

## **Appendix E**

### **Cumulative Impacts Assessment**

# *Cumulative Effects Report*

## Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gilmer County, Georgia



Prepared by:  
**Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc.**  
**JACOBS®**

Prepared for:  
**Georgia Transmission Corporation**

July 2012

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

## Executive Summary

Jacobs Engineering Group, Inc. (JEG) was contracted to address the potential cumulative effects in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) associated with the construction and operation of the Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC) Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV transmission line in Gilmer County, Georgia. GTC is proposing this facility in order to meet federal guidelines on the provision of reliable electrical service (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rules under 18 CFR Parts 39.10 and 40) and to be able to effectively perform routine maintenance with minimal risk of disruption.

The proposed transmission line will provide reliable electrical power to serve an expanding population. It will also provide an alternative power supply, in the event of a disruption to existing power transmission lines in Gilmer County. Two project alternatives are being considered for the project. Alternative 1 (Tails Creek Alternate Route) is a 230kV backup line to reinforce the area that will be built at a distance from the existing 230kV line to avoid being disabled in the same contingency event. This alternative proposes to cross Carters Lake which is a US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) property. Alternative 2 (Pleasant Gap Alternate Route) is also a 230 kV backup line that proposes to cross the Coosawattee River at the Coosawattee River Resort.

This report principally analyzes whether the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line, when combined with other proposed large scale public and private projects in the area, would result in either short-term and/or long-term cumulative environmental impacts. Because construction schedules and/or locations for the various other large scale projects planned for Gilmer County are not anticipated to overlap with the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project in both Alternatives 1 and 2, short-term cumulative impacts in regards to construction related-traffic, noise, and air quality are not anticipated.

Alternative 1 avoids short term cumulative impacts with small scale projects as well in terms of traffic, noise, air quality and rural lifestyles. Although these small private actions cannot be quantified, Alternative 1 requires the acquisition of only one vacant parcel and will not require the rebuilding of the existing road network. Because of these factors Alternative 1 will not have short term cumulative impacts to the adjacent community.

There will be significant short term cumulative effects for Alternative 2 for the residents of the Coosawattee River Resort and any short term private actions they plan over the next two years. The need to potentially acquire 14 vacant parcels and 10 existing homes for Alternative 2 will conflict with any reasonably planned uses for these properties. Alternative 2 also requires the rebuilding of large sections of the existing road network in the Coosawattee River Resort for construction access. This will moderately affect traffic, noise, air quality and rural lifestyles for the community.

Long-term cumulative effects to environmental resources are generally none to minimal, except for impacts on socioeconomics, land use and wildlife habitat resources which are anticipated to be moderate for the same reasons mentioned in the preceding paragraph. A summary of the

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

potential cumulative impacts on the environmental resources are provided in the matrix (Table 1) below.

**Table 1. Matrix of Cumulative Impacts Analysis on Environmental Resources**

Environmental Resource	No Cumulative Impacts		Minor/Minimal Cumulative Impacts		Moderate Cumulative Impacts	
	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 1	Alternative 2
<b>Short-term cumulative impacts (Large Projects/Actions)</b>						
Construction-related traffic, noise and air quality	x	x				
<b>Short-term cumulative impacts (Small Private Projects/Actions)</b>						
Construction-related traffic, noise, air quality, and rural lifestyles	x					x
<b>Long-term cumulative impacts (Large and Small Projects/Actions)</b>						
Land Use			x			x
Socioeconomics			x			x
Air Quality	x	x				
Water Quality			x	x		
Wetlands			x	x		
Streams			x	x		
Floodplains			x	x		
Wildlife Habitat			x			x
Threatened and Endangered Species	x	x				
Hazardous Wastes and Materials	x	x				
Noise			x	x		
Cultural Resources			x	x		
Aesthetics			x	x		
Transportation/Traffic	x	x				
Environmental Justice	x	x				

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

## Introduction

This report addresses the potential cumulative effects associated with the construction and operation of the Georgia Transmission Corporation (GTC) Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV transmission line in Gilmer County, Georgia. The Council on Environmental Quality's (CEQ) regulations for implementing the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) define cumulative effects as:

*“the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other actions”* (40 CFR § 1508.7).

The cumulative effects of an action may be undetectable when viewed individually in the context of direct or indirect impacts, but nevertheless when added to other actions can eventually lead to measurable environmental or social change. This report analyzes the cumulative effects of the combined construction and operation of the project in regard to other local and regional development and infrastructure projects as compared to baseline conditions.

To determine the potential for cumulative impacts, a literature review of relevant planning documents, including the 2004-2025 Gilmer County Comprehensive Plan and the 2005-2035 Georgia Statewide Transportation Plan Update, were examined. Additionally, attempts were made to conduct telephone interviews with the planning department staff in Gilmer County (see **Appendix A - Conversation Records**). Other data for analysis included county future land use planning maps, jurisdictional features maps, floodplain maps, archaeology and historic resources maps, and environmental justice population maps.

## Project Description

The project area is located in southwest Gilmer County, Georgia between the existing Ellijay Substation in the City of Ellijay and a planned Roundtop Substation on Roundtop Road. The proposed Ellijay Roundtop transmission line would extend from the planned Roundtop Road Substation in a northerly and westerly direction along Roundtop Road, Knight Road, Barnes Mountain Road, and Oak Hill Road, crosses the upper reach of Carters Lake, proceeds north to Banks Road, follows to United States (US) 76/State Route (SR) 282, continues east and ends at the Ellijay Substation. The total project length is approximately 17.1 miles. Outside the city limits of Ellijay, the project area is primarily rural with low density residential and undeveloped land (see **Appendix B - Figure 1, Project Location Map**).

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

## Project Purpose and Need

The proposed transmission line will provide reliable electrical power to serve an expanding population. It will also provide an alternative power supply, in the event of a disruption to existing power transmission lines in Gilmer County.

This area is one of the most exposed areas in the state of Georgia in terms of electrical power outages due to the frequency of natural disruptions. The Gilmer County contingency situation has been deemed a low probability high consequence event with the entire county's electrical service at risk. The frequency, duration, and restoration times from outages are higher than in other parts of the state due to the lack of an alternative electrical feed, limited highway access for equipment and difficult terrain. GTC is proposing this facility in order to meet federal guidelines on the provision of reliable electrical service (Federal Energy Regulatory Commission rules under 18 CFR Parts 39.10 and 40) and to be able to effectively perform routine maintenance with minimal risk of disruption.

## Project Alternatives

The following alternatives are proposed for the project and are illustrated in **Appendix B - Figures 2 and 2A-2K**, Project Alternatives Map).

- Alternative 1 (Tails Creek Alternate Route) - A redundant 230kV line to reinforce the area that will be built at a minimum distance from the existing 230kV line to avoid being disabled in the same contingency event. This alternative proposes to cross Carters Lake which is a US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) property.
- Alternative 2 (Pleasant Gap Alternate Route) - A redundant 230 kV line to reinforce the area. This alternative proposes to bypass Carters Lake and cross through the Coosawattee River Resort.
- No Build Alternative

### 1. Alternative 1 (Tails Creek Alternate Route) – Preferred Alternative

Alternative 1 is the Tails Creek Alternate Route and would originate from the planned substation on Roundtop Road. The proposed transmission line would extend north and west along Roundtop Road, Knight Road, Barnes Mountain Road, and Oak Hill Road for approximately five miles before crossing Carters Lake between the Oak Hill Recreation Area and the Ridgeway Recreation Area. It would then continue due north for approximately 1.5 miles to Banks Road and would follow Banks Road for approximately one mile to SR 282. A second planned substation (Tails Creek) would be built and connected to the proposed transmission line on SR 282. The proposed transmission line would continue east along SR 282 for approximately 10 miles and would connect to the existing Ellijay Primary substation

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

located in the City of Ellijay. Three access roads would be constructed on Carters Lake during right-of-way clearing activities to provide access for equipment to construct and maintain the transmission line.

Alternative 1 is approximately 17.1 miles long and contains approximately 17.39 acres of easement. The width of the easement will vary from 25 feet wide along SR 282 to 125 feet at the proposed crossing of Carters Lake. Access road easements will be cleared to a width of approximately 30 feet and will be graded with drainage ditches and 12-foot wide graveled drives. The entire width of the easement for the proposed alignment will be cleared and stabilized with grass or wood chips.

The proposed project crossing at Carters Lake will be approximately 1.23 miles, of which approximately 0.20 mile will cross over lake water. Alternative 1 is the Preferred Alternative.

### **2. Alternative 2 (Pleasant Gap Alternate Route)**

Alternative 2, referred to as the Pleasant Gap Alternate Route, would also originate from the planned Roundtop Road substation and extend north similar to the proposed alignment under Alternative 1. However, it would instead bypass Carters Lake to the east and pass through the subdivision known as the Coosawattee River resort. Alternative 2 would cross the Coosawattee River and associated mountainous residential resort area to SR 282 and proceed east to connect to the Ellijay Primary substation. This alternative would require the relocation of a large number of existing homes in the resort. Also, the road system in this subdivision consists of mostly one lane curvilinear drives that hug the topography of the cliffs along the river in order to preserve the river vistas of each lot. This road design makes it impossible to access the transmission line corridor using existing roads with material and equipment for construction. All the roads and the numerous creek crossings in this area would have to be extensively rebuilt for several miles both north and south of the Coosawattee River. This area is also an environmentally sensitive area for aquatic species.

In addition, the planned Tails Creek substation is proposed to be connected to the proposed transmission line by 2017. This load center became a waypoint in the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230kV transmission line alignment. These requirements and constraints resulted in no viable corridors in this area.

Locating the route slightly further west, just outside the USACE Carters Lake property, places the proposed transmission line in an area of similar residential development along the rugged and meandering path of the Coosawattee River but with fewer existing homes and more vacant lots. This area is also part of the Coosawattee River Resort. The same parcel subdivision pattern and road designs mentioned above also prevail here and make it unfeasible to locate the line in this corridor for the same reasons. These constraints also resulted in no viable corridors in this area.

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

### 3. No Build Alternative

The “No-Build” Alternative means that no transmission line will be constructed in the project area. The principal advantage of this alternative is that noise and construction impacts associated with the project would not occur. Also, no temporary disruption of present travel patterns along nearby roads would result. There would be no siltation of water courses, and no disturbance of wildlife habitat and farming areas. However, the primary disadvantage of the No-Build Alternative would be that there would be no improved service and continued reliable power for the people of Gilmer County.

### Analysis of Cumulative Impacts

This report analyzes whether the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line when combined with other proposed projects in the area, would result in either short-term and/or long-term cumulative environmental impacts. Short-term cumulative impacts are those related primarily to project construction. Long-term cumulative impacts are those related primarily to permanent features or operation of the project. In the project area, short-term cumulative construction impacts could include increased traffic, air emissions, and noise. Short-term construction-related impacts are not typically considered significant. Long-term cumulative impacts could include those related to visual and biological resources.

As previously stated, the cumulative effects of an action may be undetectable until added to other actions which may eventually lead to measurable environmental or social change. For this reason, the cumulative impacts analysis and the area of effects is often larger than the proposed project footprint and can even encompass the entire county. Two proposed alternative alignments (Alternative 1 - preferred alternative and Alternative 2) are evaluated in this document. Because Alternatives 1 and 2 are in close proximity to each other and even follow the same alignment in some areas, their area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county for most of the environmental resources discussed.

To be more concise and reader friendly, analysis in some sections of this document will be combined in one paragraph or section. These sections are air quality, water quality, wetlands, streams, floodplains, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, hazardous waste and materials, noise, cultural resources, aesthetics, transportation/traffic and environmental justice. Analysis conducted under separate discussions for Alternatives 1 and 2 would be the sections for short-term cumulative effects, land use and socioeconomics because the area of effects are considered to be the Carters Lake general area for Alternative 1 and the Coosawattee River Resort area for Alternative 2.

#### 1. Short-Term Cumulative Impacts

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed separately because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the more narrowly defined Carters Lake area and Coosawattee River Resort area, respectively. The proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

Transmission Line is currently scheduled for construction in June 2013 and completion in June 2015. If scheduled for the same construction time frame, additional proposed development and/or roadway improvement in close proximity to the project could result in short-term cumulative impacts to traffic, noise, and air quality. Overlapping time schedules would place a concentrated construction effort in the area, which would require greater coordination between agencies to minimize impacts. The following plans have been identified as currently proposed future actions in the project area.

## 1A. Description of Currently Proposed Future Actions

The Gilmer County planning officials were contacted regarding the potential cumulative effects of planned developments in the general vicinity of the project area. Responses were received from Mr. Jim Smith, Director of the Gilmer County Board of Directors and Mr. Brian Jones, Director of Planning and Zoning, respectively. Refer to **Appendix A - Conversation Records** for copies of the conversation records. Mr. Smith indicated that there are several planned projects in southwest Gilmer County where the proposed project is located. These planned developments are discussed in detail below. Mr. Jones mentioned the planned Mountaintown Creek residential development.

- **Mountaintown Creek** is a master planned residential community. The project is comprised of approximately 1,975 acres and is owned by Flint Timber, L.P. The project calls for 1,750 residential units with a variety of amenities including an 18-hole golf course. The project is located on the north side of Carters Lake and south side of SR 282. The plans for this project are of a preliminary nature at the present time because of present economic conditions. Although, it appears to be in the general area of Alternative 1 and 2, it is not likely to be constructed in the same construction time frame as the proposed transmission line, and therefore, no cumulative impacts to traffic, noise and air due to overlapping construction schedules are anticipated.
- **Oak Hill Road Recreation Project** - USACE and Gilmer County were in discussions and preliminary design of a campground recreational project in the Oak Hill Road area of the USACE property. However, this is on hold because of the notification of the proposed transmission line project. Once the transmission line project is built, discussions about the Oak Hill Road Recreation Project may resume.

It appears that the proposed recreation project would not conflict with transmission line construction for Alternative 1 as it appears to be planned after construction of the transmission line is completed. Construction of Alternative 2 would not affect the Oak Hill Road Recreation Project as this alternative would be located outside of the Oak Hill Road Recreation Project. Therefore, no cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project for both Alternatives 1 and 2.

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

- **SR 382 Road Improvements** – the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) has a roadway improvement project planned for the extension of SR 382. This project would involve the extension of SR 382 from its intersection with SR 5 to SR 515. SR 382 is located to the south east of SR 282. Surveying and engineering is currently underway and construction is scheduled for the years 2013 to 2014.

However, this roadway project will be located to the east of the proposed transmission line for both Alternatives 1 and 2 and just south of Ellijay; therefore, neither alternative is likely to conflict with project construction. No short-term cumulative impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project.

- **Tails Creek Substation** – GTC has indicated that the Amicalola EMC has a future need for a distribution substation near the westernmost edge of their service territory, in a zone along SR 282 between Tails Creek and Pleasant Gap Road. This future Tails Creek substation will be built and connected to the Alternative 1 alignment. Connecting this substation to the proposed transmission line will be required by 2017. This load center became a waypoint in the proposed transmission line alignment of Alternatives 1&2.

It appears that the proposed substation project would not conflict with transmission line construction for Alternative 1 as it appears to be planned for after construction of the transmission line is completed. Therefore, no short-term cumulative impacts associated with construction are anticipated as a result of the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project for Alternative 1. The planned substation would occur under Alternative 2 but the proposed alignment under Alternative 2 would not connect to the planned Tails Creek substation and this constraint resulted in no viable corridors for alternative 2.

### Conclusion

Because construction schedules and/or locations for the projects discussed above are not anticipated to overlap with the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project in both Alternatives 1 and 2, short-term cumulative impacts in regards to construction related-traffic, noise, and air quality are not anticipated.

## 2. Long-Term Cumulative Impacts

Long-term cumulative impacts analysis considers future conditions when the project would be fully operational (the years 2014-2015). The analysis also takes into account known transportation, infrastructure and development plans, public policies, and general community growth. For the purpose of this analysis, past actions are those related to the resources before the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project was considered. Present actions are those related to the resources at the time of the environmental analysis, and future actions are considered to be those that are reasonably foreseeable after the year 2015.

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

The impact of the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV transmission line project is combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-Federal) or person undertakes such actions. These combined impacts are defined as “cumulative” in 40 CFR 1508.7 and include individually minor but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time. It is possible that an impact that may be small by itself could result in a moderate or large impact when considered in combination with the impacts of other actions on the affected resource. Likewise, if a resource is regionally declining or imperiled, even a small individual impact could be important if it contributes to or accelerates the overall resource decline. The long-term cumulative impacts analysis for the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project include the following resources: land use, socioeconomics, air quality, water quality, wetlands, streams, wildlife habitat, threatened and endangered species, hazardous waste and materials, noise, cultural resources, aesthetics, and transportation/traffic.

## **2A. Land Use**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed separately because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the more narrowly defined Carters Lake area and Coosawattee River Resort area, respectively. Existing and Future Land Use Maps for Gilmer County covered by the proposed transmission line show primarily undeveloped lands with conservation areas in the north, northeast and southeast limits of the county (see **Appendix B - Figure 3A** Gilmer County Existing Land Use Map and **Figure 3B**, Gilmer County Future Land Use Map).

### **Alternative 1**

According to the Gilmer County Existing Land Use map, the character area in the vicinity of the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line for Alternative 1 is identified as a combination of forestry and vacant/undeveloped land near the southern termini but extends north towards Carters Lake into areas identified as recreational and then spreading out into low density residential towards the city of Ellijay.

Carters Lake is a dam and recreational area consisting of 3,200 surface acres of water and approximately 60 miles of shoreline owned by the USACE. Formed from the bed of the Coosawattee River, the dam is one of the few “reverse” dams in the country, which means that the water flows down pipes inside of a mountain in order to generate power during the day. At night, the generators are reversed and they serve as pumps to transfer the water back to the lake to be used the next day. Since its completion, Carters Lake has become a popular destination for recreational activities such as fishing, hunting, camping, boating, biking, and hiking. The lake is surrounded by 14 parks and recreation areas, including five campgrounds with 164 sites, eight day use areas, and one marina. Carters Lake is visited by approximately 600,000 people annually.

The preservation of the overall rural character appears to be a high priority for the citizens of Gilmer County. Approximately 55 percent of the land area is vacant/undeveloped land and

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

approximately 9.4 percent is dedicated to low density residential, as is noted in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line for Alternative 1. The mountainous topography of Gilmer County is a primary reason why so much land is vacant or undeveloped. Very limited public services and facilities are available in these areas, thus limiting available opportunity for other types of development. As previously noted, discussions with county planning officials indicated that low density residential development is planned for the southwest section of the county in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line for Alternative 1.

The Gilmer County Future Land Use map shows the general vicinity of Alternative 1 is dedicated primarily to low density residential with some forestry in the south and the planned Oak Hill Road Recreational Project at the northern end of Carters Lake. Typically, infrastructure improvements in the county have been made in response to development needs. Due to transmission lines being constructed on current electrical utility easements and GDOT right-of-way, when possible, only small areas of rural conservation lands would be permanently removed from use by pole placement and some access road construction on USACE property during right-of-way clearing activity to provide access for equipment to construct and maintain the proposed transmission line in the context of the region. It should also be noted that under this alternative, only one vacant parcel of land will be acquired and converted to utility use, and there would be no relocations. Due to the fact that Alternative 1 will aid and contribute to future planned land use changes in the area, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to land use are anticipated.

### **Alternative 2**

According to the Gilmer County existing land use map, the character area in the vicinity of the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line for Alternative 2 is also identified as a combination of forestry and vacant/undeveloped land near the southern termini but extends north into areas identified as low density residential in the area of the Coosawattee River and the City of Ellijay. The majority of the area covered by this alternative is low density residential as this area is dedicated primarily to the Coosawattee River Resort residential development.

The Coosawattee River Resort is a 5,500-acre development consisting of more than 7,000 individual, privately owned lots divided by 12 miles of the Coosawattee River. The Coosawattee River is formed where the Ellijay and Cartecay Rivers meet and then travels for six or seven miles where it becomes Carters Lake. This area is home to wildlife such as deer, wild turkeys, raccoons, bears, eagles, hawks, along with stocked fishing pond, park and camping sites. There are over 300 miles of paved and gravel roads in the resort. Low density residential development is planned for this section of the county in the vicinity of the proposed transmission line.

In reviewing the existing and future county land use maps, the general vicinity of Alternative 2 is planned for low density residential development primarily in the area of the Coosawattee River and due to the mountainous topography in the region. Although relatively small areas of rural land would be permanently removed from use by pole placement and access roads, approximately ten homes would be relocated and 14 vacant parcels would be acquired and converted to utility use. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to land use are anticipated. Alternative 2 will aid and contribute to future planned land use changes in the area.

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

Also, Alternative 2 would be consistent with the future county land use map and would bring power to northeastern Georgia to further encourage residential development.

## **2B. Socioeconomics**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed separately because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the more narrowly defined Carters Lake area and Coosawattee River Resort area, respectively. In some cases, the area of effects would be the county.

### **Alternative 1**

Construction and operation of the project would benefit the region by ensuring the supply of sufficient electrical power to the area. Although intense growth is not planned for the immediate future in the project area, increased capacity and reliability of affordable cost electricity will facilitate expansion of the planned Oak Hill Road Recreation Project near Carters Lake as well as expansion of low density residential development such as the planned Mountaintown Creek Development. Cumulative impacts due to Alternative 1 are likely to be beneficial and would include increases in business revenues realized due to construction activities and potential increases in the property tax revenues received by the county from existing power plants in the area and as new development occurs in the area. Additional residential development could lead to stresses on community infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and solid waste). However, local government could also expect increases in property tax revenues and facility user fees from the growth that would provide funding for infrastructure expansion and help mitigate negative impacts or stresses. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to socioeconomic resources are anticipated, but are expected overall to be beneficial for the economics of the community.

### **Alternative 2**

Alternative 2 (through increased capacity and reliability of affordable cost electricity) will facilitate expansion of low density residential development in the Coosawatta River Resort area. Similar to Alternative 1, cumulative impacts due to Alternative 2 are likely to be beneficial and would include increases in business revenues realized due to construction activities. It would also include potential increases in the property tax revenues received by the county as new development occurs in the area. Additional residential development could lead to stresses on community infrastructure (roads, water, sewer and solid waste). However, local government could also expect increases in property tax revenues and facility user fees from the growth that would provide funding for infrastructure expansion and help mitigate negative impacts or stresses. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to socioeconomic resources are anticipated, but are expected overall to be beneficial for the economics of the community.

## **2C. Air Quality**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county. Gilmer County is classified by the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) as being outside the nonattainment areas for both

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

ground-level ozone and particulate matter pollution. Nonattainment status means that air pollution levels are likely to exceed federal and state limits on many days throughout the year.

Metropolitan Atlanta's air quality is among the worst in the U.S. However, Gilmer County is not part of the 21-county air quality non-attainment areas that are in violation of the Clean Air Act standards for ground-level ozone and particulate matter. Therefore, this non-attainment status would not directly affect Gilmer County's ability to expand its system of regionally significant roadways as automobile emissions are directly linked to high levels of air pollution. Due to federal regulations, a nonattainment designation directly impacts the county's road improvement program and its ability to add additional travel capacity to regionally significant roads such as street widening. However, this is not the case for Gilmer County. Additionally, although the proposed SR improvement in the vicinity of the project area for both Alternatives 1 and 2 is planned, it is not likely to elevate current air quality levels. Also, no long-term air emissions are associated with the operation of the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV transmission line under both alternatives. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to air quality are not anticipated to result from the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV project implementation.

### **2D. Water Quality**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the Coosawattee River Basin. The proposed transmission line is located in an area of Gilmer County that is a part of the Coosawattee River Basin. A jurisdictional waters survey by Wetland and Ecological Consultants in March 2012 identified ten perennial and 25 intermittent streams; one open water (i.e., Carters Lake); and one wetland within the survey corridor (see **Appendix B - Figures 4 Index, 4A-4G**, Jurisdictional Area Location Map). These waters include the Coosawattee River, Mountaintown Creek, Mountain Creek, Flat Branch, Flat Creek, Gunstock Branch, Flat Branch, Tails Creek and their respective tributaries. The waters as well as storm water runoff in the project area drain into the Coosawattee River. The Coosawattee River and its tributaries in the project area are not listed as impaired streams on the Final 2010 and Draft 2012 State 303(d) list for nonpoint source pollution.

Construction activities, when combined with the potential impacts from the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Plan and the effects of other present and past actions in the analysis area, could cumulatively increase sediment and other pollutant loads in streams. Additionally, although minor, it could potentially affect the quantity and quality of available water resources, cumulatively increasing the possibility of impairment of one or more beneficial uses. However, because most actions would be separated in time or space and because a number of storm water best management practices (BMPs) will be used both during and after construction, these cumulative impacts are likely to be minimal.

Gilmer County follows state and federal regulations to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to jurisdictional waters. Due to the small footprint of new impervious surface created by the proposed transmission line, negligible storm water runoff would be generated by project implementation. Additionally, there would be no requirements for water use or wastewater discharge for future operation. As such, minor potential cumulative impacts to water quality are

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

anticipated as a result of project implementation due to a number of factors. Land use, zoning, tax structure, and environmental practices are incorporated into the development process through regulation, thereby giving special consideration to water quality and associated development. Therefore, it is anticipated that project implementation would have only minor reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects to the water quality in the area.

## 2E. Wetlands

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the Coosawattee River Basin. March 2012 ecology field surveys identified the presence of one jurisdictional wetland within the proposed transmission line corridor (refer to **Appendix B - Figures 4 Index, 4A-4G**). The wetland is classified as palustrine scrub-shrub. The extent of cumulative impacts on wetland habitat associated with the project would depend on the location, nature, and scale of future development projects in the general area. However, a goal of the Section 404 regulatory program is to contribute to the national goal of no overall net loss of the nation's remaining wetlands base through mitigation for loss of wetlands exceeding one acre.

Adverse cumulative impacts are unlikely to result from project implementation because land use plans show areas identified for future development do not contain jurisdictional wetlands. Project construction would be consistent with zoning requirements and federal, state, and local regulations, which would minimize or remove impacts to identified wetland systems. Although, Gilmer County currently follows state and federal regulations to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to jurisdictional waters of the U.S., there have been incremental adverse impacts to wetlands in these counties over time. However, project implementation is anticipated to have minor reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to wetlands.

## 2F. Streams

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the Coosawattee River Basin. As previously stated, field studies identified 10 perennial and 25 intermittent jurisdictional streams and one open water (i.e., Carters Lake) within the proposed transmission line corridor under Alternative 1 (refer to **Appendix B - Figures 4 Index, 4A-4G**). Also, under Alternative 1, Gilmer County has identified several streams near the river crossing above Carters Lake as trout streams. However, under Alternative 2, approximately nine stream crossings with culverts and/or rock crossings would potentially be impacted but would involve clearing of vegetative buffers along sensitive habitats of the Coosawattee River. Also, due to the existing road design under Alternative 2, access to the proposed transmission line corridor using the existing roads would be difficult; therefore, all the roads and the numerous creek crossings in this area would have to be extensively rebuilt for several miles both north and south of the Coosawattee River.

Past and present actions potentially affecting streams for the proposed transmission line include ongoing weed management, fertilization, crop production, grazing, road use and maintenance, and waterway modifications for stock watering. These activities can result in surface water flow

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

alterations, water diversions, and stream bank modification and destabilization. Weed control and fertilization can introduce pesticides, nutrients, and total suspended solids (TSS) into water supplies. Irrigation and waterway modifications for stock can result in increased TSS and fecal coliform bacteria. Some grazing practices result in sedimentation to surface water due to soil destabilization from reduced vegetation. Maintenance and use of roads at river and stream crossings can destabilize banks and increase sedimentation to surface water. These effects are commonly seen in agricultural areas.

In more developed suburban, commercial and industrial areas, past and present actions potentially affecting streams include increased impervious surfaces, storm water runoff and subsequently nonpoint source pollution. Increased impervious surfaces are a concern because, with their construction, a chain of events is initiated that modifies urban water resources. Impervious surfaces seal the soil surface eliminating rainwater infiltration and natural groundwater recharge. Stormwater runs directly across the impervious surfaces raising flood peaks causing stream channel erosion, sediment loads increase and possible degradation of aquatic habitats. Nonpoint source pollution such as oil and heavy metals from automobiles are carried into streams by storm water runoff without treatment.

Construction activities, when combined with the potential adverse impacts from the proposed transmission line and the effects of other present and past actions in the analysis area, could cumulatively increase sediment and other pollutant loads in nearby streams. Additionally, although minor, it could potentially affect the quantity and quality of available water resources, cumulatively increasing the possibility of impairment of one or more beneficial uses. However, because most actions would be separated in time or space and because a number of storm water best management practices (BMPs) will be used both during and after construction, these adverse cumulative impacts are likely to be minimal.

Prior to federal regulations for environmental protection, such as the Clean Water Act of 1972, there have been incremental adverse impacts to streams in the county. Today, Gilmer County follows state and federal regulations to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to jurisdictional water of the U.S. Stormwater runoff would not be generated by project implementation. Additionally, there would be no requirements for water use or wastewater discharge for future operations. As such, minimal potential cumulative adverse impacts to streams have been identified.

Per the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975 and its 2003 and 2008 amendments, Chapter 7-17-9 states any land disturbing activities conducted by any electric membership corporation or municipal electric system or any public utility under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Public Service Commission, or any utility under the regulatory jurisdiction of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, or any agency or instrumentality of the United States engaged in generation, transmission, or distribution of power would be exempt from rules and regulations set forth in the 1975 Act, except when the electric membership, municipal electric membership, or public utility is considered a secondary permittee for a project located within a larger common plan of development. Requirements for an overhead utility to be exempt include (a) the new utility line right-of-way width does not exceed 200 linear feet; (b) utility lines are routed and constructed so as to

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

minimize the number of stream crossings and disturbances to the buffer; (c) only trees and tree debris are removed from within the buffer resulting in only minor soil erosion; and (d) functional native riparian vegetation is re-established in any bare or disturbed areas within the buffer. Based on the aforementioned information, GTC would qualify for an exemption under Chapter 7-17-9 of the 2003 amendment to the Erosion and Sedimentation Act of 1975.

More erosion control BMPs will be needed at the river crossing above Carters Lake under Alternative 1 due to the nearby presence of several small streams, state and local buffer requirements, and steeper slopes in the general areas leading to and from the crossing site itself. Approximately seven buffer variances along the proposed transmission line under Alternative 1 are anticipated due to the tight space between the highway and the trout streams on either side. As previously mentioned due to the existing road design under Alternative 2, access to the proposed transmission line corridor using the existing roads would be difficult; therefore, all the roads and the numerous creek crossings in this area would have to be extensively rebuilt for several miles both north and south of the Coosawattee River. Rebuilding the stream crossings has the potential to impact the stream buffer.

Stream buffer variances are anticipated for both project alternatives because of some land disturbing activities within the 50-foot designated stream buffer, including areas where it is necessary for access road enhancements. It is anticipated that all vegetation within the 50-foot stream buffer will be hand-cleared, thereby minimizing impacts to the buffer. Much of the material will be lopped and left as fallen; any material to be removed will be removed without skidding or dragging. Impacts associated with installation or replacement of culverts at stream crossings are considered minor and are generally exempt from stream buffer requirements.

### **2G. Floodplains**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the Coosawattee River Basin. A survey of the project corridor for floodplains has identified multiple crossings of the 100-year floodplain associated with the Coosawattee River and its tributaries (see **Appendix B - Figure 5, Floodplain Map**). The project would be designed in such a way that it would have no significant encroachment on the floodplain. Gilmer County participates in the Regular Program of the National Flood Insurance Program, and the proposed transmission line overall would produce no rise in flood elevations for the Coosawattee River or its tributaries. However, since development is not anticipated to occur rapidly in the area, the proposed project is not likely to precipitate reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects to floodplains.

### **2H. Wildlife Habitat**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the Coosawattee River Basin. Past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions were reviewed for potential cumulative impacts on wildlife habitat. Ecology field surveys identified upland vegetation communities, considered early- to

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

mid-successional species typical of a mixed hardwood - pine forests which provide minimal habitat for wildlife diversity.

Past activities have affected wildlife within the project area through loss of native habitat due to rural development. These activities have resulted in displacement of individual animals due primarily to habitat loss; however, many wildlife species have adapted to habitat changes, and thus, have not been negatively affected at the population level.

Reasonably foreseeable future actions that develop new or expanded permanent facilities could result in some permanent change in existing wildlife habitat. Habitat may be reduced, altered, or fragmented, which could affect the diversity and abundance of area wildlife. The amount of habitat in general that would be permanently disturbed would, in general, be limited to the area of the proposed transmission line.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) requires the protection of migratory birds and their habitats. Birds, such as the barn swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), or Eastern phoebe (*Sayornis phoebe*) typically nest under bridges and culverts. The proposed project may involve the removal and replacement of culverts. Also, the clearing and construction of the proposed transmission line may potentially result in some loss and/or fragmentation of forest habitat and creation of edge habitat relative to interior forest habitat. Increased rates of nest predation and cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) brood parasitism have often been associated with the creation of forest edge by fragmentation. The edge effect occurs when forested areas are bisected or reduced by human activities, opening the forest or reducing the tract size and creating opportunities for predation. This form of habitat loss decreases the amount of core forest interior available for species to nest and be protected from predation and parasitism. Fragmentation is a concern because it affects species richness, population trends of habitat-specific birds, and the overall biological diversity of ecosystems. Reasonably foreseeable moderate cumulative impacts to nesting habitats and to contiguous tracts of forest habitats that are suitable for use by migratory birds as nesting and foraging habitat are anticipated as a result of the proposed project.

The cumulative impact of habitat loss, as previously described, could affect some wildlife, but it would not likely reduce the viability of wildlife populations within the region, as structures would reduce habitat by a relatively small amount and would not likely consume critical habitats for wildlife species. Since there is no loss of sensitive habitat, animals should be able to adapt to changing habitat conditions. Therefore, the proposed transmission line implementation would have minor reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects to the wildlife habitat in the project area.

### **2I. Threatened and Endangered Species**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county. Ecology field surveys also attempted to determine the presence of suitable protected species habitat and the potential occurrence of these species in the proposed alignment for Alternative 1. A total of sixteen state and federally-listed species are known to occur in Gilmer County. There were no protected species identified within

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

the proposed transmission line study corridor. Possible preferred habitats (i.e. streams) for several protected aquatic species were observed within the survey corridor; however, no impacts to these protected species are anticipated from construction of the new transmission line.

Based on the proposed project construction techniques and BMPs to control erosion and sedimentation including hand clearing within stream buffers and wetlands, water quality is expected to be maintained; therefore, existing stream habitats should not be affected by the construction of the new transmission line. Further, the use of these techniques and controls for the proposed project will prevent adverse affects to aquatic species or their habitat located within the project vicinity. For a summary of federal and state-listed species, refer to the March 2012 Ecology Report by Wetland and Ecological Consultants which is on file at GTC.

Clearing will be limited to construction areas for the proposed substation pad, driveways, storm water detention areas, access roads and up to a 225-foot wide right-of-way for the transmission line. The remainder of the project will occur within existing maintained transmission line right-of-way. Existing habitat adjacent to the proposed right-of-way will be left undisturbed. Therefore, due to available surrounding habitat, this project is not likely to affect terrestrial species or their overall habitat.

GTC construction protocols comply with the standards required by the Georgia Erosion and Sedimentation Control Act of 1975 as amended and the NPDES for Construction Sites. Appropriate erosion control measures will be used where appropriate to prevent degradation of water quality during construction.

Additionally, current regulations, such as Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act and Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, provide a system to protect and prevent degradation of water and natural resources. These protection mechanisms work to improve habitat for threatened and endangered species. Therefore, project implementation would have no reasonably foreseeable cumulative effects to the threatened and endangered species in the project area.

### **2J. Hazardous Waste and Materials**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county. The Hazardous Site Inventory (HSI) is a list of sites in Georgia where there has been a known or suspected release of a regulated substance above a reportable quantity and which have yet to show they meet state clean-up standards found in the Rules for Hazardous Site Response. It is compiled and published by the Georgia EPD at least once each year. According to the July 2011 edition of the HSI, one site is listed for Gilmer County. This is the SR 52 Tower Road Municipal Solid Waste Facility (HSI # 10664). The facility is a 93 acre site that has been listed on the HSI since 2001. The site has a known release of vinyl chloride in groundwater at levels exceeding the reportable quantity. No human exposure via drinking water is suspected from this release. The nearest drinking water well is less than 0.5 mile from the area affected by the release. Cleanup activities are being conducted for source materials and groundwater. The site is approximately ten miles east of the project termini. Reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts from this location are not anticipated due to the

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

distance from the proposed transmission line and because the HSI location is currently undergoing corrective action.

Construction and operations associated with reasonably foreseeable future actions would require the use of some hazardous materials, although the variety and amounts of hazardous materials present during operation would be minimal. Types of hazardous materials that may be used include fuels (e.g., gasoline diesel fuel), lubricants, cleaning solvents, paints, and pesticides. These same types of materials would also continue to be used in agriculture, weed management, maintenance of road and rail facilities, and other ongoing activities in the area. Wastes would be managed as required by state and federal law, and there would be a low probability of cumulative impacts as a result. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts in regard to hazardous waste are not anticipated to result from operation of the Ellijay Round top 230 kV Transmission Line Project.

### **2K. Noise**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county. Background noise levels are likely to increase as more vacant/undeveloped land in the county is developed into more low density residential development. This increase is attributed to growth, residential development, the planned recreational area near Carters Lake and increased vehicular traffic.

Temporary noise impacts may occur during project construction, but these would not be of a cumulative type. These temporary impacts would generally occur during normal working hours. Upon final construction and operation of the project, cumulative impacts associated with audible noise would be additive but are expected to be less than double the existing level of noise caused by operation of the current electrical infrastructure. The increased noise level at the edge of the right-of-way may be audible during wet-weather conditions, although the line noise would likely be masked by naturally occurring sounds at locations beyond the right-of-way and would not be significant. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts in regard to noise are not anticipated for the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project.

### **2L. Cultural Resources**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the west section of the county. Cumulative impacts to cultural resources, including historic resources and archaeological features, could result over time from repeated incremental damage caused by new right-of way, motorized vehicles and easement maintenance. Historic surveys of the project's area of potential effect (APE) were conducted in January and March 2010 by Historic Preservation Consulting in order to determine whether any historic resources present are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). Of the 30 historic properties identified, three were considered to be NR eligible, seven were considered to be NR possibly eligible and the remaining were considered NR not eligible. A summary of the findings are noted in Table 1 below. A review of the project boundary and map of historic resources surveyed can be reviewed in **Appendix B - Figures 6A-6D**, Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed.

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

**Table 1. Ellijay Roundtop Summary of Historic Resource Findings**

Resource Number	NR Eligible	NR Possibly Eligible	NR Not Eligible
1			X
2			X
3		X	
4			X
5		X	
6			X
7		X	
8			X
9			X
10	X		
11	X		
12			X
13			X
14			X
15			X
16			X
17			X
18			X
19		X	
20		X	
21			X
22			X
23	X		
24			X
25		X	
26			X
27			X
28			X
29			X
30		X	

Archaeological survey reviews were also conducted for the proposed project in February 2009 by Southeastern Archaeological Consultants. According to the report, a total of 23 archeological sites have been officially recorded in the project area by local citizens interested in collecting Indian artifacts and by professional archeologists during surveys of federally funded or licensed construction projects. Of the 23 sites, six were determined to be not eligible for the NRHP and

# Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

eight were recommended or determined as eligible for the NR. A copy of the report is on file at GTC.

The Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line would not require a substantial level of new access, thereby reducing cumulative impacts to cultural resources. Additionally, Gilmer County follows history and archaeology survey guidelines in consultation with Department of Natural Resources Historic Preservation staff and concurred by the State Historic Preservation Office. Therefore, reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts to cultural resources are expected to be minor.

## **2M. Aesthetics**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the west section of the county. Cumulative visual impacts would increase with effects to views from highways, residences, and general rural landscape. The transmission lines built in a currently natural setting usually would cause the most noticeable incremental change because of the contrast of form, line, color and texture to the surroundings. Each successive change, when added in an existing corridor, would be less noticeable than the first. However, the new combination of all the changes (e.g., form, line, color, and texture) is more evident. Addition or removal of current electrical transmission and distribution lines as part of the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line project will have minimal cumulative visual impact and will likely be beneficial by improving the look of aging transmission lines currently in use. In order to lessen any potential impact, mitigation to reduce visual impacts would include maintaining a 30 feet or larger vegetative buffer between the homes and the transmission line, and the reclamation of areas disturbed by construction-related activities. Therefore, the effect of the proposed transmission line would contribute a small increment of aesthetic impact which would not be considered significant.

## **2N. Transportation/Traffic**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county. Cumulative impacts to traffic and transportation are not anticipated to be permanent, but rather temporary, occurring during construction. The Ellijay Roundtop 230kV Transmission Line Project would not affect traffic circulation and would generate only a small number of vehicle trips. Traffic effects associated with the project area in combination with the local and regional transportation and economic development projects are not expected to be at a noticeable level to impact future baseline conditions. In summary, the proposed project would not be expected to result in cumulative adverse impacts on transportation or traffic.

## **2O. Environmental Justice**

In this section, Alternatives 1 and 2 are discussed together because the area of effects and cumulative impacts analysis would be the county. An Environmental Justice (EJ) Survey was conducted for the proposed project by Wetland and Ecological Consultants in March 2012. The survey was conducted in accordance with GTC's *Environmental Justice Guidelines* and

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

*Methodology for Analyzing Potential Environmental Justice Areas of Concern.* The GTC EJ documents, based upon methodology developed by EPA Region IV, explain the fundamental details of this analysis. The EPA methodology is based on Census 1990. At that time, Georgia's minority population was approximately 30.0%, and the low-income population was approximately 14.7%. The minority and low-income population percentages in Georgia have changed during the decades leading up to Census 2010. The 2010 Census shows that Georgia's minority population has now increased to 44.1%, and the low-income population has increased to 15%. For the 2010 Census, low-income data will be released through the American Community Survey (ACS), which updates every year and is now current through the end of 2009 at the Census tract level. EPA Region IV did not develop new thresholds for the 2000 Census numbers and has not yet done so for 2010. At this time, GTC is continuing to use the 1990 EPA thresholds for environmental justice evaluations. Both the minority and low-income analyses will be more inclusive than would be required if the EPA thresholds were adjusted to account for the changes in population.

Based on the March 2012 report, environmental justice concerns for the proposed Ellijay Roundtop 230kV Transmission Line project are not anticipated. The majority of the project area is outside of the municipality of Ellijay and consists of large forested areas, with limited agricultural areas, and generally does not contain large residential areas. The proposed project area is located within three Census tracts (802-804) which are further subdivided into six Census block groups. The 2010 average minority population percentage within the six Census block groups is 9.82% of the total population and ranges from 4.5-16.3%, which is below the USEPA threshold. Therefore, environmental justice concerns related to impacts to minority populations are not anticipated in the proposed project area.

The March 2012 report further stated that the 2000 average low-income population percentage within the six Census blocks is 19.06% of the total population which ranges from 11.84 - 29%. The 2010 average estimated low income population percentage within the three census tracts is 13.27% of the total population, and ranges from 10.2 - 17.6%. Both of these averages are below the USEPA threshold for environmental justice. Therefore, environmental justice concerns related to impacts to low-income populations are not anticipated in the proposed project area. Please refer to **Appendix B - Figure 7A**, Environmental Justice Census Tract Map and **Figure 7B**, Environmental Justice Census Block Group Map.

Since there are no environmental justice concerns as a result of the project, it is likely that any cumulative impacts to such populations would be beneficial.

### Summary

This analysis addresses the potential cumulative effects associated with the construction and operation of the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project in Gilmer County. From the above resources analyzed for cumulative impacts, over half were not anticipated to result in reasonably foreseeable cumulative impacts from the construction or operation of the project. Eight resources were anticipated to sustain minor impacts from the construction or operation of

## Cumulative Impacts Analysis

---

the Ellijay Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Project: land use, socioeconomics, water quality, wetlands, streams, hazardous materials, cultural resources, and aesthetics. Overall, the project is anticipated to have a beneficial cumulative impact to socioeconomic resources in the reasonably foreseeable future.

**Appendix A**  
**Conversation Records**



## Conversation Record

<b>Employee:</b>	Rebecca Crawford	<b>Project No.:</b>	GTC WA#3
<b>Talked With:</b>	Jim Smith Director	<b>Date/Time:</b>	April 19, 2012
<b>Firm:</b>	Gilmer County Board of Commissioners	<b>Telephone No.:</b>	706-635-4361
<b>Address:</b>	1 Broad Street, Suite 106 Elijay, Georgia 30540	<input type="checkbox"/> Placed Call <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Returned Call <input type="checkbox"/> Conference Call <input type="checkbox"/> Met with Party	
<b>Subject:</b>	Elijay-Roundtop 230kV Transmission Line		

---

### Conversation:

Mr. Smith returned my call about planned development in the southwest quadrant of Gilmer County. He explained that there were several transportation and residential projects planned and he asked if he could email me more information so that he could have time to give the subject more thought.

I received Mr. Smith's email the following day on 4/20/2012. He explained that there is a master planned residential community called Mountaintown Creek that has been in the planning stages for several years. The project plans consist of the development of approximately 1,975 acres that are owned by Flint Timber, L.P., and calls for the construction of 1,750 residential units with a variety of amenities including an 18-hole golf course. The project is located on the north side of Carters Lake and south side of SR 282. The plans for this project are of a preliminary nature at the present time because of current economic conditions. Mr. Smith shared details about another project planned for the area that would involve the U.S. Army of Engineers (USACE) property. The USACE and Gilmer County had begun discussions and preliminary design of a campground recreational project in the Oak Hill Road area that would be called the Oak Hill Road Recreation Project. The project has since been delayed due to the notification of the Georgia Transmission project. Once the transmission project is built the project plans may resume. He also explained that the Georgia Department of Transportation has a project planned that would involve the extension of

State Hwy. 382 from its intersection of Old Hwy. 5 to State Hwy. 515. Surveying and engineering is currently underway and is scheduled for construction in 2013-2014.

---

Copy:

Signature: Rebecca Crawford

**From:** Crawford, Rebecca  
**To:** Njie, Marle  
**Subject:** FW: Ellijay Roundtop Transmission Line  
**Date:** Friday, April 20, 2012 3:01:03 PM

---

From: Jim Smith [jsmith@gilmercounty-ga.gov]  
Sent: Friday, April 20, 2012 2:20 PM  
To: Crawford, Rebecca  
Subject: RE: Ellijay Roundtop Transmission Line

Rebecca,

Thank you for your patience in me responding to your questions concerning known "current and future" developments planned in the southwest quadrant of Gilmer Co. that may or may not have an impact on the Ga. Transmission Project. I will attempt to take each question and respond separately.

1. The only planned development for your first question is a master planned residential community called Mountaintown Creek. The project is comprised of +/- 1,975 acres and is owned by Flint Timber, L.P. The project calls for 1,750 residential units with a variety of amenities including an 18 hole golf course. Your client knows this project because Flint Timber, L.P. is one of the affected property owners. The project is located on the north side of Carters Lake and south side of State Hwy. 282. The plans for this project are of a preliminary nature at the present time because of present economic conditions.

Oak Hill Road Recreation Project (U.S. Army of Engineers & Gilmer County) - USACE and Gilmer Co. had started discussions and preliminary design of a campground recreational project in the Oak Hill Rd. area of the Corps of Engineers property but delayed because of the notification of the Ga. Transmission project. Once the transmission project is built those discussions may resume.

2. GDOT has a transportation project planned for the extension of State Hwy. 382 to State Hwy. 515. This project would involve the extension of State Hwy. 382 from its intersection of Old Hwy. 5 to State Hwy. 515. Surveying and engineering is currently underway and is scheduled for construction in 2013-2014.

3. There is not a "high demand" of building permits in this area at the current time. However, if the Mountaintown Creek project previously mentioned materializes, that will change dramatically.

4. There are no "construction plans" for expansion of parks, recreation areas or wildlife refuges that we are aware of other than the Oak Hill Road Recreation project, as previously mentioned.

I hope this information will meet your needs. However if you have any additional questions please feel free to call on me.

Thanks,

Jim Smith, Liaison  
Gilmer Co. Board of Commissioners  
1 Broad Street, Suite 106  
Ellijay, Ga. 30540  
Tele: 706-635-4361  
Cell: 706-889-2108  
Fax: 706-635-3425  
E-mail: jsmith@gilmercounty-ga.gov

---

From: Crawford, Rebecca [mailto:Rebecca.Crawford@jacobs.com]  
Sent: Thursday, April 19, 2012 3:40 PM  
To: 'jsmith@gilmercounty-ga.gov'

Subject: Ellijay Roundtop Transmission Line

Mr. Smith,

Thank you so much for returning my call today. We are hoping to gather information for our client concerning the current and future development of the southwest quadrant of Gilmer County over the next 20 years. Information that is of interest includes:

- Are there any planned developments of note in this part of the county (i.e., schools, parks, shopping centers, commercial/industrial facilities)?
- What are the proposed transportation projects in the area?
- Is there are high demand of building permits in the area? How many?
- Are there any proposed plans for the construction or expansion of parks, recreation areas, or wildlife refuges?

If you can think of anything else of note, please let me know!

Thank you,

Rebecca Crawford, MHP | Jacobs | Historian | 678.333.00253 | 678.596.8447 cell |  
Rebecca.Crawford@jacobs.com <<mailto:kevin.mullinax@jacobs.com>> |  
[www.jacobs.com](http://www.jacobs.com) <<http://www.jacobs.com/>>

---

NOTICE - This communication may contain confidential and privileged information that is for the sole use of the intended recipient. Any viewing, copying or distribution of, or reliance on this message by unintended recipients is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify us immediately by replying to the message and deleting it from your computer.





## Conversation Record

**Employee:** Rebecca Crawford      **Project No.:** GTC WA#3

**Talked With:** Brian Jones  
Director of Planning and Zoning      **Date/Time:** April 30, 2012  
8:13AM

**Firm:** Gilmer County Planning and Zoning      **Telephone No.:** 706-635-3405

**Address:** 10 Broad Street  
Elijay, Georgia 30540       Placed Call  
 Returned Call  
 Conference Call  
 Met with Party

**Subject:**  
Elijay-Roundtop 230kV Transmission Line

---

### Conversation:

I called the Gilmer County Department of Planning and Zoning on April 30, 2012. I spoke with Brian Jones, the Director of Planning and Zoning, and asked him about any planned development in the project area. Mr. Jones mentioned the Flint Timber project (a proposed residential development) that never got off the ground. According to Mr. Jones, the project died about a year ago and hasn't been talked about since. He explained that all other activities are existing development.

---

Copy:

Signature: Rebecca Crawford



## Conversation Record

**Employee:** Rebecca Crawford

**Project No.:** 510000 GTC WA#3

**Talked With:** Will Beattie

**Date/Time:** April 20, 2012  
9:30AM

**Firm:** Gilmer County Commissioner

**Telephone No.:** 706-635-7400

**Address:** 1 Broad Street, Suite 106  
ElIJay, Georgia 30540

- Placed Call
- Returned Call
- Conference Call
- Met with Party
- Emailed

**Subject:**  
ElIJay-Roundtop 230kV Transmission Line

---

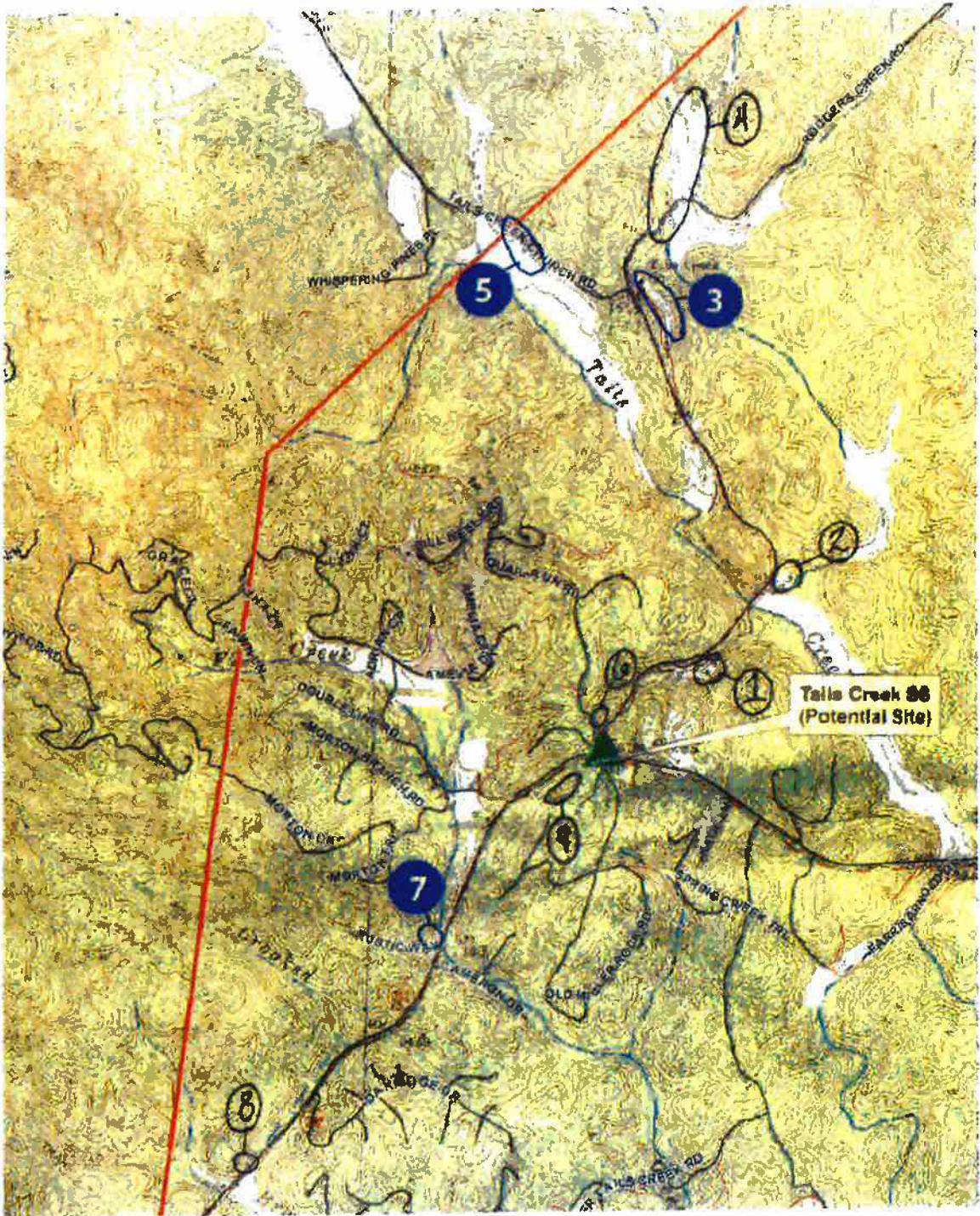
### Conversation:

I emailed Will Beattie, a County Commissioner, on Friday morning and did not receive a response.

---

Copy:

Signature: Rebecca Crawford



**Blue = Possibly NR-eligible**

Map Source: Historic Preservation Consulting, Decatur GA

Georgia Transmission

Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gilmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012

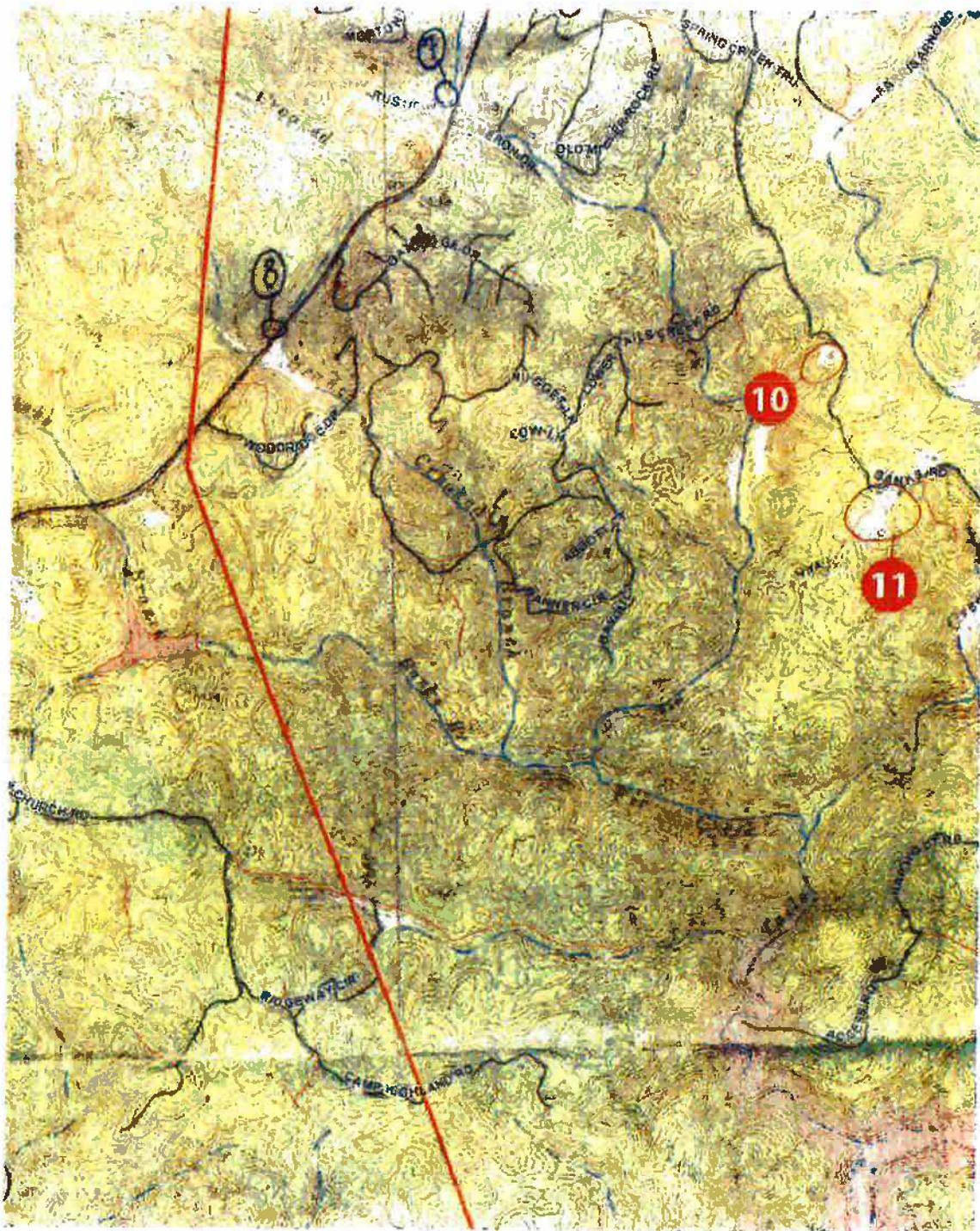
Scale: Not To Scale

Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6A



Red=NR-eligible

Map Source: Historic Preservation Consulting, Decatur GA

Georgia Transmission

Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gllmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012

Scale: Not To Scale

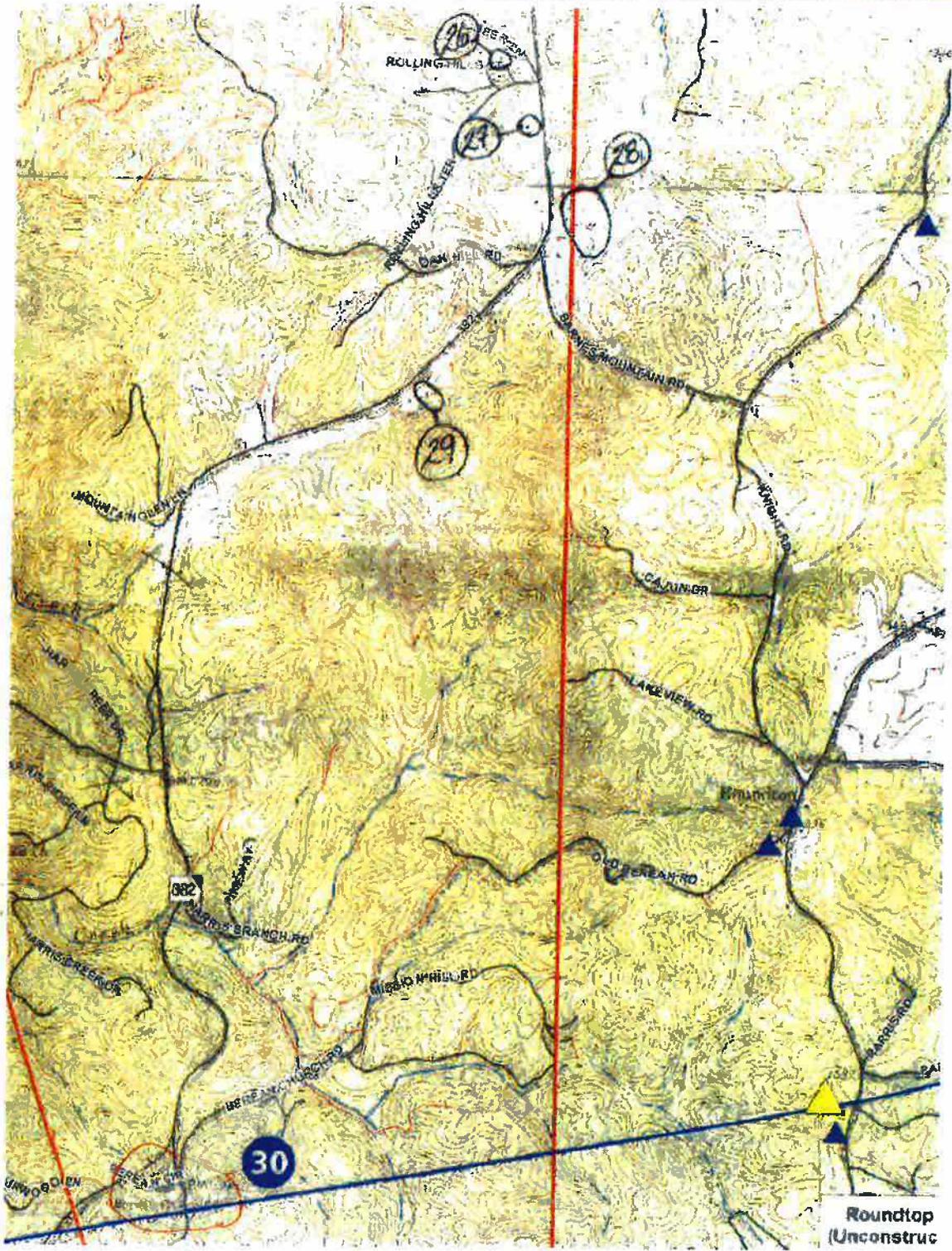
Proj. No.: N/A

JACOBS

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6B





Roundtop  
(Unconstruc

Map Source: Historic Preservation  
Consulting, Decatur GA

**Blue = Possibly NR-eligible**

Georgia Transmission

Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gilmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012

Scale: Not To Scale

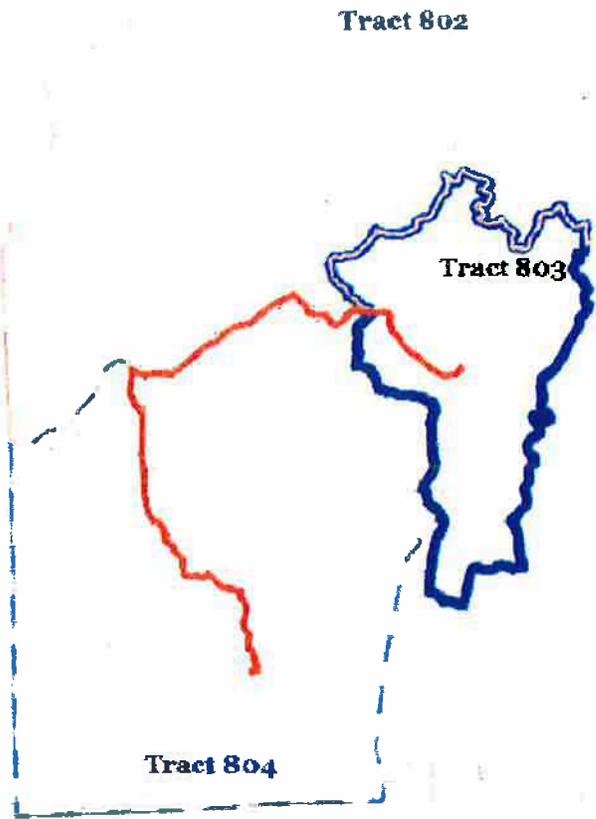
Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6D

N

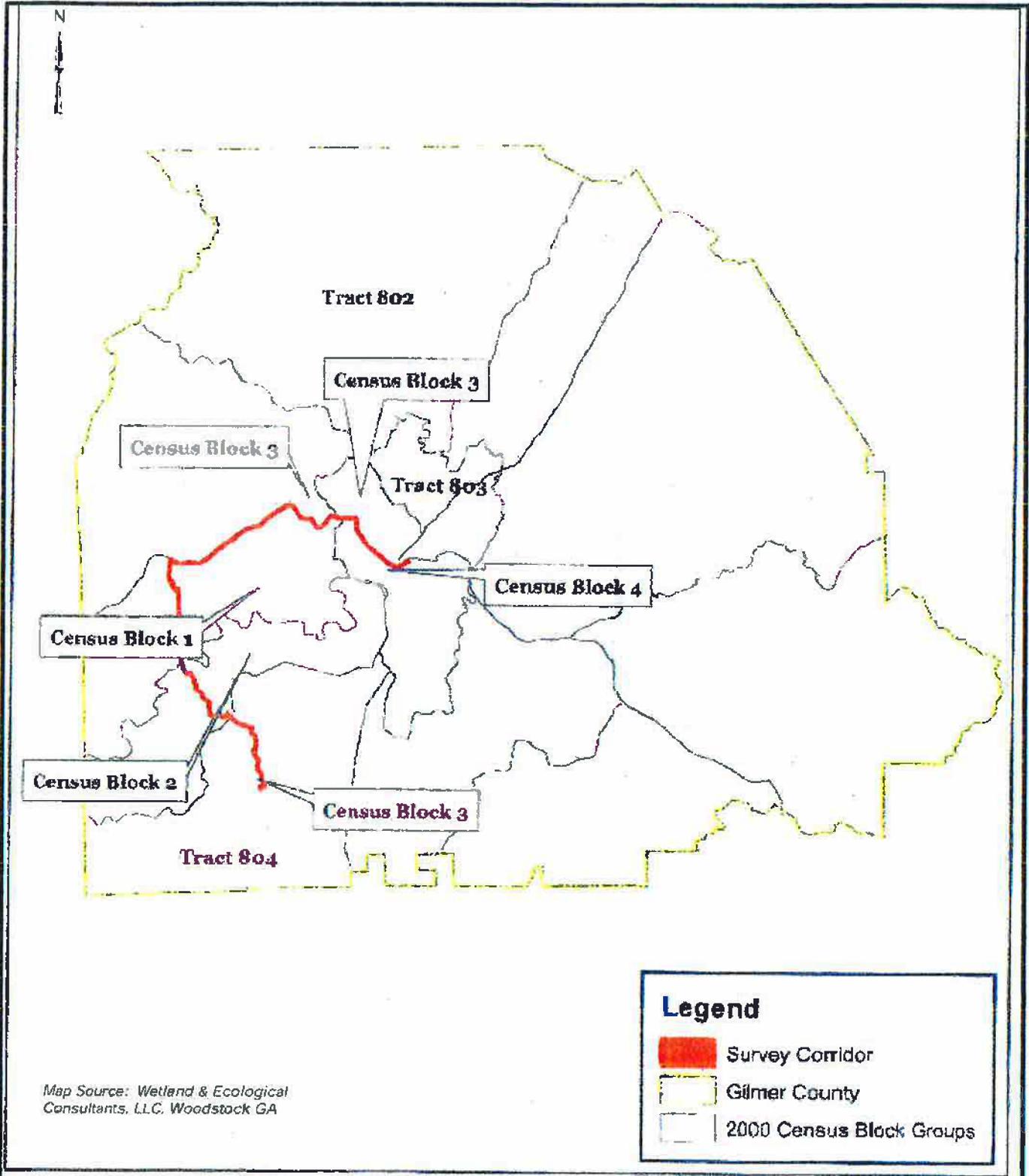


**Legend**

-  Survey Corridor
-  Tract 804
-  Tract 802
-  Tract 803

Map Source: Wetland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

 <b>JACOBS</b>	Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gillmer County, Georgia	Date: April 2012 Scale: Not To Scale Proj. No.: N/A
	Environmental Justice: Census Tract Map	Figure 7A



**JACOBS**

**Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.**

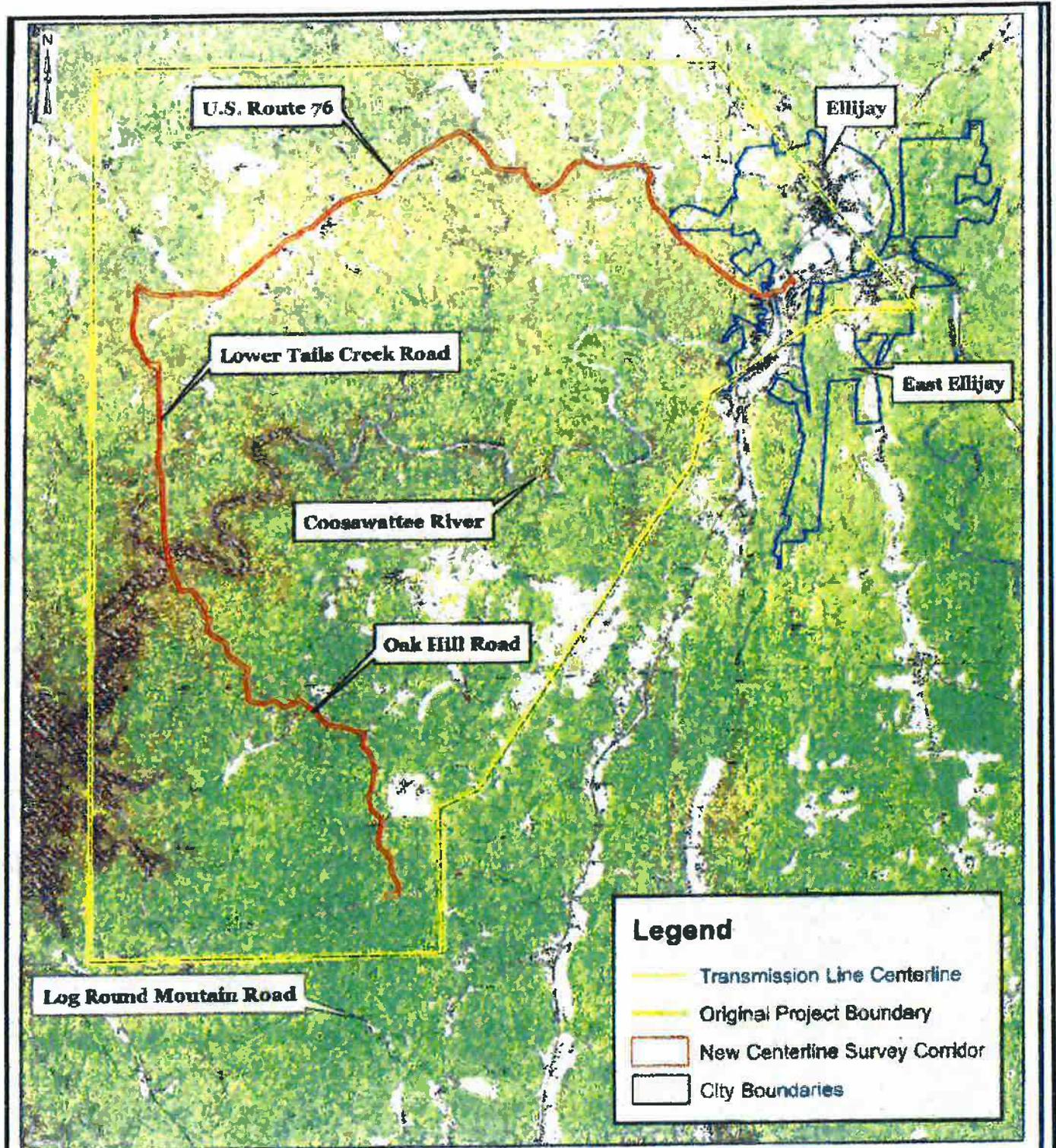
6801 Governors Lake Parkway  
Building 200

Norcross, GA 30071 USA

T 1.770.455.8555 | F 1.770.455.7391

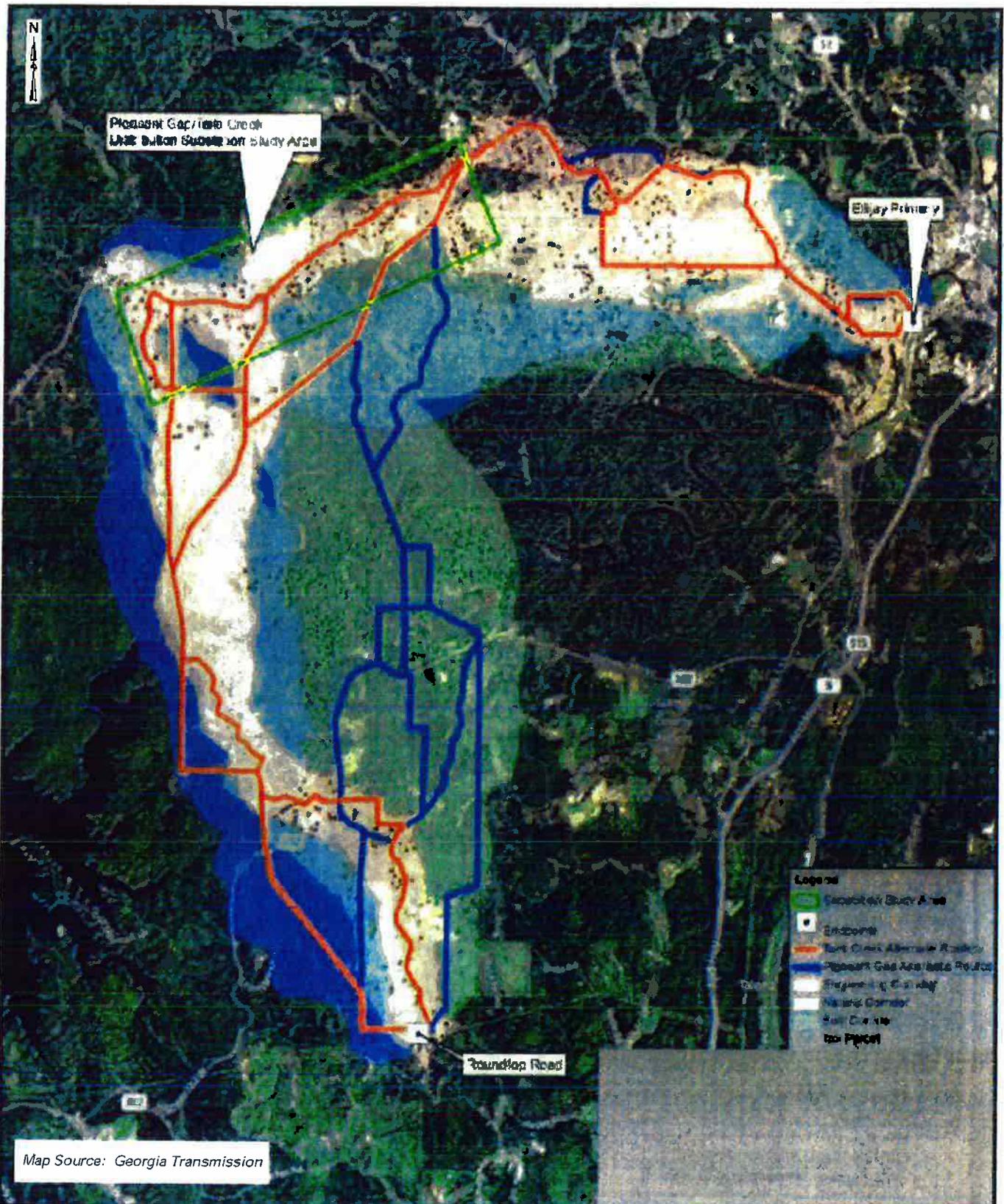
## Appendix B

### Figures



Map Source: Wetland and Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

 	Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gilmer County, Georgia	Date: April 2012 Scale: Not To Scale Proj. No.: N/A
	Project Location Map	Figure 1



Map Source: Georgia Transmission



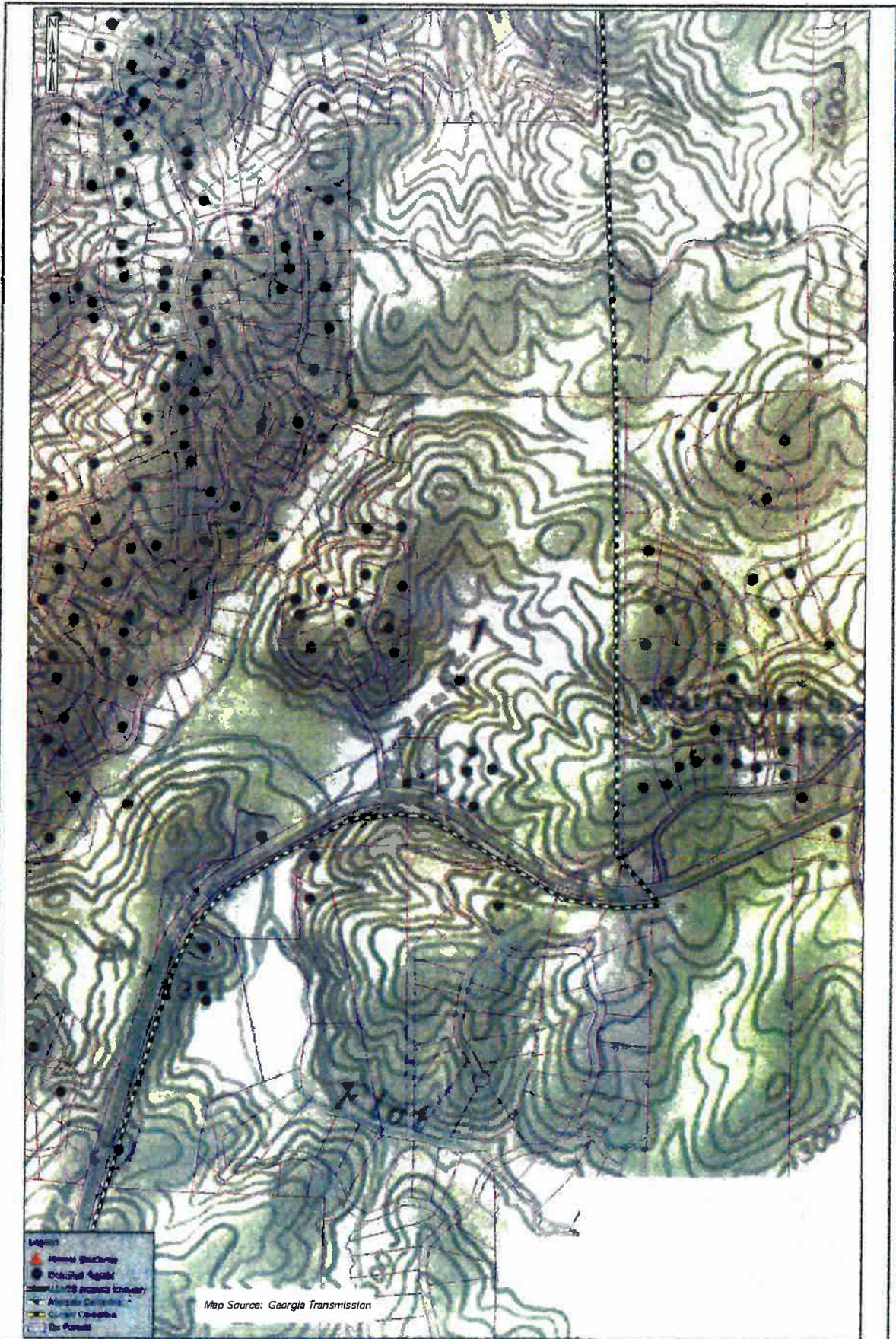
Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Glimmer County, Georgia

Project Alternatives Map

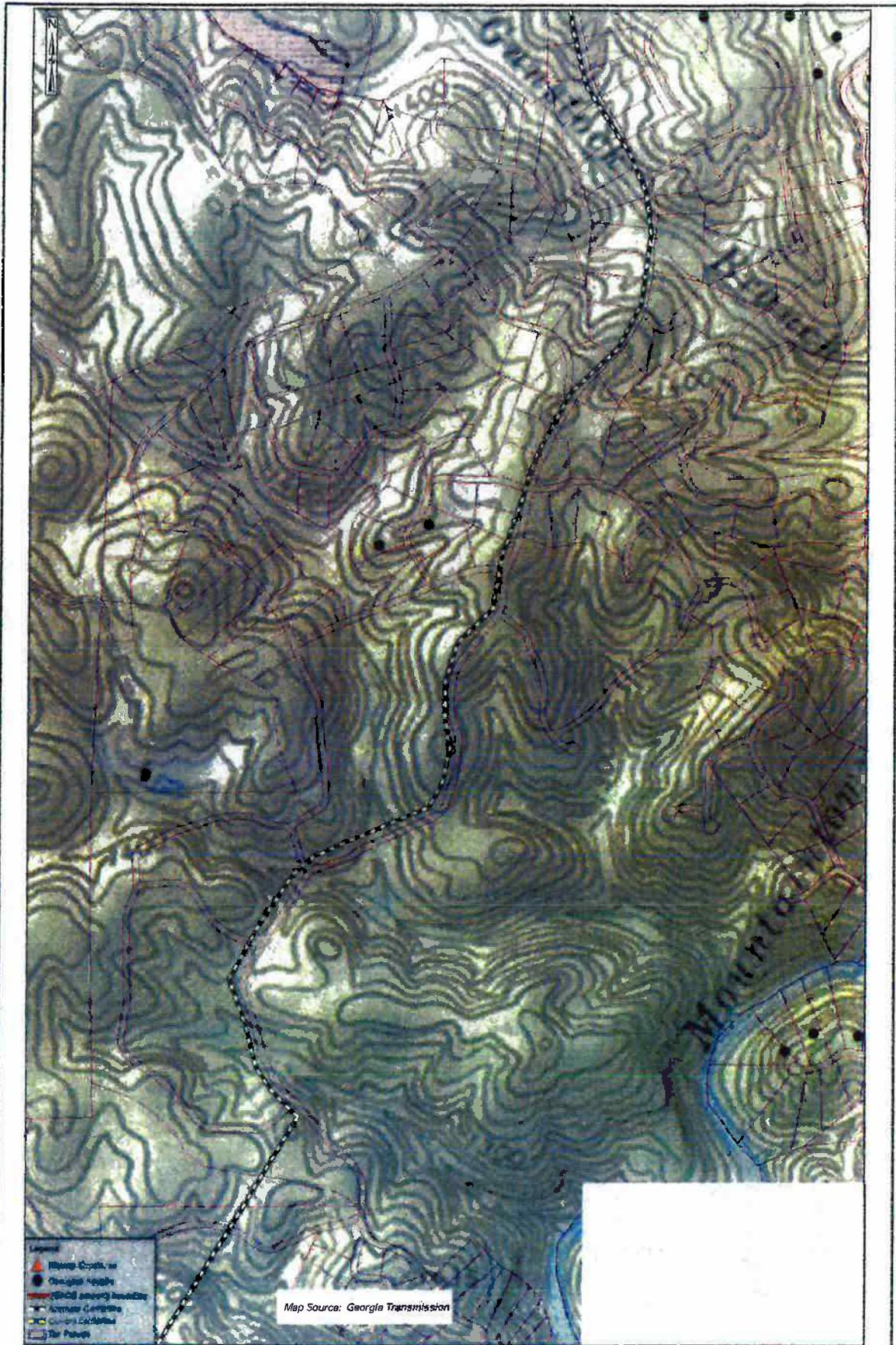
Date: April 2012  
Scale: Not To Scale  
Proj. No.: N/A

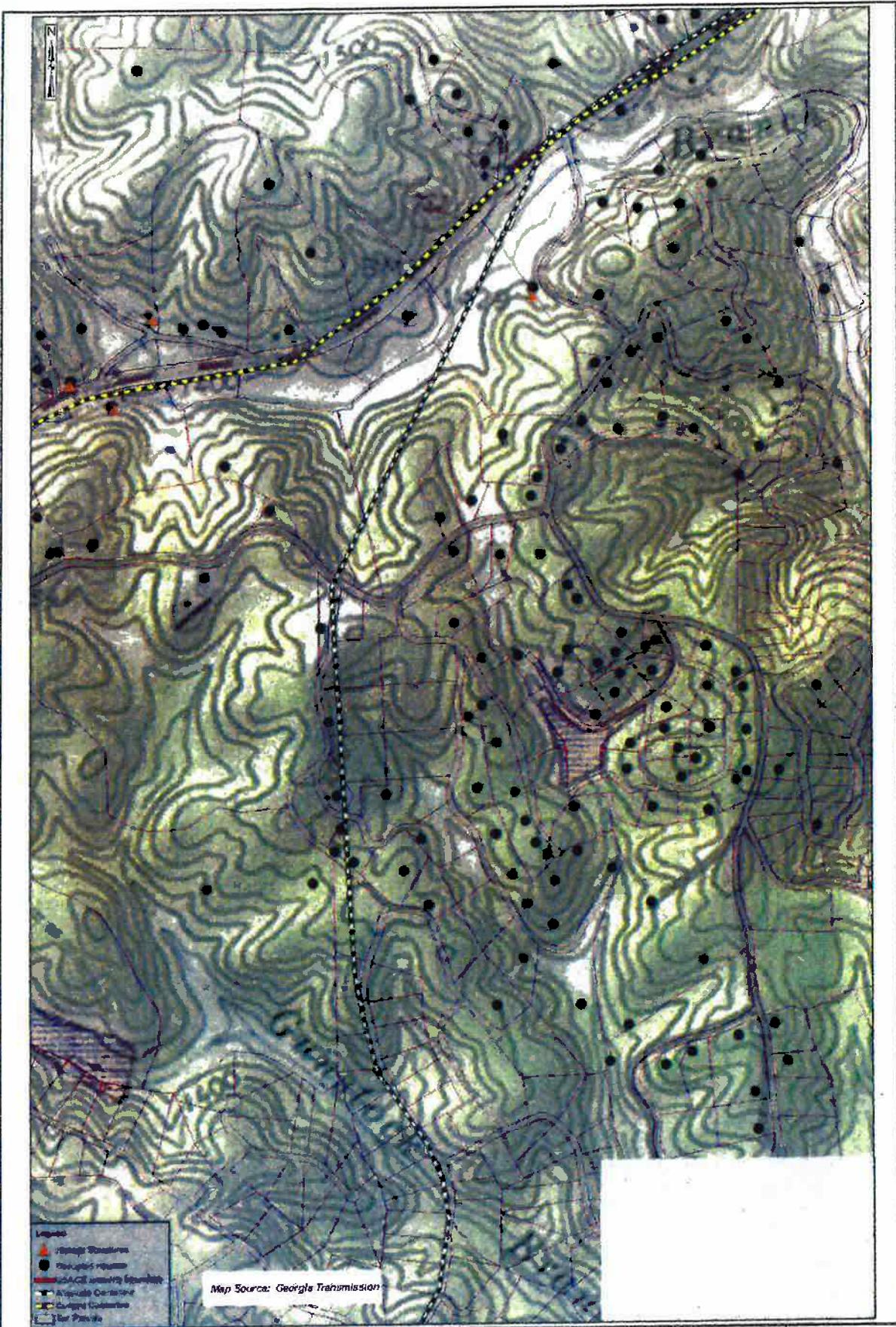
Figure 2











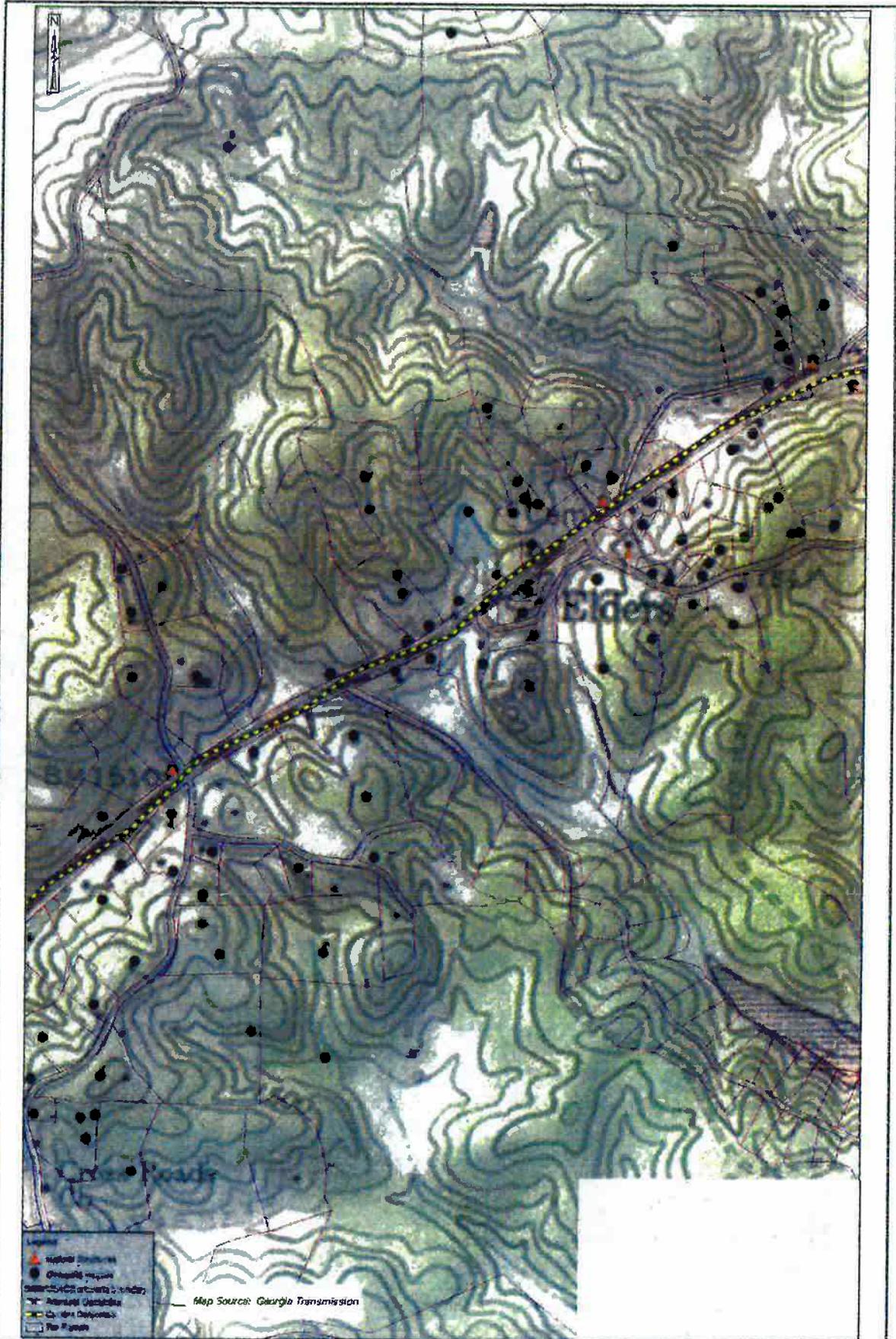
**JACOBS**

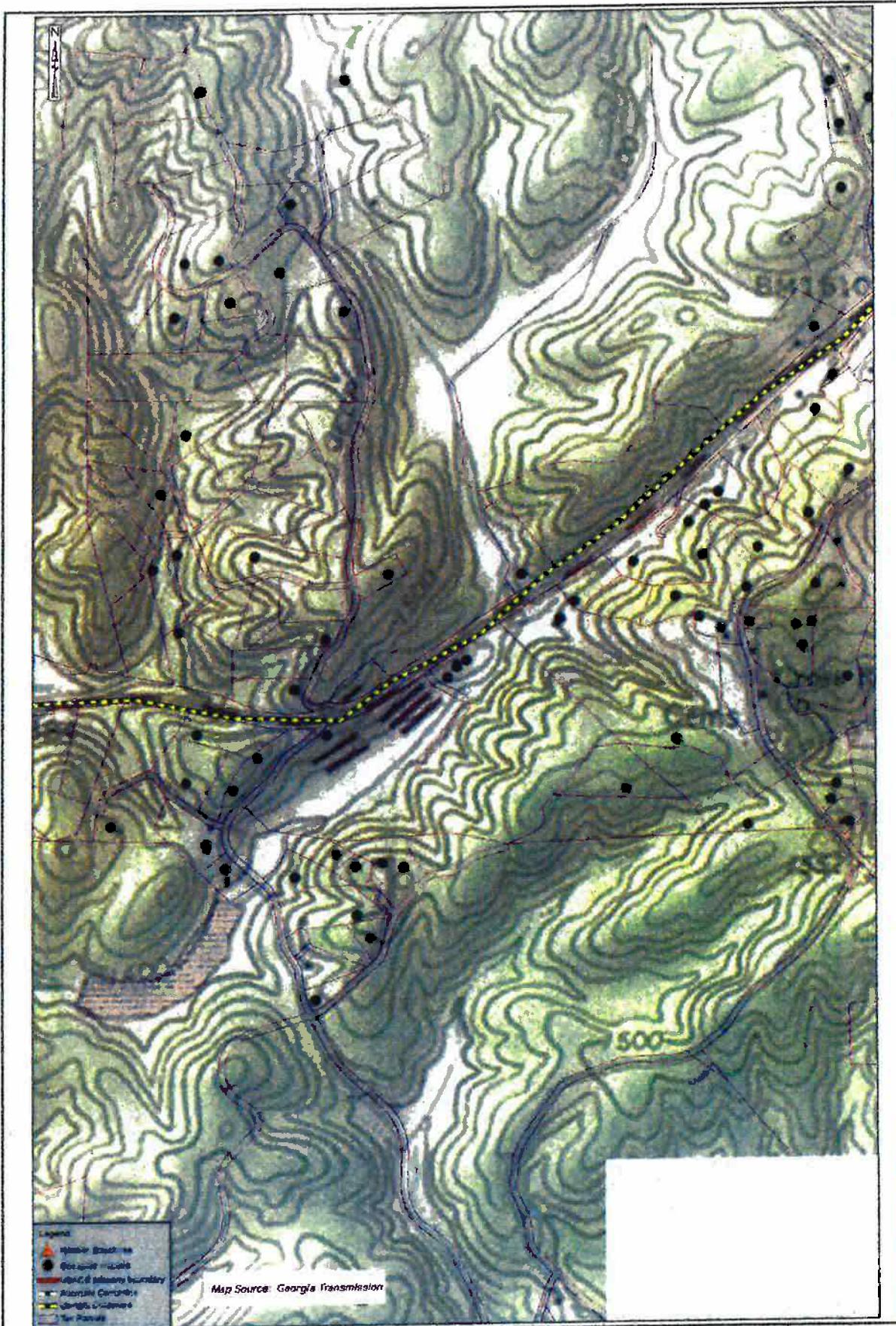
Elijah - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

Project Alternatives Map

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A

Figure 2E





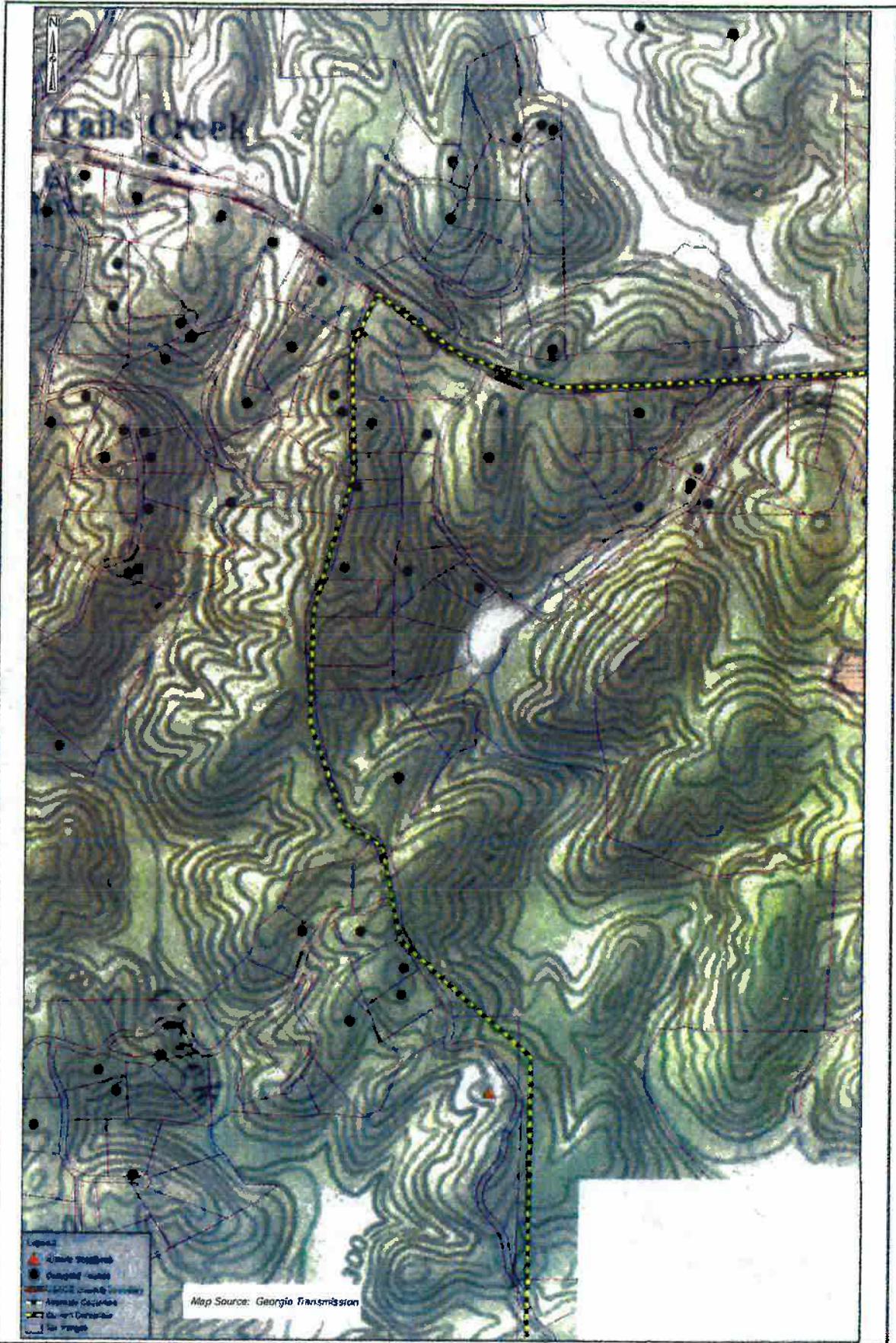
**JACOBS**

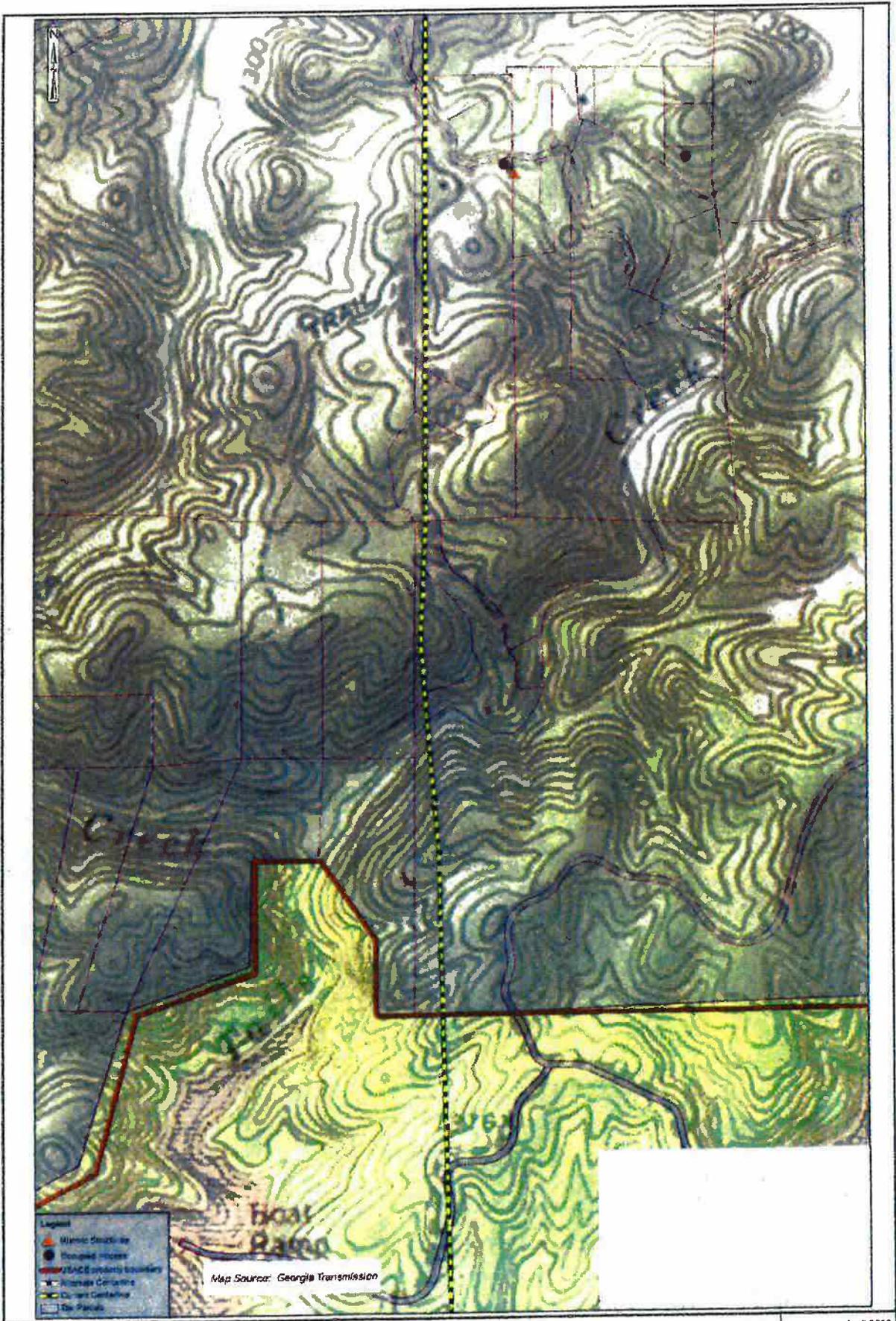
Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Glimmer County, Georgia

Project Alternatives Map

Date: April 2012  
Scale: Not To Scale  
Proj. No.: N/A

Figure 2G





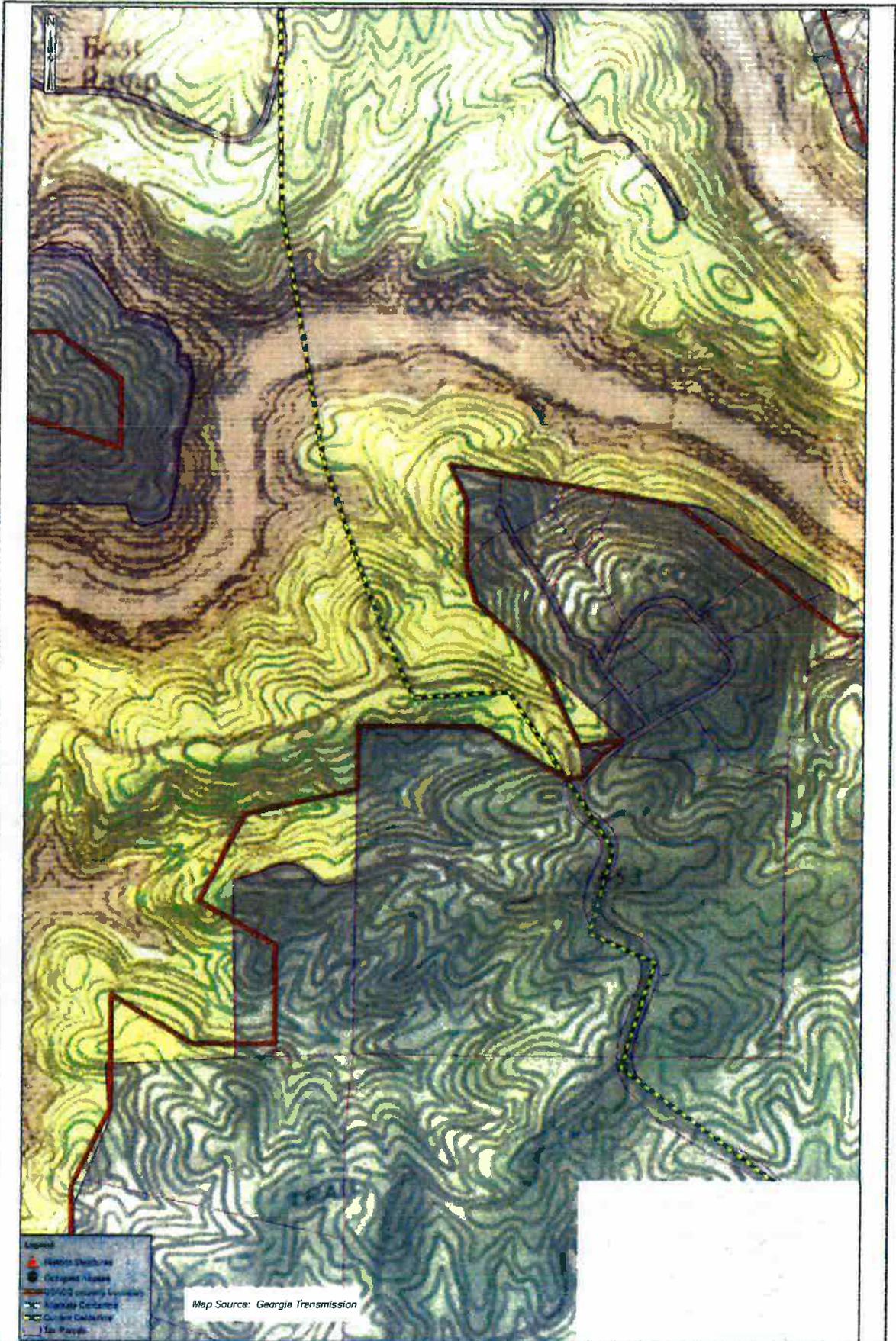
Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Glimmer County, Georgia

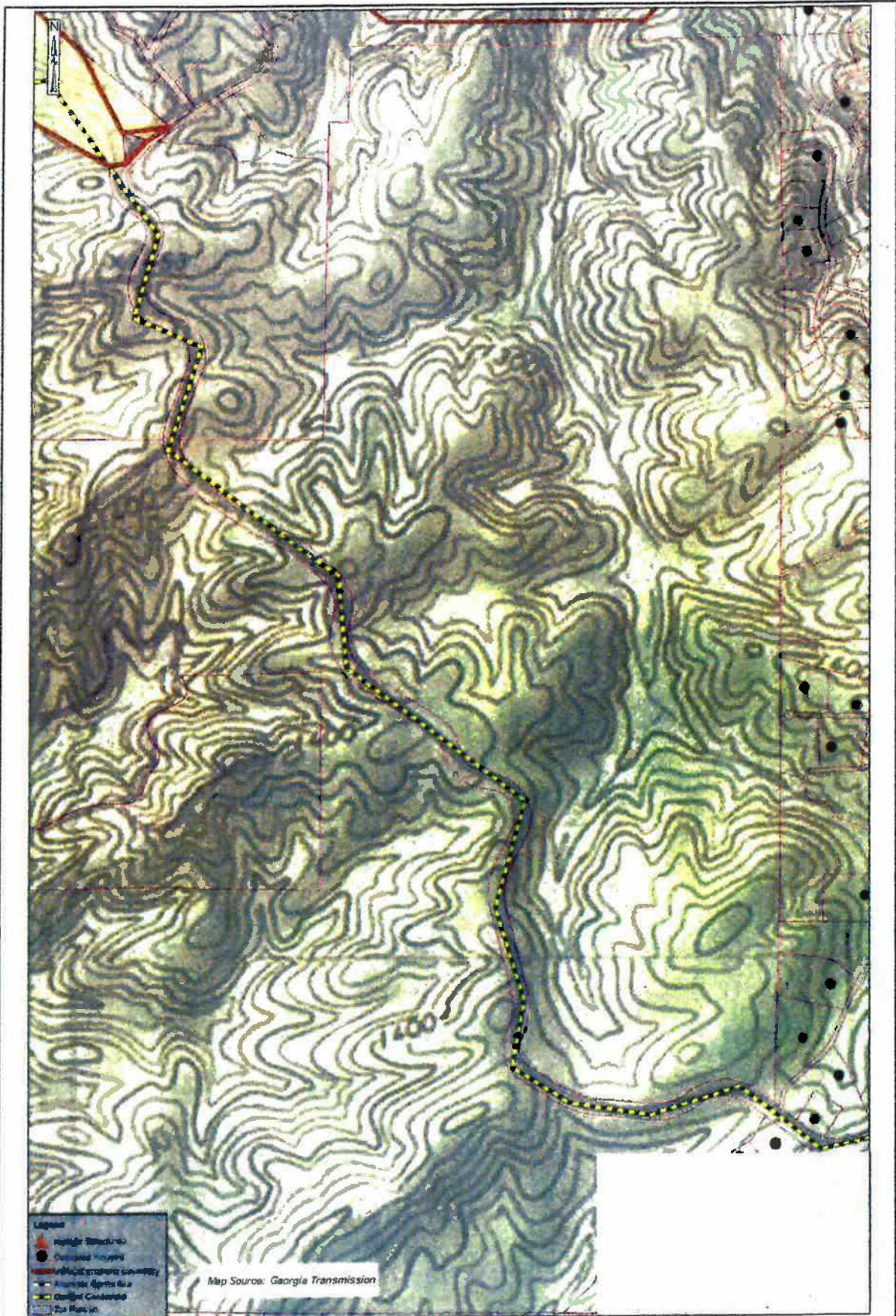
Date: April 2012  
Scale: Not To Scale  
Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Alternatives Map

Figure 21





Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Alternatives Map

Figure 2K

**LEGEND**

-  Elijay City Limits
-  East Elijay City Limits

**Existing Land Use Categories**

-  Low Density Residential
-  Medium or High Density Residential
-  Mobile Home Park
-  Commercial
-  Industrial
-  Public/Institutional
-  Transportation, Communication, and/or Utilities
-  Agriculture
-  Parks and Recreation
-  Forestry
-  Conservation
-  Vacant or Undeveloped
-  Water

Map Source: Gilmer County, Existing Land Use Map

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A

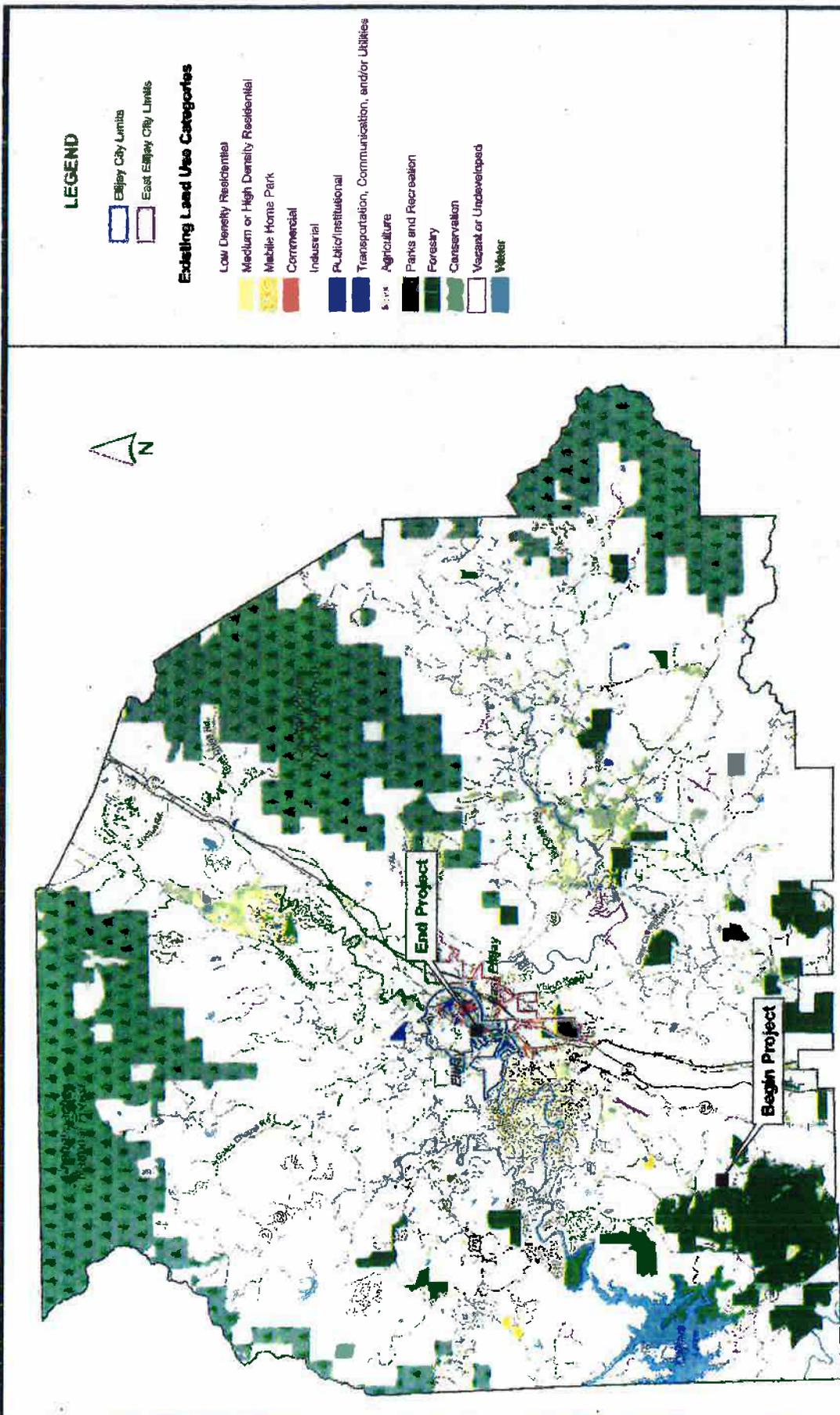
Figure 3A

**Elijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line**  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

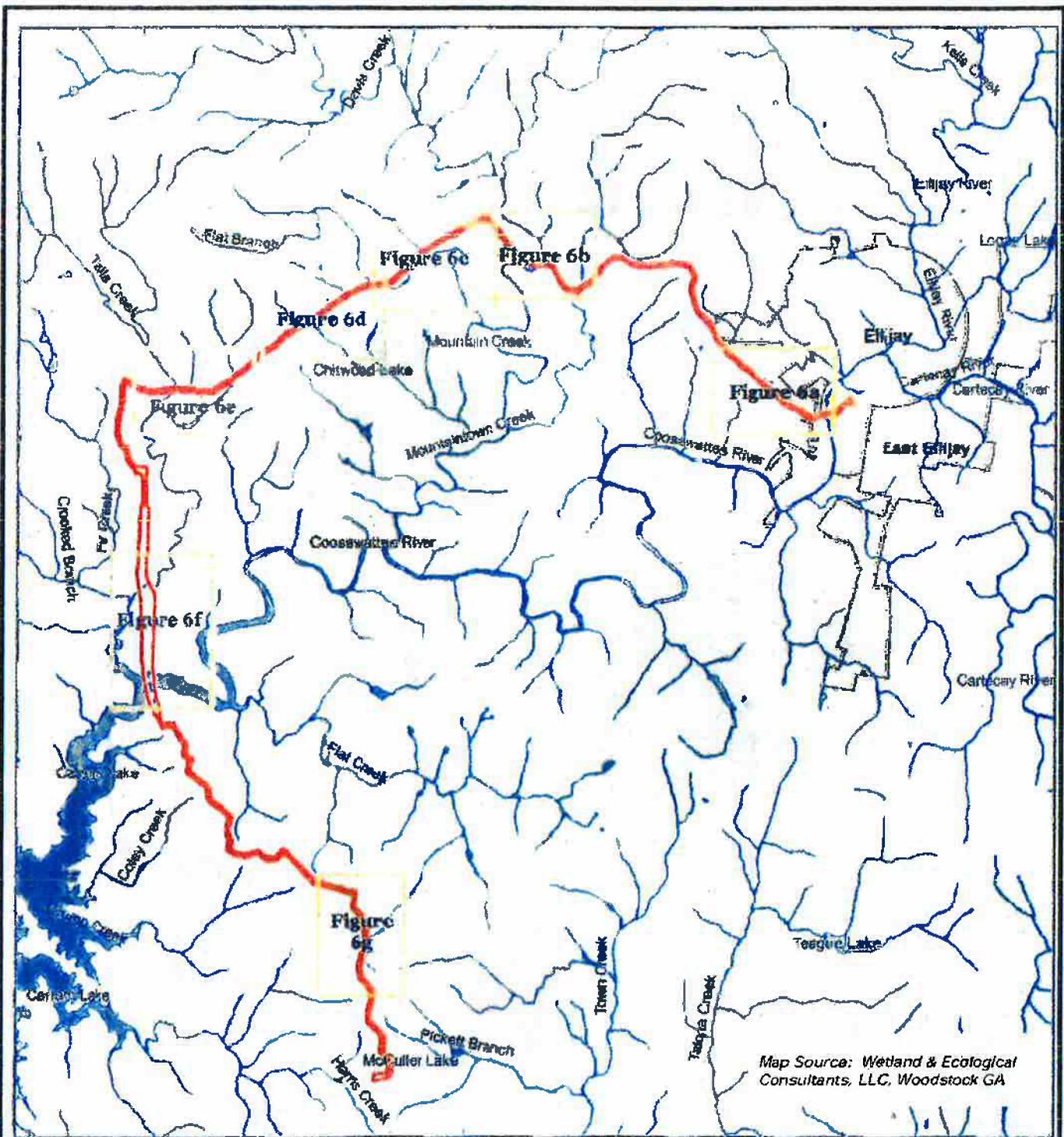
Gilmer County Existing Land Use



This is a product of the North Georgia Regional Development Center's Geographic Information Systems Department. This map is a representation of the historical (historic) data and does not constitute a legal description of any particular feature. Copyright 2012 by the NGRDC. All rights reserved. It is not to be reproduced or transmitted, in any form or by any means, without the written or verbal consent of the publisher. If you need additional information, please contact us at the following: North Georgia Regional Development Center, 605 West Wrought Street, Dobson, GA, 30709, (706) 772-2280, <http://www.ngrdc.org>, email: [info@nrgdc.org](mailto:info@nrgdc.org)







Map Source: Wetland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

**Legend**

- Survey Corridor
- Lake
- Stream
- City Limits

 Georgia Transmission  


Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

---

Jurisdictional Area Location Map

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A  
 Figure 4 Index

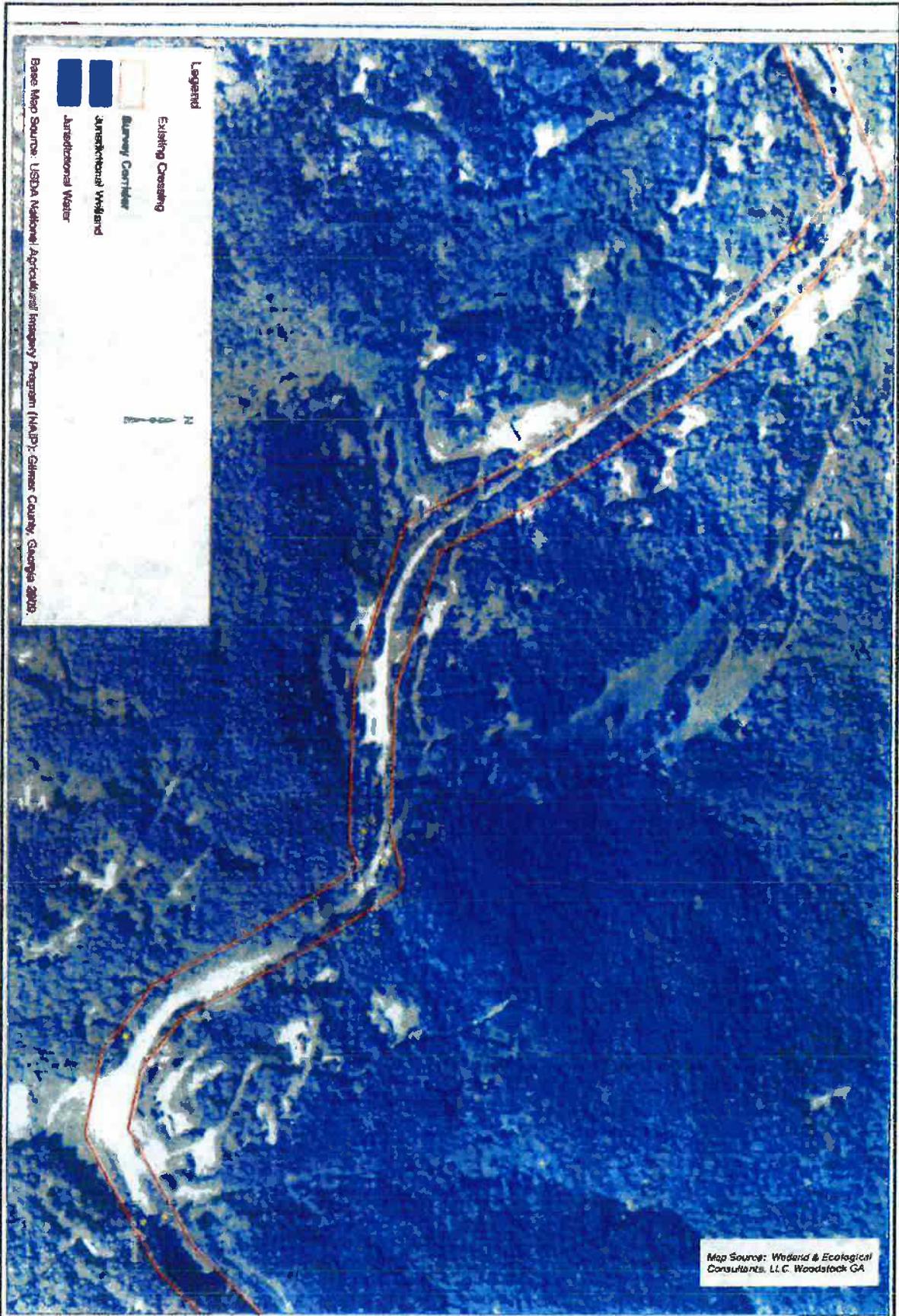


Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

Jurisdictional Area Location Map

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A

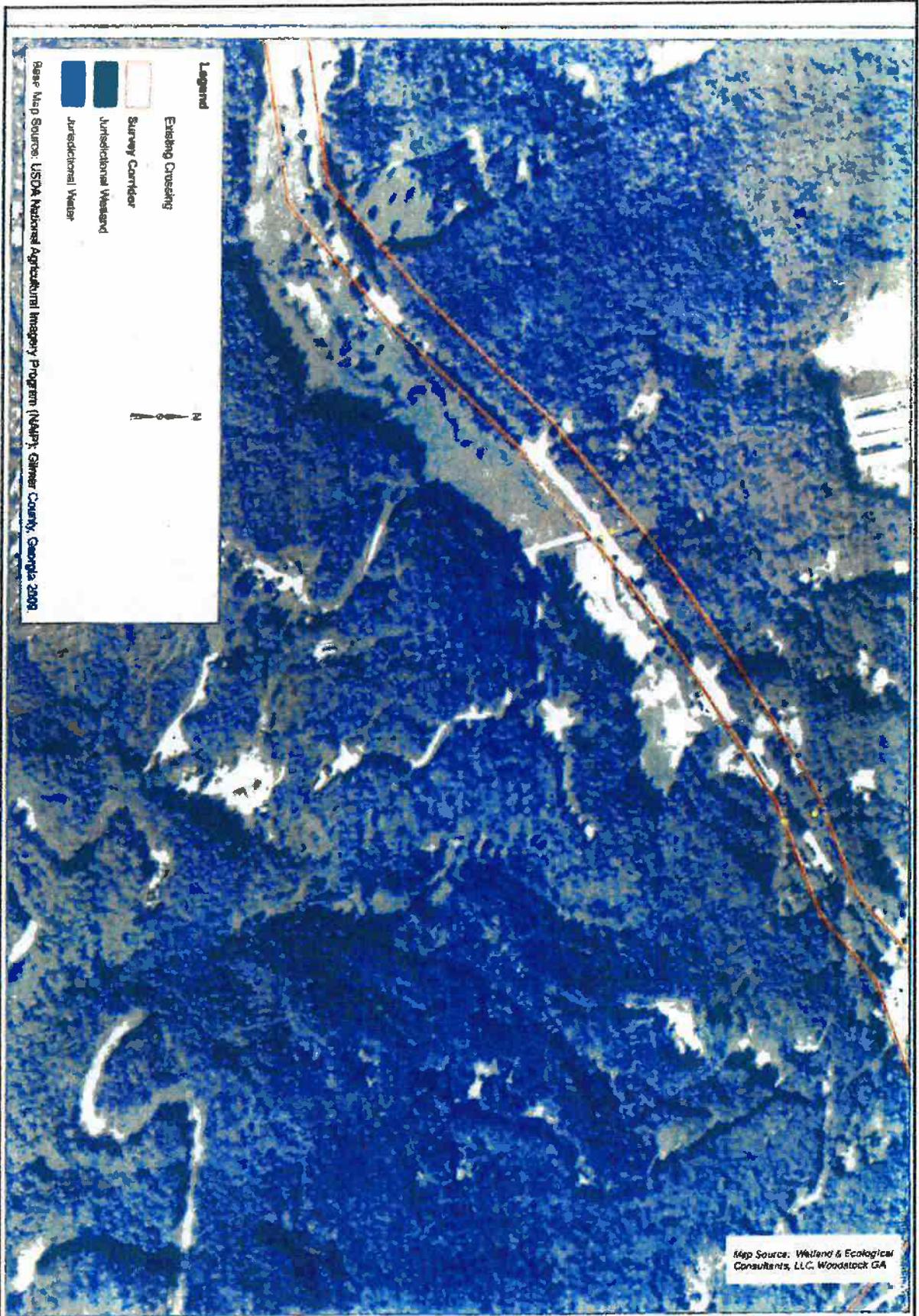
Figure 4A



Base Map Source: USDA National Agricultural Inventory Program (NAIP); Gilmer County, Georgia 2010.

Map Source: Wetland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock, GA

<b>JACOBS</b>	Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gilmer County, Georgia	Date: April 2012
	Jurisdictional Area Location Map	Scale: Not To Scale Proj. No.: N/A
		Figure 4B



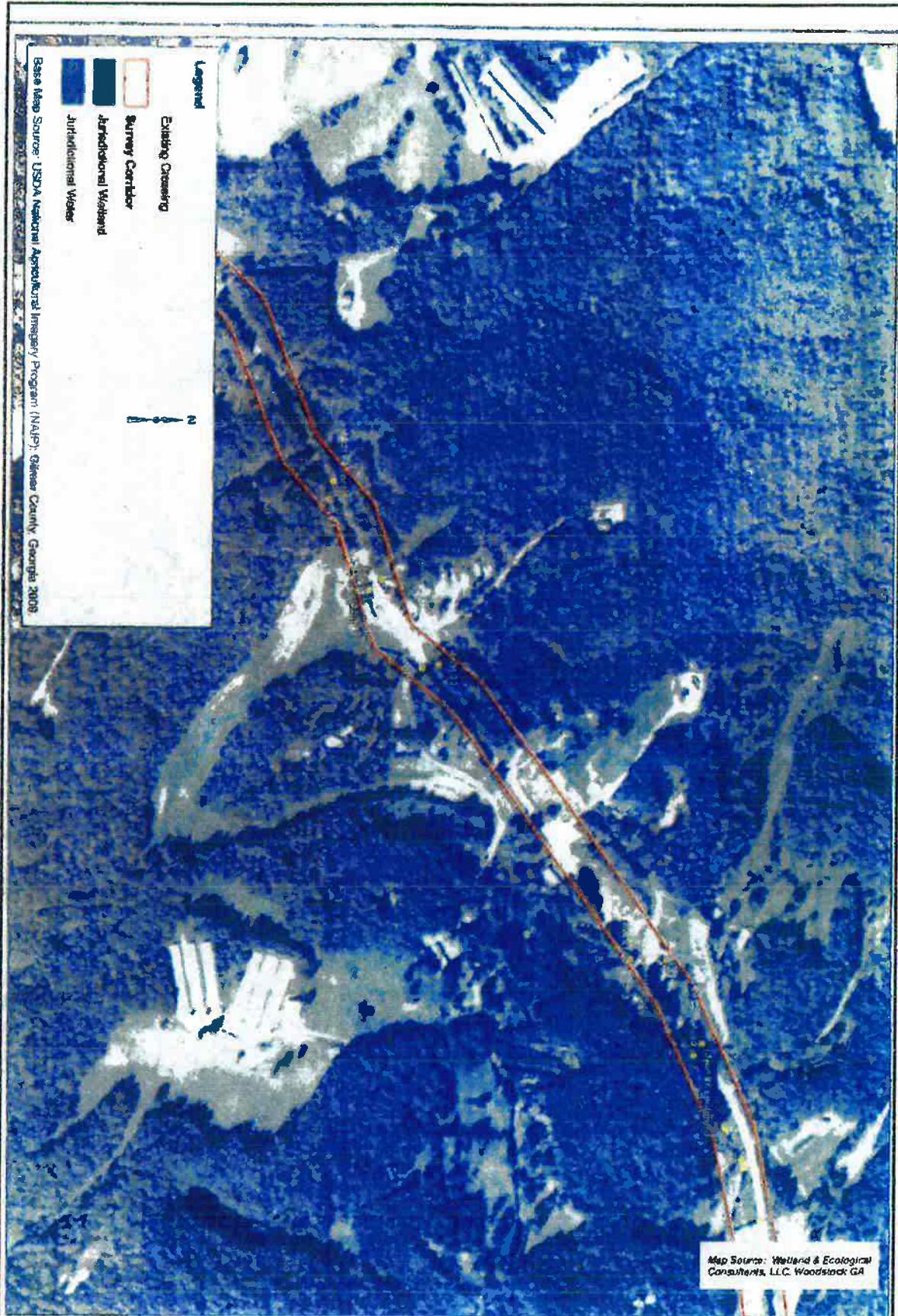
**Legend**

-  Easement Crossing
-  Survey Corridor
-  Jurisdictional Wetland
-  Jurisdictional Water

Base Map Source: USDA National Agricultural Imagery Program (NAIP), Gilmer County, Georgia 2008

Map Source: Weiland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

<b>JACOBS</b>	Eilijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gilmer County, Georgia	Date: April 2012
	Jurisdictional Area Location Map	Scale: Not To Scale Proj. No.: N/A
		Figure 4C



Base Map Source: USDA National Agricultural Inventory Program (NAIP), Gilmer County, Georgia 2008

- Legend**
-  Existing Crossing
  -  Surrey Corridor
  -  Jurisdictional Wetland
  -  Jurisdictional Waters



Map Source: Wetland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

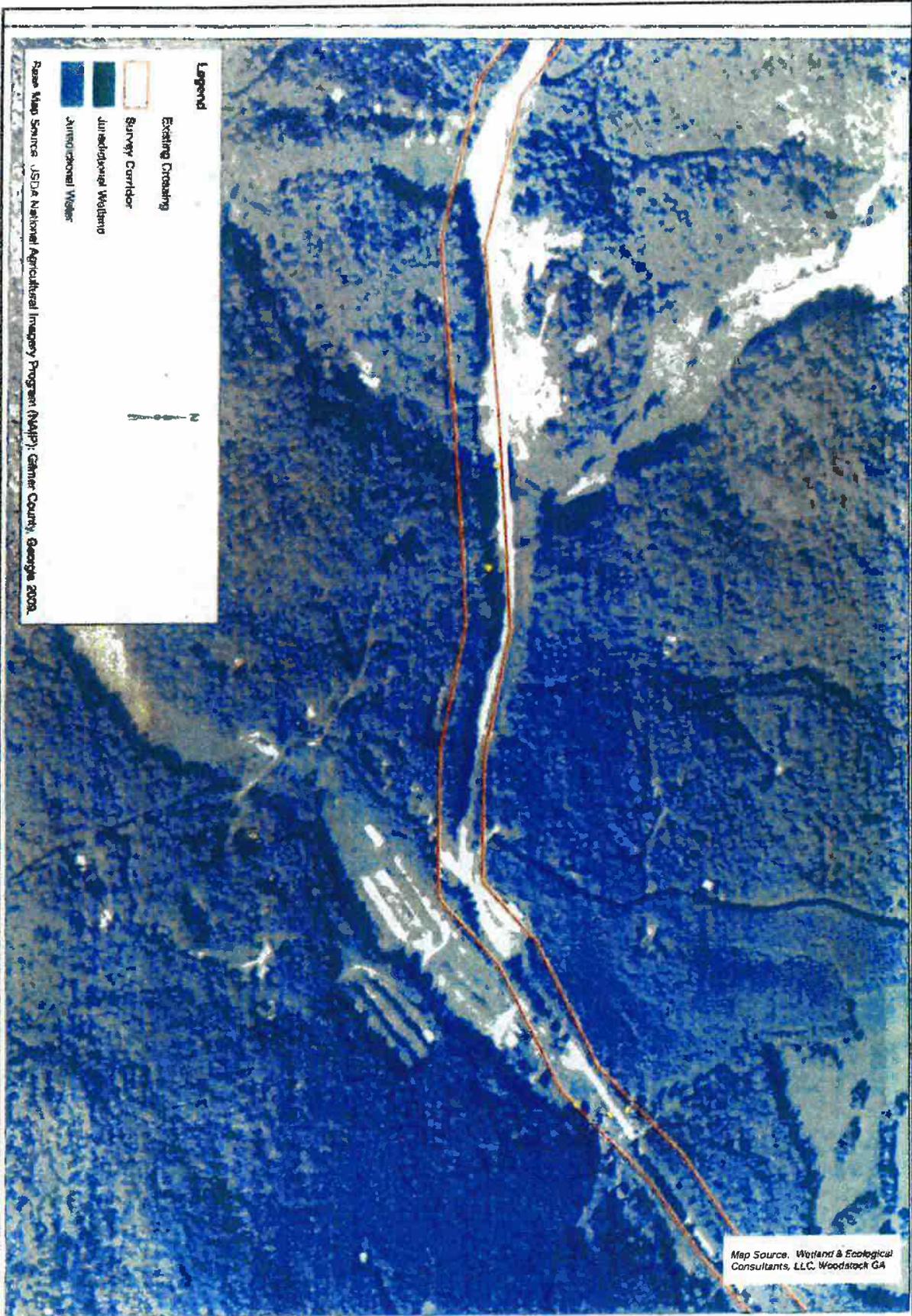


Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

Jurisdictional Area Location Map

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A

Figure 4D



**Legend**

-  Existing Overhead
-  Survey Corridor
-  Jurisdictional Waters
-  Jurisdictional Waters

Map Source: USDA National Agricultural Inventory Program (NAIP); Gilmer County, Georgia 2008.

Map Source: Wetland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

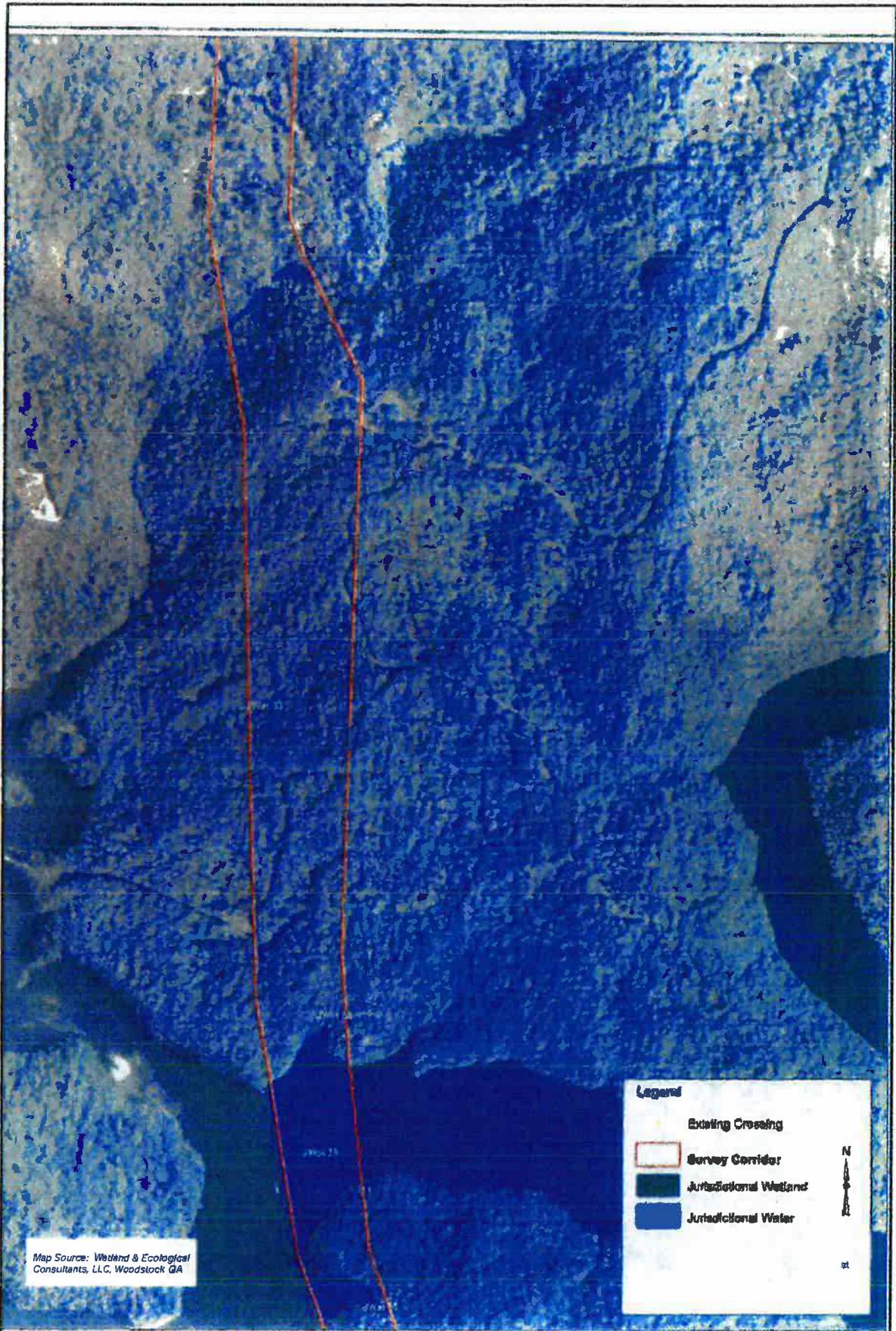


Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
 Gilmer County, Georgia

Jurisdictional Area Location Map

Date: April 2012  
 Scale: Not To Scale  
 Proj. No.: N/A

Figure 4E



Map Source: Wetland & Ecological  
Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

**Legend**

-  Existing Crossing
-  Survey Corridor
-  Jurisdictional Wetland
-  Jurisdictional Water

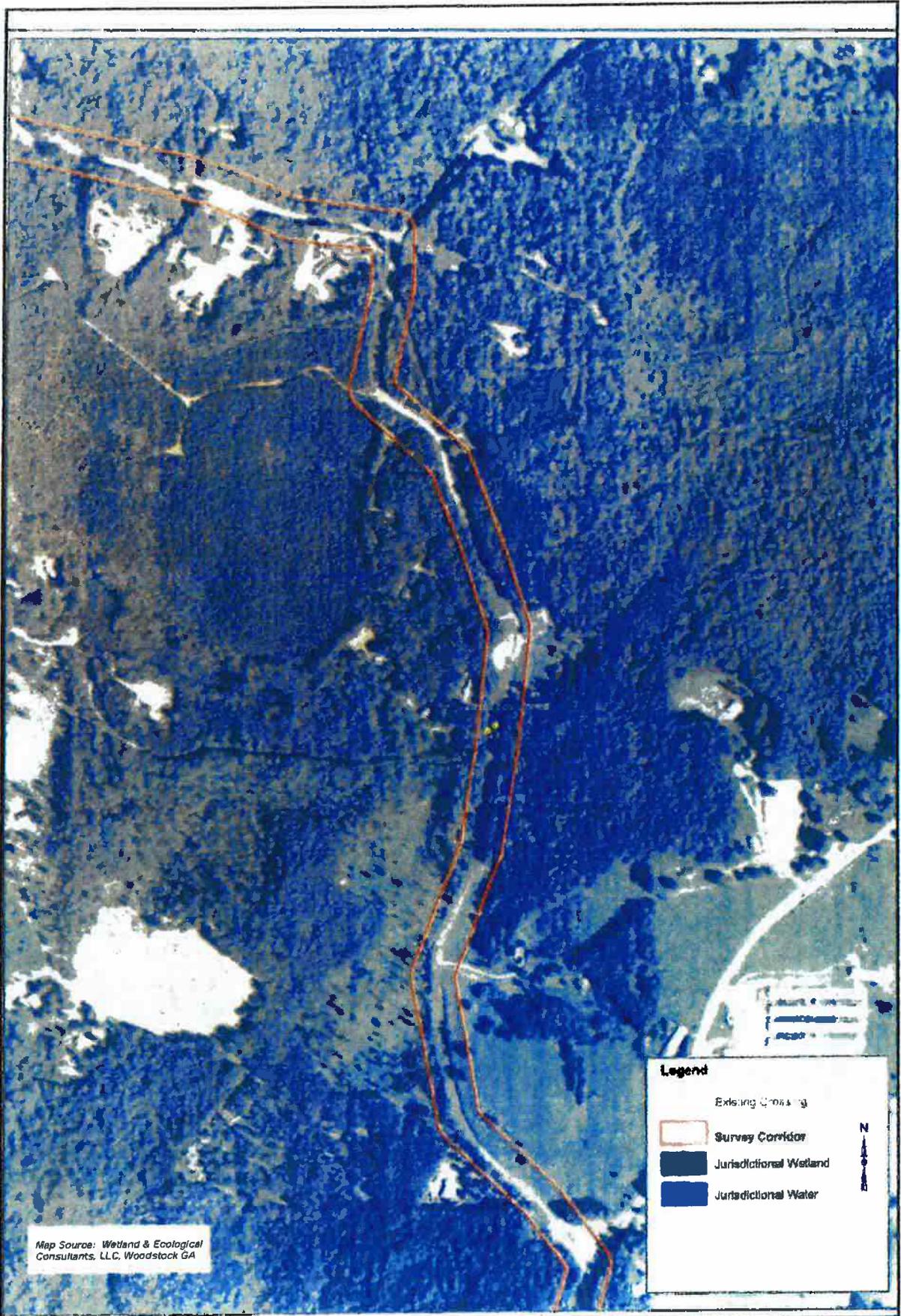


Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gilmer County, Georgia

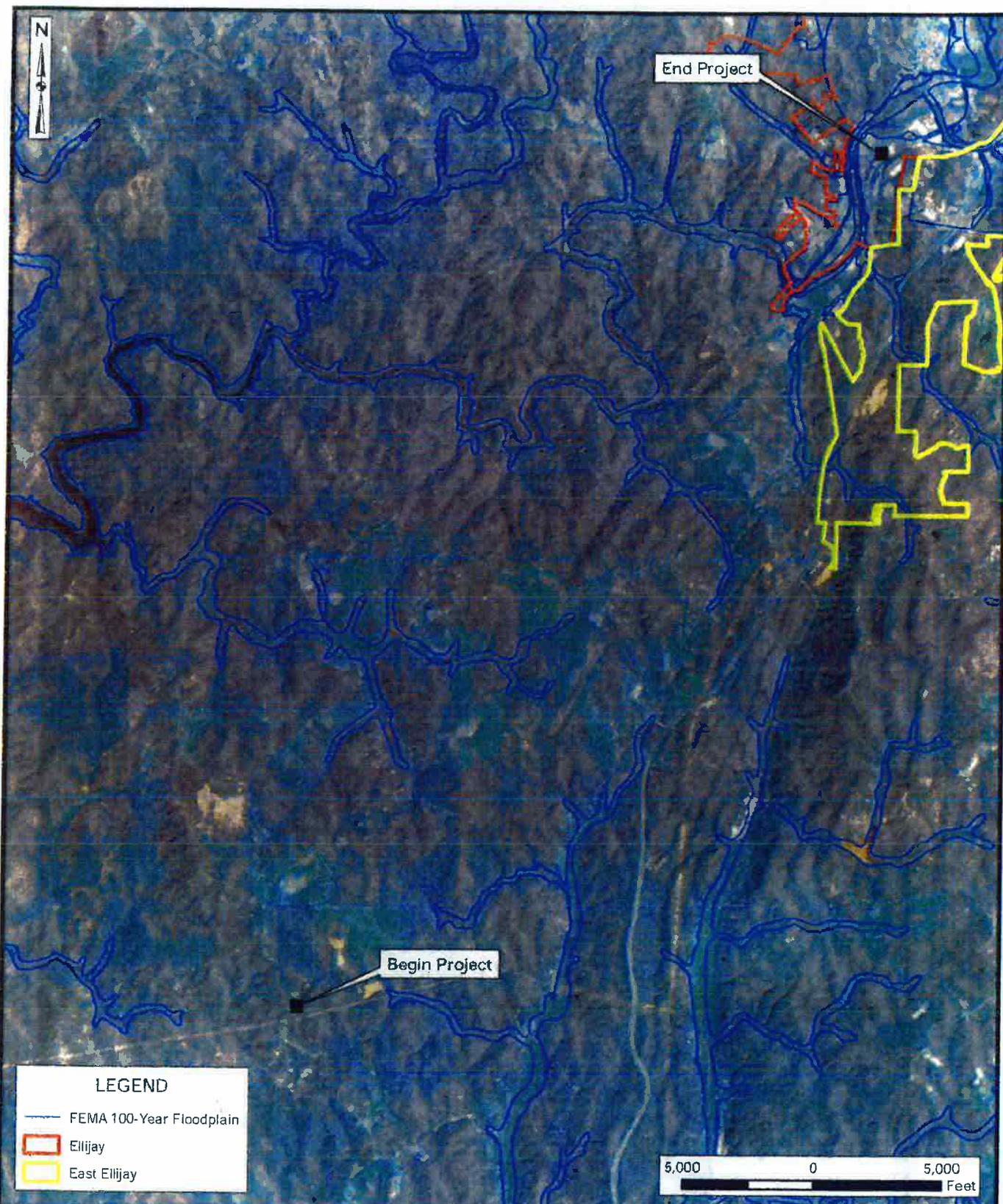
Jurisdictional Area Location Map

Date: April 2012  
Scale: Not To Scale  
Proj. No.: N/A

Figure 4F

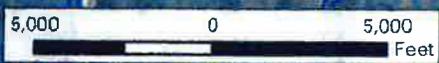


<b>JACOBS</b>	Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gilmer County, Georgia	Date: April 2012
	Jurisdictional Area Location Map	Scale: Not To Scale Proj. No.: N/A
		Figure 4G



**LEGEND**

- FEMA 100-Year Floodplain
- Ellijay
- East Ellijay



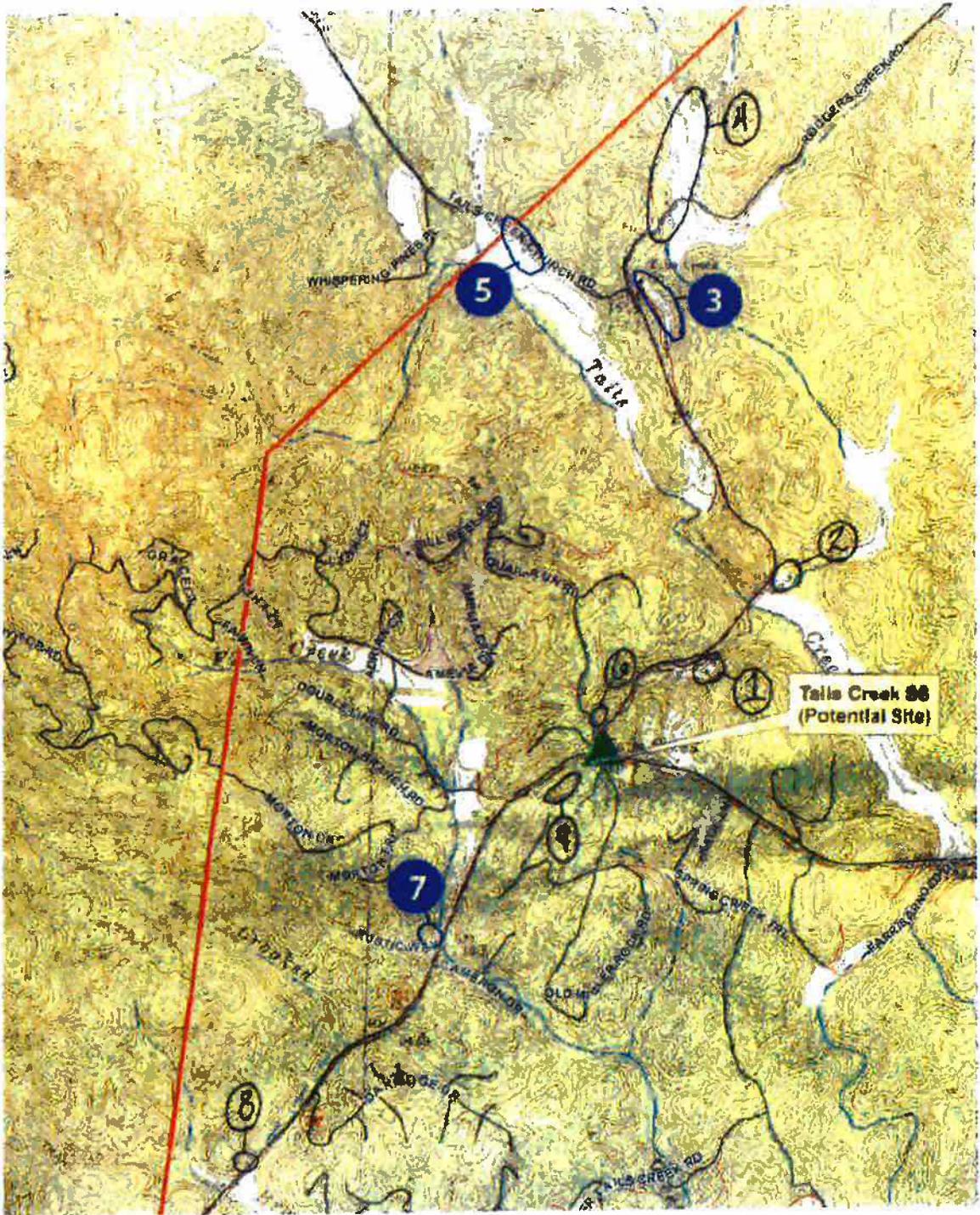
Georgia Transmission  
**JACOBS**

Ellijay - Round Top 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gilmer County, Georgia

---

Floodplain Map

Date: April 2012  
Scale: 1" = 5,000'  
Proj. No.:  
Figure 5



**Blue = Possibly NR-eligible**

Map Source: Historic Preservation Consulting, Decatur GA

Georgia Transmission

Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gilmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012

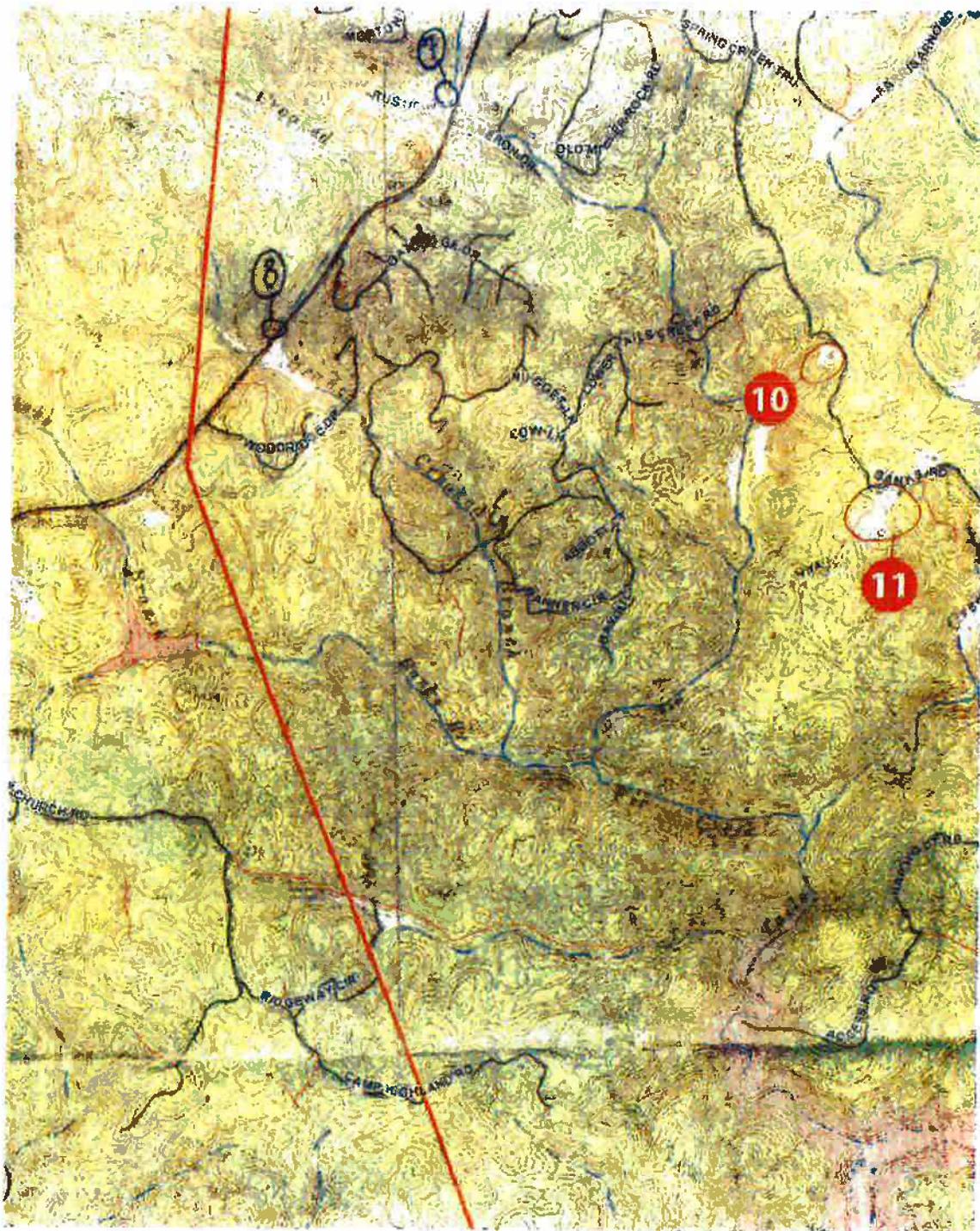
Scale: Not To Scale

Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6A



Red=NR-eligible

Map Source: Historic Preservation Consulting, Decatur GA

Georgia Transmission

Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gllmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012

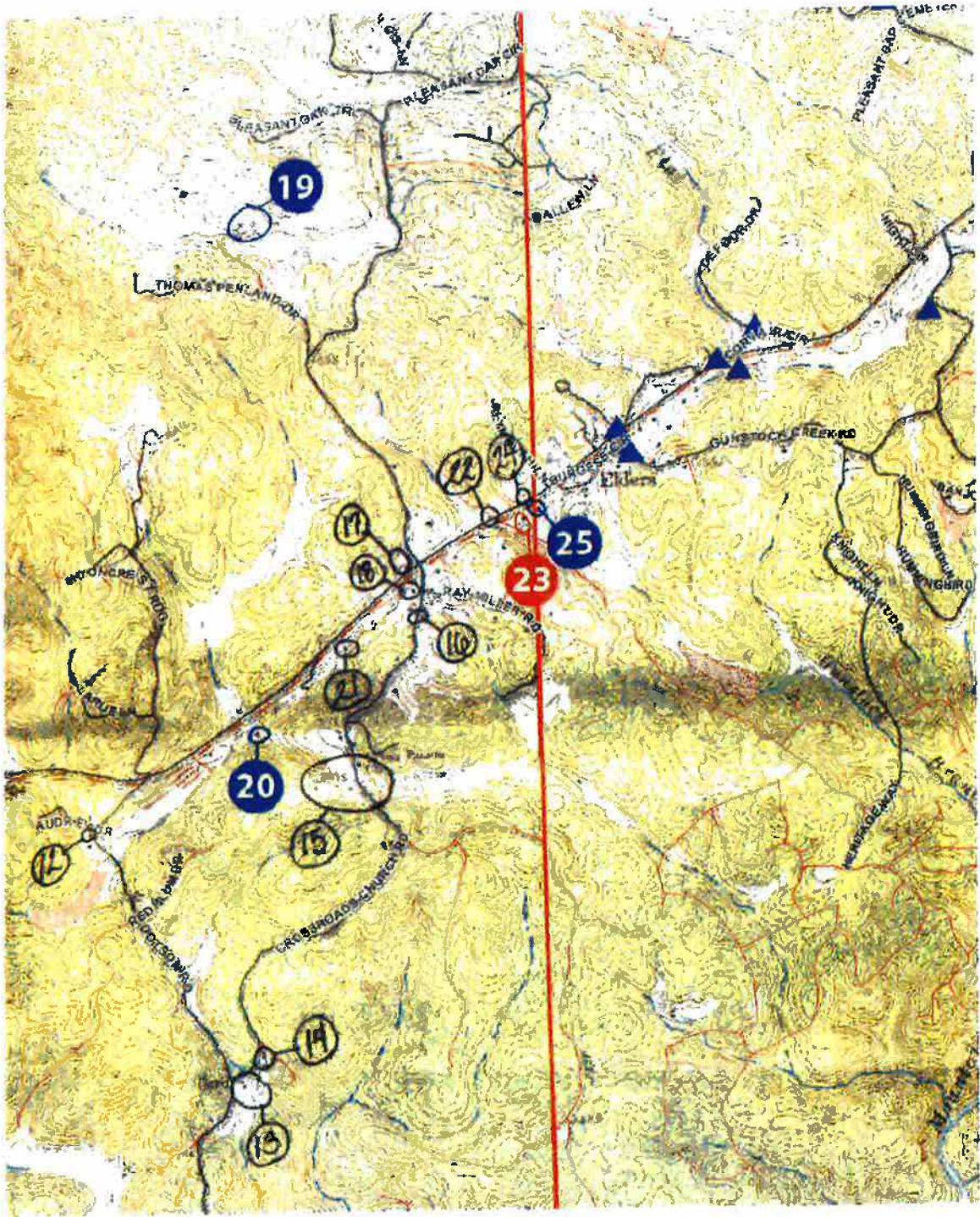
Scale: Not To Scale

Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6B



Map Source: Historic Preservation Consulting, Decatur GA

Red = NR-eligible  
Blue = Possibly NR-eligible

Georgia Transmission

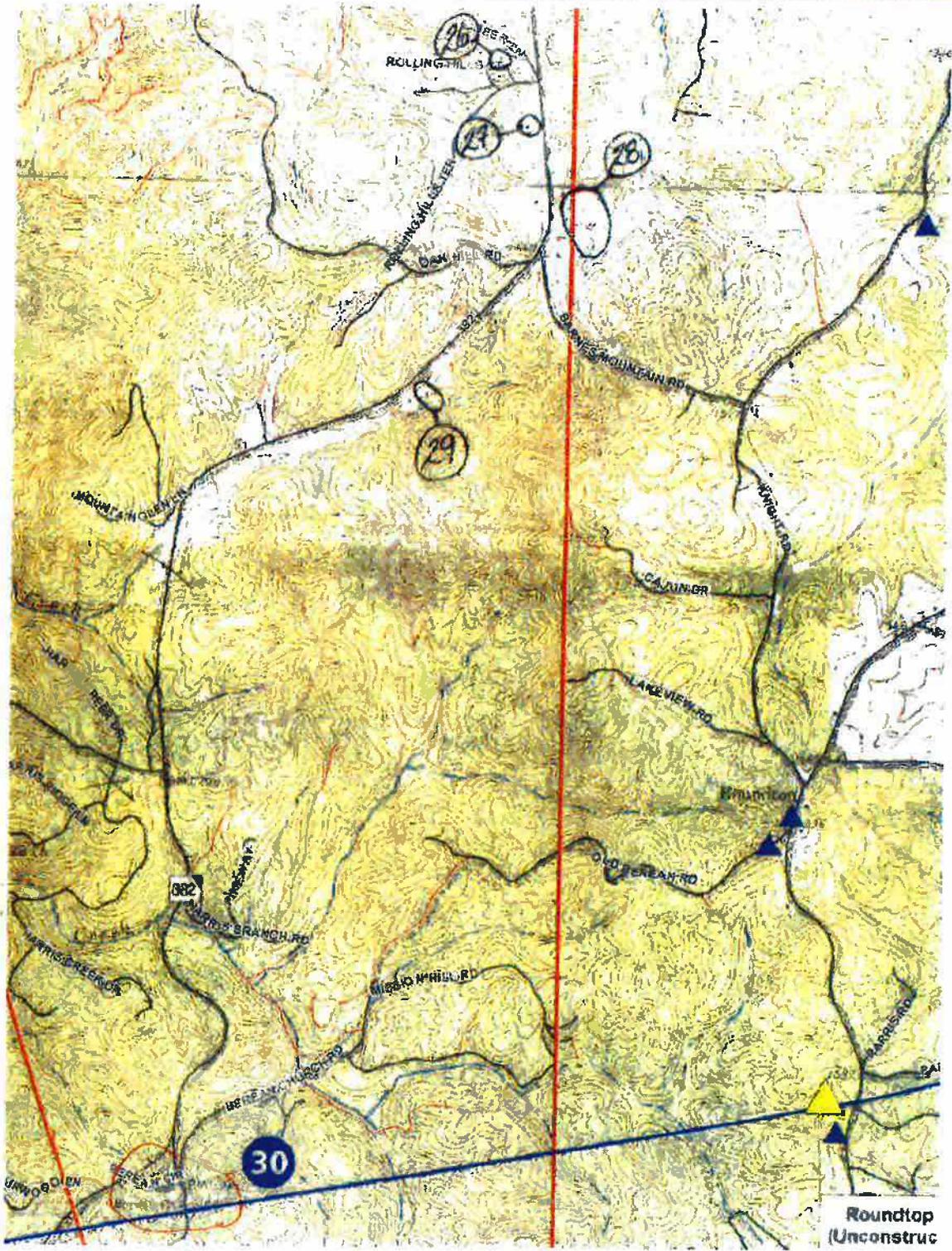
Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gillmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012  
Scale: Not To Scale  
Proj. No.: N/A

**JACOBS**

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6C



Roundtop  
(Unconstr)

**Blue = Possibly NR-eligible**

Map Source: Historic Preservation Consulting, Decatur GA



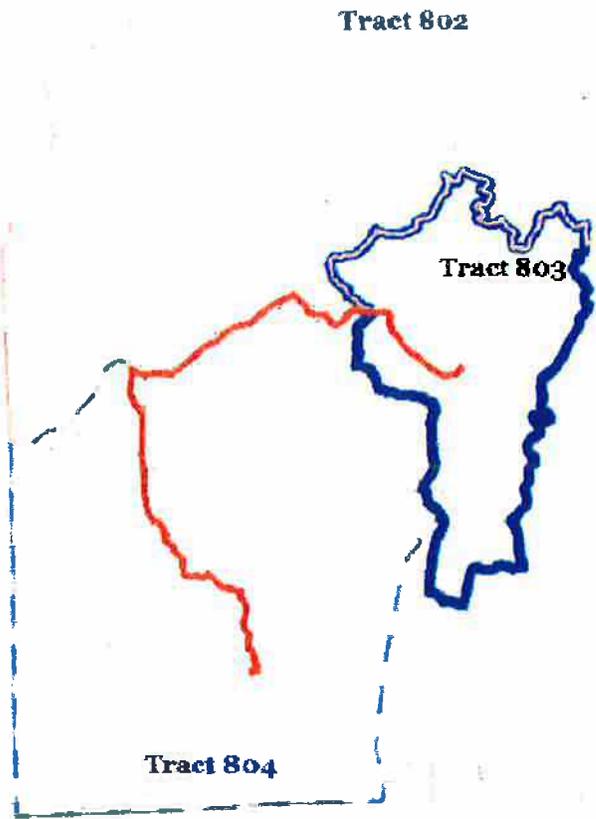
Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line  
Gilmer County, Georgia

Date: April 2012  
Scale: Not To Scale  
Proj. No.: N/A

Project Boundary and Map of Historic Resources Surveyed

Figure 6D

N

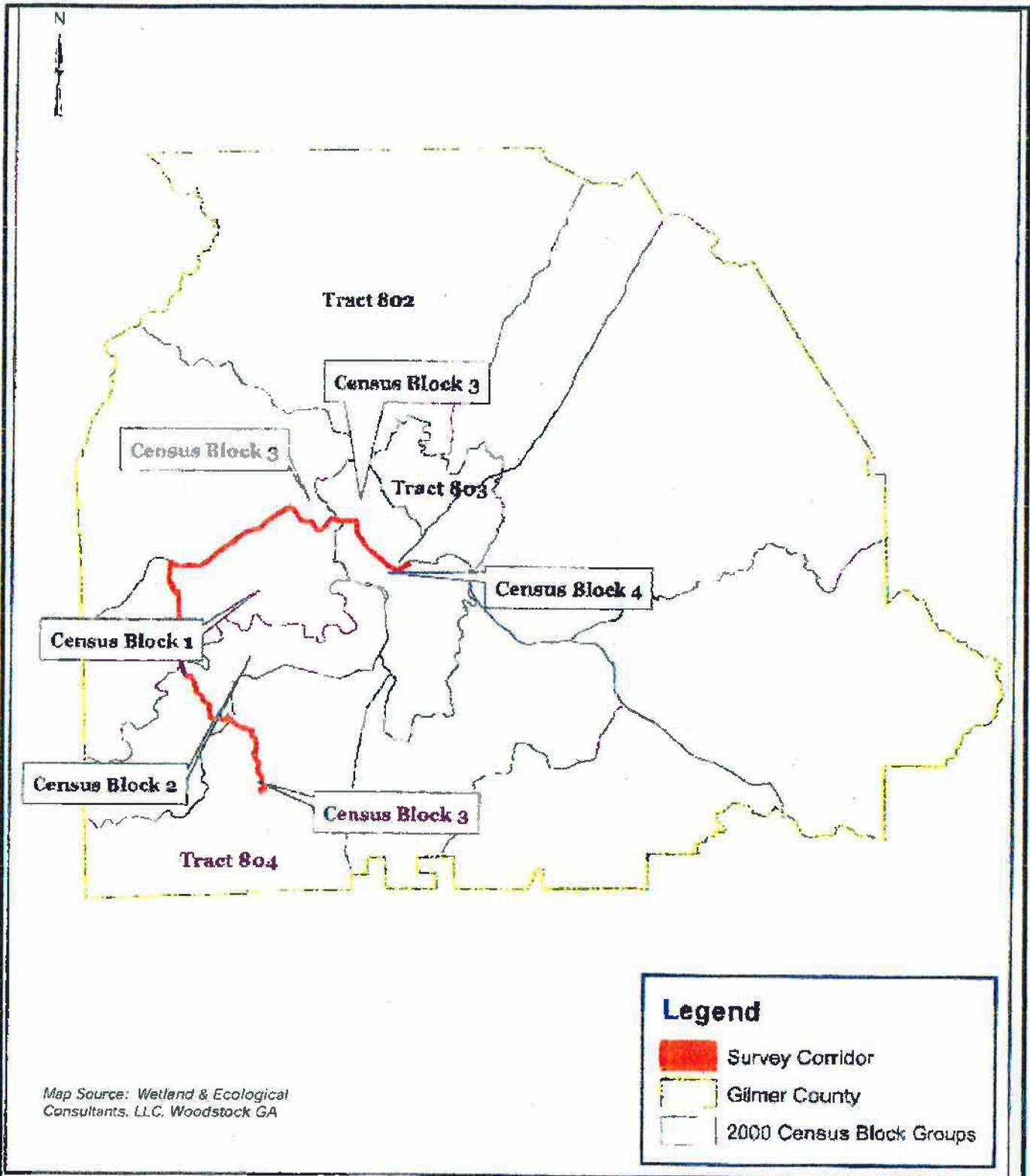


**Legend**

-  Survey Corridor
-  Tract 804
-  Tract 802
-  Tract 803

Map Source: Wetland & Ecological Consultants, LLC, Woodstock GA

 <b>JACOBS</b>	Ellijay - Roundtop 230 kV Transmission Line Gillmer County, Georgia	Date: April 2012 Scale: Not To Scale Proj. No.: N/A
	Environmental Justice: Census Tract Map	Figure 7A



**JACOBS**

**Jacobs Engineering Group Inc.**

6801 Governors Lake Parkway  
Building 200

Norcross, GA 30071 USA

T 1.770.455.8555 | F 1.770.455.7391