

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT
BURNS DISTRICT OFFICE

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW AND APPROVAL

CX Number: DOI-BLM-OR-B060-2011-0011-CX

Date: 12/06/2010

File Code (Project/Serial Number): N/A

Preparer: Aaron Eklund

Applicant: Aaron Eklund

Title of Proposed Action: Wildhorse Rim Communications Site Renovation

Description of Proposed Action and Project Design Elements (if applicable): The asbestos-containing paint on the existing concrete structure would be removed and disposed of by a DEQ-licensed HAZMAT contractor. The existing concrete structure would then be demolished and the existing tower removed by the BLM Operations Crew, with debris removed off-site to a county solid waste disposal facility. A contractor would install a new 8'x12' pre-fabricated structure at the same location as the old structure, and install a new 35'-40' monopole tower approximately 8'-10' from the new structure. The new location would be on the same side of the access road, thus eliminating the risk of line damage between the communications building and the tower (current configuration). The tower would need to be set approximately 10' into the ground, with at least a 4' diameter hole excavated. No explosives would be allowed to excavate the hole. Rock hammers and/or rock drills are planned to be used to create the hole (due to bedrock conditions at the site). The tower would be set in concrete and/or compacted aggregate. The new pre-fabricated communications building would be set on a reinforced concrete stem wall at the same location as the existing communications building. The access road would receive maintenance by the Operations Crew with a bulldozer and/or grader to blade off sloughed material on roadway and fix any damage caused by winter conditions. All equipment would be cleaned prior to being brought to this site to prevent introductions of noxious weeds. The communications site lies on State land (State of Oregon Easement and Right-of-Way No. 105024, dated 21 July 1959), and the access road lies on both State and BLM lands. Renovation activities are planned for July – September 2011. The structure and tower are to be Motorola R56 Standard compliant, and designed to remedy the September 17, 2009 CASHE findings of the existing communications configuration.

Legal Description: See Attached Maps.

B. Conformance with Land Use Plan (LUP): Steens Mountain Cooperative Management and Protection Area Resource Management Plan:

Date Approved/Amended: August 2005

The proposed action is in conformance with the applicable LUP, even though it is not specifically provided for, because it is clearly consistent with the following LUP decisions:

-Land Use Plan Goals:

-Goal Number 1: Serve current and future publics.

-Reduce threats to public health, safety, and property.—pg. 12

-Transportation and Roads:

-Objective: Manage roads and ways within the CMPA consistent with the Route Management Categories and Maintenance Levels.

-"[R]outes should be managed to minimize undue damage, maintenance costs, and provide for safe travel"—pg. 62.

-“Maintenance Level 2 is assigned to all remaining open roads within the CMPA unless otherwise prescribed under a Cooperative Management Agreement. Seasonal closures and road upgrades will be considered as needed to reduce damage to road surfaces, to protect resources, or to provide for public safety”—pg. 62.

-Land and Realty:

-Objective 1: Retain, consolidate, acquire land or interest in land with high public resource values for effective administration and improvement of resource management—pg. 58.

DOI Categorical Exclusion Reference (516 DM 2, Appendix 1): 1.7—Routine and continuing government business, including such things as supervision, administration, operations, maintenance, renovations, and replacement activities having limited context and intensity (e.g. limited size and magnitude or short-term effects).

Screening for Exceptions: The following extraordinary circumstances (516 DM 2, Appendix 2) may apply to individual actions within the categorical exceptions. The indicated specialist recommends the proposed action does *not*:

CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION EXTRAORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES DOCUMENTATION

2.1 Have significant impacts on public health or safety.

Rationale: The construction site will have to have barrier to keep the public out of the job site. With the heavy equipment and the removal of the asbestos can be a hazard to the public health. May have to close the road way up to the radio site, where you can control the public.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): John Petty, Safety Manager

Signature and Date: *John Petty* 1-31-11

2.2 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); flood plains (Executive Order 11988); national monuments; migratory birds; and other ecologically significant or critical areas.

Migratory Birds

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Matt Obradovich, Wildlife Biologist

Signature and Date: *Matt Obradovich* 1/25/2011

Rationale: This project, due to the limited time frame of July to September 2011 should have only minor effects to migratory birds. Most nesting and fledging of young birds would be completed by July and most birds would have moved to other areas for foraging. The demolition and construction would preclude bird use within a 100 yard radius of the project depending on the terrain during the noisiest times but birds would return to use the area when the project is complete.

Historic and Cultural Resources

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Scott Thomas, Archeologist

Signature and Date: *Scott Thomas* 1-25-11

Rationale: The project will not affect cultural resources because it is limited to aboveground structure replacements in their original locations.

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern/Research Natural Areas

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Doug Linn, Botanist

Signature and Date: *Doug Linn* 1/25/2011

Rationale: The proposal is outside of the existing RNA/ACEC boundaries. No impacts to RNAs or ACECs would occur as a result of implementation of the proposal.

Water Resources/Flood Plains

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Daryl Bingham, Riparian Specialist

Signature and Date: *Daryl Bingham* 27 JAN 2011

Rationale: There are no water resources present in the project area, nor is the project area located in a floodplain.

Soils, Biological Soil Crust, Prime Farmlands

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Doug Linn, Botanist

Signature and Date: *Doug Linn* 1/25/2011

Rationale: No significant impacts to these resources are foreseen as a result of implementing this proposal.

Recreation/ Visual Resources

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Mike Kelly, Outdoor Recreation Planner

Signature and Date: *Mike Kelly* 1/25/2011

Rationale: Visual resource: No significant impacts are anticipated as visual impacts will remain essentially the same as at present.

Recreation: During the construction phase there will be disruptive activity to recreation use. This will be of a short term duration and would not have any long term effects to recreation.

Wilderness/Wild and Scenic River Resources

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Eric Haakenson, Wilderness Specialist

Signature and Date: *Eric Haakenson* 1/26/2011

Rationale: This project is on state land, therefore there is no wilderness, WSA, WSR or Lands with Wilderness Characteristics present.

2.3 Have highly controversial environmental effects or involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources [NEPA Section 102(2) (E)].

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 1/31/11

Rationale: There are no known highly controversial environmental effects or unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources. Implementation of the proposal would occur within an existing communication site.

2.4 Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 1/31/11

Rationale: There are no known uncertain or potentially significant environmental effects or unique or unknown environmental risks. Implementation of the proposal would occur within an existing communication site.

2.5 Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 1/31/11

Rationale: Implementation of the proposal would not set a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Implementation of the proposal would occur within an existing communication site and other communication sites currently exist within Burns District.

2.6 Have a direct relationship to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 1/31/11

Rationale: There are no known individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects. Implementation of the proposal would occur within an existing communication site.

2.7 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.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Scott Thomas, Archeologist

Signature and Date: *Scott Thomas* 1-25-11

Rationale: The project will not affect eligible or listed National Register properties because the impacts will be confined to the original building foot print.

2.8 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.

Endangered or Threatened Species-Fauna

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Matt Obradovich, Wildlife Biologist

Signature and Date: *Matthew Obradovich* 01/25/2011

Rationale: There are no known federally listed Endangered, Threatened, or proposed to be listed species known to occur in this area or critical habitat for any listed species in the project area.

Endangered or Threatened Species-Aquatic

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Daryl Bingham, Riparian Specialist

Signature and Date: *Daryl Bingham* 27 JAN 2011

Rationale: There are no Threatened or Endangered aquatic species present in the proposed project area.

Endangered or Threatened Species-Flora

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Doug Linn, Botanist

Signature and Date: *Doug Linn* 1/25/2011

Rationale: There are no known Threatened or Endangered plant populations within the proposed project area. As there is limited potential for ONHP list 1 species of flora, a botanical clearance will be required prior to implementation.

2.9 Violate a Federal law, or a State, local, or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment.

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 1/31/11

Rationale: No known laws or requirements for protection of the environment would be violated. Implementation of the proposal would occur in an existing communication site.

2.10 Have a disproportionately high and adverse effect on low income or minority populations (Executive Order 12898).

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature and Date: *Rhonda Karges* 1/31/11

Rationale: Implementation of the proposal would not result in a disproportionately adverse effect on minority or economically disadvantaged populations as such populations do not occur in or near the project area.

2.11 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).

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Scott Thomas, Archeologist

Signature and Date: *Scott Thomas* 1-25-11

Rationale: This project will not affect access to or physical integrity of any known Indian sacred site because the project will only replace existing aboveground structures.

2.12 Contribute to the introduction, continued existence, or spread of noxious weeds or nonnative 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).

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Lesley Richman, Weed Specialist

Signature and Date: *Lesley Richman* 1/31/2011

Rationale: Noxious weeds are known to be present in limited numbers in relatively close proximity to this area. Treatments are ongoing. The weeds are not present in sufficient quantity to be considered a significant impact at this time.

Additional review (As determined by the Authorized Officer):

RMP conformance and CX review confirmation:

Specialist (Print Name and Title): Rhonda Karges, Planning and Environmental Coordinator

Signature:

Rhonda Karges

Date:

1/31/2011

Management Determination: Based upon review of this proposal, I have determined the Proposed Action is in conformance with the LUP, qualifies as a categorical exclusion and does not require further NEPA analysis.

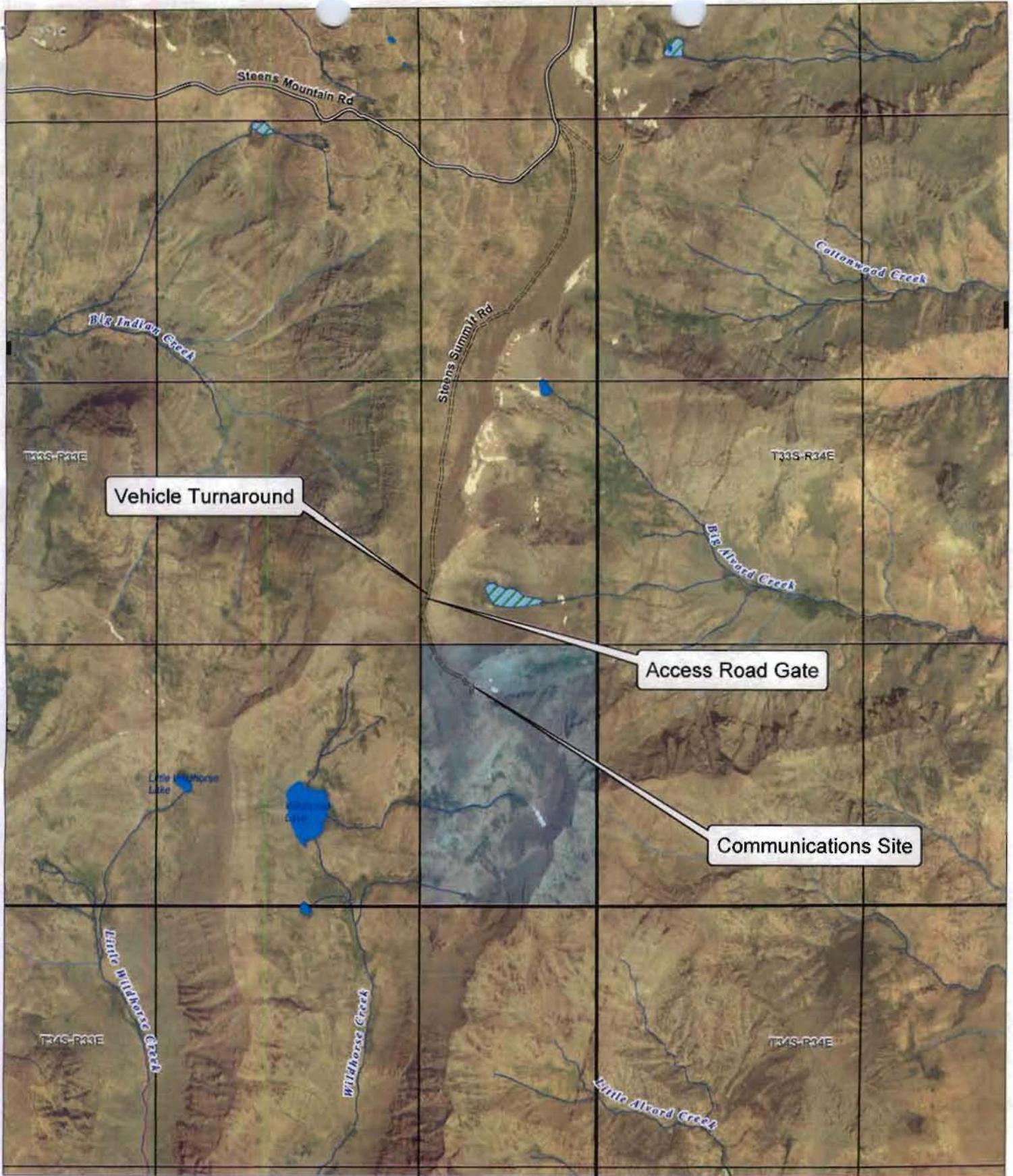
Authorized Officer (Print Name and Title): Joan Suther, Andrews/Steens Field Manager

Signature:

Joan Suther

Date:

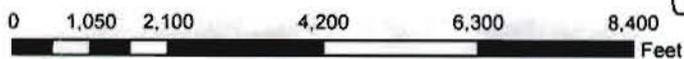
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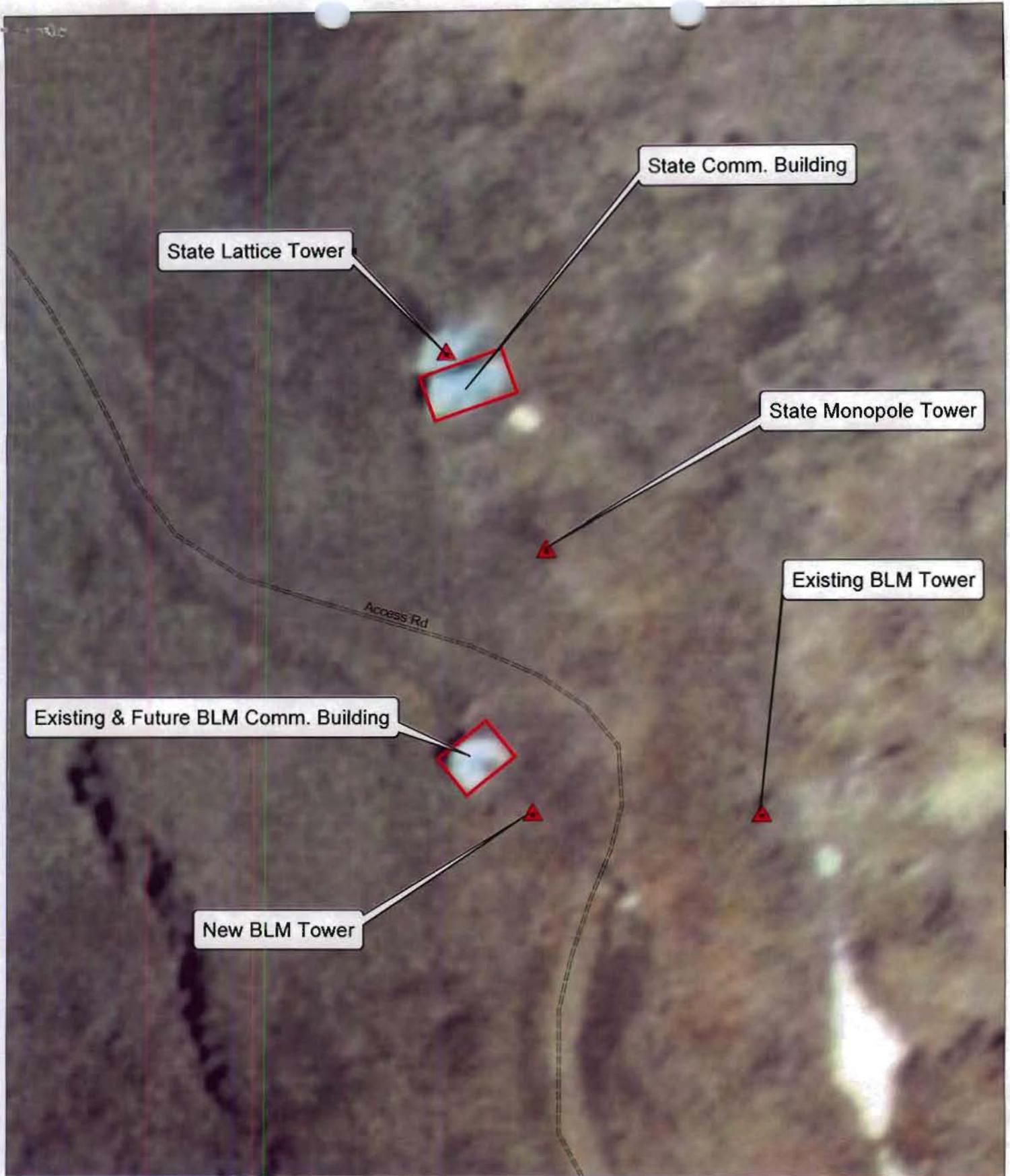
Wildhorse Rim Communications Site Vicinity Map

T. 33 S., R. 33 E.

- Legend**
- | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Paved Road | Parental Streams |
| Non-Paved Improved Road | Intermittent Stream |
| Primitive or Unknown Road Surface | Perennial Lake |
| Bureau of Land Management | Intermittent Lake |
| State | Dry Lake |
| | Marsh |

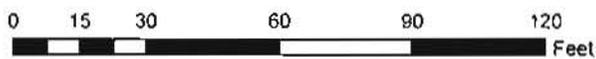


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Bureau of Land Management
Bureau Control, Oregon
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Source—Wildhorse_Rim/Wildhorse_Rim_Overview.mxd
Date Created—12/06/2010
Created By—Aaron Eiland



**Wildhorse Rim Communications Site
Detail Map**

T. 33 S., R. 33 E., Section 36



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Source: W\Wildhorse_Rim\Wildhorse_Rim_Detail.mxd
Date Created: 12/07/09
Created By: Aaron Ebbert