

COMMERCIAL RECREATION

Some individuals do not have the knowledge, skill, equipment, or time to engage in and plan float, fishing, or hunting trips or any of a range of recreational activities that take place within the John Day Basin. As a result guide, equipment rental, and shuttle operations have developed to serve this population. Currently guiding and boat rentals involving the delivery and pick up of boats at BLM managed sites is regulated by the BLM. The BLM issues Special Recreation Permits (SRPs) to authorize these uses on the public lands and related waters. SRPs enable the BLM to manage visitor use, protect natural and cultural resources, and as a mechanism to authorize commercial use, competitive use, vending, special area use, and organized group activities or events.

Within the planning area, BLM currently administers 26 river related SRPs authorizing boat rental, guiding, hunting, and fishing on specified sections of the John Day River. The activities and areas authorized vary by individual SRP. In addition, the BLM administers three upland SRPs for guided hunting during specific hunting seasons and in specified areas. The term of each SRP ranges from one to five years based on an annual evaluation of the permittee's performance.

Between 1996 and 2006, the number of commercial SRPs for the John Day River has dropped from 34 to 26 due to non-renewal of an SRP by the permittee, or non-renewal by BLM due to failure to meet permit stipulations. Outfitter and guide services offered may currently exceed public demand, based on the low number of user days reported by guides and outfitters. Most permitted guides and outfitters are not able to generate adequate income by operating solely on the John Day River. Their income from the John Day River is used to supplement other sources of income, including guiding and outfitting on other rivers or income derived from other businesses or employment.

The BLM has had a moratorium on issuing new commercial guide and outfitter permits for the John Day River since 1996. In 2001 the John Day River Plan required a needs assessment to identify a need for a particular river-related service before a new commercial guide or outfitter permit could be issued.

An estimated 15 vehicle shuttle services are used by John Day River boaters, and none are currently under BLM SRP because the services do not traverse more than one mile of BLM-managed land or water.

There have been no competitive event or vending SRPs issued within the planning area, although a John Day River Plan decision allows BLM to consider issuing vending permits at river launch points to benefit resource protection, such as for the sale of river toilets, firepans, or firewood. The BLM occasionally issues SRPs for organized group activities or events within the planning area.

In 2001, the Prineville District limited the availability of new SRPs for commercial, competitive, and organized group use on public lands within the district boundary. New SRP proposals will be considered for authorization for activities or events not exceeding seven consecutive days in length annually which do not require preparation of an environmental assessment. The BLM has received numerous requests for new river SRPs as well as new upland SRPs for guided hunting, nature hikes, and paleontological tours.

TRANSPORTATION AND ACCESS

Primary ground transportation within the planning area is provided over a mix of federal, state, and county roads and highways. Except for the extreme northern portions of the planning area most of the John Day basin is connected by basically rural roads. While the surface of the Federal Highways and many of the state and county routes are generally in good condition these roads cross difficult terrain and wind around and over rivers, streams, canyons, rimrock, and mountains.

FEDERAL INTERSTATE, STATE HIGHWAYS, & COUNTY ROADS

BLM managed lands are accessible from federal Interstate, state highways, county roads, local roads and private residences. Widespread access to BLM managed public lands provides opportunities for a variety of recreation opportunities, range, timber and mineral utilization and helps provide access to different land ownerships. Local communities are connected by a road system that traverses and meanders through the Eastern Oregon landscape.

Interstate 84 parallels part of the northern end of the planning boundary along the Columbia River. This interstate is a major route used by travelers and commercial trucks between the western and eastern portions of the country. Recreationists and other public land users from the Portland and Seattle areas also use this interstate highway in their trek to public lands in the planning area.

U.S. Highway 26 is a major travel corridor through the heart of the planning area and extends in an east-west direction. U.S. Highway 395 bisects the eastern part of the planning area from North to South. US Highway 97 extends in a North – South direction from Madras to Biggs and forms part of the western JDBRMP planning area boundary.

Table 13: Summary of U.S. and State Highway Mileage within the Planning Area

County	Interstate, U.S. or State Highway	Miles
Baker	County Total:	<u>0</u>
Gilliam	I-84	51.53
Gilliam	SR 19	52.99
Gilliam	SR 206	39.35
Gilliam	SR 74	8.05
	County Total:	<u>151.93</u>
Grant	US 395	80.25
Grant	US 26	76.55
Grant	SR 402	34.85
Grant	SR 19	19.01
Grant	SR 7	7.48
	County Total:	<u>218.14</u>
Jefferson	County Total:	<u>0</u>
Morrow	SR 207	0.06
	County Total:	<u>0.06</u>
Sherman	US 97	47.80
Sherman	SR 206	16.06
Sherman	I – 84	10.06
Sherman	SR 216	0.50
	County Total:	<u>74.42</u>
Umatilla	US 395	2.70
	County Total:	<u>2.70</u>
Wasco	SR 218	13.35
Wasco	US 97	3.17
	County Total:	<u>16.52</u>
Wheeler	SR 19	50.13
Wheeler	US 26	45.88
Wheeler	SR 207	39.79
Wheeler	SR 218	19.24
	County Total	<u>155.03</u>
Grand Total:		<u>619.10</u>

BLM GIS Road database; 2006

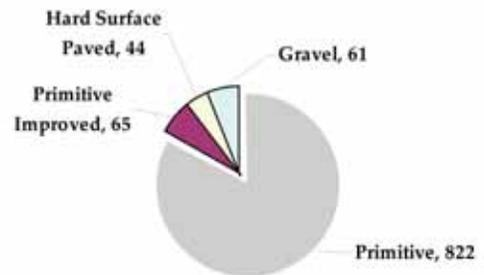
In addition to the above routes, State Highways and county roads provide access within the planning area. These state highways and county roads connect local communities, and ranches, to the John Day River, BLM, Forest Service and National Park lands. These routes also provide for travel within Eastern Oregon and to adjacent states. Table 13 summarizes Interstate, U.S. and State Highway mileage within the planning area by county.

Although state and many county roads are paved, many roads are crooked and traverse hilly topography, increasing travel time between communities. Some county roads are also graveled, increasing potential for sliding off roads. During winter months travel between communities requires longer driving times and is frequently hazardous. In addition, limited county road funding limits road maintenance, road re-construction, sign and ditch maintenance, and snow plowing. Table 14 identifies mileage of county road types within the planning area, which shows a predominance of gravel, cinder or primitive roads maintained by counties within the planning area.

ROADS ACROSS BLM LANDS

Within the planning area, a wide variety of road types are located on BLM public lands. Not all are maintained by BLM. Many of these roads are maintained and managed by entities such as the Oregon Department of Transportation, county road departments, and utility companies. These various road types are illustrated in figure 31 below.

FIGURE 31: MILES OF ROAD ON BLM LAND BY SURFACE TYPE



Source: BLM GIS road database; 2006

Table 14: County Transportation System in the John Day Basin RMP Area			
County	Paved Road	Gravel, Cinder Primitive Surface Road	Total Miles:
Baker	0	0	0
Gilliam	21	429	450
Grant	215	353	568
Jefferson	0	60	60
Morrow	0	0.9	0.9
Sherman	86	190	276
Umatilla	0	0	0
Wasco	0	22	22
Wheeler	36	335	371
Total	358	1390	1748

Estimated County Road mileage from BLM GIS road database; 2006

BLM TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

There are three classes of routes in the BLM transportation system: Roads, Primitive Roads, and Trails. A Road is a route declared a road by the owner, managed for use by low-clearance vehicles having four or more wheels, and maintained for regular and continuous use. A primitive Road is a route managed for use by four-wheel drive or high clearance vehicles. These routes do not normally meet any BLM road design standards. A Trail is a route managed for human-powered, stock, or off-highway vehicle forms of transportation or for historical or heritage values.

The existing primitive road and trail network in the planning area is a combination of historic county roads, BLM maintained roads, roads once constructed that are maintained only by the passage of users, and trails created by a variety of users. Existing routes have been constructed in the past for livestock or timber management, mining, and travel between cities and ranches. Many of these roads were created several decades ago and continue to be used, while others are no longer useable by motorized users. No standard exists for the retirement or obliteration of roads after they have served their functional purpose.

Recreationists, private land owners, and permittees use authorized and unauthorized primitive roads and trails to reach destinations throughout the John Day Basin area. BLM maintenance of primitive roads is done primarily on an “as-needed” basis. Unauthorized use on existing routes and cross-country motorized use has continued to increase annually. These actions continue to result in road rutting, soil compaction, increased muddy water runoff, disturbance to wildlife and trespass on private lands (discussions with Heidi Mottl, John Morris, and Greg Hampton, LEA, 2006).

BLM Roads

Lower John Day River

Though considered part of the Lower John Day the area immediately north of Clarno is displayed on the Sutton Mountain Area Map. From the town of Clarno, approximately four miles of BLM un-maintained primitive road extends north to a locked gate just beyond the Sorefoot Creek drainage. There are no other BLM managed roads across BLM lands in the Lower John Day Area. (See Map 10: Lower John Day Transportation and Map 11: Sutton Mountain Transportation)

Sutton Mountain Area

In the Sutton Mountain area several small proportions of BLM maintained roads exist. North of Mitchell, an old logging road extends east to west from Highway 207 to Bridge Creek Road. This road is called the Myers Canyon road (BLM road 7548) and is a BLM maintained gravel road. The Priest Hole Rd. (BLM road 7559) is a BLM maintained primitive road which extends from Bridge Creek Road down to the John Day River and then east to the Twickenham-Bridge Creek-Cutoff County Road (see Map 11: Sutton Mountain Transportation.).

Rudio Mountain and Johnson Heights Areas

Along the Franks Creek Road (BLM Road 6203), BLM has a reciprocal agreement with a large land owner, D.R. Johnson, which specifies that whoever uses this 9.5 mile road segment maintains it. BLM maintains approximately 7 miles of the Timber Basin Road, which is open for BLM administrative and public use. Holmes Creek Road is maintained by BLM and extends south for approximately 8 miles until public access ends at private land. Just north of the Cant Ranch the very rough, primitive and un-maintained Squaw

Creek Road extends approximately 8 miles until private lands prevent further public access. (see Map 12: Rudio Mountain Johnson Heights Transportation).

South Fork John Day River

The BLM maintains approximately 23 miles of gravel road on the South Fork John Day River. This road is maintained on an annual basis whereas all other BLM road maintenance in the planning area is done on an as needed basis. Grant County Road Department maintains approximately 1.5 miles of paved road and 7.5 miles of gravel road along this river.

Other routes off the South Fork John Day River Road are open seasonally. Jackass Creek and Murderer's Creek roads are limited to designated routes and open seasonally. This area is managed as a Co-operative Travel Management Area by the BLM, USFS and ODFW.

Two other areas in the South Fork John Day area are open seasonally: Battle Creek Road extends south of Highway 26 and Indian Creek road is open seasonally. (see Map 13: South Fork John Day River Transportation)

Upper John Day

There are 17 miles of roads on very steep terrain through public lands in the Little Canyon Mountain area. Many routes have no drainage built into them and rut easily due to high clay content. Many of these routes are used recreationally by OHV enthusiasts. Some routes provide access to mining claims (see Map 14: Upper John Day Transportation).

North of Prairie City along County Road 58, a BLM spur road extends to the Malheur National Forest Boundary along Dixie creek. This road is not maintained by the BLM but provides public access to the Malheur National Forest in this area.

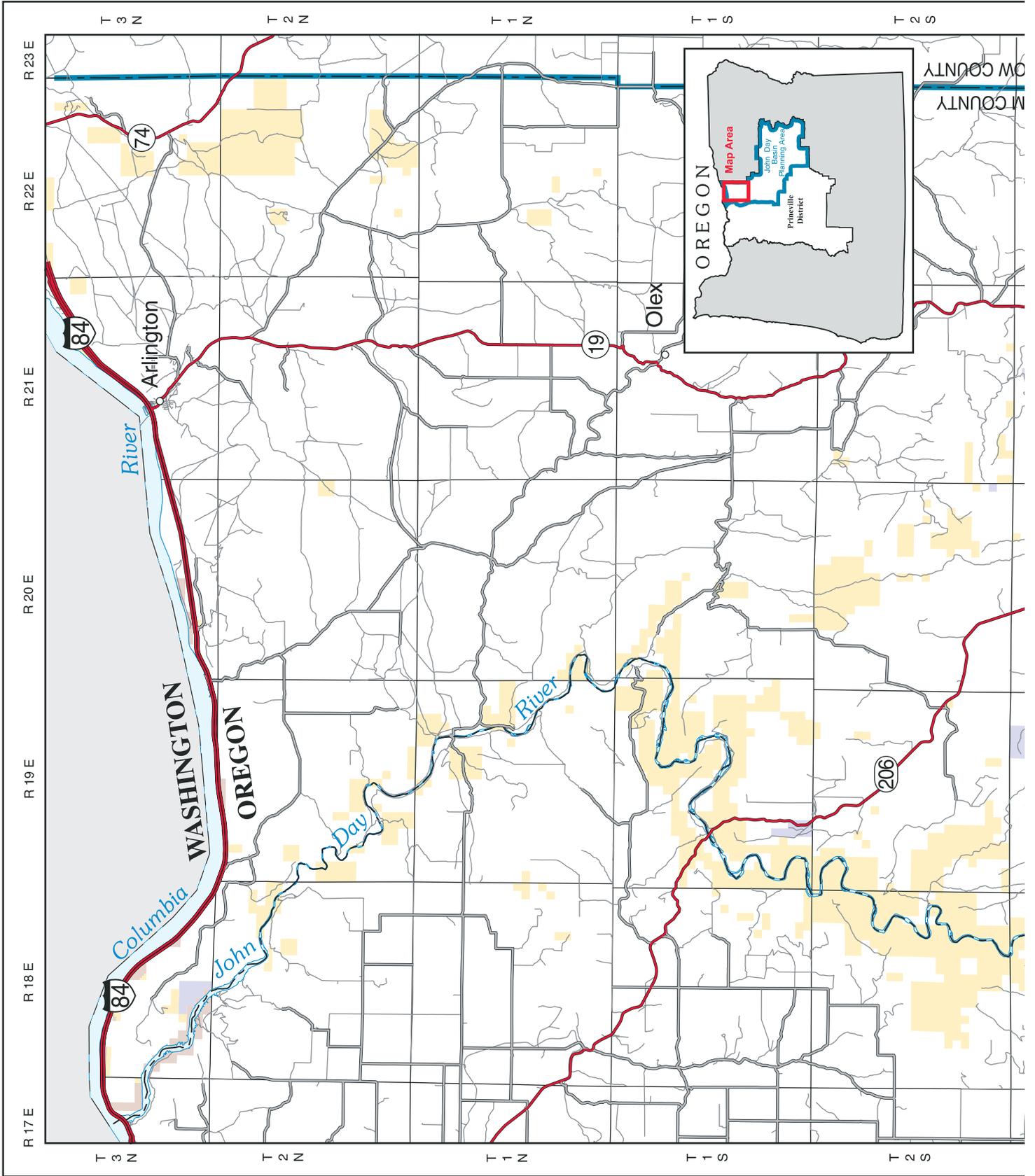
North Fork John Day River Roads

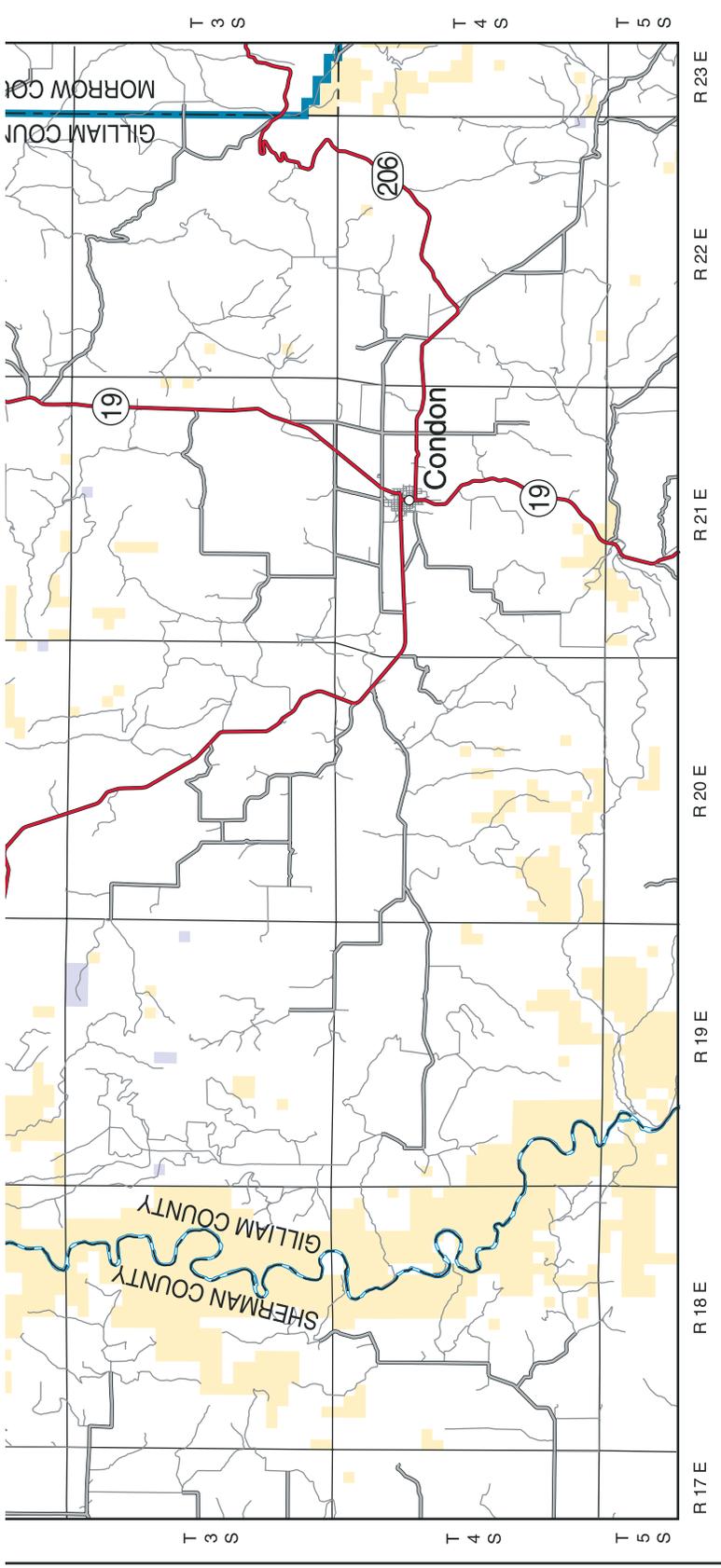
The North Fork John Day River Access Road (BLM road 7569) is a BLM maintained road following the North Fork of the John Day River from its intersection with Highway 395 downstream to the Wrightman Canyon Road (County Road 15).

A primitive road exists downriver from the Wrightman Canyon Road (County Road 15), to the Wall Creek road (County Road 31). This primitive, un-maintained road parallels the north and west banks of the North Fork John Day River. There are 7.15 miles of road on BLM public lands and 7.85 miles of road on private land. No public easements exist through the private lands and no easements have ever been pursued or obtained by BLM or any other public agency. Private land owners have placed gates across this road in the early 1990's and in 2005. These gates have frequently been pulled out by users.

Two primitive, seasonally open roads lead to the north from the North Fork John Day River Access Road. The first, up Jericho Creek has a small spur road but either direction the road soon ends. Near the end of public access on the North Fork road the Mallory Creek Road extends into the Umatilla National Forest. There has been no maintenance on these roads to date. Several primitive roads that are open seasonally extend from the Umatilla National Forest BLM managed lands. Each of these routes ends near the top of rimrock overlooking the North Fork John Day River several hundred feet below.

Public access along the North Fork is available north of the city of Monument for 7.6 miles along County Road 31, to Wall Creek. This county road extends north, past Wall Creek, to BLM and Forest Service lands. At this point several un-maintained BLM roads are open seasonally from April 16 to November 30. (See Map 15: North Fork John Day Transportation).





LEGEND

— Planning Area Boundary

Transportation



Interstate



State Highway

County Road

Road:

- BLM- Closed except for administrative use.
- Private- Closed to public use or unknown

Administered Land



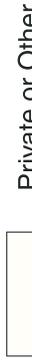
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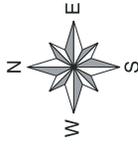
Other Federal



State



Private or Other



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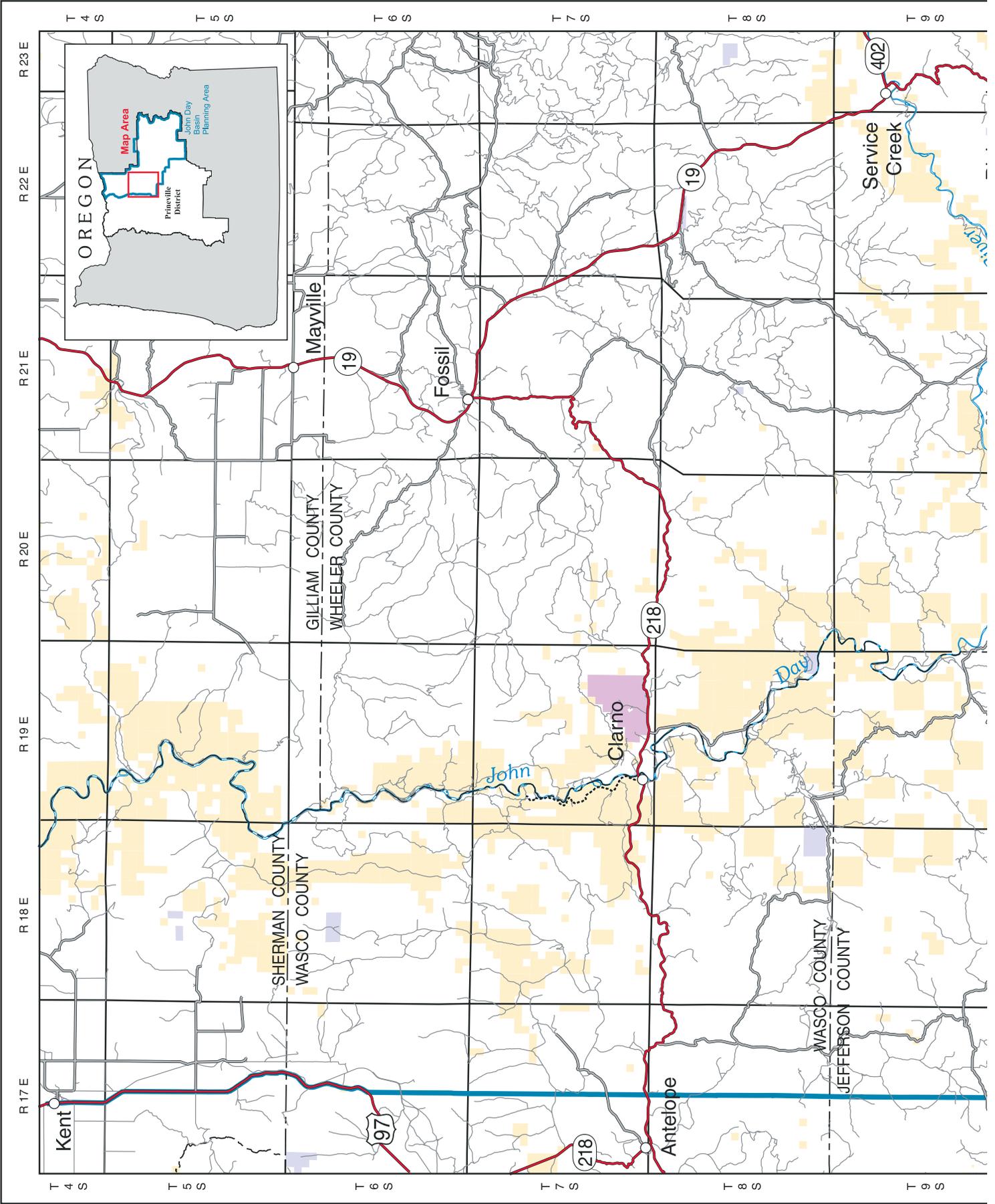


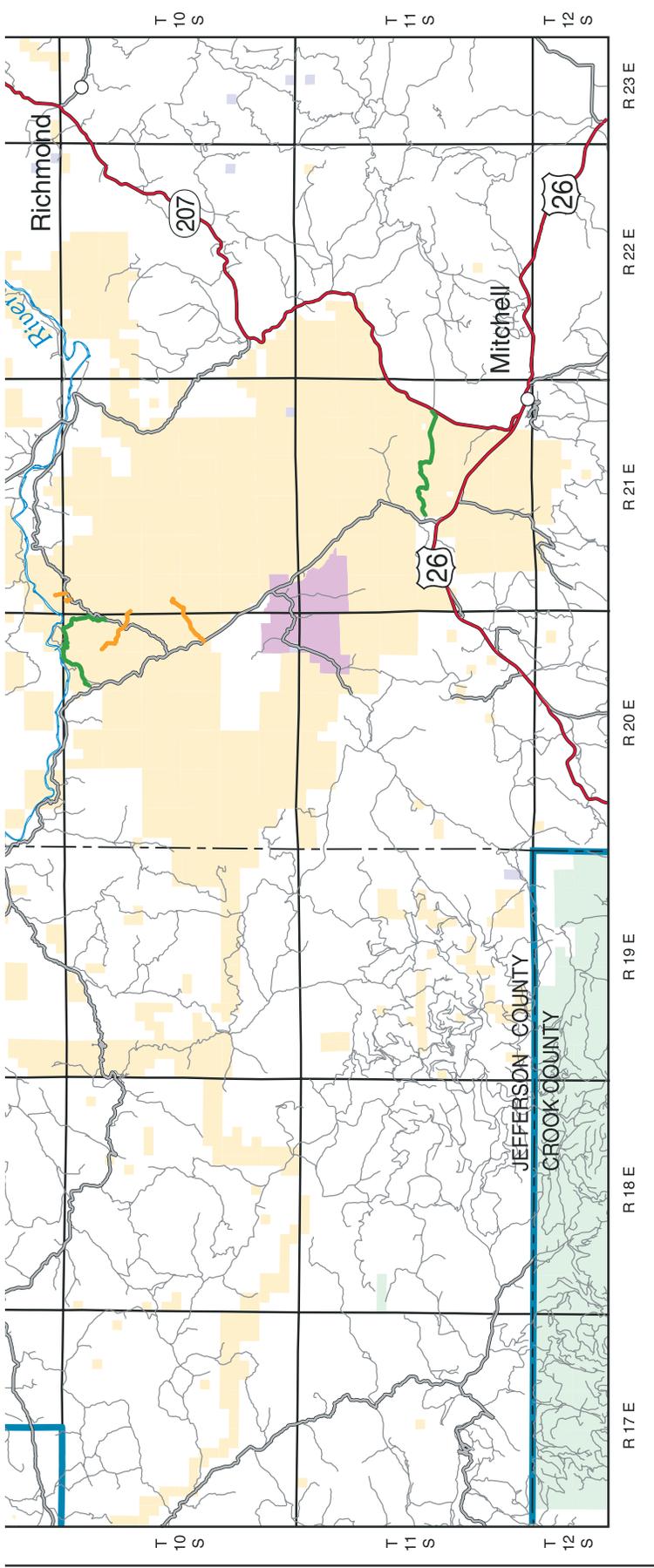
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John Day Basin
Resource Management Plan

2006

Map 10: Lower John Day Transportation

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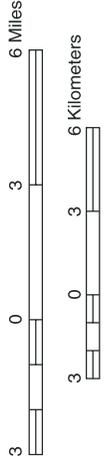
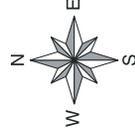




LEGEND

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|--|------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------------------|
| | Planning Area Boundary | Administered Land | |
| | Transportation | | Bureau of Land Management |
| | Open Roads | | Forest Service |
| | Road Open Seasonally | | John Day Fossil Beds National Monument |
| | BLM Maintained Roads | | State |
| | U.S. Highway | | Private or Other |
| | State Highway | | |
| | County Road | | |

Road:
 BLM- Closed except for administrative use
 Private- Closed to public use or unknown



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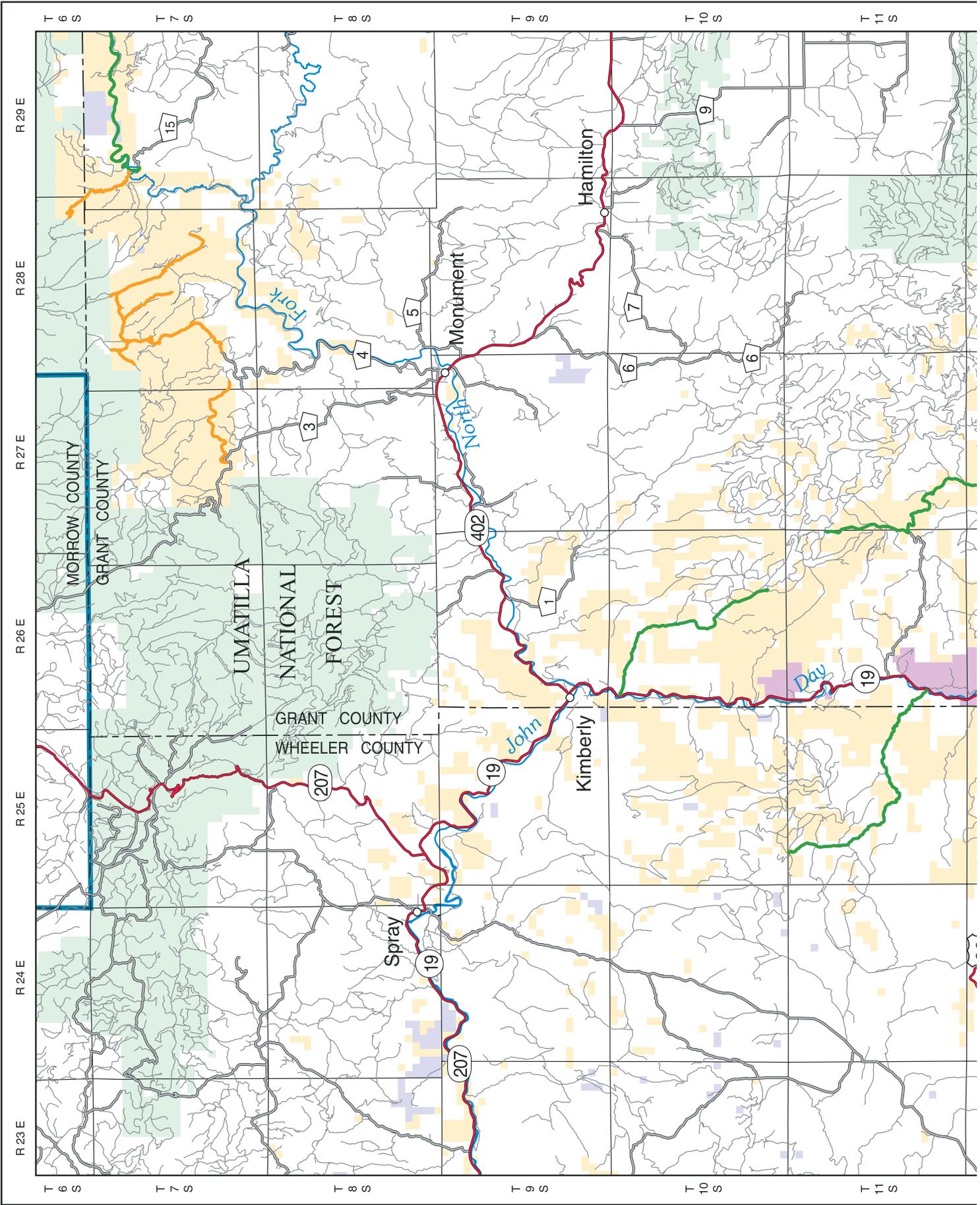


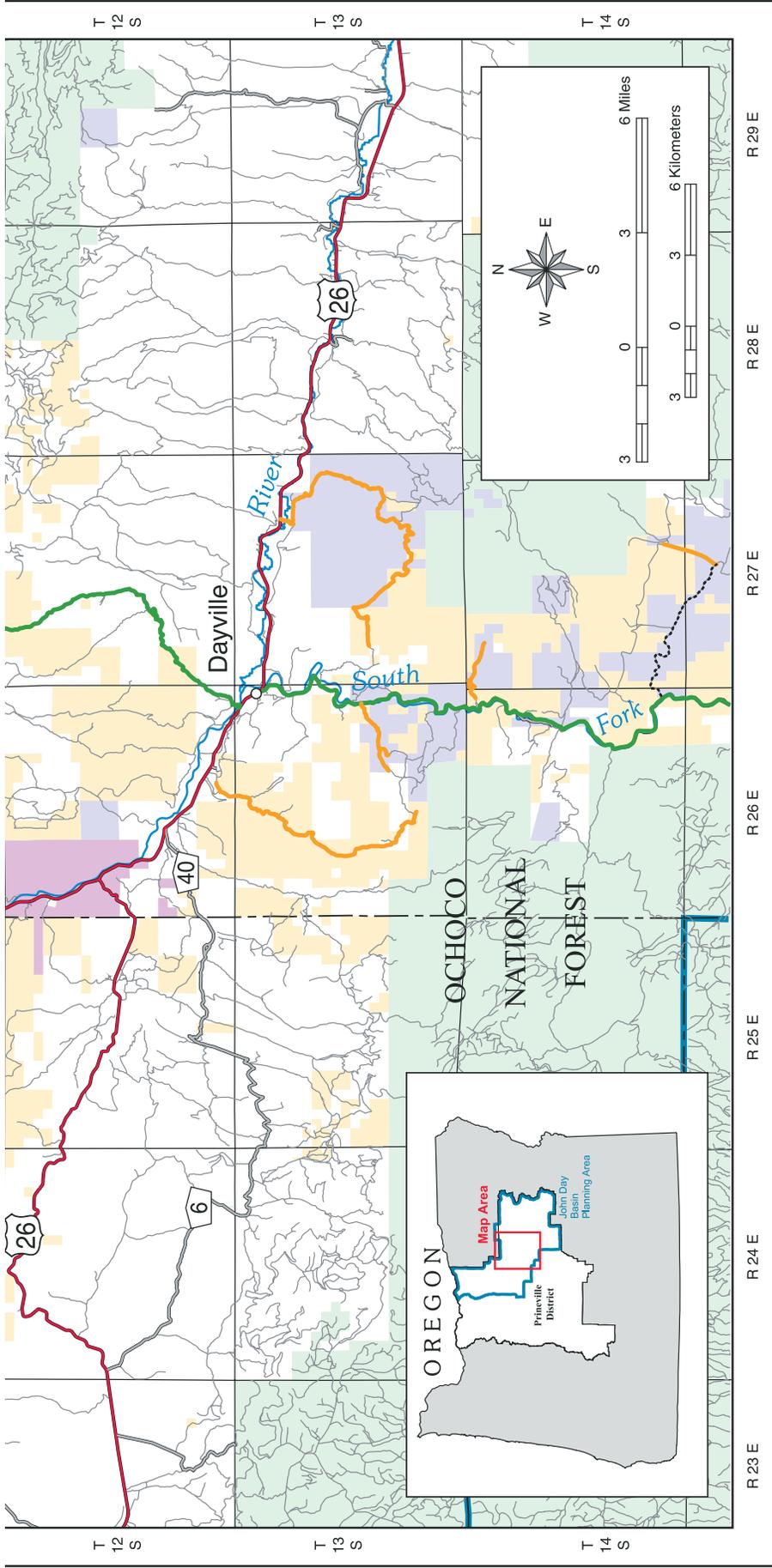
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Map 11: Sutton Mountain Transportation





LEGEND

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|--|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------------|
| | Transportation | | Planning Area Boundary |
| | Open Roads | | Administered Land |
| | Road Open Seasonally | | Bureau of Land Management |
| | BLM Maintained Roads | | Forest Service |
| | U.S. Highway | | John Day Fossil Beds National Monument |
| | State Highway | | State |
| | County Road | | Private or Other |
| | Road:
BLM- Closed except for administrative use
Private- Closed to public use or unknown | | |

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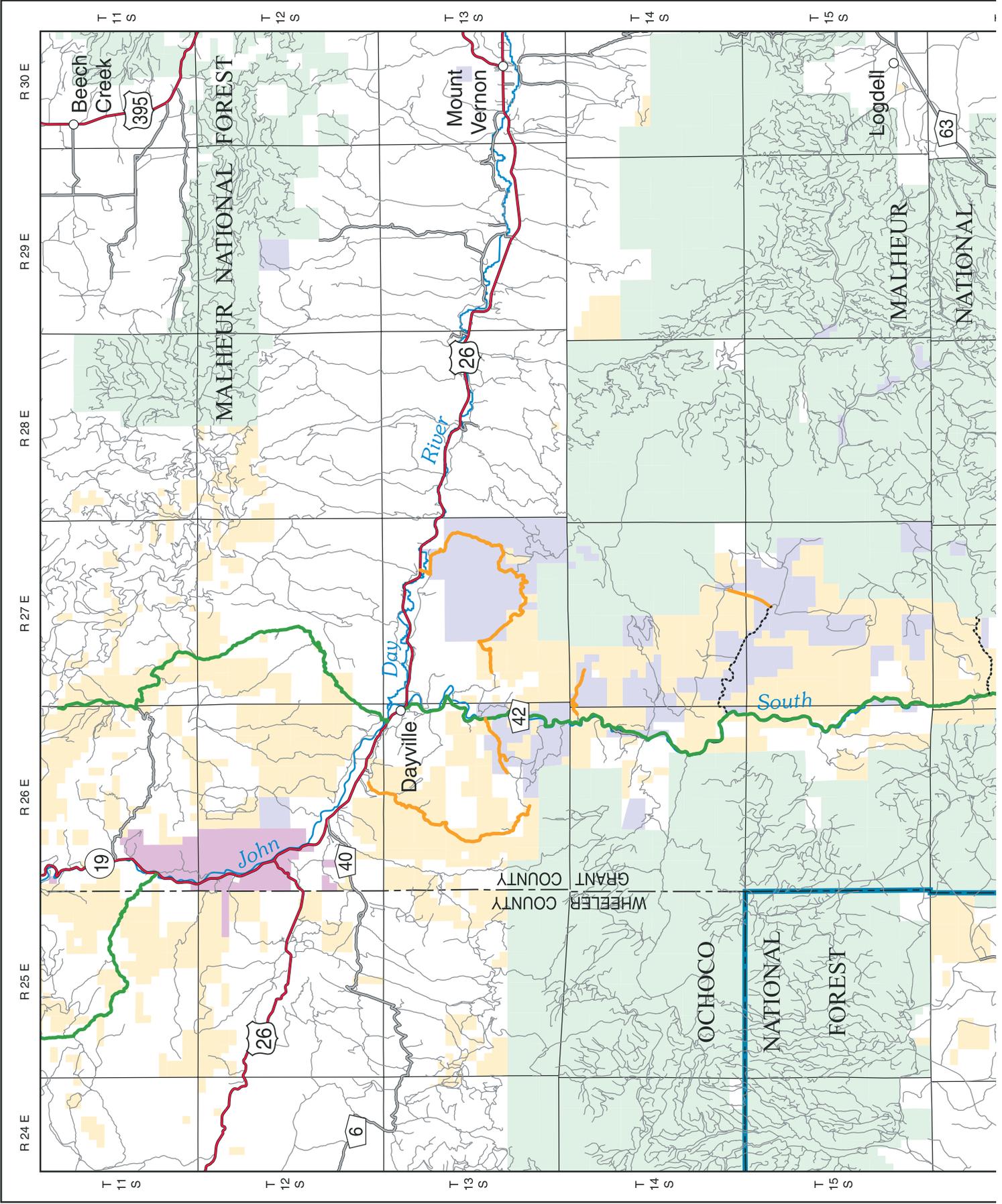


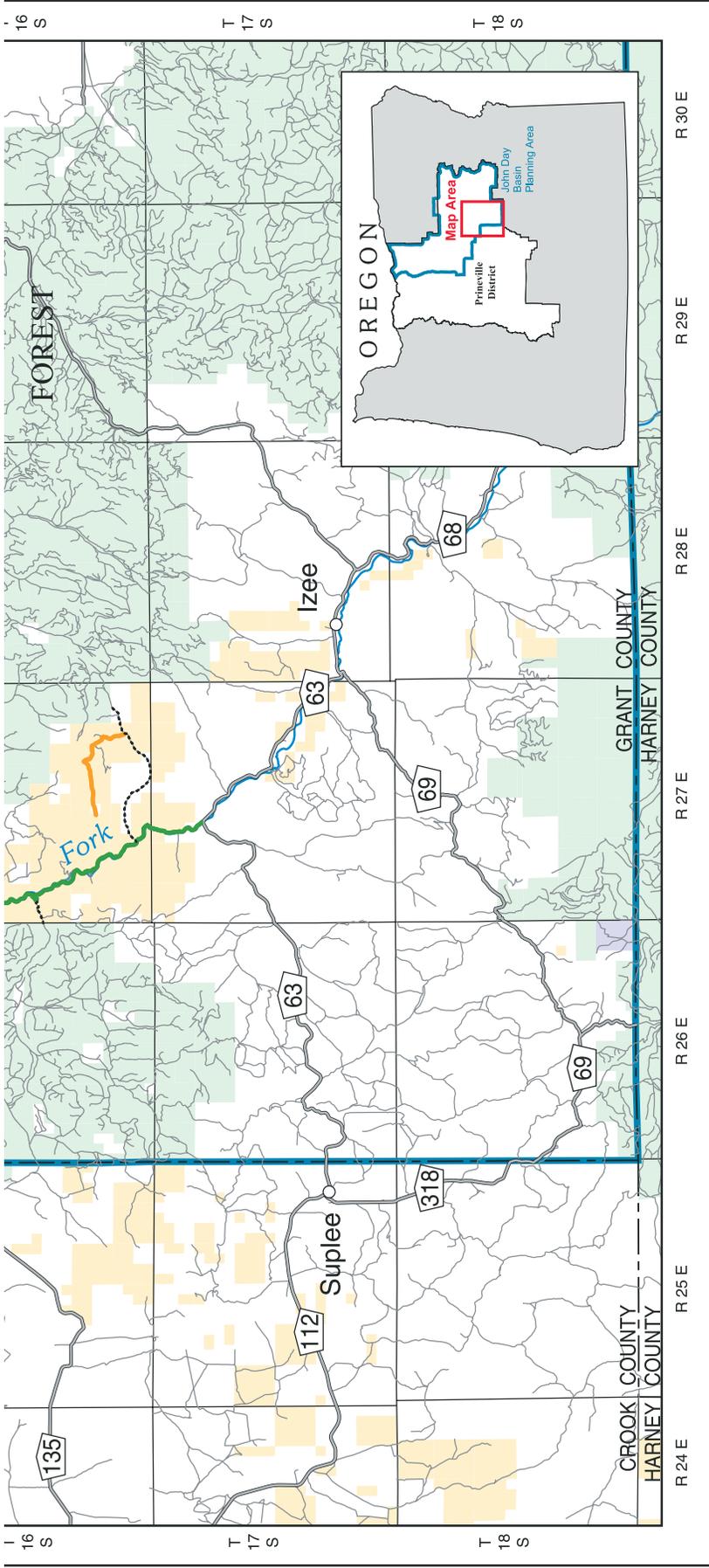
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Map 12: Rudio Mountain Johnson Heights Transportation





LEGEND

- Planning Area Boundary
- Transportation**
- Open Road
- Road Open Seasonally
- BLM Maintained Road
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- County Road
- Road:
 - BLM- Closed except for administrative use
 - Private- Closed to public use or unknown

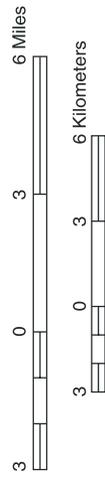
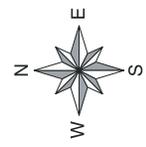
- Administered Land**
- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- John Day Fossil Beds National Monument
- State
- Private or Other

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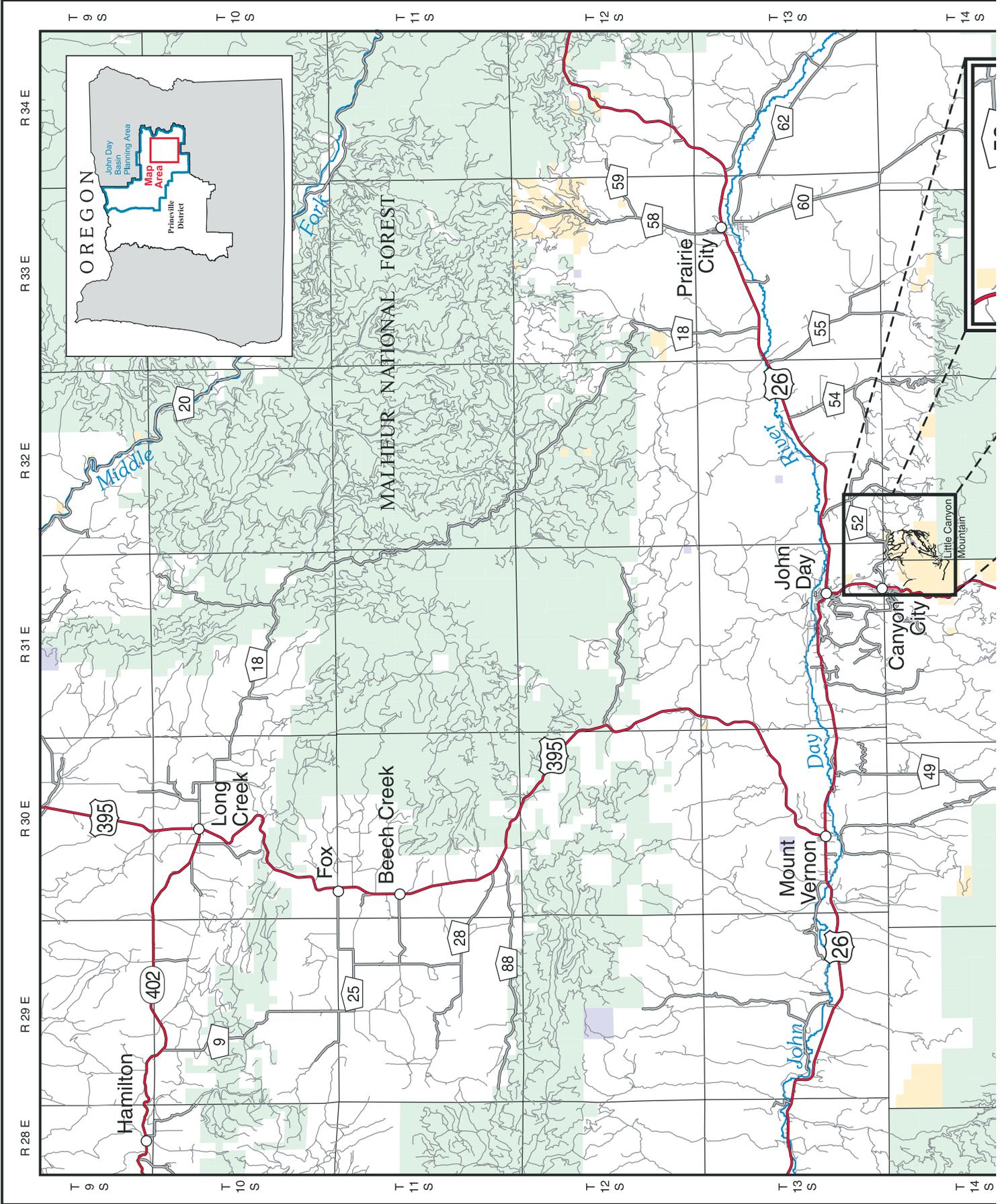
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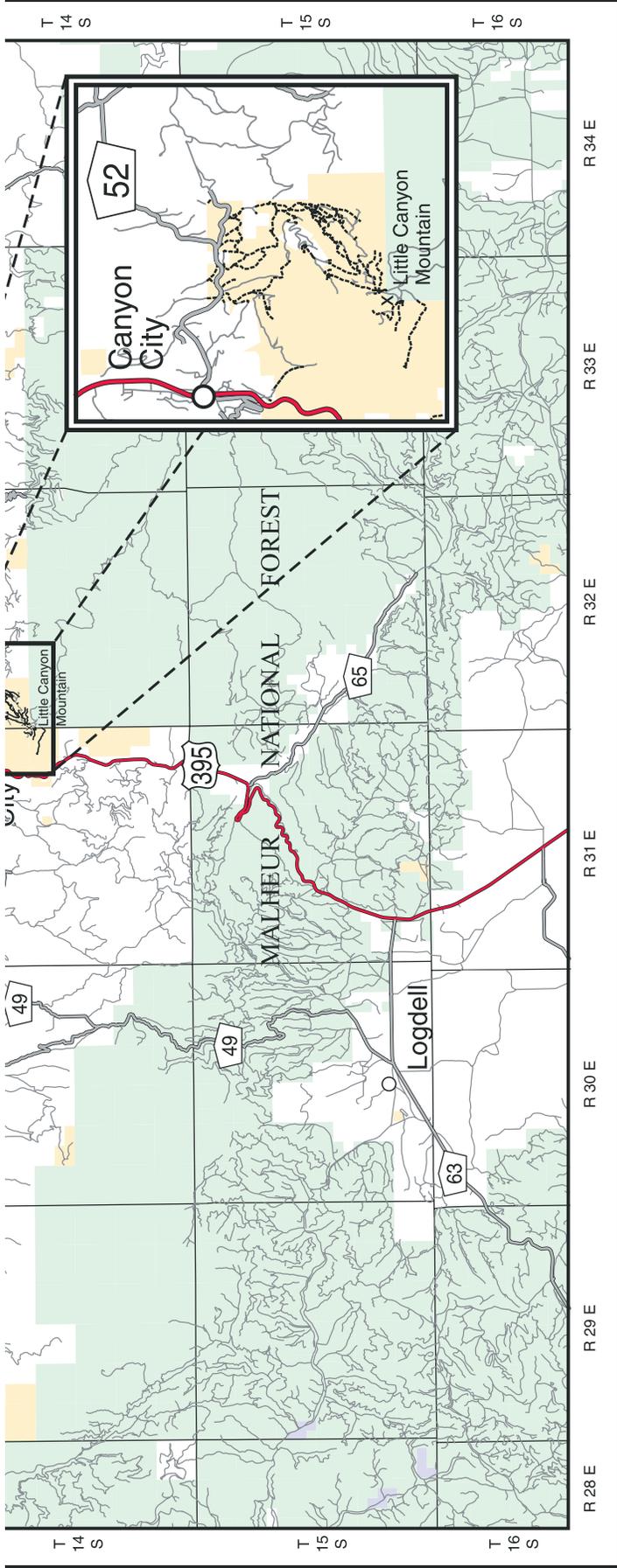
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Map 13: South Fork John Day Transportation

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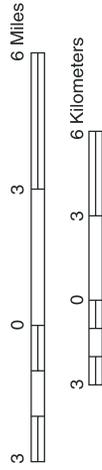
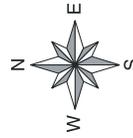
Transportation

- Open Road
- U.S. Highway
- State Highway
- County Road
- Road:

BLM- Closed except for administrative use
 Private- Closed to public use or unknown

Administered Land

- Bureau of Land Management
- Forest Service
- State
- Private or Other



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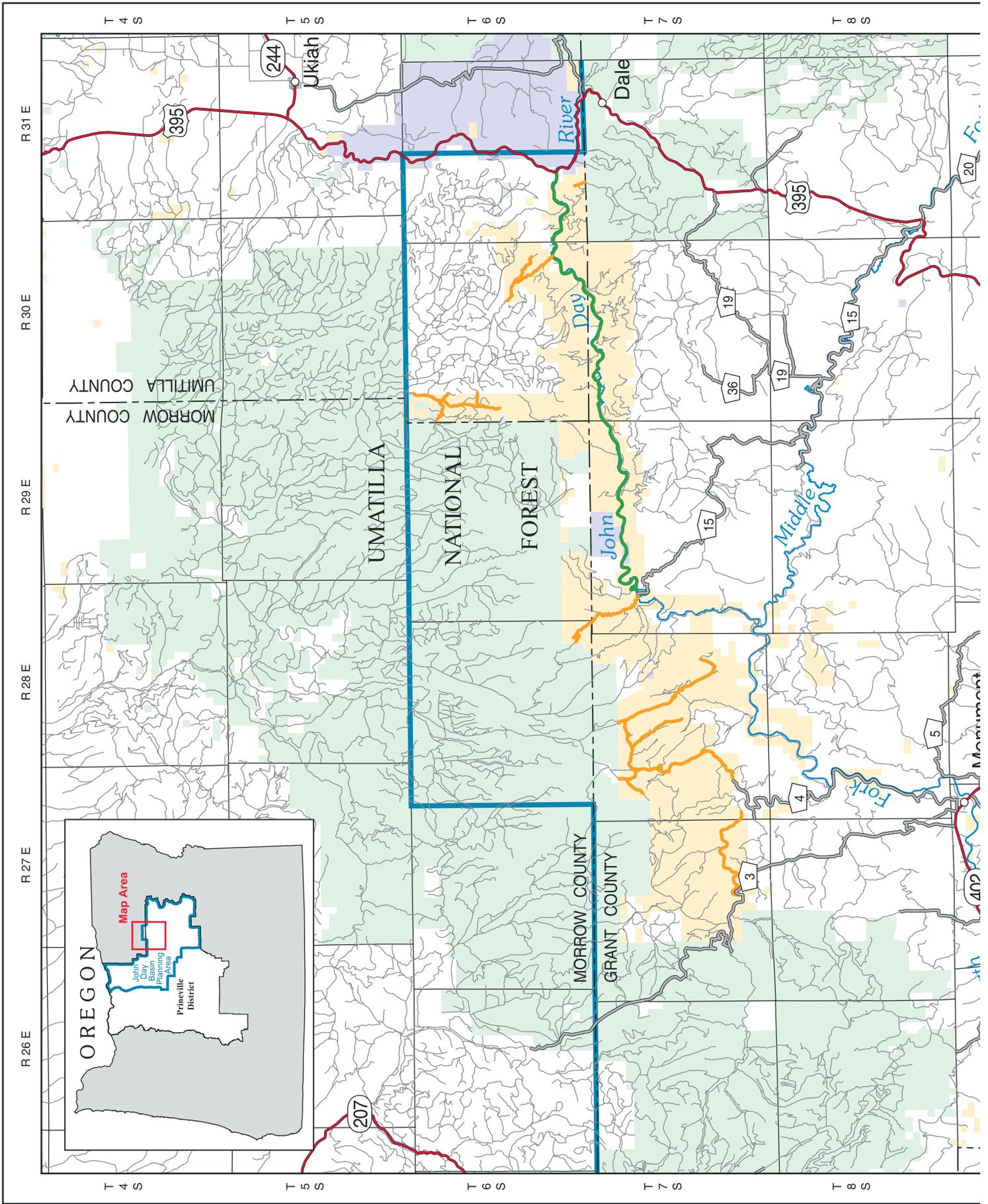


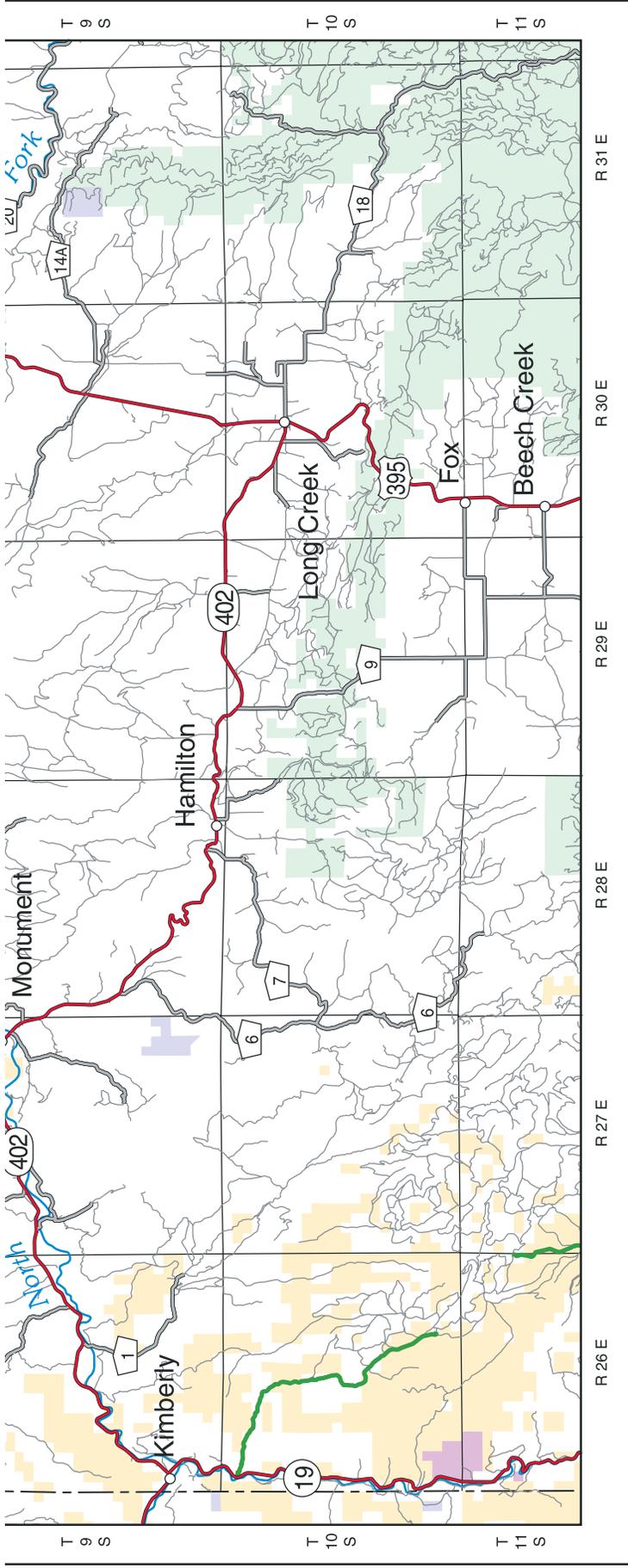
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Map 14: Upper John Day Transportation

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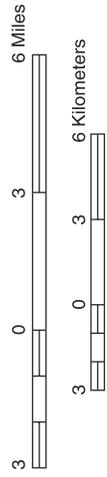
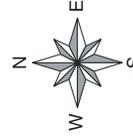




LEGEND

- | | | | |
|--|------------------------|--|----------------------------------------|
| | Planning Area Boundary | | Administered Land |
| | Transportation | | Bureau of Land Management |
| | Road Open Seasonally | | Forest Service |
| | BLM Maintained Roads | | John Day Fossil Beds National Monument |
| | U.S. Highway | | State |
| | State Highway | | Private or Other |
| | County Road | | |

Road:
 BLM- Closed except for administrative use
 Private- Closed to public use or unknown



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Map 15: North Fork John Day Transportation

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SPECIAL ROAD DESIGNATION

State Scenic Byway

The Journey Through Time Scenic Byway, designated by the Oregon Department of Transportation is approximately 286 miles long and starts at Biggs, Oregon and ends in Baker City. This Scenic Byway explores the history and geology of the route, connecting small towns from north central Oregon to Baker City and the Oregon Trail Historic Center in eastern Oregon.

BLM Back Country Byway

BLM's Back Country Byways program designates special roads that cross BLM land and are noted for their scenic attributes. There are two types of Back Country Byways.. Type 1 byways have a paved or all-weather surface. Type 2 byways are generally not paved but frequently have improved gravel surface.

The South Fork John Day River Back Country Byway is the only BLM byway within the JDBRMP. This Type 1 & 2 byway parallels the South Fork of the John Day River through its windy canyon for approximately 50 miles from Dayville to the Malheur National Forest boundary. Fishing, hiking, primitive camping, and excellent views are available along this roadway.

Forest Service Byways

The Blue Mountain Scenic Byway offers a variety of scenery along with historical sites and numerous recreational opportunities. Several sites of national or state significance are the crossing of the Oregon Trail (a National Historic District), the Wild and Scenic John Day River, and the North Fork John Day Wilderness. Also located along this route is a state-managed wildlife area and remnants of historic mining activities and settlements. The area traversed by this scenic route contains one of the largest Rocky Mountain elk herds in the nation.

The Elkhorn Scenic Byway is located on the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest. This Scenic Byway is a 106-mile loop through the Elkhorn Mountains; a country rich in scenery, history, geology, and natural resources. Different recreational opportunities are available along the way, including hunting, fishing, camping, picnicking, boating, skiing, and hiking. Special points of interest include gold mining operations and the historical narrow-gauge railroad grade. Signs along the way mark special points of interest and road junctions. The entire route is paved, however in the winter the route is not snowplowed between Granite and Anthony Lakes.

BLM ROAD TRAFFIC TRENDS

Patterns of use on BLM managed roads within the planning area have not been systematically studied. It appears that OHV use on BLM roads, primitive roads and trails continues to increase throughout the planning area, especially during deer and elk hunting seasons. BLM public lands tend to be more popular and receive more OHV use, since OHV access is restricted on Forest Service lands adjacent to the planning area. The OHV resource area profile, describes user created trails and OHV user trends in more detail. Currently an assessment of use patterns on existing roads, primitive roads and trails is underway.

RECREATION ACCESS TRENDS

Private roads that were once open to the public are often no longer available for access to public land as private landowners place gates across these private roads. Recreational use of public lands has joined grazing and timber management as a primary use. Limitations on public access to scattered public lands and a transportation system that does not accommodate changing user needs has contributed to resource damage and increased the incidence of trespass on private lands.

Reduction in access has occurred as roads across private lands are decommissioned and open roads are not repaired. The location and distribution of scattered BLM lands require public land users to become familiar with adjacent private ownership patterns and routes open for public use. The fact that some BLM lands are isolated from public access has also led to trespass. Patterns of land ownership frequently leads to confusion by recreational users and sometimes in intentional trespass on privately owned lands. The Johnson Heights area accessed by Squaw Creek Road experiences some of the most persistent hunter-landowner conflicts in the planning area. The many isolated BLM parcels in this area are coveted by hunters and some attempt to cross private lands at the end of public access in order to reach these lands.

Some ranches that in the past afforded neighbors access to BLM managed lands have been divided or bought by “outsiders” who often manage for fee hunting. These changes in land ownership exacerbate the already limited access. This represents a change in landowner mindset, since they have historically allowed the public to drive on private roads to reach public lands.

While the public at large may be excluded from enjoying BLM managed lands surrounded by private lands, the Private landowners and their guests frequently use OHVs to access public land for deer, elk, sheep and upland bird hunting.

Similarly commercial hunting guides pay a fee to gain access to public lands through private property. Some motorized users have attempted to access public lands through private property with and without landowner permission.

Motorized use is no longer available to the public in the Spring Basin WSA. This 5,982 acre area is located near the east bank of the John Day River, approximately 3 miles south of Clarno. In past years, motorized use occurred on approximately nine miles of undeveloped vehicle routes in this area. This access requires crossing a 40 acre parcel of private land, which has been closed to the public by the landowner.

RIGHTS-OF-WAY AND EASEMENTS

BLM land in the planning area has 249 miles of easements and 129 miles of granted Rights-of-way involving roads and utilities.

Easements are acquired by the BLM in order to use the land of another for a special purpose or access. Rights of way are granted by the BLM to others for various purposes which include easements, leases, permits, or licenses to occupy, use, or traverse public lands. Rights-of-Way are authorizations for reservoirs, canals, ditches flumes, laterals, pipes, pipelines, tunnels, and other appurtenances for the storage and distribution of water; pipelines and other systems for the transportation of distribution of liquids and gases other than water or oil; transportation and distribution systems, and storage