



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: ILEC Route
Project Type: COMMUNICATIONS, BURIED LINES/CABLES, BURIED LINES, NEW
Latitude/Longitude (DMS): 33.123471 / -108.795162
County(s): CATRON; GRANT; HIDALGO
Project Description: Buried fiber optic cable.

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Project Organization: PRIVATE COMPANY OR CONSULTANT
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OVERALL STATUS

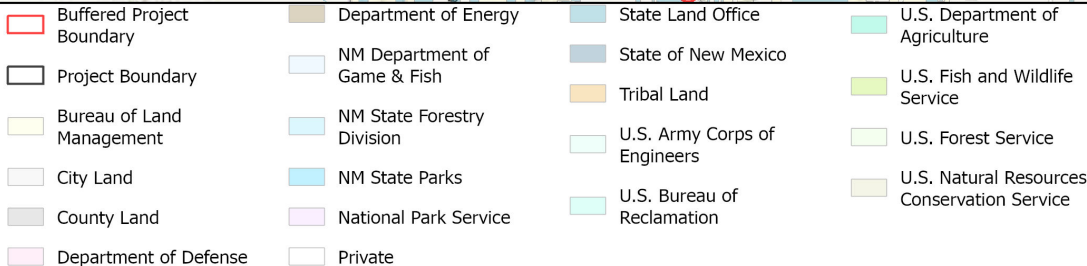
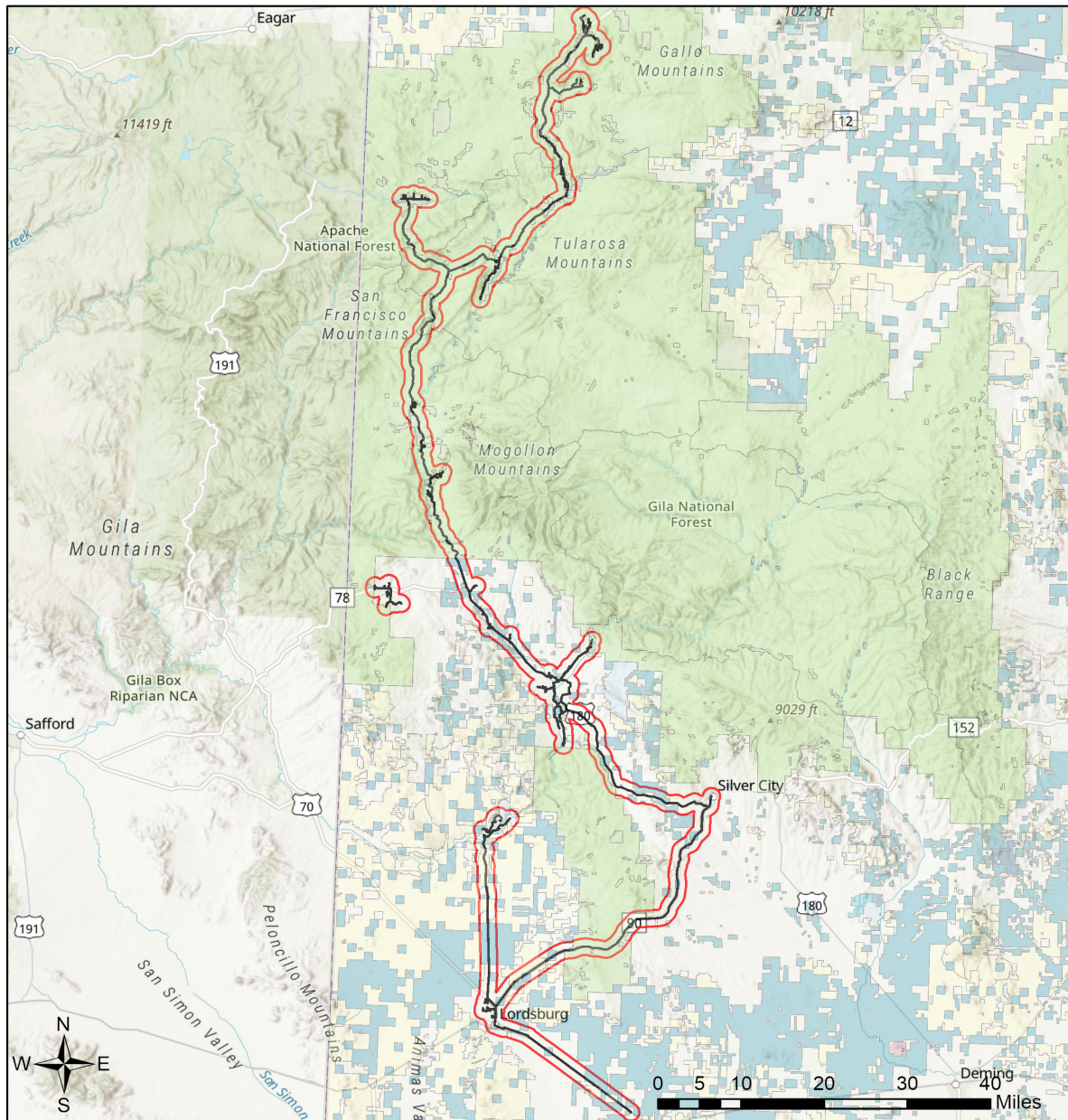
The information contained within this report comprises the recommendations of the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) for management and mitigation of proposed project impacts to wildlife and habitat resources; see the Project Recommendations section below for further details. No further consultation with the Department is required based on the project's location and, with implementation of mitigation measures described in the Project Recommendations section below, no adverse effects to wildlife or important habitats are anticipated. However, a Department biologist may be in touch within 30 days if they determine that further review is required.

About this report:

- This environmental review is based on the project description and location that was entered. The report must be updated if the project type, area, or operational components are modified.
- This is a preliminary environmental screening assessment and report. It is not a substitute for the potential wildlife knowledge gained by having a biologist conduct a field survey of the project area. Federal status and plant data are provided as a courtesy to users. The review is also not intended to replace consultation required under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), including impact analyses for federal resources from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) using their [Information for Planning and Consultation tool](#).
- The New Mexico Environmental Review Tool (ERT) utilizes species observation locations and species distribution models, both of which are subject to ongoing change and refinement. Inclusion or omission of a species within a report can not guarantee species presence or absence at a precise point location, as might be indicated through comprehensive biological surveys. Specific questions regarding the potential for adverse impacts to vulnerable wildlife populations or habitats, especially in areas with a limited history of biological surveys, may require further on-site assessments.
- The Department encourages use of the ERT to modify proposed projects for avoidance, minimization, or mitigation of wildlife impacts. However, the ERT is not intended to be used in a repeatedly iterative fashion to adjust project attributes until a previously determined recommendation is generated. The ERT serves to assess impacts once project details are developed. The [New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool](#) is the appropriate system for advising early-stage project planning and design to avoid areas of anticipated wildlife concerns and associated regulatory requirements.



ILEC Route



USGS, New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (NMDGF), Natural Heritage New Mexico (NHNM), and USDA Forest Service,

Compiled by Richard Norwood of NHNM over the period 2020 to 2021.

Sources: Esri, Airbus DS, USGS, NGA, NASA, CGIAR, N Robinson, NCEAS, NLS, OS, NMA, Geodastysreisen, Rijkswaterstaat, GSA, Geoland, FEMA, Intermap and the GIS user community



Special Status Animal Species within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI
Arizona Toad	Anaxyrus microscaphus			SGCN
Mountain Treefrog	Hyla wrightorum			SGCN
Chiricahua Leopard Frog	Lithobates chiricahuensis	Threatened		SGCN
Northern Leopard Frog	Lithobates pipiens			SGCN
Lowland Leopard Frog	Lithobates yavapaiensis		E	SGCN
Eared Grebe	Podiceps nigricollis			SGCN
Neotropic Cormorant	Phalacrocorax brasilianus		T	SGCN
American Bittern	Botaurus lentiginosus			SGCN
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus		T	SGCN
Northern Goshawk	Accipiter gentilis			SGCN
Common Black-Hawk	Buteogallus anthracinus		T	SGCN
Common Black-hawk	Buteogallus anthracinus		T	SGCN
Zone-Tailed Hawk	Buteo albonotatus			SGCN
Ferruginous Hawk	Buteo regalis			SGCN
Golden Eagle	Aquila chrysaetos			SGCN
Aplomado Falcon	Falco femoralis		E	SGCN
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus		T	SGCN
Montezuma Quail	Cyrtonyx montezumae			SGCN
Mountain Plover	Charadrius montanus			SGCN
Long-Billed Curlew	Numenius americanus			SGCN
Common Ground-Dove	Columbina passerina		E	SGCN
Yellow-Billed Cuckoo	Coccyzus americanus	Threatened		SGCN
Yellow-billed Cuckoo	Coccyzus americanus	LT		SGCN
Whiskered Screech-owl	Megascops trichopsis		T	SGCN
Elf Owl	Micrathene whitneyi			SGCN
Mexican Spotted Owl	Strix occidentalis lucida	Threatened		SGCN
Violet-crowned Hummingbird	Amazilia violiceps		T	SGCN
Blue-Throated Hummingbird	Lampornis clemenciae			SGCN
Lucifer Hummingbird	Calothorax lucifer		T	SGCN
Costa's Hummingbird	Calypte costae		T	SGCN
Elegant Trogon	Trogon elegans		E	SGCN
Lewis's Woodpecker	Melanerpes lewis			SGCN
Gila Woodpecker	Melanerpes uropygialis		T	SGCN
Williamson's Sapsucker	Sphyrapicus thyroideus			SGCN
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Contopus cooperi			SGCN
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher	Empidonax traillii extimus	Endangered		SGCN
Thick-billed Kingbird	Tyrannus crassirostris		E	SGCN
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia			SGCN



Special Status Animal Species within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI
Pinyon Jay	Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus			SGCN
Clark's Nutcracker	Nucifraga columbiana			SGCN
Juniper Titmouse	Baeolophus ridgwayi			SGCN
Pygmy Nuthatch	Sitta pygmaea			SGCN
Marsh Wren	Cistothorus palustris			SGCN
Western Bluebird	Sialia mexicana			SGCN
Sage Thrasher	Oreoscoptes montanus			SGCN
Bendire's Thrasher	Toxostoma bendirei			SGCN
Crissal Thrasher	Toxostoma crissale			SGCN
Sprague's Pipit	Anthus spragueii			SGCN
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus			SGCN
Bell's Vireo	Vireo bellii		T	SGCN
Gray Vireo	Vireo vicinior		T	SGCN
Black-Throated Gray Warbler	Setophaga nigrescens			SGCN
Red-faced Warbler	Cardellina rubrifrons			SGCN
Painted Redstart	Myioborus pictus			SGCN
Painted Bunting	Passerina ciris			SGCN
Abert's Towhee	Melospiza aberti		T	SGCN
Black-Chinned Sparrow	Spizella atrogularis			SGCN
Baird's Sparrow	Ammodramus bairdii		T	SGCN
Lincoln's Sparrow	Melospiza lincolnii			SGCN
Chestnut-Collared Longspur	Calcarius ornatus			SGCN
Evening Grosbeak	Coccothraustes vespertinus			SGCN
Rainbow Trout	Oncorhynchus mykiss			SERI
Gila Trout	Oncorhynchus gilae	LT	T	SGCN
Gila Trout	Oncorhynchus gilae	LT	T	SGCN
Roundtail Chub	Gila robusta		E	SGCN
Gila Chub	Gila intermedia	LE	E	SGCN
Spikedace	Meda fulgida	Endangered		SGCN
Speckled Dace	Rhinichthys osculus			SGCN
Loach Minnow	Rhinichthys cobitis	Endangered		SGCN
Longfin Dace	Agosia chrysogaster			SGCN
Desert Sucker	Catostomus clarkii			SGCN
Sonora Sucker	Catostomus insignis			SGCN
Rio Grande Sucker	Catostomus plebeius			SGCN
Channel Catfish	Ictalurus punctatus			SGCN
Flathead Catfish	Pylodictis olivaris			SGCN
Gila Topminnow	Poeciliopsis occidentalis	LE	T	SGCN



Special Status Animal Species within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI
Smallmouth Bass	Micropterus dolomieu			SERI
Largemouth Bass	Micropterus salmoides			SERI
Arizona Shrew	Sorex arizonae		E	SGCN
Mexican Long-tongued Bat	Choeronycteris mexicana			SGCN
Mexican Long-nosed Bat	Leptonycteris nivalis	LE	E	SGCN
Lesser Long-Nosed Bat	Leptonycteris yerbabuenae	LE	T	SGCN
Cave Myotis	Myotis velifer			SGCN
Southwestern Myotis	Myotis auriculus			SGCN
Occult Myotis	Myotis occultus			SGCN
Eastern Red Bat	Lasiurus borealis			SGCN
Western Yellow Bat	Lasiurus xanthinus		T	SGCN
Spotted Bat	Euderma maculatum		T	SGCN
Allen's Big-Eared Bat	Idionycteris phyllotis			SGCN
Big Free-Tailed Bat	Nyctinomops macrotis			SGCN
White-sided Jackrabbit	Lepus callotis		T	SGCN
Black-Tailed Prairie Dog	Cynomys ludovicianus			SGCN
Gunnison's Prairie Dog	Cynomys gunnisoni			SGCN
Arizona Gray Squirrel	Sciurus arizonensis			SGCN
Bailey's Pocket Mouse	Chaetodipus baileyi			SGCN
Northern Pygmy Mouse	Baiomys taylori			SGCN
Mexican Wolf	Canis lupus baileyi	LE,XN	E	SGCN
White-Nosed Coati	Nasua narica			SGCN
Hooded Skunk	Mephitis macroura			SGCN
Jaguar	Panthera onca	LE		SGCN
Collared Peccary	Pecari tajacu			SGCN
Red-Eared Slider	Trachemys scripta			SGCN
Sonoran Mud Turtle	Kinosternon sonoriense			SGCN
Gila Monster	Heloderma suspectum		E	SGCN
Southwestern Fence Lizard	Sceloporus cowlesi			SGCN
Sonoran Spotted Whiptail	Aspidoscelis sonorae			SGCN
Chihuahua Nightsnake	Hypsiglena jani			SGCN
Sonoran Mountain Kingsnake	Lampropeltis pyromelana			SGCN
Sonoran Whipsnake	Coluber bilineatus			SGCN
Mexican Gartersnake	Thamnophis eques	LT	E	SGCN
Northern Mexican Garter Snake	Thamnophis eques megalops	Threatened		SGCN
Narrow-headed Gartersnake	Thamnophis rufipunctatus	LT	T	SGCN
Narrowhead Garter Snake	Thamnophis rufipunctatus	Threatened		SGCN
Green Ratsnake	Senticolis triaspis		T	SGCN



Special Status Animal Species within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI
Arizona Coral Snake	Micruroides euryxanthus			SGCN
White-Belted Ringtail	Erpetogomphus compositus			SGCN
Serpent Ringtail	Erpetogomphus lampropeltis natrix			SGCN
Gray Sanddragon	Progomphus borealis			SGCN
Blue-Eyed Darner	Rhionaeschna multicolor			SGCN
Checkered Setwing	Dythemis fugax			SGCN
Western Pondhawk	Erythemis collocata			SGCN
Widow Skimmer	Libellula luctuosa			SGCN
Hoary Skimmer	Libellula nodisticta			SGCN
Flame Skimmer	Libellula saturata			SGCN
Common Whitetail	Plathemis lydia			SGCN
Desert Whitetail	Plathemis subornata			SGCN
Blue Dasher	Pachydiplax longipennis			SGCN
Red Rock Skimmer	Paltothemis lineatipes			SGCN
Eastern Amberwing	Perithemis tenera			SGCN
Variegated Meadowhawk	Sympetrum corruptum			SGCN
Black Saddlebags	Tramea lacerata			SGCN
American Rubyspot	Hetaerina americana			SGCN
Springwater Dancer	Argia plana			SGCN
Sooty Dancer	Argia lugens			SGCN
Aztec Dancer	Argia nahuana			SGCN
Familiar Bluet	Enallagma civile			SGCN
Northern Bluet	Enallagma annexum			SGCN
Arroyo Bluet	Enallagma praevarum			SGCN
Pacific Forktail	Ischnura cervula			SGCN
Plains Forktail	Ischnura damula			SGCN
Mexican Forktail	Ischnura demorsa			SGCN
Black-Fronted Forktail	Ischnura denticollis			SGCN
Great Spreadwing	Archilestes grandis			SGCN
Pale-Faced Clubskimmer	Brechmorhoga mendax			SGCN
Painted Damselfly	Hesperagrion heterodoxum			SGCN
Desert Firetail	Telebasis salva			SGCN

ESA = Endangered Species Act, WCA = Wildlife Conservation Act, SGCN = Species of Greatest Conservation Need, SERI = Species of Economic and Recreational Importance, E = Endangered, T = Threatened

Special Status Plant Species within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMAC	NMRPCS
Hart's Groundsel	Packera hartiana			
Goodding Bladderpod	Physaria gooddingii			SS



Special Status Plant Species within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMAC	NMRPCS
Green-Flower Nipple-Cactus	Mammillaria viridiflora			
Wilcox's Fishhook Cactus	Mammillaria wrightii var. wilcoxii			
Night-Blooming Cereus	Peniocereus greggii var. greggii		E	SS
Villous Groundcover Milkvetch	Astragalus humistratus var. crispulus			SS
Mogollon Clover	Trifolium longipes var. neurophyllum			SS
Chiricahua Dock	Rumex orthoneurus			

NMAC = New Mexico Administrative Code, NMRPCS = [New Mexico Rare Plant Conservation Strategy](#), SS = NM Rare Plant Conservation Strategy Species



Project Recommendations

Open trenches excavated for underground water or oil and gas pipelines, powerlines, or fiber optic communication lines can unintentionally entrap and cause the unnecessary mortality of amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals, and can cause injury to large mammals. Trapped animals can die from exposure, starvation, crushing from pipe-laying, entombment from trenching backfilling, drowning, and predation. This unnecessary wildlife mortality can be avoided by implementing conservation measures including: concurrent trenching, pipe-laying, and backfilling operations to minimize the amount of trench left open overnight or longer; construction escape ramps; and employing biological monitors to remove trapped animals. Periods of highest activity for amphibians and reptiles vulnerable to entrapment include summer months and wet weather, and they can be active both day and night. Small mammals subject to entrapment are active year-round and generally most active at night.

Implementing the general trenching conservation measures outlined in the Department's [Trenching Project Guidelines](#) will help minimize unnecessary mortality of wildlife. Best management practices should include, at minimum, the following mitigation measures.

- Whenever possible, locate trenching activities within previously disturbed areas, such as existing road or pipeline right-of-ways. To the extent possible, avoid trenching in undisturbed habitat.
- Trench during the cooler months (October – March).
- Utilize concurrent trenching, pipe- or cable-laying, and backfilling. Keep trenching, pipe- or cable-laying, and backfilling crews as close together as possible to minimize the amount of open trench at any given time. When trenching activities are temporarily halted (e.g., overnight, weekends, holidays, weather shutdowns), protect wildlife from accessing any open trench between digging and backfilling operations by using one or more of the methods described below.
- Avoid leaving trenches open overnight. When trenches cannot be backfilled immediately, escape ramps should be constructed at least every 90 meters and preferably 30 meters. Escape ramps can be constructed parallel or perpendicular to the existing trench. The escape ramp slope should be less than 45 degrees (1:1). If pipe or cable has been installed but backfilling has not occurred, escape ramps may need to be constructed on both sides of the trench, since, unless the pipe is elevated enough to allow animals to move underneath it, the pipe or cable may block access of amphibians, reptiles, and small mammals to the ramps if only constructed on one side.
- Trenches that have been left open overnight should be inspected the following day by a qualified biological monitor and trapped animals removed as soon as possible, especially where state- or federally-listed threatened or endangered amphibians, reptiles, or small mammals occur. Untrained personnel should not attempt to remove trapped wildlife because of the potential to injure animals and the possibility of injury from venomous snakes. Required tools for removal will include snake tongs for removing snakes and a dip net for capturing and removing amphibians and small mammals. Many animals trapped in a trench will burrow under loose soil. To the extent possible, the biological monitor should disturb loose soil in the trench to uncover and remove trapped animals. Animals should be relocated at least 50 meters away from the open trench in undisturbed habitat.
- When pipe has been laid in the trench, end caps should be placed on the open end(s) of the pipe to preclude animals from entering. Pipe staged outside the trench should be capped until placed in the trench or checked for wildlife before being placed into the trench.
- Most wildlife can be protected by constructing silt fence completely around the open trench. Silt fence should be supported from sagging by t-posts, rebar, or stakes and buried at the base to preclude animals from moving below the fence. If construction of a silt fence is a required best management practice for erosion control, then, to preclude the need for a biological monitor, escape ramps, and concurrent backfilling, the guidelines for silt fence installation and maintenance in the [Trenching Project Guidelines](#) should be followed.



Your proposed project activities may require a custom review for assessment of potential effects to wildlife. See the "OVERALL STATUS" section above to determine the likelihood that your project will be reviewed further based on its location. A Department biologist will confirm whether any additional conservation measures are needed. You should expect to receive any additional project recommendations within 30 days of your project submission. If the "OVERALL STATUS" section indicates that no further consultation with the Department is required based on its location, then you will only receive additional project feedback from the Department if a biologist deems it necessary.

The proposed project occurs near an important bat area. This area may contain important bat roosting resources, such as caves or mines, that potentially could be affected by certain project activities. Follow the guidelines below to minimize disturbance to roosting bats.

- Avoid use of pesticides, firearms, open-flame torches, or heavy smoke-producing equipment, especially from April through September.
- If artificial lighting is needed, use only light sources powered by batteries, or cyalume glow/light sticks. Keep the site clean by picking up refuse or materials from project lighting or operations whenever they are shut down.
- For any surface disturbing activities, the project footprint (including a 350 foot buffer) should avoid potential roost sites such as caves or mines, especially from April through July. Tree clearing activities and prescribed burns should include a minimum 0.5 mile buffer from any such features.
- If caves, mines, bridges, or other man-made structure suitable as potential bat roosts are encountered within the project area, they should not be entered during any time of year, and no roosting or hibernating bats should be contacted or disturbed. Report any dead or injured bats to the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish, who can facilitate contacts with other appropriate personnel.

The proposed project occurs within or near a riparian area. Because riparian areas are important wildlife habitats, the project footprint should avoid removing any riparian vegetation or creating ground disturbance either directly within or affecting the riparian area, unless the project is intended to restore riparian habitat through non-native plant removal and replanting with native species. If your project involves removal of non-native riparian trees or planting of native riparian vegetation, please refer to the Department's habitat handbook guideline for [Restoration and Management of Native and Non-native Trees in Southwestern Riparian Ecosystems](#).

Your proposed project occurs within an area where springs or other important natural water features occur. This may result in the presence of a high use area for wildlife relative to the surrounding landscape. To ensure continued function of these important wildlife habitats, your project should consider measures to avoid the following.

- Altering surface or groundwater flow or hydrology,
- Disturbance to soil that modifies geomorphic properties or facilitates invasion of non-native vegetation.
- Affecting local surface or groundwater quality.
- Creating disturbance to wildlife utilizing these water features. Disturbance to wildlife can be reduced through practices including clustering infrastructure and activity wherever possible, avoiding large visual obstructions around water features, and limiting nighttime project operations or activities.

Department biologists are available for site-specific consultation regarding measures to assist with management and conservation of these habitat resources.



Your project occurs within important habitats for wildlife, which could include fawning/calving or wintering areas for species such as deer and elk, or high wildlife movement and activity areas. Management recommendations within these areas may include the following.

- Restrictions on noise-generating activities between December 1 and April 15. These activities would include oil and gas well pad development and operation that exposes wildlife to noises loud noises (at or above 48.6 dB(A) Leq at 400 feet in any direction from the source) from drilling, compressors, and pumping stations.
- Modifying fences along high use areas to make them wildlife friendly and facilitate large animal movement.
- Taking mitigation actions to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions at high risk locations.

Disclaimers regarding recommendations:

- The Department provides technical guidance to support the persistence of all protected species of native fish and wildlife, including game and nongame wildlife species. Species listed within this report include those that have been documented to occur within the project area, and others that may not have been documented but are projected to occur within the project vicinity.
- Recommendations are provided by the Department under the authority of § 17-1-5.1 New Mexico Statutes Annotated 1978, to provide "communication and consultation with federal and other state agencies, local governments and communities, private organizations and affected interests responsible for habitat, wilderness, recreation, water quality and environmental protection to ensure comprehensive conservation services for hunters, anglers and nonconsumptive wildlife users".
- The Department has no authority for management of plants or Important Plant Areas. The [New Mexico Endangered Plant Program](#), under the Energy, Minerals, and Natural Resources Department's Forestry Division, identifies and develops conservation measures necessary to ensure the survival of plant species within New Mexico. Plant status information is provided within this report as a courtesy to users. Recommendations provided within the ERT may not be sufficient to preclude impacts to rare or sensitive plants, unless conservation measures are identified in coordination with the Endangered Plant Program.
- Additional coordination may also be necessary under the federal ESA or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Further site-specific recommendations may be proposed during ESA and/or NEPA analyses, or through coordination with affected federal agencies.