



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Melrose
Project Type: ENDANGERED SPECIES
Latitude/Longitude (DMS): 34.310548 / -103.639648
County(s): CURRY
Project Description: The project is a potential solar farm in Curry/Roosevelt Counties in New Mexico. T&E and SOC surveys in the search area. Wetland work will also be conducted for possible wetlands. Timing of the project is unscheduled. Based upon survey findings the location of the project may be adjusted or changed. Ground disturbance for surveys will be minimal, wetland delineation surveys include small soil pits with a shovel. Panels will be placed to cause least disturbance to the area and avoid all wetland and wildlife habitat and T&E and SOC.

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Project Organization:
Contact Name: Carolyn Brown
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Organization: 2DOT Consulting
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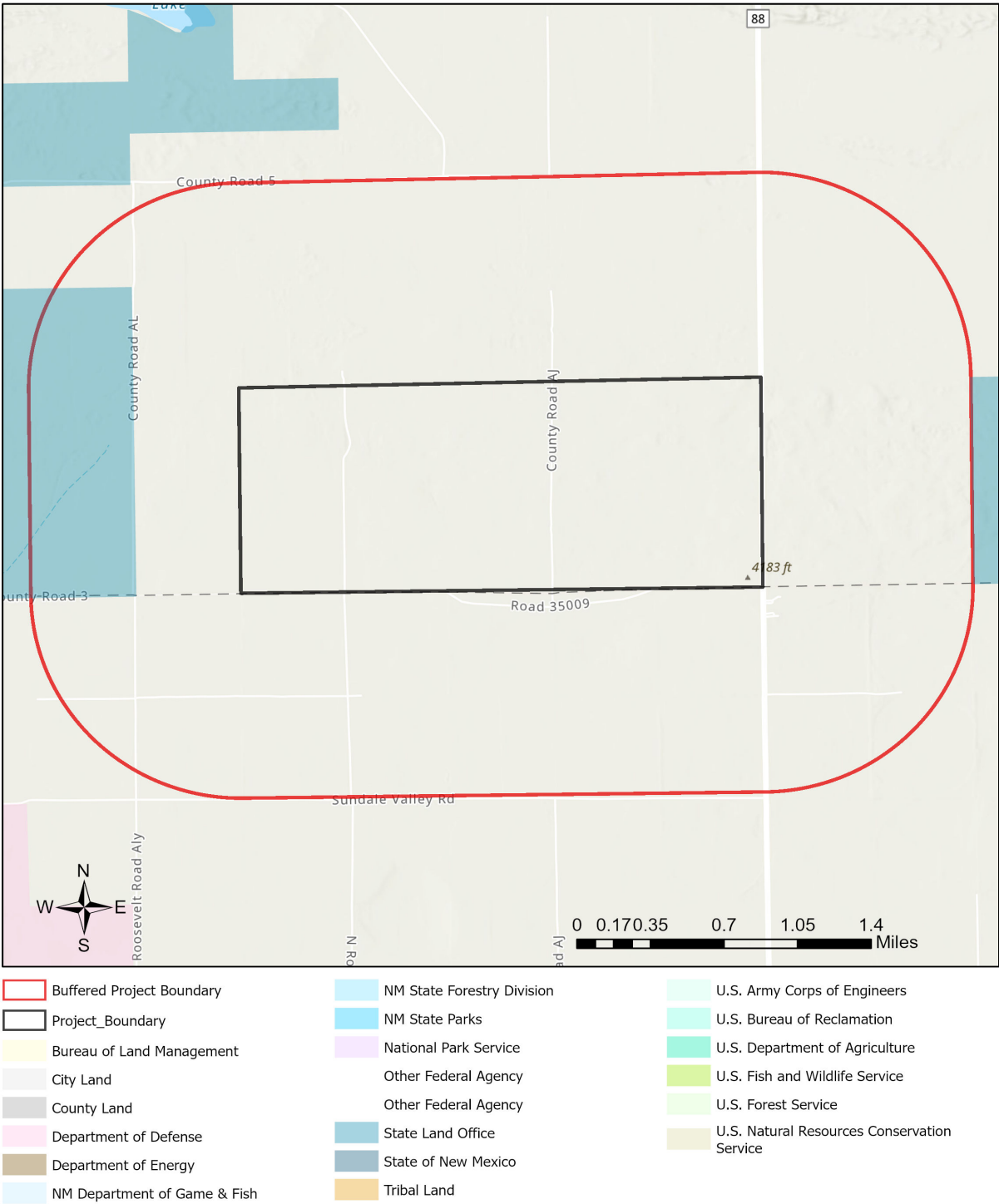
OVERALL STATUS

This report contains an initial list of recommendations regarding potential impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitats from the proposed project; see the Project Recommendations section below for further details. Your project proposal is being forwarded to a New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) biologist for review to determine whether there are any additional recommendations regarding the proposed actions. A Department biologist will be in touch within 30 days if there are further recommendations regarding this project proposal.

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.

Melrose



City of Clovis, Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, TomTom, Garmin, SafeGraph, GeoTechnologies, Inc, METI/NASA, USGS, EPA, NPS, USDA, USFWS
NHNM, USGS, USFS, US Census Bureau, NMDGF
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS

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
Lesser Prairie-Chicken	Tympanuchus pallidicinctus	LE		SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Mountain Plover	Charadrius montanus			SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM WATCH
Long-Billed Curlew	Numenius americanus			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Western Burrowing Owl	Athene cunicularia hypugaea			SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor			SGCN			
Red-Headed Woodpecker	Melanerpes erythrocephalus			SGCN			
Loggerhead Shrike	Lanius ludovicianus			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Vesper Sparrow	Pooecetes gramineus			SGCN			
Thick-billed Longspur	Rhynchophanes mccownii			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Chestnut-Collared Longspur	Calcarius ornatus			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Least Shrew	Cryptotis parva		T	SGCN			BLM WATCH
Black-Tailed Prairie Dog	Cynomys ludovicianus			SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Mule Deer	Odocoileus hemionus			SGCN			
Pronghorn	Antilocapra americana			SGCN			
Desert Massasauga	Sistrurus catenatus edwardsii			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](#); 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.

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.

Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in Lesser Prairie-chicken Crucial Habitat Category 2 (Connectivity Zone).

Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in Lesser Prairie-chicken Crucial Habitat Category 3 (Modeled Habitat Zone).

The Lesser Prairie-chicken (*Tympanuchus pallidicinctus*) (LPC) was designated as a SGCN in New Mexico and the southern Distinct Population Segment, including populations in New Mexico and Texas, is federally listed as Endangered. The LPC Interstate Working Group has developed the Southern Great Plains Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool ([SGP-CHAT](#)) to designate and prioritize areas for LPC conservation activities and development. Our preliminary assessment indicates your project occurs in LPC habitat. For more information on the SGP-CHAT, contact Chanda Pettie, Industry LPC Program Contact with the Western Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, at (719) 207-5053 or chanda.pettie@wafwa.org.

If your project has potential to lead to take (including harassment, harm, pursuit, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, collecting, or attempting to engage in these activities) of a LPC and you entered into the Candidate Conservation Agreement (CCA) or CCA with Assurances (CCAA) for the LPC with [CEHMM](#), the Department recommends you contact CEHMM (575-885-3700). If your project may lead to take of a LPC and you did not enter the CCA/A with CEHMM, the Department recommends you contact Lauren Rangel, at 505-761-4745 or lauren_rangel@fws.gov, who is the species lead for the LPC in the Ecological Services Office with USFWS. She is also the contact for the rangewide renewable energy Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) if relevant for your project. The Department recommends a qualified, permitted biologist conduct surveys for the LPC according to these [Lesser Prairie-chicken Survey Protocols](#) (or others recommended by USFWS) and following any training as required by USFWS.

Your project could affect important components of habitat for large mammals, including important and sensitive seasonal areas, stopover sites, or movement corridors for elk, mule deer, or pronghorn. Mitigation measures should be implemented as appropriate in these high use sites and movement areas that were identified based on data gathered and analyzed by the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish (Department) and partners. Management recommendations within these areas may include the following (as relevant to the proposed project).

- Restrictions on noise-generating activities during wintering and calving/fawning seasons. These seasons are November 15-April 30 for wintering and May 15-June 30 for calving fawning in northern New Mexico; specific timing differs for southern New Mexico. These activities 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.
- Avoid new fence construction where possible and modify unavoidable fences along high use areas to make them wildlife friendly and facilitate large animal movement. Where possible, divide larger fenced sites into smaller fenced areas with movement corridors in between.
- Avoid siting facilities within important habitats such as critical seasonal ranges or parturition sites.
- To minimize surface disturbance, implement directional drilling and co-locate drill holes on a single pad in the least suitable areas for wildlife.
- Avoid construction or development activities during important times, like parturition (May 15 – June 30 in northern New Mexico).
- Where feasible, coordinate with the Department on collection of pre- and post-construction observational or GPS collar data to quantify responses of big game herds to project implementation.

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.

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.