

WMHCTA Trail Assessment Form v4

Trail number and name: _____

Date: _____ Submitted by: _____ Hours (no travel time): _____

Contact (phone and/or email if we have questions): _____

General: Passable to hikers? _____ To stock? _____ Signed OK? _____

(Down trees more than 16" above the ground or more than 16" in diameter are impassable to stock.)

Trees: Location / notes: _____

_____ Crosscut/chainsaw necessary? _____

Trail Segment	< 12" diam			12" to 24" diam			> 24" diam		
	clear	step	around	clear	step	around	clear	step	around
Total trees									

Brush: Location / notes: _____

Tread: Location / notes, including water bars, check dams, drainage dips, rockslides, locations where new tread work is necessary: _____

Signage: General location / notes: _____

Other, including cultural resources (cabins, other historical sites): _____

To Submit: Mail to WMHCTA, 401 NE First Street, Suite A, Enterprise, OR 97828
 or drop off at WMHCTA, Room 51, Wallowa Resources Stewardship Center (at above address)
 or scan and email to: info@wmhcta.org

Wallowa Mountains Hells Canyon Trails Association
Trail Assessment Guidelines v4

The USFS specs for hiking and stock trails are based on a box 6' to 8' wide x 10' high. The box should be clear of obstructions, including trees, limbs, and brush. It's actually more nuanced than that, because small logs low to the ground can be closer to the trail. Also, we have to use some common sense and set priorities about what is worth worrying about and what is not.

When assessing a trail, remember to think not only about hikers, but stock (horses and mules), which may be carrying a person or carrying loads. A mule carrying a pannier on either side is much wider than you might think, sometimes more than 6' wide. Issues to note:

General

Is the trail passable to hikers? To stock? Are there spots where avalanches, flooding, washouts, rockslides or other events have blocked or destroyed the trail?

Trees

Note the number and general location of trees that need to be pulled off or cut out of the trail. If you want to be detailed, you should distinguish between large trees that would require a two-man crosscut saw or chainsaw, vs. medium and small trees that could be cut out with a bow saw, hand (pruning) saw, or axe. Distinguish between trees that can be stepped over (after limbing) vs. trees that are high enough off the trail that travelers must go around them.

Trees up to 12" can be cut with a hand saw or bow saw. Trees from 12" to 18" (or possibly even up to 24") can be cut with a bow saw, but not a hand saw. Trees over 24" will require a crosscut or chainsaw.

Tread

Make note of ... Water bars that require reconstruction or cleaning out.

(A water bar is a diagonal construction of rock or wood that diverts running water off the trail.)

Check dams that require reconstruction or cleaning out.

(A check dam is built from rock or wood and placed in a deeply rutted trail where it is impossible to divert the water, in order to slow down running water so that suspended sediments can settle out and gradually build up the surface of the trail.)

Drainage dips that need cleaning out.

(A drainage dip is a shallow depression that, like a water bar, diverts running water off the trail.)

Locations where new water bars, check dams, or drainage dips would help prevent erosion.

Areas where the trail is deeply rutted, e.g., 12" or more deep and 50' or more long.

Unofficial trails

If there are spots where switchbacks have been cut, or significant unofficial trails have developed, make note of them.

Signs and Structures

Note location and condition of signs and signposts, bridges, and trailhead facilities. Pictures of signs are useful. Take one picture that shows the whole sign, signpost, and rock cairn if any. Take one closeup of each sign on the signpost. When you submit your report and photos if any, make sure that each photo can be linked to its location.

If there are old cabins or other items that may be considered cultural resources or items of historical value, note their condition and take one or more photos.