USDA United States Department of Agriculture Forest Service

Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests
Forest Supervisor's Office
903 3rd Street, Kamiah, ID 83536
208-935-2513 (office)

File Code: 1950
Date: May 27, 2016

Dear Planning Participant:

We will be considering the enclosed project proposals and conducting environmental analyses on them in the near future.

You are being notified of these proposals because you have expressed interest in projects on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests.

Preliminary assessments have been made that the following projects fall within a category of actions listed in 36 CFR 220.6, thereby excluding them from documentation in an Environmental Assessment (EA) or an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). On our Forest, we refer to these as "Small NEPA" projects. Please feel free to offer your comments regarding them (see next page).

Thank you for your continued participation in projects involving the Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests.

Sincerely,

for CHERYL F. PROBERT
Forest Supervisor
Nez Perce – Clearwater National Forests

Enclosures: Project Descriptions and Maps

Information Regarding Public Comments

Please review the following proposals and submit your site-specific comments, as described below, for inclusion in our analyses for the projects.

Comments should be submitted as an email attachment, in Word (preferred) or PDF format, to: comments-northern-nezperce@fs.fed.us.

If you choose to comment on the proposals, please include the following:

(1) Your name, address, phone number, email address, and organization, if any;
(2) Title of project; and,
(3) Specific facts and relevant rationale you feel should be considered.

Comments received in response to this solicitation, including names, telephone numbers, addresses, and email addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection.

Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7 CFR 1.27(d), any person may request this Agency to withhold a submission from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) permits such confidentiality. The Forest Service will inform the requester of the Agency's decision regarding the request for confidentiality and the options available (see 7 CFR 1.27 for further information).

Please note that this opportunity for comment is primarily for you to make statements regarding why the project should or should not proceed as described below. If you have questions about any details regarding an individual project, we encourage you to please contact the project proponent, listed with each project on the pages below, to possibly get answers (including requests for more detailed project maps) before submitting your comments.

If you have any questions regarding comment submission, please contact Sheila Lehman, 208-935-4256 (work), 208-935-4275 (FAX); or, mail inquiries: Supervisor's Office, Nez Perce-Clearwater NFs, 903 3rd Street, Kamiah, ID, 83536.

Please submit your comments by June 27, 2016, for full consideration.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender

Project Proposals

1) AVISTA Buried Electrical Lines [Red River Ranger District (RD)]

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(2): Additional construction or reconstruction of existing telephone or utility lines in a designated corridor.

Legal Coordinates (Boise Meridian)**:** Township 25 North, Range 8 East, Sections 3, 10, and 11

Background: The need for this project is to provide electricity to private land owners with inholdings along Road 222D. This would also allow these remote owners to pump water potentially needed for fire suppression. Operation and maintenance would be taken care of by AVISTA.

Project Design / Equipment: AVISTA is proposing to install 5000' (approximately one mile) of buried electrical line, 36 inches deep and mounting two to three 3' x 3' x 3' green steel junction enclosures at ground level within the Right-Of-Way along Road 222D. The cable would be buried via a trench created with a vibratory plow cat. Any surface disturbance would be bladed back to its original condition. All work would be done in the existing road bed or along the edge of the road in summer or early fall when conditions are dry.

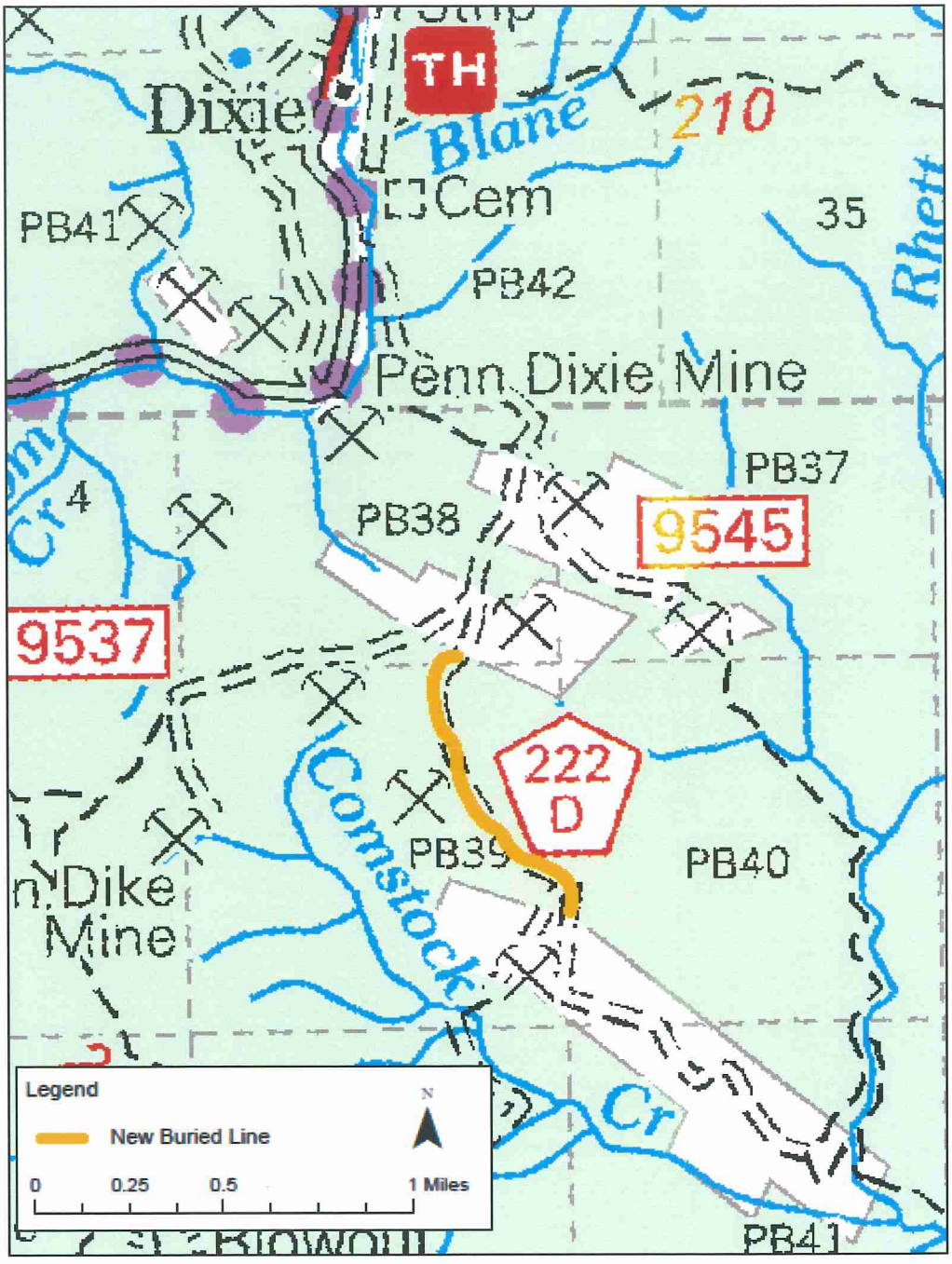
Road 222D is a public road under an easement issued to Idaho County for 66 feet in width or 33 feet on each side of centerline. AVISTA must get consent from Idaho County that this project would not interfere with the free flow of traffic or impair the full use and safety of the public road. Any need for signing or flaggers during construction would be coordinated with the county.

Project Implementation: Work would be completed in the summer or early fall of 2016 and is projected to take one week.

Project Information: Molly Puchlerz, Lands Special Uses Program Coordinator, (208) 942-0303; mpuchlerz@fs.fed.us; Andy Schmidt, Lead R1 West Side Land and Boundary Zone, (208) 765-7226, ajschmidt@fs.fed.us.

Map of Avista Buried Electrical Line Project

AVISTA Buried Line- FS Road 222D



2) Blue Ribbon Test Drilling (Red River RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8): Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 29 North, Range 9 East, SE/4 of Section 32, and Township 28 North, Range 8 East, NW/4 of Section 3

Background: The project area lies within previously disturbed and undisturbed areas within the Siegel Creek drainage. The area is vegetated with predominately upland vegetation and timber of mixed species, with some areas of riparian vegetation. Goldski, LLC, is proposing to exploratory drill to test for gold values on unpatented mining claims to determine if sufficient quantities of valuable minerals exist to warrant further development of a mining operation.

Project Design / Equipment: The northernmost test sites would be accessed by taking State Highway 14 to Forest Road 222 (Red River Road), then to Forest Road 1182C. The southernmost sites would be accessed by taking State Highway 14 to Forest Road 222 (Red River Road), then on Forest Road 1182 (Siegel Creek) for approximately 3.5 miles.

The proposal is for a total of six drill sites, each approximately 30' X 50' in size. Up to three sites may be active at any one time depending on the number of drills in operation. A maximum of two holes, 3" to 6" in diameter and from 750' to 1000' deep may be drilled at each site. Drilling depths may be adjusted as targets become more defined. The holes would be drilled using one to three self-contained, track-mounted drill rigs operating concurrently. The drill rigs would be self leveling to minimize the need for a leveling excavation of the drill area. A sump or infiltration gallery, approximately 2' wide by 3' - 4' deep and approximately 20' long, would be dug at each site to contain drill fluid and to allow drill cuttings to settle out. Drill fluid would be comprised of water and a clay derivative. The operation would require between 500 and 1000 gallons of water per day per drill rig.

In the event that water is used from Forest Service lands, a water use permit would be obtained from the Idaho Department of Water Resources, and the water withdrawal site reviewed by Forest Service specialists before water is taken from any stream.

Upon completion of drilling, each drill hole would be filled and plugged according to the State of Idaho Best Management Practices (BMP's) for filling and plugging drill holes. Upon abandonment of a drill site, sumps would be allowed to dewater through percolation and evaporation, then backfilled. The topsoil would be replaced, with duff and woody debris scattered over the area, if available, and the area seeded and mulched as necessary. If earth leveling is required for any drill pad the area would be restored to its original contour, the topsoil replaced, and the site revegetated. Each site would be reclaimed when work at the site was completed before moving on to the next drill site. Each drill site would be accessed using existing access roads, old road templates or by overland travel. Some minor temporary road construction may be required to access some of the sites. Placement of these roads would be determined by a field review which would include the operator and Forest Service specialists. Areas impacted by equipment

travel would be reconditioned as needed, mulched with existing duff and woody debris, and seeded as required as part of the reclamation of the drill site it accesses. Surface disturbance needed to reach individual drill sites would be minimal but may require brushing of existing road templates or overland routes.

Equipment used includes a small backhoe to dig infiltration galleries, a small cat to conduct reclamation activities, and 4 X 4 pickups and ATVs to support drilling activities. A low ground pressure ATV or a pickup truck would be used to transport drill core and supplies.

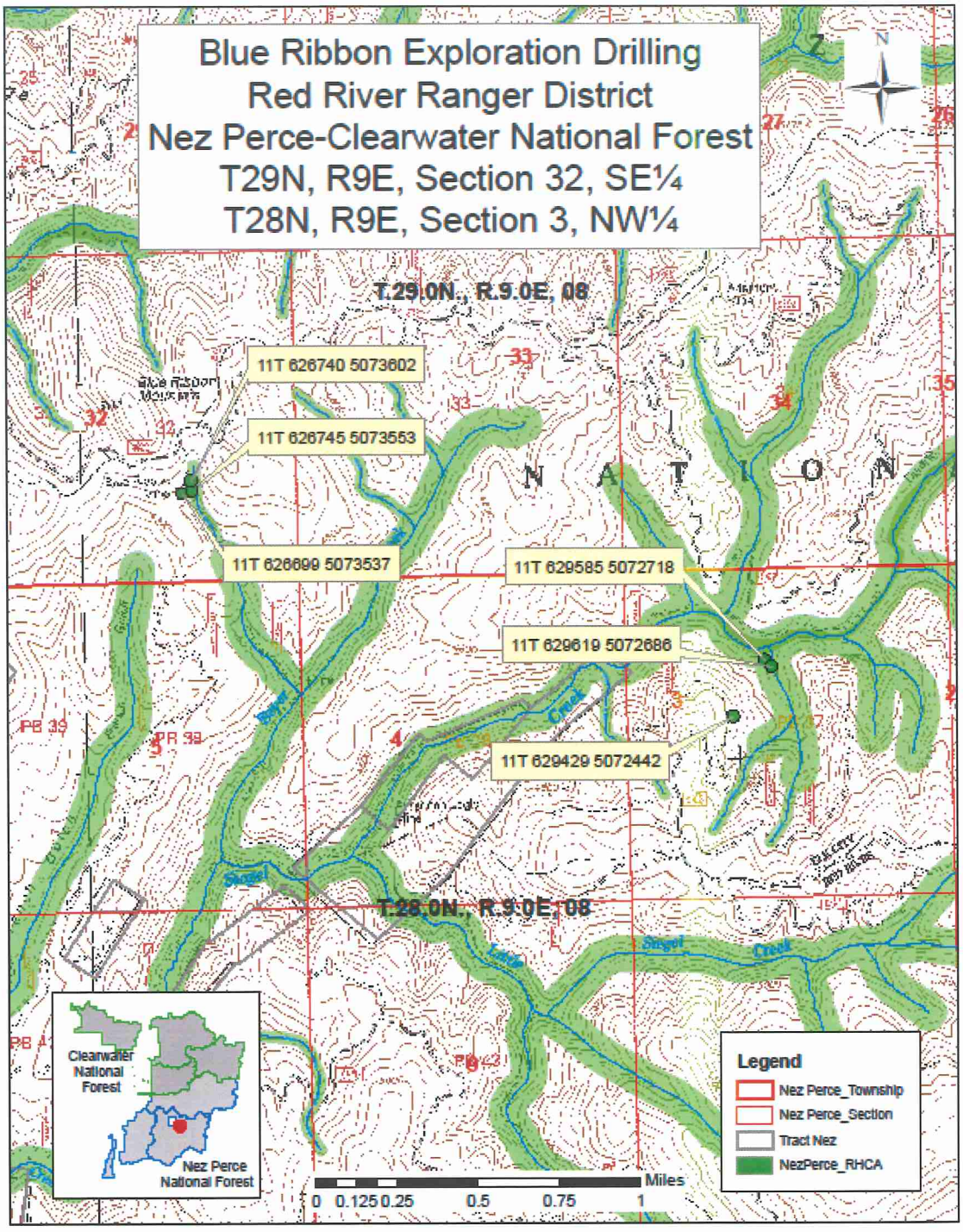
All activities would follow both State of Idaho Mining BMPs and standard mitigation measures for mineral projects developed by the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (and incorporated into the operator's permit), including, but not limited to: notifying the District Ranger or minerals administrator 48 hours before any work is to begin; not beginning operations until a field review is conducted by appropriate Forest Service personnel to verify placement of sump/ infiltration gallery and temporary access trails and ensure that acceptable conditions exist (no excessive saturation, high water, etc.); washing all vehicles and equipment used at the site before being brought onto National Forest System (NFS) lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds; utilizing suitable erosion control devices, placed between the pond and live waters; avoiding disturbances of wetlands and stream riparian zones; avoiding working on saturated soils; not discharging water into any live stream or wetland; not removing large vegetation without prior authorization of the District Ranger; developing a hazardous material and spill prevention plan and submitting it to the District Ranger prior to operations; not storing more than 30 gallons of fuel or oil in the project area; Prior to October 1, removing all equipment, garbage and trash from NFS lands as a result of the operations; and, using and maintaining a sanitary facility at the project area while operations are ongoing.

As drilling is nearing completion at one site, the next site would be prepared ahead of time to minimize the amount of time the drill rig would need to sit idle. Once the drill rig had been removed from a site, needed reclamation would be completed for that site as soon as practicable. A reclamation bond would be calculated based on the estimated cost of reclaiming each active and each recently abandoned site. A bond sufficient to cover the cost of all anticipated surface disturbance would be submitted by the operator before the Plan of Operations is approved and before work may begin.

Project Implementation: The project is expected to be implemented in summer 2016, and would be completed within one year from the approval date of the Plan of Operations.

Project Information: Marty Jones, Minerals Administrator, (208) 983-5158, martinjones@fs.fed.us.

Map of the Blue Ribbon Test Drilling Project



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April 6, 2016, Clint Hughes

3) Lamb Creek Road Use Permit (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 42 North, Range 1 East, Section 29

Background: Potlatch Corporation is requesting the use of approx. 0.6 miles of National Forest System Roads (NFSR) 3933 and 3933-A to access their land at the National Forest boundary located at the end of NFSR 3933-A. Both roads are currently closed yearlong (gated on 3933) to all motorized vehicles. The closure is designated as S/W (soil and water). Both roads are aggregate surfaced roads in good condition, and would require minimal maintenance/road work prior to log haul. Forest Service Roads 3933 and 3933-A are considered the most economical route for Potlatch Corp. to access their land.

Project Design / Equipment: Potlatch Corporation proposes to use 0.3 miles of NFSR 3933 and 0.3 miles of 3933-A to access their land for a timber harvest scheduled for summer of 2016, with prescribed burning and tree planting to be conducted after the timber harvest. A 5-year Road Use Permit would be authorized that would allow Potlatch Corporation administrative and commercial use of the road by logging trucks and support vehicles during the closure period. The road would continue to be closed to all motorized vehicles.

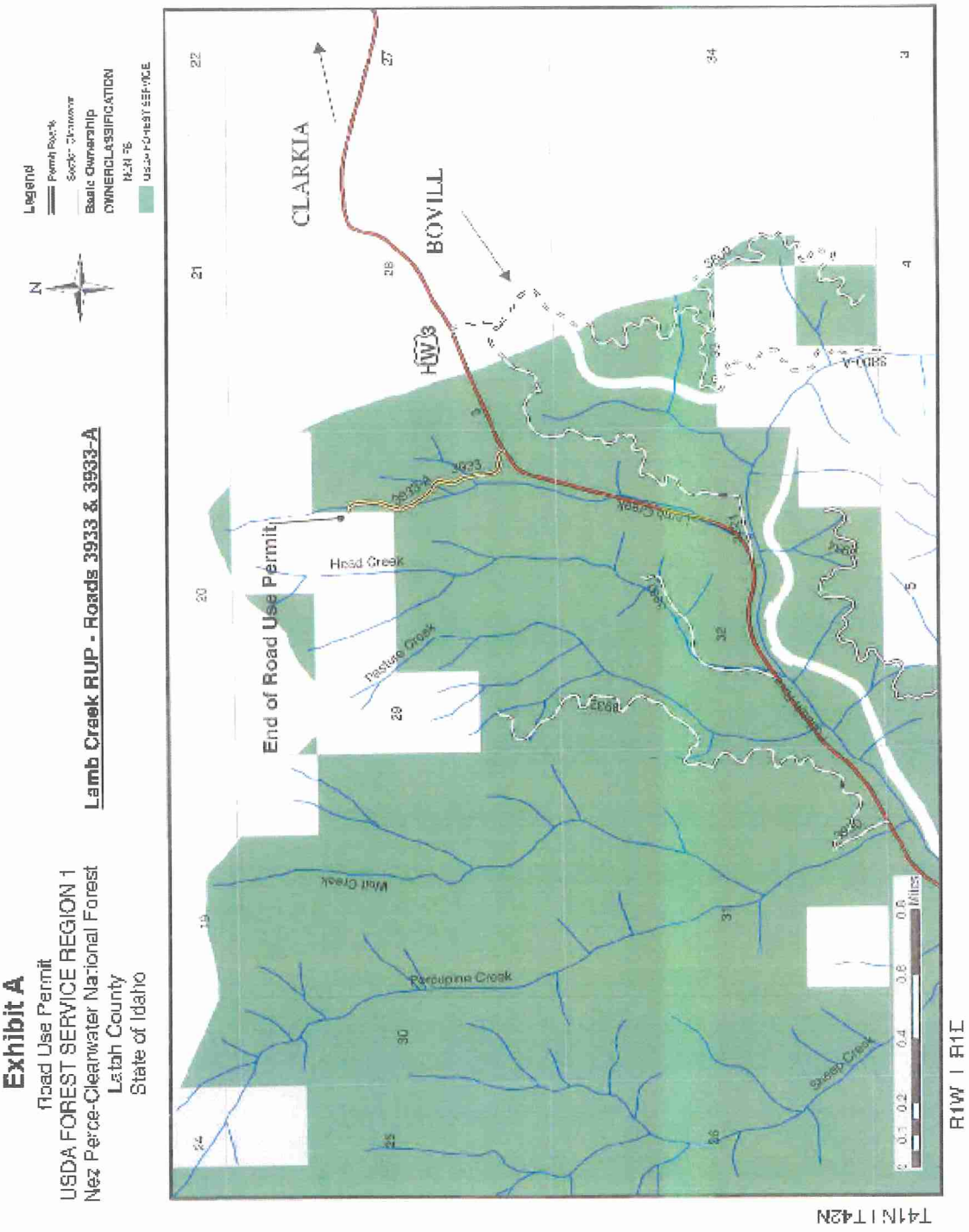
The Potlatch Corporation would maintain the roads through roadside brush removal, culvert maintenance, ditch cleaning and road grading. Equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher would be used to accomplish road maintenance.

All road maintenance activities would be required to follow Forest Service Road Maintenance Specifications and Best Management Practices, which would be included in the road use permit. NFSR 3933 and 3933-A would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the road use permit.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest would start as early as summer of 2016, with planting completed by winter, 2021.

Project Information: David Ratliff, Forest Service Civil Engineer, 208-875-1718, dratliff@fs.fed.us

Map of the Lamb Creek Road Use Permit Project



4) Nat Brown Fencing (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(9) Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an allotment management plan is not yet in place.

Legal Coordinates (Boise Meridian): Township 41 North, Range 1 West, Section 7

Background: Nat Brown Meadow is small and narrow with a portion of Nat Brown Creek running through the meadow. Bounded on all sides by hills, the area forms a natural corridor for animal movement. There are no current means to exclude livestock from most of the meadow, including a usually wet part of the floodplain. This makes it nearly impossible to keep livestock from grazing it past the time when utilization and streambank alteration indicators have been met or exceeded. The permittee has attempted to keep livestock from grazing the meadow at these times (herding, salting, protein supplements, etc.) and nothing has worked consistently. There are no livestock distribution or utilization concerns on the rest of the allotment, which consists mostly of transitory range. Part of the stream and meadow was fenced in 2013, and there has been no trouble with livestock breaking in there.

Project Design / Equipment: The Forest Service is proposing to extend the existing Nat Brown exclosure fence by approx. 1600' to include most of the meadow, which would add an additional 3.7 acres to the exclosure. Most of the materials would be recycled from the existing fence (see attached map). We are also proposing to construct a new small exclosure (approx. 1.10 acres, 1400' of fencing) in the riparian meadow opposite Forest Service Road 3327. Ground disturbance would consist of digging post holes for wood posts with a hand augur or small tracked augur and pounding T-posts. The tracked augur would only be used when the ground was dry and hard. The work would be done by the permittee or a contractor. Both exclosures would be grazed occasionally—for example, a few days in the fall—for forage plant health while keeping stubble height, utilization and streambank alteration to acceptable levels as described in the term permit and Annual Operating Plan. There would be no changes to designated access.

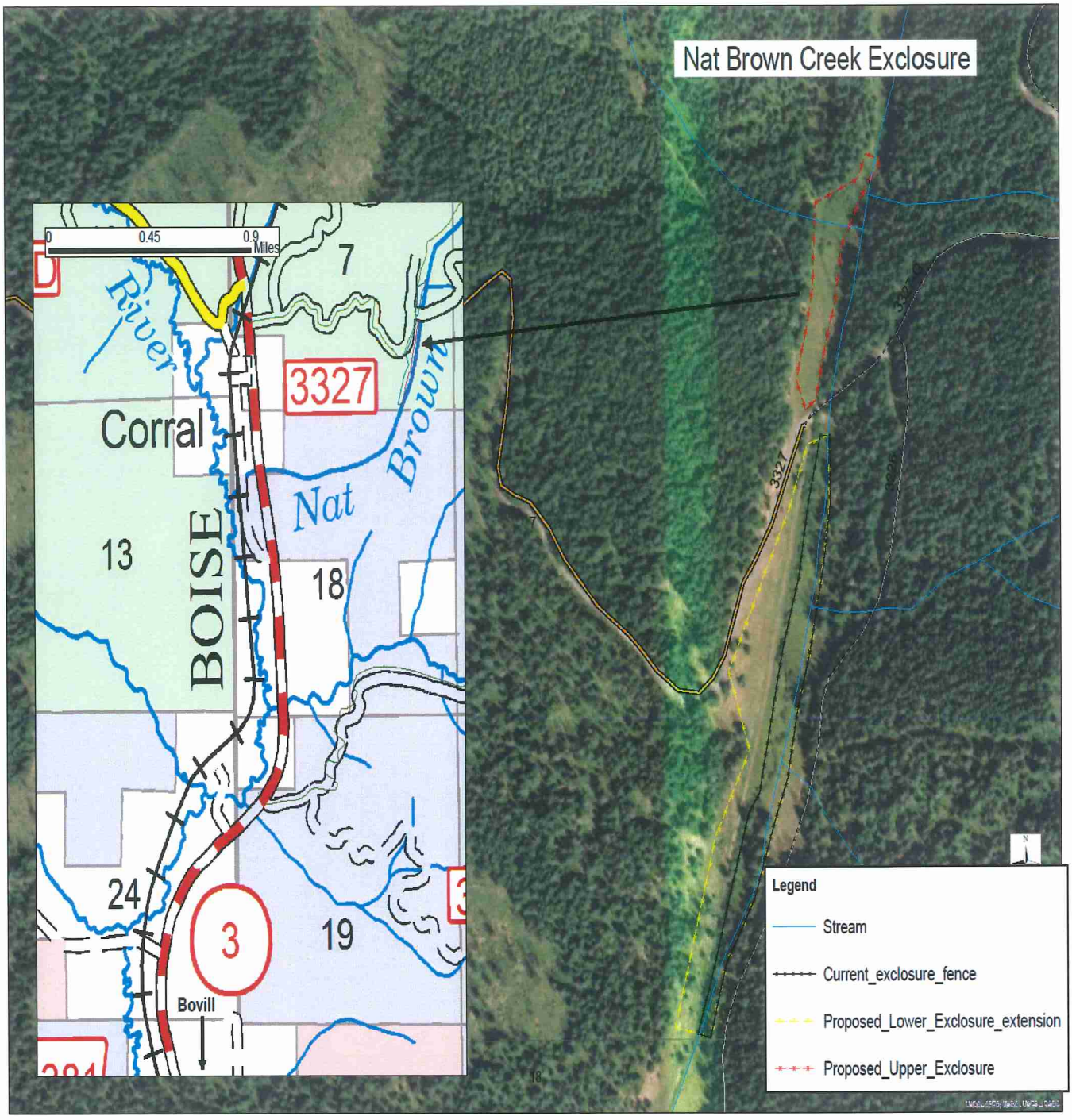
The project would have multiple benefits: (1) eliminate or vastly reduce impacts to the streambank and channel, allowing for improved riparian function over time; (2) reserve more forage within the exclosure and increase browse species for wildlife; and (3) reduced grazing pressure would allow native plants to compete more effectively with noxious weeds.

The south end of Nat Brown Meadow is under Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) ownership. IDL will be contacted to determine if they want to coordinate with the Forest Service and fence off their part of the meadow, which has the same issues.

Project Implementation: Work could begin in the summer of 2016 but more likely in spring/summer 2017, and would take a few days to a week.

Project Information: Katlyn Howisey, North Zone Range & Weeds Specialist, 208-875-1740, katlynmhowisey@fs.fed.us.

Map of the Nat Brown Fencing Project



5) National Forest System Road 4716-A Road Easement (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(7) Sale or exchange of land or interest in land and resources where resulting land uses remain essentially the same.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 43 North, Range 4 West, Section 18

Background: The State of Idaho, Department of Lands, ("Cooperator" or "State") and the United States of America, by and through the Regional Foresters, Northern Region and Intermountain Region, USDA Forest Service, ("Government") entered into a Road Right-of-Way Construction and Use Agreement and Cooperative Road Maintenance Agreement on January 13, 2003, hereinafter referred to as the "State of Idaho / Forest Service Cost Share Agreement" or "Agreement" providing for the joint construction and use of roads within the State of Idaho and within and adjacent to the National Forests.

This project is located within the State of Idaho Agreement Area which includes the entire State of Idaho. The State of Idaho is requesting permanent access to their lands across National Forest System (NFS) lands on an existing road for the protection and management of their lands.

Idaho Department of Lands has been using National Forest System Road (NFSR) 4716-A for land management activities, including commercial timber haul, under 7700 Road Use Permits. The current permit expired in 2015.

Easement Details: The USA, USDA Forest Service, would grant an easement to the State of Idaho, Department of Lands, across NFS lands for the following existing road:

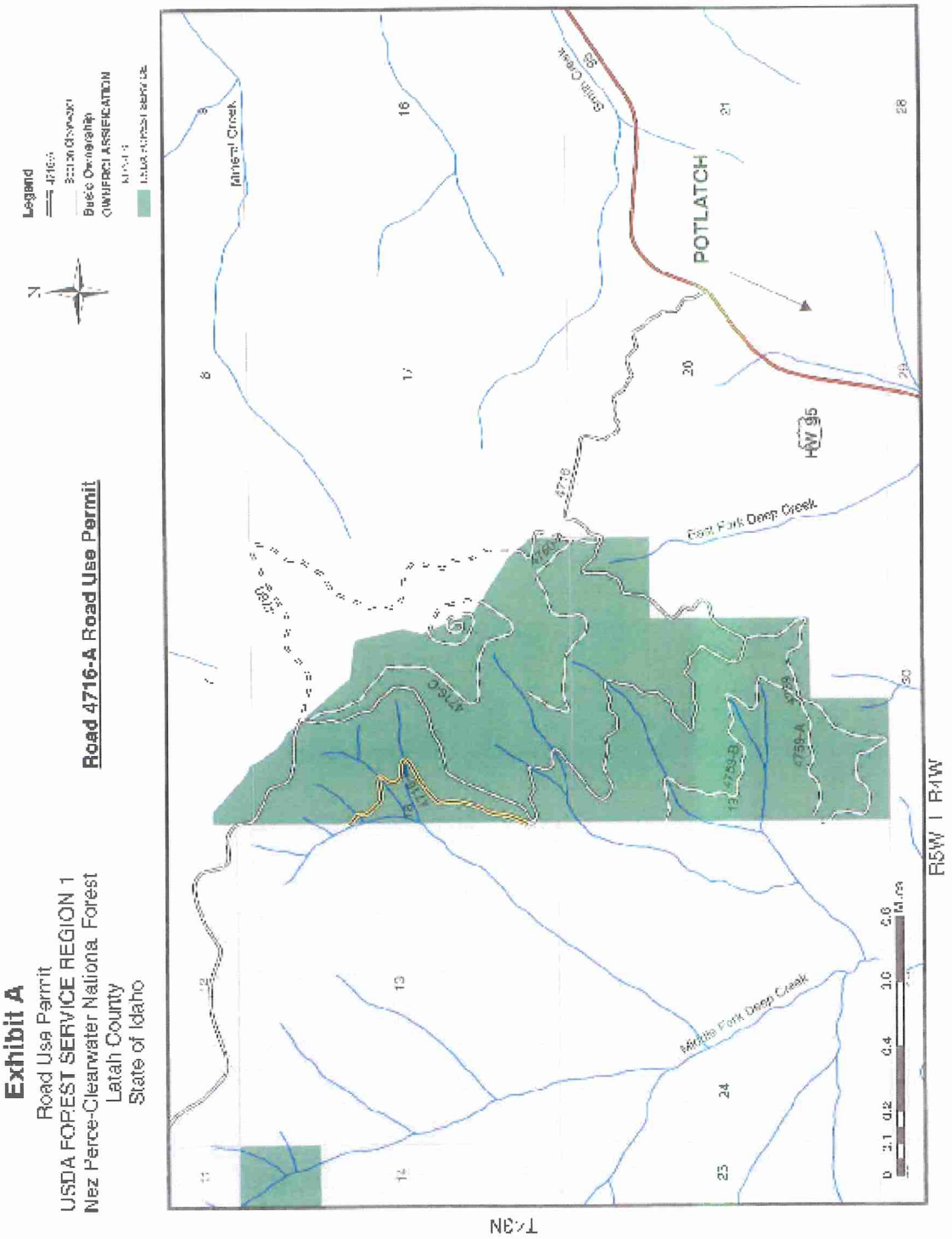
> NFSR 4716-A (T43N, R4W, Sec. 18.) A gated, maintenance level 2 road (approximately 1.20 miles in length), closed to the public for full-sized vehicles yearlong but open to vehicles under 50", e.g. ATVs, snowmobiles, etc.

Road maintenance activities such as roadside brush removal, ditch cleaning and road grading would be within the existing road template. Typical road use equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher may be used to maintain the road. The road was constructed for timber haul; log trucks and support vehicles would use the road, and there would be other vehicle use for post-harvest activities, such as burning and planting. The current public road closure to full-sized vehicles would remain the same. NFSR 4716-A would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the easement.

The easement would be managed under the State of Idaho / USDA Forest Service Cooperative Road Maintenance Agreement (2003) and under the terms and conditions of the easement granted. The State would continue to pay or perform road maintenance commensurate with their use as they would under a Road Use Permit. By granting road easements, the Forest Service would not have to process Road Use Permits. Work to complete a Fact Sheet and Supplement for this project would begin as soon as the project is approved.

Project Information: David Ratliff, Forest Service Civil Engineer, 208-875-1718, dratliff@fs.fed.us

Map of the NFSR 4716-A Road Use Permit Project



6) *National Forest System Roads 5216E and 5216E-1 Road Use Permit (North Fork RD)*

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(3) Approval, modification, or continuation of minor special uses of NFS lands that require less than five contiguous acres of land.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 37 North, Range 6 East, Section 25

Background: The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) is requesting the use of NFSR 5216-E (0.1 miles) and 5216-E1 (0.2 miles) to access State land at the National Forest boundary located at the end of the 5216-E1. Both roads are native surface ridge top roads with no water crossings, and have yearlong closures to motorized vehicles (open seasonally to snowmobiles) for soil and water.

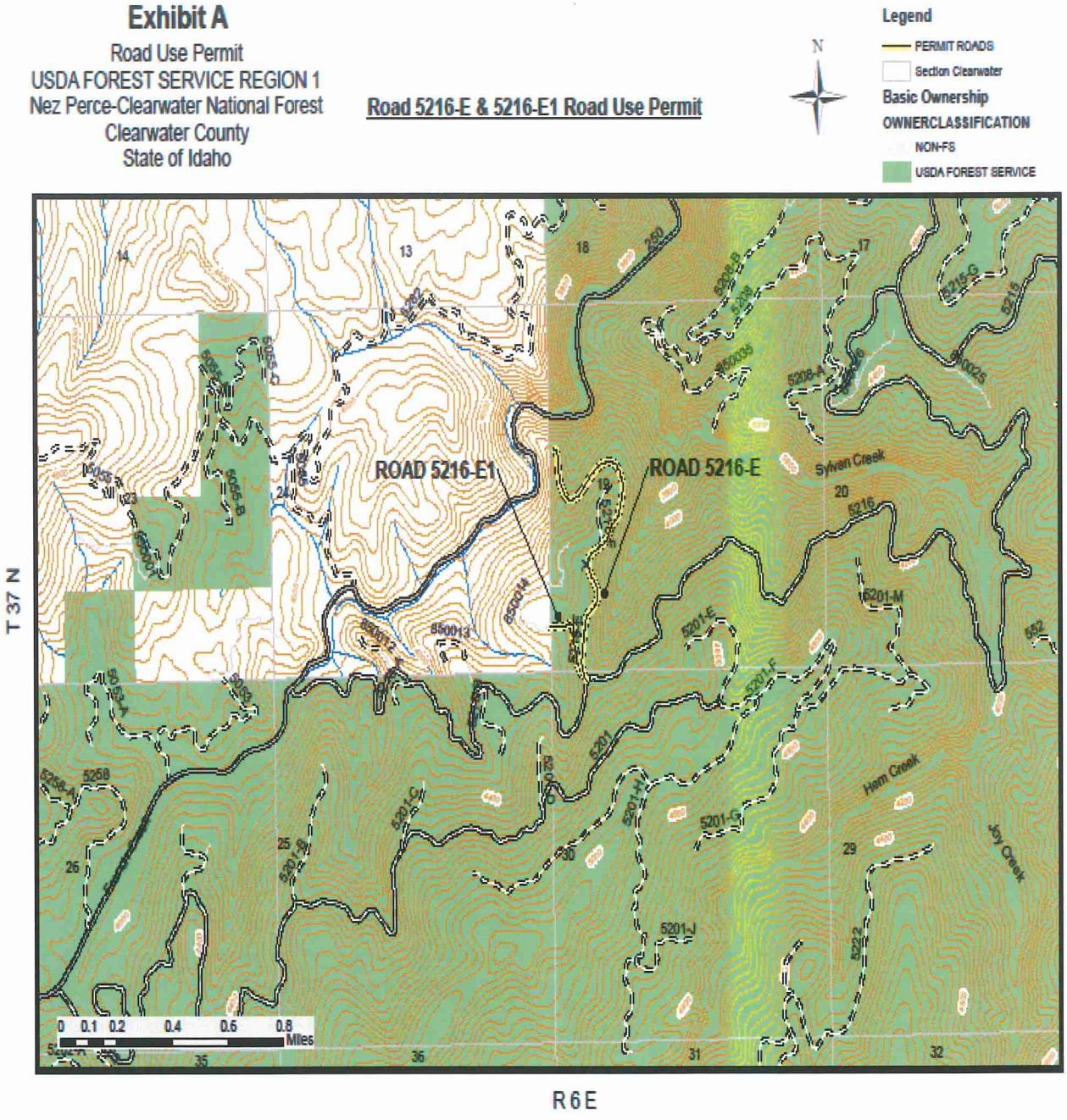
Project Design / Equipment: IDL is requesting use of NFSR 5216-E and 5216-E1 to access State land for a timber harvest scheduled for summer 2016 with prescribed burning and tree planting to be completed after the timber harvest. A 5-year Road Use Permit would be authorized that would allow the IDL administrative and commercial use of the roads by logging trucks and support vehicles. The road would continue to be closed to full sized motorized vehicles.

IDL would maintain the road through roadside brush removal, culvert maintenance, ditch cleaning and road grading. Equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher would be used to accomplish road maintenance. All road maintenance activities would be required to follow Forest Service Road Maintenance Specifications and Best Management Practices, which would be included in the road use permit. NFSR 5216-E and 5216-E1 would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the road use permit.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest would start as early as summer of 2016, with planting completed by winter, 2021.

Project Information: Travis Mechling, North Zone Engineer, (208) 476-8210, tmechling@fs.fed.us

Map of the NFSR 5216E and 5216E-1 Road Use Permit Project



7) National Forest System Roads 5326 and 5326-A Road Use Permit (North Fork RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(15) Issuance of a new special use authorization for a new term to replace an existing or expired special use authorization when the only changes are administrative, there are not changes to the authorized facilities or increases in the scope or intensity of authorized activities, and the applicant or holder is in full compliance with the terms and conditions of the special use authorization.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 40 North, Range 7 East, Section 19

Background: The Idaho Department of Lands (IDL) is requesting the use of NFSR 5326 (1.25 miles) and 5326-A (0.15 miles) to access State land at the National Forest boundary located at the end of the 5326-A. Both roads are native surface roads, and have yearlong closures to motorized vehicles for soil and water.

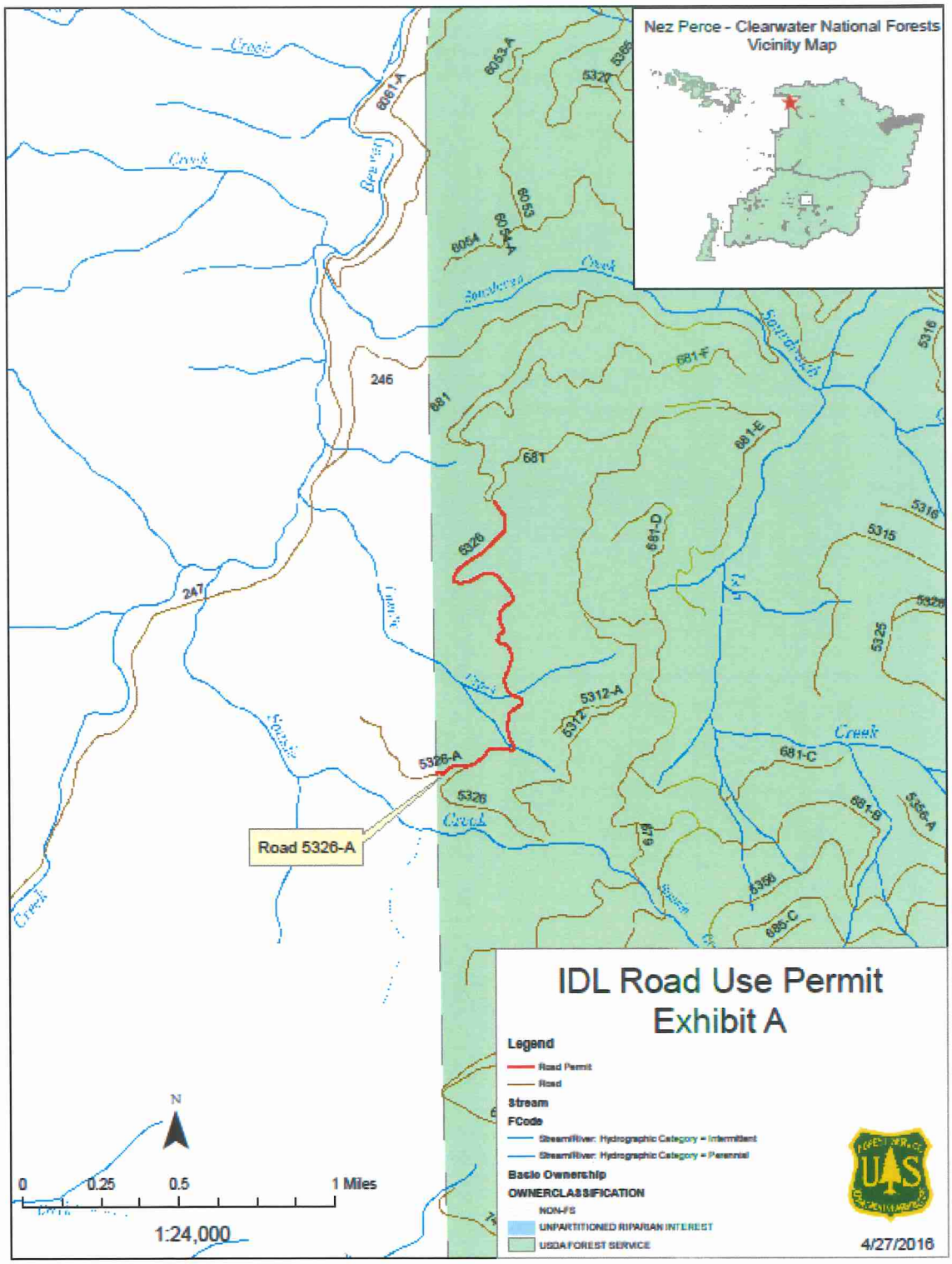
Project Design / Equipment: IDL is requesting use of NFSR 5326 and 5326-A to access State land for a timber harvest scheduled for summer 2016, with prescribed burning and tree planting to be completed after the timber harvest. A 5-year Road Use Permit would be authorized to replace the Road Use Permit that expired on December 31, 2015. The permit would allow IDL administrative and commercial use of the roads by logging trucks and support vehicles during the closure period. The roads would continue to be closed to full sized motorized vehicles.

IDL would maintain the road through roadside brush removal, culvert maintenance, ditch cleaning and road grading. Equipment such as a road grader, rubber tire backhoe and mechanical brusher would be used to accomplish road maintenance. All road maintenance activities would be required to follow Forest Service Road Maintenance Specifications and Best Management Practices, which would be included in the road use permit. NFSR 5326 and 5326-A would be inspected by Forest Service personnel periodically to ensure road conditions were being maintained per the specifications in the road use permit.

Project Implementation: Timber harvest would start as early as summer of 2016, with planting completed by winter, 2021.

Project Information: Travis Mechling, North Zone Engineer, (208) 476-8210, tmechling@fs.fed.us

Map of the NFSR 5326 and 5326-A Road Use Permit Project



8) Peasley Creek Culvert Replacement Project (Salmon River RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(18) Restoring wetlands, streams, riparian bodies by removing, replacing, or modifying water control structures such as, but not limited to, dams, levees, dikes, ditches, culverts, pipes, drainage tiles, valves, gates, and fencing, to allow waters to flow into natural channels and floodplains and restore natural flow regimes to the extent practicable where valid existing rights or special use authorizations are not unilaterally altered or canceled.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 29 North, Range 5 East, Section 27

Background: Peasley Creek, a tributary to the South Fork Clearwater River (SFCLWR), provides ideal spawning and rearing habitat for Snake River steelhead, a "Threatened" species under the Endangered Species Act. Steelhead designated critical habitat is present at the confluence of Peasley Creek and the mainstem of the SFCLWR. While the culvert currently on Hwy 14 at Peasley Creek accommodates most high flow events, it acts as a barrier to aquatic organisms, including Snake River steelhead, due to high flow velocities and a drop at the outlet. The proposed action is needed in order to provide the appropriate sized culvert for 100-year storm flows and to allow for aquatic organism passage including fish at the site. Replacing the existing culvert would reconnect the SFCLWR with over eight miles of upstream habitat.

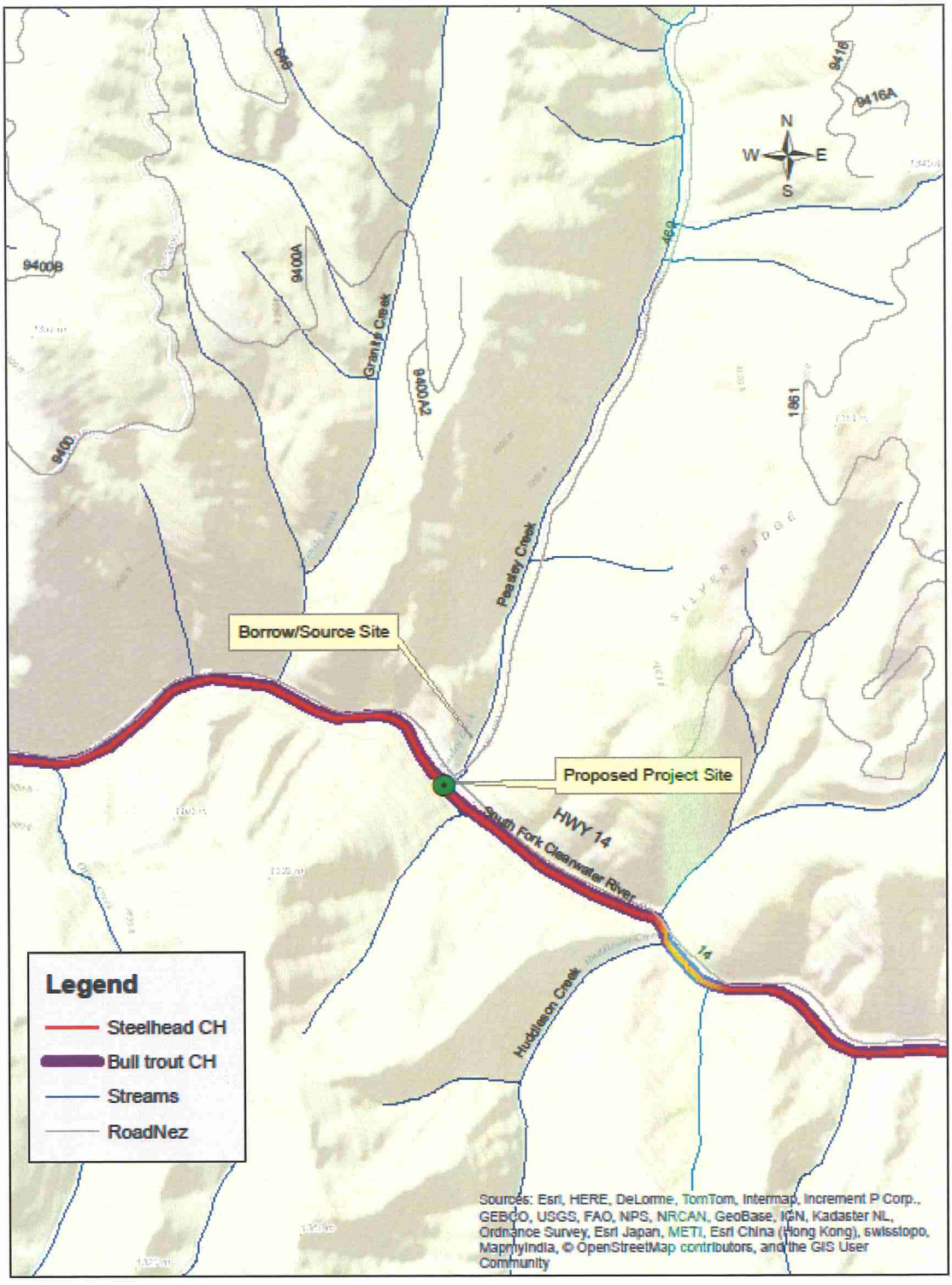
Project Design / Equipment: The proposal is to remove the existing pipe arch on Peasley Creek at milepost 23 of State Hwy 14 and replace it with a bottomless structural plate arch culvert. A contractor working for Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) would remove the existing culvert, ensure the channel was to grade, and install the new culvert. The contractor would then re-build the road prism, provide erosion control on the new fill slopes, and re-surface the road. Replacing the existing culvert would require clearing the vegetation around the crossing, and excavating the road and the fill over the culvert. Additional excavation may be needed to accommodate the concrete footers (foundations) for the new culvert. All of the excavated material would be replaced. Equipment to be used includes excavators, dozers, dump trucks, possibly a crane (for culvert removal and placement) and other heavy equipment. One lane of Highway 14 would remain open for the duration of the project.

The project would be designed and construction completed by the ITD. The Nez Perce Tribe, in conjunction with the Forest Service, would fund the project. The Forest Service and the Tribe would provide technical support and design reviews. Coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Idaho Department of Water Resources, and Idaho Department of Lands would be required under Sec. 10 of the Rivers & Harbor Act of 1899, Section 404 and Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and EPA Construction General Permit 42104-61. Consultation with NOAA Fisheries and US Fish and Wildlife Service would occur, and work would follow any terms and conditions imposed by the ESA regulatory agencies.

Project Implementation: Construction would start in July 2017 and should last 3 - 5 weeks during the instream work window.

Project Information: Anne Connor, Watershed Restoration Program Lead, 208-476-3745, aconnor@fs.fed.us; Mark Johnson, Lower South Fork Clearwater Project Leader for the Nez Perce Tribe Department of Fisheries Resource Management/ Watershed Division, 208-621-3561

Map of the Peasley Creek Culvert Replacement Project



9) Potlatch River Boundary Fence Extension (Palouse RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(9) Implementation or modification of minor management practices to improve allotment condition or animal distribution when an allotment management plan is not yet in place.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 42 North, Range 1 East, Section 32

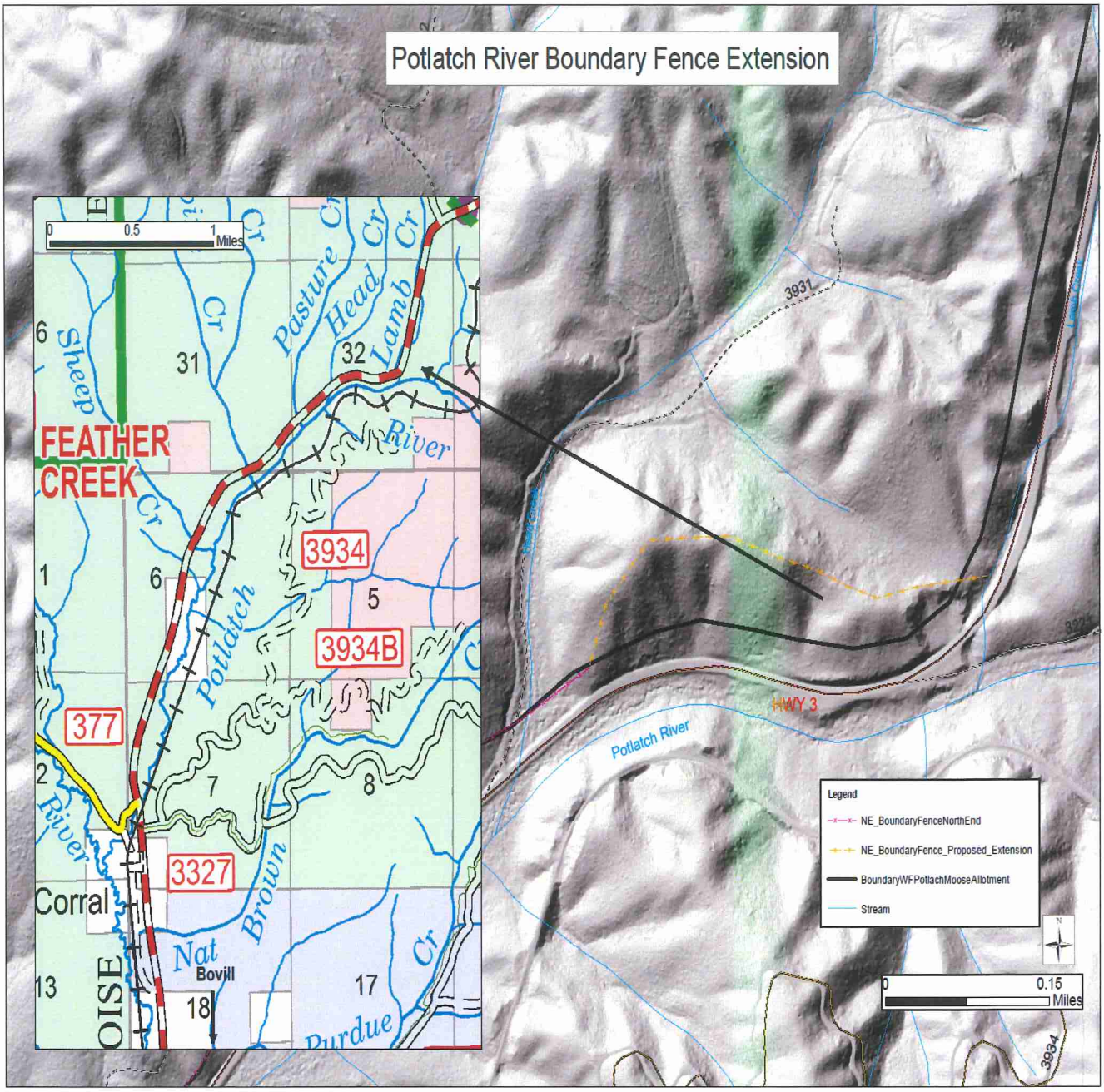
Background: The project is located on the Feather Creek Allotment, adjacent to Highway 3. The allotment boundary fence currently ends at a steep side hill. In the fall, when the pasture is in rotation, livestock can currently go around the fence and end up on the highway, where they can become a nuisance and a public safety hazard. In October, 2015 a logging truck hit two cows and jackknifed, blocking the highway for several hours.

Project Design / Equipment: To limit the possibility of livestock wandering onto Highway 3, the Forest Service is proposing to extend the existing boundary fence approximately 2100' (approx. 0.4 miles) along a dry ridgeline to tie in with the highway embankment. Ground disturbance would consist of pounding T-posts and digging post holes for wood posts with a hand held power augur or small tracked augur. ATVs may be used to transport fencing materials. All work would be done by the permittee.

Project Implementation: Work would begin either in the fall of 2016 or spring/summer of 2017 and take a few days to a week to complete.

Project Information: Katlyn Howisey, North Zone Range & Weeds Specialist, 208-875-1740, katlynmhowisey@fs.fed.us

Map for the Potlatch River Boundary Fence Extension Project



10) Rebel/Beat Street Placer Exploration (Salmon River RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(8): Short-term (1 year or less) mineral, energy, or geophysical investigations and their incidental support activities that may require cross-country travel by vehicles and equipment, construction of less than 1 mile of low standard road, or use and minor repair of existing roads.

Legal Coordinates of Project Site: Township 25 North, Range 3 East, NW/4 of Section 14

Background: Jason Streeter has submitted a Plan of Operations for placer exploration on the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests, Salmon River Ranger District. He is proposing to exploratory drill to test for gold values on unpatented mining claims to determine if sufficient quantities of valuable minerals exist to warrant further development of a mining operation. The project area lies within previously disturbed and undisturbed areas within the French Creek drainage. The area is vegetated with predominately upland vegetation and timber of mixed species, with some areas of riparian vegetation.

Project Design / Equipment: Access to the project area would be by Forest Development Road 221 from Grangeville, Idaho to Forest Road 9321 to Forest Road 9328 to the project area. No earthwork would be required for access to most of the test sites, but approximately 250' of an old skid trail may require regrading to gain access to 10-15 test sites. Some dead and/or down timber may be removed for access and safety.

The proposal is for excavating up to 100 six-inch diameter test holes for the purpose of testing placer gravels for mineral values. Test holes would be drilled with a 6" diameter auger attached to a 160LC excavator and would be to bedrock when possible. If testing at individual holes shows promise, further testing may be done at those sites with a larger (up to 24") clamshell auger, which would be mounted to the same excavator. Material would be processed by first removing materials from the test hole and separating it by layers (topsoil, overburden, pay material, etc.). Material to be processed would be run through a small wash plant. As testing was completed at each hole, it would be refilled with the excavated material and reclaimed by covering the bare area with available forest duff and woody debris and seeding with an appropriate seed mix.

A small sump would be dug onsite to act as a settling pond. The sump would be located to minimize disturbance to the surrounding area and to prevent discharge of any materials into wetlands or riparian areas. An appropriate buffer of at least 20' - 30' would be maintained between any surface disturbance and adjacent streams or wetland areas. Water used in this proposal would initially be pumped from a local stream to fill the sump/settling pond to a level adequate for processing material. Makeup water would be added as needed. Water would be recycled from the settling pond to the wash plant and reused. The sump would be filled, regraded, and seeded upon project completion.

A permit from the Idaho Department of Water Resources would be obtained before water is removed from any live water source.

Equipment used in the operation includes a 130LC excavator with a mounted auger unit, a wash plant mounted on a trailer, pickup, and ATV. A bucket would also be periodically mounted onto the excavator for digging/cleaning the sump/settling pond, and also for feeding the processing plant.

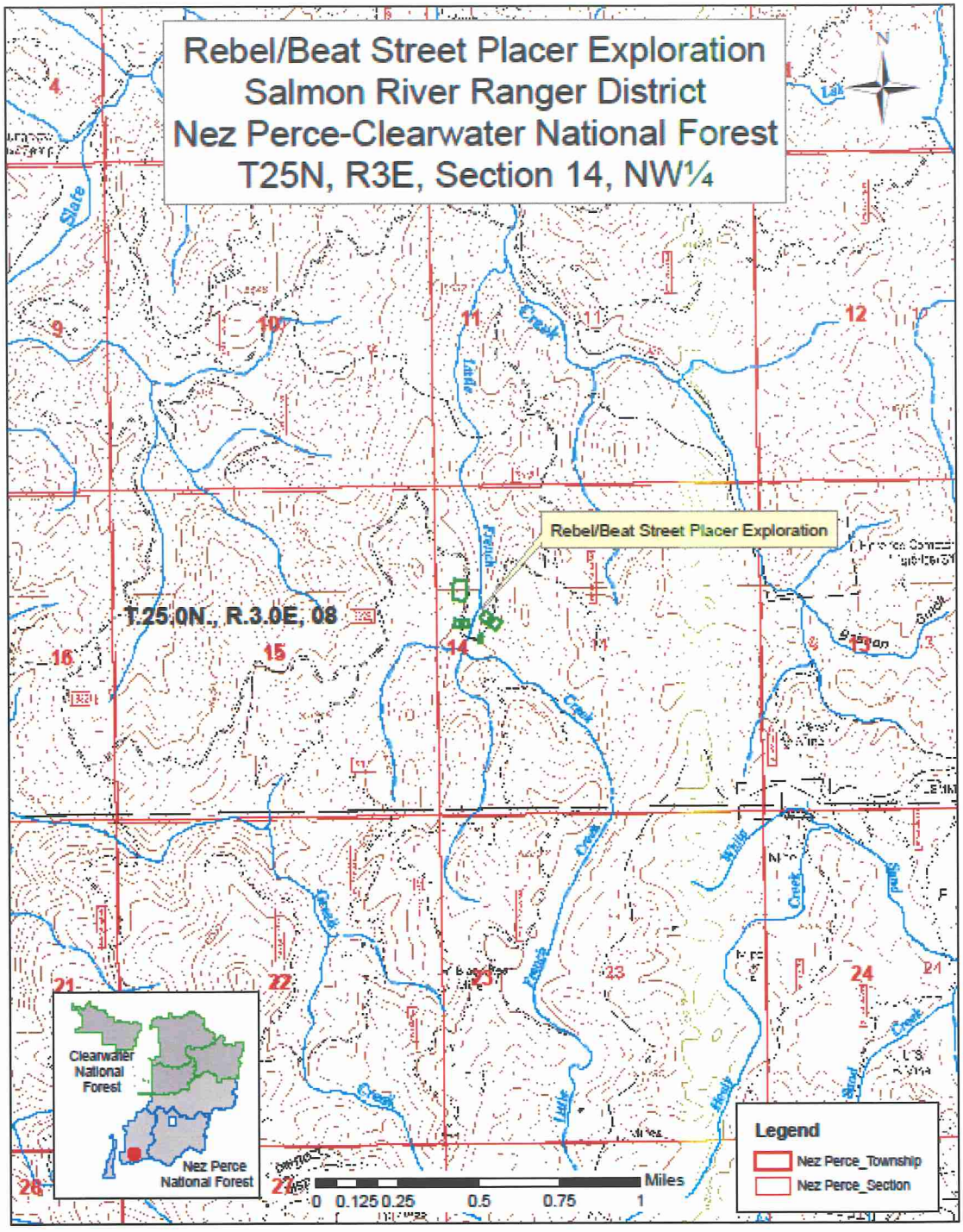
All activities would follow both State of Idaho mining BMPs and standard mitigation measures for mineral projects developed by the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests (and incorporated into the operator's permit), including, but not limited to: notifying the District Ranger or minerals administrator 48 hours before any work is to begin; not beginning operations until a field review is conducted by appropriate Forest Service personnel to verify placement of sump/ infiltration gallery and temporary access trails and ensure that acceptable conditions exist (no excessive saturation, high water, etc.); washing all vehicles and equipment used at the site before being brought onto National Forest System (NFS) lands to prevent the spread of noxious weeds; utilizing suitable erosion control devices, placed between the pond and live waters; avoiding disturbance of wetlands and stream riparian zones; avoiding working on saturated soils; not discharging water into any live stream or wetland; not removing large vegetation without prior authorization of the District Ranger; developing a hazardous material and spill prevention plan and submitting it to the District Ranger prior to operations; not storing more than 30 gallons of fuel or oil in the project area; Prior to October 1, removing all equipment, garbage and trash from NFS lands as a result of the operations; and, using and maintaining a sanitary facility at the project area while operations are ongoing.

A reclamation bond would be calculated based on the estimated cost of reclaiming each active and each recently abandoned site. A bond sufficient to cover the cost of all anticipated surface disturbance will be submitted by the operator before the Plan of Operation is approved and before work may begin.

Project Implementation: The project is proposed for the spring and summer of 2016, and would be completed within one year from the approval date of the Plan of Operation.

Project Information: Marty Jones, Minerals Administrator, (208) 983-5158, martinjones@fs.fed.us.

Map for the Rebel/Beat Street Placer Exploration Project



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April 6, 2016, Clint Hughes

11) Wildfire Tree Planting - Lochsa 2 (Lochsa – Powell RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(11): Post-fire rehabilitation activities, not to exceed 4,200 acres (such as tree planting) to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition from wildland fire damage.

Legal Coordinates of Project Sites: Township 33 North , Range 7 East, Sections 30 and 31.

Background: This project is a continuation of the Wildfire Tree Planting project on the Lochsa Ranger District scoped in December, 2015 (see scoping letter of 12/17/2015 for details).

The proposed project is located in the Woodrat Wildfire area of 2015 on the Lochsa-Powell Ranger District. Along with other post-fire recovery and restoration efforts, the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests looked for opportunities to recover the economic value, where appropriate, to offset the costs of restoration in fire-affected areas. A rapid assessment process used a coarse filter/fine filter approach to eliminate burned areas from consideration for salvage. "Coarse filters" included designated Wilderness, Idaho Roadless Rule areas, Wild and Scenic River areas, Research Natural Areas, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas, landslide-prone areas, etc. The "Fine filter" approach then evaluated the remaining burned areas using a restoration-based framework. Among other criteria, areas of 50% or greater mortality that would not be economically feasible, due to timber not meeting merchantability standards, accessibility, etc., were dropped for proposed salvage. (The area proposed for the Wildfire Tree Planting-Lochsa II project met this criteria.) These areas would be restored through natural regeneration and planting native tree species where planting is needed.

Relying on natural regeneration in the proposed project area would result in stands dominated primarily by grand fir and Douglas fir, species susceptible to root disease and stem decay, and likely to have low survival rates. Western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine are more resistant to root disease and stem decay and being shade intolerant species tend to be more fire resistant and longer lived than shade tolerant species. By planting these species, the project would help reestablish and promote the diversity of the forested component in the burned area. In turn, this would improve the overall health, structure and vigor of the stands within the larger wildfire-impacted landscape over the long term.

The project would meet the requirements of the National Forest Management Act which states that "*All forested lands in the National Forest System shall be maintained in appropriate forest cover with species of trees, degree of stocking, rate of growth, and conditions of stand designed to secure maximum benefits of multiple use sustained yield management in accordance with land management plans.*"

Project Design / Equipment: The Lochsa Ranger District is proposing to plant seedlings of western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine in stands burned during the summer of 2015. Tree planting would occur in stands without timber salvage operations.

The project would plant trees on approximately 320 acres within seven stands (see Table below). The seedlings would be one year-old container stock and would be planted on an 11 x 11 foot spacing. Planting would be done using a contract crew with oversight by Forest Service personnel.

Stands Proposed for Tree Planting on the Lochsa-Powell RD after the 2015 Woodrat Wildfire

Stand No.	Acres	Township	Range	Section	County	Watershed – Subwatershed
0105052202057	49	33N	6E	30	Idaho	Lochsa - Swan Creek
0105052203023	73	33N	6E	30	Idaho	Lochsa - Little Smith Creek
0105052203024	45	33N	6E	30	Idaho	Lochsa - Little Smith Creek
0105052203057	67	33N	6E	31	Idaho	Lochsa - Little Smith Creek
0105052203058	74	33N	6E	31	Idaho	Lochsa - Swan Creek
0105052203072	3	33N	6E	31	Idaho	Lochsa - Swan Creek
0105052203079	9	33N	6E	31	Idaho	Lochsa - Swan Creek
Total acres	**320**					

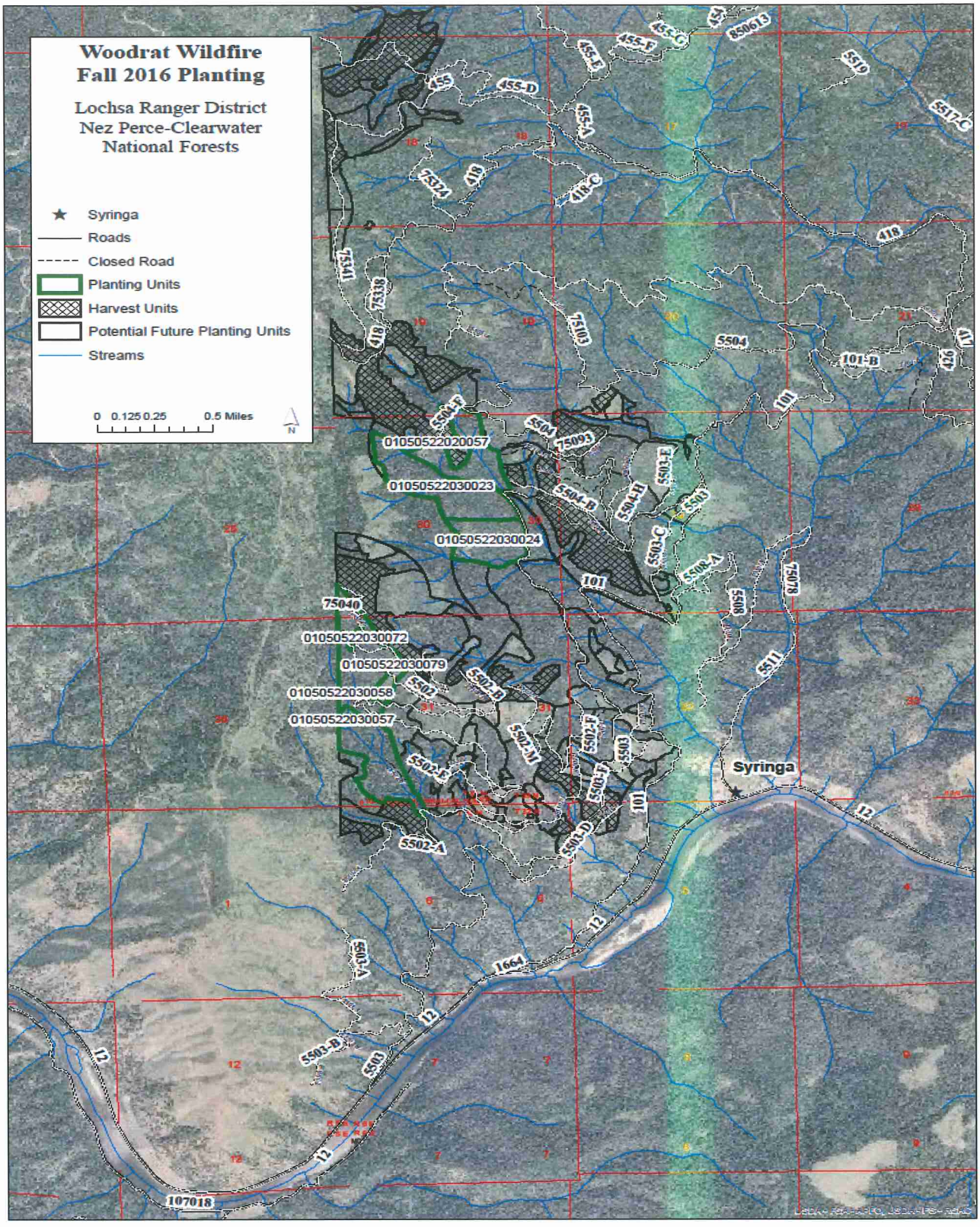
All planting would be done using hand tools; no mechanical equipment would be used. There would be no other ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed action. Access to the sites would only be by existing roads. The project would not change access restrictions. During wet conditions driving full size vehicles on roads would be limited and ATVs or walking would be used to access the stands instead to minimize damage to roads.

Surveys would be conducted after the first and third growing seasons to monitor the survival and condition of the planted trees.

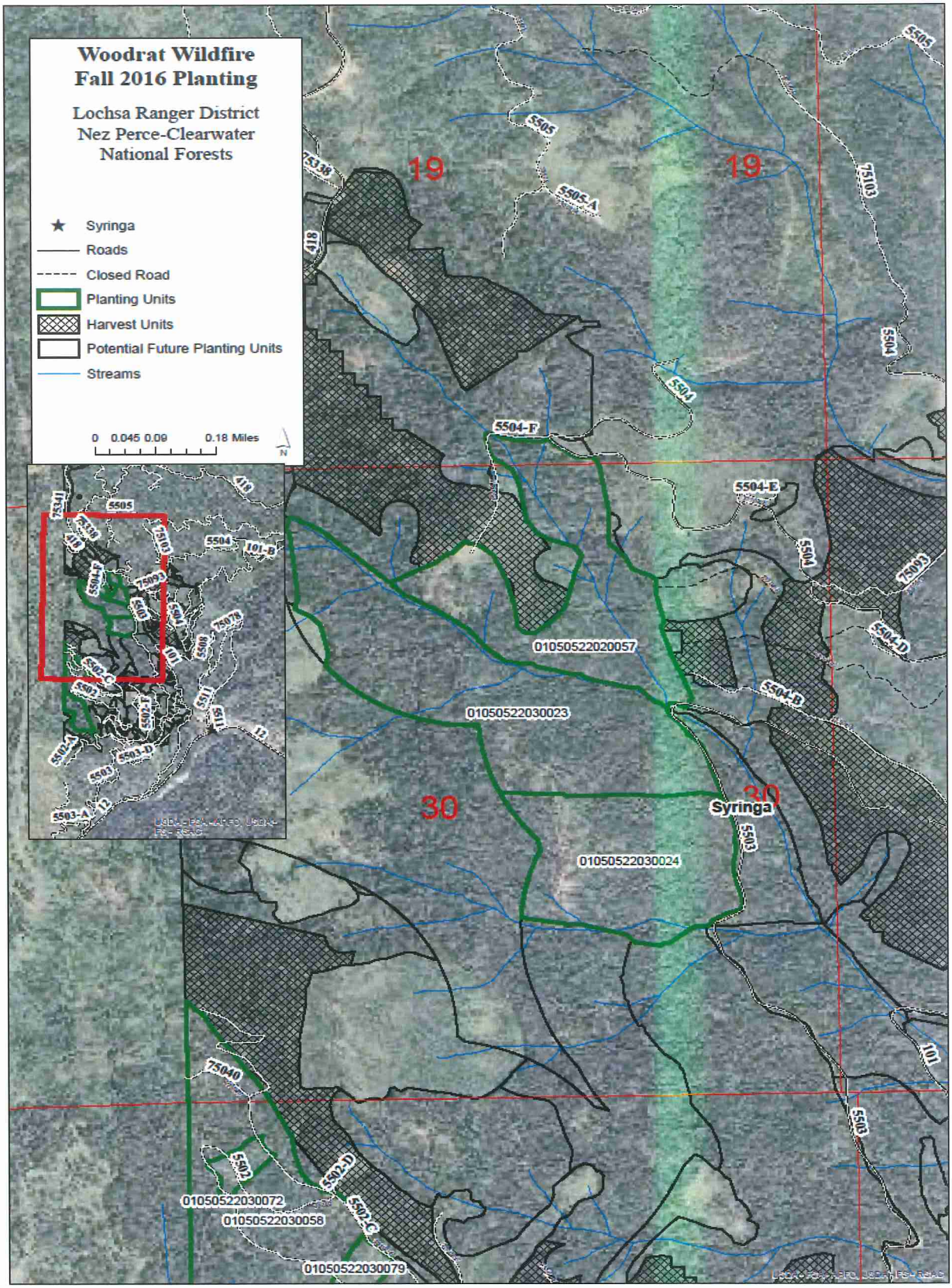
Project Implementation: The work would occur in the fall of 2016 or the spring and fall of 2017. Fall planting would be done in late September to early October, spring planting in late April to mid-May. The project would take approximately two weeks to complete.

Project Information: Clare Brick, Forest Culturist, 208-963-4208, cbrick@fs.fed.us.

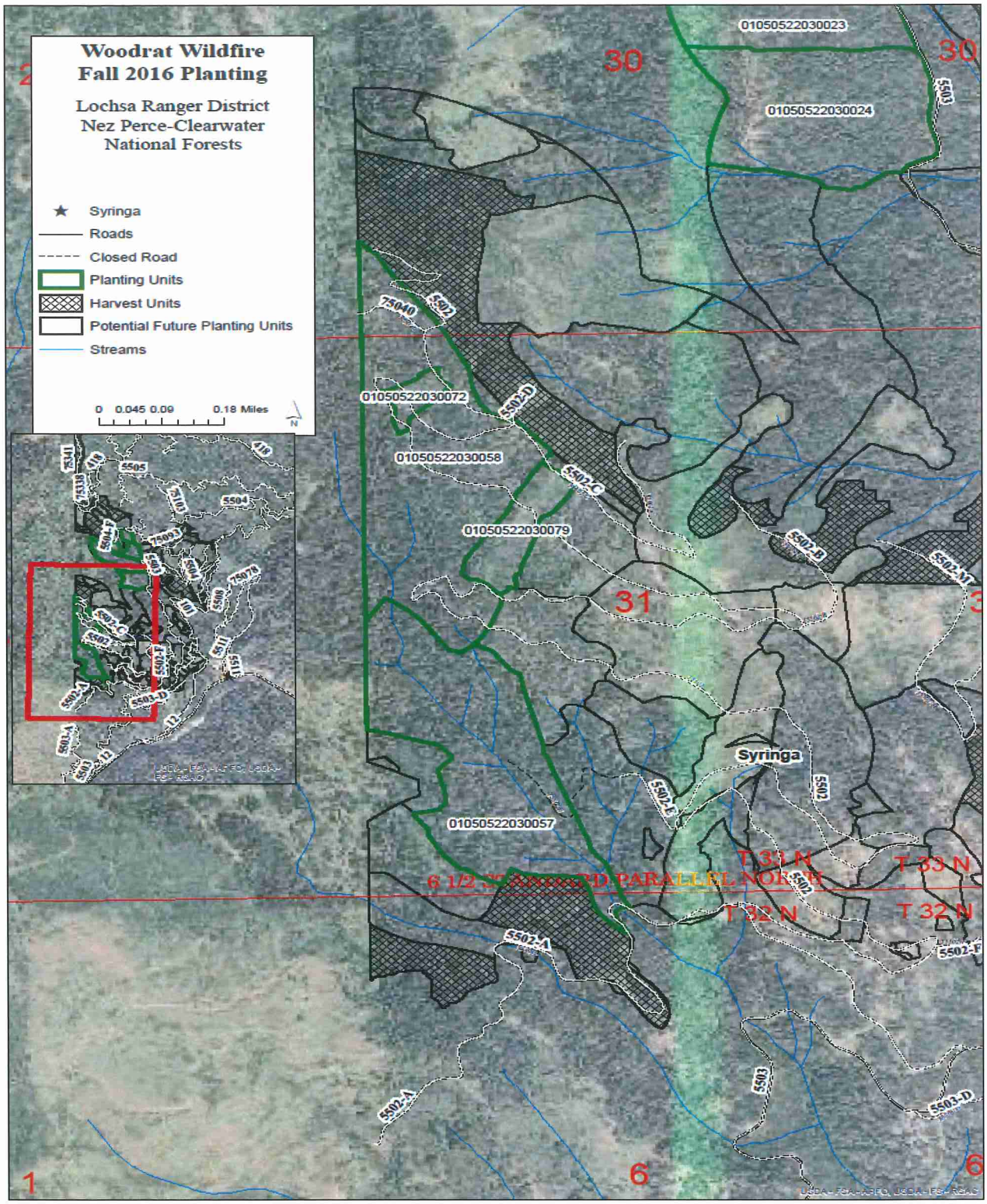
Map 1 for the Wildfire Tree Planting - Lochsa 2 Project



Map 2 for the Wildfire Tree Planting - Lochsa 2 Project



Map 3 for the Wildfire Tree Planting - Lochsa 2 Project



12) Wildfire Tree Planting - North Fork (North Fork RD)

Proposed Category: 36 CFR 220.6(e)(11): Post-fire rehabilitation activities, not to exceed 4,200 acres (such as tree planting) to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management approved condition from wildland fire damage.

Legal Coordinates of Project Sites: Township 36 North , Range 7 East, Sections 6 and 7.

Background: The proposed project is located in the Snowy Summit Wildfire area of 2015 on the North Fork Ranger District. Along with other post-fire recovery and restoration efforts, the Nez Perce-Clearwater National Forests looked for opportunities to recover the economic value, where appropriate, to offset the costs of restoration in fire-affected areas. A rapid assessment process used a coarse filter/fine filter approach to eliminate burned areas from consideration for salvage. "Coarse filters" included designated Wilderness, Idaho Roadless Rule areas, Wild and Scenic River areas, Research Natural Areas, Riparian Habitat Conservation Areas, landslide-prone areas, etc. The "Fine filter" approach then evaluated the remaining burned areas using a restoration-based framework. Among other criteria, areas of 50% or greater mortality that would not be economically feasible, due to timber not meeting merchantability standards, accessibility, etc., were dropped for proposed salvage. (The area proposed for the Wildfire Tree Planting-North Fork project met this criteria.) These areas would be restored through natural regeneration and planting native tree species where planting is needed.

Relying on natural regeneration in the proposed project area would result in stands dominated primarily by grand fir and Douglas fir, species susceptible to root disease and stem decay, and likely to have low survival rates. Western white pine, western larch and ponderosa pine are more resistant to root disease and stem decay and being shade intolerant species tend to be more fire resistant and longer lived than shade tolerant species. By planting these species, the project would help reestablish and promote the diversity of the forested component in the burned area. In turn, this would improve the overall health, structure and vigor of the stands within the larger wildfire-impacted landscape over the long term.

The project would meet the requirements of the National Forest Management Act which states that *"All forested lands in the National Forest System shall be maintained in appropriate forest cover with species of trees, degree of stocking, rate of growth, and conditions of stand designed to secure maximum benefits of multiple use sustained yield management in accordance with land management plans."*

Project Design / Equipment: The North Fork Ranger District is proposing to plant seedlings of western white pine and western larch in stands burned during the summer of 2015. Tree planting would occur in stands without timber salvage operations.

The project would plant trees on approximately 18 acres within two stands (see Table below). Tree spacing and trees per acre may vary but would be approximately 10 x 10 feet and 400 trees per acre. Forest Service personnel would evaluate the stands and design planting specifications to provide seedling protection and determine the appropriate species for site conditions. Planting would be done using a contract crew with oversight by Forest Service personnel.

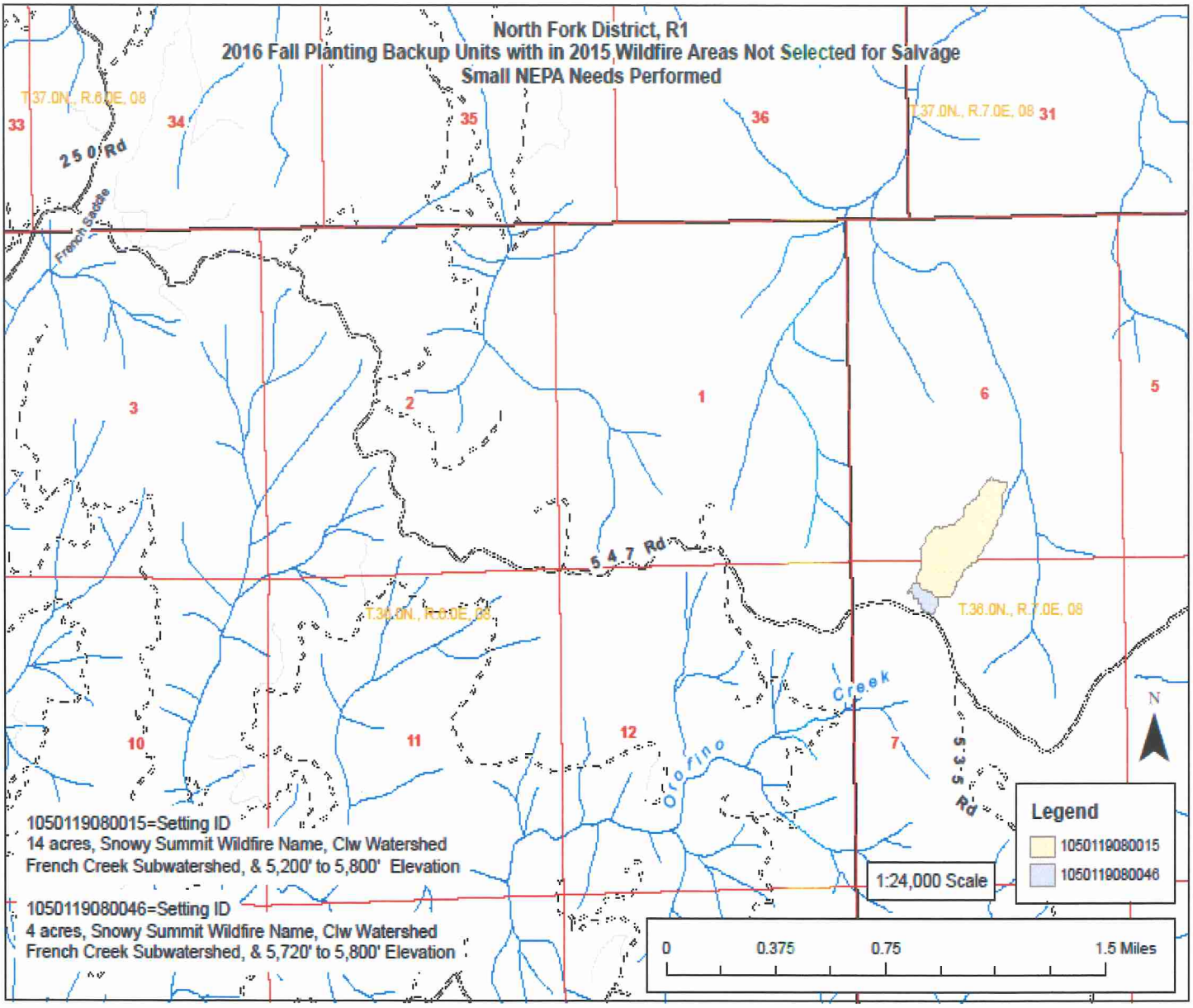
Stands Proposed for Tree Planting on the North Fork RD after the 2015 Snowy Summit Wildfire

Stand No.	Acres	Township	Range	Section	County	Watershed - Subwatershed
01050119080046	4	36N	7E	7	Clearwater	Clearwater – French Creek
01050119080015	14	36N	7E	6 & 7	Idaho	Clearwater – French Creek
Total acres	18					

All planting would be done using hand tools; no mechanical equipment would be used. There would be no other ground disturbing activities associated with the proposed action. Access to the sites would only be by existing roads. The project would not change access restrictions. During wet conditions driving full size vehicles on roads would be limited and ATVs or walking would be used to access the stands instead to minimize damage to roads.

Surveys would be conducted after the first and third growing seasons to monitor the survival and condition of the planted trees.

Project Implementation: The work would occur in the fall of 2016 or the spring and fall of 2017. Fall planting would be done in late September to early October, spring planting in late April to mid-May. The project would take approximately two weeks to complete.

Project Information: Clare Brick, Forest Culturist, 208-963-4208, cbrick@fs.fed.us.

Map for the Wildfire Tree Planting - North Fork Project