

March 11, 2020

Nick Schade
Recreation planner
Salmon-Challis National Forest
1206 S. Challis St.
Salmon, Idaho 83467

Re: Letter of support for Sawmill Canyon trails project

Mr. Schade,

Please consider this a group support letter for a trails project in, and around, Sawmill Canyon within the Lemhi Range of the Salmon-Challis National Forest.

In conjunction with the Idaho Department of Parks and Recreation – and consultation with the Idaho Department of Fish and Game – the following groups encourage a suite of management actions to improve access and experience for a variety of user types. The groups are the Theodore Roosevelt Conservation Partnership, Backcountry Hunters and Anglers, Trout Unlimited, the Salmon-Challis Area Trails Group, and the Challis Community Trails Group.

Our groups believe that as Idaho's population increases by 20,000 people annually that it is in our best interest to work together to address access issues in a way that benefits all users for generations to come. Additionally, we consider reducing the impacts to fish and wildlife from trails to be an important component of this project proposal. Our proposed trail project would open up 7.5 miles of motorized access, but, just as importantly, it will protect 10 miles of non-motorized access on South Fork of Big Creek, and it addresses watershed health issues in Sawmill Canyon.

The projects aimed at expanding motorized opportunities are:

1. Opening the Trail Creek Trail (No. 6186) to motorized use.
2. Opening Slide Creek Trail (No. 4146) to motorized use.
3. Changing Red Rock Loop Trail (No. 4109) from 50-inch machines to 64-inch machines
4. Changing Summerhouse Canyon from single track to 50-inch machines.
5. Close user-made routes in Summerhouse Gulch. Re-establish the Summerhouse Canyon Trail (No. 4177.02).
6. Reroute a section of Bear Canyon Trail (No. 4080) around a large bog that has developed from unauthorized use.
7. Re-route North Fork Big Creek Trail (No. 4075) where necessary from Park Fork Trail (No. 4196) to Patterson Trail Junction (No. 6185).

The rationale for these changes is to accommodate increasing recreation use. In 1988, the forest closed 50 percent of motorized single-track access. During that same timeframe, the number of motorcycles, ATVs, and other OHVs increased by more than 2,200 percent. That increase in demand must be met with increased opportunity.

The changes were vetted with sportsmen and IDFG. Considerations were made on other trail issues to accommodate the expansion of motorized use. The trails suggested for re-opening are supported by all user groups, and it is believed the changes in the system will spread out use across the system, which should decrease the potential for user conflicts.

In addition to the expansion of motorized access, there are several proposals for changes on motorized routes to help improve fisheries habitat. These projects are:

1. Install a bridge on North Fork Big Creek Trail (No. 4075) at the first creek crossing near trailhead.
2. Install trail restrictions at the trail head of Bear Canyon Trail (No. 4080) to limit unauthorized uses.

The final group of proposals is for preservation of a non-motorized opportunity with and near Sawmill Canyon. They are:

1. Trail improvements for fisheries on South Fork of Big Creek non-motorized trail (No. 4078).
2. Install trail restrictions at trailhead on South Fork of Big Creek non-motorized trail (No. 4078).
3. Install trail restrictions at trailheads for Smithie Fork Trail (No. 4081) at the top with trail (No. 4076) and possibly the bottom of, Slide Creek Trail (No. 4146).

Trail improvements and reroute Firebox Canyon on Mill Creek Trail (No. 4082) for fisheries concerns as well as re-establish the trail.

The trail proposals on the non-motorized section of the trails network were made to accommodate those users seeking more of a backcountry experience. They were also made with fisheries habitat improvements in mind. Finally, the changes were made to stop illegal use, both pioneering of new motorized routes and encroachment of motorized use.

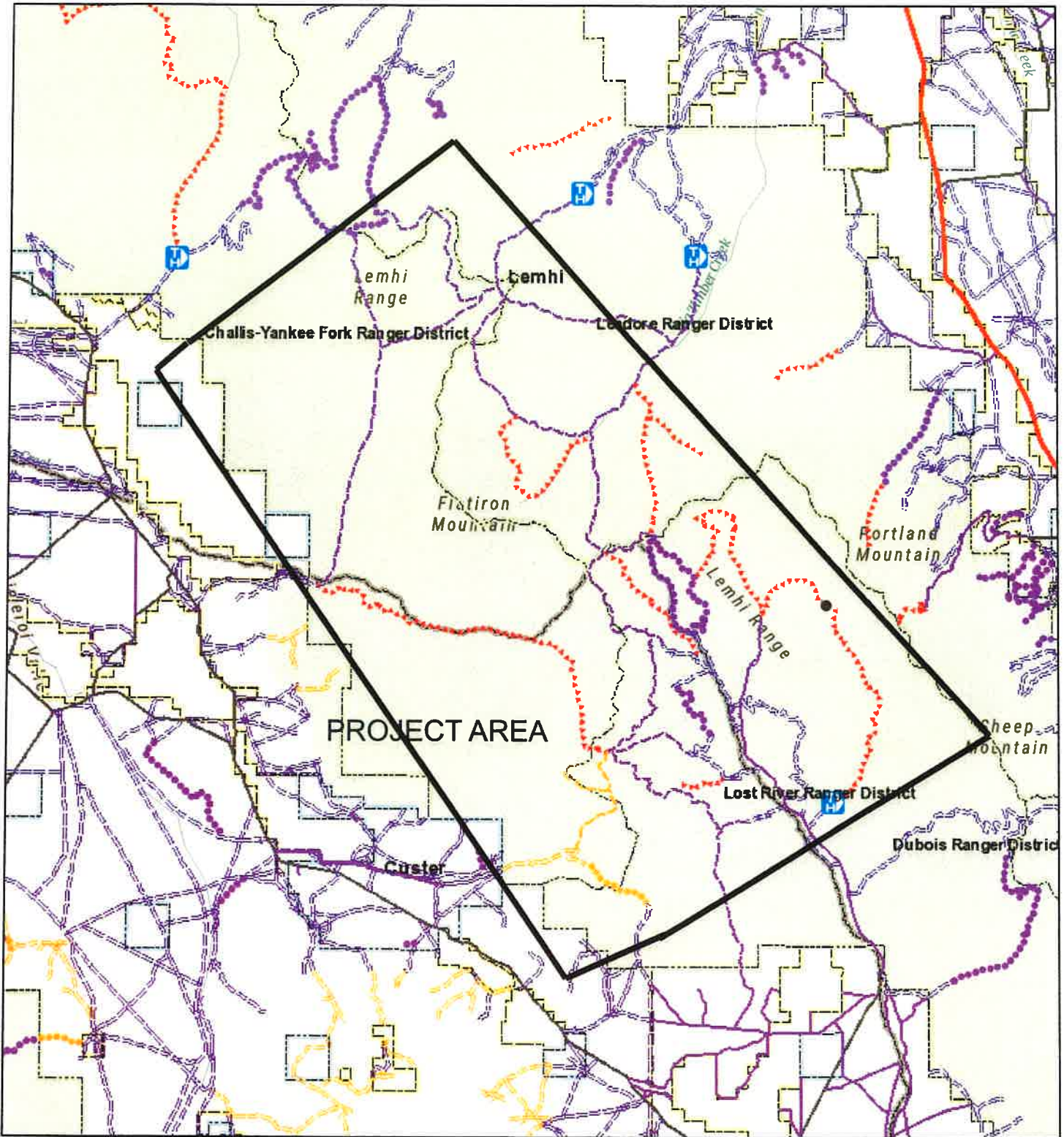
Finally, we suggest campground improvements at Timber Creek Campground.

Our groups believe these changes will accommodate the increasing use of Sawmill Canyon and the other nearby trail systems. We also believe the proposals properly balance the needs of a diverse community of users and the wildlife that thrives in the Lemhi Range.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.







Sincerely,

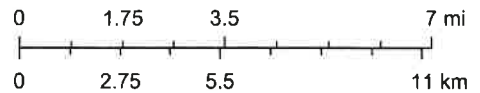
Idaho Trails



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Sawmill Canyon Proposal

Directory of Figures and Maps.

Figure 1 Map of the proposed trail re-designations

1 -Trail Creek Trail #6186 non-motorized to motorized single track

2- Slide Creek Trail #4146 non-motorized to motorized single track

Figure 2 Map of Summer House Gulch Trail #4177.02 that is single track motorized and should be ATV or >50". See attached National MVUM.

*Figure 2A shows user made routes in the Summer House Gulch area.

*Figure 2B shows more user made routes in the Summer House Gulch area.

Figure 3 shows the Red Rock Loop Trail #4109 that is currently >50" and is suggested to be re-designated as 64"

**Figure 4 reflects the upper end of the North Fork of Big Creek Trail #4075. This area desires to have several sections of trail tread re-located out of water crossings and drains.

**Figure 4-2/3 represents bridge locations or reconstructed approaches at significant creek crossings.

**Figure 5-1 shows a location on North Fork Big Creek Trail #4075 of a significant creek crossing.

Figure 6-1 reflects a location for trail restriction. Unauthorized users are using trail #4076 and trail #4080 and widening the trail tread out.

Figure 6-2 shows an area of a large bog that should be re-routed around.

Figure 7 show the Timber Creek Campground and immediate area.

Figure 8 is a map of South Fork Big Creek.

Figure 8-1 reflects locations for more aggressive signage for NON-Motorized use.

**Figure 8-2 reflects areas of concern for bridges or maintained creek crossings.

Figure 9-1 reflects a location for trail restriction at the top of Smithie Fork Trail #4081. Unauthorized use is pushing down the non-motorized trail.

****Figure 10 reflects a map of the north end Mill Creek Trail #4082. This section of trail north of Mill Creek Lake to trail #4081 is in desperate need of several re-routes Figure 10-3. Many large bogs and springs have developed in this area with no trail tread and in several places no visible evidence of the trail. In a couple places the trail tread has become an addition to the stream bed.**

****Figure 10-1/2 reflect locations for bridges or more developed creek crossings.**

Additional notes:

***represents wildlife concerns**

**** represents fishery concerns**

Idaho Trails

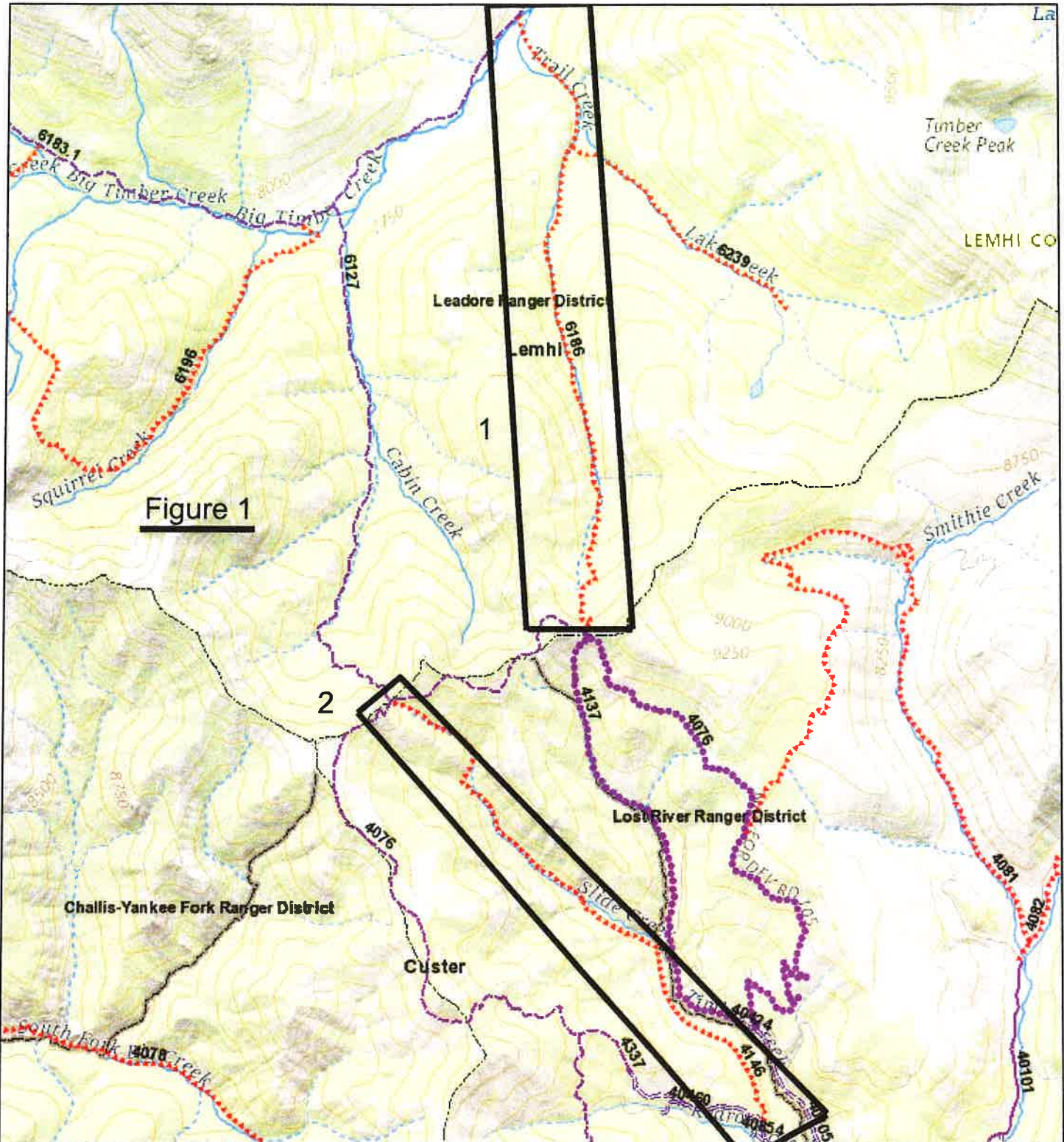






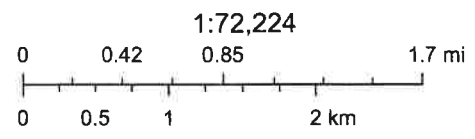


Figure 1

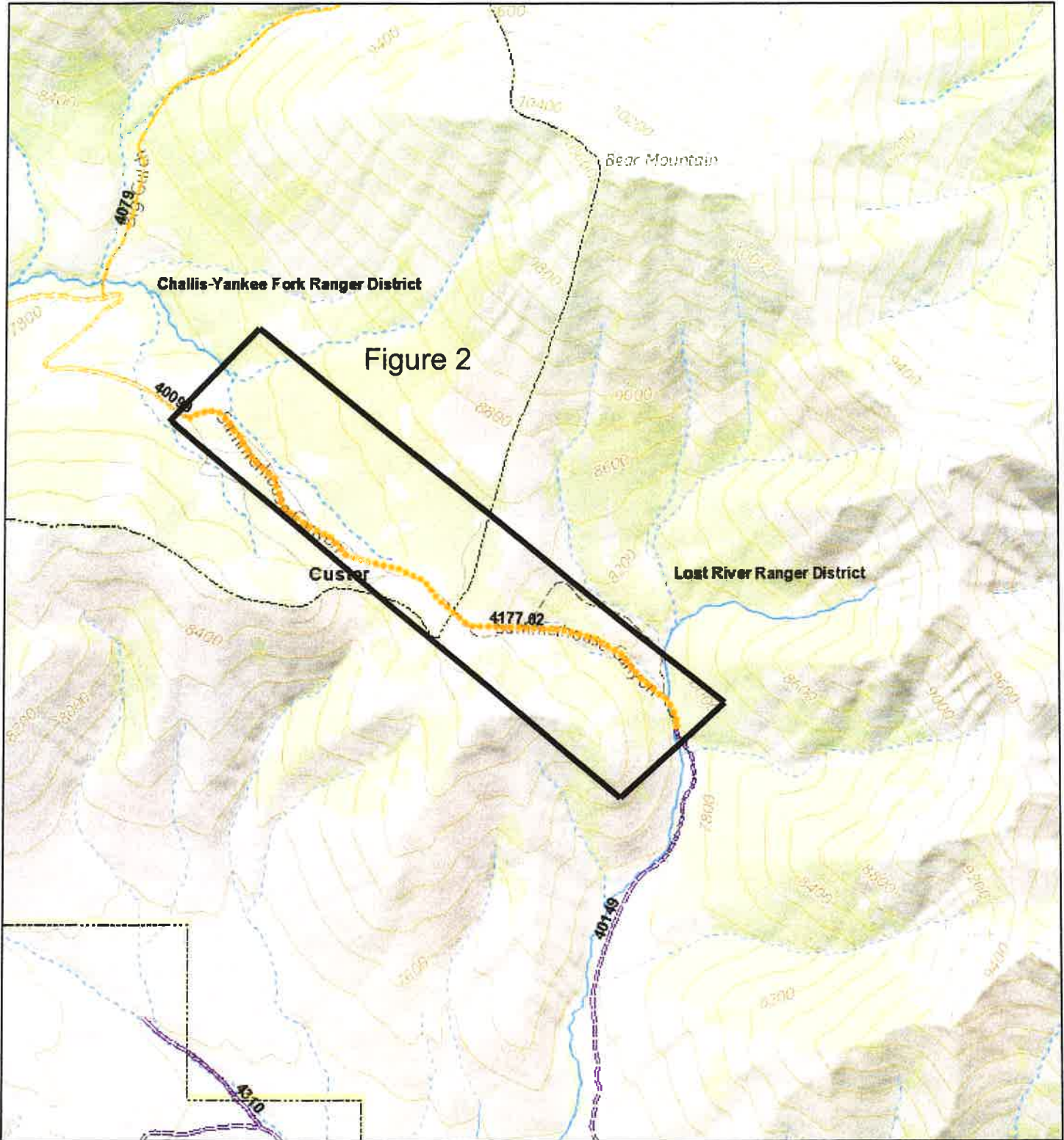
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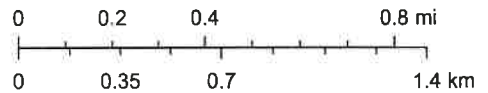
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- LAYERS
- LEGEND
- CLEAR MAP
- FEEDBACK

4177.02 | Summerhouse Canyon

Twitter Recreation Trail

TRAIL NUMBER | NAME:
4177.02 | Summerhouse Canyon

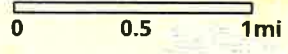
TRAIL OPEN TO THE FOLLOWING MOTOR VEHICLES:
Wheeled OHV 50" or Less in Width:
Seasonal (See Dates Below)

OPEN TO DIRT BIKES:
07/01-09/30

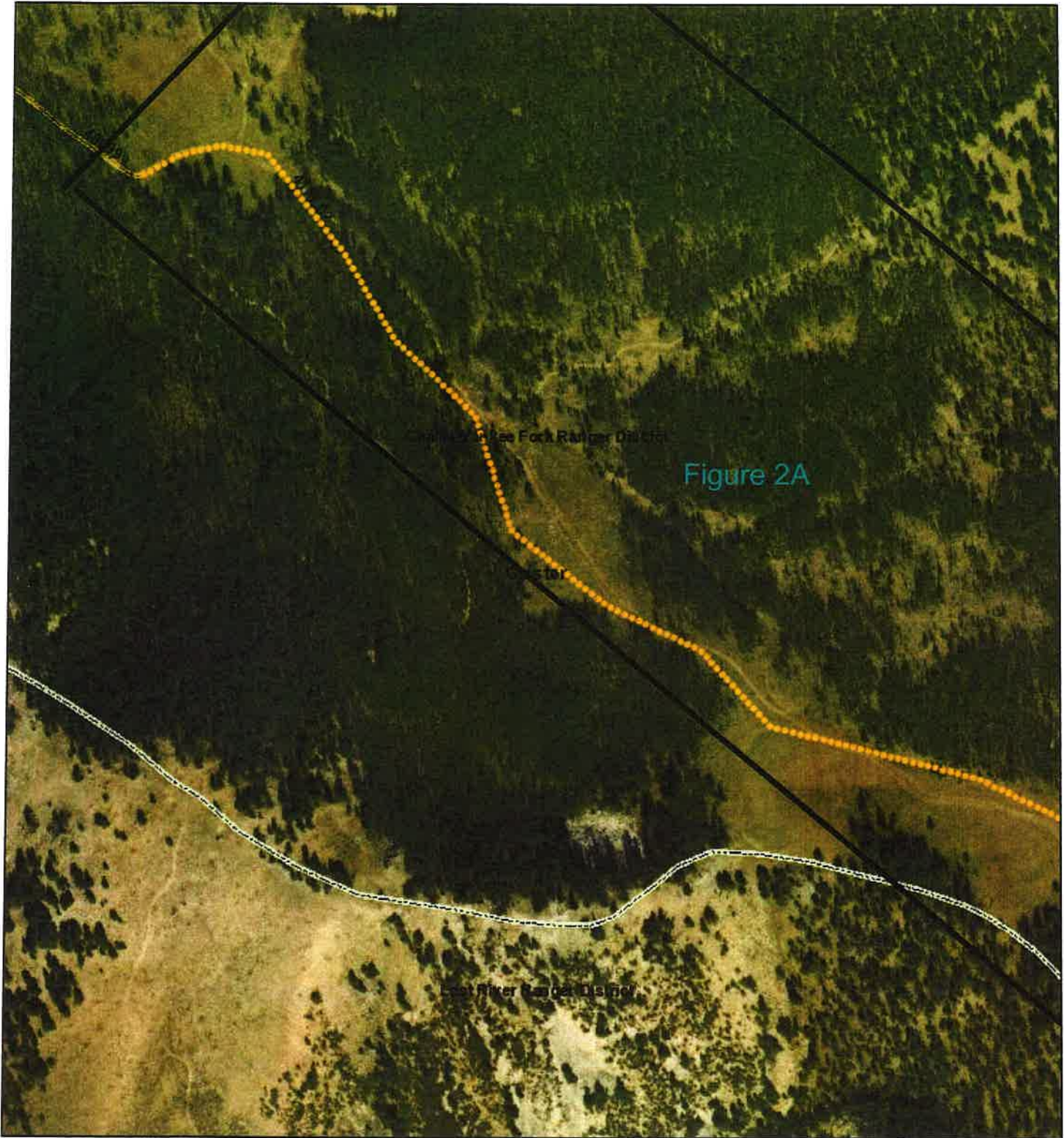
MANAGED FOR ATV'S:
07/01-09/30

OPEN TO HIKING:
01/01-12/31







OPEN TO PACK AND SADDLE:
01/01-12/31

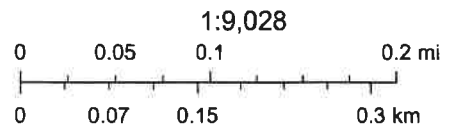


Idaho Trails



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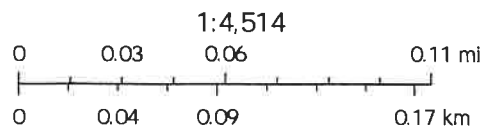
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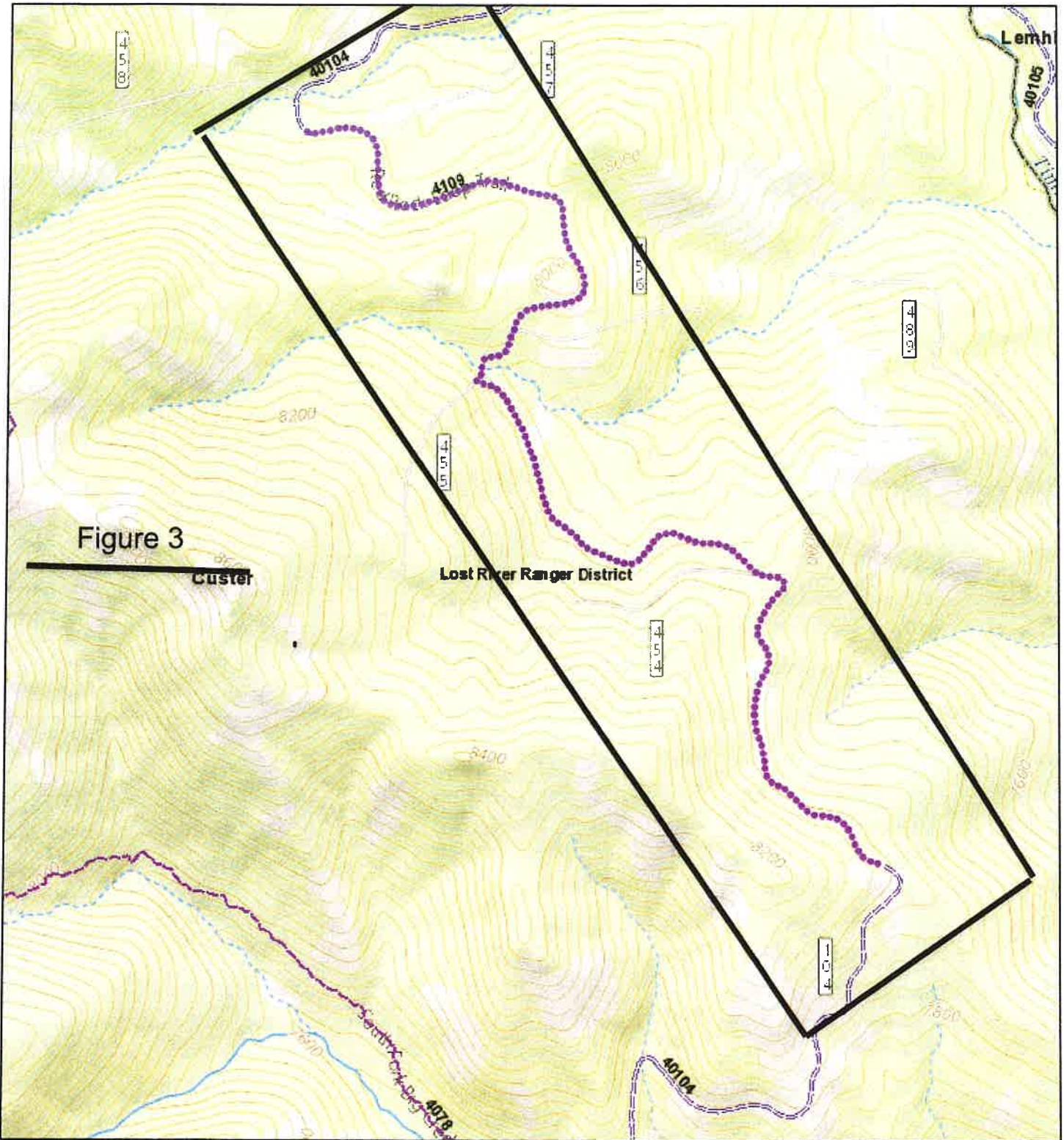






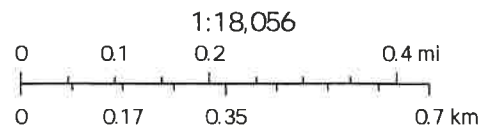


Figure 3

Lost River Ranger District

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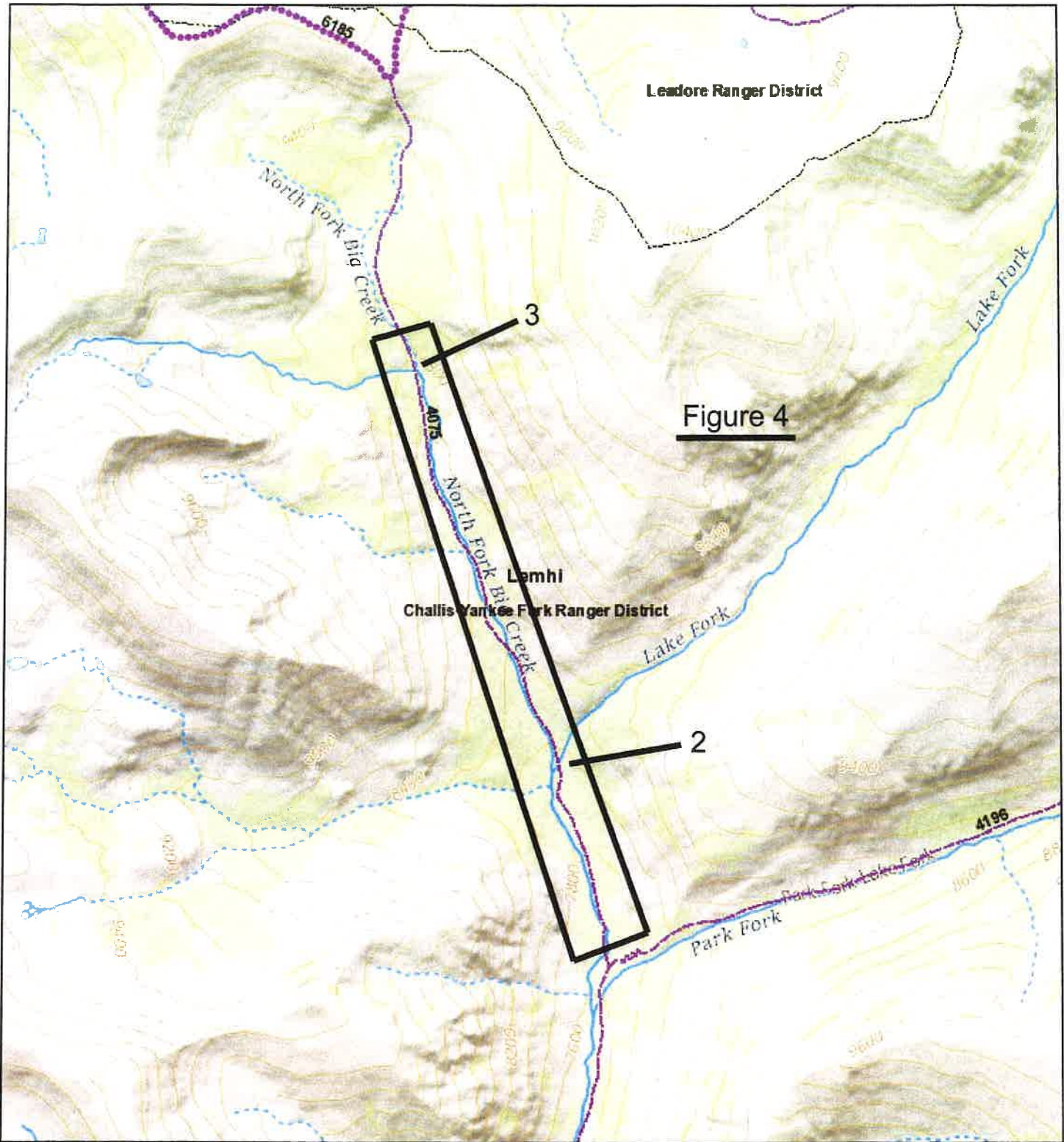






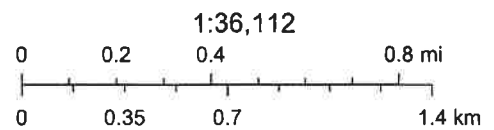


Figure 4

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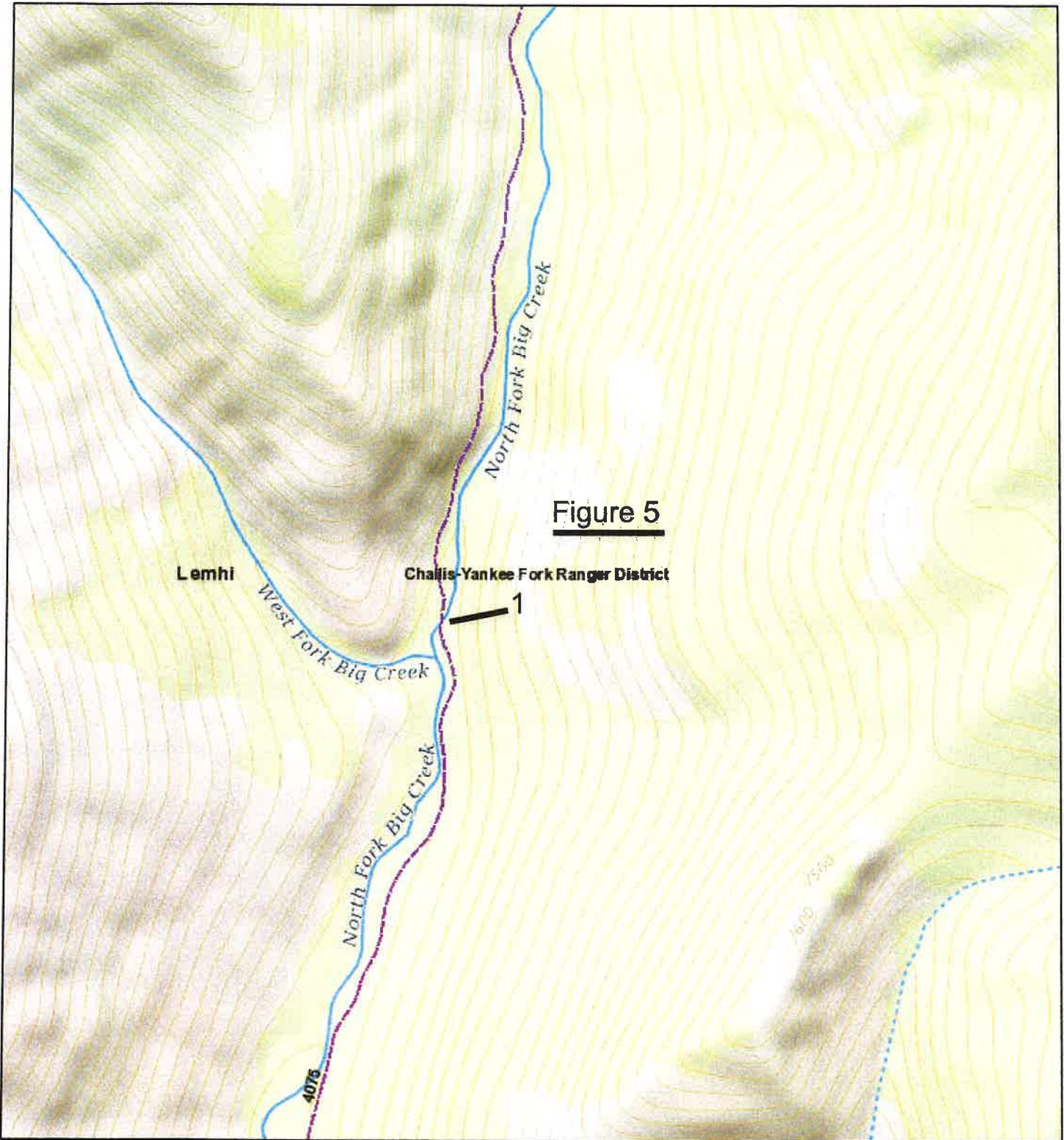






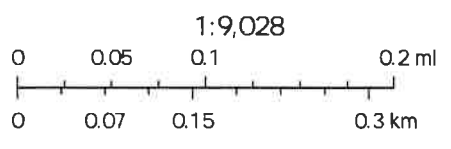


Figure 5

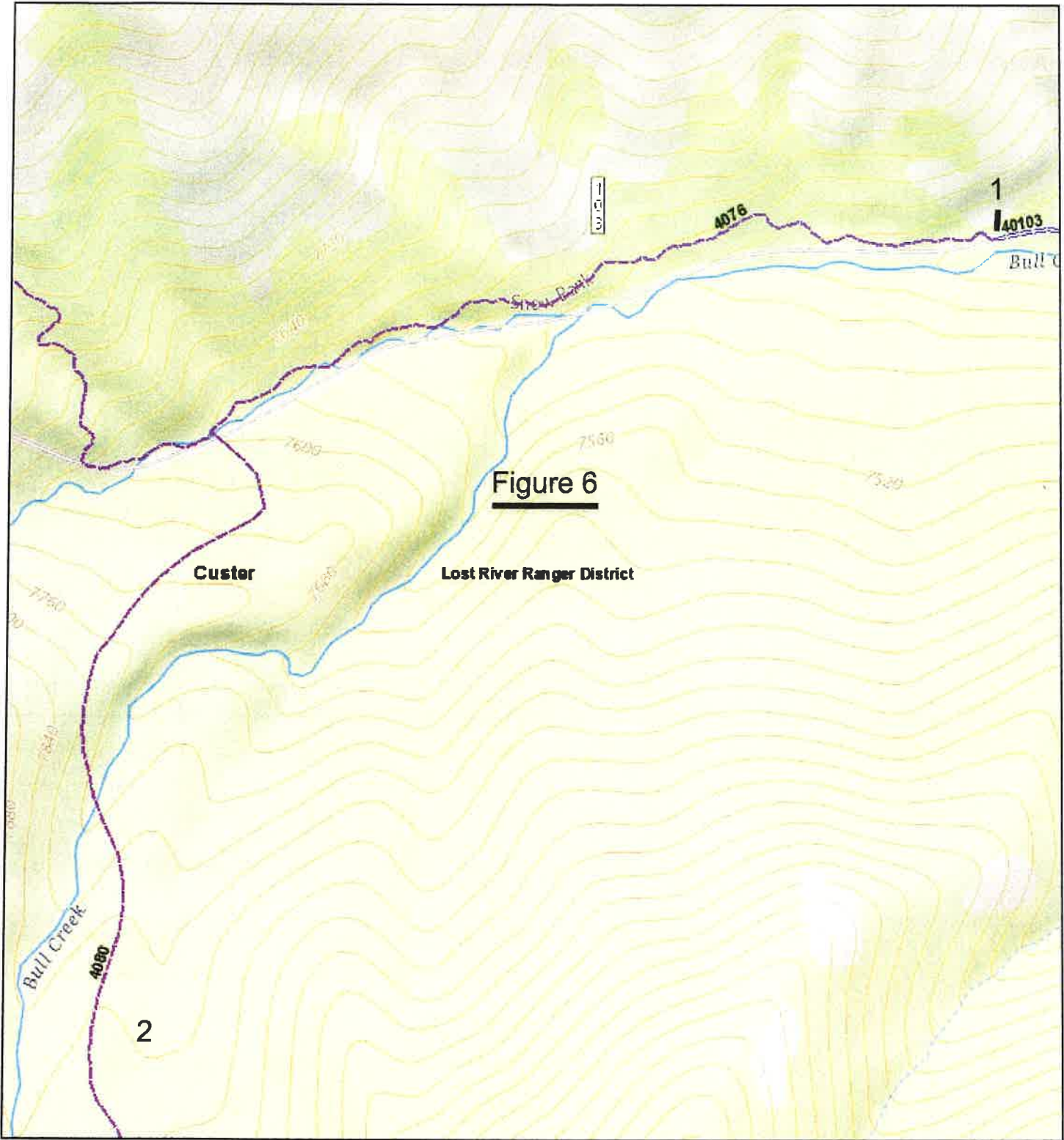
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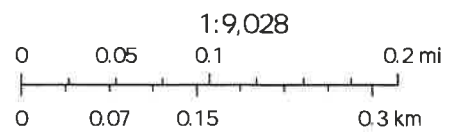
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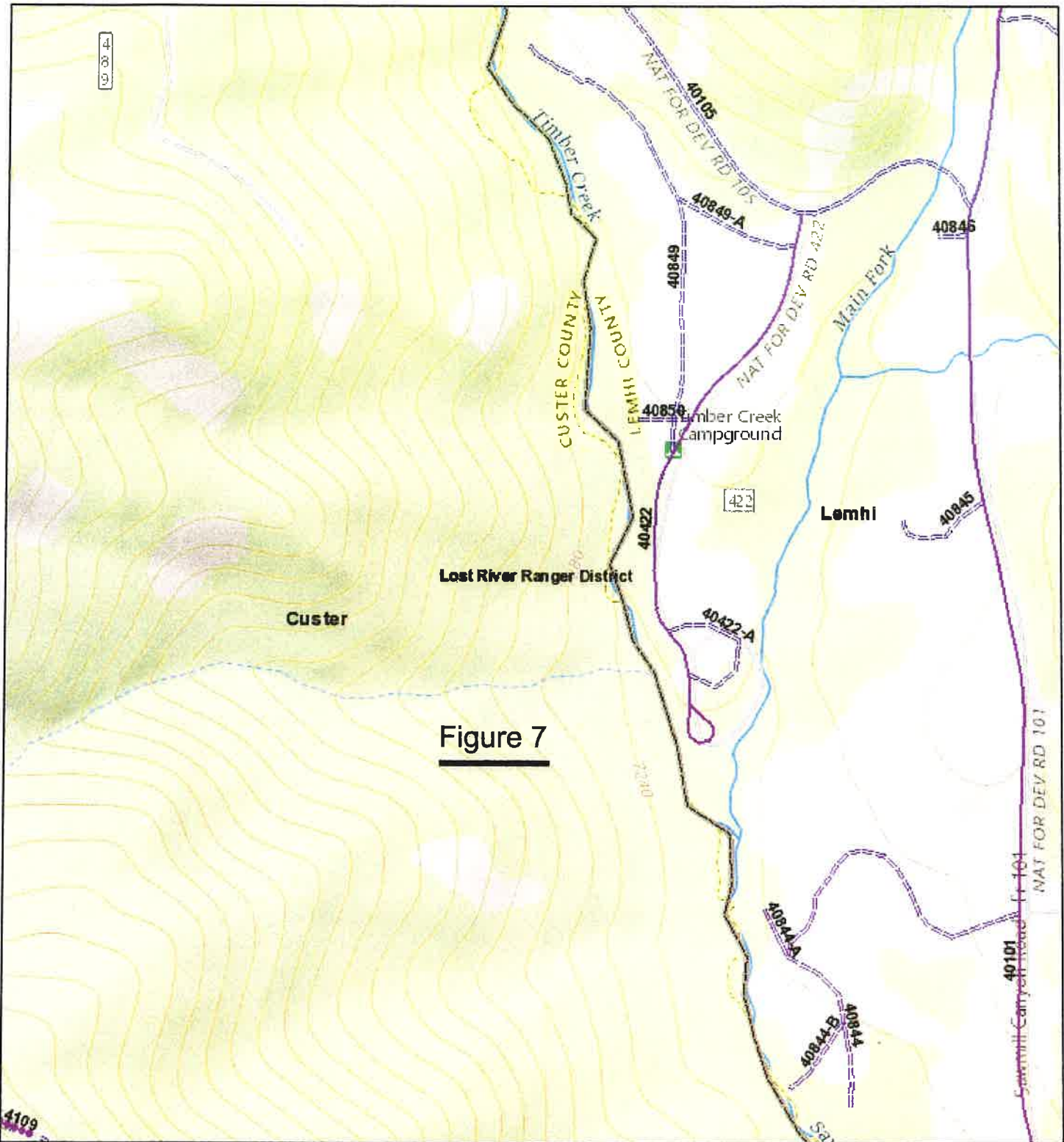






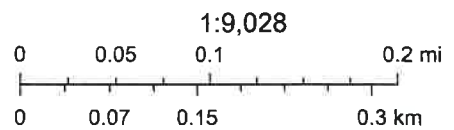


Figure 7

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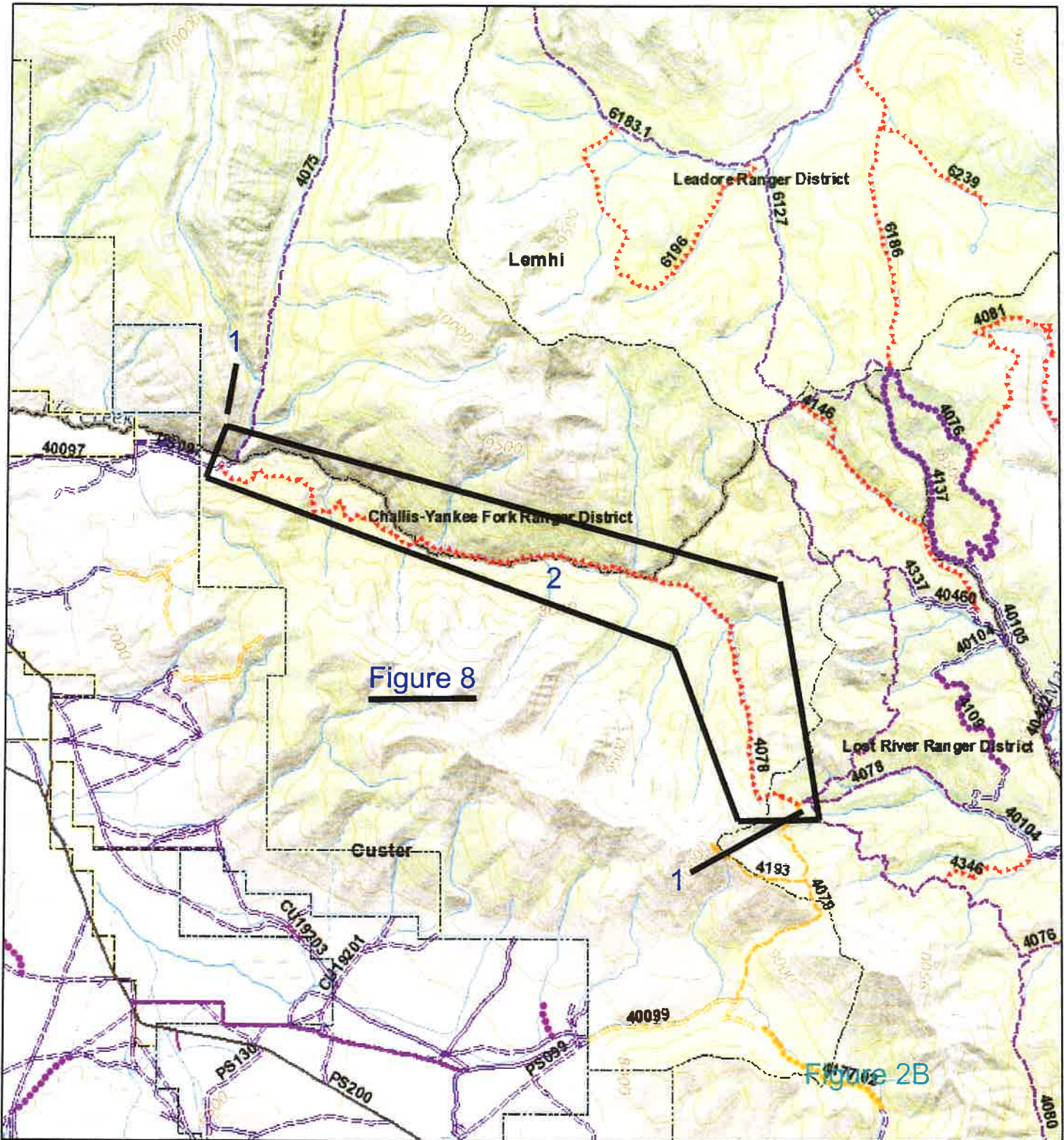








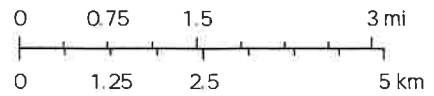
Figure 8

Figure 2B

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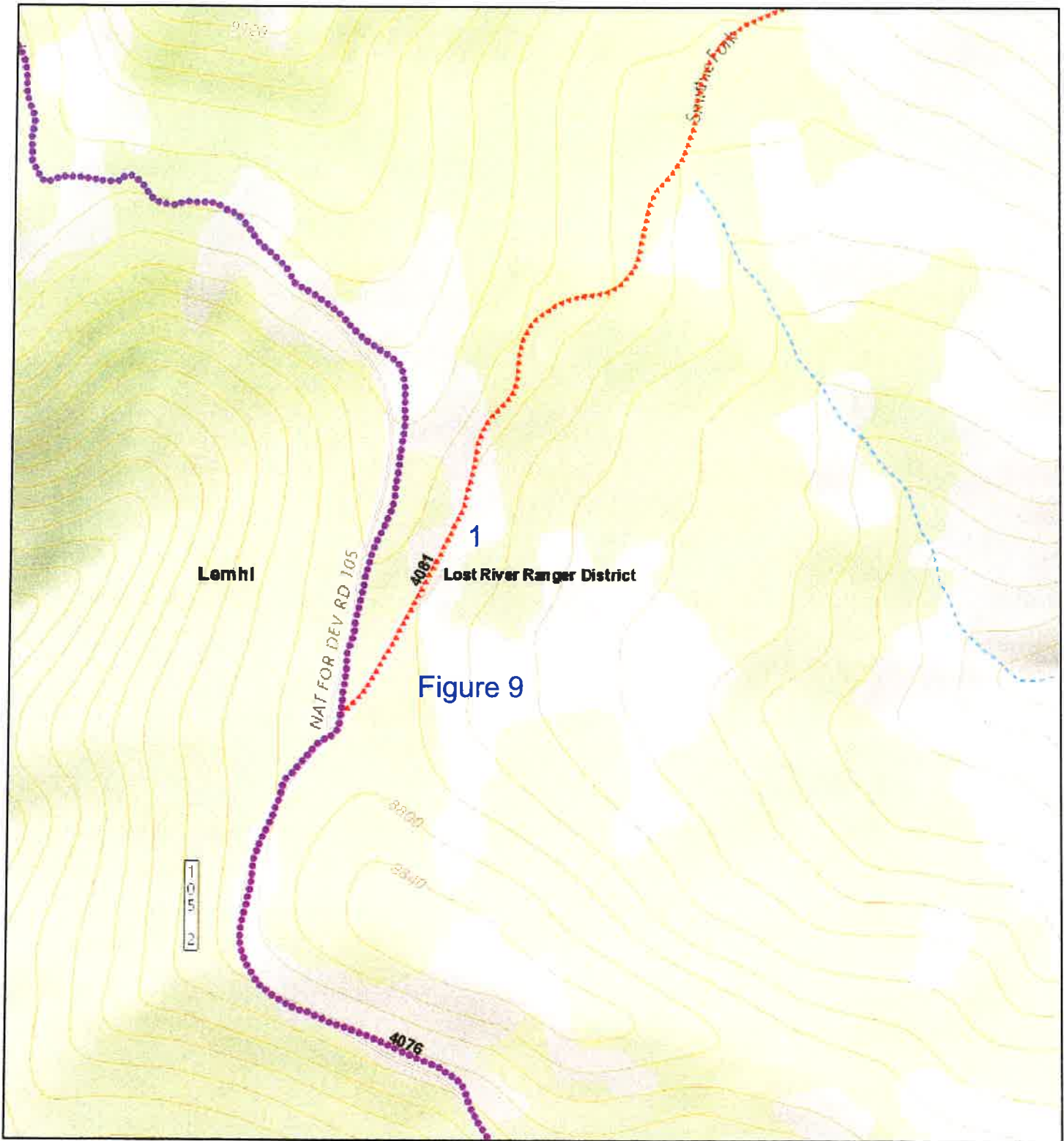




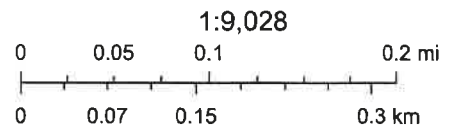


Figure 9

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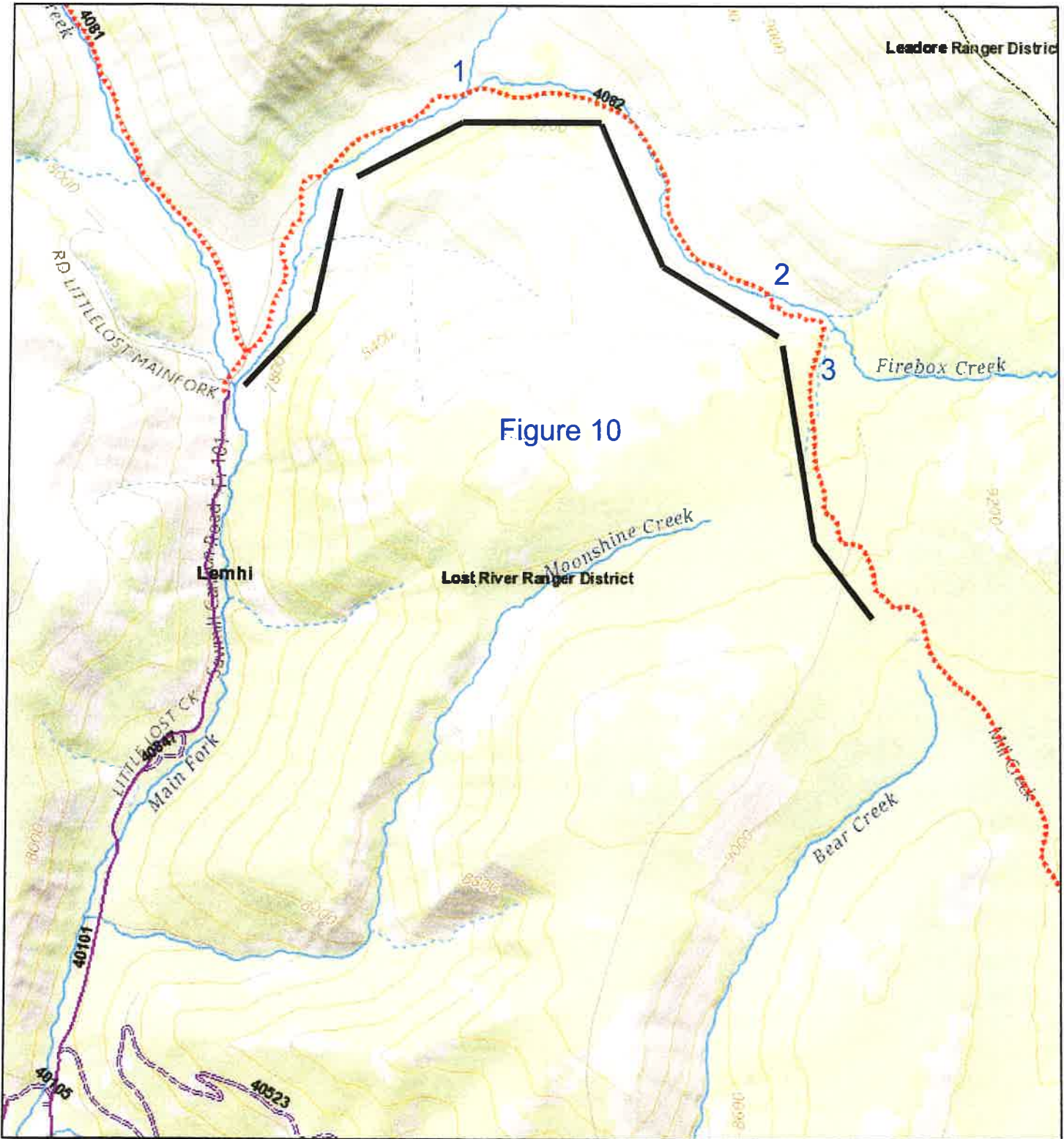






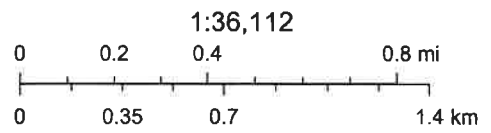


Figure 10

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