



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest
Service

Alaska Region
Tongass National Forest
Thorne Bay Ranger District

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STANEY CREEK Enhancement & Restoration Project #1 Scoping Notice and Comment

PROJECT INTRODUCTION: COLLABORATIVE PLANNING BEGINS

Dear Planning Participant:

May 23, 2008

The Forest Service is seeking your input on a proposal for enhancement and restoration treatments within the Stanley Creek Watershed on the Thorne Bay Ranger District. We have completed a preliminary evaluation of the the Stanley Creek Watershed to determine what enhancement and restoration needs exist, and have proposed a first round of treatments to help align the existing condition more with the desired conditions as described in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan. The Project Area is within reasonable proximity to local communities and may provide contracting opportunities for local contractors.

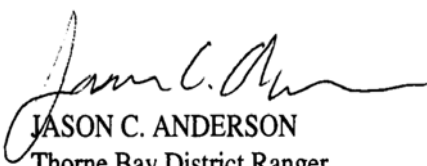
We are presently in the "Scoping" or initial public participation phase of this project. Scoping is the first formal step in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process. It helps us identify potential issues, concerns, and opportunities associated with our proposal. WE NEED YOUR HELP to ensure we analyze all the issues that are of concern to you and your community.

Please examine the enclosed proposal and maps, and send us any comments you feel will help us develop a sound project. Please identify: your specific concerns; places within the Project Area that are important to you; and any suggestions you have to improve the project, including ideas for alternatives to our proposal.

You may comment on the project three ways, by: 1) Letter; 3) FAX; or 4) e-mail. The second to last sheet serves as a pre-addressed form for your written comments. It has check-boxes for those who would like to remain on the project mailing list, those who wish to be removed, and for your media preference as the project progresses.

For more information on this project, please contact Susan Howell at 907-828-3263 or smhowell@fs.fed.us

We look forward to receiving your comments and thank you for your participation in the planning process for this project. Your views are important to us as we develop an action strategy to achieve the goals set forth in our new Forest Plan. Thank you for taking the time to help manage your National Forest.


JASON C. ANDERSON
Thorne Bay District Ranger
Tongass National Forest

Stanley Creek E&R Timeline

YOU ARE HERE!
PUBLIC SCOPING

SCOPING COMMENTS
DUE 30 days from
publication of SCOPING
NOTICE in the
Ketchikan Daily News



**ENVIRONMENTAL
DOCUMENT**
for public comment
September 2008



**DECISION
DOCUMENT**
December 2008



APPEAL PERIOD
45 days



IMPLEMENTATION
Spring 2009



Project Area Location and Description (where)

The Project Area is located on north Prince of Wales Island, northwest of Control Lake, and southeast of the town of Naukati. (see Figure 1, Vicinity Map, page 10). It encompasses about 39,298 acres, and incorporates four different Land Use Designations (LUDs); Timber Production, Modified Landscape, Old-Growth; and Special Interest Areas (see Figure 2, LUD Map, page 11). All Project Area LUDS allow the type of activities proposed below, although no activities are proposed in the Special Interest LUD.

Proposed Action (what)

The Thorne Bay Ranger District is proposing a variety of restoration and enhancement activities within the Staney Creek Watershed. Most of these activities involve treatment of vegetation or road and stream work that could be contracted for bid, and be performed by local contractors. Some treatments may be performed by Forest Service personnel.

The tables below list the proposed treatments and the enclosed maps display specific locations where treatments would occur. Table 1 below, displays a summary of treatment units, road segments and stream segments by LUD, as described in the Tongass Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan). Tables 2a through 2e (pages 3 through 6) identify individual treatment units and segments, by number and LUD. These tables and the enclosed maps are provided to assist you in referencing your comments to site-specific proposed actions.

Table 1. Summary of Proposed Treatment Types by LUD

Treatment Type	Number of Units or Segments	Unit of Measure	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	TOTAL
Fish Passage Restoration	47 road segments	Miles >	4	3	31	38
Fish Habitat Improvement	11 stream segments	Feet >	5,400	6,300	8,300	20,000
Riparian Thinning	19 thinning units	Acres >	27	78	252	357
Wildlife Thinning	1 unit	Acres >	0	38	0	38
Wildlife Thinning	38 thinning units	1/10th Acre Gaps >	656	237	3,144	4,037
Timber Thinning	21 thinning units	Acres >	162	0	646	808

Table 2a. Proposed Road Segments by LUD

Road Segment	Miles			Total
	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	
1			0.6	0.6
2			0.7	0.7
3			2.9	2.9
4	0.1			0.1
5			0.5	0.5
6			0.5	0.5
7			0.5	0.5
8	1.1			1.1
9			0.5	0.5
10			0.0	0.0
11			0.0	0.0
12			0.1	0.1
13			0.2	0.2
14			0.9	0.9
15	0.7		0.4	1.1
16			0.5	0.5
17		0.2		0.2
18		1.0		1.0
19		0.7		0.7
20		0.4		0.4
21	1.1		0.2	1.3
22	0.6		0.2	0.8
23	0.5		0.4	0.8
24			1.6	1.6
25			2.7	2.7
26			1.2	1.2
27			2.5	2.5
28			0.7	0.7
29			0.3	0.3
30			2.7	2.7
31			1.3	1.3
32			0.3	0.3
33			0.8	0.8
34			0.0	0.0
35		0.8	0.7	1.5
36			1.3	1.3
37			0.5	0.5
38			0.6	0.6
39			0.5	0.5
40			0.0	0.0
41			0.1	0.1
42			1.1	1.1
43			0.5	0.5
44			0.1	0.1
45			0.1	0.1
46			1.7	1.7
47			0.1	0.1
TOTAL	4.0	3.1	30.7	37.7

Table 2b. Proposed Stream Segments by LUD

Stream Segment	Feet			Total
	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	
A			2,700	2,700
B			1,300	1,300
C	500			500
D	2,300		500	2,800
E		1,300	1,300	2,600
F		100	400	500
G		1,100		1,100
H		3,200		3,200
I	2,600			2,600
J		600		600
K			2,100	2,100
TOTAL	5,400	6,300	8,300	20,000

Table 2c. Proposed Riparian Thinning by LUD

Riparian Thinning Unit	Acres			Total
	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	
1	20		25	45
2			41	41
3			20	20
4			13	13
5		2	15	17
6		24		24
7		23	17	40
8		12		12
9			20	20
10	5		37	42
11			3	3
12			6	6
13			22	22
14			5	5
15	2		7	9
16		1	9	10
17			4	4
18			8	8
19		16		16
TOTAL	27	78	252	357

Table 2d. Proposed Wildlife Thinning by LUD

Acres				Total
Unit	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	
1		38		38

1/10th Acre Gaps				Total
Unit	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	
2	46		89	135
3			104	104
4			20	20
5			70	70
6			135	135
7			28	28
8			152	152
9			99	99
10			98	98
11	168		91	259
12			132	132
13			178	178
14	44	1		45
15	124	1	8	133
16			221	221
17			189	189
18	41		10	51
19			127	127
20	79		51	130
21	39		7	46
22			76	76
23	21	1	0	22
24			214	214
25			169	169
26		5	93	98
27		17	28	45
28		0	62	62
29		128	87	215
30		6	8	14
31			343	343
32			74	74
33			49	49
34			5	5
35			21	21
36			36	36
37		3	15	18
38	93		53	146
39		76	2	78
TOTAL	656	237	3,144	4,037

Table 2d. Proposed Timber Thinning by LUD

Timber Thinning Unit	Acres			Total
	Modified Landscape	Old Growth	Timber Production	
500	6			6
502	111			111
503			20	20
504	45			45
505			39	39
506			38	38
507			30	30
508			76	76
509			38	38
510			32	32
511			31	31
512			46	46
513			27	27
514			30	30
515			44	44
516			4	4
517			46	46
518			32	32
519			86	86
520			2	2
521			25	25
TOTAL	162	0	646	808

Purpose and Need for Action (why here, why now)

A need has been established in the Staney Creek Watershed for the enhancement and restoration of natural processes that have been diminished or interrupted by past management practices. This need is demonstrated in the findings of recently completed assessments of the area by Forest Service personnel. These assessments include a Landscape Assessment, a Vegetation Management Plan, and a Watershed Restoration Plan for the Staney Creek Watershed. The watershed has also been identified as a very high priority for restoration by the Tongass National Forest and The Nature Conservancy in the draft document titled *A Framework for Setting Watershed-scale Priorities for Forest and Freshwater Restoration on Prince of Wales Island*. The restoration prioritization effort was a collaborative undertaking with Federal, State and local stakeholders on Prince of Wales Island. The Staney Creek Watershed was identified as a very high priority for restoration based on the high biological and social values of the area, and the high level of modification to important habitats and ecological processes.

Large portions of the Staney Creek Watershed were harvested in the 1960s and 1970s under the 50-year timber sale contract between the US Forest Service and Ketchikan Pulp Company. Lesser amounts were harvest in the 1980s and 1990s. Harvest units were concentrated on the lower, better growing sites, which are also important deer winter range. To date, 38% of the project area (14,738 acres) has been harvested using the clear cut method, producing dense, even-aged stands. Approximately 150 miles of road were built to access the timber that was harvested. Harvest areas adjacent to streams were typically cut to the stream, usually leaving little or no buffer. Approximately 68% of the previously harvested stands (9,961 acres) have been pre-commercially thinned, using spacing that varied from 10 feet by 10 feet, to 14 by 14 feet.

Today, about 75% of the previously harvested acres, whether previously thinned or not, are in the stem exclusion stage of stand development, or will have entered it within the next 5 to 10 years. During this stage, which can last upwards of 150 years if left undisturbed, the understory vegetation becomes shaded-out and can become altogether barren of any browse. Deer populations are generally limited by the amount and quality of available winter forage, or browse. Encouraging and maintaining an understory will provide more productive deer habitat, and help maintain subsistence and sport hunting needs. Pre-commercial thinning is one way to accomplish this. Thinning a dense stand at a pre-commercial size, usually around age 15 to 25, for the purpose of increasing growth and yield, also has benefits for wildlife. It reduces the competition for light and nutrients, and increases the growth of individual trees, but it may also increase the longevity of understory plant species important to deer. Another thinning method used to encourage or maintain undserstory browse is the creation of gaps within dense stands. Gaps provide additional growing space for initiation of early successional plants, free from competition from overstory trees.

Past harvest in riparian areas has resulted in the lack of large standing trees, necessary for large woody debris for pool formation and fish habitat. Road condition surveys have identified numerous problems with overgrown that are in need of maintenance. Thirty percent, or 33 of the 112 fish crossings within the Staney Creek Watershed are inhibiting or completely blocking fish passage. Lack of road maintenance has also caused some erosion and sedimentation concerns that must be addressed.

The purpose of proposing this first round of treatments at this time is to begin to meet the needs described in the above assessments. In general, the needs are to:

1) Restore the ecological processes and improve the condition of riparian areas and streams. More specifically:

- Increase channel and habitat complexity
- Improve Salmon rearing habitat
- Increase Steelhead spawning habitat
- Increase Coho and Chum spawning habitat

- Improve Cutthroat rearing habitat
- Improve riparian area vegetation
- Restore sediment regime
- Reduce width and increase pool depth
- Restore floodplain processes
- Restore natural drainage

Direction for maintenance and restoration of fish habitat is described on pp. 4-8 through 4-12 of the Forest Plan. This section directs us to maintain and restore the natural range and frequency of aquatic habitat conditions to sustain the diversity and production of fish and other freshwater organisms. It also directs us to improve or restore fish habitat, giving priority to restoration projects (p.4-13)

2) Reinitiate development of an understory in stem excluded young growth stands, providing more productive habitat to sustain a Sitka black-tailed deer population capable of supporting subsistence and sport hunting needs in the Staney Creek Watershed.

3) Balance the maintenance and enhancement of wildlife habitat and riparian conditions, in previously harvested areas, still suitable for timber production, with the production of timber volume and quality. Treat areas previously harvested, but no longer suitable for timber production, for enhancement of wildlife and riparian values.

This first installment of the Staney Creek Enhancement & Restoration Project will not only respond to the underlying needs listed above, but is also aligned with the goals and objectives for each LUD within the Project Area. The proposed activities will help move the Project Area toward the Desired Conditions (DCs) for each LUD, as described in the Forest Plan. DCs are desired landscape attributes of land and resource conditions envisioned for the Forest in the future.

Desired Conditions common among the Project Area LUDs include:

Timber Production LUD, p.3-116	A variety of wildlife habitats, predominantly in the early and middle successional stages, are present.
Modified Landscape LUD, p.3-109	A variety of successional stages provide a range of wildlife habitat conditions.
Old Growth LUD, p.3-57	A diversity of oldgrowth habitat types and associated species and sub-species and ecological processes are represented.
Special Interest Area LUD, p.3-40	Allow fish, wildlife, soil and water improvements if they are compatible with the purposes for which each Special Interest Area was established.

Collaborative Planning - Commenting on this Project

Collaborative planning is the process by which you the public and other agencies take a more active role in project development. Examples of collaborative planning include input generated from public meetings, input generated during the Scoping Notice and Comment Period, and input after a draft EIS or EA has been issued. Alternatives to a Proposed Action are often crafted, in response to public comments received during the public scoping period. Alternatives can be further refined in response to comments on the draft document. Your comments at this point in the planning process, will aid us in identifying existing concerns about the project area, or about what we are proposing.

Please refer to the enclosed maps and make your comments as site-specific to the project as possible. A comment form is attached to this letter for your convenience. Comments are the most helpful if they are site-specific, rather than general in nature. Let us know if you have any site-specific areas of concern that we should be considering. There may be something about the Project Area that the Forest Service may not know, which might affect the activities proposed.

Forest Service regulations define “substantive comments” (36 CFR 215.2) as “Comments that are within the scope of the proposed action, are specific to the proposed action, have a direct relationship to the proposed action, and include supporting reasons for the Responsible Official to consider.” An example of a site-specific comment is: “Treatment XYZ does not meet Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines because...”. Stating “how” and “why” this treatment does not meet the Forest Plan make this comment site-specific. An example of a non-site-specific comment is “Timber management is inappropriate on National Forest land,”. This type of comment is beyond the scope of an individual project and should be addressed at the national level.

To be most helpful and timely, scoping comments should be received within 30 days of the of the publication of this SCOPING FOR NOTICE AND COMMENT in the *Ketchikan Daily News* (the official paper of record for this project). Comments should include:

1. Your name and mailing address (a telephone number is optional).
2. The project title “*Staney Creek Enhancement & Restoration Project #1*”.
3. Your organization name if you are commenting as a representative.

Please send your written comments to:

Letters: Thorne Bay Ranger District, PO Box 19001, Thorne Bay, AK 99919-0001

FAX: (907) 828-3309

E-mail: comments-alaska-tongass-thorne-bay@fs.fed.us

Comments received in response to this solicitation will become a matter of public record. After we have received and analyzed your comments, our interdisciplinary team (IDT) of resource specialists will: 1) develop an appropriate range of alternatives to the Proposed Action, including a no-action alternative, that will address all significant or unresolved issues associated with this project; and 2) refine the analysis of effects of each alternative.

Thank you for participating in the Staney Creek Enhancement & Restoration Project #1.

Figure 1. Vicinity Map

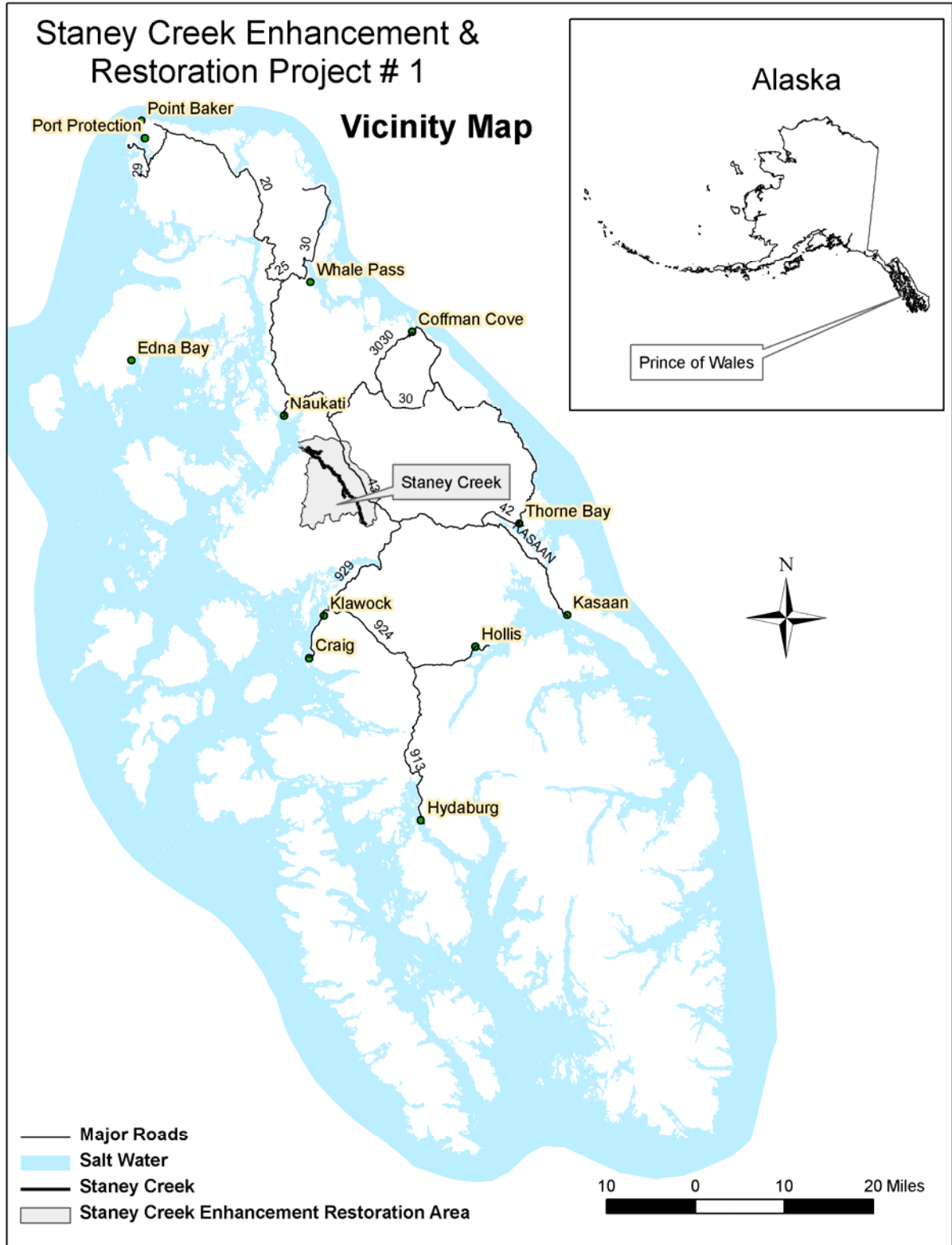


Figure 2. Project Area LUD Map

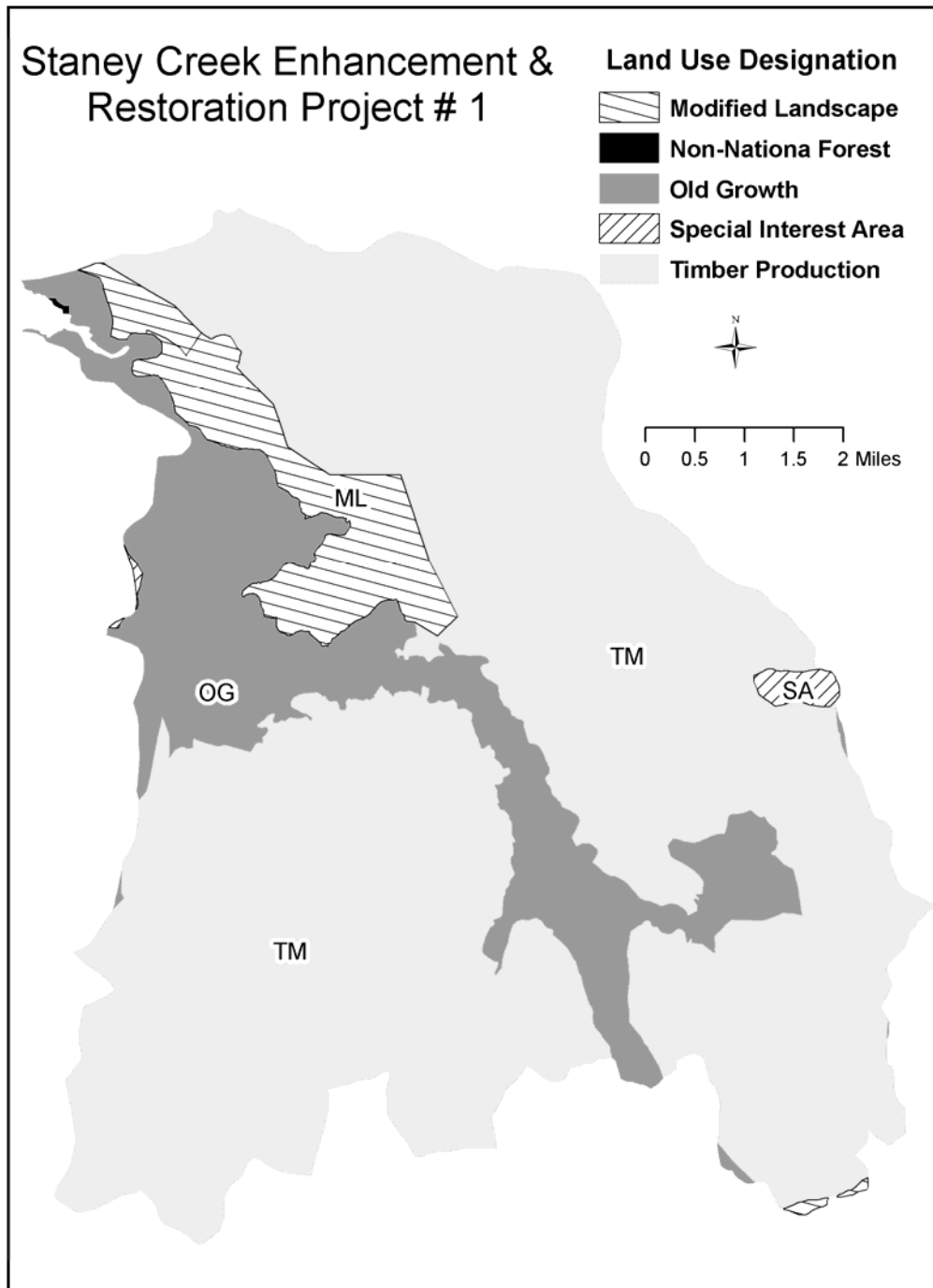


Figure 2a. Proposed Road Treatments

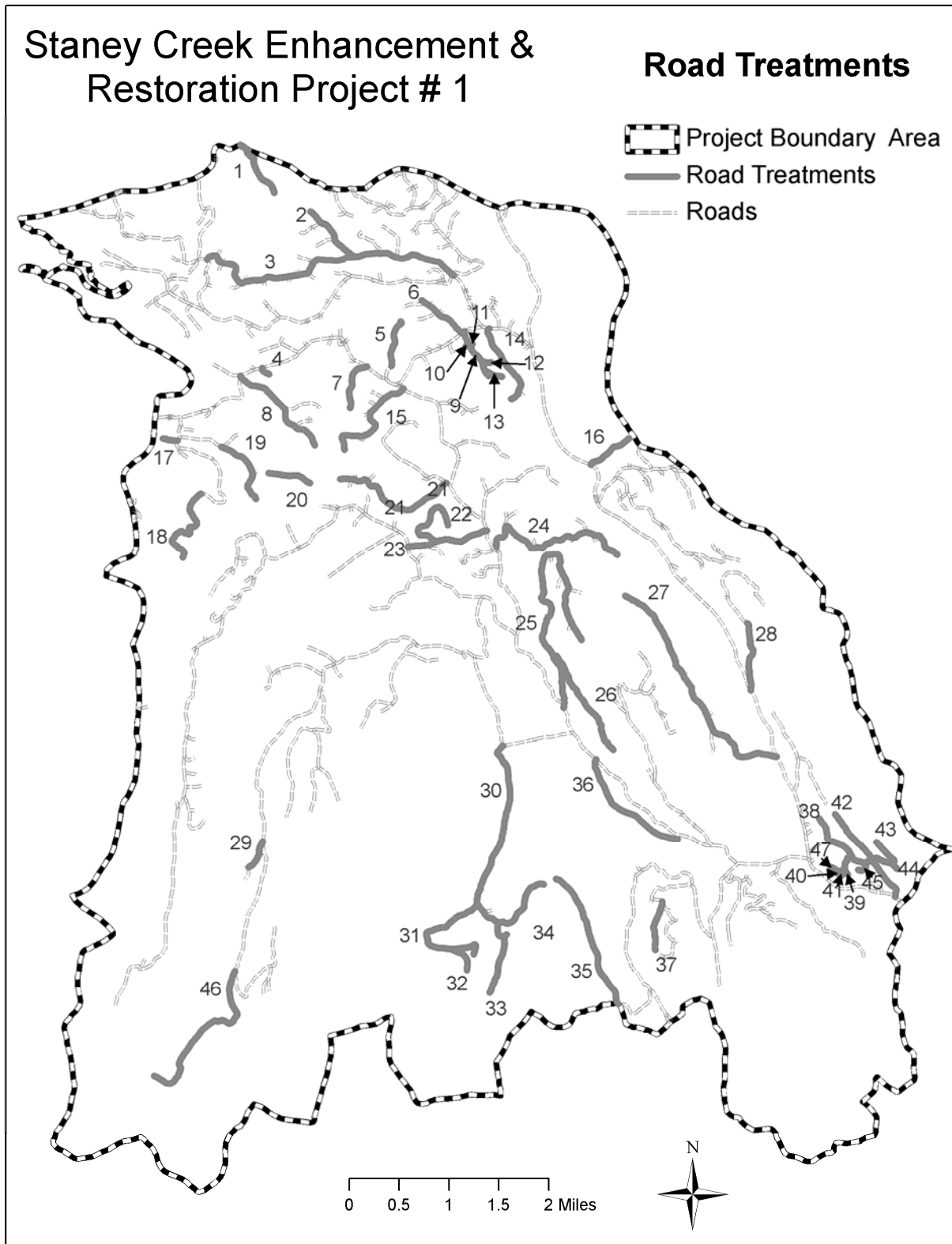


Figure 2b. Proposed Stream Treatments

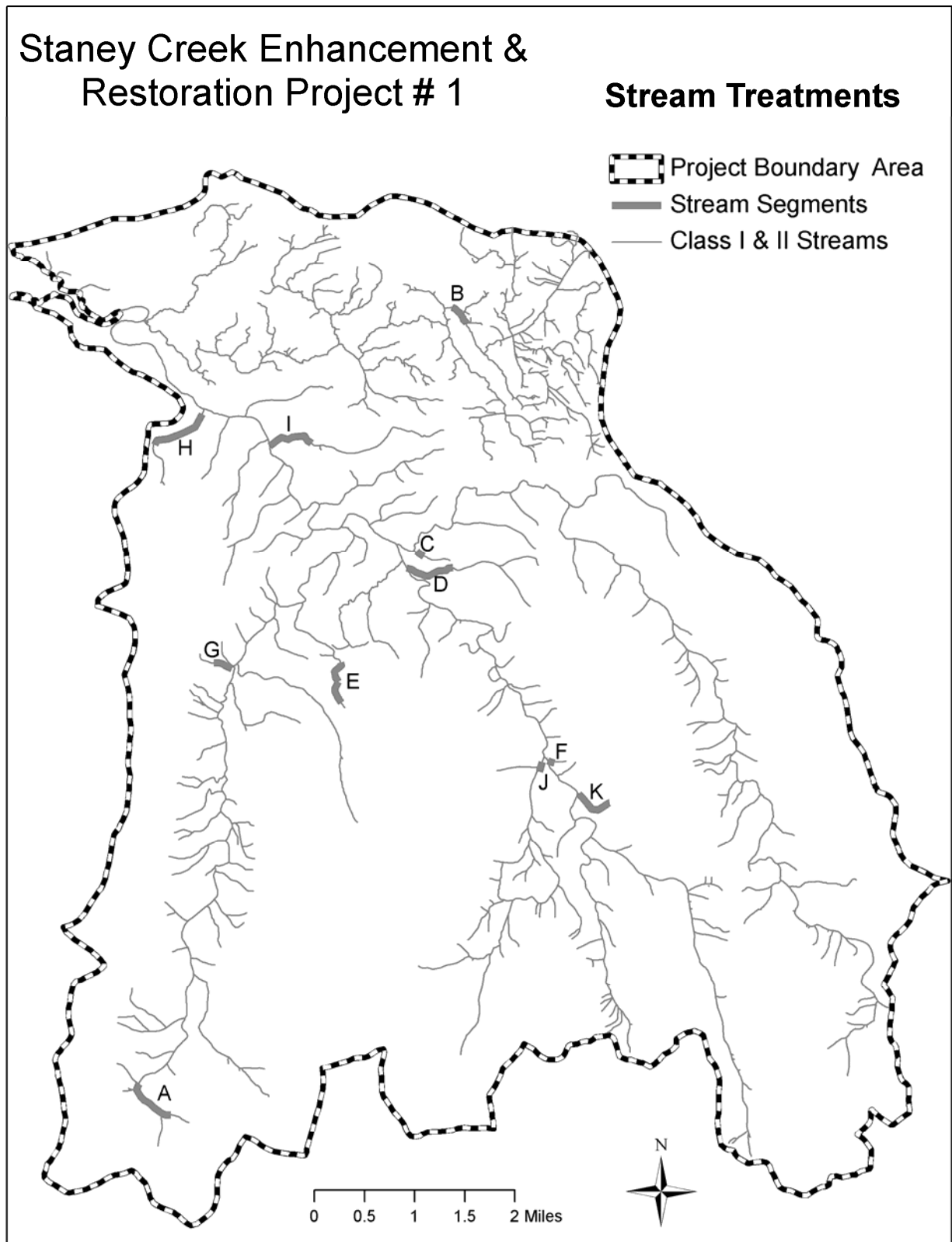


Figure 2c. Proposed Riparian Thinning Treatments

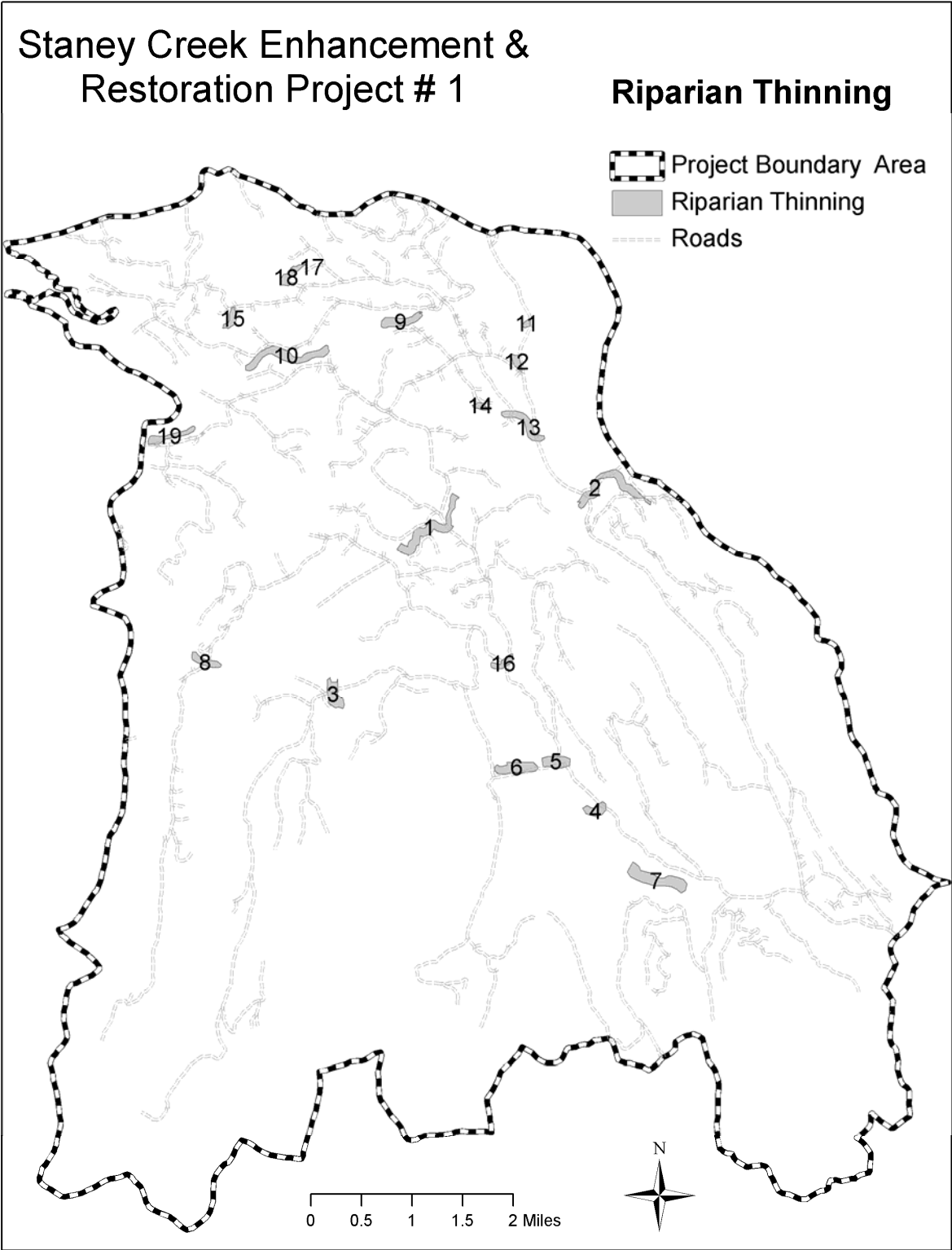


Figure 2d. Proposed Wildlife Thinning Treatments

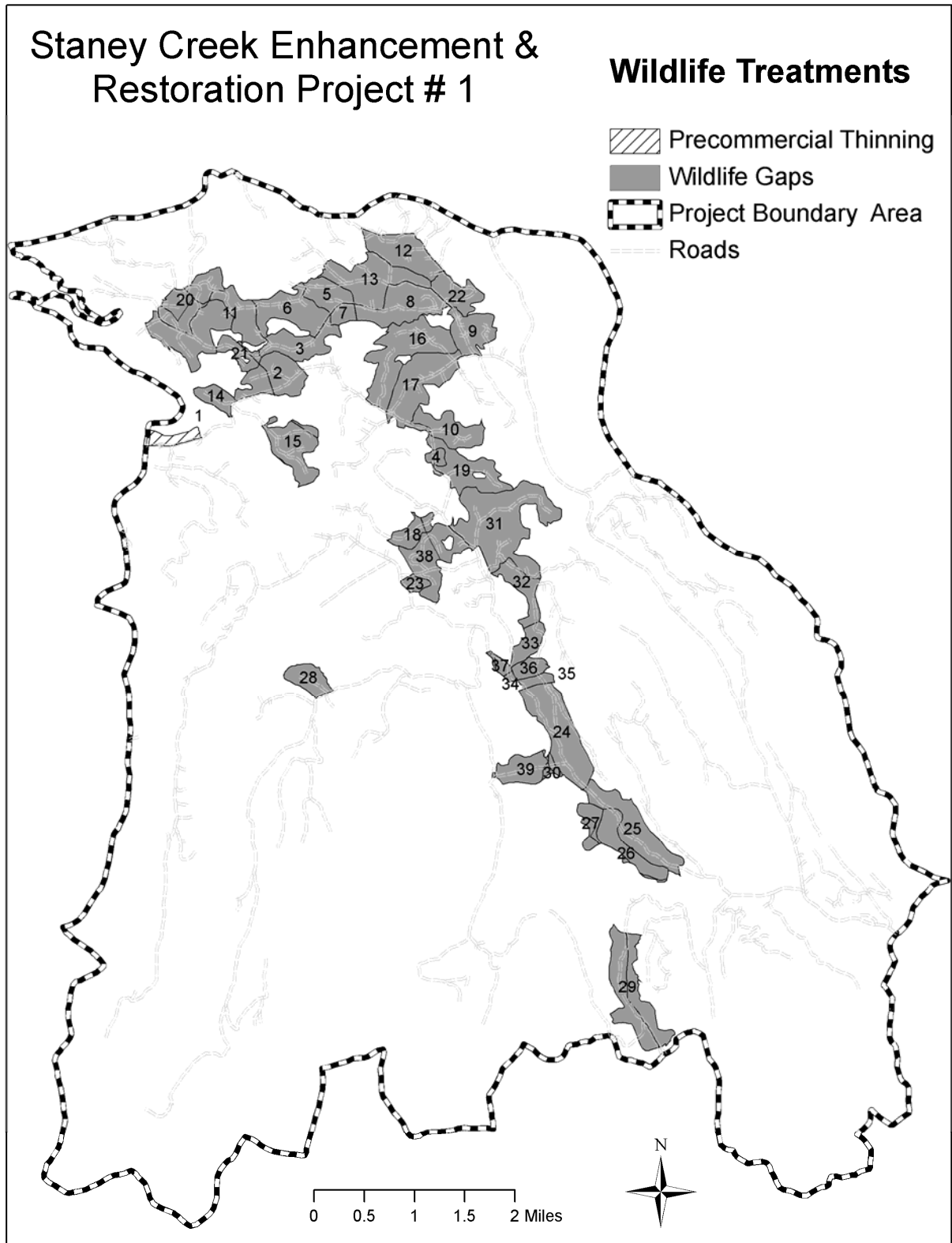
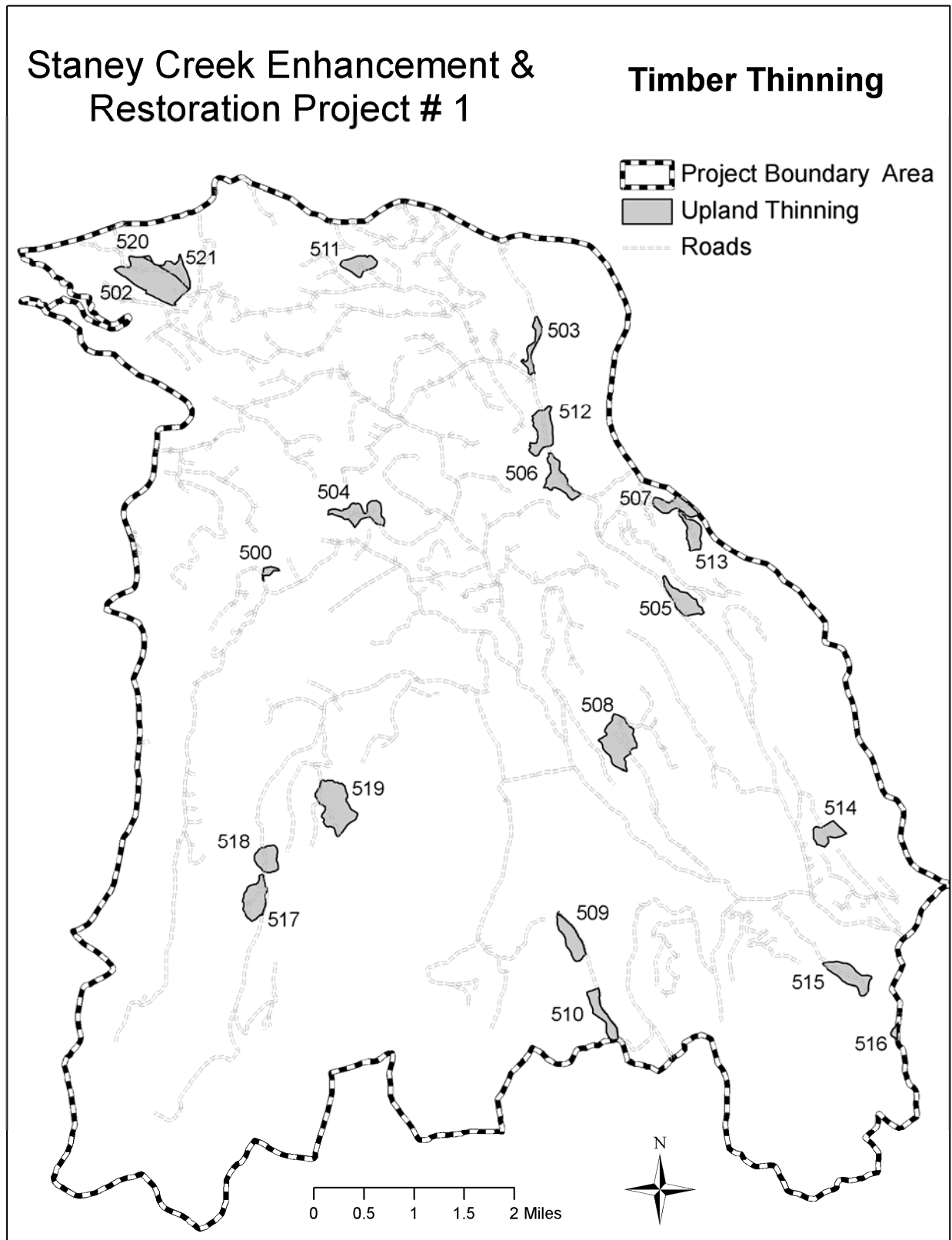


Figure 2e. Proposed Timber Thinning Treatments



HERE ARE MY SCOPING COMMENTS FOR THE
STANEY CREEK ENHANCEMENT & RESTORATION PROJECT #1

Comments due 30 days from the date of publication of this SCOPING NOTICE in the *Ketchikan Daily News*
If you have NO comments at this time, but wish to remain on this mailing list, return this form with the other side filled out.
IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU, YOUR NAME WILL BE REMOVED FROM THIS PROJECT'S MAILING LIST.

Please complete the other side, fold, and send to the address below:

OR

Telephone: (907) 828-3304 FAX: (907) 828-3309 E-Mail: comments-alaska-tongass-thorne-bay@fs.fed.us

<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	I want to stay on the mailing list for this project.. Please send all future project information to my current address, printed below.
<input type="checkbox"/> No	I do not wish to remain on the mailing list for this project. Please do not send any further information regarding this project.

Please send future project information in (please choose only one):

CD

Hard Copy

I will obtain future information from the internet.
<http://www.fs.fed.us/r10/tongass/index.shtml>

IF WE DO NOT HEAR FROM YOU AT THIS TIME, YOUR NAME WILL BE REMOVED FROM THIS MAILING LIST, however, your name will remain on our master mailing list for future projects. NOTE: Our public mailing lists may be made available to those who request them under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). We cannot assure you that your name and address will remain confidential if you are on the mailing list.

----- Fold along line, staple, stamp, and mail -----

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY. If your mailing label is correct, cut it out and tape it here.

From: (Return address required)

(name)

(organization)

(address)

(city, state, zip)

**Place
Stamp
Here**

TO: Thorne Bay Ranger District
Tongass National Forest
Attn: Stanley Creek Enhancement & Restoration Project #1
Scoping, Notice and Comment
PO Box 19001
Thorne Bay, AK 99919

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Please Participate!

To assist the Forest Service in identifying and considering issues, opportunities, and concerns on the proposed action, all comments should be AS SITE-SPECIFIC AS POSSIBLE. Please identify areas of particular concern using the information provided in this letter and referring to specific areas on the enclosed maps. Larger-scale maps are available at the Thorne Bay Ranger District.

STAY IN TOUCH! STAY INVOLVED!

Thorne Bay Ranger District
Tongass National Forest
PO Box 19001
Thorne Bay, AK 99919



Staney Creek Enhancement & Restoration Project #1 Details inside

PROPOSED PROJECT: Watershed Enhancement & Restoration

LOCATION: Staney Creek Watershed,
Thorne Bay Ranger District

SUMMARY: Enhancement and restoration of natural processes affected by past management.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

District Ranger
Thorne Bay Ranger District
PO Box 19001
Thorne Bay, AK 99919
Telephone (907) 828-3304

COMMENTS DUE: 30 days from the date of publication of this SCOPING NOTICE in the *Ketchikan Daily News*.
