

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: HOBE – Burning the woodlands in the growing season and fall.

PEPC Project Number: 66996

PMIS Number:

Project Type: Prescribed Fire

Project Location:

County, State: Tallapoosa, AL

Project Leader: TBD

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Fire managers have been using prescribed fire to restore the open woodlands that were historically present at HOBE for over a decade. Burning has been conducted between the dates of December and April. The 2004 EA states on page 2-4 that December through March is the preferred time for burning, primarily due to low visitor use. Page 2-4 of the EA also allows for burning between March and July if the winter burns are not effective in reducing the number of pole-sized trees. While December through July are an effective time to achieve resource and hazard fuel objectives, fire managers are also proposing to allow prescribed fire at any time of year (pending annual USFWS consultation and restrictions due to T&E species). The most recent scientific literature supports the benefits from prescribed fire in the late growing and early dormant seasons of August through November. Burning in the late growing season is particularly beneficial for units that have been restored to an open woodland through repeated prescribed fire treatments and are nearing the maintenance phase.

Please refer to Appendix A for a map of the approved burn units from the 2004 EA. Appendix B includes a map of the burn units from the 2008-2011 approved prescribed fire plan which shows a slight shift in some unit boundaries. This shift was done to facilitate operations by placing unit boundaries along more practical locations such as roads and trails.

Every burn unit at HOBE contains woodlands. Under this proposal every burn unit would be available for prescribed fire treatments year-round, pending USFWS consultation. Please refer to Appendix C for a map of the burn units containing woodlands.

Please use this ESF to document any potential issues and impacts you can identify related to burning the woodlands at HOBE between August and November.

C. RESOURCE IMPACTS TO CONSIDER:

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Air Air Quality	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short term impacts from smoke • Will mitigate with wind direction specified in burn plan • Longer days in growing season result in more time for smoke dispersion
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May reduce <i>Microstegium vimineum</i> populations if prescribed fire occurs before seeding
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indiana bat formal or informal consultation would need to take place • May be restricted from June 1- August 7th with bat pups in trees • Positive impact from the creation of bat habitat / dead trees
Biological Vegetation	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote and restore Longleaf pine, fire tolerant hardwoods, and associated herbaceous understory plants • Reduce <i>Microstegium vimineum</i>, <i>Ligustrum sinense</i>, and others
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No impacts to aquatic species • Would need to consult on migratory birds
Cultural Archeological Resources	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing areas as done during current prescribed burning
Cultural Cultural Landscapes	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • promote open understory
Cultural Ethnographic Resources	none	none
Cultural Museum Collections	none	none
Cultural Prehistoric/historic structures	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protect existing prehistoric/historic structures
Geological Geologic Features	none	none
Geological Geologic Processes	none	none
Lightscapes Lightscapes	none	none
Other Human Health and Safety	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park would send out press release in early winter and closer to date, along with information on website and social media • Trails would be closed and area swept before beginning operations

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Neighbors would be contacted and information posted at the VC Public Information Officer or staff member would be available to answer questions
Socioeconomic Land Use	none	none
Socioeconomic Minority and low-income populations, size, migration patterns, etc.	none	none
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic	none	none
Soundscapes Soundscapes	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> short term duration of noise from engines / UTV
Visitor Use and Experience Recreation Resources	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors would not be able to be in the immediate area of the prescribed burn for 1-3 days. The area would be open as soon as deemed safe by the burn boss and park staff
Visitor Use and Experience Visitor Use and Experience	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visitors would not be able to be in the immediate area of the prescribed burn for 1-3 days. The area would be open as soon as deemed safe by the burn boss and park staff
Water Floodplains	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vegetation changes and fire does not generally carry through this area (Burton/Brian)
Water Marine or Estuarine Resources	none	none
Water Water Quality or Quantity	none	none
Water Wetlands	none	none
Wilderness Wilderness	none	none

D. ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS:

Question	Answer	Notes

ENVIRONMENTAL SCREENING FORM (ESF)

Updated Sept 2015 per NPS NEPA Handbook

A. PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: HOBE – Using prescribed fire to help restore and maintain the battlefield.

PEPC Project Number: 66994

PMIS Number:

Project Type: Prescribed Fire

Project Location:

County, State: Tallapoosa, AL

Project Leader: TBD

B. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Fire managers are proposing to use prescribed fire to help restore the battlefield to native grasses and forbs. Currently the battlefield is comprised of exotic cool season grasses that are routinely mowed to maintain the open historic condition. The proposal would be to use a combination of herbicide, prescribed fire, and seeding to restore the battlefield to a native species composition and continue to maintain it with the combination of the three tools.

The 2004 EA does not clearly specify if the open grass areas of the battlefield can be treated with prescribed fire. The grass areas do not appear to be included in the burn units shown on the EA map in Figure 2-2 (see Appendix A), nor were they included in the initial 5 year treatment plan. These grass areas are included in the burn units in the 2008 approved prescribed fire plan (see Appendix B) and in every subsequent prescribed fire plan. The EA does state that artifacts are presumed to be buried beneath the surface of the battlefield and prohibits any earth moving activities. It does not mention any specific concerns regarding cultural resources due to prescribed fire activities.

Please refer to Appendix D for maps showing the grass areas of the battlefield and the prescribed fire units they are located in.

Please use this ESF to document any potential issues and impacts you can identify related to burning the battlefield at any time of year.

C. RESOURCE IMPACTS TO CONSIDER:

Resource	Potential for Impact	Potential Issues & Impacts
Air Air Quality	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• short term smoke impacts from grass fine fuels• reduction in diesel from mowing
Biological Nonnative or Exotic Species	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• current grass cover is almost 100% non native exotic, fescue, Johnson Grass• Fire may promote reduction in exotic non native grass and promote Native Warm Season grasses
Biological Species of Special Concern or Their Habitat	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Indiana bat would require formal or informal consultation• No RTE plant species

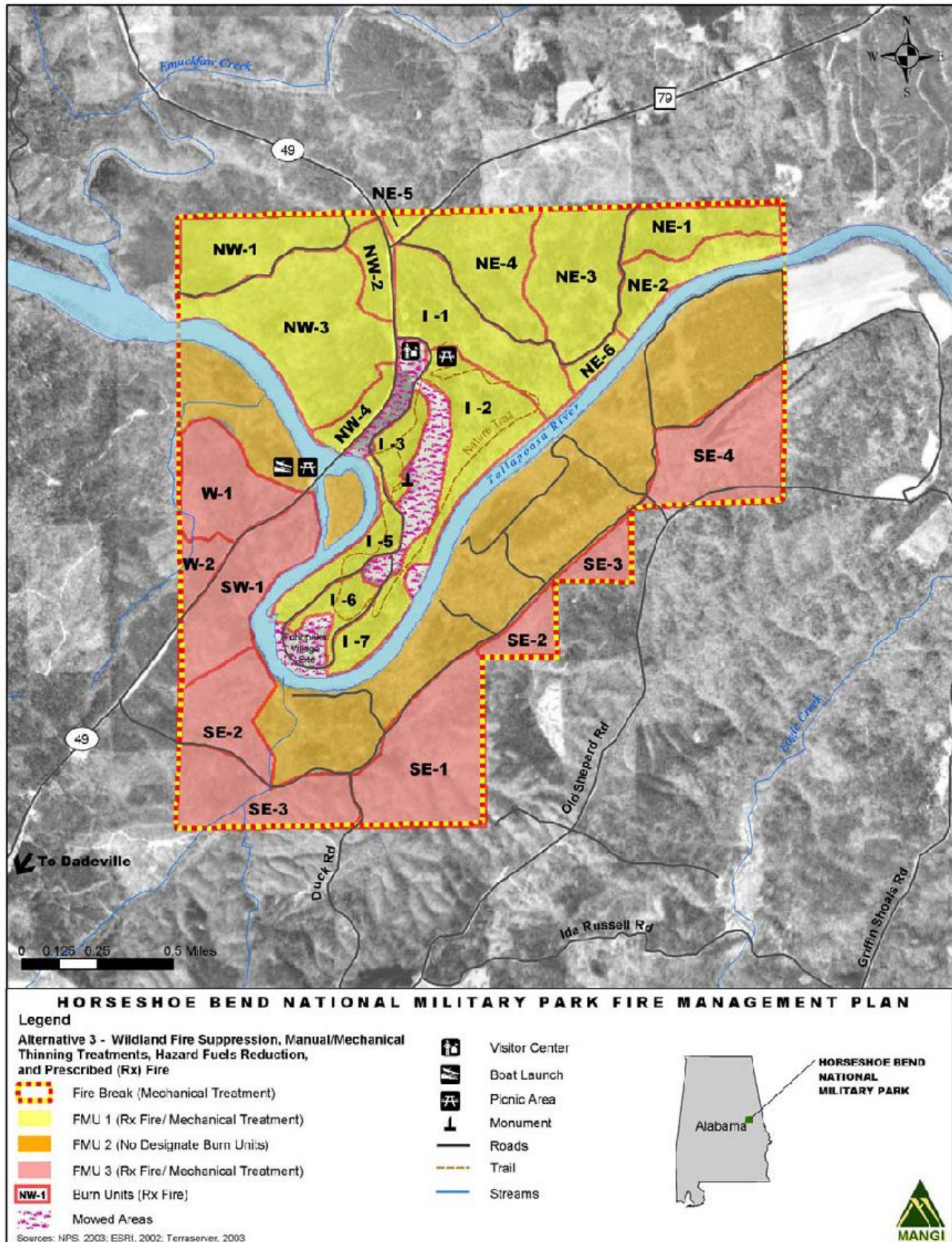
Biological Vegetation	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce exotic non native cool season grasses which is currently almost 100% cover • Promote Native Warm Season Grasses • Fire typically will not burn to adjacent river due to transition of vegetation
Biological Wildlife and/or Wildlife Habitat including terrestrial and aquatic species	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Native Warm Season Grasses may offer cover and forage to nesting bird species if tall enough • Native warm season grasses offers cover and forage for a diversity of insects, small mammals, and reptiles • Studies have shown minimal impact to turtles and other animals associated with fire adapted vegetation as they are behaviorally adapted to avoid direct contact with fire (Burton) • Hatchling eastern box turtles are most susceptible to direct mortality from spring fires in grassy areas (JFSP Project Number 14-3-01-30)
Cultural Archeological Resources	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire is carried quickly in fine grass fuels and will not likely penetrate more than .5 cm below the surface, unless a heavy fuel retains heat (Burton/Neppl)
Cultural Cultural Landscapes	positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Landscape plan calls for the fields to remain open but does not specify the tool (Byrd) • Fire would be another tool to reduce woody species encroachment in concert with mowing (Brian)
Cultural Ethnographic Resources	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will need to consult with Native American Tribes
Cultural Museum Collections	none	none
Cultural Prehistoric/historic structures	none	none
Geological Geologic Features	none	none
Geological Geologic Processes	none	none
Lightscapes Lightscapes	none	none
Other Human Health and Safety	minor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park would send out press release in early winter and closer to date, along with information on website and social media • Trails would be closed and area swept before beginning operations • Neighbors would be contacted and information posted at the VC

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public Information Officer or staff member would be available to answer questions
Socioeconomic Land Use	none	none
Socioeconomic Minority and low-income populations, size, migration patterns, etc.		
Socioeconomic Socioeconomic	none	none
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Water Floodplains	none	none
Water Marine or Estuarine Resources	none	none
Water Water Quality or Quantity	none	none
Water Wetlands	none	none
Wilderness Wilderness	none	none

D. ESF ADDENDUM QUESTIONS:

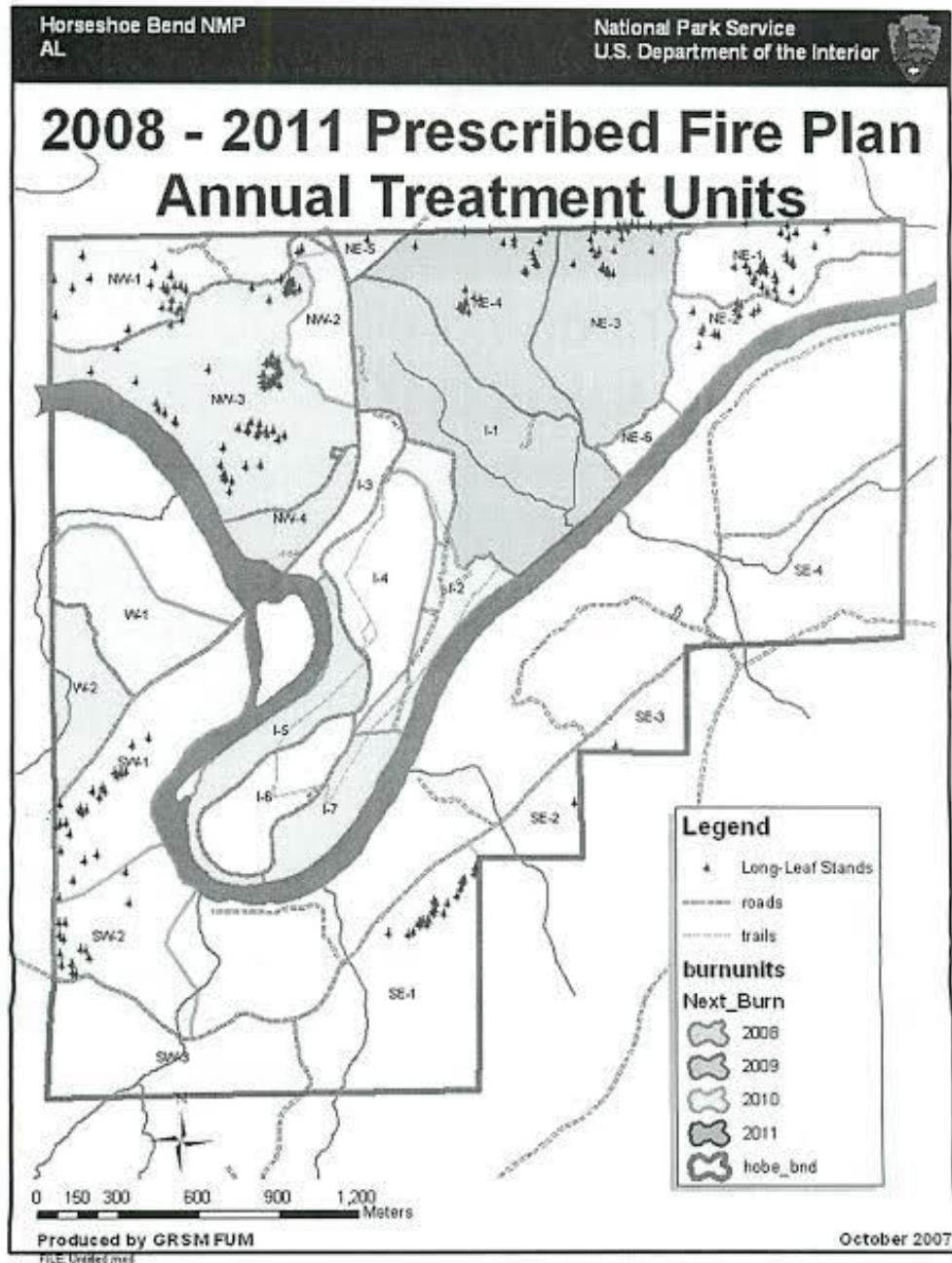
Question	Answer	Notes

Appendix A: HOBE Burn Unit Map (Figure 2.2 from page 2-19 of the 2004 EA)



Appendix B: HOBE Burn Unit Map from the Approved 2008 Prescribed Fire Plan

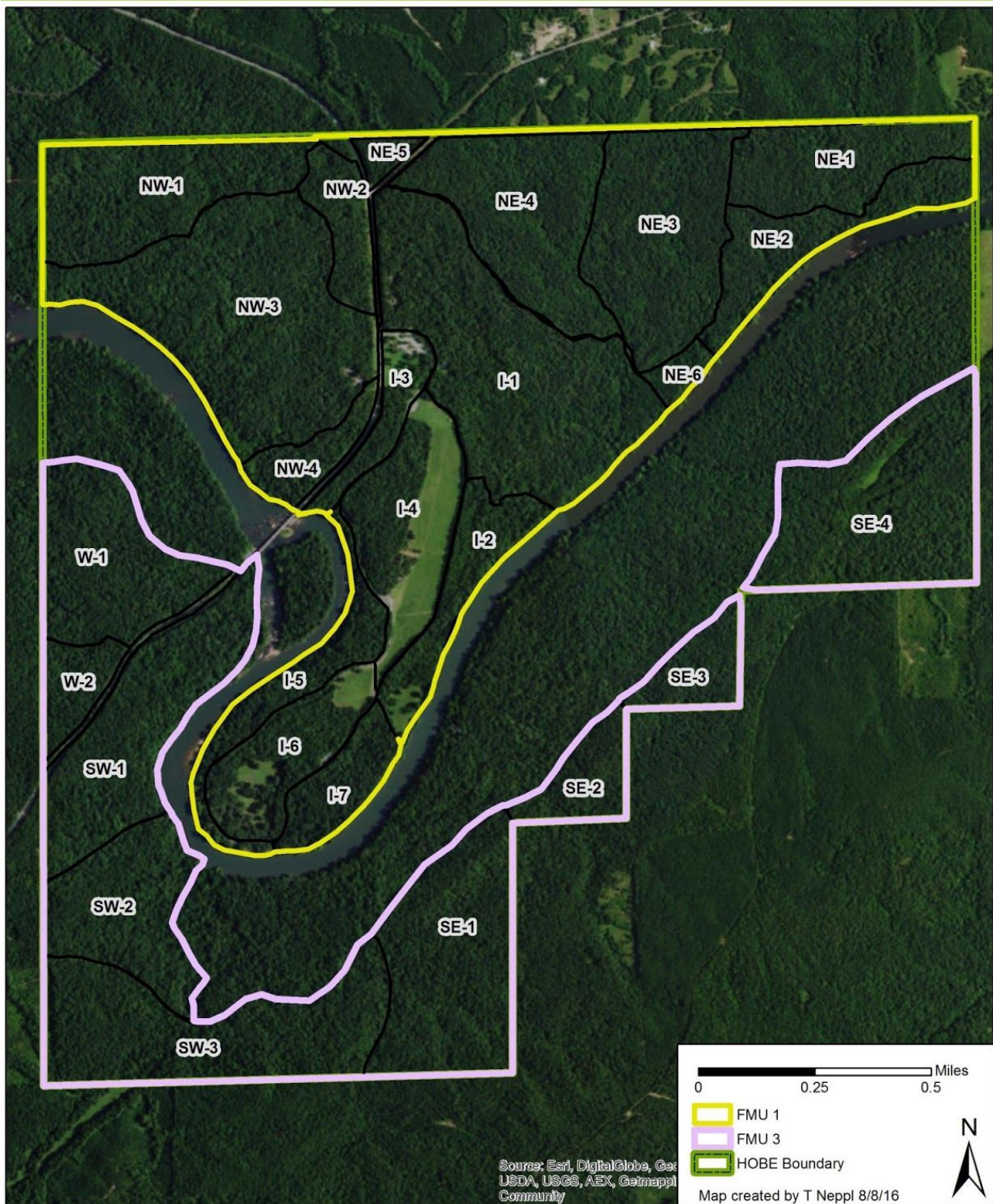
A: MAPS

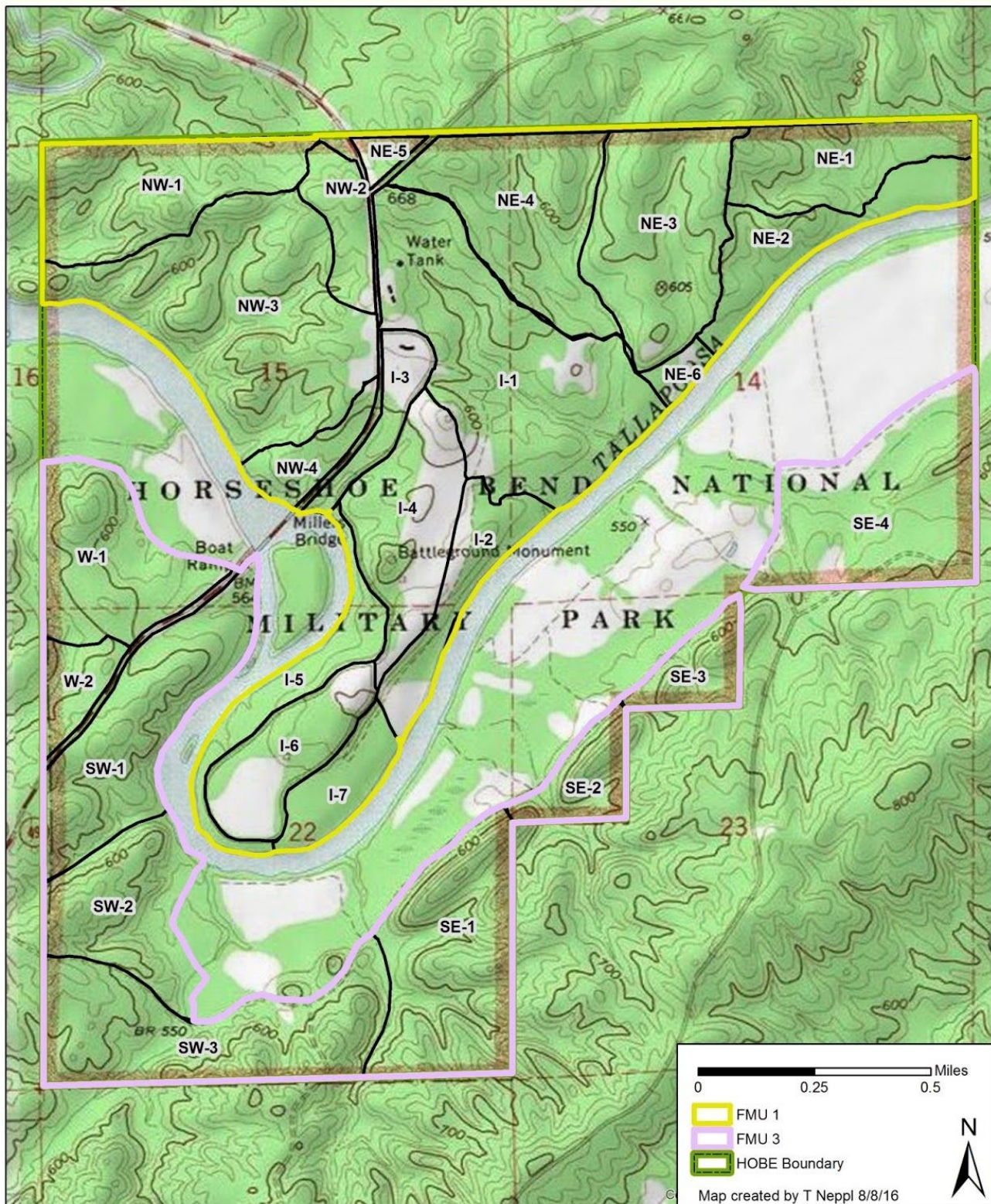


Appendix C: Prescribed Fire Units Containing Woodlands

Mississippi River Zone Fire Management
HOBE - Prescribed Fire Units Containing Woodlands

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior





Appendix D: Proposed Prescribed Fire Units Including Grass Areas of the Battlefield

Mississippi River Zone Fire Management

HOBE - Interior Units Including Grass Areas of the Battlefield

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

