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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest Region

DECISION NOTICE  
and  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
Snowcreek Land Exchange

Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests  
Mono, El Dorado and Placer Counties, California

**DECISION, RATIONALE, AND PUBLIC INTEREST DETERMINATION**

I have reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared by the Inyo National Forest, addressing the anticipated environmental effects of a land exchange involving approximately 94 acres of Federal land, located in the Town of Mammoth Lakes within Mono County, State of California, on the Inyo National Forest, for approximately 1,950.85 acres of non-Federal lands. The non-Federal parcels consist of approximately 152.89 acres located in Mono County within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, and approximately 1,797.96 acres located in El Dorado and Placer Counties within the boundaries of the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests.

The EA is available for public review at the Offices of the Forest Supervisors, Inyo National Forest 351 Pacu Lane, Suite 200, Bishop, CA. 93514, Eldorado National Forest, 100 Forni Road, Placerville, CA 95667, and Tahoe National Forest, 631 Coyote Street, Nevada City, CA 95959-6003.

Based on the analysis described in the EA, it is my decision to adopt Alternative 1, the Proposed Action, which includes the relocation of the Forest Service administrative pasture site. My decision incorporates the mitigations that are listed in Exhibit B, which primarily involve the administrative site relocation as a part of my decision.

Alternative 1 will result in an approximate net gain of 1,511.06 acres of lands having valuable resource attributes on the Eldorado National Forest (see Purpose and Need Section) within the Rubicon River drainage, approximately 287 acres of lands gained above the Middle Fork River on the Tahoe National Forest, and a net gain 58.89 acres of lands on the Inyo National Forest in exchange for a 94 acre National Forest parcel adjacent to an existing private 9-hole golf course. The National Forest System as a whole will gain approximately 1,856.85 acres of beneficial lands.

I have selected Alternative 1, because transfer of the Federal parcel into private ownership is in conformance with the Forest Plan and will result in increased management efficiency. The Forest will incur a cost savings in resource administration, location, posting, and maintenance of property boundaries. Conveyance of the parcel will eliminate land from the National Forest System that is adjacent to urban uses and can be better used for community purposes as a golf course. The Federal parcel proposed for exchange meets all of the criteria for disposal. It is located within the boundaries of the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TML), the community has long supported the

development of an additional golf facility, and it is consistent with the urban limits policy of the TML General Plan. Following exchange, the parcel is proposed for construction of an additional nine holes of golf to expand the existing Snowcreek Golf Course to a full eighteen holes. I find that the preferred alternative is in the public interest, as required by 36 CFR 254.3 (b) because the lands to be acquired contain equal or higher resource values than the lands to be conveyed.

All properties were appraised and reviewed for compliance with Federal standards, and a Federal land value of \$1,400,000 and non-Federal property value of \$1,569,000 were approved. The difference in value will be made up of a cash equalization payment by the United States in the amount of \$169,000.

The Federal Snowcreek Parcel identified for disposal is located within the Mammoth Management Area of the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP). Management Direction for this area is to exchange Forest Service lands into the private sector for community expansion when:

1. The most appropriate use of the National Forest lands over the long term is in the private sector,
2. State, County, local, and Forest Service planning processes identify and support conveying ownership of the parcel from National Forest System status to the private sector; and,
3. The use intended for the Federal land being exchanged meets the intent of the current approved County General Plan

Transfer of the Federal parcel into private ownership is in conformance with the Inyo LRMP. The non-Federal parcels to be acquired meet the objectives of the Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forest Plans by obtaining available lands with high resource values and public benefit. The future intended use of the conveyed Federal lands will not substantially conflict with the established management objectives of adjacent NFS lands.

The primary issues raised during this environmental analysis were: 1) the potential for increased development of adjacent NFS lands; (2) the effect of loss of habitat for the Sherwin deer herd; (3) the effects on wildlife and fisheries watershed condition, water quality and quantity, open space, scenic resources, cultural resources and recreational trails; and, (4) future development of the Federal parcel. Issue 1 was considered to be non-significant, because it had been previously addressed by law, regulation, Forest Plan, or other higher-level decision.

### **ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED**

Alternative 1, the Proposed Action is to exchange approximately 94 acres of NFS land to Dempsey Corporation for the offered 1,950.85 acres of non-Federal lands to the United States. Dempsey would also relocate the Forest Service administrative site (pack station, corrals, and pasture fences) that are currently on the Federal parcel to a site on NFS land immediately east of its present location. (Refer to Exhibit B in the EA for a complete description of this action).

Dempsey has also indicated its intent to convey a covenant to the Town of Mammoth Lakes,

limiting future development of the property to recreational and open space land uses consistent with Town of Mammoth Lakes zoning. A special use permit may also be issued for operation of three existing campgrounds on the Lee Vining Canyon parcel, after further analysis. Maps and legal descriptions for the parcels are appended to the EA, in Exhibit A.

Under Alternative 2, the No Action alternative, the current land exchange proposal would not take place. This alternative was not selected because it would result in the Forest continuing to manage a parcel adjacent to urban uses and suitable for community use as a public golf course. Selection of this alternative would not meet the community's need for additional golfing facilities, and it would preclude acquisition of 1,950.85 acres of high resource value parcels on three national forests.

The following alternatives were considered, but not analyzed in detail, as part of this environmental analysis.

Under Alternative 3, purchase of the parcels, the Inyo NF would need to complete in a National land purchase prioritization process, which utilizes jointly developed land and resource criteria to prioritize individual parcels for limited purchase funding. Alternative 3 was not selected, because only parcels that are earmarked by Congress in legislation are funded for acquisition outside of a National prioritization process. There are generally very limited purchase funds available to apply towards the non-Federal parcels. In addition, the offered Rubicon Parcels are owned in fee by Dempsey and are only being made available to the Forest Service as part of the proposed land exchange. Dempsey purchased these parcels for the purpose of offering them to the Forest Service as a part of this exchange, and is not offering them for sale. The Forest Service only enters into direct purchases on the basis of willing-sellers and willing-buyers.

Future funding for land purchases within the Inyo National Forest is also expected to be limited, with the exception of the occasional "emergency" purchase allocation. This alternative was not considered viable for acquiring the Lee Vining Canyon non-Federal parcel.

Alternative 4, alternative exchange configuration, was also not selected. This alternative was previously analyzed in the 1997 Snowcreek EIS as one of six alternatives, and was not considered the preferred alternative. The configuration of the Federal Snowcreek parcel, as described under this Proposed Action, is consistent with the Forest Service decision following the alternatives analysis process that took place at that time. Due to rapidly increasing market values in Mammoth Lakes, in addition to the low availability of private parcels within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest with willing sellers, the Inyo has increasingly relied upon other National Forests within Region 5 to help provide the equal value balance of Federal and non-Federal lands needed for land exchanges.

Because lands or interests in lands exchanged must be equal in value, or within 25% cash equalization value, the Inyo NF determined there was insufficient, suitable non-Federal lands on the Inyo NF to balance the value of the Federal Snowcreek Parcel, therefore, the current configuration resulted when Dempsey acquired the additional lands on the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests.

Alternative 5, constructing the golf course on private land, was not selected. This alternative was also analyzed in the 1997 FEIS, and was not considered the preferred alternative. As with Alternative 4, I consider it unnecessary to re-analyze alternatives that were previously analyzed and not selected. The current Federal Snowcreek parcel is consistent with the Forest Service decision in 1997.

Under Alternative 6, placing a deed restriction in the patent to ensure use as golf course and maintain open space in perpetuity, the Forest Service and/or the proponent would be limited to an identified use of the acquired land. If the Forest Service were to place a deed restriction, there would be a loss of value to the Federal estate; for this reason deed restrictions are not placed in the patent. However, Dempsey has stated its commitment to place a covenant on the land area to restrict its use as a golf course, and the Town of Mammoth Lakes has agreed to accept such a covenant. This achieves the goal of maintaining the use as a golf course, while not affecting the value of the Federal Parcel for exchange purposes. Therefore, the alternative of placing a deed restriction on the parcel by the Forest Service was not selected.

## **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

Public notifications of this land exchange proposal were placed within the Inyo Register, the Mammoth Times, the Mountain Democrat and the Auburn Journal, and published once a week for four consecutive weeks during April and May 2002 (4/25, 5/02, 5/09 and 5/16). Notifications were sent to the appropriate Congressional, State and local governments, and affected Indian Tribes. Additionally, special-use permit holders and private property owners abutting the Federal parcel were notified of the proposed exchange. This exchange proposal was published in the Schedule of Proposed Actions in December 2001, April 2002, and most recently in January - April, 2003. Several recent meetings were also held with local interest groups. The planned future use of the Federal land is for construction of nine holes of golf, which is generally supported by the local community.

As a result of the public scoping process, the Forest received five written comments: three by private citizens and two by local organizational groups. The primary concerns were that the proposed exchange could open the door to other similar proposals for urban development, recreational or otherwise, and the need to protect local wildlife populations (notably the Round Valley deer herd), watershed and fisheries protection of nearby Mammoth Creek, and future developmental concerns for ground water and chemicals needed to maintain the golf course.

The EA was made available to the public for a 30-day comment period, which ended March 31, 2003. Notice of the 30-day opportunity for the public to comment was published in the Inyo Register, the Mammoth Times, the Mountain Democrat and the Auburn Journal. Six additional comments letters or emails were received, which primarily focused on similar development issues and protection of resource values.

## **FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**

In assessing the impacts, I have determined that this is not a major federal action that would significantly affect the quality of the human environment, therefore an environmental impact



statement will not be prepared. This determination was made considering the following factors, primarily in the contexts of the immediate locale and the community of affected interests:

1. Beneficial and adverse impacts.

- The Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests will realize a net gain of approximately 1,856.85 acres into the National Forest System.
- The United States will realize a net gain of a minimum of 11.4 acres of riparian habitat, in addition to any wetlands associated with the Rubicon Parcels.
- The United States will realize a net gain of 0.9 stream miles in Lee Vining Canyon, 10.5 stream miles along the Rubicon and Middle Fork of the American River, 1.5 miles of shoreline at Hell Hole Reservoir, and 164.5 acres of floodplains.
- The United States will acquire potential threatened, endangered and Region 5 sensitive species habitat; including potential habitat for northern goshawk, American marten, scalloped moonwort (Lee Vining Canyon); Spotted owl, California red-legged frog, Townsends big-eared bat, Bald eagle, Stebbins's phacelia and saw-toothed lewisia (Rubicon Parcels). The United States would acquire one sensitive plant occurrence (Stebbins's phacelia) on the Rubicon Parcels.
- The United States would acquire lands in El Dorado and Placer Counties identified as being potentially eligible for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- The United States will acquire non-Federal lands in Lee Vining Canyon suitable for camping and other forms of recreation, and habitat including wetlands, riparian habitat, and aquatic habitat.
- The miles of National Forest boundary requiring periodic maintenance will be reduced by 11.7 miles and 7 survey corners.
- The 94 acre Snowcreek parcel will be conveyed from public ownership. This includes a less than 25 acre portion of the mule deer holding area. There are no old-growth forest species on this parcel.
- There are Pacific Gas and Electric Company reservations affecting several of the Rubicon Parcels for gas, oil and other mineral interests, as well as riparian (water) rights and associated easements to construct and operate ditches and flumes to transport water. Energy and mineral development potential in this area is low. PG&E has indicated to the Forest that they are not likely to exercise these rights in the future. These reservations are not anticipated to interfere with the potential designation and management of these parcels as Wild and Scenic Rivers.

2. The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety. This exchange of land and resources constitutes no effect to public health or safety, per field inspections of both the Federal and non-Federal parcels, which are documented within the "Feasibility Analysis" prepared for this project on August 20, 2001. Subsequent inspections have not revealed any evidence of potentially hazardous substances or contaminants on any of the subject properties.

3. Unique characteristics of the geographic area. The Federal Parcel, including the NFS lands to be occupied by the relocated Forest Service pack station, does not contain unique characteristics other than a small area of deer holding habitat. (D.R. Sanders and Associates report, 2002). The

non-Federal Lee Vining Canyon and Rubicon parcels include a minimum of 11.4 acres of riparian habitat, including wetlands, 164.5 acres of floodplains, over 11 miles of stream frontage, 1.5 miles of shoreline at Hell Hole Reservoir, potentially suitable habitat for threatened, endangered and Region 5 sensitive species, as noted above, and natural characteristics warranting potential Wild and Scenic River designation.

4. The degree to which the effects on the human environment are likely to be highly controversial. The potential for a land exchange involving the Snowcreek Parcel was first proposed in 1999. Since that time, including a 30-day public scoping period, five comment letters expressing concerns regarding the exchange have been received. As summarized under "Issues" in the EA, none of the identified issues were considered to be significant, or if they were, were not within the scope of this environmental document. During the same time period, the Mammoth Lakes Town Council adopted a resolution formally supporting the land exchange, and at least three written communications have been received supporting the exchange. Based on the issues raised, the proposed land exchange does not constitute a highly controversial Federal action.
5. The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks. Risks to the human environment were analyzed in the Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project EIS (FEIS, Appendix G). Past experience with similar projects and environmental analysis reveal that no extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause the action to have significant effects upon the human environment. A summary of environmental consequences is displayed on p.11 of the EA. My decision incorporates the mitigations that are listed in Exhibit B, and Exhibit B is a part of my decision.
6. The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration. Each land exchange proposal is considered upon a case-by-case basis. This action will not necessarily lead to another future action or actions that will have significant effects, either individually or in combination with each other or with this action.
7. Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts. The proposed action is not related to other individual actions and would have no cumulatively significant impact on the environment. It is anticipated that conveyance of these lands by exchange will help consolidate land ownership patterns without creating cumulative effects on other resources. There are no significant environmental effects that result from land conveyance itself. Overall cumulative impacts were addressed in the Proposed Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project EIS (FEIS pages IV-28 – 34). Effects associated with the potential development of lands transferred from federal ownership will be addressed through appropriate State of California, Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes environmental analysis and permitting processes.
8. The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources. A portion of the lower Bodle Ditch crosses the Federal parcel. While the overall ditch system played a significant role in the development of the area in historic times, the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the Forest Service's finding that this lower portion does not meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (FEIS, page IV and EIS, App.F).

Dempsey has indicated that it intends to incorporate the preservation and interpretation of a portion of this ditch into Dempsey's future project design.

9. The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973. The Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation prepared by an Inyo National Forest Wildlife Biologist for the 1997 FEIS concluded that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the Owens tui chub or its critical habitat. In addition, it was determined that the proposed project will not affect any Federally listed threatened or endangered species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with this finding (1997 FEIS, Appendix D). A recent supplemental Biological Evaluation, consistent with the earlier studies, found that no TES species would be affected (Perloff and Nelson, 2003).
10. Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. This exchange of land and resources constitutes no violation of Federal, State, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Site inspections, including hazardous materials screenings, have been conducted and documented within the "Feasibility Analysis".

#### **FINDINGS REQUIRED BY OTHER LAWS**

I have determined that this action is consistent with the goals, objectives, and management direction contained in the Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests' Land and Resource Management Plans. The EA is tiered to the Environmental Impact Statement for the Inyo Land and Resource Management Plan (1988) and the Final Environmental Impact Statement and Record of Decision – Proposed Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project (1997).

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW OR APPEAL OPPORTUNITIES**

This decision is subject to appeal pursuant to 36 CFR 215. To initiate an appeal, a written Notice of Appeal must be postmarked within 45 days from the date of the first publication of a legal notice in the Inyo Register, the Mammoth Times, the Mountain Democrat, and the Auburn Journal, the newspapers of general circulation for the counties affected by this land exchange. Notices of Appeal must meet the specific content requirements of 36 CFR 215.14.


A Notice of Appeal must be filed with the Regional Forester, Attn: Appeals, USDA Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Region, 1323 Club Drive, Vallejo, CA. 94592.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

Implementation of this decision may not take place sooner than 50 days after the publication of the legal notice in the Inyo Register, the Mammoth Times, the Mountain Democrat, and the Auburn Journal.

CONTACT PERSON

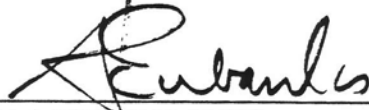
For further information contact: Rick Murray, Lands and Special Uses Administrator, Inyo National Forest, Mono Lake Ranger District, P.O. Box 429, Lee Vining, CA. 93541, or phone (760) 647-3013.

  
JEFFERY E. BAILEY  
Forest Supervisor  
Inyo National Forest

6/19/03  
Date

  
JOHN BERRY  
Forest Supervisor  
Eldorado National Forest

6/20/03  
Date

  
STEVE EUBANKS  
Forest Supervisor  
Tahoe National Forest

6/19/03  
Date

## **EXHIBIT A**

### **PROPOSED SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE PUBLIC COMMENTS FROM REVIEW OF ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS**

The following comments were received from 30-day public noticing of the Snowcreek Land Exchange EA from Feb 28, 2003 - March 31, 2003. The public comment is followed by the Forest Service response.

**Comment 1:** I would like to know the exact boundaries of the proposed relocated USFS administrative site and pasture, plus the road that accesses the rear of Sierra Meadows Ranch and how that road will access Kerry Meadow.

**Response:** The proposed relocation area for the administrative site and pasture is shown in detail in a geographic information photo in Exhibit B of the EA. The existing road that would be reactivated to provide access to the rear of Sierra Meadows Ranch is also shown. This exhibit shows the proposed replacement access road at the eastern edge of the existing borrow pit that will connect to the road to Kerry Meadow. These boundaries may be adjusted as needed to accommodate local features, geography, and other considerations. Specific on-site trips may be arranged by appointment.

**Comment 2:** Is there a proposed sleigh route on flat ground proposed from Sierra Meadows Ranch?

**Response:** There are several possibilities for a proposed sleigh route. One is on the rear access road noted in Comment 1, and another could include the Sherwin Creek Road, (4S08).

**Comment 3:** Is there a relocated horseback trail ride leaving Sierra Meadows Ranch across the flat area proposed for the administrative site and pasture?

**Response:** Yes. The rear access road noted in Comment 1 is one possibility, if a flat trail is desired. There are other trails leaving the rear of the Ranch that may be considered for use.

**Comment 4:** Separate water meters need to be installed at both Sierra Meadows Ranch and at the proposed USFS administrative site.

**Response:** At present there is only one water meter that is shared by both sites. The Forest Service would also prefer separate meters and has asked Dempsey to investigate this possibility and any costs involved. Costs attributed to changing the present metering system would be borne by the Forest Service and Sierra Meadows Ranch, as Dempsey is not required to do more than "in kind" replacement of existing facilities.



on the outcome of the analysis.

**Comment 8:** Would the Forest Service allow grazing on the land acquired in the trade?

**Response:** The National Forest System lands adjoining the non-Federal Lee Vining Canyon and Rubicon Parcels are not currently used for grazing. These National Forest lands either have vacant grazing allotments or no designated allotments. The management of the non-Federal lands to be acquired will be consistent with the adjoining National Forest System lands until future planning pertaining to the newly acquired lands modifies such management guidance. Given the location of the non-Federal parcels within recreation corridors and areas identified as being potentially eligible for designation as part of the System of Wild and Scenic Rivers, the likelihood that these lands will become part of a Federal grazing allotment is remote. However, these issues are outside the scope of the Snowcreek Land Exchange decision.

**Comment 9:** What kind of management is intended for the parcels the public would acquire?

**Response:** Similar to Response 8, above, management of the non-Federal lands to be acquired will be consistent with the adjoining National Forest System lands until future planning pertaining to the newly acquired lands modifies such management guidance, or until such time as that Forest's Land Management Plan revision occurs. As stated on page 13 of the EA, the Lee Vining Canyon Parcel is currently used for three campgrounds. Such uses are expected to continue under a Special Use Permit that may be issued to the current operator of the facilities, Mono County, after further analysis.

The Rubicon Parcels will be managed in accordance with standards and guidelines for Management Area 2 (Wild and Scenic River) or Management Area 7 (semi-primitive motorized) management prescriptions of the 1988 Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests. These Forest Plans emphasize protection of wild and scenic river qualities, or maintaining semi-primitive motorized forest settings.

**Comment 10:** Will the Town of Mammoth Lakes sufficiently restrict development on the Snowcreek Parcel and protect the public's interest in seeing this land used for recreational and open space needs?

**Response:** Upon conveyance from Federal ownership, the Federal Parcel will be subject to the provisions of the Town of Mammoth Lakes "OS" (open space) zoning designation. Open space uses include agricultural uses, parks, passive recreational uses and other open space type uses. The intended use of the parcel for expansion of the Snowcreek Golf Course to the standard 18 holes is believed to be consistent with the OS zoning. Changing such zoning to some other urban use, such as "Resort" designation, would require a number of actions including: an amendment of the General Plan including preparation of an Environmental Impact Report; rezoning the parcel in conformance with the revised General Plan; revisions to the Town of Mammoth Lakes Urban Limits Boundary to allow the subject property to be used for

**Comment 14:** Can we get clarification on the proposed agreement between Dempsey Corporation and the Town of Mammoth Lakes?

**Response:** See response to Comments 10, 11, 12, and 13 above.

**Comment 15:** Will the Sierra Framework mandates be changed?

**Response:** The Sierra Nevada Land Management Plan Amendment was signed in January, 2001, and, similar to any Forest Land Management Plan, continues in effect until revised through a public land management planning process. It has been the subject of a formal review in 2002, and recommendations from that review have been presented to the Regional Forester who decided that a supplemental EIS will be done. The public will be involved, as they were in the initial EIS. This exchange decision is based upon the current Forest Plans, as amended by the 2001 SNFP Amendment.

**Comment 16:** Can an extension of the EA comment period be granted until April 15, 2003?

**Response:** The EA was made available for public review for a period of 30 days, as required by NEPA. The Forest Service did not feel there was a compelling reason for extending the public review period beyond that period which ended March 31, 2003. Also, considering the extensive history of this project, the Forest Service believes that no new information is likely to surface that would add value to the analysis or decision.

**Comment 17:** The future use of the land will be for a golf course and related ancillary recreation uses. The remedies for violating the covenant should be strengthened and clarified.

**Response:** As explained in the responses to Comments 10, 11, 12, and 13, the Forest Service is not a party to the covenant between the non-Federal Party and the Town of Mammoth Lakes. Recognizing the interest that the Sierra Club has in this issue, the non-Federal Party has been working directly with the Range of Light Group, Toiyabe Chapter of the Sierra Club, to further refine the provisions of the proposed covenant.

**Comment 18:** Assure that the wildlife, particularly the deer herd, are not unduly affected by the new fences and other alterations.

**Response:** A small portion (less than 25 acres) of a very large winter holding area is occasionally utilized by deer in the vicinity of the proposed new administrative site and pasture. As has been historically done with the current pack station fences, the fence wire is dropped at the end of each field season. This allows the deer to move freely, and also protects the fence from snow damage. Deer fence (smooth wire) will be used for the top and bottom strands.

**Comment 24:** A supplemental EA addressing the relocated administrative area is the best way of addressing administrative area issues; alternatively, the relocation should be further addressed in the Decision Notice.

**Response:** The relocation of the administrative site was initially addressed in the FEIS, and surveys conducted. The recent EA analyzed the relocation more substantially, and disclosed the impacts of that relocation so that an informed decision could be made. The Decision Notice and FONSI address the relocation of the administrative site, and its impacts are acknowledged by the Forest Supervisors in their Decision. Exhibit B, which incorporates mitigations specific to the relocated pack station, is incorporated into this decision.

**Comment 25:** I am concerned that this exchange shows a net benefit for the public and the National Forest system.

**Response:** The EA, especially under "Purpose and Need" and the table entitled "Comparison of Benefits and Losses" demonstrates that this exchange will result in a net benefit for the public. Three National Forests show a net gain in acreage, which includes a variety of potential TES species habitat, wetlands, and other recreation and wildlife values, and potential Wild and Scenic River designation. The approximately 95 acres that will be conveyed into private ownership display few resource values when compared to those found on the non-Federal acres to be acquired. For those members of the public who golf, an additional recreational use will be added, and it will be offered on private land, rather than on National Forest land, as originally proposed.

**Comment 26:** The 95 acres proposed for the golf course should be maintained as open space in perpetuity. Another neutral party should work toward such an agreement within the covenant.

**Response:** See responses to Comments 10, 11, 12, and 13. The proposed covenant will run with the land. The Forest Service is not involved with the covenant and is not a position to recommend a suitable entity to hold and monitor future compliance with the covenant.

**Comment 27:** This decision should not set a precedent to push for other exchanges around Mammoth Lakes.

**Response:** As noted in the response to Comment 6, each land exchange is evaluated by the Forest Service on its own merits. With specific regards to future land exchanges within the Inyo National Forest and the Mammoth Lakes area in particular, The Inyo National Forest Landownership Adjustment Strategy approved in May 1995, identifies certain parcels of Federal land that may be suitable for conveyance from Federal ownership in the future. The Snowcreek Land Exchange does not establish a precedent of any sort for future exchanges.

## **EXHIBIT B**

### **SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE – REQUIRED MITIGATIONS**

#### **Management Requirements for FS administrative site relocation**

##### **Water and Air Quality Mitigations:**

- The following Best Management Practices (BMP's) are applicable to the Forest Service administrative site relocation and would be implemented during each phase of the project:

BMP 2-3: Timing of Construction Activity: Ensure that construction of the new tack room takes place during the dry summer and early fall to minimize the risk of erosion and off-site sedimentation from a rainfall event.

BMP 2-28: Surface Erosion Control at Facility Sites: Erosion control structures such as straw wattles and silt fences should be in place during and immediately after construction. Long-term site stabilization such as gravelling high traffic areas and re-establishment of vegetation will ensure long-term erosion control at this facility

- Implement dust abatement techniques during construction of the tack room and related facilities. Apply water or suitable dust abatement substances to control fugitive dust.

##### **Weed Control and Revegetation Mitigations**

- Weed mitigation measures associated with the Forest Service administrative site relocation:
  1. Erosion control materials, e.g. straw wattles, will consist only of weed free materials.
  2. New weed infestations will be controlled as they occur.
- Weed mitigation measures associated with acquired parcels:
  1. Known weed locations on the acquired Lee Vining or Rubicon parcels will be recorded in Forest weed databases, and prioritized for weed treatment.

**Road/Trail relocations Noted in the Environmental Assessment:**

- Dempsey Corporation will reactivate an existing small road just southeast of Sierra Meadows Ranch, next to the proposed relocation site for the Forest Service administrative site. This replaces the rear access to Sierra Meadows, and the first part of the hayride route.
- On the southwest side of Sherwin Creek road (4S08), Dempsey Corporation will reroute those parts of the existing road to the edge of the old borrow site to where it connects to an existing road just south of the land to be acquired, thus preserving public access to "Kerry Meadow".
- Relocation of the explosives cache at the eastern corner of the pasture will include an access road.



John

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE**

**Lead Agency:**

United States Department of Agriculture  
Forest Service  
Pacific Southwest Region

**Responsible Officials:**

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John Berry, Forest Supervisor  
Eldorado National Forest  
100 Forni Road  
Placerville, CA 95667

Steve Eubanks, Forest Supervisor  
Tahoe National Forest  
631 Coyote Street  
Nevada City, CA 95959-6003

**For Additional Information, Contact:**

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Lands and Special Uses Permit Administrator  
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Lee Vining Ranger District  
P.O. Box 429  
Lee Vining, CA 93541  
(760) 647-3013

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

USDA Forest Service

### Snowcreek Land Exchange

Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests  
Mono, Placer and El Dorado Counties, California

## INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

In June 1997, the Inyo National Forest (Forest Service) approved issuance of a Special Use Permit to Dempsey Construction Corporation (Dempsey or Non-Federal Party) for construction and operation of nine holes of golf on 95.44 acres of National Forest System (NFS) lands within the Town of Mammoth Lakes (Federal Parcel or Snowcreek Parcel). This action was proposed to complete the Snowcreek Golf Course. The Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) and Record of Decision - Proposed Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project were released in June 1997 following several years of public discussions, environmental analyses and negotiations regarding the Special Use Permit.

Issuance of the Special Use Permit was subsequently appealed through administrative and judicial means by the Sierra Club and others. Towards the end of these proceedings, a general consensus emerged that, while construction of the golf course in the proposed location was appropriate and consistent with the goals and objectives of the Inyo National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP), such use would be more appropriately located on private, rather than NFS lands. Therefore, on July 13, 1999 the Inyo National Forest Supervisor withdrew the Record of Decision for the proposed Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project to explore other options to address the needs of the Town of Mammoth Lakes for additional golfing opportunities. (See Federal Register, Vol. 64, No. 137, July 19, 1999, page 38624).

This is an assembled land exchange, whereby the Federal Parcel would be conveyed to Dempsey in exchange for suitable non-Federal lands. Dempsey acquired the Rubicon Parcels and has a letter of intent to purchase with Southern California Edison Company for the Lee Vining Canyon Parcel. See Exhibit A for complete descriptions of the Federal and non-Federal lands.

The land exchange proposal has been reviewed within the context of the Forest Service's environmental analysis process. The results of that process are disclosed in this Environmental Assessment (EA), which is tiered to the 1997 FEIS and the supporting analyses contained in the Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion project files. The specifically referenced portions of those documents, as noted by page/section references, are incorporated into this EA by reference, and are available for review at the Mammoth and Mono Lake Ranger Stations as well as the Tahoe and Eldorado Forest Supervisor's Offices.

The 95.44-acre Federal parcel identified for exchange is adjacent to the Sherwin Creek Road (Forest Road 4S08) and an existing 9-hole private golf course. The vegetation consists of 90% brush species, including sagebrush, bitterbrush, rabbitbrush and snowberry. The remainder of the

parcel contains scattered Jeffrey pine, manzanita and 11 acres of formerly irrigated pasture, which is occupied by a Forest Service administrative pack station. This pasture land was historically irrigated by Bodle Ditch, which has been sporadically wet and dry throughout the last ten years, and has had riparian vegetation associated with it during wet years. There are currently no inventoried wetlands on the parcel, nor is there any old growth forest species.

## **PROPOSED ACTION**

Dempsey Construction Corporation (hereinafter referred to as Dempsey), a California corporation, is proposing an exchange with the Forest Service to acquire 95.44 acres of Federal land, located within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, in the Town of Mammoth Lakes within Mono County. In exchange, Dempsey proposes to convey 1,959.16 acres of non-Federal lands to the United States. The non-Federal lands consist of 161.2 acres in Lee Vining Canyon located in Mono County within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, and 1,797.96 acres of land located along the Rubicon and Middle Fork of the American River in Placer and El Dorado Counties, within the boundaries of the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests.

The individual non-Federal parcels proposed for exchange, approximate acreage, and general location are described below. See the Purpose and Need section and Exhibit A of this EA for more detailed descriptions.

Lee Vining Canyon Parcel – 161.2 acres, in lower Lee Vining Canyon recreation area, Mono County, CA. (Map 2, “Lee Vining Canyon”)

Rubicon Parcels - 1,797.96 acres in Placer and El Dorado Counties, CA. (Map 3, “Rubicon Parcels”). These non-Federal properties consist of twelve (12) parcels under one ownership, and are actually comprised of eight (8) consolidated parcels. The parcels are divided between Placer and El Dorado Counties, because it is necessary to refer to 12 individual parcels for conveyance purposes.

This would be an approximately equal value exchange of Federal and non-Federal property. These lands would be acquired subject to a number of utility and road rights-of-way and other similar existing encumbrances.

As part of this proposed action, Dempsey will relocate a Forest Service administrative pack station to adjacent NFS land. A detailed description of the existing facility and conditions of relocation are described in Exhibit B of this EA, including maps of the site.

The Inyo National Forest intends on issuing a Special Use Permit for the continued operation and maintenance of three campgrounds located on the Lee Vining Canyon parcel, consistent with Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP) direction, subject to a separate environmental analysis.

Dempsey has also stated its commitment to place a covenant on the land area, approved by the Town of Mammoth Lakes for completion of the Snowcreek Golf Course, limiting future land use

to recreation, open space and appropriate ancillary uses. This restriction would be placed on the property following completion of the land exchange and, therefore, would not affect the value of the Federal Parcel for exchange purposes.

### **PURPOSE AND NEED**

The Inyo National Forest LRMP states that the highest priority for land acquisition is given to lands with water frontage, such as lakes, streams, floodplains, wetlands and riparian zones; lands within key wildlife management areas; lands having endangered or threatened fish, wildlife, or plant habitat; and lands needed to reduce fire risks. The highest priority lands identified for disposal are those tracts inside or adjacent to communities, when such tracts would enhance community development and reduce use conflicts, provided that suitable private land is not available. A secondary priority for lands identified for disposal is land under special use permit within or adjacent to communities that would be better suited for private ownership.

The Forest Service is authorized to complete land exchanges after a determination is made that the exchange will serve the public interest. When considering the public interest, the authorized officer shall give full consideration to: 1) the opportunity to achieve better management of Federal lands; 2) the needs of the state and local residents and their economies; and 3) achieving important resource management objectives including protection of fish and wildlife habitat, riparian habitat, cultural resources, recreation opportunities and watersheds. The proposed exchange meets the intent of 36 CFR 254.3(b) for determination of public interest and benefit. Conveyance of the parcel into private ownership is in conformance with the LRMP, and with the following landownership adjustment objectives:

- Conveyance of Federal lands within and immediately adjacent to expanding communities;
- Conveyance of Federal parcels which have lost or are losing their National Forest character due to close proximity to residential development;
- Conveyances will not adversely affect management of adjoining National Forest System (NFS) lands.
- Conveyance of the Federal lands via land exchange avoids the use of NFS lands under a special use permit, which would involve additional administrative costs; and,
- Anticipated development of the exchanged Federal lands will not affect management of adjoining NFS lands.

The Federal parcel identified for disposal is located within the Mammoth Management Area, #9, Inyo National Forest LRMP, p. 193-194, which specifies that NFS lands may be exchanged into the private sector for community expansion when:

1. The most appropriate use of the NFS lands over the long term is in the private sector,
2. State, County, local, and Forest Service planning processes identify and support conveying ownership of the parcel from NFS status to the private sector; and,
3. The use intended for the Federal land being exchanged meets the intent of the current approved County General Plan.

The Federal Snowcreek Parcel proposed for exchange meets all of the above criteria for disposal:

- It is located within the boundaries of the Town of Mammoth Lakes (TML).
- The community has long supported the development of an additional nine holes to augment the existing private nine-hole golf course.
- It is consistent with the urban limits policy of the TML General Plan.

The “Comparison of Alternatives/Benefits and Losses” (p.11) summarizes the amenities and values lost as a result of conveying the Federal Parcel into private ownership.

The non-Federal Party, the Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests have cooperatively developed the proposed land exchange to accomplish a number of objectives identified in the respective Forest LRMPs and landownership adjustment policy and guidance documents. The primary amenities and values to be gained by exchanging the Federal parcel for the 13 proposed non-Federal parcels are described as follows:

#### **Non-Federal land on the Inyo National Forest**

##### **Lee Vining Canyon – 161.20 acres**

- Completes Federal acquisition of available Southern California Edison (SCE) properties in Lee Vining Canyon. This parcel, along with previously acquired SCE lands from other exchanges, will enhance Forest management activities.
- Isolated parcel entirely surrounded by NFS lands.
- Acquisition of beneficial wetlands habitat into the Federal estate.
- Contains high quality recreation, riparian (approximately 0.9 stream miles) habitat and esthetic values.
- Lies along State Route 120, gateway to the eastern entrance of Yosemite National Park.
- Contains three campgrounds operated by Mono County (Cattleguard, Lower Lee Vining and a portion of Moraine Campgrounds).
- Identified as a high priority for acquisition in the 1995 INF Landownership Adjustment Strategy.

#### **Non-Federal land on the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests**

##### **Rubicon Parcels – 1,797.96 acres**

- Acquire twelve (12) properties along the Rubicon and Middle Fork of the American River. The Rubicon River is identified in both the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forest LRMPs for preliminary administrative designation as a Scenic River.
- Parcels include acquisition of approximately 10.5 stream miles and approximately 1.5 miles of shoreline at Hell Hole Reservoir.
- Parcels identified as the highest priority for acquisition in the Eldorado National Forest Landownership Adjustment Plan.
- Would enhance Forest Service’s ability to manage the transportation system (some parcels include trails and primitive roads).
- Acquisition maintains or improves the natural characteristics for a Scenic River.



- Potential habitat for wide variety of sensitive species, including the California red-legged frog, Townsend's big-eared bat, California spotted owl, Bald eagle and other wildlife and plant species. There is one identified sensitive plant occurrence (Stebbin's phacelia).
- Parcels contain approximately 164 acres of stream corridors and riparian habitat.
- The non-Federal lands are located in the remote western portion of the Rubicon River Canyon, with steep walls, cliffs and small waterfalls, containing high quality recreation lands.
- Consolidation of ownership improves the Forest Service's ability to manage semi-primitive motorized recreation opportunities and the high quality visual setting where changes are managed to be "rarely evident".
- Acquisition of important or unique resources, such as wetlands, floodplains, and wildlife habitat.
- Consolidation of Federal landownership, which will enhance forest management activities and result in a reduction of National Forest boundary line and survey corners requiring periodic maintenance.

### **DECISION TO BE MADE**

The proposed land exchange would convey 95.44 acres of land, or interests in land and resources, owned by the United States, in exchange for 1,959.16 acres of non-Federal lands, or interests in land, and the associated resources. An existing Forest Service administrative site would be relocated from the Federal Parcel to adjacent NFS lands in conjunction with the exchange.

This proposed action is consistent with the Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National LRMPs.

The act of conveyance itself would have no direct environmental effects, except for the requirement to relocate the Forest Service administrative site. This analysis is intended to determine the effects of exchanging or not exchanging real property values and estates. Land exchanges are discretionary actions, subject to disclosure of the associated public benefits of acquiring the non-Federal lands into the National Forest System in exchange for the Federal lands to be conveyed into the private sector.

The primary decision to be made is whether the resource values and the public objectives for the 1,959.16 acres to be acquired on the three National Forests are equal to or exceed the values and objectives served by the 95.44 acres of Federal lands to be conveyed into private ownership from the Inyo National Forest. The secondary decision to be made is where to relocate the Forest Service administrative site and under what conditions or mitigation.

### **PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT**

The Forest Service first announced its intent to convey the Federal Parcel to Dempsey as part of a land exchange proposal in July 1999, when the decision to issue a special use permit for

expansion of the golf course on the Federal Parcel was withdrawn. The intent to pursue a land exchange was reported in the local newspapers and media.

Public notifications of the subsequent land exchange proposal were placed in the Inyo Register (Inyo and Mono Counties) the Mammoth Times (Town of Mammoth Lakes), the Mountain Democrat (El Dorado County) and the Auburn Journal (Placer County). These notifications were published once a week for four consecutive weeks during April and May 2002 (4/25, 5/02, 5/09 and 5/16). The Forest Service issued a press release regarding the proposed land exchange on April 30, 2002, which resulted in several articles in local newspapers and electronic and broadcast media. Presentations regarding the exchange were also made before the Mammoth Lakes Town Council, and meetings were held with interested parties including representatives of the Sierra Club Range of Light Group.

Notifications were sent to the appropriate Congressional, State, and local governments, and affected Native American tribes in Mono County, including the Mono Lake Indian Community, Utu Utu Gwaite Paiute Tribe, Antelope Valley Indian Community; and the Mi Wok Tribes in Placer and Eldorado Counties. Additionally, special use permit holders and private property owners abutting the Federal parcel were notified of the proposed exchange via an Inyo National Forest letter dated May 6, 2002. This exchange proposal was also published in the Inyo National Forest Schedule for Proposed Actions beginning in February 2000 and most recently in the fall, 2002 (November-December) edition, which is widely circulated.

The expansion of the Snowcreek Golf Course onto the Federal parcel was the subject of an FEIS released in June 1997. Preparation of the FEIS involved extensive public notification and involvement activities over several years. The proposed use of the Federal parcel has not changed from the initial proposal.

As a result of the above-described public scoping activities, the Inyo National Forest received five written comments (letters and/or e-mails) from interested members of the public. Those identified as issues are discussed in the following section of this EA; those identified as comments are attached as Exhibit C, with the Forest Service response.

## ISSUES

Issues identified in the 1997 FEIS were deemed significant in light of the nature of the 1997 proposal. The Forest Service proposed action analyzed in the 1997 document, included development of a private golf course on lands that would have remained in Federal ownership. However, under this proposal, the Federal parcel would be conveyed to private ownership. Based on the analysis and discussion of effects disclosed in this analysis, the land to be acquired is intended to mitigate any losses on the Federal parcel. Thus, the development of alternatives and identification of issues for this analysis focuses on those issues that arise directly from the transfer of land from Federal ownership and the determination of value.

The jurisdiction to regulate future land use on the Federal parcel to be conveyed would no longer fall within Forest Service authority. It is important to note, given this fact that many of the issues identified in the 1997 FEIS would be most appropriately addressed through future California

Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and relevant permitting processes, and are therefore outside the scope of this environmental document.

Issues were eliminated from detailed study because: (1) the issue was considered outside the scope of the proposed action; (2) the issue has already been decided by law, regulation, LRMP, or a higher level decision; (3) the issue is irrelevant to the decision to be made; or, (4) the issue is conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence. The following issues were identified for consideration in the proposed land exchange.

**Issue #1 – Potential for increased development of adjacent NFS lands**

Land exchanges are discretionary actions, which are considered on a case-by-case basis. Only those proposals consistent with Forest management objectives are accepted for detailed consideration. Therefore, the proposed land exchange does not establish a precedent for any future land exchange completed by the Forest Service within the Inyo or any other National Forest. Nor does the proposed land exchange, in itself, determine future uses on adjacent private land.

**Issue Status:** The issue is outside the scope of this decision.

**Issue #2 – Effect of loss of habitat for the Sherwin deer herd.**

The conveyance of land itself would not result in a direct effect on the Sherwin deer herd. However, in the 1997 FEIS, the No Action Alternative and six (6) location alternatives for the proposed golf course expansion address this issue (FEIS, Chapter II). Wildlife impacts, including impacts to the Sherwin deer herd, were addressed in the analysis beginning on pages III-11 and IV-13 of the FEIS. The loss of this holding area habitat is acknowledged in the “Environmental Consequences” on 12 of this EA.

**Issue Status:** The issue is addressed in part through proposed acquisition of valuable wildlife habitat. Potential effects are summarized on p. 13 of this EA.

**Issue #3 – Effects on wildlife and fisheries watershed condition, water quality and quantity, open space, scenic resources, cultural resources and recreational trails.**

The conveyance of land itself would not result in the impacts to the resources identified above. However, this issue and the related impacts were addressed in the 1997 FEIS, which disclosed the environmental, social and economic impacts of the proposed expansion of the Snowcreek Golf Course on the Federal Parcel, plus reasonable and prudent alternatives to that action. In addition, effects on these resources are considered in the land exchange valuation process as identified on p. 13.

**Issue Status:** This issue is addressed through the comparison of values lost and gained on p.11 and summarized in the “Environmental Consequences” section of this document. The FEIS and supporting documents, including the Sanders Wetlands report (2002) are in the project file at the Mammoth Ranger Station.

**Issue #4 – Loss of wetlands habitat.**

The potential loss of wetlands was considered in the 1997 FEIS, p. IV-13. Approximately 0.5 acres were delineated at that time on the Federal parcel. Subsequent studies (Groeneveld 1996, Resource Concepts, Inc. 2000, Sanders and Associates, Inc. 2002, Perloff 2003) have concluded that the site no longer supports any wetlands. The discontinuation of historic irrigation practices has resulted in drier conditions. There are no areas within the Snowcreek Federal parcel at this time that contain the hydric soils, wetland hydrology and hydrophytic vegetation characteristic of wetlands.

The non-Federal lands proposed for conveyance into the public domain contain a minimum of approximately 11.4 acres of high quality riparian habitat, some of which are wetlands.

**Issue Status:** This issue was used to develop alternatives. Effects are disclosed in this EA on p. 13. No wetlands are located on the Snowcreek parcel. The offered non-Federal lands, Lee Vining Canyon and the Rubicon parcels, include a minimum of 11.4 acres of riparian habitat to be conveyed to the United States as a result of the land exchange, some of which are wetlands. Therefore, there are significant beneficial impacts, as there is a potential overall net gain of wetlands to the Federal estate.

**ALTERNATIVES****Alternative 1: Proposed Action**

This alternative is described in the Proposed Action section of this Environmental Assessment. It would exchange 95.44 acres of NFS land in the Town of Mammoth Lakes to Dempsey. In exchange, Dempsey would convey 1,959.16 acres of non-Federal lands to the United States. The non-Federal land consists of 161.2 acres in Lee Vining Canyon located in Mono County within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, and 1,797.96 acres of lands located along the Rubicon and Middle Fork of the American River in Placer and Eldorado Counties, which are within the boundaries of the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests.

Dempsey would also relocate the Forest Service administrative site (pack station, corrals, and pasture fences) that are currently on the Federal parcel to a site on NFS land immediately east of the current pack station. Refer to Exhibit B for a complete description of this action. Dempsey has also indicated its intent to convey a covenant to the Town of Mammoth Lakes, limiting future development of the property to recreational and open space land uses consistent with Town of Mammoth Lakes zoning. A special use permit may be issued for operation of three existing campgrounds on the Lee Vining Canyon parcel. Maps and legal descriptions for the parcels are appended to this EA, in Exhibit A.

## **Alternative 2: No Action**

The land exchange proposal, as described in the Proposed Action section of this EA would not take place under this alternative. The Inyo National Forest would continue to manage the 95.44 acre Federal parcel under current law and regulation. There would be no expansion of golf course facilities, relocation of the Forest Service administrative site, or the possible need to issue a special use permit.

National Forest System ownership of the 13 non-Federal parcels could be pursued in future land acquisition opportunities. The 161.2 acres in Lee Vining Canyon would remain under private ownership, as would the 1,797.96 acres of lands within the Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests.

## **Alternatives Considered, But Eliminated From Detailed Consideration:**

The following alternatives were considered, but not analyzed in detail as part of this environmental analysis.

## **Alternative 3: Purchase**

Under this alternative, the United States would acquire the non-Federal Parcels using money appropriated by Congress from the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). The Federal Parcel would not be conveyed to Dempsey.

Over the past 20 years, the Inyo National Forest has only occasionally been allocated funding to make land purchases using Congressionally appropriated funds from the LWCF. In the late 1980's, the Forest Service, along with three other agencies within the Department of the Interior, implemented a National land purchase prioritization process, using a jointly developed land and resource management criteria to nationally rank and prioritize individual parcels for limited, annual land purchase funding allocations. Generally, only parcels that are specifically earmarked by the Congress in legislation are funded for acquisition outside of this process.

Most of the parcels of land that have been identified by the Inyo National Forest for potential acquisition via direct purchase have historically competed very poorly against parcels on other National Forests in California and nationally. Funding for land purchases within the Inyo National Forest is expected to remain limited, with no change expected in the near future, with the exception of the occasional allocation of "emergency" purchase dollars. Therefore, the alternative of directly purchasing the Lee Vining Canyon parcel from its current owner was not considered in further detail.

The same holds true with regards to the Eldorado National Forest's and Tahoe National Forest's potential to acquire the Rubicon parcels through direct purchase. In addition, these parcels are owned in fee by Dempsey and are only being made available to the Forest Service as part of the proposed land exchange, as opposed to a direct purchase. Dempsey purchased these parcels for the purpose of offering them to the Forest Service as a part of this exchange, and is not offering them for sale. The Forest Service only enters into direct purchases on the basis of willing-sellers and willing-buyers.



**Alternative 4: Alternative Exchange Configuration**

The Federal Snowcreek parcel has been the subject of an extensive analysis process associated with the potential issuance of a special use permit authorizing the golf course expansion. As part of the previous EIS, six alternatives were considered. The configuration of the Federal Snowcreek parcel, as described under this Proposed Action, is consistent with the Forest Service decision following the alternatives analysis process that took place at that time. Therefore, it is unnecessary to re-analyze those alternatives.

No other configurations for this exchange currently exist, due to the lack of available private land with willing sellers within the boundaries of the Inyo National Forest, and the fact that the current proposal meets all existing policy, rules, and regulations for Assembled Exchanges (See Purpose and Need section of this EA). In addition, all non-Federal parcels are considered high priority acquisitions for each of the three National Forests.

**Alternative 5 - Construct golf course on private land**

Similar to Alternative 4, this alternative was analyzed in the FEIS. The configuration of the Federal Snowcreek parcel, as described under the Proposed Action, is consistent with the Forest Service decision following the alternatives analysis process that took place at that time. Therefore, it is unnecessary to re-analyze those alternatives.

**Alternative 6 – Place deed restriction in patent to ensure use as golf course and maintain open space in perpetuity**

This alternative is counter to Forest Service policy, and would impact the estate to be appraised and, therefore, could have a negative impact on the appraised value of the property. Such restrictions are only included as patent reservations in very rare instances. To achieve the same end, Dempsey has stated its commitment to place a covenant on the land area approved by the Town of Mammoth Lakes for completion of the Snowcreek Golf Course limiting future land use to recreation, open space and appropriate ancillary uses. The Town has agreed to accept such a covenant. This restriction would be placed on the property following completion of the land exchange and, thus, would not affect the value of the Federal Parcel for exchange purposes.

**DECISION CRITERIA**

The chart on the following page summarizes the decision criteria and exchange objectives described in the “Purpose and Need” section of this document. It illustrates the values and amenities found on the Federal Snowcreek Parcel, and those found on the parcels to be acquired by the United States. This table provides a means for comparison between the proposed action and no action alternatives. Values identified in the column titled “Federal

## Comparison of Benefits and Losses

	Federal Parcel Snowcreek	Non-Federal Parcel- Lee Vining Canyon	Non-Federal Parcels- Rubicon	Total Non- Federal Parcels	Net Change (Post Exchange)
Size	95.44 acres	161.20 acres	1797.96 acres	1959.16 acres	1863.72 acres
Riparian Habitat, Includes wetlands	0	11.4 acres	Not quantified	11.4 acres (at minimum)	11.4 acres (at minimum)
Floodplains	0	7 acres	157 acres	164 acres	164 acres
Stream/Lake front miles	0	0.9 stream miles	10.5 stream mi., 1.5 lake front mi.	11.4 mi. 1.5 mi.	11.4 stream mi. 1.5 lake front mi.
Threatened, Endangered, Candidate or Region 5 Sensitive Species	0	Potential habitat for northern goshawk, American marten, and scalped moonwort	Potential habitat for spotted owls, red-legged frog, Townsend's big- eared bat, bald eagles, saw- toothed lewisia, Stebbins's phacelia.	Potential habitat for: refer to list in previous two columns. One sensitive plant occurrence (Stebbins's phacelia)	Overall gain in potential Habitat. See columns 2 and 3. Gain of one sensitive plant occurrence.
Significant Cultural Resources	None	Not surveyed	Not surveyed	Not surveyed	Unknown
Structures	USFS Pack Station and Corrals	3 camp- grounds with primitive facilities	None	3 campgrounds with primitive facilities	3 campgrounds with primitive facilities. Move of USFS facilities to other federal land.
Recreational Opportunities	Dispersed recreational opportunities: Hiking, horse back riding, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling	Developed and dispersed recreational opportunities: 3 developed campgrounds, fishing and hiking.	Dispersed recreational opportunities in potential wild and scenic river corridor	A variety of developed and dispersed recreational opportunities and wild and scenic river corridor	Gain 1863.72 acres of lands with developed and dispersed recreational opportunities, primarily within a wild & scenic river corridor.
Hazardous Materials	None	None	None	None	None
Miles of National Forest Boundary Added or Eliminated ( )	0.5 miles,  8 survey corners	(2.5) miles  (6) survey corners	(9.7) miles  (9) survey corners	(12.2) miles  (15) survey corners	(11.7) miles  (7) survey corners
Consistent with Forest Plans, as amended – SNFP	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Parcel Snowcreek" would be retained under the No Action alternative. Values identified in the other columns would not be acquired under the No Action alternative.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

Refer to the table on the previous page for a summary of environmental consequences.

The Federal Snowcreek Parcel has been surveyed for cultural resources, threatened, endangered and sensitive (TES) plant and animal species, wetlands/floodplains and hazardous materials. The offered non-Federal property has been surveyed for hazardous materials, and cursory surveys done for TES animal species and wetlands/floodplains. Survey information for the Rubicon Parcels is available in the project files located on the Eldorado National Forest and Tahoe National Forests.

There were no indications of hazardous materials, past or present, on the Federal Snowcreek Parcel, or on any of the offered non-Federal parcels during field inspections.

There will be a loss of mule deer holding area located on the Federal Parcel to be conveyed. The larger holding area totals approximately 11,250 acres, and the portion located on the Federal parcel is approximately 25 acres, at the western edge of the holding area.

Approximately 0.5 acre of wetland was initially identified on the Federal parcel in 1990, however, changes in irrigation practices have resulted in drier conditions and subsequent studies concluded that there are no longer any wetlands on the site (Sanders, 2002; Perloff, 2003). No floodplains exist on the parcel. A net beneficial effect is expected through acquisition of wetland and riparian areas on parcels passing into Federal ownership.

An historic site on the Federal parcel, consisting of a portion of the Bodle Ditch, will be incorporated into the future project design and interpreted, as described in the FEIS. Section 106 requirements have been met.

The relocation of the Forest Service administrative site would encompass approximately 20 acres of native brush vegetation, with less than 5 of those acres to be occupied by structures (i.e.: corrals, a tack shed and support facilities) and the remaining acres left in native brush and grass species (Exhibit B). Forest Service standards and guidelines will be followed in the relocation of this site. This relocation has been previously analyzed in the 1997 Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion FEIS (V-23-24), incorporated into this EA by reference. Specialist reports are located in the project file at the Mammoth Ranger Station for a more detailed analysis of this site. No significant effects to vegetation, wildlife or other resources are expected as a result of the relocating the Forest Service administrative site.

Issuance of a Special Use Permit for continued operation of 3 existing campgrounds on the Lee Vining Canyon Parcel would be needed if the parcel is acquired into Federal ownership. There are numerous improvements on the property, ranging from developed campsites, picnic tables, toilets, access roads and signs, which would need authorization from the Forest Service. The

environmental consequences of not authorizing the existing uses would be that the Forest Service would incur additional expenses to operate and maintain the campgrounds, or require the current operator to remove their facilities, or possibly close the campgrounds. A separate environmental analysis would be completed prior to the issuance of a special use permit.

Under the No Action Alternative, none of the environmental consequences noted above would occur. None of the environmental benefits and opportunities offered on the non-Federal parcels would result, as the parcels would remain in private ownership. The Forest Service would continue to manage the Federal parcel under current law and regulation.

### **Effects relative to significance factors.**

#### **1. Beneficial and adverse impacts.**

- The Inyo, Eldorado and Tahoe National Forests will realize a net gain of approximately 1,863.12 acres into the National Forest System.
- The United States will realize a net gain of a minimum of 11.4 acres of riparian habitat, in addition to any wetlands associated with the Rubicon Parcels.
- The United States will realize a net gain of 0.9 stream miles in Lee Vining Canyon, 10.5 stream miles along the Rubicon and Middle Fork of the American River, 1.5 miles of shoreline at Hell Hole Reservoir, and 164.5 acres of floodplains.
- The United States will acquire potential threatened, endangered and Region 5 sensitive species habitat; including potential habitat for northern goshawk, American marten, scalloped moonwort (Lee Vining Canyon); Spotted owl, California red-legged frog, Townsends big-eared bat, Bald eagle, and saw-toothed lewisia (Rubicon Parcels). The United States would acquire one sensitive plant occurrence (Stebbins's phacelia) on the Rubicon Parcels.
- The United States would acquire lands in El Dorado and Placer Counties identified as being potentially eligible for inclusion in the National System of Wild and Scenic Rivers.
- The Forest Service will acquire non-Federal lands in Lee Vining Canyon suitable for camping and other forms of recreation, and habitat including wetlands, riparian habitat, and aquatic habitat.
- The miles of National Forest boundary requiring periodic maintenance will be reduced by 11.7 miles and 7 survey corners.
- The 95.44 acre Snowcreek parcel will be conveyed from public ownership. This includes a portion of the mule deer holding area. There are no old-growth forest species on this parcel.

2. **The degree to which the proposed action affects public health or safety.** This exchange of land and resources constitutes no affect to public health or safety, per field inspections of both the Federal and non-Federal parcels, which are documented within the "Feasibility Analysis" prepared for this project on August 20, 2001. Subsequent inspections have not revealed any evidence of potentially hazardous substances or contaminants on any of the subject properties.

3. **Unique characteristics of the geographic area.** The Federal Parcel, including the NFS lands to be occupied by the relocated Forest Service pack station, do not contain unique characteristics other than a small area of deer holding habitat. (D.R. Sanders and Associates report, 2002). The non-Federal Lee Vining Canyon and Rubicon parcels include a minimum of 11.4 acres of riparian habitat, including wetlands, 164 acres of floodplains, over 11 miles of stream frontage, 1.5 miles of shoreline at Hell Hole Reservoir, potentially suitable habitat for threatened, endangered and Region 5 sensitive species, as noted above, and natural characteristics warranting potential Wild and Scenic River designation.
4. **The degree to which the effects on the human environment are likely to be highly controversial.** The potential for a land exchange involving the Snowcreek Parcel was first proposed in 1999. Since that time, including a 30-day public scoping period, five comment letters expressing concerns regarding the exchange have been received. As summarized under "Issues" in this EA, none of the identified issues were considered to be significant, or if they were, were not within the scope of this environmental document. During the same time period, the Mammoth Lakes Town Council adopted a resolution formally supporting the land exchange, and at least three written communications have been received supporting the exchange. Based on the issues raised, the proposed land exchange does not constitute a highly controversial Federal action.
5. **The degree to which the possible effects on the human environment are highly uncertain or involve unique or unknown risks.** Risks to the human environment were analyzed in the Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project EIS (FEIS, Appendix G). Past experience with similar projects and environmental analysis reveal that no extraordinary circumstances exist that might cause the action to have significant effects upon the human environment. A summary of environmental consequences is displayed on p.11 of this EA.
6. **The degree to which the action may establish a precedent for future actions with significant effects or represents a decision in principle about a future consideration.** Each land exchange proposal is considered upon a case-by-case basis. This action will not necessarily lead to another future action or actions that will have significant effects, either individually or in combination with each other or with this action.
7. **Whether the action is related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts.** The proposed action is not related to other individual actions and would have no cumulatively significant impact on the environment. It is anticipated that conveyance of these lands by exchange will help consolidate land ownership patterns without creating cumulative effects on other resources. There are no significant environmental effects that result from land conveyance itself. Overall cumulative impacts were addressed in the Proposed Snowcreek Golf Course Expansion Project EIS (FEIS pages IV-28 – 34). Effects associated with the potential development of lands transferred from federal ownership will be addressed through appropriate State of California, Mono County and Town of Mammoth Lakes environmental analysis and permitting processes.



8. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect districts, sites, highways, structures, or objects listed in or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, or may cause loss or destruction of significant scientific, cultural, or historical resources.** A portion of the lower Bodle Ditch crosses the Federal parcel. While this ditch played a significant role in the development of the area in historic times, the State Historic Preservation Officer concurred with the Forest Service's finding that it does not meet the eligibility criteria for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (FEIS, page IV and EIS, Appendix F). Preservation and interpretation of a portion of this ditch will be incorporated into Dempsey's future project design.
9. **The degree to which the action may adversely affect an endangered or threatened species or its habitat that has been determined to be critical under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.** The Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation prepared by an Inyo National Forest Wildlife Biologist for the 1997 FEIS concluded that the proposed project is not likely to adversely affect the Owens tui chub or its critical habitat. In addition, it was determined that the proposed project will not affect any Federally listed threatened or endangered species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service concurred with this finding (1997 FEIS, Appendix D). A recent supplemental Biological Evaluation, consistent with the earlier studies, found that no TES species would be affected (Perloff, 2003).
10. **Whether the action threatens a violation of Federal, State, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment.** This exchange of land and resources constitutes no violation of Federal, State, or local law or other requirements imposed for the protection of the environment. Site inspections, including hazardous materials screenings, have been conducted and documented within the "Feasibility Analysis".

#### **AGENCIES AND PERSONS CONSULTED**

El Dorado County Board of Supervisors  
Placer County Board of Supervisors  
Honorable Barbara Boxer  
Honorable Mike Briggs  
Honorable Ken Calvert  
Honorable Bill Campbell  
Honorable Christopher Cox  
Honorable John T. Doolittle  
Honorable Dianne Feinstein  
Mammoth Community Water District  
Mono County Board of Supervisors  
Mono County Planning Department  
Honorable William M. Thomas  
Town of Mammoth Lakes  
Sierra Club/Range of Light Chapter  
Honorable William J. Knight  
Governor's Office/Planning/Research  
Jerry Andrews, Mono Lake Indian Community



Ute Ute Gwaite Benton Paiute Tribe  
Antelope Valley Indian Community  
Mi Wok Tribe

Input by notice was also sought from all private property owners, as identified by the Mono County Assessor's Office, which adjoin the Federal parcel. The names of all property owners are listed in the project file. Preparation of the 1997 FEIS involved many government agencies, non-governmental entities, and individuals noted in the FEIS, Chapter 5.

**EXHIBIT A**  
**(Includes legal descriptions and maps)**

**FEDERAL LAND PROPOSED FOR EXCHANGE:**

Mt. Diablo Meridian, Mono County, California

T. 4 S., R. 27 E.

Section 2: Parcel 1: Tract 46

Parcel 2: A portion, more particularly described as follows:

Beginning at the CW 1/16 Section Corner of Section 2;

Thence, S 0-10 E, 979.44 feet to Angle Point 1, Tract 46, identical with Angle Point 4, Tract 45;

Thence, S 0-10 E, 326.70 feet to Angle Point 4, Tract 46;

Thence, S 89-30 W, 1334.52 feet to Angle Point 3, Tract 46;

Thence, S 0-10 E, 173.30 feet along the section line between Sections 2 and 3;

Thence, N 89-30 E, 2020.00 feet;

Thence, N 49-30 E, 1125.00 feet;

Thence, N 0-10 W, 1050.00 feet, to the intersection with the Westerly Right-of-Way line of Sherwin Creek Road;

Thence, Northwesterly along said Westerly Right-of-Way line, to the intersection with the Southerly Right-of-Way line of Old Mammoth Road;

Thence, Southwesterly along said Southerly Right-of-Way line, to the North-South Centerline of Section 2, to the True Point of Beginning.

(APN 22-220-26)

95.44 acres

*Total Federal acreage to be conveyed: 95.44 acres*

**NON-FEDERAL LAND PROPOSED FOR EXCHANGE:**

**Lee Vining Canyon Parcel (Inyo National Forest)**

Mount Diablo Meridian, Mono County, California

T. 1 N., R. 26 E.

Section 19: N1/2SW1/4; NW1/4 SE1/4; SW1/4NE1/4, according to the Official Plat thereof.

EXCEPT THEREFROM, that certain parcel of land described in the deed executed by Southern California Edison Company, in favor of the State of California, recorded July 27, 1970 in Book 113 Page 464, of Official Records.

EXCEPTING AND RESERVING unto GRANTOR, its successors and assigns, an easement for electric distribution line with appurtenances, together with a right of way over existing roads for ingress and egress for the purpose of maintaining such

improvements, being located in the N1/2SW1/4NE1/4 of Section 19, T.1N., R.26 E., MDM.\*

APN 21-130-01

161.20 acres

*\*Note: This description of the reservation is preliminary and may be revised where necessary.*

### **Rubicon Parcels (Tahoe and Eldorado National Forests)**

#### Mount Diablo Meridian, Placer County, California

##### **Parcel One**

T.14 N., R.12 E.

Section 29: E1/2NE1/4; SW1/4NE1/4; SE1/4; SE1/4SW1/4

EXCEPTING any portion of land within the natural bed of the river below the ordinary high water mark where it was located prior to any artificial or avulsive changes in the location of the shoreline.

APN 068-050-003

298.4 acres

Acres on Tahoe NF 286.9 acres

Acres on Eldorado NF 11.5 acres

### **Rubicon Parcels (Eldorado National Forest)**

#### Mount Diablo Meridian, Placer County, California

##### **Parcel Two**

T.13 N., R.12 E.

Section 7: Lots 2, 3 and 4; E1/2SW1/4

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion thereof lying outside of Placer County. ALSO EXCEPTING any portion of the land within the natural bed of the river below the ordinary high water mark where it was located prior to any artificial or avulsive changes in the location of the shoreline.

APN 068-130-008

122.5 acres

##### **Parcel Three**

T.13 N., R.12 E.

Section 29: N1/2NE1/4

EXCEPTING THEREFROM any portion thereof lying outside of Placer County. ALSO EXCEPTING any portion of the land within the natural bed of the river below the ordinary high water mark where it was located prior to any artificial or avulsive changes in the location of the shoreline.

APN 068-170-007

36.4 acres

APN 063-020-26

70.02 acres

**Parcel Eleven**

T.13 N., R.12 E.

Section 27: SE1/4SE1/4, according to the official plat of the survey of said land on file in the Bureau of Land Management.

EXCEPTING any portion of the land within the natural bed of the river below the ordinary high water mark where it was located prior to any artificial or avulsive changes in the location of the shoreline. ALSO EXCEPTING THEREFROM all timber harvesting rights pursuant to an unrecorded Timber Agreement which terminates on December 31, 1996, as reserved in deed from Sierra Pacific Industries, a California corporation recorded July 23, 1993, in Book 4067 of Official Records, at page 165. ALSO EXCEPTING THEREFROM all that portion lying outside of El Dorado County.

APN 063-030-04

19.51 acres

*Note: The title company has agreed to remove the deed exception noted above pertaining to the unrecorded timber agreement, as such has terminated.*

**Parcel Twelve**

T.13 N., R.13 E.

Section 13: SE1/4SW1/4

A strip of land embracing the entire bed and banks of the Rubicon River extending across the Southeast quarter of the Southwest quarter of Section 13, T.13 N., R.13 E. MDM, the Southeasterly boundary line of which strip is parallel to and distant one hundred (100) feet Southeasterly from the Southeasterly line of high water in said Rubicon River and the Northwesterly boundary line of said strip is parallel to and distant one hundred (100) feet Northwesterly from the Northwesterly line of high water in said Rubicon River. EXCEPTING any portion of the land within the natural bed of the river below the ordinary high water mark where it was located prior to any artificial or avulsive changes in the location of the shoreline. ALSO EXCEPTING THEREFROM all that portion lying outside of El Dorado County.

APN 063-040-02

0.52 acres

***Total non-Federal acreage in El Dorado County: 187.46 acres***

**Non-Fed. acreage to be conveyed, more or less, within Inyo National Forest: 161.20 ac.**

**Non-Fed. acreage to be conveyed, more or less, within Eldorado National Forest: 1,511.06 ac.**

**Non-Fed. acreage to be conveyed, more or less, within the Tahoe National Forest: 286.90 ac.**

**Total non-federal acreage to be conveyed, more or less: 1,959.16 acres**

## SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE

### INDEX TO MAP EXHIBITS

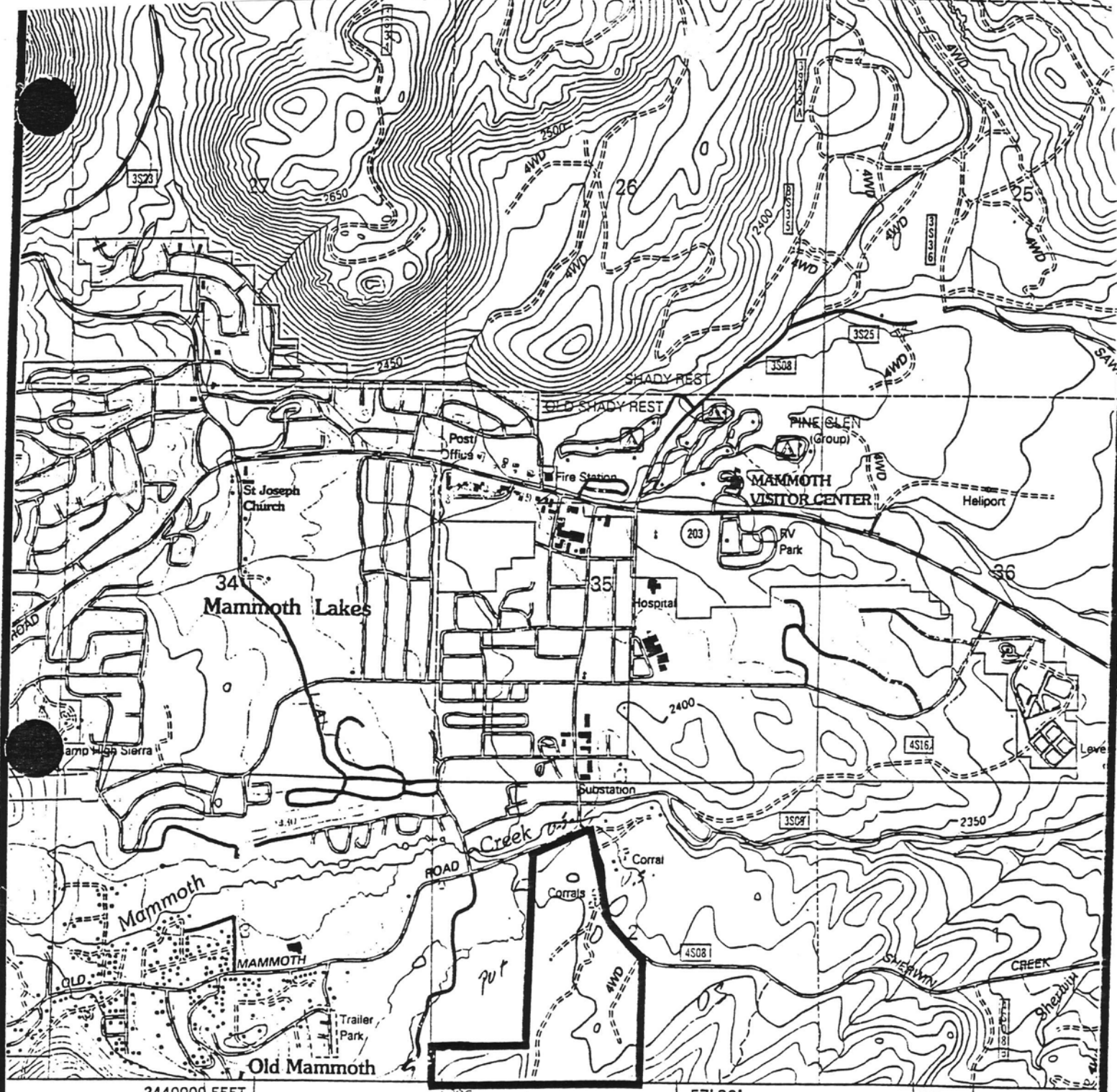
Exhibit A – Federal Snowcreek Parcel

Exhibit A – Lee Vining Canyon Non-Federal Parcel

Exhibit A – Rubicon Non-Federal Parcels (8 individual maps)

Exhibit B - Federal Administrative Site, Proposed Relocation - Vicinity Map

Exhibit B - Federal Administrative Site, Proposed Relocation - Detailed Map



2440000 FEET

326

57' 30"

328

R. 2

Survey

ce

lands may not have been revised

1976 and 1979. Revised from aerial  
map by U.S. Forest Service 1994

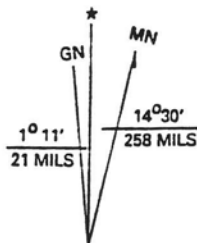
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(North American 1983 conformal conic). Blue  
ticks, zone 11

as shown by dashed corner ticks  
NAD 83 for 7.5-minute

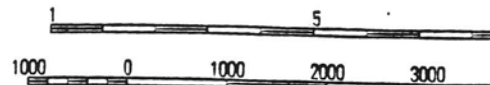
Survey NADCON software

U.S. National Forest  
or State reservations

Map document. Public lands are



UTM GRID AND 1995 MAGNETIC NORTH  
DECLINATION AT CENTER OF SHEET



## Proposed Snowcreek Land Exchange Inyo National Forest

Federal Parcel

"Snowcreek"

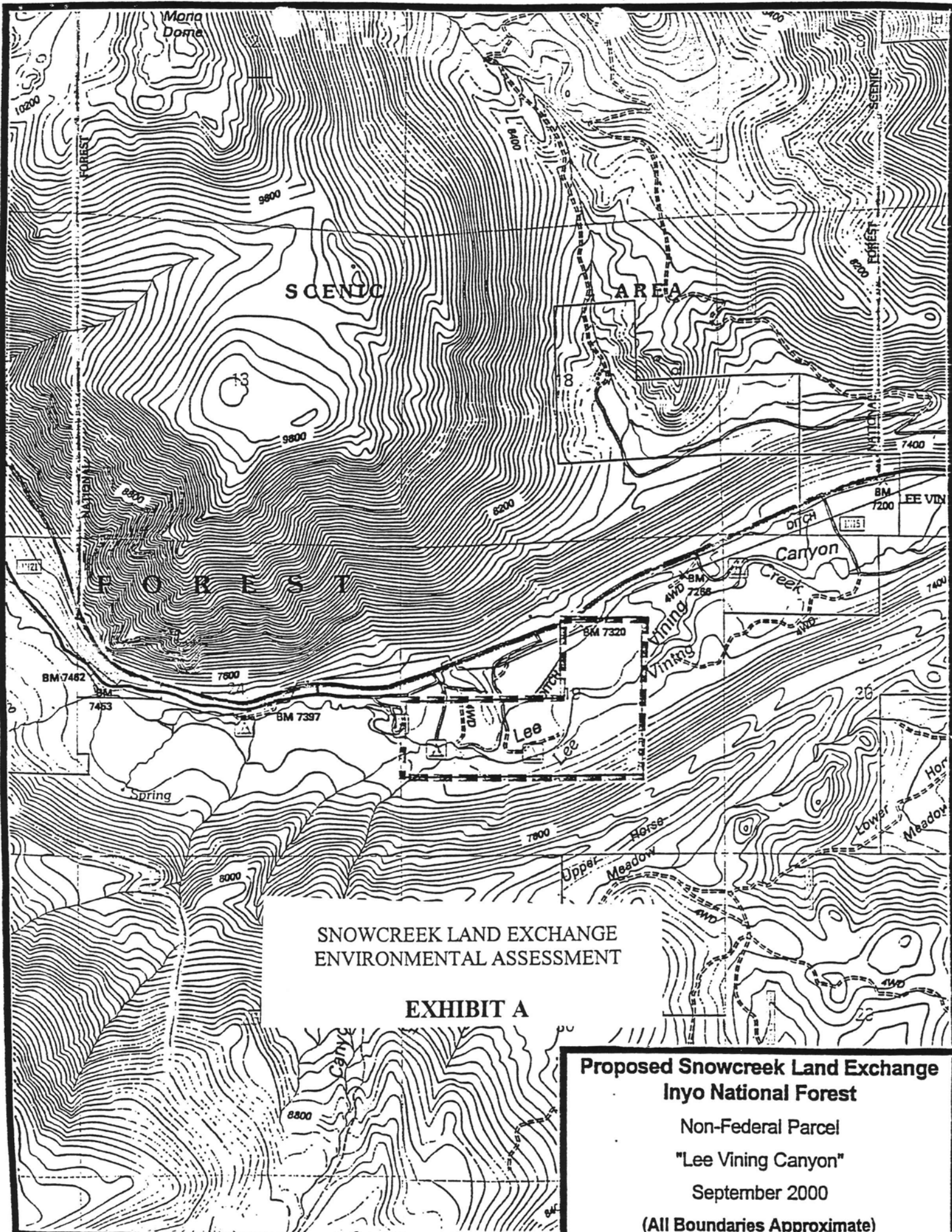
September 2000

(All Boundaries Approximate)

SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EXHIBIT A





SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EXHIBIT A

**Proposed Snowcreek Land Exchange  
Inyo National Forest**

Non-Federal Parcel

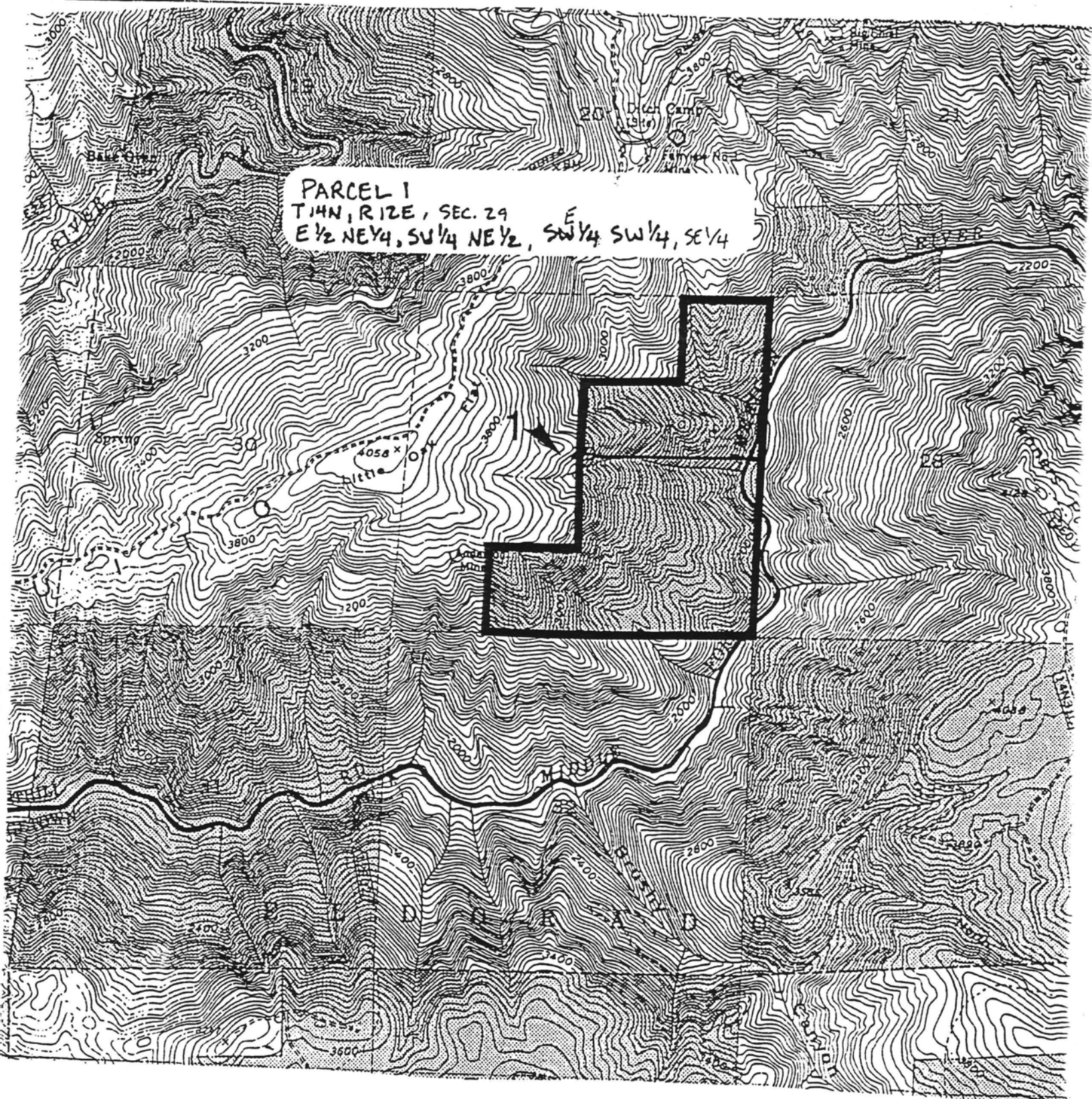
"Lee Vining Canyon"

September 2000

(All Boundaries Approximate)



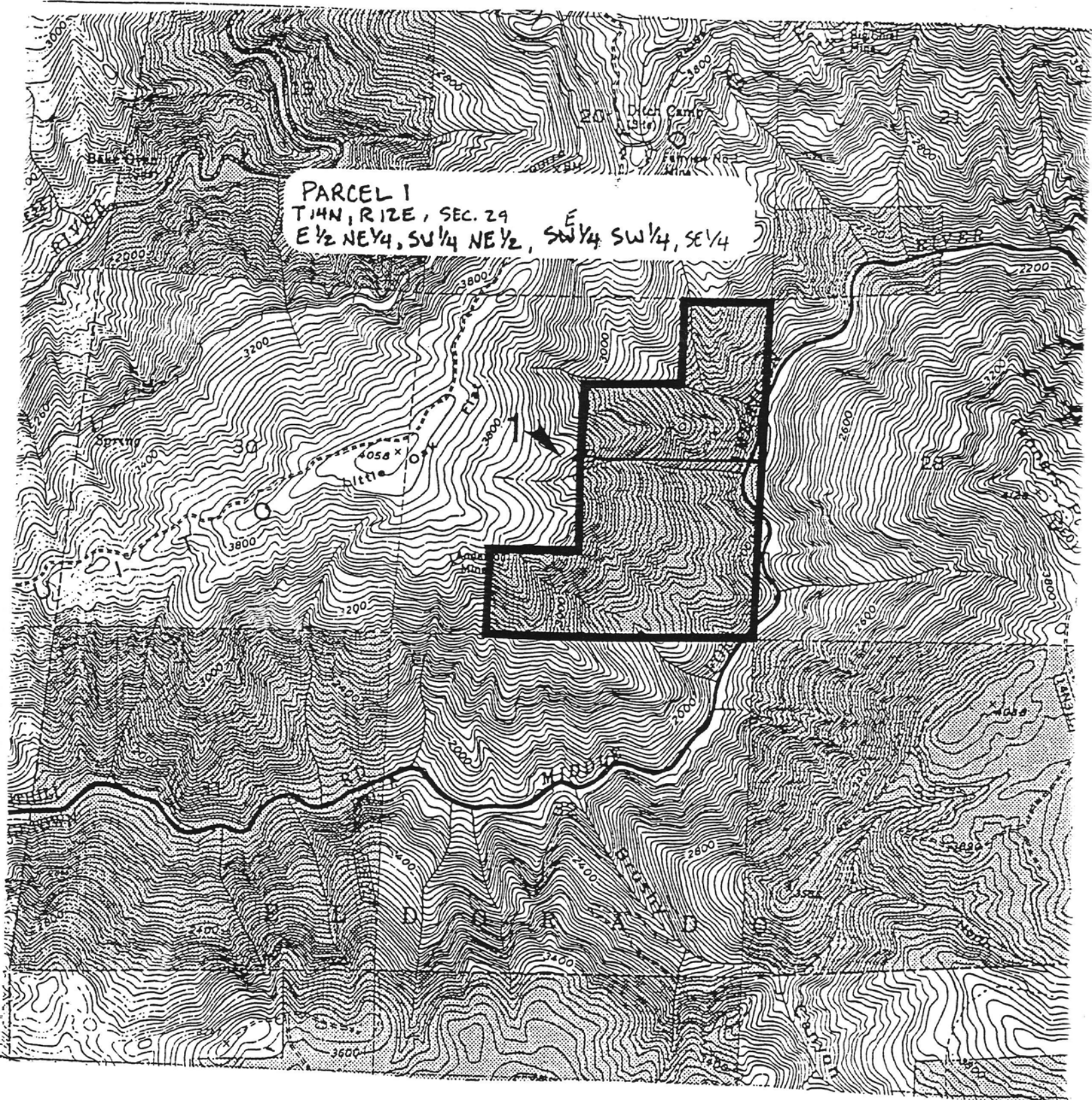




SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

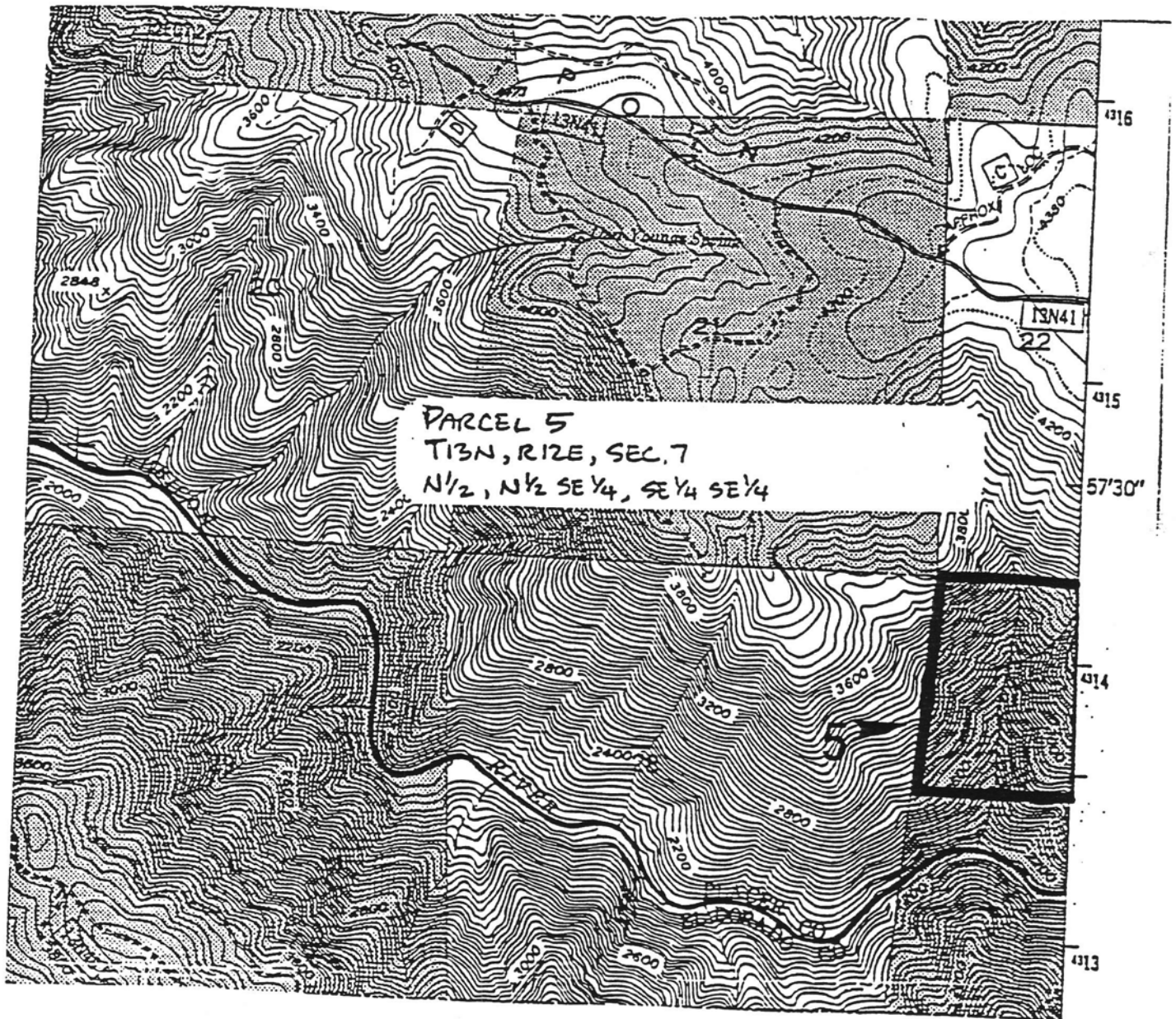
EXHIBIT A  
RUBICON PARCELS





SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**EXHIBIT A**  
**RUBICON PARCELS**



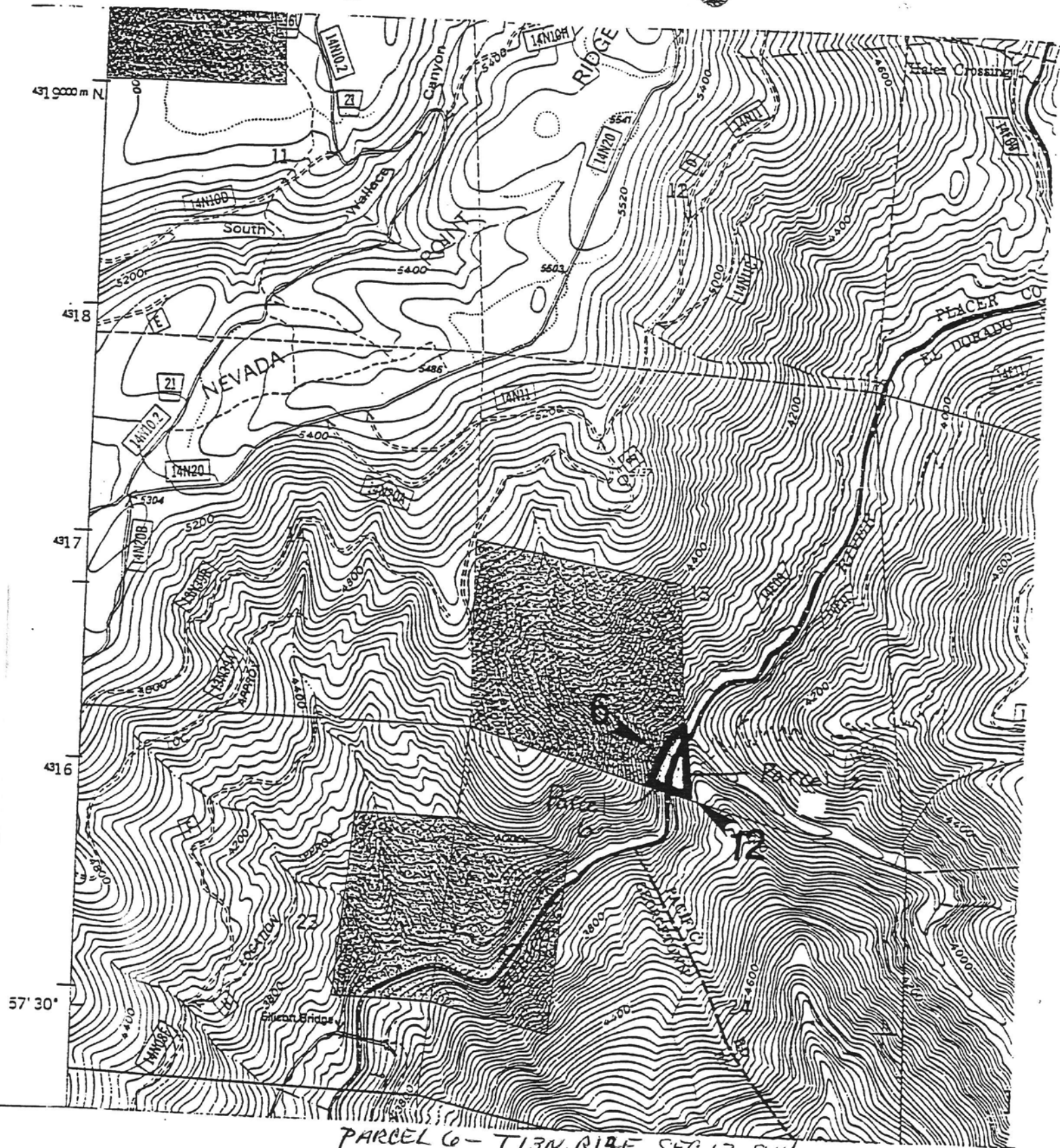
SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE  
ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**EXHIBIT A**  
**RUBICON PARCELS**









PARCEL 6 - T13N, R18E, SEC 13, SW 1/4  
 PARCEL 12 - T13N, R18E, SEC 24, NW 1/4  
 SNOWCREEK LAND EXCHANGE  
 ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

# EXHIBIT A RUBICON PARCELS

**EXHIBIT B**  
(Includes attached site map)

**RELOCATION OF FOREST SERVICE ADMINISTRATIVE SITE**

The Forest Service currently operates an administrative facility within the Federal parcel, consisting of a backcountry pack station, corrals, and pasture. Upon completion of the exchange, Dempsey has agreed to relocate this facility to other NFS lands located immediately east of the existing facility on the Sherwin Creek Road (4S08), and immediately south of the Sierra Meadows Ranch. The impact of relocating the Forest Service administrative facility was also addressed in the FEIS, pages IV 23-24. This is a connected action to the land exchange proposal, which would require relocation of the current 2-inch domestic waterline, electrical and phone lines, to serve the new proposed location, plus all existing pack station facilities either relocated or replaced "in kind". The facilities would be constructed so as to meet current accessibility and visual standards. A non-potable waterline for limited pasture irrigation to replace Bodle Ditch irrigation water would be installed at the same time as the golf course is constructed, from a golf course irrigation line to the relocated administrative site. The amount of water used at the relocated pack station would be consistent with current use. Such use occurs primarily during the late spring and early summer.

The road which serves the existing Forest Service tack room and corrals is also used by Sierra Meadows Ranch for its hayride access to "Kerry Meadow", a small meadow to the south of the federal land to be acquired. The relocation of the Forest Service administrative site and fences will close off the existing rear access to Sierra Meadows Ranch. To replace the rear access to Sierra Meadows, and also to replace the first part of the hayride route, currently located on the exchange parcel, Dempsey Corporation will reactivate an existing small road just southeast of Sierra Meadows Ranch, next to the proposed relocation site for the Forest Service administrative site. On the southwest side of Sherwin Creek road (4S08), Dempsey Corporation will reroute those parts of the existing road to the edge of the old borrow site to where it connects to an existing road just south of the land to be acquired. This will preserve public access to "Kerry Meadow", including use by Sierra Meadows Ranch customers.

The proposed Forest Service administrative site for relocation comprises approximately 20 acres. Less than 5 acres would contain buildings, holding corrals, and parking area. The remaining 15 acres would consist of fenced native vegetation for pasture. The explosives cache, including an access road, would be relocated at the eastern corner of the pasture. The proposed dirt road reactivation consists of less than 1/2 mile of grading and brushing. The access road to the explosives cache is less than 1/8 mile long, and the relocation of a small portion of the road from the borrow site to the existing road includes less than 1/8 mile. A map showing the relocation area and access roads is attached.