

Whitewater Baldy and Little Bear Wildfires Game Management Unit and Access Impacts

New Mexico Department of Game & Fish
Wildlife Management Division

New Mexico State Game Commission Meeting
Rio Rancho, NM
August 23, 2012



- **Wildlife Habitat**

- Riparian and aquatic habitat degradation in areas of high fire intensity and areas downstream of high fire intensity (siltation, scouring, incision)
- Increase in grasses, forbs and shrubs in patches across large acreages provides better habitat for mule deer, elk, bear, turkey, quail and many other species of wildlife





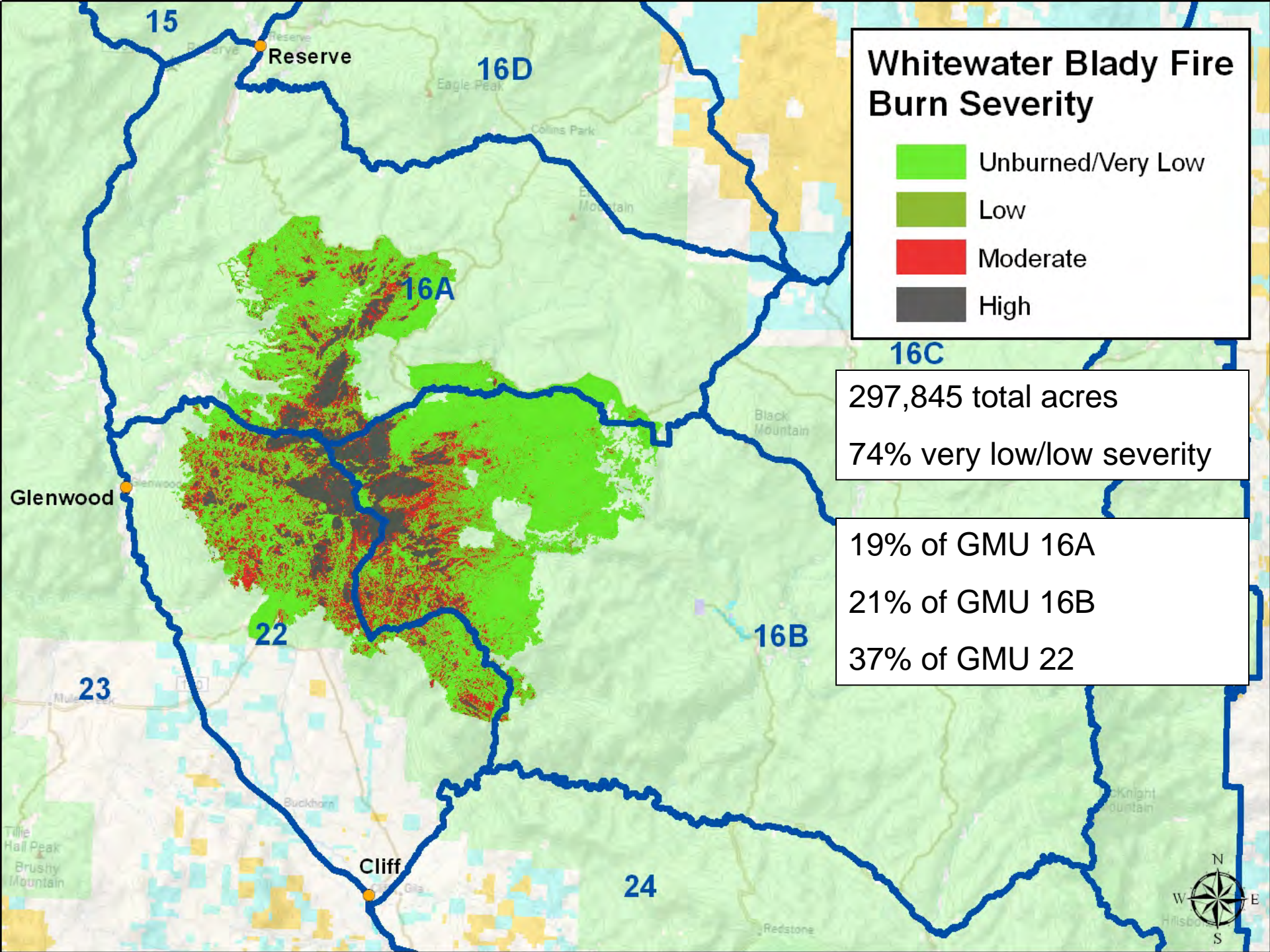


June 15, 2012



July 12, 2012





Whitewater Blady Fire Burn Severity

- Unburned/Very Low
- Low
- Moderate
- High

297,845 total acres
74% very low/low severity

19% of GMU 16A
21% of GMU 16B
37% of GMU 22

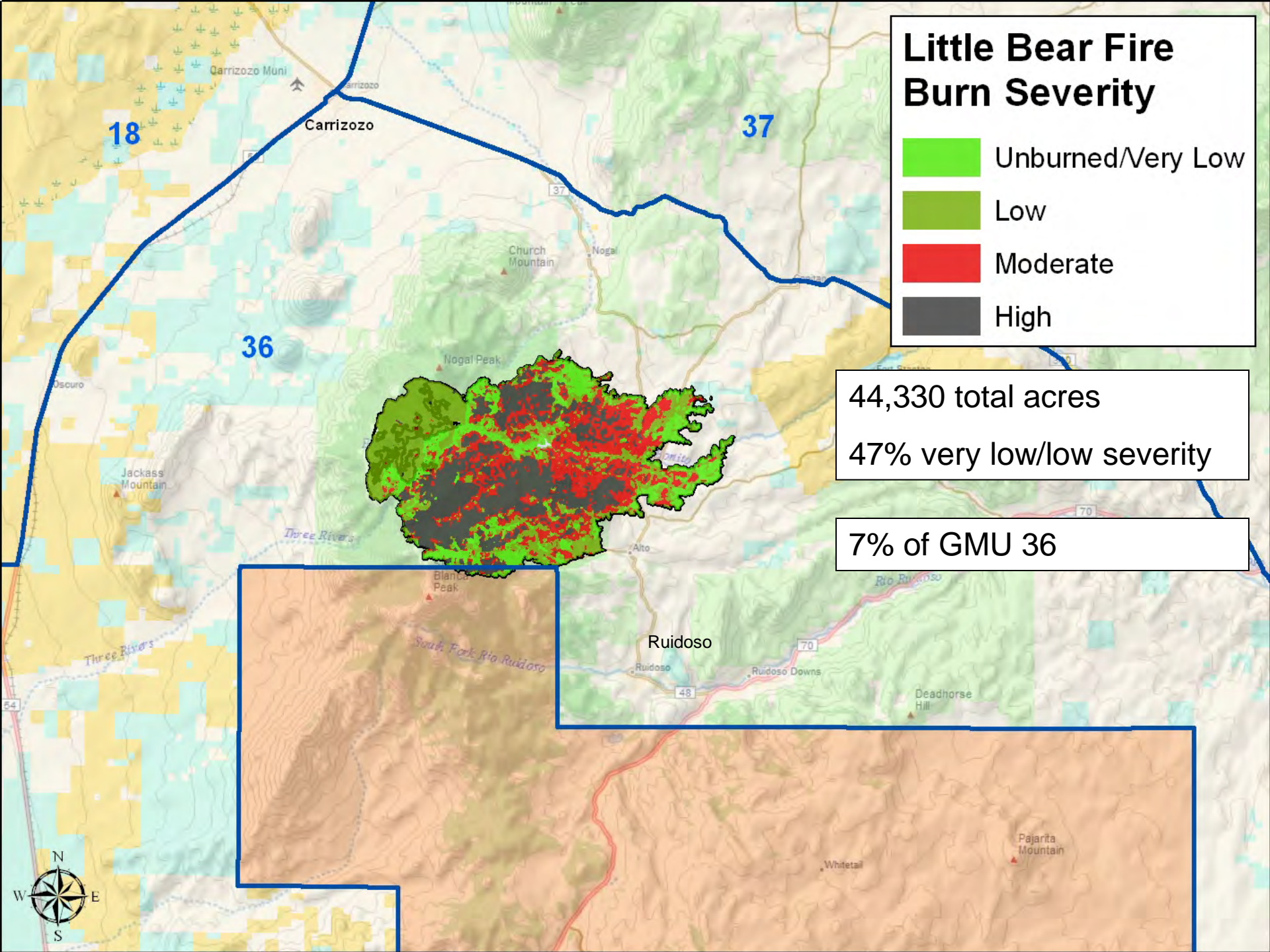
Little Bear Fire Burn Severity

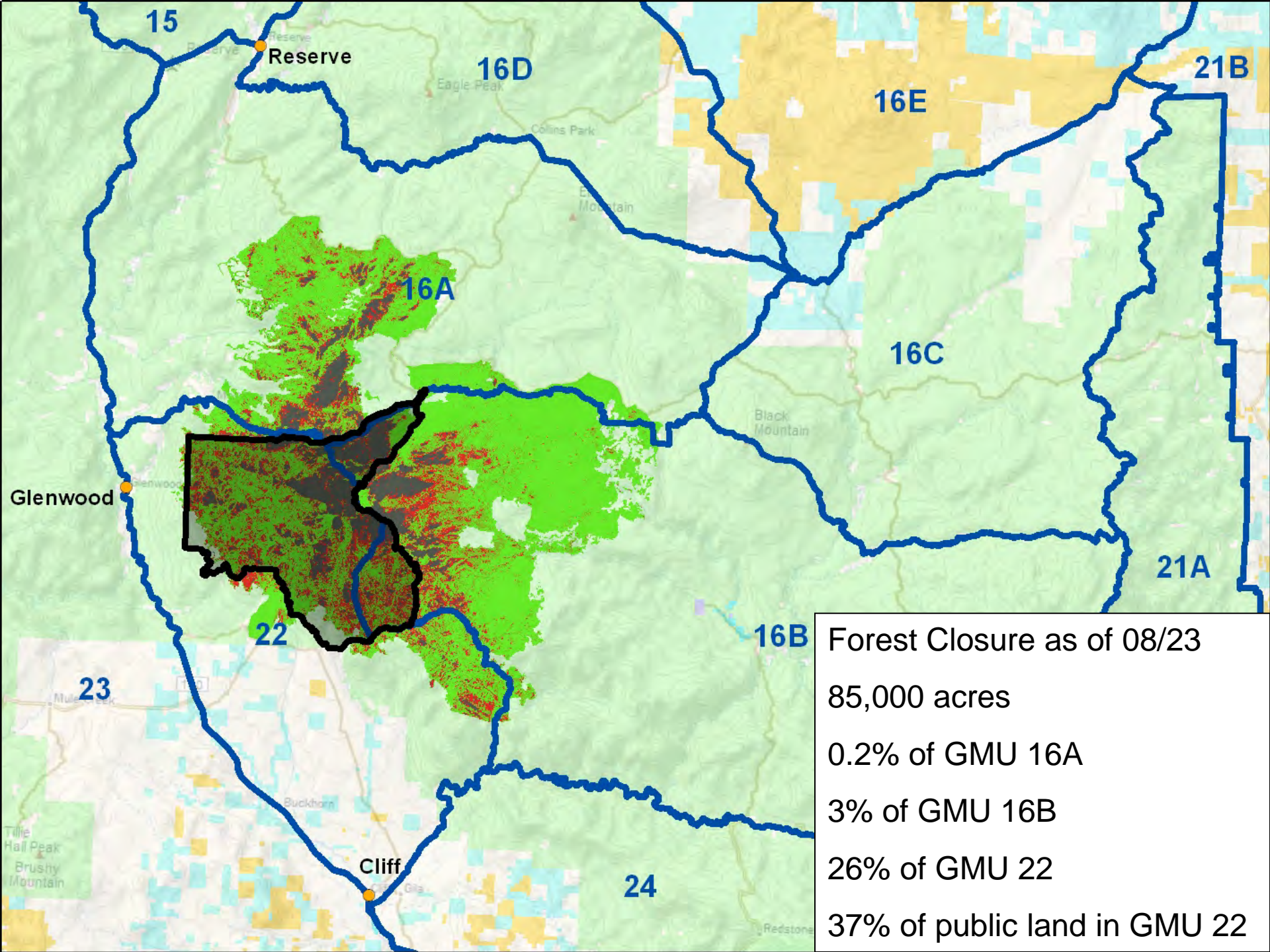


44,330 total acres

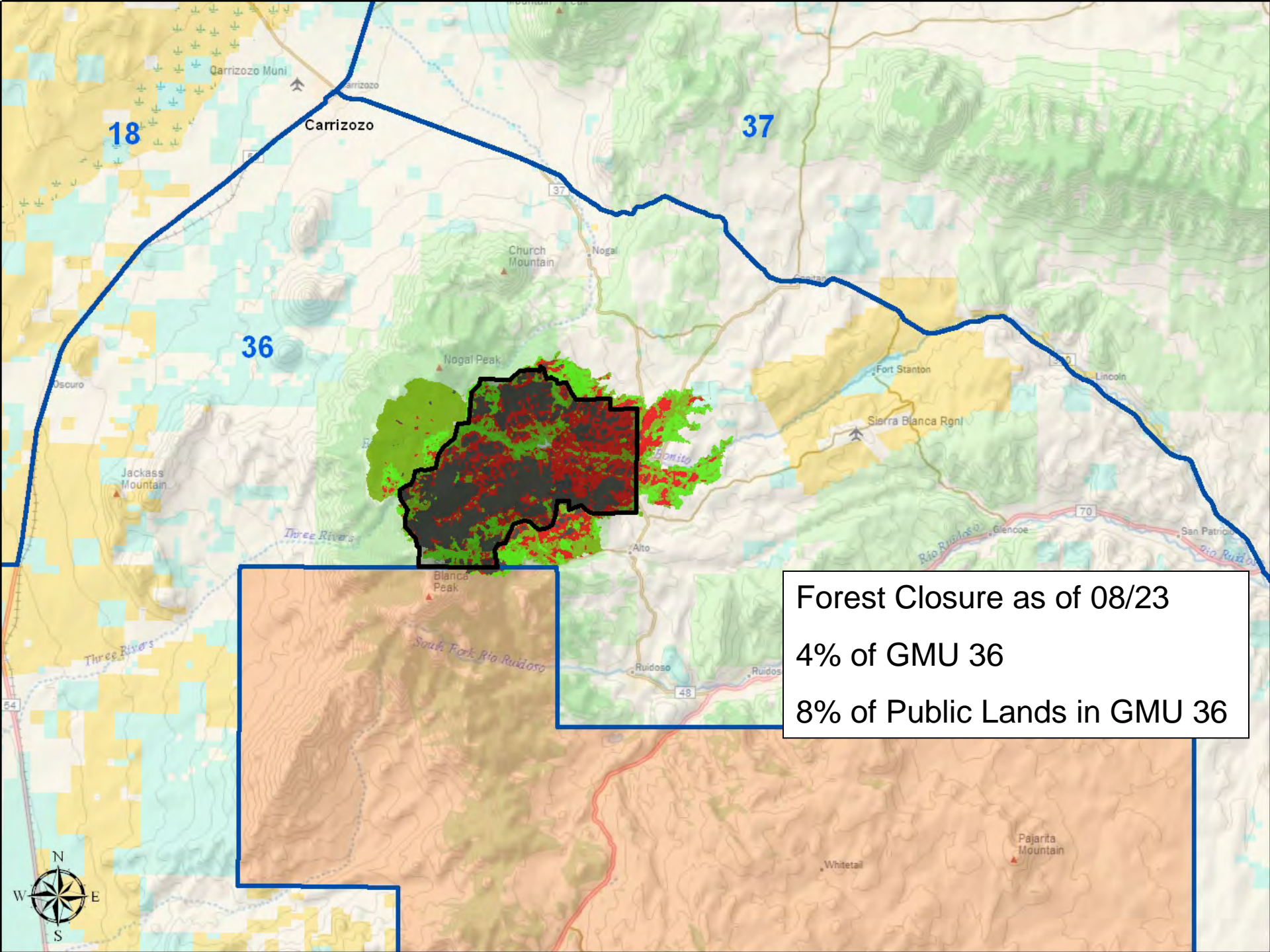
47% very low/low severity

7% of GMU 36





Forest Closure as of 08/23
85,000 acres
0.2% of GMU 16A
3% of GMU 16B
26% of GMU 22
37% of public land in GMU 22



Forest Closure as of 08/23
4% of GMU 36
8% of Public Lands in GMU 36

QUESTIONS



Impacts to fisheries of Whitewater Baldy Fire:

- Immediate fish kills due to fire intensity (upper West Fork, upper Willow Creek, upper Whitewater Creek).
- Fish kills due to ash and debris flow (most tributaries of the West Fork, many Middle Fork tributaries, Willow, Whitewater, Mogollon, Rain, Mineral, Spruce, and Turkey Creeks, Gila and San Francisco Rivers).
- Long term habitat degradation in many of these streams (siltation, scouring, loss of streamside vegetation, stream incision, etc).
- Temporary reduction (up to 85%) in Bill Evans Lake capacity. (Unable to pump water from Gila River due to ash and debris flow).

