



City of Eagle Recreation Concept Plan



Introduction

The City of Eagle, through a citizen work group (Resolution 20-21), has developed a recreation proposal for the use and management of roughly 1,600 acres of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) lands located in the Eagle Foothills (Maps 1-4). Development of historically open private lands in the area surrounding this parcel, coupled with the population increase in the Treasure Valley, and associated use of public lands for recreation has created significant challenges for maintaining and managing public access and open space. As the City of Eagle struggles to keep pace with the demands for safe and useable open space, a partnership with the BLM is an opportunity to provide access to lands for sustainable recreation activities, impacts from existing uses and user groups, and create economic drivers to support the operations and maintenance of these lands.

The intent of this proposal is to balance continued public use and access of the BLM lands with existing natural and cultural resources of the area and future development patterns surrounding the site. As the uses outlined in this proposal included both active and passive recreational activities, it is critical that continued access and use be managed in an environmentally sustainable and economically feasible manner that promotes human health and safety while protecting critical habitat and culturally sensitive resources. It is the City's intention that the BLM utilize this proposal in its long-term management plans and implementation efforts. The proposal is also supported by the City's 2017 Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 6 – Land Use), and its 2019 Pathways and Trails Master Plan (see below).

City of Eagle's 2017 Comprehensive Plan (Chapter 6 - Land Use, pg. 68):

The BLM Park is a nearly 2,000-acre site in the foothills that the city has begun to acquire (either own or manage) as a city park facility. The site is not intended to be developed but to provide recreation uses as negotiated between the City and BLM.

2019 Pathways and Trails Master Plan (Goal 1 - Strategy C, pg. 34):

Strategy C - Develop an expanded, formalized Foothills trail system through collaboration and planning with landowners and land managers.

Supporting Action - Create formal and informal management and/or development agreements and partnerships with BLM, Ada County Parks and Waterways, planned developments (such as Avimor and Hidden Springs) and private landowners to develop, expand, improve and manage interconnected Foothills trails system.

Background

On December 27, 2007, a pre-annexation/development agreement was signed between the City of Eagle and M3 Eagle/Spring Valley. This agreement initiated the process that eventually resulted in a 30-year development agreement (Development Standards and Design Guidelines), and the annexation of 6,000+ acres of private lands (Spring Valley), and roughly 1,600 acres of BLM lands into the City of Eagle (Maps 1, 2, and 3). The final annexation agreement was signed and implemented on November 10, 2009, under City Ordinance 634.

Since the City of Eagle annexed the private lands and the BLM lands, those BLM lands annexed into the city limits were now required to comply with local laws and ordinances, with enforcement authority by local law enforcement, pursuant to 43 CFR § 8365.1-7.

**Title 43. Public Lands: Interior-- Subtitle B. Regulations Relating to Public Lands--
Chapter II. BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
Subchapter H. RECREATION PROGRAMS --Part 8360. VISITOR SERVICES --Subpart
8365. Rules of Conduct --Section 8365.1-7. State and local laws. ---43 CFR § 8365.1-7**

8365.1-7 State and local laws.

Except as otherwise provided by Federal law or regulation, State and local laws and ordinances shall apply and be enforced by the appropriate State and local authorities. This includes, but is not limited to, State and local laws and ordinances governing:

- (a) Operation and use of motor vehicles, aircraft, and boats;*
- (b) Hunting and fishing;*
- (c) Use of firearms or other weapons;*
- (d) Injury to persons, or destruction or damage to property;*
- (e) Air and water pollution;*
- (f) Littering;*
- (g) Sanitation;*
- (h) Use of fire;*
- (i) Pets;*
- (j) Forest products; and*
- (k) Caves.*

As an example, once annexed the BLM lands fell under section 5-2-3 of the Eagle City Ordinance, which makes it:

unlawful for any person to discharge a firearm, pellet gun, or air gun within the corporate limits of the city; provided, that this section shall not be construed to prohibit any officer of the law from discharging a firearm in the performance of his or her duties, nor to prohibit any person from discharging a firearm when lawfully defending any person or property (Ord. 145, 1-24-1989).

As such, it is currently illegal under city code to discharge a firearm within the 1,600-acre BLM parcel. However, the City of Eagle has not actively enforced this or other city codes within the BLM lands since the 2009 annexation because of the historic use of the area by the public for recreation and the limited resources available to city law enforcement officials.

Similarly, the City of Eagle has not managed or enforced any of the other uses outlined under Title 43 that fall under the City's control, including but not limited to: operation and use of motor vehicles; hunting and fishing; littering; use of fire; pets; and others. As such, there has been no clear direction in how best to manage these public lands to address multiple user groups, reduce user conflicts, and protect existing resources. Furthermore, increased use of the area and development pressure directly adjacent to these lands is creating greater conflicts and potential safety issues.

In order to address these and future issues, the City of Eagle developed a recreation poll and initiated a citizen work group through (Resolution 20-21). The recreation poll was used to identify the issues and concerns of the citizens of eagle related to recreational activities, as well as the type of use and users that would be affected by this concept plan. The poll received over 1,100 submittals and was submitted to the working group for support materials.

Existing Conditions and Public Input

Project Location

For this document, the Eagle Foothills is defined as the area within Ada County north of Homer Road between State Highways (SH) 16 and 55 (Maps 1-3). The area is approximately 30,957 acres, with 24,551 acres (79%) privately owned, 4,571 acres (15%) BLM lands, and 1,835 acres (6%) of State lands. The area is similar to the Eagle Foothills Planning Area defined in the City’s Comprehensive Plan (Section 6.14 and Map 6.12), minus the lands in Gem and Boise Counties. Future foothills plans will include these areas but based on the extent of the BLM Lands this area is sufficient.

Project Area Acreage

The project area is 1,634 acres (5% of the Eagle Foothills) of BLM lands located in the southern portion of the Eagle Foothills (Maps 1-3), approximately 1-mile north of Beacon Light Road, between Highway 16 and Willow Creek Road. The site is surrounded by private lands (Maps 1-3), including existing residential homes on 5 or more acres, and several proposed developments in various stages of planning (Map 3).

Public Access, Roads, and Trails

While the entire project area is comprised of BLM lands, it is wholly surrounded by private property, commonly referred to as an “inholding”. Under Idaho state law, private property owners are not required to grant access to adjacent public lands. Furthermore, crossing private property to access public lands without the consent of the property owner or granted rights-of-way (ROW) through an authorized easement is defined as civil trespass under (Idaho Code 6-202 and House Bill 658). Currently, there is only one BLM-authorized access point at the end of Heartly Lane (Map 2). As such, future access and use of these BLM-lands is very much dependent on coordination with existing landowners in the area.

Similarly, there are also regulations for use and access of public lands, including those landowners directly adjacent to BLM lands. Under current federal regulations outline in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), the public and adjacent landowners may access federal lands if there is a public or granted access path. However, development of trails, roads, structures, or other disturbances on BLM lands by private landowners must be granted through a ROW or it is considered trespass with potential civil and criminal penalties.

Currently, there are over 12-miles of native surface two-track trails within the project area (Map 2). These pathways have been developed over the years by livestock grazing operators, the public, and adjacent landowners. None of the existing pathways within the 1,600 acres are authorized under a BLM ROW grant, and none of them have been designed or constructed for drainage or vehicle load. As such, most of the exiting pathways show signs of severe erosion and have become safety hazards.



To address many of these issues, the BLM may initiate a site-specific transportation planning process. This process would inventory all existing resources and ROWs, including roads, pathways, and trails. The intent of the plan is to determine the level of transportation corridors (roads, pathways, and trails) warranted for the area based on the long-term goals and objectives outlined in the BLM’s Resource Management Plan and local management guidelines. This could include keeping some existing pathways, decommissioning existing pathways, rehabilitating unsustainable or hazardous pathways, or developing additional infrastructure as needed. This process would be initiated by the BLM, with support from the City of Eagle and its citizens, local NGOs and user groups, and private property owners, among others.

Environment

A wide variety of plant and animal species live in the Eagle Foothills ranging from big game, game birds, large and small mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians and fish. Of these, some are of special concern to federal and state agencies, either due to game management considerations or to risks to the species locally or regionally. Game animals found within the Foothills include mule deer, elk, California quail, chukar, Hungarian partridge, and the ring-necked pheasant, among others. In addition to these game species, there are a number of non-game special status species that are protected or have management considerations under state and federal law. Non-game species of concern that may occur within the Foothills include:

- Two amphibians: the northern leopard frog, and Woodhouse's toad;
- Two snakes: the ground snake, and longnose snake;
- Five raptors: the bald eagle, peregrine falcon, ferruginous hawk, merlin, and western burrowing owl;
- Four migratory birds: the mountain quail, long-billed curlew, loggerhead shrike, and lesser goldfinch;
- Four bats: the long-legged myotis, pallid bat, Townsend's big-eared bat, and western small-footed myotis;
- One mammal: the Merriam's shrew
- Two plant species: slick spot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) and Aase’s Onion (*Allium aasea*).

Of these species, slickspot peppergrass (*Lepidium papilliferum*) is only one that is listed under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) as Threatened.

Wildlife in the Foothills also includes the more common animals typically observed while living, working, and recreating there. These include, but are not limited to songbirds, waterfowl, ospreys, foxes, coyotes, badgers, raccoons, beaver, otters and muskrats. Watching the activities of these animals deepens the daily and recreational experiences in Eagle.

Plant and wildlife populations rely on available habitat for the requirements of life i.e., food, shelter, water, and space/ territory. In Southwest Idaho, a region of limited moisture, these species have either adapted to low water conditions or are found in areas with available water. There are two primary types of native habitat present within the Foothills: riparian/wetland habitats and upland habitats (shrub/grass steppe). However, much of the existing habitat in the Foothills has been altered over time and exhibits limited pre-European conditions. Alteration of habitat in the area has generally been associated with historic human uses, such as residential and commercial development, farming, grazing, and recreation. These activities have resulted in the establishment and expansion of exotic non-native species and increased wildfire frequency. Changes in vegetation over time have adversely affected the overall diversity of native species present, as well as their populations.

Riparian communities in particular make up the smallest percentage of the area but support the greatest diversity of plant and wildlife species. Since water is a limited commodity in the region, these areas are very important to consider for protection. In contrast, uplands make up the largest amount of area, but with fewer dependent species. However, this does not mean it is unimportant, because the animals using these lands are highly adapted to the native conditions and most thrive best within these communities. In addition, these areas are required for migratory paths and connectivity between riparian communities. Upland habitat is crucial for big game winter range, as well as the unique species that utilize the sagebrush/grasslands native to this area.

Riparian vegetation consists of the plants (grasses, sedges, rushes, forbs, shrubs and trees) found along perennial and ephemeral bodies of water. Typically, these species include black cottonwood, choke cherry, willow species, red-osier dogwood, golden currant, Wood's rose, and numerous grasses, sedges, rushes, and herbs. This vegetation provides habitat for songbirds, otters, beaver, foxes, raccoons, big game, various amphibian species, insects, and numerous other wildlife species. Osprey, bald eagles, hawks, and other raptors use these areas for nesting and foraging. Riparian areas are currently found within the Boise River and Dry Creek floodplains, with a patchwork of smaller, fragmented riparian communities found in unnamed drainages throughout the area. In addition to these areas, degraded creek and drainage areas that currently do not support riparian vegetation may be appropriate for habitat improvement and should not be disregarded.

Native upland vegetation in the Foothills consists of the plant communities generally associated with higher elevation shrub steppe/grassland communities throughout the Snake River Plains. Typically, the canopy of these communities includes some combination of Mountain, Wyoming, or Great Basin Big sagebrush, green or gray Rabbit Brush, or Antelope Bitterbrush. Species composition is generally dependent on-site conditions and historic use of the area. Grasses found in these communities include Bottlebrush Squirrel Tail, Idaho Fescue, Basin Wild Rye, Bluebunch Wheatgrass, Sandberg's Bluegrass, Needle and Thread, Three-awn, Sand Dropseed, Indian Rice Grass, Prairie June Grass, and others.

However, most of the habitat found in this area has been degraded over time, resulting in wide-spread changes in the composition and structure of the communities. These communities are generally dominated by invasive and noxious weed species, including Cheatgrass, Medusa Head Wild Rye, Crested Wheat Grass, Intermediate Wheatgrass, Witch Grass, Fox-tail Barley, Purple Loosestrife, Whitetop, Canada Thistle, Poison Hemlock, Puncture Vine, Rush Skeleton Weed and other invasive and noxious

weed species. The establishment of these species generally results in the reduction or elimination of native species unless strong rehabilitation measures are taken. Such measures include mechanical, chemical, or biological treatments to potentially control/manage the establishment of new populations and spread of existing populations. The use of seeding and planting native grasses, forbs and shrubs can also be used to control invasive and noxious weed species by increasing the community's resiliency after a disturbance, such as fire, and to resist the establishment of invasive species.

Therefore, areas with residual native communities are extremely valuable for native seed sources and wildlife species. However, even those areas with significant disturbance, dominated by invasive non-natives can still provide habitat for wildlife. The native areas in the Foothills are important foraging areas for resident mule deer herds, as well as residual migratory populations of pronghorn antelope, mule deer, and elk. In the winter, these areas are critical to the survival of these species when snow covers the mountains and foothills to the north.

Rare plants are also of concern in the City of Eagle and the planning area. Populations of two rare species found in the Foothills are Aase's Onion and Slickspot Peppergrass. Currently, neither has federal protection on private lands, but both species are protected on federal lands, including the BLM. Development in Foothills is encouraged to protect these species because if conservation measures are not undertaken to protect these populations, future restrictions may occur.

Connectivity between areas of habitat is critical to maintain healthy populations. Many wildlife populations in the Foothills on the ability to move from one area to another in order to take advantage of different habitat requirements. For example, deer and elk summer in the mountains northeast of the Foothills but require low elevation habitat to forage when snows cover the high ground of the foothills. Wildlife populations also move between patches of habitat for dispersal, as when conditions become adverse in one patch of habitat, or when young animals are leaving their birth area. This is best achieved by establishing small, concentrated areas of human impact, gradually decreasing in concentration the further from the center to the periphery which should be surrounded by large contiguous stands of undeveloped open space. Undeveloped open space can include wildlands and agricultural fields in some instances. However, manicured parks and golf courses provide limited habitat for only a few species. Therefore, these types of communities should not be considered as a method of connectivity for wildlife.

Cultural

There are remnants of trails used in the Oregon Trail network. While the trails in the project area are not listed or protected under the National Historical Protection Act (NHPA), there are several existing sites that are part of Eagle and the Treasure Valley's heritage, including portions of the Goodale's Cutoff. This was a route used by early century residents that saved time when traveling to Oregon at Brownlee's Ferry. In Oregon travelers could now reach the Eagle Valley and Pine Valley areas, and the gold mines in Auburn. The cutoff rejoined the main Oregon Trail at the Powder River, near Baker City. These traces of history are not delineated in within the project area in any way at this time.

Recreational Uses

Existing recreation uses within the BLM lands are largely unmanaged based on the isolated nature of the site and limited accessibility. While BLM continues to manage the land and resources, much of the enforcement requirements associated with shooting, hunting, motorized vehicles, fire, and other uses have shifted to the City of Eagle. Existing uses include but are not limited to: hiking, biking, equestrian, wildlife watching, sunset watching, bonfires, hunting, target shooting, plinking (shooting), off-highway vehicles (OHV), driving/mudding, and others.

As these uses are mostly unmanaged, there are a number of user conflicts, safety hazards, and impacts to adjacent homeowners. Impacts include but are not limited to:

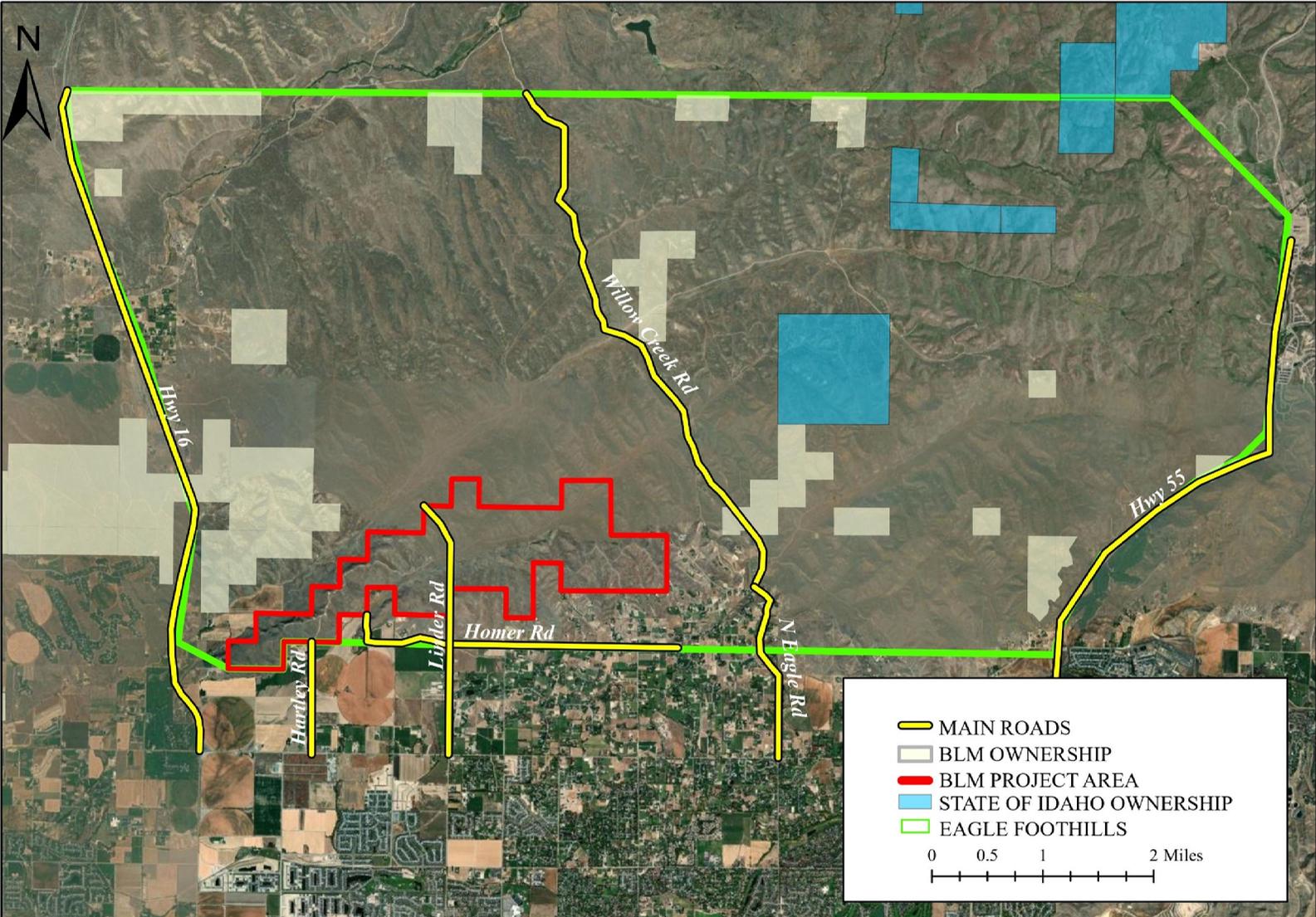
- open bonfires during fire season;
- unsafe shooting practices (residential homes within surface danger zones);
- mechanical impacts to soils from motorized activities on erodible soils or during periods of saturation;
- distribution of invasive and noxious weed species; and
- increased fire risk from motorized vehicles during the fire season.

To address these issues, the work group has developed a concept map with proposed access points, use designations, and facilities/infrastructure for the area with adaptive recommendations for implementation, management, funding, partnerships, and potential events. This is the foundation of the proposed recreational concept plan to be submitted to City Council and the BLM for future planning purposes.

Existing Conditions Maps

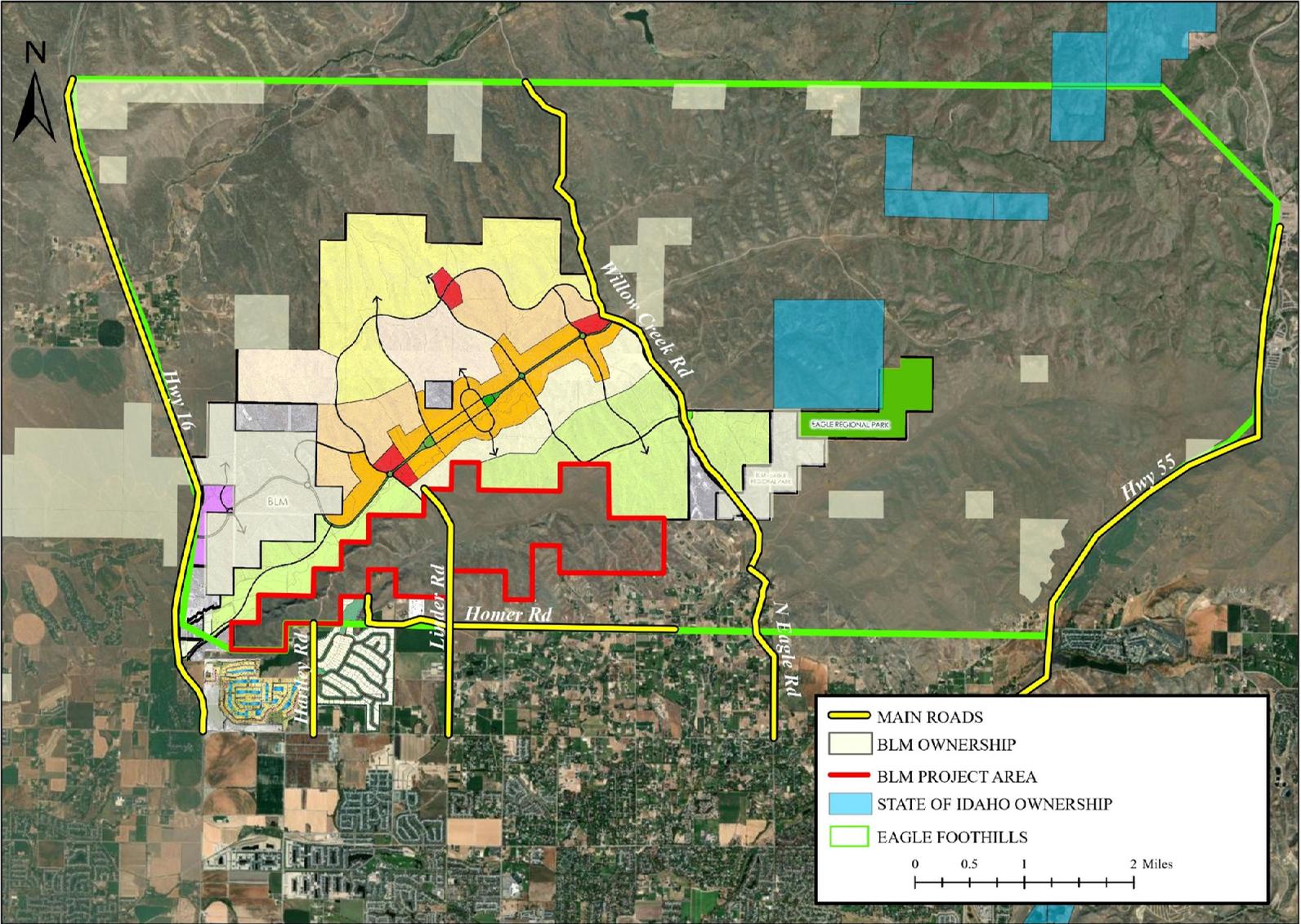
The following maps show Linder Road extended northward through the BLM Project Area. While this road does not exist at this time, it is intended to show an approximation of the ACHD approved route from Homer Road that will become a major access point to the project area and the development to the north of the project area. The exact footprint of the Linder Road extension is yet to be determined.

MAP 1: OVERVIEW OF SURROUNDING PROJECT AREA



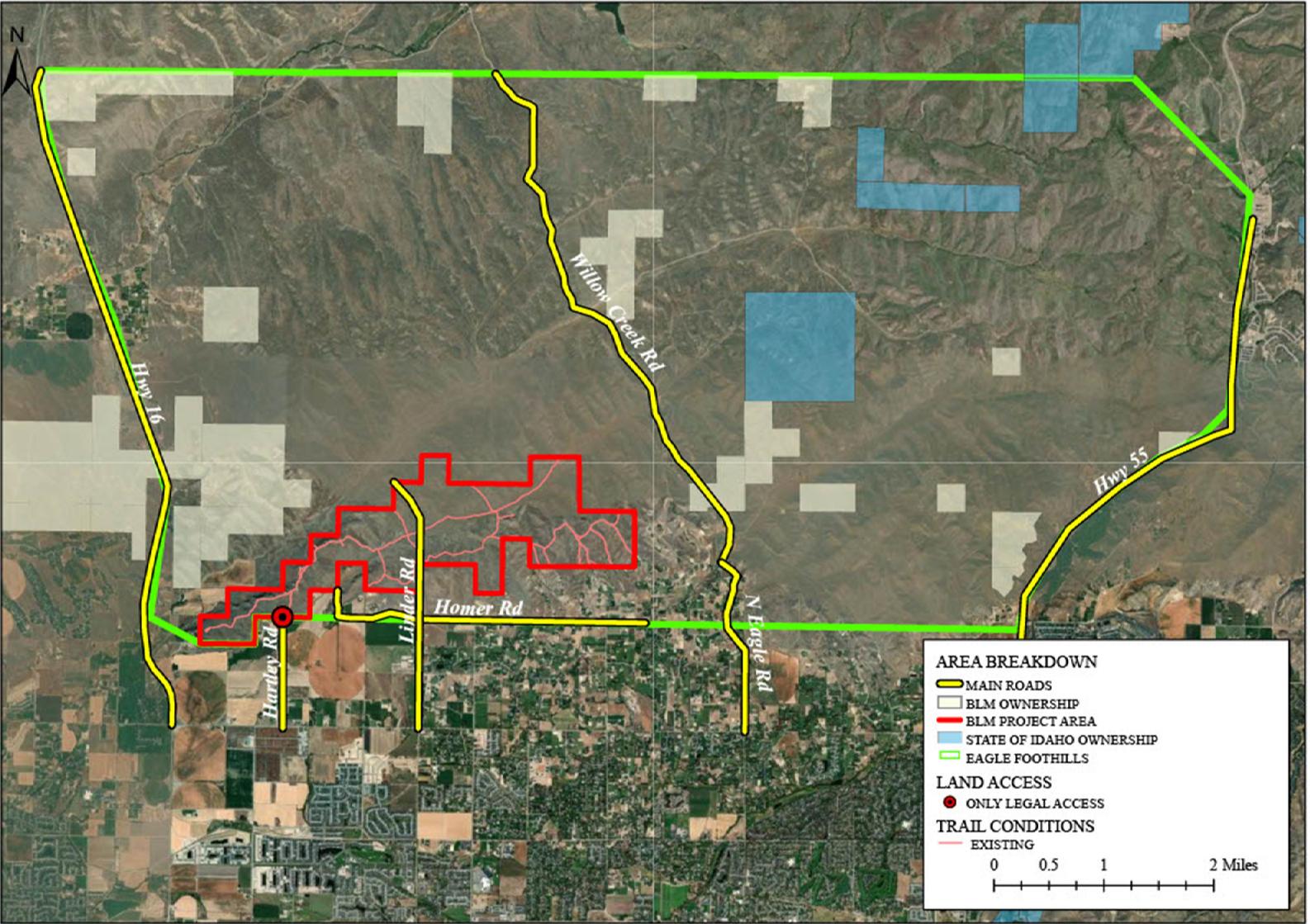
Map 1. Vicinity Map of Eagle Foothills

MAP 2: PROPOSED DEVELOPMENTS AND PROJECT AREA



Map 2. Project Area with Existing Ownership and Proposed Developments

MAP 3: EXISTING CONDITIONS AND OWNERSHIP



Map 3. Eagle Foothills - Existing Conditions and Ownership Map

The Citizen Work Group

The citizen work group was tasked to advise and make recommendations to the Eagle City Council regarding recreation within the 1,600 acres, and to develop a recreation concept plan for submittal to the BLM for incorporation into its resource management planning process.

The seven-person citizen work group is comprised of four at large members and three members from the City’s Parks Pathways and Recreation Commission (PPRC). The four “At Large” members were selected through an application and interview process conducted by the City Mayor, Council, and staff. These four volunteers represented the citizens of Eagle as well as the users in the area. They represented equestrians, hunters, shooters, hikers, bikers, residence in close proximity to the BLM lands, and much more. They gave up their time because they care about recreation, conservation, and the city in which we live. These members are:

- Kathryn Colson
- William Johnson
- Micky Pingree
- Herb Wollerman

The three members from the PPRC were appointed by that committee. They are:

- Sam Blaine
- Ken Elwer
- Shelly Stirrat

In addition to the Work Group, members from city staff, City Council, the BLM, and the Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council (MYAC) were also part of the work group as non-voting members. Their task was to support the citizen work group with resources, expertise, regulatory requirements, coordination of subject matter experts, mapping, and facilitated the meetings. This group included:

- City Council President - Charlie Baun
- Trails and Pathways Superintendent - Steve Noyes
- Deputy Clerk/Treasurer - Holly Csencsits
- BLM Four Rivers Field Manager - Brent Ralston
- Mayor’s Youth Advisory Council - Kylee Whiting
- GIS/Mapping Support – Megan Wheatly
- Survey Development – Christine Heimbigner



In order to get a full range of alternatives and a better understanding of the resources, history, and uses of the area, the work group heard from eight separate “Subject Matter Experts” during four two-hour public meetings held at the Eagle City Hall. These presenters were given a list of questions (see below), developed by the work group to standardize the information they received. Each presenter was given 30 minutes to present, with follow-up questions from the work group. The subject matter experts included:

- Cultural Resources - Jerry Eichhorst, President of the Idaho California Trail System – Oregon Trail/Goodale’s Cutoff
- Hunting and Shooting - Butch Whiting, CEO Kryptek Outdoor Group
- Hunting and Shooting - Kerry O’Neil, Range Expert & Founder/Owner of Range Design Services – Shooting Range Design
- Local Homeowners - Burk Mantel, BLM Border Property Owner
- Mountain Biking - Carlos Matutes, Executive Director of Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA)
- Youth Group - Kylee Whiting and five other youth members (local high school students)
- Motorized Vehicles - Scott Meyer President of the Treasure Valley Trail Machine Association (TVTMA)
- Canine Training - Larry Sandusky, President of Idaho Brittany Club, a licensed AKC club since 1965
- Equestrian - Karen Danley, Board Member Foundation for Ada and Canyon County Trail Systems (FACTS)

Questions for Subject Matter Experts:

1. How much area is required for your activity?
2. Is your activity seasonal, i.e., does your activity stop due to certain weather conditions?
3. What impact does your activity have on the ecosystem, i.e., wildfire, erosion, invasive species, etc.? Do you have programs or funding sources to address these issues?
4. What are the primary issues or conflicts with other user groups? How are they complimentary? Are there any non-compatible uses?
5. How can/do you address conflicts with other user groups?
6. What education/etiquette is required of your activity participants and other users to safely and responsibly enjoy both activities?
7. What type of infrastructure would you need for your activity, i.e., parking space for cars/trailers, berms/backstops, targets, buildings, utilities services, solid waste collection, trail building, fire breaks etc.?
8. Are there funding sources to help with capital improvements and O&M for your activity, what are they (including community outreach or volunteer events)?
9. Are there regional competitions for this activity, and are there any currently held in the Treasure Valley? If not, why, and are there estimates on economic effect to communities?
10. What is the long-term sustainability of your activity as overall use continues to increase with the growing population of Ada County and the region?

11. Are there levels of saturation, i.e., carrying capacity for your specific use? If so, what it is?
12. Are there regulatory issues or zoning requirements that need to be addressed, changed, or exempted?
13. How does the use benefit citizens of Eagle, Ada County, and the region?

The Work Group used the information derived from the SME presentations along with the City's recreation poll of the citizens to develop a list of existing uses, potential user conflicts, and issues to be addressed. This was followed up by a mapping process that integrated the recommendations of the work group with the existing and proposed infrastructure of the area (Map 4a and 4b). The process and results are outlined below.

Concept Plan Development Process

The City of Eagle Foothills Recreation Concept Plan was divided into four primary components:

Goals and Strategies: Overview of the goals and objectives based on the City’s Comprehensive Plan, Parks and Pathways Master Plan, and the work group.

Existing Conditions: Overview of the project area and summarizes public input and needs.

Recommendations: Infrastructure and operational recommendations to balance potential uses with the resources of the area and public safety.

Implementation: Prioritizes the recommendations from the work group and outline funding, infrastructure, and operational aspects needed to implement and manage the area in perpetuity.

Public Input and Concept Plan Development

The Foothills Recreation Concept Plan was collaboratively developed with Eagle residents, stakeholders, city staff, and agency partners providing valuable input throughout the process. Various public input strategized were used to make sure that citizens and user groups were represented in this process, including:

- Eight public meetings led by a Work Group of seven members and City staff.
- Eight Subject Matter Experts presented during the public meetings.
- Public open house with over 150 attendees.

Online Survey

An online public survey was developed by the City to get baseline information from the public relative to existing and proposed uses on the BLM lands. The survey was made available to the public from February 3rd through May 10th of 2021, with 1,122 responses. This was a record-high for feedback about City planning, and the strongest indication of interest in it. Below is a summary of the data collected:

- 53% of those who responded were female, 47% male.
- 26% of the 1,122 were between 45 to 54 years of age.
- 88% were open to some designation for certain uses.
- 84% said that limiting motorized vehicles to certain areas is a good idea.
- 86% said we should limit shooting to specified areas.
- 85% would support seasonal closures for wildlife.
- 83% feel biking and hiking are compatible.
- 56% feel that bikes and horses are compatible.
- 80% feel that shooting is not compatible with biking, hiking, or horseback riding.
- 57% would support a taxing district to fund the project.
- 64% would support a tax levy.
- Activities that survey responders took part in (in order):
 - Hiking -- 395 of responders hike weekly, 47 never hike.
 - Mountain biking – 231 ride weekly, 375 never ride.
 - Trail running – 176 run weekly, 568 never run.
 - Off road vehicle use – 115 use them weekly, 590 never do.
 - Equestrian – 94 ride weekly, 724 never ride.
 - Target shooting – 71 shoot weekly, 455 never shoot.
 - Hunting – 34 hunt weekly, 635 never hunt.

Goals and Strategies

Goal 1: Provide Public Access

Strategy 1.A - Working with local developers, landowners, and the BLM, establish trailheads with vehicle and trailer parking and other amenities. These points of access will be suited to the designated uses nearby to the extent possible.

Strategy 1.B – Design and build (or rebuild) one central pathway (10-12ft wide), using materials that promote drainage and increase load capacity (Maps 4a and 4b). Use of this road would be commensurate with the designate uses in the area (motorized or non-motorized), but the entire pathway would be accessible to wildland fire and emergency management service (EMS) vehicles.

Strategy 1.C – Assist BLM with their transportation planning process which includes an existing inventory of trails and their condition, coupled with a process to determine if that trail would stay or be decommissioned. Where possible, eliminate or combine and commission, existing private connections to the project area.

Goal 2: Designate Use Trails and Areas

Strategy 2.A – Design and build sustainable, multi-purpose or use-specific trails that are mindful of sensitive plant species, soil composition, slope, and impacts to resources and adjacent landowners.

Strategy 2.B – Spatial and temporal designations for specified use activities that are compatible with other uses in the area. Human safety and protection of existing resources (soils, vegetation, wildlife, and habitat) is the priority.

Goal 3: Active Management of “High-Impact” Uses to Safety and Property

Strategy 3.A - Provide a well-designed and managed shooting range that addresses multiple user groups and is accessible to the public.

Strategy 3.B – Designate locations, timeframes, and infrastructure where campfires may be located throughout the site. These should be co-located with vehicle-accessible observation points with seasonal restrictions during the fire season.

Strategy 3.C – Utilize the 10-12ft wide proposed pathway (Maps 4a and 4b) as an access corridor for EMS and Wildland Fire assets (to the extent feasible), and a firebreak to reduce the amount and connectivity of fuels in the area.

Goal 4: Create Event Facilities

Strategy 4.A – Design, build, and manage a publicly accessible shooting range in coordination with local law enforcement.

Strategy 4.B – Design, build, and manage facilities suitable for equestrian competitions through partnerships with trail and open space groups, recreational grant funding, and other funding sources.

Strategy 4.C – Design, build, and manage facilities suitable for mountain bike racing through partnerships with trail and open space groups, recreational grant funding, and other funding sources.

Strategy 4.D – Design, build, and manage a motorized trails course through partnerships with trail and open space groups, recreational grant funding, and other funding sources.

Strategy 4.E – Design, build, and manage observation areas, at elevated locations that can be accessed by motor vehicles.

Strategy 4.F – Trails and facilities should be designed to accommodate multiple-user groups, to the extent possible. Safety, protection of resources, sustainable use, and site limitations are the primary factors used to determine trail designations and de-conflict uses.

Recommendations

The citizen work group used the input from the public survey, subject matter experts, and the community to develop the following recommendations. These are the general guidelines used to develop overall concept plan and maps (Maps 4a and 4b).

Events Oriented Design: To drive our local economy, wherever possible within the project area, it shall be a priority to develop facilities that can accommodate large events that our user groups enjoy, or that will bring new user types to our city. Realizing this goal will require the employment of versatile concepts in parking, restroom facilities, and multi-use trail design.

Target Shooting: Create a shooting range for long range targets and for short range hobbyists. Design of these facilities must include safety elements and noise reduction. Display signage throughout the project area with City Code information.

Hunting: If hunting is allowed within the project area there would have to be spatial and seasonal restrictions for safety and limited to short-range weapons (shotguns only). Display signage throughout the project area with City Code information.

Hiking: Provide a network of trails that can be shared with compatible user groups like uphill mountain bikers and equestrians. Trailhead parking and restrooms as well.

Mountain Biking: Provide bike optimized trail options that could include use-specific trails. Provide a network of trails that can be shared with compatible users groups like hikers, trail runners, and dog walkers. Trailhead parking, potable water, and restrooms as well.

Equestrian: Provide a network of trails that can be shared with compatible users groups like hikers, trail runners, and dog walkers. Pull-through trailhead parking, potable water, trash dumpsters and restrooms.

Dog Exercise and Training: Provide a network of on-leash trails that can be shared with compatible user groups like uphill mountain bikers, and equestrians. Off-leash areas should be designated as conditions allow. Provide trailhead parking and restrooms.

Motorcycle/ATV/UTV: Provide a well-designed motorized trail system to meet the needs of various skill levels, including a closed course that focus on skills building. Lower speed trail designs will help mitigate the engine noise. Provide trailhead parking and restrooms.

Off-Road Vehicles: Limit these vehicles to designated roads, observation points, and parking areas.

Observation Areas: Design and build observation areas, at elevated locations throughout the project area, that can be accessed by foot or motor vehicles (depending on the location), and where gatherings and campfires/bonfires may safely occur outside the fire season.

Seasonal Closures: Designated times of the year when access to certain areas would be closed to all users to protect wildlife and associated habitat, while also promote long-term sustainability.

Designated Use: Trails and other facilities that are optimized for specific uses enhance the experience and reduce conflicts between users. These facilities should be located in areas near access and parking

tailored to the needs of the group or groups for which these facilities were designed. Control elements such as gates and bollards can be designed to manage access.

Access Points: City/BLM approved access from existing and future private parcels will be supported and would be subject to BLM rules and City code. Access routes must be improved for sustainability. Existing routes are subject to modification or closure if resources are threatened by their form. Security of private parcels would be the responsibility of the property owner. Easements for access in favor of the City may be required for approval of existing routes, and public access easements may be required for approval from new development.

Signage should be displayed that clearly explains the intended uses, and/or provides important information.

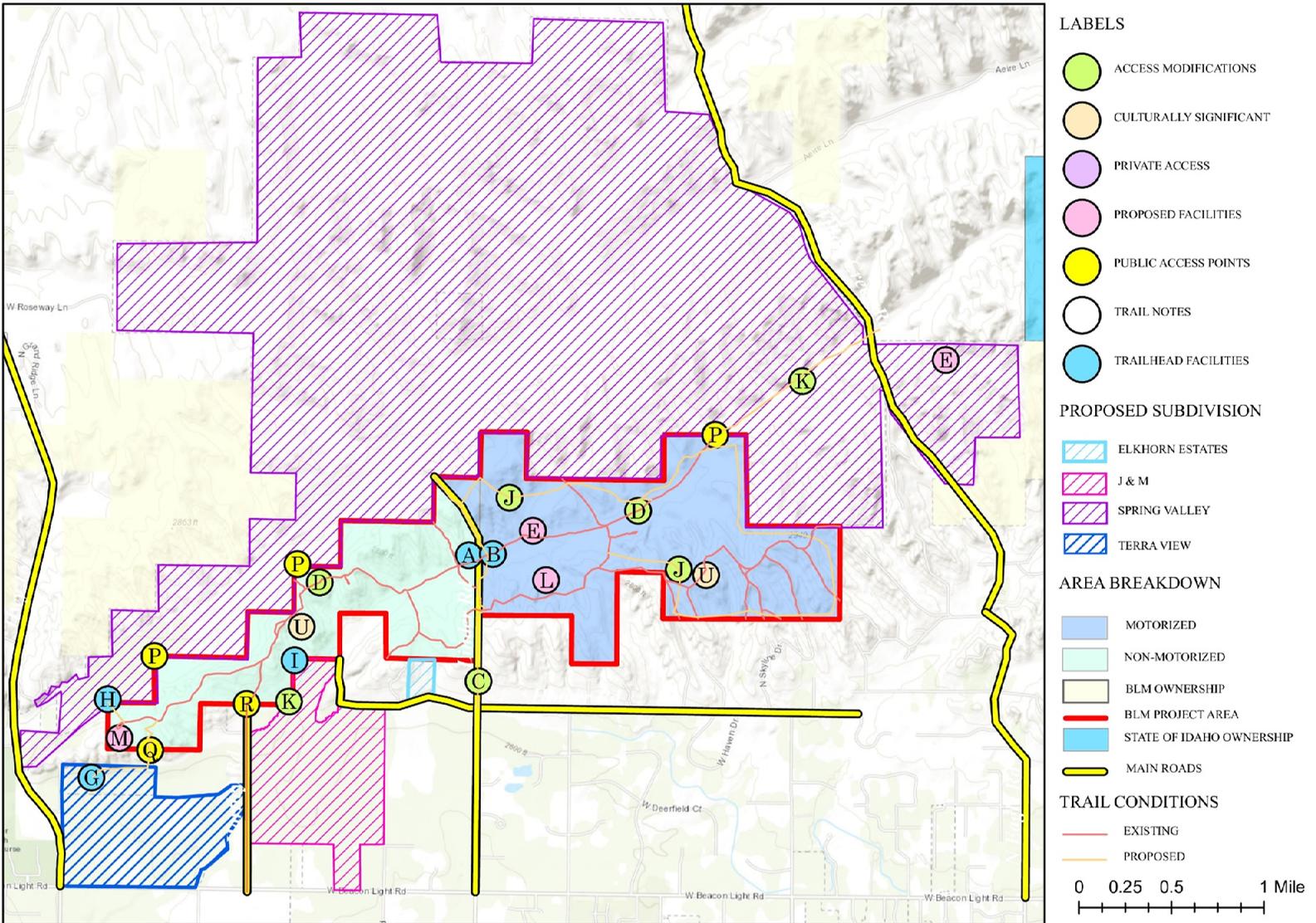


NOTE: modification, elimination, addition, and rerouting of trails will take place after careful evaluation of habitat, soil composition, sustainability (erosion control) and other considerations.

Concept Maps

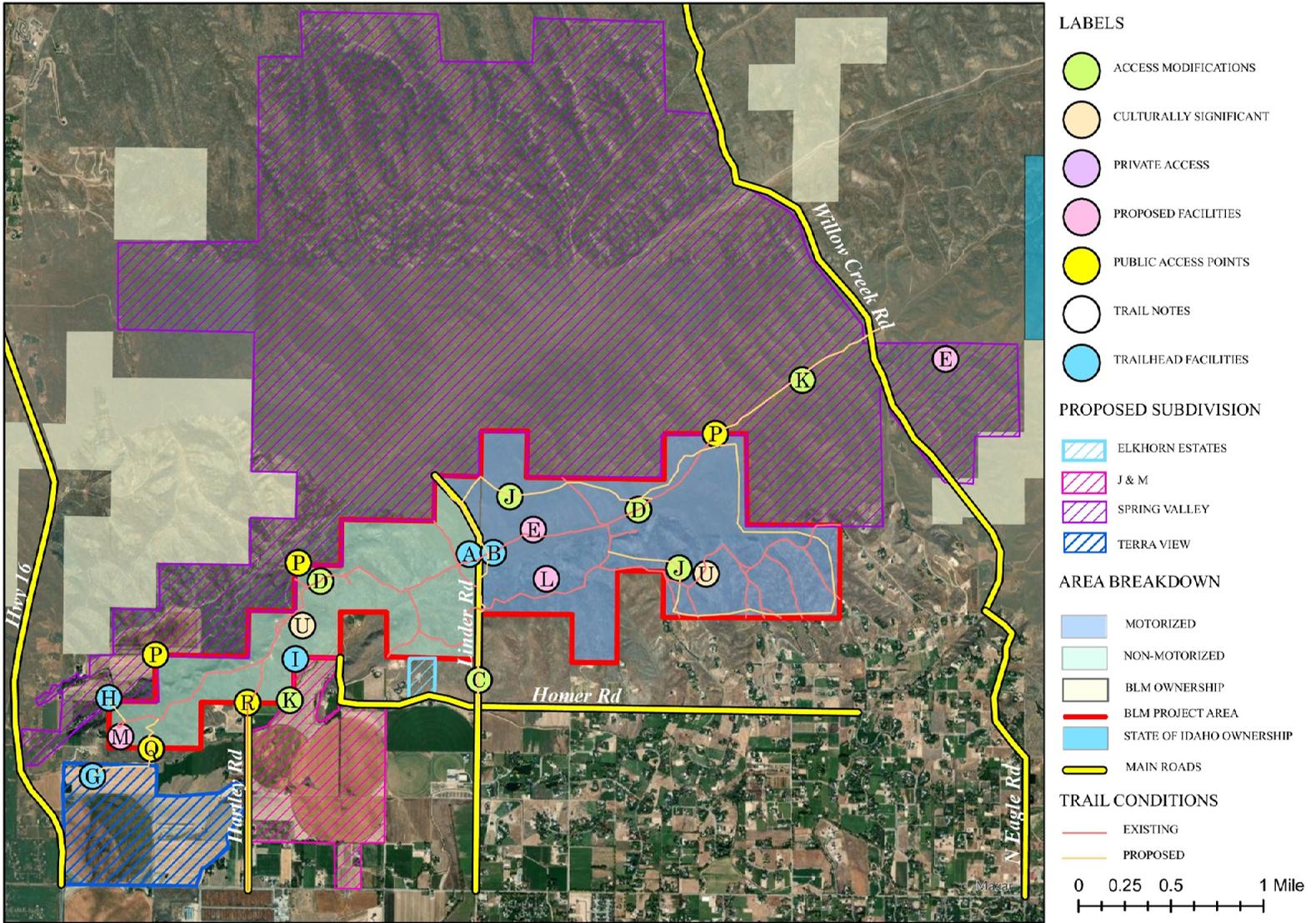
The maps below (Map 4a and 4b) are concept designs proposed by the citizen work group. The locations identified are recommendations only and may change based on a number of factors including but not limited to site-specific conditions, environmental regulations, additional input or guidance from the BLM, availability of funding, access agreements, and others.

MAP 4A: PROPOSED PROJECT AREA OVERVIEW



Map 4a. Concept Map with Topographic Background.

MAP 4B: PROPOSED PROJECT AREA OVERVIEW



Key to Maps 4A and 4B

- AB** These are two trailheads that are split by Linder Road. Non-motorized trail access on the west side of Linder, Motorized trail access on the east side of Linder. These two parking areas will be close enough in proximity that they can serve as one large parking lot for large events.
- C** Linder Road will be extended to the north and through the BLM land to the proposed development north of the BLM Land.
- D** This “spine pathway” will be loosely based on the existing main road that runs through the area. It will be rerouted and improved as needed to insure sustainability. This road will connect trails, facilities, and provide access for emergency and maintenance vehicles.
- E** A Shooting Range and Archery Range in this approximate location will relocate firearms use to an area with fewer safety concerns and reduce the related noise. There have been two options for the location of a Shooting Range (See Maps 5, 4A and 4B).
- G** Proposed equestrian trailhead parking and facilities in this location will provide access to the non-motorized zone. It will include pull-through parking stalls, a restroom, trash bins, and potable water.
- H** Optional trailhead location for future access.
- I** Proposed and optional trailhead parking facilities proposed as part of development (subject to development design).
- J** A wide perimeter trail will provide connectivity between trails and facilities, provide fire protection, and small vehicle access for emergencies and maintenance, to areas that would otherwise be very difficult to access.
- K** Proposed public access road to proposed trailhead through development from Hartley Lane.
- L** Motorcycle/ATV/UTV course facilities. Possible elements include skills training, hard enduro, and trials riding area.
- M** Horse Park with skills training elements, and other facilities.
- P** Proposed public access point from development.
- Q** Proposed natural surface trail from development trailhead to the BLM Land.
- R** Hartley Road, the only existing public access point, Potential parking area on BLM Land
- U** Goodale’s Cutoff, part of the Oregon Trail System, runs through the project area in at least two places. Monument signage will delineate those areas.

Implementation

Priorities

Assuming that access (BLM-granted ROW) to the areas has been made available, here is a list of proposed action (See Maps 4A and 4B). While this is the proposed priority list, they are all contingent on approval and funding. As such, the priority is likely to change over the history of the project. Proposed actions and priority list:

- (E) Design and construction of a Shooting Range and parking facility on east side of Willow Creek Road
- (D) Redesign and reconstruction of the Spine Pathway to improve access and sustainability
- (K) Design and construction of an access road from Willow Creek Road
- (H) Design and construction of trailhead parking and facilities on private land (in first phase of a residential development)
- (P) Design and construction of public access points to private development
- (S&T) Evaluation of existing trails to determine their impact on long term maintenance, sustainability, sensitive species and habitat, safety, and their contribution to the trail system
- Design and construction of recreational trails, throughout the project area, for various user types within the areas designated for certain uses
- (J) Design and construction of the Perimeter Trail
- (S&T) Closure of existing trails and access points that no longer suit the goals of the project, or have been evaluated to be a detriment to long term maintenance, sustainability, sensitive species and habitat, or safety
- (A&B will be timed with the extension of Linder Road) Design and construction of the central trailheads and parking areas
- (G) Design and construction of Equestrian capable trailhead, parking outside of the project area (in first phase of a residential development) and access trails (Q)
- (M) Design and construction of Horse Park with skills training elements, and other facilities
- (L) Design and construction of Motorcycle / ATV / UTV course facilities.
- (I) Design and construction of trailhead parking and facilities on private land just east of Hartley Road (in first phase of a residential development)

Partnerships

There are many opportunities for partnerships that will make possible many of the recommendations in this plan. Some potential partners include:

- Southwest Idaho Mountain Biking Association (SWIMBA)
- Foundation for Ada and Canyon Trail Systems (FACTS)
- The Idaho California Trail System
- The Treasure Valley Trail Machine Association (TVTMA)
- Idaho Horse Council
- Idaho Backcountry Horseman

Potential Funding Mechanisms

The City is now looking into alternative methods of funding park and trail capital projects besides tapping into the General Fund. Some of the possibilities include:

- **Forming a Recreation District** (A taxing district is any entity or unit with the statutory authority to levy a property tax. The areas covered by these districts may overlap and change every year.)
- **Foothills Levy** (A local property tax passed by voters that generate tax revenue for a specific purpose.)
- **Voluntary community funding program** (Volunteer grants are corporate giving programs that encourage volunteerism in communities where employees live and work. Through these programs, companies provide monetary grants to organizations where employees regularly volunteer.)
- **User Fees** (charging users to use specialized or high-cost elements of this area, through point of contact collection, memberships)
- **Capital Improvement District (CID):** One-time special assessments or Revenue Bonds
- **Fundraisers**
- **Event Permit Revenue**
- **Private and Commercial Donations**

Grant Funding

There are many grant opportunities for trails and recreation that the City has and will employ in our effort to develop this land:

- Community Planning Association of Southwest Idaho (COMPASS)
- Southwest Idaho Resource Conservation and Development (SW-RC&D)
- Idaho Parks and Recreation Recreational Trails Program
- Idaho Parks and Recreation Motorized Trails Program
- Idaho Parks and Recreation Mountain Bike Plate Fund

Operational Improvements

The operation and maintenance of the project area will become the responsibility of Eagle Public Works Department. Additions to its staff may include:

- Staff members trained in gravel road maintenance and construction
- Staff members trained in native and natural surface trail maintenance and construction
- A staff member trained in the identification and care of plant species found in the area
- A volunteer coordinator

Additional equipment may include:

- Trail maintenance tools
- Noxious weed control equipment
- UTV's suitable for all terrain types in the area
- Field mowers and brush cutters

Next Steps

Once the proposed recreation plan has been developed, it will be presented to Eagle City Council for review and approval or denial. If denied the plan would go back to the workgroup to address the deficiencies or suspend the planning process until a later date. If approved, the plan would be formally submitted to the BLM for review and incorporation into its planning process.

Included in the BLM's planning process in the development of Travel and Transportation Management (TTM) Plan under the BLM's Comprehensive Travel and Transportation Management (CTTM) program. This program aims to provide reasonable and varied transportation routes for access to and through public lands and provide areas for a wide variety of both motorized and non-motorized recreational activities.

By addressing recreational activities (trail and OHV management) through a proactive land use planning process, BLM can minimize impacts to wildlife habitat; reduce the introduction and spread of invasive weeds; lessen conflicts among various motorized and non-motorized recreation users; and preventing damage to cultural resources resulting from the expansion of pathways and trails on public lands.

The TTM plan would develop a summary of the baseline conditions of the site, including but not limited to soils; vegetation; cultural resources; visual resources; wildlife; special status species; fuels and wildland fire history; and existing uses (livestock grazing, recreation, etc.). In addition, an inventory of the existing access points, trails (single track) and pathways (two track), would be incorporate into the baseline conditions. Based on the existing conditions, BLM resources management plan, and the City's recommendations, the BLM would develop a site-specific TTM and recreation plan to identify designated uses, access points, seasonal closures, connectivity, and which trails/pathways would be retained/improved or decommissioned. If retained, a trail/pathway may be reconstructed to increase useability and sustainability. If decommissioned, a trail/pathway would be plowed, seeded, and rehabilitated.

As part of the TTM and recreation plan, the BLM and City of Eagle would develop an area-wide management plan. This plan would outline each entity's responsibilities related to monitoring, maintenance, rehabilitation, and restoration/rehabilitation for the area. It would also outline the process and parameters for agency coordination, events, future projects (new or altered trails/pathways, terrain park), conservation activities, and others.

Once completed, the TTM and recreation plan would be assessed under the National Environment Policy Act (NEPA), most likely an Environmental Assessment (EA), to determine the impacts to the human environment from the proposed action. This process would include a public scoping and comment process. Once finalized, the BLM would authorize granted rights-of-way (ROW) and projects could be initiated.

The timeline for this process is two to five years, and is dependent on the resources (staff and funding) available to initiate and complete the TTM/recreation plan and associated EA. However, BLM has the authority and discretion to authorize site-specific projects within the area prior to the completion of this process.

Proposed Shooting Range (Concept Design)

A proposed shooting range planning process was initiated at the request of the working group. The planning process included site selection based on accessibility, impacts to adjacent landowners, and safety parameters. Safety parameters are based on topography and surface danger zones (SDZ), which are described below. In addition to the site selection, the contractor provided concept designs and estimated construction costs and timelines, including long-term management costs for the site. The two proposed locations (Map 5) and concept designs (Figures 1-4) are shown below.

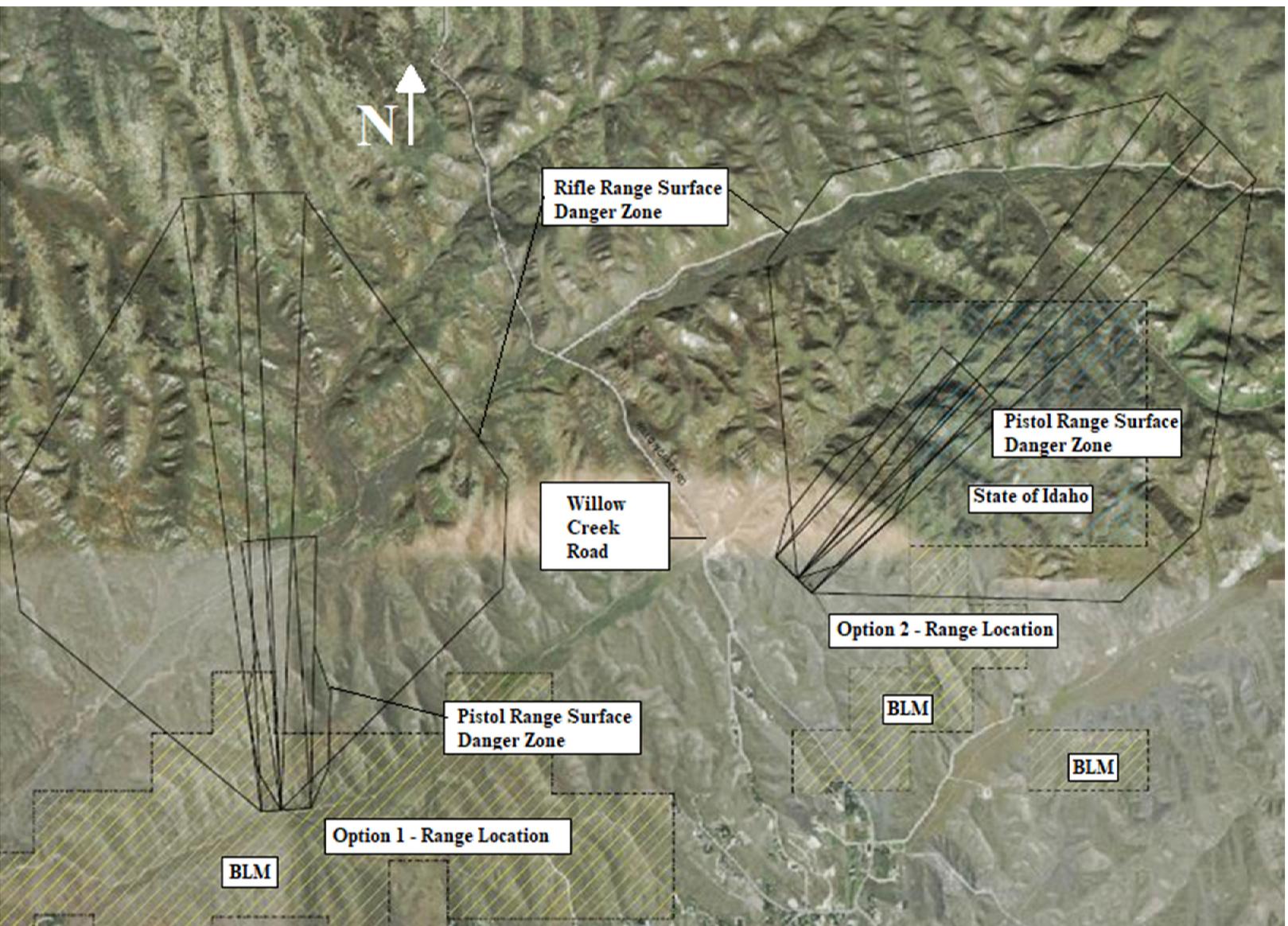
Surface Danger Zones (SDZ)

A Calculated Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) is part of the total range design. The United States Military defines a Surface Danger Zone as follows:

"Per DA PAM 385-63: The ground and airspace designated within the training complex (to include associated safety areas) for vertical and lateral containment of projectiles, fragments, debris, and components resulting from the firing, launching, or detonation of weapon systems to include explosives and demolitions. The Surface Danger Zone (SDZ) is a depiction of the mathematically predicted area a projectile will return to earth either by direct fire or by ricochet. The SDZ is the area extending from a firing point to a distance downrange based on the projectiles fired. This area has specific dimensions that provide a contained area for all fragments resulting from the caliber of weapons fired. These dimensions are found in DA PAM 385-63."

For civilian applications, we must consider other factors that impede a projectile's flight path, such as changes in topography, in-place safety features, or angle of fire. These factors are typically part of a non-military shooting range. Therefore, the calculated SDZ's for the proposed ranges should not be regarded as a typical impact zone for bullets fired at the range. Instead, the SDZ's are placed to consider future land uses within those areas because of their proximity to the shooting range. Based on the proposed location and designs, there would be no safety issues for surrounding residents, i.e., design features would keep all munitions on sight. Similarly, the site locations also addressed acoustics, i.e., located and designed to reduce noise impacts to adjacent landowners to the extent possible.

While the shooting range is one of the highest priorities in this plan, the proposed shooting range is contingent on a number of factors, including, but not limited to: final site selection and approved use of the lands, final design, funding and partnerships, long-term management plan, and a public scoping process. The timeframe for this process is contingent on a number of factors as well but is anticipated to be one of the first priorities if this plan is adopted.



Map 5. Shooting Range Concept Options 1 and 2



Figure 1. Option 1 concept design.



Figure 2. Option 1 concept design.



Figure 3. Option 2 concept design.



Figure 4. Option 2 concept design.

End of Concept Plan