

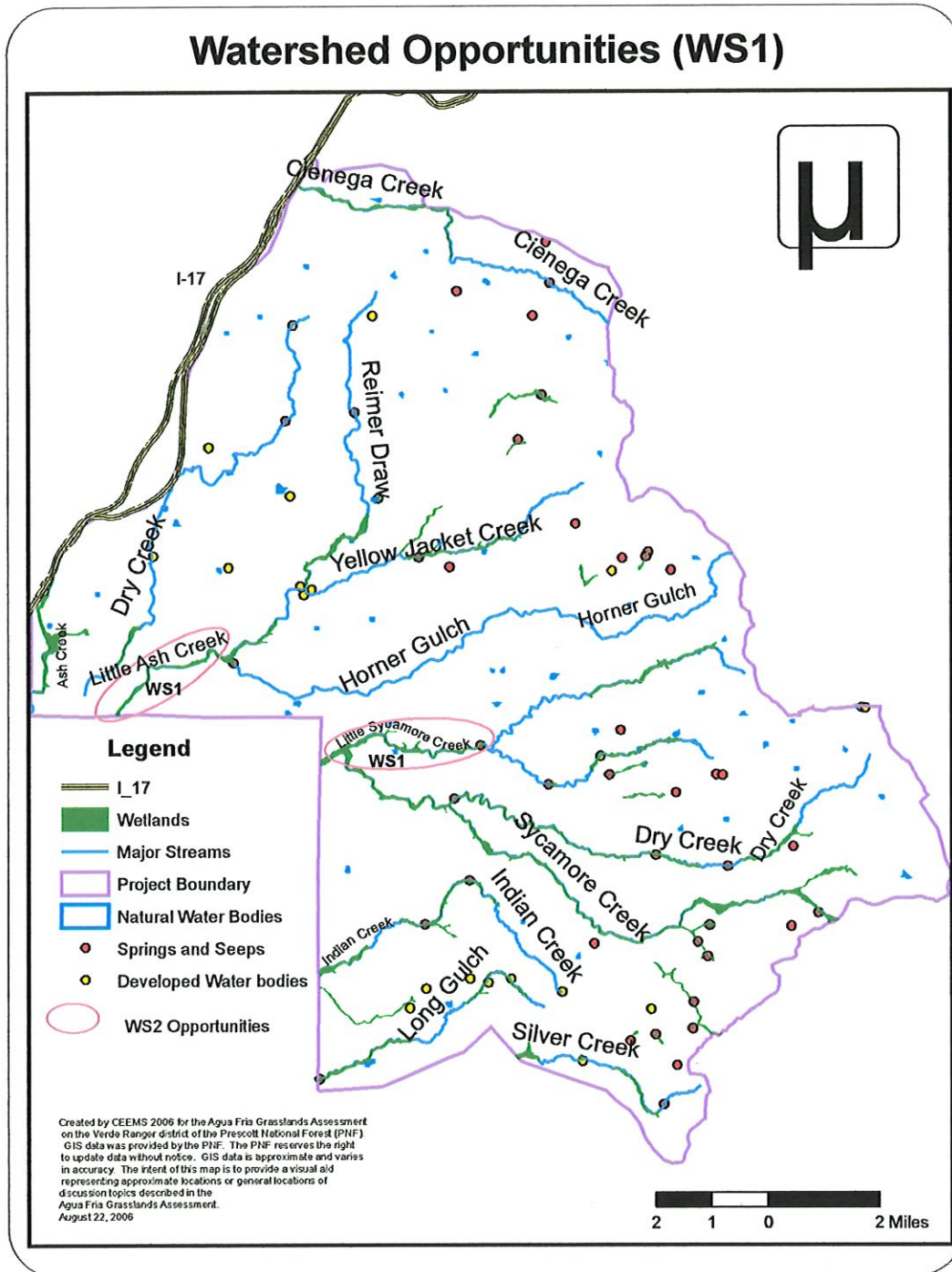
Potential Tools to Implement/Move Towards Opportunity

The main tools identified to help in the implementation of the identified opportunities include, but are not limited to, vegetation treatments, water distribution tanks and lines, fire and relocation of travelways. See Table 11 for specifics.

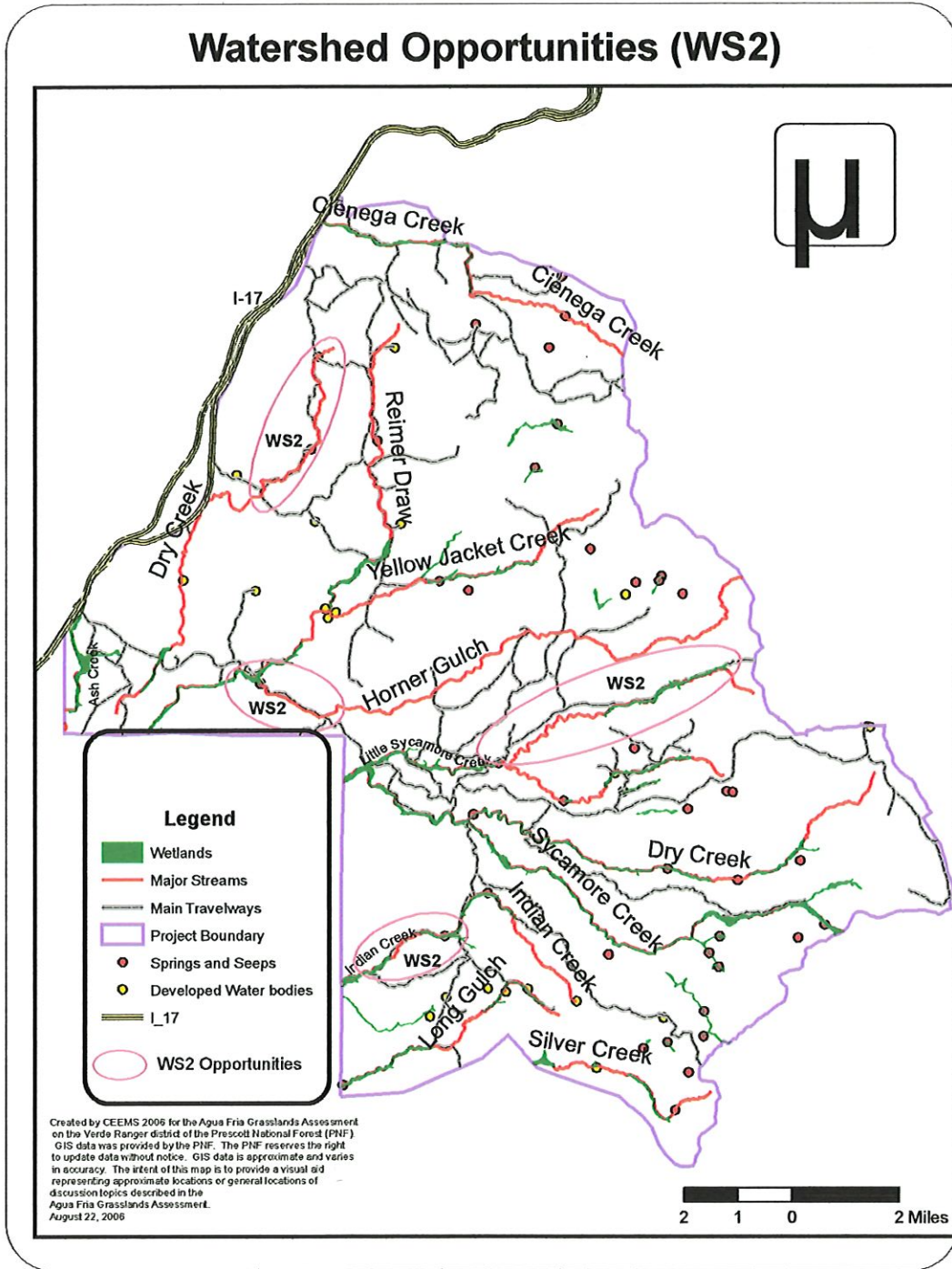


Opportunities for signing and hardening of stream crossings.

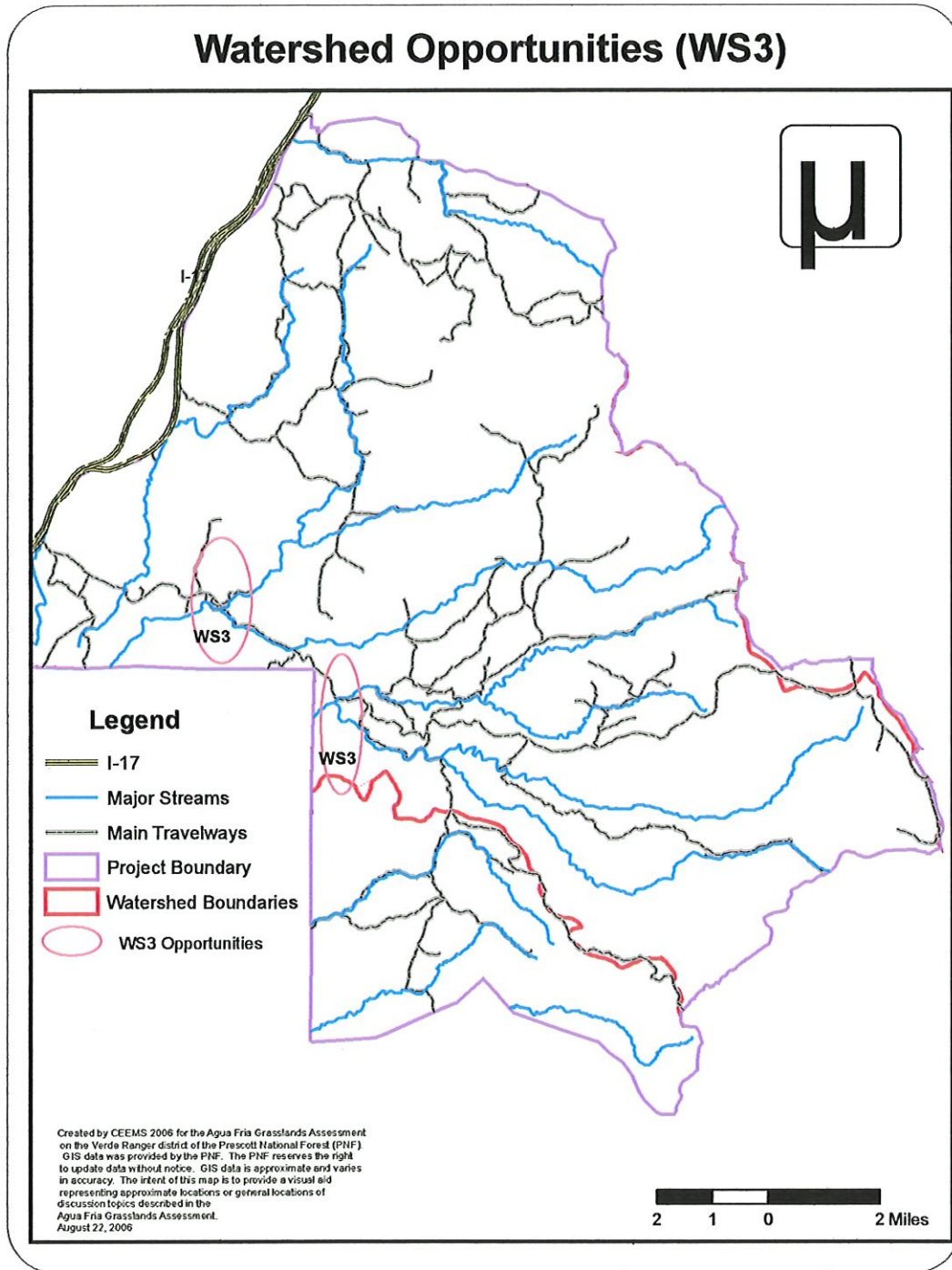
Map 12.



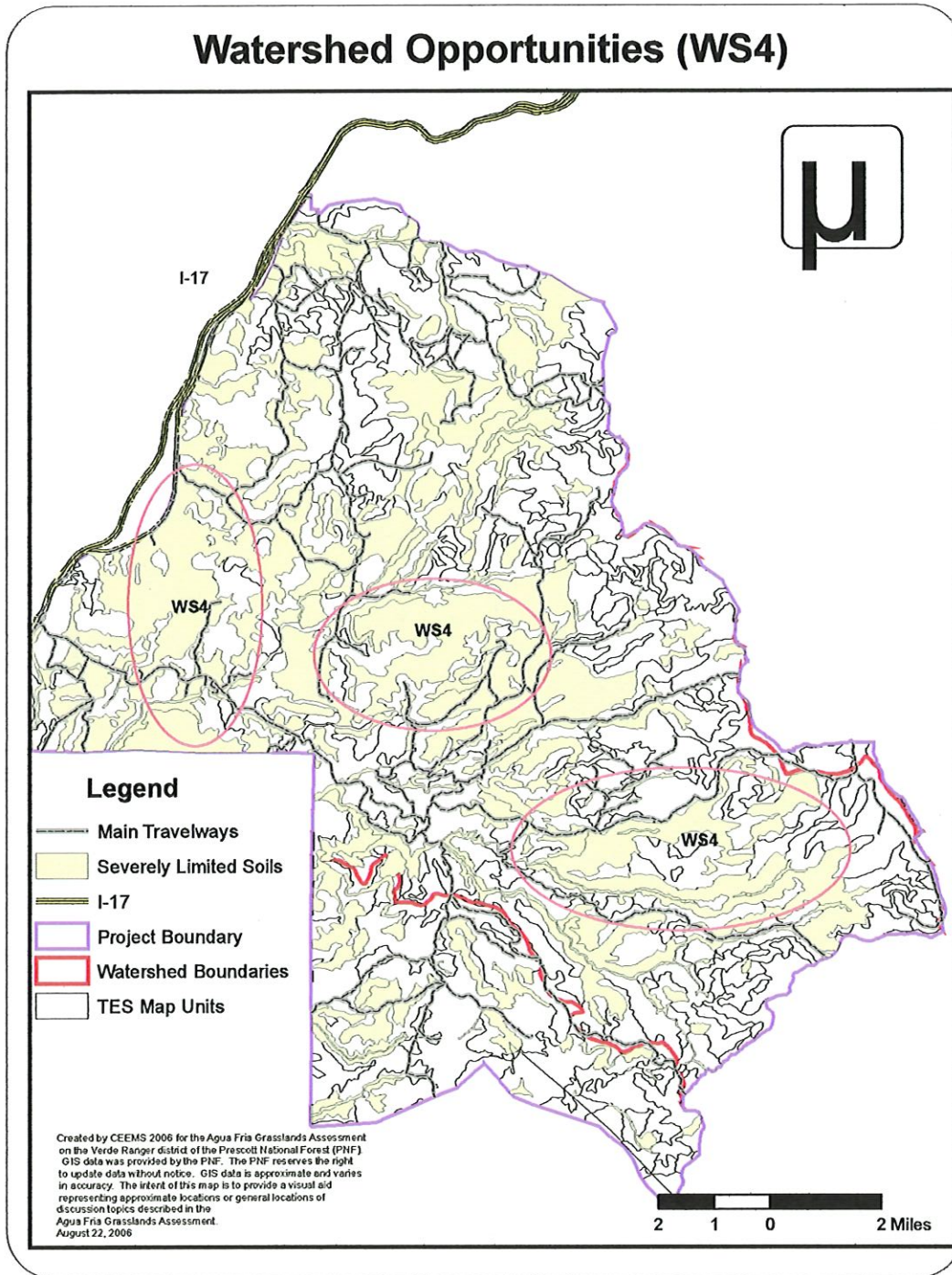
Map 13.



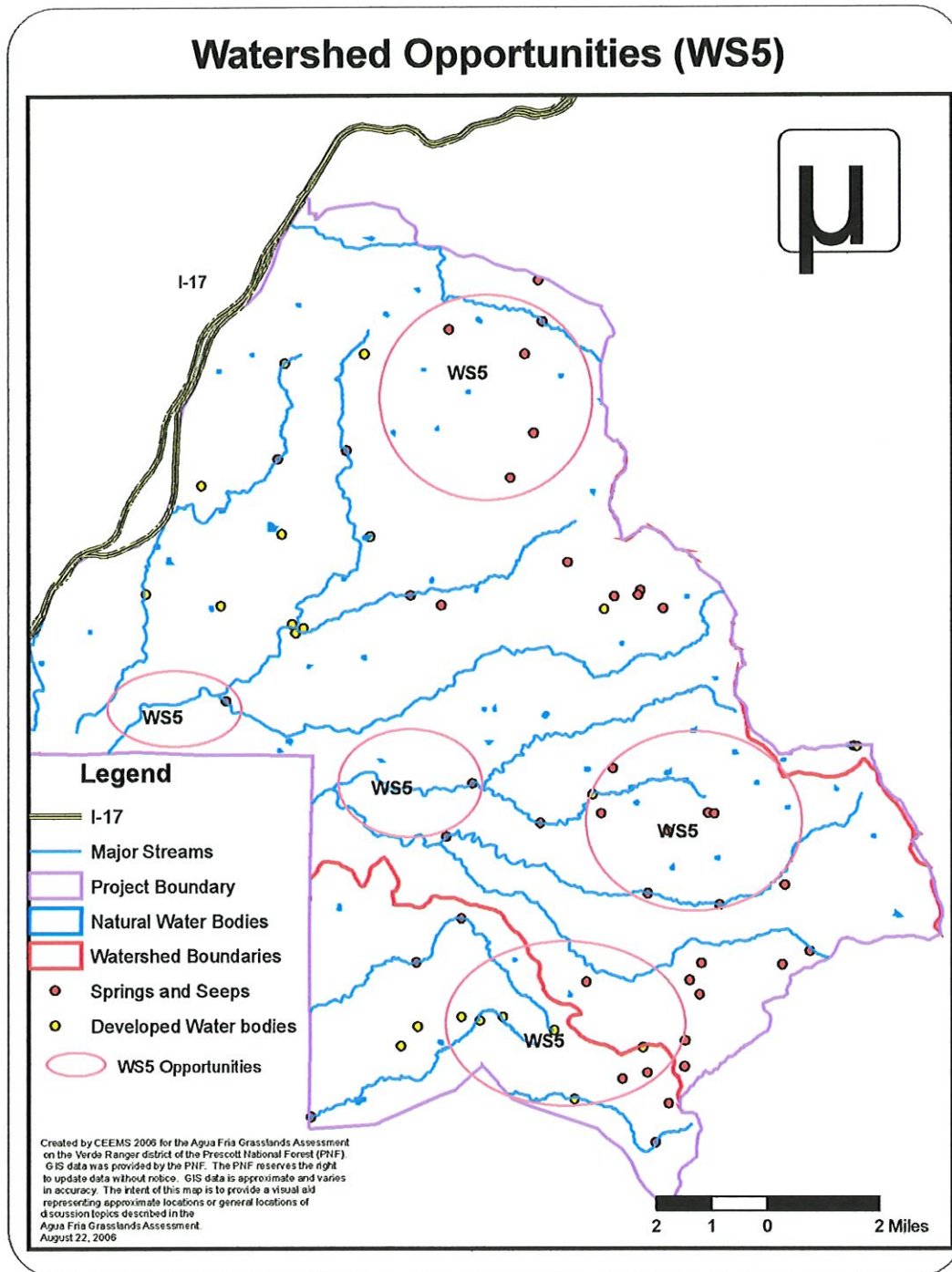
Map 14.



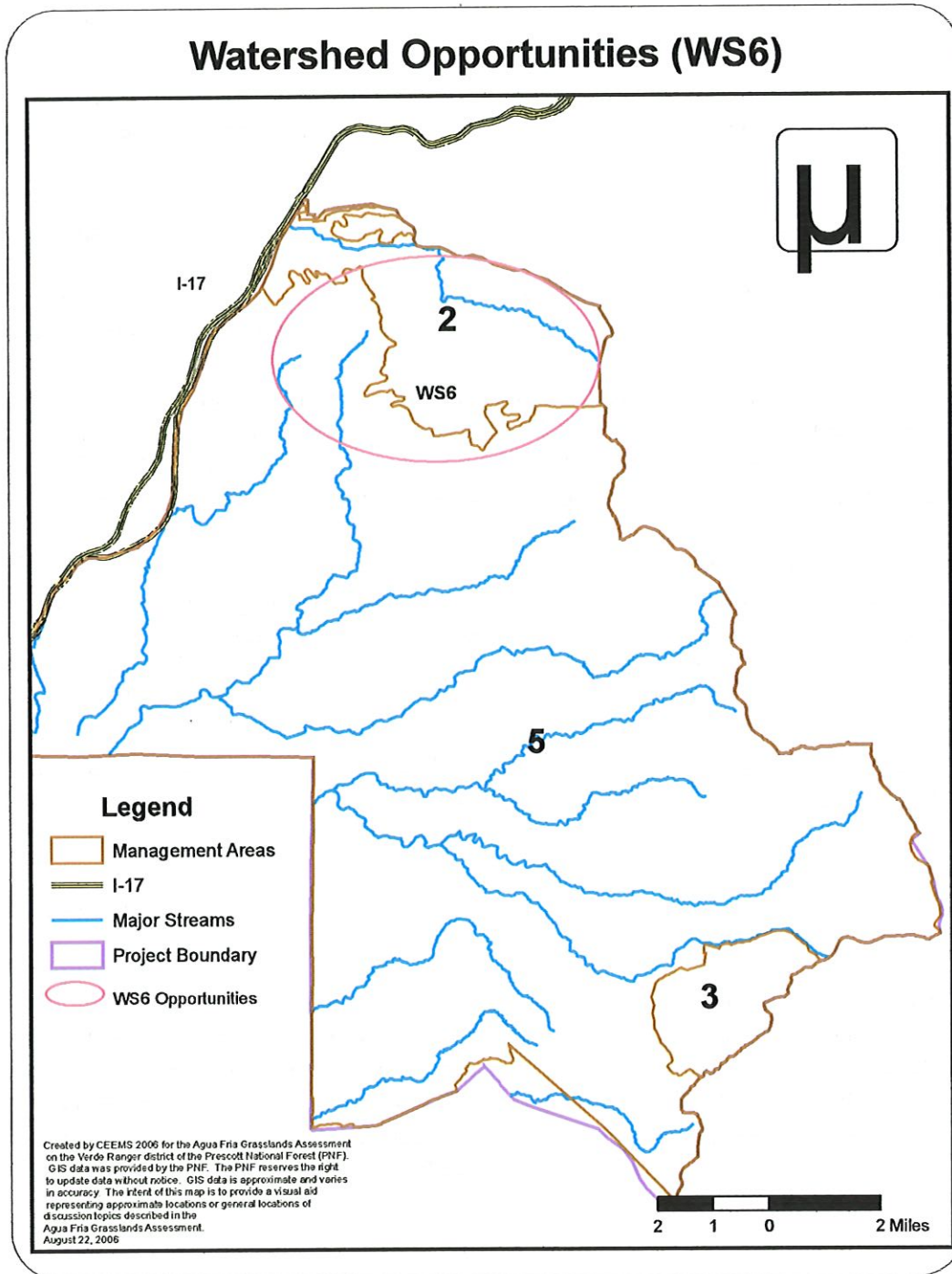
Map 15.



Map 16.



Map 17.



Off Highway Vehicle Use

A 180-mile OHV transportation system offers outstanding opportunities for OHV recreation. All motorized travel is restricted to authorized travel routes. Cross-country travel is not permitted. Authorized travel route designations include forest development roads, dual-use roads, and OHV trails within the grasslands. Dual-use roads and OHV trails are open to hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bike riders. The difference between the two is that full size vehicles are prohibited on OHV trails. A travel management plan was completed in the 1980s. A network of unauthorized trails and roads has developed and continues to proliferate. Varying levels of conflict with area grazing operations are reported from a majority of permittees (see Appendix B). The area has a special closure order prohibiting travel on all roads and trails when they are wet, however, reports suggest that the prohibition is largely disregarded. Spring and fall are the recommended seasons of use by the Forest. Spark arrestors and mufflers are also required on vehicles. The Great Western Trail passes north and south through the assessment area. This designation attracts four-wheel-drive enthusiasts and will eventually connect Canada with Mexico (Prescott NF OHV Opportunity Guide).

Trails

There are approximately 18.7 miles of Forest Service system trails within the area. The 6.4 miles of non-motorized, multi-use trails are all short segments accessing and continuing into the Cedar Bench or Pine Mountain Wilderness areas. Reports suggest the trail conditions vary from poor and hard-to-find to satisfactory.

The 12.3 miles of motorized, multi-use trails typically connect forest system roads. A 2006 condition inventory underway of motorized trails is being conducted (Steedman).

Desired Condition

Based on 2006 recreation niche planning, the Verde Ranger District has been given the priority of managing with emphasis on day-use recreation (Hines). Refinement of authorized, motorized travel routes will commence in the fall of 2006 under Travel Management Rule procedures.

Recreational uses in the assessment area have the potential to grow considerably. It will be important to minimize conflicts between various recreation uses and also between recreationist and area residents or grazing permittees. Biological and physical resources should be given weight in planning efforts when in conflict with recreation opportunities. A particular area was highlighted by District staff as a location for future site development to mitigate resource impacts (a dispersed and group-use camping area along Little Ash Creek off of County Road 171).

Consistency with Forest Plan

For Management Areas 2 and 5 identified in the assessment area, the following direction exists in the Prescott National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan of 1986:

“Dispersed recreation will be managed to maintain environmental quality and reduce user conflicts. Improve all riparian areas and maintain in satisfactory condition. This management area is an emphasis area for interpretation. Interpretation efforts will be focused on high-use roads, trails, sites, and areas.”

Management Area 3 direction does not address recreation.

Future Activities

On private land between Dugas and the Agua Fria National Monument, a single family residential subdivision named “Sycamore Creek Preserve” is planned for initial construction of 83 homes in 2008 at the Forest boundary. All residential lots will be at least five acres in size and may contain equestrian facilities. Approximately 16 miles of trails are planned within the community with the intent that they will also provide access to the National Forest. Assumptions are that recreation will increase on the Agua Fria Grasslands as the development is completed.

Table 12. Recreation Opportunities.

Opportunity	Desired Outcome	Tools to Implement
Collect a baseline ‘rapid site’ inventory of dispersed campsites.	Provide a reference point to compare trends of potential increase in site impact and density with increased recreation use. Data is important in support of future management decisions	One week of staff or volunteer time to inventory. Appropriate condition assessment form and GPS unit.
Moderately develop the Little Ash Creek dispersed group use site until appropriations can fund the construction of toilet vaults.	Locate concentrated use areas an appropriate distance from the stream to keep watershed quality at high standards.	Modest information board highlighting area considerations, Leave No Trace practices pertinent to area (regarding human waste disposal). Procurement of steel grills to identify and designate camp sites.
Identify OHV staging areas with durable information and education interpretive panels. Little Ash Creek group use site would be a good location due to proximity with the Great Western Trail, existing use, and ease of access.	Reduce and prevent conflicts and resource damage.	Grant dollars or other funding for Information & Education panels focusing on ‘Light on the Land’ ethics and the Great Western Trail.

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APPENDIX A

Appendix A
Fire and Fuels Notes
Derived from Permittice Interviews on August 16, 2006

- Don Moore/Bald Hill Allotment
 - Fire is the most effective way to manage juniper
 - Needs to be burned to eradicate/maintain juniper
 - Wants prescribed burning to occur

- Scott Smith/Rice Peak Allotment
 - Wants more prescribed burning
 - Fire is good, but can be damaging if not done right
 - Fire improves the range
 - Exclusion of fire has got the range in the current condition that it's in
 - Less juniper means more prescribed burning

- Willie Kelton/Long Gulch Allotment
 - Likes fire

- Joel Kent/Horner Mountain Allotment
 - Prescribed burning is more effective than wildfire
 - Prescribed burning needs to be coordinated between Forest Service and the permittees
 - Fire is not overly important
 - Juniper needs to be thinned and burned

- Shawn Moore/Sycamore Allotment
 - Fire should occur every 1 to 2 years
 - Prescribed burning is good for the land and it reduces juniper and prickly pear
 - Prescribed burning should be carefully planned
 - Wildland Fire Use is good depending on when & where
 - The lack of fire is the reason why the landscape is at its' current condition

- Gary Halford/Cienega
 - Fire is a management tool
 - Wants to burn the junipers that were cut by the Agra Ax

- Tom Teskey/Todd Allotment
 - Very much in favor of Wildland Fire Use during natural lightning season
 - Fire is a good management tool
 - Fire suppression is the cause of the deterioration of the current conditions

- Alan and Diana Keeler/V-Bar Allotment
 - Should avoid fire
 - Recognizes the use for fire but manages through intense grazing, and are living with the woody component issues
- Chuck and Trudy Birkemeyer/Dugas Allotment
 - Had a bad experience w/ the FS burning
 - Burned with low soil moistures
 - That caused that the grasses not to return for a long time
 - Mixed feelings on prescribed burning
 - Have had good success with fire (Butte Fire)
 - Restock as appropriate, when there is 4" to 6" of green grass
 - Could tolerate up to 1/3 of pastures to be burned
 - Replace fence and pipe that was burned by fire
- Fred Teskey/Willow Allotment
 - In favor of Wildland Fire Use and would like to see it used
 - Any portion of his allotment could tolerate fire
- Scott Spleres/Verde District Fuels Specialist*
 - 3-7 year fire interval
 - 2nd most lightning strike state only behind Florida
 - Hazard Fuels and Ecological Restoration and separate categories/topics
 - The Prescott is not in a drought, its in a long term dry spell
 - Timing of fire is very important
 - During the monsoon
 - June to September
 - Monsoon starts when the predominating winds shift from the Southwest/West to the Southeast/East
 - Wildland Fire Use would be the most effective way to get back within the natural range of variability
 - The ecosystem is not ready due to the Wildland Urban Interface
 - There is a need for preparation of the Wildland Urban Interface to accommodate the use of Wildland Fire Use

*Scott Spleres is a Prescott National Forest employee who was interviewed on August 17, 2006.

APPENDIX B

Appendix B
Human Dimension Notes
Derived from Permittee Interviews on August 16, 2006

- Don Moore/Bald Hill Allotment
 - OHV users have torn up the country
 - Vandalism & theft have occurred
 - Hunters leave gates open

- Scott Smith/Rice Peak Allotment
 - Gates have been left open
 - Littering has occurred

- Willie Kelton/Long Gulch Allotment
 - OHV users and hunters leave gates open
 - Gates and fences have been damaged

- Joel Kent/Horner Mountain Allotment
 - Little recreation use
 - Some vandalism
 - Water trough and water storage tank shot
 - Gates left open occasionally
 - Forest Service needs to maintain roads better

- Shawn Moore/Sycamore Allotment
 - Hunters leave trash
 - OHV users tear up roads
 - Hikers have no impact on lands

- Gary Halford/Cienega Allotment
 - Trash left outside dump and along I-17

- Tom Teskey/Todd Allotment
 - Vandalism
 - Shooting of water tanks
 - Cutting Fences
 - Gates left open
 - OHV tracks on grasslands/off trails
 - Need more Forest Service law enforcement
 - Hunters are pretty good

- Alan and Diana Kessler/V-Bar Allotment
 - Camping & OHV directly cause loss a vegetation cover
 - Cattle is adversely effected by OHV users
 - Their pasture choices are made in part to avoid recreationists

➤ Chuck and Trudy Birkemeyer/Dugas Allotment

- Better patrol of OHV & camping unauthorized use
- Better control of road ways/improve road maintenance
- Wildcat roads are a problem
- Need for increase of signage concerning OHV use
 - Get dollars from developers to help pay for patrolling & education materials about misuse of the lands
- OHV & campers disregard of the no driving on the roads when they are wet

APPENDIX C

Appendix C

Community Member Interviews

1. All 6 community members live in Camp Verde.
2. Tell me about your or your community's connections or uses of the Agua Fria Grassland on the Prescott NF?

Response	Interview #
No current activity or connections to area	1, 3, 5,6
Horseback riding outside identified area or in the past	3, 1, 4
Drive thru the area to access wilderness and river	2
Horseback riding and hiking	4

3. What time of year do you use the area and how often?

Response	Interview #
No response	1, 3, 5, 6
Spring time. Once every few years	2
Mostly year-round, high elevation in the summer, lower elevations in the winter	4

4. What changes have you noticed over time?

Response	Interview #
No response	1, 5,6
Don't see Pronghorn populations as often	2, 3
Less grass density, especially in the last 5 year	3
More prickly pear or brush, increase in OHV use and damage resulting, more garbage and trash	4

5. What do you feel the Agua Fria Grasslands should look like?

Response	Interview #
No response	1, 5
An area managed for pronghorn	2
Should look natural, don't make changes	3
Loves seeing wildlife, cattle help keep the fire danger low	4
Need more established trails and enforce trail rules	4
Leave it alone	6

6. What changes would you like to see the forest service make with the Agua Fria Grasslands?

Response	Interview #
No response	1, 5
Focus on travel management, close and obliterate roads & roads in sensitive areas	2, 3
Promote defensible space around to Dugas landowners	3
Develop an auxiliary patrol group to inform public about staying on trails and trash pick up, establish more multi-use trails, create more staging areas for horse and quad riders, burn after cutting, more signage	4

7. How would prescribed fire & Wildland Fire Use affect your or the community's connections of activities in the Agua Fria Grasslands?

Response	Interview #
May attract attention as a place to go look and see what happened on the land	2
Assist when wildfires occur by providing fire crews a place to stay (school gym)	1
The land should burn, a natural part of the forest, would not affect the connection	3, 4
No response	5
Burning may be implemented, but should be for holistic reasons rather than single species' habitat manipulation prescribed	6

8. How would mechanical treatments affect connections/activities in the area?

Response	Interview #
No response	1, 5
Remove skeletons and slash to keep visual quality high	2
Does not want to see clear-cut type treatments. Selective cutting is best, chainsaws noise does not affect wildlife	3
Area needs to be thinned, doesn't matter how	4
Do not destroy juniper-type vegetation communities for preference of pronghorn habitat	6

9. Describe partnership or volunteer opportunities that may be possible with your community and the Prescott NF?

Response	Interview #
Stewards of Public Lands could help clean up areas	1
New development residents could be valuable source for partnerships, Camp Verde residents are too far away	2, 3
Develop volunteer patrol to assist with information and education, partner for trails development	4
Would like to see some trail access points from the development to the forest, some defensible space	5
Would collaborate with interpretive site location and content	6

10. Is there anything more you'd like to share I did not ask regarding your community and the Agua Fria Grasslands?

Response	Interview #
No response	1
Mt ranch area is allowing some access thru locked gate on road to Childs so people can make loop OHV ride from the south. Route returns on Dugas road from the Tonto	2
He warns of what the new development's effect will be. There will be large increase in OHV, horses, and hunting. New trails will be created	3
The winter rain makes a big difference, I have seen water running in creeks and from springs that I have never seen run before	4
We to break ground on the development in 2008. We did have a meeting with the FS on access concerns and what would be needed for that. Have been working with the permittee to continue to allow grazing in the area after the development goes in. We want to honor the grazing/ranching way of life and to have a rural setting. We will use wording in the deeds to help do this. Have also been working with the BLM on restricting access and letting members of the community be members of the monument	5
Avoid toxic chemicals in land management activities; minimize grazing activities to the extent possible; keep cattle out of permanent water sources; do not modify water sources without a holistic review of the effects on other species; do not initiate unilateral predator removal programs;	6

Key

Interview #	Name	Community Connection
1	Bill Lee	Camp Verde Town Manager
2	Dexter Allen	Long time resident and USFS Verde River Ranger
3	Howard Parrish	Camp Verde City Council Member/50 year resident
4	Ron Smith	Camp Verde City Council Member
5	Jeremy Bach	AZ North Vice-President/Developer
6	Chris Coder	Yavapai Apache Archeologist

APPENDIX D

Appendix D
Hunting Regulations That Apply To The Agua Fria Grasslands
Game Management Unit 21

Animal	Season Dates	Number of Permits
Pronghorn Antelope	Sep. 8 – Sep. 17, 2006	5 (Bucks) 10 (Bucks/Archery)
Mule Deer	Nov. 10 – Nov. 19, 2006	400 (Antlered)
Whitetail Deer	Oct. 27 – Nov 5, 2006	350 (Antlered)
Whitetail Deer	Dec. 15 – Dec. 31, 2006	50 (Antelered)
Any Deer	Sep. 1- Sep. 21, 2006	Nonpermit Tag (Antlered/Archery)
Any Deer	Dec. 15, 2006 – Jan. 31, 2007	Nonpermit Tag (Antlered/Archery)
Mountain Lion	Jul. 1, 2006 – Jun, 30, 2007	1 Per Hunter (Harvest Objective Of 8)
Bear	Oct. 6 – Dec 31, 2006	2
Blue Grouse	Sep. 15 – Nov. 26	3 Per Day
Chukar Partridge	Sep. 15, 2006 – Feb 12, 2007	5 Per Day
Cottontail Rabbit	Jul 1, 2006 – Jun. 30, 2007	Not Defined
Pheasant	Oct. 13, 2006 – Feb. 12, 2007	2 Per Day (Archery) 2 Per Day (Falcony-Only)
Gambel's, Scaled And California Quail	Oct. 13, 2006 – Feb. 12, 2007	15 Per Day
Mearns' Quail	Nov. 24, 2006 – Feb 12, 2007	8 Per Day
Tree Squirrel (Except The Mount Graham Red Squirrel)	Oct. 13 – Nov. 26, 2006	5 Per Day
Tree Squirrel (Except The Mount Graham Red Squirrel)	Sep. 1 – Oct. 5, 2006	5 Per Day (Archery)



**Trapping Regulations That Apply To The Agua Fria Grasslands
Game Management Unit 21**

Animal	Season Date	Number Of Permits
Coyote	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Bobcat	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Fox	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Ringtail	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Badger	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Beaver	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Raccoon	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Skunks	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Weasels	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited
Muskrat	Nov. 1, 2006 – Feb. 28, 2007	Unlimited

*All information was gathered from: Arizona Game And Fish Department 2006 – 2007
Arizona Hunting And Trapping Regulations Booklet

APPENDIX E

Appendix E Acknowledgements

Throughout the development of this assessment, many individuals have provided valuable and much-needed assistance to the CEEM team as we gathered information and compiled data. Without your support, completion of the Agua Fria Grasslands Assessment would not have been possible. We sincerely thank the following people:

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Jake Fousek, Arizona Game and Fish Department
Gary Halford, grazing permittee
Dee Hines, Prescott National Forest
Susan Hixson, Prescott National Forest
Willie Kelton, grazing permittee
Joel Kent, grazing permittee
Alan Kessler, grazing permittee
Diana Kessler, grazing permittee
Bill Lee, Camp Verde Town Manager
Doug MacPhee, consultant
Karl McCormick, Prescott National Forest
David Moore, Prescott National Forest
Don Moore, grazing permittee
Shawn Moore, grazing permittee
Howard Parrish, Camp Verde Town Council
Albert Sillas, Prescott National Forest
Ron Smith, Camp Verde Town Council
Scott Smith, grazing permittee
Kelli Spleiss, Prescott National Forest
Scott Spleiss, Prescott National Forest
Craig Steedman, Prescott National Forest
Tom Teskey, grazing permittee