

Categorical Exclusion Documentation Format for Actions Other Than Hazardous Fuels and Fire Rehabilitation Actions

AZA 01876 Mohave Electric Cooperative Amendment NEPA Number DOI- BLM-AZ-C030-2013-0043-CX

A. Background

BLM Office: Lake Havasu Field Office Lease/Serial/Case File No.: AZA 01876

Proposed Action Title/Type: Southwest Transmission Corp. (SWTC) partial relinquishment and Mohave Electric Cooperative (MEC) amendment.

Location of Proposed Action:

Gila and Salt River Meridian, Arizona

T. 20 N., R. 21 W.

Sec. 30, portion of lot 1, N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$ N $\frac{1}{2}$, W $\frac{1}{2}$ NW $\frac{1}{4}$.

Containing 6.277 acres.

Description of Proposed Action:

SWTC was granted right-of-way AZA 14908 on June 26, 2001 for a 230kV and 69kV aerial electric lines and a substation. SWTC has applied to relinquish the 69kV line to MEC. BLM transferred the lands to the State of Arizona (IL580) and this right-of-way was reserved.

The 69kV aerial electric line is 5,468.57 feet long by 50 feet wide (6.277 acres). The existing MEC right-of-way grant AZA 01876 will be amended to include this acreage and will expire on July 21, 2018, 5 years. MEC is rental exempt.

B. Land Use Plan Conformance

Land Use Plan Name: *Lake Havasu Field Office Resource Management Plan*

Date Approved/Amended: May, 2007

The proposed action is in conformance with the LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decision(s) (objectives, terms, and conditions): Lake Havasu Field Office may allow the use of the public lands or interests in lands through issuance of ROWs, leases, and permits. The types of uses that would be authorized by a ROW issued pursuant to Title 5 FLPMA would include access roads, power lines, telephone lines, fiber optic systems, communications facilities, and so forth. Examples of uses authorized pursuant to the Mineral Leasing Act include crude oil pipelines and oil and gas pipelines. Typical uses authorized by permits would include filming and establishing and maintaining apiary sites.

C. Compliance with NEPA:

The Proposed Action is categorically excluded from further documentation under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) in accordance with 516 DM 11.9, E. Realty #12. Grants of right-of-way wholly within the boundaries of other compatibly developed rights-of-way.

This categorical exclusion is appropriate in this situation because there are no extraordinary circumstances potentially having effects that may significantly affect the environment. The proposed action has been reviewed (See Attachment 1), and none of the extraordinary circumstances described in 516 DM2 apply.

I considered the possibility of significant impacts by authorizing this action, but there are none as demonstrated by the signatures in Attachment 1.

D: Signature

Authorizing Official: \s\Kimber Liebhauser Authenticated by S.Ahrens Date: 7/18/13
(Signature)

Name: Kimber Liebhauser
Title: Field Manager, Lake Havasu Field Office

Contact Person For additional information concerning this CX review, contact:

Sheri Ahrens, Realty Specialist
BLM, Lake Havasu Field Office
2610 Sweetwater Ave.
Lake Havasu City, AZ 86406
Phone: (928) 505-1200

Note: A separate decision document must be prepared for the action covered by the CX. See Attachment 2.

Attachment 1: Extraordinary Circumstances Review

| Extraordinary Circumstances | Comment (Yes or No with supporting Rationale) |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| 1. Have significant effects on public health or safety. | No, Administrative Action |
| 2. Have significant impacts on such natural resources and unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources; park, recreation or refuge lands; wilderness areas; wild or scenic rivers; national natural landmarks; sole or principal drinking water aquifers; prime farmlands; wetlands (Executive Order 11990); floodplains (Executive Order 11988) national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas. | No, Administrative Action |
| 3. Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2)(E)]. | No, Administrative Action |
| 4. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks. | No, Administrative Action |
| 5. Establishes a precedent for future action or represents a decision in principle about future actions with significant environmental effects. | No, Administrative Action |
| 6. Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. | No, Administrative Action |
| 7. Have significant impacts on properties listed, or eligible for listing, on the National Register of Historic Places as determined by either the bureau or office. | No, Administrative Action |
| 8. Have significant impacts on species listed, or proposed to be listed, on the List of Endangered or Threatened Species, or have significant impacts on designated Critical Habitat for these species. | No, Administrative Action |
| 9. Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. | No, Administrative Action |
| 10. Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898). | No, Administrative Action |
| 11. Limit access to and ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites on Federal lands by Indian religious practitioners or significantly adversely affect the physical integrity of such sacred sites (Executive Order 13007). | No, Administrative Action |

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| 12. Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or non-native invasive species known to occur in the area or actions that may promote the introduction, growth, or expansion of the range of such species (Federal Noxious Weed Control Act and Executive Order 13112). | No, Administrative Action |
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Approval and Decision

Attachment 2

Compliance and assignment of responsibility Lands & Resources

Monitoring and assignment of responsibility: Lands & Resources

Review: We have determined that the proposal is in accordance with the categorical exclusion criteria and that it would not involve any significant environmental effects. Therefore, it is categorically excluded from further environmental review.

Prepared by: \s\Sheri Ahrens Date: 7/18/13
Sheri Ahrens, Realty Specialist
Project Lead

Reviewed by: \s\ David Daniels Authenticated by S.Ahrens Date: 7/18/13
David Daniels
Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Reviewed by: \s\Lisa Stapp Authenticated by S.Ahrens Date: 7/18/13
Amanda Dodson. Assistant Field Manager Lands & Resources

Project Description: SWTC was granted right-of-way AZA 14908 on June 26, 2001 for a 230kV and 69kV aerial electric lines and a substation. SWTC has applied to relinquish the 69kV line to MEC. BLM transferred the lands to the State of Arizona (IL580) and this right-of-way was reserved.

The 69kV aerial electric line is 5,468.57 feet long by 50 feet wide (6.277 acres). The existing MEC right-of-way grant AZA 01876 will be amended to include this acreage and will expire on July 21, 2018, 5 years. MEC is rental exempt.

Decision: Based on a review of the project described above and field office staff recommendations, I have determined that the project is in conformance with the land use plan and is categorically excluded from further environmental analysis. It is my decision to approve the action as proposed, with the following stipulations (if applicable).

Approved By: \s\Kimber Liebhauser Authenticated by S.Ahrens Date: 7/18/13
Kimber Liebhauser
Field Manager, Lake Havasu Field Office

Exhibits:

- A. Map
- B. Stipulations
- C. Guidelines for Handling Sonoran Desert Tortoise

Stipulations

1. The Holder shall conduct all activities associated with the construction, operation, maintenance and termination of the Right-of-way within the authorized limits of the right-of-way.
2. The Holder shall give written notice to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) of any anticipated changes in the Plan of Development and management, construction timetables, and shall obtain approval from the BLM prior to initiating changes.
3. The Holder shall maintain the facilities constructed on the lands in a satisfactory condition.
4. The Holder shall remove trash, rubbish, and other construction debris shall be removed from the site and disposed of at a designated sanitary landfill, and the grounds shall be maintained in a neat and orderly manner at all times.
5. All activities directly or indirectly associated with construction, operation and maintenance shall be conducted within the limits of the approved right-of-way. This right-of-way does not allow for any surface disturbing activities outside the right-of-way area.
6. Actions other than those explicitly approved by the Bureau of Land Management, which result in impacts upon archaeological or historical resources, shall be subject to the provisions of the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979 as amended and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976. These statutes protect cultural resources for the benefit of all Americans. As property of the United States, no person may, without authorization, excavate, remove, damage, or otherwise alter or deface any historic or prehistoric site, artifact or object of antiquity located on public lands.
7. The Holder shall immediately bring to the attention of the Lake Havasu Field Manager (or designated representative) any cultural resources (prehistoric/historic sites or objects) and/or paleontological resources (fossils) encountered during permitted operations and maintain the integrity of such resources pending subsequent investigation.
8. Care shall be taken not to disturb or destroy desert tortoises or their burros. Handling, collecting, damaging, or destroying desert tortoises are prohibited by Arizona State Statute. Any sightings of desert tortoise shall be immediately reported to the LHFO, Wildlife Biologist at (928) 505-1200. If a desert tortoise is endangered by any activity that activity shall cease until the desert tortoise moves out of harm's way on its own accord or is moved following the attached guidelines "Guidelines for Handling Sonoran Desert Tortoises Encountered on Development Projects" (Exhibit C).
9. If any species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended, are encountered during the activities, work will stop immediately. Immediate notification of the discovery shall be made to the BLM Wildlife Biologist at (928) 505-1200. The activity may resume only after U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service has authorized a continuance.
10. State protected plant species (all cactus, ocotillo and native trees) shall be avoided; if they cannot be avoided they will be salvaged and replanted after construction within the RIGHT-OF-WAY boundaries or another location determined by the LHFO Wildlife Biologist. The Holder shall report all State protected species destroyed or damaged to the LHFO Wildlife Biologist.

11. No hazardous material, substance, or hazardous waste, (as these terms are defined in the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation and Liability Act of 1980, 42 U.S.C. 9601, *et seq.*, or the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act, 42 U.S.C. 6901, *et seq.*) shall be used, produced, transported, released, disposed of, or stored within the right-of-way area at any time by the Holder. The Holder shall immediately report any release of hazardous substances (leaks, spills, etc.) caused by the Holder or third parties in excess of the reportable quantity as required by federal, state, or local laws and regulations. A copy of any report required or requested by any federal, state or local government agency as a result of a reportable release or spill of any hazardous substances shall be furnished to the Authorized Officer concurrent with the filing of the reports to the involved federal, state or local government agency.

The Holder shall immediately notify the Authorized Officer of any release of hazardous substances, toxic substances, or hazardous waste on or near the right-of-way potentially affecting the right-of-way of which the Holder is aware.

As required by law, Holder shall have responsibility for and shall take all action(s) necessary to fully remediate and address the hazardous substance(s) on or emanating from the right-of-way.

12. The Holder shall be responsible for weed control on disturbed areas within the limits of the right-of-way. The Holder is responsible for consultation with the Authorized Officer and/or local authorities for acceptable weed control methods within limits imposed in the right-of-way stipulations.
13. The Holder shall comply with all applicable local, state, and federal air, water, hazardous substance, solid waste, or other environmental laws and regulations, existing or hereafter enacted or promulgated. To the full extent permissible by law, the Holder agrees to indemnify and hold harmless, within the limits, if any, established by state law (as state law exists on the effective date of the right-of-way), the United States against any liability arising from the Holder's use or occupancy of the right-of way, regardless of whether the Holder has actually developed or caused development to occur on the right-of-way, from the time of the issuance of this right-of-way to the Holder, and during the term of this right-of-way. This agreement to indemnify and hold harmless the United States against any liability shall apply without regard to whether the liability is caused by the Holder, its agents, contractors, or third parties. If the liability is caused by third parties, the Holder will pursue legal remedies against such third parties as if the Holder were the fee owner of the right-of-way.

Notwithstanding any limits to the Holder's ability to indemnify and hold harmless the United States which may exist under state law, the Holder agrees to bear all responsibility (financial or other) for any and all liability or responsibility of any kind or nature assessed against the United States arising from the Holder's use or occupancy of the right-of way regardless of whether the Holder has actually developed or caused development to occur on the right-of-way from the time of the issuance of this right-of-way to the Holder and during the term of this right-of-way.

14. The Holder shall not violate applicable air standards or related facility siting standards established by or pursuant to applicable federal, state, or local laws or regulations. The Holder shall be responsible for dust abatement within the limits of the right-of-way and is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits from appropriate authorities for acceptable dust abatement and control methods (e.g., water, chemicals). The Holder shall be solely responsible for all violations of any air quality permit, law or regulation, as a result of its action, inaction, use or occupancy of the right-of-way.

Notwithstanding whether a violation of any air quality permit, law or regulation results, the Holder would cooperate with the Authorized Officer in implementing and maintaining reasonable and appropriate dust control methods in conformance with law and appropriate to the circumstances at the sole cost of the Holder.

Prior to relinquishment, abandonment, or termination of this right-of-way, the Holder shall apply reasonable and appropriate dust abatement and control measures to all disturbed areas. The abatement and measures shall be designed to be effective over the long-term (e.g., rock mulch or other means) and acceptable to the Authorized Officer.

15. Use of pesticides shall comply with the applicable Federal and state laws. Pesticides shall be used only in accordance with their registered uses and within limitations imposed by the Secretary of the Interior. Prior to the use of pesticides, the Holder shall obtain from the Authorized Officer written approval of a plan showing the type and quantity of material to be used, pest(s) to be controlled, method of application, location of storage and disposal of containers and any other information deemed necessary by the Authorized Officer. The plan shall be submitted no later than December 1 of any calendar year that covers the proposed activities for the next fiscal year. Pesticides shall not be permanently stored on public lands authorized for use under this right-of-way.

16. In the event that the public land underlying the right-of-way encompassed in this right-of-way, or a portion thereof, is conveyed out of Federal ownership and administration of the right-of-way or the land underlying the right-of-way is not being reserved to the United States in the patent/deed and/or the right-of-way is not within a right-of-way corridor being reserved to the United States in the patent/deed, the United States waives any right it has to administer the right-of-way, or portion thereof, within the conveyed land under Federal laws, statutes, and regulations, including the regulations at 43 CFR Part [2880], including any rights to have the Holder apply to BLM for amendments, modifications, or assignments and for BLM to approve or recognize such amendments, modifications, or assignments. At the time of conveyance, the patentee/grantee, and their successors and assigns, shall succeed to the interests of the United States in all matters relating to the right-of-way, or portion thereof, within the conveyed land and shall be subject to applicable State and local government laws, statutes, and ordinances. After conveyance, any disputes concerning compliance with the use and the terms and conditions of the right-of-way shall be considered a civil matter between the patentee/and the Holder.

GUIDELINES FOR HANDLING SONORAN DESERT TORTOISES
ENCOUNTERED ON DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Arizona Game and Fish Department

Revised October 23, 2007

The Arizona Game and Fish Department (Department) has developed the following guidelines to reduce potential impacts to desert tortoises, and to promote the continued existence of tortoises throughout the state. These guidelines apply to short-term and/or small-scale projects, depending on the number of affected tortoises and specific type of project.

The Sonoran population of desert tortoises occurs south and east of the Colorado River. Tortoises encountered in the open should be moved out of harm's way to adjacent appropriate habitat. If an occupied burrow is determined to be in jeopardy of destruction, the tortoise should be relocated to the nearest appropriate alternate burrow or other appropriate shelter, as determined by a qualified biologist.

Tortoises should be moved less than 48 hours in advance of the habitat disturbance so they do not return to the area in the interim. Tortoises should be moved quickly, kept in an upright position parallel to the ground at all times, and placed in the shade. Separate disposable gloves should be worn for each tortoise handled to avoid potential transfer of disease between tortoises. Tortoises must not be moved if the ambient air temperature exceeds 40° Celsius (105° Fahrenheit) unless an alternate burrow is available or the tortoise is in imminent danger.

A tortoise may be moved up to one-half mile, but no further than necessary from its original location. If a release site, or alternate burrow, is unavailable within this distance, and ambient air temperature exceeds 40° Celsius (105° Fahrenheit), the Department should be contacted to place the tortoise into a Department-regulated desert tortoise adoption program. Tortoises salvaged from projects which result in substantial permanent habitat loss (e.g. housing and highway projects), or those requiring removal during long-term (longer than one week) construction projects, will also be placed in desert tortoise adoption programs. Managers of projects likely to affect desert tortoises should obtain a scientific collecting permit from the Department to facilitate temporary possession of tortoises. Likewise, if large numbers of tortoises (>5) are expected to be displaced by a project, the project manager should contact the Department for guidance and/or assistance.

Please keep in mind the following points:

These guidelines do not apply to the Mojave population of desert tortoises (north and west of the Colorado River). Mojave Desert tortoises are specifically protected under the Endangered Species Act, as administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

These guidelines are subject to revision at the discretion of the Department. We recommend that the Department be contacted during the planning stages of any project that may affect desert tortoises.