

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

for the

*Grayback Mountain Trail
Phase 1*

(EA# OR117-00-26)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT
GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA

August 2000

Dear Reader:

We appreciate your interest in the BLM's public land management activities. We also appreciate your taking the time to review this environmental assessment (EA). If you would like to provide us with written comments regarding this project or EA, please send them to me at 3040 Biddle Road, Medford, OR 97504 or email them to me at *or110mb@or.blm.gov*.

If confidentiality is of concern to you, please be aware that comments, including names and addresses of respondents, will be available for public review or may be held in a file available for public inspection and review. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. If you wish to withhold your name or street address from public review or from disclosure under the Freedom of Information Act, you must state this clearly at the beginning of your written comment. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowed by law. All submissions from organizations or officials of organizations or businesses will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

William E. Ray, Jr.
Field Manager
Grants Pass Resource Area

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
MEDFORD DISTRICT

EA COVER SHEET

RESOURCE AREA: Grants Pass

FY & REPORT # EA Number OR-117-00-26

ACTION/TITLE: Grayback Mountain Trail Construction - Phase 1

LOCATION: T39S, R5W, Sections 20, 21, 28, 29 and 32 Willamette Meridian, Josephine Co., Oregon.

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GRANTS PASS RESOURCE AREA
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

Grayback Mountain Trail Construction - Phase 1

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Chapter 1

Purpose of and Need for Action

A. Introduction

The purpose of this environmental assessment (EA) is to assist in the decision making process by assessing the environmental and human affects resulting from implementing the proposed action and/or alternatives. This EA will also assist in determining if an environmental impact statement (EIS) needs to be prepared or if a finding of no significant impact (FONSI) is appropriate.

This EA tiers to the following documents:

- (1) the Final EIS and Record of Decision dated June 1995 for the Medford District Resource Management Plan dated October 1994 (RMP);
- (2) the Final Supplemental EIS on Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl dated February 1994; and
- (3) the Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and its attachment A entitled the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl dated April 13, 1994 (NFP).

This EA also draws from the following documents:

- (1) Williams Watershed Analysis, Medford District, Grants Pass Resource Area, 1996.
- (2) Grayback/Sucker Watershed Analysis, Siskiyou National Forest, U.S. Forest Service, 1995.
- (3) BLM Port-Orford Cedar Management Guidelines (September 1994).
- (4) Source Book for Natural Area Coordinators (March 1990)
- (5) USFWS Biological Opinion #1-7-96-F-392

B. Purpose and Need for the Proposal

The broad purpose of the proposed action is to implement the Medford District's Resource Management Plan (RMP). The Grayback Mountain Trail is one of 16 potential trails identified in the RMP to be developed as funding, opportunity and workload allows. Its purpose is to provide and develop recreation opportunities.

A portion of the Grayback trail was constructed in 1990. The proposal evaluated in this EA is to continue the trail system. It will also be of regional and national significance because it will provide access to over 2500 miles of trail in the western United States, specifically the Pacific Crest Trail, and the Boundary Trail (two trails in the national trails system) as well as other trail systems in the Red Buttes Wilderness Area and other National Forest land, and the Oregon Caves National Monument. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail travels over 2500 miles from Mexico to Canada. The Boundary Trail follows the ridge that separates the Illinois River Valley and the Applegate Valley for 8 miles.

C. Project Location

The general location of the proposed project is shown on Map 1 (Appendix A). The project area is located in T39S, R5W, Sections 20, 21, 28, 29 and 32. The full trail proposed is located on BLM, U.S. Forest Service and private lands. Phase 1 addressed in this EA is located on BLM administered land in the Williams fifth field watershed.

D. Issues and Concerns Relevant to the Project

A variety of issues and concerns were identified during the initial scoping of this project. These were raised by the project planning team, the resource area's interdisciplinary (ID) team or have been drawn from some of the documents noted above. These issues were used in the design of the proposed project and alternatives. The pertinent issues identified for this project are:

1. There is a potential for introduction of non-native vegetative species with increased uses.
2. Increased recreational use may increase fire risk.
3. A portion of the trail may pass through the Grayback Glades RNA.
4. Soils in the lower portion of the trail (section 21) are potentially erosive and there are landslides in the area.
5. Potential for the introduction of *Phytophthora lateralis*.
6. Potential for the presence of Alaska Yellow cedar.
7. There is habitat for the Northern Spotted owl, a federally listed species, in the project area.

E. Land Use Allocation and Objectives

On federal land, the proposed trail location is in three NFP/RMP land allocations. The broad management objectives for each of these allocations are spelled out in the NFP and the Medford District RMP.

Adaptive Management Area: (BLM) Objectives are to “develop and test new management approaches to integrate and achieve ecological and economic health and other social objectives.” (USDI BLM, 1995)

Late-Successional Reserve (LSR): (BLM, FS) The broad objective includes protecting and enhancing conditions of late-successional and old growth forest ecosystems. Existing developments are to be retained and maintained as long as they are consistent with the objectives. (USDI BLM, 1995)

Administratively Withdrawn Area: (BLM) One alternative allows for a portion of the proposed trail to pass through the Grayback Glades Research Natural Area (RNA). Objectives of RNAs include preservation of important features for scientific study, research and education.

Riparian Reserves: Objectives relating to recreation include “designing new facilities within riparian reserves, including trails and dispersed sites, so as not to prevent meeting Aquatic Conservation Strategy and riparian reserve objectives.” (USDI BLM, 1995)

Chapter 2 Proposed Action and Alternatives

A. Introduction

This chapter describes the proposed action and alternatives that are addressed and analyzed in this EA.

B. Alternative 1: No Action Alternative

In this EA the "no-action" alternative is defined as not implementing any aspect of the proposed action alternative(s). Defined this way, the no action alternative also serves as a baseline or reference point for evaluating the environmental effects of the action alternatives. Inclusion of this alternative is done without regard to whether or not it is consistent with the Medford District RMP.

The no action alternative is not a "static" alternative. Implicit in it is a continuation of the environmental conditions and trends that currently exist or are occurring within the project area. This would include trends such as vegetation succession and consequent wildlife habitat changes, rates of erosion, trends in fire hazard changes, OHV use, *etc.*

C. Alternative 2: Proposed Action

1. Introduction/Objective

The objective is to build a trail system to provide a recreation opportunity. The purpose of the trail is to provide access to a high elevation (6,000 feet) recreational area and to join the Forest Service National Boundary Trail managed by the Siskiyou and Rogue River National Forests. The Boundary Trail provides access to the Oregon Caves, the Red Buttes Wilderness, the Pacific Crest Trail, Bigelow Lake, Bolen Lake and Tannen Lake. The proposed Grayback Mountain Trail would provide access to these areas from the Williams area.

The proposed action consists of three phases of constructing a trail from Rock Creek Road to the Forest Service Boundary Trail. The proposed route encompasses a 3/4 mile section of existing trail which was built in 1990. The total trail length (all phases) would be approximately 6 miles.

This EA will address phase 1 and evaluate its effects. Phases 2 and 3 are presented in this EA for purposes of overall project perspective, but will be more specifically evaluated under separate EAs upon completion of special status species surveys and resolution of easement needs.

2. Phase 1

Phase 1 of the trail construction will be in section 21 (see map 2). Approximately 1 mile of trail will be constructed to connect with the existing trail in section 21. The first 1/4 mile of trail follows an existing road. Once leaving the road, the proposed route passes through a past clearcut and connects with the

existing trail. This portion of the trail will be built in 2000 or later. Trail work will include brushing, building a trail tread and building a trail bridge across a slide area.

Trail head parking for approximately 5 vehicles would be at the existing pull-out on Rock Creek Road. The road to the trail head will be bladed, rocked, and brushed as needed. The road will also be evaluated for improving drainage from the existing gate to the trail head. A new gate will be installed above the trail head and below the junction with road 39-5-21 and will be closed year-round. The existing gate (approximately ½ mile south) along road 39-5-14 will be open during the dry season (typically June 1 to September 15).

The trail tread will be constructed to a total width of 3 feet. It will be out-sloped, rolled and dipped for proper drainage. The trail tread will be constructed on a full bench prism with no fill slopes. All debris will be scattered below the trail to blend with the natural landscape. The trail will be cleared to a width of 4 feet horizontally each side of centerline and 10 feet vertically from centerline. On long grades, passing lanes may be constructed to provide safety in passing for horses. The trail will be built with hand tools or mechanized equipment (i.e., chainsaws, trail building machines). Any mechanized equipment used will be washed prior to bringing it to the project site and following use to reduce the chance of spreading *Phytophthora*. If a trail building machine is used, it will be limited to the dry season (June 15 - September 15). Trail construction will be seasonally restricted within 1/4 mile of existing owl sites or unsurveyed habitat from March 1 to June 30.

The following trail uses would be permissible in the proposed action (all phases): hiking, day use. Campfires, equestrian use and camping will be allowed only if the trail is located outside the RNA boundaries (alternative 2b below).

The following uses would not be permitted on the trail: motorized vehicles and mountain bicycles.

3. Phase 2

Phase 2 will include construction of the trail from the southwest boundary of section 21 to the BLM and FS boundary in section 32. (See map 2). This work will include brushing, trail tread construction per the specifications of Phase 1. It will require easement acquisition in sections 20 and 32. Phase 2 would begin in 2001, or as funding is secured. Phase 2 will also include providing additional parking, as needed, along the Rock Creek Road utilizing existing turnouts. This phase will be analyzed under a separate EA upon further resolution of the easement options.

a. Alternative 2a (Phase 2)

This alternative routes the trail through the Grayback Glades RNA. Approximately one mile of trail would be within the RNA. This would avoid private land and easement acquisition in section 32, but would be steeper and require switchbacks. This alternative would permit hiking and day use only. Equestrian use would not be permitted due to its routing through the RNA.

b. Alternative 2b (Phase 2)

This alternative routes the trail outside the RNA but crosses private land in section 32. This would keep the trail on the ridgeline. It would require obtaining a 1/4 mile easement for the trail across private land instead of keeping the trail on public land. In this alternative, permitted uses include hiking, horseback riding, day use and overnight uses.

4. Phase 3

Phase 3 will include connecting the Grayback Mountain Trail to the Boundary Trail on U.S. Forest Service land, from the USFS/BLM property line in section 32. This phase will also include obliterating and rehabilitating the existing trail (Old Rock Creek Trail through the RNA) including the removal of any old campsites. Only native plant species would be used in the rehabilitation if seeding is necessary. Water bars will be placed on steep pitches along the trail. This phase will be analyzed under a separate EA.

D. Project design features

Project design features (PDFs) are included in the proposed action for the purpose of reducing anticipated adverse environmental impacts which might stem from the implementation of the proposal. The PDFs noted below would be a part of all of the alternatives, unless otherwise noted.

1. Botanical Resource Protection

If localized erosion control is necessary, native plant species will be used or sterile wheat grass. Reestablishment of native vegetation will be allowed to occur naturally on other disturbed areas. If any federal candidate, Bureau Sensitive or survey and manage plant species are encountered along the proposed trail location, the trail will be re-routed to avoid these populations.

2. Cultural Resource Protection

If cultural sites are found along the proposed trail route, mitigation measures such as rerouting the trail, will be implemented to protect the sites.

3. Wildlife Resource Protection

If survey and manage species are located along the proposed trail route, the trail will be rerouted to avoid these areas. Trail construction will be seasonally precluded within 1/4 mile of existing spotted owl sites or unsurveyed spotted owl habitat from March 1 to June 30. Talus areas judged suitable for Del Norte salamanders will be avoided by trail routing.

Chapter 3 Environmental Consequences

A. Introduction

Only substantive site specific environmental changes that would result from implementing the proposed action or alternatives are discussed in this chapter. If an ecological component is not discussed, it should be assumed that the resource specialists have considered affects to that component and found the proposed action or alternatives would have minimal or no affects. Similarly, unless addressed specifically, the following were found not to be affected by the proposed action or alternatives: air quality; cultural or historical resources; Native American religious concerns; prime or unique farmlands; Flood plains; endangered, threatened or sensitive plant, animal or fish species; water quality (drinking/ground); wetlands/riparian zones; wild and scenic rivers. In addition, hazardous waste or materials are not directly involved in the proposed action or alternatives.

General or "typical" affects from projects similar in nature to the proposed action or alternatives are also described in the EISs and plans to which this EA is tiered.

B. Site Specific Beneficial or Adverse Effects of the Alternatives

1. Resource: Soils and Water

a. Affected Environment

The trail is on and adjacent to ridges that separate the East Fork of Williams Creek 6th Field Watershed (6FW) and the West Fork of Williams Creek 6FW. The construction of the trail would start from the Rock Creek Road (39-5-14) and follow an old grassed logging road (39-5-21.1) at an elevation of 3,000 feet and continue on a spur ridge top and along ridge side slopes to an elevation of 3,500 feet. The trail crosses and unstable slide area on a side slope. Soil on the trail location is mapped in the Soil Survey of Josephine County as Tethrick gravelly fine sandy loam surface over fine sandy loam subsoil. Tethrick is well drained. Effective soil depth is greater than 40 inches. This soil developed in colluvium derived dominantly from granitic rock. Tethrick soil is highly erosive due to low levels of cohesiveness.

b. Environmental Effects

1) Alternative 1: No Action

Conditions that affect hydrologic condition should remain roughly the same as they are currently. This applies for both short (0 to 5 years) and long (5 to 20 years) terms. It is unlikely that human use would increase in the short term. Long term human use is difficult to project but would be expected to either remain at the current level or increase slightly.

2) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

The trail would be designed in such a way that natural drainage patterns will be maintained by rolling and out-sloping with 3 foot total width and dipped for drainage. The trail itself should cause minimum, if any, changes of localized runoff and erosion. The trail should have minimal, if any, effect of increased sediment to the stream network in either of the 6th field WS's. Since the trail will span the existing unstable slide area by bridging between stable points, these will be no increased potential of future mass movement.

The reconstructed trail would encourage increased hiking use of the area. The reconstruction will create a narrow strip where varying levels of vegetation clearing will occur. Increased use and trail maintenance will slightly diminish vegetated area and thus plant productivity. For the entire trail this would amount to approximately 2.2 acres. For the first phase this would amount to about 0.4 acres.

Alternative 2b would allow the trail to be used for horse riding. Horse hooves put greater bearing pressure on the trail surface than hikers do. This could lower the trail surface and create a low track on the trail that would carry runoff water off the trail. This may create an erosive situation if drainage problems were to develop over time. However it is anticipated that minimal, if any, sediment would reach the stream network.

There would be no anticipated additional cumulative effects to the watershed in terms of stream water quality and quantity changes.

2. Resource: Vegetation / Port-Orford Cedar

a. Affected Environment

The proposed trail will go through 5 different Operations Inventory (OI) units. All have had timber harvested within the last 30 years. Two units 39-5-21(008) and 39-5-21(896) at the north/central part of the section were clearcut in 1981. Both have since been reforested and are awaiting pre-commercial thinning treatments. There is no standing timber volume on these units. Unit 39-5-21(014) (also the north/central part of the section) had a mortality salvage in 1984. There is approximately 6 mbf / acre remaining in the overstory; primarily Douglas-fir greater than 21" DBH. The understory is stocked with Douglas-fir and white fir. Unit 39-5-21.015 (northeast portion of the section) had a select cut in 1984. There is approximately 3 mbf / acre remaining; primarily sugar pine and Douglas-fir greater than 21" DBH. The understory is stocked with Douglas-fir and white fir. Unit 39-5-21(018) had a select harvest in 1972. This unit currently retains a mature forest and has approximately 20 mbf / acre; overstory species include Douglas-fir, sugar pine, and ponderosa pine greater than 21" DBH and white fir greater than 11" DBH. The understory is stocked with Douglas-fir and white fir. Port-Orford cedar is also found on about 8 acres.

A number of different plant communities occur in the project area. The Douglas-fir series is represented by 2 different plant associations which occur on the drier sites: Douglas-fir - California Black Oak/Poison Oak and Douglas-fir - Canyon Live Oak - Tanoak. Moister sites can support white fir communities:

White Fir/Dwarf Oregon grape/Vanilla leaf and White Fir - Dwarf Oregon grape / Baldhip Rose (Atzet and others 1996). One small stream side area hosts one of the drier non-serpentine Port-Orford cedar communities: Port-Orford cedar - Incense Cedar - Alder (Jimerson 1997). This association was previously mapped along the East Fork of Williams Creek. The area is currently free of *Phytophthora lateralis* the pathogen that causes Port-Orford cedar root disease.

b. Environmental consequences

1) Alternative 1: No Action

Potential for *Phytophthora lateralis* to infest the area would remain at current low level. Potential exists for pathogen importation via wildlife and dispersed recreationists.

2) Alternative 2: Proposed Action Alternatives

The proposed action would have no impacts unless it were to be a contributor to the introduction of *Phytophthora lateralis* into the area.

Increased recreation use could increase the potential for *Phytophthora lateralis* introduction. Allowing only hiking would have the least chance of importation of root disease into the project area simply due to a lower potential for the importation of infested soil less (hiking only *vs.* hiking and horseback riding). During wet weather, the important carriers are elk, cattle, and machines. Based on the findings of Zobel, hiking boots could pose a hazard, however, the risk is low. (Zobel et al 1985)

3. Resource: Botany (special status species)

a. Affected Environment

The Phase 1 portion of the Grayback trail was surveyed for Survey and Manage or Special Status vascular plants, lichens and bryophytes. Since the route in Phase 1 uses an old roadbed and passes through a clearcut, no fungi habitat should be affected.

Two habitats were found along the Phase 1 route. On north facing slopes, Douglas-fir and white fir dominates with a patchy to open understory of mostly wood rose (*Rosa gymnocarpa*). A portion of this slope contains a dense young stand of mixed conifer species. On east facing slopes, a dense mix of Douglas-fir and white fir with canyon live oak, tanoak, ponderosa pine and deer brush (*Ceanothus integerrimus*) exists.

No Survey and Manage or Special Status species were found on the Phase 1 portion of the trail.

b. Environmental Consequences

1) Alternative 1: No Action

If the trail is not constructed, no effects would occur to botanical resources along the proposed route. The old roadbed and clearcut would eventually grow in closing in the open habitat found along the route. Plants (native and non-native) intolerant to shade would eventually be successional replaced by more shade tolerant species. This should not have an effect on native vegetation overall and may help to reduce disturbed openings for the introduction of noxious weeds.

2) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

Since no Survey and Manage or Special Status species were found on the route of this phase there will be no detrimental effects. Potential habitat does exist for these species along the route, though.

Off-trail trampling could take place from hikers and would reduce the probability of such species to exist adjacent to the trail on both sides. Trampled areas would also allow for introduction of non-natives and noxious weeds. Allowing horse use on this trail will create even more disturbance in the form of erosion, introduction of non-native or noxious species and larger areas of trampling off trail, reducing the potential habitat even further.

Cumulative Effects - Trail building is minimal in this portion of the Siskiyou mountains. Cumulative effects should be negligible.

4. Resource: Wildlife (special status, S&M species and their habitats)

a. Affected Environment

Potentially suitable habitat for a range of special status species is located in the vicinity of the existing trail and the proposed addition and includes: northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), red tree vole (*Phenacomys longicaudus*), tail dropper slugs (*Prophysaon spp.*), Del Norte salamanders (*Plethodon elongatus*), goshawks (*Accipiter gentilis*), and other raptors as well as all five buffer species of bats identified in the NFP-ROD.

Currently, the northern spotted owl is the only special status species (threatened) confirmed within the proposal area. There is one known spotted owl nest within 1/4 mile of the existing trail.

b) Environmental Consequences

1) Alternative 1: No Action

Under the "No action" alternative the existing portion of trail would remain disjunct with any other trails. The area would continue to have very limited visitation from humans and would remain relatively remote. Existing trends in vegetation would continue. Current low levels of disturbance from human visitation are anticipated to remain the same. Current trends in special status species populations would remain the same.

2) Alternative 2: Action Alternative

Under Alternative 2, the trail system would be built in three phases. Only phase 1 is being analyzed here. With phase 1, the trail would pass through a variety of habitats and ground disturbance would be required for implementation. Thus it has the potential for both habitat modification and disturbance. Based upon the actual length of new trail construction (<3/4 mile), however, potential impacts associated with ground disturbance are limited.

Talus habitat suitable for Del Norte Salamanders would be avoided during trail routing and construction. Based on this, there are no anticipated impacts to Del Norte salamander populations or suitable habitat.

The trail is not anticipated to change the overall ecological conditions of surrounding habitats. Survey and manage species such as molluscs which depend upon the forest as a whole, will not be disturbed by the proposed project. Based on this, there are no anticipated impacts to survey and manage mollusc populations.

The trail will not alter or remove suitable RTV habitat. The RTV is a small arboreal species not likely to be affected by trail recreation. Based on this, there are no anticipated impacts to RTV populations and habitat.

There will be no removal of suitable northern spotted owl habitat as a result of this proposal. The proposed new trail construction will pass through habitat that is currently unsuitable for the northern spotted owl. Suitable habitat is in the vicinity of the existing trail and a known nest site is adjacent to the trail. Increased use of this trail that may arise as a result of its extension has the potential to displace the birds from their current nesting location in either the short or the long term. Increased activity associated with trail construction, including noise from chainsaws or trail building machines, has the potential to negatively affect individuals occurring within the proposal area during the period of this activity. The seasonal operating constraint on machine operations will minimize the potential for this impact.

For wildlife species in general, there are potential impacts associated with increased recreational use. The primary effect of the trail will be to increase human activity in areas that currently receive limited visitation. The degree of disturbance will depend on frequency, time and magnitude of visitation. It is anticipated that the trail will receive "light" weekend use with the majority of users utilizing the trail system to access higher elevation terrain.

Other factors influencing potential impacts include the time of year during which the disturbance occurs. Disturbance outside of breeding season may affect the individual's energy balance and, therefore, its survival. Disturbance during the breeding season may affect an individual's productivity. During the breeding season, wildlife may respond to disturbance by abandoning their nests or young, leading to total reproductive failure. Human activity can also alter parental attentiveness, increasing the risks of the young being preyed upon, disrupting feeding patterns, or exposing the young to adverse environmental stress (Knight and Gutzwiller 1995).

Response to disturbance also varies according to the species. Species with specialized food and shelter requirements are more vulnerable to disturbance than species with generalized requirements. Preliminary evidence shows that body size is important in determining a species' response to disturbance. Comparison studies indicate that larger species flush at greater distances than smaller species (Cooke 1980; Skagen et. 1991; Holmes et al. 1993).

There are learned responses wildlife may show to recreationists: 1) habituation, 2) attraction, and 3) avoidance (Knight and Cole 1991). Outdoor recreationists may have a variety of impacts on wildlife ranging from harassment or injury, which might result in avoidance behavior, to feeding wildlife, which could cause attraction behavior. Other activities may neither positively nor negatively affect wildlife; such instances could result in wildlife habituating to humans.

Wildlife behavioral responses may include short duration and long term behavioral changes. For example, with short term avoidance responses, wildlife may return to areas they have fled within minutes or hours from the time that the disturbances have ceased. With long term avoidance responses, abandonment of territories may result.

In summary, recreation and its associated disturbance will affect wildlife in the vicinity of the trail. In general, impacts to larger bodied species (deer, bear, large carnivores) are likely to be greater than those to small bodied species (rodents and song birds). Diurnal species are more likely to be affected than nocturnal species. Responses will vary according to the species and the individual. Based on the level and intensity of the proposed project and its consequences, these impacts are, however, judged to be minimal.

5. Resource: Recreation/Cultural

a. Affected Environment

The proposed trail begins on the Rock Creek Road and will eventually connect with the Boundary Trail. The total trail route begins at approximately 3,000 feet elevation and climbs to over 6000 feet elevation in 6 miles. Phase one will provide access in the lower elevations to connect with the existing trail in section 21.

There are no known cultural sites along the proposed route.

b. Environmental consequences

1) Alternative 1: No Action

In the no action alternative, recreational use would continue to be light, with no trail development. User impacts would be dispersed throughout the area. The existing section of trail, which was constructed in 1990 by volunteers, would be difficult to access and unusable, due to its location behind a locked gate and its limited access.

2) Alternative 2: Proposed Action

In Phase 1, hiking (and potentially equestrian) opportunities would be provided from the Williams area to an existing trail. The existing trail provides access to late-successional forest. In Phases 2 and 3, the trail would continue to connect with the Boundary Trail, and eventually to the Pacific Crest trail, providing access to thousands of miles of trail. This recreation opportunity would provide access into some of the most unique high elevation habitat in the area, with the opportunity for interpretation of the unique features of the area.

Construction of a trail would limit impacts to a single trail, rather than multiple trails throughout the area to access the existing section of trail. According to Hammitt and Cole (1987), trail construction is a good example of use concentration that serves to avoid the creation of numerous user-created trails criss-crossing the landscape. This concentration of use will also limit safety hazards by providing a designated trail, rather than allowing for multiple trails to be built and brushed in steep terrain, where hikers could get lost or injured.

The proposed trail construction is in a VRM Class III area. The project will meet VRM III objectives, which are to “partially retain the existing character of the landscape. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer.” (BLM Manual H8410-1, 1986.)

Chapter 4

Agencies and Persons Consulted

A. Agencies and Persons Consulted

All input was considered by the planning and ID teams in developing the project proposal and in preparing this EA. Personnel from multiple agencies were consulted prior to preparation of this proposal:

US Forest Service, Siskiyou National Forest, Illinois Valley Ranger District
Illinois Valley Community Response Team
US Forest Service, Rogue River National Forest, Applegate Ranger District
Williams Watershed Council
Applegate River Watershed Council

B. Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

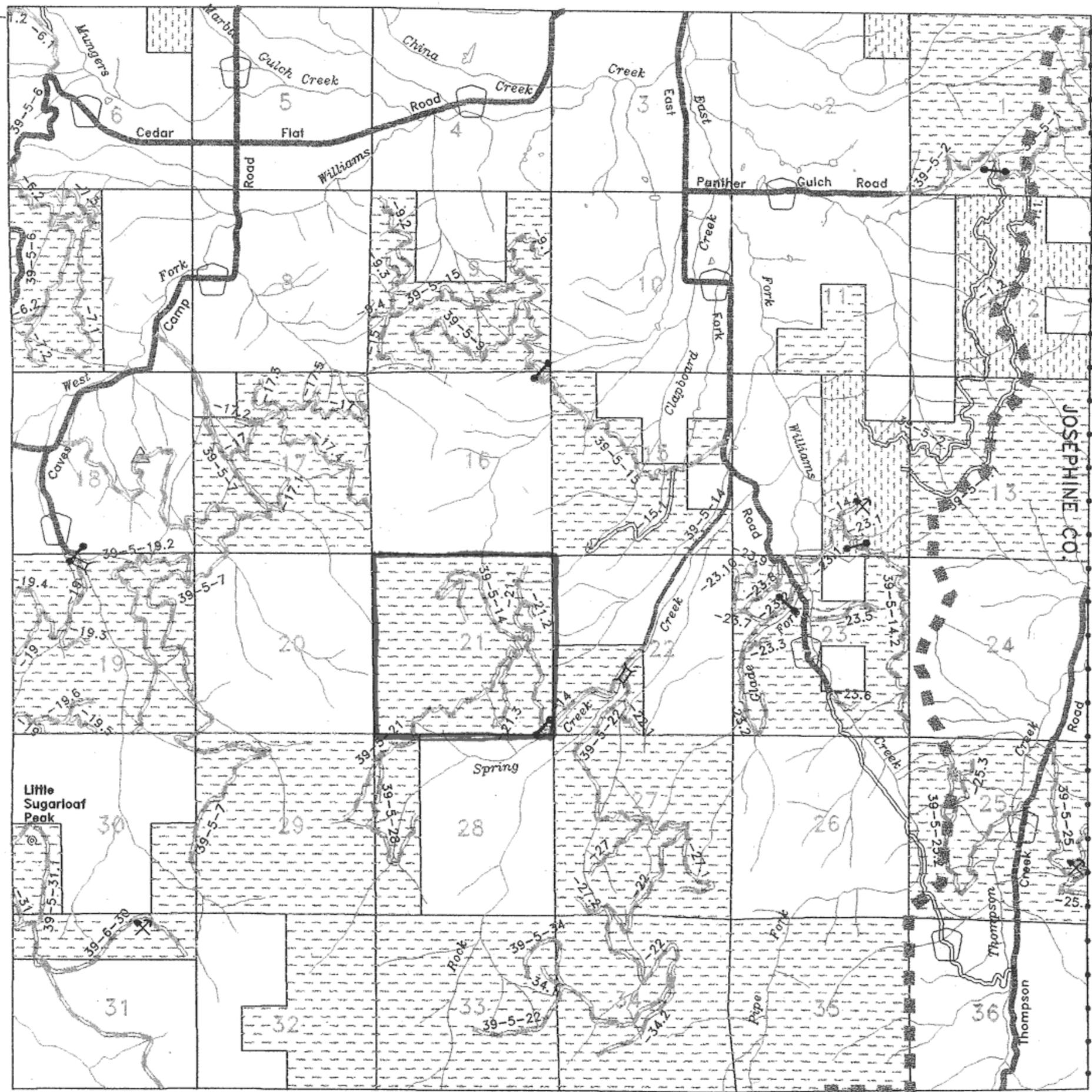
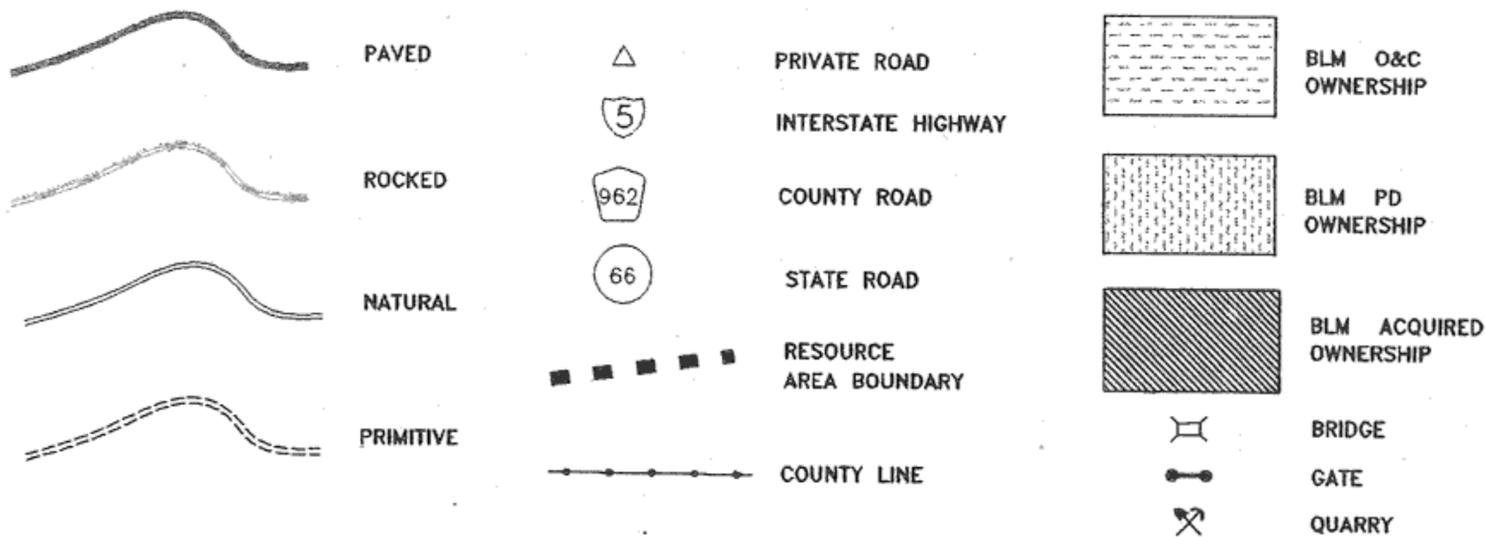
Copies of the EA document will be available for formal public review in the BLM Medford District Office. A formal 15 day public comment period will be held following an announcement in the Grants Pass Courier.

**Appendix A
Project Maps**

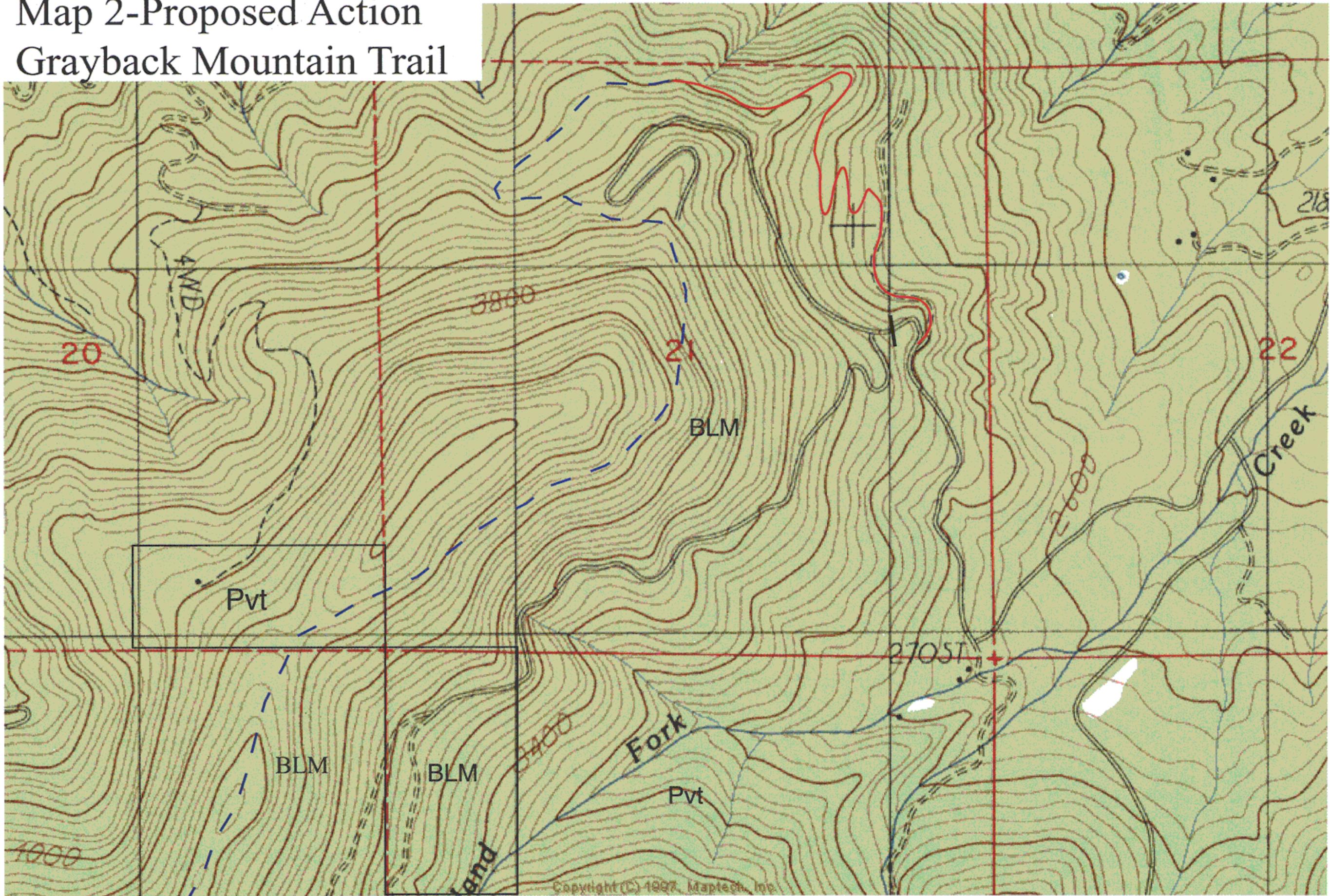
Map 1 Project Location

TOWNSHIP 39 S

RANGE 5 W



Map 2-Proposed Action Grayback Mountain Trail



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New construction
Phase 1 

New construction
Phase 2 
Includes existing trail (3/4 mile)

Proposed gate 

Appendix B:
Potential Monitoring

- 1) *Port-Orford cedar monitoring*: Annually monitor the trail to determine if Port-Orford Cedar root disease is present. Monitor after the onset of moisture stress (after July 15th).
- 2) In order to determine the significance of the increased trail traffic on the known spotted owl nest area, monitoring is proposed for a minimum of two years following completion of Phase 1.

Appendix C

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