



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Environmental Analysis

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State Historic Preservation Office
Montana Historical Society
P.O. Box 201/202
1301 E. Lockey Avenue
Helena, MT 59620-1201

October 4, 2018

Re: Docket No. AB-6 (Sub-No. 495X), BNSF Railway Company – Abandonment
Exemption – Flathead County, Montana; Section 106 determination

Dear Ms. Bush:

The Surface Transportation Board issued a decision in the above-captioned case on August 14, 2017, granting BNSF abandonment authority subject to a Section 106 condition under the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), 54 U.S.C. § 306108. Specifically, the Section 106 condition prohibits BNSF from initiating any salvage activities on the rail line at issue (including removal of tracks and ties) and requires BNSF to retain its interest in and take no steps to alter the historic integrity of all historic properties including sites, buildings, structures, and objects within the project right-of-way (the Area of Potential Effect) that are eligible for listing or listed in the National Register of Historic Places (National Register). The condition also prevents BNSF from filing a consummation notice with the Board for the abandonment of the line until the Section 106 process is completed and the Board removes the condition.

The Board imposed this condition on a portion of the BNSF rail line from Milepost 1226.79 to two end points at Mileposts 1227.10 and 1227.58. The remaining portion of the rail line is part of the Kalispell Core Area Development and Trail Project, which includes plans to convert a section of the BNSF rail line in Kalispell into a community park and trail.

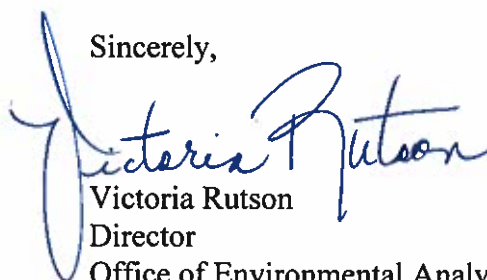
The Board's Office of Environmental Analysis (OEA) received a cultural resource inventory report prepared by Western Cultural, Inc. (Western Cultural), dated August 2018 (copy attached). The report addresses the requirements of the Section 106 condition imposed by the Board and has allowed OEA to reach the conclusions discussed below.

One previously recorded site (24FH0350) is located on the segment and has been determined as National Register eligible under Criteria A for its association with significant events that contributed to the broad patterns of local, state and regional history. Western

Cultural's report also indicates that the site may be eligible under Criteria B for its known association with James J. Hill, an early American railroad magnate. The segment surveyed for this inventory is not associated with any unique grade segments, bridges, or tunnels. Repair work and replacement of rails and ties has also taken place over time. The segment has been stranded from the rail network and adjacent tracks removed. OEA has determined that the segment has suffered a loss of integrity over time and no longer qualifies as eligible under Criteria A. The segment is not recommended as eligible under Criteria B and C.

Pursuant to the Section 106 regulations of NHPA, we have also determined that the proposed abandonment would not adversely affect historic properties listed in or eligible for inclusion in the National Register. We look forward to your concurrence with our determinations. If we can be of further assistance, please contact Kenneth Blodgett of my staff at (202) 245-0305.

Sincerely,



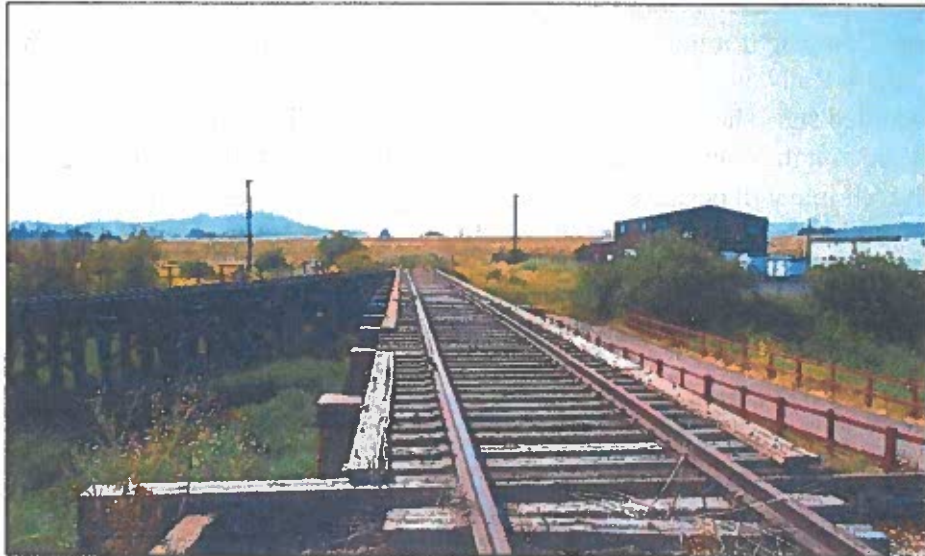
Victoria Rutson

Director

Office of Environmental Analysis

Enclosure

**BNSF Railway Abandonment Project,
Cultural Resource Inventory, Flathead County, Montana.**



BNSF Rail line, Kalispell to Somers spur line

Prepared for:
BNSF Railway Company
2650 Lou Menk Dr.
Fort Worth TX 76131

Prepared by:
Western Cultural, Inc.
Building 30, Suite 3
Fort Missoula Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Principle Investigator
Jay T. Vest

Jay Vest

August, 2018

ABSTRACT

Western Cultural conducted a cultural resource inventory of approximately 1.5 miles along a portion of the Great Northern Railroad, Kalispell to Somers spur line, under contract with the BNSF Railway Company for the proposed abandonment of the rail line. The Class III survey of the Great Northern Railway segment recorded no new cultural resources and revisited one previously recorded site. The one previously recorded site, **24FH0350**, is recommended as *Eligible* for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). As the abandonment and removal of the rail line will negatively impact the integrity of the site and impact elements that make the site eligible for listing on the NRHP, there will be an *Adverse Effect* to the site as a result of the proposed project. It is recommended that Section 106 consulting parties consult to determine appropriate mitigation efforts. Previous surveys (Herbel 2016) suggested appropriate mitigation efforts could entail interpretive signage discussing the history and contribution of the railway, leaving segment(s) in place for educational purposes, or moving segment(s) to the Glacier Rail Park north of the site, as well as other undetermined mitigation efforts for resolving this adverse effect.

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INTRODUCTION

On August 9, 2018 Western Cultural performed a cultural resource inventory for the BNSF Railway Company of approximately a 1.5-mile portion of the Great Northern Railroad, Kalispell to Somers spur line, in Flathead County, Montana. We see this project as relating to the overall larger on-going project within Kalispell, the Kalispell Core Area Development and Trail Project. This core development project aims to convert sections of the Great Northern Railroad corridor found throughout Kalispell into a community park and trail system. As such Western Cultural, Inc. took into consideration any suggestions made by prior surveys previously conducted in or near this project area.

This report is designed to meet the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (as amended) and any other state and federal legislation requiring the consideration of cultural resources. The portion of the rail line is located within the city limits of Kalispell, Montana (T28N, R22W, Section 13, E 1/2).

The BNSF Railway Company is proposing to abandon a 1.5-mile rail line extending from milepost 1226.79 to the south end of the line at milepost 1227.58 and to the west end of the line at milepost 1227.10. The inventory focused on the identification, mapping, and documentation of the historic rail line as well as any associated historic features, buildings, structures, or archaeological sites located within the project area. Jay Vest, Archaeological Technician, completed an intensive, pedestrian inventory by meticulously recording any man-made structures and features found within the project area. One historic feature was located, **24FH0350**, the historic Great Northern Railway, which is recommended as *Eligible* under NRHP guidelines.

This report presents the results of this inventory including a brief description of the physical environment for the project area, a short summary of the prehistory and history of the region, the survey methodology, and the results of the survey including all cultural resources located. The report interprets and describes the resources located, a brief statement of integrity, a recommendation of eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, and a recommendation of any possible effect which the undertaking may have on historic properties.

ENVIROMENTAL SETTING

The survey was conducted on a portion of the Great Northern Railway located west of South Meridian Road in downtown Kalispell, Montana. The area is located in an urban/industrial setting with houses, apartments, businesses, and a highway surrounding the project area. A gravel road crosses over the project area south of the northern section of the project area. A rectangular retention pond is located at the northern end of the survey area.

The topography of the immediate project area is relatively flat with small undulating hills, and some flat disturbed land due to nearby construction and development. Ashley Creek runs along the western edge of the site causing the land to slope down towards the creek. Ground cover was very dense especially along the southern section of the project area and consisted predominately of mixed grasses, weeds, and varieties of brush. Soils consisted of silt/clay and small to medium sized gravel.

Topography

Kalispell and the surrounding area are located in the Flathead Valley, a broad agricultural valley encompassed by the foothills and mountains of the Northern Rockies. The valley is approximately 15 miles wide and 25 miles long, gradually sloping from north to south (Krigbaum 2016). The valley itself is dominated by open grasslands and agricultural activities. Average elevation in the valley bottom is typically around 3,000 feet with the nearby mountains surrounding the valley averaging around 5,500 feet.

Geology

Local rock formations make up the materials for soils in the environment, with the physiography and glacial history determining how it was deposited. Much of the valleys geography has been influenced by past glacial activity. The surrounding mountainous perimeter of the Flathead Valley is largely composed of metamorphized sedimentary bed rock of the belt supergroup. Above the bedrock lies tertiary and quaternary valley fill sediments consisting of alluvium and glacial till (Krigbaum 2016). Surface soil deposits consist largely of river terrace and glacial lake sediments.

Hydrology

The largest river in the area is the Flathead River, which drains into Flathead Lake approximately 8 miles south of the project area. Other nearby rivers include Stillwater and Whitefish River, along with Ashley Creek that runs along the western side of Kalispell. The Stillwater, Whitefish, and Ashely Creek are typical of low gradient streams that typically carry low sediments loads and tend to meander back and forth across the valley floor.

Flora

Local vegetation in the area predominately consists of mixed grasses, varieties of brush, deciduous and coniferous trees. Much of the valley itself is comprised of irrigated agricultural land, grasslands, and areas set aside for seasonal grazing. Near the eastern and western parts of the valley, in the more mountainous terrain conifers and deciduous trees are most common (Arno 1979).

Fauna

Wildlife in the area reflects that of the typical intermountain valley type life zones, although heavily disturbed by human development. White-tailed deer are the most common big game species in the area with occurrences of elk, mule deer, and moose also being observed. Many smaller mammals that are common in the area include skunk, raccoon, weasel, beaver, and coyote among others. Along with mammals the area supports a diverse amount of waterfowl, raptors, game, and song birds. The most common fish within the nearby rivers and Flathead Lake include lake, bull, cutthroat, and rainbow trout, as well as northern pike.

Climate

The climate in the project area has been described as “modified Pacific maritime” in character, meaning that compared to the rest of Montana this area more closely resembles the Pacific coast. The character of the climate becomes “modified” by occasional intrusions of arctic air masses, common throughout the rest of the state, that push through the area bringing cold arctic air and heavy snowfall to the mountains (Arno 1979). The climate readings for Kalispell, MT show that the average annual temperatures range from an average annual low of 33 °F to an average annual high of 55.5 °F. The month with the lowest average temperature is January with a temperature of 29.1 °F and the highest average temperature occurring in July at 81.6 °F. The annual precipitation of the area is 15.21 in, with June being the wettest month at 2.03 in on average, and March being the driest at 0.88 in on average (Western Regional Climate Center 2017).

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The prehistory of the Flathead and Whitefish Valleys along with the surrounding intermountain area was long occupied over the centuries by several different tribes who have used this area to hunt and gather food such as the Salish, Pend d'Oreille, and Kootenai. Though other tribes would occasionally use this area it was primarily inhabited by the Kootenai Tribe (Forest Service, USDA 2010b). The area was also influenced by tribes such as the Blackfeet who either raided or traveled through the area.

Few Euro-Americans ever entered the area during the early 1800s, those that did consisted mainly of explorers, fur trappers, and Jesuits. The first fur trappers known in the historical record to enter into the Kootenai territory were two French fur trappers named La Blanc and La Gasse. They were sent by David Thompson of the North West Company to winter with the Kootenai sometime in the early 1800s (Miss 1994). By 1808 David Thompson had made his way into the territory surveying and mapping the Kootenai River, as well as establishing several trading posts. His explorations over the next four years helped in establishing the North West Company's dominance in the region. By the 1850s things had remained much the same, one of the only prosperous ways to earn a living was still by hunting, trading, or trapping (Forest Service, USDA 2010b).

In the late 1800s gold and copper were discovered north of Flathead Valley. This enticed some miners and freighters to the area near what is now Glacier National Park and the tributaries of the South Fork of the Flathead River. The quantities however were insufficient to be commercially prosperous, making mining historically minimal in the county (Krigbaum 2016).

Water and timber, however, helped to define the region and provided an employment base for the population. Water from the Flathead, Stillwater, and Whitefish Rivers provided irrigation for the development of agriculture in the area, while lumber provided other supplemental jobs for the ever increasing population.

In 1879 following the foreclosure of the St. Paul & Pacific Railway, out of Minnesota, James J. Hill and three other entrepreneurs purchased the company and reorganized it as the St. Paul, Minneapolis & Manitoba Railway. Within one year of taking over management of the railroad Hill began planning to extend the railway to the Pacific. By late 1887 the railway had reached the town of Havre, Montana, and in 1889 the railway was renamed as the Great Northern Railway (Herbel 2016). In the fall of 1890 the Great Northern Railway crossed the continental divide and continued its path down the middle fork of the Flathead River. Charles Conrad and A. A. White located the new townsite of Kalispell for the railway, located three miles northwest of Demersville, after failing to secure lands in Columbia Falls. This extension of the railway over the continental divide created a mass transportation route fueling the timber industry and creating an influx of settlers traveling to the west. From 1892 to 1904 Kalispell served as the division point between Cut Bank and Troy, when in 1904 the route was resurveyed and the division point was moved north to Whitefish (Herbel 2016).

With the arrival of the Great Northern Railway and the incorporation of Kalispell as a townsite in 1892, the region began to flourish. Within the next year Kalispell became the county seat of the newly formed Flathead County.

In 1900 the Great Northern Railroad built a spur line to John O'Brien's tie plant and mill in Somers, south of Kalispell. O'Brien and Hill joined forces and built the 11-mile railroad line to the sawmill on the north shore of Flathead Lake. Hill built the line in record time and provided financial assistance for the construction of the sawmill. O'Brien in return supplied Hill and the railway with 600,000 railroad ties annually until 1906 when Hill acquired ownership of the sawmill. By 1910 the sawmill was the largest in the Flathead Valley producing over 30 million board feet of lumber every year. Both freight and passenger trains traversed the spur line daily carrying people and goods between the Great Northern depot in Kalispell and the steamboat terminal in Somers. In 1949 the sawmill was finally closed and dismantled (MDOT n.d)

Like many towns across Montana, Kalispell began as a boomtown, but unlike others Kalispell's population never drastically rose nor fell, but rather gradually increased. As a railroad town serving as the division point for the Great Northern Railway, the townsite grew as a productive regional agricultural, trade, and governmental center for the Flathead Valley and surrounding areas.

FILE AND LITERATURE SEARCH

A file and literature search of the project area was conducted by the Montana SHPO prior to the survey on August 8, 2018. The search revealed a total of six reports and five sites within the section that was searched. The results of this search and the associated Cultural Resource Annotated Bibliography Systems (CRABS) and Cultural Resource Information Systems (CRIS) are presented below.

Table 1. Previous cultural resource surveys

CRABS DOCUMENT NUMBER	REPORT TITLE	AUTHOR	DATE	SURVEY WITHIN PROJECT AREA
FH 4 16230	Draft EIS & Site Forms – US 93 Somers to Whitefish	Paulson, Dale	11/22/1993	Yes, older than twenty years
FH 4 22062	Cultural Resource Inventory and Assessment of the Kalispell Bypass Project	Ferguson David M. and Kathy Mckay	1/1/1999	Yes
FH 4 25057	Somers to Whitefish Cultural Resource Inventory Highway 93 and Its Alternatives	Gray, Dale M.	3/1/1994	Yes, older than twenty years
FH 4 28353	Cultural Resource Inventory of the Kalispell Bypass Supplemental Report in Flathead County, Montana	Rossillon, Mitzi	1/19/2006	Yes, Survey excluded 24FH0350 in results.
FH 6 37429	A Cultural Resource Inventory and Visual Effects Analysis for the Proposed 'MT1 Bypass' Self- support Cellular Telecommunications Facility, Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana	Leary, Susan C.	8/28/2014	Yes

FH 6 38801	Tiger VII Glacier Rail Park & Trail Project, City of Kalispell	Herbel, Brian	11/8/2016	Yes
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Table 2. Previously recorded cultural resources.

Site Number	Site Type	NRHP Eligibility	Comments
24FH0350	Historic Railroad	Eligible	In project area
24FH0491	Historic Homestead	Eligible	Not in project area
24FH0900	Historic Residence	Ineligible	Not in project area
24FH1077	Historic Residence	Ineligible	Not in project area
24FH1338	Historic Residence	Ineligible	Not in project area

METHODOLOGY

Western Cultural utilized a standardized methodology during the field investigation. All of the project area is located on private lands owned by the BNSF railway. The cultural resource inventory was conducted on August 9, 2018 by Jay T. Vest.

Prior to survey, a file and literature search of the land was conducted to search for any previously recorded sites and previous cultural surveys. Once the file search was completed and all archaeological and historical survey reports were examined, onsite inspection and evaluation of the railway commenced. The pedestrian survey, 30 meters wide, extended from the center of the rail line out along either side of the feature. Site overview pictures of the project area were taken before and during the archaeological survey. Detailed field notes were taken during the survey including legal location, project area size, project area boundaries, topography, geomorphology, vegetation, and other standard survey data.

Mr. Vest carried field maps showing the area at a 1:24,000 scale, Magellan GPS unit, digital camera, compass, photograph logs, blank MT SHPO site forms, and previously recorded site forms. The GPS units recorded the UTM coordinates for the sites encountered, digital photographs were taken of every site and recorded on the photograph logs, and site information was compiled in the field onto the appropriate site forms. The results of the inventory are presented below.

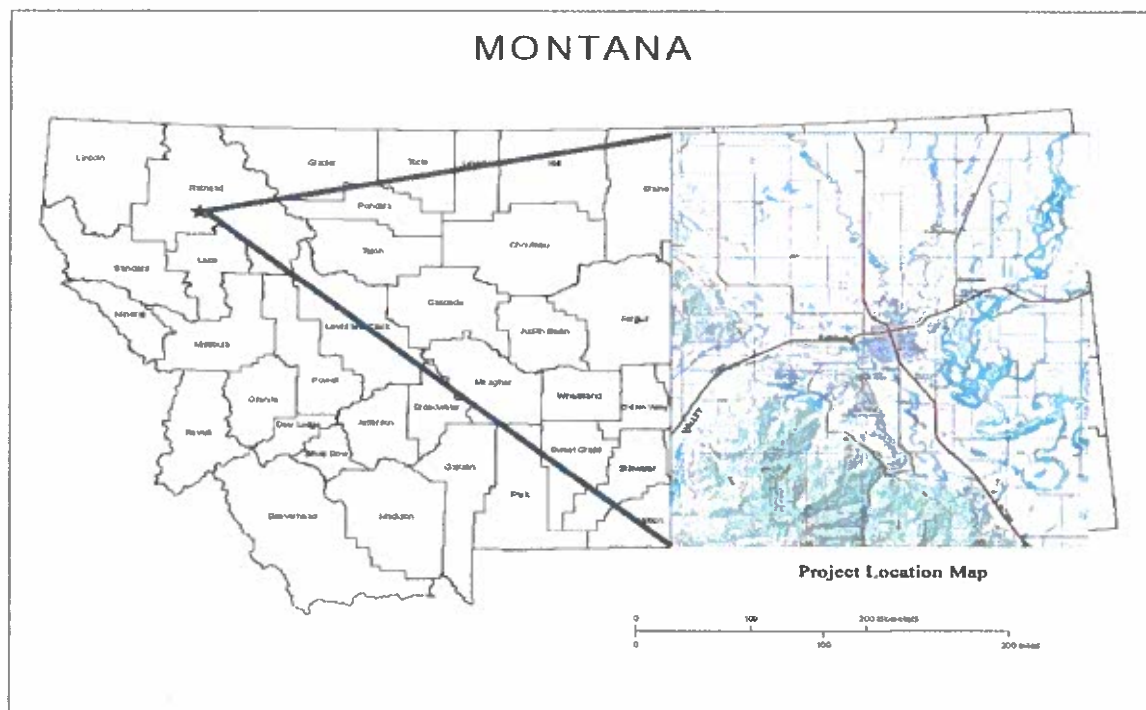


Figure 1. Location of the project area.

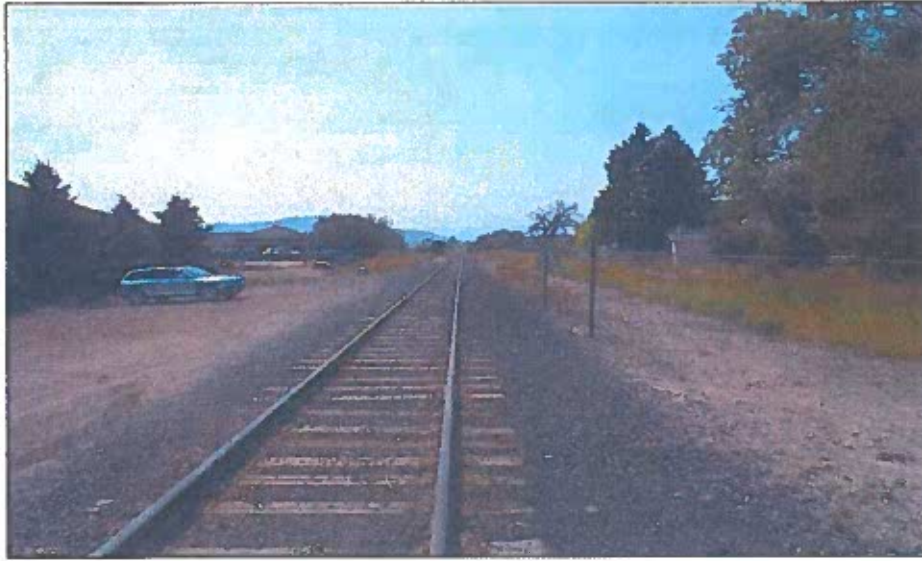


Figure 3. Northeast end of project area, view to the west.



Figure 4. Northeast end of project area, looking out of project area, view to the east.



Figure 5. Northeast end junction of Kalispell-Somers spur line, view to the southeast.

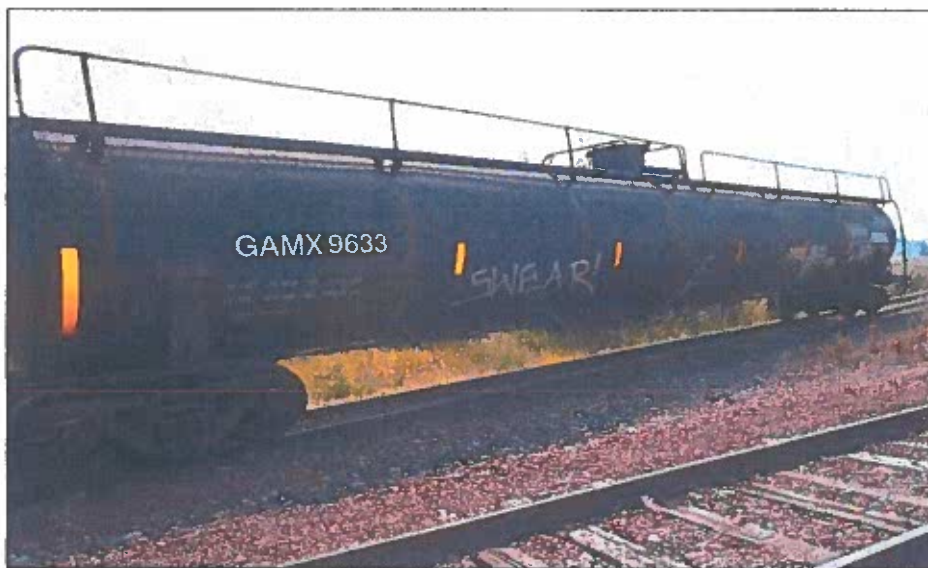


Figure 6. Rail car on spur line, view to the south/southwest.

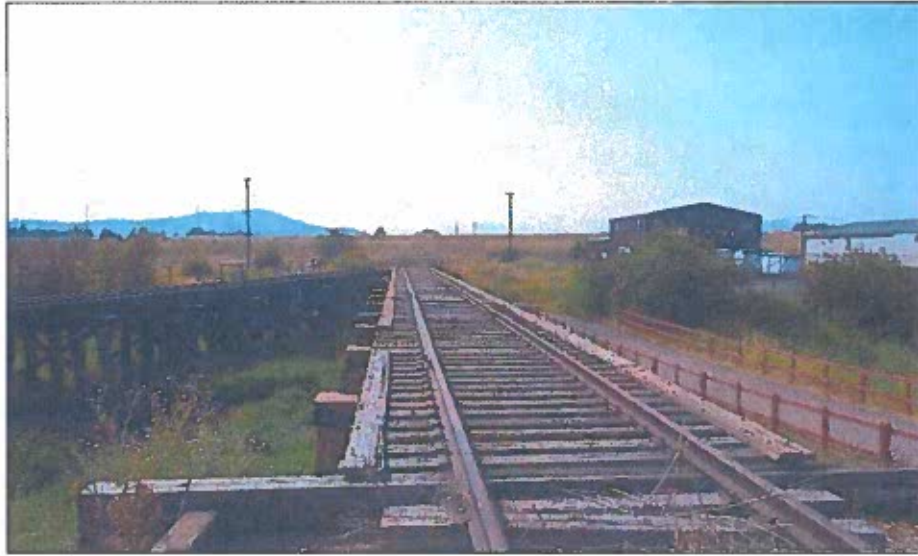


Figure 7. Northwest end of project area, northwest junction, looking towards Hwy 93 Alt, view to the west.



Figure 8. Northwest end of project area, view to the east.

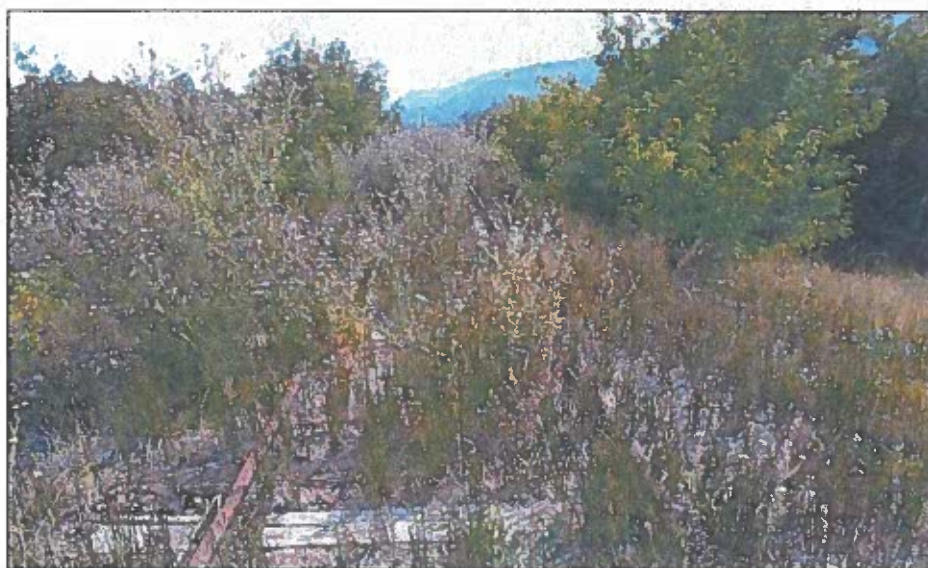


Figure 9. South end of project area, heavily overgrown, view to the south.



Figure 10. South end of project area, heavily overgrown, view to the north.



Figure 11. Broken railings and ties near south end, plan view.



Figure 12. Construction occurring west of the project area, view to the west.



Figure 13. Gravel road crossing over 24FA0350 leading to construction area, view to the west.



Figure 14. Southern junction, overgrown, view to the north.



Figure 15. Railroad switch near northeast end of project area, view to the east/northeast.



Figure 16. Rails to trails marker, and trail running parallel to project area, view to the west.

RESULTS

No new cultural resources were encountered during the inventory. One previously recorded site was revisited (24FH0350). No other previously recorded sites were updated for this project as they were out of the project area.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Site 24FH0350, the Flathead County portion of the Great Northern Railroad, has previously been determined as eligible under Criteria A and B, and is recommended as eligible under Criteria C in the site form update by Lee and Orms (2016). Previous surveys of 24FH0350 focused on the full line of the railway while this inventory focused specifically on the Kalispell to Somers spur line. Western Cultural though, agrees with these previous surveys. The site is eligible under Criteria A for its association with significant events that contributed to the broad patterns of local history, state and regional levels. Similarly, under Criteria B the site is eligible for its known association with James J. Hill, an early American railroad magnate. While the whole segment of 24FH0350 maybe recommended as eligible under Criteria C, the segment of the Kalispell to Somers spur line surveyed for this inventory is not associated with any unique grade segments, bridges, or tunnels. Repair work and replacement of rails and ties has also taken place overtime, therefore this segment is recommended as not eligible under Criteria C.

The results of this inventory agree with previous recommendations for integrity. The Kalispell to Somers spur line still retains integrity of location, feeling, and association. Integrity of setting is slightly impacted by the change of the landscape since the time of the railways construction. Integrity of design, material, and workmanship is impacted due to repair work and replacement of rail and tie segments over time.

Western Cultural recommends that the removal of the rail track will result in an *Adverse Effect* for the Great Northern Railroad. We recommend that the previous mitigation efforts put forth by Herbel (2016) be followed. Herbel (2016) suggests that MTSHP, the City, and other Section 106 consulting parties should consult to determine appropriate mitigation efforts for resolving this adverse effect. Previous suggestions by Herbel (2016) include the use of interpretative signage detailing the history of the railroad, and more specifically signage highlighting the history of the Kalispell to Somers spur line at the Kalispell terminus. Other recommendations for mitigation include leaving several rail tracks in place for educational purposes, or moving segment(s) to the Glacier Rail Park just north of the site. Other undetermined mitigation strategies that celebrate the historic contribution of the Great Northern Railway may also be applicable.

REFERENCES CITED

Arno, Stephen F.

1979 Forest Regions of Montana. USDA Forest Service Research Paper. Electronic Resource. https://www.fs.fed.us/rm/pubs_int/int_rp218.pdf Last Accessed 08-17-2018

Borresen, Jennifer and Sarah Orms

2016 24FH0350 site form update. Document on file, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

Forest Service, USDA

2010b Trails of the Past: Historical Overview of the Flathead National Forest, Montana, 1800-1960. Electronic Resource
<http://www.foresthistory.org/ASPNET/Publications/region/1/flathead/chap4.htm>
Last Accessed 08-15-2018

Herbel, Brian

2016 Section 106 Cultural Resource Inventory Glacial Rail Park/Kalispell Care Area Development and Trail Project, City of Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana. Rabbitbrush Archaeological Services, LLC. Submitted to the City of Kalispell.

Krigbaum, Dagny K.

2016 Class III Cultural Resource Investigations of the Glacier Rail Park in Kalispell, Montana: Phase I, Parcels A & B. Historical Discoveries. Submitted to the City of Kalispell.

Miss, Christian J (ed.)

1994 Historic Overview of the Kootenai National Forest. Northwestern Archaeological Associates, Inc. Seattle, Washington.

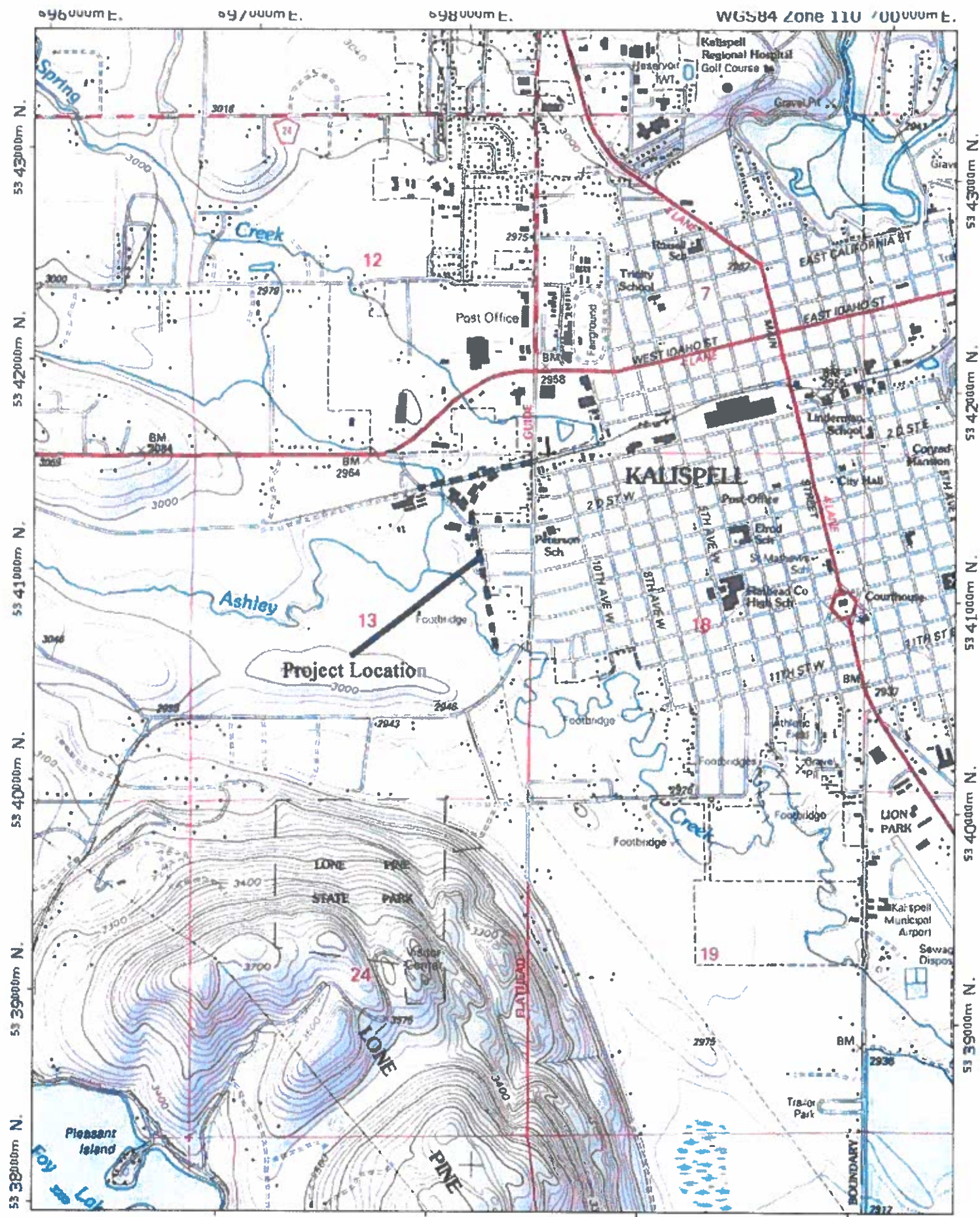
MDOT

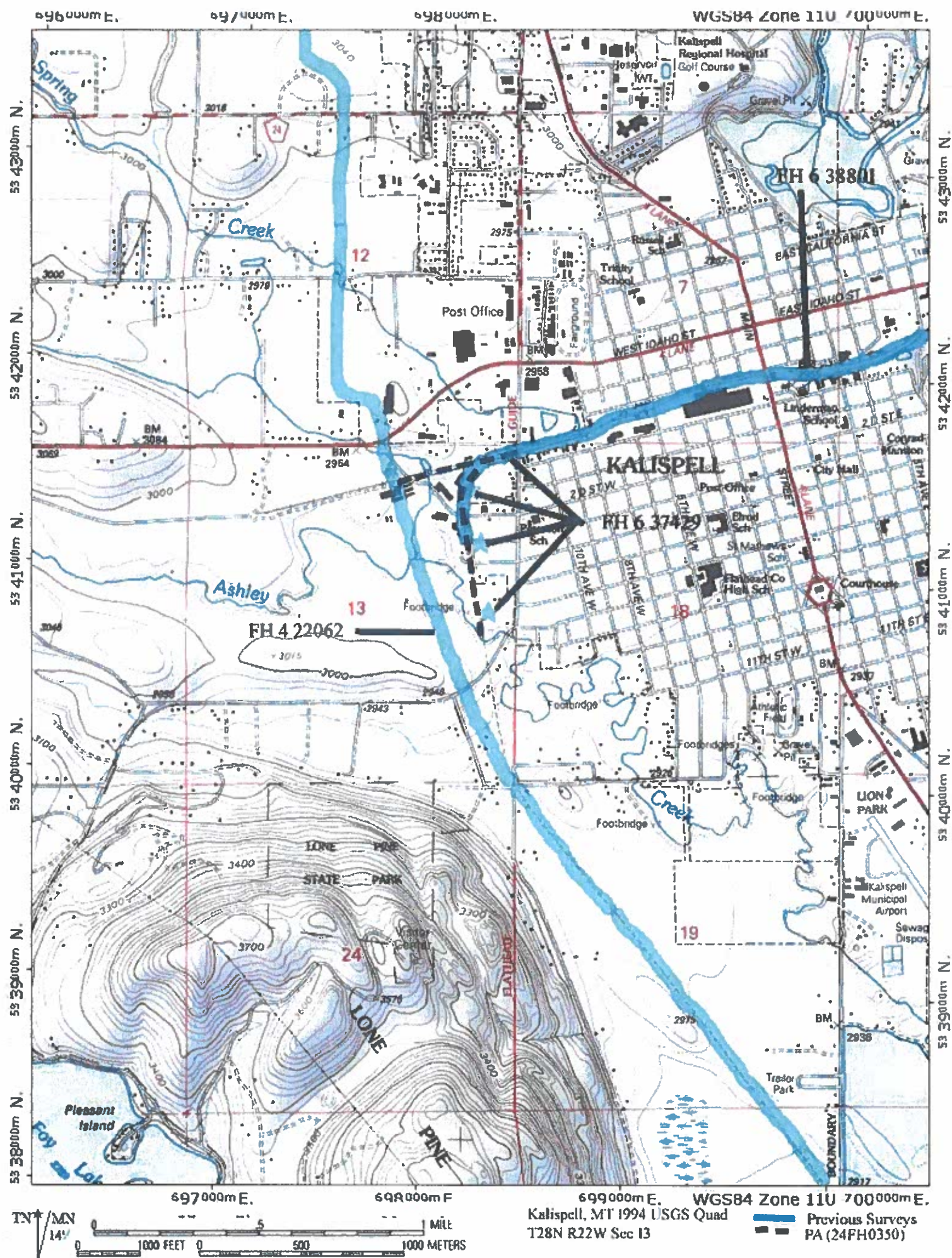
(n.d) The Kalispell to Somers Spur Line. Montana Historical Markers. Somers, Montana.

Western Regional Climate Center

2016 Kalispell, Montana: Period of Recorded Monthly Climate Summary, Period of Record: 1900 to 2005. Electronic Resource.
<https://wrcc.dri.edu/cgi-bin/cliMAIN.pl?mt4084> Last Accessed 08-17-2018

Appendix A:
Project Location and Previous Surveys





Appendix B:
Site Form for 24FH0350

MONTANA CULTURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM (CRIS) FORM

1. IDENTIFICATION

1.1 Smithsonian Number: 24FH0350 UPDATE

1.2 Field Designation: Great Northern Railroad, Kalispell to Somers spur line

1.3 Project Name: BNSF Railway Abandonment Project

1.4 Agency Project Number:

1.5 Consultant Project Number: 18-08

2. LOCATION

2.1 Township/Range: T28N, R22W, Section 13; ¼ Section(s): NE and SE

2.2 County: Flathead

2.3 UTM Coordinates: Zone 11 E 698218m; N 5340771m, Point 1- South end of project area

Zone 11 E 698360m; N 5341617m, Point 2- Northeast corner of project area

Zone 11 E 697902m; N 5341480m, Point 3- Northwest corner of project area

Datum used: ☒ NAD 83 conus

2.4 Administrative/Surface Ownership: BNSF Railway

2.5 7.5' USGS Map Name, Date: Kalispell, MT 1994 Usgs Quad

2.6 Narrative of access: From the Kalispell Courthouse head north onto Main St/Hwy 93 for .55 miles, turning west onto W Center St. Follow W Center St west for approximately .8 miles. Turn north onto S Meridian Rd for .05 miles, the Kalispell to Somers spur line will be on the left.

2.7 Vicinity of (city/town): Kalispell, MT

3. DESCRIPTION

3.1 Site Type: Historic Railroad

3.2 Site Time Period
(use dropdowns):

Prehistoric:

Paleontological:

Historic: Historic Period

Combination: ☐Unknown: ☐

3.3 Narrative Description of Site: Original recordings of this site looked at the railroad in its entirety throughout Flathead County. For the purpose of this update only the portion of the railroad, the Kalispell to Somers spur line, located within Kalispell city limits was updated. The recording by Lee and Orms (2016) states that the site consists of that portion of the Great Northern Railroad's Mainline segment and two associated branch lines in Flathead County, MT. The site is a significant historic transportation corridor throughout various portions of Montana and the Northwest. Physical features of the site include tracks, ties, buildings, grade, culverts, bridges, road crossings, firebreaks, wooden power poles, mile posts, signage, water stations, tunnels, switching equipment and right-of-way fences. Railroads in Montana are typically constructed as single track lines, on grades with passing tracks or sidings generally situated 8 to 10 mile intervals.

UPDATE: As stated previously, this project only focused on portions of the railway that were within the project area. The section of the Kalispell to Somers spur line found within the project area is similar to that of previous recordings. It consists of a single railway track running east to west at the northern end of the project area, with two tracks forming essentially a "Y", continuing into a single track in the southern section of the project area. The northern portion of the rails seem to be in fair condition, not heavily overgrown, and appears that some railcars are still placed on the tracks for storage. The southern portion of the tracks is heavily overgrown and several sections of the rails are in disrepair.

MONTANA CULTURAL RESOURCES INFORMATION SYSTEM (CRIS) FORM

3.4 Site Dimensions: 1.5 miles; linear site

Surface visibility: Northern half good visibility 75-90%, southern half very poor visibility 25-40%.

3.5 Feature Descriptions: The feature consists of a single railway track running east to west at the northern end of the project area, with two tracks forming essentially a "Y", continuing into a single track in the southern section of the project area. The northern portion of the rails seem to be in fair condition, not heavily overgrown, and appears that some railcars are still placed on the tracks for storage. The southern portion of the tracks is heavily overgrown and several sections of the rails are in disrepair.

3.6 Artifacts: (✓ all that apply) ☐ Chipped Stone ☒ Wood ☐ Ground Stone ☐ Ceramics ☐ Bone ☐ Trade ☒ Other
Description: Railroad ties, rails, spikes, various metal objects associated with the rails.

3.7 Diagnostic Artifacts: No diagnostic artifacts recovered.

3.8 Subsurface Testing: No subsurface testing conducted.

3.9 Site function/interpretation: Historic Railway

4: ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

4.1 Geographic Setting: The portion of the Kalispell to Somers spur line recorded for the project is located in an urban/industrial setting with houses, apartments, businesses, and a highway surrounding the project area. The topography of the immediate project area is relatively flat with small undulating hills, and some flat disturbed land due to nearby construction and development. Ashley Creek runs along the western edge of the site causing the land to slope down towards the creek. Ground cover was very dense especially along the southern section of the project area.

4.2 Contour: ☒ Known ☐ Approximate ☐ Unknown

4.3 Elevation: 2960ft

4.4 View/Aspect: Site is open in all directions.

4.5 Sediments: Soils consisted of silt/clay and small to medium sized gravel.

Deposition: ☒ Surface Only ☐ Buried Only ☐ Surface and Buried ☐ Redeposited ☐ Other

4.6 Available Water Source: Stream/River/Creek

4.7 Major River Drainage: Flathead River, 3.3 miles east, 2895 ft

4.8 Minor Drainage: Ashley Creek, onsite, 2940 ft

4.9 Local Vegetation: Short Grass Prairie
Local vegetation around the Kalispell to Somers spur line terminus in Kalispell consists of mostly tall grasses, varieties of brush, and a few deciduous trees.

Regional Vegetation: Combination
The regional vegetation consists of mixed grasses, varieties of brush, and conifers and deciduous trees. There are also areas of cultivation including irrigated agricultural areas

5. ASSESSMENT, RECORDING & MANAGEMENT

5.1 Significance: The site form by Lee and Orms (2016) states that the Great Northern played a significant role in the settlement and development of, and the transportation of goods and services to and from, northern Montana, and to a lesser extent, central Montana in the early 1900's. For those reasons, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria A.

Due to the railroad's association with James Jerome Hill, the "Empire Builder", the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria B.

Although a railroad grade generally remains as a commanding feature even if the tracks and ties have been salvaged, to

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date railroad grades have not been recommended as significant for their association with Criteria C. However some structures considered part of the railroad, such as tunnels, trestles, uniquely constructed grade segments, and bridges can be considered significant for their association with Criteria C. This is arguably the case for the route over Marias Pass, which required sophisticated engineering and innovation. Thus, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria C.

With regard to Criteria D the site is recommended to be insignificant.

UPDATE: On August 9, 2018 Western Cultural, Inc. revisited the portion of railway located within the Kalispell city limits, known as the Kalispell to Somers spur line. Unlike previous projects that looked at the entirety of the railway throughout Flathead County, this project focused only on this spur line.

Western Cultural agrees with the previous survey by Lee and Orms (2016) in that the Kalispell to Somers spur line of the Great Northern Railway played a significant role in the development of Kalispell and surrounding areas. This line was also vital in providing a connecting route between the ferry at the north shore of Flathead Lake to the Great Northern Railroad depot in Kalispell. Thus, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria A.

Like other portions of the Great Northern Railway, the Kalispell to Somers spur line is also associated with James Jerome Hill. Hill and John O'Brien worked together in order to build this spur line to O'Brien's sawmill on the north shore of Flathead Lake. In return for Hill's help O'Brien supplied Hill with 600,000 railroad ties annually. Thus, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria B.

Unlike other segments along the Great Northern Railroad, the Kalispell to Somers spur line, located within Kalispell, does not exhibit any structures or unique construction such as the route over Marias Pass, or any tunnels or bridges that may be eligible. Though the overall site of 24FH0350 may be recommended as significant under Criteria C, the Kalispell to Somers spur line that occurs within the project area does not qualify and is thus recommended to be insignificant under Criteria C.

With regard to Criteria D, this portion of track is recommended as insignificant as it is unlikely to yield any information important in the prehistory or history of the area.

5.2 Condition/Integrity: The site form by Lee and Orms (2016) states that the majority of the site retains integrity of feeling, association, and location. Integrity of setting is questionable as the landscape has changed since the construction of the site. Integrity of materials, design, and workmanship are largely intact although repair work to various grade segments and rail and tie replacement has occurred frequently over time.

UPDATE: Western Cultural, Inc. upon the return visit agrees with the previous recording.

5.3 Possible impacts to site: BNSF Railway purposes to abandon this segment of railroad as well as remove the rails and ties from the area. An undertaking is considered to have an effect on a historic property when the undertaking may alter characteristics that qualify it for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The abandonment as well as removal of the rail lines will negatively impact the integrity of the site.

5.4 Evaluation: Does this property meet National Register criteria for eligibility? ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Unevaluated

Evaluation Procedures/Justification: The site form by Lee and Orms (2016) states that the Great Northern played a significant role in the settlement and development of, and the transportation of goods and services to and from, northern Montana, and to a lesser extent, central Montana in the early 1900's. For those reasons, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria A.

Due to the railroads association with James Jerome Hill, the "Empire Builder", the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria B.

Although a railroad grade generally remains as a commanding feature even if the tracks and ties have been salvaged, to date railroad grades have not been recommended as significant for their association with Criteria C. However, some structures considered part of the railroad, such as tunnels, trestles, uniquely constructed grade segments, and bridges can

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be considered significant for their association with Criteria C. This is arguably the case for the route over Marias Pass, which required sophisticated engineering and innovation. Thus, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria C.

With regard to Criteria D the site is recommended to be insignificant.

UPDATE: On August 9, 2018 Western Cultural, Inc. revisited the portion of railway located within the Kalispell city limits, known as the Kalispell to Somers spur line. Unlike previous projects that looked at the entirety of the railway throughout Flathead County, this project focused only on this spur line.

Western Cultural agrees with the previous survey by Lee and Orms (2016) in that the Kalispell to Somers spur line of the Great Northern Railway played a significant role in the development of Kalispell and surrounding areas. This line was also vital in providing a connecting route between the ferry at the north shore of Flathead Lake to the Great Northern Railroad depot in Kalispell. Thus, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria A.

Like other portions of the Great Northern Railway, the Kalispell to Somers spur line is also associated with James Jerome Hill. Hill and John O'Brien worked together in order to build this spur line to O'Brien's sawmill on the north shore of Flathead Lake. In return for Hill's help O'Brien supplied Hill with 600,000 railroad ties annually. Thus, the site is recommended to be considered significant under Criteria B.

Unlike other segments along the Great Northern Railroad, the Kalispell to Somers spur line, located within Kalispell, does not exhibit any structures or unique construction such as the route over Marias Pass, or any tunnels or bridges that may be eligible. Though the overall site of 24FH0350 may be recommended as significant under Criteria C, the Kalispell to Somers spur line that occurs within the project area does not qualify and is thus recommended to be insignificant under Criteria C.

With regard to Criteria D, this portion of track is recommended as insignificant as it is unlikely to yield any information important in the prehistory or history of the area.

5.5 Recording status: ☒ surface examination ☒ photo ☒ map ☐ subsurface tested

5.6 Recommendations (use dropdown): Preservation Measures Warranted

Comments: Previous surveys of the rail line, most notably Herbel (2016), suggested that mitigation efforts could potentially include the use of interpretative signage detailing the history of the railroad, more specifically signage highlighting the history of the Kalispell to Somers spur line at the Kalispell terminus. Other recommendations for mitigation include leaving several rail tracks in place for educational purposes, or moving segment(s) to the rail park just north of the site. Other undetermined mitigation strategies that celebrate the historic contribution of the Great Northern Railway may also be applicable.

5.7 Site Located by: Jennifer Borresen Lee and Sarah Orms

Date Located: 11/20/2016

5.8 Site Recorded by: Jennifer Borresen Lee and Sarah Orms

Date Recorded: 11/20/2016

5.9 Site form update and revisions by: Jay Vest

Date Updated: 8/20/2018

5.10 Federal/State Permit No:

5.11 Publication(s)/Report(s) where site is described: BNSF Railway Abandonment Project, Cultural Resource Inventory, Flathead County, Montana

5.12 Artifact Repository: No artifacts collected.

5.13 Field notes/maps/photos repository: Western Cultural Inc, Missoula, MT.

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6. DESCRIPTION OF HISTORIC SITES

6.1 Property boundaries:

: estimated

1.5 miles; linear site: measured

Boundary justification: Length of track within the project area.

6.2 Physical description of buildings/ structures/ features; dates of construction and major alterations;

contribution of building/ structure to property significance: Original recordings of this site looked at the railroad in its entirety throughout Flathead County. For the purpose of this update only the portion of the railroad, the Kalispell to Somers spur line, located within Kalispell city limits was updated. The recording by Lee and Orms (2016) states that the site consists of that portion of the Great Northern Railroad's Mainline segment and two associated branch lines in Flathead County, MT. The site is a significant historic transportation corridor throughout various portions of Montana and the Northwest. Physical features of the site include tracks, ties, buildings, grade, culverts, bridges, road crossings, firebreaks, wooden power poles, mile posts, signage, water stations, tunnels, switching equipment and right-of-way fences. Railroads in Montana are typically constructed as single-track lines, on grades with passing tracks or sidings generally situated 8 to 10 mile intervals.

UPDATE: As stated previously, this project only focused on portions of the railway that were within the project area. The section of the Kalispell to Somers spur line found within the project area is similar to that of previous recordings. The Kalispell to Somers spur line was originally built in 1900. It consists of a single track running east to west at the northern end, with two tracks forming essentially a "Y", continuing into a single track in the southern section of the project area. The northern portion of the rails seem to be in fair condition, not heavily overgrown, and appears that some railcars are still placed on the tracks for storage. The southern portion of the tracks is heavily overgrown and several sections of the rails are in disrepair.

6.3 Artifacts observed, collected: Artifacts observed included railroad ties, rails, spikes, and various assortment of other metal objects associated with railways. No artifacts collected.

6.4 Subsurface Testing Methods and Results: No subsurface testing attempted.

6.5 Historical Information and Context (footnote sources): Refer to site form 24FH0350

6.6 Sources, files, people consulted:

Borresen, Jennifer and Sarah Orms

2016 24FH0350 site form update. Document on file, Montana State Historic Preservation Office, Helena, MT.

Herbel, Brian

2016 Section 106 Cultural Resource Inventory Glacial Rail Park/Kalispell Care Area Development and Trail Project, City of Kalispell, Flathead County, Montana. Rabbitbrush Archaeological Services, LLC. Submitted to the City of Kalispell

7. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1. Northeast end of project area, view to the west.



Figure 2. Northeast end of project area, looking out of project area, view to the east.

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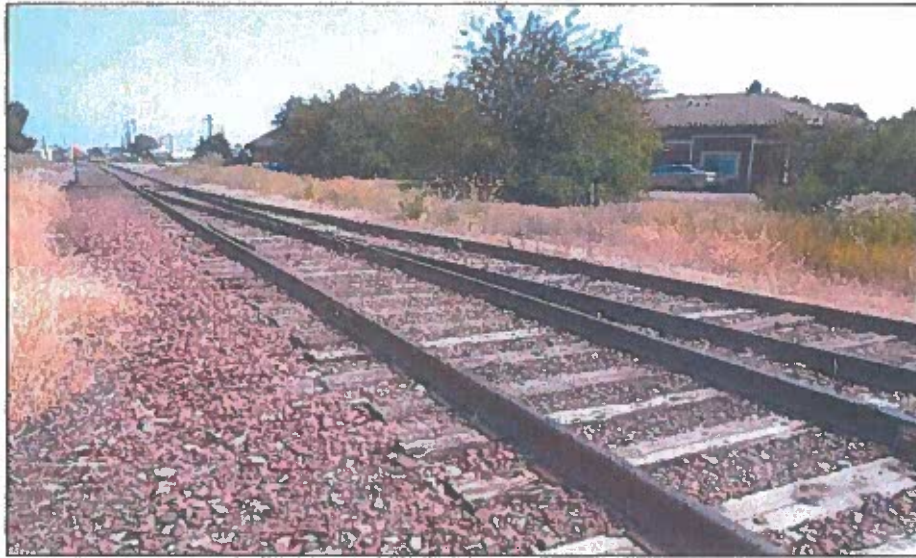


Figure 3. Northeast end junction of Kalispell-Somers spur line, view to the southeast.

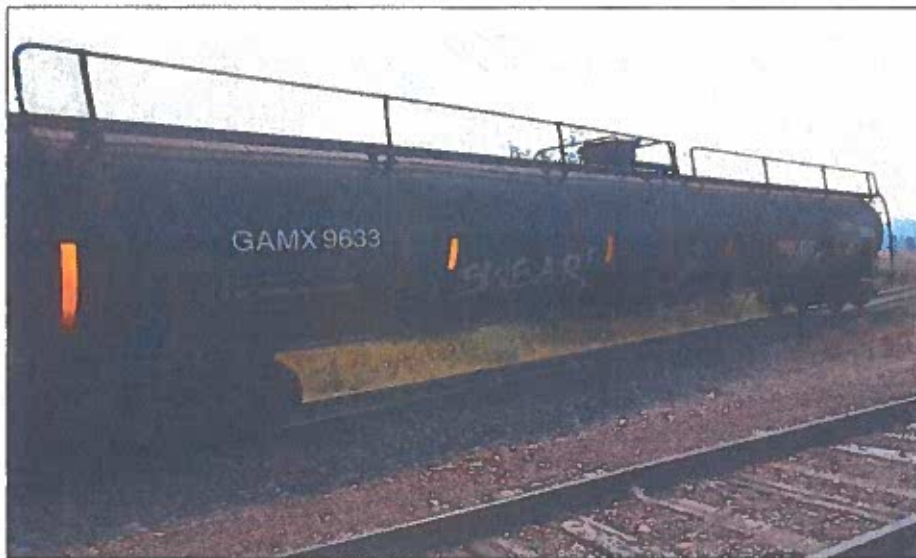


Figure 4. Rail car on spur line, view to the south/southwest.

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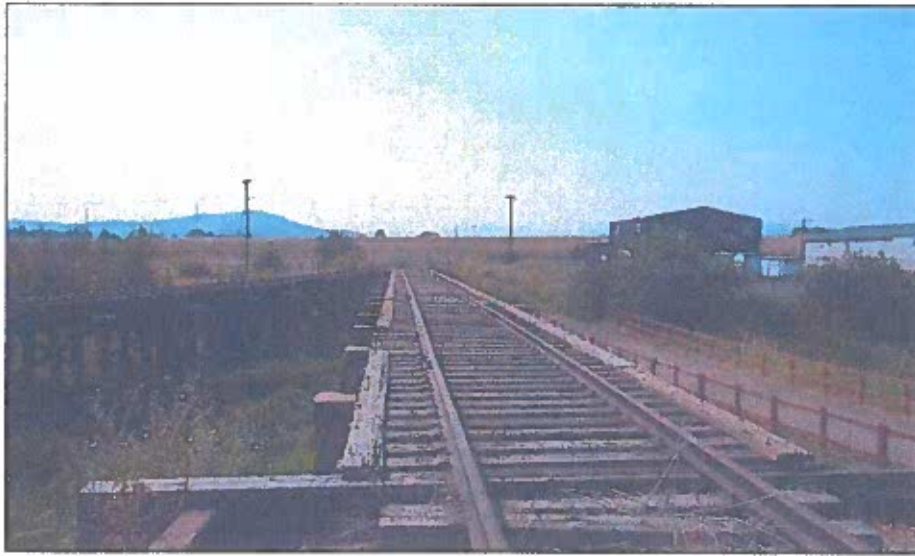


Figure 5. Northwest end of project area, northwest junction, looking towards Hwy 93 Alt, view to the west.



Figure 6. Northwest end of project area, view to the east.

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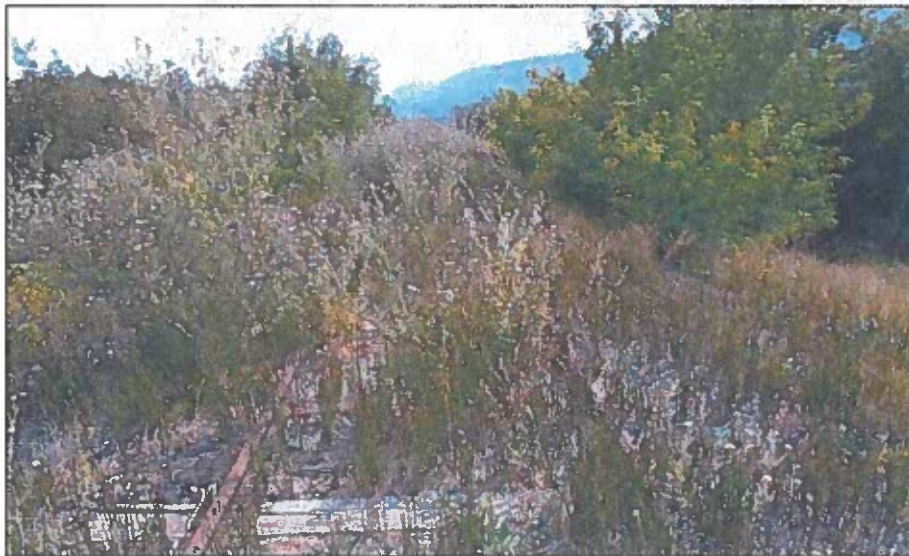


Figure 7. South end of project area, heavily overgrown, view to the south.

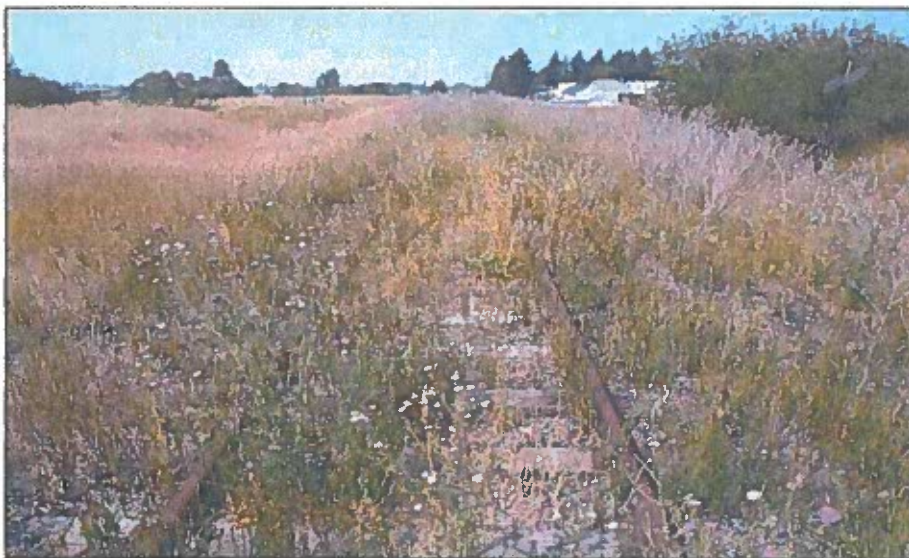


Figure 8. South end of project area, heavily overgrown, view to the north.

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Figure 9. Broken railings and ties near south end, plan view.



Figure 10. Construction occurring west of the project area, view to the west.

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Figure 11. Gravel road crossing over 24FA0305 leading to construction area, view to the west.



Figure 12. Southern junction, overgrown, view to the north.

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Figure 13. Railroad switch near northeast end of project area, view to the east/northeast.



Figure 14. Rails to trails marker, and trail running parallel to project area, view to the west.

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MAPS

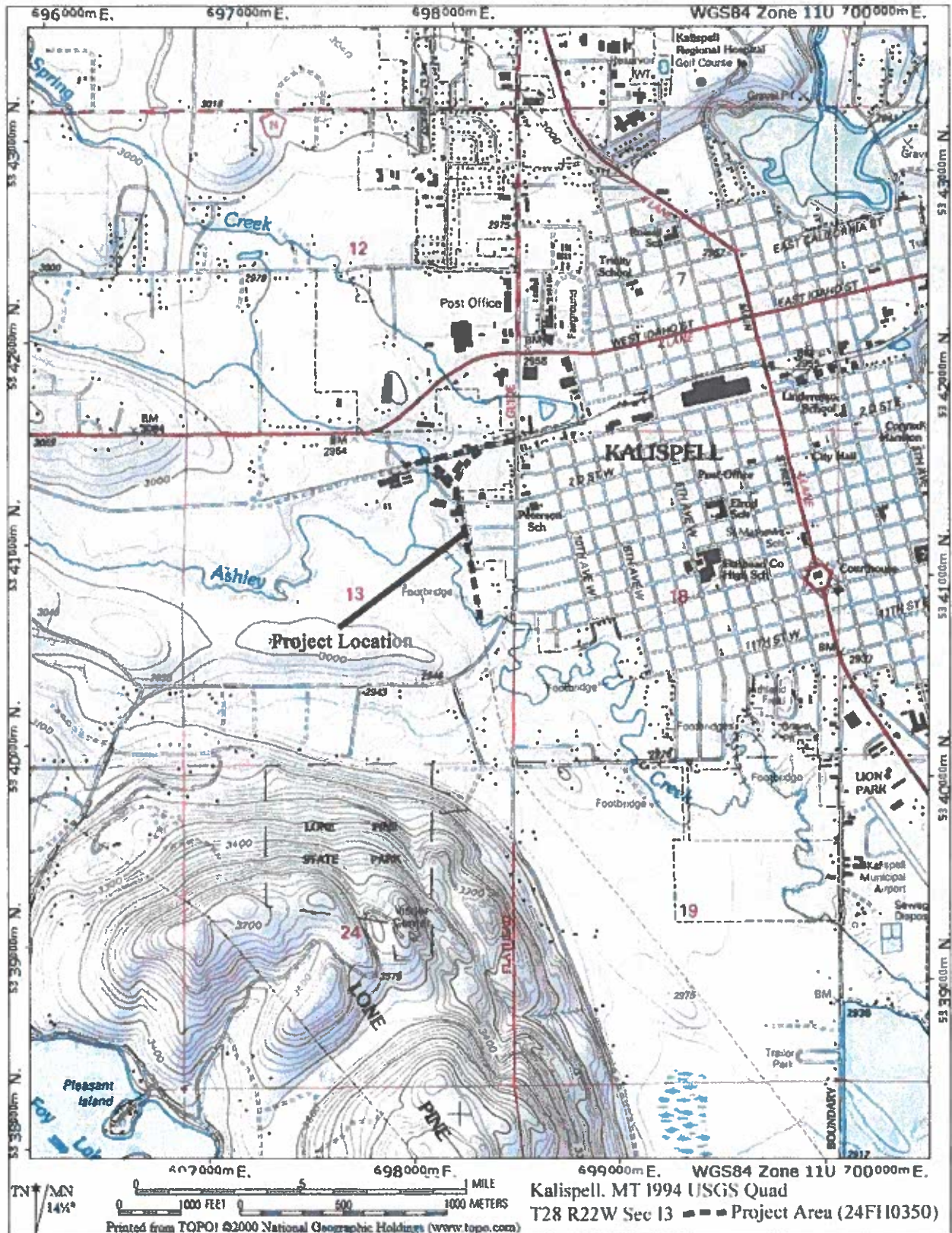


Figure 15. Topographic map of project area.

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Figure 16. GPS points depicting extent of the site.