

# Sandpoint Frontcountry Trail Systems

## Emergency Response Plan

### Overview

Sandpoint, Idaho, with a population 9,777, is the largest City in Bonner County (population 51,414). Within 3 miles of Sandpoint multiple trailheads access over 26 miles of frontcountry trails within two trail systems: the Syringa Trail System and the Little Sand Creek Watershed Lower Basin Trail System. Since 2019 over 16 miles of new natural surface trails have been added to the two trail systems, dramatically increasing access to outdoor recreation, including hiking, mountain biking, trail running, cross country skiing, fat biking, snow shoeing, dog walking, and berry picking, among other non-motorized trail-based activities.

Ongoing efforts by organizations including Pend Oreille Pedalers, Kaniksu Land Trust, Sandpoint Nordic Club, Schweitzer, the United States Forest Service, and the City of Sandpoint's Parks and Open Spaces department promise to see increased expansion of frontcountry trails in the years to come.

Although precautions have been taken to reduce trail incidents through appropriate design and construction, effective signage, regular maintenance, and public education campaigns via organization email lists and social media, inherent risks still exist on the trail.

In order to respond to incidents, an Emergency Response Plan has been established. The Emergency Response Plan acts as an action plan for emergencies occurring along the trail. Trail access data has been provided to Bonner County GIS department and incorporated into the County's GIS systems to offer increased dispatch support.

Selkirk Fire and Bonner County EMS serve as the primary responders to incidents within the region where the Lower Basin and Syringa Trail Systems exist. Additional first responders, depending on the exact location of an incident, may include Schweitzer Fire, Schweitzer Bike and Ski Patrol, and Bonner County Sheriff's office.

### Purpose

The purpose of the Sandpoint Frontcountry Trail Systems Emergency Response Plan is to coordinate inter-agency responses to trail-related incidents and emergencies occurring within the greater Sandpoint area so as to improve response times, reduce severity of trail-based incidents, and increase safety of trail users within Sandpoint's frontcountry trail systems.

### Background of Sandpoint's Frontcountry Trail Development

Frontcountry trail access to residents of Sandpoint and surrounding Bonner County has increased steadily over the last 20 years.

1. In 2004 Pend Oreille Pedalers is formed to support trail construction in the privately owned (protected under a conservation easement) 132-acre Sherwood Forest property in Dover. From 2004-2012 approximately 6 miles of trails are built and opened for public access in the Sherwood Forest, known locally as the "Syringa Trails."
2. In 2005 the Mickinnick trail opens thanks to grants and partnerships between the Idaho Panhandle Resource Advisory Committee, the City of Sandpoint, Bonner County, Bureau of Land

Management, U.S. Forest Service, the private landowner who donated the property, and The Friends of Mickinnick Trail. The 3.5-mile trail climbs through a 160-acre parcel of USFS property from a City of Sandpoint utility owned parcel along Woodland Drive to a 4,300-foot viewpoint overlooking Lake Pend Oreille. *NOTE: The Mickinnick Trail, while it is a popular frontcountry trail, is not yet included in the Emergency Response signage plan.*

3. In 2011 the Pend Oreille Bay trail, a 1.5-mile out and back trail from the City of Sandpoint's lake water treatment plant north along Pend Oreille Bay, opens to the public. *NOTE: The PBOT is not yet included in the Emergency Response signage plan.*
4. In 2015 Pend Oreille Pedalers build and construct and open the new 1.2-mile "Lower Basin Trail" between switchbacks 2 and 4 of Schweitzer Mountain Road.
5. In 2019 Kaniksu Land Trust opens the 180-acre Pine Street Woods, which over the next two years sees seven miles of hiking, biking, and cross country ski trails open to the public.
6. In 2020 Julie and Steve Meyer acquire VTT, a 100-acre property directly south of Pine Street Woods and east of Sherwood Forest. Over the next three years POP builds five miles of new mountain bike-optimized trail.
7. In 2021-2022 POP builds a new 2.4-mile two-directional trail in the Lower Basin and partners with the City to develop a master recreation and trail plan along with the International Mountain Biking Association.
8. In 2023 and 2024 Kaniksu Land Trust acquires and opens the 48-acre sled hill property on West Pine Street to the public (this acquisition is planned as of summer 2023 and not yet finalized), bringing the total size of the Syringa Trail System properties (Sherwood Forest, Pine Street Woods, VTT, and the Sled Hill) to 448 acres.
9. In 2024 and beyond POP, the City of Sandpoint, USFS, and Schweitzer will collaborate to continue the buildout of the Little Sand Creek Watershed master trail plan (40+ miles of new Frontcountry trails proposed).

### Emergency Response Plan development

In 2020 an ad hoc team of land managers, first responders, and trail advocacy organizations met to discuss the need for a frontcountry trail system emergency response plan. In 2022 Pend Oreille Pedalers developed the trailhead signage and trailside emergency locator signage, rolling it out throughout the Syringa and Lower Basin trail systems. Today there are 55 emergency locator signs and ten trailhead signs describing the emergency protocols across the 26 miles of trails in the two trail systems.

While the emergency signage plan covers a good portion of Sandpoint's frontcountry trails, it is not yet incorporated into the following popular trails or trail networks:

- Mickinnick Trail
- Sandpoint – Dover shared-use pathway
- Sand Creek shared-use pathway
- Pend Oreille Bay Trail
- Little Sand Creek Watershed trails above the Schweitzer Roundabout (on Schweitzer-owned property)

### Partners

The following entities have been identified as partners in the Sandpoint Frontcountry Trail Systems Emergency Response Plan

#### Land managers / property owners:

- City of Sandpoint
- City of Ponderay
- Schweitzer/Alterra
- USFS
- Idaho Department of Lands
- Kaniksu Land Trust
- Julie and Steve Meyer (VTT)
- Mark Kubiak (Sherwood Forest)

#### Non-profit trail organizations

- Pend Oreille Pedalers
- Sandpoint Nordic Club
- Friends of the Pend Oreille Bay Trail

#### First Responders

- Selkirk Fire
- Bonner County EMS
- Bonner County Dispatch / 911
- Bonner County Sheriff's office
- Schweitzer Fire
- Schweitzer Bike/Ski Patrol

#### Assumptions

1. While steps have been taken to mitigate potential incidents along the trail, risks may exist.
2. Trail users should act responsibly and use the trail at their own risk. Signs are available at all trailheads informing users of emergency locator signage and what to do in case of an emergency.
3. Incidents occurring along the trail will most likely be associated with the following:
  - a. Accident-related trauma
  - b. Medical Emergencies
  - c. Wildland Fire Emergencies
  - d. Wildlife encounters

#### Concept of Operations

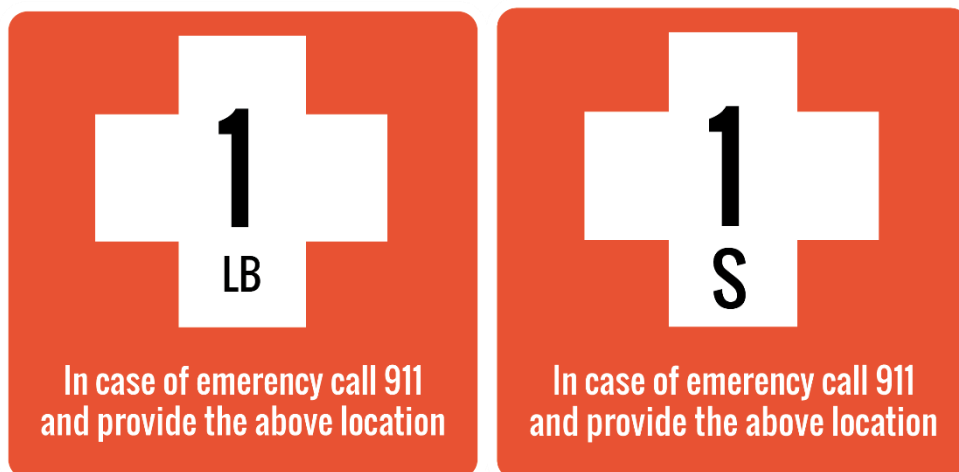
1. "Emergency Response Plan trailhead signs" – Emergency Response Plan signs are located at all trailheads to inform users of the Emergency Response Plan in place in the Syringa and Lower Basin trail systems. The trailhead signs inform users to always call 911 in case of an emergency, to be alert, and to remain aware of emergency location numbers within the trail system. An example of an emergency trail location number sign is also displayed.

**Figure 1:** Trailhead signage for Lower Basin (left) and Syringa trail system (right)



2. “Emergency Location Number signs” – An emergency location number is a designated point within the trail system to help emergency responders locate injured trail users. Numbers are located on 3.5”x3.5” square decals applied to carsonite trail sign posts (in the Lower Basin) or printed on metal signs mounted to trail sign posts or trees (in the Syringa System) at approximately 1/4-mile intervals along linear trails and at most intersections within both trail systems. Each emergency location number sign includes a number and a letter or letters indicating which trail network the user is in (“S” for Syringa, “LB” for Lower Basin). Geolocations for each emergency location number sign have been provided to Bonner County GIS and recorded within the County’s GIS system.

**Figure 2:** Emergency locator number signage example from the Lower Basin (left) and Syringa trail system (right)



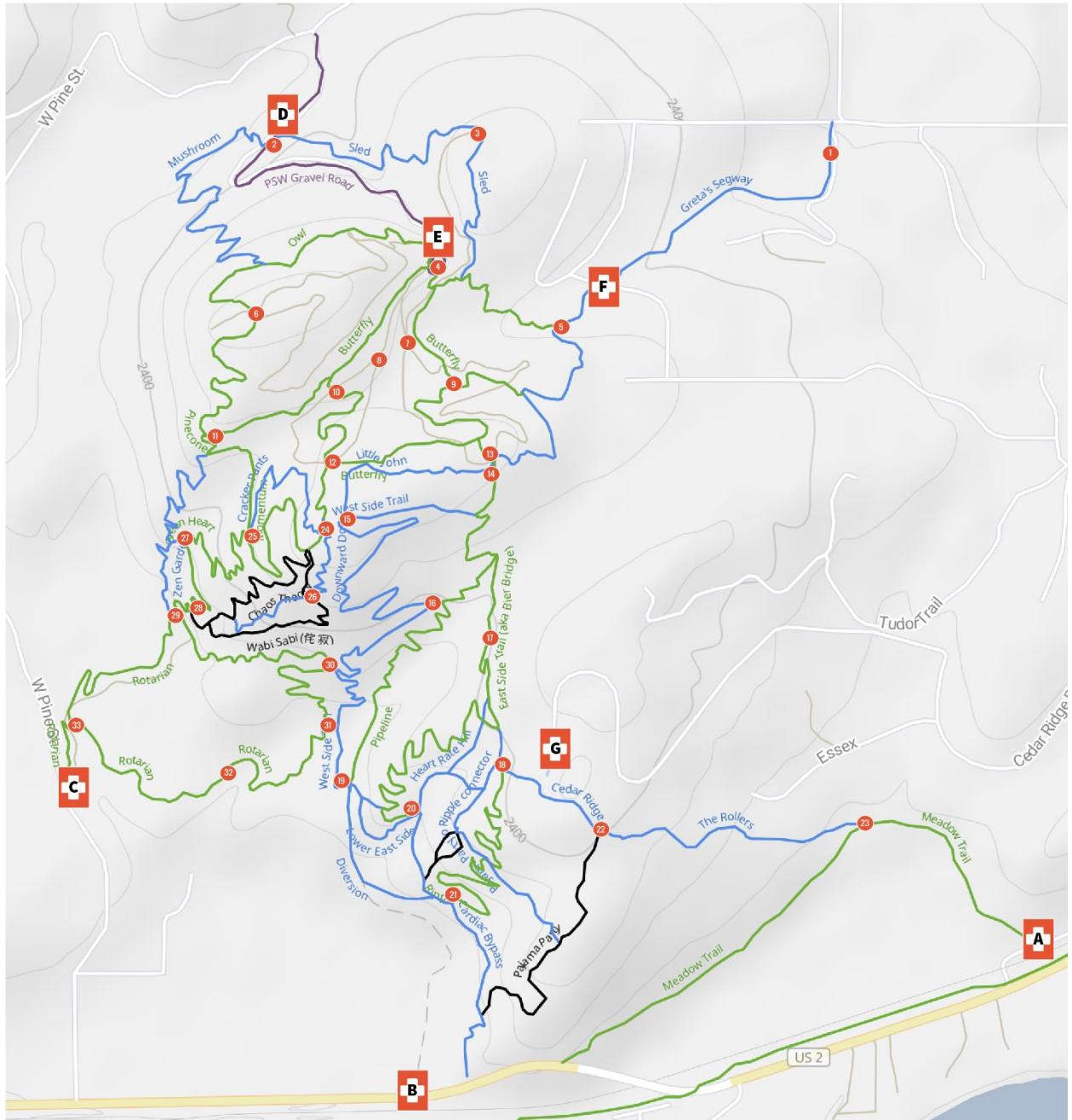
3. “EMS Access points” – EMS access points are indicated on trail system maps for both the Syringa and Lower Basin systems. Access points are identified by a letter (A, B, C, etc.) and either a street address or a location along Schweitzer Mountain Road. Tables indicating which Emergency location number signs are accessed from which EMS Access Point are provided in this plan.
4. “Emergency Locator Sign and EMS Access Point Maps” – Included in this plan are maps showing the location of all emergency locator signs and access points.
5. “Bonner County GIS system” – Bonner County GIS department has been provided with all emergency locator sign and EMS access point locations for entry into the county’s GIS system and for coordination with 911 dispatch and first responders.
6. “Incidents” – When calls for medical assistance or other emergencies (such as fires) are received by 911, Bonner County Dispatch notifies the relevant first responder agency (most likely Selkirk Fire or Bonner County EMS) and follows agency protocol.
  - a. Dispatch should ask the trail user calling in the emergency if they know what trail network they are in. If the response is Syringa or Lower Basin, then...
  - b. Dispatch should ask the caller if they know the nearest emergency locator number, and if not, could they walk up or down the trail to find it.
  - c. Once an emergency locator number is identified near the site of the incident, Dispatch can reference the table within this plan to identify the correct EMS access point.
  - d. Dispatch communicates to first responders which EMS access point the is best for responding to the incident.
  - e. Referencing Bonner County GIS system, dispatch may determine the exact coordinate of the incident and provide further detail to first responders how to locate the victim or incident.
7. “Follow-up” – Once an incident response is complete, the agency responding to the emergency will report to the relevant land manager (City, USFS, KLT, or private landowners) and Pend Oreille Pedalers after each incident to provide an incident summary. Incident summaries may be reported to the following:
  - a. For the Syringa Trail System - Kaniksu Land Trust: 208-263-9471
  - b. For the Lower Basin trail system – City of Sandpoint: 208-263-3158
  - c. Pend Oreille Pedalers (both trail systems): 208-290-0137

### Plan Relevance and Updates

The pace of development of new trails within Sandpoint’s Frontcountry trail systems is unlikely to slow down in the coming years. As new trails are developed in the Little Sand Creek Watershed and in the Syringa System, or as existing trails are incorporated into the Emergency Response Plan (such as those on Schweitzer-owned property), there will be a need to update the maps and tables within this plan and add new emergency trail location numbers and EMS access points to Bonner County’s GIS system. Existing trails systems or linear trails not currently in the plan (such as those identified above) may be incorporated, necessitating that the plan be updated. Coordination with other agencies such as the USFS will be necessary as new trails are developed.

### Trail Maps and EMS Access Points

**Figure 3:** Syringa System map with emergency locator numbers and EMS access points

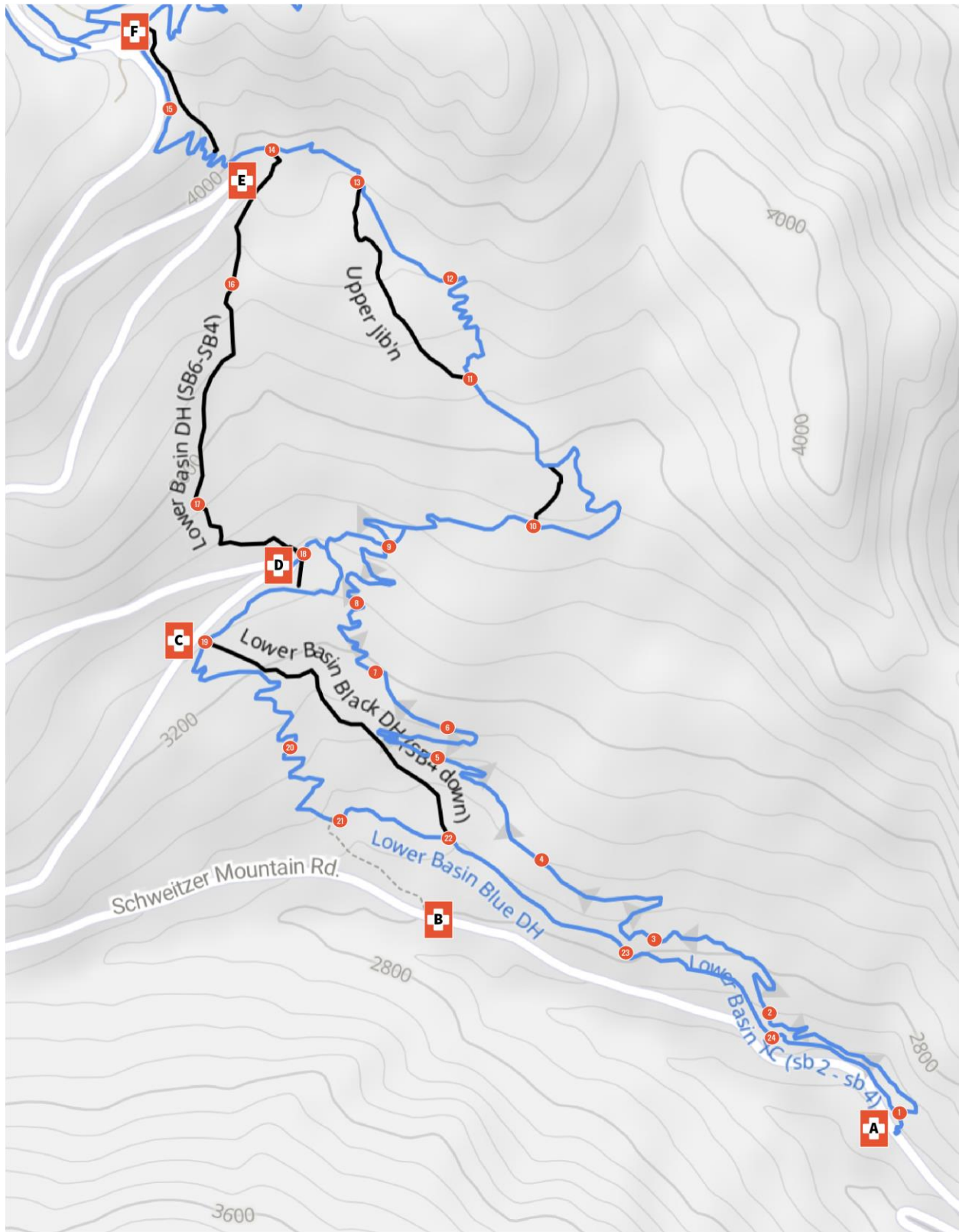


**Figure 4:** Syringa Trail System EMS Access Points

Syringa Trail System Emergency Locator numbers			
Emergency marker #	Trail name	Property name	EMS Access point
1	Greta's Segway	Greta's trailhead	F
2	Sled/Mushroom	PSW	D
3	Outhouse (wide trail)	PSW	D
4	Butterfly	PSW	E
5	Greta's Segway	PSW	F
6	Crooked Tree (wide trail)	PSW	E
7	Homestead (wide trail)	PSW	E
8	Meadow (wide trail)	PSW	E
9	Butterfly	PSW	E
10	Meadow (wide trail)	PSW	E
11	Pinecone	PSW	E
12	Meadow (wide trail)	PSW	E
13	Homestead (wide trail)	PSW	E
14	Top of Greta's Segway	Sherwood Forest	E
15	Westside/Little John	Sherwood Forest	E
16	Westside	Sherwood Forest	B
17	Eastside	Sherwood Forest	G
18	Eastside / top of Ripple	Sherwood Forest	G
19	Westside	Sherwood Forest	B
20	Bottom of Eastside	Sherwood Forest	B
21	Bottom of Ripple / Cardiac Bypass	Sherwood Forest	B
22	Top of the Rollers / Pajama Party	Romine	G
23	Meadow Trail	Romine	A
24	Momentum	VTT	E
25	Momentum	VTT	E
26	Downward Dog	VTT	E
27	Green Heart	VTT	C
28	Rotarian	VTT	C
29	Rotarian	VTT	C
30	Rotarian	VTT	C
31	Rotarian	VTT	C
32	Rotarian	VTT	C
33	Rotarian	VTT	C

EMS Access points		
Indicator	Name	Street address
A	Lower Syringa Heights ("Blue Gate")	1310 Syringa Heights Road, Dover
B	Sherwood Forest from Hwy 2	25243 US Hwy 2, Dover
C	VTT parking lot	13482 West Pine Street, Dover
D	PSW lower parking lot	11915 West Pine Street, Dover
E	Pine Street Woods main parking lot	11915 West Pine Street, Dover
F	Ravenwood Lane trail crossing	Ravenwood Lane, Sandpoint
G	Cedar Ridge Road	1486 Cedar Ridge Road, Sandpoint

Figure 5: Lower Basin map with emergency locator numbers and EMS access points





**Figure 6:** Lower Basin EMS Access Points

Lower Basin Emergency Locator numbers		
Emergency marker #	Trail name	EMS Access point
1	XC	A
2	XC	A
3	XC	B
4	XC	B
5	XC	B
6	XC	B
7	XC	D
8	XC	D
9	XC	D
10	XC	D
11	XC	E
12	XC	E
13	XC	E
14	XC	E
15	XC	F
16	Black DH	E
17	Black DH	D
18	Blue DH	D
19	Blue DH	C
20	Blue DH	C
21	Blue DH	B
22	Blue DH	B
23	Blue DH	B
24	Blue DH	A
EMS Access Points		
Indicator	Location along Schweitzer Mountain Road	
A	0.25 miles above 2nd switchback	
B	1.25 miles above 2nd switchback	
C	0.25 miles before 4th switchback	
D	Switchback 4	
E	Switchbak 6	
F	East side of Schweitzer roundabout	