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## Spring Hill

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The Spring Hill study area is located in the Chocolate Mountains on open land approximately 50 miles west of the City of Blythe. The Spring Hill study area has a 300-foot survey radius to account for the guy wires of the proposed 330-foot tall tower structure.

### Existing Conditions

#### **General Site Conditions**

The study area is located on an undisturbed ridge. The elevation of the study area is approximately 2,605 feet above sea level. The soils observed on the study area during the survey consist of decomposing rock; no USDA soil surveys have been completed for this area. Land use in the vicinity consists of undisturbed open space in all directions, except for a poorly maintained dirt access road to the east. A drainage feature is located at the bottom of the ridge to the east. The study area is not subject to any regular disturbance.

#### **Vegetation**

The vegetation on the study area is a sparse creosote bush scrub plant community. The plant species observed include creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), burro-weed (*Ambrosia dumosa*), and jumping cholla (*Opuntia bigelovii*).

#### **Wildlife**

Wildlife activity during the survey was moderate for the area. Wildlife species observed include common raven (*Corvus corax*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), and zebra-tailed lizard (*Callisaurus draconoides rhodostictus*).

### 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.

##### *CNPS Listed Species*

The study area contains suitable habitat for Las Animas colubrina (*Colubrina californica*), a CNPS List 2.3 species. The species was not observed within the study area. Regardless, plant species identified as sensitive only by CNPS are not protected by any State or federal laws or policies.

#### **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 located within Critical Habitat for desert tortoise, as designated by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Because marginally suitable habitat occurs on the study area, focused surveys must be conducted for desert tortoise prior to consultation with the USFWS and BLM.

### ***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***

Both ocotillo and jumping cholla were observed in the study area and these species are protected under Section 80073 of the California Desert Native Plant Act (CDNPA). According to Section 80073 of the CDNPA, no ocotillo or jumping cholla (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 ocotillo and jumping cholla which may be taken under any permit and on the number of permits for the taking of ocotillo and jumping cholla which may be issued.

### ***Jurisdictional Waters***

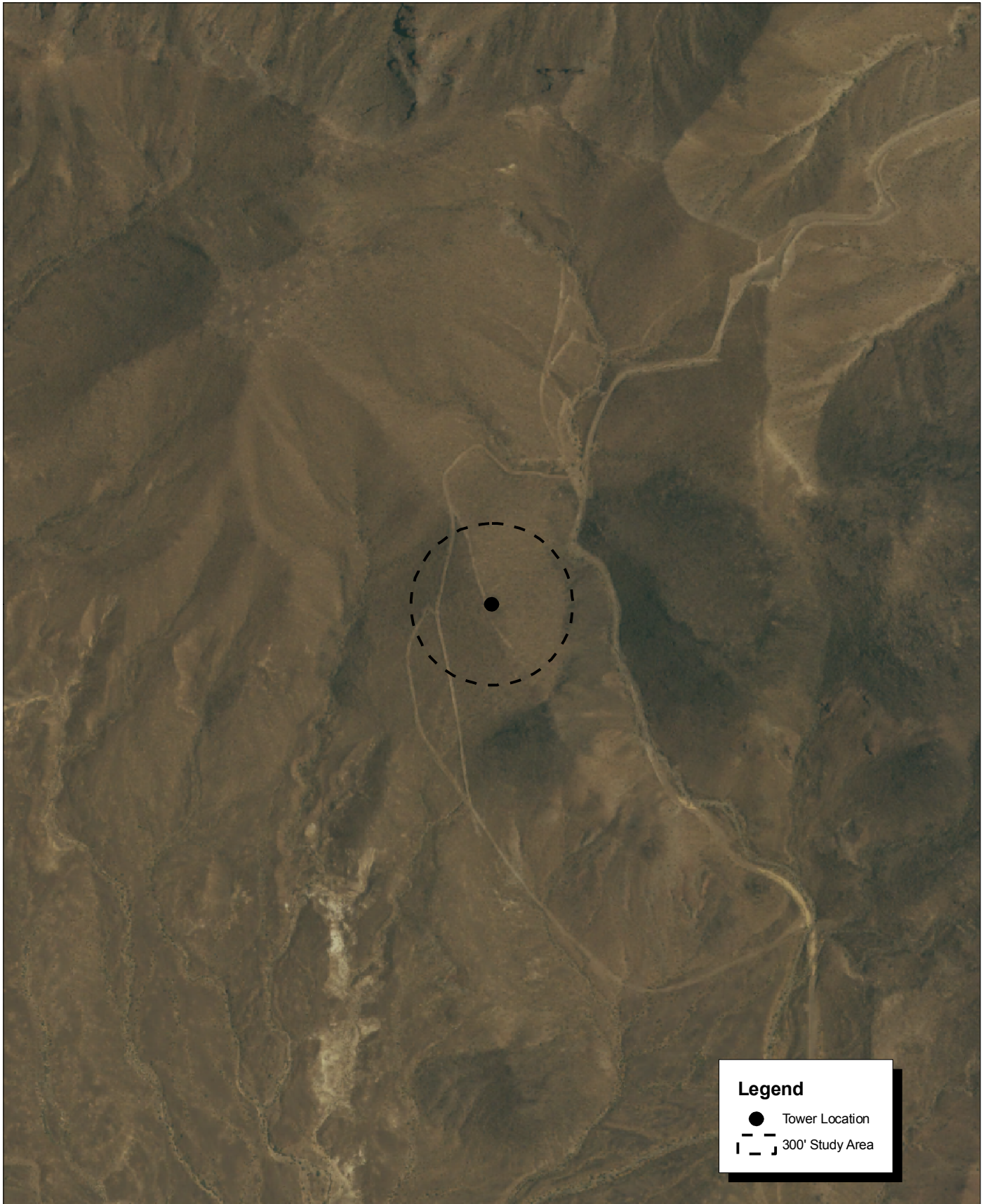
A large, potentially jurisdictional drainage feature occurs at the base of the ridge, approximately 400 feet east of the study area. No impacts to the drainage are anticipated to occur.

### ***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.



**Legend**

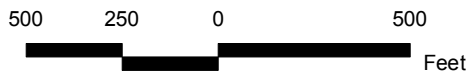
- Tower Location
- 300' Study Area

Source: Riverside County NAIP, 2005.



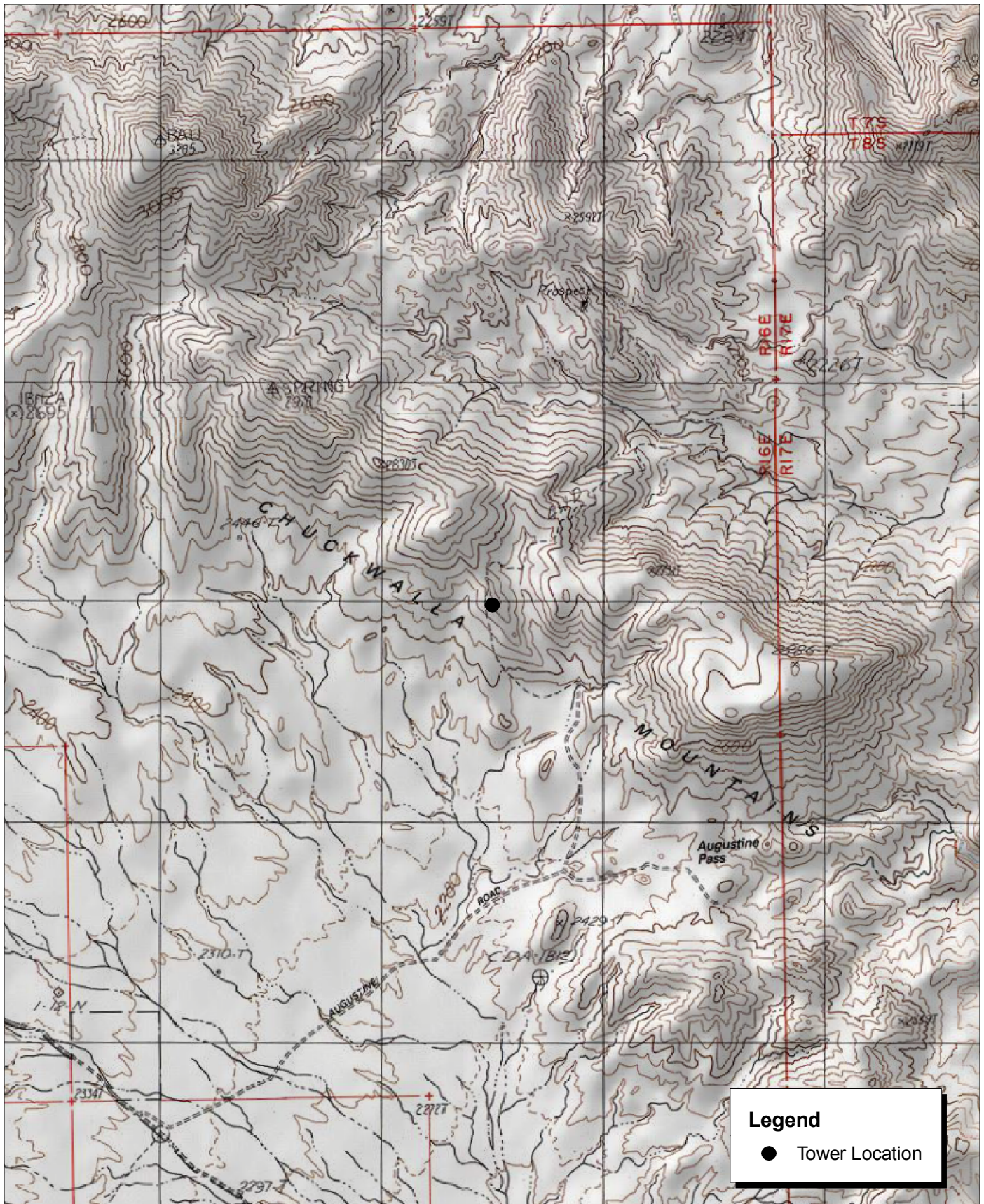
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## Spring Hill Communication Site Local Vicinity Aerial Map

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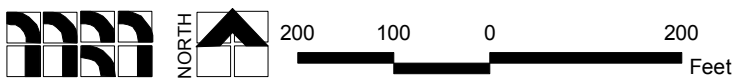
Source: USGS Augustine Pass 7.5' Topographic Map.



## Spring Hill Communication Site Local Vicinity Topographic Map



Source: USDA Soils Data (NRCS).



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## Spring Hill Communication Site USDA Soils Map

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Photograph 1: View toward Spring Hill candidate location, facing northeast.



Photograph 2: View toward Spring Hill candidate location, facing north-northeast.



Photograph 3: View toward Spring Hill candidate location, facing northwest.



Photograph 4: View from Spring Hill candidate location, facing north.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Spring Hill Candidate Photographs 1 to 4  
PSEC Project



Photograph 5: View from Spring Hill candidate location, facing east.



Photograph 6: View from Spring Hill candidate location, facing south.



Photograph 7: View from Spring Hill candidate location, facing west.

Source: Michael Brandman Associates, 2008.



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Spring Hill Candidate Photographs 5 to 7  
PSEC Project