



Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation

**Vulture Mountains
Cooperative
Recreation
Management Area
Master Plan**

September 2012

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VULTURE MOUNTAINS COOPERATIVE RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA MASTER PLAN

September 2012



Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation

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Acronyms

ACEC	Area of Critical Environmental Concern
ADMS/P	Area Drainage Master Study/Plan
ADOT	Arizona Department of Transportation
AGFD	Arizona Game and Fish Department
ASLD	Arizona State Land Department
ASM	Arizona State Museum
ATSF	Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway
ATV	all terrain vehicle, see note below
BLM	Bureau of Land Management
BNSF	Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railway
CIP	Capital Improvement Plan
CMA	Cooperative Management Agreement
CRMA	Cooperative Recreation Management Area
FCDMC	Flood Control District of Maricopa County
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Panels
GIS	geographic information system
HDMS	Heritage Data Management System

JPC	Joint Planning Committee
LR 2000	BLM's Land & Mineral Legacy Rehost 2000 System
MAG	Maricopa Association of Governments
MCPRD	Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department
MCSO	Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
OHV	off-highway vehicle, see note below
R&PP	Recreation and Public Purposes
RAMP	Recreation Area Management Plan
RMP	Bradshaw-Harquahala Record of Decision and Approved Resource Management Plan
RAE	Recreation Activity Evaluation
RMZ	Recreation Management Zone
RV	recreational vehicle
SAG	Stakeholder Advisory Group
SCRMA	Special Cultural Resource Management Area
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Office
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
USESA	U.S. Endangered Species Act
VRM	Visual Resource Management
WCCF	Wickenburg Cultural and Conservation Foundation
WCTMP	Wickenburg Community Trails Master Plan

Note: There are many types of and terminologies for off-highway vehicle (OHV), including 4x4, all terrain cycle, all terrain vehicle, dirt bike, four wheeler, Jeep®, quad, side-by-side, utility terrain vehicle, and many others. Arizona State Parks Department's "*Arizona Trails 2010: A Statewide Motorized & Non-Motorized Trails Plan*" as well as Arizona Revised Statutes § 28-1171 uses the term OHV to define the group as a whole. Likewise, the master plan uses the term OHV to indicate the group of vehicles and their uses, unless otherwise specifically quoted from a referenced source as a specific OHV type.



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Arizona Game and Fish Department
Arizona Off-Highway Vehicle Coalition
Arizona State Land Department
Arizona Trail Riders
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Desert Caballeros Western Museum
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Maricopa County Sheriff's Office
Rancho de los Caballeros
The Nature Conservancy—Hassayampa River Preserve
Town of Wickenburg
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Wickenburg Horsemen's Association

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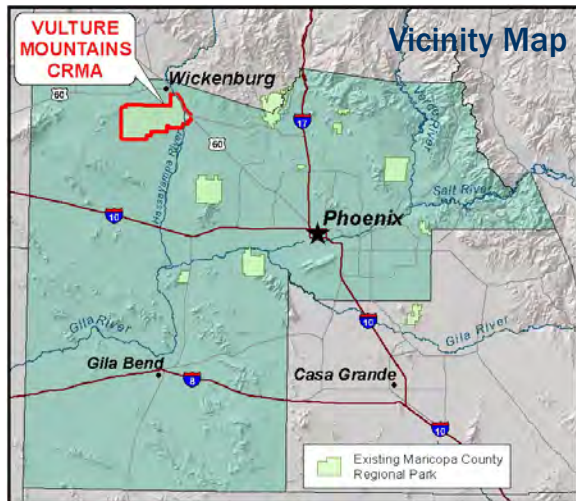


1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

Urban growth in and towards the Wickenburg area has been occurring at a fast pace over the past several decades. Likewise, recreation use in the region has grown as well. The Vulture Mountains area in general is attractive to users for many of the same recreation opportunities that the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation system provides, albeit unstructured and with few amenities. Some of the most popular activities in the Vulture Mountains area include (in no particular order) horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, primitive tent and recreational vehicle (RV) camping, wildlife viewing, and hunting. The area is popular for both recreational and competitive OHV use.

In 2006, the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Department (MCPRD) began discussions with the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) regarding the cooperative management of a possible recreation area in the Vulture Mountains. In 2008, MCPRD and BLM began developing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to provide procedures and guidance for coordination and cooperation in future planning of the park and recreation area. The purpose of the MOU was to initiate a formal working



relationship and establish a general framework of cooperation upon which a Recreation Area Management Plan (RAMP), a BLM planning process, would be prepared for the Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area (CRMA), see Vicinity Map. The RAMP will be developed to determine the recreational uses and needs of the area and to identify the management actions required to reach the desired outcomes of the parties, the public, and surrounding communities. Further, the MOU specified that the RAMP will include the design of a recreation fee program addressing the criteria required in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to establish standard and expanded amenity fees on

public lands. After approval of the RAMP and completion of the environmental analysis, a separate Cooperative Management Agreement (CMA) will be executed to establish the framework for plan implementation. The MOU contains specific plan objectives and outlines the responsibilities of MCPRD and BLM.

In June 2009, the MCPRD was awarded a five-year challenge cost share grant from the BLM to jointly create a recreation activity plan and a cooperative management agreement for a recreation area in the CRMA. Introductory meetings were held in August and September 2009 in Wickenburg with likely stakeholders, Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, and Wickenburg town staff to present the general concept for a recreation area and to introduce the cooperative management partnership between the BLM and MCPRD. In October 2009, the BLM, MCPRD, and stakeholders participated in a joint planning summit for the Wickenburg Community Trails Master Plan

(WCTMP) and the RAMP; two separate planning projects. The summit was the first meeting for the trails plan project and included a discussion on the potential for a regional park. In February 2010, the MCPRD selected EPG as the planning consultant to assist in the preparation of the RAMP.

The study area for the CRMA encompasses 70,378 acres, which is nearly 110 square miles. Located in northwest Maricopa County and south of Wickenburg, the CRMA would be the largest regional park/recreation management area in the MCPRD system, which presently provides recreation opportunities at 10 facilities for Maricopa County residents and visitors. The CRMA features multiple ecosystems of the Sonoran Desert, including Arizona Uplands represented by the Vulture Mountains, foothills represented by the Hassayampa Plain, and riparian areas along the Hassayampa River. With nearly 2,000 feet of elevation change, the setting changes dramatically from the exposed granite peaks of Vulture Peak and Caballeros Peaks, through rolling upland hills and foothills, to the dense cottonwood-willow-mesquite groves along the Hassayampa River.

The area in around the CRMA and the Town of Wickenburg have a storied past.

Although the agricultural potential of Arizona’s fertile river valleys contributed significantly in attracting Anglo settlers, a great deal of early settlement in the Arizona Territory centered on mining; particularly within the CRMA. In 1863, Henry Wickenburg along with two associates, filed a claim for the Vulture gold mine along the Hassayampa Plain. By 1864, Wickenburg had established a new residence near one of these emerging settlements, which soon bore his name. The Vulture Mine remains today and is a prominent reminder of the historical importance that gold mining was to the establishment of the Phoenix metropolitan area.



Overview of the Master Planning Process

The RAMP is a blueprint for the future. It is a comprehensive document, long-range in its views, that is intended to guide land management decisions in the CRMA for the foreseeable future. The RAMP uses the BLM Bradshaw-Harquahala approved Resource Management Plan (RMP) as a foundation. The RMP provides broad guidance for the management of the BLM land in Maricopa, Yavapai, and LaPaz Counties, which includes the Vulture Mountains. In addition, the RAMP will work in concert with the Wickenburg Community Trails Master Plan (WCTMP), conducted by BLM, that integrates recreation trails in the region with community trail infrastructure in Wickenburg.

The RAMP has been prepared to respond to stakeholder direction and public comment within the framework of BLM public land policy and MCPRD system policy and guidelines. The RAMP sets public policies regarding recreation use, land management, and supporting facility development. The information and concepts presented in the RAMP are intended to guide land manager’s decisions for recreation uses of the public land within the CRMA, as well as provisions for public facilities.



The public participation program for the master plan was established with the following objectives:

- Inform the public
- Identify public recreation needs and issues communities
- Identify desired locations for recreation areas and facilities
- Identify locations for Recreation and Public Purposes (R&PP) leases/patents
- Develop a framework for the CMA

Three types of meetings were conducted for the RAMP: Joint Planning Committee (JPC), Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), and public meetings/open houses. Each meeting type or committee served a distinct purpose throughout the different phases of the project. The RAMP and WCTMP projects had parallel schedules and similar scopes. To allow the public's and stakeholder's time commitment to be minimal while maximizing the focus and feedback on each planning effort, the BLM and MCPRD combined many of the public and stakeholder meetings for both projects. Press releases, newspaper articles, a project website, newsletters, questionnaires/surveys, and public meetings were all different methods use to communicate to the public regarding the RAMP process.

Data Inventory and Analysis

The CRMA is located in the upper elevations of the Sonoran Desert. The CRMA's desert setting is unique in having the perennially flowing Hassayampa River cross within its boundaries. Public use of the land, since the discovery of gold in the mid-1880s, has created varying degrees of impact on the desert's natural system. Recreation use and supporting facility development proposed by the RAMP will inevitably continue these impacts. However, many of the ecologically and aesthetically unsound changes perpetuated on the public land occurred because of a failure and/or an indifference to either consider, or understand, natural and cultural factors. A major objective in the planning process for public land managers is to see that both the ecological and cultural impacts of recreation use and any supporting facility development are minimized, while optimizing human use and enjoyment of the land. The data elements presented below are the primary analysis data sets considered to establish an analytical planning approach that thoroughly investigates the CRMA as both a natural and cultural system:

- Hydrology
- Vegetation
- Biology
- Cultural, Historic, and Prehistoric Resources
- Landforms and Topography
- Visual Resource Management
- Active Mining Claims and Historical Mine Locations
- Surrounding Land Uses/Ownership

- Existing Recreation Related Facilities
- Transportation and Access Issues
- Public/Private Utilities
- Existing Grazing Leases/BLM Land Use Activities
- General Plans
- BLM Route Designations
- Composite Site Analysis
- Drive Time Analysis

Recreation Needs Assessment

Maricopa County has numerous recreational opportunities for residents, nonresidents and visitors. The County has an abundance of open spaces and public lands that attract seasonal and year-round visitors. It possesses numerous and varying recreational attractions. Around and within the urban area there exist extensive game lands, a State Park, and private recreational resources, such as zoos and water parks. For “human-powered recreation” alone, these resources and opportunities and others statewide are key to 87,000 jobs, \$371 million in tax revenues, and \$5.3 billion annually in retail sales and services across Arizona (Bavousett, Brigitte and Gerald D. O’Neill, Jr., 2011).



Hassayampa River

The *Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (2009)* indicated that Maricopa County is a sponsor of a number of recreational programs and events in its regional park system, currently comprised of 10 regional parks totaling more than 120,000 acres. Today, more than 1.4 million park visitors each year enjoy affordable parks and recreation services available year-round. Wickenburg residents indicated a desire for a county park that is closer to their community. The proposed CRMA would not only provide Wickenburg residents and visitors close access to a Maricopa County park but would allow the park system to keep pace with growing demand, in particular for western Maricopa County.

A Recreation Activity Evaluation (RAE) was prepared to obtain input from the stakeholders and public regarding the needs and/or desires for recreation facilities and uses in the CRMA. The assessment began by reviewing the *Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (2009)*. Stakeholder input was gathered during public participation, along with input from the JPC. Additional information was obtained through public open houses, newsletters, and the project website. Comments and issues gathered during this process were also reviewed, evaluated, and summarized in relation to alternatives.



Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Four alternatives were developed and presented to the stakeholders and public for review as part of the planning and public involvement process. The alternatives ranged from Alternative A - No Action, to progressively increasing levels of passive and active recreation opportunities and supporting development for Alternatives B, C, and D. Public review included both presentations and on-line access to the public meeting materials at the MCPRD's Vulture Mountains webpage. Attendees to the meetings provided written input. On-line visitors responded via an on-line questionnaire.

The resulting Preferred Alternative is a mix of opportunities and management actions analyzed during the alternatives review period. It sets the course for recreation opportunities and management in the CRMA into the foreseeable future. This RAMP was developed under the premise that all existing and permitted uses of the BLM land would be recognized and accommodated.

Based on a multi-month review period involving stakeholder input, public comments, and MCPRD operational and management considerations, the wide-ranging alternatives were analyzed and consolidated into a Draft Preferred Alternative that most closely met the near consensus heard during the review period. The Draft Preferred Alternative also underwent a multi-month review period to refine the recreation opportunities and location of facilities. The results became the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative most closely represents features of Alternatives B and C. Most opportunities and actions provided by those two alternatives have been carried forward into the Preferred Alternative, which include:

- All Non-Motorized (Multi-Use Trails) Uses
- All Motorized Uses, except Rock Crawling
- All Equestrian Uses, except for Arenas
- All Picnic Uses
- All Camping Uses, including Backcountry OHV Camping¹
- Group Use Opportunities
- Recreation Concessions for Archery Range Lanes/Field Course and Commercial Development, such as an Equestrian Concessionaire
- Interpretive Uses for an Interpretive/Education Center, Wildlife Viewing, and Viewing of Historical Sites/Features
- Miscellaneous Uses, including Hunting and Geocaching/Rockhounding

Management Controls

The MCPRD and BLM will ensure that a careful assessment is made of how visitor use dynamics interrelate with the RAMP prior to initiating changes in direct use regulations. The MCPRD will be the on-the-site recreation manager, providing recreation

¹Current MCPRD policy does not allow OHV activities in the Maricopa County park system. This policy will be created to address this use in the CRMA.

management throughout the CRMA as guided by the CMA. The BLM will continue to manage traditional permitted land uses, such as mining and grazing leases.

The RAMP provides for optimum levels of a variety of visitor uses by offering non-fee areas and fee regulated area. Fee regulated areas will provide direct benefits and facilities for what would otherwise not be provided to the public without the presence of a Maricopa County park, such as developed day-use facilities and camping areas. The fees charged will be commensurate with the MCPRD's standard facility entrance and use fees. The MCPRD will apply to lease/patent from the federal government under the R&PP Act, according to BLM policies, for the proposed fee regulated areas, which are owned by the BLM. As discussed in Chapter 2, the MCPRD will continue to discuss options with the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC) to acquire or transfer fee title of properties along US 60.

Goals and Actions

A significant long term goal of the RAMP is to allow and manage the public lands for the types of public recreation use that will not degrade the natural resources of the CRMA. Sixteen long term and 3 short term management goals for both public use and the maintenance of ecological integrity of the CRMA were developed for the RAMP.

Theme

The *Town of Wickenburg General Plan (2003)* notes that “respect for tradition contributes to planning decisions made here in one of the State’s oldest incorporated municipalities. Western living character stems from a history of mining and ranching.” In keeping with the Wickenburg area’s desert southwest theme, development in the CRMA should follow basic principles found in Territorial Architecture style. Entire books have been devoted to its unique characteristics and application in the desert southwest. Specific principles of this style for use in public works have been well documented in *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands* by the U.S. Forest Service. Their architectural guidelines for the Southwest Province, as well as recommendations for sustainability and design synthesis are provided in Appendix D.

Capital Improvement Plan

The Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) was prepared as a general guide for potential priority of development. Divided into four phases, the CIP outlines the major components of the Preferred Alternative with improvements across a 30-year time frame, which is roughly consistent with the improvement and development progression at other Maricopa County Parks over the years. The estimate is presented as an order-of-magnitude approximation of the potential development costs associated with the proposed facilities. All values presented are in 2011 dollars with no escalation.

Phase 1 - Hassayampa River Day Use Area

Time Frame: 1 to 3 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$3,850,000

The first phase focuses on the Hassayampa Rest Area and the Hassayampa River Preserve visitor center area. Improvements to both of these areas simply take advantage of the resource opportunities with the lowest initial cost.



Phase 2 - Vulture Peak Day Use and OHV Day Use Areas

Time Frame: 4 to 10 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$10,138,000

The second phase will provide developed day use facilities at two easily accessible and popular locations along Vulture Mine Road: the Vulture Peak Day Use Area and the OHV Day Use Area.

Phase 3 - Vulture Peak Campground

Time Frame: 11 to 30 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$13,300,000

The third phase will provide a developed campground for the CRMA. The Vulture Peak Campground is located west of Vulture Mine Road off the same proposed intersection as the Vulture Peak Day Use Area. The campground will include up to 80 campsites with water and electricity hook-ups. The campground will also include restrooms with showers, host campsites, and a dump station.

Phase 4 - Backcountry

Time Frame: 11 to 30 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$1,650,000

The fourth phase will provide backcountry services that were frequently mentioned during the public involvement process as lacking and greatly needed. These services include remote water well developments and trail stops.

Summary

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$28,938,000



2. BACKGROUND AND AREA HISTORY

Background

Urban growth in and towards the Wickenburg area has been occurring at a fast pace over the past several decades. Likewise, recreation use in the region has grown as well. The Vulture Mountains area in general is attractive to users for many of the same recreation opportunities that the Maricopa County Parks and Recreation system provides, albeit unstructured and with few amenities. Some of the most popular activities in the Vulture Mountains area include (in no particular order) horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, primitive tent and RV camping, wildlife viewing, and hunting. The area is popular for both recreational and competitive OHV use, although it is not currently a permitted use in the parks system. The Town of Wickenburg's goal to be the "trails capital" of the United States is compatible with the MCPRD vision statement:

"Our vision is to connect people with nature through regional parks, trails and programs, inspire an appreciation for the Sonoran Desert and natural open spaces, and create life-long positive memories."



In 2006, the MCPRD began discussions with the BLM regarding the cooperative management of a possible recreation area in the Vulture Mountains. In 2008, MCPRD and BLM began developing a MOU to provide procedures and guidance for coordination and cooperation in future planning of the park and recreation area. The purpose of the MOU was to initiate a formal working relationship and establish a general framework of cooperation upon which a RAMP, a BLM planning process, would be prepared for the Vulture Mountains CRMA. The RAMP will be developed to determine the recreational uses and needs of the area and to identify the management

actions required to reach the desired outcomes of the parties, the public, and surrounding communities. Further, the MOU specified that the RAMP will include the design of a recreation fee program addressing the criteria required in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to establish standard and expanded amenity fees on public lands. After approval of the RAMP and completion of the environmental analysis, a separate CMA will be executed to establish the framework for plan implementation. The MOU contains specific plan objectives and outlines the responsibilities of MCPRD and BLM. The MOU is located in Appendix E.

The Open Space Element of the *Town of Wickenburg General Plan (2003)* identified Recommendation R-2 as:

"Begin planning with and follow through on Arizona Preserve Initiative applications to the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD) and coordination with the BLM for preservation/protection of prominent scenic vistas and landmarks, such as Vulture Peak as a regional park."

It was noted in the *Maricopa County Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (2009)* that Wickenburg residents desire to have a county regional park that is closer to their community. From Wickenburg, the nearest Maricopa County mountain park, White Tank Mountain Regional Park, is 41 miles away with a travel time of over 1 hour. (Lake Pleasant Regional Park is closer at 34 miles, but has a lake recreation focus.) Additionally, the county-wide community indicated the need for an all terrain vehicle (ATV) course in the 2009 master plan.

BLM Regional Planning

In April 2010, after several years of hard work and collaborative efforts, the BLM completed the RMP. The RMP provides guidance for the management of the BLM land in Maricopa, Yavapai, and LaPaz Counties. The CRMA is within the Hassayampa Management Unit, see Figure 2-1. The CRMA is a combination of the Vulture Mine Recreation Management Zone (RMZ) and a portion of the Wickenburg Community RMZ, which are both subareas of the BLM Hassayampa Management Unit. An RMZ is “a planned and delineated area with designated recreation opportunities, settings, and activities” (BLM, 2010).

Wickenburg Community Trails Master Plan

In October 2009, the BLM, MCPRD, and stakeholders participated in a joint planning summit for the WCTMP. The summit was the first meeting for the trails plan project and included a discussion on the potential for a Maricopa County regional park. The trails plan was funded in part by a BLM grant to develop a plan that integrates the BLM recreation trails with community trail infrastructure in Wickenburg, propose linkages, identify trailhead locations, detail typical facilities, identify legal access, potential acquisition, and construction and implementation strategies for a regional trails system.

The BLM has been working closely for several years with the non-profit, local resident group Wickenburg Cultural and Conservation Foundation (WCCF). Over that time, the BLM and WCCF worked together documenting existing trails and usage, and identifying potential desirable corridors. The product was the *Preliminary Wickenburg Regional Trail Plan: Critical Corridors and Networks*. The trails master plan project continued that relationship to update, detail, and finalize the trails plan by focusing on public participation and stakeholder input as the primary vehicle for plan creation.

MCPRD Park Planning

In June 2009, the MCPRD was awarded a five-year challenge cost share grant from the BLM to jointly create a recreation activity plan and a cooperative management agreement for a recreation area in the CRMA. The MCPRD will ultimately take the primary role in day-to-day management of any developed recreation facilities in the CRMA as a result of the RAMP. Following completion of the RAMP, a formal CMA will be developed between MCPRD and BLM that details the cooperative partnership for the management of the CRMA.

Introductory meetings were held in August and September 2009 in Wickenburg with likely stakeholders, Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, and Wickenburg town staff to present the general concept for a recreation area and to introduce the cooperative



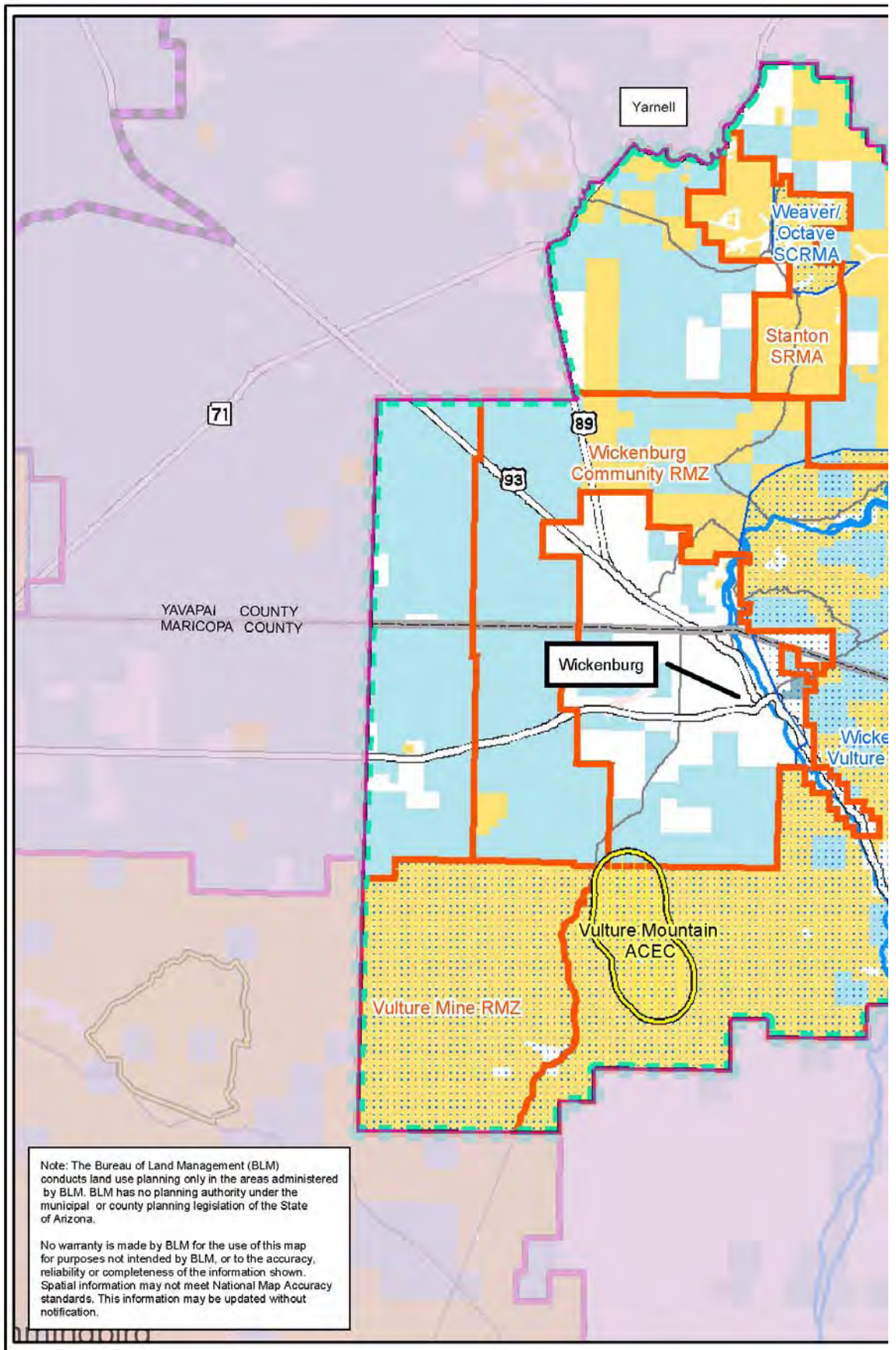
management partnership between the BLM and MCPRD. As discussed above, in October 2009, the MCPRD participated in a joint planning summit with the BLM's WCTMP project. The WCTMP and the development of the RAMP are two separate projects, although with mutual benefit to each other.

In February 2010, the MCPRD selected EPG as the planning consultant to assist in the preparation of the RAMP. The RAMP will include the design of a recreation fee program addressing the criteria required in the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to establish standard and expanded amenity fees on public lands. After approval of the RAMP and completion of any required environmental analysis, a separate agreement will be executed to establish the framework for plan implementation. Specific objectives of the RAMP are to include:

- Establish an appropriate managerial and physical framework for the collaborative management of recreation use in the CRMA; establishing the CRMA as a recognized BLM "recreation area"
- Retain the open space characteristics of the area, remaining available for public enjoyment in current and future generations, while ensuring the CRMA is predominantly retained in federal ownership
- Identify approximate locations that Maricopa County will apply to lease/patent from the federal government under the R&PP Act. The proposed parcels will provide developed facilities typical of a Maricopa County "regional park," such as picnic shelters, trailheads, restrooms, and camping areas.
- Produce sustainable beneficial outcomes from public recreation opportunities that are consistent with plan decisions and the desired future condition identified in land use plans
- Provide for the protection of natural, cultural, historical, and wildlife resources and the sustainability of traditional uses in the CRMA
- Provide for public safety and mitigate or eliminate hazards as identified; strive to reduce visitor use conflicts and avoid conflicts between the recreational and traditional uses
- Promote collaborative management and community-based planning
- Combine and use the knowledge, skills, and resources available from the parties to the greatest extent possible

Recreation and Public Purposes Act

Recognizing the strong public need for a nationwide system of parks and other recreational and public purposes areas, the Congress, in 1954, enacted the Recreation and Public Purposes Act (68 Statute 173; 43 United States Code 869 et. seq.) as a complete revision of the Recreation Act of 1926 (44 Stat. 741). This law is administered by the BLM (BLM 1996). The act authorizes the sale or lease of public lands for recreational or public purposes to state and local governments and to qualified nonprofit organizations.



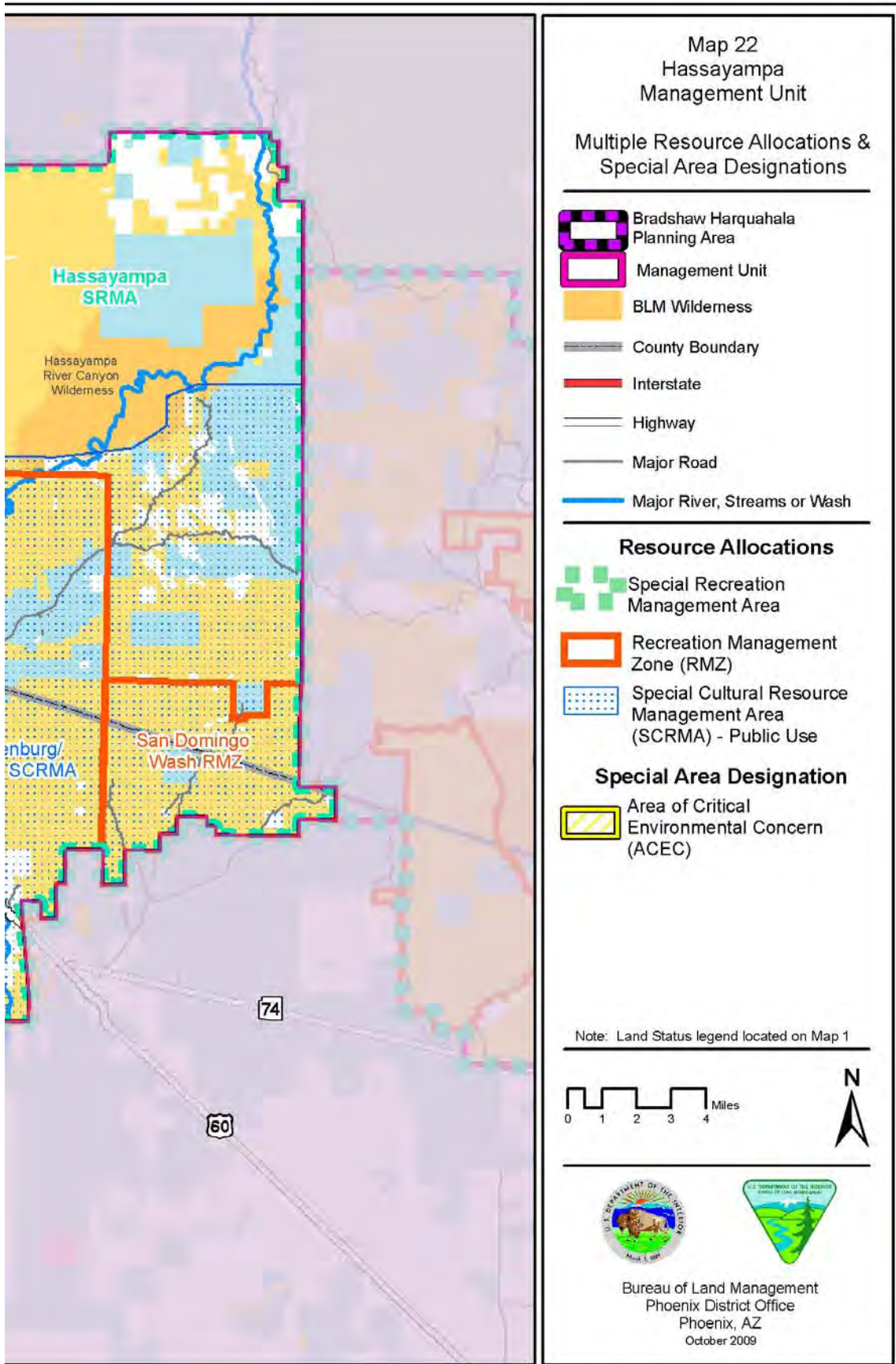
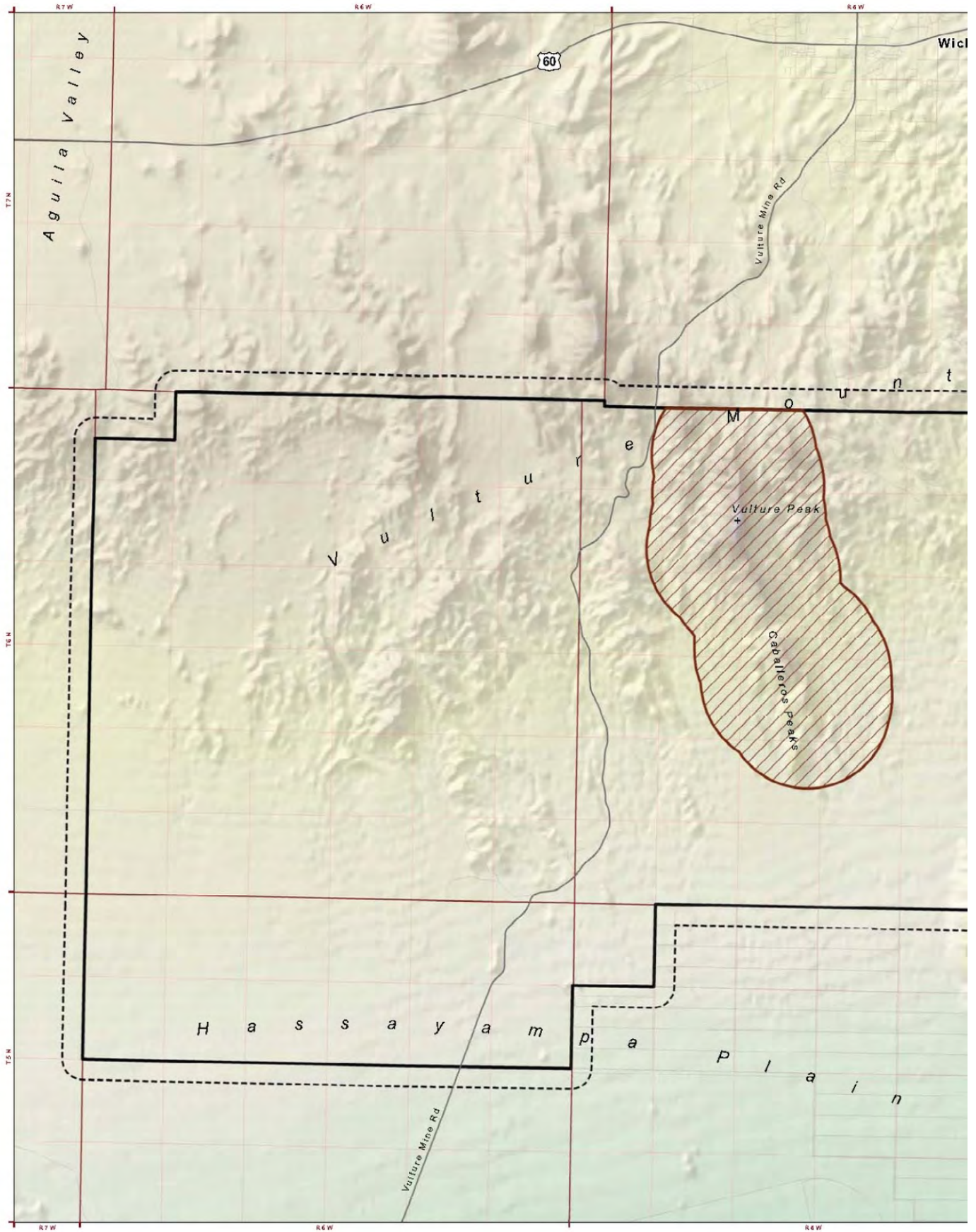
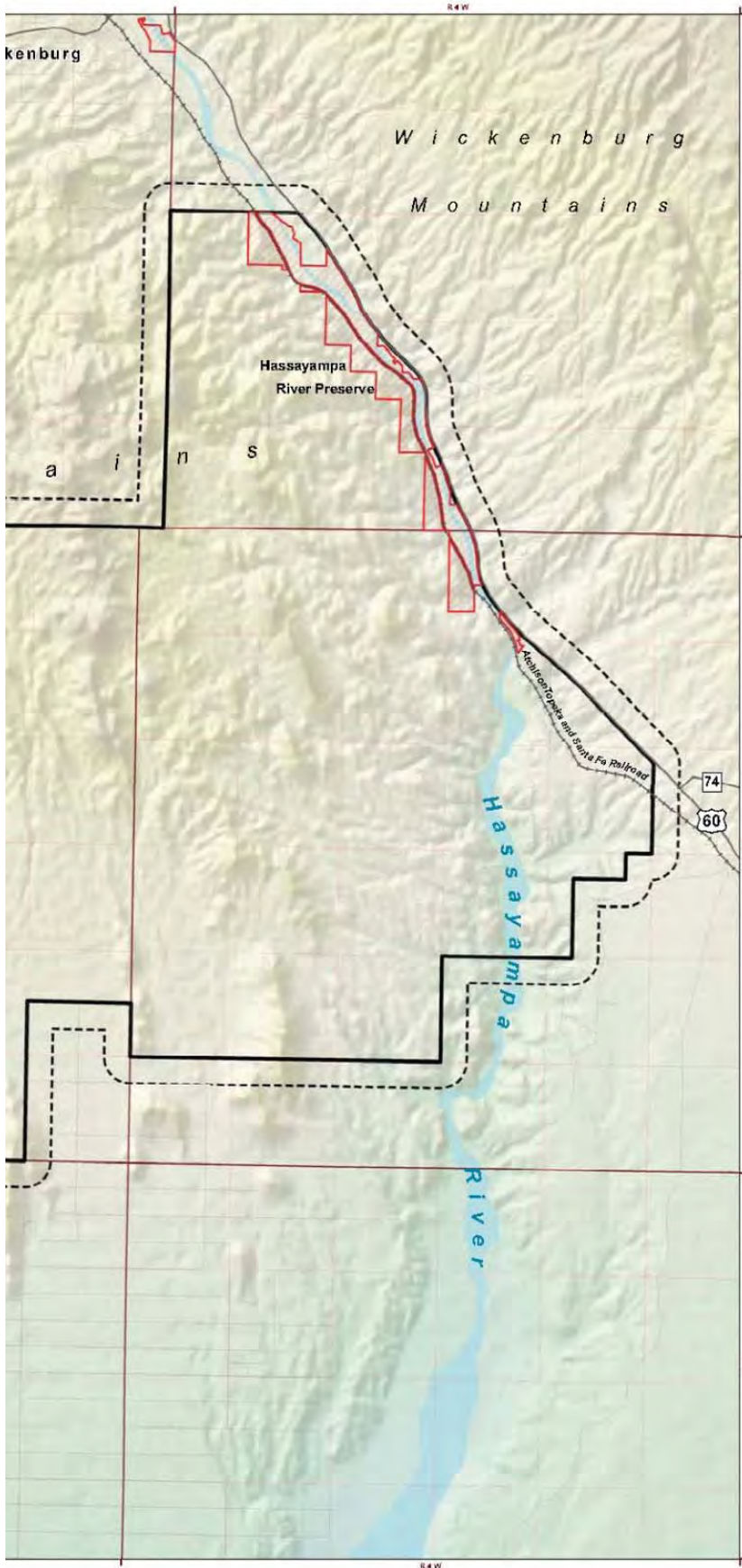


Figure 2-1





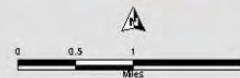
Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

LEGEND

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Vulture Mountain ACEC
- Hassayampa River Preserve



40 40
40 40
160 Acres



November 2011

Sources: GUM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCP R, 2010; SPQ, 2010.



Figure 2-2

In accordance with BLM policies, the MCPRD will apply to lease/patent parcels for facility development for day use areas and campgrounds. Preliminary concepts are provided in Chapter 6.

Cooperative Management Agreement

A CMA is an implementation tool for the RAMP and is executed to establish the framework for RAMP implementation. The purpose of the CMA is to ensure that the project partners work collaboratively to adopt, implement and adhere to the Vulture Mountains RAMP developed for the area, which includes the details for on-site management of the area. Specific roles and responsibilities for both agencies will be delineated to avoid confusion and ensure proper management.

Location and Setting

The study area for the CRMA encompasses 70,378 acres, which is nearly 110 square miles, see Figure 2-2. Located in northwest Maricopa County and south of Wickenburg, the CRMA would be the largest regional park/recreation management area in the MCPRD system, which presently provides recreation opportunities at 10 facilities for Maricopa County residents and visitors. The CRMA features multiple ecosystems of the Sonoran Desert, including Arizona Uplands represented by the Vulture Mountains, foothills represented by the Hassayampa Plain, and riparian areas along the Hassayampa River. With nearly 2,000 feet of elevation change, the setting changes dramatically from the exposed granite peaks of Vulture Peak and Caballeros Peaks, through rolling upland hills and foothills, to the dense cottonwood-willow-mesquite groves along the Hassayampa River.

The area has remained relatively pristine despite the fact that it has been modified by mining activities, trails and roads, a railroad and busy highway, and assorted development in the lowlands and along the river corridor. Because of its biological diversity and natural beauty, the area is much loved by avid recreationists. The challenge of the RAMP is to satisfy many recreation needs, sometimes competing with one another, and at the same time maintain environmental and cultural integrity, as well as the quality of recreation experiences in the CRMA.



Area History

Although the agricultural potential of Arizona's fertile river valleys contributed significantly in attracting Anglo settlers, a great deal of early settlement in the Arizona Territory centered on mining; particularly within the CRMA. The event that would spark this mining-related settlement was the discovery of gold placer deposits along the Gila River in 1858 by Colonel Jacob Snively (Marshall Trimble 1989; Eldred D. Wilson 1981). Once placers along the Gila River were exhausted, prospecting in other parts of Arizona increased, particularly along the Hassayampa River and Bradshaw Mountains (Mark E. Pry 1997, Wilson 1981).

Throughout 1862–63, gold prospectors explored up the Hassayampa River drainage laying claim to deposits in the Bradshaw Mountains which included Lynx Creek, Granite Creek, Big Bug, and Groom Creek (Pry 1997). In 1863, Henry Wickenburg along with two associates, E.A. Van Bibber and Theodore Green Rusk, filed a claim for the Vulture gold mine along the Hassayampa Plain south of the Bradshaws. Lacking long-term enthusiasm for the project, Van Bibber and Rusk left the area shortly afterward, leaving Wickenburg to develop the mine on his own. Wickenburg eventually left the area as well, and the Vulture Mine remained undeveloped. Following his return to the area in 1864, Wickenburg submitted a second claim for the Vulture Mine, and subsequently organized the Wickenburg Mining District with four new partners. Initial development of the mine yielded modest results; however, the amount was significant enough to continue further development. Aware of the profits being taken from the Vulture enterprise, Rusk ultimately tried to sue Wickenburg for a third of his share in the mine. Fortunately for Wickenburg, the territorial court took the position that the original claim was not properly registered and no longer valid (Pry 1997).



975. Placer Mining. The Arrastra.

Placer Mining: The Arrastra
(Lawrence & Houseworth, 1866)

Although Wickenburg initially worked the Vulture claim himself, he promptly decided to sell the gold ore to outside miners for a payment of \$15 per ton. Word of the mine quickly spread, and by 1865, approximately 40 arrastras (a primitive mill for grinding and pulverizing ore) were operating along the western bank of the Hassayampa River. Initial settlement congregated around the mine in Vulture City where Henry Wickenburg built his first cabin; however, the mine and township lay approximately 10 miles west of the river limiting the availability of resources such as water and wood. As such, many miners and their families settled in encampments along a five-mile stretch of the river (Pry 1997). By 1864, Wickenburg had established a new residence near one of these emerging settlements. Will C. Barnes (1988) attributes the naming of the settlement “Wickenburg” to James Moor who, in

1864, wrote several letters to the territorial governor from Wickenburg's ranch with a return address of “Wickenburg.” According to Pry (1997), the return address used was

“Wickenburg’s Ranch” which was shortened to “Wickenburg” after the establishment of the post office in 1865. In 1866, Wickenburg missed becoming the second territorial capital by two votes. In its heyday, Wickenburg was the third largest town in Arizona (*Town of Wickenburg Fun Facts*, n.d.). The Town of Wickenburg was later incorporated in 1909.

In the latter part of 1865, Henry Wickenburg sold his interest in the Vulture Mine for \$25,000 to a group of New York investors led by Benjamin Phelps. The sale resulted in the organization of the Vulture Mining Company, and with it, the subsequent modernization of the mining operations in the area. These improvements included excavating a new inclined shaft at the Vulture Mine and upgrading an existing stamp mill located just north of Wickenburg at Martinez Wash. Despite high operating cost due to the nature of the ore body, the Vulture Mine proved a profitable investment for the company throughout the rest of the 1860s. By 1870, the Wickenburg area, which included Vulture City, had approximately 400 residents, of which significant number were Mexican *placers*. Accompanying the miners during this period were farmers and ranchers, again many from Sonora, Mexico, that settled along the Hassayampa River in the vicinity of Wickenburg (Pry 1997).



By late 1871, profits were declining for the Vulture Mining Company. Further exacerbating the mine’s economic problems, a flooding incident in a newly excavated shaft resulted in a 2 year closure that the company never recovered from. In 1874, Maricopa County took control of the mine as compensation for back taxes. During this period, the mine passed through a series of owners, and mining operations in the area primarily consisted of reprocessing ore and tailings from previous excavations. One of these operations was at Smith’s Mill, a 10-stamp mill constructed in 1872 to replace the old Vulture Mill at Martinez Wash. Located 10 miles downriver from the old mill site, Smith’s Mill resulted in the emergence of a small community which would become known as Seymour (Pry 1997). In 1878–79, the Central Arizona Mining Company purchased the Vulture Mine, and subsequently built a new 20-stamp mill approximately 2 miles from Smith’s Mill (Barnes 1988; Pry 1997). According to Barnes (1988), the Central Arizona Mining Company surveyed and platted the settlement around Smith’s Mill in 1879, calling it “Seymour” for company president James Seymour. However, the town of Seymour was to be short lived as the Central Arizona Mining Company decided it would be more profitable to process the ore directly on site. In order to accomplish the task, the company constructed an 80-stamp mill in Vulture City as well as a 14-mile long pipeline to carry river water to the mine site. The new mill at Vulture City was completed in 1880 and effectively nullified Smith’s Mill. The residents of Seymour gradually moved off to other communities. Despite the construction of the on-site mill and pipeline, the Central Arizona Mining Company only made a profit during the first year of operation, and by 1884 had closed the mine (Pry 1997).

Over the years, many attempts were made to reopen the Vulture Mine; however, high operating costs which had plagued previous owners prevented many from turning a profit. In 1890, a dam breach at Walnut Grove on the Hassayampa River brought disaster to the Wickenburg area. Occurring in the early morning of February 22, the floodwaters surged down the Hassayampa watershed scouring a path all the way to Seymour. Although the true death toll was never known, accounts at the time estimate approximately 70 fatalities. Most of the ranch and farm buildings in the river bottom were washed away, including a large section of the Vulture City pipeline. With the destruction of the pipeline, water once again became a major factor in the operating costs for further mining operations. Modern extraction methods such as cyanide processing were introduced over the next two decades in attempts to yield profits from the mine, and for a short period during the 1910s, an estimated \$1.8 million in gold was extracted from the mine. Regardless, the boom times were over, and Wickenburg area residents looked to an uncertain future (Pry 1997).

Since the 1860s, many other mines and claims were operated in the Vulture Mountains area, but none remotely as prosperous as the Vulture Mine. The area is still popular with mining enthusiasts as evidenced by the number of active claims within the CRMA. However, mining activities are sporadic and largely occur as avocational ventures for residents and tourists. The area contains many old, abandoned hardrock mine shafts, remnants of the long-past commercial gold operations. Today, the Vulture Mountains are a high-use recreation area, especially popular with OHV enthusiasts who use the old mine roads to access scenic backcountry areas. Because many of these roads were originally constructed to provide access to mine sites, recreational users can encounter hazardous mine features located next to the roads.

Six open abandoned shafts, located near regularly used roads in the Vulture Mountains, were backfilled in 2009-2010 as part of the Vulture Mine Backfill Project (part of the BLM's Abandoned Mine Lands program). The open shafts ranged from 60 to over 100 feet deep; most were abandoned nearly a century ago after gold mining ceased. Before they were secured, these caverns posed serious safety concerns. The reclamation work permanently eliminated the physical safety hazards that the six open mines had posed to the public. ("Vulture Mine Backfill," n.d.). However, many abandoned open shafts still remain throughout the CRMA.

In 1895, the Santa Fe, Prescott, and Phoenix Railroad, which later became an operating subsidiary of the Atchison, Topeka, and Santa Fe Railway (ATSF), arrived in Wickenburg. Influenced by local mining interests, the final decision to construct the railroad through Wickenburg was one further attempt to bolster the waning mining industry. In this respect, the railroad did succeed in reducing operating costs for the local mines; however unknown at the time, tourism along the new transportation corridor would prove to have the most significance in shaping the future of a community in search of a post-mining identity. John and Francis Sanger of New York are credited with establishing the first tourist destination in the Wickenburg area on the former ranchlands of Frederick Brill in 1912 (Pry 1997). Naming the resort "The Garden of Allah," the Sangers advertised the natural springs and ponds found on the property as an "oasis in the desert" appealing to the "hunter, pleasure seeker, tired business man and convalescent" (Pry 1997:90-91). Originally called Alice Siding, the

Peavine (ATSF Railway) from Prescott to Phoenix stopped there to let off guests for the Garden of Allah Guest Ranch and others who were travelling on to Castle Hot Springs (“Allah,” n.d.). The original Brill adobe ranch house (circa 1865) still stands today. The structure also served as the local stage stop for the Arizona Stage Line. This was at one time also the headquarters for the Sanger Dam System, used in gold mining along the river (“Allah,” n.d.). Later the ranch was called the Lazy RC Ranch. The rock foundations of the old depot and a crumpled water tower are still visible today, west of the railroad, although on private property not owned by TNC.

Beginning in the 1920s, a vacation trend for guest ranches emerged throughout the west offering eastern tourists a taste of the “Old West.” Many residents of the Wickenburg area embraced this new phenomenon, and in 1923, the Bar FX Ranch opened as the first guest ranch in the town. The Bar FX was quickly followed by ranches such as the Kay El Bar, Rancho de los Caballeros, and the Flying E. This period coincides with the construction of US 60 Highway which brought additional tourists to Wickenburg. Increasing ranching tourism resulted in Wickenburg eventually claiming the title, “Dude Ranch Capital of the World.” Presently, Wickenburg’s economy continues to center on tourism generated by dude ranches and through annual celebrations of its mining past such as Gold Rush Days (Pry 1997; “History of Wickenburg,” n.d.).



TNC purchased the Brill property in December 1986 from Norman and Dorothy R. Lykes, creating the Hassayampa River Preserve. For most of its 100-mile course through the desert, the Hassayampa River flows only underground. But within the preserve its crystal clear waters emerge, flowing above ground throughout the year (“Hassayampa River Preserve,” n.d.). The adobe ranch house is now the preserve’s Arthur L. Johnson Visitor Center. The preserve doubled in size in 2004 with the acquisition and donation of 330 acres of desert foothills west of the river. The transaction essentially completed the Lykes’ vision to reunite the lands on the other side of the railroad tracks with the river-bottom preserve lands (“Preserves Boast Colorful Past: History Highlights,” n.d.).

In the early 1960s, US 60 was improved along its present alignment, paralleling the Hassayampa River and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) railway in the vicinity of the CRMA. The Hassayampa Rest Area was constructed at this time also. In 2009, ADOT closed the rest area along with several others across the state due to a statewide budget shortfall. In 2010, after stabilizing their budget and in response to the public requests, ADOT began reopening this and other rest areas across the state. The Hassayampa Rest Area suffered some vandalism during the closure and after repairs, was reopened in the fall of 2010.

In 1995, the ATSF Railway merged with the Burlington Northern Railroad, creating the BNSF Railway, which is the current owner and operator of the railway line through the CRMA.



3. OVERVIEW OF THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

The RAMP is a blueprint for the future. It is a comprehensive document, long-range in its views, that is intended to guide land management decisions in the CRMA for the foreseeable future. The RAMP has been prepared to respond to stakeholder direction and public comment within the framework of BLM public land policy and MCPRD system policy and guidelines. The RAMP sets public policies regarding recreation use, land management, and supporting facility development. Based on that public direction and public policies, the information and concepts presented in the RAMP are intended to guide land manager's decisions for recreation uses of the public land within the CRMA, as well as provisions for public facilities.

The master planning process for the RAMP began when leaders from the Town of Wickenburg, that included former mayors, the Chamber of Commerce, and the Wickenburg Conservation Foundation, approached the BLM and MCPRD about the creation of a Maricopa County park as a way to protect the rural heritage of Wickenburg and to provide facilities that would direct use to maintain the natural integrity of the Vulture Mountains. Planning was then initiated in August 2009 with a meeting with the Town Manager and planning staff. In September 2009, the agencies presented to the Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce at their monthly luncheon to introduce the project to the business community and to seek feedback. In October 2009, the agencies held a stakeholder planning summit at the Wickenburg Community Center hosted by the BLM Deputy State Director, Mike Taylor, and Maricopa County Supervisor Max Wilson.

Plan Objectives

The public participation program for the master plan was established with the following objectives:

- Inform the public. A high degree of public interest in the park master plan was anticipated. The public was informed of current activities in the planning process through public meetings, newsletters, news releases, social media, and the MCPRD website. The major steps in the planning process included opportunity for public reviews and comments, including data analysis, opportunity and constraint identification, review of master plan alternatives, and review of the preferred master plan.
- Identify public recreation needs and issues. In addition to the surrounding communities, Maricopa County residents and other visitors will use the CMRA. Identifying recreation needs was a key component of the planning process. Recreation needs and concerns expressed by the public were incorporated into the planning process. The gathering of this information was achieved through formation of a Stakeholder Advisory Group (SAG), stakeholder meetings, agency contacts, and through public meetings.
- Identify desired locations for recreation areas and facilities.
- Identify locations for R&PP leases/patents.
- Develop a framework for the CMA.

Public Meetings

Three types of meetings were conducted for the RAMP: JPC, SAG, and public meetings/open houses. Each meeting type or committee served a distinct purpose throughout the different phases of the project. The RAMP and WCTMP projects have parallel schedules and similar scopes. The BLM and MCPRD combined many of the public and stakeholder meetings for both projects to allow the public's and stakeholder's time commitment to be minimal while maximizing the focus and feedback on each planning effort. A detailed description of each is provided below:

Joint Planning Committee Meetings

The RAMP and WCTMP are two separate projects that will cooperatively identify a trails-network, create a management plan for conservation areas and identify recreational facilities desired by the public. The primary goals for the two projects are to ensure the responsible management of natural and cultural resources and to make sure that existing and future recreation sites are well connected to Wickenburg's trail system. The WTMP is a BLM project with SEC as the planning consultant. Planning for the RAMP is lead by MCPRD with EPG as the planning consultant, while MCPRD led the public involvement. The RAMP is a joint project between the BLM and MCPRD.

A JPC was formed to identify issues and possible alternatives for the RAMP. The JPC included representatives from the BLM and MCPRD. The JPC meetings occurred to provide direction and input on the developing master plan, and finalize the RAMP recommendations.

Stakeholder Advisory Group

A major component of the public participation program was the formation of a SAG to assist with public participation efforts. The MCPRD, in cooperation with BLM, organized the SAG to assist with public participation efforts. The purpose of the SAG was to establish a group representing a range of opinions in a forum small enough to allow for education of the participants, detailed discussion of issues, and informal dialogue. Members were selected based on their knowledge of the project area, capability to commit time required throughout the project and willingness to be impartial.



Vulture Mountains Stakeholder Meeting

The SAG was comprised of 17 organizations that included community leaders and representatives from potentially interested agencies and special interest groups. The SAG met five times during the planning process: October 30, 2009; June 9, 2010; September 15, 2010; December 7, 2010; and December 13, 2011. The group's comments and concerns were integrated into the planning process and assisted in the development of the conceptual alternatives and the preferred master plan alternative. Information and recreation recommendations identified by the group were used in conjunction with the RAE to develop the alternatives.

Public Meeting/Open Houses

Four public meetings/open houses were held during the project: February 4, 2010; March 27, 2010; December 11, 2010; and June 28, 2011. Because of potential public concern regarding future park activities, the BLM recommended an initial scoping meeting. Therefore, the first open house was also publicized as a public scoping meeting. The meetings allowed the public to review and comment on project information, issues, and alternatives. The open houses were publicized through newsletters, the MCPRD website, newspaper advertisements, and press releases. During and after each meeting, input was collected and incorporated when appropriate.

Public Outreach Efforts

Press releases, newspaper articles, a project website, newsletters, questionnaires/surveys, and public meetings were all methods used to communicate to the public regarding the RAMP process. A copy of all documents used to notify the public of upcoming events related to the Master Plan process are located in Appendix A, as well as public input received.

Project Website

The MCPRD created a project website (<http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/vulturemntn.aspx>) to describe the planning process, provide project updates, gather public comments and feedback, and announce future open house meeting dates and locations. Copies of the data analysis maps, alternatives, and related material were also placed on the website for review.

Media Coverage

The local media was used to keep the public-at-large informed of important project milestones, such as open houses for the joint projects. Newspaper advertisements were distributed by SEC to the *Wickenburg Sun* and *Arizona Republic*, and were printed prior to each open house. Press releases were distributed by the MCPRD before each open house and upon availability of the Environmental Assessment for public review to the *Wickenburg Sun*, *Daily News Sun*, *West Valley View*, *Peoria Times*, *Peoria Independent*, *FootHills Focus*, *Newszap.com*, *Arizona Republic* and other media outlets.

Newsletter

One newsletter was produced and distributed during the project via email distribution lists and posted on the project website. The newsletter announced upcoming open house dates and provided updates, as well as opportunities to comment on the project.

Questionnaires/Surveys

At each public meeting, a comment form or questionnaire was distributed to all meeting participants. The purpose of the surveys was to gauge the public's opinion on the various issues facing the project at each milestone. Meeting participants were asked to complete the survey and return it in a timely manner for documentation purposes.

Several surveys using Survey Monkey, an internet based questionnaire service, were also distributed for the purpose of determining the recreation needs of the area and to determine the preferred alternative. Use of this service also allowed the public to provide open and honest feedback as results were anonymous.

Typical Project Announcement

**Wickenburg Community Master Trail Plan
& Vulture Mountain Master Plan**

Partnering Agencies

Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation Department
234 N. Central Ave.
Suite 6400
Phoenix, AZ 85004
(602) 506-2030
www.maricopa.gov/parks

Mission: Through responsible stewardship, provide quality parks, trails, programs, services and experiences that energize visitors and create life-long users and advocates.

United States Department of Interior
Bureau of Land Management
Hassayampa Field Office
21602 N. 7th Avenue
Phoenix, AZ 85027
(602) 680-5000
www.blm.gov/us/field.html

Mission: To sustain the health, diversity and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Stakeholder Updates

Since our Summit in October 2009, we have been working toward strategies to enhance public participation as well as preparing for the planning process to provide for the future of both the Wickenburg Community Trails and the Vulture Mountain Area.

You will be receiving regular electronic stakeholders' updates to keep you informed of the progress not only of the public involvement but the planning efforts. In addition to the "Update", there will be additional stakeholders meetings to ensure all the key players stay engaged with the planning processes of both projects.

For your information:

Public Kick-off Meeting
February 4, 2010 at 5:30 pm
At the Wickenburg Community Center
160 N. Valentine Street

For additional information:
<http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/vulturemntn.aspx>

Conclusion

Input from each meeting and throughout the process, including surveys, comments, emails, etc. was compiled by the MCPRD for review by the JPC. A matrix was followed to determine if comments were applicable to the RAMP, WCTMP, a joint issue, or not part of the scope of work. Based on the determination of the JPC in accordance with the matrix, information was then incorporated into the final master plan.

As future site specific planning is conducted for implementation of the various elements of the CRMA, additional public input will be sought during each of the future design phases and/or projects.

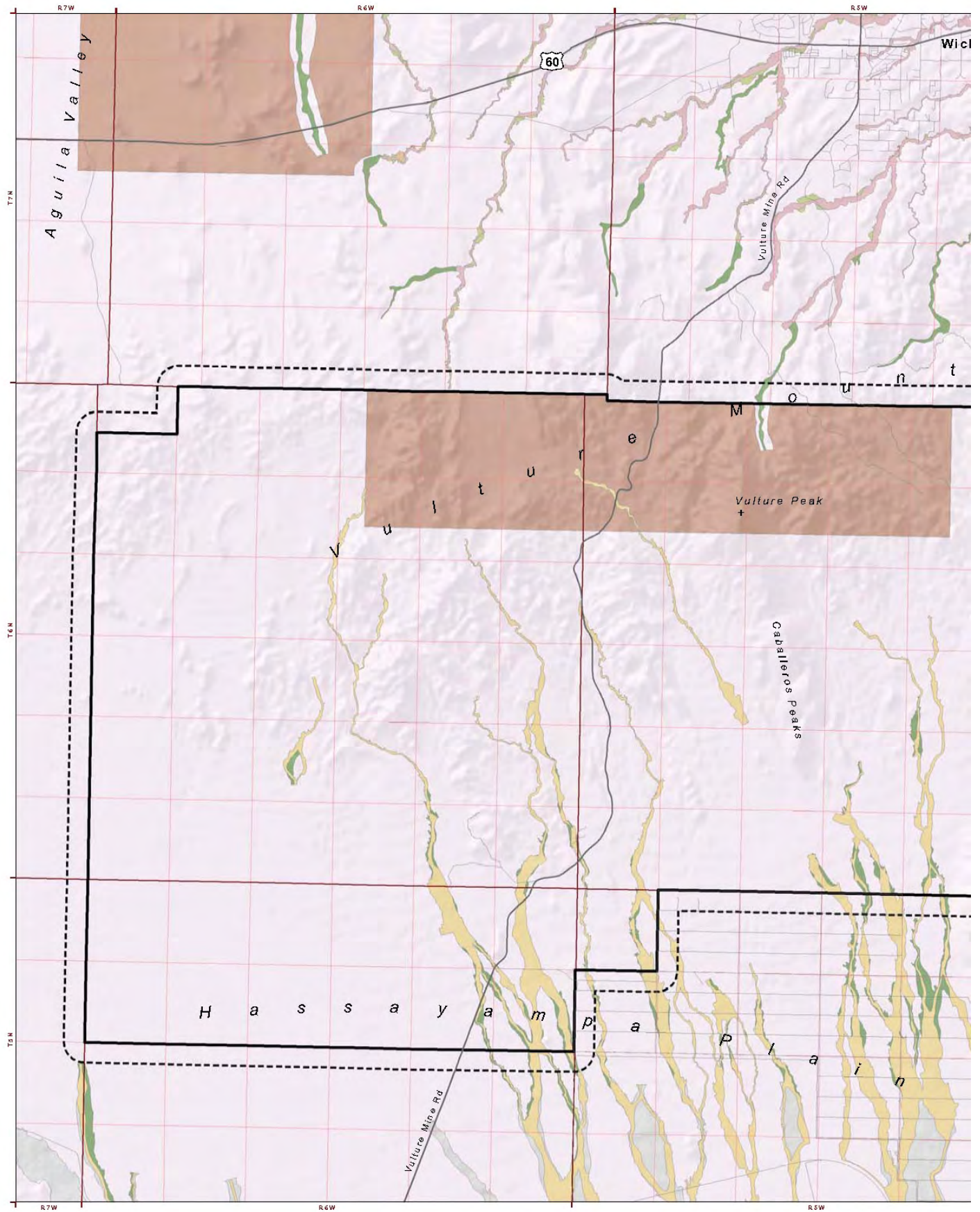
4. DATA INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

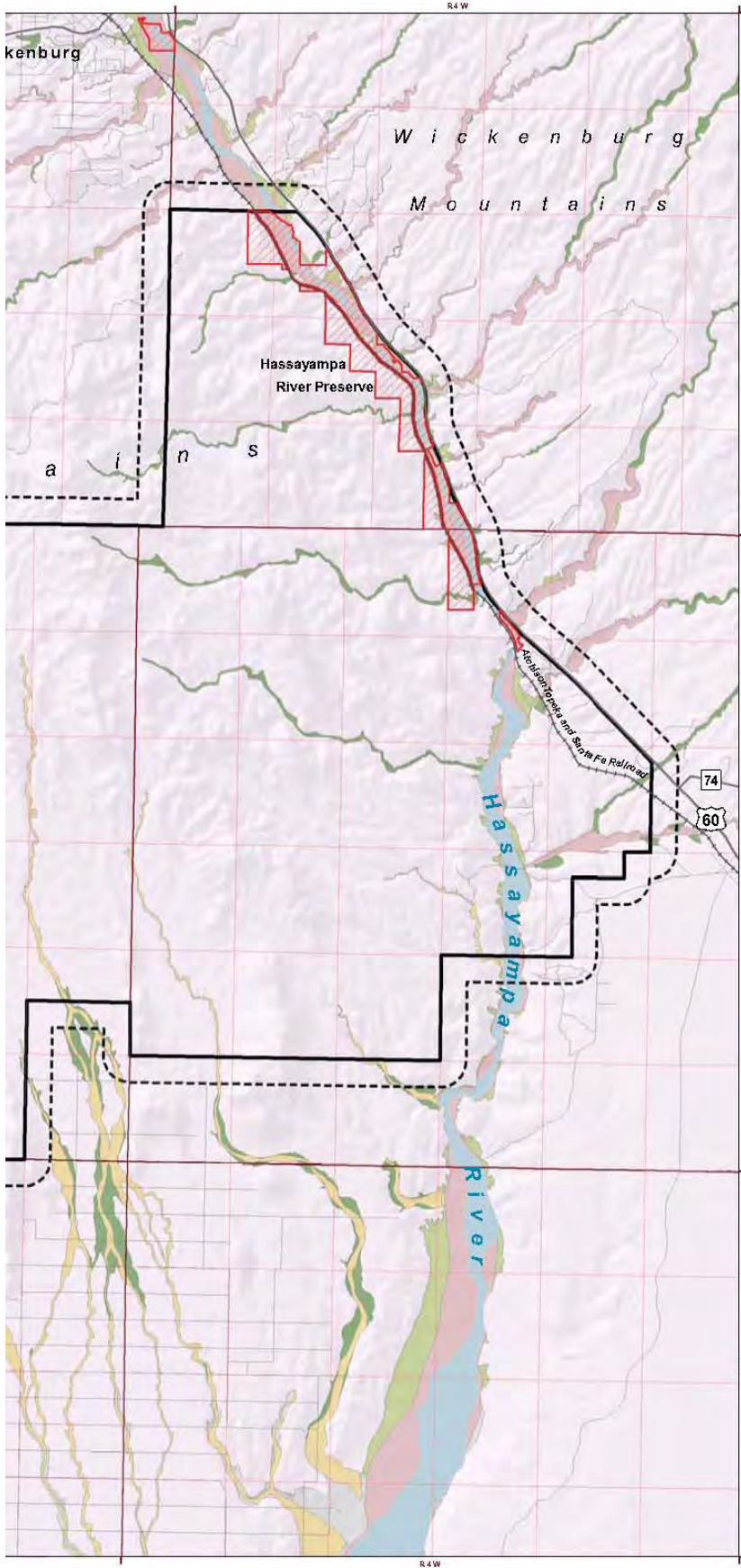
The CRMA is located in the upper elevations of the Sonoran Desert. The Sonoran Desert is a complex system of living organisms and inorganic materials and is one of the largest and hottest deserts in North America. The CRMA's desert setting is unique in having the perennially flowing Hassayampa River cross within its boundaries. Public use of the land, since the discovery of gold in the mid-1880s, has created varying degrees of impact on the desert's natural system. Recreation use and supporting facility development proposed by the RAMP will inevitably continue these impacts. However, many of the ecologically and aesthetically unsound changes perpetuated on the public land occurred because of a failure and/or an indifference to either consider, or understand, natural and cultural factors. A major objective in the planning process for public land managers is to see that both the ecological and cultural impacts of recreation use and any supporting facility development are minimized, while optimizing human use and enjoyment of the land. Sound recreation management and appropriate, limited facility development will limit further impacts and aid in restoration of biologically significant areas. The data elements presented below are the primary analysis data sets considered to establish an analytical planning approach that thoroughly investigates the CRMA as both a natural and cultural system. By recognizing these data sets, planners and land managers can find and maintain a balance between man's activity, the environment, and the CRMA's character.

Hydrology

Current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) flood zone information is shown on Figure 4-1 and is based on Flood Control District of Maricopa County (FCDMC) geographic information system (GIS) database shape files obtained in July 2010. These floodplains may differ slightly from published Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM) panels as the County electronic records are typically more current than the published maps. Flood zones include:

- Zone A – A high risk area where no Base Flood Elevations have been determined
- Zone AE – A high risk area where Base Flood Elevations have been determined
- Zone AEFW – Zone AE, above, where a floodway (channel of a river and adjacent land) has been reserved or designated for the purposes of discharging the base flood
- Zone AFW – Zone A, above, where a floodway (channel of a river and adjacent land) has been reserved or designated for the purposes of discharging the base flood
- Zone AH – Areas of shallow flooding, usually in the form of ponding, with an average depth ranging from 1 to 3 feet. These areas are considered high risk areas.
- Zone D – An undetermined risk area with possible but undetermined flood hazards





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

FEMA Flood Zones

LEGEND

Flood Zones

- A
- AE
- AEFW
- AFW
- AH
- D
- FW
- X1

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCPA, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-1

- Zone FW – A "Regulatory Floodway" where the channel of a river or other watercourse and the adjacent land areas must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water surface elevation more than a designated height. Communities must regulate development in these floodways to ensure that there are no increases in upstream flood elevations
- Zone X1 – A low to moderate risk area determined to be outside the 500-year flood and protected by levee from 100-year flood

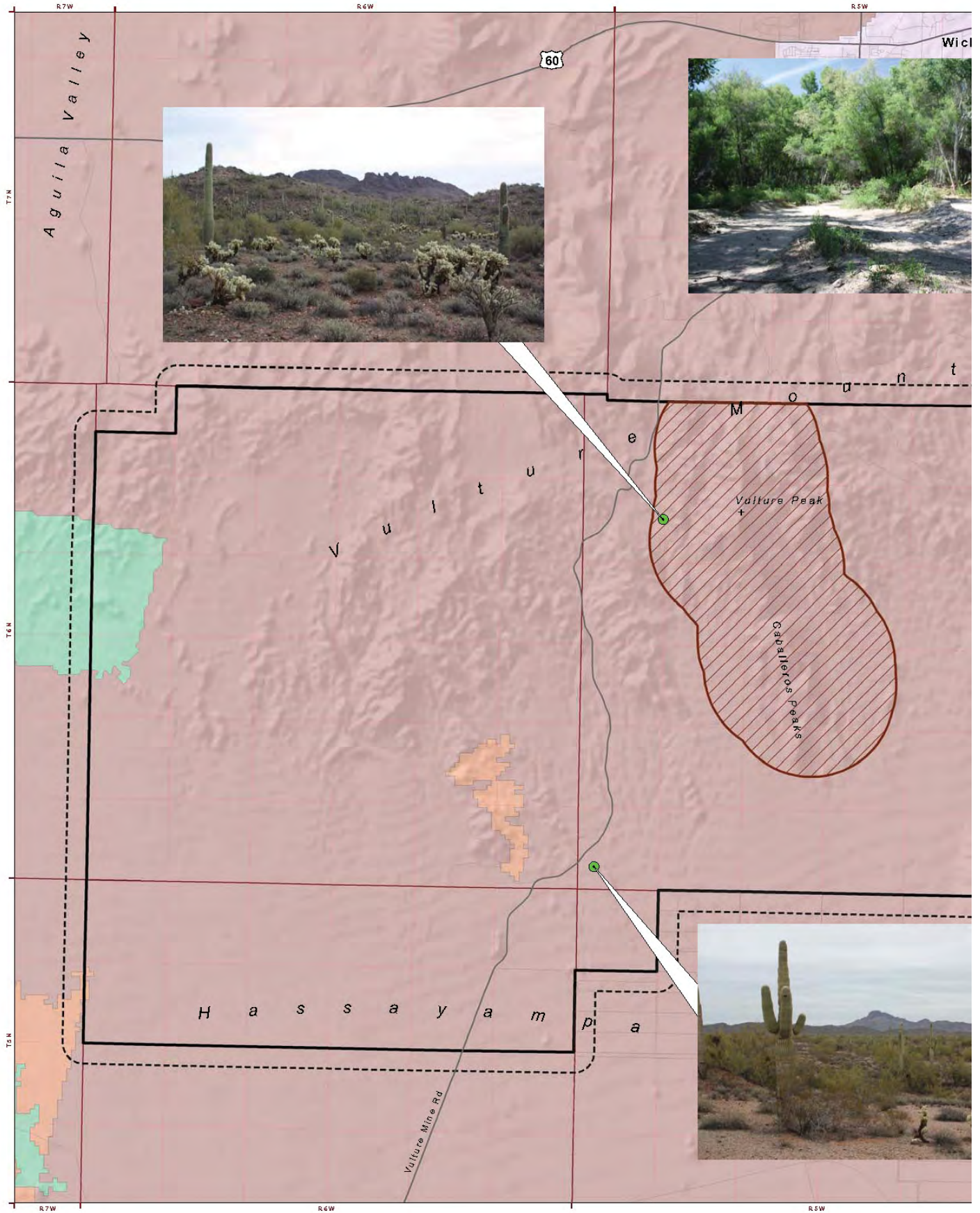
Portions of the CRMA lie within the boundaries of a current FCDMC Area Drainage Master Study/Plan (ADMS/P) project for Wickenburg. The ADMS/P is being conducted in three phases. Phase 3, which is to tentatively occur in 2012, is to include the CRMA. As can be expected, the ADMS/P will likely identify revisions to the FIRM along the Hassayampa River and its tributaries and washes. Future development in the CRMA should adhere to the future ADMS/P recommendations and FIRM revisions for all facility developments that are in proximity to or cross the mapped zones.

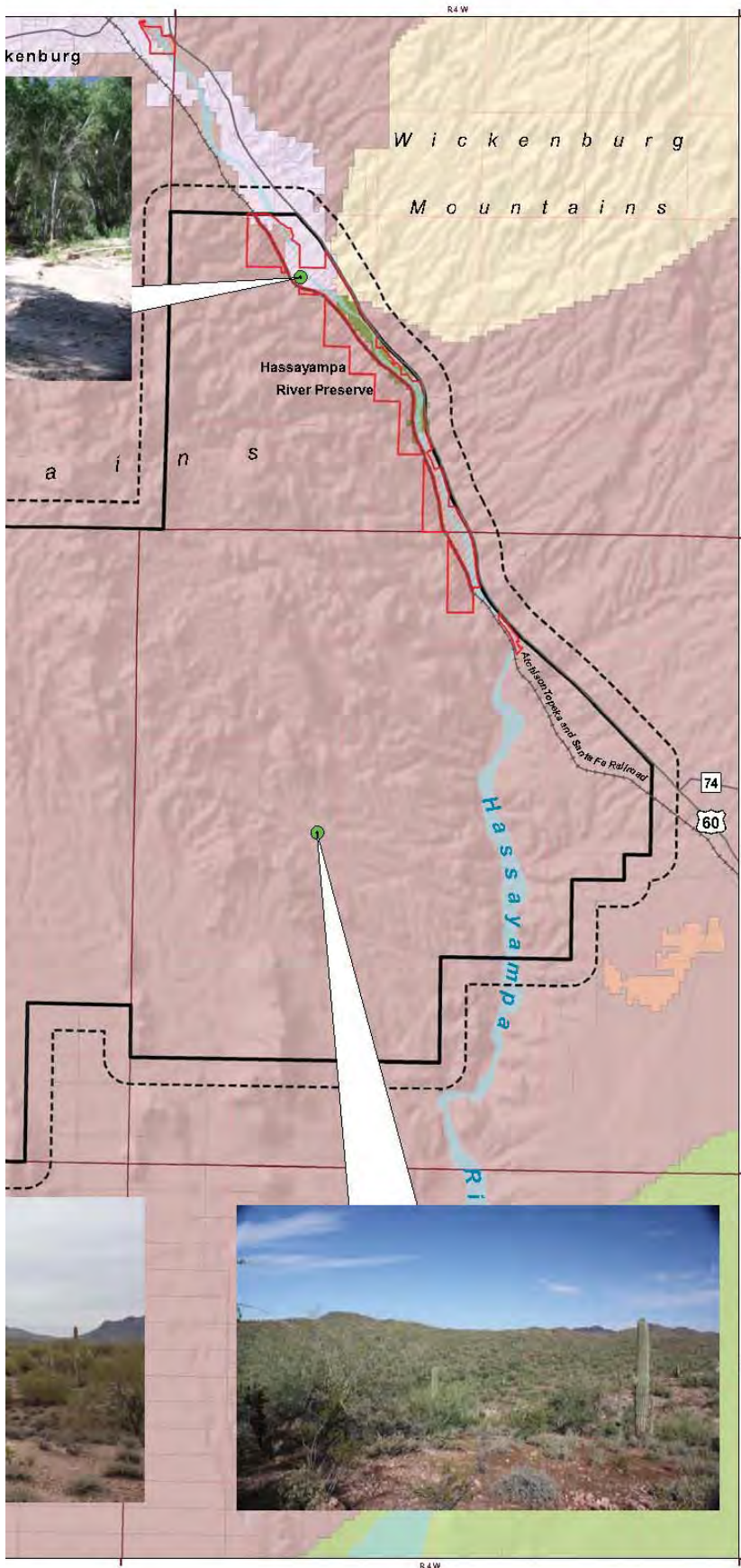


Vegetation

As described by Turner and Brown (1982), the majority of the mapped vegetation within the CRMA is within the Paloverde-Cacti-Mixed Scrub Series of the Arizona Upland Subdivision, see Figure 4-2. This series is comprised of evergreen and deciduous leguminous trees, intermixed with a diverse mix of shrubs and cacti. The most prominent plants are foothill paloverde (*Parkinsonia microphylla*), triangle-leaf bursage (*Ambrosia deltoidea*), white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*), saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*), and fish-hook pincushion (*Mammillaria grahamii* var. *grahamii*). Other common species include creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), desert ironwood (*Olneya tesota*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), catclaw acacia (*Acacia greggii*), velvet mesquite (*Prosopis velutina*), and several cholla species (*Cylindropuntia* spp.).

Two additional vegetation series occur along the Hassayampa River: the Sonoran Creosote Bursage Paloverde Mixed Cacti (wash) and the Sonoran Riparian/Mesquite Forest. Additionally, a few minor (in size) inclusions of the Sonoran-Mojave Creosote-White Bursage Desert Scrub and Apacherian-Chihuahuan Mesquite Upland Scrub series also occur in scattered locations within the CRMA.





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Vegetation

LEGEND

Vegetation

- Sonoran Riparian/Mesquite Forest
- Sonoran Creosotebush Scrub
- Sonoran Creosotebush-Bursage Scrub
- Sonoran Creosotebush-Bursage-Paloverde-Mixed Cacti (wash)
- Sonoran Creosotebush-Mesquite Scrub
- Sonoran Paloverde-Mixed Cacti-Mixed Scrub
- Urban

Photo Point

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Vulture Mountain ACEC
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-2

Biology

Sensitive Species

Sensitive species of potential occurrence, as tracked by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) Heritage Data Management System (HDMS), within the boundaries of the CRMA and ¼-mile buffer are presented in Table 4-1. The table was generated by providing the township, range, and sections of the CRMA to HDMS staff.

The Southwestern Willow Flycatcher is a federal endangered species, known to occur along the Hassayampa River, within TNC's Hassayampa River Preserve. Occurrence of this endangered species within the project area will require coordination with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for any proposed project actions. Occurrence of the Sonoran Desert Tortoise and the Western Burrowing Owl will also necessitate compliance with AGFD guidelines if either of these animals are encountered during any construction development activities.

Desert Tortoise Habitat

The Sonoran population of the Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) is a BLM and U.S. Forest Service sensitive species as well as an AGFD Wildlife Species of Concern. Specific habitat categories for the Sonoran population of the Desert Tortoise (also referred to as the Sonoran Desert Tortoise) have been established by the BLM for management purposes, see Figure 4-3. The habitat category of highest management priority is Category I. Management objectives for Category I are the maintenance of stable, viable populations and the protection of existing tortoise habitat values. Additionally, where possible, populations are to be managed to increase in numbers. Category II habitat is to be managed to maintain stable, viable populations, and limit any further declines in tortoise habitat quality. Finally, Category III habitat management objectives include limiting the decline of tortoise habitat and populations through mitigation of impacts (WildEarth Guardians and Western Watersheds Project, 2008).

Most of the CRMA is mapped as Category II tortoise habitat, with a small area of Category III tortoise habitat in the north-eastern portion of the CRMA along, and west of, the Hassayampa River Preserve.

Vulture Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern

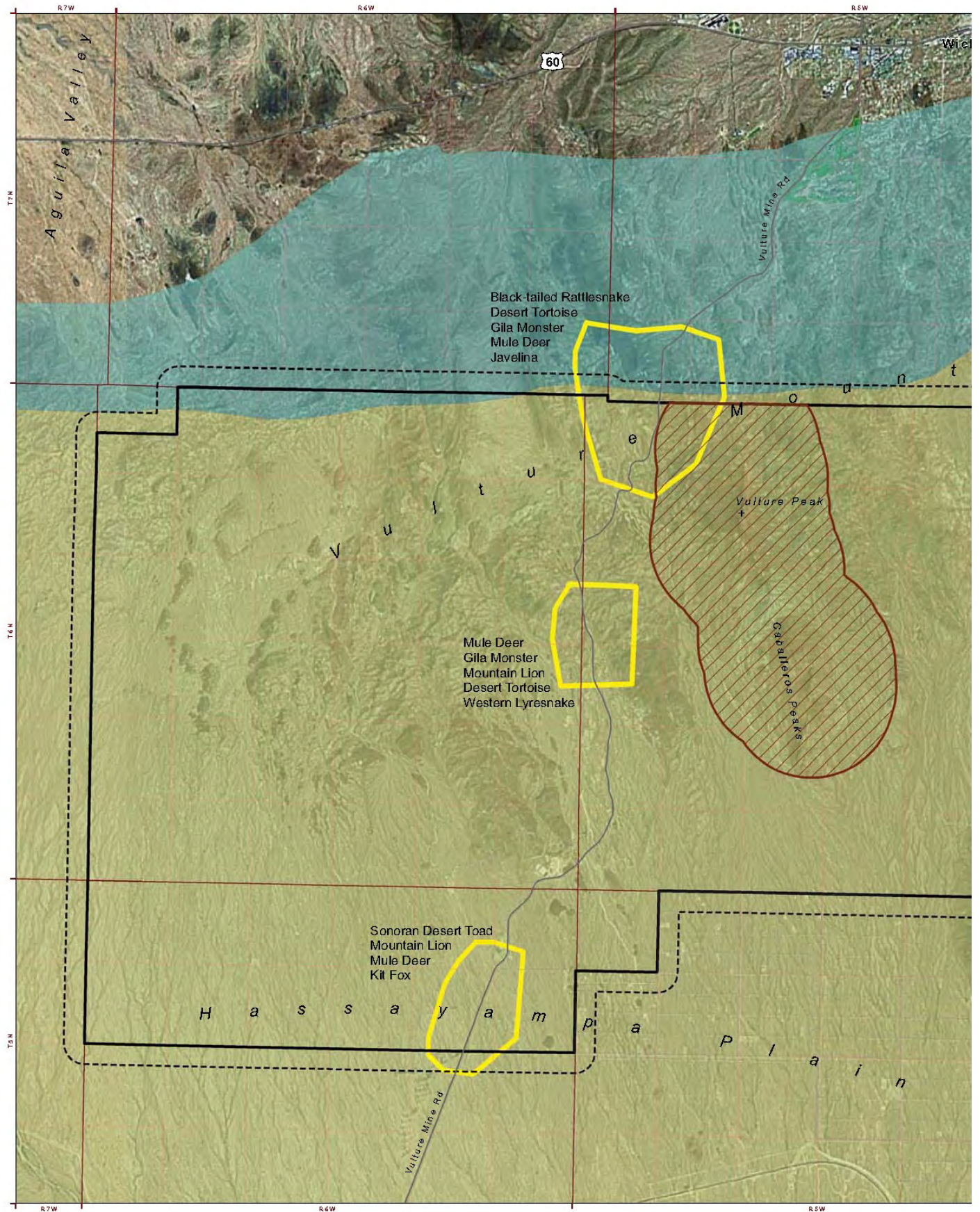
The Vulture Mountain Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is an administrative special designation of the RMP. The cliffs along the crest of Vulture and Caballeros Peaks are significant habitat features used by many raptor species. Also, they are a pristine, scenic landmark. The cliffs are essential to maintaining the current biological diversity of the surrounding area. Large concentrations of hawks and falcons nest on these spectacular cliff faces.

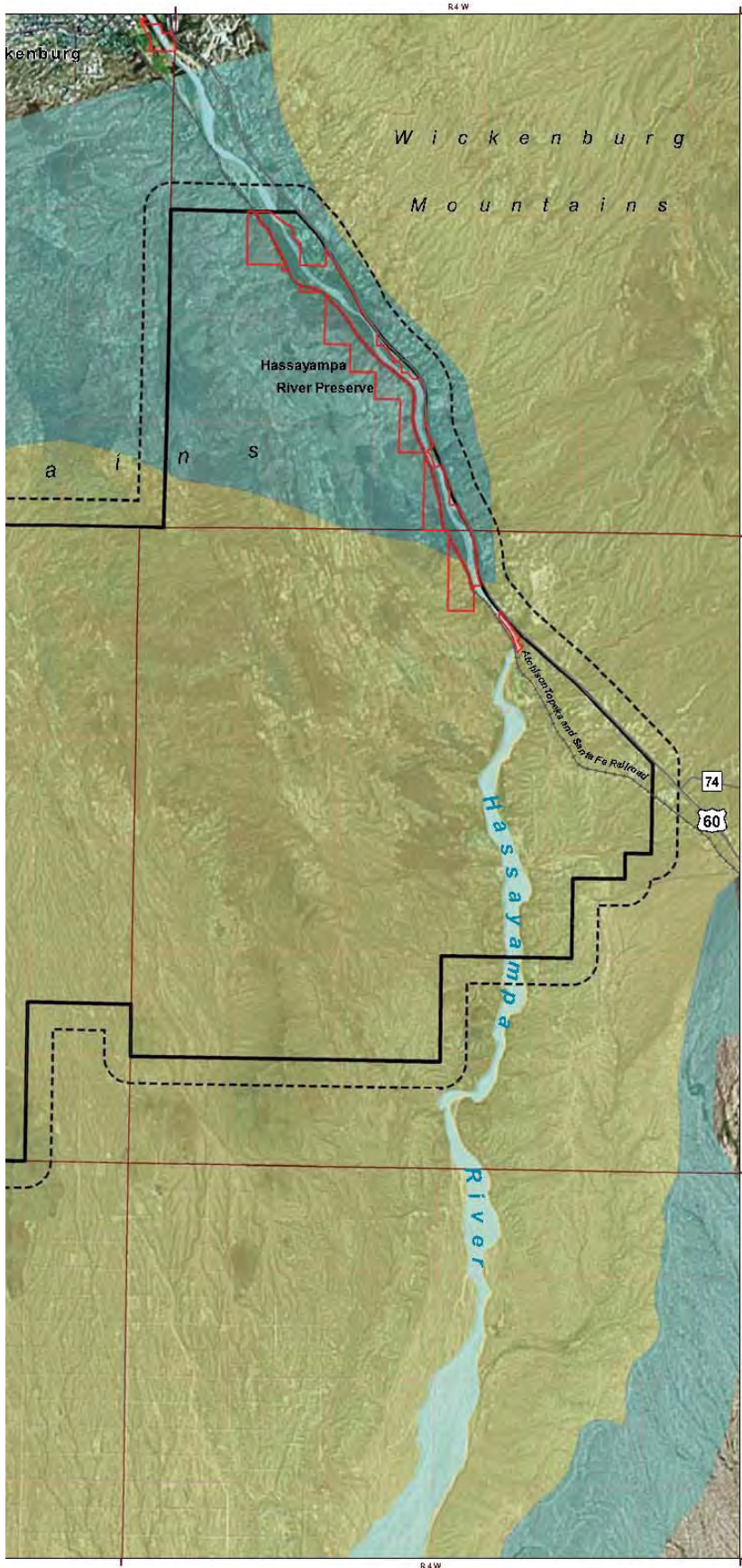
The value of the cliffs for nesting raptors is significant for a large area. These cliffs are virtually the only suitable nesting cliffs for many miles. Nesting raptors are sensitive to construction-related activities. If the cliffs and surrounding area are not protected from these activities, cliff-nesting raptors would disappear from much of the area (Bureau of Land Management, April 2010). The RMP identifies the desired future condition to be:



Table 4-1 Sensitive Biological Features					
NAME	COMMON NAME	USES A	USFS	BLM	AZ
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	American Peregrine Falcon	SC	S	S	WSC
<i>Plestiodon "gilberti" arizonensis</i>	Arizona Skink	SC			WSC
<i>Anaxyrus microscaphus</i>	Arizona Toad	SC	S		
<i>Macrotus californicus</i>	California Leaf-nosed Bat	SC	S	S	WSC
<i>Myotis velifer</i>	Cave Myotis	SC			
<i>Agosia chrysogaster chrysogaster</i>	Gila Longfin Dace	SC	S	S	
<i>Agave murpheyi</i>	Hohokam Agave	SC	S	S	HS
<i>Rana yarapaiensis</i>	Lowland Leopard Frog	SC	S	S	WSC
<i>Nyctinomops femorosaccus</i>	Pocketed Free-tailed Bat		S		
<i>Egretta thula</i>	Snowy Egret			S	WSC
<i>Gopherus agassizii (Sonoran Population)</i>	Sonoran Desert Tortoise	C	S	S	WSC
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	LE			WSC
<i>Mammillaria viridiflora</i>	Varied Fishhook Cactus				SR
<i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i>	Western Burrowing Owl	SC	S	S	
<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>	Western Red Bat		S	S	WSC
<i>Lasiurus xanthinus</i>	Western Yellow Bat		S	S	WSC
<i>Wickenburg - Hassayampa Linkage Design</i>	Wildlife Corridor				(see note)
<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Yellow-billed Cuckoo	C	S		WSC

C Candidate for listing as endangered or threatened, further defined by U.S. Endangered Species Act (USES A)
LE Listed Endangered: imminent jeopardy of extinction
S Sensitive, further defined by U.S. Forest Service and BLM
SC Species of Concern, further defined by USESA
SR Salvage Restricted, further defined by the Arizona Native Plants Law
WSC Wildlife of Special Concern in Arizona, further defined by AGFD
Note: The linkage design is a proposed mitigation that will conserve well-connected networks of large wildland areas where natural ecological and evolutionary processes operate over large spatial and temporal scales.









Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan








Biology

LEGEND

Desert Tortoise Habitat

-  Category 2
-  Category 3
-  Water Catchment
-  Wildlife Habitat Linkage

Reference Features

-  Vulture Mountain CRMA
-  1/4-Mile Study Area
-  Vulture Mountain ACEC
-  Hassayampa River Preserve
-  Township and Range
-  Section
-  Highway/Road
-  Railroad
-  Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-3

- (AC-8) Maintain the raptor nesting habitat values of the cliffs and the surrounding foraging habitat

The management actions are:

- (AC-9) Consider building new routes only when necessary to meet natural resource objectives and where routes would not degrade the resources for which the ACEC is being created
- (AC-10) Mitigate vehicle routes that conflict with maintaining wildlife values to ensure achieving the desired future condition. Mitigation measures include relocating routes, limiting season or time-of-day use, and closing routes.
- (AC-11) Prohibit building new recreation sites; however, maintain the Vulture Peak Trail and trailheads to their current condition and standards
- (AC-12) Prohibit rock climbing within the Vulture Mountain ACEC
- (AC-13) Acquire non-Federal lands within the Vulture Mountain ACEC as available

Cultural, Historic, and Prehistoric Resources

A records search by EPG revealed a total of 49 previously recorded sites within the CRMA; 36 historic, nine prehistoric, and four multi-component sites. The historic sites primarily consist of roads, camps, trash scatters and dumps, prospects, and claims related to mining. The prehistoric sites consist of artifact scatters, habitation areas, and an agricultural clearing. One site, the Santa Fe, Prescott, Phoenix Railway (AZ N:3:32 [ASM]) has been determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Of the remaining 48 sites, 20 have been recommended as eligible, 20 as not eligible, and eight remain unevaluated. Additionally, 68 historic resources were identified from historic General Land Office survey plats within the review area. These resources have not been identified, recorded, or evaluated during previous survey work. Although it is likely that many of these resources no longer exist, we recommend cultural surveys for areas not previously investigated to accurately identify and evaluate any previously unrecorded resources (Christopher E. Rayle, 2010).

A site sensitivity analysis conducted by EPG, identified 26 sites with low sensitivity. This category includes sites previously recommended or determined by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to be not eligible for inclusion on the NRHP; however, it can include recommended sites. Typically, these are sites that have low to moderate artifact densities, few features, and previous documentation and mapping has exhausted the information potential of the site.

Fourteen sites were identified as having moderate sensitivity. This category includes recommended and unevaluated sites that exhibit a higher profile on the landscape than sites with low sensitivity. Moreover, these sites have a potential to yield additional scientific information.

Eight sites were identified as having a high sensitivity. These sites include those recommended, or determined as eligible by the SHPO. They characteristically have a high artifact density with highly visible surface features that draw attention to the site.

One site was classified as indeterminate due to the lack of information available from the site card. Based on this analysis, we recommend avoidance of high sensitivity sites due to the potential for vandalism stemming from recreational activities. Moderate sensitivity sites may exhibit a higher profile on the landscape than low sensitivity sites, and potential impacts should be considered on a site by site basis. Sites identified with low sensitivity are the least susceptible to potential vandalism, and any recreational impacts may be considered negligible (Rayle, 2010).

Additional information is available in the separate document, *A Cultural Resources Inventory and Sensitivity Analysis for the Vulture Mountains Regional Park and Recreation Area Master Plan, Maricopa County, Arizona*, prepared by EPG.

As identified in the BLM RMP, the CRMA is overlaid by the Wickenburg/Vulture SCRMA, allowing for site-specific allocations to the category of public use sites that are accessible and appropriate for interpretive development (BLM, 2010). Regarding public use, decision CL-6 of the RMP states:

CL-6. Public use allocations: Allocate selected sites to public use for long-term preservation and public visitation. Consider the following factors in selecting sites suitable for this type of use:

- Presence of above-ground features, such as structures or rock art, that are of interest to the public and are amenable to interpretive development
- The condition of the site and the feasibility of treating or stabilizing selected areas to withstand visitation
- Accessibility to communities, travel routes, and recreation trails
- Compatibility with other land uses and site values, such as traditional use by Native Americans
- Visitor safety
- Feasibility of regular inspections by BLM staff and volunteers
- Partnership opportunities for interpretive and educational projects

The following decisions and management actions are specific to the Hassayampa/Vulture SCRMA:

CL-33. Wickenburg/Vulture SCRMA includes 124,000 acres administered by BLM. Allocate to public use sites that are accessible and appropriate for interpretive development as defined in the Cultural Resources section of the Decisions Applicable to the Entire Planning Area.

CL-35. The following historic period sites are allocated to public use: Vulture City Cemetery, Constellation Road, Monte Cristo Mine, and Weaver Cemetery/town site. (Note: only the Vulture City Cemetery is in the CRMA.)

CL-37. Allocate the following sites to “conservation for future use” to ensure long-term preservation: Vulture City Cemetery, Weaver Cemetery, and segments of Constellation Road where historic engineering features remain intact. (Note: only the Vulture City Cemetery is in the CRMA.)

CL-39. Develop selected historic period sites for on-the ground interpretive facilities and public visitation. Work with the Wickenburg community and organizations to use these sites to highlight the history of ranching and mining in the area.

CL-40. Maintain the protective fence around the Vulture City Cemetery and install protective signs.

Landforms and Topography

The Vulture Mountains, as is most of Arizona, are located in the Basin and Range Province of the western North American continent. Basin and Range topography is characterized by abrupt changes in elevation, alternating between faulted mountain chains and flat arid valleys and basins. This topography has been uniquely described “as being composed of many short, abrupt ranges or ridges, looking upon the map like an army of caterpillars crawling northward. At length, about 150 miles north of the Mexican boundary, this army divides into two columns, one marching northwest, the other north-northeast. The former branch becomes the system of mountain ridges spread over the southern and western portions of Arizona, the whole of Nevada and the western portion of Utah and extending into Oregon and Idaho” (Clarence E. Dutton, 1886). The Vulture Mountains, Hassayampa Plain, and the region’s neighboring mountain and valley landforms are representative of this description, although on a microscale of the entire Basin and Range Province, see Figure 4-4. As described in the Town of Wickenburg General Plan (2003), the topography of the land surrounding Wickenburg has had a pronounced effect on the pattern and form of development in the Town. The mountain ranges surrounding the Town have helped shape the image and character of the community and have also provided a natural barrier between Wickenburg and the Salt River Valley.

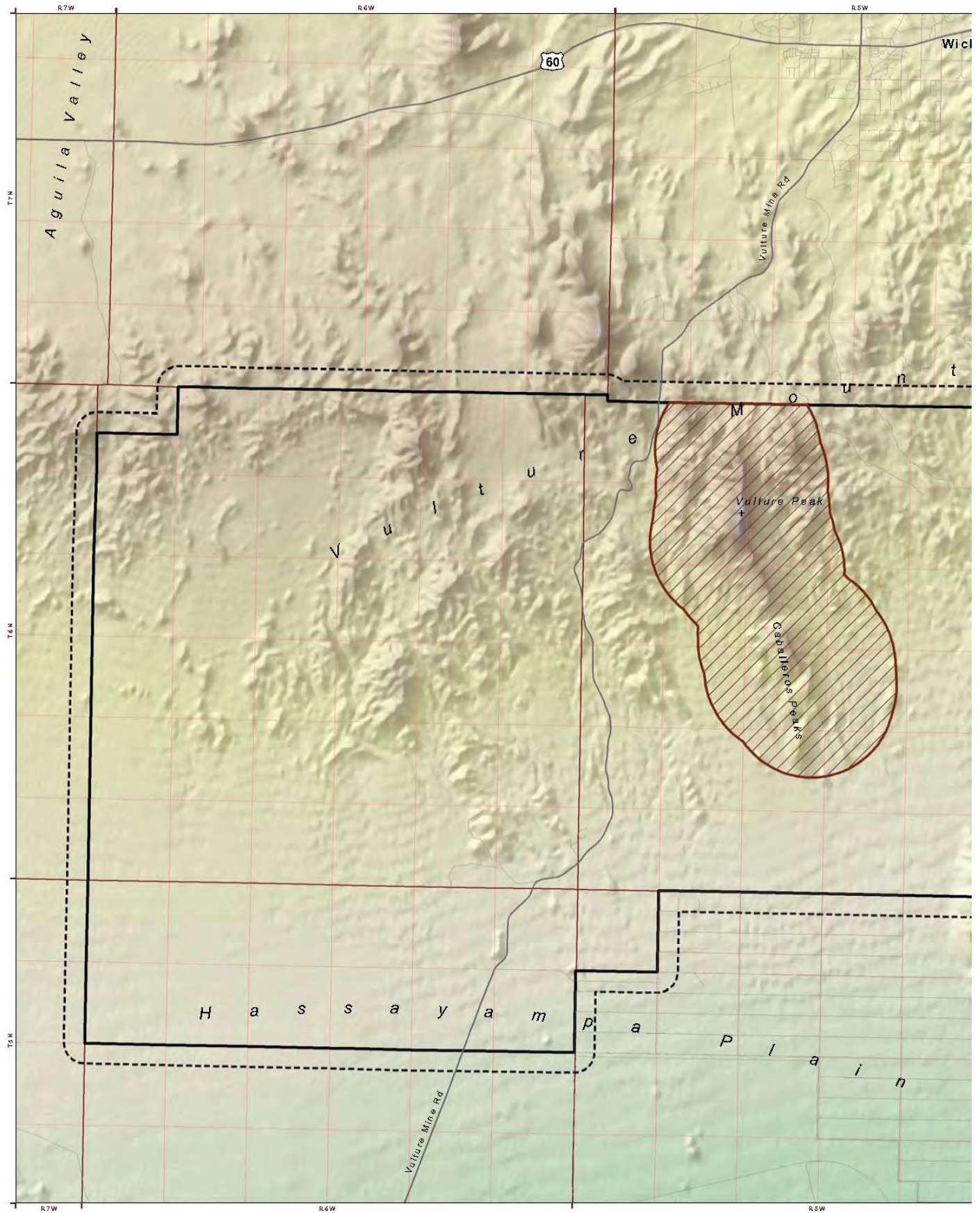
The most prominent landforms in the CRMA are Vulture Peak and Caballeros Peak, which rise to elevations of 3,660 and 3,044 feet above sea level, respectively. These are the highest points in the CRMA. Vulture Peak is distinct from other peaks with its vertical fins of rock, resembling a large and treeless rounded bulb visible from up to 25 miles away. Just outside the CRMA to the north are Twin Peaks, located at 3,382 and 3,245 feet above sea level. These peaks are almost as prominent as Vulture Peak.

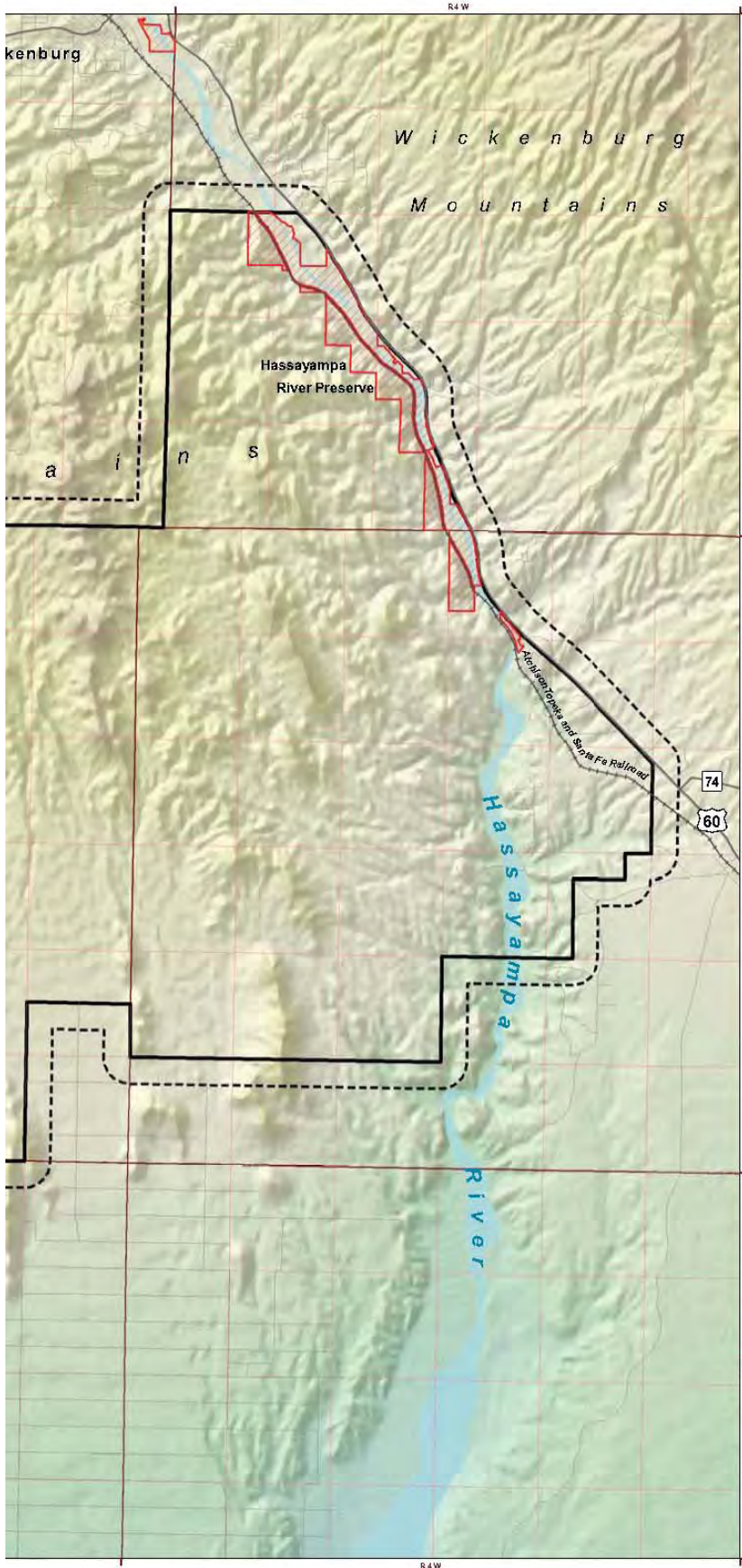
The lowest point in the CRMA is the Hassayampa River as it exits the CRMA at an elevation of 1,760 feet above sea level. The river flows from north to south, and is generally the northeastern and eastern edge of the CRMA. BLM land occurs up to three miles east of the river and is interspersed with Arizona State Trust land and private property.

The Hassayampa River played a prominent part in the history of the Wickenburg area. It is doubtful that mining and agriculture would have had as significant an impact on Wickenburg without the river water resources available. Today, the Hassayampa is typically dry and generally flows underground along its 100-mile course. For the five-mile length that occurs in the Hassayampa River Preserve, the river flows above ground throughout the year making it a unique and protected riparian resource. The lush streamside habitat is home to some of the desert’s most spectacular wildlife (Hassayampa River Preserve, n.d.).

Slope Analysis

A slope analysis is an important tool in analyzing the land topography for suitable site selection for various potential uses. The four categories of slope used in this study’s analysis were: (1) flat slopes, 0%-5%; (2) moderate slopes, 5%-10%; (3) steep slopes, 10%-20%; and (4) severe slopes, over 20%. Flat slopes are more suited to most types of





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Landforms/Topography

LEGEND

Elevation (Feet)



Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Vulture Mountain ACEC
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed

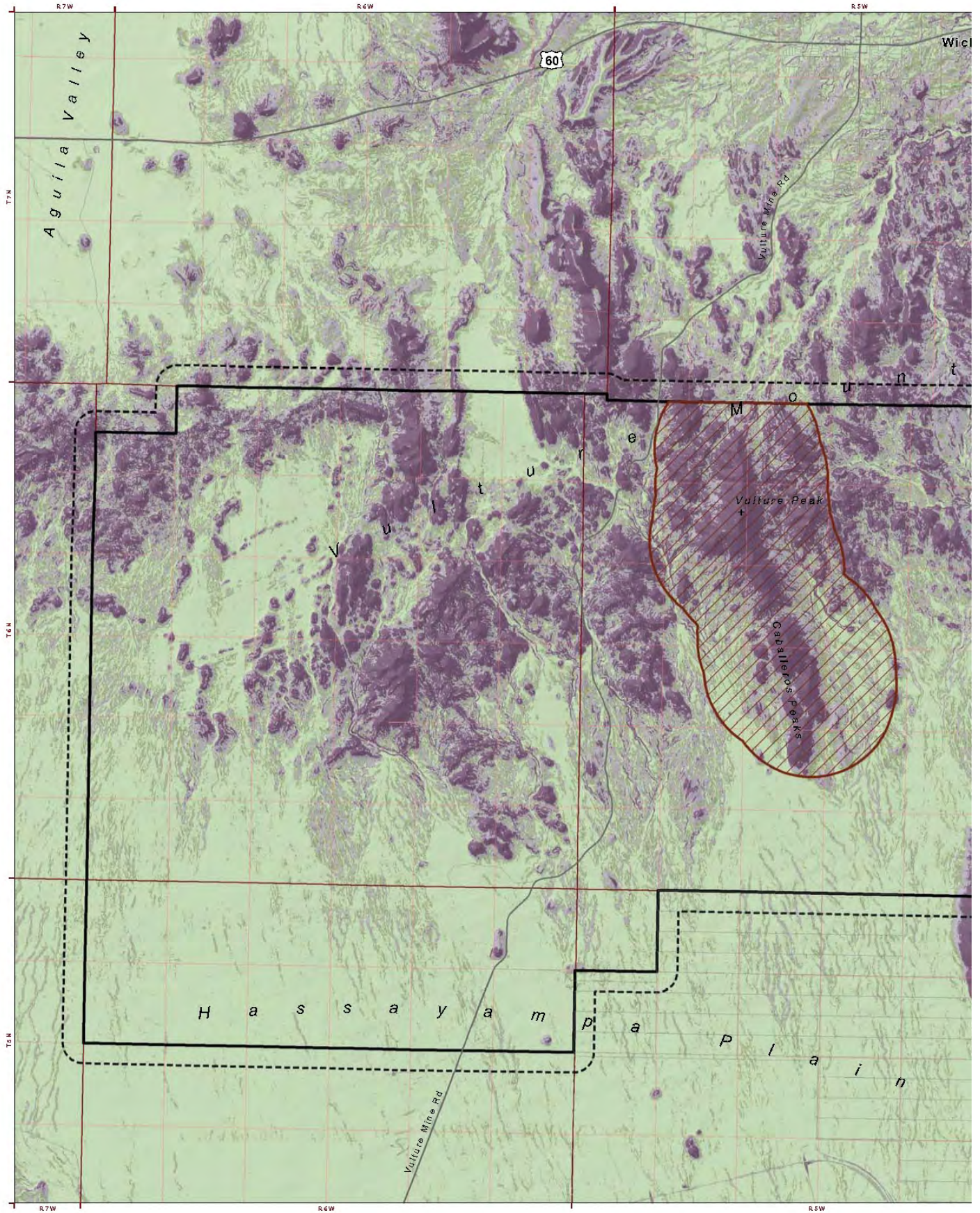


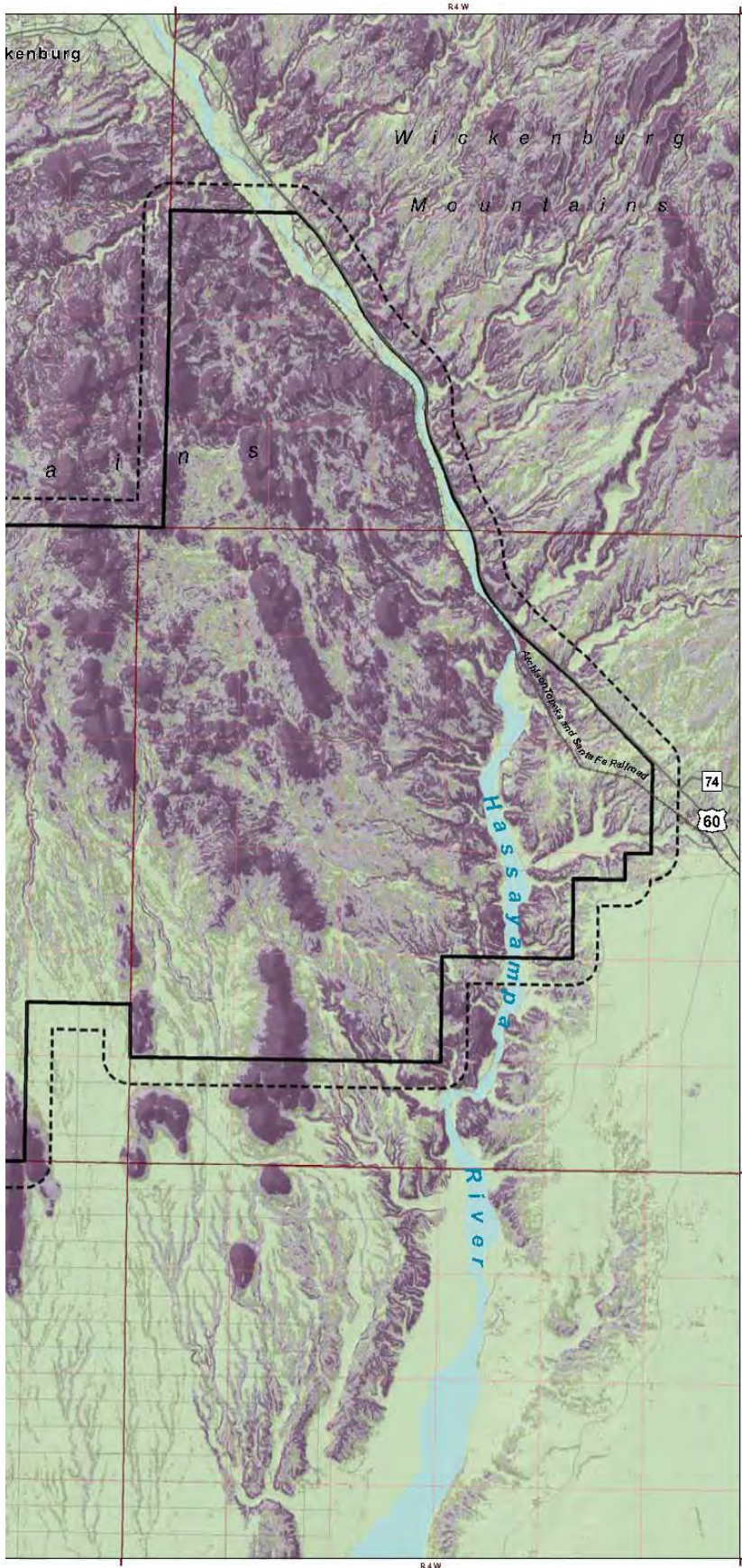
December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-4



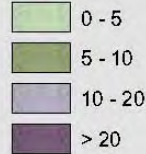


Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Slope

LEGEND

Slope (%)



Reference Features



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-5

land development related to a regional park, such as campgrounds, trailheads, roads, and parking areas. Development on flatter slopes requires less grading to accommodate a constructed use, will minimize disturbance to the natural environment, and is less costly to develop. Moderate slopes are developable, but require additional considerations for grading cut and fill and embankment rehabilitation, such as retaining walls and slope stabilization. Steep slopes should be avoided wherever possible or include significant mitigation or rehabilitation to lessen the impact on the land. Severe slopes are generally unusable for recreational land development purposes; the cost to develop and mitigate typically not being feasible.

A slope analysis for the CRMA was prepared using these four categories, see Figure 4-5. Slope analysis is an important component of site selection for development. Wherever steeper terrains are unavoidable for development, following the contour of the land will minimize the mitigation required to the affected areas and present the most aesthetic solution. Trails are the best example. Being relatively narrow, single-track trails follow the contour of the land when change of elevation is required or desired, and can be constructed on steep and severe slopes using appropriate techniques. The area of disturbance is relatively narrow and mitigation is minimal in comparison to a vehicular roadway on the same slope. Similarly as an example, development of larger areas for parking should include curved parking bays that follow the contour of the land to minimize grading cut and fill and minimize embankments.

For the CRMA, flatter slopes (0%-5%) that favor development, occur:

- In a valley at the upper Box Wash area, approximately 1 mile west of Vulture Mine Road
- In a valley west of Jimmie Wash, which is approximately three miles west of Vulture Mine Road
- Across the broad Hassayampa Plain, south of the Vulture Mountains
- Generally along ridge lines and wash corridors, however, wash corridors should be avoided for facility development



Visual Resource Management

The public lands administered by the BLM contain many outstanding scenic landscapes. While these lands provide a place to escape and enjoy the beauty of nature, they are also used for a multitude of other activities. Any activities that occur on these lands, such as recreation, mining, timber harvesting, grazing, or road development for example, have the potential to disturb the surface of the landscape and impact scenic values. Visual resource management (VRM) is a system for minimizing the visual impacts of surface-disturbing activities and maintaining scenic values for the future. When visual resources are not carefully managed and the visual impacts of poorly designed surface-disturbing activities are ignored, there can be dire consequences to the scenic values of American landscapes. The benefits to be gained by carefully designing surface-disturbing activities to minimize visual impacts are readily apparent. The BLM is committed to sound management of the scenic values on public lands in order to ensure that these benefits are realized and the scenic values are protected (“Visual Resource Management,” n.d.).

Visual resources are managed to meet the objectives for VRM Classes I through IV, as defined in the BLM’s Handbook H-8410-1, Visual Resource Inventory, (Section B, 1 through 4). As a part of the development of the RMP, VRM classes were identified across the Bradshaw-Harquahala Planning Area. See Figure 4-6 for the VRM classes in the CRMA. Objectives (desired conditions) for the VRM classes are described below.

VRM Class I

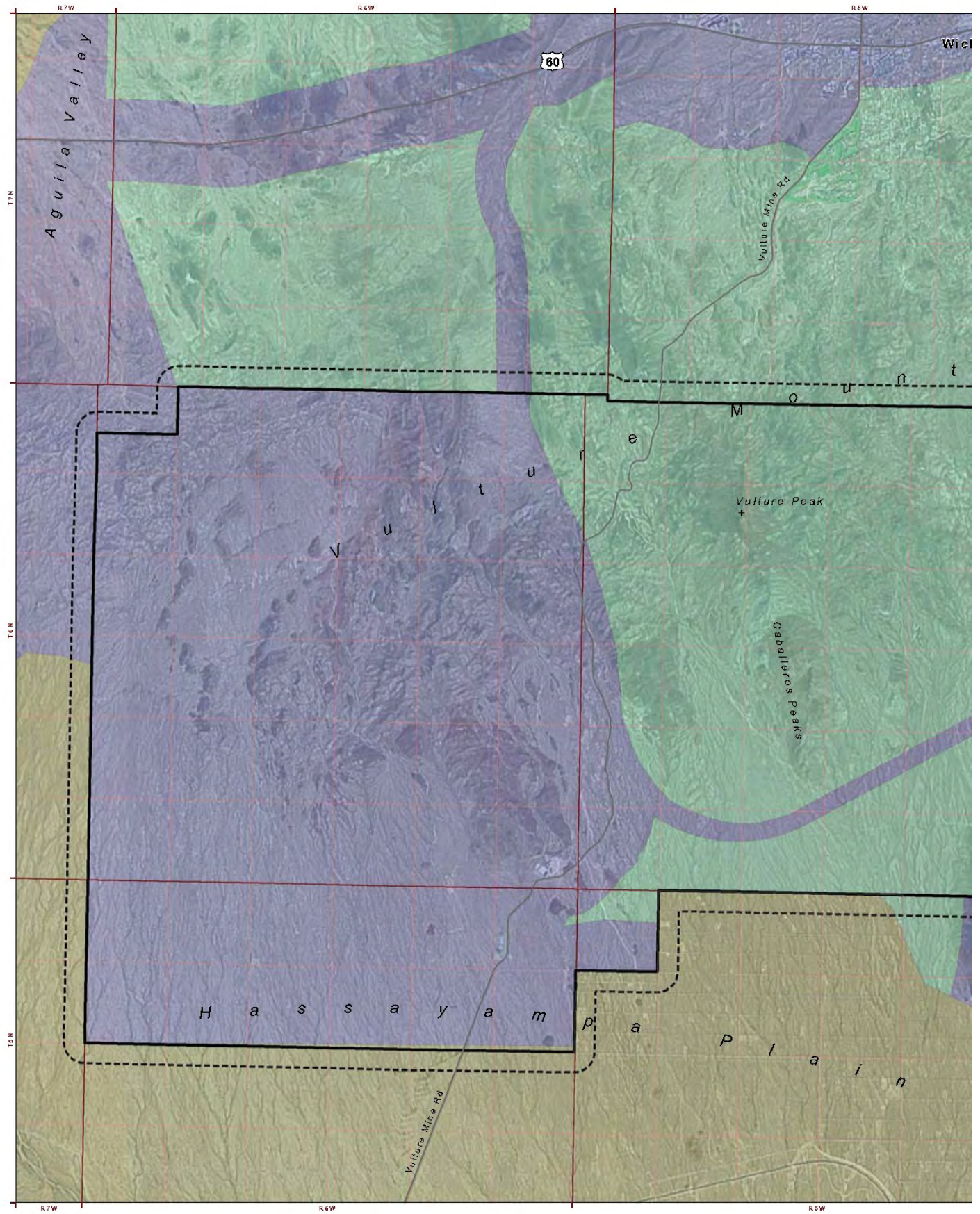
The objective of this class provides for natural ecological changes, but it does not preclude very limited management activity. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be very low and must not attract attention. However, this class does not occur within the CRMA.

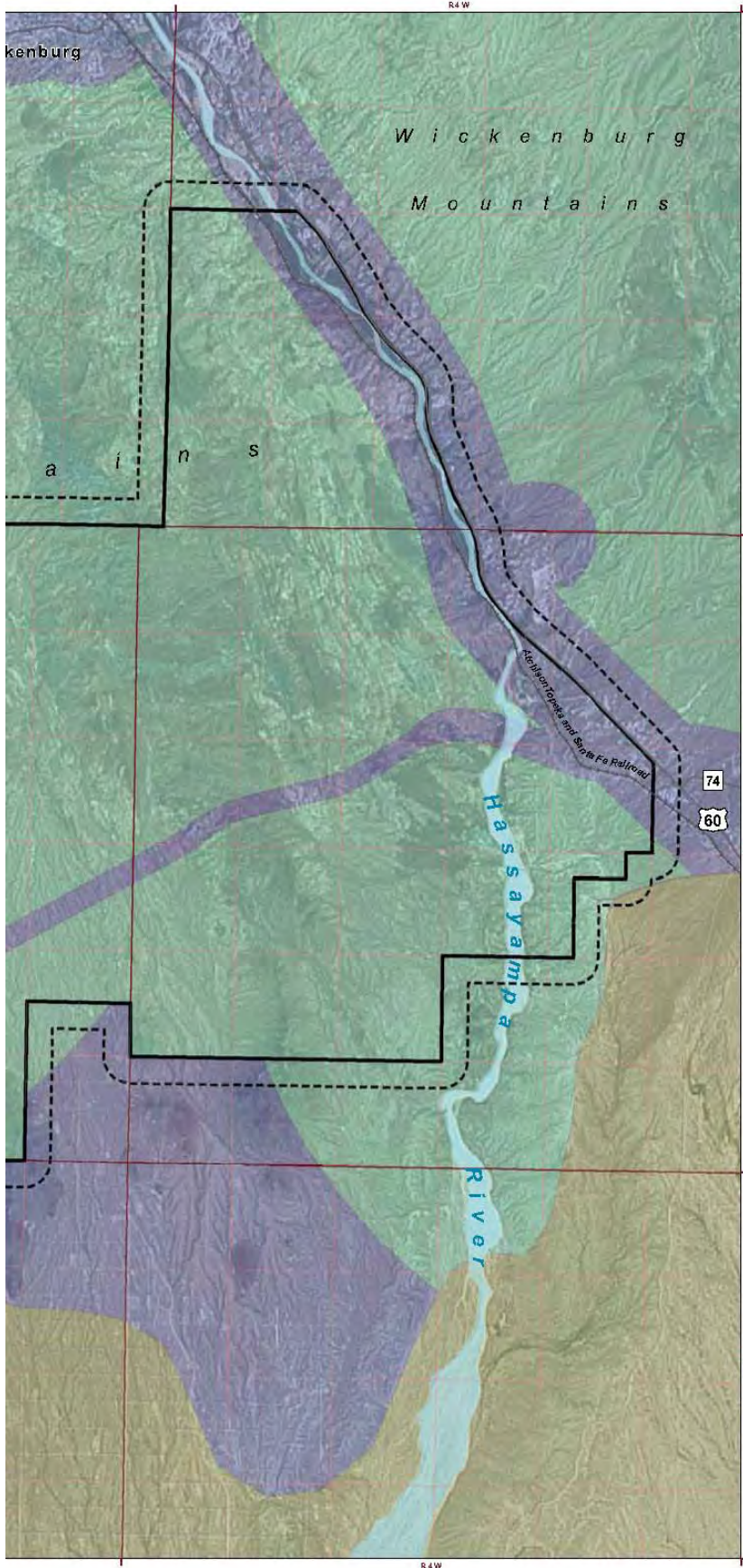
VRM Class II

The objective of this class is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. Any changes must repeat the basic elements of form, line, color, and texture found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape. The majority of the CRMA east of Vulture Mine Road is allocated to Class II.

VRM Class III

The objective of this class is to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Management activities may attract attention but should not dominate the view of the casual observer. Changes should repeat the basic elements found in the predominant natural features of the characteristic landscape. The majority of the CRMA west of Vulture Mine Road is allocated to Class III. Additionally, two corridors for utilities have been allocated to Class III across the CRMA east of Vulture Mine Road. These corridors are for future transportation and utilities.





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Visual Resources

LEGEND

VRM Classes

- II
- III
- IV

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-6

VRM Class IV

The objective of this class is to provide for management activities that require major modifications of the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape can be high. These management activities may dominate the view and be the major focus of viewer's attention. Every attempt should be made to minimize the impact of these activities through careful location, minimal disturbance, and repeating the basic elements. This class does not occur within the CRMA, but abuts it to the south and west.

Active Mining Claims and Historical Mine Locations

As discussed in the Area History section, mining activities in the CRMA have occurred almost continuously for nearly 150 years, dating back to the discovery of the Vulture Mine in 1863. Mining activities have included both placer mining and lode mining. Placer mining involves deposits of unconsolidated materials, such as sand and gravel, containing free gold or other minerals. Placer mining is often done individually by one prospector working these surface deposits on their own. Lode mining involves classic underground veins or lodes having well-defined boundaries. They also include other valuable mineral bearing rock in-place and may be broad zones of mineralized rock. Lode mining requires many miners working together to extract the gold from tunnels in a mountain or deep underground. Historical and current data on mining activities is shown in Figure 4-7.

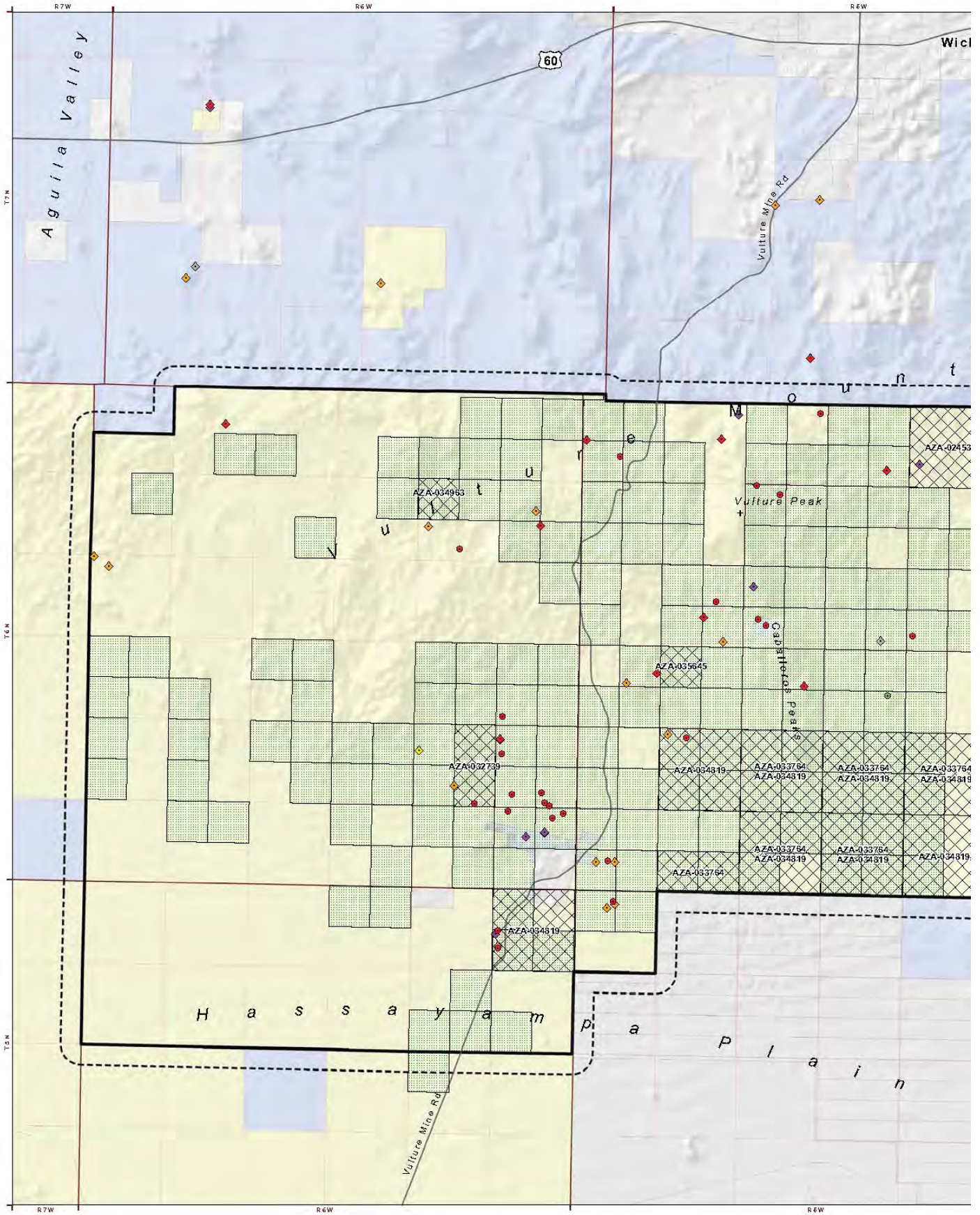
Historically recorded commercial mining in the CRMA, according to the Mineral Resources Data System, managed by the U.S. Geological Survey, has included 91 operations. See “Historical Recorded Mining in the Vulture CRMA” in the appendix. Primary commodities have included not only gold and silver but also copper, lead, tungsten, and several non-metallic commodities, including marble, sand and gravel, mica, fluorine-fluorite, and others.

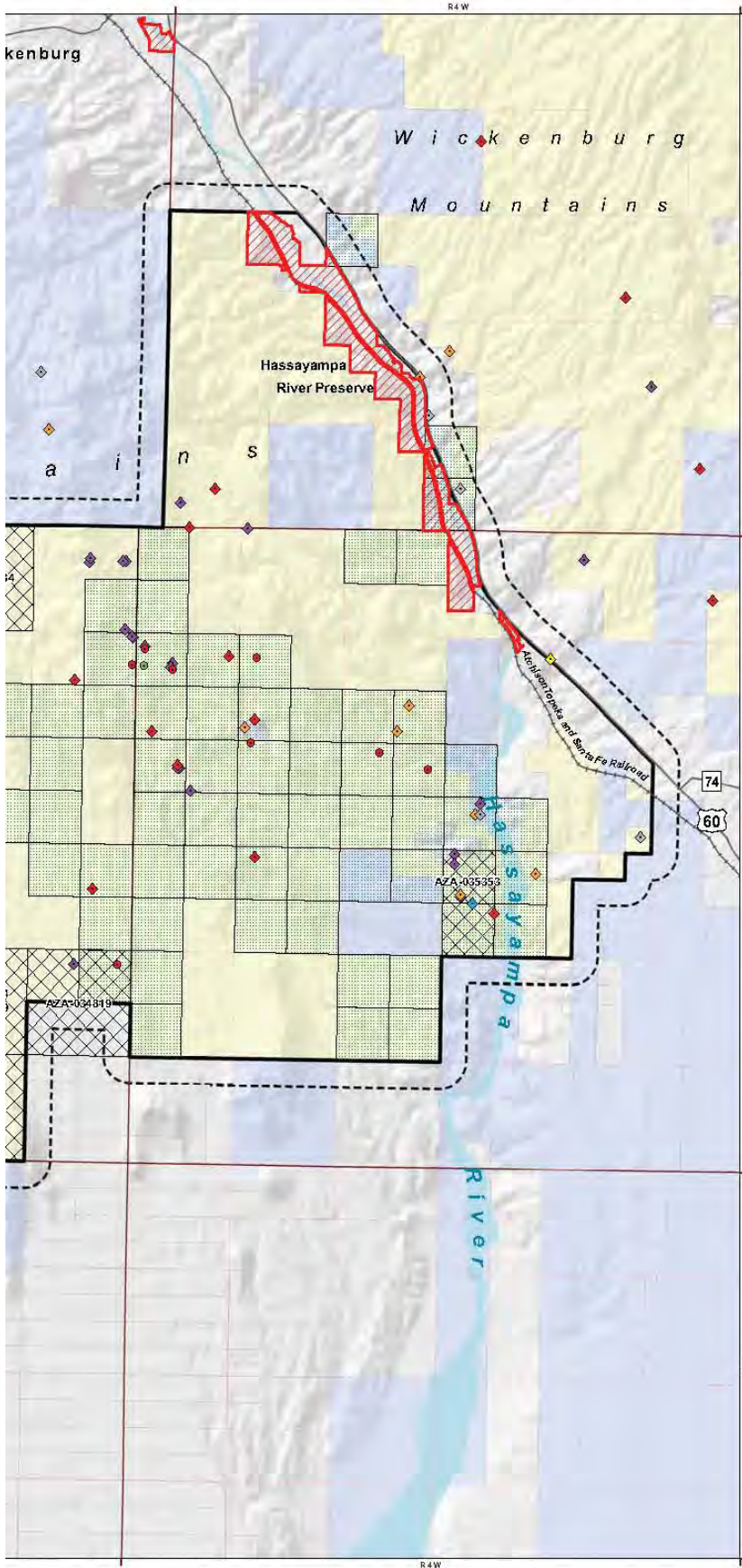
As of March 2011, according to the BLM Land & Mineral Legacy Rehost 2000 System (LR 2000), there are 461 active mining claims in the CRMA. See “Active Mining Claims in the Vulture CRMA” in the appendix. Mining claims are limited in size to 20 acres per claim. The identified claimants include individuals, groups of individuals, prospecting clubs, and corporations. Location dates for the claims range from 1994 to 2010. Maintaining an active claim on BLM land requires an annual maintenance fee of \$140 (or a waiver certificate for a claimant with 10 or fewer active claims) and annual assessment work, which includes a minimum of \$100 in labor or improvements. Assessment work is not required for mill or tunnel sites; however, a claimant must file a notice of intent to hold the site.

A patented claim is one for which the federal government has passed title to the claimant, making it private land. A person may mine and remove minerals from a mining claim without a patent. A mineral patent gives the owner title to the minerals, surface, and other resources. There are examples of patented claims within the CRMA, including the Vulture Mine. Patented claims for lodes are often discernible by their parcel configuration, with property lines outlining and paralleling the bearing and length of the underground lode. However, as of October 1, 1994, the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriation Act established a moratorium on the acceptance of new mineral patent applications. Until the moratorium expires (it has been extended by subsequent appropriation acts), patent applications are returned to the applicant without action (“Mining Claim Information,” n.d.).

Surface Management

The BLM regulates surface management of mining activity conducted on lands administered by the BLM. All mining activities require reasonable reclamation. The lowest level of mining activity, "casual use," is designed for the miner or weekend





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Historical and Active Mining

LEGEND

Mine Operations

- Open Mine Shaft or Davit (BLM field-verified)
- Closed Mine Shaft or Davit (BLM field-verified)
- ◆ Current Producer
- ◇ Occurrence
- ◆ Past Producer
- ◆ Plant
- ◆ Prospect
- ◇ Unknown

▨ Mine Plan of Operation or Notice of Intent

▨ Quarter Section with Active Mining Claims*

* One or more active claims per quarter section. Each claim is limited to 20 acres.

Land Ownership

- Bureau of Land Management
- State Trust
- Private

Reference Features

- ▭ Vulture Mountain CRMA
- ▭ 1/4-Mile Study Area
- ▨ Hassayampa River Preserve
- ▭ Township and Range
- ▭ Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- ▭ Hassayampa Riverbed



40 40
40 40
160 Acres



August 2011

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRS, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-7

prospector who creates only negligible surface disturbance (for example, activities that do not involve the use of earth-moving equipment or explosives may be considered casual use). Dredging at any level of use may require a permit from the appropriate state agency administering water quality. The second level of activity is where surface disturbance is 5 acres or less per year and requires a notice advising the BLM of the anticipated work 15 days prior to commencement. This notice needs to be filed with the appropriate field office. No approval is needed although bonding is required. State agencies need to be notified to assure that their requirements are met. The next level of activity involves more than 5 acres and requires a detailed plan of operation that must be filed with the appropriate BLM field office. Bonding is required to ensure proper reclamation (“Mining Claim Information,” n.d.).

According to LR 2000, as of August 2011, there are 10 Notices of Intent or Plans of Operation that are either authorized or pending in the CRMA study area. See “Notices of Intent and Mining Plans of Operation in the Vulture CRMA” in the appendix. The defined commodities include gold placers, gold lodes, gemstones, and non-precious.



Surrounding Land Uses/Ownership

Land uses in the study area, by its remoteness and majority ownership, is nearly all unoccupied and undeveloped land, see Figure 4-8. According to the *Maricopa County 2020: Eye to the Future, Comprehensive Plan (2002)* the predominant land use within the CRMA is low density residential, with the following exceptions:

- Active Open Space—along the Hassayampa River from the north limit of the CRMA to approximately the Hassayampa Rest Area
- Industrial—Vulture Mine
- Medium Density Residential—adjacent to the Vulture Mine area
- Retail/Commercial—Morristown (intersection of US 60 and SR 74)

The CRMA encompasses 70,378 acres, which is nearly 110 square miles. The property within the CRMA is predominantly owned by the BLM, see Figure 4-9. Private parcel exceptions occur along US 60 and the Hassayampa River and several mining related parcels along and in the vicinity of Vulture Mine Road. The most notable ownership, other than the BLM includes (approximate acreage):

- Arizona State Trust—1,865 acres
- Hassayampa River Preserve—660 acres
- Vulture Mine area—355 acres (multiple parcels and ownership)
- Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway—110 acres

Other private parcels are scattered along and near the Hassayampa River south of US 60 as well as a few patented claim in-holdings within the CRMA.

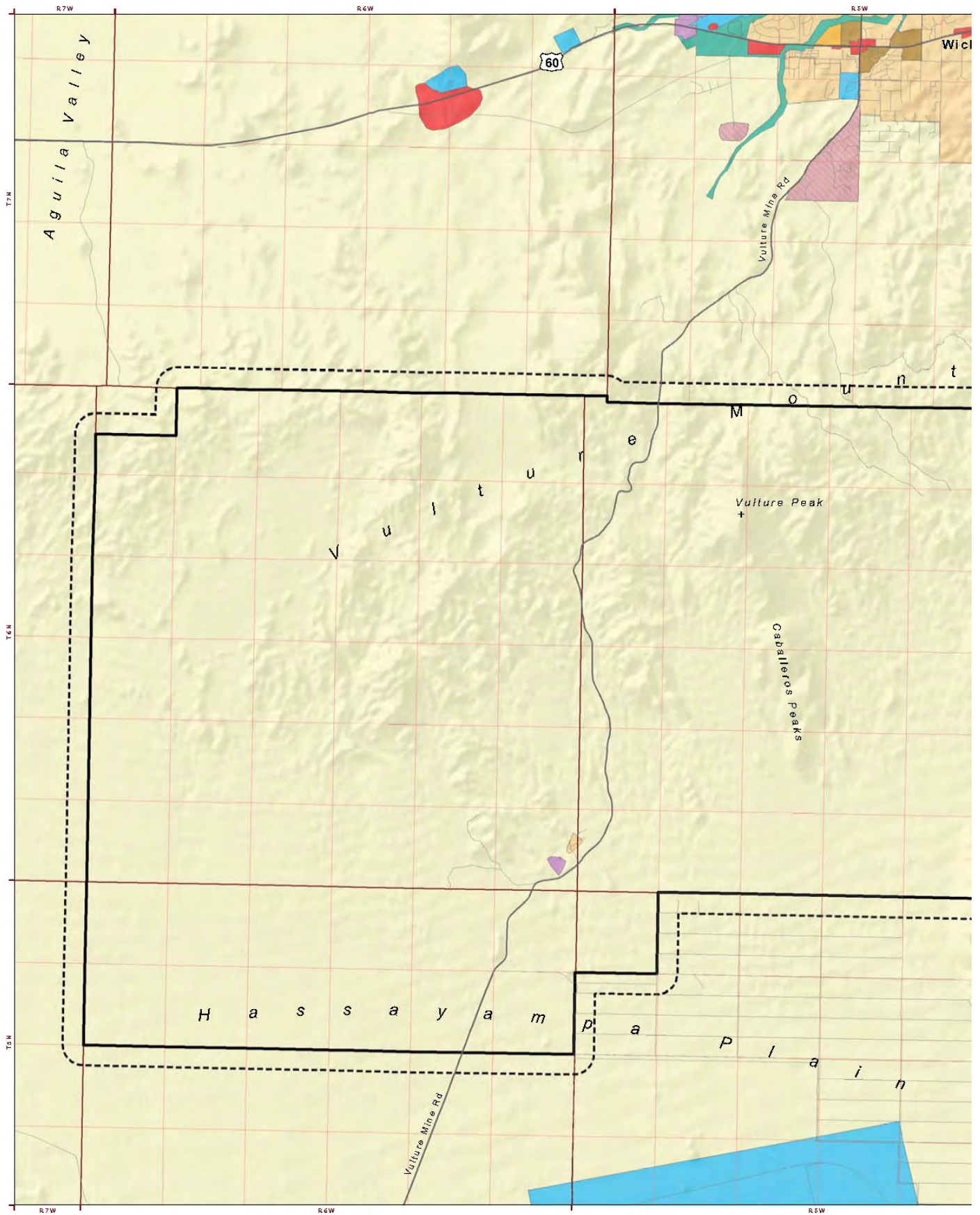
Predominant ownership of adjacent property in the 1/4-mile study area buffer includes:

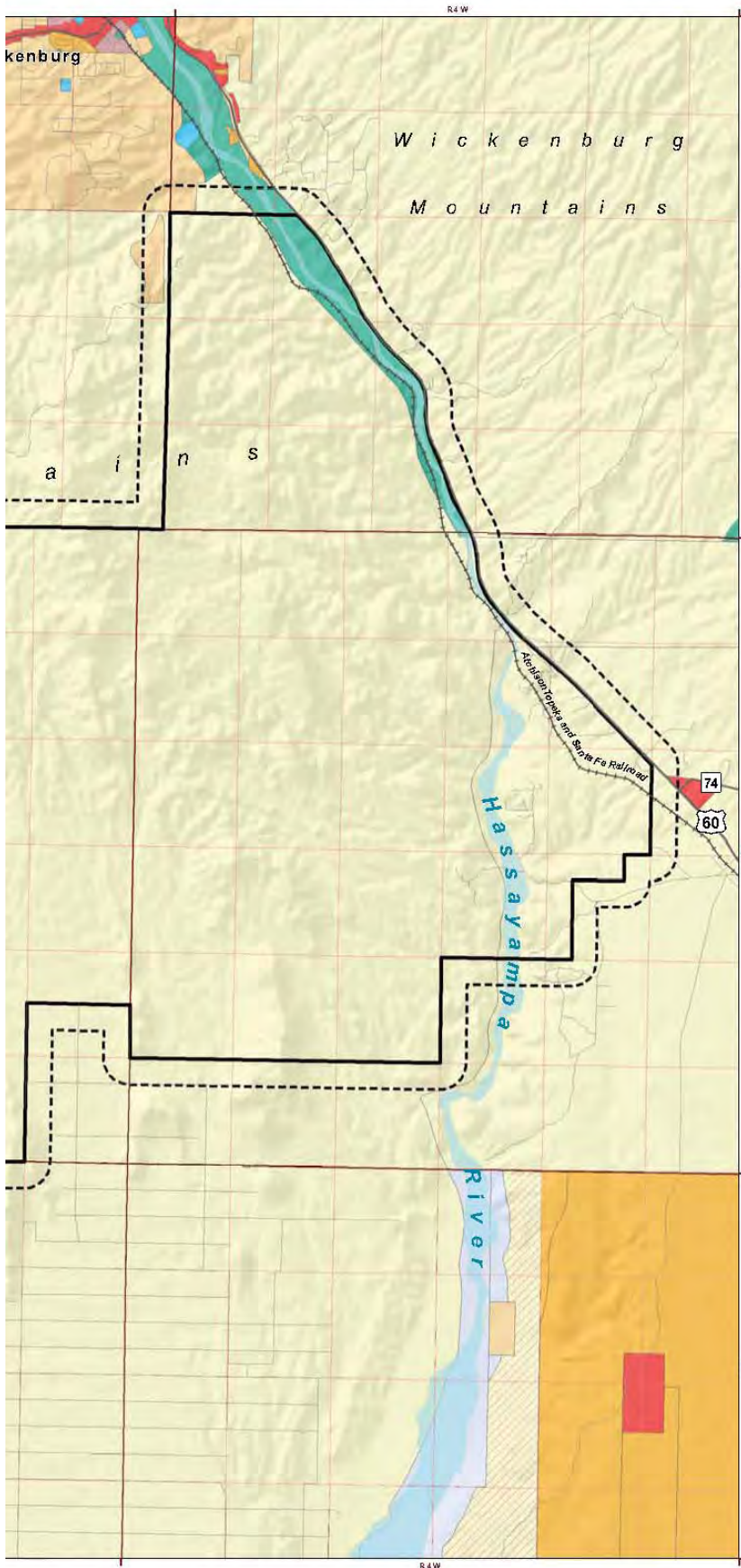
- North: Arizona State Trust
- West: BLM and Arizona State Trust
- South: Private (Whispering Ranch subdivision), BLM, and Arizona State Trust
- East and along US 60: Arizona State Trust, private, and BLM

Hassayampa Rest Area

The Hassayampa Rest Area is one of 19 ADOT rest areas¹ statewide. It is now atypical to ADOT in that it is one of only four rest areas that is not located on the interstate highway system. Built by ADOT in the early 1960s, when the interstate system in Arizona was in its infancy, US 60 was still the major route from Ehrenberg (and Los Angeles) to Phoenix. At that time, I-10 ended just east of Quartzsite, where it connected with the existing US 60, passed through Wickenburg and continued into Phoenix, where I-10 began again and continued on to Tucson. I-10 was not extended to the west edge

¹ Of the 19 rest areas, ADOT and the National Park Service have joint ownership and operation of the Marble Canyon-Navajo Bridge Rest Area on US Alt89. It has remained open during the recent bout of rest area closures statewide.





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Land Use

LEGEND

Land Use

- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- High Density Residential - Multi-Family
- Planned Development
- Retail/Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Resorts
- Industrial
- Public/Military/Proving Grounds
- Active Open Space
- Water

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed

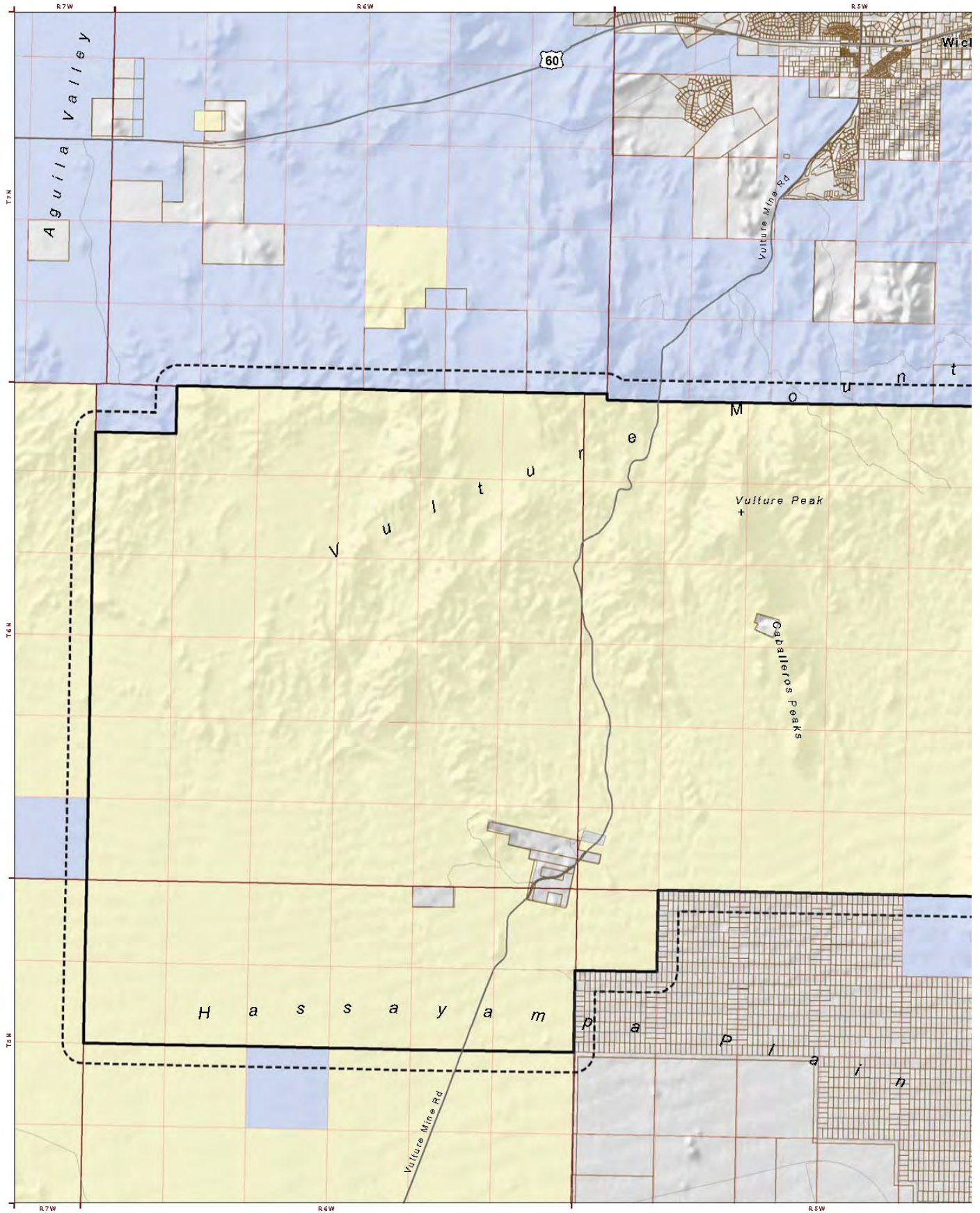


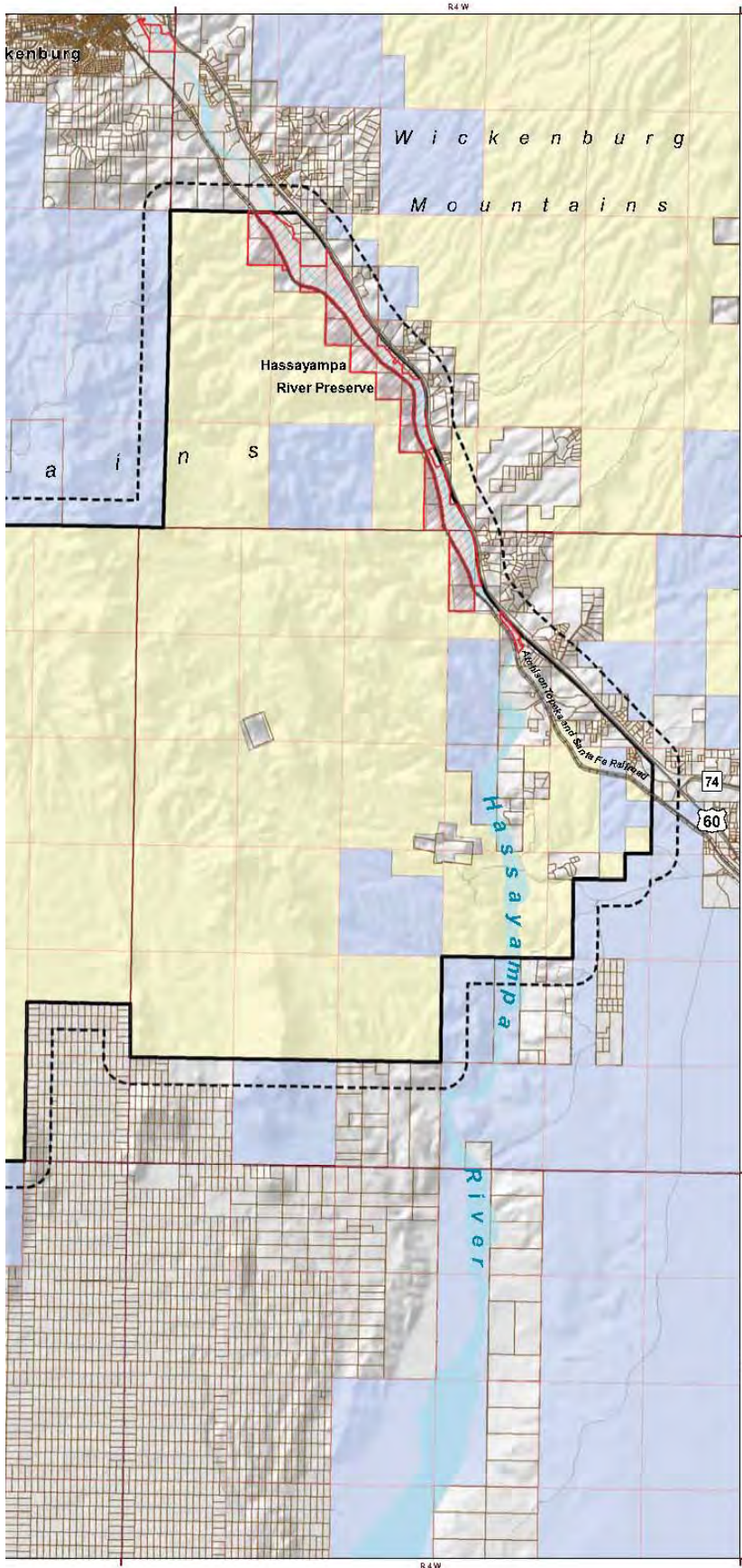
December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-8









Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan


Land Ownership

LEGEND

Land Ownership

-  Bureau of Land Management
-  State Trust
-  Private
-  Parcel Lines

Reference Features

-  Vulture Mountain CRMA
-  1/4-Mile Study Area
-  Hassayampa River Preserve
-  Township and Range
-  Section
-  Highway/Road
-  Railroad
-  Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-9

of the Phoenix area until 1974 and into central Phoenix until 1990. Up until the completion of I-10, the rest area was significant in its service to weary, pre-interstate era travelers across this region of Arizona. Following the completion of I-10 and with increased development of private motorist services from Wickenburg to Phoenix, the rest area has lost much of its customer base, so to speak. Additionally, this section of US 60 was and still is the major route from Phoenix to Las Vegas, continuing from Wickenburg on US 93.

In 2009, in order to meet state budget shortfalls, ADOT closed most of the rest areas across the state including the Hassayampa Rest Area, angering many motorists along the way. By the fall of 2010, ADOT was able to reopen most of these by juggling their reduced budget, including the Hassayampa Rest Area. However, vandalism and theft at the closed site required repairs prior to its reopening. At the time of this writing, the Hassayampa Rest Area is the only non-interstate rest area solely owned by ADOT that has been reopened.

During the initial discussions with ADOT stakeholders, the MCPRD met and talked with ADOT on several occasions to discuss the rest area closure and options for its future. As discussed above, the Hassayampa Rest Area is unique to the current ADOT rest area system and it is no longer of critical service to motorists as much as it once was. Additionally, ADOT's budget for operations and maintenance of rest areas is constantly being scrutinized for cost savings. ADOT stakeholders encouraged continuing their discussions with the MCPRD regarding possibly acquiring the rest area for repurposing as a non-motorized trailhead, primarily for equestrian use. Recreation access at this strategic location provides not only access to the west into the CRMA, but also access to the east along Monarch Wash and into the trail system being planned in the WCTMP by the BLM.

Hassayampa River Preserve

TNC acquired the initial property for and established the Hassayampa River Preserve in 1986 and has continued to add property, bringing its total acreage to approximately 660 acres. The mission of TNC is to preserve the plants, animals, and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive ("TNC Vision and Mission" n.d.), which is not dissimilar to the MCPRD's mission, through responsible stewardship is to provide the highest quality of parks, trails, programs, services, and experiences that energize visitors and create life-long users and advocates (Pros Consulting, LLC and Olsson Associates, June 2009).

For the past 15 years, the preserve has provided protection to the ecologically unique ecosystem that occurs along the five-mile stretch of the Hassayampa River within the preserve and have provided untold opportunities and experiences in their outdoor classroom on the river. The preserve offers 2-1/2 miles of self-guided trails that branch out from the Arthur L. Johnson Visitor Center. The preserve is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday during the milder seasons and Friday through Sunday during the summer.

The visitor center, an historical adobe house, was once the local stage stop from Wickenburg to Phoenix for the Arizona Stage Line. Though a unique facility for the



preserve, the continuing maintenance requirements of the visitor center and accompanying buildings has been a concern to TNC. Deferred maintenance to the property is a growing burden in these trying economic times.

During the initial discussions with TNC stakeholders, the MCPRD met and talked with TNC on several occasions to discuss the preserve's existing public outreach, their similar missions, the similarities between a Maricopa County park and the TNC preserve, and opportunities to be a component of the proposed regional park and/or its programs. TNC does on occasion transfer their ownership of acquired and protected properties to agencies or groups that share a common purpose and goal in land stewardship and public awareness of sensitive ecosystems. TNC stakeholders encouraged continuing their discussions with the MCPRD regarding the possibility of transferring all or portions of the preserve property to Maricopa County for use as a part of the proposed regional park and its education programs.

BNSF Railway

The BNSF Railway line through the CRMA is a branch line from Williams to Phoenix, which is the end of service. All BNSF freight into and out of Phoenix travels by way of this branch line. Since the railroad line was first constructed in 1895, its right-of-way corridor through the public land was granted as a standard incentive by federal law to encourage commerce and development of the West. The railway line's right-of-way is the private property of BNSF Railway.

Therefore, all public uses that cross its right-of-way will require extensive and lengthy coordination with BNSF to gain approval for a Construction and Maintenance Agreement for the crossing. The Agreements are never guaranteed regardless of the need or purpose. At grade trail crossings are expressly forbidden by BNSF, unless occurring at an existing public roadway crossing, which don't occur within the CRMA. Additionally, trails that are parallel to the railroad and within the right-of-way are forbidden.

During the initial discussions with the BNSF stakeholders, the MCPRD met and talked with the BNSF on several occasions to discuss access and crossing issues of their right-of-way. Several existing drainage washes are crossed by railway trestles that have height clearances to allow trail under passes. However, additional parameters by the BNSF include allowing access only at concrete trestles and to only allow a single trail crossing in the CRMA. After review and discussion, and in coordination with a potential trailhead at a repurposed rest area, the BNSF agreed to allow the MCPRD to pursue a trail underpass easement application at Bridge 144.8, which is a concrete trestle at an unnamed wash that is 1500 feet up river of the rest area. Extensive study and cost will be associated with making a trail connection through BNSF right-of-way.

General Plans

The CRMA predominantly falls within the purview of the county’s general plan, *Maricopa County 2020: Eye to the Future, Comprehensive Plan (2002)*. The 2020 Land Use element generally identifies the Hassayampa Plain as Rural Development Area and the mountain terrain north of the Plain (including the Vulture Mountains) as Proposed Open Space-Public. This includes all land within the CRMA that falls within Township 5 North and Township 6 North. Although within the Town of Wickenburg’s Municipal Planning Area, the CRMA is outside the Town’s incorporated area and was not discussed in detail in the *Town of Wickenburg General Plan (2003)*. Unincorporated areas of the municipal planning area are generally identified as Rural (Unincorporated—5 acres or larger), which includes the northeast portion of the CRMA that is within Township 7 North.

Additionally, the *Maricopa County 2020: Eye to the Future, White Tank/Grand Avenue Area Plan (2000)* boundary overlays the majority of Range 4 West of the CRMA. The future land use for that area is designated Rural Residential.

Existing Recreation Related Facilities

Tourism and visitor opportunities are numerous in the Wickenburg area. Visitors to the regional park and recreation area will have the opportunity to lengthen their stay and enjoy other activities and facilities in the area. Within a five-mile study around the CRMA, public and private recreation facilities were researched and mapped, see Figure 4-10. These include:

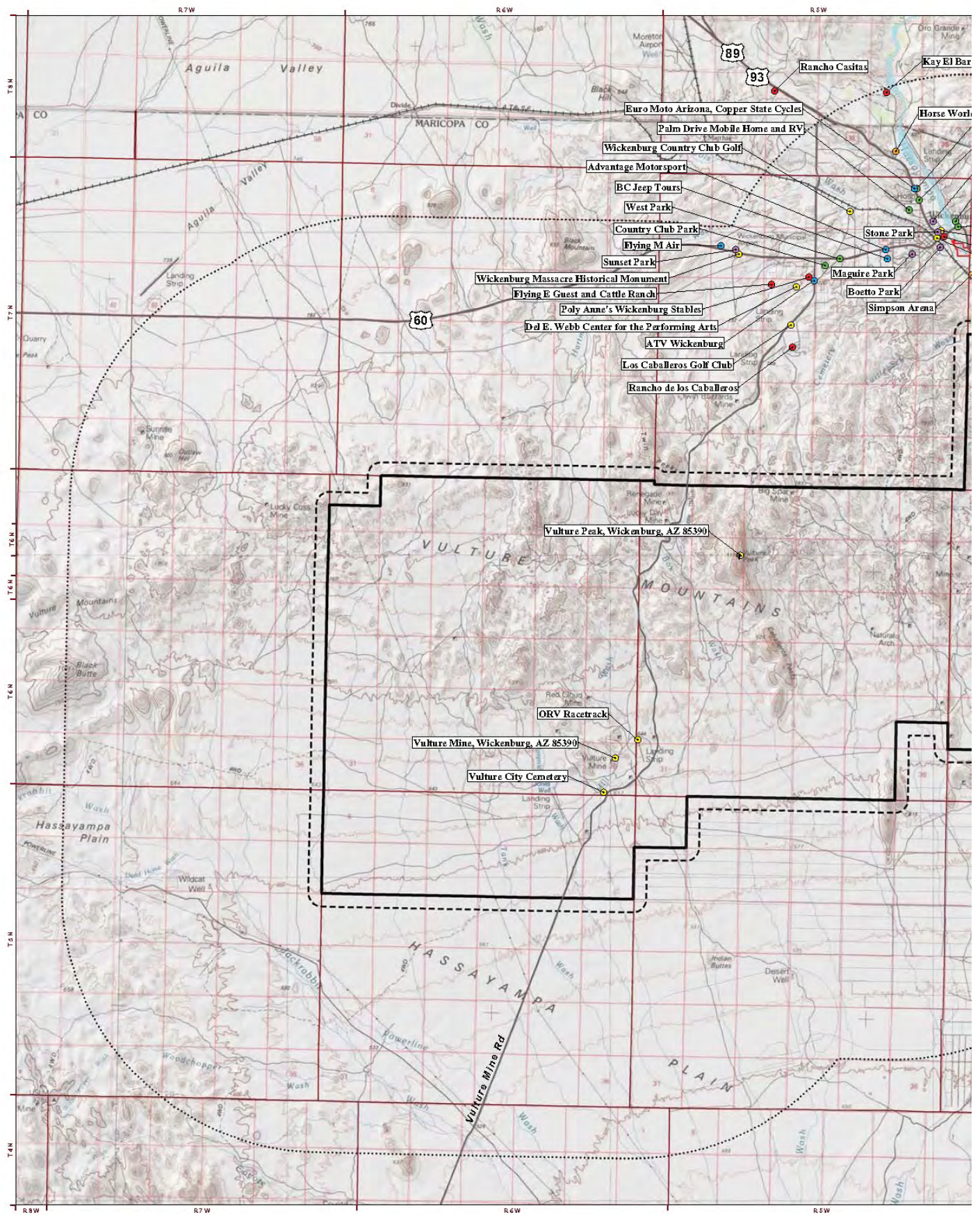
- 12 campgrounds/RV parks
- 6 motorized tours and rentals
- 8 guest ranches and horseback riding tours
- 11 recreation destinations (preserves, museums, golf courses, points-of-interest)
- 3 arenas/rodeo grounds
- 7 public parks and public facilities

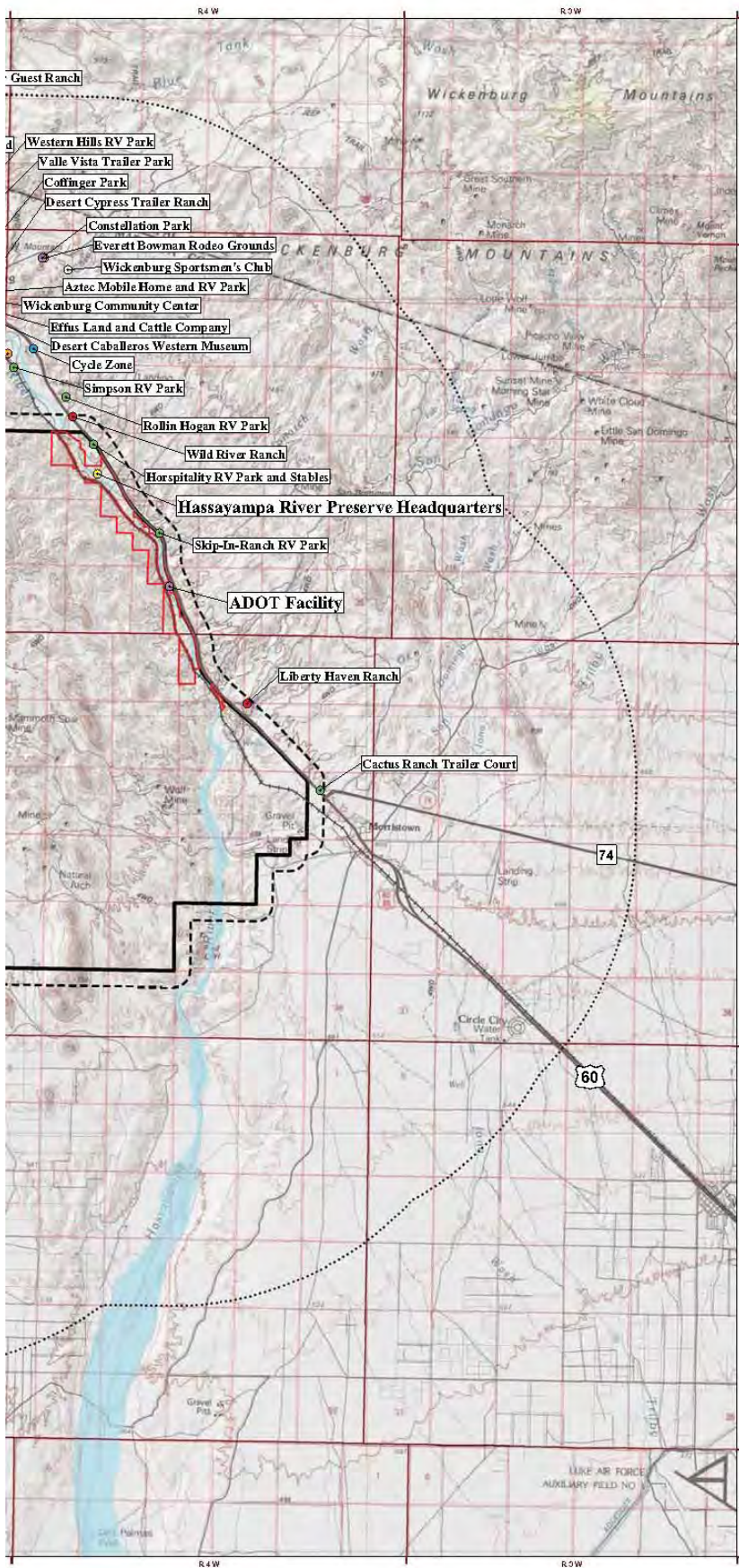
The Town of Wickenburg and its businesses are hosts to several annual events throughout the year. A few of the events include:

- Gold Rush Days (February)
- Cowgirl UP! (March)
- Desert Caballeros Men's Ride (April)
- Out Wickenburg Way Street Dance & BBQ (May)
- Independence Celebration (July)
- Fiesta de Septiembre (September)
- Chamber of Commerce Annual Golf Invitational (September)
- Wickenburg Fly-In and Classic Car Show (October)
- Las Senoras Home Tour (November)
- Wickenburg Gem and Art Fair (November)
- Bluegrass Festival (November)
- Cowboy Christmas Poetry Gathering (December)
- Christmas Parade of Lights (December)
- Wickenburg Saturday Rodeo (multiple events)
- Yost Roping Event (multiple events)

Within the CRMA, special permitted events have occurred, including:

- Whiplash Racing, west of Vulture Mine Road





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Existing Recreation Facilities

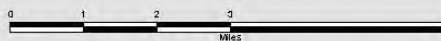
LEGEND

Existing Recreation Facilities

- Campground/RV Park
- Motorized Tours/Rentals/Sales
- Ranch/Horseback Riding Tours
- Recreation Destination
- City Park/Public Facility
- Gun Range
- Arena

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- 5-Mile Buffer
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPSG, 2010.



Figure 4-10

Transportation and Access Issues

The CRMA can be accessed directly from Wickenburg via Vulture Mine Road, a north-south tending road consisting of one paved lane in each direction. Vulture Mine Road begins on the north at US 60 (Wickenburg Way) with the paving ending on the south at Wickenburg Road/Aguila Road, an approximate distance of 20 miles. Vulture Mine Road basically traverses through the middle of the CRMA and circuitously connects to I-10.

In addition to numerous unpaved trails, there are three named and unpaved roads that intersect with Vulture Mine Road and provide access into the CRMA. From the north, these are:

- Vulture Peak Road, providing access to the east to the existing Stewart Trailhead (on State Trust land), the proposed BLM day use trailhead, and the east side of Vulture Peak and Caballeros Peaks
- Vulture Ranch Road, providing access to the west to the Vulture City Cemetery and private parcels that are southwest of Vulture Mine
- Painted Wagon Trail, providing access to the east to the Whispering Ranch subdivision

Major highways exist north and east of the CRMA. Approximately three miles to the north is US 60, a paved four-lane highway running in an east-west direction. West from downtown Wickenburg, this highway is known as Wickenburg Way. Access to the CRMA from this section of US 60 is provided by Vulture Mine Road. To the east and basically adjacent to the CRMA's northeastern edge is US 60, a four-lane divided paved highway. East from downtown Wickenburg, this highway is known as Center Street and northwest from Phoenix as Grand Avenue. There is one named and unpaved road that intersects with Grand Avenue and provides access into the CRMA. From Morristown, this is Gates Road, providing access to the west to the Hassayampa River's east bank, an undefined streambed crossing of the river, and into the CRMA via an unpaved road.

The Maricopa Association of Governments (MAG) and the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) have conducted numerous roadway studies in the area. The latest, conducted by MAG, is the *Hassayampa Valley Framework Study for the Wickenburg Area* (Wilson and Company, 2011). This study was prepared for the Town of Wickenburg and was finalized in April 2011. The recommended alternative is shown on Figure 4-11. Seven new transportation corridors are planned to traverse or abut the CRMA. Additionally, the existing Vulture Mine Road is planned to be upgraded to an Arizona Parkway configuration. New transportation corridors consist of two freeways (Hassayampa Freeway and Lake Pleasant Freeway), three Arizona parkways (Joy Ranch Parkway, Black Mountain Parkway, and Hidden Waters Parkway), two arterial roads (Twin Peaks Road and Caballeros Road), and a high capacity transit and freight railroad. Town Council approved the recommended alternative in November 2010 with the understanding that final alignment studies should consider an alignment of the Hassayampa Freeway that does not bisect the proposed recreation area. Locating the highway further west and nearer to the proposed Black Mountain Parkway alignment



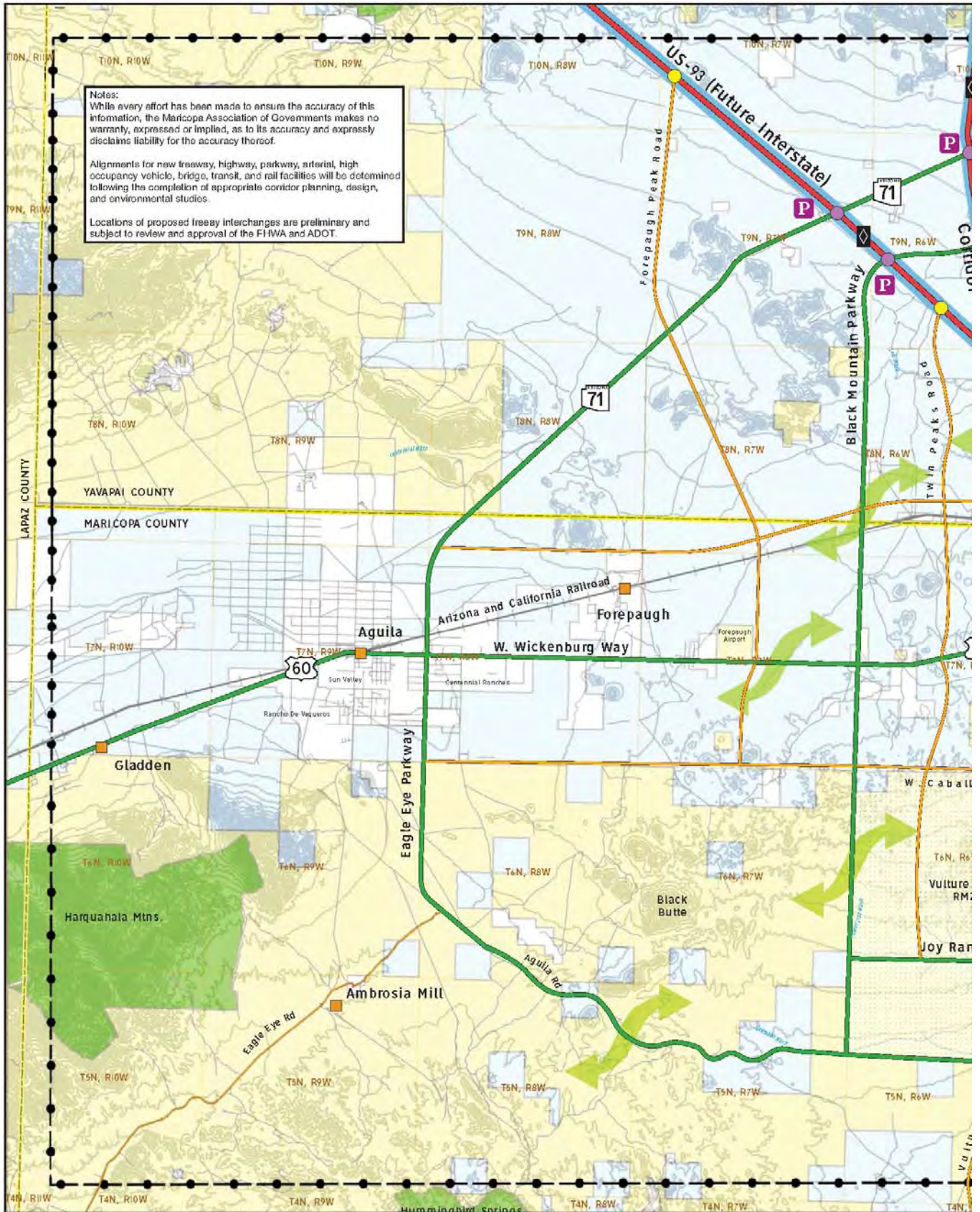
would avoid extensive construction impacts through the rugged Vulture Mountains and not impact the open space continuity of the CRMA.

Additionally, the north-south route for the Hassayampa Freeway in this area, has frequently been discussed as the ultimate location of the proposed I-11 CANAMEX corridor, which is designated as a high priority corridor by the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991.

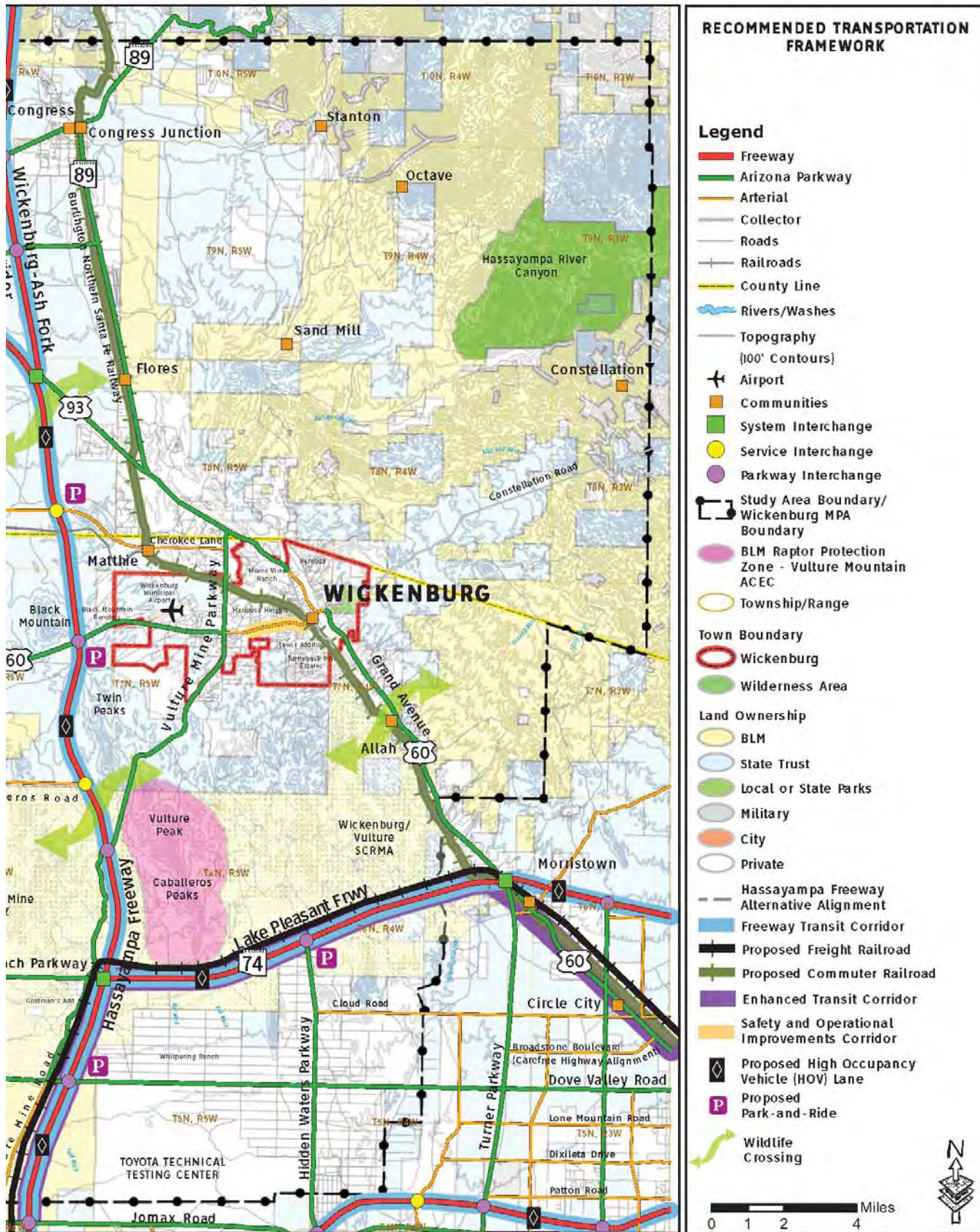
In the early 1960s, ADO T developed the Hassayampa Rest Area on US 60 at milepost 116.1, which is 2.2 miles (by road) southeast of the Hassayampa River Preserve driveway and approximately 5.7 miles (by road) southeast of downtown Wickenburg. The median width in this area is approximately 12 feet. There is no east bound deceleration lane for right-turns into the rest area. West bound access is by an approximately 620 foot long left-turn lane and median break. There is no right-turn acceleration lane exiting the rest area. Rest area frontage along US 60 is approximately 665 feet.

The Hassayampa River Preserve was established by the Nature Conservancy in 1986. The preserve's driveway is located approximately 3.5 miles (by road) southeast of downtown Wickenburg, at milepost 113.9. The preserve is approximately 5 miles long, with over three miles of frontage along US 60. The median width in this area is approximately 70 feet. There is no east bound deceleration lane for right turns into the preserve. West bound access is by an approximately 200 foot long left turn lane and median break. However, the median break, while aligning with a driveway north of the highway, is offset to the west approximately 50 feet from the preserve's driveway. Obvious complications exist for west bound, departing visitors as an acute angle, up-highway crossing of the east bound lanes is required to arrive in the median break. Sight visibility to the west, along the east bound lanes, is approximately 1,000 feet. The posted speed in this area is 65. There is no right-turn acceleration lane exiting the preserve.

HASSAYAMPA VALLEY FRAMEWORK STUDY F



OR THE WICKENBURG AREA



Public/Private Utilities

Water and Sewer

There are no known water or sewer services/facilities within the CRMA. Along Vulture Mine Road, the nearest facilities are located within the Rancho De Los Caballeros development and golf course. The infrastructure consists mainly of water supply and service lines and a water supply tank. These facilities lie approximately 3.8 miles (by road) north of the CRMA and 5.2 miles (by road) north of the proposed Vulture Peak Facilities area. Elevation difference between the water supply tank (elev. 2430 feet +/-) and Vulture Peak Facilities area (elev. 2550 feet +/-) is approximately 120 feet.

There are no known water or sewer services/facilities along Grand Avenue. The Hassayampa River Preserve operates a private well and septic system on property. ADOT operates a private well and septic system for the Hassayampa Rest Area. The well is located in the right-of-way north of the US 60 west-bound lanes.

Dry Utilities

There are no known existing dry utility facilities within the CRMA. There is a designated hi-voltage power line corridor along portions of the park boundary as shown on Figure 4-11. This power line corridor is identified in the *I-10/Hassayampa Valley Roadway Framework Study* (DMJM Harris AECOM, 2007).

Electric (12 kV) and telephone infrastructure is provided for the Rancho De Los Caballeros development, a distant 3.8 miles (by road) north of the CRMA and 5.2 miles (by road) north of the proposed Vulture Peak Facilities area.

Electric (12 kV and 69 kV) and telephone infrastructure is provided along Grand Avenue for the Hassayampa River Preserve, Hassayampa Rest Area, and other private parcels along the highway.

Existing Grazing Leases/BLM Land Use Activities

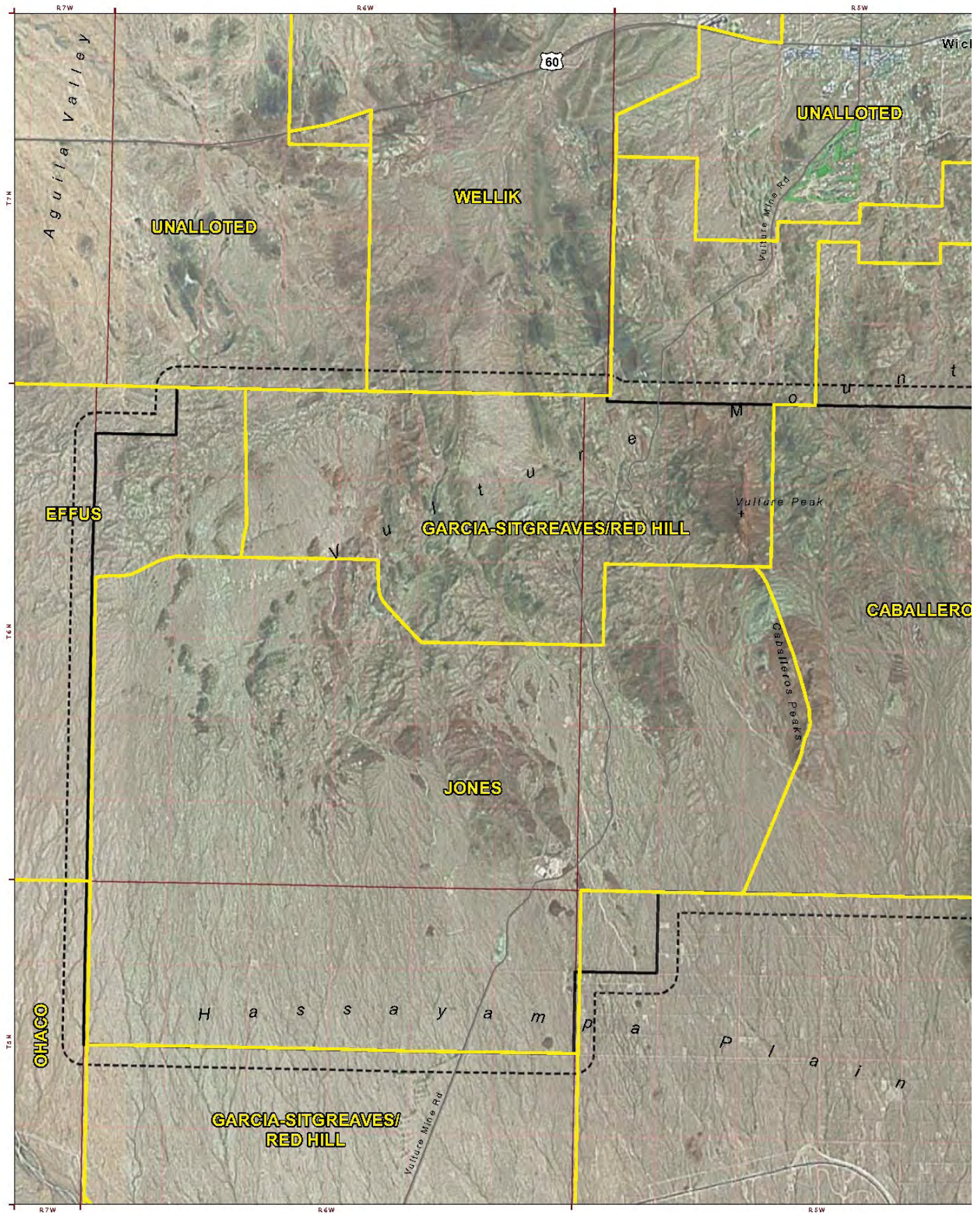
The BLM, which administers about 245 million acres of public lands, manages livestock grazing on 157 million acres of those lands, as guided by federal law. The terms and conditions for grazing on BLM-managed lands (such as stipulations on forage use and season of use) are set forth in the permits and leases issued by the Bureau to public land ranchers.

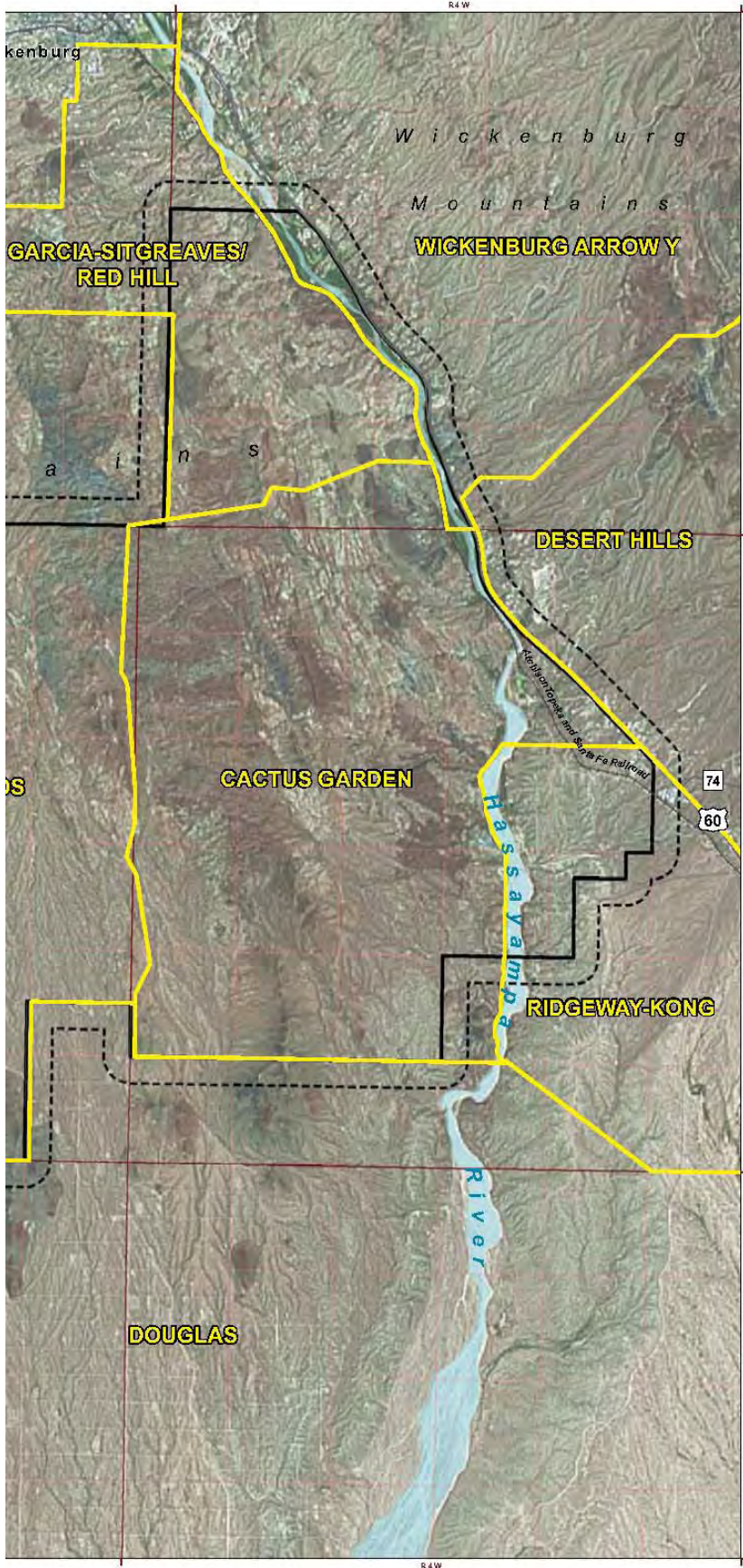
In managing livestock grazing on public rangelands, the BLM's overall objective is to ensure the long-term health and productivity of these lands and to create multiple environmental benefits that result from healthy watersheds. The BLM administers public land ranching in accordance with the Taylor Grazing Act of 1934, and in so doing provides livestock-based economic opportunities in rural communities while contributing to the West's, and America's, social fabric and identity. Together, public lands and the adjacent private ranches maintain open spaces in the fast-growing West, provide habitat for wildlife, offer a myriad of recreational opportunities for public land users, and help preserve the character of the rural West.

Among the key issues that face public land managers today are global climate change, severe wildfires, invasive plant species, and dramatic population increases, including the associated rural residential development that is occurring throughout the West. Grazing, which was one of the earliest uses of public lands when the West was settled, continues to be an important use of those same lands today. Livestock grazing now competes with more uses than it did in the past, as other industries and the general public look to the public lands as sources of both conventional and renewable energy and as places for outdoor recreational opportunities, including off-highway vehicle use.

Livestock grazing can result in impacts on public land resources, but well-managed grazing provides numerous environmental benefits as well. For example, while livestock grazing can lead to increases in some invasive species, well-managed grazing can be used to manage vegetation. Intensively managed "targeted" grazing can control some invasive plant species or reduce the fuels that contribute to severe wildfires. Besides providing such traditional products as meat and fiber, well-managed rangelands and other private ranch lands support healthy watersheds, carbon sequestration, recreational opportunities, and wildlife habitat. Livestock grazing on public lands helps maintain the private ranches that, in turn, preserve the open spaces that have helped write the West's history and will continue to shape this region's character in the years to come ("Fact Sheet on the BLM's Management of Livestock Grazing," n.d.).

There are seven active grazing allotments that occur on and beyond the CRMA: Cactus Garden, Douglas, Effus, Garcia-Sitgreaves/Red Hill, Jones, Los Caballeros, and Ridgeway-Kong, see Figure 4-12. Authorized use predominantly is for cattle with one active horse allotment and one ephemeral sheep allotment. See the "Allotment Master Report" in the Appendix.





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

BLM Grazing Allotments

LEGEND

BLM Grazing Allotments

Allotment Boundary

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



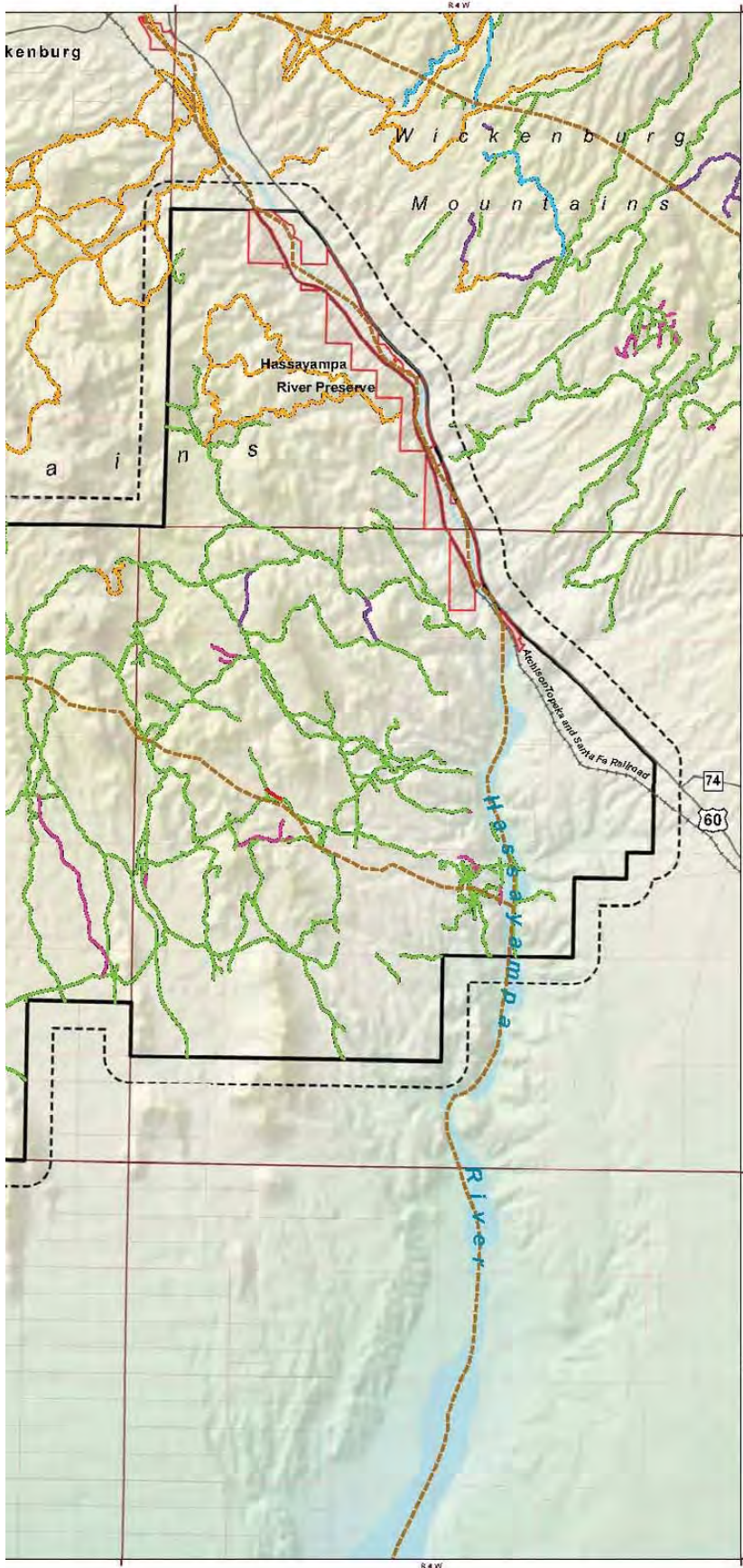
December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCFR, 2010; EPG, 2010.



Figure 4-12





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

BLM Route Designations

LEGEND

BLM Route Designations

- Staging Area
- Primary Road Road (Unpaved)
- Secondary Road (Paved)
- Secondary Road (Unpaved)
- Tertiary Road (Unpaved)
- Reclaiming
- Single Track
- Maricopa Regional Trail (Future)
- ORV Racetrack
- Equestrian Trail

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Vulture Mountain ACEC
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



40 40
40 40
160 Acres



November 2011

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCR, 2010; BPG, 2010.



Figure 4-13

BLM Route Designations

Concurrent with the RAMP planning process, the BLM has been conducting planning for the WCTMP with trail route designations on approximately 100,000 acres of agency managed lands north, east, and south of Wickenburg, which include the Vulture Mountains area.

Alternatives

The No Action Alternative served as the baseline for which the other alternatives were measured. The alternative considered the effects of changing nothing, leaving all of the proposed change points as they are today. This meant that no roads would be closed, no staging areas would be built, and access to public lands would not be secured for the long term.

The Maximum Access Alternative included trails as suggested by the public. The alternative attempted to find a place for all the suggested uses, while protecting natural and cultural resources.

The Maximum Protection Alternative contained a route system that attempted to avoid using sand washes as roads or trails. Reclaiming large areas for the benefit of wildlife and desert tortoise, was a main goal of the alternative.

Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative identifies areas where equestrian, hiking, and motor vehicle recreation are emphasized. Outside the CRMA, the areas northeast of Wickenburg, known as The Box and Red Top Trails RMZ, are to be managed primarily for equestrian experiences. Within the CRMA, the area south and west of Wickenburg, known as the Vulture Mine RMZ, will be managed for vehicle based recreation including racing. The area surrounding Vulture Peak will be managed for hiking, equestrian, and bicycle use with special emphasis on a loop trail around Vulture Peak. See Figure 4-13 for the preferred route designations in the CRMA.

Trail access to the MCPRD facilities would be provided, and trails developed to compliment park facilities. Specifically, new trails would connect the BLM lands south of Wickenburg to the MCPRD facilities along US 60. Non-motorized trails would connect to the MCPRD facilities along Vulture Mine Road at the Vulture Peak Day Use Area. To provide for motorized recreation around the old Vulture Mine airstrip a new access road to the old airstrip would be developed. It would be developed in such a way as to protect private property and historic resources.

Outside the CRMA, The Box RMZ would be managed to improve the riparian condition, protect sensitive resources while allowing access by non-motorized means. Motorized access would be restricted to the south end of that area. Primitive parking, a vault toilet and picnic tables would be provided. Walk-in access would be allowed. Driving access could be allowed at a later date if a partner emerges to assist the BLM in managing access and vehicle based camping impacts.

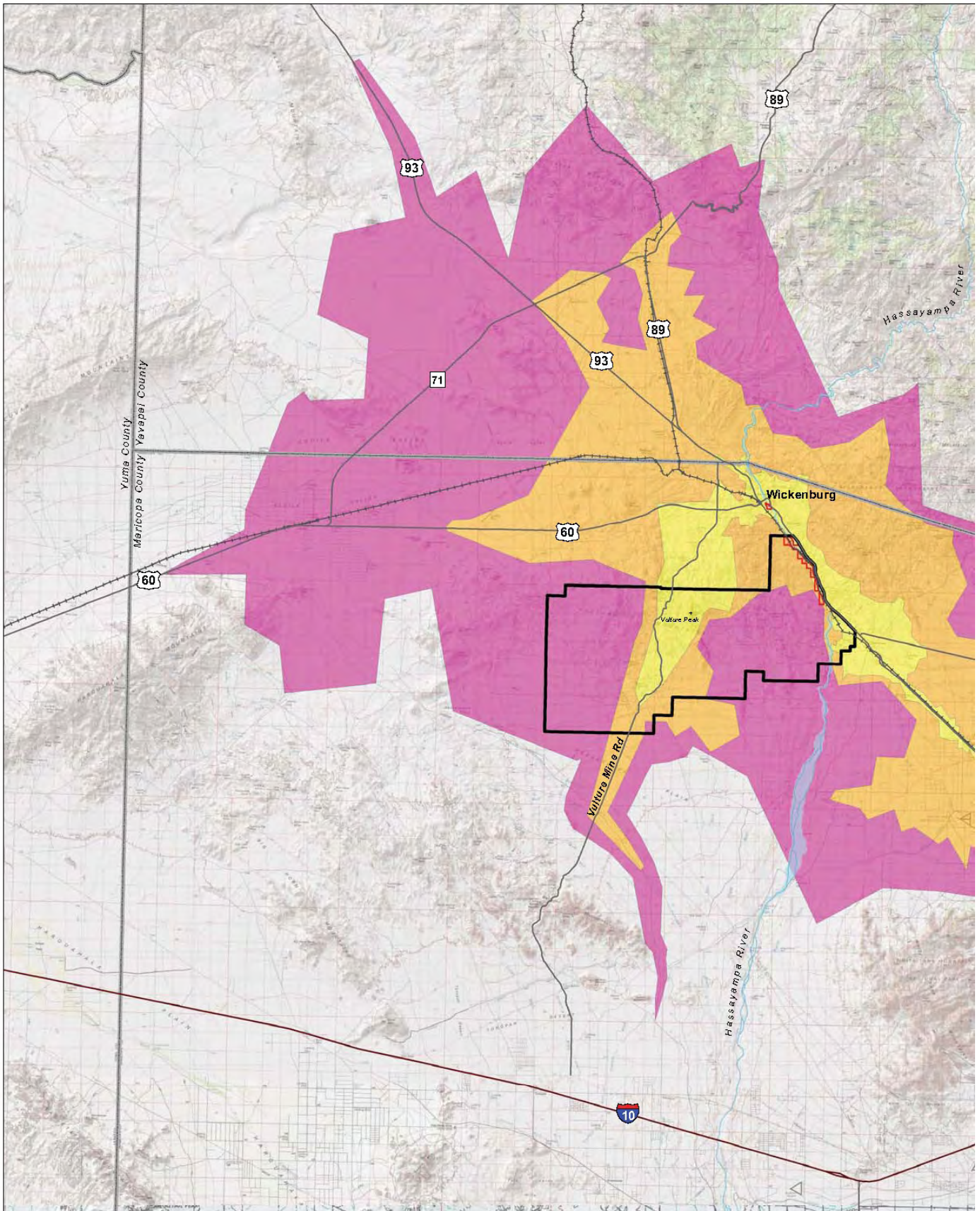


Drive Time Analysis

An analysis was prepared to calculate the areas that are within a 15, 30, and 45 minute drive time to either the Hassayampa River Preserve entrance on US 60 or to the Vulture Peak Trailhead on Vulture Mine Road, whichever is closest, see Figure 4-14. The drive time zones were placed onto a 2000 Census Tract data set to determine census tracts to include in the population evaluation. Census tracts that were more than 50% within the 45 minute zone were kept for the evaluation; those that were less than 50% within the 45 minute zone were omitted. From this evaluation, in 2000 there was an estimated population of 479,382 within a 45 minute drive time. For 2010, there is an estimated population of 743,926 within a 45 minute drive time. The *Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan* evaluated for years 2007 and 2017. Therefore, estimates for this RAMP are based on the population growth estimates based on county-wide growth per Table 4-2 applied to the 2000 and 2010 estimates above.

The resulting population estimates for 2017 is a guide to estimate user demand of the proposed regional park's facilities, compared to similar MCPRD mountain parks (Cave Creek, Estrella Mountain, McDowell Mountain, San Tan Mountain, Utery Mountain, and White Tank Mountain). Table 4-3 is a comparison of the seven similar mountain parks. From this comparison, the population within a 45-minute drive time of Vulture Mountains is estimated in 2017 to be most similar to McDowell Mountain and San Tan Mountain Regional Parks. However, true user demand will be driven by the unique characteristics of each park and the facilities, programs, and/or recreation opportunities provided at each.

Year	Population	Growth (%)	Source
2000	3,072,149		US Census Bureau
2007	3,865,048	25.8% over 2000	US Census Bureau
2010	3,817,117		US Census Bureau
2017	4,295,135	12.5% over 2010	Interpolation between 2010 and 2020 Estimates
2020	4,500,000		ADES Estimate



Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Drive Time Analysis

LEGEND

Drive Times

- 15 Minutes
- 30 Minutes
- 45 Minutes

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Interstate
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Major River
- Lake/Riverbed



June 2011

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010.

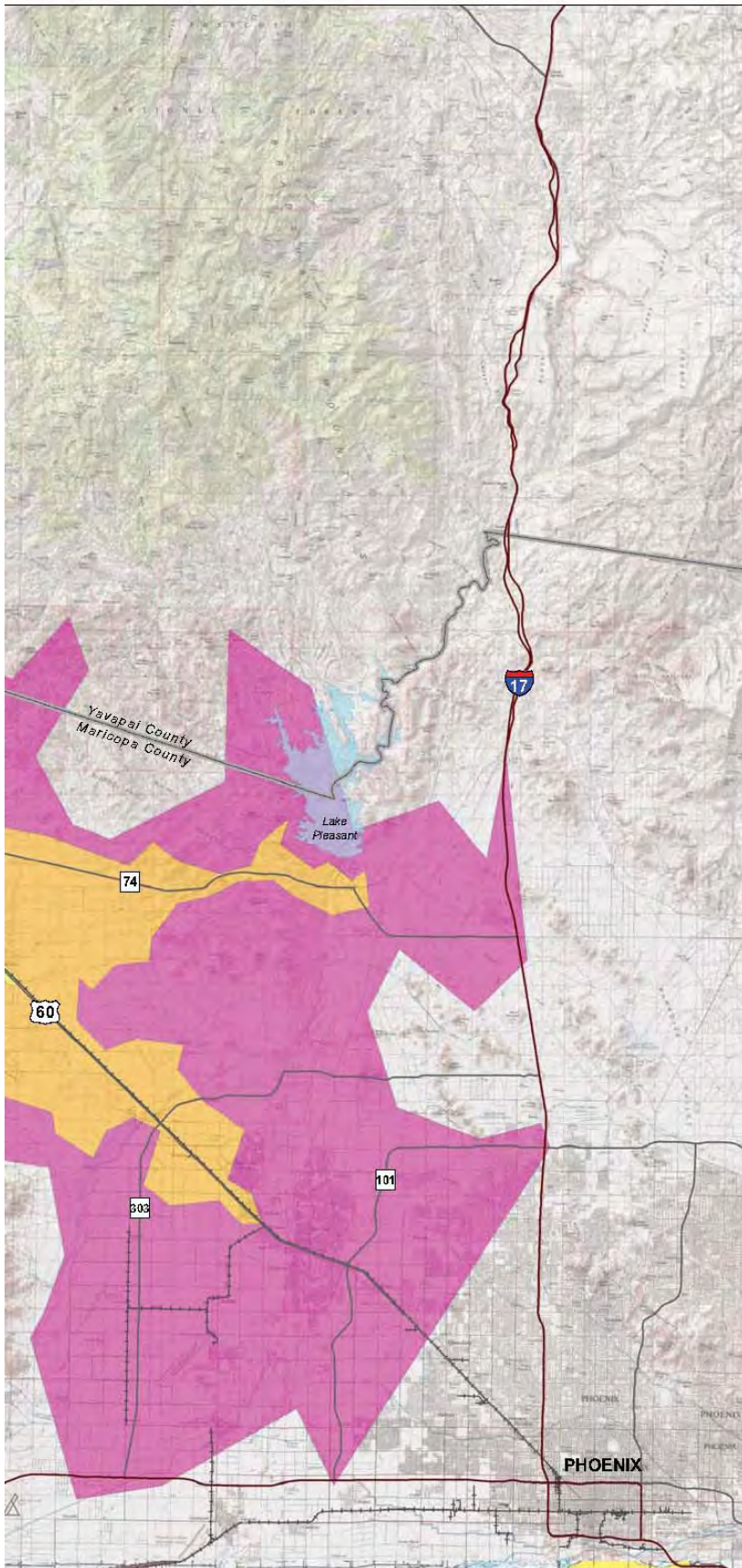


Figure 4-14

**Table 4-3
Drive Time Analysis Population Estimates**

2007	Total Population by Time Segment (Minutes)		
Site	15	30	45
Vulture Mountains			603,063
Cave Creek	41,369	300,625	1,782,630
Estrella Mountain	65,303	801,960	2,638,637
McDowell Mountain	5,673	62,841	714,574
San Tan Mountain	2,460	51,775	590,138
Usery Mountain	106,911	722,720	1,847,195
White Tank Mountain	2,029	160,851	1,133,810
2017	Total Population by Time Segment (Minutes)		
Site	15	30	45
Vulture Mountains			836,917
Cave Creek	61,554	403,135	2,307,644
Estrella Mountain	106,212	1,103,520	3,493,037
McDowell Mountain	7,305	81,303	913,941
San Tan Mountain	3,237	79,292	831,075
Usery Mountain	137,694	978,708	2,436,180
White Tank Mountain	2,782	267,256	1,593,287



Composite Site Analysis

A primary goal for the RAMP is to have the Vulture Mountains and associated public lands be used for public recreation without causing extensive degradation of the natural resources of the CRMA. In fact, sound recreation management and appropriate, limited development will lessen further impacts and improve existing conditions while accommodating additional recreational users, which are expected with future development of the Phoenix metropolitan area. The preceding sections identify the inventory and analysis of data that was readily available for the CRMA, including both natural resources and human created/developed elements. Figure 4-15 portrays a composite analysis of these resources and elements as a guideline for development and public recreation in the CRMA. The composite site analysis provides the framework for future planning decisions to be made with the conservation of the CRMA's resources in mind. This will allow for the sustained use of the land without degradation of the natural resources and the Sonoran Desert's inherent beauty, while still achieving the goals for the proposed recreation area.

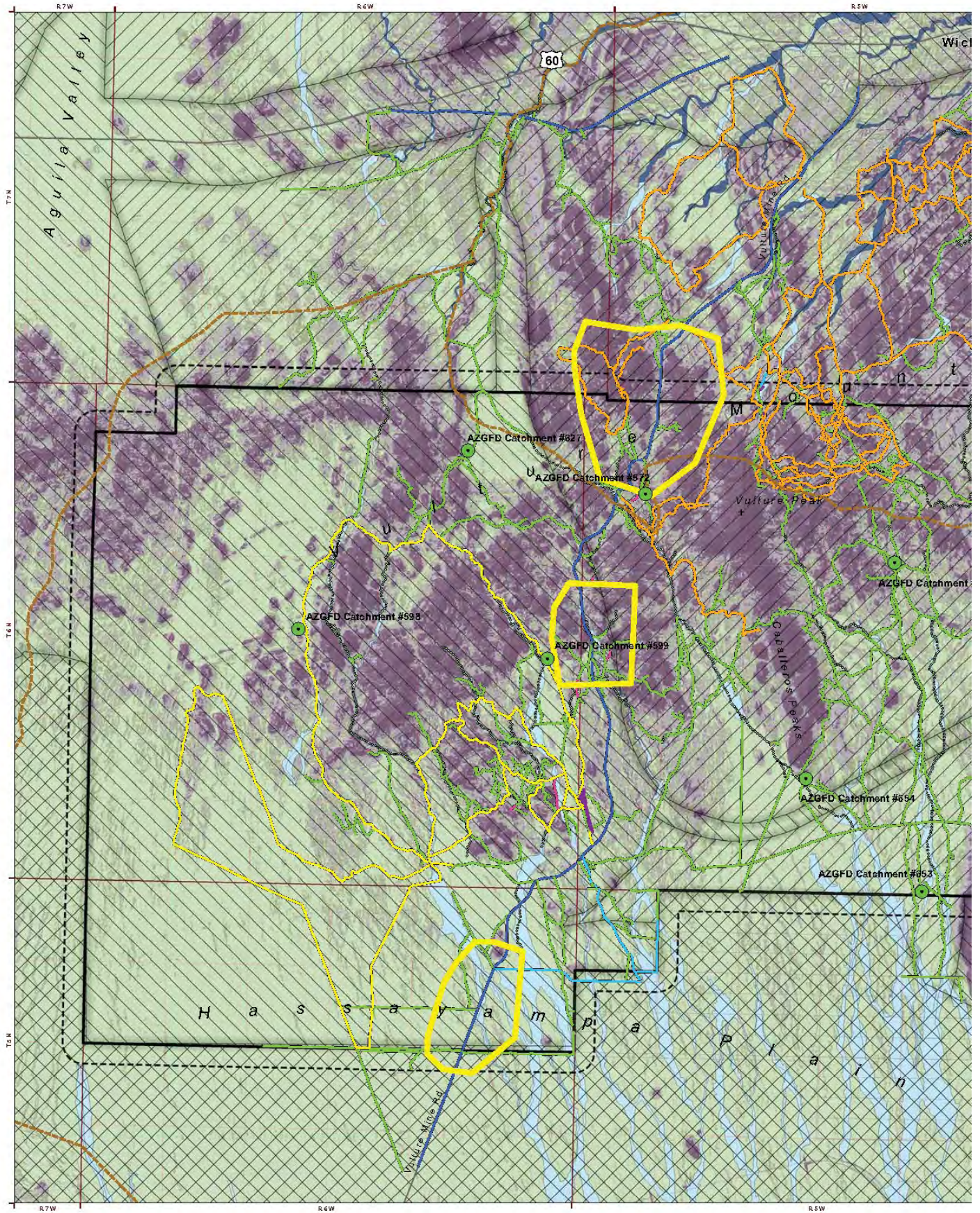
A detailed site analysis should be performed during the planning and design process for future facility development. The site analysis, which produces a comprehensive evaluation of the property, begins with the production of primary base map information including size of area, soil types, topography, and stormwater flow courses, and potentially utilities. Field reconnaissance will provide a thorough firsthand look at the existing physical and environmental components of the site, including its vegetation, existing structures, areas of poor drainage, topography, sensitive ecological features, views, and the general character of their location within the context of the site. Each of these characteristic components is combined to determine the location and orientation of the facility's programmed elements, such as entry, parking, roads, and buildings/structures. The data and information gathered and assessed during the site analysis is used to form an understanding of the facility setting's overall characteristics as well as its existing opportunities and challenges for active and passive recreation development.

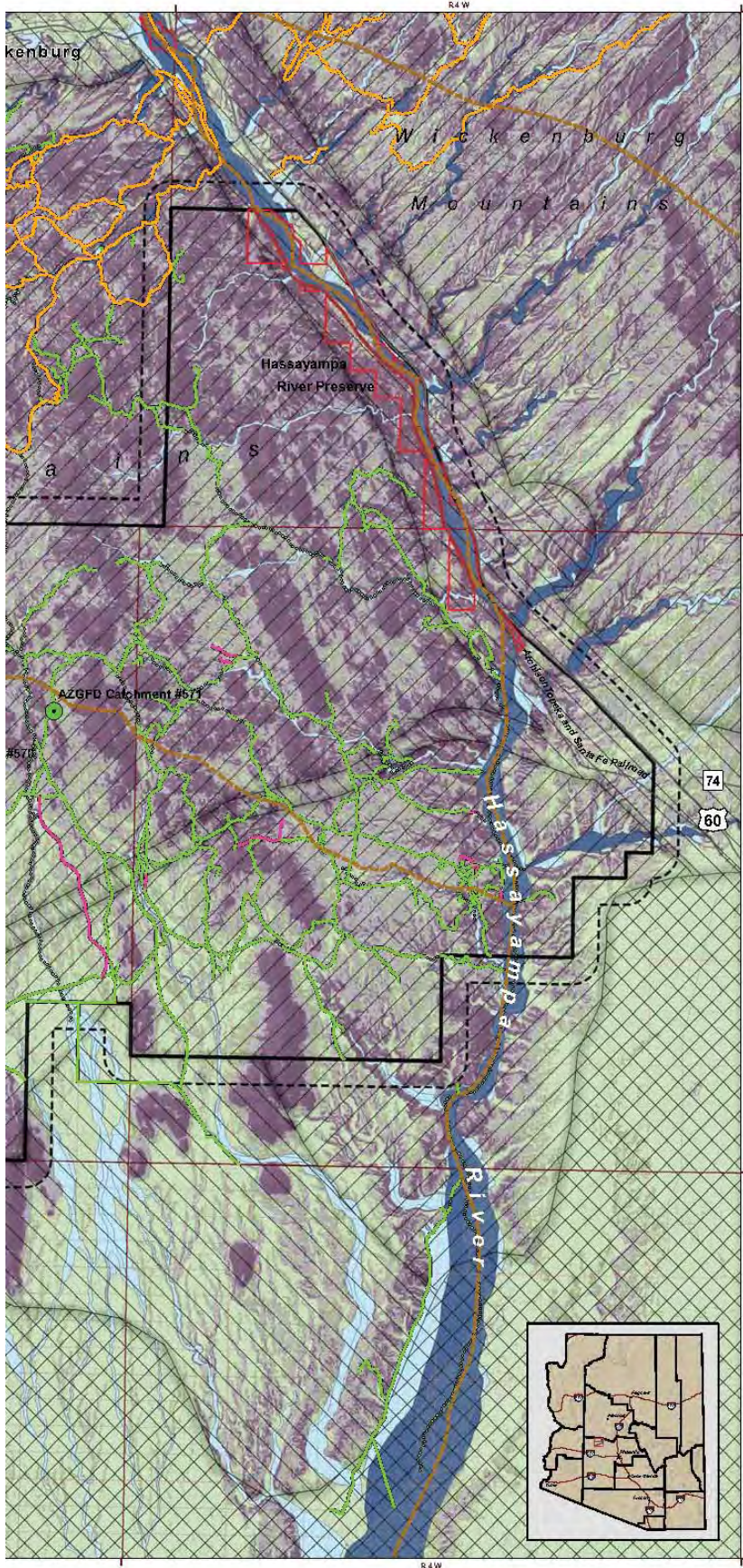
Constraint Analysis and Suitability

Proposed developed features for the CRMA can be divided into two general groups: land consumptive or land accommodative. Land consumptive recreation uses include significant facility development, such as roads, parking, camp grounds, and buildings/structures. Land accommodative recreation uses include activity development, such as trails, trail stops, and an archery field course.

Building upon the data analysis and site analysis, an analysis was conducted to determine environmental resource sensitivities and the suitability of the location of recreation uses. The environmental resource sensitivity analysis evaluated key resources in order to identify areas of low constraint to disturbance. Figure 4-16 presents the findings of the Constraint Analysis and Suitability. Levels of constraint can be identified as low, moderate, or high. The three sensitivity levels are based on resource value of each data set, protective status, and present and future use, and are described below:

- **Low Constraint.** Areas where the resource conflicts that have been identified through the data analysis are minimal. These areas of low sensitivity will be





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Site Analysis

LEGEND

BLM Route Designations

- Staging Area
- Secondary Road (Paved)
- Secondary Road (Unpaved)
- Tertiary Road (Unpaved)
- Tertiary Road in Wash
- Reclaiming
- Reclaiming in Wash
- Maricopa Regional Trail (Future)
- ORV Racetrack
- Equestrian Trail

Flood Zones

- FW
- A, AH, AFW, AEFW, AE
- Water Catchment

Slope (%)

- 0 - 5
- 5 - 10
- 10 - 20
- > 20

VRM Classes

- II
- III
- IV

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Wildlife Habitat Linkage
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed

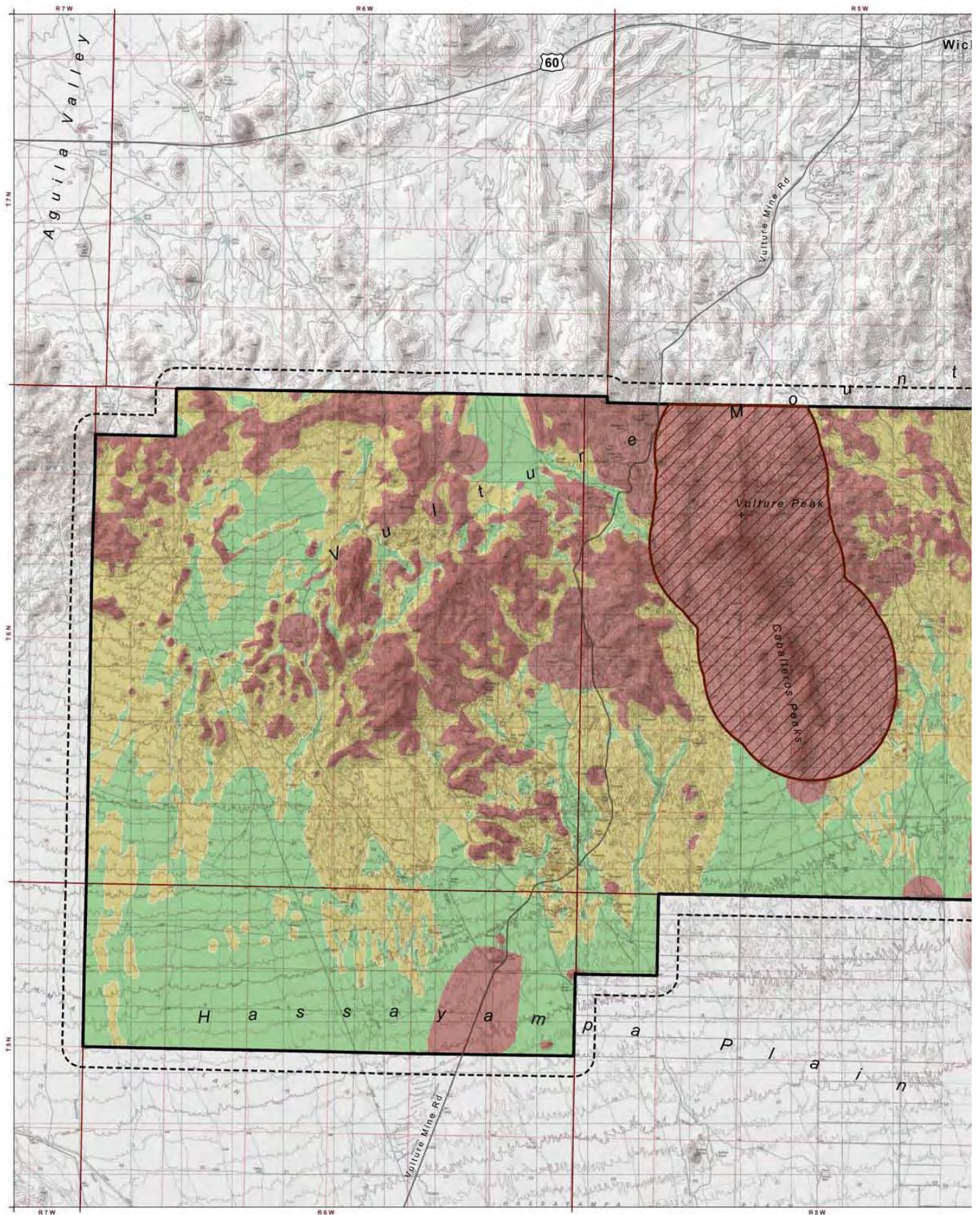


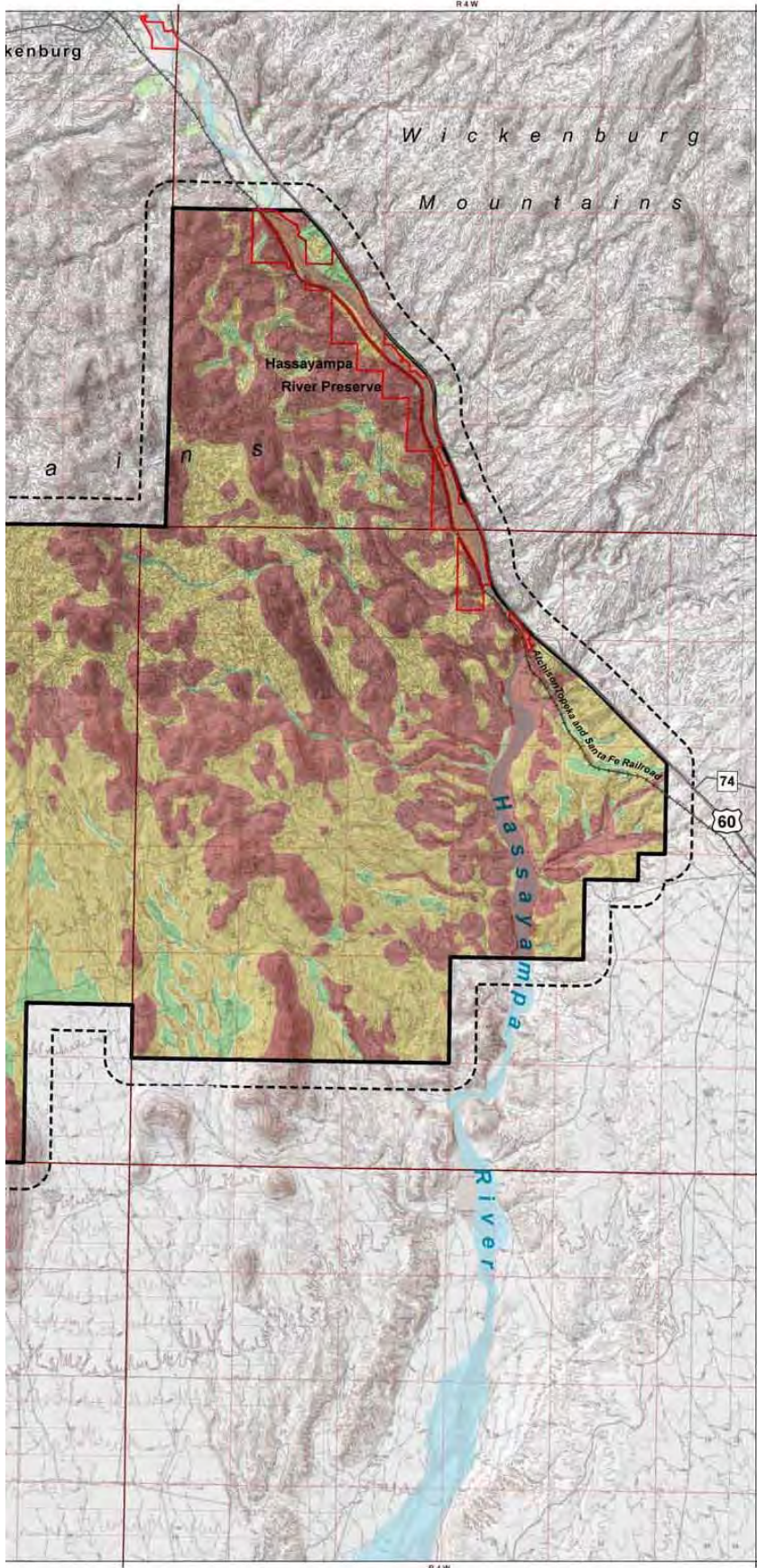
December 2010

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCPR, 2010; EPS, 2010.



Figure 4-15





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Constraints Analysis and Suitability

LEGEND

Levels of Constraint/Sensitivity

- Areas of Low Constraint/Sensitivity**
areas where the resource conflicts that have been identified through the environmental study process are minimal
- Areas of Moderate Constraint/Sensitivity**
areas of potential environmental impact because of important, valued resources; resources assigned special status; some conflict with use
- Areas of High Constraint/Sensitivity**
areas determined to be less suitable because of unique, highly valued, complex or legally protected resources and significant potential conflict with use

Reference Features

- Vulture Mountain CRMA
- 1/4-Mile Study Area
- Vulture Mountain ACEC
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Township and Range
- Section
- Highway/Road
- Railroad
- Hassayampa Riverbed



December 2011

Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCPR, 2010; EPG, 2010



Maricopa County
Parks and Recreation



Figure 4-16

considered to be opportunities for locating both land consumptive and land accommodative recreation uses.

- **Moderate Constraint.** Areas of potential environmental impact because of important, valued resources; resources assigned special status; and some conflict with use. Locations of moderate sensitivity will be considered to be constraint areas, also, and less desirable for locating land consumptive recreation uses. Land accommodative recreation uses may be located in these areas with awareness of proper siting and construction techniques.
- **High Constraint Areas.** Areas determined to be less suitable because of unique, highly valued, complex or legally protected resources, and significant potential conflict with use. Locations of high sensitivity will be considered to be high constraint and undesirable for location of land consumptive recreation uses. Land accommodative recreation uses may be located in these areas with precaution and additional considerations of proper siting and construction techniques.

Mitigation measures that can reduce impacts for areas with constraints include:

- **Site Planning.** Through detailed site planning or configuration, a facility or recreation use could be located in a manner so as to reduce or minimize impacts.
- **Design.** Through the use of design standards or guidelines such as size (height of structures), material selection, and construction details, impacts can be reduced or minimized.
- **Operation/Maintenance.** Operation and maintenance procedures, such as using hand tools in a sensitive area as opposed to heavy machinery, can be used to reduce or minimize potential impacts.
- **Surveys –** Surveys for sensitive species or archaeological resources can be used to identify specific resources that can be avoided, recovered, and/or monitored in order to reduce or minimize impacts.

5. RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

Maricopa County has numerous recreational opportunities for residents, nonresidents, and visitors. The County has an abundance of open spaces and public lands that attract seasonal and year-round visitors. It possesses numerous and varying recreational attractions, such as boating at Lake Pleasant and Tempe Town Lake, hiking and wildlife watching in the many municipal and county mountain parks, and multi-use trails along SRP canals and the Maricopa Regional Trail. Around and within the urban area there exist extensive game lands, a State Park, and private recreational resources, such as zoos and water parks. These resources and opportunities, and others statewide, are key to 87,000 jobs, \$371 million in tax revenues, and \$5.3 billion annually in retail sales and services across Arizona for “human-powered recreation” alone (Bavousett, Brigitte and Gerald D. O’Neill, Jr., 2011).

The *Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (2009)* indicates that Maricopa County is a sponsor of a number of recreational programs and events in its regional park system, currently comprised of 10 regional parks totaling more than 120,000 acres. More than 1.4 million park visitors each year enjoy affordable parks and recreation services available year-round. Wickenburg residents indicated a desire for a county park that is closer to their community. The proposed CRMA would not only provide Wickenburg residents and visitors close access to a Maricopa County park but would allow the park system to keep pace with growing demand, in particular for western Maricopa County.

Recreation Activity Evaluation

The purpose of the RAE was to obtain input from the stakeholders and public regarding the needs and/or desires for recreation facilities and uses in the CRMA. The assessment began by reviewing the *Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (2009)*. Stakeholder input was gathered during the public participation program, along with input from the JPC. Additional information was obtained through public open houses, newsletters, and the project website. Comments and issues gathered during this process were also reviewed, evaluated, and summarized in relation to alternatives. The RAE results are illustrated in Figure 5-1.

As part of this task, regional and surrounding community recreation facilities within a 5-mile buffer area of the CRMA were inventoried to determine service area voids and opportunities, see Figure 4-10. Also, operational and maintenance needs and concerns were discussed with the MCPRD regarding different potential uses.

The RAE results are qualitative based on a rating from low to high, and consider recreation activity in comparison to criteria such as: compliance with MCPRD policy, whether the activity supports the CRMA mission and goals, level of public interest, level of public opposition, regional availability, potential site disturbance, infrastructure requirements, operation and maintenance requirements, and potential for revenue generation. Based on the evaluation, recreation activities were recommended for consideration or elimination from the conceptual alternatives for the park, and presented to the public for review. In general, public comments indicated a desire to leave the park as largely undeveloped with proposed facilities to include trailheads,

Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan Recreation Activity Evaluation

Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Supports the CRMA Mission and Goals		Public Interest	Public Opposition	Regional Availability	Potential Site Disturbance	Infrastructure Requirement	Operations & Maintenance	Revenue Potential	Consider For Master Plan
		Recreation	Education								
Non-motorized (Multi-Use Trails)											
M-1 Secondary Trails (2 ft width)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M-2 Primary Trails (4 ft width, Maricopa Trail)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M-3 Interpretive (4 ft width, pedestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M-4 Barrier-Free (7 ft width, hardened surface)	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M-5 Competitive Tracks (10' width)	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
M-6 Staging Area / Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Recreation	Education	Resource Protection	Public Interest	Public Opposition	Regional Availability	Potential Site Disturbance	Infrastructure Requirement	Operations & Maintenance	Revenue Potential	Consider For Master Plan
M-1 Single Track (Motorcycle)	No	Yes	Partially	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	
M-2 Two Track (OHV)	No	Yes	Partially	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	
M-3 Jeep Tours (Concessionaire)	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	
M-4 Staging Area / Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Partially	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	
M-5 OHV Tot Lot at Staging Area	No	Yes	Partially	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	
M-6 Rock Crawling	No	Yes	Partially	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Possibly	

Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Recreation	Education	Resource Protection	Public Interest	Public Opposition	Regional Availability	Potential Site Disturbance	Infrastructure Requirement	Operations & Maintenance	Revenue Potential	Consider For Master Plan
E-1 Riding Stables (Concessionaire)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
E-2 Trail Staging Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
E-3 Hitching Posts / Stations Along Trails	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
E-4 Water (New or Backcountry Sources)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Arena	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	

Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Recreation	Education	Resource Protection	Public Interest	Public Opposition	Regional Availability	Potential Site Disturbance	Infrastructure Requirement	Operations & Maintenance	Revenue Potential	Consider For Master Plan
P-1 Family Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
P-2 Group Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
P-3 Playgrounds	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Recreation	Education	Resource Protection	Public Interest	Public Opposition	Regional Availability	Potential Site Disturbance	Infrastructure Requirement	Operations & Maintenance	Revenue Potential	Consider For Master Plan
C-1 Backcountry (Pedestrian or Equestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
C-2 Tent Camping (Designated Spaces)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
C-3 RV or Trailer Camping (No Elect. Or Water)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
C-4 RV or Trailer Camping (Elect. and Water)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan
Recreation Activity Evaluation

Facility / Activity	Complies with Current M CPRD Policy	Supports the CRMA Mission and Goals			Public Interest	Public Opposition	Regional Availability	Potential Site Disturbance	Infrastructure Requirement	Operations & Maintenance	Revenue Potential	Consider For Master Plan
		Recreation	Education	Resource Preservation								
C-5 Organized Youth Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Yes
C-6 Group Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Yes
C-7 Group Camping (5 to 10 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Possibly
Recreation Concession												
R-1 Shooting Range (Pistol & Rifle)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Possibly
R-2 Shotgun / Skeet / Trap Sporting Clays	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Possibly
R-3 Archery Range Lanes / Field Course	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Possibly
Commercial Development/Concession	Yes	Yes	Yes	No								Yes
R-4 Example: Paint Ball Range	Yes	Yes	No	No								Possibly
Example: Zip Line	Yes	Yes	Partially	Partially								Yes
Ballooning	No	No	Partially	No								No
Interpretive												
I-1 Interpretive / Education Center (Nature Center, Library, Classrooms, Labs, Etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially								Yes
I-2 Botanical Garden	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially								Yes
I-3 Amphitheater / Performance Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially								Yes
I-4 Wildlife Viewing	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes								Yes
I-5 Viewing of Historical Sites / Features	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially								Yes
Museum (Stand-Alone Regional Facility)	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially								No
Miscellaneous (Other)												
O-1 Hunting	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially								Possibly
O-2 Event Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	No							Possibly
Off-Leash Dog Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Partially							Yes
O-3 Geocaching / Rockhounding	Yes	Yes	Yes	Partially	Partially							Possibly
Rock Climbing	No	Yes	Yes	No								No

restrooms, non-motorized trails, a campground, and similar county park facilities. Continuing OHV use in the CRMA was also a popular activity that was desired. Many comments noted that the park should not be overdeveloped with intensive active recreation facilities that require extensive infrastructure. Further analysis of site specific location, resource suitability, JPC, SAG, and public comments, along with operational and management considerations, helped to refine the recreation activities considered in the preferred alternative.

In general, the basis for determining the results of the RAE came from existing secondary data and information provided by the MCPRD, BLM, stakeholders, and the professional experience of the planning consultants. Additional information was obtained from the public via the open house meetings, website comments, and telephone conversations. The results of the RAE are the basis for the recreational activities and facilities proposed in the alternatives, which are presented in Chapter 6 - Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan.



Revenue Activities

According to the *Parks and Recreation Strategic System Master Plan (2009)*, a unique characteristic of the MCPRD park system is that it is operated as a business enterprise in that it functions primarily on revenues that it collects in the form of park entry, camping, and special use fees, as well as concessionaire revenues. At the time of that document, the park system had 146 revenue generating facilities. Many of those facility types are proposed for the CRMA. These are listed in Table 5-1:

Revenue Generating Facilities	<i>Parks & Rec. Strategic System Master Plan</i>	Proposed in the CRMA
Developed Campgrounds	4 (with 384 sites)	1 (with 80 Sites)
Semi-Developed Campgrounds	1	
Group Campgrounds	6	2
Youth Campgrounds	7	
Ramadas	95	8
Archery Range	1	1, Potentially Concession
Gun Range	1	
Amphitheaters / Outdoor Classrooms	5	1
Rodeo Arena	1	
Visitor / Nature Centers	7	2
Outdoor Recreation Center	1	
Marina	1	
Golf Courses	3	
Paint Ball Facility	1	
Water Park	1	
Model Plane Facilities	2	
Competitive Tracks	3	1, Potentially Concession
Ball Fields	6	
Other Potential Concessions		Equestrian, Zip Line, Etc.

Specific fee categories for entry, amenities, and enhanced amenities will be defined in the CMA. Charged fees will be commensurate with the benefits and services provided to the CRMA visitors and in keeping with the MCPRD User Fee Schedule as it may be revised from time-to-time. In accordance with the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act, use fees in the CRMA for amenities within properties acquired by R&PP leases/patents¹, will be limited to sites that have a specified minimum level of development and meet specific criteria.

¹The Hassayampa River Preserve, if acquired, is a private property and fee restrictions may not apply, such as an entrance fee for individuals under 16 years of age may be charged as is standard for other Maricopa County parks.

Amenity Recreation Fee

An amenity recreation fee will generally be charged by itself, or in addition to an entrance fee, for:

- A destination visitor or interpretive center that provides a broad range of interpretive services, programs, and media
- An area--
 - (A) That provides significant opportunities for outdoor recreation
 - (B) That has substantial public investments
 - (C) Where fees can be efficiently collected
 - (D) That contains all of the following amenities:
 - (i) Designated developed parking
 - (ii) A permanent toilet facility
 - (iii) A permanent trash receptacle
 - (iv) Interpretive sign, exhibit, or kiosk
 - (v) Picnic tables
 - (vi) Security services

Enhanced Amenity Recreation Fee

Additionally, an enhanced amenity recreation fee will generally be charged by itself, or in addition to an entrance fee, for:

- Use of developed campgrounds that provide at least a majority of the following:
 - (A) Tent or trailer spaces
 - (B) Picnic tables
 - (C) Drinking water
 - (D) Access roads
 - (E) The collection of the fee by an employee or agent of the MCPRD
 - (F) Reasonable visitor protection
 - (G) Refuse containers
 - (H) Toilet facilities
 - (I) Simple devices for containing a campfire
- Use of hookups for electricity, cable, or sewer
- Use of sanitary dump stations
- Participation in an enhanced interpretive program or special tour
- Use of reservation system

Prohibited Fees

In general, the Act prohibits certain fees for:

- General access to BLM areas
- Horseback riding, walking through, or driving through areas where no facilities or services are used
- Access to overlooks or scenic pullouts
- Undesignated parking areas where no facilities are provided
- Picnicking along roads or trails
- Individuals under 16 (entrance or amenity recreation fee)

6. COOPERATIVE RECREATION MANAGEMENT AREA MASTER PLAN

Alternatives

Four alternatives were developed using the data analysis, inventory, recreation needs assessment, and initial public and stakeholder input. These were then presented to the stakeholders and public for review as part of the planning and public involvement process. The alternatives ranged from Alternative A - No Action, to progressively increasing levels of passive and active recreation opportunities and supporting development for Alternatives B, C, and D. All of the alternatives were compatible with the park system's mission and vision. Public review included both public meeting presentations and on-line access to the public meeting materials at the MCPRD's Vulture Mountains webpage (<http://www.maricopa.gov/parks/vulturemtn.aspx>). Attendees to the meetings provided written input. On-line visitors were asked to respond via an on-line questionnaire. See Chapter 3 - Overview of the Master Planning Process for a discussion of the public involvement process and directions and suggestions given related to the alternatives.

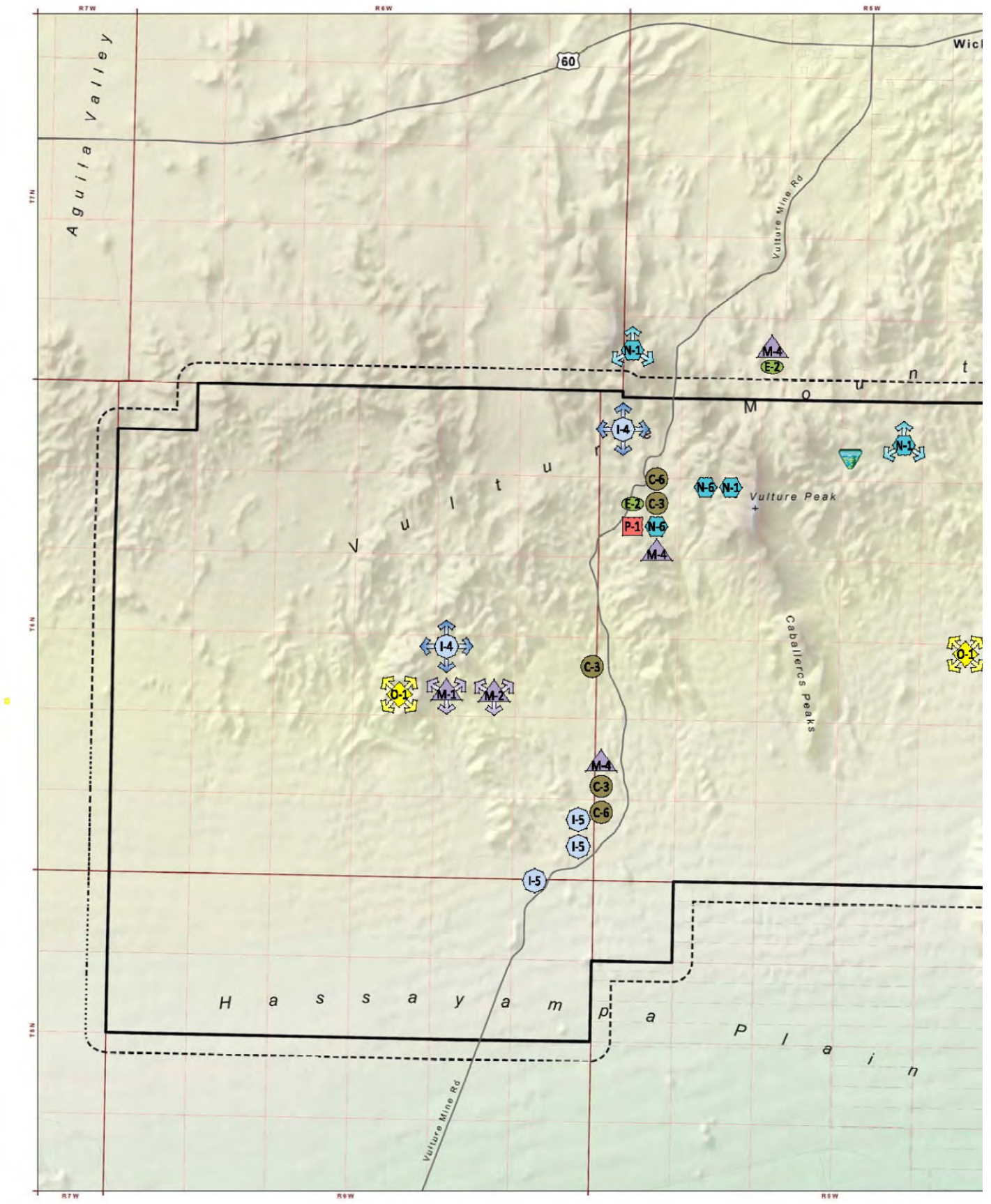
Alternative A - No Action

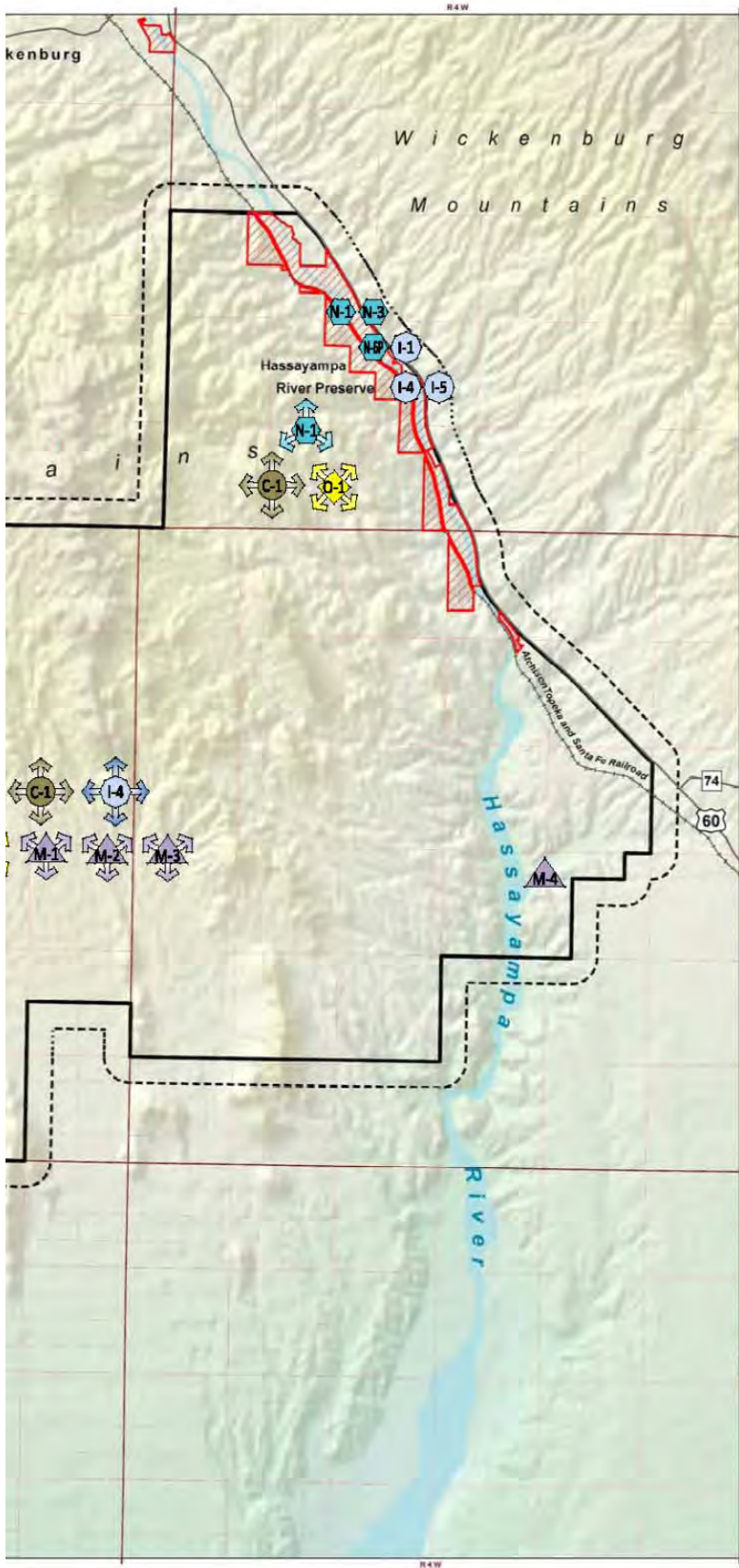
Alternative A was established as a No Action Alternative, see Figure 6-1, as a base for comparison of the other alternatives. The No Action Alternative reflected conditions that are expected to continue to exist if the Vulture Mountains Regional Park and Recreation Area is not adopted. It provided a basis for comparison of the other alternatives, which indicate progressively increasing levels of recreation, development, and oversight by the MCPRD and BLM. It included land uses and facilities that presently occur in the CRMA. The No-Action Alternative also included existing, but separately occurring recreation opportunities, such as the Hassayampa River Preserve.

Opportunities and Actions Common to Alternatives B, C, and D

If the creation of a regional park is the desire of the public, and it is authorized by the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, it is the intent of the MCPRD to provide recreation experiences in the CRMA that are consistent with the department's other parks as well as offer additional opportunities that do not otherwise occur in the Maricopa County park system. In keeping with their site development standards, facility development will:

- Fit within the context of the ecological, physical, and cultural settings of the CRMA
- Be generally minimalist in nature
- Harmonize with, or complement, the character of the landscape setting
- Whenever possible, be in close proximity to existing roadways, infrastructure, and supporting facilities

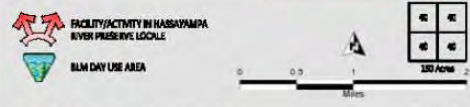




Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Alternative A - No Action

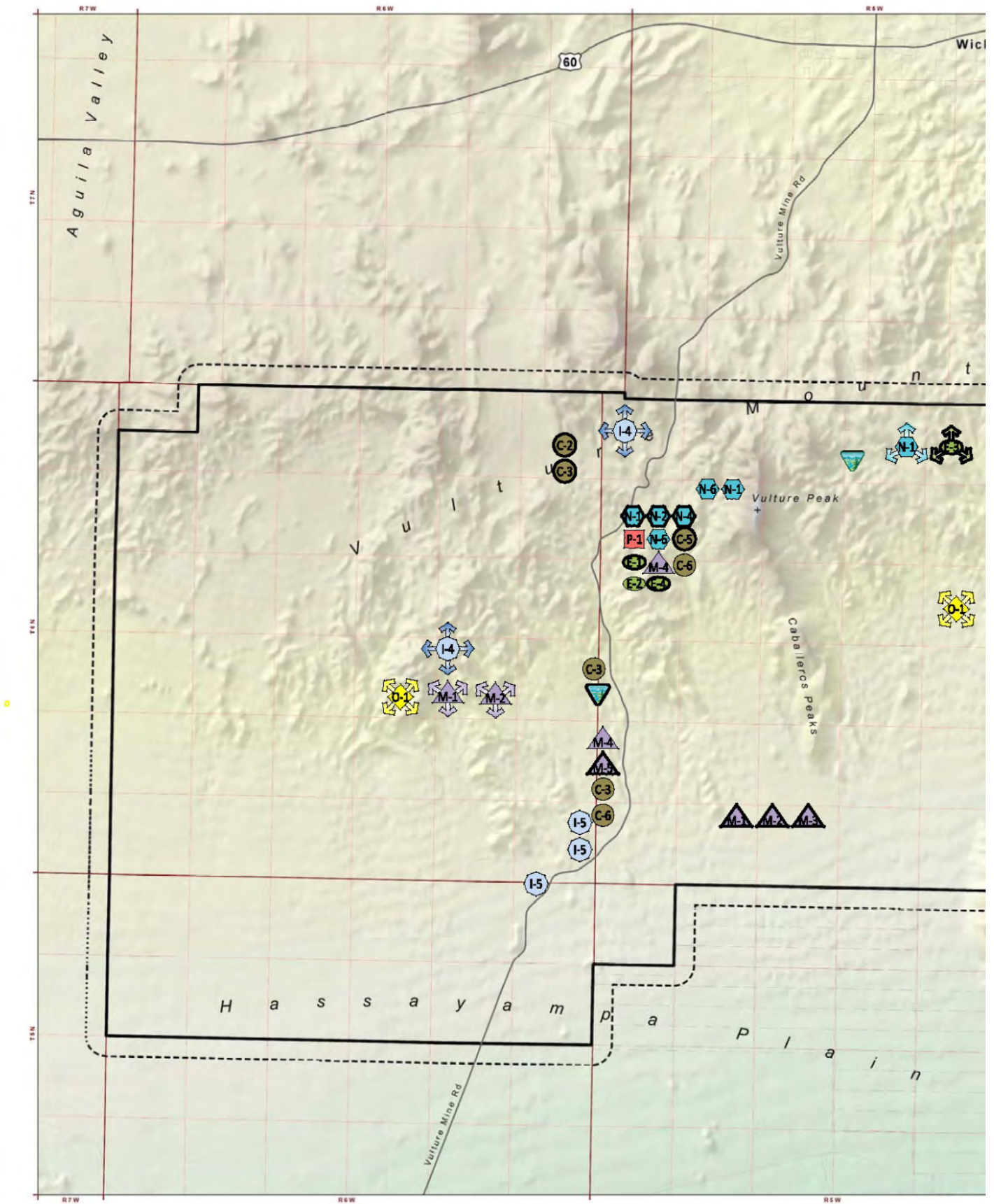
	Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCPSP Policy	Consider For Master Plan	Alternative A No Action	
GENERAL SITE	Non-motorized (Multi-use Trails)				
N-1	Secondary Trails (2 ft width)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
N-2	Primary Trails (4 ft width, Maricopa Trail)	Yes	Yes	No	
N-3	Interpretive (4 ft width, pedestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
N-4	Barrier-Free (2 ft width, hardened surface)	Yes	Yes	No	
N-5	Competitive Trails (10' width)	Yes	Yes	No	
THROUGHOUT AREA	Staging Area / Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Yes	
N-6P	Staging Area / Trailhead (Pedestrian Only)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
GENERAL SITE	Motorist				
M-1	Single Track (Motorcycle)	No	Possibly	Yes	
M-2	Two Track (DM)	No	Possibly	Yes	
M-3	Keop Tours (Concessions)	No	Possibly	Yes	
M-4	Staging Area / Trailhead	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
M-5	Off-Trail Lot at Staging Area	No	Possibly	No	
M-6	Rock Crawling	No	Possibly	No	
GENERAL SITE	Equestrian				
E-1	Riding Stables (Concessions)	Yes	Yes	No	
E-2	Trail Staging Area	Yes	Yes	Yes	
E-3	Hitching Posts / Stations Along Trail	Yes	Yes	No	
THROUGHOUT AREA	E-4	Water (New or Backcountry Sources)	Yes	Yes	No
	Rest	Yes	No	No	
GENERAL SITE	Picnic Areas				
P-1	Family Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	
P-2	Group Areas	Yes	Yes	No	
P-3	Playgrounds	Yes	Yes	No	
GENERAL SITE	Camping				
C-1	Backcountry (Pedestrian or Equestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
C-2	Ten (Camping Designated Spaces)	Yes	Yes	No	
C-3	Rv or Trailer Camping (No Elect. Or Water)	Yes	Yes	Unapproved / Unintended	
C-4	Rv or Trailer Camping (Elect. and Water)	Yes	Yes	No	
C-5	Organized Youth Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	No	
THROUGHOUT AREA	C-6	Group Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Unapproved / Unintended
	C-7	Group Camping (6 to 10 Acres)	Yes	Possibly	No
GENERAL SITE	Recreation Concession				
R-1	Shooting Range (Pistol & Rifle)	Yes	Possibly	No	
R-2	Shooting / Sling / Trap / Sporting Clays	Yes	Possibly	No	
R-3	Archery Range / Lanes / Field Course	Yes	Possibly	No	
R-4	Commercial Development	Yes	Yes	No	
	Example: Paint Ball Range	Yes	Possibly	No	
	Example: Zip Line	Yes	Yes	No	
	Balloon Rig	No	No	No	
GENERAL SITE	Interpretive				
I-1	Interpretive / Education Center (Nature Center, Library, Classrooms, Labs, Etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes	
I-2	Botanical Garden	Yes	Yes	No	
I-3	Amphitheater	Yes	Yes	No	
THROUGHOUT AREA	I-4	Wildlife Viewing	Yes	Yes	Unapproved / Unintended
	I-5	Viewing of Historical Sites / Features	Yes	Yes	Unapproved / Unintended
	I-6	Museum	Yes	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Miscellaneous (Other)				
D-1	Hike Blog	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
D-2	Event Area	Yes	Possibly	No	
D-3	Off-Leash Dog Area	Yes	Yes	No	
THROUGHOUT AREA	D-4	Geocaching / Rockhounding	Yes	Possibly	No
	Rock Climbing	No	No	No	

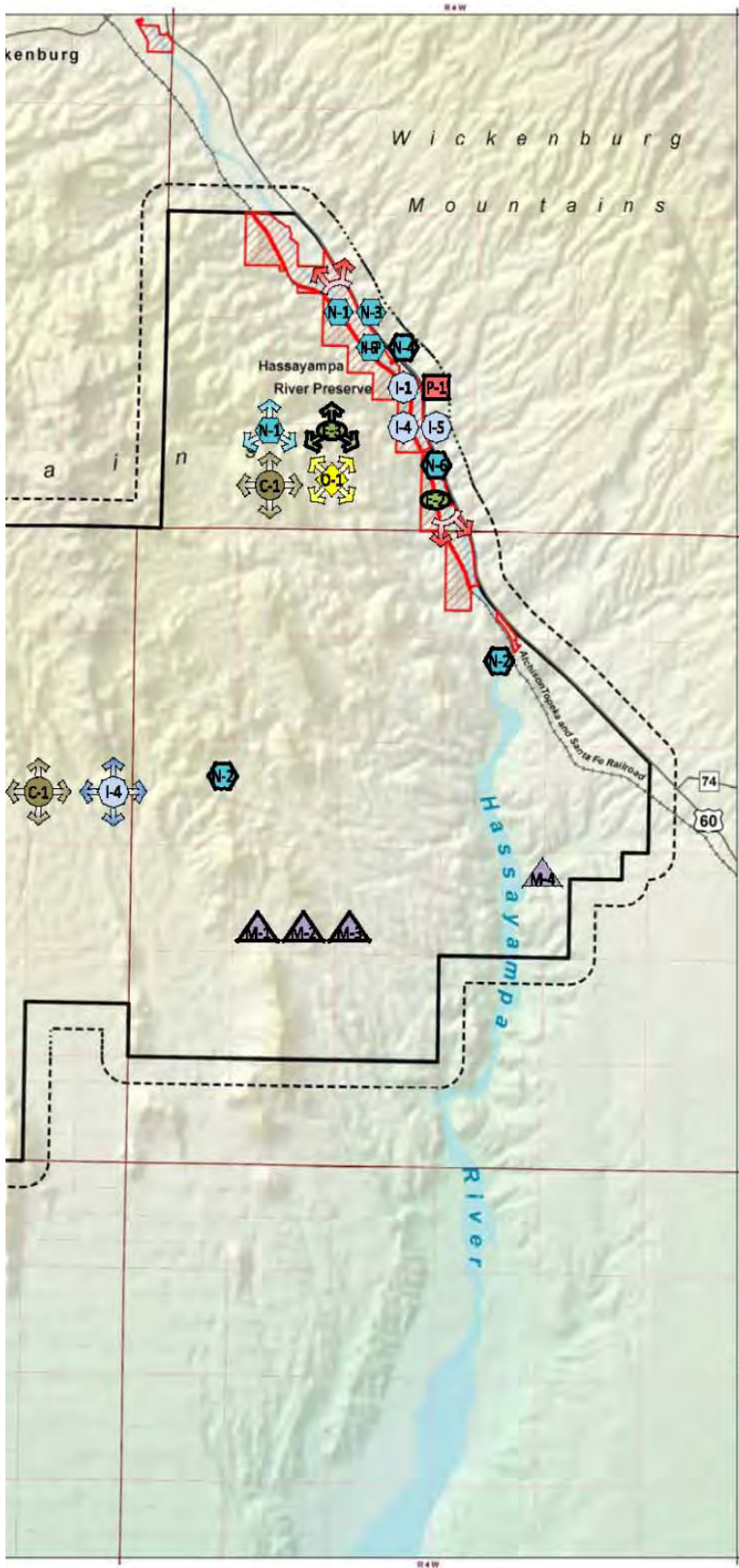


Sources: BLM, 2010 ARPD, 2010, MCPSP, 2010, EPD, 2010
September 2021



Figure 6-1





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Alternative B - Passive Use/ Minimal Development

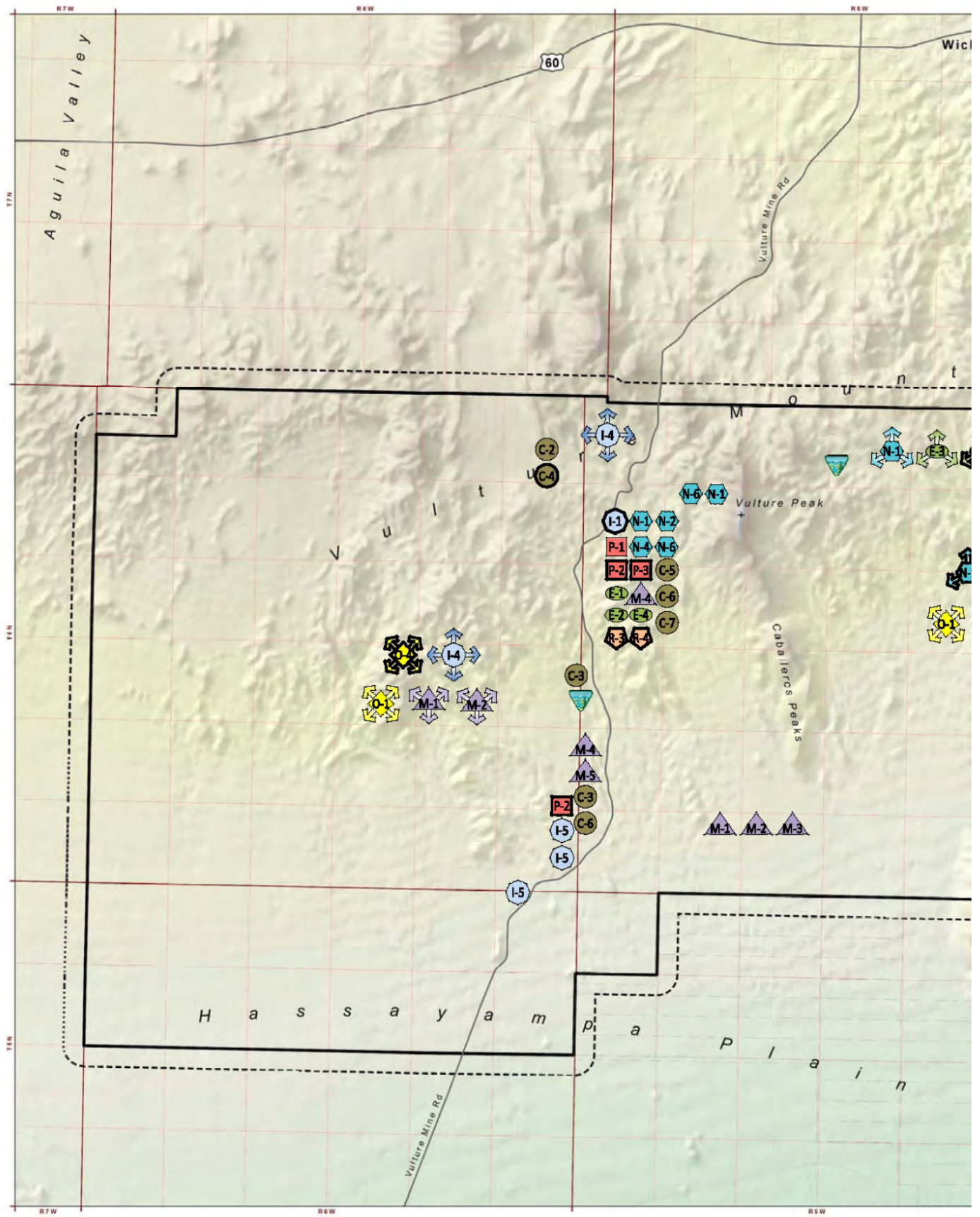
	Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCPRO Policy	Consider for Master Plan	Alternative B Passive Use/ Minimal Development
GENERAL SITE	Non-motorized (All-Use Trails)			
N	N-1 Secondary Trails (2 ft width)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-2 Primary Trails (4 ft width, Maricopa Trail)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-3 Interpretive (4 ft width, pedestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-4 Barrier-Free (7 ft width, hardened surface)	Yes	Yes	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	N-5 Competitive Tracks (10' width)	Yes	Yes	No
	N-6 Staging Area/Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-6P Staging Area/Trailhead (Pedestrian Only)	Yes	Yes	Yes
GENERAL SITE	Motorized			
M	M-1 Single Track (Motorcycle)	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-2 Two Track (OHV)	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-3 Jeep Tours (Concessionaire)	No	Possibly	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	M-4 Staging Area/Trailhead	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	M-5 OHV Tot/Lot/staging Area	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-6 RockCrawling	No	Possibly	No
GENERAL SITE	Equestrian			
E	E-1 Riding Stables (Concessionaire)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	E-2 Trail Staging Area	Yes	Yes	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	E-3 Hitching Posts / Stations Along Trails	Yes	Yes	Yes
	E-4 Water (New or Backcountry sources)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	E-5 Areas	Yes	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Picnic Areas			
P	P-1 Family Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
	P-2 Group Areas	Yes	Yes	No
	P-3 Playgrounds	Yes	Yes	No
GENERAL SITE	Camping			
C	C-1 Backcountry (Pedestrian or Equestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-2 Tent Camping (Designated spaces)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-3 RV or Trailer Camping (No Elect. Or Water)	Yes	Yes	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	C-4 RV or Trailer Camping (Elect. and Water)	Yes	Yes	No
	C-5 Organized Youth Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-6 Group Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-7 Group Camping (6 to 10 Acres)	Yes	Possibly	No
GENERAL SITE	Recreation Concessions			
R	R-1 Shooting Range (Pistol & Rifle)	Yes	Possibly	No
	R-2 Shotgun / Shotgun / Trap Sporting Clays	Yes	Possibly	No
	R-3 Archer / Range Lanes / Field Course	Yes	Possibly	No
	Commercial Development	Yes	Yes	No
	R-4 Example: Paintball Range	Yes	Possibly	No
	Example: Zip Line	Yes	Yes	No
	Ballooning	No	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Interpretive			
I	I-1 Interpretive / Education Center (Nature Center, Library, Classrooms, Labs, Etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	I-2 Botanical Garden	Yes	Yes	No
	I-3 Amphitheater	Yes	Yes	No
	I-4 Wildlife Viewing	Yes	Yes	Interpretive / Unimproved
THROUGHOUT AREA	I-5 Viewing of Historical Sites / Features	Yes	Yes	Interpretive / Unimproved
	Museum	Yes	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Miscellaneous (Other)			
O	O-1 Rustling	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	O-2 Event Area	Yes	Possibly	No
	O-3 Off-Leash Dog Area	Yes	Yes	No
THROUGHOUT AREA	O-4 Geocaching / Rockclimbing	Yes	Possibly	No
	RockClimbing	No	No	No

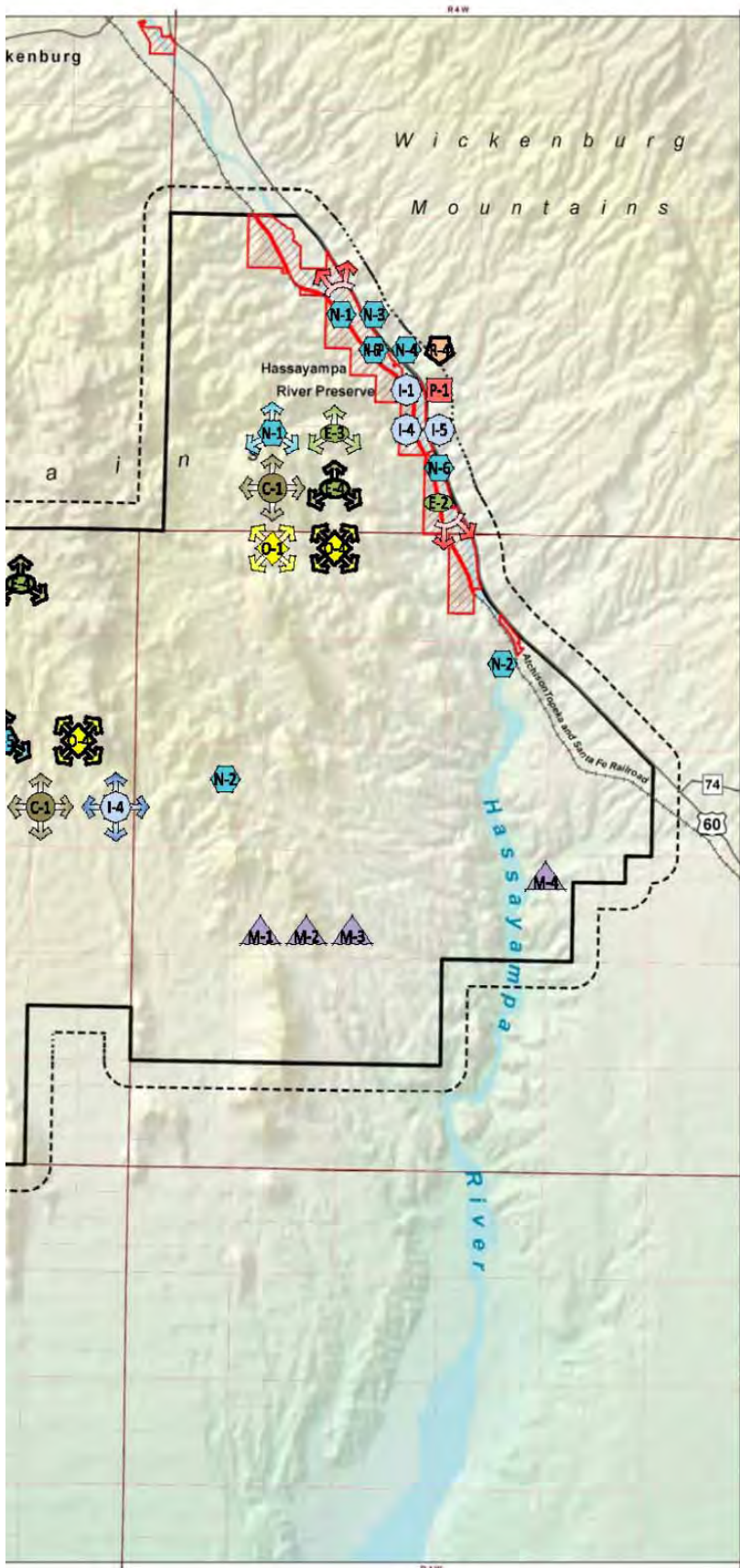


Sources: BLM, 2016; AGFD, 2010; MCPRO, 2010; EPD, 2010

September 2011

Figure 6-2

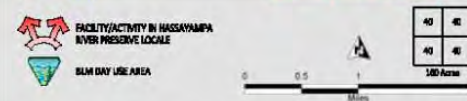




Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Alternative C - Mixed Use/ Moderate Development

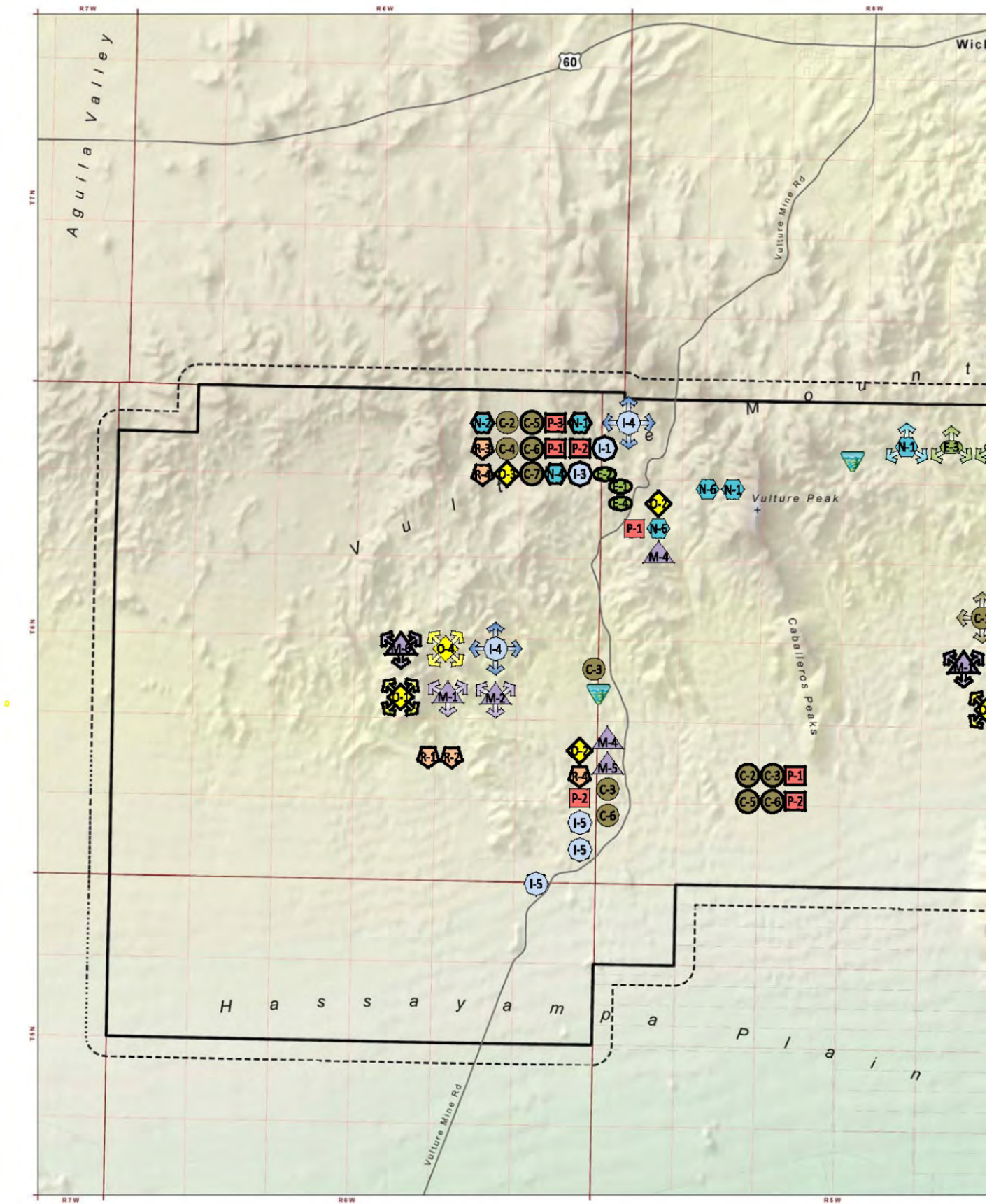
	Facility/Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Consider for Master Plan	Alternative C Mixed Use/Moderate Development
GENERAL SITE	Non-motorized Multi-Use Trails			
N-1	Secondary Trails (≥ 8' width)	Yes	Yes	Yes
N-2	Primary Trails (4' width, Maricopa Trail)	Yes	Yes	Yes
N-3	Interpretive (4' width, pedestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes
N-4	Barrier-Free (7' width, hardened surface)	Yes	Yes	Yes
N-5	Competitive Tracks (0.7' width)	Yes	Yes	Yes
N-6	Staging Area / Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Yes
N-6P	Staging Area / Trailhead (pedestrian only)	Yes	Yes	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	Motorized			
M-1	Single Track (Motorcycle)	No	Possibly	Yes
M-2	Two Track (OHV)	No	Possibly	Yes
M-3	Loop Tours (Concessions)	No	Possibly	Yes
M-4	Staging Area / Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Yes
M-5	OHV Tot Lot at Staging Area	No	Possibly	Yes
M-6	Rock/Crawling	No	Possibly	No
THROUGHOUT AREA	Equestrian			
E-1	Riding Stables (Concessions)	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-2	Trail Staging Area	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-3	Hitching Posts / Stations Along Trails	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-4	Water (New or Backcountry Sources)	Yes	Yes	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	Picnic Areas			
P-1	Family Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
P-2	Group Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
P-3	Playgrounds	Yes	Yes	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	Camping			
C-1	Backcountry (pedestrian or equestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C-2	Tent Camping (Designated Spaces)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C-3	RV or Trailer Camping (No Electric or Water)	Yes	Yes	No
C-4	RV or Trailer Camping (Electric and Water)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C-5	Organized Youth Camping (0 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C-6	Group Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes
C-7	Group Camping (6 to 10 Acres)	Yes	Possibly	Yes
THROUGHOUT AREA	Recreation Concessions			
R-1	Shooting Range (Pistol & Rifle)	Yes	Possibly	No
R-2	Shooting / Slingshot / Trap / Sporting Clays	Yes	Possibly	No
R-3	Archery Range / Laser / Field Course	Yes	Possibly	Yes
R-4	Commercial Development	Yes	Yes	No
R-4	Example: Paint Ball Range	Yes	Possibly	Yes
R-4	Example: Zip Line	Yes	Yes	Yes
R-4	Balloon	No	No	No
THROUGHOUT AREA	Interpretive			
I-1	Interpretive / Education Center (Nature Center, Library, Classrooms, Labs, Etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
I-2	Botanical Garden	Yes	Yes	No
I-3	Amphitheater	Yes	Yes	No
I-4	Wildlife Viewing	Yes	Yes	Unfunded
I-5	Viewing of Historical Sites / Features	Yes	Yes	Yes
I-6	Museum	Yes	No	No
THROUGHOUT AREA	Miscellaneous Other			
O-1	Hunting	Yes	Possibly	Yes
O-2	Event Areas	Yes	Possibly	No
O-3	Off-Leash Dog Area	Yes	Yes	No
O-4	Geocaching / Rockhounding	Yes	Possibly	Lease Areas
THROUGHOUT AREA	Rock Climbing	No	No	No

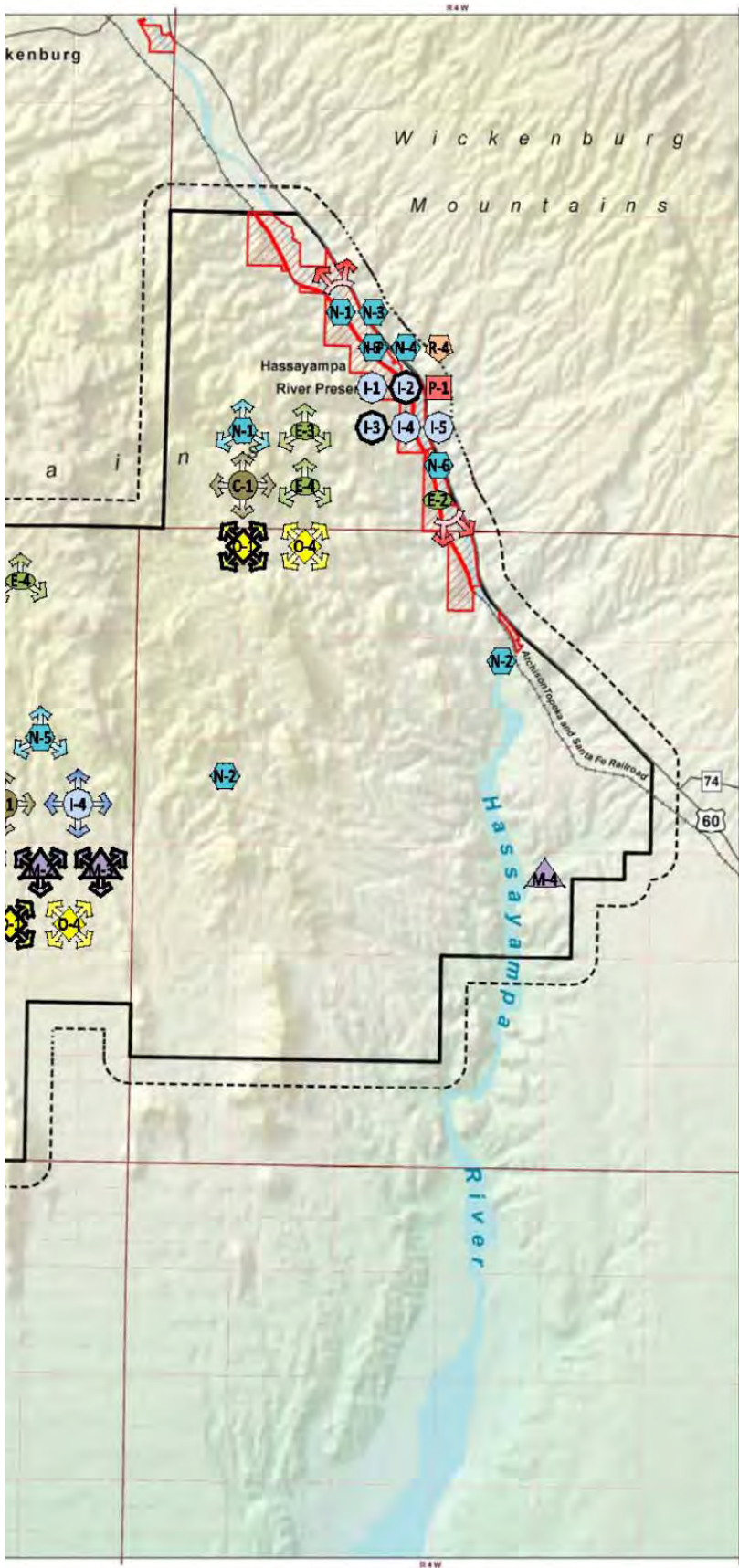


Source: BLM, 2010 AGFD, 2010, MCRP, 2010, EPD, 2010. September 2011



Figure 6-3





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Alternative D - Active Use/ Most Development

	Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Consider for Master Plan	Alternative D Active Use/ Most Development
GENERAL SITE	Non-motorized Multi-Use Trails			
THROUGHOUT AREA	N-1 Secondary Trails (2 ft width)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-2 Primary Trails (4 ft width, Maricopa Trail)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-3 Interpretive (4 ft width, pedestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-4 Barrier-Free (7 ft width, hardened surface)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-5 Competitive Tracks (10' width)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-6 Staging Area/ Trailhead	Yes	Yes	Yes
	N-6P Staging Area/ Trailhead (pedestrian Only)	Yes	Yes	Yes
GENERAL SITE	Motorized			
THROUGHOUT AREA	M-1 Single Track (Motorcycle)	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-2 Two Track (OHV)	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-3 Jeep Tours (Concessionaire)	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-4 Staging Area/ Trailhead	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	M-5 OHV/Trailhead Staging Area	No	Possibly	Yes
	M-6 Rock Crawling	No	Possibly	Yes
GENERAL SITE	Equestrian			
THROUGHOUT AREA	E-1 Riding Stables (Concessionaire)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	E-2 Trail Staging Area	Yes	Yes	Yes
	E-3 Hitching Posts / Stations Along Trails	Yes	Yes	Yes
	E-4 Water (New or Backcountry sources)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Area	Yes	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Picnic Areas			
THROUGHOUT AREA	F-1 Family Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
	F-2 Group Areas	Yes	Yes	Yes
	F-3 Playgrounds	Yes	Yes	Yes
GENERAL SITE	Camping			
THROUGHOUT AREA	C-1 Backcountry (Pedestrian or Equestrian)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-2 Tent Camping (designated spaces)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-3 RV or Trailer Camping (No Elec. Or Water)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-4 RV or Trailer Camping (Elec. and Water)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-5 Organized Youth Camping (1 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-6 Group Camping (5 to 5 Acres)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	C-7 Group Camping (6 to 10 Acres)	Yes	Possibly	Yes
GENERAL SITE	Recreation Concession			
THROUGHOUT AREA	R-1 Shooting Range (Pistol & Rifle)	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	R-2 Shotgun / Slope / Trap Sporting Clays	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	R-3 Archery Range Lanes / Field Course	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	Commercial Development	Yes	Yes	Yes
	R-4 Example: Paint Ball Range	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	Example: Zip Line	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Balloon	No	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Interpretive			
THROUGHOUT AREA	I-1 Interpretive / Education Center (Nature Center, Library, Classrooms, Labs, Etc.)	Yes	Yes	Yes
	I-2 Botanical Garden	Yes	Yes	Yes
	I-3 Amphitheater	Yes	Yes	Yes
	I-4 Wildlife Viewing	Yes	Yes	Yes
	I-5 Viewing of Historical Sites / Features	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Museum	Yes	No	No
GENERAL SITE	Miscellaneous (Other)			
THROUGHOUT AREA	O-1 Hunting	Yes	Possibly	Intermittent Seasonal
	O-2 Equest Area	Yes	Possibly	Yes
	O-3 Off-Leash Dog Area	Yes	Yes	Yes
	O-4 Geocaching / Rock-bounding	Yes	Possibly	Limit Areas
	Rock Climbing	No	No	No



Source: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRPD, 2010; EPD, 2010

September 2011

Figure 6-4

In the Vulture Mountains, historical development, recreation trailheads (both developed and undesignated), staging areas, and camping areas have set an obvious trend for where additional facilities should be located and developed. The public has generally gravitated to areas that are noticeably easily accessible by roadway as jumping off points (staging areas). These offer convenient access to nearby, inviting natural and cultural attractions or access to the backcountry. Therefore, proposed park facility development would occur in the following locales to a level commensurate with the alternative's proposed intensity:

- Hassayampa Rest Area
- Hassayampa River Preserve
- Broad ridge leading to the existing Lower Vulture Peak Trailhead and similar ridges in that area
- Box Wash valley, west of Vulture Mine Road
- Abandoned Vulture airstrip, north of Vulture Mine
- Hassayampa River at Gates Road

Alternative B - Passive Use ¹ (Minimal Development)

This Alternative included core programs to meet the objectives of a Maricopa County park, see Figure 6-2. It provided for minimal levels of recreation opportunities that might be found in the Maricopa County park system. For this alternative, opportunities in addition to what now occur in the No Action alternative, included additional non-motorized trails, equestrian facilities, semi-developed camp sites (no water or electric) and group camping.

¹ Passive Use is defined as non-motorized and motorized recreation activities that:

- Offers constructive, restorative, and enjoyable physical or human benefits and fosters appreciation and understanding of open space and its purpose, such as horseback riding or mountain biking (by individuals or as non-organized activities)
- Is compatible with other passive recreation uses
- Does not significantly impact natural, cultural, scientific, or agricultural values
- Requires only minimal visitor facilities and services directly related to safety and minimizes passive recreation impacts
- Are non-consumptive uses of the public land, such as constructed facilities and services
- OHV uses that don't require additional trails (some unnecessary and under used trails may be obliterated and restored to a natural state)

² Mixed Use is a combination of both passive uses and active recreation uses.

³ Active Use is defined as recreation activities that:

- Entail direct participation in an organized activity or event, such as an equestrian ride or a bicycle race
- Are consumptive use of the public land, such as campgrounds, visitor centers, and event areas



Alternative C - Mixed Use ² (Moderate Development)

Alternative C built on Alternative B by adding facilities that would benefit users seeking more varied recreation opportunities or services of both passive and active recreation types, see Figure 6-3. These included non-motorized competitive tracks, day-use facilities, developed camp sites (with water and electric), concessionaire managed active recreation (archery range, paint ball course, zip line, etc.), interpretive development of historical sites, geocaching, and rockhounding.

Alternative D - Active Use ³ (Most Developed)

Alternative D continued to build on the previous alternatives by retaining nearly all of Alternative B and Alternative C opportunities and added additional active recreation uses to the proposed regional park, see Figure 6-4. These included more intensive OHV uses (rock crawling), additional interpretive facilities (garden and amphitheater), developed area for organized events (mineral show, club gatherings, etc.). Due to a more intensive use of the area and increased human presence, hunting would be limited to designated areas similar to other Maricopa County parks.

Opportunities and Actions That Were Eliminated From Consideration

Actions that were considered in Alternatives B, C, and/or D, but that were not carried forward to the Preferred Alternative, include the following along with the rationale for elimination:

- Rock Crawling - does not comply with MCPRD policy and there are limited areas for opportunity within the CRMA
- Equestrian Arena - inconsistent with the MCPRD mission and would not likely be economically feasible due to other arenas in the region



- Shooting Range and Shotgun/Skeet/Trap/Sporting Clay Range - inconsistent with the intent of the CRMA
- Ballooning - does not comply with MCPRD policy
- Botanical Garden - inconsistent with the intent of the CRMA
- Amphitheater - inconsistent with the intent of the CRMA and would not likely be economically feasible to provide and operate a performance center/venue. However, a small amphitheater/outdoor classroom would be consistent with a Nature Center and may be considered.
- Museum - inconsistent with the intent of the CRMA as a stand-alone regional facility. However, a small interpretive center in conjunction with the Hassayampa River Preserve or other site may be considered.

- Event Area - inconsistent with the intent of the CRMA, would not likely be economically feasible, and would require significant infrastructure investment. Passive group use areas will be considered.
- Off-Leash Dog Area - inconsistent with the intent of the CRMA
- Rock Climbing - does not comply with MCPRD policy and there are limited areas for opportunity within the CRMA outside the ACEC, which is off-limits to this activity
- Park Facility Development at Hassayampa River at Gates Road - limited to no public land available for facility development and the river crossing can be treacherous



Preferred Alternative

The Preferred Alternative is a mix of various opportunities and management actions discussed during the alternatives review period. It sets the course for recreation opportunities and management in the CRMA into the foreseeable future. This RAMP was developed under the premise that all existing and permitted multiple uses of the BLM land would be recognized and accommodated.

Based on a multi-month review period involving stakeholder input, public comments, and MCPRD operational and management considerations, the wide-ranging alternatives were analyzed and consolidated into a draft preferred alternative that most closely met the near consensus heard during the review period. The Draft Preferred Alternative also underwent a multi-month review period to refine the recreation opportunities and general location of facilities. The results became the Preferred Alternative.

The Preferred Alternative, see Figure 6-5, most closely represents features of Alternatives B and C. Most opportunities and actions provided by those two alternatives have been carried forward into the Preferred Alternative, which include:

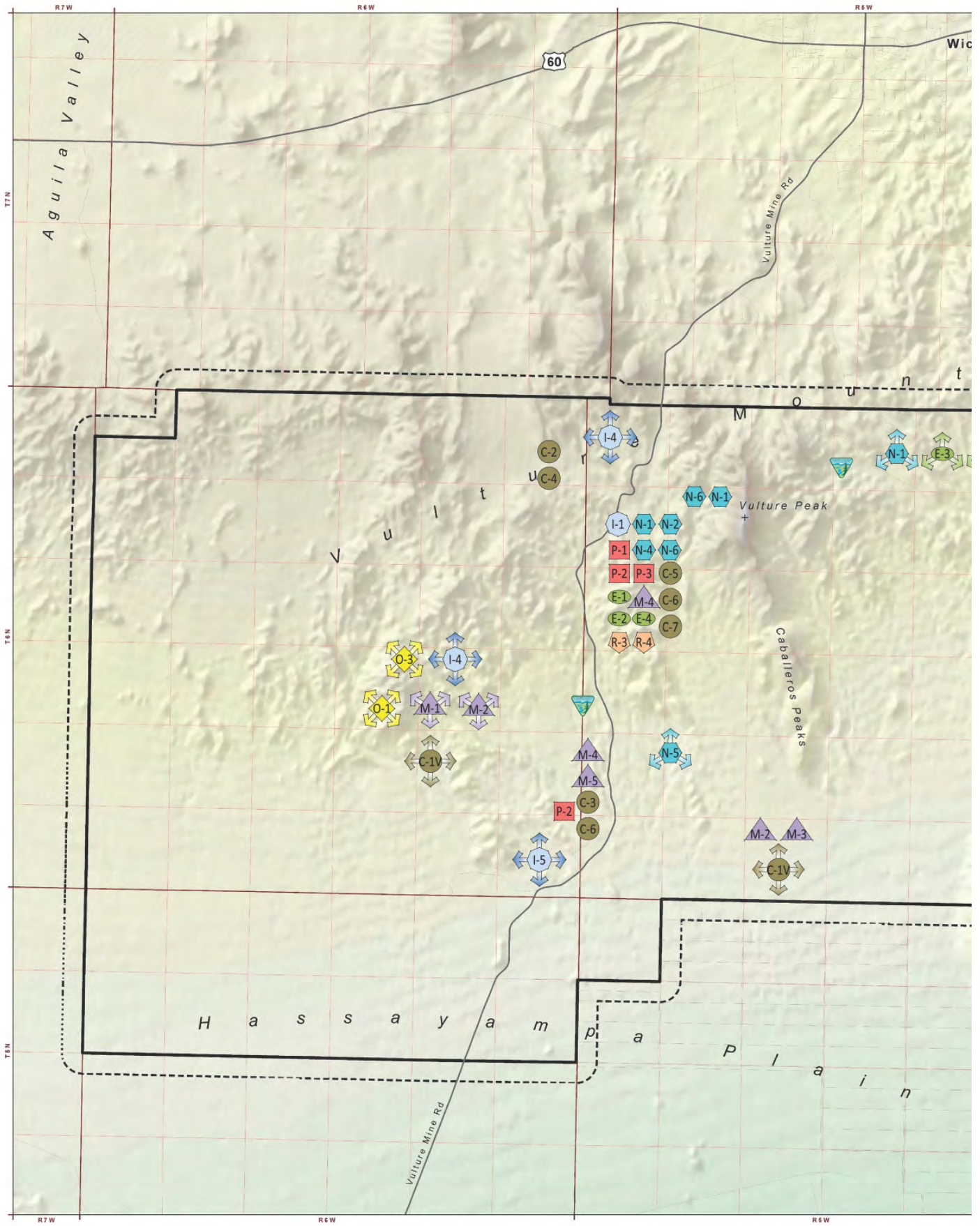
- All Non-Motorized (Multi-Use Trails) Uses
- All Motorized Uses¹, except Rock Crawling
- All Equestrian Uses, except for Arenas
- All Picnic Uses
- All Camping Uses, including Backcountry OHV Camping¹
- Group Use Opportunities
- Recreation Concessions for Archery Range Lanes/Field Course and Commercial Development, such as an Equestrian Concessionaire
- Interpretive Uses for an Interpretive/Education Center, Wildlife Viewing, and Viewing of Historical Sites/Features
- Miscellaneous Uses, including Hunting and Geocaching/Rockhounding

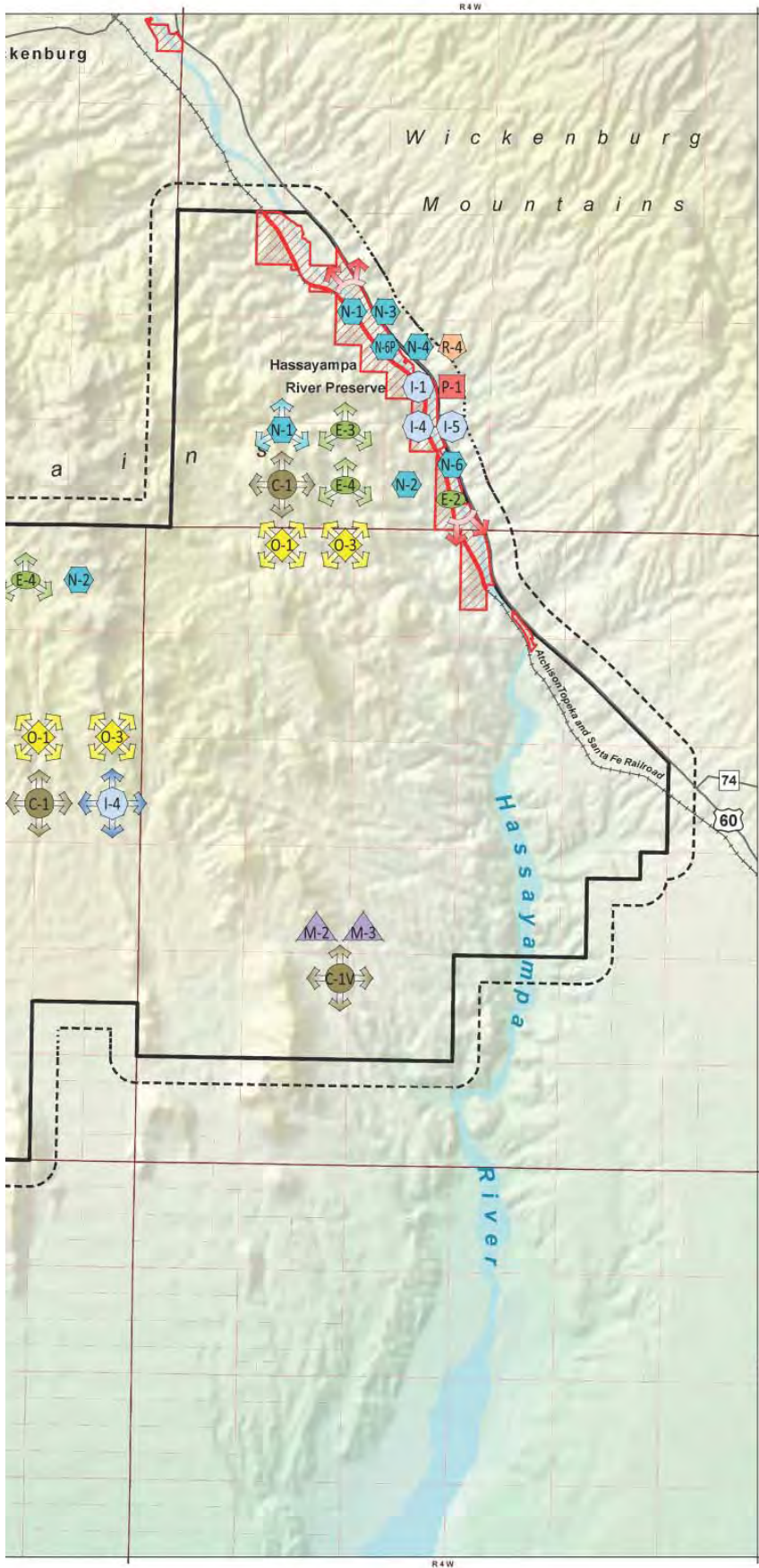
Management Controls

The MCPRD and BLM will ensure that a careful assessment is made of how visitor use dynamics interrelate with the RAMP prior to initiating changes in direct use regulations. The MCPRD will be the on-the-site recreation manager, providing recreation management throughout the CRMA as guided by the CMA. The BLM will continue to manage traditional permitted land uses, such as mining, and grazing leases.

Due to an anticipated and ever increasing recreation use in the CRMA, a major issue discussed during the review period was the issue of direct management controls, including how much would be charged for entry fees, where these would occur, and what would be the public benefit.

¹ Current MCPRD policy does not allow OHV activities in the Maricopa County park system. This policy will be created to address this use in the CRMA.

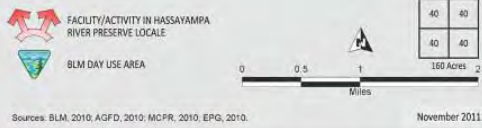




Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan Preferred Alternative

	Facility / Activity	Complies with Current MCRPD Policy	Consider For Master Plan	Proposed for the Preferred Alternative	
GENERAL SITE					
THROUGHOUT AREA	N-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	N-2	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	N-3	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	N-4	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	N-5	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	N-6	Yes	Yes	Yes	
Motorized					
GENERAL SITE	M-1	No*	Possibly	Yes	
	M-2	No*	Possibly	Yes	
	M-3	No*	Possibly	Yes	
	M-4	No*	Possibly	Yes	
THROUGHOUT AREA	M-5	No*	Possibly	Yes	
	M-6	No*	Possibly	No	
	Equestrian				
	GENERAL SITE	E-1	Yes	Yes	Yes
E-2		Yes	Yes	Yes	
E-3		Yes	Yes	Yes	
E-4		Yes	Yes	Yes	
THROUGHOUT AREA	Arena	Yes	No	No	
	Picnic Areas				
	GENERAL SITE	P-1	Yes	Yes	Yes
		P-2	Yes	Yes	Yes
P-3		Yes	Yes	Yes	
Camping					
GENERAL SITE	C-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	C-1V	No*	Yes	Yes	
	C-2	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	C-3	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	C-4	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	C-6	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	C-7	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
THROUGHOUT AREA	Recreation Concession				
	R-1	Yes	Possibly	No	
	R-2	Yes	Possibly	No	
	R-3	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
	R-4	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	Ballooning	No	No	No	
	Interpretive				
GENERAL SITE	I-1	Yes	Yes	Yes	
	I-2	Yes	Yes	No	
	I-3	Yes	Yes	No	
	I-4	Yes	Yes	Unplanned/Underdeveloped	
	I-5	Yes	Yes	Yes	
THROUGHOUT AREA	Museum (Stand-Alone Regional Facility)	Yes	No	No	
	Miscellaneous (Other)				
	O-1	Yes	Possibly	Yes	
	O-2	Yes	Possibly	No	
	O-3	Yes	Possibly	Limited Areas	
Rock Climbing	No	No	No		

*Current policy to be reaffirmed.



Sources: BLM, 2010; AGFD, 2010; MCRP, 2010; EPG, 2010. November 2011.



Figure 6-5

The RAMP provides for optimum levels of a variety of visitor uses by offering non-fee areas and fee regulated area. Fee regulated areas will provide direct benefits and facilities for what would otherwise not be provided to the public without the presence of a Maricopa County park, such as developed day-use facilities and camping areas. The fees charged will be commensurate with the MCPRD's standard facility entrance and use fees. The MCPRD will apply to lease/patent parcels from the federal government under the R&PP Act, according to BLM policies, for the proposed fee regulated areas, which are owned by the BLM. As discussed in Chapter 2, the MCPRD will continue to discuss options with ADOT and TNC to acquire or transfer fee title of properties along US 60. TNC currently charges a day-use fee for entrance to the Hassayampa River Preserve. The repurposed rest area would become a fee regulated day-use area and trailhead.

Non-fee regulated uses and non-developed access to those uses will continue to be allowed, as long as they are in-keeping with the goals of the CRMA, such as motorized and non-motorized trail access and backcountry camping. All fees collected will provide direct benefit to the CRMA. Maricopa County will also be responsible for all special use permitting in the CRMA that are of a recreational nature, including both commercial and non-commercial uses.

Law Enforcement

The Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO) Mountain Patrol Division has the responsibility for law enforcement services in the recreational and wilderness areas of the Maricopa County Parks. MCPRD recognizes that with the potential addition of park lands and responsibilities to the park system for the CRMA, that the MCSO will have staffing impacts. Based on stakeholder discussions with MCSO, it is foreseeable that a minimum of two Deputy Sheriff's including all necessary equipment would be needed once MCPRD has a presence on site to address safety, visitor needs, and regular patrols.

Goals and Actions

A significant long term goal of the RAMP is to allow and manage the public lands for the types of public recreation use that will not degrade the natural resources of the CRMA. Facility and infrastructure development will aid in directing use and protecting resources from additional impacts as recreational use of the area increases. Some land that currently has other designated uses, will be transferred to an exclusive recreation use through the R&PP process. Some of these typical current land uses include grazing leases and mining, which are administered by the BLM as allowable uses of the public land. It is important to note that there is no long term goal to discontinue any current BLM allowed uses.

Long term management goals for both public use and the maintenance of ecological integrity of the CRMA should consider (in no particular order):

1. Maintain and promote the ecological relationship between the Hassayampa River and the Vulture Mountains' high desert areas of the CRMA whenever possible.
2. Provide for continued wildlife habitat protection and improvement project opportunities. Mitigate conflicts between recreation users and wildlife species to ensure their continued existence. Consider wildlife habitat linkages when proposing and siting facility development; mitigate for conflicts.
3. Provide for the types of sustainable recreational uses of the public lands that do not extensively degrade the natural resources of the CRMA and its ecosystem.
4. Protect and restore the natural ecological form, function, and environmental values of the Hassayampa River system.
5. Protect and avoid all high vulnerable/low suitability areas as identified in the individual data analysis sections when possible.
6. Prior to initiation of detailed planning or design of recreational facilities or improvements, all sites must adhere to applicable Federal and State regulations governing the protection of historic or archeological resources.
7. Protect cultural resources from vandalism and development within and immediately adjacent to the CRMA. Build an awareness and appreciation of cultural and natural history resources through interpretation and visitor information.
8. All use and management of the project area lands must comply with the BLM RMP and other related management plans and actions, such as AGFD regulations.
9. Ensure that all facility developments are designed to be visually harmonious with adjacent environs.
10. Specific land uses and locations should be responsive to the public land's inherent vulnerability or its ability to withstand the impacts of resource based recreation.

11. Manage the land in the CRMA that is west of Vulture Mine Road and south of Box Wash valley, predominantly for OHV uses. Manage the land in the CRMA that is east of Vulture Mine Road and north of Box Wash valley, predominantly for non-motorized uses. Minimize conflicts between recreation users so that these uses can continue to co-exist.
12. Educate the public and particularly younger generations about the values and benefits of protecting significant natural and cultural resources.
13. Recognize valid existing and future commercial mining and grazing operations. The BLM will carry out actions that manage the BLM's mining procedures and grazing leases. Minimize conflicts between recreation users, recreational miners, and grazing leases so that these uses can continue to co-exist.
14. Minimize natural and human-caused soil erosion and vegetation loss at developed recreation sites and other high-use areas. Incorporate wise soil, and vegetation conservation practices into all new development projects.
15. Maintain air quality standards throughout the CRMA, adhering to all applicable Federal, State, and local regulations governing dust control.
16. All proposed uses should be monitored for potential degradation to the CRMA's natural and man-made resources. Once degradation occurs, it is imperative that the intensity of land uses be adjusted or that maintenance of intensively used areas, such as OHV trails and competitive tracks, be increased to minimize degradation, so that irreparable damage does not occur. Land uses should be managed, and corresponding levels of intensity established, to limit or minimize degradation, ensure land health standards may be met, and not decrease the quality of the user's experience. The result is a RAMP that has a stringent, but adaptable, management plan.

Short term goals and recommendations need to be extensions of the long term RAMP goals, especially with regard to native flora and fauna and public use:

1. Land uses should, whenever possible, serve in managing and preserving the natural ecological functions of the Vulture Mountains and the Hassayampa River system. Highly managed or manipulated land uses, such as facility development and trail development, should be kept to a minimum. Facility development should follow good design principles for site location and building materials. Trail development should be in keeping with the WCTMP and BLM travel management plan.
2. When completed, trail closures and restoration of disturbed areas should restore and maintain a natural physical and biological integrity of the CRMA environs.
3. Over time a restoration of other lost environmental values, such as vegetation and wildlife habitat, should also occur. For example, abandoned mines should be closed or secured for public safety and/or historical interpretation. Closed mine areas should be restored to a natural desert setting as much as possible.



Theme

The *Town of Wickenburg General Plan (2003)* notes that “respect for tradition contributes to planning decisions made here in one of the State’s oldest incorporated municipalities. Western living character stems from a history of mining and ranching.” The Wickenburg area’s history and character is heavily influenced by the nation’s expansion in the mid-19th century into what was then New Mexico Territory, but was later designated as the Arizona Territory.

Territorial Architecture

In keeping with the Wickenburg area’s desert southwest theme, development in the CRMA should follow basic principles found in Territorial Architecture style. Entire books have been devoted to its unique characteristics and application in the desert southwest. Specific principles of this style for use in public works have been well documented in *The Built Environment Image Guide for the National Forests and Grasslands* by the U.S. Forest Service. Their architectural guidelines for the Southwest Province, as well as recommendations for sustainability and design synthesis are provided in Appendix D.

Early day miners and settlers made do quite often with the materials at hand, just as the Anasazi and Spanish had done before them. The Anasazi constructed rock shelters with mud mortar in caves and beneath rock overhangs. Spanish Colonial architecture included fortified adobe buildings with smooth windowless exterior walls. Their buildings included such defensive features as parapets, gun ports, and look-out towers. Later, Spanish Colonial missions were largely constructed from stone, derived from European influences, instead of adobe (The Built Environment Image Guide, 2001).

Historically, millable timber wasn’t available in the Sonoran desert. Lumber had to be hauled in from Prescott or Flagstaff at great expense. The new settlers adopted methods that had persisted in the Sonoran desert for centuries. The abundance of stone and the ease of making adobe brick helped establish a distinctive regional design style. Territorial Style architecture evolved with the rush of settlers into the new territory. They added touches reminiscent of architectural styles found “back East.” Due to limited supply,



Territorial Ramada Suggestion
(U.S. Forest Service, 2001)

milled woodwork was often limited to door and window frames as an added flourish to flat-roofed adobe and rock structures. Still later, during the 1930s the WPA, CCC, and other Federal relief programs built civic buildings and public works throughout the country. In the Southwest, WPA-era buildings adopted Spanish Colonial, Pueblo, and Territorial Revival styles. They used domes, curvilinear parapets, vigas, latillas, canales, and stucco. The “rustic” idiom was evident in parks, forests, and outdoor recreation areas (The Built Environment Image Guide, 2001).

Capital Improvement Plan

The following pages summarize the implementation strategy for development of the Preferred Alternative. The CIP is presented as a general guide for potential priority of development, see Table 6-1. Divided into four phases, the CIP outlines the major components of the Preferred Alternative with improvements across a 30-year time frame, which is roughly consistent with the improvement and development progression at other Maricopa County Parks over the years.

The estimate is presented as an order-of-magnitude approximation of the potential development costs associated with the proposed facilities. All values presented are in 2011 dollars with no escalation.

Phase 1 - Hassayampa River Day Use Area

Time Frame: 1 to 3 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$3,850,000

The first phase focuses on the Hassayampa Rest Area and the Hassayampa River Preserve visitor center area. Improvements to both of these areas simply take advantage of the resource opportunities with the lowest initial cost. Access related issues create the biggest unknown variable related to capital costs and have the potential for significantly increasing the order-of-magnitude. This initial area also offers other unique advantages:

- Located on US 60, both facilities have excellent visibility and road frontage, allowing an immediate “open for business” advertisement of the new regional park to travelers and the community. The volume of potential visitors along this busy corridor also offers the greatest initial fee revenue to create a source of operating revenue to partially fund early operating costs.
- Located directly on the banks of the perennially flowing river, the Hassayampa River Preserve and its Arthur L. Johnson Visitor Center offers a resource for historical interpretation and outdoor education that does not currently exist in the MCPRD system
- With direct access to US 60, the Hassayampa Rest Area’s site arrangement is very well suited to being reconfigured with minimal cost into a trailhead for non-motorized access into the CRMA (equestrian, hiking, and biking). Additionally, with the given limitations for crossing the BNSF Railway right-of-way, the BNSF has initially approved of a railway underpass for non-motorized uses approximately 1,500 feet upstream of the rest area. The corridor between the rest area and underpass occurs on Hassayampa River Preserve property as well. Private parcels adjacent to TNC property, coupled with the ever changing river, create several “pinch points” that may require some creative trail design work.

Phase 2 - Vulture Peak Day Use and OHV Day Use Areas

Time Frame: 4 to 10 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$10,138,000



The second phase will provide developed day use facilities at two easily accessible and popular locations along Vulture Mine Road. These two areas are heavily disturbed by prior uses over the years. Development of these sites will ultimately improve resource conditions.

Vulture Peak Day Use Area

The Vulture Peak Day Use Area, see Figure 6-6, is located along the broad ridge where the Lower Vulture Peak Trailhead is located. This area is located east of Vulture Mine Road and 1.4 miles (by road) south of the north edge of the CRMA. The day use area will serve as the main day use area and administrative site on the interior of the CRMA. Major proposed facilities include a small nature center, picnic shelters, restrooms, nature playground, archery facilities, competitive track, equestrian concessionaire, as well as the existing trailhead. Additionally, group camping facilities are proposed.

OHV Day Use Area

The OHV Day Use Area, see Figure 6-7, is located at the long-abandoned Vulture Mine airstrip. This area is located west of Vulture Mine Road and 6.0 miles (by road) south of the north edge of the CRMA. The day use area will serve as the main staging area for OHV day use in the CRMA. Major proposed facilities include a staging area and trailhead, picnic shelters, informational signage, and restroom. Additionally, group camping facilities are proposed.

Phase 3 - Vulture Peak Campground

Time Frame: 11 to 30 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$13,300,000

The third phase will provide a developed campground for the CRMA. The Vulture Peak Campground, see Figure 6-6, is located west of Vulture Mine Road off the same proposed intersection as the Vulture Peak Day Use Area. The campground will include up to 80 campsites with water and electricity hook-ups. The campground will also include restrooms with showers, host campsites, and a dump station.

Phase 4 - Backcountry

Time Frame: 11 to 30 Years

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$1,650,000

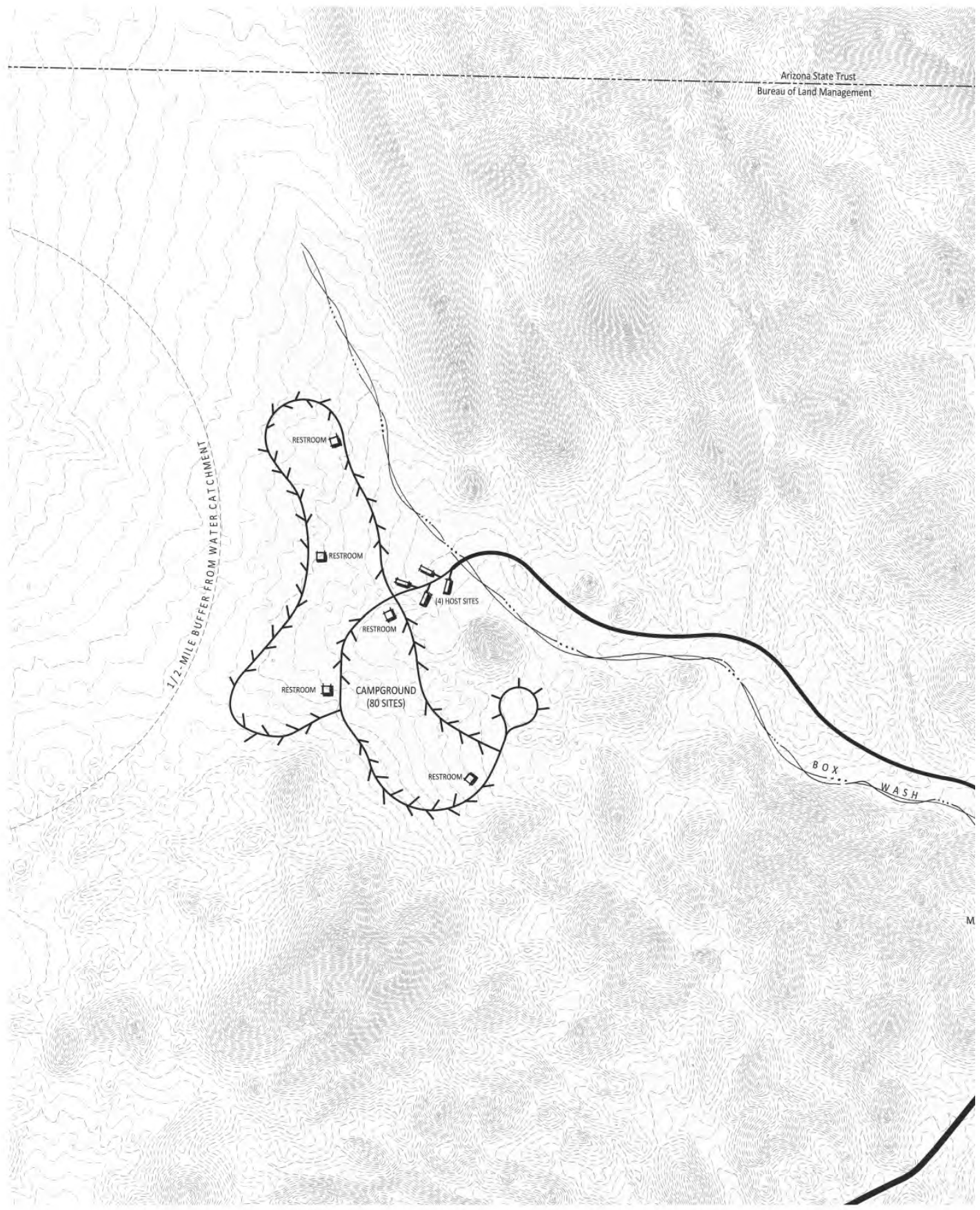
The fourth phase will provide backcountry services that were frequently mentioned during the public involvement process as lacking and greatly needed. These services include remote water well developments, trail stops, and backcountry campsites.

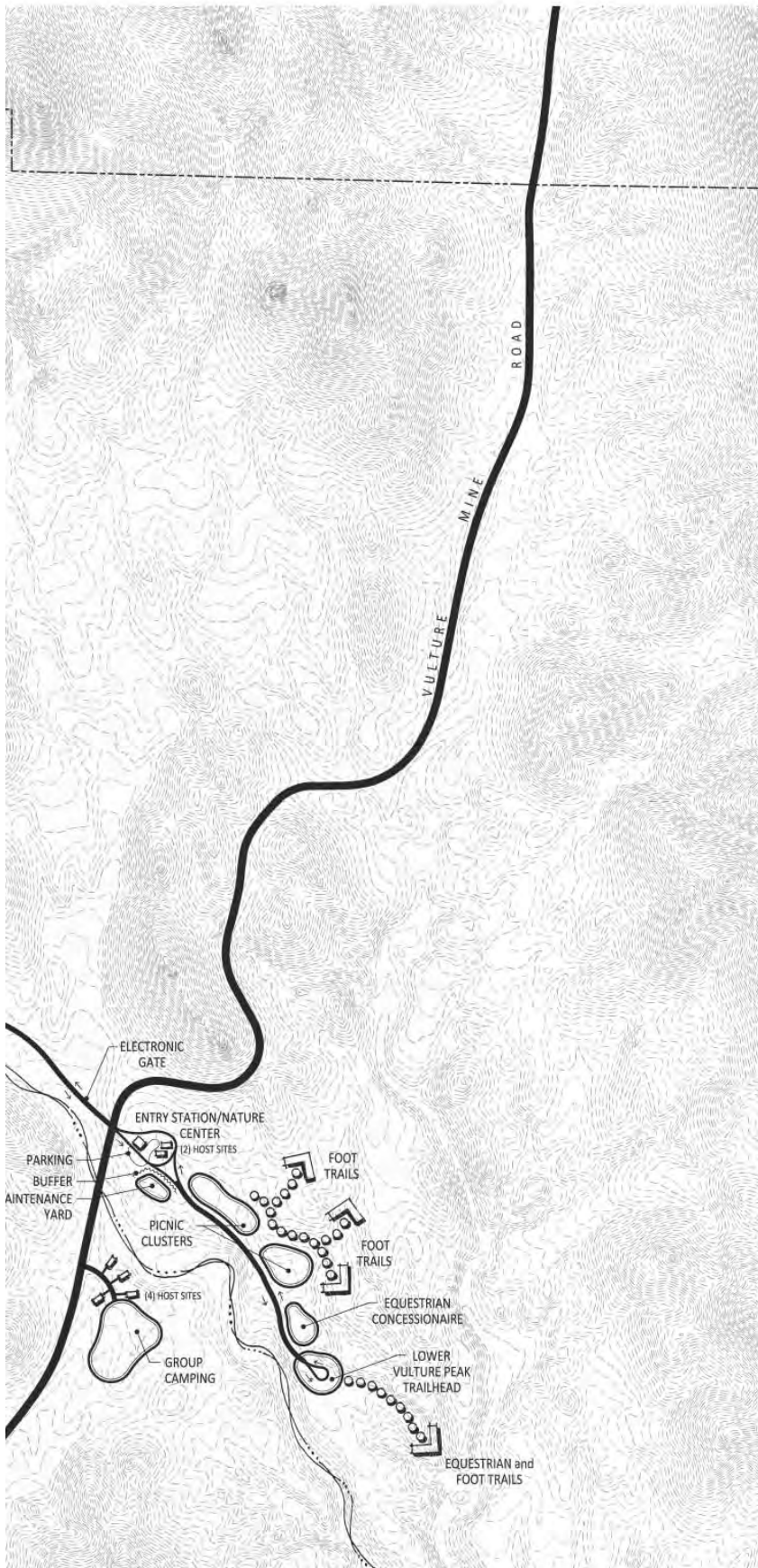
Summary

Order of Magnitude Cost: \$29,028,000

Table 6-1 Capital Improvement Program		
	Phase 1 - Hassayampa River Day Use Areas	1 to 3 Years
	ADOT Hassayampa Rest Area	
1	Purchase Rest Area	\$125,000
2	Railroad Trestle Under Crossing	\$250,000
3	Trail Construction	\$120,000
4	Parking Upgrade	\$100,000
5	Individual Picnic Cluster (1)	\$100,000
6	Monument Entrance Sign	\$85,000
	TNC Hassayampa River Preserve	
7	Individual Picnic Clusters (2)	\$200,000
8	Group Ramada (2)	\$115,000
9	Restroom	\$320,000
10	Parking and Road Improvements	\$350,000
11	Building Renovations/Improvements	\$2,000,000
12	Monument Entrance Sign	\$85,000
	Phase Total	\$3,850,000
	Phase 2 - Vulture Peak Day Use and OHV Day Use Areas	4 to 10 Years
	Vulture Peak Day Use Area	
1	Water System	\$2,200,000
2	Electric System	\$550,000
3	Maintenance Compound with Host Sites	\$850,000
4	Entry Station/Nature Center	\$1,500,000
5	Individual Picnic Clusters (3)	\$300,000
6	Group Ramada	\$58,000
7	Primitive Camping/Group Camping	\$230,000
8	Group Camp Restroom w/ Showers	\$510,000
9	Multi-Use Trailhead w/ Restroom	\$600,000
10	Picnic Restroom	\$320,000
11	Nature Playground w/ Shade	\$150,000
12	Archery Field Course	\$50,000
13	Competitive Track	\$200,000
14	Monument Entrance Sign	\$85,000
15	Interpretive Signage / Kiosks	\$50,000
	OHV Day Use Area	
16	Electric and Water System	\$1,000,000
17	Parking and Road Improvements	\$500,000
18	Primitive Camping/Group Camping	\$230,000
19	Restroom	\$320,000
20	Host Sites	\$300,000

Table 6-1 cont. Capital Improvement Program		
21	Monument Entrance Sign	\$85,000
22	Interpretive Signage / Kiosks	\$50,000
	Phase Total	\$10,138,000
	Phase 3 - Vulture Peak Campground	11-30 Years
1	Campground	\$10,915,000
2	Water System	\$1,000,000
3	Electric System	\$500,000
4	Dump Station	\$750,000
5	Automatic Gate	\$50,000
6	Monument Entrance Sign	\$85,000
	Phase Total	\$13,300,000
	Phase 4 - Backcountry	11-30 Years
1	Remote Water Well Developments (3) - Solar Powered	\$1,500,000
2	Trail Stops: Hitching Posts, etc. (3)	\$150,000
	Phase Total	\$1,650,000
	Summary	
	Total	\$28,938,000





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

Vulture Peak Facility Concept Plan



KEY MAP



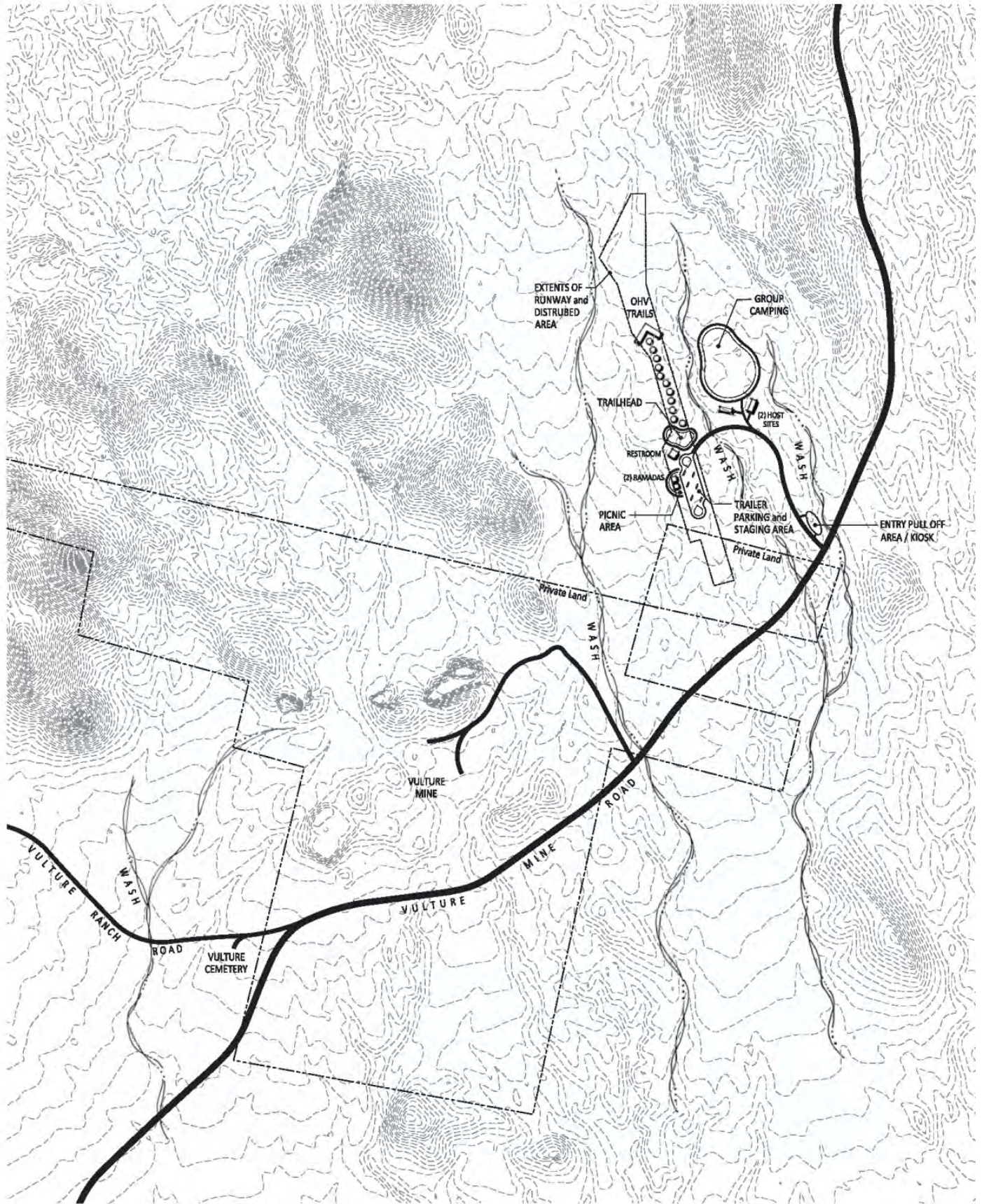
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1 inch = 300'

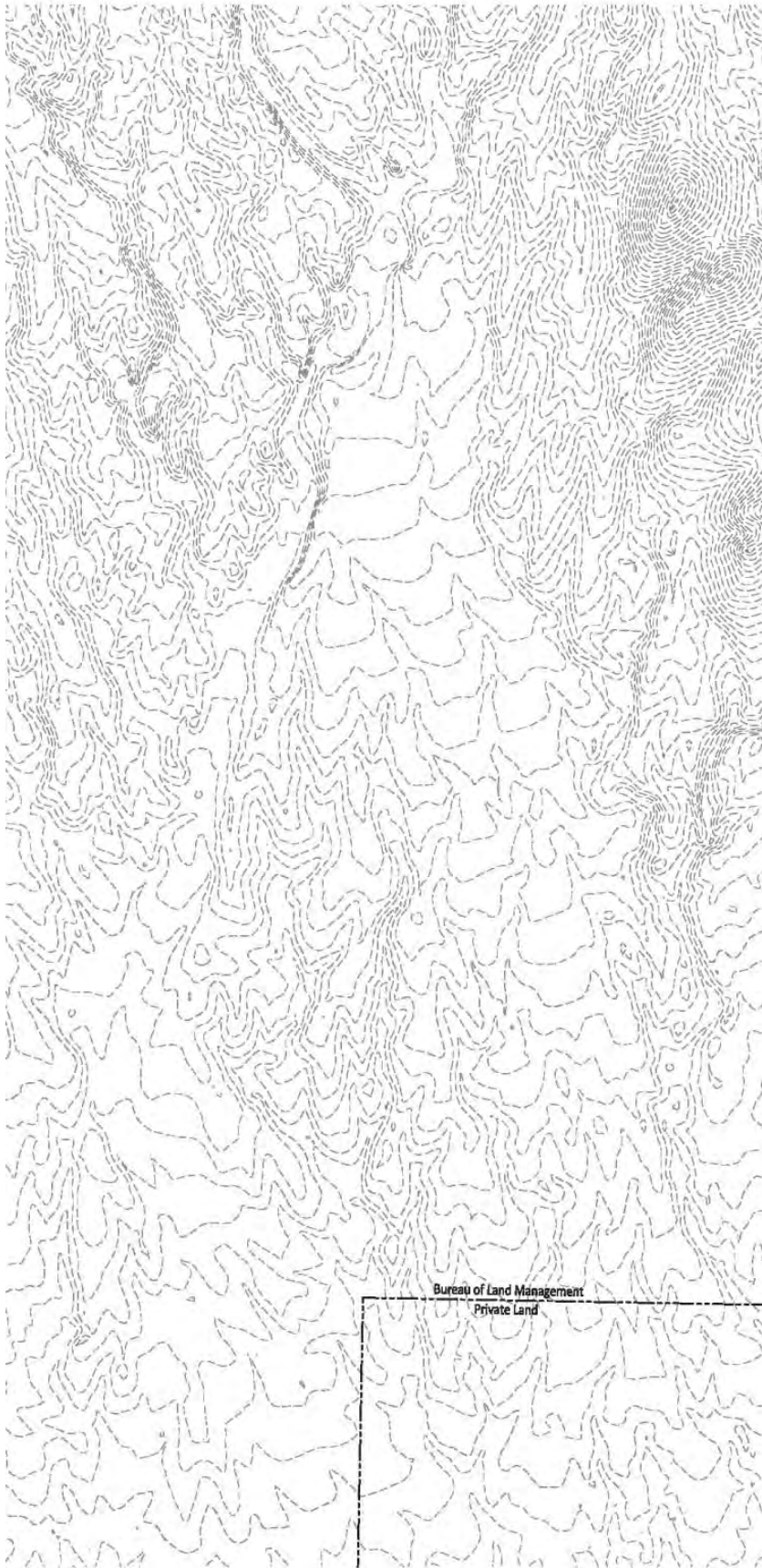
NOTE: CONTOUR INTERVAL = 5 FEET

NOVEMBER 8, 2011



Figure 6-6





Vulture Mountains Cooperative Recreation Management Area Master Plan

OHV Day-Use Facility Concept Plan



KEY MAP



Scale = 1:3600
1 inch = 300'

NOTE: CONTOUR INTERVAL = 5 FEET

OCTOBER 31, 2011



Figure 6-7

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