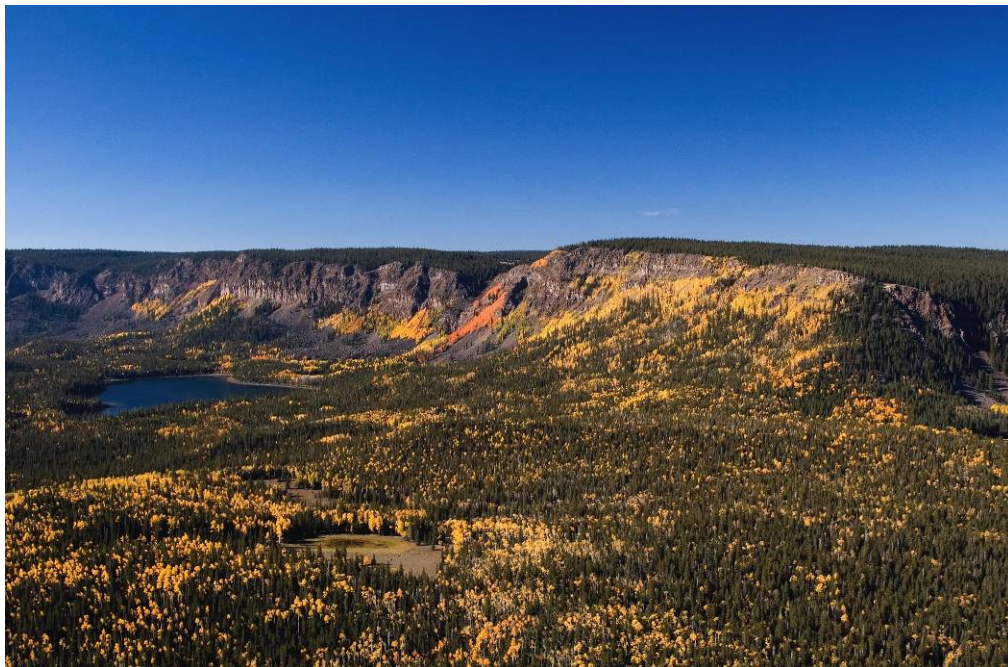


# **A PROPOSAL TO IMPROVE TRAVEL MANAGEMENT ON BOULDER MOUNTAIN**



Blind Lake and Donkey Point, Boulder Mountain, Photo © Tim Peterson/  
Grand Canyon Trust, flown by LightHawk

**IMPROVING RECREATION MANAGEMENT, PROVIDING  
ECOLOGICAL BENEFITS, MEETING COMMUNITY DESIRES  
AND BENEFITING WATERSHEDS WHILE IMPROVING  
HABITAT SECURITY AND QUALITY**

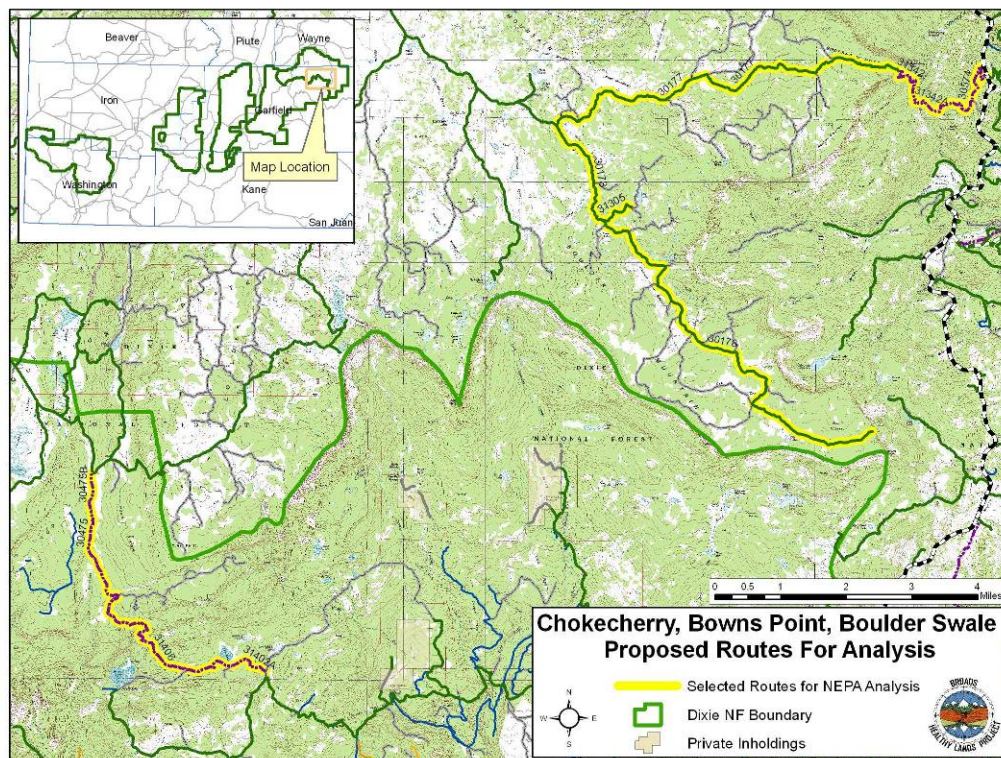
## **GRAND CANYON TRUST, UTAH ENVIRONMENTAL CONGRESS, WILDLANDS CPR, GREAT OLD BROADS FOR WILDERNESS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

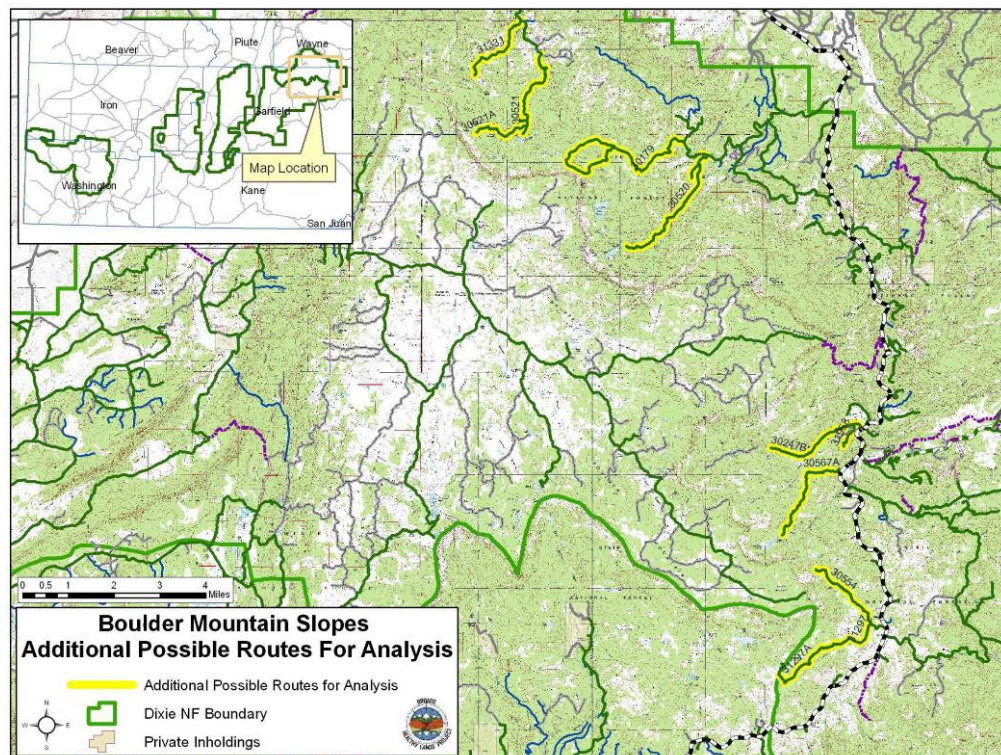
With the signing of the Motorized Travel Plan (MTP) in March of 2009, the Dixie National Forest solidified more than thirteen years of inventory, planning and NEPA work in a decision that reflects both compliance with the national Travel Management Rule of 2005 and a new mode of managing recreation on the Forest. Moving from a situation where motorized cross-country travel was generally allowed to a system of designated routes is a huge step in the right direction for the integrity of the resource. The recreating public now has the opportunity to better use the Forest in a more sustainable manner, and we applaud the Dixie and its leadership team for its responsiveness to concerns and its serious commitment to the MTP decision and its effective implementation. The partners in this proposal have engaged for years in the MTP process, and we are generally very satisfied with the outcome. A few remaining areas of concern linger, however. Some of the partners in this proposal appealed the decision for various reasons, including lack of consideration of management changes for routes in so-named “previous decision areas.” Further, both communities of interest in Wayne County and regional and national conservation groups wanted to see more aggressive management action taken on a subset of routes; actions that were not considered and analyzed in the MTP NEPA process. As a part of a joint MTP Appeal Resolution process, some appellants agreed to submit this proposal to examine ways to better manage roads and motorized recreation on top and under the rim of Boulder Mountain in a localized area near the community of Boulder Town. The routes in question affect watershed health, run counter to some local community desires, degrade habitat quality and security and offer temptation to those who would flaunt the MTP decision knowing that they stand little chance of being held accountable for violations in the remote backcountry.

A map of the routes of concern that we’d like to see analyzed can be found on the following page. Per the appellant’s appeal resolution agreement, the roads are known as Chokecherry (#s 30574, 31342A, 31342, 30177), Bowns Point (#30178), Big Lake (#31305) (which is a spur off Bowns Point), the Boulder Swale (#s 30475, 30475B, 31406, 31402A) and 31331, 30521, 30521A, U5073, 30526, 30179, 30520, 30247B, 30567A, 30554, 31297A, and 30494.





**Map 1A**



**Map 1B**

## **PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

- 1)** Convert The Boulder Swale ATV route (30475B, 30475, 31406, 31402A) to a non-mechanized trail.
- 2)** Change management on the Bowns Point route (30178), ending motorized use at the end of heavy road work in Pleasant Creek Meadows located at 38.09202, -111.41778. Convert the remainder of the route to a non-motorized trail.
- 3)** Convert the Big Lake route (31305) to a non-motorized trail.
- 4)** Convert the route from Beef Meadows to Chokecherry Point (30177) to a non-motorized trail.
- 5)** Close the Chokecherry Point route from the rim (31342, 31342A, 30574) to Highway 12 to motorized use, converting it to a non-mechanized trail.
- 6)** Change management on the Bowns Lake/Steep Creek Lake route (31297, 31297A) to end motorized travel at the junction with the Deer Creek Lake trail (34001.9), converting the portion of the route north of the junction to a non-motorized segment of the Great Western Trail (GWT).
- 7)** Change management on the Long Lake/Scout Lake route (30554) so that motorized travel ends at 38.055506, -111.341628 and the remainder of the route is converted to a non-motorized trail.
- 8)** Change management on the Oak Creek Reservoir route (30567A), locking the gate at 38.07702, -111.36711 and hardening a parking area there, ending public motorized use below the dam. Invite walk-in use to the reservoir while retaining administrative/permittee access to the head gate works at the dam.
- 9)** Change management on the Wildcat Creek Route (30247, 30247B) so that motorized use ends at the corral at 38.10836, -111.344509, re-designating the route to the west of this point a non-motorized trail.
- 10)** Change management on a dispersed camp spur near Hickman Pasture (34000), such that motorized use ends at the large dispersed camp site in the meadow at 38.190689, -111.404807.
- 11)** Change management on the Beaver Dam Reservoir/Fish Creek Lake Route (30520) so that it is either converted to a non-motorized trail or open only to OHVs. If the route remains open to motorized use, create a hardened parking area below Beaver Dam Reservoir at 38.165282, -111.431532. Install gates and barriers so that unauthorized motorized use is halted beyond 38.165083, -111.431361 and ensure that the non-motorized network is better signed and enforced, particularly the Wildcat Trail (TRL\_NO 35140).
- 12)** Change management on 30179 so that the redundant western spur becomes part of the non-motorized trail system. Continue motorized use management from the spur junction at 38.196722, -111.436841 to Green Lake on the easternmost route. Create a parking lot at 38.18891, -111.447275 and better delineate and sign the Donkey Point and Blind Lake non-motorized trails.
- 13)** Change management on the Donkey Reservoir route (30521, 30521A) by restricting motorized use along the reservoir edge by placing barriers and creating a hardened parking lot at 38.20338, -111.487483
- 14)** Change management in the Left Hand Reservoir route (31526) to administrative/permittee access

- 15) Close and remove the Dog Flat route (31331) from the transportation system, or close and retain administrative/permittee access if deemed necessary

## PROPOSED PURPOSE AND NEED

As a part of settling an appeal to the Dixie National Forest Motorized Travel Plan, the Forest Service agreed that:

“Within two years of this decision, the Dixie and Fishlake NFs will initiate a NEPA process analyzing the possible closure of the Chokecherry (#s30574, 31342A, 31342, 30177), Bowns Point (#30178), and Big Lake (#31305) (which is a spur off Bowns Point), and the Boulder Swale (#s 30475, 30475B, 31406, 31402A) routes. The analysis will include consideration of the roadless area’s ecological benefits; watershed values; locally desired community effects; and habitat restoration, security and effectiveness on the northeast, east and south slopes of Boulder Mountain.

- a. This process would include the consideration of other routes in the Boulder Slopes area, such as the routes described by #s 31331, 30521, 30521A, U5073, 30526, 30179, 30520, 30247B, 30567A, 30554, 31297A, and 30494<sup>1</sup>”

The majority (65%)<sup>2</sup> of the area covered by these routes is classified as 2A (Semi-Primitive Recreation), under the 1986 LRMP. Areas of 2B (Roaded Natural Recreation), 4A (Fish and Aquatic Habitat), 6A (Livestock Grazing), 7A (Wood Production), 9A (Riparian Management), and 10B (Municipal Water Supply Watersheds) are also present in the potential analysis area. Management Area 2A, Semi-Primitive Recreation “... *would provide the user with a moderate to high probability to experience isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, and provide for independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of woodsman and outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk. Opportunity exists for users to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment.*”<sup>3</sup>

The purpose of the Proposed Action would be to initiate actions that would improve watershed conditions, fisheries, wildlife habitat security and quality, the non-motorized recreation experience and would allow the Forest to better move toward desired conditions for management area 2A, Semi-Primitive Recreation, which covers the majority of the area of interest. The actions would also better meet community desires and reduce on-going resource damage on Boulder Top and the northeast, east, and southeast slopes of Boulder Mountain. Similar management actions have been taken in the past in the immediate vicinity with excellent results. The trails to Chriss Lake and Deer Creek Lake were once motorized, and the Boulder Top Fisheries and Restoration Project of the late 1990s did much to improve road and resource management on

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<sup>1</sup> *Appeal Resolution Agreement, Dixie National Forest Travel Management Plan, 07/31/09*

Wildlands CPR, The Wilderness Society, Utah Environmental Congress, Great Old Broads for Wilderness and Grand Canyon Trust appellants

<sup>2</sup> See included GIS – “Area\_Of\_Interest.shp,” Appendix 2, Area of Interest and Appendix 3, LRMP Management Areas for the Area of Interest

<sup>3</sup> Dixie NF LRMP, pp IV-63 to IV-67, 1986



Boulder Top. The latter changed much of the area's management prescription from 7A (Wood Production) to 2A (Semi-Primitive Recreation). We agree with this change, and the proposed changes in this document would better meet the area's current 2A management prescription while retaining nearly all motorized vehicle access. Further, community desires in the Boulder Town area dictate that changes be made to the current motorized system to increase recreation quality as well as big game habitat and hunt success. The areas in question are remote and retain a primitive character. The level of motorized trespass on the non-motorized trail system has been and continues to be unacceptable, particularly on designated non-motorized segments of the Great Western Trail (GWT) and the Wildcat trail. Since the area is so remote, violators know that



Round Lake, Boulder Mountain, Photo © Tim Peterson

there is almost no chance they will be caught and cited, further exacerbating the habitat security problem. Since the area has not had a Law Enforcement Officer in place for the last few years, it is important to take positive steps to let the recreating public know that the Dixie is serious about the travel plan including better dissemination of information and education. The project outlined herein could serve as an excellent opportunity to educate the public on the benefits to improved hunting<sup>4</sup> due to better habitat security. The proposed changes can also help the agency better manage the non-motorized trail system by lessening the temptation for motorized users to violate the MTP with minimal additional commitment of law enforcement resources by lessening the temptation for motorized users to violate the MTP. Because of the level terrain on Boulder Top, and since much of the non-motorized system on the slopes of Boulder Mountain is wide and in open country, vehicles (particularly OHVs) can travel off-road and on non-motorized trails with little difficulty. As such, enforcement of road closures and restricted travel areas is very difficult. Most Forest users want to do the right thing, and with better education, management and implementation, hunt success, non-motorized recreation and watershed quality can all be improved.

By well-delineating both motorized and non-motorized routes with signage, posts, gates and fences and with native materials such as logs and boulders, the users' expectations can be better met while lessening pressure on law enforcement. As well, better signage and delineation ease the burden of proof for the agency in court when citations are issued, leading to higher conviction rates and lower rates of recidivism. Many of the

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<sup>4</sup> Reduced road density can improve hunter success for Elk, see Gratson, M.W., and C.L. Whitman. 2000. Road closures and density and success of elk hunters in Idaho. Wildlife Society Bulletin 28(2): 302-310, and Rowland, M.M., M.J. Wisdom, B.K. Johnson, and M.A. Penninger. 2005. Effects of roads on elk: implications for management in forested ecosystems.

proposed changes will improve water quality by getting vehicles away from lakes and reservoirs. Such changes have been implemented on this Forest and others with great success. Users can still drive within easy walking distance of a lake; then walk in to fish, camp and picnic.

Among the major issues identified to drive development of this proposed action alternative is the regionally significant Boulder Mountain proposed wilderness. The most acute aspect of this concern is that two authorized routes come down from Boulder Top to the road system below the rim of the mountain. The Boulder Swale ATV route (the Swale) and the high clearance vehicle route dropping off the rim from



North Slope of Boulder Mountain,  
Photo © Tim Peterson/Grand Canyon Trust, flown by LightHawk

Chokecherry point (Chokecherry) potentially divide the larger proposed Boulder Mountain wilderness area into three smaller potential wilderness areas. This is a significant conflict among alternative uses of available resources, as the potential Wilderness attributes and values of three smaller potential Wilderness areas are greatly diminished when compared to one larger potential Wilderness. Overshadowed only by the

greater High Uintas potential wilderness area that is close to one million acres in northern Utah, the next largest potential Wilderness area on National Forest lands in Utah is this area on Boulder Mountain. The National Forest conservation community in Utah has long proposed this outstanding area for Wilderness. Depending on the details of boundary placement, the size of the greater Boulder Mountain potential wilderness area ranges from 125,000 to 158,000 acres. Aside from the greater Flat Tops Wilderness in west central Colorado, the potential Boulder Mountain wilderness area is the largest contiguous potential wilderness remaining in the entire Utah High Plateaus Ecoregion. Study of these two routes that trisect such a unique and extraordinarily large potential wilderness is explicitly a central aspect of the purpose and need, and that this concern is embodied in the structure of the appeal resolution agreement that in part catalyzes this NFMA/NEPA analysis is critical. Motorized and mechanized use of The Swale and Chokecherry constitutes a major, and at the very least regionally significant, conflict among alternative uses of available resources. Consistent with the statutory language of the NEPA concerning resolution of such conflicts via the alternative development process, we believe that this issue needs to be identified as a major issue (sometimes also called significant issue) that drives development of alternatives. In the case at hand we believe this significant need must drive the development and/or refinement of the proposed action. To this effect, our proposed action alternative would designate these two key routes as non-mechanized.

Boulder Mountain is unique due to its relative remoteness, range of elevations and habitats, numerous lakes and reservoirs, and its outstanding dispersed recreation opportunities. Where road management currently allows motorized access all the way to the water, options that better protect the resource should be enacted while retaining walk-in access to the lakes. Water quality, fishing, hunting and the primitive experience that is so sought after will all benefit.

## **DESCRIPTION OF EACH PROPOSED MANAGEMENT ACTION**

**1) Boulder Swale ATV route** (Maps 1A, 2<sup>5</sup>: 30475B, 30475, 31406, 31402A). Convert to a non-mechanized trail.

Though it was not analyzed for closure in any of the alternatives of the recent MTP FEIS, the community of Boulder has expressed a strong desire to convert the Boulder Swale ATV route to a non-mechanized trail. The route is redundant for OHV users, as the primary vehicle access to Boulder Top is via the Hell's Backbone and Posey Lake Roads, then on the main road through Jacobs Valley, then up to Spectacle Lake. Being mostly improved, the Hells Backbone route is safer, better established and does not present as many resource problems as the Swale. The Swale provides OHV users too much temptation to violate the current MTP. ATV access from Dry Lake to McGath Lake used to be legal along the Swale (Fig. 1<sup>6</sup>), and enforcement will be much more difficult than if the Swale were restricted to non-mechanized use at the parking lot (Fig. 2) at the McGath Lake trailhead at 38.00185, -111.52917. The Swale also provides the temptation to use motors on the now motor-restricted Burr Top trail, which is still unsigned and heavily used by full-sized vehicles (Fig. 3).

Resource, wildlife and hydrology problems on the Swale include "impacts [to] channels, floodplains, wetlands or riparian areas, contribution to erosion or slope failure." The route "[is a] moderate risk to soil & water resources, encroaches on a sensitive area or impact TES/MIS species, impacts specific wildlife habitat or security...Close to meet big game habitat effectiveness road density standards within GA or to protect important TES/MIS habitat."<sup>7</sup>

Located on a steep rocky slope (Fig. 4) in excellent deer and elk habitat, the route should be converted to a non-mechanized trail.

**2) Bowns Point route** (Maps 1A, 2: 30178). ending motorized use at the end of heave road work in Pleasant Creek Meadows located at 38.09202, -111.41778. Convert the remainder of the route to a non-motorized trail.

The Bowns Point route serves as the main access to the southern portion of the Top, and was extensively reconstructed as a part of the 1998 Boulder Top Fisheries EA. After the road work ends at the curve in Pleasant Creek Meadows, the road deteriorates substantially (Fig. 5), and it becomes very slow going and difficult to traverse. Once it

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<sup>5</sup> Please see **APPENDIX 4, MAP 2, PROPOSED MANAGEMENT CHANGES**

<sup>6</sup> Please see **APPENDIX 1, PHOTOGRAPHS** for figures (separate .pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 31406



reaches its terminus at the rim near Bowns Point, an old stock driveway drops down the escarpment to near Long Lake. The stock driveway is not part of the NFS trail system, but it is capable of handling and receives occasional ATV use. The route also accesses the Great Western Trail as it climbs from Sunflower Flat and winds along the rim.

According to the Route Report prepared for the MTP process, the “route encroaches on a sensitive area or impact TES/MIS species, impacts specific wildlife habitat or security, [it is] Subject to Erosion Concerns [and passes through ] Elk (MIS) High Summer Range, Goshawk (MIS) (TES), in or Through Post Fledgling Area, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range, Sage Grouse (TES) Proximate to Brood Rearing Area (within 1 mile), Sage Grouse (TES) In or Through Brood Rearing Area, Snowshoe Hare High Year-Long Range and Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range.”<sup>8</sup> Due to its location, it is likely that the route impacts cultural resources.

In order to better meet the Desired Conditions associated with LRMP management area 2A (Semi-Primitive Recreation), and to improve wildlife habitat and big game habitat security, the route should be closed to motorized use at the end of the road work at the curve in Pleasant Creek meadows at 38.09202, -111.41778 (Fig. 6), a trailhead parking lot hardened off and the remainder converted to a non-motorized trail.

### **3) Big Lake route (Maps 1A, 2: 31305) Convert to a non-motorized trail.**

The Route from the Bowns Point route to the pond south of Big Lake is little used (Fig. 7). Under the current MTP, it is not legal to drive all the way to Big Lake. Currently unsigned, the route peters out at a pond (Fig. 8). The “Special Resources” section of the Route Report at [http://maps.fs.fed.us/tm\\_jsp/r4/dixie\\_tm/pdf/31305.pdf](http://maps.fs.fed.us/tm_jsp/r4/dixie_tm/pdf/31305.pdf) is absent, though it likely has similar concerns as 30178. This short spur route should be converted to a non-motorized trail to avoid providing the temptation for motorized users to violate the MTP and ride/drive all the way to Big Lake.

### **4) Route from Beef Meadows to Chokecherry Point (Maps 1A, 2: 30177). Convert to a non-motorized trail.**

This route was recommended for closure to motorized vehicles under the proposed action in the Boulder Top Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Project EA, but the DN/FONSI altered the preferred alternative, keeping the route from Beef Meadows to Chokecherry Point open. The EA states: “All roads into Donkey and Chokecherry Points would be closed, as well as roads into Grass, Surveyors, Chucks, Meeks, Pleasant, Horseshoe, and Crater Lakes. Road closures would consist of a combination of gates, physical closures, and administrative closures.”<sup>9</sup> The Decision Notice and FONSI reversed the Chokecherry portion of the proposed action, stating: “FS Road # 171 [sic<sup>10</sup>] to Chokecherry Point will remain open in its entirety as described in Alternative C.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 30178

<sup>9</sup> Boulder Top Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Project EA, Dixie NF, 1998

<sup>10</sup> The DN/FONSI should read FS Road # 177

<sup>11</sup> Boulder Top Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Project DN/FONSI, Dixie NF, 1998

We believe that since the EA proposed closure of this route in the proposed action, the route should be converted to a non-motorized trail, retaining access for administrative/permittee use if absolutely necessary. We would be very interested in viewing the EA's project record for more information on why this route was slated for closure in the proposed action. The route is very rough, extremely rocky and in very poor condition (Fig. 9). Due to its location, it is also likely that the route impacts cultural resources. The "Special Resources" section of the Route Report at [http://maps.fs.fed.us/tm\\_jsp/r4/dixie\\_tm/pdf/30177.pdf](http://maps.fs.fed.us/tm_jsp/r4/dixie_tm/pdf/30177.pdf) is absent, though it likely has similar resource concerns as 30178.

- 5) Close the Chokecherry Point route from the rim (Maps 1A, 2: 31342, 31342A, 30574) to Highway 12 to motorized use, converting it to a non-mechanized trail.**

Though this conversion was not analyzed for closure in any of the alternatives of the recent MTP FEIS, some living in the community of Boulder have expressed a strong desire to convert the Chokecherry Point ATV route to a non-mechanized trail. The route is redundant for OHV users, as the primary vehicle access to Boulder Top is via the Hell's Backbone and Posey Lake Roads, then on the main road through Jacobs Valley, then up to Spectacle Lake. Being mostly improved, the Hell's Backbone route is safer, better established and does not present as many resource problems as Chokecherry. The Chokecherry Point route is extremely steep, very rough, among the rockiest on the Forest and presents a safety hazard from inattentive OHV riders and rock fall (Fig. 10). Its dangerous nature makes it unsuitable for mixed use, and the lower portion has drainage problems (Fig. 11) as well as extensive braiding (Fig. 12).

According to the Route Report, "the route is in very poor condition or a particular burden for maintenance, the route is the cause of safety concerns, the route contributes to erosion or slope failure, the route is a moderate risk to soil & water resources, the route encroaches on a sensitive area or impact TES/MIS species, the route impacts specific wildlife habitat or security including Elk (MIS) High Summer Range, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range, Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range." The report recommends that the route can be "close[d] to meet big game habitat effectiveness road density standards within GA or to protect important TES/MIS habitat (e.g. Nesting, breeding, roosting)."<sup>12</sup>

It is our recommendation that this dangerous and resource damaging route be converted to a non-mechanized trail. We recommend installing barriers at the junction with Highway 12 (Fig. 13) and creating a trailhead parking lot on the other side of Highway 12 with a kiosk containing travel maps and information.

- 6) Bowns Lake/Steep Creek Lake route (Maps 1B, 2: 31297, 31297A). End motorized travel at the junction with the Deer Creek Lake trail (TRL\_NO 34001.9), converting the**

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<sup>12</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 31342 and 30574

portion of the route north of the junction to a non-motorized segment of the Great Western Trail.

Near the end of the Bowns Lake/Steep Creek Lake route (31297) there exists an excellent opportunity to correct and preserve non-motorized management of the Great Western Trail. To alleviate resource concerns and to discourage currently relatively heavy unauthorized motorized use of the GWT, the Bowns Lake/Steep Creek Lake route (31297) should end at 38.029806, -111.370122. There is already a gate and signage to the west (fig 14); the same should apply on the north where the current route suffers from erosion problems (Fig. 15). There is no good reason to allow motorized use to continue north on 31297A from this point. It is a short (less than 1/3 mile) segment that leads OHV users to the non-motorized GWT, where closure signs have been removed and OHV trespass on the non-motorized system appears common (Fig. 16).

**7) Long Lake/Scout Lake route** (Maps 1B, 2: 30554) Change management so that motorized travel ends at 38.055506, -111.341628 and the remainder of the route is converted to a non-motorized trail.

Popular, well-loved and close to Highway 12, the Long Lake/Scout Lake route presents an excellent opportunity to improve water quality, aquatic habitat and to better move toward the desired conditions associated with Management Area 2A (Semi-Primitive Recreation). As the route is presently managed, it is too easy for OHV users to ride too close to and in the aquatic resource (Fig. 17). A spur off the main route accesses the lakeshore at Long Lake, and it is currently possible to drive directly into Scout Lake (Fig. 18).

According to the Route Report, the “route contributes to erosion or slope failure, is a moderate risk to soil & water resources, encroaches on a sensitive area or impacts TES/MIS species, it impacts specific wildlife habitat or security, is Subject to Erosion Concerns,” and encroaches on “Elk (MIS) High Summer Range, Goshawk (MIS) (TES) In or Through Post Fledgling Area, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range and Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range.”<sup>13</sup>

To improve habitat security, improve hunting<sup>14</sup>, to improve non-motorized recreation, and to protect the aquatic resource, we recommend that the route be closed at a choke point below Long Lake at 38.055506, -111.341628 (Fig. 19). If a closure there is not feasible, the route should be closed and a hardened barrier parking area created just above the Long Lake shoreline at 38.057770, -111.345492 (Fig. 20). Walk in access to Scout Lake should be encouraged. This strategy of limiting vehicle access to improve the aquatic resource and the remote angling experience has met with success on the

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<sup>13</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 30554

<sup>14</sup> Gratson, M.W., and C.L. Whitman. 2000. Road closures and density and success of elk hunters in Idaho. Wildlife Society Bulletin 28(2): 302-310, and Rowland, M.M., M.J. Wisdom, B.K. Johnson, and M.A. Penninger. 2005. Effects of roads on elk: implications for management in forested ecosystems.

Fishlake NF on Monroe Mountain at Barney Reservoir in a joint project recently implemented with UDWR (Fig. 21).

**8) Oak Creek Reservoir route** (Maps 1B, 2: 30567) Change management on the locking the gate at 38.07702, -111.36711 and hardening a parking area there, ending public motorized use below the dam. Invite walk in use to the reservoir while retaining administrative/permittee access to the head gate works at the dam.

The route to Oak Creek Reservoir has management problems that are in need of mitigation along its course and at its terminus at the reservoir. The route is steep, erosive, poorly maintained and has problems with braiding. Violations of the non-motorized system off the route appear quite common. The Bear Flat trail (TRL\_NO 35156) is not accurately mapped in GIS, and while it is signed in one location (Fig. 22), it is not in another (Fig. 23). The trail needs barriers installed to prevent illegal OHV use on the non-motorized trail (Fig. 24). The route needs better delineation (by rocking off the intended course and placing coarse woody debris in braids) as it crosses a meadow to avoid further resource damage (Fig. 25). Near the end of the route, we suggest locking the gate already present (Fig. 26), and creating a parking area there, welcoming walk-in use to the Reservoir. This management action is necessary to prevent use of the reservoir bed below the high water mark (Fig. 27), and to prevent unauthorized motorized use of an old user created route that runs along the south side of the reservoir (Fig. 28). If the Forest elects not to close and lock the existing gate, a parking area should be hardened off at the dam, rocking in the area to prevent illegal use on the route on the south side of the reservoir.

According to the Route Report, the “route contributes to erosion or slope failure, is a Moderate risk to soil & water resources, it encroaches on a sensitive area or impact TES/MIS, it is in (within the banks or high water mark) of a Riparian area, and is in Elk High Summer Range, Goshawk (MIS) (TES), In or Through Post Fledgling Area, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range and Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range.”<sup>15</sup>

The Oak Creek Reservoir route is not one that would be built as it is today. Modern engineering standards would not allow a route so steep, erosive and unstable. The route needs mitigation as described above, and if it cannot be successfully mitigated, the route should be closed to public use, retaining the prism for administrative/permittee use.

**9) Wildcat Creek Route** (Maps 1B, 2: 30247, 30247B) Change management on the so that motorized use ends at the corral at 38.10836, -111.344509, re-designating the route to the west of this point a non-motorized trail.

Management actions have already been taken to limit motorized access to Mimo Lake in the Pleasant Creek drainage. Posts have been placed in the route at what appears to be quite an arbitrary place (Fig. 29). A popular area for hunting, habitat security and hunt

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<sup>15</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 30567



success could be greatly improved by further limiting motorized use and ending the full size vehicle route at the corral at 38.10836, -111.344509. An excellent location for barriers exists here (Fig. 30). An alternate location for route closure exists at 38.107803, -111.34673. If this option is chosen, designation for camp spur 31598A (currently closed) should be reevaluated and designated open to all. The popular camping area would provide an excellent base camp for hunting (Fig. 31). Past this point, 30247 has problems with erosion (Fig. 32), braiding (Fig. 33), unhardened stream crossing (Fig. 34), direct tree mortality due to lack of route planning (Fig. 35). Unfortunately, illegal motorized use of the first part of the Behunin Creek trail appears common (Fig. 36). Better signage and barriers are needed here regardless of potential management change. The junction of this route with Highway 12 already contains a constructed kiosk, and the board there provides an excellent opportunity for education about travel management, dispersed camping and the new MVUM.

**10) Dispersed camp spur near Hickman Pasture** (Maps 1B, 2: 34000), Change management on a dispersed camp spur near Hickman Pasture (Maps 1B, 2: 34000), such that motorized use ends at the large dispersed camp site in the meadow at 38.190689, -111.404807.

This short route off the Beaver Dam Reservoir route makes sense as a camp spur. What does not make sense is the continuation of the route past a major dispersed camp site (Fig. 34) where it wanders aimlessly up the drainage with no purpose no clear end and no destination (Fig. 35). We recommend that the route be retained on the system, but with a clear physical indication that the route ends at the camp site at 38.190689, -111.404807.

**11) Beaver Dam Reservoir/Fish Creek Lake Route** (Maps 1B, 2: 30520) Change management so that it is either converted to a non-motorized trail or open only to OHVs. If the route remains open to motorized use, create a hardened parking area below Beaver Dam Reservoir at 38.165282, -111.431532. Install gates and barriers so that unauthorized motorized use is halted beyond 38.165083, -111.431361 and ensure that the non-motorized network is better signed and enforced, particularly the Wildcat Trail (TRL\_NO 35140).

Truly one of the roughest and rockiest routes if not *the* roughest and rockiest route on the Fremont River South RD (Fig. 39), the route to Beaver Dam and Fish Creek Reservoirs has serious management problems that are in urgent need of mitigation along its entire course and at its terminus at the reservoir. Passable to only OHVs and the hardiest and most skilled full-sized vehicle driver, the route should either be converted to a non-motorized trail or be converted to an OHV trail. The route has substantial problems with erosion (Fig. 40), braiding (Fig. 41), unhardened stream crossing (Fig. 42), dispersed camping in dying aspen stands, and needs better signage and barrier installation on the non-motorized system. In particular, the non-motorized Wildcat trail near the bottom of the route is subject to apparently frequent illegal ATV use (Fig. 43). Signage and barrier installation are necessary here and at the junction with the GWT to Emily Lake (Fig. 44). The area also needs information posted about

dispersed camping regulations and enforcement of these regulations. Some well-used sites are very poorly sited along this route – within 10 feet of streams and much more than 150 feet from designated open routes. The route is also a safety hazard, particularly for inexperienced OHV riders. The route is very long, relatively remote and presents great difficulty in reaching and treating accident victims.

According to the Route Report, the “route is in very poor condition or a particular burden for maintenance the route is the cause of safety concerns, the route impacts wetlands or riparian areas, the route impacts specific wildlife habitat or security, has 4 stream crossings, and impacts Elk (MIS) High Summer Range, Goshawk (MIS) (TES) In or Through Post Fledgling Area, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range, Snowshoe Hare High Year-Long Range, Wild Turkey (MIS) Critical Winter Range and Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range.”<sup>16</sup>

We recommend closure of this route to motorized use, retaining administrative/permittee access if necessary. If that is not the option chosen, the route should be converted to a motorized trail open to vehicles. At Beaver Dam Reservoir, a parking lot should be created and rocked in, moving vehicle use away from the water’s edge. The area should be better signed, and the section above the lot signed as a non-motorized trail welcoming walk-in use to Fish Creek Reservoir. Administrative/permittee use could be retained from Beaver Dam Reservoir to the flow control device at Fish Creek Reservoir if necessary. Particular attention should be paid to halting illegal use across the creek below the Beaver Dam Reservoir spillway (Fig. 45) and along a short section of the Wildcat Trail to Blind Lake (Fig. 46). Whatever set of options is chosen, the damage along the entire route should be mitigated, including the correction of severe erosion, stream crossing and hydrological problems, as well as better delineating the route to restore braided areas. The route offers an excellent teaching opportunity for dispersed camping regulations. Finally, the non-motorized trails that leave the route need signage, barrier installation and enforcement.

**12) Green Lake Route** (Maps 1B, 2: 30179) Change management on so that the redundant western spur becomes part of the non-motorized trail system. Continue motorized use management from the spur junction at 38. 196722, -111.436841 to Green Lake on the easternmost route. Create a parking lot at 38.18891, -111.447275 and better delineate and sign the Donkey Point and Blind Lake non-motorized trails.

There are currently two ways to get to Green Lake from the 10,000 foot bench below the lake. One of them, the westernmost part of a loop, allows what appears to be frequent illegal ATV use on the non-motorized Wildcat Trail to Left Hand Reservoir (Fig. 47). At the junction of the western portion of the route with the Wildcat Trail, there currently exists no barrier and no signage that the Wildcat Trail is a non-motorized trail (Fig. 48). The extremely remote nature of the area allows illegal use to continue undetected, and closing the western spur would eliminate both route redundancy and ease the temptation to violate the Wildcat trail. The junction at the bottom appears to

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<sup>16</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 30520

have been the subject of mitigation in the past. It is barely visible, and has had logs placed in the prism of the route (Fig. 46). That action should be carried further, formally closing this portion of the route to motorized use while welcoming non-motorized use on this section and on the Wildcat Trail. The eastern part of the spur should remain open almost to Green Lake, and a parking area should be rocked in where the Donkey Point and Blind lake trails leave the motorized route at 38.18891, -111.447275. Both the Donkey Point and Blind lake Trails need better signage and vehicle barriers, as they are currently the subject of occasional motorized trespass (Fig. 47). Signs have been placed, but their poor siting allows motorized users access without being able to see the closure signage (Fig. 48). Both of these trails need better delineation (blazing and/or signage) as they are very easy to lose thorough the relatively open Forest (Fig. 49).

**13) Donkey Reservoir route** (Maps 1B, 2: 30521, 30521A) Change management by restricting motorized use along the reservoir edge by placing barriers and creating a hardened parking lot at 38.20338, -111.487483

According to the Route Report, the “route is the cause of safety concerns, the route causes soil erosion or mass failure with a moderate risk of failure. Some sediment sources and erosional features are present. The route impacts specific wildlife habitat or security including Elk (MIS) High Winter Range, Elk (MIS) High Summer Range, Goshawk (MIS) (TES) in or Through Post Fledgling Area, Mule Deer (MIS) Critical Winter Range, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range, Snowshoe Hare High Year-Long Range, Wild Turkey (MIS) High Year-Long Range, Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range.”<sup>17</sup>

A popular destination, Donkey Reservoir needs improved management. A parking lot should be hardened and created below the dam to restrict vehicle use on the shoreline. As mentioned before, similar measures to improve fisheries and reduce sedimentation have been employed with success at Barney Reservoir on Monroe Mountain. This route needs also remediation and crossing hardening (or bridges) for its 12 stream crossings.

**14) Left Hand Reservoir route** (Maps 1B, 2: 31526) Change management to a non-motorized trail while retaining administrative/permittee access if necessary.

With plenty of lakes to drive directly to in the area, the short route (.2 miles) from 30521 to Left Hand Reservoir should be closed to public motorized use and a gate installed. Walk-in use should be welcomed. Violations on the Wildcat trail have occurred in the past beyond Left Hand Reservoir and elsewhere, and restricting motorized use to 30521 would alleviate the temptation for motorized users to violate the MTP in an effort to travel from Left Hand Reservoir to Green Lake via OHV. The remote nature of area makes enforcement difficult, and based on their behavior, riders are aware that there is little chance of getting caught.

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<sup>17</sup> Dixie MTP Route Report for 30521

**15) Dog Flat route** (Maps 1B, 2: 31331) Close and remove the route from the transportation system, or close and retain administrative/permittee access if deemed necessary

According to the Route Report, the “route is substantially brushed in, in very poor condition or a particular burden for maintenance, the route is the cause of safety concerns, the route is duplicated within 0.5 mile, the route is not needed for 20-30 years but leave prism. The route could be closed to enhance big game habitat effectiveness by maintaining road density below GA standard. The route impacts specific wildlife habitat including Elk (MIS) High Winter Range, Elk (MIS) High Summer Range, Mule Deer (MIS) High Summer Range, Wild Turkey (MIS) High Summer Range, and Wild Turkey (MIS) Critical Winter Range.”

Located within a municipal watershed and with three stream crossings, this route serves no worthy purpose or destination for the general public, other than accessing the Wildcat Trail, one which arguably has too much vehicle access already. The route is redundant, a safety concern and impacts habitat. For these reasons, the route should be closed and removed from the transportation system, or retained for administrative/permittee access if absolutely necessary.



Fish Creek Reservoir, Boulder Mountain Photo © Tim Peterson/Grand Canyon Trust

## CONCLUSION

The above proposed changes to routes on top and on the flanks of Boulder Mountain would represent a positive step for resource management for an exceptional area. The recent MTP for the Dixie has made substantial improvement to recreation and road management across the Dixie National Forest as a whole, but the area above Highway 12 and the routes in question in particular saw little or no management change as a result of the MTP process. Some of the routes were analyzed as a part of the Boulder Top Watershed and Fisheries Restoration Project, but that project did not consider improvements to the Forest Transportation System below the rim. We urge the Forests to view the proposed management changes above as a continuation of both the Watershed and Fisheries Project of the late 1990s and an enhancement of the recently completed MTP. The coalition backing this proposal consists of local landowners and local, statewide, regional and national conservation groups. Our constituency knows and loves the area - we enjoy recreating there, and we very much look forward to full implementation of the Dixie MTP, as well as consideration of additional improvements



to the system as outlined above. Boulder Mountain is truly a unique, wild and special place, and the proposal in this document would improve water quality, fisheries, habitat security and hunt success, and would go a long way toward reversing decades of illegal use on the area's world-class non-motorized trails system. The proposed changes found herein would also bring the area closed to meeting the desired condition for most of the area – 2A, Semi-Primitive Recreation which *“would provide the user with a moderate to high probability to experience isolation from the sights and sounds of humans, and provide for independence, closeness to nature, tranquility, and self-reliance through the application of woodsman and outdoor skills in an environment that offers challenge and risk. Opportunity exists for users to have a high degree of interaction with the natural environment.”*<sup>18</sup> Please don't hesitate to contact any of the undersigned with questions regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'B. Peterson'.

Tim D. Peterson  
Utah Wildlands Program Director  
Grand Canyon Trust

Mary O'Brien  
Utah Forests Program Manager  
Grand Canyon Trust

Kevin Mueller  
Program Director  
Utah Environmental Congress

Sarah Peters  
Legal Liaison and Staff Attorney  
Wildlands CPR

Rose Chilcoat  
Associate Director  
Great Old Broads for Wilderness

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<sup>18</sup> Dixie NF LRMP, pp IV-63 to IV-67, 1986



### APPENDIX 3 – LRMP MANAGEMENT AREAS FOR THE AREA OF INTEREST

CODE1	ACRES	
10B#	6359.41043298000	6359.41043298000 Watershed
2A	21536.04571820000	21536.04571820000
2A	34257.08194390000	34257.08194390000
2A#	8.75082377578	8.75082377578
2A#	28244.85890820000	28244.85890820000
2A#	1.01780352915	1.01780352915
2A#	2404.52967609000	2404.52967609000
2A#	6126.12907942000	6126.12907942000
		<b>92578.41395311490</b> Semi P Rec 64.90%
2B	129.95863970800	129.95863970800
2B	358.75110589600	358.75110589600
2B	354.53864801800	354.53864801800
2B	2331.83177014000	2331.83177014000
2B	1264.62032850000	1264.62032850000
2B	1411.57979740000	1411.57979740000
2B	3908.74551193000	3908.74551193000
		<b>9760.02580159200</b> Roaded Nat Rec
4A	71.45758649430	71.45758649430
4A	15.17440578430	15.17440578430
4A	36.87935043040	36.87935043040
4A	10.12087682090	10.12087682090
4A	40.21451390290	40.21451390290
4A	10.44884054610	10.44884054610
4A	62.98442975550	62.98442975550
		<b>247.28000373440</b> Fish and Aquatic
6A	3928.59681288000	3928.59681288000
6A	1372.94932802000	1372.94932802000
6A	27.21236337310	27.21236337310
6A	2326.50943496000	2326.50943496000
6A	3897.94103123000	3897.94103123000
		<b>11553.20897046310</b> Livestock Grazing
7A	570.25303603500	570.25303603500
7A	1111.99014279000	1111.99014279000
7A	2346.44003209000	2346.44003209000
7A	289.32427456300	289.32427456300
7A	224.08076288200	224.08076288200
7A	31.80653309060	31.80653309060
7A	2228.01368624000	2228.01368624000
7A	1341.38541542000	1341.38541542000
7A	232.07923021600	232.07923021600
7A	348.15540089400	348.15540089400
7A	8895.27782176000	8895.27782176000
7A	1120.92243961000	1120.92243961000
7A	2037.43585395000	2037.43585395000
		<b>20777.16462954060</b> Wood Production
9A	53.48951979220	53.48951979220
9A	95.54790064290	95.54790064290
9A	86.10793252640	86.10793252640
9A	76.38265469660	76.38265469660
9A	282.29103509000	282.29103509000

9A	7.10743470487	7.10743470487
9A	35.40794705270	35.40794705270
9A	17.47245217590	17.47245217590
9A	23.70482144950	23.70482144950
9A	35.77888893780	35.77888893780
9A	52.43838946240	52.43838946240
9A	107.81617334300	107.81617334300
9A	79.62227325750	79.62227325750
9A	80.62054712000	80.62054712000
9A	65.09998491490	65.09998491490
9A	7.05882250895	7.05882250895
9A	4.25912025747	4.25912025747
9A	5.43258519185	5.43258519185
9A	16.94798640850	16.94798640850
9A	2.97967220313	2.97967220313
9A	5.70945907050	5.70945907050
9A	420.77290324100	420.77290324100
9A	34.25847724720	34.25847724720
		<b>1596.30698129527</b> Riparian
9B	76.92383367460	76.92383367460
9B	36.09541303840	36.09541303840
9B	58.92445690200	58.92445690200
9B	62.38028572340	62.38028572340
		<b>234.32398933840</b> Int. Riparian

143106.13476205900 total



## APPENDIX 4 – MAP 2, PROPOSED MANAGEMENT CHANGES

