



Ruckelshaus
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A DIVISION OF THE
HAUB SCHOOL OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Teton Canyon Public Involvement Forums on Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Final Report

Teton Area Advisory Forum



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Executive Summary

Teton Canyon in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest is situated east of Alta, WY. Its scenic values and recreation amenities attract large numbers of recreationists throughout the summer months. Recreational opportunities in the canyon include hiking access to the Tetons, camping in Reunion Flats and Teton Canyon Campgrounds, use of the Treasure Mountain Boy Scout Camp, mountain biking and wildlife viewing along the Teton Canyon road. In addition to recreational opportunities, Teton Canyon has a diversity of wildlife including ungulate species, large carnivores, and quite a number of species that rely on habitats with stand and age class diversity. The area is important mule deer winter range and used to be bighorn sheep winter range.

But Teton Canyon is changing. Over 100 years of fire exclusion have resulted in dense stands of timber, high loads of dead and down fuel on the forest floor, increased tree mortality due to insects, and unproductive wildlife habitat. Where these conditions are found within Teton Canyon, they represent a threat of wildfire to private property and increase the risk of exposure to the public and firefighters. In response, the Teton Basin Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest sees value in implementing vegetation treatments (mechanical and prescribed fire) that reduce the fuel loadings in the canyon and mimic natural disturbance to create a more natural mosaic and increase the stand variability and age class structure. Understanding that large-scale vegetation treatments in such a heavily used recreation area will generate significant public interest, the County Commissions in Teton County, ID and Teton County, WY asked the Teton Area Advisory Forum (TAAF) to convene a series of public meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to gather information about concerns residents and recreationists might have about proposed treatments, gather information about what people value in the canyon, and learn what they might want to see the Forest Service do to improve conditions in the canyon.

The public forums were held over a period of eight months, between May 2013 and March 2014. TAAF served as the convener utilizing services of University of Wyoming Extension to facilitate the community forums. The forums were organized around a problem-solving process that enabled participants to define their values, concerns, and objectives related to forest management in the canyon, learn about and understand the problems to be solved, generate alternative solutions, and then evaluate those alternatives. Five sessions and a field tour in the canyon were organized by TAAF. The process enabled the community to identify the values it associates with the Teton Canyon and their concerns related to fuel reduction and fire in the Canyon.

Data collected through participant interaction and voting on potential management options indicates that:

- People value the canyon for its outstanding views, recreation resources, and wildlife.
- Safe access to the canyon is a value and a concern. Dust continues to be an issue.
- People are looking to the Forest Service to manage the resources in the canyon to provide healthy forests, wildlife habitat, high water quality, and access to firewood.
- Air quality is a concern. Forum participants were interested in ways to reduce smoke pollution by utilizing the wood in ways other than burning it.
- Degradation of riverine habitat from over-use and abuse of dispersed campsites is a concern of many participants.
- People want to maintain access to the canyon year round.

In addition, it was revealed that there was general support for:

- Applying a combination of treatments for fuels reduction and wildlife habitat enhancement including prescribed burn, mechanical treatments, and group harvest
- Managing dispersed recreation by limiting vehicle access to some sites, rehabilitating some sites, and closing others.

In summary, to do nothing is not an option. The public participating in these forums have indicated a willingness for strategic, careful and proactive management to address the issues and opportunities that are present in Teton Canyon.

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Teton Area Advisory Forum

Teton Canyon Public Involvement Forums on

Hazardous Fuels Reduction and Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Introduction and Background

Teton Canyon in the Caribou-Targhee National Forest is situated east of Alta, WY. Its scenic values and recreation amenities attract large numbers of recreationists throughout the summer months. Recreational opportunities in the canyon include hiking access to the Tetons, camping in Reunion Flats and Teton Canyon Campgrounds, use of the Treasure Mountain Boy Scout Camp, mountain biking and wildlife viewing along the Teton Canyon road.

In addition to recreational opportunities, Teton Canyon has a diversity of wildlife including ungulate species, large carnivores, and quite a number of species that rely on early, mid and late succession habitats (three-toed woodpeckers, owls, etc.). The area is important mule deer winter range and used to be bighorn sheep winter range.

But Teton Canyon is changing. Historically fires would start in the valley and burn up onto the mountains until terrain or fuels put them out. This frequent fire cycle helped establish and maintain abundant aspen groves ringing the valley. With the settlement of Teton Valley natural fire no longer performs this task. As a result there is a change in the vegetation in the canyon. Over 100 years of fire exclusion have resulted in dense stands of timber, high loads of dead and down fuel on the forest floor and increased tree mortality due to insects. Where these conditions are found within Teton Canyon, they represent a threat of wildfire to private property and increase the risk of exposure to the public and firefighters.

Coupled with problems of vegetation build-up and wildfire risk is the loss of high quality wildlife habitat in the canyon. Most of the vegetation in Teton Canyon is mature, the area has less early successional habitat that supports ungulates and other wildlife species. Bighorn sheep rarely winter here, partly because of conifer expansion. Bighorn sheep rely on their eyesight to detect predators and therefore, require open habitat with good sight distances.

In response, the Teton Basin Ranger District of the Caribou-Targhee National Forest is proposing a series of vegetation treatments – prescribed fire and mechanical harvest – to accomplish a number of objectives. These include reducing the risk of fire to the community of Alta and the municipal water supply that supports the towns of Alta and Driggs, and reducing hazardous fuel accumulations adjacent to private property, the Treasure Mountain Boy Scout Camp, Teton Campground, and the Reunion Flats Campground. In addition, the vegetation treatments are aimed to diminish future beetle problems, provide for a more resilient forest, improve wildlife habitat, and re-introduce fire into Teton Canyon.

Understanding that large-scale vegetation treatments in such a heavily used recreation area will generate significant public interest, the County Commissions in Teton County, ID and Teton County, WY asked the Teton Area Advisory Forum (TAAF) to convene a series of public meetings. The purpose of the meetings was to gather information about concerns residents and recreationists might have about

proposed treatments, gather information about what people value in the canyon, and learn what they might want to see the Forest Service do to improve conditions in the canyon.

Public Forums

TAAF organized five public forums and one field trip between May 2013 and March 2014. All the forums were held in the evenings in the Driggs, ID High School. The forums were planned and organized by TAAF and the University of Wyoming (UW), with input by staff of the Teton Basin Ranger District. The forums were facilitated by faculty from UW Extension and the UW Ruckelshaus Institute.

The forums were organized around a problem-solving process that enabled participants to define their values, concerns and objectives related to forest management in the canyon, learn about and understand the problems to be solved, generate alternative solutions, and then evaluate those alternatives. This report contains a summary of each of the five forums.

Forum 1: Teton Canyon: Public Values and Perceptions

May 22, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00pm, Teton High School, Driggs, ID

Number of Participants: 25

The purpose of the first Teton Canyon forum was to introduce the issues that the Forest Service was facing in the canyon, namely dangerous fuel loading and diminished wildlife habitat, and to gather information on how people valued the canyon and adjacent lands.

TAAF representative opened the forum and provided a brief description of the purpose of the Teton Canyon public forums: that they wanted to provide input to the County Commissions of Teton County, ID and Teton County, WY about potential actions that could be taken to improve conditions in the canyon. The Teton Basin District Ranger briefed the public on the issues related to fuel loading and wildlife habitat in the canyon. This was a general briefing about the issues and possible management approaches that included prescribed burns and mechanical treatments.

The participants were then asked to work in small groups at their tables and discuss four questions:

1. Why is the Teton Canyon area important to you?
2. Do you think fuel reduction would be helpful at all? And if so, why? And if not, why not?
3. Do you think wildlife habitat improvement would be helpful? And if so, why? And if not, why not?
4. What questions do you want to have addressed at future meetings?

A full listing of all participant responses to these questions is contained in Appendix 1.

Why is the Teton Canyon area important to you?

The purpose of this question was to identify the values and perceptions that people hold toward Teton Canyon. Understanding how people perceive the canyon, the values that derive from it, and their concerns related to its management will help guide land managers and decision makers in the development of specific forest management treatments. Responses ranged from broadly identified

Table 1. Positive and Negative Perspectives toward Fuels Reduction Methods in Teton Canyon, Forum 1, May 22, 2013.

Perspective of Response	Count
Positive toward prescribed fire	8
Negative toward prescribed fire	8
Positive toward mechanical harvest	0
Negative toward mechanical harvest	3
Positive toward both	11
Negative toward both	1
Equivocal responses	2
Responses not specific to topic	3
Total responses	36

Do you think wildlife habitat improvement would be helpful? And if so, why? And if not, why not?

Forum participants were asked their opinions regarding the application of vegetative treatments to improve habitat for wildlife in the canyon. Responses to this question were indicative of the high value that people place on wildlife and wildlife viewing in the canyon. While most respondents indicated that they would like to see management actions that benefit wildlife, many responses reflected peoples' concern for wildlife and wildlife habitat, but didn't directly address the question. For example, responses that directly address the question of whether wildlife habitat improvement would be helpful included, *"Of course, helpful for their food supply – increase food supply and provide better regrowth"* and *"[It would] be good to some wildlife, bad to others – younger vegetation under represented"*. Examples of responses that reflect concern but were not directly related to the question included, *"Full of wildlife"*, and *"Wildlife is beautiful and like to see it and needs protection. Wolves are affecting wildlife."* Table 2 summarizes the responses to the question regarding wildlife habitat improvement in terms of whether the response was positive, negative or neither. The complete list of questions can be found in Appendix 1.

Table 2. Positive and Negative Perspectives toward Wildlife Habitat Improvement in Teton Canyon, Forum 1, May 22, 2013

Perspective of Response	Count
Positive toward habitat improvement	14
Negative toward habitat improvement	2
Neither positive nor negative	9
Total responses	25

What questions do you want to have addressed at future meetings?

Not surprisingly, most questions posed by meeting participants were oriented around the application of fire as a management prescription. Specific questions addressed areas to be burned, duration of burn, effect of prescribed fire on campground use, liability issues, and the effect of fire on weed infestation. Incidentally, the questions about cost were all related to the cost of prescribed fire. Questions related to mechanical harvesting focused on the use of heavy equipment, and revenue gained from timber sales. The two questions about Teton Canyon road were about dust and dust abatement. A summary of question topics is shown in Table 3. A full list of all the questions is contained in Appendix 1.

Table 3. Question Topics Posed by Participants, Forum 1, May 22, 2013

Question Topic	Count
Prescribed fire	9
Mechanical harvest	3
Cost	3
Teton canyon road	2
General forest condition	2
Grazing	2
Firewood	1
Recreation	1
Wildlife	1
Total responses	24

Field Trip: Current Resource Conditions

July 17, 2013, 9:00am – 12:00pm, Field Trip, Teton Canyon

Number of Participants: 9

Professional staff of the Teton Basin Ranger District led tour of Teton Canyon sharing professional knowledge of the current resource conditions and concerns related to vegetation management and dispersed camping in the canyon. Professional staff leading the tour were:

- Jay Pence, USFS District Ranger
- Deb Flowers, USFS Zone Fuels Assistant Fire Management Officer
- Dave Ovard, USFS Wildlife Biologist
- Avery Beyer, USFS Forester
- Kurt Kluegel, USFS District Recreation Specialist
- Aly Courtemanch, Wyoming Game and Fish Department Habitat Biologist

The field trip included four stops each of which highlighted a specific issue related to vegetation management, wildlife habitat, and recreation (see map in Appendix 2). Each stop is briefly describe below.

A. Winter Parking Area: *Teton Canyon big picture, fire management, wildlife winter range, trails.*

Discussion focused on Teton Canyon Road and dust problems associated with it. It was noted that road paving has been approved by the Forest but funds have not been appropriated. The Forest Service has not applied magnesium chloride (MgCl) to segments of the roadway to harden it and keep the dust down due to lack of funding. It was reported that MgCl does not impact invertebrates in the adjacent stream.

B. **Ward Campsite:** *Dispersed camping, vegetation recruitment, soil impacts, hydrology.*
This stop featured a discussion about managing dispersed camping in the canyon. The resource management issue is damage to vegetation and soils from vehicles encroaching on the aquatic influence zone. The Ward campsite is an example of what can be done to properly manage dispersed camping. Rock barriers were installed to limit vehicle access and bear boxes provided to encourage proper food storage.

C. **Reunion Flats Campground:** *Wildlife – peregrine falcons & bighorn sheep, potential treatment options, access/egress*
Discussion at this tour stop centered on habitat for bighorn sheep and peregrine falcons. The Apostles (a geologic formation on the north canyon wall) are historic bighorn sheep winter range. Although a GPS-collared bighorn sheep passed through Teton Canyon during summers 2008 and 2009, it was reported that they no longer winter here, partly because of conifer expansion. Vegetation treatments could improve bighorn sheep habitat. Key habitat for mule deer, elk, and moose is mountain shrub communities. However, much of the shrub vegetation is too tall for these ungulates to reach and too old to produce vigorous growth, which is the food ungulates rely on during the winter.

Potential treatments in this area could be mechanical slash in the conifer stands and follow up with prescribed burns. The management objective would be to create a mosaic of uneven-aged stands and open shrub communities.

D. **Teton Canyon Horse Corrals:** *Aspen ecology & potential treatment options.*
The aspen in this area are becoming crowded out by conifers. Aspen stands serve as fire breaks and are value habitat for a variety of wildlife. A potential management alternative would be to stimulate aspen regeneration in areas of conifer encroachment. This would involve harvesting the conifer that is encroaching the aspen stands. The cut material would be left on the ground to red-needle and then followed up with a prescribed burn six months to one year later. This treatment could meet two objectives: improving vegetation diversity, and mitigating hazardous fuel loadings.

E. **Teton Canyon Campground:** *Wilderness, wildlife, big picture - mosaic*
This tour stop focused on the spruce stands in this area. These stands are even-aged and old, and because there are no openings in the stands to allow sunlight to penetrate, they are not regenerating. The stands need small openings to stimulate new growth. A potential treatment option would be to open up some places in the stands and achieve the proper balance shade and sunlight to stimulate some seedlings. This would most likely be accomplished by mechanically harvesting in these stands to remove logs.

The presentations given at the field tour were repeated and video recorded. The video recording were made available on the Teton Area Advisory Forum website at <http://tetonforum.org/> and the University of Wyoming Extension website at <http://uwyoextension.org/targhee-forest-plan/> (both available as of 4/23/2014).

Forum 2: Current Resource Conditions

July 17, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00pm Teton High School, Driggs, ID

Number of Participants: 12

The purpose of this forum was to provide information about current resource conditions in Teton Canyon and answer questions about possible management options. The evening session was meant to substitute for the field trip for those who could not attend earlier that day. Following is a summary of the presentations. A full report on the presentations is contained in Appendix 3.

Management Considerations and Vegetation Overview

Avery Beyer, USFS Forester

Avery presented information about current resource conditions in the canyon, focusing on the role of ecological disturbances, such as natural wildfires, in creating mosaics of vegetation types and age classes. The last major disturbance in the canyon was a fire about 100 years ago. As a result, the forest is not diverse, being dominated by large expanses of contiguous mixed conifer forest. Aspen stands are declining, now occupying about 8% of the land area in the canyon. Aspen acreage has declined by approximately 80% on the west slope of the Tetons and in the Rockies as a whole. Along the north side of the canyon bottom are areas of upland brush and Mountain Mahogany, but those too are older.

Treatment options include

- Prescribed fire (more info in the following discussion)
- Use of chainsaws to cut smaller diameter trees; these can be left on the ground to facilitate prescribed burning, or piled (expensive) but less visual impact in areas of high visitor use
- Masticators to chop/shred vegetation.
- Logging

Mechanized treatments, e.g. masticators and logging, would be limited to only a small portion of the canyon, namely in some of the spruce stands that are at risk for windthrow and beetle infestation. Small patch cuts less than 150 feet across would allow for younger spruce to regenerate. Mastication is a treatment option that would be undertaken adjacent to roads and recreation sites where fuels reduction is needed but the risk and visual impact of prescribed burning is not wanted.

Role of Fire in Teton Canyon

Deb Flowers, USFS Zone Fuels Assistant Fire Management Officer

Deb discussed the effect that past fire suppression practices have had on future risk of large scale, high intensity fires in the canyon. There is a concern that a wildfire in the canyon could pose a substantial risk to the Alta public water supply, the dispersed campsites, Reunion Flats and Teton Canyon campgrounds, the Treasure Mountain Boy Scout Camp, as well as a risk to the safety of the public using the canyon on any given day.

Deb presented information on the application of prescribed burns to mimic fire's natural role in the ecosystem. Prescribed fires range in size and complexity but the typical size of a burn ranges from 500 to 1000 acres, and must be administered according to objectives described in a detailed burn plan. In this case, prescribed fire would be used to reduce fuels build-up, improve and regenerate aspen stands, and

improve wildlife habitat. Smoke reduction and abatement measures are also contained in a burn plan. Burns will be conducted only when wind speed, wind direction, smoke dispersion conditions are optimal. The cost of a 500-1,000-acre prescribed fire will range between \$15,000 to \$20,000, much less than the cost to suppress a dangerous wildfire.

Wildlife in Teton Canyon

Dave Ovard, USFS Wildlife Biologist

Aly Courtemanch, Wyoming Game and Fish Department Habitat Biologist

Dave and Aly discussed the need for diversity in the canyon's plant community, which will result in diversity of wildlife species. Teton Canyon has a diversity of ungulate species, large carnivores, and quite a number of species that rely on early, mid and late succession habitats (three-toed woodpeckers, owls, etc.). Diversity of vegetation (types and age classes) can better support a diverse animal assemblage. In Teton Canyon almost all of the habitat is mature with less early successional habitat that supports ungulates. The area is important mule deer winter range and it used to be bighorn sheep winter range. Bighorn sheep no longer winter here, partly because of conifer expansion.

The valley bottom is dominated by shrub communities, meadows, and riparian areas. Other than the even-aged stands of spruce, most of the plant communities in the valley bottom are in good shape. One issue of concern however is the impact of dispersed camping on vegetation near the creek. Compaction and disturbance is producing sediment runoff into the creek which impacts the trout fishery.

Above the valley floor, the mountain shrubs on the winter range are very mature, up to eighty years old. They are too tall for deer and elk to reach the forage. The forage is old and nutrition of the forage reduces with age. Mountain mahogany stands have moved from its habitat niche in the rocky outcrops to include habitat that was once a more diverse mountain shrub community. Mahogany has since replaced most of the other shrubs on the north slope of the canyon. A treatment objective would be to increase the diversity of shrub species in this area.

Most of the aspen in the basin is seral aspen. Seral aspen is slowly invaded and taken over by conifer trees which are longer lived and shade out the sun loving aspen trees. There is only one patch of mid age aspen in the canyon. Aspen is a rich source of food for many wildlife species. Only a riparian area has a higher biodiversity in the Rocky Mountains than aspen stands. It is important that we treat at-risk aspen stands to preserve this biodiversity into the future. We are losing our aspen stands across the west. In 1900 there were 42,000 acres of aspen in Teton Canyon. Today, only about 9,000 acres remain, a loss of 78%.

Treatment options would include enhancing the diversity of winter range shrubs, reviving aspen stands that are most in danger of dying out, and opening up some of the conifer stands to allow for resiliency and biodiversity. When thinking about potential treatments to improve wildlife habitat, prescribed fire provides nutritional benefits that cannot be achieved through mechanical methods. Fire releases nutrients and minerals from the soil, which plants uptake after the fire, improving their nutritional quality for ungulates.

Recreation in Teton Canyon

Kurt Kluegel, USFS Natural Resource Specialist, Recreation.

Kurt indicated that on a typical summer day, 1,100 people are using the canyon. Kurt discussed the issue of road dust in the canyon. He stated that the Forest Service approved paving in the last forest plan, but the cost is prohibitive, which is why it hasn't happened. They also attempted to reduce the dust problem by lowering the speed limit on the road in 2004. Road Improvement cost estimates:

- \$144,000/mile to blade and prepare base.
- \$450,000 / mile to pave.
- The life expectancy of paved road is 15 years . And a paved road would still require 2-3 seal coats to get the live each seal is \$112,000 per mile.

The campground concessionaire has been applying magnesium chloride on the roads around the campgrounds. It is too cost prohibitive, at \$2,000 per mile, to apply to the entire roadway. And it has its drawbacks. Once treated, there is dust abatement for a year, then the tacky surface starts to break up similar to potholes. The situation then degrades to where it is worse than washboards.

Kurt addressed the problems related to dispersed camping in the canyon. The number of user-created campsites and access roads has been increasing. In 2006, there were 10 major areas with 33 dispersed campsites. Two years later, 11 major areas with 39 campsites were identified. These campsites are growing at a rapid rate. Dispersed camping is negatively impacting vegetation in the riparian zone. Vehicle use is damaging tree roots and killing trees. In addition, the stream bank is being eroded causing significant water quality problems from sedimentation. Kurt reported that he would like to see more managed camping situations like the Ward Cabin area.

Forum 3: Participatory Mapping

August 21, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00pm Teton High School, Driggs, ID

Number of Participants: 12

The purpose of the third forum was to provide an opportunity for participants to discuss features and places in the canyon that are important to them, discuss what they believe should be the management objectives of the project, and record these aspects on base maps of the canyon. Groups of 3 or 4 participants produced maps that contained places that are important to them, places that they use or visit, and places that the Forest Service should focus its attention when carrying out management prescriptions. Based on the input provided at this forum, Forest Service professional staff generated a master map showing potential treatment areas (Figure 5). This information may be used by the Forest Service staff in their development of management options. Appendix 4 contains the notes from this meeting.

Features Important to Participants:

1. Winter ranges (what is real vs. what isn't) recognizing critical ranges for wildlife
2. Manage to ensure "Quality of Canyon Life"
 - Air
 - Water
 - Wildlife need adequate habitat
 - Designated campgrounds
 - Creek experience
 - Camp by creek
 - Cookout spots
 - Live safely

- Enjoy safely

Participant-Generated Project Objectives and Maps (What Should be Done?):

Group 1:

- Improve and protect wildlife winter range
- Maintain critical roads and routes.
- Maintain ability to collect firewood in WY Roadless area that exists.
- Protect winter range boundaries between Teton Canyon Road and existing ski area south boundaries.
- Recognize the importance of cattle grazing to maintain a healthy ecosystem.

Green Dots (Places that are important to you):

- Boy Scout camp
- Campgrounds
- Cold Springs – use for family time/recreation

Blue Dots: (Places you visit or use):

- Historical routes and trails

Yellow Dots and Highlighted Areas (Places for Forest Service to focus attention):

- Critical winter range
- Dispersed Camping, decries needs to be cleaned up after, no maintenance, trash, no fire pits established.
- Road – maintain road
- Grazing for winter range habitat
- Spruce, add opportunities to reduce fuel load



Figure 2. Group 1 User-Generated Map.

Group 2:

- Limiting grazing (eliminate)
- More prescribed burns fewer mechanical treatments
- Improve campsites to reduce human started fires
- Manage parking to reduce risk human caused fires.
- Management of fuels around dispersed camping
- Limiting dispersed camping in areas
- Temporary speed bumps in summer.
- Protect the character of the trails.
- Enhance wildlife habitat
- Increase aspen using prescribed burns
- Burn sagebrush
- Use harvesting

Green Dots (Places that are important to you):

- Mill Creek
- Wildlife crossing

Blue Dots: (Places you visit or use):

- Sheep Trail

Yellow Dots and Highlighted Areas (Places for Forest Service to focus attention):

- Big campground – more attention
- Mill Creek – Character of trail important
- Ski Area – Protect resource
- Select timber harvest

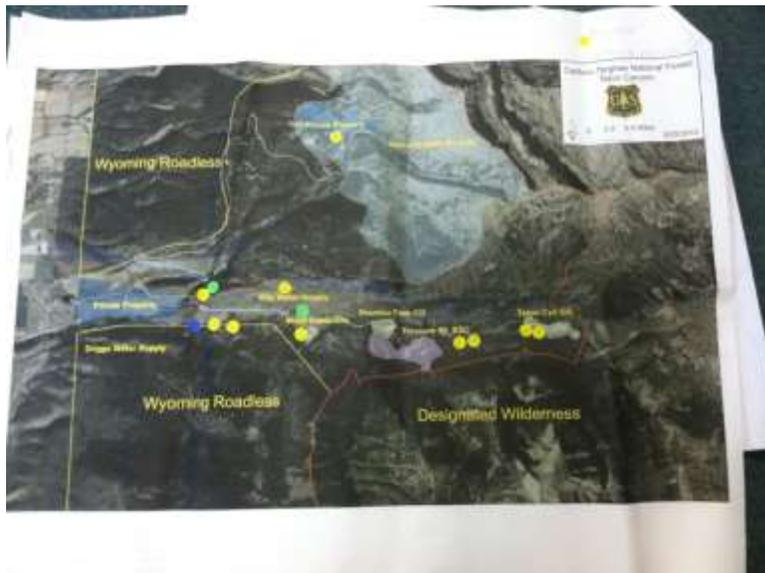


Figure 3. Group 2 User-Generated Map

Group 3

- Manage forest with prescribed burns and selected logging

Green Dots (Places that are important to you):

- Private homes

Blue Dots: (Places you visit or use):

- Cookout
- Trail
- Teton Creek – Fisheries, water quality (entire creek)

Yellow Dots and Highlighted Areas (Places for Forest Service to focus attention):

- Road (Yellow highlighter)
 - Pink marker – Sheep bridge parking lot expansion, needs to stop. People using Sheep trail should park in main lot.
- Deal with dispersed camping, need a plan for the whole thing.
- Open to prescribed burn anywhere.
- Mosaic burns – habitat and forest health
- Manage campgrounds to eliminate dispersed camping
- Existing places need to be enhanced to eliminate disuse.
- Wildlife habitat enhancement
- Pink polygons on map = yellow dots.



Figure 4. Group 3 User-Generated Map

Figure 5, below, represents an amalgam of the three user-generated maps showing potential treatment areas that include prescribed fire, mechanical and slashing, and group harvest sites. Also included on this map are dispersed campsites that could be closed. This map became the basis for a discussion of proposed treatments in Forums 4 and 5.

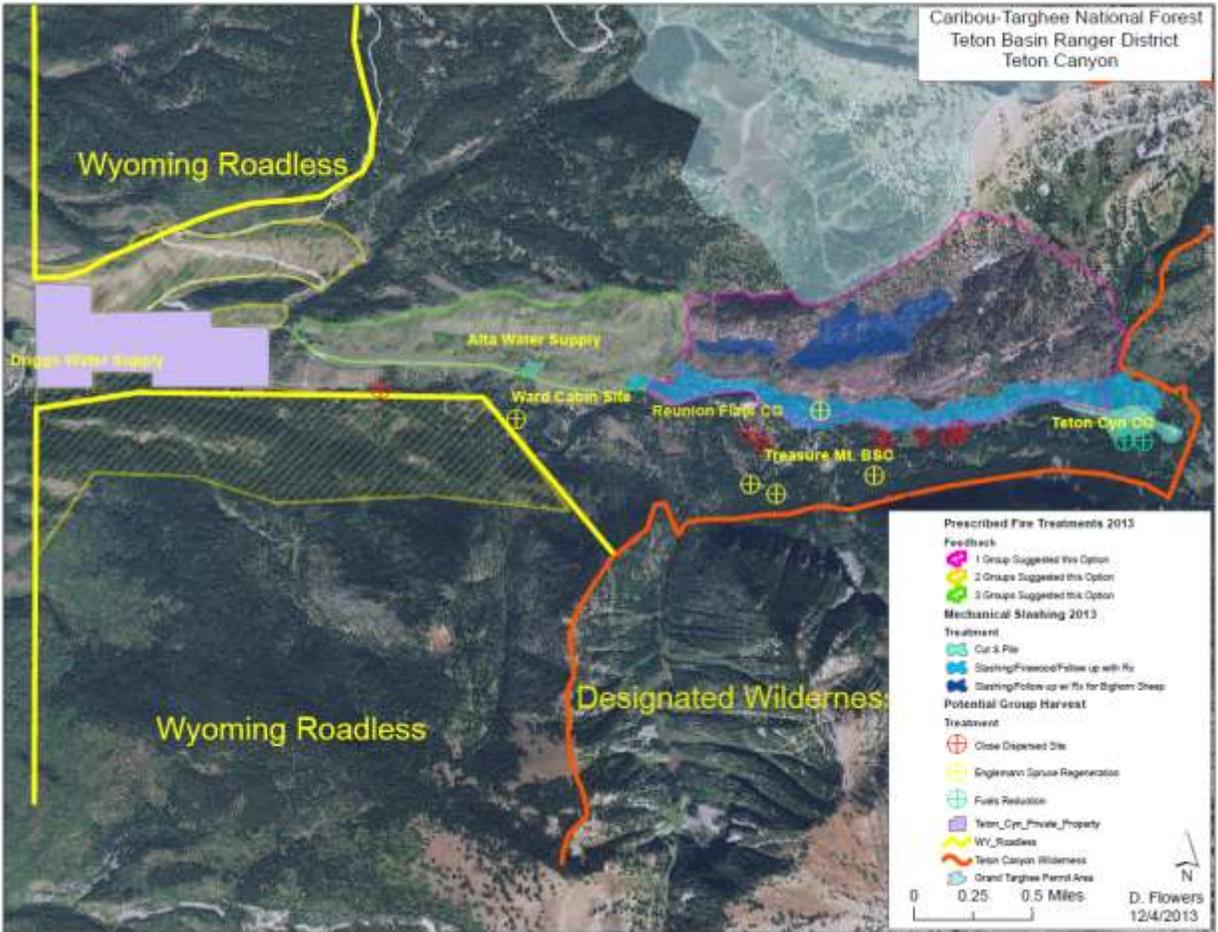


Figure 5. Prescribed Treatments Identified by Teton Canyon Forum Participants, 2013.

Forum 4: Evaluation of Vegetative Treatment Options
December 12, 2013, 6:00 – 8:00pm Teton High School, Driggs, ID
Number of Participants: 13

Based on the outcomes of the discussion and mapping exercise from Forum 4, the professional staff of the Teton Basin Ranger District developed a number of options for potential treatments in the canyon. Options included four prescribed fire treatments, four mechanical harvest options, two group harvest options, and a combined burn and mechanical treatment in the Wyoming Roadless Area. The options were presented in detail by the District staff and participants were able to ask questions specific to each option. After the options were presented and described, the participants voted their preference for each option. Participants voted using audience response keypads or “clickers.” Participants were

presented with a specific option and could press a button on their keypads corresponding to the following voting choices:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

Following is a brief description of each option, polling results, and comments offered by the participants that explain their polling selection. A complete summary of the discussion from this meeting is contained in Appendix 5.

Prescribed Fire Prescriptions

Using fire to remove trees and debris and stimulate growth of new vegetation.

Treatment 1a: Fuels Reduction in the Wildland Urban Interface (WUI)

Specifics of this option include:

- Spring or fall burn
- Short duration
- Potential short duration road closures.
- Potential Mill Creek trail closure.
- Reduces fuel loading, increases available food for wildlife.



Polling results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1 = I just don't like it	0%	0
2 = I prefer something different	0%	0
3 = I have mixed feelings about this option	0%	0
4 = I like it, good enough	50%	6
5 = I fully support this option	50%	6
Totals	100%	12

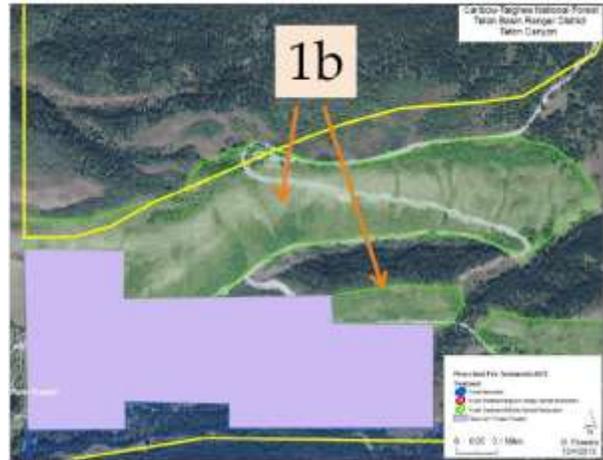
Comments:

None.

Option 1b: Fuels Reduction in the WUI, Wildlife Habitat Improvement

Specifics of this option include:

- Spring or Fall burn
- Short duration
- Potential short duration closures along road to Grand Targhee
- Reduces fuel loading, increases available food for wildlife



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1	0%	0
2	0%	0
3	15.38%	2
4	38.46%	5
5	46.15%	6
Totals	100%	13

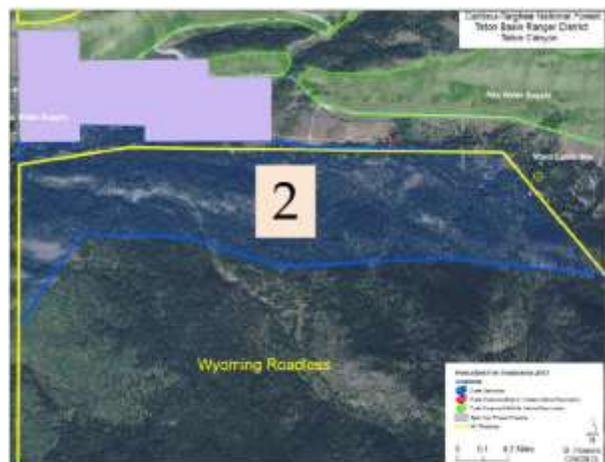
Comments:

None.

Option 2: Fuels Reduction on South Slope of Canyon

Specifics of this option include:

- Steep terrain, continuous timber with heavy fuel loadings, the absence of natural barriers and lynx habitat constraints make prescribed fire a difficult treatment option.
- Fall burn – 2 to 3 days for implementation
- Smoke will be visible from the valley and will settle in low lying areas at night.
- Potential closures of up to a week are possible along the Sheep Bridge trail.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1 = I just don't like it	8.33%	1
2 = I prefer something different	0%	0
3 = I have mixed feelings about this option	66.67%	8
4 = I like it, good enough	16.67%	2
5 = I fully support this option	8.33%	1
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

- I have mixed feelings, OK to burn, but my concern is about the smoke. I am mostly concerned about the wildlife area, it needs to be improved, don't care how you do it
- I would like to see tools used that will meet the objectives, if a mosaic can be provided, that will enhance entire ecosystem. Something needs to be done. I don't care what the prescription is, the end results needs to be achieved with the appropriate tools to achieve age class and species diversification of the forest.

Option 3: Fuels Reduction and Bighorn Sheep Habitat Restoration

Specifics of this option include:

- Improve access and egress of recreationalists
- Break up the overstory canopy along the road corridor to decrease the potential for crown fire.
- Fall burn – Moderate duration burn - 1 to 2 days for implementation.
- Multi-year project – 2 to 3 years.
- Smoke will be visible from the valley and will disperse into low lying areas at night.
- Short duration closures are possible along the Teton Canyon road.
- Aspen improvement
- Will meet both fuels reduction and wildlife habitat improvement objectives



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	16.67%	2
	8.33%	1
	41.67%	5
	33.33%	4
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

- I support the objective. The Forest Service needs discretion to use the tools they need to accomplish what needs to be accomplished in the canyon to make this area critical wildlife habitat (recommend expanding this polygon to the east).

Mechanical Treatment Options

Removal of trees using mechanical harvesters and chain saws.

Option 4a: Cut/Pile/Burn Alta Water Supply, 3 Acres

Specifics of this option include:

- Protect Alta water supply from sediment movement from a wildfire.
- Selectively cut and pile material by hand.
- Reduce dead and down surface fuel loading
- Implementation – 1 week
- Piles will cure for 1 year prior to being burned.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	8.33%	1
	16.67%	2
	41.67%	5
	33.33%	4
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

- Firewood opportunities need to be considered here (firewood or chipping)
- Prevent trails from occurring and or have money appropriated to repair trails

Option 4b: Cut/Pile/Pile Burn – Teton Canyon Campground, 24 Acres

Specifics of this option include:

- Reduce risk to public and firefighters in the event of a wildfire.
- Protect campground infrastructure from wildfire.
- Selectively cut and pile material by hand.
- Reduce dead and down surface fuel loading
- Implementation – 2 months
- Piles will cure for 1 year prior to being burned.
- Noise pollution within the campground.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	8.33%	1
	8.33%	1
	58.33%	7
	25%	3
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

None.

Option 4c: Slashing/Firewood/Follow-up with Prescribed Fire, 135 Acres

Specifics of this option include:

- Fuels reduction and wildlife habitat improvement
- Break up tree canopy along road corridor.
- Focus on conifer encroached aspen stands.
- Slash with chain saws.
- Opportunity for firewood.
- Follow-up with Prescribed Fire
- Multi-phase project
 - Example: Slash conifer – 2014
 - Prescribed fire – 2015
- Slashing broadens treatment window.
- Slash will “red-needle” for one season before burning.
- Noise from chain saws along the road corridor and in Reunion Flats Campground.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	8.33%	1
	0%	0
	50%	6
	41.67%	5
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

- I prefer prescribed burning to mechanical treatment. More concerned about people driving off road and creating roads.

Option 4d: Slashing or Herbicide/Follow-up with Prescribed Fire, 82 Acres

Specifics of this option include:

- North side of the canyon near the Apostles
- Bighorn sheep habitat improvement
- Steep terrain – too hazardous for mechanical slashing by hand.
- Treatments include use of a chain saw in areas not limited by terrain
- In steep terrain herbicide treatment applied by using a hypo-hatchet or backpack sprayer.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	27.27%	3
	9.09%	1
	9.09%	1
	27.27%	3
	27.27%	3
Totals	100%	11

Comments:

- If you're going to treat, would rather see burn than chemicals used. May be strings attached to using outside money for the chemical purchase.
- Treatment isn't necessary if the information to treat is being based on 1800 polls. Since there was only 1 ewe, it does not justify doing anything.

Group Harvest Options

Felling and removal of all trees from a small area, generally an acre or less.

Option 4e: Group Harvest – Teton Canyon Campground

Specifics of this option include:

- Reduce risk to public and firefighters in the event of a wildfire.
- Protect campground infrastructure from wildfire.
- Felling and skidding (dragging) trees to landing, 1-3 days per group.
- Loading and hauling of logs, 1-3 days per group.
- Can contractually limit time of operations, i.e. no hauling on weekends.
- Would likely schedule activity to take place in Oct.-Nov. to minimize conflict with recreational use.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
 2 = I prefer something different
 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
 4 = I like it, good enough
 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1	0%	0
2	0%	0
3	16.67%	2
4	33.33%	4
5	50%	6
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

- What is definition of "old growth"?
- Spruce won't be useable because of twisted grain. If no one wants it what will you do with it?

Option 4f: Group Harvest – Englemann Spruce Regeneration

Specifics on this option include:

- Create openings for regeneration of spruce forest.
- Felling and removal of all trees from a small area, generally an acre or less.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1 = I just don't like it	0%	0
2 = I prefer something different	8.33%	1
3 = I have mixed feelings about this option	0%	0
4 = I like it, good enough	16.67%	2
5 = I fully support this option	75%	9
Totals	100%	12

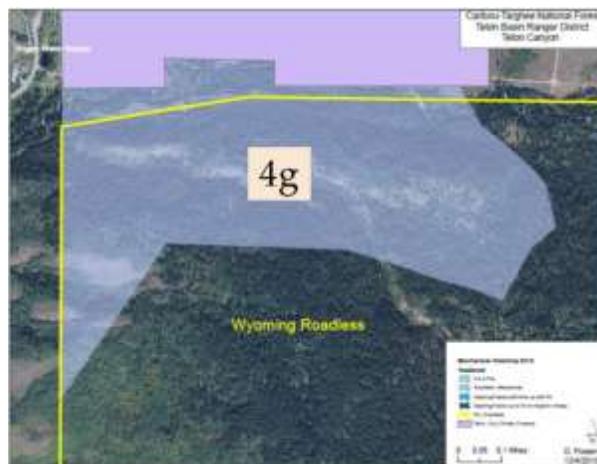
Comments:

Stay farther away than 100 yards from creek.

Option 4g: Prescribed Burn in Wyoming Roadless Area

Specifics on this option include:

- Logging – possible after significant justification and review from higher levels.
- Mastication – use of heavy equipment to mulch down logs and small trees to create fuelbreaks and facilitate prescribed burning.
- Hand Felling and piling – crews with chainsaws cut smaller diameter trees, pile cut trees in some areas for later burning, create control lines.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1 = I just don't like it	8.33%	1
2 = I prefer something different	33.33%	4
3 = I have mixed feelings about this option	8.33%	1
4 = I like it, good enough	0%	0
5 = I fully support this option	50%	6
Totals	100%	12

Comments:

- Bad combination
- Prefer mechanical to prescribed burn
- I voted a "3", something needs to be done, whatever managers think can work----do
- Logging is best choice (use the resource)

Forum 5: Evaluation of Dispersed Camping Treatment Options

March 6, 2014, 6:00 – 8:00pm Teton High School, Driggs, ID

Number of Participants: 10

The problems of soil and vegetation disturbance resulting from user-created campsites and access roads along Teton Creek have been increasing over the years. Campers are pulling their vehicles into the trees for shade which is resulting in tree root damage and tree mortality. In addition, the stream bank is being eroded causing significant water quality problems from sedimentation. In response, the Forest Service is proposing several treatments to reduce camping impacts and rehabilitate some of the most degraded sites.

The proposals for campsite treatments include rehabilitation of sites, erection of vehicle barriers, group selection harvest of some tree stands to reduce fuel loadings and improve stand health, and placement of regulatory signs to direct and guide use. Improving management of dispersed camping in Teton Canyon is meant to achieve the following goals:

- Provide a balance between recreation use and resource protection and enhancement.
- Improve the watershed condition.
- Continue to provide dispersed camping in Teton Canyon.
- Reduce fuel loadings to mitigate wildfire potential.

Eight sites were identified for treatment. These are identified as Sites A through H and are shown on the map in Figure 3. The options were presented in detail by the District staff and participants were able to ask questions specific to each option. After the options were presented and described, the participants voted their preference for each option. Participants voted using audience response keypads. The voting choices are recorded here using the same voting choices as presented for vegetative prescriptions in the previous forum¹:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

Following is a brief description of each option, polling results, and comments offered by the participants that explain their polling selection. In addition to the eight options presented by the Forest Service staff, two other options were suggested by a participant and were voted on. A complete summary of the discussion from this meeting is contained in Appendix 6.

¹ The participants in this poll were presented voting choices that were the opposite of the choices in the December poll, that is, 1=I fully support this option and 5=I just don't like it. The votes are rescaled in this report (i.e., 1=I just don't like it and 5=I fully support this option) so that the two polls are comparable. The notes in Appendix 6 show the scaling as used in the meeting.

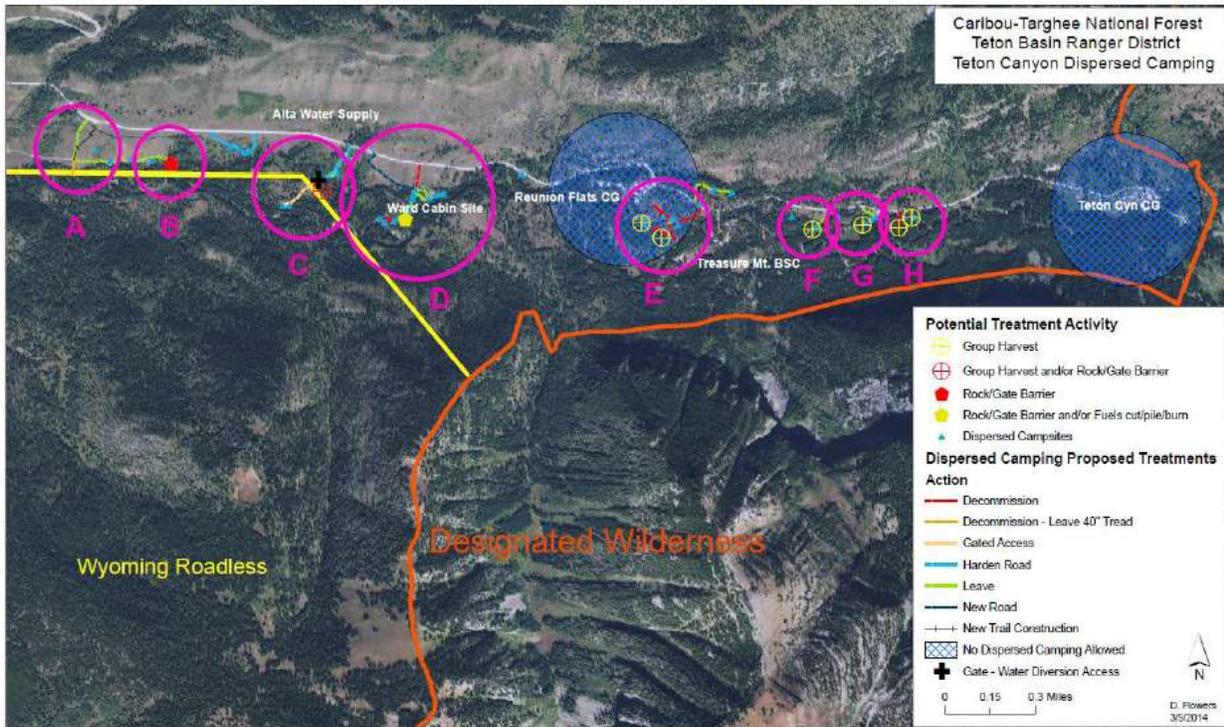
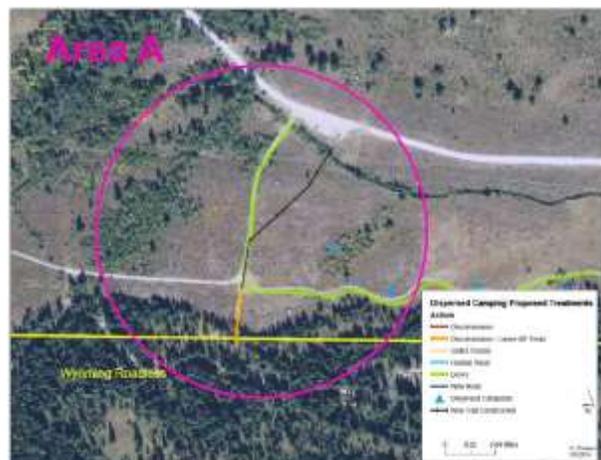


Figure 6. Dispersed Camping Proposed Treatment Areas

Area A: Sheep Bridge Area Road Conversion and Area Rehabilitation

Specifics on this option include:

- Convert Sheep Bridge approach route to a non-motorized trail.
- Connect the Sheep Bridge to the winter parking area with a new, 40-inch wide trail.
- Rehabilitate dispersed camping site near the bridge.
- Rehabilitate user-created parking area.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	12.50%	1
	0%	0
	12.50%	1
	75%	6
Totals	100%	8

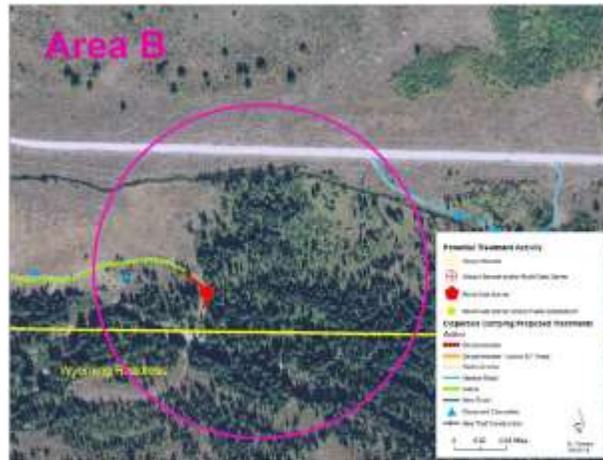
Comments:

- Are people really going to stop parking there? Or are they just going to find another place to pull off? How do you train people to use the winter parking lot?
- The other option would be to create another parking lot.
- We deal with that every day and emergency vehicles can't access private homes. Most people, if you can talk to them, understand and are pretty compliant.
- Make all the sites in A/B area walk in only.
- The proposed new trail from parking lot to Sheep Bridge camping would make them walk in only anyway.

Area B: Camping Access Closure at Sage Flat

Specifics of this option include:

- Keep the access route open through sage flat.
- Close the terminal portion of route with a rock barrier.
- Rehabilitate camp area and old access routes.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1	25%	2
2	25%	2
3	12.50%	1
4	12.50%	1
5	25%	2
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

- If the parking area is done away with and rock barriers are put there, what's going to keep them from going down the road and just parking anyway. This is the worst and longest road in Teton Canyon as far as concerns expressed over rutting and drainage. A road to terminal would be a shorter road that could access the sites at the end, even though roads are expensive to make. Will the roads be rehabilitated if they are kept? (Answer): There is no funding mechanism for that.
- The access road is rutted and terrible.
- There are holes all along the canal that parallels the road and drains it directly into the creek.

- I like the road there, because where's everyone going to drive anyway? Most people who come to camp aren't from here, they aren't going to park where the "T" is. People said they would follow the signs if there were some there. They will move to another canyon if you take out the sites they use now and have used for 100 years.

Area C: Road Closure near Irrigation Diversion

Specifics of this option include:

- Close the access route at the Wyoming Roadless Boundary.
- Close vehicle access to two dispersed sites.
- Improve access route and add drainage structures.
- Maintain permittee access to irrigation diversion gate.
- Potential group harvest could provide funding for road repairs.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1	0%	0
2	0%	0
3	25%	2
4	12.50%	1
5	62.50%	5
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

- There's going to be people and equipment in the Roadless area.

Area D: Access Route Closure at Ward Cabin Site

Specifics of this option include:

- Close and rehabilitate current access route.
- Construct a new road with less grade.
- Rehabilitate west fork of route as part of fuels treatment.
- Rehabilitate six dispersed camp sites.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	0%	0
	37.50%	3
	25%	2
	37.50%	3
Totals	100%	8

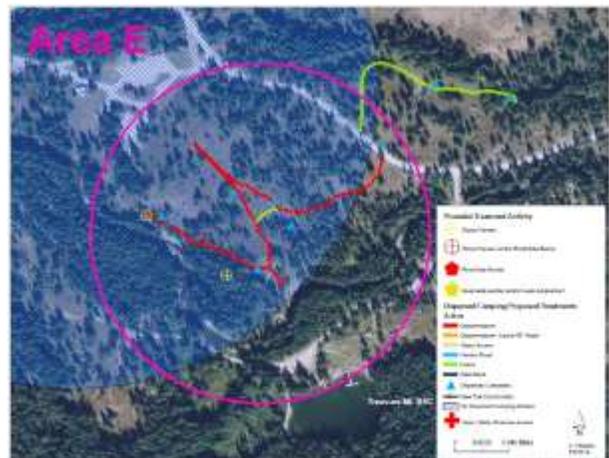
Comments:

- I had mixed feelings -putting a new road in is a good option to deal with the existing road and erosion, but roads are roads and they are expensive. I would rather see if resource protection outweighs social expectation. If it does, then close the road. New roads won't have maintenance dollars, they would be constructed vs. created, but no maintenance in the long term.
- The straight road is gravelly and hard to drive down. I can see the idea of the side road for people who want to camp there. It would be a better situation for them too.

Area E, Option 1: Closure of Sites Adjacent to Scout Camp

Specifics related to the option:

- Dispersed camping area is not in compliance with the forest plan.
- Area is designated for developed recreation.
- Close access to these sites.
- Rehabilitate access routes and dispersed sites with a group selection harvest.
- New regulatory signs would be installed along road way.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	12.50%	1
	50%	4
	25%	2
	0%	0
	12.50%	1
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

- None.

Area E, Option 2: Improvement of Sites Adjacent to Scout Camp

Specifics related to the option:

- Allow dispersed camping under management of the concessionaire.
- This option would include a user fee.
- Provide access through Reunion Flats Campground.
- Rehabilitate dispersed sites impacting stream bank.
- Close and rehabilitate existing user developed access route.

Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	0%	0
	37.50%	3
	37.50%	3
	25%	2
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

- I had mixed feelings of juggling concessionaires, but I don't like concessionaire program. People who want to disperse camp don't want the campground.
- But they use the facilities of the campground.
- I don't know if that's true, most people will only walk 100 feet to a bathroom.
- I'm not necessarily taking issue with this, but I watched a group walk across the fence and line up for the restrooms while I was visiting with the host. He said they see it a lot.
- The hosts complain about it constantly.

Area F: Rehabilitate Sites East of Scout Camp

Specifics related to this option:

- Continue access into the meadow and use of dispersed camping areas.
- Rehabilitate the terminal portion of the route within the forested riparian area
- Use group selection to help in rehabilitation effort.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
1 = I just don't like it	0%	0
2 = I prefer something different	11.11%	1
3 = I have mixed feelings about this option	22.22%	2
4 = I like it, good enough	33.33%	3
5 = I fully support this option	33.33%	3
Totals	100%	9

Comments:

None.

Area G: Access Road Closure in Spruce Grove

Specifics related to this option:

- Keep access route into the meadow open for dispersed camping.
- Rehabilitate terminal portion of the road in riparian area with potential group harvest.



Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	0%	0
	0%	0
	25%	2
	12.50%	1
	62.50%	5
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

None.

User Proposed Option 1: Replace Dispersed Camping in Areas A & B with an RV Campground

Specifics related to this option:

- None given.

Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	37.50%	3
	25%	2
	12.50%	1
	12.50%	1
	12.50%	1
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

None.

User Proposed Option 2: Convert Areas A & B to Walk-In Sites

Specifics related to this option:

- Decommission Sheep Bridge access road.
- Parking required in winter parking lot.

Polling Results:

- 1 = I just don't like it
- 2 = I prefer something different
- 3 = I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4 = I like it, good enough
- 5 = I fully support this option

	Responses	
	(percent)	(count)
	25%	2
	12.50%	1
	25%	2
	12.50%	1
	25%	2
Totals	100%	8

Comments:

- If you're going to walk in, you're going to go to a place worth walking to, not the drive in spots that are already there.
- People are going to park on the main road and walk in from there.
- I don't want to shut people out, but the road has holes and ruts and generates more dust than Teton Canyon Road does.
- We [Canyon Residents] maintain the road and do upgrades to it, not trying to keep people out, but we do pay for it.

Appendix 1: Results from the May 22, 2013 Public Forum

Why is the Teton Canyon area important to you?

- Canyon has not changed since 1800s because of old practices of stewardship through grazing, firewood harvesting. Grazing brings back grasses for other game
- Provides important wildlife habitat, quiet non-motorized recreational activities (above trailhead south of North fork)
- Not wasting resources. Use the fuel to benefit the economy
- Recreation is the biggest economic driver in this community
- Boy Scout camp is important in this setting and the SAFETY of the scouts is important – there is only one access to/from camp
- Wildlife diversity – habitat retention
- Girl Scout camp – they learn good wilderness ethics (700 girls go through there in the summer)
- Solitude/Quiet
- Keep it from burning however we have to
- Economic benefit of wood (harvesting for lumber and firewood), habitat of vegetation/game, recreation
- Recreation. Good to have different people using canyon
- Alta culinary and irrigation water
- Cattle grazing to keep brush down to help prevent fire
- Firefighter public safety
- Wildlife habitat
- Species diversity
- Forest health
- Water quality
- Recreational opportunities
- Safety for people in canyon
- BEAUTY OF CANYON
- Riding bike and walking
- Speed limit – to keep down dust
- *Proximity and access to wilderness
- Gentle hiking with great views – great for non-hard-core hikers
- Non-motorized trail on North side of creek starting at the first parking lot
- Moderate cross country skiing
- Habitat diversity – changing ecosystems
- Scout camps
- NOLS
- Campground
- Wildlife
- Very popular for public – multiple use
- Serenity, beauty, wild life, trails, vistas, wild flowers
- Birds, waterfalls, Teton creek, hiking, see moose; listen to the birds, wildflowers to shoulder. Take house guests, flat, accessible, unique. Not afraid to go alone
- Access to background, solitude, exercise, close by, wild flowers, wild life
- Wildlife, flowers, waterfalls, quiet, river, trails, mountains, walking the dog, hiking
- Most beautiful place on west side of the Tetons, wildlife
- Access to back country, up & over

- Close by, 10 minutes from home
- Easy trail, good for guests – walk 10 minutes see beautiful things
- Horseback riding
- Something to do all year round
- It is a sanctuary, a place for solitude, introspection, peace, interaction with natural setting
- It is a key location for photography in this valley
- Incredible, fabulous place for hiking
- Truly value the encounters with wildlife
- Appreciate the pristine cleanliness of streams, forests
- One of the most beautiful canyons
- Historical use for group parties/gatherings
- Campgrounds should be used more and reduced fees would help with better use
- Helps entire valley in many ways and fire may not be best or only tool
- Lots of water for use from the canyon for the city of Driggs and Grand Teton Canal and other irrigation water, so we need to protect water use
- Wild game should be taken care of and Boy Scout camp is important. Campgrounds should be used without such high fees

Do you think fuel reduction would be helpful at all? And if so, why? And if not, why not?

- Fuel reduction through fire is not economically beneficial to community. Wasting a resource
- Aspens grow near water, on northern slopes. Burning out conifers will not increase Aspen growth
- There are places for burning there and places for timbering
- Fire is a natural cycle of the forest with ecological benefits
- There is no one easy fix. We need to find/maintain balance
- Fuel reduction would be good to prevent a massive forest fire, which would cost taxpayers millions of dollars to fight
- More open access to gather firewood – further in than 300 feet
- Fuel reduction increase safety to visitors in canyon. Protecting campgrounds, Boy Scout camp, trail heads, Alta water supply, Driggs water supply, ski area
- Safety to private lands
- Reduce potential for large fire
- Increase age diversity
- Increase Aspen across landscape
- Open view sheds
- Reduce risk of insect and disease
- Enhance wildlife diversity – elk, moose, deer, big horn sheep
- Increase vegetation diversity
- Noise and cost of getting timber out
- Inevitable fuel reduction
- Reduce in small chunks – small controlled burns
- Open to firewood collection
- Limit time spent each summer – if it could be done in a week
- Minimal impact on air quality
- Not recommending timber sale
- Is important, but needs to be done in a safe manner. Not like Colorado Springs. Concern is the fire getting out of control. What is the safest time to do it? Fall?

- Support prescribed burn only if it helps wildlife. Ex. burn brush = new growth would be food for wildlife. More food for wildlife
- Concern with other fuel reduction – wood chip – concern about bringing in equipment to cut and chip – what would be the impact of bringing in machines. What would happen to the trails? How will it impact hikers?
- How will it affect the trails if they bring in machines? Aspen Trail – the whole valley filled with smoke – is that what they would do? Is there food right away for the wildlife? Where do they go? Problem with breathing the smoke
- Need to have prescribed burns. How do people get out if there is a fire – how do they get out? Prescribed burns will prevent this. Gain for wildlife – if they can't get food wildlife will leave the canyon
- Will the canyon be closed when they do a prescribed burn? Will the willows burn?
- Will they stop burning when the valley fills with smoke?
- How to reduce the impact on the residents? Bad for local economy when the smoke fills the valley
- Would like more background info on fuels reduction. There are questions about effect of fuel reduction on habitat. There may be mulching value. Vegetation including dead debris has watershed value. Questions on catastrophic fire effect – if no danger then minimize disturbance
- Dead trees can be utilized – not just through burning. Can be used for firewood and other products. Fire should be last resort (x 3 comments)
- Controlled burns necessary in some places and saw wood or firewood may be utilized. Controlled burn preferable to wild fire
- Take a look at historical active management of timber harvest and other tools. Burning is lazy way out and smoke is an issue
- Burning takes away from grazing and other things for agriculture

Do you think wildlife habitat improvement would be helpful? And if so, why? And if not, why not?

- More wildlife habitat. Dogs need leashes year round
- Be good to some wildlife, bad to others – younger vegetation under represented
- Good for big horn sheep; be good to see big horn sheep
- Deer, elk, moose have reduced numbers due to habitat condition
- Important movement path
- Increase forage for predators
- Full of wildlife
- Restore Aspens to enhance the habitat
- Thorn apple – remove, replace with willow
- Prevent erosion on side roads used by ATV
- Allow predators – grizzlies and wolves
- Not recommending timber sale
- Of course, helpful for their food supply – increase food supply and provide better regrowth. It is the home for the wildlife. Maintain what we got in terms of wildlife
- Get wildlife more food. The animals will be forced out of the canyon during the controlled burn until the following summer. Where will they go? Would the animals come back? The controlled burns are good because you can control what you burn in contrast to wildfires
- Don't know if it helps wildlife. Mother nature has done very well, who do we need to change that?
- Teton Canyon haven for wildlife – putting up too many fences – wildlife do not have enough open area to migrate. Worry about all the wildlife. Want to maintain, not ruin wildlife habitat.
- Important – good habitat, the animals will be healthy and reproducing

- Why is wildlife, deer, coming into residential areas? Cars, traffic. What is the reason wildlife coming to residential areas to eat?
 - Why so many deer and elk in the neighborhoods?
 - Animals do not seem to be afraid of humans
 - Like to see wildlife habitat enhanced and canyon is shared with people
 - Wildlife is beautiful and like to see it and needs protection. Wolves are affecting wildlife.
 - Predators have controlling effect on wildlife and habitat plays minor role
 - Agrees with above statements
- Too vague a question – what wildlife are we trying to improve? Define improvement?

What questions do you want to have addressed at future meetings?

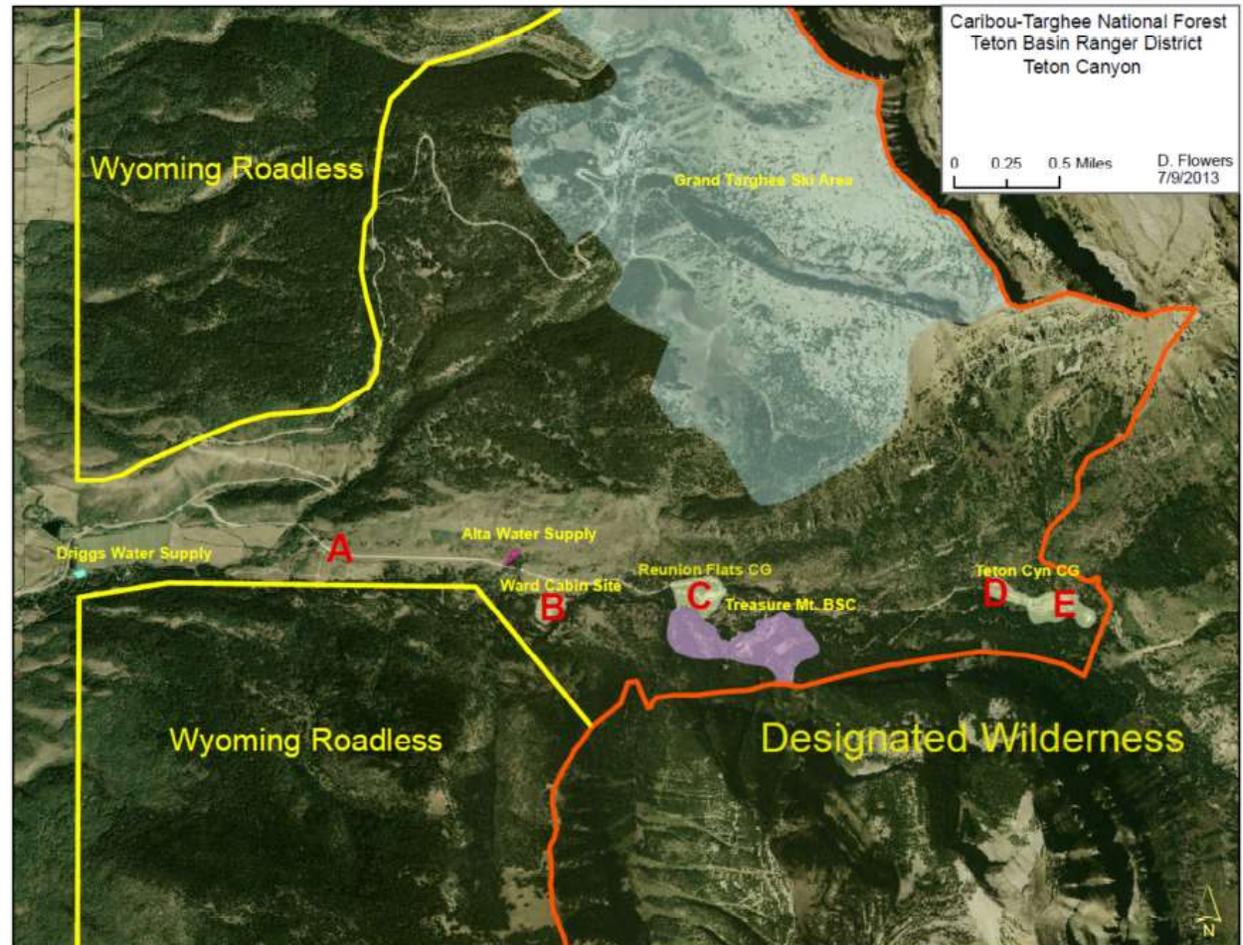
- Access roads – can we keep them open without the tank traps and stopping traffic? A single sign in middle of the road (multiple use, no passage, etc.) would suffice. Need a way to get to help in a problem situation. Leave the roads open and warn people with signs like “possible fine if you go beyond this point” or something like that
- What is the current condition?
- What is the desired future condition?
- Can they do small burns – how small is effective?
- What are the needs for the wildlife?
- What is the impact of the cows on the river to other wildlife?
- Is it a good idea to have grazing on such a popular canyon?
- Can a trail be put in on North side of creek?
- Can something be done to keep down the dust?
- How long would the burn last?
- How much area would be burned at one time?
- Do they have to leave the trees standing after the burn? Danger – fall on you. Spring Creek is ruined since the burn
- What would be the impact to the trails if they had to bring in heavy equipment? What are the effects of the machines on the trails?
- How much does a control burn cost? What are the costs of the alternatives? Does it cost more to stop a wildfire?
- Can you take big equipment into a wilderness area?
- Would the campground or trail be closed during burn? How long?
- What are the liability issues for prescribed burns? Will a controlled burn control the beetle problem?
- How will the sequester affect available funds for the burning project? Will the burn be done in stages?
- How extensive would fuels reduction be? Where? What are the options to fire? When would this happen? How would trails be affected, campgrounds, etc.? How would water quality be affected, both surface and ground? Costs for harvest, chip, etc. vs. fire? Value in harvesting dead trees? Could that value pay for harvesting cost vs. prescribed fire? What recreation opportunities will be lost short and long term?
- If they can do timber harvest economically, would it pay for the harvest?
- If you get a wildfire what would the cost be?
- Could a waiver be used for citizens, groups to harvest timber/firewood voluntarily?
- How would wildfires affect noxious weeds?

- Is important, but needs to be done in a safe manner. Not like Colorado Springs. Concern is the fire getting out of control. What is the safest time to do it? Fall?
- Concern with other fuel reduction – wood chip – concern about bringing in equipment to cut and chip – what would be the impact of bringing in machines. What would happen to the trails? How will it impact hikers?
- How will it affect the trails if they bring in machines? Aspen Trail – the whole valley filled with smoke – is that what they would do? Is there food right away for the wildlife? Where do they go? Problem with breathing the smoke
- Need to have prescribed burns. How do people get out if there is a fire – how do they get out? Prescribed burns will prevent this. Gain for wildlife – if they can't get food wildlife will leave the canyon
- Will the canyon be closed when they do a prescribed burn? Will the willows burn?
- Will they stop burning when the valley fills with smoke?
- How to reduce the impact on the residents? Bad for local economy when the smoke fills the valley

Appendix 2: Current Resource Conditions, Field Trip Tour Stops July 17, 2013

Tour Stops

- A. Teton Canyon Big Picture, Fire Management, Wildlife – winter range, Trails
- B. Dispersed Camping, Vegetation – recruitment, Soil impacts, Hydrology
- C. Wildlife – Peregrine falcons & Bighorn Sheep, Potential treatment options, Access/egress
- D. Aspen ecology & Potential treatment options
- E. Wilderness, Wildlife, Big Picture - mosaic



Appendix 3: Current Resource Conditions, Forum Presentations July 17, 2013

Jay Pence, USFS, Teton Basin RD., District Ranger

Welcome, Why Here, Why Now.

Why are we here? To better understand the questions and issues in Teton Canyon. To inform you as to what is going on- on the ground in the canyon and enable you to understand the current condition so you can provide guidance to the Forest Service which will enable the Forest Service to be responsive to what is important and of interest to you the public.

This is a learning process about what is happening, to help you gain information about what is happening out in the canyon. What is important is your involvement, it is more than one meeting, we need you to stay with us.

Steve Smutko, University of Wyoming Extension, Facilitator

Tonight is about information, from the Forest Service perspective what they see on the ground, and to answer your questions from the first Forum.

At the next meeting we are going to be looking at maps, and identifying what is important to you.

Tonight is the only one of our sessions that is simply providing information to you.

We are trying to develop a process where you will help identify potential treatment options in portions of Teton Canyon to the Forest Service.

Public Comment

While I applaud the effort to get public input, The Forest Service has the science and expertise to know what is best for the resource within the budget. One way or another there is going to be a fire, I would like it to be a prescribed burn.

Response to comment - Steve Smutko. The specialists will be part of this process....we will have the science expertise available to help us with the process.

Presentations:

Avery Beyer, USFS Forester

Management Considerations and Vegetation Overview.

The Forest Service is a Multiple Use Agency. We take into consideration the parameters of the law and the input of the public when making any decision.

As specialists we have very strong opinions about what we see out in the canyon, and would like to use this opportunity to educate the public as to why and how taking management action is likely to provide for long term benefits.

It is a given that vegetation changes. Change occurs slowly over time, or it can happen more rapidly due to disturbance. Small scale disturbances can have the beneficial effect of creating a mix of either different plant associations or a variety of different age classes and densities within a given plant association. This diversity allows an area to be more resilient in the face of various disturbance types. The Canyon is mostly older forest and shrublands. The last major disturbance was fire about 100 years ago, before that there was logging and settlement...100 years old. The forest is not diverse, it is dominated by large expanses of contiguous mixed conifer forest. Aspen stands are declining we have about 8 %, there has been an approximately 80% decline in the acreage of aspen stands on the west slope of the Tetons and in the Rockies as a whole. Along the north side of the canyon bottom are areas of upland brush and Mountain Mahogany, but those too are older.

Our options "do nothing" or , prescribe a change.....implemented by means such as:

- Rx fire (more info in the following discussion)
 - Use of chainsaws to cut smaller diameter trees; these can be left on the ground to facilitate Rx burning, or piled (expensive) but less visual impact in areas of high visitor use
 - Masticators to chop/shred vegetation
 - Logging
- Use of mechanized equipment (mastication or logging) would likely only occur on a very small percent of the canyon, due to inability for equip to traverse steep (over 40%) slopes. A good example of where logging would be appropriate is in a portion of the spruce stands, which are at high risk for windthrow and/or beetle infestations. Small “patch” cuts less than 150 feet across would allow for younger spruce to seed in or be planted, and assure there is already future spruce forest established in case of disturbance. Mastication is a treatment option adjacent to roads and recreation sites where fuels reduction is needed but the risk and visual impact of Rx burning is not wanted.

Deb Flowers, USFS Zone Fuels AFMO

Role of Fire in Teton Canyon

Fires suppression within the Teton Canyon area has led to an even aged stand of timber 100+ years old not the mosaic of burned and unburned areas that would have occurred if fires were allowed to naturally burn. There is a greater risk for a larger scale, high intensity fire within an even aged stand. Historic fires data from 1970 – 2011 within this area shows that we receive lightning strikes on the ridgetops and human starts along well used roads like Teton Canyon. There is a concern that a human caused start could impact public safety and egress from all of the recreation areas within the Teton Canyon area. Identified values at risk include the Alta and Driggs water supply, the dispersed campsites, Reunion Flats and Teton Canyon Campgrounds, the Treasure Mountain Boy Scout Camp and the numerous members of the public hiking or biking on any given day within the canyon. In 2003, the Health Forest Restoration Act passed and it identified communities that are at risk. Alta was identified as an “at risk community” and is also adjacent to the Caribou-Targhee National Forest Wildland Urban Interface (WUI), so because of the use and the potential fire hazard, I see there needs to be a focus on reducing fuels within Teton Canyon and within the Alta area.

Prescribed fire is a tool which can be used in certain areas to mimic fire’s natural role in the ecosystem. Prescribed fires range in size and complexity but the typical size of a burn ranges from 500 to 1000 acres. Prior to implementing a prescribed fire we have to create a prescribed fire burn plan which identifies our project objectives which typically look towards fuels reduction and the improvement of wildlife habitat and then we set prescription parameters that have to be met prior to implementation. We look closely at the weather conditions prior to lighting a prescribed fire and ensure that the resource personnel that are needed to keep a prescribed fire under control are sufficient. There is a lot of forethought and planning that goes into a prescribed fire prior to actual implementation.

Fire will naturally create a mosaic when it burns. This is based off of the vegetation within area and the amount of dead and down material that is on the forest floor. These amounts will dictate how hot a fire will burn and what is consumed. So naturally a prescribed fire will create a mosaic of burned and unburned areas that will create the age class and species diversity that benefit wildlife.

Aspen stands are typically leave trees within hazard fuels reduction projects. The understory within an aspen stand usually contains a large amount of forbs and grass which will only burn under really dry conditions. In fire suppression operations, aspen stands are sometimes used as a natural fire break. Only under very dry conditions will an aspen stand burn. A typical treatment that we have completed in other areas on the District that has resulted in successful aspen regeneration is to cut those areas of conifer that have started to encroach into aspen stands. Once those needles have started to dry out we follow up with a prescribed fire which will ensure that fire will move through those aspen stands. This way we can mimic natural fire in aspen stands and this treatment will allow us to burn under cooler, moist

conditions and contain a prescribed fire. Depending on the productivity of a site we will see 2000 – 3000 aspen suckers per acre one year after a prescribed fire. This is the type of aspen regeneration we saw within the Hill Creek Prescribed Fire.

Smoke

Smoke is definitely a concern to the residents of the valley. Prior to implementing a prescribed fire we have to seek permission from the Wyoming Dept. of Environmental Quality for smoke emissions. Within our burn plan we dictate under what wind direction, wind speed and dispersion we can burn under. We use helicopters for ignition to speed up the process and to get good lift on the smoke and get it out of the valley. Under wildfire conditions we cannot control the wind speed and direction. Look at the conditions last year; we were impacted by smoke from the wildfires in central ID for 2 months. That could happen here and it will be much closer to home. Fire is going to occur at some point, we can deal with a short term impact now or deal with a much larger fire with greater smoke impacts later.

Cost

Cost of prescribed fire on 500-1000 acre fire is \$15,000-20,000. Compare that to the wildfire in Horsethief Canyon last year outside of Jackson which cost \$9 Million.

Questions

What is response of invasive species after a fire? There will be an increase in weeds initially and then native vegetation will take over.

Dave Ovard, USFS Wildlife Biologist.

Wildlife

The wildlife belongs to the residents of the state, which is why we are teaming up with the state of Wyoming. The Forest Service is responsible for the vegetation on the Forest. What we are hoping for as wildlife biologists is for diversity in the plant community, which will result in diversity of wildlife species. By doing some vegetation treatments, we will add to the area's diversity, health, and resiliency. In Teton Canyon almost all of the habitat is mature.

Valley Bottoms

In the valley bottom there are shrub communities, meadows and riparian areas. In the riparian areas you will see willows and spruce along the creek. This community is in fine condition except that most of the spruce is even aged and mature, which makes it susceptible to insects and fire. The spruce would benefit from treatments that would promote regeneration of the spruce. In the valley bottom, I'm concerned about the grass meadows which are showing impacts from the dispersed camping. The fisheries biologist, who is unable to be with us tonight, asked that I share his concerns. The main concerns are with the sediment that could result from the dispersed camping areas, and the lack of screens on the diversions to keep the trout in the river.

Mountain Shrubs

The mountain shrubs on the winter range are very mature, up to eighty years old. They are too tall for deer and elk to reach the forage. The forage is old and nutrition of the forage reduces with age. The current year's growth is important nutrition for animals. When the shrubs get too tall, the new growth is out of reach to the animals. It is the new growth on these shrubs that is eaten by the deer, elk and moose.

Aspen

Most of the aspen in the basin is seral aspen. Seral aspen is slowly invaded and taken over by conifer trees which are longer lived and shade out the sun loving aspen trees. There is only one patch of mid age aspen in the canyon. All aspen trees have roots that want to sprout but this tendency is suppressed by a hormone in the adult above-ground tree. When the above ground tree is dead, it releases the roots to sprout, resulting in a new healthy stand of young aspen.

Everything wants to eat aspen. This tree supports fungus and bacterial, insects, deer, elk and moose. The above ground part of the aspen tree is susceptible to many things but when the mature trees die, the roots sprout up a new stand.

An aspen stand produces an abundance of forage. While there is about 200 lbs. of forage under a conifer stand, there's 1000 lbs. of forage under an aspen stand.

Only a riparian area has a higher biodiversity in the Rocky Mountains than aspen stands. It is important that we treat at risk aspen stands to preserve this biodiversity into the future. We are losing our aspen stands across the west. Here on the west slope of the Tetons, in 1900 there was 42,000 acres of aspen in Teton Canyon now there is only about 9,000 acres, a loss of 78%.

Mt. Mahogany

Mahogany stands have moved from their habitat niche in the rocky outcrops to include habitat that was once a mountain shrub community. Mahogany has become the predominant feature below the apostles. The mahogany has replaced mountain shrubs. I would recommend treating this area so some of the historic shrubs can return to the area.

My suggestions: Treat winter range shrubs, treat aspen that is in most danger of dying out, treat the mahogany to restore more traditional shrubs, treat the conifer to allow for resiliency and biodiversity.

Aly Courtemanch, Wyoming Game and Fish, Habitat Biologist

Wildlife

The Wyoming Game and Fish Department collaborates with the Forest Service on habitat treatments for wildlife, including those that could go on in Teton Canyon. Teton Canyon has a diversity of ungulate species, large carnivores, and quite a number of species that rely on late succession habitats (three-toed woodpeckers, owls, etc.). We need to focus on diversity of vegetation (types and age classes) to support a diverse animal assemblage. Since most of the vegetation in Teton Canyon is mature, the area has less early successional habitat that supports ungulates. The area is important mule deer winter range and it used to be bighorn sheep winter range. Bighorn sheep no longer winter here, partly because of conifer expansion. Bighorn sheep rely on their eyesight to detect predators and therefore, require open habitat with good sight distances. As conifer trees expand into areas, bighorn sheep are pushed out. We know that a GPS-collared bighorn sheep passed through Teton Canyon during summers 2008 and 2009. We would love to have sheep utilize this area again during the winter. Vegetation treatments could improve bighorn sheep habitat. Key habitat for mule deer, elk, and moose is mountain shrub communities, but unfortunately, most of the shrubs are too tall for these ungulates to reach and too old to produce vigorous growth, which is the food ungulates rely on during the winter.

Furthermore, I am concerned about the loss of aspen stands; these are important habitat for moose, elk, mule deer, and a variety of other wildlife species. When thinking about potential treatments to improve wildlife habitat, prescribed fire provides nutritional benefits that cannot be achieved through mechanical methods. Fire releases nutrients and minerals from the soil, which plants uptake after the fire, improving their nutritional quality for ungulates. For example, the protein content of fireweed, an important food for ungulates, can increase by 6% for 7 years post-fire. This may not seem like much, but it can make a big difference for ungulate body condition, pregnancy rates, and offspring survival. For example, cow elk need to have at least 10-12% body fat in the fall to become pregnant, which equates to about 70 pounds of fat that they need to gain during the summer. These requirements are similar for mule deer, moose, and bighorn sheep. Small increases in nutrition over the course of a year can lead to real benefits for animal populations. Additionally, improving habitat in Teton Canyon could help keep animals on Forest Service lands during the winter and alleviate problems in residential areas. Habitat treatments to benefit wildlife can be designed to also meet fuels reduction objectives and vegetation resiliency objectives.

Kurt Kluegel, USFS Natural Resource Specialist, Recreation.

Recreation in Teton Canyon

Fuel reduction was the driver for this process. How do recreation issues relate to vegetation issues? As part of the process do we want to address recreation in the canyon?

Dust & the Road

One of the big issues is the dust. Feasibility of the road, we did a NEPA document in 2004 primarily looking at improving road access. Could have made the road straighter? There was concern about more dust with a straighter road; we also widened the road to improve ingress and egress for emergency situations. In 2004, the speed limits were reduced as a result of the NEPA process. The Forest Service has heard the public about the road. In the NEPA decision about the road, we approved paving, the cost is prohibitive, which is why it hasn't happened.

Road Improvement cost estimates:

- \$144,000/mile to blade and prepare base.
- \$450,000 / mile to pave.
- The life expectancy of paved road is 15 years . And a paved road would still require 2-3 seal coats to get the live each seal is \$112,000 per mile.

Are there other options for reducing dust? Yes, there is one chemical Forest Service is approved to use Magnesium Chloride. It has been used by the campground concessionaire for the roads around the campgrounds. It is too cost prohibitive, MgCl is \$2000 per mile. Once treated, there is dust abatement for a year, then the tacky surface starts to break up similar to potholes. The situation then degrades to where it is worse than washboards. If you treat with MgCl it is more expensive to re-grade and re-apply.

Campgrounds

Campground issues were raised by the community. We have 2 campgrounds, one thing mentioned in the public meeting was a concern about fees and lack of use.

- Fees for a single site \$12.
- Other forests' in the region -\$10-\$50. We are on the low end of the fee scale. I don't know if the question poised was regarding the fee structure or if was indicating the campground needed more people.
- When we design the campgrounds we design them for 60-70% occupancy. We have found out that we do not want to manage campgrounds at full occupancy; there is a correlation between user satisfaction and percentage of occupancy.
- Campgrounds are operated by a concessionaire; the concessionaire has obligations under a special use permit. There are terms and conditions which allow the Forest Service to shut down campgrounds to deal with treatment, dropping timber, prescribed burns.

Trails

We have added additional forest system trails in response to public input and demand.

- Mill Creek
- Sheep B ridge Trail

There were questions about trails complexity. We manage the wilderness areas with one of the goals focusing on visitor solitude.

In the 2004, we were asked to add trail that runs parallel to the road, we approved a 45" tread, which allows for mountain bikes, and jogging with baby strollers. It's not there yet because of budget constraints.

Dispersed Recreation

A survey completed in 2006 showed user created routes to campfire rings. The network of roads to access these dispersed campsites travels the entire length of the canyon. In 2006, there were 10 major

areas with 33 dispersed campsites. Two years later, 11 major areas with 39 campsites were identified. These campsites are growing at a rapid rate. (Check map for sites)

There was concern with motorized use and ATV use within the dispersed recreation areas, and I'm getting a lot of pressure about dealing with this issue. I would like you to consider where our management direction needs to go. I would like to see more areas where we have more managed camping situations like Ward Cabin area. Dispersed campers are creating additional issues where tree roots are being impacted which results in trees dying, small trees are being removed by vehicle use. Even more alarming, the stream bank stabilization is being jeopardized which is probably one of the biggest issues in the Forest from a water shed and recreation standpoint.

Treatments in the Wilderness Area?

The Jedidiah Smith Wilderness Area is not part of this project area. If people want to expand the mechanization in the wilderness there is a process that can be used, a minimum tool analysis would need to be done.

Another thing related to the canyon we have 26 outfitters on the Teton Basin Ranger District, 14 of which operate in the canyon.

Questions

What is the revenue from campgrounds....roughly \$19,000/year is generated.

How many people use the canyon? Typical summer weekend 1100 people in the canyon, that is roughly the size of the town of Driggs. Imagine the population of Driggs in the canyon and we get a wildfire?

Appendix 4: Notes from Participatory Mapping Exercise

August 21, 2013

Notes from Teton Canyon Project Public Meeting
Facilitated by Teton Area Advisory Forum
August 21, 2013 - Driggs HS, 6-8pm

Randy Williams, TAAF

Introduction of TAAF and FS personnel. Provided an overview of TAAF's purpose and involvement; role in dealing with issues which affect the adjacent Teton counties of Idaho and Wyoming.

Steve Smutko, Univ of Wyoming Extension, Facilitator

Agenda: purpose of this meeting is to have public in attendance discuss and record what they believe should be the management objectives of this project. FS will give overview of why it feels this area needs to have a mgmt project and answer questions from members of the public.

Jay Pence, CTNF TBRD, District Ranger

Within area around Teton Cyn and area as a whole forest conditions have significantly changed since settlement. Change is normal, discussion good vs. bad depends on what values are being considered. Regardless of values the forest in this area is heavily influenced by fire, is adapted to cope with fire, but human use of the area has changed. FS has concerns about public safety with regards to the heavy use in the canyon and fire danger. Additionally there are wildlife habitat issues and forest health concerns. At previous public meetings and field trips specialists have shown their areas of concern and options to mitigate those concerns. This is an opportunity for the public to list/voice their value/concerns about the canyon with regards to management and treatment options. The FS can then use this knowledge/insight when starting the NEPA analysis and designing a range of treatment alternatives.

Questions? - Answered by J. Pence and other members of FS staff present.

Q: Understand the concern about bighorn sheep habitat, what is the historical vs. current population level?

A: There are approx. 125 in the Teton Mtns, traditionally were many more but no good data on total numbers. Bighorn sheep are no longer coming down into lower elevation traditional winter range areas, but are staying up in more severe high elevation areas through the winter. Data from collared sheep shows that some still move through the area in the summer, but do not stay and use.

Q: Individual has a number of q. aspen at his home which are dying, is there a blight or something killing them?

A: Hard to say what specifically is killing individual trees without seeing them. There is no single large scale disease or insect causing aspen mortality like was seen in area with lodgepole pine & mtn pine beetle. Trees often die due a combination of factors as they age, as well as factors such as drought or injury.

Q: Does FS assume that a catastrophic fire will happen?

A: Fires will happen, no way to really predict when/how severe. Forest is changing in a way that makes severe fire behavior more likely. Treatment of area should lessen fire risk, as well as improve wildlife habitat and forest health.

Q: Can we do logging? Fewer trees on ridges for would decrease lightning strikes.

A: Logging is an option, but only in some areas. Much of the canyon is designated as wilderness or roadless, logging not an option there. Additionally, most of the canyon is very steep which would require

very expensive specialized equipment and the value of the product which could be removed would not cover costs (additional \$ to cover difference not likely).

Q: Have seen log trucks leaving Boy Scout Camp area though.

A: There were a significant number of identified hazard trees which needed to be felled for safety of campers as part of their Special Use Permit. BSA paid FS for value of those trees which logger removed. BSA paid logger add'l \$ for a larger number of trees which were felled in the name of camper safety but had no commercial value.

Q: Why can't firewood cutting be used to reduce fire danger?

A: Current firewood cutting rules only allow the cutting of dead and/or down trees within 300' of open roads. The distance limit is for resource protection and stipulated under the Forest Plan, changing the distance is outside the scope of this project. The dead/down trees are not a significant component leading to the increased fire danger and wildlife habitat issue. However, under some of the treatment options available there would be additional firewood availability.

Q: Why not utilize/open some of the existing older roads/trails within the "Designated Roadless" areas, why is it "roadless" when there are roads?

A: The 2001 Roadless Rule was designed to protect designated areas from a proliferation of un-managed "splinter" roads and trails. The FS and states worked together to identify sensitive areas which were either currently un-roaded, or where existing roads/trails had been closed for resource protection. This designation precludes the building of new roads or opening of old roads, but allows many other management activities and public use. Changing of this designation is beyond the scope of this project.

Q: What would happen to the forest if we cut the conifers? Would it regenerate?

A: One of the treatment options considered is the cutting and/or use prescribed fire to eliminate some conifer and promote better aspen regeneration. This is just a change in forest type, and results in a forest which is more resistant to catastrophic fire as well as promoting better wildlife habitat and forest diversity/resiliency. Other types of treatments would change the conifer composition, but would be designed to promote natural regeneration or be planted if necessary.

Q: Where is the FS in the NEPA analysis process?

A: Have not yet started analysis, or even officially designated a project area/bdy. This and previous meetings are a precursor to the analysis. By listening to the ideas and concerns expressed by public the FS will be better able to design a project that is more aligned with public opinion.

Steve Smutko, Univ of Wyoming Extension, Facilitator and Small Group Facilitators

Step 1 – Discuss "What is important to you about Teton Canyon?" Public participants were presented copies of the value statements captured in the May forum and had a discussion at their tables about values and possible management treatments and objectives.

Step 2 – "What should be done?" Participants were asked to come up with objectives, try to use verb (i.e. improve, reduce, protect) and object (i.e. aspen stand, bighorn habitat, fire hazard). Each group had at their table a map of the project area, upon which they were asked to indicate possible treatments/objectives they desired on maps through the use of colored sticky dots to signify areas or marker drawn areas. Facilitators captured the map notations being indicated by the group on the maps in writing.

Flip-Chart Notes and Maps

Table 1

What is important to you?

1. Winter ranges (what is real vs. what isn't) recognizing critical ranges for wildlife.
2. What should be done?
 - Improve and protect wildlife winter range
 - Maintain critical roads and routes.
 - Maintain ability to collect firewood in WY Roadless area that exists.
 - Protect winter range boundaries between Teton Canyon Road and existing ski area south boundaries.
 - Recognize the importance of cattle grazing to maintain a healthy ecosystem.
3. Dots (Green – important to you, Blue – visit or use, Yellow – FS focus attention)
South facing slopes that need burned for aspen regeneration and serviceberry

Yellow (WR) – Critical winter range

Green (BS) – Boy Scouts

Green (CG) – Campground

Yellow (DC) – Dispersed Camping, decries needs to be cleaned up after, no maintenance, trash, no fire pits established.

Blue – Historical routes and trails

Yellow – Road – maintain road

Orange Line – grazing for winter range habitat

Yellow 44 – spruce, add opportunities to reduce fuel load

Green - Cold Springs – use for family time/recreation

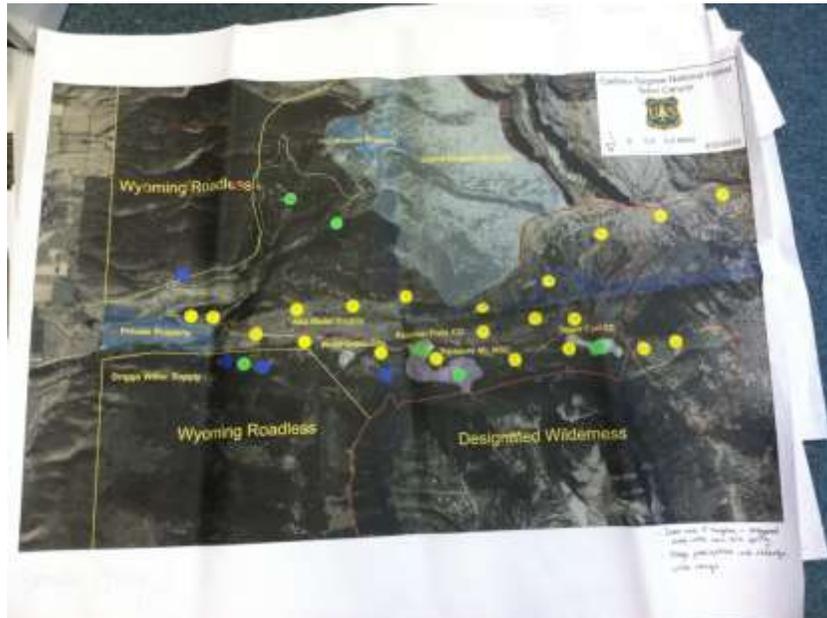


Table 2

1. What is important to you?
2. What should be done?
 - a) Limiting grazing (eliminate)
 - b) More prescribed burns fewer mechanical treatments
 - c) Improve campsites to reduce human started fires
 - d) Manage parking to reduce risk human caused fires.
 - e) Management of fuels around dispersed camping
 - f) Limiting dispersed camping in areas
 - g) Temporary speed bumps in summer.
 - h) Protect the character of the trails.
 - i) Enhance wildlife habitat
 - j) Increase aspen using prescribed burns
 - k) Burn sagebrush
 - l) Use harvesting
3. Dots (Green – important to you, Blue – visit or use, Yellow – FS focus attention)
 - Blue – Sheep Trail
 - Yellow – More attention
 - Yellow – Big campground – more attention
 - Yellow – Mill Creek – Character of trail important
 - Green – Mill Creek
 - Yellow – Ski Area – Protect resource
 - Yellow – Select timber harvest
 - Green – Wildlife crossing

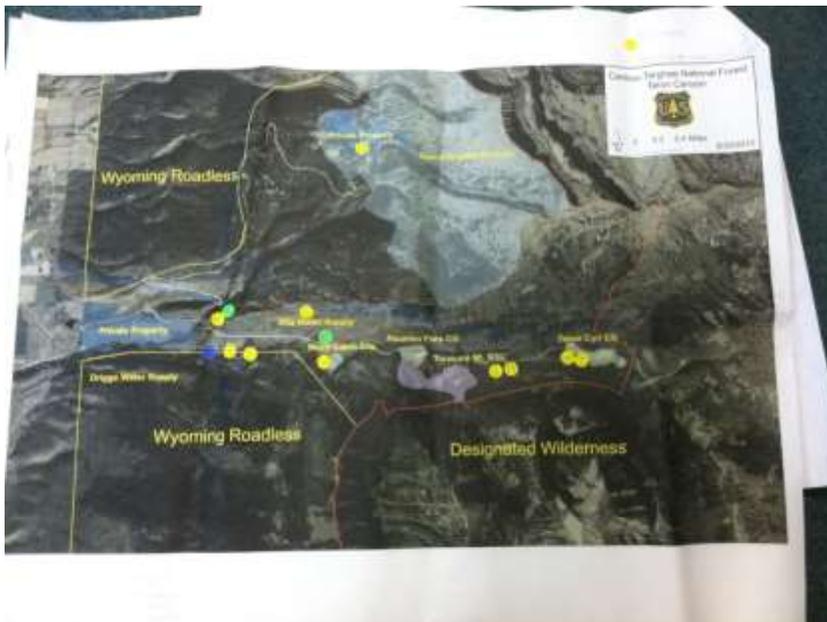


Table 3

1. What is important to you?

Manage to Ensure "Quality of Canyon Life"

- Air
- Water
- Wildlife need adequate habitat
- Designated campgrounds
- Creek experience
- Camp by creek
- Cookout spots
- Live safely
- Enjoy safely

2. What should be done?

Manage forest with prescribed burns and selected logging

3. Dots (Green – important to you, Blue – visit or use, Yellow – FS focus attention)

Green – Rex's house – Private homes

Blue – Cookout

Trail

Teton Creek – Fisheries, water quality (entire creek)

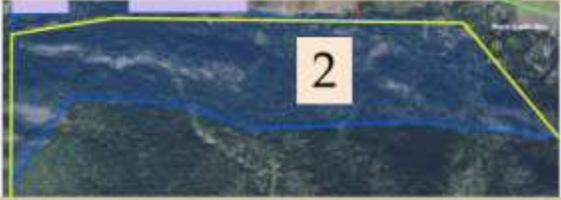
Yellow –

- a) Road (Yellow highlighter)
 - i. Pink marker – Sheep bridge parking lot expansion, needs to stop. People using Sheep trail should park in main lot.
- b) Deal with dispersed camping, need a plan for the whole thing.
- c) Open to prescribed burn anywhere.
- d) Mosaic burns – habitat and forest health
- e) Manage campgrounds to eliminate dispersed camping
- f) Existing places need to be enhanced to eliminate disuse.
- g) Wildlife habitat enhancement
- h) Pink polygons on map = yellow dots.



Appendix 5: Notes from Vegetative Treatment Options Meeting December 12, 2014

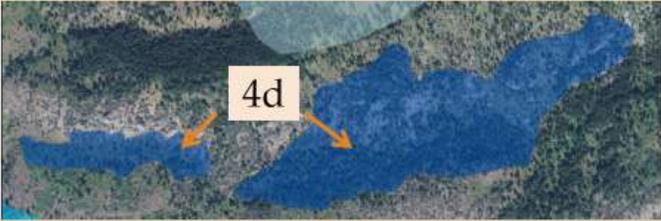
<p>Teton Canyon TAAF Forum December 12, 2013 Teton High School, Driggs, Idaho</p>	<p>Evaluating Options 5 = I fully support this option 4 = I like it, good enough 3= I have mixed feelings about this option 2=I prefer something different 1= I just don't like it</p>
<p>Option 1a</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuels reduction in WUI • Wildlife habitat improvement 	<p>6 response = 4 6 response = 5</p>
<p>Option 1b</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuels reduction in WUI • Wildlife habitat improvement 	<p>2 response = 2 - Irrigation diversion in area, concern for sediment - Prefer prescribed burn as opposed to nothing</p> <p>5 response = 5 6 response = 6</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Option 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuels reduction • South of road 	<p>1 response = 1 -Leave roadless area alone, without barriers may wind up burning more 2 response = 0 3 response = 8 -mixed feelings, ok to burn, concern about the smoke, mostly concerned about wildlife area, it needs to be improved, don't care how you do it -something needs to be done, don't care what the prescription, the end results need to be achieved with the appropriate tools to achieve age class and species diversification of forest 4 response = 2 5 response = 1</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Option 3</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fuels reduction near Apostles • Bighorn sheep habitat restoration 	<p>1 response = 0 2 response = 2 FS needs discretion to use the tools they need to accomplish what needs to be accomplished in the canyon to make this area critical wildlife habitat (recommend expanding this polygon to the east) 3 response = 1 4 response = 5 5 response = 4</p>

<h2 style="text-align: center;">Option 4a</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut/Pile/Burn • Alta water supply • 3 acres 	<p>1 response = 0 2 response = 1 Firewood opportunities need to be considered here Prevent trails from occurring and or have money appropriated to repair tire scars 3 response = 2 4 response = 5 5 response = 4</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Option 4b</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cut/Pile/Burn • Teton Canyon Campground • 24 acres 	<p>Response 1 = 0 Response 2 = 1 Response 3 = 1 Response 4 = 7 Response 5 = 3</p>
<h2 style="text-align: center;">Option 4c</h2> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slashing/Firewood • Follow-up with prescribed fire • 135 acres 	<p>Response 1 = 0 Response 2 = 1 Prefer burning to mechanical treatment. Concerned about people driving off road and creating roads Response 3 = 0 Response 4 = 6 Response 5 = 5</p>

Option 4d

- Slashing or herbicide
- Follow-up with prescribed fire
- 82 acres



Response 1 = 3
 If you're going to treat, would rather see burn than chemicals used. May be strings attached to chemical use.

Response 2 = 1
 Treatment isn't necessary if the information to treat is being based on 1800 polls

Response 3 = 1
 Response 4 = 3
 Response 5 = 3

Option 4e

- Teton Canyon Campground



Response 1 = 0
 Response 2 = 0
 Response 3 = 2
 -What is definition of "old growth"
 -Spruce won't be useable because of twisted grain, if no one wants it what will you do with it?

Response 4 = 4
 Response 5 = 6

Option 4f

- Englemann spruce regeneration



Response 1 = 0
 Response 2 = 1
 Stay farther away than 100 yards from creek.

Response 3 = 0
 Response 4 = 2
 Response 5 = 9

<p style="text-align: center;">Option 4g</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prescribed burn in Wyoming roadless area 	<p>Response 1 = 1 Bad combination</p> <p>Response 2 = 4 Prefer mechanical to prescribed burn</p> <p>Response 3 = 1 Voted 3, something needs to be done, whatever FS thinks can work---- do</p> <p>Response 4 = 0</p> <p>Response 5 = 6 Logging is best choice (use the resource)</p>
	<p><i>“Get into the document the desire for staging the treatments in the canyon for the long term health of the forest”</i></p>

Appendix 6: Notes from Dispersed Camping Treatment Options Meeting

March 6, 2014

Teton Canyon Forum #6 3/6/14

During the Dispersed Camping Presentation:

Public Comment/Questions:

After going through the 1997 Forest Plan, it seems like we have more options even though there are conflicting management objectives [provide for recreation, protect watersheds and vegetation].

Yes, but every management activity that changes the ground needs to go through the NEPA process.

Can we suggest any ideas for change in the canyon?

Yes

Some of the neighbors [residents who live in and close to Teton Canyon] have strong feelings about the canyon- what are the boundaries for ideas generated? Looking for a framework for the group.

There's a wide array of what can be done.

Group selection harvest would be a rehabilitation strategy, not hardening?

Yes- it would be funding source (from logging) and a means to get the rehabilitation done.

Area A

Are people really going to stop parking there? Or are they just going to find another place to pull off?

How do you train people to use the winter parking lot?

That might happen.

The other option would be to create another parking lot.

We deal with that every day and emergency vehicles can't access private homes. Most people, if you can talk to them, understand and are pretty compliant.

A sign that explains why the area is closed may last longer [than other FS closure signs that are stolen].

Area B

On the sage flats portion of the trail, this is the one place where you can take a closer look, especially with direct sediment into Teton Creek. There is an old canal off of this road. This section drains directly into the creek in several places. If water quality is an issue, this is what we need to look closer at. It is a half mile of bare mineral soil that contributes to the air quality issue as well. We don't want to shut down camping, but this is the sore thumb of the canyon.

There are a lot of requests from the public for an established campground in that area, and that might be another option, but we were keeping the presentation to dispersed camping.

How many dispersed sites are on this half mile?

10-12 on a busy weekend in the summer.

How would you (Canyon residents) feel about an established campground there?

Wouldn't like it, but it would be better than what's there now and the option.

Area C

How are you going to divert the water off the road?

Probably more of a settling situation. Lead off ditches would be very long.

Area D

Is reunion flat running at full occupancy? Are they using dispersed camping instead of established sites?
No. Yes. Large groups get permits and need to provide for bear proof food storage and portable toilets.

Will they move somewhere else?
Yes, probably to North Leigh Canyon

Is there concern about the large groups shifting to other areas?
Yes, we haven't closed too many, but if this one was decommissioned we expect to see more usage in Darby and North and South Leigh.

Area E

Area F

The Boy Scout camp has a lot of camping outside of the camp area by people associated with the scouts, do you allow this?

We have been working with the scouts about this, it is a special use permit issue not a dispersed camping issue.

So it is an issue.

Yes.

Area G

Driving logging trucks close to the creek and cutting trees is going to have impacts short term.

Yes there will be impacts, but through logging contracts, they have to rehabilitate and close the road.

The logging is an impact of days not the year-round impact that the camping is having.

For bigger logging projects, we have to build roads. For the proposed group harvest logging, they will utilize the road that is already there.

Is it going to be worth a logger's time/money?

On any one site, probably not, but for all of them, it might pay for itself. It's a possibility, but we don't know if it will sell.

What is the value to a logger?

Maybe \$10,000-\$20,000, especially since they won't need to build roads.

How will you generate the money to do the work?

The timber should cover the cost, but no guarantee. There are also stewardship contracts that might be available.

You need the whole canyon.

If you were to contract a piece of heavy equipment to rehab sites, it would cost 10's of thousands of dollars. You eliminate that part with the equipment of the loggers.

The road proposed to open is going to cost money.

Yes.

Area H

Are you thinking of designating dispersed sites? Camping only in designated and established sites?

We didn't go there with this proposal.

You will only move your problem along the stream not solve them.

Right. We looked at moving a site across the road.

People want to be next to the creek, so putting them across the road won't work.

Clicker Voting²

1. How much resource damage do you perceive that dispersed camping is causing in the canyon?

None-0, Low- , Medium- , High- , xx

The evaluation options for the rest of the poll are as follows:

- 1- I fully support this option
- 2- I like it, good enough
- 3- I have mixed feelings about this option
- 4- I prefer something different
- 5- I just don't like it

2. Area A Rehab Option

- 1-75 %
- 2- 13%
- 3- 0%
- 4- 13%
- 5-0%

A and B are more tied together than they are represented here

3. Area B Access Option

- 1-25 %
- 2- 13%
- 3- 13%
- 4- 25%
- 5- 25%

If the parking area is done away with and rock barriers are put there, what's going to keep them from going down the road and just parking anyway. This is the worst and longest road in Teton Canyon as far as concerns expressed over rutting and drainage. A road to terminal would be a shorter road that could access the sites at the end, even though roads are expensive to make. Will the roads be rehabilitated if they are kept?

There is no funding mechanism for that.

It is rutted terrible.

There is a vegetative filter in this area between the road and the creek.

There are holes all along the canal that parallels the road and drains it directly into the creek.

We talked about closing the entire road, but then we take out a quarter of the dispersed sites, where do they go?

If you take Andy and Deb's points, you can put them across the canal without going down the half mile road.

I like the road there, because where's everyone going to drive anyway? Most of the time everyone who comes to camp aren't from here, they aren't going to park where the "T" is. People said they would follow the signs if there were some there. They will move to another canyon if you take out the sites they use now and have used for 100 years.

² The participants in this poll were presented voting choices that were the opposite of the choices in the December poll, that is, 1=I fully support this option and 5=I just don't like it. The votes are rescaled in the body of the report (i.e., 1=I just don't like it and 5=I fully support this option) so that the two polls are comparable. The votes in this appendix show the scaling as used in the meeting.

4. Area C Closure Option

- 1-63 %
- 2- 13%
- 3- 25%
- 4- 0%
- 5- 0%

Group harvest wasn't on the list, aren't we voting on that.

The areas with the group harvest are: C,E,F,G,H

There's going to be people and equipment in the Roadless area.

That's covered in the permits.

5. Area D Closure and Rehab Option

- 1- 38%
- 2- 25%
- 3- 38%
- 4- 0%
- 5- 0%

I had mixed feelings -putting a new road in is a good option to deal with the existing road and erosion, but roads are roads and they are expensive. I would rather see if resource protection outweighs social expectation. If it does, then close the road. New roads won't have maintenance dollars, they would be constructed vs. created, but no maintenance in the long term.

The straight road is gravelly and hard to drive down. I can see the idea of the side road for people who want to camp there. It would be a better situation for them too.

6. Area E Option 1

- 1-13%
- 2-0%
- 3-25%
- 4-50%
- 5-13%

7. Area E Option 2

- 1-25 %
- 2-38%
- 3-38%
- 4-0%
- 5-0%

Are we looking at constructing a road through Reunion Flats?

There is a road through there; we'd have to gate that.

I had mixed feelings of juggling concessionaires, but I don't like concessionaire program. People who want to disperse camp don't want the campground.

But they use the facilities of the campground.

I don't know if that's true, most people will only walk 100 feet to a bathroom.

I'm not necessarily taking issue with this, but I watched a group walk across the fence and line up for the restrooms while I was visiting with the host. He said they see it a lot.

The hosts complain about it constantly.

8. Area F Rehab Option

- 1-33 %
- 2-33%
- 3-22%
- 4-11%
- 5-0%

I agree with closing terminal portion of the road, I'm not a fan of group harvest in this area. It looks like there is a lot of young and riparian vegetation in this area.

All of the group harvest follows best practices. The logger's prices may seem cheap but they have to do a lot of work to rehabilitate. Most of the soil disturbance is on the road.

9. Area G Rehab Option

- 1-63 %
- 2-25%
- 3-13%
- 4-%
- 5-%

10. Option H Closure and Rehab Option

- 1-63 %
- 2-13%
- 3-25%
- 4-%
- 5-%

The maintained road is probably within your fiscal capabilities. This is a great source of air pollution and is visible to the whole valley. I don't know the solution except for dust abatement which is expensive. By allowing people to use the road we are putting up a lot of particulate matter that also affects the trees, right Jim?

Yes.

The road is access to wilderness and huge access to the Boy Scout Camp.

I won't look at that, I already have, and had the road approved to be paved, but no funding source ever materialized to do that. The other option is to close the road, which isn't going happen. I don't want to take away from this process. It has to come from an internal funding source.

Are you looking at building any outhouses at any dispersed sites?

There are no funding sources so we haven't looked at it. If Teton County makes it a recreation site, there might be an option. It's a difficult situation, as an agency we're taking outhouse down because we can't keep them maintained.

For areas with group harvest proposals, is there a certain distance from the creek?

Yes, at this point we're just feeling out the public support for that. If this option is desired, we go out with the botanist, soil scientists and other experts to come up with the prescription to reduce biological impact. This is also why it's so hard to project the cost of the project. We would do the logging in fall/early winter to minimize impacts to the stream.

I don't want to see this too close to the creek.

Sometimes you do a small logging operation to mitigate a larger hazard.

The nice thing about logging is it's the only way to get anything paid for. The greater good is done.

The ecological perspective: short term impact from logging is less than long-term camping impact, rehabilitation is less impactful than logging, but it has to be paid for.

All the weeds are where the roads have been torn up, is it really benefitting?

My concern more is destabilizing banks.

The only place directly adjacent to the stream bank is in E. Whether or not we would group harvest there we don't know yet. Most people would be much less likely to put their equipment on the stream bank and risk putting it in the creek.

Area B RV Campground at Mill Creek

Make all the sites in A/B area walk in only.

The proposed new trail from parking lot to Sheep Bridge camping would make them walk in only anyway.

Extra poll questions:

11. Area A/B RV Campground at Mill CK-prevent dispersed camping but make it established campground

1- 13%

2-13%

3-13%

4-25%

5-38%

12. Area A/B Decommission the road, parking only at winter parking all sites walk in.

1-25%

2-13%

3-25%

4-13%

5-25%

If you're going to walk in, you're going to go to a place worth walking to, not the drive in spots that are already there. People are going to park on the main road and walk in from there. I don't want to shut people out, but the road has holes and ruts and generates more dust than Teton Canyon Road does.

That site got worse when the gate went on Teton Canyon Road with people going around before the gate opens.

We [Canyon Residents] maintain the road and do upgrades to it, not trying to keep people out, but we do pay for it.

Dispersed camping management- people living in the campground (residing), takes FS personnel to visit and manage that. Where are we at with that?

We have about 4 citations a year and move countless others that we can track. Need to track someone for 16 days. We usually have 1 or 2 abandoned sites a year.

Randy- All the dispersed camping is on one side of the road, are there any across?

Yes, one

There were a few new ones this year

It's farther from the creek.