

**Appendix C -
Analysis of Potential Wilderness
Areas and Evaluation of Potential
Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory**

This page intentionally left blank

Appendix C

Table of Contents

APPENDIX C - ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS AND EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS INVENTORY.....	C-1
C.1 ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS.....	C-1
C.1.1 INTRODUCTION	C-1
C.1.2 BACKGROUND.....	C-1
C.1.3 IDENTIFICATION OF POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS	C-2
C.1.4 SUMMARY OF RESULTS	C-2
<i>Consideration of Possible Additions to Existing Wilderness Areas.....</i>	<i>C-2</i>
<i>Re-evaluation of RARE II Study Areas</i>	<i>C-3</i>
<i>Analysis of Areas Proposed during the Forest Plan Revision Process</i>	<i>C-3</i>
<i>GIS-based Forestwide Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas</i>	<i>C-3</i>
C.1.5 CONCLUSIONS.....	C-3
C.2 CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE ADDITIONS TO EXISTING WILDERNESS AREAS	C-3
C.2.1 BLACK CREEK WILDERNESS AREA.....	C-3
C.2.2 LEAF WILDERNESS AREA	C-6
C.3 RE-EVALUATION OF RARE II STUDY AREAS	C-7
C.3.1 SANDY CREEK RARE II AREA	C-7
C.4 RE-EVALUATION OF RARE II STUDY AREAS	C-7
C.4.1 SANDY CREEK RARE II AREA HOMOCHITTO NATIONAL FOREST.....	C-7
C.5 ANALYSIS OF AREAS PROPOSED DURING FOREST PLAN REVISION	C-14
C.5.1 TEN-MILE BAYOU AND SIX-MILE BAYOU, DELTA NATIONAL FOREST; HAWK’S NEST, HOMOCHITTO NATIONAL FOREST.....	C-14
C.5.2 TEN-MILE BAYOU AND SIX-MILE BAYOU.....	C-14
<i>Delta National Forest.....</i>	<i>C-14</i>
<i>Ten-Mile Bayou.....</i>	<i>C-14</i>
<i>Six-Mile Bayou</i>	<i>C-14</i>
C.6 ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS	C-16
C.6.1 DELTA NATIONAL FOREST.....	C-16
C.7 HAWK’S NEST AREA.....	C-25
C.7.1 TOMBIGBEE NATIONAL FOREST	C-25
C.8 ANALYSIS OF PROPOSED WILDERNESS AREAS	C-26
C.8.1 TOMBIGBEE NATIONAL FOREST	C-26
<i>Hawk’s Nest</i>	<i>C-26</i>
C.9 GIS-BASED FORESTWIDE ANALYSIS OF POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS	C-31
C.9.1 BIENVILLE NATIONAL FOREST	C-31
C.9.2 DELTA NATIONAL FOREST.....	C-36
C.9.3 DE SOTO NATIONAL FOREST, DE SOTO RANGER DISTRICT	C-41
C.9.4 DE SOTO NATIONAL FOREST, CHICKASAWHAY RANGER DISTRICT	C-41
C.9.5 HOLLY SPRINGS NATIONAL FOREST	C-41
C.9.6 HOMOCHITTO NATIONAL FOREST	C-41

C.9.7	TOMBIGBEE NATIONAL FOREST	C-45
C.9.8	SUMMARY OF DISTRICT-BY-DISTRICT ANALYSIS FOR POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS	C-45
C.10	EVALUATION OF POTENTIAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS	C-47
C.10.1	NATIONAL RIVERS INVENTORY	C-47
C.10.2	MISSISSIPPI - SCENIC STREAMS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM	C-47
C.10.3	REVIEW OF POTENTIALLY ELIGIBLE RIVERS	C-48
	<i>Black Creek Scenic River</i>	C-49
	<i>Black Creek</i>	C-51
	<i>Bluff Creek</i>	C-51
	<i>Homochitto River</i>	C-51
	<i>Red Creek</i>	C-51
	<i>Strong River</i>	C-52
	<i>Tchoutacabouffa River</i>	C-52
	<i>Tuxachanie Creek</i>	C-52

List of Tables

TABLE C 1.	SANDY CREEK RARE II AREA.....	C-9
TABLE C 2.	TEN MILE BAYOU.....	C-17
TABLE C 3.	SIX MILE BAYOU	C-21
TABLE C 4.	HAWK'S NEST	C-27
TABLE C 5.	NATIONAL RIVERS INVENTORY AND SCENIC STREAMS STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM, RIVERS AND STREAMS IN MISSISSIPPI.....	C-48

List of Figures

FIGURE C 1.	MAP OF BLACK CREEK WILDERNESS AREA	C-5
FIGURE C 2.	MAP OF LEAF WILDERNESS AREA.....	C-6
FIGURE C 3.	MAP OF SANDY CREEK RARE II AREA.....	C-13
FIGURE C 4.	MAP OF TEN MILE BAYOU	C-20
FIGURE C 5.	MAP OF SIX MILE BAYOU	C-24
FIGURE C 6.	MAP OF HAWK'S NEST	C-30
FIGURE C 7.	MAP OF BIENVILLE AREA 1	C-32
FIGURE C 8.	MAP OF BIENVILLE AREA 2	C-33
FIGURE C 9.	MAP OF BIENVILLE AREAS 3 AND 4	C-34
FIGURE C 10.	MAP OF BIENVILLE AREAS 4 AND 5	C-35
FIGURE C 11.	MAP OF DELTA AREA 1.....	C-37
FIGURE C 12.	MAP OF DELTA AREA 2.....	C-38
FIGURE C 13.	MAP OF DELTA AREAS 3 AND 4	C-39
FIGURE C 14.	MAP OF DELTA AREAS 5 AND 6	C-40
FIGURE C 15.	MAP OF DE SOTO AREA 1	C-42
FIGURE C 16.	MAP OF DE SOTO AREA 2	C-43
FIGURE C 17.	MAP OF HOLLY SPRINGS AREA 1	C-44
FIGURE C 18.	MAP OF TOMBIGBEE AREAS 1 AND 2.....	C-46
FIGURE C 19.	MAP OVERVIEW OF BLACK CREEK SCENIC RIVER CORRIDOR	C-50
FIGURE C 20.	MAP OF BLACK CREEK.....	C-53
FIGURE C 21.	MAP OF HOMOCHITTO RIVER	C-54
FIGURE C 22.	MAP OF STRONG RIVER.....	C-55
FIGURE C 23.	MAP OF RED CREEK.....	C-56

Appendix C - Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas and Evaluation of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory

C.1 Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas

C.1.1 Introduction

As part of the forest plan revision process, the National Forests in Mississippi (Forests) conducted a forestwide inventory of potential wilderness areas that may be suitable for recommendation for congressional designation as wilderness study areas. Areas qualify for placement on the potential wilderness inventory if they meet the statutory definition of wilderness. Forest Service Handbook (FSH) 1909.12 chapter 71 prescribes inventory criteria used to determine if an area meets the statutory definition of wilderness.

The inventory of all National Forest System (NFS) lands for potential wilderness study area recommendations included:

- Consideration of possible additions to existing wilderness areas,
- Re-evaluation of study areas identified in the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) of 1979,
- Analysis of areas proposed by individuals and groups during the forest plan revision process, and
- A GIS-based forestwide analysis of NFS administered lands to identify potential wilderness areas based upon FSH 1909.12 chapter 71 inventory criteria.

C.1.2 Background

The National Forests in Mississippi were established in the 1930s from lands that were previously under private ownership and, in many cases, had been heavily farmed and logged. The patchwork of private and public lands that still characterize the National Forests in Mississippi means that few areas are undisturbed or unaffected by nearby human habitation. With almost 3,000 miles of forest system roads that provided access to the national forest and many of the system roads also serve as through routes to private lands, potential roadless areas are limited in size and extent on the Forests.

A comprehensive process, instituted in June 1977 (by the Department of Agriculture), to identify roadless and undeveloped land areas in the National Forest System and to determine their general uses for both wilderness and other resource management and development was completed in January 1979. This Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) identified three areas in Mississippi for potential wilderness evaluation. The areas identified in the 1979 RARE II process were Sandy Creek (08310), Black Creek (08311) and Leaf (08312). The Black Creek and Leaf were recommended for wilderness in the RARE II process and were subsequently designated as wilderness areas by Congress 1984. Upon passage of the Mississippi National Forest Wilderness Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-515 –October 19, 1984) the Black Creek and Leaf Wilderness Areas were added to the national wilderness preservation system. Sandy Creek a 2,375-acre RARE II roadless inventory area (on the Homochitto National Forest) was identified as needing further planning for all uses including wilderness in the RARE II process. The Mississippi National Forest Wilderness Act of 1984 released the Sandy Creek further planning area to multiple use management; however the Act and agency policy required review of the wilderness option for Sandy Creek when the forest plan was revised. This evaluation report documents that review and

includes a comprehensive review of all potential wilderness study areas on NFS land administered by the National Forests in Mississippi.

C.1.3 Identification of Potential Wilderness Areas

Based on direction in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70, section 71, the first step in analyzing potential wilderness during forest plan revision was to identify and inventory all areas within NFS lands that satisfied the definition of wilderness in section 2(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act. Although the inventory criteria generally focused on large tracts of land (over 5,000 acres) with little evidence of structural improvements, additional criteria were considered for lands in the Eastern United States (including Mississippi) that may have been acquired from private ownership and show signs of human activity.

In addition to using the criteria in FSH 1909.12, sections 71.1 and 71.11 for identifying potential wilderness areas, the Forests also considered the following criteria in section 71.12 for potential wilderness east of the 100th meridian:

1. The land is regaining a natural, untrammelled appearance.
2. Improvements existing in the area are being affected by the forces of nature rather than humans and are disappearing or muted.
3. The area has existing or attainable NFS ownership patterns, both surface and subsurface, that could ensure perpetuation of identified wilderness characteristics.
4. The location of the area is conducive to the perpetuation of wilderness values.
5. Each area contains no more than a half mile of forest roads under Forest Service jurisdiction for each 1,000 acres.
6. No more than 15 percent of the area is in non-native, planted vegetation.
7. Twenty percent or less of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years.
8. The area contains only a few dwellings on private lands and the location of these dwellings and their access needs insulate their effects on wilderness characteristics on NFS lands.

Using these criteria, the Forests conducted an analysis of existing wilderness areas, RARE II study areas, areas proposed by the public during forest plan revision, and an overall forestwide review of any large tracts of land that could be potential wilderness areas. The summaries below provide an overview of the results from these analyses. Additional details and maps for each potential area considered are provided in the attachments which follow.

C.1.4 Summary of Results

Consideration of Possible Additions to Existing Wilderness Areas

The National Forests in Mississippi have two existing designated wilderness areas—the Black Creek Wilderness and Leaf Wilderness. Both of these wilderness areas are located on the De Soto National Forest in southern Mississippi and were established in 1984. Changes in land ownership around both wilderness areas were reviewed in 2008 to see if there were any appropriate areas for potential expansion. Although there were no opportunities for expansion of the Leaf Wilderness, several tracts surrounding the Black Creek Wilderness have been acquired by the Forest Service in recent years. There are approximately 250 acres of possible additions to the Black Creek Wilderness. While these acres do not meet criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness, they could become a part of the inventory pending a change in the status of the mineral rights for these acres.

Re-evaluation of RARE II Study Areas

In the RARE II evaluation for Mississippi in 1979, Sandy Creek was identified for “further planning.” In 2008, as part of the forest plan revision process, Sandy Creek was again re-evaluated and the area did not meet the statutory definition of wilderness based upon FSH 1909.12 chapter 70, section 71 inventory criteria. However, approximately 300 acres of the Sandy Creek area has been proposed in the revised forest plan for designation as a special botanical area.

Analysis of Areas Proposed during the Forest Plan Revision Process

During the forest plan revision process, members of the public proposed three potential wilderness areas. Two areas were located on the Delta National Forest (Ten-Mile Bayou and Six-Mile Bayou), and one area was proposed on the Tombigbee National Forest (Hawk’s Nest). Each area was individually considered using guidance in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70. None of the three areas qualified for placement on the potential wilderness inventory. The areas did not meet the criteria prescribed in FSH 1909.12 (part 71.12) to qualify as lands that have potential for wilderness recommendation.

GIS-based Forestwide Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas

In addition to the above reviews, the National Forests in Mississippi utilized resource data from the 2008 GIS database as a tool to conduct a district-by-district analysis of any large blocks of land that would warrant further consideration as potential wilderness areas. The screening followed FSH 1909.12, chapter 70 criteria and was focused on large blocks of contiguous lands (1,000 acres or larger) that had little evidence of human activity and would provide a sense of remoteness and solitude. No areas greater than 5,000 acres were identified in the screening process. Collectively across the Forests, 16 areas were identified as being over 1,000 acres in size with a road density of less than one-half mile per 1,000 acres. However, none of these areas were found to qualify for the inventory of potential wilderness areas based upon FSH 1909.12, chapter 70, sections 71.1, 71.11 and 71.12 criteria.

C.1.5 Conclusions

Based on findings in the above described analysis there were no areas found on the Forests that qualified for placement on the potential wilderness inventory.

C.2 Consideration of Possible Additions to Existing Wilderness Areas

C.2.1 Black Creek Wilderness Area

The Black Creek Wilderness on the De Soto National Forest was established on October 19, 1984, by presidential approval of Public Law 98-515. The wilderness area contains approximately 5,052 acres. Land acquisitions (totaling approximately 252 acres) along the perimeter of the proclaimed wilderness have further consolidated Federal ownership in recent years. These acquired tracts are forested with few if any roads (as seen on aerial photography). However, both parcels have 100 percent of their areas encumbered by 3rd party mineral rights.

To qualify these areas for placement on the potential wilderness inventory, appropriate occupancy provisions that would maintain the areas in a condition suitable for wilderness would need to be developed and agreed upon by the affected parties. Until such provisions are developed these areas do not qualify for placement on the potential wilderness inventory. However, national forest management activities in these areas should be directed towards perpetuation of wilderness characteristics such that

they may eventually qualify for placement on the potential wilderness inventory and be considered as possible additions to the wilderness area.

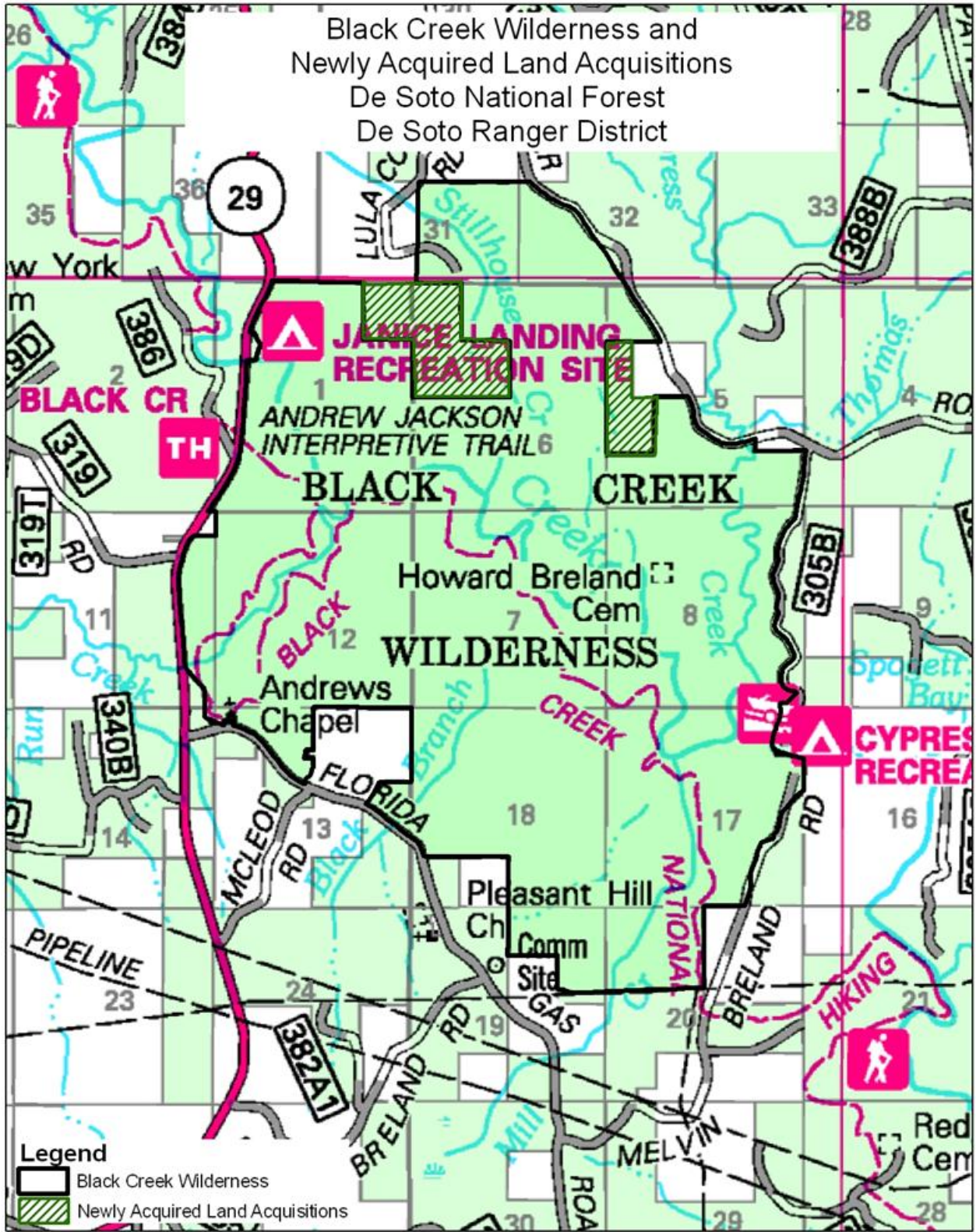


Figure C 1. Map of Black Creek Wilderness area

C.2.2 Leaf Wilderness Area

The Leaf Wilderness on the De Soto National Forest was established in the same legislation as the Black Creek Wilderness in 1984. There have been no land acquisitions within or adjacent to the proclaimed wilderness. This small 994-acre wilderness area is constrained from future expansion on the north or east by the National Forests in Mississippi proclamation boundary. Roads will limit future expansion to the west, and railroads will limit expansion south.

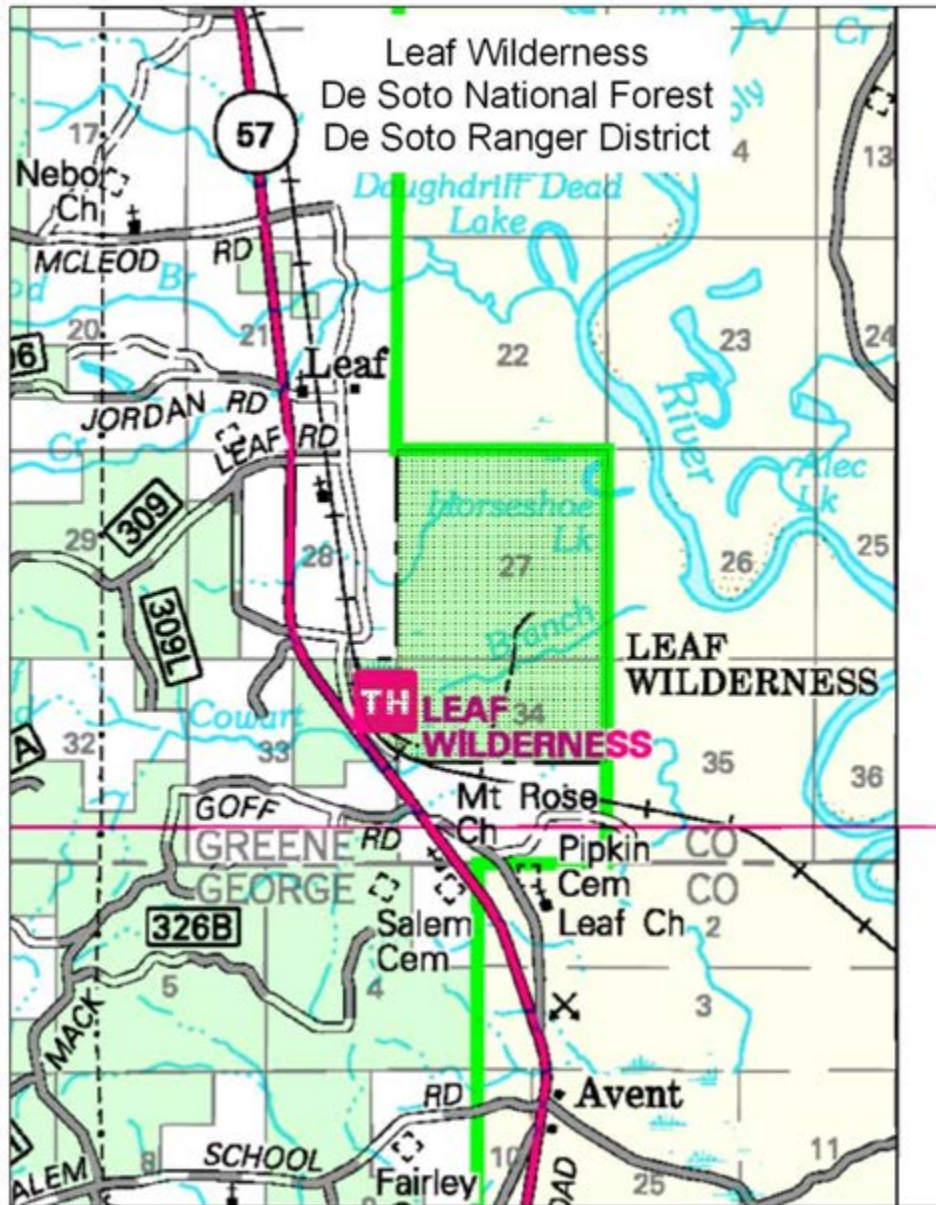


Figure C 2. Map of Leaf Wilderness area

C.3 Re-Evaluation of RARE II Study Areas

C.3.1 Sandy Creek RARE II Area

An area on the Homochitto National Forest known as Sandy Creek was identified along with Black Creek and Leaf as areas with potential wilderness characteristics in the national Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE II) evaluation in 1979. During the period of 1978-1984, all three areas were further analyzed. Black Creek and Leaf areas were recommended as wilderness areas, and Sandy Creek was identified for “Further Planning.” On October 19, 1984, the Mississippi Wilderness Act (P.L. 98-515) established both the Black Creek and Leaf Wilderness Areas. The Sandy Creek RARE II Area did not meet the criteria for wilderness based on road density, access required to private land, and significant past management. Accordingly, Sandy Creek was released to multiple use management by the Mississippi National Forest Wilderness Act of 1984.

As part of the forest plan revision process, the Sandy Creek RARE II area was reviewed once again, using criteria established in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70. The analysis is documented in Table C 1. The results demonstrate that several of the chapter 70 criteria for potential wilderness areas east of the 100th Meridian are not met for Sandy Creek, specifically:

- Section 71.11.10 – There are 1.4 miles of cleared power line right-of-way within the RARE II area and an additional 2.4 miles of transmission line forms the north boundary line of the area.
- Section 71.12.1 - The proposed area shows evidence of being “trammed” by man (roads, pipelines and power lines).
- Section 71.12.2 - Each of the improvements listed in 71.12.1 is actively being managed therefore, they show little or no evidence of past human impacts being muted or disappearing by natural forces.
- Section 71.12.5 – There are 11.45 miles of Forest Service roads within the area which equates to a road density of 4.7 miles per 1,000 acres.

Other Forest Service observations and concerns include the following:

- Wilderness experiences such as solitude, serenity, adventure and self-reliance would only be attainable after major restoration of 11.45 miles of interior roads.
- Special features are limited with the exception of the 300-acre proposed Sandy Creek Botanical Area.
- The proposed wilderness lies entirely in the Sandy Creek Wildlife Management Area, a cooperative special use with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP).
- The proposed area currently experiences high interest by the general public for dispersed recreation opportunities, including hunting and fishing.

In summary, several notable criteria in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70 for wilderness designation are not met as documented in this analysis. After reviewing these criteria for potential wilderness attributes as outlined in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70, the Sandy Creek RARE II further study area does not meet the statutory definition of wilderness and therefore does not qualify for placement in the inventory of potential wilderness.

C.4 Re-evaluation of RARE II Study Areas

C.4.1 Sandy Creek RARE II Area Homochitto National Forest

A portion of the Homochitto National Forest, Sandy Creek was identified and selected as an area with potential wilderness characteristics and placed on the RARE II list in 1977. During the period of 1978-1984 Sandy Creek was further analyzed based on road density, access required to private lands, and

significant past management and found to not meet wilderness criteria. It was released to multiple use management by the Mississippi Wilderness Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-515, October 19, 1984).

The following table provides analysis results for the Sandy Creek RARE II area based on wilderness criteria (FSH 1909.12, chapter 71) for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness areas.

Table C 1. Sandy Creek RARE II Area

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.1 – Inventory Criteria	Potential wilderness areas qualify for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness if they meet one or more of the following:		
	1. They contain 5000 acres or more.	The RARE II Study area contains 2,428 acres	Proposed area is less than 5,000 acres.
	2. They contain less than 5,000 acres but:		
	a.) Due to physical terrain, natural conditions can be preserved	The area is bounded by man-made utility lines, roads and property boundaries. The only natural boundary is Sandy Creek along the NW flank.	This criterion is not met.
	b.) They are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.	The RARE II Study area is not a self-contained ecosystem.	This criterion is not met.
	c.) They are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.	The RARE II Study area is not contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas or other potential wilderness in FS or other ownership.	This criterion is not met.
	3. The area does not contain forest roads (36 CFR 212.1) or other permanently authorized roads, except as permitted in areas east of the 100 th meridian (FSH 1909.12, sec. 71.12)	See section 71.12, criterion #5, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #5

Appendix C - Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas and Evaluation of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements	Potential wilderness areas may qualify for the inventory even though they include the following types or areas or features.		
	1. Airstrips and heliports.	None within area.	N/A
	2. Cultural treatments involving plantations or plantings where the use of mechanical equipment is not evident.	There are 3 small plantations from bug spots with evidence of mechanical equipment.	There is some evidence of mechanical planting.
	3. Electronic installations, such as cell towers, television, radio, and telephone repeaters, and the like, provided their impact is minimal.	There are none.	There are no communication or electronic installations in the area.
	4. Areas with evidence of historic mining (50+ years ago). Inventoried lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation may include:		
	a. Areas that otherwise meet inventory criteria if they are covered by mineral leases having a "no surface occupancy" stipulation.	The only portion of the RARE II Area with a "no surface occupancy" stipulation is the 300 ac. "Sandy Creek Proposed Botanical Area".	Most of the area allows for surface occupancy.
	b. Areas covered by mineral leases that otherwise meet inventory criteria only if the lessee has not exercised development and occupancy rights. If and when these rights are exercised, remove the area, or portion affected, from the inventory unless it is possible to establish specific occupancy provisions that would maintain the area in a condition suitable for wilderness.	There are several mineral leases; however, no activity as of 11/10/08. Previous well and tank batteries have been removed and the areas restored. One 1.5 mile pipeline still exists in the area underground.	One 1.5 mile pipeline still exists in the area underground.
	5. National Grasslands and Prairies. National Grasslands and Prairies may have structures or evidence of vegetative manipulation resulting from past management practices. National Grassland and Prairie lands that contain the following features may be inventoried:		
	a. Vegetation type conversions that are reverting to native vegetation with minimal evidence of cultivation.	N/A	N/A
	b. Less than 1 mile of interior fence per section	N/A	N/A
	6. Areas of less than 70-percent Federal ownership, if it is realistic to manage the Federal lands as wilderness, independent of the private land.	There is a 424-acre tract of 16th section land in the north central portion of Sandy Creek RARE II; the RARE II boundary excludes this tract.	As shown on the map, with the exclusion of the 16th section tract, the RARE II area is 100% Federal ownership.
7. Minor structural range improvements (FSM 2240.5) such as fences or water troughs. Exclude areas where nonstructural range improvements are readily visible and apparent.	There are no range improvements within the proposed area.	Wilderness potential is not impacted by range improvements.	

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements (cont'd)	8. Recreation improvements such as occupancy spots or minor hunting or outfitter camps. As a general rule, do not include developed sites. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.	There are no recreation improvements within the Sandy Creek RARE II area.	Wilderness potential is not impacted by existing recreation improvements.
	9. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not evident, except as provided in Section 71.12 for areas east of the 100th meridian.	See section 71.12, criterion #7, later within this table.	See section 71.12, criterion #7.
	10. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines and powerlines, if a right-of-way has not been cleared.	There is 1.4 mi. of powerline in the SE corner of the RARE II area; 2.4 miles of powerline forms the north boundary line of the area.	This wilderness criterion is not met regarding existing cleared powerline right-of-ways.
	11. Watershed treatment areas if the use of mechanical equipment is not evident. The inventory may include areas where minor watershed treatment has been accomplished manually, such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.	There are no watershed treatment areas.	Wilderness potential is not impacted by existing watershed treatment area.

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.12 - Criteria for Potential Wilderness Areas East of the 100th Meridian	National Forest System lands in the Eastern United States (east of the 100th meridian) have been acquired over time from private ownership. Criteria for inventorying those lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation recognize that much, if not all of the land, shows some signs of human activity and modification even though they have shown high recuperative capabilities. Areas east of the 100th meridian qualify for inventory as lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation if:		
	1. The land is regaining a natural, untrammelled appearance.	Area has a history of forest management. There are roads, utilities and pipelines. The public has a history of using the area for hunting.	The proposed area shows evidence of being "trammelled" by man.
	2. Improvements existing in the area are being affected by the forces of nature rather than humans and are disappearing or muted.	Management by humans is evident in the roads, pipeline and powerlines	This criterion is not met.
	3. The area has existing or attainable NFS ownership patterns, both surface and subsurface, that could ensure perpetuation of identified wilderness characteristics.	No outstanding/reserved minerals in the Sandy Creek RARE II area.	This criterion is met.
	4. The location of the area is conducive to perpetuation of wilderness values. Consider the relationship of the area to sources of noise, air and water pollutions, as well as the unsightly conditions that would have an affect on the wilderness experience. The amount and pattern of Federal ownership is also a factor.	The entire western boundary of the RARE II area is private land, and a small section of private borders FS along the SE corner.	Considerable private land borders the RARE II area (approx. one third of the perimeter). There is no control of activities occurring on private land.
	5. The area contains no more than a half mile of improved road for each 1,000 acres, and the road is under Forest Service jurisdiction.	There are 11.45 miles of FS roads within the 2,428 acre RARE II Area; this equates to 4.7 miles per 1000 acres.	This criterion is not met.
	6. No more than 15 percent of the area is in non-native, planted vegetation.	There is no non-native, planted vegetation within the RARE II area.	This criterion is met.
	7. Twenty percent or less of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years.	There is only one 97 acre stand that is less than 10 years old, this equates to only 4% of the total area.	This criterion is met.
8. The area contains only a few dwellings on private lands and the location of these dwellings and their access needs insulate their effects on wilderness characteristics	There are no dwellings on FS or the 16 th section land.	This criterion is met.	

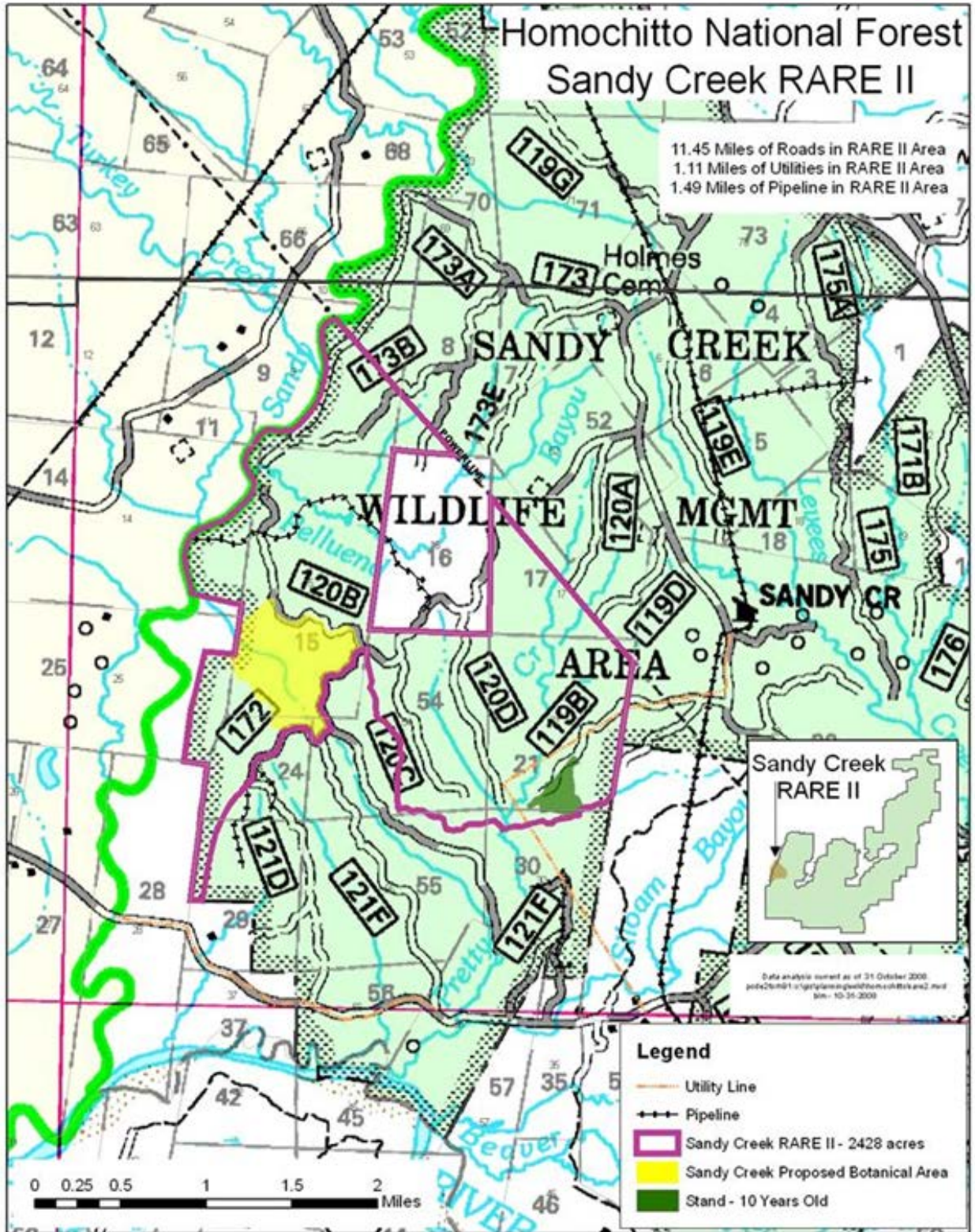


Figure C 3. Map of Sandy Creek RARE II area

C.5 Analysis of Areas Proposed During Forest Plan Revision

C.5.1 Ten-Mile Bayou and Six-Mile Bayou, Delta National Forest; Hawk's Nest, Homochitto National Forest

During the forest plan revision process, the National Forests in Mississippi received input on behalf of the Sierra Club and the Friends of Mississippi Public Lands. Within the document submitted in June 2004 "Towards a New Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi: A Conservation Re-vision", two areas located on the Delta National Forest were proposed for wilderness consideration. A third area, Hawk's Nest on the Tombigbee National Forest, was also mentioned. Each of these three areas was considered using the criteria for potential wilderness outlined in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70. The documentation for each analysis is described in the following attachments. None of the areas were found to qualify for placement on the potential wilderness inventory.

C.5.2 Ten-Mile Bayou and Six-Mile Bayou

Delta National Forest

During the forest plan revision process, two areas located on the Delta National Forest were proposed for wilderness consideration. The proposed Ten-Mile Bayou contained 9,843 acres and the Six-Mile Bayou area encompassed 11,903 acres, constituting a total of 21,746 acres of the 60,955-acre Delta National Forest (see Figure C 4 and Figure C 5). These two proposed wilderness areas were analyzed individually using the criteria in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70.

Ten-Mile Bayou

The analysis of the Ten-Mile Bayou proposal is documented in Table C 2. While several criteria for potential wilderness were met, there are other criteria that conflict with desired conditions for potential wilderness designation. These conflicting criteria from chapter 70 are summarized below:

- Section 71.11.8 – There are 8 developed hunter camps along the perimeter of the proposed area.
- Section 71.11.10 – Two natural gas transmission lines transect the area for a total of 6.1 miles.
- Section 71.11.11 – Significant watershed improvement projects to restore wetland habitat have been implemented and use structures such as pumping stations and levees.
- Section 71.12.1 – The presence of interior roads, the two pipelines, and water control structures do not meet the criteria of "regaining a natural, untrammelled appearance."
- Sections 71.12.2 – Each of the improvements listed in 71.12.1 is actively being managed by humans, and are not muted or disappearing.
- Section 71.12.4 – There are military training flight paths over the proposed area, and water quality is impacted by runoff from adjacent agricultural lands which have a combined impact on potential wilderness experience.
- Section 71.12.5 – There are more than 17.7 miles of Forest Service roads which equates to a road density of 1.8 miles per 1000 acres.
- Section 71.12.8 – The proposed area contains one unoccupied dwelling and a pumping station. There are also many private dwellings and hunter camps surrounding the perimeter of the area.

Six-Mile Bayou

The analysis of the Six-Mile Bayou proposal is documented in Table C 3. The criteria for potential wilderness in chapter 70 that are not met are summarized below:

- Section 71.11.8 – Recreation improvements include 19 developed hunter camps, both within the interior and along the perimeter of the proposed area. There are two trailhead parking areas, one of which has restroom facilities.
- Section 71.11.10 – There are 3.1 miles of electric power lines within the proposed area.
- Section 71.11.11 – Significant watershed improvement projects are present in the area. There is a high financial investment in these water control structures that provide for 2,519 acres of wetland and waterfowl habitat.
- Section 71.12.1 – The proposed area shows evidence of being “trammed” by man.
- Section 71.12.2 – Improvements in the area are maintained and managed by the Forest Service and are not muted or disappearing.
- Section 71.12.4 – There are military training flight paths over the proposed area, and water quality is impacted by runoff from adjacent agricultural lands which have a combined impact on potential wilderness experience.
- Section 71.12.5 – There are more than 15 miles of Forest Service roads which equates to a road density of 1.3 miles per 1000 acres.
- Section 71.12.8 – The proposed area contains one dwelling on the private in-holding, and there are many private dwellings and hunt camps surrounding the perimeter of the area.

Other Forest Service observations and issues that apply to both the proposed Ten-Mile Bayou and Six-Mile Bayou wilderness areas include the following:

Wilderness experiences such as solitude, serenity, adventure and self-reliance would only be attainable after major restoration of interior roads and costly relocation of the natural gas pipelines and electric transmission lines.

The road and trail system currently in place provides only moderate challenge for users because routes are very well defined. Decommissioning and restoring trails and roads would be needed to increase the challenge and adventure.

Recreational use and opportunities are centered on wildlife-associated activities such as fishing, hunting, and wildlife-watching. Forest users are comprised mostly of hunters and/or anglers (approximately 95 percent). Recreation use is high during the fall, winter, and spring when hunting seasons and weather conditions support outdoor activities.

The entire Delta National Forest is also a state wildlife management area (Sunflower WMA). Wildlife habitat improvements include timber management, waterfowl management and wildlife opening management. Located in the Mississippi flyway, Delta National Forest provides critical wintering habitat for migrating waterfowl.

Significant investments (millions of dollars) have been made by the Forest Service and numerous partners to improve and enhance waterfowl habitat on Delta National Forest within both proposed areas.

A wilderness designation would severely impact the way current forest users are accessing and using the forest. The national forest already provides the experience one expects from a wilderness due to the nature of the ecosystem. A wilderness designation would not provide any additional opportunities that are not currently available.

The Louisiana black bear is a federally threatened and state endangered species. Habitat for black bears on Delta National Forest is excellent, and the habitat diversity provided by forest

management activities only increases the quality of this habitat. A wilderness designation would not appear to enhance the chances for successful black bear restoration in the area.

In summary, the two proposed areas, Ten-Mile Bayou and Six-Mile Bayou, currently have high interest and use for recreation, including hunting, fishing, trail use and primitive camping. Many criteria for wilderness designation are not met for each area, as documented in this analysis. The public is served well by continuing with existing uses. After reviewing the criteria for potential wilderness outlined in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70, neither the Ten-Mile Bayou area nor the Six-Mile Bayou area, meet the statutory definition of wilderness and therefore do not qualify for placement in the potential wilderness inventory.

C.6 Analysis of Proposed Wilderness Areas

C.6.1 Delta National Forest

Two areas on the Delta NF were proposed by the Sierra Club and Friends of Mississippi Public Lands document “Towards a New Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi: A Conservation Revision” (revised June 2004) as comment to the National Forests in Mississippi forest plan revision process.

The following tables (Table C 2 and Table C 3), for each area, provides an analysis of how well the proposed areas meet the criteria (FSH 1909.12, chapter 70) for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness areas.

Table C 2. Ten Mile Bayou

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.1 – Inventory Criteria	Potential wilderness areas qualify for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness if they meet one or more of the following:		
	1. They contain 5000 acres or more.	Proposed area contains 9,843 acres	Proposed area meets acreage criterion.
	2. They contain less than 5,000 acres but:		
	a. Due to physical terrain, natural conditions can be preserved	N/A	N/A
	b. They are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.	N/A	
	c. They are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.	N/A	
3. The area does not contain forest roads (36 CFR 212.1) or other permanently authorized roads, except as permitted in areas east of the 100 th meridian (FSH 1909.12, sec. 71.12)	See section 71.12, criterion #5, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #5	
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements	Potential wilderness areas may qualify for the inventory even though they include the following types or areas or features.		
	1. Airstrips and heliports.	None within area.	No impacts.
	2. Cultural treatments involving plantations or plantings where the use of mechanical equipment is not evident.	None within area.	No impacts.
	3. Electronic installations, such as cell towers, television, radio, and telephone repeaters, and the like, provided their impact is minimal.	None within area.	No impacts.
	4. Areas with evidence of historic mining (50+ years ago). Inventoried lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation may include:		
	a. Areas that otherwise meet inventory criteria if they are covered by mineral leases having a “no surface occupancy” stipulation.	No leases within area.	No impacts.
	b. Areas covered by mineral leases that otherwise meet inventory criteria only if the lessee has not exercised development and occupancy rights. If and when these rights are exercised, remove the area, or portion affected, from the inventory unless it is possible to establish specific occupancy provisions that would maintain the area in a condition suitable for wilderness.	No leases within area.	No impacts.
	5. National Grasslands and Prairies. National Grasslands and Prairies may have structures or evidence of vegetative manipulation resulting from past management practices. National Grassland and Prairie lands that contain the following features may be inventoried:		
	a. Vegetation type conversions that are reverting to native vegetation with minimal evidence of cultivation.	N/A	N/A
	b. Less than 1 mile of interior fence per section	N/A	N/A

Appendix C - Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas and Evaluation of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements (cont'd)	6. Areas of less than 70-percent Federal ownership, if it is realistic to manage the Federal lands as wilderness, independent of the private land.	Area has more than 70% Federal ownership.	This criterion is met.
	7. Minor structural range improvements (FSM 2240.5) such as fences or water troughs. Exclude areas where nonstructural range improvements are readily visible and apparent. Areas with spray or burning projects are permissible if there is little or no evidence of the project.	There are no range improvements within the proposed area.	Potential wilderness criteria are not impacted by range improvements.
	8. Recreation improvements such as occupancy spots or minor hunting or outfitter camps. As a general rule, do not include developed sites. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.	Area includes 8 developed hunter camps (#35, #37, #41, #42A, #43, #45, #66, #68, #69) located along FR 707 and the Dummy Line Rd (county).	Developed hunter camps are present in the proposed area, this criterion is not met.
	9. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not evident, except as provided in Section 71.12 for areas east of the 100th meridian.	See section 71.12, criterion #7, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #7.
	10. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines and power lines, if a right-of-way has not been cleared.	Two natural gas transmission lines operated by Southern Natural and Texas Eastern transect the area for a total of 6.1 miles or 33 ROW acres.	Utility right-of-ways are present in the area; this criterion is not met.
	11. Watershed treatment areas if the use of mechanical equipment is not evident. The inventory may include areas where minor watershed treatment has been accomplished manually, such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.	Three partnership projects have been constructed within the area to improve wetland habitat for overwintering waterfowl and other wetland species. A total of 3500 ac. of wetland habitat has been restored as a result of these projects.	Significant watershed improvement projects are present in the area and are maintained and managed by the FS. There is high financial investment in these areas; this criterion is not met.

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.12 - Criteria for Potential Wilderness Areas East of the 100th Meridian	National Forest System lands in the Eastern United States (east of the 100th meridian) have been acquired over time from private ownership. Criteria for inventorying those lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation recognize that much, if not all of the land, shows some signs of human activity and modification even though they have shown high recuperative capabilities. Areas east of the 100th meridian qualify for inventory as lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation if:		
	1. The land is regaining a natural, untrammelled appearance.	Area has a history of forest management. Old logging roads traverse the area. Water-control structures are managed for wetland species including wintering waterfowl. The public has a history of using the area for hunting.	The proposed area show evidence of being "trammelled" by man.
	2. Improvements existing in the area are being affected by the forces of nature rather than humans and are disappearing or muted.	Improvements in the area consist of the following: FS roads (level 3), FS road (level 2), water control structures, trailheads, parking areas, SST, numerous administrative use trails, and two gas pipelines	Proposed area does not meet this criterion. All sites are being maintained by the Forest Service.
	3. The area has existing or attainable NFS ownership patterns, both surface and subsurface, that could ensure perpetuation of identified wilderness characteristics.	The area is contiguous in NFS ownership. Adjacent to the area on the NW corner lies another 640 acres of private ownership which has been subdivided into private hunt camps along FR 703.	Proposed area meets the ownership pattern criteria.
	4. The location of the area is conducive to perpetuation of wilderness values. Consider the relationship of the area to sources of noise, air and water pollutions, as well as the unsightly conditions that would have an effect on the wilderness experience. The amount and pattern of Federal ownership is also a factor.	There are military training flight paths over the area. Water quality is impacted by runoff from adjacent agricultural lands. There is also a Green Tree Reservoir pumping station in the area.	It would be difficult to attain or perpetuate wilderness values or experience in this area.
	5. The area contains no more than a half mile of improved road for each 1,000 acres, and the road is under Forest Service jurisdiction.	FS roads within the area are FR 707 and FR 703D (7 mi., level 3). Additional improved, motorized roads/trails are FR 707A, FR 709, FR 709A, and FR 709B (7.72 mi., level 2). County maintained Dummyline Rd borders on the south.	This criterion is not met, there are 17.72 miles of road for 9,843 acres which equates to a road density of approx. 1.8 miles per 1000 acres.
	6. No more than 15 percent of the area is in non-native, planted vegetation.	The area contains native vegetation.	Proposed area meets non-planted vegetation criteria.
	7. Twenty percent or less of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years.	Within the last 10 years forest management activities have been implemented on 1,889 acres within the area. Historical logging routes and old trails as well as more recent logging routes are evident throughout the area.	Proposed area meets the percent harvested criterion.
	8. The area contains only a few dwellings on private lands and the location of these dwellings and their access needs insulate their effects on wilderness characteristics on NFS lands.	Proposed area contains one dwelling and one pumping station. Many private dwellings and hunter camps surround the area.	Proposed area is heavily impacted by adjacent private land on the north and east side of the proposed area.

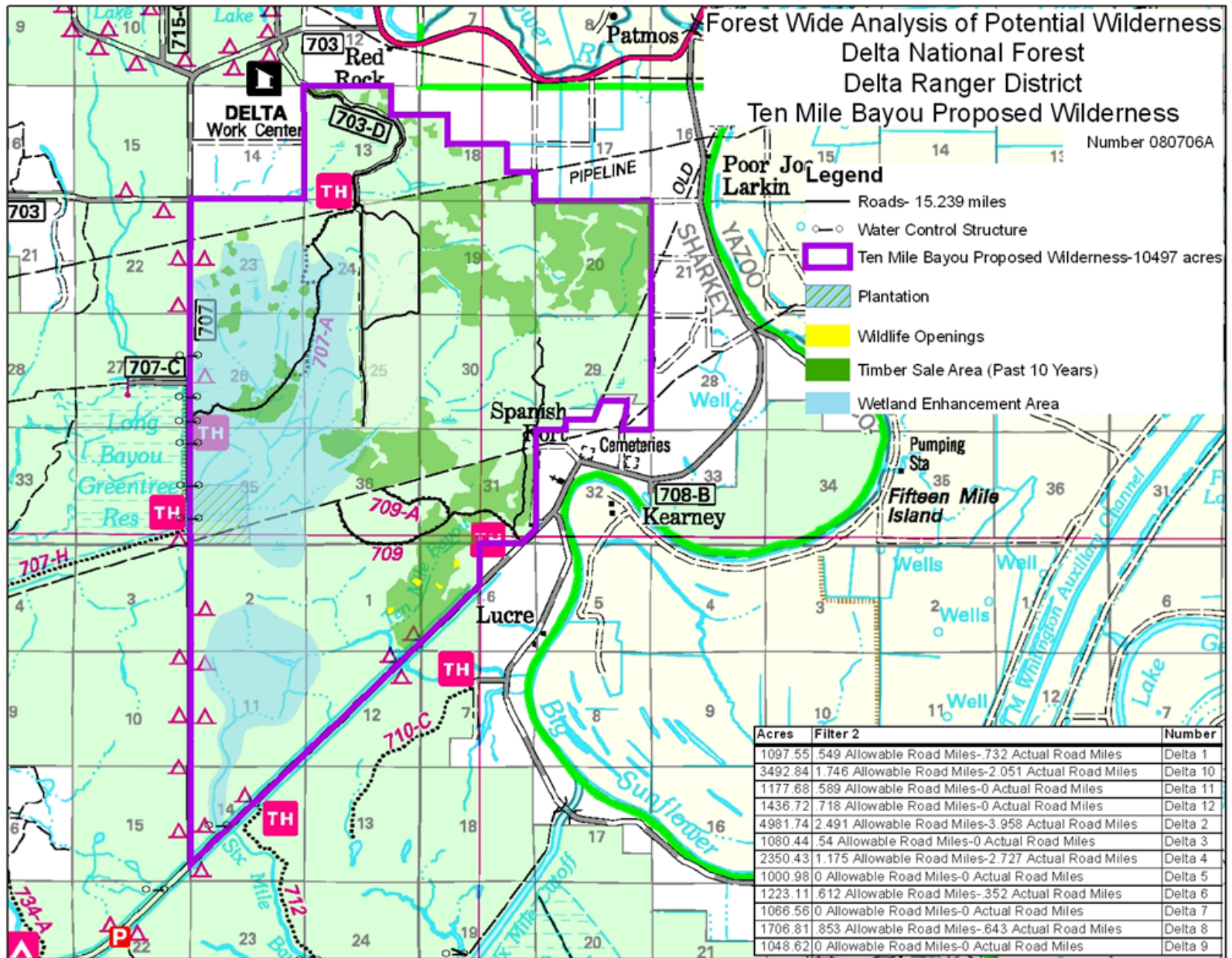


Figure C 4. Map of Ten Mile Bayou

Table C 3. Six Mile Bayou

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.1 – Inventory Criteria	Potential wilderness areas qualify for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness if they meet one or more of the following:		
	1. They contain 5000 acres or more.	Proposed area contains 11,903 acres	Proposed area meets acreage criterion.
	2. They contain less than 5,000 acres but:		
	a. Due to physical terrain, natural conditions can be preserved	N/A	N/A
	b. They are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.	N/A	N/A
	c. They are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.	N/A	N/A
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements	3. The area does not contain forest roads (36 CFR 212.1) or other permanently authorized roads, except as permitted in areas east of the 100 th meridian (FSH 1909.12, sec. 71.12)	See section 71.12, criterion #5, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #5
	Potential wilderness areas may qualify for the inventory even though they include the following types or areas or features.		
	1. Airstrips and heliports.	None within area.	None within area.
	2. Cultural treatments involving plantations or plantings where the use of mechanical equipment is not evident.	There is one 80 ac. plantation within the area.	Overall impact of less than 1% of area.
	3. Electronic installations, such as cell towers, television, radio, and telephone repeaters, and the like, provided their impact is minimal.	None within area.	None within area.
	4. Areas with evidence of historic mining (50+ years ago). Inventoried lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation may include:		
	a. Areas that otherwise meet inventory criteria if they are covered by mineral leases having a “no surface occupancy” stipulation.	No mineral Leases within area.	N/A
	b. Areas covered by mineral leases that otherwise meet inventory criteria only if the lessee has not exercised development and occupancy rights. If and when these rights are exercised, remove the area, or portion affected, from the inventory unless it is possible to establish specific occupancy provisions that would maintain the area in a condition suitable for wilderness.	No mineral Leases within area.	N/A
	5. National Grasslands and Prairies. National Grasslands and Prairies may have structures or evidence of vegetative manipulation resulting from past management practices. National Grassland and Prairie lands that contain the following features may be inventoried:		
	a. Vegetation type conversions that are reverting to native vegetation with minimal evidence of cultivation.	N/A	N/A
	b. Less than 1 mile of interior fence per section	N/A	N/A
	6. Areas of less than 70-percent Federal ownership, if it is realistic to manage the Federal lands as wilderness, independent of the private land.	There is more than 70 percent Federal ownership.	This criterion is met

Appendix C - Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas and Evaluation of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements (cont'd)	7. Minor structural range improvements (FSM 2240.5) such as fences or water troughs. Exclude areas where nonstructural range improvements are readily visible and apparent. Areas with spray or burning projects are permissible if there is little or no evidence of the project.	There are no range improvements within the proposed area.	Potential wilderness criteria are not impacted by range improvements.
	8. Recreation improvements such as occupancy spots or minor hunting or outfitter camps. As a general rule, do not include developed sites. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.	Area includes 19 developed hunter camps located along FR 720, 721 and the Dummy Line Rd (county). A public parking area is also located along Dummy Line Rd. Trailheads for public parking exist at FR 712 and FR 720A. One restroom facility (SST) is located at the FR 720A trailhead.	Developed hunter camps, parking areas and trailheads are present in the proposed area, this criterion is not met.
	9. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not evident, except as provided in Section 71.12 for areas east of the 100th meridian.	See section 71.12, criteria #7, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #7.
	10. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines and power lines, if a right-of-way has not been cleared.	Electrical power line runs from the South GTR across the Little Sunflower River, down FR 721 and across FR 720 (3.1 miles).	Utility right-of-ways are present in the area; this criterion is not met.
	11. Watershed treatment areas if the use of mechanical equipment is not evident. The inventory may include areas where minor watershed treatment has been accomplished manually, such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.	The South GTR, Six-Mile, Four-Mile, Howlett Bayou and Rookery Lake water control structures are located within the area and comprise 2,519 acres under wetland and waterfowl management.	Significant watershed improvement projects are present in the area. There is a high financial investment in these improvements that are maintained and managed by the FS.
71.12 - Criteria for Potential Wilderness Areas East of the 100th Meridian	National Forest System lands in the Eastern United States (east of the 100th meridian) have been acquired over time from private ownership. Criteria for inventorying those lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation recognize that much, if not all of the land, shows some signs of human activity and modification even though they have shown high recuperative capabilities. Areas east of the 100th meridian qualify for inventory as lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation if:		
	1. The land is regaining a natural, untrammled appearance. "trammel - a restriction on free activity or movement"	Area has a history of forest management. Old logging roads traverse the area. Water-control structures are managed for wetland species including wintering waterfowl. The public has a history of using the area for hunting.	The proposed area show evidence of being "trammed" by man.

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.12 - Criteria for Potential Wilderness Areas East of the 100th Meridian (cont'd)	2. Improvements existing in the area are being affected by the forces of nature rather than humans and are disappearing or muted.	Improvements in the area consist of the following: FS roads (level 3), FS road (level 2), water control structures, greentree reservoir, trail-heads, parking areas, sst restroom, private property and electric power lines.	Proposed area does not meet this criterion. All sites are being maintained by the Forest Service.
	3. The area has existing or attainable NFS ownership patterns, both surface and subsurface, that could ensure perpetuation of identified wilderness characteristics.	The area is contiguous in NFS ownership with the exception of the Champion Camp (166 acres) located centrally within the area.	Proposed area meets the ownership pattern criterion.
	4. The location of the area is conducive to perpetuation of wilderness values. Consider the relationship of the area to sources of noise, air and water pollutions, as well as the unsightly conditions that would have an effect on the wilderness experience. The amount and pattern of Federal ownership is also a factor.	There is military flight training routes over the area. Water runoff from adjacent agricultural fields flows through this area to the Little Sunflower River.	It would be difficult to attain or perpetuate wilderness values or experience in this area.
	5. The area contains no more than a half mile of improved road for each 1,000 acres, and the road is under Forest Service jurisdiction.	The area contains 15 miles of Level 3 Forest Service roads.	This criterion is not met, the road density is approximately 1.3 miles per 1000 acres.
	6. No more than 15 percent of the area is in non-native, planted vegetation.	The area contains native vegetation.	Proposed area meets non-planted vegetation criterion.
	7. Twenty percent or less of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years.	Approximately 2 percent (218 acres) has been harvested in the past 10 years.	Proposed area meets the percent harvested criterion.
	8. The area contains only a few dwellings on private lands and the location of these dwellings and their access needs insulate their effects on wilderness characteristics on NFS lands.	Proposed area contains one private dwelling located on the Champion property. Many private dwellings, hunt camps and agricultural fields surround the area.	Proposed area is impacted by private land within the area and surrounding boundary of the area.

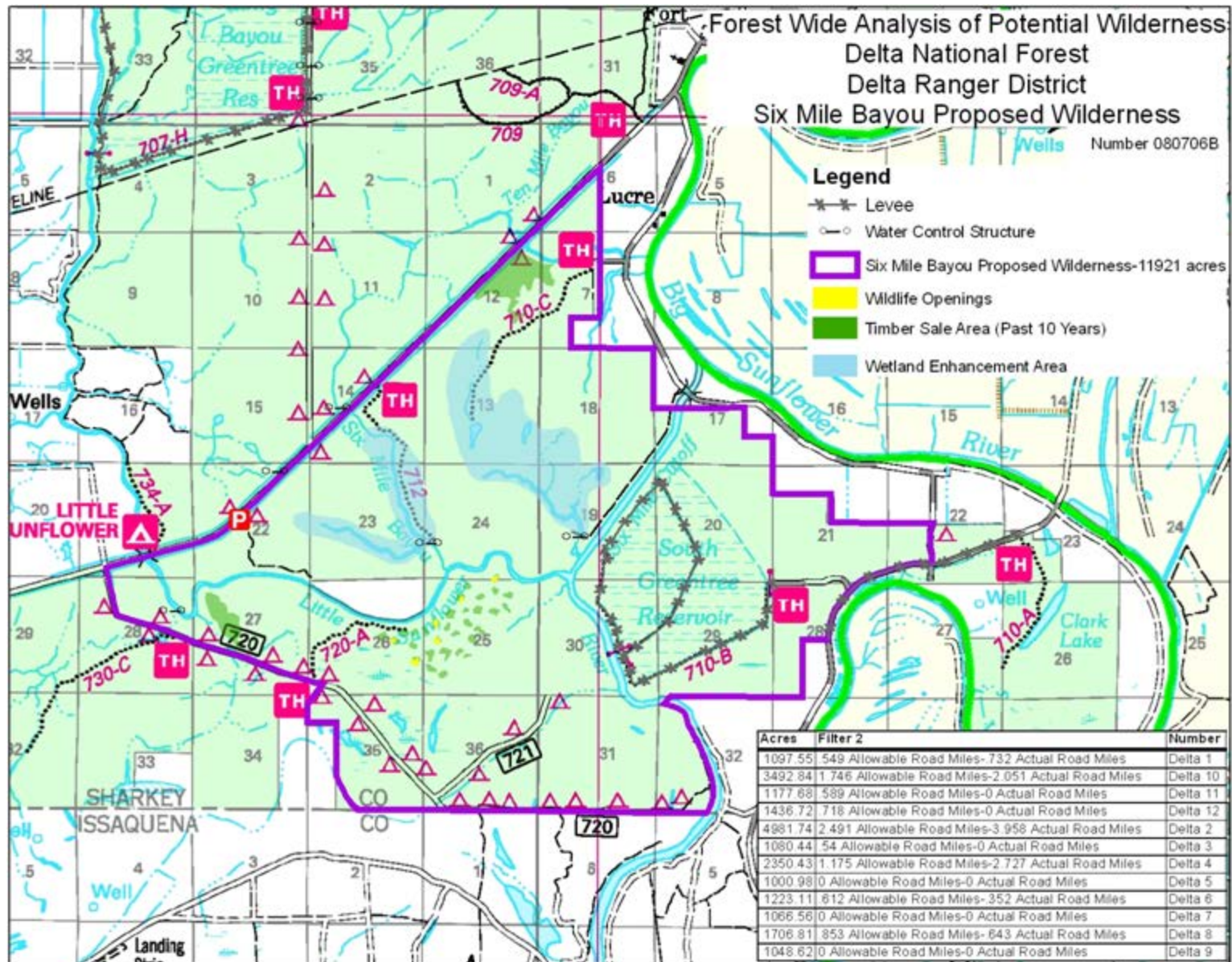


Figure C 5. Map of Six Mile Bayou

C.7 Hawk's Nest Area

C.7.1 Tombigbee National Forest

The Friends of Mississippi Public Lands and Sierra Club submitted a document titled, "Towards a New Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi: A Conservation Re-vision" (revised June 2004) as comment to the National Forests in Mississippi forest plan revision process proposing the Hawk's Nest area in the Tombigbee for consideration as a potential wilderness area.

Their proposal was considered using criteria established in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70. The analysis of the Hawk's Nest proposal is documented in the attached table. While several criteria for potential wilderness were met, there are other criteria that conflict with desired conditions for potential wilderness. These conflicting criteria are summarized below:

- Section 71.12.1 – With 12.34 miles of interior Forest Service roads, 2.7 miles of electric transmission lines, and 24 miles of maintained mountain bike trails, the proposed area is not "regaining a natural, untrammled appearance."
- Section 71.12.2 – Each of the improvements listed in 71.12.1 is actively being managed by humans, not nature, and is not muted or disappearing.
- Section 71.12.3 – Although some in-holdings may be available for purchase, one landowner of 105 acres would probably not be willing to sell, and the Little Rock cemetery would also not be available for purchase.
- Section 71.12.4 – With close proximity to State Highway 15 and the communities of Ackerman and Louisville, the Hawk's Nest area is not remote. Noise from traffic on Highway 15 can be heard at times. Pine plantations on large tracts of private in-holdings negatively impact potential wilderness character.
- Section 71.12.5 – There are more than 12 miles of interior Forest Service roads.

Other Forest Service observations and issues regarding the Hawk's Nest area include the following:

- Wilderness experiences such as solitude, serenity, adventure and self-reliance would only be attainable after major restoration of 12.34 miles of interior roads and relocation of 2.7 miles of a major (100-foot wide) Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) electric transmission line. A relocation of the TVA transmission line would be very costly and would likely be opposed.
- The extensive road and trail system currently in place provides only moderate challenge as routes are very defined. Decommissioning and restoring trails and roads would be needed to increase the challenge and adventure.
- Outdoor recreation opportunities are currently provided in the project area; however, wilderness use would shift the types of use due to reduced access. Mountain bike trails would have to convert to hiking or equestrian trails, and designated primitive campsites would be decommissioned. Access by vehicle for nature study, hunting or wildlife viewing would be sacrificed.
- Special Features are limited with the exception of the proposed Choctaw #4 Botanical area, a 45-acre stand of pristine old-growth hardwood which will be protected whether the proposed area is wilderness or not.
- The proposed wilderness lies entirely in the Choctaw Wildlife Management Area, a cooperative special use with the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks (MDWFP). It is unknown how MDWFP or the public would receive a proposal for wilderness designation.

In summary, the proposed area currently has high interest and use for recreation, including hunting, fishing, trail use and primitive camping. Many criteria for wilderness designation are not met as

documented in this analysis. The public is served well by continuing with existing uses. After reviewing the criteria for potential wilderness outlined in FSH 1909.12, chapter 70, the Hawk's Nest area does not meet the statutory definition of wilderness and therefore do not qualify for placement in the inventory of potential wilderness.

C.8 Analysis of Proposed Wilderness Areas

C.8.1 Tombigbee National Forest

Hawk's Nest

The Hawk's Nest area on the Homochitto NF was mentioned in the Sierra Club and Friends of Mississippi Public Lands document "Towards a New Management Plan for the National Forests in Mississippi: A Conservation Re-vision" (revised June 2004) as comment to the National Forests in Mississippi forest plan revision process. Table C 4 provides an analysis of how well the Hawk's Nest area meets the criteria (FSH 1909.12, chapter 70) for inclusion in the forest inventory of potential wilderness areas.

Table C 4. Hawk's Nest

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.1 – Inventory Criteria	Potential wilderness areas qualify for placement on the inventory of potential wilderness if they meet one or more of the following:		
	1. They contain 5000 acres or more.	The proposed area includes 4431 FS acres and 766 private acres, for a total of 5197 acres.	Obtaining 5000 acres will require acquiring some of the private in-holdings. For this reason we address each of the less than 5000 acres criteria below.
	2. They contain less than 5,000 acres but:		
	a. Due to physical terrain, natural conditions can be preserved	The proposed area is bounded by roads on the north and south flanks and by property lines on the east and west flanks.	This criterion is not met, the area is defined by roads and private boundary, not physical terrain.
	b. They are self-contained ecosystems, such as an island, that can be effectively managed as a separate unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.	The proposed area is not a self-contained ecosystem.	This criterion is not met.
	c. They are contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, Administration-endorsed wilderness, or potential wilderness in other Federal ownership, regardless of their size.	The proposed area is not contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas or potential wilderness.	This criterion is not met.
3. The area does not contain forest roads (36 CFR 212.1) or other permanently authorized roads, except as permitted in areas east of the 100 th meridian (FSH 1909.12, sec. 71.12)	See section 71.12, criterion #5, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #5	
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements	Potential wilderness areas may qualify for the inventory even though they include the following types or areas or features.		
	1. Airstrips and heliports.	There are no airstrips or heliports.	This criterion is met.
	2. Cultural treatments involving plantations or plantings where the use of mechanical equipment is not evident.	Most of the private in-holdings and adjacent private lands are managed in young pine plantations.	This criterion is not met.
	3. Electronic installations, such as cell towers, television, radio, and telephone repeaters, and the like, provided their impact is minimal.	There are no electronic or communication improvements	This criterion is met.
	4. Areas with evidence of historic mining (50+ years ago). Inventoried lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation may include:		
	a. Areas that otherwise meet inventory criteria if they are covered by mineral leases having a “no surface occupancy” stipulation.	The Choctaw #4 Proposed Botanical Area has a No Surface Occupancy stipulation; the rest of the area is leased but allows for Surface Occupancy.	Most of the area allows for surface occupancy, this criterion is not met.
	b. Areas covered by mineral leases that otherwise meet inventory criteria only if the lessee has not exercised development and occupancy rights. If and when these rights are exercised, remove the area, or portion affected, from the inventory unless it is possible to establish specific occupancy provisions that would maintain the area in a condition suitable for wilderness.	There are several mineral leases (FS minerals and surface) which would expire in 2013-2015; no active mineral activity within the proposed area.	Lease holders have the right to develop their leases until the lease date expires. Until then surface occupancy is allowed.

Appendix C - Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas and Evaluation of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers Inventory

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.11 - Criteria for including improvements (cont'd)	5. National Grasslands and Prairies. National Grasslands and Prairies may have structures or evidence of vegetative manipulation resulting from past management practices. National Grassland and Prairie lands that contain the following features may be inventoried:		
	a. Vegetation type conversions that are reverting to native vegetation with minimal evidence of cultivation.	N/A	N/A
	b. Less than 1 mile of interior fence per section	N/A	N/A
	6. Areas of less than 70-percent Federal ownership, if it is realistic to manage the Federal lands as wilderness, independent of the private land.	There are approx. 4431 Federal acres per 5197 total, this equates to 87% Federal ownership. Some of the private landowners might be receptive to selling their land. If private lands are not acquired it may be difficult to manage the Federal lands as wilderness, independent of the private land.	The percent Federal ownership is met, however there is some doubt to whether the total area could be managed as wilderness without acquiring at least the landlocked in-holdings in Sections 19 and 29 of Township 16 North, Range 12 East, approx. 480 acres.
	7. Minor structural range improvements (FSM 2240.5) such as fences or water troughs. Exclude areas where nonstructural range improvements are readily visible and apparent. Areas with spray or burning projects are permissible if there is little or no evidence of the project.	There are no range improvements.	No range improvements are impacting the wilderness character.
	8. Recreation improvements such as occupancy spots or minor hunting or outfitter camps. As a general rule, do not include developed sites. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.	There are 24 miles of developed mountain bike trails within the proposed area.	The mountain bike trails are well established. This Criterion is not met.
	9. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not evident, except as provided in Section 71.12 for areas east of the 100th meridian.	See section 71.12, criterion #7, later within this table	See section 71.12, criterion #7.
	10. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines and power lines, if a right-of-way has not been cleared.	There are 2.7 miles of cleared electric transmission lines within the proposed area.	This criterion is not met.
11. Watershed treatment areas if the use of mechanical equipment is not evident. The inventory may include areas where minor watershed treatment has been accomplished manually, such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.	There are no watershed treatment areas within the proposed area.	No watershed treatment areas impact the wilderness character.	
71.12 - Criteria for Potential Wilderness Areas East of the 100th Meridian	National Forest System lands in the Eastern United States (east of the 100th meridian) have been acquired over time from private ownership. Criteria for inventorying those lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation recognize that much, if not all of the land, shows some signs of human activity and modification even though they have shown high recuperative capabilities. Areas east of the 100th meridian qualify for inventory as lands that may have potential for wilderness recommendation if:		
	1. The land is regaining a natural, untrammled appearance. "trammel - a restriction on free activity or movement"	There is 12.34 miles of interior forest roads, 2.7 miles of electric transmission lines and 24 miles of FS mountain bike trails.	This criterion is not met.

Directive	Criteria	Comments	Determination
71.12 - Criteria for Potential Wilderness Areas East of the 100th Meridian (cont'd)	2. Improvements existing in the area are being affected by the forces of nature rather than humans and are disappearing or muted.	FS Roads, the electric transmission lines and FS trails are all being maintained at present. Inclusive FS lands are currently managed for multiple use including timber mgt.	This criterion is not presently met.
	3. The area has existing or attainable NFS ownership patterns, both surface and subsurface, that could ensure perpetuation of identified wilderness characteristics.	There are private in-holdings totaling 660 acres. 501 of these acres are in private timber company ownership and could likely be acquired. Tract 821 has half interest in all minerals outstanding in third party (46 ac.). There are several mineral leases (FS minerals and surface) which would expire in 2013-2015. The Noxubee Hill Cemetery is a 2.8 acre in-holding in the southern portion of proposed area.	There is a good possibility that private timber company in-holdings could be acquired. Two landowners of 159 acres in the southeast may be receptive to selling. The 2.8 acre Noxubee Hill Cemetery in-holding would not be available for purchase. The landowner for the 105 acre in-holding in the north part of the proposed area would probably not be receptive to selling. Mineral interests, including leases could possibly be purchased.
	4. The location of the area is conducive to perpetuation of wilderness values. Consider the relationship of the area to sources of noise, air and water pollutions, as well as the unsightly conditions that would have an effect on the wilderness experience. The amount and pattern of Federal ownership is also a factor.	The proposed area is within 2-3 miles of state hwy. 15 between Ackerman and Louisville, MS. The area is within 5 miles of either community. The 320 ac. block of pvt. land in Sec. 19, T16N, R12 E and the pvt. In-holding in Sec 29 is in young pine plantations. There is other managed pvt. land adjoining the area on the east and west.	Some traffic along Highway 15 would likely be heard at times. Agriculture from adjoining private land on the east and west might impact water quality. The timber company land in the center of the proposed area does not have wilderness character.
	5. The area contains no more than a half mile of improved road for each 1,000 acres, and the road is under Forest Service jurisdiction.	There are 12.34 miles of interior FS roads within the proposed area, which equates to 2.6 miles of road per 100 acres.	This criterion is not met for road density.
	6. No more than 15 percent of the area is in non-native, planted vegetation.	No non-native planted vegetation is in the proposed area.	This criterion is met.
	7. Twenty percent or less of the area has been harvested within the past 10 years.	There are no FS stands less than 10 years old. The private timberlands are however less than 10 years old, if acquired this would comprise only about 10% of the total area.	This criterion is met.
	8. The area contains only a few dwellings on private lands and the location of these dwellings and their access needs insulate their effects on wilderness characteristics on NFS lands.	There are no dwellings on interior private lands	This criterion is met.

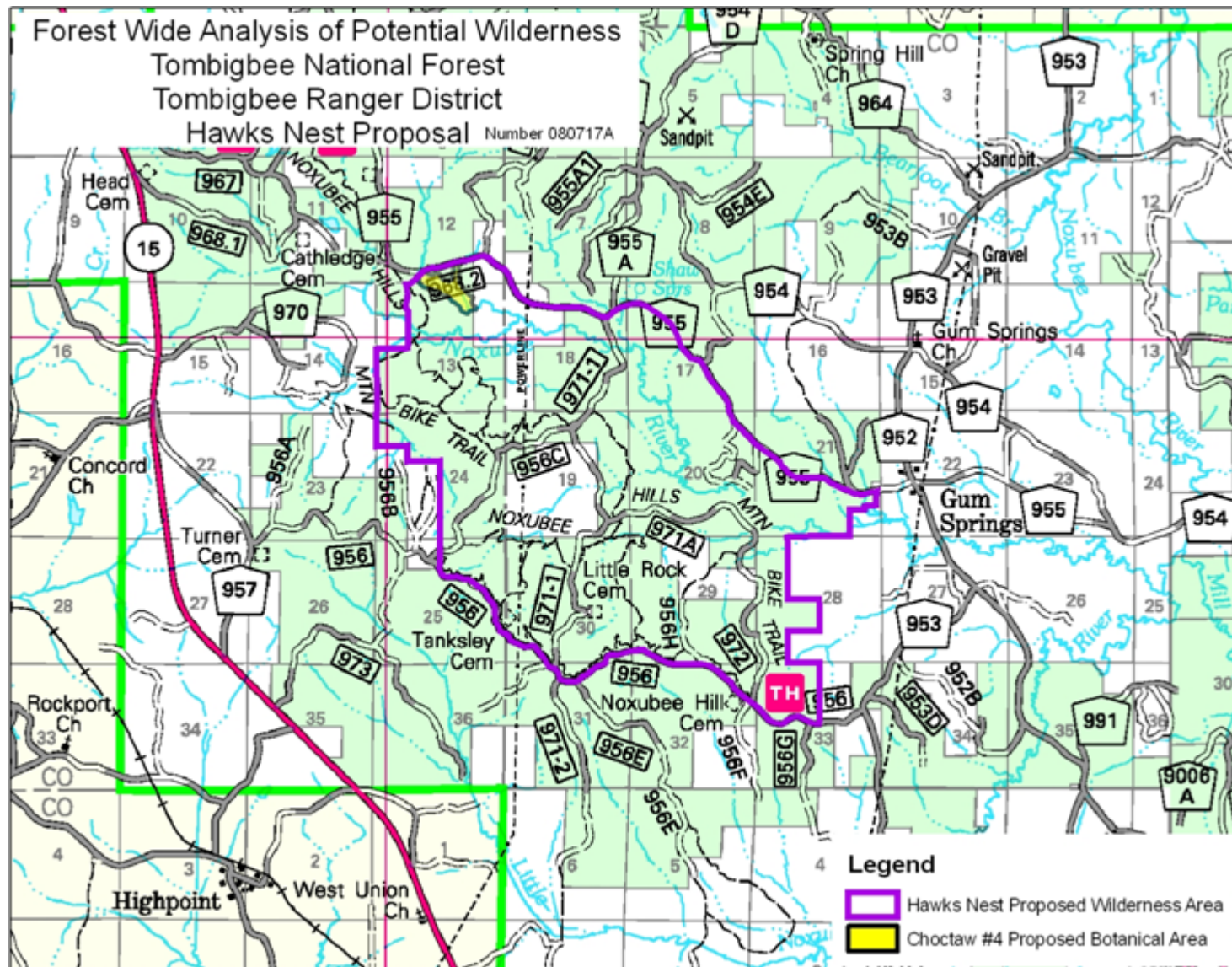


Figure C 6. Map of Hawk's Nest

C.9 GIS-based Forestwide Analysis of Potential Wilderness Areas

A forest-wide analysis of all large blocks of NFS administered lands was completed using the following methodology from FSH 1909.12, chapter 70:

- A GIS query identified NFS blocks of ownership of 1,000 acres or more.
- Each identified tracts was evaluated to sort out tracts with a road density of one-half mile or less roads per 1,000 acres.
- Each block which passed the first two criteria above was evaluated to ensure that no more than 20 percent of the area had been harvested in the past 10 years.
- Finally, each remaining block of potential wilderness was analyzed individually for consideration of manageability, remoteness, ability to provide solitude, unique characteristics, and other improvements (mineral development, power lines, pipelines, etc.)

Each of the areas that went through the above filtering process is documented below by ranger district. Maps are provided using district administrative map format to give the best sense of geographic placement relative to surrounding communities, proximity to roads (forest, county, state, etc.), local landmarks and encumbrances such as utility right-of-ways. It should be noted that the GIS layer for district administrative maps do not always coincide with actual GIS roads layer. The GIS roads layer is the more accurate layer and was used as the base for the road density analysis.

C.9.1 Bienville National Forest

Bienville 1 – this 1583-acre tract has a large 332-acre private in-holding with access and a second 8.5-acre tract of private land without access. There is a 1.5-mile utility line corridor that cuts diagonally through the west half of the area. Considering these encumbrances, the relatively small size of the tract, and the lack of any special features or potential for wilderness experience, this area does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

Bienville 2 – is a long and narrow 1136-acre tract bounded by private property lines and roads with no other special features. This area would not provide wilderness experience or challenge and would be difficult to manage. This area does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

Bienville 3 – is a 1297-acre tract surrounded by roads on the east, west, and south perimeter and by landlines on the north perimeter. The area is less than a mile and a half north of State Highway 80 near Shockaloe Horse Trail, Base Camp 1. There would be little challenge or sense of remoteness within this area, and there are no unique or special features. For these reasons, including the small size of the area, Bienville 3 will not be included in the inventory of potential wilderness.

Bienville 4 – is a 1140-acre tract mostly surrounded by roads. It is located just west of Shockaloe Horse Trail and 2-1/2 miles north of US Highway 80. Much like Bienville 3 above, there is little opportunity for wilderness solitude or remoteness, and there are no unique features. As such, this area does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

Bienville 5 – this 1105-acre tract is completely surrounded by roads. There is a 0.9-mile linear ROW cutting diagonally through the northern third of the area. Due to its small size and lack of wilderness character, values, or uniqueness, this area does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

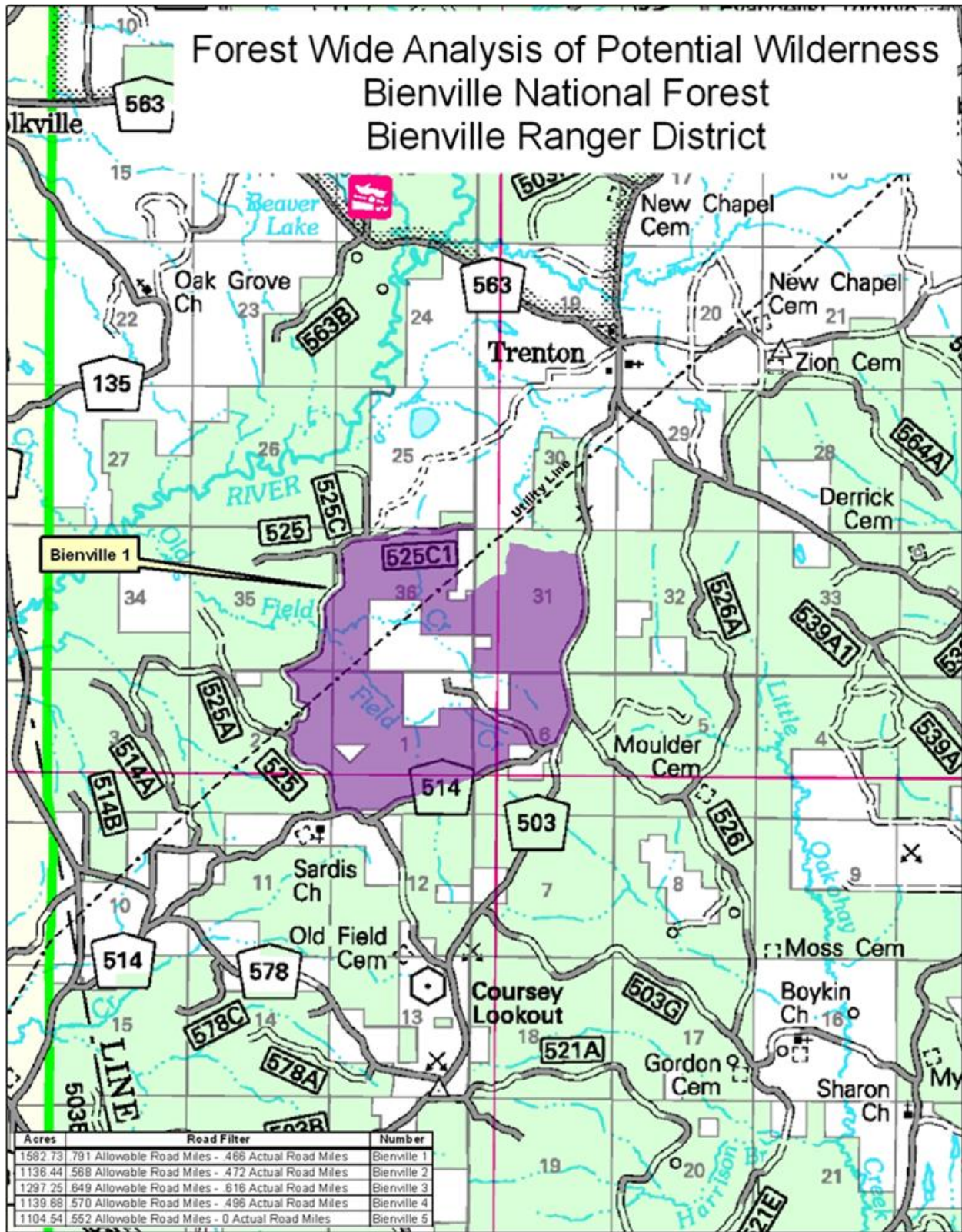


Figure C 7. Map of Bienville area 1

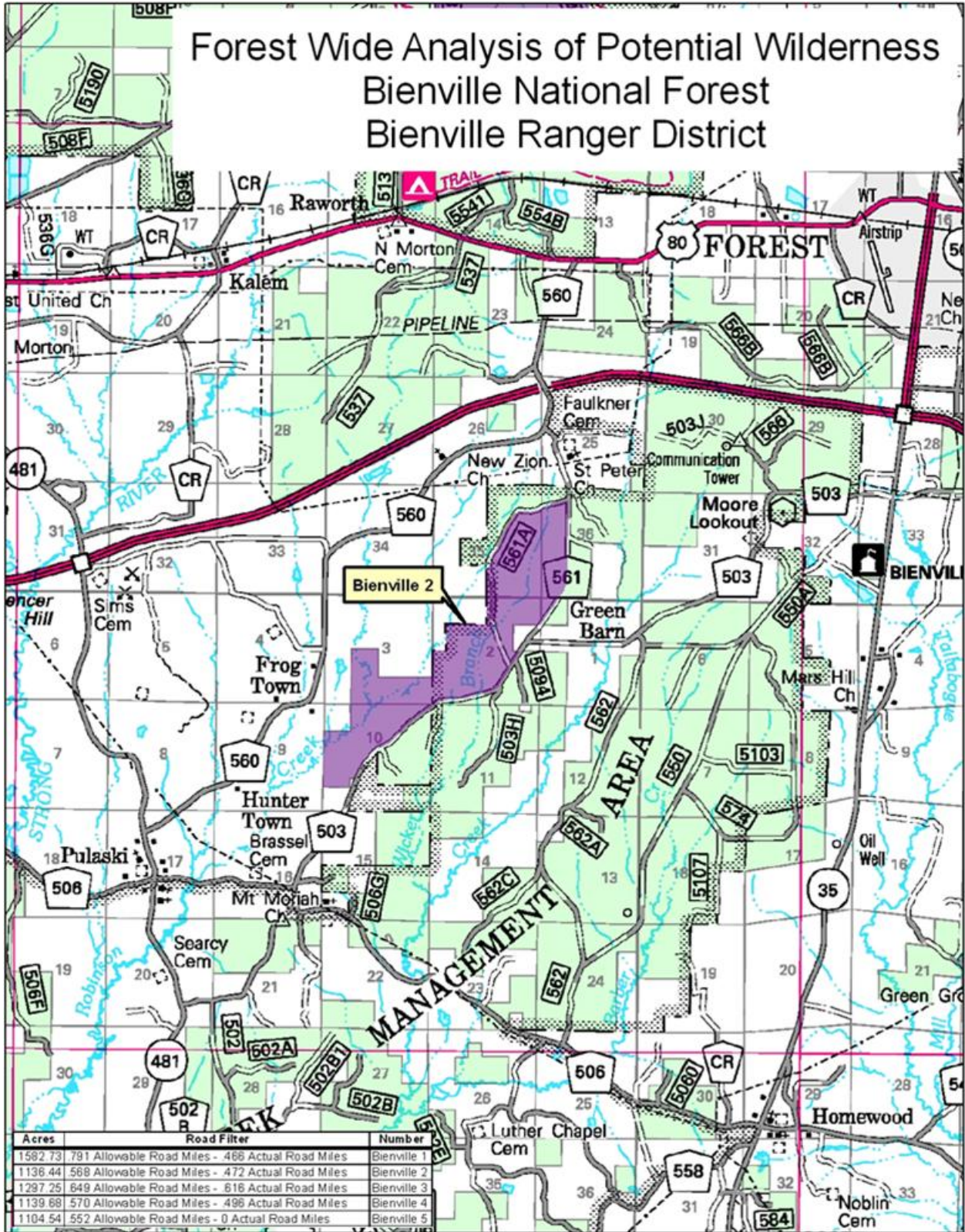


Figure C 8. Map of Bienville area 2

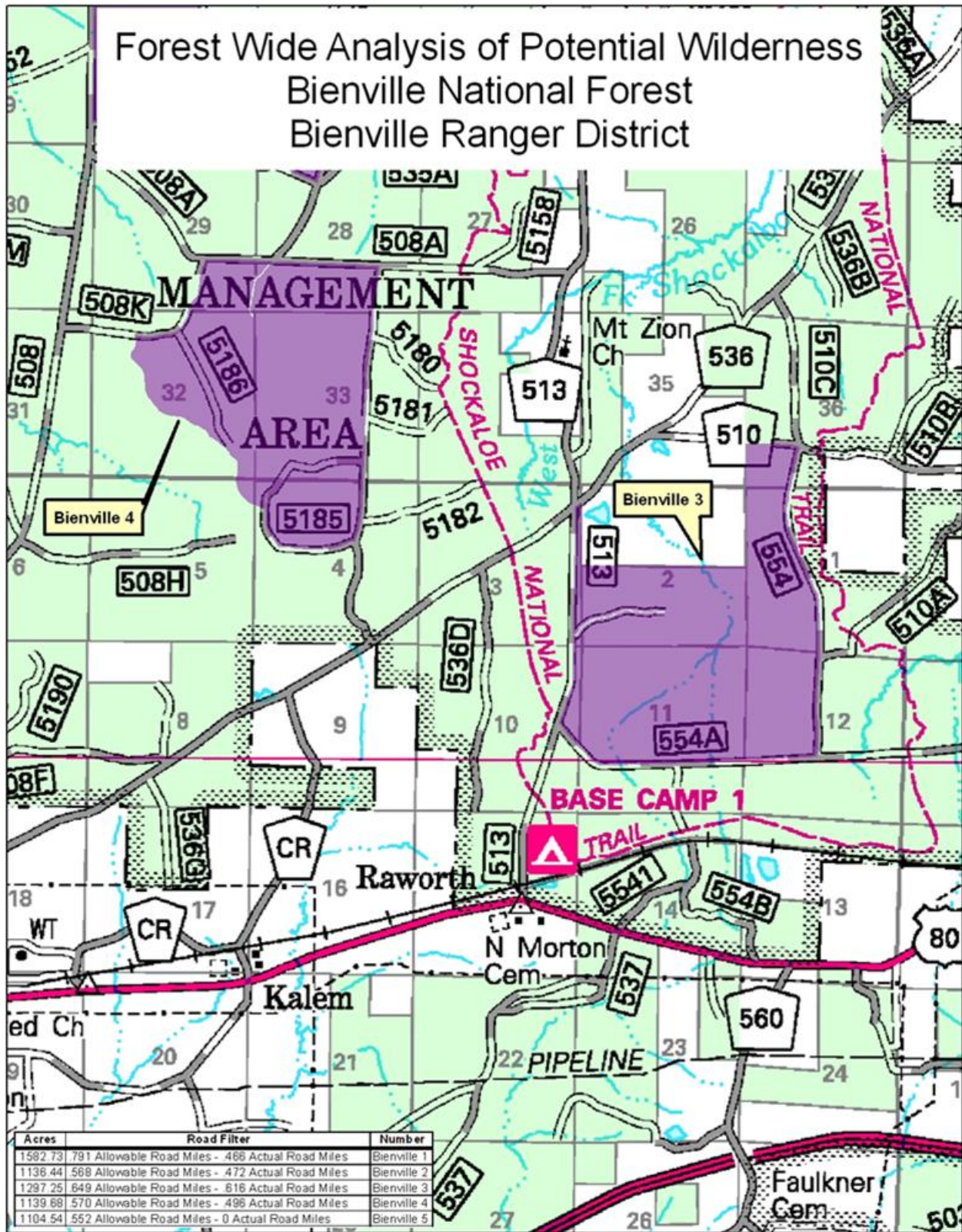


Figure C 9. Map of Bienville areas 3 and 4

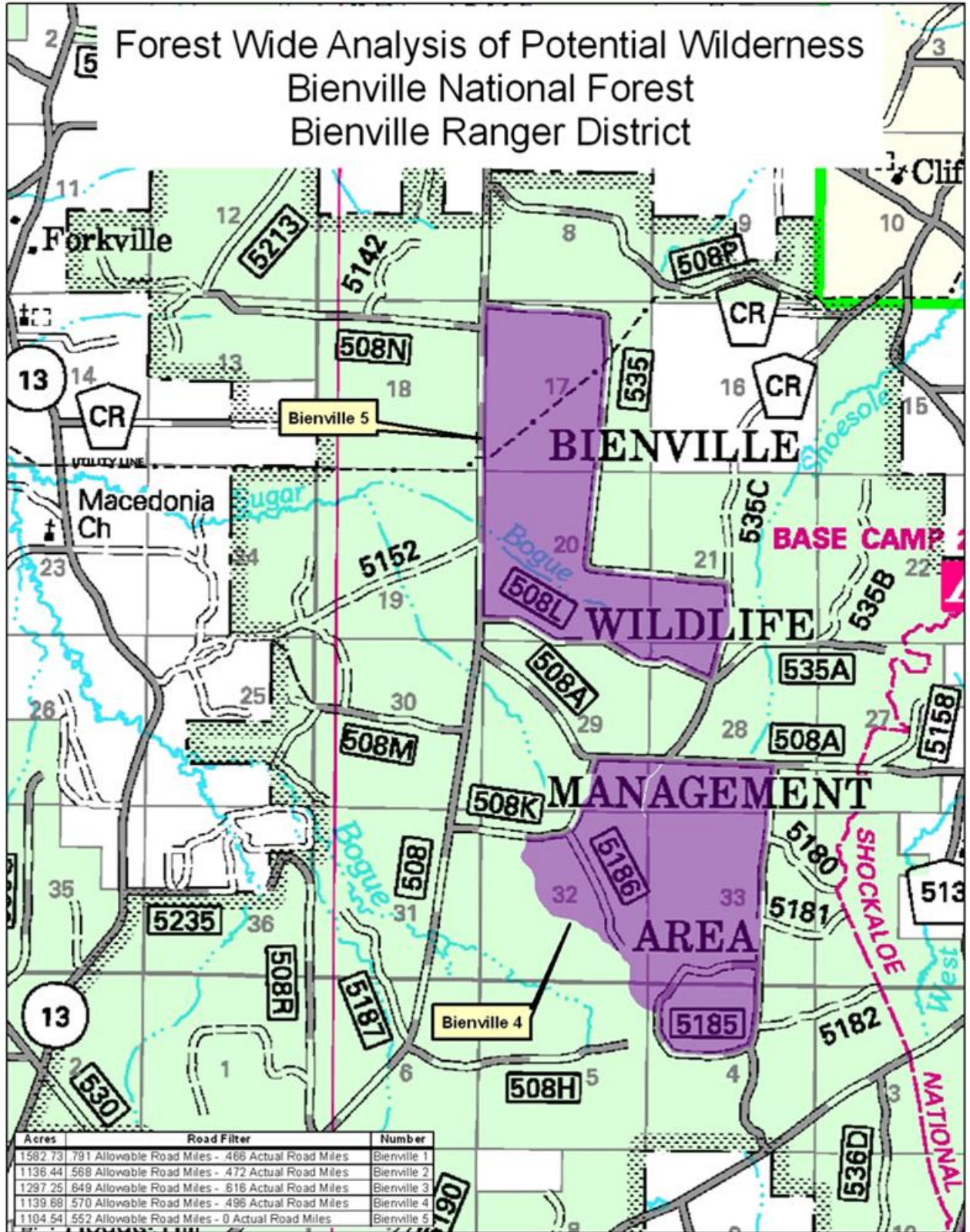


Figure C 10. Map of Bienville areas 4 and 5

C.9.2 Delta National Forest

Delta 1- is 1133 acres in size and located south of Little Sunflower Recreation Area. It is bounded by roads and private land. There are 2 developed hunter camps along Forest Road 720 and a trailhead parking area. Consideration was given to take in all of the NFS land south of 720 to see if this would improve the road density; but it did not, and it would have involved adding additional hunt camps and a second trailhead into the proposed area. Other nearby improvements includes a small aircraft landing strip one mile west of the area and a second landing strip 2-1/1 miles south of the area. Given the area's small size, lack of remoteness and no unique features, it does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

Delta 2 – is 1001 acres in size, located in an oxbow of the Big Sunflower River, and bounded by other private lands. Although there are numerous sloughs within the area, with this area's small size and lack of any unique features or wilderness values, it does not does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

Delta 3 – is located just east and south of the Delta Work Center. It is 1600 acres in size and is bounded by roads and private property. A pipeline crosses the area for a mile and a half, and there is one developed trailhead. Due to the pipeline and the lack of unique or special features, Delta 3 does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

Delta 4 – this 2855-acre tract lies between Forest Road 715 and the Little Sunflower River. It is generally a mile across by four miles long. Six developed hunter camps are located along the boundary roads, and the Delta Work Center is a half mile east of the area. Other encumbrances include a one and one-half mile pipeline. Delta 4 does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness due to the pipeline, developed recreation, lack of remoteness, and lack of unique or special features.

Delta 5 - is 2681 acres in size and located approximately one and a half miles from State Highway 16. The tract is primarily bounded by roads and private property. As this area is surrounded by roads and close to a busy state highway, it is not remote and there are no unique features to otherwise warrant consideration as potential wilderness. This area does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

Delta 6 – is located on the opposite side of FS 706-C from Delta 5. This 1707-acre tract also has no unique features, there is one developed trailhead, and the area lacks remoteness due to its narrowness (no more than a mile across) and its general location. This area does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

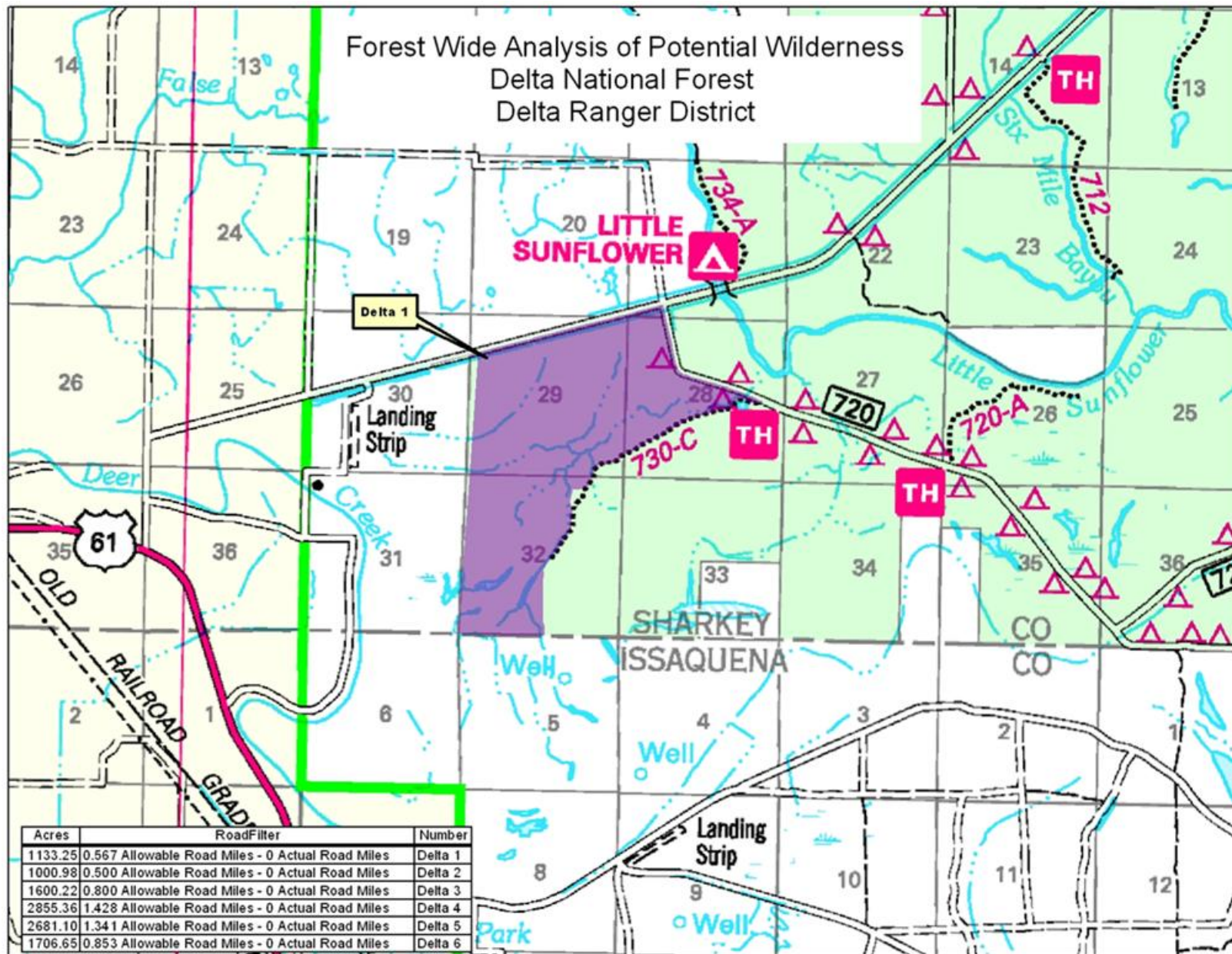


Figure C 11. Map of Delta area 1

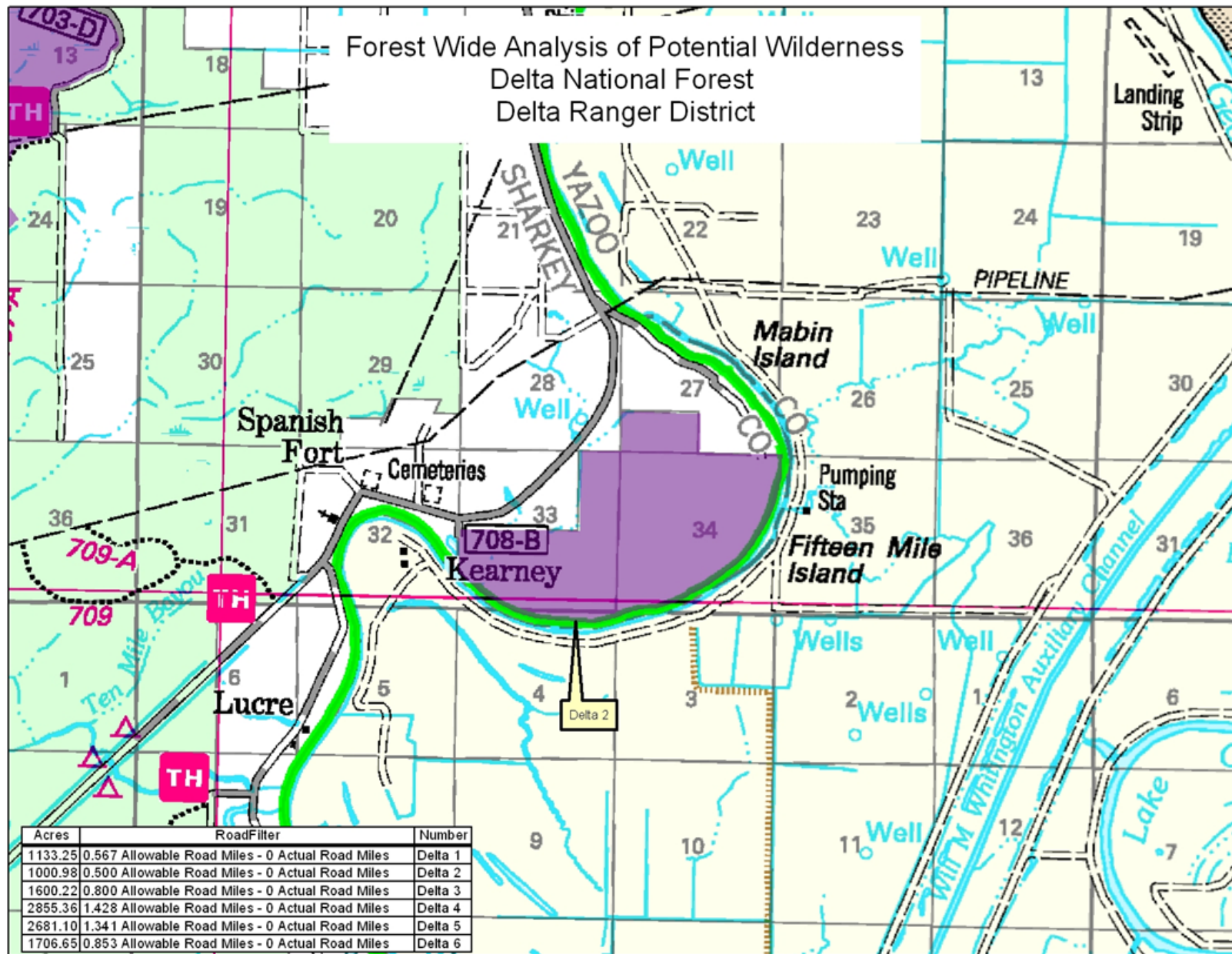


Figure C 12. Map of Delta area 2

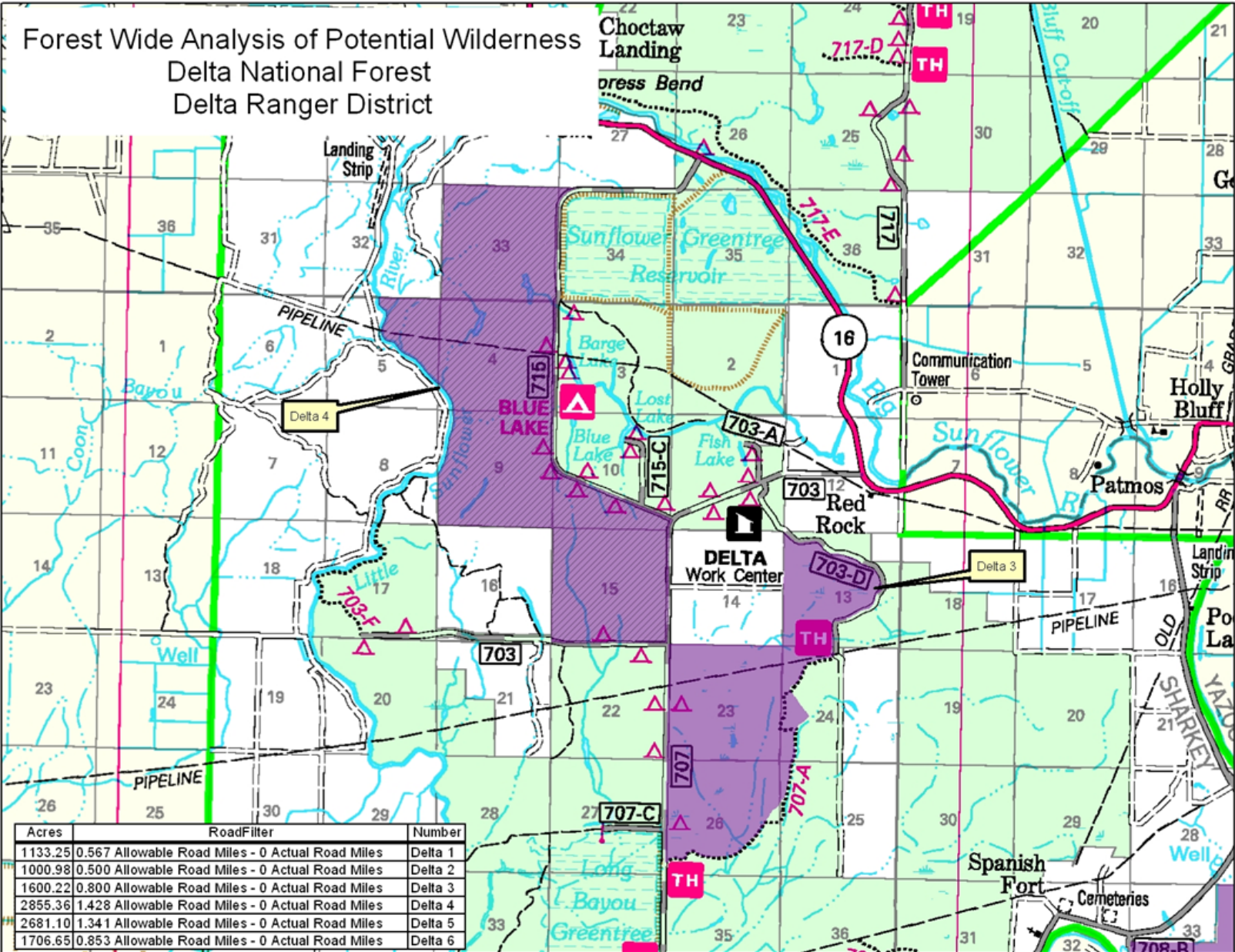


Figure C 13. Map of Delta areas 3 and 4

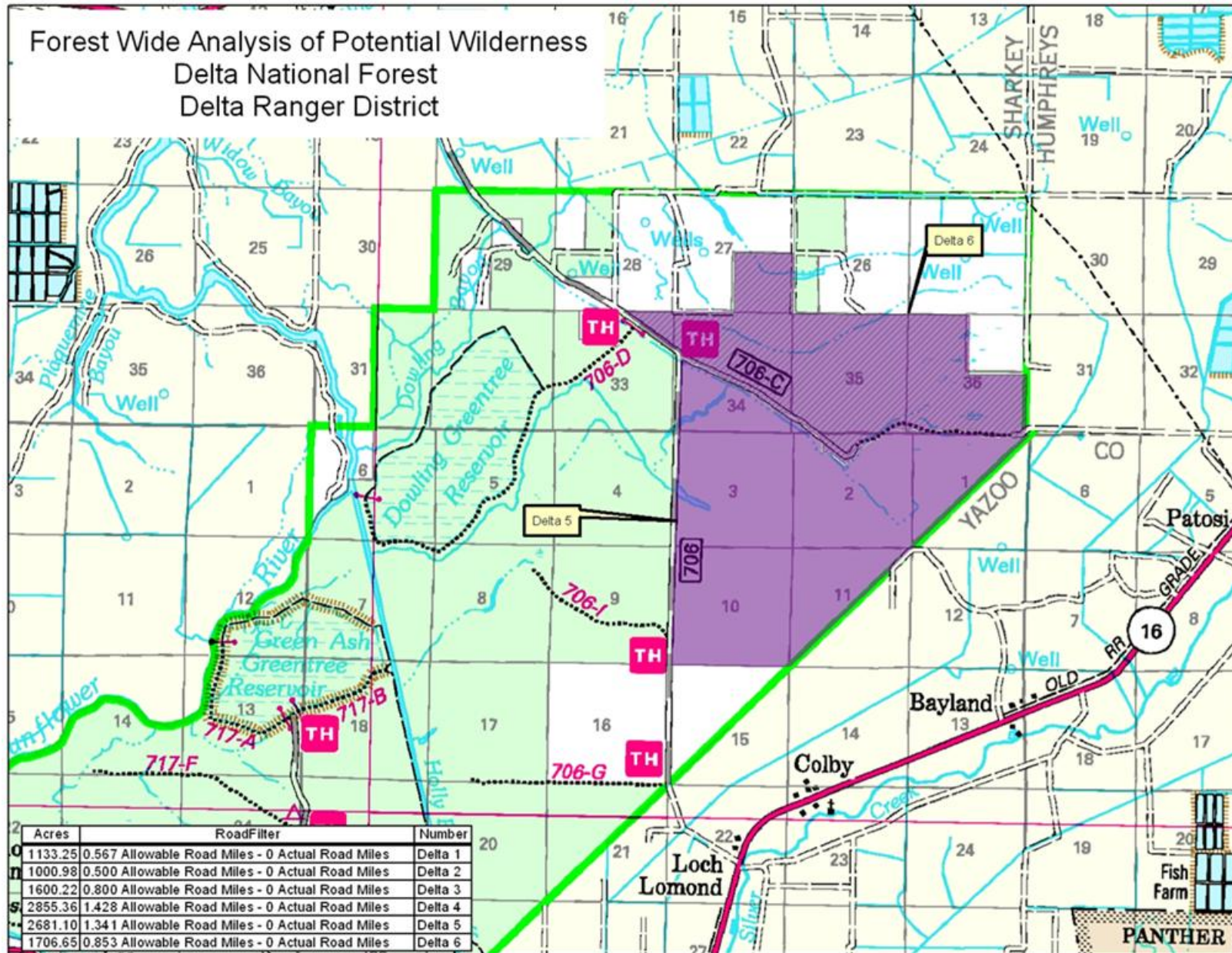


Figure C 14. Map of Delta areas 5 and 6

C.9.3 De Soto National Forest, De Soto Ranger District

Areas within the De Soto Ranger District on the De Soto National Forest that lie within the Camp Shelby Military Special Use Area were excluded from consideration due to active use of the area for military training and maneuvers. Camp Shelby is a training area for U.S. military forces awaiting deployment. Tank maneuver areas, areas with unexploded ordinance, and other training sites were not available or suitable for wilderness consideration.

De Soto 1 – is a 1444-acre tract surrounded by roads and private landlines. State Highway 15 borders the west side of the area. There are two private in-holdings totaling approximately 300 acres. The area is located just south of Bethel Motorcycle Trail. This area does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

De Soto 2 – this 1540-acre tract is bounded by Red Creek Road to the south, Forest Road 349 to the north and east, and private landlines on the west. A pipeline crosses the western portion for a mile and a half. There is little opportunity to experience solitude and wilderness challenge and there are no unique or special features. This area does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

C.9.4 De Soto National Forest, Chickasawhay Ranger District

The GIS analysis of the Chickasawhay Ranger District on the De Soto National Forest did not yield any areas with less than a half mile of road per 1000 acres. Therefore, no areas were identified as eligible for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

C.9.5 Holly Springs National Forest

Holly Springs 1 – is a 112-acre tract bounded by roads on three sides and private landlines on the north flank. Although there are no interior Forest Service roads, there are old woods roads along two ridges. There are no special or unique features to this area, and it would be difficult to experience remoteness or wilderness challenge. As such, this area does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

C.9.6 Homochitto National Forest

The GIS analysis of the Homochitto NF did not yield any areas with less than a half mile of road per 1000 acres. The Sandy Creek RARE II area was evaluated and did not meet the criteria for potential wilderness based on road density, interior power lines, and lack of other wilderness characteristics. No areas on the Homochitto National Forest met the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

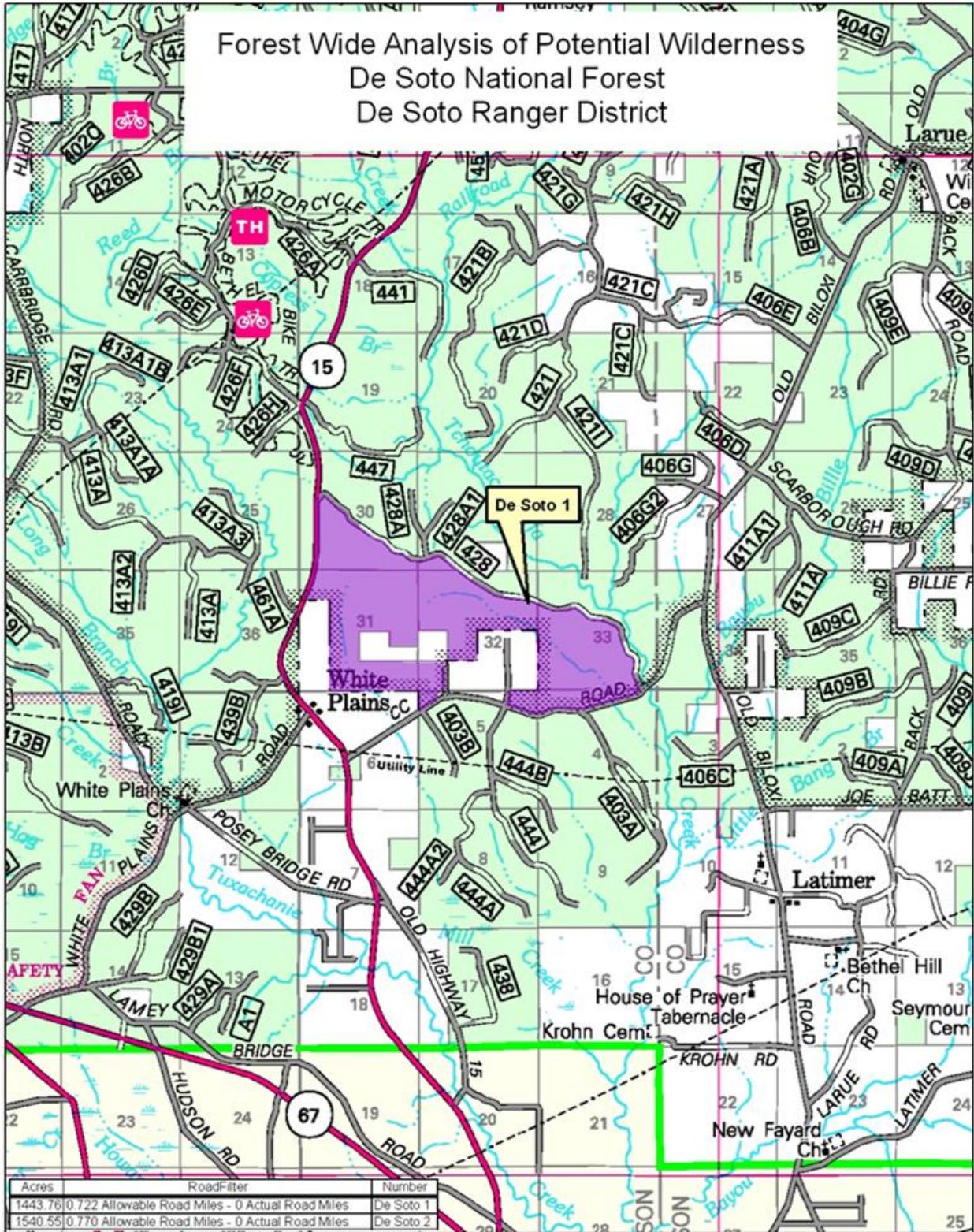


Figure C 15. Map of De Soto area 1

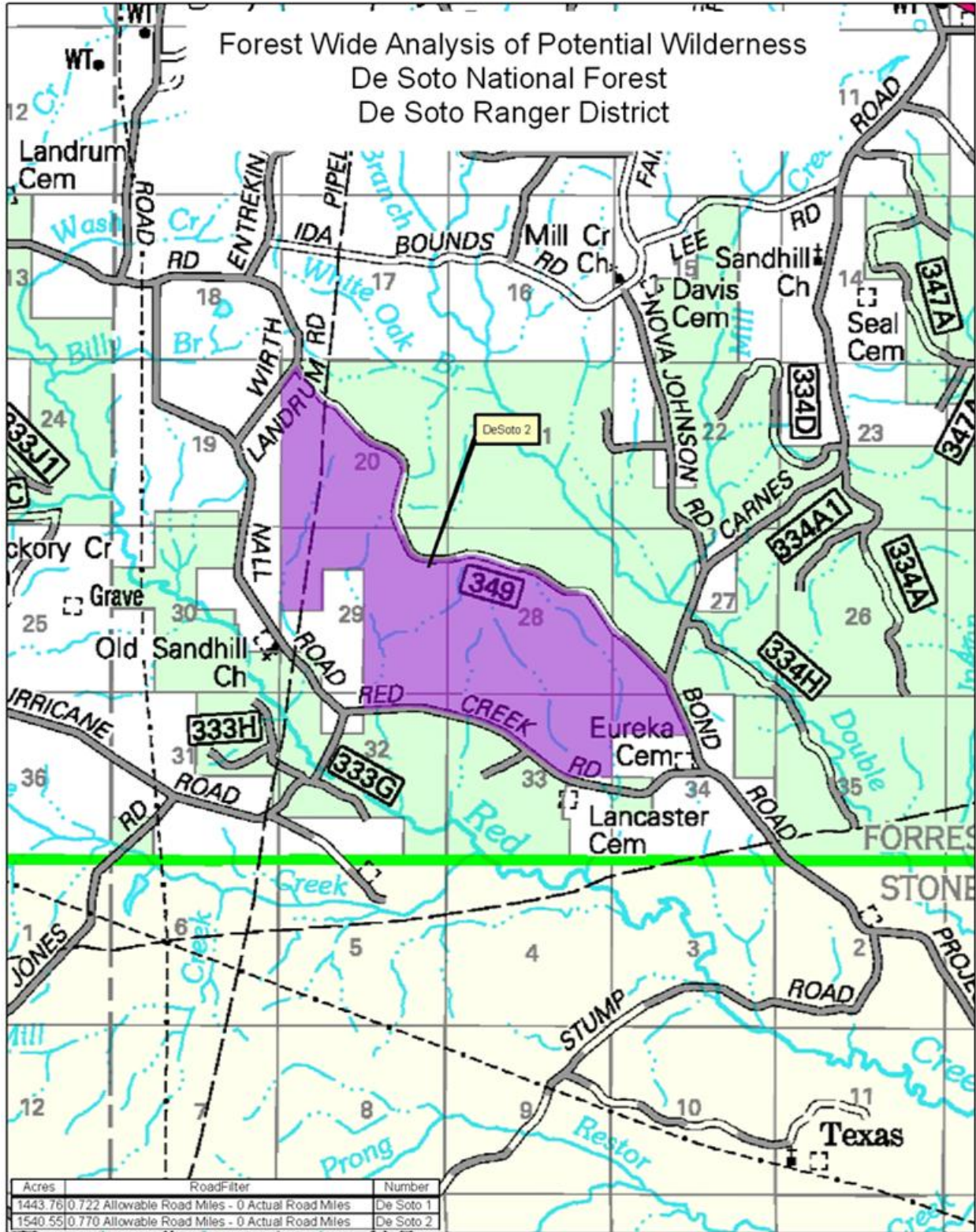


Figure C 16. Map of De Soto area 2

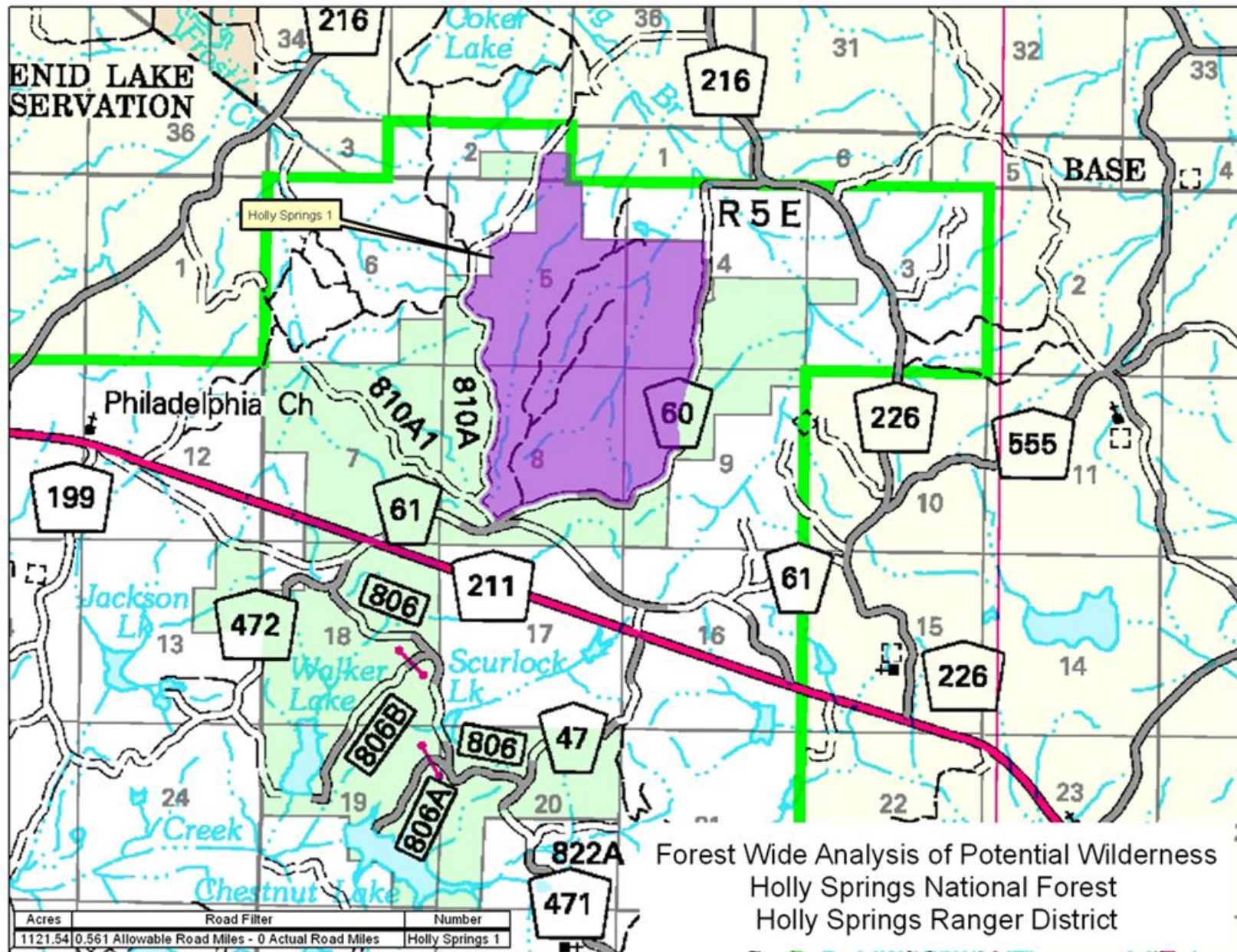


Figure C 17. Map of Holly Springs area 1

C.9.7 Tombigbee National Forest

Tombigbee 1 – The Natchez Trace Parkway borders this 2003-acre tract on its eastern flank and other roads surround the area. There is approximately 1 mile of utility right-of-way and two old sand pits in the southern portion. Seven miles of the Witch Dance Horse Trail meander through the area, with the Witch Dance Trailhead also located adjacent to the area. Although this area has many recreation features, it does not meet the criteria for potential wilderness.

Tombigbee 2 – located adjacent to Tombigbee 1, this 1042-acre tract has private lands adjoining it along two-thirds of its perimeter and the area is less than a mile across in any given point. There are no unique features, and the area would not provide for any wilderness values. This area does not meet the criteria for inclusion in the inventory of potential wilderness.

C.9.8 Summary of District-by-District Analysis for Potential Wilderness Areas

Each ranger district or national forest in Mississippi was analyzed using GIS queries for large blocks of National Forest System management (1000 acres+) with no more than ½- mile of road per 1000 acres and no more than 20 percent of the area in less than 10 year old age class. For each district, areas that passed these initial criteria were then considered based on other wilderness criteria such as lack of other improvements (dwellings, pipelines, developed recreation); remoteness; ability of the area to provide wilderness challenge and solitude; and any special or unique features.

In total, 16 areas forest wide were evaluated and none of the areas met the criteria for potential wilderness areas. Based on findings documented in this process report there were no areas found on the National Forests in Mississippi that qualified for placement on the potential wilderness inventory.

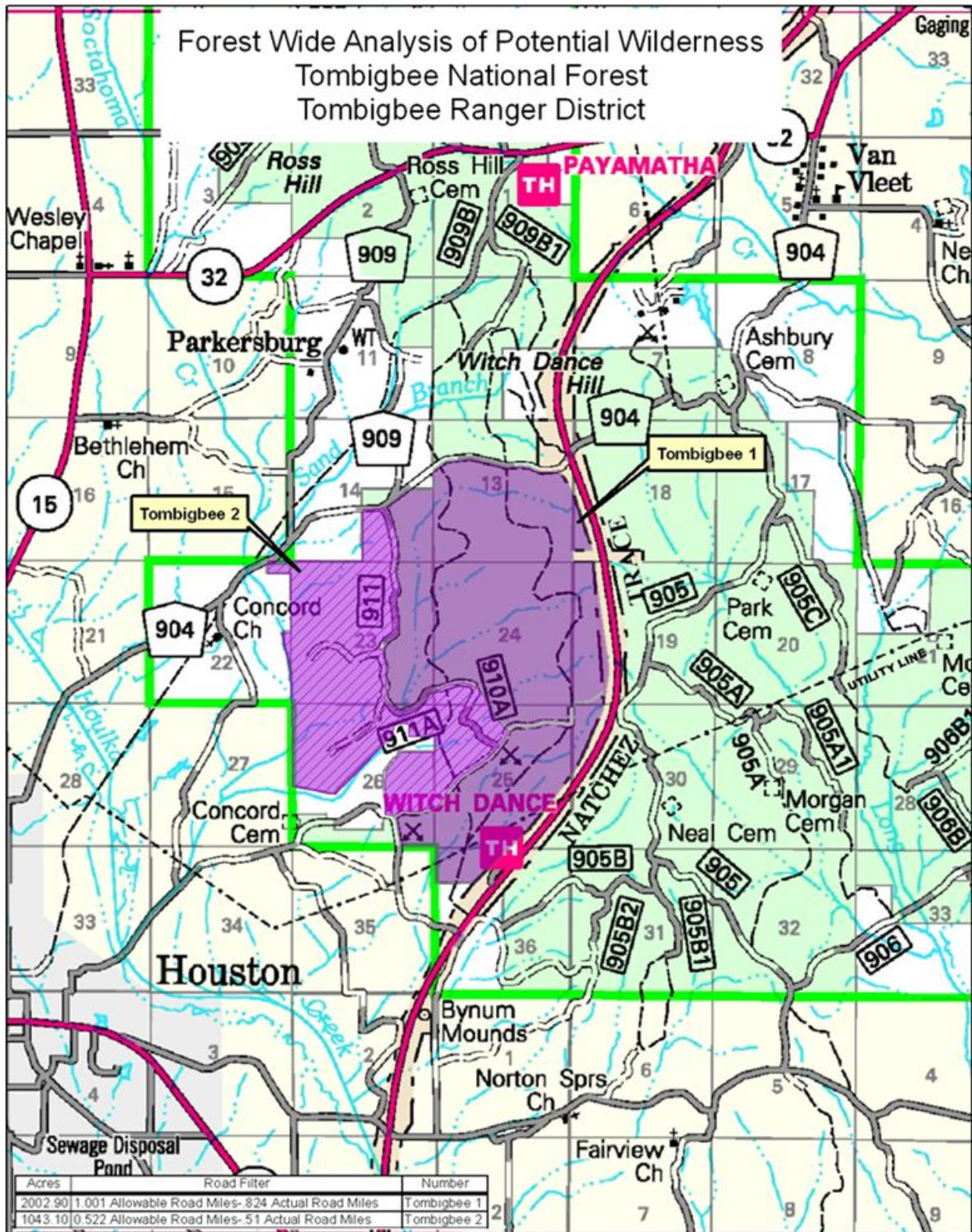


Figure C 18. Map of Tombigbee areas 1 and 2

C.10 Evaluation of Potential Wild and Scenic Rivers

C.10.1 National Rivers Inventory

There are 24 rivers and streams in Mississippi that are on the National Rivers Inventory (NRI). Seven of these inventoried rivers cross portions of National Forest System (NFS) lands. However, due to the intermingled land ownership patterns the majority of the stream channels are located on privately owned tracks.

Inventoried rivers affecting NFS lands in Mississippi were evaluated during development of the 1985 forest plan. A 41 mile segment of the Black Creek on the De Soto National Forest was identified as having the greatest potential for meeting the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the national wild and scenic rivers system. A study report and environmental impact statement were completed resulting in a 21-mile segment of Black Creek being added to the national wild and scenic rivers system as a scenic river on October 30, 1986.

The remaining inventoried rivers affecting NFS administered lands did not meet the eligibility requirements for recommending inclusion in the national system. To date, no substantial changes have occurred in their watersheds that warrant an in depth review or study of their eligibility criteria beyond a preliminary survey or assessment level.

C.10.2 Mississippi - Scenic Streams Stewardship Program

Following passage by Congress of the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968, Mississippi's first attempt at a streams bill was in 1969. After six failed attempts at a regulatory streams act, the project was abandoned in 1978. Twenty years later came a renewed effort to have a streams program in Mississippi without regulation. The Mississippi Scenic Stream Stewardship Act was passed in the 1999 legislative session and was signed by the Governor on March 16, 1999. This legislation created the Scenic Streams Stewardship Program which began August 9, 1999.

The Scenic Streams Stewardship Program (SSSP) was designed to promote voluntary private conservation efforts along Mississippi's unique and outstanding rivers and streams. Achievement of the goal will be through use of best management practices (BMPs) which are water quality improvement practices that will maintain the health of streams by keeping stream banks in good condition and preventing harmful sedimentation.

Nominated streams are evaluated by the Mississippi Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and may then be recommended to the Mississippi Legislature for consideration as eligible. A stream becomes eligible only through adoption and passage of a bill by the Mississippi Legislature. Once eligible, an advisory council is established which follows a public notice and meeting process to consider nomination of an eligible stream to be designated in the scenic streams stewardship program. A stream may be designated only through adoption and passage of a bill by the Mississippi legislature.

Seventeen Mississippi streams have been designated as eligible for nomination into the Scenic Streams Stewardship Program by the Mississippi legislature (1999 – 2008). Ten of the seventeen eligible streams have subsequently been designated by the legislature to the scenic streams stewardship program. Six of the ten designated streams are also on the National Rivers Inventory, along with five streams that are currently listed as eligible for nomination to the Scenic Streams Stewardship Program.

Table C 5. National Rivers Inventory and Scenic Streams Stewardship Program, rivers and streams in Mississippi

River/Stream Name	NFS	NRI	SSSP
Bayou Pierre	No	Yes	N/A
Bear Creek	No	No	Designated
Big Black River	No	Yes	N/A
Black Creek	Yes	Yes	Designated
Bluff Creek	Yes	Yes	N/A
Bogue Chitto River	No	Yes	Eligible
Bowie River and Bowie Creek	No	Yes	N/A
Buttahatchie River	No	Yes	Eligible
Chickasawhay River	No	Yes	N/A
Chunky Creek	No	No	Designated
Chunky River	No	Yes	Designated
Escatawpa	No	No	Eligible
Hatchie River	No	Yes	N/A
Homochitto River	Yes	Yes	N/A
Jourdan River	No	Yes	N/A
Leaf River	No	Yes	N/A
Magees Creek	No	Yes	Designated
Noxubee River	No	Yes	Designated
Okatoma River	No	Yes	Eligible
Pascagoula River	No	Yes	Designated
Pearl River	No	Yes	Eligible
Pearl River	No	Yes	N/A
Red Creek	Yes	Yes	Designated
Strong River	Yes	Yes	Eligible
Tangipahoa River	No	No	Designated
Tchoutacabouffa River	Yes	Yes	N/A
Tombigbee River	No	No	Eligible
Tuxachanie Creek	Yes	Yes	N/A
Wolf River	No	Yes	Designated

C.10.3 Review of Potentially Eligible Rivers

As part of the plan revision process, rivers and streams in Mississippi on the National Rivers Inventory and those eligible or designated in the Mississippi – Scenic Streams Stewardship Program were reviewed to determine if anticipated NFS management may influence or impact their status. Twenty-nine streams are on the combined list (Table C 5). Seven of the rivers and streams flow across NFS administered lands. Also, the undesignated segments from the 1985 Study Report of Black Creek were reviewed for changes in landownership status.

During the forest plan revision process for the National Forests in Mississippi, no individual, group or public entity proposed any streams or rivers to be considered for national wild and scenic river designation. The State of Mississippi does not have a regulated scenic rivers program.

Black Creek Scenic River

The Black Creek Wild and Scenic River was designated by Public Law 99-590 on October 30, 1986. The designated portion of Black Creek begins at Moody's Landing and extends south 21 miles to Fairley Bridge Landing.

A forty-one mile stretch of Black Creek flows through the proclamation boundaries of the De Soto National Forest from Big Creek Landing (Upper Terminus) to Old Alexander Bridge (on Highway 26). This portion of Black Creek was formally studied in the early 1980s to determine eligibility for inclusion in the national system. Because the river has varying characteristics over its length it was divided into three segments which were considered separately for classification. Subsequently, the most isolated segment of the river from Moody's Landing to Fairley Bridge Landing (21 miles) was designated as scenic and added to the national wild and scenic rivers system. Since the River Study and Wild and Scenic River designation in 1986, additional tracts of private lands have been acquired along the original Black Creek Study River corridor.

The 1986 river study indicated that upstream, the twelve mile segment from Big Creek Landing to Moody's Landing was more developed having five bridges near the town of Brooklyn, and a parallel road in several areas, and five of the twelve river miles were on private lands (1986). In 2008, the proportion of private lands along this segment has decreased from five river miles through private lands in 1986 to three river miles. Downstream (in 1986), the seven mile segment from Fairley Bridge Landing to Old Alexander Bridge had a high percentage of private lands and human caused disturbance was more evident along this segment than the middle segment that was ultimately designated as a scenic river. Since the 1986 river study the proportion of private lands in this river segment has declined from 41 percent private ownership to approximately 36 percent private ownership in 2008.

Based on this apparent shift in ownership mix, and considering that ownership, not scenic quality or environmental consideration was the principal factor for not carrying these segments forward in the 1986 designation process, a more detailed and formal river study report for these undesignated portions of the Black Creek corridor may be warranted.

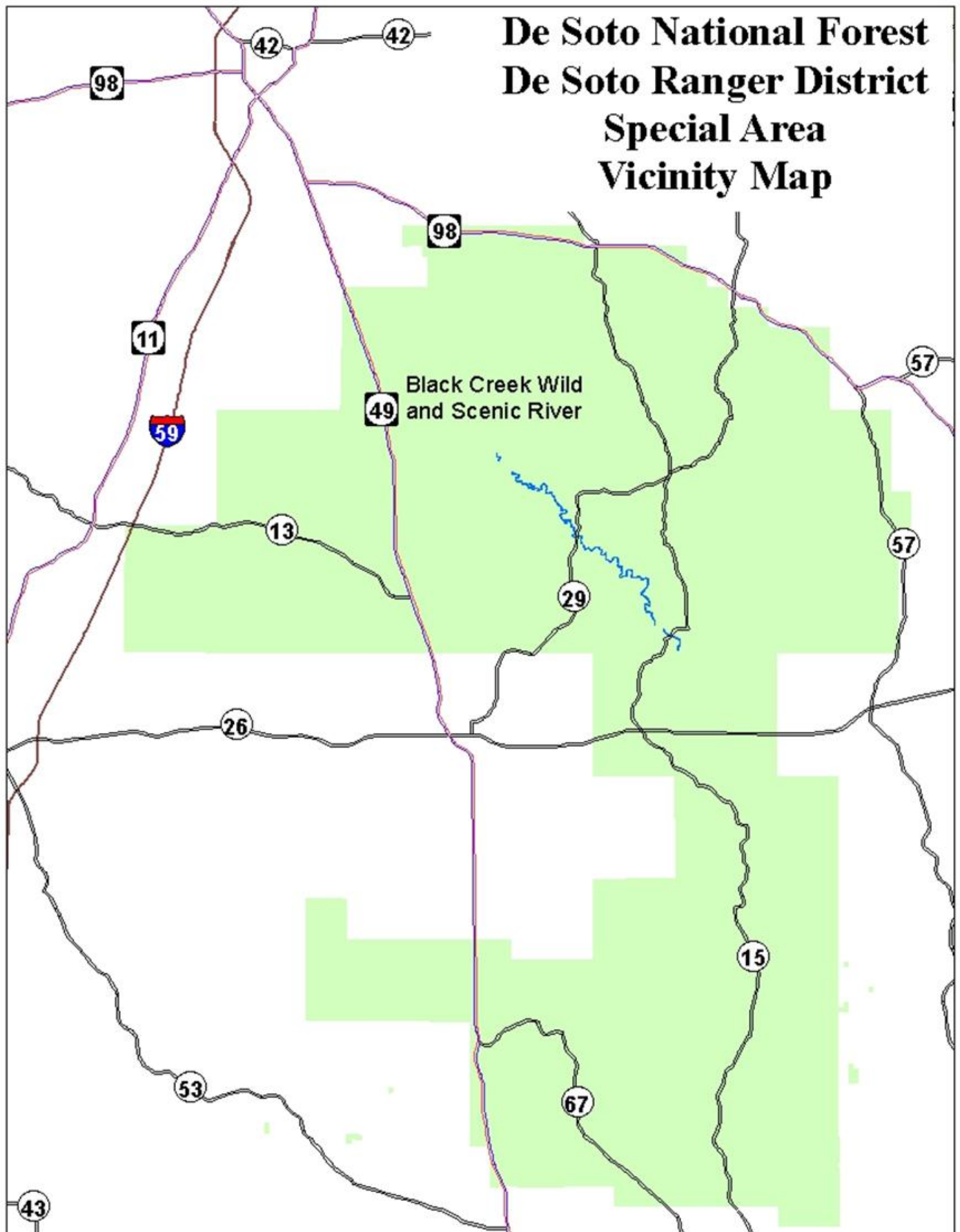


Figure C 19. Map overview of Black Creek scenic river corridor

Black Creek

There are two segments of Black Creek currently in the National Rivers Inventory. The first segment is downstream from the previous river study area, located in Jackson, George, and Stone counties. This segment is 40 river miles long, beginning at the confluence with Pascagoula River upstream to river mile (RM) 40, (MS Highway 26 Bridge). Less than one river mile of this river segment is on NFS administered lands (in Stone County) with the reminder on private lands.

The second segment is located in Forrest, Lamar, Jeff Davis and Marion counties. This second segment begins at RM 76 (Big Creek Landing) and extends upstream to RM 123 (headwaters near Bassfield). Less than two river miles of this National Rivers Inventory segment flows through NFS administered lands in Forrest County.

On April 22, 2004 a segment of the Black Creek from the confluence with the Pascagoula River (Jackson County) to the Mississippi Highway 589 Bridge in Lamar County was designated as a state scenic stream. The state scenic stream overlay the two National Rivers Inventory segments described above, and includes the 21 mile segment on the De Soto National Forest included in the national wild and scenic rivers system. The state scenic stream is located in Forrest, George, Jackson, Lamar, Perry, and Stone, Counties.

Due to the predominance of private ownership along these two segments and the fact that they are designated in the state scenic stewardship program, recommendations for inclusion into the national system have been reserved by and are deferred to the State of Mississippi.

Bluff Creek

The National Rivers Inventory segment of Bluff Creek begins at the confluence with West Pascagoula River and continues upstream to RM 23 (two miles northeast of Larue) in Jackson County. A portion of the headwaters reach into the De Soto National Forest, however the majority of the main stream is on private lands. Bluff Creek has not been designated as eligible for nomination to the state scenic streams stewardship program. Due to the limited amount of NFS lands in its main channel no further recommendation are being considered.

Homochitto River

This National Rivers Inventory segment is 71 river miles long flowing through Adams, Amite, Copiah, Franklin, Lincoln and Wilkinson counties from RM 24 near Sibley to RM 95 near Caseyville at the MS 550 bridge crossing. The Homochitto River flows through the Homochitto National Forest proclamation boundary, however with very few exceptions the river course lies on private lands.

The Homochitto River has not been designated as eligible for nomination to the state Scenic Streams Stewardship Program. Based upon 1986 study records, the portion of the stream on National Forest does not meet eligibility requirements because there are no outstandingly remarkable attributes. No significant changes in the watershed have occurred since the initial study that warrants additional study.

Red Creek

Located in Forrest, George, Jackson, Lamar, Pearl River and Stone counties the National Rivers Inventory segment is 71 river miles in length stretching from the confluence with Black Creek to its headwaters northwest of Lumberton. A segment of Red Creek from Mississippi Highway 26 in Stone County to its confluence with Black Creek in Jackson County was designated as a state scenic stream on March 15, 2006. Portions of Red Creek flow through the De Soto National Forest; however a significant majority of the stream course is on private lands.

Due to the predominance of private ownership and the fact that Red Creek is designated in the state scenic stewardship program, recommendations for inclusion into the national system have been reserved by and are deferred to the State of Mississippi.

Strong River

The National Rivers Inventory segment is 72 river miles long beginning at the confluence with Pearl River upstream to one mile below the I-20 bridge crossing and flows through Scott, Simpson, Smith and Rankin counties. The Strong River became eligible for nomination to the Scenic Streams Stewardship Program on March 16, 1999 but has not been designated by the Mississippi Legislature into the program. The eligible segment is in Simpson, Smith and Rankin counties beginning at the confluence of Beech Creek in Smith County to the Pearl River in Simpson County. Headwaters of the Strong River occur on the Bienville National Forest and the remainder of Strong River occurs on private lands.

Since the headwaters and just a small segment of the main channel occur on NFS administered lands no further recommendations are being considered for inclusion in the national system.

Tchoutacabouffa River

Located in Harrison, Jackson, and Stone counties this National Rivers Inventory segment is from RM 3, above Biloxi, to RM 22, MS Highway 15 Bridge. This segment of the Tchoutacabouffa River was evaluated during the Black Creek River Study (1986) process and was not recommended for carrying forward as a potential wild and scenic rivers candidate. According to the 1986 process records the river portion on NFS lands was not sufficiently outstanding to warrant carrying on the inventory of potential wild and scenic rivers. The Tchoutacabouffa River has not been designated as eligible for nomination to the state scenic streams stewardship program. There have been no significant changes in the watershed to warrant a renewed study.

Tuxachanie Creek

Tuxachanie Creek is in Harrison and Stone counties and flows through the De Soto National Forest. The National Rivers Inventory segment begins at the confluence with Tchoutacabouffa River and continues upstream approximately 28 river miles to its headwaters five miles southeast of Perkinson, Mississippi. Findings from the 1986 study indicate that: the stream is fairly small, upper reaches become intermittent in a dry summer, and NFS lands have no outstanding remarkable attributes along the creek channel. The Tuxachanie Creek has not been designated as eligible for nomination to the state Scenic Streams Stewardship Program. A new study of river attributes' does not appear to be warranted.

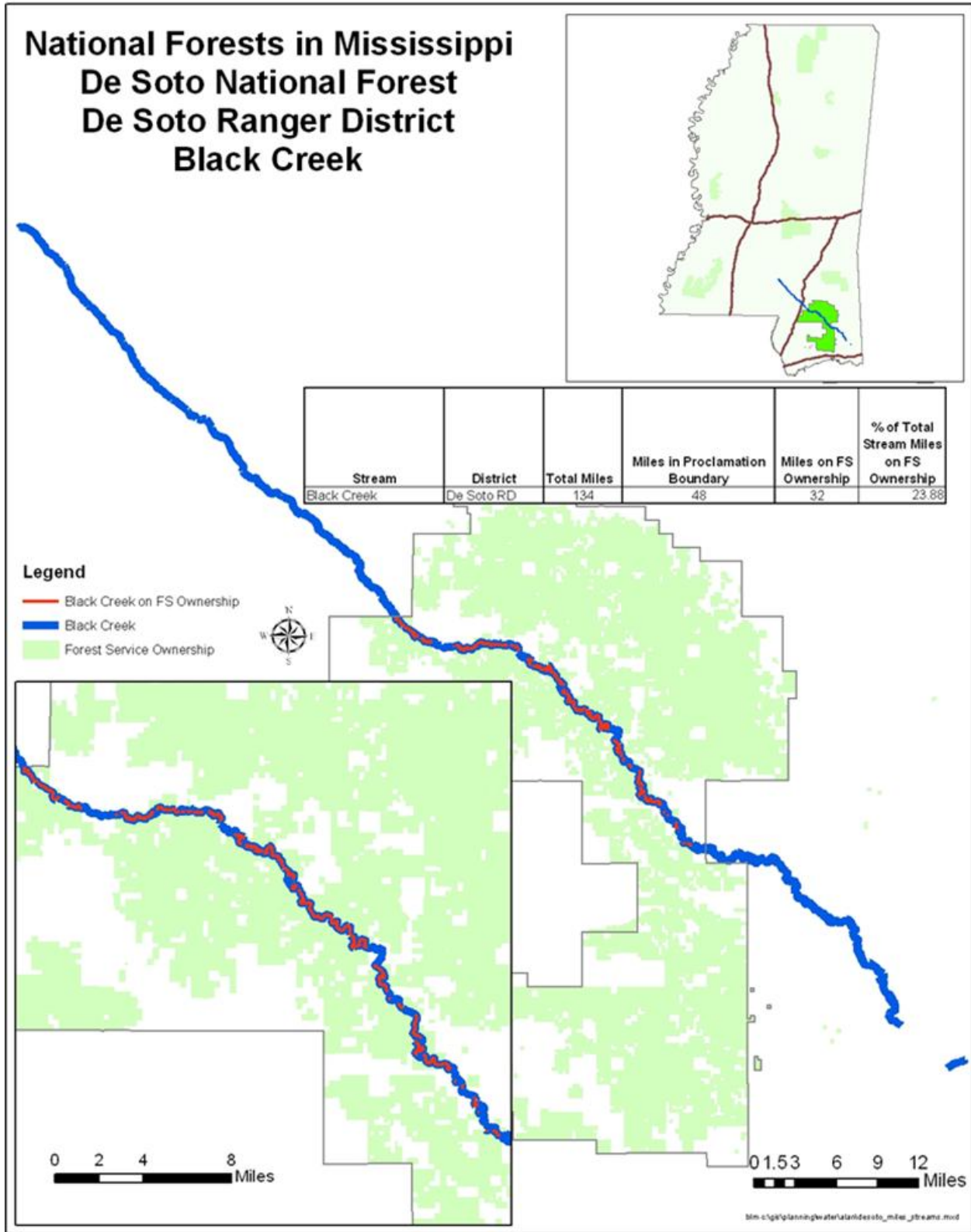


Figure C 20. Map of Black Creek

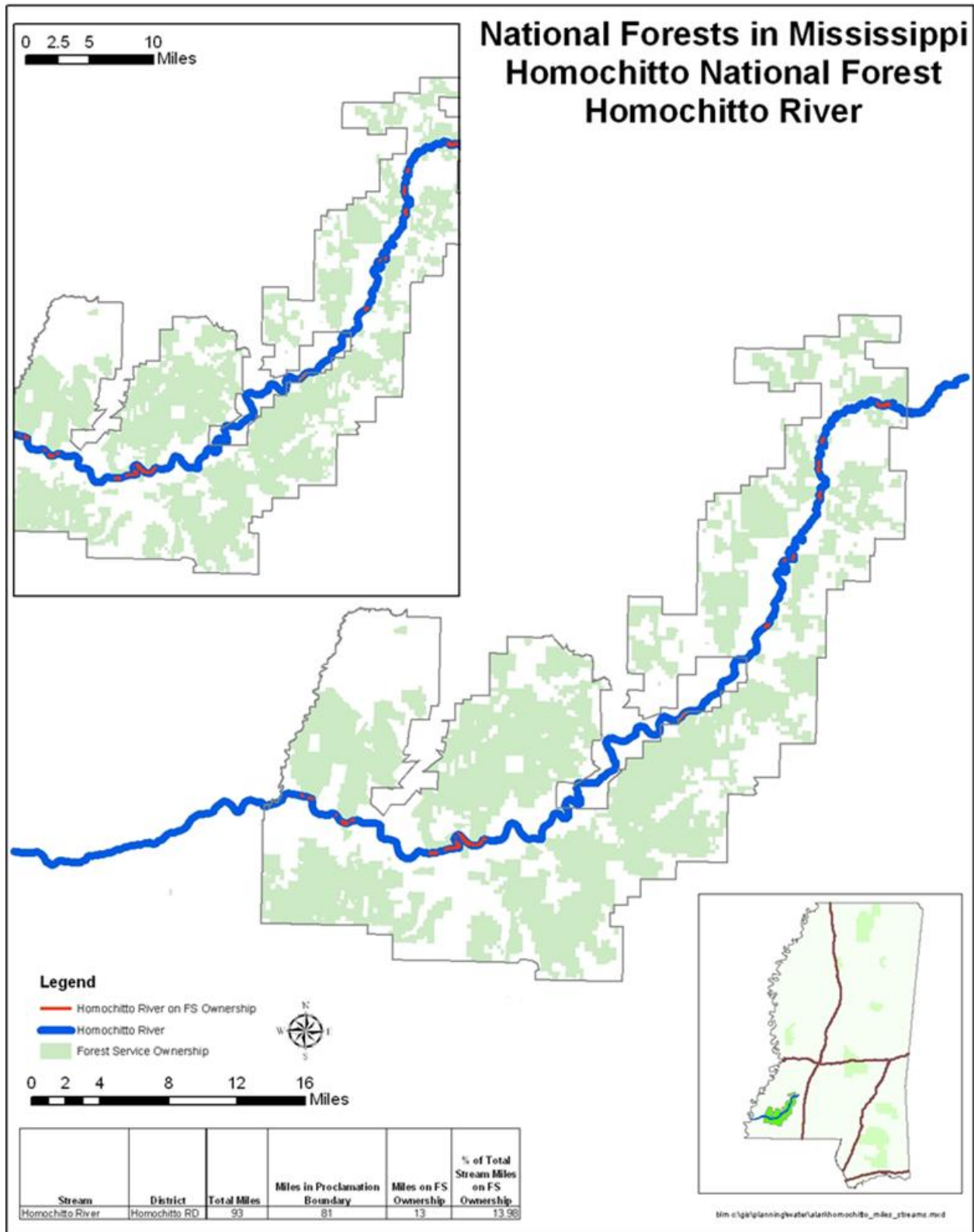


Figure C 21. Map of Homochitto River

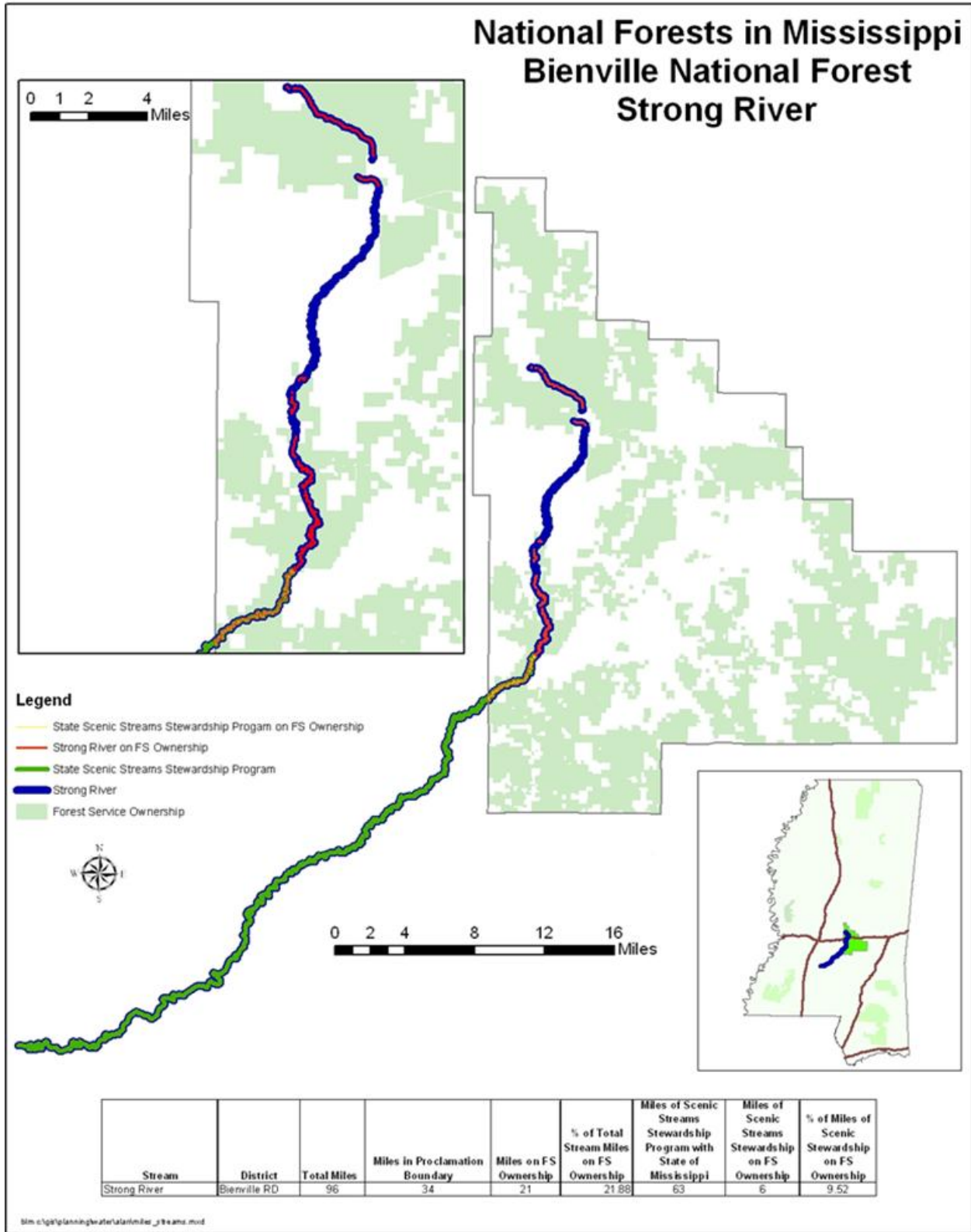


Figure C 22. Map of Strong River

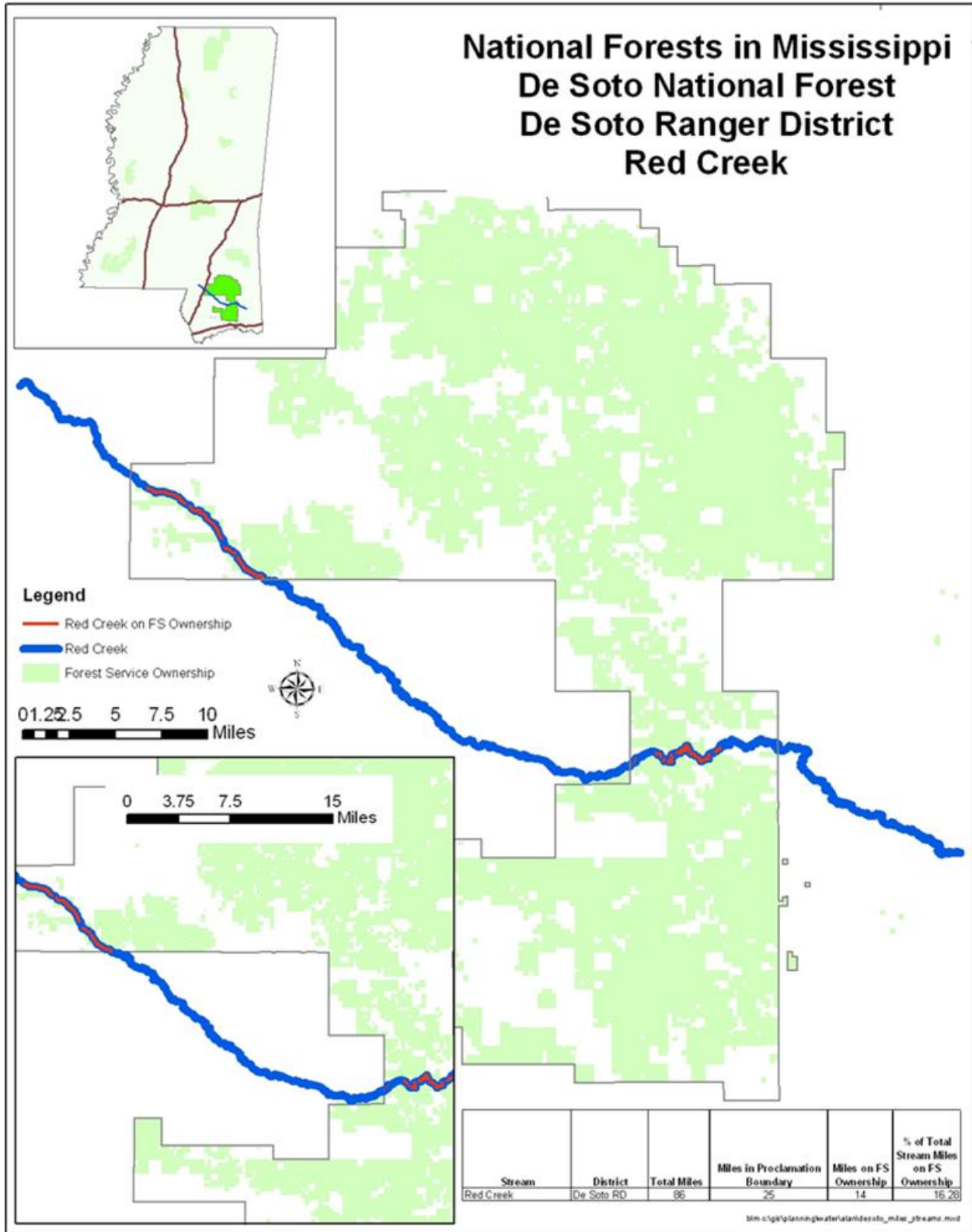


Figure C 23. Map of Red Creek