

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT, FONSI and DR FORM

**EA Number:** AZ-030-2012-028 Lease/Serial Case File No. AZA 23402

Kingman Field Office

Proposed Action Title/Type: Grant a Right-of-Way

Location of Proposed Action: SE¼ sec. 17, T. 20 N., R. 15 W., G&SRM.

Applicant (if any): TEP

### INTRODUCTION

In 1989 the U.S. accepted title to land in the Hualapai Mountains. A parcel of this land on Getz Peak was subject to a lease for a communications facility held by Salt River Project, predecessor in interest of TEP (TEP). This lease expired on February 28, 2009 and TEP has submitted an application to renew this lease. Since the application was received after the lease expired, TEP lost its rights to a renewal under the terms and conditions of the former lease and an entirely new lease would have to be approved in order for TEP to continue to operate the facility.

### CONFORMANCE WITH APPLICABLE LAND USE PLAN

This proposed action is in conformance with the Kingman Resource Management Plan approved March 1995.

Remarks: RMP Decision number and narrative:

LR14/B3 – Commercial mountaintop development for communication sites are restricted to the eleven described on page 67. Comment: Getz Peak is one of these designated sites.

LR16/B3 – Tower heights will be limited to a height that will not require lighting by the [FAA]. Comment: The tower at this facility is 60 ft., therefore it does not require lighting by the FAA.

LR18/C1 – Primary users are required to notify other users of new frequencies at least 30 days prior to use of new frequencies. Comment: The initial part of Article IV, Section 1, Item 2 of the Kingman area Users Association requires the following: “All users are required to complete a BLM data sheet for each transmitter prior to its installation. The data sheet shall be submitted to the Secretary with payment of the proper processing fee. Installation may not begin until 30 days following distribution of the data sheet to all members by the secretary.” If granted, the right-of-way would require the holder to join the Kingman Area Users Association and remain in good standing (refer to item 2 of Exhibit B of the draft right-of-way grant)

### PURPOSE AND NEED FOR PROPOSED ACTION

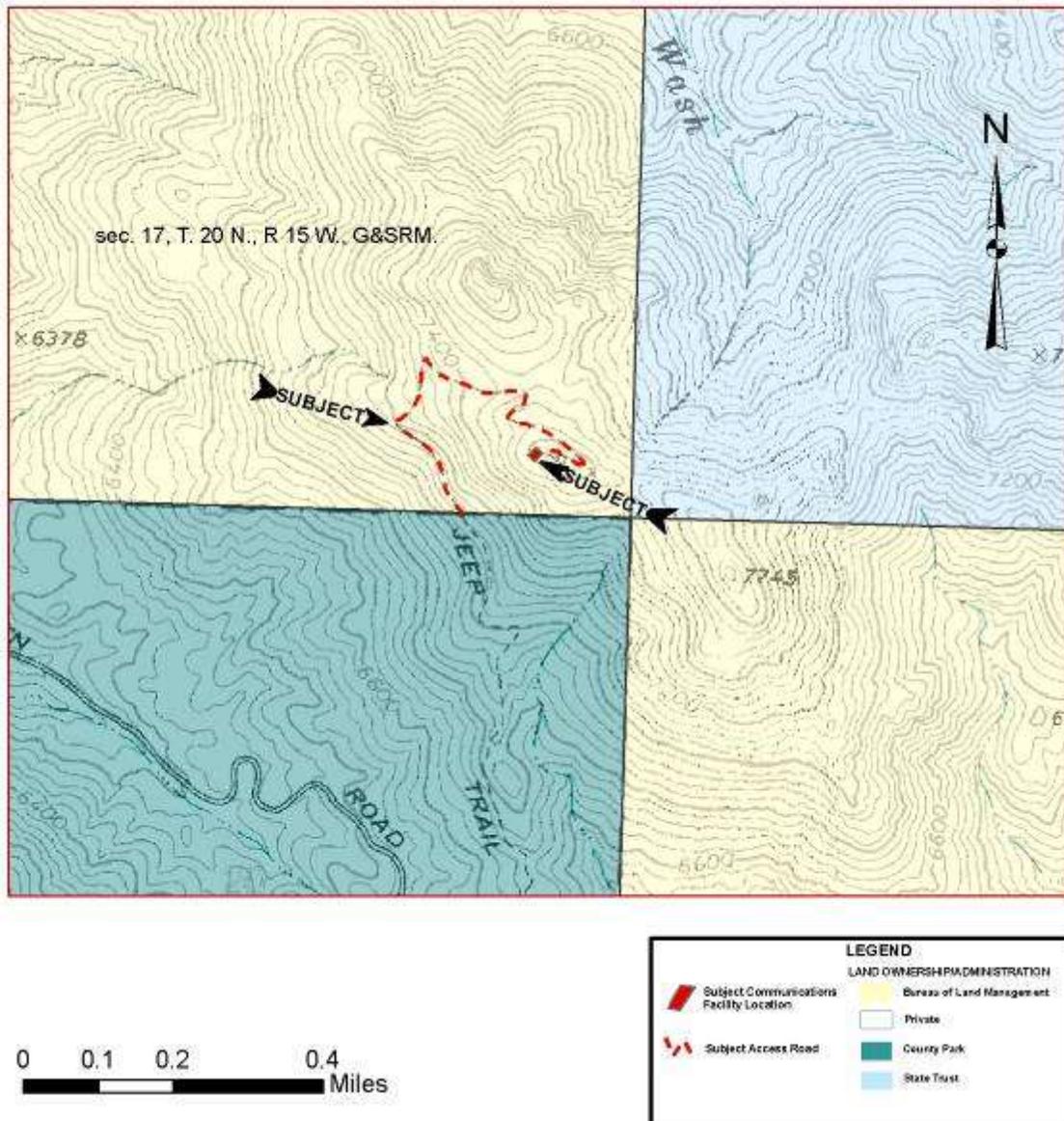
The purpose of the action is to respond to TEP’s request for the ability to continue using its facility to receive and transmit communications information on Getz Peak. The need for the action is established by the BLM’s responsibility under the Federal Land Management and Policy Act and 43 CFR Part 2800 to grant or deny a right-of-way upon the submission of a complete application.

**Decision to be Made:** The BLM authorized Officer will decide to authorize the right-of-way described in the Proposed Action Alternative, deny the right-of-way, or approve it with modifications.

### DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED ACTION ALTERNATIVE

The Proposed Action is to grant a right-of-way to TEP for the operation, maintenance, and termination of

facilities that were previously authorized under a lease with the former landowner. The facilities consist of a 10 ft. by 21 ft. building, 60 ft. tall free standing tower, and a 500 gallon propane tank. These are within a 19 ft. by 44 ft. area fenced with 6 ft. high chain link. This is located within the 0.13 acre site, which is cleared of vegetation for access to all sides of the facility except for a boulder pile immediately to the east of the fenced area. The right-of-way would include the portion of the access road on public land, which is approximately 12 ft. wide and 3,100 ft. long, which occupies approximately 0.854 acres. All of the above described facilities/improvements are within the SE¼ sec. 17, T. 20 N., R. 15 W., G&SRM. (refer to the map below). The term of the right-of-way would be through December 31, 2032. No changes to the buildings, tower, road, or other improvements are a part of the Proposed Action.



**Map 1: Proposed Communications Facility Right-of-Way Area and Access Road**  
**DESCRIPTION OF NO ACTION ALTERNATIVE**

The No Action Alternative is to deny the right-of-way.

## AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The affected environment was considered and analyzed by an interdisciplinary team as documented in the KFO Project Scoping Form found in the Administrative Record for this proposal. Resources of concern that are either not present in the project area or would not be impacted to a degree that requires detailed analysis will not be discussed here. Resources which could be impacted by the proposed action or alternatives are discussed below.

The general setting of the area is within a Ponderosa and Pinion Pine/Arizona Interior Chaparral vegetation community at an elevation of approximately 7,600 ft. above mean sea level (a.m.s.l.). The location of the facility is near the summit of South Getz Peak on its western side. The access road which would be included in the right-of-way traverses a predominantly Arizona Interior Chaparral vegetation community interspersed with pinion trees along most of its route until it reaches the northwestern and northern slope of South Getz Peak at an elevation of approximately 7,400 ft. a.m.s.l. where it traverses the same vegetation community in which the communication facility is located.

This section describes the existing conditions of the environment and expected impacts. The table below summarizes the resources reviewed for this project. Resources not present within the project study area, as well as those present and not affected, are not discussed. Those resources that have been identified by an interdisciplinary team as present and potentially affected are discussed further below.

PROJECT RESOURCE review				
Resources Considered	Not Present	Present and Not Affected	Present and/or Potentially Affected	Comments
Air Quality*	X			
Areas of Critical Environmental Concern*	X			
Cultural and Historic*	X			
Environmental Justice* / Socioeconomics	X			
Floodplains*	X			
Grazing		X		This is within the Hualapai Peak Grazing allotment (GR# 0047). The facilities that would be authorized under the proposed right-of-way have not in the past nor is it anticipated these would affect forage quantity, availability, or livestock movement and management.
Hazardous or Solid Waste*	X			
Invasive and Non-native Species*		X		No new ground disturbing activities are proposed, so the potential for the Proposed Action to introduce new species or to increase the spread of non-native species such as red brome is highly unlikely.
Land Use	X			

PROJECT RESOURCE review				
Resources Considered	Not Present	Present and Not Affected	Present and/or Potentially Affected	Comments
Migratory Birds*		X		Migratory birds are likely to use this area for foraging and possibly nesting. Since the majority of the Proposed Action would entail operation and maintenance activities of the facility, these are ongoing activities which would not normally affect foraging and nesting activities. Upon termination a term and conditions of the Proposed Action would be through the approval of a termination and rehabilitation plan.
Native American Religious Concerns*	X			
Prime and Unique Farmland*	X			
Threatened and Endangered Species*	X			
Vegetation		X		Vegetation that encroached within the access road would be impacted by trimming and in some cases individual plants would “slough off” the hillside immediately upslope of the access road.
Visual Resources		X		Refer to the Visual Resource Management portion of the Environmental Impacts section.
Water Quality*	X			
Wetland or Riparian Zones*	X			
Wild and Scenic Rivers*	X			
Wilderness*	X			
Wildlife		X		Since the majority of the Proposed Action would entail operation and maintenance activities of the facility, these are ongoing activities which would not normally affect wildlife use of the area.
* Consideration Required By Law or Executive Order				

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

### Expected Impacts from the Proposed Action

Visual Resource Management: The proposal lies within an area that has been classified as Visual Resource Management Class (VRM) II in the Kingman RMP. The objective for this classification is to retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be low. Management activities may be seen, but should not attract the attention of the casual observer. The existing character of the landscape includes rugged mountains and heavy vegetation interspersed with buildings, towers, electric and communications lines and access roads. Casual observers would most likely include some residents in the Pine Lake and Lazy YU subdivisions, hikers, primarily those using Mohave County’s trails in Hualapai Mountain Park, OHV enthusiasts, and people who work on the communications facilities in the area. The existing communications facility does not change any of the basic elements of the landscape (form, line, color, of texture) and is not evident in the characteristic landscape. A term and condition of the Proposed Action would

be that the right-of-way holder would have to consult with the BLM prior to making any changes in the exterior finishes to ensure colors compatible with the landscape are to be used. Therefore the Proposed Action Alternative is compatible with the VRM Classification of this area.

Operation of TEP and UNS Electric Grid: The continuation of the operation of this facility under the proposed right-of-way would allow the applicant's electrical grid to function in a safe, efficient manner.

#### Impacts from Connected Actions

Access Through Hualapai Mountain County Park – Although no formal agreement exists between TEP and Mohave County, in order for the TEP to maintain and operate the facility in the same manner it has in the past, it would be anticipated that periodic maintenance of the access road that is within the Hualapai Mountain County Park would occur. This kind of activity is anticipated by Mohave County Parks Department, which does not have intentions of preventing this maintenance. Impacts from this would be the same as described in the table above regarding the periodic sloughing off of individual plants immediately upslope from the road.

#### Impacts from the No Action Alternative

Visual Resource Management: The site would be reclaimed and return to its former state and so no visual intrusions from the facility would exist.

Operation of TEP and UNS Electric Grid: By eliminating the communications paths and links this facility provides, a significant portion of the applicant's electrical grid would not function.

#### Cumulative Impacts

The granting of the right-of-way described in the proposed action alternative section above would be an action in addition to other communications facilities currently authorized on North and South Getz Peak along with the consideration of two proposed communications facilities.

Existing Facilities: Currently there is one other communication facility located on South Getz Peak besides TEP's. This consists of two buildings and towers which are approximately 175 to 300 feet to the east-southeast of TEP's facility. The dimensions for this facility are unspecified. Another facility is located approximately 1,080 ft. west of TEP's facility on the western flank of Getz Peak consisting of a 195 ft. tall free standing tower and building within a 35 ft. by 37 ft. fenced area. Two communications facilities exist on North Getz Peak, one of these consists of a building and tower of unspecified dimensions and another with a small tower of unspecified height with a cabinet attached to it to house communications equipment.

Proposed Facilities: Two new facilities are proposed in this area, one each on North and South Getz Peak. These would be similar in size and nature to facility authorized under the proposed action alternative. The facility proposed for South Getz Peak would be located approximately 125 ft. east of TEP's facility. This proposed facility would consist of a 60 ft. tall free standing tower and 12 ft. by 20 ft. building. The other facility, proposed for North Getz Peak, would have a 60 ft. tall free standing tower and a 8 ft. by 16 ft. building. This would be located approximately 1,300 ft. north-northwest of TEP's facility. Decisions on whether or not to authorize these are anticipated by the end of 2012/beginning of 2013.

Visual Resource Management: There would be a slight increase in the cumulative visual intrusiveness by allowing TEP's facility to remain in conjunction with the existing facilities and the two proposed facilities. In considering the allowable threshold of the visual intrusiveness of the two proposed facilities in light of

conformity with the objectives for this area, the new facilities would either have to have design features incorporated into the facilities or be adequately mitigated through terms and conditions of the authorizations to ensure that they could be authorized. Given that the cumulative impacts to visual resource management with the existing facilities, including TEP's, is currently acceptable, and any new facilities would have to conform to the land use plan in regards to visual resource management, cumulative impacts in regards to visual resource management would have to be acceptable.

**Impacts from Operation Maintenance Activities:** Operation and maintenance activities for the existing facilities include the periodic visits to these for maintenance, typically by use of four wheel drive pick-ups and sports utility vehicles, deliveries of propane for back up electrical generation by the use of approximately 2.5 ton four wheel drive trucks, the periodic maintenance to the access road, which typically occurs once every year to two years, and the infrequent maintenance of the electric line serving these facilities.

If the two proposed facilities are authorized the human activity in this area would temporarily increase by the construction of these facilities. Construction activities for the proposed facility on North Getz Peak would be done during two periods lasting approximately one week each over the course of two months. It is unknown how long the facilities proposed for South Getz Peak would last, but given the similarity in sizes with the other proposed facility, it is likely this would be similar in duration.

Over the long run, should the two new facilities be authorized along with TEP's, the maintenance activities in this area, i.e. more vehicle traffic to and from these sites, would be at about twice what it would be if the No Action Alternative is chosen and the authorization for the two proposed facilities are denied. It is anticipated the cumulative impacts from the operation and maintenance of these six facilities would be at an acceptable level.

It is not anticipated that by authorizing TEP's and the two proposed facilities would necessarily increase the need for maintenance of the road or the electric line since maintenance requirements for these are more related to weather events than by their use. It would be anticipated that these activities would remain infrequent and therefore the impacts would remain minor.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AND RESIDUAL IMPACTS:**

See terms and conditions of the proposed lease.

#### **PERSONS/AGENCIES CONSULTED:**

Mike Gibelyou, Agent for Tucson Electric Power  
Shawn Blackburn, Director, Mohave County Parks Department  
Len Marceau, Outdoor Rec. Planner, BLM Kingman F.O.  
Rebecca Peck, Wildlife Biologist, BLM Kingman F.O.  
Tim Watkins, Archaeologist, BLM Kingman F.O.

Preparer(s): Andy Whitefield  
Environmental Coordinator: Ramone McCoy

Bureau of Land Management, Kingman Field Office  
FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**NEPA Document Number:** DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2012-0028-EA

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

/ s / Ruben A. Sanchez  
Field Manager, Kingman

8/10/2012  
Date

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DECISION RECORD

**NEPA Document Number:** DOI-BLM-AZ-C010-2012-0028-EA

Decision: My decision is to offer the right-of-way to Tucson Electric Power Company (TEPC) to authorize its communications facility on Getz Peak in accordance with the terms, conditions, and stipulations contained in the attached draft grant.

Rationale for Decision: TEPC has operated its facility on Getz Peak since it was assigned from Salt River Project in July 2006 in accordance with the lease agreement with the former landowner. That lease expired, along with TEPC's right to renewal under the terms and conditions of that lease. The right-of-way grant offered to TEPC would replace that lease agreement, bringing the authorizing instrument into standard conformance for BLM's authorization of facilities such as the one described under the proposed Action alternative in the attached EA.

Stipulations: Refer to the attached right-of-way grant for the terms, conditions, and stipulations under which the facilities described in the Proposed Action Alternative would be operated, maintained and terminated.

\_\_\_\_\_/ s / Ruben A. Sanchez  
Field Manager, Kingman

\_\_\_\_\_/ 8/10/2012  
Date