

## Lasal Mountain Lower

The Lasal Mountain Lower snow course is located on Lasal Mountain at an elevation of 8800 feet msl. This snow course is on an open, exposed northwest aspect of a hill. There are aspen trees to the south and east up the hill, whereas the remainder of the exposure is primarily covered by brush and grass. The exposure is directly in line with prevailing winds and there is a substantial sun exposure as well. This wind exposure is important as the initial vegetation was primarily brush species such as sagebrush and rabbit brush. On an open wind exposure slope, snow will accumulate to the top of the vegetation that covers the course and then will become more exposed to wind scour and erosion. If that vegetation is changed to primarily grasses or other vegetation that is substantially lower in height and density, the level to which the wind and scour becomes much shorter and consequently, there is potential for less snow. This, of course, is highly dependent on wind run in any given year and particularly wind run during and immediately after storm events.

Potential weather modification: none



In this 1936 photo of Lasal Lower, notice the height and density of the brush species.



From this angle, looking perpendicular across the course brush is still a predominant feature of the area on both the snow course as well as the adjacent hill side.



Yet again, notice the consistency, density and height of brushy species along the course.



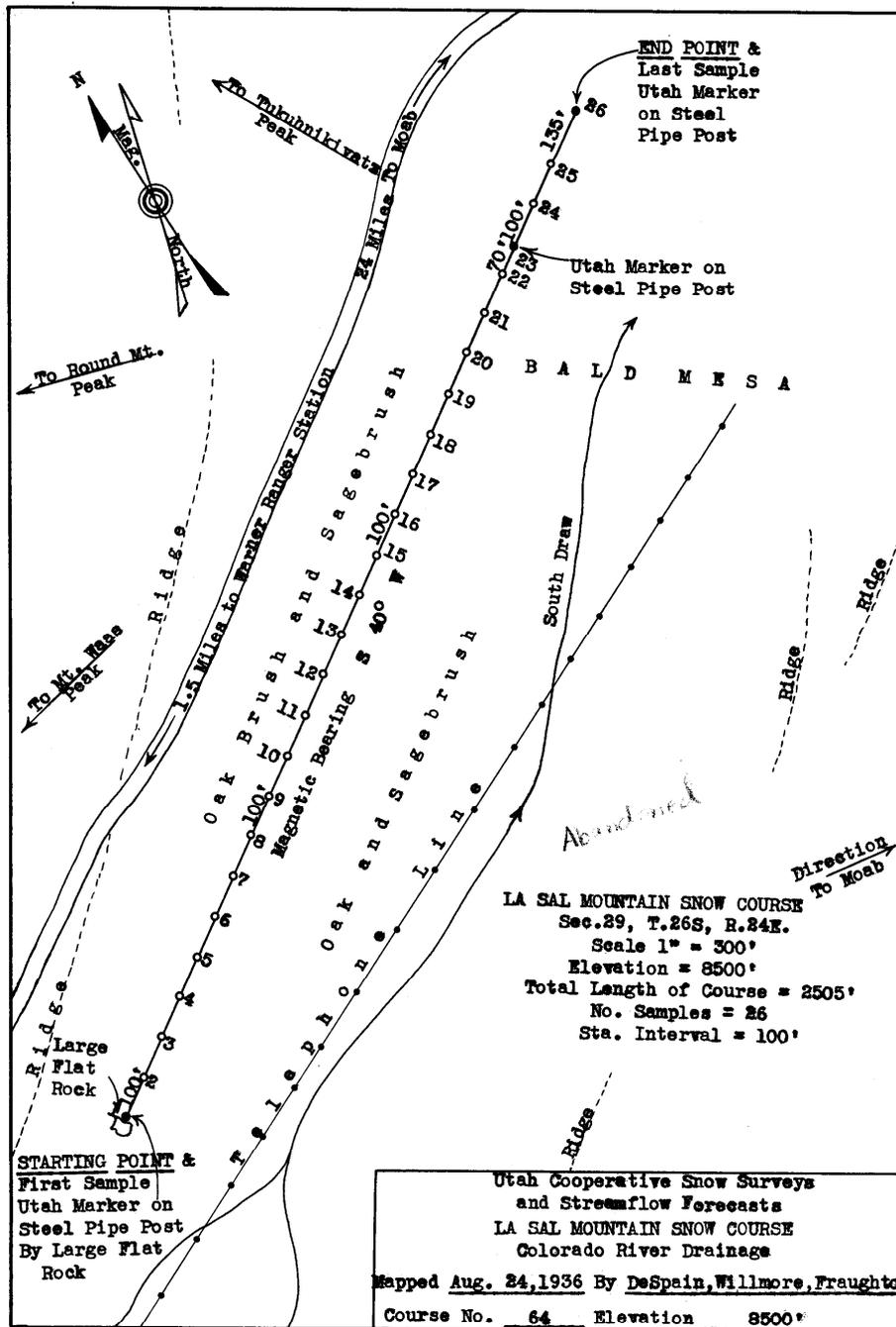
Current conditions at Lasal Lower. Notice the absence of brush species which have been replaced by grasses and forbs. Only remnants of the former brush complex remain. Note also the open aspect to wind exposure.



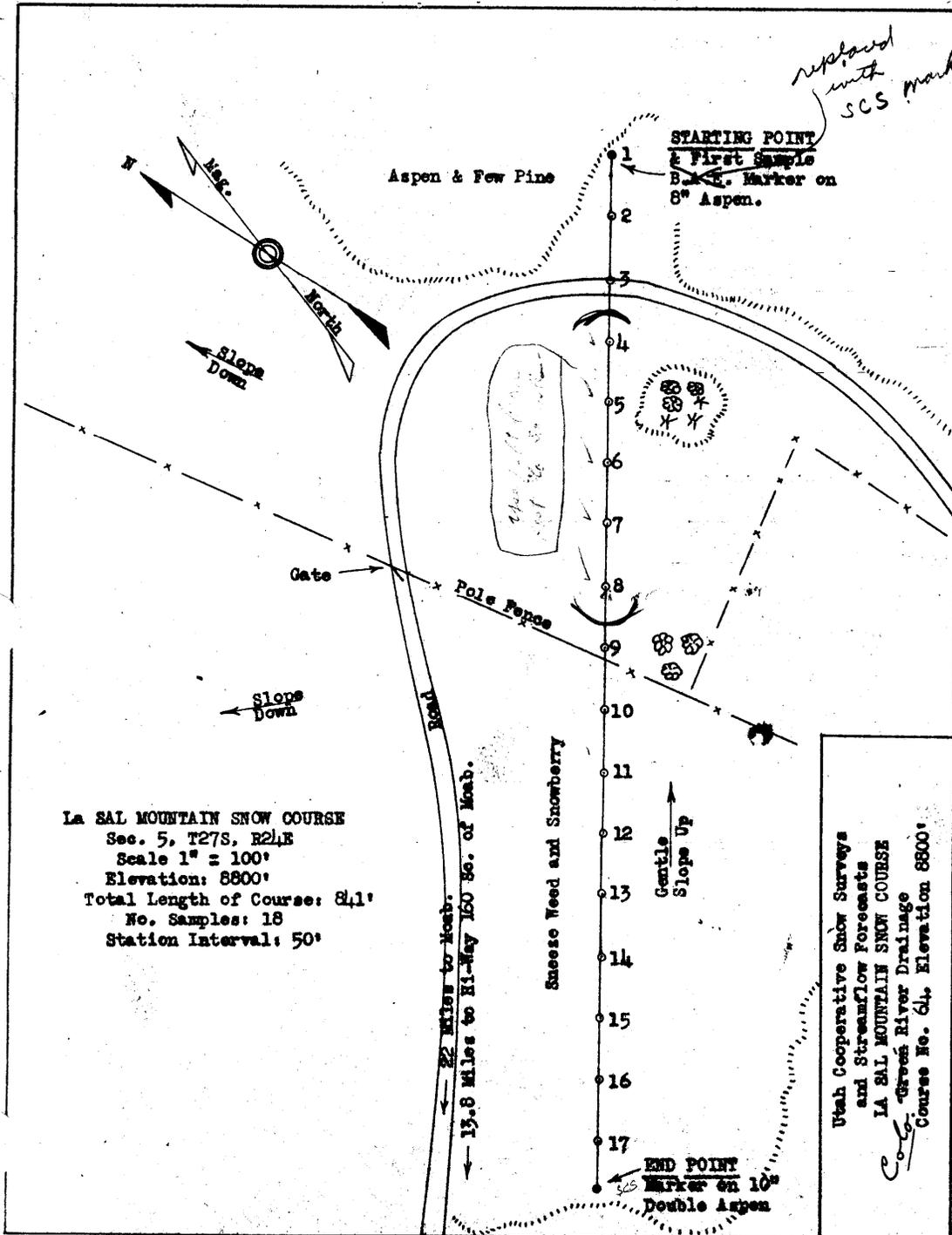
The course looking to the east. Most brush is now gone.



A general look at the wind exposure to the west and northwest.

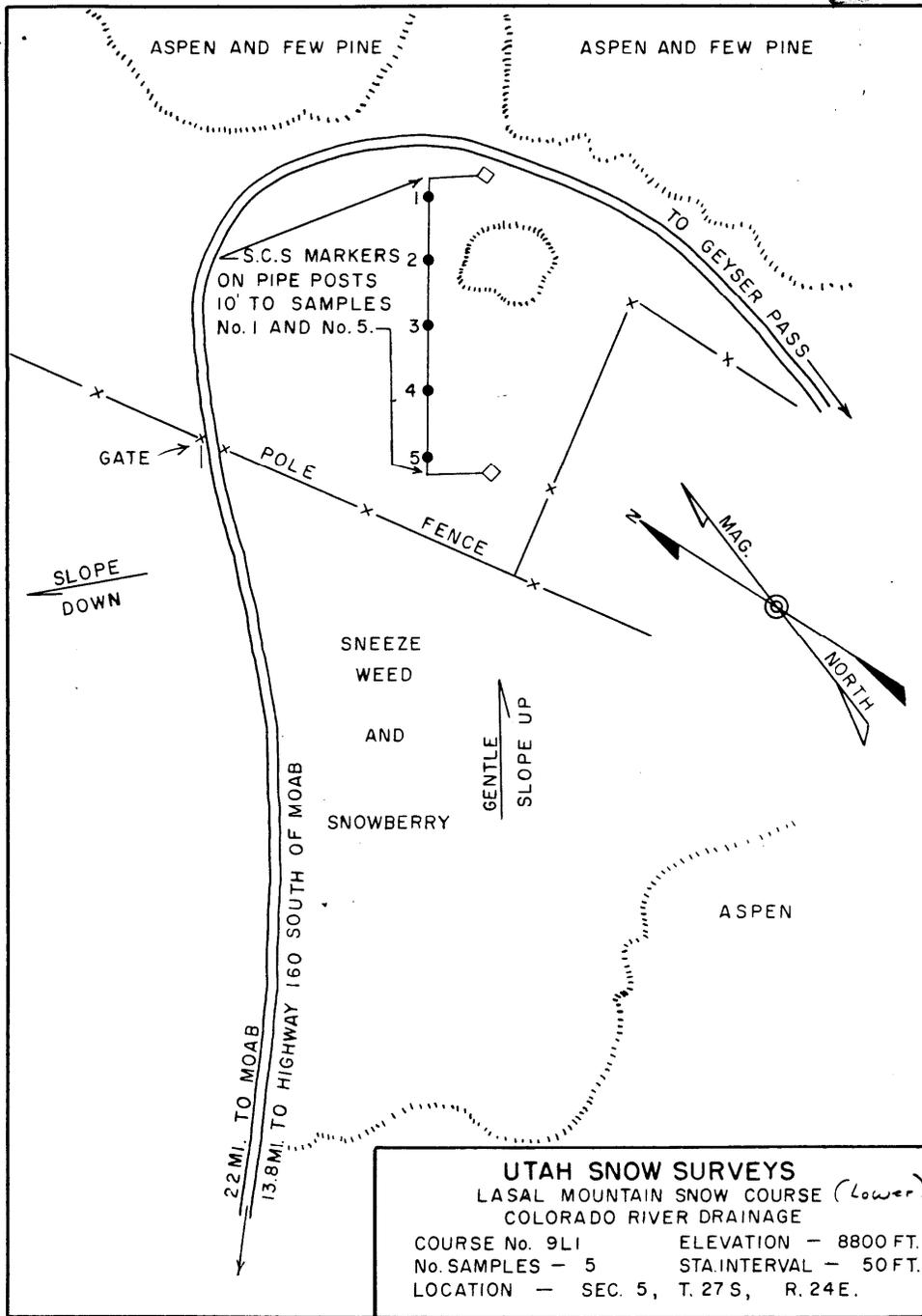


Original Lasal Mountain Lower snow course map.



Snow course shortened to 17 points.

OK - 8/7/86 DJ



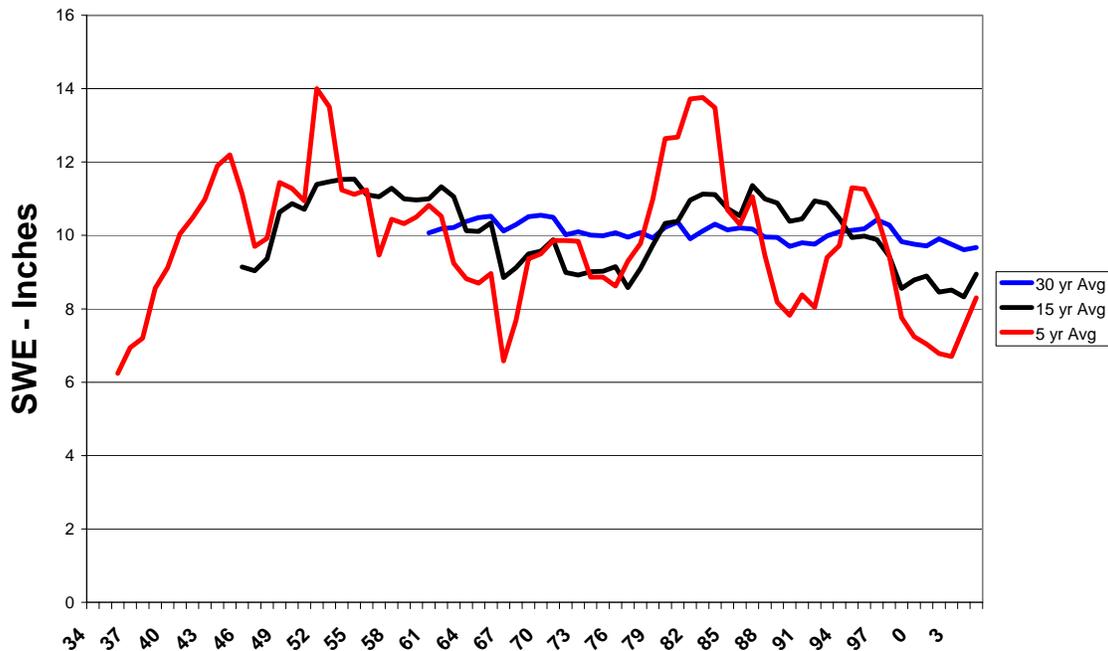
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Snow course shortened to 5 points in 1986.

When a snow course was shortened, the original points continued to be measured although renumbered, thus points 1,2,3,4 and 5 may have originally been points 13,14,15,16 and 17. This map also shows the relative position of vegetation and other features with respect to the course. Distances are not measured and asterisks do not represent individual trees rather a general depiction of vegetation. The density of vegetation is also relative and not absolute.

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This chart shows a fairly steady SWE pattern over all years. One would have expected to see a decline in SWE in response to vegetative changes. This site is not likely to be impacted by weather modification. It has no other changes or impacts that we can identify. If a decline in snowpack due to vegetative change is expected, yet has not occurred, what can be inferred about the long term pattern of SWE accumulation? Is there simply not enough wind and exposure for a measurable impact or has SWE accumulation actually increased? Has the change in vegetation had any impact on SWE accumulation? Given the premise that the data are innocent until proven guilty, this site could be used for long term comparison.

R Julander  
2007