



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

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In Reply Refer To:

5400/1792 (LLORC00000)
DOI-BLM-OR-128-2009-0003-EA

SCOPING DOCUMENT

October 28, 2008

Dear Citizen:

This information and the enclosed maps briefly describe the Proposed Action for the development of the EFC 2009 Environmental Assessment (EA).

The USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District Office is preparing this Environmental Assessment addressing new circumstances and new information pertinent to multiple timber sales that would occur within the East Fork Coquille River fifth field watershed. These sales were previously analyzed under the East Fork Coquille EA (OR128-03-17) which resulted in the signing of a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI). The proposed action would manage approximately 360 acres.

Forest treatments would occur in General Forest Management Area (GFMA) portions of the matrix Land Use Allocation (LUA) and within the Riparian Reserve LUA as defined in the 1995 Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan/Record of Decision (1995 RMP/ROD). Treated unit areas are proposed as timber management areas (TMAs) and riparian management areas (RMAs) in the 2008 Proposed Resource Management Plan (USDI 2008).

Project Summary

The proposed action would harvest approximately 268 acres of timber through regeneration harvests and hardwood conversions. Four acres of this harvest includes portions of a stand described in the East Fork Coquille EA as Mature (100-200 years old); none of this harvest includes stands described as in the old-growth stage (>200 years old). Regeneration harvests of these stands would include harvesting the timber except for Riparian Reserves, snags, down woody debris, and other habitat needs as described in the East Fork Coquille EA. The harvested areas would be prepared for replanting by removing most of the residual logging slash through broadcast burning or piling and burning. The stands considered for regeneration harvest were identified in the East Fork Coquille Watershed Analysis (USDI 2000) as the highest priority for harvest. There are 40 acres of hardwood conversion.

Density management thinning (DMT) would occur on 92 acres within areas identified as the Riparian Reserve in the East Fork Coquille EA.

The timber sales are expected to be sold in Fiscal Years 2009 and 2010 and would contribute approximately 11 million board feet to the decadal Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for the Myrtlewood Field Office.

The EFC 2009 project would also include constructing roughly 3.6 miles of new roads, renovating or improving approximately 6.5 miles of existing roads, and decommissioning 9.0 miles of selected roads.

Some of the proposed treatment units contain or are adjacent to unsurveyed suitable Marbled Murrelet habitat. Surveys to determine occupancy of these areas began in May 2008.

This project would incorporate data and recommendations from the East Fork Coquille Watershed Analysis, the East Fork Coquille EA (OR128-03-17), the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Revision of the Resource Management Plans of the Western Oregon Bureau of Land Management (USDI 2008) and its supporting documents, and other information relevant to the analysis. Unit boundaries, treatments, and design features would closely approximate those described in the original environmental assessment.

Location

The EFC 2009 Analysis Area includes units in the central and western portions of the East Fork Coquille Watershed. This area is located about 20 miles southeast of Coos Bay, Oregon and is north of State Highway 42. The total Analysis Area is 85,981 acres in size. The proposed harvest activities are located in T. 28 S., Ranges 10 W. and 11 W.; and T. 29 S., Range 11 W., Willamette Meridian.

The following table shows the land ownership within the project area.

Table I: Ownership within the Analysis Area

Sub-watershed	Private Acres	Coquille Indian Tribe Acres	BLM Acres	Total Acres
Brewster Canyon	8594	2	8468	17064
Brummit Creek	4852	0	10752	15604
Camas Creek	6995	0	7222	14217
Elk Creek	3980	1193	4531	9704
Lost Creek	5923	0	7027	12950
Yankee Run	8718	160	7563	16442
Totals	39062	1355	45564	85981

The following two tables show the land-use allocations under the Northwest Forest Plan and under the 2008 Proposed Resource Management Plan. The differences in total acres are attributable to differences in GIS layer accuracies, not to true differences of on-the-ground acreage of the LUAs.

Table II: LUA of BLM acres in the Analysis Area under the current RMP

GFMA	LSR	Connectivity	Total Acres
19165	23392	3011	45568

Table III: LUA of BLM acres under the 2008 PRMP

Timber Management Area	Deferred Timber Management Area	Late-Successional Management Area	Riparian Management Area	Administratively Withdrawn	Total Acres
12227	972	19528	4842	7981	45550

Need for the Project

The Coos Bay District declared in the RMP an Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) of 27 MMBF per year was to be derived entirely from the Matrix land use allocation. The ASQ “refers to the maximum non-declining level of timber harvest sustainable over time” (USDI 1994 Vol. II p 209). Combinations of harvest methods including regeneration harvests were anticipated and necessary to fulfill this commitment. Since the RMP approval in 1995 to the end of 2003 the Coos Bay District has sold 112 MMBF of the anticipated decadal commitment of 273 MMBF from regeneration harvest for the decade ending in 2004. The ROD also anticipated that almost 9 MMBF would be regeneration harvested from connectivity/diversity blocks for the first decade. To date only 1.7 MMBF has been harvested. The timber proposed for regeneration harvest in this project are on lands that were allocated to the primary purpose of timber production and are of the age and condition anticipated for timber harvest under the Northwest Forest Plan (NWFP). Under the timber harvest rotation established in the NWFP, therefore these lands would have contributed to meeting the need for timber production anticipated in the NWFP.

The proposed RMP analyzed in the 2008 FEIS recognizes that BLM’s timber harvest levels, as directed by existing plans, are not being achieved (USDI 2008, pg. 1-4). The Plan revision notes the Need to re-focus the goal for management of the BLM-administered lands to the statutory mandates specifically applicable to these lands (the O&C Act), as directed by a settlement agreement (AFRC v. Clarke, Civil No. 94-1031-TPJ [D.D.C.]) and capitalizes on an opportunity to coordinate the BLM’s management plans with new recovery plans and redesignations of critical habitat currently under development. The current proposed action (EFC 2009) and all future BLM proposed actions in the Analysis Area would be designed to meet this need.

This environmental assessment will be tiered to the 2008 FEIS and incorporate the redesignation of Spotted Owl Critical Habitat. Additionally, new information developed during the analysis for the FEIS and other new information from other sources will be considered in this EA.

Preliminary Project Purpose

The purpose of this project is to implement the design features upon the landscape of the East Fork Coquille EA while analyzing the action in light of the 2008 FEIS and new information since the East Fork Coquille EA for which a FONSI was signed in 2005.

You are invited to submit written comments on any issues or concerns you may have regarding this project by November 26. Comments which are helpful to the analysis process are those which identify new scientific or technical information, determine the scope of issues to be addressed, and express site-specific concerns related to the proposed action. Opinions agreeing or disagreeing with current laws and policies are not helpful in refining the proposed action.

Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the above address during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA document or other related documents. Individual respondents may request confidentiality. Before including your address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment – including your personal identifying information – may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so. All submissions from organizations or businesses, and from individuals identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations or businesses, will be made available for public inspection in their entirety.

The EA interdisciplinary team will use your comments, along with their own professional expertise, to further develop a Proposed Action, alternative actions, and design features. The Proposed Action and alternatives will then be analyzed and the results documented in an EA as required by the National Environmental Policy Act. If the EA results in a FONSI (Finding of No Significant Impact), this document is anticipated to be available for review in March 2009. A copy of the EA will be sent to those that request it or are on the District's mailing list to receive an EA. It will also be posted on the District's web site:

<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay/plans/index.php>.

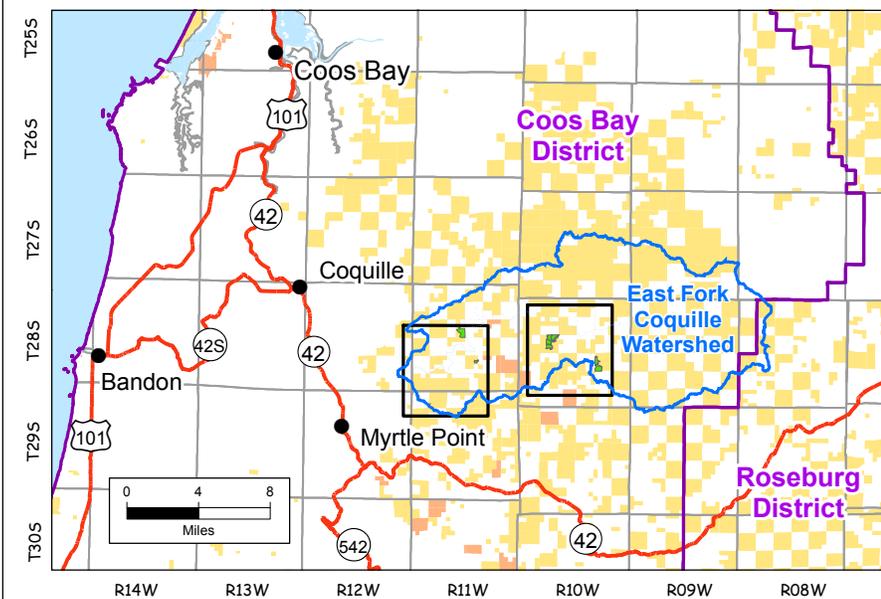
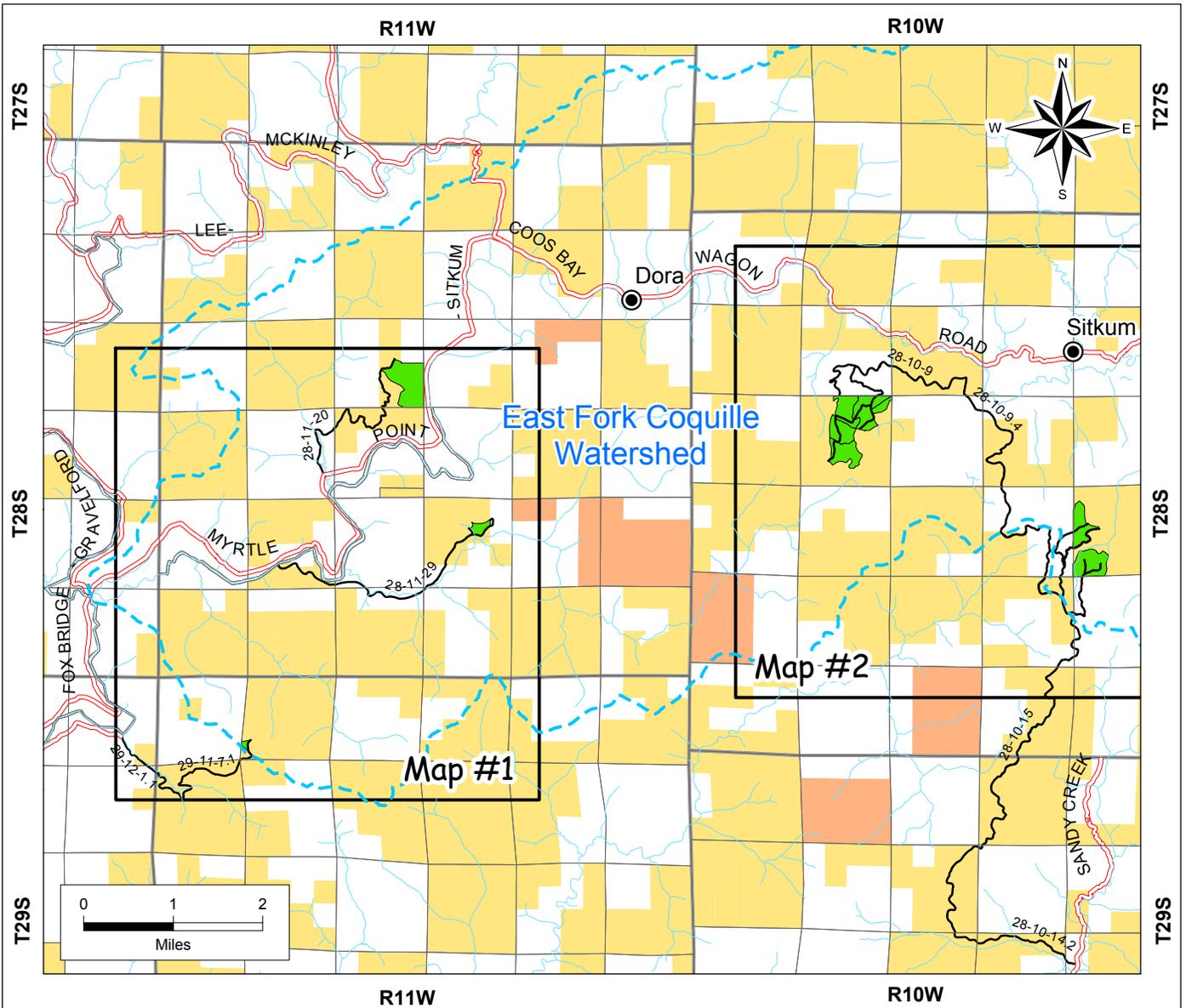
Please direct your responses or questions to Aimee Hoefs, Myrtlewood Field Office, 1300 Airport Lane, North Bend, OR 97459, call (541) 756-0100, FAX: (541) 756-9303.
OR_CoosBay_Mail@blm.gov

Respectfully,

/s/Paul T. Flanagan

Paul T. Flanagan
Field Manager
Myrtlewood Resource Area

Enclosures



Map Features

- Perennial Stream
- East Fork Coquille Watershed
- County Road
- Primary Haul Road
- Potential Harvest Boundary
- BLM Administered Land
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Private / Other Ownership

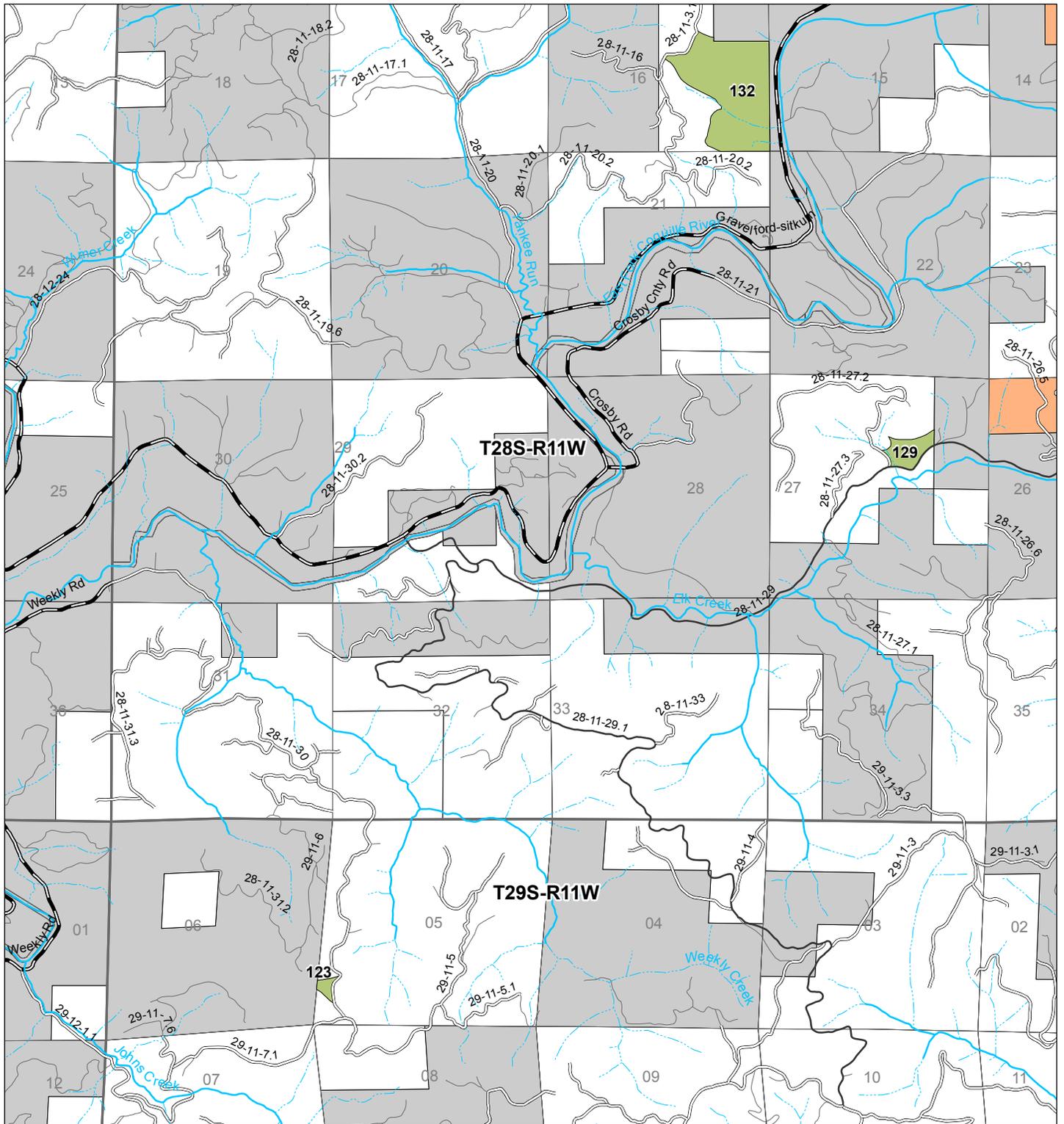
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Myrtlewood Resource Area
1300 Airport Lane
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Map Features (Not all map features necessarily occur in the area mapped above.)

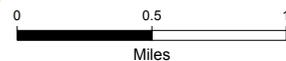
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|---|---|
|  Unit Boundaries |  Highway |
|  BLM Administered Land |  County Road |
|  Coquille Forest |  Paved Road |
|  Private / Other Ownership |  Gravel Road |
|  Fish-bearing stream |  Natural/Unk Surfaced Road |
|  Non fish-bearing stream | |



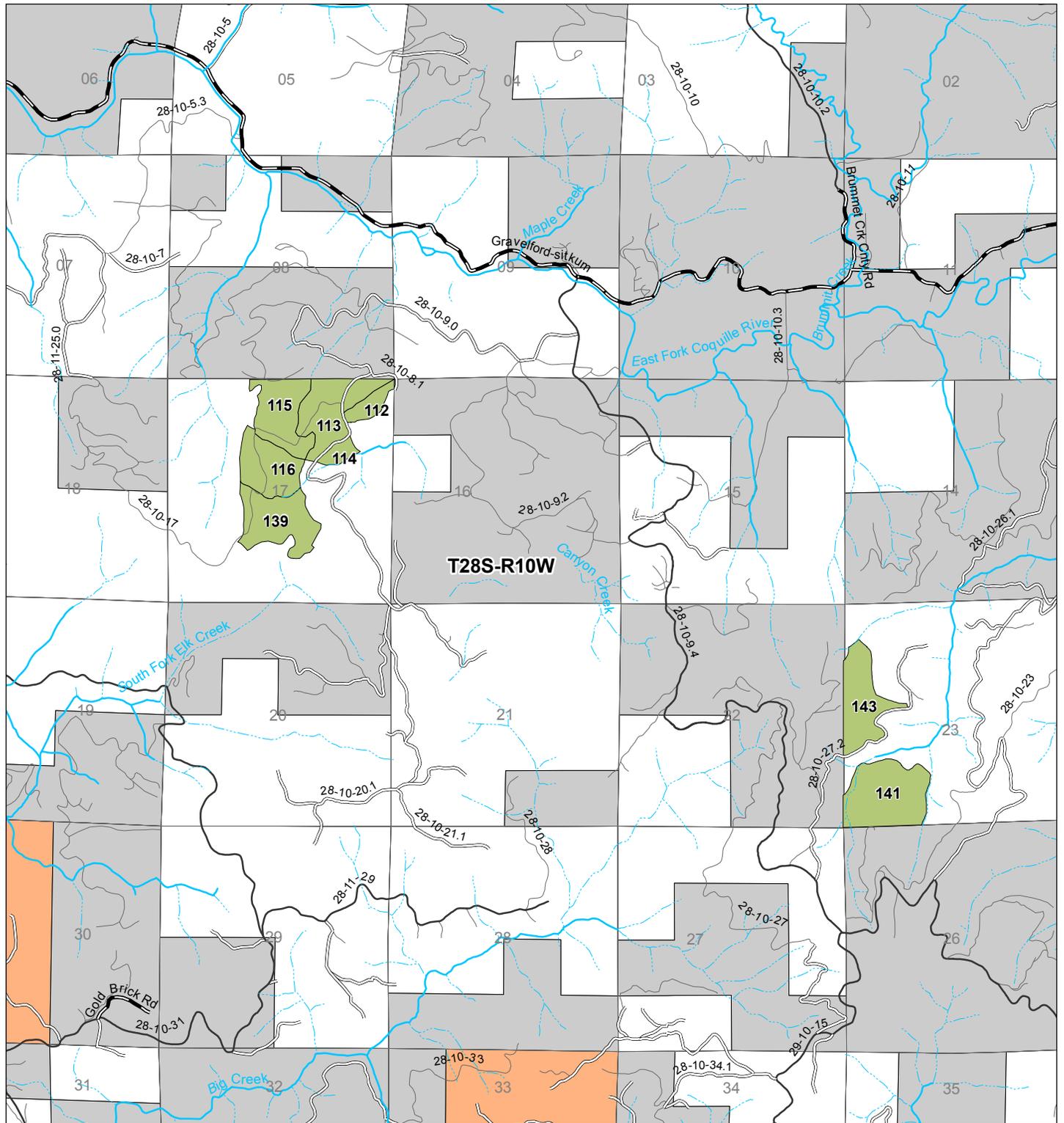
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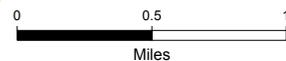
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