



# United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

COOS BAY DISTRICT OFFICE

1300 AIRPORT LANE, NORTH BEND, OR 97459

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## **In Reply Refer To:**

1792/5400

DOI-BLM-OR-C040-2010-0001-EA

*October 1, 2009*

## **Scoping Document**

Dear Citizen:

The following information and the enclosed maps briefly describe a Proposed Action for the development of the Weaver-Sitkum Environmental Assessment (EA No: DOI-BLM-OR-C040-2010-0001-EA).

The USDI, Bureau of Land Management, Coos Bay District Office is preparing an Environmental Assessment for multiple timber sales that would occur primarily within the East Fork Coquille 5<sup>th</sup>-field watershed. The Proposed Action would treat approximately 1,000 acres of 40-70 year old forest stands through commercial thinning and density management.

Forest treatments would occur within the General Forest Management Area (GFMA) and Connectivity portions of the Matrix Land Use Allocation (LUA), within the Late-Successional Reserve LUA and within the Riparian Reserve LUA as defined in the 1995 Coos Bay District Resource Management Plan (1995 RMP).

### **Project Summary**

Commercial Thinning would occur within GFMA and Connectivity stands and use a “thin from below” prescription. Individual stand prescriptions would capture imminent mortality and yield commercial forest products while leaving a residual stand that fully utilizes the growing potential of the site and maximizes the volume and quality of future forest products.

Density Management would occur within the Late-Successional Reserves (LSR) and Riparian Reserves (RR) and would receive slightly different treatments to achieve results for the differing management objectives for these LUAs. The LSR prescription would be designed to enhance conditions of late-successional stands that serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest-related species. Riparian Reserves would be treated to restore and maintain components of the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives.

Harvest would occur on roughly 260 acres of Matrix land, 380 acres of LSR and 360 acres of riparian reserve.

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

**Table I: Ownership within the Analysis Area**

BLM Acres			Coquille Indian Tribe Acres	Private Acres	Total Acres
GFMA	Connectivity	LSR			
27,422	4,467	31,076	1,379	52,692	117,036

The timber sales are expected to be sold in FY2011 and FY2012 and would yield approximately 14 million board feet of timber 4 million of which would contribute to the decadal Allowable Sale Quantity (ASQ) for the Myrtlewood Field Office. No hardwood conversions are planned, although some hardwoods within the proposed units would be thinned.

The Weaver-Sitkum project would also include constructing roughly 5 miles of new roads, renovating or improving approximately 25 miles of existing roads, and decommissioning of 6 miles of selected roads.

Some of the proposed units are adjacent to occupied or un-surveyed suitable marbled murrelet habitat.

This project may incorporate data and recommendations from the East Fork Coquille, Middle Fork Coquille, North Fork Coquille and Big Creek Watershed Analyses which are available at the Coos Bay BLM District Office.

### **Location**

The project area is mainly within the East Fork Coquille 5<sup>th</sup>-field Watershed, with some units dropping over into the Middle Creek, Big Creek and Upper Rock Creek 6<sup>th</sup>-field sub-watersheds.

The project area is located roughly 20 miles Southeast of Coos Bay. The total analysis area is approximately 117,000 acres in size with BLM lands totaling 63,000 acres. The proposed harvest activities are located in T. 28 S., R. 9 W., Sections 31, 35; T. 29 S., R. 9 W., Section 5; T. 28 S., R. 10 W., Sections 18, 21, 23, 25, 27; and T. 28 S., R. 11 W., Sections 9, 21, Willamette Meridian.

Maps of the project are available upon request or at our website:  
<http://www.blm.gov/or/districts/coosbay/plans/index.php>.

### **Need for the Project**

Within the analysis area, the GFMA and Connectivity stands are characterized by uniform structure, heavy stocking, slowing growth rate and low stand vigor. Research indicates that stands that develop at very high densities are susceptible to diameter growth stagnation and instability. Without treatment at the appropriate time, these dense stands rapidly decline in growth and vigor. This results in a stagnant stand that becomes more susceptible to wind, insects, disease and fire disturbances.

Late-successional Reserves and Riparian Reserves in the project are in the same over-stocked condition. Left untreated, these stands would not achieve the desired vegetation characteristics (listed below) envisioned in the Northwest Forest Plan. Reducing stand density is required in order to maintain growth trajectory, improve stand stability and meet the objectives for each LUA.

### **Project Objectives (Purpose)**

Any action alternative to be given serious consideration as a reasonable alternative must meet the objectives provided in the ROD/RMP for projects to be implemented within the planning area. The ROD/RMP and applicable statutes specify the following objectives to be accomplished in managing the lands in the project area:

1. Provide a sustainable supply of timber and other forest commodities to provide jobs and contribute to community stability (p. 22) by:
  - Conducting timber harvest and other silvicultural activities in that portion of the Matrix with suitable forest lands (p. 22).
  - Selecting logging systems based on the suitability and economic efficiency of each system for the successful implementation of the silvicultural prescription, for protection of soil and water quality, and for meeting other land use objectives (p. 52).
  - Providing timber sale volume towards the Coos Bay District Allowable Sale Quantity as required by the Oregon and California Act (O&C Act) of August 28, 1937. The BLM has a statutory obligation under the O&C Act to manage suitable commercial forest lands revested by the federal government from the Oregon and California Railroad grant (O&C lands) for permanent forest production in accordance with the sustained yield principle.
2. Manage developing stands on available lands to promote tree survival and growth and to achieve a balance between wood volume production, quality of wood and timber value at harvest (p. 52) by:
  - Applying silvicultural systems that are planned to produce, over time, forests with desired species composition, structural characteristics and distribution of seral or age classes (p. 53).
  - Basing silvicultural treatments and harvest designs on the functional characteristics of each forest stand site. Treatments would be designed – as much as possible – to prevent the development of undesirable stand characteristics (p. 53).
3. Manage riparian resources to meet the Aquatic Conservation Strategy Objectives designed to maintain and restore the ecological health of aquatic ecosystems on public lands (p. 6) by:
  - Applying silvicultural practices for Riparian reserves to control stocking, re-establish and manage stands and acquire desired vegetation characteristics (p. 13).
4. Manage Late-successional Reserves to enhance conditions of stands that serve as habitat for late-successional and old-growth forest-related species (p. 18) by:
  - Conducting thinning operations in forest stands up to 80 years of age. This will be accomplished by precommercial and/or commercial thinning of stands regardless of origin (e.g. planted after logging or naturally regenerated after fire or blowdown) (p. 19).

5. Protect, manage, and conserve federally listed and proposed species and their habitats to achieve their recovery in compliance with the Endangered Species Act, approved recovery plans, and the Bureau Special Status Program (p. 32) by:
    - Providing for important ecological functions such as dispersal of organisms, carryover of some species from one stand to the next and maintenance of ecologically valuable structural components such as down logs, snags, and large trees (p. 22).
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You are invited to submit written comments on any issues or concerns that you may have regarding this project by October 31, 2009. 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.

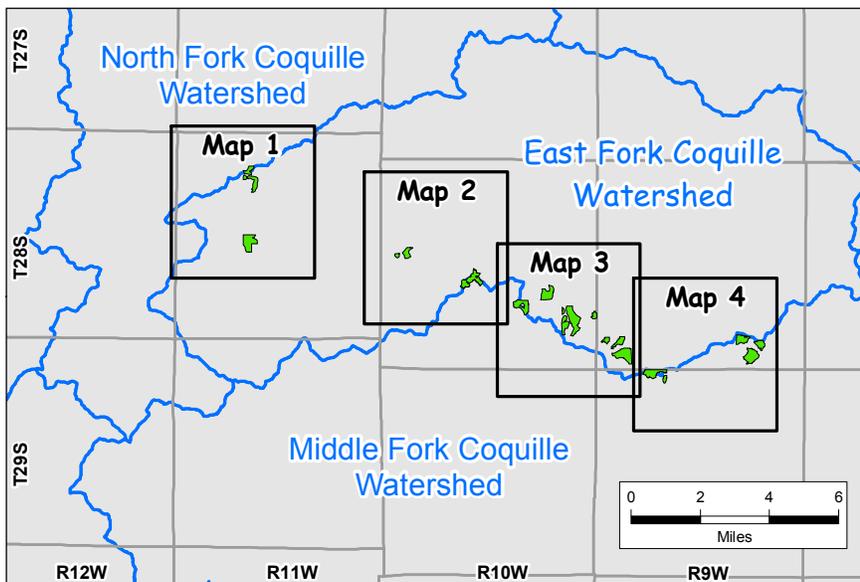
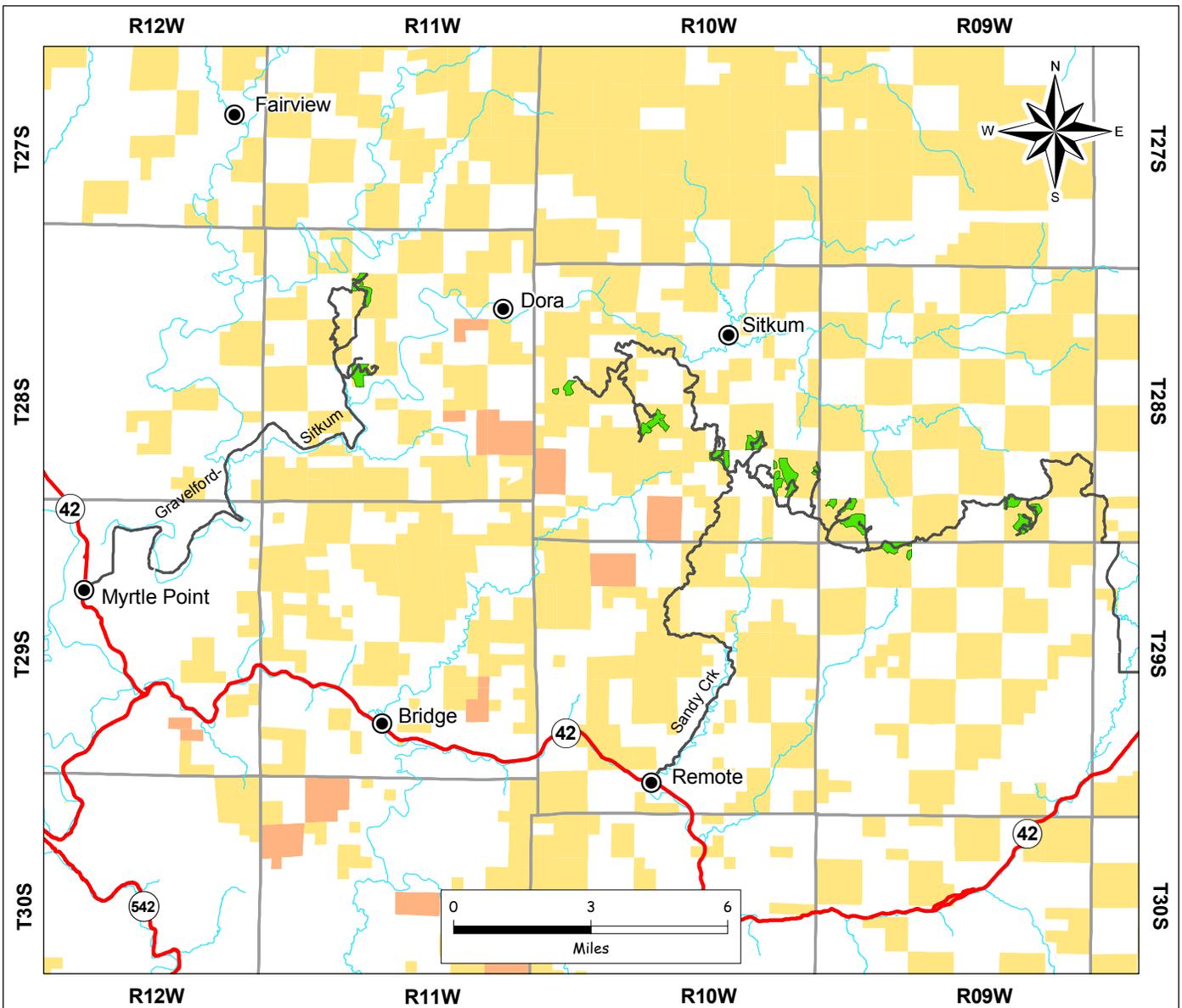
Comments, including names and street addresses of respondents, will be available for public review at the address listed below during regular business hours (8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.), Monday through Friday, except holidays, and may be published as part of the EA document or other related documents. Individual 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 publically 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.

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/ Jeffrey K. Davis*

Jeffrey K. Davis  
Acting Myrtlewood Field Manager



**Map Features**

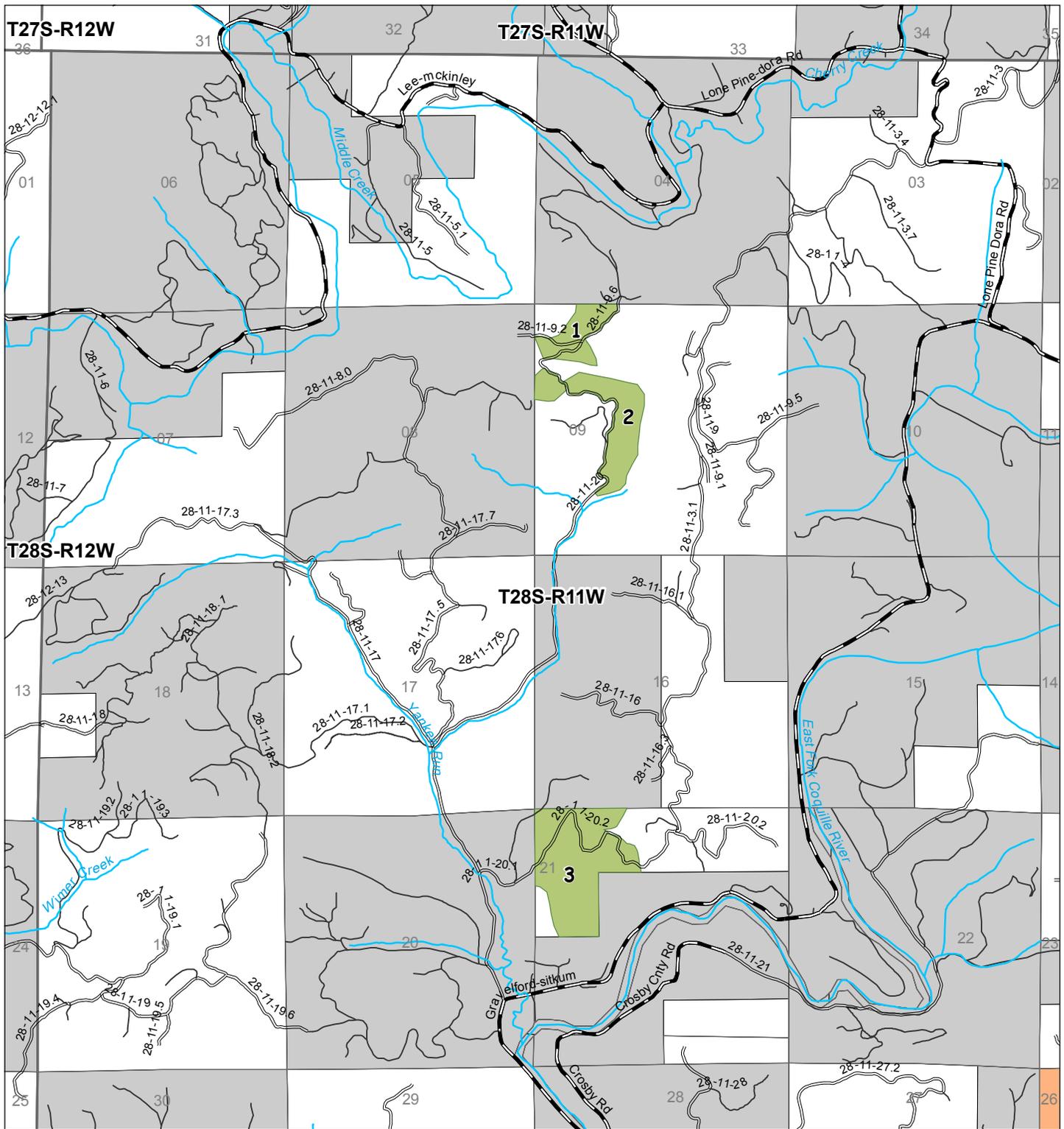
- State Highway
- Primary Haul Road
- Major Stream
- Unit Boundary
- BLM Administered Land
- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Other Ownership

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No warranty is made by the Bureau of Land Management as to the accuracy, reliability, or completeness of these data for individual or aggregate use with other data.



**Map Features** (Not all map features necessarily occur in the area mapped above.)

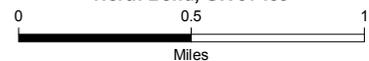
-  Highway
-  County Road
-  Paved Road
-  Gravel Road
-  Natural/Unk Surfaced Road
-  Streams (fishbearing)
-  Unit Boundaries
-  BLM Administered Land
-  Coquille Forest
-  Private / Other Ownership



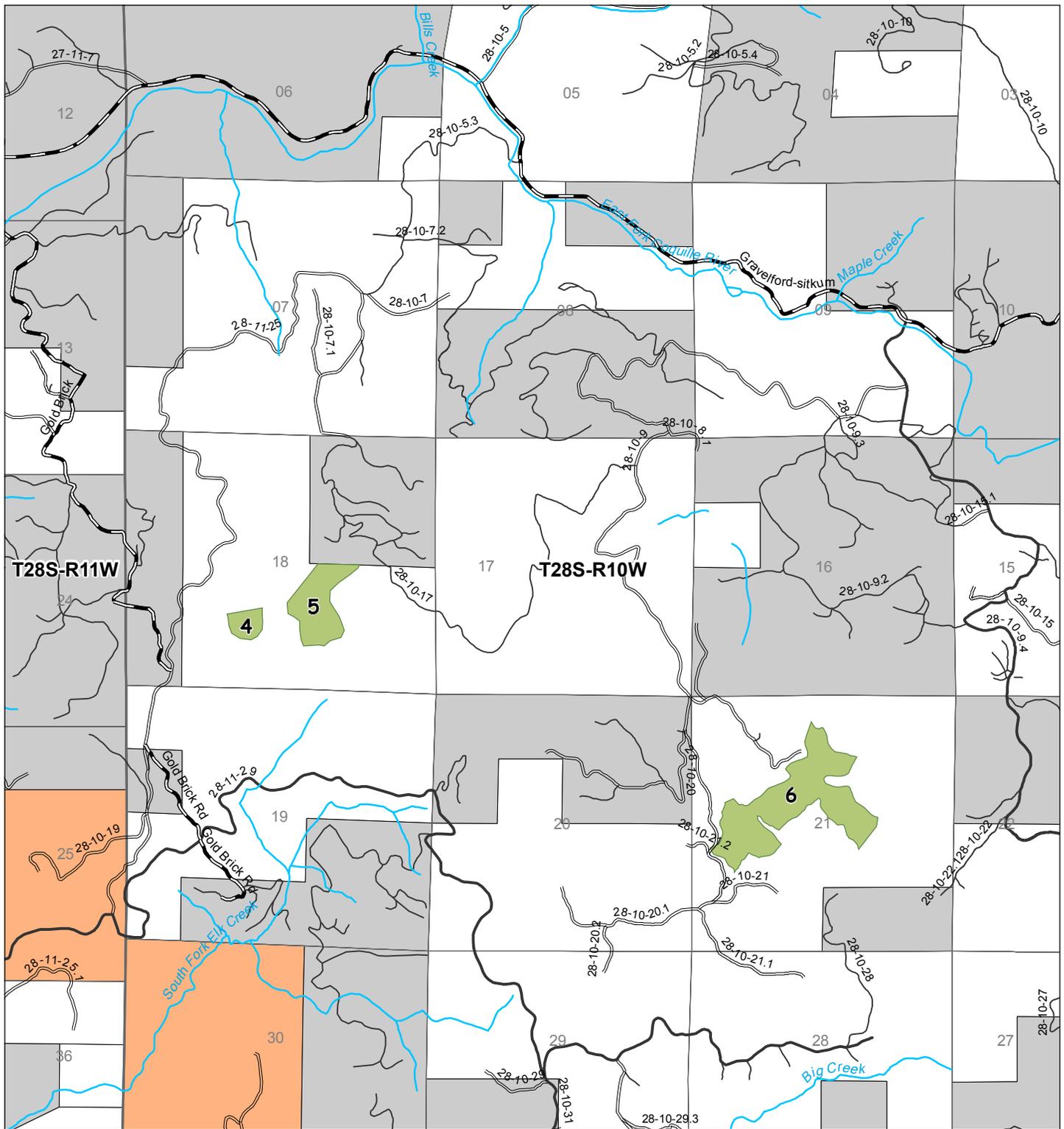
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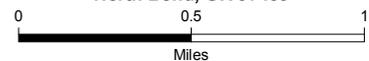
-  Highway
-  County Road
-  Paved Road
-  Gravel Road
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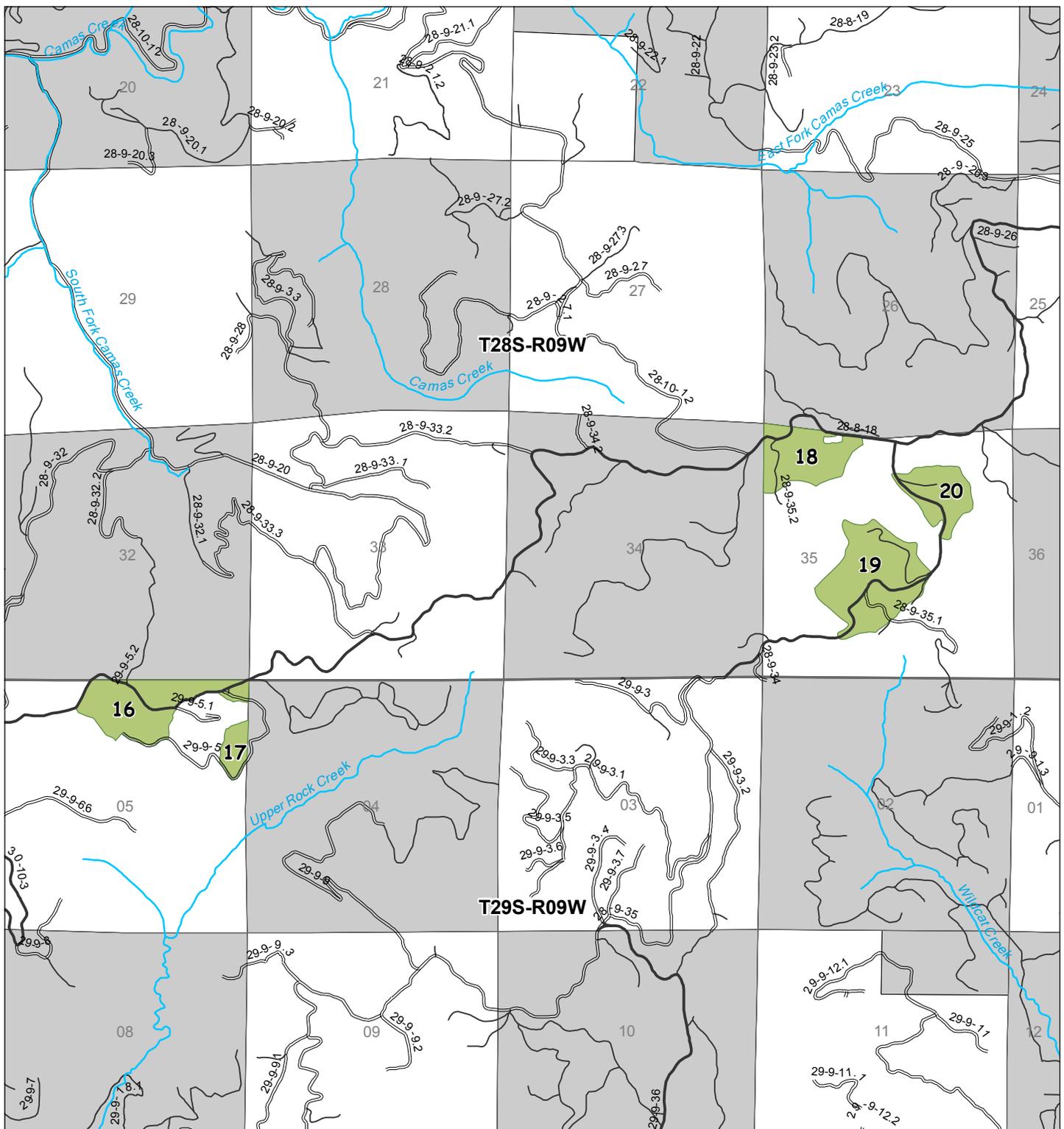


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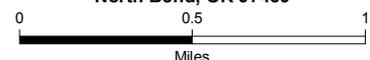
- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Highway                   |  Streams (fishbearing)     |
|  County Road               |  Unit Boundaries           |
|  Paved Road                |  BLM Administered Land     |
|  Gravel Road               |  Coquille Forest           |
|  Natural/Unk Surfaced Road |  Private / Other Ownership |



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