

## SOME PRELIMINARY THOUGHTS ON THE EFSF RAMP DRAFT

There are two important roads that are not adequately covered in the Draft EA and they should be, Sugar Creek Road and the Red Metal Mine Road. Both of these roads support recreational activities ***that are critical to the continued economic viability*** of the Yellow Pine community. Both roads were physically closed recently without following legal procedures during the time period the Forest Service was working on the EFSF RAMP project - Lots more factual info on the legality is available. **A detailed economic analysis of the impact on the Yellow Pine Village of closing/restricting roads for all 3 action alternatives is required** given the close tie to the economic survival between the Village & Recreation.

### Sugar Creek Road

This is a highly valued road that was built to access the Cinnabar Mine. Opening this road would benefit the recreation community and at the same time support the economic stability of Yellow Pine which depends on recreation (primarily motorized). The road is designated to be open only in Alternative D, but should be designated to be open in all 3 of the Action Alternatives.

### Red Metal Mine Road

This road accesses the Red Metal Mine which is the launching site for boon dock hiking into Crater Lake for recreationists in the Yellow Pine area. If reopening this road is not done, then an alternative for access to Crater Lake needs to be considered in this EA. This road *is not addressed anywhere in the Draft EFSF RAMP. Nor was it covered in the Collaborative report to the Forest.* Early on in this EA Process the Payette National Forest stated the Red Metal Mine road would be addressed in the plan.

## The Draft EA contains 4 Alternatives

- Alternative A (no action) would retain the existing system of roads and motorized trails and existing legal opportunities for public motorized uses. It would not address unauthorized routes or management needs at existing dispersed campsites.
- Alternative B would expand legal opportunities for motorized uses by adding some of the currently unauthorized routes to the road and motorized trail system. It would decommission all other unauthorized routes determined to be unneeded and manage existing dispersed campsites to address the project purpose and need. This alternative would decommission the most miles of unauthorized routes of all the action alternatives.
- Alternative C would also expand legal opportunities for motorized uses by adding more unauthorized routes to the existing road and motorized trail system and would decommission some unauthorized routes, but not all. This alternative adopts all recommendations from the Big Creek-Yellow Pine Collaborative that meet the project purpose and need. The Collaborative is a group comprised of individuals, agencies, and other entities including the Nez Perce Tribe, Idaho Conservation League, Idaho Parks and Recreation, Valley County, Perpetua Resources (formerly Midas Gold), and Trout Unlimited. This alternative would leave the most miles of unauthorized routes on the landscape.
- Alternative D would expand legal opportunities for motorized uses the most, compared to all the action alternatives. This alternative would add the most miles of unauthorized routes to the road and motorized trail system and decommission all other unauthorized routes. It would also manage existing dispersed sites to address the project purpose and need.

<sup>1</sup>Total value excludes 64.08 miles of non-NFS and other public roads

# ALTERNATIVE B

The following list describes the specific routes or route segments that are subject to a change in route classification. The dispersed campsite actions are also summarized following this list in table 5. Refer to map 5 in appendix A:

- A **0.19-mile** unauthorized route accessing the east and west sides of the Wilson Mine near Profile Summit would be **converted to an ATV<50"** trail. This action would require obtaining an easement from the private landowner.
- A **3.23-mile** unauthorized route from the Missouri Creek Trailhead to the end of the road would be **decommissioned** and the **existing non-motorized trail** (National Forest System Trail #031) would be **retained**. Historically, the access route into the Missouri Creek Trailhead has been an unauthorized route, and the existing non-motorized trail is associated with the old access road that goes up the canyon.
- A **0.15-mile** unauthorized route that accesses the Missouri Creek Trailhead from the Profile Road would be **added as ML2** and open to motor vehicle use.
- **1.31 miles** of the lower, unauthorized Quartz Creek Road from Yellow Pine to the Quartz Creek Bridge would be **converted to a Trail Open to All Vehicles (TOV)**.
- **4.68 miles of unauthorized routes** from the Quartz Creek Bridge up to and around the Red Mountain mining area would be **converted to Special Designation-UTV<70"**. This change in motorized use would necessitate upgrades to the existing bridge to safely accommodate vehicle passage over Quartz Creek.
- **The 0.52-mile** National Forest System Road 51417 (Spring Box Road) that accesses the water diversion for Eiguren Ranch would be **changed from the current designation of ML2 to Temporary**. The route was incorrectly recorded in the forest transportation system as an ML2 but has an outstanding special uses permit and is being corrected to Temporary.
- **4.85 miles of National Forest System Road 51883 (Sugar Creek Road)** would be **changed from the current designation of ML2AP to ML1**. The Forest Service would pursue an easement with the owner of private land near the mouth of Sugar Creek to ensure long-term administrative access.
- **0.2 miles** of unauthorized routes that access dispersed campsites off the Stibnite Road on the way up to Monumental Summit would be **converted to TOV** to allow full-sized motor vehicle access to these sites that are just over 300 feet from the main road. Sites available for camping would each be identified by the placement of signs. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
- A **2.43-mile** unauthorized route from the end of National Forest System Road 50375 (Thunder Mountain Road) at the Dewey Mine gate up to Lightning Peak would be **added as ML2**.
- A **0.33-mile** unauthorized route associated with the National Forest System Trail #062 (Marble Creek Trail) in the Thunder Mountain area would be **converted to a non-motorized trail**.
- A **0.04-mile** unauthorized route from the Lightning Peak TOV to the Marble Creek Trailhead would be **converted to TOV**.
- **0.55 miles** of the unauthorized route that accesses Horse Heaven via the Boise National Forest would be **converted to a TOV**. The Forest Service would install traffic control at an appropriate location to keep motorized traffic from going beyond the trail designation on the closed route going down into the Stibnite mining area.
- An additional approximately **61.33 miles** of unauthorized routes would be **decommissioned** within the project area (64.56 total miles of decommissioning would occur).
- The existing **19.62 miles** of designated 2-wheeled motorized trails within the project area would be **retained**. These National Forest System trails include Quartz Creek Trail #067, Williams Peak Trail #073, Deadman Creek Trail #075, S/F Sheep Creek Trail #072, and Caton Lake Trail #091.
- **33.68 miles** of existing ML2 National Forest System roads that access the project area would be **retained**. These include National Forest System Roads 50375 (Thunder Mountain Road), 51290 (Meadow Creek Lookout Road), and 51887 (Old East Fork Campground Road).
- The **31 existing, dispersed campsites** within the project area would receive management action. Dispersed campsites would only be allowed where a sign with a tent symbol has been installed at the beginning of the route. Other actions that could occur include restricting vehicle access with boulders, relocating firepits, removing downed trees, or decommissioning sites. The actions that could occur at each dispersed recreation site are summarized in table 5.

# ALTERNATIVE C

The following list describes the specific routes or route segments that are subject to a change in route classification. Refer to map 6 in appendix A.

- **0.83 miles** of unauthorized routes on the west side of the Wilson Mine would be **converted** to an **ATV<50" trail**. This action would require the Forest Service to obtain a reciprocal easement with the Wilson Mine property owner. This action would also require a section of the trail to be rerouted out of an intermittent stream channel.
  - **1.31 miles** of the lower Quartz Creek Road from Yellow Pine to the Quartz Creek Bridge would be **converted** from an unauthorized route to a **Trail Open to All Vehicles (TOV)**.
  - **4.67 miles** of unauthorized routes from the Quartz Creek Bridge up to and around the Red Mountain mining area would be **converted** to an **ATV<50" trail**. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
  - **0.82 miles** of the unauthorized route that accesses Horse Heaven via the Boise National Forest would be **converted to Trail Open to All Vehicles (TOV)**. The Forest Service would install traffic control at an appropriate location to keep motorized traffic from going beyond the TOV trail designation into the Stibnite mining area.
  - **4.85 miles** of National Forest System Road 51883 (Sugar Creek Road) would be **retained as ML2AP**. The Forest Service would pursue an easement with the private landowner. The Collaborative did not come to a consensus decision on this route and asked the Forest Service to find a workable solution. Hence, this alternative action would reflect the current management being applied to the Sugar Creek Road. It should be noted that in the 2008 Krassel Travel Management Record of Decision, Sugar Creek was already managed as a closed ML2AP-designated road.
  - **31.42 miles** of existing ML2 National Forest System roads that access the project area would be **retained**. These roads include Thunder Mountain Road 50375, Meadow Creek Lookout Road 51290, Old East Fork Campground Road 51887, and some shorter, miscellaneous routes associated with mining in the Stibnite area and around Eiguren Ranch. This reflects the Collaborative's proposal to not make changes to existing, open, system roads.
  - **7.03 miles** of unauthorized routes would be **decommissioned** (full re-contour). These routes are old mining routes on the north slope of Sugar Creek and the old Mule Hill Road south of the Thunder Mountain Road east of Stibnite on the way up Monumental Summit.
  - An existing **19.62 miles** of **2-wheeled motorized trails** within the project area would be **retained**. These trails include Quartz Creek Trail #067, Williams Peak Trail #073, Deadman Creek Trail #075, S/F Sheep Creek Trail #072, and Caton Lake Trail #091.
  - The Collaborative's proposal did not include recommendations on **60.06 miles** of existing unauthorized routes. As such, these routes would remain **unauthorized** and not open to public access.
  - There would be no change to the management of existing dispersed recreation sites in the project area under alternative C.
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# ALTERNATIVE D

The following list describes the specific routes or route segments that are subject to a change in route classification. Refer to map 7 in Appendix A:

- **1.18 miles** of an unauthorized route accessing the east and west sides of the Wilson Mine near Profile Summit would be **converted to an ATV<50"**. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary. This action item, if selected, would require the Forest Service to obtain an easement from the private landowner.
- A **0.15-mile** unauthorized route to the Missouri Creek Trailhead would be **designated as ML2**.
- A **3.23-mile** unauthorized route from the Missouri Creek Trailhead to the end of the road would be **decommissioned** and the **non-motorized trail** would be **retained**.
- **5.14 miles** of unauthorized routes from Quartz Creek Bridge up to and around the Red Mountain mine area would be **converted to a Special Designation – UTV<70" trail**. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
- The **0.52-mile** National Forest System Road 51417 (Spring Box Road) that accesses the water diversion for Eiguren Ranch would be **changed from the current designation of ML2 to Temporary**. The route was incorrectly recorded in the forest transportation system as an ML2 but has an outstanding special uses permit and is being corrected to Temporary.
- **4.85 miles** of Sugar Creek Road 51883 would be **changed from the current designation of ML2AP to ML2** open for public motorized use. The Forest Service would need to secure legal access prior to the change with the private landowner. An aquatic organism passage (AOP) structure would need to be installed at Sugar Creek prior to opening the portion of the road beyond the crossing. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would need to be applied as necessary to minimize effects to watershed and fisheries resources from reopening this road to motor vehicle use. Sections of the road could require road cut-and-fill slope stabilization work to facilitate motorized access.
- **0.2 miles** of unauthorized routes that access dispersed campsites off the Stibnite Road on the way up to Monumental Summit would be **converted to TOV** to allow for full-sized motor vehicle access to these sites that are just over 300 feet from the main road. Sites would be identified as available for camping by the installation of signs. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
- **0.12 miles** of unauthorized routes that access Timm's Cabin in the Thunder Mountain area would be **converted to TOV**. The Forest Service would protect cultural resources by installing boulders to restrict motor vehicle access to a fixed end point. Additionally, an interpretive panel with historical site information for visitors would be installed.
- A **2.43-mile** unauthorized route from the end of the Thunder Mountain Road at the Dewey Mine gate up to Lightning Peak would be **added as ML2**. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
- A **0.33 mile** unauthorized route associated with National Forest System Trail #062 (Marble Creek Trail) in the Thunder Mountain area would be **converted to a non-motorized trail**.
- A **0.04-mile** unauthorized route from the Thunder Mountain ML2 road to the Marble Creek Trailhead would be **converted to TOV**. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
- A **1.5-mile** unauthorized route in the Horse Heaven area accessing the ridgeline on the north side of the powerline road would be **converted to an ATV<50" trail**. This action would require installation of traffic controls to keep larger UTVs and full-sized vehicles from traveling any further into the roadless area. It would also require narrowing the trail where needed to enhance the ATV experience and protect the characteristics of the surrounding roadless area.
- A **1.83-mile** unauthorized route accessing the Horse Heaven area from the Boise National Forest boundary to the top of the Meadow Creek drainage would be **converted to a Trail Open to All Vehicles (TOV)**. The Forest Service would install traffic controls at the end of the route to keep full-sized vehicles from going beyond the TOV trail designation down into the Stibnite mining area.
- A **3.61-mile** unauthorized route from the end of the Horse Heaven TOV down into the Meadow Creek area, which accesses the backdoor to the Stibnite mining area, would be **converted to a Special Designation – UTV<70" trail**. Storm damage risk reduction treatments would be applied as necessary.
- An additional approximately **53.98 miles** of unauthorized routes within the project area would be **decommissioned**.
- The existing **19.62 miles** of **2-wheeled motorized trails** within the project area would be **retained**. These trails include Quartz Creek Trail #067, Williams Peak Trail #073, Deadman Creek Trail #075, S/F Sheep Creek Trail #072, and Caton Lake Trail #091.
- **6.88 miles** of non-motorized trails would be **converted to 2-wheeled motorized trails**. This includes 4.96 miles of Parks Creek Trail #069 and 1.91 miles of Parks Peak Cut-off Trail #074. This action may require the installation of multiple bridges across fish-bearing streams and improvement of drainage structures along this trail to accommodate this use and limit or mitigate effects to watershed and fisheries resources.
- **36.52 miles** of existing **ML2 roads** would be **retained**. Roads include National Forest System Roads 51290 (Meadow Creek Lookout Road), 51887 (Old East Fork Campground Road), 50375 (Thunder Mountain Road), and 51417 (Spring Box Road) which is utilized by Eiguren Ranch to access their authorized water diversion.
- **31 dispersed campsites** within the project area would be managed the same as alternative B (table 5).



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# East Fork South Fork Restoration and Access Management Plan #60889

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