



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Valdez Unit 3
Project Type: FOREST MANAGEMENT, FUELWOOD, SMALL WOOD PRODUCTS
Latitude/Longitude (DMS): 36.721750 / -104.909150
County(s): COLFAX
Project Description: Year-round firewood harvesting activities using forestry tools including motorsaws and transportation of wood products off-site for firewood cutting and splitting.

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Project Organization:
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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.

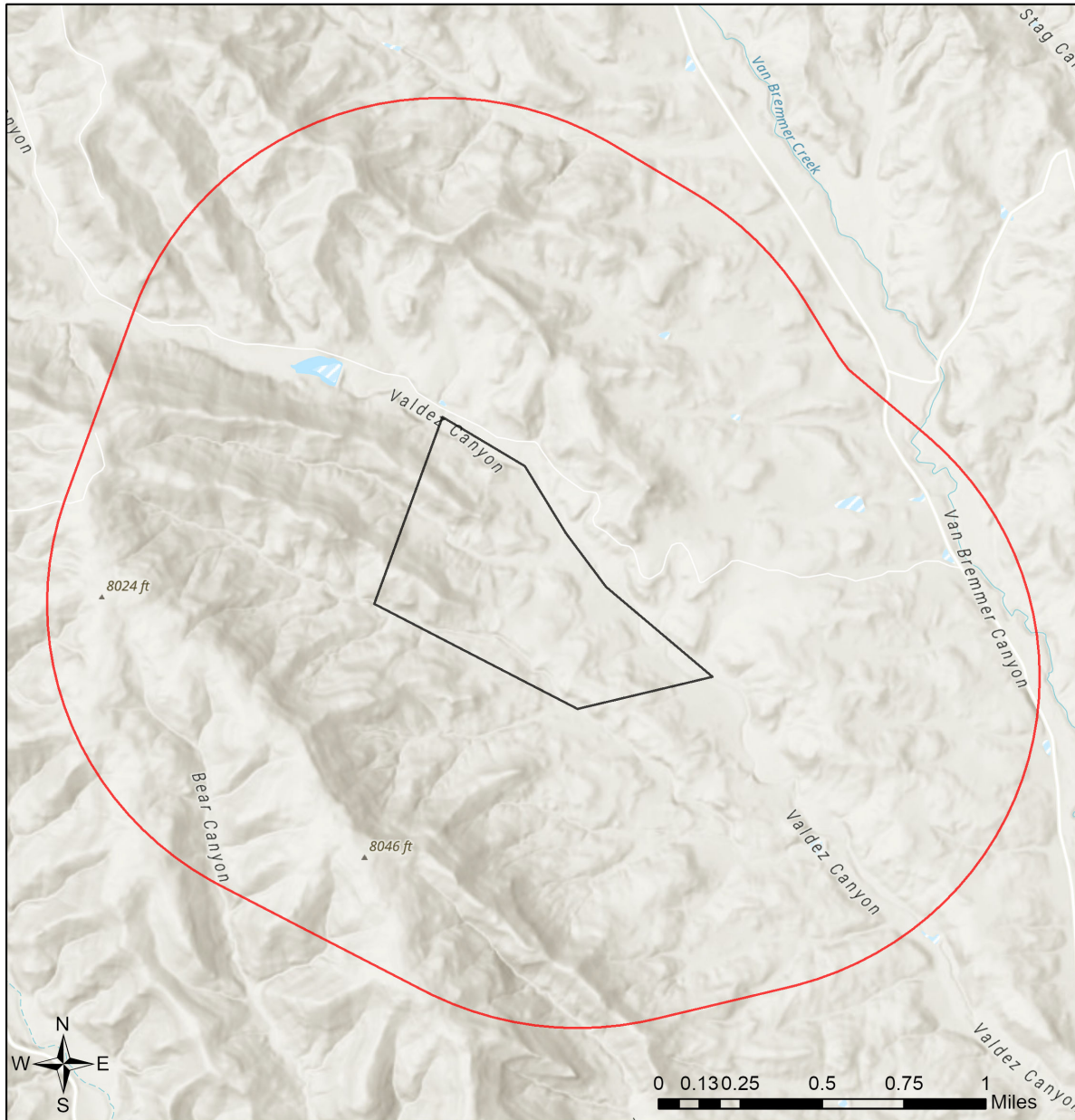
About this report:

- 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 habitat suitability models, both of which are subject to ongoing change and refinement. Inclusion or omission of a species within a report cannot guarantee species presence or absence within your project area. To determine occurrence of any species listed in this report, or other wildlife that may be present within your project area, onsite surveys conducted by a qualified biologist during appropriate, species-specific survey timelines may be necessary.
- 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.





Valdez Unit 3



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|---------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|---|
| Buffered Project Boundary | Department of Energy | State Land Office | U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| Project Boundary | NM Department of Game & Fish | State of New Mexico | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| Bureau of Land Management | NM State Forestry Division | Tribal Land | U.S. Forest Service |
| City Land | NM State Parks | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | U.S. Natural Resources Conservation Service |
| County Land | National Park Service | U.S. Bureau of Reclamation | |
| Department of Defense | Private | | |

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 Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI
Boreal Chorus Frog	Pseudacris maculata			SGCN
Northern Leopard Frog	Lithobates pipiens			SGCN
Clark's Grebe	Aechmophorus clarkii			SGCN
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus		T	SGCN
Mountain Plover	Charadrius montanus			SGCN
Long-billed Curlew	Numenius americanus			SGCN
Western Burrowing Owl	Athene cunicularia hypugaea			SGCN
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor			SGCN
Lewis's Woodpecker	Melanerpes lewis			SGCN
Williamson's Sapsucker	Sphyrapicus thyroideus			SGCN
Olive-sided Flycatcher	Contopus cooperi			SGCN
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia			SGCN
Pinyon Jay	Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus			SGCN
Clark's Nutcracker	Nucifraga columbiana			SGCN
Juniper Titmouse	Baeolophus ridgwayi			SGCN
Pygmy Nuthatch	Sitta pygmaea			SGCN
Western Bluebird	Sialia mexicana			SGCN
Mountain Bluebird	Sialia currucoides			SGCN
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus			SGCN
Virginia's Warbler	Oreothlypis virginiae			SGCN
Grace's Warbler	Setophaga graciae			SGCN
Vesper Sparrow	Pooecetes gramineus			SGCN
Cassin's Finch	Haemorhous cassinii			SGCN
Evening Grosbeak	Coccothraustes vespertinus			SGCN
Least Shrew	Cryptotis parva		T	SGCN
Pale Townsend's Big-Eared Bat	Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens			SGCN
American Pika	Ochotona princeps			SGCN
Gunnison's Prairie Dog	Cynomys gunnisoni			SGCN
Meadow Jumping Mouse	Zapus hudsonius	LE	E	SGCN
Western Ribbon Snake	Thamnophis proximus		T	SGCN

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



Project Recommendations

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.

All migratory birds are protected against direct take under the federal [Migratory Bird Treaty Act](#) (16 U.S.C. Sections 703-712), and hawks, falcons, vultures, owls, songbirds, and other insect-eating birds are protected under New Mexico State Statutes (17-2-13 and 17-2-14 NMSA), unless permitted by the applicable regulatory agency. To minimize the likelihood of adverse impacts to migratory birds, nests, eggs, or nestlings, the Department recommends that ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities be conducted outside of the primary migratory bird breeding season of April 15-September 1. Breeding season may begin earlier for raptors or when working in low-elevation habitats such as deserts. If ground disturbing and clearing activities must be conducted during the breeding season, the area should be surveyed for active nest sites (with birds or eggs present in the nesting territory) and avoid disturbing active nests until young have fledged. For active nests, establish adequate buffer zones to minimize disturbance to nesting birds. Buffer distances should be at least 100 feet from songbird and raven nests; 0.25 miles from most raptor nests; and 0.5 miles for ferruginous hawk, golden eagle, peregrine falcon, and prairie falcon nests. Active nest sites in trees or shrubs that must be removed should be mitigated by qualified biologists or wildlife rehabilitators. Department biologists are available to consult on nest site mitigation and can facilitate contact with qualified personnel.

The list of [New Mexico Species of Greatest Conservation Need](#) (see link, page 14, table 5) and the federal list of [Birds of Conservation Concern](#) should be reviewed to fully evaluate potential effects to migratory birds from your proposed project. Federal agencies are also required under Executive Order 13186 to implement standards and practices that lessen the amount of unintentional take attributable to agency actions. These conservation measures are strongly recommended to ensure persistence of migratory bird species whose populations are small and/or declining within New Mexico.

Prairie dog colonies may occur within the vicinity of your project area. Both black-tailed prairie dogs (*Cynomys ludovicianus*) and Gunnison's prairie dogs (*Cynomys gunnisoni*) are designated as New Mexico Species of Greatest Conservation Need, and their colonies provide important habitat for other grassland wildlife. Wherever possible, occupied prairie dog colonies should be left undisturbed, and all project activities should be directed off the colony. Any burrows that are located on the project site should be surveyed by a qualified biologist to determine whether burrows are active or inactive and whether burrowing owls may be utilizing the site. Colonies within the range of the black-tailed prairie dog can be surveyed by a qualified biologist diurnally, year-round using binoculars. Colonies within the range of the Gunnison's prairie dog can be surveyed by a qualified biologist diurnally, using binoculars during the warmer months from April through October and by searching for fairly fresh scat and lack of cobwebs or debris at the mouths of burrows during the cold months (November through March). If ground-disturbing activities cannot be relocated off the prairie dog colony, or if project activities involve control of prairie dogs, the Department recommends live-trapping and relocation of prairie dogs. The Department can provide recommendations regarding suitability of potential translocation areas and procedures.



Your project could affect important components of wildlife habitat, including fawning/calving or wintering areas for species such as deer and elk, or general high wildlife movement and activity areas for large mammals. Mitigation measures should focus on high use sites and movement areas based on collar data and expert knowledge of Department of Game and Fish and land management agency personnel. Management recommendations within these areas may include the following.

- Restrictions on noise-generating activities during wintering and calving/fawning seasons, specific timing of which may vary throughout the state. These activities would include oil and gas well pad development and operations that expose wildlife to loud noises from drilling, compressors, and pumping stations within 400 feet of the source.
- Modifying fences along high use areas to make them wildlife friendly and facilitate large animal movement.

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 and/or consultation may also be necessary under the federal ESA or National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). Further site-specific mitigation recommendations may be proposed during ESA consultation and/or NEPA analyses or through coordination with affected federal agencies.