

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

Character Area B2

Character Area B2 is located to the west of Character Area B1 and Mitchell Pass. This Area contains documented emigrant trail resources that are visible. The trail rut resources in this area are braided trails that are in most cases vegetated. The area is one of secondary visitor use although with no formal walking trails in this area.

Existing Condition

- The trail topography within this area is gently sloped to the west with the exception of a large knoll on the east end of the character area. Ravines flank both sides of the trail resources.
- The views and vistas of Scotts Bluff, South Bluff and beyond are prevalent throughout the Character Area.
- Multiple braided trail ruts exist throughout the character area due to the gentle topography and ability of the wagons to spread out in this area.
- Vegetation encroachment has occurred throughout the trail causing less erosion.
- The only contemporary improvements have been the addition of compatible 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.
- According to monument staff, Character Area B2 receives little visitor use. No formal visitor trails exist.
- 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.
- The multiple trails in this area provide an example of how emigrant wagons spread out in flatter topography on the west side of Mitchell Pass.
- The trail ruts in this area are more difficult to visibly discern than in Character Areas A and B1 due to vegetation encroachment, the braided nature of the trails and non-use. While the growth of vegetation (grasses) helps stabilize soils and reduce erosion, it also reduces the visibility of trail ruts, primarily in the flatter sections.

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Visitor Experience

- Visitors who visit this area have an opportunity to experience the inspiring views of Scotts Bluff and South Bluff in much the same way emigrants did.
- The emigrant trail in this area is more difficult for visitors to locate and view than the trail in Character Areas A and B1 and receives less use.



Figure 3 - 35. Trail ruts in wide flat area in Character Area B2 (2009)
(MBD DSC_0105.JPG)

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Figure 3 - 36. View of Scotts Bluff, South Bluff and Mitchell Pass from Character Area B2 (2009) (MBD DSC_0109.JPG)

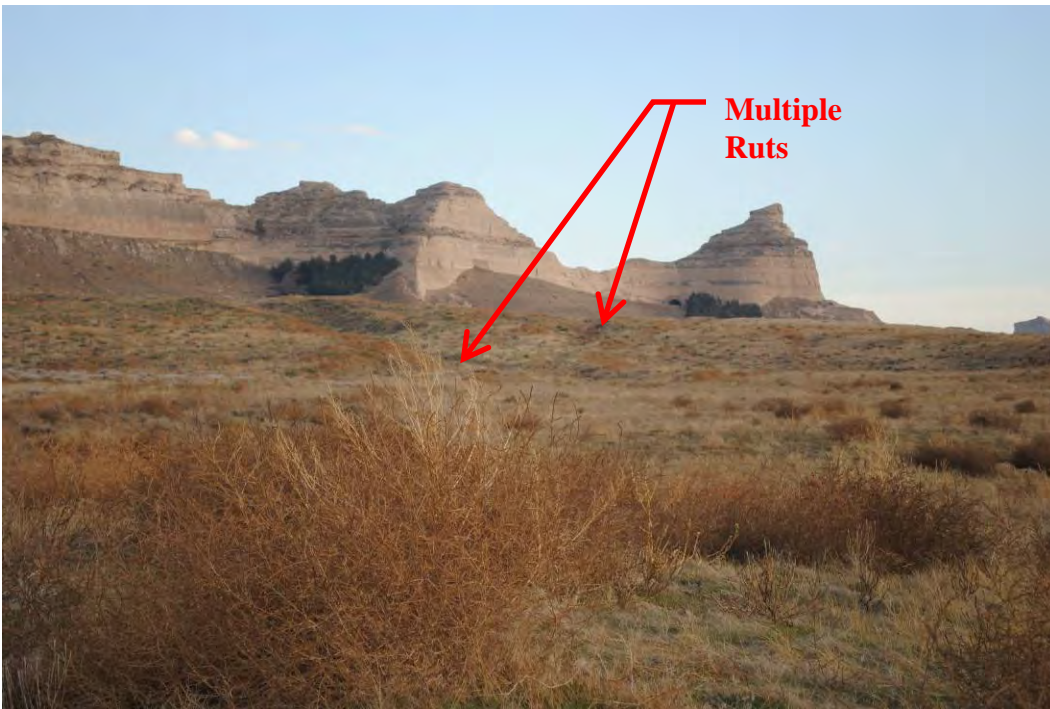
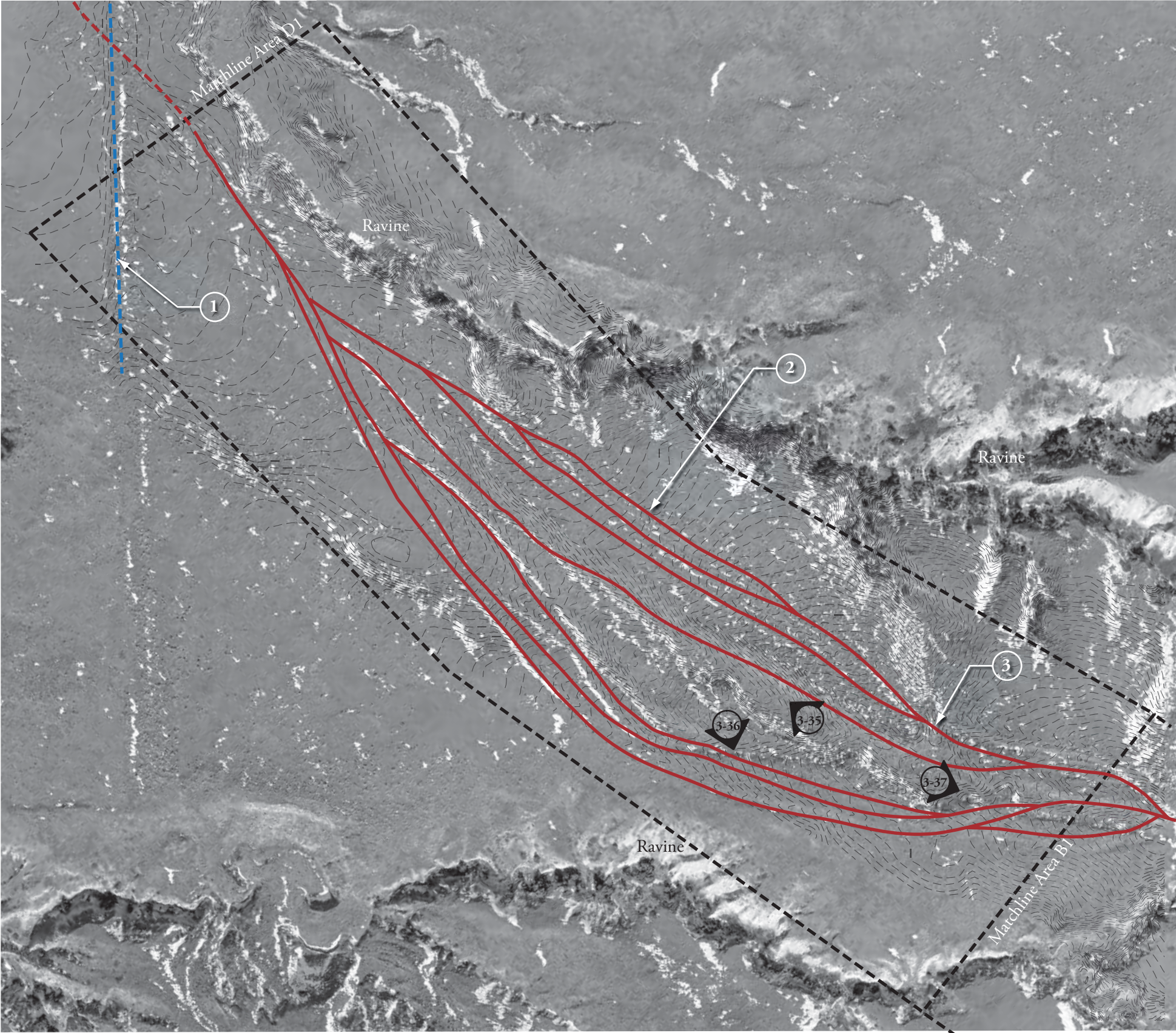


Figure 3 - 37. Trail ruts at the knoll (west end) of Character Area B2 (2009) (MBD DSC_0114.JPG)

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Table 3: Character Area B2 - 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>



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 **Remnant Fenceline Topography - From Prior Agricultural Practices Post Oregon Trail**
- ② **Multiple Trail Ruts Through Flat Topography - Class 1 (Unaltered Original Trail)**
- ③ **Multiple Trail Ruts Through Ridge - Class 1 (Unaltered Original Trail)**
- ▲₃₋₁ **Photo Reference Figure #**

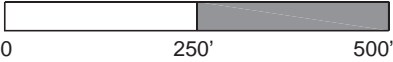


FIGURE 3 - 38		TITLE OF PROJECT OREGON TRAIL RUTS LANDSCAPE STUDY ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT		
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR		DRAWING TITLE CHARACTER AREA B2 - EXISTING CONDITIONS		
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT		NAME OF PARK SCOTTS BLUFF NATIONAL MONUMENT		
		REGION MIDWEST	COUNTY SCOTTS BLUFF	STATE NEBRASKA

