



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: RAML - BHP

Project Type: MINING, Mine Reclamation

Latitude/Longitude (DMS): 35.400625 / -107.825527

County(s): MCKINLEY

Project Description: Project Overview: The study aims to assess the habitat of an old mining area located in northwest New Mexico, specifically in McKinley County. This assessment will provide a comprehensive understanding of the local wildlife, plant species, habitat types, and ecoregions. The findings will support the board of trustees in making informed decisions regarding the restoration of the project area and its surroundings. Wildlife and Plants: McKinley County is home to a diverse range of wildlife and plant species. Notable wildlife includes mule deer, elk, black bears, and various bird species such as the golden eagle and peregrine falcon 1. The area also hosts several endangered plant species, including Zuni fleabane (*Erigeron rhizomatus*) and Parish's alkali grass (*Puccinellia parishii*) 2. The study will document these species and their habitats to ensure their protection during restoration efforts. Habitat Types and Ecoregions: The project area encompasses several habitat types and ecoregions. Key habitats include Great Basin Desert Scrub, characterized by species such as four-wing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) and rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosus*) 2. The ecoregions in McKinley County include the Colorado Plateau and the Chihuahuan Desert, each with unique ecological characteristics 3. Understanding these habitats and ecoregions will be crucial for effective restoration planning. Restoration Goals: The primary goal of the restoration project is to rehabilitate the old mining area to support native wildlife and plant species. This involves soil stabilization, re-vegetation with native plants, and the creation of habitats that promote biodiversity 4 5. The study will provide detailed recommendations on these restoration activities, ensuring they align with ecological principles and community needs. Impact on Surrounding Areas: Restoring the project area will have positive ripple effects on the surrounding regions. Improved habitats will support local wildlife, enhance water quality, and contribute to the overall ecological health of McKinley County 6. The study will also explore opportunities for community involvement and education, fostering a sense of stewardship among local residents.

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Project Organization:

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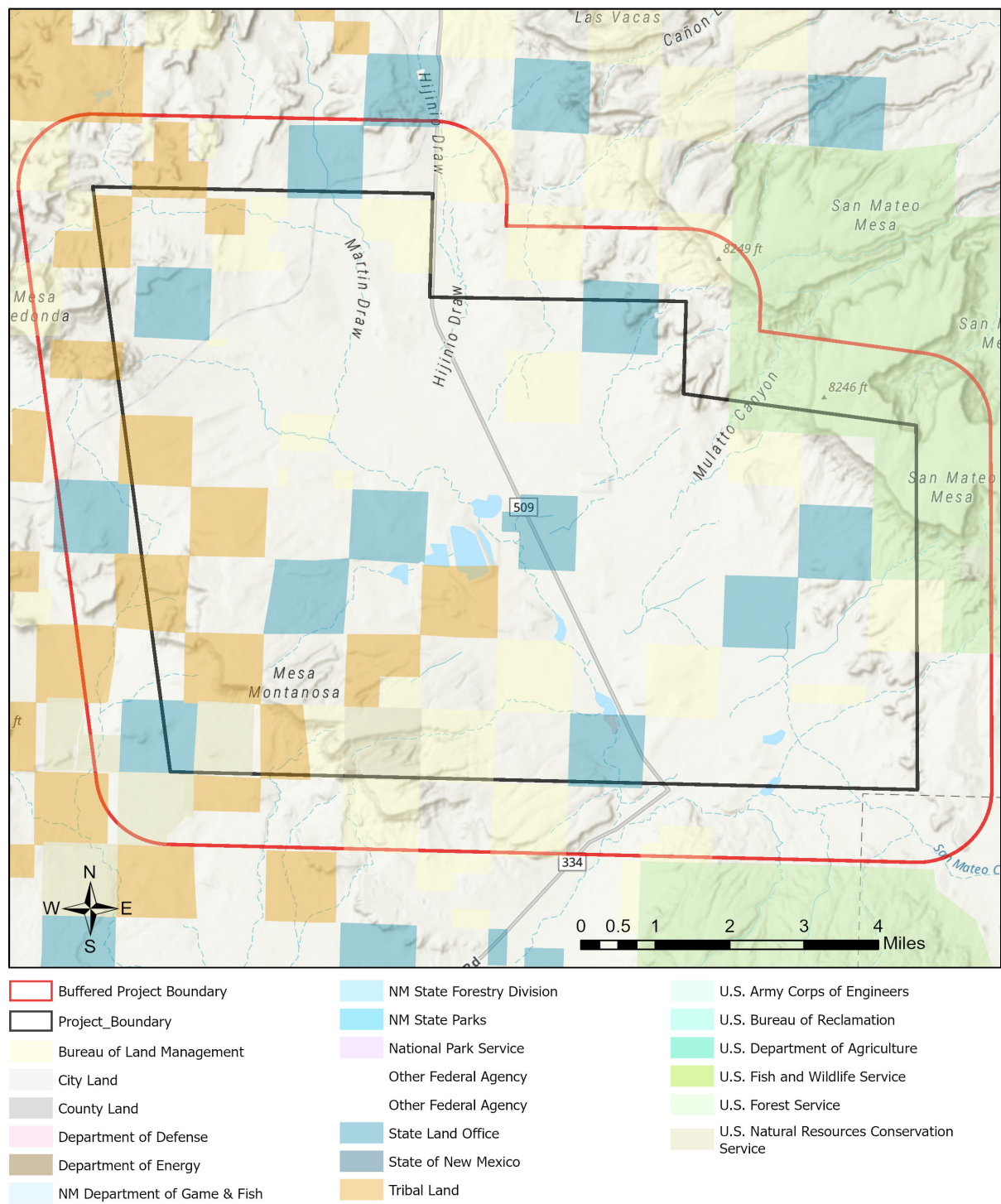
OVERALL STATUS

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](#).
- This report contains information on wildlife species protected under the ESA and the [Wildlife Conservation Act \(WCA\)](#), [Species of Greatest Conservation Need \(SGCN\)](#), and Species of Economic and Recreational Importance (SERI). Species listed under the ESA are protected from take at the federal level and under the WCA are protected from take at the state level. SGCN are identified in the [State Wildlife Action Plan \(SWAP\) for New Mexico](#); all of these species are considered to be of conservation concern but not all of them are protected from take at the state or federal level. The harvest of all SERI is regulated at the state level. The Department has no authority to designate critical habitat for species listed under the WCA; only the USFWS can designate critical habitat for species listed under the ESA.
- 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](#), the data layers from which are included in the ERT, is the appropriate system for advising early-stage project planning and design to avoid areas of anticipated wildlife concerns and associated regulatory requirements.

RAML - BHP



NHNM, USGS, USFS, US Census Bureau, NMDGF
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, Bureau of Land Management, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS

Special Status Animal Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI	USFS	USFS SCC	BLM
Mountain Treefrog	Hyla wrightorum			SGCN			
Boreal Chorus Frog	Pseudacris maculata			SGCN			
Northern Leopard Frog	Lithobates pipiens			SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Eared Grebe	Podiceps nigricollis			SGCN			
Clark's Grebe	Aechmophorus clarkii			SGCN			
American Bittern	Botaurus lentiginosus			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Bald Eagle	Haliaeetus leucocephalus		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus		T	SGCN			BLM WATCH
Mountain Plover	Charadrius montanus			SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM WATCH
Flammulated Owl	Otus flammeolus			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Western Burrowing Owl	Athene cunicularia hypugaea			SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor			SGCN			
Black Swift	Cypseloides niger			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	
Lewis's Woodpecker	Melanerpes lewis			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Williamson's Sapsucker	Sphyrapicus thyroideus			SGCN			
Olive-Sided Flycatcher	Contopus cooperi			SGCN			
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia			SGCN			
Pinyon Jay	Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Clark's Nutcracker	Nucifraga columbiana			SGCN			
Juniper Titmouse	Baeolophus ridgwayi			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Pygmy Nuthatch	Sitta pygmaea			SGCN			
Western Bluebird	Sialia mexicana			SGCN			
Mountain Bluebird	Sialia currucoides			SGCN			

Special Status Animal Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMDGF (WCA)	NMDGF SGCN/SERI	USFS	USFS SCC	BLM
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Gray Vireo	Vireo vicinior		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Virginia's Warbler	Leiothlypis virginiae			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Black-Throated Gray Warbler	Setophaga nigrescens			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Grace's Warbler	Setophaga graciae			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Black-Chinned Sparrow	Spizella atrogularis			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Vesper Sparrow	Poocetes gramineus			SGCN			
Chestnut-Collared Longspur	Calcarius ornatus			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Cassin's Finch	Haemorhous cassinii			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Evening Grosbeak	Coccothraustes vespertinus			SGCN			
Spotted Bat	Euderma maculatum		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Pale Townsend's Big-Eared Bat	Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens			SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Gunnison's Prairie Dog	Cynomys gunnisoni			SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Black Bear	Ursus americanus			SGCN			
Mountain Lion	Puma concolor			SGCN			
Elk	Cervus canadensis			SGCN			
Mule Deer	Odocoileus hemionus			SGCN			

Common Name hyperlink takes you to species account in [bison-m.org](https://www.bison-m.org/); Scientific Name hyperlink takes you to information in [NatureServe Explorer](https://www.natureserve.org/explorer/); ESA = Endangered Species Act, C = Candidate, LE = Listed Endangered, LT = Listed Threatened, XN = Non-essential Experimental Population, for other ESA codes see this [website](#); WCA = Wildlife Conservation Act, E = Endangered, T = Threatened; SERI = Species of Economic and Recreational Importance; SGCN = Species of Greatest Conservation Need; USFS = U.S. Forest Service, Sensitive Species = A species likely to occur on USFS lands that is of concern for a potential reduction in population viability; SCC = Species of Conservation Concern; BLM = Bureau of Land Management, BLM SENSITIVE = A species that occurs on BLM lands and whose viability is at risk, BLM WATCH = Species that may be added to the sensitive species list in future pending new information regarding species status.

Special Status Plant Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

Common Name	Scientific Name	USFWS (ESA)	NMAC	NMRPCS	USFS	USFS SCC	BLM
Chaco Milkvetch	Astragalus micromerius			SS	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH

NMAC = New Mexico Administrative Code, E = Endangered; NMRPCS = [New Mexico Rare Plant Conservation Strategy](#), SS = NM Rare Plant Conservation Strategy Species; USFS = U.S. Forest Service, Sensitive Species = A species likely to occur on USFS lands that is of concern for a potential reduction in population viability; SCC = Species of Conservation Concern; BLM = Bureau of Land Management, BLM SENSITIVE = A species that occurs on BLM lands and whose viability is at risk, BLM WATCH = Species that may be added to the sensitive species list in future pending new information regarding species status.

Project Recommendations

Burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) may occur within your project area. Burrowing owls are protected from take by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and under New Mexico state statute. Before any ground disturbing activities occur, the Department recommends that a preliminary burrowing owl survey be conducted by a qualified biologist using the Department's [Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol](#). Should burrowing owls be documented in the project area, please contact the Department or USFWS for further recommendations regarding relocation or avoidance of impacts.

Your project area intersects an Important Plant Area (IPA) that contains one or more species of plants listed as threatened or endangered by the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department (EMNRD) under New Mexico Statutes Annotated (NMSA) 75-6-1 or by the USFWS under the federal ESA. Although IPAs have no legal designation, they have been identified as areas that support either a high diversity of sensitive plant species or contain the last remaining locations of New Mexico's most endangered plants. The Department recommends that you consult with EMNRD's [Endangered Plant Program Coordinator](#) regarding any state-listed plants and the USFWS's [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPAC\)](#) system for any federally-listed plants and reaching out to the appropriate federal species lead(s) with the [New Mexico Ecological Services Office of USFWS](#). The Department does not have any authority to designate or advise on state- or federally-listed plants.

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 SGCN, 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.

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.