

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW & DECISION RECORD

(DOI-BLM-OR-M060-2014-0005-CX)

Project Name: Applegate Roadside Informational Sites

BLM Office: Ashland Resource Area, Medford District Office

Contact: Dennis Byrd, 541-618-2369

Location: There are four separate locations all located on BLM-administered lands between Jacksonville and the town of Applegate (see attached map):

Site #1: Located at the base of Mount Isabelle near the Isabelle Saddle (T38S, R4W, Section 1; BLM Road 38-3-5);

Site #2: Located at the Long Gulch Saddle (T38S, R3W, Section 7; BLM Road 38-3-8);

Site #3: Located at the China Gulch Saddle (T38S, R3W, Section 8; BLM Road 38-3-5.1);

Site #4: Located at Bunny Meadows Staging Area, Longanecker Road & Forest Creek Road (T38S, R3W, Section 14; BLM Road 38-3-14)

DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED ACTION:

Applegate Trails Association (ATA), a local 501(c)3 non-profit organization, will enhance four (4) existing parking areas along BLM Roads used to access trails. All sites will include one or more of the following improvements:

- Parking area improvement:
 - 10-300 yards of $\frac{3}{4}$ minus gravel spread evenly, depending on the site
 - Boulders (approximately 3 feet in diameter) installed in sufficient quantities to make the parking area safer and to discourage unauthorized user-created trails
- Vandalism-resistant informational kiosk (see attached Kiosk Plan) and picnic table
- Signage discouraging littering at each trailhead

Currently, all four sites receive a lot of use and unfortunately have quite a bit of litter (spent cartridges and various appliances riddled with bullet holes). Some sites are muddy and hold water in the winter. Most sites could use large boulders to better define the area or prevent vehicles from going over the edge. The proposed action will provide for improved drainage, encourage the responsible use of public land, and make trails more accessible and welcoming to the general public for all recreational uses of public lands (i.e. hiking, biking, equestrian use, and OHV use). The kiosks will provide opportunities for the BLM to educate the public about resource use and the numerous natural features of interest, including ecology, flora, fauna, geology, responsible recreation use, etc. The picnic tables will provide a place for individuals and families to sit, relax, and dine.

The six specific sites and improvements to be made are as follows:

Site #1: Informational kiosk, picnic table, fill to level site (approximately 10-12 inches), boulders (20), gravel (300 yards, on-site already), signs (free standing)

Site #2: Informational kiosk, picnic table, boulders (20), gravel (20 yards), signs (free standing)

Site #3: Informational kiosk, picnic table, boulders (20), signs (free standing)

Site #4: Informational kiosk, picnic table, signs (free standing)

The ATA will monitor the progress of the project and provide monthly reports to the BLM (Ashland Resource Area's Outdoor Recreation Planner). ATA will assess the level of success of rock barriers placed at the parking

areas by noting the existence or non-existence of new erosion-creating OHV trails originating from the parking areas. ATA will document the effectiveness of the anti-litter signage by keeping track of litter that appears at each site. ATA will continue to monitor the sites and report to the BLM on maintenance needs, if any.

The following environmental and safety stipulations as required project design features:

- During implementation of the above projects, ATA will place signs alerting other users in the immediate area that machinery and work is ahead.
- ATA will notify and coordinate with the BLM prior to beginning work.
- ATA will notify the BLM of any safety concerns related to the project.
- Heavy hauling activities will only occur during the dry season to reduce the potential indirect effects which may be imparted through heavy truck traffic (gravel and boulder hauling).
- All equipment shall be washed prior to entering the project area at a site where any mud or debris from the equipment will not contribute to the spread of noxious weeds.
- Heavy hauling activities should only occur during the dry season to reduce the potential indirect effects which may be imparted through heavy truck traffic (gravel and boulder hauling).

PLAN CONFORMANCE

The proposed action is in compliance with the *1995 Medford District Record of Decision and Resource Management Plan (RMP)*. The 1995 Medford District Resource Management Plan incorporated the *Record of Decision for Amendments to Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl and the Standards and Guidelines for Management of Habitat for Late-Successional and Old-Growth Forest Related Species Within the Range of the Northern Spotted Owl (Northwest Forest Plan) (USDA and USDI 1994)*.

This project is consistent with the *2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines for Amendments to the Survey and Manage, Protection Buffer, and other Mitigation Measures Standards and Guidelines*, as incorporated into the Medford District Resource Management Plan.

This project is not a habitat-disturbing activity, as defined in page 22 of the Standards and Guidelines of the *2001 Record of Decision and Standards and Guidelines*, for any Survey and Manage species. Because the project is not habitat-disturbing, the Survey and Manage provisions, including pre-disturbance surveys, are not required (Standards and Guidelines, p. 7, 21-22).

The proposed action is consistent with BLM Manual 6840 (USDI 2008), the purpose of which is to provide policy and guidance for the conservation of BLM special status species and the ecosystems upon which they depend on BLM-administered lands. BLM special status species include those species listed or proposed for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), as well as those designated as Bureau sensitive by the State Director(s). The objectives of the BLM special status policy are: To conserve and/or recover ESA-listed species and the ecosystems on which they depend so that ESA protections are no longer needed for these species; and to initiate proactive conservation¹ measures that reduces or eliminates threats to Bureau sensitive species to minimize the likelihood of and need for listing of these species under the ESA (USDI 2008: section 0.02).

This decision is also in conformance with the direction given for the management of public lands in the Medford District by the Oregon and California Lands Act of 1937 (O&C Act), Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA), the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA), the

¹ Conservation: as applied to Bureau sensitive species, is the use of programs, plans, and management practices to reduce or eliminate threats affecting the status of the species, or improve the condition of the species' habitat on BLM-administered lands (USDI 2008, Glossary p. 2).

Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973, the Clean Water Act of 1987, Safe Drinking Water Act of 1974 (as amended 1986 and 1996), Clean Air Act of 1990, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended, and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979.

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

Department of the Interior Regulations (43 CFR § 46.205(c)) require that any action that is normally categorically excluded must be evaluated to determine whether it meets any of the extraordinary circumstances listed in 43 CFR § 46.215. An action would meet one of the extraordinary circumstances if the action may:

<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>	<u>Categorical Exclusion Exception</u>
()	(X)	1. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.
()	(X)	2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resource; park, recreation, or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.
()	(X)	3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)] not already decided in an approved land use plan.
()	(X)	4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks.
()	(X)	5. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.
()	(X)	6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant, but significant cumulative environmental effects. (40 CFR 1508.7 and 1508.25(a)).
()	(X)	7. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.
()	(X)	8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.
()	(X)	9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.
()	(X)	10. Have disproportionate significant adverse impacts on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).
()	(X)	11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007).
()	(X)	12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112).

COMPLIANCE WITH NEPA

In accordance with 43 CFR §§ 46.205(c) and 46.215, the proposed action has been reviewed against the twelve criteria above and I have determined that none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 43 CFR § 46.205(c) apply to this project. The project qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9 G (2 & 4) which allows for the “*installation of routine signs, markers,on/or adjacent to roads and trails identified in any land use or transportation plan, or eligible for incorporation in such plan*” and “*placement of recreational, special designation, or information signs, visitor registers, kiosks, and portable sanitation devices.*”

DOCUMENT PREPARATION AND REVIEW

<u>Zach Million</u>	<u>Outdoor Recreation Planner</u>	<u>1-22-14</u>
Prepared by	Title	Date
<u>Stephanie Kelleher</u>	<u>Environmental Coordinator</u>	<u>5-1-14</u>
Reviewed & Edited by	Title	Date

DECISION

I have determined that the proposed action, which qualifies as a categorical exclusion under 516 DM 11.9 G (2 & 4), involves no significant impact to the human environment and that no further environmental analysis is required. It is my decision to authorize the site improvements as described above. Notice of this decision will be posted on the District internet website.

	<u>5-1-14</u>
John Gerritsma, Field Manager, Ashland Resource Area	Date

ADMINISTRATIVE REMEDIES

Notice of this decision will be posted on the Medford District internet website. The action is subject to protest under 43 CFR 4.450-2. A decision in response to a protest is subject to appeal to the Interior Board of Land Appeals under 43 CFR part 4.

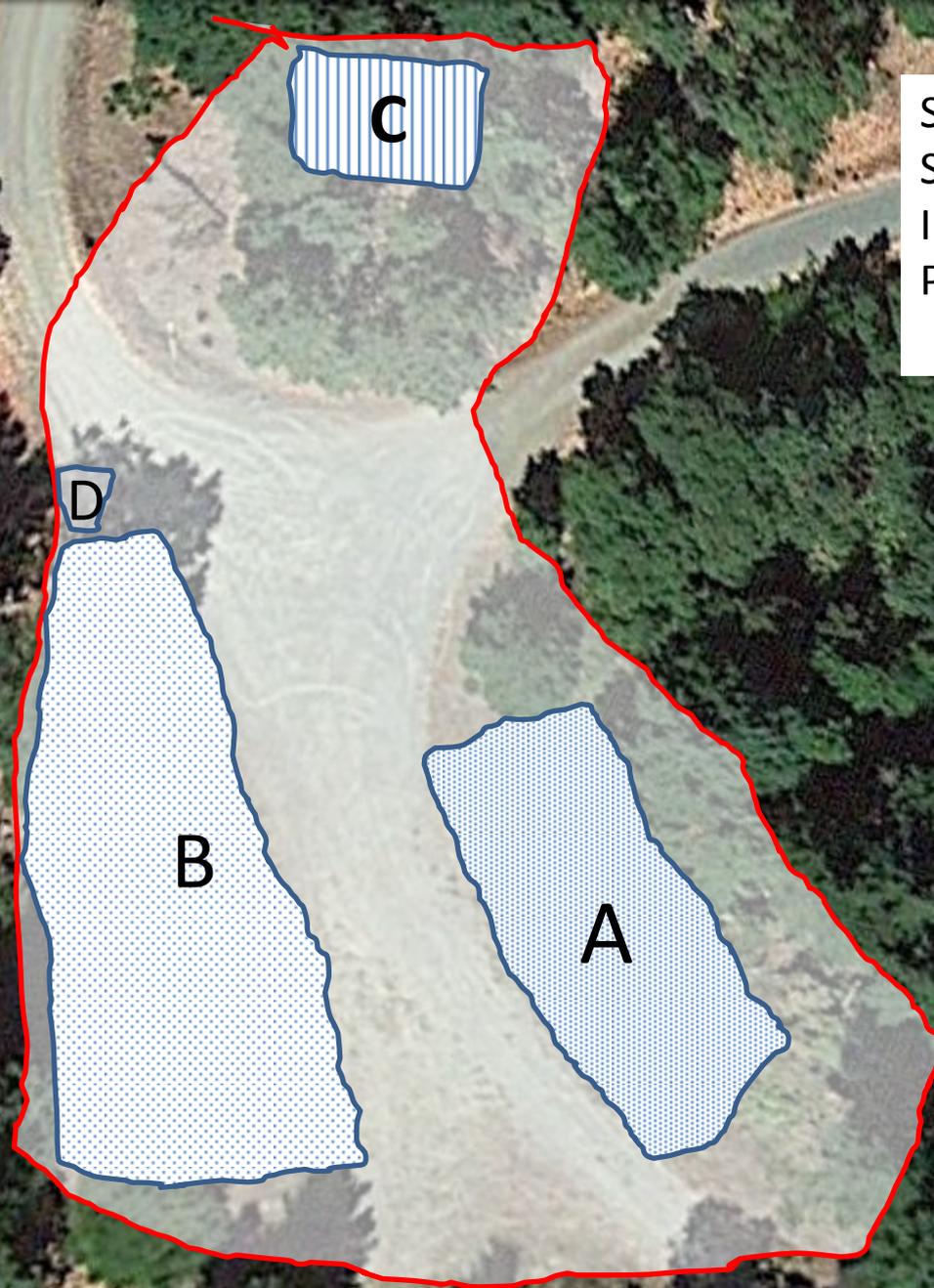
A: Fill to level site. Approx. 10"-12". Place large boulder to delineate sites.

B: Remove the existing 300 yards of crushed rock and place at the upper landing behind the gate. Site would be leveled and crushed rock would be used to finish off the entire site.

C: Bench would be placed at this site. Block would be used to level the table. Not trees would be removed.

D: Kiosk would be placed here adjacent to the electrical box. Site would be located prior to digging.

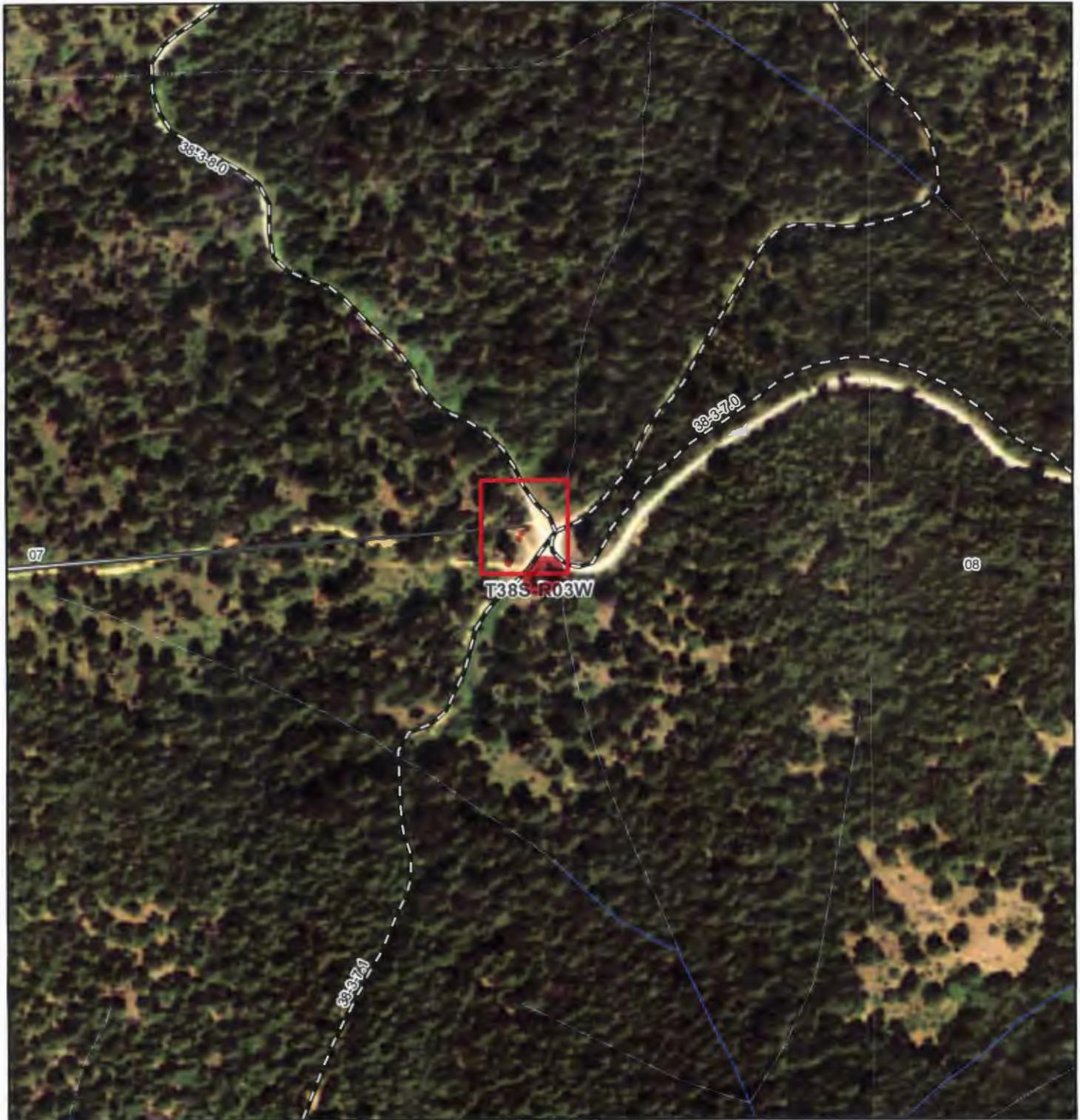
SITE 1 ATA
Site
Improvement
Project



O:TAOLC

Site #2: Long Gulch Saddle

(T38S-R03W-Section 7; BLM Road 38-3-8)



0 125 250 500 Feet



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O=Task

Site #3: China Gulch Saddle

(T38S-R03W-Section 8; BLM Road 38-3-5.1)



0 85 170 340 Feet

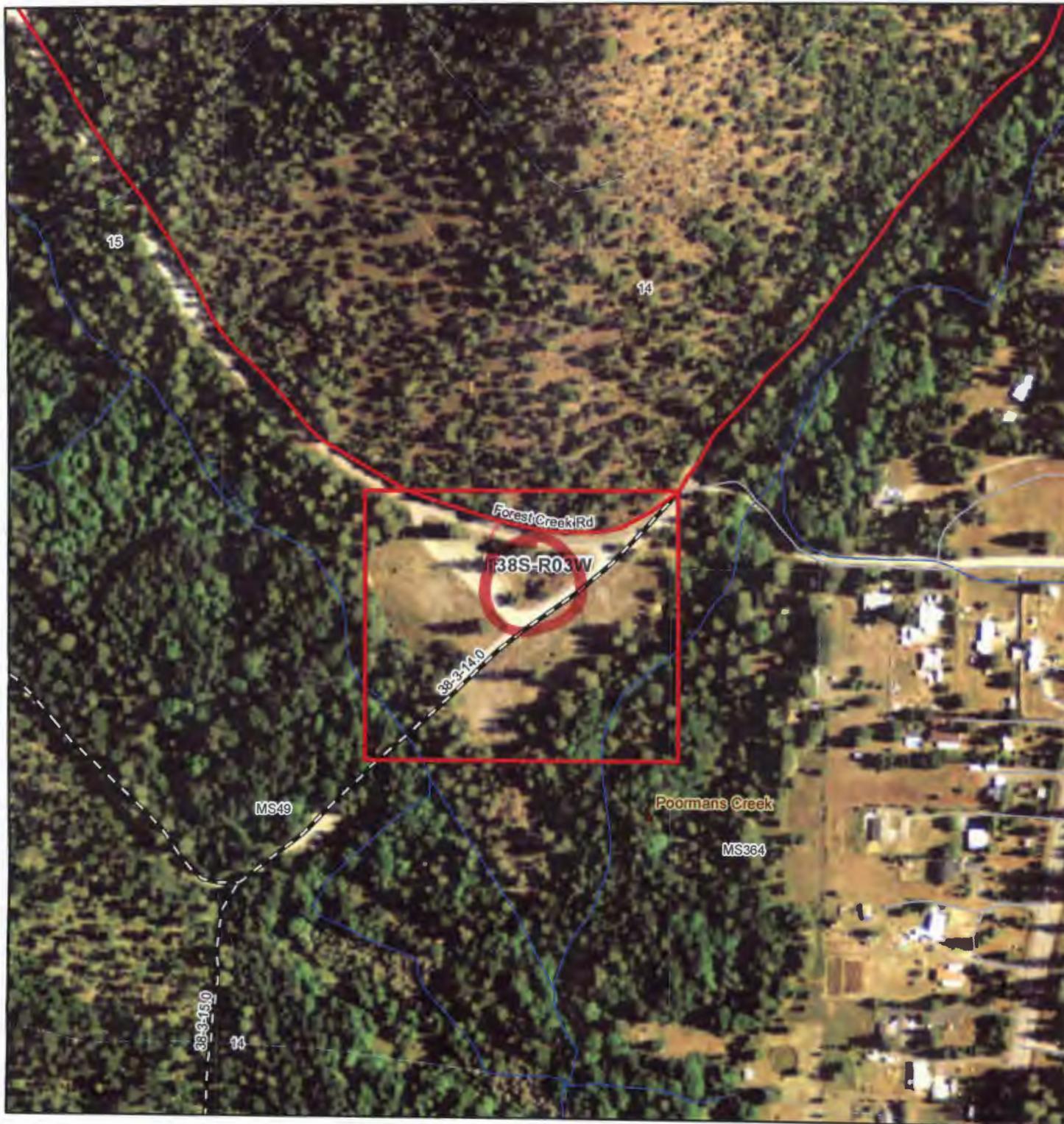


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O = Table Area

Site #4: Bunny Meadows Staging Area

(T38S-R03W-Section 14; BLM Road 38-3-14)



0 160 320 640 Feet



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