

LAZYMEN INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA
SUBUNIT C – South and West Portion
Beaver Creek, Tenmile Creek, Moose Creek and Lazyman Creek
May 15, 2026



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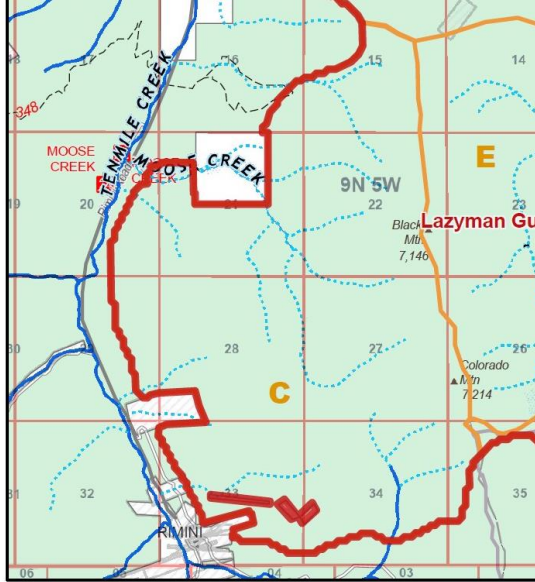
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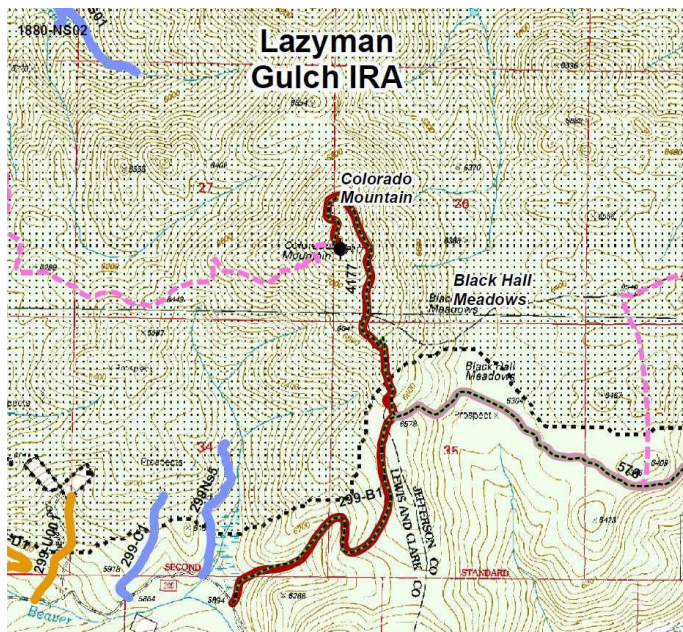
Subunit C: South and Western IRA includes drainages of Beaver Creek, Tenmile Creek, Moose Creek and Lazyman Creek

Eight surveys conducted for Subunit C of the Lazyman Inventoried Roadless Area are summarized below (and in [Field Reports](#)). In addition, one ground Incident Report and one



Flight Report (2019-04-03 Flight) is also described. Field surveys were conducted in response to Forest Service plans to enter the IRA using “existing” roads for the Tenmile-South Helena Vegetation Manipulation Project. HHAA responded by gathering field data that revealed useable roads were in fact not present in most instances. Nature has reclaimed very old routes that were used primarily for turn-of-the-century (1900’s), mining. The photographic record of Subunit C includes at least 105 pictures.

Figure C01. Map of Subunit C, Lazyman IRA.



May 16, 2020 Colorado Mtn Trail-Beaver Cr, Route 4177 by Camie Westfall

At the southern-most end of the Lazyman IRA, “road” #4177 starts at the junction of #299-B1, which is a completely vegetated two-track. Four field surveys investigated routes claimed to be usable roads for the Tenmile-South Helena Vegetation Manipulation Project: 4177, 299-NS05, 299-C1, 299-U001.

Figure C02. Four field surveys conducted at south end of the Lazyman IRA.

#4177 is barely distinguishable at times when it goes through grassy meadows where the road bed has been naturally revegetated with sagebrush and bluebunch wheatgrass.

In areas with forest canopy, there are conifer encroachment occurs due to mature Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, and lodgepole pine on the edges of the route as well as 1 to 4 foot tall

seedling/sapling regeneration within the “road” bed. There are also areas where there would need to be large rock and windblown dead fall removal for equipment to pass. The road bed varies from about 4 to 15 feet in width. No noxious weeds were observed during survey. Elk and deer sign was abundant throughout.



Figure C03. Barely distinguishable #4177 road bed with faint trail in grassy meadow. Some large rocks, SW photo direction, 4 foot width.

Figure C04. End of #4177 on top of Colorado Mountain. Old road bed, some rocks and herbaceous undergrowth, SE photo direction, 10 foot width.

May 17, 2020 Beaver Cr. 299-NS05, 299-C1, 299-U007 Camie Westfall

The 299 Series roads (Fig. C05) have been used for past mechanized logging although these roads are not recognized as unauthorized, user-created, or non-system existing roads. Logging activity stops at the IRA boundary. Except for common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), no noxious weeds were observed.

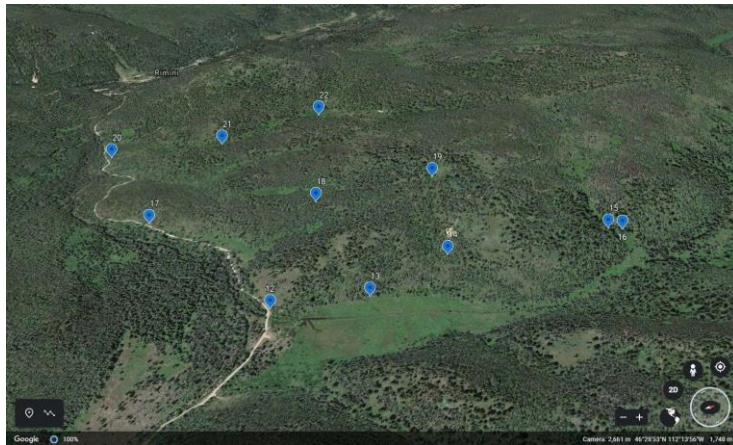


Figure C05. Google Earth screenshot of #299-NS05 (Waypoints 012-016), #299-C1 (Wpts 017-019), and #299-U001 (Wpts 020 – 022)

At the IRA boundary, 299-NS05 is blocked with downed trees and conifer regeneration. Within the IRA, large trees (>15" DBH were marked during timber surveys) and it is difficult to find the road bed due to windblown deadfall, herbaceous forest undergrowth, and regeneration of Douglas fir, lodgepole pine, and subalpine fir. The road crosses a creek/spring with current running water and soil saturation. The wetland system to the east of the road has survey stakes and marking on trees throughout, although logging activity was prevented with HHAA legal intervention.



Figure C06. At the end of 299-NS05, creek and groundwater flows with sedge and Douglas fir and subalpine fir regeneration. Waypoint 15.

Figure C07. End of #299-C1. Road bed or trail is indistinguishable due to forest regeneration and herbaceous undergrowth (Waypoint 19). According to map, "road" ends at abandoned mining cabin site in small clearing, NE photo direction.

#299-C1 is not gated or marked in any way at the junction of Chessman Road. Logging has occurred up to the IRA boundary, but the "road" ends just before an abandoned mining cabin site and is non-existent once in the IRA. Except for common mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), no noxious weeds were observed.



Figure C08. Two-track #299-U001 near start of Tenmile IRA boundary, some soil saturation and rocks. NE photo direction.

#299-U001 is a two-track that is gated at the junction of Chessman Road but the two-track continues into the Tenmile IRA. Marked trees occur along two-track in the IRA. The two-track appears to be periodically used and maintained for access to private land parcels located within the IRA.

Moose Creek occurs in the west center portion of Subunit C and drains about four square miles. The Lazyman IRA boundary skirts a 160 acre private land parcel through which Moose Creek runs. Log hauling and access routes for the Tenmile-South Helena Vegetation Manipulation Project were proposed above the private land. Gary Ingman surveyed the three routes involved, taking 37 photographs. Representative photos of each route are provided here but the full report involves several more photos.



Figure C09. May 17, 2020 Moose Creek field surveys: 1880-NS01, NS02, NS03.

Gary Ingman reported, “1880-NS01 is the main road coming up the Moose Creek drainage from a 160 acre private inholding that effectively controls access to the area. There is a gate at the private property boundary below and this road extends up the creek into the upper reaches of Moose Creek. The road has been used by ATVs (some fresh tracks were noted) and has been cleared of blowdown, as evidenced by numerous cut logs thrown out of the trail. Some parts of the road could accommodate use by a smaller SUV or Jeep.



Figure C10. Evidence of routine trail clearing by ATV users. NS01-11. Roadbed is about 6-7 feet wide. Figure C11. NS01 turns into a horse or footpath. Looking up Moose Creek SE, tape=6’.

Over the course of its length, the road gradually narrows, crosses an old wooden foot bridge, and morphs into a horse or hunter footpath. Evidence of trail clearing extended into the footpath segment and beyond the end of road feature shown on the USFS transportation map. Vegetation in the lower reaches of the segment consists of mature lodgepole pine and medium sized Douglas-fir trees. The size of the fir trees increases further up the drainage and there are some very large trees at the end of the mapped segment. Trail clearing and motorized use on this trail is presumably illegal but goes largely unnoticed given the private landlocked nature of the setting. I skirted the private property to access this public segment before and after this survey, and it is difficult.”

“1880-NS02 and NS03 - Only slight traces remain of an old mine prospecting access road. The routes are inundated with extensive blowdown and are difficult to pass on foot. They have largely been naturally obliterated and are fading into the landscape.”

NS03 parallels a tributary to Moose Creek with the stream course located approximately 6 feet from the edge of the roadway. The old roadbed was covered with numerous piles of moose droppings. Fresh elk tracks and droppings were present. Huge spruce and Douglas fir trees are present in this drainage, some of which are on the order of 5 feet dbh (diameter at breast height). Signs of human use in the form of trash, cleared trails or campsites were not observed.



Figure C12. Looking SW from upper reaches of NS03. Tape measure extended to 6 feet.

Figure C13. NS02 where it parallels Moose Creek. Looking NW; main Moose Creek to the left.

May 2, 2020 Lazyman Creek 1813 and 1813-NS01 by Nick Sovner

Lazyman Creek partially occurs within the IRA boundary. The field surveys conducted by Nick Sovner included 16 photographs of landscape condition along routes the Forest Service intended to use for the Tenmile-South Helena Vegetation Project. However, those routes had largely been reclaimed by nature. 1813 occurred outside the IRA while 1813-NS01 was inside.

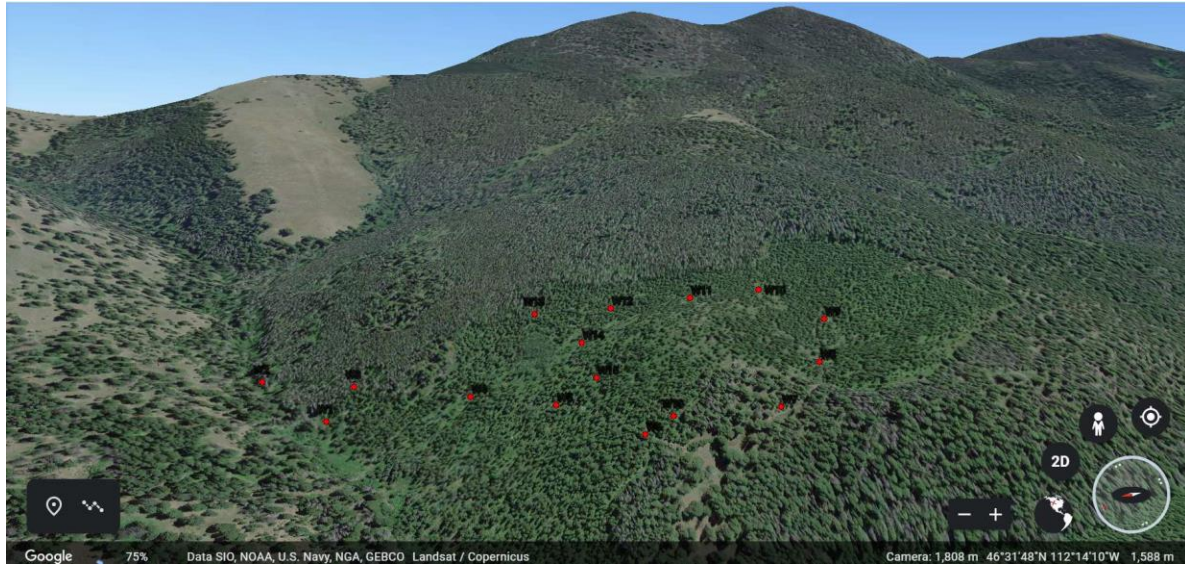


Figure C14. Google Earth Skyline: Lazyman parks occur on the left, Black Mountain occurs in upper center, and Colorado Mountain upper right. Surveys conducted May 2, 2020.

Before entering the IRA, Sovner described: an old logging road that was difficult to find, the beginning of the Tenmile Educational Trail, and cut saplings along a hiking trail. Once inside the IRA he reports, “Did not see any weeds during entire route. Much of the route was overgrown and in places hardly discernable from the natural landscape. Heavy sign of elk throughout.



Figures C15 and C16. Beginning and ending points of survey route 1813-NS01.

May 22, 2017 Telegraph Trail, Tenmile Cr field meeting - Doug Powell, Gayle Joslin, Roy Barkley

The Telegraph Trail gets its name from the old telegraph line that used to run between the Moose Creek historic cabin and the lookout (no longer present) at the crest of Colorado Mountain. The trail extends from the junction of Moose Creek with Tenmile Creek beginning in NE Section 20 and climbs in a southeasterly direction near the Moose-Tenmile divide through Sections 21 and 28 then turns east through the lower portion of Section 27, to the top of Colorado Mountain.



HHAA members Doug Powell and Gayle Joslin met with Forest Service employee Roy Barkley to express concerns about conversion and expansion of the non-system trail into a system trail for use by mountain bikers in the pending Forest Plan revision. As a system trail, Barkley noted that it would be open to non-motorized but mechanized use. Powell explained that such a change would alter the historic, quiet character of the trail (see full Colorado-Telegraph Trail Report).



The nature of the historic Telegraph Trail (from the 1800's) has been damaged with trail expansion and cutting of huge trees that used to have the copper line insulators attached. Trees sporting insulators are still standing along portions of the trail that have not been expanded.

Figure C18. Expanded and cleared segment of the Telegraph Trail.

Powell expressed his frustration with changes to the trail and that he felt the Wilderness assessment of the Lazyman-Black Mountain area had been woefully incomplete because the boundary for analysis by the forest service had been drawn along the drainage boundary rather than along the IRA boundary. Thus, this re-described paper-boundary substantially reducing the size of the area assessment because the entire west flanks of Colorado, Black Mountain, and the Lazyman area were excluded.

For a host of reasons, HHAA does not want to see mountain bike trails throughout Lazyman. Those reasons include wildlife security, hiking opportunity close to Helena – citing that mountain bikes displace hikers, and the fact that this area went through a Congressional Wilderness designation process that passed both houses of Congress.

Map on the left is the area considered by Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest for Wilderness Evaluation as compared to the area promoted by Montana residents which passed unanimously through the U.S. Congress designating the area as Wilderness.

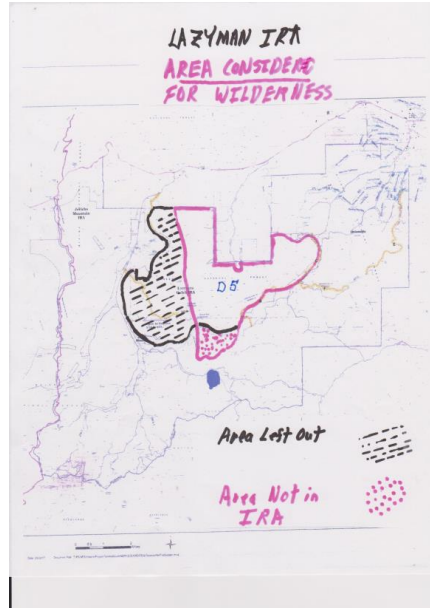
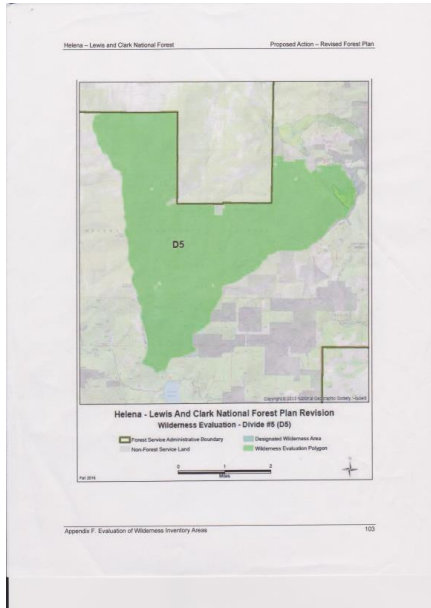


Figure C19. Comparison of maps in discussions of Wilderness.

Given its long publicly-supported history for Wilderness, Powell requested this trail and the Lazyman-Black Mountain area be at least considered “non-mechanized” as the Forest planning process moves forward, because places near Helena need

to exist for hikers and wildlife, not just for mountain bikers who tend to supersede both.



During the hike, coyote tracks and scat, 2 groups of elk – one group of 7 and the other group of about 30, were observed.

Figure C20. Elk observed May 22, 2017.

August 24, 2022 Incident Report: Moose Creek-Tractor within the IRA One of the Incident Reports was the result of an aerial flight conducted by HHAA member and pilot Doug Powell in which he reported a red tractor loader on forest service ground within the IRA above the McMahan private land inholding in Moose Creek. HHAA president Steve Platt reported the situation to Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest personnel who resolved the situation and had the tractor removed.

A summary of this report by Dennis Milburn notes: Observers departed the Tenmile Picnic Area at 09:30, traveling on the interpretive trail for access into the IRA. The gate on the road was swung open with no signage on appropriate use of the route for motor vehicles. The FS Divide Travel Plan shows the route to be a non-motorized trail. However, we immediately found a vehicle with 2 people who had evidently camped behind the open gate. They told us there were others camped further up the road which we found to include 3 more vehicles and 4 people.



Figure C21. Motorized campers with mountain bike behind the gate in the area closed to motorized use in Lazyman Creek.

Figure C22. Open gate at Lazyman Creek entrance without a sign indicating the area is closed to motorized use.

Both groups informed us that they used the Trail Forks website which indicated that there was mtn bike trail(s) and camping

accessed from that road. We need to check with the FS regarding the current status of that road. The road had been opened and used for timber harvest.



Figure C23. Three more vehicles behind the Lazyman Creek gate.

Figure C24. Campers associated with the three vehicles.

We observed a variety of weeds in the harvest unit and along the road, including Spotted Knapweed, Hounds Tongue, Musk Thistle, and Common Mullein.

Continuing up the creek, we noticed a significant decline of weed observations after leaving the road. The creek flows well and clear, currently. There is some evidence of past livestock grazing on the stream bank and lack of riparian vegetation on some segments of the creek. It appears the banks are recovering and some stretches having increased riparian vegetation, particularly along an area with less gradient, and may well have had previous beaver activity.

Along the entire length of the route that we followed up drainage, there was a trail that has been kept cleared. There is no official trail above the interpretive trail. An individual, or others, have been routinely sawing out downfall along this non-system trail.

Leaving the drainage bottom, we climbed the steep south-facing slope heading north. We entered a grassland area with some scattered large, old ponderosa pine and an occasional Douglas-fir. For the most part, the grasslands appear healthy, with no evidence of recent livestock grazing. We did find some Dalmatian Toadflax and, rarely, Hounds Tongue. It is not known if this is a new infestation or if it has existed for some time at this density.

Elk use sign is abundant throughout the area and we soon spotted a group of 23+. As we traveled north along the ridge, we observed at least 3 or 4 more groups ranging in size from 6 to a dozen or more individuals. The mix of primarily late-seral stage forest, primarily Douglas-fir on the north and east facing slopes, and grasslands on the south slopes and ridgetops, make for wonderful habitat for elk and a diversity of wildlife. From the top of the divide between Colorado Gulch and Tenmile headed downslope to the west, the diversity of the vegetation makes provides ideal winter range for elk. We also noted at least a couple piles of bear scat.

As we continued to the north, down from the ridgeline, we entered a younger stand of Douglas-fir on a north-facing slope. This area had been cut for cordwood in the late 1800s to early 1900s so this stand represented healthy second growth that was around 120 years old.

We exited the IRA into BLM managed land and on to the Rimini Road at around 16:30. New red boundary markers had been recently installed along the FS-BLM boundary.

November 11, 2025 Incident Report: Beaver Creek Motorized Use/Clearing - Camie Westfall

In the vicinity of the 299 surveys previously conducted in May 2020, new vegetation clearing to accommodate motorized use was discovered by Westfall on November 11, 2025 and reported to the Helena Ranger District:

(fs_5300_16Statement_Westfall_20251118 / FS299-B1_Nov25Westfal):

“On 11/11/2025, I accessed FS 299-B1 from the parking area off of Chessman Road near Rimini, MT (46.48390, -112.21611). While hiking, I noticed a huge increase in trail clearing and widening, as well as random, reasonless cutting and limbing of conifer saplings, sagebrush, and deciduous shrubs. The trail is now 15 feet wide all the way up to the parks. Width of the trail is enormous now and people have been driving side-by-sides and ATVs around the parking area rocks and through the wire fence gate all the way to the parks.

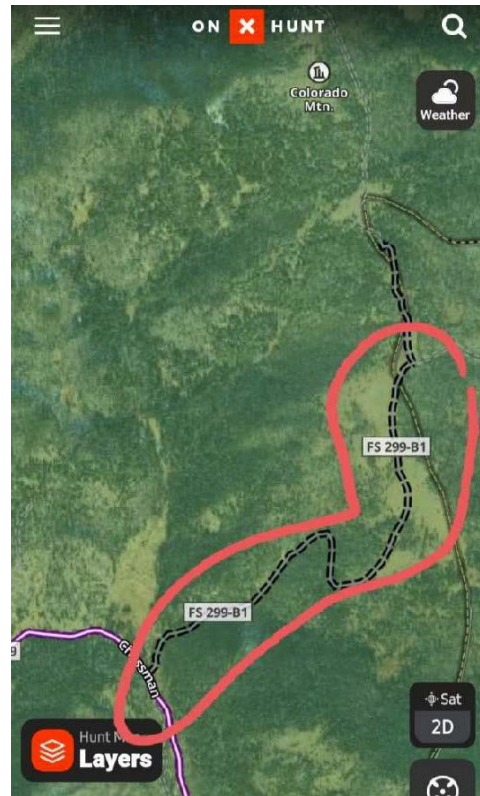


Figure 25. Map of Beaver Cr motorized use.

Some of this cutting and widening has occurred less than 100 feet from a surface water tributary that goes into Beaver Creek.



Figure 26. Trail along 299-B1 has been cut out for motorized access.



Figure C27. Gate on 299-B-1 was open with signs of recent ATV use.

Figure C28. Closed the gate to deter driving.

The wire fence gate (near 46.484694, -112.21520) was wide open on 11/11/2025; I untangled it and closed it. In recent years, there has been ongoing abuse of this area by folks on OHVs coming from Chessman Road. And now with this extreme widening of the trail, I fear the motorized abuse will be amplified and may soon enter the Lazyman IRA boundary and eventually go up to the summit of Colorado Mountain.

I am interested in seeing a more obvious closure sign put up and a more robust gate at the parking area that OHV can't drive around. The fence is down, and people can drive around the big rocks. Please see the photos I included in this submission. (Additional photos are in FS299-B1_Nov25Westfal) Photos were taken from the parking area to where the trail splits and goes to Black Hall Meadows."



Figure C29. Better closure sign (more obvious) and robust gate should be installed at parking area - 299-B1.

Wildlife often bear the brunt of trail impacts. Motorized trails often lead to wildlife being



accidentally and sometime purposefully run over as in these photos of a snowshoe hare and a boreal toad. The non-motorized nature of Inventoried Roadless Areas are beyond measure for wildlife.

Figure C30 and C31. Snowshoe hare recently run over by ATV on trail just outside the Lazyman IRA.



As noted in Subunit B, reports of grizzly bears (Fig. B34) within the area occur semi-regularly, with one photographic observation confirmed in 2017 by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks about one mile southeast of the IRA (Subunits B and C) in the Chessman Reservoir area.

Moose, black bears, elk, and deer are abundant, as well as a wide variety of other wildlife. Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks reports that wildlife appear to be moving between the Continental Divide and the Elkhorn Mountains to the east and south and would have to cross through the Lazyman IRA to do so.



Figure C32. Boreal toad run over on trail near Lazyman IRA.