

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
ROSEBURG DISTRICT

NEPA CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION REVIEW

A. Background:

BLM Office: Roseburg District, South River Field Office
777 NW Garden Valley Blvd
Roseburg, Oregon, 97471
Phone: 541-464-4930

NEPA Document No. DOI-BLM-OR-R000-2015-0002-CX

Proposed Action Title: Cow Creek and Trapper Creek Slide Removal

Location of Proposed Action:

Cow Creek –Section 24, T. 31 S., R. 8 W., Willamette Meridian (W.M.)

Trapper Creek – BLM Road Nos. 25-1-2.0 and 25-2-3.0; Section 3, T. 25 S., R. 1 W., W.M.

B. Description of Proposed Action:

A storm event on February 9, 2015 resulted in a landslide that blocked the Cow Creek Access Road (BLM Road No. 30-6-32.0) in the Lower Cow Creek watershed, in an area burned in 2013 by the Rabbit Mountain Fire, part of the Douglas Complex of wildfires. The Cow Creek Access Road is part of a designated Back Country Byway servicing industrial timber haul, and providing access for fire suppression and recreational use.

Reopening the road would involve the removal of approximately 3,000 cubic yards of rock and soil, and transfer of the material to an existing quarry and community pit just to the north of the junction of the Cow Creek Road and Cattle Creek Road (BLM Road No. 31-7-17.0), located approximately three miles away in the NE¼NW¼, Section 17, T. 31 S., R. 7 W., W.M. (Maps attached) It is expected that five days would be required to complete the slide removal.

The project area is outside of the 35-yard disruption threshold for heavy equipment operation as it pertains to the northern spotted owl, and no seasonal restrictions for disturbance are required.

There is suitable nesting habitat for the marbled murrelet within the 100-yard disruption threshold where potential disturbance during nesting season becomes a concern. The project area is in marbled murrelet Management Zone 2, but not within the Zone 2 Restriction Corridor. Consequently, no seasonal restrictions are required, but work will be subject to Daily Operating restrictions between April 1st and August 5th, both dates inclusive, which would prohibit commencement of work until two hours after sunrise and cessation of work two hours before sunset.

The Trapper Creek slide was also the result of the February 9, 2015 storm. The blocked roads service industrial timber haul and provide access for fire suppression.

Reopening the road would involve removal of approximately 2,400 cubic yards of rock and soil, and approximately 50 logs/trees ranging from 10 to 16 inches in diameter. The rock and soil would be transported approximately four miles to a maintenance rock stockpile along BLM Road No. 25-1E-31.0 in the SW¹/₄NE¹/₄, Section 23, T. 25 S. R. 1 W., W.M. for disposal. The logs/trees would be sorted and decked at the site of the slide for use in fisheries habitat projects. It is expected that six days would be required to complete the slide removal.

The project area is outside the range of the marbled murrelet. There are no known northern spotted owl sites or unsurveyed suitable habitat within the 35-yard disruption threshold for heavy equipment operation or 65-yard threshold for power equipment such as chainsaws, so no seasonal restrictions for disturbance are required.

Both slide removal projects are limited to existing road prisms. Sediment control devices (hay bales, straw wattles, sediment fences, etc.) would be installed in both instances to maintain water quality in adjacent or nearby streams. Materials removed would be disposed of in areas long-designated for aggregate stockpiling and disposal of waste material. As such, the projects would not constitute habitat-disturbance and are not subject to provisions of the Survey and Manage program.

C. Land Use Plan Conformance:

The proposed action is subject to and in conformance with the *Roseburg District Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision* (ROD/RMP), approved: June 2, 1995, because it is specifically provided for in the following decision:

“Remove slide material when it is obstructing road surface and ditch drainage and either utilize for needed road improvement elsewhere or place in a stable waste area. Avoid sidestepping of slide material where it will damage, overload, or saturate embankments, or flow into downslope drainage courses.” (ROD/RMP, p. 137)

D. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9 (I) (1) -“Planned actions in response to wildfires, floods, weather events, earthquakes, or landslips that threaten public health or safety, property, and/or natural and cultural resources, and that are necessary to repair or improve lands unlikely to recover to a management-approved condition as a result of the event. Such activities shall be limited to: . . . replacement or repair of existing culverts, roads, trails, fences and minor facilities; construction of protection fences; planting, seeding and mulching; and removal of hazard trees, rocks, soil and other mobile debris from, on, or along roads, trails, campgrounds and watercourses.”

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment as documented in the following table. The proposed action has been reviewed in the following table, and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM 2 apply.

E. Categorical Exclusions - Extraordinary Circumstances Documentation:

THE PROPOSED CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ACTION WILL:	YES	NO
2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.		X
Rationale: The project areas are in remote rural settings, well-removed from populated areas. Clearing the slides will provide for public safety as the roads are used by other forest landowners for resource management, for access to recreational opportunities by the general public, and as access for fire suppression.		
2.2 Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; 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
Rationale: There are no unique geographic characteristics, parks, 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) or national monuments in proximity to the slide removal areas that would be affected. There would be no removal of trees and vegetation that could affect migratory birds. Slide removal work would be limited to the confines of the road prism, and waste material would be disposed of in established storage areas, so there would be no effect to cultural or historical resources.		
2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)].		X
Rationale: Road maintenance, including the removal of landslides from existing roads is a long-standing practice not shown to have controversial environmental effects. The roads have been in place for several decades and maintaining safe conditions of passage and use does not involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of the roads.		
2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.		X
Rationale: Road maintenance, including the removal of landslides from existing roads is a long-standing practice not shown to have uncertain or significant environmental effects, nor unique or unknown environmental risks.		
2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: Road maintenance, of which the clearing of landslides is a part, is addressed and authorized under the existing ROD/RMP, as described in Section C of this document. As such, this project represents implementation of that land use plan decision, not a decision in principle on future actions. Road maintenance has been conducted on BLM and Forest Service lands throughout Oregon and has not been shown to have potentially significant impacts.		
2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.		X
Rationale: This proposed project has no direct relationship to other current or planned projects. It is a response to a natural event that has impacted Federal infrastructure. The purpose of the project is to protect the government's investment in the infrastructure, and provide for safe use by members of the public who use the roads for purposes of work and recreational activities.		
2.7 Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office.		X
Rationale: Slide removal work would be limited to the road prism, and waste material would be disposed of in established storage areas, so there would be no effect to cultural or historical resources listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places.		
2.8 Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, as an Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species.		X
Rationale: The project would have no effect on the Federally-threatened northern spotted owl. In neither case does the slide removal involve the removal of habitat, nor are the work areas within disruption thresholds of occupied or unsurveyed suitable habitat where the potential for disturbance of nesting northern spotted owls during the critical breeding period would exist. Slide removal would include the use of trucks, heavy equipment, and/or handheld		

power equipment, increasing noise above ambient levels. However, because the work would be of short-duration with effects spatially limited to the immediate vicinity of roads, and since the affected areas receive baseline disturbance from vehicle traffic and other activities disruption is unlikely to occur

While critical habitat (Subunit WCS-6) for the northern spotted owl is present at the site of the Trapper Creek slide, it consists wholly of dispersal habitat. Work associated with the slide removal would not include the removal of any primary constituent elements (i.e. trees, large downed woody debris and snags), which might otherwise affect the function of the critical habitat.

There is suitable nesting habitat for the Federally-threatened marbled murrelet at the Cattle Creek disposal site within the 100-yard disruption threshold where the potential for disturbance during nesting season becomes a concern. The project would not remove any suitable nesting habitat and work would be subject to Daily Operating Restrictions between April 1st and August 5th, both dates inclusive, which would prohibit commencement of work until two hours after sunrise and cessation of work two hours before sunset. With this measure in place it is considered unlikely that nesting marbled murrelets, if present, would be subject to disturbance. The Trapper Creek site is not within the range of the marbled murrelet and would have no potential for affecting the species.

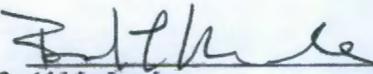
Removal of slide material from the Cow Creek byway would not measurably affect OC coho salmon, its critical habitat, or EFH for OC coho and chinook salmon in Cow Creek. Sediment control measures would minimize side cast of material into Cow Creek. The composition of the slide material is primarily coarse cobble and gravel, and some boulders. A minimal amount of sand could be released into Cow Creek, but the volume of water and large amount of surface area in Cow Creek would rapidly dilute possible effects of the sand. The small volume of cobble and gravel that may reach Cow Creek could provide substrates for spawning bed construction in downstream-depositional reaches. Boulders would provide slack-water areas for use by juvenile and adult salmonids.

The Trapper Creek slide location is more than five miles upstream from reaches occupied by Oregon Coast (OC) coho salmon, and the haul route for the waste material is entirely paved. Consequently, this project would not have any effect on OC coho salmon, its critical habitat, or Essential Fish Habitat (EFH) for OC coho and chinook salmon.

The proposed action would occur entirely within the affected road prisms and in previously disturbed sites established for the stockpiling and/or disposal of soil and rock. It would not constitute a new surface disturbing activity, and as such, would not have any effect on federally-listed or BLM OR/WA sensitive plant or fungi species.

2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.		X
Rationale: The proposed action conforms to direction from the Roseburg District ROD/RMP for management of public lands on the Roseburg District. The ROD/RMP complies with all applicable laws, including the Federal Land Policy Management Act, Clean Water Act, Endangered Species Act, and others.		
2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 2898).		X
Rationale: No potential impacts have been identified by the Roseburg District BLM, either internally or through public involvement, indicating that the removal of landslides from traveled roadways would have a disproportionate impact on low-income or minority populations in Douglas County, Oregon.		
2.11 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
Rationale: No Indian sites of sacred, religious or ceremonial value have been identified in the project areas.		
2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native 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).		X
Rationale: Best Management Practices would be implemented which would include: equipment washing prior to move-in to remove soil and materials that may be contaminated with weed seed or root fragments; seeding, with native grass seed, and mulching as necessary; and monitoring to identify any new populations, and treat as appropriate. With incorporation of these measures, there would be a negligible change in the number and size of noxious weed populations.		

F. Signature:


FOR Abbie Jossie
District Manager
Roseburg District Office

4-8-15
Date

G. Contact Person & Reviewers:

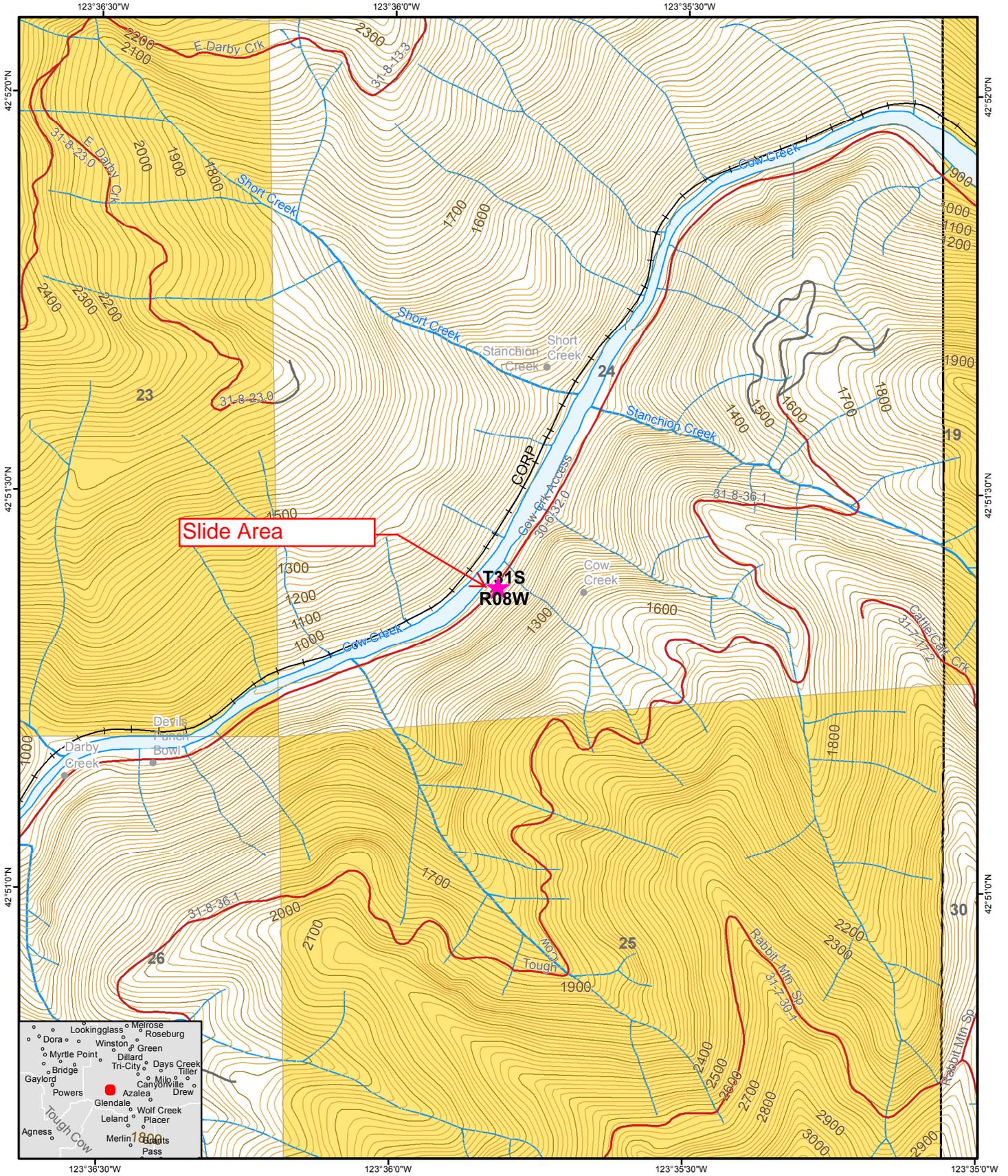
For additional information concerning this Categorical Review, contact:

Thane Syverson – Roseburg District Engineer
Roseburg District Office, Bureau of Land Management
777 NW Garden Valley Blvd.
Roseburg, OR 97471
(541) 464-3318

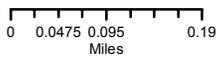
Reviewers	Resource Expertise	Initials	Date
Paul Ausbeck	NEPA	PA	4/3/15
Roli Espinosa	Wildlife Biologist	RE	4/1/15
Elizabeth Gayner	Wildlife Biologist	EG	4/3/15
Aaron Roe	Botanist	AR	4/1/15
Johanna Blanchard	Botanist	JLB	4/3/15
Jeff McEnroe	Fisheries Biologist	JM	4/3/15
Steve Clark	Fisheries Biologist	SC	4/2/15
Molly Casperson	Archaeologist	MC	4/1/15

Cow Creek Road Slide

Date: 2/26/2015
Time: 3:18:44 PM



Map Center:
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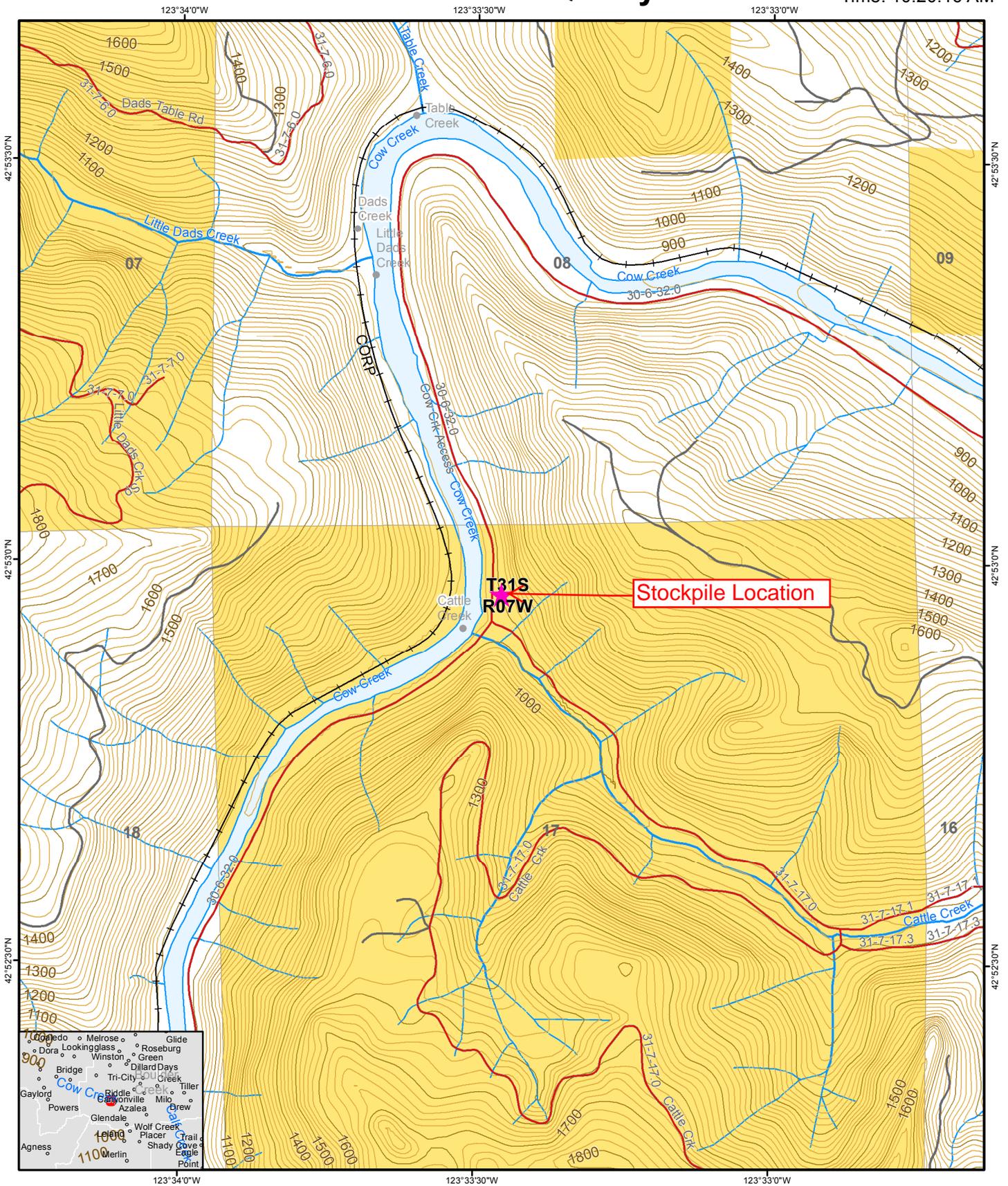
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| U.S. Forest Service | State |
| National Park Service | Local Government |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Private/Unknown |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs | |



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. Original data were compiled from various sources and may be updated without notification. For internal use only.

Cattle Creek Quarry

Date: 3/16/2015
Time: 10:20:16 AM



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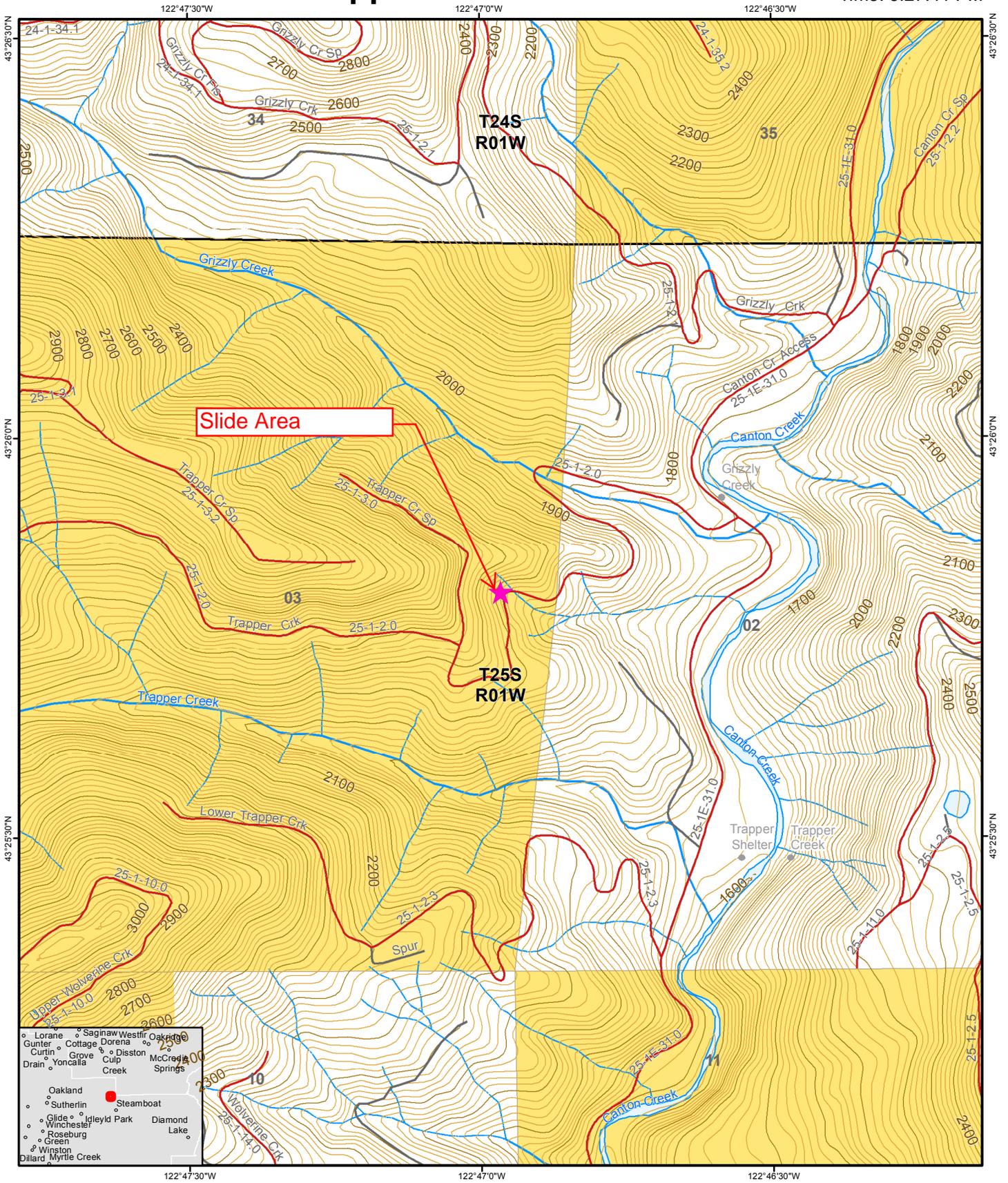
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| U.S. Forest Service | State |
| National Park Service | Local Government |
| U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service | Private/Unknown |
| Bureau of Indian Affairs | |



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Trapper Creek Road Slide

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Time: 3:27:41 PM



Slide Area

T25S
R01W



Map Center:
-122.782763, 43.430102



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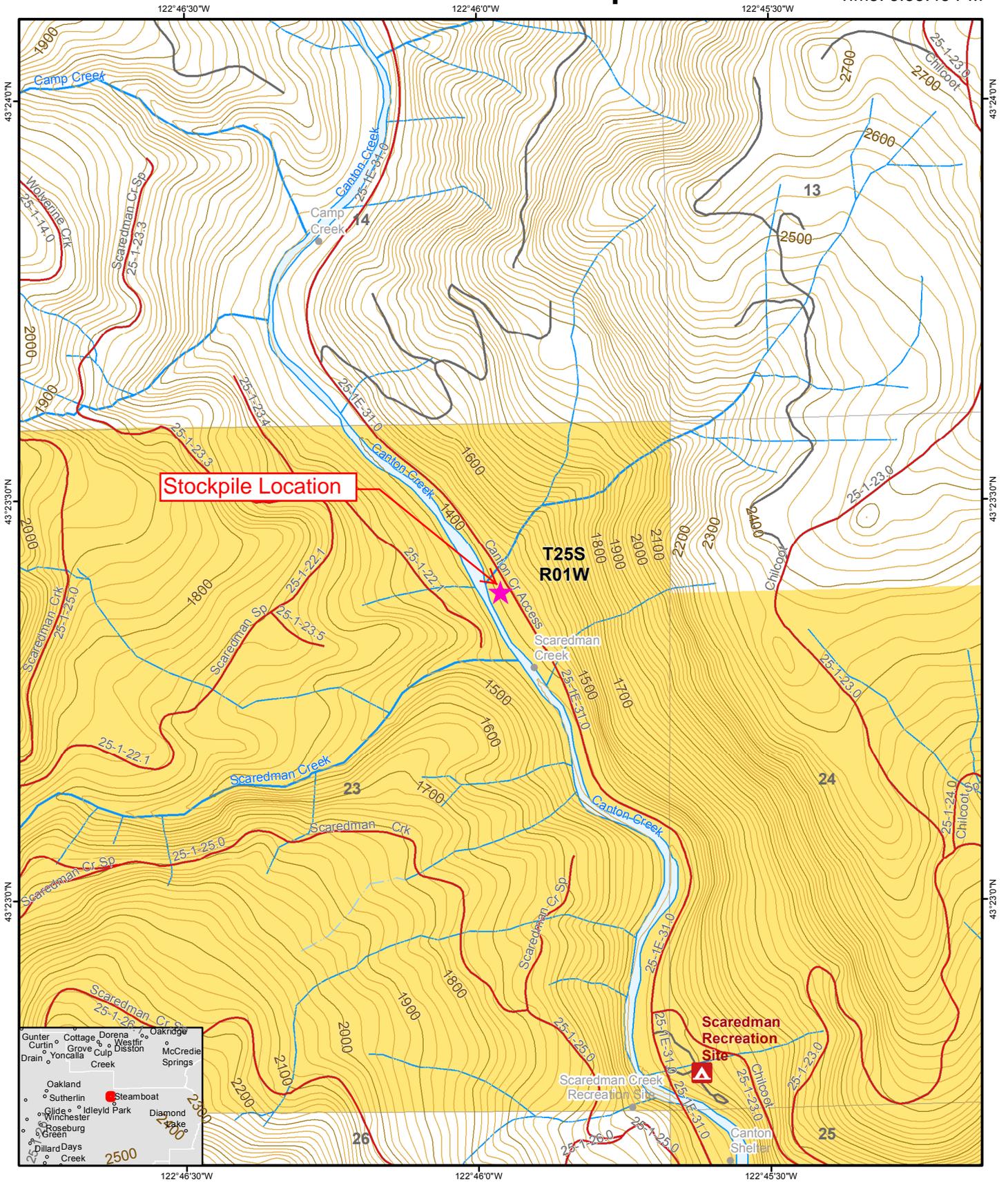
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| U.S. Forest Service | State |
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Scaredman Stockpile

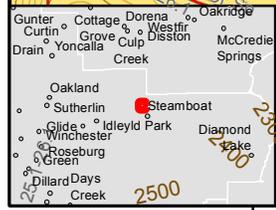
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Stockpile Location

**T25S
R01W**

**Scaredman
Recreation
Site**



Map Center:
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- Bureau of Land Management
- Other Federal
- U.S. Forest Service
- State
- National Park Service
- Local Government
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Private/Unknown
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