
Red Mountain

The Red Mountain study area is located within the SBNF adjacent to Red Mountain Lookout. Red Mountain is within the southwestern San Jacinto Mountains, approximately 8 miles southeast of the City of Hemet.

Existing Conditions

General Site Conditions

The study area is located on a moderate to steep, southeast facing slope, within a fuel modification setback area for an adjacent communications facility and the lookout tower. The elevation of the study area is approximately 4,507 feet above sea level. Soils present consist of the Wind River-Oak Glen families association, based on the USDA soil survey. Land use in the vicinity consists of an existing communications facility to the west, a dirt access road and active fire lookout tower to the north, and open space to the east and south. The study area is subject to disturbance associated with vegetation clearing for the fuel modification zones as well as maintenance activity at the existing communication facility.

Vegetation

The emergent vegetation on the study area is a remnant of a chamise chaparral plant community. All plant specimens were recently cut at the base as a result of fuel modification activities. The dominant plant species observed was chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), but other species observed include white sage (*Salvia apiana*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha intermedia*), broad-leafed filaree (*Erodium botrys*), skunkbush (*Rhus trilobata*), short-podded mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* sp.), chaparral yucca (*Yucca whipplei*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), giant wild rye (*Leymus condensatus*), yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), and red brome (*Bromus rubens*). The vegetation surrounding the fuel modification area consists of a dense, chamise chaparral plant community, dominated by chamise.

Wildlife

Wildlife activity during the survey was high. Wildlife species observed include western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), black headed grosbeak (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), and side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*).

Sensitive Biological Resources

Sensitive Species

Federally and State Listed Species

The study area contains suitable habitat for Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*), a federally-listed endangered species. The species was not observed within the study area. Focused surveys are necessary to determine the occupancy status of the species onsite.

USFS Sensitive and Watch List Species

The study area also contains suitable habitat for San Diego (coast) horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*) a USFS Region 5 Sensitive List species; and Bell's sage sparrow (*Amphispiza belli belli*), Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*), California beardtongue (*Penstemon californicus*), chaparral sand-verbena (*Abronia villosa* var. *aurita*), Parry's spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *parryi*), and Payson's jewel-flower (*Caulanthus simulans*), all USFS Region 5 Watch List species. None of the species were observed within the study area. Regardless, species identified as sensitive by the USFS are not directly protected by any State or federal laws or policies. Bell's sage sparrow and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow, however, are also protected under the MBTA and CDFG code and impacts to their nesting activities will still need to be avoided.

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 shrub nesting avian species, such as western scrub jay.

California Desert Native Plant Act

Chaparral yucca was observed in the study area and this species is protected under Section 80073 of the CDNPA. According to Section 80073 of the CDNPA, no chaparral yucca (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 chaparral yucca which may be taken under any permit and on the number of permits for the taking of chaparral yucca which may be issued.

Jurisdictional Waters

No drainage features, wetlands, vernal pools, or suitable habitat for sensitive fairy shrimp species occur on or in the vicinity of the study area. No waters or wetlands potentially under the jurisdiction of the State or the United States will be impacted by the development of the study area.

Wildlife Corridors and Movement

Given the limited size and minimal disturbance associated with the development of 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 USFS. The study area is subject to the SBNFMP. Approval by the USFS must be obtained prior to construction.

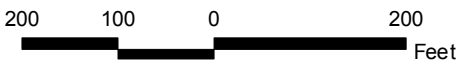


Source: USDA Soils Data (NRCS).



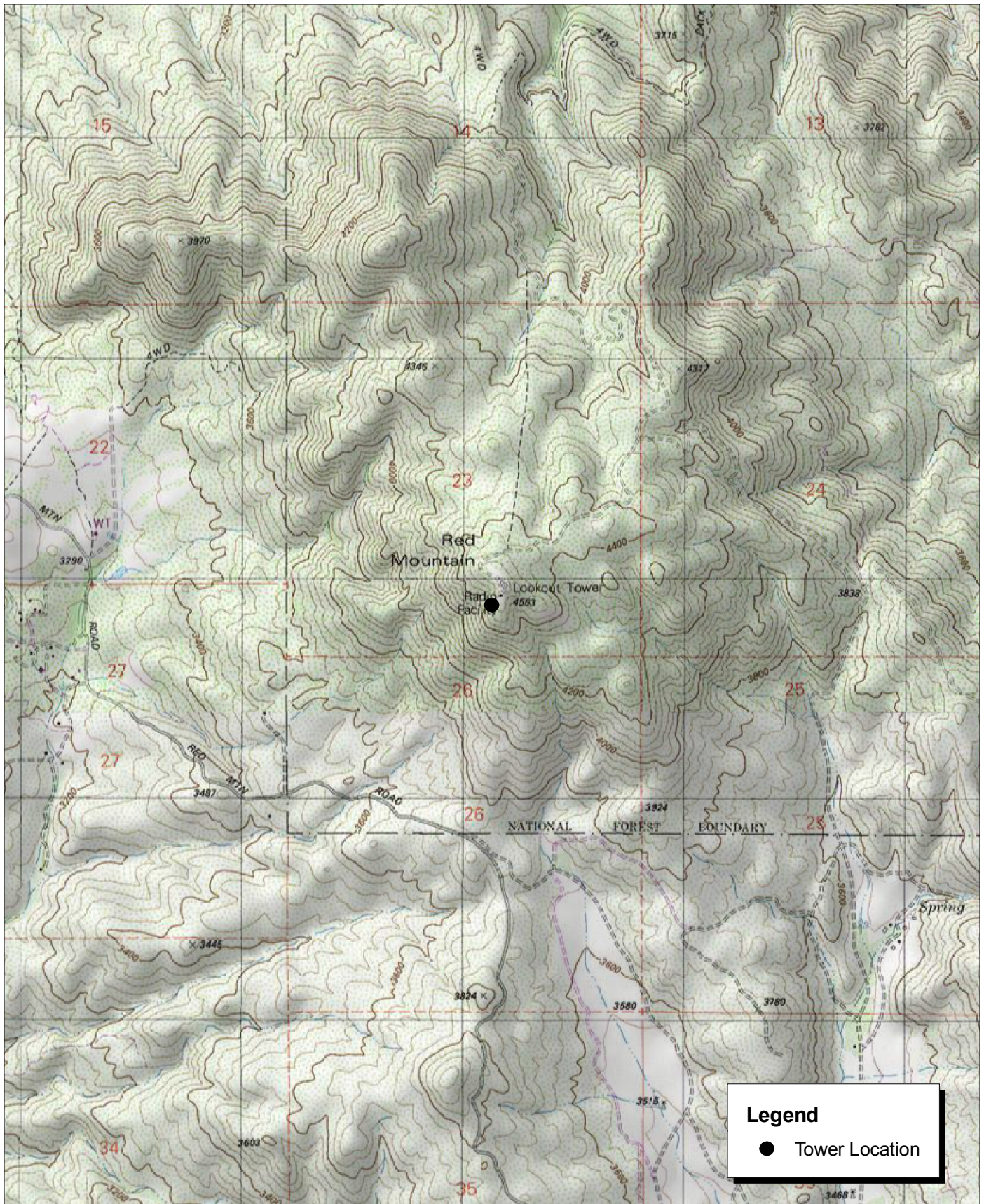
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Red Mountain Communication Site Local Vicinity Aerial Map

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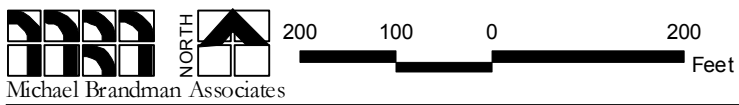
Source: USGS Blackburn Canyon 7.5' Topographic Map.



Red Mountain Communication Site Local Vicinity Topographic Map



Source: USDA Soils Data (NRCs).



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Red Mountain Communication Site USDA Soils Map

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Photograph 1: View toward Red Mountain candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 2: View toward Red Mountain candidate location, facing southwest (photo taken from Lookout Tower).



Photograph 3: Overview of Red Mountain candidate location, facing north.



Photograph 4: Overview of Red Mountain candidate location, facing south.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Red Mountain Candidate Photographs 1 to 4 PSEC Project



Photograph 5: View from Red Mountain candidate location, facing southeast.



Photograph 6: View from Red Mountain candidate location, facing north.



Photograph 7: View from Red Mountain candidate location, facing northwest.



Photograph 8: View from Red Mountain candidate location, facing southwest.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Red Mountain Candidate Photographs 5 to 8
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