

# **EXHIBIT F**

## EXHIBIT F – RECREATIONAL PURPOSES AND ASPECTS

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As stated in R14-3-219, Exhibits to Application, Exhibit F of the Rules of Practice and Procedure Before Power Plant and Transmission Line Siting Committee:

*“State the extent, if any, the proposed site or route will be available to the public for recreational purposes, consistent with safety considerations and regulations and attach any plans the applicant may have concerning the development of the recreational aspects of the proposed site or route.”*

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### INTRODUCTION

Exhibit F includes a summary of existing recreation opportunities, as well as the potential impacts the Project may have on recreation. For further information on recreation, refer to Sections 3.14 and 4.14 in the Final EIS included as Exhibit B-1.

### AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

Recreation activities occurring throughout southern Arizona involve a broad spectrum of pursuits, ranging from dispersed and casual recreation to organized, permitted group uses. Typical recreation in the Project study area includes: off-highway vehicle (“OHV”) driving, scenic driving, hunting, hiking, wildlife viewing, horseback riding, camping, backpacking, mountain biking, geocaching, rock-hounding, picnicking, night-sky viewing, viewing cultural/historical sites, and photography. Southern Arizona, outside the Tucson-metro area, is known for its large-scale undeveloped areas and remoteness, which provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities for users who wish to experience undeveloped recreation, as well as those seeking more organized or packaged recreation experiences.

The Project study area includes a 200-foot wide right-of-way (“ROW”) along the CEC New Build Route, 150-foot ROW along the CEC Upgrade Route, and five CEC Substation expansions Apache, Pantano, Vail, DeMoss Petrie, and Tortolita substations. Southline has no current plans to develop recreational facilities within the Project study area; however, as described in the “Future Recreation Planning” section below, the

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Arizona Game and Fish Department (“AGFD”) is planning to relocate their Crane Lake facility at Willcox Wildlife Area.

All other existing, designated, and dispersed recreation opportunities will remain available. Where the Project crosses existing roads or trails, permanent access to and along these features for recreation use will not be affected. The following discussion describes the recreation settings and features within the Project study area (federal, state, and local), beginning at the eastern county of the CEC Proposed Route, Cochise County, then Pima County, and ending at the western end at the CEC Tortolita Substation in Pinal County.

## **I. COCHISE COUNTY**

Within the Project study area in Cochise County, there are two designated recreation sites or facilities intersected by the CEC New Build Route: the proposed Butterfield Trail and the Willcox Playa Wildlife Area. Elsewhere, Arizona State Land Department (“ASLD”), Bureau of Land Management (“BLM”) and privately-managed lands provide dispersed recreation experiences and opportunities such as OHV driving, wildlife viewing, and hunting.

### **A. Federal**

#### **Proposed Butterfield Overland Trail National Historic Trail**

The proposed Butterfield Trail commemorates the routes pioneered by John Butterfield and his Butterfield Overland Stage Company as its stages traveled over the “oxbow route” between the eastern termini of St. Louis and Memphis and the western terminus of San Francisco. Stages traveled over this route between 1858 and 1861. Where evidence of the trail is known, the trail can be hiked or traced on horseback. There are many areas where the exact location of the trail is unknown (National Park Service (“NPS”) 2013). Near Willcox, Arizona, the trail location is known and includes access to the ruins of Fort Bowie. The trail location is also known to traverse south of the Willcox Playa, near the CEC New Build Route (*see* Figure F-1 below). The Butterfield Trail offers primitive, developed, and dispersed recreation opportunities and activities (NPS 2013). The trail is currently under study by the NPS to determine whether the trail should be designated under the National Trails System Act of 1968 as historic.

## **B. State**

### **Willcox Playa Wildlife Area**

The Willcox Playa Wildlife Area totals approximately 595 acres, including 120 acres of deeded land, 320 acres of land patented from the BLM, a 115-acre perpetual ROW from the ASLD, and a 40-acre donation from a private landowner. Management emphasis for the Willcox Playa Wildlife Area is to support the best wildlife habitat possible in the area for present and future generations. This emphasis includes keeping opportunities available for public hunting and other wildlife-oriented recreation. The AGFD manages the water levels of Crane Lake for wildlife habitat. Existing uses include bird watching, photography, and hunting. Willcox Playa was placed on the NPS National Natural Landmark list in 1966 (NPS 2012). The area is a roosting area for 4,000 to 8,000 sandhill cranes and contains the greatest diversity of tiger beetles (*Cicindela sperata*) in the United States (AGFD 2012). The CEC New Build Route crosses through the Willcox Playa Wildlife Area (see Figure F-1 below).

### **Future Recreation Planning**

Crane Lake, located on Willcox Playa and partially within Willcox Playa Wildlife Area, is managed by the AGFD. As described in more detail in the Application, Southline worked with the AGFD to address concerns with potential Project impacts on Crane Lake. Specifically, Southline and the AGFD have negotiated but not yet executed, a September 1, 2015 Memorandum of Agreement outlining a mitigation plan for Crane Lake. The mitigation plan involves relocating the existing Crane Lake from the edge of the Willcox Playa to 120 acres of lands managed by the AGFD along Kansas Settlement Road, and within the Willcox Playa Wildlife Area. Additional facilities will be developed as part of the mitigation plan, including a native fish pond, ephemeral wetlands, and a visitors' area. The visitors' area will be equipped with a parking area, interpretive trails, informational kiosks, viewing platforms, and restrooms.

## **C. Local**

There are no local designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Cochise County.

## **II. PIMA COUNTY**

Within the portion of the Project study area in Pima County, dispersed recreation opportunities exist on ASLD, private, and BLM-managed lands, including dispersed recreation experiences and opportunities such as OHV driving, hiking, wildlife viewing, and hunting. No impacts to these dispersed recreation opportunities are expected from the Project.

### **A. Federal**

There are no federally designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Pima County.

### **B. State**

There are no state designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Pima County.

### **C. Local**

There are no local designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Pima County.

## **III. PINAL COUNTY**

Within the portion of the Project study area in Pinal County, dispersed recreation opportunities exist on ASLD, private, and BLM-managed lands, including dispersed recreation experiences and opportunities such as OHV driving, hiking, wildlife viewing, and hunting. No impacts to these dispersed recreation opportunities are expected from the Project.

### **A. Federal**

There are no federally designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Pinal County.

## **B. State**

There are no state designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Pinal County.

## **C. Local**

There are no local designated recreation sites or facilities within the CEC Proposed Route or CEC Substations in Pinal County.

### **POTENTIAL EFFECTS**

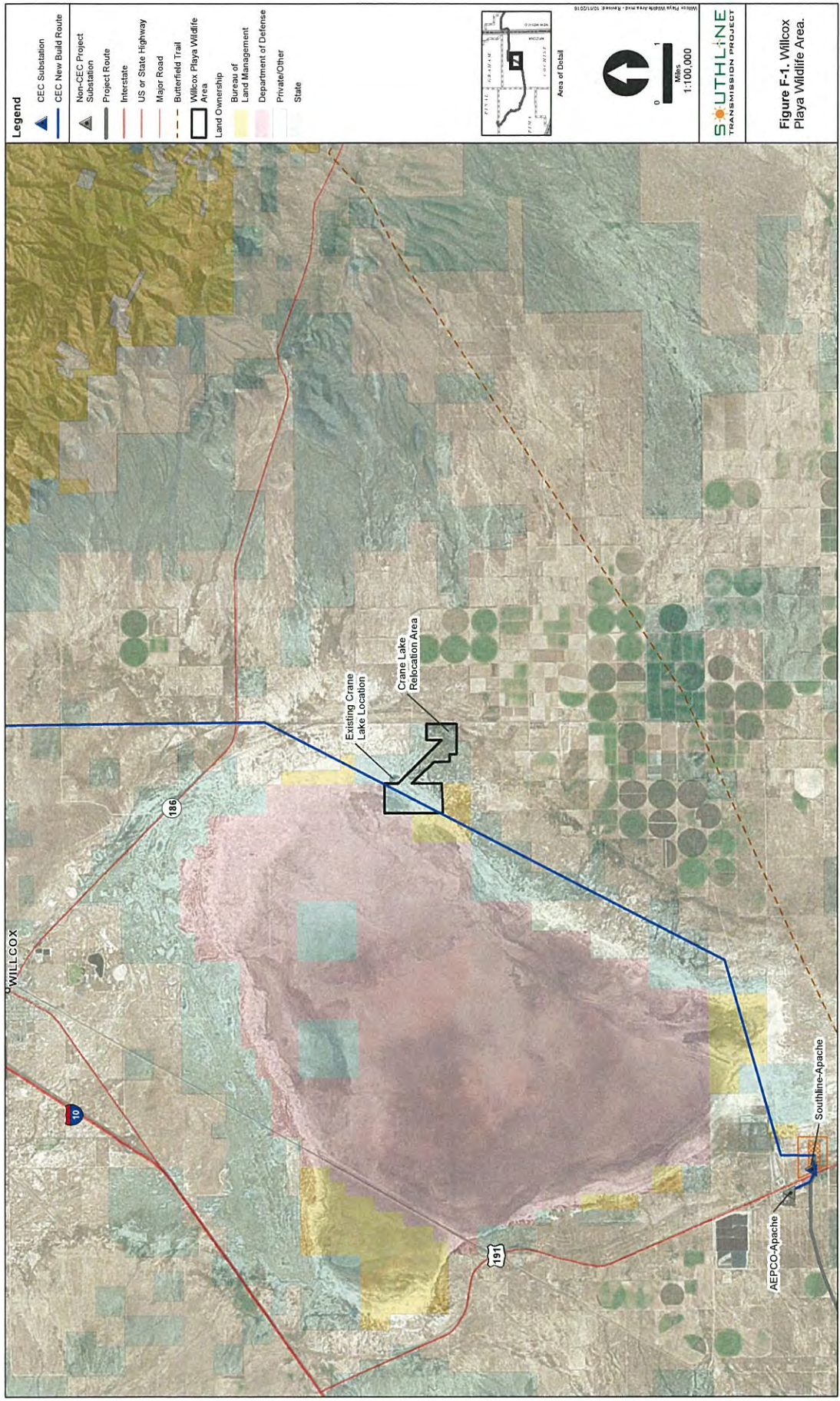
Construction of the Project is not expected to permanently preclude the use of or access to any existing recreation opportunities or activities, but some short-term impacts to these resources will occur during the construction phases of the Project. Dispersed recreation activities such as hiking, camping, bird watching, or equestrian use may be temporarily affected as construction noises, visual disturbances, and/or the presence of other humans could detract from these recreation opportunities and activities. Recreation users that seek opportunities for solitude commonly seek areas where they will be less likely to see other humans.

Hunting opportunities (both big- and small-game) that could be displaced by the construction of the transmission line, substations, and ancillary facilities will not represent a significant impact, since the areas within AGFD game management units that are outside of the Project footprint will remain available for hunting (AGFD 2106), subject to applicable laws and regulations.

Recreation opportunities and activities will continue during operation and maintenance since operation and maintenance will be temporary in terms of the amount of time activities will take place in a given area and the amount of time that passes between operation and maintenance activities, which may be many months to years in duration. Thus, since the potential for displacing recreation opportunity and activities may occur, there will be minor impacts to recreation. Further, unless specifically closed to public access, all areas within the ROW (i.e., beneath spans) will be accessible for recreational opportunity and activities. Near the Willcox Playa, recreation activities such as bird watching could be permanently affected by the addition of new transmission lines and towers; however, the future recreation planning for Crane Lake is intended to both

improve and maintain the existing recreation opportunities and experiences that are currently available at Willcox Play Wildlife Area.







## REFERENCES

- Arizona Game and Fish Department (AGFD). 2012. Willcox Playa. Available at:  
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