

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT



Coeur d'Alene Field Office  
DOI-BLM-ID-C010-2013-0008-EA  
April 2013



# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail and Easement

---

It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Bureau of Land Management  
Coeur d'Alene Field Office  
3815 Schreiber Way  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83815  
208-769-5000**

## Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
2	Alternatives .....	2
3	Affected Environment and Effects of Alternatives.....	4
4	Consultation and Coordination .....	19
5	References.....	20

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Trail

---

## 1 INTRODUCTION

The Coeur d'Alene Field Office is proposing to construct 0.9 miles of pedestrian/bike trail on the Bureau of Land Management lands, hereafter, called the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary (JCPMWS), near Cougar Bay on Lake Coeur d'Alene, approximately 1 mile south of Coeur d'Alene, Idaho. A standard trail system would be constructed using hand tools (shovels, rakes, clippers, saws) to a standard trail of 2 ft wide dirt path with most vegetation cleared to 2 ft on either side of the trail. The Bureau of Land Management recently acquired an easement to cross private lands to access the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary from the existing Nature Conservancy land trails. This area will provide outstanding views and vistas of Lake Coeur d'Alene and the surrounding shoreline.

### 1.1 Purpose and Need

#### Need:

The BLM recently acquired an easement across private lands which provide recreational opportunities on BLM lands in this area that were previously not available.

In addition, one of the actions called for in the Approved Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (BLM 2007) for this area is to: "Initiate project planning for the John C. Pointer Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary. Manage the area in conjunction with the Cougar Bay Wildlife Viewing Area and adjoining property owners, and consider development of trails and wildlife viewing facilities (Action RC-1.2.15). Also, there have been problems with the public accessing and trespassing on private lands through existing trails on adjacent lands owned by The Nature Conservancy.

#### Purpose:

The purpose of the proposed action is to comply with management direction in the RMP by providing a trail which connects with and supplements trails on adjacent lands which are open to the public and provides opportunities for wildlife viewing. The secondary purpose is to discourage and reduce trespass on other private lands.

### 1.2 Relationship to Laws, Policies and Land Use Plans

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires an action under consideration to be in conformance with the applicable BLM land use plan, and to be consistent with other federal, state, local and tribal policies to the maximum extent possible.

#### 1.2.1 BLM Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action as described in chapter 2 of this EA is in conformance with the Approved Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan (BLM 2007). As described in the Purpose and Need (Section 1.1 above) the Coeur d'Alene Resource Management Plan specifically states: "Initiate project planning for the John C. Pointer Memorial Wildlife

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

Sanctuary. Manage the area in conjunction with the Cougar Bay Wildlife Viewing Area and adjoining property owners, and consider development of trails and wildlife viewing facilities (Action RC-1.2.15).

## 1.2.2 Consistency with Non-BLM Authorities

This action is consistent with the MOU for Cougar Bay between the BLM and the adjacent landowner, The Nature Conservancy.

## 1.3 Scoping and Issues

### 1.3.1 Public Involvement

In December of 2011, the BLM held a public meeting on the proposed easement acquisition and trail construction at the JCPMWS property. The comments received were mostly in support of the project and acquisition of the easement.

### 1.3.2 Issues

Based on internal scoping of issues by a BLM interdisciplinary team, and considering comments received during public scoping, the BLM identified the following issues for analysis:

- Potential impacts to soil/water from trail construction.
- Potential impacts to vegetation from trail construction.
- Spread of invasive plant species resulting from trail construction and use.
- Potential impacts to wildlife and habitats from trail construction and use.
- Potential impacts to cultural resources from trail construction.

## 2 ALTERNATIVES

This chapter describes the Proposed Action and No Action alternatives. It also describes alternatives that BLM considered but eliminated from further analysis in this EA.

### 2.1 Proposed Action

The BLM would create 0.4 miles of trail which would tie into an additional 0.5 miles of existing (user defined) trail to make a 0.9 mile loop trail through 28 acres of BLM managed properties along Lake Coeur d'Alene (See Vicinity Map #1 and Project Map #2). The trail will have two benches that will act as resting and viewing areas. There will also be an interpretive overlook that will be dedicated to John C Pointner who sold the property to the BLM.

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

The trails will be standard trail design of 2 ft width of bare ground and vegetation cleared to 2 ft on both sides of the trail. Approximately 80 percent of the new trail will follow previously constructed and abandoned logging roads.

The BLM will also install signs to inform the public of the boundaries of the private lands adjacent to the public lands.

Full-bench construction, properly installed drainage, and other design features would be employed to decrease the potential for trail erosion into the wetland.

Trail improvements and construction should occur between August 1 and April 1 to mitigate impacts to migratory birds and Special Status birds during the nesting season. Signs would be posted advising users to stay on designated trails. Adherence to this would mitigate impacts to wildlife and habitat quality outside of the trail corridor.

The Coeur d'Alene Field Office botanist will inventory the proposed trail segment prior to ground-disturbing activities. If BLM Sensitive species are found, measures would be implemented to reduce project impacts to plants growing within the proposed trail corridor.

The BLM will also monitor disturbed areas for post-project vegetation recovery. Areas that do not vegetate quickly and would be vulnerable to weed invasion would be planted with native and/or desirable non-native species.

Post-construction weed monitoring efforts would be implemented to track potential impacts from weed introduction and could lead to control methods that would limit negative effects to native vegetation. However, these treatments are not part of this proposed action or analyzed in this EA.

The BLM trail should be posted with information encouraging users to stay on trails to avoid trampling impacts to site vegetation and to limit weed introduction.

The BLM would also expand interpretive displays at the trailhead that would increase public awareness about lake ecology, the function of wetlands, and the vulnerability of site plant communities to weed invasion.

The Coeur d'Alene Field Office hydrologist will inspect the new trail segment prior to ground-disturbing activities. If specific potential problem areas for drainage or erosion are found, they will be addressed through design measures.

Following large floods or runoff events the trail would be inspected to insure soil stability and proper drainage is maintained.

### **2.2 No Action**

The BLM would not construct trail on the BLM lands known as the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary.

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## 2.3 Alternatives Eliminated from Further Analysis

The BLM considered an alternate trail system along the bench above the waterline, but determined that the expense of building and maintaining this trail system made it not feasible.

## 3 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND EFFECTS OF ALTERNATIVES

This chapter characterizes the resources and uses that have the potential to be affected by the proposed action, followed by a comparative analysis of the direct, indirect and cumulative impacts of the alternatives. Direct effects are caused by the action and occur at the same time and place. Indirect effects are caused by the action and are later in time or farther removed in distance, but are still reasonably foreseeable. Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions.

### 3.1 Scope of Analysis

#### 3.1.1 Setting

The Bureau of Land Management's property known as the John C. Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary (JCPMWS) is located along Cougar Bay on the northwest section of Lake Coeur d'Alene (see Appendix 1 for maps). Vegetation consists mainly of Douglas fir, cedar and grand fir on the north moist slopes and ponderosa pine on the more gentle open slopes. The JCPMWS is approximately 160 acres with approximately 132 acres within the floodplain or wetlands of Cougar Bay.

The total trail length on the JCPMWS property is 0.9 miles. The wetland section along the lakefront has a pre-existing trail of 0.5 miles and will not be improved. The upland vegetation area trail length is 0.4 miles and will impact 0.3 acres of upland vegetation

#### 3.1.2 Related Past, Present and Reasonably Foreseeable Actions

As defined by NEPA regulations (40 CFR 1508.7), "Cumulative impacts result from the incremental impacts of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such other actions."

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## Past and Present Actions

Years prior to the BLM acquiring this land, the timber was harvested and there are several old logging roads that have grown over with vegetation. The BLM plans on using the footprint of the old logging roads for trails, wherever possible. At one time John Pointner maintained a dyke through the property to assist in agricultural crops. This has since grown over with wetland vegetation, but does remain somewhat visible. The tractor used to create the dyke is also currently on BLM property. In addition, there is a telephone line that crosses the BLM property. US Highway 95 borders the north side of the property and the cumulative effects analysis area. Also, the Post Falls dam controls the lake level, which changes seasonally.

## Reasonably Foreseeable Future Actions

Seasonal changes in the lake level will continue to occur as controlled by the Post Falls dam. Also, effects from use and maintenance of US Highway 95 will continue into the foreseeable future.

The Nature Conservancy (TNC) is considering adding trails along the TNC owned property to the south of the JCPMWS along Lake Coeur d'Alene. The TNC has approached the BLM and asked about building a trail onto their property after our trail has been completed. However, TNC does not yet have a detailed plan and this action is only speculative at this time.

During public scoping, the public was greatly in favor of building a boat dock or a pier for fishing or for people to dock their boats. However, this proposal is also only speculative at this time, and, therefore, will not be considered in analysis of cumulative effects.

### 3.1.2 Assumptions

The BLM used the following assumptions for analysis:

- Visitor use of the area would increase by 5,000 people/year
- The parking lot on the TNC lands would be filled to capacity on weekends and holidays.
- The incidence of homeless use or illegal use should decrease due to high recreational use.
- Potential conflicts will arise between recreational users and hunters along the shoreline.
- The risk of non-native, invasive plants being introduced into adjacent native vegetation would increase due to increased visitor use of the new trail area over current levels.

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## 3.2 Affected Resources

### 3.2.1 Vegetation/Special Status Species

The cumulative effects analysis area for the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary is approximately 1,920 acres. The direct action area is the upland area and consists of 28 acres. The wetland portion of the JCPMWS is 132 acres.

#### Affected Environment

##### *Vegetation Communities*

Vegetation in the action area consists primarily of upland forest dominated by ponderosa pine, Douglas fir, grand fir, and western larch. Other tree species such as western white pine, western red cedar, and western hemlock grow where moisture, light, and soil conditions favor these species. Wetlands are present where the existing trail borders Cougar Bay, while small draws catch enough moisture to support a minor amount of riparian vegetation. Meadow or dry grassy vegetation occurs from the parking area into part of the easement section of trail, with invasive, non-native species present over much of this stretch.

##### *Threatened or Endangered Plants*

No threatened or endangered plants occur in the action area. Therefore there will be no further discussion in this document.

##### *BLM Sensitive Plants*

The BLM completed a survey of the proposed new trail for sensitive plant species and found none. Hence, no sensitive plants will be affected by the proposed action.

##### *Wetlands and Riparian Zones*

Riparian and wetland vegetation in the action area is dominated by black cottonwood; thin-leaf and red alder; red-osier dogwood; cattails; reed canary grass; sedges; rushes; and bulrushes.

#### Direct/Indirect Effects

### **Proposed Action**

##### *Vegetation Communities*

Clearing a trail tread to bare ground on BLM land would destroy about 0.3 acres of mostly upland existing vegetation. Side-casting of excess soil from trail work could create a seed-bed into which common native vegetation or undesirable invasive species could re-grow. Periodic maintenance of trailside vegetation would prevent re-establishment and closing-off of this area, and would likely promote more sun-tolerant shrub and herbaceous species. Weeds may out-compete and displace desirable, native vegetation, altering plant community composition, structure, and function both in the present and future.

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## *Wetlands and Riparian Zones*

The new trail segment along the wetland area is a pre-existing trail and would not impact any wetlands. The primary impacts will be to the upland forest community therefore, impacts along the wetland stretch are expected to be minor.

## **No Action Alternative**

Continuation of casual trail use at the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary would impact native vegetation, potential habitat for rare species, and wetland and riparian areas, if plants are trampled along user-defined trails or weeds are introduced. Monitoring may not immediately detect weeds brought in by casual use or along “pioneered” trails, giving weeds a chance to establish and possibly out-compete native vegetation.

## Cumulative Impacts

The analysis area is the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, the adjacent area containing connected trails, and the wetland complex of Cougar Bay. (approximately 1920 acres).

Several types of natural or human-caused disturbance in the analysis area have created the present mosaic of vegetation in various stages of succession, including fire activity; flooding; extreme weather events (e.g., ice storm); erosion; road building and maintenance; homesite development; recreational pursuits; stream re-alignment; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam since the early 1900s.

Present day influences on vegetation in the analysis area include road encroachment and maintenance; flooding; erosion; recreational pursuits; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam.

Reasonably foreseeable future actions affecting vegetation include road encroachment and maintenance; flooding; erosion; recreational pursuits; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam.

Ongoing and future vegetation-disturbing activities in the analysis area would continue to promote a mosaic of plant communities in various stages of ecological succession. Ecological succession would proceed where vegetation is left undisturbed. Plant communities that revert to earlier ecological succession stages due to disturbance would begin the process of maturing all over again. Ongoing and proposed activities that impact vegetation would open up sites favorable to weed invasion due to ground disturbance and/or reduction of tree canopy cover. Where left untreated, weeds would continue to threaten native plant communities.

The proposed action would affect approximately 0.3 acres of about 1,920 acres of vegetation in the cumulative analysis area; therefore, this project is unlikely to contribute measurable cumulative effects to vegetation communities, special status plant species, or

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

wetland and riparian zones, due to the relatively small level of disturbance and its projected timing of implementation, when compared to the overall analysis area.

## 3.2.2 Wildlife

### Affected Environment

#### *Wildlife Habitat*

The proposed easement and trail are largely surrounded by upland vegetation dominated by ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. The relative abundance of mature ponderosa pine forest in north Idaho is low. This forest type has declined 60-70% in Idaho, and 85-98% in the greater Rocky Mountain and Inter Mountain West, and the eastside Cascade Mountains (Noss and others 1995). That makes the value of this habitat type to wildlife species, especially habitat specialists, disproportionate to its abundance.

The ponderosa pine community is host to several Special Status wildlife species. Both “generalist” wildlife species, such as coyote, and “habitat specialists” such as pygmy nuthatch, may inhabit the site. However, no formal surveys have been conducted on the site. The table below illustrates protected and Special Status species that may inhabit the site or were encountered during site visits.

#### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

There is no core or critical habitat, or documentation of federally protected species occurring on, in or near the project area. Therefore, these species are not addressed further in this document.

**Table 1. Migratory birds, raptors, Special Status Species, Species of Greatest Conservation Need and game animals that may inhabit the project site**

Species	Likely to Inhabit	Uncommon- May Inhabit	Encountered on Site Visit
Bald Eagle <sup>M</sup>	X		X
Northern Goshawk		X	
Northern pygmy owl*	X		
Flammulated owl* <sup>M</sup>		X	
Calliope hummingbird* <sup>M</sup>	X		
White-headed woodpecker*		X	
Lewis', woodpecker*		X	
Pygmy nuthatch*		X	
Cassin's finch* <sup>M</sup>	X		
Gray wolf*		X	
Fisher*		X	
Fringed Myotis		X	
Townsend's big-eared bat*		X	
Yuma myotis*	X		
Long-eared myotis*		X	
California myotis*		X	
Long-legged myotis*		X	
Western small-footed myotis*		X	

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

Species	Likely to Inhabit	Uncommon- May Inhabit	Encountered on Site Visit
Common garter snake*	X		
Northern alligator lizard*		X	
Coeur d' Alene Salamander*		X	

\*Special Status Species, <sup>M</sup> Migratory Bird

### *Special Status Species*

Very often, species that are habitat specialists are BLM Special Status Species or Idaho State Listed Species of Greatest Conservation Need. Their populations tend to be less secure because loss of their specialized habitat results in more dramatic population declines and higher rates of extinction (R.L.Smith 1992). Recovery of declining populations requires restoration of lost habitat which may be difficult for many reasons. Ponderosa pine specialists require ponderosa pine during some portion of their life history. Lewis' woodpecker and white-headed woodpecker use large ponderosa pine for excavating nesting cavities and for foraging. Pygmy nuthatches forage for insects along the bole of the ponderosa tree, and they store pine seeds from the cones in the knobby bark. Pygmy nuthatches excavate a nesting cavity in the soft wood of a dead limb or snag. Small family groups roost in the nesting cavity during the non-breeding season. Calliope humming birds build their nests on pine boughs or on the base of an old pine cone (Kaufman, 1996).

While the common garter snake is fairly common in north Idaho, the northern alligator lizard is relatively rare. The alligator lizard is a habitat specialist that can occur in many different upland habitats, but is limited to those habitats that have talus slopes, or rocky outcrops. Common garter snakes are found in many upland and riparian sites in the Panhandle region of Idaho. Usually they are not too far from a water source. They are habitat generalists that prey on insects, small fishes, amphibians, and occasionally small mammals and birds (NatureServe, 2009).

The Coeur d'Alene Salamander is associated with three habitat types; waterfall spray zones, springs and seeps, and stream edges. In wet weather they may be found under leaf litter, logs, and bark. Forest sites where they have been documented have at least 25% canopy cover but can be highly variable in cover type; from ponderosa pine to hemlock (Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, 2009). Because they respire (breath) through their skin, the most important habitat component for the Coeur d'Alene Salamander is moisture and humidity. On the project site, salamanders would be located in perpetually wet areas, such as a seep, spring or perennial stream banks.

The bat species found in Table 1 are habitat specialists because they require roosting and hibernating habitats that are very specific in their temperature and airflow requirements. Often bat populations, roosting sites, and life histories are not well known. This lack of knowledge leads most wildlife and land managers to take a more conservative approach when it comes to actions that may impact these bat species or their habitats. No mine workings, which would provide valuable roosting habitat, are known on this site. Some species that use snags, loose bark, cavities, or foliage for roosting may be present on the site. California myotis (myotis is a species of bats) prefer dry conifer sites, and they may

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

use this site for foraging. They may also roost under loose tree bark. The fringed myotis, which is relatively rare in north Idaho, is most likely to be found in low elevation ponderosa pine. Little is known about its roosting habitat requirements, but snags are one likely source in spring, summer, and early fall. Townsend's big eared bat may use this site for foraging and roosting. The long legged myotis and long eared myotis (bat) are both forest dwelling bats that use snags, caves, and sometimes structures as roosts. This site may provide both foraging and roosting habitat for these two species. Yuma myotis are most commonly found near open water so these bats are highly associated with wetlands. Because of the proximity of the project site to Blue Lake and the nearby wetlands along the lower Coeur d'Alene River, it is likely that Yuma bats may use this site for roosting and for foraging (Adams, 2003).

### *Migratory Birds*

The open forest canopy and shrub understory on the project site provide foraging and nesting habitat for numerous neo-tropical migrants in spring and summer.

Mature ponderosa pine, with an open and shrubby understory is a habitat type that supports both specialist and generalist migratory birds. Unlike ponderosa pine specialists, migratory birds that are generalists on the project site can usually fulfill all of their life history requirements in mixed coniferous forests, the shrubby forest understory, or in sunny forest openings with grasses and shrubs. These generalists that are likely to be on the project site are usually relatively common. These birds may nest in pine trees, from near to ground level up to the highest branches. They may be secondary cavity nesters, or nest on the ground.

### *Other Wildlife*

There is evidence of elk, deer, and wild turkey use on the site. The low elevation and proximity to water make this parcel particularly valuable to many wildlife species. This project site provides necessary habitat components for mountain lion, bear, grouse, bobcat, and numerous small mammal species.

### Direct/Indirect Effects

#### **Proposed Action**

##### *General Effects Common to All Species*

Disturbance, from human activity and noise, during construction has the potential to disturb any wildlife inhabiting the site. Most species are easily able to leave the area if disturbance is significant enough. However, this still is an energetic cost to the individual and in extreme cases can result in increased predation risk to the individual or its offspring. This disturbance will only occur during the 3 days when construction occurs.

Ground disturbance from trail construction (0.3 acres of trail construction in upland vegetation) can result in increased presence of invasive nonnative weed species. This

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

may ultimately lead to habitat degradation. Monitoring of and treatment of weeds along the trail corridor would help mitigate this effect.

### *Special Status Species and Migratory Birds*

Construction of new trail and improvement to existing trail will require brush removal and dirt work within the trail corridor. If construction takes place during the nesting season for migratory birds or Special Status birds, nest loss or abandonment may occur. Disturbance by laborers and equipment may be significant enough to cause stress to nesting birds and result in abandonment and/or predation of nests. Implementing trail improvements and construction outside of the nesting season would mitigate these impacts. Ideally construction would occur after August 1 and before April 1.

### **No Action Alternative**

Currently, recreationists are using the area on undesignated trails. Disturbance to wildlife is already occurring at some level and is not confined to a specific trail corridor. This disturbance would continue to occur under the No Action Alternative. However, disturbance would not be concentrated onto an improved trail, instead it would continue to occur on a network of pioneered and unofficial trails on the parcel.

Construction effects to nesting birds and wildlife would not occur under this alternative. There would be no disturbance to migratory or Special Status birds during the nesting season and energetic costs to individuals or loss of nests and offspring would not result. Soil would not be disturbed from construction and the potential spread of invasive plant species would not result. However, hikers would continue to spread these plants by disturbing soil on pioneered trails and introducing seeds from their shoes, pets, tires etc.

### Cumulative Effects

The analysis area includes the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, the adjacent area containing connected trails, and the wetland complex of Cougar Bay. (approximately three square miles or 1,920 acres).

Several types of natural or human-caused disturbance in the analysis area have created the present mosaic of wildlife habitat in various stages of succession, including fire activity; flooding; extreme weather events (e.g., ice storm); erosion; roadbuilding and maintenance; homesite development; recreational pursuits; stream re-alignment; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam since the early 1900s.

Present day influences on wildlife in the analysis area include road encroachment and maintenance; flooding; erosion; recreational pursuits; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam.

Reasonably foreseeable future actions affecting wildlife include road encroachment and maintenance; flooding; erosion; recreational pursuits; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam.

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

Ongoing and future activities in the analysis area would continue to promote a mosaic of wildlife habitats in various stages of ecological succession. Ecological succession would proceed where vegetation is left undisturbed. Plant communities that revert to earlier ecological succession stages due to disturbance would begin the process of maturing all over again. Ongoing and proposed activities that impact wildlife habitat would open up sites favorable to weed invasion due to ground disturbance and/or reduction of tree canopy cover. Where left untreated, weeds would continue to degrade wildlife habitat.

The proposed action would affect approximately 0.3 of about 1,920 acres of wildlife habitat in the analysis area; therefore, this project is unlikely to contribute measurable cumulative effects to wildlife communities or special status wildlife species due to the relatively small level of disturbance and its projected timing of implementation, when compared to the overall analysis area.

The no action alternative would contribute even less to cumulative effects. No construction impacts would occur and recreational use disturbance would not be concentrated onto an improved trail.

### 3.2.3 Aquatic/Special Status Species

#### Affected Environment

The proposed action would take place adjacent to Cougar Bay on Coeur d'Alene Lake. Cougar Creek is a small tributary stream to Coeur d'Alene Lake that enters at Cougar Bay.

Twelve native fishes inhabit the Coeur d'Alene Lake basin: northern pikeminnow (*Ptychocheilus oregonensis*), redbelt shiner (*Richardsonius balteatus*), torrent sculpin (*Cottus rhotheus*), shorthead sculpin (*C. confusus*), speckled dace (*Rhinichthys osculus*), longnose dace (*R. cataractae*), longnose sucker (*Catostomus catostomus*), largescale sucker (*Ca. macrocheilus*), bridgelip sucker (*Ca. columbianus*), mountain whitefish (*Prosopium williamsoni*), westslope cutthroat trout (*Oncorhynchus clarki lewisi*) and bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*). There are a variety of nonnative fish species found within the watershed as well, including smallmouth bass (*Micropterus dolomieu*), largemouth bass (*M. salmoides*), crappie (*Pomoxis* sp.), sunfish (*Lepomis* sp.), yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*), brown bullhead (*Ameiurus nebulosa*), channel catfish (*Ictalurus punctata*), northern pike (*Esox lucius*), brook trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), rainbow trout (*O. mykiss*), chinook salmon (*O. tshawytscha*), and kokanee (*O. nerka*).

#### *Threatened and Endangered Species*

Coeur d'Alene Lake contains bull trout which are federally listed as threatened. The Columbia River bull trout Distinct Population Segment was federally listed as threatened on June 10, 1998 by the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) (63 FR 31647); this includes bull trout in Coeur d'Alene Lake. The USFWS issued a final rule for bull trout

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

critical habitat on September 26, 2005, and on October 18, 2010 issued a revised designation of bull trout critical habitat, which includes Coeur d'Alene Lake.

Bull trout are not known or likely to use Cougar Creek, which is small and does not have the habitat to support bull trout spawning or rearing.

### *BLM Sensitive Species*

Westslope cutthroat trout, a BLM sensitive species, are found in Coeur d'Alene Lake and many of its tributaries including Cougar Creek. They spawn mainly in small tributaries from March through July, when water temperatures warm to about 50°F.

Westslope cutthroat trout stocks in the Coeur d'Alene Basin exist at a fraction of historic levels due to habitat degradation from activities such as mining, logging, development, and highway construction. Fishing pressure and introduction of non-native fish species has also contributed to reducing cutthroat numbers (USFWS, 1999; DuPont and Horner, 2003). Due to low numbers, the current fishing regulations for westslope cutthroat trout are catch-and-release in the entire Spokane River drainage, which includes the Spokane River above Post Falls Dam, Coeur d'Alene Lake and all tributary streams (Idaho Fish and Game website).

Westslope cutthroat trout use Cougar Creek year-round, and are also found in Cougar Bay.

### Direct/Indirect Effects

#### **Proposed Action**

No direct effects to fish species inhabiting Cougar Creek or Cougar Bay from construction or use of the trail would occur. Indirect effects from construction and use of the trail could occur if sediment were to be mobilized and enter the water. However, only a short section of the proposed trail is within about 100 feet of Cougar Bay; the rest of the trail heads up the hillside away from the water. Construction of the trail would mostly involve removal of small trees, shrubs, and downed wood with very little ground disturbance. Use of the trail also would be expected to create very little disturbance. Due to the lack of disturbance, the distance of most of the trail from Cougar Creek and Cougar Bay, and the vegetation that is located between the proposed trail and the water, sediment is not expected to move into Cougar Creek or Cougar Bay, therefore no indirect effects to fish or fish habitat are anticipated. The proposed action would have "No Effect" on bull trout or bull trout designated critical habitat.

#### **No Action**

There would be no direct or indirect effects of trail construction or use on fish or fish habitat in Cougar Creek or Cougar Bay.

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## Cumulative Effects

Since there would be no direct or indirect effects from the proposed action or no action alternative, there would be no contribution to cumulative effects on fish species.

### 3.2.4 Cultural Resources

A cultural resource inventory was conducted in the project area. No cultural resources were located in the proposed trail location. Hence no cultural resources would be affected by the proposed project or no action alternative.

### 3.2.5 Invasive Species

#### Affected Environment

Historic activities in the project area (primarily logging) created disturbances allowing the invasion of noxious weeds. The majority of the current weed populations are closely associated with these past activities. Old logging roads, skid trails, and the transition area between wetland and upland are areas with existing noxious weed populations. Despite these activities, the majority of the area is weed free or has only minor weed infestations. Noxious weeds currently identified on the JPMWS property are:

Spotted knapweed	<i>Centaurea maculosa</i>
Common tansy	<i>Tanacetum vulgare</i>
Meadow hawkweed	<i>Hieracium caespitosum</i>
Common mullein	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>
Canada thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Oxeye daisy	<i>Chrysanthemum leucanthemum</i>
Bull thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## Direct/Indirect Effects

### **Proposed Action**

The construction activities would likely have a direct effect by increasing the localized invasive plant invasion into 0.3 acres disturbed areas. Indirect effects would be caused by increased human traffic (5,000 visitors/year) and possible ongoing ground disturbance and possible introduction of new invasive species into the area. Short term results would likely be an increase in invasive plants following construction.

Trail construction disturbs the soil creating available sites for invasive plant establishment. Once established, trails also provide a conduit for invasive species spread. Weed seeds or other reproductive plant parts maybe inadvertently carried into new areas by hikers, pets or wildlife.

Disturbed areas will be monitored for post-project vegetation recovery. Areas that do not vegetate quickly and would be vulnerable to weed invasion will be planted with native and/or desirable non-native species.

### **No Action**

Construction disturbance and associated opportunity for introduction of weeds would not occur. However, monitoring may not immediately detect weeds brought in by casual use or along pioneered trails, giving weeds a chance to establish and possibly out-compete native vegetation.

## Cumulative effects

There are many factors in the analysis area that contribute to the spread of noxious weeds including: logging, wildlife, wildland fires, recreation and other uses.

Noxious weed control efforts in the project area would be conducted as part of the Inland Empire Cooperative Weed Management Area (IECWMA). These cooperators have noxious weed control responsibilities and interests on adjacent and co-mingled lands in the area. Uncontrolled weed populations in one jurisdiction greatly affect the ability of other land managers to control weeds on lands they administer. The IECWMA promotes an integrated weed management program throughout the area that includes public relations, education and training in the noxious weed arena, along with coordination of weed control efforts and methods, and sharing of resources.

Past events such as road-building and use; logging; and recreational activity have contributed to weed invasion on BLM and non-BLM lands. Where left untreated, these weeds may have persisted and continued to threaten native plant communities; although in areas where plant canopy has provided sufficiently shaded conditions, weeds may have not established or decreased in extent over time. Where effective treatment has occurred, weeds have been either eradicated or their spread into native vegetation was curtailed. Ongoing and reasonably foreseeable actions on non-BLM land which would increase the threat of weed invasion into native plant communities include road-building and use; logging; fire; wildlife, and recreational activity.

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

The short term effects of the proposed action may result in increased weed establishment and spread in areas of ground disturbance (0.3acres). Over the long term, established trails may provide avenues for weed seed dispersal into the project area. Alternatively, the trails will provide increased access for weed control activities such as monitoring and treatment. These efforts undertaken by BLM on public lands would contribute positive cumulative effects on noxious weeds through participation in the IECWMA and implementation of the proposed action.

Cumulative impacts would be similar under the no action alternative to those described for the proposed action. However, the local weed impacts would be lessened. No disturbance from trail construction and low visitor traffic would result in fewer weed introductions and fewer opportunities for spread than those resulting from the proposed action. No action would provide less access for weed control and inventory would make finding and controlling any existing weeds more difficult.

### 3.2.6 Soil and Water Resources

#### Affected Environment

The primary soil type in the project area is Kruse silt loam, on 20-35 percent slopes (USDA, NRCS, 2008). The soil is well drained and consists of silt loam and loam to a depth of 46-63 inches. It is derived from volcanic ash and/or loess over mixed colluvium. In the wetlands, the soil type is classified as Pywell muck, on slopes of 0-2 percent. The parent material is herbaceous and/or woody organic material.

#### Direct/Indirect Effects

##### **Proposed Action**

The proposed new trail on BLM land would be located far enough upslope to leave an effective vegetative buffer between the trail and the lake.

The proposed action would not measurably affect water quality of Lake Coeur d'Alene or the wetlands. Although increased foot traffic (assumed at 5,000 visitors/yr) would generate a small increase in erosion off of the trail, the vegetated buffer below the trail would effectively trap sediment. The new trail section would avoid wetland areas and be designed to drain properly, thereby, minimizing puddling and concentrated runoff. Through good drainage design, and regular trail maintenance, impacts to soil or water resources would be very minimal.

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## Cumulative Effects

The analysis area is the John Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary, the adjacent area containing connected trails, and the wetland complex of Cougar Bay. (approximately three square miles or 1,920 acres).

As described in the vegetation section of this document, several types of natural or human-caused disturbance in the analysis area have created the present mosaic of vegetation in various stages of succession, including fire activity; flooding; extreme weather events (e.g., ice storm); erosion; road building and maintenance; home site development; recreational pursuits; stream re-alignment; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam since the early 1900s.

Present day influences on Lake Coeur d'Alene in the analysis area include road encroachment and maintenance; flooding; erosion; recreational pursuits; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam.

Reasonably foreseeable future actions affecting vegetation include road encroachment and maintenance; flooding; erosion; recreational pursuits; agricultural use; and lake levels controlled by the Post Falls Dam.

The proposed action would affect approximately 0.3 of about 1,920 acres of vegetation in the analysis area; therefore, this project is unlikely to contribute measurable cumulative effects to water quality, vegetation communities or wetland and riparian zones, due to the relatively small level of disturbance and its projected timing of implementation, when compared to the overall analysis area.

Continuation of casual trail use at the John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary under the no action alternative would have minor impacts on wetland and riparian areas if poorly maintained trails contribute sediment.

### 3.2.7 Recreation/Visual Resource Management

#### Affected Environment

The entire project area is classified as a Class II Visual Resource Management (VRM) area. The objective of this class is to retain the existing characteristic landscape. The level of change in any of the basic landscape elements due to management activities should be low and not evident. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape (BLM Manual H-8410-1 - Visual Resource Inventory).

The JCPMWS property is within the Lake Coeur d'Alene Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA). This SRMA is managed for land and water based leisure activities for outdoor sports, relaxation, social group or family affiliation, and personal

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

enrichment or learning through environmental study within accessible natural forested lakeshore settings.

The JCPMWS trail is within the Cougar Bay complex and is maintained as a 'no wake' area to limit large boat traffic and preserve the nesting waterfowl and wildlife in the area. The area does not have a predominance of road or trails visible from the JCPMWS property.

## Direct/Indirect Effects

### **Proposed Action**

As described within the affected environment section, the surrounding landscape currently shows little impacts from past human activities. The JCPMWS property itself has some old overgrown logging roads, 80 percent of the new trail will follow these previously constructed roads. The proposed action of trail building will not remove many trees and will maintain the natural characteristics of the landscape. The trail that is to be used along the lake is an already 'user defined' trail that will simply be used to assist in completing the trail system. The trail design will have minimal impacts to visual resources and will assist in defining proper locations for recreationalists to travel within these BLM lands. The trail system will increase the public's enjoyment of the area and vistas of Lake Coeur d'Alene. Construction of the trail is consistent with the objectives under the Coeur d'Alene Lake SRMA.

The trail system will greatly enhance visitor's ability to access the property. The trail system will enhance the areas recreation by providing a place to observe nature close to the City of Coeur d'Alene. The trail system will be contoured to minimize visual impacts to the landscape. The trail should be small enough to not be noticed from Highway 95 or from the lakeside viewshed.

The improved trail system and increased visitor use will deter homeless use, garbage dumping, and unauthorized fire pits, which currently detract from the recreational experience.

### **No Action**

The No Action alternative will not have any direct impacts on any of the visual resources of the Lake Coeur d'Alene viewshed. There is currently some uncontrolled use on the JCPMWS property. Under the no action alternative the impacts from uncontrolled recreational use would be random and uncontrolled, but recreational use would likely continue at current levels. Homeless use, garbage dumping, and unauthorized fire pits, would continue to detract from the recreational experience.

## Cumulative Effects

In addition to the existing and proposed trail systems at JCPMWS, Mineral Ridge, Blue Creek, and Tubbs Hill provide similar recreation opportunities within 3 miles of downtown Coeur d'Alene. While there are no major actions affecting recreational use at Mineral Ridge or Blue Creek, now or in the foreseeable future, there is on-going

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

construction that affects access to the trail head for Tubbs Hill. This construction is slated for completion within the next year. The proposed action will slightly increase opportunities in the area, while the no action alternative would allow the current opportunities to remain unchanged.

## 3.4 Mitigation and Monitoring

All the mitigation and monitoring recommendations were moved to the design features of the proposed action.

## 4 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

### 4.1 Preparation of this EA included consultation and coordination with the following:

Coeur d'Alene Tribe  
The Nature Conservancy  
Hagadone Properties  
US Fish and Wildlife Service  
US Army Corp of Engineers  
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office

### 4.2 Preparers

Kurt Pindel (Recreation)  
LeAnn Abell (Botanist)  
Larry Kaiser (Forester)  
Doug Evans (Natural Resource Specialist)  
Carrie Hugo (Wildlife Biologist)  
David Sisson (Archeologist)  
Mike Stevenson (Soils/Hydrology)  
Cynthia Weston (Fisheries Biologist)

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

## 5 REFERENCES

- Adams, R.A. 2003. Bats of the Rocky Mountain West. University Press of Colorado. Boulder, CO. USA. 289pp.
- Asher, J. 1998. The spread of invasive weeds in western wildlands: A state of biological emergency. The Governor's Idaho Weed Summit. Boise, Idaho. May 1998.
- BLM. 1996. Partners Against Weeds: An Action Plan for the Bureau of Land Management.
- BLM. 2007a. Record of Decision for the Vegetation Treatments on Bureau of Land Management Lands in 17 Western States Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement. BLM, Nevada State Office, Reno, Nevada.
- BLM. 2007b. Coeur D'Alene Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision. U. S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Coeur D'Alene, Idaho. <http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/prog/planning.html>
- Buchanan, D.M., and S.V. Gregory. 1997. Development of water temperature standards to protect and restore habitat for bull trout and other cold water species in Oregon. Pages 1-8 in W.C. Mackay, M.K. Brewin and M. Monita (eds). Friends of the Bull Trout Conference Proceedings. Bull Trout Task Force (Alberta), c/o Trout Unlimited Calgary, Alberta, Canada.
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Birds of North America Online [Internet]. Available from: <http://bna.birds.cornell.edu/bna>.
- DuPont, J. and N. Horner. 2003. Regional fisheries management investigations, Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Federal Aid in Fish Restoration, F-71-R-28, Job c-2, 2003 Performance Report, Cutthroat Trout Trend Assessment. Boise, Idaho.
- Fraley, J.J. and B.B. Shepard. 1989. Life history, ecology and population status of migratory bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) in the Flathead Lake and River system, Montana. Northwest Science 63:133-143.
- Goetz, F. 1994. Distribution and juvenile ecology of bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) in the Cascade Mountains. Master's Thesis. Oregon State University, Corvallis, Oregon.
- Graham, P.J., B.B. Shepard, and J.J. Fraley. 1981. Use of stream habitat classifications to identify bull trout spawning areas in streams. Pages 186-192 in N.B. Armantrout, editor. Acquisition and utilization of aquatic habitat inventory information. 1982. Western Division of the American Fisheries Society, Bethesda, Maryland.

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

---

- Jakober, M. 1995. Autumn and winter movement and habitat use of resident bull trout and westslope cutthroat trout in Montana. Masters Thesis, Montana State University, Bozeman, Montana.
- Kaufman, Kenneth. 1996. Lives of North American Birds. Houghton Mifflin. New York, NY. 675pp.
- McPhail, J.D. and C.B. Murray. 1979. The early life-history and ecology of dolly varden (*Salvelinus malma*) in the Upper Arrow Lakes. University of British Columbia, Department of Zoology and Institute of Animal Resources, Vancouver, British Columbia.
- McPhail, J.D., and J.S. Baxter. 1996. A review of bull trout (*Salvelinus confluentus*) life-history and habitat use in relation to compensation and improvement opportunities. Department of Zoology, University of British Columbia. Fisheries Management Report No. 104. Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.
- Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks. Montana Animal Field Guide [Internet]. Available from: <http://fwp.mt.gov/fieldguide/>.
- Nature Serve. Nature Serve Explorer [Internet]. Available from: <http://www.natureserve.org/explorer/>.
- Noss, R.F., E.T. LaRoe III, and J.M. Scott. 1995. Endangered Ecosystems of the United States: a preliminary assessment of loss and degradation. USDI, National Biological Service, Biological Report 28. Washington, D.C. 58pp.
- Panhandle Bull Trout Technical Advisory Team (PBBTTAT). 1998. Lake Pend Oreille key watershed bull trout problem assessment. Prepared for the State of Idaho. Boise, Idaho.
- Montana Bull Trout Scientific Group (MBTSG). 1998. The relationship between land management activities and habitat requirements of bull trout. Unpubl. Report prepared for the Montana Bull Trout Restoration Team, Helena, Montana.
- Pratt, K.L. 1992. A review of bull trout life history. Pages 5 - 9 *in*: Howell, P.J. and D.V. Buchanan, eds., Proceedings of the Gearhart Mountain bull trout workshop. Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, Corvallis, Oregon.
- Ratliff, D. E. and P. J. Howell. 1992. The status of bull trout populations in Oregon. Pages 10-17 *in* Howell, P.J. and D.V. Buchanan, eds., Proceedings of the Gearhart Mountain bull trout workshop. Oregon Chapter of the American Fisheries Society, Corvallis, Oregon.
- Rieman, B.E. and J. D. McIntyre. 1993. Demographic and habitat requirements for conservation of bull trout. USDA Forest Service, Intermountain Research Station, GTR INT-302, Ogden, Utah.

## John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

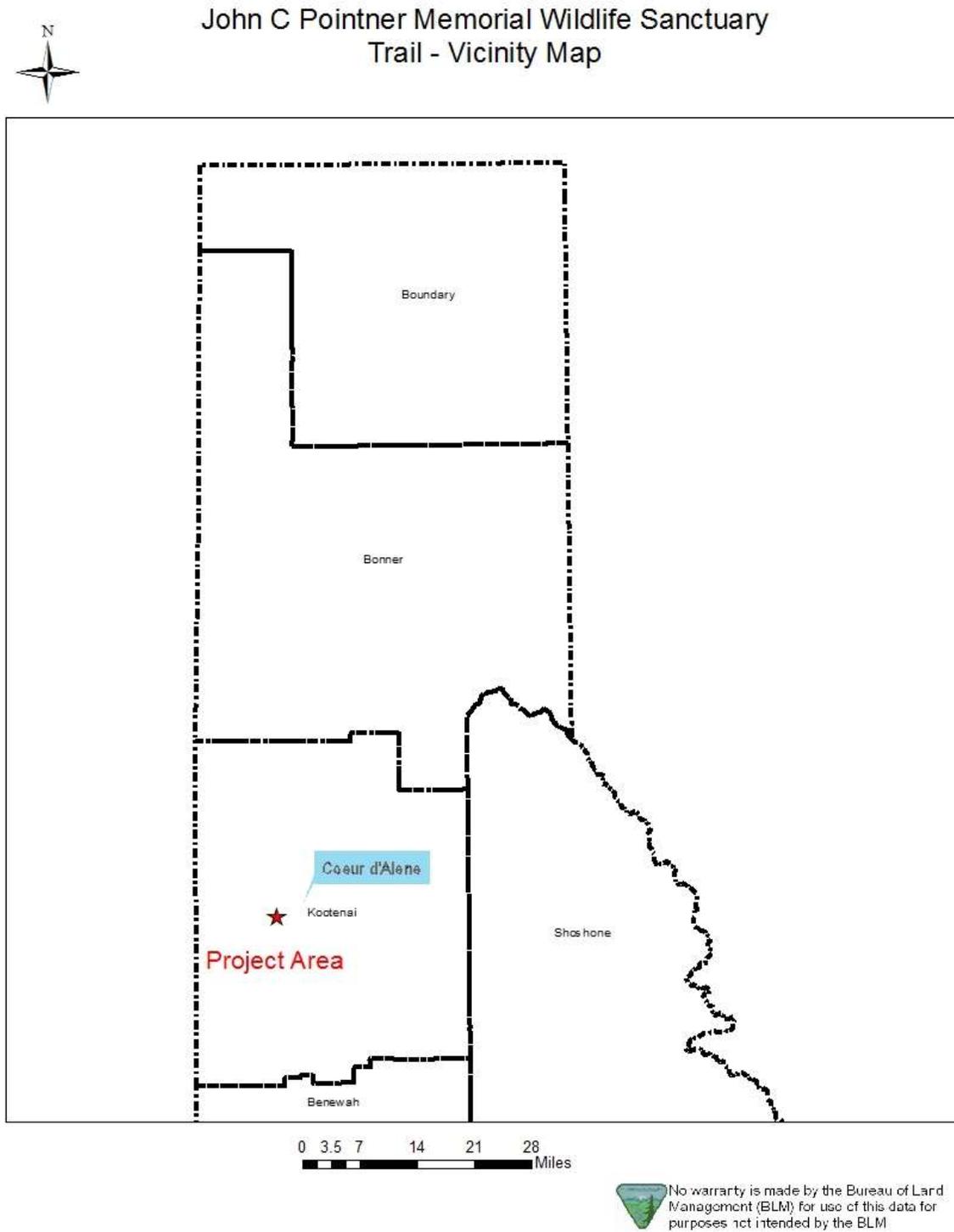
---

- Rieman, B.E. and J. D. McIntyre. 1995. Occurrence of bull trout in naturally fragmented habitat patches of varied size. *Transactions of the American Fisheries Society* 124(3): 285-296.
- Rieman, B.E., D.C. Lee, and R.F. Thurow. 1997. Distribution, status, and likely future trends of bull trout within the Columbia River and Klamath River basins. *North American Journal of Fisheries Management* 17:1111-1125.
- Sheley, R.L. and J.K. Petroff (eds.). 1999. *Biology and Management of Noxious Rangeland Weeds*. Oregon State University Press. Corvallis, Oregon. 438 pgs
- Smith, R.L. 1992. *Elements of Ecology*. Third Edition. Harpers Collins Publishers Inc. New York, NY. USA. 617pp.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 1999. *Status Review for Westslope Cutthroat Trout in the United States*. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. 188pps.
- Weaver, T.M. and R.G. White. 1985. *Coal Creek fisheries study no. III*. Montana State Cooperative Fisheries Research Unit, Bozeman, Montana. 94 pp.

# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

## APPENDICES

MAP 1.



# John C Pointner Memorial Wildlife Sanctuary Trail

Map 2

