



# U.S. Department of Energy Categorical Exclusion Determination Form

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Proposed Action Title:

Maintenance and Wood Pole Replacement along the Gila Wellton Mohawk 161-kV Transmission Line, Yuma County, Arizona (Structures 0/1 to 12/8 excluding 6/6)

Program or Field Office: Western Area Power Administration/ Desert Southwest Region

Location(s) (City/County/State): Liguria, Yuma County, Arizona

Proposed Action Description:

Western proposes to conduct specific and general maintenance activities episodically along the 13-mile-long Gila to Wellton Mohawk 161-kV Transmission Line (Structures 0/1 to 12/8 excluding 6/6) beginning 1/2/2013. As shown on the attached maps, known maintenance activities include: removing vegetation near Structures 0/3 and 1/5 to 1/7; Replace or repair broken ground wire at Structures 0/7, 4/6, 6/8, 11/1, 12/2; Replace missing X-brace at 10/3; and replace wood pole structures at 11/5, 11/7, 11/8, 12/5, 12/5A, and 12/8. In addition, Western plans to conduct maintenance activities such as wood pole replacement along the entire line as needed over the next 10 years.

The project area is located north of Interstate-8 and south of the Gila River between Yuma and Liguria in Yuma County, Arizona as shown on the attached maps. It is situated on land managed by the U.S Bureau of Reclamation and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. It occurs in portions of Township 9 South, Ranges 20, 21 & 22 West on the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian. The corresponding USGS maps are Fortuna and Liguria, Arizona.

Special Conditions:  
See attached list of special conditions.

Categorical Exclusion(s) Applied:

B1.3 - Routine maintenance

For the complete DOE National Environmental Policy Act regulations regarding categorical exclusions, including the full text of each categorical exclusion, see Subpart D of [10 CFR Part 1021](#).

Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410(b): (See full text in regulation)

The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix A or B to 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D.

To fit within the classes of actions listed in 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, a proposal must be one that would not: (1) threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety, and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders; (2) require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities; (3) disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases; (4) have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources, including, but not limited to, those listed in paragraph B(4) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B; (5) involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those listed in paragraph B(5) of 10 CFR Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B.

There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal.

The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. This proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1)), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211 concerning limitations on actions during preparation of an environmental impact statement.

Based on my review of the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1B), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class(es) of action, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

NEPA Compliance Officer: *Jordan Marcantoni*

Date Determined: *1-3-13*

## Categorical Exclusion Determination Form (continued)

Maintenance and Wood Pole Replacement along the Gila Wellton Mohawk 161-kV Transmission Line, Yuma County, Arizona (Structures 0/1 to 12/8; excluding 6/6)

### Special Conditions:

The attached maps highlight locations of the below-listed special conditions

#### **Lands**

- 1) On Federal lands, Western will follow the maintenance procedures and stipulations stated in ROW Grant AZAR 000367 for maintenance activities.
- 2) On Federal lands, Western will not create new access roads or widen existing access road located without authorization.
- 3) On Federal lands, Western will drive on existing access roads to reach maintenance work areas.

#### **Cultural**

- 4) Between Structures 0/3 and 0/4, avoid the Southern Pacific Railroad tracks and bed.
- 5) Between Structures 6/2 and 6/3, avoid blading and stay on existing access road. Cultural monitor is needed for maintenance work located southwest of the existing transmission line access road.
- 6) Between Structure 6/5 and 6/7, avoid blading and stay on existing access roads. A cultural monitor is needed for maintenance work that occurs off of the existing transmission line access road.
- 7) At Structure 6/6, ground-disturbing maintenance work such as pole replacement, insulator repair or guy anchor replacement requires a separate environmental review.
- 8) Near Structure 8/5, avoid blading a portion of old U.S. 80 road bed.
- 9) Near Structure 8/7, avoid blading a portion of old U.S. 80 road bed.
- 10) Between 8/7 and 8/9, avoid blading and stay on existing access road. A cultural monitor is needed for maintenance work situated off of the existing transmission line access road.
- 11) Near Structure 9/6, avoid blading two portions of old U.S. 80 road bed.
- 12) At Structure 11/2, avoid blading and stay on existing access road. A cultural monitor is needed for all maintenance work.
- 13) Between 11/4 and 11/5, avoid blading and stay on the existing access road. A cultural monitor is needed for maintenance work located off of the existing transmission line access road.
- 14) At Structure 11/7, avoid blading and stay on the existing access road between the ADOT parking area and the structure. Avoid driving or blading on the existing dirt road east of Structure 11/7. A cultural monitor is needed for maintenance work situated off of the existing transmission line access road.
- 15) Between Structure 11/8 and 12/1, avoid blading and stay on the existing access road. A cultural monitor is needed for maintenance work that occurs off of the existing transmission line access road.

16) Between Structures 12/8 and the takeoff structure, avoid the existing Wellton Mohawk Canal.

### **Biological**

17) A desert tortoise protection education program shall be presented to all employees, inspectors, supervisors, contractors, and subcontractors who carry out proposed activities at the project site. The education program shall include discussions of the following:

- a. The legal and sensitive status of the tortoise;
- b. A brief discussion of tortoise life, history, and ecology
- c. Mitigation measures designed to reduce adverse effects to tortoises; and
- d. Protocols to follow if a tortoise is encountered, including appropriate contact points.

18) Between Structures 5/2 and 10/3, work will be conducted between November 1 and February 28, outside of the desert tortoise activity period, as feasible. A Biological Monitor will conduct a pre-construction survey prior to the start of any ground disturbance or vegetation clearing activities in this part of the alignment to determine whether desert tortoises or their burrows are present.

19) If work must take place during the desert tortoise activity season (March 1 to October 31), or if a potentially occupied desert tortoise burrow is present at or near a work site, the Biological Monitor will be present during all project activities between structures 5/2 and 10/3.

20) No construction activities will take place in the vicinity of a desert tortoise. If a desert tortoise is observed, it may be moved out of harm way according only by biologists authorized by the BLM and the AGFD. The Biological Monitor and all workers shall regularly observe the work areas for desert tortoise. At any time a desert tortoise is seen within or near any work area (including access roads, turnouts, staging areas, etc.), the Biological Monitor and project supervisor will be immediately notified.

21) Project activities involving ground disturbance or vegetation management will be conducted between September 1 and January 31, outside the breeding season for nesting birds, as feasible. Outside of this period, the Biological Monitor will conduct pre-construction surveys for bird nests in all work areas subject to ground disturbance or vegetation management activities prior to beginning work. Project activities may not disturb an active bird nest. If an active bird nest is located on or adjacent to the site, the Biological Monitor will designate and flag an appropriate buffer area around the nest where activities will not be permitted.

22) Project activities involving ground disturbance, including driving off existing access routes, occurring at any time of year, will require a pre-construction survey to determine if burrowing owls or active burrowing owl burrows are present. If a burrowing owl or active burrow is present within or near the work area, the Biological Monitor will designate and flag an appropriate buffer area around the owl burrow where activities will not be permitted..

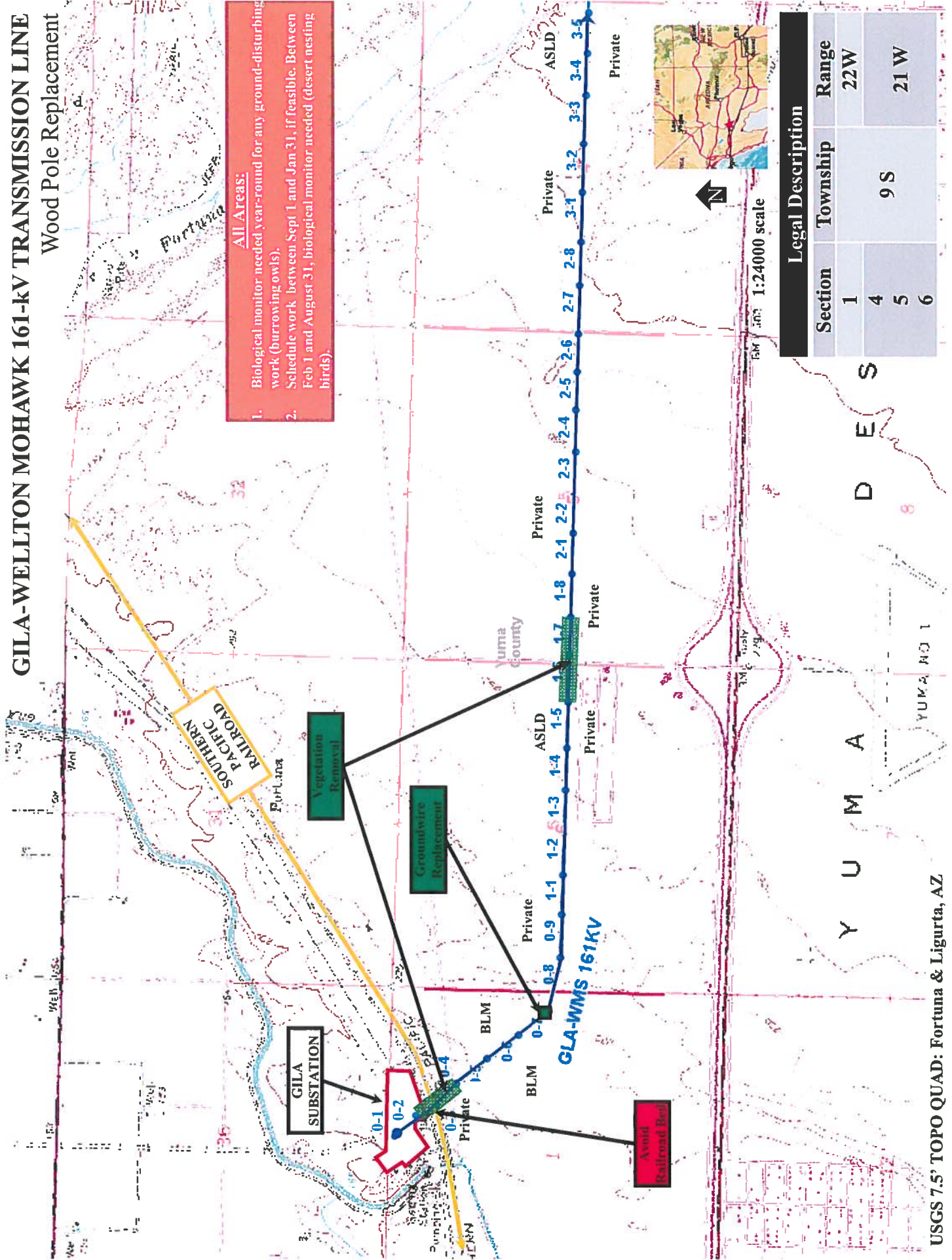
Checklist for Categorical Exclusion Determination, revised Nov. 2011

<b>Application of Categorical Exclusions (1021.410)</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Unknown</b>
(b)(1) The proposal fits within a class of actions that is listed in appendix A or B to subpart D.		X	
(b)(2) There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal, including, but not limited to, scientific controversy about the environmental effects of the proposal; uncertain effects or effects involving unique or unknown risks; and unresolved conflicts concerning alternate uses of available resources		X	
(b)(3) The proposal has not been segmented to meet the definition of a categorical exclusion. Segmentation can occur when a proposal is broken down into small parts in order to avoid the appearance of significance of the total action. The scope of a proposal must include the consideration of connected and cumulative actions, that is, the proposal is not connected to other actions with potentially significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.25(a)(1), is not related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant impacts (40 CFR 1508.27(b)(7)), and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or § 1021.211 of this part concerning limitations on actions during EIS preparation.		X	
<b>B. Conditions that are Integral Elements of the Classes of Actions in Appendix B. :</b>	<b>NO</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>UNKNOWN</b>
(1) Threaten a violation of applicable statutory, regulatory, or permit requirements for environment, safety and health, or similar requirements of DOE or Executive Orders.	X		
(2) Require siting and construction or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities (including incinerators), but the proposal may include categorically excluded waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment actions or facilities;	X		
(3) Disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminants, or CERCLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that preexist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled or unpermitted releases;	X		
(4) Have the potential to cause significant impacts on environmentally sensitive resources. An environmentally sensitive resource is typically a resource that has been identified as needing protection through Executive Order, statute, or regulation by Federal, state, or local government, or a federally recognized Indian tribe. An action may be categorically excluded if, although sensitive resources are present, the action would not have the potential to cause significant impacts on those resources (such as construction of a building with its foundation well above a sole-source aquifer or upland surface soil removal on a site that has wetlands). Environmentally sensitive resources include, but are not limited to:	X		

(i)	Property (such as sites, buildings, structures, and objects) of historic, archaeological, or architectural significance designated by a Federal, state, or local government, or property determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places;	X		
(ii)	Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their habitat (including critical habitat) or Federally- proposed or candidate species or their habitat (Endangered Species Act); state-listed or state-proposed endangered or threatened species or their habitat; Federally-protected marine mammals and Essential Fish Habitat (Marine Mammal Protection Act; Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act); and otherwise Federally-protected species (such as under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act or the Migratory Bird Treaty Act);	X		
(iii)	Floodplains and wetlands (as defined in 10 CFR 1022.4, —Compliance with Floodplain and Wetland Environmental Review Requirements: “Definitions,” or its successor);	X		
(iv)	Areas having a special designation such as Federally- and state-designated wilderness areas, national parks, national monuments, national natural landmarks, wild and scenic rivers, state and Federal wildlife refuges, scenic areas (such as National Scenic and Historic Trails or National Scenic Areas), and marine sanctuaries;	X		
(v)	Prime or unique farmland, or other farmland of statewide or local importance, as defined at 7 CFR 658.2(a), —Farmland Protection Policy Act: Definitions,   or its successor;	X		
(vi)	Special sources of water (such as sole-source aquifers, wellhead protection areas, and other water sources that are vital in a region); and	X		
(vii)	Tundra, coral reefs, or rain forests.; or	X		
(5)	Involve genetically engineered organisms, synthetic biology, governmentally designated noxious weeds, or invasive species, unless the proposed activity would be contained or confined in a manner designed and operated to prevent unauthorized release into the environment and conducted in accordance with applicable requirements, such as those of the Department of Agriculture, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the National Institutes of Health.	X		

# GILA-WELLTON MOHAWK 161-kV TRANSMISSION LINE

## Wood Pole Replacement



**All Areas:**

1. Biological monitor needed year-round for any ground-disturbing work (burrowing owls). Schedule work between Sept 1 and Jan 31, if feasible. Between Feb 1 and August 31, biological monitor needed (desert nesting birds).
- 2.

Legal Description			
Section	Township	Range	
1	9 S	22 W	
4			
5			
6			21 W

# GILA-WELLTON MOHAWK 161-kV TRANSMISSION LINE

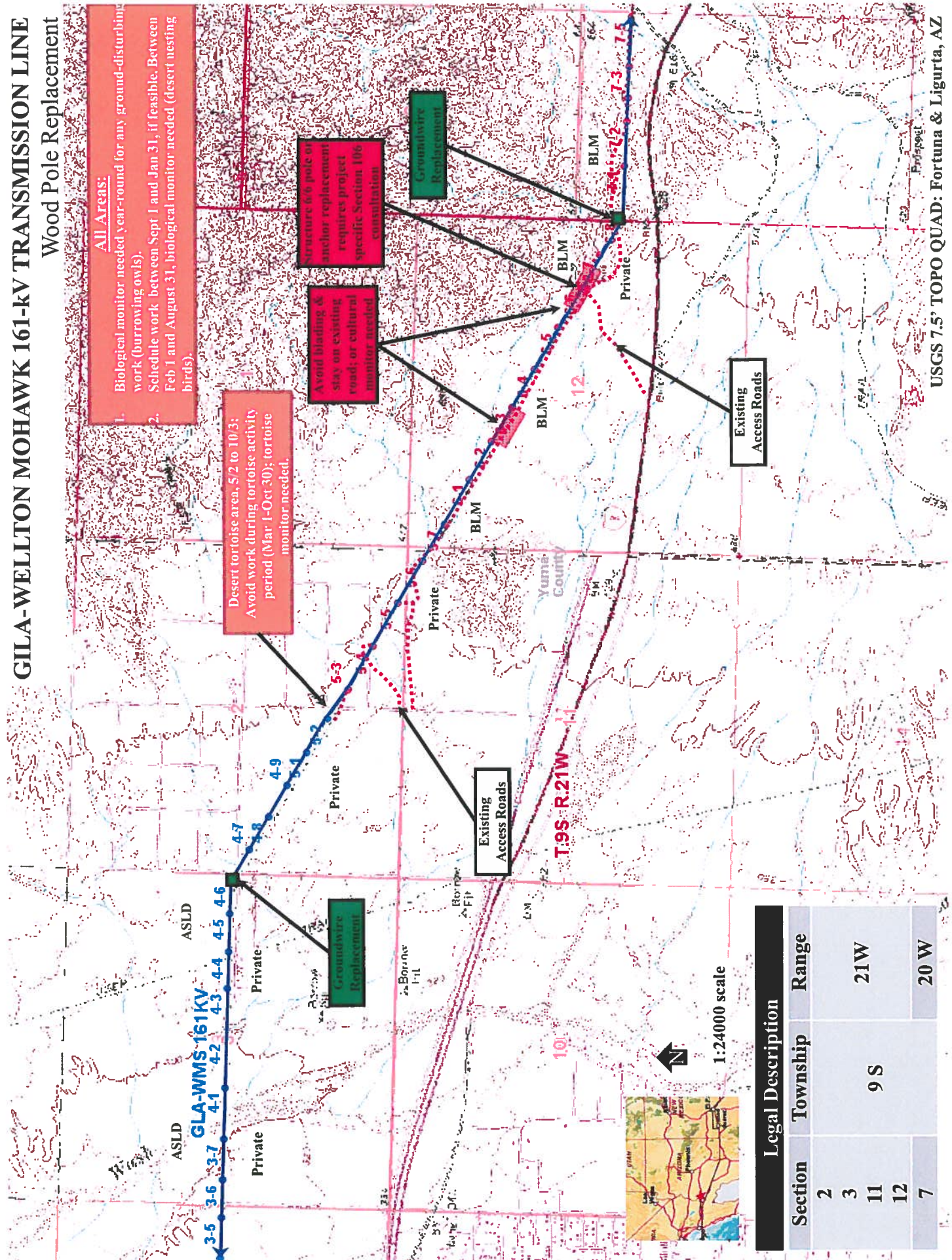
## Wood Pole Replacement

- All Areas:**
1. Biological monitor needed year-round for any ground-disturbing work (burrowing owls).
  2. Schedule work between Sept 1 and Jan 31, if feasible. Between Feb 1 and August 31, biological monitor needed (desert nesting birds).

Desert tortoise area, 5/2 to 10/3;  
Avoid work during tortoise activity period (Mar 1-Oct 30); tortoise monitor needed.

Avoid blading & stay on existing road; or cultural monitor needed.

Structure & anchor replacement requires project specific Section 106 consultation.

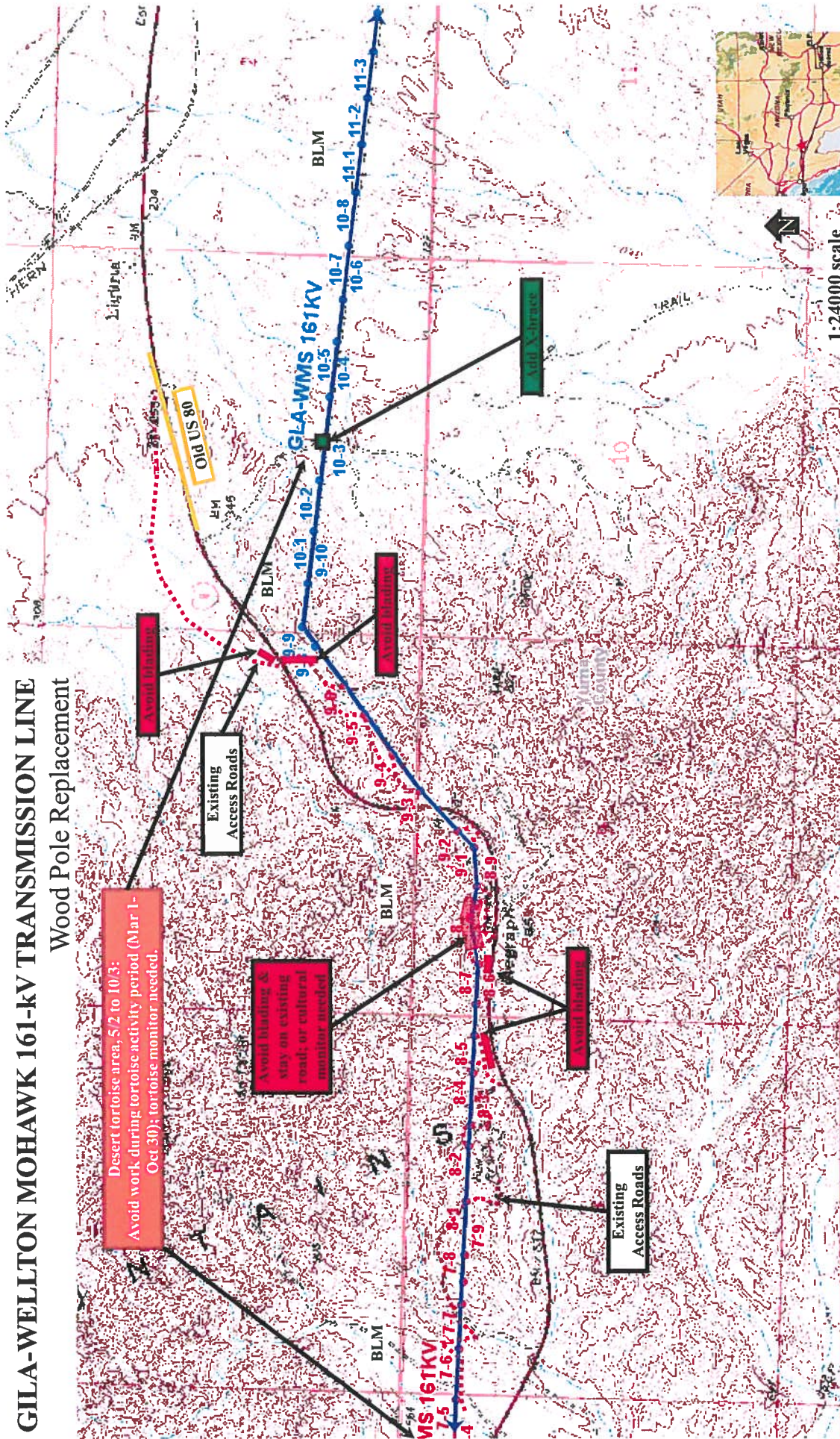


1:24000 scale

Legal Description		
Section	Township	Range
2	9 S	21W
3		
11	9 S	21W
12		
7	20 W	

# GILA-WELLTON MOHAWK 161-KV TRANSMISSION LINE

## Wood Pole Replacement



Desert tortoise area, S/2 to 10/3:  
 Avoid work during tortoise activity period (Mar 1-  
 Oct. 30); tortoise monitor needed.

Avoid Blading &  
 stay on existing  
 roads; or cultural  
 monitor needed

Existing  
 Access Roads

- All Areas:**
1. Biological monitor needed year-round for any ground-disturbing work (burrowing owls).
  2. Schedule work between Sept 1 and Jan 31, if feasible. Between Feb 1 and August 31, biological monitor needed (desert nesting birds).

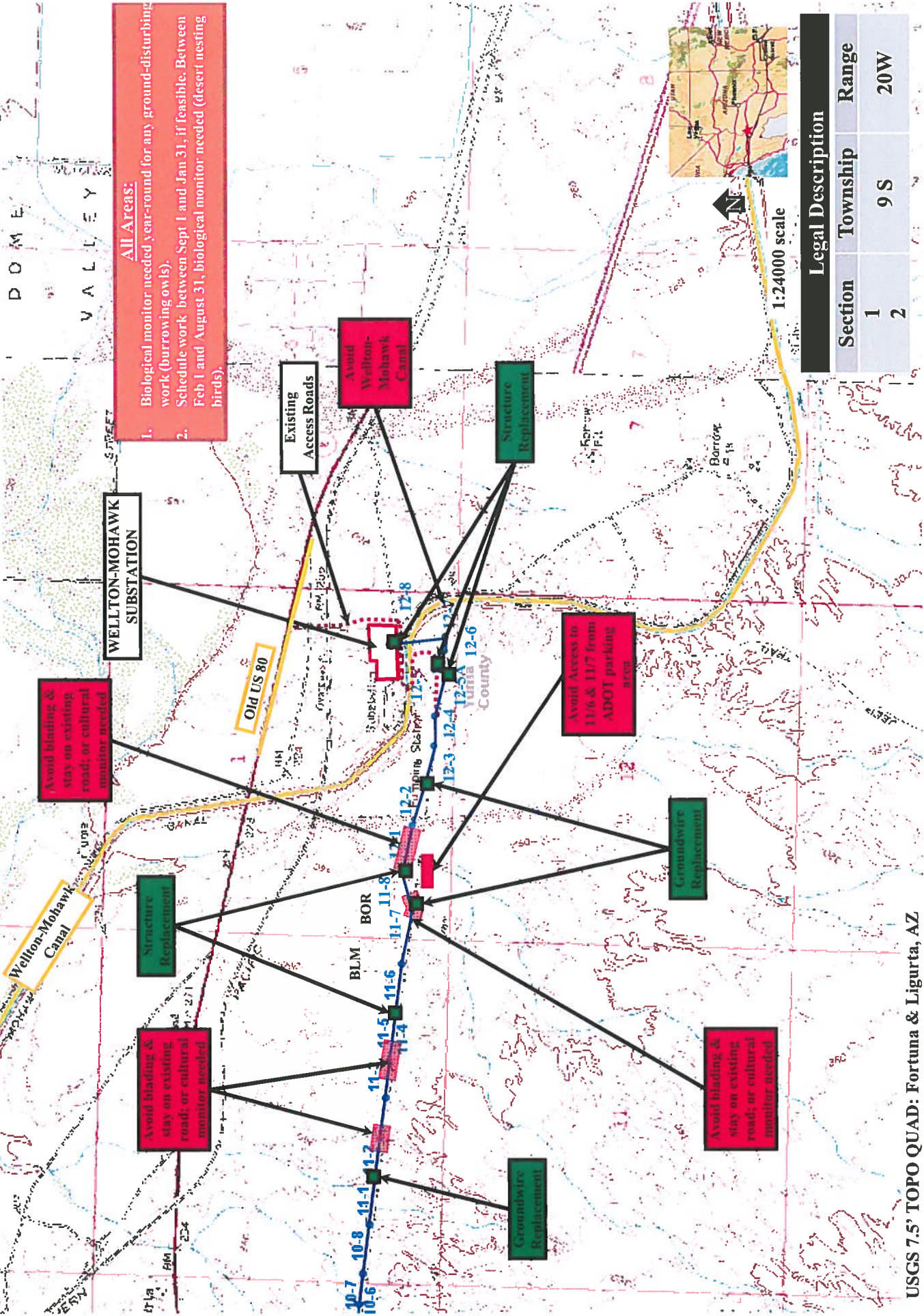
### Legal Description

Section	Township	Range
2	9 S	20 W
3		
4		
8		
9		



# GILA-WELLTON MOHAWK 161-kV TRANSMISSION LINE

## Wood Pole Replacement



- All Areas:**
1. Biological monitor needed year-round for any ground-disturbing work (burrowing owls).
  2. Schedule work between Sept 1 and Jan 31, if feasible. Between Feb 1 and August 31, biological monitor needed (desert nesting birds).

Legal Description		
Section	Township	Range
1	9 S	20W
2	9 S	20W