
Black Jack

The Black Jack study area is located southwest of the Little Maria Mountains and northeast of the McCoy Mountains, approximately 16 miles northwest of the City of Blythe.

Existing Conditions

General Site Conditions

The study area is located on a wide, flat, desert wash. The elevation of the study area is approximately 980 feet above sea level. The soils observed consist of desert pavement throughout, except in the center where a stretch of compacted silt occurs beneath a north-south strip of vegetation. No USDA soil surveys were completed for this area. Land use in the vicinity consists of a frequently used mining-access road to the east, but otherwise surrounded by open space. The study area is subject to disturbance associated with traffic on the adjacent access road.

Vegetation

The eastern and western portions of the study area are barren with sparse occurrences of creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and burro-weed (*Ambrosia dumosa*). The central portion of the study area contains a north-south stretch of comparatively dense Sonoran creosote bush scrub. This community contains creosote bush, burro-weed, brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), white rhatany (*Krameria greyi*), and catclaw acacia (*Acacia greggii*).

Wildlife

No wildlife species were observed or otherwise detected during the survey. Wildlife species expected to occur are those commonly found in desert scrub habitats such as greater road runner (*Geococcyx californianus*), deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and zebra-tailed lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides*).

Sensitive Biological Resources

Sensitive Species

Federally and State Listed Species

The study area contains suitable habitat for desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), a State- and federally-listed threatened species. The species was not observed within the study area. Focused surveys are necessary to determine the occupancy status of the species onsite.

CSC

The study area contains suitable habitat for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), a CSC. The species was not observed within the study area. Even though CSC are not protected by any State or federal laws or policies, burrowing owl is protected under the MBTA and CDFG Code.

Other Sensitive Species

No suitable habitat for sensitive species not specifically protected under any other policy occurs on the study area.

Critical Habitat

The study area is not located within any USFWS-designated Critical Habitat.

Nesting Birds

No nests or nesting activities were observed during the survey; however, the study area contains suitable nesting habitat for ground and shrub nesting avian species, such as killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*) and greater roadrunner.

California Desert Native Plant Act

The study area contains catclaw acacia, a plant species protected under Section 80073 of the CDNPA. According to Section 80073 of the CDNPA, no catclaw acacia (including both dead and live) may be harvested except under a permit issued by the County Agricultural Commissioner or the sheriff. The commissioner may establish limits on the quantity of catclaw acacia which may be taken under any permit and on the number of permits for the taking of catclaw acacia which may be issued.

Jurisdictional Waters

A stretch of silty soils and relatively dense desert vegetation occurs on a linear, north-south path through the center of the study area. No definable bank nor any ordinary high water marks were found and the vegetation present in the vicinity is comprised of entirely upland and facultative upland plant species. The path is a swale upslope of the headwaters for a drainage feature located south of the study area. No features jurisdictional under CDFG, USACE, or RWQCB occur on the study area and none will be impacted by the development of the study area. Additionally, no wetlands, vernal pools, or suitable habitat for sensitive fairy shrimp species occur on or in the vicinity of the study area.

Wildlife Corridors and Movement

Given the limited size and minimal disturbance associated with the development for the study area, no impacts to any wildlife corridors or wildlife movement patterns are anticipated.

Applicable HCP or Land Use Management Plan

The study area is located on federal land managed by the BLM and is subject to the Northern and Eastern Colorado Desert amendment (NECD) to the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. Approval by the BLM must be obtained prior to construction.

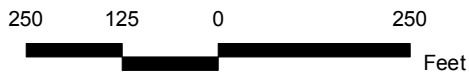


Source: Riverside County NAIP, 2005.



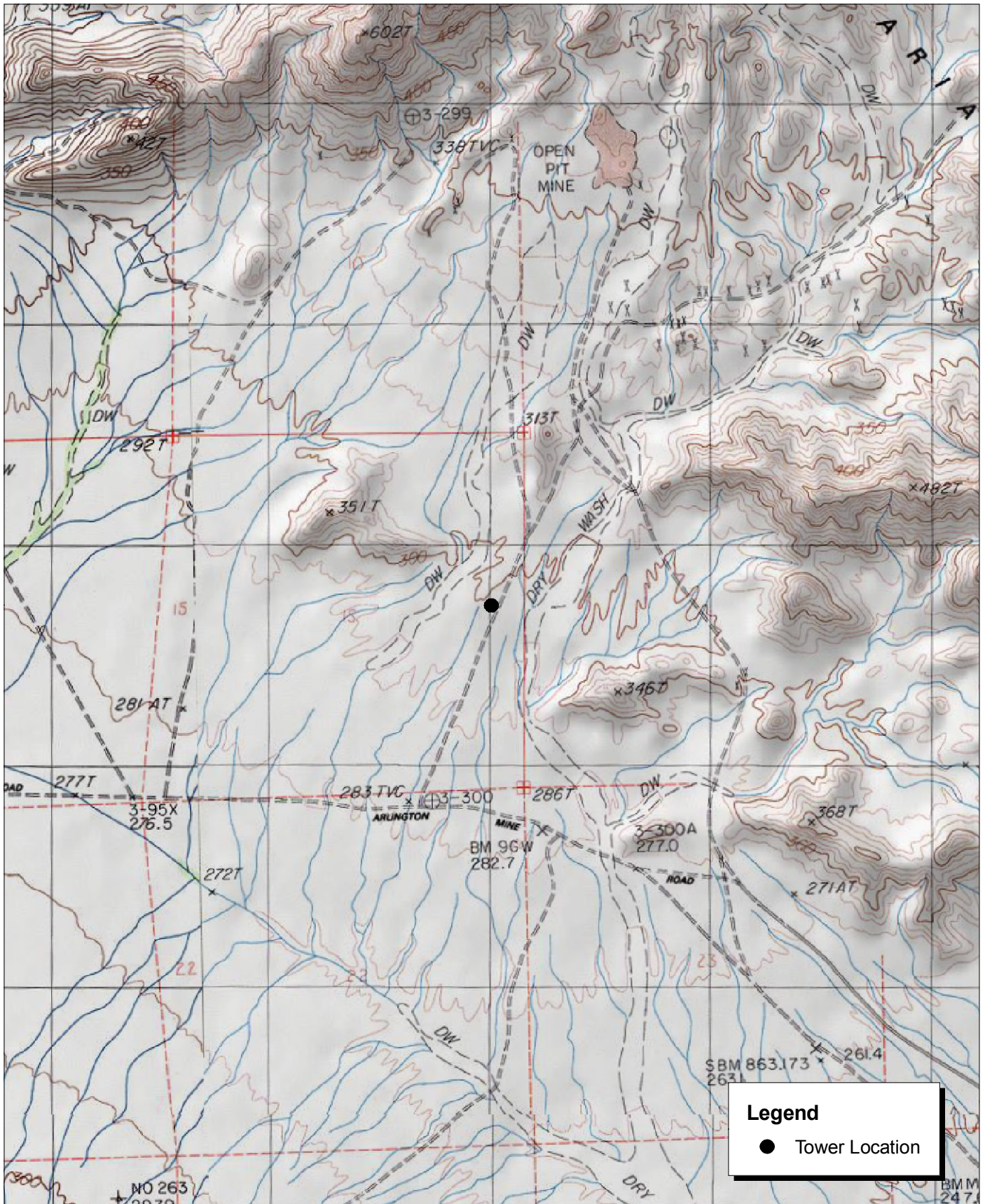
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Black Jack Communication Site Local Vicinity Aerial Map

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Source: USGS Inca 7.5' Topographic Map.



Black Jack Communication Site Local Vicinity Topographic Map



Source: USDA Soils Data (NRCS).



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Black Jack Communication Site USDA Soils Map

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Photograph 1: View toward Black Jack candidate location, facing south.



Photograph 2: View toward Black Jack candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 3: View toward Black Jack candidate location, facing north.



Photograph 4: View from Black Jack candidate location, facing north.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Black Jack Candidate Photographs 1 to 4
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Photograph 5: View from Black Jack candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 6: View from Black Jack candidate location, facing south.



Photograph 7: View from Black Jack candidate location, facing west.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Black Jack Candidate Photographs 5 to 7
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