

*Alta Lakes Recreation Area*  
**Master Plan**

For Summer Recreation Activities



Norwood Ranger District  
Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests

Last Update: December 2018



## Table of Contents

Introduction and Area Description	Page 1
Management History	Page 4
Resource Issues	Page 6
Goals and Recommended Actions	Page 8
Appendix A: Alta Lakes Vicinity Map	Page 13
Appendix B: Map of Alta Designated Dispersed Camping Zone	Page 14
Appendix C: Map of Mary E Camping Area	Page 15
Appendix D: Map of Lower Alta Lake Phase 1 Improvements	Page 16
Appendix E: Map of Lower Alta Lake Phase 2 Improvements	Page 17
Appendix F: Map of Gold King Basin Phase 2 Improvements	Page 18
Appendix G: Map of Wild Boy Lake Phase 2 Improvements	Page 19

## 1. Introduction

This Alta Lakes Recreation Area Master Plan is a vision document intended to provide guidance for the development and management of summer recreation on National Forest lands in the greater Alta Lakes area for the next five to ten years. It describes current resource conditions and explains the need for change within an area that is receiving a significant increase in recreation use.

In the spring of 2017, the Forest Service invited community members to attend a series of meetings to formulate a vision for managing summer recreation in the Alta Lakes area. A stakeholder group was then formed to develop a Master Plan for the area. The group included representatives from local governments, outfitter-guide companies, trail and mountain bike groups, NGOs, and local property owners.

This plan is the result of discussions from the 2017 stakeholder meetings as well as from subsequent Forest Service field observations and monitoring. It is intended as a living document to be periodically reviewed and updated as necessary to meet changing conditions.

## 2. Area Description

The three Alta Lakes sit in a high alpine basin at 11,300-foot elevation with a spectacular backdrop of mountain peaks (Appendix A) on the Norwood Ranger District (Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre and Gunnison National Forests – GMUG). Long a popular Forest Service recreation area, the lakes continue to see increasing summer use by visitors seeking opportunities to camp, picnic, hike, bike, jeep, kayak, paddleboard, and fish. The summer recreation season in this area typically begins in mid-June during the annual Telluride Bluegrass Festival and stays very busy through Labor Day.

Alta Lakes is an undeveloped recreation area with essentially no facilities at any of the lakes except for the road system. The primary road access to the lakes is via the Alta Road, a rough, narrow 4.3-mile route recommended for high clearance vehicles.

Designated dispersed camping is allowed throughout the area for no fee, there is no potable water, and there are no trash facilities. Camping in the Alta area is limited to 7 days in a 30-day period. It is also prohibited within 100-feet of any lake, stream, pond, or other similar body of water; unless otherwise marked as a designated campsite.

Throughout this document there will be references to “developed,” “dispersed” and “designated dispersed” camping. In general, “developed” campgrounds offer a higher level of amenities in a setting that is engineered and designed (e.g. surfaced access roads and parking areas, restrooms, potable water, and trash facilities). The Matterhorn, Sunshine and Woods Lake campgrounds are examples of developed campgrounds.

In contrast, all other camping fits under the broader category of “dispersed” camping. Areas open to dispersed camping offer few, if any, developed facilities or amenities. Within areas on the GMUG that are open to dispersed camping, visitors are typically allowed to choose wherever they want to camp as long as it doesn’t damage vegetation or soils. Prior to 2018, all dispersed camping on National Forest lands in the Alta area fit this category.

Allowing visitors to camp anywhere they choose has resulted in significant resource impacts on certain National Forest lands in the Telluride area. In some areas, visitors have driven off road to access their campsites, compacting soil and damaging vegetation in the process. Consequently, the Norwood District has begun addressing this issue by delineating “designated dispersed” camping areas. Within these areas, visitors will be required to camp only at designated sites that are marked with a camping

sign, thus limiting the impacts to soils and vegetation. In August of 2018, camping at Lower Alta Lake was changed to designated dispersed with the marking of 20 designated campsites (Appendix D).

**Lower Alta Lake** is the largest lake and receives most of the recreation use. There is a braided network of user-created roads on the west side of the lake that provides motorized access to the 20 designated dispersed campsites. A kiosk near the entrance to the area provides visitor information and a map.

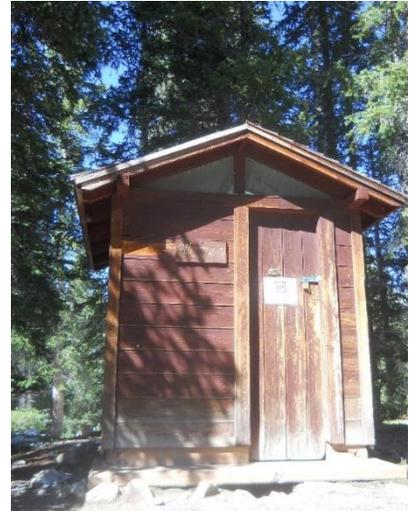
Each summer, the Forest Service provides temporary portable toilets that are placed on the south and west side of the lake. Colorado Parks & Wildlife stocks the lake annually as a “put and take” fishery since the lake is too shallow to support a sustainable fish population.

**Upper Alta Lake** has no motorized road access so it receives light to moderate use by walk-in campers and day users. There are no developed recreation facilities at this lake and no recreation signing in the area. This lake is not stocked by Colorado Parks and Wildlife but has good potential as a sustainable fishery because of its depth.

In June of 2017, the Forest Service implemented the 2002 Uncompahgre National Forest Travel Plan (TMP) decision by closing the motorized routes between Lower and Upper Alta Lakes. Prior to the closure, it was not uncommon to see the 6-8 dispersed campsites at the upper lake occupied on a busy summer weekend. Following the route closures, camping use at the lake has dropped significantly but day hiking remains popular.

**Third Lake:** The remaining lake (often referred to as the “Third Lake”) is surrounded on three sides by private land with only the west side being on National Forest lands. Property owners in this area have administrative vehicle access through a locked gate.

There are no developed recreation facilities nor is there any recreation signing in the area.



*This 1960's-era restroom was removed from the lower lake in the spring of 2017.*



*Spectacular view of Gold King Basin.*

**Gold King Basin**, located .5 mile south of Alta Lakes, is a picturesque alpine basin with a small lake. High clearance vehicles are recommended for the rough drive into the basin. There are no developed recreation facilities here and there is no recreation signing. About 2-3 dispersed campsites are located on NFS lands while an additional 3-4 are on adjacent private lands.

The primary recreation use at the area is hiking and off-highway vehicle driving. Groups of jeeps routinely drive to a large turnaround area on private land at the east end of the basin to stop and enjoy such activities as taking photos and checking out the Gold King Mine ruins located a short walk up into the basin.

**Wild Boy Lake** is a small undeveloped recreation site that can be accessed from the Alta Road via a short, rough route that requires a high clearance vehicle. There is a braided network of user-created roads that were intended to be closed per the TMP but remain open and unsigned. About 6-8 campsites are present in the area. There are no developed recreation facilities nor is there any recreation signing at the site.

**Alta Road:** The Alta Road is a 4.3-mile Forest Service road (NFSR 632) that provides access to the Alta Lakes area. San Miguel County recognizes the road segment from Highway 145 through the Alta Townsite as CR 64F and the segment from the Townsite to Lower Alta Lake as CR G67. The road is narrow and rough in places prompting the Forest Service to install a sign at the bottom of the road recommending that it is unsuitable for trailers and RVs over 20 feet in length.

During the summer of 2017, Forest Service crews installed a traffic counter on the Alta Road at the road's intersection with Lower Alta Lake. Traffic count data showed that from August 1 to September 23 there were a total of 8,756 vehicles counted. These counts need to be divided by two since every vehicle that drove up the road was counted twice; once as it entered the lower lake area and once as it left the area. Consequently, a more accurate traffic count for this time period is a total of 4378 vehicles with the following monthly breakdown: 1) August 1 – 31, 2017: 2,755 total vehicles (average of 89 vehicles per day), and 2) September 1- 23, 2017: 1,622 total vehicles (average of 70 vehicles per day).

The Alta Road travels through both National Forest and private lands as shown on Appendix A. The Forest Service has acquired easements for each of the road segments that pass through private land.

Historically there has been a general lack of signing along the Alta Road. Consequently, visitors routinely camped on both National Forest and private lands immediately adjacent to the road. In the summer of 2017, private landowner Alta Lakes, LLC posted “No Camping” signs at each dispersed campsite and spur road that had traditionally been used by the public. In all, about 10 campsites on private land were closed, leaving about 3-4 campsites available on National Forest lands.

**Alta Townsite:** Visitors to the area can't help but notice the historic mine buildings as they travel through the Alta Townsite on their way to Alta Lakes. The town, founded in the late 1870's, supported a few hundred residents who worked at the nearby Gold King Mine in Gold King Basin. Mines in the Alta area produced ore into the 1940's until a fire in one of the shafts in 1945 effectively ended production.



*Gold King Mine in Gold King Basin, circa 1891*

Due to the high volume of recreation traffic that travels through the Townsite, the historic buildings and associated artifacts are at great risk of being removed, defaced and/or vandalized. In 2017, landowner Alta Lakes, LLC began to address this concern by installing signs throughout the Townsite property alerting visitors to stay off the structures.



### **3. Management History**

#### **1960's:**

The Norwood District began a concerted planning effort to improve recreation facilities at Alta Lakes in the late 1960's. They developed plans to install three vault toilets and two parking/camping areas (Alta Lakes Site Plan, May 2, 1969). Ultimately just one vault toilet was installed at Lower Alta Lake but none of the parking or camping improvements were made.

#### **1980's:**

By the early 1980's, the Forest Service had restricted travel in the Alta area, requiring that motorized vehicles stay on designated routes (1984 Uncompahgre National Forest Travel Map). Although vehicles were restricted to the Alta Road, records are unclear as to whether the District attempted to close the braided system of spur roads that existed around and between the three Alta Lakes.

#### **1990's:**

In about 1991, President H.W. Bush launched the America's Great Outdoors Initiative (AGO) which funded public land management agencies to improve their recreation facilities. In 1992, the Norwood District Ranger approved an AGO proposal called the Alta Lakes Campground and Recreation Area Project which proposed the construction of a full service fee campground and companion day use facilities. Planned improvements included 20-25 campsites, toilets, electrical utilities, a potable water system, parking areas, picnic facilities, and a lakeshore trail. A 9-mile non-motorized trail, connecting Alta Lakes to both the Telluride Ski Area and to Highway 145, was also proposed. Portions of the Alta Lakes Road were to be widened, reconstructed or relocated to improve visitor safety. Impacted riparian areas and certain unneeded roads, trails and campsites were to be rehabilitated. The dam on Lower Alta Lake was to be raised to provide greater water depth so that it could support a sustainable fishery.

This project was subsequently submitted to the Forest Service's Regional Office (Denver) as a capital improvement project but was never funded nor implemented.

Concurrent with this proposal, the Norwood District entered into discussions with Silver Mountain Industries, who owned the adjacent Alta Townsite property, about the possibility of SMI constructing and operating the new Alta Lakes campground. Discussions ended in about 1992 when SMI decided not to proceed with this idea.

In about 1999, the Norwood District used internal grant funding to place boulders to close the routes between the Lower and Upper Alta Lakes. These closures were unfortunately short-lived. Within a

few years most of the boulders had been moved by the public, reopening the routes to motorized vehicle use and its impacts.

**2002:**

In 2002, the TMP decision approved additional travel restrictions for the Alta area. Per the decision, motorized travel was to be restricted on the west side of Lower Alta Lake, essentially prohibiting vehicle access to all of the existing west side campsites. The only route to remain open to motorized vehicles was on the east side of Lower Alta Lake. To date, the District has not implemented the road closure on the west side of the lower lake but has instead tried to find a solution that would maintain motorized access to those campsites.

**2009:**

In 2009, the Norwood District developed another proposal for improving recreation at Alta Lakes. The plan included the creation of designated dispersed campsites at Lower Alta Lake with minimal amenities (fire rings, site posts), no potable water system, and no electrical utilities. At the lower lake there would be 30 campsites (west side of lake), a new day use parking area, a restroom, a new trail around the lower lake and a developed boat ramp. The area would also be converted to a fee site operated by a concessionaire. The road on the east side of the lower lake would be closed to motorized use and additional road closures per the TMP would be implemented.

The project was never implemented because of a lack of funding.

**2017:**

In 2017, the Norwood District implemented portions of the TMP by gating the Boomerang Trail (Appendix A) at the Alta Townsite, closing the non-system routes between Lower and Upper Alta Lakes, and closing various braided spur roads on the west side of the lower lake.



Photo 1: *Rugged and braided roads on the west side of the lower lake that impact riparian vegetation.*  
Photo 2: *Braided road system connecting the upper and lower lakes. In 2017, this road was closed to motorized use.*

### Related Management Decisions

In the spring of 2009, San Miguel County granted initial approval for Silver Mountain Industries to develop their property north of the Alta Townsite in the Turkey Creek Mesa area. The plan included the construction of 28 homes to be clustered on a 540-acre tract and the upgrading and realignment of the Alta Road. Ultimately, SMI discarded their development plan and then, in 2010, sold their property to Alta Lakes, LLC.

In 2013, the Forest Service began working with Alta Lakes, LLC; the Skyline Ranch Trust; LLC, and the Trust for Public Land on the Wilson Peak Land Exchange. In September of 2015, the Forest Service approved the exchange which resulted in the agency acquiring a total of 665 acres. Among the five parcels that the Forest Service acquired was a 262-acre parcel north of the Alta Townsite on Turkey Creek Mesa. The land exchange also addressed non-system mountain bike trails located west of Alta Lakes that had been created on both National Forest land and the Alta Lakes, LLC property. The Forest Service approved the construction of a new 7-mile mountain bike trail (Magic Meadows Trail) in the decision. In the fall of 2018, Phase 1 of the Magic Meadows Trail was completed, constructing 3.2 miles of new trail that is open to mountain bikes, equestrians, and foot travel (Appendix A). Phase 2 of the trail project, including 4.0 miles of new trail, is planned for construction in 2019 or 2020, pending grant funding.

## **4. Resource Issues**

Many of the Alta Lakes resource concerns identified by the Forest Service during the late 1960's persist to the present day but are now even more pressing due to the increasing recreation use in the area. Today, the highest priority recreation issues and needs in the Alta area include: dispersed camping, day use parking, signing, and riparian habitat restoration.

### **Dispersed Camping**

Unmanaged dispersed camping can cause resource damage if visitors don't properly dispose of their human waste or pack out their trash. Campers who drive off of designated routes often damage soil and vegetation. Camping adjacent to water sources can damage riparian vegetation, contaminate the water, and inhibit wildlife access. Social impacts from unmanaged camping can occur if visitors are inconsiderate of other campers (e.g. playing loud music, not controlling their dogs, etc.).

All of the resource and social impacts described here are occurring at Alta Lakes, Gold King Basin, and Wild Boy Lake. Existing campsites are getting larger in size as people push out farther and farther to gain some privacy from adjacent campers. New campsites are also being created as visitors are driving off the road to find new places to camp.

### Lower and Upper Alta Lakes

As mentioned previously, the Forest Service has recently addressed the dispersed camping issue at Lower Alta Lake by designated 20 campsites (Appendix D). Additionally, "No Camping" signs were posted along the shoreline to implement the Forest's prohibition on camping within 100 feet of water.

There is a need to post signing along the Upper Lake to prohibit camping per the 100-foot order.

### Alta Road

Camping is expanding along the .1-mile segment of the Alta Road from the Gold King Basin Road Junction to the entrance to Lower Alta Lake. Nineteen rock fire rings were counted in this area during a 2017

campsite inventory. In many cases, campers drove off the Alta Road to access these sites, creating new 2-track routes through the forest.

### Gold King Basin

Camping opportunities are very limited in Gold King Basin, particularly with the Forest Order that prohibits camping within 100-feet from water. The 2017 campsite inventory showed a total of 9 campsites in the basin, several of which were on private land.

### Wild Boy Lake

Per the TMP, several of the non-system routes near Wild Boy Lake are designated to be closed and decommissioned. There are opportunities to establish new designated dispersed campsites along the main access road into the site.

### Connected Actions Related to Dispersed Camping

The implementation of the 100-foot rule at Lower Alta Lake in August of 2018 resulted in the closing of 7 campsites along the lake's shoreline. These closures and the proposed closure of additional campsites in Gold King Basin and Wild Boy Lake (See Phase 2 – Page 10) would result in some campers being displaced to other areas in the Telluride region. The Forest Service began addressing this in 2018 by creating the new Mary E Camping Area (Appendix C), located in the Ilium Valley about five miles west of Telluride. Mary E opened in August of 2018 with 15 designated dispersed campsites, portable toilets, a dumpster, picnic tables, and new signing.

### **Day Use Parking**

Day use parking is primarily an issue at Lower Alta Lake. With heavy visitation occurring during the summer months (e.g. an average of 89 vehicles per day during August 2017), vehicle impacts to vegetation are expanding. In the short term, parking can be better managed through signing but there remains a need to construct one or more day use parking areas at the lake.

### **Lack of Signing**

There is a lack of Forest Service signing throughout the Alta area. This points to the need to install signing to inform visitors about rules, regulations, recreation opportunities, and leave no trace principles. There is also an opportunity to provide interpretive signing to educate visitors about the area's rich mining history.

### **Riparian Habitat Restoration**

Riparian habitat includes the plants that are found along lakes and streams. It is distinctly different from the surrounding habitats because of its unique soil and vegetation characteristics. Riparian habitat is more productive in plant and animal biomass than upland areas and supplies food, cover and water for a large diversity of wildlife species.

The riparian habitat along Lower Alta Lake has been heavily impacted by unmanaged vehicle travel and dispersed camping.



*Campsites, like this one, have impacted riparian habitat along the east side of Lower Alta Lake.*

Appendix E shows the area that is the highest priority for wetland restoration. There is a need to restore the compacted soils and denuded vegetation in this riparian area so that the area can once again support a healthy, native plant community.

## 5. Goals and Recommended Actions

The following goals and recommended actions are the result of discussions from the initial 2017 stakeholder meetings paired with Forest Service field observations and data.

### Phase 1

Most of the Phase 1 actions require minimal NEPA and/or funding so they would likely be the first items to implement.

#### Actions

**Goals:** Address the unmanaged dispersed camping that is occurring at Lower Alta Lake, Wild Boy Lake, Gold King Basin and along the Alta Road. Address the safety issue posed by the existing trail bridge at Lower Alta Lake. Improve the road that accesses the west side of Lower Alta Lake. Improve travel management at Lower Alta Lake by focusing motorized public access on the west side of the lake while closing the east side of the lake to motorized use. Use signing to discourage trailers and RVs from driving up the Alta Road because of its narrow, rough condition and because the existing campsites at Lower Alta Lake are not large enough to accommodate them.

- *Conduct NEPA to:* 1) Improve the alignment of the access road on the west side of Lower Alta Lake and decommission the abandoned road segment as shown on Appendix D; 2) Change the Alta area to designated dispersed camping as shown on Appendix B and designate campsites at Wild Boy Lake and along the Alta Road; 3) close the first one-half mile of the Alta Road corridor to camping (from Highway 145 to private land) as shown on Appendix D; 4) Close Gold King Basin to camping; and 5) Close the east side of Lower Alta Lake to motorized use by installing a gate as shown on Appendix D. Private landowners would continue to have administrative access to their properties located behind the gate.
- *Designated Dispersed Camping Order:* Following NEPA, issue a GMUG Forest Special Order to formally restrict camping to designated dispersed campsites throughout the Alta area as shown on Appendix B. The Order would allow Forest Service officers to enforce the designated dispersed camping changes.
- *Trailer/RV Signing:* Install a larger sign at the bottom of the Alta Road (at its intersection with Highway 145) that discourages trailers and RVs from driving up the road.
- *Picnic Area:* Provide at least picnic sites at Lower Alta Lake as shown in Appendix D.
- *Trail Bridge:* Remove the unsafe trail bridge located on the north side of Lower Alta Lake and replace it with either a low water crossing or another trail bridge (Appendix D).
- *Travel Management:* Implement the Uncompahgre Travel Plan at Wild Boy Lake by closing non-system routes with barriers and signage.

## Phase 2

Many of the following actions require additional NEPA analysis as well as major funding in order to be implemented.

### **Lower Alta Lake (Appendix E)**

**Goals:** Improve opportunities for designated dispersed camping and day use recreation activities while restoring damaged riparian areas in the vicinity of Lower Alta Lake. Offer quality recreation, natural, and cultural history information about the area through signing. Provide sanitation and trash facilities, ensuring that new restrooms meet Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) requirements. Provide opportunities for visitors with special needs to park, fish, hike, camp and picnic in the area. Rehabilitate and restore riparian habitat, focusing on the area shown on Appendix E.

### **Actions:**

- *Camping:* Design and construct a 15-20 site designated dispersed campground on the west side of the lake. The campground would likely be operated by a concessionaire and a fee would be charged. Make several of the campsites ADA accessible.
- *Accessible Picnic Sites:* Provide one or more ADA accessible picnic sites on the south side of the lake.
- *Day Use Parking:* Develop a new expanded day use parking area at the south end of the lake. The parking area should accommodate 30+ vehicles and provide the required number of ADA parking spaces.
- *Sanitation:* 1) Restrooms: Install 2-3 vault restrooms (double with 2 risers). Suggested locations are shown on Appendix E. All restrooms will meet Forest Service ADA requirements; and 2) Trash Facilities: Provide dumpsters at key locations (e.g. day use parking, camping area).
- *Boat launch:* Develop a primitive boat launch on the south side of the lake with trail access to the day use parking area.
- *Signing:* 1) Provide additional kiosks at key points along the lake, as needed to provide camping and recreation information/education, and 2) Install additional directional, informational, and regulatory road and trail signing throughout the area, as needed.
- *Trails:* 1) construct a hiking trail around the lake that also provides fisherman access points. Consider making at least half of the trail and one or more of the fishing sites ADA accessible; 2) construct a hiking trail that connects the lower and upper lakes, and 3) construct a biking trail that connects Lower Alta Lake to Gold King Basin as shown on Appendix A.
- *Resource Repair and Reclamation:* Address resource damage and habitat restoration by: 1) Decommission and reclaim all existing non-system routes in the vicinity by ripping the compacted soil with heavy equipment and re-establishing drainage, then seeding them with a native seed mix and scattering rocks, logs and other available downed material along the route corridors to effectively close

them to vehicle use; and 3) restoring native riparian vegetation along the north side of the lake (Appendix E) by ripping the compacted soil with heavy equipment then planting with native riparian species.

### **Upper Alta Lake**

**Goals:** Provide opportunities at Upper Alta Lake for primitive walk-in designated dispersed camping and day use recreation activities. Offer quality recreation, natural, and cultural history information about the area.

#### **Actions:**

- *Signing:* 1) Provide a kiosk at the lake to provide camping and recreation information/education, and 2) Install recreation signing to inform visitors that camping is only allowed in designated sites.
- *Hiking Trails:* Construct a hiking trail around the lake for fishing and picnic access. Also reconstruct the hiking trail that connects the upper and lower lakes. See Appendix E.
- *Resource Repair and Restoration:* Decommission the non-system routes by ripping the compacted soil with heavy equipment then seeding with a native seed mix.

### **Gold King Basin (Appendix F)**

**Goals:** Provide opportunities for day use recreation activities such as hiking, biking, sight-seeing, and limited off-highway vehicle driving. Offer quality recreation, natural, and cultural history information about the area.

#### **Actions:**

- *Signing:* Provide a kiosk at a key point along the access road to provide camping and recreation information/education; and 2) Consider installing recreation signing to educate visitors about leave no trace etiquette and additional interpretive signing to educate visitors about the area's mining history.
- *Public/Private Land Interface:* Work with adjacent private land owner(s) to sign public/private land in the Basin.
- *Lake Outlet:* Stabilize the lake outlet to address ongoing erosion issues.
- *Trails:* 1) Construct a hiking trail on National Forest land around a portion of the lake; and 2) Construct a trail on National Forest land that connects Gold King Basin to Lower Alta Lake and to Wild Boy Lake. See Appendix A.

### **Wild Boy Lake (Appendix G)**

**Goals:** Provide opportunities for designated dispersed camping and day use recreation activities such as hiking, biking, kayaking, and stand up paddle boarding. Offer quality recreation, natural, and cultural history information about the area.

## **Actions:**

- *Signing:* 1) Provide kiosks at key points (e.g. parking area, at the lake) to provide camping and recreation information/education; and 2) Install directional, informational, and regulatory road and trail signing throughout the area, as needed.
- *Camping:* Design and create 6 – 8 designated dispersed campsites as shown on Appendix G. Make several of the campsites ADA accessible.
- *Picnic Sites:* Provide several picnic sites that are within proximity to vehicle access and the lake. Make one or more of the picnic sites ADA accessible.
- *Day Use Parking:* Develop a small day use parking area that can accommodate 4 - 6 vehicles.
- *Access Road:* Realign and reconstruct the access road into the lake to make it accessible for a septic truck (restroom vault pumping).
- *Sanitation:* 1) Construct a vault restroom near the parking area; and 2) Require visitors to pack out all trash.
- *Travel Management:* Decommission and reclaim the non-system routes in the vicinity by ripping the compacted soil with heavy equipment and re-establishing drainage, then seeding them with a native seed mix and scattering rocks, logs and other available downed material along the route corridors to effectively close them to vehicle use
- *Hiking trails:* 1) Construct a hiking trail around the lake that also provides fisherman access points while protecting riparian vegetation; and 2) Provide a new trail that connects Wild Boy Lake to Gold King Basin to Lower Alta Lake (Appendix A).

## **Alta Road**

**Goals:** 1) Maintain the routes to the Alta Lakes, Wild Boy, and Gold King Basin to accommodate high clearance motorized vehicles; and 2) Offer quality recreation, land boundary, regulatory, and safety information along the road.

## **Actions:**

- *Trailers and RVs:* Issue a GMUG Forest Special Order to prohibit trailers/RVs greater than 20 feet in length on the Alta Road.
- *Road Improvements:* Improve the Alta Road from the Alta Townsite north to Lower Alta Lake to include adequate drainage, grades, and road surfacing.
- *Signing:* 1) Install signing at the bottom of the Alta Road (near Highway 145 intersection) that informs visitors when dispersed campsites are full; 2) Install signs at the public – private land boundaries along the Alta Road to mark where the road enters and leaves National Forest lands.

## **Alta Townsite**

**Goals:** Restrict visitor use at the Townsite to protect and preserve the historic mine buildings and associated artifacts. Provide opportunities for visitors to learn about the history of the Alta Townsite, the local mining history, and surrounding trails through signage at the interpretive site (described below). The responsible party for specific actions is shown in parentheses.

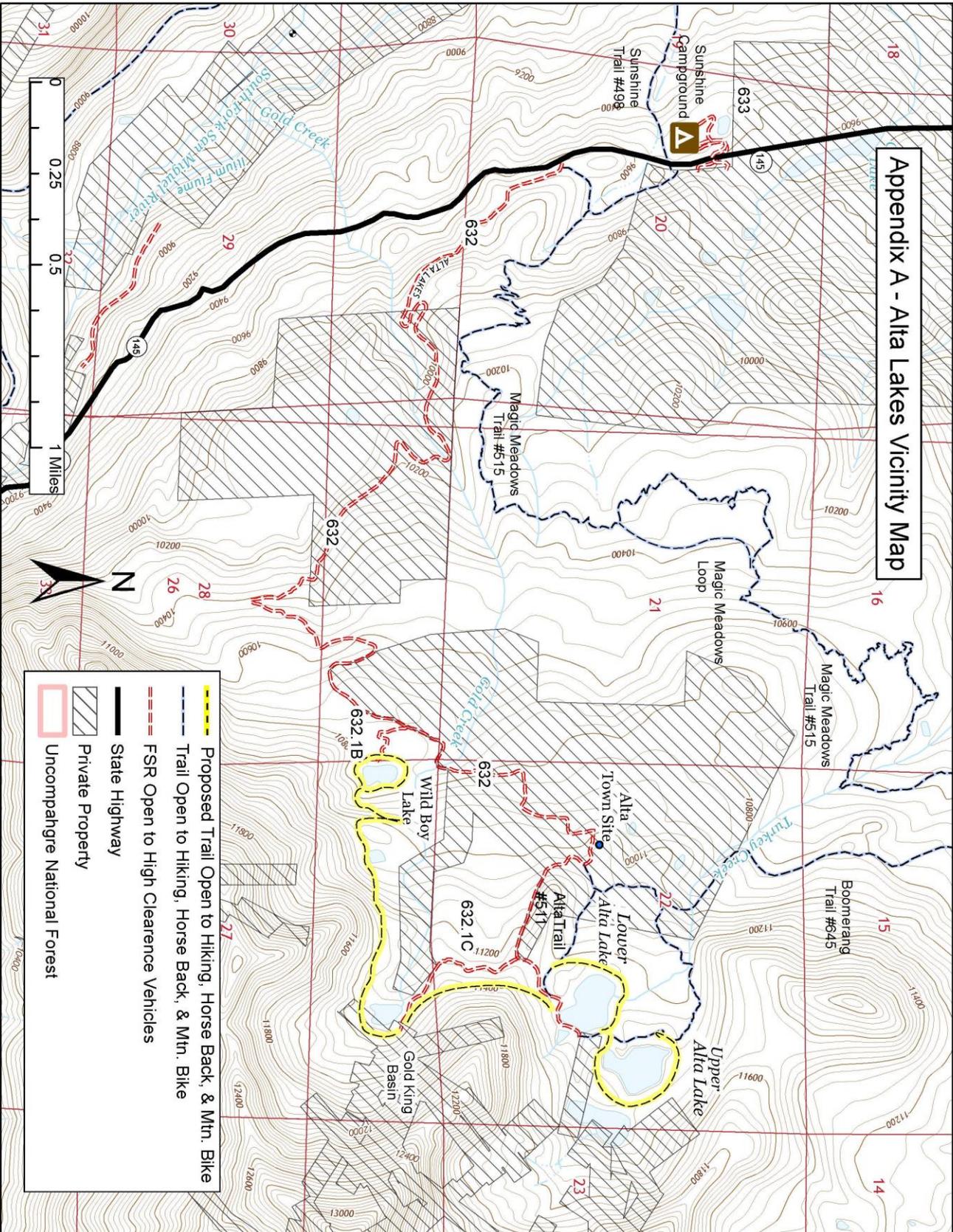
### **Actions:**

- *Signing:* 1) Develop an interpretive site on the County’s easement located within the Townsite that includes local mining history and a trail map (Alta Lakes, LLC and San Miguel County); 2) Develop the interpretive site to include a few parking spaces with the objective of restricting use to the easement (Alta Lakes, LLC and San Miguel County); and 3) Install “No Parking” and “Parking” signs along the Alta Road through the Townsite to clearly designate where public parking will and will not be allowed (Alta Lakes, LLC and Forest Service).



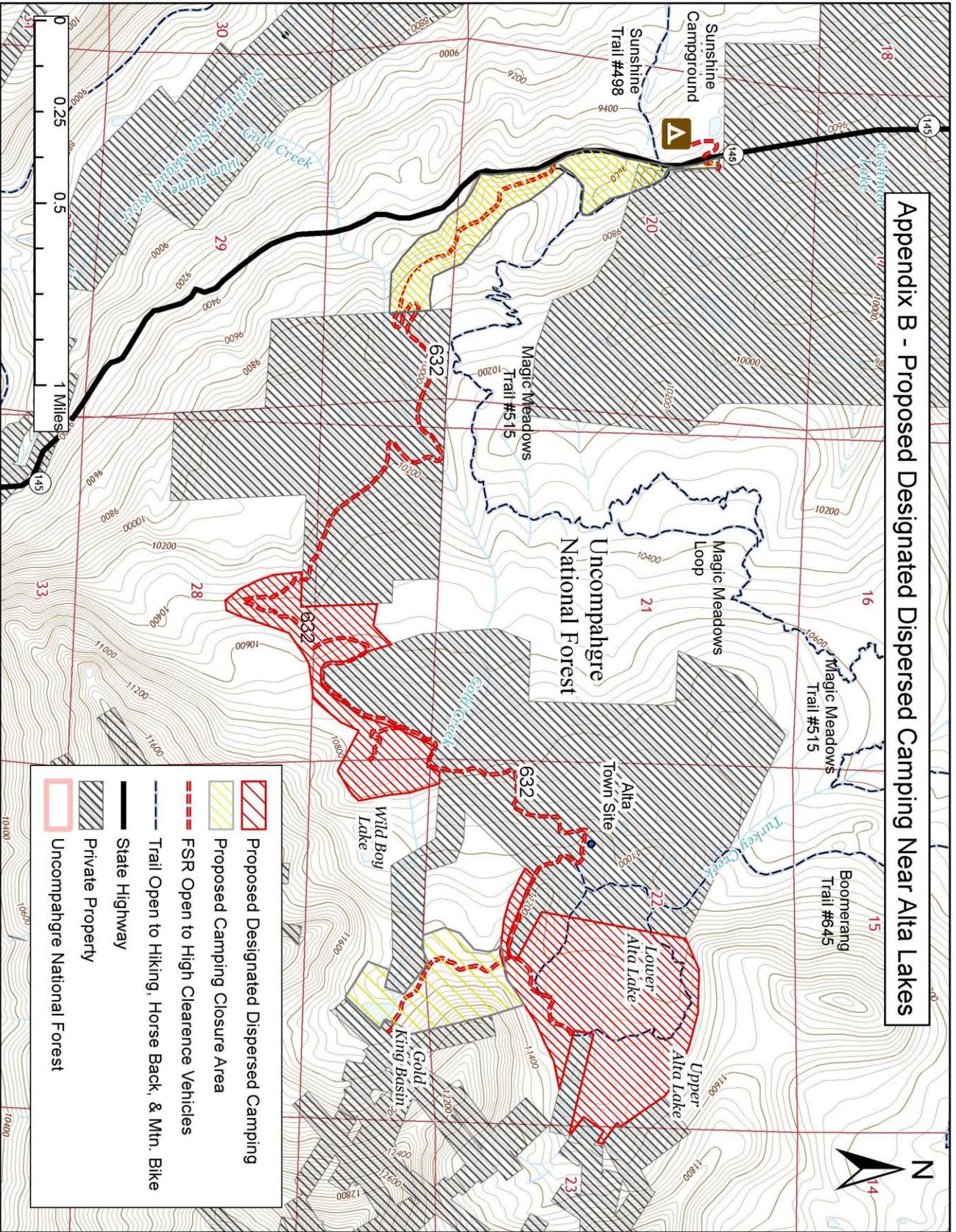
*Scenic view of Lower Alta Lake*

# Appendix A - Alta Lakes Vicinity Map



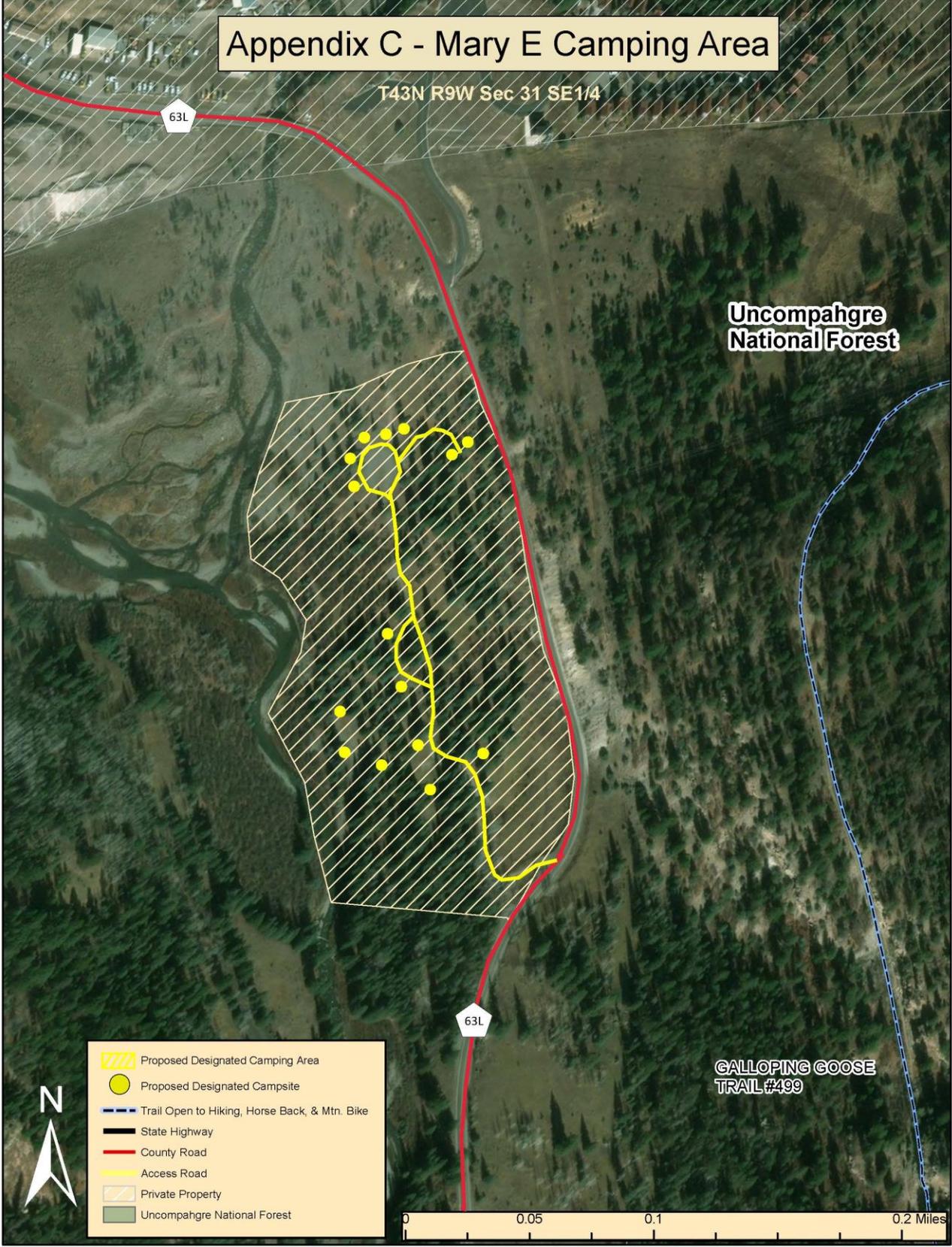
- Proposed Trail Open to Hiking, Horse Back, & Mtn. Bike
- Trail Open to Hiking, Horse Back, & Mtn. Bike
- FSR Open to High Clearance Vehicles
- State Highway
- Private Property
- Uncompahgre National Forest

# Appendix B - Proposed Designated Dispersed Camping Near Alta Lakes

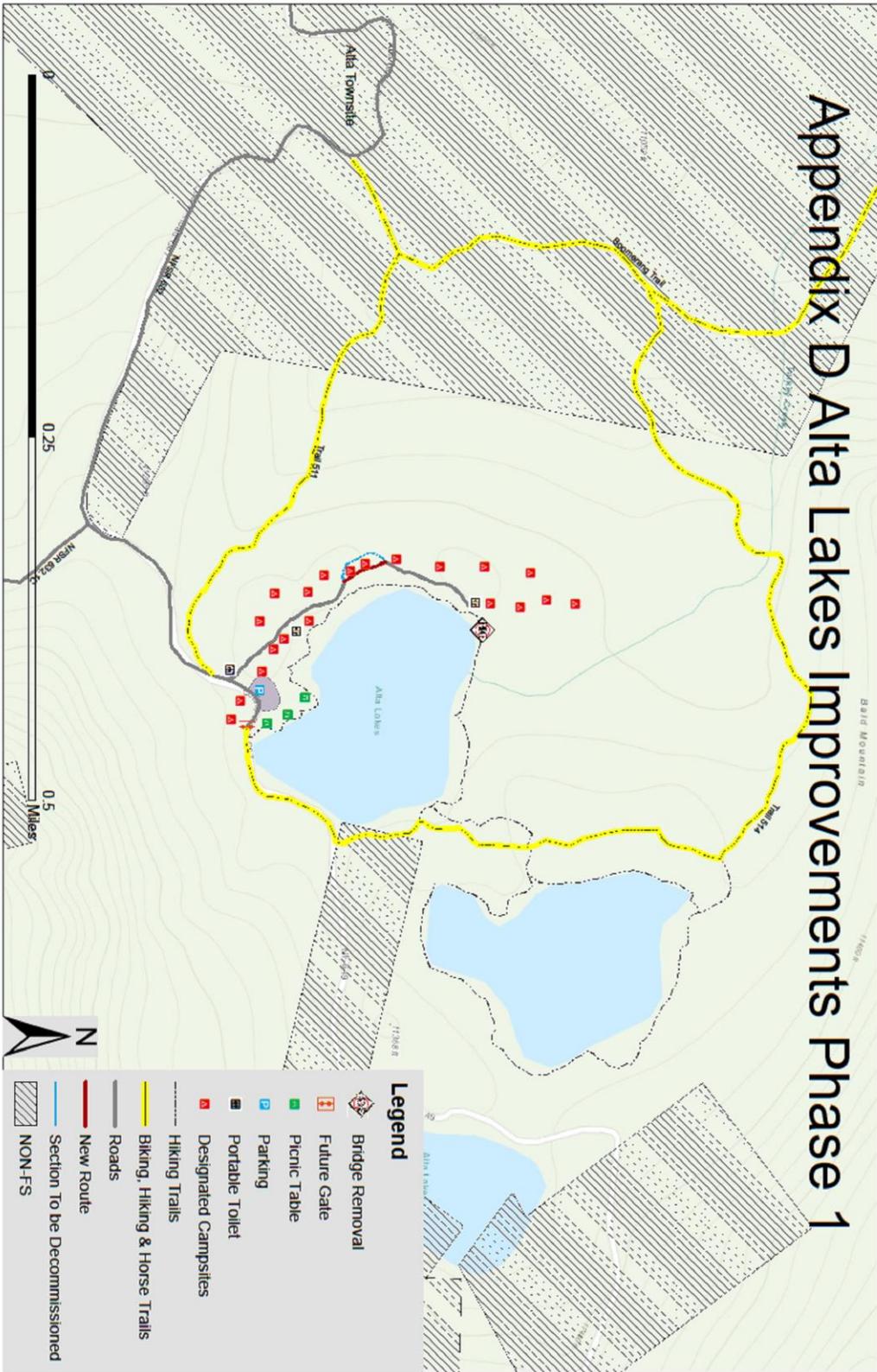


# Appendix C - Mary E Camping Area

T43N R9W Sec 31 SE1/4



# Appendix D Alta Lakes Improvements Phase 1



**Legend**

- Bridge Removal
- Future Gate
- Picnic Table
- Parking
- Portable Toilet
- Designated Campsites
- Hiking Trails
- Biking, Hiking & Horse Trails
- Roads
- New Route
- Section To be Decommissioned
- NON-FS



