
Road 177

The Road 177 study area is located on the western edge of the Palen Valley, east of the Coxcomb Mountains, approximately 37 miles northwest of the City of Blythe.

Existing Conditions

General Site Conditions

The study area is located on a flat area adjacent an existing communication facility. The elevation of the study area is approximately 603 feet above sea level. The soils observed on the study area during the survey consist of a rocky, silty sand; no USDA soil surveys have been completed for this area. Land use in the vicinity consists of open space to the south and west, a paved road and overhead utility lines followed by open space to the north, and the existing communication facility followed by State Route 177 to the east. The study area is subject to disturbance associated with off-road vehicle use and activities at the adjacent communication site.

Vegetation

The vegetation on the study area is a sparse creosote bush scrub plant community. The plant species observed include creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), burro-weed (*Ambrosia dumosa*), and burrobrush (*Hymenoclea salsola*).

Wildlife

Wildlife activity during the survey was moderate. Wildlife species observed include great-tailed grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*), zebra-tailed lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides rhodostictus*), and side blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*).

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 still 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 vegetation in the study area contains suitable nesting habitat for shrub nesting avian species, such as greater roadrunner.

California Desert Native Plant Act

No plant species protected under the CDNPA were observed within the study area and no impacts associated with the development of the study area are anticipated to occur.

Jurisdictional Waters

Various, braided, erosional features occur across the study area and vicinity. The features run from west to east. The braids that run through the study area end at a small berm that extends along the western edge of State Route 177. No further downstream connectivity could be established during the survey. None of the features are jurisdictional under the State or federal regulations and no further action is required.

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 BLM and is subject to the NECD of the California Desert Conservation Area Plan. Approval by the BLM must be obtained prior to construction.

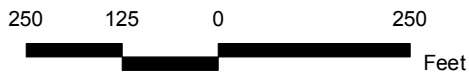


Source: Riverside County NAIP, 2005.



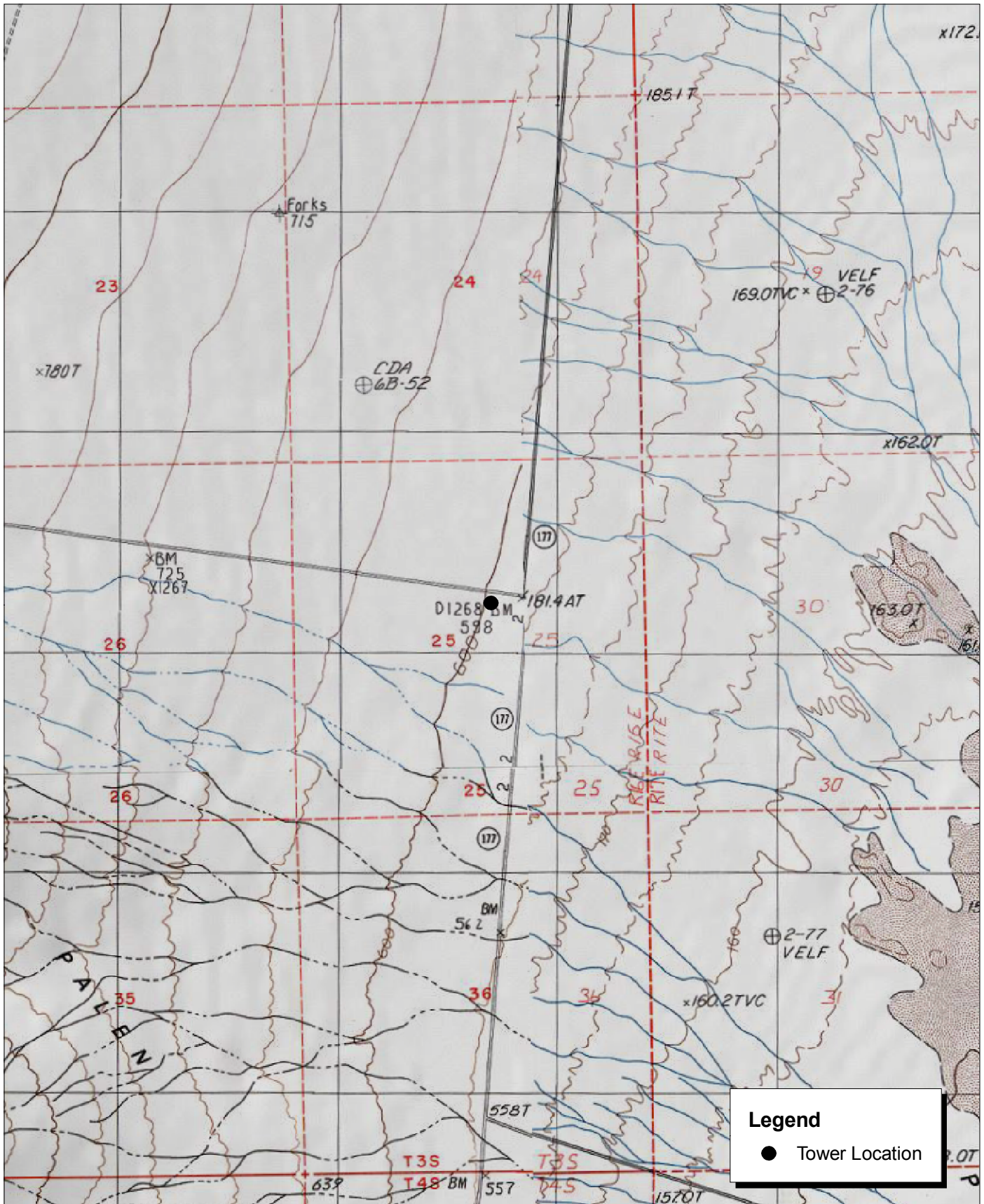
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Road 177 Communication Site Local Vicinity Aerial Map

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Source: USGS Coxcomb Mts. 7.5' Topographic Map.



Road 177 Communication Site Local Vicinity Topographic Map

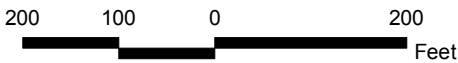


Source: USDA Soils Data (NRCS).



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Road 177 Communication Site USDA Soils Map

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Photograph 1: View toward Road 177 candidate location, facing north.



Photograph 2: View toward Road 177 candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 3: View toward Road 177 candidate location, facing south.



Photograph 4: View from Road 177 candidate location, facing north.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Road 177 Candidate Photographs 1 to 4
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Photograph 5: View from Road 177 candidate location, facing west.



Photograph 6: View from Road 177 candidate location, facing southeast.



Photograph 7: View from Road 177 candidate location, facing east (June 26, 2007).



Photograph 8: View from Road 177 candidate location, facing east (January 14, 2008).

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Road 177 Candidate Photographs 5 to 8
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