

FINAL BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
of
Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Species
for the proposed
ASARCO ROCK CREEK MINE



Supervisor's Office
Kootenai National Forest
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BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT
of
Threatened, Endangered, and Proposed Terrestrial Species
for the
ASARCO ROCK CREEK MINE

Cabinet Ranger District
Kootenai National Forest

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Implementation of the proposed federal action will have **NO EFFECT** on water howellia. The project **IS NOT LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT** gray wolf, bald eagle, and peregrine falcon. The project **IS LIKELY TO ADVERSELY AFFECT** the grizzly bear. The project is **NOT LIKELY TO JEOPARDIZE** the continued existence of the lynx or result in the destruction or adverse modification of critical lynx habitat.

CONSULTATION REQUIREMENTS

In accordance with the Endangered Species Act and its implementing regulations and FSM 267 1.4, Kootenai National Forest is required to request written concurrence from FWS with respect to the determination of potential effects on Gray Wolf, Bald Eagle, and Peregrine Falcon.

Formal Consultation is required with respect to the determination of potential effects on the Grizzly Bear.

Informal consultation is summarized in Appendix 3.

NEED FOR RE-ASSESSMENT BASED ON CHANGED CONDITIONS

The biological assessment findings are based on the best current data and scientific information available. If new information reveals effects that may impact threatened, endangered, or proposed species or their habitats in a manner or to an extent not considered in this assessment; if the proposed action is subsequently modified in a manner that causes an effect that was not considered in this assessment; or if a new species is listed or habitat identified that may be affected by the action, a revised biological assessment should be prepared.

INTRODUCTION

This Biological Assessment addresses the potential effects of the proposed federal action on all threatened, endangered, and proposed species known or suspected to occur in the proposed action influence area. General life history information on these species is provided in Reel et al. (1989 pgs. 2-5, 7-8, 18-19) and is incorporated by reference into this Biological Assessment.

Threatened, endangered, and proposed species are managed under the authority of the federal Endangered Species Act (PL 93-205, as amended) and the National Forest Management Act (PL 94-588). The Endangered Species Act requires federal agencies to ensure that all actions which they "authorize, fund, or carry out" are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened, endangered, or proposed species. Agencies are further required to develop and carry out conservation programs for these species. Conservation measures implemented to date for threatened, endangered, and proposed species by the Kootenai National Forest are listed in Appendix 1.

DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION

The proposed federal action consists of permitting ASARCO to construct and operate the Rock Creek Mine. The project lies in Compartment 711 of the Cabinet Ranger District in Sanders County, MT. The project area starts approximately 1 air mile east of Noxon, MT. Figure 1 is a vicinity map of the project area. Figure 2 is a detailed map of the proposed activity.

The proposed federal action is alternative number 5 as described in detail in the ASARCO ROCK CREEK MINE Environmental Impact Statement. The detailed description of the action from the EIS is provided in Appendix 2. A summary of the proposed action is presented in Table 1.

TABLE 1: Project Summary (Alternative 5)

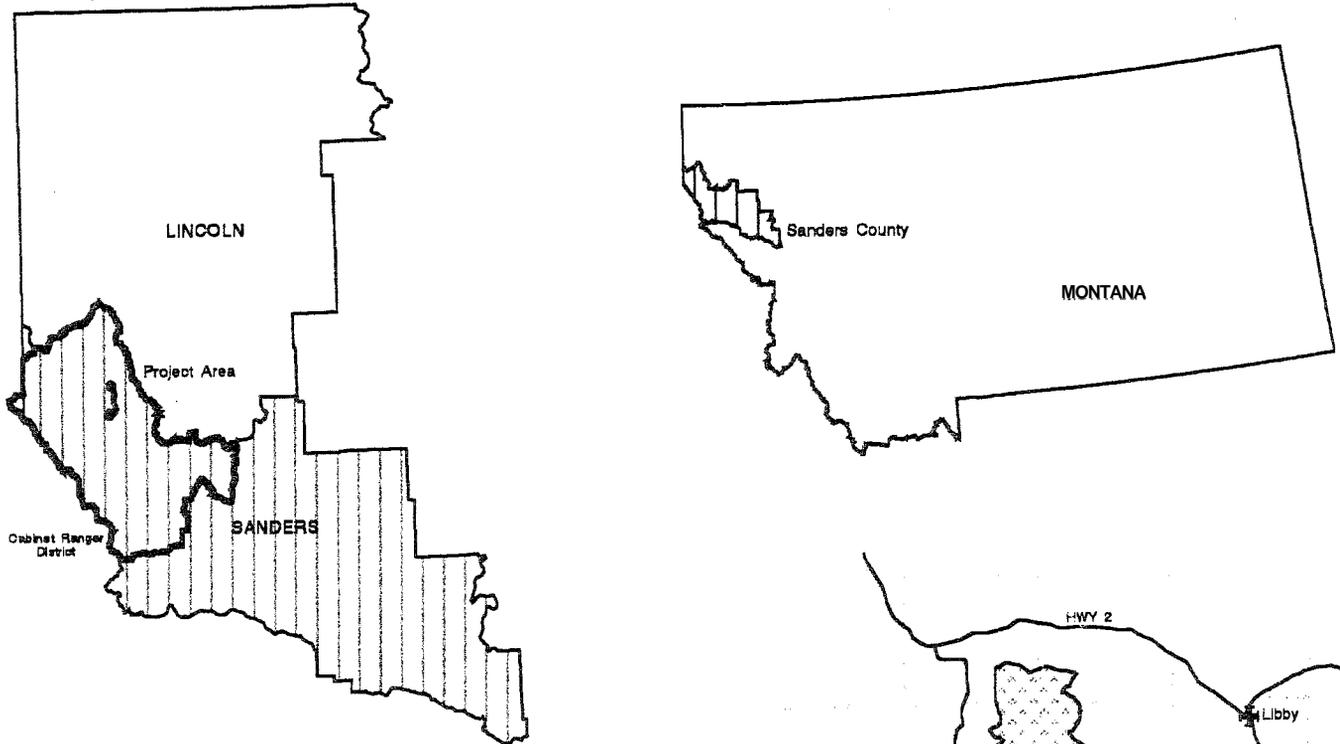
Total acres in Analysis Area	198,394
Percent of Analysis Area Treated	0.8
Total acres in Permit Area	1,668
Physically Disturbed Areas (Acres)	
Tailings Impoundment & A.F.	368
Mill Site and A.F.	41
Exploration Adit & Support Facilities	10
Roads	64
TOTAL	483
Road Construction (miles)	3.54
Road Reconstruction (miles)	5.43
Project Duration (years: includes restoration)	35

AF = Associated Features

Asarco Rock Creek Vicinity Map

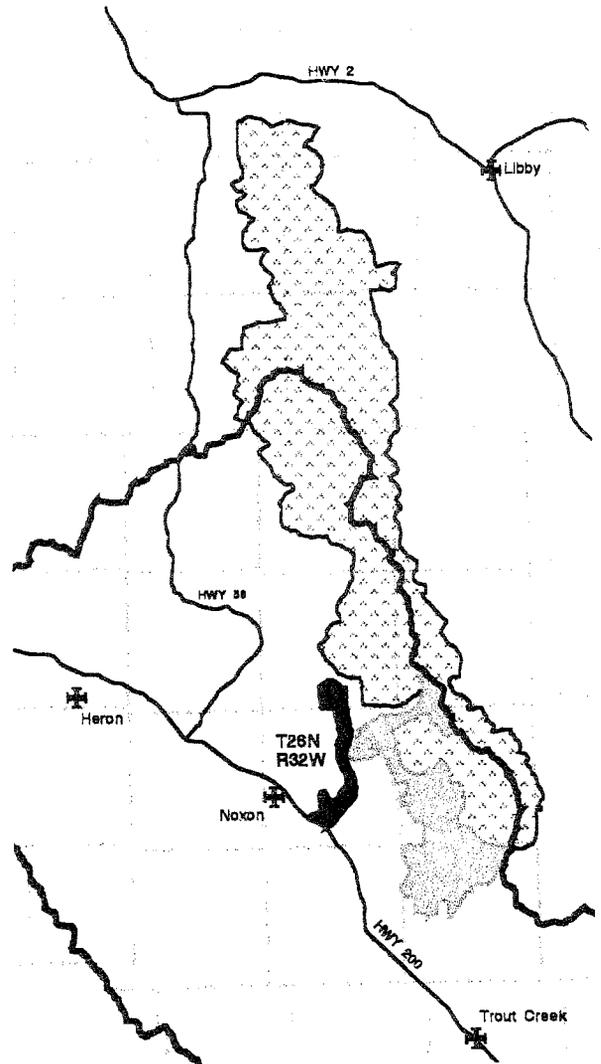
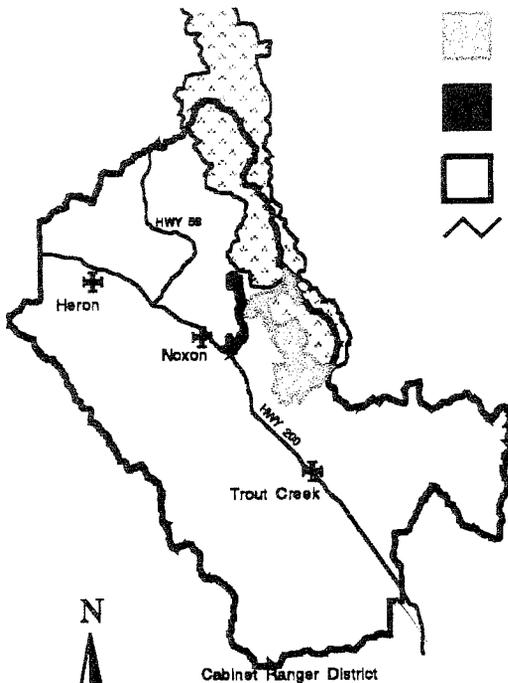
Figure BA1

Adjacent Counties



Key

-  Cabinet Wilderness
-  Sanders County
-  Mckay Roadless Area
-  Asarco Project
-  Cabinet Ranger District
-  Highways



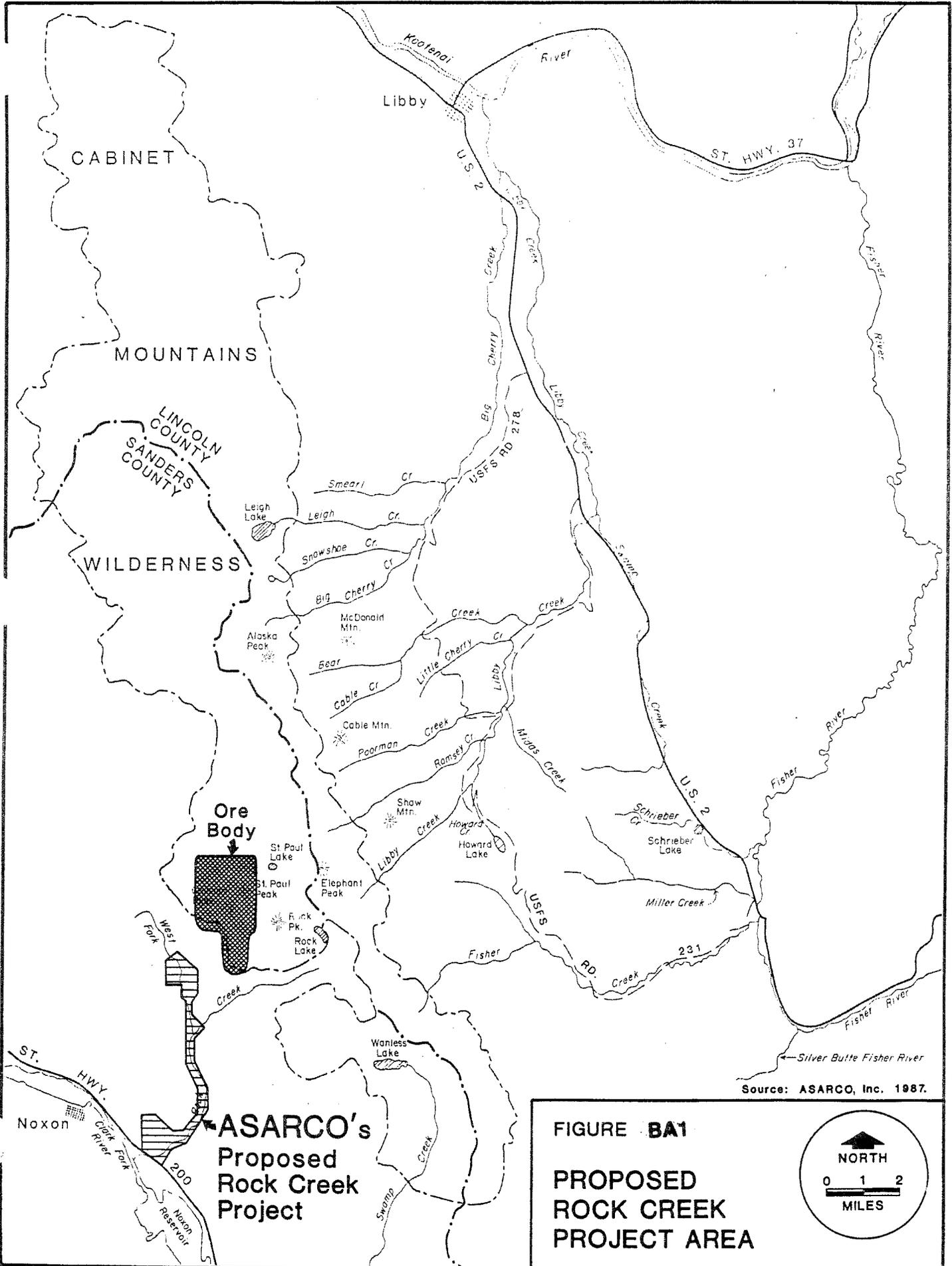


FIGURE BA1

PROPOSED ROCK CREEK PROJECT AREA

NORTH

0 1 2 MILES

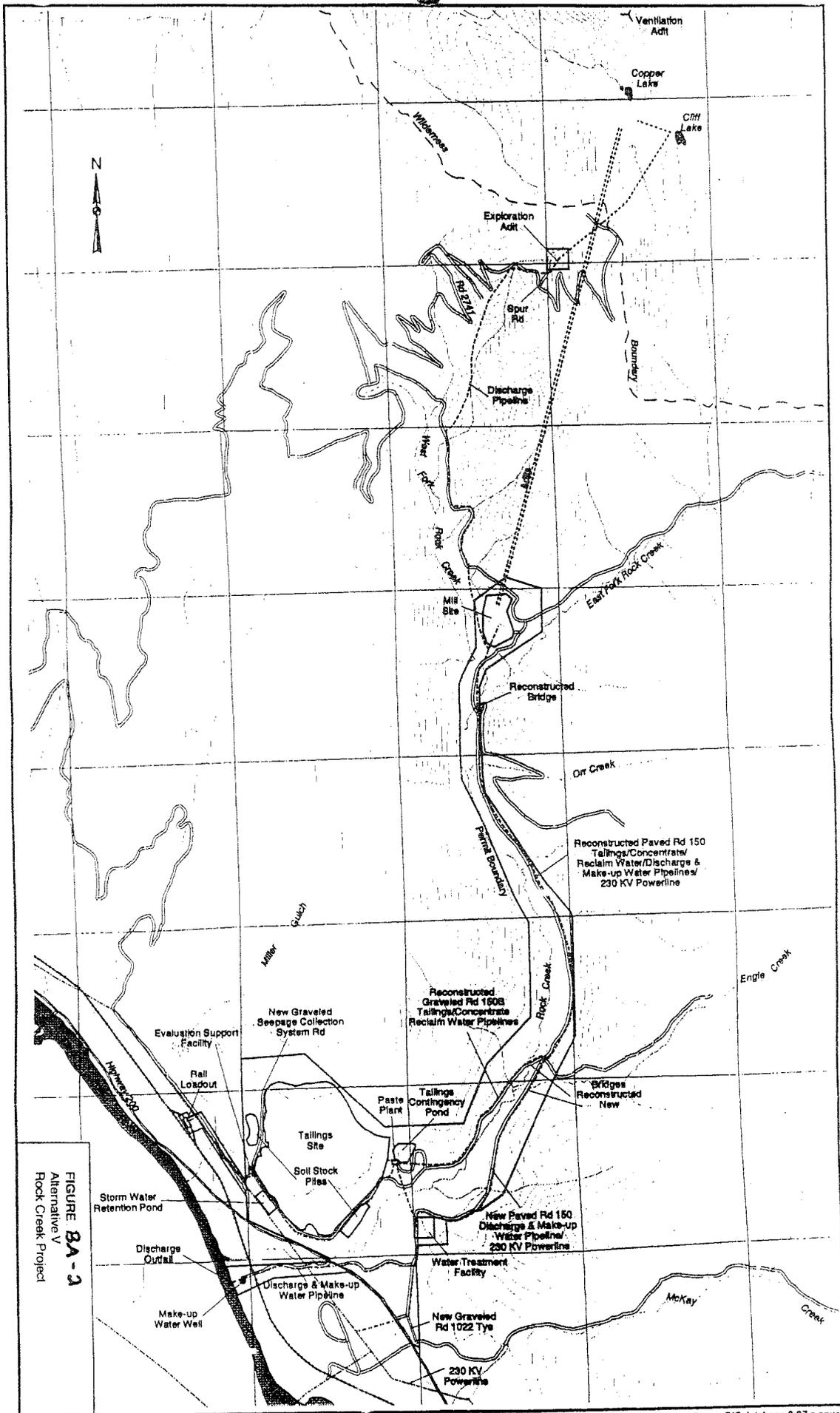


FIGURE BA-2
 Alternative V
 Rock Creek Project

Source: Kootenai National Forest GIS database 6-97 s.agus