

Ideas for desired trail connections to keep in mind during the UXO clearance of BLM Area B

F. Watson, 16 Jan 2018

1. Vision

- a. Loops of different sizes
- b. Entirely single track. Almost no double-track or gravel. Zero asphalt (except road crossings).
- c. Accessible from all current & future access points

2. Goals addressed here. Increase single-track options for

- a. Users originating from Seaside via FORTAG
- b. Users originating from the Presidio Annex
- c. Users seeking the biggest loop you can do on the North Side i.e. north of Eucalyptus, east of Parker Flats Cutoff, south of Intergarrison, and west of Reservation
- d. Users seeking more than one way to connect the northern and southern portions of FONM via single track, and without using "The Beach" (which is one-way and somewhat of a non-standard novelty trail loathed by some and loved by others).
- e. Users seeking different options for reaching the East Side (Christmas Tree).

3. Main things sought by this document

- a. Plan now for a long single-track west-east connector generally along the north side of Eucalyptus
- b. Plan now for west-east connections from the Addington area out toward Christmas Tree

4. Refer to two attached maps

- a. Wide-area map with conceptual corridors
- b. Zoomed map with specific suggested trails (including some new segments, some segments to re-open, and some currently-open segments)

5. A conceptual description of the major trail corridors and loops on the North Side.

Refer to wide-area map for location of names used.

- a. **Core & Rim** loop areas. Many different loops can already be created in these areas, taking in focal areas such as Henneken Lake, Addington Glade, Kyle's Bench, The Quarry, Blair Witch, Machine Gun Flats etc. Most of it is currently open, with the exception of the Oak Oval area (temporarily closed since 2007), and BLM Area B (partially & temporarily closed since 2017).
- b. **Jerry** Smith Corridor. The principle access route to the **Core** area.
- c. **Youth Camp** area. Full of great trails for short loops and events, and has an important function in providing more choices for accessing the overall single-track trail system from the north. This is also the primary access area for trips originating at East Garrison.
- d. **Red Pony Ridge, Salamander Ridge, and Outlaw Ridge**. These three corridors are named for easy flowing trails that follow the alignment of the ancient sand dunes. Together, they provide a variety of choices for trips originating from either 8th & Gigling or Jerry Smith Trailhead. Great short loops can be made by heading out along one ridge and back along another. Although well-known to early-adopters since the 1990s, key parts of these ridges have been under temporary ESCA-RP closure since 2007.
- e. **Abrams, Whispering, and CSUMB**. These are key access corridors from the northwest. "**Abrams**" serves the City of Marina, and CSUMB East Campus.
"**Whispering**" serves The Dunes, Sea Haven, Cypress Knolls, and the Promontory at CSUMB - with a future assist from FORTAG.
"**CSUMB**" will serve CSUMB main campus once CSUMB acquires its designated property east of 8th Ave
- f. **Normandy, Fitch, and Seaside**. These are key access corridors from the west.
"**Normandy**" serves much of the Presidio, and will serve Campus Town.
"**Fitch**" serves Fitch Park in the Presidio.
"**Seaside**" will serve Seaside proper, with an assist from FORTAG.
- g. **Eucalyptus**. The idea behind this corridor is that it should provide a continuous single-track experience running all the way along the north side of Eucalyptus Rd from Parker Flats Cutoff at least as far as

Barloy Canyon.

Back in the old days when no-one knew the rules, this corridor could be used to accomplish the longest loops on the whole North Side. It has great potential to provide this function again in the future. This corridor can also provide important variety in choices available to users originating from Seaside and the Presidio.

The west end starts either at Parker Flats Cutoff or Artillery Hill – depending on one’s point of origin. This area is mostly in MPC land, but it is up on the wooded hills away from the flat land (Parker Flats) i.e. not where MPC development is most likely to occur.

Bike Shed Trail connects east from Artillery Hill, and then two trails – Yerba and Santa – connect further east into Army Range MRS 16. At some point in the past, these two made a nice short loop in their own right, when land use restrictions were unclear. They could be re-opened once the area is cleared. Yerba is a sinuous downhill; and Santa complements it as an uphill.

The opportunity for long-distance connectivity extends east through MRS 16 along the alignment of an ancient sand dune. There used to be a dirt road along the ridge crest. When land use restrictions were unclear, this road could be used to connect across toward Sandy Lane beneath Leary Hill. The road was eroded and was revegetated. A single track should be re-established along the ridge – in a more sustainable fashion than the previous road.

A new gravel road – let’s call it “Leary Road” - has been constructed in late 2017 from Sandy Lane up onto Leary Hill. So only a short new trail would be needed to connect from MRS 16 to Leary Road – ensuring a zero-asphalt experience (other than road crossings).

From Leary Road, some users may wish to drop down Eucalyptus Canyon, which could be accomplished by formally opening Lost Trail. Other users may wish to head up to Little Moab via Leary Road.

- h. **Leary and Lost.** These are two connectors between Eucalyptus Canyon and Leary Hill.
Leary Road is a new road built by the Army in late 2017. It should serve users coming from the west along the Eucalyptus-aligned trail, wanting to get up onto Leary Hill.
Lost Trail is an existing but closed trail that should serve users wanting an alternate single-track connection between the North Side and South Side. It is also the eastern section of the Eucalyptus-aligned trail. It probably needs some tweaks in order to work as an uphill as well as a downhill trail.
- i. **Kyle’s Bench, The Beach, Perry Ridge, and Picnic Canyon.** The **Kyle’s Bench** corridor (Trail 50) is the only real way to connect from the South Side to the North Side via single-track. In the reverse direction, one could choose **The Beach** (Trail 60), but this is – shall we say – an idiosyncratic option. The **Perry Ridge** (Trail 50) and **Picnic Canyon** (Trail 49) corridors are the corresponding corridors heading south into the South Side.
- j. **Christmas Tree, and Sandbag.** The **Christmas Tree** loop is the thing to do on a trip to the East Side. A great single-track sequence can be had using Ranger Trail, Christmas Tree Trail, and trails like 63 & 24 direct, or Trail 22 via a bit of road bashing on Crescent Bluff Rd. The Trail 24 area has been out of action since 2007 with the temporary ESCA closures.

Sandbag Ridge has great potential as a way to access the **Christmas Tree** area, but it needs some planning. Sandbag Trail itself is currently not closed, but many surrounding trails are under ESCA closure, and a good non-asphalt connection between Sandbag and the Addington area doesn’t yet exist.

6. **Suggested specific trail segments in BLM Area B to be UXO-cleared**

- a. On the long Eucalyptus-aligned trail

- i. Re-open the eastern parts of Yerba Trail and Santa Trail
 - ii. Add a new segment coming down to these from Eucalyptus Rd, in case of a future trailhead on Eucalyptus just east of the old watchtower.
 - iii. Add a new single-track along the MRS 16 ridge, possibly re-occupying some of the old revegetated road. Most of this ridge is not in the current UXO clearance area, I think.
 - iv. Add a new segment from Parker Flats Road across to Sandy Lane
- b. Near Trail 57
 - i. When considering what to do in place of closing Trail 57, choose routes that facilitate an eventual connection east down Sandbag Ridge out toward Christmas Tree. I've drawn some segments in that area that I think should be kept in mind, even though they are not in the current UXO-clearance area.
 The main current value of Trail 57 is that it is fun to ride, and it has a lovely vernal pool with an unofficial bench that is super-pretty at sunset. It would be nice to preserve at least some of that experience, while protecting salamanders. Maybe a very short out-and-back to the bench?
- c. On the north end of Trail 69
 - i. Complete re-route at lower gradient, to avoid the deeply rutted segment
- d. Near SW Pool
 - i. The current use trail that runs along the north edge of SW Pool is great as a trail, although perhaps not great for Salamanders. But in looking for alternatives, keep in mind that the north end of Trail 66 is a sandy wash-out i.e. not a good trail. Overall, it would be good to have a non-sandy connector that jumps across between West MGF Rd and Watkins Gate Rd.
- e. Near Quarry Trail
 - i. Yes, adding a low-gradient alternative would be good. But also retain Quarry Trail itself because it is a favorite technical challenge for bikers. And watch out for the giant sand trap off east of the east end of Trail 91.
- f. West of Trail 70
 - i. Replace existing Trail 70 with more of an east-west route.
 Make sure there's a good connection to Trail 91.
 Re-occupy the old overgrown road in places, e.g. at the highest point in that area, just west of Trail 70, with a great view.

Low-res versions of maps are on next page.

High-res versions will be transmitted separately.

