

Appendix E – Biological Review and Update



BIOLOGY MEMORANDUM

To: Audrey Navarro
Biologist-Environmental Project Manager

Date: December 12, 2017

From: Daniel Board, Biologist, WSP USA.

Subject:
303-A(ASO)T
303 MA 005 H6870 01L
State Route 303L, State Route 30 to Interstate 10

Introduction:

A Biological Review was prepared for the extension of State Route (SR) 303L from I-10 to the future SR 30 (303-A[ASO]T; 303 MA 005 H6870 01L) and approved by the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) Environmental Planning Group on February 5, 2013. The review concluded that there would be “no effect on any federally endangered, threatened, proposed, or candidate species as a result of the proposed extension of State Route 303 Loop south of Interstate 10 and the associated traffic interchanges.” Because the project would occur in an environment with minimal natural habitat, it is not expected to result in impacts on biological resources. This biology memorandum serves as an update to design and environmental assessment.

Scope of Project:

The project is located generally south of Interstate 10 along the Cotton Lane alignment within the city limits of Goodyear, west of Phoenix in Maricopa County, Arizona. The purpose of the project is to extend State Route (SR) 303 Loop (303L) south of I-10 and to provide a freeway connection to the proposed SR 30 freeway that is being planned to relieve traffic congestion on I-10. The connection will ultimately have four general purpose lanes and one high occupancy vehicle (HOV) lane in each direction. The current Regional Transportation Plan Freeway Program funds the initial installation of three general purpose lanes each direction from SR30 to I-10. The project work and limits have not been changed from the Biological Review submitted February 5, 2013 (see Figures 1 and 2).

The extension of SR 303L from I-10 to the future SR 30 would involve the construction of several miles of roadway; however, no project construction would occur within jurisdictional Waters of the United States. Large numbers and a variety of construction equipment, including earthmovers, bulldozers, and road graders, as well as paving machines and associated equipment, would be required for project construction. It is anticipated that construction would occur over a two-year period, but the exact timing has yet to be determined. The work includes a 10-lane divided, access-controlled urban freeway that would provide four general purpose lanes and an HOV lane in each direction between I-10 and the

future SR30 freeway near MC85. The new facility would also include diamond interchanges at Yuma Road and Lower Buckeye Road; and a half-diamond interchange at Elwood Street EB/Broadway Road WB. Auxiliary lanes would be provided between interchanges; and frontage roads would be provided along Cotton Lane. The proposed project would ultimately include a freeway-to-freeway system interchange between SR303L and the proposed SR30.

The project would occur within the planning limits of the City of Goodyear, City of Buckeye, and unincorporated Maricopa County. The project area elevation lies between 900 and 996 feet above mean sea level on relatively flat terrain that descends gently to the south in the Buckeye Valley southwest of Phoenix. The project area is bounded by I-10 to the north, the perennial Gila River to the south, and Estrella Mountain Regional Park to the southeast. The project vicinity supports primarily agriculture (e.g., alfalfa, cotton) and housing developments. The Union Pacific Railroad bisects the southern half of the project area. Overall, little natural terrain remains because the project area has been altered by human activities.

Because construction of the entire project will disturb more than one acre, a Section 402 (Arizona Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit will be obtained through the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and a Stormwater Prevention Pollution Plan (SWPPP) will be prepared. There will be no work in Waters of the U.S.; therefore Section 404/401 permits will not be required. Terrain throughout most of the project area is highly disturbed, consisting of agricultural land, roads, and commercial and residential infrastructure. Only small patches of native vegetation remain.

Threatened and Endangered Species Analysis Update:

ADOT Biologist Audrey Navarro obtained an official, updated species list for the project area from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) on November 16, 2017. The list included seven threatened, endangered, or candidate species that should be evaluated for the project area. All species were addressed in the February 2013 submittal. The list was reviewed by a qualified biologist, Daniel Board, to determine species that may occur in the project vicinity. None of the species have the potential to occur in the project area since the area has minimal natural habitat due to human traffic and development. This project will have no effect on the species.

The Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*) status was updated on November 3, 2014 from Candidate to Threatened. Proposed critical habitat (PCH) includes approximately 546,335 acres (221,094 hectares) in Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Texas, Utah, and Wyoming for the western yellow-billed cuckoo under the Act. This includes all of Arizona, and the project vicinity falls within the PCH of the Yellow-billed Cuckoo; however, the area is highly developed.

Sensitive Species Analysis Update:

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) on-line environmental review tool was accessed by Audrey Navarro on September 28, 2017 to determine special status species known to occur in the project vicinity. The AGFD on-line environmental review tool included a list of special status species known to occur within three miles of the project vicinity. The state protected species list included the following updates to the February 2013 Biological Review document approval:

- The Mojave Desert tortoise population (*Gopherus agassizii*) is not listed under the Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA).
- The Sonoran Desert Tortoise population (*Gopherus morafkai*) is listed under the CCA, and as Sensitive under the United States Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau

- of Land Management (BLM).
- The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) Sonoran Desert population was listed as Sensitive under the USFS and BLM

According to the USFWS, the Mojave Desert Tortoise population (*Gopherus agassizii*) is considered threatened AGFD distribution data places the Mojave Desert tortoise in the area north and west of the Colorado River. USFWS range maps for the Desert Tortoise indicate its presence along the western border of the state, near Yuma, Arizona and Blythe, California. The project is located approximately 135 miles east-northeast of Yuma placing it significantly outside the Mojave Desert tortoise population range.

The USFWS range maps for the Sonoran Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*) place it within the project area boundaries. ADOT is a signatory of the CCA listing of the Sonoran Desert Tortoise established June 19, 2015. USFWS announced a 12-month finding on October 6, 2015 [Docket No. FWS-R2-ES-2015-0150; 4500030113] stating that listing the Sonoran Desert Tortoise was not warranted; the species is still considered 'Not Listed'. According to USFWS, suitable habitat for the Sonoran Desert tortoise includes Sonoran Desertscrub and Semidesert Grassland, preferably in rocky slopes and bajadas from 900-4,200ft elevation. The Sonoran Desert tortoise most often occurs in paloverde-mixed cacti associations, but has been documented in semi-desert grassland, interior chaparral, oak woodland, ponderosa-pine dominated coniferous forests, and thorn-scrub habitats. Incised washes are important features for sheltering in lower elevation habitat. Distribution is generally south and east of the Colorado River, in the central and western parts of Arizona and into northwestern Mexico. Due to high human traffic, the project area does not contain suitable habitat for the Sonoran Desert Tortoise; therefore, impacts are not anticipated.

The bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) presence on site was addressed in the February 2013 Biological Review document approval and is known to forage along the Gila River and pass over the project area while in transit between perching sites, foraging areas, or nesting sites. Project-related construction may impact bald eagle movement patterns but will not impact any nesting sites.

Mitigation Measures

These mitigation measures are carried over from the Biological Review document approval in February 2013 and updated. Mitigation measures will be implemented to avoid impacts to Sonoran Desert Tortoises that may be encountered in the project limits.

Design Responsibility:

- **All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction will be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.**

District Responsibilities:

- **If active bird nests are identified within the project limits, construction activities will avoid disturbing any active nest. Avoidance areas, if necessary, will be marked in the field with temporary fencing or t-posts with flagging by the approved biologist. The engineer will confer with the approved biologist to determine the appropriate avoidance strategies until the nestlings have fledged from the nest and the nest is no longer active.**
- **If any active bird nests cannot be avoided by vegetation clearing or construction activities, the Engineer will contact the Environmental Planning Group Biologist (602.712.7134 or 602.712.6819) to evaluate the situation.**

Roadside Development Section Responsibilities:

- The Arizona Department of Transportation Roadside Development Section will provide special provisions for the control of noxious and invasive plant species during construction that may require treatment and control within the project limits.
- Protected native plants within the project limits will be impacted by this project; therefore, the Department Roadside Development Section will determine if Arizona Department of Agriculture notification is needed. If notification is needed, the Department Roadside Development Section will send the notification at least 60 calendar days prior to the start of construction.

Contractor Responsibilities:

- The contractor shall develop a Noxious and Invasive Plant Species Treatment and Control Plan in accordance with the requirements in the contract documents. Plants to be controlled shall include those listed in the State and Federal Noxious Weed and the State Invasive Species list in accordance with State and Federal Laws and Executive Orders. The plan and associated treatments shall include all areas within the project right of way and easements as shown on the project plans. The treatment and control plan shall be submitted to the Engineer for the Arizona Department of Transportation Construction Professional Landscape Architect for review and approval prior to implementation by the contractor.
- To prevent the introduction of invasive species seeds, the contractor shall inspect all earthmoving and hauling equipment at the storage facility. All vehicles and equipment shall be washed and free of all attached plant/vegetation and soil/mud debris prior to entering the construction site.
- All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction shall be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.
- To prevent invasive species seeds from leaving the site, the contractor shall inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached plant/vegetation and soil/mud debris prior to leaving the construction site.
- The contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a preconstruction survey for invasive plant species immediately prior to ground-disturbing activities. Upon completion of the survey, the contractor shall contact Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning at 602.712.7767 to provide survey results.
- Prior to the start of ground-disturbing activities, the contractor shall arrange for and perform the control of noxious and invasive species in the project area.
- The contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a preconstruction survey for burrowing owls 96 hours prior to construction in all suitable habitat that will be disturbed. The biologist shall possess a burrowing owl survey protocol training certificate issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Upon completion of the survey, the contractor shall contact Arizona Department of Transportation Environmental Planning at 602.712.7767 to provide survey results.
- If any burrowing owls are located during preconstruction surveys or construction, the contractor shall employ a biologist holding a permit from the US Fish & Wildlife Service to relocate all burrowing owls from the project area, as appropriate.
- If burrowing owls or active burrows are identified during the preconstruction surveys or during construction, no construction activities shall take place within 100 feet of any active burrow until the owls are relocated.

Contractor Responsibilities, continued:

- **If clearing, grubbing, or tree/limb removal will occur between March 1 and August 31, the contractor shall employ a qualified biologist to conduct a migratory bird nest search of all vegetation within the 10 (ten) days prior to removal. Vegetation may be removed if it has been surveyed and no active bird nests are present. If active nests cannot be avoided, the contractor shall notify the Engineer to evaluate the situation. During the non-breeding season (September 1 – February 28), vegetation removal is not subject to this restriction.**

Attachments:

- Figure 1 – Project Location
- Figure 2 – Vicinity Map
- USFWS Information, Planning, and Conservation Official Species List
- AGFD on-line environmental review tool

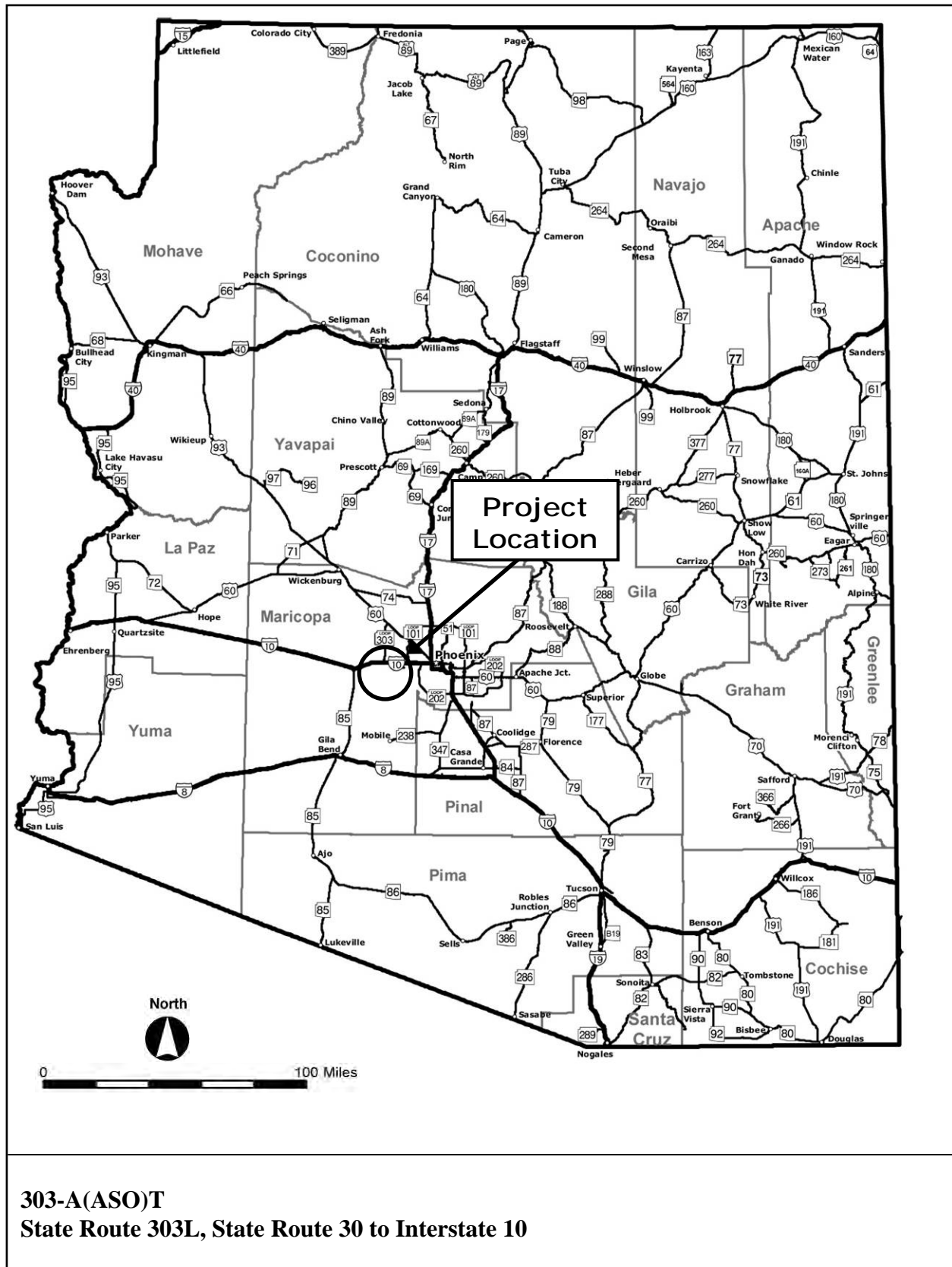
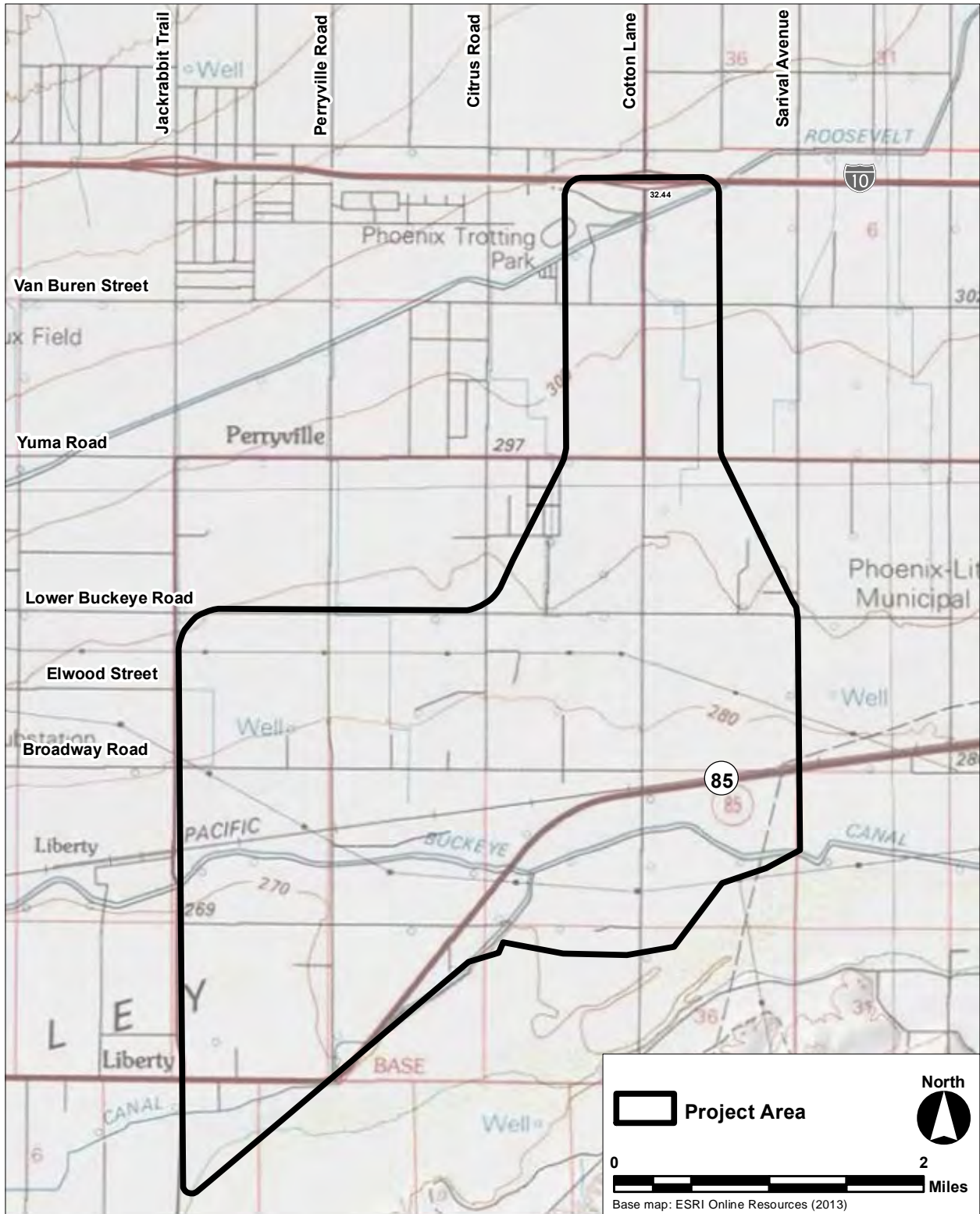


Figure 1. Project location



**303-A(ASO)T
State Route 303L, State Route 30 to Interstate 10**

Figure 2. Project vicinity

M:\W Drive\04-755\Task 5\BIO\Figures\BR Fig2.mxd



United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Arizona Ecological Services Field Office

9828 North 31st Ave

#c3

Phoenix, AZ 85051-2517

Phone: (602) 242-0210 Fax: (602) 242-2513

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/>

http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/EndangeredSpecies_Main.html

In Reply Refer To:

November 16, 2017

Consultation Code: 02EAAZ00-2017-SLI-0993

Event Code: 02EAAZ00-2018-E-00344

Project Name: 303 MA 005 H6870; SR303L, SR 30 TO I-10

Subject: Updated list of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) is providing this list under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). The list you have generated identifies threatened, endangered, proposed, and candidate species, and designated and proposed critical habitat, that may occur within one or more delineated United States Geological Survey 7.5 minute quadrangles with which your project polygon intersects. Each quadrangle covers, at minimum, 49 square miles. In some cases, a species does not currently occur within a quadrangle but occurs nearby and could be affected by a project. Please refer to the species information links found at:

http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Docs_Species.htm

<http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/Documents/MiscDocs/AZSpeciesReference.pdf> .

The purpose of the Act is to provide a means whereby threatened and endangered species and the habitats upon which they depend may be conserved. Under sections 7(a)(1) and 7(a)(2) of the Act and its implementing regulations (50 CFR 402 et seq.), Federal agencies are required to utilize their authorities to carry out programs for the conservation of Federal trust resources and to consult with us if their projects may affect federally listed species and/or designated critical habitat. A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, we recommend preparing a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.

If the Federal action agency determines that listed species or critical habitat may be affected by a federally funded, permitted or authorized activity, the agency must consult with us pursuant to 50 CFR 402. Note that a "may affect" determination includes effects that may not be adverse and that may be beneficial, insignificant, or discountable. You should request consultation with us even if only one individual or habitat segment may be affected. The effects analysis should include the entire action area, which often extends well outside the project boundary or "footprint." For example, projects that involve streams and river systems should consider downstream effects. If the Federal action agency determines that the action may jeopardize a proposed species or adversely modify proposed critical habitat, the agency must enter into a section 7 conference. The agency may choose to confer with us on an action that may affect proposed species or critical habitat.

Candidate species are those for which there is sufficient information to support a proposal for listing. Although candidate species have no legal protection under the Act, we recommend considering them in the planning process in the event they become proposed or listed prior to project completion. More information on the regulations (50 CFR 402) and procedures for section 7 consultation, including the role of permit or license applicants, can be found in our Endangered Species Consultation Handbook at:

<http://www.fws.gov/endangered/esa-library/pdf/TOC-GLOS.PDF>.

We also advise you to consider species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. 703-712) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (Eagle Act) (16 U.S.C. 668 et seq.). The MBTA prohibits the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when authorized by the Service. The Eagle Act prohibits anyone, without a permit, from taking (including disturbing) eagles, and their parts, nests, or eggs. Currently 1026 species of birds are protected by the MBTA, including species such as the western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugea*). Protected western burrowing owls are often found in urban areas and may use their nest/burrows year-round; destruction of the burrow may result in the unpermitted take of the owl or their eggs.

If a bald eagle (or golden eagle) nest occurs in or near the proposed project area, you should evaluate your project to determine whether it is likely to disturb or harm eagles. The National Bald Eagle Management Guidelines provide recommendations to minimize potential project impacts to bald eagles:

<https://www.fws.gov/migratorybirds/pdf/management/nationalbaldeaglenmanagementguidelines.pdf>

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/management/managed-species/eagle-management.php>.

The Division of Migratory Birds (505/248-7882) administers and issues permits under the MBTA and Eagle Act, while our office can provide guidance and Technical Assistance. For more information regarding the MBTA, BGEPA, and permitting processes, please visit the following: <https://www.fws.gov/birds/policies-and-regulations/incidental-take.php>. Guidance for minimizing impacts to migratory birds for communication tower projects (e.g. cellular, digital television, radio, and emergency broadcast) can be found at:

<https://www.fws.gov/birds/bird-enthusiasts/threats-to-birds/collisions/communication-towers.php>

Activities that involve streams (including intermittent streams) and/or wetlands are regulated by

the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). We recommend that you contact the Corps to determine their interest in proposed projects in these areas. For activities within a National Wildlife Refuge, we recommend that you contact refuge staff for specific information about refuge resources.

If your action is on tribal land or has implications for off-reservation tribal interests, we encourage you to contact the tribe(s) and the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) to discuss potential tribal concerns, and to invite any affected tribe and the BIA to participate in the section 7 consultation. In keeping with our tribal trust responsibility, we will notify tribes that may be affected by proposed actions when section 7 consultation is initiated.

We also recommend you seek additional information and coordinate your project with the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Information on known species detections, special status species, and Arizona species of greatest conservation need, such as the western burrowing owl and the Sonoran desert tortoise (*Gopherus morafkai*) can be found by using their Online Environmental Review Tool, administered through the Heritage Data Management System and Project Evaluation Program <https://www.azgfd.com/Wildlife/HeritageFund/>.

For additional communications regarding this project, please refer to the consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter. We appreciate your concern for threatened and endangered species. If we may be of further assistance, please contact our following offices for projects in these areas:

Northern Arizona: Flagstaff Office 928/556-2001
Central Arizona: Phoenix office 602/242-0210
Southern Arizona: Tucson Office 520/670-6144

Sincerely,
/s/ Steven L. Spangle Field Supervisor

Attachment

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List
-

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Arizona Ecological Services Field Office

9828 North 31st Ave

#c3

Phoenix, AZ 85051-2517

(602) 242-0210

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 02EAAZ00-2017-SLI-0993

Event Code: 02EAAZ00-2018-E-00344

Project Name: 303 MA 005 H6870; SR303L, SR 30 TO I-10

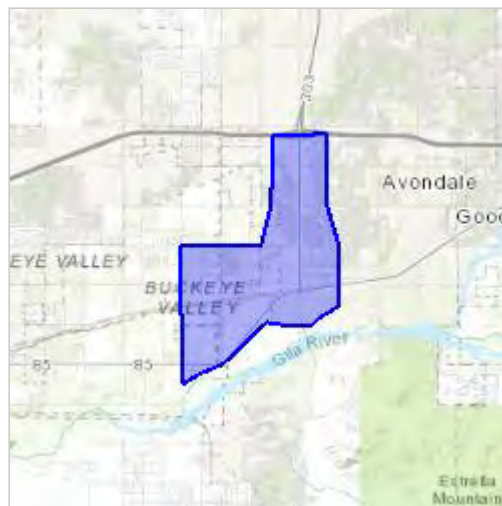
Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: The purpose of the project is to extend State Route (SR) 303 Loop (303L) south of I-10 and to provide a freeway connection to the proposed SR 30 freeway that is being planned to relieve traffic congestion on I-10. The proposed project would involve the construction of a divided, access-controlled highway with four travel lanes and one HOV lane in each direction of travel; a freeway-to-freeway interchange between SR 303L and SR 30; a diamond interchange at Yuma Road; and half-diamond interchanges at Van Buren Street and Elwood Street. The project is one element of the Regional Transportation Plan Freeway/Highway Life Cycle Program associated with the passage of Proposition 400 in November 2004.

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/33.41605441467236N112.44413565108856W>



Counties: Maricopa, AZ

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 7 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on this species list. Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
<p>Lesser Long-nosed Bat <i>Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuena</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3245</p>	Endangered
<p>Sonoran Pronghorn <i>Antilocapra americana sonoriensis</i> Population: U.S.A. (AZ), Mexico No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/4750</p>	Experimental Population, Non-Essential

Birds

NAME	STATUS
California Least Tern <i>Sterna antillarum browni</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8104	Endangered
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher <i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i> There is final critical habitat for this species. Your location is outside the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i> Population: Western U.S. DPS There is proposed critical habitat for this species. Your location overlaps the critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911	Threatened
Yuma Clapper Rail <i>Rallus longirostris yumanensis</i> No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3505	Endangered

Fishes

NAME	STATUS
Roundtail Chub <i>Gila robusta</i> Population: Lower Colorado River Basin DPS No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2782	Proposed Threatened

Critical habitats

There is 1 critical habitat wholly or partially within your project area under this office's jurisdiction.

NAME	STATUS
Yellow-billed Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus americanus</i> https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/3911#crithab	Proposed

Arizona Environmental Online Review Tool Report



Arizona Game and Fish Department Mission

To conserve Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and manage for safe, compatible outdoor recreation opportunities for current and future generations.

Project Name:

303 MA 005 H6870; SR 303L, SR30 TO I-10

User Project Number:

H6870; SR303L, SR30 TO I-10

Project Description:

The purpose of the project is to extend State Route (SR) 303 Loop (303L) south of I-10 and to provide a freeway connection to the proposed SR 30 freeway that is being planned to relieve traffic congestion on I-10. The proposed project would involve the construction of a divided, access-controlled highway with four travel lanes and one HOV lane in each direction of travel; a freeway-to-freeway interchange between SR 303L and SR 30; a diamond interchange at Yuma Road; and half-diamond interchanges at Van Buren Street and Elwood Street. The project is one element of the Regional Transportation Plan Freeway/Highway Life Cycle Program associated with the passage of Proposition 400 in November 2004.

Project Type:

Transportation & Infrastructure, Road construction (including staging areas), Realignment/new roads

Contact Person:

audrey navarro

Organization:

Arizona Department of Transportation

On Behalf Of:

ADOT

Project ID:

HGIS-05848

Please review the entire report for project type and/or species recommendations for the location information entered. Please retain a copy for future reference.

Disclaimer:

1. This Environmental Review is based on the project study area that was entered. The report must be updated if the project study area, location, or the type of project changes.
2. This is a preliminary environmental screening tool. It is not a substitute for the potential knowledge gained by having a biologist conduct a field survey of the project area. This review is also not intended to replace environmental consultation (including federal consultation under the Endangered Species Act), land use permitting, or the Departments review of site-specific projects.
3. The Departments Heritage Data Management System (HDMS) data is not intended to include potential distribution of special status species. Arizona is large and diverse with plants, animals, and environmental conditions that are ever changing. Consequently, many areas may contain species that biologists do not know about or species previously noted in a particular area may no longer occur there. HDMS data contains information about species occurrences that have actually been reported to the Department. Not all of Arizona has been surveyed for special status species, and surveys that have been conducted have varied greatly in scope and intensity. Such surveys may reveal previously undocumented population of species of special concern.
4. HabiMap Arizona data, specifically Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN) under our State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) and Species of Economic and Recreational Importance (SERI), represent potential species distribution models for the State of Arizona which are subject to ongoing change, modification and refinement. The status of a wildlife resource can change quickly, and the availability of new data will necessitate a refined assessment.

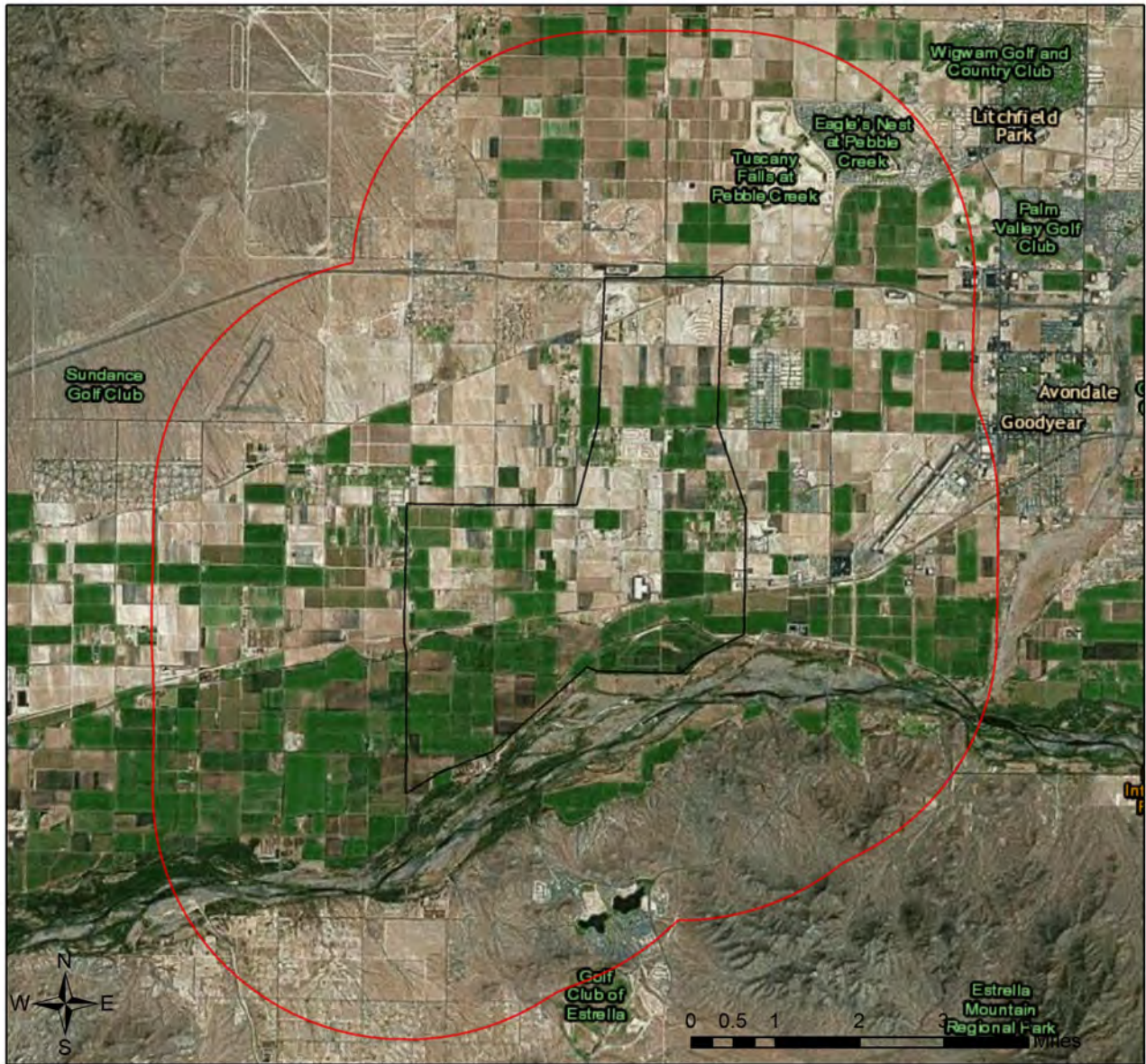
Locations Accuracy Disclaimer:

Project locations are assumed to be both precise and accurate for the purposes of environmental review. The creator/owner of the Project Review Report is solely responsible for the project location and thus the correctness of the Project Review Report content.

Recommendations Disclaimer:

1. The Department is interested in the conservation of all fish and wildlife resources, including those species listed in this report and those that may have not been documented within the project vicinity as well as other game and nongame wildlife.
2. Recommendations have been made by the Department, under authority of Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5 (Amusements and Sports), 17 (Game and Fish), and 28 (Transportation).
3. Potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources may be minimized or avoided by the recommendations generated from information submitted for your proposed project. These recommendations are preliminary in scope, designed to provide early considerations on all species of wildlife.
4. Making this information directly available does not substitute for the Department's review of project proposals, and should not decrease our opportunity to review and evaluate additional project information and/or new project proposals.
5. Further coordination with the Department requires the submittal of this Environmental Review Report with a cover letter and project plans or documentation that includes project narrative, acreage to be impacted, how construction or project activity(s) are to be accomplished, and project locality information (including site map). Once AGFD had received the information, please allow 30 days for completion of project reviews. Send requests to:
Project Evaluation Program, Habitat Branch
Arizona Game and Fish Department
5000 West Carefree Highway
Phoenix, Arizona 85086-5000
Phone Number: (623) 236-7600
Fax Number: (623) 236-7366
Or
PEP@azgfd.gov
6. Coordination may also be necessary under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or Endangered Species Act (ESA). Site specific recommendations may be proposed during further NEPA/ESA analysis or through coordination with affected agencies

303 MA 005 H6870; SR 303L, SR30 TO I-10 Aerial Image Basemap With Locator Map



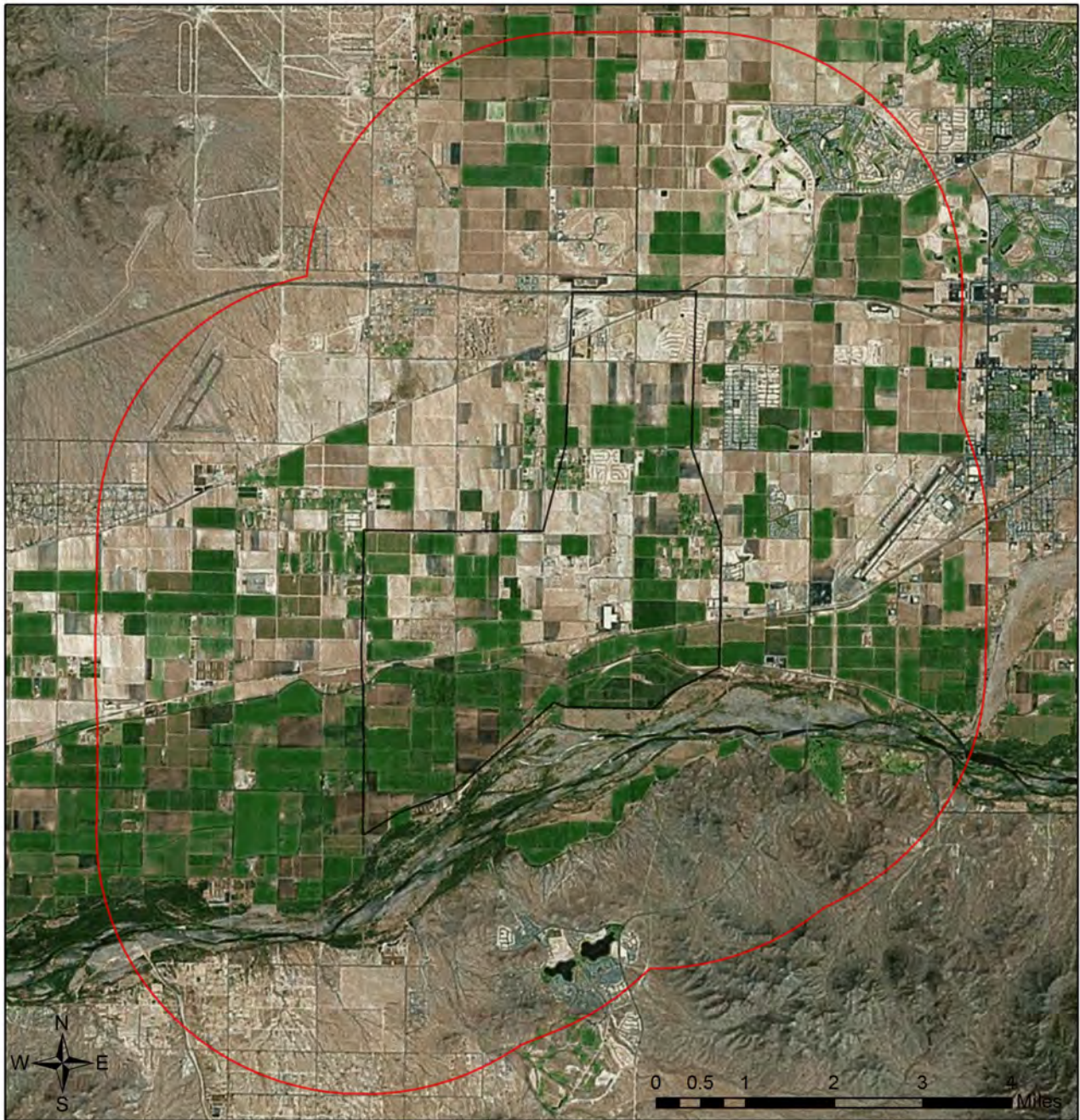
- Project Boundary
- Buffered Project Boundary

Project Size (acres): 8,899.09
Lat/Long (DD): 33.4142 / -112.4421
County(s): Maricopa
AGFD Region(s): Mesa
Township/Range(s): T1N, R2W; T1S, R2W
USGS Quad(s): AVONDALE SW; PERRYVILLE

Service Layer Credits: Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, TomTom, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong),



303 MA 005 H6870; SR 303L, SR30 TO I-10 Web Map As Submitted By User

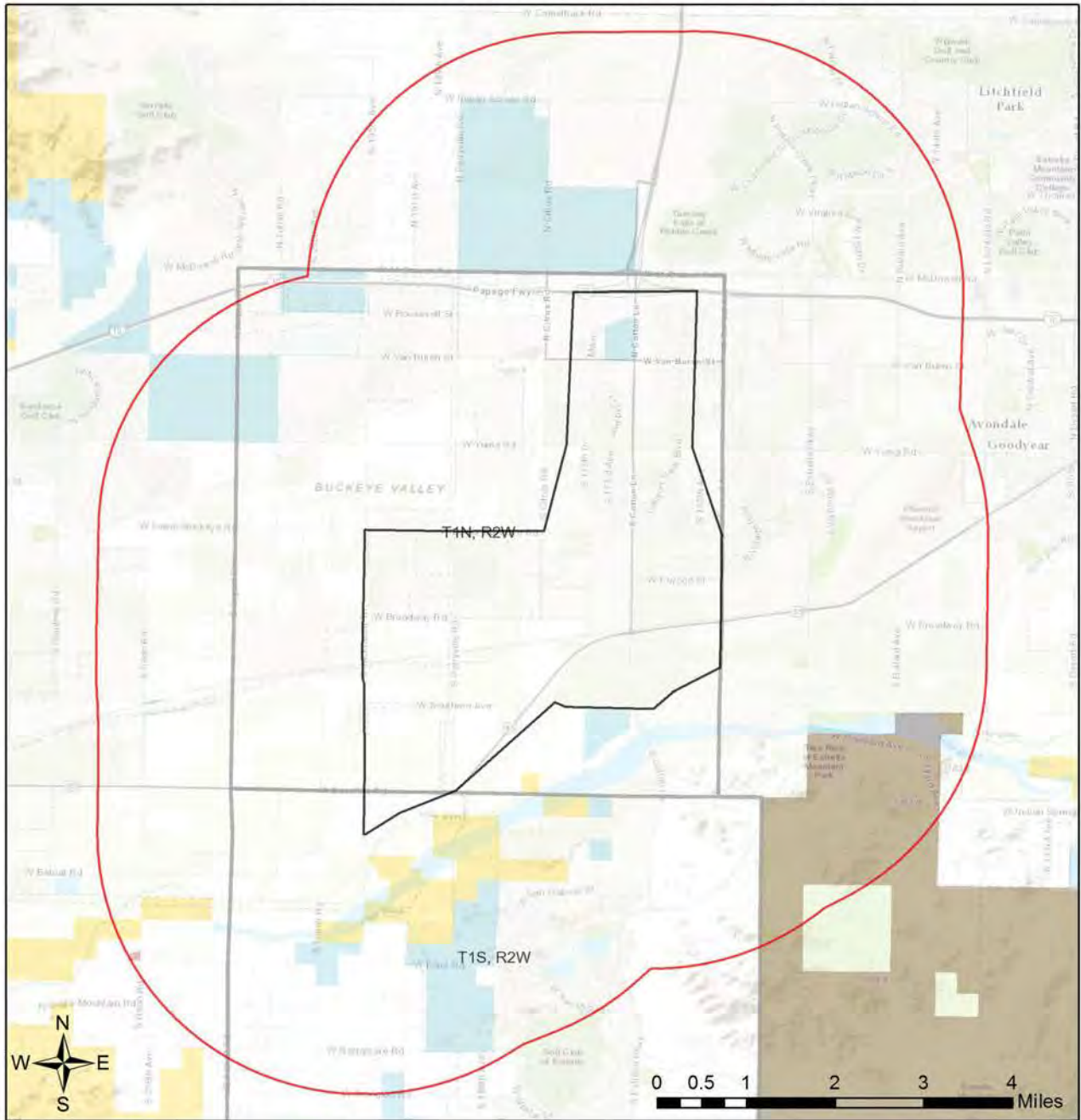


- Project Boundary
- Buffered Project Boundary

Project Size (acres): 8,899.09
Lat/Long (DD): 33.4142 / -112.4421
County(s): Maricopa
AGFD Region(s): Mesa
Township/Range(s): T1N, R2W; T1S, R2W
USGS Quad(s): AVONDALE SW; PERRYVILLE

Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community

303 MA 005 H6870; SR 303L, SR30 TO I-10 Topo Basemap With Township/Ranges and Land Ownership



- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| Project Boundary | Mixed/Other |
| Buffered Project Boundary | National Park/Mon. |
| Township/Ranges | Private |
| AZ Game and Fish Dept. | State and Regional Parks |
| BLM | State Trust |
| BOR | US Forest Service |
| Indian Res. | Wildlife Area/Refuge |
| Military | |

Project Size (acres): 8,899.09
 Lat/Long (DD): 33.4142 / -112.4421
 County(s): Maricopa
 AGFD Region(s): Mesa
 Township/Range(s): T1N, R2W; T1S, R2W
 USGS Quad(s): AVONDALE SW; PERRYVILLE

Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Special Status Species and Special Areas Documented within 3 Miles of Project Vicinity

Scientific Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	NPL	SGCN
<i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i>	Western Burrowing Owl	SC	S	S		1B
<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Western DPS)	LT	S			1A
<i>Gopherus morafkai</i>	Sonoran Desert Tortoise	CCA	S	S		1A
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> (wintering pop.)	Bald Eagle - Winter Population	SC,BG A	S	S		1A
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> pop. 3	Bald Eagle - Sonoran Desert Population	SC,BG A	S	S		1A
PCH for <i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Yellow-billed Cuckoo Proposed Critical Habitat					
<i>Rallus obsoletus yumanensis</i>	Yuma Ridgway's Rail	LE				1A
Salt and Lower Gila Rivers Ecosystem IBA						

Note: Status code definitions can be found at <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/planning/wildlifeguidelines/statusdefinitions/>

**Species of Greatest Conservation Need
 Predicted within Project Vicinity based on Predicted Range Models**

Scientific Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	NPL	SGCN
<i>Aix sponsa</i>	Wood Duck					1B
<i>Ammospermophilus harrisi</i>	Harris' Antelope Squirrel					1B
<i>Anaxyrus microscaphus</i>	Arizona Toad	SC		S		1B
<i>Anaxyrus retiformis</i>	Sonoran Green Toad			S		1B
<i>Anthus spragueii</i>	Sprague's Pipit	SC				1A
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Golden Eagle			S		1B
<i>Athene cunicularia hypugaea</i>	Western Burrowing Owl	SC	S	S		1B
<i>Botaurus lentiginosus</i>	American Bittern					1B
<i>Buteo regalis</i>	Ferruginous Hawk	SC		S		1B
<i>Castor canadensis</i>	American Beaver					1B
<i>Chilomeniscus stramineus</i>	Variable Sandsnake					1B
<i>Chionactis occipitalis klauberi</i>	Tucson Shovel-nosed Snake	SC				1A
<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Western DPS)	LT	S			1A
<i>Colaptes chrysoides</i>	Gilded Flicker			S		1B
<i>Coluber bilineatus</i>	Sonoran Whipsnake					1B
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens</i>	Pale Townsend's Big-eared Bat	SC	S	S		1B
<i>Crotalus tigris</i>	Tiger Rattlesnake					1B
<i>Crotaphytus nebrius</i>	Sonoran Collared Lizard					1B
<i>Euderma maculatum</i>	Spotted Bat	SC	S	S		1B
<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	Greater Western Bonneted Bat	SC		S		1B
<i>Gopherus morafkai</i>	Sonoran Desert Tortoise	CCA	S	S		1A
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	Bald Eagle	SC	S	S		1A

**Species of Greatest Conservation Need
 Predicted within Project Vicinity based on Predicted Range Models**

Scientific Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	NPL	SGCN
<i>Heloderma suspectum</i>	Gila Monster					1A
<i>Incilius alvarius</i>	Sonoran Desert Toad					1B
<i>Kinosternon sonoriense sonoriense</i>	Desert Mud Turtle			S		1B
<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>	Western Red Bat		S			1B
<i>Lasiurus xanthinus</i>	Western Yellow Bat		S			1B
<i>Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuenae</i>	Lesser Long-nosed Bat	LE				1A
<i>Lepus alleni</i>	Antelope Jackrabbit					1B
<i>Lithobates yavapaiensis</i>	Lowland Leopard Frog	SC	S	S		1A
<i>Macrotus californicus</i>	California Leaf-nosed Bat	SC		S		1B
<i>Melanerpes uropygialis</i>	Gila Woodpecker					1B
<i>Melospiza lincolni</i>	Lincoln's Sparrow					1B
<i>Melospiza aberti</i>	Abert's Towhee		S			1B
<i>Micruroides euryxanthus</i>	Sonoran Coralsnake					1B
<i>Myotis occultus</i>	Arizona Myotis	SC		S		1B
<i>Myotis velifer</i>	Cave Myotis	SC		S		1B
<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>	Yuma Myotis	SC				1B
<i>Nyctinomops femorosaccus</i>	Pocketed Free-tailed Bat					1B
<i>Ovis canadensis mexicana</i>	Mexican Desert Bighorn Sheep					1B
<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	Savannah Sparrow					1B
<i>Perognathus amplus</i>	Arizona Pocket Mouse					1B
<i>Perognathus longimembris</i>	Little Pocket Mouse	No Status				1B
<i>Phrynosoma goodei</i>	Goode's Horned Lizard					1B
<i>Phrynosoma solare</i>	Regal Horned Lizard					1B
<i>Phyllorhynchus browni</i>	Saddled Leaf-nosed Snake					1B
<i>Rallus obsoletus yumanensis</i>	Yuma Ridgeway's Rail	LE				1A
<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	Yellow Warbler					1B
<i>Tadarida brasiliensis</i>	Brazilian Free-tailed Bat					1B
<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>	Le Conte's Thrasher					1B
<i>Troglodytes pacificus</i>	Pacific Wren					1B
<i>Vireo bellii arizonae</i>	Arizona Bell's Vireo					1B
<i>Vulpes macrotis</i>	Kit Fox	No Status				1B

Species of Economic and Recreation Importance Predicted within Project Vicinity

Scientific Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	NPL	SGCN
<i>Callipepla gambelii</i>	Gambel's Quail					
<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	Mule Deer					

Species of Economic and Recreation Importance Predicted within Project Vicinity

Scientific Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	NPL	SGCN
Ovis canadensis mexicana	Mexicana Desert Bighorn Sheep					1B
Puma concolor	Mountain Lion					
Zenaida asiatica	White-winged Dove					
Zenaida macroura	Mourning Dove					

Project Type: Transportation & Infrastructure, Road construction (including staging areas), Realignment/new roads

Project Type Recommendations:

Bridge Maintenance/Construction

Identify whether wildlife species use the structure for roosting or nesting during anticipated maintenance/construction period. Plan the timing of maintenance/construction to minimize impacts to wildlife species. In addition to the species list generated by the Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool, the Department recommends that surveys be conducted at the bridge and in the vicinity of the bridge to identify additional or currently undocumented bat, bird, or aquatic species in the project area. To minimize impacts to birds and bats, as well as aquatic species, consider conducting maintenance and construction activities outside the breeding/maternity season (breeding seasons for birds and bats usually occur spring - summer). Examining the crevices for the presence of bats prior to pouring new paving materials or that the top of those crevices be sealed to prevent material from dripping or falling through the cracks and potentially onto bats. If bats are present, maintenance and construction (including paving and milling) activities should be conducted during nighttime hours, if possible, when the fewest number of bats will be roosting. Minimize impacts to the vegetation community. Unavoidable impacts to vegetation should be mitigated on-site whenever possible. A revegetation plan should be developed to replace impacted communities.

Consider design structures and construction plans that minimize impacts to channel geometry (i.e., width/depth ratio, sinuosity, allow overflow channels), to avoid alteration of hydrological function. Consider incorporating roosting sites for bats into bridge designs. During construction, erosion control structures and drainage features should be used to prevent introduction of sediment laden runoff into the waterway. Minimize instream construction activity. If culverts are planned, use wildlife friendly designs to mitigate impacts to wildlife and fish movement. Guidelines for bridge designs to facilitate wildlife passage can be found on our Wildlife Friendly Guidelines web page under the Wildlife Planning button, at <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/planning/wildlifeguidelines/>.

Fence recommendations will be dependant upon the goals of the fence project and the wildlife species expected to be impacted by the project. General guidelines for ensuring wildlife-friendly fences include: barbless wire on the top and bottom with the maximum fence height 42", minimum height for bottom 16". Modifications to this design may be considered for fencing anticipated to be routinely encountered by elk, bighorn sheep or pronghorn (e.g., Pronghorn fencing would require 18" minimum height on the bottom). Please refer to the Department's Fencing Guidelines located on Wildlife Friendly Guidelines page, which is part of the Wildlife Planning button at <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/planning/wildlifeguidelines/>.

During the planning stages of your project, please consider the local or regional needs of wildlife in regards to movement, connectivity, and access to habitat needs. Loss of this permeability prevents wildlife from accessing resources, finding mates, reduces gene flow, prevents wildlife from re-colonizing areas where local extirpations may have occurred, and ultimately prevents wildlife from contributing to ecosystem functions, such as pollination, seed dispersal, control of prey numbers, and resistance to invasive species. In many cases, streams and washes provide natural movement corridors for wildlife and should be maintained in their natural state. Uplands also support a large diversity of species, and should be contained within important wildlife movement corridors. In addition, maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem functions can be facilitated through improving designs of structures, fences, roadways, and culverts to promote passage for a variety of wildlife. Guidelines for many of these can be found at: <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/planning/wildlifeguidelines/>.

Consider impacts of outdoor lighting on wildlife and develop measures or alternatives that can be taken to increase human safety while minimizing potential impacts to wildlife. Conduct wildlife surveys to determine species within project area, and evaluate proposed activities based on species biology and natural history to determine if artificial lighting may disrupt behavior patterns or habitat use. Use only the minimum amount of light needed for safety. Narrow spectrum bulbs should be used as often as possible to lower the range of species affected by lighting. All lighting should be shielded, canted, or cut to ensure that light reaches only areas needing illumination.

Minimize potential introduction or spread of exotic invasive species. Invasive species can be plants, animals (exotic snails), and other organisms (e.g., microbes), which may cause alteration to ecological functions or compete with or prey upon native species and can cause social impacts (e.g., livestock forage reduction, increase wildfire risk). The terms noxious weed or invasive plants are often used interchangeably. Precautions should be taken to wash all equipment utilized in the project activities before leaving the site. Arizona has noxious weed regulations (Arizona Revised Statutes, Rules R3-4-244 and R3-4-245). See Arizona Department of Agriculture website for restricted plants, <https://agriculture.az.gov/>. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has information regarding pest and invasive plant control methods including: pesticide, herbicide, biological control agents, and mechanical control, <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>. The Department regulates the importation, purchasing, and transportation of wildlife and fish (Restricted Live Wildlife), please refer to the hunting regulations for further information <https://www.azgfd.com/hunting/regulations>.

Minimization and mitigation of impacts to wildlife and fish species due to changes in water quality, quantity, chemistry, temperature, and alteration to flow regimes (timing, magnitude, duration, and frequency of floods) should be evaluated. Minimize impacts to springs, in-stream flow, and consider irrigation improvements to decrease water use. If dredging is a project component, consider timing of the project in order to minimize impacts to spawning fish and other aquatic species (include spawning seasons), and to reduce spread of exotic invasive species. We recommend early direct coordination with Project Evaluation Program for projects that could impact water resources, wetlands, streams, springs, and/or riparian habitats.

The Department recommends that wildlife surveys are conducted to determine if noise-sensitive species occur within the project area. Avoidance or minimization measures could include conducting project activities outside of breeding seasons.

Based on the project type entered, coordination with State Historic Preservation Office may be required (<http://azstateparks.com/SHPO/index.html>).

Trenches should be covered or back-filled as soon as possible. Incorporate escape ramps in ditches or fencing along the perimeter to deter small mammals and herptefauna (snakes, lizards, tortoise) from entering ditches.

Design culverts to minimize impacts to channel geometry, or design channel geometry (low flow, overbank, floodplains) and substrates to carry expected discharge using local drainages of appropriate size as templates. Reduce/minimize barriers to allow movement of amphibians or fish (e.g., eliminate falls). Also for terrestrial wildlife, washes and stream corridors often provide important corridors for movement. Overall culvert width, height, and length should be optimized for movement of the greatest number and diversity of species expected to utilize the passage. Culvert designs should consider moisture, light, and noise, while providing clear views at both ends to maximize utilization. For many species, fencing is an important design feature that can be utilized with culverts to funnel wildlife into these areas and minimize the potential for roadway collisions. Guidelines for culvert designs to facilitate wildlife passage can be found on the home page of this application at <https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/planning/wildlifeguidelines/>.

Based on the project type entered, coordination with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality may be required (<http://www.azdeq.gov/>).

Based on the project type entered, coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be required (<http://www.usace.army.mil/>)

Based on the project type entered, coordination with County Flood Control district(s) may be required.

Vegetation restoration projects (including treatments of invasive or exotic species) should have a completed site-evaluation plan (identifying environmental conditions necessary to re-establish native vegetation), a revegetation plan (species, density, method of establishment), a short and long-term monitoring plan, including adaptive management guidelines to address needs for replacement vegetation.

The Department requests further coordination to provide project/species specific recommendations, please contact Project Evaluation Program directly. PEP@azgfd.gov

Project Location and/or Species Recommendations:

HDMS records indicate that one or more listed, proposed, or candidate species or Critical Habitat (Designated or Proposed) have been documented in the vicinity of your project. The Endangered Species Act (ESA) gives the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulatory authority over all federally listed species. Please contact USFWS Ecological Services Offices at <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona/> or:

Phoenix Main Office

2321 W. Royal Palm Rd, Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021
Phone: 602-242-0210
Fax: 602-242-2513

Tucson Sub-Office

201 N. Bonita Suite 141
Tucson, AZ 85745
Phone: 520-670-6144
Fax: 520-670-6155

Flagstaff Sub-Office

SW Forest Science Complex
2500 S. Pine Knoll Dr.
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Phone: 928-556-2157
Fax: 928-556-2121

HDMS records indicate that Western Burrowing Owls have been documented within the vicinity of your project area. Please review the western burrowing owl resource page at:
<https://www.azgfd.com/wildlife/speciesofgreatestconservneed/burrowingowlmanagement/>.

The analysis has detected one or more Important Bird Areas within your project vicinity. Please see http://aziba.org/?page_id=38 for details about the Important Bird Area(s) identified in the report.



Arizona Department of Transportation

Environmental Planning Group

Biological Review

State Route 303L, State Route 30 to Interstate 10

**303-A(ASO)T
303 MA 005 H6870 01L**

Prepared for:

Arizona Department of Transportation
Environmental Planning Group
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**February 5, 2013
Fourth Submittal**

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1. PROJECT LOCATION

This project is generally south of Interstate 10 (I-10) along the Cotton Lane alignment within the city limits of Goodyear, west of Phoenix in Maricopa County, Arizona (Figure 1–Project location and Figure 2–Project vicinity). The project area occupies Sections 1, 2, 11–15, 21–28, and 33–36 in Township (T) 1 North, Range (R) 2 West (W), and Sections 4–5 in T1 South, R2W on the Perryville (1982), Arizona, US Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic series map. Most adjacent land is privately owned; the remaining adjacent land is under the jurisdictions of the Arizona State Land Department and the Bureau of Land Management.

Throughout this Biological Review, the term “project limits” is used to represent the construction footprint (area of disturbance), while the term “project area” includes surrounding lands outside but adjacent to the project limits. The term “project vicinity” is used to denote a more expansive landscape context.

2. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The purpose of the project is to extend State Route (SR) 303 Loop (303L) south of I-10 and to provide a freeway connection to the proposed SR 30 freeway that is being planned to relieve traffic congestion on I-10. The proposed project would involve the construction of a divided, access-controlled highway with four travel lanes and one HOV lane in each direction of travel; a freeway-to-freeway interchange between SR 303L and SR 30; a diamond interchange at Yuma Road; and half-diamond interchanges at Van Buren Street and Elwood Street. The project is one element of the Regional Transportation Plan Freeway/Highway Life Cycle Program associated with the passage of Proposition 400 in November 2004.

Project construction would involve the disturbance of more than 1 acre of terrain; therefore, a Clean Water Act Section 402 permit would be obtained through the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality and a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan would be prepared for the project. Terrain throughout most of the project area is highly disturbed, consisting of agricultural lands, roads, and commercial and residential infrastructure. Only small patches of native vegetation remain.

Project construction would occur along the route of existing roads (e.g., Cotton Lane), would cross agricultural land, and potentially would cross some patches of native vegetation. Vegetation removal would be limited to roadside vegetation, some native shrubs growing in patches of native vegetation, and plants growing in unmaintained but previously disturbed areas between fields and within fallow fields. Such vegetation consists primarily of native and exotic grasses and herbs adapted to colonization of disturbed habitat but may include patches of native vegetation (primarily saltbush [*Atriplex* spp.]) and scattered larger perennial native and nonnative shrubs and trees. Due to the extensive disturbance of terrain, no natural drainages remain in the project area. No project construction would occur within jurisdictional Waters of the United States.

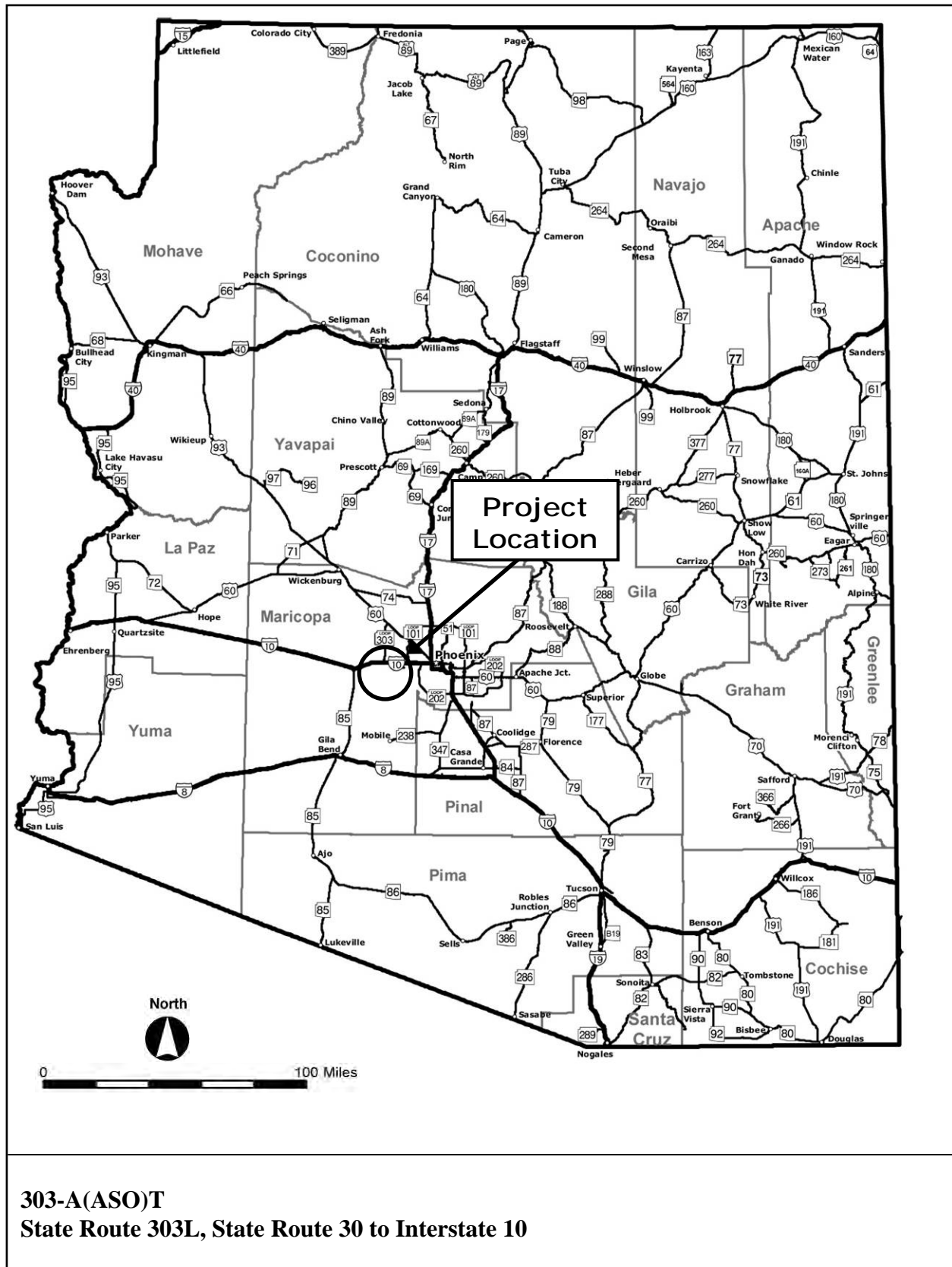
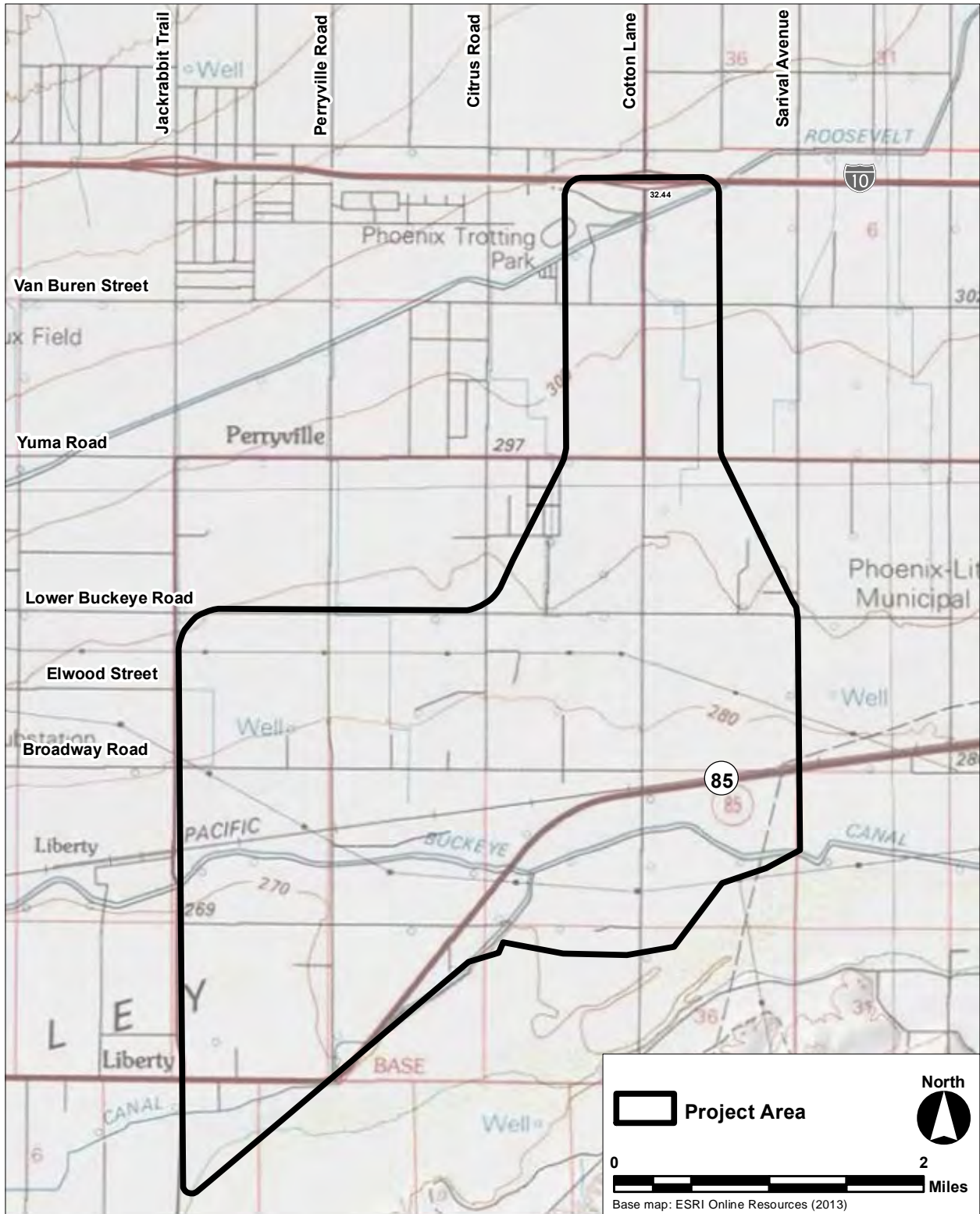


Figure 1. Project location



303-A(ASO)T
State Route 303L, State Route 30 to Interstate 10

Figure 2. Project vicinity

M:\W Drive\04-755\Task 5\BIO\Figures\BR Fig2.mxd

The extension of SR 303L from I-10 to the future SR 30 would involve the construction of several miles of roadway. Large numbers and a variety of construction equipment, including earthmovers, bulldozers, and road graders as well as paving machines and associated equipment, would be required for project construction. It is anticipated that project construction would occur over a two-year period, but the exact timing has yet to be determined.

3. PROJECT AREA

The project area lies between 900 and 996 feet elevation¹ on relatively flat terrain that descends gently to the south in the Buckeye Valley southwest of Phoenix. The project area is bounded by I-10 to the north, the perennial Gila River to the south, and Estrella Mountain Regional Park to the southeast. The project vicinity supports primarily agriculture (e.g., cotton) and housing developments. The Union Pacific Railroad bisects the southern half of the project area. Overall, little natural terrain remains because the project area has been altered by human activities.

The Estrella Mountain Regional Park, rising to 1,252 feet elevation approximately 1 mile southeast of the project limits, is the closest elevated terrain and natural plant community. The historic natural plant community occurring at the margins of the developed portions in the project area is the saltbush-dominated Lower Colorado River subdivision of Sonoran desertscrub (Turner and Brown 1994). Uncommon native perennial plants in the project area include cattle saltbush (*Atriplex polycarpa*), wolfberry (*Lycium* spp.), desertbroom (*Baccharis sarothroides*), and goldenbush (*Isocoma* spp.). Common nonnative plants with a patchy distribution include ornamental trees (e.g., eucalyptus and palm), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), and curly dock (*Rumex crispus*). Scattered paloverde (*Parkinsonia* spp.) and mesquite (*Prosopis* spp.) trees occur infrequently in the project area. A patch of mesquite bosque with fire damage transitions to a cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) riparian woodland near the west-flowing, perennial Gila River, which is directly south of, and parallel to, the southern project limit.

The Salt River and the Agua Fria River join the Gila River approximately 4 to 8 miles east of the project area. The Roosevelt Canal bisects the project area north of Maricopa County Route 85 (MC 85). The Buckeye Canal and the Extension Canal bisect the project area south of MC 85. These canals include concrete-lined and earthen-banked portions in the project area. No natural wetlands or perennial surface waters occur within the project limits.

Native soils in the northern project area are classified as well drained, limy soil of the Laveen-Rillito Association and originating from surficial deposits of Holocene to late Pleistocene age (Hendricks 1985). Native soils in the southern project area are classified as well-drained, sandy to clayey soil of the Torrifluvents Association and originating from young alluvium of Holocene to late Pleistocene age (Hendricks 1985).

4. SPECIES IDENTIFICATION

The US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) list of endangered, threatened, proposed, and candidate species for Maricopa County (USFWS 2012) was reviewed by a qualified biologist to determine which listed species may occur in the project vicinity (Table 1).

¹ Elevations in this document are referenced to mean sea level.

Table 1. USFWS listed species in Maricopa County and evaluation of effects.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	Suitable Habitat Present?	Occupied Habitat Present?	Critical Habitat Present?	Species Affected?	Critical/Suitable Habitat Affected?
Endangered and Threatened							
Acuña cactus	<i>Echinomastus erectocentrus</i> var. <i>acunensis</i>	PE	No	No	No	No	No
Arizona cliffrose	<i>Purshia subintegra</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
California least tern	<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Desert pupfish	<i>Cyprinodon macularius</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Gila topminnow	<i>Poeciliopsis occidentalis occidentalis</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Lesser long-nosed bat	<i>Leptonycteris curasoae yerbabuena</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Mexican spotted owl	<i>Strix occidentalis lucida</i>	T	No	No	No	No	No
Razorback sucker	<i>Xyrauchen texanus</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Sonoran pronghorn	<i>Antilocapra americana sonoriensis</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Woundfin	<i>Plagopterus argentissimus</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Yuma clapper rail	<i>Rallus longirostris yumanensis</i>	E	No	No	No	No	No
Candidate							
Desert tortoise, Sonoran population	<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>	C	No	No	No	No	No
Roundtail chub	<i>Gila robusta</i>	C	No	No	No	No	No
Sprague's pipit	<i>Anthus spragueii</i>	C	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
Tucson shovel-nosed snake	<i>Chionactis occipitalis klauberi</i>	C	No	No	No	No	No
Yellow-billed cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	C	No	No	No	No	No

C = Candidate, E = Endangered, PE = Proposed Endangered, T = Threatened (USFWS 2012)

5. FINDING

- No effect to species or its habitat
- May affect species, not likely to adversely affect species or its habitat
- May beneficially affect species or its habitat
- Likely to adversely affect species or its habitat

6. MITIGATION MEASURES

Design Responsibility

- All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction will be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.

Roadside Development Responsibility

- Protected native plants within the project limits will be impacted by this project; therefore, the Department Roadside Development Section will determine if Arizona Department of Agriculture notification is needed. If notification is needed, the Department Roadside Development Section will send the notification at least 60 calendar days prior to the start of construction.

Contractor Responsibilities

- To prevent the introduction of invasive species seeds, all earthmoving and hauling equipment shall be washed at the contractor's storage facility prior to entering the construction site.
- All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction shall be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.
- To prevent invasive species seeds from leaving the site, the contractor shall inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached plant/vegetation and soil/mud debris prior to leaving the construction site.
- The contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a preconstruction survey for invasive plant species immediately prior to ground-disturbance activities. Upon completion of the survey, the contractor shall contact the Department Environmental Planning Group at 602.712.7767 to provide survey results.
- The contractor shall employ a qualified specialist to appropriately treat and remove invasive plant species found during surveys immediately prior to ground-disturbance activities.
- The contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a preconstruction survey for burrowing owls 96 hours prior to construction in all suitable habitat that will be disturbed. The biologist shall possess a burrowing owl survey protocol training certificate issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Upon completion of the survey, the contractor shall contact the Department Environmental Planning Group at 602.712.7767 to provide survey results.
- If any burrowing owls are located during preconstruction surveys or construction, the contractor shall employ a biologist holding a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to relocate all burrowing owls from the project area, as appropriate.

Contractor Responsibilities (continued)

- If burrowing owls or active burrows are identified during the preconstruction surveys or during construction, no construction activities shall take place within 100 feet of any active burrow until the owls are relocated.
- If any tree or shrub removal is required to accommodate project construction activities, the contractor shall complete all necessary tree and shrub removal activities prior to March 1 or after August 1 to avoid the migratory bird nesting season and minimize impacts to breeding birds. If tree and shrub removal must occur between March 1 and August 1 of any calendar year, the contractor will hire a qualified biologist to conduct surveys for breeding bird nests prior to construction.

7. COORDINATION

As part of the environmental review process, these agencies and individuals were contacted:

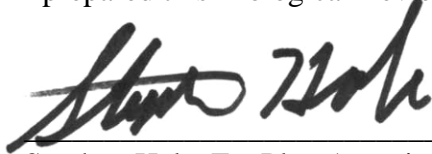
- Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) (Laura Canaca, Project Evaluation Program Supervisor)
 - The AGFD was asked whether it had specific concerns, suggestions, or recommendations regarding this project, such as information on wildlife movement, habitat issues, or seasonal concerns, and, if so, to respond with those concerns, suggestions, or recommendations.
 - The AGFD sent a response letter (attached) verifying and validating the results of the AGFD On-line Environmental Review Tool. The AGFD noted that Western burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) occur within 3 miles of the project and recommended following AGFD protocols when encountering Western burrowing owls in the project area (http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/w_c/owl/BurrowingOwlClearanceProtocol.pdf). The AGFD also recommended that the USFWS be contacted regarding the project. No other concerns or issues were provided by the AGFD.
- USFWS Arizona Ecological Services Field Office (Steve Spangle, Field Supervisor, and Debra Bills, Assistant Field Supervisor for Central Arizona)
 - The agency was contacted to solicit specific concerns, suggestions, or recommendations regarding this project, such as information on wildlife movement, habitat issues, or seasonal concerns.
 - The agency has not responded.

8. LITERATURE CITED

- Hendricks, D.M. 1985. Arizona soils. The University of Arizona Press, Tucson, Arizona.
- Turner, R.M., and D.E. Brown. 1994. Sonoran desertscrub. *In* Desert plants, biotic communities of the American Southwest–United States and Northwestern Mexico, edited by D.E. Brown, pp. 181–221. Vol. 4, Nos. 1–4.
- USFWS. 2012. Arizona Ecological Services Field Office website, <http://www.fws.gov/southwest/es/arizona>. Arizona federally listed species for Maricopa County. Updated November 27, 2012. Accessed January 24, 2013.

9. SIGNATURES

I prepared this Biological Review:



Stephen Hale, EcoPlan Associates, Inc.
Senior Project Scientist

February 5, 2013

Date

I am submitting this Biological Review:



Thomas C. Ashbeck, EcoPlan Associates, Inc.
Director, Biological Resources Group

February 5, 2013

Date

APPENDICES

A. State Sensitive Species

The AGFD On-line Environmental Review Tool was accessed to determine special status species known to occur in the project vicinity. As part of the environmental review process, a letter describing the project was sent to the AGFD to inform the department of the project and to solicit comments. The letter requested specific concerns, suggestions, or recommendations the department may have related to the project.

The AGFD tool included a list of special status species known to occur within 3 miles of the project area, and the AGFD returned a response letter. The AGFD tool included the yellow-billed cuckoo, the Southwestern willow flycatcher, and the Yuma clapper rail, which are addressed in Table 1; the Western burrowing owl, the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), and the least bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*), which are addressed in Appendix B; and the California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*).

California leaf-nosed bats are non-migratory bats that are found in Sonoran desertscrub and roost in mines, caves, and rock shelters. These bats are known to roost in the Estrella Mountains and may forage in the project area. Project-related construction may impact an individual bat's foraging patterns but will not impact any roosting sites.

The AGFD tool included a standard response for the treatment and management of invasive species. The project area was surveyed by EcoPlan Associates, Inc., on September 28, 2006, and invasive plant species were observed in the project area. No formal survey was conducted to identify and map the invasive plant species at the time.

Some common invasive plant species that are known to occur in Maricopa County and likely occur in the project area are:

Common Name	Scientific Name
African mustard	<i>Brassica tournefortii</i>
Barnyardgrass	<i>Echinochloa crus-galli</i>
Bermudagrass	<i>Cynodon dactylon</i>
Cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>
Common purslane	<i>Portulaca oleracea</i>
Curly dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>
Dodder	<i>Cuscuta</i> spp.
Field bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Giant reed	<i>Arundo donax</i>
Johnsongrass	<i>Sorghum halepense</i>
Lehmann lovegrass	<i>Eragrostis lehmanniana</i>
London rocket	<i>Sisymbrium irio</i>
Mexican paloverde	<i>Parkinsonia aculeata</i>
Nettleleaf goosefoot	<i>Chenopodium murale</i>
Nuttall's poverty-weed	<i>Monolepis nuttalliana</i>
Puncturevine	<i>Tribulus terrestris</i>
Red brome	<i>Bromus rubens</i>
Redstem stork's bill	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i> ssp. <i>cutarium</i>
Russian thistle	<i>Salsola tragus</i>
Tamarisk	<i>Tamarix</i> spp.
Tree tobacco	<i>Nicotiana glauca</i>
Wild mustard	<i>Sinapis arvensis</i>
Yellow sweetclover	<i>Melilotus officinalis</i>

This project will incorporate the following measures to prevent the introduction and spread of invasive species:

Design Responsibility

- All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction will be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.

Contractor Responsibilities

- To prevent the introduction of invasive species seeds, all earthmoving and hauling equipment shall be washed at the contractor's storage facility prior to entering the construction site.
- All disturbed soils that will not be landscaped or otherwise permanently stabilized by construction shall be seeded using species native to the project vicinity.
- To prevent invasive species seeds from leaving the site, the contractor shall inspect all construction equipment and remove all attached plant/vegetation and soil/mud debris prior to leaving the construction site.

Contractor Responsibilities (continued)

- The contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a preconstruction survey for invasive plant species immediately prior to ground-disturbance activities. Upon completion of the survey, the contractor shall contact the Department Environmental Planning Group at 602.712.7767 to provide survey results.
- The contractor shall employ a qualified specialist to appropriately treat and remove invasive plant species found during surveys immediately prior to ground-disturbance activities.

The AGFD tool included a standard response regarding local or regional needs of wildlife movement, connectivity, access to habitat needs, and the design of various roadway features such as culverts and bridges. The Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT), the AGFD, the Federal Highway Administration, and representatives from other agencies have completed a Wildlife Linkages Assessment to address important wildlife movement corridors in Arizona. The Gila River, at the southern end of the project area, falls within Wildlife Linkage 151—Gila/Salt River Corridor Granite Reef Dam–Gillespie Dam, as defined by the Wildlife Linkages Assessment. Based on the project scope of work described in this Biological Review, this project will not change the current wildlife connectivity of this region.

ADOT is planning to continue working with partners involved, including the AGFD, and has considered wildlife movement patterns during the planning of this project. In addition, ADOT has provided an opportunity for the AGFD to be involved with the design of roadway features and has considered AGFD recommendations during project development.

B. Migratory Birds

The bald eagle is known to forage along the Gila River and pass over the project area while in transit between perching sites, foraging areas, or nesting sites. Project-related construction may impact bald eagle movement patterns but will not impact any nesting sites. The least bittern occurs along the Gila River, beyond the limits of the project area, and will not be impacted by project-related construction.

Though the Sprague's pipit does not appear in the AGFD tool, there are records in Phoenix of wintering pipits, and there is suitable habitat present in the project area. These occurrences are rare, and construction-related impacts would be limited to the disruption of wintering activities. The net loss of suitable habitat would be extremely low compared with the amount of suitable habitat beyond the project vicinity.

Based on the presence of Western burrowing owls and suitable nesting habitat in the project area, the following mitigation measures are proposed to avoid impacts:

Contractor Responsibilities

- The contractor shall employ a biologist to complete a preconstruction survey for burrowing owls 96 hours prior to construction in all suitable habitat that will be disturbed. The biologist shall possess a burrowing owl survey protocol training certificate issued by the Arizona Game and Fish Department. Upon completion of the survey, the contractor shall contact the Department Environmental Planning Group at 602.712.7767 to provide survey results.

Contractor Responsibilities (continued)

- If any burrowing owls are located during preconstruction surveys or construction, the contractor shall employ a biologist holding a permit from the US Fish and Wildlife Service to relocate all burrowing owls from the project area, as appropriate.
- If burrowing owls or active burrows are identified during the preconstruction surveys or during construction, no construction activities shall take place within 100 feet of any active burrow until the owls are relocated.

The vegetation in the project vicinity may provide nesting habitat for migratory birds. To ensure that no active migratory bird nests are impacted by construction activities, the following mitigation measure will be implemented:

Contractor Responsibility

- If any tree or shrub removal is required to accommodate project construction activities, the contractor shall complete all necessary tree and shrub removal activities prior to March 1 or after August 1 to avoid the migratory bird nesting season and minimize impacts to breeding birds. If tree and shrub removal must occur between March 1 and August 1 of any calendar year, the contractor will hire a qualified biologist to conduct surveys for breeding bird nests prior to construction.

C. Protected Native Plants

The project area was surveyed by EcoPlan Associates, Inc., for the presence of protected native plants on September 28, 2006. The non-systematic survey entailed a visual inspection along several road transects. Native habitat in the project area has been almost entirely altered for agricultural and development purposes. Scattered individuals of the following protected native plants were found growing along roadsides and unmaintained areas in the project area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Occurrence
Salvage Restricted		
Prickly pear	<i>Opuntia</i> sp.	Uncommon
Salvage Assessed		
Paloverde	<i>Parkinsonia</i> spp.	Uncommon
Salvage Assessed/Harvest Restricted		
Mesquite	<i>Prosopis</i> spp.	Uncommon

-

The following mitigation measure is proposed in regard to protected native plants:

Roadside Development Responsibility

- Protected native plants within the project limits will be impacted by this project; therefore, the Department Roadside Development Section will determine if Arizona Department of Agriculture notification is needed. If notification is needed, the Department Roadside Development Section will send the notification at least 60 calendar days prior to the start of construction.

D. Photo Log



Photo 1. View of an abandoned field in the project area from Van Buren Street, facing northeast. Cotton Lane is visible in the right midground (adjacent to the palm trees). I-10 intersects Cotton Lane to the north and in the far background (out of sight).



Photo 2. View of MC 85 west of Cotton Lane, facing west. Note an agricultural field to the south and an uncommon patch of native saltbush–dominated Sonoran desert scrub to the north in the project area.



Photo 3. View of a patch of native saltbush–dominated Sonoran desertscrub in the project area from MC 85 west of Cotton Lane, facing north.



Photo 4. View of a drainage canal and an abandoned field of Russian thistle in the project area from Cotton Lane north of MC 85, facing southeast. The Estrella Mountains are visible in the far background.



Photo 5. View of the southern border of the project limits from Jackrabbit Trail south of MC 85, facing east. An agricultural field in the foreground is in the project area. A patch of riparian woodland adjacent to the Gila River in the background is outside the project area. Curly dock roadside vegetation is visible in the foreground.



Photo 6. View of the Buckeye Canal and the surrounding land in the project area from Cotton Lane south of MC 85, facing west.

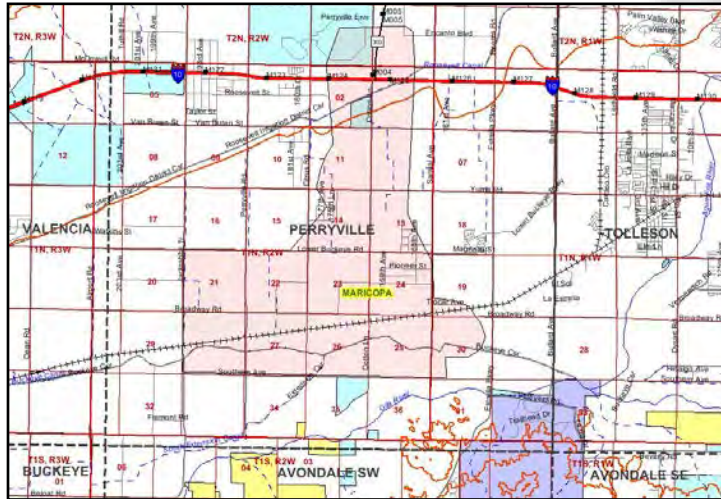
E. Attachments

- AGFD On-line Environmental Review Tool receipts (2)
- AGFD scoping response letter
- USFWS scoping letters (2)

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

Search ID: 20121218019239
 Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 1
 Date: 12/18/2012 8:02:10 AM

Project Location



Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 1
Submitted By: Patrick Dockens
On behalf of: CONSULTING
Project Search ID: 20121218019239
Date: 12/18/2012 8:02:04 AM
Project Category: Transportation & Infrastructure, Road construction (including staging areas), Realignment/ new roads
Project Coordinates (UTM Zone 12-NAD 83): 366510.426, 3698888.468 meter
Project Area: 8950.565 acres
Project Perimeter: 31956.428 meter
County: MARICOPA
USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle ID: 1293
Quadrangle Name: PERRYVILLE
Project locality is not anticipated to change

Location Accuracy Disclaimer

Project locations are assumed to be both precise and accurate for the purposes of environmental review. The creator/owner of the Project Review Receipt is solely responsible for the project location and thus the correctness of the Project Review Receipt content.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide in-depth comments and project review when additional information or environmental documentation becomes available.

Special Status Species Occurrences/Critical Habitat/Tribal Lands within 3 miles of Project Vicinity:

Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	State
<i>Athene cucularia hypugaea</i>	Western Burrowing Owl	SC	S	S	
Bat Colony					
<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Western U.S. DPS)	PS:C	S		WSC
<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	LE			WSC
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> (wintering pop.)	Bald Eagle - Winter Population	SC, BG A	S	S	WSC
<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	Least Bittern				WSC
<i>Macrotus californicus</i>	California Leaf-nosed Bat	SC	S	S	WSC
<i>Rallus longirostris yumanensis</i>	Yuma Clapper Rail	LE			WSC

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

Search ID: 20121218019239

Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 1

Date: 12/18/2012 8:02:10 AM

Please review the entire receipt for project type recommendations and/or species or location information and retain a copy for future reference. If any of the information you provided did not accurately reflect this project, or if project plans change, another review should be conducted, as this determination may not be valid.

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool:

1. This On-line Environmental Review Tool inquiry has generated recommendations regarding the potential impacts of your project on Special Status Species (SSS) and other wildlife of Arizona. SSS include all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service federally listed, U.S. Bureau of Land Management sensitive, U.S. Forest Service sensitive, and Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) recognized species of concern.
2. These recommendations have been made by the Department, under authority of Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5 (Amusements and Sports), 17 (Game and Fish), and 28 (Transportation). These recommendations are preliminary in scope, designed to provide early considerations for all species of wildlife, pertinent to the project type you entered.
3. This receipt, generated by the automated On-line Environmental Review Tool does not constitute an official project review by Department biologists and planners. Further coordination may be necessary as appropriate under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has regulatory authority over all federally listed species under the ESA. Contact USFWS Ecological Services Offices: <http://arizonaes.fws.gov/>.

Phoenix Main Office
2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021
Phone 602-242-0210
Fax 602-242-2513

Tucson Sub-Office
201 North Bonita, Suite 141
Tucson, AZ 85745
Phone 520-670-6144
Fax 520-670-6154

Flagstaff Sub-Office
323 N. Leroux Street, Suite 101
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Phone 928-226-0614
Fax 928-226-1099

Disclaimer:

1. This is a preliminary environmental screening tool. It is not a substitute for the potential knowledge gained by having a biologist conduct a field survey of the project area.
2. The Department's Heritage Data Management System (HDMS) data is not intended to include potential distribution of special status species. Arizona is large and diverse with plants, animals, and environmental conditions that are ever changing. Consequently, many areas may contain species that biologists do not know about or species previously noted in a particular area may no longer occur there.
3. Not all of Arizona has been surveyed for special status species, and surveys that have been conducted have varied greatly in scope and intensity. Such surveys may reveal previously undocumented population of species of special concern.
4. HDMS data contains information about species occurrences that have actually been reported to the Department.

Arizona Game and Fish Department Mission

To conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and

management programs, and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation, and use by present and future generations.

Project Category: Transportation & Infrastructure, Road construction (including staging areas), Realignment/ new roads

Project Type Recommendations:

All degraded and disturbed lands should be restored to their natural state. Vegetation restoration projects (including treatments of invasive or exotic species) should have a completed site-evaluation plan (identifying environmental conditions necessary to re-establish native vegetation), a revegetation plan (species, density, method of establishment), a short and long-term monitoring plan, including adaptive management guidelines to address needs for replacement vegetation.

Based on the project type entered; coordination with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality may be required (<http://www.azdeq.gov/>).

Based on the project type entered; coordination with County Flood Control districts may be required.

Based on the project type entered; coordination with State Historic Preservation Office may be required (<http://azstateparks.com/SHPO/index.html>)

Based on the project type entered; coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be required (<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/regulatory/phonedir.html>)

During planning and construction, minimize potential introduction or spread of exotic invasive species. Invasive species can be plants, animals (exotic snails), and other organisms (e.g. microbes), which may cause alteration to ecological functions or compete with or prey upon native species and can cause social impacts (e.g. livestock forage reduction, increase wildfire risk). The terms noxious weed or invasive plants are often used interchangeably. Precautions should be taken to wash all equipment utilized in the project activities before and after project activities to reduce the spread of invasive species. Arizona has noxious weed regulations (Arizona Revised Statutes, Rules R3-4-244 and R3-4-245). See Arizona Department of Agriculture website for restricted plants

<http://www.azda.gov/PSD/quarantine5.htm>. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has information regarding pest and invasive plant control methods including: pesticide, herbicide, biological control agents, and mechanical control:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>. The Department regulates the importation, purchasing, and transportation of wildlife and fish (Restricted Live Wildlife), please refer to the hunting regulations for further information http://www.azgfd.gov/h_f/hunting_rules.shtml.

During the planning stages of your project, please consider the local or regional needs of wildlife in regards to movement, connectivity, and access to habitat needs. Loss of this permeability prevents wildlife from accessing resources, finding mates, reduces gene flow, prevents wildlife from re-colonizing areas where local extirpations may have occurred, and ultimately prevents wildlife from contributing to ecosystem functions, such as pollination, seed dispersal, control of prey numbers, and resistance to invasive species. In many cases, streams and washes provide natural movement corridors for wildlife and should be maintained in their natural state. Uplands also support a large diversity of species, and should be contained within important

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wildlife movement corridors. In addition, maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem functions can be facilitated through improving designs of structures, fences, roadways, and culverts to promote passage for a variety of wildlife.

Hydrological considerations: design culverts to minimize impacts to channel geometry, or design channel geometry (low flow, overbank, floodplains) and substrates to carry expected discharge using local drainages of appropriate size as templates. Aquatic wildlife considerations: reduce/minimize barriers to migration of amphibians or fish (e.g. eliminate falls). Terrestrial wildlife: washes and stream corridors often provide important corridors for movement. Overall culvert width, height, and length should be optimized for movement of the greatest number and diversity of species expected to utilize the passage. Culvert designs should consider moisture, light, and noise, while providing clear views at both ends to maximize utilization. For many species, fencing is an important design feature that can be utilized with culverts to funnel wildlife into these areas and minimize the potential for roadway collisions. Guidelines for culvert designs to facilitate wildlife passage can be found at <http://www.azgfd.gov/hgis/guidelines.aspx>.

Minimization and mitigation of impacts to wildlife and fish species due to changes in water quality, quantity, chemistry, temperature, and alteration to flow regimes (timing, magnitude, duration, and frequency of floods) should be evaluated. Minimize impacts to springs, in-stream flow, and consider irrigation improvements to decrease water use. If dredging is a project component, consider timing of the project in order to minimize impacts to spawning fish and other aquatic species (including spawning seasons), and to reduce spread of exotic invasive species. We recommend early direct coordination with Project Evaluation Program for projects that could impact water resources, wetlands, streams, springs, and/or riparian habitats.

Planning: consider impacts of lighting intensity on mammals and birds and develop measures or alternatives that can be taken to increase

human safety while minimizing potential impacts to wildlife. Conduct wildlife surveys to determine species within project area, and evaluate proposed activities based on species biology and natural history to determine if artificial lighting may disrupt behavior patterns or habitat use.

Preconstruction - Consider design structures and construction plans that minimize impacts to channel geometry (i.e. width/depth ratio, sinuosity, allow overflow channels) to avoid alteration of hydrological function. Identify whether wildlife species use the structure for roosting or nesting during anticipated construction period. Plan the timing of construction/maintenance to minimize impacts to wildlife species. In addition to the species list generated by the Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool, the Department recommends that surveys be conducted at the bridge and in the vicinity of the bridge to identify additional or currently undocumented bat, bird, or aquatic species in the project area. To minimize impacts to birds and bats, as well as aquatic species, consider conducting maintenance and construction activities outside the breeding/maternity season (breeding seasons for birds and bats usually occur spring - summer). Examining the crevices for the presence of bats prior to pouring new paving materials. When bats are present, the top of the crevices should be sealed to prevent material from dripping or falling through the cracks and potentially onto bats. If bats are present, maintenance and construction (including paving and milling) activities should be conducted during nighttime hours, if possible, when the fewest number of bats will be roosting. Consider incorporating roosting habitat for bats into bridge designs. Minimize impacts to the vegetation community. A revegetation plan should be developed to replace impacted communities. Unavoidable impacts to vegetation should be mitigated on-site whenever possible. During construction: Erosion control structures and drainage features should be used to prevent introduction of sediment laden runoff into the waterway. Minimize instream construction activity. If culverts are planned, mitigate impacts to wildlife and fish movement. Guidelines for bridge designs to facilitate wildlife passage can be found at <http://www.azgfd.gov/hgis/guidelines.aspx>.

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Recommendations will be dependant upon goals of the fence project and the wildlife species expected to be impacted by the project. General guidelines for ensuring wildlife-friendly fences include: barbless wire on the top and bottom with the maximum fence height 42", minimum height for bottom 16". Modifications to this design may be considered for fencing anticipated to be routinely encountered by elk, bighorn sheep or pronghorn (e.g., Pronghorn fencing would require 18" minimum height on the bottom). Please refer to the Department's Fencing Guidelines located at <http://www.azgfd.gov/hgis/guidelines.aspx>.

The Department recommends that wildlife surveys are conducted to determine if noise-sensitive species occur within the project area. Avoidance or minimization measures could include conducting project activities outside of breeding seasons.

The Department requests further coordination to provide project/species specific recommendations, please contact Project Evaluation Program directly.

Trenches should be covered or back-filled as soon as possible. Incorporate escape ramps in ditches or fencing along the perimeter to deter small mammals and herptefauna (snakes, lizards, tortoise) from entering ditches.

Project Location and/or Species recommendations:

Heritage Data Management System records indicate that one or more listed, proposed, or candidate species or Critical Habitat (Designated or Proposed) have been documented in the vicinity of your project (refer to page 1 of the receipt). Please contact:
Ecological Services Office
US Fish and Wildlife Service
2321 W. Royal Palm Rd.

Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951

Phone: 602-242-0210

Fax: 602-242-2513

Heritage Data Management System records indicate that western burrowing owls have been documented within the vicinity of your project area (refer to the species list on page 1 of the receipt). Please review the relocation procedures recommended for burrowing owls found on the Environmental Review Home Page: http://mirror-pole.com/burr_owl/bur_owl1.htm.

Recommendations Disclaimer:

1. Potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources may be minimized or avoided by the recommendations generated from information submitted for your proposed project.
2. These recommendations are proposed actions or guidelines to be considered during **preliminary project development**.
3. Additional site specific recommendations may be proposed during further NEPA/ESA analysis or through coordination with affected agencies.
4. Making this information directly available does not substitute for the Department's review of project proposals, and should not decrease our opportunity to review and evaluate additional project information and/or new project proposals.
5. The Department is interested in the conservation of all fish and wildlife resources, including those Special Status Species listed on this receipt, and those that may have not been documented within the project vicinity as well as other game and nongame wildlife.
6. **Further coordination requires the submittal of this initialed and signed Environmental Review Receipt with a cover letter and project plans or documentation that includes project narrative, acreage to be impacted, how construction or project activity(s) are to be accomplished, and project locality information**

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

Search ID: 20121218019239

Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 1

Date: 12/18/2012 8:02:10 AM

(including site map).

7. Upon receiving information by AZGFD, please allow 30 days for completion of project reviews. Mail requests to:

Project Evaluation Program, Habitat Branch

Arizona Game and Fish Department

5000 West Carefree Highway

Phoenix, Arizona 85086-5000

Phone Number: (623) 236-7600

Fax Number: (623) 236-7366

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2. Unauthorized attempts to upload information or change information on this website are strictly prohibited and may be punishable under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 and/or the National Information Infrastructure Protection Act .
3. The Department reserves the right at any time, without notice, to enhance, modify, alter, or suspend the website and to terminate or restrict your access to the website.
4. This Environmental Review is based on the project study area that was entered. The review must be redone if the project study area, location, or the type of project changes. If additional information becomes available, this review may need to be reconsidered.

5. A signed and initialed copy of the Environmental Review Receipt indicates that the entire receipt has been read by the signer of the Environmental Review Receipt.

Security:

The Environmental Review and project planning web application operates on a complex State computer system. This system is monitored to ensure proper operation, to verify the functioning of applicable security features, and for other like purposes. Anyone using this system expressly consents to such monitoring and is advised that if such monitoring reveals possible evidence of criminal activity, system personnel may provide the evidence of such monitoring to law enforcement officials. Unauthorized attempts to upload or change information; to defeat or circumvent security measures; or to utilize this system for other than its intended purposes are prohibited.

This website maintains a record of each environmental review search result as well as all contact information. This information is maintained for internal tracking purposes. Information collected in this application will not be shared outside of the purposes of the Department.

If the Environmental Review Receipt and supporting material are not mailed to the Department or other appropriate agencies within six (6) months of the Project Review Receipt date, the receipt is considered to be null and void, and a new review must be initiated.

Print this Environmental Review Receipt using your Internet browser's print function and keep it for your records. Signature of this receipt indicates the signer has read and understands the information provided.

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

Search ID: 20121218019239

Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 1

Date: 12/18/2012 8:02:10 AM

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Proposed Date of Implementation: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

Please provide point of contact information regarding this Environmental Review.

City, State, Zip: _____

Application or organization responsible for project implementation

Phone: _____

Agency/organization: _____

E-mail: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

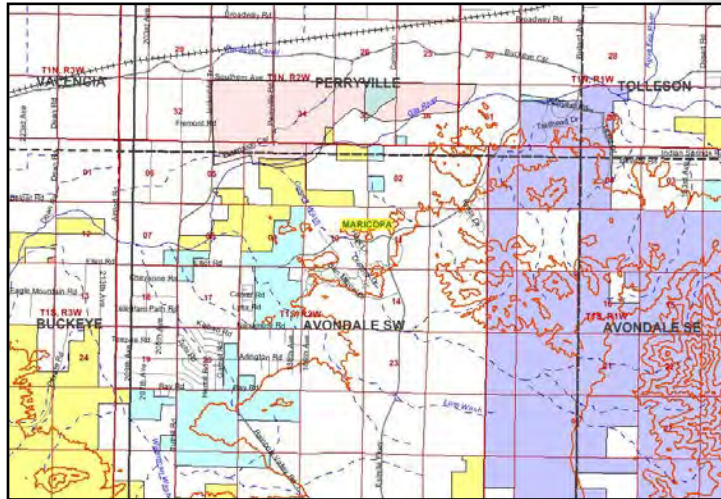
Person Conducting Search (if not applicant)

Agency/organization: _____

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

Search ID: 20121218019240
 Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 2
 Date: 12/18/2012 8:05:46 AM

Project Location



Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 2
Submitted By: Patrick Dockens
On behalf of: CONSULTING
Project Search ID: 20121218019240
Date: 12/18/2012 8:05:42 AM
Project Category: Transportation & Infrastructure, Road construction (including staging areas), Realignment/ new roads
Project Coordinates (UTM Zone 12-NAD 83): 365101.560, 3694831.837 meter
Project Area: 2330.594 acres
Project Perimeter: 17431.028 meter
County: MARICOPA
USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle ID: 1339
Quadrangle Name: AVONDALE SW
Project locality is not anticipated to change

Location Accuracy Disclaimer

Project locations are assumed to be both precise and accurate for the purposes of environmental review. The creator/owner of the Project Review Receipt is solely responsible for the project location and thus the correctness of the Project Review Receipt content.

The Department appreciates the opportunity to provide in-depth comments and project review when additional information or environmental documentation becomes available.

Special Status Species Occurrences/Critical Habitat/Tribal Lands within 3 miles of Project Vicinity:

Name	Common Name	FWS	USFS	BLM	State
<i>Athene cucularia hypugaea</i>	Western Burrowing Owl	SC	S	S	
<i>Coccyzus americanus</i>	Yellow-billed Cuckoo (Western U.S. DPS)	PS:C	S		WSC
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> (wintering pop.)	Bald Eagle - Winter Population	SC, BG A	S	S	WSC
<i>Ixobrychus exilis</i>	Least Bittern				WSC
<i>Rallus longirostris yumanensis</i>	Yuma Clapper Rail	LE			WSC

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

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Please review the entire receipt for project type recommendations and/or species or location information and retain a copy for future reference. If any of the information you provided did not accurately reflect this project, or if project plans change, another review should be conducted, as this determination may not be valid.

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool:

1. This On-line Environmental Review Tool inquiry has generated recommendations regarding the potential impacts of your project on Special Status Species (SSS) and other wildlife of Arizona. SSS include all U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service federally listed, U.S. Bureau of Land Management sensitive, U.S. Forest Service sensitive, and Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) recognized species of concern.
2. These recommendations have been made by the Department, under authority of Arizona Revised Statutes Title 5 (Amusements and Sports), 17 (Game and Fish), and 28 (Transportation). These recommendations are preliminary in scope, designed to provide early considerations for all species of wildlife, pertinent to the project type you entered.
3. This receipt, generated by the automated On-line Environmental Review Tool does not constitute an official project review by Department biologists and planners. Further coordination may be necessary as appropriate under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and/or the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has regulatory authority over all federally listed species under the ESA. Contact USFWS Ecological Services Offices: <http://arizonaes.fws.gov/>.

Phoenix Main Office
2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021
Phone 602-242-0210
Fax 602-242-2513

Tucson Sub-Office
201 North Bonita, Suite 141
Tucson, AZ 85745
Phone 520-670-6144
Fax 520-670-6154

Flagstaff Sub-Office
323 N. Leroux Street, Suite 101
Flagstaff, AZ 86001
Phone 928-226-0614
Fax 928-226-1099

Disclaimer:

1. This is a preliminary environmental screening tool. It is not a substitute for the potential knowledge gained by having a biologist conduct a field survey of the project area.
2. The Department's Heritage Data Management System (HDMS) data is not intended to include potential distribution of special status species. Arizona is large and diverse with plants, animals, and environmental conditions that are ever changing. Consequently, many areas may contain species that biologists do not know about or species previously noted in a particular area may no longer occur there.
3. Not all of Arizona has been surveyed for special status species, and surveys that have been conducted have varied greatly in scope and intensity. Such surveys may reveal previously undocumented population of species of special concern.
4. HDMS data contains information about species occurrences that have actually been reported to the Department.

Arizona Game and Fish Department Mission

To conserve, enhance, and restore Arizona's diverse wildlife resources and habitats through aggressive protection and

management programs, and to provide wildlife resources and safe watercraft and off-highway vehicle recreation for the enjoyment, appreciation, and use by present and future generations.

Project Category: Transportation & Infrastructure, Road construction (including staging areas), Realignment/ new roads

Project Type Recommendations:

All degraded and disturbed lands should be restored to their natural state. Vegetation restoration projects (including treatments of invasive or exotic species) should have a completed site-evaluation plan (identifying environmental conditions necessary to re-establish native vegetation), a revegetation plan (species, density, method of establishment), a short and long-term monitoring plan, including adaptive management guidelines to address needs for replacement vegetation.

Based on the project type entered; coordination with Arizona Department of Environmental Quality may be required (<http://www.azdeq.gov/>).

Based on the project type entered; coordination with County Flood Control districts may be required.

Based on the project type entered; coordination with State Historic Preservation Office may be required (<http://azstateparks.com/SHPO/index.html>)

Based on the project type entered; coordination with U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may be required (<http://www.spl.usace.army.mil/regulatory/phonedir.html>)

During planning and construction, minimize potential introduction or spread of exotic invasive species. Invasive species can be plants, animals (exotic snails), and other organisms (e.g. microbes), which may cause alteration to ecological functions or compete with or prey upon native species and can cause social impacts (e.g. livestock forage reduction, increase wildfire risk). The terms noxious weed or invasive plants are often used interchangeably. Precautions should be taken to wash all equipment utilized in the project activities before and after project activities to reduce the spread of invasive species. Arizona has noxious weed regulations (Arizona Revised Statutes, Rules R3-4-244 and R3-4-245). See Arizona Department of Agriculture website for restricted plants <http://www.azda.gov/PSD/quarantine5.htm>. Additionally, the U.S. Department of Agriculture has information regarding pest and invasive plant control methods including: pesticide, herbicide, biological control agents, and mechanical control: <http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usdahome>. The Department regulates the importation, purchasing, and transportation of wildlife and fish (Restricted Live Wildlife), please refer to the hunting regulations for further information http://www.azgfd.gov/h_f/hunting_rules.shtml.

During the planning stages of your project, please consider the local or regional needs of wildlife in regards to movement, connectivity, and access to habitat needs. Loss of this permeability prevents wildlife from accessing resources, finding mates, reduces gene flow, prevents wildlife from re-colonizing areas where local extirpations may have occurred, and ultimately prevents wildlife from contributing to ecosystem functions, such as pollination, seed dispersal, control of prey numbers, and resistance to invasive species. In many cases, streams and washes provide natural movement corridors for wildlife and should be maintained in their natural state. Uplands also support a large diversity of species, and should be contained within important

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wildlife movement corridors. In addition, maintaining biodiversity and ecosystem functions can be facilitated through improving designs of structures, fences, roadways, and culverts to promote passage for a variety of wildlife.

Hydrological considerations: design culverts to minimize impacts to channel geometry, or design channel geometry (low flow, overbank, floodplains) and substrates to carry expected discharge using local drainages of appropriate size as templates. Aquatic wildlife considerations: reduce/minimize barriers to migration of amphibians or fish (e.g. eliminate falls). Terrestrial wildlife: washes and stream corridors often provide important corridors for movement. Overall culvert width, height, and length should be optimized for movement of the greatest number and diversity of species expected to utilize the passage. Culvert designs should consider moisture, light, and noise, while providing clear views at both ends to maximize utilization. For many species, fencing is an important design feature that can be utilized with culverts to funnel wildlife into these areas and minimize the potential for roadway collisions. Guidelines for culvert designs to facilitate wildlife passage can be found at <http://www.azgfd.gov/hgis/guidelines.aspx>.

Minimization and mitigation of impacts to wildlife and fish species due to changes in water quality, quantity, chemistry, temperature, and alteration to flow regimes (timing, magnitude, duration, and frequency of floods) should be evaluated. Minimize impacts to springs, in-stream flow, and consider irrigation improvements to decrease water use. If dredging is a project component, consider timing of the project in order to minimize impacts to spawning fish and other aquatic species (including spawning seasons), and to reduce spread of exotic invasive species. We recommend early direct coordination with Project Evaluation Program for projects that could impact water resources, wetlands, streams, springs, and/or riparian habitats.

Planning: consider impacts of lighting intensity on mammals and birds and develop measures or alternatives that can be taken to increase

human safety while minimizing potential impacts to wildlife. Conduct wildlife surveys to determine species within project area, and evaluate proposed activities based on species biology and natural history to determine if artificial lighting may disrupt behavior patterns or habitat use.

Preconstruction - Consider design structures and construction plans that minimize impacts to channel geometry (i.e. width/depth ratio, sinuosity, allow overflow channels) to avoid alteration of hydrological function. Identify whether wildlife species use the structure for roosting or nesting during anticipated construction period. Plan the timing of construction/maintenance to minimize impacts to wildlife species. In addition to the species list generated by the Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool, the Department recommends that surveys be conducted at the bridge and in the vicinity of the bridge to identify additional or currently undocumented bat, bird, or aquatic species in the project area. To minimize impacts to birds and bats, as well as aquatic species, consider conducting maintenance and construction activities outside the breeding/maternity season (breeding seasons for birds and bats usually occur spring - summer). Examining the crevices for the presence of bats prior to pouring new paving materials. When bats are present, the top of the crevices should be sealed to prevent material from dripping or falling through the cracks and potentially onto bats. If bats are present, maintenance and construction (including paving and milling) activities should be conducted during nighttime hours, if possible, when the fewest number of bats will be roosting. Consider incorporating roosting habitat for bats into bridge designs. Minimize impacts to the vegetation community. A revegetation plan should be developed to replace impacted communities. Unavoidable impacts to vegetation should be mitigated on-site whenever possible. During construction: Erosion control structures and drainage features should be used to prevent introduction of sediment laden runoff into the waterway. Minimize instream construction activity. If culverts are planned, mitigate impacts to wildlife and fish movement. Guidelines for bridge designs to facilitate wildlife passage can be found at <http://www.azgfd.gov/hgis/guidelines.aspx>.

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Recommendations will be dependant upon goals of the fence project and the wildlife species expected to be impacted by the project. General guidelines for ensuring wildlife-friendly fences include: barbless wire on the top and bottom with the maximum fence height 42", minimum height for bottom 16". Modifications to this design may be considered for fencing anticipated to be routinely encountered by elk, bighorn sheep or pronghorn (e.g., Pronghorn fencing would require 18" minimum height on the bottom). Please refer to the Department's Fencing Guidelines located at <http://www.azgfd.gov/hgis/guidelines.aspx>.

The Department recommends that wildlife surveys are conducted to determine if noise-sensitive species occur within the project area. Avoidance or minimization measures could include conducting project activities outside of breeding seasons.

The Department requests further coordination to provide project/species specific recommendations, please contact Project Evaluation Program directly.

Trenches should be covered or back-filled as soon as possible. Incorporate escape ramps in ditches or fencing along the perimeter to deter small mammals and herptefauna (snakes, lizards, tortoise) from entering ditches.

Project Location and/or Species recommendations:

Heritage Data Management System records indicate that one or more listed, proposed, or candidate species or Critical Habitat (Designated or Proposed) have been documented in the vicinity of your project (refer to page 1 of the receipt). Please contact:
Ecological Services Office
US Fish and Wildlife Service
2321 W. Royal Palm Rd.

Phoenix, AZ 85021-4951

Phone: 602-242-0210

Fax: 602-242-2513

Heritage Data Management System records indicate that western burrowing owls have been documented within the vicinity of your project area (refer to the species list on page 1 of the receipt). Please review the relocation procedures recommended for burrowing owls found on the Environmental Review Home Page: http://mirror-pole.com/burr_owl/bur_owl1.htm.

Recommendations Disclaimer:

1. Potential impacts to fish and wildlife resources may be minimized or avoided by the recommendations generated from information submitted for your proposed project.
2. These recommendations are proposed actions or guidelines to be considered during **preliminary project development**.
3. Additional site specific recommendations may be proposed during further NEPA/ESA analysis or through coordination with affected agencies.
4. Making this information directly available does not substitute for the Department's review of project proposals, and should not decrease our opportunity to review and evaluate additional project information and/or new project proposals.
5. The Department is interested in the conservation of all fish and wildlife resources, including those Special Status Species listed on this receipt, and those that may have not been documented within the project vicinity as well as other game and nongame wildlife.
6. **Further coordination requires the submittal of this initialed and signed Environmental Review Receipt with a cover letter and project plans or documentation that includes project narrative, acreage to be impacted, how construction or project activity(s) are to be accomplished, and project locality information**

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(including site map).

7. Upon receiving information by AZGFD, please allow 30 days for completion of project reviews. Mail requests to:

Project Evaluation Program, Habitat Branch

Arizona Game and Fish Department

5000 West Carefree Highway

Phoenix, Arizona 85086-5000

Phone Number: (623) 236-7600

Fax Number: (623) 236-7366

Terms of Use

By using this site, you acknowledge that you have read and understand the terms of use. Department staff may revise these terms periodically. If you continue to use our website after we post changes to these terms, it will mean that you accept such changes. If at any time you do not wish to accept the Terms, you may choose not to use the website.

1. This Environmental Review and project planning website was developed and intended for the purpose of screening projects for potential impacts on resources of special concern. By indicating your agreement to the terms of use for this website, you warrant that you will not use this website for any other purpose.
2. Unauthorized attempts to upload information or change information on this website are strictly prohibited and may be punishable under the Computer Fraud and Abuse Act of 1986 and/or the National Information Infrastructure Protection Act .
3. The Department reserves the right at any time, without notice, to enhance, modify, alter, or suspend the website and to terminate or restrict your access to the website.
4. This Environmental Review is based on the project study area that was entered. The review must be redone if the project study area, location, or the type of project changes. If additional information becomes available, this review may need to be reconsidered.

5. A signed and initialed copy of the Environmental Review Receipt indicates that the entire receipt has been read by the signer of the Environmental Review Receipt.

Security:

The Environmental Review and project planning web application operates on a complex State computer system. This system is monitored to ensure proper operation, to verify the functioning of applicable security features, and for other like purposes. Anyone using this system expressly consents to such monitoring and is advised that if such monitoring reveals possible evidence of criminal activity, system personnel may provide the evidence of such monitoring to law enforcement officials. Unauthorized attempts to upload or change information; to defeat or circumvent security measures; or to utilize this system for other than its intended purposes are prohibited.

This website maintains a record of each environmental review search result as well as all contact information. This information is maintained for internal tracking purposes. Information collected in this application will not be shared outside of the purposes of the Department.

If the Environmental Review Receipt and supporting material are not mailed to the Department or other appropriate agencies within six (6) months of the Project Review Receipt date, the receipt is considered to be null and void, and a new review must be initiated.

Print this Environmental Review Receipt using your Internet browser's print function and keep it for your records. Signature of this receipt indicates the signer has read and understands the information provided.

Arizona's On-line Environmental Review Tool

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Project Name: 04-755005 B 303 Part 2

Date: 12/18/2012 8:05:46 AM

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Proposed Date of Implementation: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

Please provide point of contact information regarding this Environmental Review.

City, State, Zip: _____

Application or organization responsible for project implementation

Phone: _____

Agency/organization: _____

E-mail: _____

Contact Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

Person Conducting Search (if not applicant)

Agency/organization: _____



THE STATE OF ARIZONA
GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

5000 W. CAREFREE HIGHWAY
PHOENIX, AZ 85086-5000
(602) 942-3000 • WWW.AZGFD.GOV

GOVERNOR
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DIRECTOR
LARRY D. VOYLES
DEPUTY DIRECTORS
GARY R. HOVATTER
BOB BROSCHEID



December 26, 2012

ADOT
c/o Tricia Balluff
EcoPlan Associates
701 W. Southern Ave., Suite 203
Mesa, AZ 85210

Re: 303-A(AS0)A
303 MA 005 H6870 01L
State Route 303L, State route 30 to Interstate 10

Dear Ms. Galluff:

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) has received and reviewed your letter of December 20, 2012 regarding the above referenced project. I have verified and validated the searches you conducted (receipts 20121218019239 & 40) using the Department's On-line Environmental Review Tool. The searches indicate there are 2 listed endangered species (Southwestern willow flycatcher and Yuma Clapper Rail), one candidate species (yellow-billed cuckoo) and one species (bald eagle) protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Act. The Department does not have regulatory authority to make determinations regarding effects of projects on these species. We recommend you contact the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to obtain their determination on potential effects.

The receipts also indicate there are western burrowing owls within 3 miles of your project. Although not listed under the ESA, this is a species of concern to the Department. We request that you insure your client's work crews are familiar with and follow our recommendations (http://www.azgfd.gov/pdfs/w_c/owl/BurrowingOwlClearanceProtocol.pdf) for dealing with these birds when encountered in a development action.

The Department has no further comments at this time. If you have questions or concerns, please give me a call at 623 236-7513. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Daniel E. Nelson, Project Evaluation Specialist
Cc: Kelly Wolfe-Krauter, AGFD; Debra Bills USFWS
M12-12242917



Arizona Department of Transportation
Intermodal Transportation Division

206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

John S. Halikowski
Director

December 20, 2012

Jennifer Toth
State Engineer

Mr. Steve Spangle
Field Supervisor
US Fish and Wildlife Service
2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021

Re: 303-A(ASO)A
303 MA 005 H6870 01L
State Route 303L, State Route 30 to Interstate 10
USFWS Consultation No. 22410-2006-I-0339

Dear Mr. Spangle:

The Arizona Department of Transportation and the Federal Highway Administration, as the lead federal agency, are reinitiating design concept and environmental studies regarding the proposed extension of the State Route (SR) 303 Loop (303L) from Interstate 10 (I-10) south to the proposed SR 30 freeway. The proposed action was identified as part of the Maricopa Association of Governments Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) that is funded by the voter-approved Proposition 400 (2004). The original SR 303L study began in 2006 with an agency scoping meeting to identify issues or concerns to be considered in the development and evaluation of alternatives. A scoping letter to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) requesting comments and concerns was mailed on March 21, 2006. The USFWS replied on March 28, 2006, with no specific species concerns for the project. The USFWS also provided a consultation number (22410-2006-I-0339) for further communications on the project. The SR 303L study was placed on hold in 2009 due to uncertain funding levels for the RTP as well as questions concerning the location of a system interchange between SR 303L and SR 30.

Currently, funding has been identified for the design of the southern half of the I-10/SR 303L system interchange and for the extension of SR 303L, which will extend north-south through the study area between I-10 and Maricopa County Route 85 (MC 85), to SR 30, which will extend east-west south of MC 85 in the vicinity of Cotton Lane. The purpose of the project is to extend SR 303L south of I-10 and to provide a freeway connection to the proposed SR 30 freeway that is being planned to relieve traffic congestion on I-10. The proposed ultimate improvements include construction of directional ramps from I-10 to SR 303L, four general purpose lanes and a high-occupancy-vehicle lane in each direction for SR 303L between I-10 and SR 30, and a system interchange between SR 303L and SR 30 in the vicinity of Cotton Lane. The project is in the city of Goodyear and the town of Buckeye in Maricopa County, Arizona (Figure 1-Project location and Figure 2-Project vicinity). Adjacent lands are primarily agricultural and residential. The project is in Sections 1, 2, 11-15, 21-28, and 33-35 of Township 1 North, Range 2 West and in Sections 5 and 6 of Township 1 South, Range 2 West on the Perryville (1982), Arizona, US Geological Survey 7.5-minute topographic series map.

Mr. Spangle
December 20, 2012
303 MA 005 H6870 01L
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If you or others in your agency have specific concerns, suggestions, or recommendations regarding this project, such as information on wildlife movement, habitat issues, or seasonal concerns, please let us know.

Please identify any issues or concerns you have regarding this project by January 21, 2013, and contact Tricia Balluff via email at tballuff@ecoplanaz.com; by phone at 480.733.6666, ext. 118; by fax at 480.733.6661; or mail them to:

**Arizona Department of Transportation
c/o Tricia Balluff
EcoPlan Associates, Inc.
701 W. Southern Ave., Suite 203
Mesa, AZ 85210**

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,



Anthony Horne
Environmental Planner III
Environmental Planning Group

Enclosures: Figure 1 and Figure 2

c: Debra Bills, USFWS
Tricia Balluff, EcoPlan Associates, Inc.



Arizona Department of Transportation
Intermodal Transportation Division

206 South Seventeenth Avenue Phoenix, Arizona 85007-3213

Janice K. Brewer
Governor

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Director

December 20, 2012

Jennifer Toth
State Engineer

Ms. Debra Bills
Assistant Field Supervisor for Central Arizona
US Fish and Wildlife Service
2321 W. Royal Palm Road, Suite 103
Phoenix, AZ 85021

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303 MA 005 H6870 01L
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Ms. Bills
December 20, 2012
303 MA 005 H6870 01L
Page 2

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**Arizona Department of Transportation
c/o Tricia Balluff
EcoPlan Associates, Inc.
701 W. Southern Ave., Suite 203
Mesa, AZ 85210**

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,



Anthony Horne
Environmental Planner III
Environmental Planning Group

Enclosures: Figure 1 and Figure 2

c: Steve Spangle, USFWS
Tricia Balluff, EcoPlan Associates, Inc.