

## **ILLEGAL TRAILS IN INVENTORIED ROADLESS AREA**

### **Lazyman: Sections 10, 11, NW14, NE15 T9N R5W**

Helena Hunters and Anglers Association

Conducted: September 24 & October 9, 2022

Attached Draft Map of trails is currently unfinished. By November 30, 2022, field work to document trails will be completed. Final submission will be provided to the Helena-Lewis and Clark National Forest, in an interactive mapping format, along with additional information.

### **METHODS**

Five members of Helena Hunters and Anglers Association (HHAA) conducted the trails survey.

The area inventoried occurs within the Colorado Gulch drainage of the Lazyman IRA.

Avenza mapping app was used to document each trail using the “tracking” feature.

Beginning and ending points of trails, and most trail junctions were noted with photo waypoints.

Photos were also taken of trail features such as banked curves, slalom courses, jumps, e-bikers.

More than 120 photos are associated with inventoried trails.

Flagging was placed at junctions to note trail being surveyed.

Data from all tracking devices were compiled into a georeferenced map with embedded waypoint photos.

Not all existing trails have been inventoried yet. Completion will occur by the end of November, 2022.

Upon completion of trail inventory, flagging used to indicate trails surveyed will be removed.

### **OBSERVATIONS**

- A plethora of trails have been created and are being maintained totaling approximately 20.85 miles – although inventorying is not yet complete. The majority of that mileage occurs within the two square miles contained in Sections 10 and 11.
- Motorized use by an e-bike was documented. Note saw strapped to handle bars of Trek e-bike (Photo 1, Photo 1b).

- Many deadfall trees (and a few green trees) had been cut to maintain unauthorized trails (Photo 2, 2b).
- Unauthorized trails emanate from private property (Photo 3, Photo 4)
- Switchback trails were engineered (Photo 5, Photo 6).
- Multiple parallel trails (sometime within a few feet of each other) have been constructed (Photo 7).
- Stream crossings have been “reinforced” with logs to ride across (Photo 7b).
- Profusion of bones have been tied to trees with baling twine denoting trail location (Photo 8 through Photo 17); also hatchet and pink spray painted “Blazes” liberally mark trails, and both tin and plastic snoose cans have been nailed and screwed to trees marking trails (Photo 18).

## MAP OF UNAUTHORIZED TRAILS IN SECTIONS 10 AND 11.

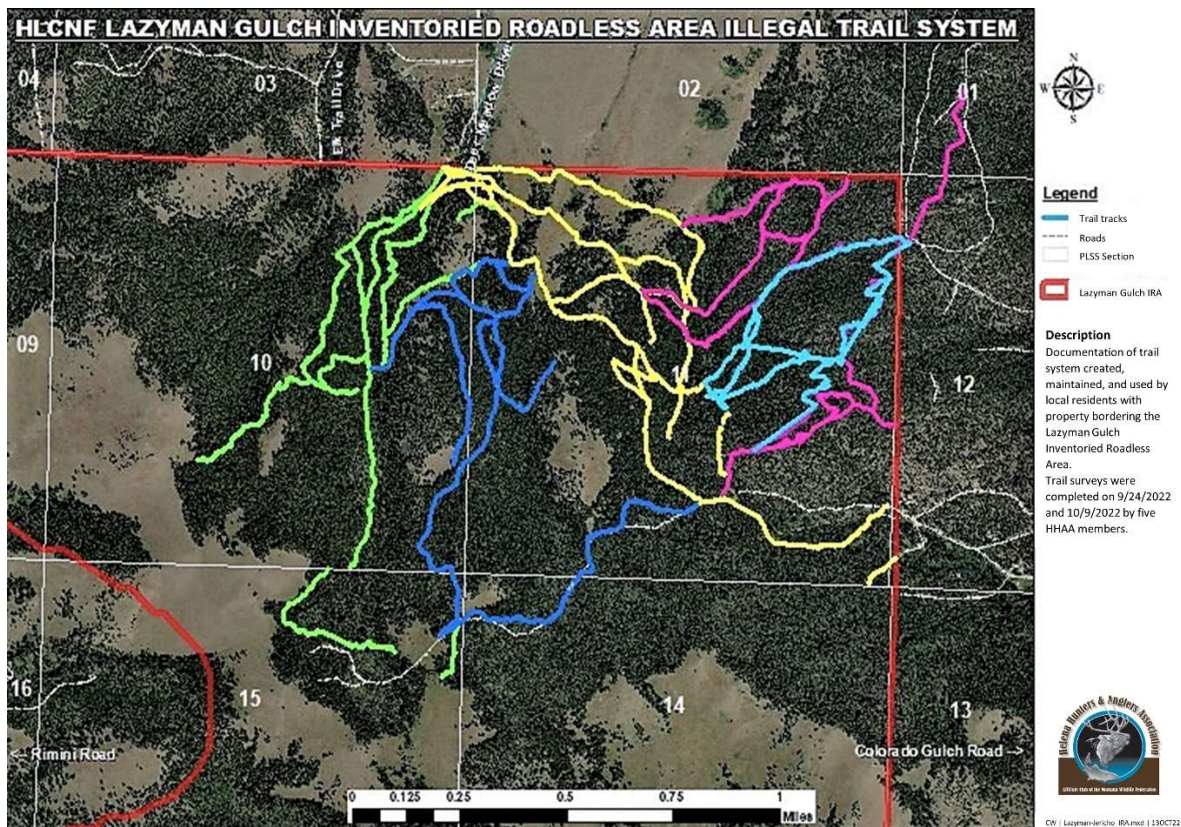


Photo 1.



Photo 1b.

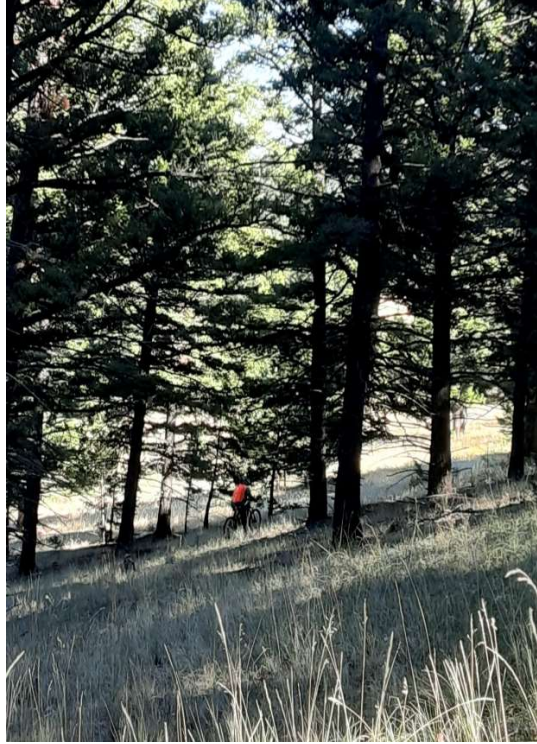


Photo 2.



Photo 2b.

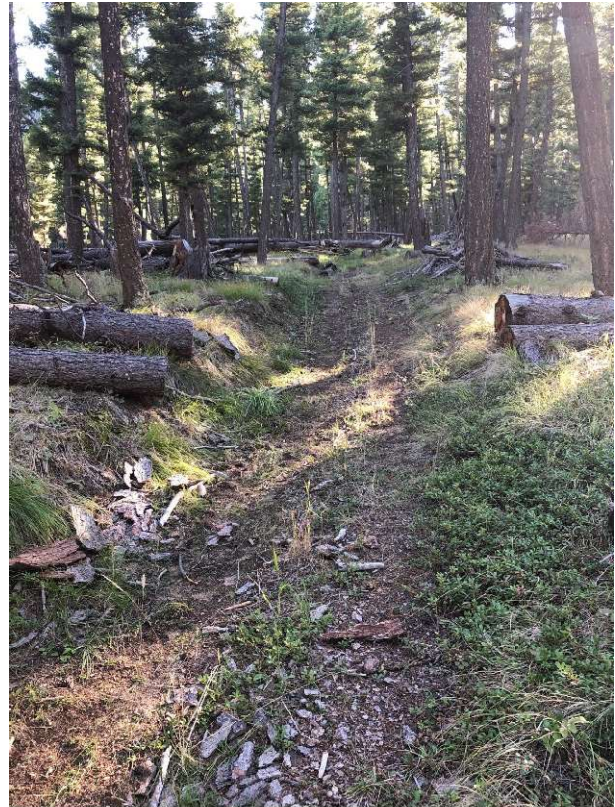


Photo 3.



Photo 4.



Photo 5.



Photo 6.



Photo 7.



Photo 7b.



Photo 8. Deer leg, spine, and pink paint. Photo 9.



Photo 10.



Photo 11.



Photo 12.



Photo 13. Femur ball socket and pint paint.



Photo 14.



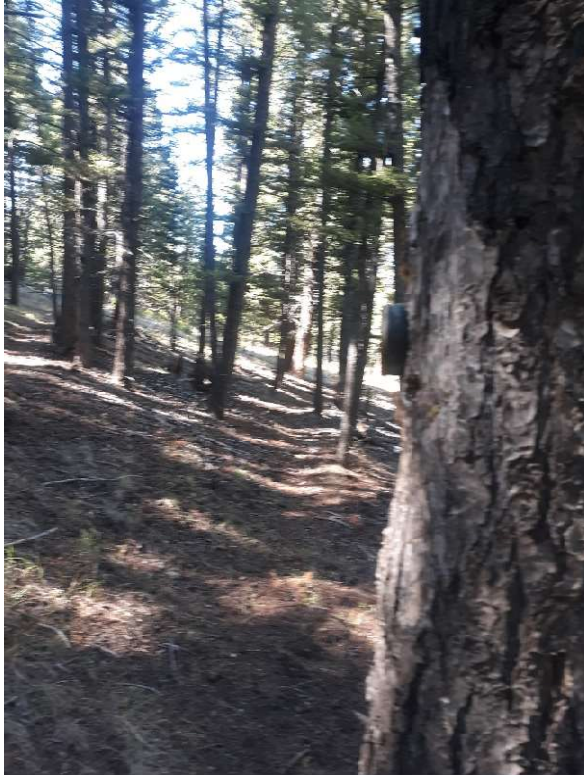
Photo 15.



Photo 16. Pink paint – on numerous trees. Photo 17. Bone and pink paint.



Photo 18. Snoose can nailed to tree as a trail marker.



## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- I. Install signage at all major IRA entrances and along private property boundaries noting:
  - a. “Inventoried Roadless Area” Boundary
  - b. NO Trail Building Allowed. Cite actual Federal Code that requires a legal process for trail building.



- c. Signage such as that occurring at Blackhall Meadows should reference the Federal Code and be slightly modified to read: “Area closed to motor vehicle use: Area is closed to provide non-motorized recreational opportunities, big game security, and to prevent *natural resource damage*.”

2. Initiate an educational media effort (news papers; FS website and Facebook page; trail biker groups, etc) to prevent violations.
3. Enforce Federal Codes against unauthorized trail construction, with citations – particularly after a first warning.
4. Monitor mountain bike websites to assure that illegal use is not being established.
5. Reclaim unauthorized trails to discourage future use, and reestablish wildlife habitat free of mechanized human use.

*Submitted October 14, 2022*