



United States Department of the Interior



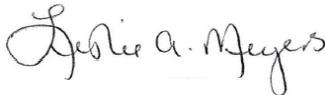
BUREAU OF RECLAMATION
Phoenix Area Office
6150 West Thunderbird Road
Glendale, AZ 85306-4001
MAR 11 2021

IN REPLY REFER TO:
PXAO-1500
2.1.4.17

VIA ELECTRONIC MAIL AND U.S. MAIL

Memorandum

To: All Interested Persons, Organizations, and Agencies

From: Leslie A. Meyers 
Area Manager

Subject: Notice of Public Scoping for an Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Proposed Expansion of the Recreational Trail Along the Central Arizona Project Canal, Pinal County, Arizona (Action by 30 days from the date of this memorandum)

The Pinal County Open Space and Trails Department (Pinal County) is proposing to develop, operate, and maintain a recreational trail along 39.75 miles of the Central Arizona Project (CAP) Canal from Park Line Road north to Highway 79 (Figure 1). The alignment would be located on land administered by the Bureau of the Reclamation (Reclamation), Pinal County, and Arizona State Lands Department (ASLD). The Proposed Action includes three CAP trail segments identified in Pinal County's 2015 *Master Plan for the Pinal County Segment of the Central Arizona Project CAP National Recreation Trail*: the North Picacho Segment, the Coolidge Segment, and the South Florence Segment. The project entails a non-motorized¹, multi-use recreational trail along the CAP canal that would accommodate pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians. As part of the project, three trailheads would also be developed. Pinal County is working with Reclamation to prepare an EA as required under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The EA would consider the impacts of Reclamation's approval of the trail on Reclamation administered lands as well as impacts from potential connected actions on ASLD and Pinal County lands. Reclamation is requesting public input to help identify issues and concerns associated with the proposed recreational trail. This information will be used to analyze the environmental impacts of the project.

The proposed trail would be located atop the existing berm, adjacent to the CAP Canal, or use an existing road from the Park Link Road and Nona Road intersection, north until it ends west of Highway 79 near Florence, Arizona (Figure 2). Most of the proposed path (28.3 miles) would use an existing maintenance road on top of the berm along the canal, but would be outside the security

¹ Reclamation recently revised 43 Code of Federal Regulations, Part 420 for off-road vehicle use. Under the revised rule, the definition for "off-road vehicle" was amended to include an additional exclusion category for electric bikes (e-bikes) that satisfy specific criteria. Upon certain approvals class I, II, and III e-bikes may be treated similarly to traditional, non-motorized bicycles on Reclamation Lands. An evaluation will be included in the EA.

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* PARTIAL

fencing, and would require minimal ground disturbance for trail construction and operation. The existing maintenance road is naturally surfaced with native soils and is approximately 12-foot wide. Another 9.2 miles of the proposed trail would be on ASLD administered lands and would follow an existing two track road that is approximately 8 to 12-foot wide. The remaining portion of the proposed trail (2.25 miles) would occur on Pinal County lands and would follow an existing dirt road. The establishment of the trail on ASLD and Pinal County lands would require minimal ground disturbance to construct and operate the trail. The project also includes the construction, operation, and maintenance of three trailheads: the Picacho Trailhead, the Cactus Forest Trailhead, and the South Florence Trailhead (Figure 2). The Cactus Forest Trailhead would include parking spaces, and the Picacho and South Florence Trailheads would also include equestrian parking spaces, waterless restrooms, and shade ramadas.

Reclamation has determined that an EA is the appropriate level of review under NEPA. The EA will evaluate the impacts of the proposed action on the human and natural environments. As part of this EA process, Reclamation is seeking your participation in identifying any potential issues or concerns with the proposed activity. Comments should be submitted to Pinal County CAP Trail Project, Attn: SWCA Environmental Consultants, 343 West Franklin Street, Tucson, Arizona 85716; fax to (520) 325-2033; or, via email to cagner@swca.com, no later than 30 days from the date of this memorandum.

Please be aware that by law, your name, address, and other personal identifying information may be made publicly available at any time. Individuals may request that their personal identifying information be withheld from public review by stating so prominently at the beginning of your comment. We cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so; however, we will honor your request to the extent allowable by law. All comments from organizations or businesses will be available for public inspection in their entirety.

For additional information regarding this memorandum, please contact Ms. Nichole Olsker, Environmental Protection Specialist, Reclamation's Phoenix Area Office, (480) 216-9914 or via email nolsker@usbr.gov.

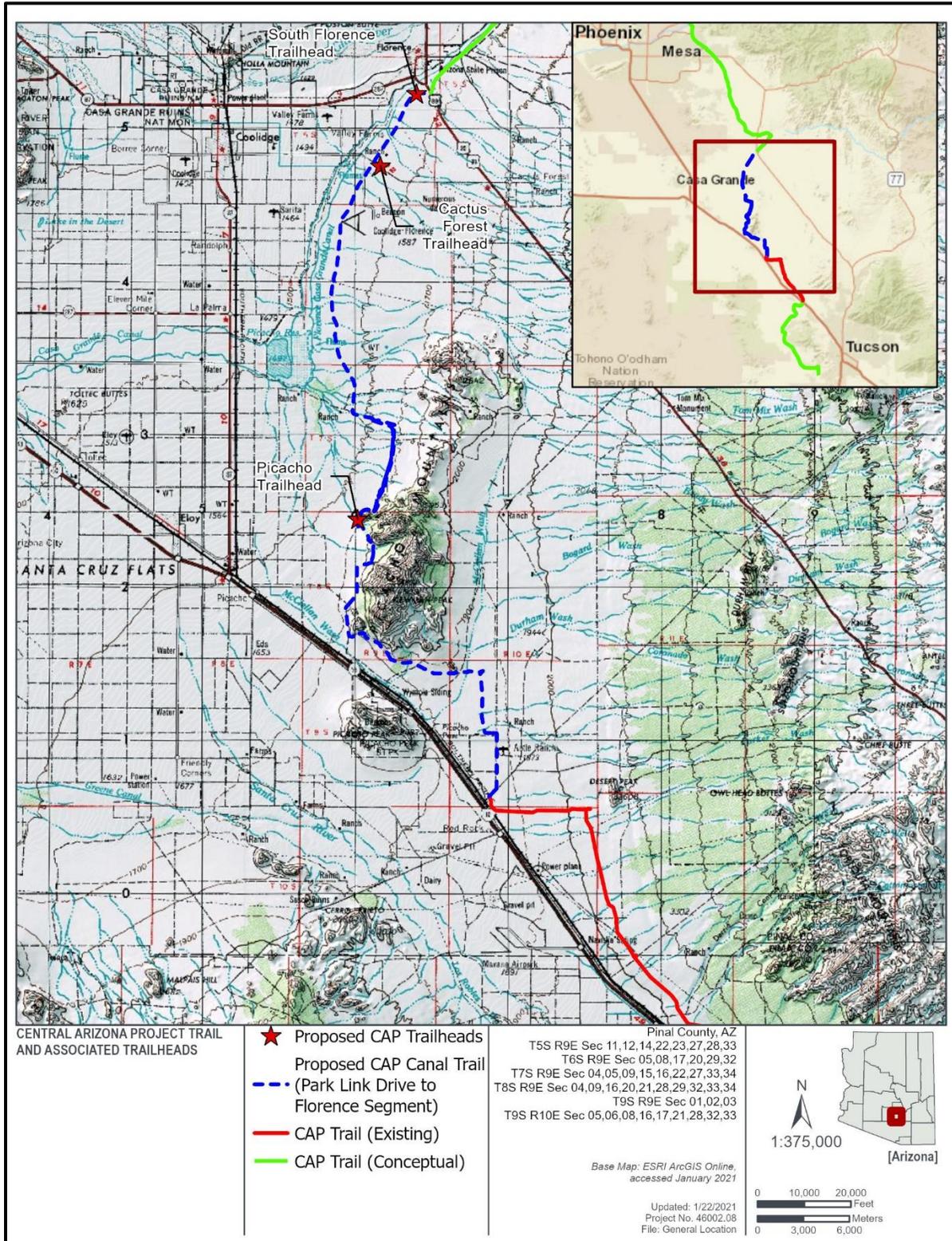


Figure 1. Central Arizona Project Recreational Trail Project location.

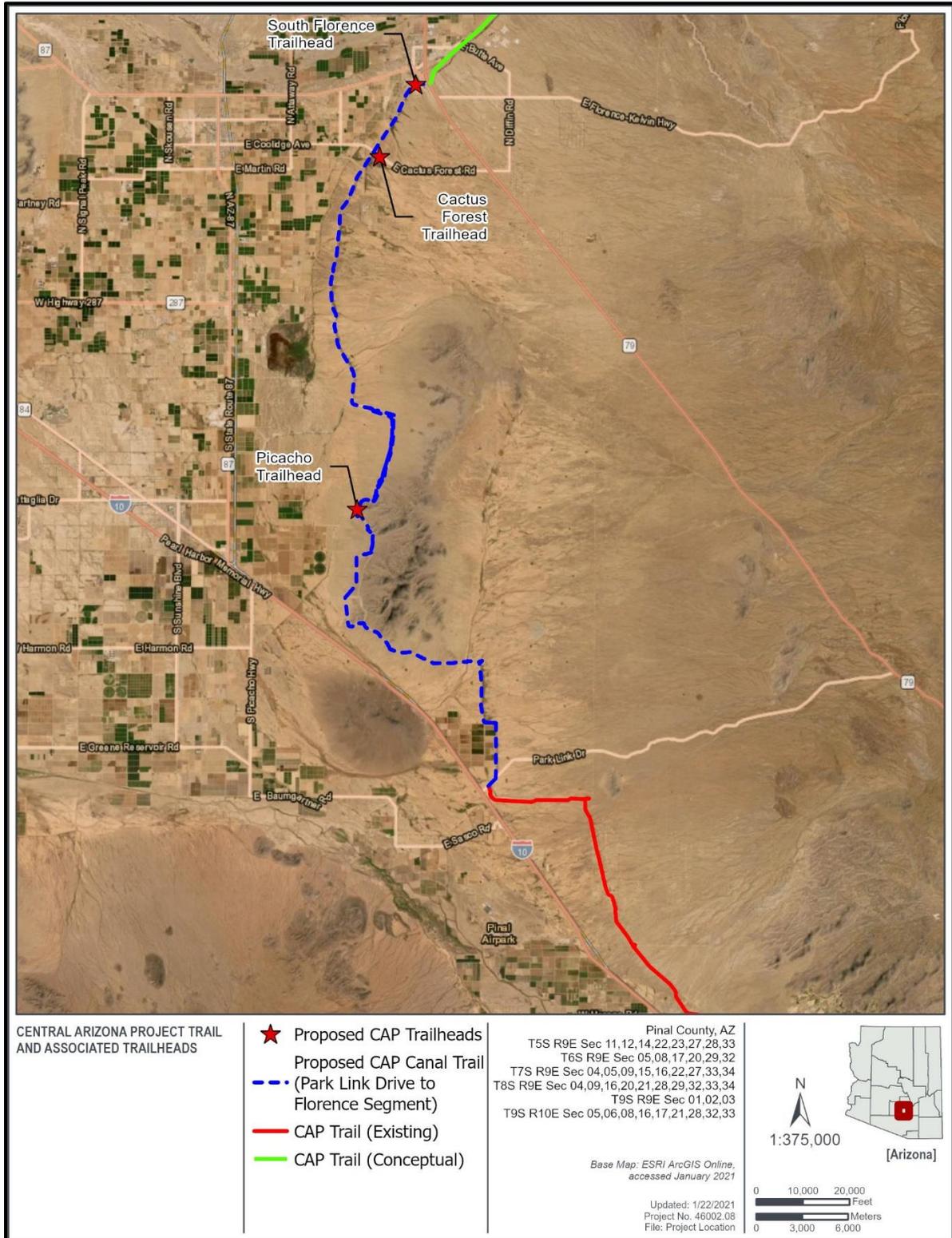


Figure 2. Central Arizona Project Recreational Trail Project location.