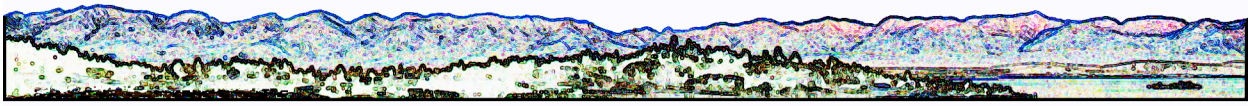
Swan View Coalition *Nature and Human Nature on the Same Path*



3165 Foothill Road, Kalispell, MT 59901 swanview.org & swanrange.org ph/fax 406-755-1379

February 25, 2021

To: Chris Dowling and Darlene Bridges
Fr: Keith Hammer
Re: Observations and Corrections for Krause Basin Maps

This PDF is sent as we reengage in the 2015 process of identifying the trail system in Krause Basin that was retained by the 1988 Noisy Face Recreation Decision, in order to help make corrections to the Swan Lake District Map and Motor Vehicle Use Map and to guide the reclamation/decommissioning of unauthorized trails.

The following mapping observations are based on my familiarity with Krause Basin dating back to approximately 1970, my detailed mapping of roads and trails there in 1985, my involvement in the Noisy Face Recreation Task Force, my familiarity with the 1988 Noisy Face Decision and Map, and my monitoring of Krause Basin since that time, including my 2015 photo inventory of roads and trails in Krause Basin.

This memo includes my observations keyed, by number, to the pointers on the attached PDF map of Krause Basin roads (purple), trails (blue) and my 2015 photo inventory GPS tracks (yellow). The road and trail locations are Flathead NF GPS/KML files obtained from Kathy Ake and hence coincide with the Swan Lake District Map and MVU Map. I've also attached a version of the map without the clutter of the pointers. Both are shown on a Google Earth satellite image base.

1. This route is heavily overgrown and I could not even locate its east end in 2015, even though such a retained route is shown on the 1988 Noisy Face Decision Map. It did not appear in 2015 to be receiving any significant use.

2. This route is heavily overgrown, even though shown as a retained route on the 1988 Decision Map. I could not find the northern end in 2015 nor navigate the southern end well enough to GPS it. It did not appear in 2015 to be receiving any significant use.

3. This route is improperly mapped and never did exist to the best of my knowledge. To conform to the 1988 Decision Map, it should follow GPS Track #4. I could not find it on either end in 2015.

4. This GPS Track is the location intended to be shown on the 1988 Decision Map as a retained route, even though it does not hug the DNRC boundary as closely. The long traverse down from Peters Ridge Road was heavily overgrown in 2015 but has since been cut open. The first portion heading west from Krause Creek and Road 5389 is currently overgrown and has a tough ford of Krause Creek when the water is up.

5. This GPS Track is private access to Forest Service land via Krause Lane or Larch Lane and old logging roads cutting the northwest corner of DNRC land.

6. This portion of (purple) Road 10724 is improperly mapped and should follow the switchback GPS Track southwest to its junction with Road 5389.

7. This route is incorrectly located and perhaps is intended to represent the GPS track of the old skid road immediately to the west, running north-south along the DNRC-FS boundary (I've drawn in a red line connecting the GPS Tracks to show the steep hill I did not climb up and down during my GPS outing). This route is not shown on the 1988 Decision Map as a retained route. It is the route discovered being cleared open by chainsaw on 12/16/20 by two men without authorization.

8. This blue route is an approximation of a retained route shown on the 1988 Decision Map as retained. The GPS track shows the actual location. This route was overgrown with small trees in 2015 but was cut open its full length in 2020 and named Hilltop on Trailforks.com.

9. While the 1988 Decision Map shows a retained route along the DNRC-FS boundary all the way to Strawberry Lake Road, it has not remained a popular route. The western portion has been cleared open in the past several years, is shown by my 2015 GPS Track and is named Slim and Shady on Trailforks.com. East and south of that, the old route passes through a deep ravine, is heavily overgrown and shows no use. The blue trail line is located where no route ever existed to the best of my knowledge, nor was it shown as retained on the 1988 Decision Map.

10. An extension of Road 10724A is clear to this GPS Track junction, then the old roadbed can be followed south for only a short way even though it is overgrown. My GPS Track heading downhill and to the southeast from there was a bushwhack (red x's), not an old route.

11. This route is on an old road/skid road bed but was not shown as retained on the 1988 Decision Map. It was cut open prior to 2015, likely to provide access to FS land from the private residence at its southern end.

12. This route along the FS-private property line was retained on the 1988 Decision Map but has been overgrown for a long time and was overgrown in 2015.

13. This portion of the blue route is improperly located, as evidenced by the bushwhack GPS Tracks (red x's) where I attempted to locate it. This location is not shown on the 1988 Decision Map as a retained route. The correct location is indicated by GPS Track #14.

14. This GPS Track is the correct location of a route that was retained on the 1988 Decision Map and has remained popular enough to remain mostly clear.

15. This GPS Track is not on the 1988 Decision Map as a retained route. It is an old logging/skid road that has for the most part remained open and cleared.

16. This route was not on the 1988 Decision Map as a retained route and is a narrow trail cut open a half-dozen years ago, with some earthen banking of trail tread in places. It is part of the route named Twiggy on Trailforks.com

17. The lower/eastern part of this route was retained on the 1988 Decision Map and is subject to much abuse by conventional vehicle trespass, mud-bogging, bonfires, beer parties, and shooting - including during times of high fire danger. I'm not certain if the western portions that climb steeply up a couple of benches to connect with Road 10724 wer retained in 1988, but they have remained popular and are heavily eroded.

18. The routes in this red circle are not shown as retained on the 1988 Decision Map. The GPS Track starts on an old skid road at the south end and becomes a trail cleared without authorization around 2014 or 2015 as one travels northward. The blue routes simply don't exist in the locations show.

19. This blue route simply does not exist in this location, nor is it on the 1988 Decision Map.

20. The red line I've drawn here is a steep skid trail that connects the GPS Tracks. It and the GPS Track running east are retained routes on the 1988 Decision Map. The GPS Track running from the red line south is an old logging/skid road that has remained open and mostly clear since 1988, connects with (is an extension of) Road 10724, and was shown as part of this retained loop on the 1988 Decision Map. The blue lines not within the #18 circle are apparently a poor approximation of this loop up to Road 10724. As I recall, Ranger Dowling visited this area with me when we first met.

21. This GPS Track is a route cleared around 2015 or since, creating a traverse to apparently detour around part of the steep hill/skid trail shown by my red line. It is named Easy Up on Trailforks.com.

22. This GPS Track is a deeply incised skid trail that traverses and climbs a steep hillside of big hemlock trees. It does not appear on the 1988 Decision Map as retained (until its junction with my red line at #20 and then continuing eastward on relatively flat ground). It nonetheless has remained popular and mostly cleared. It serves as an alternative route to Strawberry Lake Road when the old road up the South Fork of Krause Creek (#23) is difficult during high water fords in Spring. It is also popular during winter for snowshoeing and bold skiing.

23. This GPS Track shows the proper location of a retained route shown on the 1988 Decision Map. It is popular both summer and winter, when it offers one of the most exceptional ski outings in Krause Basin. The blue route is apparently a crude approximation of this route.

24. This route is Road 5389 and appears as a retained route on the 1988 Decision Map. This route also is popular both summer and winter, serving as a connector with the Peters Ridge Road when the North Fork of Krause Creek is crossable. I have never been charge by a bear while on foot but have been charged twice on this route while on mountain bike, where it is close to the North Fork of Krause Creek and its sound.

25. This red line is a user-created motorcycle hill climb and dead end (last I checked) trail through hemlock forest. I've seen it used by motorcycles during high fire danger when such use is prohibited by Stage II restrictions.

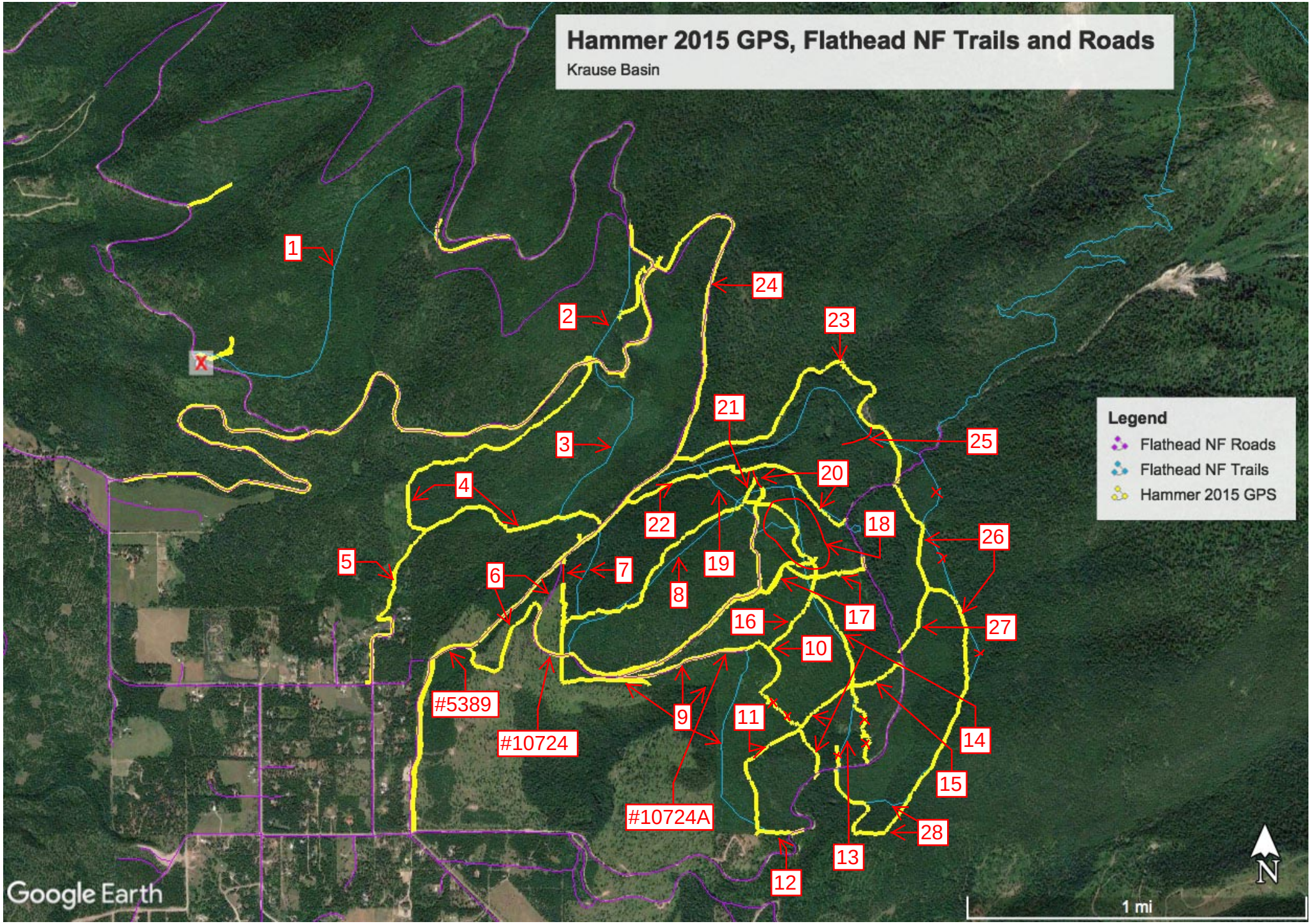
26. The GPS track is the correct location of the retained route shown on the 1988 Decision Map, which has remained popular and mostly clear. I've placed red x's on portions of the blue route that are incorrectly located and where no such route exists.

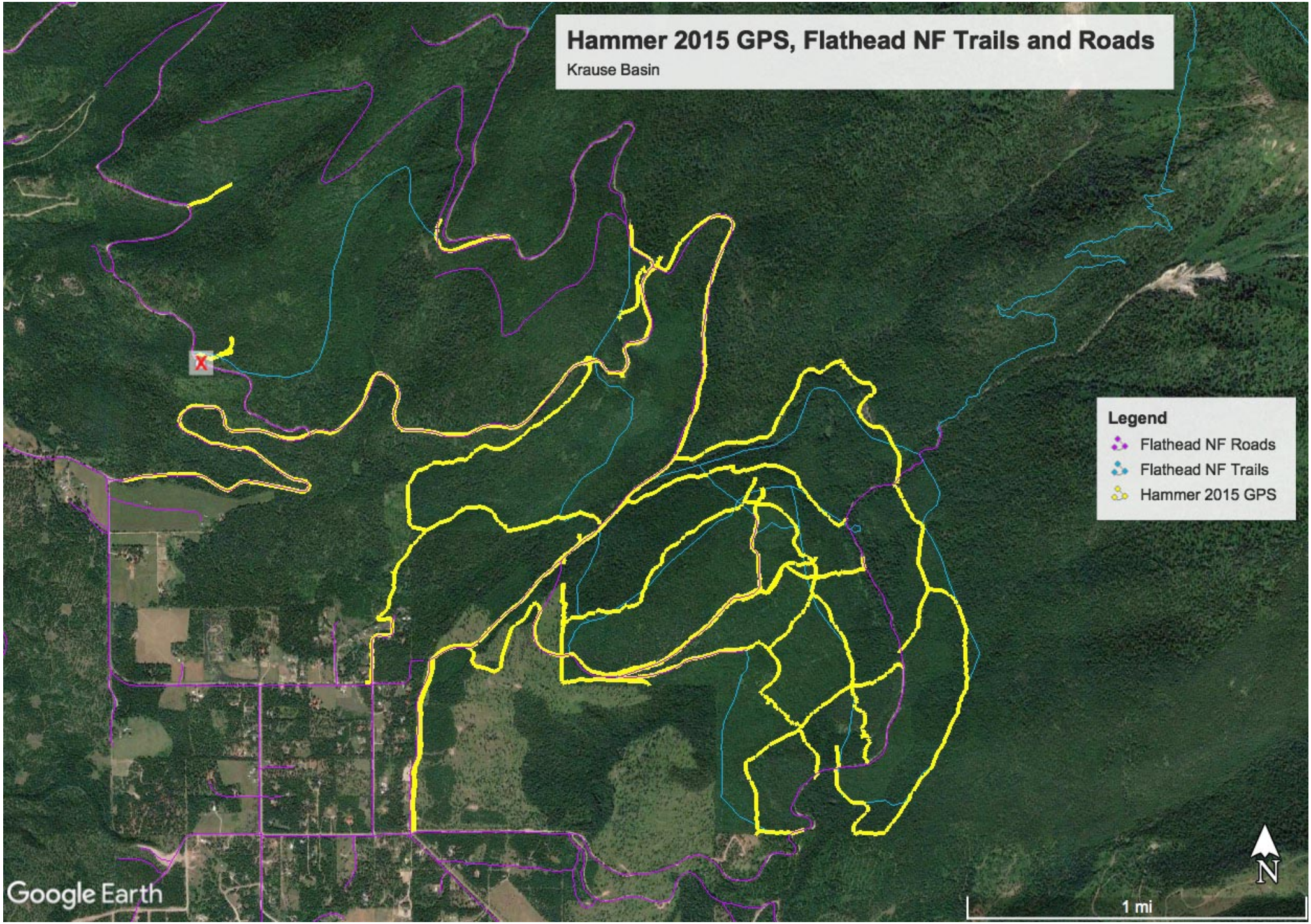
27. This GPS track is an old skid road shown on the 1988 Decision Map as a retained route with a single dot. It connects route #26, above, to the Strawberry Lake Road. It has remained popular and mostly clear.

28. The southern end of GPS Track #26 for a long time since 1988 had two alternative routes. The blue route was heavily overgrown in 2015 while the GPS'd route that touches the private property boundary was mostly clear.

These maps and observations do not account for all the old routes in Krause Basin, many of which have naturally become overgrown due to lack of use - as was the intention of the 1988 Noisy Face Recreation Decision. They do, however, attempt to account for the status of those routes included as retained on the 1988 Decision Map and the most obvious routes since then kept clear or re-cleared after growing shut. There may be more unauthorized routes being kept clear that I am not aware of.

Let me know by email or phone if you have questions. I hope these observations and map could form the basis for a Teams or Zoom meeting with either or both of you as you work to sort things out in Krause Basin. Thanks again for reengaging us in the process that unfortunately got dropped in 2015/2016.


Hammer 2015 GPS, Flathead NF Trails and Roads
Krause Basin
Legend
Flathead NF Roads
Flathead NF Trails
Hammer 2015 GPS
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
#5389
#10724
#10724A
Google Earth
1 mi
N


Hammer 2015 GPS, Flathead NF Trails and Roads
Krause Basin
Legend
Flathead NF Roads
Flathead NF Trails
Hammer 2015 GPS
N
1 mi
Google Earth