

UNDERSTANDING THE MVTP ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT:

Here is a quick guide that will help you get to the meat of it. But please, if you have the time, peruse through the EA. Many of your questions will be answered there and the Table of Content can help direct you.

To start, the EA is comprised of four separate alternatives. That is, there are three separate maps (alternative 1 has no map) that show what trails would be adopted and which would not. The EA describes in detail the proposal for each trail in the project area for each alternative, which includes the following management actions: adopt, reroute and new construction, and rehabilitate/rehabilitation.

It is important to note that the final decision will not be a vote between the alternatives. It is more of a trail-by-trail decision and the final decision could be a hybrid of a combination of alternatives.

Below is a brief explanation of each alternative and the page for the corresponding map. Each map is also attached to this email. What do Class 2 and Class 3 trails mean in the key on each map? Class 2 trails are built for mountain bikes and hikers while Class 3 trails are wider and also accommodate horses.

Alternative 1, NO ACTION:

There is no map for this alternative. The no action alternative was developed to provide a baseline.

Under the no action alternative, management would remain unchanged in the May Valley area leaving 3.7 miles of system trails (Southridge Trail). No unauthorized trails or roads would be adopted and no new trails constructed. In addition, no unauthorized trails would be removed, rehabilitated or maintained. Hikers and equestrians would continue to be able to utilize the existing trails and roads. Mountain bikes would only be able to use the existing authorized trails (which would only be Southridge Trail).

It is very unlikely that this alternative will be followed.

Alternative 2, PROPOSED ACTION:

Map on page 9. This alternative reflects the original proposed action map from the 2013 scoping documents, which was in response to the Forest Plan Settlement Agreement with IMBA. If you remember, this was the first map we saw during the first comment period before the fire. And it by no means dictated which trails would be adopted and which ones removed. It was a suggestion to encourage comments and get feedback.

This alternative did leave out several key trails that many felt would be a great loss to the system.

Alternative 3, MITIGATED EXISTING TRAIL SYSTEM:

Map on page 18. This was based on the key issues developed from the 2013 scoping comments, which were mainly mountain bike related. This alternative shows practically every trail in the May Valley Trails Project area except Chalk Hill, Satan's Gut, part of Exfoliator and Missing Link (the latter two are merely reroutes in areas so the trail will be slightly altered from the original).

This is the alternative that Idyllwild Cycling will support (with some minor tweaks). The club will send a more detailed description of its position shortly. ***What is extremely important to note is that this alternative shows the power of our comments from the first public comment period. This alternative would not exist if we had not submitted anything. Our voices are heard and we need to do it again! And as many people as possible with constructive comments!***

Alternative 4, SMALL LOOP TRAIL SYSTEM:

Map on page 21. This alternative has minimal trails and was developed to minimize area disturbance and resource effects and still meet the purpose and need of the project. It came to be because of comments, again, from 2013. In this case, the comments were submitted mainly from Forest Hydrology.

The EA goes into quite a bit of detail on how to mitigate any of these problems, such as erosion, sediment loading down streams and drainage. It explains very thoroughly about proper trail construction and features such as water bars and bridges. This complete report should alleviate many of these concerns.

Alternative Comparison:

Attached also find a chart comparing all four alternatives. It is also a good cross-reference for trail names and numbers. This can be found on pages 33 - 35 in the assessment.

There are also other fascinating info and maps in the Environmental Assessment. For example, a map showing where the burn area went through and to what level of damage it created. The trails are marked so you can see which survived more intact and the others that did not. Check it out!

Idyllwild Cycling