

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS

VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO LPC LAND USE PERMIT APPLICATION

PARCEL NO. 559715100076

LOCATION:

Diaga LLC. Subdivision, Lot 1A-B
Township 36 North, Range 9 West, Section 15
New Mexico Principal Meridian
La Plata County, Colorado

USGS 7.5' Quadrangle:

Hermosa, CO

Latitude/Longitude:

37.38517° N, 107.84066° W
Datum: NAD 83

Prepared by SME Environmental Inc. for SEH Inc.

INTRODUCTION

SME Environmental Inc. (SME) has been contracted by SEH Inc. to provide documentation in support of the permitting of the Village Camp Durango RV resort. This Wildlife Analysis has been prepared in accordance with applicable sections of the La Plata County Land Use Code (Secs. 70-8, 73-5).

METHODS

SME personnel conducted an on-site field investigation of the subject property on July 25, 2023. The entire parcel was observed to characterize site conditions and determine available wildlife habitat and wildlife use. Any wildlife or signs of wildlife use such as tracks, scat, burrows, nests, carcasses, etc. were noted. Existing impacts or impediments to wildlife use were also noted.

SITE CONDITIONS

Physiography

The subject parcel is located within the northern half of La Plata County within the Animas Valley, a broad, flat river valley formed during Pleistocene glaciation. The valley is located on the southern edge of the San Juan Mountains and is flanked to the east and west by high ridges and rugged mountain drainages. The Animas River flows through the valley from north to south. Refer to the attached Figures 1 through 3 for maps of the property setting.

Geology

Animas Valley surficial geology is composed of modern alluvial deposits associated with the Animas River and tributary drainages. Mountains framing the valley to the east and west are composed of stratified layers of sedimentary formations including (from oldest to youngest): the Hermosa Group, Cutler Formation, Dolores Formation, Entrada Sandstone, Wanaka Formation, Junction Creek Sandstone, Morrison Formation, and Dakota Sandstone.

Soils

Soils in the project area were mapped by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and consist of *Pescar fine sandy loam* (Pe) through approximately $\frac{3}{4}$ of the site with *Teflon loam* (Te) and *Riverwash* (Rw) comprising roughly equal portions of the remainder of the site along the northern and southern edges of the property, respectively. The parent material for Pe is stratified, calcareous alluvium; Te is mixed alluvium; and Rw is sandy and/or cobbly or gravelly alluvium. Surface soils ($\leq 8''$) are mapped as fine sandy loam (Pe) and loam (Te); Rw is a miscellaneous area comprising poorly drained undifferentiated sand, gravel, and cobbles. Past gravel mining on the subject property has disturbed/rearranged surface soils which are very stoney in areas. Drainage class for the soils (Pe, Te) is somewhat poorly drained. Shrink-swell potential is low.

Hydrology/Wetlands

The main hydrologic feature in the site vicinity is the Animas River which traverses the southern edge of the property. The entirety of the subject property, along with most of the valley in the Trimble area, is within the 100-year floodplain. The western edge of the property is fringed by a short drainage tributary to the Animas River which supports wetland conditions. The wetland comprises emergent marsh and fringing riparian scrub-shrub with an intermittent tree canopy. The northeastern end of the wetland supports an open water pond. The wetland is likely influenced by near surface groundwater and surface runoff including that from irrigation of the Dalton Ranch golf course/housing development. The western half of the property also includes a small segment of oxbow or remnant excavation from gravel development. This area appears to be intermittently flooded and supports a fringe of riparian shrubs and trees. The remainder of the subject site has been influenced by past gravel development, and, apart from perimeter berms, is level with no other hydrologic features occurring. Refer to the wetlands memo prepared by SME for further information regarding hydrologic features of the subject property.

Vegetation

Of the approximately 30 acres of the subject property north of the active channel of the Animas River, approximately 20 acres of the site is bare or nearly bare ground as a result of past gravel mining. Vegetation is generally relegated to the perimeter of the property where gravel mining did

not occur with the exception of portions of the western interior of the property where ruderal vegetation has established and where the previously mentioned oxbow/excavation supports woody riparian vegetation (see attached Figure 4).

The eastern edge of the property east of gravel operations and just west of Trimble Lane includes a 1.6-acre swath of mainly blue spruce trees likely planted to provide a visual screen during the period of gravel operations. Other planted trees in this area include silver maple and an ornamental crab apple. These trees are somewhat widely spaced and do not form a closed canopy. The understory is mostly upland grasses with rabbitbrush fringing the eastern and western boundaries.

The northern bank of the Animas River supports a mix of riparian and upland shrubs, specifically narrowleaf willow and rabbitbrush, respectively. The willow occurs nearer the river and in areas with higher groundwater, and the rabbitbrush occurs higher on the bank. The top of the bank also supports scattered riparian trees in a narrow strip between the gravel operation area and the banks slope. Trees include narrowleaf cottonwood and boxelder. As mentioned previously, the western edge of the property includes a marsh area that supports emergent wetland vegetation including reed canarygrass with a fringe/overstory of woody riparian vegetation including narrowleaf willow, narrowleaf cottonwood, and boxelder. The oxbow/excavation in the western portion of the property supports the same woody riparian plants. Altogether, the woody riparian vegetation type comprises 4.4 acres of the site.

Portions of the gravel operation area with more developed soils and less disturbance recently (within the last 5 years) support rabbitbrush, hairy false goldenaster, and a variety of ruderal forbs including kochia, thistles (musk, Scotch), tumbled mustard, alyssum, hoary cress, Russian knapweed, diffuse knapweed, and Russian thistle (“tumbleweed”). These areas occur mostly in the western half of the property and along the fringes. These areas total approximately 4.3 acres.

Human Use

The subject property is located in the Trimble area which includes an expansive residential development amongst the Dalton Ranch golf course. This development abuts the west and northwest edges of the property and is separated from the development to the north by a sewage treatment plant and newly developed self-storage site, and to the east by Trimble Lane and an adjacent gravel operation. The southeast corner of the property is used as a public access point/boat launch for the Animas River. South of the river is low density residential development, pasture lands, and the Animas Mosquito Control District yard along the southern bank. Human use of the subject property included gravel mining up until recently.

WILDLIFE HABITAT

CPW-Mapped Wildlife Areas

Important mapped habitat maintained by CPW (2022) in or near the subject parcel is included in the attached Figures 5 through 13. CPW-mapped ranges that are generalized and/or are common and widespread throughout the County are excluded. CPW-mapped habitats/ranges of note in the area are listed in the following table. Definitions of CPW habitat/range types are available online at <https://cpw.state.co.us/learn/Maps/CPW-Public-GIS-Species-Activities-Definitions.pdf>.

CPW-mapped Habitats on or Near Parcel No. 559715100076

SPECIES	TYPE	SITE SUITABILITY
Bald Eagle	Winter Range	Bald Eagles likely forage and roost along the Animas River in the winter and may occur in the vicinity in winter.
	Winter Concentration Area	Larger trees along the Animas River and in the western wetland may be used for perching or roosting.
	Winter Forage	The Animas River provides prey (fish).
	Summer Forage	The Animas River provides prey (fish). The nearest nest site is located 4 miles to the south. Nesting eagles may occasionally forage in the parcel vicinity in summer.
Black Bear	Human Conflict Area	Currently, limited potential for conflict. Limited foraging habitat on site.
Elk	Resident Population Area	No sign of elk use was observed on site. Site visit was conducted mid-summer.
	Winter Concentration Area	Limited cover outside of western wetland area. Peripheral shrubs and trees may provide limited winter browse, although no browse line was observed. Fencing limits access. Nearby lawns and open areas in and around golf course provide winter habitat.
	Severe Winter Range	Limited cover outside of western wetland area. Peripheral shrubs and trees may provide limited winter browse. Fencing limits access.
	Migration Corridor	Fencing limits access/permeability of site.
	Production Area	Shrub cover in the western wetland area may provide limited habitat for calving.
Mule Deer	Production Area	Site outside of mapped area. Western wetland area could provide fawning cover.

	Winter Range	Site outside of mapped area. No browse line evident on trees.
	Winter Concentration Area	Site outside of mapped area. No browse line evident on trees.
Canada Goose	Winter Range	Animas River in-channel bars and islands may provide loafing and foraging habitat. Nearby ponds and lawns in and around golf course provide significant additional habitat. No foraging habitat on site.
	Winter Concentration	Unlikely on site. Animas River and golf course lawns/ponds/wetlands.
	Foraging Area (winter)	Unlikely on site. Animas River and golf course lawns/ponds/wetlands.
	Production Area	Unlikely to nest along the Animas River near site due to tall woody cover. Grassy nesting sites adjacent to open water occur along golf course and on opposite side of river.
	Brood Concentration Area	Site outside of mapped area.
Mountain Lion	Human Conflict Area	Currently, limited potential for conflict. Prey species present but limited.
River Otter	Overall Range	Suitable denning habitat along banks of river. Suitable foraging habitat in river, along banks, and in western wetland.
Peregrine Falcon	Potential Nesting Area	Site outside of mapped area. Potential foraging habitat along river.
Wild Turkey	Winter Range	Site outside of mapped area. Site generally lacks habitat.
	Winter Concentration Area	Site outside of mapped area. Site generally lacks habitat.
	Production Area	Site outside of mapped area. Site generally lacks habitat.

Observed and Potential Wildlife Use

Tracks and scat of mule deer were observed in and around the western portion of the parcel, primarily along the mapped game trails (see Figure 4), and a fawn was observed under tree cover in the western wetland area. Overall, deer use on the subject property is likely limited due to limited vegetation and cover over most of the site, and movement through the site is limited by existing

fences (see Figure 4) which are all over 6 feet tall. Deer use is likely concentrated to the western wetland area and along the Animas River where cover and forage is present. Unlike a nearby vacant lot along Trimble Lane, no winter browse line was observed on any trees of saplings on the subject property.

Signs of beaver (chewed stumps) were observed in western riparian woodlands, and a beaver bank den was observed in the wetland along the western edge of the property (see Figure 4). Tracks of raccoon were observed along the Animas River and along the game trail in the western portion of the parcel. Possible tracks of a bobcat were also observed in the game trail. The call of a rock squirrel was heard near the northwest edge of the property, but no suitable habitat was observed there, and no sign of rock squirrel use was observed there. Skunks, elk, and bear may occasionally to rarely pass through the parcel as well. An adjacent property manager stated that he had observed a mountain lion on a kill in the past on the property just to the north of the subject property (self-storage property). This was prior to that property being cleared for development.

Trees and shrubs on the parcel provide habitat for nesting migratory birds, primarily in mapped riparian woodland habitat (see Figure 4). The site visit was conducted mid-day on a hot day and very few birds were observed (ash-throated flycatcher, western kingbird, red-tailed hawk, osprey, turkey vulture). Willow habitat along the river and wetland area likely support additional species. Southwestern willow flycatcher use of the parcel is unlikely. Willow habitat along the Animas River is located on a steep bank and is relatively narrow; this is atypical of selected habitat which occurs in level floodplains in wider patches and mosaics of willow and riparian woodland. The wetland at the western edge of the property generally lacks extensive willow habitat and there is evidence that the wetland is regularly treated for mosquito control which would negatively impact foraging habitat. No raptor nests were observed in or near the subject property.

POSSIBLE IMPACTS OF DEVELOPMENT

Site development would have minimal direct impacts on wildlife habitat as nearly all development would occur in previously disturbed areas with limited habitat potential. Site development would increase human presence on the parcel. Again, this is not anticipated to have a significant impact on the majority of the property given the limited wildlife habitat.

Riparian woodland habitat provides the most significant wildlife habitat on site. Human use in these areas associated with river access, dog walking, or hiking by resort visitors has the potential to disturb wildlife and nesting birds and trample or alter habitat. It is presumed that most of this activity will occur during the summer months thereby impacting resident breeding populations of wildlife and having lesser impacts on migrating (e.g. elk) or wintering wildlife (e.g. bald eagle roosting and perching/foraging).

Development of the site would impact wildlife permeability and movement through the interior of the site by introducing new structures and by increasing human activities. Use of the site for movements and migration is likely low due to existing fencing.

MITIGATION OF IMPACTS

Proposed development will avoid the wetland along the western edge of the parcel. This will avoid impacts to beaver habitat, deer and elk fawning/calving habitat, otter foraging habitat, migratory bird nest habitat, and general wildlife cover.

Similarly, riparian woodlands and trees along the north bank of the Animas River will be protected with the exception of two river access locations (see Landscape Plan). These would have minor impacts on overall habitat and would have minor impacts on fragmentation. Roost and perch tree habitat for bald eagles would remain mostly intact.

Most of the trees along the eastern buffer will be preserved in place which will minimize impacts to migratory bird breeding habitat.

Proposed ponds will provide new habitat for Canada geese.

Impacts to site permeability will be offset by new fencing. New 42" tall split rail fencing will replace the >6-foot-tall chain link fencing along the eastern property boundary. The new fencing will be permeable to wildlife, providing greater access and mobility for wildlife movements and migrating along the Animas River corridor/Animas Valley.

As an additional measure to minimize impacts to riparian woodland habitat along the Animas River, the proponent could consider education, signing, or fencing to limit visitor access to the willow/woody streamside vegetation that will be protected in place during development.

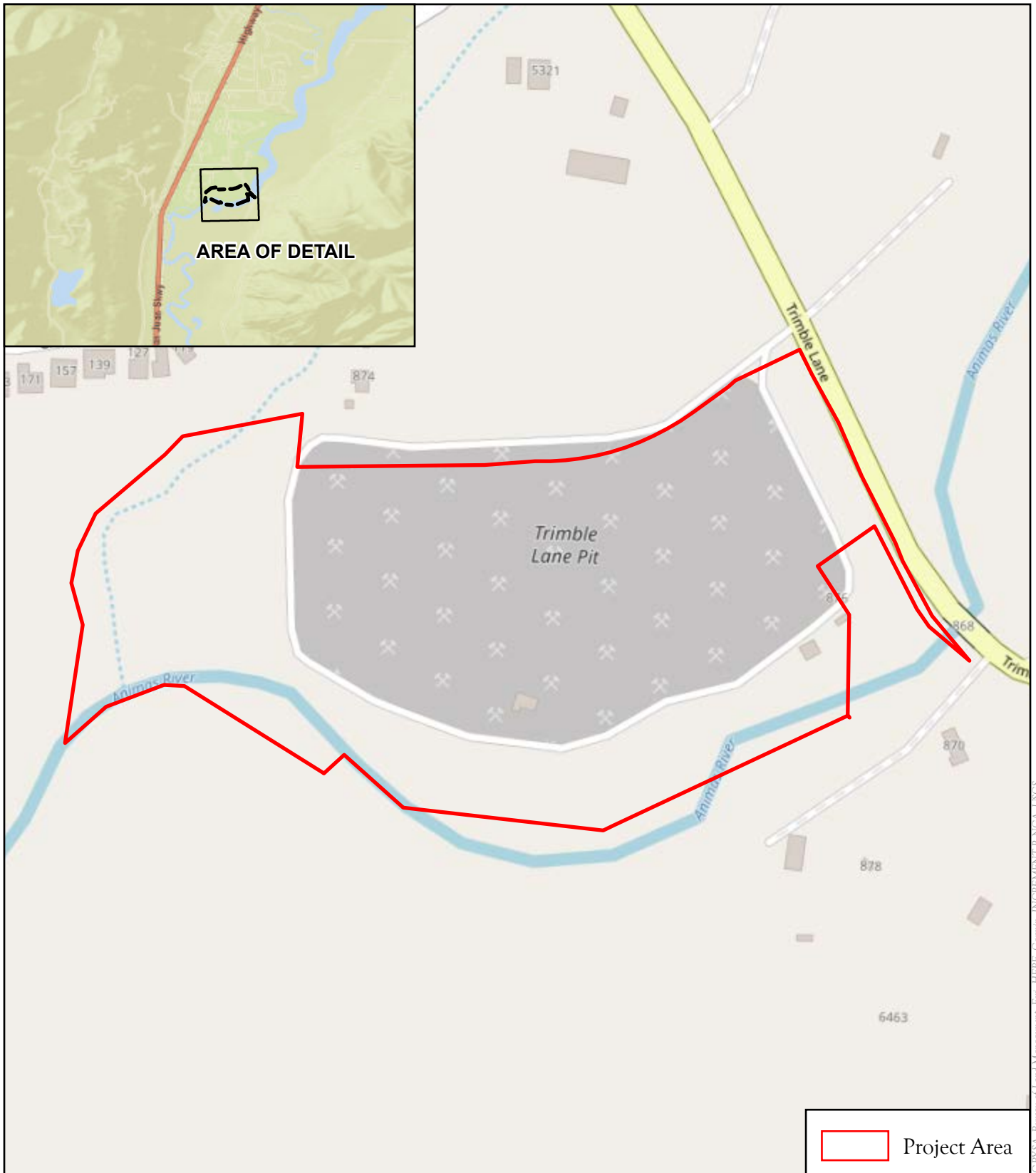
SURVEYORS/PREPARERS



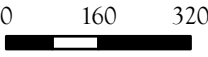
Nathan Kirker
Senior Biologist
(970) 403-0583

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ATTACHMENT A

Figures



 <p>SME ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS 679 East 2nd Ave. Unit E2, Durango, Colorado 81301 www.sme-env.com (970) 259-9595</p>	Drawn by:	Rvwd. by:	Project No.:	ROAD VICINITY MAP	
	SB	NK	230026		
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	7/31/2023	NA	1:4,000		
			 <p>0 160 320 Feet</p>		FIGURE 1

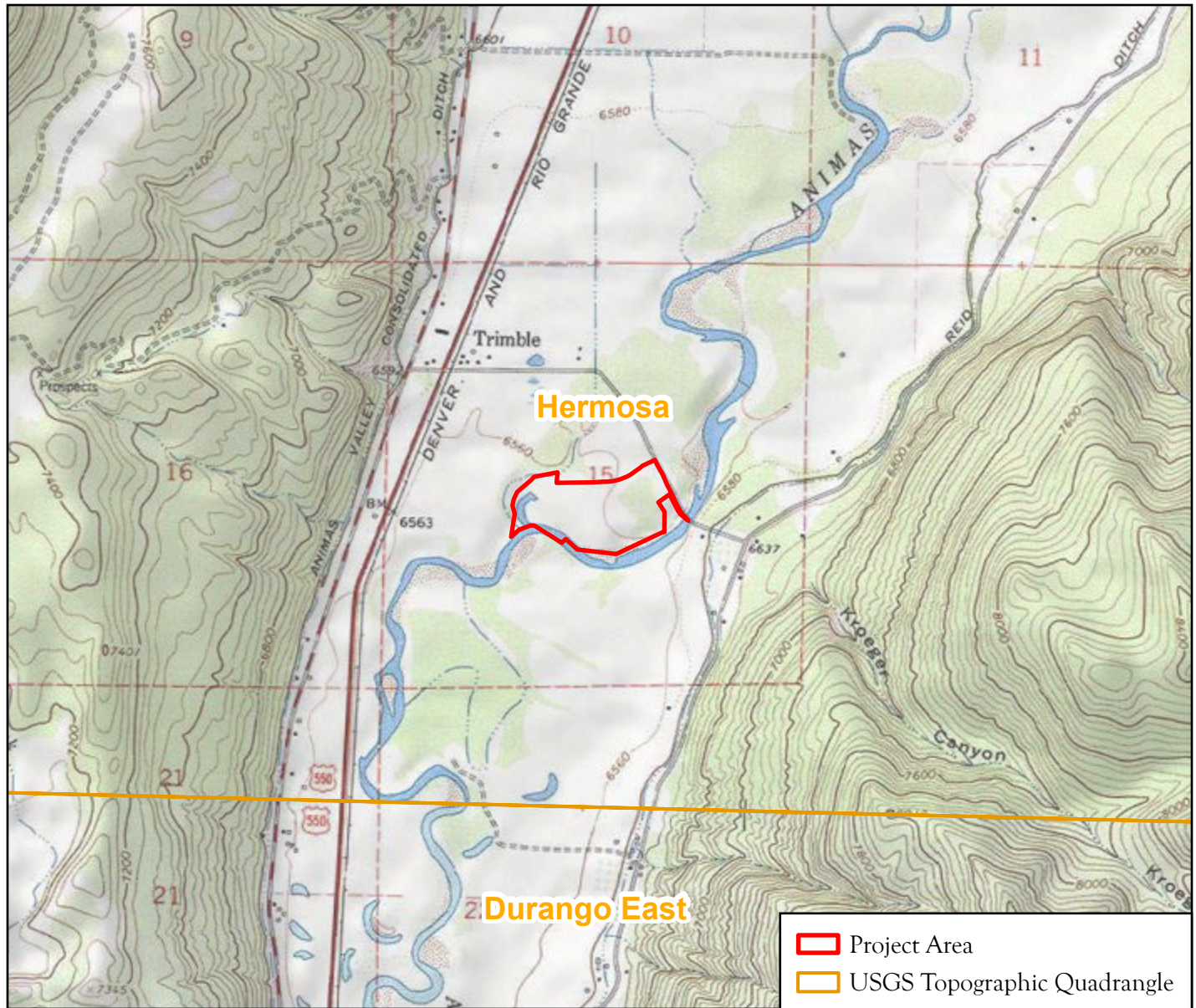
PROJECT LOCATION:

Township 36 North, Range 9 West, SENW, SWNE, NESW,
NWSE, of Section 15;
New Mexico Principal Meridian
La Plata County, Colorado.

PROJECT AREA CENTROID (NAD83):

Latitude: 37.38517°

Longitude: -107.84066°



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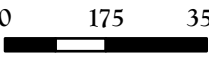
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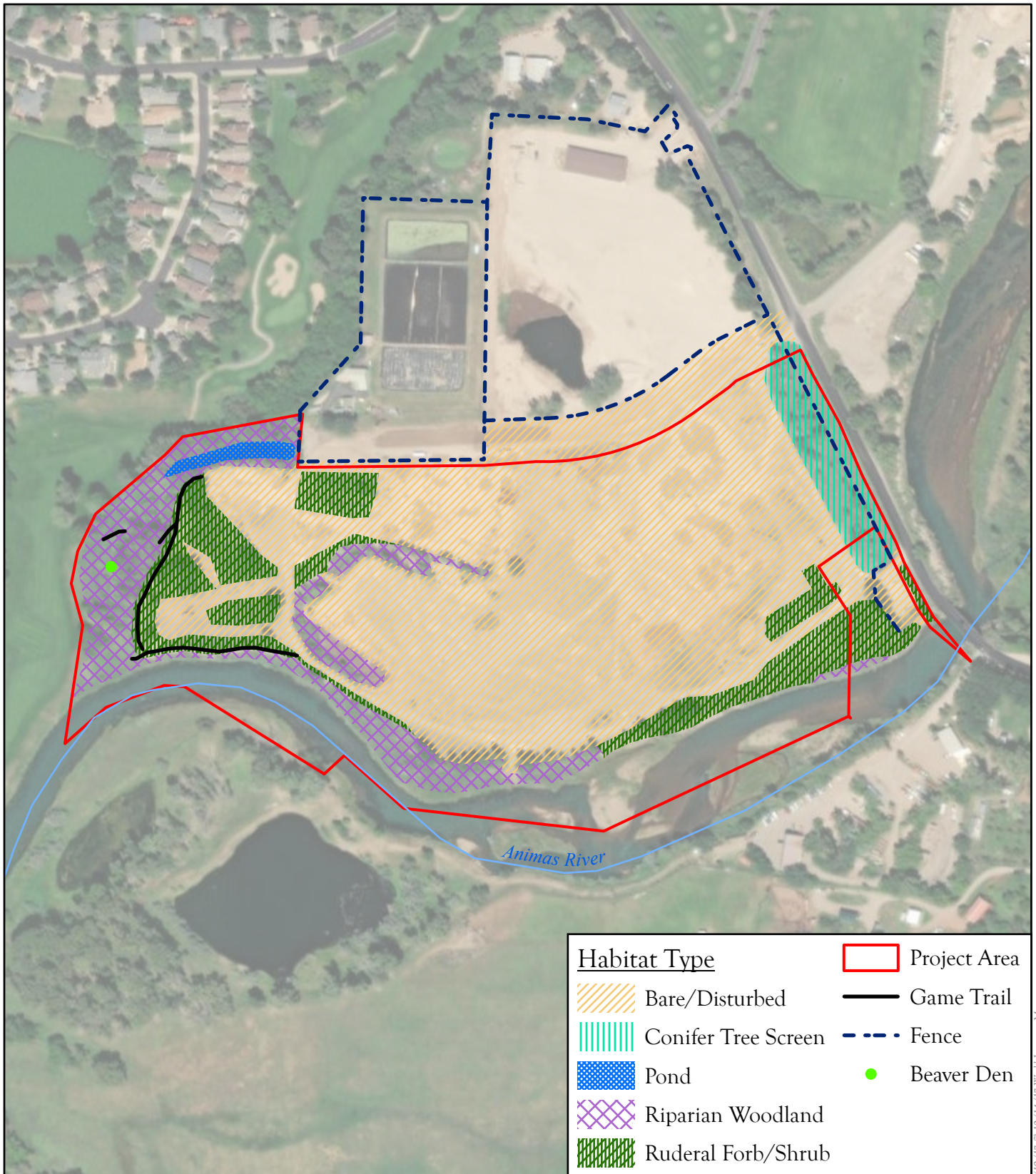
TOPOGRAPHIC LOCATION MAP




AQUATIC RESOURCES
ASSESSMENT
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
2

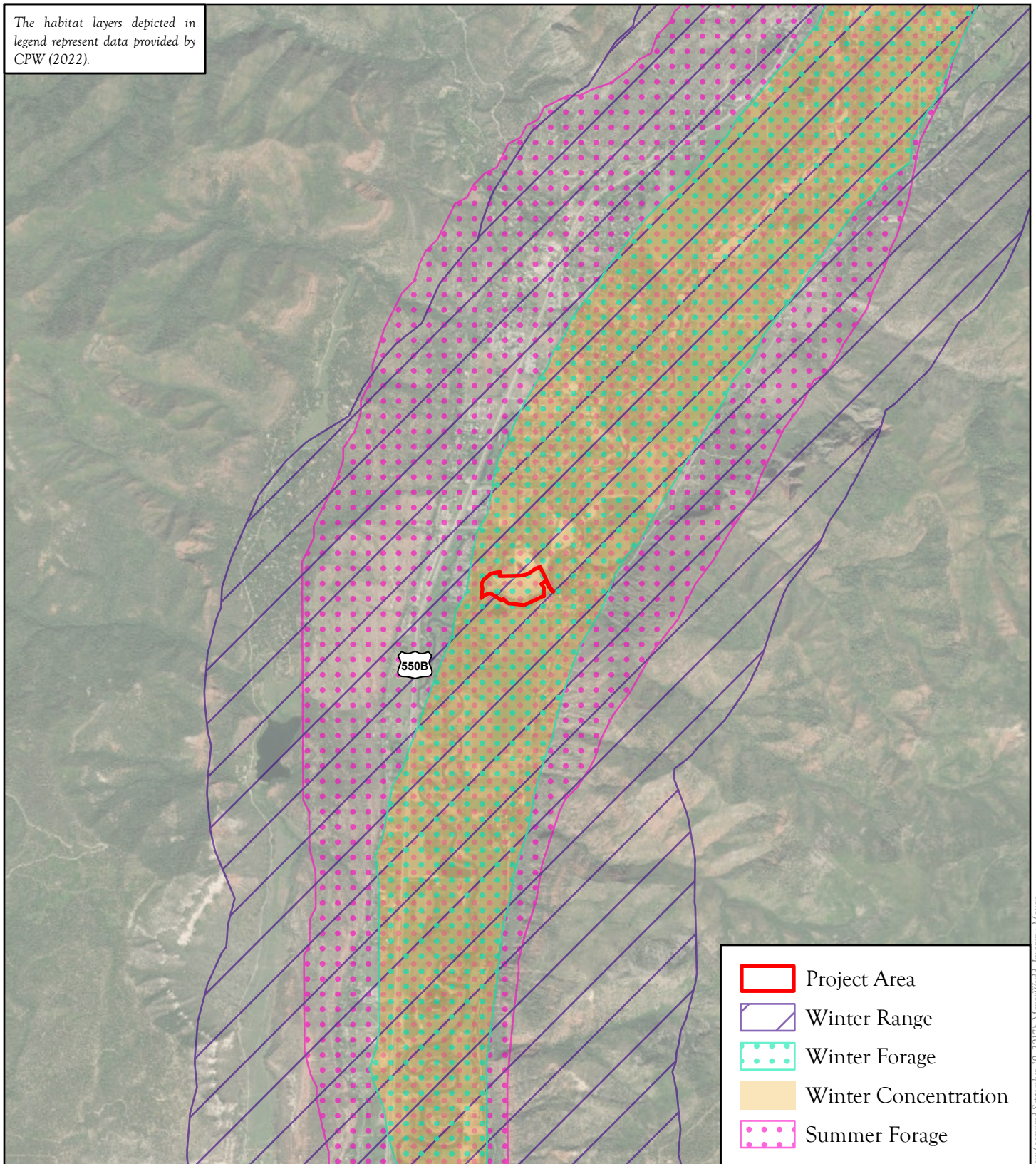


 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS</p> <p>679 East 2nd Ave. Unit E2, Durango, Colorado 81301 www.sme-env.com (970) 259-9595</p>	Drawn by:	Rvwd. by:	Project No.:	AERIAL LOCATION MAP	
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	Date:	Rvsd. Date:	Scale:	WILDLIFE ANALYSIS VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO LA PLATA COUNTY, CO	
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	  <p>0 175 350 Feet</p>				



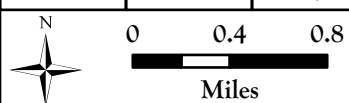
 <p>ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANTS</p> <p>679 East 2nd Ave. Unit E2, Durango, Colorado 81301 www.sme-env.com (970) 259-9595</p>	Drawn by:	Rvwd. by:	Project No.:	SITE SETTING MAP	
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		0 175 350  Feet		FIGURE 4	

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).



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Date:	Rvwd. Date:	Scale:
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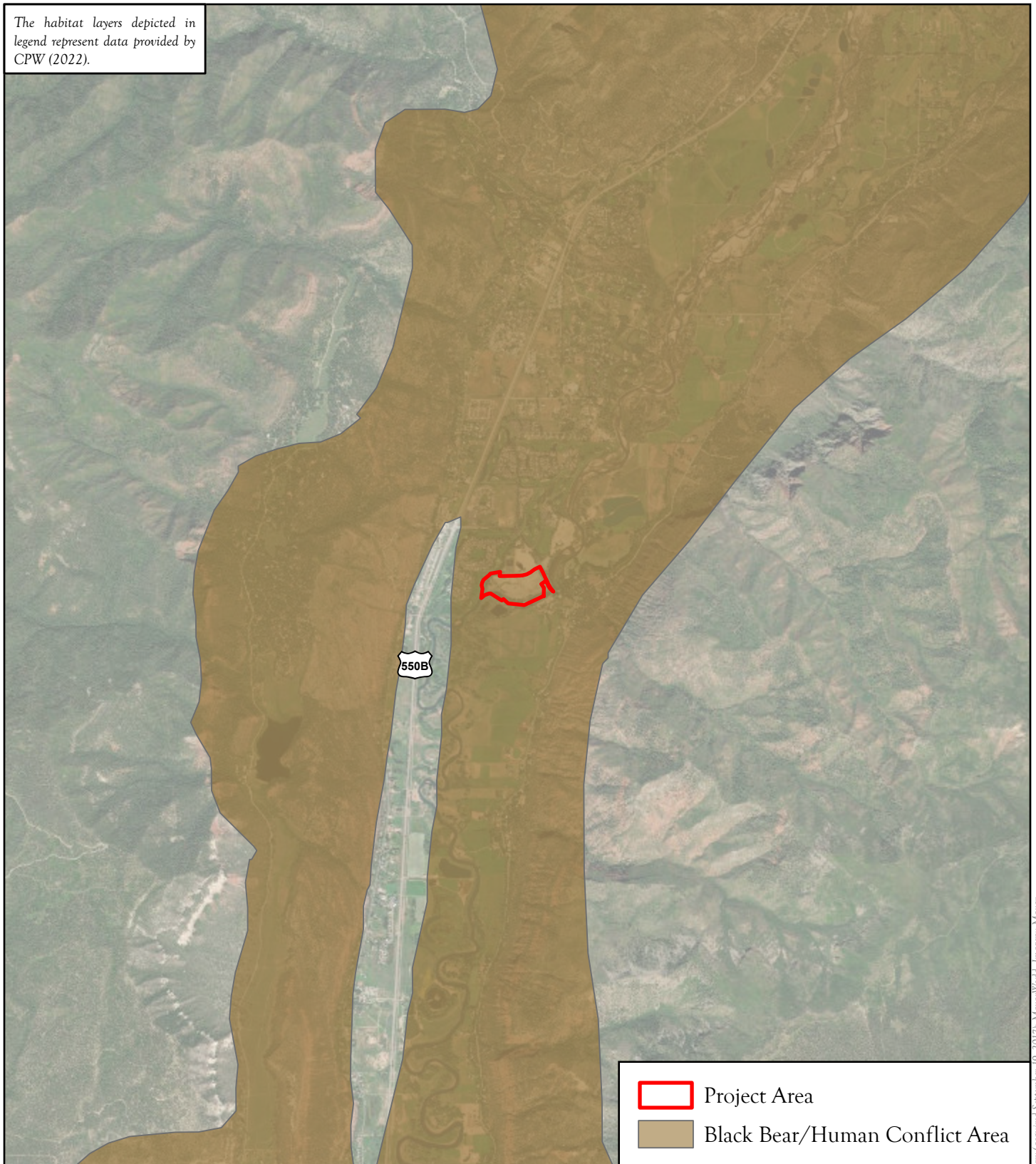


BALD EAGLE HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
5

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).

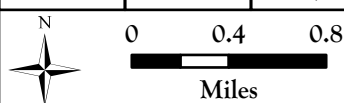


- Project Area
- Black Bear/Human Conflict Area



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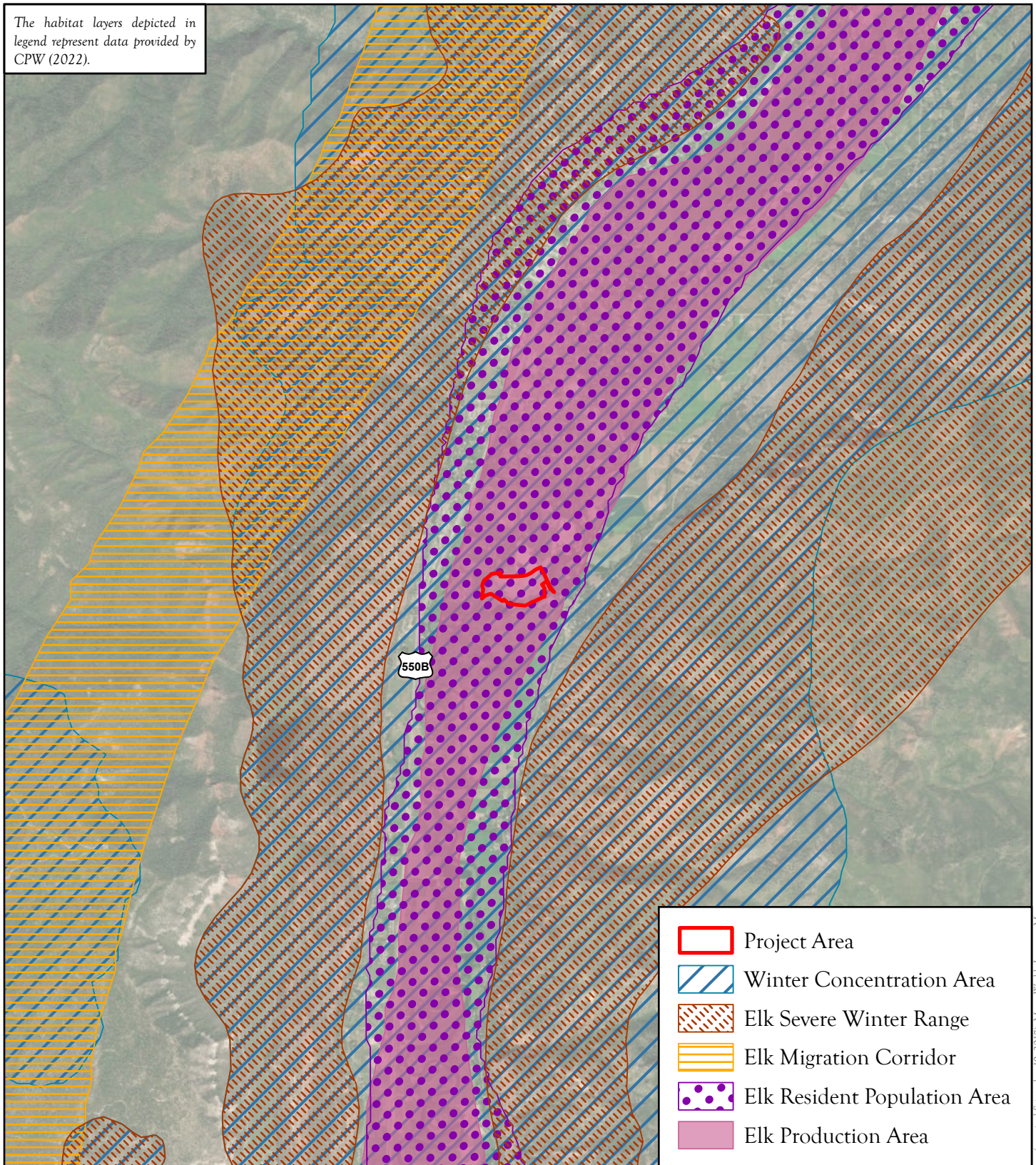





BLACK BEAR CONFLICT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
6

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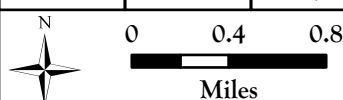


-  Project Area
-  Winter Concentration Area
-  Elk Severe Winter Range
-  Elk Migration Corridor
-  Elk Resident Population Area
-  Elk Production Area



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SB	NK	230026
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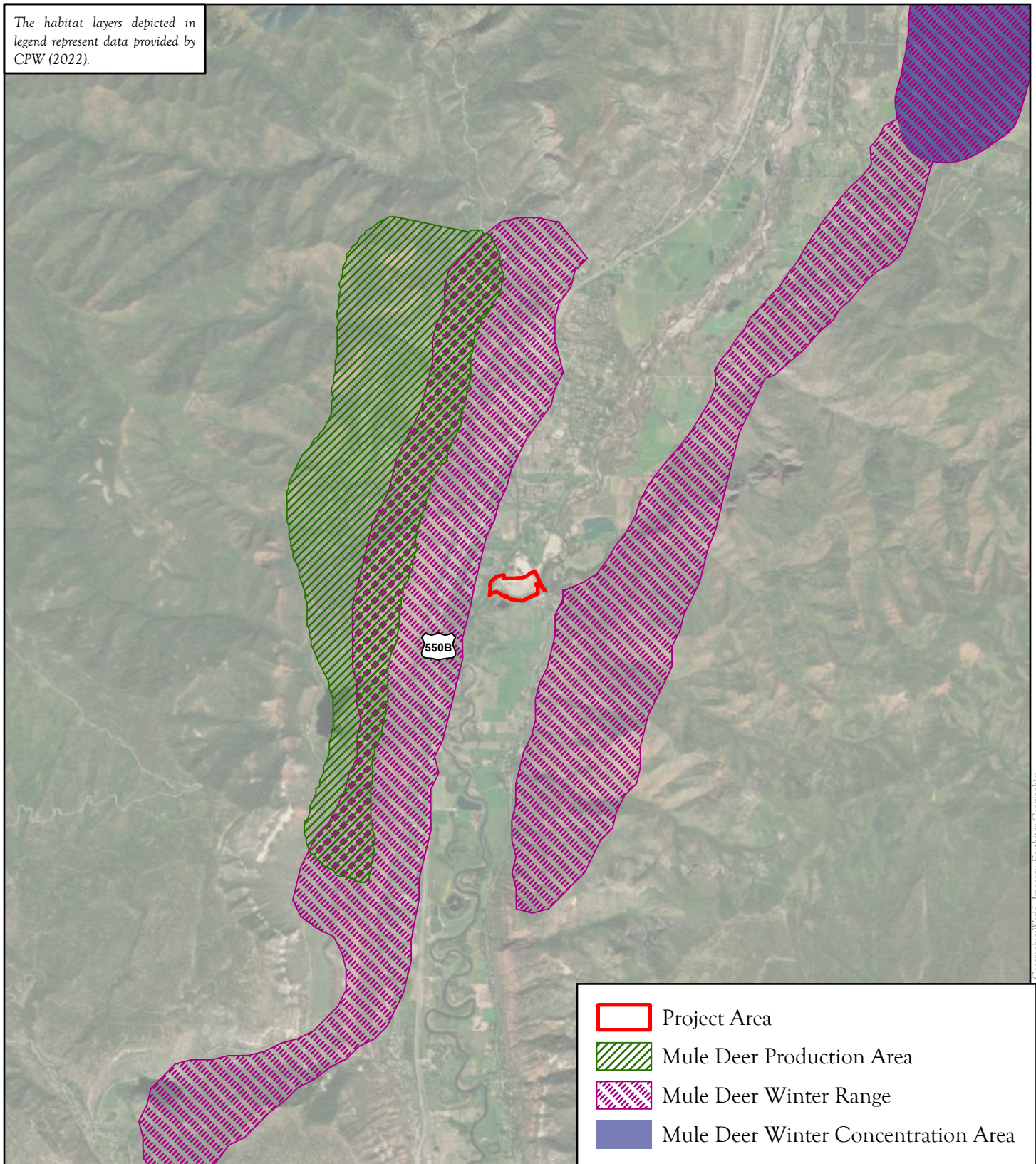






ELK HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
7


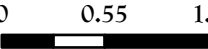
The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).



-  Project Area
-  Mule Deer Production Area
-  Mule Deer Winter Range
-  Mule Deer Winter Concentration Area



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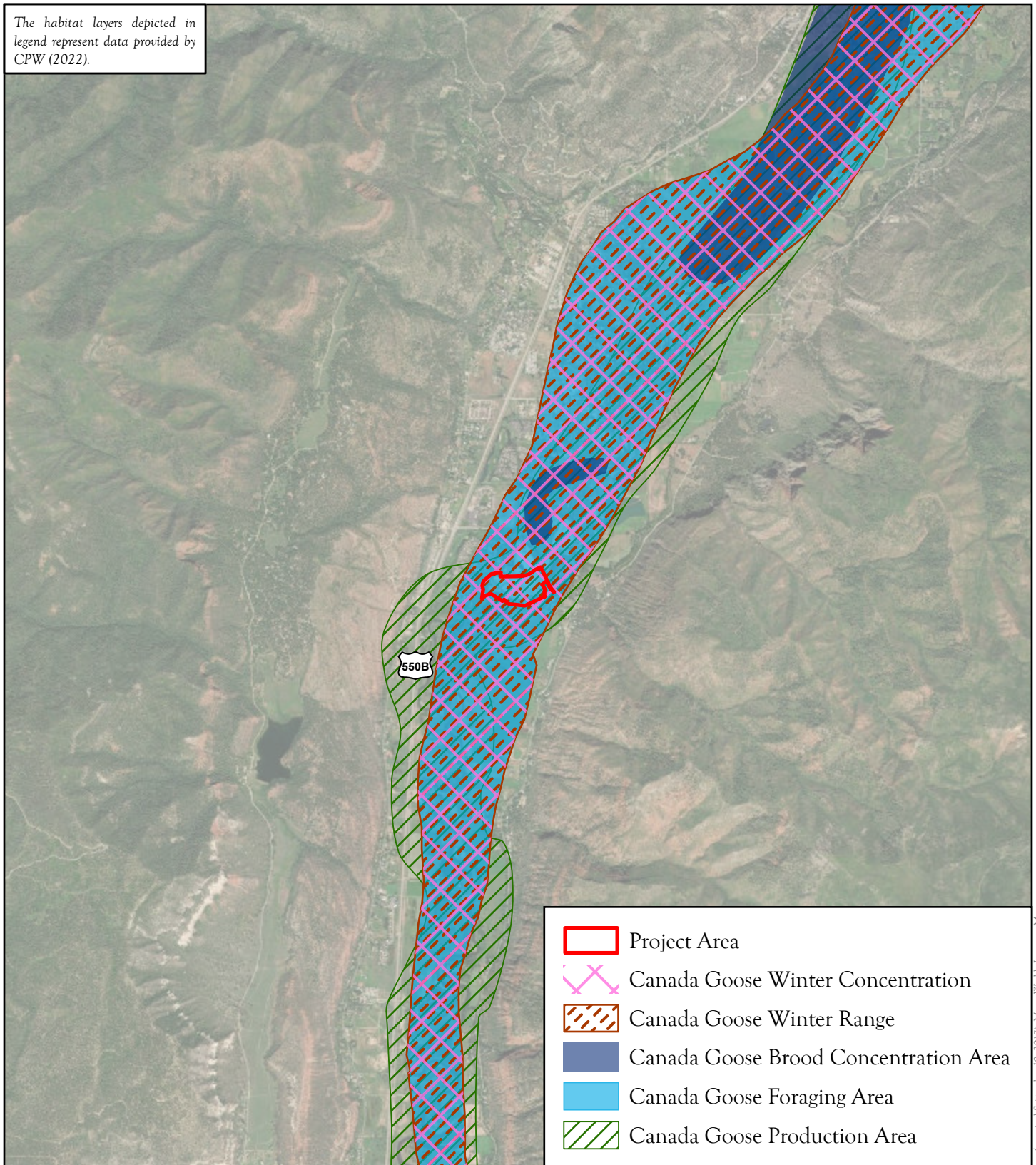
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Date:	Rvwd. Date:	Scale:
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MULE DEER HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
8

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).

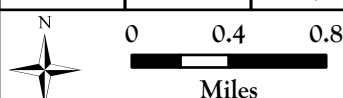


- Project Area
- Canada Goose Winter Concentration
- Canada Goose Winter Range
- Canada Goose Brood Concentration Area
- Canada Goose Foraging Area
- Canada Goose Production Area



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SB	NK	230026
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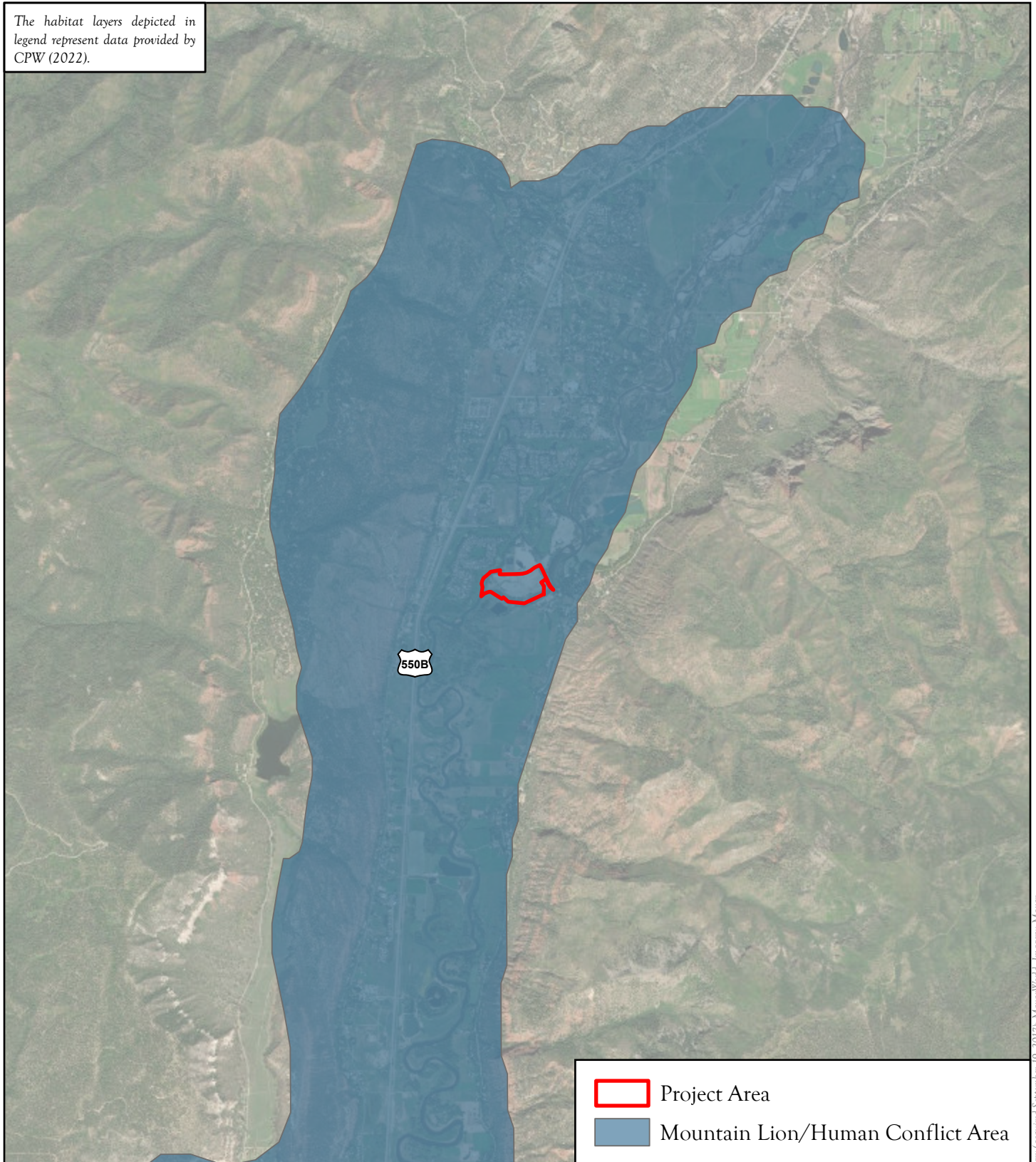


CANADA GOOSE HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
9

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).



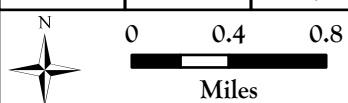
- Project Area
- Mountain Lion/Human Conflict Area



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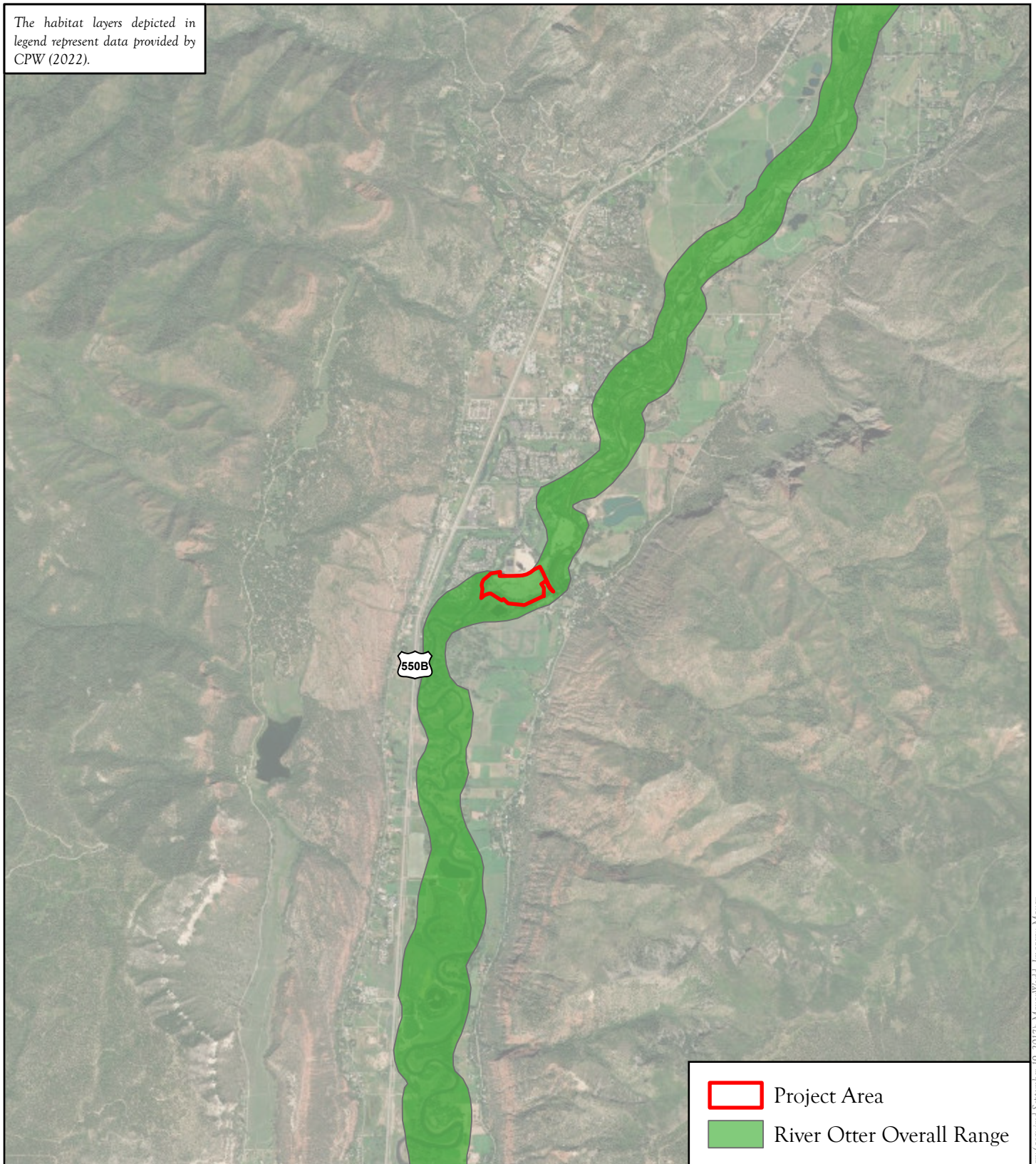


MOUNTAIN LION CONFLICT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

**FIGURE
10**

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).



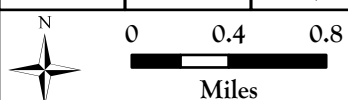
- Project Area
- River Otter Overall Range



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Date:	Rvsd. Date:	Scale:
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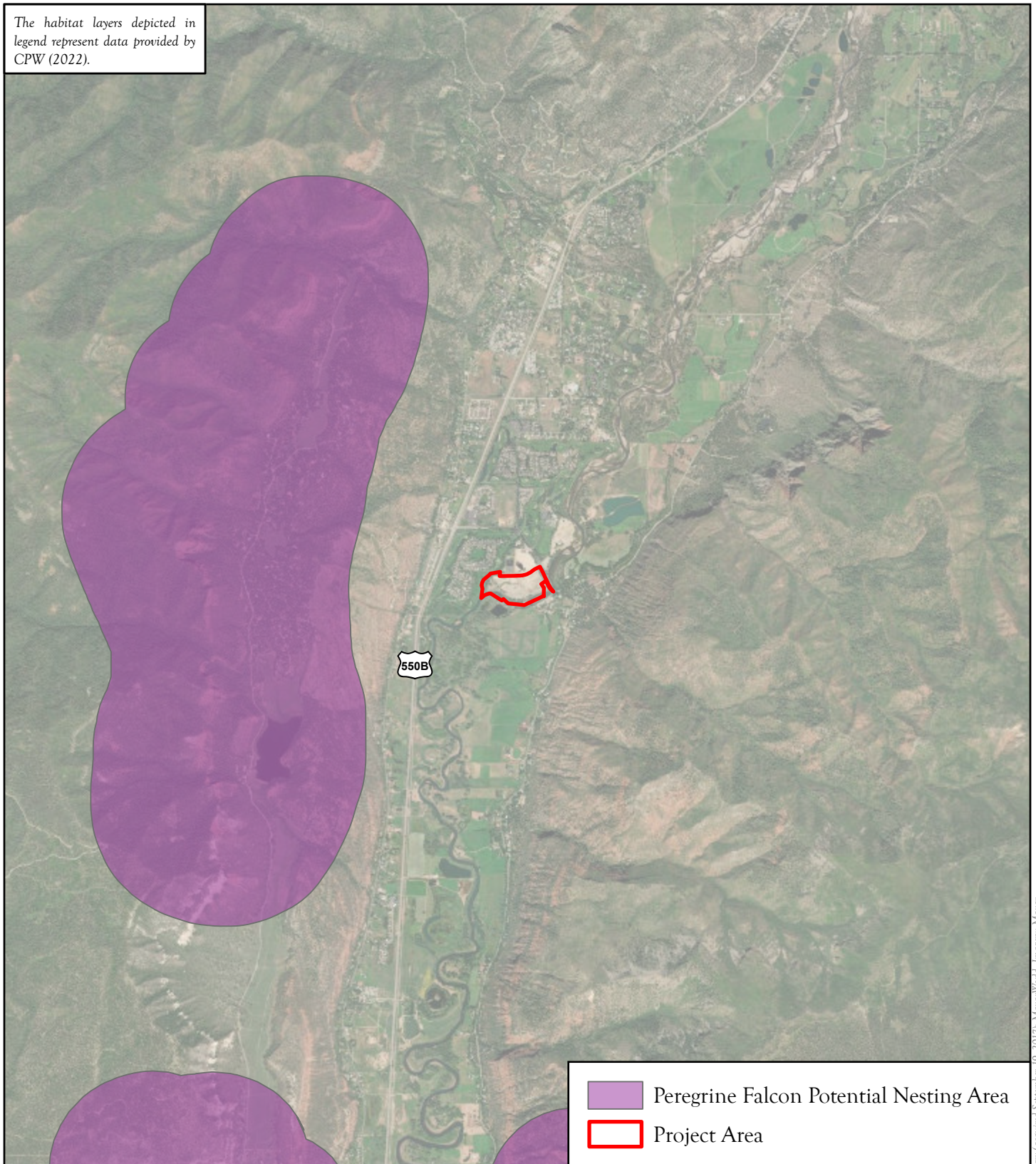


RIVER OTTER HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
11

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).



- Peregrine Falcon Potential Nesting Area
- Project Area



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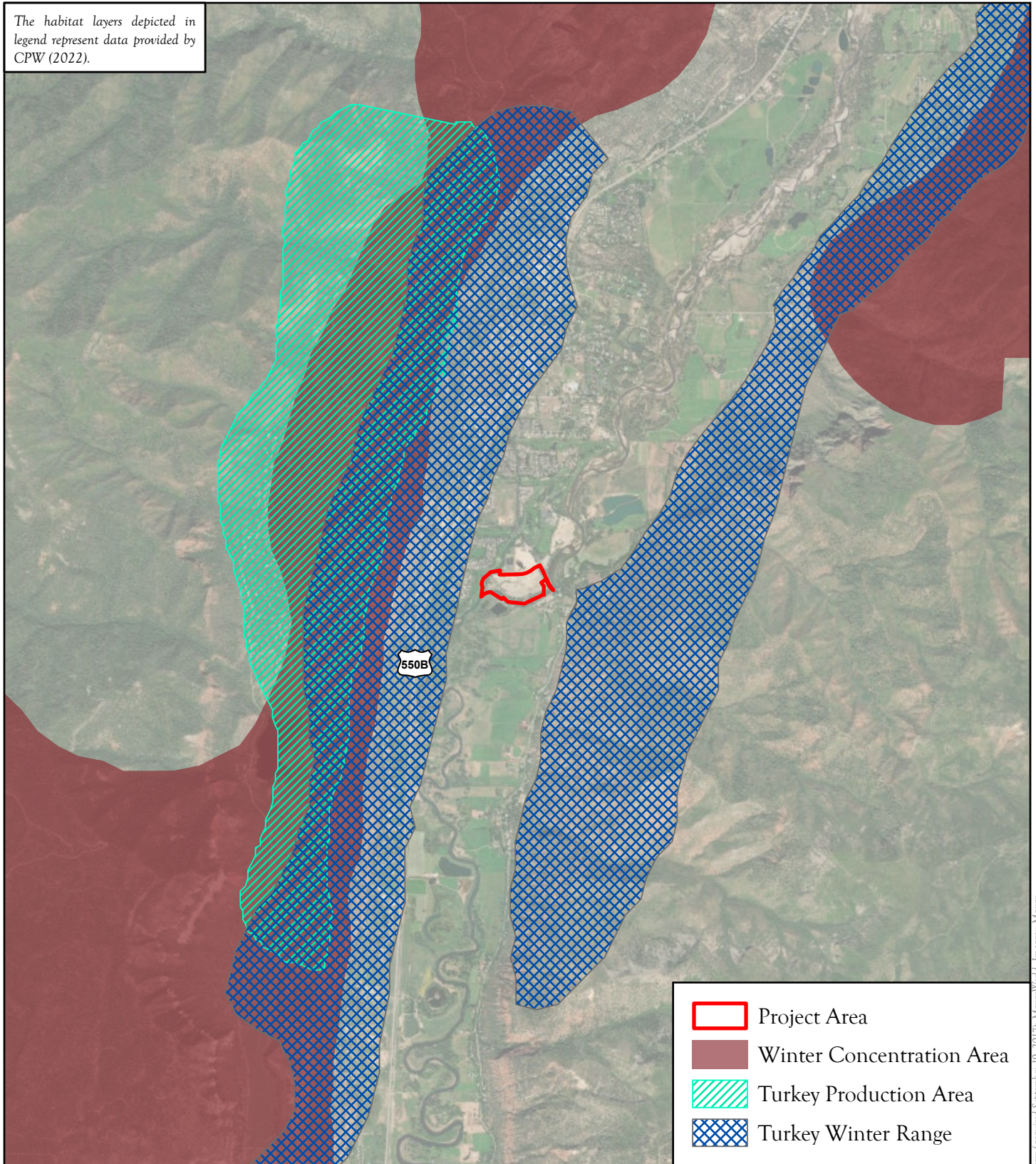
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PEREGRINE FALCON HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
12

The habitat layers depicted in legend represent data provided by CPW (2022).



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SB	NK	230026
Date:	Rvwd. Date:	Scale:
7/31/2023	NA	1:50,000



0 0.4 0.8
Miles

WILD TURKEY HABITAT MAP

WILDLIFE ANALYSIS
VILLAGE CAMP DURANGO
LA PLATA COUNTY, CO

FIGURE
13

ATTACHMENT B
Photo Documentation – July 25, 2025



Photo 1 is from the top of the berm at the western end of the property and faces west towards the southern end of the wetland at the west edge of the property where it meets the Animas River.



Photo 2 is from the top of the berm described in photo 1 and faces north along the top of the berm. Note wetland/riparian woodland to the west (left) and disturbed gravel mining area to the east (right).



Photo 3 is from the northwest corner of the property and faces southeast. Note bare areas and ruderal vegetation in previously disturbed area.



Photo 4 is from the north side of the property facing east. Note tall fence and bare, gravelly soils.



Photo 5 is from the eastern edge of the property and shows the conifer tree screen.



Photo 6 is from the northern bank of the Animas River near the eastern end of the property and faces east. Note the steep bank with minimal riparian woodland veg here.



Photo 7 is from the south-central portion of the property and faces south towards the Animas River. Note the narrow band of trees along the northern bank.



Photo 8 is from the northern bank of the Animas River near the western end of the property and faces east. Note the steep bank with narrow band of willow here.



Photo 9 is from a bit south of the center of the property and faces east. Note the wide expanse of bare ground and sparse ruderal vegetation across the majority of the site.



Photo 10 is from the same location as figure 9 and faces west. The riparian woodland along the north bank of the Animas River is visible in the left midground beyond the bare open area.