

Scotts Bluff National Monument
Oregon Trail Ruts Landscape Study
and Environmental Assessment ■ 100% Report

Character Area B1

Character Area B1 is located to the west of Character Area A and contains portions of the trail rut resources on the west side of Mitchell Pass. This area contains well established, trail rut resources that are visible as individual ruts and as a corridor or ‘trough’. The area is one of secondary visitor use although there are no walking trails in this area.

Existing Condition

- The trail topography within this area consists of rolling topography, flat areas and one large ravine.
- The views of Scotts Bluff are visible along all sections of the trail in this Character Area.
- The ‘double cut’ where two trail ruts are located side by side through a knoll are visible from the W.H. Jackson Campsite in Character Area A.
- Vegetation encroachment has occurred throughout the trail corridor.
- The only contemporary improvements have been the addition of the wooden trail markers.

Analysis

Trail Rut Resource

- The trail ruts are Class 1 (unaltered original trail) throughout the character area. All of the trail rut resources in this area are contributing resources.
- Most of the trail ruts are visible with the exception of the area in the flatter portions of the character area where depressions are braided and indistinct.
- The ‘double cut’ is one of the more visually prominent sections of the emigrant trail west of the pass.
- Erosion potential is low due to vegetated ruts and moderate topography. Vegetation encroachment has helped reduce the erosion within and adjacent to the trail ruts by stabilizing the soil.
- Trail ruts in this area are vegetated with grasses, reducing the depth and visual clarity of the ruts.

Visitor Experience

- Monument staff considers Character Area B1 as an area of secondary visitor use.
- Most visitors walk the trail from the Visitor Center to the W.H. Jackson Campsite

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488 and return. Visitors who chose to experience the trail beyond Character Area A,
489 typically walk to the top of the double cut (the most visible trail ruts in Character
490 Area B1) before turning around and returning to the Visitor Center.

491 ■ Visitors who experience this area do not have a formal trail to walk on. Their
492 experience is at exploratory level, as they search for the trail resource.

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Figure 3 - 26. Character Area B1 *Above* - existing Oregon Trail ruts (2010) (MBD DSC00146.JPG) *Below* – trail ruts (c. 1939) (MBD DSC_0218.jpg) (source: SCBL archives)

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Figure 3 - 27. Character Area B1 *Above* – West of Mitchell Pass - Scotts Bluff on left (2010) (MBD DSC00143.JPG); *Below* – trail ruts (c. 1969) (MBD DSC_0246.jpg) (source: SCBL archives)

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507 **Figure 3 - 28.** Character Area B1 *Above-* Existing condition of 'double cut' (2010)
508 (MBD DSC_00138.JPG), *Below* - 'double cut' (c. 1941) (MBD DSC_0226.jpg)
509 (source: SCBL archives)
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Figure 3 - 29. Character Area B1 *Above*—existing ‘double cut’ (one side) (2009) (MBD DSC_0084.JPG); *Below* – ‘double cut’ (c. 1941) (MBD DSC_0224.jpg) (source: SCBL archives)

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Figure 3 - 30. Character Area B1 *Above* - existing 'double cut' (2010) (MBD DSC00142.JPG) *Below* - 'double cut' below 2nd Tunnel (c. 1939) (MBD DSC_0214.jpg) (source: SCBL archives)

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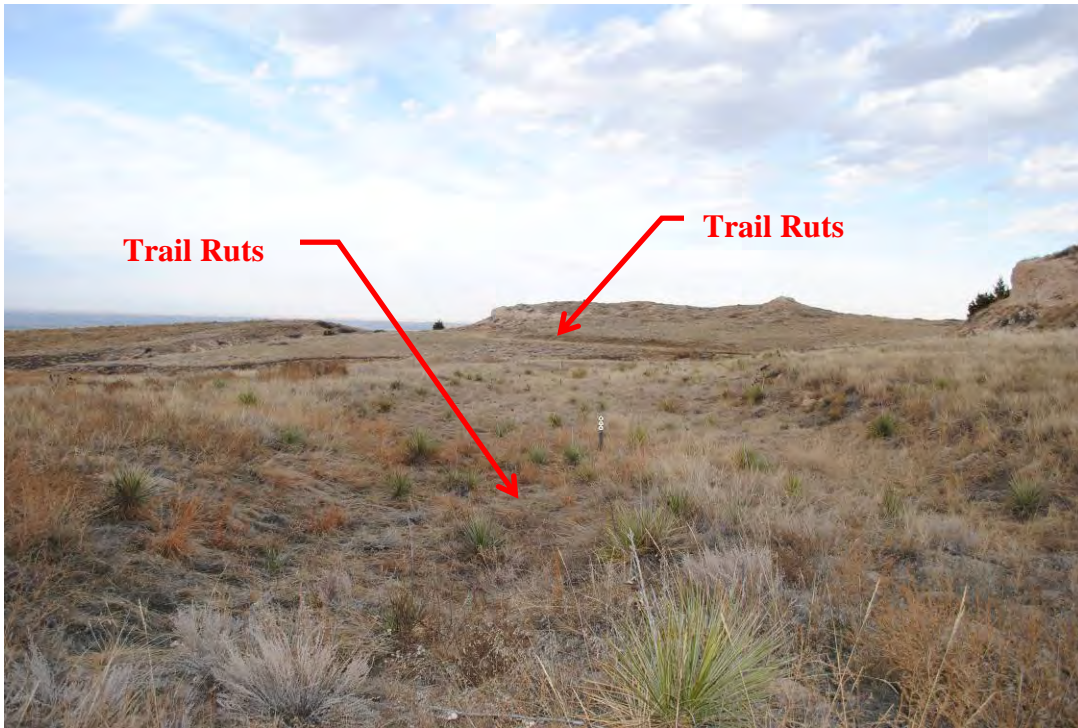


Figure 3 - 31. Existing trail ruts looking northwest in Character Area B1 (2009) (MBD DSC_0086.jpg)



Figure 3 - 32. Existing trail ruts around ravine in Character Area B1 (2009) (MBD DSC_0093.JPG)

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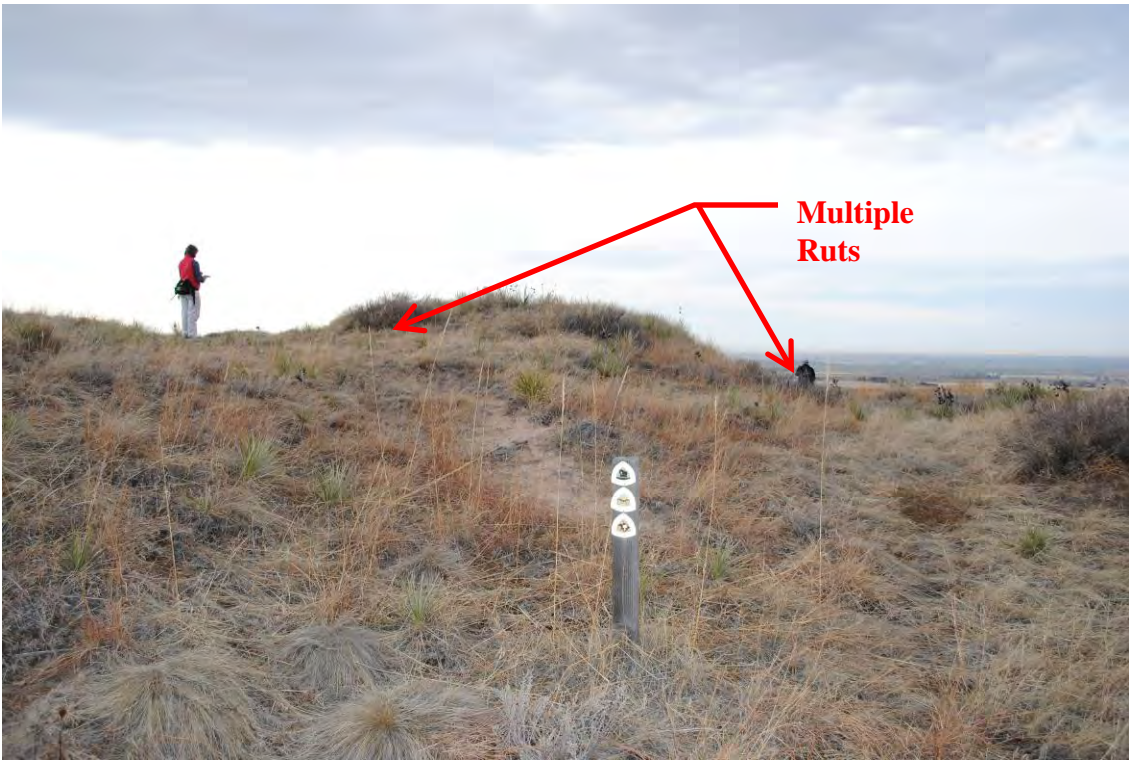
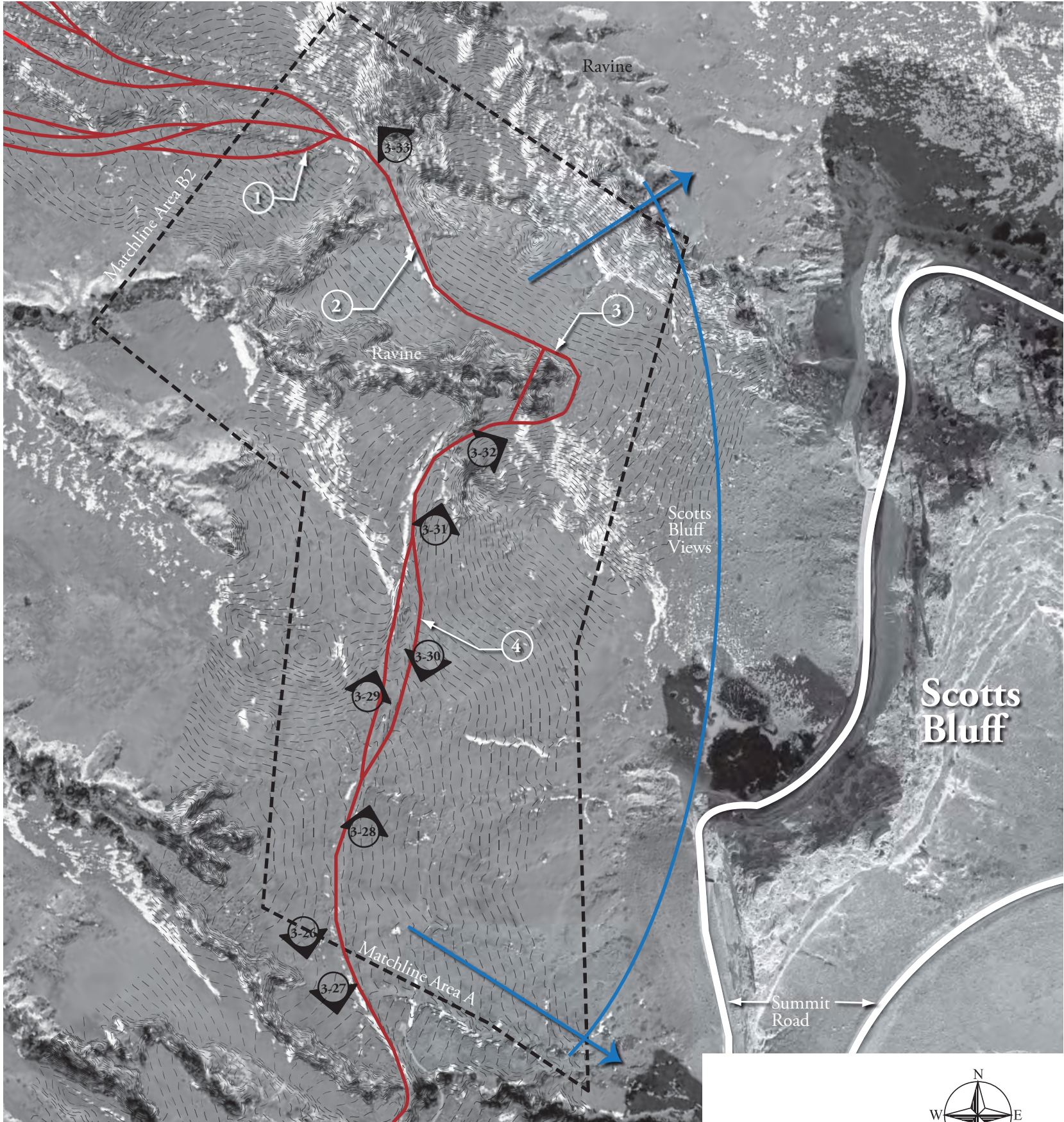


Figure 3 - 33. Multiple trail ruts through knoll at transition between Character Area B2 and C1. Boy Scout trail marker in foreground. (2009) (MBD DSC_0100.JPG)

Table 2: Character Area B1 - Small Scale Features

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Figure #</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Condition</i>	<i>Contributing/Non-contributing</i>
Boy Scout Trail Marker	3-24	Wood post with emblems indicating trail location of Oregon Trail/California Trail/Pony Express	Good	non-contributing compatible <i>outside period of significance</i>

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Trail Classification

Class 1 -
Unaltered Original Trail

Class 2 -
Used Original Trail

Class 3 -
Verified Original Trail

Class 4 -
Impacted Original Trail

Class 5 -
Approximate Original Trail

Legend

- ① Multiple Trail Rut Locations
(Parallel Scarring Visible) -
Class 1 (Unaltered Original
Trail)
- ② Trail Ruts Location - Class 1
(Unaltered Original Trail)
- ③ Trail Ruts Location - Class 1
(Unaltered Original Trail)
(Around Ravine)
- ④ Trail Ruts Location - Class 1
(Unaltered Original Trail)
(Double Cut) - Visible From
William Henry Jackson
Campsite (Area A)
- ▲
3-1 Photo Reference Figure #

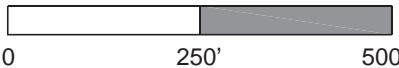


FIGURE 3 - 34		TITLE OF PROJECT OREGON TRAIL RUTS LANDSCAPE STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT	
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR		DRAWING TITLE CHARACTER AREA B1 - EXISTING CONDITIONS	
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT		NAME OF PARK SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT	
REGION MIDWEST	COUNTY SCOTTS BLUFF	STATE NEBRASKA	

