

EXHIBIT F

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EXHIBIT F – RECREATIONAL PURPOSES AND ASPECTS

“State the extent, if any, the proposed site or route will be available to the public for recreational purposes, consistent with safety considerations and regulations and attach any plans the applicant may have concerning the development of the recreational aspects of the proposed site or route.”

The following analysis describes recreational facilities within the recreation study area and describes the potential impacts to them from the Vail to Tortolita 230 kV Transmission Line Project. The recreation study area for the Project consists of a 1-mile-wide study area centered on the Project route.

The Project is an upgrade of an existing transmission line owned and operated by Western Area Power Administration (WAPA). The 64-mile route will include the replacement of wood H-frame poles with steel monopoles in approximately 52 miles of existing transmission line right-of-way (ROW). The Project will also include four realignments outside the current ROW, totaling approximately 12 miles (Vail Lateral realignment [segment U4 in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (Final EIS)], Old Vail Road realignment [segment U3aPC in the Final EIS], Tumamoc Hill realignment [segments TH1a and TH1 Option in the Final EIS], and Marana Airport realignment [segment MA-1 in the Final EIS]).

INTRODUCTION

Exhibit F includes a summary of existing recreation opportunities, as well as the potential impacts the Project may have on recreation. For further information on recreation, refer to Sections 3.14 and 4.14 in the Final EIS, and for information about local parks and recreation areas, refer to Sections 3.12 and 4.12 in the Final EIS, included as Exhibit B-1.

AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Fifty-two miles of the route will stay in the current transmission line ROW. The majority of the ROW consists of private easements that are not currently available to the public for recreational purposes, except for where it crosses Tucson Mountain Park and five city parks. The approximately 12 miles of realignments will be located on a mixture of state and private lands. The Vail Lateral realignment (both options) is located on lands administered by the Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). The Old Vail Connection alignment is located on both private and ASLD lands. The Tumamoc Hill realignment is located on both private and ASLD lands. The Marana

Airport realignment is located on state lands. ASLD lands are available for recreation while private lands are not.

All existing, designated, and dispersed recreation opportunities will remain available. Where the Project crosses existing roads or trails, permanent access to and along these features for recreation use will not be affected. The following discussion describes the recreation settings and features within the Project study area (federal, state, and local).

Arizona State Land Department Lands

In the 1-mile study area, typical recreation activities on state lands include off-highway vehicle (OHV) driving, scenic driving, hunting, hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, camping, backpacking, mountain biking, geocaching, rock-hounding, picnicking, night-sky viewing, viewing cultural/historical sites, and photography.

State land within the study area is open to recreational use as long as the user possesses an active individual permit (e.g., a valid Arizona hunting license or recreational permit), unless otherwise specified. Hunting on all lands in the analysis area, regardless of ownership, is managed by the Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD) under Arizona Administrative Code (AAC) Title 12, Chapter 4.

The Project crosses two game management units (GMUs), 37A and 38M.

ASLD administers a Recreational Permitting Program for those users who may not possess a hunting license. There are two recreational permits available from ASLD: (1) non-competitive/non-commercial group permits and (2) individual and family permits (ASLD 2012). The non-competitive/non-commercial group Recreational Use Permit is available to user groups such as off-roading clubs, hunting clubs, and other non-competitive outdoor organizational events.

Table F-1. Game Management Units in the Project Area*

GMU	GMU Hunting Season	GMU Permits	GMU Hunter Days**	GMU Hunting Success
37A	Mule deer: November Javelina: February/March Bighorn sheep: December Dove: September, November–January Quail: October–February	Average no. of permits in past 5 years: Mule deer: 200 Javelina: 800 Bighorn sheep: 1	10,880	19%

GMU	GMU Hunting Season	GMU Permits	GMU Hunter Days**	GMU Hunting Success
38 M	Javelina: January (archery only) Mule deer: late December/January (archery only) Mountain lion: August–May (archery only) Eurasian collared dove: year-round Mourning dove, white-wing dove: September 1–15 Mourning dove (only): late November–early January Quail: early October–early February Coyote: year-round Other fur-bearers (bobcat, raccoon): August 1–March 3	Average no. of hunters in past 5 years:† Deer (archery only): 276	2,192	6% (limited data, archery only for deer)

* Table F-1 is adapted from Table 3.14-2 in the Southline Final EIS.

** Arizona hunter days and hunt success were derived from deer, pronghorn, turkey, and javelina hunts.

† AGFD does not authorize a specific number of permits for archery deer hunting in Unit 38M. The majority of archery deer hunts are offered as permits sold over the-counter; hunters can then choose to hunt in any of the open units for that season; Unit 38M is one of the open units. Value presented is the average number of hunters that elected to hunt unit 38M. Javelina hunter data are not available.

Local

Tumamoc Hill

Tumamoc Hill is managed by both the University of Arizona College of Science and Pima County. Since 1906, Tumamoc Hill has been an ecological preserve and study area. Its 860-acre ecological reservation is both a National Historic Landmark and an Archaeological District. Tumamoc Hill also is a heavily used hiking trail along a paved road; however, public hiking access is prohibited between 4:00 a.m. and 10:00 p.m. The existing WAPA ROW crosses the preserve; stakeholders from the University of Arizona, Pima County, and AGFD provided feedback during the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process requesting that the existing transmission line be routed off the preserve. Several alternatives and routing options were considered (see FEIS Chapter 2); the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and WAPA selected a route along Star Pass Boulevard, Greasewood Road, and Anklam Road and determined that the existing transmission line structures would be removed across the preserve.

Tucson Mountain Park

Tucson Mountain Park was established in 1929. Totalling approximately 20,000 acres, the park is one of the largest natural resource areas owned and managed by Pima County. The park has

approximately 62 miles of non-motorized shared-use trails open to hikers, equestrians, and mountain bikers. The Gates Pass overlook includes interpretive displays and historic structures. Picnicking and wildlife viewing opportunities are located throughout the park.

Pima County Conservation Lands System

Pima County Conservation Lands System (CLS) lands include important riparian areas, biological core management areas, special species management areas, multiple use management areas, scientific research areas, agricultural inholdings, and critical landscape connection corridors. The Pima County CLS (Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element 2005) was developed as a framework for biological and habitat protection in Pima County; is used as a guide for developing compensatory mitigation for residential and commercial development; and is used to offset the biological impacts of County activities.

Agriculture in-holdings within the CLS are those lands used for agricultural purposes and lands where agricultural uses have been abandoned. Agricultural land uses, in general, are more conducive to the movement of native fauna and functional pollination processes than other lands supporting higher intensity uses. Intensifying the land use of these areas could compromise landscape integrity, promote the spread of exotic species, and otherwise compromise the biodiversity of adjacent or nearby CLS lands (Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element 2005).

Biological Core Management Areas are lands that fulfill the five tenets used to construct the CLS and that provide greater biological diversity than Multiple Use Management Areas. These areas are primarily distinguished from other lands within the CLS by their potential to support high-value habitat for five or more priority vulnerable species as identified by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element 2005).

Important Riparian Areas are characterized by hydri-riparian, meso-riparian, and xero-riparian biological communities. Important riparian areas are valued for their higher water availability, vegetation density, and biological productivity. In addition to the inherent high biological value of these water-related communities, important riparian areas, including their associated upland areas, provide a framework for linkages and landscape connections. Important riparian areas are essential elements in the CLS (Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element 2005).

Multiple Use Management Areas are those lands that fulfill the five tenets used to construct the CLS but that are not as biologically rich as those lands designated as Biological Core Management Areas. These areas are primarily distinguished from other lands within the CLS by their potential to support high-value habitat for three or more priority vulnerable species as identified by the Sonoran Desert Conservation Plan (Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element 2005).

Other City Parks

Other City of Tucson parks that would be crossed by the Project include:

- Christopher Columbus Park
- Joaquin Murrieta Park
- Kennedy Park
- Santa Cruz River Park
- Silverbell Municipal Golf Course (the Project runs immediately adjacent to the golf course)

POTENTIAL EFFECTS

Construction

Construction activities would include direct ground disturbance and temporary increases in ambient noise levels in areas where the transmission line and substations intersect with areas used for recreation. Construction of the Project is not expected to permanently preclude the use of or access to any existing recreation opportunities or activities, but some short-term impacts to these resources will occur during the construction phases of the Project. Dispersed recreation activities such as hiking, camping, bird watching, or equestrian use may be temporarily affected as construction noises, visual disturbances, and/or the presence of other humans could detract from these recreation opportunities and activities.

Increases in ambient noise levels, the presence of equipment, and dust would be temporary and would decrease with the completion of construction activities. Impacts to recreation areas and users during construction would be minor since the activities would be short-term in nature.

Short-term, minor impacts to the existing recreation settings would occur within or adjacent to the following local parks during construction: Tucson Mountain Park, Tumamoc Hill, Joaquin Murrieta Park, Kennedy Park, Santa Cruz River Park, Christopher Columbus Park, and the Silverbell Municipal Golf Course. These impacts would occur only during construction, as construction activities and equipment have the potential to result in short-term changes, such as increased noise and fugitive dust, to the recreation setting. The Project would result in long-term benefits to Tumamoc Hill and associated recreation opportunities because the transmission line would be relocated along Starr Pass Boulevard, Greasewood Road, and Anklam Road, thereby removing the visual impact and improving recreation experiences within the preserve of Tumamoc Hill.

Potential impacts on the Pima County CLS would be negligible since the facilities to be upgraded are pre-existing. The ROW for the portions of the Project between the existing Del Bac and Rattlesnake substations (within Tucson) would not be widened. Portions of the Project that may cross Pima County Conservation Lands intended to protect (1) agriculture in-holdings; (2) biological core management areas; (3) important riparian areas; and (4) multiple-use management areas would not expand the existing transmission line ROW and would not decrease the acreages for Pima County Conservation Lands. All activities would be limited to the existing ROW across Pima County Conservation Lands.

Specific to National Trails, refer to Final EIS Appendix F for a detailed National Trails Assessment. The Project crosses the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail and the Butterfield Overland Mail and Stage Route each four times. Potential impacts to trails would include direct impacts where facilities would be sited within the designated trail corridor. Potential indirect impacts could include changes to the visual character, historic, natural, or cultural qualities of the trail as well as temporary increases in ambient noise levels during maintenance activities. However, these impacts would be minor since all crossings of National Trails (including trails under study for national designation) would occur in areas that include existing transmission facilities with no known recreation values.

Potential indirect impacts could include changes to the natural, historic, cultural, or visual character of some parks and recreation areas. Other impacts could include increased access to areas due to the presence of access roads. This could lead to increased use of areas by OHV users, which could conflict with management objectives for some recreation areas.

Hunting opportunities (for both big and small game) that could be displaced by the construction of the transmission line would not represent a significant impact, since the areas within AGFD GMUs that are outside of the Project footprint would remain available for hunting, subject to applicable laws and regulations.

Operation and Maintenance

Recreation opportunities and activities will continue during operation and maintenance since maintenance will be temporary in terms of the amount of time necessary for such activities in a given area and the interval between scheduled maintenance activities, which may be up to 18 months in duration. Therefore, although the potential for displacing recreation opportunity and activities due to maintenance activities may occur, impacts to recreation would be minor. Further, unless specifically closed to public access, all areas within the ROW (i.e., beneath spans) not on private easements will be accessible for recreational opportunity and activities.

Following construction activities, the presence of new access roads that would be used for operation and maintenance of the Project could permanently change the OHV use patterns in the area, subject to federal, state, and local OHV and traffic laws and regulations. If required and feasible, new access roads would be signed and would be closed to the public, but illegal OHV use would not be entirely preventable on the new access roads. This would result in an increased chance for “wildcat” and user-created route proliferation. The resultant impact from increased OHV use would be a moderate impact to recreation opportunities/activities. Mitigation such as adding locked gates and posting signage that indicates road status would decrease the magnitude of these impacts. However, illegal and/or unauthorized use of access roads would be enforceable by law enforcement.

Dispersed recreation and hunting would continue upon completion of construction within the ROW of the transmission line, substations, and ancillary facilities, subject to applicable laws such as ARS Title 17, Chapter 3, “Game and Fish,” Articles 17-301 and 17-309 A(12).

Impacts to City of Tucson parks and Pima County CLS would be negligible since the Project would be an upgrade of the existing WAPA transmission line, in most places. For those areas near Tumamoc Hill, it is important to note the Project would relocate the existing transmission ROW off of Tumamoc Hill to the existing North Greasewood Road and Anklam Road, thereby reducing the long-term impacts to Tumamoc Hill and associated recreation activities at that location. Further, the transmission line would span the parks as the existing WAPA lines between the Apache and Saguaro substations currently do.

The route segment U3aPC (generally located 3 miles northwest of the existing Nogales Substation) would be located on privately owned lands. Recreation in this area would be primarily limited to OHV driving since the proximity to occupied structures and mineral materials activities would prevent legal hunting from being pursued in nearly all areas along U3aPC. Recreational opportunities/activities on the privately owned lands would require permission from the landowner.

REFERENCES

Arizona State Land Department (ASLD). 2012. State Land Recreational Use Permit. Available at: <https://land.az.gov/applications-permits/recreation>. Accessed October 2, 2020.

Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element. 2005. Conservation Land System: Regional Plan Policy 6 Environmental Element. Available at: https://webcms.pima.gov/UserFiles/Servers/Server_6/File/Government/Development%20Services/Land%20Planning%20and%20Regulation/Long%20Range%20Planning/CLS%20Regional%20Plan%20Policy.pdf. Accessed October 4, 2020.