BANKHEAD NATIONAL FOREST
LIAISON PANEL PUBLIC MEETING SUMMARY
JULY 26, 2007
MOULTON, ALABAMA

Liaison Panel Member Attendees

Ron Eakes, Alabama Wildlife & Freshwater Fisheries
Dave Borland, The Nature Conservancy
Vince Meleski, Wild South
Laverne Matheson, Smith Lake Advocacy, Inc.
Charles Borden, Forest Landowner, Recreation
Jody Buttrum, Recreation
Anthony Hood, Recreation
Gene Gold, Blue Clan, Echota Cherokee
Mike Henshaw, Alabama Extension Service
Bill Snoddy, Treasure Forest Landowner
Randy Feltman, Logger

Additional Attendees

Becky Gold, Resident
Larry Barkley, Resident
Mimi Barkley, Resident
Mark Kolinski, Wild South
Stewart Horn, Wild South
Ted Kuzma, Wild South
Hank Byrnes, Wild South
Kristen Bishop, The Decatur Daily

Forest Service Attendees

Glen Gaines, District Ranger
Stephanie Love, Silviculturist
Allison Cochran, Wildlife Biologist
Tom Counts, Wildlife Biologist
Blake Addison, Timber Management Assistant

Meeting Agenda

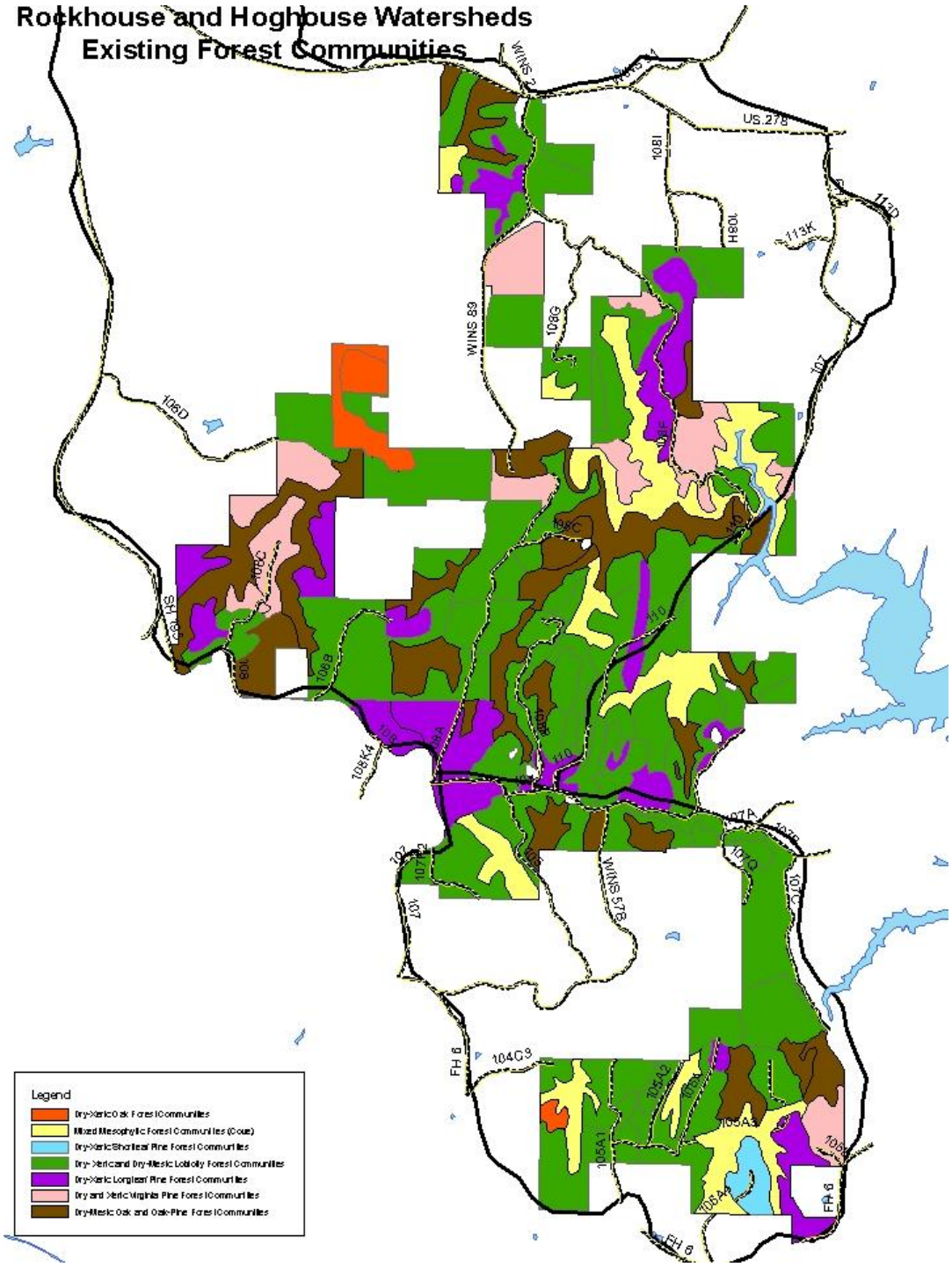
6:00	Welcome	Glen Gaines USFS, Bankhead
6:15	Presentation of Watershed Project Analysis Results	
	▪ Existing Vegetation	Stephanie Love
	▪ Desired Watershed Conditions	USFS, Bankhead
	▪ Proposed Treatments by Alternative	
	▪ Predicted Affects/Changes to Forest Community by Alternative	
	▪ Predicted Affects/Changes to Terrestrial Wildlife Habitats by Alternative	Tom Counts Allison Cochran
	• Canyon Prescription Allocations by Alternative	USFS, Bankhead
7:00	Group Review and Discussion on Analysis and Initial Findings	
7:30	Group Review and Discussion on Treatments to Achieve	

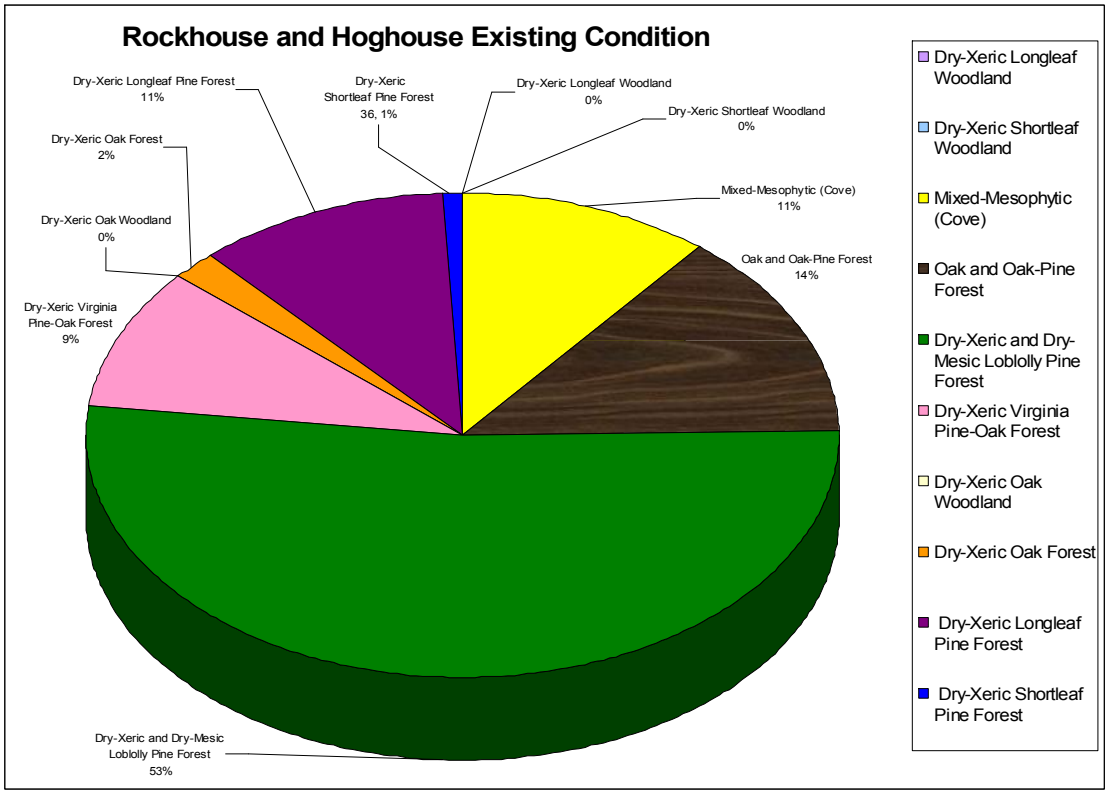
	the Desired Watershed Conditions		
8:00	Finalize Group Recommendations for the Project		
8:15	Timber/Thinning Monitoring Report	- May 22 Field Trip	Vince Meleski WildSouth
8:30	Closeout and Schedule Next Meeting		Glen Gaines

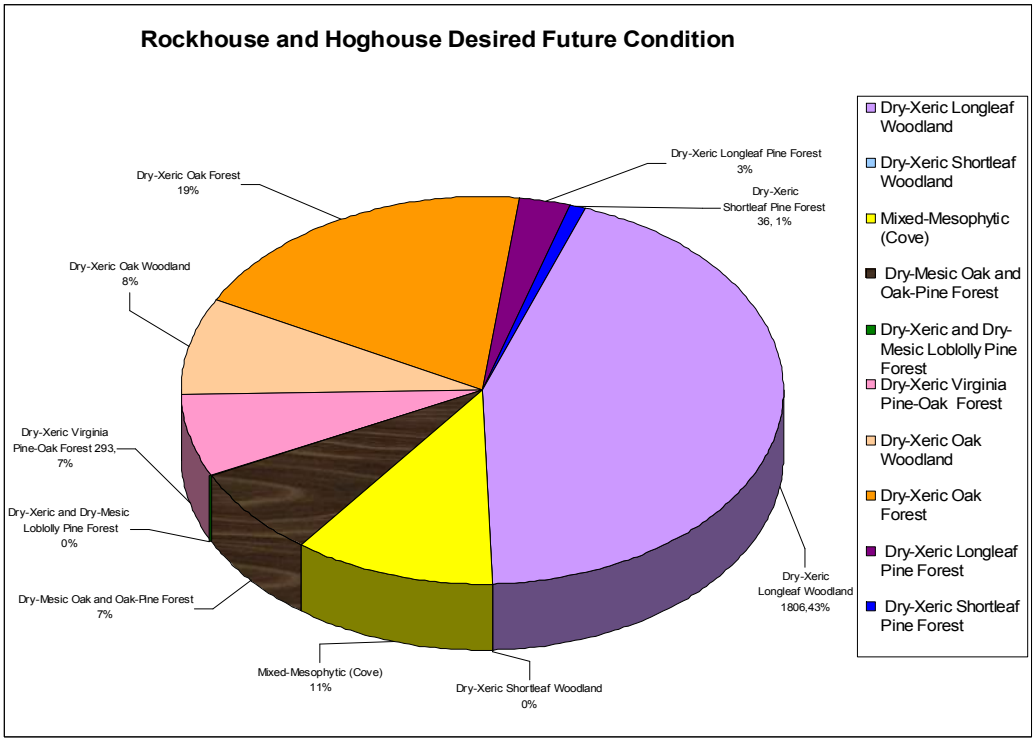
Presentation of Watershed Affects Analysis

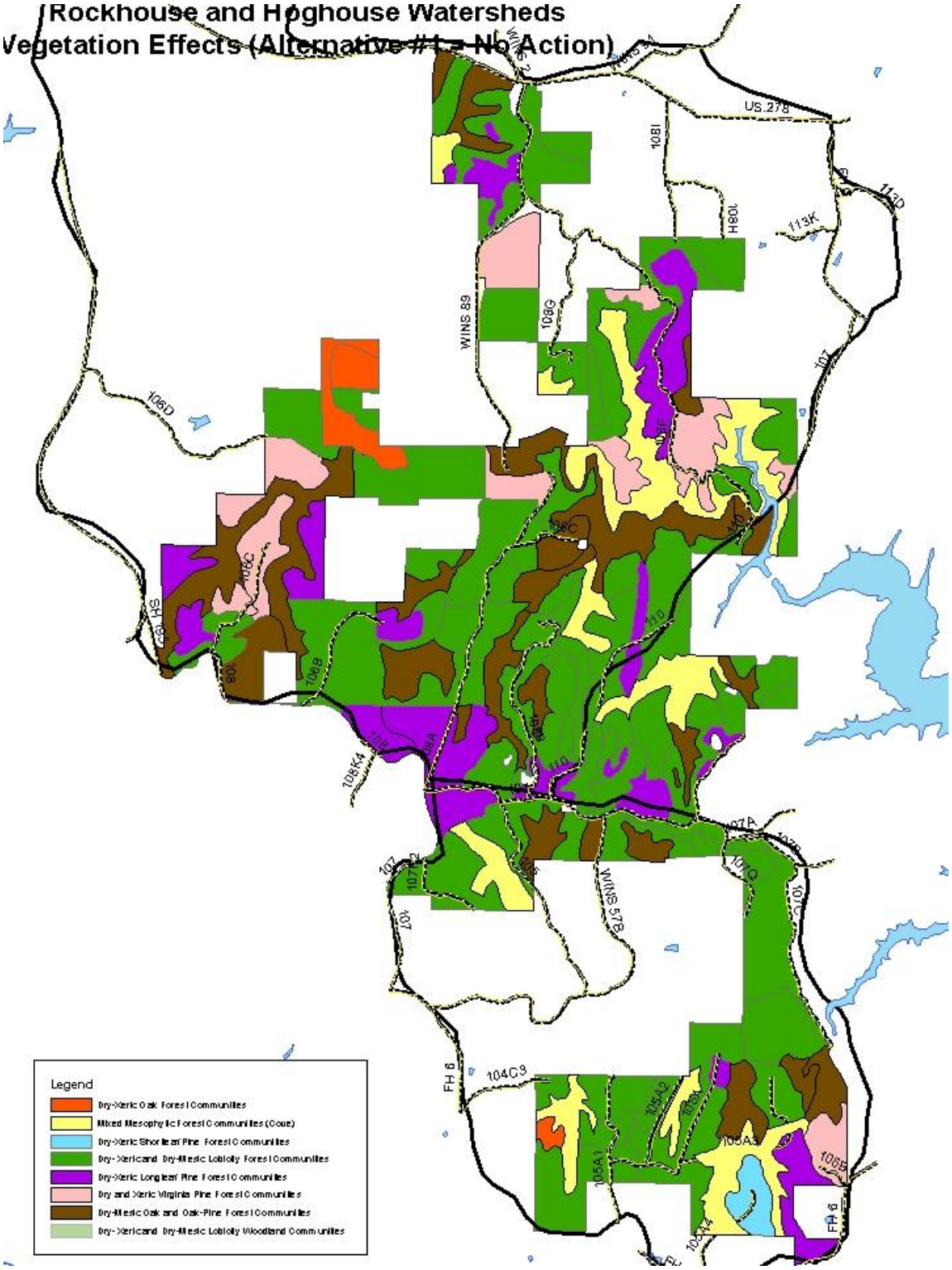
Effects to Forest Vegetation

Stephanie Love presented the findings of the initial effects analysis for forest vegetation for the three alternatives begin analyzed for the Rockhouse/Hoghouse Watershed Project and the Grindstone/Mill and Inman Watershed Project.

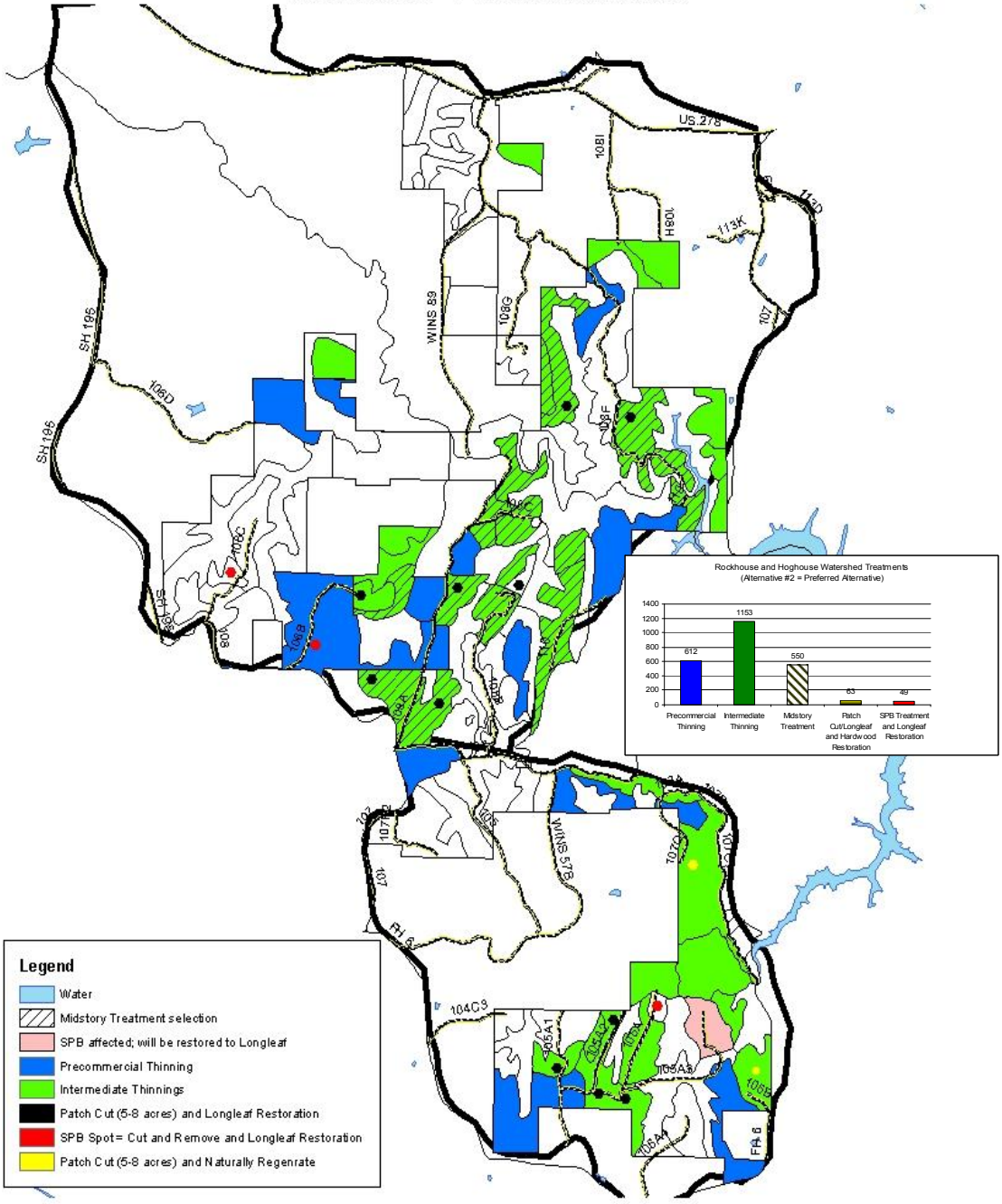

Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds
Existing Forest Communities
US.278
WINS 89
WINS 57B
FH 8
Legend
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Forest Communities (Cove)
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities

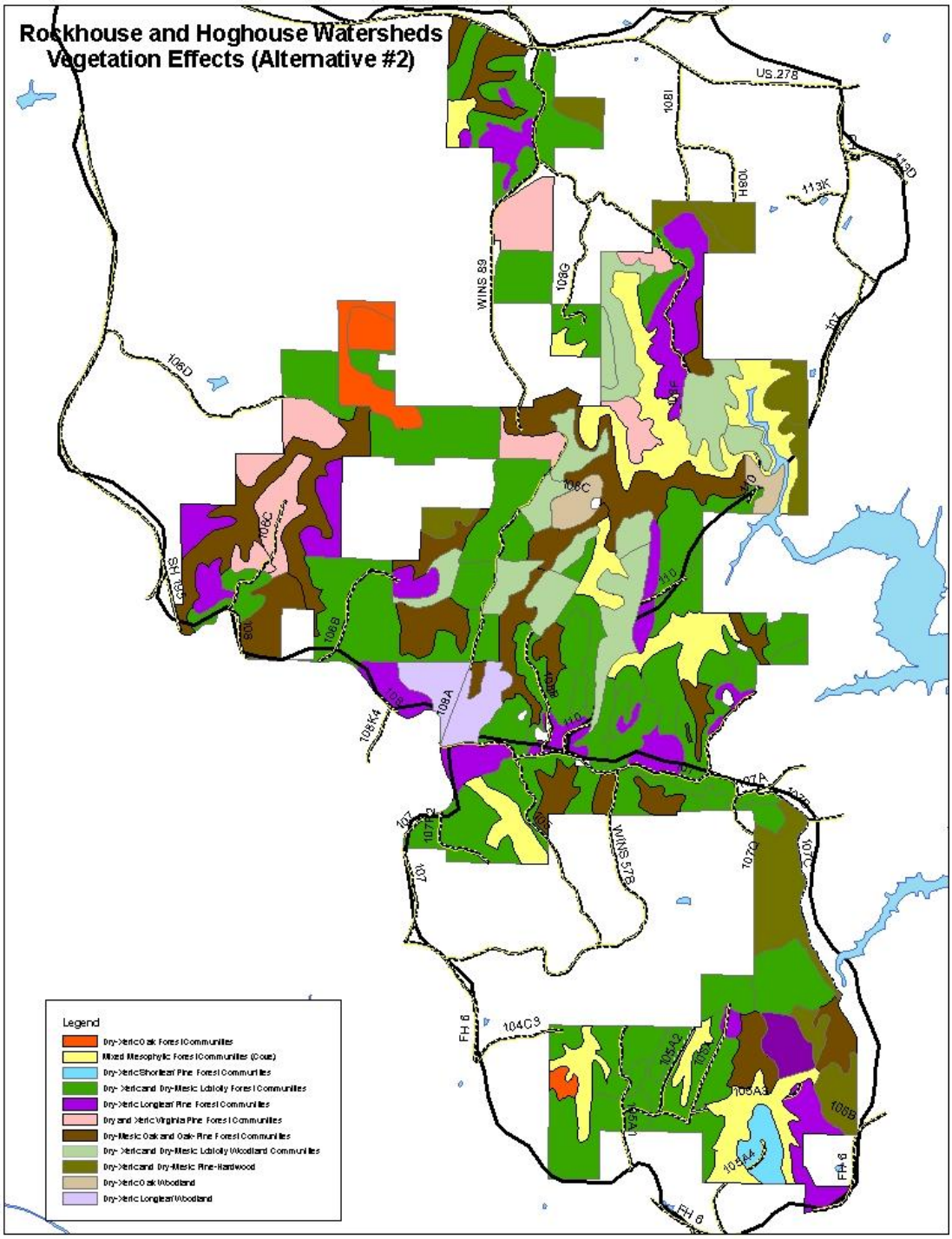

Rockhouse and Hoghouse Existing Condition
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest 11%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest 36, 1%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland 0%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Woodland 0%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest 2%
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove) 11%
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland 0%
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest 14%
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest 9%
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Pine Forest 53%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Woodland
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove)
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest


Rockhouse and Hoghouse Desired Future Condition
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest 3%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest 36, 1%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest 19%
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland 8%
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest 293, 7%
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Pine Forest 0%
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest 7%
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove) 11%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Woodland 0%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland 1806,43%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Woodland
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove)
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest

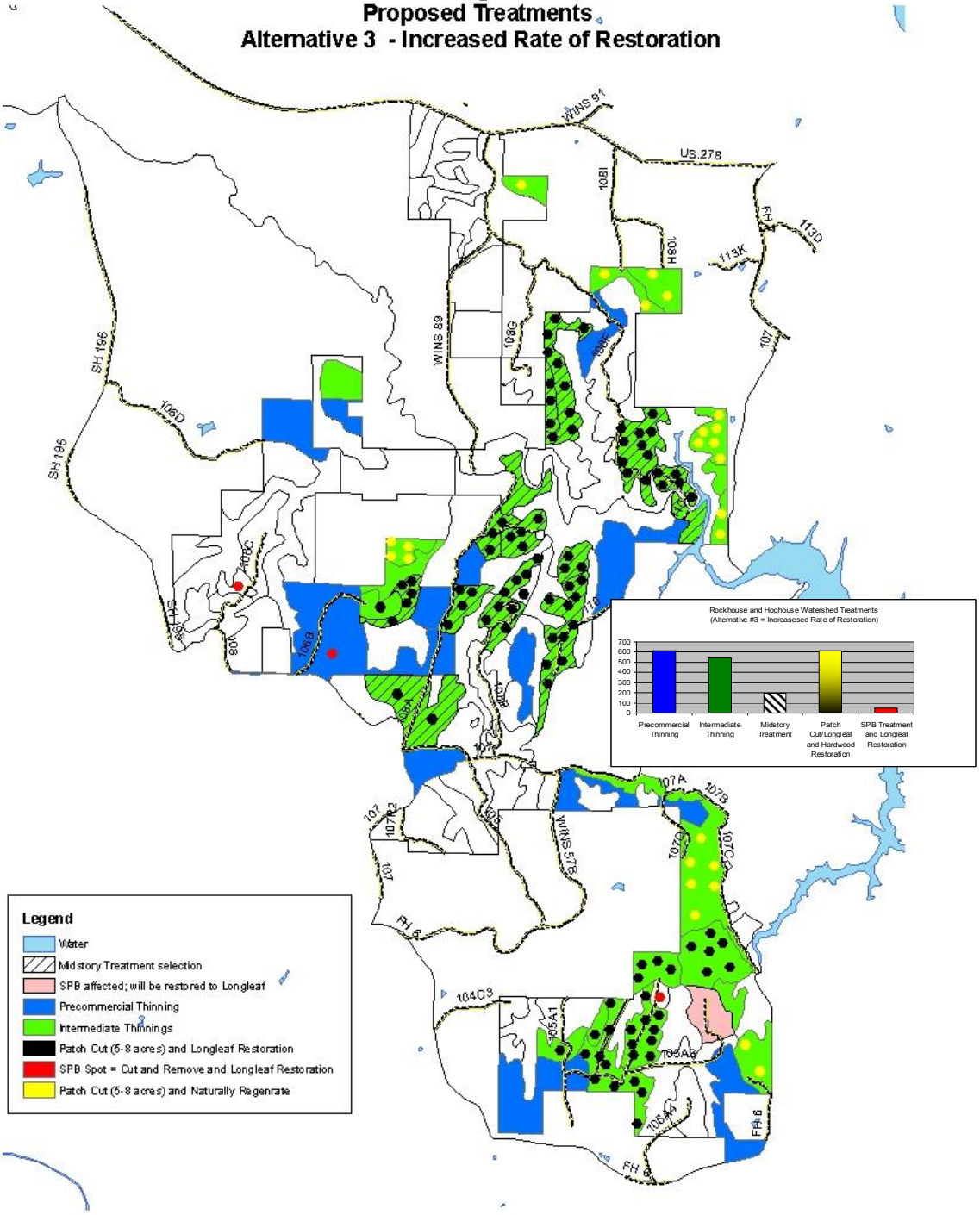

Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds
Vegetation Effects (Alternative #1 = No Action)
US 278
WINS 89
WINS 578
108I
108H
108G
113K
113D
106D
108C
108B
108A
108K4
107A
107Q
107C
107
104C3
105A2
105A3
105A1
108E
FH 6
Legend
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Forest Communities (Cove)
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Woodland Communities

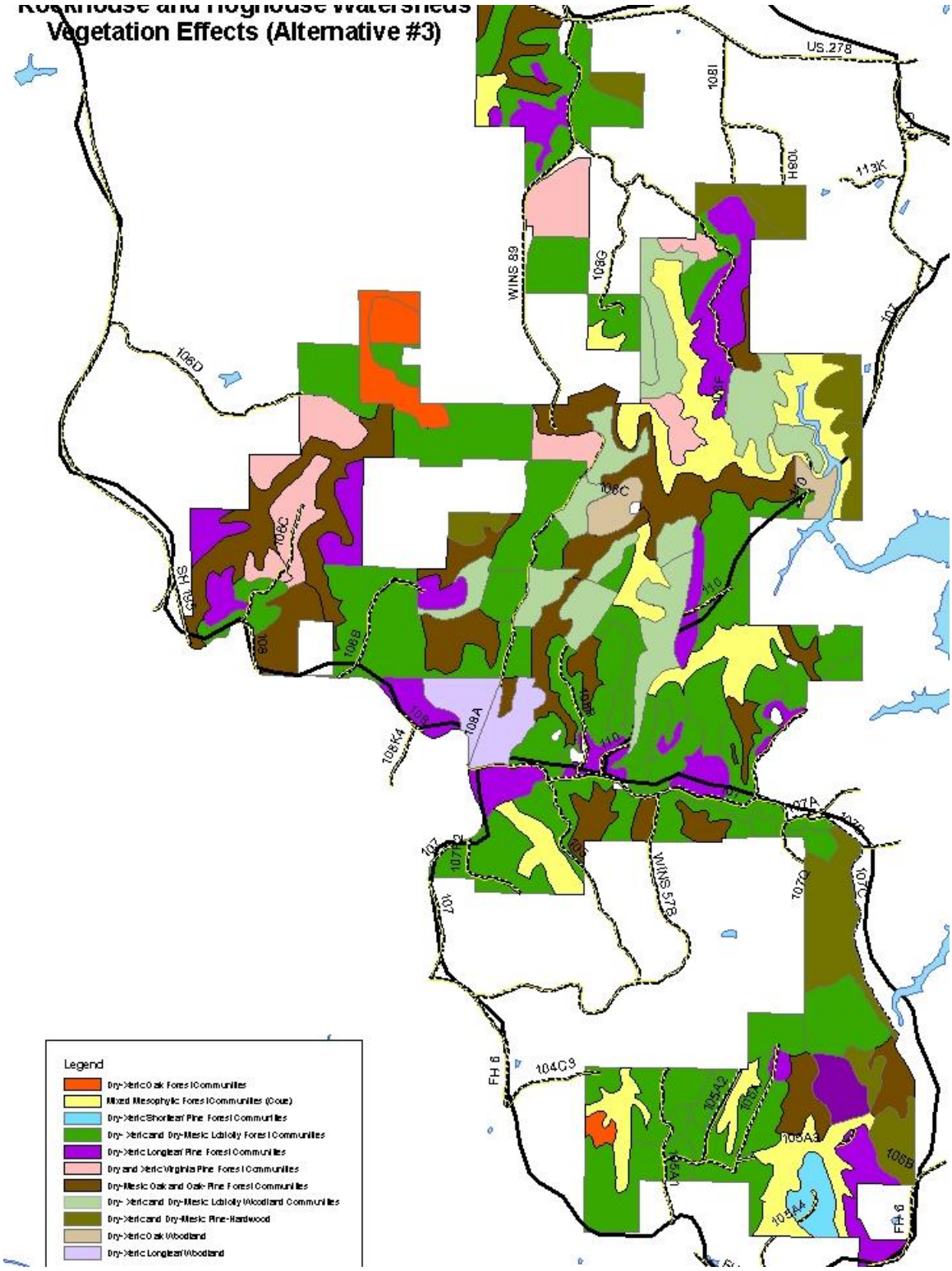
Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds
Proposed Treatments
Alternative 2 - Preferred Alternative



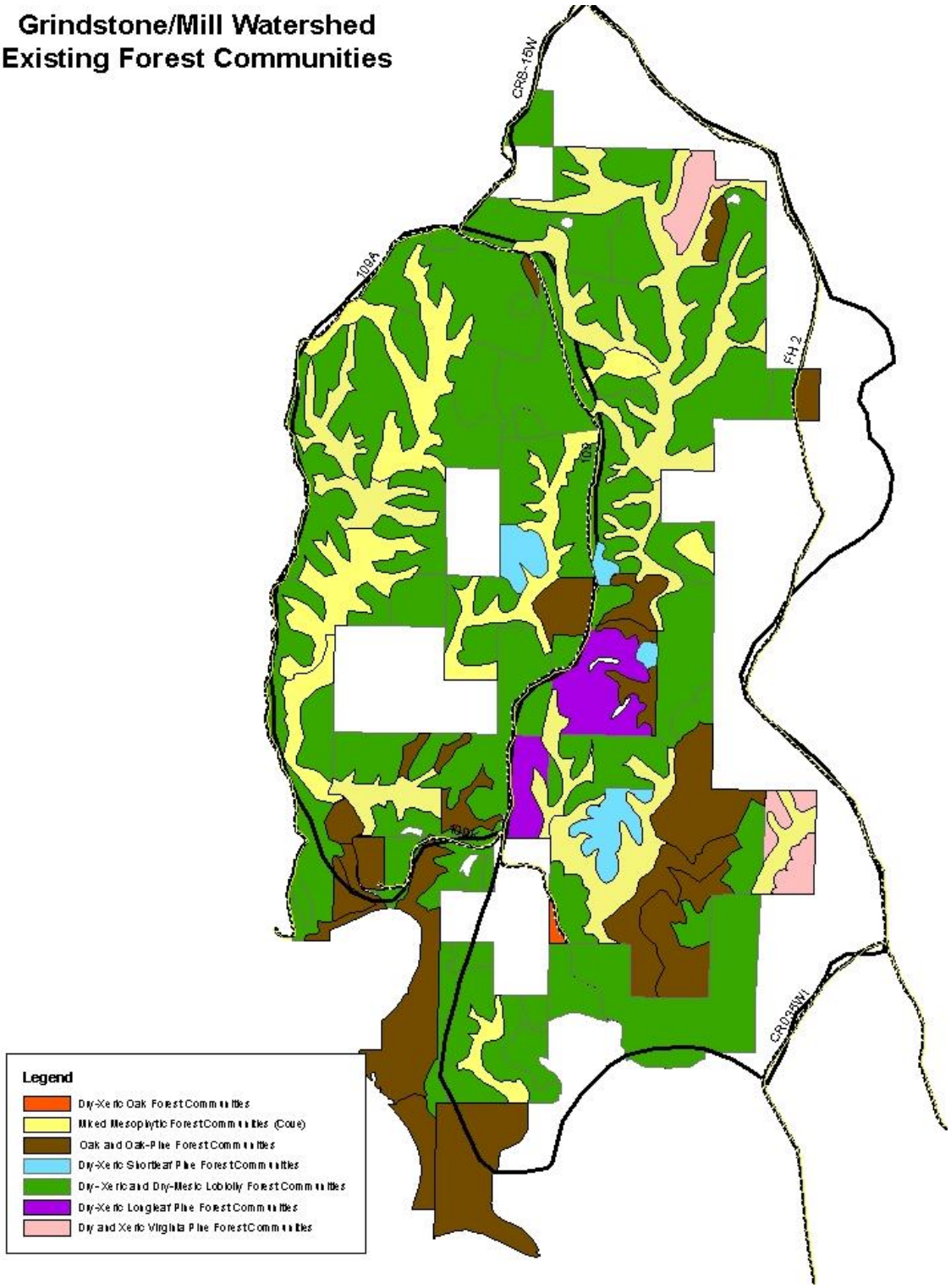

Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds
Vegetation Effects (Alternative #2)
US 278
WINS 89
WINS 578
FH 6
Legend
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Forest Communities (Coue)
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xericand Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xericand Dry-Mesic Loblolly Woodland Communities
Dry-Xericand Dry-Mesic Pine-Hardwood
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland

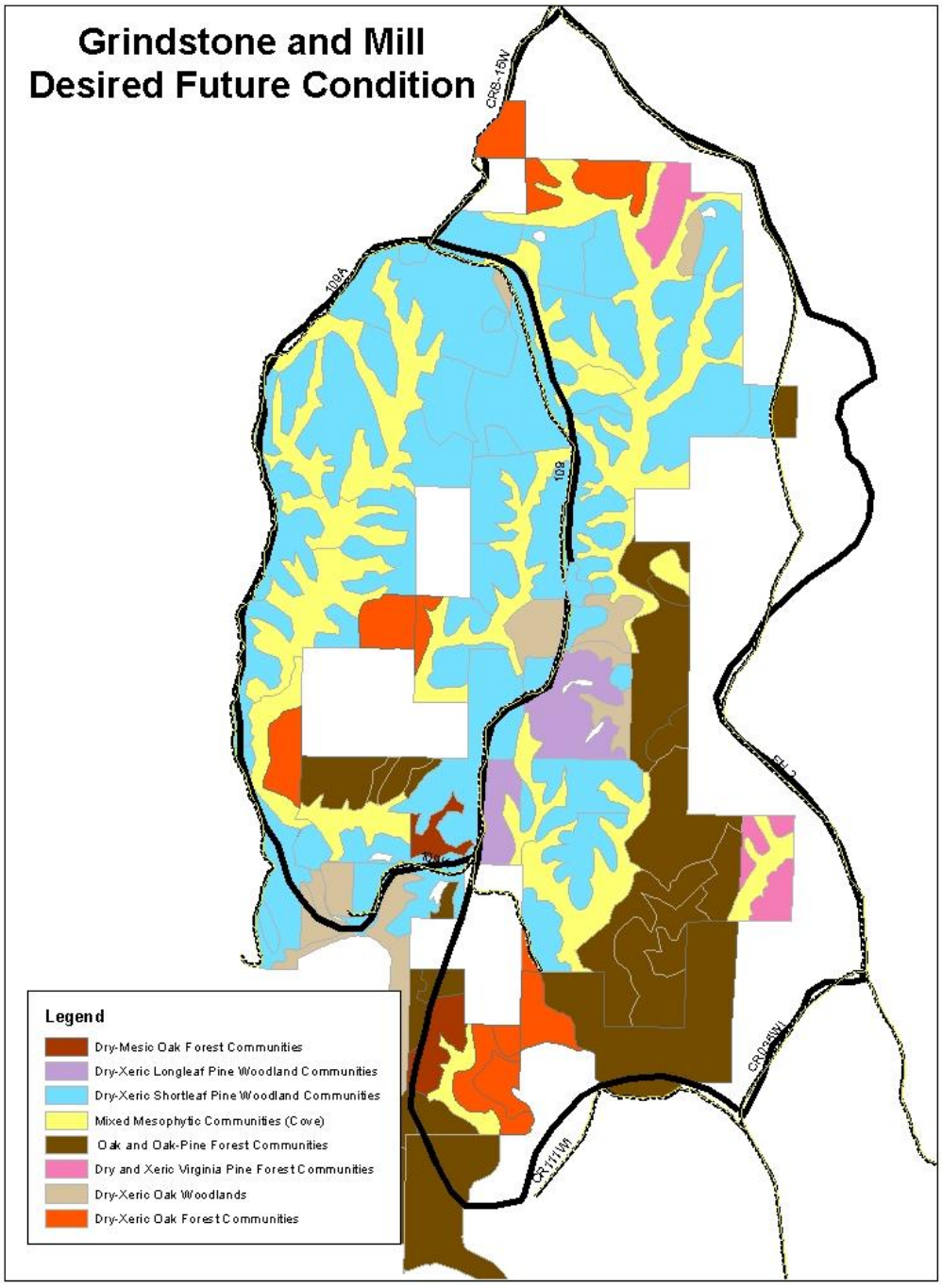
Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds
Proposed Treatments
Alternative 3 - Increased Rate of Restoration

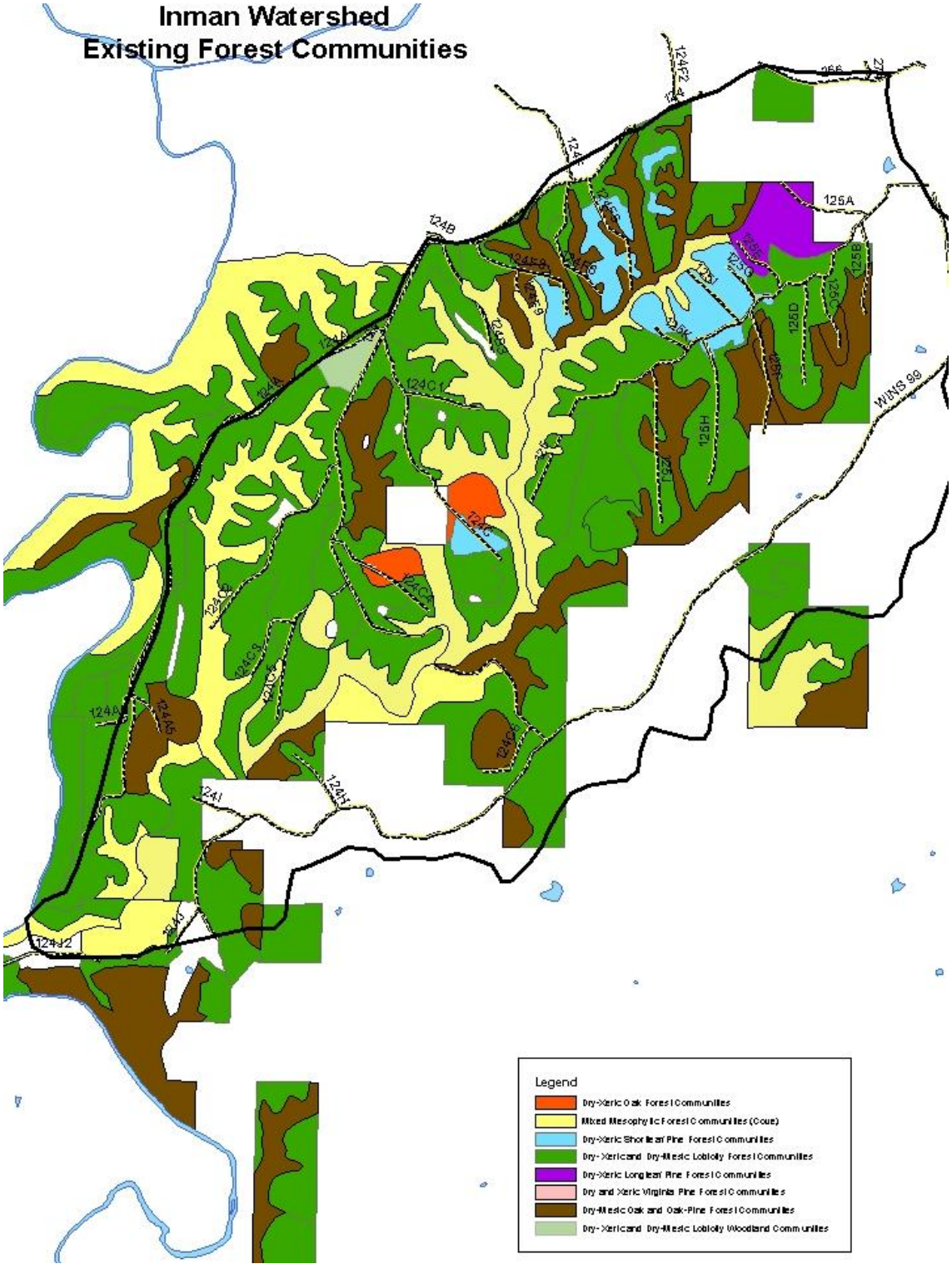



Rockhouse and Hoghouse Watersheds
Vegetation Effects (Alternative #3)
US 278
108I
H80L
113K
WINS 89
108G
107
108D
108C
SH 108
108B
108A
108K4
110
107A
107Q
WINS 57B
107C
FH 6
104G9
105A2
105A1
105A3
106B
105A4
Legend
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Forest Communities (Cove)
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xericand Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xericand Dry-Mesic Loblolly Woodland Communities
Dry-Xericand Dry-Mesic Pine-Hardwood
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland

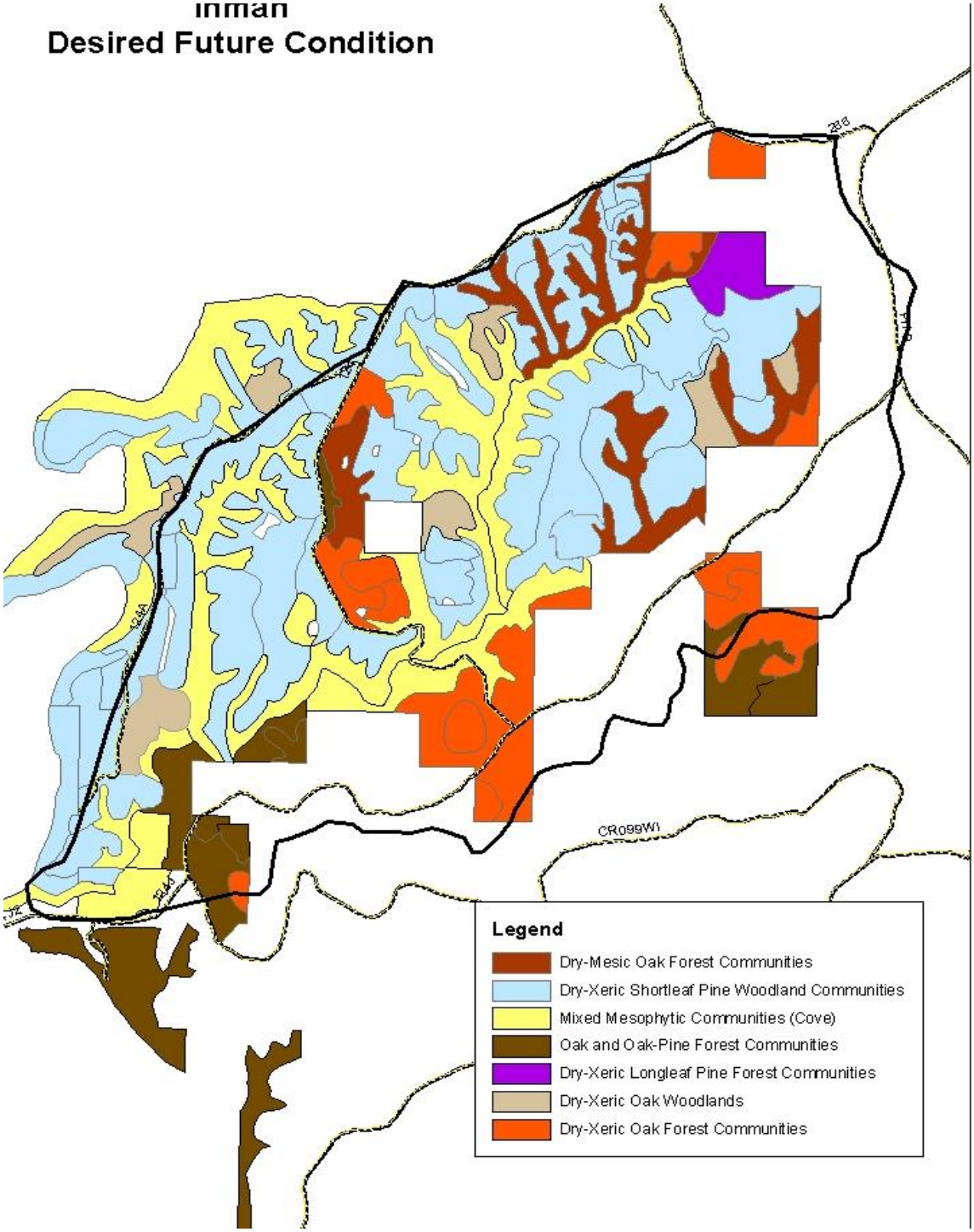
Grindstone/Mill Watershed
Existing Forest Communities

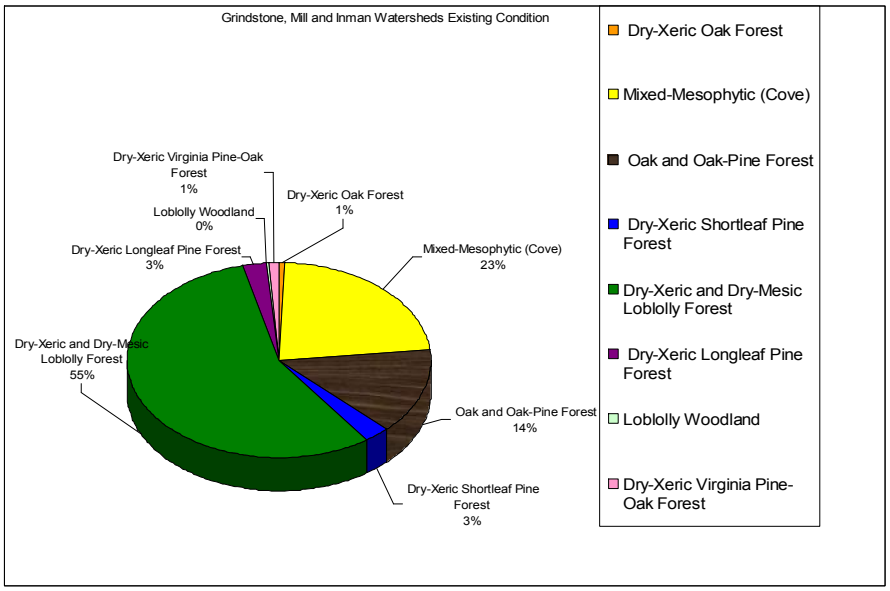


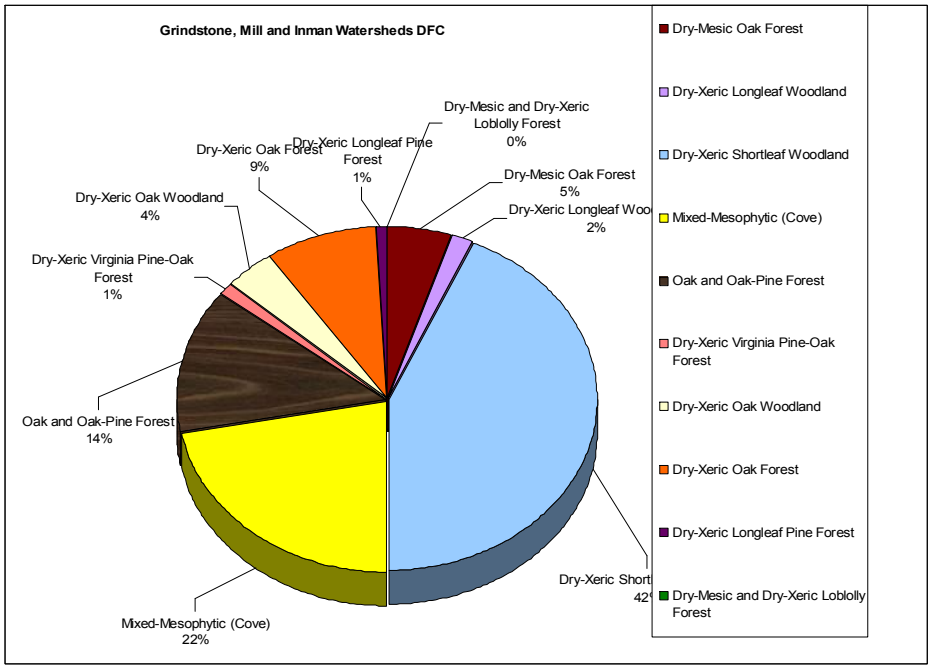

Grindstone and Mill
Desired Future Condition
CR8-15W
108A
109
CR8-15W
CR17-11W
Legend
Dry-Mesic Oak Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Woodland Communities
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Woodland Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Communities (Cove)
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodlands
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities


Inman Watershed
Existing Forest Communities
125A
124B
125B
125C
125D
125H
WINS 99
124C
124H
124J2
Legend
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Forest Communities (Coue)
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Woodland Communities

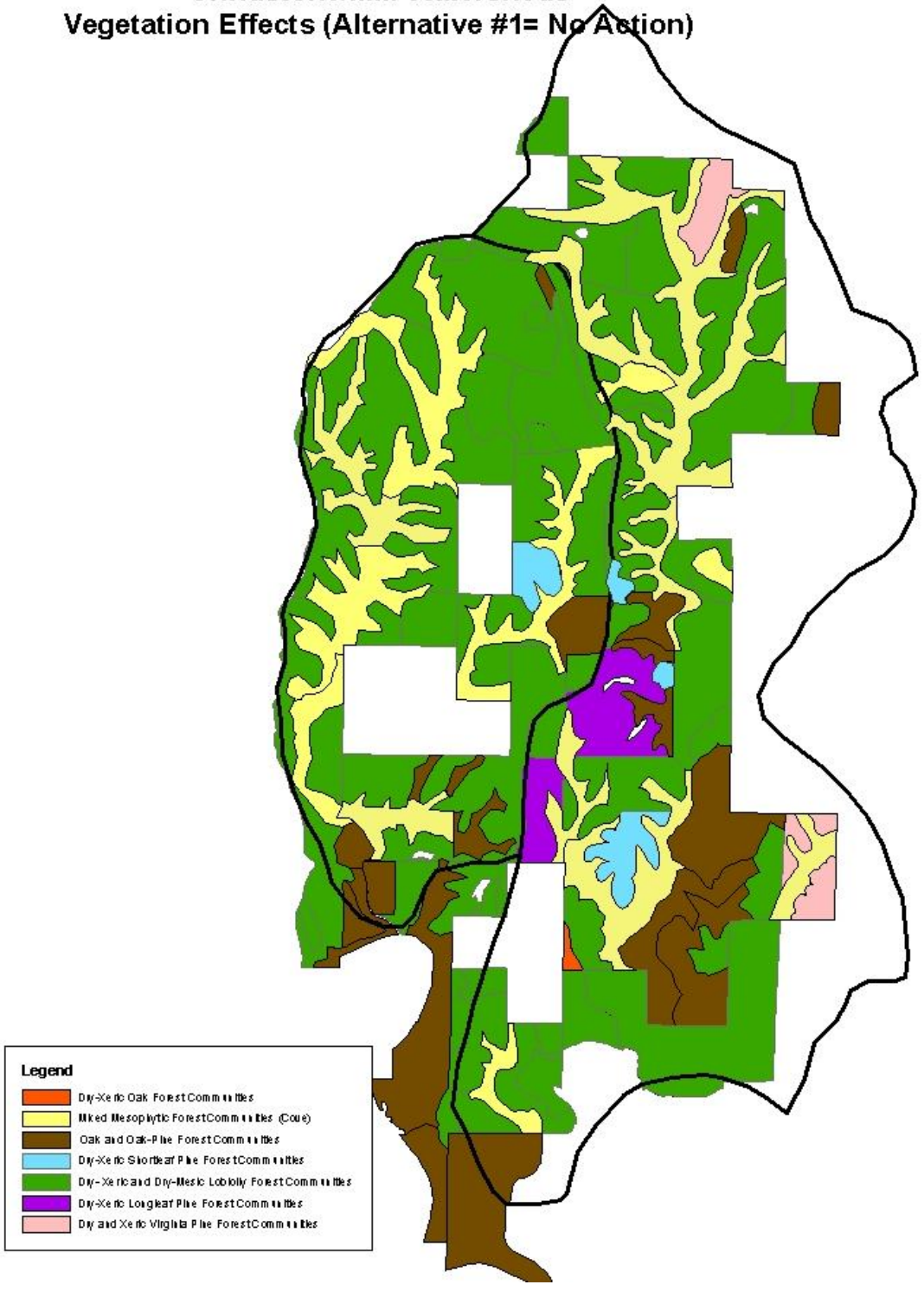
Inman
Desired Future Condition



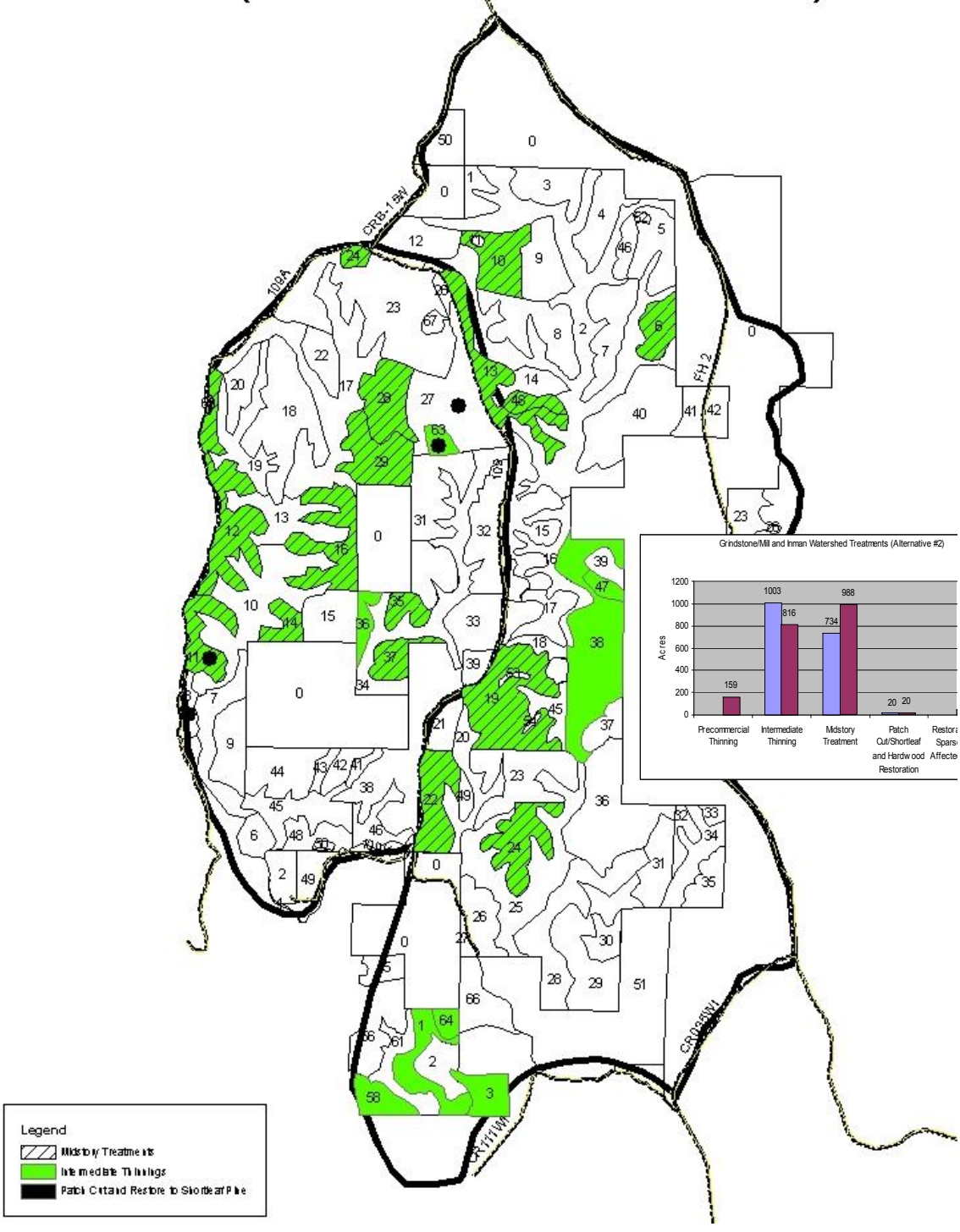

Grindstone, Mill and Inman Watersheds Existing Condition
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest 1%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest 1%
Loblolly Woodland 0%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest 3%
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove) 23%
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest 55%
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest 14%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest 3%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove)
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest
Loblolly Woodland
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest

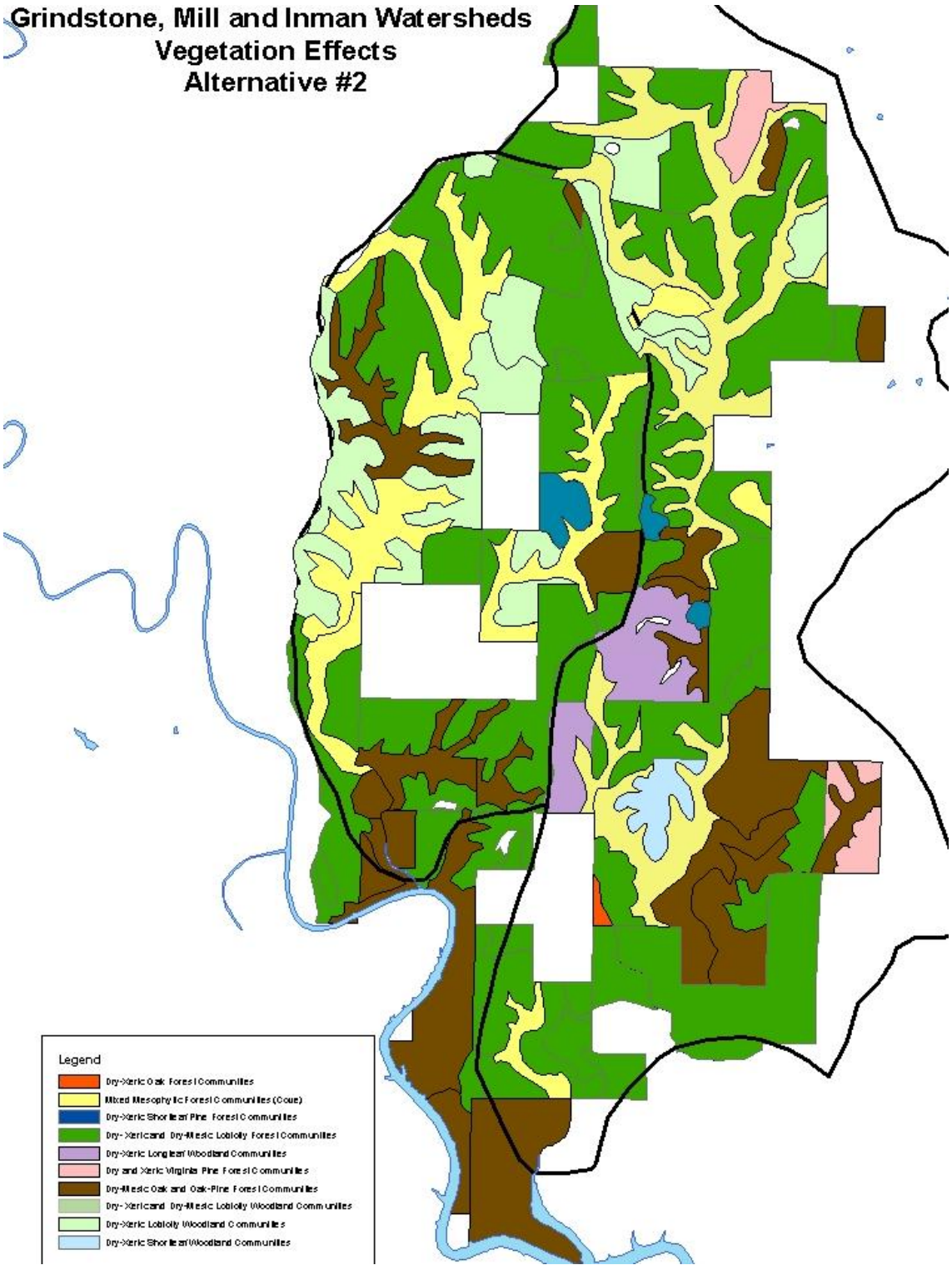

Grindstone, Mill and Inman Watersheds DFC
Dry-Mesic and Dry-Xeric Loblolly Forest 0%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest 9%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest 1%
Dry-Mesic Oak Forest 5%
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland 4%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woo 2%
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest 1%
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest 14%
Dry-Xeric Short 42
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove) 22%
Dry-Mesic Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Woodland
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove)
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Oak Woodland
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest
Dry-Mesic and Dry-Xeric Loblolly Forest

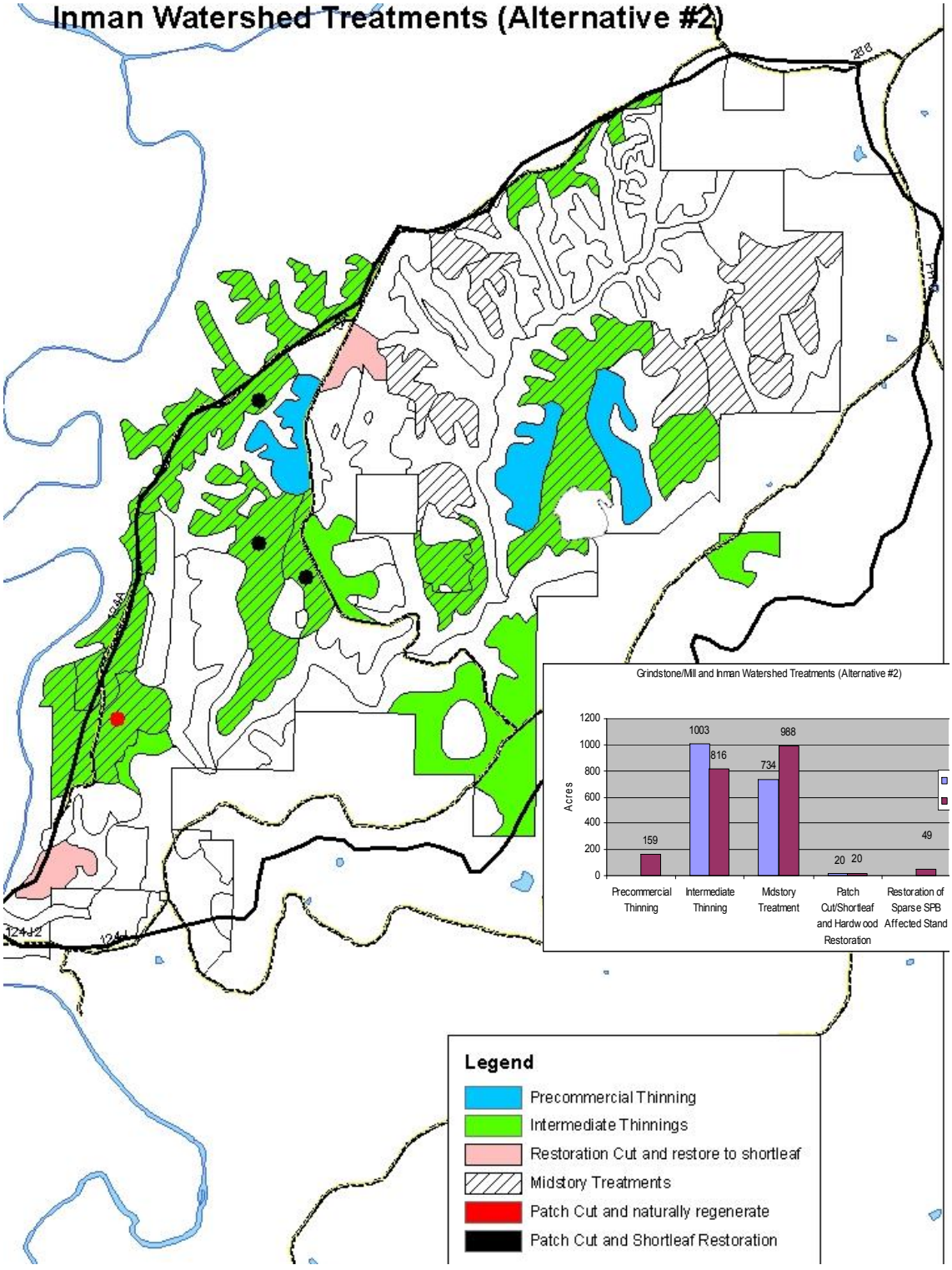
Grindstone/Mill Watersheds
Vegetation Effects (Alternative #1= No Action)

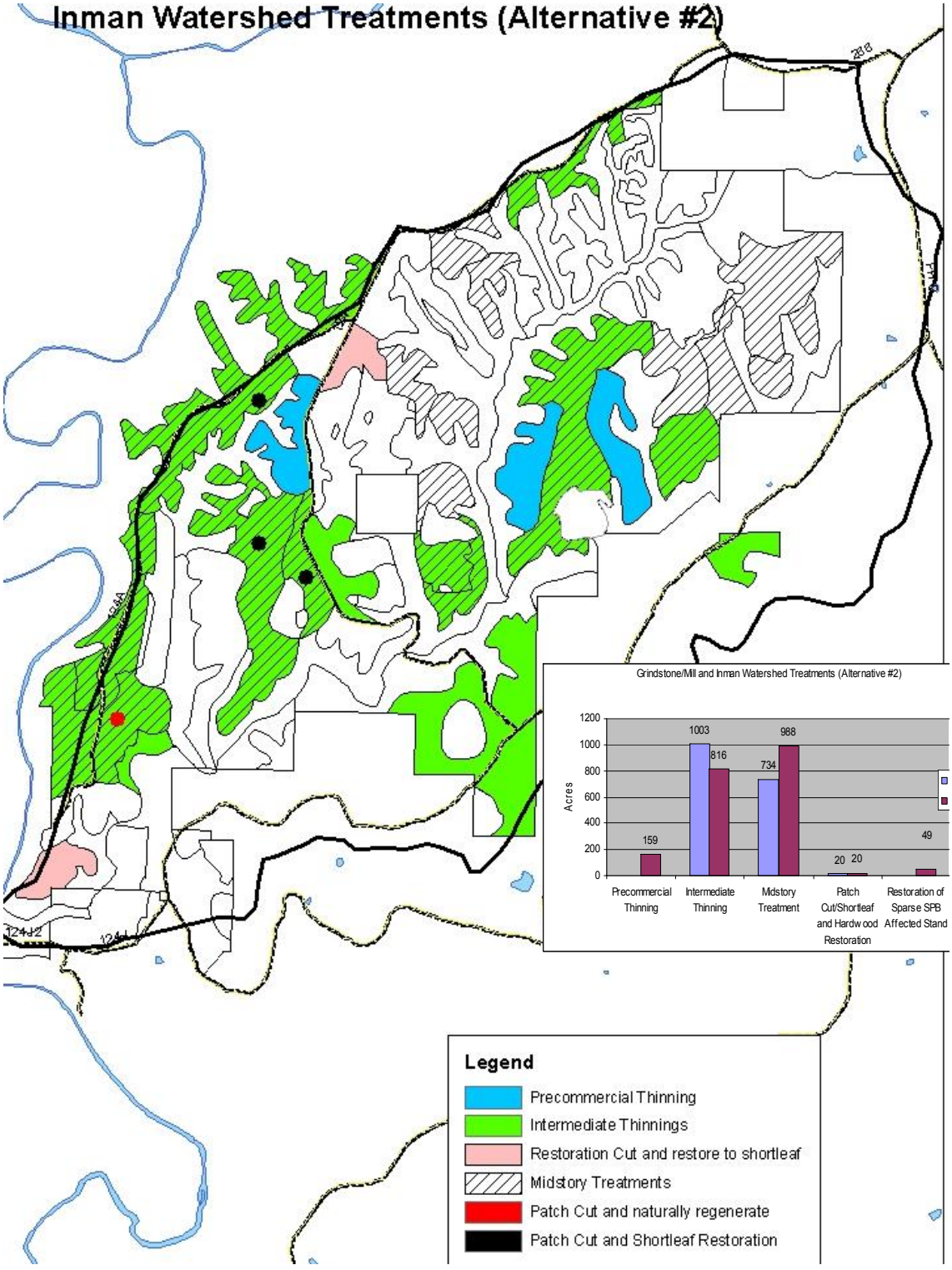


Grindstone and Mill
Treatments (Alternative #2 = Preferred Alternative)

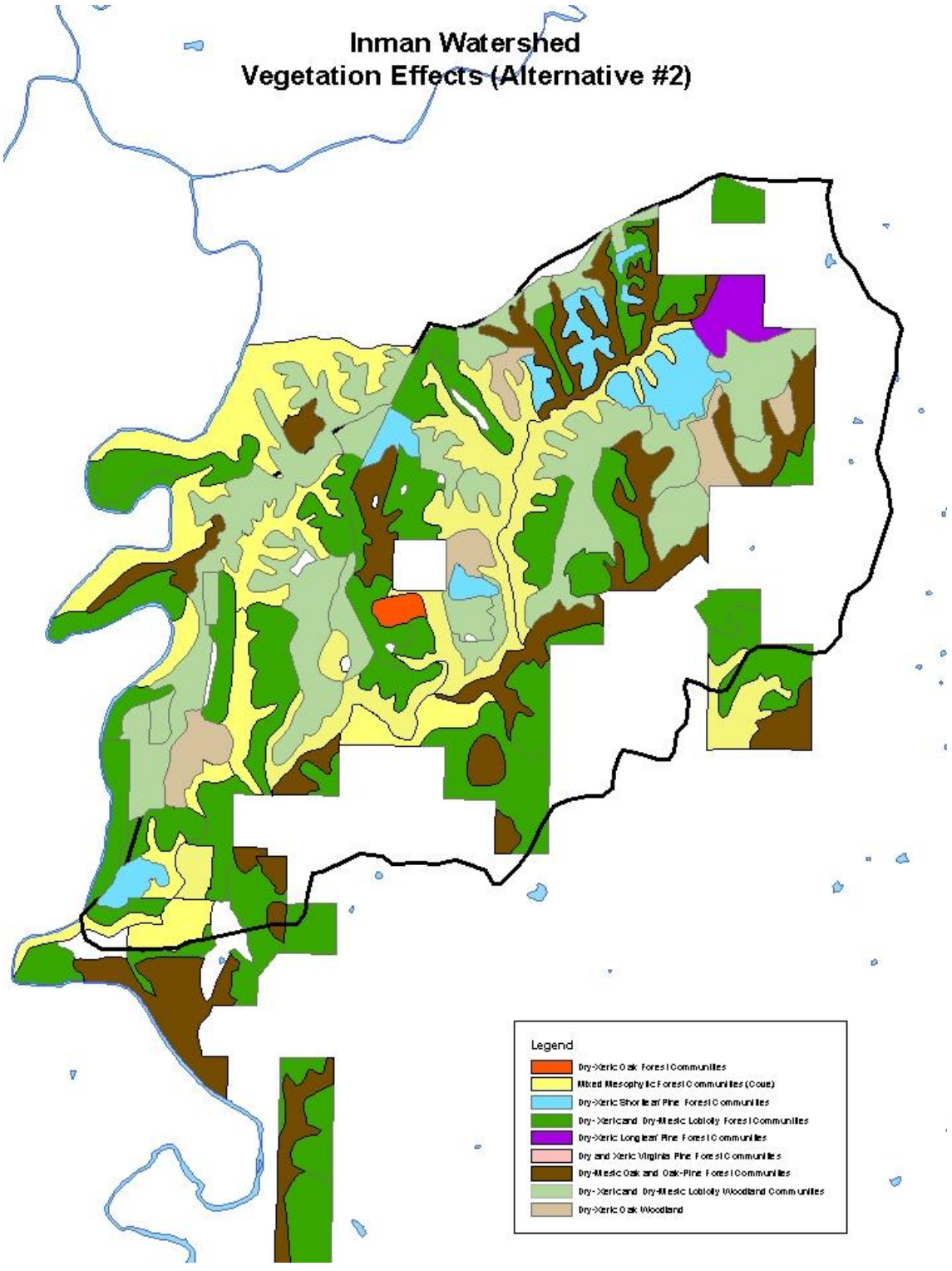



Grindstone, Mill and Inman Watersheds
Vegetation Effects
Alternative #2
Legend
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest Communities
Mixed Mesophytic Forest Communities (Coue)
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest Communities
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland Communities
Dry and Xeric Virginia Pine Forest Communities
Dry-Mesic Oak and Oak-Pine Forest Communities
Dry- Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Woodland Communities
Dry-Xeric Loblolly Woodland Communities
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Woodland Communities

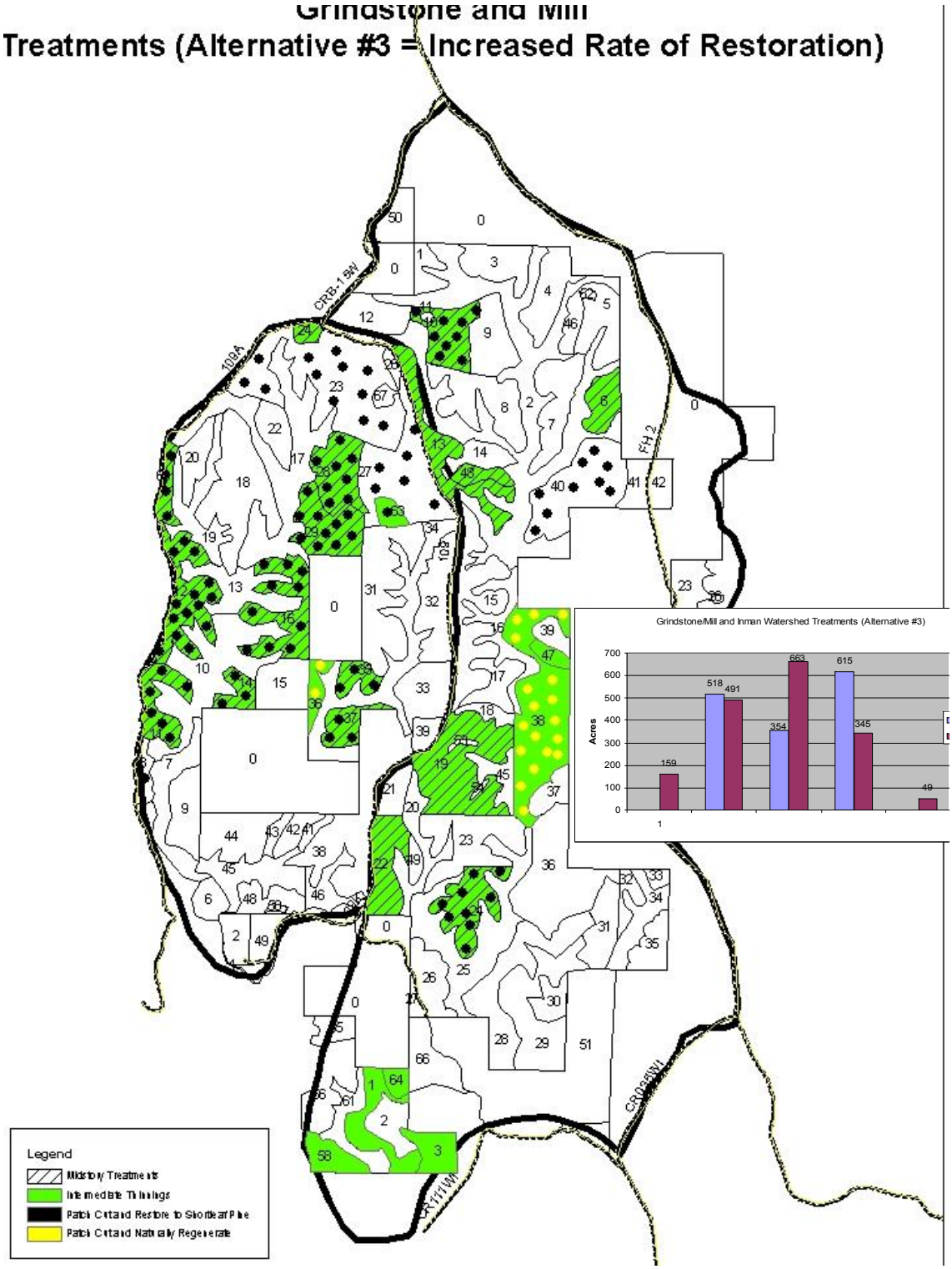

Inman Watershed Treatments (Alternative #2)
Grindstone/Mill and Inman Watershed Treatments (Alternative #2)
Acres
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
159
1003
816
734
988
20
20
49
Precommercial Thinning
Intermediate Thinning
Midstory Treatment
Patch Cut/Shortleaf and Hardwood Restoration
Restoration of Sparse SPB Affected Stand
Legend
Precommercial Thinning
Intermediate Thinnings
Restoration Cut and restore to shortleaf
Midstory Treatments
Patch Cut and naturally regenerate
Patch Cut and Shortleaf Restoration


Inman Watershed Treatments (Alternative #2)
Grindstone/Mill and Inman Watershed Treatments (Alternative #2)
Acres
1200
1000
800
600
400
200
0
159
1003
816
734
988
20
20
49
Precommercial Thinning
Intermediate Thinning
Midstory Treatment
Patch Cut/Shortleaf and Hardwood Restoration
Restoration of Sparse SPB Affected Stand
Legend
Precommercial Thinning
Intermediate Thinnings
Restoration Cut and restore to shortleaf
Midstory Treatments
Patch Cut and naturally regenerate
Patch Cut and Shortleaf Restoration

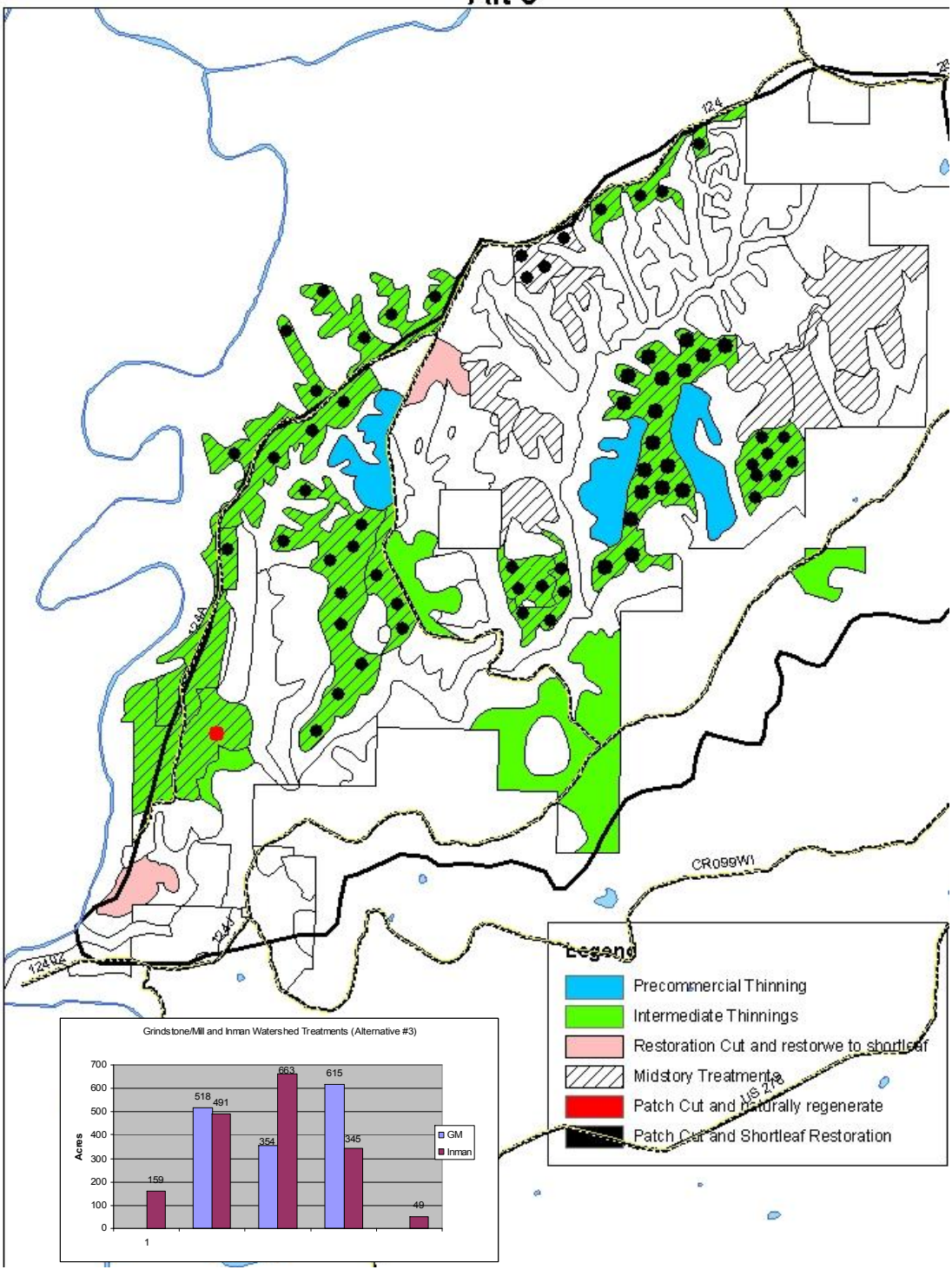
Inman Watershed
Vegetation Effects (Alternative #2)



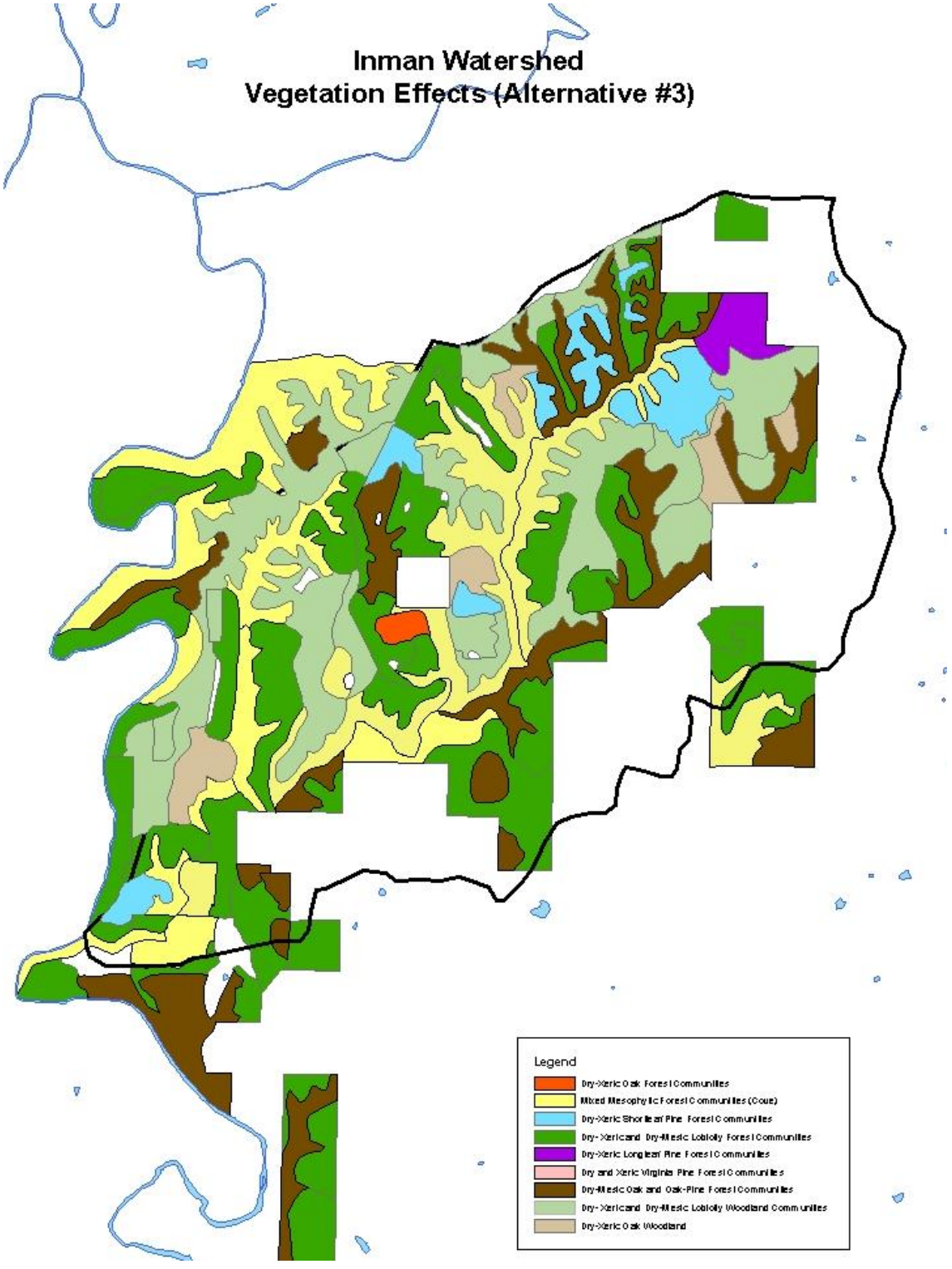
Grindstone and Mill
Treatments (Alternative #3 = Increased Rate of Restoration)

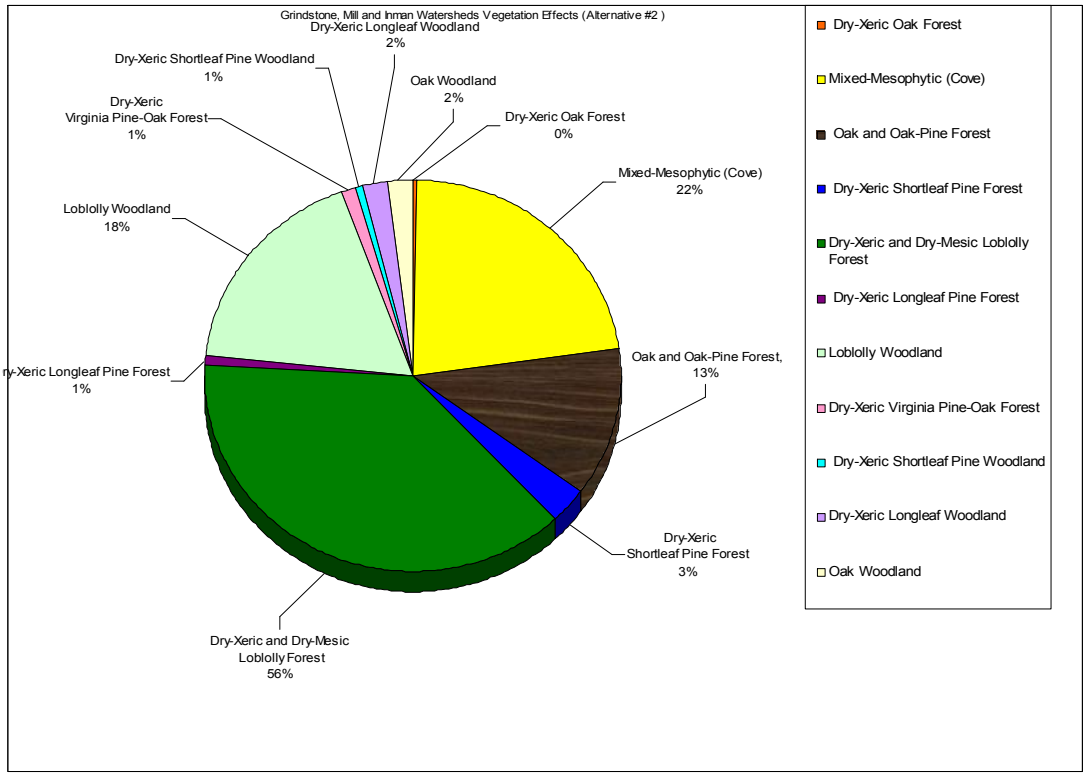


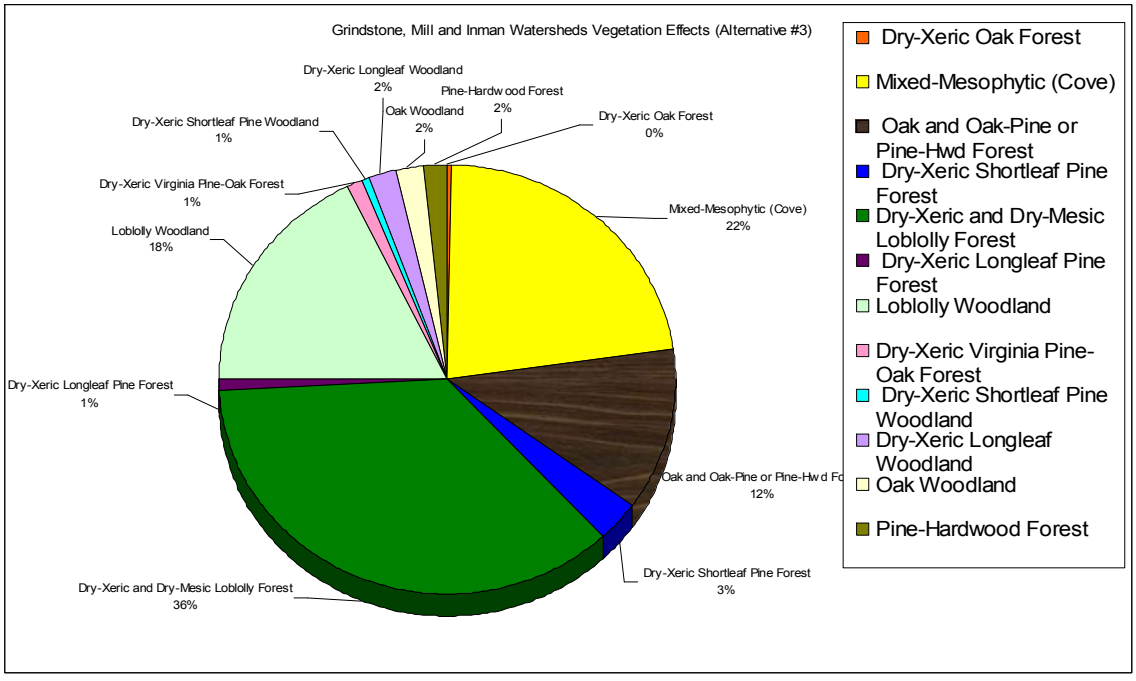
Inman
Alt 3


124
124A
124K
124K2
CR099W1
HIS 21
Legend
Precommercial Thinning
Intermediate Thinnings
Restoration Cut and restorwe to shortleaf
Midstory Treatments
Patch Cut and naturally regenerate
Patch Cut and Shortleaf Restoration
Grindstone/Mill and Inman Watershed Treatments (Alternative #3)
Acres
700
600
500
400
300
200
100
0
159
518
491
354
663
615
345
49
1
GM
Inman

Inman Watershed
Vegetation Effects (Alternative #3)




Grindstone, Mill and Inman Watersheds Vegetation Effects (Alternative #2)
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland 2%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Woodland 1%
Oak Woodland 2%
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest 1%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest 0%
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove) 22%
Loblolly Woodland 18%
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest, 13%
ry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest 1%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest 3%
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest 56%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove)
Oak and Oak-Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest
Loblolly Woodland
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Woodland
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland
Oak Woodland


Grindstone, Mill and Inman Watersheds Vegetation Effects (Alternative #3)
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland 2%
Pine-Hardwood Forest 2%
Oak Woodland 2%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Woodland 1%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest 0%
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest 1%
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove) 22%
Loblolly Woodland 18%
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest 1%
Oak and Oak-Pine or Pine-Hwd Fo 12%
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest 3%
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest 36%
Dry-Xeric Oak Forest
Mixed-Mesophytic (Cove)
Oak and Oak-Pine or Pine-Hwd Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Forest
Dry-Xeric and Dry-Mesic Loblolly Forest
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Pine Forest
Loblolly Woodland
Dry-Xeric Virginia Pine-Oak Forest
Dry-Xeric Shortleaf Pine Woodland
Dry-Xeric Longleaf Woodland
Oak Woodland
Pine-Hardwood Forest

Effects to Wildlife Habitats

Tom Counts and Allison Cochran provided a discussion on initial analysis for wildlife, fish, and rare plants. They discussed findings from the Grindstone/Mill Watershed Project. Work is still in progress on the Inman and Rockhouse/Hoghouse Watersheds.

Bankhead National Forest
Watershed Prescriptions
Rockhouse, Hoghouse, Inman, Grindstone and Mill

Potential Project Effects
on
Native Wildlife and Plants

By Bankhead Wildlife Staff
Tom Counts
Allison Cochran

Introduction

- Watershed Management Concept
- Species of Concern - T/E species
- Compare Treatments / Practices
  - Effects of the Project on MIS Wildlife

Perspective/Scale of Project
181,734 Acres
within Bankhead National Forest

- Total acres included w/in these watersheds 12,486 acres of Forest Service lands
  - Rockhouse 2830 acres
  - Hoghouse 1271 acres
  - Inman 3530 acres
  - Mill 2822 acres
  - Grindstone 2033 acres

Operational Requirements

- National Forest Management Act
  - *Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, 2004 (RX 9C3 Southern Cumberland Plateau Native Ecosystem Restoration and Maintenance)*
- Endangered Species Act of 1973
  - *Consultation Process w/ FWS*

Protected Species

- Endangered, Threatened, & FS Sensitive Species
- Protection Mechanisms & Mitigation Measures (Forest Plan and ESA)

Federally Listed Species
The Full List of Potential Species

- Gray Bat
- Indiana bat
- Bald Eagle
- Red-cockaded woodpecker
- Flattened musk turtle
- Cumberlandian combshell
- Upland combshell
- Turgid blossom pearly mussel
- Fine-lined pocketbook
- Orange-nacre mucket
- Alabama moccasinshell
- Coosa moccasinshell
- Dark pigtoe
- Ovate clubshell
- Rough pigtoe
- Triangular kidneyshell
- Pink mucket pearlymussel
- Leafy prairie clover
- Lyrate bladder-pod
- Mohr's Barbara's
- Kral's water-plantain
- Alabama streak-sorus fern
- Tennessee yellow-eyed grass

T&E Potentially Impacted
(found in the vicinity of the project)

- Flattened Musk Turtle
- Mussels (Critical Habitat)
- Bats
- Bald Eagle
- Selected Plants

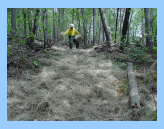
Potential Effects to Wildlife & Rare Plants

- Aquatic Resources (Fish/Herps/Mussels)
  Sensitive to ground disturbing activities - heavy equipment (thinning, patch cutting, SPB cut & remove, drum chopping, road construction). Potential for soil erosion
- Terrestrial Resources (Plants)
  Sensitive to direct impacts such as running over with equipment & habitat changes

Treatments that will be needed to achieve the Desired Future Conditions/Community Types

- **Pre-commercial Thinning**
- **Intermediate Thinning**
- **Midstory Removal – Manual**
- **Midstory Removal - Herbicide**
- **Patch Cutting**
- **Site Preparation Manual /Herbicide**
- **Artificial and Natural Regeneration**
- **Release – Manual**
- **Release - Herbicide**
- **SPB Cut & Remove**
- **Wildlife Opening Practices**
- **Road Reconstruction**
- **Strip Disking**

Protection Mechanisms & Mitigation Measures



- Biological Surveys & Evaluation
  - FWS Review & Concurrence
- Riparian Guidelines and SMZ's
- Erosion Control Practices
- Exclusion of Rare Communities
  - Caves
  - Bluffs, glades and rock outcrops
  - Wetlands
- Contract Compliance - Inspectors/Timber Sale Administrators

Effects of Project upon T/E species

- Avoidance – example: excluding a glade from drum chopping
- Minimization – ex. Drum chop area w/ less slope
- Mitigation – ex. Seeding an access road

FWS Concurrence w/ Project regarding effects to T/E species

Questions or Discussion

T / E Species

Analysis of Effects of 3 Alternatives

Existing / Alternative #2 / Alternative #3

- Wildlife Species Associates of Each Forest Condition
- Acres of Various Forest Habitat by Alternative

Grindstone & Mill Creek

Southern Yellow Pine Forest

- Species Associates
  - Brown Headed Nuthatch
  - Northern Bobwhite
  - Pine warbler

Southern Yellow Pine Forest

Grindstone / Mill Creek

- Existing 3064 Acres
- Alternative #2 2331 Acres
- Alternative #3 2077 Acres

Grass/Forb/Shrub/Seedling/Sapling Habitats

- Species Associated with this habitat
  - Northern Bobwhite
  - Field Sparrow
  - Prairie Warbler
  - Yellow-Breasted Chat
  - Blue-Winged Warbler

Grass/Forb/Shrub/Seedling/Sapling Habitats

Grindstone / Mill Creek

- Existing 27 acres
- Alternative #2 762 acres
- Alternative #3 937 acres

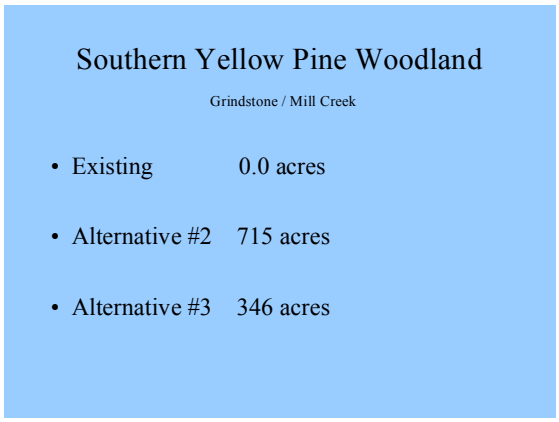
Grass/Forb/Shrub/Seedling/Sapling Habitats

Grindstone / Mill Creek

- Existing 27 acres
- Alternative #2 762 acres
- Alternative #3 937 acres

Southern Yellow Pine Woodland

- Species Associates
  - Brown-headed Nuthatch
  - Northern Bobwhite Quail
  - Pine warbler
  - Prairie Warbler
  - Blue-Winged Warbler
  - Yellow-Breasted Chat
  - Field Sparrow



Group Discussion on the Findings and Restoration Treatments

Some of the points discussed by the group:

Desired Conditions

The DFC identified Longleaf Forest as a community. In the long-term, if these areas are not part of fire treatments, these area the desired conditions of these areas would be Upland Oak Forests. The group discussed why these longleaf areas would not be managed for woodland restoration. The main explanation was the areas are in locations that are either isolated by topography or land ownership patterns and the areas are not conducive to prescribed burning.

Rates of Restoration

The group discussed the pros and cons regarding different rates of restoration. Alternative 2 provides a slow rate (approximately 5% of the loblolly restored during the next decade) and Alternative 3 provides an increased rate. The Forest Service discussed these rates as being at approximately 20%, however the treatment analysis in alternative 3 displayed approximately 50% of the loblolly being restored during the next decade. This discrepancy will be reviewed by the Forest Service.

Some of the "Cons" related to an increased rate of restoration include possible negative effects to soil/water resources and the effect on an even distribution early successional habitat over time. Visuals were also identified as potentially being impacted.

The main "Pros" was recognized as moving the watersheds to the desired condition much sooner. If the restoration rate was maintained for alternative 2 it would require approximately 100 years to complete, while the use of alternative 3 would require approximately four to five decades (at the 20% rate). There was favorable discussion on seeing the desired forest overstory trees being restored into the system at the higher rate.

The Use of Herbicides

The group discussed the use of herbicides in restoration work such as site preparation for planting, release of planted longleaf/shortleaf or naturally regenerated hardwoods, and for mid-story control.

Some in the group stated the use of chemicals was unnatural and that the use of chemicals to restore natural communities were at odds. Other cons included potential negative impacts to water and natural resources when herbicide use is abused. Some in the group voiced skepticism related to the pesticide use and industry labels.

The benefit of using herbicide was discussed as a more cost effective treatment in insuring survival of desirable tree species – the use of herbicides would decrease the need for retreatment of areas. Herbicide use would increase rate of achieving desired understory conditions and species composition quicker, than by the use of fire alone (i.e. reduce amount of sprouting woody vegetation in shorter time frame vs. allowing fire to gradually reduce over time).

It was stated that if the restoration goals can be met without using herbicides, than use the non-herbicide treatments. There was no clear agreement or recommendation from the group to expand the use of herbicides on the Bankhead in the restoration process, beyond the treatment of non-native, invasive species. The discussion on the use of herbicides as a restoration tool will be continued at the next meeting.

Closeout

The discussion had to be cut off due to the closing of the recreation center. The timber/thinning working group was not able to make their scheduled presentation The panel agreed that additional meeting time and discussion was needed on the alternatives and treatments.

A special meeting was called for Tuesday, August 28, 2007 at 6:00pm at the Bankhead Ranger Station in Double Springs, Alabama.