



# Gothic Basin Morning Star Natural Resources Conservation Area

Inventory and Assessment of  
Conditions from Fall 2015 visit  
by Way/McFarland, and from  
Fall 2017 visit by Gary Paull



Foggy Lake with Del Campo Peak in the background



Outlet of Foggy Lake looking east through Gothic Basin



Vegetation in bloom  
(Photos taken in Summer of 2007)

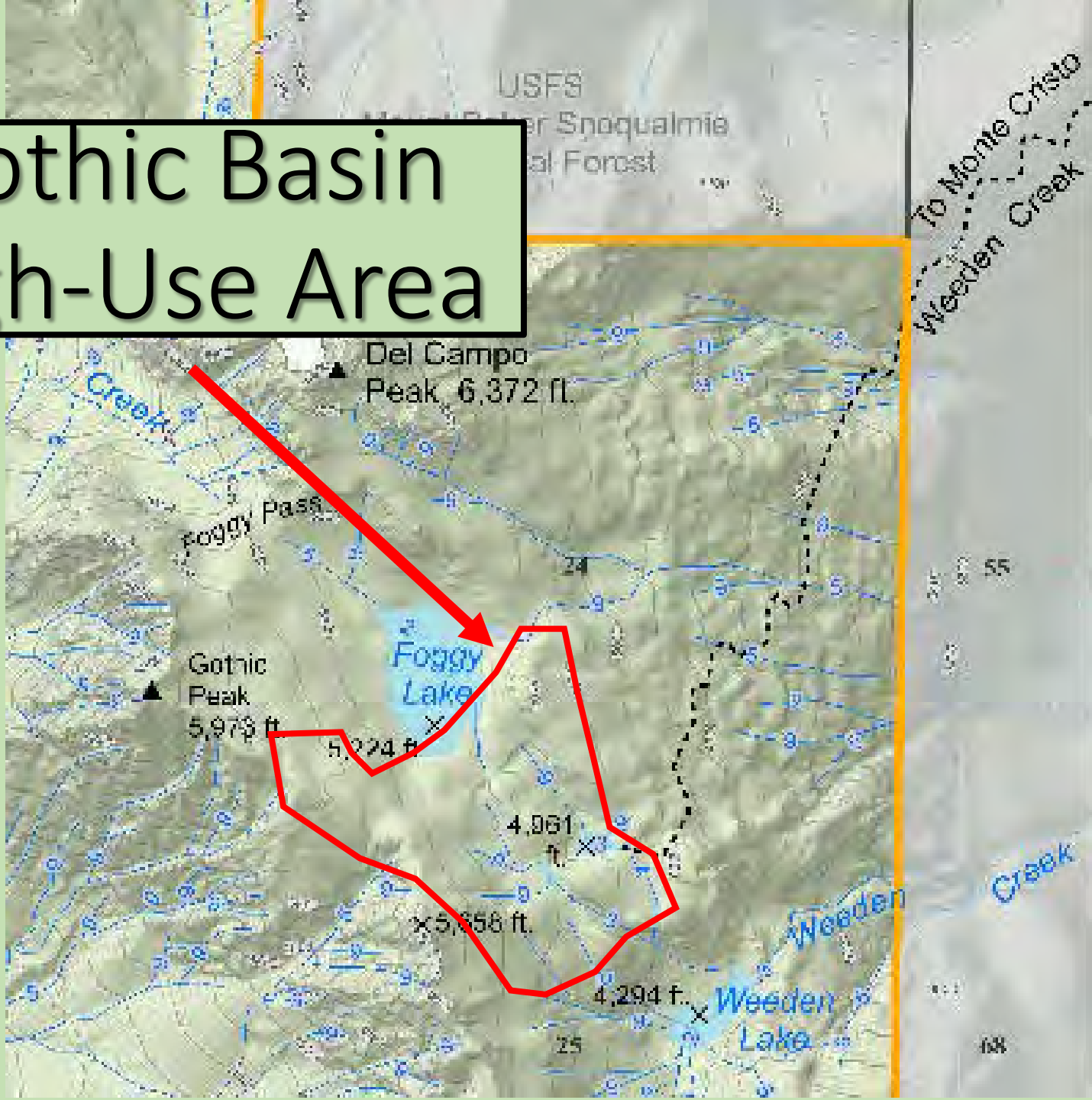


Vegetation in bloom  
(Photos taken in Summer of 2007)



Vegetation in bloom  
(Photos taken in Summer of 2007)

# Gothic Basin High-Use Area





Gothic Peak

Del Campo Peak

Foggy Lake

Weeden Lake

DNR/USFS  
Boundary

# Gothic Basin Trail

Some problem spots

© 2017 Google  
Image Landsat / Copernicus

1989

Imagery Date: 6/8/2015 47°59'09.60" N 121°27'





Boundary sign MP 2.35

Mileages from new trailhead  
on Monte Cristo Road

1. First gully MP 2.46

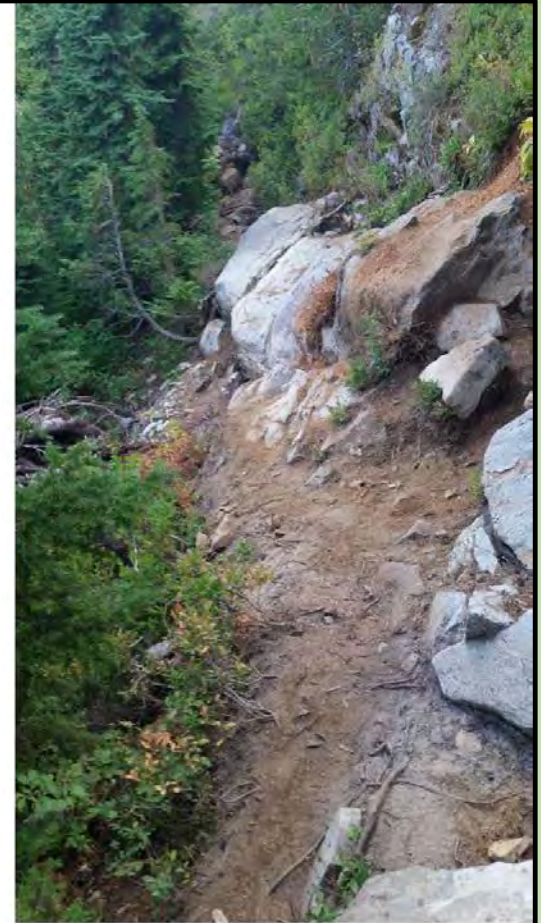




2. Steep Rock at MP 2.67.  
Serious brushing needed  
between here and MP 3.16



3. Big drop on  
steep rock at MP 2.99.



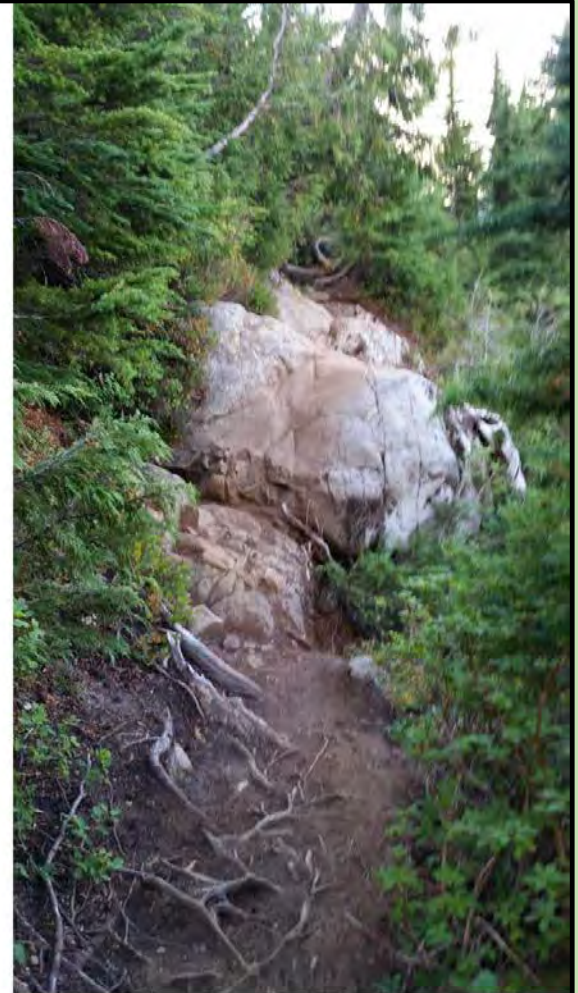
4. Rocky sidehill, trail now  
Below instead of on top of  
Rock. MP 3.16.



5. Fire ring at campsite and braided trail MP 3.1



6. Slickrock drop at MP 3.2



7. Nasty sidehill rock at MP 3.3

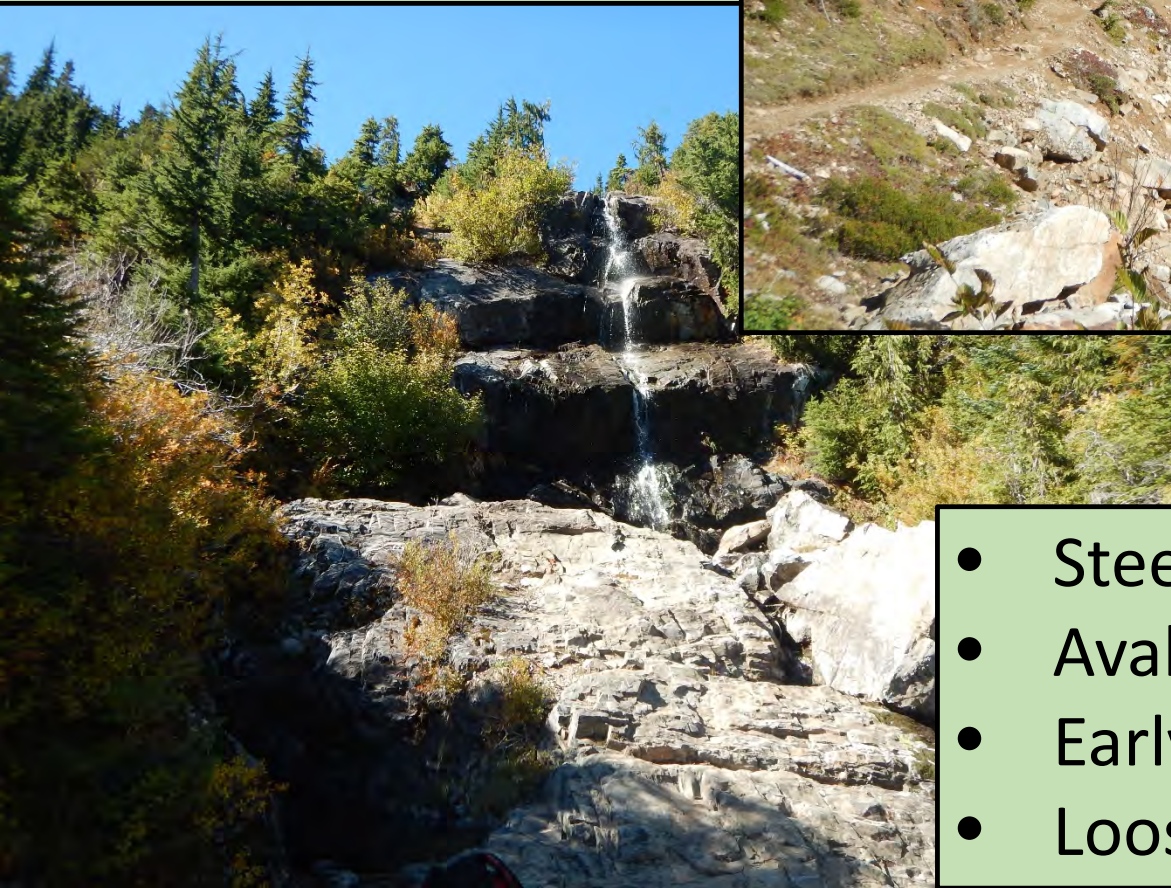


8. Root mat at MP 3.5




9. Big log over trail MP 3.7

# Hazards



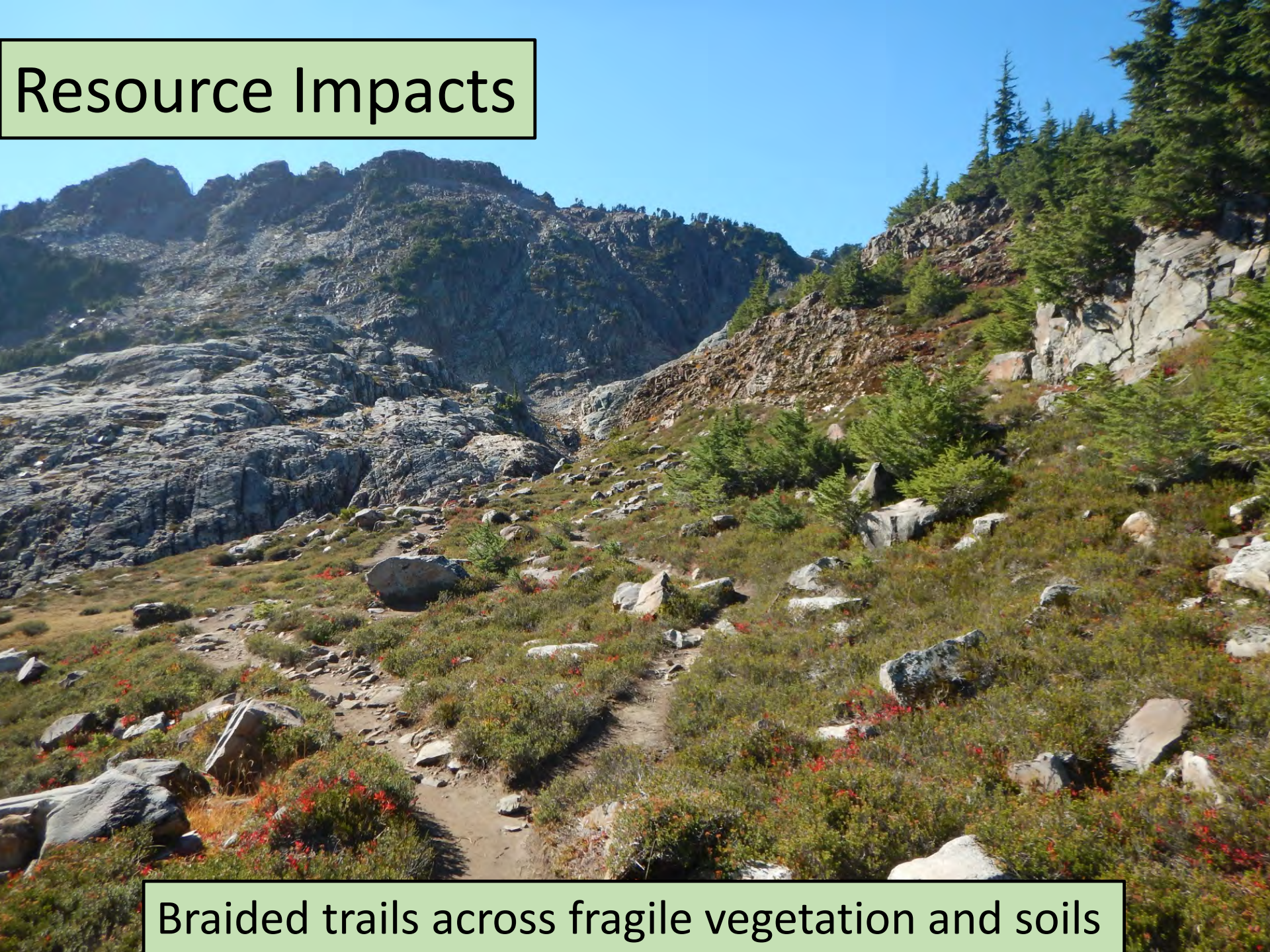
- Steep Topography
- Avalanche Chutes
- Early Season Snow Bridges
- Loose and Unstable Footing

# Resource Impacts

A photograph of a stream in a forest. The stream is filled with dark, silty water and is heavily cluttered with large pieces of driftwood and branches. The banks are eroded, with exposed tree roots and soil. The surrounding forest is lush with green foliage, including ferns and various trees. The scene illustrates the impact of un-managed trail use on a natural resource.

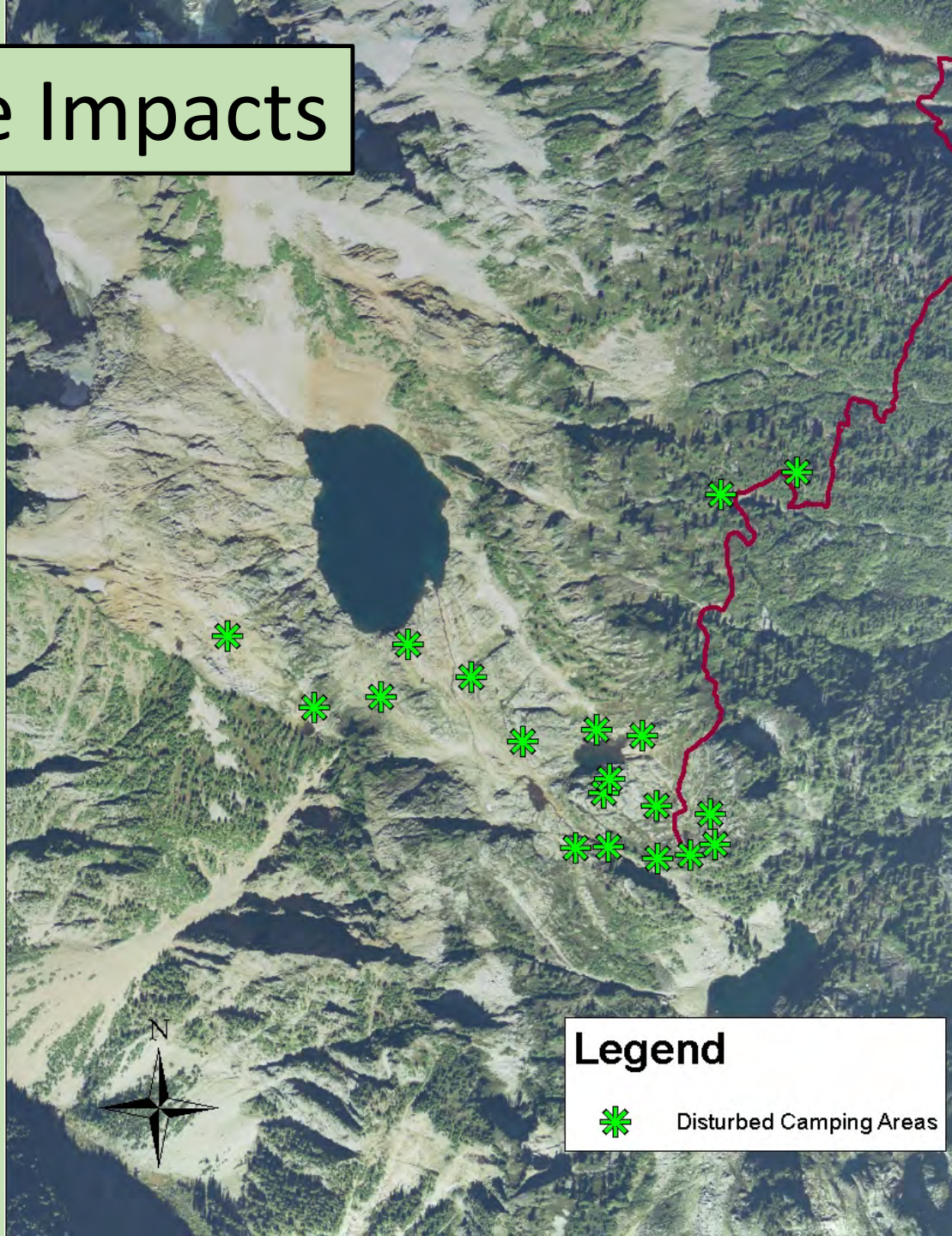
Soil compaction and erosion from years of un-managed trail use

# Resource Impacts



Braided trails across fragile vegetation and soils

# Resource Impacts





Primary camp areas



Indiscriminate camping is occurring throughout Gothic Basin





Area 2  
Tents occupy two sites



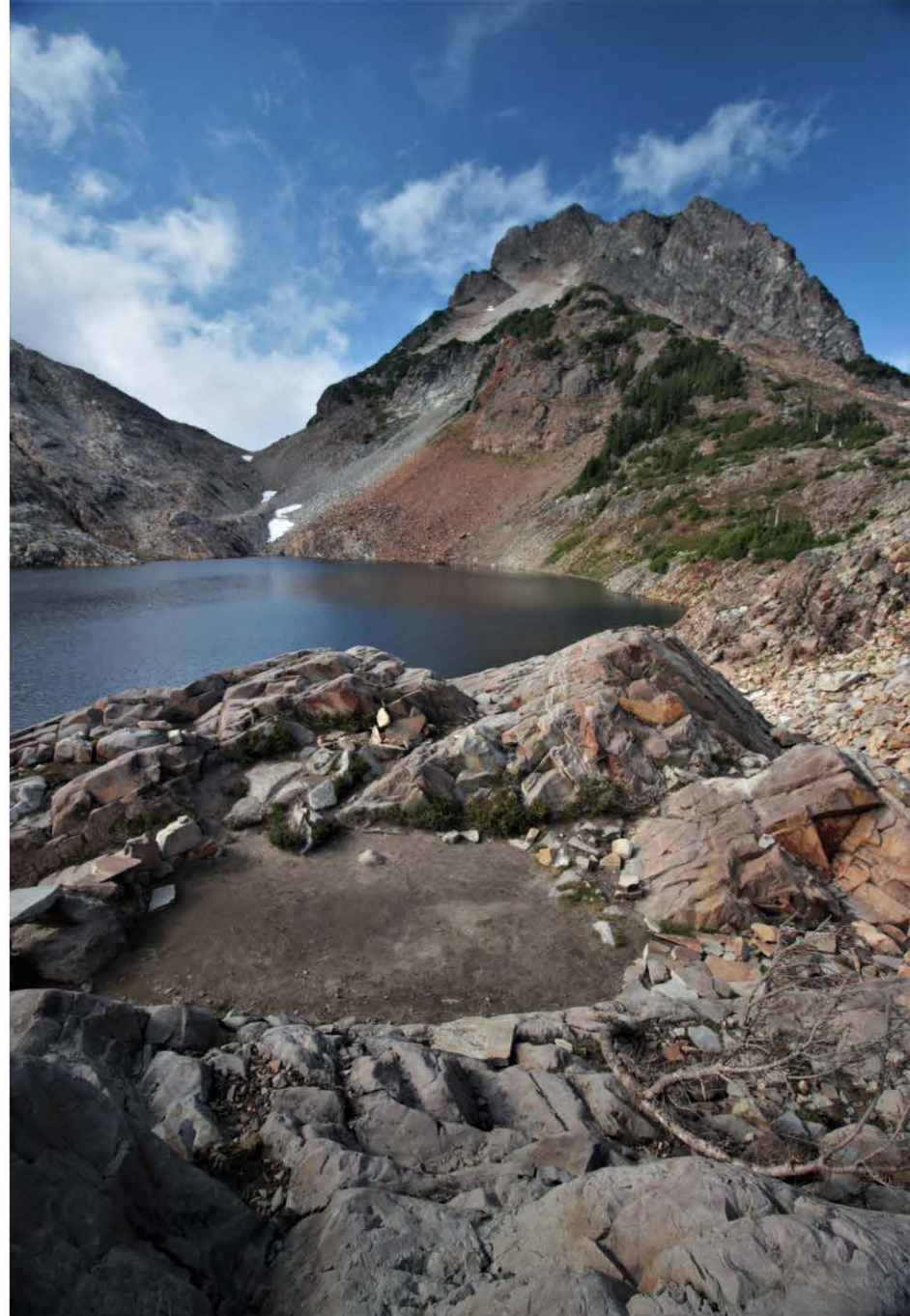
Area 2  
Fresh fire ring



Area 3  
Large camp area



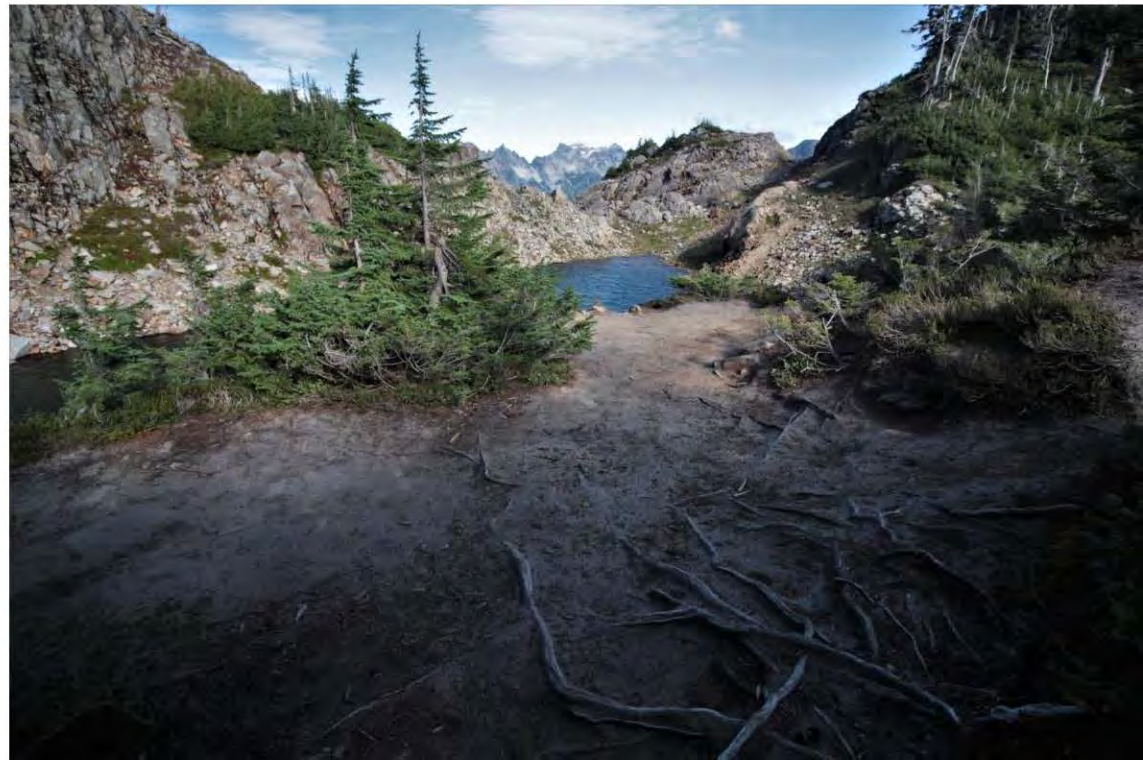
Area 3  
Fire pit in rock



Area 3  
Campsite in rock



Area 4  
Campsite and fire ring in  
trees





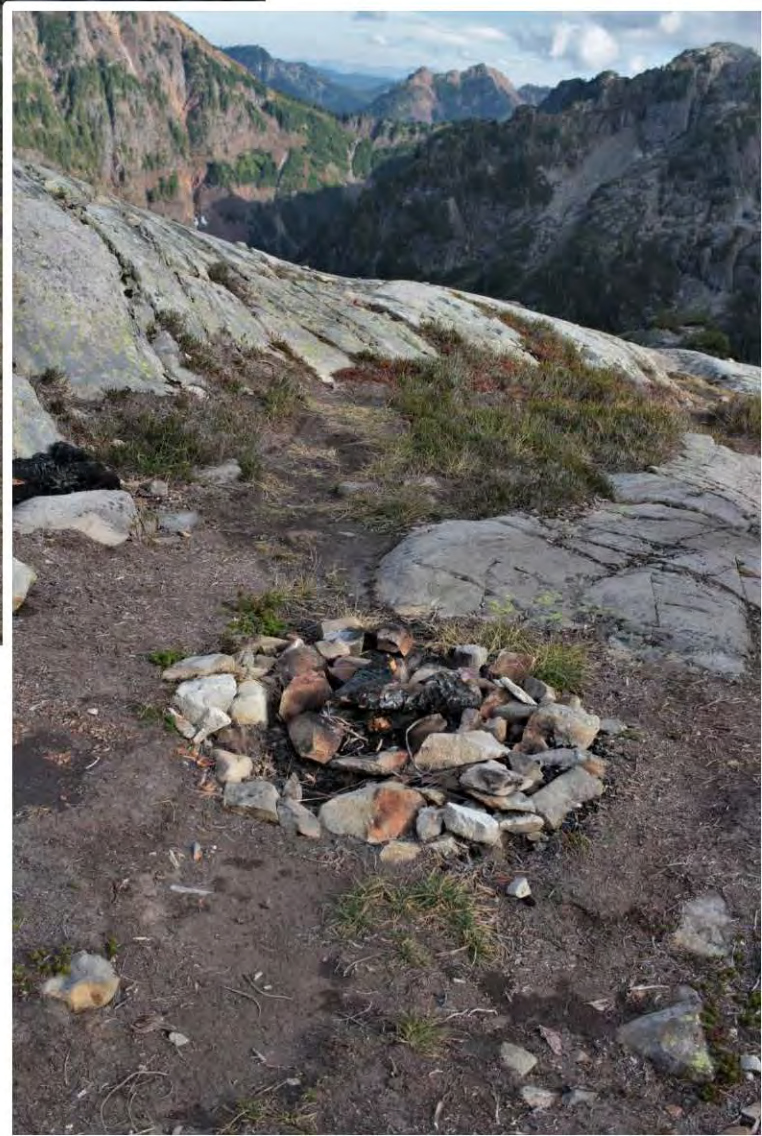
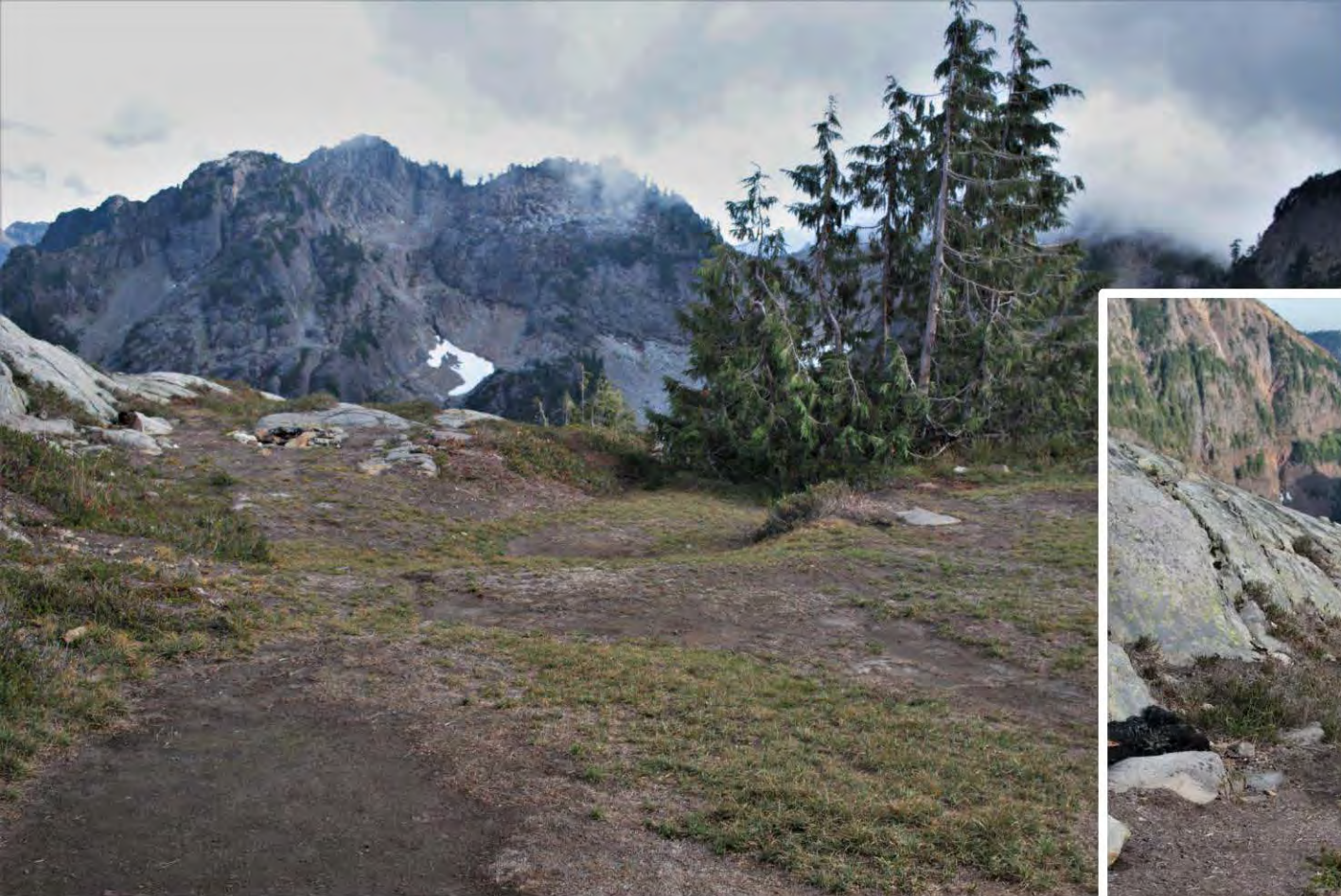
Area 5, two camps





Area 5 Camp in dried pond with fire ring.





Area 5 Camp with fire ring.



Area 6 Camp and old fire ring



Area 7 Camps



Indiscriminate camping

# Historically Significant Past



Stockpile of wooden culverts found near trail

# Historically Significant Past



Wood culvert stream crossing found on trail

# Historically Significant Past



Log weir dam at outlet of what appears to be a mining-related pond

# Comments Received

“There were around 60-70 tents and about 100 day hikers coming up the trail. Please, please have both an overnight tent camping limitation and also limit the number of day hikers into Gothic Basin.....The reality is that Gothic Basin is being treated like a gym workout and take your dog hiking event.” – email comment received 2014

“Word from the Forest Service is that use at Gothic exceeds that at Monte Cristo (which means a lot). My experience today is that there's been change since I was last there (~2001), and that the huge number of users is seriously impacting the place. I would suggest that it might be the most urgent issue in Morning Star NRCA.” – email comment received from a Volunteer Natural Areas Steward (Holly Zox), 2014

“There is toilet paper all over from the lower lakes to Foggy Lake to the trend up to Del Campo, Gothic peak and even Weeden Lake...Dogs are running all over as Saturday night probably 100 overnights came in many with dogs.” email comment from volunteer, 2017



# Summary of Current Conditions

- High level of unmanaged public use
- Ongoing resource impacts
- Lack of information about sensitive plants, animals, habitats, historical/cultural resources
- Safety issues associated with known hazards
- Concerns from users, stakeholders and staff related to above
- Out of compliance with statewide management plan (conservation first)

What now?

# Objective: Get right with the Plan

## Strategies:

- Work with DNR management, stakeholders, and Forest Service to initiate a temporary closure to public use, to allow time for data collection, assessment, and decision making about whether, and if so at what level Gothic Basin should be open to public use
- Seek funding for and embark on restoration
- Pending outcome of assessment, seek funding for site planning/development
- Build a sustainable Gothic Basin