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Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Show Low South Land Exchange

Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Prescott National Forests



Cover Photo: Show Low South Federal Parcel

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Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Show Low South Land Exchange

Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Prescott National Forests, Arizona

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Abstract: First American Title Insurance Company, as Trustee, and not personally, under Trust No. 8667; for the benefit of SL Land Exchange, LLC has proposed a land exchange with the United States Forest Service in Apache, Coconino, Greenlee, Navajo, and Yavapai counties, Arizona. The proposed exchange includes several geographically separate land parcels located on three individual national forests: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs), Coconino National Forest (CNF), and Prescott National Forest (PNF). The proposal to exchange lands in the national forest boundary responds to the Forest Service's need for consolidation of Federal land ownership patterns. Non-Federal lands within national forests that are included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitat and perennial waters. These lands are currently subject to development that could diminish those values and support activities that would be incompatible with the surrounding national forest character. The non-Federal lands currently contribute to the undesirable ownership pattern and are classified as desirable for acquisition.

The proposed exchange involves approximately 1,028 acres of Federal lands for approximately 1,558 acres of non-Federal lands. There are 13 parcels total: 9 non-Federal parcels to be conveyed into Federal ownership; and 4 Federal parcels to be conveyed to non-Federal ownership. The majority of acreage being exchanged is within the ASNFs; therefore, the ASNFs have been established as the lead agency overseeing the environmental impact statement (EIS) process. This final EIS (FEIS) also analyzes the no action alternative, in which no land exchange would occur.

This FEIS evaluates the potential social and environmental impacts of the proposed action and the no action alternative on the following resource areas: land use; recreation and public access; socioeconomics; environmental justice; plants; fish and wildlife; grazing; prime and unique farmlands; wetlands and flood plains; water quality, rights, and claims; cultural resources; mineral resources; roads; fire and fuels; and hazardous materials.

Executive Summary

First American Title Insurance Company, a California Corporation, as Trustee, and not personally, under Trust No. 8667; for the benefit of SL Land Exchange, LLC (SLL), an Arizona Limited Liability Company has proposed the following exchange of lands within the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Prescott National Forests. The Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs) will serve as the lead for this land exchange.

The proposed land exchange consists of 1,028 acres of Federal National Forest System (NFS) lands in the ASNFs, and Coconino National Forest (CNF) in exchange for 1,558 acres of non-Federal lands (lands currently held in private ownership) in the Prescott National Forest (PNF), CNF, and ASNFs. The affected Federal lands for this proposal are located within four individual parcels within the Lakeside and Alpine Ranger Districts (RDs) of the ASNFs and within the Red Rock RD of the CNF. The corresponding non-Federal (private) lands consist of nine individual parcels located within the Alpine, Black Mesa, Lakeside, and Clifton RDs of the ASNFs; the Mogollon Rim and Red Rock RDs of the CNF; and the Verde RD of the PNF.

The proposal to exchange lands in the ASNFs responds to the USFS's need for consolidation of Federal land ownership patterns. Non-Federal lands within national forests that are included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitats and perennial waters. These lands are subject to future development that could diminish those values and support activities that would be incompatible with the surrounding national forest character. The non-Federal lands currently contribute to the undesirable ownership pattern and are classified as desirable for acquisition in the ASNFs plan (USDA 1987a). The Federal lands in the exchange consists of four separate parcels located within the boundaries of the ASNFs and CNF and are located in Management Area (MA) 1, described as forested land located outside of special management areas; MA 2, described as woodland; and MA 10 in the grassland and piñon-juniper vegetation type found above the Mogollon Rim in CNF. The ASNFs plan (1987a) also states Federal lands considered for exchange will generally meet one or more of the following criteria: (1) lands needed to meet the needs of expanding communities; (2) isolated tracts or scattered parcels that cannot be efficiently managed; (3) provide for consolidation of the public lands; (4) to improve management or benefit specific resources; and (5) to meet overriding public needs. The proposed land exchange would meet forest plan direction by benefiting specific resources (acquisition of lands with perennial waters and critical species habitat) and meeting specific criteria such as meeting needs of expanding communities and consolidating ownership patterns. The responsible official will determine if the proposed exchange is in the best interest of the public. The Federal lands, if conveyed, would be subject to development.

A formal offer to exchange lands was first submitted by SL Land Exchange, LLC, to the acting ASNFs supervisor on January 15, 2004 and amended on January 25, 2008. The agreement to initiate (ATI) the exchange was authorized by the lead delegated Forest Supervisor of the ASNFs on March 19, 2010.

The EIS scoping process was initiated on April 28, 2009, with publication in the Federal Register of the notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS. The scoping process resulted in identifying public concerns, key issues, and previously unknown potential environmental effects of the proposed action. The main issue identified during the EIS scoping process was the potential adverse social and economic impacts (including a possible decrease in the availability of recreational lands) due to possible development on the Federal lands (if exchanged). The measures developed to address this key issue include a qualitative discussion of the impacts of potential development to social

and economic attributes that were raised as concerns, including potential loss of recreational opportunities if the Federal lands leave Federal ownership and are subject to future development.

A reasonable range of alternatives to the proposed action, including the no action alternative, was considered during the environmental analysis. Alternatives considered in detail include the proposed action and no action. A more detailed description of these alternatives and other alternatives considered but eliminated from detailed study is included in chapter 2 of this document.

Appendices C and D have been added to this FEIS to address comments received on the DEIS.

Major Conclusions Include the Following: The proposed land exchange would result in Federal acquisition of 1,558 acres in the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF and conveyance of 1,028 acres of land in the ASNFs and CNF. The Forest Service would receive a net gain of 530 acres of land in this exchange. The areas that would be obtained by the USFS as a result of this exchange contain vital species habitat for federally listed native wildlife including the loach minnow, Chiricahua leopard frog, Little Colorado spinedace, Mexican spotted owl, Apache trout, Gila chub, and southwestern willow flycatcher. If the exchange occurs, development would be precluded on the non-Federal lands proposed for exchange.

The conveyed Federal lands would be subject to future development. The reasonable and foreseeable use of these parcels include an expanded waste water treatment facility on the City of Show Low 70-acre parcel; a mixed use, low density residential development on the approximately 948-acre Show Low South parcel; and a single rural residential area on the approximately 8-acre Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel. No further development is anticipated on the Sierra Blanca 2-acre adjustment parcel. This projection is based upon the stated intent of the proponent and the history of development by the proponent on Federal lands that were conveyed in a prior exchange in the area. Development on the conveyed Federal lands, if an exchange occurs, could result in impacts to upland ponderosa pine, grassland, and juniper habitat. Riparian habitat, aquatic habitat, and wetland habitat found on Show Low Creek and its associated watershed could also be impacted because these habitats exist on the Federal lands proposed for exchange. Future uses or development on the lands conveyed out of Federal ownership would become subject to all applicable laws, regulations, and zoning authorities of state and local governing bodies. If development on the conveyed lands were to occur, minimal impacts to riparian, aquatic, and wetland habitats would be expected.

If the no action alternative is selected, 1,028 acres of the Federal lands would continue to be managed by the Forest Service. The 1,558 acres of non-Federal lands, which include special features such as critical species habitat and perennial waters including Juan Miller Creek, Boneyard Creek, Wet Beaver Creek, Red Tank Draw, Brookbank Canyon, and Beaver Creek, would remain subject to future development.

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Acronyms

ACHP	Advisory Council on Historic Preservation
ADOC	Arizona Department of Commerce
ADEQ	Arizona Department of Environmental Quality
ADWR	Arizona Department of Water Resources
AGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
ANF	Apache National Forest
ASNFs	Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
ASTM	American Society for Testing Materials
ATI	Agreement to initiate
BA&E	Biological assessment and evaluation
BCC	Birds of conservation concern
BMP	Best management practices

BO	Biological opinion
CEQ	Council on Environmental Quality
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CNF	Coconino National Forest
DEIS	Draft environmental impact statement
EIS	Environmental impact statement
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEIS	Final environmental impact statement
FLPMA	Federal Land Policy and Management Act
FPPA	Farmland Protection Policy Act
FR	Federal Register
FS	Forest Service
FSM	Forest Service Manual
G&SRM	Gila and Salt River Meridian
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLO	General Land Office
IBA	Important bird areas
ID	Interdisciplinary
LRMP	Land and resources management plan
MA	Management area
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MIS	Management indicator species
MOA	Memorandum of agreement
MSO	Mexican spotted owl
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFS	National Forest System
NFSR	National Forest System road
NFST	National Forest System trail
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOA	Notice of availability
NOI	Notice of intent
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
PIF	Arizona Partners in Flight
PILT	Payment in lieu of taxes
PNF	Prescott National Forest
PNVT	Potential natural vegetation type

RD	Ranger district
REC	Recognized environmental condition
ROD	Record of decision
ROW	Right-of-way
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
SNF	Sitgreaves National Forest
SOPA	Schedule of Proposed Actions
SLL	SL Land Exchange, LLC
T&E	Threatened and endangered
TES	Terrestrial ecosystem survey
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USDI	U.S. Department of the Interior
USFS	U.S. Forest Service
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Document Structure

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Forest Service (USFS) has prepared this final environmental impact statement (FEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) 42 United States Code §§ 4321-4370d, as implemented by the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations, 40 Code of Federal Regulations Parts 1500–1508, and other relevant Federal and state laws and regulations. This document is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Purpose and Need for Action

This chapter includes information on the history of the project proposal, details how the USFS informed the public of the proposal, and summarizes how the public responded. This chapter describes the purpose and need for action, the Federal proposed action, the decision framework, and the issues that arose during scoping.

Chapter 2: Comparison of Alternatives

This chapter provides a more detailed description of the agency's proposed action and the no action alternative, as well as alternatives considered but ultimately dismissed. This discussion also includes possible mitigation measures and a summary table of the environmental consequences associated with the alternatives.

Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

This section describes the environmental effects of implementing the proposed action and the no action alternative. Within each section, the affected environment is described followed by the effects of the proposed action and the no action alternative, which provides a baseline for comparison with the proposed action.

Chapter 4: List of Preparers

This section provides a list of preparers, members of the ID team, and other Forest Service contributors to the completion of the FEIS.

Chapter 5: Consultation and Coordination

This section provides a list of agencies, municipalities, organizations, and individuals consulted during development of the FEIS.

Chapter 6: References

This chapter contains literature cited and references used in preparation of the FEIS.

Additional documentation, including more detailed analyses of project area resources, is available in the project record, located at the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs) Supervisor's Office, 30 South Chiricahua Drive, Springerville, Arizona 85938. The FEIS is also available for public review at this location and on the ASNFs Web site at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/projects/asnf/landmanagement/projects>.

Chapter 1. Purpose and Need

Background

This land exchange was proposed by SL Land Exchange, LLC (SLL), in January 2004, amended in January 2008, and formally accepted by the ASNFs in February 2008. During this time period, discussions continued relative to specific parcels that were deemed favorable to be acquired by the USFS as well as Federal land parcels that were available to be transferred into private ownership.

The USFS is considering this proposal under the authorities of the General Exchange Act of March 1922 (42 Stat. 465, as amended; 74 Stat. 205; 16 U.S.C. 485, 486, 7 U.S.C. 2201), the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 1976 (43 U.S.C. §§ 1701–1782, October 21, 1976, as amended 1978, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990–1992, 1994 and 1996), and the Federal Land Exchange Facilitation Act of 1988 (102 Stat. 1086; 43 U.S.C. 1716).

This proposed project includes several geographically separate land parcels located on three individual national forests: Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs), Coconino National Forest (CNF), and Prescott National Forest (PNF). Maps and photographs depicting the Federal and non-Federal parcels are included in Appendix A. Each national forest has developed a forest land and resource management plan (forest plan), adopted in 1986 (PNF) and 1987 (ASNFs and CNF). The forest plans set forth broad programmatic direction for management of National Forest System (NFS) lands. Where appropriate, this document tiers to the forest plan FEIS and record of decision (ROD) for each of the three forests.

The Wallow Fire

On May 29, 2011, a human-caused wildfire was ignited on the ASNFs. The Wallow Fire burned more than 538,000 acres in Apache, Greenlee, Graham, and Navajo counties, Arizona. The wildfire destroyed 68 residences and outbuildings and impacted lands and resources on 504,500 acres of the ASNFs (USDA 2011). Over 58 percent of the total area burned at a moderate to high severity, resulting in loss of >50 percent of forest basal area (USDA 2011). Additional tree mortality is anticipated over the next 3 years, resulting from root and cambium damage and insect and disease infestations. The ASNFs have a history of implementing restoration based fire and fuels treatments, which have proven effective at safeguarding local communities and reducing the fire severity in treated areas. These mechanical and prescribed fire treatments are ongoing and are expected to continue in areas unaffected by the wildfire. Efforts of regeneration and reforestation are planned for areas affected by the wildfire.

Two of the nine non-Federal parcels (Sierra Blanca Ranch and Sprucedale parcels) and one Federal parcel (Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel) were burned by the Wallow Fire. These parcels were visited post fire to determine the potential impacts of the fire and assess the feasibility of continuation of the land exchange. Given that these parcels are mostly comprised of grasslands, meadows, and forest edge, the effects of the fire were minimal on these parcels. The fire burned through at a low intensity in these areas, providing nutrient cycling for grasses already in the area. The parcels will likely benefit from the fire in future growing seasons with high quality regrowth. With no major long-term damage or negative impacts to any of the parcels in question, the land exchange will continue on its current trajectory without any additional analysis related to the wildfire needed.

Proposed Action

The proposal would exchange approximately 1,028 acres of Federal lands for approximately 1,558 acres of non-Federal land within the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF (figures 1 and 2). A total of 13 parcels would be exchanged: 9 non-Federal parcels to be conveyed into Federal ownership and 4 Federal to be conveyed to non-Federal ownership. The majority of acreage being exchanged is within the ASNFs; therefore, the ASNFs was established as the lead agency overseeing the EIS process. The public, other agencies, and local entities such as the White Mountain Trail System organization TRACKS, along with the SLL and the City of Show Low were involved in developing alternatives and mitigation measures, specifically regarding relocation of the Buena Vista Trailhead #637 to ensure continued public access to the trail. A brief overview of the components proposed for the land exchange and other related actions is provided in Table 1.

The non-Federal and Federal lands are located within Apache, Coconino, Greenlee, Navajo, and Yavapai counties, Arizona.

Table 1. Summary of proposed action

Parcel Name	Acreage	Forest
Non-Federal Lands to be Acquired by USFS		
Alder Peak	160	*ANF
Juan Miller	120	*ANF
Railroad	22	*SNF
Sierra Blanca Ranch	156	*ANF
Sponseller Ranch	118	*SNF
Sprucedale	70	*ANF
Leonard Canyon (632 acres on ASNFs and 8 acres on CNF)	640	*SNF/CNF
Soda Springs Ranch	157	CNF
Cherry	117	PNF
Total for Non-Federal Lands	1,558	
Federal Lands to be Conveyed Into Private Ownership		
Show Low South	948	*SNF
City of Show Low	70	*SNF
Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment	2	*ANF
Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment	8	CNF
Total for Federal Lands	1,028	
Other Actions		
Relocate part of Buena Vista Trail #637 (located on the Show Low South federal parcel) and construct a new trailhead on federal land	NA	*SNF
NFSR 249A Road Easement (Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel)	NA	*ANF

*To better define the location of parcels for land exchange purposes the ASNFs is split into ANF (Apache National Forest) and SNF (Sigreaves National Forest) in this table rather than listed as the two forests are managed, together as ASNFs. The ANF and SNF are separately designated national forests simply combined under one unit of management.

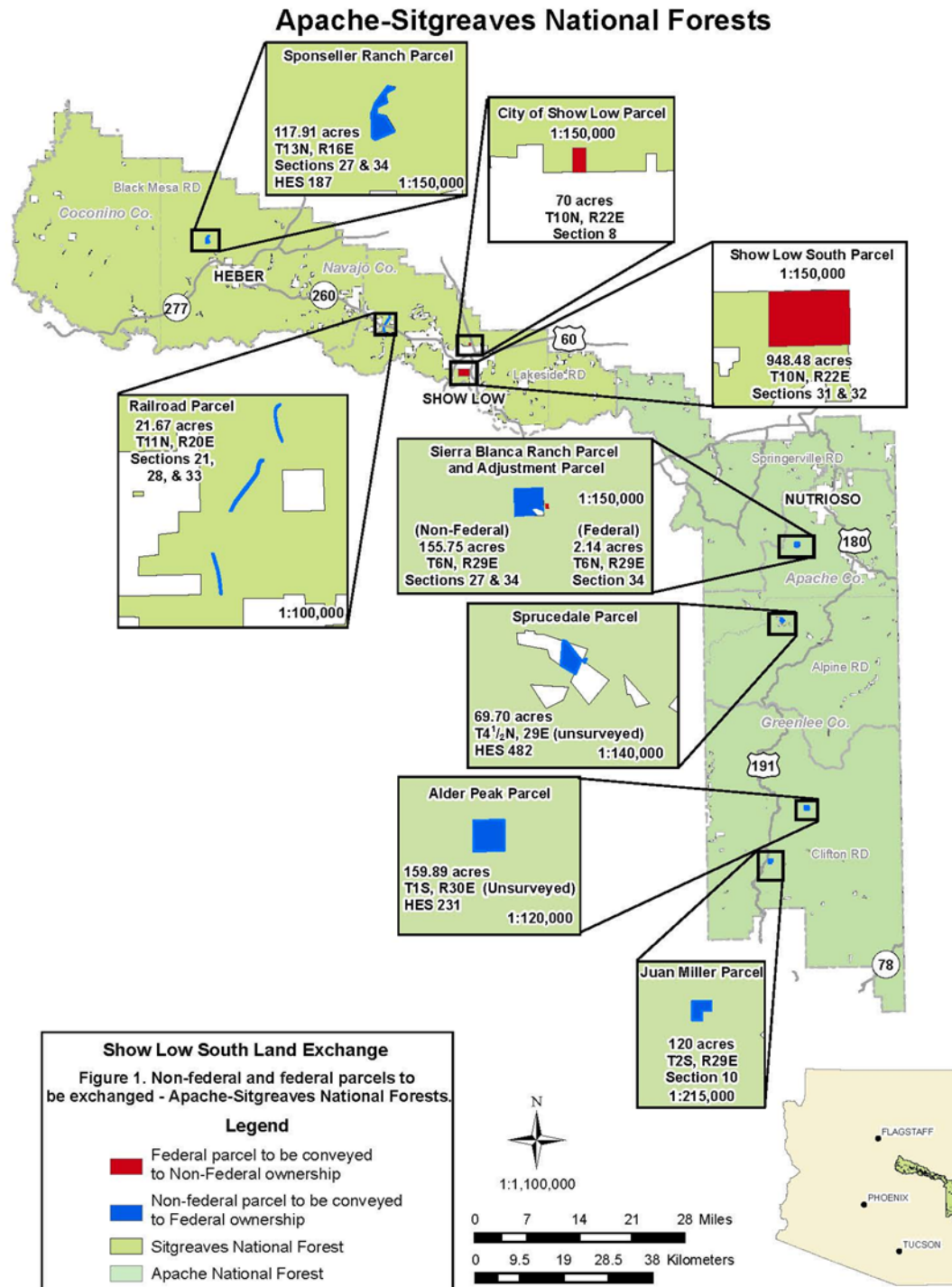


Figure 1. Non-Federal and Federal parcels to be exchanged on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests

Prescott and Coconino National Forests

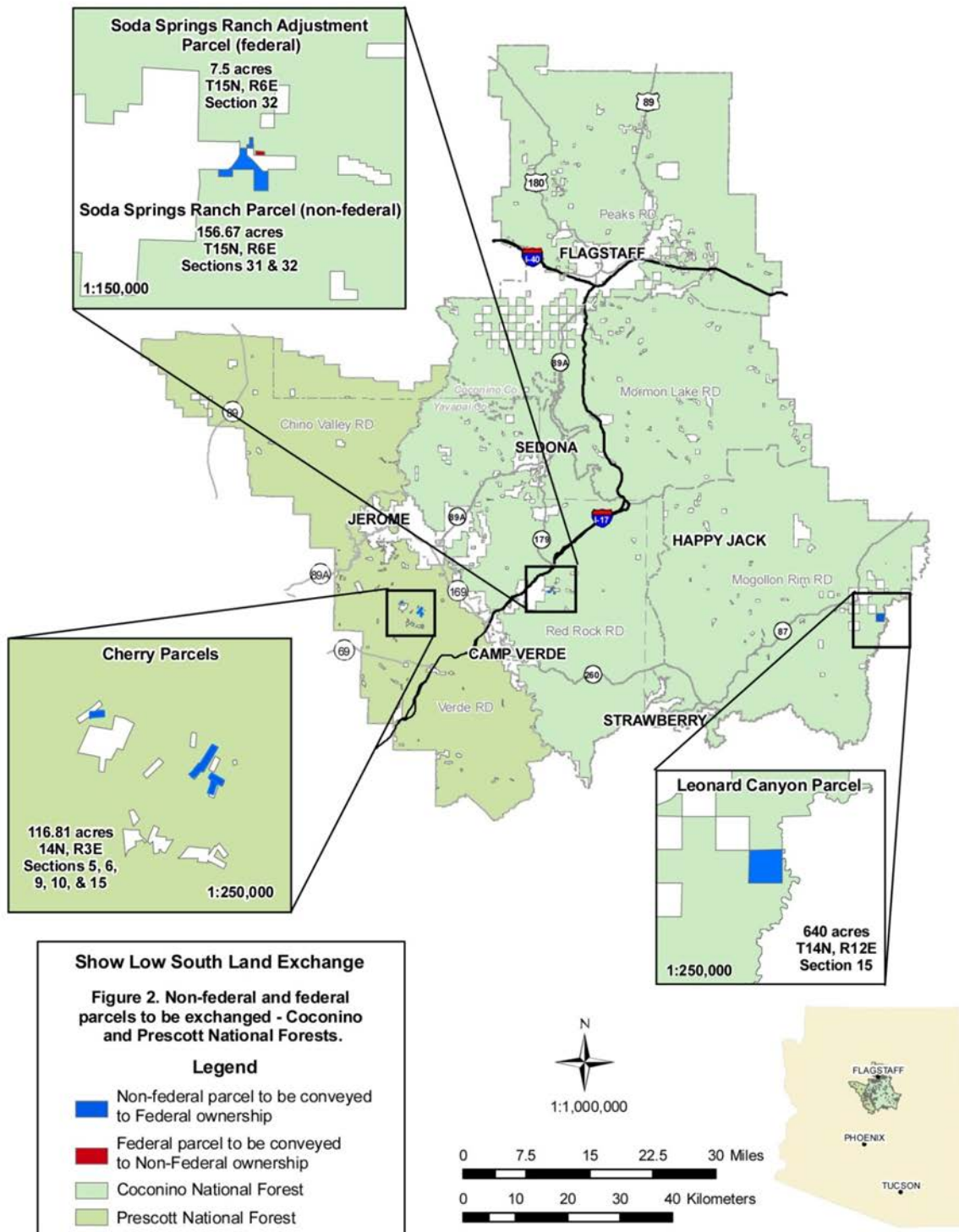


Figure 2. Non-Federal and Federal parcels to be exchanged on the Coconino and Prescott National Forests

Purpose and Need

The proposal to exchange lands in the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF responds to the Forest Service's need for consolidation of Federal land ownership patterns and the need to enhance management of the public's natural resources. The forests needs to acquire lands that (1) protect habitat for several threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; (2) facilitate public access to Federal lands; (3) improve wetlands, flood plains, and riparian areas; (4) decrease the complexity of maintaining property boundaries; and (5) improve the efficiency of resource management by focusing the forests' funding and staff on consolidated land.

The non-Federal lands offered in this exchange meet several of the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF forest plans' (USDA 1986; 1987a; 1987b) criteria for acquisition. These criteria include the following: (1) provide for consolidation of public lands; (2) reduce property and boundary line maintenance through the reduction of intermingled ownerships; (3) assure continued public access to NFS lands through acquisition of necessary public road rights-of-way; (4) acquire private lands with development potential adjacent to designated natural areas; (5) improve management or benefit specific resources and research needs; and (6) increase total wetland and floodplain acreage.

Objectives

The USFS has the responsibility to manage NFS lands for appropriate multiple public uses. There is a need to meet forest plan goals and objectives, including making adjustments in land ownership that serves the public interest and is consistent with land management planning objectives. The purpose of the proposed action is to meet the following USFS objectives:

1. Acquisition of non-Federal lands within existing NFS boundaries that contain habitat for federally listed and protected species and aquatic and riparian habitats associated with streams and creeks (see tables 2 and 3, below).
2. Elimination of landline boundaries and controlling corners between NFS lands and private lands.
3. Acquisition of non-Federal lands within existing NFS boundaries that would contribute to consolidation of public land ownership, reduce the likelihood of trespass on or degradation of NFS lands, and facilitate fire and resource management.

The proposed exchange includes several non-Federal parcels with valuable wildlife habitat including perennial water and riparian habitat. The proposed exchange would eliminate 20 miles of landline boundaries and 22 controlling corners between NFS lands and private lands.

For the exchange to take place, both parties of the exchange must agree on the total package. The non-Federal trustee First American Title Insurance Company, under Trust 8667, for the benefit of SLL, agrees the exchange satisfies the SLL's requirements for consolidating their real estate.

Additional discussion of the purpose and need for the proposed action is discussed below in terms of existing conditions, desired conditions, and the conformance of the proposed action to the respective forest plans.

Existing Condition

Due to the size and number of parcels being exchanged, the parcels will be described in two separate categories: "non-Federal lands" and "Federal lands." Non-Federal lands are private lands

that are proposed for acquisition into the NFS, and Federal lands are those proposed for private acquisition.

Non-Federal Lands

The non-Federal lands consist of nine separate parcels totaling approximately 1,558 acres located within the boundaries of the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF (see appendix A for parcel maps and photographs of non-Federal lands). Privately owned parcels that are partially or completely surrounded by NFS lands are often referred to as “inholdings,” and make management of surrounding landscapes by NFS lands administration difficult. The presence of inholdings often increases costs associated with resource management and protection, including fire suppression. Inholdings may cause fragmentation of wildlife habitat and limit wildlife access to dependable water sources. Demand for undeveloped inholdings for rural residential and/or subdivision development continues to increase. This type of development may result in negative impacts to resources on adjacent NFS lands and in general prevent a unified approach to forest management. Once inholdings have been developed, they are rarely available for future acquisition by the USFS.

Non-Federal lands within the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF that are included in this exchange proposal contain potential habitat for numerous federally listed and protected species (table 2; AGFD 2010) and valuable perennial waters (table 3). These lands are currently subject to development that could diminish those values and support activities that would be incompatible with the surrounding NFS land character. At the present time, the non-Federal lands contribute to the undesirable ownership pattern depicted in the parcels maps in Appendix A and are classified as desirable for acquisition. These inholdings increase land management complexity because of the miles of common, or shared, landline boundaries that add to administrative costs and increase the potential for encroachments on NFS lands.

Table 2. Federally listed or protected species with potential habitat on the non-Federal parcels

Parcel Name	Species	Status	Forest
Alder Peak (160 acres)	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	ANF
	Loach minnow	Endangered with critical habitat	
	Mexican gray wolf (10J area)	Nonessential experimental population	
	Western yellow-billed cuckoo	Candidate	
Cherry (117 acres)	No Federally Listed Species		PNF
Juan Miller (120 acres)	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	ANF
	Mexican gray wolf (10J area)	Nonessential experimental population	
Leonard Canyon (640 acres)	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	SNF
	Chiricahua leopard frog	Threatened with critical habitat as of 3/20/2012 (77 FR 16324)	
	Little Colorado spinedace	Threatened with critical habitat	
	Mexican spotted owl	Threatened with critical habitat	
Railroad (22 acres)	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	SNF
Sierra Blanca Ranch (156 acres)	Apache trout	Threatened	ANF
	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	

Parcel Name	Species	Status	Forest
	Chiricahua leopard frog	Threatened with critical habitat	
	Loach minnow	Endangered with critical habitat as of 2/23/2012 (77 FR 10810 10932)	
	Mexican gray wolf (10J area)	Nonessential experimental population	
	Mexican spotted owl	Threatened with critical habitat	
	New Mexico meadow jumping mouse	Candidate	
	Three forks springsnail	Endangered with critical habitat	
Soda Springs Ranch (157 acres)	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	CNF
	Gila chub	Endangered with critical habitat	
	Roundtail chub	Candidate	
	Southwestern willow flycatcher	Endangered	
	Western yellow-billed cuckoo	Candidate	
Sponseller (118 acres)	No Federally Listed Species		SNF
Sprucedale (70 acres)	Apache trout	Threatened	ANF
	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	
	Mexican spotted owl	Threatened with critical habitat	
	Mexican gray wolf (10J area)	Nonessential experimental population	
	New Mexico meadow jumping mouse	Candidate	
	Roundtail chub	Candidate	

Table 3. List of perennial creeks and streams within the non-Federal parcels

Parcel Name	Creek/Stream	Approximate Length (miles)	Forest Location
Juan Miller	Juan Miller Creek	0.25	ANF
Sierra Blanca Ranch	Boneyard Creek	0.64	ANF
Soda Springs Ranch	Wet Beaver Creek	0.17	CNF
	Red Tank Draw	0.29	
Sponseller Ranch	Brookbank Canyon	1.27	SNF
Sprucedale	Beaver Creek	0.52	ANF

Federal Lands

The Federal lands consist of four separate parcels totaling approximately 1,028 acres located within the boundaries of the ASNFs and CNF (see appendix A for parcel maps of Federal lands).

Federal land resource objectives for the parcels located within the boundary of the ASNFs are based upon existing management area (MA) designation as presented in the 1987 ASNFs forest plan (USDA 1987a). The Federal parcels on the ASNFs are located in MA 1 and MA 2. MA 1 is described as forested land located outside of special management areas. Management emphasis includes a combination of multiple uses including: sustained yield of timber and firewood production, wildlife habitat, livestock grazing, watershed, and dispersed recreation. MA 2 is described as woodland. Management emphasis includes firewood production, wildlife habitat, watershed condition, and livestock grazing.

Federal land resource objectives for the parcel located within the boundary of the CNF, Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel, as presented in the 1987 CNF forest plan (USDA 1987b) is based upon MA 10 in the grassland and sparse piñon-juniper vegetation type above the Mogollon Rim. Management emphasis includes range management, watershed condition, and wildlife habitat.

Show Low Creek, located within the City of Show Low parcel, is the only perennial water within the four Federal parcels. Approximately 0.16-miles of Show Low Creek flows through the southwest corner of the City of Show Low parcel. Potential habitat for federally listed and protected species within the Federal parcels is shown in table 4 (AGFD 2010).

Table 4. Federally protected or candidate species with potential habitat on the Federal parcels

Parcel Name	Species	Status	Forest
City of Show Low	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	SNF
	Little Colorado Spinedace	Threatened	
Show Low South	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	SNF
Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment	Bald eagle (winter population)	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act	ANF
	Mexican gray wolf (10J area)	Nonessential experimental population	
	Mexican spotted owl	Threatened	
Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment	Western yellow-billed cuckoo	Candidate	CNF

Desired Condition

Non-Federal Lands

The desired condition is for fewer private inholdings to exist on the ASNFs, PNF, and CNF. Lands containing perennial waters that are valuable as habitat for federally listed species would be acquired. Multiple benefits would be expected with the addition of the offered non-Federal lands to the NFS. These would include the acquisition of potential habitat for the federally listed species shown in table 2 and acquisition of aquatic and riparian habitats associated with the creeks, streams, and rivers listed in table 3. Additional management benefits would include a reduction in complex ownership patterns that would consolidate public land ownership; elimination of numerous miles of landline boundaries and controlling corners that would contribute to management efficiency; and elimination of any possible future subdivision/residential development on these remote private inholdings within the boundaries of the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF.

The non-Federal properties to be acquired would contribute to the preservation of resource values for wildlife habitat and, in a few instances, riparian habitat. When the proposed land exchange is completed, each non-Federal parcel would be incorporated into the adjacent land MA on the national forest in which it is located. Certain parcels identified for exchange into Federal ownership may be located within multiple MAs and may be classified into multiple MAs once the proposed exchange is completed. All of the non-Federal parcels are within the proclaimed boundaries of NFS lands within Arizona. The acquisition of all the parcels would contribute to the management efficiency of NFS lands.

As previously mentioned, the non-Federal lands offered in this exchange meet several of their respective forest plans' criteria for acquisition. These criteria include the following: (1) provide for consolidation of public lands; (2) reduce property and boundary line maintenance through the reduction of intermingled ownerships; (3) assure continued public access to NFS lands through acquisition of necessary public road rights-of-way; (4) acquire private lands with development potential adjacent to designated natural areas; (5) improve management or benefit specific resources and research needs; and (6) increase total wetland and flood plain acreage.

Exchange of 1,558 acres of non-Federal lands for 1,028 acres of Federal lands would result in a net gain of 530 acres of Federal lands into the NFS.

Federal Lands

Conveyance of the Federal lands to SLL would result in more functional and consolidated private land holdings more suitable for development. The NFS lands being considered for exchange in the Show Low South Land Exchange meet several of the criteria for conveyance contained within the ASNFs and CNF forest plans. Specifically, these criteria include the following: forest management efficiency; lands needed to meet the needs of expanding communities; consolidation of the public lands; improved management of benefit specific resources; resolution of trespass issues; and meeting overriding public needs.

Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations

The analysis of exchanging land between federal and non-federal entities must comply with numerous statutory requirements, including the following acts:

National Forest Management Act

The proposed land exchange has been found to be consistent with the management direction, goals and objectives of the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF forest plans and is in the public interest (36 CFR 254.3(b)(2)). The non-Federal lands meet the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF forest plans Standards and Guidelines that identifies them as desirable for acquisition, and the Federal lands as available for conveyance under land exchange authorities.

When acquired, the non-Federal lands will be incorporated into the Management Areas in which they are located (36 CFR 254.3(f)). Management objectives for the parcels would be the same as surrounding federal lands, unless otherwise changed by future amendment of the ASNFs, CNF, or PNF forest plans. No site-specific forest plan amendment is required.

National Environmental Policy Act

The proposed land exchange has been considered in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA, 42 USC §4321-4347). NEPA provisions have been followed as required under 40 CFR 1500. This FEIS complies with the intent and requirements of NEPA and analyzes a range of reasonable alternatives, including the "no action" alternative. It also discloses the expected impacts of each alternative, and discusses the identified issues and concerns.

Endangered Species Act

The proposed land exchange has been considered in compliance with the environmental conservation law of the Endangered Species Act of 1973 (ESA, 7 USC §136, 16 USC §1531). The ESA was implemented to protect endangered and threatened species from extinction. This FEIS complies with the requirements, plans, permits, agreements and species protection/listing statuses of the ESA. The FEIS identifies all issues and concerns related to any threatened or endangered species that could be affected by the Show Low South Land Exchange, analyzes reasonable alternatives including the “no action” alternative, and discloses the expected impacts of each alternative.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The proposed land exchange has been considered in accordance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA, 16 USC §§ 703-712). The MBTA is an agreement enacted between the United States and Great Britain that provides protection for migratory bird species. This FEIS complies with the laws outlined in the MBTA that provide protection for migratory birds in the United States. The Show Low South Land Exchange FEIS highlights any concerns related to migratory birds and analyzes the impacts of all reasonable alternatives (including the “no action” alternative) in relation to the MBTA.

Executive Order 11990 Wetlands

The proposed land exchange has been considered in compliance with EO11990, which requires Federal agencies to provide leadership and to take action to minimize the destruction, loss or degradation of wetlands, and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands in carrying out agency responsibilities for acquiring, managing, and disposing of Federal lands and facilities. The FEIS analyzes effects on wetlands for all alternatives.

Executive Order 11988 Floodplains

The proposed land exchange has been considered in compliance with EO11988, which requires Federal agencies to provide leadership and action to reduce the risk of flood loss, to minimize the impact of floods on human safety, health and welfare, and to restore and preserve the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains in carrying out agency responsibilities for acquiring, managing, and disposing of Federal lands and facilities. The FEIS analyzes effects on floodplains.

National Historic Preservation Act

The land exchange has been considered in compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended (NHPA; Public Law 89-665, 16 USC §470 *et seq.*). The NHPA is a legislative law that preserves and protects historical and archaeological sites in the United States. The law requires all Federal agencies to take into account the effects of their undertakings (actions, financial support, and authorizations) on properties included in or eligible for the National Register. The law initiated the National Register of Historic Places, the list of National Historic Landmarks, and the State Historic Preservation Offices. The Show Low South Land Exchange FEIS complies with the legislation of the NHPA. The FEIS discloses the expected impacts to historic and archaeological sites in the area and analyzes the impacts of all reasonable alternatives (including the “no action alternative”) in relation to the NHPA.

Archaeological Resources Protection Act

This FEIS is consistent with the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 as amended (ARPA) (16 U.S.C. 470aa et. seq.). ARPA establishes a permit process for the excavation or removal of any archeological resources from on Federal lands. If a permit issued may result in harm to, disturbance to, or destruction of, any religious or cultural site, as determined by the Federal land manager, the Federal land manager shall notify any federally recognized Tribe which may consider the site as having religious or cultural importance. This law also establishes criminal and civil penalties for illegally excavating, removing, damaging, or defacing any archeological resources on Federal lands. It further establishes provisions for the confidentiality of archeological resources on public lands. Any necessary permits required by ARPA would be acquired and issued for this project.

American Indian Religious Freedom Act

This FEIS is consistent with the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (AIRFA) of 1978, as amended (42 U.S.C. 1996). The law protects and preserves for American Indians their inherent right of freedom to believe, express, and exercise the traditional religions of the American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiians, including but not limited to access to sites, use, and possession of sacred objects and the freedom to worship through ceremonial and traditional rites. This FEIS complies with the AIRFA. Throughout the NEPA process the ASNFs consulted with American Indian tribes that are associated with the federal lands included in the alternatives that could leave federal ownership. No access issues or traditionally used lands were identified by the tribes with the parcels considered in this analysis. The analyzed alternatives will not affect the right of American Indians to access federal lands used to express and exercise ceremonial and traditional rites.

Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act

This FEIS is consistent with the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (NAGPRA) (25 U.S.C. 3001). The law provides a process for Federal agencies to return Native American human remains, funerary objects and sacred objects to the ancestors and appropriate Native American tribe. The law also includes provisions for the intentional excavation and unanticipated discovery of Native American cultural items on Federal and Tribal lands. Human remains are not expected to be discovered at the archaeological sites analyzed in this document. . A NAGPRA plan of action was developed as part of an MOA (appendix A of the MOA) in consultation with the tribes culturally associated with the archaeological sites located on some of the federal parcels considered for exchange in case of inadvertent discovery of human remains. Implementation of the MOA would be required for the proposed action.

Forest Plan Consistency

This analysis is consistent with the management direction, goals, and objectives of the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF forest plans and is in the public interest (36 CFR 254.3(b)(2)). The non-Federal lands analyzed for exchange meet the forest plan standards and guidelines that identify them as desirable for acquisition (ASNFs Forest Plan, p. 101; CNF Forest Plan, p. 84; PNF Forest Plan 1986, p. 57) and the Federal lands the forest plan standards and guidelines that identify them as available for conveyance under land exchange authorities (ASNFs Forest Plan, p. 100; CNF Forest Plan, p. 86; PNF Forest Plan, p. 56).

Connected Actions

Following the exchange and prior to the finalization of development plans, the project proponent would assist the Forest Service in relocating the portion of the Buena Vista Trail #637 from the Federal exchange Show Low South parcel to Federal lands not part of the exchange. A second trailhead would be designed and developed near the east end of the Federal exchange parcel. This would be done when the road system is built for the development (see figure 11).

With regard to the Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, a private road easement application would be evaluated which would grant the private landowner access on the existing National Forest System Road (NFSR) 249A currently unauthorized. Concurrently with the establishment of that easement, a previously recorded private road easement for NFSR 249V lying southwesterly authorized by the ASNFs under FLPMA authority, (October 21, 1976), issued to GOC, LLC would be terminated.

Scope of Analysis and Decision Framework

The forest supervisor of the ASNFs will be the deciding official to determine if the land exchange should take place as described in the proposed action. The decision would include the proposed action, connected actions, mitigation, and monitoring. The forest supervisor may decide to modify the proposed action or choose the no action alternative.

Public Involvement

Public involvement for the proposed Show Low South Land Exchange was initiated on April 28, 2009, with publication of the notice of intent (NOI) to prepare an EIS for the proposed Show Low Land Exchange in the Federal Register. The project was placed on the “Apache-Sitgreaves NFs Schedule of Proposed Actions” (SOPA) on April 2, 2009, and published quarterly thereafter. Scoping for the DEIS included a land exchange notice publication and notice of public open house in the *White Mountain Independent* (36 CFR 254.8); direct mailing of an “interested party” letter to over 160 county, state, and congressional delegations and other potentially interested agencies, individuals, and organizations; and one public open house held on April 28, 2009, to provide information about the proposed exchange and solicit comments on the proposed action. A total of 36 comments were received during the scoping period.

A letter was sent to those who submitted scoping comments and other interested stakeholders notifying them that the DEIS was available for public comment on the ASNFs Web site. Notice of availability of the document was sent to other Federal agencies, federally recognized tribes, and State and local governments. The official notice of availability (NOA) of the DEIS was published in the Federal Register on November 2, 2012. A legal notice for public comment on the DEIS was also published in the *White Mountain Independent* newspaper on November 9, 2012. The DEIS was made available for public review at the Lakeside Ranger District, 2022 West White Mountain Blvd., Lakeside, Arizona 85929, and on the ASNFs Web site. Hard copies of the DEIS were made available upon request. The official 45-day DEIS public review period began on November 3, 2012 and ended on December 17, 2012. Twenty five letters were received from which 71 comments (via e-mails or letters) were noted from federal, state, and local agencies; private organizations; and the general public. In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, all comments received were reviewed and considered in the FEIS. Appendix C is a summary of comments received and the Forest Service’s response.

Tribal Consultation

In compliance with NEPA, the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 as amended; Executive Orders 13007 (Indian Sacred Sites), 13084 and 13174 (Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments) the ASNFs identified the tribes that are associated with the lands that are part of the proposed action and initiated government to government consultation. The tribal governments that were consulted are as follows: Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, the Ramah Chapter of the Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation, Yavapai-Apache Nation, and Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe.

These tribes were informed and consulted about the proposed land exchange in April 2009 as part of the NEPA process. Two tribes provided written responses in May 2009: the Hopi Tribe and the Navajo Nation. The Hopi Tribe commented that they wished to be provided with copies of the cultural resources survey report and any proposed treatment (mitigation) plan if prehistoric cultural sites are located within the Federal parcels that would be adversely impacted. The Navajo Nation commented that they have no concerns with the land exchange as it is not expected to impact any traditional cultural properties important to the Navajo Nation and provided they are notified under NAGPRA should any sites, objects, or human remains be discovered.

In August 2010, an additional consultation letter was sent by the ASNFs to the Hopi Tribe and Pueblo of Zuni requesting concurrence on the reported archaeological findings, and both tribes were asked to contact the Forest if they wished to participate in developing a mitigation plan and a memorandum of agreement (MOA) regarding the treatment of affected sites. The Hopi Tribe responded by letter in August 2010, and the Pueblo of Zuni later responded by phone/email. The tribes concurred with the eligibility of the documented sites, including those to be affected by the proposed land development. The Hopi recommended that the lands with the prehistoric sites be withdrawn from the Show Low South parcel, but in subsequent meetings agreed to the exchange provided mitigation measures set forth in an MOA were carried out. The Hopi specifically indicated that they would defer to the State Historic Preservation Office and interested parties regarding the MOA but requested that consultation continue with them, including participation in the development and implementation of a mitigation plan.

The cultural program manager/tribal liaison of the ASNFs attended an administrative meeting with the Hopi Tribe's Cultural Preservation Office on January 12, 2011 to discuss the proposed land exchange, among other topics. At the meeting the cultural program manager/tribal liaison discussed with the Hopi that if the Forest Service withdrew the lands with the archaeological sites within the Show Low South parcel the land exchange would not be viable. The sites are not located in an area that can be excluded from the parcel without changing the parcel size and potential land value. The Hopi Tribe agreed to consult on a treatment plan for mitigating adverse impacts to two identified prehistoric sites. The draft treatment plan was sent to the Hopi Cultural Preservation Office and the Zuni Cultural and Historic Preservation Office for review in April 2011. The Hopi responded by letter in April, reiterating what they had stated at the January 2011 meeting. They also requested consideration of a rock art panel at Site AR-03-01-07-1031 to be left in place and not disturbed. The request was taken to the project proponent who expressed in a January 30, 2012 email a willingness to preserve the rock art boulder. This cooperative preservation option has been included within the project's treatment plan.

The ASNFs submitted a revised treatment plan, draft MOA, and draft Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) plan to the Hopi Tribe and Pueblo of Zuni with an accompanying letter on October 3, 2012. The cultural program manager of the ASNFs attended another administrative meeting with the Hopi Tribe on October 17, 2012 to discuss the submitted treatment plan and draft NAGPRA plan. Revisions were suggested to both documents, particularly the NAGPRA plan, and it was indicated at the meeting that the Pueblo of Zuni would also need to be provided an opportunity to comment on the revised documents. The Hopi Tribe followed up the meeting with a November 13, 2012 letter summarizing their consultation to date and requesting continued consultation (with the Pueblo of Zuni) on the proposed treatment and NAGPRA Plan of Action. The ASNFs incorporated the comments submitted by email from the Hopi CPO and Zuni THPO into the NAGPRA plan.

The ASNFs submitted a revised NAGPRA Plan of Action to the Hopi and Zuni tribes via email on December 7, 2012. The Hopi Tribe and the Pueblo of Zuni were invited to be signatories of the MOA. The Hopi Tribe has deferred to the Arizona State Historic Preservation Officer regarding the MOA and is not a signatory of the MOA. The Zuni THPO indicated that the Pueblo of Zuni would like to be a concurring signatory to the MOA.

Issues

The ASNFs analyzed all comments received to identify issues, which are defined as cause-effect relationships directly or indirectly resulting from implementation of the proposed action. The issues defined as within the scope of the project, and directly or indirectly resulting from proposed action implementation, were used to develop the alternatives. Other comments eliminated from detailed study were identified as those (1) outside the scope of the proposed action; (2) already decided by law, regulation, forest plan, or other higher level decision; (3) irrelevant to the decision to be made; or (4) conjectural and not supported by scientific or factual evidence.

The CEQ NEPA regulations explain this delineation in Sec. 1501.7: "...identify and eliminate from detailed study the issues which are not significant or which have been covered by prior environmental review (Sec. 1506.3)..." The following issues were used to develop alternatives and focus the analysis for this project. All comments and the forests' response to these comments are located in the project record and Appendices C and D.

Issue 1: Trails/Access/Recreation

Concern: Land exchange would remove access to Buena Vista Trail #637.

Response: To maintain access and recreational opportunities, the proposed action alternative would relocate a segment of Trail #637 on Forest Service lands to the south of the existing route and build a second trailhead near the east end of the Federal exchange parcel.

Unit of Measure: Approximate length and difficulty of the proposed re-route of the trail as compared to the existing trail. Discussed in chapter 3, the "Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, Recreation and Public Access" section.

Issue 2: Future Development of Lands Including Density and Type of Development

Concern: Land exchange would reroute additional traffic through Sierra Pines neighborhood.

Response: The Sierra Pines neighborhood would experience increased traffic as a result of the proposed action alternative; however, since the direction of the resulting traffic is not known, it is not possible to predict the precise impact. To prevent all new traffic from being funneled through a single neighborhood, preliminary development plans would call for multiple entrances into the conveyed Show Low South parcel to be constructed.

Unit of Measure: Number of entrances (4) into the Show Low South parcel, as guided by the City of Show Low building codes and regulations. Discussed further in chapter 3, the “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, Roads” section.

Issue 3: Land Values/Use/Character

Concern: Residents in the Sierra Pines neighborhood raised the concern that additional development within the community of Show Low would add to the oversupply of available housing and may affect land values. The land exchange would also reduce forest access and existing recreational opportunities that give Show Low its distinctive mountain forest community character.

Response: In consideration of the present economy and general oversupply of housing, the land within the Show Low South parcel would likely remain vacant until development would be a profitable enterprise. Development on the Show Low South parcel would not take place until the demand exists for new residences. When development becomes economically feasible on the Show Low South parcel, development is not expected to negatively affect land values of adjacent landowners. The Show Low South parcel would be zoned similarly to the Sierra Pines neighborhood, no high density residential development would occur, and no mobile homes would be constructed. If land values of nearby landowners change, it would likely be from other factors related to the housing market.

The proposed action alternative would not eliminate forest access or recreational opportunities, though it would require residents of the Sierra Pines neighborhood to travel a greater distance to reach ASNFs land. If the land exchange occurs, the proponent working within the City of Show Low development processes would utilize reasonable setbacks and other measures to help minimize impacts to the mountain forest character of the area.

Unit of Measure: There is no definitive unit of measure that can accurately predict how a proposed development would affect adjacent land values. For forest access concerns, distance to access the ASNFs for the residences in the northern half of the Sierra Pines subdivision would increase by approximately 1 mile. Discussed further in chapter 3, the “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, Recreation and Public Access” section.

Issue 4: Wildlife Use and Migration Routes

Concern: Land exchange could impact migration routes, habitat, and water availability for wildlife on the City of Show Low and Show Low South parcels.

Response: Under the proposed action alternative, the City of Show Low parcel, except for the expansion area of the waste water treatment facility, would remain undeveloped, allowing for the continued use of habitat, water availability, and migration routes for wildlife. The Show Low South parcel would be developed as a low density and mixed use residential area and would maintain treed areas and open habitat available for wildlife use and migration. Additionally, ASNFs lands would be located immediately adjacent to the west and south of the Show Low South parcel.

The proposed action may result in loss of habitat for wildlife species on the parcels going out of forest ownership if parcels are developed following the land exchange; however, the lands coming into forest ownership are of greater acreage and the land exchange would result in a net gain of high value wildlife habitat.

Unit of Measure: Acres maintained as open space within the City of Show Low parcel. Lot size on the Show Low South parcel. Discussed further in chapter 3, the “Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, Plants and Wildlife, Management Indicator Species (MIS)” section.

Issue 5: Noise and General Pollution

Concern: Development of the Federal parcels would increase tree removal, noise, and pollution.

Response: Upon transfer to private ownership, there would be an anticipated increase in tree removal and local noise pollution on the City of Show Low, Show Low South, and Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment parcels. However, the land exchange would consolidate development and involve a net gain of 530 acres for the Forest Service. The lands gained by the Forest Service would come under Federal protection and management, and no further development would occur.

Unit of Measure: Noise and other forms of pollution would adhere to local codes and regulations.

Additional issues and concerns were brought up during the DEIS 45-day comment period. All comments and the forests’ response to these comments are located in appendix C.

Changes Between Draft and Final EIS

In preparing the FEIS, public, agency and tribal government comments were assessed and considered both individually and collectively. Some of the public’s input led the Forest Service to respond by improving, modifying, or making factual corrections to the final document. Specifically, the Forest Service made the following changes based on comments on the DEIS.

- Minor edits, changes in text formatting and slight modifications to the document structure were completed throughout the FEIS to impart clarification of information previously presented.
- In Chapter 1 under Findings Required by Other Laws and Regulations the Archaeological Resource Protection Act, American Indian Religious Freedom Act, and the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act were added.

- Additional information was provided in Chapter 1 under Tribal Consultation.
- A description of the valuation process of land parcels was added to Chapter 2.
- In Chapter 2, under Environmental Justice, information was provided clarifying that no direct or indirect impacts to access or use of federal lands for American Indian ceremonial or traditional rites is expected. Under cultural resources, effects were clarified.
- In Chapter 3, under Unavoidable Adverse Effects and Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources, impacts to cultural resources were clarified.
- In Chapter 3, under Land Use, a section was added describing the development process for the City of Show Low Planning and Zoning.
- In Chapter 3, under Land Use, a clarification on the presence of encumbrances on federal parcels was provided.
- In Chapter 3, under Recreation and Public Access/Environmental Consequences/Alternative 1, a further detailed description of the re-route to the Buena Vista Trail was provided.
- In Chapter 3, under Socioeconomics, a section was added to discuss the history of land adjustments and property values in the City of Show Low.
- In Chapter 3, under Socioeconomics/Environmental Consequences/Alternative 1/Federal Parcels, a discussion was added on the impacts to property values.
- In Chapter 3, under Plants, Fish, and Wildlife, additional detail was provided on conceptual designs for the wastewater treatment plant on the City of Show Low Parcel.
- In Chapter 3, under Cultural Resources, clarification was provided about the sites on federal land and expected effects to the sites.
- In Chapter 5 a list of tribal governments and offices consulted was added.
- Photographs of all parcels were added to Appendix A.
- A summary of public comments on the DEIS and Forest Service responses was added as Appendix C.
- Federal and state agency letters received during the DEIS comment period were added as Appendix D.

Chapter 2. Comparison of Alternatives

Introduction

This chapter describes and compares the alternatives considered for the Show Low South Land Exchange proposal on the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF. The alternatives are presented in comparative form, defining the differences between the alternatives and providing a clear basis for analysis by the decision maker and the public.

The Valuation Process

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of October 21, 1976 (43 U.S.C. 1716, 1717; FSM 5430.12) requires that land exchanges must be conducted with United States citizens, must be within the same state, must be equal or nearly equal on both sides of a land exchange as determined by an agency-approved appraisal, and can be subject to cash equalization within set limits if values are slightly unequal. Appraisals are not part of the environmental analysis for a project. The purpose of an appraisal is to estimate the market value of the defined estate for the defined properties as of the date of value.

The Forest Service has established its appraisal organization separate from the Line and other staff organizations within the agency. The purpose of this segregation is to assure that appraisals result in unbiased opinions of value. This minimizes any influence that Line or other staff officers could otherwise have in determining appraised values. More importantly, it alleviates any appearance of influence by those people who are directly involved with negotiating, processing, or approving transactions.

An agency staff appraiser or a private contract appraiser may prepare appraisals used in Federal transactions. Private contract appraisers may work under contract from the agency or the nonfederal party, in either case appraisal instruction will be developed for the appraiser of record by the Forest Service. Appraiser(s) must demonstrate through education and work experience that they are qualified for the assignment. Appraisers' experience and expertise are matched with the assignment. Appraisers preparing reports for Forest Service land exchanges must be State Certified General appraisers and have successful experience with providing approved narrative appraisal reports for Federal or State land management agencies within the past three years. The FS Review Appraiser assigned to the case (that must be knowledgeable in the subject market area) then reviews the reports. An appraiser not meeting the minimum qualifications would not be considered for the assignment. This process helps assure that a professional job is completed pursuant to Federal and State rules and regulations for all properties, irrespective of their ownership.

Federal regulations in Forest Service Manual 5430 require that appraisals used in land exchanges be reviewed by qualified review appraisers. The Forest Service has delegated authority to approve appraisal reports to qualified review appraisers.

The appraisal process for land exchanges is done in the following sequence: First, a Forest Service field office (working on behalf of the authorized officer) and the non-Federal party agree to the estate to be conveyed. This, along with other items such as assignment of costs, is agreed to formally in an Agreement to Initiate. The field office prepares a "Request for Appraisal Services" that identifies the purpose of the appraisal, legal description of the property to be appraised, the estate to be appraised, current information concerning title to the property, and any other pertinent information concerning the property. Based upon that request, a review appraiser is assigned to

the project. The review appraiser prepares written appraisal instructions for the properties involved. Those written instructions include requirements that the appraisal report be prepared as a complete, self-contained appraisal report and in conformance with Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (Interagency Land Acquisition Conference 2000), the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices (Appraisal Standards Board 2008), and within the specifications of the project. A pre-work meeting is then held with the review appraiser, appraiser, and representatives from both the Forest Service and the non-Federal party to the proposed land exchange to discuss the written instructions and clarify any questions that may arise. The appraiser then prepares the report, which is reviewed and approved by the qualified review appraiser.

Alternatives Considered But Eliminated from Detailed Study

Federal agencies are required by NEPA to rigorously explore and objectively evaluate all reasonable alternatives and to briefly discuss the reasons for eliminating any alternatives that were not developed in detail (40 CFR 1502.14). Public comments received in response to the proposed action provide suggestions for alternative methods for achieving the purpose and need. Some of these alternatives may have been outside the scope of consideration for land exchanges or may already be addressed in the alternatives considered in detail.

The range of alternatives considered in a discretionary land exchange is limited by the exchange process itself. A balanced exchange package is arrived at by a series of proposals and counter proposals until both the non-Federal and Federal parties agree on an acceptable configuration of parcels. Once both parties agree upon an acceptable allocation of lands, the USFS proposes to go forward with an analysis of the proposed action. The exchange proposal analyzed in this document reflects lands mutually agreed upon by the non-Federal landowner and the USFS. The Federal lands, if not already classified as base-for-exchange, would be reclassified when it has been determined they meet required criteria as identified in the forest plans and a decision has been made to exchange the selected lands.

Sale of Private Lands to the Forest Service for Acquisition Purposes

Other means of acquiring the non-Federal lands were considered but eliminated from further study. The sale of non-Federal lands to the USFS is an alternative to a land exchange; however, funds to purchase these privately owned parcels are presently not available and it appears funds for land purchases will continue to be limited. Even if funds were available, the land exchange proponent has made the non-Federal lands available to the USFS on the basis of exchange only.

Require Deed Restrictions for Inholdings

Some scoping comments suggested that deed restrictions be used to control potential future development on the Federal lands once conveyed into private ownership. The purpose of a deed restriction should be to limit use or development on the Federal lands after conveyance as a means of addressing environmental concerns. A deed restriction alternative on the Federal lands was considered but eliminated from further study because no environmental concerns exist that require the reservation of rights by the United States (36 CFR 254.3(h)). In addition, any potential future development on the exchanged Federal lands would be subject to all laws and regulations of the State of Arizona and zoning ordinances, including subdivision development requirements of Apache, Navajo, and Yavapai counties, as applicable. The relevant laws, regulations, and

zoning ordinances contain adequate measures to assure the conveyed Federal lands, adjacent private land, and remaining adjacent NFS lands are not adversely affected. Changes in zoning typically require public review and comment at the county or city level. Protection of the Federal lands through deed restriction is not necessary, as the intended use of the conveyed land would not substantially conflict with the established management objectives on the adjacent NFS lands. Deed restrictions are not required in order to fulfill the purpose and need. Restrictions, if imposed, also would lessen the value of the federal parcels during appraisal and would require continued Federal administration or oversight of the lands exchanged out of Federal ownership. A principle objective of the exchange is to reduce federal administrative requirements over such parcels. The USFS has long taken the position that zoning and regulation of uses on private land are within the responsibility of state and local governments. Deed restrictions are not to be considered unless there is a need to protect the public interest where state or local regulations are not adequate. “Except as authorized by law, order, or regulation, Forest Service policies, practices, and procedures shall avoid regulating private property use” (USDA 2003). “Reservations and restrictions should not be used to address a social or political issue” (USDA 1995; Chapter 33.41c).

Alternatives Considered in Detail

Alternative 1 - Proposed Action

Exchange approximately 1,558 acres of non-Federal land for approximately 1,028 acres of Federal land, including connected actions. Maps and photographs depicting individual Federal and non-Federal parcels are included in appendix A. Forest Service databases would be updated to reflect these changes (e.g., GIS layers, INFRA database, cultural database, NRIS, etc.)

Detailed Description of Federal and Non-Federal Lands Proposed for Exchange

Non-Federal Lands to be Conveyed into Federal Ownership: 1,558 acres

The non-Federal lands are located in Apache, Coconino, Greenlee, Navajo, and Yavapai counties, Arizona. Many of the parcels are surrounded by Federal land. Table 5 presents legal descriptions and acreages of each of the non-Federal parcels proposed for exchange followed by descriptions of each parcel.

Table 5. Legal descriptions of non-Federal lands to be conveyed to Federal ownership

Parcel Name	Section	Township	Range	Approximate Acreage
Inholdings within Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests				
Alpine Ranger District				
Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel	27 & 34	6N	29E	156
Sprucedale Parcel	A portion of Tract B of HES 482	4½N (unsurveyed)	29E	70

Parcel Name	Section	Township	Range	Approximate Acreage
Clifton Ranger District				
Alder Peak Parcel	HES 231	1S (unsurveyed)	30E	160
Juan Miller Parcel	10	2S	29E	120
Black Mesa Ranger District				
Leonard Canyon Parcel (also within CNF)	15	14N	12E	8
Sponseller Ranch Parcel	27 and 34	13N	16E	118
Lakeside Ranger District				
Railroad Parcels	21, 28, & 33	11N	20E	22
Inholdings Within Coconino National Forest				
Mogollon Rim Ranger District				
Leonard Canyon Parcel (also within ASNFs)	15	14N	12E	632
Red Rock Ranger District				
Soda Springs Ranch Parcel	31 & 32	15N	6E	157
Inholdings Within Prescott National Forest				
Verde Ranger District				
Cherry Parcels	Mineral Survey Fractions 939, 940, 941, 942, 1226, & 1227 5, 6, 9, 10, & 15	14N	3E	117
Total Acreage of Non-Federal Lands to be Conveyed				1,558

Alder Peak Parcel (160 acres): This private parcel is surrounded by the Clifton Ranger District, Apache National Forest, and located within unsurveyed Township 1 South, Range 30 East, G&SRM. The Alder Peak parcel is approximately 22 miles north of Clifton, Arizona. Elevations on the property range from approximately 6,000 to 6,400 feet above mean sea level (amsl). A minor drainage flows south to north into Burns Tank located near the central-western section of the parcel. This tract is rural with an open meadow and a small water body. Vegetation on the parcel is primarily ponderosa pine and alligator juniper with a variety of low-lying shrubs and grasses.

Cherry Parcels (117 acres): The Cherry parcels (which are comprised of three separate parcels) are located on private inholdings surrounded by the Verde Ranger District, PNF. The Cherry Parcels are located approximately 8 miles south of Cottonwood, Arizona. The three parcels (Cross Cut/Gulch Parcel; Ida/Gold Ring/Potomac Parcel; and Sitting Bull Parcel) are located in five sections of Township 14 North, Range 3 East, G&SRM. The parcel boundaries of the Cross Cut/Gulch Parcel and Ida/Gold Ring/Potomac Parcel are located within Sections 9, 10, and 15 and are surrounded by Federal land. Located in Sections 5 and 6, the Sitting Bull Parcel's northwest corner adjoins private land and the remaining boundaries are connected to Federal lands. Steep surface topography exists for the Cherry Parcels. The Cherry Creek drainage crosses

a portion of the Sitting Bull Parcel, and other minor drainages occur on the Cross Cut/Gulch Parcel and Ida/Gold Ring/Potomac Parcel. Vegetation within the Cherry Parcels is characterized by dense manzanita with occasional interspersed junipers.

Juan Miller Parcel (120 acres): This parcel is surrounded by the Clifton Ranger District, Apache National Forest, and located within Section 10, Township 2 South, Range 29 East, G&SRM. The Juan Miller Parcel is approximately 15 miles north of Clifton, Arizona. The elevation of the parcel ranges from 5,800 to 6,400 feet amsl. Access to the parcel is from Coronado Road (NFSR 475), which intersects the parcel and leads to campgrounds to the east. Juan Miller Creek bisects the parcel, with surface topography becoming steeper to the north and south of the creek. The area along Juan Miller Creek is characterized by a single large sycamore and several native riparian vegetation species. North of Juan Miller Creek is a south-facing slope with scrub-live oak, agave, juniper, prickly pear, and blue grama. The area north of Juan Miller Creek drainage is predominantly ponderosa pine.

Leonard Canyon Parcel (640 acres): A total of 632 acres of the Leonard Canyon Parcel is bordered by the Mogollon Rim Ranger District, CNF, while the remaining 8 acres (that portion located east of Leonard Canyon) is bordered by the Black Mesa Ranger District, Sitgreaves National Forest. The parcel is the full Section 15, Township 14 North, Range 12 East, G&SRM and is surrounded by Federal lands. The Leonard Canyon Parcel is approximately 14 miles northeast of Happy Jack, Arizona. The elevation of the parcel ranges from 6,200 to 6,860 feet amsl. Approximately 0.3 mile of Leonard Canyon is within this parcel. This 0.3 mile of Leonard Canyon is considered a perennial pool stream reach, which means it has pools of water that remain year-round, while water flows throughout the entire 0.3 mile of Leonard Canyon for a portion of the year. This perennial pool stream reach flows into East Clear Creek north of the parcel. General vegetation within the parcel consists of ponderosa pine, gamble oak, alligator juniper, and various grasses. Cacti species are present along the open areas on south-facing slopes.

Railroad Parcels (22 acres): The Railroad Parcels, surrounded by the Lakeside Ranger District, Sitgreaves National Forest, and located within Sections 21, 28, and 33, Township 11 North, Range 20 East, G&SRM consist of three separate parcels of land that are approximately 100 feet wide. The Railroad Parcels are located approximately 1 mile east of Pinedale, Arizona. These three parcels of land are situated along abandoned Standard Lumber Mill, Inc., railroad grades. Elevations on the parcels remain relatively flat at approximately 6,300 feet amsl. Mortensen Wash runs through the middle and southern sections, and Pine Tank is immediately adjacent to the southern section. Vegetation within the Railroad Parcels consists primarily of native grasses, various thistles, and ponderosa pine. Evidence of the Rodeo-Chediski Fire which occurred in 2002 is present.

Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel (156 acres): This private parcel is primarily bordered by the Alpine Ranger District, Apache National Forest, in Sections 27 and 34, Township 6 North, Range 29 East, G&SRM. The southeast corner of this parcel borders private land. The Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel is approximately 6.5 miles northwest of Alpine, Arizona. Elevations on the property range from approximately 8,430 to 8,600 feet amsl. The general vegetation is mixed conifer forests with grasslands and open meadows. The parcel includes a wetland area approximately 82 acres in size. Three creeks meet within the wetland area. Boneyard Creek enters the parcel near the northeast corner and exits the parcel on the western boundary. Another creek (spillway from Sierra Blanca Lake) enters at the southern boundary and drains into Boneyard Creek. The third creek enters

from the northern boundary and also drains into Boneyard Creek. This parcel is currently encumbered by a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy. The conservation easement will terminate upon acquisition of the parcel by the Forest Service.

Soda Springs Ranch Parcel (157 acres): This private parcel is partially bordered by the Red Rock Ranger District, CNF within Sections 31 and 32, Township 15 North, Range 6 East, G&SRM. The Soda Springs Ranch Parcel is approximately 7 miles northeast of Camp Verde, Arizona. The parcel also borders Montezuma Castle National Monument to the west and private land on part of the east boundary. Elevations on the parcel range from 3,575 to 3,700 feet amsl. The prominent hydrologic features include Wet Beaver Creek and Red Tank Draw, both of which cross the parcel. Montezuma Well and Soda Spring are located within ¼ mile of the parcel.

Sponseller Ranch Parcel (118 acres): This parcel is surrounded by the Black Mesa Ranger District, Sitgreaves National Forest, and is within Sections 27 and 34, Township 13 North, Range 16 East, G&SRM. The Sponseller Ranch Parcel is approximately 3 miles northwest of Heber, Arizona. Elevations on the property remain relatively flat at an elevation of approximately 6,600 feet amsl. The center of the parcel is dominated by blue grama and other grasses, while a number of ponderosa pine and junipers occur along the edges of the parcel. Brookbank Canyon is the prominent drainage and crosses the length of the parcel.

Sprucedale Parcel (70 acres): This parcel is partially bordered by the Alpine Ranger District, Apache National Forest, within unsurveyed Township 4½ North, Range 29 East, G&SRM. The Sprucedale Parcel is approximately 14 miles southwest of Alpine, Arizona. The parcel borders ASNFs on the southwest and northwest corners and along the eastern boundary of the parcel. The remaining boundaries adjoin private land. Elevations on the property remain relatively flat at approximately 7,550 feet amsl. The prominent drainages in the area include Beaver and Horton Creeks, both intermittent streams. Vegetation within the parcel consists almost entirely of grasses, while dense ponderosa pine stands surround the area.

Federal Lands to be Conveyed into Non-Federal Ownership: 1,028 acres

The Federal lands consist of approximately 1,020 acres of land within the ASNFs and 8 acres within the CNF. Table 6 presents legal descriptions and acreages of each of the Federal parcels proposed for exchange. Descriptions of the parcels follow in table 6.

Table 6. Legal descriptions of Federal lands to be conveyed to non-Federal ownership

Parcel Name	Section	Township	Range	Approximate Acreage
Apache National Forest				
Alpine Ranger District				
Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel	34	6N	29E	2
Coconino National Forest				
Red Rock Ranger District				
Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel	32	15N	6E	8

Sitgreaves National Forest				
Lakeside Ranger District				
City of Show Low Parcel	8	10N	22E	70
Show Low South Parcel	31 & 32	10N	22E	948
Total Acreage of Federal Parcels to be Conveyed				1,028

City of Show Low Parcel (70 acres): This parcel is just north of the City of Show Low, Arizona, within the Lakeside Ranger District, Sitgreaves National Forest, in Section 8, Township 10 North, Range 22 East, G&SRM. The parcel is relatively flat at an elevation of approximately 6,300 feet amsl. The southern boundary of the parcel adjoins private land, while the west, north, and east boundaries adjoin ASNFs lands. The parcel, which remains undeveloped, contains a short segment of Show Low Creek in the southwest corner. The parcel's southwest corner also extends over the City of Show Low's sewage pipeline. Vegetation within this parcel consists primarily of juniper woodland with some gamble oak and ponderosa pines. Show Low Creek canyon contains riparian grasses, willows, and other vegetation.

Show Low South Parcel (948 acres): This parcel is located just south of the City of Show Low, Arizona, within the Lakeside Ranger District, Sitgreaves National Forest, in Sections 31 and 32 of Township 10 North, Range 22 East, G&SRM. Elevations on the property range from approximately 6,550 to 6,850 feet amsl. ASNFs lands flank the west and south, while private lands border the north and east sides. The parcel is contiguous to urban/transitional lands, such as the Sierra Pines subdivision, and contains part of the Buena Vista Trail #637, which would be rerouted for that part of the trail to federal land following exchange. The parcel also contains two identified prehistoric sites, which would have effects mitigated through implementation of a treatment plan (see Chapter 3, Cultural Resources). The Show Low South Parcel is located within a vegetation transition zone between ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper habitat. Several small unnamed drainages cross the parcel and Lost Tank is located near the center of the parcel.

Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel (2 acres): This parcel is within the Alpine Ranger District, Apache National Forest, in Section 34, Township 6 North, Range 29 East, G&SRM. The Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel is approximately 6.5 miles northwest of Alpine, Arizona. Elevations on the parcel range from approximately 8,430 to 8,580 feet amsl. The parcel is encumbered by an existing residential structure contiguous to the retained portion of Sierra Blanca Ranch. The general vegetation is mixed conifer forests with grasslands and open meadows. The northeastern section of the property is forested, while the southwestern area is open grassland and meadow habitat. No hydrologic features occur within the property, though Lake Sierra Blanca is directly southeast of the parcel.

Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel (8 acres): This parcel is within the Red Rock Ranger District, CNF, in Section 32, Township 15 North, Range 6 East, G&SRM. The Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel is approximately 7 miles northeast of Camp Verde, Arizona. Elevations on the parcel range from approximately 3,580 to 3,620 feet amsl. The parcel borders private lands to the west and south, and CNF lands to the north and east. This area of CNF is exposed to the management issues associated with urban and rural boundaries. The vegetation on this parcel is diverse as the southern half is characterized by an open irrigated nonnative grassy field, while the

northern section is primary desert scrub habitat. No hydrologic features are present within the parcel, though Wet Beaver Creek is immediately south of the parcel.

Connected Actions

Following the exchange, the trailhead to the Buena Vista Trail would be relocated, as well as a portion of the trail itself. Furthermore, NFSR 249A would be improved within the Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel.

Alternative 2 - No Action

Under alternative 2, the no action alternative, no exchange of lands would occur between the USFS and SLL. Lands would remain in current ownership.

Comparison of Alternatives

Table 7 compares the impacts of the alternatives to the key issues that were raised during the scoping process. More detail concerning the environmental consequences of the alternatives can be found in chapter 3 of this EIS.

Table 7. Comparison of alternatives

Ownership	Alternative 1 – Proposed Action	Alternative 2 – No Action
Land Use		
Non-Federal	The nine non-Federal parcels would not undergo any further development.	The non-Federal parcels would be developed as rural and low-density housing.
Federal	The four Federal parcels would be developed including expansion of the waste water treatment facility, low density, mixed use residential housing.	No change.
Recreation and Public Access		
Non-Federal	An additional 1,558 acres would become available for public access and use for recreation, hunting, fishing, camping, and other outdoor activities.	Remain private property with no public access or use.
Federal	Approximately 1,028 acres would be removed from public access and recreation opportunities. The Buena Vista Trail and Trailhead (#637) would be relocated to the south on retained Forest Service lands.	No change.
Socioeconomics		
Non-Federal	The private land tax base would decrease by a total of 1,558 acres as non-federal parcels are transferred to federal ownership; however, there would be corresponding increase in the Payment in Lieu of Taxes and Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 funds to each county to offset the lands moving into Federal ownership. May also increase tourism in the area bringing additional revenue.	Development could increase base property tax values in five Arizona counties.

Ownership	Alternative 1 – Proposed Action	Alternative 2 – No Action
Federal	The private land tax base would increase by a total of 1,028 acres as the federal parcels are transferred to private ownership. The exchange is not anticipated to have a measurable effect on tourism for the three communities due to the close proximity to other Federal lands.	No change.
Environmental Justice		
Non-Federal	No direct or indirect impacts to minority and low-income populations.	Development may bring jobs to several rural communities. No adverse effects are anticipated.
Federal	Development may bring jobs to several rural communities. No direct or indirect impacts to access and use federal lands to express and exercise American Indian ceremonial or traditional rites.	No change.
Plants, Fish, and Wildlife		
Non-Federal	Generally, the non-Federal parcels contain more valuable habitat for special status species, primarily due to the presence of perennial waters and riparian habitat on many of the parcels. Protection of species and habitat would be assured with Federal acquisition.	Parcels would likely be developed in the future reducing the quality and availability of wetland, riparian, and upland habitat.
Federal	Federal parcels provide low quality habitat for T&E species, which would be offset by the acquisition of over 1,500 acres of high quality riparian and upland habitat suitable for several T&E and other special status species. Best management practices (BMPs) would be implemented to limit the spread of invasive plant species.	No change.
Grazing		
Non-Federal	A total of 1,558 acres would be added to the NFS. An evaluation would determine the inclusion of these parcels into specific allotments.	Development on the Leonard Canyon and Soda Springs Ranch parcels would remove 797 acres from exiting grazing leases.
Federal	A total of 1,028 acres would be removed from current grazing allotments.	No change.
Prime and Unique Farmlands		
Non-Federal	No prime and unique farmlands are known to exist.	No change.
Federal	No prime and unique farmlands are known to exist.	No change.
Water Quality		
Non-Federal	A total of 1,040.26 acre-feet in annual volume of water rights would be conveyed to Federal ownership. No direct or indirect effects to water quality would occur.	Change in water quality or availability would be guided by city, county, or State of Arizona regulations.

Ownership	Alternative 1 – Proposed Action	Alternative 2 – No Action
Federal	A total of 0.09 acre-feet in annual volume of water rights would be conveyed to private ownership. Development of these parcels after conveyance is not expected to impact water quality in any way. Specifically, for the City of Show Low parcel, which will house the expansion of the city waste water treatment facility, the city will not allow effluent to enter Show Low Creek, maintaining the current water quality value. No direct or indirect effects to water quality are anticipated.	No change.
Wetlands and Floodplains		
Non-Federal	Approximately 112.3 acres of wetlands and 167 to 170 acres of delineated flood plains would be conveyed to Federal ownership. An additional ~6.5 to 62 acres of land that may be subject to flooding would also be conveyed.	These parcels would likely be developed reducing their quality and habitat availability to wildlife and other species of interest.
Federal	Approximately 1.8 acres of wetlands and 3.7 acres of delineated flood plains would be conveyed to private ownership. An additional 0.9 acre of land that may be subject to flooding would also be conveyed.	No change.
Cultural Resources		
Non-Federal	Any future proposed actions would be subject to historic preservation laws.	No protection of cultural resources exists, except human burials.
Federal	Direct adverse effects on three sites eligible to the NRHP. Adverse effects would be resolved and minimized through mitigation measures developed.	No change.
Mineral Resources		
Non-Federal	Alder Peak, Juan Miller, Leonard Canyon, Sierra Blanca Ranch, Soda Springs Ranch, Sponseller Ranch, and Sprucedale have little to no potential for mineral commodities. Alder Peak parcel has low to moderate potential for geothermal resources. Cherry parcel has little to no potential and is not prospectively valuable for leasable minerals.	Mineral estates would remain the same.
Federal	There is little to no potential for mineral commodities. None of the parcels are considered prospectively valuable.	Mineral estates would remain the same.
Roads		
Non-Federal	Any roads or road segments located on non-Federal parcels conveyed to Federal ownership would be evaluated to determine their inclusion in the Forest Service transportation system.	Additional roads may be built to provide access to developed lots.
Federal	The segments of roads located on the parcels would be removed from the Forest Service transportation system upon issuance of patent. No non-system roads would be affected by the land exchange. A road easement (30" wide; 15' from centerline) application would be evaluated on the Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel on NFSR 249A to allow access to the caretaker house located on the parcel after the exchange is finalized..	No change.

Ownership	Alternative 1 – Proposed Action	Alternative 2 – No Action
Fire and Fuels		
Non-Federal	Fire and fuels management would need to be consistent with the respective forest plans.	Private owners would be responsible for implementation of any fire and fuel treatments during and following development.
Federal	The Forest Service would be responsible for vegetation management within the urban interface to reduce the risk of wildfires from spreading from forest land to the newly acquired private parcels. Private owners would be responsible for fire and fuel treatments on the newly acquired private land.	No change.
Hazardous Materials		
Non-Federal	No hazardous material is known to exist.	No change.
Federal	No hazardous material is known to exist.	No change.

Chapter 3: Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the physical, biological, cultural, and socioeconomic environments of the project area and the effects of implementing each alternative on that environment. It also presents the scientific and analytical basis for the comparison of alternatives presented in chapter 2. In the development of the environmental analyses that follow, the best available science was considered and is documented in the project record. The environmental analysis focuses on resources identified by the ASNFs interdisciplinary resource specialists' team (ID team) and through the scoping process. The resources analyzed in this chapter include land use; recreation and public access; socioeconomic; environmental justice; plants and wildlife; grazing; prime and unique farmlands; wetlands and flood plains; water quality, rights, and claims; cultural resources; mineral resources; roads; fire and fuels; and hazardous materials. Existing conditions for each parcel are described followed by a comprehensive effects analysis for the Federal parcels. The non-Federal parcels receive a cursory evaluation of effects with the exception of the hazardous materials, which require a full and thorough evaluation. An environmental effect, impact, or consequence is defined as a modification of or change in the existing environment brought about by the proposed action taken. Effects are direct, indirect, or cumulative and may be temporary (short term) or permanent (long term). Effects can vary by degree, ranging from only a slightly discernible change to a drastic alteration of the environment. Mitigation measures that could reduce or prevent adverse impacts identified during the impact analyses are also described.

Short-term Uses and Long-term Productivity

NEPA requires consideration of “the relationship between short-term uses of man’s environment and the maintenance and enhancement of long-term productivity” (40 CFR 1502.16). As declared by Congress, this includes using all practicable means and measures, including financial and technical assistance, in a manner calculated to foster and promote the general welfare, to create and maintain conditions under which man and nature can exist in productive harmony, and fulfill the social, economic, and other requirements of present and future generations of Americans (NEPA Section 101).

The proposed land exchange would not result in long-term loss of productivity of ASNFs lands and resources. The land exchange would result in benefits to long-term productivity through a net increase in NFS lands that contain higher wildlife values, an increase in recreational opportunities, a reduction in private inholdings, and an increase in forest management efficiency. A description of impacts by resource can be found in this chapter.

Unavoidable Adverse Effects

Unavoidable adverse effects of the land exchange would be primarily to those individuals that utilize the ASNFs lands adjacent to their private residences for recreational purposes, particularly on the parcels near the City of Show Low (City of Show Low parcel and Show Low South parcel). These individuals would have to travel further to enjoy the recreational opportunities offered by ASNFs lands. Transferring lands out of federal ownership that include the three historic properties identified would also have unavoidable adverse effects that are irreversible; however, the severity of the effects identified would be minimized by adhering to mitigation measures that were developed and are included in this EIS. Other unavoidable impacts could

include impacts to recreation and public access, land use, and wildlife. A description of impacts expected by alternative can be found by resource area in this chapter.

Irreversible and Irretrievable Commitment of Resources

An irreversible effect is a change in a natural resource that cannot be reversed. An irreversible commitment of resources refers primarily to the use of nonrenewable resources such as minerals but could also apply to an effect such as the permanent loss of a cultural resource site through development of an area. An irretrievable effect is a loss of production or use of a renewable natural resource for a period of time, but is reversible, such as the loss of soil productivity or wildlife habitat from the presence of a road. By definition, cultural resource sites and traditional cultural properties are not renewable and damage to them cannot be reversed.

Under the proposed action, irreversible and irretrievable adverse effects that would occur to cultural resources located on the Federal parcels would be resolved through mitigation as required by NHPA and implemented through the MOA developed for this project. In addition, the proposed action would likely result in loss of forest soil productivity and loss of habitat for wildlife species on the Federal parcels, if parcels are developed following the land exchange; however, the non-Federal parcels are of greater acreage and the land exchange would result in a net gain of high value wildlife habitat. While some surface waters located on Federal parcels would be irretrievably lost, a greater amount of surface waters would be brought into forest ownership. See the affected resources discussions below for each resource category analyzed.

Other Required Disclosures

NEPA at 40 CFR 1502.25(a) directs “to the fullest extent possible, agencies shall prepare final environmental impact statements concurrently with and integrated with other environmental review laws and executive orders.” As a proposed Federal project, the proposed land exchange decision is subject to compliance with other Federal and state laws. The following actions have been taken to document and ensure compliance with other laws.

Consultation with Arizona SHPO and the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP)

Compliance with the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) is required for the proposed land exchange. Concurrence regarding determinations of site eligibility for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and the determination of effects was received from the SHPO on October 4, 2010, and is in the project record. The action alternative would have an adverse effect to historic properties as defined in 36 CFR 800. The Forest Service notified and consulted the ACHP regarding the adverse effects determination. Cultural resources located on Federal lands would require mitigation to resolve those adverse effects in consultation with the SHPO and ACHP. The ACHP chose not to participate in consultation regarding the MOA pursuant to 36 CFR 800.6 (a)(1)(iii). A treatment plan for mitigation and a MOA have been prepared for the action alternative. SHPO agreed that the proposed treatment plan for mitigation would satisfy the legal requirements to resolve adverse effects to the historic properties. A letter of approval of the treatment plan from the SHPO was received on September 20, 2013, and is in the project record.

Consultation with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)

Compliance with the Endangered Species Act (ESA) is required. A biological assessment and evaluation (BA&E) has been prepared for the proposed action. Lands going out of Federal ownership were surveyed for federally listed species protected by the ESA. No federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed species occur on the Federal parcels. No surveys for federally listed species were conducted on the non-Federal parcels; any listed species present on the non-Federal parcels would be protected by the USFS following the proposed land exchange. Therefore, biological resources on the private lands were briefly characterized in the BA&E based on habitat and information available for adjacent Federal lands. Due to the fact that no federally listed species protected under the ESA were identified on the Federal lands, no formal or informal consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) is required. Biological resources are discussed and evaluated in the “Plants and Wildlife” section of this chapter.

Land Use

Affected Environment

The land use evaluations disclose the “reasonable and foreseeable use” of non-Federal parcels if the land exchange is not executed, and the “reasonable and foreseeable use” of Federal parcels if the land exchange is executed and they are conveyed into private ownership. The reasonable and foreseeable use, as defined by 36 CFR 254 Subpart A, is established by an appraiser’s supported opinion of the most probable and legal use of a property, based on market evidence, as of the date of valuation.

City of Show Low Planning and Zoning

Most of the private property currently within the City of Show Low came into private ownership through land exchanges. The City of Show Low *General Plan* (City of Show Low 2007) includes areas that could become private property during future land exchanges and long-term planning anticipates these exchanges.

The Federal Show Low South parcel has been annexed by the City of Show Low and is included within the *General Plan*. The *General Plan* presumes that the exchanged property will be developed as one or more master planned communities, which is typically accomplished through a planned unit development although it can also be undertaken through traditional zoning (City of Show Low 2007).

The development process starts with an application for a zone change, which requires a neighborhood meeting and public hearings. There is a long list of requirements for this process, including the developer submitting a land use plan for the entire property that indicates density, uses, and open space for each area of the property, accompanied by a statement of design philosophy, setbacks (both internally and at perimeters), circulation, and traffic analysis. This plan must be presented at public hearings and be approved by both the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council.

After approval of the zone change application, the developer will begin the Preliminary Development Plan or Preliminary Plat Process, which also includes public meetings with the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council prior to approval. As part of the process, the developer will submit more detailed plans on the portion of the property to be developed. A

traffic statement from a registered engineer will address the impact of new development on existing roads, and sewer, water, and other utilities will be analyzed including the status of existing capacities.

The next step is the Final Plat process, during which all plans must be reviewed and approved in specific detail. The Final Plat must be approved by the City Council. The developer must also post financial assurances in an amount that will cover all improvements before the Final Plat can be recorded. Once the Final Plat has been approved and recorded and all public improvements have been completed, the City Council accepts the subdivision.

Typically, the high initial cost of infrastructure, which must be paid by the developer, tends to hold back development until there is sufficient market demand for new products. Refer to project record item dated March 18, 2013 for an explanation of City of Show Low South parcel development process.

Federal Parcels

The City of Show Low parcel (70 acres; Lakeside Ranger District, SNF) is currently undeveloped, but encumbered by the City of Show Low's force main sewer pipeline, which crosses through the parcel's southwest corner, authorized by a Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) utility easement. NFSR 9701K5 provides access to the northern portion of this parcel.

The Show Low South parcel (948 acres; Lakeside Ranger District, SNF) is currently undeveloped, but encumbered. The parcel is within the incorporated (annexed) limits of the City of Show Low. Recreationists utilize a number of designated forest roads that cross the Show Low South parcel. A segment of Buena Vista Trail #637 extends through a portion of the parcel. The existing trailhead near US 60 will not be impacted by the exchange since it is over one mile from the nearest edge of the Federal exchange parcel. Navopache Electric Cooperative, Inc. has an overhead transmission line that crosses diagonally through the parcel from the southeast to northwest. All facilities and lines associated with this transmission line are authorized by a master special use permit that includes a 20-foot-wide right-of-way (ROW) that expires December 31, 2027.

The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel (2 acres; Alpine Ranger District, ANF) is encumbered by a caretaker house (guest house) with a detached shed and road (NFSR 249A). Use of the caretaker house is currently authorized by the ASNFs under a special use permit that covers 3.4 acres. That portion of NFSR249A on the subject parcel is currently unauthorized. The legal access to the caretaker house is through the existing adjacent private ranch and across the federal lands by a private road easement for NFSR 249V lying southwesterly currently authorized by the ASNFs under FLPMA authority, (October 21, 1976), issued to GOC, LLC.

The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel (8 acres; Red Rock Ranger District, CNF) is encumbered with an unauthorized telephone line, unauthorized irrigated field, access road, and portion of a Frisbee golf course.

Non-Federal Parcels

The Alder Peak parcel (160 acres) is surrounded by the Clifton Ranger District, ANF. The parcel is undeveloped, unoccupied, and has no evidence of recent use.

The Cherry parcels consist of three separate parcels (117 acres); the Sitting Bull Parcel (the northwest parcel), Cross Cut and Gulch Parcel (the middle parcel), and Ida, Gold Ring, and Potomac Parcel (the southeast parcel). The middle and southeast parcels are completely surrounded by Federal land (Verde Ranger District, PNF), while the northwest parcel is partially bordered by the Verde Ranger District of the PNF and private land. Together, the Cherry parcels contain six patented mineral surveys (mining claims). No other development activities are evident.

The Juan Miller parcel is surrounded by Federal land (120 acres; Clifton Ranger District, ANF). NFSR 475 (Juan Miller Road) runs through the parcel and provides access to the Upper and Lower Juan Miller Campgrounds. No other development is present. The Upper and Lower Juan Miller Campgrounds are located southwest of the parcel.

The Leonard Canyon parcel (8 acres on the CNF; 632 acres on the SNF) is mostly surrounded by Federal land (Mogollon Rim Ranger District, CNF, on the north, west, and southern boundaries; Black Mesa Ranger District, SNF, on the eastern boundary). A section of private land exists diagonally northwest of the parcel. NFSR 137B and NFSR 137E cross the property; however, no other development is present. No proposed changes to the existing road status have been identified.

The Railroad parcels consist of three separate strips of land (total of 22 acres) that are surrounded by Federal land (Lakeside Ranger District, SNF). Overhead electrical lines and a service road follow sections of the middle and southern strips of land. NFSR 129 intersects the northern strip at two locations. The Railroad parcels are situated along abandoned railroad grades (railroad material has been removed).

The Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel (156 acres) is mostly surrounded by Federal land (Alpine Ranger District, ANF) except for privately owned land to the southeast. No development is present within the Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel. It is currently encumbered by a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy. The legal access to the Ranch is by a private road easement for NFSR 249V lying southwesterly authorized by the ASNFs under FLPMA authority, (October 21, 1976), issued to GOC, LLC.

The Soda Springs Ranch parcel (157 acres) is generally bordered by the Montezuma Castle National Monument to the west, CNF land to the north and south (Red Rock Ranger District, CNF), and private land to the east. An unmarked dirt road runs through the middle of the property and NFSR 121 crosses a small northern portion of the property. Arizona Public Service Company has an easement through the parcel. No other development is present.

The Sponseller Ranch parcel (118 acres) is surrounded by Federal land (Black Mesa Ranger District, SNF). Remains of the Wyrick Ranch (formally S.A. Sponseller) are evident within the parcel including a dilapidated structure, water derrick, and water well.

The Sprucedale parcel (70 acres) is part of a larger inholding tract of private land. The parcel is bordered by Federal land (Alpine Ranger District, ANF) on a small section of the eastern, northern, and southern boundary. No development is present.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be transferred to private ownership. As such, the parcels would not be available for public use, including recreation, travel, timber, grazing operations, etc. The following describes the reasonable and foreseeable use of each of the parcels if the proposed action alternative is chosen.

The City of Show Low parcel would be directly transferred to the City of Show Low through the land exchange proponent. The City of Show Low parcel would house the expansion of the city's waste water treatment facility (see figure 3). The remainder of the parcel would remain undeveloped. The City of Show Low would apply a zoning designation of AR-43 (Agricultural-Residential) to the parcel.

The Show Low South parcel is currently within the municipal boundaries of the City of Show Low and would likely be developed as low-density residential and mixed-use residential (figure 4). Transfer of the Show Low South parcel to private ownership would not affect the power lines that exist on the parcel, because the master use permit would include the transfer of the easement within the private parcel. The segment of Buena Vista Trail #637 within the City of Show Low parcel would be realigned. A report prepared by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (ADWR) concluded that the City of Show Low has sufficient water supplies which are continuously and legally available for 100 years after the report's approval in the year 1999 (updated May 25, 2011). The City of Show Low would employ a zoning designation of AR-43 (Agricultural-Residential) to the parcel.

No further development is anticipated if the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel is transferred to private ownership. The special use permit for the existing caretaker house would terminate. A 30-foot-wide private road easement (15' from centerline) would be granted to the proponent for use of NFSR 249A, extending from NFSR 249 to the boundary of the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel. Concurrently with the establishment of that easement, a previously recorded road easement that was established for the property across undisturbed NFS lands would be terminated.

The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel would likely be developed as a single rural residential area. No effects to the Arizona Public Service Company power line would occur because it is outside of the parcel boundary. Transfer of the parcel to private ownership would not affect the access of other private parcels via NFSR 121.

Non-Federal Parcels

Upon transfer to Federal ownership, the nine non-Federal parcels would not undergo any further development. The parcels would be integrated into the NFS, which would allow the public to utilize the lands for recreation and other uses. The parcels would be managed as directed under respective forest plans. Because the ASNFs would acquire the Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel, the conservation easement managed by The Nature Conservancy would be terminated.

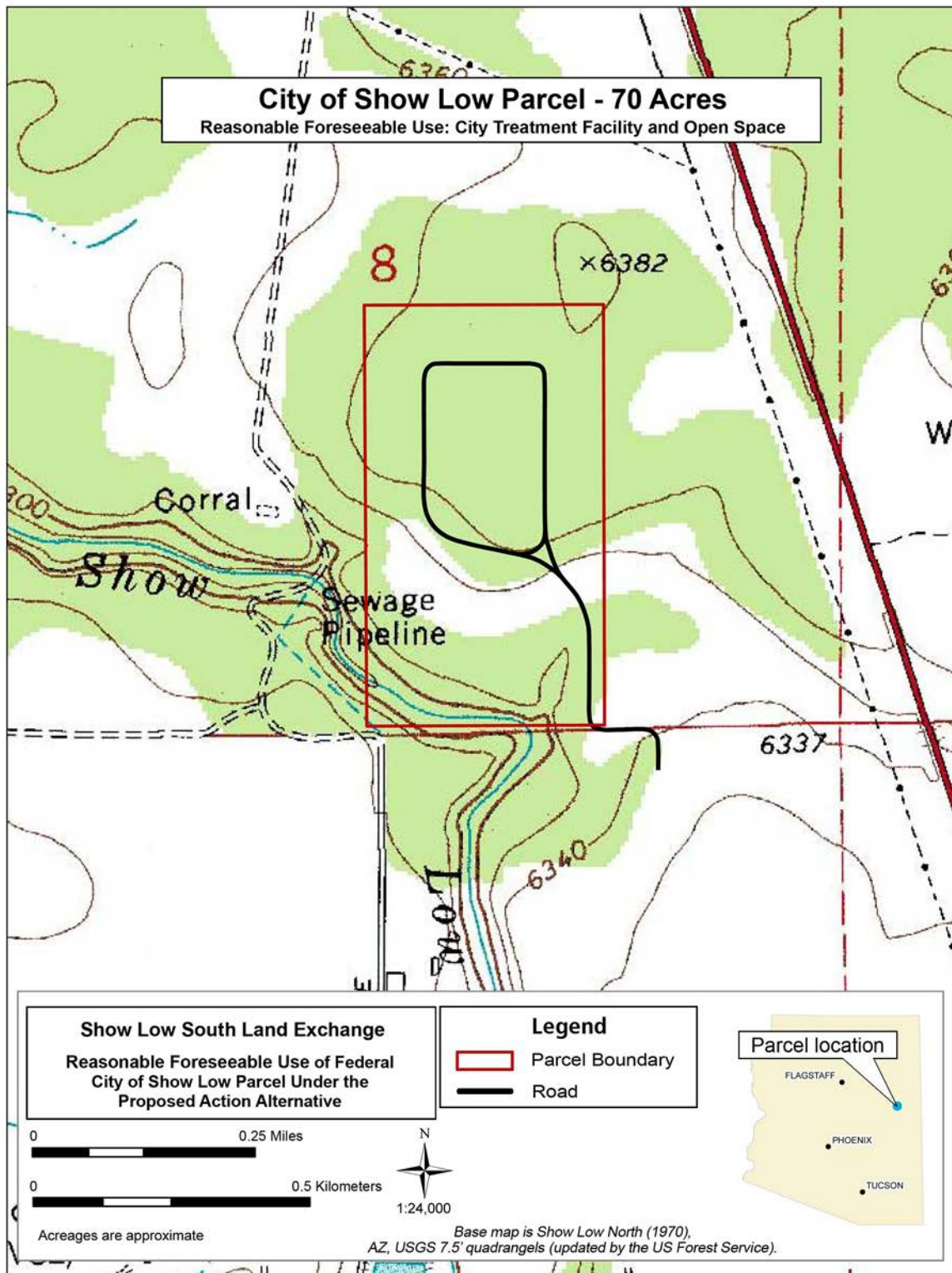


Figure 3. Reasonable and foreseeable use map of the federal City of Show Low parcel showing the planned expansion of the City of Show Low waste water treatment facility

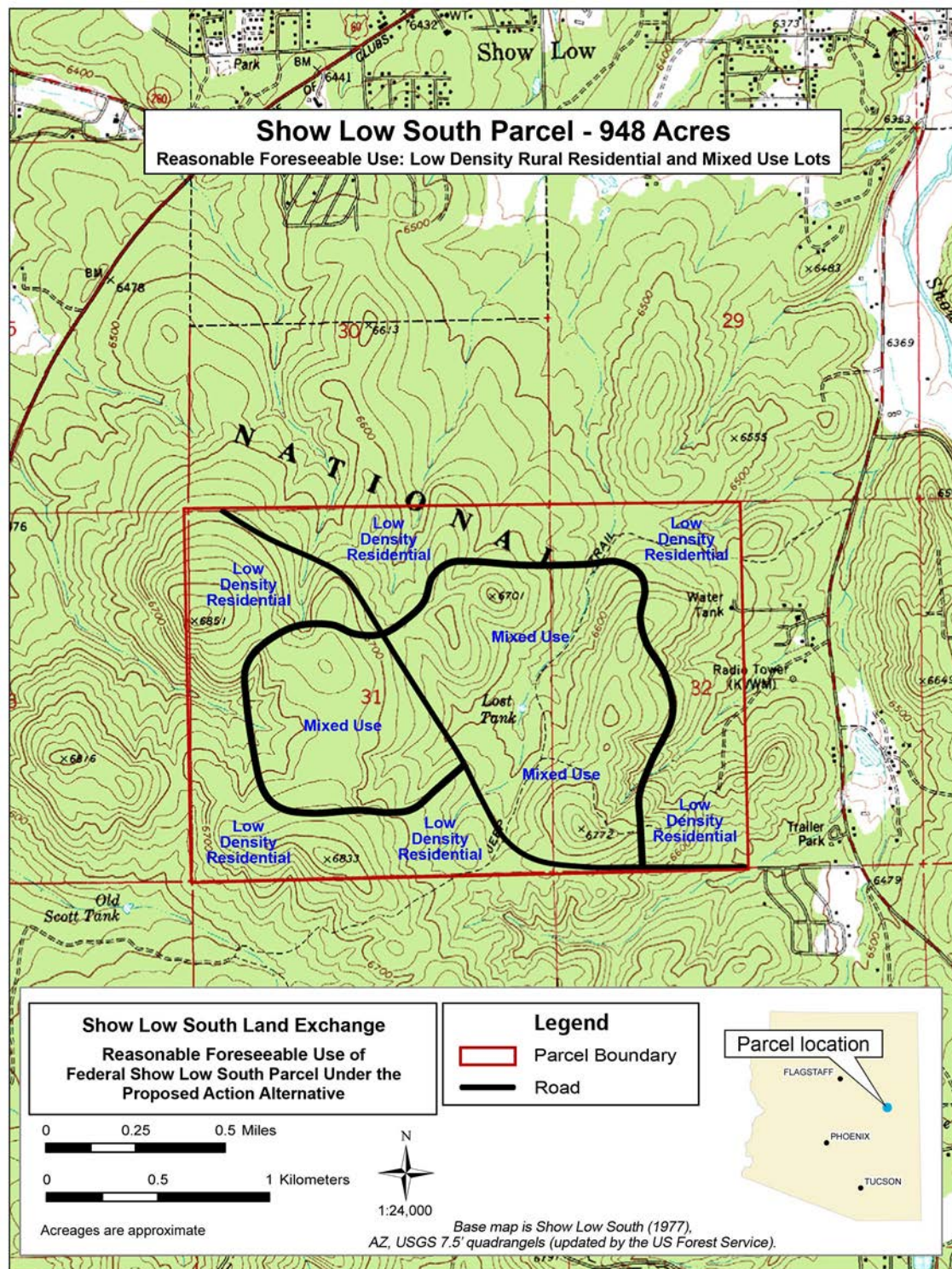


Figure 4. Reasonable and foreseeable use map of the federal Show Low South parcel showing planned development

Cumulative Effects

The cumulative effects analysis considers past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions to determine whether they would result in effects on land use when combined with the proposed action. The existing condition described above reflects the current land use within the project area. Past, present, and future projects—as listed in appendix B—cumulatively would have little effect on land use within the project region. Residential zoning within the City of Show Low’s *General Plan* would ensure a limited amount of public land use within the immediate vicinity of the City of Show Low, though SNF land is open for public use in the surrounding area. The Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange project, which would involve a trade of Federal and private lands, would allow consolidation of NFS lands and provide for a children’s camp on private lands. Overall, a net gain of land for the NFS resulting from the Show Low South Land Exchange would result in no substantial cumulative impacts regarding land use.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the four Federal parcels would not be conveyed to private ownership and would remain within the NFS. As such, no effects to the current land use of the Federal parcels would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

If the nine non-Federal parcels are not transferred to Federal ownership, the parcels would remain in private ownership and would likely be further developed. The parcels would not be available for public use. The following are the most reasonable and foreseeable uses of each of the non-Federal parcels under the no action alternative based on current zoning.

The Alder Peak parcel would likely be developed as a remote ranch or cabin site.

The Cherry parcels would likely be developed as rural residential cabin lots. Each lot would be 20 acres or greater in size.

The Juan Miller parcel would likely be developed as five rural residential cabin lots. Each of the 5 lots would be approximately 24 acres in size (figure 5).

The Leonard Canyon parcel would be developed as a rural residential area. There would be a total of 45 lots that are 10 acres or greater in size (figure 6).

The Railroad parcels would be developed as rural cabin sites. There would be five tracts, each approximately 1 acre or more in size, within each of the three strips of land that comprise the Railroad Parcels (figure 7).

The Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel would continue to be managed as a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy. The most reasonable and foreseeable uses of the parcel include several possible scenarios: construction of one single family residence (with accessory buildings and structures); operation of an ecotourism, bed and breakfast; retreat center; and/or use as a

ranch for up to 36 horses with barns and corrals (special warranty deed with reservation of conservation easement dated January 11, 2006).

The Soda Springs Ranch Parcel would be developed as a rural residential area. There would be a total of 41 lots that are 3.5 acres or greater in size (figure 8).

The Sponseller Ranch Parcel would be developed as a rural residential area. There would be a total of 42 lots that are 2.5 acres or greater in size (figure 9).

The Sprucedale Parcel would be developed as a rural residential area. There would be a total of 13 lots that are 5 acres or greater in size (see figure 10).

Cumulative Effects

Under the no action alternative, the parcels would remain under their current ownership and no changes to public land use would occur. No cumulative effects are anticipated.

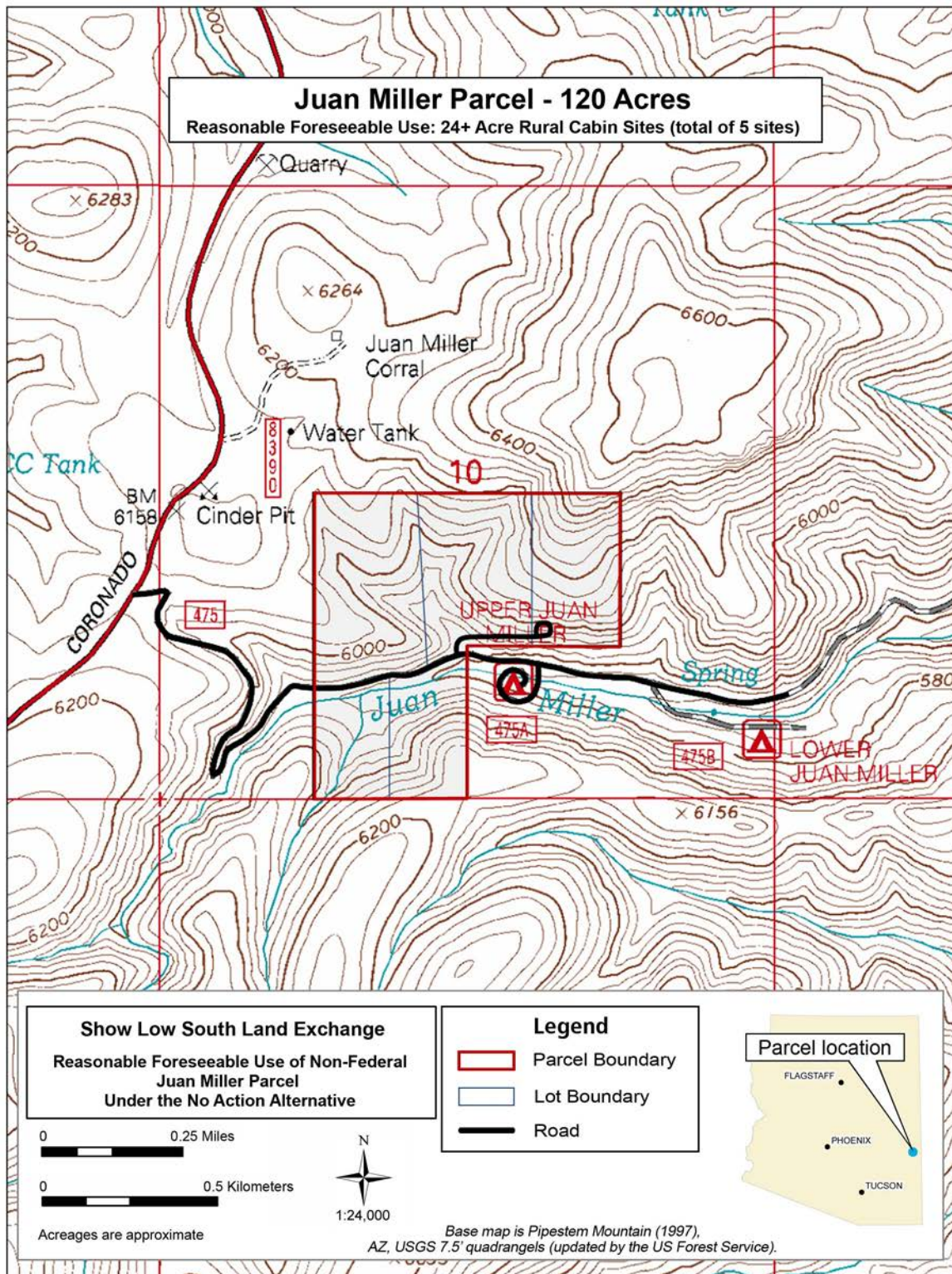


Figure 5. Reasonable and foreseeable use map showing the planned development of the non-federal Juan Miller parcel

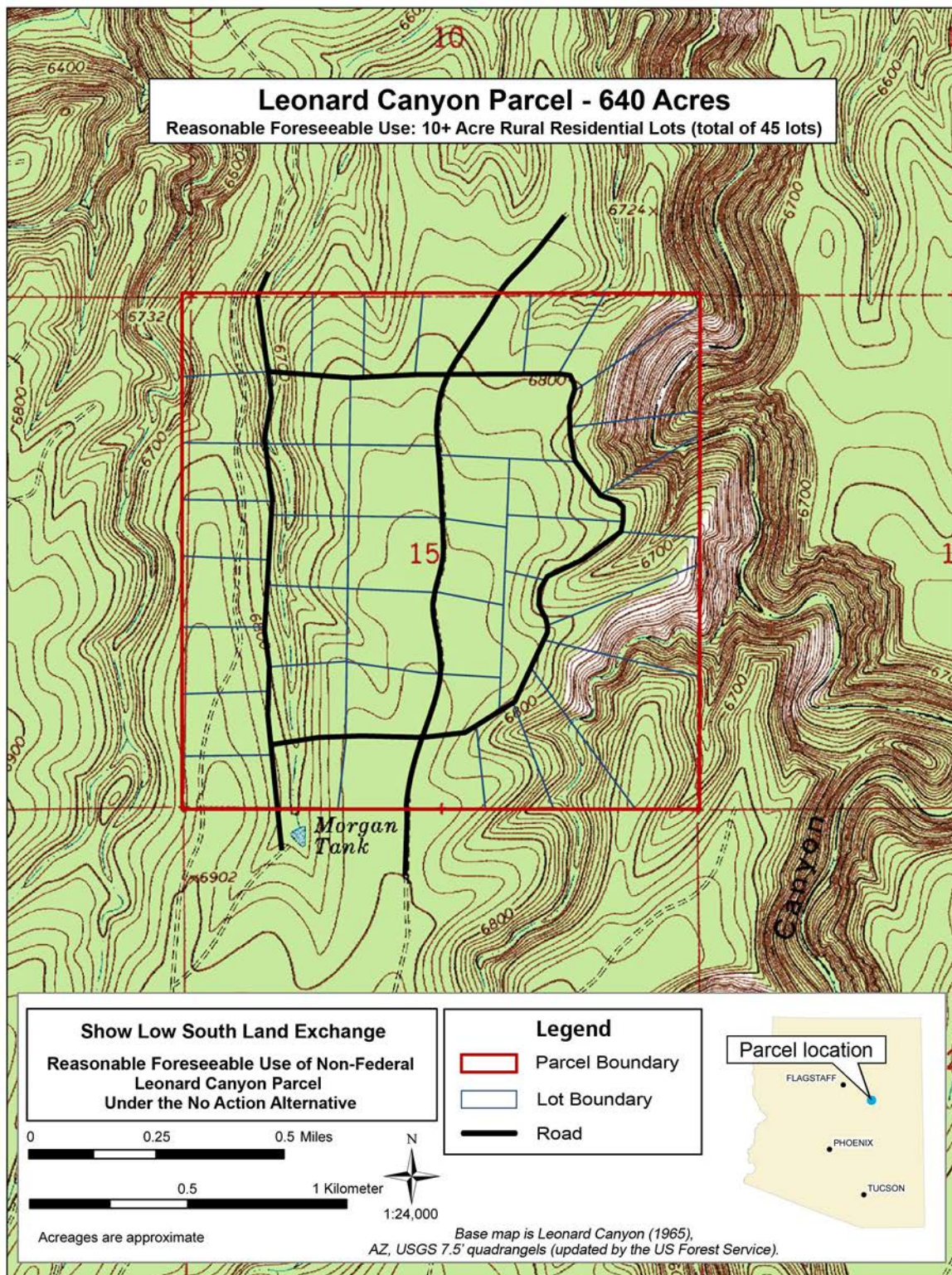


Figure 6. Reasonable and foreseeable use map showing the planned development of the non-federal Leonard Canyon parcel

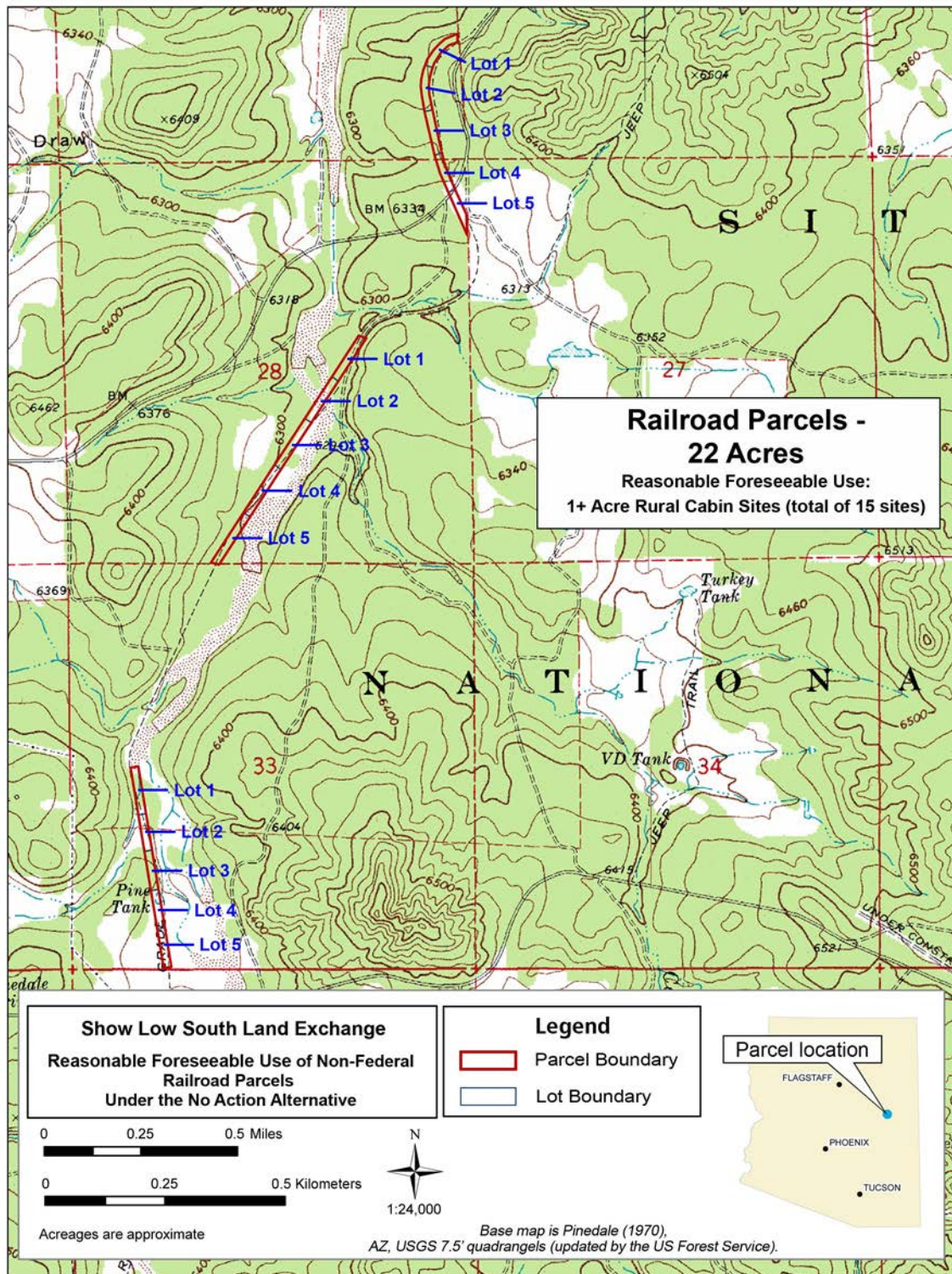


Figure 7. Reasonable and foreseeable use map showing the planned development of the non-federal Railroad parcels

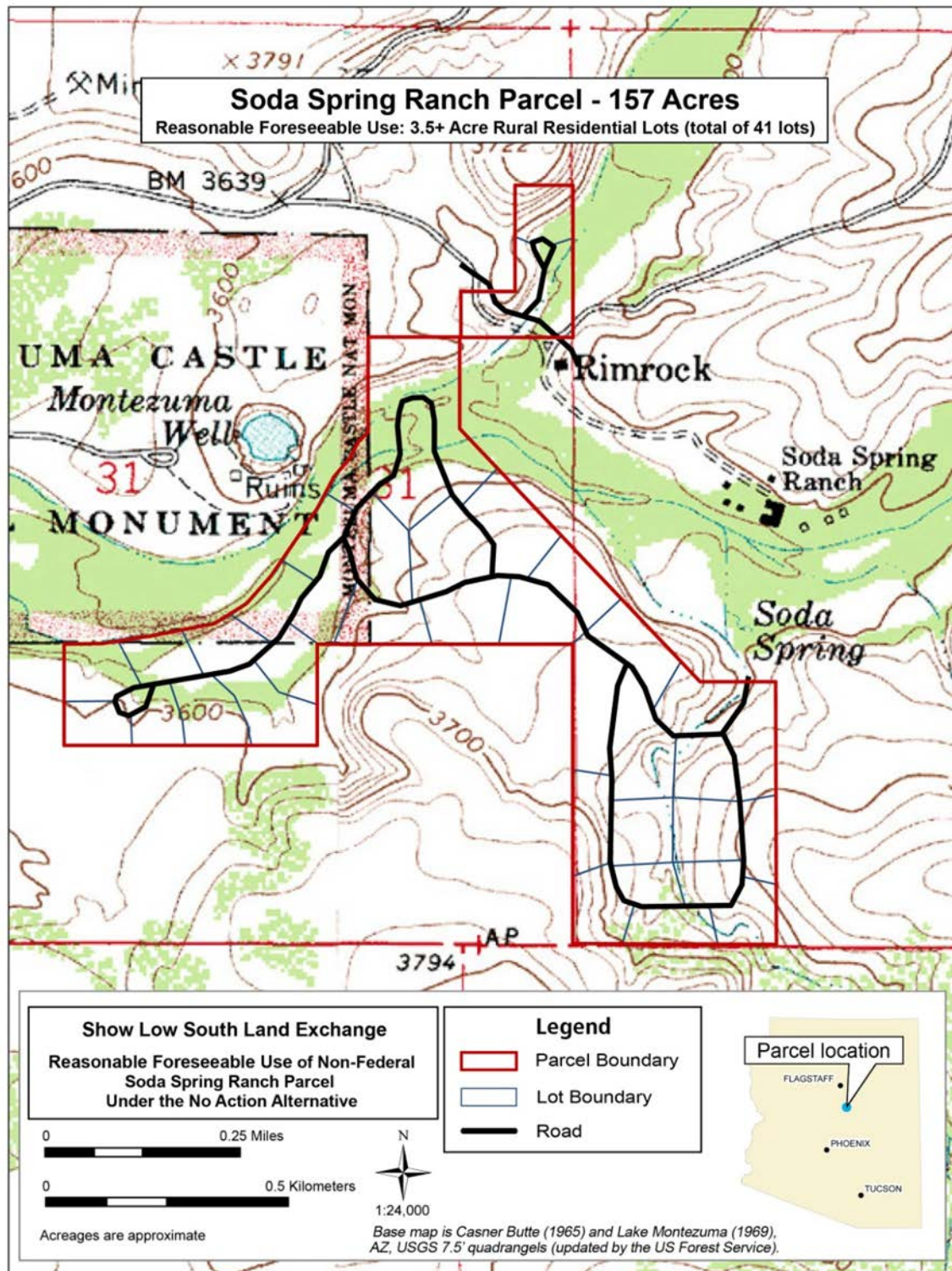


Figure 8. Reasonable and foreseeable use map showing the planned development of the non-federal Soda Springs Ranch parcel

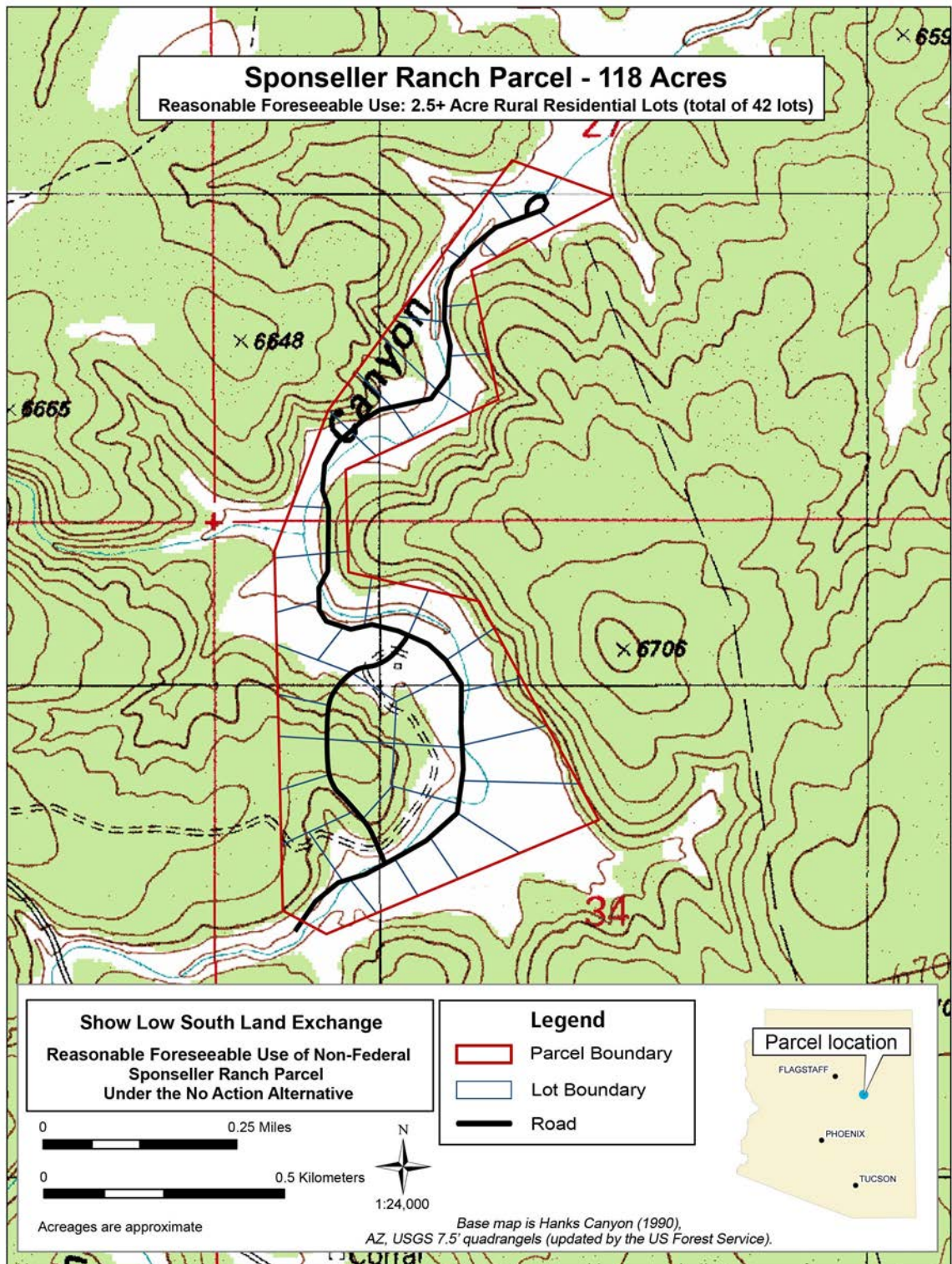


Figure 9. Reasonable and foreseeable use map showing the planned development of the non-federal Sponseller Ranch parcel

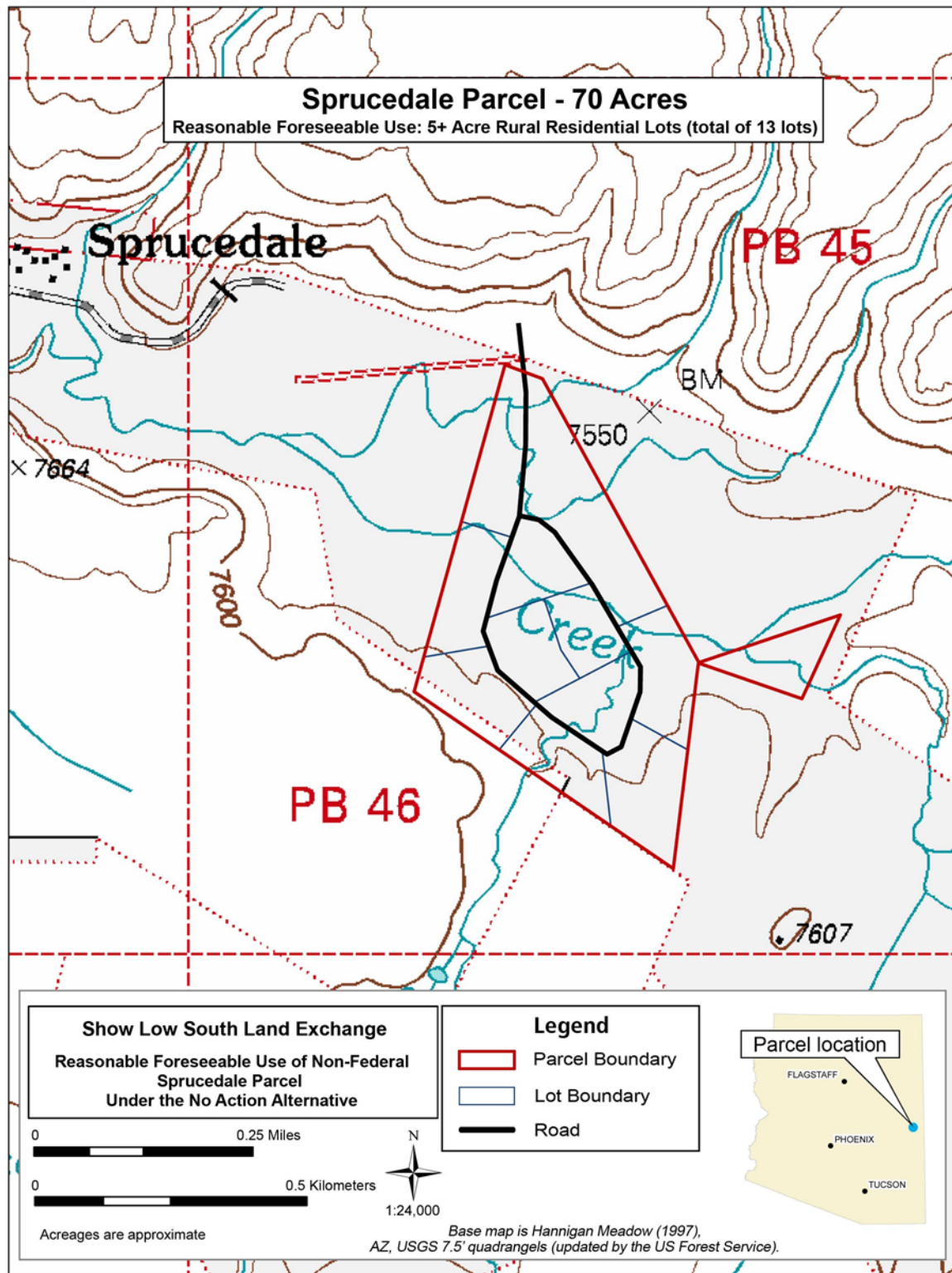


Figure 10. Reasonable and foreseeable use map showing the planned development of the non-federal Sprucedale parcel

Recreation and Public Access

Affected Environment

Federal Parcels

The Federal parcels are open to public use and offer a wide range of dispersed recreation opportunities, including hiking, biking, horseback riding, camping, nature viewing, hunting, all-terrain vehicle use, and winter sports (e.g., cross-country skiing, sledding, snowshoeing, and snowmobile use).

The only established forest trail on any of the four Federal parcels is Buena Vista Trail #637 (figure 11), a portion of which is on the Show Low South Parcel. Due to the proximity of the Show Low South parcel to the City of Show Low to the north and a subdivision and trailer park to the east, the parcel is utilized by recreationists fairly frequently. The same is the case for the City of Show Low parcel, which is directly north of the City of Show Low and contains a portion of Show Low Creek.

Non-Federal Parcels

The non-Federal parcels are private property and, therefore, are not legally open to public use. However, because many of the parcels are not fenced or identified as private land with signs, evidence of dispersed recreation is apparent on some of the parcels (e.g., Leonard Canyon, Juan Miller, and Soda Springs Ranch parcels).

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the exchange would occur and the four Federal parcels would transfer to private ownership. Approximately 1,028 acres of NFS lands would be removed and be unavailable for public use and recreational activities. The forest roads extending through the various parcels would be removed from the NFS transportation database system and would no longer be available for public access. Buena Vista Trail #637 would be realigned south of its current location outside of the land exchange boundary. In addition, a second trailhead for the Buena Vista Trail would be established on NFS lands near the east end of the parcel. This would place it much closer to the residences of the Sierra Pines subdivision. No other established trails would be affected by the land exchange.

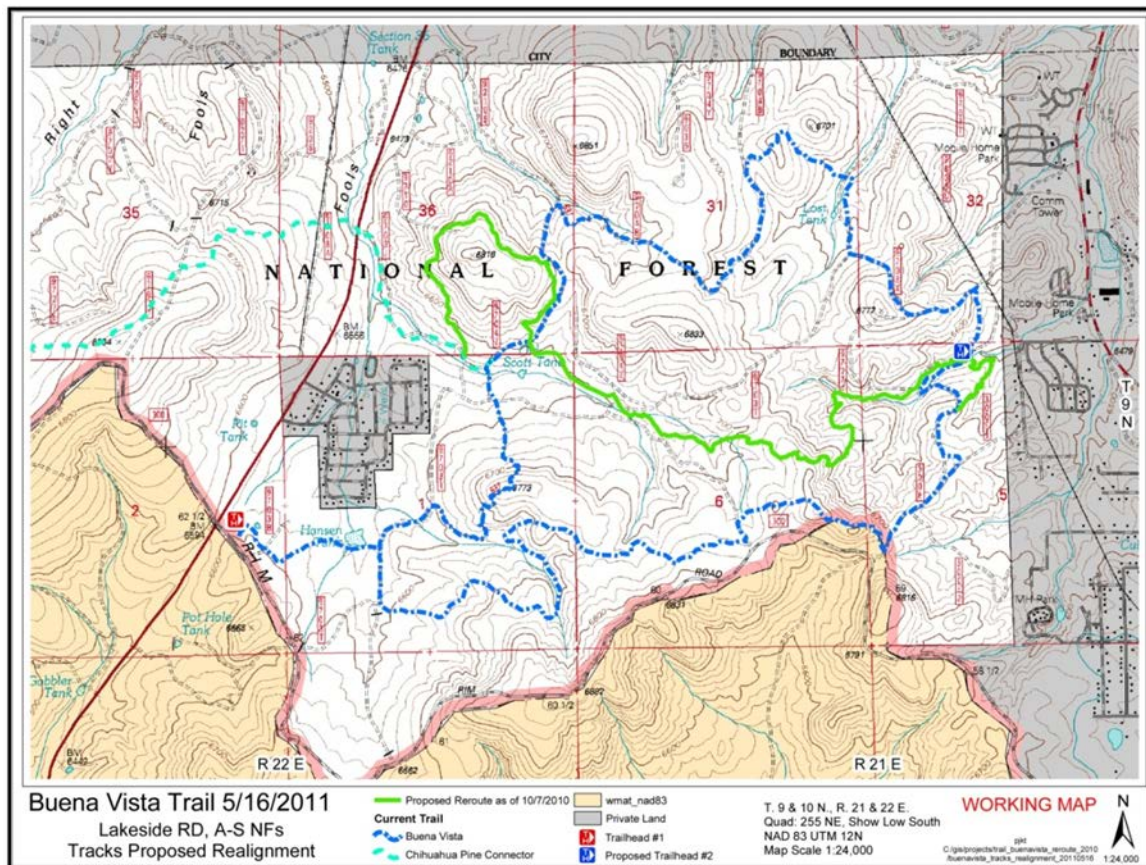


Figure 11. A topographic map of Buena Vista Trail

Approximately one-third of the existing Buena Vista Trail is on the Show Low South Federal exchange parcel. The existing trailhead near US 60 will not be impacted by the exchange because it is over one mile from the nearest edge of the trade parcel.

The Forest Service partners with TRACKS, a non-profit organization specializing in non-motorized trails on the Lakeside Ranger District. TRACKS identified an acceptable re-route to move the portion of the trail from the exchange parcel to National Forest System lands that are not part of the exchange. The proposed re-route will maintain the approximate length and difficulty of the existing trail. The exchange proponent has agreed to support part of the cost to relocate the trail. This will occur after the exchange agreement has been signed but before development plans are finalized. In addition, the Forest Service, TRACKS, and the exchange proponent have agreed to design and develop a second trailhead. This would occur near the east end of the parcel. It would be developed as the road system is built for the proposed development and would likely not occur for several years. Figure 11 presents a map of the Buena Vista Trail, existing Trailhead #1, proposed trail re-route, and proposed Trailhead #2. Refer to project record item dated 10/29/2007 for Buena Vista Trail background discussions and project record e-mail dated 6/21/2010 for trail commitments.

The Forest Service remains responsible for the Buena Vista Trail and future approved connections from adjacent developments. The City of Show Low and the developer would negotiate the long-

term responsibility for trails located on private lands and approved during the city development processes.

Transfer of the Show Low South parcel to private ownership would directly affect public access to the ASNFs for residents in the northern half of the Sierra Pines neighborhood. If the proposed action alternative occurs, these Sierra Pines residents would have to travel about 1 mile south to access ASNFs land and the second Buena Vista Trailhead (figure 11).

Non-Federal Parcels

The proposed exchange would result in an increase of approximately 1,558 acres (net gain of 530 acres) under NFS management. The nine non-Federal parcels would be open to public use and dispersed recreation. Because all of the non-Federal parcels are partially or completely surrounded by Federal land, use of surrounding lands for recreational purposes would be enhanced.

In addition to the general enhancement to recreation and public access of acquiring the non-Federal parcels, there is an added benefit to the management of Montezuma Castle National Monument. According to the feasibility analysis conducted by the Forest Service, acquisition of the Soda Springs Ranch parcel (non-Federal) would result in improvements to the management of the adjoining Montezuma Castle National Monument in several ways. First, acquisition of this parcel would limit the amount of development that could potentially adversely affect the national monument. Acquisition of the Soda Springs Ranch parcel would also increase the total acreage of NFS land within the CNF that would be available for recreation, while protecting both the landscape and open space characteristics of this property which is directly connected to Montezuma Castle National Monument. Finally, acquisition of the Soda Springs Ranch parcel would result in a reduction in management cost by eliminating greater than 2 miles of landline boundary, while allowing for maintenance of forest type lands that are directly adjacent to Montezuma Castle National Monument (USDA Forest Service Feasibility Analysis 2010).

Cumulative Effects

The following past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future projects listed in appendix B would contribute to the direct and indirect effects to recreation and public access listed above.

- An existing road will provide access to the proposed Second Knoll Shooting Range in the Lakeside Ranger District, ASNFs.
- The Woodland Lake Park Tract Townsite Act Purchase project would result in a net loss of 583 acres of land administered by the ASNFs.
- The Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit in the Alpine Ranger District of the ASNFs would be developed to provide materials for road improvement in Greenlee County, resulting in a benefit for recreation and public access resources.
- Under the Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange, there would be a decrease in NFS land on the ASNFs but an increase in NFS land overall with land acquired on the Coronado, Prescott, and Tonto National Forests.

Since under the Show Low South Land Exchange the Forest Service would acquire a net gain of 530 acres which would be largely available to recreationists and since the Buena Vista Trail will

be rerouted to allow continued recreational use, no substantial negative cumulative adverse effects regarding recreation or public access are anticipated.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, no change would occur to the current use and management of the Federal parcels. Recreation and public access would remain unchanged.

Non-Federal Parcels

With no land exchange, development would likely occur on the existing non-Federal parcels. Since the parcels are privately owned, there would be no direct impact regarding public access and recreation within the parcels. Once the parcels are developed, individuals using surrounding forest lands would experience a negative impact to overall aesthetics and their forest experience by the increase in casual use of the forest and increased use of access roads serving the developments. In conjunction with development, there would be more fencing, signage, and noise which may cause the public to recreate in places further away from the non-Federal parcels.

Cumulative Effects

Development of the Second Knoll Shooting Range, the Woodland Lake Park Tract Townsite Act Purchase project, the Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit, and the Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange (see appendix B) would contribute to the direct and indirect effects to recreation and public access resulting from the no action alternative. Overall, there would be a general cumulative increase in development in the region of the ASNFs, specifically within NFS inholdings, which would cumulatively affect recreationists in pursuit of remote outdoor settings.

Socioeconomics

Affected Environment

This analysis of socioeconomic conditions focuses on the communities in closest proximity to the four Federal parcels: the City of Show Low and the town of Camp Verde. Because there is no U.S. Census Bureau data for the unincorporated community of Alpine, Arizona (which is near the Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel), specific socioeconomic information on this community was limited. Socioeconomic data is summarized in table 8.

Table 8. Summary of the socioeconomic composition for the City of Show Low and the town of Camp Verde (according to the 2005–2009 American Community Survey)

	Race (Percent)							Poverty		Income	Unemployment Rate (Percent)
	White	Black or African American	American Indian or Alaska Native	Asian	Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or more Races	Percent Individuals in Poverty	Percent Families in Poverty	Per Capita Income (\$)	
United States	74.5	12.4	0.8	4.4	0.1	5.6	2.2	13.5	9.9	27,041	7.2
State of Arizona	77.6	3.6	4.5	2.4	0.2	9.1	2.6	14.7	10.5	25,203	6.8
Show Low	87.8	2.0	5.9	0.8	0.0	1.7	1.8	16.1	11.9	20,416	5.8
Camp Verde	83.2	1.2	8.2	0.0	0.2	5.4	2.0	16.6	8.8	20,609	5.6

Tourism and Recreation

According to the Arizona Department of Commerce (ADOC), tourism and recreation are important economic activities for the City of Show Low, town of Camp Verde, and community of Alpine (ADOC 2009a; ADOC 2009b; ADOC 2009c).

ADOC (ADOC 2009a) states that “tourism and recreation are the foundations of the economy of Show Low.” Show Low serves as the entry point for many visitors to the White Mountains and offers a variety of year-round recreational opportunities and points of scenic interest. Because of its location, Show Low also serves as a center of regional trade with southern Navajo County and portions of southern Apache County. The ASNFs has 58 campgrounds, trails, and pristine lakes, along with the scenic White Mountain and Mogollon Rim areas that are nearby for campers and sport fishermen. Arizona’s only covered bridge is 15 miles west of Show Low in Pinedale. Apache, Navajo, Hopi, and Zuni Indian Reservations are also nearby. The city has an indoor aquatic center, eight 18-hole golf courses within 20 miles, and numerous hotel, motel, and RV accommodations. Boating and fishing are popular in the many lakes and streams surrounding Show Low. Winter activities include snow skiing at Sunrise Park Resort on the nearby White Mountain Apache Indian Reservation and cross-country skiing in surrounding Forest Service lands.

The town of Camp Verde also offers a variety of tourism and recreation opportunities. Montezuma Castle National Monument contains some of the nation’s best preserved cliff dwellings and Montezuma Well features a large natural limestone sink, whose waters were used for a network of prehistoric irrigation canals (ADOC 2009b). Other attractions include the Fort Verde Historic State Park, Tuzigoot National Monument, as well as excellent hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities. Beasley Flats is operated by the Forest Service, which serves

as a major starting point for Verde River trips. Cliff Castle Casino, operated by the Yavapai-Apache Nation, also attracts numerous visitors (ADOC 2009b). These recreational and tourism activities bring visitors from near and far and generate retail and service trade in the community.

ADOC states that tourism is the economic base for the Alpine community (ADOC 2009c). Alpine offers year-round tourism and recreation opportunities including big game hunting, fishing, camping, horseback riding, rock hounding, cross-country skiing, sledding, and designated areas for snowmobiling. Alpine's cool summers, mountain air, and scenic beauty attract vacationers and retirees. Their year-round activities bring more than 50,000 people to the ASNFs annually. There are 11 lakes and more than 200 miles of trout streams within a 30-mile radius of Alpine (ADOC 2009c). Developed campsites are available at Luna Lake, the Alpine Divide, and the Black and Blue Rivers. Luna Lake wildlife refuge is home to bald and golden eagles, swans, geese, and much more. Alpine's Ranger Station has a herbarium with hundreds of area wildflowers for visitors to view. Local annual events include dog-sled races in January, independence celebration in July, Alpine Chili Cook-off in August, and campground programs supporting the local economy (ADOC 2009c).

Lifestyle and Cultural Values

According to the 2005–2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2009), the level of education received by the population within the demographic group of 25 years or older in the City of Show Low was comparable with national statistics. For populations within the demographic group of 25 years or older, 84.6 percent of the U.S. population had graduated from high school or higher, and 27.5 percent had received a Bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, 87.2 percent of the City of Show Low's population had graduated from high school or higher and 17.5 percent had gained a Bachelor's degree or higher. There were 4,475 total occupied housing units in the City of Show Low. Family households made up 3,235 of this total or 72.3 percent. The average household size was 2.55 inhabitants, while the average family size was 2.88.

The level of education received by the population of Camp Verde was comparable to, but slightly lower than, national statistics. For the population of 25 years or older, 84.6 percent of the U.S. population has graduated from high school or higher, and 27.5 percent has received a Bachelor's degree or higher. In comparison, 83 percent of the population of Camp Verde graduated from high school or higher, and 14.2 percent had a Bachelor's degree or higher. There were 3,832 total occupied households in Camp Verde. Family households made up 2,435 of this total or 63.5 percent. The average household size was 2.77 inhabitants, while the average family size was 3.51.

Community Infrastructure

According to the Arizona Department of Commerce (ADOC 2009a), the City of Show Low has a broad range of community facilities including a library, bowling alley, one 18-hole golf course, a 27-hole golf course, several lighted racquetball and tennis courts, an exercise fitness course, soccer fields, and movie theaters. Other facilities available include an indoor aquatic center pool, lighted softball and baseball fields, handball and basketball courts, and picnic areas. The City of Show Low has a full range of educational institutions including elementary, middle, and high schools, a community college, and a technical school. The city has six banks, several hotels, a fire department, police department, and a regional medical center. Show Low Regional Airport has two paved runways, a paved taxiway, self-service fuel facilities, and a terminal. Show Low has

access to all utility services, including electricity, natural gas, telephone, internet, cable, water, and sewer.

Community facilities within Camp Verde include a library, museum, recreation center, tennis court, several softball and football fields, a skateboard park, horse arena, community swimming pool, and 18 acres of park land and picnic areas along the Verde River (ADOC 2009b). Camp Verde has educational facilities consisting of elementary, middle, and high schools. This town has three banks, a fire department, a town marshal, and one health care facility. The town of Camp Verde has two privately owned airstrips and multiple hotel options. Camp Verde has access to all utilities.

The community of Alpine also offers a broad range of community facilities (ADOC 2009c), including a library, country club, and golf course. Alpine has a winter sports recreation area with maintained cross-country ski trails and designated snowmobiling and sledding areas. Alpine also has a county owned public library, a public elementary school, two banks, a volunteer fire department, a Sheriff's office, and lodging facilities. The community has access to electricity, propane, telephone, internet, water, and sewer services.

Property Taxes

The Forest Service makes payment to counties with respect to Federal lands under three statutes known as the Twenty-Five Percent Fund, the Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILT) Act, and the Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000. The Twenty-Five Percent Fund of May 23, 1908, provides for counties to receive 25 percent of the gross receipts and revenues from timber sales and other income generating activities on Federal lands. The PILT Act of 1976 authorizes payments to counties based on the number of acres of "entitlement lands" within the county. For purposes of this discussion, entitlement lands are NFS lands. The Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 stabilizes payments for fiscal years 2001 through 2006 (extended through 2011) to counties that received a 25-percent payment during fiscal years 1986 through 1999 to provide funding for schools and roads that supplements other available funds. Non-Federal landowners make payments to counties in the form of property taxes.

City of Show Low Land Adjustments and Property Values

The Forest Service reviewed the history of land adjustments within the incorporated limits of the City of Show Low. The city first incorporated in 1953 and has continued expanding in the area through a number of annexations. The Forest Service reviewed the land base through the 2007 annexation. The 2011 annexation was not considered in the review because no private land was located in that annexation and the Show Low South land exchange was developed during the period 2004-2008. Refer to project record item dated 3/6/2013 for a map of City of Show Low annexation history. The Show Low South parcel is on National Forest System land annexed by the city in 1982. Refer to project record item dated 12/24/1982 for the City of Show Low Ordinance #165 (annexation action).

During the past 125 years (since 1888), land transferred from the Federal estate to private ownership in four ways: sale of public land (2/18/1898); railroad grant (2/24/1908); Homestead Act cases (1888 thru 1937); and land exchanges (1929 thru 2007). Approximately 13,589 acres were transferred as follows: 320 acres (2.3%) by 1898 sales; 3,098 acres (22.8%) by railroad

grant; 3,080 acres (22.7%) by Homestead Act cases; and 7,038 acres (51.8%) by land exchanges. An additional 52.46 acres were transferred to the City of Show Low for a city park in 1984.

Since Show Low incorporated in 1953, an estimated 6,005 acres have transferred from the Federal estate to the city. Of that total, an estimated 5,953 acres or 99.1% were transferred by land exchanges. Refer to project record item dated March 17, 2013 for a review of Forest Service land adjustments near Show Low over time.

Show Low and its residents have benefitted from the availability of lands from the Federal government specifically through land exchanges with the Forest Service. The city has effectively integrated these lands to accommodate an increased population and expanded developments. This is accomplished through city planning, zoning, and development processes which are governed by State law and local regulations.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action, the Federal parcels would be transferred to private ownership and the lands would no longer be available for public use (with the exception of Buena Vista Trail within the Show Low South parcel). The primary socioeconomic impact would be in the form of recreational effects. These impacts would be largely confined to social effects of impeding forest use rather than substantial economic impact. Residents and tourists who wish to recreate on the Federal parcels would be forced to travel to other areas of the ASNFs, PNF, and CNF. With vast amounts of forest land available to the public in close proximity to these four parcels, effects are not considered adverse.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the proposed action alternative would have a measurable effect on tourism for the three communities (Show Low, Camp Verde, and Alpine) in close proximity to the Federal parcels.

The private land tax base for Apache (2 acres), Navajo (1,018 acres), and Yavapai (8 acres) counties would apply to the exchanged federal 1,028 acres. Based on information provided by Navajo County and estimated tax rates from Apache and Yavapai counties, tax revenues would increase by over a million dollars among the three counties altogether as a result of the proposed action (table 9). However, there would be an associated decrease in the PILT and Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 funds to each county due to the lands moving out of Federal ownership. It is difficult to quantify the decrease in these revenue sources because of the patchy nature of their implementation; however, they generate less revenue than private land tax; therefore, the proposed action is anticipated to provide an overall net increase in revenue for all three counties, in particular Navajo County.

Table 9. Federal parcels zoning and estimated tax rates under the proposed action

Parcel Name	County	Zoning Designation	Acres	Estimate Per Acre	Taxes (estimated)
City of Show Low ¹	Navajo	City AR-43	70.00	\$1,000.00	\$70,000
Show Low South ¹	Navajo	City GA-5	948.48	\$1,000.00	\$948,480
Sierra Blanca	Apache	Ag. Gen	2.14	\$41.84	\$89.53
Soda Springs	Yavapai	RCU-2A	7.50	\$22.62	\$169.65
Total					\$1,018,739.18

¹ Data Provided by Darlene Fraley, Navajo County Tax Assessor, September 22, 2011.

While property values have declined across the nation due to general economic conditions, there is no evidence that past land exchanges have negatively impacted property values.

If, in the future, all of the Federal land that would be exchanged was placed on the market at the same time, one might expect an effect on local land values, in particular, the adjacent private properties. The likelihood that the entire acreage would go on the market at the same time is very unlikely, as a proposed subdivision of this size, once planned and approved by the City of Show Low, is usually developed in phases.

There are several lots immediately adjacent to National Forest lands that would no longer be adjacent to National Forest System lands if the exchange occurs and whose property values could be affected. The amount of value foregone to individual owners of adjacent lots would be difficult to predict. Individual lot values can vary dependent upon numerous factors, including, but not limited to, terrain features, available access, vegetative conditions, quality of neighboring development, buyer preference (i.e. lot locations such as corner lots), type and square footage of development, age of construction, level of improvement, and other factors.

At the time of initial sale of lots within Sierra Pines development, a disclosure was made within the purchase contracts that the adjacent National Forest System lands were subject to being traded into private ownership via land exchange(s) with the Forest Service (refer to project record item dated 1/31/2005).

Non-Federal Parcels

Socioeconomic effects on the non-Federal parcels would be largely confined to social effects rather than substantial economic impacts. However, for non-Federal parcels, recreational effects would be beneficial. With a net gain of approximately 530 acres throughout the three forests, more land would be available to the public for recreational purposes.

The private land tax base for Apache (155 acres), Coconino (640 acres), Greenlee (350 acres), Navajo (140 acres), and Yavapai (273 acres) counties would decrease by a total of 1,558 acres; however, there would be a corresponding increase in the PILT and Secure Rural Schools and Community Self-Determination Act of 2000 funds to each county to offset the lands moving into Federal ownership.

Currently, tax revenues generated through private ownership of the non-Federal parcels contribute a total of \$16,409.74 to the tax base divided among five counties (table 10). Each county assesses the tax rate based on parcel size and current zoning of the land. Under the proposed action, Apache County would see a reduction in tax revenue of \$6,526.28; Coconino County would see a reduction in tax revenue of \$15.78; Greenlee County would have a reduction in tax revenue of \$2,272.20; Navajo County would have a reduction in tax revenue of \$4,044.08; and Yavapai County would see a reduction in tax revenue of \$3,551.40.

Table 10. Non-Federal parcels zoning and tax rates

Parcel Name	County	Parcel Number(s)	Zoning Designation	2011 Taxes
Alder Peak	Greenlee	200-09-001	RU-36	\$4.12
Cherry	Yavapai	403-01-003	RCU-2A	Exempt
Cherry	Yavapai	403-02-003	RCU-2A	Exempt
Cherry	Yavapai	403-02-004	RCU-2A	Exempt
Cherry	Yavapai	403-02-004, 005A, 005B	RCU-2A	Exempt
Juan Miller	Greenlee	200-25-001	RU-36	\$24.14
Leonard Canyon	Coconino	403-13-006F	General	\$15.78
Railroad	Navajo	205-19-014	Ag. Gen.	\$237.10
Sierra Blanca	Apache	101-40-001A	Ag. Gen.	\$4,122.14
Sierra Blanca	Apache	101-40-002A	Ag. Gen.	\$2,404.14
Soda Springs	Yavapai	405-30-001A & 001B	RCU-2A	\$3,551.40
Sponseller	Navajo	201-02-001A	Special Development	\$3,322.72
Sponseller	Navajo	201-02-001B	Special Development	\$222.74
Sponseller	Navajo	201-02-001C	Special Development	\$261.52
Sprucedale	Greenlee	100-02-004E	RU-36	\$2,243.94
Total				\$16,409.74

Cumulative Effects

As depicted in tables 9 and 10, Navajo County would have an estimated annual net gain of tax revenues close to \$1,000,000 as a result of the proposed action alternative, while the other four counties would have negligible decreases in tax revenue. A number of other projects that may result in cumulative effects are listed in appendix B, which could have economic impacts on the five counties. However, these changes in economic impacts are immeasurable while planning is in progress, and the full impacts can only be measured after implementation. No substantial negative cumulative impacts regarding socioeconomic issues are expected.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

There would be no direct or indirect impacts to socioeconomic conditions on the Federal parcels as a result of the no action alternative. On the non-Federal parcels, development would likely occur, which would likely add to the counties' (Apache, Coconino, Greenlee, Navajo, and Yavapai) real estate property tax base.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect negative impacts to socioeconomics resulting from the no action alternative, no negative cumulative impacts would occur.

Environmental Justice

Affected Environment

Under Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Federal agencies are required to ensure that no person is excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, or subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance on the grounds of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. In addition, Executive Order 12898, Federal Actions to address Environmental Justice in Minority and Low-Income Populations, signed by President Clinton on February 11, 1994, requires Federal agencies to identify and address as appropriate as part of project planning and decision making and as an integral component of the NEPA process, the occurrence of disproportionately high and adverse effects on minority and low-income populations. The demographic composition of the project region for the Federal parcels was analyzed using data from the 2005–2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Information specific to the City of Show Low (nearest community to the City of Show Low parcel and Show Low South parcel) and town of Camp Verde (nearest community to Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel) was queried which provided demographic data including racial, ethnic, elderly, disabled, low income, and female head of household population demographics within the project area. There is no U.S. Census Bureau data for the unincorporated community of Alpine, Arizona (nearest community to Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel).

The demographic characteristics of the population located near the City of Show Low and the town of Camp Verde were reviewed to evaluate whether protected populations would be disproportionately affected by the proposed project. Protected populations include people of a minority race; of Hispanic ethnicity; older than 16 years of age who are either work disabled, have self-care limitations, or have a mobility disability; members of households below poverty level; people 60 years of age and older; and/or are females who maintain a household with no spouse present while living with one or more people related to her by birth, marriage, or adoption.

Minority racial populations, as defined by the Federal Census, include the following racial categories: African American, American Indian/Eskimo and Aleut (Native American), Asian and Pacific Islander, and “other race.” In the census, the category “Hispanic” is not a racial category, but is instead an ethnicity. Therefore, the category “Hispanic” was used for all Hispanics (regardless of race) even for those who identified themselves as “White.”

Employment and Income

According to the 2005–2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2009), the unemployment rate in Show Low was 5.8 percent and in Camp Verde was 5.6 percent, which compares to the State of Arizona (6.8 percent) and United States (7.2 percent). The percent of individuals in poverty in Show Low (16.1 percent) and Camp Verde (16.6 percent) is higher than both the State of Arizona (14.7 percent) and United States (13.5 percent), while the percent of families in poverty is higher in Show Low (11.9 percent) but lower in Camp Verde (8.8 percent) when compared to family poverty levels in Arizona (10.5 percent) and the United States (9.9 percent). The per capita income between 2005 and 2009 in Show Low was \$20,416 and in Camp

Verde was \$20,609 (see table 8), while the median household income in Show Low was \$41,611 and in Camp Verde was \$41,750.

Demographic Trends

According to the 2005–2009 American Community Survey, the total population of Show Low was 11,420 inhabitants. The City of Show Low has seen a 127.4 percent increase in population since 1990 and a 48.4 percent increase in population since the year 2000 (ADC 2009a). The majority of this population was Caucasian, though American Indians made up a relatively large percentage of the minority population in comparison to the rest of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Table 8 shows the race distribution of the population in the study area. Males made up 50.7 percent of Show Low’s population, while females consisted of 49.3 percent of the population. The median age of the City of Show Low was 36.3 years, while 73 percent of the population was 18 years or older and 16.3 percent was 65 years or older.

The town of Camp Verde had a population of 10,670 people according to the 2005–2009 American Community Survey. This population includes a 70.9 percent increase from the recorded 1990 population and a 12.9 percent increase from the recorded 2000 population (ADC 2009b). The majority of this population was Caucasian, though American Indians made up a relatively large percentage of the minority population in comparison to the rest of the United States (U.S. Census Bureau 2009). Males made up 50.5 percent of Camp Verde’s population, while females consisted of 49.5 percent of the population. The median age of the town of Camp Verde was 43 years, while 76.2 percent of the population was 18 years or older and 20.1 percent was 65 years or older.

According to the 2005–2009 American Community Survey (U.S. Census Bureau 2009), female head of household percentages (11.8 percent for Show Low; 9.4 percent for Camp Verde) are relatively comparable to the corresponding averages for the State of Arizona (11.7 percent) and United States (12.4 percent). The percentage of those whose age is 60 years and over (22.1 percent for Show Low; 26.1 percent for Camp Verde) is considerably higher than the corresponding averages for the State of Arizona (17.6 percent) and the United States (17.4 percent). Disabled populations were not reported for Show Low or Camp Verde.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and nine non-Federal parcels conveyed to Forest Service ownership. Through this land exchange, there would be no negative direct or indirect impacts to minority and low-income populations or other persons based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap. Development of the City of Show Low and Show Low South parcels may contribute to the local economy and create jobs that could indirectly benefit local minority and low-income populations through employment.

Cumulative Effects

Given that there are no negative direct or indirect impacts regarding environmental justice associated with the proposed action alternative, no cumulative negative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the no action alternative, the land exchange would not occur and current ownership would be maintained. There would be no direct or indirect impacts to minority and low-income populations or other persons based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, or handicap as a result of this alternative.

Cumulative Effects

There are no direct or indirect impacts associated with the no action alternative; therefore, no cumulative effects would occur.

Plants, Fish, and Wildlife

The ASNFs completed a BA&E (biological assessment and evaluation), which focused on the Federal parcels involved in the proposed land exchange (EnviroSystems 2011a). The BA&E evaluated impacts to federally protected species listed as threatened and endangered (T&E) under the Endangered Species Act; Forest Service sensitive species, management indicator species (MIS) listed by the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF; and migratory birds protected under the Migratory Birds Treaty Act (MBTA) as a result of implementing the proposed action alternative. The BA&E did not analyze effects to plants and wildlife as a result of the no action alternative because no change would occur to Federal parcels. A summary of the BA&E results are presented below.

The Forest Service consulted on the 11 land and resource management plans (LRMPs) for all national forests and grasslands in the Southwestern Region, and a final biological and conference opinion (LRMP BO) was issued on June 10, 2005. In order to address a number of issues concerning the LRMP BO, the Forest Service reinitiated Endangered Species Act (ESA) Section 7 consultation with the USFWS in May 2010. Consultation was completed on April 30, 2012, with individual biological opinions for each forest in the Southwestern Region. The new ASNFs LRMP BO (ASNFs LRMP BO, 2012) will henceforth be utilized. It is the current direction of the Southwestern Region to conduct a consistency check to determine whether an amendment to a LRMP would be consistent with the requirements of the ASNFs LRMP BO. A LRMP amendment is considered to be consistent with the ASNFs LRMP BO if it: (1) results in effects (to species and/or designated critical habitat) that were analyzed in the BO; (2) does not result in exceeding the amount of take issued in the BO; (3) meets the assumptions stated in the BO; and (4) would result in continuing to implement the terms and conditions of the BO. Based on a review of the ASNFs LRMP BO in relation to proposed project activities, implementation of any of the alternatives proposed would be consistent with the new Apache-Sitgreaves LRMP biological opinion and no amendment to the LRMP would be necessary.

Threatened and Endangered Species Affected Environment

As part of the BA&E, biological surveys were performed on each of the four Federal parcels. Habitat was not analyzed in detail on non-Federal parcels for suitability. A total of four federally listed threatened, endangered, proposed, or candidate species (table 11) were identified as having potential habitat within the Federal lands which is designated critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl and suitable habitat for the western yellow-billed cuckoo, Mexican gray wolf, and Little Colorado spinedace. Federal status protecting several species analyzed in the FEIS and

supporting documents were updated to reflect designation of critical habitat for Chiricahua Leopard frogs on March 20, 2012, and designation of critical habitat for Loach minnow on February 23, 2012. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service list of threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species (last updated November 13, 2013) was reviewed again in December 2013 to identify any species status or listing changes since the last list review. No changes were noted, and analysis remained up-to-date for the four species listed in Table 11 (USFWS 2013).

Table 11. Threatened and endangered species with potential habitat in the Federal parcels

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	USFWS Status	Parcel
Birds				
Mexican spotted owl (designated critical habitat)	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	Nests in canyons and dense forests with multi-layered structure of mixed conifer or ponderosa pine/gambel oak; seemingly prefers sites with cool microclimates.	Threatened	Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment
Western yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	In Arizona, streamside cottonwood, willow groves, and larger mesquite bosques for migrating and breeding preferred.	Candidate	Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment
Mammals				
Mexican gray wolf (10-j area)	<i>Canis lupus baileyi</i>	Found in a variety of habitats as long as the habitat is adequate to support sufficient prey populations such as elk and deer.	Nonessential experimental population	Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment
Fish				
Little Colorado spinedace	<i>Lepidomeda vittata</i>	Most common in slow to moderate water currents, over fine gravel bottoms.	Threatened	City of Show Low

Designated Critical Habitat for Mexican Spotted Owl

Designated critical habitat for the Mexican spotted owl (MSO) occurs on the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel (2 acres). This parcel does not contain all of the primary constituent elements necessary to support nesting and roosting habitat needs of the MSO. None of the other Federal parcels contain suitable habitat for the MSO. Though not designated as critical habitat, 2 years of MSO surveys were completed on the Show Low South parcel and a ½-mile buffer surrounding the parcel boundary as requested by the district biologist. No MSO were found during the surveys, and the areas were found to not have the primary constituent elements necessary for MSO.

Three of the non-Federal parcels are located within areas mapped as MSO critical habitat, including the Leonard Canyon parcel (640 acres), Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel (156 acres), and Sprucedale parcel (70 acres). However, 50 CFR Part 17, “Final Designation of Critical Habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl” (USDOJ 2004) states that private lands are not included by definition in the designation of critical habitat; private lands are not considered essential to the conservation of the MSO.

Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo

The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel (8 acres) may provide habitat characteristics for foraging yellow-billed cuckoos, but there is no riparian vegetation that would provide suitable nesting habitat. None of the other three Federal parcels proposed in the land exchange contain habitat characteristics suitable for this species.

One non-Federal parcel (Soda Springs Ranch parcel) provides approximately 10 acres of potential habitat for the western yellow-billed cuckoo. The Soda Springs Ranch parcel has portions of Wet Beaver Creek (0.17 mile) and Red Tank Draw (0.29 mile), both of which contain flowing water. Wet Beaver Creek has a well-developed cottonwood gallery overstory with a shrubby riparian understory that would provide high quality foraging and nesting habitat for this species.

Mexican Gray Wolf

On January 12, 1998, the USFWS published an ESA section 10(j) rule on the Mexican gray wolf that provided for designation of specific populations of listed species in the United States as “experimental populations.” Under 10(j), a population of a listed species reestablished outside its current range but within its probable historic range may be designated as an experimental population. Nonessential experimental populations located outside of national wildlife refuges or national park lands are treated as if they are proposed for listing. The reintroduced Mexican gray wolf population has been designated a nonessential experimental population, providing for greater management flexibility. There are no documented occurrences of this species on any of the federal parcels proposed for exchange.

The Federal Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel (approximately 2 acres) occurs within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area and is, therefore, considered to have potential habitat for the Mexican gray wolf. The following non-Federal parcels are also located within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area: Alder Peak (160 acres), Juan Miller (120 acres), Sierra Blanca Ranch (156 acres), and Sprucedale (70 acres).

Little Colorado Spinedace

The Little Colorado spinedace was designated as threatened with critical habitat (September 16, 1987) by the FWS. Based on a species 5-year review by the FWS, Little Colorado spinedace is recommended for reclassifying to endangered status primarily due to dewatering of habitat and interactions with nonnative fish and crayfish (USFWS 2008). The species is currently not present in the area of Show Low Creek. Spinedace may have been present historically in area streams including upper Brown Creek, Show Low Creek, Porter Creek, and Billy Creek. These drainages will be considered as potential or suitable habitat for the species. Critical habitat is not present in the area.

The City of Show Low parcel (70 acres) contains approximately 0.16 miles of Show Low Creek which provides potential habitat for the Little Colorado spinedace. No other Federal or non-Federal parcel provides habitat for this species.

Threatened and Endangered Species Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and nine non-Federal parcels conveyed to Forest Service ownership.

Designated Critical Habitat for Mexican Spotted Owl

As discussed above, the only Federal parcel that contains MSO critical habitat is the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel. This parcel does not contain the canopy cover or snag requirements to support MSO or its necessary prey abundance level. Additionally, if this parcel is conveyed to private ownership, it would be covered under a conservation easement administered by The Nature Conservancy, protecting the area from future development. The three non-Federal parcels located within areas mapped as MSO critical habitat (i.e. Leonard Canyon parcel, Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, and Sprucedale parcel) would be transferred to Federal ownership and would not undergo future development. The project would have a beneficial effect to MSO critical habitat in the net gain of approximately 606 acres.

Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo

The CNF would exchange marginal foraging habitat for the western-yellow billed cuckoo within the Federal Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel for high quality foraging and nesting habitat within the non-Federal Soda Springs Ranch parcel. This would be a beneficial effect to the western yellow-billed cuckoo in the net gain of approximately 10 acres of high quality habitat.

Mexican Gray Wolf

The only Federal parcel that contains habitat for the Mexican gray wolf is the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel. If this parcel is conveyed to private ownership, it would be covered under a conservation easement administered by The Nature Conservancy, protecting the area from future development. The four non-Federal parcels located within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area would be conveyed to Federal ownership, increasing the current protection and potential availability of habitat to wolves in the area by a net gain of approximately 503 acres. The project would not affect the Mexican gray wolf nonessential experimental population.

Little Colorado Spinedace

The ASNFs would lose approximately 0.16 miles of Show Low Creek through the land exchange. This stretch of Show Low Creek does provide potential habitat for the species but no known population currently exists in that location. Potential indirect effects from development after the land exchange to this species' habitat would be minimal. Proposed expansion of the City of Show Low waste water treatment facility will only occur on the upland area of the parcel, away from potential habitat for the Little Colorado spinedace. Show Low Creek would be maintained as open space as designated by the deed restriction imposed on the property by the City of Show Low to conserve and protect the area along Show Low Creek. This easement would thereby maintain any and all potential habitat for the spinedace even under non-Federal ownership.

Cumulative Effects

With only beneficial direct or indirect effects through the gain of potential habitat in the land exchange to any T&E species, no detrimental cumulative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the no action alternative, the Federal parcels would remain under Federal ownership, no development would occur, and T&E species would continue to receive protection. The non-Federal parcels, however, would likely be developed as provided by the reasonable foreseeable use document (with the exception of the Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel), and T&E species and their habitat, if present, could be impacted.

Mexican Spotted Owl

As stated above, the Leonard Canyon parcel, Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, and Sprucedale parcel are located within areas mapped as critical habitat for the MSO. However, according to 50 CFR Part 17, “Final Designation of Critical Habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl” (USDOI 1994), private lands are not included by definition in the designation of critical habitat; private lands are not considered essential to the conservation of the MSO. With this conclusion, no effects to MSO critical habitat would occur.

Western Yellow-Billed Cuckoo

The only non-Federal parcel with suitable habitat for the western yellow-billed cuckoo is the Soda Springs Ranch parcel. Wet Beaver Creek has a well-developed cottonwood gallery overstory with a shrubby riparian understory that could provide high quality foraging and nesting habitat for this species. Under the no action alternative, the land exchange would not occur; leaving the Soda Springs Ranch parcel in private ownership and that would likely be developed as rural residential lots approximately 3.5+ acres in size. While an indirect effect of the land exchange, potential habitat for the western yellow-billed cuckoo would likely be negatively affected as a result of this type of development.

Mexican Gray Wolf

There are four non-Federal parcels located within the Blue Range Wolf Recovery Area: Alder Peak parcel, Juan Miller parcel, Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, and Sprucedale parcel. With the exception of the Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, these lands would likely undergo varying degrees of development. These lands are considered suitable hunting and denning habitat for the Mexican gray wolf and would likely be degraded by indirect effects of development. The Mexican gray wolf would likely avoid these private developments.

Little Colorado Spinedace

The only parcel that has potential habitat for this species is the City of Show Low parcel. Under the no action alternative, this parcel would remain under Federal ownership and no change to potential habitat would occur.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to the MSO or its critical habitat or Little Colorado spinedace habitat, no cumulative effects would occur.

Present and foreseeable future actions resulting from development of non-Federal parcels may cumulatively affect the western yellow-billed cuckoo and Mexican gray wolves. Any projects that include development and noise (i.e. Second Knoll Shooting Range and the Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit projects) could affect the habitat used by Mexican gray wolf. Wildfires can reduce

or degrade habitat quality. Given the scale of these potential developments relative to the larger scale of existing habitat, no adverse cumulative effects to T&E species would occur.

Forest Service Sensitive Species Affected Environment

Within the biological assessment and evaluation (EnviroSystems 2011a), a total of 36 Forest Service sensitive species (not including T&E species that are analyzed in the section above) were identified as having potential habitat within the four Federal parcels (table 12). These species were originally identified from the Regional Forester's sensitive species list (USDA 2007). A new Regional Forester's sensitive species list was released in 2013 and was reviewed in December 2013 to identify any species status or listing changes since the review of the 2007 list. No changes in analysis were determined; the analysis remained up-to-date for the species listed in Table 12 (USDA 2013). Forest Service sensitive species were analyzed in detail in the BA&E (EnviroSystems 2011a) for Federal parcels only. For a list of potential species on non-Federal parcels, please see appendix A of the BA&E (EnviroSystems 2011a).

Table 12. Summary of Forest Service sensitive species with potential habitat on the Federal parcels by acres per potential natural vegetation type (PNVT)

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	Potential Natural Vegetation Type	Acres on Federal Parcels Proposed for Exchange	Parcel ¹
Amphibians					
Arizona toad	<i>Bufo microscaphus</i>	Rocky streams in canyons and flood plains in pine-oak belt and also in lower deserts.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	3.02	1/4
Lowland leopard frog	<i>Rana yavapaiensis</i>	Inhabits aquatic systems in desert grasslands to piñon-juniper. They are habitat generalists and breed in a variety of natural and manmade aquatic systems. Natural systems include rivers, permanent streams, and permanent pools in intermittent streams, beaver ponds, cienegas, and springs.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	2.47	1
Northern leopard frog	<i>Rana pipiens</i>	Permanent waters with rooted aquatic vegetation, also frequents ponds, canals, marshes, springs, and streams.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	2.47	1
Birds					

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	Potential Natural Vegetation Type	Acres on Federal Parcels Proposed for Exchange	Parcel ¹
Abert's towhee	<i>Pipilo aberti</i>	Inhabits riparian corridors in the Sonoran Deserts of Arizona. Often found in cottonwood and willow woodlands, with dense shrubs, along desert streams and rivers.	Desert Communities, Semi-Desert Grassland	7.02	4
American peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	Nests in sheer, steep cliffs; preys on birds in woodlands, riparian areas, and other habitats with abundant prey near nest site.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Montane/Subalpine Grasslands, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas, Semi-Desert Grassland	69.41	1
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Nests in large trees or cliffs near water with abundant prey. Mainly feeds on fish but will also feed on waterfowl, small mammals, and carrion.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Ponderosa Pine Forest, Montane/Subalpine Grasslands, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	1,014.89	1/2/3
Gray catbird	<i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	They are associated with the ponderosa pine forest found in the deserts of the Southwest; piñon-juniper forests distributed throughout the semiarid Western U.S., usually on dry, shallow, rocky soils of mesas, benches, and canyon walls; and nonforest habitats found in river, riparian woodlands, and subalpine marshes.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	69.41	1
Gray vireo	<i>Vireo vicinior</i>	Found in desert scrub, mixed juniper, or piñon pine and oak scrub associations, and chaparral, in hot, arid mountains and high plains scrubland.	Pinyon-Juniper Woodland	63.00	1/2
Northern goshawk	<i>Accipiter gentilis</i>	Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer forests; some riparian habitats.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	947.46	1/2/3
Invertebrates					

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	Potential Natural Vegetation Type	Acres on Federal Parcels Proposed for Exchange	Parcel ¹
California floater	<i>Anodonta californiensis</i>	Shallow areas, less than 2 m. deep in unpolluted lakes, reservoirs, and perennial streams in mud or sand with juveniles found in loose sand.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Ferris' copper	<i>Lycaena ferrisi</i>	Meadows and cienegas near the food plant <i>Rumex hymeospalus</i> .	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	3.02	1/3
Four spotted skipperling	<i>Piruna polingii</i>	Moist meadows and streambanks in mountains of Arizona and New Mexico.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	3.02	1/3/4
Fish					
Bluehead sucker	<i>Catostomus discobolus discobolus</i>	When water is clear, they stay in deep pools and eddies during the day then move into shallow riffles, tributary mouths, shorelines, or other hard bottomed sites to feed at night. When water is turbid, they occupy shallow areas throughout the day.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Little Colorado sucker	<i>Catostomus</i> spp. 3	Small to medium creeks in pools with abundant cover. Occasionally in riffles. Endemic in the Little Colorado River and north flowing tributaries.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Roundtail chub	<i>Gila robusta</i>	Occupy mid-elevation streams and rivers where typical adult habitat consists of pools up to 6.6 feet deep adjacent to riffles and runs.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Mammals					
Allen's lappet-browed bat	<i>Idionycteris phyllotis</i>	Found in ponderosa pine, piñon-juniper, Mexican woodland, white fir, and mohave desert scrub vegetative communities.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Desert Communities	949.62	1/2/3/4
Arizona montane vole	<i>Microtus montanus arizonensis</i>	In Arizona they seem to prefer dense damp to wet grassy areas at high (alpine like) elevations. They make runways through the tall grass. Often found in marshy areas or near streams.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	950.48	1/2/3

Chapter 3. Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	Potential Natural Vegetation Type	Acres on Federal Parcels Proposed for Exchange	Parcel ¹
Long-tailed vole	<i>Microtus longicaudus</i>	Inhabits meadows, grassy valleys, grassy clearings in forests, sagebrush flats, and rocky slopes in or near coniferous forests.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Montane/Subalpine Grasslands, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	949.42	1/2/3
Merriam's shrew	<i>Sorex merriami leucogenys</i>	Inhabits cool, grassy places, often in association with the Mexican vole and near coniferous forests.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Montane/Subalpine Grasslands	1,011.87	1/2/3
Navajo Mogollon vole	<i>Microtus mogollonensis navaho</i>	Occupies dense thickets of shrubs and dry, grassy areas adjacent to ponderosa pine forests.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Montane/Subalpine Grasslands	1,011.87	1/2/3
Pale Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens</i>	Found over desert scrub and in shelters in desert-mountains, oak-woodland, piñon-juniper, or coniferous forests.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland	1,010.46	1/2/3/4
Plains harvest mouse	<i>Reithrodontomys montanus</i>	This species occurs in open grassy areas, including cultivated fields, prairie, and grazed grasslands with their diet consisting of insects, seeds, and herbs.	Semi-Desert Grassland	4.86	4
Southern red-backed vole	<i>Clethrionomys gapperi</i>	Found in ponderosa pine or spruce-fir forests where rocks or rocky slopes are present.	Ponderosa Pine Forest	949.72	1/2/3
Springerville silky pocket mouse	<i>Perognathus flavus goodpasteri</i>	Found in the plains-like short grassland which is interspersed with volcanic rock or in areas of shortgrass, boulders, and tumbleweeds. Also found in prairies of sandy, gravelly, or rocky areas with sparse vegetation of various grasses and forbs.	Montane/Subalpine Grasslands	1.41	3
Spotted bat	<i>Euderma maculatum</i>	Found in desert to subalpine meadows, including desert scrub, piñon-juniper, ponderosa pine, mixed conifer forest, canyon bottoms, rims of cliffs, riparian areas, fields, and open pasture.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Montane/Subalpine Grasslands	1,014.34	1/2/3
Plants					

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	Potential Natural Vegetation Type	Acres on Federal Parcels Proposed for Exchange	Parcel ¹
Arizona alum root	<i>Heuchera glomerulata</i>	Found on shaded rocky slopes, in humus soil near seeps, streams and riparian areas.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Arizona sneezeweed	<i>Helenium arizonicum</i>	Seasonally wet meadows in ponderosa pine forests at elevations ranging from 6,000 to 8,000 feet amsl.	Ponderosa Pine Forest	947.46	1/2/3
Arizona willow	<i>Salix arizonica</i>	High elevation wet meadows, streamsides, and cienegas.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Bebb's willow	<i>Salix bebbiana</i>	Coniferous forests along streams, springs, and lakes.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest	2.47	1
Blumer's dock	<i>Rumex orthoneurus</i>	Mid- to high-elevation wetlands with moist, organic soil adjacent to perennial springs or streams in canyons or meadow situations.	Wetland/Cienega	0.55	3
Davidson's cliff carrot	<i>Pteryxia davidsonii</i>	Occurs on sheer cliffs (north facing) and in rocky, damp, drainages and mountainsides, in piñon-juniper woodland and lower montane coniferous forest.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland	1,010.46	1/2/3
Heathleaf wild buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum ericifolium</i> var. <i>ericifolium</i>	Dry, gravelly to rocky slopes of lacustrine, in mixed grasslands, chaparral, and oak-woodlands.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Semi-Desert Grassland	952.32	1/2/3/4
Hualapai milkwort	<i>Polygala rusbyi</i>	Desert grassland and juniper woodland on sandy flats and limestone bedrock, rock, gravel, and silt.	Semi-Desert Grassland, Desert Communities	7.02	4
Ripley wild buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum ripleyi</i>	Found in lakebeds on well drained, powdery soils derived from limestone, sandstone, or volcanic tuffs and ashes.	Semi-Desert Grassland, Desert Communities	7.02	4
Tonto Basin agave	<i>Agave delamateri</i>	Usually found atop benches, at edges of slopes, and on open hilly slopes in desert scrub, overlooking major drainages and perennial streams. Occasionally found in chaparral or juniper-grassland.	Semi-Desert Grassland, Desert Communities	7.02	4

Common Name	Scientific Name	Preferred Habitat Description	Potential Natural Vegetation Type	Acres on Federal Parcels Proposed for Exchange	Parcel ¹
Reptiles					
Mexican gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis eques megalops</i>	Most abundant in densely vegetated habitat surrounding cienegas, cienega-streams, and stock tanks, and in or near water along streams in valley floors and generally open areas, but not in steep mountain canyon stream habitat.	Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	3.02	1/3
Narrow-headed gartersnake	<i>Thamnophis rufipunctatus</i>	Found in piñon-juniper and pine-oak woodland into ponderosa pine forest; in permanently flowing streams, sometimes sheltered by broadleaf deciduous trees.	Ponderosa Pine Forest, Pinyon-Juniper Woodland, Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, Wetland/Cienega Riparian Areas	1,013.48	1/2/3
Reticulate Gila monster	<i>Heloderma suspectum suspectum</i>	Inhabits shrubby, grassy, and succulent desert, in canyon bottoms or arroyos with permanent or intermittent streams where it digs burrows or uses those of other animals.	Semi-Desert Grassland, Desert Communities	7.02	4

¹ Parcels: 1 = City of Show Low; 2 = Show Low South; 3 = Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment; 4 = Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment.

Forest Service Sensitive Species Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and nine non-Federal parcels conveyed to Forest Service ownership. No negative effects would occur to Forest Service sensitive species located on the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel because after conveyance, this parcel would be protected from further development by a conservation easement administered by The Nature Conservancy.

There will be no change to suitable or potential habitat for Forest Service sensitive species as a direct result of the land exchange. Habitat for Forest Service sensitive species on the City of Show Low parcel, Show Low South parcel, and Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel would likely see a reduction in habitat quality or loss of available habitat as an indirect effect of the land exchange and as a result of development activities, based on the reasonable and foreseeable use of these parcels.

Potential indirect effects from development after the land exchange to Forest Service sensitive species that occur on the City of Show Low Parcel would be minimal. Proposed expansion of the City of Show Low wastewater treatment facility will only occur on the upland area of the parcel,

away from the potential habitat of Forest Service sensitive species. Show Low Creek would be maintained as open space as designated by the deed restriction imposed on the property by the City of Show Low to conserve and protect the area along Show Low Creek. This easement would thereby maintain any and all habitat for Forest Service sensitive species even under non-Federal ownership.

The City of Show Low and Show Low South parcels were surveyed for northern goshawks at the request of the district biologist, using the Forest Service recommended survey protocol (Joy et al. 1994). A goshawk nest was found in the Show Low South parcel during the surveys, less than ½ miles from the previously known nest location. This nesting pair of goshawks may be impacted by the land exchange indirectly through any subsequent development of the parcel. Abandonment of this nest may result if development proceeds as anticipated. Goshawks are known to nest near residential areas, so the pair may return to the area following completion of construction.

Overall, the land exchange would result in a net gain of 530 acres of suitable habitat for Forest Service sensitive species. Based on habitat characteristics surrounding non-Federal parcels and species identified to potentially occur within the vicinity by the AGFD online review tool, the nine non-Federal parcels also contain habitat for Forest Service sensitive species. Generally, the non-Federal parcels contain more valuable habitat for special status species, primarily due to the presence of perennial waters and riparian habitat on many of the parcels. The proposed action alternative would not cause a trend toward listing or loss of viability for any Forest Service sensitive species (EnviroSystems 2011a). For a more detailed species-by-species analysis, please see the BA&E (EnviroSystems 2011a).

Cumulative Effects

The Timber Mesa-Vernon restoration project will likely improve habitat for Forest Service sensitive species. This project will also provide alternative nesting and foraging habitat for the goshawk pair that may be indirectly displaced by the land exchange. Given the close proximity of these areas, no cumulative effects to any Forest Service sensitive species will occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the no action alternative, the Federal parcels would remain under Federal ownership. No development would occur, and Forest Service sensitive species would continue to receive protection. Plants and wildlife located on the non-Federal parcels that are considered sensitive by the Forest Service would not receive further protection as the parcels would continue to be owned privately. Development would likely occur on the majority of non-Federal parcels, and potential habitat for Forest Service sensitive species outside Federal ownership would likely be degraded or removed.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to Forest Service sensitive species on Federal lands, no cumulative effects would occur.

Management Indicator Species Affected Environment

Under the National Forest Management Act (§ 36 CFR 219.19), the Forest Service is required to manage wildlife habitat to maintain viable populations of native and desired nonnative species. To do this, the Forest Service must identify MIS for each MA within each national forest. These species are selected because they are representative of a vegetation community, and their long-term population changes serve as a gauge for the overall health of the ecosystem. MIS for the ASNFs and CNF were identified in their respective forest plans (USDA 1987a; USDA 1987b).

MIS for this project were evaluated based on the MAs located within the Federal parcels. On the ASNFs, the Federal parcels lay within the Forested MA1 and the Woodland MA2 areas. On the CNF, the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel is within the Verde Valley MA (MA 11). Table 13 lists the MIS with suitable habitat in the Federal parcels for each MA in the project area, their indicator habitat, and their forest-wide habitat and population trends. The MIS listed for the Verde Valley MA did not have suitable habitat in the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel, therefore, it was excluded from further analysis. Forest-wide population trends were updated to reflect current status based on the final MIS report released in June 2012. While some forest-wide population trends had changed from the finalized BA&E (EnviroSystems 2011a) for several species, it did not affect the determination of how the proposed action would affect MIS populations or habitat trends. An addendum to the BA&E dated October 23, 2012, was prepared which presents the most recent MIS forest-wide trend data for the ASNFs and CNF.

Table 13. MIS within forest land management areas, MIS habitat components, forest trends, and acres analyzed in the Show Low South Land Exchange analysis area

MIS by Forest Management Area	Habitat Component Indicated		Forest-wide Habitat Trend*	Forest-wide Population Trend*	Acres of Habitat Forest-wide		Acres to be Analyzed in Project Area	Parcel
	ASNFs	Coconino NF			ASNFs	Coconino NF		
Hairy woodpecker	Snags (all types)	Snag component of ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, and spruce-fir	Upward	Stable	712,366	900,426	947.46	1/2/3
Red-naped sapsucker	Snags (aspen)	Late seral and snag component of aspen	Stable	Stable	800,000	4,487	0	Not applicable
Northern goshawk	Late Succession (ponderosa pine)	Late seral ponderosa pine	Stable to Declining	Declining	1,682,492	807,424	947.46	1/2/3
Merriam's turkey	Late Succession	Late seral ponderosa pine	Stable	Stable	936,663	807,424	951.89	1/2/3
Pygmy nuthatch	Late Succession (ponderosa pine)	Late seral ponderosa pine	Declining	Stable	569,890	807,424	947.46	1/2/3
Mexican spotted owl	Late Succession	Late seral mixed conifer and spruce-fir	Declining	Declining	649,069	93,002	0	Not applicable
Rocky Mountain elk	Early Succession	Early seral ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, and spruce-fir	Increasing	Stable to Declining	1,690,439	900,426	951.89	1/2/3
Mule deer	Early Succession	Early seral aspen and pinyon-juniper	Increasing	Stable to Increasing	1,769,299	606,316	1,010.46	1/3
Abert's squirrel	Early Succession (ponderosa pine)	Early Seral ponderosa pine	Stable to Declining	Stable	746,902	807,424	947.46	1/2/3
Red squirrel	Late Succession (spruce/mixed conifer)	Late seral mixed conifer and spruce-fir	Declining	Stable to Declining	203,347	93,002	0	Not applicable

Juniper (Plain) titmouse	Snags	Late seral and snag component of pinyon-juniper	Stable to Increasing	Stable	784,532	601,829	63.00	1
Pronghorn antelope	Early Succession	Early and late seral grasslands	Increasing	Stable	479,867	266,049	6.27	4
Lincoln sparrow	High Elevation Riparian	Late seral, high elevation riparian (>7,000 feet)	Stable	Stable	10,101	557	0	Not applicable
Yellow-breasted chat	Low Elevation Riparian	Late seral, low elevation riparian (<7,000 feet)	Stable	Stable	10,101	4,579	0	Not applicable
Lucy's warbler	Low Elevation Riparian	Late seral, low elevation riparian (<7,000 feet)	Stable	Stable	10,101	4,579	0	Not applicable
Cinnamon teal	Wetlands	Wetlands/aquatics	Stable to Declining	Stable to Declining	29,430	1,140	0.55	3
Aquatic macroinvertebrates	Riparian	Not designated as MIS on Coconino NF	Declining	Declining	48,730-wetland cienega 3,279-open water	Not designated as MIS on Coconino NF	3.02	1/3

¹ Parcels: 1 = City of Show Low; 2 = Show Low South; 3 = Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment; 4 = Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment.

Management Indicator Species Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and nine non-Federal parcels conveyed to Forest Service ownership. Each MIS was evaluated to determine the absolute value of potential habitat in acres the land exchange would remove for parcels that would be conveyed by the Forest Service, and the value of potential habitat in acres the land exchange would contribute for parcels being acquired by the Forest Service (EnviroSystems 2011a). This evaluation also included the net change in acreage and the percentage of the area to the total area of habitat available on the forests (table 14).

Table 14. Summary of ASNFs MIS forest-wide habitat acreages and net change in acreage resulting from the proposed action alternative

MIS Common Name	Current Forest-wide Habitat (Total Acres)	Area Conveyed by Forest Service Under Proposed Action in Acres (Percent of Total)	Area Acquired by Forest Service Under Proposed Action in Acres (Percent of Total)	Net Change in Acres (Percent of Total)	Parcel
Abert's squirrel	746,902	947 (0.13%)	866 (0.12%)	- 81 (0.01%)	1/2/3
Elk (Rocky Mountain)	1,690,439	952 (0.06%)	1,246 (0.07%)	+ 294 (0.02%)	1/2/3
Hairy woodpecker	712,366	947 (0.13%)	866 (0.45%)	- 81 (0.01%)	1/2/3
Juniper titmouse	784,532	63(<0.1%)	380 (0.05%)	- 317 (0.04%)	1
Mule deer	1,769,299	1,010 (0.06%)	1,246 (0.07%)	+ 236 (0.01%)	1/3
Northern goshawk	1,682,492	947 (0.06%)	1,246 (0.07%)	+ 299 (0.02%)	1/2/3
Pygmy nuthatch	569,890	947 (0.17%)	866 (0.16%)	- 81 (0.01%)	1/2/3
Wild turkey (Merriam's turkey)	936,663	952 (0.10%)	866 (0.09%)	- 86 (<0.01%)	1/2/3
Cinnamon teal	29,430	0.55 (<0.01%)	3.11 (0.01%)	+ 2.56 (<0.01%)	3
Aquatic Macroinvertebrates	52,009	3 (<0.01%)	621 (0.01%)	+ 618 (0.12%)	1/3

¹ Parcels: 1 = City of Show Low; 2 = Show Low South; 3 = Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment; 4 = Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment.

As depicted in table 14, the proposed action alternative would result in a minor change in net habitat acreages for all MIS with habitat in the project area. The proposed action alternative would lead to no change to forest-wide habitat or population trends for any MIS.

As for wildlife designated as MIS on the City of Show Low parcel, some habitat would be lost as part of the waste water treatment plant expansion. The shape of the 70-acre parcel, approximately one-half mile long south to north, would provide the odor buffer as required by Arizona

Department of Environmental Quality/Environmental Protection Agency standards. The new waste water treatment facility would be built near the north end of the parcel furthest from private land. The remainder of the parcel would remain undeveloped, except for a road accessing the treatment facility, and available to wildlife use and migration. Show Low Creek would be maintained as open space as designated by the deed restriction imposed on the property by the City of Show Low to conserve and protect the area along Show Low Creek. This easement would thereby maintain any and all habitat for MIS even under non-Federal ownership. On the Show Low South parcel, the land would be developed within City of Show Low development processes to utilize reasonable setbacks and other measures to minimize impacts to the mountain forest character of the area. Treed areas and open space would remain for wildlife use and movement.

Parcels acquired through the land exchange would likely be assigned to neighboring management areas and, therefore, MIS requirements pending additional review by the appropriate forests.

Cumulative Effects

With no negative direct or indirect effects to MIS as a result of the land exchange, no cumulative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the no action alternative, no changes in land ownership would occur; therefore, no direct or indirect effects to MIS would occur. Consistency with the forest plan would be the same as described above. Upon review of information provided in the updated MIS report (AGFD 2012) and the consistency statements in the BA&E, it was found that consistency with the forest plan goals and objectives for all MIS and their habitat would be maintained, and that forest-wide population and habitat trends would not change with the no-action alternative.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to MIS, no cumulative effects would occur.

Migratory Birds Affected Environment

On January 10, 2001, President Clinton signed Executive Order 13186, placing emphasis on the conservation of migratory birds. No Forest Service regional or forest-level policies have been developed to provide guidance on how to incorporate migratory birds into a NEPA analysis. The Southwestern Region of the Forest Service currently analyzes impacts to migratory birds by addressing the effects to important bird areas (IBAs); important overwintering areas; and migratory birds listed by Arizona Partners in Flight (PIF) and birds of conservation concern (BCC).

IBAs are listed on the Audubon Society's Web site (NAS 2012). There are no IBAs located adjacent to the Federal parcels' boundaries. The Upper Little Colorado River Watershed IBA is more than 15 miles from the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel and more than 25 miles from the City of Show Low parcel and Show Low South parcel. The Blue River Complex IBA is more than 30 miles from the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel. Lastly, the Lower Oak Creek IBA is approximately 10 miles from the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel.

A total of 23 migratory bird species have been identified as potentially occurring within the Federal lands by PIF and BCC (table 15). The following table includes all priority bird species with potential habitat listed by PIF for the mixed-conifer, ponderosa pine, piñon-juniper, Sonoran desert scrub, and low elevation riparian habitats (Latta et al. 1999) and species listed by BCC for the Colorado Plateau and the Sierra Madre Occidental biological conservation regions (USDOI 2008).

Table 15. Migratory bird species listed by PIF and BCC with potential habitat in the Federal lands

Species	Habitat	Vegetation Structure
American bittern	Marshlands and very wet meadows	Rarely seen away from dense reeds, rushes, cordgrass, cattails, and other emergent vegetation.
Bendire's thrasher	Desert habitats with cholla cactus, creosote bush and yucca, and in juniper woodland	Commonly found in areas of tall vegetation.
Black-chinned sparrow	Chaparral in rocky, rugged landscapes	Habitats characterized by sagebrush, greasewood, chamise, mesquite, cactus, and other arid scrub plants.
Black-throated gray warbler	Mostly piñon, also commonly occurs in Madrean oak/pine-oak in southeastern Arizona with shrub component	In taller and denser piñon-juniper woodland, usually nest 2–15 feet high, low to mid-story nester, prefers relatively heavy conifer cover, forages most often in piñon.
Cactus ferruginous pygmy-owl	Sonoran riparian deciduous woodland	Occurs in streamside cottonwoods and willows and adjacent mesquite bosques, usually with saguaros on nearby slopes.
Cassin's finch	Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer	Breeds in open coniferous forest at high elevations, and winters in similar habitat at lower elevations.
Common black-hawk	Sycamore, cottonwood (mature), gallery riparian trees	Large, tall trees, prefers groves of trees rather than single trees.
Cordilleran Flycatcher	Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir, maple, oak, aspen	Dense canopy closure, middle to late successional.
Flammulated owl	Dry coniferous forests, composed of pine, mixed conifer species, oak, or aspen	Found primarily in mixed conifer, pine, and pine-oak habitats, but they also occur locally in woodlands of piñon-juniper, oak, and cypress.
Golden eagle	Piñon-juniper woodlands	Usually found in open country, in prairies, arctic and alpine tundra, open wooded country and barren areas, especially in hilly or mountainous regions.
Grace's warbler	Ponderosa pine and mixed conifer	Found high in the treetops of mature pines from Nevada to Nicaragua.
Gray flycatcher	Piñon pine and/or juniper, with an open overstory of ponderosa	Larger stands of piñon-juniper with open understory, some areas with sagebrush, nest height 2–9 feet, may need some ground cover to support insect populations for foraging; larger, taller stands of sagebrush and greasewood.
Gray vireo	Piñon-juniper with broad-leafed shrubs, Utah serviceberry, singleleaf ash	Open, avoiding stands greater than 112 trees per acre, usually nest and forage at 2–8 feet.
Juniper titmouse	Piñon-juniper woodlands, may use riparian habitat if adjacent to piñon-juniper	Taller piñon and juniper trees.

Species	Habitat	Vegetation Structure
Lewis's woodpecker	Ponderosa pine, mixed conifer, and riparian	Favors open forest, ranging from low elevation riparian areas to high elevation pine forests and burned areas.
Lucy's warbler	Mesquite, willow, cottonwood, secondary cavity nester	Dense mid-story in elevations up to 6,500 feet amsl.
Olive warbler	Mixed pine-oak woodlands	Breeds in open montane pine forests at high elevations.
Olive-sided flycatcher	Ponderosa pine, Douglas-fir	Multilevel, mature forest, fairly open canopy, "clumpiness," dead branches for foraging, live mature pines for nesting, snags important.
Phainopepla	Desert, riparian woodlands, and chaparral	Nests in shallow, woven cups of twigs placed on a tree limb or fork, or in a clump of mistletoe.
Pinyon jay	Breeds in piñon and ponderosa pine usually in piñon-juniper where piñon is dominant	Over 85 percent of nests found in bottom half of canopy, commonly in extensive stands of piñon-juniper with open physiognomy, may increase as mid-story and understory decrease.
Purple martin	Ponderosa pine	Open canopy, open mid-story cover, open understory cover, high snag density.
Red-faced warbler	Maple, oak, sycamore, willow (and associated conifers)	Mid-story important, dense preferred, but not necessarily tied to dense understory.
Southwestern willow flycatcher	Nesting substrate variable: box elder, tamarisk, willow, Russian olive, alder	Dense mid-story and understory.

Migratory Birds Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and nine non-Federal parcels conveyed to Forest Service ownership. There are no identified or potential IBAs within the project boundaries that would be affected by the land exchange. There are also no important overwintering areas within the project boundaries, so none would be affected.

Each of the four Federal parcels provide habitat for a subset of the listed migratory birds in table 13. The City of Show Low parcel provides several acres of riparian habitat, a rare habitat type in the arid forests and woodlands of Arizona. While this parcel is slated for development with the expansion of the city's waste water treatment facility, development is planned for the upland area of the parcel away from the riparian zone. The riparian area of the City of Show Low parcel is expected to remain undeveloped as open space and, therefore, maintain currently available habitat for these species. The Show Low South parcel is expected to be developed as low density rural residential with some mixed-use areas. Development of this parcel would likely reduce the available habitat for migratory birds, but with low density residential designs anticipated within the City of Show Low development processes, a minimum level of habitat would likely remain. The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel currently has a small cabin and several outbuildings that would be covered under a conservation easement administered by The Nature Conservancy as part of a larger private land tract and would preclude future development of this parcel. Any habitat currently available for migratory birds would remain available after the land exchange. The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel is expected to be developed as 2-acre lots in a low

density rural residential area. Development of this parcel would likely reduce the available habitat for migratory birds, but with 2-acre lots planned for this area, a minimum level of habitat would likely remain. No significant effects would occur to range-wide populations of migratory bird species because the proposed action would not affect the suitability of migratory bird habitats and would not result in intentional take. Unintentional take may occur in the project area to some migratory bird species, but will not be detrimental to the range-wide population of the species.

Cumulative Effects

If the exchange occurs, development on the Federal parcels would result in a small loss of upland ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper woodland habitat for migratory birds. Since these are the most common habitat types on the ASNFs, most of the projects listed in appendix B have the potential to cumulatively impact migratory bird habitat. Wildfires (past and future), timber harvest, and vegetation clearing for developments (i.e. Second Knoll Shooting Range, a new Lakeside district office, and Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit) would potentially remove trees and understory vegetation. Residential zoning on approximately 5,500 acres of land in Show Low as designated in the City of Show Low *General Plan* (City of Show Low 2007) would all involve tree removal. Wildland-urban interface projects, as well as other vegetation thinning and management activities, would alter vegetation density and composition within general habitat for migratory birds. While all of these projects could cumulatively impact migratory birds, vast quantities of close proximity upland ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper woodland habitats within the ASNFs would make the impact minor to range-wide habitats and populations.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the no action alternative, habitat for migratory birds located on the non-Federal parcels could be damaged or removed by development activities. Suitable habitat within the Federal parcels would remain protected.

Cumulative Effects

The ASNFs has many projects proposed on the forest (listed in appendix B), which have the potential to cumulatively impact migratory bird habitat. Wildfires (past and future), timber harvest, and vegetation clearing for developments (i.e. Second Knoll Shooting Range, a new Lakeside district office, and Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit) would potentially remove trees and understory vegetation. Residential zoning on approximately 5,500 acres of land in Show Low as designated in the City of Show Low *General Plan* (City of Show Low 2007) would all involve tree removal. Wildland-urban interface projects, as well as other vegetation thinning and management activities, would alter vegetation density and composition within general habitat for migratory birds. However, while all of these projects could cumulatively impact migratory birds, vast quantities of close proximity upland ponderosa pine and piñon-juniper woodland habitats within the ASNFs would make the impact minor to range-wide habitats and populations. With no additional direct or indirect effects to migratory birds on Federal lands under the no action alternative, no cumulative effects would occur.

Grazing

Affected Environment

Federal Parcels

Livestock grazing occurs within each of the four Federal parcels. The City of Show Low parcel (Lakeside Ranger District, SNF) lies within the Show Low allotment. The Show Low South parcel (Lakeside Ranger District, SNF) lies within the McNeil allotment. The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel (Alpine Ranger District, ANF) lies within the Boneyard allotment. The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel (Red Rock Ranger District, CNF) lies within the Beaver Creek allotment.

Non-Federal Parcels

There are grazing leases on two of the non-Federal parcels: the Leonard Canyon parcel and Soda Springs Ranch parcel. The grazing lessee on the Leonard Canyon parcel is Bar T Bar Ranch, Inc., and the grazing lessee on the Soda Springs Ranch parcel is Bar D Cattle Company, LLC. Grazing does not currently occur on any of the other non-Federal parcels.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and the Forest Service would no longer assign livestock capacity to that property. The current grazing permittees would no longer be able to graze livestock within the parcels, though grazing would still be authorized in the remainder of the allotments. The land exchange would not affect the number of livestock authorized with any of the allotments. The City of Show Low parcel lies within the Show Low allotment; however, the loss of 70 acres would be a minor loss of grazing capacity and would not have an effect on the grazing capacity of the allotment. The Show Low South parcel lies within the Railroad allotment. This will be the allotment with the largest loss of acreage—948.48 acres—however, the pasture within this allotment that would be lost is currently not grazed and, therefore, no adverse effects to the grazing management or rangeland resource are expected from this exchange. The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel would reduce the Boneyard allotment, an active allotment, by 2 acres. This reduction would not have an effect on the grazing capacity. The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel would reduce the Beaver Creek allotment by only 7.5 acres; therefore, no adverse effects to grazing management are expected.

Sec. 402(g) of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) requires that a two-year notification be provided to permit holders in which significant changes to grazing permits may take place. Permit holders were notified of the proposed action in November 2001. The proposed action alternative would not conflict with the requirements of Sec. 402 (g) of FLPMA.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the exchange would occur and the existing grazing leases on the Leonard Canyon parcel and Soda Springs Ranch parcel would terminate. The grazing lessee on the Leonard Canyon parcel is the same permittee on the adjacent Federal land and may

be able to continue to graze livestock on the exchanged parcel though this would be considered in a separate environmental analysis following the exchange. The grazing lessee on the Soda Springs Ranch parcel would not be affected because they did not have access to the non-Federal parcel being conveyed to Federal ownership. The non-Federal parcels would be evaluated by the Forest Service for potential inclusion in any surrounding grazing allotments. However, the evaluation and resultant decision on inclusion in a grazing allotment would not be accomplished as part of this land exchange decision. A decision regarding future grazing use would be made as part of the allotment management planning process which considers impacts on vegetation, soil and watershed productivity, and wildlife habitat. Management options to be considered would include fencing all or part of the parcels to protect watershed and soil productivity.

Cumulative Effects

There are no known actions that, in conjunction with the proposed action alternative, would result in substantial impacts to grazing. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions considered for cumulative effects to grazing include the Woodland Lake Park Tract Townsite Act Purchase project and the Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the exchange would not occur, and the Federal parcels would continue to be grazed under the existing term grazing permits. No direct or indirect effects to grazing would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

Since the non-Federal parcels would not be transferred to Federal ownership, they would not be considered for inclusion in a Forest Service grazing allotment. Existing grazing leases would not be terminated on the Leonard Canyon parcel and Soda Springs Ranch parcel. No direct or indirect effects to grazing would occur.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to grazing, no cumulative effects would occur.

Prime and Unique Farmlands

Affected Environment

Under the Farmland Protection Policy Act (FPPA), Federal agencies are directed to identify and take into account the adverse effects of Federal programs on the preservation of farmland, to consider appropriate alternative actions which could lessen adverse effects, and to assure that such Federal programs are, to the extent practicable, compatible with state or local government programs and policies to protect farmland. FPPA guidelines developed by the Department of Agriculture apply to farmland classified as prime or unique, or of state or local importance. Farmland subject to FPPA does not have to be currently used for cropland.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership. There are no areas within the four Federal parcels that are designated as prime and unique farmlands (NRCS Web Soil Survey 2010). There would be no direct or indirect effects to prime and unique farmlands.

Non-Federal Parcels

There are no areas within the nine non-Federal parcels that are designated as prime and unique farmlands. There would be no direct or indirect effects to prime and unique farmlands.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to prime and unique farmlands, no cumulative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the exchange would not occur, and the Federal parcels would continue to be managed under the current forest plans. No direct or indirect effects to prime and unique farmlands would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

Since the non-Federal parcels would not be transferred to Federal ownership, they would not be considered for inclusion in the NFS. No direct or indirect effects to prime and unique farmlands would occur.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to prime and unique farmlands, no cumulative effects would occur.

Wetlands and Flood Plains

Affected Environment

A water resources report was conducted for the proposed exchange (exhibit C of the feasibility analysis, project record item dated 2/10/2012). Information from this report is summarized below.

Federal Parcels

The City of Show Low parcel contains 1.5 acres of potential wetlands and 3.1 acres of flood plains with an additional 0.9 acres adjacent to the ephemeral channel. These wetlands and flood plains are associated with the areas surrounding Show Low Creek.

The Show Low South parcel contains no wetlands or flood plains. This parcel does have eight separate channels from ephemeral streams crossing the parcel that may be subject to seasonal flooding and/or isolated precipitation events.

The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel contains 0.3 acres of potential wetlands and 0.4 acres of delineated flood plains. At the time of the field survey, there was no standing water present in the meadow.

The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel contains no acres of wetlands and approximately 0.2 acres of flood plains. This acreage is currently in a cultivated meadow (turf field) and does not contain a stream course.

Non-Federal Parcels

The Alder Peak parcel contains no acres of delineated wetlands and flood plains. There are 1.5 acres adjacent to Burns Tank and a narrow channel below the tank that may be subject to seasonal flooding and/or isolated precipitation events.

The Cherry parcels contain no acres of wetlands and flood plains. The water resources report states that the Cherry parcels “are on decomposed granite parent material, dominated by chaparral vegetation. All are on side slopes with no indication of channels, a high water table, or springs.” These factors were confirmed by a field visit.

The Juan Miller parcel contains less than 2.5 acres of wetlands with no acres delineated as flood plains. However, there are approximately 5 acres adjacent to Juan Miller Creek that may be subject to seasonal flooding and/or isolated precipitation events.

The Leonard Canyon parcel contains no acres of natural wetlands and approximately 3 to 4 acres of flood plains. The flood plain acres are associated with the perennial pool stream reach within Leonard Canyon.

The Railroad parcels contain no acres of wetlands and 6 to 7.7 acres of delineated flood plains. The flood plain areas are associated with Mortensen Wash.

The Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel contains 82.8 acres of wetlands and 82 acres of delineated flood plains. These acres are associated with the wet meadow surrounding the confluence of several small creeks on the parcel.

The Soda Springs Ranch parcel contains no acres of natural wetlands and approximately 19 acres of flood plains. A total of 16 of the flood plain acres are associated with Wet Beaver Creek, while the remaining 3 acres are associated with the flood plain of Red Tank Draw.

The Sponseller Ranch Parcel contains no acres of wetlands and delineated flood plains. An additional 0 to 56 acres are adjacent to Brookbank Canyon and may be subject to flooding.

The Sprucedale Parcel contains 27 acres of wetlands and 57 acres of delineated flood plains. These wetlands and flood plains are associated with Beaver and Horton Creeks.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Under the proposed action alternative, the Forest Service would receive a net gain of approximately 110.5 acres of wetlands and between 163 and 166 acres of flood plains. There would also be an additional 5.6 to 61 acres of land conveyed that may be subject to flooding. This net gain would also add to the acreage of available riparian habitat within Forest Service management and protection.

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the exchange would occur and the four Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership. Approximately 1.8 acres of wetlands and 3.7 acres of delineated flood plains would be conveyed to private ownership. An additional 0.9 acres of land that may be subject to flooding would also be conveyed. These wetlands and flood plains and any associated riparian habitat would no longer be managed by the Forest Service or be provided the protection of Federal ownership. The area surrounding Show Low Creek would remain open space by the City of Show Low and, therefore, would retain its natural flow and riparian habitat availability to wildlife and other species of interest.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the exchange would occur and the nine non-Federal parcels would be conveyed to Federal ownership. Approximately 112.3 acres of wetlands and 167 to 170 acres of delineated flood plains would be conveyed to the USFS. An additional approximately 6.5 to 62 acres of land that may be subject to flooding would also be conveyed. These wetlands and flood plains and any associated riparian habitat would then be managed by the Forest Service and be provided the additional protection of Federal ownership.

Cumulative Effects

Cumulative effects with regards to wetlands and flood plains are discussed in a general qualitative manner due to the scale of the analysis area. A number of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions have the potential to impact wetlands and flood plains:

- The proposed Second Knoll Shooting Range and associated access roads in the Lakeside Ranger District of the ASNFs;
- The Woodland Lake Park Tract Townsite Act Purchase project, which would result in a net loss of 583 acres of land administered by the SNF;
- Timber Mesa – Vernon Wildland-Urban Interface Project;
- The Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit in the Alpine Ranger District of ASNFs;
- The Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange on the Sitgreaves, Coronado, Prescott, and Tonto national forests;
- Wildfires;
- Timber harvesting; and
- Residential development as addressed in the City of Show Low *General Plan*.

While these projects could potentially affect wetlands, projects on NFS lands are managed to mitigate impacts to wetlands. The proposed action alternative would have a net gain of 110.5 acres of wetlands and between 163 and 166 acres of flood plains. The proposed action alternative when combined with present and foreseeable future actions would not result in any measurable changes to wetlands or flood plains.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the exchange would not occur, and the Federal parcels would continue to be managed under the current respective forest plans. No direct or indirect effects to wetlands or flood plains would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the non-Federal parcels would not be transferred to Federal ownership, and they would not be considered for inclusion in the NFS. These lands would likely be developed, which could negatively affect wetlands and flood plains and potentially remove any associated riparian habitat.

Cumulative Effects

There are no known actions that, in conjunction with the no action alternative, would result in substantial impacts to wetlands or flood plains.

Water Quality, Rights, and Claims

Affected Environment

A water resources report was conducted for the proposed exchange (exhibit C of the feasibility analysis). This information is summarized below.

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the Federal lands would be conveyed together with any and all associated and appurtenant water rights. The City of Show Low parcel does not have any water rights identified for conveyance. Waters that flow in the natural channel of Show Low Creek have been appropriated by downstream users for various beneficial uses. A report released on April 15, 1999 by the Arizona Department of Water Resources (project record item dated 3/18/2011) concluded that the City of Show Low has sufficient water supplies which are continuously and legally available for 100 years after the report's approval in the year 1999.

Water quality in the Show Low Creek watershed, which includes areas of both the City of Show Low parcel and the Show Low South parcel, is monitored by the Arizona Department of Water Quality and the City of Show Low and managed through the Show Low Creek Watershed Enhancement Partnership (2007). Water in the watershed is primarily used for municipal, recreational, and some agricultural and industrial purposes and is supplied mostly by snowmelt and Pinetop, Thompson, and Scott Springs.

The Show Low South parcel has a claim of right for a stock pond (Registry No. 38-010656) by the ASNFs. The annual volume claimed is 0.09 acre-feet, which is claimed for stock waters and wildlife uses. This water claim will be transferred to the non-Federal party.

The Sierra Blanca adjustment parcel has no water rights identified for conveyance.

The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel has no water rights identified for conveyance. An unauthorized sprinkler-irrigated field occurs on a fraction of the parcel (0.75 recorded acres); however, it is not associated with any water rights.

Non-Federal Parcels

The non-Federal parcels would be conveyed together with any and all associated appurtenant water rights, except for the Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, where the non-Federal water claims would be allocated between the conveyed and retained lands. Such water claims of record have yet to be adjudicated under Arizona Water Law. The Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel has a claim of right of use for an annual volume of 400 acre-feet (Registry No. 36-31850). Water is claimed for irrigation, domestic, stock water, and other uses. In addition, a Statement of Claimant, Adjudication File (No. 39-004950) for surface waters includes an annual volume of 250 acre-feet for irrigation, 14 acre-feet for domestic, 250 acre-feet for stock water, 200 acre-feet for wildlife, and 200 acre-feet for other uses. The proponent and the Forest Service have agreed that the portion of the water rights conveyed with the Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel would be 80 percent of the claimed irrigation right, 80 percent of the claimed stock water right, 80 percent of the claimed wildlife right, 80 percent of the claimed other uses right, and 0 percent of the claimed domestic right. All claimed domestic uses (14 acre-feet per year) and 20 percent of all other claimed water uses (i.e. irrigation, stock water, wildlife, and other) shall remain with the retained Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel.

The Alder Peak parcel has a claim of right to use for an annual volume of 84,000 gallons for stock water use (Registry No. 36-102032).

The Cherry parcels, Juan Miller parcel, Leonard Canyon parcel, Railroad parcels, Soda Springs Ranch parcel, Sponseller Ranch parcel, and Sprucedale parcel have no water rights identified for conveyance.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

The proposed action alternative would result in a net gain of water rights/claims of approximately 1,030 acre-feet in annual volume.

Federal Parcels

Drought conditions from 1996 to 2005, coupled with increasing residential growth, spurred shortages in water supplies in the Show Low area and drew concern for water quality issues. In 1988, Arizona Department of Environmental Quality (ADEQ) placed Rainbow Lake on Arizona's 303(d) list of impaired waters due to excessive weeds, pH, and nutrient overloading. This is due primarily from agricultural and residential pollutants that infiltrate tributaries such as Show Low Creek and causes some concern for any proposed uses that could occur if the Federal parcels are

turned over to city zoning, which would split the land into two distinct zones; A-general and Industrial (Navajo County Public Works 2011). The concern is that the increase in demand for land and water use in the Show Low area could further accent the issues facing the watershed by introducing more residential and industrial uses to areas once protected by the USFS.

Under the proposed action alternative, the four Federal parcels and associated water rights (a total of 0.09 acre-feet in annual volume) would be conveyed to private ownership. While the City of Show Low would expand their waste water treatment facility on the City of Show Low parcel, no adverse direct or indirect effects to the water quality of Show Low Creek are anticipated because no effluent from the treatment facility would be released into the creek. The rest of the City of Show Low parcel would remain undeveloped.

On the Show Low South parcel, the land would be developed as low-density residential and mixed-use residential. While the parcel is within the Show Low Creek watershed, there are no intermediate or perennial waters located on the parcel, and the only water rights proposed for conveyance are 0.09 acre-feet from a stock pond. With no water rights or claims conveyed on the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel or Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel, no direct or indirect effects to water quality, rights, or claims would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the nine non-Federal parcels and associated and/or agreed upon water rights/claims (a total of 720 acre-feet in annual volume) would be conveyed to Federal ownership. Under the protection of the NFS, the parcels would not be developed and no adverse effects to water quality would occur.

Cumulative Effects

There are no known actions that, in conjunction with the proposed action alternative, would result in measurable cumulative impacts to water quality, rights, or claims. Any future land exchanges, including the planned Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange (see appendix B), would involve a similar trade of lands and any associated water rights and claims. However, as with the proposed action alternative (which has a net water rights gain of 1,030 acre-feet in annual volume), land exchanges often involve a net gain of water rights and claims. The National Wild Turkey Federation riparian restoration projects would benefit water quality for streams in the project area. In general, projects on national forests are designed to minimize effects to water quality. No cumulative impacts are anticipated.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the exchange would not occur, and the Federal parcels would continue to be managed by the Forest Service. No direct or indirect effects to water quality, rights, or claims would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the non-Federal parcels would not be transferred to Federal ownership and would likely be developed. While development could affect water quality, plans

would likely include mitigation measures to avoid major impacts to water quality. No adverse direct or indirect impacts to water quality, rights, or claims would likely occur.

Cumulative Effects

There are no known actions that, in conjunction with the no action alternative, would result in cumulative impacts to water quality, rights, or claims.

Cultural Resources

Affected Environment

Federal Parcels

Cultural resources investigations were conducted on each of the four Federal parcels between April and September of 2009 (EnviroSystems 2011b and 2011c) in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended. Results of these investigations, which were conducted at a Class III level of intensity, are summarized below.

During April 27–28, 2009, investigation of the City of Show Low parcel, which had not been previously surveyed for cultural resources, resulted in the identification of one previously unrecorded archaeological site (a historic trash scatter) and nine isolated occurrences of cultural material.

The Show Low South parcel was completely surveyed for cultural resources during 2 previous projects, and 17 sites had been recorded within (n=6) or near (n=11) the parcel. Field investigations were conducted April 28–29 and September 10, 2009, to verify the locations of the 17 sites and to assess their current condition. A total of six archaeological sites were located within the Show Low South parcel:

- three separate artifact scatters;
- agricultural features with associated artifacts;
- a habitation structure, rock alignment, petroglyph panel, and associated artifact scatter; and
- a flaked stone scatter.

The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel had not been previously surveyed for cultural resources. During the investigation on April 27, 2009, one historic site (a historic habitation composed of two cabins, a water tank, and several rock and concrete pads) was identified.

No cultural resources were identified within the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel during a field investigation on April 21, 2009.

The cultural resources investigations were approved by CNF on April 25, 2011, for the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel inventory report (EnviroSystems 2011b) and by the ASNFs with State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) concurrence in October 4, 2010, for the three exchange parcels on the ASNFs (EnviroSystems 2011c). Two of the six sites within the Show Low South Parcel were determined eligible to the NRHP. The remaining four sites in the parcel have been determined ineligible for the NRHP. One of the National Register eligible sites consists of a habitation structure, rock alignment, petroglyph panel, and associated artifact scatter. The other

eligible site is defined as an artifact scatter with ceramics, flaked stone, and ground stone artifacts.

No traditional cultural properties were identified within Federal parcels by the consulted Tribes.

Non-Federal Parcels

A Class I cultural resources investigation was conducted for the nine non-Federal parcels (EnviroSystems 2011d). The investigation included record searches for any previous archaeological surveys and previously recorded archaeological sites within or adjacent to the nine parcels, as well as an assessment of potential historic properties through examination of historic General Land Office (GLO) plat maps. No field surveys were conducted.

No known or potential cultural sites were identified within the Alder Peak, Leonard Canyon, or Sprucedale parcels.

Within the three Cherry parcels, historic cultural resources may be present and associated with eight named mineral claims that make up these parcels. No previous archaeological surveys have been conducted, however.

For the Juan Miller parcel, no previous archaeological surveys have occurred, though GLO maps indicate that a portion of the historic Laney Ranch potentially lies within the parcel.

The three Railroad parcels are located along an old railroad grade, and GLO maps indicate that a road (called the Danish Settlement to Snowflake Road) closely followed the route of the old railroad grade in places. No previous archaeological surveys are known to have been conducted along the relevant sections of the grade.

Though no archaeological surveys have been previously conducted within the Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, GLO maps indicate that a cabin may have been located on the parcel.

During an archaeological survey of a portion of the Soda Springs Ranch parcel in 1988, no cultural resources were identified.

The entire Sponseller Ranch parcel was surveyed for archaeological resources in 2002. The inventory resulted in the identification of seven archaeological sites within or partially within the parcel. Three of the sites are prehistoric artifact scatters, one is a prehistoric habitation, and the remaining three are historic sites.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

The proposed action meets the requirements of Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and Executive Order 11593. The following eight Native American tribes and one chapter were notified of the project: Hopi Tribe, Navajo Nation, Ramah Chapter of the Navajo Nation, Pueblo of Zuni, San Carlos Apache Tribe, Tonto Apache Tribe, White Mountain Apache Tribe, Yavapai-Apache Tribe, and Yavapai-Prescott Tribe.

For the City of Show Low parcel, the archaeological site (trash scatter) and IOs are not considered under the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as their data potential has been exhausted by the survey level recording. No further archaeological work on the City of Show Low parcel is required, and no direct or indirect adverse effects to cultural heritage resources would occur as a result of the proposed exchange.

Under the proposed action alternative, two archeological sites eligible for the NRHP would be adversely affected within the Show Low South parcel. A historic properties treatment plan and memorandum of agreement were developed to resolve and mitigate the direct and indirect adverse effects to these two sites. Mitigation measures in the treatment plan include mapping the sites, conducting surface artifact collections, and completing area and feature excavations.

The historic site identified within the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel has also been determined eligible for the NRHP. The transfer of this parcel out of federal ownership would have an adverse direct effect to the historic site. The historic properties treatment plan and memorandum of agreement were developed to resolve and mitigate the direct and indirect adverse effect to this site. Primary mitigation measures include archival and oral data recovery.

Since no cultural resources were identified on the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel, no direct or indirect effects to cultural resources would occur, and no further archaeological work would be required within the Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel.

Non-Federal Parcels

Transfer of the non-Federal lands to Federal ownership would have a beneficial effect on any cultural resources present. Any cultural resource sites found on the non-Federal lands would come under Federal management and would receive the full protection of Federal laws. No negative direct or indirect effects to cultural resources are anticipated as a result of these parcels being exchanged.

Cumulative Effects

Though natural events such as wildfires have the potential to affect cultural resources, Forest Service projects are designed to avoid and mitigate adverse effects to cultural resources in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act. As a result, the future projects listed in appendix B as cumulative events likely include proper mitigation and avoidance practices.

Within the Lakeside Ranger District, other planned or reasonably foreseeable activities that may adversely affect cultural resources are two additional land exchanges: Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange, and the Lakeside Ranger Station Conveyance. At present, these exchanges are expected to adversely affect 9 archeological sites. The adverse effects are expected to be mitigated through data recovery in consultation with the ACHP, Arizona SHPO, and culturally affiliated Tribes. However, despite data recovery, this mitigation strategy leads to a cumulative loss of historic properties.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the four Federal parcels would not be conveyed to private ownership and would remain within the NFS. As such, the Federal lands would continue to be managed as directed under forest plans for the respective forests (ASNFs forest plan; CNF forest plan). However, site 01–413 on the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel would continue to be used and affected even though the site is mostly on Federal land. This site is managed under a conservation easement held by The Nature Conservancy.

Non-Federal Parcels

Cultural resources that are located on the non-Federal lands would not receive further protection, with the exception of human burials which are protected under Arizona Burial Statute ARS §41–865. If present, direct or indirect adverse effects to cultural resources could occur as a result of development activities.

Cumulative Effects

Under the no action alternative, there would be no direct or indirect effects on cultural resources located on federal lands; therefore no cumulative effects on federal lands would be expected.

Mineral Resources

Affected Environment

A mineral report (dated May 23, 2008) was prepared for the four Federal and nine non-Federal parcels. Conclusions of this report, which was prepared by a certified mineral examiner for Region 3 of the USFS, are presented below.

Federal Parcels

There is little to no potential for mineral commodities on the four Federal parcels. None of the parcels are considered prospectively valuable.

Non-Federal Parcels

Seven of the nine non-Federal parcels (Alder Peak, Juan Miller, Leonard Canyon, Sierra Blanca Ranch, Soda Springs Ranch, Sponseller Ranch, and Sprucedale) have little to no potential for mineral commodities. None of the parcels are considered prospectively valuable.

The Alder Peak parcel has low to moderate potential for geothermal resources. The parcel is not prospectively valuable for other mineral commodities and has little to no potential for these resources.

The Cherry parcel has little to no potential and is not prospectively valuable for leasable minerals. The parcel has a moderate potential for locatable minerals, and low potential for salable minerals.

The mineral report was forwarded to the Bureau of Land Management and concurrence was received from Albuquerque, NM, on February 23, 2011.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Should the land exchange be executed, neither the United States nor the private landowner would reserve any mineral right, royalty, or other mineral interest.

Federal Parcels

The exchange would occur, and most of the Federal parcels would be developed (no further development is proposed on the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel). There would be no direct or indirect effects of development activities on mineral resources. Respective mineral resources would be conveyed along with the surface.

Non-Federal Parcels

The non-Federal parcels would be integrated into the NFS and be managed as directed under respective forest plans. There are no plans to further explore the moderate potential for geothermal resources on the Alder Peak parcel or the moderate potential for locatable minerals on the Cherry parcels. No effects regarding mineral resources would occur. Respective mineral resources would be conveyed along with the surface.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to mineral resources, no cumulative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

No change would occur to current use and management of the Federal parcels. No effects regarding mineral resources would occur. Mineral estates would remain the same.

Non-Federal Parcels

The exchange would not take place and development would likely occur on the existing non-Federal parcels. There would be no direct or indirect effects of development activities on mineral resources. Mineral estates would remain the same.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to mineral resources, no cumulative effects would occur.

Roads

Affected Environment

Federal Parcels

The City of Show Low parcel can be accessed via National Forest System Road (NFSR) 11-9701K5, which connects to State Highway 77 just north of the City of Show Low.

The Show Low South parcel is just south of the City of Show Low and can be accessed by several roads stemming off State Highway 260 to the east, State Highway 77 (a.k.a. Interstate 60 and West Deuce of Clubs) to the north and west, and Mogollon Rim Road to the south. Several forest roads are located within the Show Low South parcel, including NFSRs 11-9039, 11-9703T, 11-9703X, 11-9704B, 11-9704Y, 11-9600U, and 11-9727F.

The Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel, located southwest of the community of Nutrioso, Arizona, is accessed by NFSR 01-249V. NFSR 249V connects with NFSR 249 outside of the parcel, which continues east to its intersection with State Highway 180.

The Soda Springs Ranch adjustment parcel, located northeast of Camp Verde, Arizona, is south of NFSR 121 (a.k.a. Soda Springs Road). NFSR 121 connects with NFSR 618 (a.k.a. East Beaver Creek Road) which continues west and intersects with Interstate 17.

Non-Federal Parcels

Any roads or road segments located on non-Federal parcels conveyed to Federal ownership would be evaluated to determine their inclusion in the Forest Service transportation system.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and undergo various degrees of development. No non-NFS roads would be affected by the land exchange.

Within the City of Show Low parcel and Show Low South parcel, the segments of any NFS roads would be removed from the Forest Service transportation system upon issuance of patent. Additional private roads would likely be needed as a result of development within the Show Low South Parcel (low-density residential and mixed use) and Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel (rural residential area). Additionally, private road construction may be needed within the City of Show Low parcel, where Show Low intends to expand their waste water treatment facility.

On the Show Low South parcel, new residents moving to the proposed residential development (zoned as low-density and mixed-use residential) would cause an increase in the immediate area's traffic. Residents living within the Show Low South parcel would access their residences through a minimum of two proposed entrances. Some traffic may access the Show Low South property through the Sierra Pines subdivision, though having at least two other entrances to the property would help minimize increase to neighborhood access traffic.

Though no development would occur within the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel, the proponent would be granted a FLPMA private road easement (30-foot-wide right-of-way) for NFSR 01-249A, extending from its junction with NFSR 01-249 to the boundary of the Sierra Blanca Ranch Adjustment Parcel. Concurrently with the establishment of that easement, a previously recorded road easement that was established for the property across undisturbed NFS lands would be terminated.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the non-Federal parcels would be transferred to Federal ownership. Therefore, the lands would be managed under objectives set forth in the respective forest plans, and roads would be analyzed for potential inclusion in the NFS transportation system.

Cumulative Effects

Several reasonably foreseeable future actions could cumulatively impact the NFS road system. The Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange—which proposes to exchange Federal land on the ASNFs for private land on the ASNFs, Coronado, Prescott, and Tonto national forests—would potentially involve a similar trade of roads between the NFS and private proponent. A goal of the Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit Project is to develop a new mineral pit to provide materials for road improvements in Greenlee County. Also, the Second Knoll Shooting Range proposal involves construction of an access road to reach the planned 80-acre shooting range. Considering the thousands of miles of forest roads already existing within the NFS in Arizona, no measurable cumulative effects to roads are anticipated.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, no change would occur to the current use and management of the Federal parcels.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the non-Federal parcels would undergo various degrees of development. As a result, a number of private roads would likely need to be constructed in order to provide access to prospective homeowners. Also, the non-Federal parcels are inholdings, privately owned parcels partially or completely surrounded by NFS lands. Residential development on these inholdings would increase the local population, resulting in an increased use of nearby Forest Service roads.

Cumulative Effects

The reasonably foreseeable future events that could cumulatively affect roads include the potential trade and development of roads as part of the Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange; road improvement in Greenlee County as a result of the Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit Project; and access road construction during the Second Knoll Shooting Range Project. No adverse cumulative effects to roads are anticipated.

Fire and Fuels

Affected Environment

Federal Parcels

Existing levels of live and dead fuels on the Federal parcels are generally consistent with surrounding forest lands. There is no evidence of recent wildfires on many of the Federal parcels. The exception is the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel that was recently burned in the

Wallow Fire. In May and June of 2011, the Wallow Fire burned more than 550,000 acres in Arizona and New Mexico (for more information, see the “Wallow Fire” section in chapter 1). Preliminary analysis of fire effects from this human-caused fire indicate a mixed severity over the area burned. Salvage logging and the removal of hazard trees (standing dead trees that may pose a threat to motorists on surrounding roads and highways) is occurring to ensure the safety of the public that utilize these areas. The Wallow Fire blackened the boles of trees at the Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel, but no buildings associated with this parcel were damaged by the fire. Overall, the fire removed some of the live and dead surface fuels onsite, but did not burn the forest canopy on this parcel. Because of the low to moderate intensity of the fire at this parcel, the effects will likely recycle nutrients, making them available for regrowth of native grasses in the understory. The fire also helped expose soil, allowing regeneration of the overstory in future growing seasons.

Non-Federal Parcels

Similarly, fuels on the non-Federal parcels are generally consistent with surrounding forest lands. As stated, the Wallow Fire burned more than 550,000 acres in Arizona and New Mexico (see the “Wallow Fire” section in chapter 1). Salvage logging and the removal of hazard trees to ensure the safety of the public that utilize these areas is occurring. Two parcels—Sprucedale and Sierra Blanca Ranch—were in the path of the wildfire and were partially burned as the fire passed through. After the fire was extinguished, both parcels were visited to assess any potential impact the fire may have had on the habitat and property value. It was evident that a recent fire had passed through the parcels, as both had visible scorching on the ground. However, there was no major damage to the property. Because of the low intensity of the fire at these sites, the effects will likely recycle nutrients, making them available for regrowth of the native grasses in the understory in future growing seasons.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

The land exchange would occur, and the private owners/developers would be responsible for implementation of fire and fuel treatments on the acquired parcels. Firefighting capabilities would be provided to meet requirements of the respective counties. The Forest Service would be responsible for ensuring that proper vegetation management occurs within the wildland-urban interface to mitigate or lessen the potential of wildfires from spreading from forest land to the newly acquired private parcels.

Non-Federal Parcels

Management of the non-Federal parcels would become the responsibility of the USFS, and fire and fuels management would be consistent with the respective forest plans.

Cumulative Effects

As discussed above, the Wallow Fire burned within Sierra Blanca Ranch adjustment parcel, Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel, and Sprucedale parcel, removing accumulated live and dead fuels. While some areas burned by the Wallow Fire resulted in high severity effects such as complete tree

mortality, the three parcels affected by the Wallow Fire were mostly grasslands or wet meadow and, therefore, experienced low to moderate intensity surface fires that burned quickly. Additional wildfires are likely to occur in the reasonable foreseeable future and affect the ASNFs, CNF, and PNF. Future wildfires could be low intensity and ultimately prove beneficial to the overall ecological condition, or they could be of high severity and result in catastrophic, long-term effects.

Future fuels reduction and management projects (e.g., Timber Mesa – Vernon Wildland-Urban Interface Project) would continue to ensure that the risk of fire damage to residential properties, including those resulting from development within the Federal parcels proposed for exchange, is minimized or eliminated. No cumulative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Fire and fuels on and in the vicinity of the Federal parcels would not be affected by the no-action alternative. The Federal parcels would continue to be managed in accordance with the respective forest plans. No direct or indirect effects would occur as a result.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the private owners of the non-Federal parcels would be responsible for implementation of any fire and fuel treatments during and following development. Firefighting capabilities would be provided to meet requirements of the respective counties. Fire and fuels management in the surrounding forest lands would be the responsibility of the Forest Service. No direct or indirect effects with regards to fire and fuels would occur.

Cumulative Effects

There are no direct or indirect effects to fire and fuels; therefore, no cumulative effects would occur.

Hazardous Materials

Affected Environment

The Federal and non-Federal lands proposed for exchange have been examined in accordance with Section 120(h) of the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). Phase I Environmental Site Assessments were completed for the Federal and non-Federal parcels. These evaluations were conducted via records searches, interviews, and site visits consistent with good commercial or customary practice as set forth in the American Society for Testing Materials (ASTM) Designation E 1527-05. The objective of the environmental site assessments was to evaluate each parcel for recognized environmental conditions (RECs) that indicate an existing release, a past release, or a material threat of a release of any hazardous substance or petroleum product into structures on the properties or into the ground, groundwater, or surface water of the properties. No RECs were found to be associated with any of the parcels. No testing of soil, air, water, or any other matter was conducted during the environmental site assessments.

Environmental Consequences

Alternative 1 – Proposed Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the proposed action alternative, the Federal parcels would be conveyed to private ownership and likely undergo development. Expansion of waste water treatment facilities at the City of Show Low parcel would adhere to Navajo County and State of Arizona requirements and provisions for solid waste disposal in an approved landfill in order to minimize the risk of impacts regarding hazardous materials. All other development should abide by Federal, State of Arizona, and local rules and regulations to minimize risk associated with hazardous materials. Since there are no RECs on the Federal lands, no direct or indirect effects regarding hazardous materials are anticipated.

Non-Federal Parcels

Since there are no RECs on the non-Federal lands, no direct or indirect effects regarding hazardous materials are anticipated. Once transferred to Federal ownership, these parcels would be managed for public purposes under objectives of the respective forest plans.

Cumulative Effects

Since the proposed action alternative would not have direct or indirect effects with regards to hazardous materials, no cumulative effects would occur.

Alternative 2 – No Action

Direct and Indirect Effects

Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, no change would occur to the current use and management of the Federal parcels. Since no RECs occur on the Federal lands, no direct or indirect effects to hazardous materials would occur.

Non-Federal Parcels

Under the no action alternative, the non-Federal lands would not be transferred to Federal ownership. Development would likely occur on each of the nine non-Federal parcels, mainly in the form of residential development. Adherence to local, county, and State of Arizona requirements and provisions for development activities would minimize any risk of substantial impacts regarding hazardous materials.

Cumulative Effects

With no direct or indirect effects to hazardous materials as a result of the no action alternative, no cumulative effects would occur.

Chapter 4. List of Preparers

Preparers and Contributors

The Forest Service consulted the following individuals, Federal, State, and local agencies, tribes, and non-Forest Service persons during development of this EIS.

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Lynn Neal	Cultural Resources Manager
Sarah Hurteau	Project Biologist
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EnviroServices

Carol Holland	NEPA Specialist
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Other Forest Service Contributors

The following people prepared resources information and/or specialized technical guidance during the analysis.

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Tribal Governments and Offices

Hopi Tribe
Hopi Cultural Preservation Office
Navajo Traditional Culture Program
Navajo Nation
White Mountain Apache Tribe
White Mountain Apache Tribe Office of Historic Preservation
San Carlos Apache Tribe
Tonto Apache Tribe
Fort McDowell Yavapai Nation
Yavapai-Apache Tribe
Yavapai –Apache Tribe Cultural and Historic Preservation
Yavapai-Prescott Tribe Cultural Resource Program
Yavapai-Prescott Indian Tribe
Zuni Heritage & Historic Preservation Office
Pueblo of Zuni
Ramah Chapter

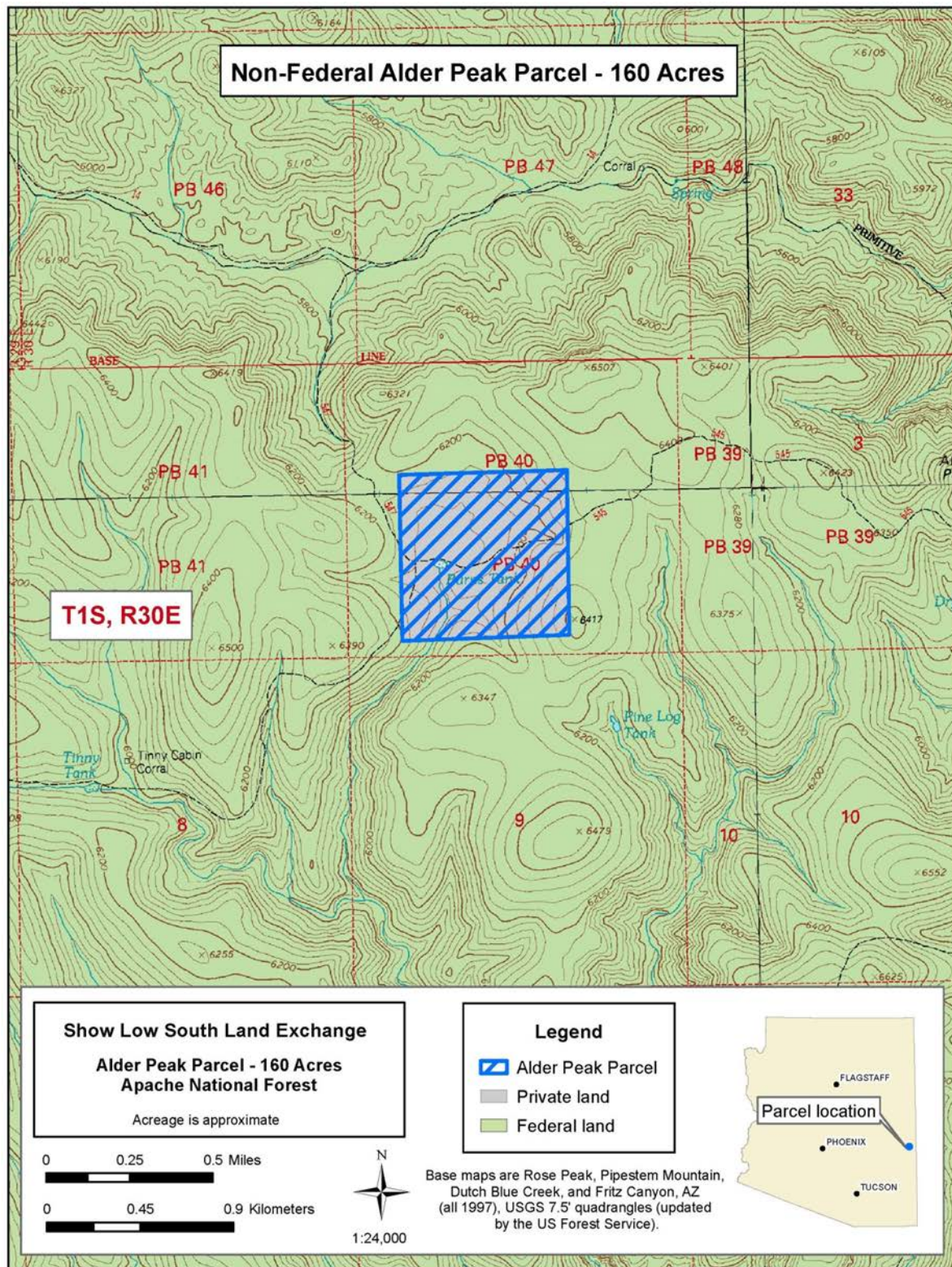
Chapter 6. References

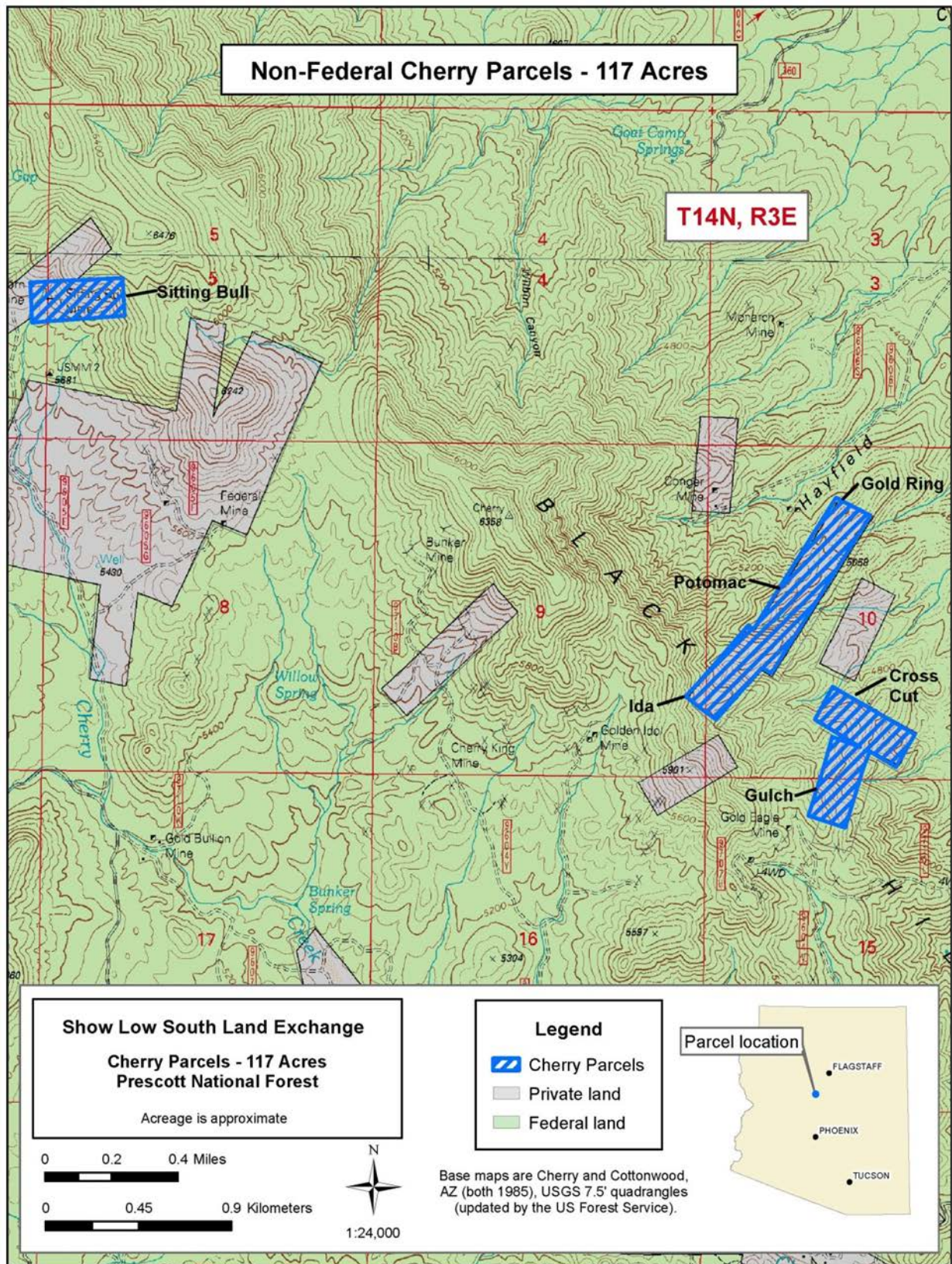
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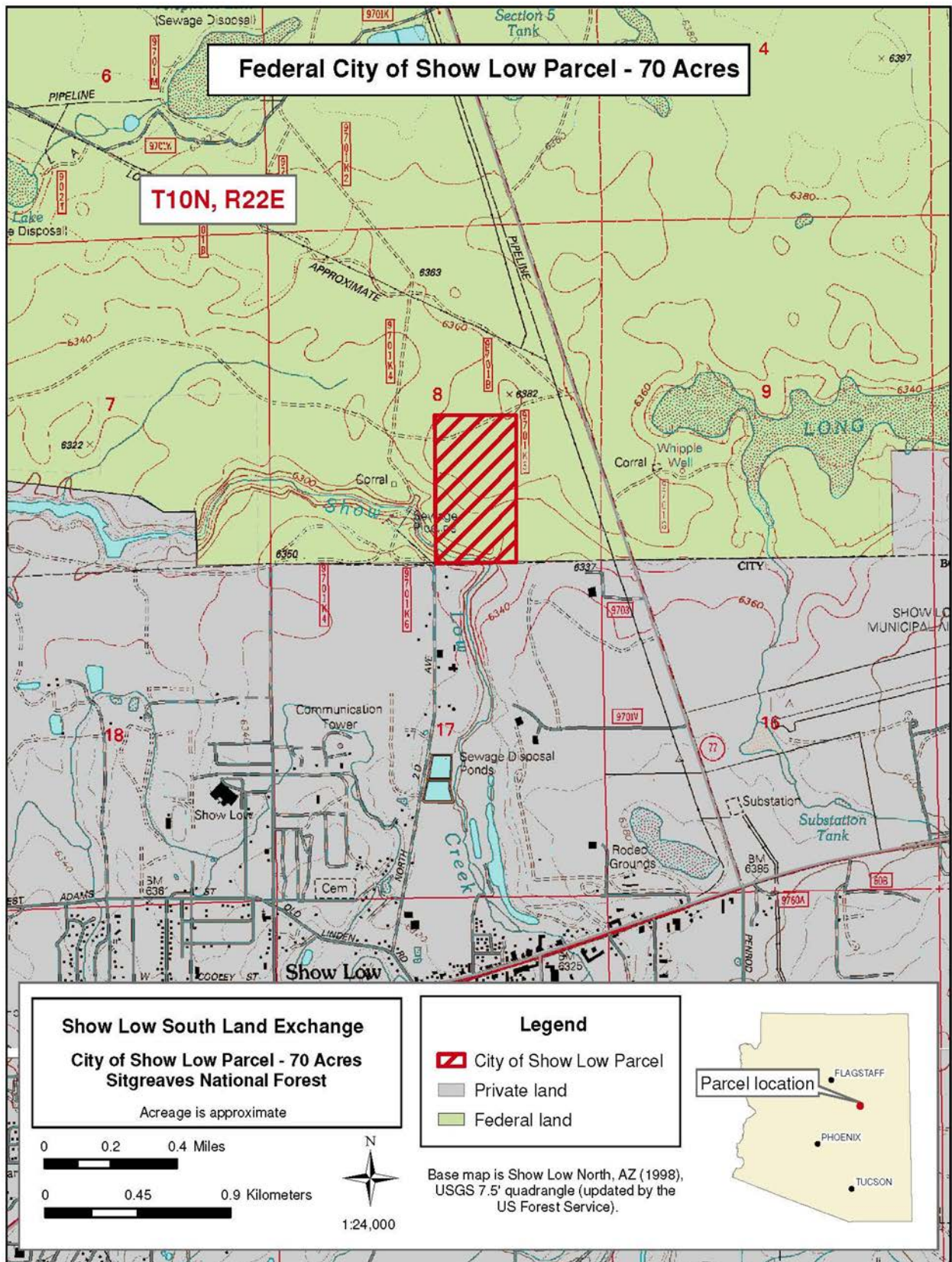
Chapter 6. References

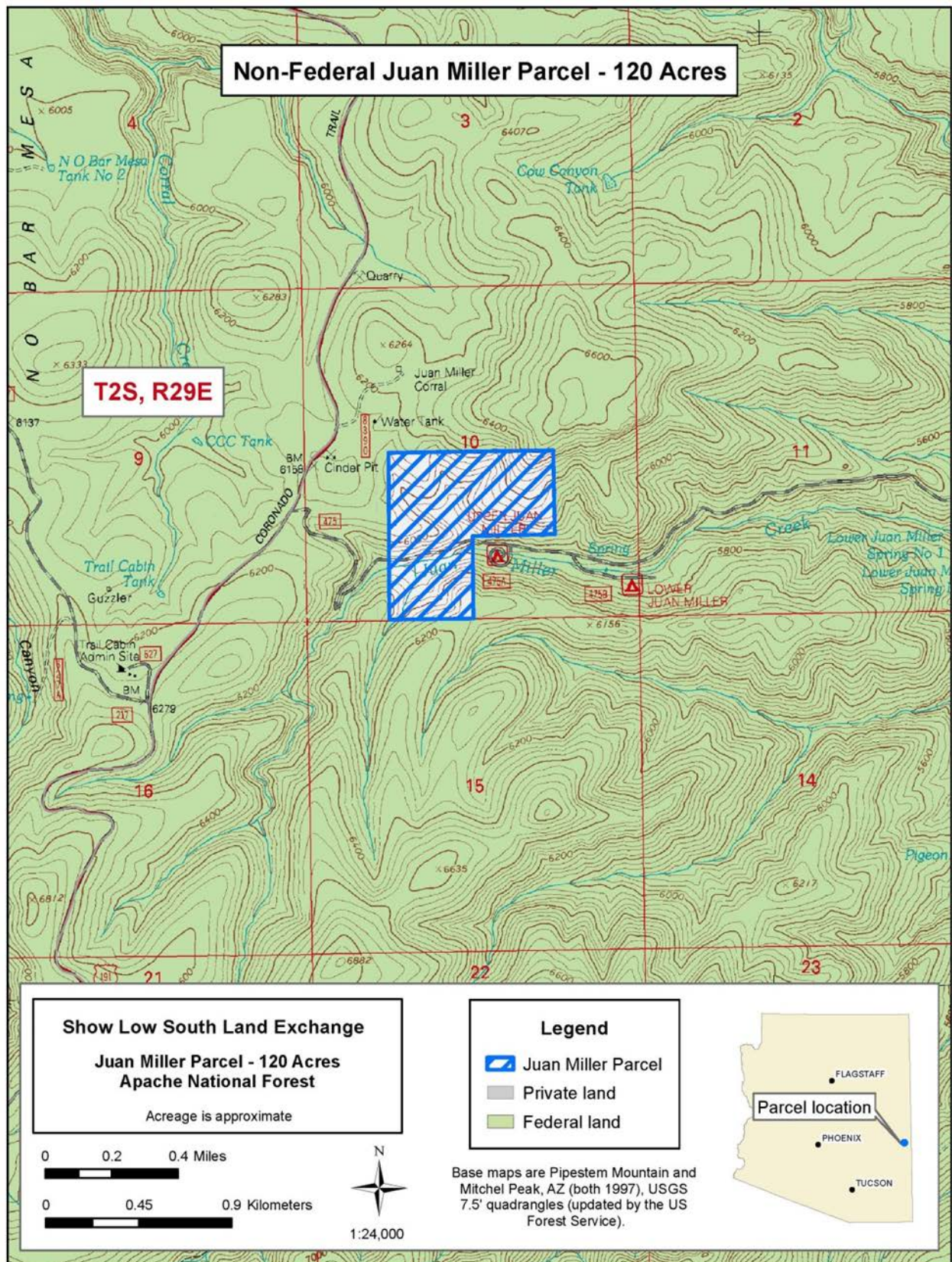
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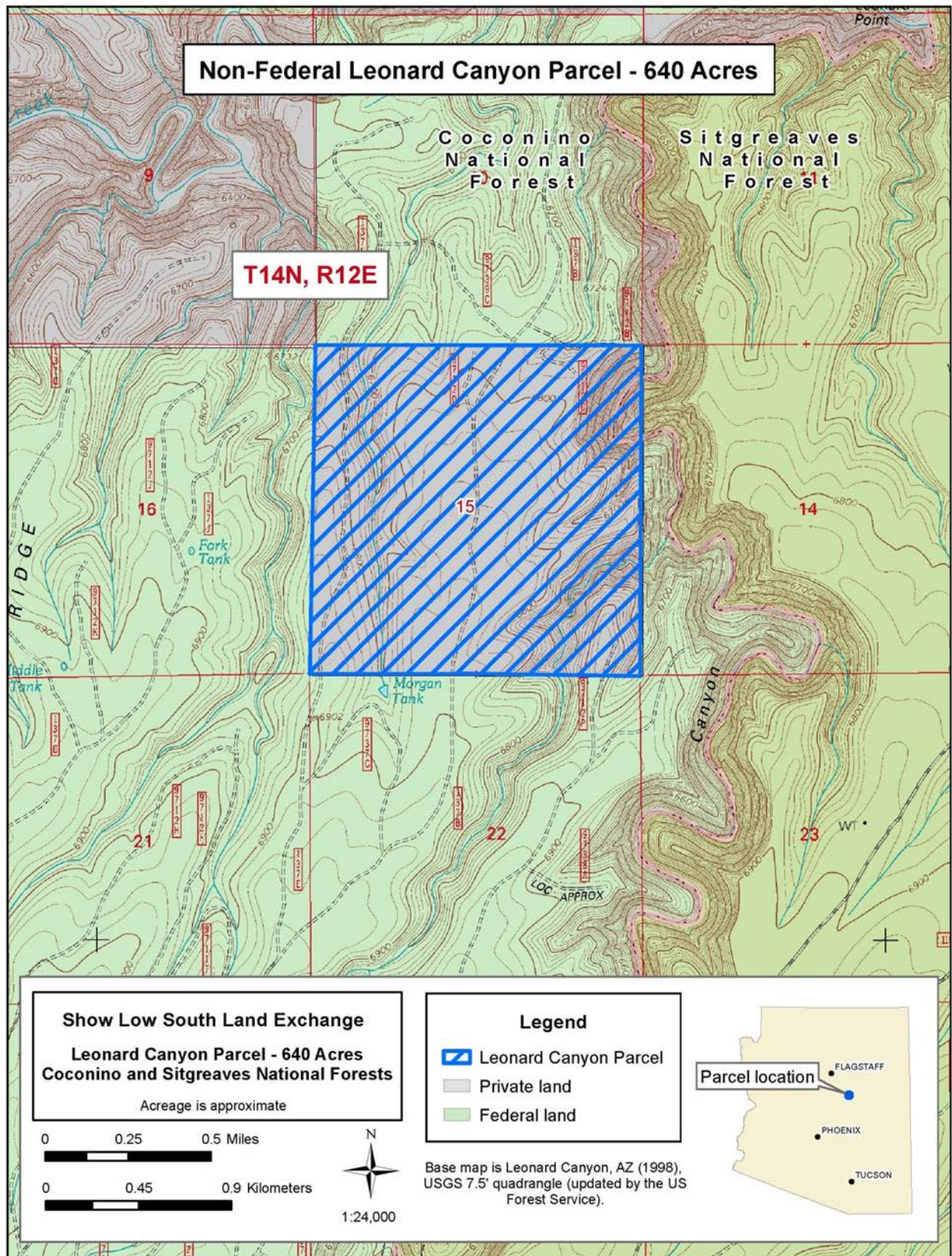
Appendix A. Parcel Maps and Photographs of Federal and Non-Federal Land

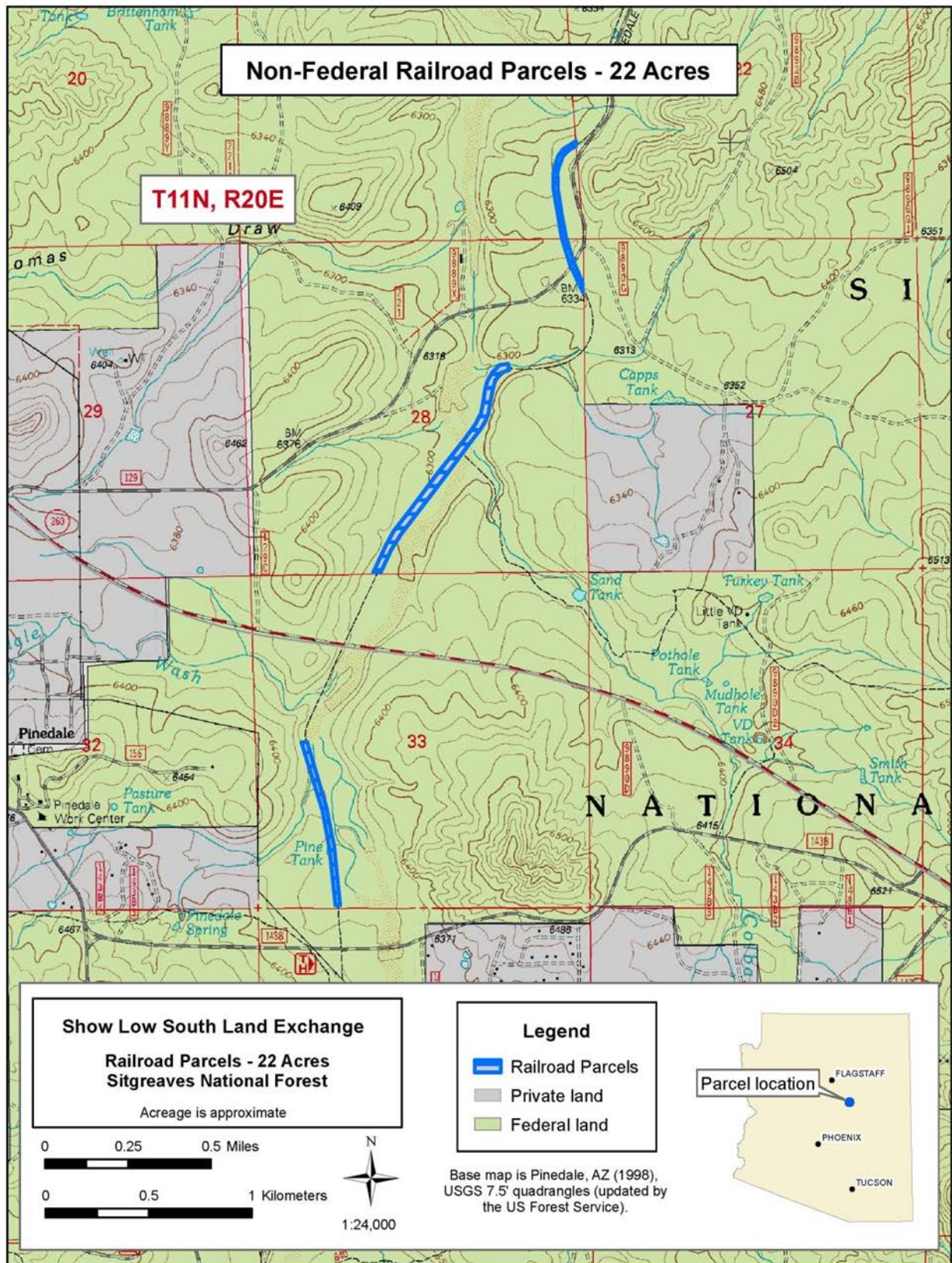


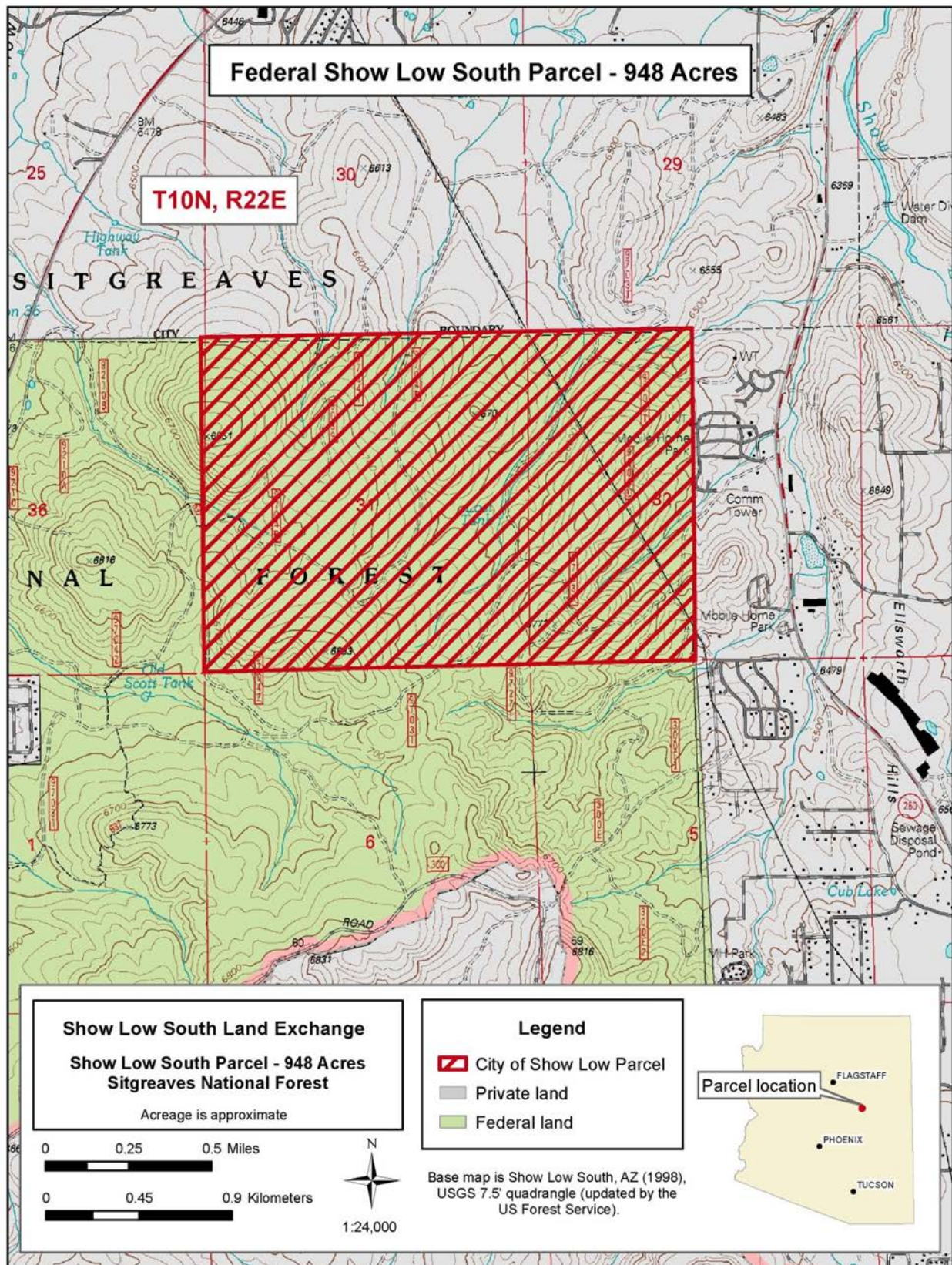


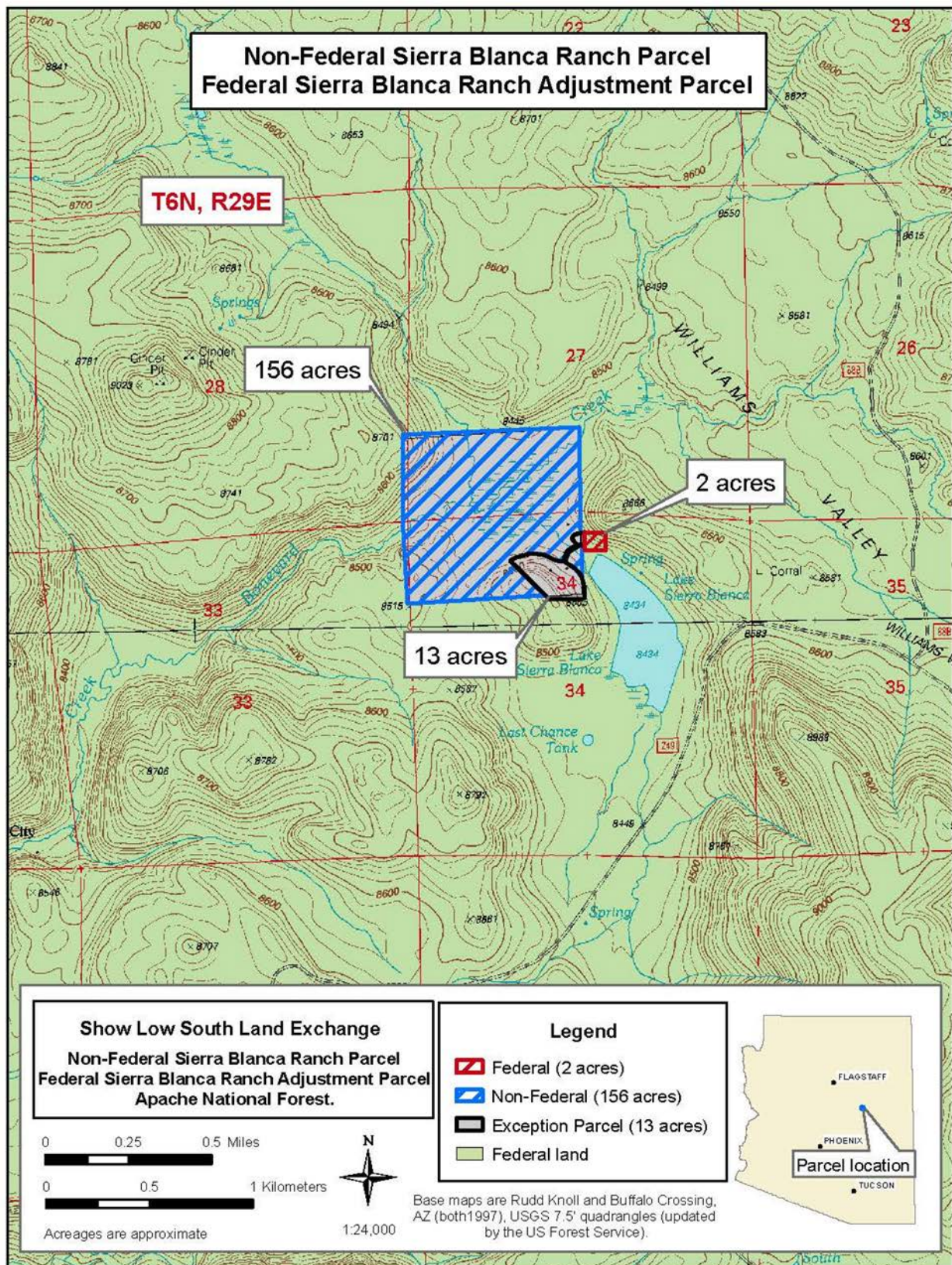


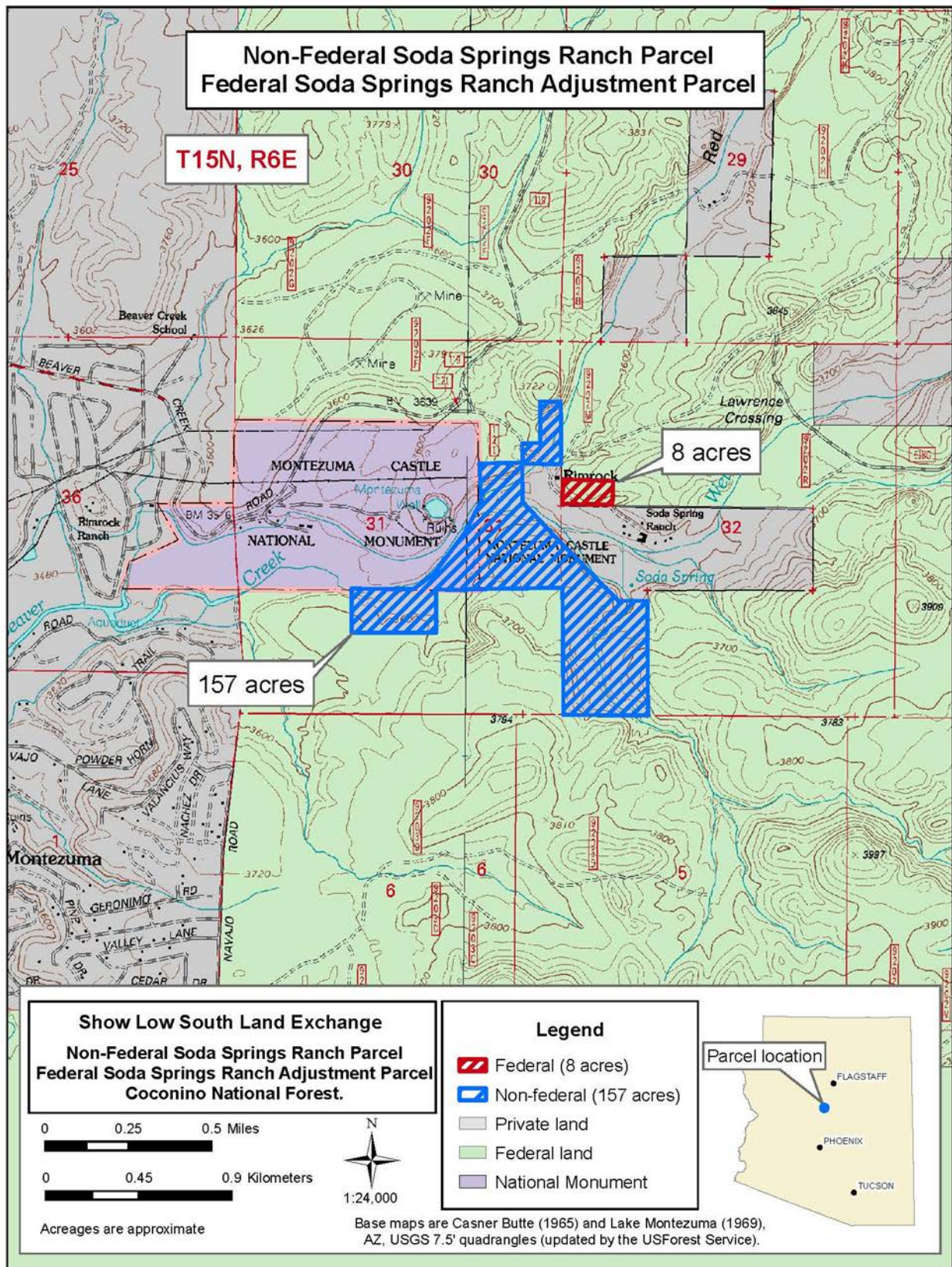


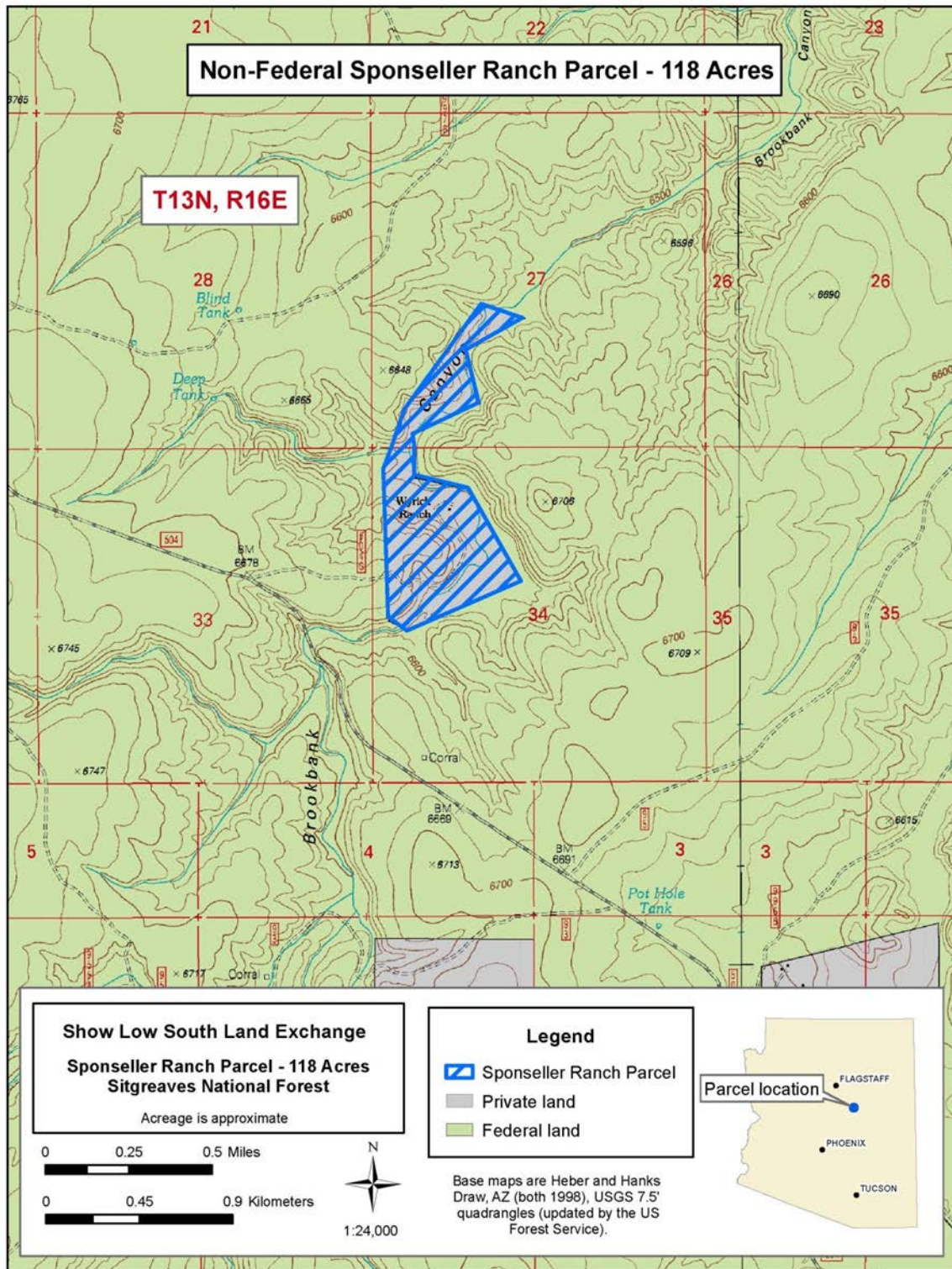












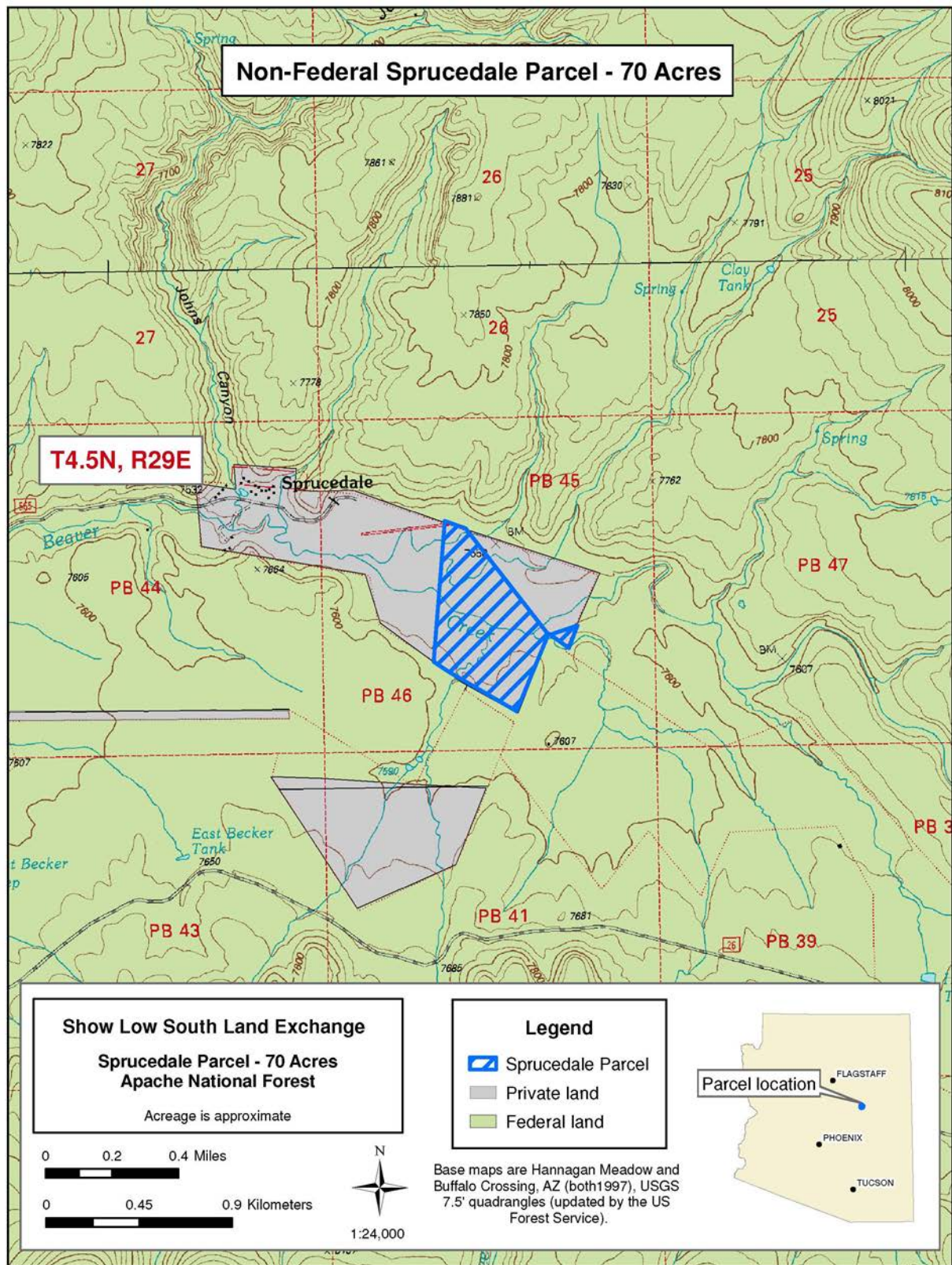




Figure A1. Alder Peak Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A2. Juan Miller Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A3. Railroad Non-Federal Parcels



Figure A4. Sierra Blanca Ranch Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A5. Sponseller Ranch Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A6. Sprucedale Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A7. Leonard Canyon Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A8. Soda Springs Ranch Non-Federal Parcel



Figure A9. Cherry Non-Federal Parcels



Figure A10. Show Low South Federal Parcel



Figure A11. City of Show Low Federal Parcel



Figure A12. Sierra Blanca Ranch Federal Adjustment Parcel



Figure A13. Soda Springs Ranch Federal Adjustment Parcel

Appendix B. Cumulative Effects

This cumulative effects list was based on projects listed on the current “Schedule of Proposed Actions for the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests,” focusing on the Lakeside and Alpine RDs where most of the Federal lands are located, as well as recent land exchanges in the region that may have cumulative effects on relevant items such as property taxes (human environment). Additionally, projects focused in the Red Rocks RD on the Coconino National Forest were also included in the cumulative effects analysis. The City of Show Low *General Plan* (City of Show Low 2007) was also reviewed for potential regional projects that may result in cumulative effects.

National Forests Activity	Type	Status	Ranger District
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests			
Lakeside District Office Conveyance EA – Analyze NF land at the Lakeside Ranger Station for sale under the FS Facility Realignment and Enhancement Act (FSFREA, PL109-54). This also involves analyzing the location of a new ranger station. Two decisions.	Facility Management Land Ownership Management	Foreseeable Implementation Dec. 2012	Lakeside RD
Second Knoll Shooting Range EA – Analyze and develop an 80-acre shooting range including an existing access road. A special use permit will be issued to Arizona Game and Fish Department. AGFD will partner with White Mountain Shooters Association for the long-term operation and maintenance.	Special Use Management	Foreseeable Implementation Dec. 2012	Lakeside RD
Timber Mesa - Vernon WUI EA – Analysis of 39,000 acres of NF lands east of the City of Show Low and north of Pinetop-Lakeside for vegetation thinning and fuel reduction. Project borders 20–25 miles of private lands. This includes the Woolhouse Wildlife Habitat Area.	Fuels Management	Foreseeable Implementation Sept. 2012	Lakeside RD
Woodland Lake Park Tract Town site Act Purchase EA – A town of Pinetop-Lakeside proposal for the phased purchase of 583 acres of Federal lands administered by the ASNFs.	Land Ownership Management	Foreseeable Implementation March 2013	Lakeside RD
(NWTF) Riparian restoration project (multiple sites) CE – Six sites across the Alpine RD would be protected to allow recovery of riparian vegetation. Historic spring boxes would be protected or modified at a seventh site. Project would enhance wildlife habitat on about 100 acres.	Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants	NA	Alpine RD
Pueblo Park Mineral Materials Pit EA – Develop new mineral pit to provide materials for road improvements in Greenlee County.	Road Management Minerals and Geology	Foreseeable Implementation April 2012	Alpine RD
Camp Tatiyee Land Exchange EIS – Exchange of private parcels in the Apache-Sitgreaves, Coronado, Prescott and Tonto national forests for Federal lands in Pinetop-Lakeside. Would provide land for children’s camp currently under special use permit and result in consolidation of isolated parcels on the forest.	Land Acquisition	Foreseeable Implementation March 2013	Lakeside RD

Appendix B. Cumulative Effects

National Forests Activity	Type	Status	Ranger District
Wildfire History – Sunflower Fire (2005) 385 ac., KP Fire (2004) 16,092 ac., KP Fire (2003) 10 ac., KP Fire (2001) 17 ac., Thomas Fire (2003) 10,644 ac., Steeple Fire (2003) 6,009 ac.	Unplanned Ignitions	Past	Forestwide
Timber Harvest	Tree Removal	Past	Forestwide
City of Show Low General Plan 2007 – According to the “City of Show Low General Plan,” current zoning has allotted approximately 5,500–6,500 acres of land for residential zoning.	Future Residential Zoning	Foreseeable Implementation 2007-2017	City of Show Low
Coconino National Forest			
Cave Springs Bank Stabilization CE – Stabilize the banks of Oak Creek along Cave Springs Campground. Project would involve stabilizing a collapsing bank and possibly restoring a more natural central channel to the creek by filling in two constricted side channels and opening the middle.	Watershed Management	Foreseeable Implementation September 2014	Red Rocks RD
Verde Valley Trail Planning – Establish a system of motorized and nonmotorized use trails in the area around Rim Rock, Montezuma, and McGuireville to provide a system of sustainable trails.	Watershed and Recreation Management	Foreseeable Implementation February 2013	Red Rocks RD
Cornville Nonmotorized Trail System CE – Proposal to construct nonmotorized trail connections between Cornville Road and the Verde River and SR89A and Oak Creek in the Cornville area.	Recreation Management	Foreseeable Implementation May 2013	Red Rocks RD

Appendix C. Draft Environmental Impact Statement Comment and Response Summary

Overview

This appendix presents a summary of comments received on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) and the Forest Service response to these comments. The public comment period began on November 3, 2012 and ended on December 17, 2012. Twenty-five letters were received from federal, state, and local agencies; private organizations; and the general public during the Draft Environmental Impact Statement review, from which a total of 71 distinct comments were identified (Table 1). In accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act, all comments received were reviewed and evaluated in the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

Table C1. Comment Letters Received

No.	Date	First Name	Organization
1	11/2/2012	Nick Lund	TRACKS
2	11/6/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
3	11/7/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
4	11/7/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
5	11/7/2012	Thomas Cedarblade	<i>individual</i>
6	11/6/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
7	11/8/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
8	11/8/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
9	11/9/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
10	11/12/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
11	11/1/2012	Conrad Loney	<i>individual</i>
12	<i>n/a</i>	Lee Podhajsky	<i>individual</i>
13	11/12/2012	Kim & Ron Schmidt	<i>individual</i>
14	12/30/2012	Ed Muder	City of Show Low
15	11/14/2012	Karen & Gene Berg	<i>individual</i>
16	11/5/2012	Dea Podhajsky	<i>individual</i>
17	12/4/2012	Dave Gallinger	<i>individual</i>
18	12/6/2012	Steve Adams	<i>individual</i>
19	12/7/2012	David Dorum	Arizona Game and Fish Department
20	12/13/2012	David Kwali	Yavapai-Apache Nation, Chairman
21	12/12/2012	Zola M. Hamm	<i>individual</i>
22	12/11/2012	Tony Potucek	<i>individual</i>
23	12/17/2012	Patricia Sanderson Port	Department of Interior, Office of the Secretary, Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance, Pacific Southwest Region
24	12/14/2012	Janine Blaeloch	Western Lands Project
25	12/11/2012	Kathleen Martyn Goforth	Environmental Review Office, EPA

Comment and Response Process

All correspondence received during the public comment period containing comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement were categorized, indexed, and recorded in a Draft

Environmental Impact Statement Comment and Response Matrix. Correspondence addressing more than one topic was sub-indexed by comment. For example, one correspondence, indexed chronologically as #17, could have four categorized comments covering Alternatives, Land Use, Socioeconomics, and Recreation and Public Access indexed as 17.1, 17.2, 17.3, and 17.4 respectively. Within this appendix, comments broken out by topic are referenced by the correspondence number and comment number, e.g., “Correspondence #17, Comment #1.” This appendix is a summary document of the comment and response matrix, which is available as part of the project record and contains the full text of all correspondence.

A response has been provided for all relevant comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement received during the public comment period. Comments that were not substantive (e.g., declarative statements of agreement or disagreement with the proposed action) or that regarded issues outside of the scope of this project were reviewed and noted but did not warrant further agency response. Thus, not all 71 comments received have a formal response in this document. When applicable, multiple comments on the same topic (e.g. property values, recreation along the Buena Vista Trail) were grouped and received a single Forest Service response.

The following comments are grouped by overall topic as analyzed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. Forest Service responses to comments appear directly after the written comment(s). As previously mentioned, all original correspondence items that include all substantive and non-substantive comments are available in the comment response matrix as part of the project record

Contents

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Recreation and Public Access.....	C-4
Socioeconomics	C-8
Purpose and Need.....	C-11
Plants, Fish, and Wildlife.....	C-13
Wetlands and Grazing.....	C-17
Water Quality, Rights, and Claims	C-18
Visual Quality and Soundscapes	C-19
Roads	C-19
Alternatives.....	C-21
Administrative Impacts	C-31
Forest Service Policy	C-32.

Land Use

Comment(s):

NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE OVERSTATES THE PROBABILITY FOR DEVELOPMENT OF THE NON-FEDERAL PARCELS

The Draft EIS says (p. 36) that the "most reasonable and foreseeable uses" of the non-federal parcels is that the Alder Peak Parcel would likely be developed a remote ranch or cabin site; the Cherry Parcels would be developed as rural residential lots; the Juan Miller Parcel would likely be developed as five rural residential lots; the Sierra Blanca Ranch Parcel has a range of possibilities from a single family residence with outbuildings, an ecotourism B&B, and/or a ranch with up to 36 horses, barns and corrals; the Soda Springs Ranch Parcel would have 41 rural residential lots; Sponseller Ranch would have 42 rural residential lots; and the Sprucedale Parcel would also be developed as a rural residential parcel with a total of 13 lots.

It is highly unlikely that these parcels will be developed as described anytime in the foreseeable future.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #10, Comment #1]

Forest Service Response:

The Final Environmental Impact Statement discloses the effects of the Proposed Action and recognizes the very high wildlife habitat values associated with the non-Federal parcels (see pages 6-8). In addition, the Final Environmental Impact Statement discloses that if the exchange occurs, the possibility of development of the Non-federal parcels and associated impacts on wildlife and their habitats would be precluded (see pages 57-76). Though the possibility of development may be remote currently, it would not be precluded if the non-federal parcels were to remain under private ownership under the no-action alternative. Economic conditions can change rapidly and development may be more likely in the future.

Comment(s):

In summary, adding additional land for development and eliminating desirable recreational land could severely impact residents of Show Low/Navajo County and eliminate many of the reasons residents have chosen to live here. It sets a bad precedent that will negatively impact current and future land transactions when valuable Federal open space could conceivably be converted to other uses at the whim of a developer with no clear benefit to the trustees of these public lands.

—Steve Adams, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #18, Comment # 4]

Forest Service Response:

As discussed throughout the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the proposed land-for-land exchange would result in Federal acquisition of 1,558 acres of land and conveyance of 1,028 acres of land, a net gain of 530 acres (see pages 2-5). The Non-federal lands included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats, such as critical species habitat and perennial waters that greatly exceed the wildlife and habitat value of the Federal lands proposed for exchange.

Comment(s):

Issue 3: Land Values/Use/Character. The response is insufficient and unrealistic in proposing that the parcel [Show Low South parcel] will likely remain vacant until the general oversupply of available housing is overcome. This is no assurance or guarantee that the developer will not move ahead with a new housing development. Costs associated with holding such property (taxes and other costs related to the City of Show Low) preclude the developer from allowing the land to sit idle for years.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comment #10]

Forest Service Response:

The Show Low South Parcel has been annexed by the City of Show Low and included within the city's *General Plan*. The *General Plan* presumes that the exchanged property will be developed as Master Planned Communities, typically accomplished through a Planned Unit Development although it could also be undertaken through traditional zoning. The high initial cost of infrastructure, which must be paid by the developer, tends to delay development until there is sufficient market demand for new products. Refer to the Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 31-37 and project record item dated March 18, 2013 for an explanation of City of Show Low development process.

Recreation and Public Access

Comment(s):

Adjoining land owners and visitors alike enjoy access to recreational benefits of this contiguous undeveloped Federal land. There is no benefit to Show Low/Navajo County residents that would result from this land exchange as the land being exchanged is non-Federal land in Apache County. Keeping the land of Show Low South undeveloped, particularly at this current time, is important to reestablishing Show Low as a desirable community and will aid in stabilizing property values.

—Steve Adams, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence# 18, Comment #3]

Forest Service Response:

This exchange is on a broader scale in the public interest, as 1,558 acres of private parcels would be transferred to federal ownership, many including valuable wildlife habitat (see pages 2-8).

The comment in the comment letter that “the land being exchanged is non-Federal land in Apache County” is in error. The following acreages and percentages of Non-Federal lands by County in the exchange are as follows: Apache County (Sierra Blanca parcel), 156 acres, 10%; Coconino County (Leonard Canyon parcel), 640 acres, 41%; Greenlee County (Alder Peak, Juan Miller, & Sprucedale parcels), 350 acres, 22%; Navajo County (Sponseller Ranch & Railroad parcels), 140 acres, 9%; and Yavapai County (Soda Springs & Cherry parcels), 274 acres, 18%.

Comment(s):

TRAILS/ACCESS/RECREATION IS INADEQUATE/INCOMPLETE. Issue 1 (EIS p. 15) raises the concern that the "land exchange would remove access to Buena Vista Trail #637."

The response states that the "Proposed Action Alternative would relocate the Buena Vista Trailhead and a segment of Trail #637 to be realigned on Forest Service lands to the south of the existing route." The response fails to address a number of important issues. First, the existing trailhead provides parking for horse trailers and the existing trail accommodates equestrian, hiker and mountain bike users. Will all those users be accommodated for the re-located trail? Next, whose responsibility is it to develop the new trail? SLL should bear all costs associated with the relocation of the trail. In addition, the new trail should be available for public use prior to the legal transfer of the exchanged parcels in order to avoid a loss of public access or a failure to follow through on implementing the Proposed Action Alternative. The EIS fails to address these concerns in any detail.

Further, the EIS (p. 23) states that "following the exchange, the project proponent would formally grant responsibility for the Buena Vista Trail to the City of Show Low for incorporation into the Community Public Urban Trail System..." Is the responsibility for developing the trail being delegated, or is a completed trail being added to a list of established trails? Is the developer proposing to administer Forest Service lands, or is the Forest Service developing the new trail and trailhead? Have funds been allocated? Is the Proposed Action Alternative the equivalent of "vaporware"?

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #7]

As a resident of the Show Low area I am concerned the proposed Show Low South Land Exchange would have a severely negative impact on the recreational opportunities of residents as well as visitors. The proposed Show Low South area as proposed (Section 31 and 32 of T10N, R22E) should be excluded from the proposed land exchange in order to preserve the mountain biking, hiking, camping, and other recreational opportunities of that area. Additionally, I do not think we need more land development at this time in our area. There are plenty of subdivisions that currently sit practically empty of homes. What we need to do is protect the valuable resources we have. Many outdoor enthusiasts visit Show Low to experience the area included in the land exchange, including the Buena Vista Trail which would be greatly impacted by the exchange. Please stop or take no action on the Show Low South Land Exchange, the future of Show Low depends on it.

—Conrad Loney, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #11]

I recently learned of the Show Low South Land Exchange Project. I hiked parts or all of the Buena Vista trail two or three times a week last summer. Judging by the number of cars at the trailhead, it is a very popular hike. I have hiked many of the other TRACKS trails and I understand why the Buena Vista is popular. None of the other trails offer as many sweeping views of the valley as there are on this trail. When I stopped at the vistas I imagined having a house with these great views but I quickly realized that the beauty should be available for all not just a select few.

I have encountered horsemen, bicyclists and many hikers using the trail. One of the local resorts had organized a hike of the Buena Vista and over 25 people participated. It would be a shame to deprive the public of the opportunity to use this area.

—Lee Podhajsky, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #12, Comment #1]

This is an area that has not been destroyed by fire like so much of the White Mountains has in the past 10 years. Most people hike the areas of the White Mountains which hasn't been destroyed by fire. That is why having the Buena Vista trail remain is so important, it offers beautiful views and great hiking terrain and TALL pine trees!

—Kim & Ron Schmidt, Goodyear, Arizona [Correspondence #13, Comment #3]

But my issue is the accessibility of the land for the use of the public. People are drawn to the Show Low area for its mountains and forests. The area which is being considered for exchange is part of a trail system which provides opportunity for people of all ages and income levels to enjoy the forest. It is through interaction with nature that people learn to value it and to respect the Earth. Thoreau wrote, "Every creature is better alive than dead, men, moose and pine tree and he who understands it aright, will rather preserve its life than destroy it." The parcel of NFS land near Show Low because of its accessibility is nature's classroom and should be retained.

—Dea Podhajsky, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #16, Comment #2]

My home is located in the Cedar Ridge Development adjacent to the Apache Sitgreaves National Forest. I would like to go on record in opposition of the Show Low Land Exchange which has been proposed and the EIS is now under review. My reasons are: The BLM land has trails which we walk and enjoy nature at its fullest in the beautiful forest (a plus for locating here).

—Zola M. Hamm, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #21, Comment #1]

Comments on issues in DEIS related to the Show Low South Land Exchange Parcel: Chapter 1. Purpose and Need for Action. Issue 1: Buena Vista Trail access. The response is insufficient and does not address specifically where the new Buena Vista Trailhead will be located. It does not mention accommodations for parking, horse trailers or handicapped, either. It is estimated that 40% of the nine-mile Buena Vista trail will be eliminated if this proposed exchange passes, which was not pointed out in the DEIS...

Issue 4: Wildlife Use and Migration Routes. The proposed action is misleading. The statement, "ASNFs lands would be located immediate adjacent to the west and south of the Show Low South Parcel leads the reader to believe that a sufficient amount of NFS land is south of the proposed exchange land. In fact, the proposed Federal Exchange sections 31 and 32 are well within one mile of the Mogollon Rim and as close as 0.6 mile! Below the Mogollon Rim is totally undeveloped White Mountain Apache Reservation, which is not legally accessible to the general public. Therefore, not only is the general public losing major recreating capability on this portion of the Mogollon Rim, but the wildlife use and migration routes will be drastically changed and rerouted off from public lands and may negatively impact reservation land.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comments #8, #11]

Forest Service Response:

Approximately 3 miles of the existing 9-mile-long Buena Vista Trail is on the Show Low South Federal exchange parcel. The existing trailhead and parking near US 60 will not be impacted by the exchange because it is over one mile from the nearest edge of the trade parcel; therefore all existing trail users would continue to be accommodated. Refer to Final Environmental Impact

Statement pages 45-47 for additional discussion on impacts to recreation and public access and pages 57-76 for additional discussion on impacts to wildlife.

The Forest Service partners with TRACKS, a non-profit organization specializing in non-motorized trails on the Lakeside Ranger District. TRACKS identified an acceptable re-route to move the portion of the trail from the exchange parcel to National Forest System lands that are not part of the exchange. The proposed re-route will maintain the approximate length and difficulty of the existing trail. The exchange proponent has agreed to support part of the cost to relocate the trail. This will occur after the exchange agreement has been signed but before development plans are finalized. In addition, the Forest Service, TRACKS, and the exchange proponent have agreed to design and develop a second trailhead. Figure 11 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement presents an accurate location of the proposed second trailhead, which would be far enough west to avoid proximity to private land owners and to take advantage of gentler terrain. A field meeting was held with the proponent's representative, the City of Show Low, TRACKS, and the Forest Service at which time the location was decided upon. Final design is still very dependent on the transportation study and plan to be developed as part of the City of Show Low development process and the trailhead would likely not be built for several years. A separate environmental analysis for this action would be completed. Refer to Figure 11 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement to view a map of the Buena Vista Trail, existing Trailhead #1, proposed trail re-route, and proposed Trailhead #2. Also refer to project record item dated 10/29/2007 for Buena Vista Trail background discussions and project record item email dated 6/21/2010 for trail commitments.

The Forest Service remains responsible for re-routing the Buena Vista Trail and future approved connections from adjacent developments. The City of Show Low and the developer would negotiate the long-term responsibility for trails located on private lands and approved during the city development processes.

Socioeconomics

Comment(s)

We also ask that the Forest Service describe in the FEIS the potential for the proposed action, particularly the planned expansion of the Show Low wastewater treatment facility to induce growth.

—Kathleen Martyn Goforth, EPA [Correspondence #25, Comment #4]

Forest Service Response:

The expansion of the Show Low wastewater treatment facility, though adding capacity to the city's wastewater treatment capabilities, would not serve as a major driver of development in Show Low. Other broader economic trends would be much more likely to induce growth. The Arizona Department of Environmental Quality requires communities to invest in advanced treatment technologies as the population increases and the rate base allows for costs to be absorbed by the higher population. It is not intended to induce growth but rather respond to expected growth in a more environmentally responsible way. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 48-55 for additional discussion.

Comment(s):

LAND VALUES/USE/CHARACTER IS INADEQUATE - Issue 3 (EIS p. 19) "raised the concern that additional development within the community of Show Low would add to the oversupply of available housing and may affect land values. The land exchange would also reduce forest access and existing recreational opportunities that give Show Low its distinctive mountain forest community character."

The response states that the land "would likely remain vacant until development would be a profitable enterprise. Development on the Show Low South Parcel would not take place until the demand exists for new residences. When development becomes economically feasible ... (it) is not expected to negatively affect land values..."

First, this response is a speculation, that, if correct, would eliminate from possibility the significant downturn in land values we have witnessed since 2008 when the exchange was proposed. Would not the expectation that developers always act in a self-regulating manner for economic betterment equally apply to the neighboring developments now sitting idle, lots for sale and not a single home under construction? Their existence is clearly evidence to the contrary. It is unreasonable to expect a developer to postpone development while paying property taxes and other expenses for the length of time (over 10 years) for the inventory of approved plats in the City of Show Low to be developed. Supply and demand will cause the additional inventory to further drive down prices and disadvantage other developers with projects currently in work. The only way that the new development could be successful is if the land is a "give away" so that SLL has an unfair competitive advantage.

Second, when public lands are given up, the loss is permanent. Why trade well used public lands for an unneeded housing development that will likely fail?

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #3]

This letter is in response to the 948 acre parcel of the South Land Exchange.

My husband and I recently purchased the last lot available backing up to the (ASNF) Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, in the Cedar Ridge Subdivision, Lot 25, 2860 Garretts Way, ShowLow. Since this lot backs the ASNF the lot premium of course was higher and we were more than willing to pay for the privacy and tranquility it offers. There are currently (13) lots on Garretts Way that have homes already built on them.

Given the economy and the fact that homes and lots are readily available in this area we see no need for any further destruction of trees and relocation of wildlife that live in this area. There are plenty of lots in the surrounding ShowLow area that have available homesites that have been sitting for 3 or more years empty! A good example of this is the Bison development that has roads and utilities in place and lots with tall pines that have been sitting empty. Not to mention a lovely clubhouse that opened then closed and the pool was never completed.

I do understand the (USFS) United States Forest Service consolidation of federal land ownership patterns but I feel the 948 acre parcel has absolutely nothing to gain by being turned over to private ownership.

—Kim & Ron Schmidt, Goodyear, Arizona [Correspondence #13, Comment #1]

Many property owners with proximity to this NFS land built/purchased their residences, thus contributing to the local Showlow economy and growth, specifically because of the chance to border NFS property my wife and I included. We left the Pinetop area to get our NFS bordering lot, at VERY significant cost, to "back up" to the wildlife habitat, the serenity, and the opportunity to take immediate advantage of hiking and the plethora of wonders of the NFS land. We chose Cedar Ridge, approximately 5 years ago, for multiple reasons, but in large part tied to the NFS land on the west side of the subdivision, where that wildlife habitat is so present/obvious, and even in considering that specific land's seemingly unlikely/inconvenient location for future development.

—Karen & Gene Berg, Queen Creek, Arizona [Correspondence #15, Comment #3]

I am also concerned about the possible severe negative impact to property values in Show Low/Navajo County adjoining the current land [Federal Show Low South Parcel]. Local residents property values benefit from this undeveloped land.

—Steve Adams, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #18, Comment #2]

I strongly feel that exchanging this land [Federal Show Low South Parcel] behind me for another development would further affect the value of my home. With the downturn of homes being built in Show Low and the economy showing absolutely no sign of improvement, I am sincerely asking you to NOT make this land swap. We don't need another undeveloped subdivision at our back door. Thank you for considering my comments.

—Zola M. Hamm, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #21, Comment #4]

Forest Service Response:

The Forest Service reviewed the history of land adjustments within the incorporated limits of the City of Show Low and incorporate these findings into the Final Environmental Impact Statement (see pages 51-52). Refer to project record item dated 3/17/13 for a map of City of Show Low annexation history.

Since Show Low incorporated in 1953, an estimated 6,005 acres have transferred from the Federal estate to the city. Of that total, an estimated 5,953 acres or 99.1% were transferred by land exchanges. Refer to project record item dated 3/17/13 for a review of Forest Service land adjustments near Show Low over time.

While property values have declined across the nation due to general economic conditions, there is no evidence that past land exchanges have negatively impacted property values. See pages 51-55 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for further discussion on property values.

The Forest Service notes that at the time of initial sale of lots within the Sierra Pines development, a disclosure was made within the purchase contracts that the adjacent National Forest System lands were subject to exchange into private ownership. (Refer to project record item dated 1/31/2005).

Though there would be reduced Forest access immediately near Show Low as the two Federal parcels are transferred to private ownership, overall the proposed exchange would result in increased Forest access as the nine non-Federal parcels come into public ownership.

Comment(s)

The fact that we could, based on past history and current platted lots, add close to 10,000 people to the local area without using Show Low Bluffs additional "Master Planned Lots" or 20 + years of additional growth, again based on past history makes me question the exchange.

Finally, the additional long term costs to the City based on the exchange area, is also, unreasonable.

Thomas Cedarblade, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #5, Comment #4]

Forest Service Response:

Costs of infrastructure in new developments are borne by the developer. Though there may be some costs to the City of Show Low associated with a proposed development on the exchanged parcel, such as administrative tasks, the broader tax base and economic influx of new residents would in the long term benefit the city. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 31-32 and project record item dated 3/18/2013 for an explanation of the City of Show Low development process.

Purpose and Need

Comment(s)

My issue is what is to be gained by expanding the borders of the city further into the coveted Apache Sitgreaves National Forest. Not only do we diminish the existing quality of the area by either removing altogether or relocating the existing trail system but also further reducing our accessibility to the reason for being here, the beautiful forest.

—Thomas Cedarblade, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #5, Comment #3]

There are many vacant developments in the Show Low, Lakeside and Pinetop area, this land is not needed for development. In conclusion I strongly recommend that the Show Low South Land Exchange NOT take place.

—Lee Podhajsky, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #12, Comment #3]

The general Showlow area is already highly developed in multiple areas, but NOT "built out" with actual homes. One only needs to look at all the empty lots, largely empty developments or abandoned developments throughout to see, in the economy we currently live in, it will be many, many years before more development is necessary in the Showlow/Lakeside/Pinetop area. With a real estate professional in our household with local knowledge, the situation is easily documented.

—Karen & Gene Berg, Queen Creek, Arizona [Correspondence #15, Comment#2]

There are already two undeveloped subdivisions (infrastructure in but NO (zero) homes built within a two mile radius from my home (developers both filed bankruptcy and walked away).

—Zola M. Hamm, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #21, Comment #2]

Forest Service Response:

The purpose of the Proposed Action is to meet the following Forest Service objectives:

- Acquisition of the Non-Federal lands within existing National Forest boundaries that contain critical habitat for federally listed species and aquatic and riparian habitats.
- The elimination of 20 miles of landline and 22 controlling corners between National Forest and private lands.
- Acquisition of private lands within existing National Forest boundaries that would contribute to the blocking up of public land ownership, reduce the likelihood of trespass on, or damage to NFS lands, and facilitate fire and resource management.

The proposal to exchange lands in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Coconino National Forest, and Prescott National Forest responds to the Forest Service's need for consolidation of Federal land ownership patterns and the need to enhance management of the public's natural resources. There is a need to acquire lands that 1) protect habitat of several threatened, endangered, and sensitive species; 2) facilitate public access to Federal lands; 3) improve wetlands, floodplains, and riparian areas; 4) decrease the complexity of maintaining property boundaries; and 5) improve the efficiency of resource management by focusing the Forest Service's funding and staff on consolidated ownerships. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 2-9 for additional discussion.

The Federal lands in the exchange are located in Management Areas (MAs) 1 and 2 of the Apache-Sitgreaves Land Management Plan. The management direction for these areas states lands offered by the United States are needed to meet the needs of expanding communities, would provide for consolidation of public lands, improved management or benefit of specific resources, and meet overriding public needs. The intent of including this statement in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement was to disclose that the proposed exchange meets the requirements of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests Plan. By including the statement, the Forest Service did not identify a need for expansion of the community of Show Low.

However, the National Forest parcel south of Show Low is within a portion of National Forest System lands annexed by the City of Show Low on December 24, 1982. Refer to project record item dated December 4, 1982 for City of Show Low Ordinance #165 and project record item dated 3/17/13 for a map of city annexation history. It is further identified in the city of Show Low *General Plan* for future residential development.

Plants Fish and Wildlife

Comment(s)

On my hikes last summer, I came across a bear taking a nap in the sun. I had the surprise of my life in the fall when an elk bugled not more than 100 yards from me. I can't help but wonder what will happen to the creatures that a housing development displaces.

—Lee Podhajsky, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #12, Comment #2]

Forest Service Response:

Adverse impacts to plants, fish and wildlife would be mitigated. See Chapter 3 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement on pages 57-76.

Comment(s)

When reading the (DEIS) Draft Environmental Impact Statement there was an extensive study of threatened and endangered species of birds and mammals on the "island" private properties the USFS is trying to acquire but nothing about the Black Bear, Elk and Deer that live on this 948 acre parcel. Granted these animals are not endangered but they live there and would be affected by development.

We lost 550,000 acres last year in the Wallow fire. This was some of the most beautiful area in Arizona and loosing 948 acres to unnecessary development is just as bad as the devastation that fire caused by 2 young men that were careless!

—Kim & Ron Schmidt, Goodyear, Arizona [Correspondence #13, Comment #4]

Forest Service Response:

Understanding that a significant amount of habitat for large mammals was modified in response to the 2011 Wallow Fire, Forest-wide population trends are listed as stable for large ‘game’ animals, including black bear, elk, and mule deer (refer to June 2012 Arizona Game and Fish Department *Assessment of Management Indicator Species, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests from 2005 to 2011* [project record 127]). It is anticipated that the proposed action would not affect local populations of these animals. Abundant similar ponderosa pine habitat surrounds the proposed Show Low South parcel and is very common along the entire Mogollon Rim and in the White Mountains. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 57-76 for additional discussion.

Refer to Chapter 1, The Wallow Fire, on page 1 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for a summary of the fire and impacts on two of the nine Non-Federal parcels (Sierra Blanca and Sprucedale) and one Federal parcel (Sierra Blanca Adjustment Parcel). There are no major long-term adverse impacts to any of the parcels in question.

Comment(s)

My wife and I own one of those properties in Cedar Ridge and wish to express our strong opposition to that exchange for the following key reasons. #1. Elk, fox, deer, bear and multiple bird species (to name just a few) readily inhabit that NFS area, which would be inevitably altered and animals displaced with private ownership/likely development. Is that not one of the key reasons we have NFS property ... to protect their habitat & ensure their proliferation?

—Karen & Gene Berg, Queen Creek, Arizona [Correspondence #15, Comment #1]

Forest Service Response:

Adverse impacts to plants, fish and wildlife will be mitigated. See pages 57-76 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement. As discussed throughout the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the proposed land-for-land exchange would result in Federal acquisition of 1,558 acres

of land and conveyance of 1,028 acres of land, a net gain of 530 acres. The Non-federal lands included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitat and perennial waters that greatly exceed the wildlife and habitat value of the Federal lands proposed for exchange

Comment(s)

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Show Low South Land Exchange (DEIS) dated October, 2012. The DEIS disclosed the effects of a proposal to exchange 1,028 acres of National Forest System (federal) lands in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (A-S) and Coconino National Forest (CNF) in exchange for 1,558 acres of lands currently held in private ownership within the A-S, CNF, and Prescott National Forest.

The Department previously provided comment to the A-S, expressing support for the land exchange in a scoping report response letter dated May 27, 2009. At that time, parcel specific comments were provided. We request that those comments be included here by reference.

The Department's support for the proposed land exchange was based on the assessment of the relative wildlife and wildlife recreational values of the federal lands identified for exchange versus the values of privately held parcels. Although the Department recognizes that the selected federal parcels currently provide wildlife habitat values for a variety of species, as well as recreational hunting opportunities, we believe that the offered private parcels provide much higher wildlife habitat values for an even wider variety of wildlife species, including several special status species, and that their wildlife recreational opportunities meet or exceed those of the selected federal parcels. In addition, the offered private parcels contain important perennial stream/river habitats with very high riparian and native species values.

In summary, the Department supports the proposed Show Low South Land Exchange based on the overall benefit to wildlife resources and wildlife recreational opportunities associated with the exchange. We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS and provide comments on the proposal relative to wildlife resource values.

—David Dorum, Arizona Game and Fish Department [Correspondence #19]

Forest Service Response:

The Non-federal lands included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitat and perennial waters that greatly exceed the wildlife and habitat value of the Federal lands proposed for exchange. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 2-8 for additional discussion.

Comment(s)

The Nation agrees with the DEIS that the conveyance of the 157 acre Soda Springs Ranch Parcel would assist in preventing development of this parcel that would otherwise threaten proposed and designated critical habitat, candidate and endangered species. In our traditional beliefs the water belongs to the animals as well. The Nation also believes that the proposed action could help to protect certain other plants holding medicinal and cultural value to the Yavapai-Apache Nation.

On the other hand, the Nation is concerned regarding development in the Rimrock/McGuireville area in general, as such development risks further damage to the ecosystem and habitat which produces important plants for medicinal and cultural use by the Nation's tribal members.

—David Kwali, Yavapai-Apache Nation [Correspondence #20, Comment #2]

Forest Service Response:

The Forest Service has no influence on development patterns in the Rimrock/McGuireville area. The 157-acre Soda Springs parcel in this area included as part of the exchange would remain undeveloped. The 8-acre federal Soda Springs parcel that would pass into private ownership could potentially be developed but overall potential development would be lessened considerably if the land exchange were to be implemented. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 32-45 for additional discussion.

Comment(s)

The Department of the Interior has received and reviewed the subject document and has the following comments to offer.

We support the Forest Service's Proposed Action. We agree that the foreseeable use, should the no action alternative be maintained, would result in the development of the area. This development would have detrimental impacts to proposed and designated critical habitat as well as endangered and candidate species.

—Patricia Sanderson Port, DOI [Correspondence #23, Comment #1]

Forest Service Response:

The Non-federal lands included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitat and perennial waters that greatly exceed the wildlife and habitat value of the Federal lands proposed for exchange. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 2-8 for additional discussion

Comment(s)

We recommend that the Forest Service provide additional information in the FEIS on the potential impacts, including potential effects on sensitive species, wetlands, and traffic, associated with development of the proposed wastewater treatment facility and residential development.

—Kathleen Martyn Goforth, EPA [Correspondence #25, Comment #3]

Forest Service Response:

The shape of the 70-acre parcel, approximately one-half mile long south to north, would provide the odor buffer as required by Arizona Department of Environmental Quality/Environmental Protection Agency standards. The new waste water treatment facility would be built near the north end of the parcel furthest from private land. The remainder of the parcel would remain

undeveloped except for a road accessing the treatment facility. Refer to project record item dated 9/13/2010 for background of the 70-acre parcel.

Show Low Creek would be maintained as open space through a deed restriction imposed on the property by the city of Show Low. This post-exchange restriction would thereby maintain any and all habitat for Forest Service sensitive species even under Non-Federal ownership. Refer to pages 56-75 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement.

There are currently no detailed plans to develop the Show Low South parcel that could further inform the transportation impact analysis. Additional studies assessing impacts to traffic would be part of the city of Show Low planning and development process as described on pages 31-32 (also refer to project record item dated 3/18/13). A traffic statement from a registered engineer addressing impact of new development on existing roads is required during the preliminary plat process. As with other projects, these planning - zoning and sub-division design and approval processes would be open to the public and concerned citizens could offer input at that time regarding traffic or any other concern.

Wetlands and Grazing

Comment(s)

This letter constitutes the brief comments of the Western Lands Project on the proposed Show Low South land exchange environmental assessment.

Western Lands Project is a non-profit, membership organization conducting research, outreach, and advocacy for responsible federal land exchange policy. We also scrutinize a broad range of projects that propose to sell, give away, or relinquish public control of public lands.

We commend the Forest Service for doing a thorough job of analyzing and disclosing the foreseeable developments that could occur on the non-federal lands were they to remain in private hands. Over the last 15 years, our organization uniformly asked the Forest Service (nationwide) to include that information so that the public could better understand whether lands to be acquired were truly likely to be developed or exploited, and understand whether acquisition really was critical. There have been cases where the private proponent simply bought up scattered inholdings that had no development potential and used them as trade stock.

Finally, in recent years, this is becoming a central part of the land exchange analysis. We appreciate this change.

Based on the surrounding ownership patterns, environmental characteristics, and other attributes of the federal and non-federal land, this exchange does not appear to be counter to the public interest.

However, there is one issue that concerns us. Given that several of the parcels that would be brought into federal ownership contain wetlands, the Final Environmental Impact Statement should specify on which if any of the parcels livestock grazing would be permitted, and include a proposal for fencing or other means of protecting these areas from damage. We suggest that livestock grazing should be eliminated altogether on the parcels. The draft EIS states that these issues will be dealt with in the future through the permitting process for the grazing allotments, however, we strongly urge you to bring this issue into the land exchange action. To ensure that the

trade benefits the public by bringing these sensitive areas into public ownership, there should be an upfront plan to protect them. We look forward to seeing this in the final document.

—Janine Blaeloch, Western Lands Project [Correspondence #24]

Forest Service Response:

The private inholdings that are to be transferred into Federal ownership and are within an existing grazing allotment are typically, but not automatically, incorporated into the allotment. Additional analysis would be required, per *Forest Service Manual 1950: Environmental Policy and Procedures*, as to whether the inholdings would become part of the adjacent allotment. This analysis would address resource management goals for the newly acquired lands, and would consider grazing, no grazing, exclosures surrounding riparian habitat, and other management actions. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 77-78 for additional discussion.

Water Quality, Rights, and Claims

Comment(s)

Further, development of the Rimrock/McGuireville area threatens the flows of Beaver Creek and the water levels of Montezuma Well where new wells are installed to support development. Montezuma Well is a religious place of profound significance for members of the Yavapai-Apache Nation and its health and vitality is extremely important to our Nation. Therefore, to the extent the Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel is added to other fee-owned lands of the Soda Springs Ranch to support larger scale development that would impact these resources, the Nation would be opposed to such action.

—David Kwali, Yavapai-Apache Nation [Correspondence #20, Comment #3]

Forest Service Response

The Soda Springs parcels (157 acres of Non-Federal and eight acres of Federal lands) were assembled as part of a package. The acquisition of the 157 acres required the transfer of eight acres. Without the eight acres, the acquisition of the 157 acres would not be possible. Development on the acquired 157 acres would be precluded under Forest Service management, though development could occur on the exchanged 8-acre adjustment parcel. Overall under the proposed exchange, most of the acreage of the Soda Springs Ranch would not be available for development as compared to the existing condition where the entire parcel is available for development. Though there may be impacts to the monument's viewshed and soundscape if development were to occur, currently this is speculation, and compared to potential development on another 157 acres effects would be considerably less if the proposed exchange were to be implemented. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 85-88 for additional discussion.

Visual Quality and Soundscapes

Comment(s)

Furthermore, development of this area would have adverse effect on the surrounding viewshed and soundscape at Montezuma Well.

—Patricia Sanderson Port, Department of Interior [Correspondence #23, Comment #2]

Development of the 8 acre Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel is of concern. Additional residential development throughout the privately held Soda Springs parcel would potentially impact the Monument's viewshed and natural soundscape.

—Patricia Sanderson Port, Department of Interior [Correspondence #23, Comment #4]

Forest Service Response:

The Soda Springs parcels (157 acres of Non-Federal and eight acres of Federal lands) were assembled as part of a package. The acquisition of the 157 acres required the transfer of eight acres. Without the eight acres, the acquisition of the 157 acres would not be possible. Development on the acquired 157 acres would be precluded under Forest Service management, though development could occur on the exchanged 8-acre adjustment parcel. Overall under the proposed exchange, most of the acreage of the Soda Springs Ranch would not be available for development as compared to the existing condition where the entire parcel is available for development. Though there may be impacts to the monument's viewshed and soundscape if development were to occur, currently this is speculation, and compared to potential development on another 157 acres effects would be considerably less if the proposed exchange were to be implemented.

Roads

Comment(s)

ANALYSIS OF TRAFFIC IMPACT IS LACKING - Issue 2 (EIS p. 15) raises the concern that the "land exchange would reroute additional traffic through Sierra Pines neighborhood."

The response states that "the Sierra Pines neighborhood would experience increased traffic ..., however since the direction of the resulting traffic is not known, it is not possible to predict the precise impact." The response adds that "multiple entrances ... would be constructed" and provides a unit of measure as the "number of entrances (4) into the Show Low South Parcel, as guided by City of Show Low building codes and regulations."

The response dismisses any actual analysis of traffic impacts "since the direction of the resulting traffic is not known." It would indeed be unusual for residents to enter the development and never leave it. Would not traffic be increased in both directions on any existing roads servicing the proposed development? An actual analysis should be performed to address the public concern raised by increased traffic, and a quantified estimate of change in traffic density on existing roads should be provided.

Additionally, the EIS (p. 85) appears to provide contradictory information: "Residents living within the Show Low South Parcel would access their residences through a minimum of two proposed entrances." What will the number of entrances into the proposed development be? The map of the Show Low South Parcel (EIS p. 34) should be revised to show the existing developments bordering the parcel and the roads into the parcel. Lacking that information, it is very difficult to address the issue of increased traffic. Also, the neighborhoods other than Sierra Pines that are affected should be identified.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #8]

Forest Service Response:

The current proposed designs for development of the exchanged parcel are very preliminary and general, including only potential low density residential and mixed use zones and possible new entrances and roads. As plans for the parcel develop in the future, and if they include a subdivision or subdivisions, the city of Show Low planning and zoning department would work with the proponent in developing appropriate plans (see pages 31-32 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement and project record item dated 3/18/13). A traffic statement from a registered engineer addressing impact of new development on existing roads is required during the preliminary plat process. As with other projects, these planning - zoning and sub-division design and approval processes would be open to the public and concerned citizens could offer input at that time regarding traffic or any other concern

Comment(s)

Issue 2: Future Development of Lands Including Density and Type of Development. The response is insufficient in proposing multiple entrances into the development for the benefit of the Sierra Pines neighborhood. Other communities /neighborhoods like Cedar Ridge, The Pines, etc., will be impacted as well.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comment #9]

Forest Service Response:

See Figure 4 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement and discussion on pages 36-37, which presents reasonable and foreseeable use of the federal Show Low South parcel including early conceptual planned development.

Alternatives

Comment(s)

Comments on the DEIS Alternatives: The draft EIS is flawed in that all alternatives have not been considered and there is considerable speculation within it. Of substantial importance is the fact that nowhere in the draft EIS is a discussion or alternative made for the loss of a portion of the Mogollon Rim, a historic and well known feature separating the Colorado Plateau and the Basin and Range province in the south. The Mogollon Rim region is an impressive geologic, geographic and climatic divide reaching elevations of 2380 meters (7800 feet)(R. Scarborough, 1989, Cenozoic Erosion and Sedimentation in Arizona, in Geologic Evolution of Arizona, J.P. Jenney and S.J. Reynolds, eds., p 515). The northwest trend of the Rim is most likely a function of erosion produced by both the northwestward regional strike of the Paleozoic-age strata and the north-south and northwest orientations of faults south of the rim (ibid. p. 522). Well known and popular grand vistas with over 1500 feet of vertical relief dominate the geography along US highways 260, eventually reducing to a ridge several hundred feet in height going eastward. Near Pinetop, the eastern scarp of the Rim is buried by later geological recent volcanic flows which form the White Mountains. Any encroachment, loss and proposed development on the Mogollon Rim must be addressed and the lack of any discussion or alternative whatsoever by the USFS, who is charged with taking care of the American public lands and beauty, is very disturbing. While not

as impressive as natural wonders like the Grand Canyon, it is very well known and popular as a destination for the public and recreating on and around it is invaluable to local businesses located along the landmark. Nowhere on the Mogollon Rim are there any developments or homes except in the Pinetop area, where it is flattened by geologic forces. Any further development westward along the Mogollon Rim must be stopped and not allowed, period.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comment #12]

Forest Service Response

The proposal does not involve any part of the Mogollon Rim. The high forested plateau through the Show Low area is a gradual ridge that merely differentiates the drainage north into the Little Colorado River watershed and the drainage south into the Salt River watershed. The area lacks the vertical relief and grand vistas common to the Mogollon Rim in the Payson and Sedona areas to the west. The ridge varies from one-half mile to one mile south of the south boundary of the Federal parcel to be traded. Refer to the Show Low South parcel in appendix A and Figure 4, page 36, of the Final Environmental Impact Statement to view the topography of the area

Comment(s)

Similarly, what in the administrative record substantiates the options described in the draft EIS? Specifically, it now seems preposterous to project that clusters of semi-custom homes will be developed on outlying strips of railroad right-of-way when a whole development site of improved treed lots sits vacant across the street from Sierra Pines. The proposed highest and best uses of the private land to be exchanged for Forest Service land seems completely unrealistic, given current and foreseeable market conditions.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #17, Comment #2]

Forest Service Response

The Railroad parcels identified in this proposal consist of three separate parcels on the Sitgreaves National Forest east of Pinedale, Arizona. Refer to appendix A of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the detailed location. While it seems “preposterous” or “completely unrealistic” that homes would be developed on strips of railroad right-of-way, four owners of another railroad strip are planning to do just that. The strip is south of the southernmost parcel as shown in on the Railroads parcel map in appendix A and is between Forest Road 143 and the Brown (Hopper) Ranch. The owners were unwilling to sell the land to the exchange proponents because of their desire to develop it. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 31-45 for additional discussion. Also refer to project record item dated 10/29/2007, specifically the 10/4/2006 daily notes.

Comment(s)

LEGAL DESCRIPTION OF PARCELS IS INADEQUATE - Table 5 (EIS p. 19) and subsequent paragraphs give general descriptions, but not the legal descriptions that the Table's title calls for. The legal descriptions should include the Book, Map and Parcel Number for the Non-Federal lands. That would allow fuller public review of the proposal by enabling cross-checking of public records such as the Apache County records for the subject parcels.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #2]

Forest Service Response

Figure 1 on page 3 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement is a general location map of the Non-Federal and Federal parcels to be exchanged on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests. Figure 2 on page 4 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement is a general location map of the Non-Federal and Federal parcels to be exchanged on the Coconino and Prescott National Forests. Table 5 on page 21 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement presents the legal descriptions of Non-Federal lands to be conveyed to federal ownership. Appendix A of the Final Environmental Impact Statement has detailed maps and photographs of Non-Federal and Federal parcels involved in the exchange. Figure 1, Figure 2, Table 5, and appendix A provide adequate details of the parcel locations.

Comment(s)

Accordingly, the valuation of these properties is likely to be highly overestimated, along with the environmental impacts of the no action alternative. The EIS should add another alternative for analysis, that the Non-Federal parcels remain privately held, but with little or no development than their current state. This alternative is much more likely given current economic conditions. A valuation of the properties should also be done for this alternative and the environmental impacts should be re-assessed as well. The two no-action alternatives would be extensive new development (as currently drafted) and as-is usage. These two alternatives would bound the valuations and environmental impacts. A weighted analysis between the two alternatives, conducted on a parcel-by parcel basis and taking into account local economic conditions and outlooks could then be performed.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #10, Comment #2]

Under the listed No Action Alternative, the probability of non-Federal parcels is grossly proposed and exaggerated, considering the dismal state of the current 2012 real estate and property development situation. Most informed estimates predict that the economy is years away from a viable recovery of property values and further development of remote parcels, let alone community growth and development. This Alternative is flawed. Additionally, an alternative that the privately owned parcels remain as such is required.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comments # 14]

Forest Service Response

The Forest Service has already considered the alternative described, the no-action alternative, in which the non-Federal parcels would remain in private ownership. Given current economic conditions these parcels would likely remain undeveloped for several years. However, this alternative does not meet the Purpose and Need for the project and if the non-Federal parcels were to remain in private ownership the only way to preclude development would be to purchase conservation easements on these properties, an expensive proposition and with fewer benefits to the public than the proposed exchange.

A description of the valuation process was added to the Final Environmental Impact Statement on pages 19-20. Early in the land exchange process, values of lands to be acquired and lands to be

traded must be within 25%. However, the values must be equal when the exchange agreement is approved. The appraisal to determine final valuation must be reviewed by a FS Review Appraiser. It must be approved by the approving official at the same time as the Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision is approved. The appraised values are valid for 1 year or less. The values can be made equal by using the following measures: cash equalization, dropping land to be traded, dropping land to be acquired, or a combination of the above.

Comment(s)

PARCELS BEING EXCHANGED NOT OF EQUAL VALUE - After reviewing the Draft EIS for the Show Low South land exchange, I question whether the parcels being exchanged are of equal or near equal value. The maximum cash adjustment on an exchange is 25%, as I understand it. The formal offer for the exchange dates to January 25, 2008 after being initially proposed January 2004. The EIS states that "the proposed land exchange consists of 1,028 acres of Federal lands ... in exchange for 1,558 acres of Non-Federal lands..." (EIS p. 1) From the dates of the proposal to the current time, home and land values have fluctuated wildly, and not equally in different areas. For example, "during the last year, Apache County home values have fallen by 23.5%, while Show Low home values have fallen by 6.8%." (Zillow website 11/6/12) The 1,558 acres of Non-Federal lands are all or mostly in Apache County, while the 1,028 acres of Federal lands are all or mostly in the vicinity of Show Low in Navajo County.

The validity of any appraisal of value of the subject lands done around the time of the formal proposal in 2008 is highly questionable. In addition, "two of the nine Non-Federal parcels and one Federal parcel were burned by the Wallow Fire. (EIS p. 6) The fair market value of the affected parcels would be affected by the Wallow fire, also invalidating any appraisal done previously. It is absurd to say that "with no major long-term damage or negative impacts to any of the parcels in question, the land exchange will continue on its current trajectory without any additional analysis related to the wildfire." (EIS p. 6) In fact, this statement highlights a bias in the EIS to minimize or whitewash obvious impacts and get on with business as usual. The review process for the proposal should re-visit the valuation and if the variance in value between the traded lands exceeds 25%, then the proposed exchange should be cancelled

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #6]

I am writing in opposition to the proposed land exchange. The National Forest Service motto is Caring for Land and Serving People. Having read the information on the proposed land swap it is my belief that no action on the Show Low South Land Exchange Project is the course which will address both parts of that motto.

There are many issues related to the proposed exchange that are troubling. These include the legal definition, the inequality of land values between the parcels to be exchanged, the issue of over-development, and self-interest by the party wishing to exchange the land

—Dea Podhajsky, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #16, Comment #1]

Based on our conversation, there is currently an appraisal in process which will be done in about a month, after which you will respond to my FOIA request. After thinking about that for a bit, some additional thoughts and questions come to mine.

As I mentioned on the phone, I spoke to someone in the Albuquerque office in 2009 (as I recall) who was doing an appraisal. What happened to that appraisal? Was it ever finished? If not, how did the draft EIS come up with the acreages being considered for the Show Low South land exchange?

What in the administrative record documents the developer's willingness to consider a 150 yard buffer zone with existing neighborhoods? By the way, a willingness to "consider" a buffer zone seems too weak an approach; a deed restriction would protect the public interest much better. Otherwise, the developer could later put in a next "phase" of construction and say, "oh well, I considered a buffer zone."

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #17, Comment #1]

After reviewing the Draft EIS I feel it would be important to review, under the current economic conditions, the exchange value of the parcels relative to being of equal or near equal value. The initial proposal from 2008, initially proposed in Jan. 2004 does not reflect current time, home and land values and the exchange properties are from different areas.

—Steve Adams, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #18, Comment #1]

From reading the draft EIS, land values have fluctuated significantly in different areas you are considering in the land exchange. The value on homes in Apache County as fallen by 23.5% while Show Low homes have fallen by 6.8%. On your EIS most of the Non-Federal land is in Apache County and most of the Federal land is in Navajo County near Show Low. I believe your appraisal of value does NOT reflect these changes and this subject should be reviewed prior to issuing a decision on this project.

—Zola M. Hamm, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #21, Comment #3]

Net gain of acreage to the USFS is a moot point because the value of Federal lands containing Rim acreage most likely exceeds the value of non-Federal lands. Land value appraisals are obsolete and out of date (2008)—no recent (post-recession appraisals have been conducted by independent appraisers. As an example, Sierra Pine homeowners lost 40% of their land and home value and developments all around Show Low remain undeveloped, showing signs of blight and lack of care....

Fire damage has been downplayed in the draft EIS. The fact remains it IS a big deal and should not be dismissed as inconsequential and viewed as a positive by providing valuable nutrient cycling as it relates to soil amenities, etc. Two non-Federal parcels are in fact damaged by fire and are included in the trade (Sierra Blanca Ranch and Sprucedale) and these parcels need a new and current appraisal....

Working in communication with other respondents to this DEIS, it is noted that the Administrative Record is not readily available for review, nor are there any recent valuations of the proposed exchange properties. Complete review of the DEIS is incomplete without having the capability to obtain such information and threatens the very validity of the DEIS as a complete document.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comments #3, #7, #15]

Forest Service Response

The law requires that land values be equal or nearly equal on both sides of the exchange, as determined by an agency-approved appraisal. Cash equalization is permissible within set limits if values are slightly unequal. Appraisals are not part of the environmental analysis for a project. The purpose of an appraisal is to estimate the market value of the defined estate for the defined properties as of the date of value. Final values for this proposed exchange, if completed, will be disclosed in the Record of Decision.

The Forest Service has established its appraisal organization separate from the Line and other staff organizations within the agency. The purpose of this segregation is to assure that appraisals result in unbiased opinions of value. This minimizes any influence that Line or other staff officers could otherwise have in determining appraised values. More importantly, it alleviates any appearance of influence by those people who are directly involved with negotiating, processing, or approving transactions.

An agency staff appraiser or a private contract appraiser may prepare appraisals used in Federal transactions. Private contract appraisers may work under contract from the agency or the nonfederal party. In all cases, the appraiser(s) must demonstrate through education and work experience that they are qualified for the assignment. Appraisers' experience and expertise are matched with the assignment. Appraisers preparing reports for Forest Service land exchanges must be State Certified General appraisers, hold a current professional designation from a sponsor organization of the Appraisal Foundation (which requires education, experience, examination, and code of ethics), and have successful experience with providing approved narrative appraisal reports for Federal or State land management agencies within the past three years. The FS Review Appraiser assigned to the case (that must be knowledgeable in the subject market area) then reviews the reports. An appraiser not meeting the minimum qualifications would not be considered for the assignment. This process helps assure that a professional job is completed pursuant to Federal and State rules and regulations for all properties, irrespective of their ownership.

Federal regulations require that appraisals used in land exchanges be reviewed by qualified review appraisers. The Forest Service has delegated authority to approve appraisal reports to qualified review appraisers.

The appraisal process for land exchanges is done in the following sequence: First, a Forest Service field office (working on behalf of the authorized officer) and the non-Federal party agree to the estate to be conveyed. This, along with other items such as assignment of costs, is agreed to formally in an Agreement to Initiate. The field office prepares a "Request for Appraisal Services" that identifies the purpose of the appraisal, legal description of the property to be appraised, the estate to be appraised, current information concerning title to the property, and any other pertinent information concerning the property. Based upon that request, a review appraiser is assigned to the project. The review appraiser prepares written appraisal instructions for the properties involved. Those written instructions include requirements that the appraisal report be prepared as a complete, self-contained appraisal report and in conformance with *Uniform appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions*, the *Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practices*, and within the specifications of the project. A pre-work meeting is then held with the review appraiser, appraiser, and representatives from both the Forest Service and the non-Federal party to the proposed land exchange to discuss the written instructions and clarify any questions that may

arise. The appraiser then prepares the report, which is reviewed and approved by the qualified review appraiser.

The Valuation Process was added to the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Refer to pages 19-20. Early in the land exchange process, values of land to be acquired and land to be exchanged must be within 25%. However, the values must be equal when the exchange agreement is approved. The appraisal to determine valuation must be reviewed by Forest Service Review Appraiser. It must be approved by the approving official at the time the Final Environmental Impact Statement Record of Decision is approved. The appraised values are valid for 1 year or less. The values can be made equal by the following measures: cash equalization, dropping land to be traded, dropping land to be acquired, or a combination of the above.

The comment that "Non-Federal lands are all or mostly in Apache County" is in error. The following acreages and percentage of Non-Federal lands by County in the exchange follows: Apache County (Sierra Blanca parcel), 156 acres, 10%; Coconino County (Leonard Canyon parcel), 640 acres, 41%; Greenlee County (Alder Peak, Juan Miller, & Sprucedale parcels), 350 acres, 22%; Navajo County (Sponseller Ranch & Railroad parcels), 140 acres, 9%; and Yavapai County (Soda Springs & Cherry parcels), 274 acres, 18%.

Comment(s)

BUFFER ZONE DEFINITION AND COMMITMENT - In response to issues raised by the public, the land exchange "proponent is considering a 400-foot buffer between the existing neighborhoods (e.g. Sierra Pines) and the planned development to help minimize impacts to the mountain forest character of the area." (EIS p. 16) The relevant maps in the EIS should be updated to show the buffer zone and it should be made a condition for approval of the proposed exchange. It should also include the neighborhoods along the Eastern border of the Show Low South parcel: Pine Oaks, Cedar Ridge, The Pines, and Timberland, among others. Also, the buffer zone along the Eastern border of the parcel should connect to an additional Sierra Pines buffer on the Northern parcel margin and include direct access to the trailhead of re-located Buena Vista Trail.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #4, Comment #1]

The EIS (p.18) dismisses in depth consideration of a deed restriction saying it "was considered but eliminated from further study because no environmental concerns exist that require the reservation of rights by the United States."

Elsewhere, the EIS (p. 16) discusses "a 400-foot buffer between the existing neighborhoods... and the planned development to help minimize impacts to the mountain forest character of the area." Is that not an environmental concern to the public that could be safeguarded by a deed restriction? How else does the Forest Service propose to make sure that this mitigation measure described in the EIS is implemented?

Additionally, the smoke and mirrors discussion about local zoning and regulating private property use (EIS p. 19) misses the point that NEPA requires a full consideration of the project alternatives. Please see the following extract from a previous land exchange appeal affirming that applies, in particular, to deed restrictions:

File Code: 1570-1(L) Date: March 27, 2002

Route To:

Subject: Appeal Reviewing Officer Recommendations, Appeal No. 02-13-00-0001

To: Appeal Deciding Officer, Gloria Manning

Deed Restriction/Protective Covenant. In particular, I find the Forest Service failed to consider sufficiently a deed restriction/protective covenant alternative in the EA of the proposed action. While the EA did consider this type of alternative, it indicates that no restrictive covenant or easement is warranted to comply with legal requirements or meet Forest Plan objectives. EA, at II-5. The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit, however, in Muckleshoot Indian Tribe v. United States Forest Service, 177 F.3d 800 (9th Circuit, 1999), a case involving another land exchange, held that a deed restriction is more consistent with the Forest Service's basic policy objectives and must be fully analyzed. While I find that the facts in the Muckleshoot case differ substantially from those in this exchange and is not determinative of this appeal, the Forest Service does need to consider the deed restriction/protective covenant alternative more than it did with regard to the asserted needs behind the exchange.

The draft EIS should be re-done with full consideration for deed restrictions as an alternative.

—Dave Gallinger, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #9, Comment #1]

FAILURE TO INCLUDE DEED RESTRICTIONS AS A VIABLE ALTERNATIVE

The DEIS (p. 18) eliminated a deed restriction from consideration there were no environmental concerns. However, on page 16, the DEIS discusses buffer zones. This is contradictory and a flaw is considered alternatives. Deed restrictions must be considered as an Alternative.

—Tony Potucek [Correspondence #22, Comment #13]

Forest Service Response

The Forest Service would not require a deed restriction be placed on the parcel or for the proponent to create a “buffer zone” as part of the land exchange agreement, as these may lower the value of the Federal parcel to be exchanged resulting in a less favorable exchange for the agency. There are no environmental concerns to warrant this and the long-term enforcement of a “buffer zone” is problematic once the parcel is exchanged into private ownership. In addition, the possible set aside of a buffer zone is under Navajo County and City of Show Low control; it is not a federal issue (see pages 20-21 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement). As plans for the parcel develop in the future, and if they include a subdivision or subdivisions, county and city planning and zoning departments would work with the proponent in developing appropriate plans, which may or may not include a buffer zone. As with other projects, this planning and zoning process would be open to the public and concerned citizens could offer input at that time

Comment(s)

If the need to acquire other small parcels in other areas of National forest has to be done could you please look into trading another area?

—Kim & Ron Schmidt [Correspondence #13, Comment #2]

I'm writing this with hope that there is other property in Arizona that could affect less people than this S L Land Exchange LLC, aka: Bill Jordan, Dan Reeb and Mark Reeb could exchange and develop. Given the status of available already subdivided parcels of property in the ShowLow area that remain unbuilt on and have been since 2008, I see no need to turn this piece of ASNF into another development that could sit for 10 to 20 years!

—Kim & Ron Schmidt [Correspondence #13, Comment #5]

While we understand nothing is guaranteed with NFS land these days, we clearly would hope that the consideration of the "Showlow South Land Exchange" does NOT move forward ... and rather the highest priorities of preserving NFS lands are valued way beyond that of private entity financial gain and unnecessary development ... for development's sake.

We have to believe that the "private entity" seeking this exchange would far better serve the general public, the community, the state of Arizona, and even National interests by purchasing one of the multiple bankrupt or largely incomplete developments so obvious in Show Low (and/or surrounding communities) rather than be allowed ownership of this thriving, forested area to start more. Or certainly, with the numerous acres of "in proximity" NFS land already devastated with the loss of trees/wildlife to the Rodeo-Chediski fire in recent years ... would that not be a better trade of largely bare/already wildlife effected national land than this prospering, natural area. We certainly hope and want to trust that a National agency like the NFS has the resources and interests in mind to negotiate swaps/exchanges that are "win-win", which this clearly is not on many fronts.

We appreciate your thorough consideration of this vital matter & look forward to resolution of the proposed exchange in favor of RETAINING this NFS parcel as National Forest Service property.

—Karen & Gene Berg [Correspondence #15, Comment #4]

Forest Service Response

Extensive study and input by the public has guided development of alternatives for this land exchange. Please see page 20 of the Final Environmental Impact Statement for a discussion of alternatives considered but dismissed from further analysis. Comment noted. As discussed throughout the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the proposed land-for-land exchange would result in Federal acquisition of 1558 acres of land and conveyance of 1028 acres of land, a net gain of 530 acres. The non-federal lands included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitat and perennial waters that greatly exceed the wildlife and habitat value of the Federal lands proposed for exchange.

Administrative Impacts

Comment(s)

In-holdings may increase administrative costs and increase encroachments on NFS lands, but the offered parcels are only a few of the many such existing in-holding parcels which will remain in private hands. These administrative costs will likely not be reduced by any significant amount and encroachment potential will not be eliminated. —Cherry Parcels - 117 acres: Over 20 private parcels (Patented, privately owned mining claims?) remain in the shown map area and

acquisition of the 5 parcels will not significantly reduce administrative costs or encroachment potential.

—Leonard Canyon Parcel-640 acres: While one square mile is proposed in the exchange, another square mile sits contiguous to the Parcel which will remain in private hands. Acquisition of the parcel will not significantly reduce administrative costs or encroachment potential.

*—Railroad parcels-22 acres: there are **hundreds of acres remaining in private hands** and acquisition of what appears to be an old railroad bed will not reduce administrative costs or encroachment potential.*

—Sierra Blanca Ranch parcel-156 acres: within the mapped area in the draft EIS, 13 prime acres on the side of a mountain and adjacent to Lake Sierra Blanca, which will still allow for encroachment and continued administrative costs. In addition, this parcel is partially burned resulting in less value and a new appraisal is required to evaluate current value. The draft EIS points out the potential for wetlands and floodplains and admittedly are currently dry. Changing climatic conditions renders this desired potential to be a slim to none possibility of occurring; consequently added value for this should not be considered.

—Sprucedale parcel-70 acres: this parcel is partially bounded by private land of much greater size and acquisition of the parcel will not significantly reduce administrative costs or encroachment potential. In addition, this parcel is partially burned resulting in less value and a new appraisal is required to evaluate current value.

Sponseller Ranch-118 acres: this parcel is within one mile of large acreages of private land and acquisition of the 5 parcels will not significantly reduce administrative costs or encroachment potential.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comments # 4, #5, #6]

Forest Service Response:

While acquisition of these parcels does not eliminate all of the administrative or boundary maintenance issues, it would reduce those costs. Conveyance of all four associated Federal parcels and nine Non-federal parcels would result in an overall reduction of approximately 22 property control-corners and 20 miles of property landline boundary located between National Forest System land and adjacent Non-federal lands. Refer to Final Environmental Impact Statement pages 8-9 for additional discussion and to project record item dated 3/19/2010, Feasibility Analysis

Forest Service Policy

Comment(s)

The Abstract and Executive Summary of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Show Low South Land Exchange (DEIS) place heavy emphasis on receiving a net gain of land in favor of the US Forest Service (USFS) and their need for consolidation of Federal land ownership patterns. In fact, as stated in the Abstract (p. i) "The proposal to exchange lands in the national forest boundary responds to the Forest Services' need for consolidation of federal land ownership patterns" Furthermore, the DEIS state (p. 11) that in-holdings increase land management

complexity "because of the miles of common, or shared landline boundaries that add to administrative costs and increases the potential for encroachments on NFS lands."

*The above statements set the tone for why the DEIS proposal exists and what's important to the USFS national forests involved (Apache-Sitgreaves, Coconino, and Prescott). My comments on this DEIS follow in more detail, but what is noteworthy is that the **DEIS contradicts** the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for FY 2007-2012. The Plan states their Forest Service Values:*

- Cares for the Nation's forest and grassland ecosystems.*
- Values the varied skills and contributions of a diverse workforce.*
- Strives for accountability by every employee for the efficient management of the capital resources he or she uses.*
- Is responsive to national and local interests.*
- Is focused on the needs of future generations.*

Further to this Strategic Plan, the Goals are listed as:

Goal 1. Restore, Sustain, and Enhance the Nation's Forests and Grasslands.

Goal 2. Provided and Sustain Benefits to the American People.

Goal 3. Conserve Open Space.

Goal 4. Sustain and Enhance Outdoor Recreation Opportunities.

Goal 5. Maintain Basic Management Capabilities of the Forest Service.

Goal 6. Engage Urban America with Forest Service Programs.

Goal 7. Provide Science-Based Applications and Tools for Sustainable Natural Resources Management.

The disconnect between the Strategic Plan and the DEIS is that the American Public is giving up lands on the Mogollon Rim which is not consistent with the plan, and alternatives in the DEIS are flawed. Gifford Pinchot, the first Chief of the Forest Service, summed up the mission of the Forest Service Long ago: "To provide the greatest Amount of good for the greatest amount of people in the long run." The DEIS does not live up to their first Chief's guidance. Contradictions to the USDA Forest Service Strategic Plan for FY 2007=2012. Under Goal 3--Conserve Open Space (USDA Objective 6.3), the desire outcome of the Plan is to maintain the environmental, social, and economic benefits of forests and grasslands by reducing and mitigating their conversion to other uses. Objective 3.1 associated with Goal 3 states: Protect forests and grasslands from conversion to other uses. The Performance Measure is acres of environmentally important forests and grasslands protected from conversion. The Means and Strategies for accomplishing Goal 3 is, among other items, to coordinate national forest plan revisions with local and land-use plans to minimize the impacts of new and existing developments on NFS resources and management activities. Another contradiction in the DEIS to the Strategic Plan is found under Goal 6 of the Strategic Plan--Engage Urban America with Forest Service Programs. The Strategic Plan's

Means and Strategies for accomplishing Goal 6 is, among other things, to continue urban forest inventory and analysis to monitor the health and benefits of ecological and social services of urban forests and more effectively manage these complex landscapes. These contradictions are enormous when compared to the value of giving away a National resource—part of the Mogollon Rim involved in the South Show Low Land Exchange.

—Tony Potucek, Show Low, Arizona [Correspondence #22, Comments #1, #2]

Forest Service Response:

As discussed throughout the Final Environmental Impact Statement including pages 2-8, the proposed land-for-land exchange would result in Federal acquisition of 1,558 acres of land and conveyance of 1,028 acres of land, a net gain of 530 acres. The Non-federal lands included in this exchange proposal contain special features and habitats such as critical species habitat and perennial waters that greatly exceed the wildlife and habitat value of the Federal lands proposed for exchange. The acquisition of the Non-federal lands and incorporation of them into the National Forest System would preclude any development.

Appendix D. Federal and State Agency Comment Letters for Draft EIS

Letters received from federal, state, and local agencies; elected officials; and tribes have been attached in this appendix as directed in Forest Service Handbook 1909.15, Chapter 20, Section 25.1.



THE STATE OF ARIZONA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

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REGION I, 2878 E. WHITE MOUNTAIN BLVD., PINETOP, AZ 85935

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GARY R. HOVATTER
BOB BROSCHEID



December 6, 2012

Stephen James
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
30 S. Chiricahua Dr.
P.O. BOX 640
Springerville, AZ 85938

RE: Draft Environmental Impact Study for the Show Low South Land Exchange

Dear Stephen,

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) appreciates the opportunity to provide input on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Show Low South Land Exchange (DEIS) dated October, 2012. The DEIS disclosed the effects of a proposal to exchange 1,028 acres of National Forest System (federal) lands in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (A-S) and Coconino National Forest (CNF) in exchange for 1,558 acres of lands currently held in private ownership within the A-S, CNF, and Prescott National Forest.

The Department previously provided comment to the A-S, expressing support for the land exchange in a scoping report response letter dated May 27, 2009. At that time, parcel specific comments were provided. We request that those comments be included here by reference.

The Department's support for the proposed land exchange was based on the assessment of the relative wildlife and wildlife recreational values of the federal lands identified for exchange versus the values of the privately held parcels. Although the Department recognizes that the selected federal parcels currently provide wildlife habitat values for a variety of species, as well as recreational hunting opportunities, we believe that the offered private parcels provide much higher wildlife habitat values for an even wider variety of wildlife species, including several special status species, and that their wildlife recreational opportunities meet or exceed those of the selected federal parcels. In addition, the offered private parcels contain important perennial stream/river habitats with very high riparian and native species values.

In summary, the Department supports the proposed Show Low South Land Exchange based on the overall benefit to wildlife resources and wildlife recreational opportunities associated with the exchange. We appreciate the opportunity to review the DEIS and provide comments on the proposal relative to wildlife resource values.

AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS AGENCY

Arizona Game and Fish Department
DEIS for the Show Low South Land Exchange

12/6/2012
Page 2

If you have any questions or need further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me at 928-367-4281 or ddorum@azgfd.gov.

Sincerely,



David Dorum
Habitat Program Manager, Region I

cc Jon Cooley, Region I Supervisor
Laura Canaca, Projects Evaluation Program Supervisor

M09-04285710

Sent electronically to: comments-southwestern-apache-sitgreaves@fs.fed.us



United States Department of the Interior

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
Office of Environmental Policy and Compliance
Pacific Southwest Region
333 Bush Street, Suite 515
San Francisco, CA 94104

IN REPLY REFER TO:
ER# 12/801

Electronically Filed

17 December 2012

Stephen James
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Show Low South LEX
PO Box 649
Springerville, AZ 85938

Subject: Review of the Draft EIS- Show Low South Land Exchange Project, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, Coconino National Forest, and Prescott National Forest, Yavapai, Navajo, Greenlee, and Apache Counties, Arizona

Dear Mr. James,

The Department of the Interior has received and reviewed the subject document and has the following comments to offer.

We support the Forest Service's Proposed Action. We agree that the foreseeable use, should the no action alternative be maintained, would result in the development of the area. This development would have detrimental impacts to proposed and designated critical habitat as well as endangered and candidate species. Furthermore, development of this area would have adverse effect on the surrounding viewshed and soundscape at Montezuma Well. Residential development would likely result in cumulative and adverse impacts to cultural and natural resources located within the Montezuma Well Unit boundary.

Implementation of the Proposed Action would therefore help protect important wildlife habitat and riparian ecosystems bordering the National Monument boundary.

Development of the 8 acre Soda Springs Ranch Adjustment Parcel is of concern. Additional residential development throughout the privately held Soda Springs parcel would potentially impact the Monument's viewshed and natural soundscape. Cumulative impacts from continued development in the area may also include impacts to cultural and natural resources within the Montezuma Well unit boundary.

As discussed in the DEIS, we agree that development of this area would likely impact the candidate yellow-billed cuckoo.

We appreciate the Forest Service's continued effort to protect riparian habitat surrounding Montezuma Well. Montezuma Well and the surrounding land include unique and significant natural and cultural resources. Consequently, these areas are of importance to associated Native American groups and surrounding communities.

In future, please include Montezuma Castle National Monument on the mailing list for information; the final Environmental Impact Statement, and the Soda Springs land exchange.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Patricia Sanderson Port". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Patricia" being the most prominent.

Patricia Sanderson Port
Regional Environmental Officer

Cc:
Director, OEPC
OEPC Staff Contact- Lisa Treichel
Superintendent, Montezuma Castle and Tuzigoot National Monuments



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
REGION IX
75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105

December 11, 2012

Mr. Stephen James
Land Surveyor
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
30 South Chiricahua Drive
P.O. Box 640
Springerville, Arizona 85938

Subject: Draft Environmental Impact Statement for Show Low South Land Exchange, Arizona (CEQ# 20120348)

Dear Mr. James:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Show Low South Land Exchange pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, Council on Environmental Quality regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act.

The EPA supports the rationale provided by the Forest Service for the proposed Show Low South Land Exchange. The Forest Service would receive a net gain of 530 acres in this exchange, and would be trading undesirable federally owned parcels for private lands containing critical species habitat and perennial waters.

Based on our review of the DEIS, we have rated the proposed action and the document as LO-1, Lack of Objections – Adequate (see enclosed EPA Rating Definitions). The EPA acknowledges the desire to consolidate federal land holdings and obtain privately owned parcels within Forest Service boundaries-- particularly parcels, as is proposed in this exchange, that contain habitat for federally listed and protected species and valuable perennial waters, including more than 110 acres of wetlands.


Though supportive of this exchange and the valuable lands that would be brought under Forest Service stewardship if it is completed, we recommend the FEIS include additional information on the lands that would be conveyed to SL Land Exchange, LLC, particularly the 70-acre parcel that would be transferred to the City of Show Low to expand its wastewater treatment facility, and the 948-acre Show Low South Parcel targeted for a low-density residential and mixed-use development. We recommend that the Forest Service provide additional information in the FEIS on the potential impacts, including potential effects on sensitive species, wetlands, and traffic, associated with development of the proposed wastewater treatment facility and residential development. We also ask that the Forest Service describe in the FEIS the potential for the proposed action, particularly the planned expansion of the Show Low wastewater treatment facility, to induce growth.

Please note that, as of October 1, 2012, EPA Headquarters no longer accepts paper copies or CDs of EISs for official filing purposes. Submissions must be made through the EPA's new electronic EIS submittal tool: *e-NEPA*. To begin using *e-NEPA*, you must first register with the EPA's electronic reporting site - https://cdx.epa.gov/epa_home.asp. Electronic submission does not change requirements for distribution of EISs for public review and comment, and lead agencies should still provide one hard

copy of each Draft and Final EIS released for public circulation to the EPA Region 9 office in San Francisco (Mail Code: CED-2).

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DEIS, and are available to discuss our comments. If you have any questions, please contact me at 415-972-3521, or contact Jason Gerdes, the lead reviewer for this project. Jason can be reached at 415-947-4221 or gerdes.jason@epa.gov.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Martyn Goforth, Manager
Environmental Review Office

Enclosure: Summary of the EPA Rating System

SUMMARY OF EPA RATING DEFINITIONS*

This rating system was developed as a means to summarize the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) level of concern with a proposed action. The ratings are a combination of alphabetical categories for evaluation of the environmental impacts of the proposal and numerical categories for evaluation of the adequacy of the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF THE ACTION

"LO" (Lack of Objections)

The EPA review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

"EC" (Environmental Concerns)

The EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce the environmental impact. EPA would like to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EO" (Environmental Objections)

The EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

"EU" (Environmentally Unsatisfactory)

The EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potentially unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

ADEQUACY OF THE IMPACT STATEMENT

"Category 1" (Adequate)

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis or data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

"Category 2" (Insufficient Information)

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analysed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

"Category 3" (Inadequate)

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analysed in the draft EIS, which should be analysed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the NEPA and/or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

*From EPA Manual 1640, Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment.