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# National Trails System

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## Key Points

- Alternative D would provide the largest National Trail Management Corridor and would protect the largest number of acres within the viewshed. However, these acres would only account for 9 percent of all viewable acres.
- Under the Proposed RMP, the BLM would administer 23 percent of the visible acres of BLM-administered lands within the viewshed as the Pacific Crest Trail's National Trail Management Corridor.

## Summary of Notable Changes from the Draft RMP/EIS

- The BLM conducted an updated viewshed analysis that captures the entire section of the Pacific Crest Trail within the planning area. This updated analysis includes acres of BLM-administered lands that are visible anywhere along the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail within the planning area regardless of ownership.

## Issue 1

*How would the alternatives affect the BLM's ability to protect National Trails?*

### Summary of Analytical Methods

The BLM considered how the designation of various widths of National Trail Management Corridors by alternative and the Proposed RMP would affect the values and uses associated with the trails. The BLM conducted a trail viewshed analysis for the portion of the Pacific Crest Trail that passes through BLM-administered lands in the planning area to determine the percent of BLM-administered lands within the trail's viewshed.

For the purposes of this analysis, the BLM assumed that the management decisions for National Trail Management Corridors would adequately protect the values and uses associated with the National Trails. The BLM bases this assumption on the management direction applied to these corridors under all alternatives and the Proposed RMP. Within the corridors, the BLM will—

- Manage the trail consistent with the intended uses and designated classifications under the National Trails System Act of 1968;
- Designate a Special Recreation Management Area;
- Authorize special recreation permits if they do not adversely affect Pacific Crest Trail values and Resources;
- Manage for Visual Resource Management Class II;
- Designate as *closed* to public motorized access;
- Close to recreational target shooting;
- Conduct timber harvest to protect or maintain recreation setting characteristics or to achieve recreation objectives;
- Apply a controlled surface use stipulation on surface occupancy and surface-disturbing activities;
- Recommend for withdrawal from locatable mineral entry;
- Close to salable mineral material disposal; and

- Apply stipulations for leasable minerals, including no surface occupancy, controlled surface use, and timing limitations (**Appendix M**).

## **Background**

Congress designated three classifications of trails for public use under separate criteria established in the National Trails System Act of 1968, Sec. 3(a). The following definitions provide an overview of the scenic and historic classification types, the allocation through which agencies manage the trails, and the specific trails that pass through the BLM-administered lands within the planning area. See the discussion for Alternatives Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail at the end of this section for discussion of recreation classification trails.

A National Trail Management Corridor is a designation based on Section 7(a) of the National Trails System Act ‘rights-of-way.’ A National Trail Management Corridor includes public land area of sufficient width to encompass National Trail System resources, qualities, values, and associated settings. For the purposes of this planning effort, a National Trail Management Corridor includes all BLM-administered lands containing resources, values, and associated settings that support purposes of a given National Trail.

A BLM-designated National Trail Corridor includes other Federal lands, State trust lands, private land, or other interests in lands, including split estates, which contain National Trail resources, qualities, values, and associate settings. Although these lands are included within the management corridor, they are not subject to BLM management. Interested landowners may voluntarily elect to participate in National Trail management on private or State lands through a cooperative agreement.

### National Recreation Trail

The Secretary of the Interior can designate National Recreation Trails within parks, forests, and recreation areas; or where other lands administered by the Department of the Interior are involved. These would be subject to the consent of the appropriate administering agency having jurisdiction over the lands involved. There are four designated National Recreation Trails within the planning area that overlap with BLM-administered lands within the decision area. These four trails are discussed under “Issued Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail” at the end of this section.

### National Scenic Trail

Only Congress can establish National Scenic Trails, which are extended trails intended to provide for maximum outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trails pass. A portion the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail is within the decision area.

### **Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail**

The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (Pacific Crest Trail) is a long-distance hiking and equestrian trail closely aligned with the highest portion of the Sierra Nevada and Cascade mountain ranges. The Pacific Crest Trail was designated a National Scenic Trail in 1968. The trail’s southern terminus is on the U.S. border with Mexico and its northern terminus is on the U.S. border with Canada; the trail travels through the states of California, Oregon, and Washington. The Pacific Crest Trail is 2,663 miles long and ranges in elevation from just above sea level at the Oregon-Washington border to 13,153 feet in the Sierra Nevada mountain range.

The Pacific Crest Trail enters BLM-administered lands in the decision area from California along the crest of the Siskiyou Mountains east of Mt. Ashland, proceeds east towards Soda Mountain, and then continues northeasterly along the western Cascades to the Rogue River-Siskiyou National Forest boundary. Hikers can access the Pacific Crest Trail by numerous Federal, State, and county roads. Although the trail is accessible from roads, the trail itself is *closed* to motorized and mechanized use. **Table 3-102** shows the Pacific Crest Trail mileage by ownership within the decision area.

**Table 3-102.** Pacific Crest Trail mileage by ownership within the decision area

<b>Landowner</b>	<b>Trail Length (Approximate Mileage)</b>
BLM	17.0*
Private	10.7
State of Oregon	0.9
U.S. Forest Service	16.6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>45.2</b>

\* The BLM manages approximately 14 additional miles of the Pacific Crest Trail outside of the planning area in the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument.

The main use of the BLM-administered segment of the Pacific Crest Trail is for day hikes, primarily by residents of the Rogue Valley. The main recreational activity within the Pacific Crest Trail on BLM-administered lands is hiking, followed by equestrian use. In addition to these activities, sightseeing, wildlife observation, photography, camping, and hunting occur. Cross-country skiing occurs along the trail in the winter. The BLM estimates that day use along the BLM-administered segment of the Pacific Crest Trail is approximately 25,000 visitors annually.

The purpose of the Pacific Crest Trail is to provide a high quality hiking and horseback-riding experience, highlighting the scenic, natural, historic, and cultural resources along the high ridges of the Pacific mountains. The Pacific Crest Trail was designed and is managed to provide the most primitive recreational experience possible, as identified through the BLM’s Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (USDI BLM 2011). A National Trail Management Corridor permanently protects the Pacific Crest Trail including side and connecting trails and facilities such as campsites, water sources, and viewpoints. Public lands within the trail corridor, including lands acquired and managed for the Pacific Crest Trail, are managed to maximize a natural appearing landscape where human development does not dominate the viewer’s experience, and meet a minimum visual quality retention objective. The Pacific Crest Trail experience is managed cooperatively and seamlessly across unit and agency boundaries and with substantial involvement of citizen stewards.

### National Historic Trail

Only Congress can establish National Historic Trails, which are extended trails that follow as closely as practicable to the original routes of travel of national historic significance. Their purpose is to protect historic routes and their historic remnants for public use and enjoyment. Portions of the California National Historic Trail-Applegate Trail route and the Oregon National Historic Trail route are within the decision area. The Oregon National Historic Trail is discussed under “Issued Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail” at the end of this section.

### California National Historic Trail-Applegate Trail Route

The National Park Service is preparing a feasibility study to evaluate 41 routes as possible additions to the California National Historic Trail. The Applegate Trail route is one route under evaluation. Congress authorized this study under the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (Pub. L. 111-111). Approximately 10.9 miles of the Applegate Trail route are located on BLM-administered lands within the planning area. **Table 3-103** shows a mileage breakdown by ownership, within the planning area boundaries.

**Table 3-103.** California National Scenic Trail-Applegate Trail route mileage breakdown by ownership within the planning area

Landowner	Trail Length (Approximate Mileage)
BLM	10.9
Private	410.6
State of Oregon	5.0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>426.5</b>

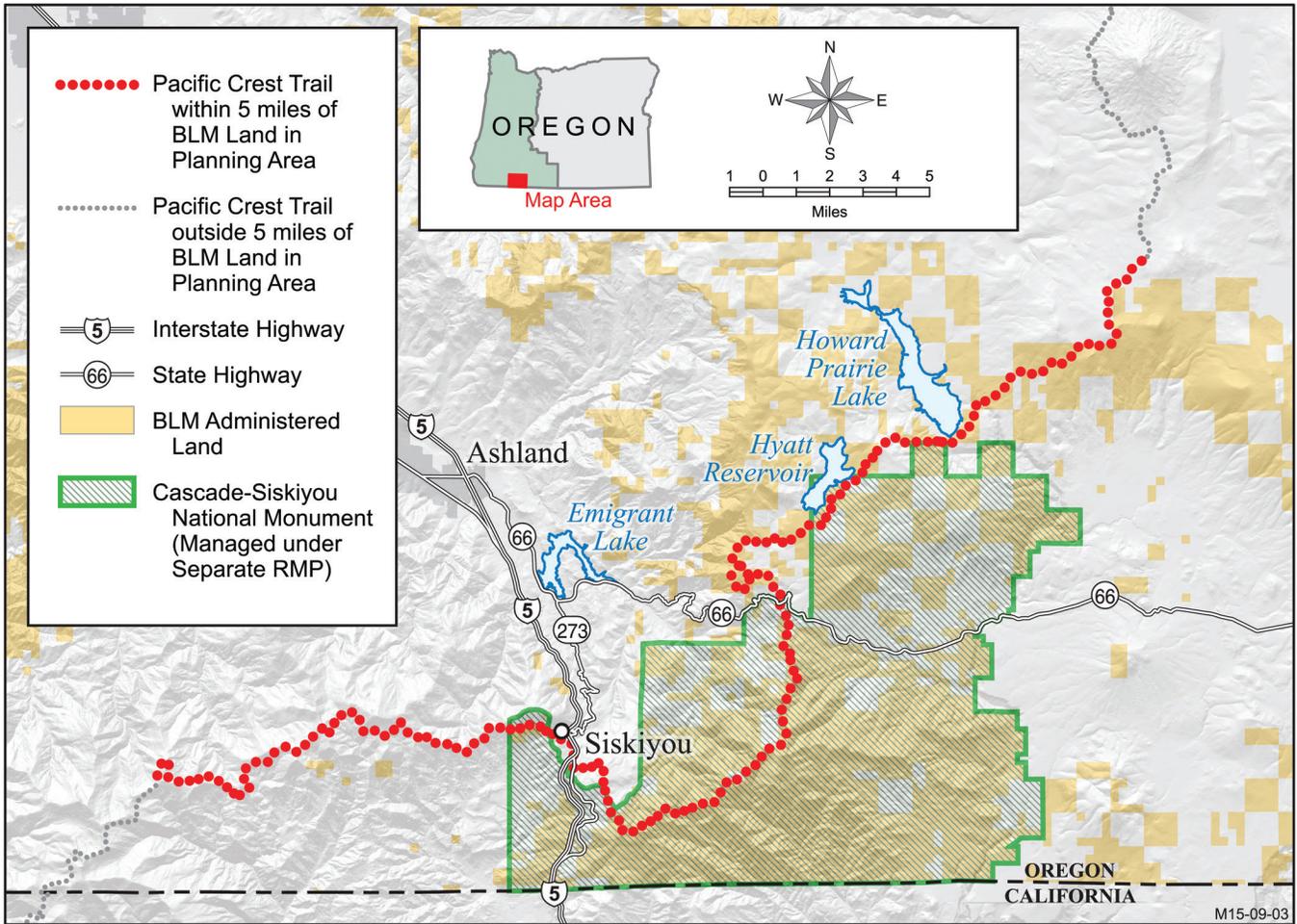
The California National Historic Trail follows the route taken by farmers, settlers, gold miners, and others who forged their way from Missouri to the Pacific Coast during the California gold rush. The California National Historic Trail is approximately 2,400 miles in length spanning across the western half of North America. The first half of the California National Historic Trail followed the same corridor of networked river valley trails as the Oregon Trail and the Mormon Trail. The California National Historic Trail splits into the Applegate Trail route just north of the Oregon-California border.

The purposes of the California National Historic Trail are to enable all people to envision and experience the heritage and effects of the western overland migration and to encourage preservation of its history and physical remnants. The California National Historic Trail is significant for several reasons. First, it was one of the major highways of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and provided a 2,400-mile path for emigrants to the West. The arrival of these emigrants dramatically changed the peoples, cultures, and landscapes of the northwest. The California National Historic Trail's route originated through earlier use by Native American and western explorers and travelers.

## Affected Environment

### Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

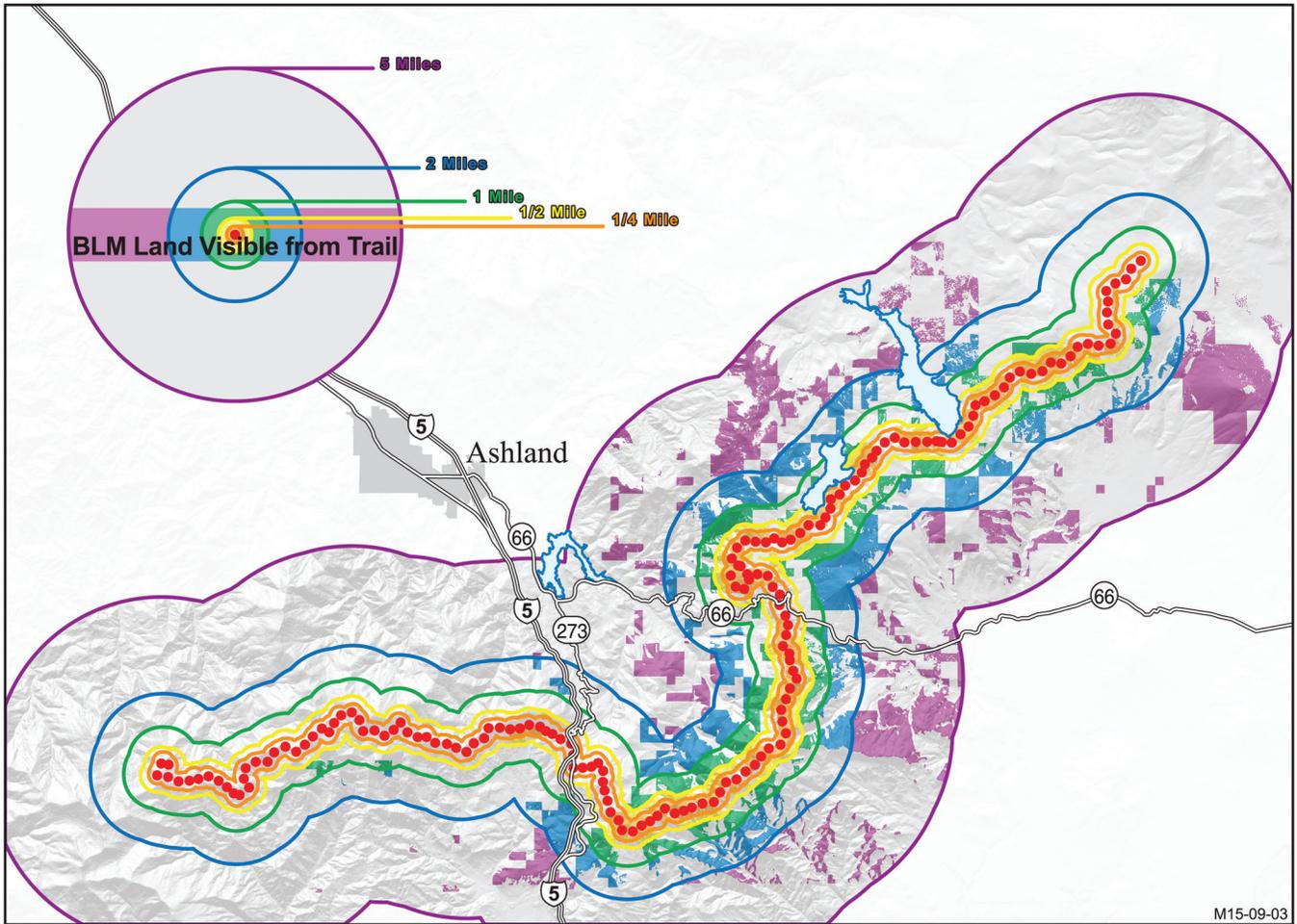
The BLM's Medford District currently manages as a Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA) the approximately 16 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail (**Figure 3-117**) that passes through the planning area. The current SRMA plan established a 100-foot wide (50 feet off centerline) National Trail Management Corridor for the trail. The BLM administers approximately 488 acres within this corridor. The Klamath Falls Field Office manages an additional mile of the Pacific Crest Trail. The BLM has not established a National Trail Management Corridor for the portion of the Pacific Crest Trail that passes through the Klamath Falls Field Office.



**Figure 3-117.** Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail route on BLM-administered lands within the planning area

### Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail Viewshed Analysis

A viewshed is the area of a landscape that can be directly seen under favorable atmospheric conditions from a viewpoint or along a corridor. Within the planning area, the Pacific Crest Trail viewshed area is defined as the area of the landscape within 5 miles on either side of the Pacific Crest Trail route. This definition is based on the assumption that the average traveler along the Pacific Crest Trail has the ability to see 5 miles from any point along the trail. This 5-mile viewshed is a fixed-distance measurement and includes areas outside of the planning area and areas that are not visible from the trail, such as back-face slopes or terrain blocked by trees. Thus, in addition to determining the acres of BLM-administered lands within the 5-mile viewshed, the BLM also determined the acres of BLM-administered lands actually visible from the trail. The BLM conducted the viewshed analysis based on available digital elevation data. The results of this analysis are displayed in **Figure 3-118** and **Table 3-104**.



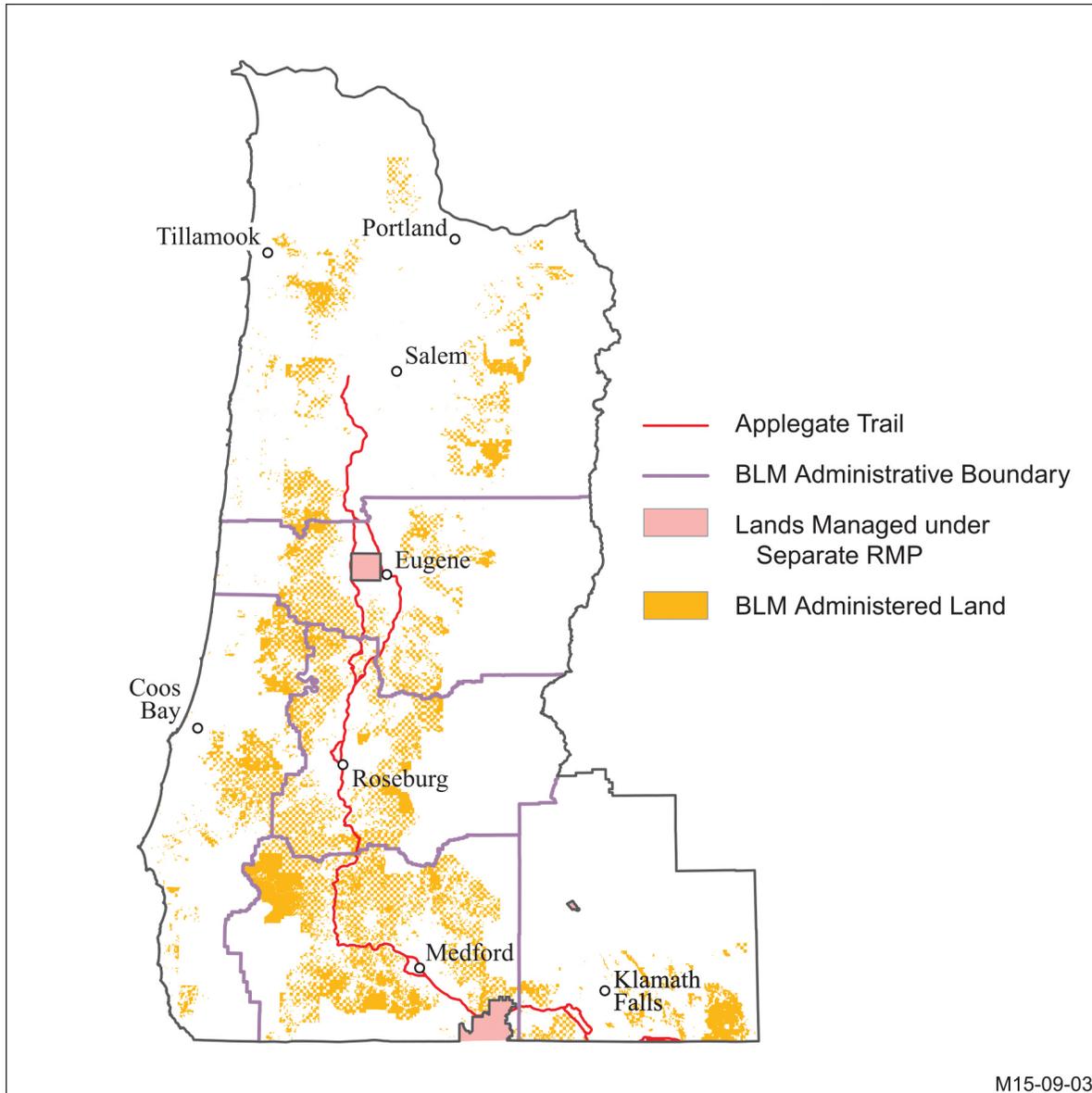
**Figure 3-118.** BLM-administered lands visible within the 5-mile Pacific Crest Trail viewshed of trail portions within the planning area

**Table 3-104.** Pacific Crest Trail viewshed results for BLM-administered lands within the 5-mile viewshed distance of trail portions

Description	All Lands (Percent)
BLM-administered lands within the Pacific Crest Trail Viewshed	30%
BLM-administered lands within the Pacific Crest Trail Viewshed that are visible from anywhere along the Pacific Crest Trail	60%
BLM-administered lands within the Pacific Crest Trail Viewshed that are visible and within the planning area (does not include lands within the Cascade-Siskiyou National Monument).	64%

### California National Historic Trail-Applegate Trail Route

The BLM does not currently have an established National Trail Management Corridor for the portion of the Applegate Trail route that passes through BLM-administered lands within the planning area. **Figure 3-119** illustrates the portions of the Applegate Trail route under evaluation as an addition to the California National Historic Trail on BLM-administered lands within the planning area.



**Figure 3-119.** Applegate Trail route on BLM-administered lands in the planning area

### **Environmental Consequences**

The variation in effects between alternatives and the PRMP is driven by the application of differing widths of the National Trail Management Corridor. As described above, the management within the corridor would be permanent and protective across alternatives and the Proposed RMP.

### California National Historic Trail-Applegate Trail Route

The No Action alternative does not provide protections for the Applegate Trail route portion of the California National Historic Trail because no National Trail Management Corridor currently exists. The No Action alternative would result in impacts to the Applegate Trail route of the California National Historic Trail's resources, values, recreation setting, and primary uses because protective management direction does not exist for BLM-administered lands within the planning area.

Under all action alternatives and the Proposed RMP, the BLM would establish a 100-foot wide National Trail Management Corridor (50-feet off centerline) along all portions of the Applegate Trail route of the California National Historic Trail study route that cross BLM-administered lands within the planning area. The BLM established this corridor based on the trail's purposes, significance, and values warranting protection as identified through inventory assessments conducted by the National Park Service as part of the Comprehensive Management Plan (USDI NPS 1999) analysis, local knowledge of the route's terrain and vegetation within the planning area, and based on professional judgment. Application of this 100-foot buffer under all action alternatives and the Proposed RMP would result in adequate protection of National Historic Trail's resources, values, setting characteristics, and primary uses for which the Applegate Trail route of the California National Historic Trail is currently being studied.

### Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail

The BLM would establish a National Trail Management Corridor on the 17 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail that crosses BLM-administered lands within the planning area. This corridor width would vary across the alternatives and the Proposed RMP. In this analysis, the BLM considers the effects of these widths on Pacific Crest Trail resources, values, recreation settings, and primary uses.

Despite the differing National Trail Corridor widths, all alternatives and the Proposed RMP would provide for outdoor recreation potential and for the conservation and enjoyment of the nationally significant scenic, historical, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trail passes. The smallest width, under the No Action alternative, would still meet the minimum requirement for protection of these resources. The management of the Trail Management Corridor would provide beneficial recreational outcomes for users and protect the trail setting characteristics.

The variance of the National Trail Corridor widths under the alternatives and the Proposed RMP would influence the acres managed within the Pacific Crest Trail viewshed under differing Visual Resource Management Classes. **Table 3-105** shows the BLM acres, percentage, and percentage of visible acres present in the Pacific Crest Trail corridor by alternative and the Proposed RMP. This table also shows the total acres of BLM-administered lands visible from the BLM portion of the Pacific Crest Trail.

**Table 3-105.** Acres of BLM-administered lands in the planning area within Pacific Crest Trail National Trail Management Corridor

Areas	No Action	Alt. A	Alt. B	Alt. C	Alt. D	PRMP
Trail corridor width	100 feet	500 feet	0.25 mile	1 mile	2 miles	1 mile
BLM-administered lands within the corridor (Acres)	210	987	2,338	6,891	10,928	6,891
BLM-administered lands within the corridor (Percent of all lands)	30%	29%	27%	22%	19%	22%
Percent of BLM-administered lands within the 5-mile viewshed and within the corridor (Percent of all lands)	< 1%	2.5%	6%	17.8%	28.2%	17.8%
Percent of BLM-administered lands visible within 5 mile viewshed and within the corridor (Percent of all visible lands)	< 1%	3.7%	8.5%	23.2%	34.4%	23.2%

Under the most protective management (Alternative D), the BLM would administer 34 percent of the total visible acres of BLM-administered lands within the viewshed as the Pacific Crest Trail’s National Trail Management Corridor. The BLM would administer less than 1 percent of these acres for these purposes under the least protective management (No Action alternative). The Proposed RMP would administer 23 percent of the visible acres of BLM-administered lands within the viewshed as the Pacific Crest Trail’s National Trail Management Corridor. Within the 1-mile corridor under Proposed RMP, 77 percent of lands within the corridor on either side of the Pacific Crest Trail are not BLM-administered lands and would be subject to landscape changes outside of the BLM’s control.

Under all alternatives and the Proposed RMP, the BLM would manage BLM-administered lands outside of the relevant National Trail Management Corridor width, but visible within the 5-mile viewshed, under the Visual Resource Management class assigned to those acres. Visual Resource Management Class IV and, to some extent, Class III lands exist within the viewshed, therefore, the BLM could implement management activities that result in visible changes to the landscape.

**No Action Alternative**

Under the No Action alternative, the BLM would continue to provide a 100-foot National Trail Management Corridor off centerline (50 feet on each side) on the Pacific Crest Trail. This would result in the protection of 210 acres of BLM-administered lands along the 17-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail within the planning area. Compared to the acres of visible BLM-administered lands from the Pacific Crest Trail (24,765 acres), the No Action alternative would preserve less than 1 percent of the visible BLM-administered lands within the planning area from the Pacific Crest Trail for the enjoyment of the nationally significant, scenic, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the areas through which the trail passes. The No Action alternative provides the least amount of protection to the Pacific Crest Trail’s resources when compared with all alternatives and the Proposed RMP. Visible changes to the natural landscape within the majority of the viewshed of the Pacific Crest Trail would be possible based on ownerships and Visual Resource Management classes, including more than 99 percent of visible BLM-managed lands.

### **Alternative A**

Under Alternative A, the BLM would establish a 500-foot National Trail Management Corridor off the centerline (250 feet on each side) on the Pacific Crest Trail. This would result in the protection of 987 acres of BLM-administered lands along the 17-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail within the planning area. Alternative A would protect 4 percent of the 24,765 acres of BLM-administered lands within the planning area that are visible from the Pacific Crest Trail using the protective management direction described in the Analytical Methods section above.

Alternative A provides greater protection to the Pacific Crest Trail's resources when compared with the No Action alternative and less protection when compared to the remaining action alternatives and the Proposed RMP. Visible changes to the natural landscape within the majority of the viewshed of the Pacific Crest Trail would be possible based on ownerships and Visual Resource Management classes, including approximately 96 percent of visible BLM-managed lands.

### **Alternative B**

In Alternative B, the BLM would establish a 0.25-mile National Trail Management Corridor off the centerline on the Pacific Crest Trail (660 feet on each side). This would result in the protection of 2,338 acres of BLM-administered lands along the 17-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail within the planning area. Alternative B would protect 9 percent of the 24,765 acres of BLM-administered lands within the planning area that are visible from the Pacific Crest Trail using the protective management direction described in the Analytical Methods section above.

Alternative B provides greater protection to the Pacific Crest Trail's resources than the No Action alternative and Alternative A, and less protection than Alternatives C and D, and the Proposed RMP. Visible changes to the natural landscape within the majority of the viewshed of the Pacific Crest Trail would be possible based on ownerships and Visual Resource Management classes, including approximately 91 percent of visible BLM-managed lands.

### **Alternative C and the Proposed RMP**

In Alternative C and the Proposed RMP, the BLM would establish a 1-mile National Trail Management Corridor off the centerline (1/2 mile on each side) on the Pacific Crest Trail. This would result in the protection of 6,891 acres of BLM-administered lands along the 17-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail within the planning area. Alternative C and the Proposed RMP would protect 23 percent of the 24,765 acres of BLM-administered lands within the planning area that are visible from the Pacific Crest Trail using the protective management direction described in the Analytical Methods section above.

Alternative C and the Proposed RMP provides greater protection to the Pacific Crest Trail's resources than the No Action alternative and Alternatives A and B, and less protection than Alternative D. Visible changes to the natural landscape within the majority of the viewshed of the Pacific Crest Trail would be possible based on ownerships and Visual Resource Management classes, including approximately 77 percent of visible BLM-managed lands.

Users of the Pacific Crest Trail would be able to see variation in the landscape, including the forested landscapes of both BLM-administered lands beyond 1-mile and privately owned forested lands within all distances, along the trail route. Within the 1-mile National Trail Management Corridor, the BLM would protect BLM-administered lands within the corridor from visible change through land management actions. However, due to the checkerboard nature of the BLM-administered lands within the planning area, users on the trail would still experience changes within the 1-mile corridor on non-BLM-administered lands not managed for the Pacific Crest Trail's scenic values. Additionally, the visibility of

changes to the landscape, both within the National Trail Management Corridor and in the visible area outside the corridor, would not be visible from all sections of the trail, as many portions traverse through densely forested stands, which prevent opportunities for long-distance views and scenic vistas. Users of the Pacific Crest Trail typically seek opportunities for the scenic values offered by both forested stands and opportunities for scenic vistas over valley floors. Because of the intermixed ownership, the designation of a 1-mile National Trail Management Corridor would continue to provide both these opportunities along the trail route within the planning area.

### **Alternative D**

In Alternative D, the BLM would establish a 2-mile National Trail Management Corridor off the centerline (1 mile on each side) on the Pacific Crest Trail. This would result in the protection of 10,928 acres of BLM-administered lands along the 17-mile segment of the Pacific Crest Trail within the planning area. Alternative D would protect 34 percent of the 24,765 acres of BLM-administered lands within the planning area that are visible from the Pacific Crest Trail using the protective management direction described in the Analytical Methods section above.

Alternative D provides the largest level of protection to the Pacific Crest Trail's resources compared to the other alternatives and the Proposed RMP. Alternative D provides protection on five times the acres as the No Action alternative. Visible changes to the natural landscape within the majority of the viewshed of the Pacific Crest Trail would be possible based on ownerships and Visual Resource Management classes, including approximately 66 percent of visible BLM-managed lands.

### **Issues Considered but Not Analyzed in Detail**

*How would the alternatives affect the management of designated National Recreation Trails within the decision area?*

The Secretary of the Interior can designate National Recreation Trails within parks, forests, and recreation areas; or where other lands administered by the Department of the Interior are involved. The National Trails System Act of 1968 authorizes the National Recreation Trail designations, which are given to existing trails that have been nominated and meet the requirements for connecting people to local resources and improving their quality of life. To be designated, a trail must be open to public use and be designed, constructed, and maintained according to best management practices, in keeping with the use anticipated. Designation must be supported by the appropriate administering agency or by the landowner having jurisdiction over the lands involved. The Secretary of Interior or the Secretary of Agriculture may designate National Recreation Trails to recognize exemplary trails of local and regional significance in response to an application from the trail's managing agency or organization.

Unlike National Historic Trails or National Scenic Trails, National Recreation Trails are managed solely for the recreational use of the designated trail. No additional management beyond the trail management (i.e., for scenic or historical values) are needed. There are four designated National Recreation Trails within the decision area (**Table 3-106**).

**Table 3-106.** National Recreation Trails within the planning area

<b>Trail Name</b>	<b>District</b>	<b>Year Designated</b>	<b>Total Trail Length (Miles)</b>	<b>BLM Trail Ownership (Miles)</b>
North Umpqua	Medford	1992	15.7	8.6
Old Growth Ridge	Eugene	1994	1.5	1.5
Row River	Eugene	2005	15.5	15.5
Rogue River	Medford	1981	40.0	21.5

Effects to these trails would occur as analyzed in detail for Recreation Management Areas in the Recreation and Visitor Services section of this chapter. In summary, each of these trails would receive management of the recreational values consistent with the designed uses through designation as Recreation Management Areas under all alternatives and the Proposed RMP, except the No Action alternative and Alternative A. Under the No Action alternative, these trails would continue to receive management consistent with the BLM’s 1981 recreation management policy, which could allow other land management actions to result in undesired changes to managed recreation sites. Under Alternative A, trailheads for these trails would be managed recreation sites, but the trails themselves would not be designated for recreation management. These existing trails would deteriorate over time and could be removed from the landscape in favor of other resource uses.

*How would the alternatives affect the management of the Oregon National Historic Trail?*

Approximately 2.5 miles of the Oregon National Historic Trail occurs within the decision area, but is managed by the National Park Service throughout this length. The cultural resources program inventories the trail. The portions of the trail within the decision area are established, paved roads, and the roads are largely not under the management and ownership of the BLM. Established BLM-managed roads would be designated to the District-Designated Reserve land use allocation under all alternatives, which directs for the management of roads for the purposes for which the BLM constructed them, and would result in the maintenance of the BLM-managed sections of the trail route. BLM-managed lands that occur along the trail route include Congressionally Reserved Lands along the Sandy River (approximately 2 miles) and lands designated as Late-Successional Reserve (approximately 0.5 miles). The management of these land use allocations would retain the existing character of the Oregon National Historic Trail route.

**References**

USDI NPS. 1999. Comprehensive Management and Use Plan/Final Environmental Impact Statement: California National Historic Trail, Pony Express National Historic Trail; Management and Use Plan Update/Final Environmental Impact Statement: Oregon National Historic Trail, Mormon Pioneer National Historic Trail. USDI National Park Service, Salt Lake City, UT. 339 pp. <http://www.nps.gov/cali/learn/management/upload/CALI-CMP-SM-updated.pdf>.