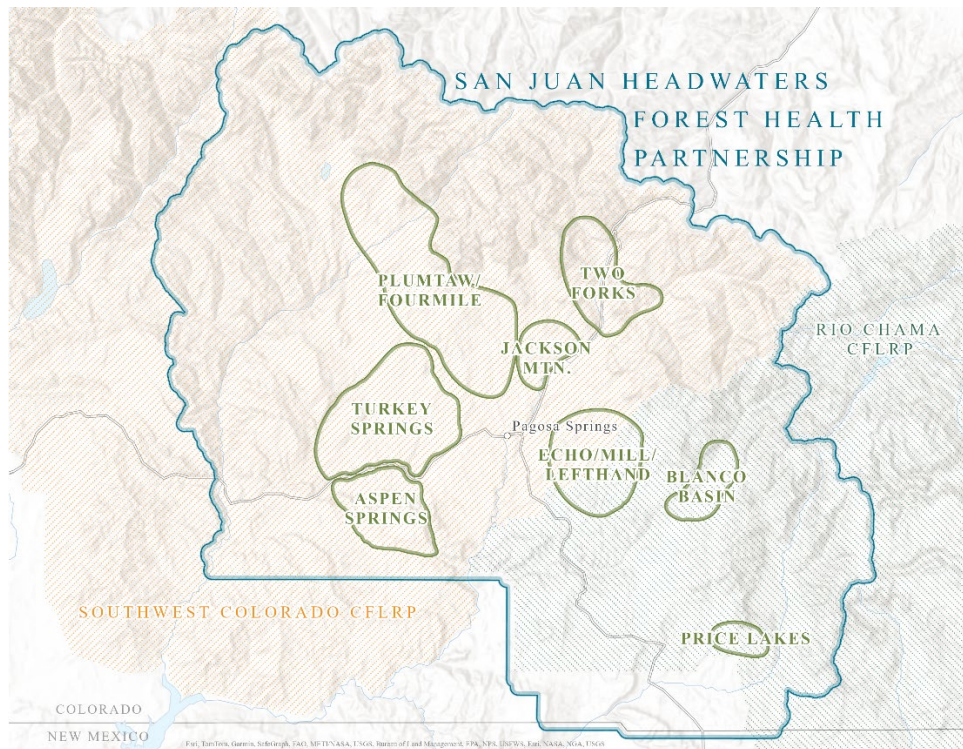




## SJHFHP Priority Landscape Fact Sheets

*Updated January, 2024*



**Disclaimer:** This is a living document, a snapshot in time. The values, priorities, and other information are listed in no specific order. The associated recommendations do not have a deadline, rather they are open-ended. A recommendation does not automatically ensure that a project will be completed. This document will be updated on an annual basis. For more information about completed and ongoing projects, visit our website to see the [INTERACTIVE MAP](#) that we maintain and update annually.

**Confluence of forests and water:** Water quality, quantity, and availability as well as public infrastructure are inextricably linked to forests and watersheds. Ensuring we have safe, clean water depends not only on the status of “human” infrastructure (pipes, intakes, ditches, etc.) but also “natural” infrastructure (watersheds, forest health, soil, etc.). While projects may not always explicitly mention their connection to water, they are always linked.

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**ACRONYMS**

- BLM: Bureau of Land Management
- BLOB: Broad landscape opportunity boundary
- CE: Categorical exclusion (part of the NEPA process [see below])
- EA: Environmental assessment (part of the NEPA process [see below] to determine environmental impacts of a proposed project)
- HOA: Homeowner’s association
- NEPA: National Environmental Policy Act (a process to identify and investigate potential projects on federal land)
- OHV: Off-highway vehicle
- PAWSD: Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District
- POD: Potential operational delineation (used in fire response)
- SJHFHP: San Juan Headwaters Forest Health Partnership
- SJNF: San Juan National Forest
- SUIT: Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- USFS: United States Forest Service
- WUI: Wildland urban interface

## JACKSON MOUNTAIN

**Priority Recommendations:** The following map has symbols to identify these Priority Areas.

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Priority	DFCs
WUI boundary around the San Juan River Village. This involves community engagement and relationship building with the residents, working alongside SJNF on the private/public boundary along the community.	3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 10.A, 10.B
Potential on Jackson Mountain Rd. and off-road trails to create POD boundaries.	3.A.4
Vegetation management, meadow enhancement, and fuels reduction through mechanical thinning. Additionally, this work, under current NEPA, can help elk habitat and migration corridors, active research sites, as well as recreation management.	2.A, 3.A, 4.A, 8.A, 8.B
Active research sites. Jackson Mountain includes active monitoring and research sites for the Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change, Weminuche Audubon Society, and Snowtopography.	4.E, 9.A, 9.D
Public infrastructure. There are key areas to protect: water line, gas line, and the highway corridor. Water infrastructure is of key importance as wildfire can have extensive negative impacts to water quality, quantity, and availability as well as economic impacts to damaged infrastructure. Protection does not only occur at the site of “human” infrastructure (pipes, intakes, ditches, etc.) but also “natural” infrastructure (watersheds, forests, soil, etc.), both of which are inextricably linked.	3.B, 6.A, 10.B

**Size:** 8,000 acres

**Ownership:**

Land manager	Percent cover
San Juan National Forest	82
Private	17
BLM	1

**Vegetation type:**

Vegetation type (LANDFIRE)	Percent cover
Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland	32
Southern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	24
Western Cool Temperate Pasture and Hayland	11
Rocky Mountain Aspen Forest and Woodland	9
Rocky Mountain Gambel Oak-Mixed Montane Shrubland	7

**Collaborative values:**

- Research and monitoring
  - Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change (ASCC)
    - Pre-treatment monitoring completed in 2023
  - Snowtopography
- WUI
  - San Juan River Village

**Ecological values:**

- Wildlife
  - Elk migration corridor and severe winter range
  - Mule deer migration corridor

**Socioeconomic values :**

- Recreation
  - Mountain biking
  - Hiking
  - Hunting
  - River access
- Livestock grazing

Headwaters developed a [virtual tour of Jackson Mountain](#) that outlines values across the landscape.

**Key partners:**

- SJNF
- Rocky Mountain Research Station
- Mountain Studies Institute
- Private landowners

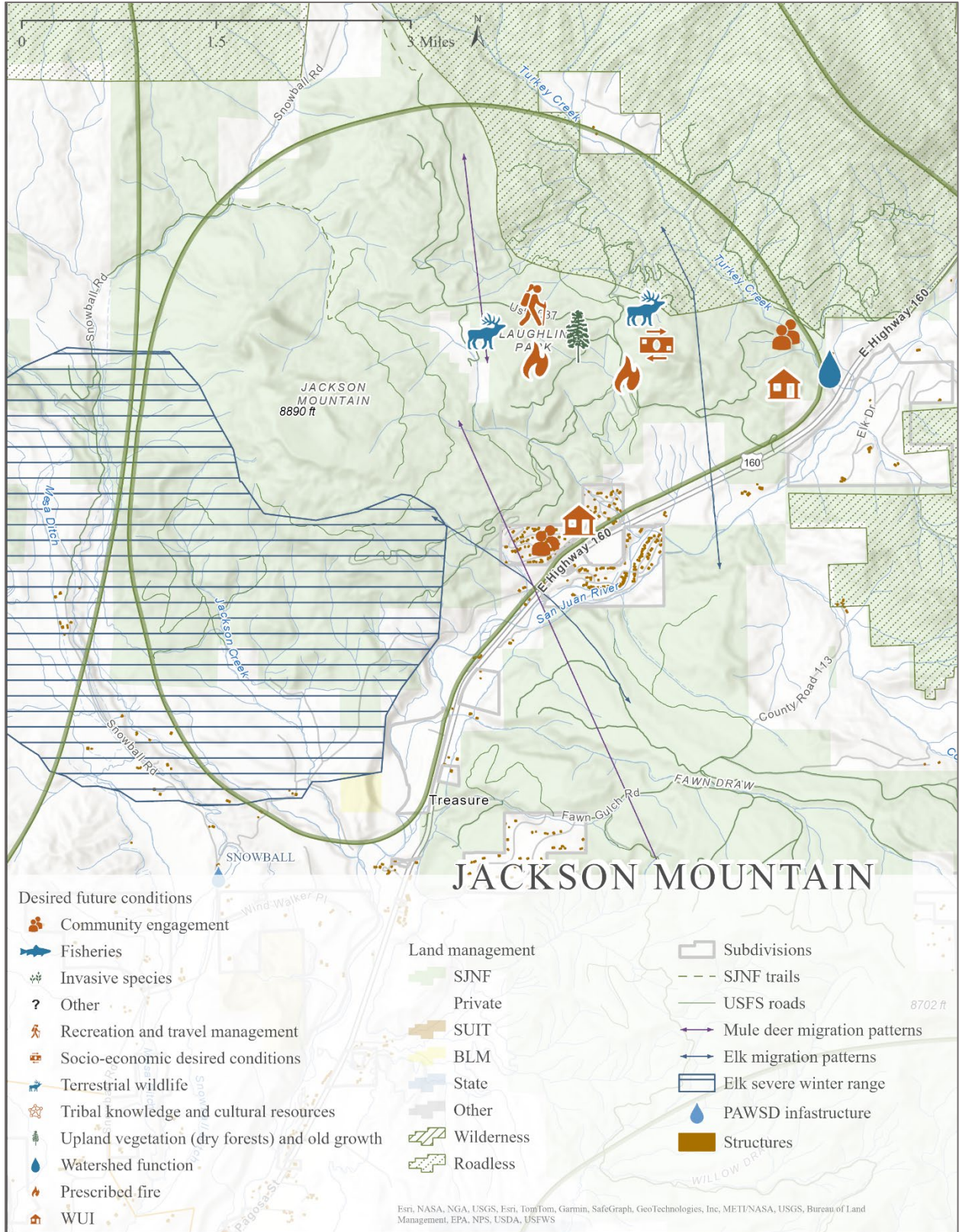
**Present and planned management decisions:**

- [Jackson Mountain EA](#) (awaiting final approval)
  - Vegetation management:
    - Fuels treatments like mastication
    - Commercial timber
    - Meadow enhancement
- Little Jackson Forest Health and Restoration Project (2007 EA)
  - Prepping the next contract to go out for FY24, ~400 acres of thinning for ASCC
- Laughlin CE (planned for 2026)
  - ~155 acres
  - Likely to be lumped in with future work on the Jackson Mountain EA

**Active projects:**

- Active operations on ~66 acres as part of the Little Jackson Forest Health and Restoration Project (2007 EA)
- Adaptive Silviculture for Climate Change
  - Pre-treatment monitoring by MSI summer 2023
- Snowtopography site installation and monitoring

- Installation happening September, 2023
- Monthly monitoring throughout the winter



## PLUMTAW/FOURMILE

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Priority	DFCs
Timber sales. This area is suitable for economically viable timber that can help support local businesses.	9.B, 9.C, 9.D
New NEPA projects. This area is suitable for collaborative discussions on new areas with potential for timber sales, prescribed burning, vegetation management, and more.	9.A, 10.A, 10.B
WUI in Lost Valley of the San Juans and Hidden Valley and Eagle Peak Ranches.	3.B, 3.C, 10.A
Vegetation management. This area is suitable for ecological restoration and fuels reduction.	2.A
Public infrastructure: water resources protection, including drinking water for Pagosa Springs and infrastructure for Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District. Water infrastructure is of key importance as wildfire can have extensive negative impacts to water quality, quantity, and availability as well as economic impacts to damaged infrastructure. Protection does not only occur at the site of “human” infrastructure (pipes, intakes, ditches, etc.) but also “natural” infrastructure (watersheds, forests, soil, etc.), both of which are inextricably linked.	3.B, 6.A, 10.B
POD boundary maintenance and hardening on Plumtaw and Fourmile Rds. These are key POD boundaries that played a vital role in the response to the 2022 Plumtaw Fire.	3.A.4

**Size:** 50,000 acres

### Ownership:

Land manager	Percent cover
San Juan National Forest	74
Private	26
BLM	<1

### Vegetation type:

Vegetation type (LANDFIRE)	Percent cover
Rocky Mountain Aspen Forest and Woodland	25
Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland	18
Southern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	11
Rocky Mountain Gambel Oak-Mixed Montane Shrubland	10
Inter-Mountain Basins Aspen-Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	7

**Collaborative values:**

- Drinking water
  - The Fourmile diversion and pipeline provides drinking water to the Town of Pagosa Springs. Forest restoration and wildfire mitigation is paramount to protect water quality, quantity and availability.
    - Need better defensible space around the headgate
  - Pipeline diversion from west Fork
- Communications and public outreach
  - Plumtaw Fire Film
- WUI
  - Lost Valley of the San Juans
  - Hidden Valley Ranch
- Years of monitoring in this landscape

**Ecological values:**

- Wildlife

**Socioeconomic values:**

- Large suitable timber base, “in the wood basket” for maintaining timber industry, an important economic value in the Headwaters landscape.
- Recreation
  - Hunting
- Livestock grazing

**Key partners:**

- SJNF
- Pagosa Area Water and Sanitation District
- Private landowners

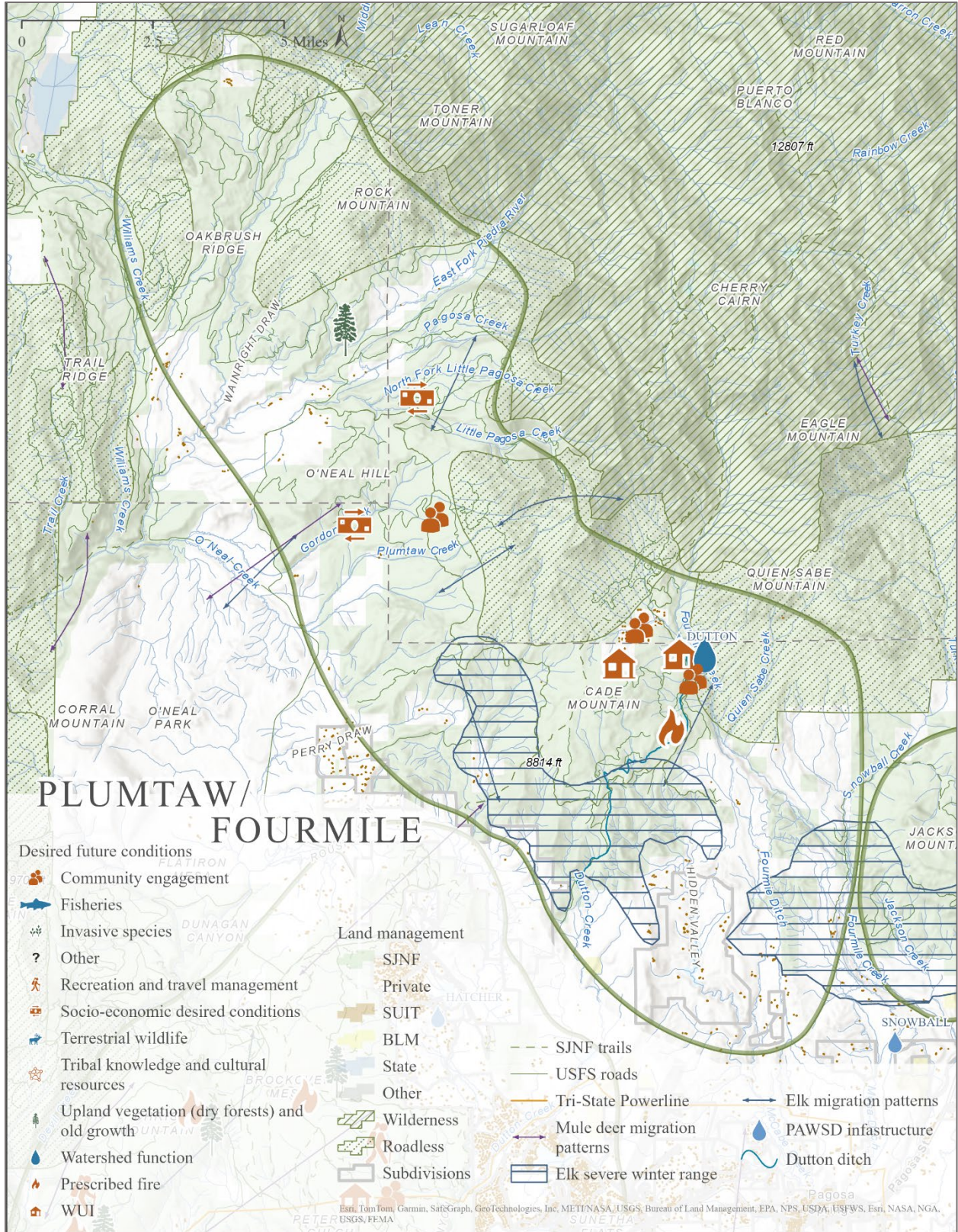
**Present and planned management decisions:**

- Planning will be needed in the future. There are no current management decisions.
  - Some areas will need to be retreated (for example, along Fourmile Road where mastication has been completed).
  - Potential future planning around O’Neal Hill

**Active projects:**

- Private lands projects
  - Hidden Valley
  - Pagosa Peak Ranch
- SJNF just completed work in Pagosa Creek
  - Aspen regeneration
  - Active management





## ASPEN SPRINGS

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Priority	DFCs
WUI outreach on private lands. There is a need for coordinated outreach and engagement to work towards mitigation work. Due to the prevailing wind direction (SW) and topography, there is high potential for propagation of wildfire into the high density WUI.	3.B, 3.C, 10.A
WUI work on Southern Ute tribal land. Due to the prevailing wind direction (SW) and topography, there is high potential for propagation of wildfire into the high density WUI.	3.B, 3.C, 10.A
Cross boundary work with SJNF on the eastern portion of the BLOB and Burns Canyon area.	3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 9.A
Public infrastructure: key communications tower.	3.B, 10.B

**Size:** 17,000 acres

**Ownership:**

Land manager	Percent cover
Private	58
SJNF	24
SUIT	15
BLM	2
State	1

**Vegetation type:**

Vegetation type (LANDFIRE)	Percent cover
Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland	52
Rocky Mountain Gambel Oak-Mixed Montane Shrubland	15
Southern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	10
Colorado Plateau Pinyon-Juniper Woodland	6
Interior Western North American Temperate Ruderal Grassland	4

**Collaborative values:**

- WUI
- Landscape connectivity
- Opportunity to showcase work because it is highly visible from HWY 160

**Socioeconomic values:**

- Infrastructure
  - Cell and internet infrastructure on Oakbrush Hill
  - Highway 160 corridor

**Key partners:**

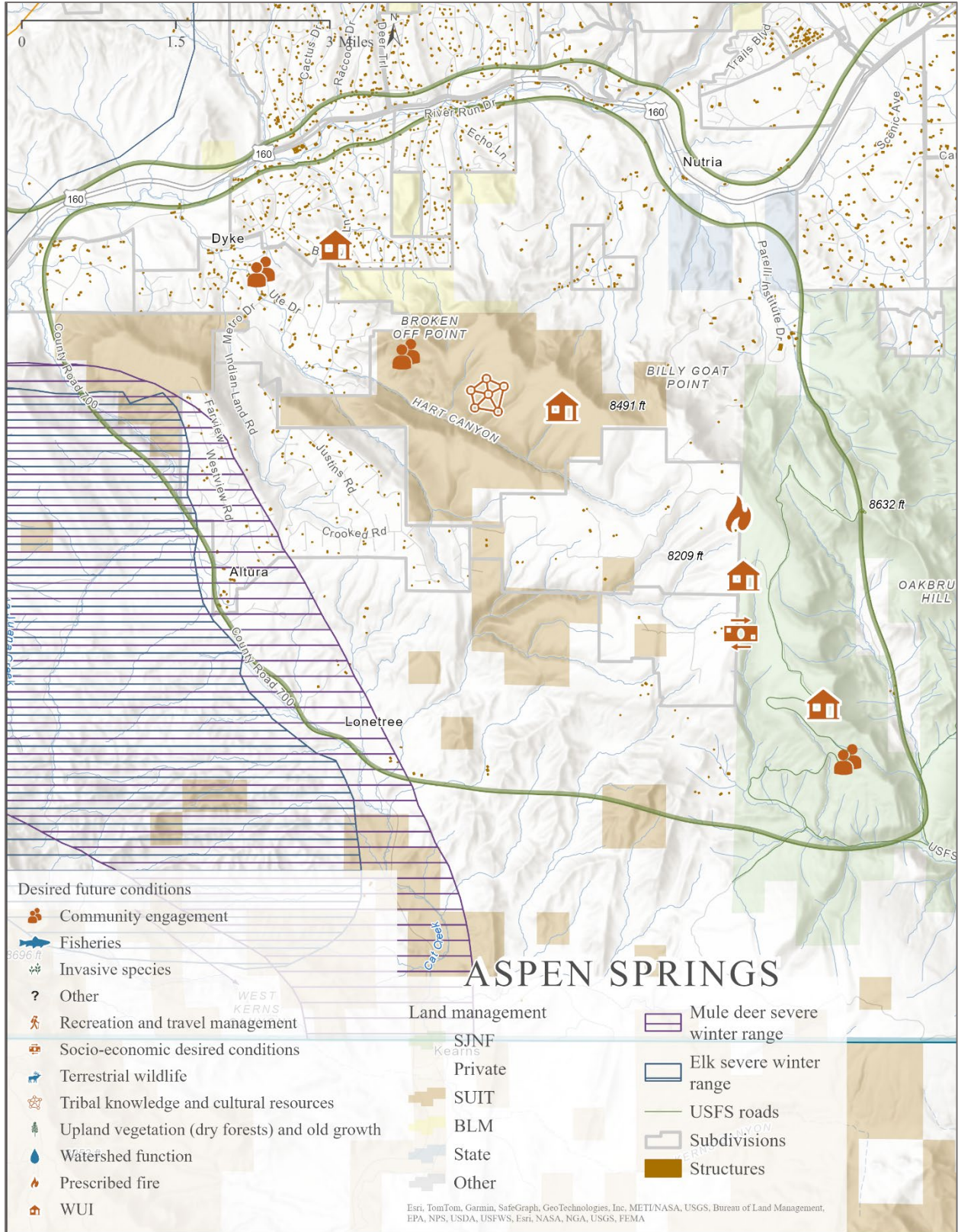
- Private landowners
- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
- Southern Ute Indian Tribe
- SJNF
- Aspen Springs Metro District
- Colorado State Land Board, state trust lands

**Active projects:**

- Wildfire Adapted Partnership is doing community assessments
  - Potential to develop Community Wildfire Protection Plan(s)
- SJNF has done prescribed burning to the west of Aspen Springs in the past

**Obstacles to treatment:**

- Small parcels
- Low-income
- Sometimes landowners aren't willing to do treatment on their land and there is concern that removing trees would remove the buffer from the road (privacy screens) and reduce property value
- Access
  - Emergency access and egress during a fire event
  - Southern Ute parcels that are "land-locked" by private land, need access through private property to access
- Need to establish better coordination and communication with Southern Ute
- Virtually no infrastructure for residents



## TWO FORKS

**Priority Recommendations:** The following map has symbols to identify these Priority Areas.

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Priority	DFCs
WUI protection, vegetation management and POD boundary on the East Fork and West Fork campground areas and adjacent private lands.	2.A, 3.A, 3.B, 3.C, 9.A
San Juan Lineage Cutthroat Trout protection on Fall Creek.	6.A, 7.A, 7.B, 7.C
Riparian restoration and recreation management on the East Fork Corridor. High use dispersed camping on East Fork.	6.A, 7.A, 8.A, 8.B
Public infrastructure: key gas line, water intake, highway 160. Water infrastructure is of key importance as wildfire can have extensive negative impacts to water quality, quantity, and availability as well as economic impacts to damaged infrastructure. Protection does not only occur at the site of “human” infrastructure (pipes, intakes, ditches, etc.) but also “natural” infrastructure (watersheds, forests, soil, etc.), both of which are inextricably linked.	3.B, 10.B

**Size:** 18,000 acres

**Ownership:**

Land manager	Percent cover
San Juan National Forest	77
Private	23
State	<1

**Vegetation type:**

Vegetation type (LANDFIRE)	Percent cover
Southern Rocky Mountain Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	22
Rocky Mountain Aspen Forest and Woodland	19
Southern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	17
Rocky Mountain Subalpine Dry-Mesic Spruce-Fir Forest and Woodland	12
Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland	10

**Collaborative values:**

- Cross-boundary opportunities between SJNF and private landowners
  - Large private properties
- Public engagement opportunity, highly visible

**Ecological values:**

- Forest health
- Watershed health
- San Juan Cutthroat population and habitat

**Socioeconomic values:**

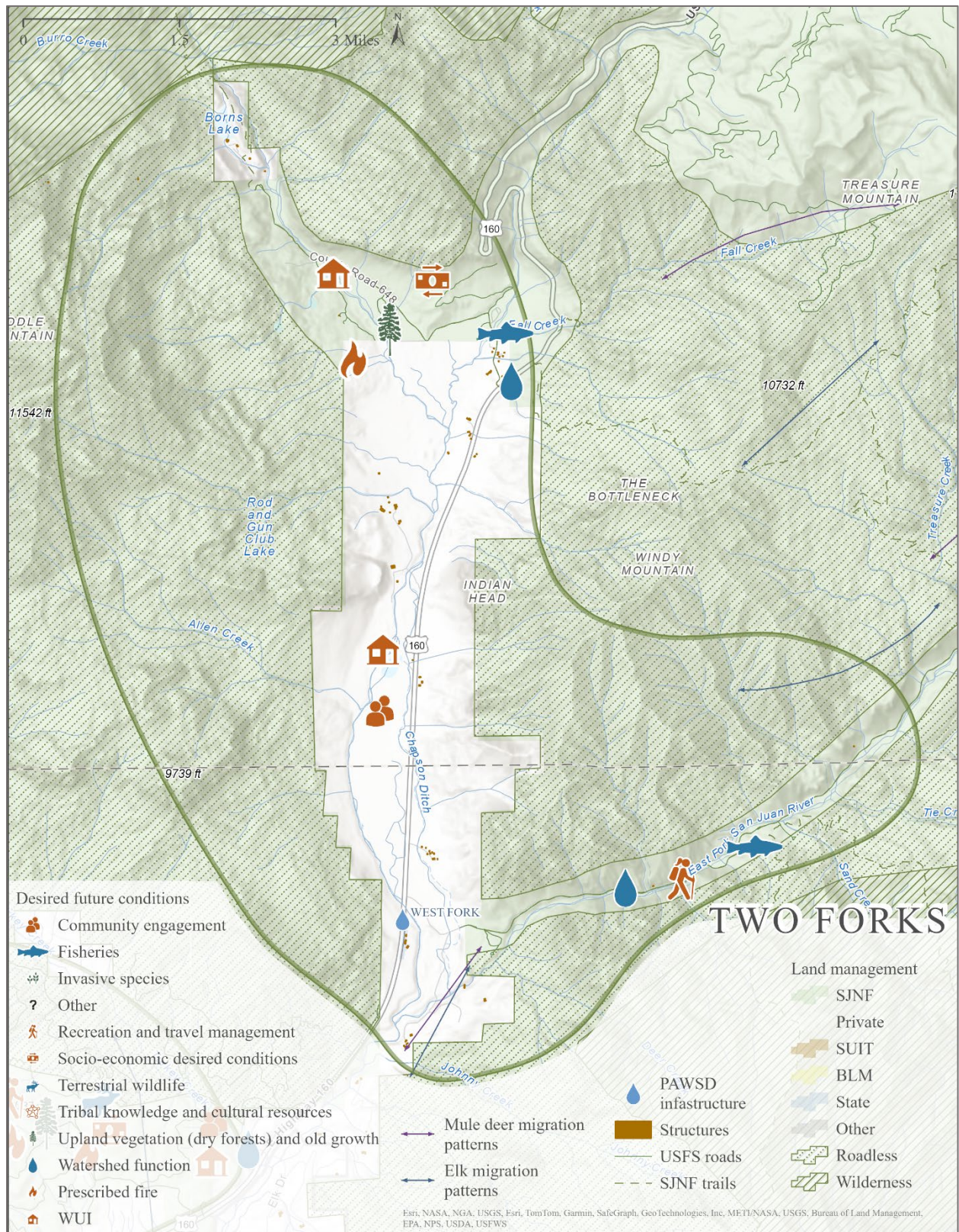
- Infrastructure
  - West Fork diversion
  - Water quality concerns of post-fire impacts
  - HWY 160 corridor
- Recreation
  - Campgrounds
  - OHV

**Key partners:**

- SJNF
- Private landowners
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife

**Present and planned management decisions:**

- Fuels and Forest Health CE (2011)
- New CE to include cross-boundary opportunity with Bruce Spruce Ranch and previous forest health prescriptions
- Future recreation planning is needed



## TURKEY SPRINGS

“a forever priority”

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Priority	DFCs
Potential POD boundary and access for ecological restoration and fire response on Chris Mountain Rd. The area is a high priority, the road provides access to treat this area. Due to the prevailing wind direction (SW) and topography, there is high potential for propagation of wildfire into the high density WUI.	2.A, 3.A, 8.B, 8.D
Prescribed fire as a tool to return fire on this landscape.	2.A, 3.A
Mechanical fuels treatment areas.	2.A, 3.A
Public infrastructure: electrical power lines.	3.B, 10.B
Trail work and recreation management on the Turkey Springs trail network.	8.A, 8.B, 8.C

**Size:** 35,000 acres

**Ownership:**

Land manager	Percent cover
San Juan National Forest	52
Private	47
BLM	1
Local govt.	<1

**Vegetation type:**

Vegetation type (LANDFIRE)	Percent cover
Southern Rocky Mountain Ponderosa Pine Woodland	59
Southern Rocky Mountain Dry-Mesic Montane Mixed Conifer Forest and Woodland	7
Rocky Mountain Gambel Oak-Mixed Montane Shrubland	7
Developed-Roads	4
Colorado Plateau-Pinyon-Juniper Woodland	3

**Collaborative values:**

- Concern about headcuts in the wetlands above Hatcher Lake. This is causing damage to important wildlife habitat, fire refugia.
- Cross-boundary opportunities between SJNF and private landowners
- WUI
  - Pagosa Lakes Property Owners Association
- Years of monitoring in this landscape



**Socioeconomic values:**

- Population hub
- Recreation
  - Hiking
  - Mountain biking
  - OHV
- Infrastructure
  - Tri-state powerline
  - Water infrastructure

**Key partners:**

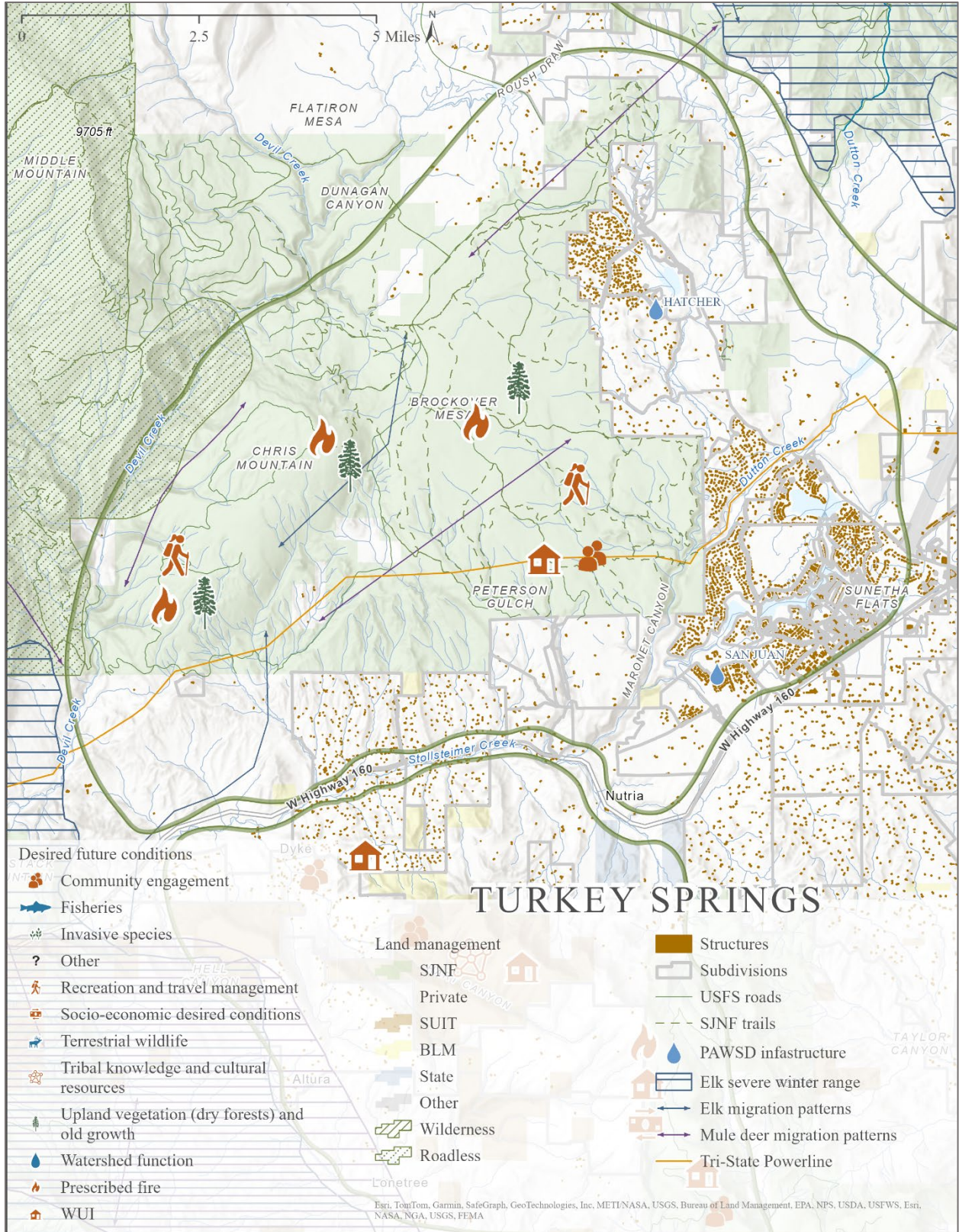
- SJNF
- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
- Tri-State
- Private landowners, HOAs

**Present and planned management decisions:**

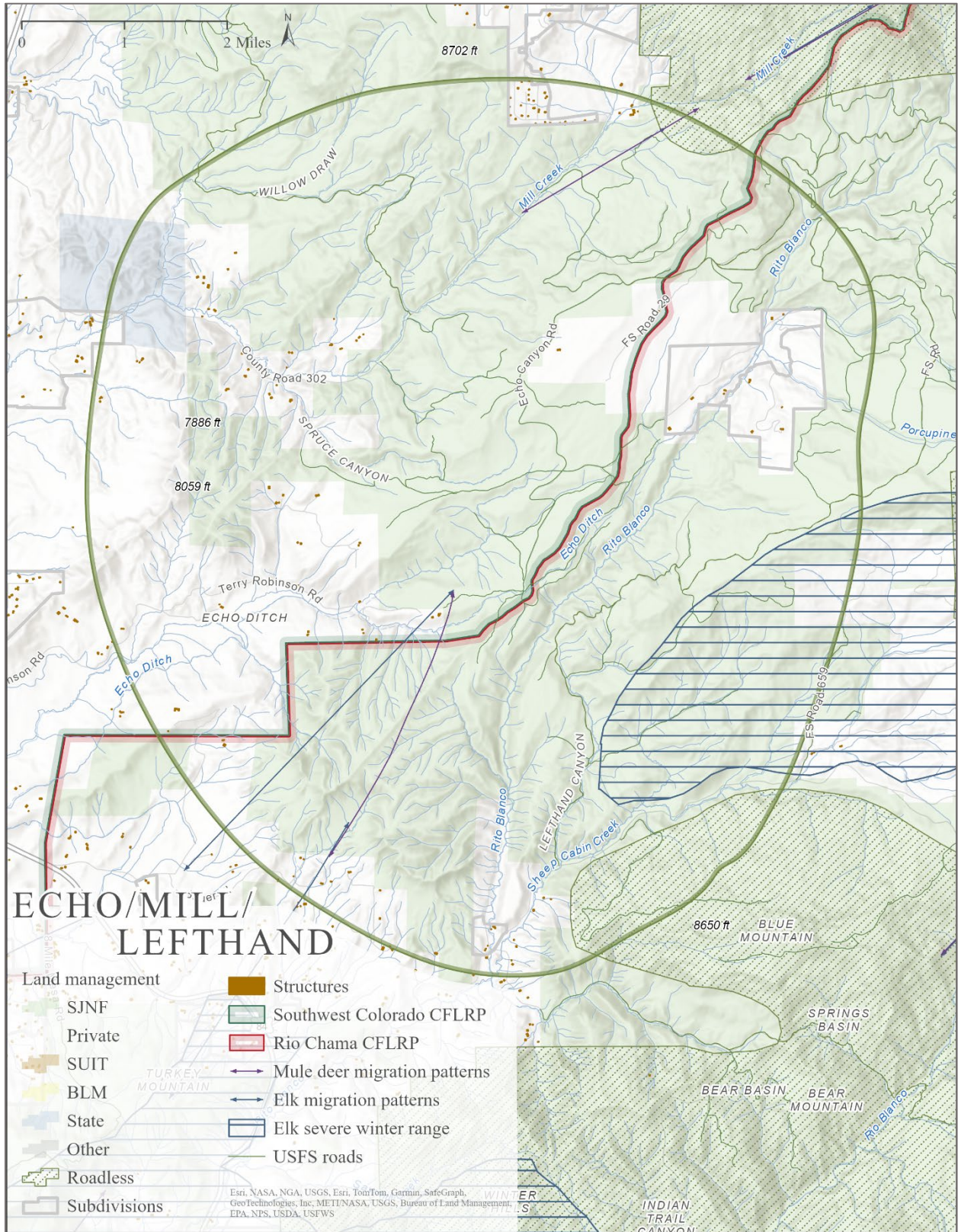
- Turkey Springs Vegetation Management Project (2021)
- Earlier Turkey Springs EA

**Active projects:**

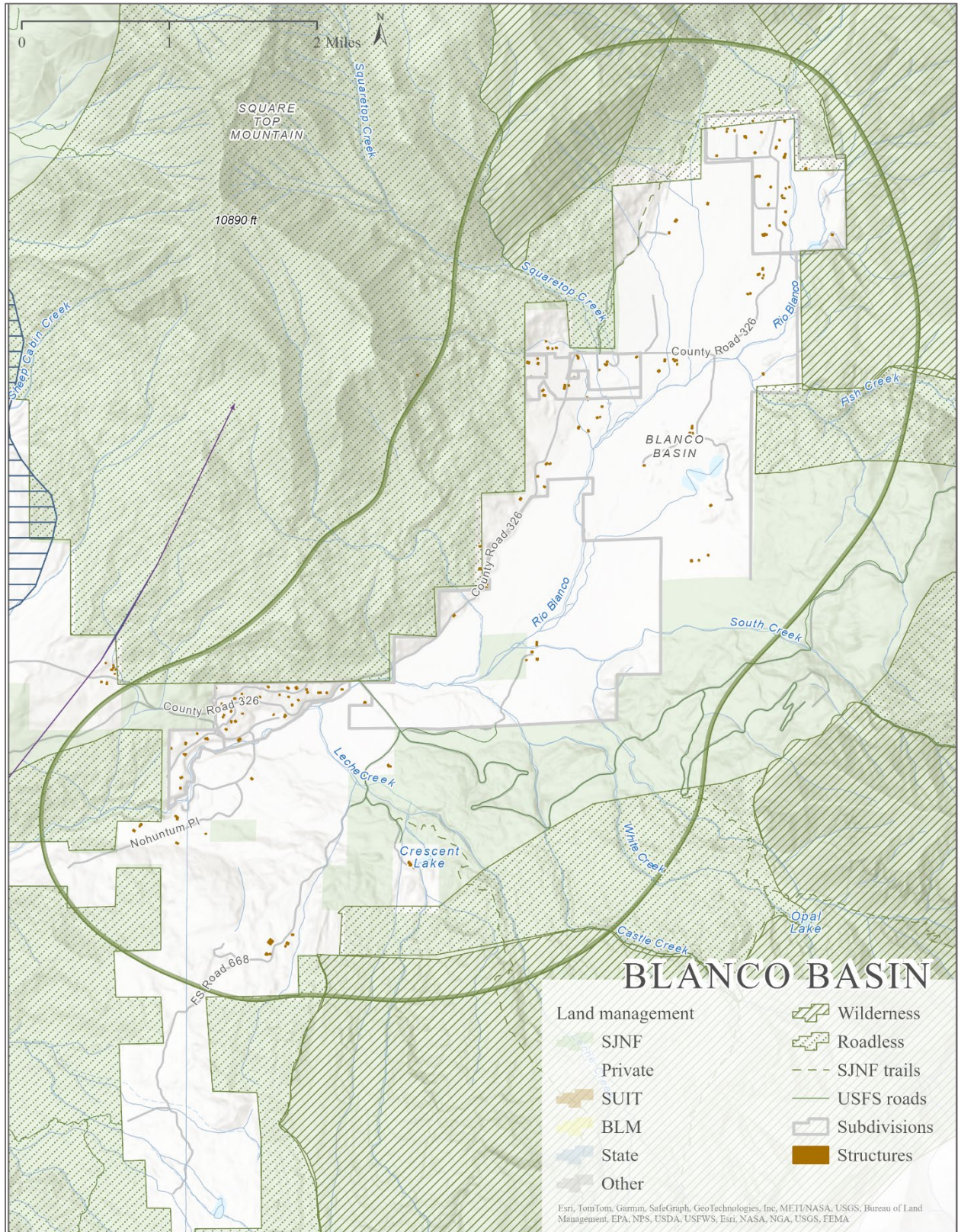
- SJNF
  - Active mastication work in Turkey Springs
  - Just awarded a contract for 184 acres of work
- Wildfire Adapted Partnership
  - Home assessments
  - Mitigation in HOA common space



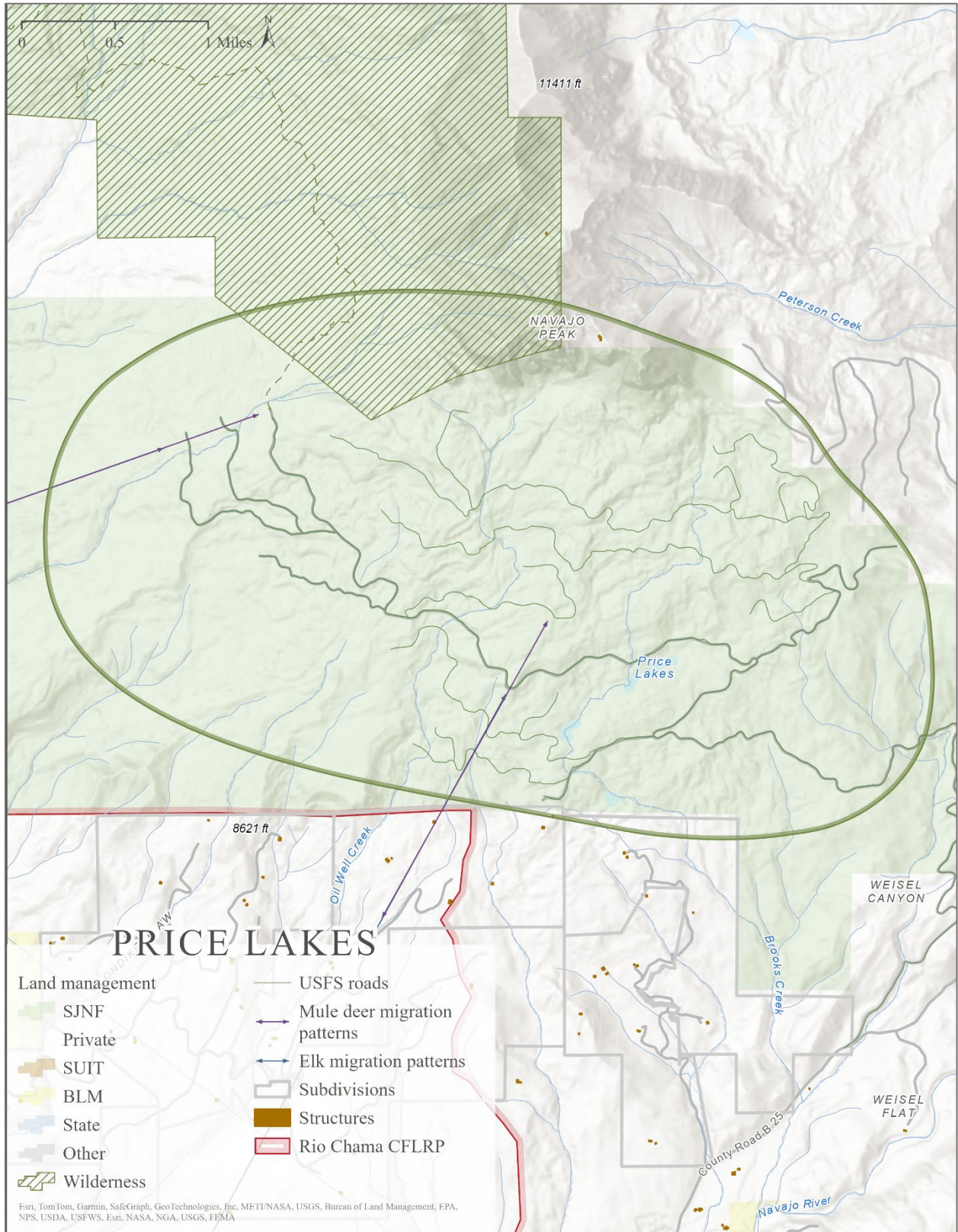
# ECHO/MILL/LEFTHAND



# BLANCO BASIN



# PRICE LAKES



## OTHER PRIORITIES

Trail maintenance, including clearing downed trees

- Firefighter access and safety
- Socioeconomic benefits of recreation

“Hardening” POD boundaries

- Increase collaborative awareness about PODs
- Promote the successful management of wildfire
- This will be a discussion item for winter meetings

San Juan Cutthroat

- Population
- Habitat

Research

- Better concrete understanding of connection between forest health and water