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#### PROJECT INFORMATION

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**Project Title:** King powerline  
**Project Type:** ENERGY DEVELOPMENT, ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION, ELECTRIC TRANSMISSION, NEW LINES OR MAJOR RETROFIT  
**Latitude/Longitude (DMS):** 34.352752 / -107.359399  
**County(s):** SOCORRO  
**Project Description:** Potential electric powerline for the Socorro Electric Coop

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#### REQUESTOR INFORMATION

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**Project Organization:**  
**Contact Name:** Charles Britt  
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**Organization:** SWCA Environmental Consultants  
**Address:** 7770 Jefferson St NE, Albuquerque NM 87109  
**Phone:** 5756219425

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#### OVERALL STATUS

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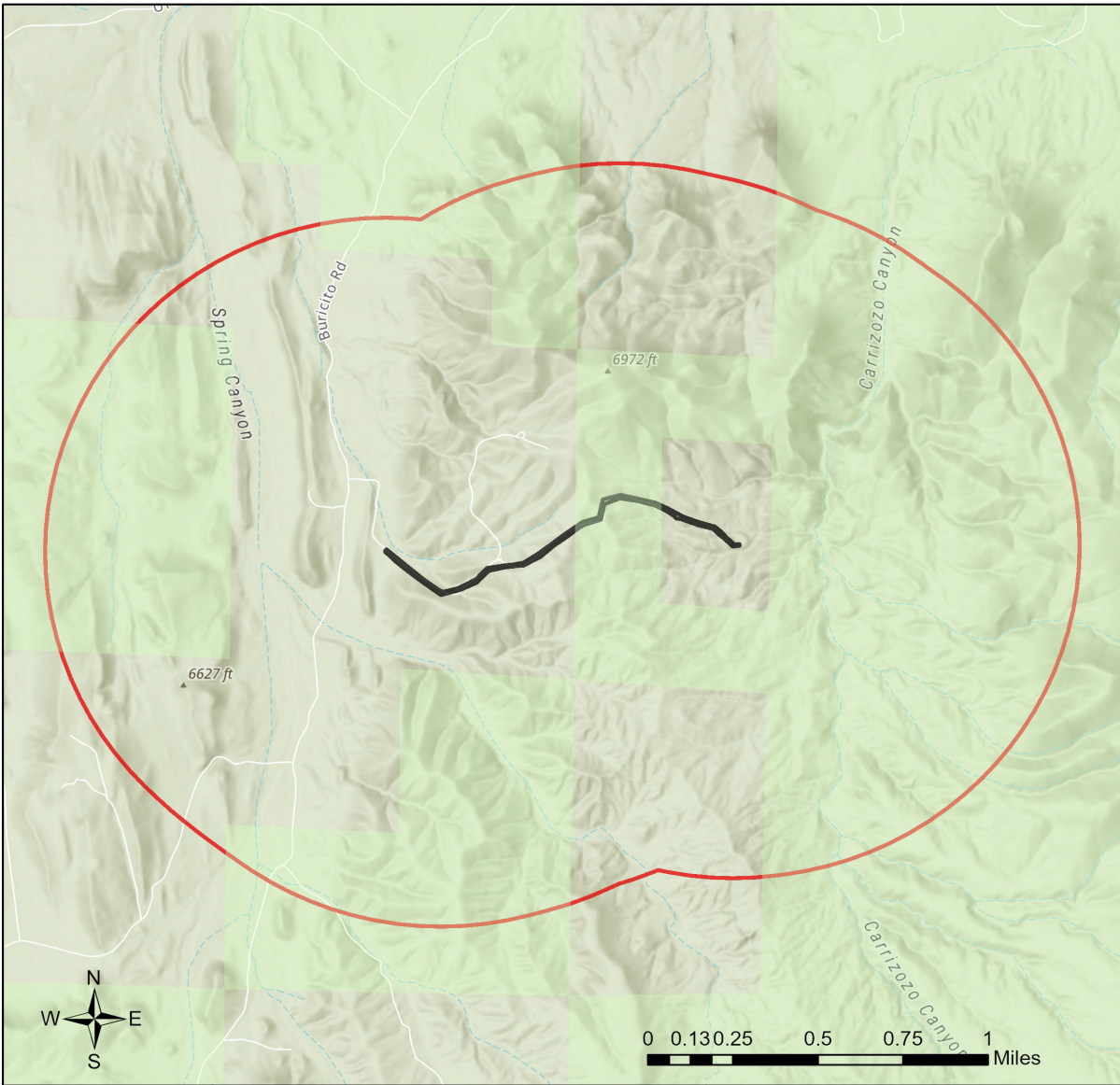
This report contains an initial list of recommendations regarding potential impacts to wildlife or wildlife habitats from the proposed project; see the Project Recommendations section below for further details. Your project proposal is being forwarded to a New Mexico Department of Wildlife (Department) 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.

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**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 \(SGCN\)](#) (page 18, table 5), 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. Any surveys including handling or capturing wildlife may require a scientific collection permit; contact the Department's Wildlife Permits Manager at [dgf.permits@dgf.nm.gov](mailto:dgf.permits@dgf.nm.gov) for more information.
- 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.

# King powerline



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

**Special Status Animal Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area**

| Common Name                                 | Scientific Name                           | USFWS (ESA) | NMDOW (WCA) | NMDOW SGCN/SERI | USFS              | USFS SCC    | BLM           |
|---------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">Boreal Chorus Frog</a>          | <a href="#">Pseudacris maculata</a>       |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">American Bittern</a>            | <a href="#">Botaurus lentiginosus</a>     |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Common Black-Hawk</a>           | <a href="#">Buteogallus anthracinus</a>   |             | T           | SGCN            | Sensitive Species |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Mountain Plover</a>             | <a href="#">Anarhynchus montanus</a>      |             |             | SGCN            | Sensitive Species |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Flammulated Owl</a>             | <a href="#">Psilosops flammeolus</a>      |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Elf Owl</a>                     | <a href="#">Micrathene whitneyi</a>       |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Western Burrowing Owl</a>       | <a href="#">Athene cucularia hypugaea</a> |             |             | SGCN            | Sensitive Species | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Common Nighthawk</a>            | <a href="#">Chordeiles minor</a>          |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Williamson's Sapsucker</a>      | <a href="#">Sphyrapicus thyroideus</a>    |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Olive-Sided Flycatcher</a>      | <a href="#">Contopus cooperi</a>          |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Pinyon Jay</a>                  | <a href="#">Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus</a> |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Clark's Nutcracker</a>          | <a href="#">Nucifraga columbiana</a>      |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Juniper Titmouse</a>            | <a href="#">Baeolophus ridgwayi</a>       |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Pygmy Nuthatch</a>              | <a href="#">Sitta pygmaea</a>             |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Western Bluebird</a>            | <a href="#">Sialia mexicana</a>           |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Mountain Bluebird</a>           | <a href="#">Sialia currucoides</a>        |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Loggerhead Shrike</a>           | <a href="#">Lanius ludovicianus</a>       |             |             | SGCN            |                   | USFS R3 SCC | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Gray Vireo</a>                  | <a href="#">Vireo vicinior</a>            |             | T           | SGCN            | Sensitive Species | USFS R3 SCC | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Black-Throated Gray Warbler</a> | <a href="#">Setophaga nigrescens</a>      |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Black-Chinned Sparrow</a>       | <a href="#">Spizella atrogularis</a>      |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |
| <a href="#">Thick-billed Longspur</a>       | <a href="#">Rhynchophanes mccownii</a>    |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Chestnut-Collared Longspur</a>  | <a href="#">Calcarius ornatus</a>         |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Cassin's Finch</a>              | <a href="#">Haemorhous cassinii</a>       |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             | BLM WATCH     |

### Special Status Animal Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

| Common Name                            | Scientific Name                            | USFWS (ESA) | NMDOW (WCA) | NMDOW SGCN/SERI | USFS              | USFS SCC    | BLM           |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|---------------|
| <a href="#">Evening Grosbeak</a>       | <a href="#">Coccothraustes vespertinus</a> |             |             | SGCN            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Spotted Bat</a>            | <a href="#">Euderma maculatum</a>          |             | T           | SGCN            | Sensitive Species | USFS R3 SCC | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Gunnison's Prairie Dog</a> | <a href="#">Cynomys gunnisoni</a>          |             |             | SGCN            | Sensitive Species |             | BLM SENSITIVE |
| <a href="#">Mountain Lion</a>          | <a href="#">Puma concolor</a>              |             |             | SERI            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Elk</a>                    | <a href="#">Cervus canadensis</a>          |             |             | SERI            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Mule Deer</a>              | <a href="#">Odocoileus hemionus</a>        |             |             | SERI            |                   |             |               |
| <a href="#">Rock Rattlesnake</a>       | <a href="#">Crotalus lepidus</a>           |             |             | 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.

### Special Status Plant Species Potentially within 1 Miles of Project Area

| Common Name                              | Scientific Name                 | USFWS (ESA) | NMAC | NMRPCS | USFS | USFS SCC | BLM |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|------|--------|------|----------|-----|
| <a href="#">Standley's Whitlow-Grass</a> | <a href="#">Draba standleyi</a> |             |      |        |      |          |     |

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

The Department recommends following the below guidelines to minimize or eliminate impacts to wildlife from powerline infrastructure and trenching activities:

[2003 Powerline Project Guidelines, updated February 2007](#)

[Trenching Guidelines, updated March 2022](#)

Major emphases of these guidelines include: 1) designing transmission lines to prevent or minimize risk of electrocution of raptors (See *Suggested Practices for Avian Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 2006*) produced by the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee (APLIC). A copy of this report may be downloaded from [APLIC](#); and 2) avoiding leaving trenches open during below-ground powerline construction to minimize injury to or death of wildlife. For maintenance of vegetation under powerlines, where feasible, allow for regrowth of low-growing vegetation including native flowering plants that can benefit pollinating insects. If mowing vegetation for maintenance purposes, mow during the overwintering period for bees (November-February) to avoid removing important forage resources and individual organism impacts. Avoid mowing in early spring as floral resources are typically limited yet important in this period when bumble bee (*Bombus* spp.) queens are starting new colonies. If mowing must occur May-October, then keep at least 66% of the area unmowed to retain sufficient forage resources and, if feasible, mow no more than twice a year at varying times, mow vegetation to no more than 10 inches in height, use a flushing bar and mow during the middle of the day at lower speeds to reduce individual mortality, and leave small patches of vegetation (e.g., milkweed [*Asclepias* spp.], flowering plants with pithy stems, full vegetation strips) untouched.

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](#). Surveys including audio calls may require a scientific collection permit; contact the Department's Wildlife Permits Manager at [dgf.permits@dgf.nm.gov](mailto:dgf.permits@dgf.nm.gov) for more information. Should burrowing owls be documented in the project area, please contact the Department or USFWS for further recommendations and information on any permitting requirements regarding relocation or avoidance of impacts. The Wild Take Unit at the USFWS, which issues take and relocation permits for migratory birds, can be reached at [MBPermits\\_take@fws.gov](mailto:MBPermits_take@fws.gov).

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. A scientific collection permit may be required; contact the Department's Wildlife Permits Manager at [dgf.permits@dgf.nm.gov](mailto:dgf.permits@dgf.nm.gov) for more information. The Department can provide recommendations regarding suitability of potential translocation areas and procedures. If a project will only impact 10 or fewer burrows and there is a large, active colony adjacent to the site the continued existence of which will not cause future conflicts, the Department suggests use of reverse dispersal translocation methods as outlined in [Creating Prairie Dog Management Plans Part three: Appendices and Attachments](#) (see Attachment 1). Methods include setting up a wire door over active burrows followed by monitoring and closure of the few burrows in the project disturbance area after prairie dog evacuation and barrier installation to prevent recolonization of closed areas. Removal activities should be performed after the spring breeding and birthing seasons and prior to winter hibernation (e.g., mid-June to mid-November). Prairie dogs in southern New Mexico may remain active in the winter, extending the potential removal period beyond mid-November. Removal activities should also begin roughly one month before construction or other disturbance occurs as it can take between one week and one month for the animals to disperse.

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.



**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.
- Unless a project is marked as confidential in the title or description by the project proponent and if a ERT-generated report is the only response that the project proponent receives from the Department, then the report will be made publicly accessible via the [Public Comment Letters](#) page on the ERT website.