



PROJECT INFORMATION

Project Title: Gold Gulch
Project Type: COMMUNICATIONS, BURIED LINES/CABLES, BURIED LINES, NEW
Latitude/Longitude (DMS): 32.551979 / -108.451730
County(s): GRANT
Project Description: Just need a species list. Thank you!

REQUESTOR INFORMATION

Project Organization:
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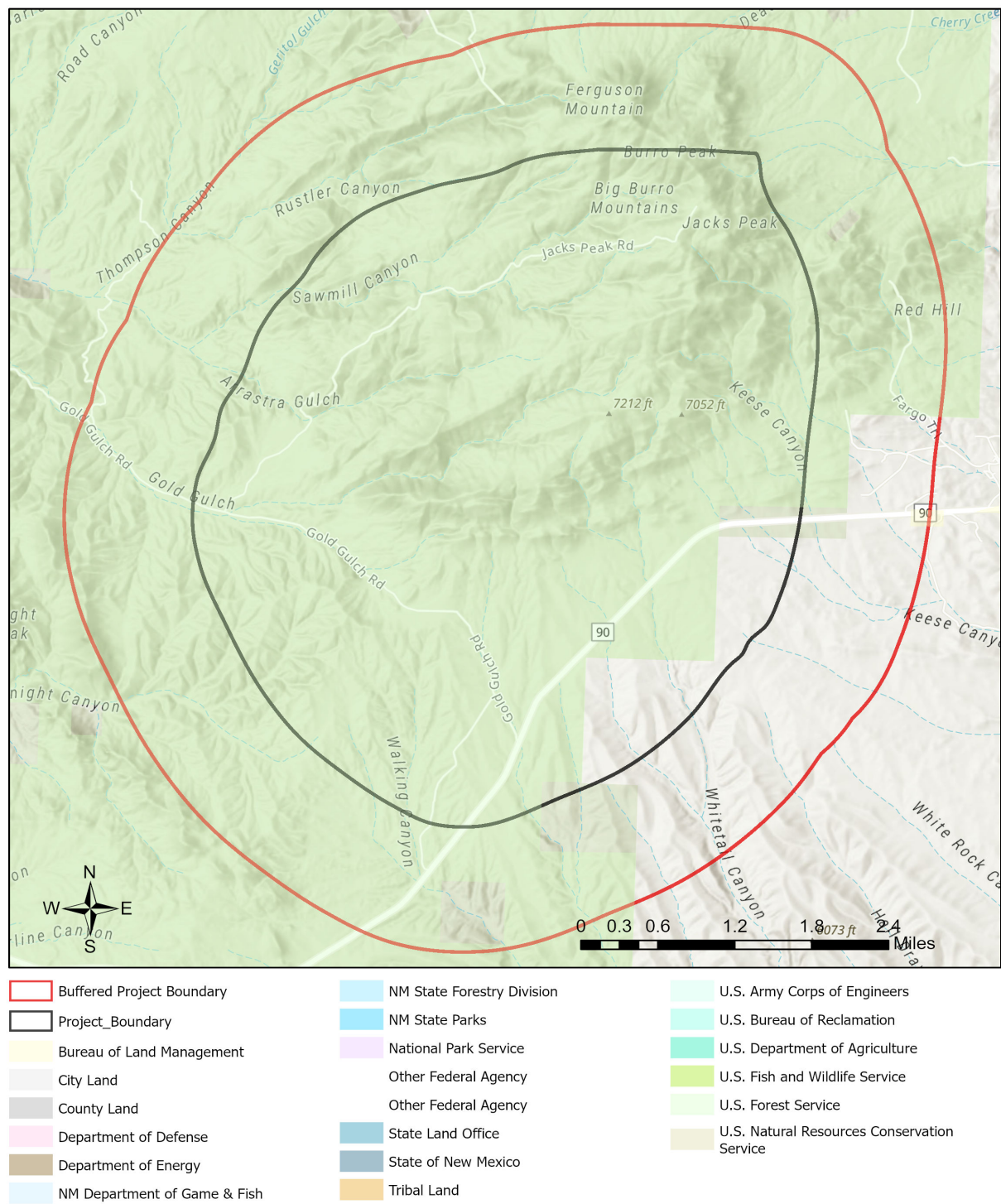
OVERALL STATUS

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.

Gold Gulch



NHNM, USGS, USFS, US Census Bureau, NMDGF
Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS
CONANP, 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
Colorado River Toad	Incilius alvarius		T	SGCN			
Arizona Toad	Anaxyrus microscaphus			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Mountain Treefrog	Hyla wrightorum			SGCN			
Plains Leopard Frog	Lithobates blairi			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Chiricahua Leopard Frog	Lithobates chiricahuensis	LT		SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Aplomado Falcon	Falco femoralis		E	SGCN			
Peregrine Falcon	Falco peregrinus		T	SGCN			BLM WATCH
Flammulated Owl	Otus flammeolus			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Whiskered Screech-Owl	Megascops trichopsis		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Elf Owl	Micrathene whitneyi			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Western Burrowing Owl	Athene cunicularia hypugaea			SGCN	Sensitive Species	USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Mexican Spotted Owl	Strix occidentalis lucida	LT		SGCN			
Common Nighthawk	Chordeiles minor			SGCN			
Lucifer Hummingbird	Calothorax lucifer		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Costa's Hummingbird	Calypte costae		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Elegant Trogon	Trogon elegans		E	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Lewis's Woodpecker	Melanerpes lewis			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Williamson's Sapsucker	Sphyrapicus thyroideus			SGCN			
Thick-Billed Kingbird	Tyrannus crassirostris		E	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Bank Swallow	Riparia riparia			SGCN			
Pinyon Jay	Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Clark's Nutcracker	Nucifraga columbiana			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
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			
Bendire's Thrasher	Toxostoma bendirei			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
Sprague's Pipit	Anthus spragueii			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
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
Lucy's Warbler	Leiothlypis luciae			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Black-Throated Gray Warbler	Setophaga nigrescens			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Grace's Warbler	Setophaga graciae			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM WATCH
Red-Faced Warbler	Cardellina rubrifrons			SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	
Painted Redstart	Myioborus pictus			SGCN			
Black-Chinned Sparrow	Spizella atrogularis			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Vesper Sparrow	Pooecetes gramineus			SGCN			
Baird's Sparrow	Ammodramus bairdii		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Thick-billed Longspur	Rhynchophanes mccownii			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Chestnut-Collared Longspur	Calcarius ornatus			SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Cassin's Finch	Haemorhous cassinii			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Evening Grosbeak	Coccothraustes vespertinus			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
Arizona Shrew	Sorex arizonae		E	SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Mexican Long-Tongued Bat	Choeronycteris mexicana			SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM SENSITIVE
Mexican Long-Nosed Bat	Leptonycteris nivalis	LE	E	SGCN			
Lesser Long-Nosed Bat	Leptonycteris verbabuenae	DL	T	SGCN		USFS R3 SCC	BLM SENSITIVE
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
Jaguar	Panthera onca	LE		SGCN			
Mountain Lion	Puma concolor			SERI			
Elk	Cervus canadensis			SERI			
Mule Deer	Odocoileus hemionus			SERI			
Pronghorn	Antilocapra americana			SERI			
Sonoran Mud Turtle	Kinosternon sonoriense			SGCN			
Gila Monster	Heloderma suspectum		E	SGCN			BLM SENSITIVE
Bunch Grass Lizard	Sceloporus slevini		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		BLM WATCH
Mountain Skink	Plestiodon callicephalus		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Green Rat Snake	Senticolis triaspis		T	SGCN	Sensitive Species		
Rock Rattlesnake	Crotalus lepidus			SGCN			
Arizona Black Rattlesnake	Crotalus cerberus			SGCN			BLM WATCH
Desert Massasauga	Sistrurus catenatus edwardsii			SGCN			

Common Name hyperlink takes you to species account in 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

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.

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.

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](#). The [New Mexico Riparian Habitat Map \(NMRipMap\)](#) may also provide useful information on local riparian habitat composition and structure.

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 is on or near a section of road that has experienced comparatively high incidence of wildlife-vehicle collisions. Coordinate with the New Mexico Department of Transportation to consider implementing mitigation actions that are appropriate to your project area and planned action to reduce wildlife-vehicle collisions. These may include but are not limited to: installation of wildlife-proof fencing; installation of wildlife passages such as arch culverts or overpasses; and installation of animal detection systems.

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.