

Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail Phase III

Finding of No Significant Impact

DOI-BLM-CA-N030-2009-0015-EA

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Arcata Field Office
Arcata, CA**

Based upon a review of the EA and the supporting documents, the BLM Arcata Field Office has determined that the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail Phase III development is not a major federal action and will not significantly affect the quality of the human environment, individually or cumulatively with other actions in the general area. No environmental effects meet the definition of significance in context or intensity as defined in 40 CFR 1508.27 and do not exceed those effects described in the King Range National Conservation Area Final Resource Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement (RMP/EIS). Therefore, an EIS is not needed. This finding is based on the context and intensity of the project as described:

Context: The project is a site-specific action directly involving approximately 9 acres of direct disturbance (tree/brush removal or tread construction) along an 8-10 mile long loop trail corridor and one mile of temporary equipment access routes on BLM administered land. The project does not have impacts of national regional or local significance as shown in the environmental analysis. All impacts are of negligible to minor levels even at the local scale.

Intensity: The following discussion is organized around the Ten Significance Criteria described in 40 CFR 1508.27 and relevant laws, policies and regulations. The descriptions below also incorporate the required contents of a negative declaration as described in CEQA Guidelines Section 15071.

1. **Impacts may be both beneficial and adverse.** The proposed action would impact resources as described in the EA. Measures to reduce impacts including buffers and limited construction operating periods to protect spotted owls, and design specifications and layout requirements to minimize erosion and sedimentation were incorporated in the design of the proposed action. Therefore no additional mitigation measures are

proposed. None of the environmental effects discussed in detail in the EA and associated appendices are considered significant, nor do the effects exceed those described in the King Range RMP/EIS.

2. **The degree to which the selected alternative will affect public health or safety.** The trail system will be constructed using the latest design standards developed by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and BLM standards for road/trail development. Although some risk is inherent in mountain biking, standard safety measures are included in the project design to reduce risk (removal of tree stumps, stumps etc.) to levels acceptable to the sport. No public health issues such as impacts to air or water quality were identified from the project.
3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area such as proximity to historic or cultural resources, park lands, wetlands, wilderness, wild and scenic rivers, or ecologically critical areas.** The project is within the King Range NCA and is an important component of the management plan (King Range RMP) for this public conservation and recreation area. The South Fork of Bear Creek was found to be eligible for Wild and Scenic River designation under the King Range RMP. The project has been designed so that it does not impact any of the “outstandingly remarkable” values identified along the corridor.
4. **The degree to which the effects on the quality of the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** There is no scientific controversy over the nature of the impacts. Projects of this nature have been completed numerous times, and impacts have been well documented.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** The project is not unique or unusual. The BLM has experience implementing similar actions in similar areas, including the long-term management of approximately 100 miles of trail within the King Range NCA. The environmental effects to the human environment are fully analyzed in the EA. There are no predicted effects on the human environment that are considered to be highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** The actions in the selected alternative (proposed action in the EA) were considered by the interdisciplinary team within the context of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete analysis of the direct, indirect, and cumulative effects of the selected alternative and all other alternatives is described in the EA.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts—which include connected actions regardless of land ownership.** The interdisciplinary team evaluated the possible actions in context

of past, present and reasonably foreseeable actions. Significant cumulative effects are not predicted. A complete disclosure of the effects of the project is contained in the EA.

8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect sites listed on or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.** The project will not adversely affect sites eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, nor will it cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A cultural inventory has been completed for the proposed action, and no cultural resources were found. A design feature is included in the project so that if unexpected cultural features are located during construction, an archaeologist will evaluate these resources to determine whether or not mitigating measures or other project changes are needed.

9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** Elements to reduce impacts to wildlife and fisheries have been incorporated into the design of the proposed action. Although the northern spotted owl, coho salmon, Chinook salmon and steelhead trout listed species occupy habitat within the project area, it has been determined that they will not be affected because project design features and construction stipulations (operating periods) are included to avoid adverse impacts. No other threatened or endangered plants or animals are known to occur in the area. Section 7 ESA Consultation was completed and the Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with BLM's determination of may affect, but not likely to adversely affect regarding the federally threatened northern spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis caurina*) on September 17, 2009.

10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of a federal, state, local, or tribal law, regulation or policy imposed for the protection of the environment, where non-federal requirements are consistent with federal requirements.** The project does not violate any known federal, state, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. State, local, and tribal interests were given the opportunity to participate in the analysis process beginning with the inclusion of the trail within the King Range RMP. The project is consistent with applicable federal, state and local land management plans, policies, and programs.



Lynda Roush
Arcata Field Manager

10-13-2009

Date

Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail Phase III

Decision Record

DOI-BLM-CA-N030-2009-0015-EA

**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
Arcata Field Office
Arcata, CA**

Decision

It is the decision of the BLM Arcata Field Office to implement the proposed action to construct an 8-10 mile mountain bike trail connecting a trailhead parking area along Shelter Cove Road to the Phase I existing Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail. In addition, a short (approximately one- mile long) beginner loop will be constructed. Design features have been incorporated into the project to minimize sedimentation in the South Fork Bear Creek watershed, and to protect the northern spotted owl habitat and nest sites (final layout/design requirements, limited operating periods etc). The selected alternative best meets the purpose and need for the project which is to continue development of the trail system identified in the King Range RMP and to construct an easier trail segment to expand the diversity of riding experiences. This project is not expected to adversely impact elements of the human environment due to design features and operations criteria. This decision is consistent with and serves to implement a priority in the King Range RMP and is also consistent with other relevant laws, regulations and policies guiding management of the project area

Alternatives Considered but not Selected

A no action alternative was considered but not selected as it would not meet the purpose and need for the project. Additional alternatives were not analyzed because no significant issues were identified that would warrant their consideration.

The BLM consulted with the Fish and Wildlife Service regarding Phase III of the trail regarding potential impacts to Federally listed species in the project area (northern spotted owl). Public involvement on the project has been ongoing since 2004, during comments on the Draft RMP for

the King Range NCA. Input from comments has been incorporated into the environmental assessment.

Administrative Remedies

Administrative remedies may be available to those who believe they will be adversely affected by this decision. Appeals may be made to the Office of Hearings and Appeals, Office of the Secretary, U.S. Department of Interior, Board of Land Appeals (Board) in strict compliance with the regulations in 43 CFR Part 4. Notices of appeal must be filed in this office within 30 days after publication of this decision. If a notice of appeal does not include a statement of reasons, such statement must be filed with this office and the Board within 30 days after the notice of appeal is filed. The notice of appeal and any statement of reasons, written arguments, or briefs must also be served upon the Regional Solicitor, Pacific Southwest Region, U.S. Department of Interior, 2800 Cottage Way, E-1712, Sacramento, CA 95825.

The effective date of this decision (and the date initiating the appeal period) will be the date this notice of decision is posted on BLM's Arcata Field Office internet website.


Lynda Roush
Field Manager,
Arcata Field Office

10-13-2009
Date

Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail Phase III

EA # DOI-BLM-CA-N030-2009-0015-EA

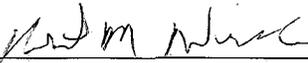
Environmental Assessment under National Environmental Policy Act

Negative Declaration Initial Study under California Environmental Quality Act

October, 2009
Bureau of Land Management
Arcata Field Office
Arcata, CA

Prepared By:  10/9/09
Gary Pritchard-Peterson, King Range National Conservation Area Manager

Reviewed By: _____ 1/1
Kathy Stangl, Asst. Field Mgr.

 10/13/09
Bob Wick, Planning/NEPA Coordinator

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background and Setting

The King Range Resource Management Plan (RMP 2005) identified the need to develop mountain biking opportunities in the King Range NCA, as legal mountain bicycling opportunities were scarce on public lands throughout the northern California coastal region. In 2005, the BLM in partnership with the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA) and local affiliated clubs, began developing the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail System in the Paradise Ridge area of the King Range NCA. The ultimate goal of the partnership was to eventually develop a trail system, with a primary loop trail, and a network of “stacked” secondary loop trails tiered off of the primary loop.

Construction of the Phase I primary loop began with a National Public Lands Day volunteer event in September 2005. Three years later, the completed 14 mile primary loop was dedicated in September 2008, again with a National Public Lands Day event. The trail was constructed by a diversity of partners working with BLM staff and IMBA Trail Solutions specialists, including: local and regional mountain bike clubs, high school classes and clubs, Student Conservation Association (SCA) crews, California Conservation Corps (CCC) crews, and various volunteer groups. Approximately one-half of the trail is hand-built single track, the other half being machine-built on decommissioned road corridors and fuel breaks. Infrastructure developed to support the 14mile loop includes a new trailhead parking area with trail maps, profiles and trail-specific information to serve trail users, trail connections to Tolkan Campground and the Horse Mountain Creek Trailhead, interpretive signage at the two Bear Creek trail crossings, and directional signage. The trail offers a challenging riding experience on a variety of terrain and forest habitats. The trail has received national recognition from mountain bike enthusiasts, drawing riders from around the United States, and a feature article in the March 2009 edition of *Bike* magazine. This proposed action would implement the next phase of the project.

1.2 Purpose and Need for Action and Decision to be Made

The existing 14-mile loop of the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail system is a challenging course with significant elevation gain and loss that also requires a significant commitment of time, energy, and level of fitness. That is the appeal of this trail to dedicated mountain biking enthusiasts, some of whom travel from across the United States on the basis of word of mouth recommendations to experience this trail. The original intent, however, of developing a mountain bike trail system was to provide a diversity of riding experiences for the enjoyment of riders of all levels. The lack of opportunity for family riding has been brought to our attention and this proposed action provides an opportunity to expand the system to meet this need.

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to construct a network of additional trails that riders of various abilities and fitness levels could enjoy, and greatly increase the diversity of terrain, habitat, and scenic vistas from that currently available on the existing trail. The Proposed Action would also expand the recreation opportunities currently available in the region, as legal mountain biking opportunities on public lands remain scarce on the north coast of California. The decision to be made is whether, or not, to construct additional mountain biking trail segments and support facilities in order to expand the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail System beyond the existing 14-mile loop.

1.3 Conformance with Land Use Plan

The Proposed Action is consistent with the King Range Resource Management Plan (RMP) (2005) as required by 43 CFR 1610.5. Specifically, the Management Action REC 6.2.3 (page 4-85) of the Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision directs the BLM to: *Establish non-motorized loop trail system designed primarily for quality mountain biking opportunities in the Paradise Ridge area. This would include reconstruction of the trail tread on the Queen Peak Trail and other loop opportunities. Link this trail system to Horse Mountain and/or Tolkan Campgrounds.*

1.4 Relationship to Statutes, Regulations or Other Plans

The Proposed Action tiers to the King Range Resource Management Plan (2005), Management Action REC 6.2.3, the Paradise Ridge Mountain Bike Trail EA AR-05-14, and the Paradise Ridge Mountain Bike Trail Infrastructure Development EA (EA-CA-330-AR-07-15). It is consistent with the BLM's Priorities for Recreation and Visitor Services (2003), and the BLM's National Mountain Bicycling Strategic Action Plan (2002).

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) provides protection for threatened and endangered species and a means for conserving ecosystems upon which they depend on. Federal agencies are required to initiate Section 7 consultation if they propose activities which may result in take (i.e., harming, harassing, or killing) of a threatened or endangered species or cause the destruction of or adverse modification of its habitat.

The project area is designated critical habitat for the following threatened and endangered species;

- **Marbled murrelet** (*Brachyramphus marmoratus*), a federally listed threatened species and state-listed endangered species.
- **Northern spotted owl** (*Strix occidentalis caurina*), a federally listed threatened species.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBT) prohibits the take (i.e., pursue, hunt, shoot, capture, collect, or kill) of any migratory bird that crosses international boundaries. Take includes any part of a migratory bird, its nest, or eggs. This act applies to all persons in

the United States, including federal and state agencies. To help implement the act, all projects with federal involvement are required to address impacts of federal actions on migratory birds.

Threatened or Endangered Species Recovery Plans

Recovery plans, authorized under the ESA, describe goals and objectives and provide direction necessary to aid species recovery, so that species might be removed from the threatened or endangered lists. A final recovery plan is available for the marbled murrelet and a draft plan is available for the northern spotted owl.

1.5 Scoping and Issues

Scoping for the trail system was initiated during the King Range RMP process. Wilderness groups and mountain biking groups advocated a trail system away from the proposed King Range Wilderness Area (area was designated as wilderness after the RMP was completed) and supported the loop system in the Paradise Ridge Area. Issues in the Paradise Ridge Area have revolved around development of a trail system in a manner that protects watershed values in Bear Creek, avoids trespass issues with nearby private property, and minimizes impacts to spotted owls. The initial phase of the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail has received consistent support from local, regional, and national-mountain bicycling advocacy groups. Local clubs have been instrumental in development, construction, and maintenance of the trail. The International Mountain Bicycling Association has asked Congress for fiscal support for the trail expansion proposed under this environmental assessment (EA). The trail has received consistent, positive support from local media (i.e., radio, newspapers), and there is no known opposition to the trail. As stated above, a primary issue brought up by the public regarding the construction of the next trail phase is the provision of easier route accessible to a larger segment of the public while addressing the concerns of all project phases (fish/wildlife habitat and private land trespass).

2.0 Proposed Action and Alternatives

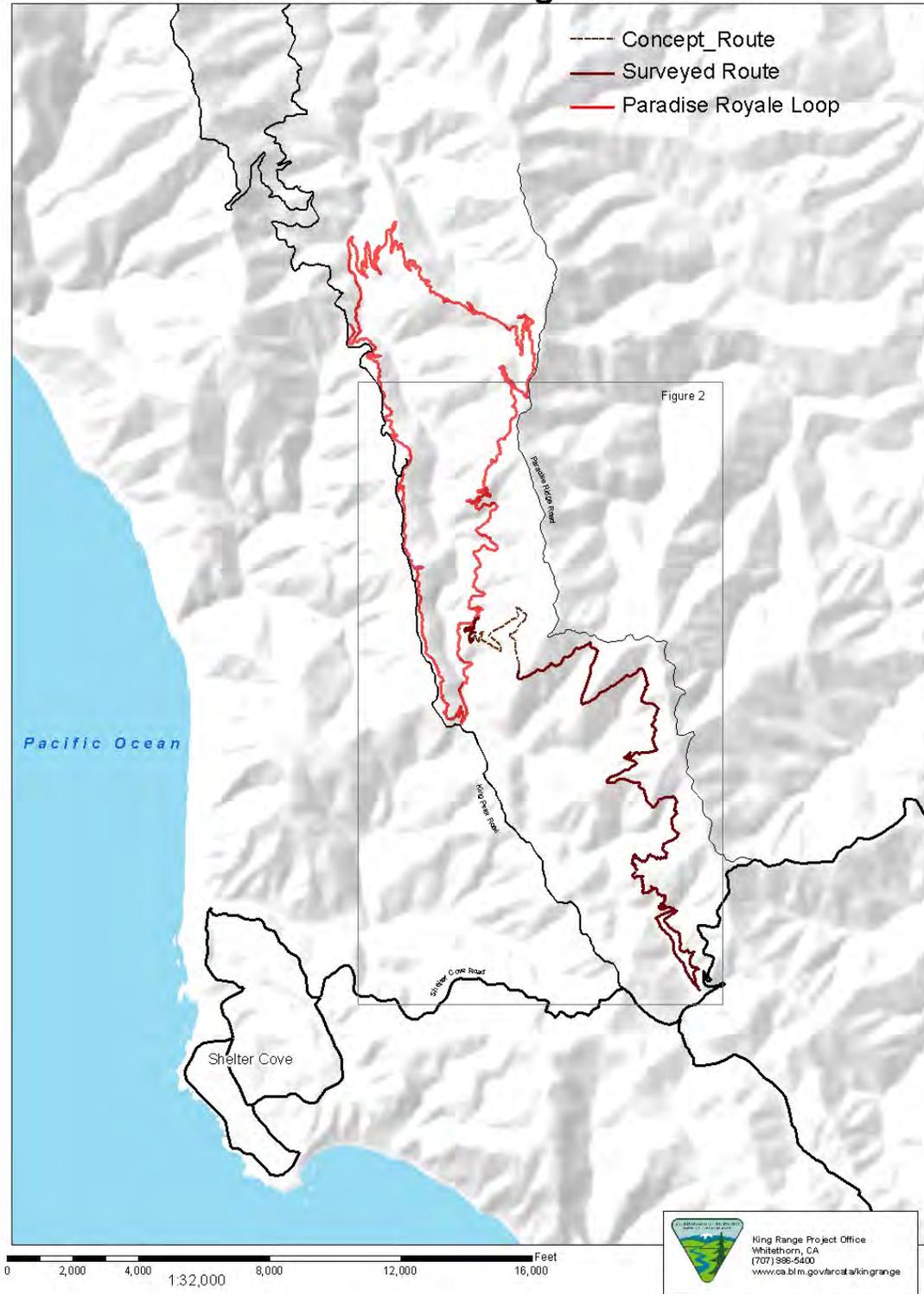
2.1 Proposed Action

The site of the Proposed Action is within the South Fork Bear Creek drainage on the west slope of Paradise Ridge in the King Range National Conservation Area (King Range NCA), in Humboldt County, California. (see Figure 1). The Proposed Action would involve construction of approximately 8–10 miles of single-track mountain bike trail to connect the completed Phase I, 14-mile loop trail with a small trailhead and parking area to be constructed near the Shelter Cove Road (see Figure 2). A short (approximately 3 miles or less), gentle gradient, “beginner” level loop trail would be incorporated into the southern end of the 8–10 mile trail near the new trailhead. This alternative description discusses proposed construction, maintenance, and use of the proposed trails and trailhead.

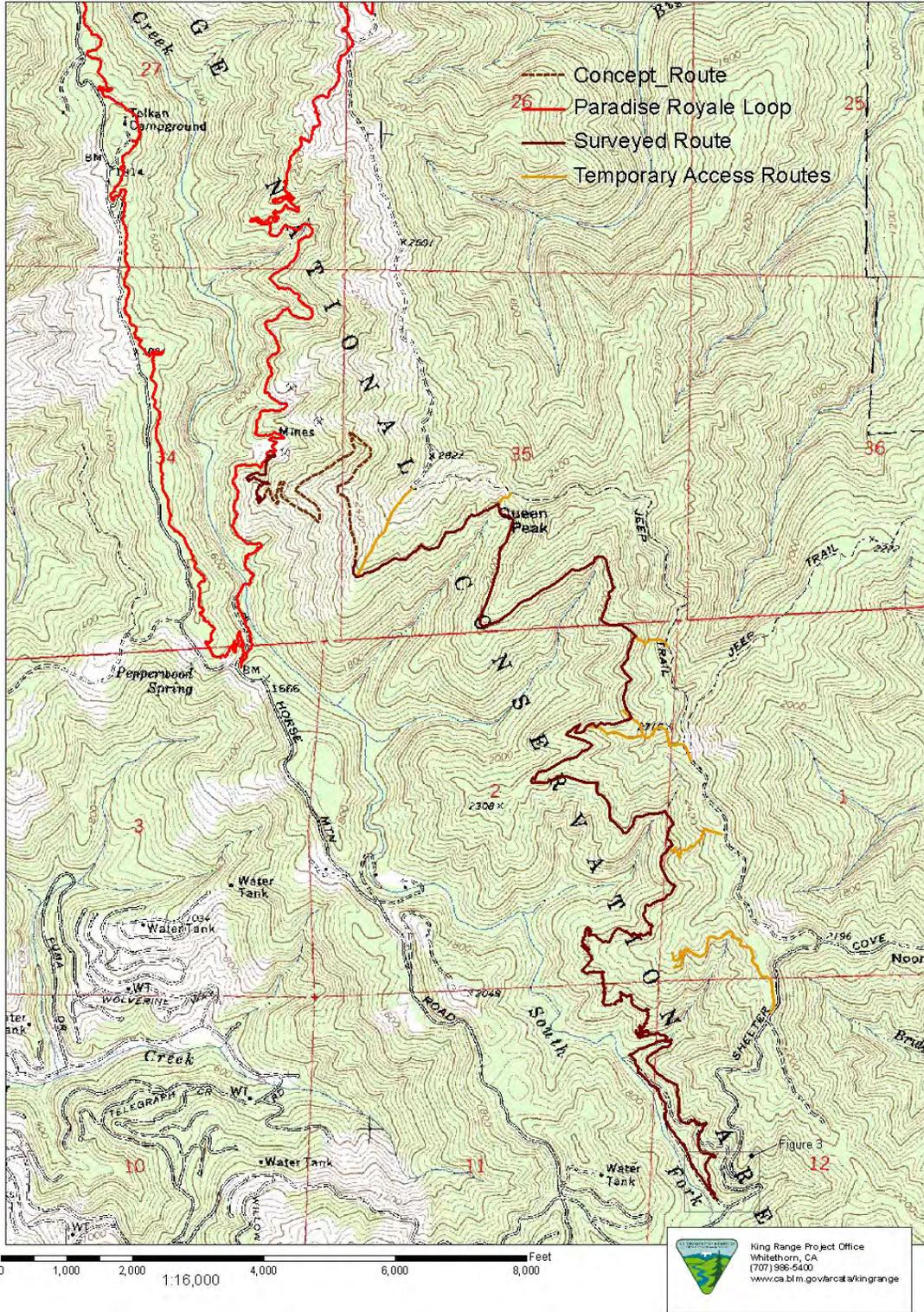
2.1.1 Construction:

2.1.1.1 Trail Connecting to Phase I Trail: The approximately 8–10 miles of single-

Figure 1: Paradise Royale Connector Mountain Bike Trail Regional Overview



**Figure 2: Paradise Royale Connector
Mountain Bike Trail Detail**



track mountain bike trail would incorporate short segments of abandoned logging roads at each end, however, most trail construction would occur on undisturbed terrain. At both the north and south ends the proposed trail would climb from approximately 1,800 foot elevation to approximately 2,200 foot elevation. The majority of the trail would contour along the west slope of Paradise Ridge between 2,200 and 2,400 foot elevation incorporating gentle climbs and descents throughout its length. The trail would be designed specifically for mountain bikes according to the IMBA's standards described in the book "Trail Solutions – IMBA's Guide to Building Sweet Singletrack". Design standards would maximize both mountain bike riding "flow" and natural hydrologic flow patterns. Short portages and/or rock stairs, where riders must dismount and carry their bikes, may be incorporated if necessary to traverse extremely steep, narrow, or rocky sections of trail.

Construction would be performed by a combination of trail machines (e.g., Sweco bulldozer, skid-steer loader, mini-excavator), as well as hand construction by groups such as the CCCs, SCAs, BLM staff, and volunteers. Hand crew construction would focus on sensitive sites such as stream crossings, steep drainages, rocky outcrops, sensitive wildlife habitat, stands of large trees with little room for trail machines to maneuver without damaging trees, and remote locations with no access routes for trail machines. The trail machines would be used in locations with suitable access routes, few rocky outcrops, expansive stands of manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita*) and/or whitethorn (*Ceanothus incanus*) on portions of abandoned logging roads, and on decommissioned roads. Some hand crew finish work would be required on the machine-built segments to remove soil berms and complete final grading.

The trail corridor would be cleared of vegetation to a width of up to 10 feet. The trail would be routed so that trees over 8 inches diameter would not be cut. In specific situations where the trail cannot be routed around larger trees for visitor safety reasons, a small number of larger trees (anticipated to be less than five trees) up to 16 inches may need to be cut. All stumps on and immediately adjacent to the trail bed would be removed. Other stumps would be cut flush with ground level. Branches extending over the trail would be cut no less than 10 feet above the trail bed. The trail bed would be constructed as a full bench trail, with a desired maximum width of approximately 3 feet. The cut bank would be backsloped to a 2:1 slope. Those trail segments constructed by trail machine may be initially somewhat wider (4–5 feet wide) but would be allowed to diminish to a narrower tread. Approximately 1 mile of temporary access routes would be cleared to allow trail machines to access the machine-built segments from Paradise Ridge Road (see Figure 2). This would involve clearing of brush and small trees. No blading or duff removal would be required unless short segments with steep side slopes are encountered that prevent safe equipment passage. In this case, blading may be necessary to provide for safe passage and the sites would be reclaimed to their original contour/duff replaced when equipment is removed.

Although generally outsloped (approximately 1–3 percent), the trail would also incorporate frequent grade reversals and rolling dips to maintain hydrologic flow patterns and to shed water off the trail. Inslope turns would be constructed to maintain good

mountain bike riding “flow”, and would incorporate a grade reversal immediately above and below the turn to prevent water from carrying through the turn. The trail would be designed to maintain relatively slow speeds with frequent turning and changes of grade. The trail would be “corralled” with rocks, logs, or other natural material to ensure that riders stay on the tread. All drainage crossings would be armored with large rocks. Retaining walls of rock and/or treated lumber would be constructed where necessary to stabilize the trail, particularly on switchback turns, and on approaches to stream crossings. Areas showing evidence of recent hillslope instability would be avoided. Evidence of recent instability includes active landslides, tension cracks, scarps, and active landslides.

2.1.1.2 Short “beginner” loop trail: A short (approximately 1 mile, or less), gentle gradient, “beginner” level loop trail would be incorporated into the southern end of the 8–10 mile trail near the new trailhead (see Figure 2). The short loop trail would be constructed by a combination of trail machines (e.g., Sweco bulldozer, skid-steer loader, mini-excavator) on a network of existing decommissioned roads. Hand crews would construct stream crossings, and complete finish work on the machine built trail. The roads upon which this trail would be constructed were decommissioned in the late 1990s.

Approximately 10 years of vegetative regrowth, downed logs, and slash would be cleared to a width of up to 10 feet to create a trail corridor. No trees over 8 inches diameter would be cut except in specific situations where the trail cannot be routed around larger trees for visitor safety reasons. If this occurs, a small number of larger trees (anticipated to be less than five trees) up to 16 inches may need to be cut. All stumps on and immediately adjacent to the trail bed would be removed. Other stumps would be cut flush with ground level. Branches extending over the trail would be cut no less than 10 feet above the trail bed. The trail bed would be constructed as a full bench trail, to an initial machine-built width of 4–5 feet, which would be allowed to diminish to approximately 3 feet over time. The cut bank would be backsloped to a 2:1 slope.

Although generally outsloped (approximately 1-3 percent), the trail would also incorporate frequent grade reversals and rolling dips to maintain hydrologic flow patterns and to shed water off the trail. Inslope turns would be constructed to maintain good mountain bike riding “flow”, and would incorporate a grade reversal immediately above and below the turn to prevent water from carrying through the turn. The trail would be designed to maintain relatively slow speeds with frequent turning and changes of grade. The trail would be “corralled” with rocks, logs, or other natural material to ensure that riders stay on the trail. All drainage crossings would be armored with large rocks. Retaining walls of rock and/or treated lumber would be constructed where necessary to stabilize the trail, particularly on switchback turns, and on approaches to stream crossings. Areas showing evidence of recent hillslope instability would be avoided. Evidence of recent instability includes active landslides, tension cracks, scarps, and active landslides.

2.1.1.3 Trailhead Parking Area: A small trailhead and parking area would be constructed on the existing entrance road to the network of decommissioned roads

described above (see Figure 3). The proposed trailhead and parking area would be located immediately adjacent to where the existing road meets the Shelter Cove Road, and would be constructed on the existing footprint created during the initial construction. The area would provide parking for no more than 5–6 vehicles, space sufficient for entrance, exit, and safe turning of vehicles into parking spaces, and encroachment onto the Shelter Cove Road. An encroachment permit would be obtained from the Humboldt County Public Works Department. Trailhead facilities would consist of an information kiosk, picnic table, and animal-proof trash can.

Figure 3: Proposed Mountain Bike Trail Access and Parking



Construction of the trailhead and parking area would be performed by a combination of trail machines, and/or backhoe. Approximately 6–10 Douglas fir trees less than 12 inches diameter would need to be removed. The native soil would be graded to approximate

final grade, including drainage features, then surfaced and graded with compacted aggregate material. Concrete or composite parking bumper stops would be installed and spiked into place to designate parking sites.

2.1.1.4 Impact Minimization Measures:

2.1.1.4.1 Trail Construction: The King Range RMP specifies standards and guidelines to be followed in the development of new trails, conversion of logging roads to trails and maintenance of trails. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Biological Opinion of the King Range RMP specified additional measures to minimize effects on the federally-listed northern spotted owl. These measures would be incorporated to minimize potential impacts from the construction of the proposed trails:

- 1) Trail tread construction will be limited to non-rain periods.
- 2) Disruption of natural hydrologic flow paths, including diversion of streamflow and interception of surface and subsurface flow will be minimized through trail design.
- 3) To minimize sediment delivery to streams from trails, outsloping of the tread surface is preferred, except where outsloping would increase sediment delivery to streams or where outsloping is infeasible or unsafe. Trail drainage will be routed away from potentially unstable channels, fills, and hill slopes.
- 4) Provide and maintain fish passage at all crossings of existing and potential fish-bearing streams.
- 5) All stream crossings will be constructed and armored with large rock so that bank erosion is minimized.
- 6) Install silt fences immediately downstream of stream crossing construction areas. Sediment generated during construction activities and collected by the silt fences will be removed to a location that will not allow sediment to migrate to the stream channel.
- 7) All approaches to stream crossings will include construction of crib walls of native rock, logs, or treated lumber. This will prevent trail sloughing which could deliver silt into the streams. During construction of these stream approaches, excavated soil will be removed to a location that will not allow soil to migrate to the stream channel.
- 8) Trail design will ensure that bicycling speed is greatly reduced on the approach to all tributary stream crossings to prevent trail rutting or displacement of soil down the trail
- 9) Minimize the disturbance to riparian areas for bridge and stream crossing construction. Disturbed ground will receive appropriate erosion control treatment (mulching, seeding, planting, etc.) prior to the beginning of the wet season.
- 10) A limited operating period from February 1 through July 9 will be imposed for the use of motorized equipment in or within 0.25 mile of unsurveyed or occupied nesting and roosting habitat. Trail construction activities within 0.25 mile of unsurveyed or occupied nesting and roosting habitat will be conducted with hand-tools only between February 1 and July 9.
- 11) The trail route will be aligned to provide an adequate buffer around all known

- northern spotted owl activity centers. Vegetative or topographic screening will be utilized to the greatest extent possible to create visual and auditory buffers.
- 12) All construction tools or equipment will be inspected and cleaned of any plant parts capable of reproduction prior to entering the project area to minimize the introduction of invasive, non-native plants.
 - 13) Any water pumping from South Fork Bear Creek or tributaries will follow NMFS (2001) guidelines to minimize the probability of harming listed Pacific salmon species.

2.1.1.4.2 Trailhead Parking Area Construction: The impact minimization measures sited above for the construction of the proposed trails would also be incorporated into the construction of the proposed trailhead parking area. Additional measures specific to the construction of the trailhead parking area would also be incorporated into the Proposed Action:

- 1) Silt fencing will be installed around the work area prior to construction activities. Sediment generated during construction activities and collected by the silt fence will be removed to a location that will not allow sediment to migrate to the stream channel.
- 2) All construction tools or equipment will be inspected and cleaned of any plant parts capable of reproduction prior to entering the project area to minimize the introduction of invasive, non-native plants.
- 3) Retain large trees around the periphery of the trailhead parking lot to provide as much shade as possible to discourage invasive, non-native plant invasion.
- 4) Any water pumping from South Fork Bear Creek will follow NMFS (2001) guidelines to minimize the probability of harming listed Pacific salmon species.

2.1.2 Management and Use:

2.1.2.1 Trail Use: The proposed trails would be intended to be predominantly for day-use mountain bikers. They would be designed to support cross-country mountain biking (vs. downhill, freeride or other defined styles). No overnight use is expected. The proposed trails would be designed to be less difficult than the Phase I Trail, yet be challenging routes that combine quality scenery, a diversity of natural features, a fun trail experience and an opportunity for physical exercise. The trails would be open year-round for all non-motorized uses; but would be designed primarily for mountain bike use. The trail would be expected to be used intermittently during the winter months, although dry times between storms may afford good riding opportunities.

The BLM would monitor trail conditions frequently to assess potential erosion or trail rutting, inspect the function of drainage features, and stream crossings, and to detect any unauthorized motorized use. If unforeseen impacts, particularly sediment movement in and around riparian areas or stream crossings, begin to occur during the wet season, then a seasonal closure would be an option to protect water quality and listed salmonid species. Monitoring would also help determine trail maintenance needs.

Rustic trail signs would be placed at all trail junctions. These signs would provide directional orientation as well as a mountain biking difficulty rating symbol. Difficulty rating symbols would conform to standard ratings as defined by the IMBA and determined by experienced mountain bike enthusiasts. Off highway vehicle restrictions would be posted at appropriate locations, and rock and log barriers would be installed as “filters” for deterring motorized vehicle traffic. Experience from management of the existing Phase I Trail has shown that periodic law enforcement presence (BLM rangers), BLM staff presence, the narrow, winding, tight design of the Phase I Trail, and effective “filters” keep unauthorized motorized vehicle use of the Paradise Royale Trail system to a minimum.

2.1.2.2 Trailhead Use: The proposed trailhead parking area would be utilized for day-use parking for users of the Paradise Royale Trail system. No overnight use would be permitted. Trail information, interpretation, and regulations would be posted on the kiosk.

Information regarding the Paradise Royale Trail system including general description, length, level of difficulty, stream crossings, trailhead parking areas, sensitive resources, etc. have been included in the King Range NCA web page, trail description interpretive displays at both the newly constructed Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trailhead, and Tolkan Campground, and a special mountain biking trail supplement to the King Range map. The same information would be posted at the proposed trailhead parking area.

2.1.2.3 Trail Maintenance and Impact Minimization Measures: BLM has developed partnerships with local mountain bike enthusiasts and clubs to help maintain and promote appropriate use of the trail. BLM staff, CCC crews, SCA crews, and seasonal employees also perform trail maintenance (i.e., brushing, log outs, tread repair, etc). The majority of trail maintenance would be accomplished utilizing non-motorized hand tools only. In the event of maintenance requiring motorized equipment, such as chainsaws, or repairs greater in extent than routine maintenance the following impact minimization measures would be incorporated to protect listed fish and wildlife habitat and populations:

- 1) A limited operating period from February 1 through July 9 will be imposed for the use of motorized equipment in or within 0.25 mile of unsurveyed or occupied nesting and roosting habitat.
- 2) Maintenance and repair work involving movement of soil will be limited to non-rain periods, except remedial repairs to drainage features.
- 3) Maintenance and repair work will incorporate all other impact minimization measures as those specified for trail construction.

2.2 Alternative 1 (No Action)

No additional trails would be constructed to add to the Paradise Royale trail system under the No Action Alternative. The existing Phase I, 14-mile loop would be the full extent of the developed mountain bike trail system in the King Range NCA.

2.3 Alternatives Considered but Dismissed

A route that would have closely followed the South Fork of Bear Creek was considered but dropped from further analysis due to conflicts with private property. Private property in the area includes many year-around residences.

3.0 Affected Environment

The project area falls within the Frontcountry Zone of the King Range NCA. It is located east of the King Range Wilderness Area which was designated in October 2006. The project area is situated on the west slope of Paradise Ridge, between the ridge top, and the South Fork of Bear Creek (see Figure 1). Most of the area is heavily forested with a number of creeks, scattered meadows, and dense brush fields. The area has witnessed extensive logging in the past on scattered acquired lands, and a network of former logging roads, skid roads, and decommissioned roads exist, as well as the decommissioned Queen Peak Mine Road.

3.1 Cultural Resources:

The proposed addition to the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail system lies on BLM lands that have been surveyed for the presence of cultural resources. These surveys (Greenway 1987; Levulett 1976, 1981; Waechter 1986) cover all of the terrain within the proposed project area that is likely to host archaeological resources. The remaining terrain is too steep to preserve in-situ cultural deposits, with the exception of rock shelter contexts which would not, if present, be affected by the construction or use of the mountain bike trail.

Six archaeological sites are recorded within approximately 1 mile of the proposed trail and trail head/parking addition (CA-HUM-401, CA-HUM-404, CA-HUM-406, CA-HUM-407, CA-HUM-411, and CA-HUM-868H).

3.2 Threatened or Endangered Wildlife:

The proposed project area is designated critical habitat for two federally threatened species; the northern spotted owl and the marbled murrelet.

Marbled Murrelet

Potential marbled murrelet habitat does exist within the King Range. However, surveys conducted between 1994 and 1999 have only documented one fly over detection in 1995. No additional nesting or occupancy behaviors have been observed. Suitable habitat for marbled murrelets would not be affected by the proposed project so this species will not be discussed further in the document.

Northern Spotted Owl

The project area is within the range of the northern spotted owl and contains suitable nesting, roosting, foraging, and dispersal habitat. A pair of spotted owls was detected in April 2009 near the route of the proposed trail. Northern spotted owl habitat and activity centers have been identified in several areas adjacent to the project area including, Horse Mountain, Tolkan Campground, Nadelos Campground, and the Finley Creek drainages. Protocol surveys have been conducted throughout the proposed project areas from 1995 to 2009. Since 1995, owl activity has been documented irregularly at South Fork Bear Creek. Not all areas of suitable habitat are surveyed each year. Extensive surveys were conducted in 2008 in the proposed project area.

3.3 Threatened or Endangered Fish and Essential Fish Habitat:

The proposed trail is within the South Fork Bear Creek watershed. South Fork Bear Creek provides spawning and rearing habitat for coho salmon (*Oncorhynchus kisutch*) and Chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) as well as steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*). All three of these species are listed as threatened under the federal ESA. Bear Creek is the third largest tributary of the Mattole River and provides approximately 19 miles of spawning and rearing habitat. Numerous scattered tracts of private lands in the South Fork Bear Creek watershed were logged prior to acquisition by BLM. Many miles of abandoned roads were present on the acquired lands in the watershed and BLM has decommissioned more than 5 miles of road to reduce the potential for road failures and chronic inputs of sediment, including the Queen Peak Mine and Lowgap Roads utilized as Phase I trail routes, and the decommissioned roads to be used for the beginner-level loop trail of the proposed action. Available information on physical habitat parameters indicates that instream habitat is recovering from floods, fire, and past land uses and riparian vegetation is well established. However, late-seral coniferous riparian forests that provided large wood to streams will not likely return to pre-1950s levels for centuries. The proposed trail would not cross the main stem of South Fork Bear Creek, but would cross several intermittent tributaries to South Fork Bear Creek and are located, generally, over ½ mile from any anadromous fish habitat.

3.4 Water Quality – Surface/Ground/Drinking:

Available water quality data for South Fork Bear Creek concern summer water temperature and Rapid Biological Assessment information based on aquatic macroinvertebrates.

Summer water temperatures in South Fork Bear Creek remain cool and generally within the range preferred by salmon and steelhead. Summer water temperatures measured near the proposed parking area remained below 65°F during 2007 (BLM data on file) which is the most recent data available. The latest data reflect great improvement over temperature data from 1972 when the temperature in Bear Creek was reported to be 79°F (BLM 1995).

Rapid Biological Assessment data generally show South Fork Bear Creek to have unimpaired water quality (BLM data on file). Diversity of aquatic macroinvertebrates is relatively high and samples contained few species tolerant to pollution.

3.5 Wetlands/Riparian:

Throughout most of South Fork Bear Creek the riparian areas are influenced by logging operations that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s, the Finley Fire in 1973, as well as the 1955 and 1964 floods which scoured and altered the stream channel. Currently the great majority of South Fork Bear Creek and its tributaries are well shaded with hardwood species dominated by red alder. Small pockets of larger Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) occur in riparian areas throughout the watershed. Historical evidence suggests that larger Douglas-fir were the dominant species along most riparian corridors (BLM 1995). The King Range RMP states that riparian silviculture may be used to accelerate growth of conifer species but to date only small projects have been completed in South Fork Bear Creek. Late-seral coniferous riparian forests that provided large wood to streams will not likely return to pre-1950s levels for centuries.

3.6 Wild and Scenic Rivers:

The South Fork Bear Creek watershed, determined by the King Range RMP is suitable for wild and scenic river designation. The affected river segment is currently classified as scenic. Scenic rivers are defined as those rivers or river segments that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads. Outstandingly remarkable values include:

- spawning and rearing habitat for federally listed coho salmon, Chinook salmon and steelhead trout
- the presence of the federally listed threatened northern spotted owl
- prehistoric and historic cultural sites
- the presence of *Usnea longissima*, a rare lichen

One of the many King Range RMP management goals is to protect the free-flowing nature and outstandingly remarkable values of this river segment.

3.7 Recreation:

Recreation activity in the project area is primarily accounted for by mountain bikers riding the existing 14-mile mountain bike trail. Approximately 100 mountain bikers ride this trail each month from May through September. During the winter months, use decreases substantially. Mountain biking on this existing trail system is expected to double within 5 years as more visitors become aware of this outstanding opportunity.

Other recreation activities occur to a limited extent, and include horseback riding, day hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, and hunting. Recreation activities nearby the project include camping in Tolkan and Horse Mountain Campgrounds, and driving for pleasure along the Shelter Cove, Paradise Ridge and King Peak Roads.

3.8 Visual Resources:

The BLM is required to incorporate visual design considerations into all surface disturbing projects. Public lands are placed into visual resource management (VRM) classes based on 1) an inventory of their scenic quality, viewer sensitivity and distance

zones, and 2) the land use planning process where factors such as special designations, other resource values/needs, public demands etc. are considered. The resulting classes range from 1-5. Class 1 is the most restrictive management zone and allows for very limited management activities that must mimic and only minimally contrast with the natural environment. This class is reserved for certain areas with special designations including wilderness areas and wild portions of designated wild and scenic rivers. Class 2 allows for management activities that can be seen, but they must not be at a level that attracts attention. Under this management class, changes in the basic visual elements of form, line, color and texture caused by a management activity must not be evident in the surrounding landscape. Class 3 allows a moderate level of change to the characteristic landscape. Management activities and uses may attract attention, but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. The King Range RMP identifies the project area within the VRM Class 3 zone.

The proposed action would create short-term visual impacts in the South Fork Bear Creek watershed. The King Range RMP identifies this portion of the Frontcountry Zone as a Class 3 VRM zone. Objective VRM 4.3 states that silvicultural treatments, road removal, and other resource restoration activities would be allowed to cause short and medium-term visual impacts that meet Class 3 objectives, but such activities would be designed so that any long-term impacts (greater than 5 years from the treatment date) are at the Class 2 level.

3.9 Forest/Rangelands:

The area affected by the Proposed Action is dominated by Douglas fir, tanoak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), and madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) forest in varying stages of succession. Portions of the area have been previously logged.

3.10 Soils/Geology:

The proposed project is located in a geologically active area with high rates of topographic uplift, frequent earthquakes, and landslides. This high rate of geologic activity is the result of the intersection of three large geologic plates, the Mendocino Triple Junction, located just offshore of the King Range NCA (Merritts and Bull 1989).

High uplift rates, fractured and folded rocks from faulting, and intense rainfall in the King Range typically form watersheds that have deeply incised drainage systems and steep slopes. These slopes are susceptible to erosion and landslides, especially where the rocks are weak. Slopes of this type are commonly found on the western slopes of the King Range.

Typical rocks in the project area are isolated blocks of resistant, massive sandstone, zones of sheared shales, and combinations of shale and sandstone of varying thicknesses. Sandstone and shale are the most common, but there are also minor occurrences of chert, conglomerate, and volcanic basalt. All of the rocks have undergone some degree of shearing and folding. The rocks in the project area are locally known as the King Range

Terrane, a geologic subunit of the Franciscan Complex as mapped by the US Geological Survey (geologic sub-unit “krk1” on geologic maps), (McLaughlin, 2000)

The proposed project is located in the South Fork of Bear Creek, which has slopes generally ranging from 30-70 percent, resistant rock types, and well drained soils. . Erosion maps from the 2002 North Coast Watershed Assessment Project (NCWAP) for the Mattole River watershed study show relatively little gully occurrence within the Bear Creek watershed. The California Geological Survey landslide map for the Bear Creek watershed also shows relatively little historical landslide activity that delivered sediment to streams (Davenport et al. 2002, p.70) when compared to other areas in the Mattole watershed.

There are no important mineral deposits in this group of rocks with the exception of a small deposit of manganese that was mined briefly during the mid-1950s. The manganese was mined by hand from chert deposits at the Queen Peak Mine on the South Fork of Bear Creek and was trucked to Arizona for processing. Phase I of the trail passes the mine site. The mine has been closed and open pits and roads were re-contoured during watershed rehabilitation programs conducted by the BLM.

4.0 Environmental Effects

Table 4.1 The following table lists elements of the human environment that were considered in assessing the impacts of the proposed action and alternatives. Consideration of these elements is based on requirements of law, regulation, policy or other supplemental authorities. Elements that may be impacted are further described in the sections following this table.

Element	No or Negligible Impact	May Impact	Not Present	Rationale (if applicable)
Air Quality	X			Any dust generated by the project would be minimal and limited to the immediate project site during construction periods. Impacts to PM 10 Attainment protocols for Humboldt County would be immeasurable.
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern			X	
Cultural Resources		X		
Environmental Justice			X	
Floodplains			X	No floodplains occur in the action area
Invasive, Nonnative Weed Species	X			French broom (<i>Genista monspessulana</i>) occurs along county roads in the vicinity of the proposed action. These populations were last treated in 2009. Given that the project participants follow common tool inspection

Element	No or Negligible Impact	May Impact	Not Present	Rationale (if applicable)
				and cleaning protocols prior to entry upon BLM lands (described in the Proposed Action); and that no weed infested fill is imported to the project site(s); there is expected to be no impact to the current weed status of the area, nor new weed introduction(s) as a result of project implementation.
Native American Religious Concerns			X	
Threatened or Endangered Wildlife		X		
Threatened or Endangered Fish---Essential Fish Habitat		X		
Threatened or Endangered Vegetation			X	The California Natural Diversity Database RAREFIND was queried for records of threatened or endangered vegetation in the project area; this database returned no records of special status plants in the area. Botanical field surveys were conducted on 5/23/09, 6/9/22, 6/22/09; no special status plants were found.
Waste- Hazardous/Solid			X	No hazardous materials or solid wastes beyond small generator quantities would be produced as a result of the proposed action. These small quantities would be disposed of at approved facilities.
Water Quality: surface/ground/drinking		X		
Wetlands/Riparian	X			The proposed trailhead parking area is nNear the South Fork Bear Creek but no impacts to riparian condition or function are expected.
Wild & Scenic Rivers		X		The proposed action is located within the South Fork Bear Creek watershed, determined suitable for Wild and Scenic River designation. Proposed trail development and maintenance, and anticipated increased mountain biking use may impact outstanding remarkable values.
Wilderness/Wilderness Study Areas			X	
Recreation		X		The proposed action affects recreation opportunities in the area.
Visual Resources		X		The proposed action includes surface disturbance in a Class III VRM area.
Public Health and Safety			X	
Social and Economic			X	
Forests/Rangelands		X		The proposed action is located in Douglas fir, tanoak, madrone forest.
Soils/Geology		X		The proposed action involves localized displacement of soil during construction and

Element	No or Negligible Impact	May Impact	Not Present	Rationale (if applicable)
				use.
Coastal Zone			X	
Other (list)				

4.1 Direct and Indirect Effects

Proposed Action

4.1.1 Cultural Resources:

The proposed action would have no effects on any currently recorded cultural resources. Construction and use of the mountain bike trail is not considered to have any potential to affect any known Native American religious concerns.

None of the recorded cultural sites are within the area of potential effect of the proposed project, nor would there be any impacts to those cultural resources should the proposed action be undertaken.

The above-noted surveys and determination of no effect to cultural resources considered eligible for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places constitutes the BLM's compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Should any currently unknown cultural resources be identified during implementation of the proposed action, all work in the vicinity of those resources shall be suspended pending examination by the Arcata Field Office archaeologist.

4.1.3 Threatened or Endangered Wildlife:

Construction of the proposed trail and increased human activity through use of the trail may affect nesting NSO where the trail passes within the line-of sight of the nest area. The proposed trail passes through two potential nest areas midslope on Paradise Ridge and foraging habitat along South Fork Bear Creek. A potential pair of NSOs were located in the southern block of potential habitat but no nesting behavior was detected in follow up surveys. Effects of trail construction, maintenance, and use activities would be mitigated by locating trail routes away from direct line-of-sight of the nest tree, as well as incorporating topographic features and dense vegetation to screen visual and auditory disturbances. Potential effects also would be mitigated by prohibiting trail construction activity within ¼ mile of suitable habitat or known activity centers during nesting season (February 1 through July 31), or until fledging occurs. Future trail maintenance activities within these areas would be restricted to hand tools only during the nesting season. Nearly all recreation use would be during daylight hours and should not interfere with NSO foraging activities. South Fork Bear Creek supports areas of high dusky-footed

woodrat (*Neotoma Fuscipes*) abundance. Construction and use of the trail would not impact woodrats middens or foraging habitat. The portion of the trail in foraging area along South Fork Bear Creek follows an existing road which would not require removing foraging habitat for trail construction.

4.1.4 Threatened or Endangered Fish – Essential Fish Habitat:

Trailhead and Parking Area Construction and Use

Although the trailhead parking area is located near South Fork Bear Creek the area is flat and requires minimal ground disturbance. The riparian vegetation along the South Fork Bear Creek adjacent to the proposed parking area is densely vegetated and should adequately filter any sediment released from the parking area before runoff reaches the stream. Discharge of automotive fluids from vehicles parked at the trailhead parking area is expected to be negligible and not likely to be transported to the stream. Vehicle impacts would be undetectable relative to that from the Shelter Cove Road which crosses South Fork Bear Creek with traffic numbering in the hundreds of vehicles per day. No impacts to fish or fish habitat are expected.

Trail Construction and Use

Measures to minimize erosion would be employed as described in the proposed action. However, it is likely that small amounts of sediment may enter the small tributary stream channels during trail construction. It is expected that all of this sediment would come from construction of tributary stream crossings and approaches to stream crossings. Since these tributaries would likely be dry or only flowing intermittently during trail construction it is likely that this small amount of erosion would be transported to the South Fork of Bear Creek during the first significant rainfall event after construction is complete. Given the anticipated small volume of sediment relative to the volume of sediment present in South Fork Bear Creek during first significant rainfall the increase in turbidity from trail construction would be undetectable and have no impacts on fish or fish habitat. Given the trail design and construction techniques it is unlikely that any sediment would be delivered to watercourses from removal of vegetation or construction occurring over 100 feet from a stream channel.

After the trail construction is complete, a small amount of additional sediment yield could occur from trail rutting or small slides developing across the trail, if trail maintenance is not performed in a timely manner. Of particular sensitivity are the tributary stream crossings. These crossings would be monitored frequently with remedial trail maintenance given a high priority in any areas that could transport sediment into any of the tributaries in the area. The amount of sediment yield from trail use is expected to be undetectable.

Given the distance of the majority of the trail from the South Fork Bear Creek it is not likely that any sediment yield from this action would cause impacts to fish or fish habitat.

4.1.5 Water Quality – Surface/Ground/Drinking:

Trailhead and Parking Area Construction and Use

Although the trailhead parking area is located near South Fork Bear Creek the area is flat and requires minimal ground disturbance. The riparian vegetation along the South Fork Bear Creek adjacent to the proposed parking area is densely vegetated and should adequately filter any sediment released from the parking area before runoff reaches the stream. Discharge of automotive fluids from vehicles parked at the trailhead parking area is expected to be negligible and not likely to be transported to the stream. Vehicle impacts would be undetectable relative to those from the Shelter Cove Road which crosses South Fork Bear Creek with traffic numbering in the hundreds of vehicles per day. Any minor impacts to water quality are expected to be undetectable.

Water necessary for compaction during construction of the trailhead parking area may be drawn from South Fork Bear Creek and would follow the NMFS (2001) water drafting guidance. Due to the small size of the proposed parking area not more than one 3,000 gallon water truck is expected to be required to be sufficient to attain adequate compaction of the aggregate surface. If construction occurs during a severe drought resulting in extremely low instream flows in South Fork Bear Creek water for compaction would be acquired from another source and trucked into the job site.

Trail Construction and Use

Measures to minimize erosion would be employed as described in the Proposed Action. However, it is likely that small amounts of sediment may enter the small tributary stream channels during trail construction. It is expected that all of this sediment would come from construction of tributary stream crossings and approaches to stream crossings. Since these tributaries would likely be dry or only flowing intermittently during trail construction it is likely that this small amount of erosion would be transported to the South Fork of Bear Creek during the first significant rainfall event after construction is complete. Given the anticipated small volume of sediment, and thus increase in turbidity, relative to the turbidity present in South Fork Bear Creek during first significant rainfall the increase in turbidity from trail construction would be undetectable and thus would have no detectable effect on water quality. Given the trail design and construction techniques it is unlikely that any sediment would be delivered to watercourses from removal of vegetation or construction occurring over 100 feet from a stream channel.

After the trail construction is complete, a small amount of additional sediment yield could occur from trail rutting or small slides developing across the trail, if trail maintenance is not performed in a timely manner. Of particular sensitivity are the tributary stream crossings. These crossings would be monitored frequently with remedial trail maintenance given a high priority in any areas that could transport sediment into any of the tributaries in the area. The amount of increased turbidity from trail use is expected to be undetectable.

Given the distance of the majority of the trail from the South Fork Bear Creek it is not likely that any sediment yield from this action would cause impacts to water quality.

4.1.7 Wild and Scenic Rivers:

Identified outstandingly remarkable values include spawning and rearing habitat for federally listed steelhead trout, and Coho and chinook salmon, a verified activity center for the federally listed threatened northern spotted owl, significant prehistoric and historic sites (within corridor but outside of project area), and contains *Usnea longissima* (rare lichen) listed by the California Lichen Society as a Survey and Manage species. The trail would be constructed and maintained to ensure that these outstandingly remarkable values are protected by implementing the impact minimization measures listed under Section 2.1.1.4.

4.1.8 Recreation: The Proposed Action would increase recreation opportunities and use for mountain bikers, specifically for those of beginning and intermediate levels. Use levels of the existing trail are 100 riders a month from May through September, and during the winter months approximately 25 riders per month. Mountain bike use of the existing trail is expected to double within 5 years, dependent on the amount of outside advertising and articles written about this outstanding opportunity unique to the region. The addition of a less challenging trail segments to the existing system is expected to broaden the appeal of the route to a larger segment of the riding community and further increase use by an additional 100-200 riders per month within 5 years.

The proposed action would increase recreation opportunities on the Paradise Royale Mountain Bike Trail System by increasing the number of access locations, and the number and variety of potential route combinations. Although this trail would be designed and promoted specifically for mountain biking, occasional hikers and equestrian users may also enjoy the trail. This trail would also serve as a link for Lost Coast Trail (LCT) through-hikers to connect with the Chemise Mountain Trail section of the Lost Coast Trail via the Horse Mountain Creek Trail. Such a connection would allow LCT through-hikers to avoid hiking several miles of the Shelter Cove Road in order to connect the coastal section of the LCT with the Chemise Mountain section. It is anticipated that only a small number of backpackers would hike this trail based on existing LCT use patterns, and therefore would not likely create user conflicts.

4.1.9 Visual Resources: The Proposed Action would result in very minimal visual contrasts to the scenic qualities of the existing environment and would conform to Class 3 visual resource management standards. Due to the densely forested habitat of this area, the visibility of the trail corridor would be limited to those using the trail. Proper pruning and disposal of brush would minimize visual impacts to trail users. Cut and fill banks would be visible along the new trail tread segment during the first year, but would be covered with leaf litter and appear natural after one winter. The proposed trail would not be visible from vantage points along either the Paradise Ridge or King Peak Roads.

4.1.10 Forest/Rangelands: The proposed action would remove approximately 9 acres of vegetation, mainly brush and tree branches and small trees (< 8" diameter) along an estimated 8 mile by 10 foot wide trail corridor. The trail would be routed to avoid cutting trees greater than 8 inches in diameter, or the possibility of equipment damage to trees during construction. In specific situations where the trail cannot be routed around larger trees for visitor safety reasons, a small number of these larger trees (anticipated to be less

than 5 trees) up to 16 inches may need to be cut. This cutting of individual trees in different locations would not impact the overall forest ecology.

4.1.11 Soils/Geology:

The proposed trail design would incorporate the same sustainable design features of the Phase I trail. The trail would be a full-bench trail (i.e., no fill material is incorporated into the trail bed), cut banks would be back-sloped to at least a 2:1 slope, the trail would incorporate frequent grade reversals to shed water, and frequent turns to slow rider speeds. These design standards maximize both mountain bike riding “flow” and natural hydrologic flow patterns. Although generally gently outsloped (approximately 1-3percent) to shed water off the trail, insloped turns would be utilized to maintain good mountain bike riding “flow” and provide fun, smooth riding. Insloped turns incorporate a grade reversal (aka rolling dip) immediately above and below the turn to prevent water from carrying through the turn. Experience with the Phase I Trail has confirmed the sustainable durability of these design elements; negligible erosion of the trail tread has been observed, and no bank nor trail tread failures have occurred on any part of the Phase I Trail.

Some soil disturbance would result from trail bed construction. Measures to minimize erosion would be employed as described in the Proposed Action.

Soil displaced during construction and use of the trail would result in localized inputs of sediment to adjacent stream channels. The magnitude of inputs is expected to be undetectable in downstream reaches. Inputs would likely decrease in the years following construction as portions of the route revegetate and inhibit further soil displacement.

4,2 Alternative 1 (no action)

No environmental impacts would result from selection of the No Action Alternative with the exception of recreation opportunities as described below.

4.2.1 Recreation

The BLM would forgo implementation of a priority recreation management objective analyzed under the King Range RMP (see section 1.3 above). Mountain biking opportunities would be limited to the existing loop which was designed for more advanced riders. Provision of opportunities for a broader range of skill levels would not occur. User conflicts and safety issues may also arise as less experienced riders attempt to access the existing trail system since alternative opportunities are not available in the local area.

4.2 Cumulative Effects

Recreation

Assessment Area: Northwest California, Humboldt and Northern Mendocino County within 2 hours of the trail.

Cumulative effects: There are currently a very limited number of mountain bike trails in the region with existing routes mostly on old logging roads. Small segments of single track trail (highly desired by mountain bikers) are available in the Arcata Community Forest and Redwood National Park, approximately 2-3 hours north of the project area. Proposed additional trail segments are being designed by the BLM in the Lacks Creek Management Area. Development of these opportunities along with the Paradise Ridge Phase III would serve to provide a “critical mass” of riding opportunities to attract out-of-area visitors who would not otherwise travel to the area for a single riding opportunity. Future expansion within the Paradise Ridge Trail system such as additional sub-loops and connections to additional trailheads (such as Horse Mountain Campground) would also add to this critical mass. Population increase in California and in particular, coastal communities is expected to contribute to increased demand for recreational opportunities in the region.

5.0 Tribes, Individuals, Organizations and Agencies Consulted

Bear River Band of Rohnerville Rancheria

Eel River Nation of Sovereign Wailaki

Sinkyone Intertribal Wilderness Council

International Mountain Bicycling Association

Tim Daniels – Big Foot Mountain Bike Club

Tyce Fraser – Southern Humboldt Mountain Bike Enthusiast

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