



# Hilton Creek Trailhead to FS Rd 4S137 Trail Proposal (Hilton / BLM trail)

Submitted by Mono County Sustainable Outdoors and Recreation (MCSOAR) and Mono County to United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, White Mountain Ranger District United States Department of Interior, Bureau of Land Management, Bishop Field Office



Use trail at FS Rd 4s137 (looking east to Hilton Creek Trailhead)

**Proposal Date:** May 2024

**Proponent Name:** Mono County (CSA1 funded)

**Ranger District / Field**

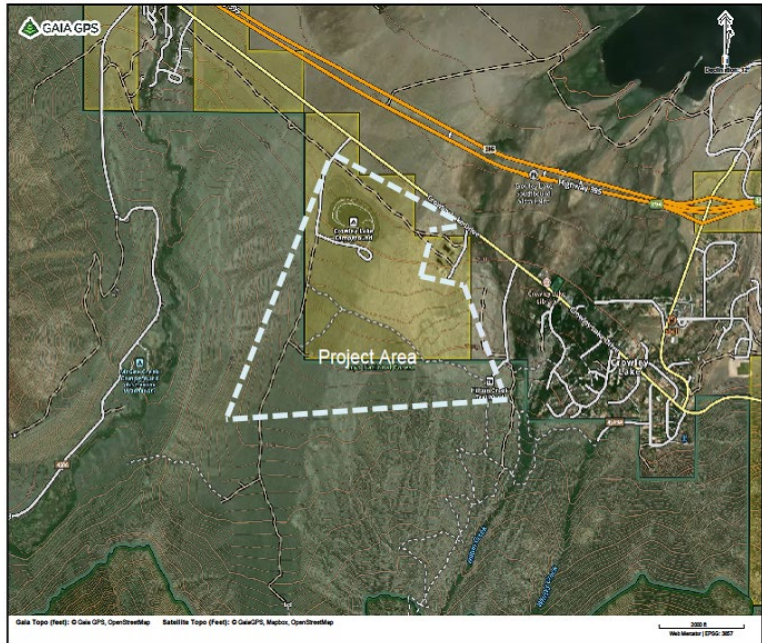
**Office:** White Mountain & Bishop

**County:** Mono

**Requested Actions:**

- 1) Agencies legalization of an existing use trail from the Hilton Creek Trailhead to Forest Service Rd 4S137 above the BLM Campground
- 2) Forest Service & BLM cooperation for Mono County to fund independent NEPA/CEQA consultants to work on future non-motorized multi-use trail concepts

**General Location:** Above Crowley Lake BLM Campground



### Purpose, Background:

Mono County Sustainable Outdoors and Recreation (MCSOAR) and Mono County, upon recommendation by the County Service Area 1 (CSA1) advisory board, wish to support and fund new non-motorized multi-use trails in South County. One short-term goal is to legalize existing use trails. This non-system trail has access from Hilton Creek Trailhead, with one sign at western end of the trail where it intersects with Forest Service Rd 4S137. The Hilton / BLM Trail is an existing use trail approximately 1.43 miles in length shown in blue in the map at the end of this proposal. The tread width is approximately 12 inches. There are some simple reroutes to make the trail more user friendly. This trail receives local usage but no maintenance. A second goal is to utilize existing public facilities (parks, campgrounds, parking areas, etc.) as access / exit nodes, build new trails to connect these facilities, and access to and from our local communities. There are many future trail options in this area with access from Hilton Creek Trailhead, Crowley Lake Drive, and the BLM Campground. A few ideas are shown in purple and orange (also on map at end of this proposal) but are not part of this submittal.

### Implementation:

Implementation of this trail project includes:

1. Legalize approximately 1.43 miles of an existing use trail to tread width compliant with agency best management practices, shown in blue.
2. Decommission .36 miles of steeper trail segments and some with large boulders, but this adds .68 miles to the existing trail but makes for a better user experience.
3. This area has high potential for additional trails, has good access, parking, and is close to the community. Some future ideas are shown in purple, orange, and red but are not

part of this proposal.

4. New prescribed/approved regulatory and wayfinding signage providing information such as location of trail, allowable uses, and trail etiquette.
5. This project is anticipated to occur in two general phases: Environmental Review, and pending the environmental findings, the Implementation phase for construction and on-going maintenance. Any NEPA/CEQA studies required to support Forest Service / BLM decisions, trail construction, signage, and on-going maintenance to be funded by Mono County utilizing funds in the County's restricted CSA1 account, as part of the total committed amount of \$50,000. Additional approval for expending funds on the implementation, construction and on-going maintenance will be a separate decision that will be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

Converting non-system trails to system trails involves bringing these trails into the Forest Service and BLM multi-use non-motorized trail design standards, Best Management Practices, and future maintenance. Mono County, Inyo National Forest, and BLM have formal agreements with seasonal trail maintenance program(s) in place.

### **Environmental/Heritage**

Any necessary surveys and reports will be paid for by Mono County (via CSA1 funds and as described above) as part of any necessary NEPA/CEQA review, inclusive of and not to exceed the \$50,000 total limit offered. The CSA1 funding would provide for the Federal lead agencies to complete their required review under NEPA and CEQA, and, if the project is ultimately approved, the County would expect that the lead agencies would assume legal liability, including defense and indemnification, in the event of a legal challenge. Mono County is aware of the need to research impacts to Sage Grouse habitat and is in the process of investigating potential overlaps of the trail alignment and habitat and subsequent mitigation strategies. Alternative alignments will hopefully be discussed if there is habitat overlap.

### **Other Benefits and Goals**

This trail has been a locally used trail for a long time. It also creates future opportunities for a stacked loop system.

- Trail has access to and from Hilton Creek Trailhead and with a future addition will tie into the Crowley Lake BLM Campground (goal to use existing infrastructure),
- Water and restrooms are available on a seasonal basis at the Crowley Lake BLM Campground (goal to use existing infrastructure),
- It has already been stated but this trail exists. If permitted, some reroutes are needed to make the trail more user friendly around large boulders and grade changes.
- Project is consistent with Mono County General Plan, Regional Transportation Plan, and the MCSOAR Overall Work Program.
- Finally, Mono County will pay (using restricted funds from its CSA1 funds up to \$50,000 plus in-kind contributions) for studies, construction, and regular on-going maintenance as described above.

### **Concurrent efforts**

- **Concurrent projects - not a part of this proposal:** As presented in a separate, additional proposal to the Inyo National Forest, Mono County is also pursuing another

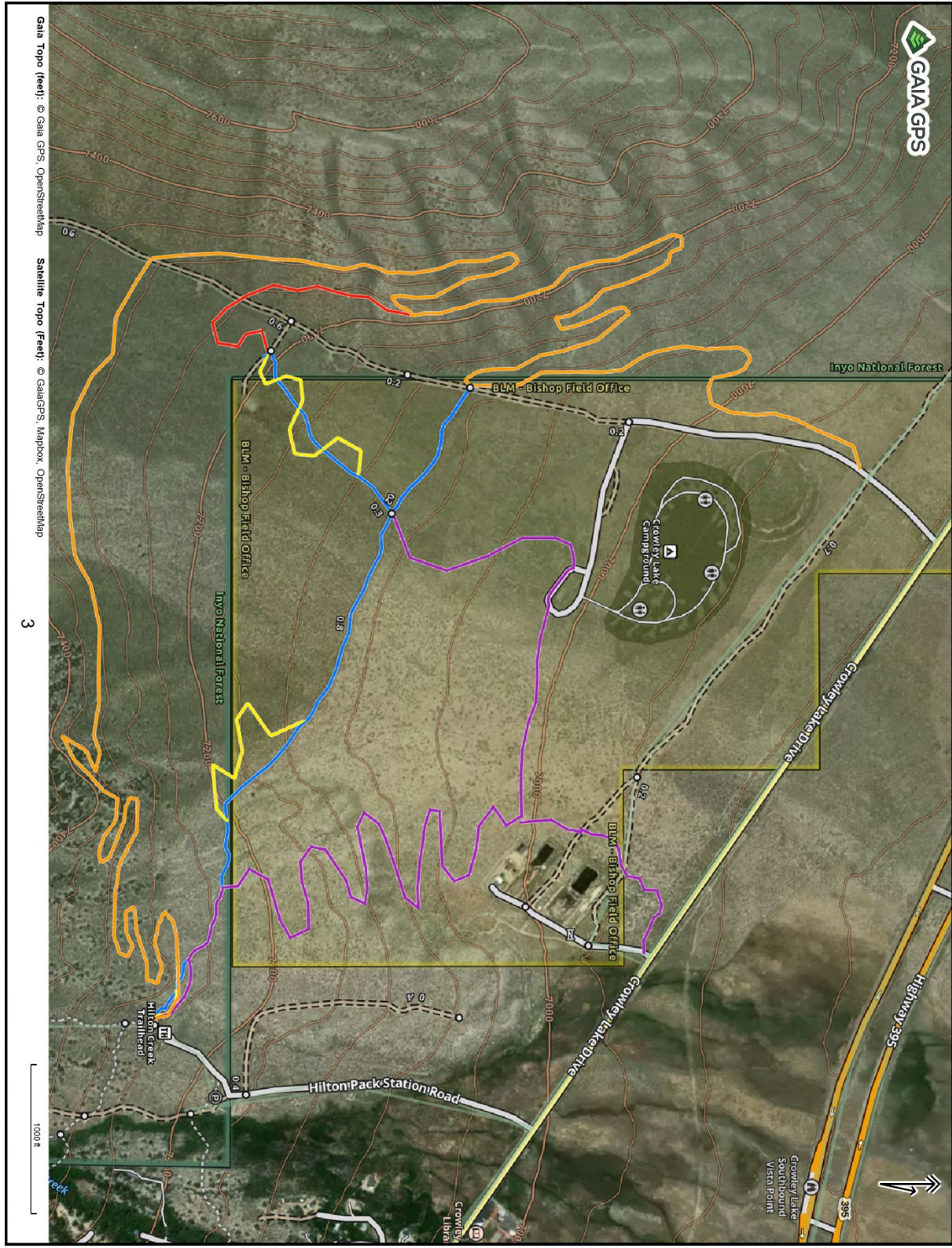
trail connector from Toms Place to Lower Rock Creek, working with support from the Inyo National Forest.

#### Future efforts

- **Projects in the next 1-3 years - not a part of this proposal:** A future concept for a stacked loop trail system is shown in purple, orange, and red. Mono County, at the recommendation of its CSA1 advisory board, would like to start work and pay for studies to keep future projects moving forward.

*See legend on next page*





<b>Hilton Creek Trailhead to BLM Campground (Hilton / BLM)</b>	
<b>Route and color</b>	<b>distance miles</b>
Hilton to BLM - existing user created trail - <b>blue</b>	1.43
Hilton to BLM - new reroutes to user trail - <b>yellow</b>	0.68
<b>Total new trails</b>	<b>2.11</b>
<i>Future campground loop / 2-5 years - purple</i>	2.27
<i>Future moraine loop / 2-5 years - orange</i>	4
<i>Future connector to orange trail - red</i>	0.4
<i>future trails / 2-5 years total</i>	<i>6.67</i>
Map key - Hilton / BLM - attachment 2	