



# United States Department of the Interior



## BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

Mother Lode Field Office  
5152 Hillside Circle  
El Dorado Hills, CA 95762-5713  
[www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)

**EA NUMBER:** CA-180-14-48

**PROPOSED ACTION:** Parking lot connector trail project

**LOCATION:** T 11 N, R 9 E, Section 11, NW ¼, NW ¼, NW ¼, El Dorado County, CA

### 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION

#### 1.1 NEED FOR ACTION

The Greenwood Creek parking area fills up quickly due to it being connected to the only free white water boating put in; the Magnolia parking area was constructed to provide overflow parking for the Greenwood parking lot. However, instead of using the new parking area, people often park along Highway 49, just outside the Greenwood Creek parking area instead of using the Magnolia parking area. This is because it is a long walk between the lots and there is no feasible connection between the two lots. Currently, there are no feasible existing trails that connect the lots to access the Greenwood Creek boat put in. The proposed connector trail between the two parking areas will address this concern and facilitate public use of the Magnolia parking area. This will reduce the public safety hazard of the public parking and walking on/along Highway 49. The connector trail will improve the hike between the two lots by providing a route directly back to the head of the Greenwood parking lot, via a spur off the existing Gerle Loop trail (see attached map). Currently an unauthorized user created trail follows a similar path to the proposed short cut, but has significant flaws that create erosion and safety concerns.

The proposed action to be analyzed in this EA would expand on, support and link past and current trail projects in the Greenwood Creek area to reduce hazardous parking along roads for local residents' safety. With this need in mind, the primary purpose of the proposed action is to reduce this hazard through the installation of a connector trail between existing authorized parking areas.

#### 1.2 CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLANS

The proposed action is consistent with the Sierra Resource Management Plan's Record of Decision, approved in February 2008. On page 26 of the ROD it states that a goal of the BLM's recreation program is to "Ensure the continued availability of outdoor recreational opportunities while protecting other resources and uses."

The construction of a trail is also consistent with the South Fork American River Management Plan published in July 2004, which states, "In general, the BLM will construct trails in the different parcels to enhance recreational opportunities," (p. 11).

## **2.0 PROPOSED ACTION / ALTERNATIVES**

### **2.1 PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action would build a connector trail between the Gerle Loop portion of the South Fork Trail and the Greenwood Creek parking lot. The proposed connector trail would be approximately 200 yards long. The trail would cross a dry wash using stone and treated timber steps. At the crossing, a 24" diameter by 20' long culvert would be installed and anchored at both ends of the culvert with rock. Local dirt for fill would be used to cover the pipe to a depth of 18" and form the bed of the trail.

### **2.2 ALTERNATIVES**

**Alternative 1.** Under Alternative 1 the trail would still be constructed as indicated above but would use a 5' wide by 20' long foot bridge to cross the creek instead of the culvert.

**No Action Alternative.** Under the no action alternative, the BLM would not conduct the planned connector trail installation within the project area. The public would continue to park along Highway 49 or hiking the existing user-created trail that involves a steep unimproved slope and a jump across the drainage ditch. These conditions could be harmful to the public's health and safety as they increase the likelihood of a traffic accident or injury to individuals.

## **3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT AND IMPACTS**

The Greenwood Creek parcel consists of approximately 732 acres. The parcel is bisected by the South Fork American River. The northern portion of the parcel includes segments of Greenwood and Hastings creeks. South-facing hill slopes are dominated by interior live oak woodland with black oak, California buckeye, toyon, buckbrush, white leaf manzanita, keckiella, California coffeeberry, poison oak, and pipe vine. A broad riparian habitat along the river includes sand bar willow, arroyo willow, shining willow, valley oak, Oregon ash, white alder, Fremont cottonwood, button willow, coyote bush, mock orange, California wild grape, deer grass, and scotch broom. Hastings Creek includes Douglas fir and incense cedar, as well as riparian species such as Oregon ash. Blue oak savannah grasslands composed largely of non-native annual species dominate the relatively flat portions of the parcel, between the two creeks, along Highway 49.

The Greenwood Creek parcel falls within areas of BLM-administered lands with special values and designations. The Greenwood Creek parcel is located within the South Fork American River Special Recreation Management Area (SRMA), designated by the BLM in 2008. Also, the BLM recommended in 2008 that the South Fork of the American River corridor from Chili Bar to Salmon Falls (including portions of the Greenwood Creek parcel) be incorporated into the national wild and scenic river system due, in part, to its outstandingly remarkable whitewater recreation and cultural resource values. The recommended classification is recreational.

Wild and Scenic River outstandingly remarkable values (ORVs) – The two alternatives would negatively impact the cultural ORVs identified by the BLM for the proposed South Fork American Wild and Scenic River. The alternatives would have a negative impact on the cultural resources ORV but the effect would be minimal. The proposed action would help to enhance the whitewater recreation ORV. The proposed action would not affect the river's classification as Recreational.

**Hydrology.** The drainage is dry most of the year and receives most of its water from run off from Highway 49. At the point of the crossing the flashy nature of the water flow has created a slot like, cut bank ditch about 4' wide by 4' deep. The ditch continues about another 150 yards East to where it meets up with Greenwood Creek. Greenwood Creek then flows south for 50 yards to join up with the South Fork American River. The use of the culvert will not change the existing conditions. If the culvert were to become plugged, the water could back up and wash around the crossing before re-entering the existing ditch. Damage would be localized to the area around the crossing.

**Soils.** Most of the parent materials for the residual soils on the parcels along the South Fork American River are either common granitic or metasedimentary or metavolcanic rock types, common in the Sierra Nevada foothills. In the canyon bottoms and riparian areas especially, are sediments of mixed origin. The proposed trail would replace a user-created trail with better routing and design features to control erosion. The culvert would have rock armoring to prevent degradation of the wash.

**Vegetation.** The project area consists of oak woodland and grasslands mixed with native and non-native species. In April 2015 the BLM Botanist analyzed the impacts of the proposed action on vegetation, particularly special status plants through a field survey. The analysis is designed to help the BLM meet its obligations under the Endangered Species Act and other BLM policies with respect to special status species. The analysis included a background records search through the California Natural Diversity Database as well as an internal BLM natural resources geodatabase. Surveys conducted by the Botanist did not locate rare plants in the project area. The BLM Botanist determined that there are no special status plants in the project area; therefore, the proposed action would not negatively impact special status plants.

**Wildlife.** In April of 2015 the BLM wildlife biologist conducted a site visit to determine potential impacts to wildlife including special status species. Wildlife within the project area is typical of wildlife throughout the lower foothills of the Sierra Nevada. Because of the mix of habitat types, the area supports significantly diverse wildlife populations. Over 200 species of birds may occur seasonally, or as residents, including wintering bald eagles. At least 94 species of mammals are residents, including mountain lions, bobcats, foxes, coyotes, deer, and ring-tail cats. The river itself supports rainbow and brown trout, and a variety of native fishes. The planning area contains numerous habitats including riparian, riverine, blue oak-foothill pine, mixed chaparral/chamise, montane hardwood-conifer, montane hardwood-oak and annual grasslands. No special status species would be directly impacted by the proposed action because none are known to occur in the project area.

**Fire and Fuels.** Construction of the trail would be during the spring or outside high fire hazard conditions. Hand tools would be used for the majority of the trail. A mini excavator may be used to install the culvert. If power equipment is used, fuel moisture/fire hazard would be taken into account. Additionally, fire hazard would not increase as a result of this project because it would not result in increased use of the area; it simply reroutes existing use. Therefore, no increases in fire hazard are expected during construction or use of this trail.

**Cultural Resources/Native American issues.** BLM's Greenwood Creek parcel, including the project area, has been inventoried for cultural resources by BLM archaeologists in 2000 and 2001 for the South Fork American River Management Plan. The inventory included Native American consultation outreach. Numerous cultural resources have been identified and recorded in the general area. No Native American issues have been identified. The BLM archaeologist is in the process of conducting an intensive inventory/study specific to the project area, in accordance with Section 106

of the National Historic Preservation Act. To date, at least one cultural resource has been identified within the project area: an abandoned mining ditch. The ditch would be slightly damaged by the trail construction. The ditch does not appear to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

**Recreation.** Use of the Magnolia Ranch Trail Head would increase with the addition of up to twenty cars on the busiest of summer weekends. The lot capacity is 80 vehicles. Competition for parking space at Magnolia is not expected to be significant, since the peak use of the Greenwood parking lot occurs mid-day and early afternoon. This is the hottest part of the day and typically the hiking and equestrian users are not present in great numbers at the Magnolia parking area. Users of the Greenwood Creek lot may see problems with traffic flow as more people utilize the east end of the lot for equipment drop-off/pick-up. The current design of the lot does not allow for easy turnaround for vehicles that are dropping off or picking up equipment other than the designed parking stalls. A potential remedy if traffic flow becomes a problem is to eliminate some parking spaces and create a turn around and gear drop off area. The greatest impact on recreation would be beneficial; it would create a safer route for users by providing an attractive option to crossing Highway 49 or walking along the highway between the Magnolia Trail Head and the Greenwood Creek River Access.

The impact on recreation would only occur if construction conflicted with the summer boating season. There would be a temporary reduction in the number of parking spaces available in the Greenwood lot.

**Visual Resources.** The BLM manages this area in accordance with class II visual resource management (VRM) standards. The BLM's objective for class II is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape. The proposed trail will not impact visual resources.

### **3.3 Impacts of Alternatives**

**Alternative 1** would have a slightly larger footprint on the land since it would require small concrete abutments at each end of the bridge structure compared to rock anchors for the culvert.

**No Action Alternative** would mean the public would continue to use a hazardous, user trail that would be prone to erosion as use increases, or walk along the even more dangerous shoulder of Highway 49 in order to get back to the Greenwood Creek parking lot.

Under No Action Alternative, the user-created trail, which has a higher gradient than the proposed trail, would continue to pose a greater risk of erosion and potential safety concerns. The culvert would increase safety and control erosion by eliminating foot impacts along the edge of the cut bank and creating a level trail where there is now a three to four foot leap required of users.

### **3.4 Cumulative Impacts**

Negative cumulative impacts are not anticipated. The proposed action would not negatively impact air, water, soil, biological, cultural, visual, wild and scenic, or ORV values. The proposed action is, however, expected to have long-term beneficial cumulative impacts on recreation along the lower South Fork.

## 5.0 Agencies and Persons Consulted

No Federally listed animal or plant species (or their habitat) were found; therefore, no consultation with outside agencies, organizations or other persons outside of the BLM interdisciplinary team was conducted in regard to the proposed ROW.

### 5.1 Author

Scott Rion, BLM Recreation Specialist

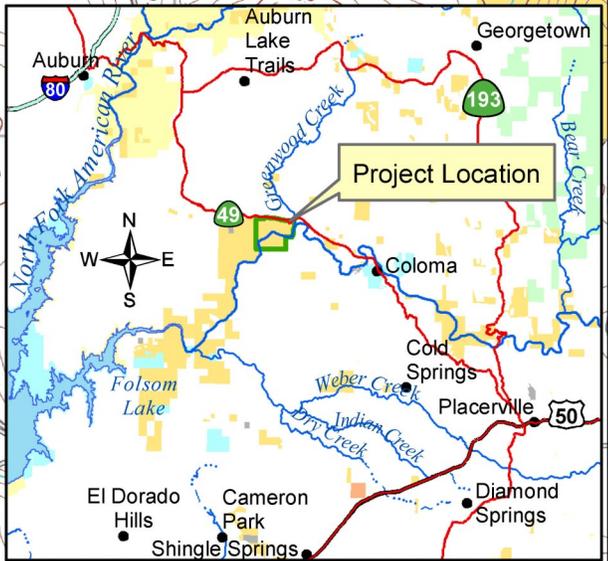
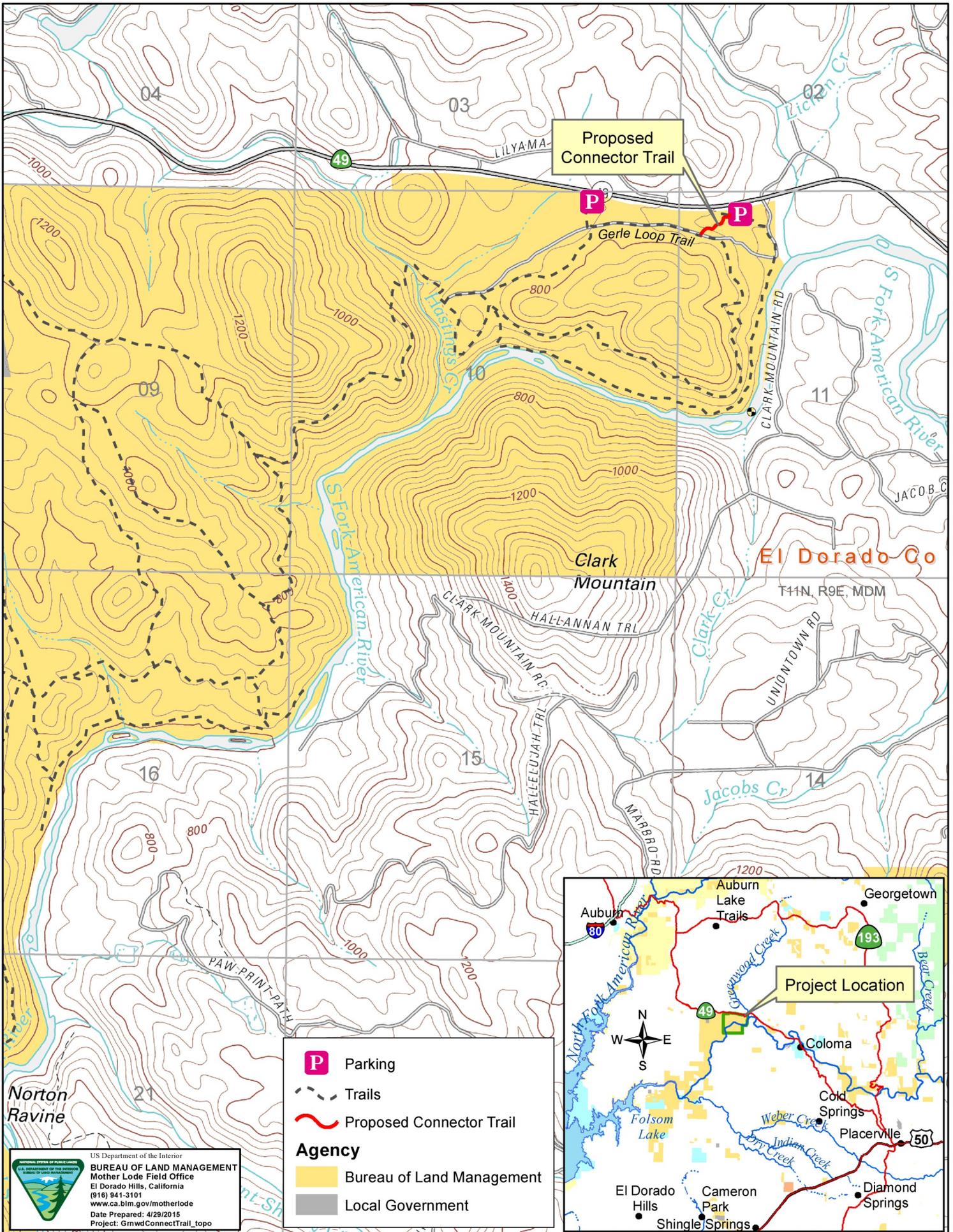
### 5.2 BLM Interdisciplinary Team/Reviewers:

<i>/s/ Jeff Horn</i> _____	<i>4/22/15</i> _____
Jeff Horn VRM / Recreation Manager	Date
<i>/s/ Beth Brenneman</i> _____	<i>4/24/15</i> _____
Beth Brenneman Botany / Invasive Species	Date
<i>/s/ James Barnes</i> _____	<i>4/22/14</i> _____
James Barnes Archaeologist, Cultural Resources	Date
<i>/s/ Peggy Cranston</i> _____	<i>4/24/15</i> _____
Peggy Cranston Wildlife Biologist	Date
<i>/s/ Heather Daniels</i> _____	<i>4/24/15</i> _____
Heather Daniels Planning & Environmental Coordinator	Date

## 4.2 Availability of Document and Comment Procedures

This EA will be posted on Mother Lode Field Office's website ([www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode](http://www.blm.gov/ca/motherlode)) under NEPA and will be available for a 15-day public review period. The EA is also available by mail upon request during this 15-day public review period. Comments should be sent to Jeff Horn at Bureau of Land Management, Mother Lode Field Office, 5152 Hillside Circle, El Dorado Hills, California 95762 or emailed to [jhorn@blm.gov](mailto:jhorn@blm.gov)

# Parking Lot Connector Trail Project



**Legend**

- Parking
- Trails
- Proposed Connector Trail

**Agency**

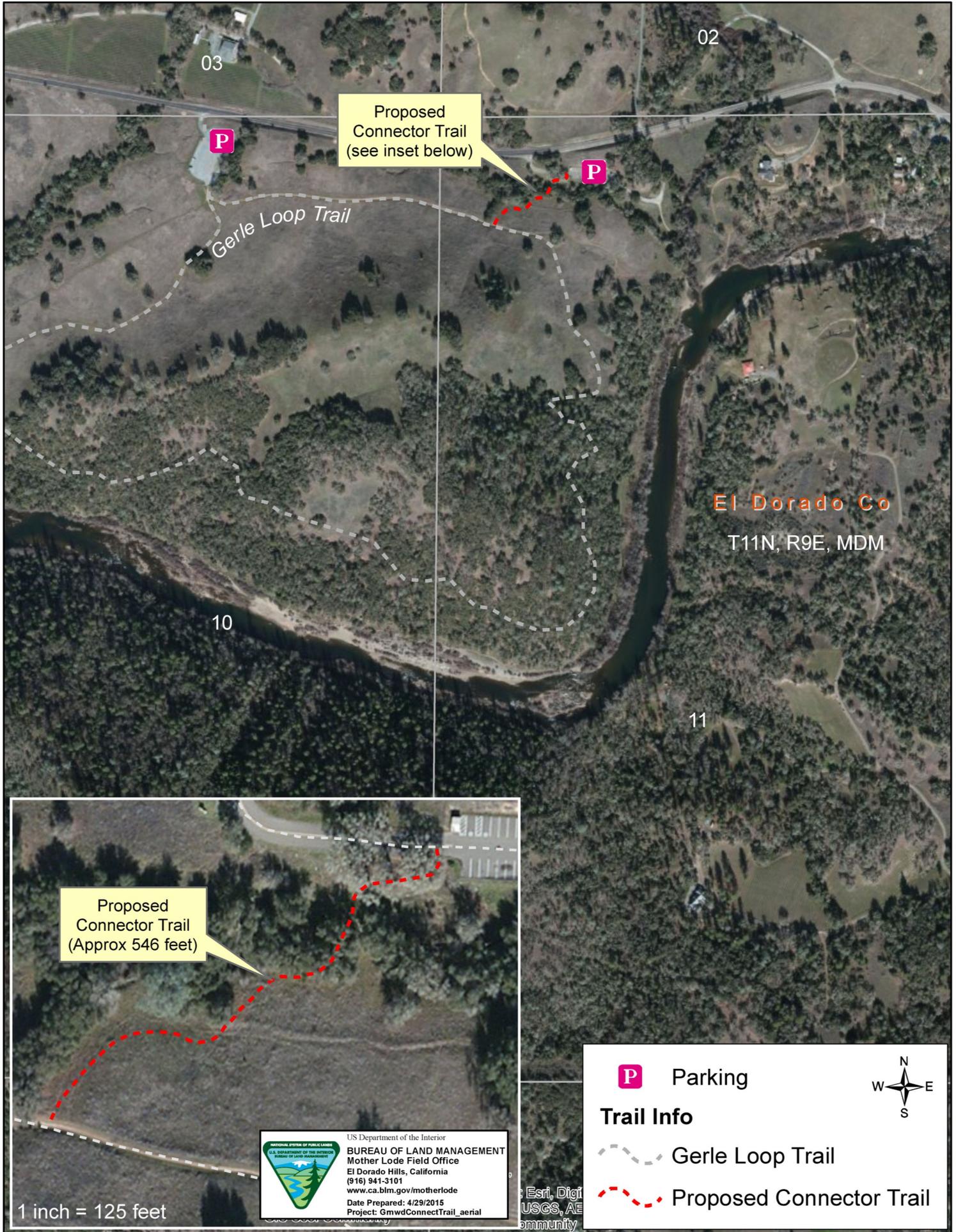
- Bureau of Land Management
- Local Government

US Department of the Interior  
**BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT**  
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 Date Prepared: 4/29/2015  
 Project: GrmwdConnectTrail\_topo

1:20,000

1 inch = 1,667 feet

# Parking Lot Connector Trail Project



Proposed Connector Trail (see inset below)

P

P

Gerle Loop Trail

El Dorado Co  
T11N, R9E, MDM

10

11

Proposed Connector Trail (Approx 546 feet)

**P** Parking



**Trail Info**

Gerle Loop Trail

Proposed Connector Trail



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 Date Prepared: 4/29/2015  
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1 inch = 125 feet

1:8,000

1 inch = 667 feet