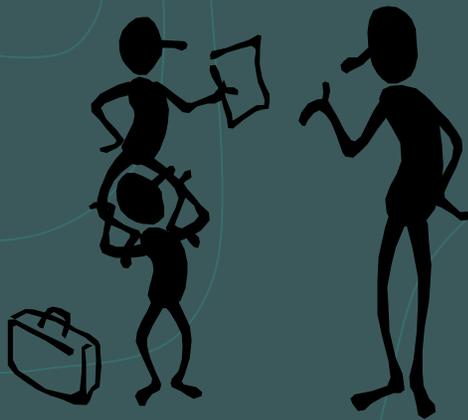


**NORTH ROCK CREEK
WATERSHED AND ECOSYSTEM
ENHANCEMENT PROJECT**

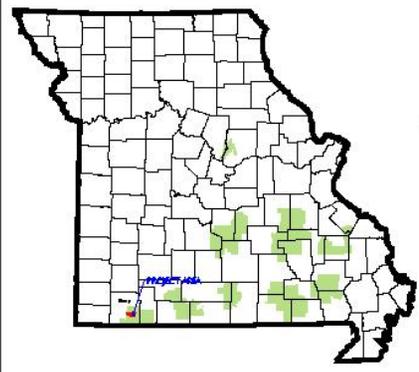
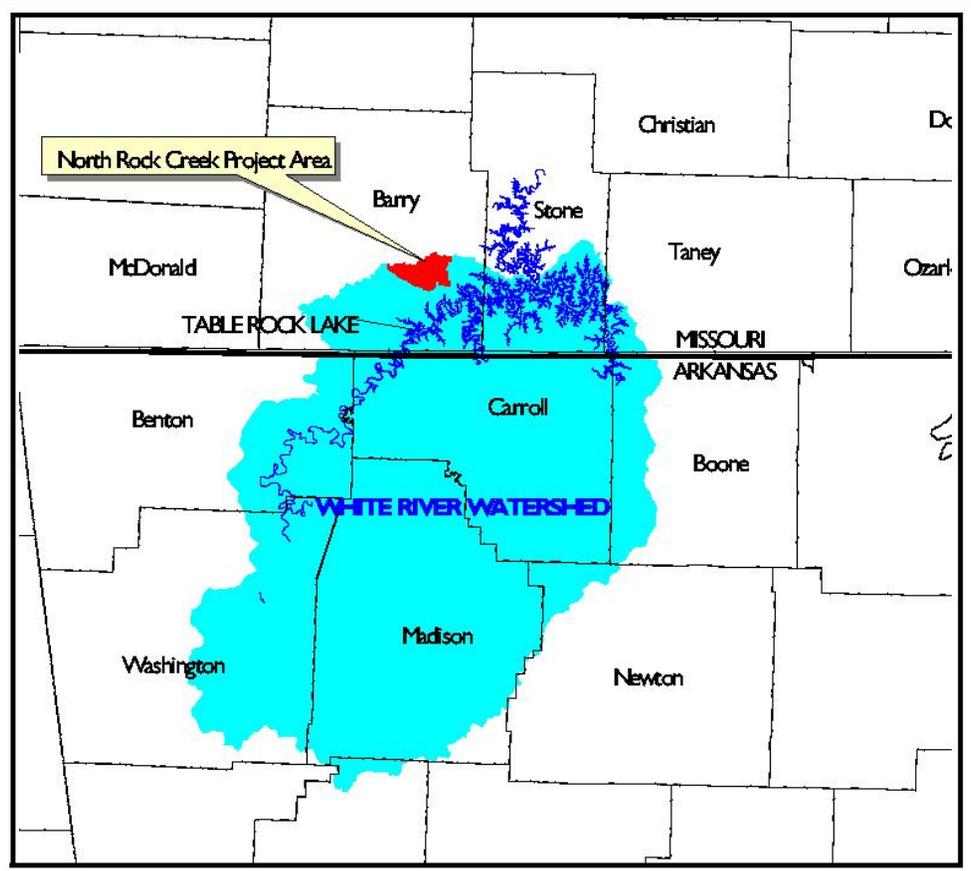
**MARK TWAIN NATIONAL FOREST
AVA-CASSVILLE-WILLOW SPRINGS RANGER
DISTRICT**

This slide show summarizes the proposal for the North Rock Creek Watershed and Ecosystem Enhancement Project. It is intended to provide you specific information about the proposed project so that you can provide better comments. Substantive comments, that are specific to the Proposed Action helps the Forest Service identify important issues and develop alternatives to the proposal action that addresses those issues.



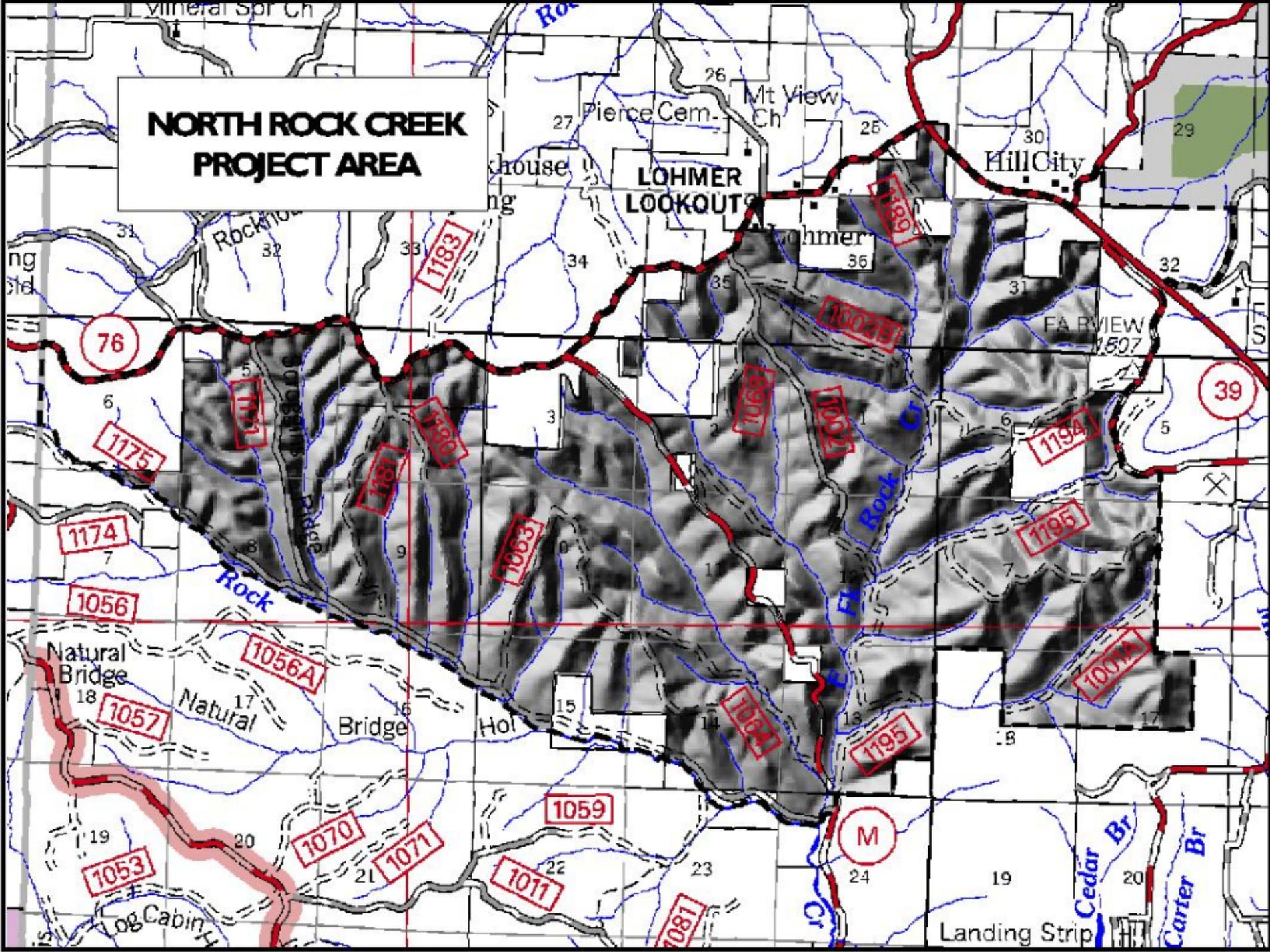
A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map. It features contour lines, a grid, and a yellow line indicating a path or boundary. The map is partially cut off on the left edge.

The North Rock Creek Project Area is located on approximately 10,310 acres of National Forest System Land on the Cassville Unit of the Mark Twain National Forest. The project area is in T. 23 & 22 N., R. 26 & 25 W. in Barry County, Missouri and can be accessed by State Highway 76 and 29 and State Route M. The entire project area is located within the Beaver Reservoir portion of the White River Watershed and is approximately 2.5 miles due north of Table Rock Lake.



The North Rock Creek Project Area
and the
White River Watershed

NORTH ROCK CREEK PROJECT AREA



A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map of a watershed. A yellow line runs vertically through the map, likely representing a road or trail. The map features contour lines and a grid.

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROPOSED ACTION

The Forest Service is proposing this project for the purposes of improving watershed conditions, enhancing wildlife habitats, and providing healthy and resilient native plant communities. This project is needed due to degraded watershed conditions caused by deteriorating road conditions and unauthorized, user-defined roads and trails that are contributing sediment and gravel to Rock Creek and its tributaries. In addition, the diverse plant communities that provide a variety of habitat conditions utilized by wildlife have changed in structure and composition. A loss of plant diversity and structure is a result of past management practices, including fire suppression.

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map of a watershed. It features contour lines, a network of streams, and a yellow line indicating a specific path or boundary. The map is partially cut off by the edge of the slide.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

- A. Improve Watershed Health
- B. Enhance Wildlife Habitats and Provide for Healthy, Resilient Forests
- C. Improve Public Access and Recreational Opportunities

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map of a watershed. The map features contour lines, a network of stream channels, and a grid of latitude and longitude lines. The colors range from light tan to dark brown, indicating different elevations and terrain features.

Improving Watershed Health – Existing Condition

In 1999, a Watershed Assessment of the East Fork of Rock Creek was conducted to assess the primary issue of stream sedimentation and degradation of aquatic ecosystems. The assessment focused on the factors that were affecting the overall quality of the East Fork of Rock Creek. The factors include: road and trail density, unauthorized off-road recreation vehicles (ORV) and all-terrain vehicles (ATV) use, conditions of riparian habitats, and roads and user-defined trails located on environmentally sensitive areas such as stream channels, steep slopes and highly erosive soils.

A vertical strip on the left side of the slide shows a topographic map of a watershed. The map features contour lines, a network of roads, and a stream system. A yellow line highlights a specific path or road through the terrain.

The assessment concluded that the main cause of degradation to water quality and aquatic ecosystems were poor road locations, undeveloped system roads and unauthorized user-defined trails created by ATV's.

Management recommendations identified in the watershed analysis that will be addressed in the project include:

- Reduce road and trail density within the watershed
- Clearly define and distinguish Forest Developed Road system roads from non-system roads
- Comply with current Forest-wide management direction to prohibit use of off-road vehicles on National Forest System Land other than on designated off-road trails.
- Increase the percentage of woodland habitat in the 0 to 9 year age class.
- Increase the percentage of open and semi-open habitats (glades and savannas)
- Develop mountain bike/equestrian trails within the watershed.
- Limit use of motorized vehicles on designated stream crossings.



View of where the East Fork (right) and Rock Creek (left) join. Notice the amount of gravel in the channel.



Forest Road 1195, like the majority of the FS system roads in the project area, is a historical road that was not initially developed by the Forest Service. As a result of improper alignment, excessive run-off and erosion has become prevalent.



Many non-system roads like this are located on steep grades and on highly erosive soils. These roads are depositing large amounts of sediment and gravel into streams each year. Many of these roads would be decommissioned and obliterated in this project.



There are approximately 7 miles of System, non-system and user-defined trails located within riparian corridors. Many of these roads are adjacent to or are within creek bottoms, impacting water quality and aquatic ecosystems.



FR 1195 – Many of the ridge top roads are in better condition than those located on steep slopes. However, most of these roads do not have proper drainage or surface material.



FR 1002 – An example of an existing system road located on erosive soils and steep grade. This road is only accessible by ATV.



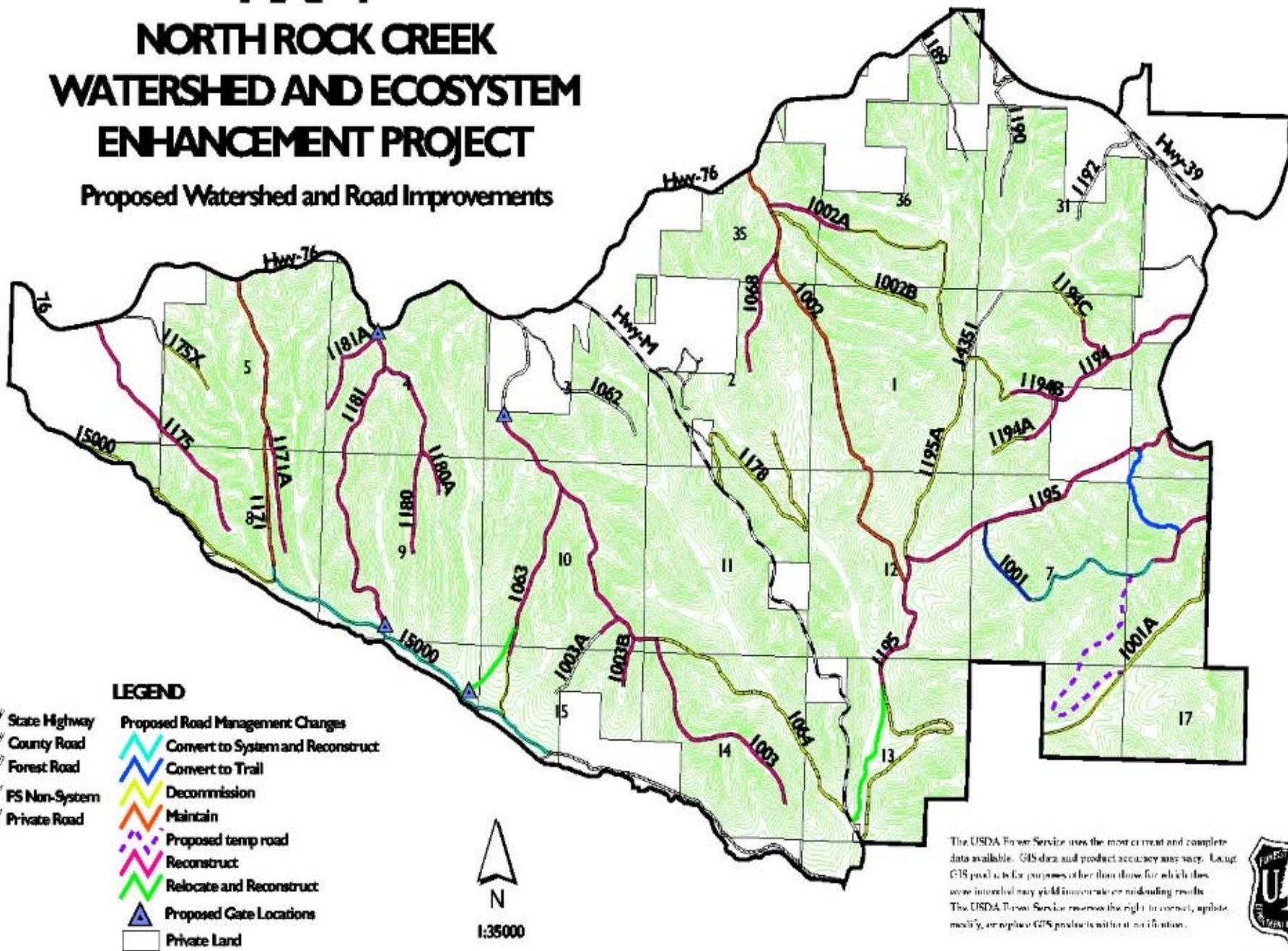
PROPOSED ACTIONS THAT ADDRESS WATERSHED HEALTH , PUBLIC ACCESS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES.

- ◆ Decommission approximately 7 miles of system roads and 6 miles of non-system roads and all unauthorized, user-defined roads.
- ◆ Reconstruct approximately 24 miles of FS system roads that do not meet Forest Service standards and are contributing to poor watershed conditions.
- ◆ Convert approximately 3.6 miles of non-system roads to Forest Service system roads and reconstruct to Forest Service standards.
- ◆ Install four steel gates to limit motorized access on FR 1181, 1003 and 1063 to protect sensitive glades and provide for walk-in turkey hunting areas. These roads will be open to motorized use during deer season.

MAP I

NORTH ROCK CREEK WATERSHED AND ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Proposed Watershed and Road Improvements



LEGEND

- State Highway
- County Road
- Forest Road
- FS Non-System
- Private Road
- Proposed Road Management Changes: Convert to System and Reconstruct
- Convert to Trail
- Decommission
- Maintain
- Proposed temp road
- Reconstruct
- Relocate and Reconstruct
- Proposed Gate Locations
- Private Land

N
1:35000

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Enhance Wildlife Habitats and Provide for Healthy Forest

Review of the existing conditions indicates that there is a lack of certain wildlife habitats as well as a decline in the health of glades and savanna ecosystems. Wildlife habitats such as early seral forest, open woodlands with grass, forb and shrub understories, and old growth do not meet the desired future conditions (DFC) as outlined in the Forest Plan. This project will address the lack of these wildlife habitats and the health of specialized habitats such as glade and savannas. In addition many areas have declining health and productivity due to age, insects, disease, and also a lack of adequate regeneration.



Eastern red cedar has encroached into glades and savannas which has dramatically reduced the diversity and abundance of grass and sedges.



The Rock Creek and East Fork Prescribed Fire areas contain an abundance of native plants that are thriving under prescribed fire activities.



This stand represents the desired future condition for those stands identified for savanna restoration cuts. The overstory is dominated by old post and white oak with an abundance of native grasses, sedges and forbs in the understory.



PROPOSED ACTION TO ADDRESS WILDLIFE HABITATS AND HEALTHY, RESILIENT FORESTS

Restore 125 acres of glade habitat by harvesting Eastern red cedar.

Restore 1,643 acres of savanna with thinning.

Create 232 acres of early seral habitat by clear-cutting.

Thin 268 acres of overstocked stands.

Using uneven-aged management prescriptions, harvest 1,348 acres.

Improvement cuts on 167 acres.

Pre-commercial thinning on 64 acres.

Salvage-cut red oak on 33 acres.

Restore and maintain glade, savanna and open woodlands using prescribed fire on 5,422 acres.

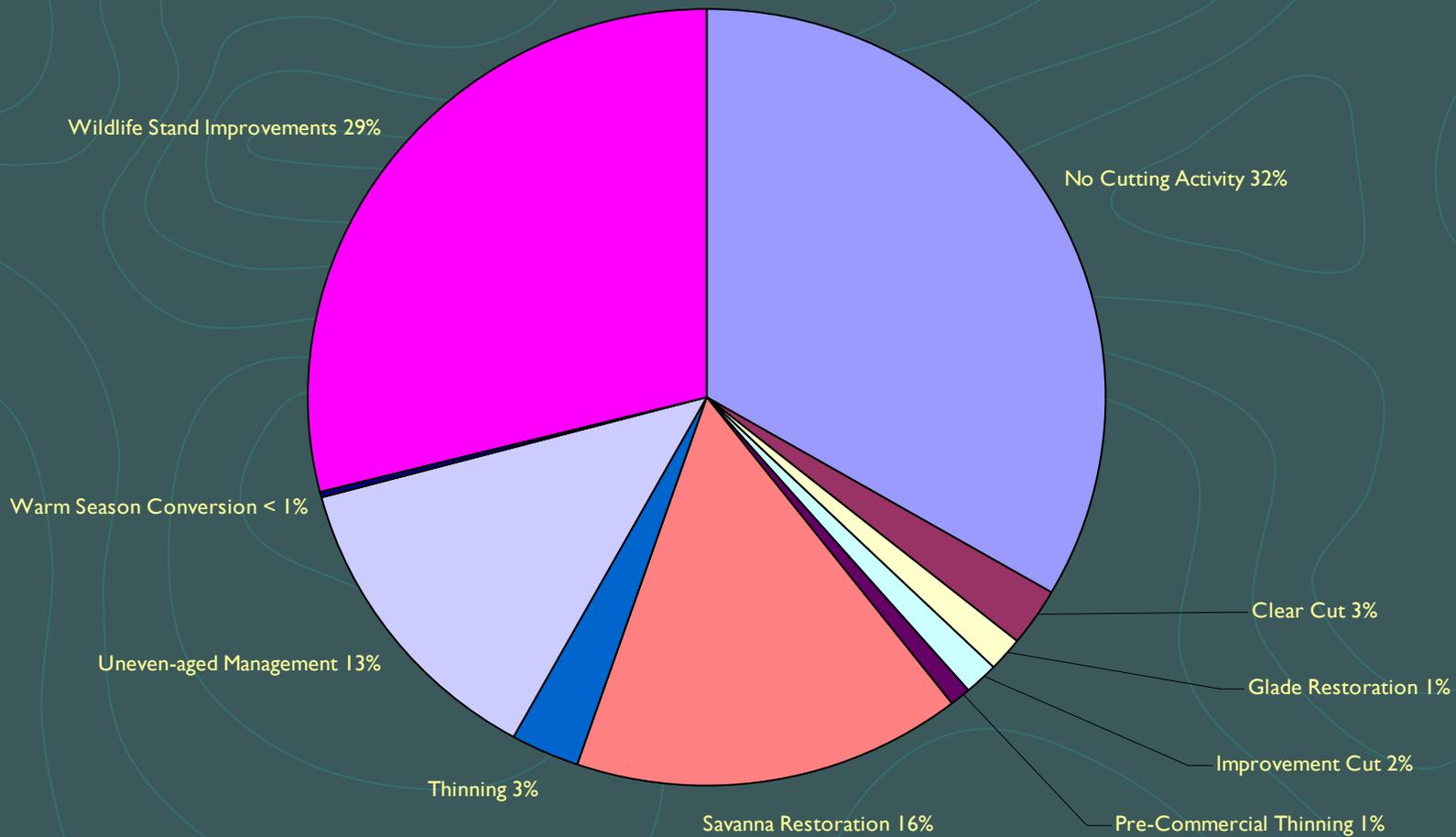
Improve forested habitats on 2,952 acres using wildlife stand improvements.

Convert 41 acres of non-native fescue fields to native warm-season grasses.

Noxious weed control on 45 acres using chemical, physical and mechanical means.

Designate 2,379 acres of existing and potential old growth.

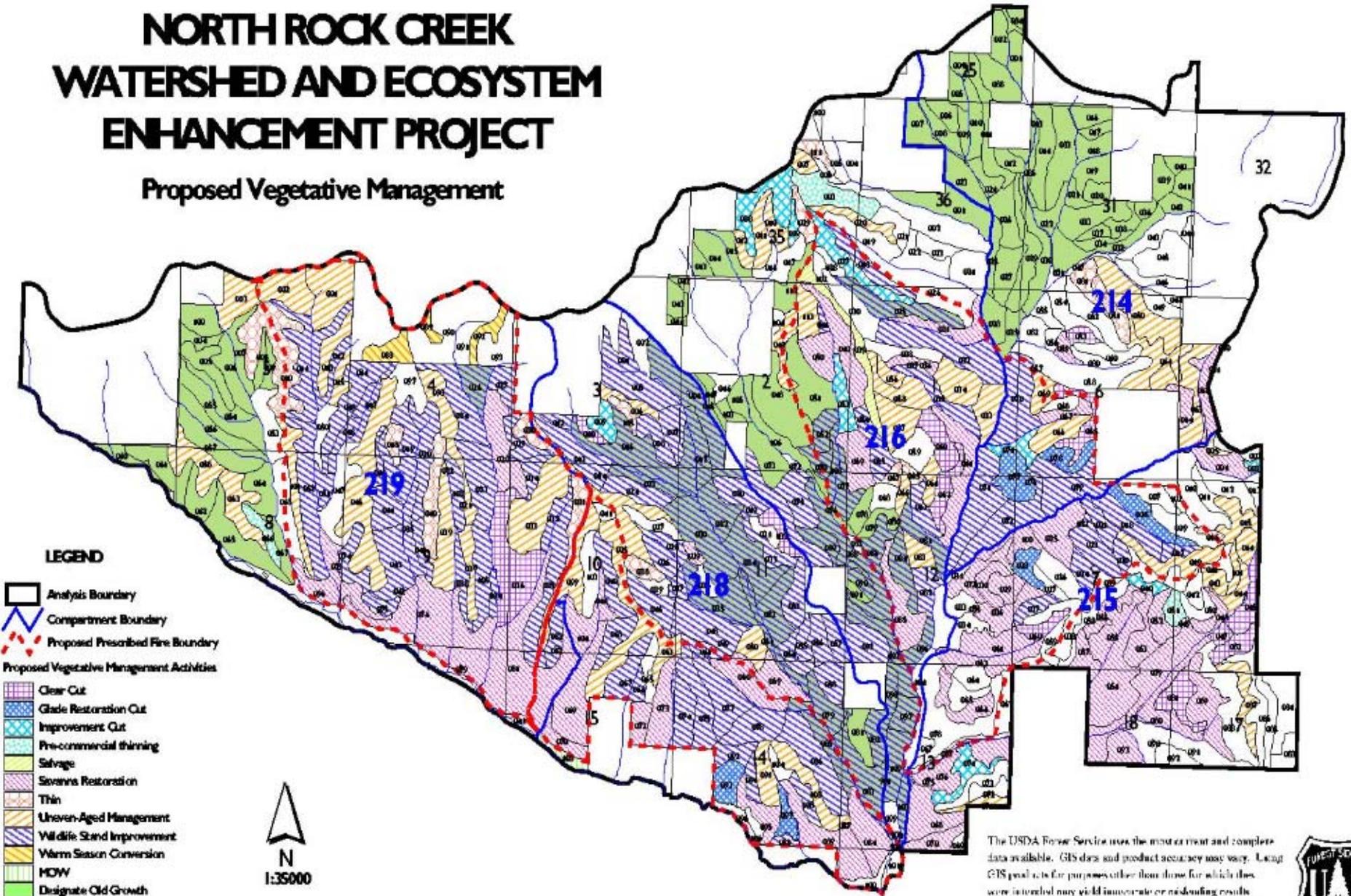
NORTH ROCK CREEK PROJECT PERCENT OF PROPOSED VEGETATIVE MANAGEMENT ON NFSL



MAP 2

NORTH ROCK CREEK WATERSHED AND ECOSYSTEM ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

Proposed Vegetative Management



LEGEND

- Analysis Boundary
- Compartment Boundary
- Proposed Prescribed Fire Boundary
- Proposed Vegetative Management Activities

- Clear Cut
- Glade Restoration Cut
- Improvement Cut
- Pre-commercial thinning
- Salvage
- Savanna Restoration
- Thin
- Uneven-Aged Management
- Wildlife Stand Improvement
- Warm Season Conversion
- HDW
- Designate Old Growth



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Summary of Proposed Actions



•Decommission system roads	7.0 miles
•Decommission non-system roads	5.7 miles
•Limit motorized access-Install steel gates	4 gates
•Clear-cut Harvest	232 acres
•Uneven-age Management	1,319 acres
•Thin	268 acres
•Glade Restoration	125 acres
•Savanna Restoration	1,643 acres
•Improvement Cuts	167 acres
•Pre-commercial Thinning	64 acres
•Salvage Red Oak	33 acres
•Prescribed Burn	6,285 acres
•Wildlife Stand Improvements	1,789 acres
•Native Warm Season Conversion	41 acres
•Maintain existing open field by mowing	12 acres
•Prescribed Fire	5,422 acres
•Noxious Weed Control	45 acres
•Designate Old Growth	2,379 acres
•Maintain existing ponds	27 ponds
•Road Reconstruction	24.6 miles
•Convert Non-system road to System road	3.6 miles
•Road Maintenance	1.7 miles
•Fire line construction	4 miles
•Hazard Tree Removal along FS system roads	As needed
•Road Decommissioning Activities; waterbars, rock and earth berms, recontouring, revegetation (seeding, planting or fertilizing)	As needed
Post all Forest Service System roads with signs	As needed