



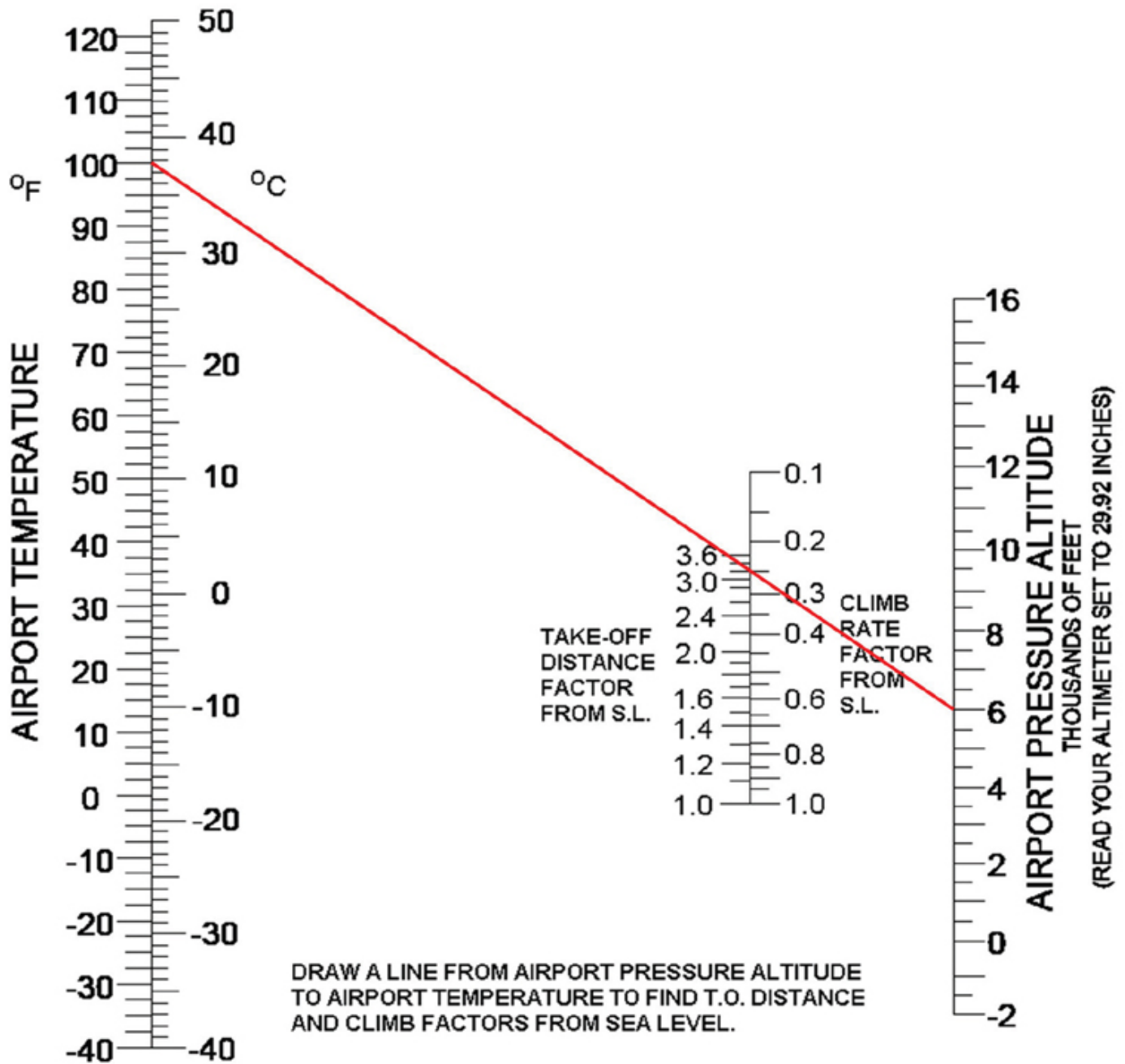
Big Creek (U60)

Recommended Standard Operating Procedures



7/2026

KOCH CHART



The Koch chart for calculating the take-off distance factor and the climb rate factor from the airport temperature and pressure altitude. The red line, connecting an airport temperature of 100°F with an airport pressure altitude of 6,000 feet, passes through a take-off distance factor of 3.2 and a climb rate factor of 0.25. This means that the takeoff roll will take 3.2 times the runway length that would be required at sea level, and the climb rate will be only 0.25 of that at sea level, given a standard atmosphere.

WARNING, PILOTS!

DENSITY ALTITUDE CAN KILL!

High density altitude means longer takeoff and landing distances and shallow climb gradients.

Airport Name:

Big Creek (U60)

Airport Elevation:

5,743

MSL

Standard Temperature at This Airport:

4

°C

39

°F

IMPORTANT! The density altitudes listed below reflect a **STANDARD DAY** at this airport. Altimeter settings below 29.92 will increase density altitude and decrease aircraft performance.

TEMPERATURE	DENSITY ALTITUDE
13°C/55°F	6,823 MSL
15°C/59°F	7,063 MSL
18°C/65°F	7,423 MSL
21°C/70°F	7,783 MSL
24°C/75°F	8,143 MSL
27°C/80°F	8,503 MSL
29°C/85°F	8,743 MSL
32°C/90°F	9,103 MSL
35°C/95°F	9,463 MSL
38°C/100°F	9,823 MSL

AIRCRAFT PERFORMANCE



What is Density Altitude?

Density altitude is pressure altitude corrected for nonstandard temperature. In other words, the density of the air decreases as altitude, temperature, and humidity increase. This degrades power, thrust, lift, and flight control effectiveness. In a sense, it's the altitude at which the airplane "feels" it's flying. The thinner air results in longer takeoff and landing distances and degraded climb performance.

Know your aircraft performance!

To learn more, scan the code below.



ASIAOPA.org/spotlight/mountainflying



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BE FOUND!

Register your 406 MHz beacon!

Registration is **FREE** and helps us find you faster
in an emergency situation.

To register and for more information visit:
www.beaconregistration.noaa.gov

Monitor Guard - 121.5

idaho.aeronautics@itd.idaho.gov



We recommend you check and update your registration annually

► Introduction

Welcome to Big Creek (U60), one of Idaho's premier backcountry airstrip destinations. Mountain flying in Idaho is one of general aviation's most gratifying flight experiences. Idaho has nearly 100 backcountry airstrips that offer access to unequaled outdoor recreation such as camping, fishing and hiking.

At the same time, flying in the mountains of Idaho is a serious, challenging endeavor and the number of recent accidents attests to that fact. Safe backcountry flying requires rock-solid skills in slow flight, airspeed control, intimate knowledge of your aircraft performance and well-prescribed personal limitations. Most of all, safe backcountry flying requires the proper attitude, one that is safe, conservative and professional. A safe flight is a stress-free and enjoyable flight.

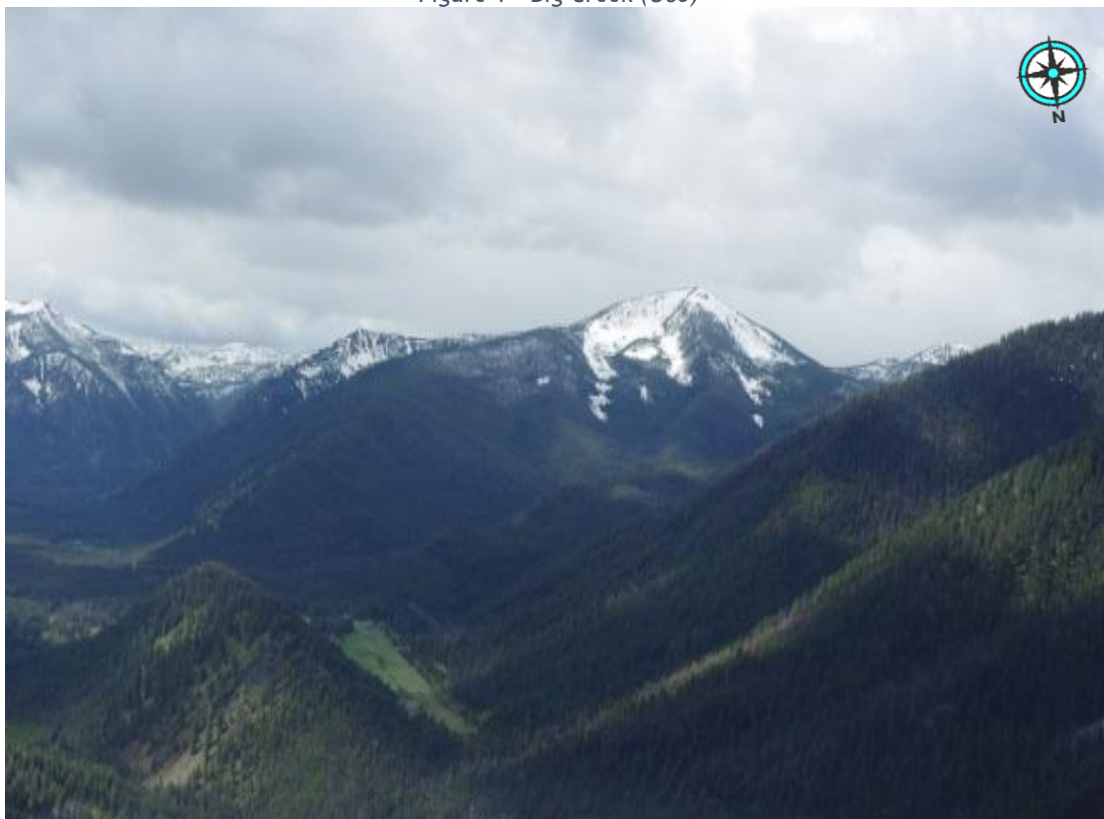
The procedures in this document are not a substitute for proper mountain flying training.

These preferred operating procedures were collaboratively developed by the FAA, NTSB, local flight training providers and the Idaho Division of Aeronautics. Our goal is to set a standard for safe operating practices at the Big Creek Airport. These include proper planning, communications, traffic patterns and inflight decision-making. They are proven procedures based on safe operating practices that will ensure your Idaho flying experience is a safe and enjoyable one.

We look forward to your safe arrival at Big Creek Airport.

Idaho Division of Aeronautics

Figure 1 - Big Creek (U60)



✈️ Preflight Planning

Big Creek (U60) is part of the vast network of Idaho backcountry airstrips. Careful reading and adherence to the procedures in this manual are essential to maintaining the safety at this particular backcountry airport. Flight planning should include:

- thorough aircraft maintenance status,
- familiarity with NOTAMs,
- backcountry operations,
- Idaho mountain flying tips,
- density altitude calculations,
- common courtesies,
- backcountry etiquette,
- weather en-route and during your stay,
- search and rescue procedures and
- survival gear.

Do not attempt operations at Big Creek without having a solid fundamental background in mountain flying. The Idaho Division of Aeronautics strongly recommends that visiting pilots obtain an airport checkout before landing at Big Creek Airport. The Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) now has a page where instructors list their services and specialties at:

idahoaviation.com/contact/

WARNING:

Be familiar with your aircraft's performance characteristics for high density altitude operations.

Example: PA of 5,743' with standard Baro Pressure and OAT of 30C = Density Altitude of 8,692'.

REFER TO THE PERFORMANCE SECTION OF YOUR AIRCRAFT'S PILOT OPERATING HANDBOOK (POH)

Route Planning

Arrivals

Landing Runway 19:

It is **recommended** that you land runway 19, wind permitting. Make your initial arrival call on 122.9 at least 5 miles from Big Creek Airport. Announce your distance, direction and altitude from Big Creek Airport. Maintain 1,500' above field elevation (AFE) as applicable or minimum (7250). *Configure your airplane to canyon maneuvering speed. Begin a descent to a traffic pattern altitude of 800-1000' AFE.*

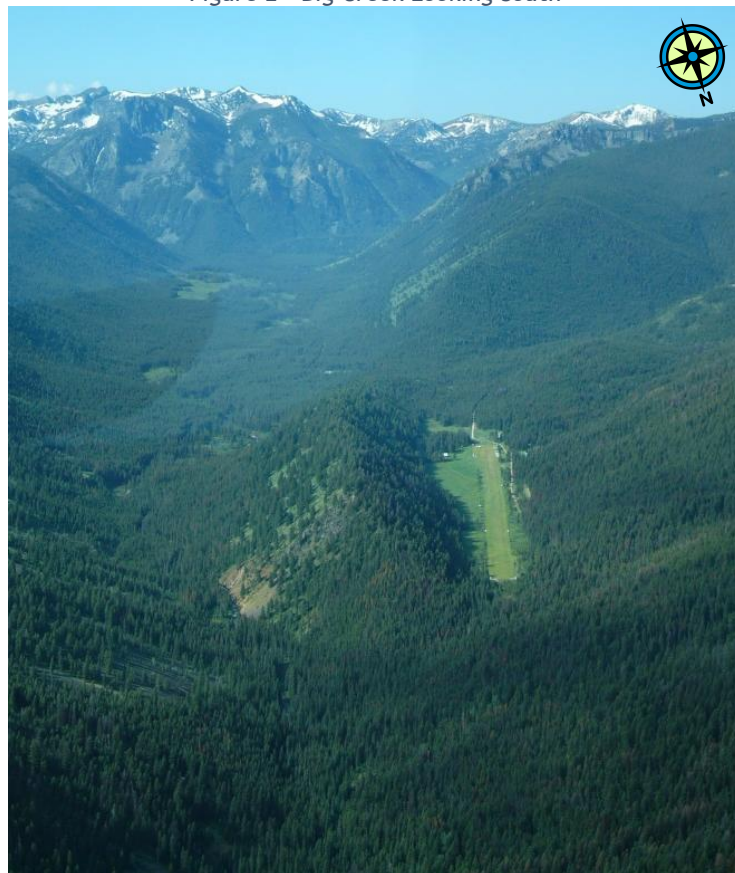
(Big Creek Airport) N45 07.99 W115 19.31

CAUTION:

There could be numerous airplanes departing and arriving north of the airfield. Consistent position reports, traffic scans and use of landing lights are crucial upon descent and throughout the approach into Big Creek Airport. You may encounter strong downdrafts on final.

If needed, circle to observe the airfield for obstacles and hazards such as airplanes, animals, vehicles, pedestrians and sprinklers. Conduct a standard left-hand pattern that includes an *upwind, crosswind, downwind, base and final.*

Figure 2 - Big Creek Looking South



Landing Runway 01:

NOTE

*Landing downstream to the north is **NOT recommended**. Landings to the north should only be considered when wind or weather dictates that landing to the south would be unsafe.*

CAUTION:

USFS Heliport Ops adjacent to the SW end of the airport. Activity is greatest during summer months.

Straight in Landing

Straight in landings to Runway 19 or 01 are **strongly discouraged**.

WARNING:

By not joining the pattern, there is increased risk of a midair collision. Your radio calls could be masked by terrain. You may not see airplanes, animals, vehicles, pedestrians or sprinklers on the runway until established on final.

Landing Abort Procedures

Runway 19 and 01

At your predetermined abort altitude, typically 200-300' AFE, begin your abort and follow the desired abort path (see map). Pick an altitude that will provide a safe abort procedure. Abort altitudes may vary for every type of aircraft and situation. 200-300' AFE is a good altitude for most aircraft.

NOTE:

You must abort the landing early if you cannot land on-speed, on aim-point, and within the first 1/3 of the runway. Early recognition to abort is paramount and requires instinctive action by the pilot.

Figure 3 - Approach 19



Departures

NOTE

Declaring intentions, scanning for traffic and use of landing lights are encouraged for departures. Make your initial radio call on 122.9 prior to taxiing. Landing traffic always have the right of way.

Departing Runway 01

North Departure-Example: “Big Creek traffic, Cessna 20836 departing runway 01 climbing northeast bound”.

CAUTION:

Rising terrain to the east will restrict your view of aircraft on the downwind and base legs. You may encounter strong downdrafts. Southerly winds prevail mid-morning through the afternoon. Aircraft should remain on the ground until more favorable conditions exist.

NOTE

Consider extending your departure leg towards Smith Creek before making your turn to the south (see map). Doing so might provide better altitude separation between you and downwind traffic.

Figure 4 - Runway 01 View



Departing Runway 19

Departing Runway 19 is **Strongly Discouraged**
Why?

1. Your takeoff path is directly toward rising terrain.
2. You may encounter strong downdrafts.
3. High density altitude conditions have contributed to accidents at Big Creek.

Figure 5 - Runway 19 View



Safety Alerts

Arrivals

- **BE ALERT** for high-density traffic en-route to Big Creek during fly-ins.
- **Runway 19:** Prior to making your base to final turn, be sure to scan the final for any straight-in traffic. **STRAIGHT-IN TRAFFIC PROCEDURES ARE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED.**
- Aircraft should make inbound Reporting Point calls at least 5NM out. State your intentions on backcountry frequency 122.9. Refer to the  Route Planning section of this guide.
- If your landing appears unsafe because of altitude, spacing, speed of preceding aircraft, or any other reason, abort your landing and initiate a go-around above 300' AFE.
- **COMMON ERRORS:** excessive speed and/or altitude, landing long, and late go-arounds.
- **FORMATION ARRIVALS ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED**

Departures

- **STRONGLY DISCOURAGED DEPARTING RWY 19;** your path is directly towards rising terrain. Depart runway 19 only when wind and/or weather conditions dictate.
- Landing traffic may only be visible when established on final.
- Last 1000' of runway 01 could be wet and soft (see map).
- Runway and tie down area subject to ongoing rodent damage. Be alert for large rodent holes.
- Aircraft should make outbound Reporting Point calls. State your intentions. Refer to the  Route Planning section of this guide.
- **FORMATION DEPARTURES ARE HIGHLY DISCOURAGED**

Airport Notes

MISHAPS, INCIDENTS, OR ACCIDENTS must be reported to the Valley Co. Sheriff's dispatch at (208) 382-5160 and the Boise FAA Flight Standards Office at (208) 387-4000.

- **Safety is priority Number One!**
- Landing traffic should clear the runway and expedite to parking.
- Use of landing lights while in the pattern is recommended.
- Tie downs are frequently obscured by tall grass. Be alert for deep rodent holes in this vicinity.
- Consider remaining in the parking area until aircraft on final have landed.
- Pilot training is discouraged at Big Creek Airport during organized fly-ins.
- Keep radio communications brief and concise. No excessive chatter.
- Fuel is not available at Big Creek Airport and no winter maintenance.
- **BE FAMILIAR WITH HIGH DENSITY ALTITUDE OPERATIONS.**

- Aerobatic maneuvers, formation flying, and low passes are all highly discouraged over Big Creek Airport.
 - Non-radio equipped aircraft are not recommended during Big Creek Airport fly-ins.
 - Wi-Fi service available at the lodge.
 - Webcams facing north/south are accessible at idahoaviation.com/iaa-webcams-page/
 - During the spring and summer months, sprinklers are active throughout the day.
 - Camping located SE side adjacent runway.
 - Big Creek USFS Ranger Station open spring and summer from 7:30AM - 12:00 midnight.
 - You are always responsible for your safety and the safety of those in your group.
-

Checklist Add-ons

1. Check ELT on **121.5** before shutdown
2. Monitor 121.5 during flight
3. Close flight plan with FAA

REMINDER:

121.5 ELTs are no longer satellite monitored. Consider upgrading to a **406 ELT**, **PLB**, or **SPOT** device.

Common Courtesy

- Be considerate of other wilderness users
- Fly quietly and safely
- Minimize practice landings and takeoffs

Important Contacts

Agency	Phone Number
Idaho Division of Aeronautics	208-334-8775
Leidos Flight Service, 1-800-WX-BRIEF	800-992-7433
Big Creek Ranger Station	208-634-2784
Big Creek lodge (reservations)	208-949-1828
Valley County Police Dispatch	208-382-5160
Arnold Aviation (<i>for help relaying emergency info</i>)	208-382-4844

Download SOP Documents and Videos

itd.idaho.gov/aero/pilot-safety/

Scroll to:

- Standard Operating Procedures for Popular Backcountry Airstrips



Backcountry Flight Instructors

Contact the Idaho Aviation Association (IAA) at

idahoaviation.com/contact/

Phone: (508) 803-5722



Figure 6 - Big Creek (U60) Area

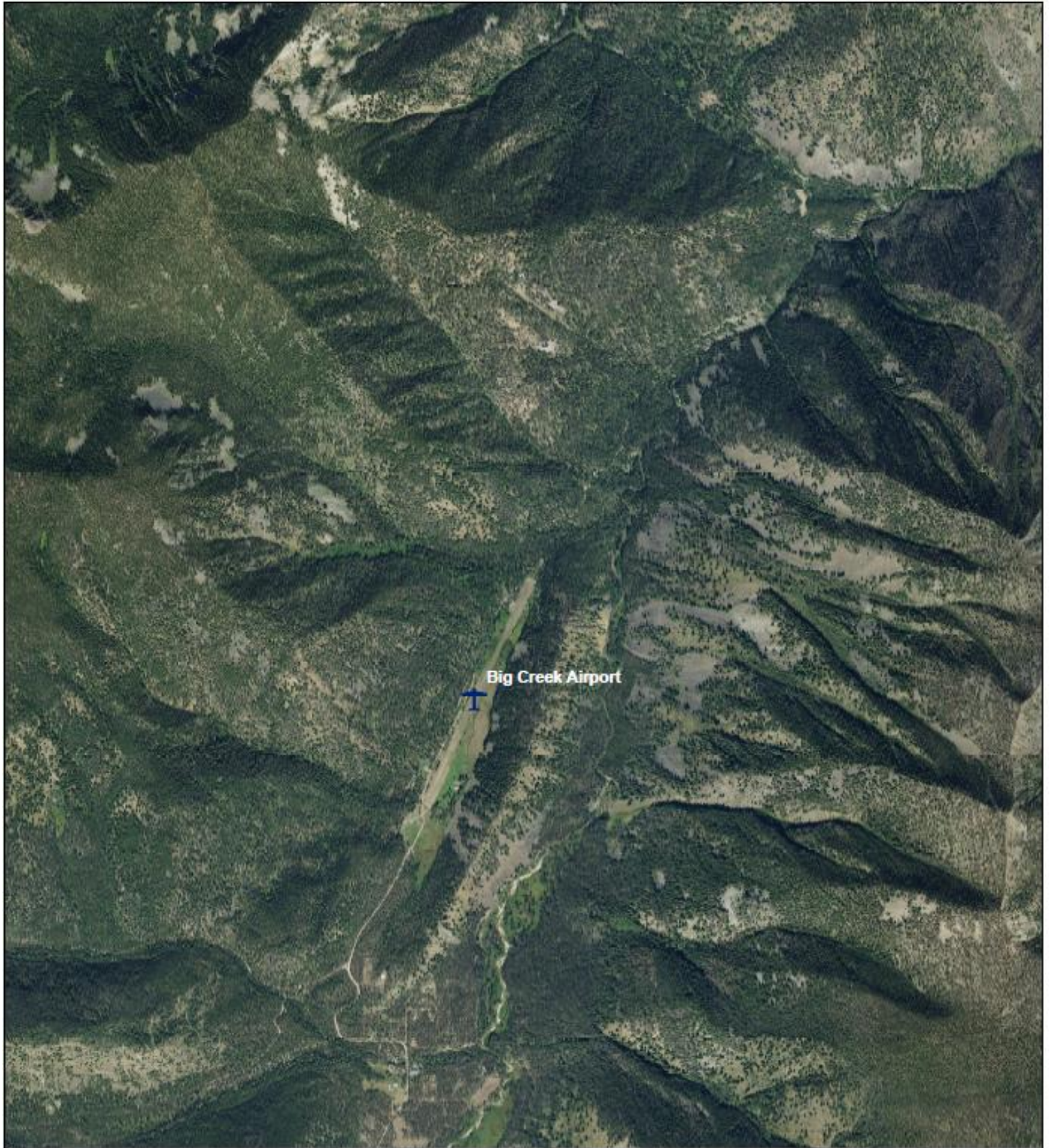


Figure 7 - Big Creek (U60) Overview





Figure 8 - Big Creek (U60) Traffic Pattern

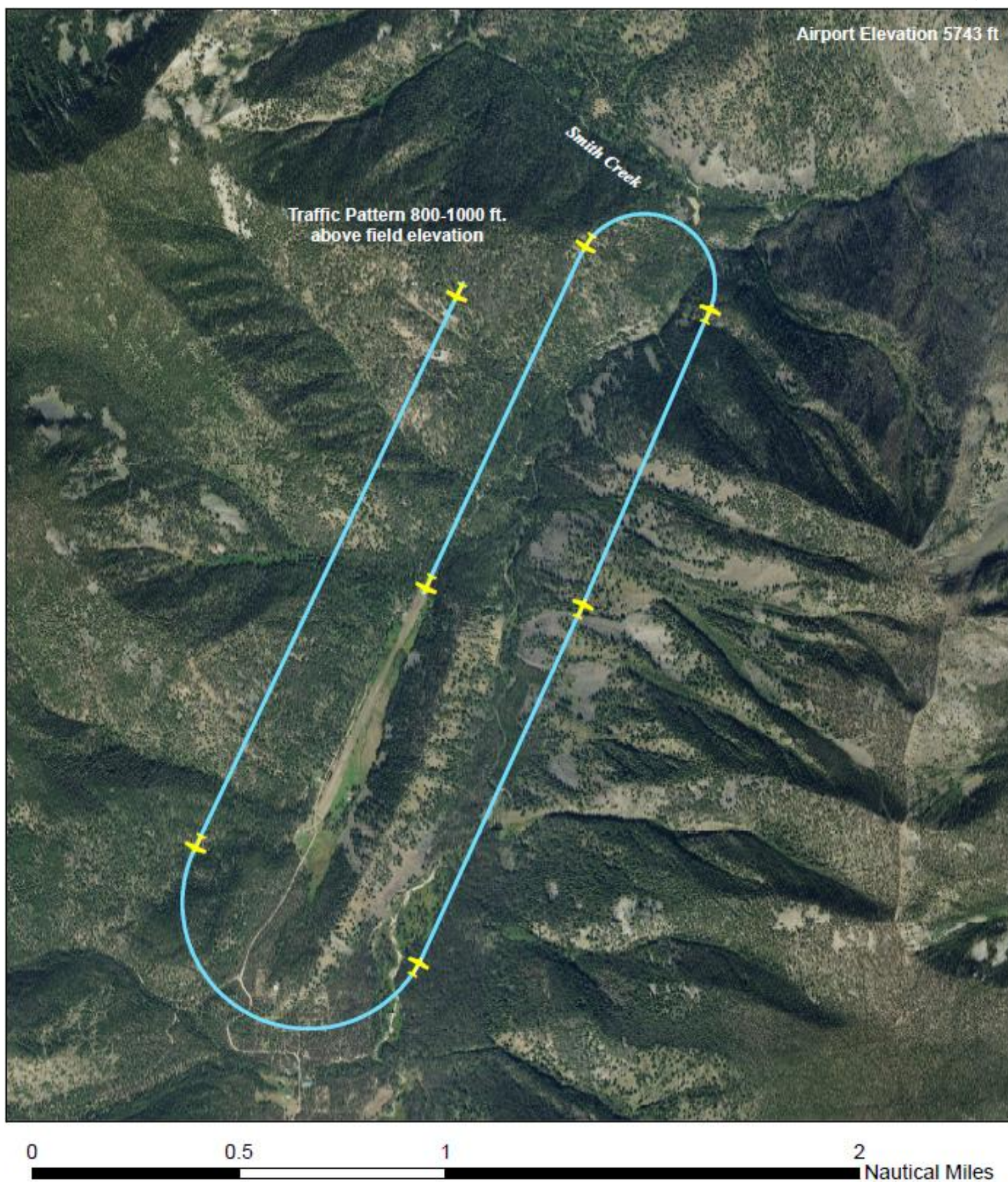
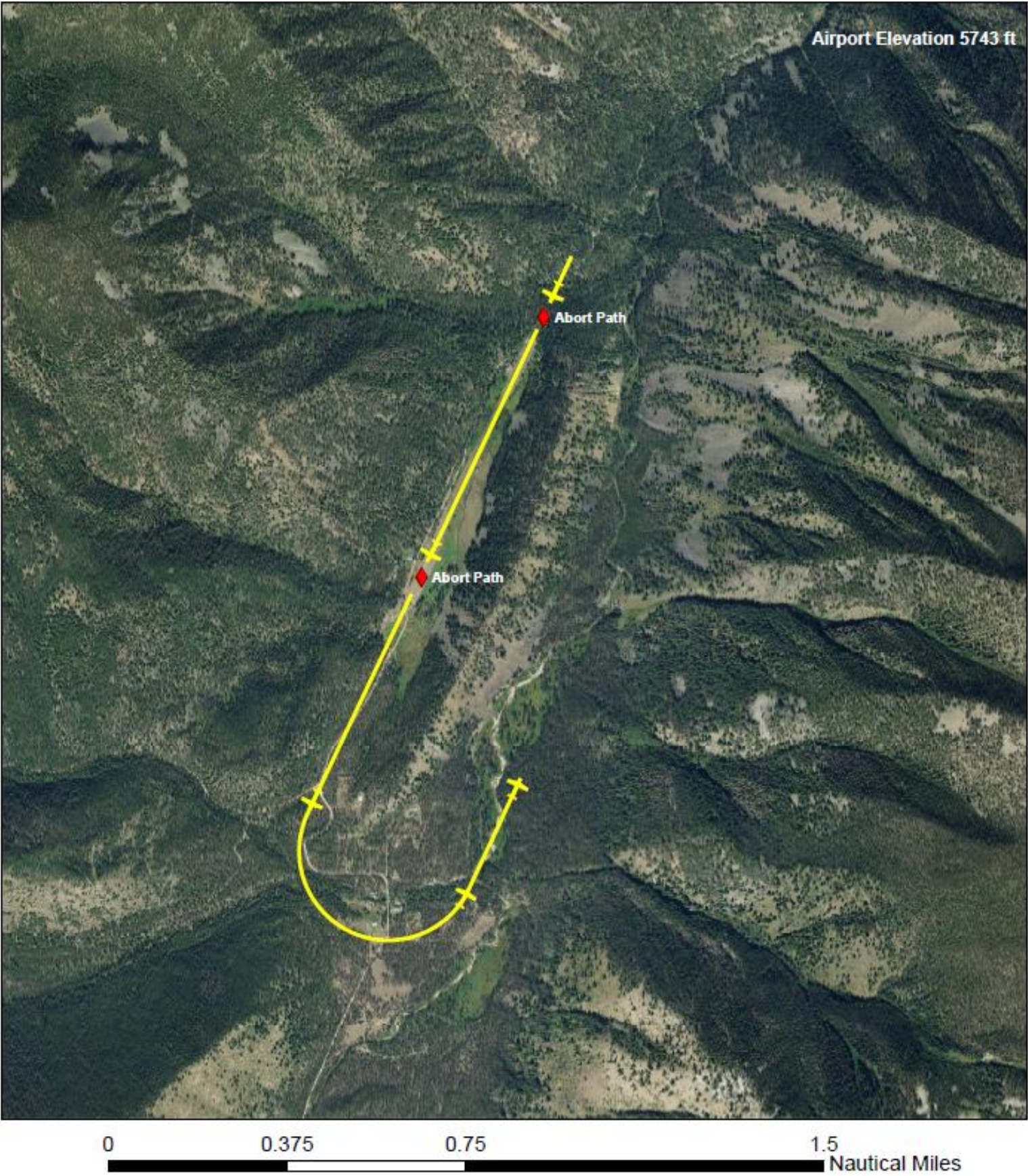


Figure 9 - Big Creek (U60) Abort Path



FLYING INTO THE BACKCOUNTRY?



Please respect and protect these special places.

- ✓ Be considerate of other backcountry users
- ✓ Safely reduce your noise signature
- ✓ Train at home — no touch-and-goes in the backcountry
- ✓ Pack it in / pack it out
- ✓ Use CTAF 122.9 — minimize chatter



theRAF.org



The Recreational Aviation Foundation preserves, improves, and creates airstrips for recreational access.



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