

Figure 3-6: Critical Habitat for Mexican Spotted Owl and Proposed Critical Habitat for the Gila Chub (Northern Portion of Sonoita Station)

Northwest; Mattie Canyon along 2.4 miles of creek from the confluence with Cienega Creek to the BLM property boundary; Empire Gulch 3.2 miles along the creek extending from the confluence with Cienega Creek upstream through BLM property; Sabino Canyon along 7 miles of creek extending from the southern boundary of the Coronado National Forest upstream to the confluence with the West Fork of Sabino Canyon in the Coronado National Forest.

Critical habitat was designated by the USFWS for the Mexican spotted owl on February 1, 2001 (66 FR 8530). Portions of Cochise and Pima counties have been designated critical habitat in Arizona; four units have been designated in the project area, encompassing several stations. Some of these areas have been identified previously in Figures 3-2, 3-4, 3-5, and 3-6; the remaining areas proposed for designation as critical habitat for Mexican spotted owl are depicted in Figures 3-7 through 3-9. Unit BR-W-11 is located in Pima County north of I-10 in the Coronado National Forest and Saguaro National Monument. The BR-W-15 Unit is located in Cochise County between SR 83 and SR 90 on Fort Huachuca, while Unit BR-W-15a is located south of BR-W-15 and is on the border south of SR 92 along Montezuma Canyon Road. Unit BR-W-18 is also located in Cochise County south of I-10, east of I-119 in the Coronado National Forest and the Chiricahua National Monument. Primary constituent elements are provided in canyons and mixed conifers, pine-oak, and riparian habitat types that typically support nesting and/or roosting.

The USFWS designated one area (complex) as critical habitat for the beautiful shiner, Yaqui catfish, and Yaqui chub in Arizona on August 31, 1984 (49 FR 34490). This area encompasses all aquatic habitat of San Bernardino National Wildlife Refuge including small permanent streams with riffles, or intermittent creeks with pools and riffles in the Rio Yaqui drainage area with clean, unpolluted water (Figure 3-10). This area is located in the Willcox Station AO in Cochise County.

3.6 UNIQUE AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE AREAS

A wide variety of unique or environmentally sensitive areas exist within the study area (Figure 3-11). A list of unique areas found in the study area by county is presented in Table 3-5. The following paragraphs describe the major unique and sensitive areas in the area of operation.

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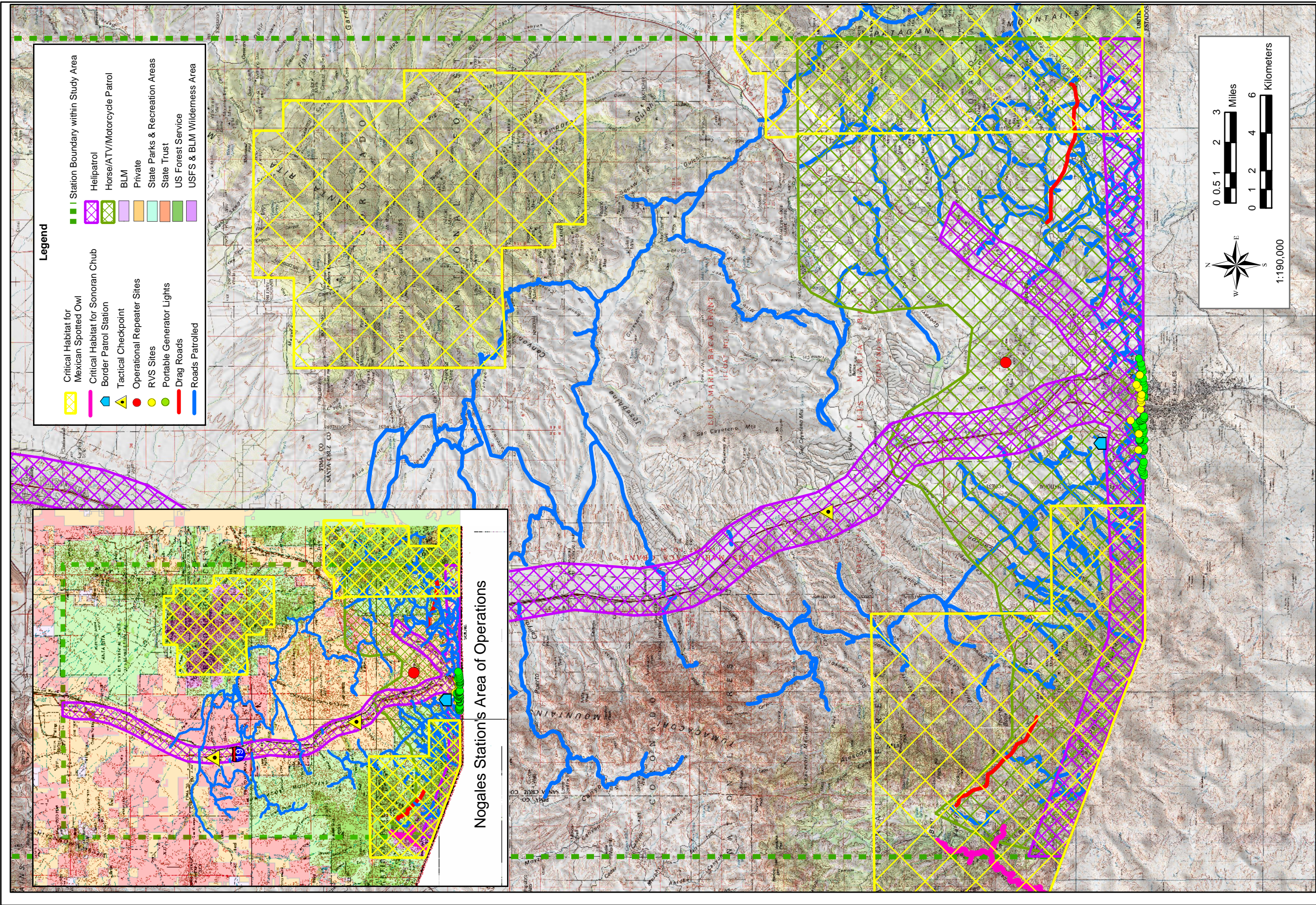


Figure 3-7: Critical Habitat for the Mexican Spotted Owl (Nogales Station)