

Step 3- Identifying Issues

The purpose of this step is to:

- Identify the key questions and issues affecting road-related management.
 - a. The known and probable transportation safety related issues including mixed use as defined by the State.
 - b. The primary public concerns related to motorized travel management;
 - c. The primary management concerns related to motorized travel management;
 - d. The primary legal constraints on motorized travel management; and
 - e. The budget amount to operate and maintain the roads; and
 - f. The amount of resources and skills available to conduct the analysis.
- Describe the origin of the issues.
- Determine the required data and tools available to complete the analysis.

The products of this step are:

- A summary of key transportation-related issues based on public collaboration.
- An economic assessment of the NFS road system.

The 2005 travel management rule (TMR) was developed in response to the Forest Service Chief's identification of unmanaged recreation, including impacts from off-highway vehicles, as one of four key threats to the health of the national forests and grasslands. Because of the current allowed motorized uses on the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests (ASNFs), conformance with the new regulations will require a major change in current management.

The initial discussions amongst the TMR ID team developed the following goals related to motorized travel management on the ASNFs:

- Provide for better management of motor vehicles.
- Reduce the damage caused by cross-country motor vehicle use.
- Provide nationwide consistency with unique local opportunities: each national forest must:
 - Designate roads, trails, and areas for public motor vehicle use.
 - Publish a free public motor vehicle use map, to be revised annually.
 - Focus on sustainable management.
 - Provide for resource protection.
 - Provide for a balance of social and environmental needs.

Since dispersed camping is a significant recreation opportunity throughout the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests, it needs to be considered when planning a motorized travel system. Many people camp in trailers, RV's, and truck campers, and roads link these campers to their desired campsites. To ensure access to these campsites, dispersed camping areas and associated roads need to be identified and designated when appropriate.

The Forest Service must strike an appropriate balance in managing all types of recreational activities. The Rule also requires the agency to preserve areas of opportunity for non-motorized travel and experience. When the travel planning process is complete and motorized use is

confined to designated areas, roads, and trails, areas of non-motorized use will be better defined. The American public will then be able to choose their preferred recreation experience on these National Forests.

Motorized mixed use is also a concern on the ASNFs roads. Motorized mixed use involves the designation of a NFS road for use by both highway-legal and non-highway legal vehicles. Many roads are already managed and used in this manner, and only diversions from the status quo that result in allowing motorized mixed use where it did not previously exist will require an engineering analysis. Situations preempting state law—such as designating a maintenance level 3 road for mixed use, will also require an engineering analysis. The Arizona state laws are discussed in Step 2 of this report. Although law enforcement agencies generally enforce vertically signed roads as legal to all motor vehicles and horizontally signed roads as open only to highway legal vehicles, there is still some confusion regarding this topic. The motor vehicle use map should clearly define the allowed uses, including by vehicle type, on forest routes.

Public Collaboration Process

Two rounds of public collaboration meetings were held on the ASNFs to address the new TMR and to discuss motorized travel management on the unit. Based on the thousands of comments received to date (5864 as of September 23, 2007), as well as the number of documented participants (3461 as of September 23, 2007), the current management of motor vehicles on the ASNFs is a topic with strong public interest. The management of motor vehicle use on the ASNFs also involves a wide-range of public opinion and controversy. As demonstrated on the public comment maps at the end of the section, almost every low standard road on the forest has received contradicting comments from the public.

The following is a summary of general comments received to date.

Participants

- 3461 people are on the project mailing list
- Hundreds of local citizens are actively involved
- Individuals nationwide are interested and following the local process
- Local government entities (counties, municipalities, tribes & adjacent national forests) are involved
- Organizations & agencies that provided site-specific comments include:
 - Arizona Game and Fish Department
 - White Mountain Open Trails Association
 - Arizona Wilderness Coalition
 - Citizens for Multiple Land Use and Access
 - Center for Biological Diversity
 - Apache County ATV Roughriders
 - Grand Canyon Wildlands Council
 - TRACKS

These comments were placed into subject categories and summarized by members of the Apache-Sitgreaves travel management team. The following bullets contain a general summary of the comments received to date, organized by topic.

Summary of Public Comments and Preliminary Issues

Motorized Use

- Allow highway legal vehicles only on the forest.
- Keep all existing roads open.
- Limit motorized use to open roads only.
- Limit ATVs to signed “open ATV” roads only.
- Keep it as it is.
- Don’t close anymore roads.
- Impacts of motorized use are increasing.

Environmental Concerns

- Pollution (water, air, etc).
- Noise Pollution.
- Wildlife impacts – habitat fragmentation.
- Erosion
- Riparian areas and wildlife tank need protection from motorized use.
- Threatened and Endangered Species impacts.
- Plant life.
- Seasonal closures to protect resources with gates (muddy, wildlife, etc.) while reopening as soon as closure are over and conditions permit.

Enforcement

- Lack of enforcement now for current regulations (esp. resource damage, speeding, and littering).
- Signage important.
- Need more law enforcement officers to enforce new rule.
- Possible permit system.

Education

- Need more with local communities and visitors on regulations, safety, and leave no trace principals.

Multiple Use & Access

- All citizens need to be able to get into forest (hikers, bikers, horseback riders, ATVs, elderly, etc.).
- Access for emergency situations (especially fires – gates with lock?).
- Areas specific to each group (hiking only, ATV only, etc).
- More Jeep trails and more ATV trails.

Dispersed Camping

- Keep as it is now.
- No excessive cross country travel to get to sites.
- Need more dispersed camping areas.
- Areas need to be signed.

Hunting, Game Retrieval & Wood Gathering

- Keep cross country travel open for game retrieval and wood gathering.
- Do not allow cross country travel for game retrieval and wood gathering.
- Require special permits.
- Motor vehicles (ATVs) are ruining the quality of hunting in the White Mts.

Economics

- Tourism is very important to local economy.
- Must consider impact to out of town visitors.
- Don't want to lose visitors.
- Recreation does not have an impact to the local economy.

Grazing Issues

- Access for permittees (cross country travel required for watering, fence maintenance, etc).
- Permittees need written permission to go outside of road system to do required work.

Residential Areas

- Noise pollution and trash a nuisance to residents living near forest boundaries.
- Possibly restrict ATV use around these areas.
- Locals have rights, out-of-towners only have opinions.

Assessing the Economic Sustainability for the National Forest Road System

Based on September 14 2007 inventory, FY 2005 Deferred Maintenance Needs, and FY 2007 funding

Forest	Forest FY 07 CMRD Budget (less CIP & Earmarks)	Region Avg FY '06 CMRD Budget	Forest DEFERRED Mtc Needs FY 2005	Forest ANNUAL Mtc Needs FY 2005
Apache-Sitgreaves	\$ 1,492,130	\$ 902,000	\$ 50,095,825	\$ 4,516,078

Miles	# of Miles	Forest Annual Mtc Needs (per mile)	Forest Deferred Mtc Needs (per mile)	Forest Total Annual & Deferred Mtc Impact to Forest Budget	Reg Avg Annual Mtc Needs (per mile)	Forest Annual Mtc Needs using Reg Avg Unit Costs
Mtc Level 5	42	\$ 10,587	\$ 40,842	\$ 2,160,004	\$ 11,273	\$ 473,466
Mtc Level 4	84	\$ 4,501	\$ 55,972	\$ 5,079,753	\$ 9,851	\$ 827,484
Mtc Level 3	600	\$ 4,911	\$ 71,427	\$ 45,802,722	\$ 6,751	\$ 4,050,600
Mtc Level 2	2041	\$ 223	\$ 171	\$ 804,583	\$ 420	\$ 857,220
Mtc Level 1	3388	\$ 86	\$ 140	\$ 764,841	\$ 107	\$ 362,516
Total:	6,155			\$ 54,611,902		\$ 6,571,286

Is this economically sustainable?

NO, the forest can only afford 33% of its road system based on this assessment.

The previous economic assessment is based solely on system road maintenance data. Although the initial remedy may be to close and decommission roads to provide a sustainable system, the table does not address the expense of closing and decommissioning. These costs would need to include both the planning cost of conducting the appropriate environmental analysis, and well as the physical implementation cost of achieving the desired objective. The immediate goal for motorized travel management on the ASNFs should involve eliminating cross-country motorized use. This complies with the Travel Management Rule. Once this major change has occurred, the true impacts of concentrating use on system routes can better be assessed. Travel management is not a “cure all” for all problems related to transportation management.

The following maps contain public comments captured spatially. As demonstrated on the maps, almost every low standard system road on the forest has received contradicting comments from the public.

Public Comments New and Open Routes

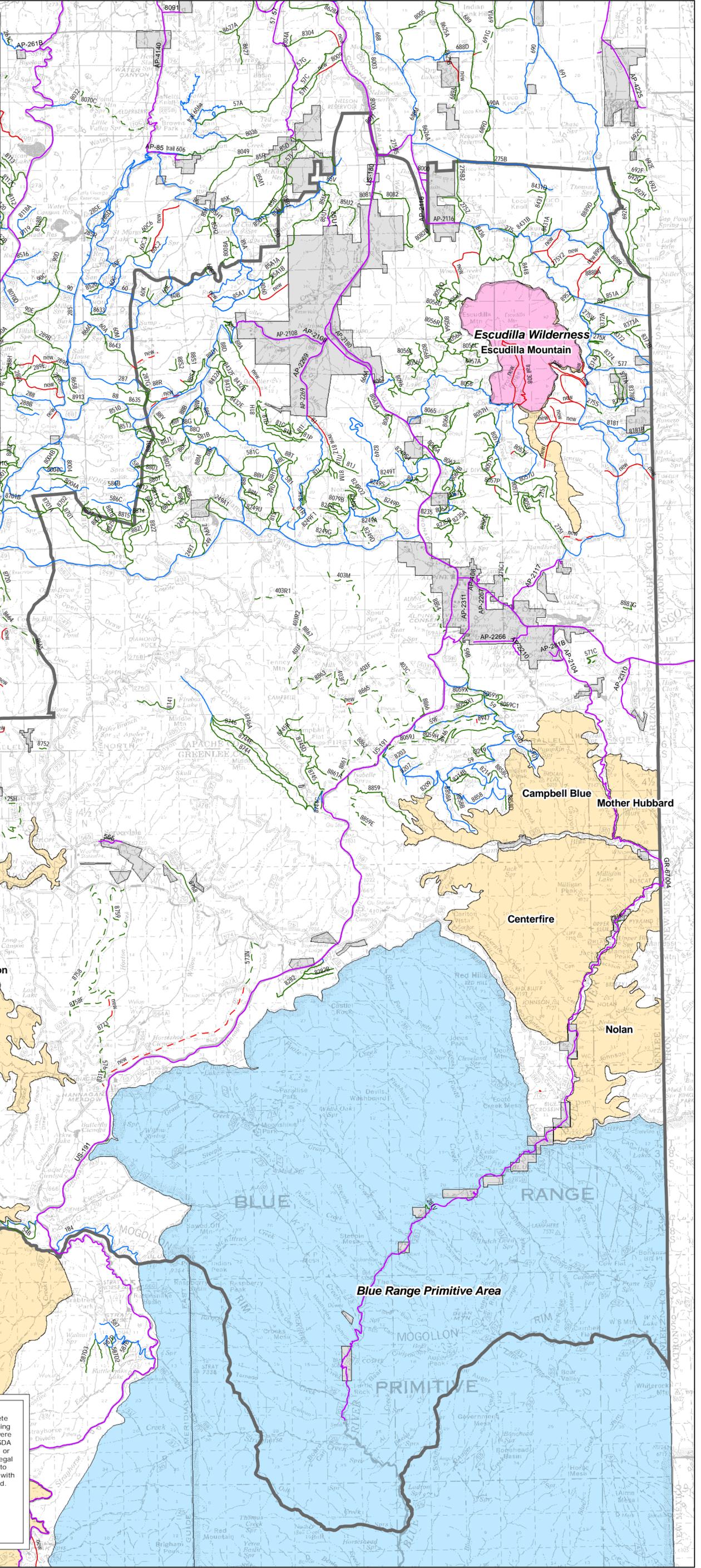
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Alpine Ranger District

Travel Management Rule



Legend

- Non-Forest Service Roads (State, County, Private)
- Public Input**
- - - Proposed New ATV Route
- - - Existing Route, Proposed ATV Addition
- - - Proposed New Full-size Route
- - - Existing Route, Proposed Full-size Addition
- Support of Current Management - Open
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Black River Canyon

Bear Wallow Wilderness
Bear Wallow

Salt House

Centerfire

Blue Range Primitive Area

Campbell Blue

Mother Hubbard

Nolan



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Public Comments Dispersed Camping Areas

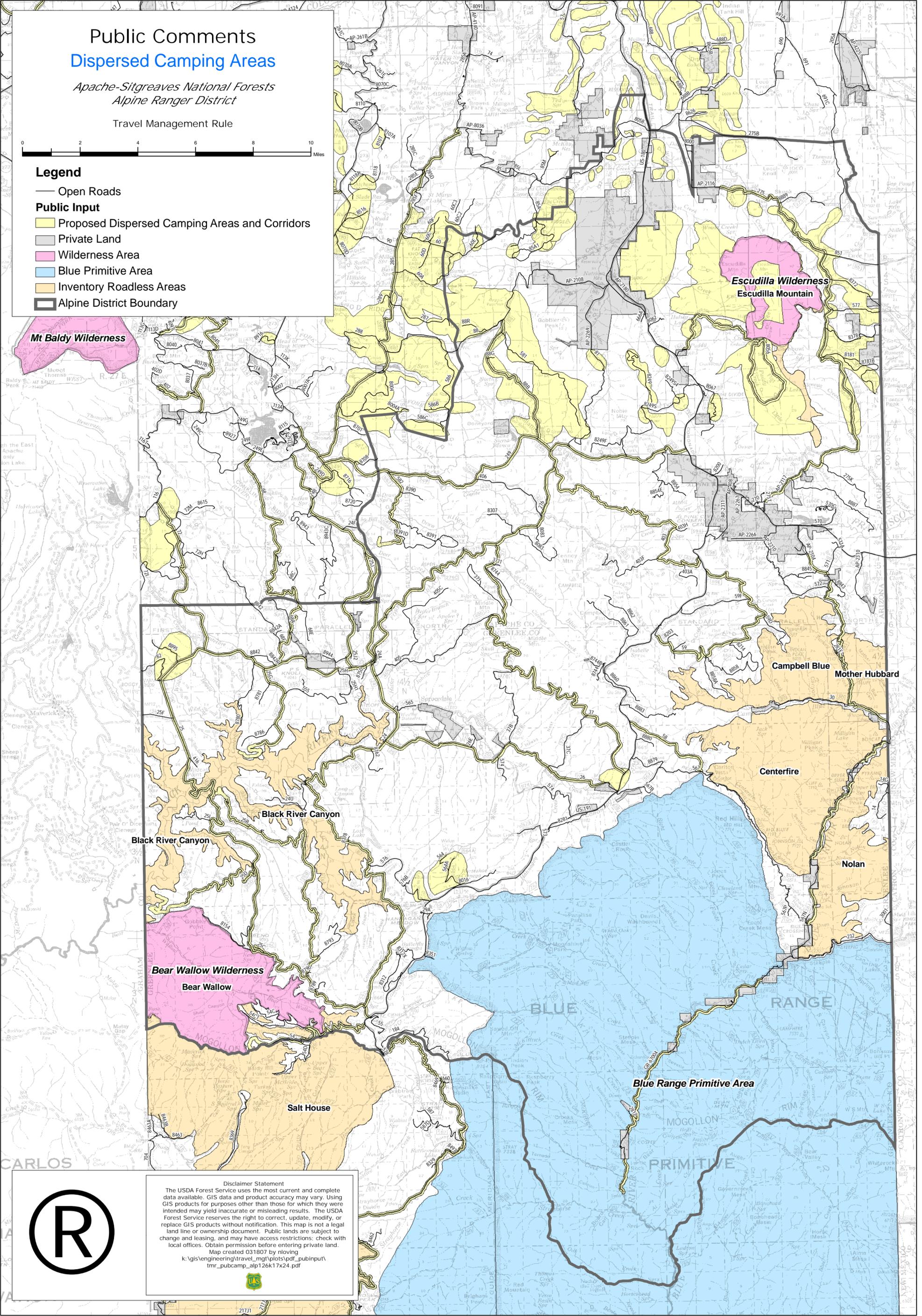
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Alpine Ranger District

Travel Management Rule



Legend

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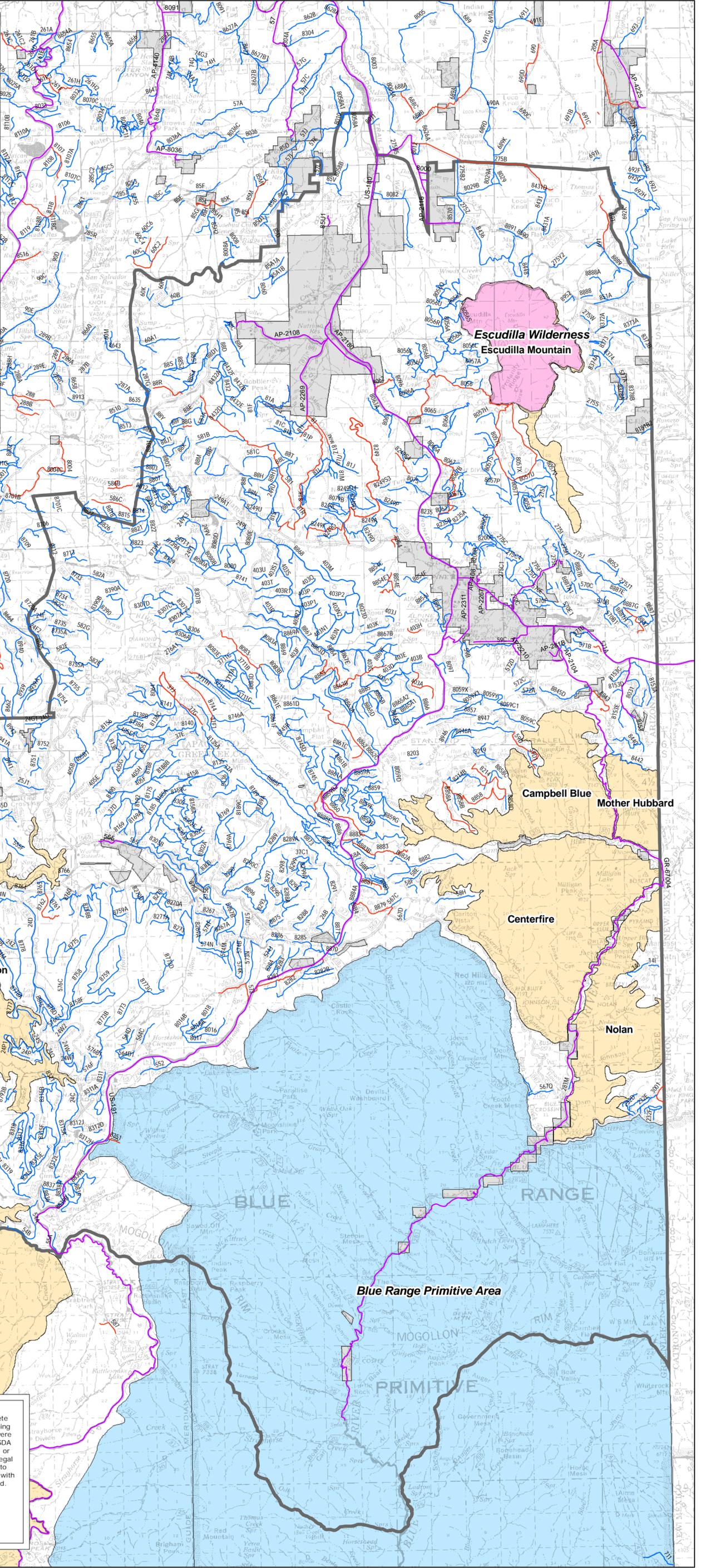
Public Comments Closed Routes

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Alpine Ranger District
Travel Management Rule



Legend

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Public Comments New and Open Routes

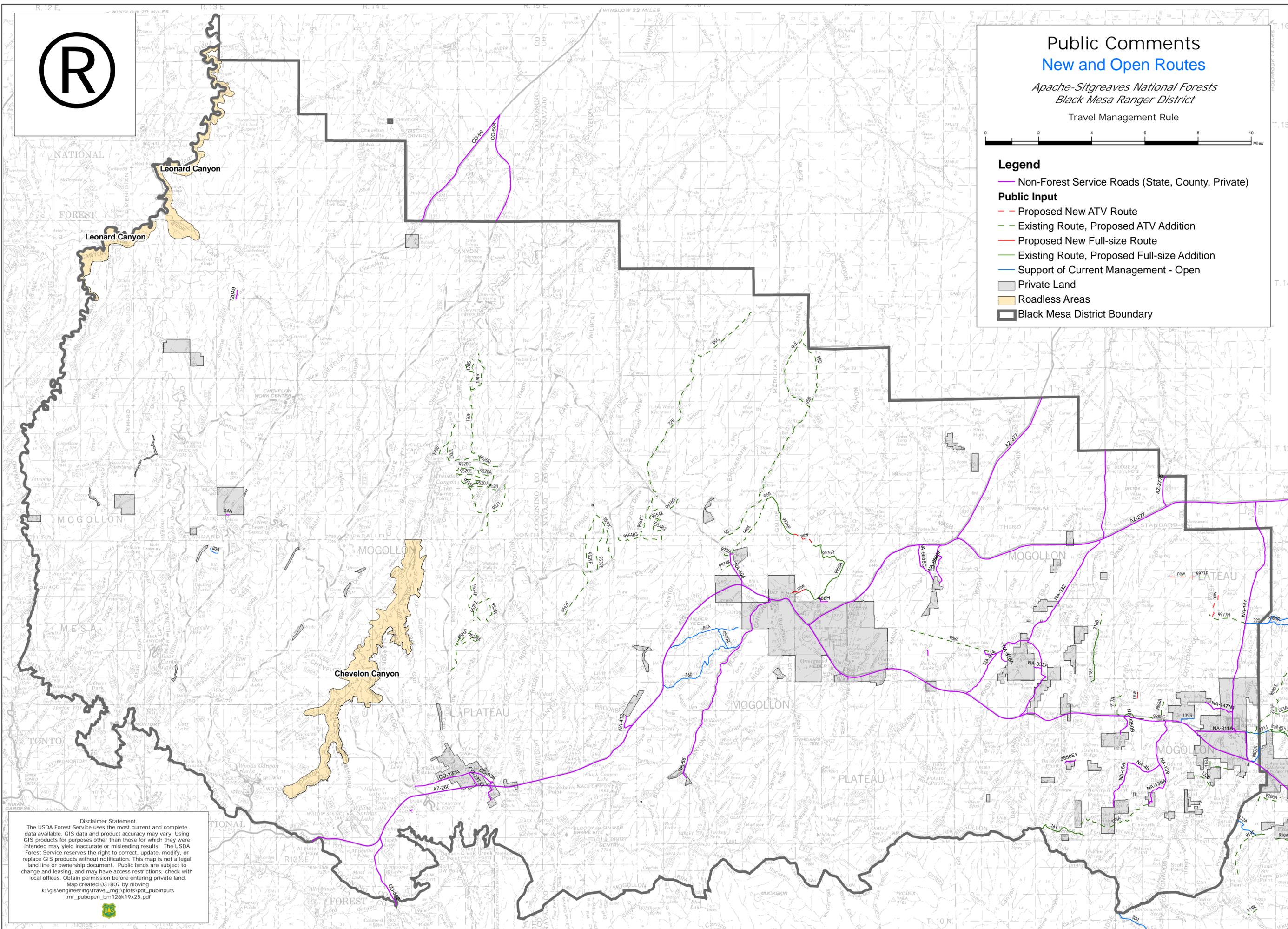
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Black Mesa Ranger District

Travel Management Rule



Legend

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Public Comments Closed Routes

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Black Mesa Ranger District

Travel Management Rule

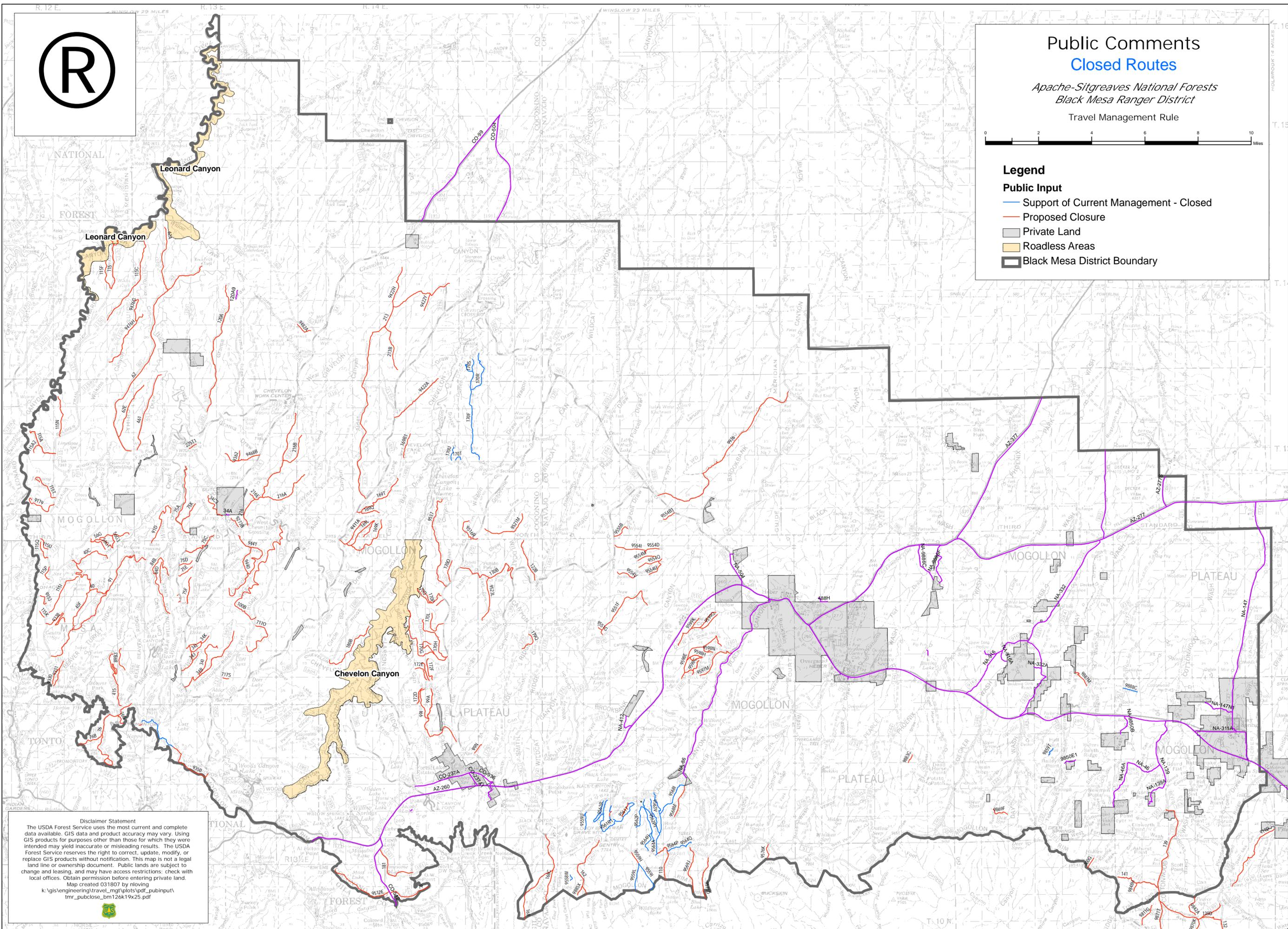


Legend

Public Input

- Support of Current Management - Closed
- Proposed Closure

- Private Land
- Roadless Areas
- Black Mesa District Boundary



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Public Comments Dispersed Camping Areas

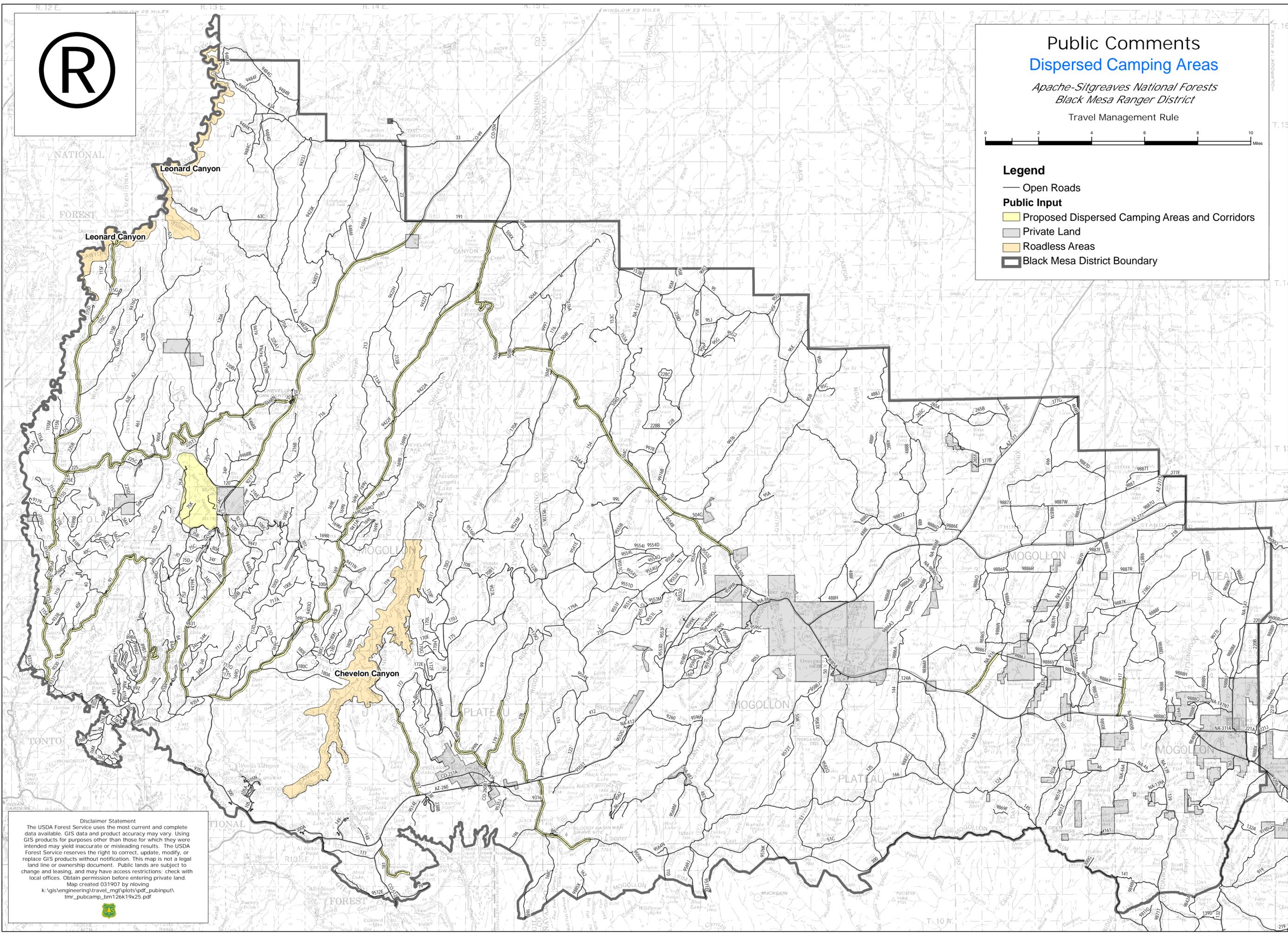
Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Black Mesa Ranger District

Travel Management Rule



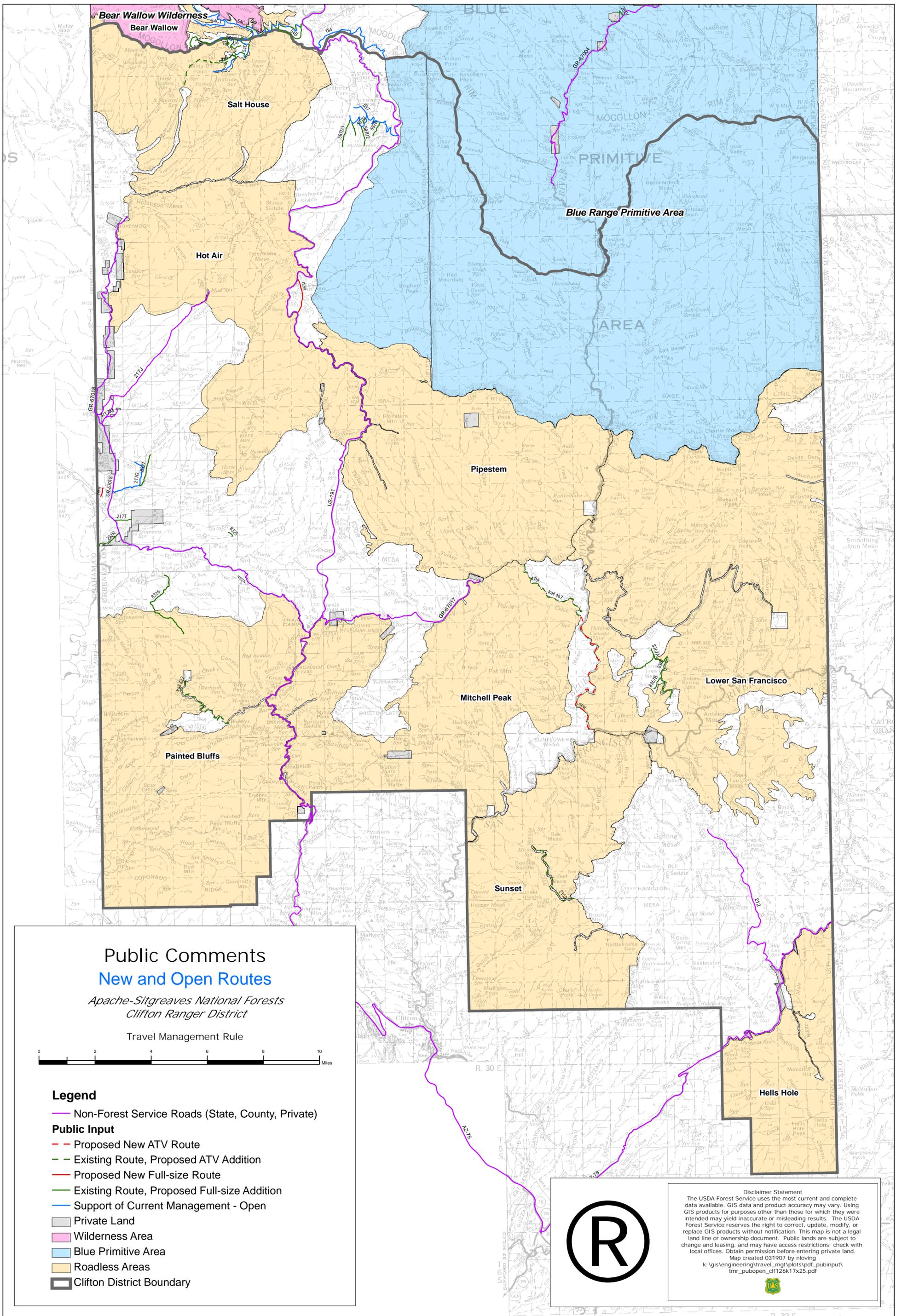
Legend

- Open Roads
- Public Input**
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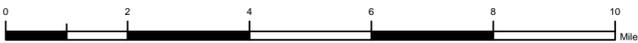




Public Comments
New and Open Routes

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Clifton Ranger District

Travel Management Rule

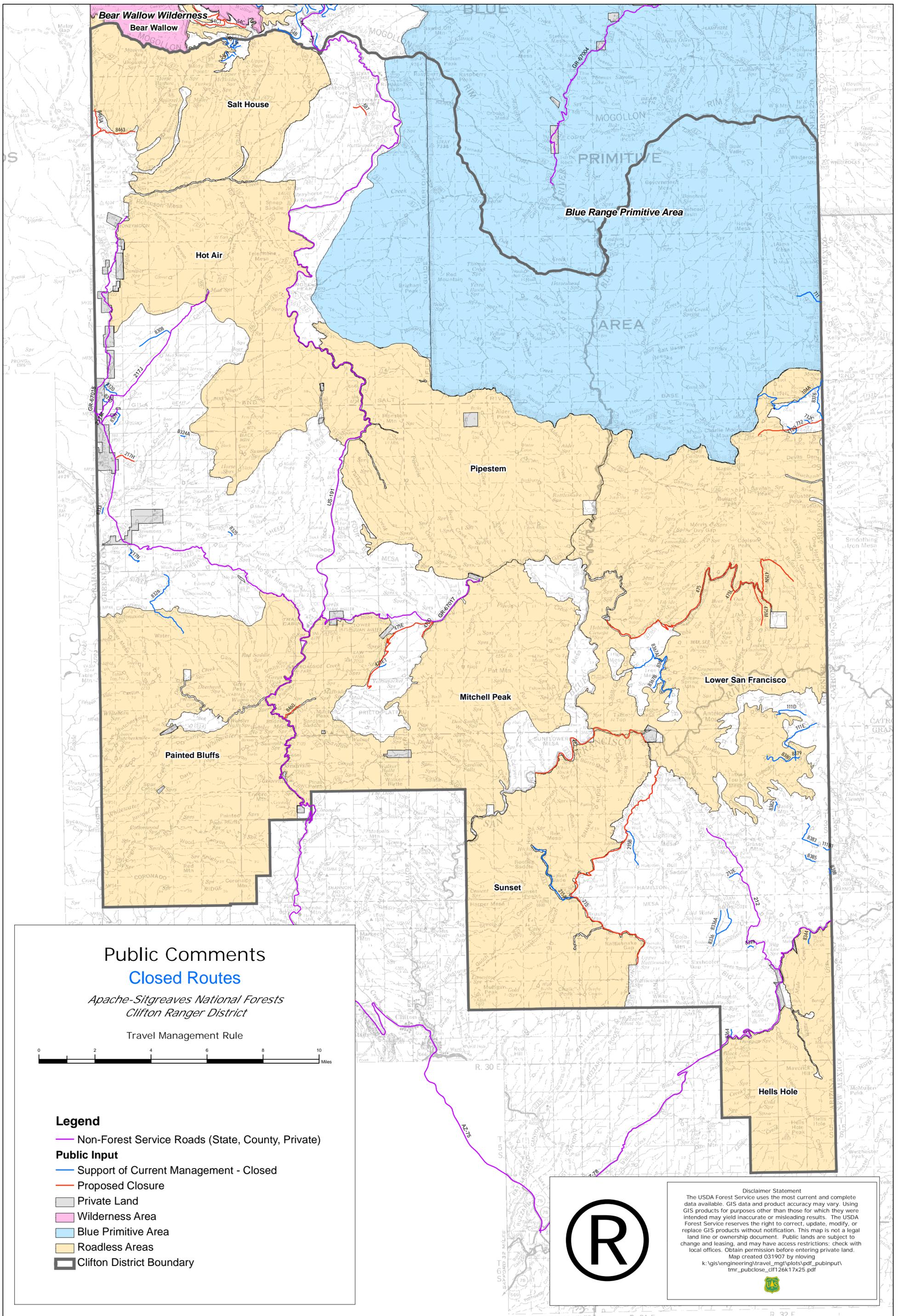


Legend

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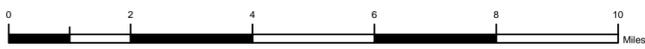


Public Comments

Closed Routes

*Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Clifton Ranger District*

Travel Management Rule

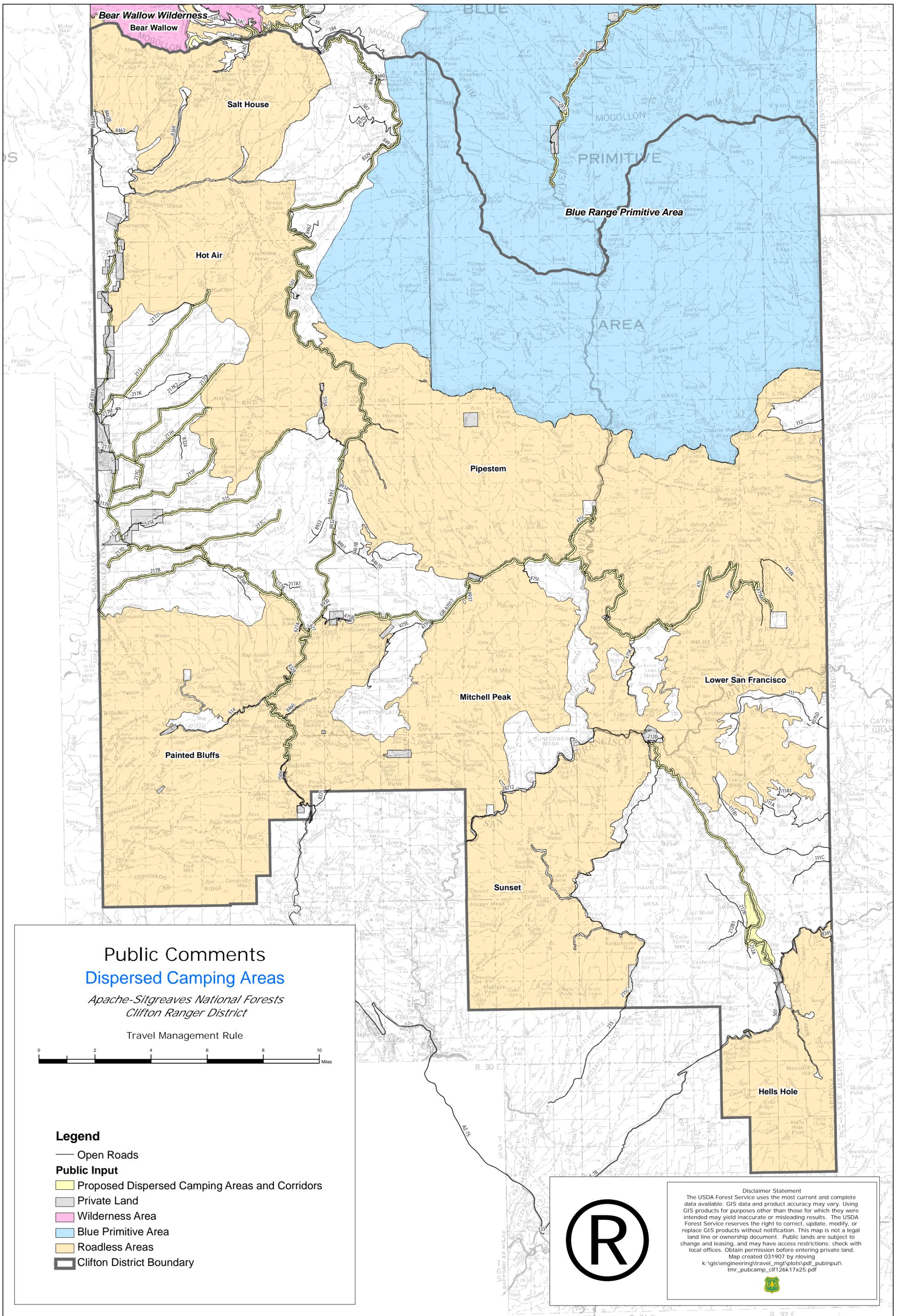


Legend

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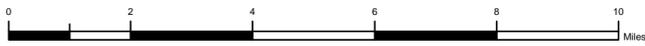
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Public Comments
Dispersed Camping Areas

*Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
 Clifton Ranger District*

Travel Management Rule



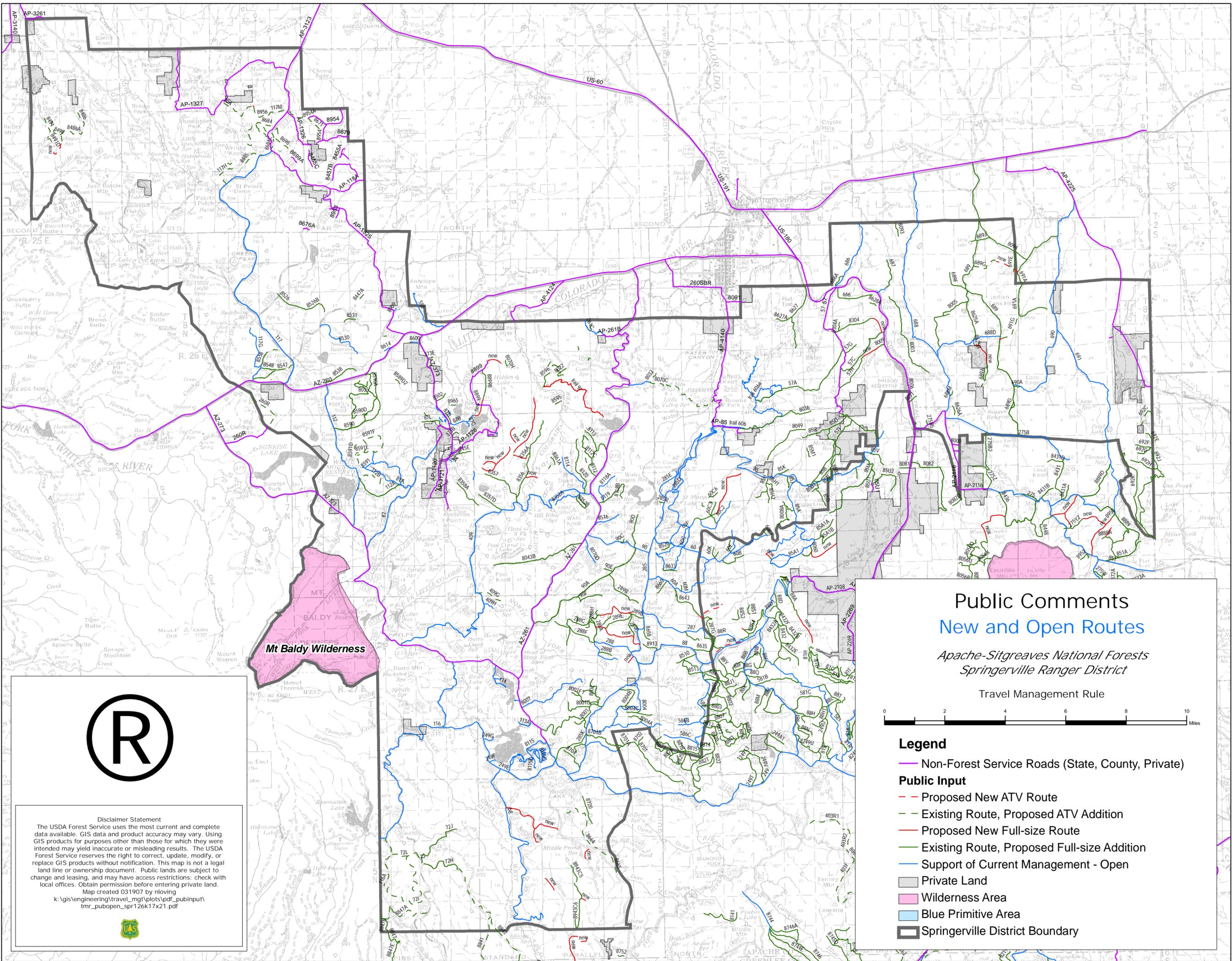
Legend

- Open Roads
- Public Input**
- Proposed Dispersed Camping Areas and Corridors
- Private Land
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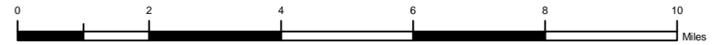




Public Comments New and Open Routes

*Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Springerville Ranger District*

Travel Management Rule



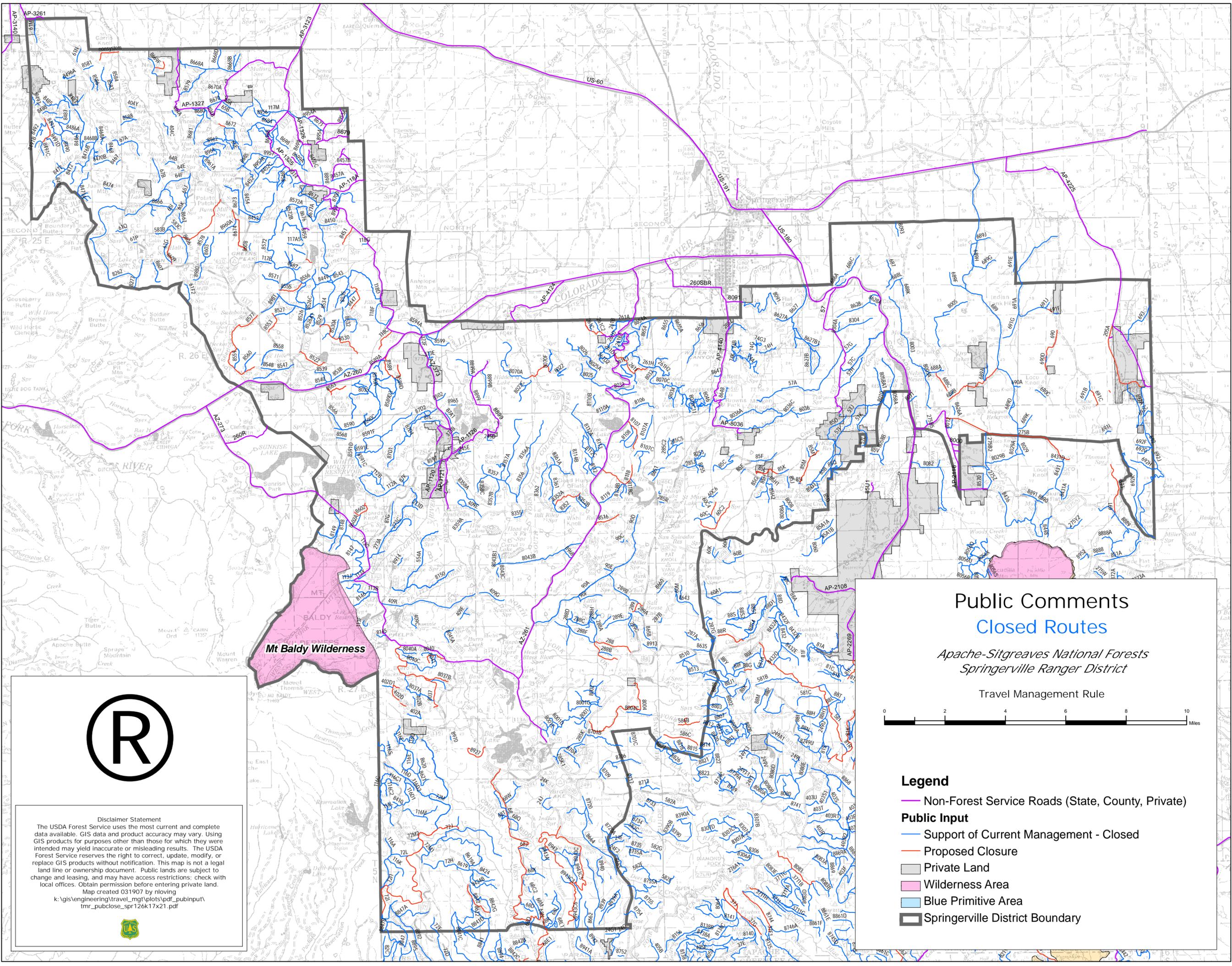
Legend

- Non-Forest Service Roads (State, County, Private)
- Public Input**
- - Proposed New ATV Route
- - Existing Route, Proposed ATV Addition
- - Proposed New Full-size Route
- - Existing Route, Proposed Full-size Addition
- Support of Current Management - Open
- Private Land
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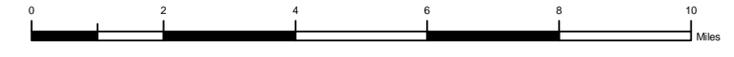




Public Comments Closed Routes

*Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Springerville Ranger District*

Travel Management Rule

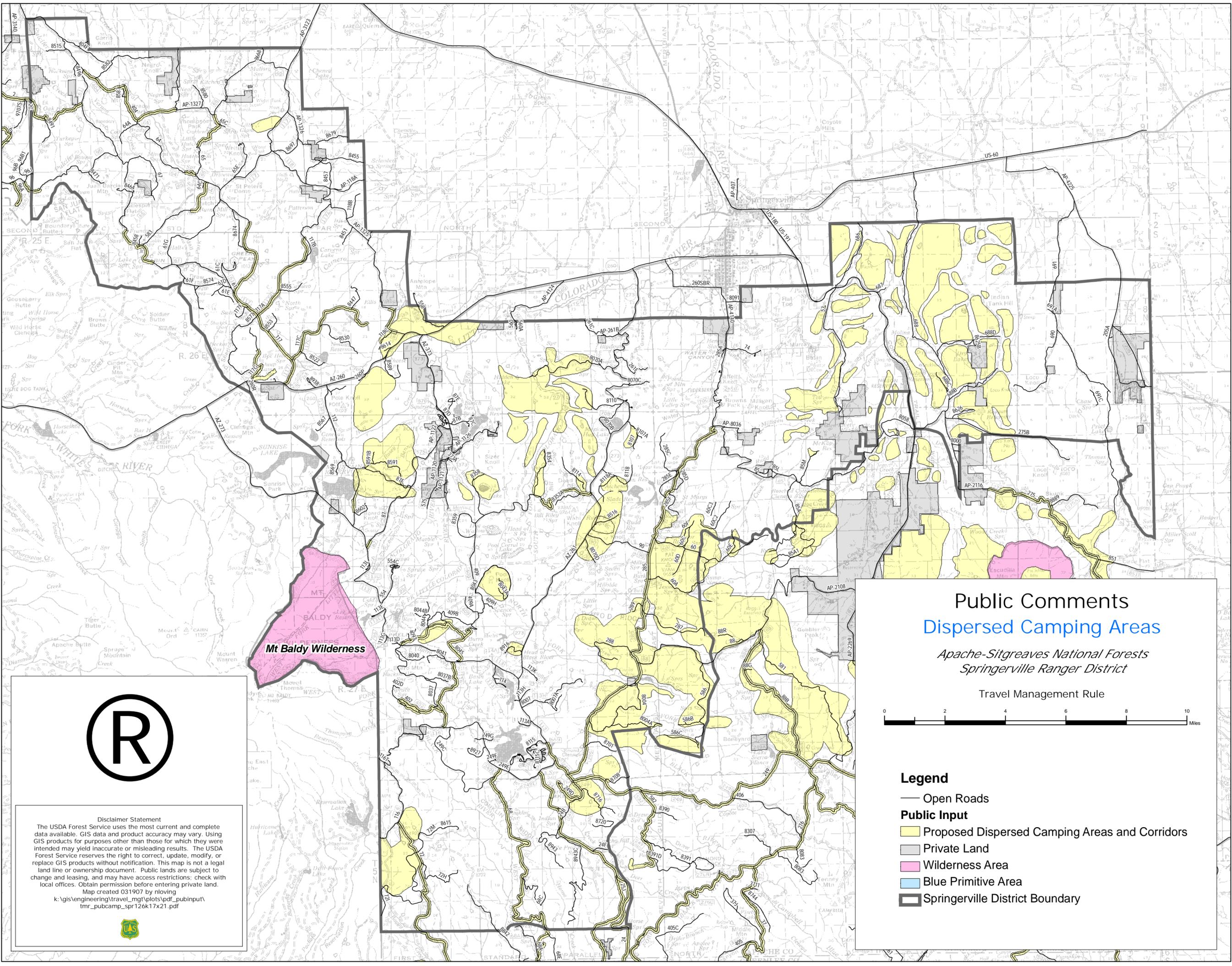


- Legend**
- Non-Forest Service Roads (State, County, Private)
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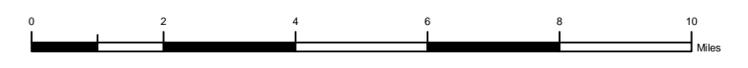




Public Comments Dispersed Camping Areas

*Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Springerville Ranger District*

Travel Management Rule



Legend

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Mt Baldy Wilderness

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Public Comments

New and Open Routes

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Lakeside Ranger District

Travel Management Rule



Legend

— Non-Forest Service Roads (State, County, Private)

Public Input

- - - Proposed New ATV Route

- - - Existing Route, Proposed ATV Addition

- - - Proposed New Full-size Route

- - - Existing Route, Proposed Full-size Addition

— Support of Current Management - Open

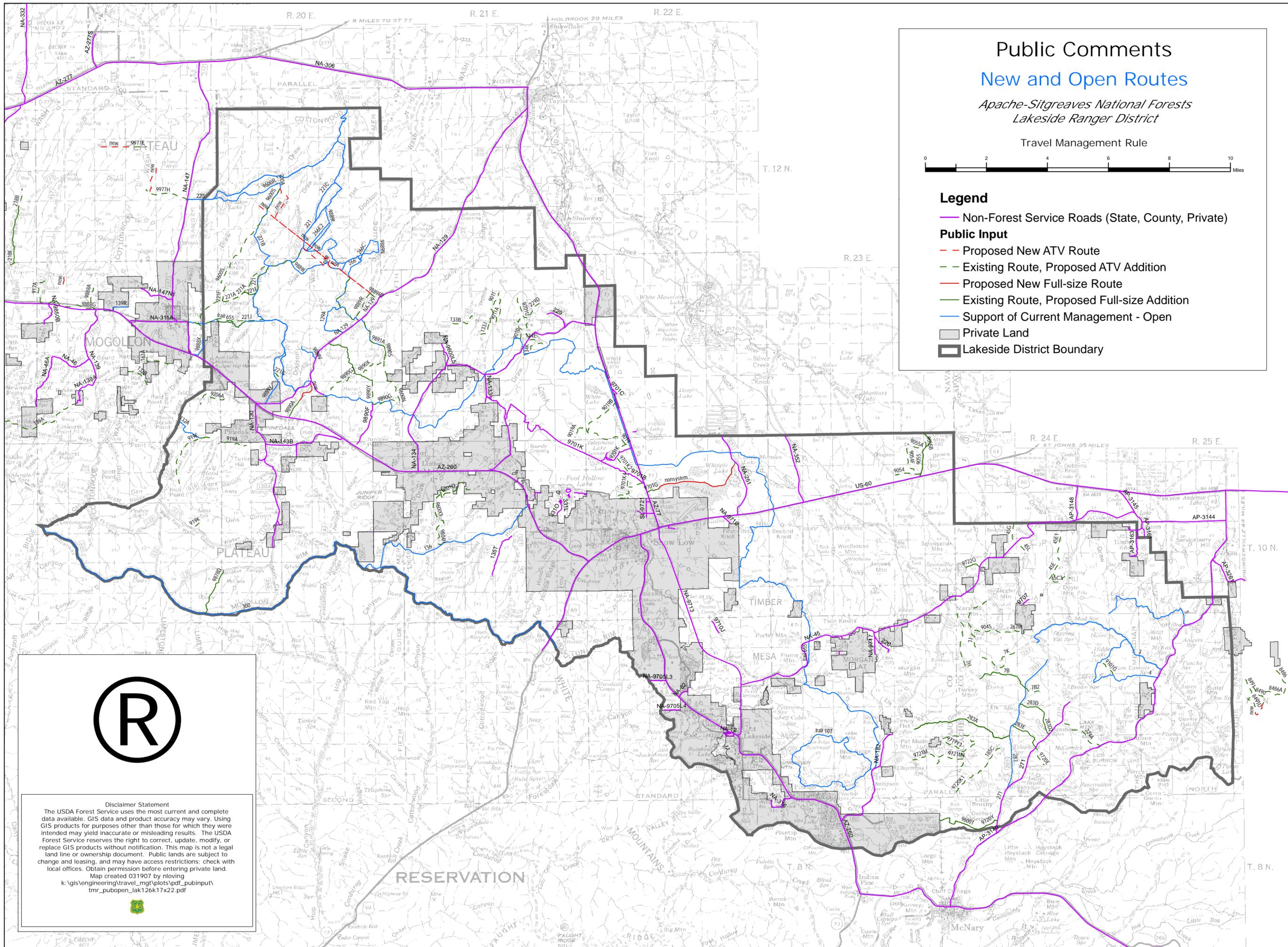
▒ Private Land

▭ Lakeside District Boundary



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Public Comments

Closed Routes

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Lakeside Ranger District

Travel Management Rule

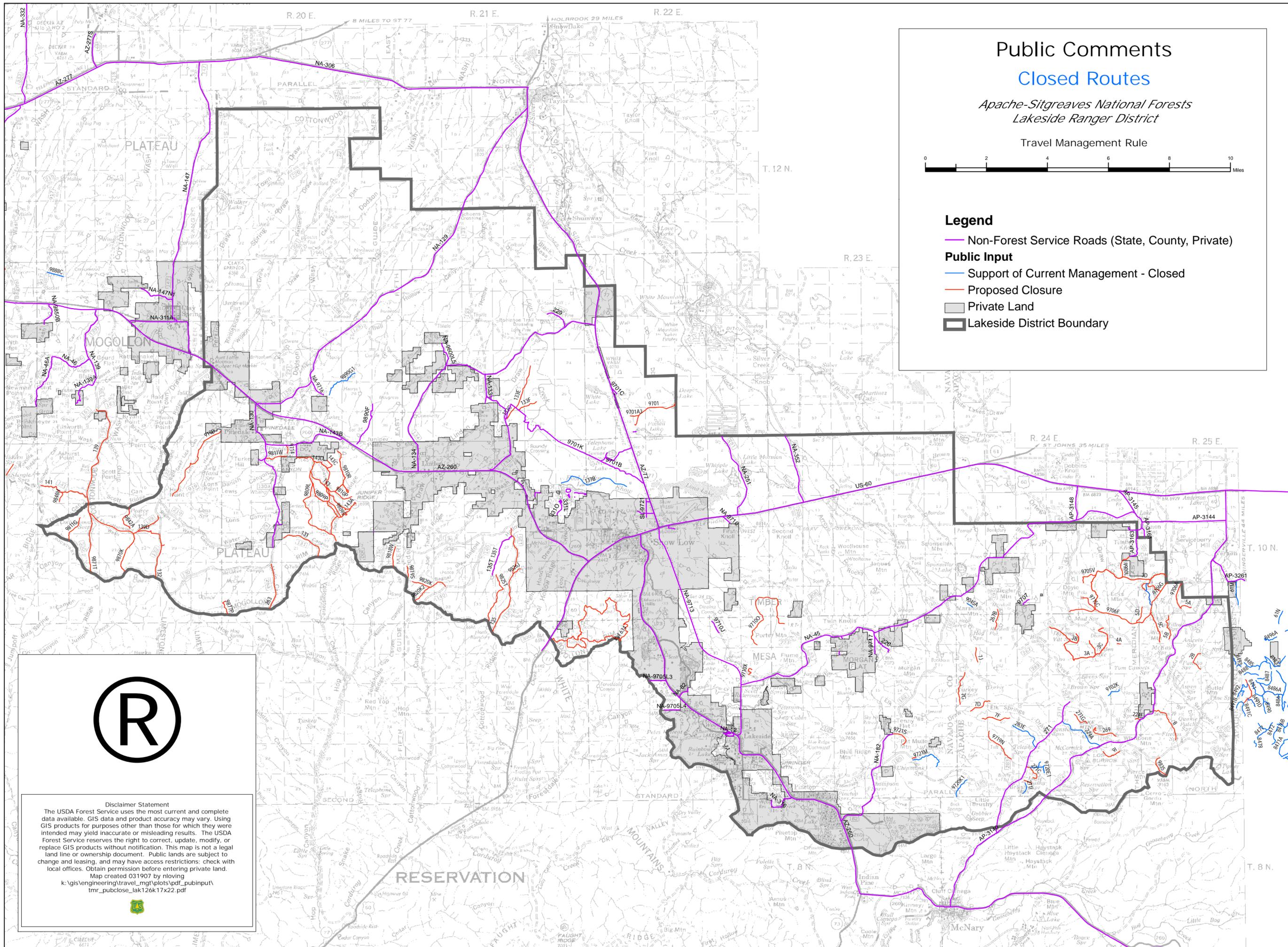


Legend

- Non-Forest Service Roads (State, County, Private)
- Support of Current Management - Closed
- Proposed Closure
- Private Land
- Lakeside District Boundary



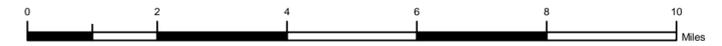
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Public Comments Dispersed Camping Areas

Apache-Sitgreaves National Forests
Lakeside Ranger District

Travel Management Rule



Legend

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