

Walnut Canyon Study Area

July 8, 2014

Walnut Canyon Study Presentation

- Background – Nicole Woodman, City of Flagstaff
- Overview of study – Jennifer Hensiek, USFS
Lisa Leap, NPS
- Water utility – Brad Hill, City of Flagstaff
- Review of options – Sara Dechter, City of Flagstaff
- Goals and direction – Nicole Woodman, City of Flagstaff

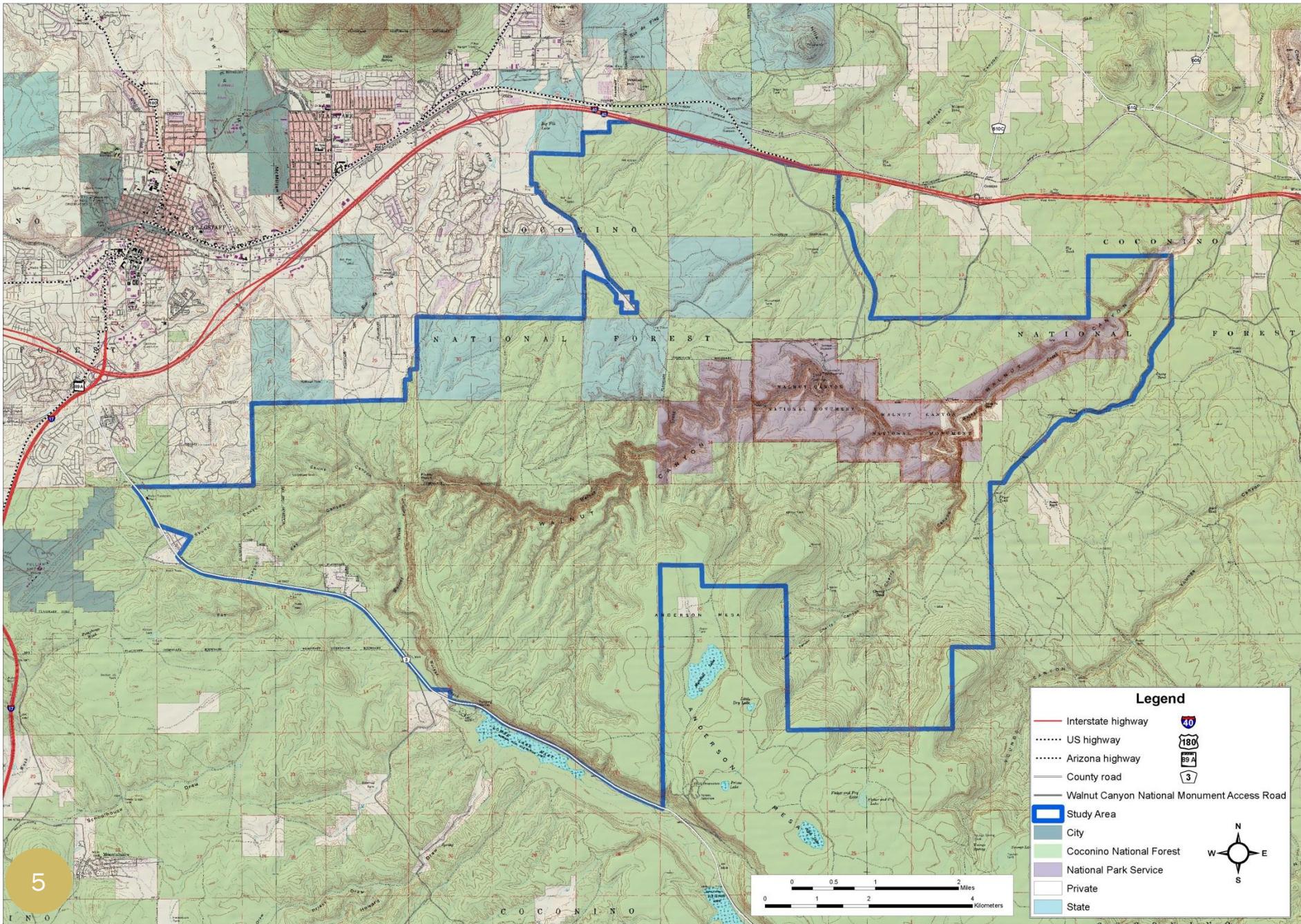
Walnut Canyon Study Background

- Compiled by the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and National Park Service (NPS).
- Study authorized in Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009.
- In 2002 Coconino County Board of Supervisors and Flagstaff City Council passed a joint resolution supporting the study.
- Study released on January 21, 2014.
- February 3, 2014 and February 25, 2014 presentations to City Council.
- April 15, 2014 Coconino County Board of Supervisors adopts resolution in support of option 2 as outlined in the study.

Jennifer Hensiek
Deputy District Ranger
U.S. Forest Service/Coconino National
Forest



Surface Land Ownership



Options Distilled from Public Meetings and Comment Periods

1. Continuation of current management by the U.S. Forest Service.
2. Congressional action establishing a special designation to the study area.
3. Congressional action that prohibits the exchange of lands to other than federal land management agencies.



Continued FS Management: Option 1

- Continued Multiple Use Management.
- Authorized uses like: forest thinning, infrastructure repair, wood cutting, and motor vehicle use expected to continue as it occurs currently.
- The same language that is in our current Forest Plan would be transferred to the revised Forest Plan.
- The current plan states, “No land exchanges will occur unless the purpose is to acquire land within MA 37 through exchange of lands of National Forest elsewhere”.

Congressional Special Management: Option 2

- Option 2 is exactly like option 1 except for it accounts for an added layer related to the enacting legislation including a congressional restriction on land disposal.
- Legislation establishing each SM Area is unique, but designations generally are: national monuments, game refuges, scenic areas, recreation areas, and other protected areas.
- Could raise land acquisition/disposal/exchange to requiring an act of Congress if language is in enabling legislation.

Congressional Restriction: Option 3

- Congress could approve legislation for specific land management direction, i.e., restriction on land disposal out of federal ownership.
- If enacted, land disposal actions would require specific act of Congress.
- No concrete examples of this type of option found during study.

TABLE 2. SUMMARY/COMPARISON TABLE (PAGE 57)

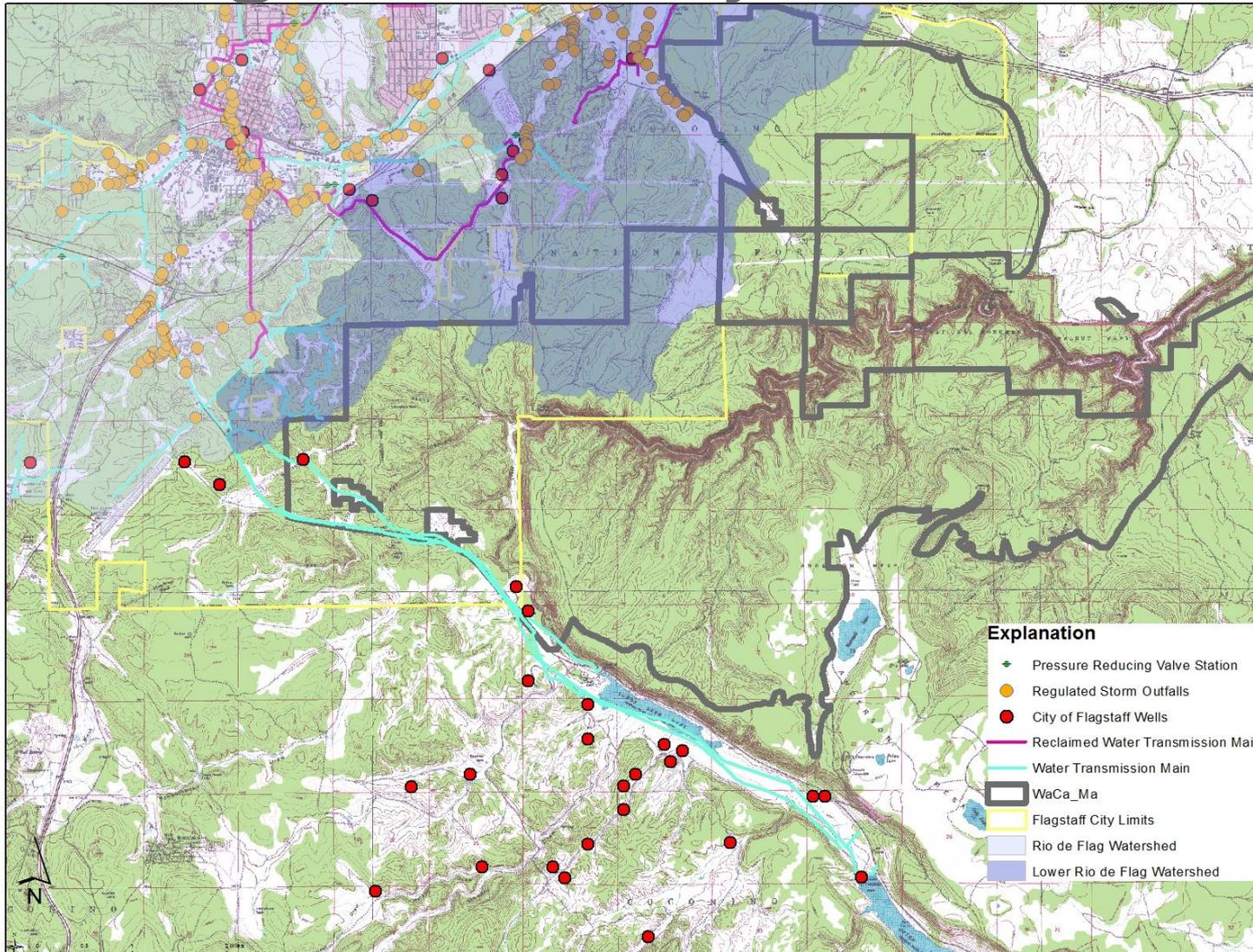
	Option 1: Continued Management by USFS	Option 2: Congressional Special Management Designation	Option 3: Congressional Restriction on Disposal
Support current range of multiple uses	Yes	Continued management by the USFS—use emphasis could change, resulting in either increases or decreases in some uses	Same as Option 1 - Continued management by the USFS
Local decision-making to respond to changes in future needs	Yes	More constrained than Option 1	Same as Option 1
Protection of cultural resources	No change; protected by current federal law and regulation	Same as Option 1	Same as Option 1
Recreation and visitor use	Use responds to growth, changes in activities; supports FUTS and Loop Trail	Could increase or decrease depending on designation	Same as Option 1
Land use in the special study area	No change; allowable land use consistent with Forest Service policies and local site and planning considerations	Allowable land uses may be defined by congressional action. Designation could limit agency flexibility to effectively manage for threats to public health and safety	Same as Option 1
USFS management	No proposed change; management objectives are defined under Forest Plan. A Regional Forester designation could be considered in the future	Adds additional layer of planning and staffing responsibility; may change depending on the designation	Same as Option 1
Achieves primary goal of protecting the from development in perpetuity	Land exchange approved at forest or USFS region level	Land disposal would require act of Congress	Land disposal would require act of Congress

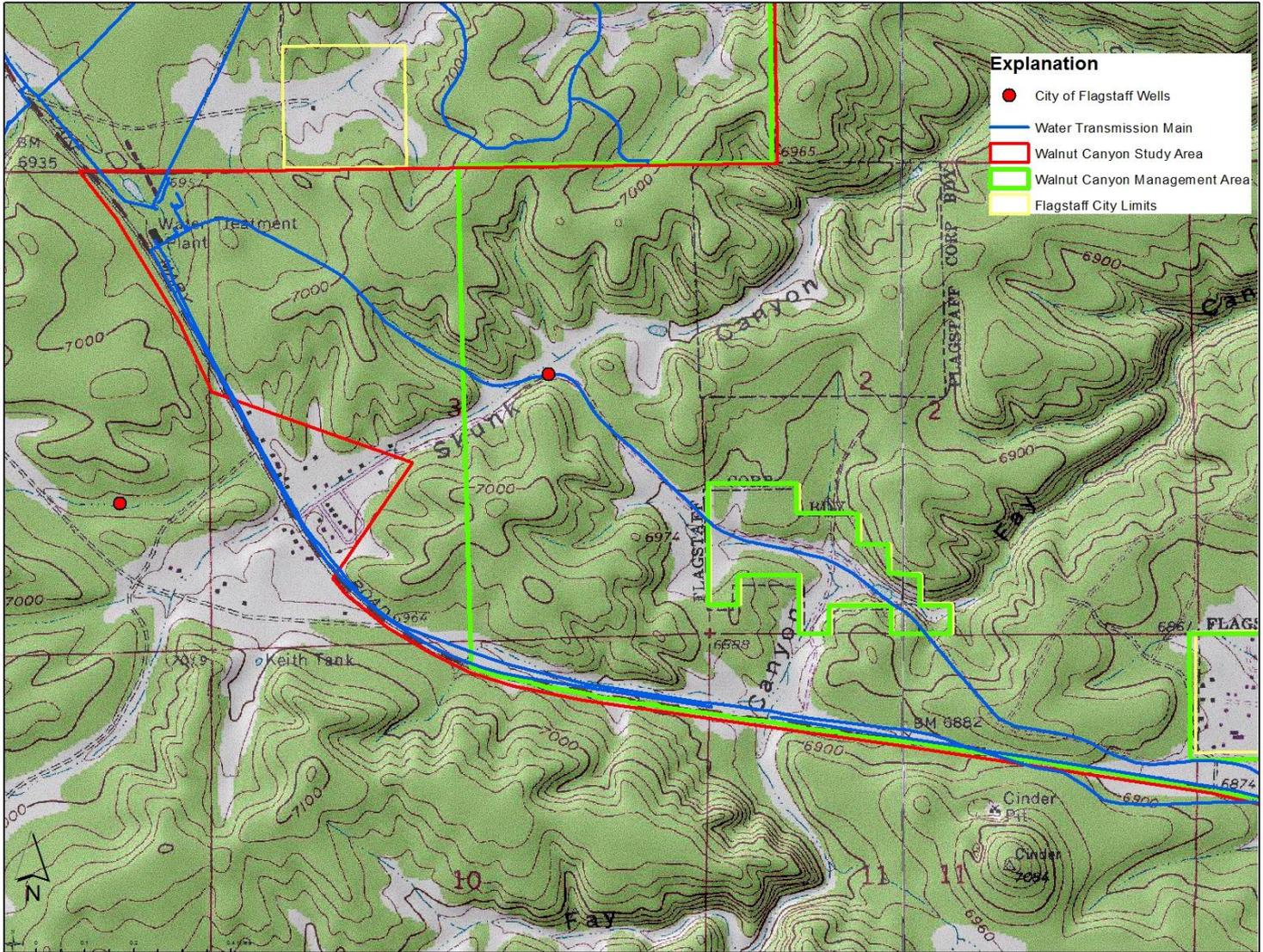
Forest Plan Revision

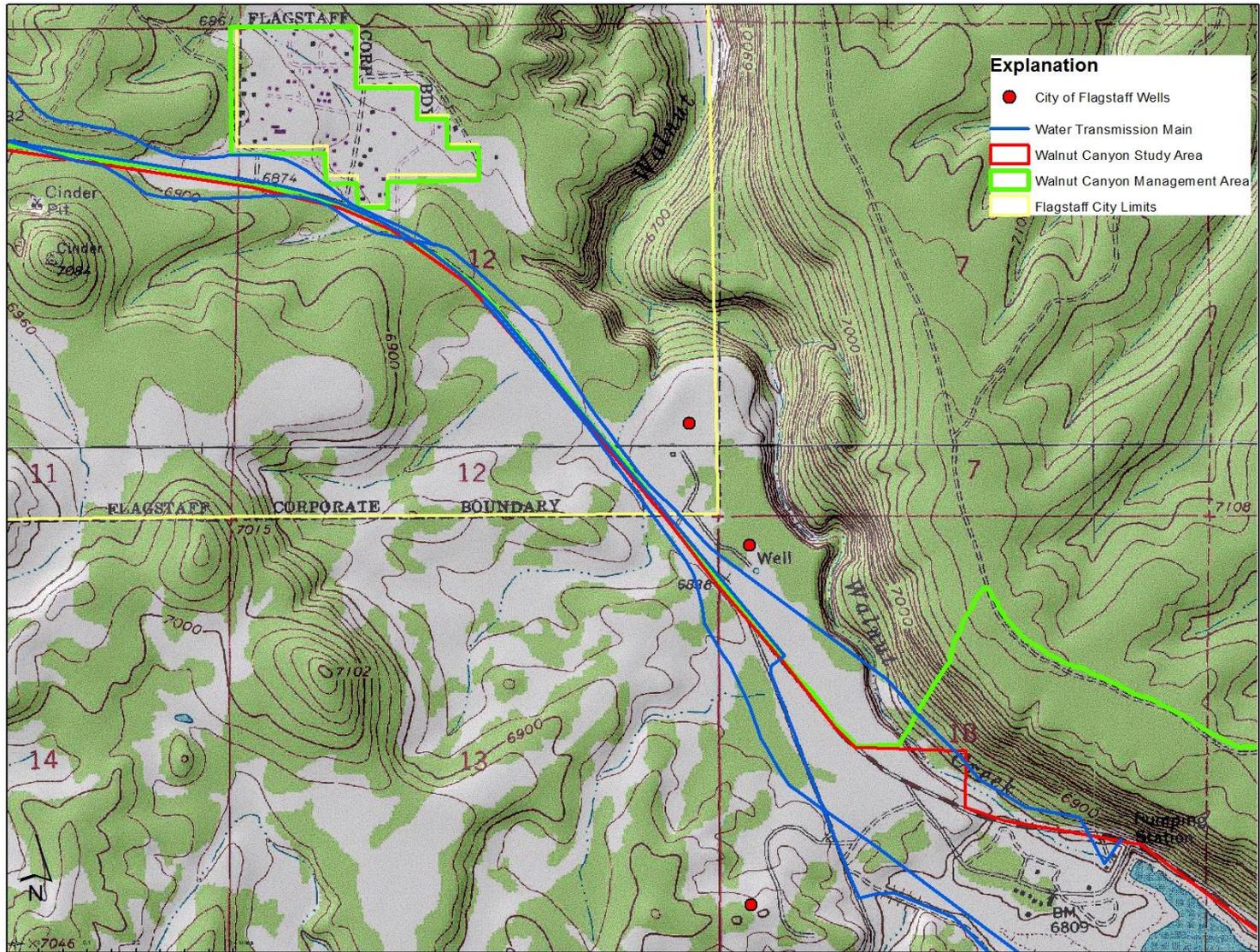
- The revised Forest Plan would have the same language as it exists in the current forest plan.
- Boundary for amendment 17 is the final boundary that will be translated to FPR documents.
- If an area was designated: Any boundary adjustments or publicly developed management plans would be incorporated into the new Forest Plan via a Forest Plan amendment. It is premature to do this now, not knowing exactly what Congress would authorize.

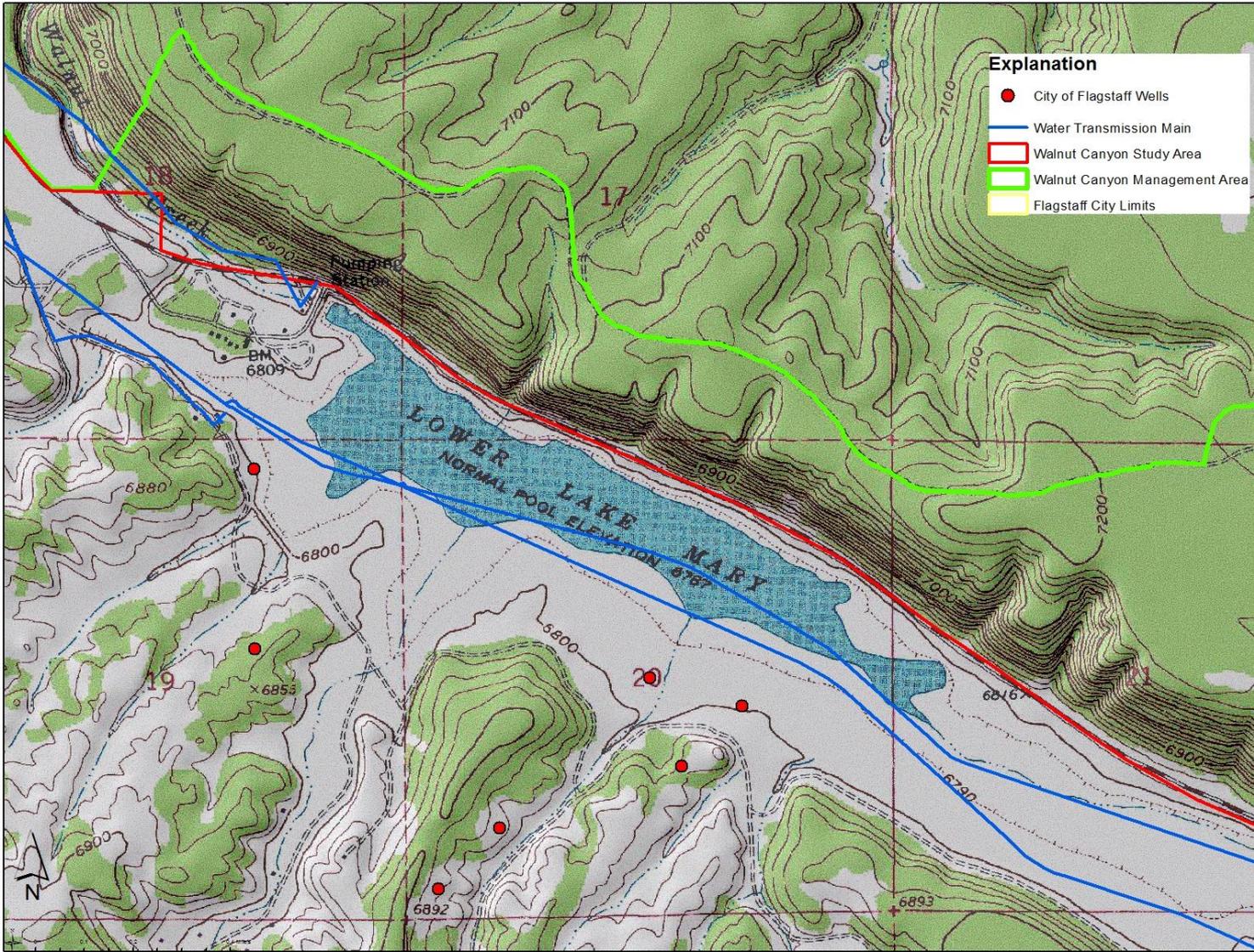
Brad Hill
Utilities Director
City of Flagstaff

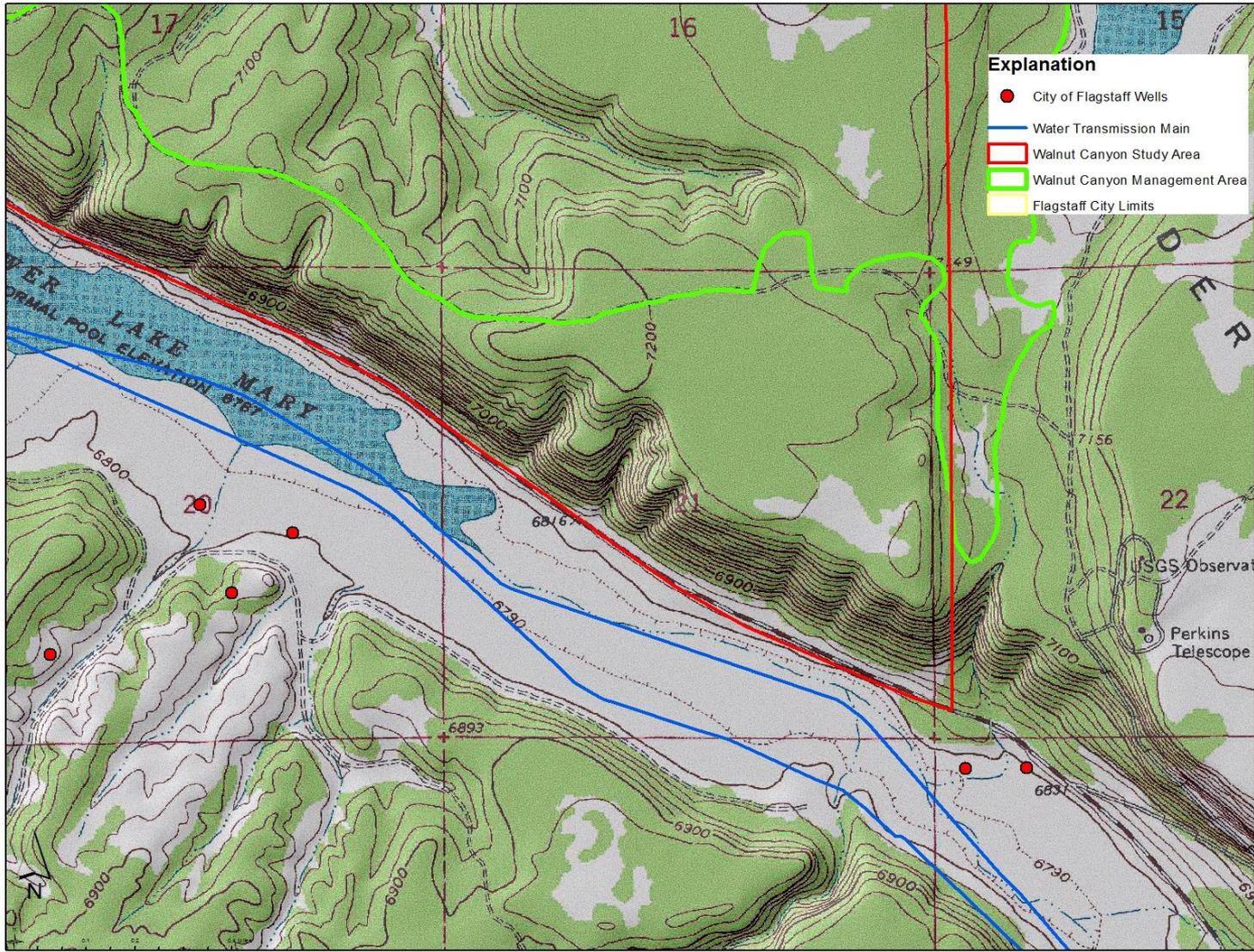
Existing Water Utility Infrastructure











Water Rights Stipulation – Surface Water

- Settles rights between NPS, USFS and City
- Provides clear language on current and future access
 - No additional surface water reservoirs in the Walnut Creek Watershed above WCNM
 - The City is permitted to:
 - Modify and maintain the ULM Reservoir, so long as the existing storage capacity is not increased.
 - Construct, modify, relocate, and maintain surface conveyance facilities (pipelines, intakes, headgates, etc.).
 - Install, maintain, operate and repair portable and temporary pumps at LLM to use water from the lake during emergencies as authorized by C.3. and C.4.

Water Rights Stipulation – Groundwater

- “The US recognizes, confirms, and agrees not to object to the future withdrawal and use by the City of underground water from existing and future wells for municipal purposes”.
- “Permitted to maintain, operate, repair, deepen and replace existing wells, and drill, maintain, operate, repair, deepen and replace future wells at any time”.
- “Replacement of existing wells or replacement of future wells in this Stipulation may be relocated anywhere in the LCR Basin, provided that any replacement well may not be located more than 1 / 8 mile nearer to Walnut Canyon NM than the well being replaced”.

Sara Dechter
Comprehensive Planner
City of Flagstaff

Staff Review of Option 1

Benefits

- + Most flexible option because exemptions to restrictions could be made by local officials.
- + Boundary could be negotiated directly with the Forest Service.
- + Flexibility to provide public utilities infrastructure.

Concerns

- The area would be treated at a level even to other Management Areas on the Forest.
- No special recognition that could be marketed, leveraged for grant money or shown on national maps.
- Land exchanges would still be difficult but still possible.

Staff Review of Option 2

Benefits

- + Legislation can be tailored to Walnut Canyon.
- + Would limit new uses.
- + Most designations of this type withdraw the area from mineral entry and limit motor vehicle access.
- + Would make the area more marketable and the area's special features more apparent on federal maps.
- + Could be leveraged for grant funding.

Concerns

- Difficult to foresee what congressionally-mandated restrictions would mean in 30 or 40 years.
- Level of detail in the enabling legislation for special areas varies
- Adjacent future suburban development could result in conflicts.
- Without appropriate language in the legislation, could limit the ability to expand utilities on the south side of the City and along the Lake Mary Road corridor.

Addressing Concerns of a Special Designation under Option 2

Legislation could be written so that it continues to allow:

- Timber harvest to address health and safety, including fuels reduction, fire suppression activities, insect and disease outbreaks, trail maintenance.
- Repairs to infrastructure using mechanized and motorized equipment.
- Woodcutting under permit.
- Invasive species management.
- Motorized vehicles on existing roads.
- The exercise of valid rights and development of State and private lands within the area.

Allow for future:

- Wells, pipelines and public utilities associated with current Stipulations between the City, Forest Service and Park Service.
- Co-location of new utilities along existing right of ways.
- Protection of health and safety during emergency recovery efforts related to flooding and fires.

Staff Review of Option 3

- Benefits and concerns would be the same as Option 1, except that land exchanges would be more restrictive.

Benefits

- + Most flexible option because exemptions to restrictions could be made by local officials.
- + Boundary could be negotiated directly with the Forest Service.
- + Flexibility to provide public utilities infrastructure.

Concerns

- The area would be treated at a level even to other Management Areas on the Forest.
- No special recognition that could be marketed, leveraged for grant money or shown on national maps.

Next Steps

- What are Council's goals?
- What action does Council want to take, if any?