Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan

Logan Simpson Design Inc.

OCTOBER 2007

PINAL COUNTY
Open Space and Trails Master Plan

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Approved October 31, 2007

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

1.0 Project Overview....1
1.1 Background and Purpose....1
1.2 Planning Process Overview....1

2.0 Inventory and Analysis....3
2.1 Introduction....3
2.2 Data Collection....3
2.3 Existing Studies and Plans Overview....3
2.4 Adjacent Community Connections....6
2.5 Biological Resources Overview....6
2.6 Cultural Resources Overview....12
2.7 Slope Analysis....15
2.8 Existing Land Ownership, Development Patterns, and Infrastructure....15
2.9 Existing and Planned Parks, Open Space Areas, and Trails....17

3.0 Public Participation....22
3.1 Introduction....22
3.2 Public Meetings – Values, Issues, and Needs....22
3.3 Public Meetings – Preliminary Master Plan....24
3.4 Stakeholder Taskforce Meetings....26

4.0 Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives....28
4.1 Introduction....28
4.2 Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives....28
4.3 Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative....32

5.0 Preliminary Master Plan....35
5.1 Introduction....35
5.2 Open Space Categories....35
5.3 Preliminary Master Plan....37

6.0 Final Master Plan....39
6.1 Introduction....39
6.2 Vision, Goals, and Objectives....39
6.3 Open Space and Trails Master Plan Elements....41
6.4 Land Ownership Considerations....45
6.5 Designation of Private, State Trust, and Bureau of Land Management Lands....46

7.0 Open Space and Trails Implementation Program....47
7.1 Introduction....47
7.2 Open Space and Trails Implementation Techniques....47
7.3 Open Space and Trails Implementation Program....51

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Base Data Map....4
Figure 2. Regional Context Map....7
Figure 3. Biological Resources....10

Figure 4. Cultural Resources 14
Figure 5. Slope Analysis 16
Figure 6. Land Ownership 18
Figure 7. Utilities 19
Figure 8. Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concept A 29
Figure 9. Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concept B....30
Figure 10. Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concept C 31
Figure 11. Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative 33
Figure 12. Preliminary Master Plan 36
Figure 13. Final Master Plan Map....42
Figure 14. Proposed Open Space and Regional Park Implementation....52
Figure 15. Proposed Trail Implementation....53
Figure A1. 2005 Pinal County Trails Plan 67
Figure A2. Bird Species Density 68
Figure A3. Mammal Species Density 69
Figure A4. Reptile Species Density....70
Figure A5. Desert Tortoise Habitat....71
Figure A6. Native Grassland Assessment 72
Figure A7. Nature Conservancy Conservation Areas 73
Figure A8. Springs and Riparian Areas....74
Figure A9. ADOT Corridor Studies....75
Figure A10. Central Arizona Association of Governments PAD Map 76

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Land Ownership....17
Table 2. Recreation Areas Within Pinal County 20
Table 3. Existing Pinal County Parks 20
Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032 54
Table A1. USFWS threatened, endangered, and candidate species potentially occurring in Pinal County....65
Table B1. NRHP Districts 78
Table D1. Stakeholder Taskforce List 98

LIST OF APPENDIXES

Appendix A – Biological and Environmental Resources Information 64
Appendix B – Cultural Resources Information 77
Appendix C – Public Involvement Information....79
Appendix D – Stakeholder Involvement Information 97
Appendix E – Data Collection Log....136

1.0 PROJECT OVERVIEW

1.1 Background and Purpose

The *Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan* (the Plan) is the foundation of the Open Space and Recreation Element of the *Pinal County Comprehensive Plan* (2001, amended 2007), and it identifies 399,300 acres of existing or planned open space, 802,400 acres of proposed open space, 25,900 acres of restricted use open space, and 168,700 acres of regional parks. The Plan reflects the vision of county residents and identifies goals and objectives for the attainments of open space, trails, and regional parks.

The Sonoran Desert, according to the World Wildlife fund, has the greatest diversity of vegetative growth of any desert in the world. It is home to 560 plant species, 58 reptile species, and 41% of all terrestrial bird species found in the United States. Large areas of pristine Sonoran Desert exist in and throughout Pinal County, and with rapid urbanization the need to preserve large tracts of unfragmented desert becomes increasingly more important.

The 2003 Arizona Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) establishes the need for more park space in Pinal County. The SCORP conducted a survey of Pinal County residents; some of its findings include the following:

> *Approximately 60% of the households in Pinal County say they visited a park or recreation area an average of four times in the past three months, which equates to 431,345 visits.*
>
> *Thirty-seven percent say they travel more than 50 miles to get to the park they visit most often, 26% travel 6–50 miles, 28% travel 1–5 miles, and 9% travel less than 2 miles.*
>
> *Fifty-one percent say they would go* [to a park] *more often if the park was closer.*

In addition, the residents of the county were asked to rate their preference for types of parks to receive funding. Forty percent of the respondents preferred funding to be directed toward large nature-oriented parks, 27% toward open space, 18% toward neighborhood parks, and 15% toward multi-use parks. Public comments from stakeholders and public meetings throughout the Plan preparation process reinforced these findings with additional emphasis placed on special use areas, such as equestrian facilities and off-highway vehicle (OHV) areas.

1.2 Planning Process Overview

The planning process and approach for the Plan consisted of 10 basic tasks that included the involvement of a stakeholder taskforce representing all the affected municipalities, federal and state government agencies, various user groups, and interested parties. The stakeholder taskforce served as the primary conduit for technical information, project issues and concerns, concurrent projects coordination, and communication between agencies and the County. Six public meetings and four stakeholder meetings were conducted at strategic project milestones to provide opportunities for community input, discussion of issues, and comments in relation to the Plan. The following are brief descriptions of each of the key project tasks undertaken.

Project Initiation – The scope of work was defined, and an initial project schedule was established. The County identified key stakeholders for the Plan, and preliminary issues were discussed at a project kick-off meeting. Existing base mapping and data, including previous, current, and planned projects affected by the Plan, were gathered and provided by the County.

Inventory and Analysis – A thorough review of the County's existing infrastructure and utilities; existing and planned land uses; and biological, cultural, and environmental resources—which included an inventory of their respective locations and relative conditions—was conducted. In addition, other existing studies and plans completed by secondary sources were reviewed and evaluated for their relevancy in developing this Plan. A base data composite map was produced to illustrate the compilation of the County's opportunities and constraints and their impacts on subsequent planning efforts.

Public Participation – Six public meetings were conducted to understand the general public's values, issues, and needs for the types of activities and areas of preservation and conservation the County

should provide for its residents. In addition, four stakeholder taskforce meetings were conducted with various municipalities, affected agencies, and interested groups.

Values/Issues/Needs Identification – Current and future values, issues, and needs related to the development of the Plan were identified by County staff, stakeholders, and the public. The public was given the opportunity to identify values, issues, and needs at three of the six public meetings held in three different locations throughout the County and through communications with City staff.

Vision, Goals, and Objectives – Based on the values, issues, and needs derived from public and County comments received at each meeting, a vision statement and goals and objectives were developed to create the basis for the conceptual alternatives in the development of the Plan.

Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives – Three *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* were developed based on the opportunities and constraints of the County's natural, physical, and scenic resources and on the public and stakeholder taskforce values, issues, and needs. The *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* were then presented to the stakeholder taskforce for review and comment, and a *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* was developed.

Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative – A *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* was developed based on the stakeholder taskforce's and County's comments and suggestions of the three *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* reviewed. The *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* was then presented to the stakeholder taskforce for review and comment to develop the *Preliminary Master Plan* that was presented to the public.

Preliminary Master Plan – The *Preliminary Master Plan* was prepared and presented to provide the opportunity for the pubic, stakeholders, and County staff to review the initial synthesis of the key master plan tasks completed, and the comments received on the three *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* and the *Preferred Master Plan Alternative*.

Draft Final Master Plan – A *Draft Final Master Plan* was developed based on the comments received from the public, stakeholders, and County staff on the *Preliminary Master Plan*. Comments from the *Preliminary Master Plan* review were addressed or incorporated into the *Draft Final Master Plan,* which was presented to the Pinal County Planning and Zoning Commission in a work session.

Final Master Plan – The *Final Master Plan* was developed based on the Planning and Zoning Commission and County's review and comments of the *Draft Final Master Plan,* and represents a complete synthesis of all 10 key tasks completed during the course of the master planning process. The *Final Master Plan* is designed to provide a variety of passive and active recreational uses that are compatible with the preservation and conservation of the natural and cultural resources of the County.

This Plan report provides the basis and guidelines to assist the County with the implementation of the proposed open space and trails that are illustrated on the Plan and presented in the following sections:

2.0 Inventory and Analysis
3.0 Public Participation
4.0 Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives
5.0 Preliminary Master Plan
6.0 Final Master Plan
7.0 Open Space and Trails Implementation Program

2.0 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

2.1 Introduction

An inventory of existing conditions was conducted to help identify opportunities and constraints within Pinal County for open space and trails. The inventory was necessary to understand the current conditions and pressures the County is facing to determine where allocation of open space is needed to compliment existing land uses, and to allocate new areas of open space that are currently underserved. In addition, the inventory helped identify existing and proposed trail corridors as well as county wide trail linkages and trail corridors. The inventory and analysis section is divided into the following five subsections:

- Data Collection
- Existing Studies and Plans Overview
- Adjacent Community Connections
- Biological Resources Overview
- Cultural Resources Overview
- Slope Analysis
- Existing Land Ownership, Development Patterns, and Infrastructure
- Existing and Planned Parks, Open Space Areas, and Trails

2.2 Data Collection

A search of existing data, reports, studies, and plans were collected from a wide range of sources, including but not limited to Pinal County, City of Apache Junction, City of Casa Grande, City of Coolidge, City of Eloy, Town of Florence, Town of Kearny, City of Maricopa, City of Queen Creek, Maricopa County, Pima County, Central Arizona Association of Governments (CAAG), Bureau of Land Management (BLM), Middle Gila Conservation Partnership, Morrison Institute, Arizona State Museum, Arizona Open Land Trust, Coronado National Forest, Tonto National Forest, Salt River Project, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), Arizona Open Land Trust, US Geologic Surveys (USGS), Arizona State Parks, Arizona Department of Transportation, Arizona Army National Guard, Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD), and the Hohokam Drainage and Irrigation District. The information was obtained in various digital formats, including geographical information system (GIS) files, electronic documents, and maps such as PDF and JPEG files. In addition to electronic documents, many hardcopy documents were also obtained. All of the relevant information contained in these documents was digitized and placed on a base data map (Figure 1, *Base Data Map*). A complete inventory log of the data can be found in Appendix E, *Data Collection Log.*

2.3 Existing Studies and Plans Overview

A review of key area studies and plans provided the baseline for determining the known direction of open space and trail development for communities and areas within the county. The following studies and plans were evaluated and incorporated in the preparation of this Plan:

The Treasures of the Superstitions: Scenarios for the Future of Superstition Vistas – Arizona's Premier State Trust Land in the Southeast Valley (April 2006).

The study was undertaken by the Morrison Institute for Public Policy at Arizona State University. It identified an area within Pinal County southeast of Apache Junction that due to its proximity to the Phoenix metropolitan area is increasingly experiencing population pressures. The study identified various scenarios of future population growth that indicate a population of 900,000 people by the year 2060. The study established a vision for the area using sustainable land use practices and long-range planning.

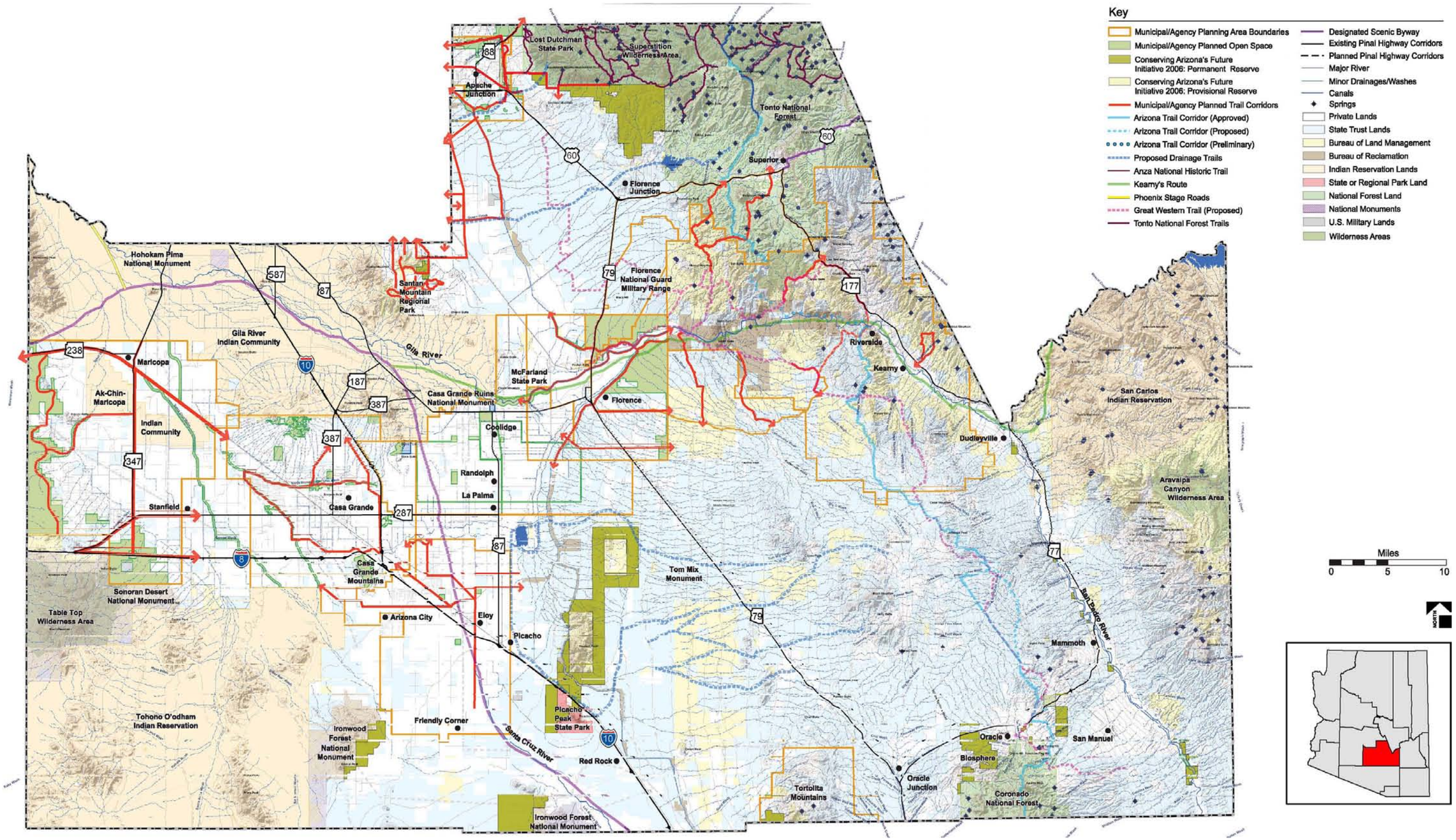


Figure 1. Base Data Map

A Motorized Route Evaluation Report – Prepared by the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership (September 2005)

The motorized route evaluation pertained to a 1.2-million-acre area of concern, which is bounded by Florence Junction and Superior to the north and extends as far south as Oracle and is bounded by State Highway 79 on the west and State Highway 77 on the south and east. The study evaluated and categorized motorized vehicle routes within a project area of 232,700 acres in the northwest corner of the area of concern. The Middle Gila Conservation Partnership, in an effort to provide guidance for the conservation of this area, developed three separate route inventories that ranged in intensity of off-highway vehicle (OHV) usage. The result of the report is a detailed evaluation of OHV trails in the area.

Multi-Use Trail Master Plan – Apache Junction (1993)

The *Multi-Use Trail Master Plan* included a research/data collection and analysis of land use zoning, circulation access, site analysis, physiography, visual analysis, historical/cultural resources, existing human-made features, planning constraints and demographic research, and public involvement. The plan identified more than eight miles of trails, access points, and connections to the surrounding areas such as the Superstition Mountains within Apache Junction.

Parks and Recreation Master Plan – Apache Junction (1998)

The *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* identified more than 1,930 acres of developed and undeveloped parks and trails within Apache Junction. The master plan also established programming activities and the vision of the community.

Apache Junction Open Space Planning Taskforce – Report to the City of Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Commission (Spring 2004)

The Open Space Planning Taskforce identified approximately 2,700 acres of BLM and State Trust land along the northern and eastern borders of Apache Junction. The taskforce incorporated the multi-use trail system identified in the Apache Junction *Multi-Use Trail Master Plan* and detailed three alternatives for the acquisition and preservation of the identified lands.

The Florence Greenway: A Bridge to the Future and a Connection to the Past – Prepared by the Drachman Institute at the University of Arizona (September 2005)

The Florence Greenway focused on establishing a greenway that encircles the historic downtown of Florence. The plan has sought to balance an eco-friendly greenway that acts as a link to adjacent neighborhoods. The greenway is a pedestrian and bicycle looping trail that utilizes the unique history and ecology of the area to promote a unique balance of pedestrian-level activities while providing ecological connections to the surrounding area.

Trail System Plan – San Tan Mountain Regional Park (March 2004)

The *Trail System Plan* was established to determine the desired future conditions of the San Tan Mountain Regional Park trail system. The plan identified trail access points and park boundaries and also established a management plan to manage the existing trail network. The park is situated on the northern edge of the county just south of the town of Queen Creek and east of the Gila River Indian Reservation, and it provides connection opportunities to the Maricopa County Regional Trail System through the Maricopa Trail.

Pinal County Comprehensive Plan (Adopted December 2001, Amended December 2004)

As the guiding framework for planning within the unincorporated areas of Pinal County, the plan has focused on creating vibrant communities by encouraging orderly development. The plan has sought to build strong communities by guiding growth into areas that can sustain development while trying to preserve environmental resources. The plan also established goals, objectives, and policies for the implementation and management of the county's resources.

Pinal County Trails Plan (May 2005)

The *Pinal County Trails Plan* focused on establishing a planning framework to create a system of non-motorized and motorized trails. The plan established three major trail corridors that act as the foundation of the trails plan—the Arizona Trail, the Central Arizona Project Canal, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail (see Figure A1, *2005 Pinal County Trails Plan*, in appendix A). The plan also established goals and strategies to guide decision making, incentive and regulatory actions, and design guidelines.

2.4 Adjacent Community Connections

Providing regional connectivity to neighboring counties and communities was a critical element of the Plan, and a regional inventory of connections was established (Figure 2, *Regional Context Map*). The inventory consisted of identifying natural resource connections through state parks, national forests and monuments, wilderness areas, and notable natural features. In addition, trail connections to existing and proposed trails in adjacent counties and communities were established.

Maricopa County

Maricopa County borders Pinal County to the north and west, and connections to the Maricopa County trail system are proposed in multiple areas. Key areas include connections to the town of Queen Creek, the city of Mesa, and the Tonto National Forest to the north and connections to the Table Top Wilderness and the Sonoran Desert National Monument to the west.

Gila County

Gila County borders Pinal County to the north, and connections to key recreation areas are proposed in three areas. One connection establishes a corridor along the US 60 Scenic Byway within the Tonto National Forest, and the two other connections would provide access to the recreational areas east of Kearny and northwest of the San Carlos Indian Reservation, which includes access to the proposed Tam O'Shanter climbing area.

Graham County

Graham County borders Pinal County to the east, and two key connections are proposed. The first connection would establish a corridor through the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness area, and the second would establish a connection to the Coronado National Forest just east of the Pinal County line.

Pima County

Pima County borders Pinal County to the south, and connections to the Pima County Regional Trail System are proposed in multiple areas. Key areas include proposed connections to the Coronado National Forest, Oracle Junction, the Tortolita Mountains, and the Ironwood National Forest.

2.5 Biological Resources Overview

In project planning and development, it is important for the planning team to be aware of the potential ecological issues within the project area. Ultimately, this knowledge can help avoid delays, reduce unforeseen costs, and ensure compliance with regulations in the project planning and implementation phases. Potential ecological issues that can affect project planning and implementation include the presence of and suitable habitat for threatened, endangered, or sensitive species; the extent of areas of undisturbed natural habitat; the existence of water sources; and the degree of invasion by undesirable species. Documenting habitat types, vegetative communities, water sources, and areas of invasive species can indicate the potential for protected species to occupy the area; can help identify areas native wildlife might use for food, cover, or movement; and can highlight those areas that need to be conserved or remediated. Often, obtaining environmental permits (e.g., Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permits) are required for ground-disturbing projects to avoid or minimize impacts on natural resources.

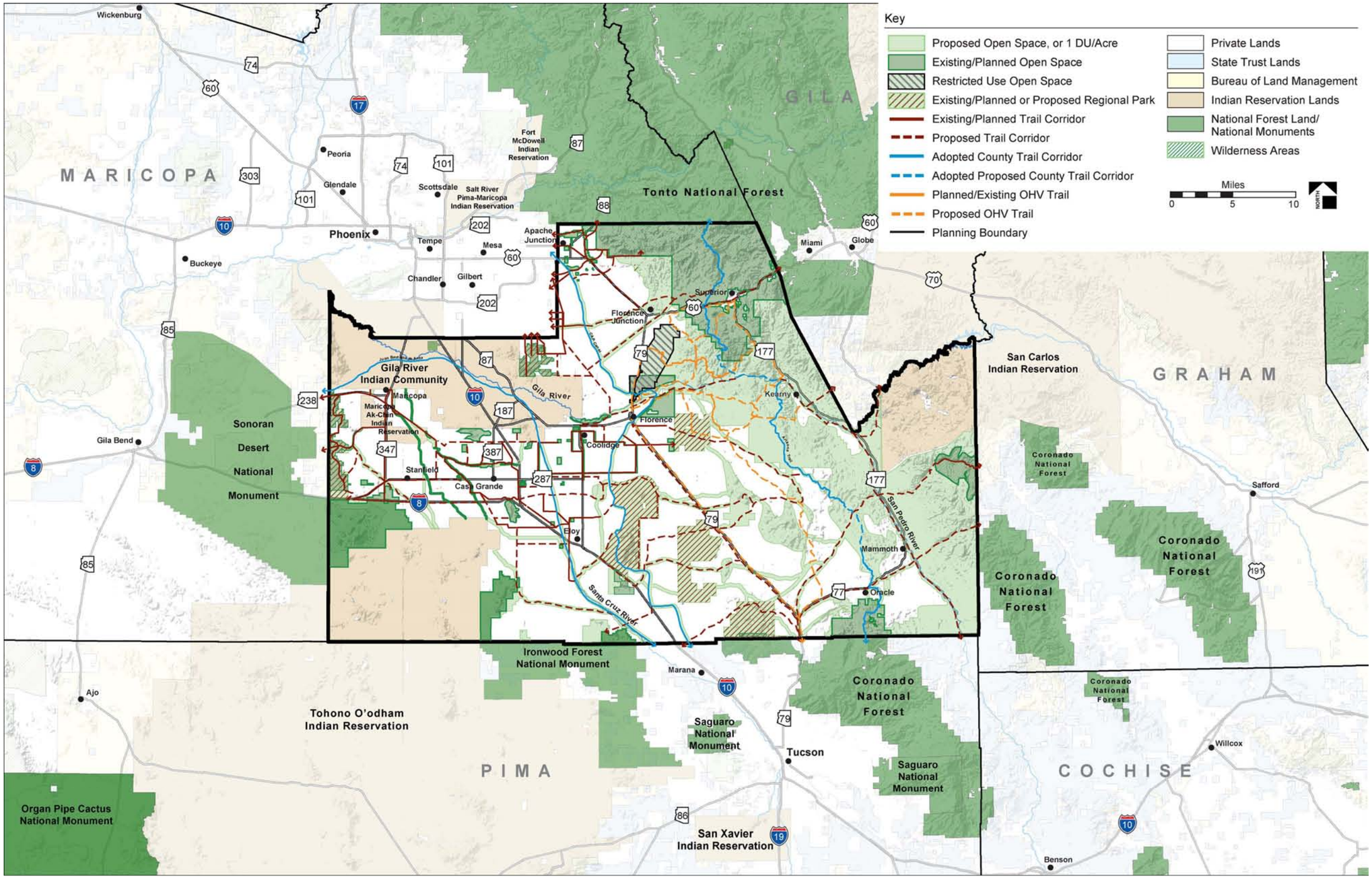


Figure 2. Regional Context Map

This biological resources overview identifies existing biological conditions within Pinal County, qualifies habitat values, and makes wildlife-management recommendations. In addition, lists of potentially occurring plants, mammals, birds, reptiles, and amphibians were collated from the existing literature using distribution maps and habitat requirements of various Arizona flora and fauna.

Soil Types

County soil types include Hyperthermic Arid (HA) soils, Thermic Semiarid (TS) soils, and Mesic Subhumid Arid (MH) soils. HA soils have a mean annual soils temperature of 72 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) and receive less than 10 inches of mean annual precipitation. TS soils are characterized by a mean annual soil temperature of 59°F–79°F, and receive a mean annual precipitation of 10–16 inches. Lastly, MH soils are characterized by mean annual soil temperatures of 47°F–59°F and a mean annual precipitation of more than 16 inches (Hendricks 1985).

General Habitat

Pinal County has five different vegetation types and four biotic communities. The Lower Colorado River Valley (LCRV) and the Arizona Upland subdivision of the Sonoran Desertscrub biotic community are the most abundant vegetation types. The other biotic communities include the Semidesert Grassland biotic community, Interior Chaparral biotic community, and the Madrean Evergreen Woodland biotic community.

The LCRV subdivision occurs through the wide, alluvial valleys and is the largest and most arid subdivision of the Sonoran Desert (Turner and Brown 1994). Dominant plant species include creosote bush, triangle-leaf bursage, white bursage, blue palo verde, ironwood, velvet mesquite, smoketree, saguaro, and ocotillo.

The Arizona Upland subdivision forms a narrow curving border at the northeast edge of the Sonora Desert. The upland subdivision is dominated by foothills palo verde, ironwood, catclaw acacia, bursage, buckhorn cholla, chain fruit cholla, teddy bear cholla, saguaro, and barrel cactus (Turner and Brown 1994).

The Semidesert Grassland community is dominated by a perennial grass-scrub landscape positioned between desertscrub below and evergreen woodland and chaparral above. The most diagnostic plants for this community are native grasses and dry-stem and leaf succulents (Brown 1994a).

The Interior Chaparral community occupies elevations between 3,400 and 6,000 feet along foothills, mountain slopes, and canyon habitats. Some of the dominant species associated with this community include desert olive, sophoras, Arizona rosewood, and Lowell ash (Pase and Brown 1994).

The Madrean Evergreen Woodland community is considered mild winter–wet summer woodland, Dominant species in this community include evergreen oaks, oaks, alligator bark, and one-seed juniper and Mexican pinyon (Brown 1994).

General Wildlife

Birds, which are active and visible during daylight hours, are the most likely group of vertebrates to be encountered during an outing. Birds such as phainopepla, hummingbirds, Gambel's quail, and hawks are likely to be commonly sited. Reptiles, such as lizards, are also commonly seen scurrying from one bush or rock to another during the daylight hours.

Some of the mammals that could be seen include the desert cottontail, kangaroo rat, coyote, and javelina. However, bats, which forage for nectar or insects, are there but are rarely seen because of their nocturnal nature.

Special-Status Species and Critical Habitat

Table A1 *USFWS threatened, endangered, and candidate species*, in Appendix A, includes a list of US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) threatened, endangered, and candidate species potentially occurring in Pinal County.

Habitat preferences of USFWS species with designated and proposed critical habitat in Pinal County are briefly described below. Figure 4*, Biological Resources,* depicts the locations of critical habitat within Pinal County. Species with federally designated and proposed critical habit in Pinal County include the loach minnow, razorback sucker, southwestern willow flycatcher, Gila chub, spikedace, and the Mexican spotted owl (MSO).

Loach minnow: This fish occupies turbulent, rocky riffles of mainstream rivers and tributaries up to 8,200 feet above msl (AGFD 2002a). The loach minnow prefers moderate to swift current velocities with gravel or cobble substrates, and they prefer an open, low-growing riparian-type community composed mostly of grasses and shrubs.

Razorback sucker: This fish uses a variety of habitat types from mainstream channels to slow backwaters of medium and large streams and rivers from 180 to 5,000 feet above msl. They prefer impoundments with depths of a meter or more over sand, mud, or gravel substrates (AGFD 2002b).

Southwestern willow flycatcher: This species of flycatcher is a riparian obligate, breeding only in dense riparian vegetation near a permanent or semipermanent source of water or saturated soil throughout the southwestern United States from at or near 0 to 8,530 feet above msl (Sogge et al. 1997).

Gila chub: This fish is normally found in the smaller headwater stream, cienegas, and springs or marshes of the Gila River basin. They can be found from 2,700 to 5,400 feet above msl in broadleaf riparian vegetation consisting of cottonwood, willow, ash, alder sycamore, walnut, and seep willow (AGFD 2002c).

Spikedace: This fish occupies midwater habitat of runs, pools, and swirling eddies and prefers moving water less than 3 feet deep at 1–2 feet per second at elevations ranging from 1,600 feet to 4,500 feet above msl (AGFD 2002d).

MSO: This species of owl can be found throughout much of Arizona primarily in forested mountains and canyons at elevations ranging from 4,500 to 10,000 feet above msl. These owls are typically associated with late seral forests and generally found in habitat that includes mixed-conifer and pine-oak forests, riparian madrean woodland, and sandstone canyonlands (USFWS 1995). However, MSOs have also been found in relatively open shrub and woodland vegetation communities in arid canyonland habitat (USFWS 1993).

Habitat Quality

Relative habitat values for Pinal County were assigned as “high,” “medium,” and “low.” High-value areas are typically undisturbed (relatively pristine), with good wildlife movement corridors, and provide optimal cover, food, and water resources. Medium-valued areas can be either undisturbed or disturbed (fragmented) and provide less than optimal cover, food, and water for wildlife. Areas ranked as medium are enhanced by the presence of adjacent high-value habitat. Disturbed, highly fragmented areas with poor cover, food, and water availability are valued as low.

Examples of high-quality habitat include areas designated as critical habitat, and large undisturbed expanses of land, such as mountain ranges, river corridors, perennial streams, and open desert areas. Medium-quality habitat may include washes near developed areas, where land may be more fragmented but where water and food may be available. Low-quality habitat includes highly developed areas like agricultural fields where the natural vegetation is highly disturbed or non-existent, limiting food and water resources.

Wildlife Management Recommendations

Preserving and possibly improving habitat should be one of the first ecological considerations for open space conservation. Most of the high-quality habitat can retain its value simply by remaining undeveloped, while medium quality habitat can retain its value by keeping users in designated areas and on marked trails while minimizing vegetative disturbances.

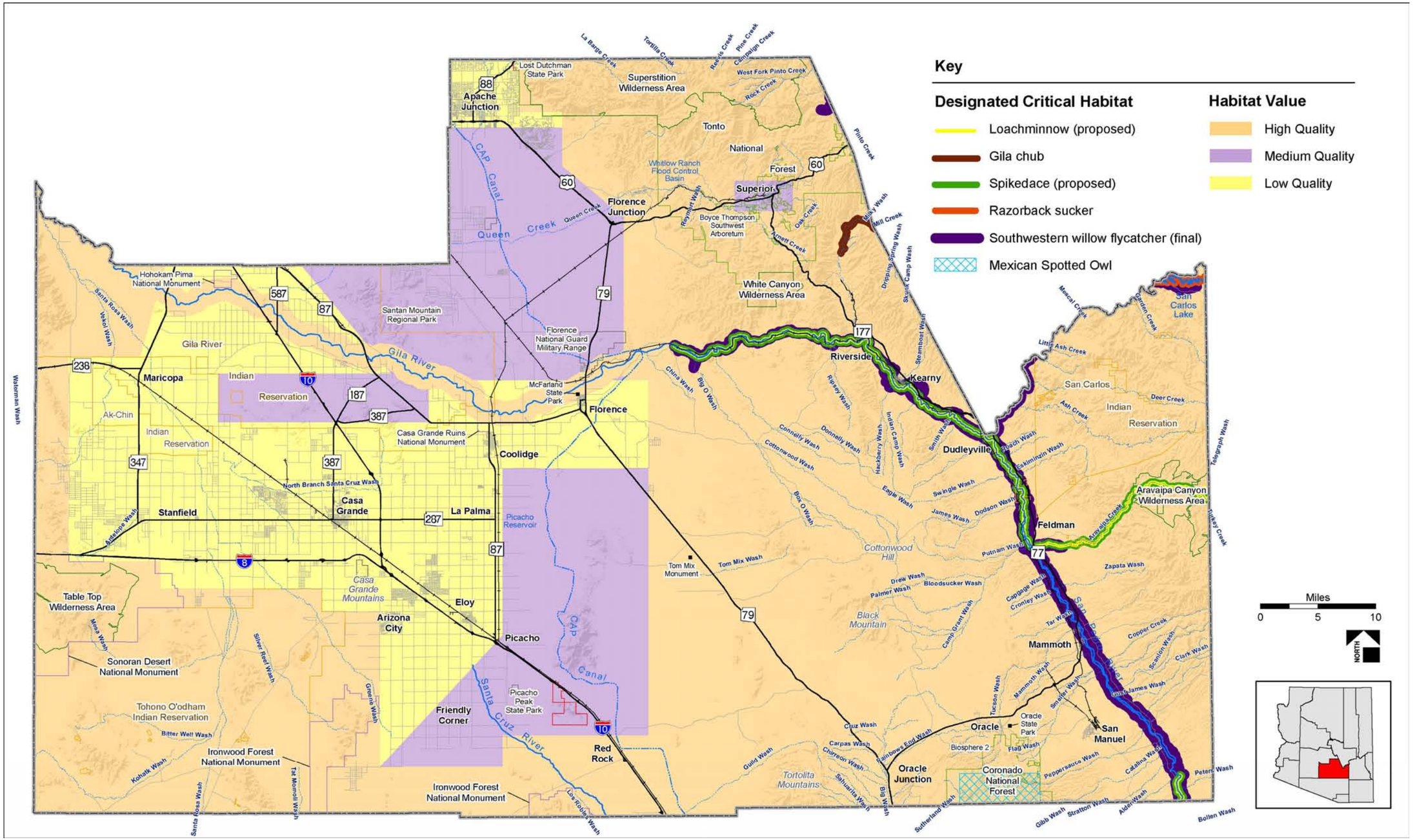


Figure 3. Biological Resources

Habitat can also be improved through rehabilitation of the natural environment. Low-quality habitat can be improved by reestablishing the natural vegetation while providing food and water for wildlife. Specific recommendations include:

- Controlling access to high-quality areas like critical habitat, rivers, perennial streams, and mountains
- Limiting access to undisturbed natural areas to avoid fragmentation
- Encouraging the development of low-quality habitat areas first and then medium-quality habitat areas, while focusing on restoration of the natural environment for those areas
- Concentrating uses, or clustering development, to avoid highly dispersed use of high-quality areas and increased fragmentation of the land

Additional biological information was provided by the respective secondary sources identified below. A brief description of the data provided by each source, and its relevance to the development of the Plan is also provided.

Arizona Open Land Trust

The Arizona Open Land Trust provided additional biological and environmental data for Pinal County. The data was provided in GIS format and included the following information from The Nature Conservancy.

Bird, Mammal, and Reptile Species Density

Species density is measured by the amount of different types of species within each group, so this data reflects the amount of biodiversity within areas of the county (see Figures A2–A4, *Bird, Mammal, and Reptile Species Densities* in Appendix A). The data indicates that the biodiversity is greatest in undeveloped areas throughout the county and lowest in the urban and suburban areas. Generally, fragmentation of habitats by development is the greatest contributor to the loss of biodiversity. Although bird species are less affected by the fragmentation of habitats, the mammal and reptile species show a dramatic reduction in species density in the urban and suburban areas. Overall, the density is greatest in mountainous, riparian, and large areas of undeveloped Sonoran Desert.

Desert Tortoise Habitat

There are three categories of desert tortoise habitat within Pinal County (see Figure A5, *Desert Tortoise Habitat*, in Appendix A). The desert tortoise habitat is divided into three categories of varying degrees of habitat suitability. Category 1 habitats are essential to the maintenance of large, viable populations. Category 2 habitats may be essential to the maintenance of large, viable populations, and Category 3 habitats are not essential to the maintenance of viable populations.

Native Grassland Assessment

The Nature Conservancy has identified areas within Pinal County that have been identified as having native grasslands, shrub-invaded native grassland with restoration potential, shrubland that is former grassland, and shrub-invaded non-native grasslands (see Figure A6, *Native Grassland Assessment*, in Appendix A). These areas are predominately in the eastern mountainous regions of the county and the southeastern portions with a small portion located on the southwestern border of the county.

Nature Conservancy Conservation Areas

The Nature Conservancy has assessed conservation areas within Pinal County that are located within Sonoran Desert and Apache Highland ecoregions (see Figure A7, *Nature Conservancy Conservation Areas*, in Appendix A). The assessments based on conservation targets included species communities and ecological systems and specific target information that included geographical distribution, habitat

type, NatureServe global rank, Endangered Species Act (ESA) status, habitat type, and two levels of taxonomic descriptions.

Springs and Riparian Areas

Known natural springs and riparian areas were identified throughout the county through the Arizona State Land Department, Arizona Land Resources Information System. This data set consists of spring locations in Arizona and incorporates information extracted from both the USGS Geonames database and the USGS Digital Line Graphs (see Figure A8, *Springs and Riparian Areas*, in Appendix A).

ADOT Corridor Studies

The Arizona Department of Transportation has identified nine wildlife corridors within Pinal County along major road corridors and the Central Arizona Project Canal that contain endangered or threatened species (see Figure A9, *ADOT Corridor Studies*, in Appendix A). Each wildlife corridor is assessed for biotic communities, land ownership, identified species, threats, and hydrology.

2.6 Cultural Resources Overview

Several federal, state, and local laws have been enacted to preserve cultural resources. The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966 (16 United States Code [U.S.C.] § 470 et seq.) requires that projects defined in 36 CFR § 800.16(y) as federal undertakings be evaluated for their impacts on historic properties. Section 106 of the NHPA, which is implemented by the regulations in 36 CFR Part 800 (as amended in 2004), defines a process of consultation that federal agencies follow to evaluate impacts on historic properties. The National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (40 CFR § 1500) requires projects with a federal action to be evaluated for impacts on the human and natural environment. Other acts, including the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 (16 U.S.C. § 470aa–mm), the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990 (25 U.S.C. § 3001–3013), the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 U.S.C. § 1996 and 1996a), and Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act of 1966 (23 U.S.C. § 138), also ensure the proper treatment of cultural resources for projects that occur on federal lands, that are funded by federal monies, or that require a federally issued permit. Similarly, Arizona Revised Statutes (A.R.S.) sections 41-841 through 41-847 and sections 41-861 through 41-881 have been enacted to protect cultural resources and Native American graves during undertakings in Arizona that do not fall under federal jurisdiction. The Arizona State Historic Preservation Act of 1982 directs state agencies to consider impacts that their projects or funding may have on historic properties owned or controlled by the agency.

Cultural resources inventory data include records of prehistoric and historic properties that are greater than 50 years old. Prehistoric and historic properties are classified as sites, buildings, structures, or objects. Properties that possess a significant concentration, linkage, or continuity or that are united historically or aesthetically by plan or physical development may be formally recognized as a district. The National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) documents the appearance and importance of properties significant in our prehistory and history. To be listed in the NRHP, a property or district must be demonstrably significant under at least one of four criteria and must possess a combination of seven aspects of integrity. The criteria of consideration for the NRHP are association with an important historic event (Criterion A) or person (Criterion B), embodiment of an important design or method of construction (Criterion C), or the potential to yield scientifically important information about prehistory or history (Criterion D). The aspects of integrity are location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. Depending on the property type and criteria, some aspects of integrity are weighted greater than others when nominating a property to the NRHP.

The goal of this cultural resources overview is to use existing archaeological survey and site data in conjunction with a basic predictive model to evaluate potential impacts on NRHP-eligible resources for the proposed Pinal County trail system and open space design. Site and survey data from the AZSITE database, which is the repository for all archaeological survey and site data on state public lands were reviewed. In addition, the NRHP database was checked to identify historic districts and NRHP-listed sites within Pinal County. In general, agencies consider all known sites to be NRHP-eligible for planning purposes until their actual NRHP eligibility has been determined; therefore, all known sites were included

in this analysis. Survey data analyzed for the County includes the total area of previous survey coverage, the number of known sites, and the available descriptive information on the type of sites present. Prehistoric and historic sites are not the only cultural resources that should be taken into consideration. Traditional cultural properties (TCPs) are places that have important cultural significance to Native American groups and other communities. Information on TCPs is often scarce, but the importance of these places should not be overlooked and should be taken into consideration whenever possible. An evaluation of TCPs should be undertaken by initiating consultation regarding sacred places with all interested Native American tribes.

The Arizona State Museum does not include archaeological survey or site data from tribal land; therefore, information from 698,465 acres, the 20% of Pinal County that is tribal land, was not included when calculating site density or percentage of land surveyed. The tribes with land in Pinal County include the Gila River Indian Community, the San Carlos Apache Indian Community, the Ak-Chin Indian Community, and the Tohono O'odham Indian Community. Although archaeological site and survey information for the Indian communities was not available, it is known that there are a high number of sites within and adjacent to tribal lands.

The basic predictive model uses the previous survey data for Pinal County and the total number of known sites to calculate an average number of sites per acre. The average number of known sites per acre is then applied to all of Pinal County. This approach is useful in that it allows for the inclusion of information from a relatively broad geographical area to develop a site-density prediction that can then be applied to previously unsurveyed areas. In some cases, this approach can significantly over- or underestimate site density, particularly when the environment contains geographically diverse areas. Similarly, site density based solely on existing survey information within the county can have erroneous results when the previously surveyed area is not representative of the entire project area.

With the exclusion of tribal lands, approximately 9.6% of Pinal County has been surveyed for cultural resources. According to AZSITE, there are a total of 4,611 known sites within Pinal County (see Figure 5, *Culture Resources).* Out of that total, 3,084 were located within surveyed areas. By using the number of sites within the surveyed areas and the total number of acres surveyed, a site density per acre can be calculated. For Pinal County, the site density is 0.012 sites per acre. When the site density is applied to all land within Pinal County, it yields an estimated number of 39,740 potential sites. Applying a range of 30% on each side of the predicted site number of 39,740 gives a better estimate of potential archaeological and historic sites within the county, placing the number of potential sites between 27,818 and 51,662. Pima County, which is immediately south of Pinal County, has completed an intensive countywide cultural resources overview within the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (SDCP). The average site density within Pinal County of 0.012 per acre reflects very closely the average site density found within the SDCP, which was only slightly higher at 0.013 per acre.

Advanced predictive models have been used to accurately predict site densities and probable site locations based on a number of different factors (Brandt et al. 1992; Kvamme 1990). Although these advanced methods are beyond the scope of this overview, their basic premises can be applied to generally suggest potentially sensitive areas. Proximity to water is an important aspect to consider (see Figure 4, *Cultural Resources)*. Both the Gila River and the San Pedro River areas are dense with known cultural resources. Slope and soils are also important to consider, as level surfaces and good soils provide environmentally favorable conditions for habitation. It is important to remember that these are just guidelines. Archaeological and historic sites can also be found in many different locations that do not conform to these general premises.

Historic and Archaeological Districts

There are 118 NRHP-listed properties within the county, including four historic districts, and four archaeological districts (see Table B1, *NRHP Districts,* in Appendix B). The four historic districts include Florence Townsite Historic District, which is composed of 115 historic buildings. Rancho Linda Vista outside the town of Oracle was a dude ranch that later became an artists commune. The Boyce Thompson Arboretum near the town of Superior was founded in 1925 and is the oldest botanical garden in the state. The Verdugo Homestead Historic District contributes to our understanding of early historic exploration and settlement of the area just south of Coolidge.

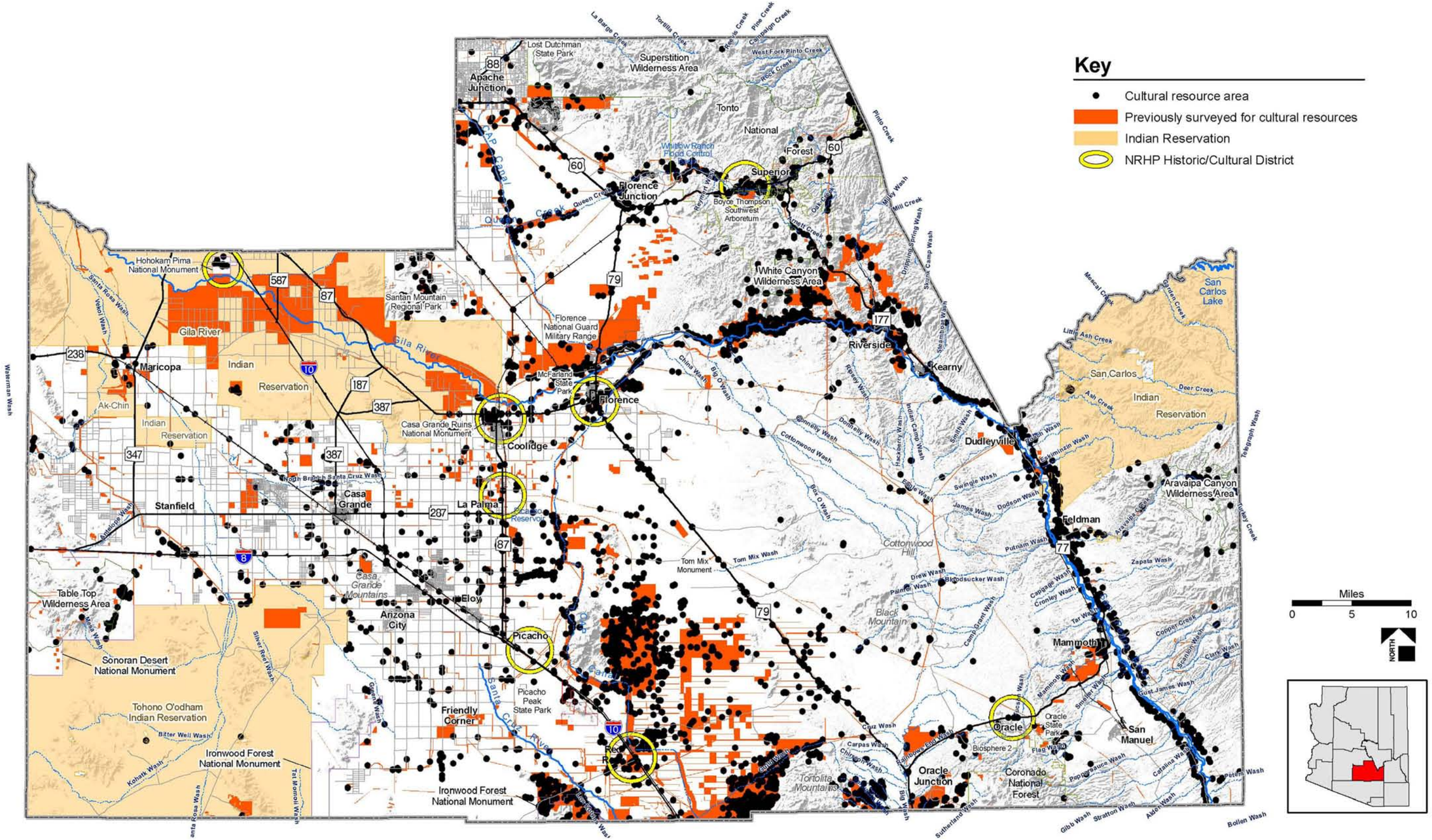


Figure 4. Cultural Resources

The four archaeological NRHP districts center around the Hohokam culture. Casa Grande National Monument, which was the first archaeological preserve to be dedicated in the country, contains the remnants of a three-story Hohokam adobe structure. The Hohokam-Pima National Monument, which is also known as Snaketown, is located on the Gila River Indian Reservation. Both the Los Robles Archaeological District and the McClellan Wash Archaeological District are representative of Classic-period Hohokam settlements and continue to contribute significantly to the understanding of the prehistory of the area.

When considering prehistoric and historic archaeological sites in the planning process, avoidance is generally considered the prudent approach. Future projects may require a Class III cultural survey to determine the presence of NRHP-eligible sites and properties.

2.7 Slope Analysis

Pinal County has significant mountain ranges and topography in the eastern half of the county and somewhat more sparse yet significant landforms that occur throughout the western portion (see Figure 5, *Slope Analysis*). These slopes can be characterized as surface topographies that range from 0%–3%, 3%–8%, 8%–12%, 12%–20%, and slopes greater than 20%. Slopes in the range of 0%–3% can be easily developed with minimal impact on the environment. Areas with slopes that range from 3%–8% are suitable for limited development but with more impact on the environment than slopes from 0%–3%. Slopes greater than 8% would require substantial site work for development purposes and also are some of the more environmentally sensitive lands. Slopes greater than 12% are generally not recommended for development.

2.8 Existing Land Ownership, Development Patterns, and Infrastructure

Development pressures within Pinal County are increasing at a rapid rate, and the pressure to develop unincorporated lands within Pinal County are intense. The county is situated between the expanding Phoenix metropolitan area within Maricopa County and the expanding Tucson metropolitan area within Pima County.

The *Pinal County Development Patterns* report and *Planned Area Development Map* from the CAAG give an overview of the current development patterns within the county, identify areas that are currently developed or planned for development, and identify potential future development trends. The report highlighted the tremendous growth pressure that Pinal County is currently under and estimated an 11% annual growth rate between the years 2001 and 2005. Additionally, the unincorporated areas of Pinal County between the years 2003 and 2005 grew by 40,567 people, which equates to a 3-year growth rate of 41.7%. The map shows that the majority of new development is west of Interstate 10 and west of State Route 79 in and around the cities of Maricopa and Coolidge and the towns of Florence, Queen Creek, and Eloy. Development pressure is also being seen east of State Route 79 in and around Oracle Junction and the Black Mountain area (see Figure A10*, Central Arizona Association of Governments PAD Map*, in Appendix A). These patterns and trends indicate areas that have a relatively low potential of large contiguous areas of open space and a relatively high need for trail connectivity due to potentially high concentrations of people.

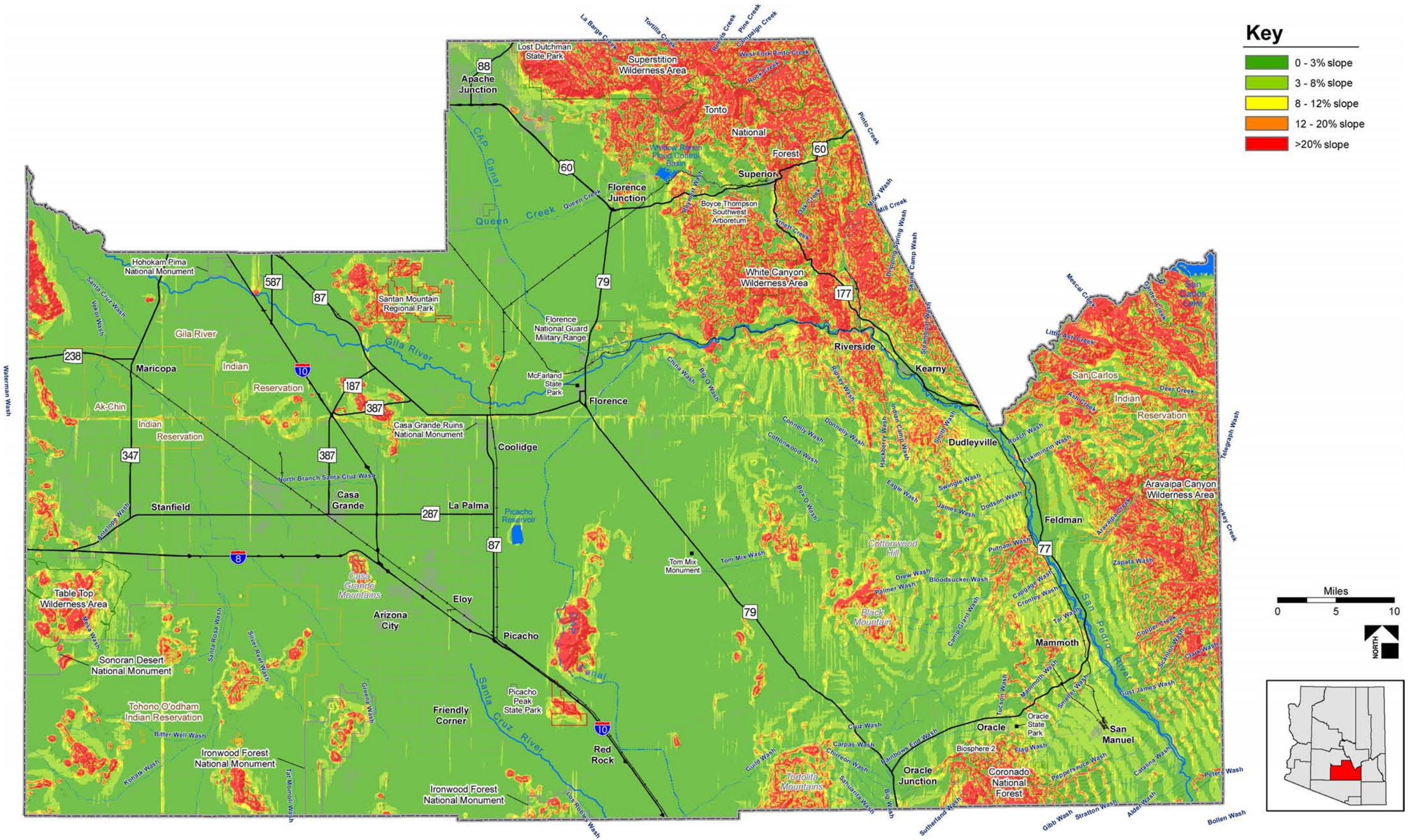


Figure 5. Slope Analysis

Overview of Land Ownership

An overview of landownership is found in Table 1, *Land Ownership*, and Figure 6, *Land Ownership*. The total approximate area of Pinal County is 3,437,517 acres; of this approximately 698,465 acres (20%) is Indian reservation land; approximately 1,204,938 acres (35%) is State Trust land; approximately 604,882 acres (18%) is Forest Service or BLM land; approximately 880,392 acres (26%) is private land; and approximately 48,840 acres (1%) is other lands comprising BOR, County, AGFD, and local or state park lands.

Table 1. Land Ownership

Ownership	Total Acres (approximate)	Percent of Total County Land
Indian Reservation	698,465	20%
State Trust	1,204,938	35%
Forest Service/BLM	604,882	18%
Private	880,392	26%
Other	48,840	1%
Total	3,437,517	100%

Utilities and Infrastructure

Existing, certified, and proposed utility alignments were identified within the county for 500kv, 345kv, 230kv, 115kv transmission lines; gas pipelines; and the Arizona Corporation Commission (ACC) approved alignment of 500kv and 230kv transmission lines (see Figure 7*, Utilities*). Utility right-of-ways were not used as trail corridors, unless they occurred along a preestablished trail corridor within the *Pinal County 2005 Trails Plan* or other approved planning documents due to homeland security concerns. Future planning efforts should not exclude the use of utility corridors for trails where possible.

2.9 Existing and Planned Parks, Open Space Areas, and Trails

A regional inventory of existing and planned parks, open space, and trails throughout the county was obtained from County staff and stakeholders (see Figure 3, *Regional Context Map*).

The open space and recreation elements of the following communities were used to establish previous open space, park, and trail planning efforts: City of Casa Grande, City of Coolidge, City of Eloy, City of Florence, City of Maricopa, Town of Queen Creek, Town of Kearny, Maricopa County, and Pima County. The information obtained consisted of existing and planned parks, as well as existing and planned trails which were identified within the communities' planning boundaries. Information from these communities was placed on the *Base Data Map* (see Figure 2, *Base Data Map),* and connections were established to each of these communities.

The following information provides an overview of the state and federal lands currently designated as recreation areas within Pinal County, as well as Pinal County's current designated parks. In addition, an overview of Pinal County's four regional trail corridors is provided.

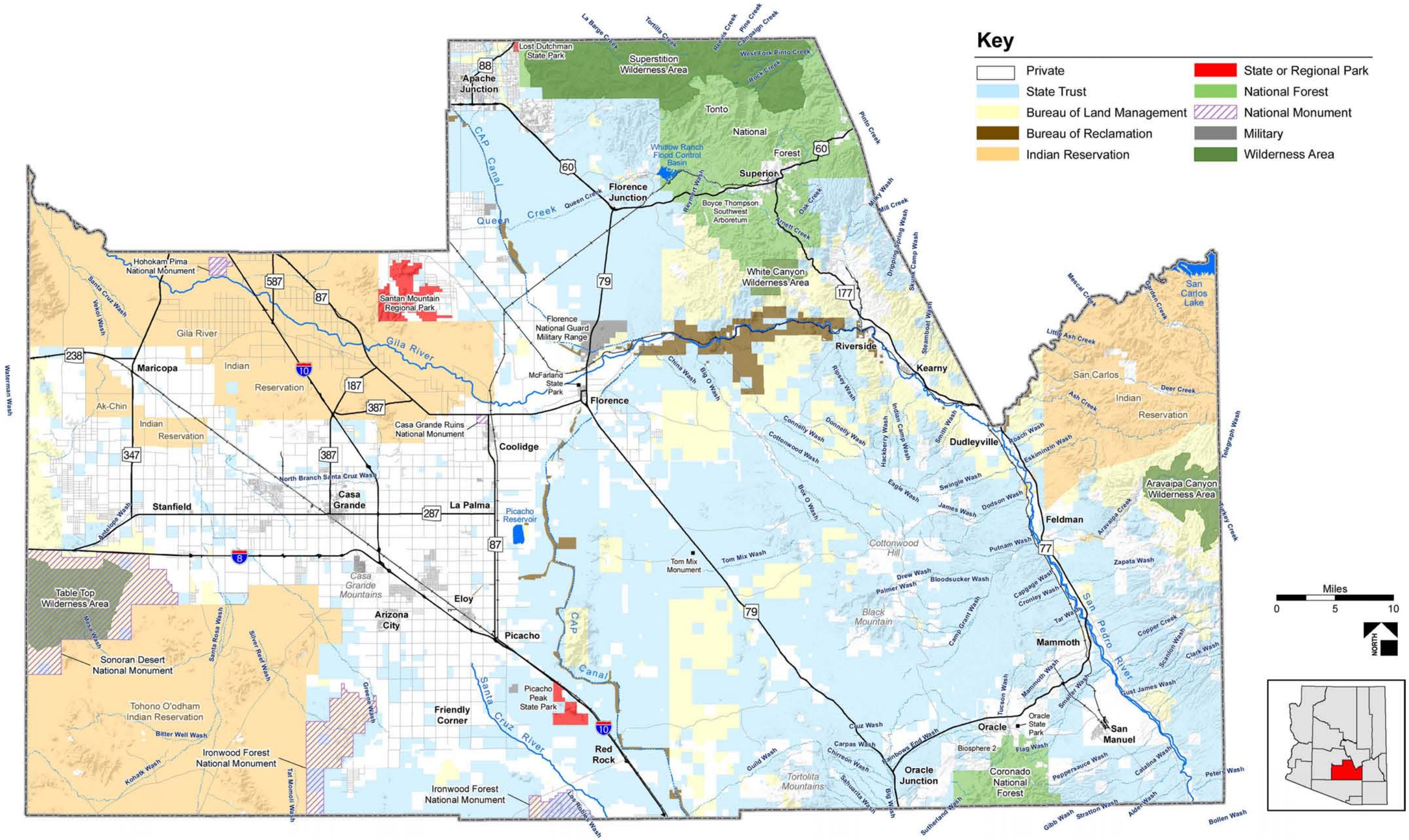


Figure 6. Land Ownership

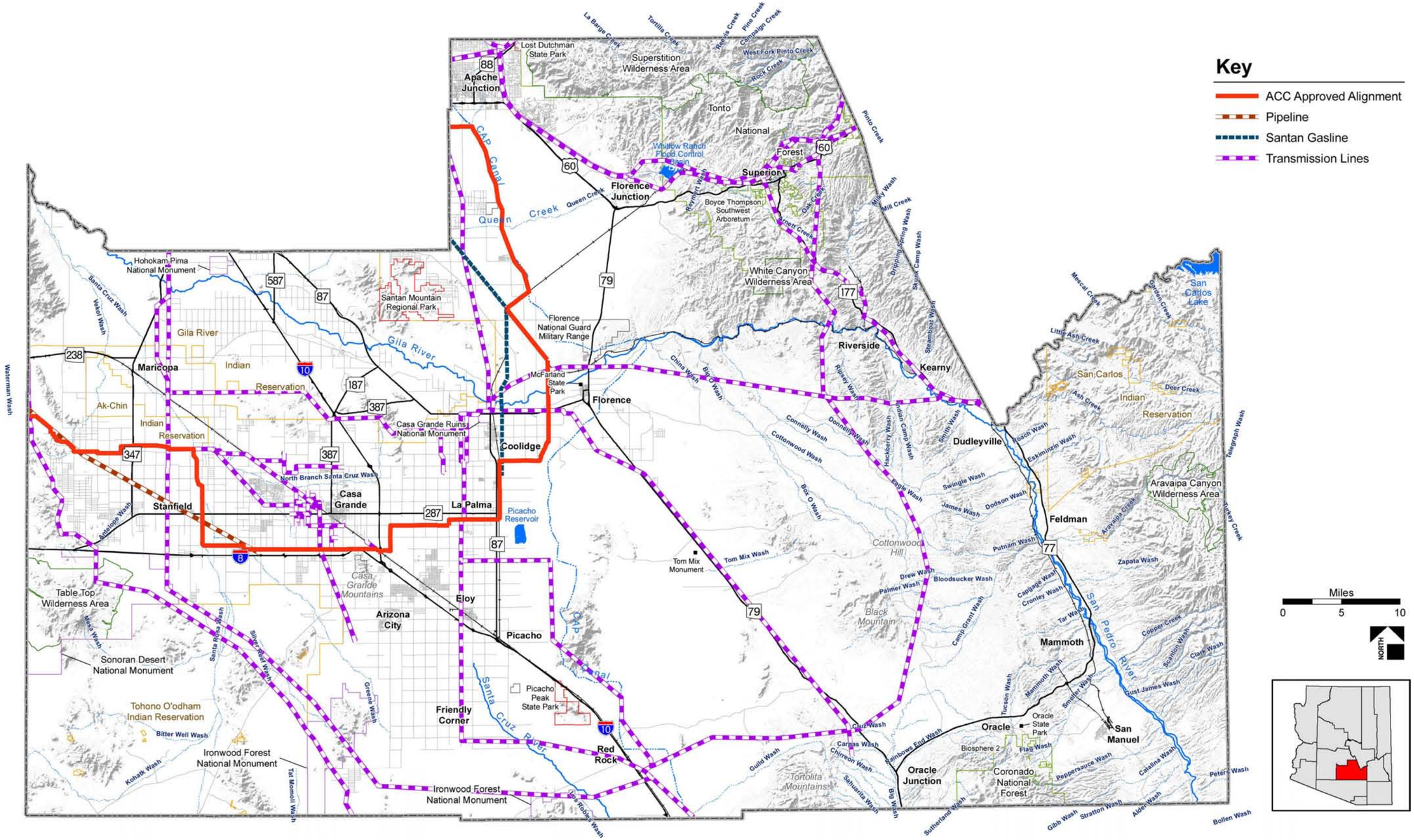


Figure 7. Utilities

Recreation Areas within Pinal County

Table 2, *Recreation Areas Within Pinal County,* shows the current existing recreation areas, their respective size, and the managing agencies found throughout the county. Within Pinal County there are currently eight national forests, monuments, or wilderness areas totaling approximately 363,138 acres. In addition, several state parks and mountain parks are located within the county, which total approximately 42,572 acres as identified below.

Table 2. Recreation Areas Within Pinal County

Recreation Area	Acres Within Pinal County	Managing Agency
Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Area	17,133	BLM
Boyce Thompson Arboretum	323	Arizona State Parks
Coronado National Forest	26,071	USDA Forest Service
Ironwood Forest National Monument	25,372	BLM
Lost Dutchman State Park	286	Arizona State Parks
McFarland State Historic Park	2	Arizona State Parks
Oracle State Park	4,000	Arizona State Parks
Picacho Peak State Park	335	Arizona State Parks
San Tan Mountain Regional Park	10,213	Maricopa County
Sonoran Desert National Monument	55,735	BLM
Superstition Wilderness Area	73,177	USDA Forest Service
Table Top Wilderness	32,394	BLM
Tonto National Forest	127,466	USDA Forest Service
Tortolita Mountain Park	27,413	Pima County
White Canyon Wilderness	5,790	BLM

Pinal County Parks

Pinal County manages and maintains five parks throughout the county (see Table 3, *Existing Pinal County Parks*).

Table 3. Existing Pinal County Parks

Parks	Acreage
Dudleyville Park	9.94
Oracle Park	4.92
Pinal County Fairgrounds	120.00
Pinal West/Kortsen Park	160.00
Randolph Park	0.74

Dudleyville Park is a 9.94 acre neighborhood park located near Dudleyville, Arizona. Amenities include softball/baseball field, picnic ramadas and grills, tot-lot equipment, sand volleyball court, and basketball court.

Oracle Park is a small neighborhood park encompassing 4.92 acres near Oracle, Arizona. Amenities include basketball court, picnic tables and grills, and playground equipment.

Pinal County Fairgrounds is a 120-acre county park near Casa Grande, Arizona. Amenities include fairgrounds office, meeting and event buildings, 4-H animal stalls, Central Arizona Raceway, Pinal County Animal Control building, and a fishing pond.

Pinal West or Kortsen Park is a 160-acre community park located near the community of Stanfield, Arizona. Amenities include picnic ramadas with grills and several group sites and playground equipment.

Randolph Park is a small neighborhood park located near Randolph, Arizona. Amenities include a basketball court, tot-lot equipment, and picnic tables.

Regional Trail Connections

As identified in the *Pinal County Trails Plan, 2005* (see Figure A1, in Appendix A *2005 Pinal County Trails Plan)* three primary regional trail corridors were identified. These three corridors, the Arizona Trail, the Central Arizona Project (CAP) canal corridor, and the Juan Bautista De Anza National Historic Trail, are described below. In addition, one multi-modal corridor was identified—the Great Western Trail (GWT).

Arizona Trail

The Arizona Trail is a 790-mile non-motorized state scenic trail that hikers, bikers, and equestrians can use. Through use of existing trails or primitive roads, the Arizona Trail, which connects Utah and Mexico through Arizona, is broken into 43 separate segments. Pinal County will soon have all but 3 miles completed of the nearly 55 miles of trails needed to connect Oracle to the Gila River. Additionally, there is approximately 15 miles of trail needed from the Gila River north to the Tonto National Forest. Pinal County will continue to work with the Arizona Trail Association (ATA), BLM, and the Forest Service to complete the trail.

CAP Canal

The CAP canal is a 336-mile-long system of aqueducts, tunnels, pumping plants, and pipelines constructed by the BOR. As the largest single source of renewable water supplies in the state of Arizona, the CAP canal is designed to bring about 1.5 million acre-feet of Colorado River water per year to municipal and industrial, agriculture, and Native American users. As part of the planning effort for the CAP canal, BOR committed itself to maintaining a 20-foot recreation corridor on the right side of the canal (facing downstream). The intent of the CAP is to include a 10-foot-wide paved, non-motorized path. Pinal County has over 53 miles of CAP canal that is also used as a connection to the Maricopa County Regional Trail System.

Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail

Established by Congress in 1990, the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, administered by the National Parks Service, preserves the corridor that Juan Bautista de Anza, commander of the Tubac Presidio, used to guide 198 settlers from Mexico to a mission in the San Francisco Bay Area. This 1,200-mile trail followed the Santa Cruz River to the Pima villages along the Gila River, and then followed the Gila to its junction with the Colorado River. The intent of the trail within Pinal County is to provide a non-motorized, paved, and non-paved historic recreational trail.

GWT

The GWT traverses the 4,455 miles from Mexico to Canada through five states—Arizona, Utah, Wyoming, Idaho, and Montana—incorporating stunning desert and canyon landscapes, plateaus, woodlands, dense forests, and alpine meadows to encompass the most diverse examples of flora and fauna in the western United States. The multi-modal GWT takes advantage of linking existing trails and roadways through publicly administered BLM lands and linking 18 national forests. To provide opportunity for every trail user group, the GWT will allow motorized OHV access where this use is already established, and in the more remote areas the trails will be exclusively non-motorized.

These four regional trails provide the framework from which the trails component of the Plan was developed. Connections to these trails were primarily established using existing or planned trails throughout the county, and additional trail connections were found using natural drainage ways, such as washes and rivers, and primitive roads.

3.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

3.1 Introduction

Providing opportunities for the public and the county as a whole to actively participate in the master planning process of this Plan was crucial to the development of the master plan. A total of six public meetings were held to identify the community's diverse interests, issues, and needs in an effort to provide a common vision and comprehensive foundation for the development of the master plan. These meetings were also held to solicit the public's input on the *Preliminary Master Plan*. In order to provide residents throughout the county with the opportunity to participate in the Plan, the meetings were held at different locations within the county.

Following is a summary of the public and stakeholder taskforce meetings that provided the basis for the development of the Plan.

3.2 Public Meetings – Values, Issues, and Needs

The purpose of the Values, Issues, and Needs public meetings was to provide an overall history and background of the project and an overview of the master planning process, as well as to solicit public input for their values, issues, and needs of open space and trails. These initial public meetings were particularly important since the information gathered from the public at these meetings would assist in developing the vision, goals, and objectives and the conceptual alternatives. Newspaper notifications introducing the meeting were published two weeks and one week prior to each meeting in local communities' newspapers. The public meetings were held in Apache Junction on June 27th, in Oracle on June 28th, and in Coolidge on June 29th. A complete detail of each meeting is located in Appendix C, *Public Involvement Information.*

The information presented at each meeting included a brief presentation of the county's existing resources including a slope, cultural, biological, ownership, utility, and trails overview. The presentation also included an overview of the master planning process and a tentative time schedule.

An open solicitation of values, issues, and needs for county residents in reference to open space and trails was conducted. The values were based on the premise, if you were to move away from Pinal County for five years, what elements or aspects of the county would you like to stay the same? Likewise, issues and needs were solicited under the same premise, except residents were asked, what would you change? The following is a summary of the publics' values, issues, and needs.

Values

- Dark at night
- Value mountain views and open areas
- Foreground views (non-cluttered)
- Preserve viewsheds
- Wildlife corridors
- Habitat to sustain wildlife
- Riparian corridors preservation
- Undisturbed natural areas (no golf courses)
- Wilderness character of existing open space
- Natural wash corridors
- Geological resources
- Proximity to existing open space areas
- Historic areas
- National historic sites
- Open space corridors along roadways
- Abundant and easy access to trails
- Hiking and equestrian trails
- Close proximity to local equestrian trails

- Keep the existing equestrian trails
- Trail solitude
- Wise, conservative, and sustainable use of water
- Southeastern corridor—preserve all of it
- Housing diversity (types)
- Low-density housing
- Pollution free
- Quiet

Issues

- Controlled access (at all levels)
- State-lands mandate
- Water supply
- No bicycle routes/paths
- Disappearing agriculture land (ranch and farm)
- Lack of protection for the San Pedro area and other riparian corridors
- Development impacts on wildlife
- Lack of regional planning
- Lack of coordination between state and local governments
- Rampant development without provisions for infrastructure
- No designated and enforced OHV trails or large use areas
- Increased traffic
- Increase in trash disposal / new site for transfer station

Needs

- Need more trails
- Quiet trails
- Trails that will not be destroyed
- All-season trails
- More areas to access trails
- Connectivity to the Arizona Trail (loop trails)
- Local multi-use path or trails
- Non-motorized trails
- Connection to Picacho Peak
- Southern east/west connection
- Butterfield connection
- Keep the existing equestrian trails
- Develop more riparian areas and trails
- Bike routes/lanes
- Link historic sites
- Safety on trails, open space
- Education programs for trail usage and respect of open space areas
- Regulation of motorized vehicles on trails
- Sustainability
- Growth controls
- Eliminate traffic and noise pollution through Oracle (from San Manuel through Tucson)
- Environmental safety (public health concerns)
- Health and safety
- Regulate desert dumping
- Local control
- Preserve rural character
- Preserve small town character

- Enhance natural character
- Preserve historic areas
- Preserve wash corridors
- Integrate farmland/ranchland and open space areas
- Create local volunteer groups

The previous listing of values, issues, and needs that were documented at the public meetings provided the general foundation for forming the vision, goals, and objectives of the Plan.

3.3 Public Meetings – Preliminary Master Plan

The purpose of the Preliminary Master Plan public meetings was to present the draft vision, goals, and objectives and the *Preliminary Master Plan*, which was developed from the initial public meetings and stakeholder meetings, respectively.

These meetings were held in Queen Creek on October 26th, in Saddlebrooke on October 30th, and in Maricopa on November 1st and consisted of a presentation of the following items:

- A summary of the inventory and analysis of the infrastructure and utilities; existing and planned land uses; biological, cultural, and environmental resources of the county (See Section 2.0, *Inventory and Analysis).*
- A summary and results of the initial public meetings (see Section 3.2, *Values, Issues, and Needs).*
- A draft vision, goals, and objectives were developed from information received at the initial public meetings.
- A draft of the open space definitions that were developed based on previous public comments and stakeholder input.
- The *Preliminary Master Plan* based on all the above information as well as the conceptual alternatives, the preferred alternative, and stakeholder input.

The following are the draft vision, goals, and objectives presented at these meetings. The *Preliminary Master Plan* is presented in Section 5.0, *Preliminary Master Plan*. Comments received at these meetings are located in Appendix C, *Public Involvement Information*.

The formulation of a successful open space and trails master plan is based on the preparation of realistic and accurate goals and objectives that address important issues and needs of the community. The vision identifies the future intent of the community relative to the provision of open space and trails. The definitions presented below for vision, goals, and objectives assist in differentiating between these elements.

- **Vision:** A concise statement that describes the image the community considers meaningful in terms of values and assets they have identified.
- **Goal:** A concise statement describing a desired condition to be achieved that addresses key issues relating to the values identified in the vision statement. A goal is generally not time dependent or suggestive of specific actions for achievement.
- **Objective:** A concise statement or method of action that addresses a goal and causes it to be achieved. An objective should be achievable and, when possible, measurable and time specific.

Vision

Pinal County's *Open Space and Trails Master Plan* promotes the quality of life of the region by providing areas of passive and active recreational opportunities, while conserving existing resources, such as natural scenic beauty, view corridors, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources, and cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. This Plan will encourage appropriate long-range growth planning opportunities, provide for a wide range of recreational activities for residents and visitors,

preserve the county's rural and natural open space character, and contribute to the well-being of its communities.

Goals

Goal 1: Develop a connected system of open space areas that protect and conserve natural, physical, cultural, and social resources.

Objective 1.1: Preserve, protect, or conserve areas of critical habitat and high habitat value and wildlife movement corridors.

Objective 1.2: Conserve large contiguous areas of the natural environment representative of the varying landscape characters within the county.

Objective 1.3: Preserve, protect, or conserve the existing natural drainage system.

Objective 1.4: Preserve, protect, enhance, and promote local histories, cultural, and agricultural resources within existing and new developments.

Objective 1.5: Preserve, protect, and provide areas for traditional cultural activities.

Objective 1.6: Provide and develop passive recreational activities for a spectrum of quality user experiences that are sensitive to the natural environment.

Objective 1.7: Develop private, state, and federal land acquisition techniques to implement the *Open Space and Trails Master Plan.*

Goal 2: Develop a safe multi-use trail system that provides connectivity throughout the county and to adjacent recreational areas.

Objective 2.1: Establish linkages to municipalities, regional parks, and state and federal recreational areas.

Objective 2.2: Provide for a wide range of non-motorized trail usages including hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking.

Objective 2.3: Incorporate designated western United States and state trail corridors into the overall county trail system.

Objective 2.4: Provide for a safe separation of non-motorized and motorized trail networks and corridors.

Objective 2.5: Provide standards for planning, designing, and developing trails that ensure compatibility with the natural environment, existing land uses, and variety of users, as well as provide for the safety of all.

Goal 3: Develop an accessible, comprehensive regional park system that provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors.

Objective 3.1: Promote public health by providing areas for regional passive and active recreational activities within the natural environment accessible to all.

Objective 3.2: Develop appropriate levels of service and standards for neighborhood, community, and regional park facilities within the unincorporated areas of the county.

Objective 3.3: Protect, conserve, or provide countywide opportunities to allow for future park and recreational trends.

Objective 3.4: Provide a coordinated process to maximize municipal, county, state, and federal park and recreational resources and service levels.

Objective 3.5: Promote the development of park and recreational facilities that support the quality of life and economic development of the county.

Goal 4: Develop park, open space, and trail guidelines for PADs and subdivision development that supports long-term sustainability.

Objective 4.1: Promote and provide incentives for conservation subdivision and PAD planning and design to conserve natural, cultural, and physical resources within the county.

Objective 4.2: Implement Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus legislation policies to protect the county's open space and water resources.

Objective 4.3: Develop standards and development criteria for integration of parkland, open space, and trails into PADs and subdivisions.

Objective 4.4: Identify specific park, open space, and trail amenities and their timely implementation to provide the service level desired by county residents and visitors.

Goal 5: Develop a framework to effectively manage the county's regional parks, open space, and trail system.

Objective 5.1: Develop an access management plan that identifies responsible parties for operating, maintaining, and enforcing the appropriate usage of the county's regional parks, open spaces, and trail corridors.

Objective 5.2: Develop a management plan to maintain and enhance the desired type and level of wildlife habitat within the county's regional park and open space areas.

Objective 5.3: Develop a wildfire management plan for the county's regional park and open space areas to minimize hazardous conditions in the natural and built environment.

Objective 5.4: Develop open space and trail standards and criteria to provide sufficient buffer zones relative to roadways, river and wash corridors, and development areas.

Objective 5.5: Develop a watershed management plan that protects the county's key contributing areas to promote water quality and conservation for future generations.

Objective 5.6: Promote collaboration among municipalities, county, state, and federal landowners/managers to provide an equitable level of recreation and open space opportunities.

3.4 Stakeholder Taskforce Meetings

The purpose of the Stakeholder Taskforce meetings was to provide input, data, and guidance on the Plan at key milestones in the master plan process. The stakeholders included various state and federal agencies, municipalities, interested non-governmental organizations, and various user groups. The following is a brief description of the stakeholder meetings. A complete list of all stakeholders and detailed meeting notes and comments are included in Appendix D, *Stakeholder Involvement Information.*

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 1

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 1 provided the stakeholders an introduction to the project, and an overview of the master planning process. The initial base data maps were presented which included a preliminary analysis on land ownership, slope analysis, major utility corridors, biological resources and cultural resources, and a review of the values, issues, and needs that were obtained from the first round of public meetings (see Section 2.0, *Inventory and Analysis*, and Section 3.2, *Public Meetings)*. An open-dialog session provided the stakeholders an opportunity to identify their own values, issues, needs, and concerns. The stakeholders were asked to provide additional base data regarding their areas of concern and respective jurisdictions to assist in creating a solid base data map for the project.

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 2

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 2 provided the stakeholders with a project update and a summary of the additional data collected since the Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 1. In addition, three conceptual alternatives (see Section 4.0, *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives)* were presented to the taskforce, and an open-dialog session was held to discuss comments, concerns, and preferences to the three conceptual alternatives. The stakeholders were given an opportunity to review the conceptual alternatives during and subsequent to the meeting, and were asked to identify their preferred concept or a combination of concepts that would provide the basis for developing a preferred conceptual master plan alternative. The stakeholders were also asked to continue to supply base data information.

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 3

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 3 provided the stakeholders with a project update of the master planning process to date and a summary of the comments and additional data collected since Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 2. The stakeholders were then presented the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* for their review and comment during an open-dialog session during and subsequent to the meeting. The stakeholders were asked to continue providing additional base data information to assist in refining the preferred alternative into the *Preliminary Master Plan* that would be presented to the public.

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 4

Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 4 provided the stakeholders with a final project update of the master planning process and a summary of the comments and additional information received since Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 3. The stakeholders were then presented with the *Draft Final Master Plan,* which was developed from the public's review of the *Preliminary Master Plan* (see Section 5.0, *Preliminary Master Plan,* and Section 3.3, *Public Meetings);* public comments received from the initial public meetings (see Section 3.2, *Public Meetings)*; and stakeholder comments received to date. The stakeholders were also presented with a draft of the *Recreation Area Design Manual for Subdivisions and PADs*, and were asked to provide additional comments and suggestions regarding the manual and the *Draft Final Master Plan.*

4.0 Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives

4.1 Introduction

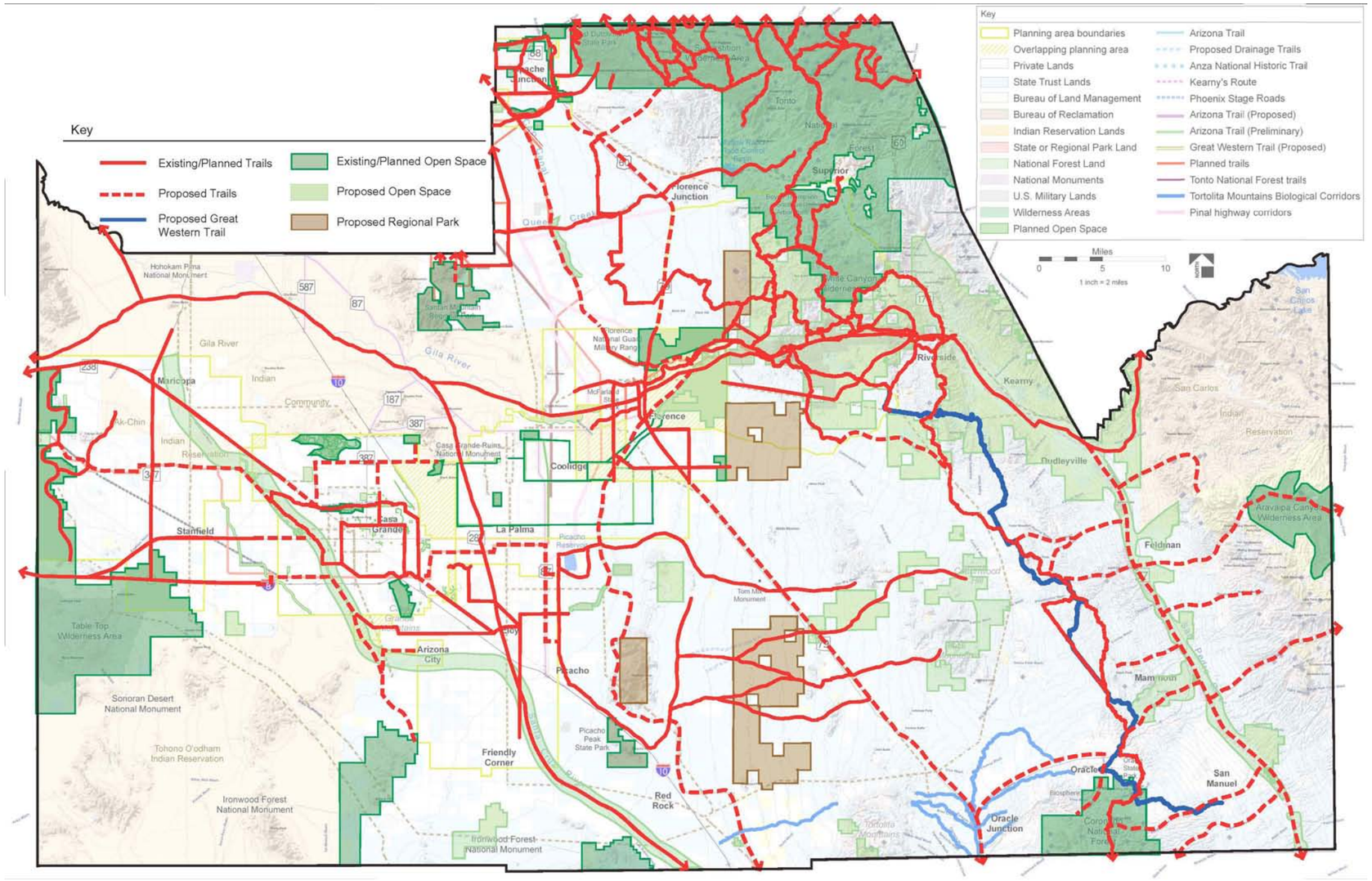
Three *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* were developed for the Plan and were based on two general premises: (1) conservation of critical resources including cultural and biological resources, viewsheds, physical characteristic of the land, and major riparian and river corridors and (2) overall connectivity including open space area and trail connectivity. Each conceptual alternative represented varying degrees of conservation and connectivity, with an overall relevancy to land ownership. The conceptual alternatives were developed to present variable scenarios, ideas, and pros and cons for the stakeholders and the county to consider and discuss. These alternatives were presented at Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 2 and are illustrated in this section, *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* (see Figures 8–10, *Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concepts A, B, and C)*. Following the Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives presentation, the stakeholders were invited to discuss the alternatives with the consultant team and staff in an open-discussion format. Stakeholders were encouraged to review the alternatives and to select their preferred alternative or a combination of alternatives on a comment sheet, along with any additional information they felt was relevant to the development of a preferred alternative. A summary of their comments are located in Appendix D, *Stakeholder Involvement Information*.

4.2 Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives

All alternatives take into consideration existing or planned areas, including municipalities, national forests, national monuments, state parks, and Indian reservations, and connect these areas with each other through trail networks and open space corridors. General plans were provided for all communities within the county, and those planned areas were then plotted on a base map from which to begin the physical planning of the overall open space of the county. Each concept connects existing and planned areas with each other into varying degrees of conservation and connectivity. While *Conceptual Master Plan Alternative B* indicates the most proposed open space and *Conceptual Master Plan Alternative A* the least amount, all three alternatives indicate potential areas for regional parks and trails. Connectivity is provided to all adjacent counties through trail and open space connections.

Identified on the *Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concepts* are planning area boundaries for all municipalities located in Pinal County. The planning area boundaries were identified using maps from existing general plans. Overlapping planning boundaries were identified where one municipality had identified a planning boundary that overlapped another municipality's planning boundary. Existing or planned open space areas such as the national forests, national monuments, and wilderness areas were identified on the maps, as well as open space areas identified by municipalities.

Pinal County is fortunate to have the San Tan Mountain Regional Park and the Tonto National Forest on the county's northern border; the Table Top Wilderness Area and an identified planned regional park facility on the county's western border; the Ironwood Forest National Monument, the Coronado National Forest and the Tortolita Mountain Park on the county's southern border; and the Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness area on the county's eastern border. The need for regional parks within the central corridor of the county is important and necessary to reflect the level of service of a one-hour drive time to access a regional park facility from any point within the county, so all of the conceptual alternatives reflect this need.

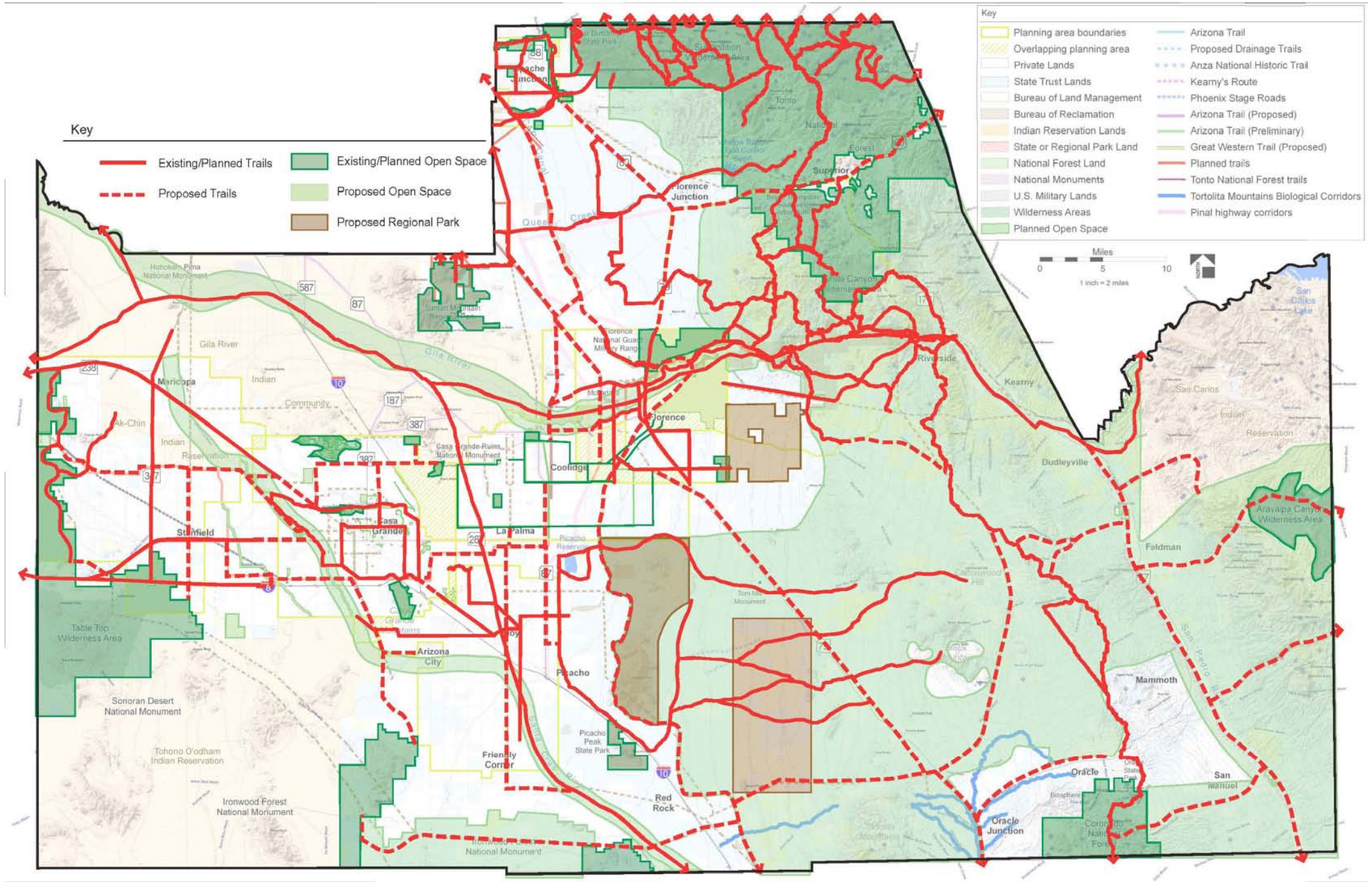


CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVE A

Alternative A proposes that federal land provides the basis for securing open space lands. It maximizes federal lands opportunities while minimizing the identification of open space areas within State Trust and private lands designations. Alternative A identifies four regional parks, centrally located from north to south within the county. A summary of Alternative A is provided below:

- Maximizes federal land ownership designations as opportunities for open space areas and trail corridor connections.
- Utilizes private land for trail linkages and open space connections along major river corridors.
- Identifies four regional parks, designated on federal land, centrally located within the county. These park locations allocate a variety of separated use areas for passive and active recreational opportunities and programming.
- Identifies open space areas for critical riparian linkages along major river corridors.
- Maximizes trail corridors and connections within the southeastern area of the county.
- Utilizes public infrastructure, drainageways, and canals for trail corridor linkages.
- Proposed trail corridors connect existing/planned trail systems within municipalities.
- Of the 3,437,517 acres within Pinal County, the open space in Alternative A is distributed as follows:
    - Existing/planned open space = 387,400 acres (11%)
    - Proposed open space = 322,350 acres (9.5%)
    - Proposed regional parks = 69,630 acres (2%)
    - Total open space and regional parks = 779,380 acres (22.5%)

Figure 8. Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concept A

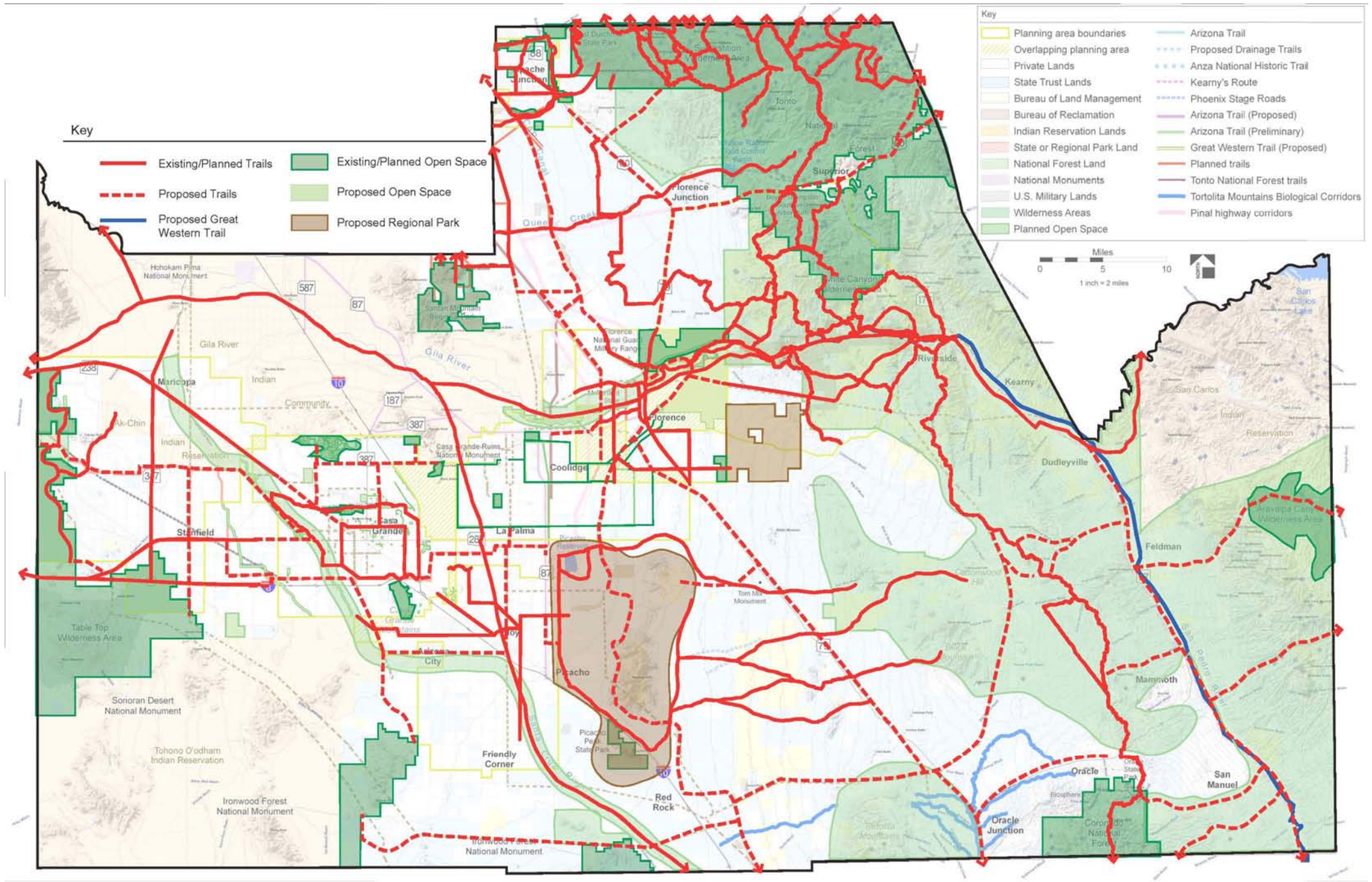


CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVE B

Alternative B proposes the use of federal, state, and private land ownership designations and places the majority of the emphasis on conserving large contiguous areas of open space, specifically in the largely undeveloped eastern half of the county, leaving growth corridors in the western half. Alternative B identifies three regional park facilities in the central portion of the county. A summary of Alternative B is provided below:

- Maximizes federal, state, and private land ownership designations as opportunities for open space areas and trail corridor connections.
- Identifies three regional parks centrally located within the county. These proposed park locations and sizes allocate sufficient separated use areas for passive and active recreational opportunities and programming.
- Maximizes open space linkages and buffers contiguous to national existing/planned open space areas.
- Maximizes proposed open space connections to existing open space areas and proposed regional parks.
- Identifies large open space areas along major river corridors.
- Maximizes preservation of critical and high-quality habitat areas.
- Maximizes trail corridor linkages from municipalities to existing/planned and proposed open space areas.
- Maximizes trail system loop opportunities through the county by utilizing existing/planned trail systems with proposed trail corridors.
- Utilizes public infrastructure, drainageways, canals, and transmission lines for trail corridor linkages.
- Of the 3,437,517 acres within Pinal County the open space in Alternative B is distributed as follows:
    - Existing/planned open space = 387,400 acres (11%)
    - Proposed open space = 1,321,802 acres (38.5%)
    - Proposed regional parks = 110,980 acres (3%)
    - Total open space and regional parks = 1,820,182 acres (52.5%)

Figure 9. Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concept B



CONCEPTUAL MASTER PLAN ALTERNATIVE C

Alternative C proposes federal, state, and private land ownership designations for open space areas and trail corridors, while balancing conservation goals with private and state land opportunities. Alternative C identifies two centrally located regional park locations. A summary of Alternative C is provided below:

- Utilizes federal, state, and private land ownership designations as opportunities for open space areas and trail corridor connections.
- Identifies two regional parks centrally located within the county. These proposed park locations allow for continued growth of the surrounding municipalities while allowing for additional growth to surround the park boundaries. The proposed sizes of the regional parks allocate sufficient separated use areas for passive and active recreational opportunities and programming.
- Provides some expansion to national existing/planned open space areas.
- Provides open space and trail corridor integration with future development areas.
- Provides preservation of critical habitat and some high-quality habitat.
- Maximizes trail corridor linkages from municipalities to existing/planned and proposed open space areas.
- Maximizes trail system loop opportunities through the county by utilizing existing/planned trail systems with proposed trail corridors.
- Utilizes public infrastructure, drainageways, canals, and transmission lines for trail corridor linkages
- Proposed trail corridors connect existing/planned trail systems within municipalities.
- Of the 3,437,517 acres within Pinal County, the open space in Alternative C is distributed as follows:
    - Existing/ planned open space = 387,400 acres (11%)
    - Proposed open space = 870,920 acres (25%)
    - Proposed Regional Parks = 118,800 acres (3.5%)
    - Total open space and regional parks = 1,377,120 acres (39.5%)

Figure 10. Open Space and Trails Master Plan Concept C

4.3 Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative

The majority of Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting attendees preferred Alternative C or a combination of Alternatives B and C. The *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* (Figure 11, *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative*) was developed from the input and comments from the County and stakeholder taskforce members received during Stakeholder Taskforce Meetings No. 2 and No. 3 (see Appendix D for specific meeting notes and comments). The following main points were identified as priorities in developing a preferred alternative.

- Convenient, centralized location of proposed regional parks.
- Good balance of open space with land ownership constraints.
- Overall open space and trail connectivity throughout the county and to adjacent recreational areas.

Planning issues and concerns that needed to be addressed in development of the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* included the following:

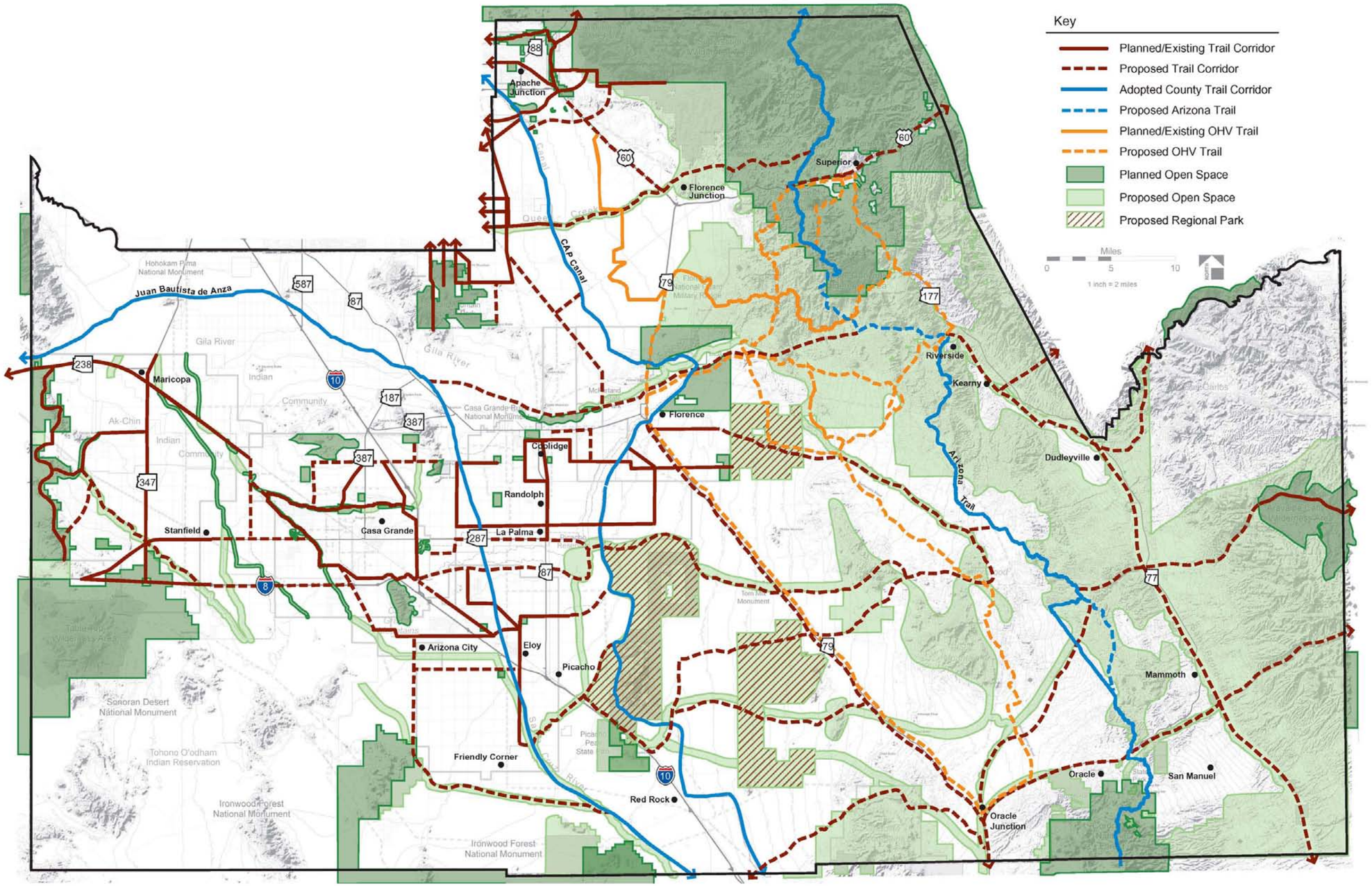
- Show the Lost Goldmine Trail alignment.
- Indicate existing and planned OHV trails that had been previously identified by the stakeholder taskforce members.
- Remove of all trail alignments from the transmission line corridors due to increasing protection of these facilities based on homeland security concerns.
- Show trail linkages from all municipalities to existing/planned open space areas.
- Make proposed open space areas buffer existing open space such as national forests, national monuments, wilderness areas, and other regional parks.
- Consider incorporating Conserving Arizona's Future Initiative parcels as proposed open space.
- Provide a connecting network of open space areas and corridors.
- Define open space categories that can address varying criteria and allowable land uses.

During the Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting No. 3, the following proposed Open Space System definition as presented with the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* for stakeholder comment.

> An open space system is a connected system of open space areas that maintain, as its primary purpose, the ecological health of the region/landscape and has as its natural consequence, the outcome of promoting human and biological health by allowing for passive and active recreational activities, solitude, natural landscapes, and wildlife movement. An open space system conserves elements of existing resources such as natural scenic beauty, view corridors, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources, and cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations.

The *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative*, as shown in Figure 11, *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative,* proposes the use of federal, state, and minimal private land ownership designations, while balancing conservation goals with private and state land opportunities. The Preferred Concept identifies three regional park locations centrally located within the county. A summary of the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* is listed below.

- Connects larger open space areas using open space corridors to create a contiguous open space system.
- Uses federal, state, and private lands within open space areas to ensure conservation of natural resources.


Key
Planned/Existing Trail Corridor
Proposed Trail Corridor
Adopted County Trail Corridor
Proposed Arizona Trail
Planned/Existing OHV Trail
Proposed OHV Trail
Planned Open Space
Proposed Open Space
Proposed Regional Park
Miles
0
5
10
1 inch = 2 miles
Apache Junction
Florence Junction
Superior
Riverside
Kearny
Dudleyville
Maricopa
Florence
Coolidge
Randolph
La Palma
Casa Grande
Stanfield
Arizona City
Eloy
Picacho
Friendly Corner
Red Rock
Oracle
Oracle Junction
San Manuel
Mammoth
CAP Canal
Juan Bautista de Anza
Arizona Trail
Gila River
Hohokam Pima National Monument
Ak-Chin Indian Community
Casa Grande Ruins National Monument
Sonoran Desert National Monument
Tohono O'odham Indian Reservation
Ironwood Forest National Monument
Tom Ridge Monument
Picacho Peak State Park
Tortolita Wilderness Area
Santa Catalina Wilderness Area
Superstition Wilderness Area
Superstition Mountains
Queen Creek
Pinal Creek
Mineral Creek
Mammoth Creek
Oracle State Park
Mount Lemmon
Mount Graham
Mount Ord
Mount Turnbull
Mount Wrightson
Mount Hopkins
Mount Ord
Mount Turnbull
Mount Wrightson
Mount Hopkins
Mount Graham
Mount Lemmon

- Provides open space buffers contiguous to national forest lands, wilderness areas, and national monuments.
- Provides open space and trail corridor connectivity to adjacent counties.
- Allows preservation of high-quality habitat areas located along the Gila River, Santa Cruz River, and the San Pedro River corridors.
- Conserves existing natural scenic resources, including view corridors, from existing and proposed urban areas.
- Uses existing open space corridors that have been established within municipalities to link to the overall open space system.
- Allows for projected growth areas adjacent to municipalities.
- Uses the three adopted county trail corridors as linkages to the proposed trail corridors network system.
- Uses federal, state, and private lands within trail corridors to ensure complete linkages to open space systems.
- Uses public infrastructure, canals, and drainage ways for trail corridor connections.
- Creates linkages to the municipalities' existing and planned trail networks.
- Provides trail corridor linkages from municipalities to the Open Space System.
- Connects the three proposed regional park locations.
- Provides trail corridor loop opportunities and integration with future development areas.
- Provides a loop system for the proposed OHV trails to connect to the GWT route.
- Of the 3,437,517 acres within Pinal County the proposed open space in the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative* is distributed as follows:
    - Existing/planned open space = 387,400 acres (11%)
    - Proposed open space = 832,089 acres (24%)
    - Proposed regional parks = 105,948 acres (3%)
    - Total open space and regional parks = 1,325,437 acres (38%)

5.0 Preliminary Master Plan

5.1 Introduction

Based on the stakeholders' and County's input of the *Conceptual Master Plan Alternatives* and the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative*, a *Preliminary Master Plan* was developed and presented at three public meetings held in October and November. A description of the *Preliminary Master Plan* is shown in Figure 12, *Preliminary Master Plan.*

A complete record of public comments received on the *Preliminary Master Plan* can be found in Appendix C, *Public Involvement Information.* Following is a summary of the main issues or concerns that the public mentioned during or subsequent to these meetings and that were addressed in the *Draft Final Master Plan*

- A concern that the Arizona Army National Guard Florence Military Reservation will be perceived as an active or passive recreation area. It was suggested that a restricted use open space definition be added to the master plan to address limited access and use to the public based on specific land managers' operational activities.
- A need for a larger open space buffer around the Arizona Trail corridor.
- A need for more open space areas within PADs and subdivisions.
- A need to keep Vekol Wash and BLM lands available for equestrian use.
- A desire to preserve BLM lands as open space.
- A need to separate OHV trails from non-motorized trails.
- A desire to protect Hidden Valley and Haley Hills in the western portion of the county.

5.2 Open Space Categories

As identified by the public and stakeholder taskforce, a need for a refined idea of open space was required to determine different types of open space and the specific criteria and uses allowed for each type (e.g., developed verses natural). Traditionally, open space is thought of in many different ways, and these categories were developed in the spirit of the public and stakeholder taskforce perceptions of open space, and what they identified as important county resources. The proposed open space indicated on the *Preliminary Master Plan* (Figure 12, *Preliminary Master Plan*) incorporates all types of open space. These categories were presented at the public meetings and reflect the communities' vision, goals, and objectives:

Developed Open Space Areas consist of developed areas that are designated for passive and active park and recreational activities. Developed open space areas should conserve the natural drainage patterns and maintain downstream flows. Drainageways provide natural stormwater management, areas for groundwater recharge, and natural biological movement corridors and can provide valuable natural linkages to adjacent areas. These developed areas can include parks, traditional park and recreational programming, and trails. Although developed open space areas could incorporate stormwater storage areas, these areas will not be substituted for traditional park development.

Transitional Open Space Areas consist of areas that abut or are adjacent to currently protected or planned open space areas such as state and national parks, national monuments, wilderness areas, and national forests, and areas identified within the Plan. Preserving the edge of these dedicated state and national lands will ensure equitable access to all. Every effort shall be made to extend the natural environment of the protected lands, and to provide a natural integration to surrounding protected landscapes. Facilities such as parks and stormwater storage areas within transitional open space areas allow for public access and the preservation of view corridors.

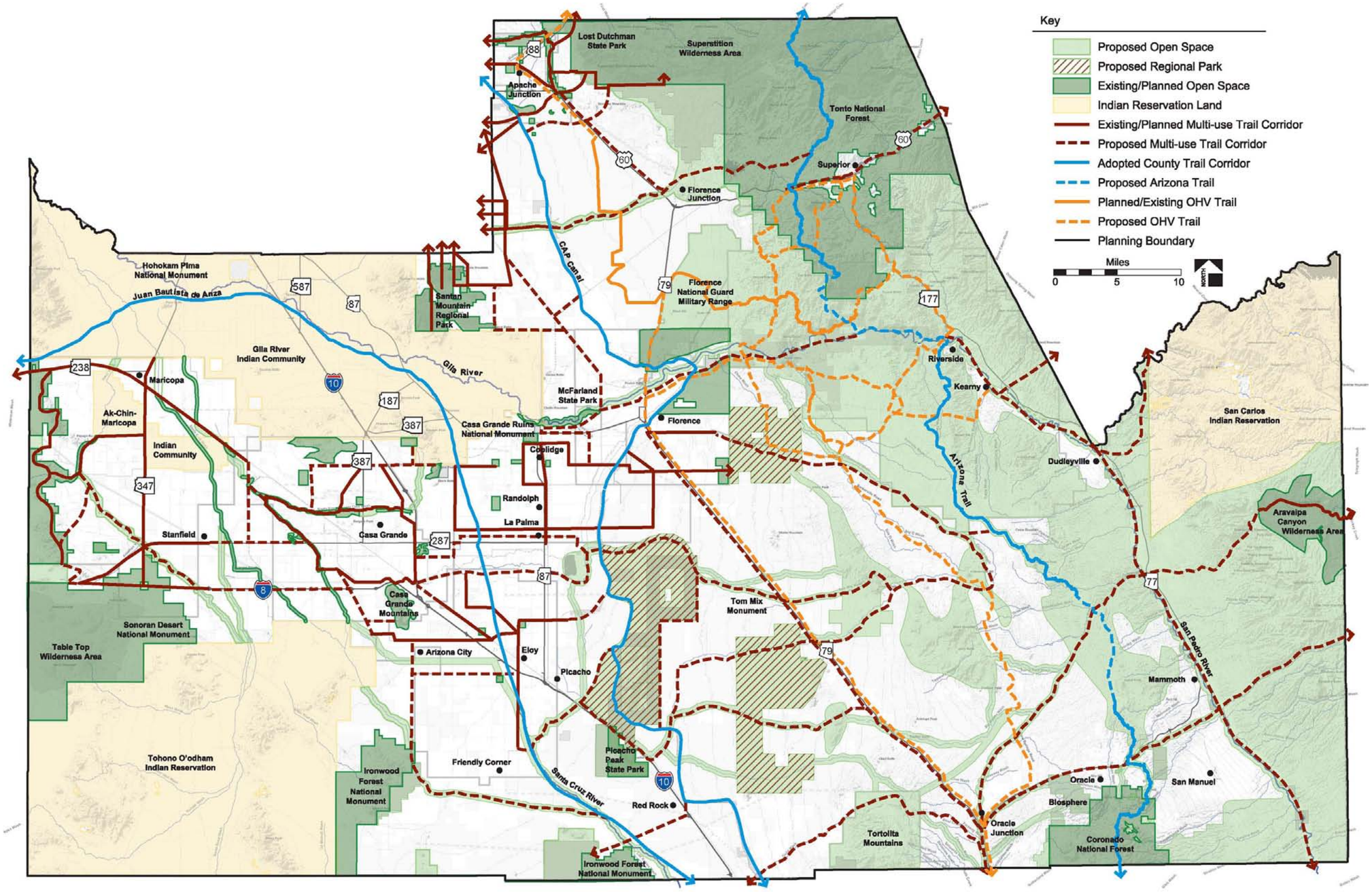


Figure 12. Preliminary Master Plan

Heritage Open Space Areas are areas that have significant cultural value. They include working landscapes such as agricultural and ranching heritage, as well as cultural resources such as historic and prehistoric archaeological sites. Heritage areas can also be places of traditional cultural activities such as festivals or ceremonial/religious activities. It is important to recognize heritage areas as areas of diverse human activities that if irresponsibly disrupted could negatively impact social and environmental conditions. Careful consideration should be given to identifying heritage areas, as well as a development of prudent management approaches. The American Farmland Trust has identified areas within Pinal County as strategic prime ranchland at risk, which could be identified as heritage open space areas. Other examples could include prehistoric or historic archaeological sites or districts such as the Los Robles Archaeological District.

Conservation Open Space Areas are areas that have a demonstrated and important ecological function. Areas that have a high to medium habitat value, which includes substantial vegetation, important natural or geologic features, and biological movement corridors, should be preserved in an effort to maintain the ecological health of the region. Examples of high-quality habitat include areas designated as critical habitat, and large undisturbed expanses of land, such as mountain ranges, river corridors, perennial streams, and open desert areas. Medium-quality habitat may include washes nearer to developed areas, where land may be more fragmented but where water and food may be available.

5.3 Preliminary Master Plan

The *Preliminary Master Plan* was based on the feedback received from the *Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative*. The siting of specific proposed open space areas and trail corridors were identified based on the suitability of activities, surrounding land use, ecological factors, topography, view sheds, and cultural resources.

The *Preliminary Master Plan* was developed using the same premises as the preferred alternative with changes including the following general principles:

- Maintain large contiguous areas of natural vegetation and open space
- Maintain wide open space corridors along major washes and watercourses
- Maintain connectivity for the movement of wildlife
- Maintain areas of nature with high biodiversity throughout county developments
- Provide trail corridors in all directions throughout the county
- Provide multiple points of connectivity to adjacent counties
- Provide separated multi-use and OHV trail corridors
- Provide looping trail systems
- Of the 3,437,517 acres within Pinal County the approximate open space in the *Preliminary Master Plan* is distributed as follows:
    - Existing/planned open space = 387,400 acres (11%)
    - Proposed open space = 783,236 acres (23%)
    - Proposed regional parks = 104,821 acres (3%)
    - Total open space and regional parks = 1,275,457 acres (37%)
- Of the 888,057 acres of proposed open space and regional park areas shown within the Preliminary Master Plan, the following is an approximate breakdown of ownership designations it is composed of:

- State Trust Land = 477,965 acres (53%)
- Private Land = 160,809 acres (18%)
- BLM = 220,357 acres (25%)
- BOR = 28,616 acres (3%)
- Military Lands = 260 acres (less than 1%)
- Other (AGFD) = 50 acres (less than 1%)

For the purpose of this Plan, Indian reservation lands are not considered a part of the existing/ planned or proposed open space as it is not currently protected open space. While development may occur on tribal lands, it is subject to the rules and regulations of the respective communities and could be developed as they desire.

6.0 Final Master Plan

6.1 Introduction

The *Final Master Plan* is a culmination of all key planning tasks identified in Sections 1.0–5.0 and is based on public, stakeholder, and County input on the *Preliminary Master Plan*. A *Draft Final Master Plan* was developed to present to the Planning and Zoning Commission in which no comments were received that resulted in any modification to the Plan. The following subsections summarize the *Final Master Plan* as it is shown in Figure 14, *Final Master Plan Map.*

6.2 Vision, Goals, and Objectives

Vision

Pinal County's Open Space and Trails Master Plan promotes the quality of life of the region by providing areas of passive and active recreational opportunities, while conserving existing resources, such as natural scenic beauty, view corridors, wildlife habitat, agricultural resources designated at risk, and cultural heritage for the benefit of present and future generations. This Plan will encourage appropriate long-range growth planning opportunities, provide for a wide range of recreational activities for residents and visitors, preserve the county's rural and natural open space character, and contribute to the well-being of its communities.

Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Develop a connected system of open space areas that protect and conserve natural, physical, cultural, and social resources.

Objective 1.1: Preserve, protect, or conserve areas of critical habitat and high habitat value and wildlife movement corridors.

Objective 1.2: Conserve large contiguous areas of the natural environment representative of the varying landscape characters within the county.

Objective 1.3: Preserve, protect, or conserve the existing natural drainage system.

Objective 1.4: Preserve, protect, enhance, and promote local histories, cultural, and agricultural resources designated at risk within existing and new developments.

Objective 1.5: Preserve, protect, and provide areas for traditional cultural activities.

Objective 1.6: Provide and develop passive recreational activities for a spectrum of quality user experiences that are sensitive to the natural environment.

Objective 1.7: Develop private, state, and federal land acquisition techniques to implement the Open Space and Trails Master Plan.

Goal 2: Develop a safe multi-use trail system that provides connectivity throughout the county and to adjacent recreational areas.

Objective 2.1: Establish linkages to municipalities, regional parks, and state and federal recreational areas.

Objective 2.2: Provide for a wide range of non-motorized trail usages including hiking, equestrian, and mountain biking.

Objective 2.3: Incorporate designated western United States and state trail corridors into the overall county trail system.

Objective 2.4: Provide for a safe separation of non-motorized and motorized trail networks and corridors.

Objective 2.5: Provide standards for planning, designing, and developing trails that ensure compatibility with the natural environment, existing land uses, and variety of users, as well as provide for the safety of all.

Goal 3: Develop an accessible, comprehensive regional park system that provides a balance of passive and active recreational opportunities for county residents and visitors.

Objective 3.1: Promote public health by providing areas for regional passive and active recreational activities within the natural environment accessible to all.

Objective 3.2: Develop appropriate levels of service and standards for neighborhood, community, and regional park facilities within the unincorporated areas of the county.

Objective 3.3: Protect, conserve, or provide countywide opportunities to allow for future park and recreational trends.

Objective 3.4: Provide a coordinated process to maximize municipal, county, state, and federal park and recreational resources and service levels.

Objective 3.5: Promote the development of park and recreational facilities that support the quality of life and economic development of the county.

Goal 4: Develop park, open space, and trail guidelines for PADs and subdivision development that supports long-term sustainability.

Objective 4.1: Promote and provide incentives for conservation subdivision and PAD planning and design to conserve natural, cultural, and physical resources within the county.

Objective 4.2: Implement Growing Smarter and Growing Smarter Plus legislation policies to protect the county's open space and water resources.

Objective 4.3: Develop standards and development criteria for integration of parkland, open space, and trails into PADs and subdivisions.

Objective 4.4: Identify specific park, open space, and trail amenities and their timely implementation to provide the service level desired by county residents and visitors.

Goal 5: Develop a framework to effectively manage the county's regional parks, open space, and trail system.

Objective 5.1: Develop an access management plan that identifies responsible parties for operating, maintaining, and enforcing the appropriate usage of the county's regional parks, open spaces, and trail corridors.

Objective 5.2: Develop a management plan to maintain and enhance the desired type and level of wildlife habitat within the county's regional park and open space areas.

Objective 5.3: Develop a wildfire management plan for the county's regional park and open space areas to minimize hazardous conditions in the natural and built environment.

Objective 5.4: Develop open space and trail standards and criteria to provide sufficient buffer zones relative to roadways, river and wash corridors, and development areas.

Objective 5.5: Develop a watershed management plan that protects the county's key contributing areas to promote water quality and conservation for future generations.

Objective 5.6: Promote collaboration among municipalities and county, state, and federal landowners/managers to provide an equitable level of recreation and open space opportunities.

6.3 Open Space and Trails Master Plan Elements

The *Final Master Plan* (see Figure 13, *Final Master Plan Map)* is based on the county's resource opportunities and constraints as identified in Section 2.0*, Inventory and Analysis*, and public, stakeholder, and County staff input identified in Section 3.0, *Public Participation.* The siting of specific proposed open space areas and trail corridors were identified based on the suitability of activities, surrounding land use, ecological factors, topography, viewsheds, and cultural resources.

Four overall open space designations are identified on the *Final Master Plan* that address previous planning efforts of other entities, existing or future land manager operational activities, and the planning efforts of this study. Following is a brief description of the identified designations:

Existing/Planned Open Space areas such as the national forests, national monuments, and wilderness areas were identified on the maps, as well as open space areas identified by municipalities (see Figure 1, *Base Data Map*, and Figure 2, *Regional Context Map).*

Existing/Planned or Proposed Regional Parks are regional parks that have been identified from previously adopted county or municipal plans. Proposed regional parks are those areas that were identified through this master planning process and are discussed below.

Restricted Use Open Space areas allow limited access to the public for recreational purposes due to the land manager's operational activities. It is the land manager's responsibility to secure the area and provide notifications and signage for the public when the property is not available for public use.

Proposed Open Space areas are those areas that had not been previously identified by any entity as existing or planned open space.

Of the 3,437,517 acres within Pinal County, the *Final Master Plan* is composed of the following approximate acres/percentages of the above-mentioned open space designations:

- Existing/planned open space = 399,300 acres (12%)
- Existing/planned or proposed regional parks = 168,700 acres (5%)
- Restricted use open space = 25,900 acres (1%)
- Proposed open space = 802,400 acres (23%)
- Total open space and regional parks = 1,396,300 acres (41%)

The proposed open space areas are based on protection and connectivity of the following items identified during the in-depth analysis of the county's natural and cultural resources discussed in Section 2.0, *Inventory and Analysis.*

Riparian and Mountainous Areas – Habitat fragmentation throughout Pinal County is a particular obstacle to threatened and endangered wildlife and a threat to overall biodiversity. To reduce the threat caused by habitat fragmentation, it is desirable to connect large contiguous areas of open space and allow for species mobility through wildlife movement corridors. As identified in Section 2.0, *Inventory and Analysis*, the highest levels of biodiversity, and the highest quality habitats are found within the riparian and mountainous areas of the county. Riparian corridors provide additional water availability and vegetative cover for wildlife, and protection of these corridors is of critical concern to overall species mobility. Riparian corridors also indicate the greatest concentrations of cultural resources. The Gila, San Pedro, and Santa Cruz Rivers were identified as the three most important riparian corridors throughout the County, and they deserve the highest priority for preservation. In addition, the mountainous areas that dominate the eastern portion of the county such as the Pinal, Superstition, Black, Dripping Springs, and Tortilla Mountains indicate a high level of biodiversity and high habitat values. Other mountainous areas such as the Tortolita and Picacho Mountains were also identified as having a high habitat value and a high level of biodiversity.

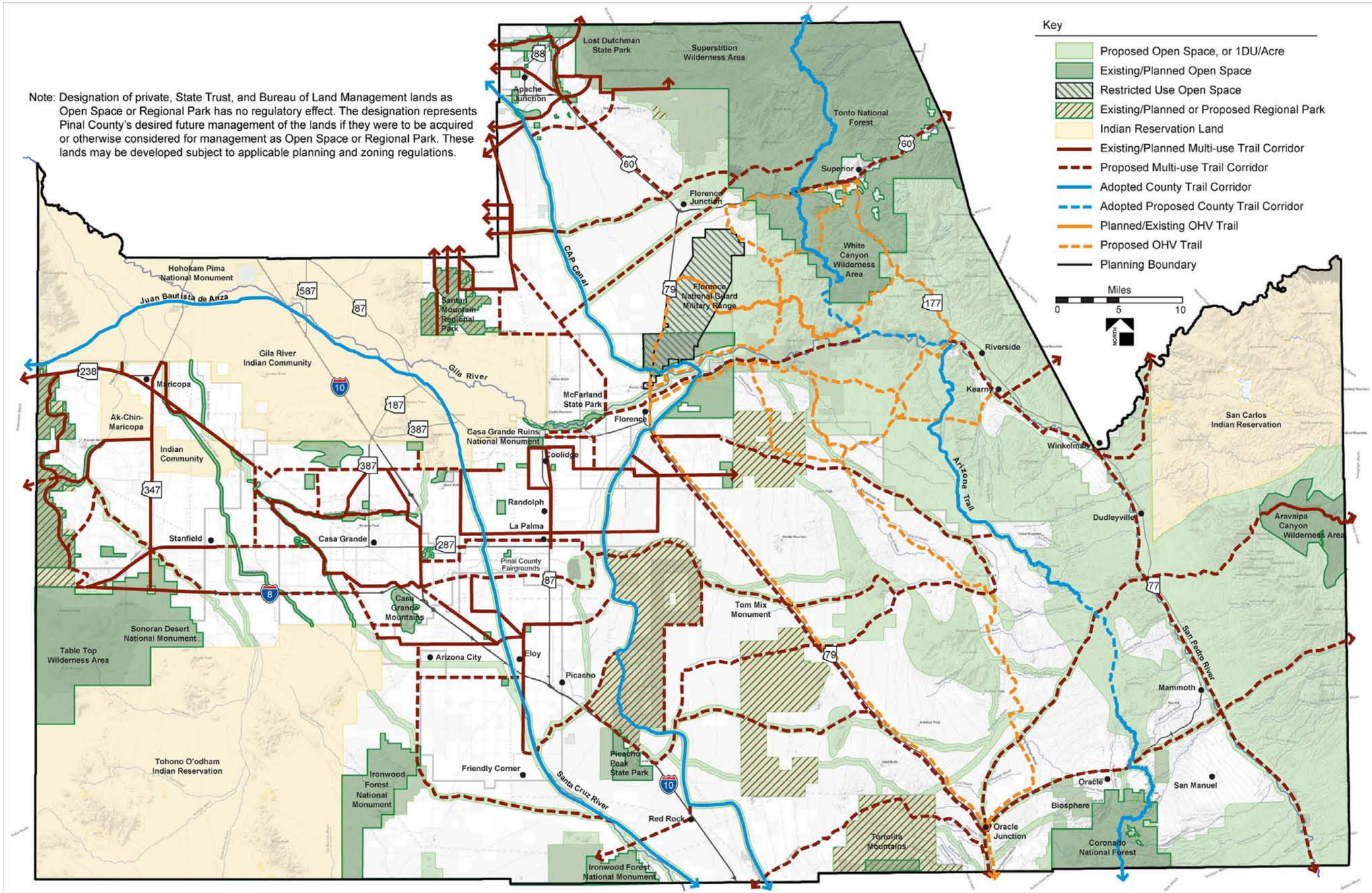


Figure 13. Final Master Plan Map

Open Space Connections – A network of wildlife movement corridors were established throughout the county connecting large open space areas with multiple path opportunities for wildlife mobility. Through stakeholder input, critical connections were established to connect the Coronado National Forest to the Tortolita, Picacho, and Black Mountain areas. Additionally, connections were established to existing open space corridors within the municipalities of Florence, Casa Grande, Apache Junction, Queen Creek, and Maricopa.

Open Space Buffers – Buffer areas around the Ironwood Forest National Monument, Superstition Wilderness area, Tonto National Forest, Coronado National Forest, Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness area, and the Sonoran Desert National Monument were established to further protect these natural resource areas. Additionally, significant cultural resources are present on the bajadas, and extending the range of these natural resources to include the bajadas provides another level of protection for these cultural resource areas.

Regional Connectivity – The Plan also provides regional connections through open space areas and open space corridors to adjacent counties. Providing regional connections to adjacent counties allows for already existing open space areas in adjacent counties to connect, as well as providing opportunities for future planning efforts. The significant land forms that dominate the eastern portion of the county extend into Gila and Graham County on the eastern edge, and will provide ample opportunities for future open space planning efforts within those counties to connect to Pinal County's open space network. The Plan connects to existing open space planning efforts in both Maricopa County on the northern and western edge and Pima County on the southern edge. Growth areas were maintained around all urban areas, while preserving view corridors and providing convenient access to the natural resources and recreation areas of the county.

In addition, two open space definitions were defined using the four open space categories identified in Section 5.2, *Open Space Categories*, for the proposed open space shown on the *Final Master Plan* to allow for the future determination of uses within each category as open space is designated or acquired.

Site-specific details of the proposed open space area or development will determine which open space category should be emphasized and the appropriate areas to be preserved and or developed. For PAD's, an Open Space and Recreation Area Plan (OSRP) shall be prepared and submitted to illustrate how a development is meeting the requirements for on-site open space, park and recreation areas, and multi-use paths and trails development.

A site analysis is required with the submittal of an OSRP. The site analysis is a tool to assist in determining areas most suitable for developed or conservation open space as described below.

Open Space, Conservation:

a. Areas of land set aside, dedicated or reserved in perpetuity for public or private enjoyment as preservation or conservation areas that have a natural scenic beauty, ecological, geological, archaeological, historic, or cultural features; that may be important as a natural resource; or whose existing openness, natural condition, or present state of use, if retained, maintains or enhances the conservation of such features or resources.

b. Such features or resources include, but are not limited to, significant habitat areas, natural or geologic features, wildlife corridors, mountain ranges, river corridors or beds, perennial streams, natural washes, open desert areas, historic trail systems or historic land uses that have cultural significance or provide a link to historic events.

c. Such areas may include abutting lands that preserve the edges of such features or resources, that act as an extension of the natural environment and integrate such features or resources with surrounding landscapes, and that preserves view corridors.

Open Space, Developed:

Areas of land that provide recreational amenities, multi-use paths, trails, and linkages, and natural revegetated landscapes for areas that have been previously disturbed or graded.

Proposed Trail Corridors

Providing equitable access to the county's resources through an interconnected multi-modal trail network ensures a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities. The foundation of the trail system shown on the Final Master Plan Map relies on a skeletal framework of three regional trail corridors. The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, the CAP Canal, and the Arizona Trail, which all provide regional connectivity throughout Pinal County from Pima County to the south to Maricopa County to the north and west. A secondary linkage for the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail was established south of the Gila River Indian Community along Val Vista Road and connects to State Route 238 to provide an alternate route. East-west connections were developed using drainageways and both paved and unpaved roads. Whenever possible, public infrastructure was used to create the trail linkages, but due to homeland security concerns utility corridors were excluded from the proposed regional trail network—unless the utility corridor had already been indicated in an existing approved plan. Future planning efforts should not exclude the use of utility corridors for trails where possible.

All planned or existing trails were identified in previous county and municipality plans, and initially mapped into the Base Data Map (see Figure 1, *Base Data Map)*. Proposed connections were established to link all existing or planned trail networks within and adjacent to the county. Major regional connections include connections to the Maricopa County Regional Trail System through the Vekol Wash and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail to the west and the Arizona Trail, CAP Canal, and Queen Creek Wash to the north. Connections to the Eastern Pima County Trail System were established through the CAP Canal, Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail, and the Arizona Trail, as well as through Oracle Junction. Although Graham and Gila Counties do not have adopted trails plans, anticipated and likely connections were established through the US 60 Gila-Pinal Scenic Byway, Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness area, and the future Tam O'Shanter State Park east of Kearny.

Separation of motorized and non-motorized trail users was an important factor when determining trail corridor locations. Providing a looping OHV trail that was separate from the proposed and existing multi-use non-motorized trail network was established by building on the framework of the existing GWT. Both primitive roads and paved roads were used in conjunction with the GWT to create a looping OHV trail from the Desert Wells OHV area in the northern portion of the county to Oracle Junction in the south and to Florence in the central portion of the county.

The Plan links planned or existing municipality trail systems in Florence, Coolidge, Casa Grande, Maricopa, Queen Creek, and Eloy to provide a regionally connected trail system. In addition, communities that do not have previously established trails plans were provided convenient and close access to the regional trail system. Connections to all natural recreation areas including National, State and county parks, National Monuments and Forests, and Wilderness Areas within the County were established using multiple trail corridor loops that provide varying degrees of difficulty for a variety of trail users.

Existing/Planned Regional Parks

A complete list of existing regional parks and recreation areas can be found in Section 2.9, *Existing and Planned Parks*, *Open Space Areas*, *and Trails*, and in Table 2, *Recreation Areas Within Pinal County.*

When evaluating the regional context adjacent to Pinal County, the county is surrounded by several large existing open space areas. These open space areas include the Sonoran Desert National Monument in Maricopa County to the west, the Tonto National Forest in Maricopa and Gila Counties to the north, Coronado National Forest in Graham County to the east and Pima County to the south, and the Ironwood Forest National Monument within Pima County to the southwest. With the abundance of existing open space along the boundaries of Pinal County, seven regional parks were proposed, of which four were proposed to be centrally located, to ensure a service level access to regional and national recreational open space within a 30-minute drive from anywhere within Pinal County.

The following describes the five proposed regional parks, as shown on Figure 13, *Final Master Plan Map*.

- The regional park proposed along the east side of the city of Florence planning boundary may provide passive and active recreational opportunities that would help to support the growing needs of the users located within the surrounding municipalities.

- The regional park proposed to the north of Picacho Peak State Park may provide more passive-oriented recreational opportunities that would conserve the natural resources located within this area while allowing users to experience the natural environment.
- The regional park located west of Highway 79 and east of the proposed regional park near Picacho Peak State Park may provide active and passive recreational opportunities to support the future needs of development that may occur in this area of the county.
- The regional park proposed on the western edge of the county was identified in the City of Maricopa's General Plan, and represents the desired future conditions for the city. The Plan identified additional areas surrounding the proposed regional park, and provided additional connectivity to the Table Top Wilderness area. This area may develop through cooperation with the City of Maricopa.
- The regional park located north of Florence Junction may provide passive and active recreational opportunities that would help to support the growing needs of the users located in the surrounding communities and municipalities.

The following describes the two existing/planned regional parks, as shown in Figure 13, *Final Master Plan Map.* These areas may continue to develop through cooperation with Maricopa and Pima Counties.

- The planned Tortolita Mountain Park located along the southern edge of the county may provide more passive-oriented recreational opportunities that would conserve existing natural resources.
- The existing San Tan Mountain Regional Park provides passive-oriented recreational opportunities, to support the growing needs of the expanding urban fringes of the Phoenix Metropolitan Area and the anticipated growth of the surrounding communities and municipalities.

6.4 Land Ownership Considerations

When considering future potential open space areas or regional parks, it is important to take into consideration the property ownership. The purpose of this section is to discuss the various property owners within Pinal County.

Federal Lands

The US Forest Service manages lands for the sustained yield of goods and services from national forest lands to maximize long-term public benefits in an environmentally sound manner. The USFS has authority under a number of statutes, when it is in the public interest, to exchange lands with non-federal parties within the boundaries of national forests. Public interest considerations include state and local needs; protection of habitats, cultural resources, watersheds, and wilderness and aesthetic values; enhancement of recreation opportunities and public access; consolidation of lands for efficient management; implementation or accommodation of existing or planned land uses or plans; and fulfillment of public needs.

The BLM preserves open space by managing public lands for multiple uses, including recreation, livestock grazing, and mining, and by conserving natural, historic, cultural, scenic, and other resources found on public lands. The disposal of public lands is authorized through sales and exchanges as directed by the 1976 Federal Land Policy and Management Act. Pursuant to the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (R&PP), BLM lands may be entitled to a county or municipality to operate and manage as parks and recreational open space through a land patent.

The BOR constructs and operates dams, reservoirs, canals, and other water management facilities. The BOR's overall mission is to meet the increasing water demands while protecting the natural environment and the public's investment in these structures. Much like the BLM, the BOR preserves open space by managing public lands for multiple uses, including agriculture and recreation, and by conserving natural, historic, and cultural resources through resource management plans. In instances where a use is not permitted on BOR lands, a permit may be required. The BOR's consideration of applications to use project lands and water surfaces is completely discretionary and reserves the right to refuse to authorize

any use that may be incompatible with the federally authorized purposes of reclamation projects or interferes with rights or operations.

State Trust Lands

Under state charter, the Arizona State Land Department has the responsibility on behalf of beneficiaries to assure the highest and best use of trust lands. The federal enabling act and state constitution mandate that fair market value must be obtained from all trust land transactions that include sales and commercial leasing. All revenues derived from the sale of trust lands are placed in a fund, which benefits public education. Given this well-defined mission, development can and does occur on state-owned land.

Private Ownership

There are various private land holdings within Pinal County. These properties may be developed subject to the planning and zoning laws of the respective jurisdictions.

Tribal Lands

Various Indian Tribes manage lands within Pinal County. These tribes include the Gila River Indian Community, the Tohono O'odham Indian Community, the San Carlos Apache Indian Community, and the Ak-Chin Indian Community. While development may occur on tribal lands, it is subject to the rules and regulations of the respective communities.

6.5 Designations of Private, State Trust, and Bureau of Land Management Lands

Designation of private, State Trust, and Bureau of Land Management lands as open space or regional park has no regulatory effect. The designation represents Pinal County's desired future management of the lands if they were to be acquired or otherwise considered for management as open space or regional park. These lands may be developed subject to applicable planning and zoning regulations.

7.0 Open Space and Trails Implementation Program

7.1 Introduction

The *Final Master Plan* presented in Section 6.0 provides the County and its residents with a valuable tool in guiding the future planning of open space areas, trail corridors, and regional park facilities for the future. The Plan is intended to be a dynamic document that will be updated and refined through time to address changing development patterns and state requirements as the county continues to grow in population. There are many techniques and strategies the County may use to protect or acquire open space areas and trail corridors for their communities. Each has its own merits, and the preservation or acquisition of specific open space areas and trail corridors within the county will be context dependent due to the varying topography, ownership, habitat, and other constraints each area presents.

7.2 Open Space and Trails Implementation Techniques

There are numerous techniques and strategies communities and agencies utilize in securing open space and trail corridors for future generations. These techniques and strategies may be achieved through three general approaches that include regulatory techniques, acquisition techniques, and influencing land management decisions by property owners and managers and are identified below:

Regulatory Techniques

Many communities use regulatory techniques to control and encourage the sustainable use and development of land to accomplish public open space conservation and trail connectivity objectives. These may include the following techniques.

Cluster or Conservation Development – Concentrates the allowable development on specifically identified areas of a parcel of land in order to preserve undeveloped areas in other parts of the same development project. The land that is not developed can be designated as open space. By concentrating development into a more compact form, infrastructure costs can also be reduced, thereby providing a financial incentive for developers and reduced long-term service and maintenance costs.

Density Bonuses – Provides additional total density for residential or commercial development that may be offered by the County or a municipality in exchange for preservation of open space or conservation of identified desert, riparian, or wildlife habitat areas within a project.

Design Guidelines – may be incorporated into a zoning ordinance for subdivision design, building design, street design, lot layout, road configuration, building heights, lighting, construction material, landscaping, and water usage. The purpose of design guidelines is to control development in designated areas to ensure that a development does not dominate a landscape or interfere with the operation of natural systems.

Planned Area Development (PAD) – Pinal County currently has the Planned Area Development Zoning District in its zoning ordinance for residential, commercial, and industrial uses. PADs can be used to encourage imaginative and innovative planning of neighborhoods, particularly with respect to diversification in land uses and flexibility in site design. The benefit to the developer can be mixed uses and increased densities in a project. PADs typically include various features such as setbacks, heights, density, open space, circulation, and reduced infrastructure standards such as private roadways, preservation of natural features, and mixed housing types within a residential development.

Sensitive Land Ordinances – Sensitive land regulations identify areas with special development constraints and allow the reasonable use and development of those areas, while promoting the public health, safety, and general welfare of the citizens of the community, and maintaining the character, identity, and natural function of sensitive areas.

Transfer of Development Rights (TDRs) – Local governments generally establish transfer of development rights systems. TDRs are designed to move development from areas where preservation or protection is desired to areas where greater densities are appropriate. In a TDR program, a landowner in an identified

"sending-area" can sell development rights to a landowner in an identified "receiving area." Sending-area landowners are compensated for giving up their development rights, while receiving-area landowners typically pay to increase the density and value of their property.

Slope/Hillside Ordinance – Pinal County is considering the adoption of a hillside ordinance for parcels having a natural hillside slope of 15% or greater. Hillside/slope development regulations are frequently based on geotechnical limitations and public safety in order to allow the reasonable use and development of hillside areas while promoting public health, safety, and general welfare. The primary objectives of hillside development standards are to minimize possible loss of life and property, to protect watersheds and natural waterways, to minimize soil erosion, and to protect public infrastructure investments. Secondary objectives include encouraging the preservation of existing landscapes by retaining natural topographic features and minimizing scarring from hillside construction.

Acquisition Techniques

Many communities acquire ownership of or interests in property that they have identified as valuable open space resources. Ownership of property rights resolves potential issues regarding the local government's authority and regulatory takings claims. At the same time, ownership raises issues relating to long-term management of the property acquired. Techniques for acquiring ownership of or interests in property may include the following:

Fee Simple Purchase – Is the simplest method for obtaining control over property and ensuring long-term management of the property and its desired use. Governments and non-profit organizations can use this technique for control of identified land. With fee simple purchase, permanent or dedicated protection of land is achieved and public access can be allowed. The owner, however, assumes responsibility for long-term maintenance of the property.

Conveyance of Property to Homeowner Associations – Lands identified as open space may be conveyed to a homeowners association for management as open space and can include access for the general public. The local government is relieved of the responsibility for long-term maintenance of the property. A risk is that the homeowners association may cease property maintenance or may declare bankruptcy, throwing the future ownership and maintenance of the property into doubt.

Land Exchange – A local government may elect to exchange developable property it owns for property with high open space value. The advantages of this technique include no acquisition costs to the local government and avoidance of capital gains tax for the landowner. The disadvantages include the potential unwillingness of landowners to exchange for the offered land and the complexities of the exchange process.

Dedication – Is a conveyance of land or an interest in land by a private owner in the nature of a gift or grant, and the acceptance of the land or interest by or on behalf of the public. Dedication is commonly utilized when a local government wants to acquire a road or utility right-of-way and the property owner wants the local government to assume control and responsibility for the right-of-way.

Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) – The PDR concept is similar to the TDR concept, except that the acquiring party is the governmental entity. Under a PDR arrangement, a landowner sells their development rights to a jurisdiction while retaining all other rights of ownership. The price is generally determined as the difference between the appraised market value of the property and the current land use value. The local government then has control over the future use of the property without the responsibilities of fee title ownership.

Conservation Easements
Creation of a conservation easement is similar to the transfer or purchase of development rights. A conservation easement is an interest in real property created when the development entitlements of a property are separated and conveyed to a third party. The landowner retains the right to continue to use the property for non-development purposes, but transfers the development rights to an identified holder of the easement who is then responsible for ensuring that the use of the property continues to be consistent with the terms of the easement. Conveyance of a conservation easement may be considered a wholly or partially tax-deductible charitable donation by the federal government. The holder of a conservation easement may be required to perform substantial administrative work to maintain the easement, including

periodic inspection of the property to ensure that it is being used for purposes contemplated by the conservation easement documents. The creation of most conservation easements requires an outlay of funds for purchase, documentation, and recordation. Many organizations that accept and manage conservation easements also require payment for administrative and other ongoing expenses.

Lease Agreements – Lease or use agreements involve short- or long-term public sector rental of land with a use agreement for open space. The advantages include low cost to the entity and the landowner's initiative to receive a regular income stream. The disadvantages include the lack of equity for the expenditures and the long-term protection of the property.

Influencing Land Management Decisions

While local governments do not have regulatory control over state and federal land management agencies, federal land management agencies protect open space on BLM and USFS lands through congressional designations of lands, through designations by the Secretaries of Interior (BLM) and Agriculture (USFS) and the heads of the agencies, and through approved land management plans completed using extensive public involvement processes. It is through these approved land management plans that the local governments can have considerable influence over landowners and managers that are not subject to local government regulation. For example, the Federal Land Management and Policy Act that governs the BLM's management of public land, provides for a significant role for local governments to influence federal land management policies. In a similar manner, Arizona cities and counties may have some input for land management decisions made by the Arizona State Land Department as it relates to the desired future land development patterns of their communities. As federal and state land management plans are undertaken, local governments should express their preferences so that they may be incorporated into the plans.

Land Acquisition Funding Techniques

When it may not be possible to achieve open space objectives for the community through regulatory or acquisition techniques or through influencing land management decisions, the following funding options may provide the opportunity to secure these lands for their desired use.

User Fees – User fees are assessed for the specific use of a service, activity, or area. An example is a fee charged for admission to a state or county park. Another example is a toll assessed for using a bridge or roadway. A user fee can be employed to defray a portion or the entire cost of land acquisition, development, or management of these types of projects. The advantage of a user fee is that the charge is incurred by the person using the specific service, activity, or area.

Development (Impact) Fees – Any county or municipality that has adopted a capital improvements plan, may assess development fees within the covered planning area in order to offset the capital costs for water, sewer, streets, parks, and public safety facilities. Impact fees are a technique that requires a developer in a specified area to pay a fee typically on a per unit basis. Laws governing impact fees in Arizona counties are identified in Title 11 of the Arizona Revised Statutes.

General Obligation Bonds – General Obligation Bonds, which are backed by the full faith and credit of the jurisdiction issuing the bonds, may be issued by a municipality or county for any lawful or necessary purpose. Each municipality and county has a constitutionally set debt cap, which limits the bond issuance capacity. Prior to issuing general obligation bonds, the municipality or county must receive authorization by a majority vote of qualified electors at an election. The primary advantage associated with general obligation bonds is the ability to use the bond proceeds for almost any purpose and to spread the benefits and burdens of the funds uniformly throughout the community. The disadvantage is that voter approval is required to authorize the issuance of bonds.

Heritage Fund Grants – The source of Heritage Fund monies is the Arizona State Lottery. The funds are administered through the Arizona State Parks Board Heritage Fund for its Trails; Local, Regional and State Parks (LRSP), and Historic Preservation programs. LRSP funding supports land acquisition and development of facilities for outdoor recreation improvements in Arizona. The Historic Preservation program supports historic preservation efforts, including rehabilitation of historic properties and preservation education. Trails funding supports trail acquisition and improvements in Arizona.

Intergovernmental Agreements (IGAs) – As is typically the case, the boundaries of watersheds, wildlife habitat areas, mountain ranges, and other natural resources are rarely located within the boundaries of a single governmental entity. Effective conservation management will therefore often require the collaboration of two or more units of government. IGAs are agreements between two or more governmental entities agreeing to a specified course of action.

Private Land Trusts – Private, non-profit land trusts manage and own environmentally sensitive land all over Arizona and the United States. When governmental budgets do not have enough money to acquire critical tracts of land in a given time frame, land trusts may be able to purchase and hold the property for future government acquisition. In addition to purchasing land in fee simple, land trusts can employ any number of other forms of conservation, such as easements and purchase and sellback arrangements, for desert conservation purposes. Nationally, there are over 1,000 land trusts. A good example of a local land trust is the Desert Foothills Land Trust.

Advantages of private land trusts include the fact that they can often be good partners in wildlife habitat protection and desert conservation because they can work effectively with private landowners. This is true, in part, because the involvement of a land trust often creates possibilities for tax incentives through land donations and bargain sales and, in part, because landowners may be wary of working with the government. Weaknesses include the fact that land trust objectives may change over time and may not coincide with those of the local government.

Recreation and Public Purposes Act – This program allows the lease or conveyance for recreational or public purposes under specific conditions. The application process includes preliminary discussions with the BLM; an application, with a non-refundable processing fee; the appraisal of the land; an environmental assessment; and a publication of a Notice of Realty Action in the *Federal Register*. If there are no adverse environmental impacts and no opposition to the lease or conveyance, the BLM requests payments of fees and executes the lease or issues a patent for the proposed use.

The Nature Conservancy – The Nature Conservancy is a national organization with a chapter in Arizona. The mission of this non-profit group is to preserve ecologically important resources throughout the United States. In Arizona, some of the natural resources the group has worked to preserve by purchasing and managing them include areas in Ramsey Canyon, Aravaipa Canyon, and the San Rafael Conservation Project.

7.3 Open Space and Trails Implementation Program

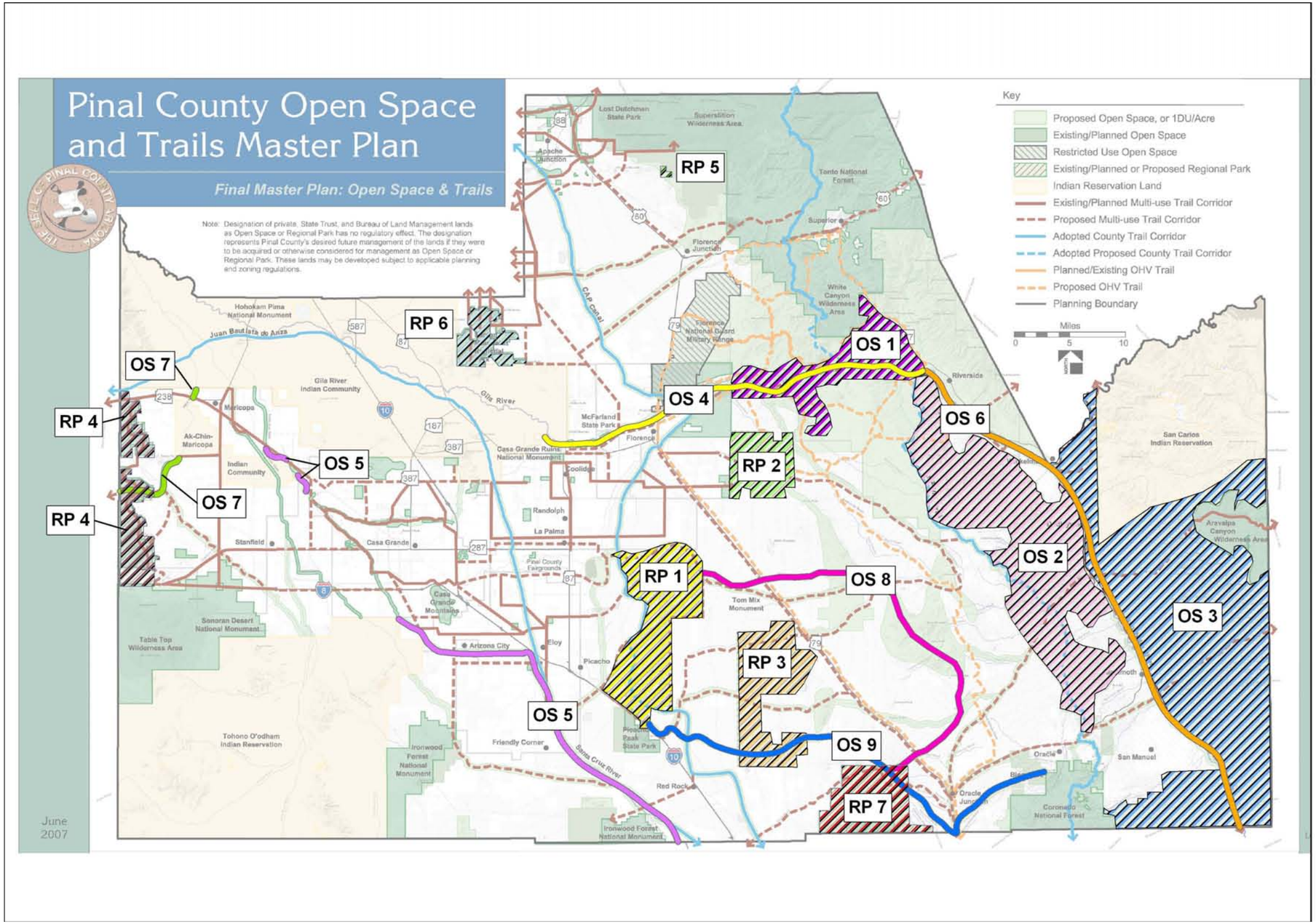
The recommended implementation program (Table 4, *Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007–2032*) identifies a proposed implementation strategy for preserving or acquiring open space areas, trail corridors, and regional parks within the county. The implementation program takes into consideration the County's existing and proposed development patterns, the County's relationship with incorporated areas, the relative population densities in unincorporated areas, the conservation of valuable natural resources, and the impact potential growth characteristics may have on these resources, the priorities identified by the public through the public participation program conducted throughout the master planning process.

The goals and objectives identified in Section 6.0 will help the implementation program presented in Table 4 to occur as opportunities arise and will allow the County to balance open space land preservation and/or acquisition with future development. This approach will assist the County in achieving the vision that the residents have for meeting their current and future open space and recreational needs. The preservation or acquisition of open space areas and corridors identified in Table 4 will address the public's concern for the natural riparian resources in the eastern portion of the county (San Pedro and Gila Rivers); riparian resources in the western portion of the County (Santa Cruz River and Wash, and Vekol Wash); and the wildlife movement corridors between the Tortolita Mountains, Black Mountain, Coronado National Forest, Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness area, White Canyon Wilderness area, and the Picacho Peak area (Figure 14, *Proposed Open Space and Regional Park Implementation*).

In addition, implementation of the three north-south regional trail corridors (Juan Bautista de Anza, Arizona Trail, and the CAP Canal) and three east-west regional trail corridors as shown in Figure 15, *Proposed Trail Implementation*, will occur as opportunities arise.

The majority of Pinal County's existing/planned open space area is contained within national forests, national monuments, and wilderness areas located along its northern, eastern, southern, and western boundaries. In order to meet the public's service level need to conveniently access regional open space areas, four regional park locations are proposed to be centrally located within the county. Additionally, three other regional parks are identified as existing or planned parks—Tortolita Mountain Park, The San Tan Mountain Regional Park, and a planned regional park on the county's western boundary. These three parks will be develop through cooperation with Maricopa County, Pima County, and the City of Maricopa (Figure 14, *Proposed Open Space and Regional Park Implementation*).

The success of the implementation program strategy is dependent on the cooperation and coordinated efforts of the County, municipalities within the county, and affected state and federal agencies in order to secure the vision of a connected open space system that conserves the natural and cultural resources of the county. Each of the items indicated in Table 4 will require support and specialized expertise from county, municipal, state, and federal agency departments for which key responsibilities have been identified.



Key

Open Space and Regional Parks

OS 1	46,400 Acres
OS 2	127,800 Acres
OS 3	218,600 Acres
OS 4	11,600 Acres
OS 5	12,900 Acres
OS 6	16,500 Acres
OS 7	2,900 Acres
OS 8	12,700 Acres
OS 9	13,700 Acres
RP1	50,680 Acres
RP2	19,800 Acres
RP3	36,800 Acres
RP4	22,700 Acres
RP5	480 Acres
RP6	11,000 Acres
RP7	27,500 Acres

Miles

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NORTH

Figure 14. Proposed Open Space and Regional Park Implementation

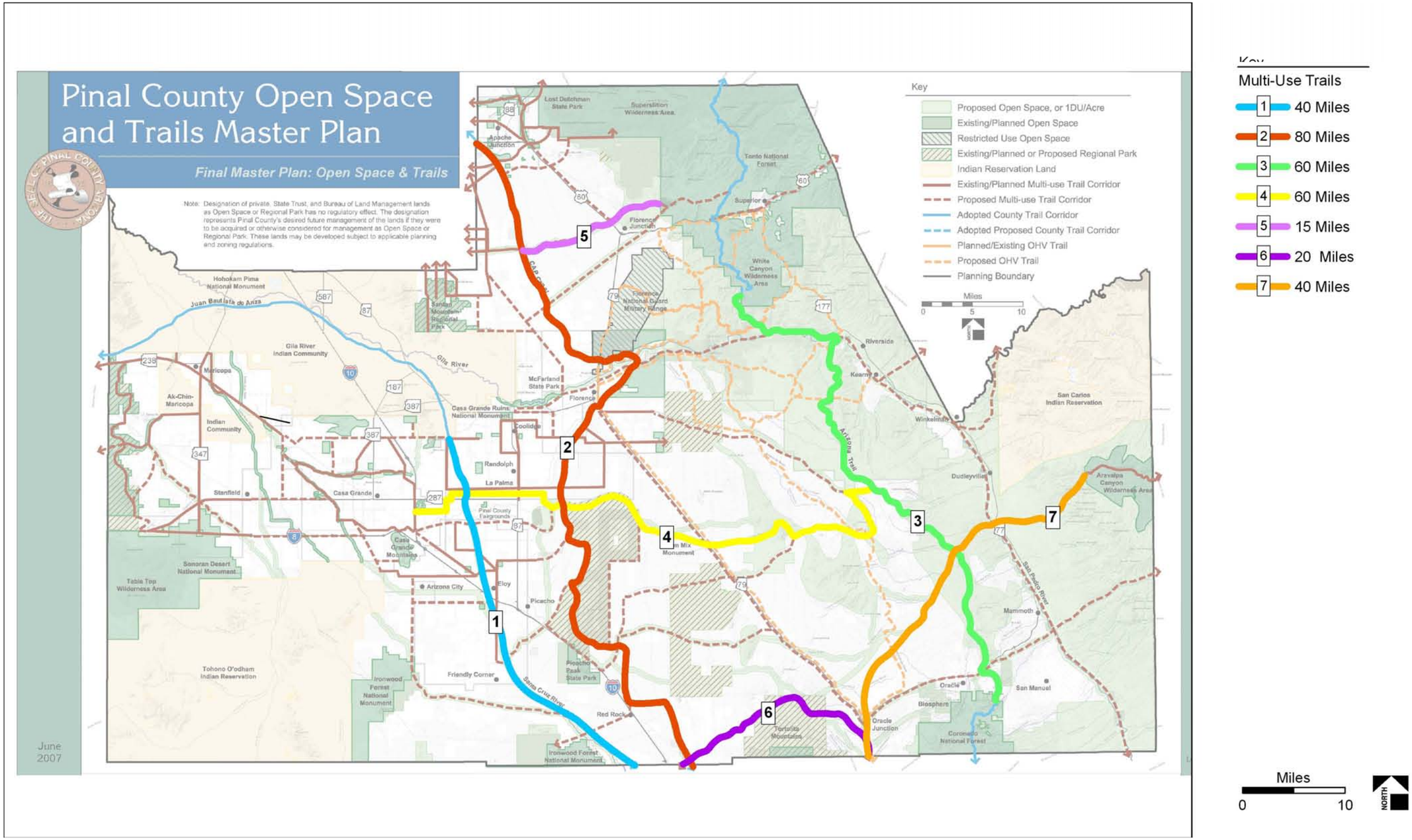

Figure 15. Proposed Trail Implementation

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Open Space Areas					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources	
Open Space Area #1 (OS 1)	~ 46,400	Area east of Florence south of Tonto National Forest and west of Riverside	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Open Space Area #2 (OS 2)	~ 127,800	Area south of Riverside, east of the Arizona Trail, west of San Pedro River and north of Oracle	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Open Space Area #3 (OS 3)	~ 218,600	Area east of the San Pedro River, and east of Coronado National Forest	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Open Space Areas (continued)					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources	
Open Space Area #4 (OS 4)	~11,600	Gila River/Wash Corridor	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Town of Florence Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Influencing Land Management Decisions • Regulatory Techniques	Secondary: • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Open Space Area #5 (OS 5)	~ 12,900	Santa Cruz River/Wash Corridor	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Influencing Land Management Decisions • Regulatory Techniques	Secondary: • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Open Space Area #6 (OS 6)	~ 16,500	San Pedro River Corridor	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Open Space Areas (continued)					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources	
Open Space Area #7 (OS 7)	~ 2,900	Vekol Wash Corridor	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Regulatory Techniques	Secondary: • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Open Space Area #8 (OS 8)	~ 12,700	Link from Picacho Peak to Black Mountain, Link from Black Mountain to Tortolita Mountains	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Open Space Area #9 (OS 9)	~ 13,700	Link from Picacho Peak to Tortolita Mountains, Link from Tortolita Mountains to Coronado National Forest	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032						
Proposed Regional Trails						
Item	Length	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources	
Suburban/Rural Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail #1 **(TR 1)** (Motorized where allowed)	~ 40 Miles	Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail	~ $2M–$4M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Influencing Land Management Decisions • Regulatory Techniques	Secondary: • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Urban/Suburban/ Rural Non-Motorized Multi-Use Path #2 **(TR 2)** (ADA Accessible where possible)	~ 80 Miles	Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal	~ $4M–$8M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department • Public Works Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • General Obligation Bonds • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Remote Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail #3 **(TR 3)**	~ 60 Miles	Arizona Trail	~ $3M–$6M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032						
Proposed Regional Trails(continued)						
Item	Length	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources	
Remote Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail #4 **(TR 4)**	~ 60 Miles	Link from Arizona Trail to I-10	~ $3M–$6M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Rural/Remote Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail #5 **(TR 5)**	~ 15 Miles	Link from Tonto National Forest to Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal	~ $750,000–$1.5M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Rural/Remote Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail #6 **(TR 6)**	~ 20 Miles	Link from CAP Canal to Oracle Junction	~ $1M–$2M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032

Proposed Regional Trails (continued)

Item	Length	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources	
Rural/Remote Non-Motorized Multi-Use Trail #7 **(TR 7)**	~ 40 Miles	Link from Oracle Junction to Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Area	~ $2M–$4M* *(@ $50,000–100,000/mile in 2007 Dollars)	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions	Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Proposed Regional Parks

Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources
Regional Park #1 (RP 1) Conservation/ Developed Open Space Amenities: • Trailheads with shade ramada and associated parking (30 spaces) • Multi-use paths and trails • Large group picnic area with ramadas for 200 people • Passive Outdoor Activity Area • Single family picnic ramadas • Restroom Buildings • Picnic/outdoor activity area and associated parking (500 spaces total) • Interpretive signage • Trail signage • Miscellaneous infrastructure	~ 50,680* *Total developed open space acreage shall be no larger than 100 acres.	Potential regional park north of Picacho Peak State Park	~ $5 Million* (land acquisition cost not included) *2007 Dollars	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Regional Park (continued)					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources
Regional Park #2 (RP 2) Conservation/ Developed Open Space Amenities: • (4)Lighted multi-use/soccer fields with a restroom and concession building, (2) shade ramadas, and 200 parking spaces • (2) Lighted adult ball fields with a restroom and concession building, and 100 parking spaces • (4) Lighted youth ball fields with a restroom and concession building, batting cages and 100 parking spaces • Picnic area for 200 people with open play including an activity plaza with, (4) shade ramadas, restroom building, play area and tot lot (2-5 yr. olds and 6-12 yr. olds), and 200 parking spaces • Maintenance facility • Trailhead staging area with a restroom and 40 parking spaces • 5 Acre dog park with (2) shade ramadas, restroom building, and 40 parking spaces • Multi-use paths and trails • Miscellaneous infrastructure	~ 19,800* *Developed acreage shall be no smaller than 100 acres and no larger than 200 acres	Potential regional park location east of Florence	~ $18–20 Million* (land acquisition cost not included) *2007 Dollars	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Purchase of Development Rights • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Regional Park (continued)					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources
Regional Park #3 (RP 3) Conservation/ Developed Open Space Amenities: • Interpretive center/ administrative offices, grounds, maintenance facility, with 200 parking spaces • Active play area with (10) lighted multi-use/soccer fields, (4) lighted adult ball fields, maintenance facility, (2) restrooms, and 1200 parking spaces • Day use area with 2-3 acres for day camping, archery range, 10 acre open play area, group picnic area with ramada for 200 people, restroom building, play area and tot lot(2-5 yr. olds and 6-12 yr. olds), and 600 parking spaces. • Trailheads with shade ramada, restroom building, and associated parking (30 spaces) • 18-hole golf course with clubhouse, maintence facility and 200 parking spaces • 5 Acre dog park with (2)shade ramadas, restroom building, and 40 parking spaces • Special user group areas (shooting range, model air park, hot air balloon, BMX/go kart-cart etc.) • Amphitheater with special event parking with bus drop off (150 spaces with optional overflow parking for large events) • Miscellaneous infrastructure	~ 36,800* *Developed acreage shall be no larger than 800 acres	Potential regional park location east of Picacho Peak State Park	~ $50 Million* (land acquisition cost not included) *2007 Dollars	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts The Nature Conservancy •

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Regional Park (continued)					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources
Regional Park #4 (RP 4) Conservation/ Developed Open Space Amenities: • Group picnic area with ramadas for 100 people • (6) Single family picnic ramadas • Picnic Area Parking (100 spaces per lot) • Play area and tot lot (2-5 yr. olds and 6-12 yr. olds) • Restroom buildings • Passive outdoor activity area • Staging and trailhead parking area (30 auto spaces and 20 trailer spaces) • Multi-use trails and paths • Miscellaneous infrastructure	~ 23,200* *Developed open space acreage shall be no larger than 50 Acres	Potential regional park location on west edge of county	~ $1.2 Million* (land acquisition cost not included) *2007 Dollars	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management City of Maricopa Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy
Regional Park #5 (RP 5) Conservation/ Developed Open Space Amenities: • Group picnic area with ramadas for 100 people • (6) Single family picnic ramadas • Picnic Area Parking (100 spaces per lot) • Play area and tot lot (2-5 yr. olds and 6-12 yr. olds) • Restroom buildings • Passive outdoor activity area • Staging and trailhead parking area (30 auto spaces and 20 trailer spaces) • Multi-use trails and paths • Miscellaneous infrastructure	~ 480* *Developed open space acreage shall be no larger than 50 Acres	Potential regional park location north of Florence Junction	~ $1.2 Million* (land acquisition cost not included) *2007 Dollars	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Table 4. Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan Implementation Program 2007-2032					
Proposed Regional Park (continued)					
Item	Acreage	Approximate Location	Costs	Responsibility	Techniques and Funding Resources
Regional Park #6 (RP 6) Conservation/ Developed Open Space	~ 11,000*	San Tan Mountain Regional Park	Presently owned and managed by Maricopa County	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Maricopa County	Primary: • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Heritage Fund Grants •
Regional Park #7 (RP 7) Conservation/ Developed Open Space Amenities: • Group picnic area with ramadas for 100 people • (6) Single family picnic ramadas • Picnic Area Parking (100 spaces per lot) • Play area and tot lot (2-5 yr. olds and 6-12 yr. olds) • Restroom buildings • Passive outdoor activity area • Staging and trailhead parking area (30 auto spaces and 20 trailer spaces) • Multi-use trails and paths • Miscellaneous infrastructure	~ 27,500* *Developed Acreage shall be no smaller than 100 Acres	Tortolita Mountain Regional Park location on south edge of county	~ $1.2 Million* (land acquisition cost not included) *2007 Dollars	Pinal County • Planning and Development Services • Parks, Recreation and Fairgrounds • Budget Office • County Attorney • Finance Department Bureau of Land Management Bureau of Reclamation Arizona State Land Department Private Property Owners Pima County	Primary: • Fee Simple Purchase • General Obligation Bonds • Lease Agreements • Recreation and Public Purposes Act • Intergovernmental Agreements • Influencing Land Management Decisions Secondary: • Regulatory Techniques • User Fees • Development (Impact) Fees • Conservation Easements • Dedications • Purchase of Development Rights • Conveyance of Property to HOA • Heritage Fund Grants • Private Land Trusts • The Nature Conservancy

Appendix A – Biological and Environmental Resources Information

Table A1. USFWS threatened, endangered, and candidate species potentially occurring in Pinal County

Scientific Name	Common Name
Echinomastus erectocentrus acunensis	Acuna Cactus
Echinocereus triglochidiatus arizonicus	Arizona Hedgehog Cactus
Echinocactus horizonthalonius var. *nicholii*	Nichol's Turk's Head Cactus
Cyprinodon macularius	Desert Pupfish
Gila intermedia	Gila Chub
Poeciliopsis occidentalis occidentalis	Gila Topminnow
Tiaroga cobitis	Loach Minnow
Xyrauchen texanus	Razorback Sucker
Meda fulgida	Spikedace
Haliaeetus leucocephalus	Bald Eagle
Pelecanus occidentalis californicus	California brown pelican
Strix occidentalis lucida	Mexican Spotted Owl
Empidonax traillii extimus	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher
Coccyzus americanus	Yellow-billed Cuckoo
Rallus longirostris yumanensis	Yuma Clapper Rail
Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuenae	Lesser Long-nosed Bat

Source: USFWS list of threatened, endangered, and candidate species potentially occurring in Pinal County, http://arizonaes.fws.gov/, accessed May 23, 2006

Biological Resources References

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_____. 2002c. *Gila intermedia*. Unpublished abstract compiled and edited by the Heritage Data Management System, Arizona Game and Fish Department, Phoenix.

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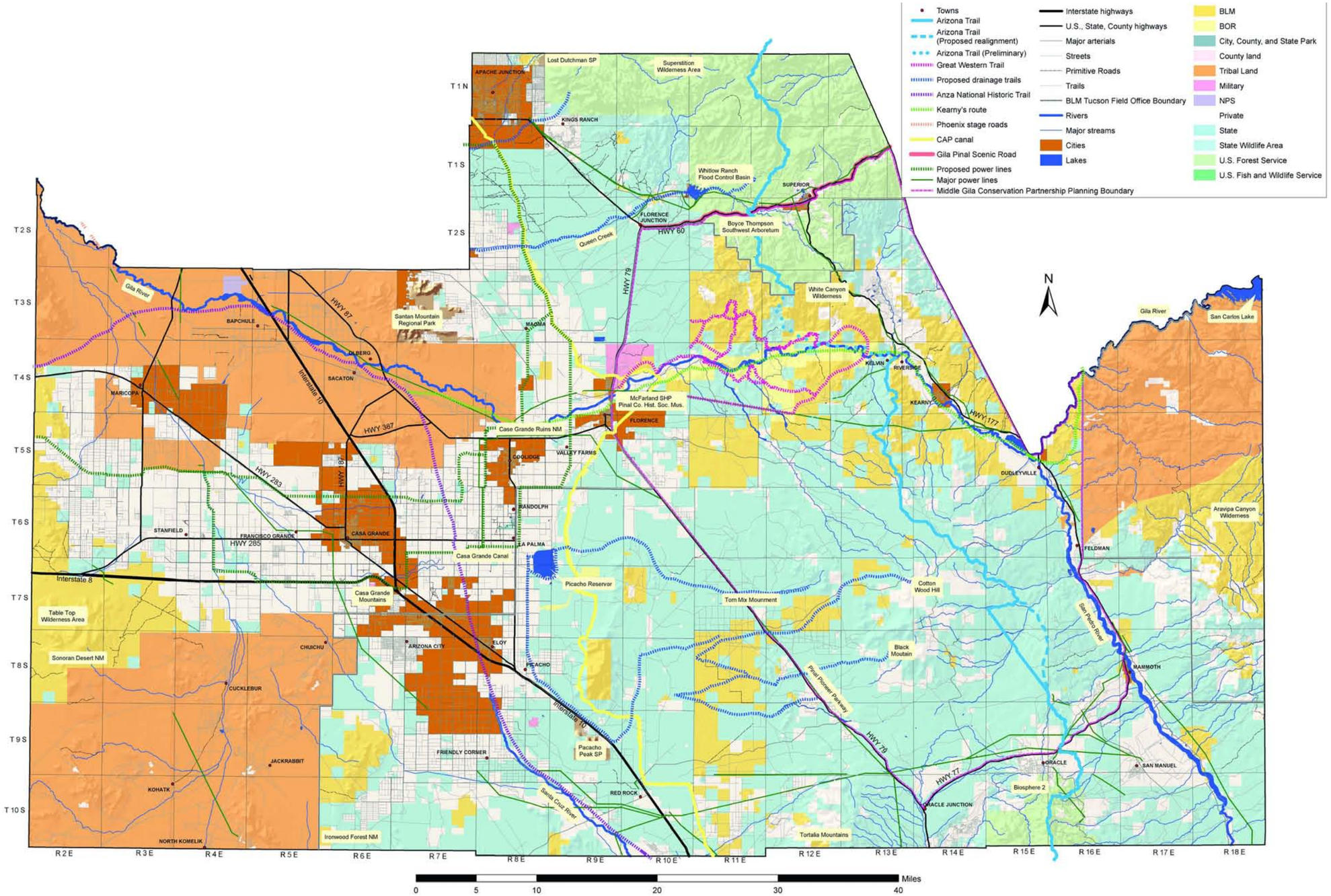

Figure A1. 2005 Pinal County Trails Plan

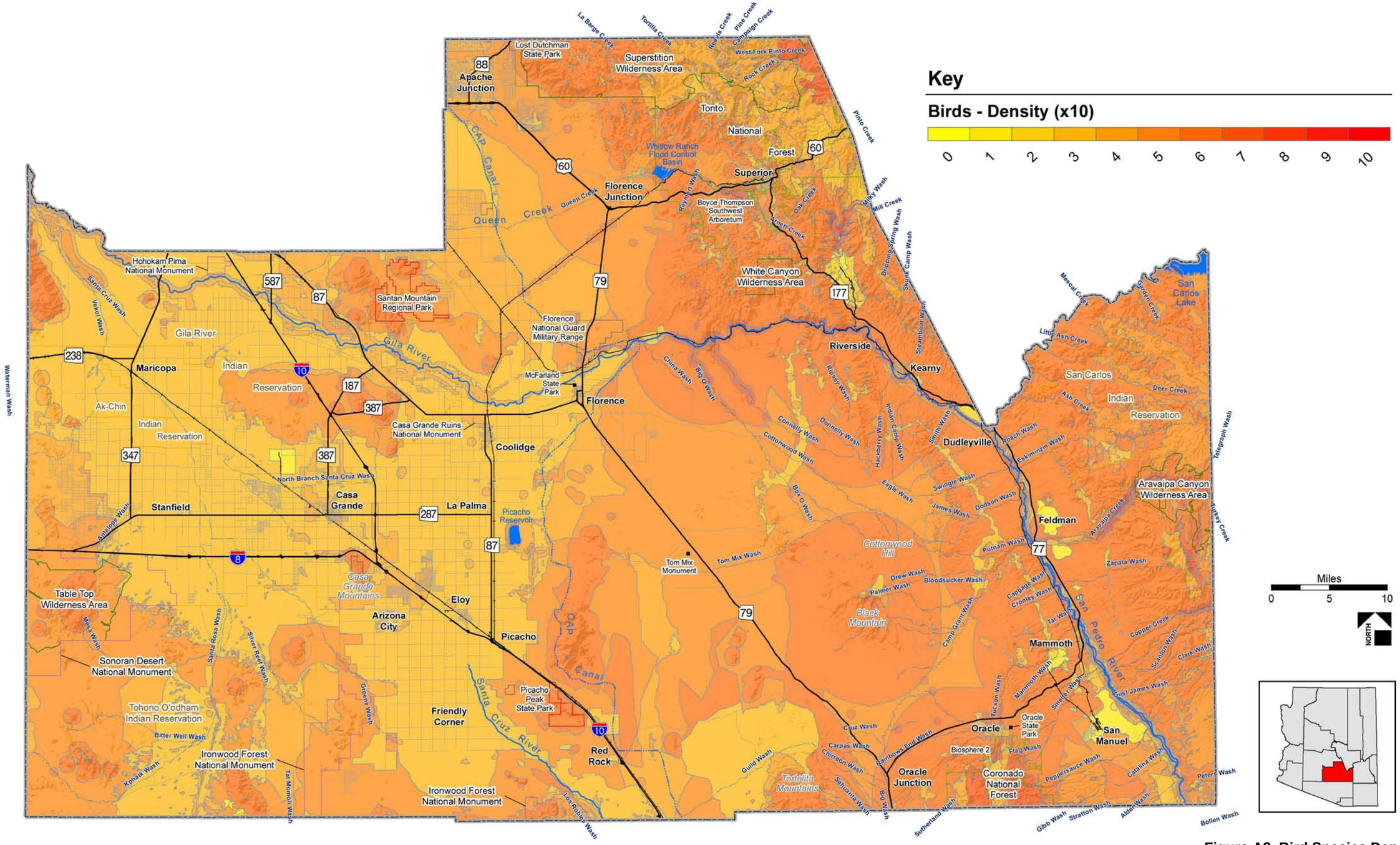

Figure A2. Bird Species Density

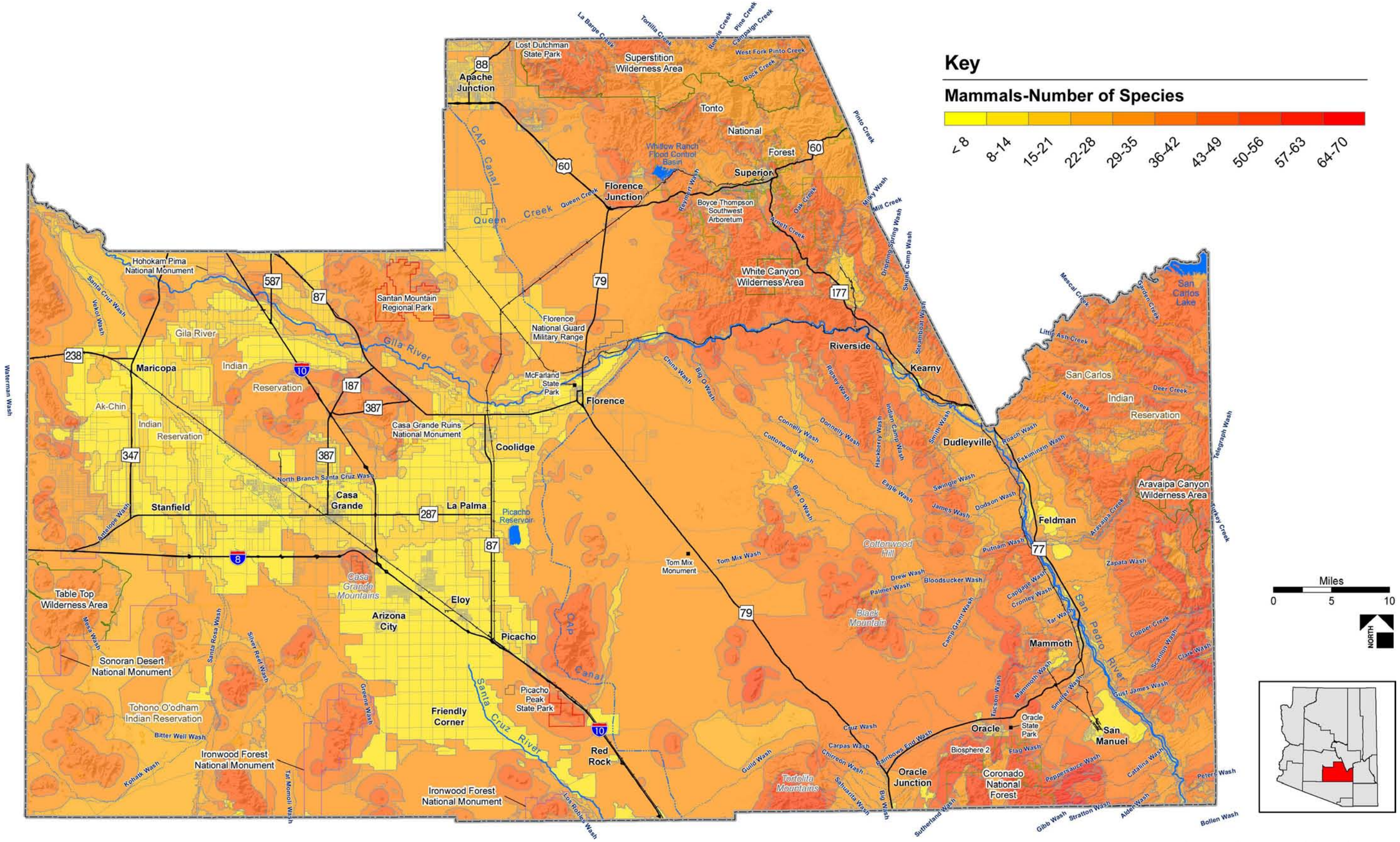

Figure A3. Mammal Species Density

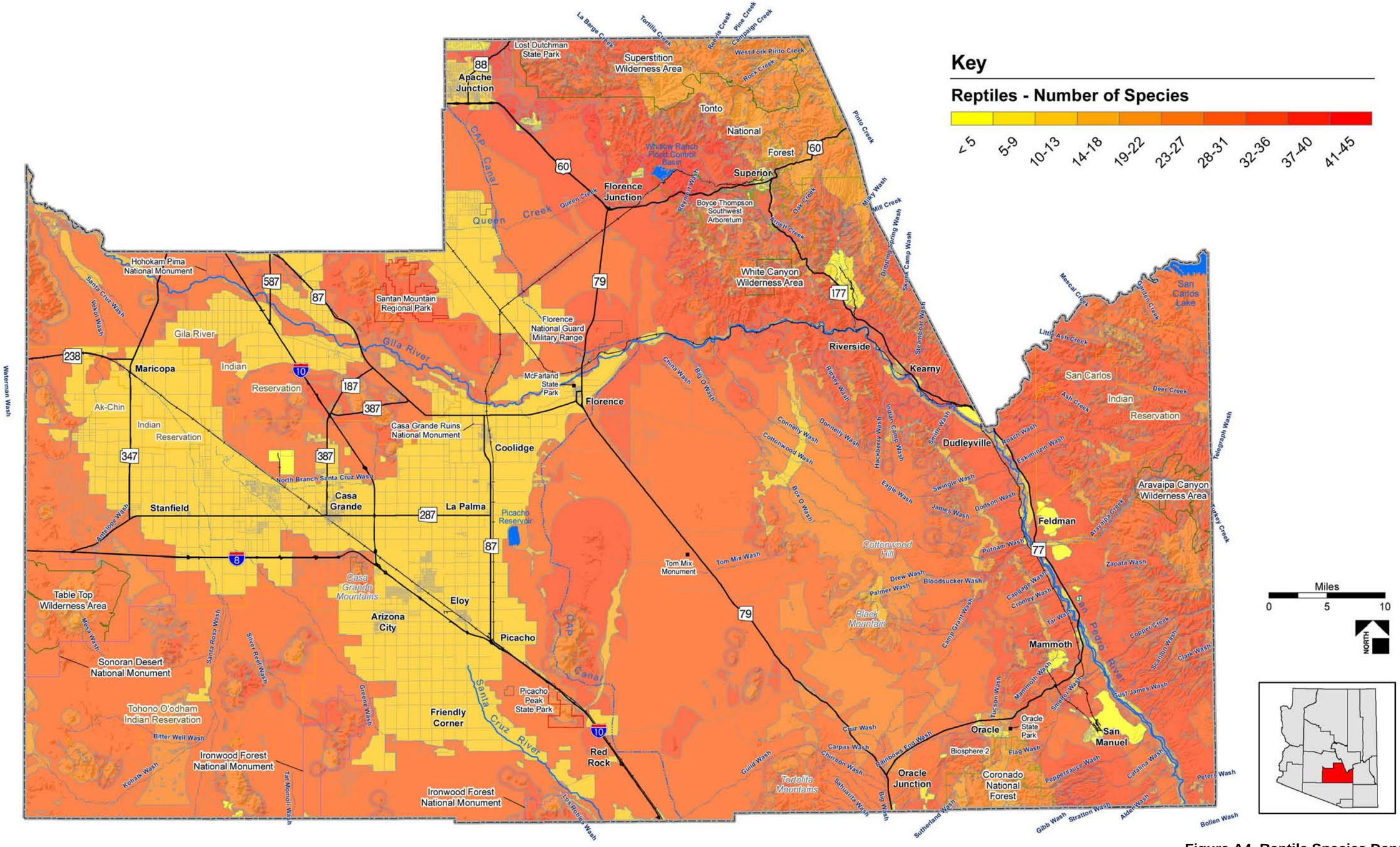

Figure A4. Reptile Species Density

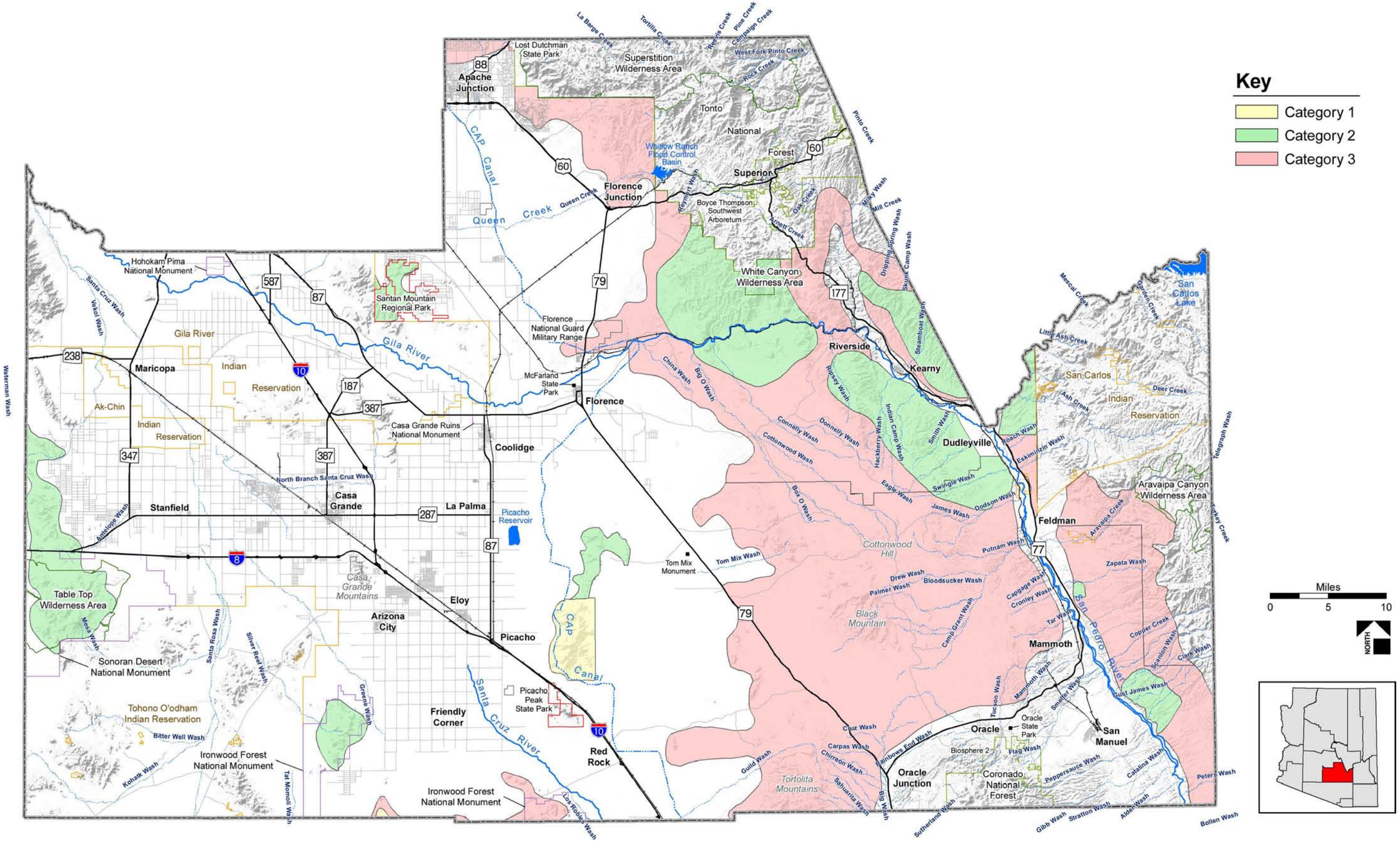

Figure A5. Desert Tortoise Habitat

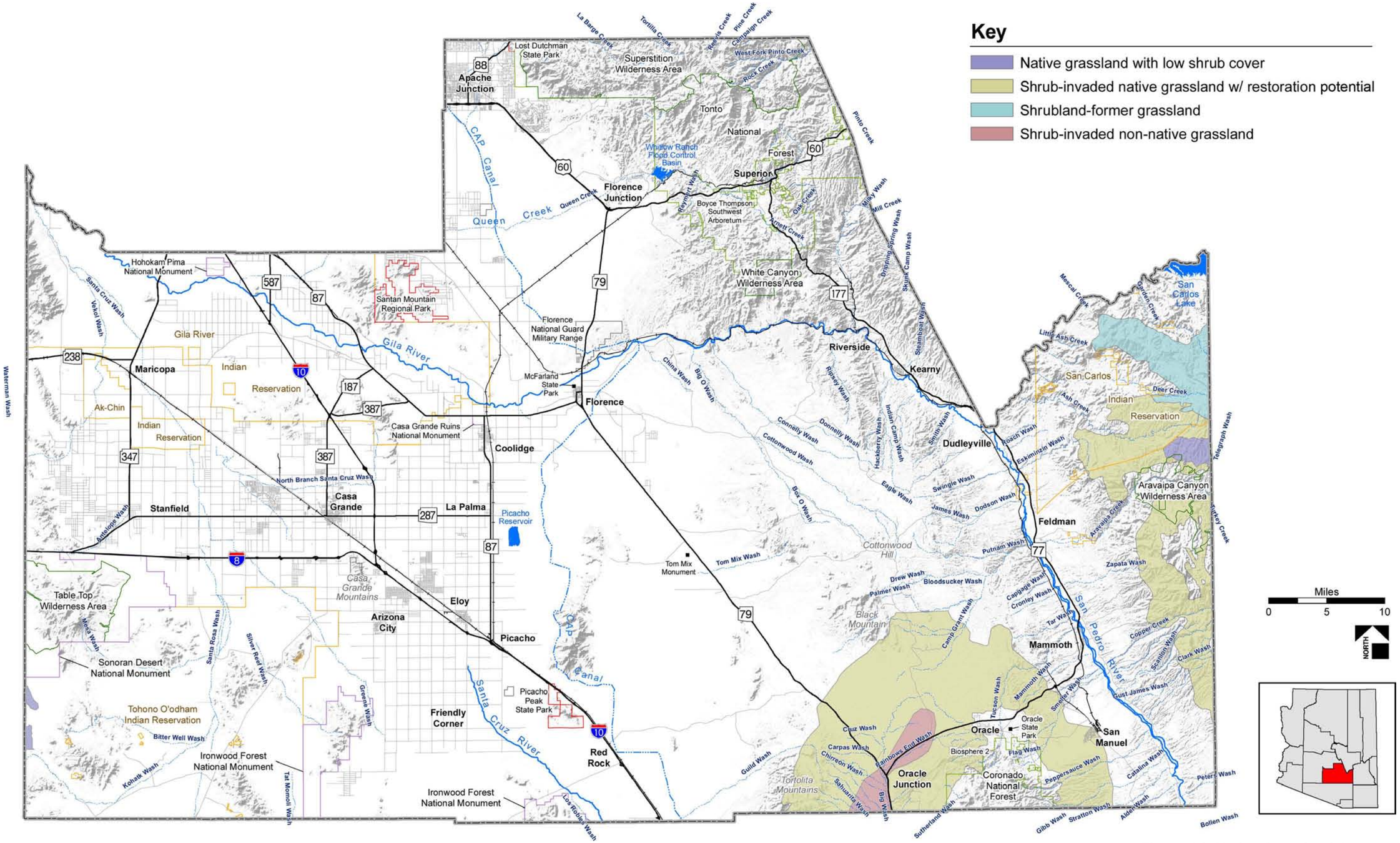

Figure A6. Native Grassland Assessment

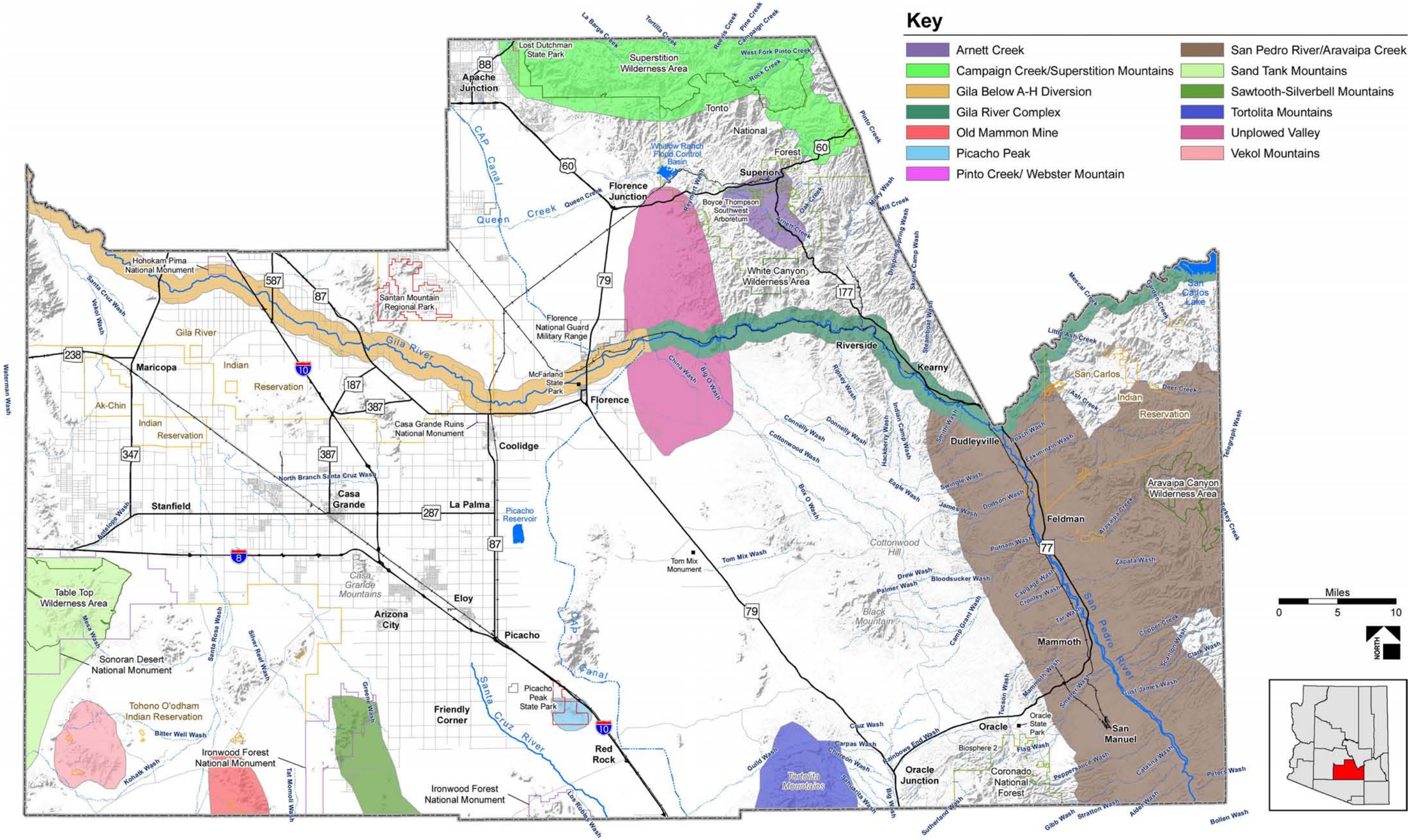

Figure A7. Nature Conservancy Conservation Areas

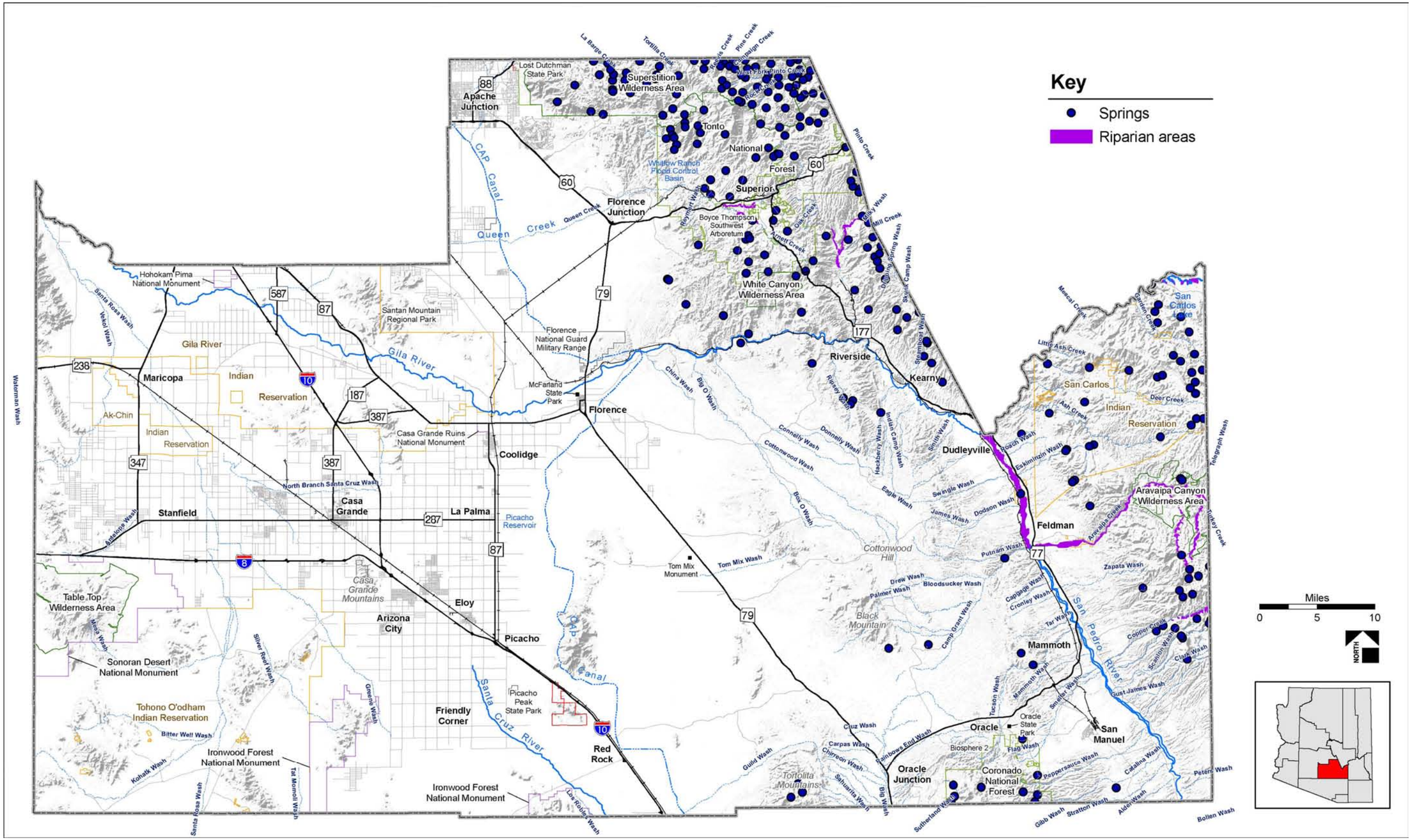

Figure A8. Springs and Riparian Areas

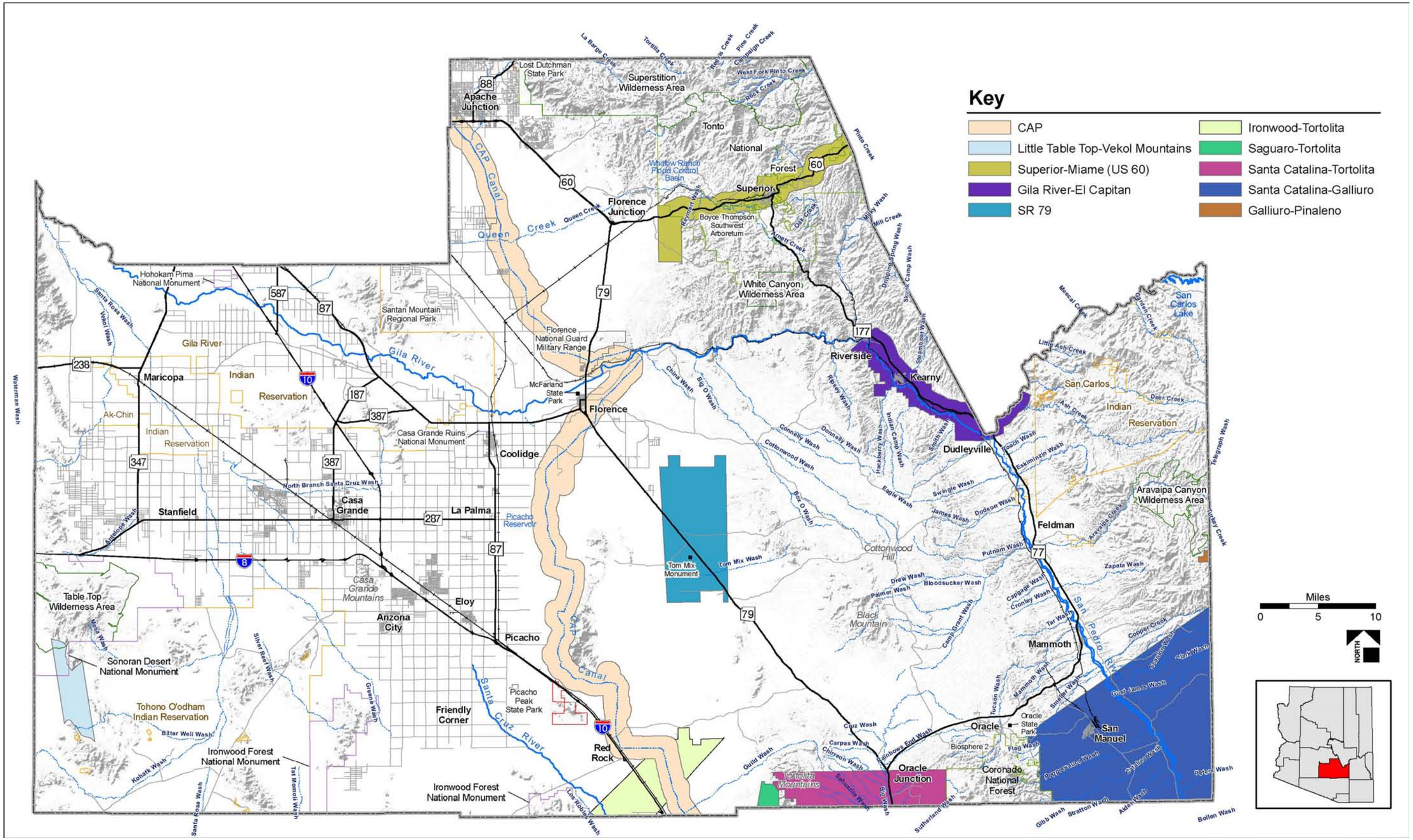

Figure A9. ADOT Corridor Studies

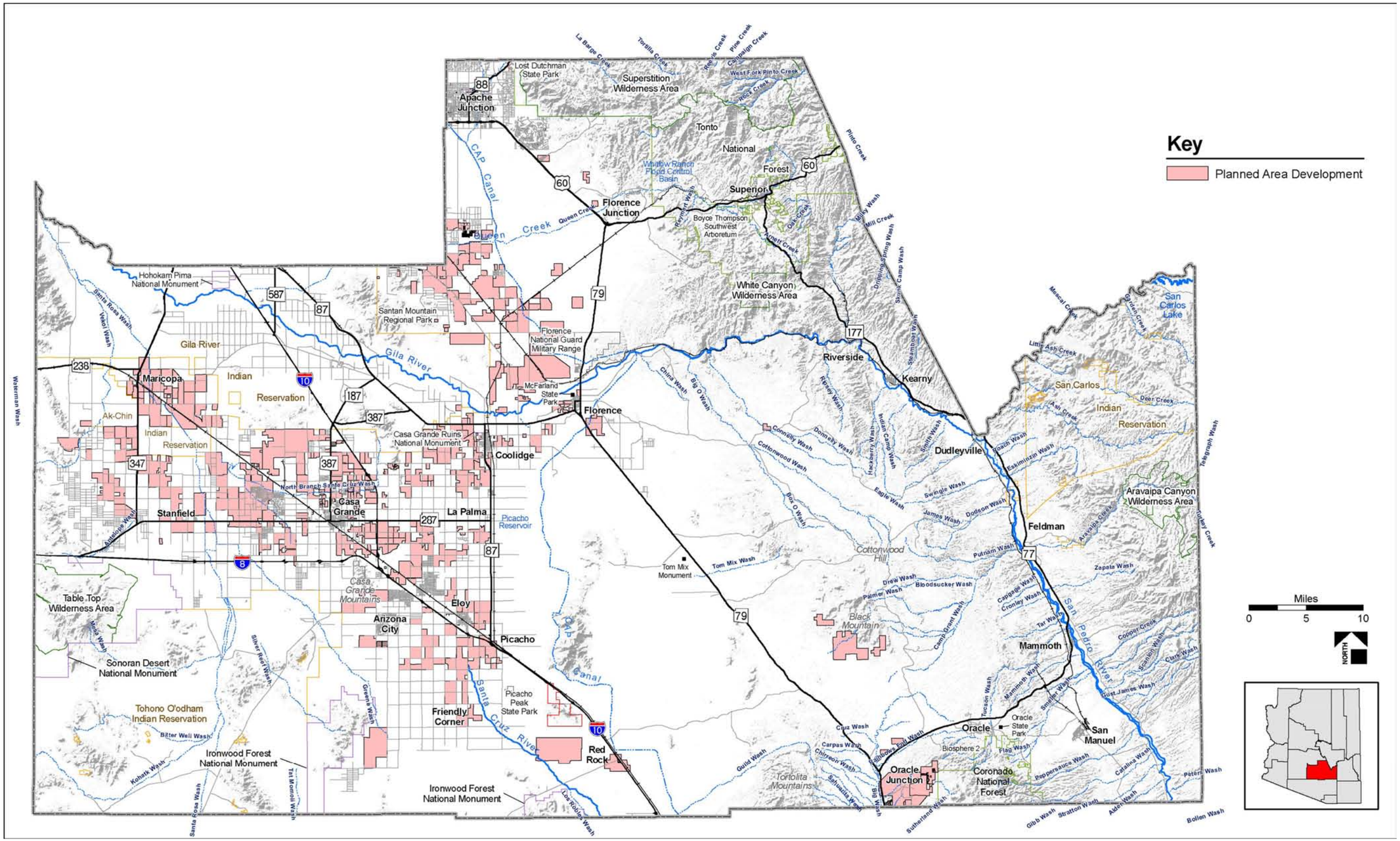

Figure A10. Central Arizona Association of Governments PAD Map

Appendix B – Cultural Resources Information

Table B1. NRHP Districts

Name	Location	Age/Affiliation	Area	Number of buildings/ structures
Casa Grande National Monument	Coolidge	500– 1499 AD/ Hohokam-Salado	4,725 acres	4
Florence Townsite Historic District	Florence	1850–1950 AD/ Euro-American	600 Acres	118
Hohokam-Pima National Monument	Gila River Indian Reservation	499BC–1499 AD/ Hohokam	16,900 acres	9
Los Robles Archaeological District	Red Rock	1499–1000 BC/ Hohokam	128,940 acres	Unknown
McClellan Wash Archaeological District	Picacho	1499–1000 AD/ Hohokam	245,560 acres	Unknown
Rancho Linda Vista	Oracle	1900–1950 AD/ Euro-American	910 acres	19
Boyce Thompson Southwestern Arboretum	Superior	1900–1950 AD/ Euro-American	12,215 acres	12
Verdugo Homestead District	Randolph	1875–1925 AD/ Euro-American	30 acres	4

Source: National Register of Historic Places

Cultural Resources References

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Appendix C – Public Involvement Information

Public Meeting No. 1 Apache Junction (June 27, 2006)

Values

- Access to equestrian trails
- Keep the existing equestrian trails
- Close proximity to local equestrian trails
- Maintain open space
- Dark skies
- Wilderness character of the existing open space
- Government support of equestrian culture
- Maintain equestrian culture
- Trail solitude
- Un-obstructed views of mountains/open space
- Natural condition
- Natural landscape
- Historical trails
- Preserve military training within existing location (along CAP)
- Safety/security within rural community
- Existing desert wildlife (preserving)
- Preservation of the large open space areas (BLM land, etc.)

Issues

- Separation of trail users
- No areas marked as single use trails
- Co-existence of trails, open space, and development
- ATV users conflicting with equestrians
- No designated and enforced ATV trails or large use areas
- Enforcement of trail usership (access and users)
- Identified chain of command (there is no clear one currently) for enforcement
- Repair of fences and signs
- Insufficient parking
- Impact to wildlife
- State land disposition
- Dumping of large trash items
- Firearm usage
- Lack of accessible trails for all age groups
- Public involvement and awareness

Needs

- Off-leash dog parks
- Potable water for all users (equestrians, pedestrians, dogs, etc.)
- Enforcement
- Effecting smart growth
- Enforce usage on state land
- More people involved
- Clear line of communication for management/enforcement
- More equestrian trails
- Over-night camping
- Equestrian camping
- Protect environment
- Designated ATV use areas

- Signage and identification
- Preserve natural environment for future generations
- Maintain trails and open space
- Convenient, sufficient parking
- Trailer parking
- Maintain open space
- More awareness and promotion throughout the county
- Volunteer program
- Control urban space development
- Connect to equestrian neighborhoods
- Accessible trails and open space
- Integration of trails and open space with new development
- User facilities (restrooms, benches, etc.)
- Rest areas and spur trails off of the main trails
- Local government buy-in, regional cooperation
- Dedication of open space/trails to county
- Integrate rural values into development
- Lobbyist/ public relations firm to help build support and promote goals
- Look for grants
- Integration of open space and growth
- Environmental clearances
- Preserve and protect cultural resources
- County guidelines for design
- Signalized trail crossings
- Grade separated crossings
- More trailheads
- Educational programs
- Chain of enforcement accountability

Additional Comments from Public Meeting No. 1

1. The main challenge will be compiling a plan that addresses multi-use. The only way that I can see is to have a separate trails/areas for different types of use.

I think there should also be some effort to accommodate wildlife. Coyotes, for example have territories and well-used trails from what I have witnessed. I hate to see development destroying the ability of coyotes and other wildlife to move around freely.

I am concerned about the increase in light pollution. This has an impact on enjoyment of open space (in the evening obviously) A good example is the lights at Prospector Park. I don't dispute that lights are needed for baseball, but the floodlights are dazzling for miles around. Couldn't they be hooded in some way so they don't light up the goldfield mountais?

2. I live in the unincorporated Gold Canyon We need more parks and off-leash dog parks- I am the president of a Dog Owners group and would like to be part of the Task Force

-Smart Growth-

3. Need to Coordinate With The Following Agencies:

Morrison Institute (ASU) – Superstition Vistas
MAG- Maricopa Association of Governments
CAAG- Central Arizona Association of Governments
EVP- East Valley Partnership
Pinal Partnership
ADOT

-Please feell free to contact me for contact info for any of these agencies.

4. My desire is to protect the Arizona Trail and other rural trails. Protect not only the trails but a wide enough corridor so that a wilderness, primitive experience is maintained. Such protection is from development and other such types of encroachment.

An issue not listed on the large sheet:

State Land Department land disposition policies and procedures.

5. Very good job-lets get more people involved!

6. I attended the meeting on Idaho Rd on 6-28-06. I put my views accross and were well received But I would like to remind you that due to the increased influx of ATVs on all dirt roads in the County and also the Military Range, we need to establish a Trail-Race Track-or obsticale coarse to send these people to (for free) or restrict them to for our own SAFETY These people aren't out for a lesureley ride They are racing as fast as thier ATV will run. "Solution" The dry Gila River Bed from the diversion dam east of Florence to Sacaton or the I-10 Freeway would be a good track for them.

7. It is imperative to conserve as much open space as possible with a few ammendmendts as possible. Toilets and potable water are a bit extreme. There should be long and wide corridors of open space between developments in order to preserve wildlife, water and the beauty of the desert, and to reduce the heat increase caused by asphalt and concrete. CHECK OUT THE "SONORAN DESERT CONSERVATION PLAN" @ www.co.pima.az.us/cmo/sdcp/.

Comments Given at PUBLIC MEETING No.2 Oracle (June 28, 2006)

Values

- Dark at night
- Value mountain views and open areas
- Foreground views (non-cluttered)
- Wildlife corridors
- Quiet
- Historic areas
- Open space corridors along roadways
- National historic sites
- Preserve viewsheds
- Habitat to sustain wildlife
- Natural wash corridors
- Hiking and equestrian trails
- American Flag Ranch
- Wise, conservative, and sustainable use of water
- Keep the existing equestrian trails
- Close proximity to local equestrian trails
- Kannally Ranch (Now Oracle State Park)
- Hijinks Ranch
- South-eastern corridor- preserve all of it
- Oracle Historical Society
- Friends of Oracle State Park
- Undisturbed natural areas (no golf courses)
- Oracle's small town character
- Abundant and easy access to trails
- Riparian corridors preservation
- Proximity to existing open space areas
- Housing diversity (types)
- Low density housing
- Pollution free
- Geological resources

Issues

- Controlled access (at all levels)
- State lands mandate
- Increased traffic (trucks) at Mtn. Lemon Highway
- Water supply
- No bicycle routes/paths
- Increase in trash disposal/ new site for transfer station
- Disappearing agriculture land (ranch and farm)
- Lack of regional planning
- Lack of protection for the San Pedro area
- Lack of coordination between state and local governments
- Rampant development without provisions for infrastructure

Needs

- Eliminate traffic and noise pollution through Oracle (from San Manuel through Tucson)
- Limit growth
- Safety on trails, open space

- Environmental safety (health of users)
- Need more trails
- Health safety
- Non-motorized trails
- Regulation of motorized vehicles on trails
- Develop more riparian areas and trails
- Regulate desert dumping
- Bike routes/lanes
- Local control
- Quiet trails
- Trails that will not be destroyed
- All-season trails
- More areas to access trails
- Connectivity to the Arizona Trail (loop trails)
- Local multi-use path or trails
- Connection to Picacho Peak
- Southern East/West connection
- Butterfield connection
- Education programs for trail usage and respect of open space areas
- Preserve rural character of Oracle
- Enhance natural character
    - Oracle Historical Society (Oracle Run)
    - Saddle Bike Club (Task Force)
- Create local volunteer groups
- Integrate farmland/ranchland and open space areas
- Local sustainability
- Keep the existing equestrian trails
- Linking historic sites
- Preserve historic areas
- Preserve wash corridors
- Preserve small town character

Additional Comments from Public Meeting No. 2

8. Charoleau Gap Rd, a famous 4 wheel drive access into Coronado National Forest, is of great concern and interest to me. The road traverses private property and eventually be closed. If action is taken quickly I can segue the cooperation of the developer, if the county can help with State Trust Land to relocate the road. I have intimate (not literally) relationship with the developer, forest service and Game and Fish who all would like to see the road relocated.

I wold like motorized and nonmotorized trails to be clearly separated. I see on the map that the Great Western crosses and occasionally utilizes the trail—this kind of sectional dual purpose encourages violations of the rest of the nonmotorized trail. I'm an avid packer and there is nothing more disturbing than having been on the trail for two days and having an ATV pull up behind me!

Oracle Land Trust has secured a conservation easement on the west slope of Oracle Hill. When needed I can send you the coordinates.

I put a BIG circle on the map you displayed for us at the Oracle meeting but failed to explain, so here is the explanation for the large circle around the town of Oracle:

The area is a transition zone! As you know, transition zones are endowed with numerous species of plants and animals-substantially more than zones above and below them.

9. At the meeting I attended bicycles were not given their due. I am not alone in advocating for bike lanes with each new road, path, trail. These public meetings in Pinal Co. seems inadequate.

Comments Given at PUBLIC MEETING No.3 Coolidge (June 29, 2006)

Values

- Sonoran desert character
- Being in the county jurisdiction
- Equestrian culture
- Remoteness
- Quiet
- Riparian areas
- Year round equestrian trails and access
- State and national parks
- Agricultural aspect
- Rural character

Issues

- Unbridled growth
- Disappearing open space
- Waste of water
- Insufficient roadways for amount of traffic
- Not enough trails
- Lack of trailheads
- Multiple types of users on same trails
- Growth without infrastructure
- Uncontrolled trail usage
- Motorized trail usage
- Open mining control

Needs

- Single track trails (continuous)
- High value trail experience
- Move trails off vehicular roads
- Designated non-motorized trails
- Designate new county and state land for parks
- Open space buffers around landmarks
- Close proximity to trails
- Preserve Diablo Canyon, Oak Flat, “bolder” boulders, Box Canyon, Coke Canyon areas
- Preserve riparian areas

Additional Comments from Public Meeting No. 3

10. Open Space for Equestrian activities!!!! Non-Motorized Trails. Trail Heads

11. Each Communities Park Board should be solicitated to participate if they have not been contacted.

The eastern part of the County has real possibilities for open space and trails.-Mr. Jay Batemen at the Garnett Home in Casa Grande might be a prime person to interview as knows the area quite well and is a past Pinal County Supervisor and Manager. He is restricted to the facility but I feel a personal interview could be arranged.

Pinal County Sherrifs Posse-Varr Myers-Posse could possibly make suggestions for horse trails.

Comments Given at PUBLIC MEETING No.4 Queen Creek (October 26, 2006)

Public Meeting Comments/Questions:

- Concerned that the executive ordinance area [the Arizona Army National Guard Florence Military Reservation (FMR)] shown on the plan, as open space, will lead people to believe that military lands can be used as an active/passive recreational activity area.
- The master plan needs to address the executive order concerning the definition of the military base designation.
- A new category of open space needs to be defined that will describe and incorporate a Military Reservation Boundary that will have restricted use areas, times, and accessibility to the public. This new category of open space needs to allow for restricted public use including active/passive recreational activities as deemed necessary by the respective land manager/owner.
- Concerned that the location of the future Anza National Park does not match the proposed designation on other documented maps.
- Will there be the flexibility to "tweak" the boundaries and alignment of open space areas and trail corridors after adoption?
- What types of Regional Parks will there be, and when will they be designated? – *The definition of regional parks will identify various category types that relate to the focus of activities (i.e. active, passive, conservation) based on the natural, cultural, physical resources of the specific site locations. They will be designated when the County acquires ownership or management of the lands.*
- How much involvement will the County have in species management (after designation and adoption of open space and regional park locations)? -
- What is the definition of a Regional Park? – *See response above.*
- What are the proposed names for Regional Parks? – *There are no names or specific designations at this time.*
- What are the next steps and timeline? – *Public comment will be received until November 10th. A Draft Final Master Plan will be prepared that addresses the comments received. The Draft Final Master Plan will be presented to the Stakeholder Taskforce and County Board of Supervisors for their review and comment. A Final Master Plan will be presented to the Board of Supervisors for approval and adoption in April 2007.*
- Where can people get copies of the plan? – *On the County's website.*

Additional Comments from Public Meeting No. 4

No comment sheets were received from the October 26, 2006 Queen Creek Meeting.

Other Public Comments (Prior to or Subsequent to Public Meeting #4)

1. Attached is a list of properties which may be affected by zoning and land use category discrepancies. We look forward to working with Pinal County and Logan Simpson Design on these land issues. Please contact us as soon as possible to arrange a meeting; we appreciate your assistance with the State of Arizona, Department of Emergency and Military Affairs.

This letter is to confirm the request of the Arizona Army National Guard and recommendations for changes to the Proposed/Planned Open Space designations, which affect property under jurisdiction of the State of Arizona Department of Emergency and Military Affairs, throughout Pinal County. These particular properties labeled on the "Pinal County Trails Plan" by Logan Simpson Design, dated May 2005, which is currently under development, may be affected by zoning and land use category discrepancies.

a. Florence Military Reservation (26,484 acres)

b. Rittenhouse (479.55 acres)

c. Casa Grande Training Site (800 acres)

d. Silver Bell Army Heliport (160.92 acres)

e. Picacho Peak Aviation Training Site (320 acres)

f. Project Challenge (5 acres)

g. Coolidge (2.7 acres)

h. Red Rock Aviation Training Field (300 acres proposed)

While at the public meeting on Thursday, October 26, 2006 we identified life safety issues with the current designations, including an artillery impact area shown as Planned Open Space. We would like the opportunity to address these issues prior to publication of the Pinal County Trails plan documentation. Identifying these issues during this open comment period will alleviate the need for future changes. We have also identified discrepancies with the Town of Florence Master Plan maps and would like the chance to discuss these issues also.

2. I can't really give a good analysis as the concept on the map is so broad. As far as my District (Globe) goes, it looks like you are proposing only the Arizona Trail near Picketpost. We are good with that. I encourage you to get in touch with Art Wirtz or Jim Cooley at the Mesa District 480-610-3300 to discuss any trails in the Apache Junction/GoldCanyon/Peralta/Florence Junction area to Gonzolas Pass. Globe District picks up at Gonzolas Pass. Thanks for the opportunity to comment.

Comments Given at PUBLIC MEETING No.5 Saddlebrooke (October 30, 2006)

Public Meeting Comments/Questions:

- Are abandoned rail lines being considered for trail alignments? –*Yes they will be.*
- How are state trust lands that fall within the open space areas going to be handled? –*They will be dispersed and acquired per the Arizona State Lands rules and regulations.*
- Will eminent domain be used to acquire land? – *No.*
- Will the County act as stewards for the Nature Conservancy lands? – *Only if the County acquires those lands and acts as the land manager.*
- How much land is open space within 50 miles of Oracle? – *As shown on the plan.*
- Will anything be done with the Paige Trowbridge Landfill?
- What are the water constraint issues?
- Were hunting uses taken into consideration when developing the open space master plan? – *The Master Plan was developed with input from the Arizona Game & Fish Department to ensure their constituents' interests are being incorporated.*
- Will open space corridors, that do not show proposed trail corridors, still be useable by the public? – *Yes.*
- Are you working with adjacent counties? – *Yes.*
- When will the open space master plan be adopted and implemented? – *It is anticipated to be adopted by the County Board of Supervisors by April 2007 and implemented as development and funding becomes available.*
- Will there be waivers for developers?

Additional Comments from Public Meeting No. 5

1. THIS WAS A GOOD RE-CAP OF THE COUNTY TRAILS PLAN IT APPEARS IT IS MOVING FORWARD IN A GOOD METHOD, HOWEVER IT IS LONG OVERDUE. THE GROWTH DEVELOPMENT IS YEARS AHEAD OF THE PLAN

Other Public Comments (Prior to or Subsequent to Public Meeting #5)

No email comments were received from this meeting.

Comments Given at PUBLIC MEETING No.6 Maricopa (November 1, 2006)

Public Meeting Comments/Questions

- What influence does the county have over State Trust lands? – *None.*
- There is support for the Arizona Trail, and they would like to see a larger open space buffer surrounding it.
- Develop creative funding strategies.
- Community and youth outreach is needed.
- What can the group do?
    - Be vocal especially during the hearing process and city budget process.
    - Form ongoing committees that extend past the life of the planning process.
    - Support bond and tax initiatives to acquire public lands.
    - Contact County Supervisors and Planning and Zoning Commissioners to help fund the implementation of the project.
- Is there a way to protect locally (and often historic) created access to trails and trail corridors?
    - Send maps or aerial photographs to Kent or your local municipality to identify those that you know of.
- Will there be protection for trees within existing wash habitats? – *That is one of the intents of creating the design manual criteria and requirements for PADs and subdivisions.*
- What is the budget and funding (creative and long term) for this project?
- Is the budget grant driven?
- Washes –are they defined as wetlands if there is standing water? – *Only if they are located within the jurisdictional boundary waters of the Corp of Engineers.*
- How can the public become involved with BLM properties on the west side of the County?
    - Become involved with the City of Maricopa and BLM directly as those lands fall within their purview.
- Would like to see the County drive the show for open space and community planning and development not just the developers.
- Increase the amount of open space required within PAD's and subdivisions.
- Are there outstanding grazing leases on BLM Properties? – *Yes we believe so.*
- Are you still designing Multi-Use trails?
    - All trails shown on the Master Plan are multi-use. They are indicated as being either motorized or non-motorized.
    - Some areas identified as non-motorized on BLM land currently allow motorized use. How will this be addressed*? – This will be addressed by BLM as they designate motorized and non-motorized corridors within their purview.*
    - Example-Tucson Electric has to drive a route that is non-motorized.
        - The non-motorized trail indicated on the plan is not the Tucson Electric line route.
- Concerns over development on mountains and hillsides.
    - The County is currently developing a hillside development ordinance to address this issue.

- Plan to link to Picacho Peak? – *Yes.*
- Are County managed areas separate (next to) existing parks or are they the same designation?
- Please improve the resolution or maps on the website.
- Clarify definition of Multi-use.
- Are there suggestions for developers? (Clout?)
- Verify location of washes on the western side of the County on the Master Plan Trails Map, as there are numerous washes in this area and not all are large enough to accommodate a trail corridor.
- Can these maps be accessed on the Pinal County Website? – *Yes.*
    - These maps will be located under the Planning and Development section of the website.
- Concern over illegal immigration along corridors.
    - Needs management and enforcement.

Additional Comments from Public Meeting No. 6

1. VEKOL WASH/BLM LAND- KEEP AVAILABLE FOR EQUESTRIAN USE. LIMIT OR ELIMINATE MOTORIZED VEHICLES IN THIS AREA.

HORSES & QUADS DON'T MIX!!!

"HIDDEN VALLEY' IS OUR BEAUTIFUL TREASURE

PRESERVE BLM LAND AS OPEN SPACE. (CONSERVATIONAL)

PROTECT IT!!!

2. On the web site, the maps aren't very clear. It should have one as is, then broken into 3rds so each area could have been enlarge so it can be seen better.

I have spoken to Kent a number of times + it came across that he was going to create a county park in the BLM Land in Hidden Valley. It turns out it isn't going to be that. He needs to improve in exactly he is doing. I don't appreciate the vagueness. It should have been explained better than Kent did.

Concerns:

Illegals- the currently follow the TEP line + trespase private property

how are going to stup people from drag race w/quads once they leave open space + go in neighbor streets +drag race up +down

Illegal dumping

Utilities cooridors- APS has 2 outstand CEC's which they are planning to put in (#24 or 26 +61 (Pinal West to Santa Rosa) Not on your map of utilities

Pinal West to Saguaro Sub Station

CK Status on open grazing rights with livestock

Influence of State trust land next to BLM part

Newspaper notice:

The county only put a notice in the tri-valley paper (which has numbers). Unfortunately they don't understand that people at this end of the county don't read that paper It doesn't cover this end of the County. They sent info to the Communicator. I had to follow thru to ask something to be put in paper.

They should have placed a notice in the paper since everyone gets a copy mailed to them at no charge its needs to be looked at, which paper(s) reach the target area. It doesn't help to put something in a paper which an area doesn't read or get.

3. ON MAPS SENT VIA E-MAIL, THE RED TRAILS MARKING STANDS OUT TOO MUCH; YOU SHOULD USE THE MAROON (BROWN) COLOR USED IN THE PUBLIC MEETING

PLEASE IDENTIFY ROADWAYS (KEY ONES) IN BLACK

MENTION CITY OF MARICOPA URBAN TRAIL SYSTEM

CREATE &ENFORCE DESIGN GUIDELINES FOR DEVELOPERS

AMEND OPEN SPACE REQUIREMENTS FROM 15% TO 20%

EMPHASIZE HOW CREATIVE OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES CAN ENHANCE THE OVERALL PAD.

MARICOPA HAS 3 MAIN WASHES: SANTA ROSA, SANTA CRUZ AND VEKOL; WOULD LIKE TO SEE THEM LABELED.

4. Thank you for your excellent presentation at the November 1st public meeting in Maricopa and for the opportunity to provide input to this process. We were pleased and encouraged to learn that Pinal County wants to protect our open spaces. Per your request, these are our comments.

We are particulary concerned about the proper classification of the open space next to our property on Ivory Road in Hidden Valley known as the Haley Hills quadrant on the USGS map and the BLM land in Township 5 South, Range 2 East, Sections 29, 28, 32 and 33. This area should be designated as natural open space and preserved as wilderness with restricted use for a number of strategically important reasons.

Your preliminary maps indicate that this is an area of the highest quality of biological resources with mammal, bird, and reptile species density in the higher ranges. Desert Tortoise habitat is slotted in category two- the middle range, however this would probably change to the highest category with updated research. Since moving here seven years ago, I have become intimately familiar with this land spending 1-4 hours practically everyday hiking and filming wildlife out there. I've sighted Desert Tortoise on three separate occasions, one which I recently captured on film. I've also sighted Gila Monster on numerous occasions. Scientists say that such frequent sightings are rare, leading me to believe that a healthier than normal population exists in this area.

An additional designation on one of your maps marks this area as "strategic prime ranchland at risk." Since most of this land is currently under BLM jurisdiction, it is primarily absent of any privately owner ranches, however particular parcels have been leased on occasion for seasonal cattle grazing. When we first moved here, we saw a few cattle roaming during the fall and winter months. For the last two years however, there have been not cattle or signs of cattle anywhere. I recently checked with the BLM regional office in Phoenix and currently there are no active leases on these lands or plans to lease them. Pursuant to one BLM report, no grazing will be allowed after 2008 in the Vekol Valley in order to protect suitable Pygmy Owl Habitat.

We moved from Mesa, Arizona in order to get away from city sprawl and to cultivate a rural lifestyle more compatible with our interests. It is heartbreaking to see the same thing happening out here that happened to the East Valley in the late 1980s- uncontrolled development with no regard for open space, existing wildlife, and the natural environment. A new, more insidious wave of intrusion upon what little open space remains has come with this development- namely recreational thrill seekers on off-raod vehicles (otherwise known as motorcycles, dun buggies, ATVs, ORVs and OHVs) which are having a negative impact on this pristine wilderness.

The Haley Hills area is a box canyon bordered on the south by the Vekol Wash a prominent waterway providing a rich riparian habitat, and on the west by an approximate two mile buffer zone with the

Sonoran Desert national Monument. Its divers and prolific wildlife and plant species, including a strong population of thriving Saguaros, can probably be credited to its unique topography and relative isolation. After moving here, hardly an evening would go by when we would not be visited be a pack of coyotes. Now we are lucky to hear them once a month. We can't help but think that this is due to increasing human encroachment on their territories. They still use the Vekol Wash and the major tributary that runs through our property, however, because I film their tracks regularly.

Back then there were hardly any OHV tracks present on the BLM land with the exception of the access road. Tracks now disfigure much of the landscape. (Photos are enclosed.) Evidently at one time the Arizona Fish and Game in conjunction with the BLM made this area off limits to OHVs per the signs posted, but these signs are being ignored and the rules and regulations not enforced. The disfiguring tracks, smoke, dust, noise pollution, and trash left behind by the off-road vehicle users continues to be a major annoyance for all those who moved out here for the quiet solitude and natural beauty of the Sonoran Desert wilderness. We feel it is contributing significantly to the decline of the wildlife in the area and poses a major threat to the already endangered Desert Tortoise as it has elsewhere

As you know, areas like this that border the Sonoran Desert National Monument should be included in the category of protected natural open space because of their strategic significance as a buffer zone/transition area for maintaining wildlife corridors and ecological health. The Vekol Wash is a rich riparian habitat that is prone to extensive flooding during Monsoon season. We should probably call it the "Vekol River" as I caught it raging as such on film! (See photos enclosed). Each rain sets off an explosion of wildlife and plant proliferation which I have documented with film. Our last major rainfall in mid-September brought on an invasion of Steodata Albomaculata- an intriguing spider whose webs looking like liquid diamonds in the sunlight blanketed the valley connecting almost every single creosote bush in a sea of spiders. You could not walk anywhere out there between bushes without running into one! It was an extraordinary natural phenomenon.

I was curious that none of your preliminary maps designate the Vekol Wash as a significant historical and cultural area for historic preservation. A U.S. Department of the Interior BLM 2003 Annual Report says it "is believe to have been an important prehistoric travel and trade corridor between the Hohokam and tribes located in what is now Mexico." I was told that the word "Vekol" means "thunder" in the language of the Tohono O'odham tribe and "grandfather" in Hebrew. At any rate, hiking the Vekol Wash is like being in another world –a lush, humid forest most of the year in strike contrast to what most of us experience here. I've witnesses the blooming of some exotic looking plants in the dense vegetation of its islands that I've never seen anywhere else.

The Haley Hills BLM area should be in the running for official wilderness status for several reasons. Like the Superstition Wilderness, it is an area of great beauty that should be preserved for its uniqueness and the protection of critical species and habitat. Any trails should be restricted for the enjoyment of hikers and horseback riders. I can show you two such rugged trails that have been there for several years. These trails go through washes and up steep hillsides to the ridges and are therefore inappropriate for OHV use. One such trail is 4 miles long and was made by and elderly couple- former winter visitors who also owned land on Ivory. They even constructed a little bench at the midway point of the trail (see photo enclosed.) That action is actually too much development for this kind of wilderness, but you can see how the natural beauty might attract those who would want to put up a resort on the edge of the area or a parking lot at the beginning of the access road. None of us wants to see that or the construction of anything that might obstruct our views of these hills and threaten the sanctity of the wildlife and pristine ecosystem. It's been our biggest secret, but alas, because it is at risk, we can keep it secret no longer. Please do not be content with these photos -- come see for yourself. The most breathtaking vistas are seen from the top of the hills and the ridges – especially at sunrise and sunset.

While I've documented bobcat tracks, some residents have reported sightings of mountain lions in recent years – two just this past spring. It was first sighted by some residents in far west Hidden Valley (Section 32 specifically) and later sighted north of Thunderbird Farms (section 28.) Following that line indicates it was probably using the Vekol Wash for cover in its migratory route like the coyotes. I've got hours of film documenting a diverse array of burrows and animal tracks, including those of the elusive Javalina. I've identified several foxes in the area by sight, scat and track. The front part of our property is kept unfenced because it has a major tributary wash of the Vekol running through it making it a prime corridor for wildlife.

We have several “Prairie Dog” colonies that are loads of fun to watch. Technically, their correct name is “Round-tailed Ground Squirrel,’ but I’m told that calling them Prairie Dogs is not completely inaccurate because of the closeness in relation – they’re just a bit smaller. At almost any given moment we can look out our window and watch their dramas unfold, along with the interesting antics of Desert Cotton tail Rabbit, White- Tailed Antelope Squirrel, Quail, Dove, Roadrunner, Gila Woodpecker, Cactus Wren, Zebra Tail Lizard, Desert Iguana, and a host of other critters. We do not want to see our little wildlife refuge disappear with the rest of the surrounding wilderness. In the winter we are blessed with frequent sightings of Red Tail Hawk (a breeding pair this last spring). Ferruginous Hawk and Harris hawk. I’ve found two abandoned nests on the neighboring hill in the past year. Several species of snakes, lizards, and owls also make this area their home. When the rains begin, we see countless Desert Toads – Bufo Retiformis- (another threatened species) awakening and emerging from their long underground slumber.

In spite of this apparent abundance in wildlife, our sightings have declined in recent years, which we feel is in direct response to the burgeoning development in Maricopa and increase in off-road vehicle activity. Not one week goes by when I don’t bring home some of their unsightly litter from one of my hikes – mostly beer cans and used shot gun shells. This has got to stop. We are glad that Pinal County has specific plans for dedicated space to meet the needs of recreational enthusiasts of off-road vehicles because they do not belong in these critical areas of pristine desert wilderness. While I am an amateur naturalist and wildlife filmmaker, I feel that a reassessment of the strategic importance of this area by your conservation scientists would confirm my experience and personal observations. If there is anything we can do to expedite this process, please let us know.

In conclusion and in accordance with one of your initial evaluations, the Haley Hills BLM lands and surrounding areas in Hidden Valley in far northwestern Pinal County have significant biological resources both in Sonoran Desert vegetation and wildlife habitat. This land provides a critical wildlife connection to the Sonoran Desert National Monument through the surrounding BLM areas and the Vekol Wash – a riparian habitat that is rich beyond measure. This land is a natural refuge for many protected species and offers many scenic vistas, foothills terrain, natural washes, and fascinating bajadas. The few rugged foot trails in this beautiful desert wilderness will continue to offer many unique hiking and wildlife observation opportunities for local residents and tourists alike as long as it is protected as natural open space with restricted usage, off limits to off-road vehicles. We residents of the Escondidos Ranchos subdivision in Hidden Valley are exceptionally fortunate to have this area in our backyard. Because it is so close to the rapidly growing city of Maricopa and sprawling residential development, it is imperative that Pinal County in conjunction with the Pinal County Open Space and Trials Master Plan stakeholders take a proactive stance with regard to its protection and proclaim it as natural open space with restricted usage – nonmotorized and nonfunctional, hopefully paving the way to the official wilderness status it so naturally and completely deserves.

Thank you for your time and consideration in this matter. Please keep us apprised of continuing developments in this process and opportunities for further input. If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please feel free to contact us.

Other Public Comments (Prior to or Subsequent to Public Meeting #6)

1. I have a few more comments regarding the western part of Pinal Co. 1. The trail going north to west in Hidden Valley, goes thru a residental area. The first resident area is from just south of Barnes Rd. to just north of Miller Rd. 2. The area just north of Halley Hills to the mountain range between Hidden Valley to Thunderbird North, is also a residental area. Even the TEP had to purchase the easements from the residents. Who is going to purchase the easements from the residents?

2. It was good to meet you at the meeting in Maricopa. I really do not have anything to add to what the other areas have said is important. I too want to see the dark skies, wild life restoration, preservation of architectural, historical and natural resources.

For me I like keeping the off road vehicle and foot traffic separate.

Would love to see 'rest' area type facilities at trail heads. Mile markers on foot paths would be great! They have these in Forest Park in Oregon and it's wonderful when running long distances.

Would also like to see a 'Friends of Pinal County Open Spaces' orsimilar to help with the care and keeping of these areas and to bring in Audubon, Arizona Fish and Game, etc.

Thank you for all your hard work and I look forward to seeing theresults of that hard work.

3. Thanks so much for the time and effort you all have put into creating a more environmentally friendly Pinal County open space and trails plan. My wife and I attended the public meeting in Maricopa on November 1st 2006 and we welcome the oppertunity to provide our comments. While you will find some critical suggestions and comments in this note, over all, you both presented very well.

You have by now, at least taken a brief look at my wife's letter and accompanying pictures. Let me start by supporting what she says and seconding her sentiments. Her regard for the BLM space known as Haley Hills Quadrant (on the USGS Map) is as sincere and wise as any environmentally conscious citizen can be. We deeply enjoy this space and don't want it to go the way of Ahwatukee or worse. It's easy to see the forces of development, so called progress, and unhealthy profit rotting and worming their way into our quiet rural quality of life and we are prepared to guide or redirect some of the coming changes even against hope. But, if we *are* swallowed by the diseased wave of boxes some people call housing developments, we will yield and simply move.As I thought about the experience of the meeting we had in the library of the Maricopa high school it became clear that the approach and process you were taking had basic flaws.The approach you and Kent adopted was one something akin to a moving train. That is, while Kent did spend the first part of the meeting bringing us up to date on what was happening on his project, he failed to understand his audience. We at that meeting (judging from the comments of the group participation) didn't know the roles of the organizations involved. Some people wanted you all to do something about the illegals or control the ATV's on the BLM land, or stop people from blocking ATVs from going across a wash, or tell us what the plans for making a park here or there were. All of this made for some discomfort and confusion and speaks to our lack of civic education but not of our intelligence.
Not all understand that you are representing the County only and not BLM or any municipalities and, more importantly, what that implies. Of course, you can say that you are representing the County but that doesn't explain the roles, responsibilities and goals of those who have influence and control of the land we were discussing. I know that some people do understand all of this basic background information and are familiar with what you all can and can't do, but many are not familiar with the basics and for us to fully contribute to the process, more must be said about roles at the beginning. Perhaps a pre-meeting for first timers would be good. Just by what I've seen you do with maps, I know you can come up with a table of the various influential organizations including the roles and explanations of their key responsibilities. This could include a map or organization chart of the planning department at the County. I know that the trails and open space plan is not the only plan affecting our area and I know as well that you can't address what the other parts of the department are doing, but just to see what the organization looks like and who the contacts are in the context of your project, would be useful.

The process used in the meeting was also lacking in some fundamental ways. We need to see the entire process from womb to tomb graphically. While the mission, vision and goals were well articulated, the way all that fits into a sequence of events was not. How did this project start and where? What happened just prior to this set of meetings and what happens next? (I know Kent talked about it but I want to see a chart.) When did you all come into the picture and who are you all anyway? Of coarse I know the answer to that now because I saw your very nice website but, at the time of the meeting (and that is what we are discussing now) I did not. In fact I didn't know Kent had a team of consultants working for him until you introduced yourselves. But back to process: A graphic showing where this particular meeting fits into the sequence of events, showing how far along Kent is and where the project is going would do wonders to clarify everything about what you are all doing.

With respect to getting the word out about this meeting; it was only chance that I saw a flyer at the local feed store. Your advertising methodology lacks luster. With respect to the maps; it's troubling to me when there is no written explanation of a legend given to a map when that legend is not self explanatory.
A question asked again and again was; "what does that mean?" This tells me that it would be great if written explanations were available for each legend on each map. You did a good job of telling us the

source of information on your maps, but you didn't provide a contact for further information, and that seems only good professional process.

So, your approach to roles and responsibilities and your attention to process could use some improvement, but having said all that, you did get my attention and I'm participating to the small extent that I'm able, so thank you for that and all the things that you do that we never notice. It's a little like Monday morning quarterbacking to offer this critique, but you asked for it and I hope it is received in the spirit of good intentions that it is delivered.

My wife's letter focused on the land and its use and once again I would like to say that we stand together on this most important issue. We must preserve natural open spaces including the Haley Hills or we in Arizona and Pinal County will open our eyes someday to discover we have destroyed the very reasons for being here.

4. We attended the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan meeting in Maricopa on November 1, 2006.

It is important to us that the trails be for hikers, bicycles, and horseback riders; no motor vehicles. We are not interested in development of the trail areas other than bathrooms and running water, if possible. We would prefer that developers put in parks with equipment, ball fields, etc. in new home developments, rather than anything like that be added to the proposed open space/trail system. We need as much "wild area" that is untouched other than a natural trail, that we can have. It's important that we go on trails that afford us a feeling of being out in nature.

The Vekol Wash, which runs near our area (Papago Butte/Thunderbird Farms) is extremely important to us. When we ride our horses in the wash, we are surrounded by tall, lush greenery. We enjoy watching butterflies and birds, such as owls, who make the wash their home. We are truly in another beautiful world when we're there. It's an important link to riding through the Sonoran Desert and on into the distant mountains. This ease of riding our horses from our home to the wash, and on to the desert and mountains, is why we moved here twenty years ago.

Hopefully, the trail system will link with other trails, such as the Arizona Trail, affording us the opportunity to enjoy increased riding opportunities.

We were notified of the meeting by Kent Taylor's e-mail. The information presented was in an easy to understand format. The maps were well done. We were given an adequate opportunity to express our views and opinions. The facility at the Maricopa H.S. was more comfortable than most, in that it was smaller, and sitting around tables felt more informal. It seemed to help open dialog, instead of being in long rows facing front.

Thank you for the efforts being made to bring this idea to reality.

5. I will not be able to attend the public meeting next Wednesday the1st, but wanted to share my public opinion and idea.

I am sure the plans you have come up with so far are great. The one thing that I would like to see would be a trail system along the Santa Rosa wash running through Maricopa.

Good examples of trails along rivers are trails that run along the Santa Cruz and Rillito rivers in Tucson.

A similar type of trail running through Maricopa along the Santa Rosa wash would connect at least a dozen master planned communities and provide recreational enjoyment for the entire city.

Proposed Santa Rosa Wash trail:

Appendix D – Stakeholder Involvement Information

Table D1. Stakeholder Taskforce List

Name	Agency/organization
Mary Johnson	Casa Grande
Marty McDonald	Maricopa
Nicole Zimmerman	Coolidge
Ricky LaPaglia	Coolidge
Jim McFellin	Eloy
Al Gramamdo	Eloy
Gabe Beechum	Florence
Jess Knudson	Florence
Jeff Bell	Apache Junction
Ralph Valez	Superior
Debbie Gomez	Queen Creek
Troy White	Queen Creek
Gary Eide	Kearny
Margaret Gaston	Kearny
Chris Coover	Maricopa County
Steve Anderson	Pima County
Karen Kelleher	BLM/Phoenix
Patrick Madigan	BLM/Tucson
Francisco Mendoza	BLM/Tucson
Mark Lambert	BLM/Tucson
Russel Haughey	Arizona Game and Fish
John Windes	Arizona Game and Fish
Annie McVay	AZ State Parks Trails Coordinator
Bob Sherman	AZ State Parks-Lost Dutchman
Rob Young	AZ State Parks-Picacho Peak
	AZ State Parks-Boyce Thompson
Chris DeMille	AZ State Parks-McFarland
Jerry Ravert	AZ State Parks -Oracle
Amy Racki	AZ State Parks -Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator
Tom Fitzgerald	CAP
Rick Millegard	BOR
Linda Beals	AZ State Land Dept
Michelle Green	AZ State Land Dept/ Planning
Gloria Nichols	AZ State Land Dept/ ROW
Connie Wilhelm	Central Arizona Homebuilders
Tom Novy	SRP
Evelyn Casuga	APS
Philip Baca	EPNG
Rosemary Shearer	SALT (Superstition Area Land Trust)
Terry Rozini	SALT (Superstition Area Land Trust)
Sandee McCullen	MGCP (Middle Gila Conservation Partnership)
Bonnie Bariola	PCTA (Pinal County Trails Association)
Laura Dupee	USFS (Coronado National Forest)
Connie Lane	USFS (Tonto National Forest) Globe District
Art Wirtz	USFS (Tonto National Forest) Mesa District

Table D1. Stakeholder Taskforce List (Continued)

Cate Bradley	National Park Service (RTCA)
Joe Winfield	National Park Service (RTCA)
Tom Smith	Pinal Partnership
Don Kucera	Anza Trail
Dave Hicks	Arizona Trail Association
Brenda Wallace	Pinal County Visitors Center
Jason Lott	Casa Grande Ruins National Monument
Maxine Leather	CAAG
Craig Ringer	CAAG
Vanessa Bechtol	Arizona Open Land Trust
Fred Rinalero	Gila River Indian Community
Bart Smith	Ak Chin Indian Community
Charles Russell	San Carlos Apache Indian Community
Marilyn Cestine	Tohono O'Odham Indian Community
Doug Mason	San Carlos Irrigation & Drainage District
Ron McEachern	Central Arizona Irrigation &Drainage District
Grant Ward	Maricopa-Stanfield Irrigation & Drainage Dist
Jack Long	Hohokam Irrigation & Drainage District
Bill Van Allen	New Magma Irrigation & Drainage District
Pinal County Board of Supervisors	
Lionel Ruiz	Supervisor District 1
Sandi Smith	Supervisor District 2
David Snider	Supervisor District 3

MEETING NOTES

DISTRIBUTION DATE: August 9, 2006

MEETING DATE: July 18, 2006

LOCATION: Pinal County Development Services Building F, Saguaro Room
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting #1**

ATTENDEES: *See attached sign-in sheet*

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

1. Introduction:

   a. Kent Taylor, Pinal County Senior Planner, began the meeting by describing the purpose of the master plan study, the history of the previous trail planning master plan, and the background information compiled for the open space and trails master plan.

   b. Jackie Keller, Logan Simpson Design Project Manager, presented an overview of the master planning process. She described the process as being within its early stages of development in which base data is still being compiled, studied, and obtained from the County, municipalities, and public input for the planning team's review and analysis. Once all data is received, the planning team will analyze all the information obtained and begin to develop conceptual alternatives for designated open space and trail corridors within Pinal County. The County and planning team will present the concepts to the Stakeholder Taskforce in Meeting #2. All Stakeholder Taskforce Members will be invited to review and give feedback on the conceptual alternatives to assist in developing the preferred master plan. The preferred master plan will then be presented to the public in a second series of public meetings as their opportunity to provide their thoughts and ideas on open space areas and trail/wildlife corridors.

   c. Jackie then reviewed the Public Meeting #1 feedback that was complied from the three separate meeting locations, which included Apache Junction on June 27th, Oracle on June 28th, and Coolidge on June 29th. The Stakeholder attendees all received handouts of what the public valued, had issues with, and would like to see out of the master planning process. The handouts also consisted of all the public comment sheets that were received during and after the meetings. Public meeting attendees were also asked to identify significant open space areas and trail corridors that they value and/or would like preserved and were asked to indicate these areas on a base map. This information will be evaluated and considered in developing the conceptual alternatives.

   d. Jennifer Moore, Logan Simpson Design Project Planner, gave an overview of the ongoing inventory of base data collection compiled to date. The following is a list of exhibits that were presented at the meeting along with the respective information sources. All exhibits listed below, except for the Cultural Resources data, can be found on the Pinal County website at **http://co.pinal.az.us/PlanDev/Trails/**

      - ❑ Land Ownership – obtained from the Arizona State Land Development (January 2006)

- ❑ Slope Analysis – obtained from Pinal County
- ❑ Major Utility Corridors – obtained from Pinal County
- ❑ Trails – obtained from Pinal County and Logan Simpson Design Inc.
- ❑ Biological Resources – species data obtained from Arizona Fish and Wildlife Service; Wildlife habitat areas determined by Logan Simpson Design Inc. Wildlife Biologists
- ❑ Cultural Resources – obtained from the Arizona State Museum

e. Logan Simpson Design (LSD) emphasized that the information shown on the exhibits is base data information that has been collected and compiled to date. A key role the stakeholder taskforce members will play is to assist in providing relevant mapping, data, or written information for each of their areas needed to assist in compiling a thorough base map for the open space and trails master plan. This information should be forwarded to Kent Taylor at Pinal County. The importance of the stakeholder's participation is required to ensure that all trail linkages, corridors and open space areas are represented within this plan that will provide continuity and connectivity for their area user groups.

2. The following is an outline of what was discussed during the open dialogue session of this meeting.

a. Bonnie Bariola, with the Pinal County Trail Association (PCTA), believed that the connection of trails within the County should connect to each of the municipality's corridors and trails system. Importance of linking master plan communities' trail connections with pedestrians and bike route circulation was also mentioned.

b. Tom Fitzgerald, with the Central Arizona Project (CAP), stated that connectivity is needed from the CAP trail to the cities and communities enabling each municipality the ability to connect to a major designated trail corridor. The CAP consists of approximately 50 miles of trail corridor throughout Pinal County located on canal right. Numerous trail connections can be established along the CAP utilizing canal right as a major trail connection corridor. He also mentioned that there are several areas on canal left that provide protection for the canal and should be included as open space areas for the County.

c. Sandee McCullen with the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership (MGCP) will send Kent data regarding the proposed routes, evaluation of routes, cultural impacts, and NEPA information that has been compiled for the Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) routes within the MGCP study area. OHV should be included in the master plan as an integral component of the trails system and should not be designated and sustained within its own area, i.e. - within Globe, Apache Junction, Florence, etc. While designating a larger land use area for this user group would assist in ensuring an area for the usage and allowance of these vehicles, the desire to be able to connect from city to city and from cities to community trail systems was mentioned as an important element of the master plan

d. Joe Winfield also mentioned that the Paiute ATV Trail in southern Utah is a great example for connections of ATV users with on-road and off-road routes that link the major cities within this region of Utah, and suggested that the County evaluate this example to identify how such a system could be incorporated into the Pinal County plan.

e. Sandee requested that the stakeholder taskforce attendees have a copy of the user group contact list so they can better assist in understanding if other contacts need to be added.

f. Management of planned trails will also need to be discussed as part of the trails master plan component. Identifying responsible parties for management and control of open space and trail areas needs to be included as a part of the master plan recommendations. Designation, regulation, and user education of open space areas and trail corridors would fall to the responsible party identified.

g. Using Flood Plain areas and analyzing drainage patterns throughout the County would be beneficial in determining continual trail corridors and connections to municipalities.

h. All terrain vehicle control access needs to be incorporated within areas designated with multiple user group access routes. There has been OHV and ATV controlled access ideas formulated for Kearney that could be incorporated within the planning and ordinance portion of the County Plan.

i. All trails, routes, and roads shall designate user groups within this plan.

j. Stakeholders, especially municipalities, need to agree with the ordinances that will be created as a result of this plan so plan compliances and enforcement can be consistent throughout the county area and variances can be limited.

k. Annie McVay, with Arizona State Parks (Trails) stated that regional facilities, especially the five State Parks located within the County, are needed to help define trail connectivity and corridors between them.

l. Identifying connectivity corridors within private developments and communities will ensure continuous open space and trail systems will provide connectivity throughout the county.

m. Acquiring State Land within the County through initiatives if they are passed should be considered in order to preserve required open space areas and trail corridors.

n. Land Use initiatives should be established for open space areas within Pinal County.

o. The Town of Florence and the City of Casa Grande are currently working on their parks, trails and open space plans.

p. Linkages connecting City parks and trail corridors to County parks and corridors are key components in making this Pinal County Plan successful.

q. Troy White, with the Town of Queen Creek, requested a trail corridor connection to Queen Creek Wash and the San Tan Mountain Regional Park from Pinal County. Queen Creek Wash is a major trail corridor that links the Town of Queen Creek trails to the Maricopa County regional trail system. Establishing another connection and corridor throughout Pinal County will help that trail corridor to continue to be preserved. This is the type of information the planning team needs to ensure that the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan is successful in linking trail corridors and open space to the communities within the county and adjacent communities in contiguous counties.

r. Preserving buffers of open space around park and trail systems to deter development from building right on the “edge” of these features.

s. Preserving and protecting trails and open space from future development. The Pinal County Plan can be utilized by the cities as an enforcement tool for private development to incorporate designated open space and trail corridors within new developments.

t. Buy-off of the County Plan by the municipalities and City Councils is key to being able to influence the pattern of development in the future.

u. The definition of open space may differ according to its delineated use. Preserving open space and designating what the definition is, may be based on the surrounding land use. Identify areas being preserved vs. areas being conserved. Identify natural resource areas on the plan that may be desired as open space in the future regardless of existing land ownership.

v. Passive and active delineations of recreation areas including buffer space with active areas and transition zones from one area to another.

w. Ensuring wildlife corridors are maintained, especially if users are brought into new areas. Education of the public in regard to wildlife habitat and open space usage. Ensuring wildlife habitat will remain intact.

x. Identify land managers vs. people managers for regulating and managing trail and open space areas. The need to preserve sensitive areas. Containing users to designated use areas to minimize environmental damage. Conserving natural areas where users are allowed by limiting their activities to designated use areas. Designating use areas within regional parks.

y. Following revised statues within comprehensive plan regardless of land ownership or authorization. Plan needs to be concise in how it is written.

z. Need owner's permission to designate planned land uses on private land. Some owners may want to ensure open space areas within their land.

aa. Identify the responsibilities of enforcement of ordinances.

bb. The land use "natural resource" can be obtained through the public process.

cc. The Arizona Trail should be protected as an Arizona and national treasure and a natural treasure. The Arizona Trail has been established as one of the top three longest trails in the nation.

3. Subsequent to the Stakeholder Taskforce meeting, Craig Ringer (CAAG) and Vanessa Bechtol (Arizona Open Land Trust) submitted electronic and hardcopy base data information for inclusion in the master plan analysis.

ACTION ITEMS:

1. Each stakeholder attendee to provide additional base information for the planning study that is relevant to their specific communities needs by July 31st.
2. Sandee McCullen with the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership (MGCP) will send Kent data regarding the proposed routes, evaluation of routes, cultural impacts, and NEPA information that has been compiled for the OHV routes within the MGCP study area.
3. LSD to continue to compile base data information and develop an overall base map for developing conceptual alternatives.
4. LSD to finalize the project contact list and update the project schedule to distribute to the stakeholders.

Attachments:

Project Coordination Contact List
Data Collection Log (to date)

Any corrections or additions to these notes should be directed to Jennifer Moore at Logan Simpson Design Inc. (480-967-1343) within the next 10 working days.

MEETING NOTES

DISTRIBUTION DATE: August 21, 2006

MEETING DATE: August 16, 2006

LOCATION: Pinal County Development Services Building F, EOC Room
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting #2**

ATTENDEES: *See attached sign-in sheet*

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

Discussion Items:

Introduction:

Kent Taylor, Pinal County senior planner, began the meeting by introducing himself, and the project team from Logan Simpson Design.

Kent then asked the stakeholders to introduce themselves, and their interests in the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan, as some of them were not at the initial stakeholder meeting held in July.

Mary Johnson from City of Casa Grande introduced herself and described Casa Grande's recent involvement with park and open space master planning.

Nicole Zimmerman from the City of Coolidge, expressed interest in the master planning process, and indicated that Coolidge is in the initial development of a request for proposal for an open space and park master plan for Coolidge.

Ricky Lapaglia from the City of Coolidge reflected Nicole's remarks in expressing interest in the master planning process, and how it may affect Coolidge.

Sandee McCullen from the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership (MGCP) wants to ensure that the MGCP interests are considered in the development of the open space and trails master plan.

Vanessa Bechtol from the Arizona Open Land Trust, indicated that her main concerns were the preservation of open space and wildlife habitats, and not necessarily trails.

Bonnie Bariola from the Pinal County Trails Association, described her experience with planning in Pinal County, and indicated the Pinal County Trails Associations interest in the development of the master plan.

Cate Bradley from the National Parks Service, indicated her interest in the open space and trails master plan, and wanted to offer any support that she could lend to develop a successful plan.

Master Plan Process:

Jackie Keller, project manager from Logan Simpson Design Inc., gave a brief overview of the master planning process to date. She described that the concepts that will be presented today are a work in progress, and that the format of the 2nd stakeholder meeting would be a working group to help refine the concepts.

Jackie identified and explained the handouts that were given at the sign in table which included:

The Meeting Agenda

The Conceptual Alternatives Summary

The Data Collection Log

Jackie summarized the comments from the first public meetings held in June 2006 at Apache Junction, Coolidge and Casa Grande. She stressed the desire of the public to control growth and preserve the natural character of the undeveloped land. Following is a brief listing of the public's desires and/or concerns the master plan should address that she shared with the taskforce.

Maintain large open space areas and un-obstructed views

Preserve the natural wilderness landscape and remoteness

Provide areas for quiet, dark sky experiences

Preserve wildlife corridors and riparian areas

Provide open space buffers for existing national monuments, forests, and other open spaces

Maintain the equestrian culture and access to open space areas

Provide separation of trail users (motorized vs. non-motorized) to allow for trail solitude and a high-value experience

Monitor and manage uncontrolled trail usage/promote user ship enforcement

Designation of and Regulation of motorized vehicle trails

Provide connectivity to regional facilities and historic sites

Integrate trails and open space into new development as it occurs

Jackie then summarized the comments from the 1st Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting, and introduced Jennifer Moore, project planner from Logan Simpson Design Inc. (Refer to Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting #1 Meeting Notes)

Jennifer gave an overview of the site analysis exhibits and base data mapping done to date (see attached Data Collection Log). The site analysis/base data mapping included:

Biological Resources –species data obtained from Arizona Fish and Wildlife services; wildlife habitat areas determined by Logan Simpson Design Inc. wildlife biologists.

Land Ownership – Land ownership data was obtained from the Arizona State Land Department.

Cultural Resources – cultural resource areas obtained from the Arizona State Museum and compiled by Logan Simpson Design Inc. archaeologist.

Pinal County Trail Concept Map approved in 2005 – obtained from Pinal County.

Utility Corridors – obtained from the Salt River Project

Nature Conservancy Conservation Areas – Information obtained from the Nature Conservancy and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Native Grassland Assessment – information obtained from the Nature Conservancy and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Springs, Riparian Areas, and Strategic Prime Ranch Land at Risk – information obtained from American Farmland Trust, Arizona Land Resource Information, and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Mammal Species Density – information obtained from the Arizona Electronic Atlas (UofA) and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Reptile Species Density – information obtained from the Arizona Electronic Atlas (UofA) and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Bird Species Density – information obtained from the Arizona Electronic Atlas (UofA) and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Desert Tortoise Habitat – information obtained from the Bureau of Land Management, and the Arizona Open Land Trust.

Current Base Data Map -- which included information from municipalities and other sources that were not in obtained in GIS format.

Jennifer gave an overview of the three conceptual alternatives (see attached PDFs), which included a brief description of the planning rationale for each alternative (see attached Conceptual Alternatives Summary) as well as a break down of land use percentages identified below.

Conceptual Alternative A:

20.5% Reservation Land

22.5% Designated Open Space

57.0% Potential Developable Area

Conceptual Alternative B:

20.5% Reservation Land

52.5% Designated Open Space

27.0% Potential Developable Area

Conceptual Alternative C:

20.5% Reservation Land

39.5% Designated Open Space

40.0% Potential Developable Area

Stakeholder Input and Discussion: the following is an outline of what was discussed during the open dialogue session of this meeting.

Cate wanted clarification in reference to the base data map about how many of the concept trails were using utility line corridors. Jennifer responded by explaining that Alternatives B and C did include trails located in utility corridor easements as well as roadways and drainages. Alternative A did not utilize any utility corridors and still maintains connectivity throughout the County. Kent also emphasized that the utility easements are major linkages that could connect regional parks.

Mark Lambert from the Bureau of Land Management wanted to know how the major trails were defined, and Jennifer responded that as of now they were not defined by activity, but only as a possible route. Jackie elaborated and explained that part of the scope of the project included writing ordinances and guidelines that would help determine specific usage when the areas become developed. The intent of the master plan is to identify major trail corridors that may include a single trail or multiple trails depending on the need.

Cate mentioned that the Forest Service's Recreational Activity Spectrum could be used as a guide to help identify uses, and that even some sidewalks could be defined as trails.

Mary mentioned that their master planning usually identified primary trails and secondary trails and that the county and municipalities trail designations/definitions may not match up.

Sandee stated that in the first stakeholder meeting it was agreed that a definition of open space was needed, and she wanted to know what definition the consultants used to develop their concepts. Jackie agreed and explained that the definition has not yet been set, but for the purposes of our concepts, open space meant that no development would occur in those areas. The open space definition will be developed with the Stakeholders' input before going to the public.

Sandee asked for clarification on the designation of Regional Parks in the concepts. Specifically she wanted to know whether the regional parks were going to be multi-use areas. Jackie elaborated and said that at this point no specific use activity was defined, but the idea would be that they would be multi-use recreational areas that would be centrally located within the county, so that all communities would have easy access to them. It is anticipated that regional parks will include passive open space areas as well as active recreational areas. Typical county regional park activities may include model airplane parks, shooting ranges, sports complexes, large special event areas, and other types of activities not provided by municipalities due to costs, area requirements, or land use conflicts.

Sandee felt there could be a balance between concept A and concept B. She noted that the Morrison Institute likes large open space, and she feels the need to dream big amidst the pressure of development.

Cate cautioned against the approach of asking for too much as in concept B because it could backlash in the political process.

Cate also recommended that alternate ways of designating open space should be explored that does not officially designate the land as open space, but use ordinances or some other mechanism to obtain the same effect.

Cate also requested that Planned Area Developments be superimposed on the concept maps so that a better understanding of the anticipated growth can be seen. Kent replied that it would be very difficult to do.

Bonnie commented that according to Pinal County Guidelines that master planned communities are required to designate 15% of the land as open space.

Sandee was concerned that if the preferred alternative were between concept B and concept C, then would Pinal County have the ability to provide access to or better dictate what the PAD's could or could not do. Kent responded that this project would develop design guidelines and ordinances that the PAD's will have to consider. Jackie also stressed the importance of the development of ordinances and design guidelines to help in the implementation of the vision of the residents of Pinal County.

Bonnie commented that in her past experience developers were generally more than willing to work with the county, and that private landowners generally saw the benefit of buffers and trails.

Kent noted that Pinal County is currently looking at the way other counties are working with developers. Specifically Pinal is looking at Pima County to give examples of PAD Guidelines, and how they represent open space in reference to drainage ways and other items.

Cate strongly recommended the need for research into bond issues and alternative funding methods written into the master plan.

Vanessa agreed with Cate and stressed the importance of writing funding strategies into the master plan.

Jackie emphasized that part of the scope of work is researching and suggesting funding strategies to accomplish the counties goals of open space.

Sandee is concerned that the focus of developers, when developing trails, is generally for non-motorized uses. Sandee emphasized the importance of also including motorized trails into the PAD guidelines.

Jackie asked Sandee what the preference of the MGCP would be in the designation of trails within the Middle Gila Conservation Study areas. Sandee said the MGCP developed three different alternatives within the study area, and it should be used as a guideline for decision making, and that the consultants and the county should use their best judgments.

Vanessa was unclear how much involvement and influence the stakeholders would have in designating trails as either motorized or non-motorized trail usage. Kent responded by saying, it will be more beneficial to have design guidelines set into place than actually designating all trails either motorized or non-motorized on a map.

Sandee suggested that it might be better to designate areas where trails should go instead of pinpointing trails on a map, and thought that it may be better to link areas together, but let the land manager for the

areas determine the designation of the trails. Kent responded by saying he would rather plan ahead of the development, so that developers would have to respond to the direction the county wanted to go.

Jackie recommended that a main motorized trail corridor be identified on the plan to show how the connectivity should be provided between areas of the County. It would then be up to the individual landowners or managers to determine motorized trail routing within their purview.

Bonnie commented that except for cities and towns it is between the developers and the county to come to an agreement about the designation of trails and implementation of design guidelines.

Jackie stated that all the stakeholders will be receiving PDFs of the three conceptual alternatives, and they will have 10 days to review (comments back by September 1st), add comments and send back for considerations.

Preferred Concepts and Next Steps: the following is a brief description of each stakeholder's comments or preferences related to the three conceptual alternatives.

Cate preferred to build on concept C. She cautioned against concept B, and feels that it might be too aggressive. She is concerned about money issues and has some concerns about gaining access to utility easements. Cate also suggests that contact should be made ASAP to private landowners that have in-holdings within BLM lands, and she would like to see drainage ways within the county put on one of the maps. Cate also commented that she feels this will be a strong blueprint to manage bond projects. She commented that bond elections are successful 80% of the time, and also that the state parks are sitting on a lot of money that is just accumulating and may be utilized for acquiring open space or recreational lands.

Bonnie- does not yet have a preference, but feels that the county and the consultants are on the right track.

Vanessa does not yet have a preference. She requested that the acreage be put on the maps of the already developed areas, and she would like to see how the Pinal County plan correlates to Pima County conservation areas and open space plan. Vanessa said that she had some information on Pima County that she would share, and she would include it with the review of the concepts.

Jackie stated that it would be very difficult to identify how many acres are currently developed in the County and that it would be a labor-intensive task at this point.

Sandee prefers to build on concept C.

Ricky does not have a preference yet, and will be better able to comment after time to review the material.

Nicole does not have a preference yet, but was concerned that there were no trails going through Coolidge, and would like to see a trail to the national monument. Jennifer clarified that the County's Master Plan is to provide links to the different communities, but it was still the communities' responsibility to plan for trails and open space within their planning boundaries.

Gabe Beechum from the city of Florence does not yet have a preference.

Mary would like to review the concepts and the percentage of lands designated as open space before making a preference, so she requested that the percentages be included in the email.

Mark does not yet have a preference, but stated the BLM will start planning for this Open Space and Trails Master plan within the next few years.

Kent and Jackie reminded everyone that the next Stakeholder Taskforce meeting is set for September 20, 2006 at the same location (EOC room). That meeting will be to review and provide feedback on a Preferred Alternative that will be taken to the public in October.

ACTION ITEMS:

Each stakeholder taskforce member to provide comments and information regarding the three conceptual alternatives by September 1, 2006.

LSD to continue to compile base data information and develop an overall base map for developing a preferred alternative for the taskforce to review on September 20th.

ATTACHMENTS:

Meeting Sign-In Sheet

Conceptual Alternatives Summary

Conceptual Alternatives and Base Data Exhibits (PDF format)

Data Collection Log (to date)

Any corrections or additions to these notes should be directed to Don Kelly (dkelly@lsdaz.com) at Logan Simpson Design Inc. (480-967-1343) within the next 10 working days.

Stakeholder Comments

Received after Meeting # 2

DISTRIBUTION DATE: September 6, 2006

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce Comments on Preferred Alternatives**

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

Comments:

Middle Gila Conservation Partnership:

A. In reviewing the maps with some detail I'm not sure of the exact "proposed Open Space" boundries including the MGCP area but I'm still leaning towards Alternative C. Since the MGCP Report reflects these lands remain in public ownership I would ask at least the BLM and FS portions be identified as Open Space.

B. Along with this I would request the plan identify the need to retain the National Guard area on State Trust Lands. These are all lands that should be retained for public uses. I don't have any more copies of the MGCP Report for the exact wording but you should have that. The Morrison Inst. Accepted the MGCP plan for this area, and are going forward with keeping the MGCP area as Open Space for State Trust Lands.

C. Trail/road access to the MGCP area:

i. Great Western Trail

ii. Price Road from Florence through Box Canyon

iii. Battle Axe Road from Kearney via the Coke Ovens

iv. Cottonwood Canyon Road of Hwy 79

v. Mineral Mtn Road off Hwy 60

vi. Arizona Trail north and south access

The actual trail/road designations within the MGCP area will fall with the land agency within their Land Use Plans.

D. I'm hoping the non-motorized trail group can meet with the MGCP soon to blend the needs of both without causing conflicts. I don't think there's a lot of issues within the pilot area of the MGCP as the major non-motorized route is the Arizona Trail and we know where it is. The only others would be within the Wilderness so we don't have a problem there. We will have issues south of the river.

E. Do you want/need the "vision" of the planning for the historical sites; cultural sites; information sites etc within the MGCP pilot area? i.e: An information/interpretative site at the diversion dam; purchase the Coke Ovens and develop into a Historical Interpretative/informational site; Restore as much as possible at Reymert; Restore Martinez and have as a major interpretative site etc.....

Town of Florence:

A. The information you have collected so far looks really good.

Arizona Open Land Trust:

A. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the 3 alternative maps presented at the last Stakeholder taskforce meeting. As I mentioned at the meeting, we would be in support of a plan somewhere in between Alternative B and C. Listed below are some of the additions that you could make to enhance Alternative C. You will probably have to look at the original data/maps for these descriptions to be clear, or I also tried to draw some of them on the attached map.

B. High biodiversity area data (TNC) - there are three areas that are high biodiversity but not identified on Alternative C as proposed open space. These areas could be added: 1) between the Coronado National Forest and the San Pedro River (essentially the hole between Mammoth and San Manuel); 2) Florence Junction to the Proposed regional park; 3) continuing west on the entire Gila River.

C. Native Grasslands (TNC) - the area around Oracle Junction.

D. Ranchland at Risk (AFT) - All that are not included. Keeping ranchlands intact is critical to protecting open space and habitat connectivity, because ranches are the only large land holdings remaining and are therefore under siege by developers with visions of master planned communities.

E. Other areas - Ironwood National Monument, along the southern border with Pima (like it is in Alt. B); State Trust initiative (see files I sent you yesterday); ADOT/AGFD Missing Linkages - I hear the Linkages map was released yesterday and the final report will be out mid-Sept. I have yet to get my hands on the map though, and will let you know what the data shows when I get it.

National Park Service.

A. I have several comments so this may get long. I'm being particular because I know that once these documents are done, they will have to stand on their own and I want them be tell the story and persuade the viewer. You can stop reading if it becomes a burden. These aren't in any order, but I'll try to be clear. I'm am referring to Alternative "C" and the base data maps, by the way.

B. The Alt "C" map visually seems to be about trails more than open space so I would pull the open space story forward and recede the trails story visually.

C. The base data map tells an important story and I have graphics suggestions for it. Personally, red is an alarming color and it jumps out from everything else. Yellow is almost impossible to see from a distance. I'd change both colors. I'd make all roadways black with different line weights to identify hierarchy and then you can remove the color and info from the key (less is more visually). I would also emphasize the rivers and major drainage ways more with font weight because they will tell an important part of the logic to the story.

D. In the key, the Arizona trail is identified in three ways and I think one should be the CAP proposed trail. The proposed part of the AZ Trails should be dashed in the same color as what represents the existing trail. I don't know what the green line represents that is associated with the AZ Trail in the key. I would also dash any planned trail so the story of the real work to be done is clear. However, if any of the planned trails are utility corridors I would not indicate them as proposed trails at all. And I'd make all the line weights, have equal eye relationship, both solid, and dashed. The dotted lines I'd use for the secondary historic trail corridors, almost like ghosts, since they are not the prime focus of the adopted trails plan but they are a wonderful story to be told in the County. I can't make out the line for the proposed Great Western trail, but I know one version shows an overlap with the AZ Trail and that should not be shown. It also should not be shown so close to the river.

E. There are some grey dotted lines around things and I don't know what they are for.

F. In the base data map and key, I would also represent the planned open space with hatch marks to represent the work that is still to be done. The way it is now seems like there is more protected than really is. I don't know what "overlapping planning areas" means in the key and wonder if it is important information. I would categorize the land management entities under one title and omit the word "land" from the text of the key, for consistency.

Alt. "C" map suggestions:

i. I suggest bringing the open space, and proposed open space areas forward and use hatch lines on the proposed areas. And change the trail color from red to something else on the cool color scale not warm, it's just a subtle psychological thing.

ii. Where proposed drainage trials start (in the elevation areas) I would identify the headwater area as part of the proposed open space plan to express the logic of protection. There is a proposed trial going through private property in Superior. Unless that is in their local plan, I'd reroute that onto public land. The same would go for any private property (not including state trust land). I am not sure about the trails indicated on the northern area of the Tonto, but it seems like a lot more than the FS manages. I'm curious, where did the whole trail pattern come from on this map? Some of it seems arbitrary, but I don't know. In any event, my guess is that you don't want to have to explain trails questions as much as express and explain open space information, for this project.

iii. In the Key on the left of this map, the Great Western Trail is highlighted and it should not be. It is not anywhere near as far along as the AZ Trail. And I would not represent it so heavily in adjacency to the San Pedro River because OHV use and rivers don't mix, or at least they shouldn't. As in the base data map, I'd remove the utility corridors or represent them in a faint way. Also the CAP proposed trail is not found in the key to the right or very well on the map.

iv. Is there a way to combine both keys on this map?

H. All these comments would apply to the other Alt. Versions.

Superstition Area Land Trust:

A. I see the Jacob's Crosscut Trail running from AJ to Lost Dutchman State Park, but there is no sign of the Lost Goldmine Trail, which so far as I know, has been officially adopted into the State Parks system and is in the process of receiving recognition with a trail number by the Tonto. It's entirely missing. I've sent maps to both agencies at their requests and provided a map of it to somebody quite a while back working on the Pinal County Trail system. So what's up there - what do we have to do to get LGT on this map? I thought this was straightened out long ago.

Arizona State Parks Trails:

A. Overall I prefer to build on Concept C.

B. A more definite definition for Open Space is needed before going to much further.

C. A trail connecting to the proposed State Park 'Tam O'Shanter' would be almost a direct line from Kearny heading East.

D. I am not sure the relevance of showing multiple trail lines within Forest Service/BLM unless it is the continuation of a larger through trail. These trails are already protected and out of the purvey of this plan. Showing connections to specfic trailheads entering these lands would be enough. In my experience, people tend to get very caught up in the details of maps and specifc trails on these lands are not details to be addressed here.

E. The plan has emphasis of trails along existing corridors such as washes, pubic infrastructure, canals etc. These corridors make obvious trails for several reasons but they are not the most desirable recreational trail. These types of corridors are already protected to some degree and are the 'low hanging fruit' when identifying trail corridors. They should be included in a trail plans but should not neccessarily be the basis of a trails plan. This plan has the unique opportunity to define trails in Pinal County and should be more aggressive. The concept of linking trails from municipalities to Existing/Planned Open Space, Regional Parks, etc will have more value as development encroaches in Pinal County.

F. Although the fate of Conserving Arizona's Future is unknown, having those parcels on the map would be helpful.

G. The bullets listed under the Conceptual Alternatives are vague and do not have much meaning without the specifc and obtainable strategies listed to accomplish them. For example:

i. Utilized Private Land for linkages. Who are the land owners, are they willing sellers or willing to grant easements, where do the funds to pay for the lands coming from?

ii. Identifies Regional Park locations. Again, what is the timeline and specifics to acquiring the land and developing as a park? And then the notion of how Pinal County plans to run the operation and management of these parks.

I am not sure how specfic the goals of this plan were intending to get in these areas but without them, it is a wish list and not too much further down the road then the last plan.

Arizona Game and Fish Department:

A. Comments on Alternatives in Regard to Open Space:

i. Of the three maps provided, Alternative B appears to conserve the most open space and opportunities for recreation. Because of this, Alternative B appears to support the Department's Mission more than the other alternatives. However, Alternative C provides for a much expanded regional park in the area surrounding the Picacho Mountains and Picacho Reservoir. The Department recognizes this expanded area to be of significant benefit to our constituents, particularly in regard to recreational opportunities available in relation to Picacho Reservoir.

ii. The Tucson Field Office informs us that large regional parks, such as shown on this plan, are not permitted under the process envisioned in the plan. Nevertheless, we encourage you to pursue designation of these areas as protected open space through all means available. The Tucson Field Office is beginning a new planning effort for all the parcels in this area and is rewriting its Resource Management Plan. The County should participate in these planning efforts to ensure that the identified parcels are protected for public trust values.

iii. Alternative C also preserves more open space along the north side of Highway 60 between Florence Junction and Apache Junction, an area of high development potential and also of high value to wildlife and recreationists due to its close proximity to urban areas. The Department considers the preservation of wildlife related recreation opportunities near urban areas a high priority.

iv. None of the three alternatives appear to include the Florence Military Reservation's permitted use area on State Trust Land northeast of Florence. The Middle Gila Conservation Partnership has recognized the State Land east of Highway 79 and north of the Gila River (with the exception of the parcel immediately northwest of the old Magma rail line) as important for wildlife and OHV recreational opportunities. The Department supports this position, and would like to see this reflected in one of the alternatives. The Department further recommends that Pinal County include the Arizona Army National Guard in coordinating the Plan.

v. Much of the BLM land available for "disposal" is identified in the plan as potential for regional park administration. However, the "bowtie"- shaped parcel east of Tom Mix monument in the 96 Hills is not identified as a potential regional park. Although alternatives B and C identify it for preservation of open space, the Department suggests including this as potential for regional park administration or other designation as it is also "available for disposal" under BLM land use designation. This area is of significant importance to our constituents for its high wildlife and recreation value and has been the subject of several potential land trades. Inclusion as a regional park or conservation area would better protect its public trust values.

vi. Riparian areas are critically important to wildlife. Alternative C, especially, provides for the least amount of preservation buffer along the San Pedro River corridor between Mammoth and San Manuel. The Department suggests that all riparian areas be given the County's highest priority for preservation of natural open space.

vii. Alternatives B and C provide for an open space corridor connecting the Catalina Mountains with the Galiuro Mountains but none of the alternatives identify open space corridors between the Catalinas and Black Mountain and the Black Hills to the north, or between the Catalinas and the Tortolitas to the

west. Wildlife movement corridors between mountain ranges are critical to many wildlife species. The Department has recent data collected from radio-collared mountain lions showing the movement of this species, for one, between these very mountain ranges. Fragmentation of wildlife habitat through isolation of mountain ranges surrounded by development is a primary concern for the Department. We find this to be a major flaw in the three alternatives and suggest open space corridors be identified here.

A major wildlife corridor/linkage has also been identified between Ironwood Forest National Monument across I-10 to the Picacho Mountains and north to the township of BLM land identified as a potential regional park west of Florence. We suggest that an open space corridor be identified connecting IFNM with the four areas identified as potential regional parks.

ix. The Department suggests you contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for their input on the Open Space and Trails Master Plan. They can be contacted at 201 N Bonita Suite 141 Tucson, AZ 85745, phone: 520-670-6144, or on the web at http://www.fws.gov/arizonaes/contacts.html.

B. Comments on the Alternatives in Regard to Trails

i. The three maps in our possession are of such a scale that trails are difficult to distinguish. Additionally it is unclear if these are motorized or non-motorized trails. As such we have no comments on specific routes. The Department supports efforts to designate motorized and non-motorized routes where such routes are appropriate. The Department has worked as a partner with the Middle Gila Conservation Partnership to evaluate routes in their planning area. The Department has concerns with many of the routes currently in use due to the potential impacts on wildlife. The Department supports a designated route system, which maximizes habitat protection, while providing optimal recreation opportunities and adequate public access.

City of Coolidge:

A. I like concept B better than the other two but since Coolidge does not have the Parks Master Plan finished it is really hard to say. I am choosing concept B because it seems to have more trails linking to Coolidge. We need to keep in mind that we have the Coolidge Ruins in Coolidge and it should be a factor when considering trails.

City of Casa Grande:

A. First Choice: Conceptual Alternative B

Second Choice: Conceptual Alternative C

Third Choice: Conceptual Alternative A; although, I'm not real crazy about this one.

B. I like the Regional Park concept in C surrounding Picacho Peak, and was wondering if that particular piece could be incorporated into Map B.

C. In all cases, I'm concerned about that little swath of white in the Regional Park area in the center, and I'm sure you are looking at that as well.

D. I think the locations of the proposed Regional Parks are appropriate, even though they may seem close together, cuz it seems you have other Existing/Planned Open Space opportunities to the north, south, east and west.

Bureau of Land Management:

A. Generally, we support the concepts Alternative B was built around, with some suggested modifications to the alternative:

B. Proposed open space should be added on the State Lands which encompass the eastern slopes of the Sawtooth Mountains, and the bajada slopes along the county line north of the West Silverbell Mts (adjoining the Ironwood Forest National Monument boundary).

C. The historic Sasco Railroad extends northeast from the northeastern portion of IFNM located in Pinal County. This should be included as a proposed trail.

D. Pinal and Pima Counties have an agreement regarding a regional mountain park surrounding the Tortolita Mtns - but this is not shown on any of the alternatives maps.

E. The area southeast of Florence Junction (lands west of Mineral Mountain, east of highway 79, south of highway 60) was identified by the MGCP as an open space area. We suggest this is carried forward in Pinal County's plan.

F. On the Base Data map, two parallel utility lines are shown passing through the Sawtooths area. The eastern-most of the two lines does not exist. The line extending straight north from the fictitious eastern line near Needle Peak actually ties into the western-most line. And the line that extends directly east (just south of Wildcat Peak) from the fictitious eastern line actually ties into the western-most line.

G. Just southeast of that area, there is a existing/planned trail connecting Box Canyon and Sandman Road. We are not aware that this trail exists. Our inventory does not identify that route.

H. When the Ray Land Exchange is finally executed, several parcels south and east of the White Canyon Wilderness Area will be transferred to Asarco. These lands are proposed open space in your alternatives. Under a pending legislative land exchange, Tam O'Shanter and the surrounding area will become a State Park.

I. The mapping of the Arizona trail appears to be incorrect north of the Gila River ; in this area, it is a proposed trail, not an existing trail.

J. The trail does not enter the White Canyon Wilderness Area. The information provided does not elaborate on how Pinal County intents to secure lands for their intended purposes; do they intend to acquire these lands?

K. Their plan can not preclude BLM to issue and authorize permits for qualified land use activities, ie, mining, rights-of-way (ROW), etc. The County will need to apply for ROWs for any trails on public lands that the County wants to permanently secure and maintain under their plan.

L. The areas identified for Proposed Regional Parks are currently identified disposal public lands, except for the parcel lying above Picacho peak State Park - this is currently identified as retention land. However, these public lands would not be eligible under the R&PP Act, unless the County can justify that the lands can be fully utilized, and not be acquired for open space with minimal development. Any lands pursued under the R&PP Act cannot be leased or Patent for open space purposes. It is not likely that BLM will dispose of these lands by sales, and if BLM did conduct sales they would most likely be conducted by competitive sales.

M. A good portion of the lands identified for existing/planned Open space are public lands lying within the White Canyon Resource Conservation Area (RCA) which basically means they have been identified for retention by BLM. For example, the Regional Park located SE of Florence Junction on Alternative A is in the White Canyons RCA. Within the RCA, identifying the non-federal lands as open space in the Pinal Co. Open Space Plan would further the purposes of the RCA - but if the county is interested in acquiring these lands, that is in conflict with our current plan.

N. Some of the comments made above assume certain definitions of regional parks and open space, but we don't have Pinal County's definitions. Can you provide us the definitions of "Regional Park" and "open space"? Large portions of BLM land are proposed Regional Parks and open space but we are unsure what implications these designations have on management.

MEETING NOTES

DISTRIBUTION DATE: September 26, 2006

MEETING DATE: September 20, 2006

LOCATION: Pinal County Development Services Building F, EOC Room
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting #3**

ATTENDEES: *See attached sign-in sheet*

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

Discussion Items:

1. Introduction:

   a. Kent Taylor, Pinal County senior planner, began the meeting by introducing himself, and the project team from Logan Simpson Design.

   b. Kent then asked the stakeholders to introduce themselves to the group, as some of them were not at the 2nd stakeholder meeting held in August.

2. Master Plan Process:

   a. Jackie Keller, project manager from Logan Simpson Design Inc., gave a brief overview of the master planning process to date. She described that the concepts that will be presented today are a work-in-progress, and that the format of the third stakeholder meeting would be a working group to help refine the preferred alternative.

   b. Jackie identified and explained the handouts that were given at the sign-in table which included:
      - The Meeting Agenda
      - The Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative Summary Sheet
      - The Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative Map
      - The Stakeholder Comments on the conceptual alternatives
      - The Stakeholder Contact sheet

   c. Donald Kelly, project coordinator from Logan Simpson Design Inc., explained the development of the Open Space System definition. He stated that the Growing Smarter Act, and the Arizona Revised Statutes definition of open space areas was the foundation of the Open Space Areas definition. Other open space plans from the surrounding counties and other areas with open space networks were also used as models to develop the open space trails definition. He also stated that Smart Growth principles helped to shape the definition.

   d. Jackie further explained the definition by stating that it is a work in progress, and that ultimately it needs to be representative of the state's legislation, the county's and public's desire for future generations, and the guiding design principles of the master plan.

e. Jennifer Moore, project planner from Logan Simpson Design Inc., summarized the comments from the second stakeholder meeting held in August 2006 in Florence (Refer to Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting #2 Comments). She stressed that the majority of stakeholders preferred conceptual alternative C or a combination of conceptual alternative B and C. In addition, the following comments were highlighted about the open space component of the three conceptual alternatives:

- Planned Open Space should buffer existing open space areas such as National Forests or parks
- The plan should consider Conserve Arizona's Future Initiatives parcels
- The plan should consist of a connecting network of open spaces
- The regional park located to the north of Picacho Peak was identified as a preferred area for such a facility.
- Conserve the most open space and opportunities for recreation areas
- The need for an open space definition

The following comments were highlighted about the trail component of the three conceptual alternatives:

- The plan needs to show the Lost Goldmine Trail location.
- Indicate on the map existing and planned OHV trails that have been identified by the stakeholder members.
- Remove all trail corridors from the transmission lines due to homeland security concerns.
- The plan needs to show linkages of trails from the municipalities to existing/planned open space areas.

f. Jennifer gave an overview of the Preferred Master Plan Alternative, which included an overview of the open space design as well as the trail design. (see attached Conceptual Master Plan Alternative Summary and map).

3. Stakeholder Input and Discussion: the following is an outline of what was discussed during the open dialogue session of this meeting.

a. Vanessa Bechtol from the Arizona Open Land Trust wanted a clarification on how much open space land was included within the concept, and she also noted that the preferred alternative did not seem as though it was a mixture of both alternative concepts B and C, with regards to percentage of open space.

b. Jackie responded that the preferred alternative was not a mixture of B and C in regards to percentage of open space, but rather it was a mixture of the two concepts with respect to land ownership. She also noted that the percentage of land was very close to concept C, and that through the stakeholder comments our plan would be further refined.

c. Francisco Mendoza from the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) recommended that a breakdown of ownership for the proposed open space areas be provided in the future. He also noted that an area of land approximately three miles north of the proposed regional park near Florence, should be considered open space because it is federal land and a Resource Conservation Area (RCA).

d. Mark Lambert from the BLM wanted to know how the county would pursue the acquisition of the regional parks.

e. Jackie responded that land acquisition strategies will be reviewed and included as part of the plan.

f. Kent Taylor from Pinal County responded that the techniques that will be agreed upon would be in compliance with County, State and Federal laws.

g. Francisco noted that the public would need to be informed as to what the acquisition will consist of.

h. Tom Fitzgerald from the Central Arizona Project noted that the County should also be aware of the existing conditions for the BLM lands with regards to lessees and mining claims.

i. Jackie asked if that is data the BLM could provide to the County.

j. Francisco responded that it would be difficult to acquire the data in a timely manner.

k. Kent wanted clarification of the RCA lands from the BLM.

l. Francisco noted that the Arizona Trail may in the near future become a National Scenic Trail, and it would be a good idea to show a buffer of open space around it.

m. Francisco noted there is a trail leading from Redrock to the Ironwood National Monument that should be shown.

n. Francisco also noted that there is a bajada extending north from the Ironwood National Monument that should be conserved as both a visual resource and a biological resource within the open space plan.

o. Vanessa concurred with Francisco's bajada comment and noted that she would like to see the proposed open space as more of a mixture between alternative concepts B and C because much of the land does have a high biological content.

p. Bonnie Barriola from the Pinal County Trails Association also concurred that the bajada extending north from the Ironwood National Monument should be preserved.

q. Michelle Green from the Arizona State Land Department wanted to know the methodology for developing the preferred concept of open space.

r. Jackie responded that the methodology first consisted of using a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) program to overlay known data from biological, cultural, natural resources as well as topographic and land use data, to find the areas that are most important to conserve as well as data gathered from public meetings. A minimum open space area encompassing these known areas was established with regard to land ownership and planned future developments. The next step consisted of making these areas as contiguous as possible while providing connectivity through natural corridors.

s. Amy Racki from the Arizona State Parks noted that there are areas that are owned by the Arizona State Land Department that are already leased for Off Highway Vehicle (OHV) activities, and she would provide the plans, so that they could be incorporated into the Open Space and Trails Master Plan.

t. Amy noted that there is an area north of Florence Junction that is an OHV area.

u. Kent noted that the area north of Florence Junction is where the Superstition Vistas is being planned.

v. Michelle noted that the Superstition Vistas is only in the conceptual stage.

w. Joe Winfield from the National Park Service wanted to know why the Gila River open space corridor stopped at the Gila River Indian Community boundary, and the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail was shown going through the Gila Indian River Community.

x. Jackie responded that the County is not currently planning within any of the Indian community boundaries, and that the Juan Bautista de Anza Trail is noted within the adopted Pinal County Trails Plan.

y. Joe noted that there are important Archeological sites just east of Coolidge that should be protected.

z. Jackie responded that the County Open Space and Trails Master Plan does not plan within the municipalities planning boundaries, and that it is each municipality's responsibility to determine their open space areas and trail corridors within their planning boundaries.

aa. Tom Smith from the Pinal Partnership wanted to know how the ADOT realignments were incorporated into the plan.

bb. Jennifer responded by showing the realignment areas that were incorporated on the base data map.

cc. Mark wanted to know what was the rational behind the ½ mile biological corridors. He noted that ½ mile was not very large, and it would make sense to have larger corridors to connect sensitive areas.

dd. Jackie concurred that it would be ideal to have larger corridors, however current experiences within Maricopa County has shown it is a struggle to set-aside 300'-500' wide corridors under private development pressure. The ½ mile was used as a starting point to begin discussions on what would be deemed appropriate. She also noted that the biological linkage corridors would be better addressed in the design guidelines.

ee. Tom suggested to identify what the county already has planned, in reference to land use, should be addressed within the Master Plan.

ff. Tom wanted to know what the current land use leases are for the BLM lands.

gg. Jackie responded that land acquisition strategies are being developed, and that the strategies will address federal, state and private lands independently.

hh. Francisco noted that there are a lot of state lands within the Ironwood National Forest that are not protected by the National Monument status, and suggested that the Open Space Plan Address these parcels particularly.

ii. Francisco also noted that the Los Robles Archaeological District is in between the Santa Cruz River and the Ironwood National Monument southwest of Redrock, and it should be included within the open space areas.

jj. Mark suggested that the ownership maps be brought to the public with the preferred concepts.

kk. Jackie concurred and stated that it will be very important to show land ownership because this plan incorporates all types.

ll. Amy suggested printing the concept map overlaid with land ownership.

mm. Amy wanted clarification about the designation of the red lined trails.

nn. Jackie responded that these will not be a specific use, but rather separates multi-use non-motorized trails from OHV trails. She noted that it was an important point from the public meetings that the use of these trails be separated for safety reasons.

oo. Gary Keller from the Arizona Great Western Trail suggested an analysis of user frequency be conducted on existing trails before user designation of such trails are defined. This would help to clarify existing use patterns on existing trails.

pp. Jackie emphasized it was important to separate the OHV corridors from the equestrian and pedestrian multi-use corridors for safety reasons.

qq. Gary noted that the Great Western Trail is a multi-use trail.

rr. Jackie clarified that the plan would identify motorized multi-use trails separately from non-motorized multi-use trails

ss. Vanessa noted the difficulties that Pima County is having acquiring state lands, and said that they have not been able to spend all the money acquired through their bonds for that specific purpose.

tt. Gary wanted to know what would happen if the county purchased land, and then the Great Western Trail was proposed through those lands.

uu. Jackie responded that the design guidelines developed for the trails will specifically address how trails will be incorporated into county lands.

vv. Mike Drawsky from the Mesa 4-Wheelers wanted to know if all the trails on the map would be the only trails within the county.

ww. Jackie responded that these were only designated as major trail corridors, and that many other trails will continue to exist, and link to this trail system. Each municipality and land management agency will be responsible for identifying trail systems within their lands.

4. Our next steps in the process of this project are described below.

a. We will address and incorporate Stakeholder comments into developing the Preliminary Master Plan that will be presented to the public during the next round of public meetings that will be held on October 26th, 30th, and November 1st, 2006.

b. We will be coordinating with the technical review contacts identified on the contact list for their input.

c. We will tentatively plan the next Stakeholder meeting for mid-to late November. We will contact all Stakeholders when this meeting date is set.

ACTION ITEMS:

5. Each stakeholder taskforce member to provide comments and information regarding the Preferred Conceptual Master Plan Alternative by October 6, 2006.
6. LSD to continue to compile base data information and develop an overall base map for developing the Preliminary Master Plan.

Attachments:

Meeting Sign-In Sheet
Preferred Alternative Summary Sheet
Preferred Alternative Map (PDF format)
Stakeholder Contact Sheet

Any corrections or additions to these notes should be directed to Don Kelly (dkelly@lsdaz.com) at Logan Simpson Design Inc. (480-967-1343) within the next 10 working days.

Stakeholder Comments

Received after Meeting #3

DISTRIBUTION DATE: October 9, 2006

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce Comments on Preferred Alternative**

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

Comments:

1. Arizona Open Land Trust:

   A. The Ironwood Forest National Monument will be greatly enhanced if the land along the southern border of Pinal county was protected as open space. I believe this suggestion was made by at least two others at our last stakeholder meeting.

   B. There are three areas in particular that have been identified by The Nature Conservancy as high biologically diverse areas, that are not included on the map. These areas should be added to the map. Very specific data with regards to the number of endemic, endangered, threatened, sensitive, etc. species is available to support the protection of these areas.

      They are:

      1. The gap south of Florence Junction (so the proposed open space around Florence Junction connects further south to the military range);

      2. The gap east of Florence and north of the proposed regional park;

      3. The western side of the San Pedro River in the area around Mammoth and to the south.

      The original data layer for High Biological areas better illustrates the areas I am describing.

   C. The habitat corridors that provide connectivity seem to be very linear. The fact that they are 1/2 mile wide is also surprising, as that is not very conducive to natural wildlife movement.

   D. My final comments are about the strategic farmland/ranchland at risk layer we provided. Although it appears that some of these areas are mapped under Proposed Open Space (and we'd recommend putting them all in, as there aren't too many remaining), I wonder if it might be more useful to put them in a category of their own. So you would have Proposed Open Space and Strategic Agricultural Lands at Risk as two distinct layers to focus conservation. The reason why this might be useful is mostly with regards to implementation. Identifying these lands as proposed open space may attract a lot of opposition, because farming/ranching is not "open space" in the eyes of the landowner. By identifying it as agricultural land to focus protection, you can weed out the habitat

conservation conflict and just address the need to keep these lands in agriculture, perhaps through agricultural conservation easements. This will also make these lands eligible for additional state and federal funding for agricultural conservation easements. Although these details are probably better addressed in the implementation plan, I think identifying farm/ranch land at risk distinctly from proposed open space on the final Master Plan is a good idea. I am happy to further discuss this idea with you.

2. National Park Service.

Some considerations regarding the map Key:

A. Since this is a "conceptual picture" of the County's trail system maybe it would be enough to show two categories of trails such as "non-motorized trails" and "motorized trails". Does it really matter at this level of planning (for public consumption) to distinguish trails with the terms of "planned", "existing", "proposed", and "adopted"? These terms may be confusing or could be interpreted differently by the public. Non-motorized trails could be solid red and motorized trails dashed red, Anza, CAP, and AZ Trail could be a slightly thicker red line and labeled.

B. Change "Planned Open Space" to represent what the land is: Tonto National Forest, Maricopa County Park - San Tan, Ironwood Forest National Monument, Sonoran Desert National Monument, Coronado National Forest, Picacho Peak State Park, etc.

General comments:

C. There are a few "dead end" trails. Some may be attributed to tribal lands. At this conceptual level I would connect all trails or show an arrow to convey that it could continue or link with another trail, so that the principle of connectivity is communicated at this conceptual level.

D. The entire corridor of the AZ Trail should be encased in a corridor of open space. The Arizona Trail will most likely be designated a National Scenic Trail in the future and it already enjoys national and international prominence among trail users. This is one of those opportunities to protect something that a hundred years from now will be greatly appreciated by those who follow us.

E. The State Route 287 logo makes the Anza Trail appear as though it's a highway.

F. Is there anyway to connect the southern patches of protected and proposed open space (Coronado National Forest, Tortalita Mountains, etc)?

G. Some trails are just outside of proposed open space corridors. Is this intentional or a mapping error?

H. For the purposes of this map I would eliminate the "pipeline" section of the AZ Trail.

I. All trail "access points" at the boundaries of public lands should be noted.

J. Looking at this map the "recreational" route for the Anza Trail may already be identified for the most part!

3. Arizona State Parks (Off Highway Vehicles):

A. OHV trails identified along the northern portion of the Pinal County Master Plan appears somewhat similar to the preferred route by the GWT Association, but the southern portion does not. The BLM was going to provide Kent Taylor with the GWT line shapefile to depict accurate representation of GWT Association's preferred alternative.

On this new GWT shapefile from the BLM, note that line heading east (the only line south of San Carlos Reservation) is the beginning of an alternate route and is not completed. Also note that the small loop on BLM land, located in the northwest portion of the file, which loops around the word "canyon" on the topo is likely not a suitable location for the trail and probably should be removed. In addition, although not provided nor depicted on the Pinal County Master Plan Alternative it would be nice to see the GWT continue off of the map to the north (and south) as an objective of the GWT is to run vertically through the state of Arizona (and other states). It will probably need to follow existing roads to the north * although not preferred by the GWT Association.

B. Desert Wells Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) site (over 180 miles of trails) is located near Florence Junction (west of intersection at US Rte 60 and State Rte 79). It is on State Trust Land. A map was provided to Logan Simpson at the last meeting. The Game and Fish Department has asked their GIS person for the boundary file * if they do not have it than the State Land Dept will need to be contacted. Pinal County may consider retaining or leasing the property from the Arizona State Land Dept for OHV Recreation. Arizona State Parks Recreation Trails Program Grant (motorized) funds may be used for lease and further development of the area. This would need to be considered by the County as the property would then be under their management authority.

C. As motorized recreation is becoming an increasingly popular activity, any additional planning for the management of motorized recreation will be key for the County. A number of OHV enthusiasts enjoy traveling long distances in natural settings (not paved roads) as well as park facilities designed specifically for motorzied recreation (rockcrawling areas, atv loops, etc)

4. Arizona State Parks (Trails):

A. I thought the meeting was productive last week and the Conceptual Master Plan has come a long way. I don't have any comments at this point other than some concerns also raised at the meeting about how to best present this information to the public.

B. I think the darker green areas listed as Planned Open Space might be better listed as Existing Public Lands. Right it give the impression that land will be protected or planned as a result of this process.

C. If possible showing land ownership in conjunction with this map would be helpful. I know you have other maps showing this but you are presenting to the general public and nuances of land ownership can be difficult to understand.

5. Arizona Game and Fish Department:

A. Pinal County Land Trust: This land trust would follow the model of the Desert Foothills Land Trust, or the McDowell Sonoran Land Trust and would work in partnership with municipalities in Pinal County or the county itself to acquire parcels of private land that might otherwise be developed. We see an opportunity for this land trust to work with developers in the county to mitigate impacts to waters of the United States as part of their Clean Water Act Section 404 permit process through acquisition and preservation of habitats threatened with development. If the Pinal County is interested, the Department

would be willing to work you and the Corps of Engineers to help set up the mechanisms for a local land trust and as a recipient for 404 permit mitigation in-lieu funds.

B. Floodway designation: Maricopa County Flood Control District has used this mechanism to limit and regulate development in the floodway along some major waterways. I worked with them on the upper Agua Fria. CWA Section 404 permits regulate activities within the "waters of the United States", which are areas that are within the normal high water area of the river channel. However, this generally still leaves the floodplain open for development. However, floodway designation would limit development within the entire floodplain of key drainages such as the San Pedro and Gila Rivers.

I can't think of a flood project that wasn't designed for the 100 year flood event. The problem I see is that there is a 25% percent chance of a 100 year flood happening within a 25 year period (for instance), and only a slightly less chance of a flood occurring that may overtop the design capacity of the flood protection. During a year when there were significant floods, many of these 100 year flood event structures in the area would be inadequate, since they were all designed for the same standard. Designating floodways as open space is a very cost-effective way to prevent significant damage from these infrequent, but inevitable flood events, allow the river to function properly, and also provides for important open space and wildlife habitat as well.

6. Picacho Peak State Park:

A. Upon review of the the master plan, the only point I have to address is the name selected for the proposed Regional Park encompassing Picacho Mountains. The name of "Picacho Peak Regional Park" would create an additional confusion for the visiting public, as well as the staff of Picacho Peak State Park, and it's neighbors. As it is now, there are four individual entities that are constantly confused by the public with each of the other due to the similarities in the names. Besides Picacho Peak State Park, we have Picacho Peak RV Resort, Picacho Campground, and Picacho Recreational Area (in California) is commonly mistaken for each other.

A more important concern would involve public safety. Picacho Peak State Park has numerous search and rescue operations involving hikers. With the popularity of cell phones, a large percentage of the calls are routed through PCSO's Dispatch. Having two similar parks with similar names would create a delay or miss direction in response to a reported emergency. The average individual does not recognize the difference between a State Park and a County Park, and would report and emergency (of any kind) as the location of "Picacho Peak".

I urge the consideration of a dissimilar name of the proposed park.

7. U. S. Fish and Wild Life Service:

A. One of the primary threats to the persistence of threatened and endangered wildlife is the ongoing loss and fragmentation of habitat. In order to reduce this threat, it is important to plan for adequate wildlife habitat connectivity. The Preferred Alternative does a good job of identifying the larger tracts of open space that are already protected, as well as additional larger tracts of land that should be protected as open space. It is extremely important to maintain large, contiguous tracts of habitat to support the life history requirements of threatened and endangered species. Important areas such as the Ironwood National Monument, Picacho Peak, the Tortolita Mountains, the San Pedro River, the Galiuro Mountains, National Forests, and Bureau of Land Management lands are all important protected areas. However, it is not adequate to simply protect these large areas of habitat. It is also necessary to maintain habitat connectivity among these large habitat areas. While the Plan presents a good first attempt at providing this habitat

connectivity, we are concerned that the identified areas are not wide enough and some areas of important habitat connectivity are missing. We have the following recommendations:

1. Washes, rivers, and other drainageways provide additional water availability and enhanced vegetation cover for wildlife. To the extent possible, open space areas and habitat corridors should be planned to include all major washes, rivers, and drainages. Of particular concern is the San Pedro River. We recommend expanding the open space buffer on the western side of the San Pedro River corridor. As shown in the Plan, the open space buffer on the western side is limited. We also recommend increased buffers for the Santa Cruz River/Greene Wash and Gila River drainages. Please consider not just protecting the main river reach, but also tributaries. We recommend a watershed approach that protects the integrity of the entire watershed system, not just the main river portion. This is true for all watersheds. This will provide a scope of protection that will ensure that the system functions long-term, and not just provide the immediate value in protecting the main drainage. It will also benefit the county from a water quality, hydrology, and flood control perspective.

2. Some important habitat corridors are missing from the Plan. Please consider adding habitat corridors in the following areas: The Cordones, connecting Coronado National Forest to the Tortolita Mountains; a connection between the Tortolita Mountains and Black Mountain; a connection between Black Mountain and the San Pedro River; interconnecting all three large regional park areas; a connection between Picacho Peak and the Ironwood National Monument; and a connection between the Sawtooth Mountains and the Casa Grande Mountains.

3. The existing identified habitat corridors are too narrow for the extent of the corridors. A general rule is that the longer a corridor is, the wider it needs to be to maintain function and reduce edge effects and predation. The indirect effects of adjacent development (lights, pets, noise, invasive species, toxins, etc.) on corridors that are too narrow will eventually reduce or eliminate the habitat connectivity values of those corridors. We acknowledge that it is a significant effort for the County or developers to set aside, acquire, or otherwise establish open space corridors. However, it is also recognized that such open space areas have considerable value with regard to economic and quality-of-life issues associated with development. There is not a one-size-fits-all solution to determining the width of habitat corridors. However, when dealing with species such as mule deer or mountain lions, corridor widths measured in miles may be more appropriate than corridors measured in yards. Corridors that include drainages and tributaries may need to be relatively wide in order to preserve function of the watershed. Corridors with intense, adjacent development may need to be wider to buffer the edge effects on species using the corridors. If trails, particularly motorized trails, are included within the open space corridor, the width of that corridor should be increased to maintain habitat values. Our recommendation would be to start with a corridor width of at least a mile as a place holder and then work from there, through guidelines and individual project proponents, to develop an appropriate corridor width.

4. We recommend an increased buffer of natural open space on the north end of Ironwood National Monument.

5. For Regional Parks planned to include an active recreation component, locate active recreation sites adjacent to urbanized areas and consider unique natural resources of each park site for protection as natural open space. For example, the Regional Park proposed east of Florence contains an important location for the

Acuna Cactus, a candidate species for listing under the Endangered Species Act. Active recreation could significantly affect this species.

B. By way of general comments, we recommend that when the Plan is adopted, Pinal County revise its Comprehensive Plan to include the designations developed in this Plan. We also recommend that a strategy of implementing this Plan include such things as developing ordinances, acquisitions, zoning changes, and developer incentives (density transfers, tax incentives, etc,) as appropriate.

C. The Fish and Wildlife Service has a number of resources and programs that could assist you in developing and implementing this Plan. These programs include the development of Habitat Conservation Plans and associated section 6 funding, Safe Harbor agreements, Partners in Wildlife funding, and a variety of conservation agreements. In addition, we possess the technical expertise to provide help in this planning process and the implementation of an approved plan. We can provide assistance in identifying important wildlife habitats such as critical habitat for listed species; in identifying and developing wildlife habitat corridors; in establishing monitoring programs; in conducting ground truthing and species surveys; and in providing information related to the Endangered Species Act and all listed species. We have considerable experience in developing implementation guidelines for a variety of projects that address the needs of threatened and endangered species and their habitats on a more specific and detailed level. We congratulate Pinal County on their efforts related to this planning process and offer our continued assistance in whatever way is most beneficial to you and Pinal County. We appreciate the opportunity to comment on this alternative and look forward to continued participation in this process. Please do not hesitate to contact us with questions or to request any other assistance we can offer.

8. Bureau of Land Management:

A. BLM recommends proposed open space designation for the State Lands that encompass the bajada slopes along the county line north of the West Silver Bell Mts (adjoining the Ironwood Forest National Monument boundary).

B. There are State Lands within the IFNM that should not be depicted as "planned open space" in the map Key. They could be depicted as proposed. Management of State Lands is not affected by the monument designation.

9. Pinal County Visitors Center:

A. My question is -- what is the safe guard the County propose to maintain and upkeep these regional parks and open spaces if the communities around them annex?

B. Kent Taylor's response--If we have regional parks space, the County intends to own it. So we would have control over the destiny of those parcels. As far as the open space goes, we have tried to respect their planning boundaries and areas for future growth. Additionally, we are attempting to set a precedent for our plan that we would hope the municipalities would also adopt and follow.

10. Hohokam Irrigation and Drainage District:

A. As we previously discussed, the District would certainly be willing to discuss the possibility of utilizing portions of the canal and lateral rights-of-way in our District for those purposes. Unfortunately, the rights-of-way are held in the name of the United States, through the Bureau of Reclamation (USBR), and they would have the final word.

Additionally, since neither the USBR nor the District hold fee title to the lands, the owners of those lands would also have to agree.

B. I have attached a map of the Hohokam irrigation distribution system for your use. If the distribution system map could be over-lain on your open space map, it would be extremely helpful in determining where your planned facilities might impact our system. It would probably be very helpful to do the same with the other irrigation project systems in the area.

11. Pima County

A. Be sure to call out the Anza National Historic Trail along the west side of the Santa Cruz, etc. (+ note CAP is a National Recreation Trail, and AZT will soon be a NST).

B. Trail #179 on the EPCTSMP is a power line corridor that begins in Pima County and enters Pinal County...not sure how far it goes in your area, but it looks like a good inter-county link.

C. Trail #180 on the EPCTMSP is another power line corridor (WAPA) that exists in both counties. Worth including on your plan.

D. Trail #156 on the EPCTSMP is Big Wash, and extends up into Pinal. Another good bi-county link.

E. Trail #168 on the EPCTSMP is Twenty Seven Wash, which I believe continues up into Pinal. Good to show on your plan.

F. Trail #2 on the EPCTSMP is the CDO Wash...not sure how far it extends up into Pinal, but it's a key corridor in our NW area, and may be good to include on yours as well.

G. Trail #7 on the EPCTSMP is the San Pedro River...you have a segment of this corridor, no?

H. We'd like to see a trail around the Picacho Mountains...the "Picacho Loop" or some such. Great opportunity for a day trip...ride down the CAP Trail to the Picacho Mountain Preserve, then take the singletrack around the range and then ride home!

12. Town of Kearny

A. Preserving and protecting the Arizona Trail and it's linkages

B. Taking into account the towns general plan with regards to parks, open space, and trails. Providing linkages.

C. Keeping in mind the OHV park that sits just outside the town limits

D. Planning for trail access to the new State

MEETING NOTES

DISTRIBUTION DATE:

MEETING DATE: November 29, 2006

LOCATION: Pinal County Development Services Building F, EOC Room
Time: 1:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce Meeting #4**

ATTENDEES: *See attached sign-in sheet*

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

Discussion Items:

1. Welcome and Introductions:

   a. Kent Taylor, Pinal County senior planner, began the meeting by introducing himself, and the project team from Logan Simpson Design.

   b. Kent then asked the stakeholders to introduce themselves to the group.

2. Overview of Master Plan Process:

   c. Jackie Keller, project manager from Logan Simpson Design Inc., gave a brief overview of the master planning process to date that included the steps that have been taken from the last Stakeholder Meeting.

   d. The second round of public meetings were held in three separate locations within Pinal County, which included Johnson Ranch (Queen Creek area) on October 26th, Saddlebrook on October 30th, and the City of Maricopa on November 1st. Presentations at the meetings reflected an overview of the master planning process and project understanding. Presentation exhibits reflected the base data information collected to date along with the Preliminary Open Space and Trails Master Plan, which included the Stakeholder comments received from the Stakeholder Taskforce review of the Preferred Master Plan Alternative. Public meeting notes were taken (See attached Public Meeting comments) and attendees were asked to fill out comment sheets to document any further questions or comments that they may have following the meeting.

   e. Jennifer Moore, project planner with Logan Simpson Design, Inc. presented an overview of the comments received from the third stakeholder meeting held on September 2006 in Florence. She described how the following changes were incorporated within the Preferred Master Plan Alternative to create the Preliminary Master Plan that was presented to the public. The following comments were presented that pertained to the open space component of the Preferred Master Plan Alternative:

      - Need to see a breakdown of the proposed open space according to land ownership.
      - Incorporate White Canyon Resource Management Plan as open space.
      - Arizona Trail should be encased in a corridor of open space.

- Connect open space areas with open space corridors along the southern boundary of the County.

The following comments were highlighted about the trail component of the Preferred Master Plan Alternative:

- Great Western Trail alignment should be removed from the San Pedro River corridor.

f. Jennifer then summarized the comments received from the public meetings that reflected changes to the Preliminary Master Plan to create the DRAFT Final Master Plan. The following are significant comments that were received from public input:

- Open Space Considerations
  1. Wildlife Restoration and Habitat.
  2. Preservation of architectural, historic, and natural resources.
  3. Increase the amount of open space required within Planned Area Developments (PAD) and Subdivisions.
  4. Open space buffer around the Arizona Trail.
  5. Value of Dark Skies.
- Trail Corridor Considerations
  1. Valued the overall trail system that links with larger trails system and routes such as the Arizona Trail.
  2. Consider using abandoned rail lines for trail alignments.
  3. Maintain existing trail routes within a proposed trail corridor.

g. Jackie briefly summarized the Vision, Goals, and Objectives established for the project and explained how these definitions help to link the goals of the Master Plan with the objectives of the Design Guidelines.

h. Don Kelly, project planner with Logan Simpson Design, explained the DRAFT Recreation Area Design Manual Criteria. His presentation included the summary of Open Space definitions/criteria, Parkland definitions/criteria, and Trail definitions/criteria.

3. Stakeholder Input and Discussion: the following is an outline of what was discussed during the open dialogue session of this meeting.

i. Bonnie Barriola from the Pinal County Trails Association stated that the manual verbiage should match what the Pinal County Planning and Zoning Commission members are accustomed to reviewing. For example, the Base Density (BD) breakdown maybe confusing to the Commission because they are use to seeing Dwelling Units (DU) terminology.

j. Bonnie also mentioned that the proposed Design Manual should correlate to the current zoning requirements.

k. Bonnie questioned how the 35% of required open space for a Planned Area Development was determined. This percentage seems high.

l. Don mentioned that LSD completed open space percentage comparisons and benchmarking for Planned Area Developments to help to determine the proposed percentage.

m. Jackie explained that the existing requirement is 15% and the public believed that the existing open space requirement was too low.

n. Bonnie stated that developers would have to figure out how to maintain the existing open space. The increase of the Open Space requirement could mean that HOAs would have to increase housing fees due to maintenance requirements once the developer is finished building the housing development and turns all maintenance over to the HOAs.

o. Mary Johnson with the City of Casa Grande requested that the open space percentage comparisons be compiled and sent out to the Stakeholders so everyone has a better understanding of existing open space requirements. These comparisons could also help to explain why Pinal County needs to raise their existing Open Space requirements.

p. Vanessa Bechtol from the Arizona Open Land Trust requested that LSD review the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan as one of the open space percentage benchmarking comparisons.

q. Bonnie suggested that showing the Commission members comparisons would help them to understand the need for change of the open space requirements along with understanding what information the project team is using to create the manual.

r. Jackie mentioned that all municipalities within the County should be on board with the proposed open space requirement that the County is suggesting, otherwise, more development will happen within municipalities if their open space requirements are much lower than the County's.

s. Tom Smith with Pinal Partnership expressed his concern about the manual not covering a hillside ordnance to elevate developers building within areas that have a 15% or steeper slope.

t. Kent responded that a hillside ordnance is not a part of this project but other Pinal County planners are reviewing how to cover this issue.

u. Tom S. also stated that future ordinances might be harder to pass because of the acceptance of Proposition 207 that gives the developers negotiating power with these types of ordinances.

v. Tom stated that a hillside graphic could be added to this document to convey the same information that is being shown in Figures 4 and 5 of the manual.

w. Bonnie suggested that the Planned Area/Subdivision Development Figures should be split out individually because both developments have different requirements and incentives.

x. Bonnie also questioned what the parcel size was of the development plan graphics.

y. Jackie stated that the purpose of the graphic was meant to convey a sample area of a development and not parcel sizes.

z. Bonnie suggested that real parcel numbers and acreages be used to help convey a sample area. The number of lots per parcel is confusing without using real numbers that would help to explain the open space required based on the dwelling units.

aa. Jackie asked Mary if golf courses are included as open space within Casa Grande's requirements.

bb. Mary stated that golf courses, detention, and retention areas are all excluded from Casa Grande's open space requirement of 15%.

cc. Jackie explained the Park Requirements and Classifications as outlined in the manual.

dd. Tom S. questioned if Anthem was designed as a good PAD with efficient park space for residents.

ee. Kent will try and obtain plans of Anthem to make an adequate comparison review of park area vs. residents/population per household.

ff. Tom S. questioned the labeling of the OHV route vs. OHV trail. Both types of trails should be designated within the Trail Corridor exhibits, specifically where Urban/Suburban trails differ from Rural/Remote trails.

gg. Tom Fitzgerald from the Central Arizona Project noted that bike routes should be designated differently from bike lanes and the trail exhibits should reflect these different scenarios.

hh. Bonnie suggested that the team research existing examples of natural/preserved environments within developments that are located in Pinal County. Gold Canyon and Deem Hills would be good examples to evaluate.

ii. Mary mentioned that a major part of the development review process is understanding the developers phasing options. Construction phasing and implementation should be apart of the County review requirements in order for a plan to be approved for each development.

4. Our next steps in the process of this project are described below.

jj. We will address and incorporate Stakeholder comments into developing the Final Master Plan that will be presented to the Pinal County Planning and Zoning Commission during January and February of 2007.

kk. We will be coordinating with the technical review contacts identified on the contact list for their input.

ACTION ITEMS:

Each stakeholder taskforce member to provide comments and information regarding the DRAFT Final Open Space and Trail Master Plan and DRAFT Recreation Area Design Manual by December 8th, 2006.

7. LSD to complete Final Open Space and Trails Master Plan.
8. LSD to continue to develop the Recreation Area Design Manual.

Attachments:
Stakeholder Meeting #4 Sign-In Sheet (PDF format)
Public Meeting Comments (PDF format)
Draft Final Master Plan Summary Sheet (PDF format)
Draft Final Open Space and Trails Map (PDF format)
Stakeholder Contact Sheet (PDF format)
Open Space Percentage Benchmarking Comparisons for Planned Area Developments (PDF format)

Any corrections or additions to these notes should be directed to Don Kelly (dkelly@lsdaz.com) at Logan Simpson Design Inc. (480-967-1343) within the next 10 working days.

Stakeholder Comments

Received after meeting #4

PROJECTS: **Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan**

SUBJECT: **Stakeholder Taskforce IV Comments on Draft Final Open Space and Trails Master Plan and Recreation Area Design Manual**

DISTRIBUTION: Stakeholder Taskforce, Pinal County Staff

Comments:

Comments from Mary Johnson-City of Casa Grande

1. Using the population # for the criteria will make it harder to define for a developer and the County staff. May want to use a per acre designation. Easier to use and less wiggle room for the developer.
2. Why are some park items shown in Table 5 as level of service areas, and some listed in table 6 minimum features? Again, recommended using an item per acre (or some other easily figured # to get these in as opposed to the population #'s.)
3. May want to define what a Picnic ramada is ie small = x size
4. Are we going to identify lighted areas. She suggests that as many facilities be lighted as possible to take advantage of the weather.
5. What square footage for indoor recreation areas on Table 5?
6. Add practice backstops as a use option

Comments from Tom Fitzgerald-Central Arizona Project

1. Trail Criteria on page 19 are actually definitions of the criteria on the preceding chart.
2. Too many trail classifications, keep it to simple classifications ie, hard surface, soft surface and remote (what is now rural, may be urban in 10 years)
3. Identify under what circumstances and where road crossings are going to be at, and whether they are going to be at grade or grade separated.
4. Make sure chart and definitions agree, ie, remote trails can't be paved?
5. Need to show how trails within the urban /suburban designation work with the typical Public works requirements.
6. May want to identify types of plants that are unacceptable near urban/subarban trails.
7. On the Trail criteria chart, eliminate any choices for the developer ie 8'-10' make it one definitive #.
8. The 18' Urban corridor width is too small
9. Remove horse from wash in exhibit 8, put on wash edge.

Arizona State Land Department:

1. There is a new proposed OHV route going through the State Trust Land that was just sold outside of Apache Junction. She indicated that this was not on the previous map, and would like to see it removed as this land is slated to be urban development.

2. Concerned with the % of open space that was presented at that meeting. She did not indicate what she thought that should be, but she did indicate that 35% was too high.

BLM Comments:

1. Generally, BLM is concerned about showing designations or land use allocations on BLM lands on the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan map without first knowing the full effects of these designations on BLM lands. Designations and allocations have been spatially assigned without being fully defined. BLM does not feel that enough information has been provided to allow for internal analysis of what the effects of these designations would be on BLM lands.

   The depiction of future preferred land uses in the Open Space and Trails Master Plan Map is not a "designation" or "allocation" of land uses by Pinal County, in that the Master Plan Map has no regulatory effect. The Plan and Map represent desired future conditions. Implementation of the objectives of the Plan may or may not include considering changes to zoning designations in the future. If, at some point in the future, the County considers changing any zoning designations affecting BLM-managed lands, it will ensure that sufficient information is provided for BLM to conduct an appropriate internal analysis.

2. BLM is opposed to open space allocations on BLM-administered lands that have been identified for disposal by BLM. These allocations for BLM disposal lands are in direct conflict with BLM's current Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the area. Please let the BLM Tucson Field Office know if you need the shape files identifying BLM disposal lands. A hard copy map depicting these lands was delivered to Pinal County in August 2006. These allocations could jeopardize future BLM land use authorizations, sales or exchanges. An open space restriction on these lands would significantly decrease their value if potential buyers are not allowed to develop them. Please keep in mind that the retention/disposal status of these lands can change through the plan revision process, which is scheduled to begin for most BLM lands in Pinal County in 2008. If retention/disposal status does change, BLM will work with Pinal County to make appropriate adjustments.

   Note: While it is not spelled out in the plan, we understand that proposed Regional Parks would revert to open space if the park could not be established. If that does occur, BLM would then be opposed to the open space allocation where it overlays BLM disposal lands.

   As discussed above, Pinal County has not made any open space allocations or designations at this point. The Open Space and Trails Master Plan and Map depict the County's preferred future condition, do not have any regulatory effect, and do not affect BLM's current RMP or management for the area. Future private landowners, of course, would be subject to County land-use and regulations. Recent changes to Arizona statutes condition the County's designation of"… private or state land as open space… unless the County receives the written consent of the landowner or provides an alternative, economically viable designation…, allowing at least one residential dwelling per acre." ARS Section 11-824. The County looks forward to working with BLM on its RMP revisions.

3. The proposed Regional Park north of Picacho Peak State Park contains BLM retention land that has not been identified for disposal. It is inappropriate to show this land within a proposed Regional Park, and entirely inconsistent with BLM's RMP for this area. R&PP authorizations are not permitted on lands that have been identified for retention.

   As discussed above, the Plan and Map depict the County's preferred future condition, but have no regulatory effect. When the BLM's RMP for the area is ready for revision, Pinal County will indicate its preferred management scenarios at that time.

4. BLM suggests that the Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan and maps contain the following statement (or some iteration thereof): "Designations shown on the map do not apply to lands administered by the BLM. If federal lands are acquired by Pinal County, they would be managed according to the designations shown on the map."

As discussed above, Plan Map depictions do not have regulatory effect. They do, however, influence BLM's resource management planning pursuant to FLPMA Title II, Section 202 and 43 CFR 1610. A clarifying disclaimer on the Plan Map may be appropriate, but it should be carefully worded to accurately describe the effect of the Plan and Map.

5. The Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan should recognize that BLM is a multiple-use agency, and some uses on BLM-administered lands may not be consistent with the open space definitions in the plan, where open space is allocated over BLM retention land. It should also state that the plan shall have no effect or prohibit the BLM from its management of those lands for permitted BLM land uses, i.e., mining, rights-of-ways, other land use authorizations, or the disposal of those lands through sales or exchanges. The plan shall not have any precedence or supersede BLM's jurisdiction and management on public lands.

   As discussed above, the Open Space and Trails Master Plan and Map do not have any regulatory effect on BLM, BLM-managed lands, BLM's management of those lands, or BLM's jurisdiction. The County's plans do, however, have significance when BLM is conducting resource management planning pursuant to the federal authorities cited above.

6. One of the stated purposes of Pinal County's proposed open spaces is to provide "open space buffers contiguous to National Forest lands, Wilderness Areas, and National Monuments." Consistent with this purpose, we recommend a proposed open space designation for the State Lands that encompass the bajada slopes along the county line north of the West Silver Bell Mts (adjoining the Ironwood Forest National Monument boundary). These bajada slopes do reach north of the monument boundary and would provide a good buffer to the monument. BLM would like to see more open space allocations made contiguous to BLM National Monuments.

   We appreciate the suggestion. Can the BLM provide a map indicating the extent of the bajada?

7. There are State Lands within the Ironwood Forest National Monument that should not be depicted as "existing/planned open space" in the map Key. They could be depicted as "proposed open space." Management of State Lands is not affected by the monument designation.

   The status of these lands will be double checked and labeled as proposed open space if appropriate.

8. BLM would like to receive written responses to our comments. BLM reserves the right to submit additional comments after this draft plan is reviewed by the BLM Arizona State Office.

Questions:

A. Which of the five definitions of open space apply to the open space proposed over lands administered by BLM?

   The character of open space and uses anticipated on it depend on the character of the land itself rather than the ownership or management of the lands. When or if property is designated for development, the proponent will provide information that will allow the County to appropriately identify and categorize the affected open space areas.

B. Does the white space on the map indicate areas for potential development? If so, BLM would like to know where specific Planned Area Developments (PAD) would be applied within the white space, including what PAD designations would occur on lands adjacent to BLM Monuments.
   The white spaces do indicate areas for potential development. A PAD designation is wholly discretionary with the County, and whether such a designation is appropriate depends, again, on the character of the land, proximity of available services etc.

Appendix E – Data Collection Log

AGENCY	• TYPE OF DATA
5-25-06	
AJ	• City of Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Maintained Facilities -Hardcopy Map- Revised 03/2005
AJ	• Apache Junction Parks AutoCAD CD Date??
AJ	• City of Apache Junction Parks and Recreation Master Plan –Hardcopy-Date??
AJ	• Apache Junction Multi-Use Trail Master Plan –Hardcopy- 1993
AJ	• Apache Junction Open Space Planning Task Force Report –Hardcopy- Spring 2004
	•
Casa Grande	• City of Casa Grande Open Space and Recreation Element (From General Plan 2010)- Hardcopy- Date??
Casa Grande	• Casa Grande Land use GIS Data
Coolidge	• City of Coolidge Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Facilities (From General Plan)- Hardcopy- 11/2003
	•
Coronado National Forest	• Kent has been trying to get trail info but they are having problems with their GIS—So no info yet.
	•
Eloy	• Parks and Open Space Element from the Eloy General Plan.-Hardcopy—Date?
	•
Florence	• City of Florence Parks and Open Space Element (From General Plan)-Hardcopy- Date??
Florence	• The Florence Greenway Loop Trail-Hardcopy: Conceptual Master Plan- March 2006
	•
Kearny	• Mescal Mt. O.H.V Area –Hardcopy (Brochure and Map)—Date ?.
	•
	•
Maricopa	• City of Maricopa Parks and Open Space Map (From General Plan 2025)- Hardcopy and PDF- December 2005
Maricopa	• City of Maricopa Circulation Plan Map (From General Plan 2025)- Hardcopy and PDF- December 2005
Maricopa	• City of Maricopa Public Services and Facilities Map (From General Plan 2025)- Hardcopy and PDF- December 2005
	•
Maricopa County	• Trail System Plan San Tan Mountains Regional Park-Hardcopy- March 2004
	•

MGCP	• Middle Gila Conservation Partnership Motorized Route Evaluation Report- Hardcopy-September 2005
MGCP	• MGCP Map Group B Environmental Perspective- Hardcopy- August 2005
MGCP	• MGCP Map Group C Tweener Perspective- Hardcopy- August 2005
MGCP	• MGCP Map Group D Access Perspective- Hardcopy- August 2005
	•
Pinal County	• Parcel Maps- PDF- Date??
Pinal County	• Fema Flood Maps-PDF- Date??
Pinal County	• Zoning Atlas- PDF- Date??
Pinal County	• Ordinances-PDF- Date??
Pinal County	• Pinal County Maps CD- Mostly GIS Data- 1999-2000
Pinal County	• Pinal County Comprehensive Plan (Amended 2004), Hardcopy, from Pinal County website
Pinal County	• Pinal County Subdivision List 1990 to Present, Hardcopy and excel spreadsheet, from Pinal County
Pinal County	• List of State Trails within Pinal County PDF 6/29/06
Pinal County	• Detail list of Trails within Pinal County PDF
	•
	•
Queen Creek	• Open Space and Trails Plan (From General Plan?)-Hardcopy- Date??
	•
7/21/06	•
Arizona Open Land Trust	• GIS info from Arizona Open Land Trust-Critical Habitat Areas—CD with Access Database and Shapefiles. 6/06
	•
7/27/06	•
MGCP	• New subset of information to be used without Tonto National Forest Info (from Email)—GIS Info??. Date ??
	•
7/31/06	•
Tonto National Forest	• Tonto National Forest Trails-Shape Files (From email)—Date ??
	•
8/1/06	•
SRP	• SRP Utility corridor shape files (from email)—Date??

Casa Grande	• City of Casa Grande Transportation Element from the 2010 General Plan (Printed off the Web)—Date??
Florence	•
	•
8/2/08	•
Pinal County	• Decisions and Directions: Pinal County Greenways Plan—CD with PDF and Hardcopy. Spring of 2003
Queen Creek	• Town of Queen Creek Open Space and Trails Master Plan –CD with PDF. 2005
Pima County	• Master Plan for the Pima County Segment of the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail.—CD with PDF. Date ??
Maricopa County	• Maricopa County Trails System Plan –CD with PDF-Date 2002
Maricopa County	• Maricopa County Trails System Plan –CD with PDF-Date 8/16/2004
8/4/06	
Coolidge	Land Use Map from General Plan—PDF (from email)- Date??
Coolidge	Circulation Map from General Plan—PDF (from email)- Date??
Coolidge	Aerial Exhibit Map from General Plan—PDF (from email)- Date??
8/9/06	
Maricopa	Maricopa Trails—JPEG (From Email)-Date ??
Maricopa	Conceptual Open Space Plan—PDF (From Email)-Date??
8/10/06	
Pinal County	Land Use Element from Comprehensive Plan—PDF (from Email)- Date??
Pinal County	Natural Environment Element from Comprehensive Plan—PDF (from Email)- Date??
Pinal County	Land Use Element from Comprehensive Plan—PDF (from Email)- Date??
Pinal County	County Subdivision Regulations page 3 (Dealing with Hillside Development)—TIF (from Email)- Date ??
Pinal County	County Subdivision Regulations page 11 (Dealing with Hillside Development)—TIF (from Email)- Date ??
Pinal County	County Subdivision Regulations page 13 (Dealing with Hillside Development)—TIF (from Email)- Date ??
Pinal County	Great Western Trail Arizona1 (From GWT Website)–JPEG (From Email)- Date??
Pinal County	Great Western Trail Arizona2 (From GWT Website)–JPEG (From Email)- Date??

Pinal County	Great Western Trail Arizona3 (From GWT Website)—JPEG (From Email)- Date??
8/11/06	
Pinal County	Great Western Trail Arizona Map4—JPEG (From Email)- Date ??

Obtained from Kearny

7/14/2006	
Kearny	• Open Space and Recreation element of Master Plan. (Hardcopy) Date? (Received from town of Kearny)
	•
	•

Public Info Received from first round of Public meetings

7/14/2006	•
CHRIS LUCIC	• Ideas for Southeastern Pinal County Open Space and Trails Masterplan. Hardcopy Map.

Info Received from First Stakeholder Meeting (Received from Kent)

7/25/2006	•
ARIZONA OPEN LAND TRUST	• GIS Info from Arizona Open Land Trust. Shape files on AZ Tortoise, Mammals, Riparian areas, Streams, springs and Reptile—Habitats?? Date? CD
CAAG	• Maps of ADOT corridor definition studies (Proposed transportation corridors) Date?? Hardcopy.
BOR	• Maps from Draft EA for Proposed Acquisition of Habitat for Southwestern Willow Flycatcher. 7/19/2006-Hardcopy.
Tortolita Mountain Park	• Tortolita Mountain Park Planning Boundarys PDF 07/2006
	•

Maps

8/8/06	•
BLM	• Sonoran Desert National Monument map – http://www.blm.gov/az/sonoran/sonoranmap.html—last accessed on 8-8-2006
BLM	• Ironwood Forest National Monument map http://www.blm.gov/az/ironwoodironwoodmap.html-- last accessed on 8-8-2006
Coronado National Forest	• Coronado National Forest Map –Hardcopy—Forest Service Map 1991
Coronado National Forest	• Oracle Ridge Trail #1 Map-From http://www.fs.fed.us/r3/coronado/forest/recreation/trails/trail_maps/TR_001.jpg Last accessed on 8/8/2006
Tonto National Forest	• Tonto National Forest Map—Land and Resource Management Plan—Hardcopy 1995
Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness	• Aravaipa Canyon Wilderness Map-- http://www.blm.gov/az/env_docs/library/wilderness_plans/AravaipaCanWildernessPlan2.pdf Last accessed 8-8-2006
BLM	• BLM edition Surface Management Status –Arizona, Casa Grande 1:100,000-scale topographic map. Hardcopy 1995
Pinal County	• Pinal County 2005 Comprehensive Plan Map. PDF from http://co.pinal.az.us/PlanDev/PDCP/CPInfo.asp Last accessed 8/8/2006
Pinal County	• Pinal County Groundwater Basin Map. . PDF from http://co.pinal.az.us/PlanDev/PDCP/CPInfo.asp Last accessed 8/8/2006
Pinal County	• Pinal County Land Subsidence Map. . PDF from http://co.pinal.az.us/PlanDev/PDCP/CPInfo.asp Last accessed 8/8/2006
US Geological Survey	• Various USGS 7.5 min topographic maps. Hardcopy- various dates.
Arizona State Parks	• Lost Dutchman State Park Trail Map—PDF From http://www.pr.state.az.us/Images/parkmaps/dutchman_map_9_26_05.pdf Last accessed on 8/8/06
	•
Arizona State Parks	• Picacho Peak State Park Map. PDF From http://www.pr.state.az.us/Parks/parkhtml/picacho.html Last accessed on 08/08/06
	•

8/10/2006	• Hillside and subdivision regulation info. PDF from Kent(email) Date??

AGENCY	• **TYPE OF DATA**
8/16/06	
BLM	Map of Parcels suitable for disposal within BLM lands—Hardcopy –April 2006
8/18/06	
ADOT	• ADOT Wildlife Corridors-GIS Data and Linkage corridors (from Email)—Date??
8/21/06	
AZ NATIONAL GUARD	• Military Lands GIS Data from AZ National Guard
	•
	•
8/23/06	• Lost Goldmine Multi-use Trailway Location Map-Hardcopy (from Kent)-Date ??
	•
8/24/06	• State Trust Land Initiatve GIS Info, source Arizona Open Land Trust .(from email)-Date ??.
	•
9/20/06	•
Arizona State Parks OHV	
	• Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Guide for Ariziona-Hardcopy Map (Brochure) August 2006
	• Arizona Game and Fish Department Off-Highway Vehicle Recreation Guide for Desert Wells Multi-Use Area Pinal County Arizona-Hardcopy Map From Amy Racki May 2005.
9/22/06	
Bureau of Land	• White Canyon Resource Conservation Area. Shape File (from Email). Date??

Management	
	•
9/25/2006	•
Bureau of Land Management	• Great Western Trail. Shape(from Email) Date??
	•
	•
9/29/2006	
Hohokam Drainage and Irrigation District	• Hohokam Irrigation and Drainage District Map (PDF from Email). Sept, 1987
	•
10/03/2006	
Pima County	• Eastern Pima County Trail System Master Plan Pocket Map #1 (PDF from email) Date??
	•
10/05/2006	•
CAAG	• Draft of the Pinal Development Projects. Shape Files (from email) August 2006
10/10/2006	• *Between Desert and River Hohokam Settlement and Land Use in the Los Robles Community.* 1993 LSD Cultural library.
	•
11/20/06	• Railroads within Pinal County. Shape Files From ADOT 2006
	• Rails to Trails list of existing trails in AZ. From www.traillink.com last accessed 11/20/2006.

Pinal County Open Space and Trails Master Plan

October 2007

Logan Simpson Design Inc.