

With Alternatives B, C, D and E, 324 acres of wetland and one acre of floodplain at Squirrel Meadows would convert to Forest Service land. Squirrel Meadows would remain undeveloped, with occasional use of water for wetland enhancement. Impacts to Squirrel Meadows would be positive, with enhancement or maintenance of the existing wetlands and floodplains. None of the negative impacts associated with development, described under Alternative A, would take place, and soil quality and sediment production would stay at natural levels.

Water Quality

In Alternative A, direct impacts to water quality could result from increased sediment production and more efficient sediment delivery to waterbodies. The degree of impact cannot be estimated at this time. Impacts currently taking place due to livestock grazing and roads outside the private parcel would continue until they could be remedied via other analyses (e.g., the Environmental Assessment for the grazing allotment). None of the negative impacts associated with development would take place with Alternatives B, C, D, and E.

Soils

Development at Squirrel Meadows in Alternative A could change drainage patterns and alter soil properties. Water tables would probably remain high, but localized wetland draining with disruption of lateral water movement would also be possible. The soils at Squirrels Meadows are uniquely unsuited for development. With their severe limitations (low strength, wetness, high potential susceptibility to frost action, shallow depth to water table, frequent flooding, high erodibility) there is a high potential for adverse impacts to soil quality as well as to structures and facilities constructed on the soils. These soils are at high risk for direct adverse impacts of compaction and puddling, and would remain wet longer than under natural conditions if their structure is altered by development. None of these negative impacts would occur with the Action Alternatives.

Wetlands and Water Quality at Grand Targhee

Grand Targhee 4a

Wetlands

In Alternatives A and E, approximately 25 acres of wetlands in the Grand Targhee base area remain on Forest Service lands. Approximately one acre of floodplain would stay in private ownership. The 1994 MDP/FEIS (page IV-21) concluded that no acres of wetland at Grand Targhee would be directly impacted by implementing the MDP. Further refinement of plans for the wastewater treatment facility, however, showed that approximately 200 square feet (.005 acre) would be (and have been, now that construction is complete) directly impacted (Headwaters Ecology, 1997). Furthermore, a letter from Grand Targhee dated July 6, 1999 stated that wetland impacts may be proposed in the future. The extent and nature of potential impacts are unknown at this time, and so cannot be assessed.

In Alternatives B, C, and D, approximately 25 wetland acres at Grand Targhee would change to private ownership. Booth Creek has stipulated that no wetlands would be directly impacted from future development, beyond the .005 acre already impacted from the wastewater treatment plant. As described above, however, activities affecting wetlands may