OLD POWERLINE ROAD ATV TRAIL

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

BLM

Cottonwood Field Office, Idaho

Cottonwood Field Office
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1 INTRODUCTION

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Cottonwood Field Office (CFO) proposes to construct 118 feet of motorized trail in Idaho County, southeast of Elk City, Idaho, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designate the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width (Map 2). This designation will be incorporated into the CFO Travel Management Plan.

The Proposed Action includes reopening a decommissioned road prism, creating a 55" wide trail restricting travel to motorized vehicles less than 50" in width and decommissioning a pioneered route created on BLM lands (Map 2) in 2011 by local motorized users as described in Section 2.2. The proposed project is located in T. 29 N., R. 8 E., Section 25 within the American River drainage, in Idaho County, Idaho just southeast of the rural community of Elk City (See Map 1).

1.1 Background

The CFO administers approximately 12,859 acres of BLM lands within the Elk City Township. Elk City is a popular Off-Road Vehicle (OHV) destination for the local and regional communities including Lewiston and Boise, Idaho. One of the attractions of the Elk City area is the availability of trails that access hunting, fishing, sightseeing and gold panning opportunities as well as the adjoining US Forest Service (USFS) trail network.

In 2012, the CFO received a proposal from the Idaho County Board of Commissioners, Idaho to re-open the former road segment, to motorized vehicles less than 50" in width (Map 2). Idaho County Commissioners obtained a 5-year easement (Attachment 3), on April 8, 2014, from Bennett Forest Industries (BFI) to permit public access on the segment of road identified on Map 2. There is local community support for the proposed action to create the opportunity for a loop trail and also provide secondary motorized fire escape route for the land owners within the American River drainage.

The road segment was decommissioned by the BLM as part of the Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project in 2008. The Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (RMP) (BLM 2009) designated a trail open to yearlong motorized vehicles less than 50" in width, northwest of the proposed trail (located near the "P" symbol on Map 2) with the intention of building an OHV bridge across the American River, thereby creating a loop opportunity. The BLM subsequently did not construct an OHV bridge and closed the route as a result of BFI informing the BLM of their intent to not allow public access on approximately one-mile of the road crossing adjacent BFI property. The BLM decommissioned the river crossing and road prism east of the river to prevent trespass issues during the late summer and early fall of 2011. An unauthorized pioneered route was created on BLM managed lands in the fall of 2011 by the local motorized community to circumvent the closed route, creating trespass issues on multiple segments of BFI managed lands on both sides of the American River.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the action is to provide Idaho County trail users, and other members of the public, legal access across public land, in T. 29 N., R. 8 E., Section 25, managed by the BLM to connect to the easement acquired by Idaho County on BFI Land, and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

The BLM's objectives for the Proposed Action include:

(a) Conform to applicable laws and the Cottonwood Resource Management Plan (BLM 2009),

(b) Ensure public safety,

(c) Protect resources,

(d) Serve the public interest.

(e) Repair damage from and prevent future pioneered trail development

The RMP states that the BLM will "manage lands for non-motorized, mechanized, and motorized recreation activities in a variety of settings". The BLM will "make future route modifications (amending, revising, or revoking route designations) as needed based on access needs, recreational opportunities, results of environmental monitoring, and natural and cultural resource constraints".

The need for the Proposed Action is to respond to the Idaho County proposal to re-open the route east of the American river. Also, damage to resources caused by pioneered trail development in the American River drainage needs to be repaired.

1.3 Relationship to Laws, Policies and Land Use Plans

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) requires an action under consideration be in conformance with the applicable BLM land use plan, and be consistent with other federal, state, local and tribal policies to the maximum extent possible. This EA has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of NEPA and any additional Federal, State, and local statutes that may be relevant to the proposed action, such as those cited below.

1.3.1 BLM Land Use Plan Conformance

The proposed action is in conformance with the Record of Decision and Approved Cottonwood Resource Management Plan, as it was approved on December 21, 2009 (BLM 2009).

Table 1: Cottonwood RMP Conformance

Resource or Use	Citation from 2009 Approved Cottonwood RMP
Aquatic Resources, Fish, and Special Status Fish (AF)	**Action AF-1.3.6-** Promote actions that support achievement of good quality riparian and aquatic habitats. Such actions may include, but are not limited to the following: …decommissioning of unneeded roads; and modification/elimination of land uses that further retard or preclude achievement of aquatic and riparian DFCs.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC)	**American River Historic Sites District ACEC** Objective AR-1.12-Protect cultural resources, specifically historical mining sites through the designation of the American River Historic Sites District ACEC.
Cultural Resources	**Goal CR-1**-Preserve and protect significant cultural resources and ensure that they are available for appropriate uses. **Goal CR-2**-Reduce imminent threats and resolve potential conflicts from natural or human-caused deterioration, or potential conflict with other resources uses, by ensuring that all authorizations for land use and resource use will comply with National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106.
Lands and Realty	**Objective LR-2.3-**Minimize the adverse impacts of unauthorized use of the public lands.
Recreation	**Goal RC-1—**Manage public lands and waters to provide a broad spectrum of recreation experiences and benefits. **Objective RC-1.3**-Manage areas for an undeveloped recreation-tourism market to provide opportunities for local residents and visitors to pursue land based activities… with an emphasis on hunting, backing country recreation, all-terrain vehicle trail riding, and snow recreation.
BLM Sensitive Status Plants	**Objective SP-1.3**—Manage Idaho BLM sensitive plants and their habitats to contribute to conservation of the species and removal of the species from protective status.
Travel Management	**Goal TM-1**—Manage travel, roads, and trails to provide access and recreation opportunities, while minimizing resource impacts and user conflicts. **Objective TM-1.2-**Identify routes where motorized vehicle use restrictions are necessary to minimize user conflicts and minimize resource damage. **Objective TM-1.3-**Make future route modifications (amending, revising, or revoking route designations) as needed based on access needs, recreational opportunities, results of environmental monitoring, and natural and cultural resource constraints. **Action TM-1.3.4**-… [Designated] trails shall be located in a manner to minimize impacts on physical resources (soils, watersheds, vegetation, air, and other resources)…
Wildlife and Special Status Wildlife (WS)	**Action WS-1.1.2**—Before authorizing new federal actions within areas providing suitable habitat for federally listed, proposed or candidate species, determine if direct, indirect or cumulative impacts could occur as a result of BLM discretionary actions.

1.3.2 Consistency with BLM Policy

BLM Manual 1626 – Travel and Transportation Manual (Public)

1.3.3 Consistency with Non-BLM Authorities

The Proposed Action is consistent with other Federal, State and local land use policies and plans to include:

Executive Order 13186 requires the BLM and other Federal agencies to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to provide protection for migratory birds.

Executive Order 11989, (Off-road Vehicles on Public Lands) (42 FR 26959; May 25, 1977) establishes policies and procedures to ensure that off-road vehicle use shall be controlled so as to protect public lands.

Executive Order 13195, (Trails for America in the 21st Century) FR Doc 01-2141 directs Federal agencies - in cooperation with tribes, states, local governments, and interested citizen groups - to protect, connect, promote, and assist trails of all types throughout the United States and describes the means by which this will be accomplished.

In addition, the Proposed Action would comply with the following laws and/or agency regulations, other plans and are consistent with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, regulations:

- The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), as amended, 43 U.S. Code (U.S.C.) 1701 et seq.
- Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA), as amended
- The National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended (Public Law 89-665; 80 Stat. 915; 16 U.S.C. 470).
- The Antiquities Act of 1906, 16 U.S.C. 431-433
- The Archeological Resources Protection Act, 16 U.S.C. 470aa.
- The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), as amended, 42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*
- The Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 7418.
- The Outdoor Recreation Act of May 28, 1963 (16 U.S.C. 4601-1).
- 43 CFR 2930
- Clean Air Act Section 176(c) (1)
- The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 U.S.C. 668-668c) 1940,
- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Management,
- Executive Order 119990, Protection of Wetlands.

The project area is located in Idaho County, Idaho. The Proposed Action is consistent with the 2006 State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation and Tourism Plan (SCORTP) which identifies the following areas of emphasis:

- Maintain public access to public recreation/tourism opportunities;
- Promote and provide for the safe and enjoyable use of public recreation/tourism facilities and opportunities.

And Idaho IDAPA 13.01.08.411:

- Travel is limited to roads, trails and areas that are designated open by the land management agency for motorized vehicle use.
- Travel by motorized vehicles that causes damage to wildlife habitat, riparian areas, cultural or natural resources, or property or improvements is prohibited.

1.4 Identification of Issues For Analysis

The identification of issues for this EA was accomplished by considering the resources that could be affected from alternative implementation.

1.4.1 Issues to be Analyzed in Detail

Through preliminary analysis, the BLM identified potentially affected resources, issues, and/or concerns; reasonable alternatives that could achieve the purpose and need; and potentially interested or affected stakeholders during Interdisciplinary Team meetings (IDT) held on March 3, 2013 and again on August 30, 2013. On September 23, 2013, the BLM invited the public to comment on the Proposed Action by sending a scoping letter to 57 members of the public, affected stakeholders, and interested parties and posting information about the project on the internet.

After considering the comments received during the scoping period, the BLM identified the following relevant issues which will be carried forward for evaluation in this EA:

- **Air Quality:** Actions authorized under the Proposed Action would result in vehicle emissions and some fugitive dust from vehicular travel on unpaved roads in the project area.

- **Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC):** Actions authorized under the Proposed Action or alternatives may affect the values of the American River Historic Sites District ACEC.

- **ESA-listed fish, aquatic habitats, and water quality:** Actions identified for the Proposed Action and alternatives may affect ESA-listed and BLM sensitive fish species and aquatic habitats. Vegetation and soil disturbance from trail construction, trail maintenance, trail decommissioning and trail use would result in varying levels of erosion and sediment.

- **Cultural Resources:** The actions authorized under the Proposed Action may directly or indirectly affect culture resources. The project area contains numerous sensitive cultural archeological resources.

- **Recreation:** Actions authorized under the Proposed Action or alternative may affect recreation users in the project area by creating user conflicts (fishermen, ATV and OHV users), and public safety issues.

- **Socioeconomics:** Actions authorized under the Proposed Action or the alternatives may affect the socioeconomic conditions of the region.

- **Wildlife habitat, migratory birds, and Idaho BLM sensitive wildlife species:** Actions authorized under the Proposed Action or the alternatives may affect wildlife habitats, migratory birds, and Idaho BLM sensitive wildlife species.

- **Riparian Conservation Area:** The project area is within the American River Riparian Conservation Area (RCA); which includes areas within 300 feet of American River. Actions conducted within RCAs may affect desired riparian and aquatic conditions.

1.4.2 Issues Considered but Eliminated from Detailed Analysis

During scoping, a number of issues were proposed for consideration in this EA. Some of these are beyond the scope of this EA – actions beyond the scope of this EA include all actions not related to decisions that would occur as a result of the Proposed Action or one of the alternatives. They include decisions that are not under the jurisdiction of the BLM or are beyond the capability of the BLM to resolve as part of this EA process. Other issues identified apply to resources or uses that would not be affected by the Proposed Action. These types of issues are listed in Table 2.

Table 2: Issues Considered but not Analyzed in Detail

ACTION PROPOSED	RATIONALE FOR DETERMINATION
ESA Listed Plants	No candidate, proposed, or Endangered Species Act (ESA) listed plants occur within the project or analysis area.
Wastes (hazardous or solid)	The Proposed Action includes measures to protect the area from hazardous or solid waste spills. Effects associated with the project would therefore be negligible.

2 ALTERNATIVES

The chapter describes the Proposed Action and the No Action alternatives to addressing the Idaho County proposal within the project area. It also describes the alternative that BLM considered but eliminated from further analysis in the next chapter of this EA.

2.1 Description of the Alternatives

2.1.1 Proposed Action

The BLM proposes to construct 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designate the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width. The route designation would be incorporated into the CFO Travel Management Plan. The proposed action would be limited to the portion of the road on BLM managed lands.

The Proposed Action would include construction of a 55" wide trail by removing the berm, rock barrier and other material used previously to decommission the road prism over a one week or less timeframe when the route is dry enough to provide a stable working surface. This will be accomplished with an excavator and crews using hand equipment (e.g., chainsaws, shovels, etc.). As needed, appropriate trail drainage and erosion control measures would be implemented. The parking area would remain on the landscape (see Map 2). If, in the future, BFI revokes the County's easement or a permanent easement is not obtained from BFI, a gate or permanent barrier would be installed at the parking area to prevent trespass onto BFI managed lands.

In addition, the pioneered route (approximately 140 feet) created on BLM managed lands (Map 2) in 2011, would be decommissioned and restoration of disturbed riparian areas would be conducted. The pioneered route crossing BLM lands would be decommissioned by partially re-contouring and deep ripping. Several large boulders would be selectively placed at the trail junction to restrict motorized access. Disturbed areas would be seeded with desired species (Table 3) and mulched with weed free straw and large wood debris. Planting of desired riparian shrubs and trees would also be conducted.

2.1.1.1 Environmental Design/Resource Protection

Best Management Practices

Best Management Practices will be used to convert the proposed trail segment and decommission the pioneered route created by the local ATV users. These stipulations are subject to modification as needed to accommodate new regulations, issues and/or any resource concerns identified by monitoring.

Design Feature

The seed mixture shown in Table 3, below is recommended for restoration of disturbed areas that are identified as a result of standard monitoring procedures. Areas should also be mulched and larger sized woody debris placed to prevent adverse erosion as necessary. All mulch and seed utilized for revegetation activities shall be certified as weed free. Decommissioning of the pioneered route would also include the planting of desired riparian shrubs and trees, such as willow, red-osier dogwood, alder, serviceberry, and Engelmann spruce.

Table 3. Restoration Seed Mixture for CFO		
Species – Common Name	Scientific Name	Lbs. Per Acre
Mountain brome "Bromar"	*Bromus marginatus*	7
Streambank wheatgrass "Sodar"	*Elymus lanceolatus* ssp. *psammophilus*	8
Tufted hairgrass	*Deschampsia caespitosa*	2
Western yarrow	*Achillea millefolium*	0.5
Golden pea	*Thermopsis montana*	2
TOTAL		19.5

The project area is within an invasive plant inventory and treatment area. The existing American River ATV trail and the proposed ATV trail conversion route have been inventoried and invasive plants treated as part of ongoing integrated weed management efforts.

2.1.2 No Action Alternative

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands.

2.2 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated From Detailed Analysis

2.2.1 The Limited Action Alternative

The Limited Action Alternative would decommission the pioneered route, rehabilitate the riparian zone damage, and terminate the route at the turn-round (see Map 2) by placing permanent barriers of concrete and rebar at both ends of the pioneered trail on BLM managed lands. This alternative would not create a loop trail, a secondary evacuation route for local homeowners, nor would it be likely to prevent future pioneered trail construction to circumvent the trail closure and therefore would not meet the purpose and need of this project.

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 General Setting

The project area includes public lands within Idaho County, Idaho located southeast of Elk City parallel to American River (see Map 1). It is within the BLM Cottonwood Field Office, is adjacent to private lands and also in close proximity to US Forest Service Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forest (USFS) lands. Several small residential/commercial areas are located nearby in addition to multiple motorized trail and road systems connecting communities and recreational resources.

3.2 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."

3.2.1 Past, Present and Future Actions

Human caused and natural events have had varying levels of impacts on the resource values associated with BLM managed lands located within the project and cumulative analysis area. Past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions of BLM and others on public and private lands that are pertinent to the analysis of cumulative effects include: recreational use, vegetation/timber harvest activities, wild and prescribed fires, invasive plant control actions, special status plant, wildlife, and fish conservation and restoration actions, livestock grazing, extensive mining, road construction/maintenance, and private land development. These activities have had moderate to major localized effects on resources such as soils, vegetation, water quality, fish and wildlife habitat.

Current mining activity in the vicinity of the Elk City area includes the Lone Pine Lode Exploration on USFS lands, which is located about three miles downstream from the project area on Crooked Creek.

There have been about 10,684 acres of timber harvest in the watershed. The majority of timber harvest occurred from the 1960s – 1990s. Most of the larger timber sales in American River included over 269 miles of concurrent road construction. There are

currently approximately 238 miles of road in the drainage. The road density is 2.3 miles/square mile.

OHV use is a popular recreational activity on BLM lands located within the project area along with other recreational uses such as sight-seeing, camping, hunting, fishing, recreational mining, and horseback use. Providing access to the BLM, USFS and private lands within the project and analysis area provides high value recreational opportunities.

Three recent land management projects that have been identified within the American River watershed include the BLM American River Restoration Project (USDI-BLM 2006a and b), Telephone Creek Restoration Project (USDI-FS 2008) and the Eastside Township Fuels and Vegetation Project (USDI-BLM 2008). The majority of these projects are completed; however, portions are still ongoing. During 2014, two undersized culverts (diameter 11 feet 4 inches) that were partial/full fish passage barriers at the mouth of American River were replaced with a 46 feet 9 inch diameter arch culvert. These activities have affected the aquatic and terrestrial conditions in American River by adding sediment to the river during construction activities.

Past fires have resulted in locally severe erosion, but post-fire erosion typically declines to negligible with vegetation recovery in about 4 years (Megahan cited in Cline et al. 1981) and the most recent large fire in the area occurred in 1919.

Livestock grazing takes place within the drainage on public and private lands. The majority of grazing is associated with pasture lands in the Elk Creek drainage, and stringer meadows along larger tributary streams. Upland grazing also occurs, primarily within timber harvest areas. The USFS allotments to the north and east (upstream) of the project area are currently vacant.

In addition, the US Forest Service, Nez Perce National Forest, issued a Five-Year Outfitter Operating Plan to Rivers West, Inc., signed August 14, 2012 which operates to the west of Elk City.

3.2.2 Reasonably Foreseeable Development

There are a number of on-going and proposed activities in the American River watershed involving BLM and USFS managed lands including continued restoration work on the American River and tributaries (see Table 4).

Table 4. Projects considered for cumulative effects within the American River drainage, which are within or adjacent to the proposed project area.

Project	Location	Activity	Time Period
Bennett Logging	Private land Section 36	Timber removal on approximately 640 acres and road	Past
Private land development	Within township	Structure and road development	Ongoing
American River Instream Improvements	BLM American River	Instream Structures and Riparian Planting	Past
American and Crooked River Project	NPNF American River and Crooked River	Timber harvest, salvage, road decommissioning, watershed improvement	Past

3.3 Analytical Assumptions

Existing trends of use and local behavior indicate that the proposed route modifications would restrict use to a designated route identified by the BLM protecting resources while providing recreational opportunities and meeting the needs of the local community. The local ATV and motorcycle community rapidly and aggressively created multiple pioneered routes to reestablish a loop trail in the fall of 2011, including the creation of a new ford across the American River drainage.

Once trails have been built to agency specifications, designated trails are used heavily by local and regional users and proliferation of routes is minimized as seen by the use patterns of other legally developed loops within the vicinity of Elk City and other loop trail developments in northern Idaho. Attempting to re-close the pioneered route without local buy-in would result in further resource damage and would also continue the trend of illegal trespass on segments of BFI managed lands. Local buy-in includes the ability to self-monitor the use of the route, discourage attempts to create another by-pass and the ability to aid in the repair to and maintenance of the trail as was established during a discussion on May 8, 2013, with local OHV and community groups at a meeting for another local project.

Trail construction would reestablish a year-round motorized loop trail with local buy-in decreasing the likelihood of the creation of additional pioneered routes that would circumvent pioneered route closure. It is therefore assumed that reestablishing a designated ATV loop trail consistent with the vehicular uses upstream would aid in the ability of the BLM to permanently close the pioneered routes in the project area.

Portions of the loop trail to the north of the project area cross private property. An effort is being made by the Clearwater Basin Collaborative to obtain easements and/or right-of-ways on some routes within the Elk City Township. This effort is likely to continue as the area continues to be developed as an OHV destination and the importance of obtaining legal access for roads and trails becomes more evident.

3.4 Affected Environment and Effects of the Alternatives

The degree to which resources/uses may be affected by the proposed activities are discussed in the following subsections. Each subsection includes discussion of the:

(1) Affected Environment (current condition) of the resource or use
(2) Effects (direct and indirect) of each alternative
(3) Cumulative Impacts

3.4.1 Air Quality

Affected Environment

Air quality associated with the project area is generally considered good to excellent most of the year and meets ambient air quality standards. Exceptions include short-term pollution (particulate matter) resulting from vehicular traffic on unpaved roads, seasonal wildfires, control burns and mining operations. Due to active fire suppression, current smoke emissions are significantly reduced from historical averages, especially during the wildfire season (Quigley and Arbelbide, 1997).

The closest non-attainment areas include portions of Missoula County, Montana (approximately 100 air miles to the northeast), and Boise and Sandpoint, Idaho (approximately 200 air miles to the southwest and northwest, respectively). The average large-scale airflow is generally from a westerly direction throughout the year. The Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness, 9 air miles to the northeast, and the Hells Canyon National Recreation Area, 40 air miles to the southwest, are the closest Class I areas (an area designated under the Prevention of Significant Deterioration program with the most stringent degree of protection from future degradation of air quality such as wilderness and National Parks), to the analysis area. All other areas, including the project area, are designated Class II areas (an area designated under the Prevention of Significant Deterioration program with a moderate degree of protection from future degradation of air quality (Section 162(b)).

Idaho State Implementation Plan for air quality indicates, under "miscellaneous area sources," that unpaved roads produce particulate emissions. Fugitive dust experiments have been performed in similar environments on dry soils utilizing different types of motorized vehicles. The information from these studies is useful in helping to predict fugitive dust generation from vehicle use within the project area. Goossens and Buck (2009) conducted field experiments in Clark County, Nevada to investigate emission of dust produced by off-road driving. Experiments were carried out with three types of vehicles (ATVs, dirt bikes, and dune buggies) on 17 soil types characteristic for a desert environment. "Tests were done at various driving speeds, and emissions were measured for a large number of dust grain" sizes. The amount of dust produced varied greatly with the type of soil, vehicle type, and driving speed. Experiments showed that the most dust (from all types of vehicles) was produced on silt/clay with gravel and desert pavements, while the sandy surfaces produced the least amounts of dust (Table 5).

Use of unpaved roads in the project area would create localized air pollution in the form of light fugitive dust, with the amount of fugitive dust created depending on the type of soil, the amount of moisture in the soil, the amount of wind and humidity, the number of participants, and their speed (higher speeds tend to produce more dust). Operation of motorized vehicles would also result in emissions of CO, SO_2, NO_X, PM_{10}, $PM_{2.5}$, VOCs, and CO_2. However, these emissions would be localized, limited to when vehicles are passing a specific location and temporary when they did occur. The project area generally has sandy to sandy-loam surfaces that have a low potential for producing fugitive dust. In addition, road conditions and limited visibility limits speed, which further reduces the level of dust and associated impacts to visibility (BLM 2007). Thus, engine and fugitive dust emissions would be minimized by the presence of sandy to sandy loam soils (Table 6) and natural speed limitations due to the primitive nature of the roads within the project area.

Table 5. PM10 (particles<10 µm) emission curves, grouped by major surface classes and vehicle type. Gossen and Buck (Figure 7, pg. 126)

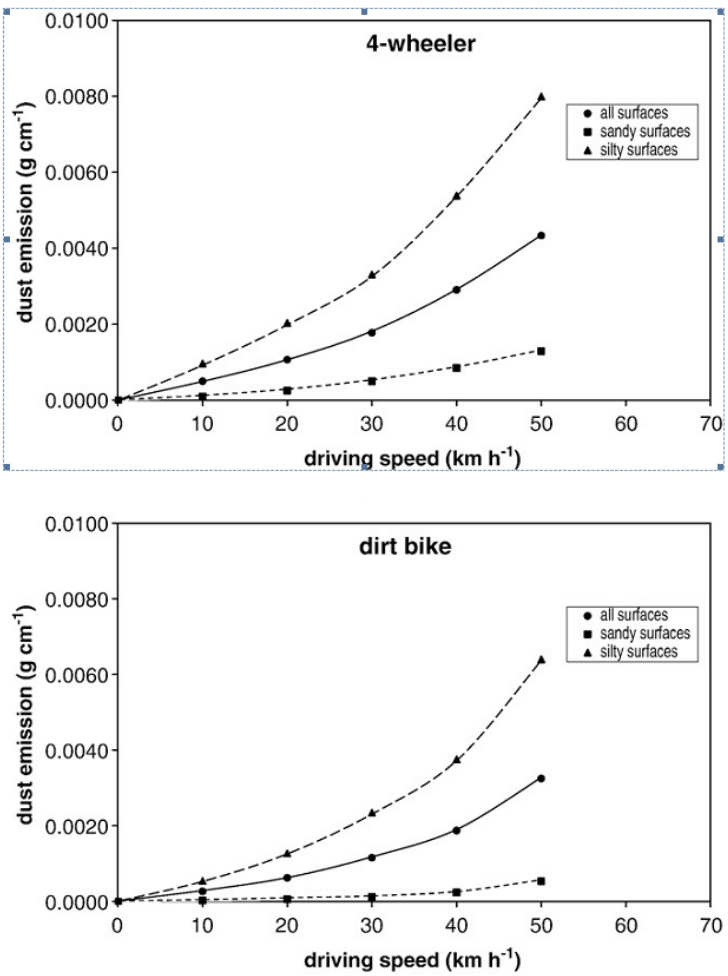
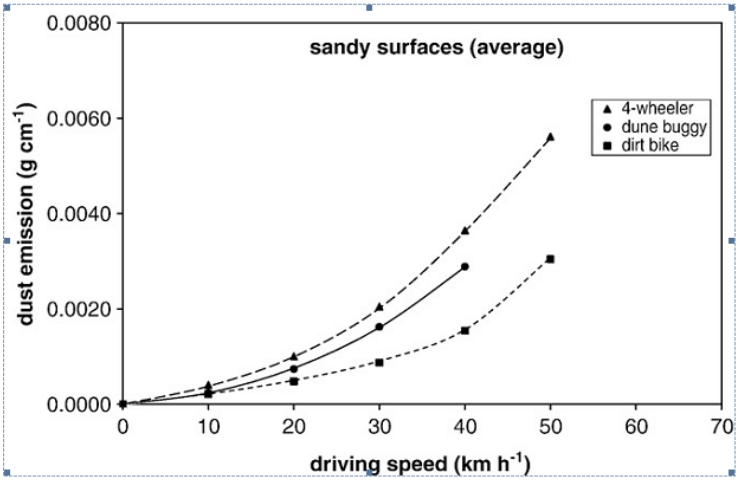


Table 6. Total Suspended Fraction (TSP) emission curves. Gossen and Buck (Figure 13, pg. 131)



Effects of Alternatives

Proposed Action

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width would result in localized and immediate (30 seconds or less) disturbance to air quality during dry conditions as it relates to the local sandy surfaces. Closure of the pioneered route on BLM would produce minimal impacts on air quality as decommissioning the pioneered route would require minimal ground disturbance and vehicular travel would decrease to the point of closure The Proposed Action would result in a net decrease in 22 feet of route on BLM managed lands. Motorized vehicles of 50" or less (dirt bike or 4-wheeler) traveling on the designated route would decrease particulate emissions or fugitive dust. Therefore the Proposed Action will have negligible impacts on the air quality of the area.

No Action

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands. The No Action alternative would produce higher emissions and fugitive dust then the Proposed Action but there would be no change from current conditions, due to the number and length of routes in use. Therefore the No Action alternative would have minimal impacts on the air quality of the area.

Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative effects analysis area is the American River watershed. Past and present actions have impacted air quality but present uses in the project area result in good to excellent air quality. Historically, the greatest impact to air quality in the watershed was

caused by the impact of smoke from fires and forestry actions with intermittent impacts from mining, residential and road construction. Commercial development can be expected to continue in the Elk City Township, with some effect to air quality, primarily through increased soil disturbance. Use on private lands adjacent to the project area has impacted air quality to varying levels and is primarily attributed to road construction, "pioneered routes", and timber harvest. It is expected that continued use of these private lands would continue to occur.

The Proposed Action, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would impact air quality within localized areas. The Proposed Action is expected to have negligible short term adverse effects on air quality if the soils are dry during the on-the-ground work, but will not impede achievement of air quality standards. Fugitive dust from the proposed project is expected to be negligible. The Proposed Action will result in a net decrease of 22 feet of route on BLM managed lands and up to 3,385 feet of route on BFI managed lands. The No Action Alternative will result in continued use of 140 feet of pioneered routes on BLM and up to 5,207 feet on BFI managed lands .Therefore particulate matter and fugitive dust would decrease in the Proposed Action alternative in comparison to the No Action alternative in which the usage would remain at current levels.

Locally adverse and cumulative significant impacts to air quality would not occur from either alternative; therefore minimal to no cumulative effects on air quality within the analysis area will occur.

3.4.2 American River Historic Sites District ACEC

Affected Environment

The American River Historic Sites District Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) includes 6,347 acres of public lands located in the southern portion of the Elk City Township. Historic sites within the ACEC include historic placer mining cutbanks, reservoirs, ditches, trails, adits, shafts, millsites, and dredge mining. These sites encompass the period between the 1860s through the 1940s. Other trails are related to Native American resource use and travel to Montana. There are no known cultural resources in the project area. Nearby on BLM managed land are sites 10IH3375, the historic Massam Wagon Road and site 10IH3329, the Gold Hill Ditch and Flume system.

Effects of Alternatives

<u>Proposed Action</u>

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width; decommissioning the pioneered route (approximately 140 feet) and rehabilitation of the riparian area will have no direct effect to cultural resources or ACEC values. However, the Proposed Action would potentially result in a reduction in the proliferation of

unauthorized trails, and thus potentially reduce the impacts to cultural resources outside the immediate project area in the ACEC.

No Action

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands. Although currently not affecting cultural resources in the ACEC, the proliferation of unauthorized use may occur, thus indirectly effecting cultural resources outside the immediate project area in the ACEC.

Cumulative Impacts

Potentially the Proposed Action could result in the reduction of routes and thus have a net benefit from a cumulative perspective.

3.4.3 Fisheries, Aquatic Habitats, and Special Status Fish Species

Affected Environment

The project area and cumulative effects analysis area occur within the American River watershed. The American River watershed totals 58,612 acres. The American and Red rivers flow together to form the South Fork Clearwater River (river mile 62.5). The South Fork Clearwater River Subbasin Assessment and Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) address water quality-limited streams listed under Section 303(d) of the Clean Water Act (Idaho Department of Environmental Quality et al., 2004). Under the Idaho Water Quality Standards, designated beneficial uses in American River are cold-water communities, salmonid spawning, primary contact recreation, domestic water supply and special resource water (IDAP 58.01.02). The area has moderate erosion hazards and the area is not landslide prone.

American River provides designated critical habitat for Endangered Species Act (ESA) – listed steelhead trout and bull trout. BLM sensitive fish species occurring in the drainage include: spring/summer Chinook salmon, westslope cutthroat trout, and redband trout. Pacific lamprey, a BLM sensitive species potentially may be occurring in the drainage.

Primary limiting factors for fish species include elevated water temperatures, sediment, lack of good quality pools, poor instream cover, and altered stream channels (e.g., dredge mining). The BLM has an ongoing program for fish habitat restoration within the watershed and various projects and actions to improve fish passage, pool quality, riparian restoration, road decommissioning and instream cover have taken place over the past 30 years.

A variety of land uses have impacted fish habitat and watershed conditions. Primary land uses which have had varying levels of impact on fish habitat and water quality include:

mining, road construction, timber harvest, livestock grazing, recreation, and urban and rural development activities.

Effects of Alternatives

Proposed Action

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width, would result in localized disturbance to vegetation and soils in the Riparian Conservation Area (RCA) for American River. The trail would be designed to include a 10 to 13 percent slope and other drainage structures to prevent adverse erosion. This proposed trail would occur in the exact location of a road that was decommissioned (e.g., re-contoured, etc.) in 2011. The trail work would disturb 0.05 acres previously altered from road construction and decommissioning. The cut and fill area of the trail would be seeded with desired seed mix and mulched with weed-free straw to encourage establishment of desired plant species and ground cover to reduce potential for erosion. With the exception of a few small seedlings, no cutting of trees would occur from the trail construction. No adverse effects would occur to American River shade or large woody debris recruitment from trail construction. Erosion control measures would minimize potential for erosion/sediment reaching American River.

The 140 feet of unauthorized route to be decommissioned and rehabilitated is adjacent to American River and occurs within a RCA. This would include re-contouring and/or deep ripping, placement of large woody debris, seeding desired vegetation and planting riparian shrubs and trees. Removing the route from the landscape would be beneficial for restoring disturbed riparian habitats and reducing the potential for erosion occurring in areas adjacent to American River in the long term.

Implementation of the Proposed Action on BLM lands would also result in potential interrelated effects on private lands from decommissioning/closing approximately 975 feet of unauthorized route occurring in riparian and upland habitats (see Map 2 and Cumulative Impacts section below), which would be beneficial for these habitats in the long term.

The proposed project is in accord with the Aquatic and Riparian Management Strategy, (Appendix D – Cottonwood RMP, BLM 2009). The proposed project will not impede achievement of Desired Conditions for aquatic habitats (Appendix H – Cottonwood RMP, BLM 2009).

It is expected that project design measures would minimize potential for adverse erosion and sediment reaching American River and impacts to water quality, fish habitat, and designated beneficial uses for American River. Construction of the ATV trail would have "*no effect*" on ESA-listed fish and designated critical habitat. A "*no impact"* determination was concluded for BLM sensitive fish. No adverse modification of Chinook salmon *Essential Fish Habitat* (Section 305(b) (2) of the Magnuson-Stevens

Act) would occur from implementation of the Proposed Action. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not impede achievement of South Fork Clearwater River temperature and sediment TMDLs and no measurable effects to American River beneficial uses is expected to occur. Decommissioning the pioneered route along American River would be beneficial in the long term for supporting achievement of temperature and sediment TMDLs.

No Action

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands that occurs within riparian habitats. Increased erosion and impacts to riparian habitats would be expected to continue from ATV use of this pioneered route which occurs adjacent to American River. In addition, this alternative would also result in potential interrelated adverse impacts to upland and riparian habitats from the continued use of approximately 975 feet of unauthorized pioneered routes occurring on private lands (see Map 2 and Cumulative Impact section below). Overall, existing riparian related impacts and potential erosion would continue for upland and riparian areas within the project area and adjacent analysis area on private lands.

Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative effects analysis area is the American River watershed. Past and present actions have impacted fisheries, watersheds, water quality, and riparian habitats to varying levels. Historically, the greatest impact to water quality and fish habitat in the American River drainage was caused by the impact of dredge mining and encroachment of roads on stream channels. The primary effects to water quality and fisheries has occurred from timber harvest, road and trail construction and use, mining, livestock grazing, recreation use, and urban and rural development. Grazing has altered streamside shade and stream bank stability. Sediment yield was increased as a result of road construction, timber harvest, fire, and residential and commercial development. This resulted in stream channel alteration, impacts to riparian vegetation, and increased sediment.

Use on private lands adjacent to the project area has impacted watershed conditions and aquatic habitats to varying levels and is primarily attributed to road construction, “pioneered routes”, and timber harvest. It is expected that continued use of these private lands by ATVs would continue to occur although interrelated corresponding work may occur to improve route and drainage conditions on an Idaho County easement across land owned by Bennett Forest Industries, Inc. (BFI) as described in the easement (Attachment 3).

The action alternative, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would impact riparian and upland wildlife habitats within localized areas. The proposed project is expected to have negligible short term adverse effects on

sediment and will not impede achievement of desired future water conditions and trends. Sediment yields from the proposed projects are expected to be negligible. Residential and commercial development can be expected to continue in the Elk City Township, with some effect to water quality, primarily through increased sediment yields. Therefore effects of the Proposed Action and the No Action alternative that would be impacted would have minimal to no cumulative effects on aquatic habitats within the analysis area.

3.4.4 Cultural Resources

Affected Environment

Historic sites in the area include historic placer mining cutbanks, reservoirs, ditches, trails, adits, shafts, millsites, and dredge mining. These sites encompass the period between the 1860s through the 1940s. Other trails are related to Native American resource use and travel to Montana.

There are no known cultural resources on the BLM portion of the project area. Nearby on BLM are sites 10IH3375, the historic Massam Wagon Road and site 10IH3329, the Gold Hill Ditch and Flume system.

On private land, adjacent to BLM managed land, are sites 10IH644, two collapsed mine buildings associated with the Mark K Mine, and 10IH678, the Elk City to Red River Stage Road and probable location of the Southern Nez Perce Trail. Both sites on private land are in poor condition. Site 10IH644 buildings are collapsed and in non-use. Site 10IH678, the stage road and Nez Perce Trail, was used as the access road to construct a power line and still used for power line maintenance. The road was likely used as a skid trail when adjacent private land was harvested of most of the timber. OHVs access the road across this parcel of private land through the BLM managed parcel as well as a second route entirely on private lands.

Effects of Alternatives

<u>Proposed Action</u>

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55” wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50” or less in width; decommissioning the pioneered route (approximately 140 feet) and rehabilitation of the riparian area will have no direct effect to cultural resources within the project area.

<u>No Action</u>

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands. Although not directly affecting cultural resources, unauthorized use may spread thus indirectly affecting cultural resources outside the immediate project area.

Cumulative Impacts

There are no impacts to cultural resources on BLM managed lands. Impacts have been identified on the road located on private lands which is anticipated to remain at the same levels of use. Cultural resources continue to be impacted primarily from natural deterioration. The road is in poor condition from use as a power line access road and existing OHV use. Use of existing roads by full size vehicles and OHVs on dredge tailings continues to degrade dredge tailings. Pioneering of unauthorized OHV roads across the landscape can affect historic mine ditches. Unauthorized collection of historic artifacts can affect cultural resources as well.

Using the road from BLM to connect to private property will have an indirect effect on 10IH678, which is the stage road and Nez Perce Trail. This existing route, which is the route authorized for use under the BFI easement, will actively be used by OHVs as a result of the Proposed Action. However, it is the same use that is currently occurring so it is anticipated that impacts to the road will not increase beyond the current level. Past timber harvest has decreased vegetation cover adjacent to the route (10IH678, the stage road and Nez Perce Trail) on private land thus increasing erosion. There are no drainage improvements on the route so water, from an adit located on private land upslope from the road, currently flows on to and down the road.

Therefore the Proposed Action would have minimal to no cumulative impacts on cultural resources.

3.4.5 Recreation

Affected Environment

The area is managed for rural recreation within the Recreational Opportunity Spectrum (RMP, 2009), which includes hunting guides and livestock wranglers (pack animals and saddle horses). The primary uses are exploring historic mining structures, enjoying local mountain lakes and utilizing the land for hunting, fishing and motor vehicular exploration by ATVs and snowmobiles. Other activities include picking berries and mushrooms, cross country skiing, fishing and wildlife viewing. There are no commercial outfitting operations within or adjacent to the project area. The area provides rural motorized recreation with no developed recreation facilities on BLM managed lands, but a new Elk City Wagon Wheel (GEM) trailhead does exist just northeast of Elk City

Effects of Alternatives

<u>Proposed Action</u>

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55” wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50” or less in width will create a designated loop trail. The Proposed Action will benefit ATV and snowmobile trail riding, will help provide better access for wildlife and fisheries viewing and gathering

activities and will provide a secondary fire evacuation route for the local community. In addition, by decommissioning the pioneered route, fishermen will not be disturbed by ATVs illegally crossing the American River. The Proposed Action will have minimal impact on recreation use in the area.

No Action

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 975 feet of route that occurs in uplands and riparian habitats. Fishermen would be disturbed by illegal ATV use where the pioneered route fords the American River. Therefore the No Action alternative would have minimal impact on recreation although there would be no change to current conditions for local and regional users.

Cumulative Impacts

Multiple ATV and snow machine clubs in the region use area trail networks including USFS Red Horse Ridge, French Gulch and Sno-1807, in and around the project area on private, BLM and USFS managed lands. The Clearwater Basin Collaborative in conjunction with Framing Our Community and a local OHV club is developing trailhead facilities for the future GEM trail that will lead from the northwest edge of Elk City to Elk River. Maintenance of the trail would concentrate use on an authorized trail network on federal, state and BFI managed lands, minimizing potential user conflicts and prevent the proliferation of routes due to topography through the buy-in of the local community and ATV, OHV and motorcycle clubs.

The implementation of this project or the USFS American and Crooked River Projects adjacent to the Eastside Project area will not alter the ROS class. The Proposed Action would improve the user experience and increase safety by decreasing or removing the use of the pioneered route over steep slopes that are subject to erosion. In addition, the project would provide legal access that would allow local users groups to advertise the trail, place it on public maps and direct users to the trail without promoting trespass. Therefore the Proposed Action would have minimal cumulative impacts on recreation.

3.4.6 Social Economics

Affected Environment

Idaho County has the largest land mass in Idaho with an estimated population of 15,000 people. Given its location, it can be assumed that Elk City one of the key access points for backcountry travelers to portions of the Selway-Bitterroot, Gospel Hump and Frank Church wilderness areas as well as the Cove-Mallard and other Roadless areas.

The region surrounding the project area provides for commercial uses including grazing, timber harvesting, tourism, mining and outfitting/guiding, although the recreation-based

industry has not been quantified locally. Commercial uses provide economic benefits to Elk City, population 275, and other local communities connected by multiple motorized trails and road systems managed by the county, USFS, BLM and private entities. In addition, the area attracts self-guided hunters from around the region each fall.

In 2006, 50% of income in Idaho County came from non-labor sources (non-earning income-dividends, interest, rents, unemployment, disability, Medicare etc.) (Headwaters, 2006)

Effects of Alternatives

Proposed Action

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width would provide a secondary fire evacuation route for the eight properties located on American River and legal access to a loop trail. By providing legal access the trail could be advertised on maps, directing users to trail opportunities beyond the USFS trails and the GEM trail once it is developed. Nearby communities are supported by tourism including outdoor recreation, forestry, mining, and light industry. The ability to advertise and promote the trail could result in increased economic benefits to the community if they also increase support services for potential trail users. There would be no potential for displacements or disruption to established routes from the Proposed Action. Therefore the Proposed Action would have minimal effects on social economics as it would replace the existing pioneered trespass routes with an authorized route on BLM managed lands.

No Action

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands. Long-term effects could occur if the trespass segments are physically closed by BFI as this would close a secondary fire evacuation route to the local community and would also close a loop trail opportunity in a local community known for having OHV routes available for use. In addition, local users would not be able to legally advertise the trail as available to the public or show it on public maps without promoting trespass. The No Action alternative would result in minimal effects on socio-economics in the local area.

Cumulative Impacts

The Proposed Action and the No Action alternative would have minimal effects on local or regional social economics.

3.4.7 Riparian Conservation Area (RCA)

Affected Environment

An unauthorized user created ATV route occurs within 20 feet of American River and occurs with the RCA (see Figure 2 and Map 2). The route crosses BLM lands for approximately 140 feet. The route then continues onto private lands and includes a segment that is approximately 750 feet in length that parallels American River and then goes upslope and connects with an existing primitive logging road and a second segment fords American River which is approximately 225 feet in length (see Figure 3) and connects to an existing road on private lands. Refer to Map 2 for locations of unauthorized routes occurring on BLM lands and private lands. The project area on BLM lands occurs within the American River RCA, and includes areas within 300 feet of American River. Portions of unauthorized trails on private lands also occur within the RCA. RCAs are areas where aquatic and riparian resources receive management emphasis (BLM 2009).

Special Status Plants: A plant survey of the project area during 2014 did not locate any ESA-listed, candidate, proposed, or BLM designated sensitive plants occurring within the immediate project area (ATV trail route and unauthorized "pioneered" route). Idaho barren strawberry (*Waldsteinia idahoensis*), a BLM Type 3 (rare species that has moderate endangerment) "watch list species" occurs adjacent to the project area.

Figure 1. Proposed route for ATV trail which was previously decommissioned.

Figure 2. View of the unauthorized user created route which occurs adjacent to American River and crosses BLM lands for approximately 140 feet before entering private lands.

Figure 3. View of the unauthorized user created route which crosses (ford) American River and is located on private lands.

Effects of Alternatives

Proposed Action

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width would result in localized disturbance to soils and vegetation from new trail prism, cut and fill areas. The proposed route would occur in the exact same location of a road that was decommissioned (Figure 1) (e.g., re-contoured, etc.) in 2011. Consequently, the new route would re-disturb an area that previously was altered from road construction and decommissioning and overall impact to habitats would be minimal (0.05 acre). The cut and fill area for the route would be seeded with desired seed mix and mulched with weed-free straw to encourage establishment of desired plant species.

Approximately 140 feet of the pioneered route crossing BLM lands would be decommissioned and rehabilitated. This pioneered route occurs adjacent to American River and within the RCA. Route decommissioning would include re-contouring and/or deep ripping, placement of large woody debris, seeding desired vegetation and planting riparian shrubs and trees. These project design measures would be beneficial for restoring disturbed riparian habitats (0.3 acre) adjacent to American River in the long term. Implementation of the Proposed Action would not preclude or retard achievement of desired riparian and aquatic conditions for the American River RCA.

Project design measures would minimize potential for adverse invasive vegetation establishment in disturbed areas. Idaho barren strawberry, a BLM sensitive species which occurs in adjacent areas would not be affected by implementation of the Proposed Action. No adverse effects to special status plants or the RCA would occur from implementation of this alternative.

No Action

By taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands that occurs within the RCA. In addition, this alternative would also result in potential interrelated adverse impacts to upland and riparian habitats from the continued use of approximately 975 feet of pioneered routes occurring on private lands (see Map 2 and Cumulative Impacts section below). Overall, existing vegetation trends and conditions would continue for upland and riparian habitats within the RCA occurring within the project area and adjacent analysis area on private lands.

Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative effects analysis area is the American River watershed. Past and present actions have impacted upland and riparian habitats to varying levels. The primary effects to vegetation and habitats has occurred from timber harvest, road and trail construction

and use, mining, livestock grazing, recreation use, and urban and rural home construction.

Private lands adjacent to the project area have had land uses which have impacted watershed conditions and aquatic habitats to varying levels and primarily attributed to road construction, “pioneered routes”, and timber harvest. It is expected that continued use of these private lands by ATVs would continue to occur.

The action alternatives, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would impact riparian and upland RCA habitats within small localized areas and overall would be minimal within the cumulative effects analysis area. Effects of the Proposed Action and No Action alternative because of the small localized areas that would have soil and vegetation disturbance would have minimal to no cumulative effects on vegetation within the RCA.

3.4.8 Wildlife, Habitat, and Special Status Species

Affected Environment

The project area primarily consists of a mid-aged mixed conifer stand and riparian habitats which occur adjacent to American River. Adjacent areas on private land have been logged and are primarily in an early seral habitat condition. Refer to Figure 4 for a general view of the American River drainage in the vicinity of the project area. Refer to section 3.4.7 - Riparian and Upland Habitats and Special Status Plants for additional information regarding habitats. The area provides habitat for a variety of game and nongame species. Big game species utilizing the area include elk, white-tailed deer, moose, mule deer, black bear, mountain lion, and gray wolf.

Figure 4. American River drainage looking North. The proposed route and pioneered route identified for decommissioning are located in the unlogged timber stands in the center of photo. The pioneered route crossing private lands is located in the logged areas located in bottom half of photo.

Migratory Bird Species

All migratory birds are protected under the 1918 Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703), as well as the Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act (16 USC Chapter 80). Executive Order 13186, *Responsibilities of Federal Agencies to Protect Migratory Birds* requires the BLM and other federal agencies to work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to improve protection for migratory birds. Migratory birds occur within the project area and analysis area. Idaho Partners in Flight (IPIF) has identified 243 species of birds that breed in the State of Idaho. Of these species, 119 are considered Neotropical migrants.

Neotropical migrant birds utilize coniferous forest habitats of the U.S. during the spring and summer breeding seasons, but migrate to southern latitudes to spend winters as far south as Mexico and South America.

Idaho Partners in Flight (2000) identified four high-priority habitats in Idaho that are also important habitats for migratory birds and include riparian, low-elevation mixed conifer, grasslands, and ponderosa pine. Two of these habitats occur in the project area, which includes riparian. Several of the high priority bird species chosen for this analysis are also discussed as BLM sensitive species.

For the riparian habitats; 2 of the 13 priority species that may occur include the dusky and willow flycatchers. The willow flycatcher will serve to represent the riparian habitat, and this species is a BLM Idaho sensitive species. For additional information and analysis regarding the willow flycatcher refer to BLM Sensitive Species section which follows.

For the low-elevation mixed conifer habitats; 4 of the 9 priority species that may occur include the northern goshawk, Williamson's sapsucker, sharp-shinned hawk, and brown creeper. The northern goshawk and Williamson's sapsucker will serve to represent the mixed conifer habitat, and these species are BLM sensitive species. For additional information and analysis regarding the northern goshawk and Williamson's sapsucker refer to BLM Sensitive Species section which follows.

Special Status Species

Endangered Species Act (ESA) – Listed Species and Proposed Species

No ESA-listed wildlife species are known to occur or preferred habitats occur in the project area or would be affected by the Proposed Action or alternatives. A "no effect" determination is concluded for ESA-listed wildlife species.

BLM Sensitive Species

Because the project and analysis area includes a variety of habitats a variety of BLM sensitive species occur or potentially may occur in the analysis area (see Table 6 below). No BLM sensitive invertebrates occur within the project area and a "no impact"

determination is concluded for these species.

Refer to Tables 7, 8, and 9 below for a summary of preferred habitats for BLM sensitive species that occur or potentially occur within the project and analysis area and may be impacted by the various alternatives.

Table 7: BLM Sensitive Species (Mammals)

Species Name	Habitat
Fisher *Martes pennanti*	Dense canopied, late seral timber types at higher elevations. Dead and down timber in grand fir, Douglas fir, or other conifer types are most preferred.
Gray Wolf *Canis lupus*	Key components of wolf habitats are sufficient year-round prey base of ungulates and alternative prey, suitable and semi-secluded denning and rendezvous sites, and sufficient seasonal habitats with minimal exposure to humans. The gray wolf was delisted as an ESA-listed species in 2011.

Table 8: BLM Sensitive Species (Birds)

Species Name	Habitat
Northern Goshawk *Accipiter gentilis*	Forests, forest edge, open woodlands. Most common in ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine and Douglas fir forests. Riparian habitats in winter. Nests are masses of twigs in tall conifers. Foods are tree squirrels, jackrabbits, ground squirrels, small birds, and occasionally grouse.
Cassin's Finch *Carpodacus cassinii*	Migratory. Occupies a variety of coniferous forest types over a broad elevation ranges. Often found in mature forests of lodgepole pine and ponderosa pine. Occasionally breeds in open sagebrush shrub steppe with scattered western junipers.
Lewis Woodpecker *Melanerpes lewis*	Open or logged forests, river groves in mountains. Nest is a hole in tree. Foods are insects, berries, and fruits.
Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus borealis*	Open timber at meadow margins in sparse timber, burns, partially logged areas. Nest is woven twigs near end of a horizontal limb of a conifer. Food includes insects caught while flying.
Willow Flycatcher *Empidonax traillii*	Riparian areas, swamps, willow thickets, open woodlands. Builds cup shape nest in shrub or deciduous tree. Insectivorous.

Table 9: BLM Sensitive Species (Amphibians)

Common Name	Habitat
Idaho Giant Salamander *Dicamptodon aterrimus*	Larvae usually inhabit clear, cold streams, but are also found in mountain lakes and ponds. Adults are found under rocks and logs in humid forests, near mountain streams, or on rocky shores of mountain lakes. Larvae feed on wide variety of aquatic invertebrates as well as some small vertebrates (e.g., fishes, tadpoles, or other larval salamanders). Adults eat terrestrial invertebrates, small snakes, shrews, and salamanders.
Western/Boreal Toad *Anaxyrus boreas* and Eastern/Boreal Toad *Anayrkus boreas boreas*	Streams, springs, grasslands, woodlands, mountain meadows. Usually in and/or near ponds, lakes, reservoirs, rivers, streams. Insectivorous.

Effects of Alternatives

Proposed Action

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width would result in localized disturbance to wildlife habitats from new trail prism, cut and fill areas. The disturbed areas for the new route primarily are grasses and forbs with scattered shrubs. The proposed trail would occur in the exact same location of a road that was decommissioned (e.g., re-contoured, etc.) in 2011. Consequently, the work would re-disturb an area that previously was altered from road construction and decommissioning and overall impact to habitats would be minimal (0.05 acre). The cut and fill area for the trail would be seeded with desired seed mix and mulched with weed-free straw to encourage establishment of desired plant species.

Approximately 140 feet of unauthorized pioneered route crossing BLM lands would be decommissioned and rehabilitated. This unauthorized route occurs adjacent to American River and within riparian habitats. The route decommissioning would include re-contouring and/or deep ripping, placement of large woody debris, seeding desired vegetation and planting riparian shrubs and trees. These project design measures would be beneficial for restoring disturbed riparian habitats (0.03 acre) adjacent to American River in the long term.

Implementation of the Proposed Action on BLM lands would also result in potential interrelated effects on private lands from decommissioning/closing approximately 975 feet of unauthorized routes occurring in riparian and upland habitats (see Map 2 and Cumulative Impacts section below), which would be beneficial for these habitats in the long term.

Project design measures would minimize potential for adverse invasive vegetation establishment in disturbed areas.

Wildlife and Habitats

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width would have low adverse impacts from alteration of approximately 0.05 acre of habitat, primarily because this route occurs in an area that was previously disturbed in 2011 (i.e., road decommissioning) and involves a very small area. Trail construction, maintenance and use would result in potential disturbance and displacement of wildlife that may be utilizing adjacent habitats (e.g., mid aged conifer stands or riparian habitats).

Decommissioning and rehabilitation of approximately 140 feet of pioneered route that occurs within riparian habitat would have short term negligible impacts from wildlife that may be utilizing adjacent areas and potential for disturbance and displacement. Long term benefits would occur to riparian dependent species from the restoration of 0.03 acre

of riparian habitat adjacent to American River.

Migratory Birds

Effects to migratory birds would be similar to what was described for wildlife above and long term benefits would be expected to riparian dependent migratory birds from restoration of riparian habitat adjacent to American River. New trail use and maintenance may potentially disturb nesting birds (April 15 – July 15) using adjacent habitats (e.g., mid aged mixed conifer and riparian), overall such impacts are considered negligible because of the small area involved. Trail construction and decommissioning of the pioneered route would have no impact or discountable impact on nesting birds because heavy equipment (excavator) use would only impact a very short segment of route that is presently being used by hikers, horseback riders, and ATVs and no impacts to adjacent habitats would occur. Restoration actions would be very short duration (one-day). Seeding and planting desirable shrubs and trees would occur during suitable wet fall periods.

Special Status Species

A "*no effect*" determination is concluded for all ESA-listed wildlife species, see previous discussion above.

Less mobile BLM sensitive species such as the western toad and Idaho giant salamander would be more prone to injury or mortality from motorized use and construction activities that occur in riparian areas or RCAs. However, the decommissioning of 140 feet of pioneered route occurring in riparian habitats would be beneficial to these species in the long term and other riparian dependent species.

Because of potential for disturbance or displacement of BLM sensitive species utilizing habitats adjacent to areas proposed for trail construction (118 feet), trail use, or pioneered route decommissioning (140 feet) a "*May impact individuals or habitat but not likely to cause trend toward federal listing or reduce viability for the population or species*" (see Tables 7, 8, and 9 above). Long term benefits would occur to riparian dependent species or other species utilizing adjacent habitats from the decommissioning of the route which is adjacent to American River. Overall, such impacts would be negligible and restriction of unauthorized trail use on BLM and private lands would be beneficial in the long term (see Tables 7, 8, and 9 above).

<u>No Action</u>

Taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands that occurs within riparian habitats. Riparian dependent species may be displaced or disturbed from continued use of this pioneered route which occurs adjacent to American River. In addition, this alternative would also result in potential interrelated adverse impacts to

upland and riparian habitats from the continued use of approximately 975 feet of pioneered ATV routes occurring on private lands (see Map 2 and Cumulative Impact section below). Overall, existing vegetation trends and conditions would continue for upland and riparian wildlife habitats occurring within the project area and adjacent analysis area on private lands.

Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative effects analysis area is the American River watershed. Past and present actions have impacted upland and riparian wildlife habitats to varying levels. The primary effects to wildlife habitats has occurred from timber harvest, road and trail construction and use, mining, livestock grazing, recreation use, and urban and rural home construction.

Adjacent to the project area occur private lands which have had varying levels of lands uses which have impacted wildlife habitats; primarily as a result of road construction, "pioneered routes", and timber harvest. It is expected that continued use of these private lands by ATVs would continue to occur.

The action alternatives, in combination with past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions would impact riparian and upland wildlife habitats within small localized areas and overall would be minimal within the cumulative effects analysis area. Effects of the Proposed Action and other alternatives because of the small localized areas that would be impacted would have minimal to no cumulative effects on wildlife habitats within the analysis area.

3.4.9 Invasive Plant Species (Weeds)

Affected Environment

The project area occurs within the Upper Clearwater Weed Management Area and the existing ATV trail is inventoried and treated for invasive plant species by BLM weed crews. Plants treated along this route include spotted knapweed, hounds tongue, Canada thistle and mullein.

Effects of Alternatives

<u>Proposed Action</u>

Construction of 118 feet of motorized trail, creating a 55" wide trail crossing BLM lands and designating the trail as Limited to motorized vehicles 50" or less in width would result in soil stabilization and revegetation of approximately 140 feet of unauthorized routes on BLM managed lands. Since this is a pioneered route, trail grades and lack of design features increase the potential for continued soil disturbance and opportunity for weed establishment. These steeper routes are also difficult to effectively inventory and treat for weeds with crews. Soil disturbance by ATVs, motorcycles or OHVs can create

an open site for colonization by invasive plant species occurring in the area. In addition, seeds of invasive plants can become caught in the undercarriage of ATVs, motorcycles or OHVs and dislodge in areas where they did not previously occur. Reopening the previously decommissioned route will provide the opportunity for a loop trail that will be included in the existing invasive plant treatment project. The properly designed trail including seeding to reduce bare ground would be conducive to treatment by weed crews using ATV equipment while providing for the safety of field operations to accomplish the job. Partners in the weed management area, including Idaho County would be able to cooperate in the treatment of the loop route on private lands and assure the success of weed control along the entire ATV trail.

Indirect effects resulting from the propose action include the reduced use of approximately ½ mile of pioneered ATV routes on private lands and potentially the revegetation of those routes. These multiple routes on steep terrain are more prone to erosion and continued soil disturbance thereby increasing the possibility of establishment and spread of invasive plants. Since they will no longer be needed to create a loop route, their use would be reduced and the risk of disturbance and introduction of invasive plant species seeds would be less.

No Action

Taking No Action would result in continued use of multiple routes with trespass issues and interrelated pioneered routes occurring on private lands which includes a ford of American River and approximately 140 feet of route crossing BLM lands. This would result in a higher potential for increase and spread of invasive plant species because of continued use of the steep trail. BLM crews would continue to inventory and treat invasive plants on the American River ATV trail but it is not as likely that the unauthorized portion of the route would be treated as the design is not as conducive to safe operations by employees conducting weed treatments.

Indirect effects include the continued use of pioneered ATV routes on private lands that would not be treated for invasive species.

Cumulative Effects

Weeds are present in the general area and management of their populations implemented in a cooperative manner by partners in the weed management area with the overall goal to reduce their spread and potential impact on native plant communities. ATVs, motorcycles or OHVs are used commonly in the Elk City area both by local individuals and by the casual recreation enthusiast. This use is not likely to decrease. Providing properly designed trails that can be monitored and treated effectively to prevent establishment and spread of invasive species and focus ATV use on these routes will decrease the potential for unchecked spread of invasive plants. There may be a slight reduction in the potential for cumulative effects from invasive plant species with the implementation of the proposed action.

3.3 Mitigation and Monitoring

All mitigation measures identified during this analysis are incorporated as design features as described in the Proposed Action in section 2 of this document.

Field monitoring using photo documentation of the Proposed Action, the documentation of user comments, complaints, or concerns (if any) and other indicators of visitor satisfaction and preference surveys would be used to evaluate the success or failure in achieving the objectives of the Proposed Action to meet recreation and travel management goals as stated in the RMP.

Monitoring data would be used for adaptive management of future modifications to travel management decisions. If monitoring identifies adverse impacts or additional pioneered route creation, such impacts would require immediate closure of pioneered routes utilizing the Best Management Practices as identified in the CFO RMP to mitigate the avoidance, removal or reduction of resource impacts.

No additional mitigation or monitoring measures have been identified for this action.

4 CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION

4.1 Tribes, Individuals, Organizations or Agencies Consulted

Scoping for preparation of this EA included coordination and consultation with the following affected interests. The BLM sent a letter describing the proposal to the following contacts on September 23, 2013. A notice of availability or copy of this EA will be sent to the following interested entities who commented during scoping and/or requested one.

<u>Tribes</u>
Nez Perce Tribe, Lapwai, ID

<u>Federal, State and Local Governmental Agencies</u>
Bureau of Indian Affairs, Lapwai, ID
Natural Resource Conservation Service, Grangeville, ID
NOAA Fisheries, Boise and Grangeville ID
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Boise ID
U.S. Forest Service, Clearwater-Nez Perce National Forest, Grangeville, ID
Idaho Department of Environmental Quality, Grangeville and Lewiston, ID
Idaho Department of Fish and Game, Boise and Lewiston ID
Idaho Department of Fish and Game Commissioner, Orofino, ID
Idaho Department of Lands, McCall, ID
Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation, Boise, ID
Idaho Department of Transportation, Lewiston, ID
Idaho State Historic Preservation Office, Boise, ID

Elected Officials
Idaho County Commissioners

This EA will be available from the Idaho BLM public internet site at:

http://www.blm.gov/id/st/en/Districts-Idaho/CDA.html

Copies may be requested by calling or visiting the BLM offices in Coeur D'Alene (208-769-5000) or Cottonwood (208-962-3245).

4.1.1 Coordination with Other Agencies

Endangered Species Act species clearances and BLM sensitive species field investigations and clearances occurred in 2014.

Consultation under section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act with the Idaho State Historic Preservation Office was completed.

4.1.2 Native American Consultation

The BLM has conducted consultation with the Nez Perce Tribe to ensure that the proposed project does not impede values that might be identified by the Tribe under the Indian Religious Freedom Act (P.L. 95-341) or Executive Order 13007, Indian Sacred Sites. The nature of the Proposed Action or the alternatives will not affect any known values.

4.2 Preparers

Judy Culver (Team Lead): Outdoor Recreation Planner
Craig Johnson: Fisheries/Wildlife Biologist
David Sisson: Archeologist
Kristen Sanders: District Fire Use Specialist
Lynn Danly: Natural Resource Specialist
Scott Pavey: Planning and Environmental Coordinator
Robbin Boyce: Assistant Field Manager, Forester

5 REFERENCES

BLM. 2009. Cottonwood Field Office 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

BLM. 2011. BLM Manual 1626— Travel and Transportation Manual (Public)

Goossens, D., Buck, B., *Dust emission by off-road driving: Experiments on 17 arid soil types, Nevada, USA*, Geomorphology (2009), doi:10.1016/j.geomorph.2008.12.001

Headwaters Economics. *A Socioeconomic Profile Idaho County, Idaho*. 2006

Harris, et al 1996. Rural Communities in the Inland Northwest - An Assessment of Small Communities in the Interior and Upper Columbia River Basins. University of Idaho, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Range, Moscow, ID.

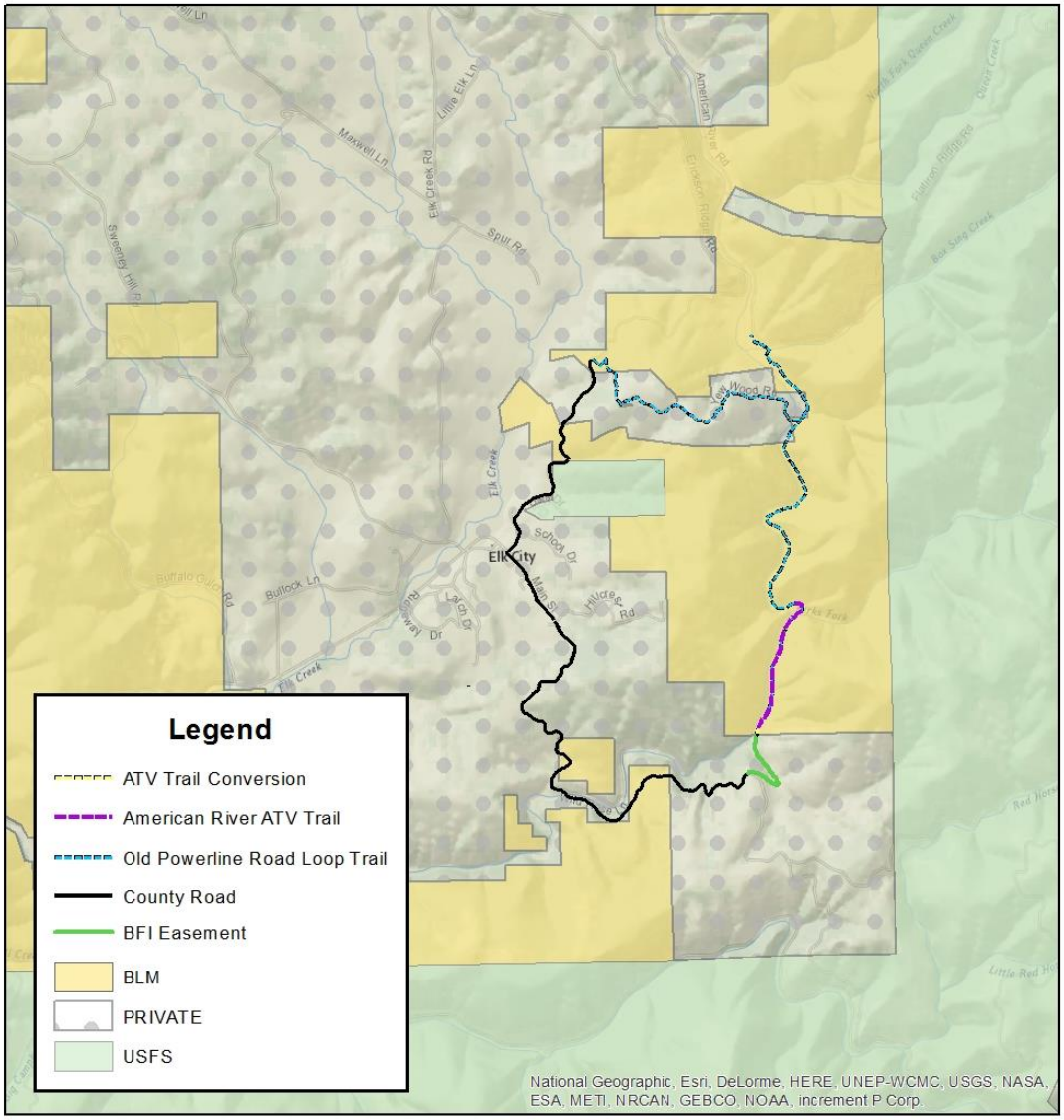
Idaho Partners in Flight. 2000. Idaho bird conservation plan, version 1.0. Idaho Partners in Flight, compiled by S. Ritter, Hamilton, MT. 166 pp.

6 ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: Map 1-see below
Attachment 2: Map 2-see below
Attachment 3: Easement

Old Powerline Road ATV Trail (Overview)

Map 1



The surface management status ("land ownership") should be used as a general guide only. Official land records, located at the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and other offices, should be checked for up-to-date information concerning any specific tract of land.

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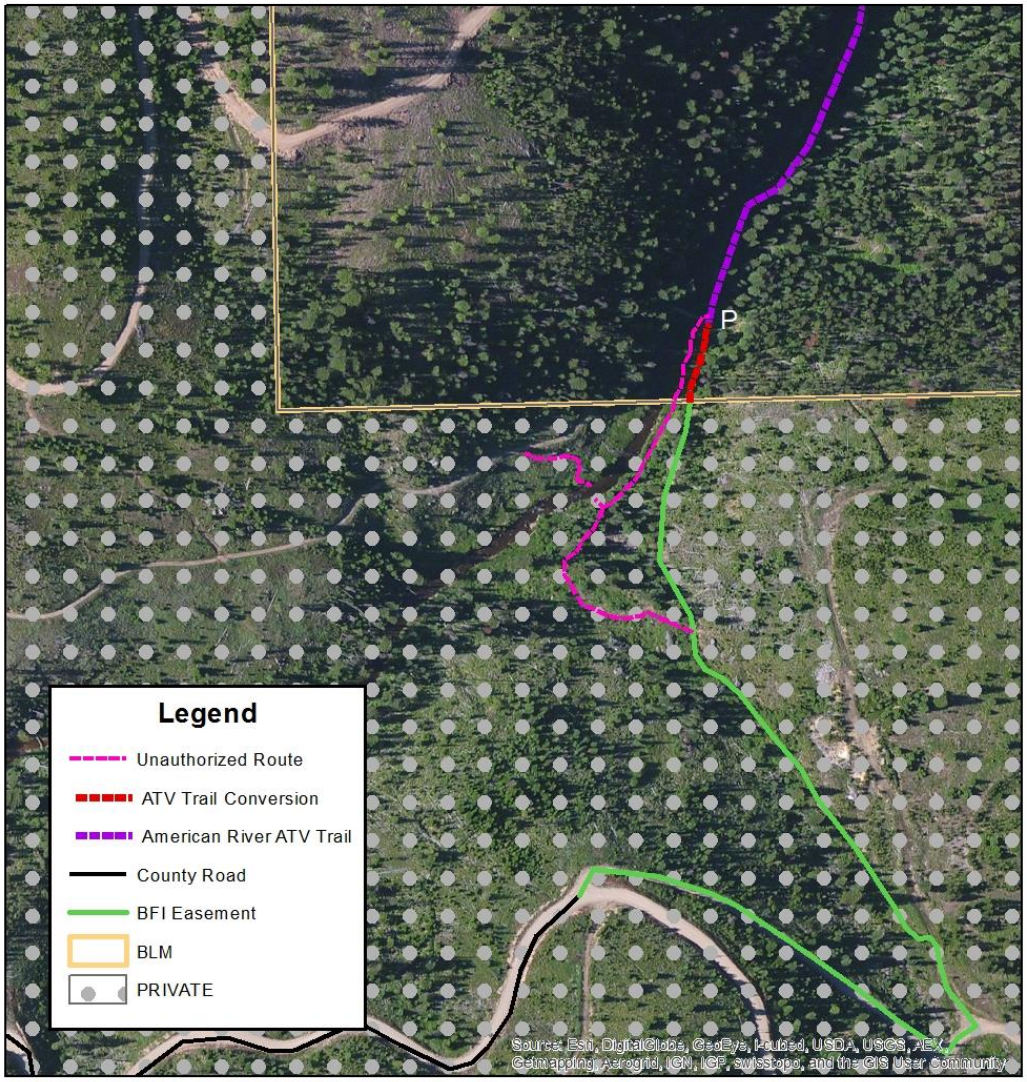
Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management. The accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual use or aggregate use with other data is not guaranteed. The following cannot be made Section 508 compliant. For help with its data or information, please contact the BLM Idaho State Office Webmaster at 208-373-4000.

Map Created: 5/13/2014

Old Powerline Road ATV Trail

Map 2



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Map Projection: NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N

Map Created: 5/13/2014

ATTACHMENT 3

494178

AMENDED TEMPORARY EASEMENT

Between BENNETT FOREST INDUSTRIES, INC., as

GRANTOR,

AND

IDAHO COUNTY, a governmental agency, as

GRANTEE.

Instrument # 494178
IDAHO COUNTY, IDAHO,
4-8-2014 11:15:33 No. of Pages: 4
Recorded for : IDAHO COUNTY
KATHY M. ACKERMAN Fee: 0.00
Ex-Officio Recorder Deputy

THIS INDENTURE, is made and entered into this 8th day of April, 2014, by and between BENNETT FOREST INDUSTRIES, INC., of Idaho County, Idaho, hereinafter called the Grantor, and IDAHO COUNTY, a governmental agency, hereinafter called the Grantee.

WITNESSETH:

WHEREAS, this Temporary Easement amends the Easement signed on June 6, 2012 and recorded at the Idaho County Recorder's office on August 1, 2012 as Instrument Number 485050. This Amended Easement specifically allows for use of the trail described in Exhibit "A" by the general public. The Amended Temporary Easement also includes Exhibit "A" which was inadvertently not recorded with the previous Temporary Easement referred to above. In addition, the term "invitees" referred to in the original easement shall be changed to the "public". This Amended Temporary Easement also extends the term of the Temporary Easement for an additional THREE (3) YEARS from the 15th day of June, 2015 to the 15th day of June, 2018. In all other respects the previous Temporary Easement remains the same.

WHEREAS, the Grantor owns certain real property in Idaho County, Idaho, more particularly described as follows, to-wit:

Section 36, Township 29, North, Range 8 East, Boise Meridian, Idaho County, Idaho

and,

WHEREAS, there is a certain improved trail which traverses through the Grantors property as described above and more particularly described in Exhibit "A". Said trail provides access across the Grantors property and connects to trails on land owned by the Bureau of Land Management.

WHEREAS, it is necessary for the Grantee, its agents, employees, the general public and all other persons authorized by it, to have an easement and right-of-way for ingress and egress over said

Page -1-
AMENDED TEMPORARY EASEMENT

trail for the purpose of travel across the Grantor's property to access property owned by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), which is adjacent to the property owned by the Grantor.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Grantor does hereby grant unto the Grantee a temporary easement and right-of-way over an existing trail as described in Exhibit "A", located upon the Grantor's property.

The non-exclusive temporary easement and right-of-way is for the purpose of ingress and egress and travel upon by the Grantee, its agents, employees, the general public and all other persons authorized by it for the exclusive purpose of using the trail described in Exhibit "A" to travel upon and access BLM property.

That such easement shall be for an additional period of three (3) years, beginning the 15th day of June, 2015, and ending on the 15th day of June, 2018. This easement and all rights contained therein will terminate on the 15th day of June, 2018.

That upon the completion of the additional three year period the Grantee agrees that it will return the trail to its present condition, normal wear and tear excepted, and make every reasonable attempt to not damage such trail through its use of the same.

Trail Use: Use of the trail shall be limited to walking, running, ATV's, UTVs, horses or bicycles. There shall be no automobile use on or next to the trail.

Maintenance and Improvements: The Grantee shall have the duty to maintain the trail. However, any major improvements must be approved in advance by the Grantor.

Grantor hereby covenants with the Grantee that they are lawfully seized and possessed of the aforedescribed portions of land and that they have a good and lawful right to convey said temporary easement.

This instrument grants no greater rights than heretofore set forth.

This Temporary Easement may not in any way be sold, transferred, conveyed or assigned by the Grantee without the express written permission of the Grantor.

If the Grantor sells the above described property, this easement runs with the land and shall continue under the same terms and conditions as stated herein.

INDEMNIFICATION OF GRANTOR: Grantee shall exercise its rights hereunder at its

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AMENDED TEMPORARY EASEMENT

own risk and Grantee shall indemnify Grantor against all liability from damages, costs, losses and expenses resulting from or arising out of or in any way with the occupation or use of the easement by Grantee or the Grantee's invitees or guests. Grantee shall defend all actions against Grantor with respect to, and shall pay, protect, indemnify and save harmless the Grantor from and against all liabilities, lawsuits, damages, costs, expenses (including reasonable attorney's fees and expenses), causes of action, suits, claims, demands, or judgments of any nature (a) to which the Grantor is subject beause of the Grantor's interest in the Premises, or (b) arising from (i) injury to or debt to any person, or damage to or loss of property, on the subject property or connected with the use, condition or occupancy of the subject property by Grantee (ii) Grantees violation of this Easement, or (iii) any act or omission of Grantee or its agents, contractors, licensees, sublicensees, invitees, or employees.

This Temporary Easement is given to Grantee as an accommodation to Grantee without payment of consideration. Grantee hereby acknowledges the title of Grantor to the property upon which the Temporary Easement is granted and agrees never to assail, resist or deny such title or to assert any claim for a prescriptive easement over said property.

TO HAVE AND TO HOLD the said temporary easement, right and right-of-way unto the Grantee.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have hereunto set their hands and seals in the day and year in the certificate first below written.

BENNETT FOREST ~~INDUSTRIES,~~ INC.

BY: _____
Manager

GRANTOR

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

By: _____ By: Absent
R. SKIP BRANDT, Commissioner JIM CHMELIK, Commissioner

By: _____
JAMES ROCKWELL, Chairman

ATTEST: By: _____
KATHY M. ACKERMAN, Clerk

GRANTEE

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AMENDED TEMPORARY EASEMENT

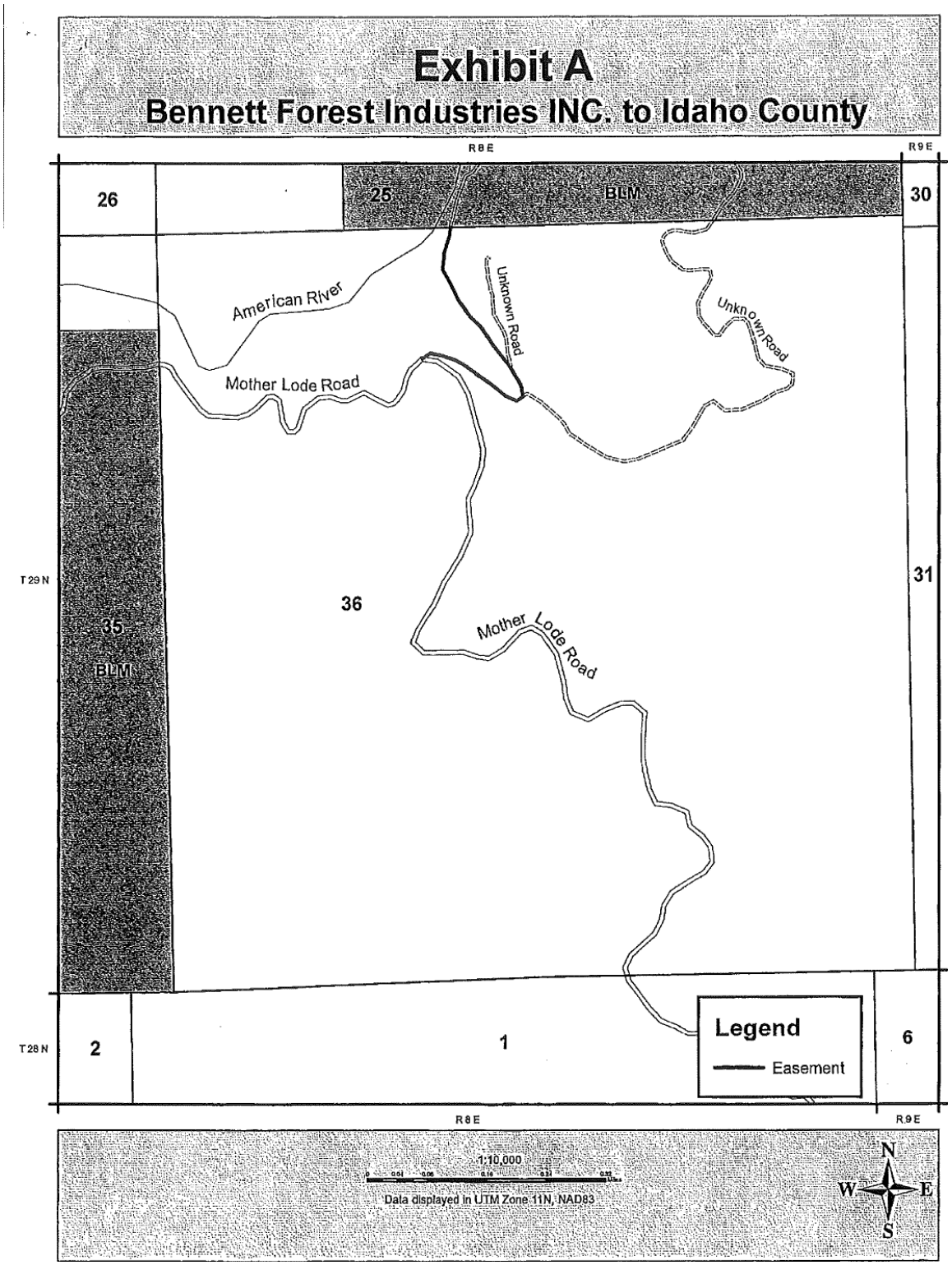
Exhibit A
Bennett Forest Industries INC. to Idaho County
R8E
R9E
26
25
BLM
30
American River
Unknown Road
Unknown Road
Mother Lode Road
T29N
36
31
35
BLM
Mother Lode Road
T28N
2
1
6
Legend
Easement
R8E
R9E
1:10,000
Data displayed in UTM Zone 11N, NAD83
N
W
E
S