

# Southern Greenlee County Trails Study

Task Assignment MPD 002E-14



## STUDY PURPOSE

The Southern Greenlee County Trails Study identified a framework of trails that could be developed to attract adventurers and naturalists to explore the rich natural and cultural heritage of Greenlee County.

The purpose of the study was to:

- ◆ Improve access to destination points within the County.
- ◆ Establish trails that provide connections between major population centers.
- ◆ Use unimproved roads and existing railroad rights-of-way as part of a proposed trail system.
- ◆ Create trail loops that encourage locals and tourists to use the trails for recreation.
- ◆ Increase stewardship of the County's natural resources by providing recreational access to them.



HDR

October 2014



# BACKGROUND

The Southern Greenlee County Trails Study was administered by the Arizona Department of Transportation and funded through the Planning Assistance for Rural Areas program (PARA). The PARA program provides federal funds to nonmetropolitan communities for the purpose of conducting transportation planning studies. The study reviewed ways to improve multimodal connections throughout the Study Area by developing an implementable and comprehensive trails system plan.

Scenic rivers, wide desert vistas, rugged mountains, primitive areas, birding, and deep Arizona history make Greenlee County a natural destination for exploration and outdoor recreation. Mining and ranching activities in Greenlee County have left behind a legacy of abandoned railroads, dirt roads, and old trails that set the stage for modern day exploration. In addition to this cultural heritage, the area's natural

heritage in the desert grasslands and the riparian areas of the Gila River, San Francisco River, and Eagle Creek provide habitat for a variety of wildlife, making the region popular for hunting and bird watching.

This planning effort connects existing and proposed County trails to the Morenci trail system, currently being planned by Freeport-McMoRan, Inc. (FMI), and builds on the popular walking trail at Loma Linda Park and the York Valley State Route 75 multiuse path. The study identified trails that Greenlee County residents could use for recreation, enabling them to engage in healthy life choices with limited bike-car or pedestrian-car conflicts. The result is a strategically located trail system that the County can implement to provide safe, convenient, and enjoyable trails making Greenlee County more multimodal and pedestrian friendly.



## OUTREACH

A Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) was established to provide input into the development and analysis of the trail network in Greenlee County. The following agencies were represented on the TAC:

- ◆ Greenlee County
- ◆ Town of Duncan, Arizona
- ◆ Town of Clifton, Arizona
- ◆ Community of Morenci, Arizona
- ◆ SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization
- ◆ Arizona Department of Transportation
- ◆ Arizona State Land Department
- ◆ Bureau of Land Management

In addition, stakeholders throughout the region were contacted to gain further knowledge of the area and how trails are being used.

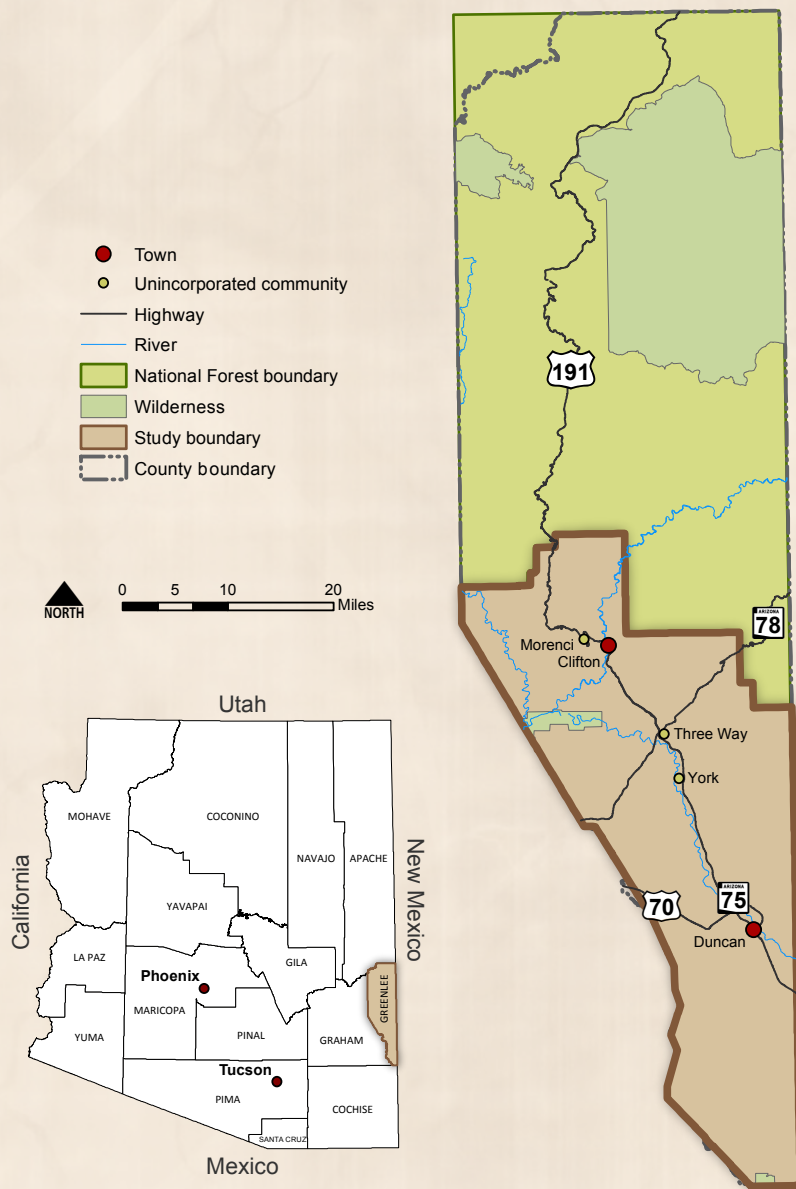
The first public meeting was held in two locations, Clifton and Duncan, on February 26, 2014. The purpose of the meeting was to present information and maps in support of Working Paper #1, *Existing and Future Conditions*. The second public meeting was held in York on April 30, 2014. The purpose of the second meeting was to present information and maps in support of Working Paper #2, *Plan for Improvements*.



# SETTING

**G**reenlee County is located in eastern Arizona on the New Mexico border, 200 miles by road from Phoenix and 170 miles by road from Tucson. Most of the 1,800 square miles of land within the County is public, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, or the Arizona State Land Department. This study focused on the lands south of the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, primarily along the Gila and San Francisco Rivers. The Study Area covers nearly 670 square miles of southern Greenlee County and includes the towns of Clifton and Duncan, and the communities of Morenci, York, and Three Way.

Southern Greenlee County is located along Arizona's physiographic Transition Zone between the Basin and Range province, which includes Sky Island mountain ranges such as the Pinalenos in Graham County or the Chiricahua Mountains in Cochise County, and the Colorado Plateau. This Transition Zone is characterized by rugged mountains and deep canyons. The County is abundant with vegetation that is native to the Southwest region. Much of the flora in the southern region of the Study Area grows low to the ground and is typical for a desert climate, such as mesquite grass, yucca, and creosote. Pine and fir trees can be found in the northern part of the County and in the Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest.



*Sandhill cranes*



*Greenlee County environment*

# Recommended Facilities

ID No.	Name	Description	Proximity to Urban Area	Time Frame	Relative Cost Comparison
Trails and Paths					
T3	Gila Bird Trail	Birding trail along Gila River in Duncan	Duncan	Short	\$
T1a	San Francisco River Path	From Zorilla Avenue bridge to Park Avenue bridge, east side of river	Clifton	Short	\$\$
T1b	San Francisco River Path	From Zorilla Avenue bridge to Park Avenue bridge, west side of river	Clifton	Mid	\$\$
T1c	San Francisco River Path	From Park Avenue bridge to Ward Canyon Road, east side of river	Clifton	Mid	\$\$
T1d	San Francisco River Path	From Park Avenue bridge to Ward Canyon Road, west side of river	Clifton	Long	\$\$
T1e	San Francisco River Path	From Trailhead 1 south along river to Zorilla Avenue bridge	Clifton	Long	\$\$
T1f	San Francisco River Path	From Ward Canyon Road to Morenci trail, east side of river	Clifton	Long	\$\$
T1g	San Francisco River Path	From Ward Canyon Road to Trailhead 3, west side of river	Clifton	Long	\$\$
T4	Ashy Trail	From San Francisco River Road to Hickey Springs Trail	Clifton	Short	\$
T5	Mulligan Trail	From San Francisco River Road to Pleasant Valley Trail	Clifton	Short	\$
S1	Clifton SRTS	Between RV park and schools	Clifton	To be determined through a Safe Routes to School study	
S2	Clifton SRTS	Downtown Clifton to schools			
S3	Clifton SRTS	Shannon Road to US 191 to schools			
S4	Clifton SRTS	Ward Canyon Road to schools			
S5	Duncan SRTS	McCarty Trail west to Duncan Elementary	Duncan		
S6	Duncan SRTS	Campbell Street east to Duncan Elementary			
S7	Duncan SRTS	Ocotillo Street north to Duncan Elementary			
S8	Duncan SRTS	To Duncan High School from southeast on Old West Highway			
S9	Duncan SRTS	To Duncan High School from Skyline Drive			
S10	Duncan SRTS	Route along Parks Canyon Road			
S11	Duncan SRTS	Route along East Avenue			
S12	Duncan SRTS	Route along Stadium Drive from Old West Highway			
S13	Duncan SRTS	Route along Wilson Road from Old West Highway			
T16	Riverview Trail	In Clifton behind Circle K	Clifton	Mid	\$
T2	York Valley Multiuse Pathway	Connection to existing York Multiuse Pathway	York	Mid	\$\$
T9	Big Lue Trail	Connection between Hamilton Trail and Black Jack Trail	N/A	Long	\$\$
T10	Rustler Trail	From Big Lue Trail, south to Greenlee Trail		Long	\$\$
T11	Greenlee Trail	Connection between Black Jack Trail and Duncan		Long	\$\$
T14	York Loop	Loop near York Valley connecting to Harris Camp Trail		Long	\$\$
Bicycle Routes					
B1	Highway 191	From Three Way north to the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest border (shoulder widening and signs). Segment into nine 3-mile sections for funding.	N/A	Long	\$\$\$
B2	Highway 75	From Three Way south to Duncan (shoulder widening and signs). Segment into six 3-mile sections for funding.		Long	\$\$\$
B3	Highway 78	From New Mexico west to Three Way (shoulder widening and signs). Segment into six 3-mile sections for funding.		Long	\$\$\$
B4	Highway 70	West from Duncan (shoulder widening and signs). Segment into five 3-mile sections for funding.		Long	\$\$\$
B5	Highway 191	From border of Apache-Sitgreaves Forest north to the County line. Segment into nine 3-mile sections for funding.		Long	\$\$\$



(continued)

ID No.	Name	Description	Proximity to Urban Area	Time Frame	Relative Cost Comparison
<b>Trailheads</b>					
TH1	Frisco Trailhead	North end of San Francisco River proposed path	Clifton	Mid	\$
TH2	Ward Canyon Trailhead	Where San Francisco River Path meets levee walk	Clifton	Short	\$
TH3	Shannon Trailhead	Shannon Road pull-off	Clifton	Mid	\$
TH4	Sunset Point Trailhead	Connection between Ashy Trail and Mulligan Trail	Clifton	Long	\$
TH5	Mares Bluff Trailhead	Ward Canyon Road	Clifton	Short	\$
TH6	Chacon Trailhead	Pull-off on Park Avenue	Clifton	Mid	\$
TH7	Riverview Trailhead	North of the Circle K	Clifton	Mid	\$
<b>Other Projects</b>					
01	Hybrid beacon crossing of US 191 in Clifton	One located between 1st Street and 7th Street	Clifton	Short	\$
02	Signage Program	Wayfinding and directional sign development and installation	N/A	Short	\$\$
03	Education Program	Develop outreach through printed media		Mid	\$\$

**T**he Recommended Facilities table lists the recommended projects by priority based on their scoring, their distance from Clifton or Duncan, and by how complex they are (how quickly or likely they can be built). The table also includes recommended time frames for completion (short-, mid- or long-term as described below) and a cost comparison (high-, medium-, or low-cost). Cost comparisons are shown using one, two, or three dollar signs to represent relative costs. Larger projects were segmented to make manageable individual sections.




















- ◆ Short-term projects are those that can be implemented fairly quickly, in the next 2 to 5 years, and with low cost.
- ◆ Mid-term projects are more complex and may require more planning time or may need to be submitted to a funding program. The time frame for these projects is generally 5 to 10 years.
- ◆ Long-term projects are the most complex, may involve obtaining easements or access from multiple property owners, and frequently cost the most. These projects generally are in the 10 to 20 year time frame.

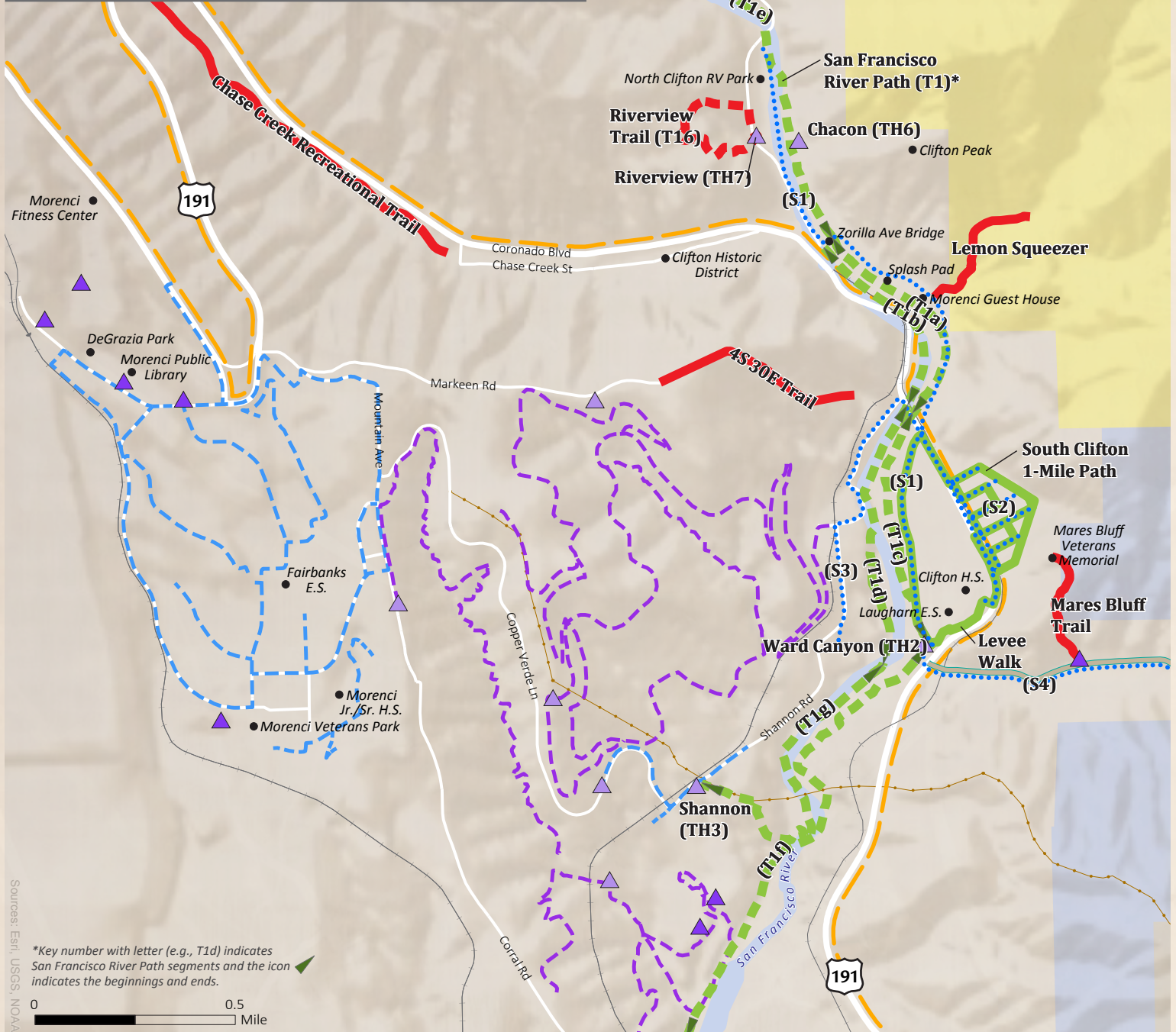
As with all planning efforts of this type, time frames are for guidance only. The realities of construction, finances, and policies dictate that some of these projects may not be implemented within their suggested time frame or in the priority order. As opportunities to cost share or obtain grants arise, they should be acted upon to propel development of the entire system forward, regardless of whether they match the prioritization determined in this study.





# Clifton

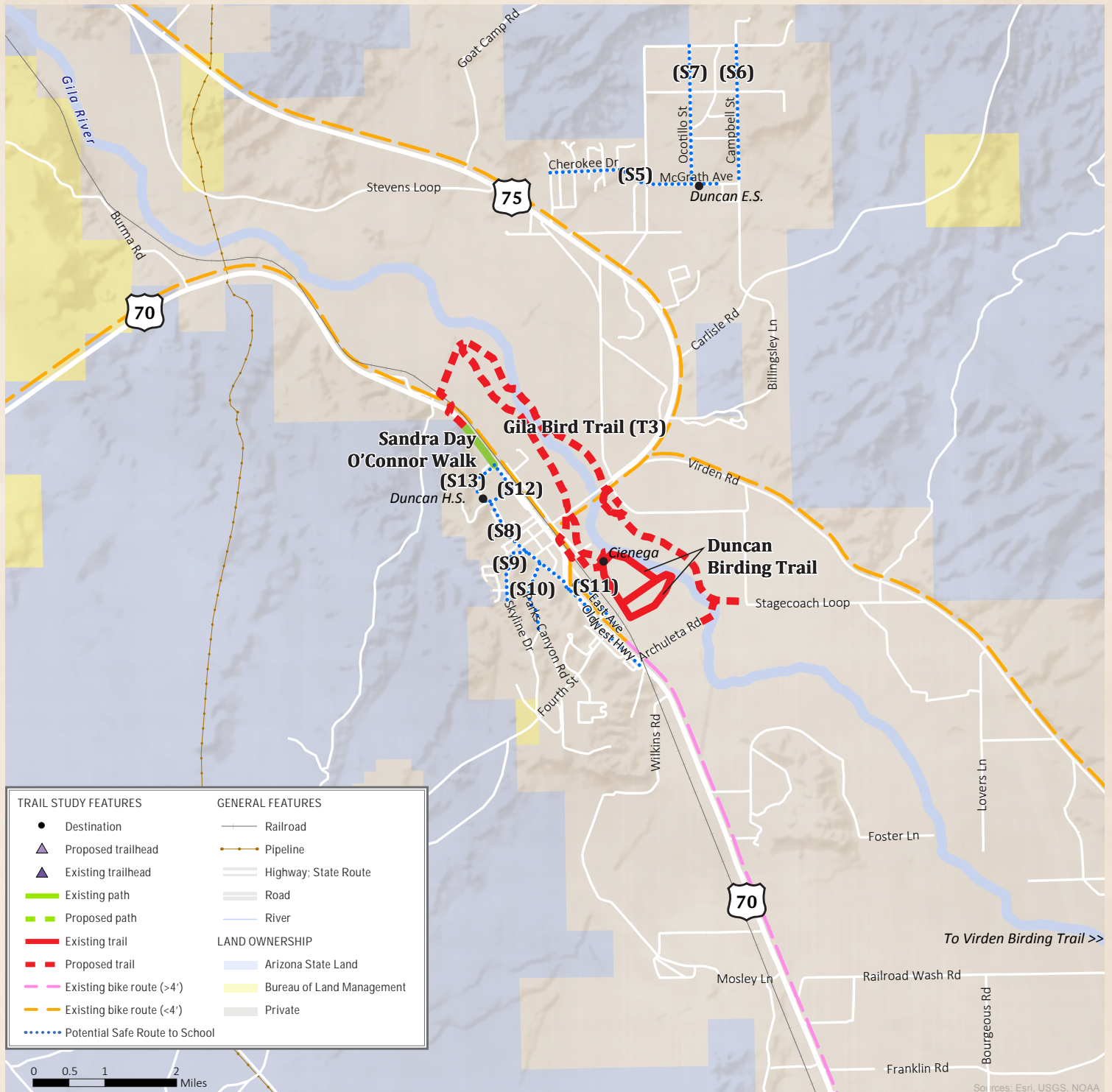
TRAIL STUDY FEATURES		
● Destination	 Proposed Morenci path	 Highway; State Route
 Proposed trailhead	 Proposed Morenci trail	 Road
 Existing	 Popular OHV route	 River
 Existing path	 Existing bike route (<4')	LAND OWNERSHIP
 Proposed path	 Potential Safe Route to School	
 Existing trail	GENERAL FEATURES	
 Proposed trail	 Railroad	 Arizona State Land
	 Pipeline	 Bureau of Land Management
		 Private



This map highlights the projects in and around Clifton. Refer to the Final Report exhibits to view the entire study area and all facilities.



# Duncan



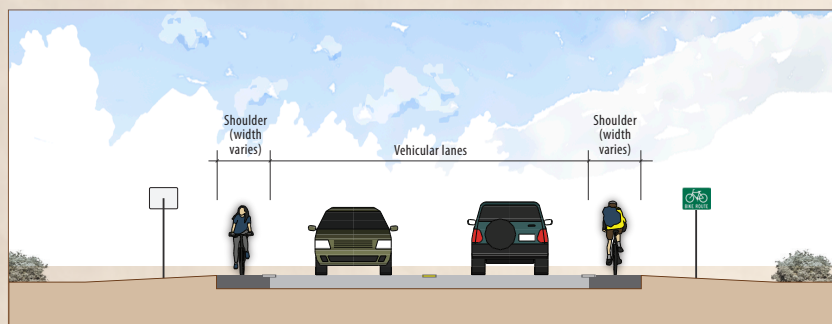
This map highlights the projects in and around Duncan. Refer to the Final Report exhibits to view the entire study area and all facilities.



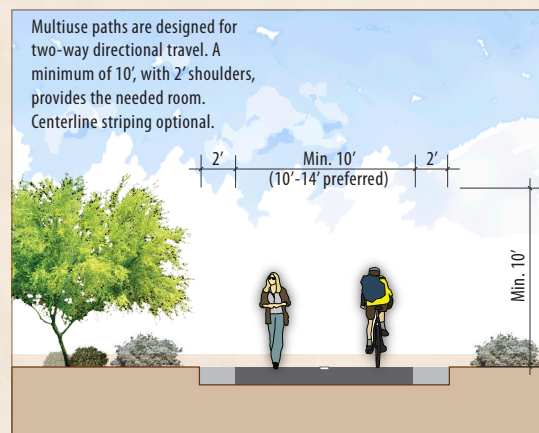
# Next Steps

Following are recommended first steps to get the implementation process started. They are not prioritized in any manner.

- ☑ Convene a trails advisory group and establish a regular meeting date and time.
- ☑ Establish a Safe Routes to School committee and begin the process of selecting projects.
- ☑ Select first project(s) and then determine land ownership. Contact owner and begin negotiations for formalizing trail status.
- ☑ Establish a logo or colors for the trails network and buy and install new trail markers for wayfinding and to generate interest in the future system.
- ☑ After October 1, 2014, contact SouthEastern Arizona Governments Organization regarding what funding changes have occurred after the expiration of MAP-21 and determine what new funding options are available.
- ☑ Work with the Apache-Sitgreaves Forest Service and their travel management plan to coordinate trails on and between Forest Service land and County land.
- ☑ Set up a trail planning and/or building workshop for local volunteers.



*Paved shoulder bicycle route*



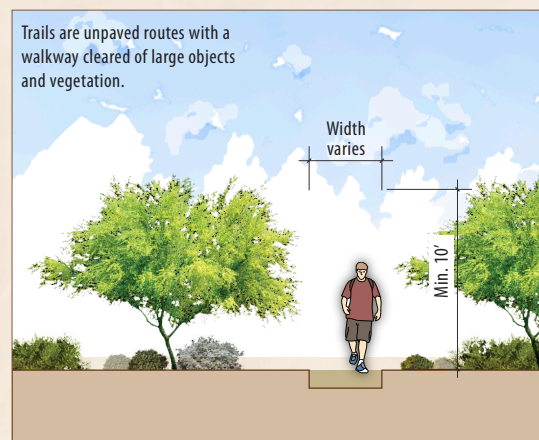
*Standard multiuse path*



*Trail markers customized for Greenlee County would inform trail users they are on a mapped route*



*View of the County's striking terrain*



*Standard trail*