Public Notice

October 23, 2024

To all interested parties and persons:

Notice is hereby given that a draft Environmental Assessment for the Clarence Wesley Health Center is available for review. The San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation (SCAHC) plans to complete construction on a new facility that is approximately 33,400 square feet including exam rooms, administrative offices, wellness area, dental, optometry, and imaging and x-ray. It will meet the needs for a new facility to the medically underserved residents of the community. The 50-acre health center site is situated in the Bylas community located south of U.S. Highway 70, where the highway crosses the Gila River. From Highway 70, the site can be accessed via Indian Route 193.

The draft Environmental Assessment has been prepared to assess the environmental impacts of the proposed construction of the Project. An Environmental Assessment is required to comply with the requirements of entering a lease with the Bureau of Indian Affairs and in preparation for constructing the Project. SCAHC is seeking a finding that the Project will have no significant impact on the environment.

A full copy of the draft Environmental Assessment will be available for review at the Ambassador's desk in the administration building of the hospital in Peridot, the front desk of the Tribal Administration Building in San Carlos, the Tribal Land Use Department or at https://www.scahealth.org and ethoscm.com/clarence-wesley-hc. This Environment Assessment may be examined for a period of 30 days on Monday through Friday between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm. Any individual, group, or agency desiring to comment on the Project may submit written comments to:

San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation
Attn: Isaiah Belknap (Deputy CEO)
PO Box 787
Peridot, AZ 85542
isaiah.belknap@scahealth.org

All comments received after November 27, 2024, will not be considered.

2024

Clarence Wesley Health Center Environmental Assessment

Izeé Baa Gowąh
San Carlos Apache Healthcare

San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation

October 2024

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Environmental Assessment
Clarence Wesley Health Center

San Carlos Apache Reservation, Graham County, Arizona

Prepared for:

San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation
103 Medicine Way Road
Peridot, Arizona 85542

and:

Bureau of Indian Affairs - Western Regional Office
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Acronyms:

AQI	Air Quality Index
BE	Biological Evaluation
BIA	Bureau of Indian Affairs
BMP	Best Management Practice
CERCLA	Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act
CRI	Cultural Resource Inventory
EA	Environmental Assessment
ESA	Endangered Species Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Map
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
SCAHC	San Carlos Apache Health Corporation
TES	Threatened, Endangered, or Sensitive

THPO	Tribal Historic Preservation Officer
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USEPA	United States Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	US Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United States Geological Survey
WRCC	Western Regional Climate Center

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Summary

The San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation (SCAHC) was established by the San Carlos Tribal Council allowing the Tribe to assume responsibility for tribal health care under Public Law 93-638, Indian Self Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. Today, SCAHC is a Tribal 638 provider-based facility that provides diagnostic, surgical and non-surgical therapeutic, and rehabilitation services to tribal members. SCAHC is constructing a clinic facility known as **Clarence Wesley Health Center Project** in the community of Bylas, Arizona. The San Carlos Apache Tribe approved SCAHC's business permit for the health center site on April 26, 2023. The purpose of the permit was to grant SCAHC "such privileges as may be necessary or appropriate … as well as the right to occupy and use the Premise while approval of the master lease is pending." The facility is nearing completion and SCAHC is requesting the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Western Regional Office (WRO) to issue a land formal lease for a 50-acre parcel to be incorporated into SCAHC's master lease.

The BIA WRO's decision to approve or deny the lease application is a federal action that triggers an environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). In accordance with 25 CFR § 162.438 (g), the application requires "environmental and archaeological reports, surveys, and site assessments as needed to facilitate compliance with applicable federal and tribal environmental and land use requirements." This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared by ETD, Inc. on behalf of SCAHC for the lease application.

NEPA requires federal agencies to incorporate relevant federal and tribal statutory and regulatory requirements into the impact evaluation process, such as Endangered Species Act (ESA) evaluations and consultations, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) Section 106 consultation, and tribal statutes and regulations. NEPA regulations are found at 40 CFR Part 1500. SCAHC consulted with the following Tribal Departments: Historic Preservation and Archaeology Department; Recreation and Wildlife Department; and the Forest Resources Program concerning impact determinations for biological and cultural resources.

This EA reveals no significant impacts anticipated from the Proposed Action. Analysis in this EA reveals minor and short-term impacts to soils and water; minor, long-term impacts to vegetation, increased noise levels, and visual resources; and long-term beneficial impacts to the residents of San Carlos Apache Tribal Reservation.

1.2 Purpose and Need

The purpose of the Clarence Wesley Health Center is to provide quality healthcare services for residents on the San Carlos Apache Tribal Reservation. The health clinic facility that is being replaced is located at 101 Medical Drive, Bylas, Arizona. It is approximately 30 years old. A building assessment determined the foundation of the old health clinic is not structurally sound, and various components are outdated, such as walls, floors, roofs, windows, and doors. In addition, the building systems are outdated, including plumbing, HVAC, and electrical (IHS, 2006).

The building footprint of the new facility is approximately 33,400 square feet including exam rooms, administrative offices, wellness area, dental, optometry, and imaging and x-ray. It will meet the need for a new facility to the medically underserved residents of the Bylas community.

The BIA Purpose and Need: The need for the BIA's action is established by the BIA's responsibility to respond to a request for a business lease approval between the San Carlos Apache Tribe and SCAHC over or across lands held in trust for Indian tribes. The BIA must meet its responsibility to review and approve actions on tribal lands held in trust for the benefit of the San Carlos Apache Tribe (42 United States Code [U.S.C.] §§ 4321 et seq). The BIA purpose, pursuant to 25 U.S.C. § 415, is to deny, grant, or grant with modifications the business lease for the subject medical facilities between the San Carlos Apache Tribe and SCAHC.

1.3 Location

The San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation encompasses 1,834,781 acres. Established by Executive Order on November 9, 1871, the Reservation is bounded by the Fort Apache Reservation, Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, and the Apache National Forest. The 50-acre health center site is situated in the Bylas community located south of U.S. Highway 70, where the highway crosses the Gila River. From Highway 70, the site can be accessed via Indian Route 193. **See Figure 1.** The legal description is Section 18, Township 4 South, Range 22 East, Gila and Salt River Meridian, Graham County, Arizona.

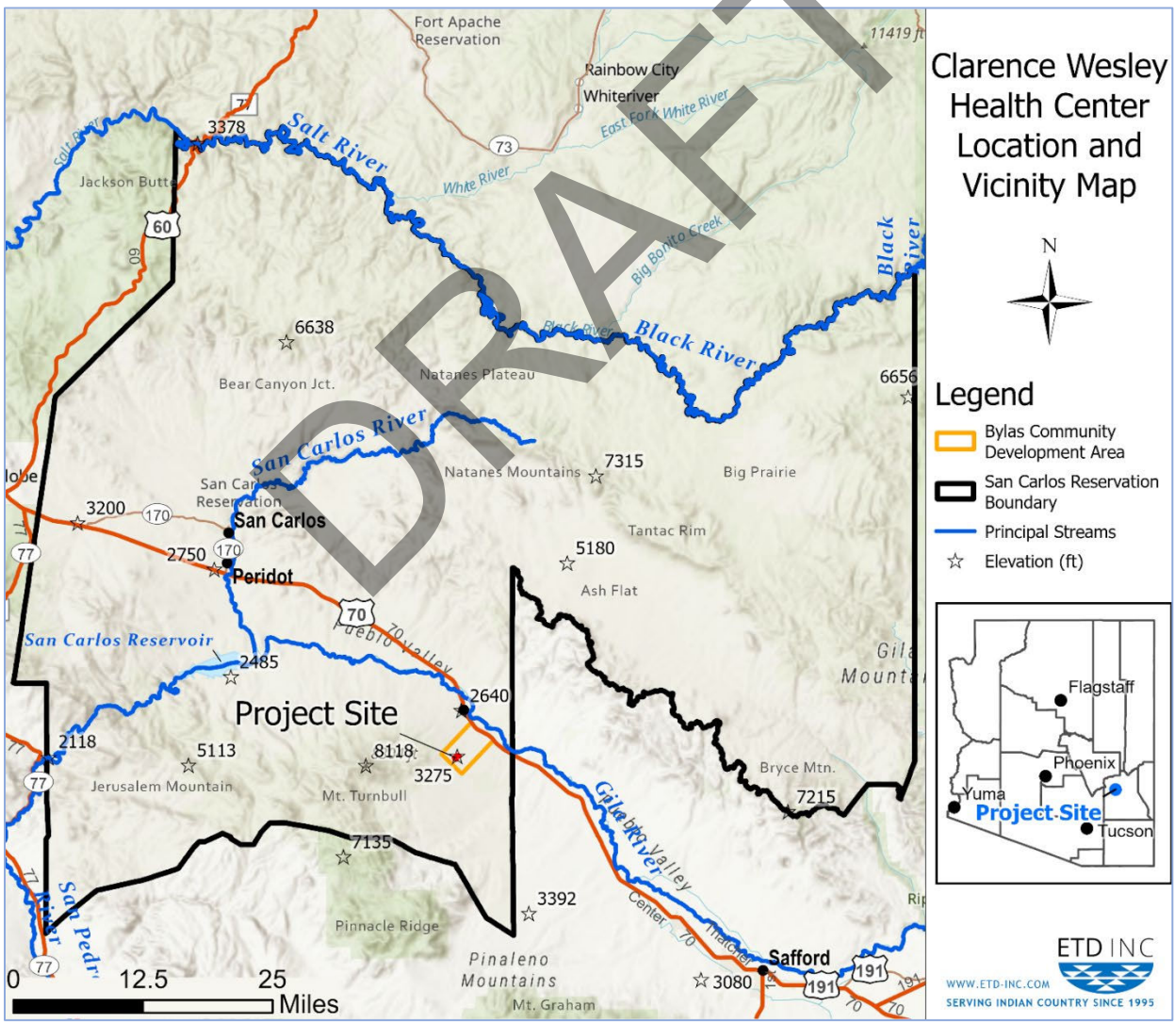

FIGURE 1. GENERAL LOCATION MAP OF THE CLARENCE WESLEY HEALTH CENTER.

2.0 Alternatives

The Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative are described here.

2.1 Proposed Action

Under the Proposed Action, SCAHC constructed the Clarence Wesley Health Center in the master planned Bylas Community in Bylas, Arizona. It will move operations from the existing building on 101 Medical Drive to its new location in late spring of 2025. Infrastructure including roads, water, sewer, power, and communications have been developed in Bylas Community for planned developments. The master plan also includes future residential and commercial developments. Bylas Elementary School was recently constructed next to the health center site.

The Clarence Wesley Health Center's building footprint is approximately 33,400 square feet in size. It includes exam rooms, administrative offices, wellness area, dental, optometry, and imaging and x-ray. The health center will also have a parking lot that includes 105 parking spaces and two driveway entrances from BIA 193. The site plan is shown in **Figure 2.**

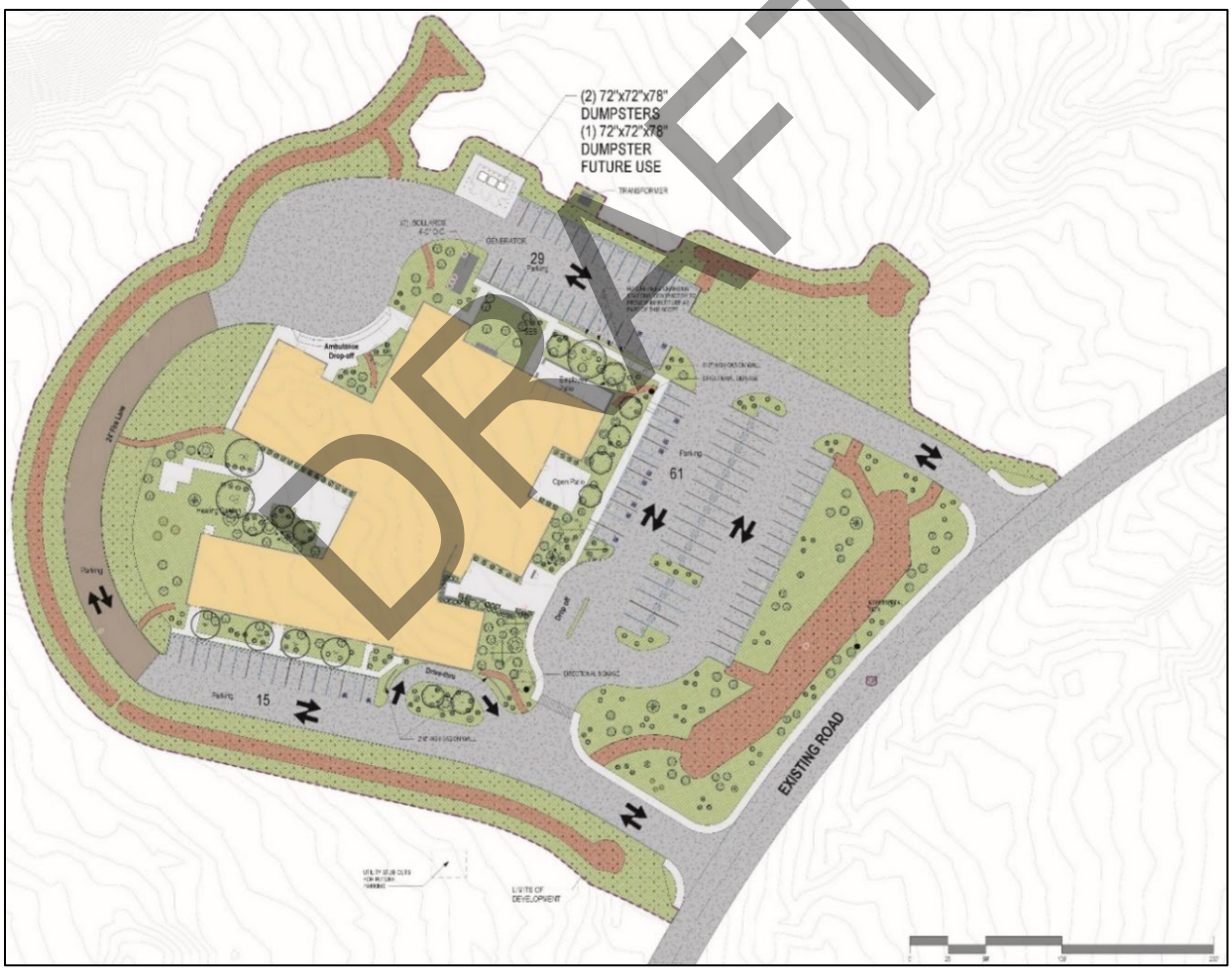

FIGURE 2. SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

2.2 No-Action Alternative

Under the No-Action Alternative, the BIA WRO would not approve the lease. SCAHC would be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations.

3.0 Affected Environment

This chapter describes the resource conditions of the proposed lease area and surrounding areas to establish baseline conditions for impacts analysis which is presented in Chapter 4. These resources and conditions are described in the following sections: land, water, atmospheric, biotic, and cultural resources, socioeconomics, resource use patterns, and other values.

3.1 Land Resources

The San Carlos Apache Tribal Reservation has landscapes ranging from alpine meadows to desert areas. This section discusses the geology, topography, soils, and mineral resources in and around the project area.

3.2.1 Geology and Mineral Resources

The San Carlos Reservation straddles the boundary between the Colorado Plateau Province in the northern part of the Reservation and the Basin and Range Province in the southern part (Wrucke, et.al., 2004). Relatively impermeable pre-Tertiary rocks are exposed across the northern and eastern parts the reservation and Tertiary and Quaternary basin fill and stream alluvium in much of the southern part of the reservation. Basin fill is widespread in the valley of the San Carlos and Gila Rivers and consists of fine sand, silt, limestone, clay, and pyroclastic volcanics that may attain a total maximum thickness of more than 3,200 ft in the reservation. Stream alluvium consists of poorly sorted, unconsolidated, gravelly, muddy, sand; and sandy gravel and reaches a maximum thickness of 100 feet along the San Carlos and Gila Rivers (Brown, J.G., 1989). According to maps prepared by the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), no faults occur on or near the project site (USGS, 2022).

Mineral resources found on the reservation include occurrences of gold, copper, peridot, gravel, iron uranium, and others. According to the USGS Mineral Resource Data System, there are no mines within 1 mile of the project. The nearest site is the Geronimo project (ID M002041), an occurrence of gold and copper approximately 1.5 miles northwest of the site (USGS, 2022). The most productive localities for peridot are found on the reservation, hosting the precious gem as nodules within the vesicular basaltic rocks found at Peridot Mesa (Rock & Gem Magazine, 2024).

3.2.2 Topography

The San Carlos Reservation lies between the Salt River on its northern boundary and the Gila River on its southern boundary. Elevations range from 6,656 feet along the Gila Mountains on the eastern side of the reservation to 2,118 feet on its western side. The health center site lies near 3,275 feet.

3.2.3 Soils

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the health center site contains 2 soil units: *Queekcreek-Brazito-Riverwash complex* with 0 to 8 percent slopes, and *Topawa Unit* very gravelly sandy loam with 3 to 15 percent slopes. The *Queekcreek-Brazito-Riverwash* complex is characterized as excessively to somewhat excessively drained, very low runoff class, no frequency of ponding, frequent flooding, and typical top profiles include very gravelly loamy coarse sand. The *Topawa Unit* is well drained, has a low runoff class, and no frequency of flooding or ponding,

with a typical top profile of very gravelly sandy loam. Neither soil complexes are considered prime or unique farmland.

3.2 Water Resources

The project region lies in the Upper Gila Watershed defined as the Gila River drainage area extending from the New Mexico border to the San Carlos Reservoir. The project is within USGS Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC) 150400050906 - Carland Wash-Gila River, within the Lower Colorado - Upper Gila Region.

About 9,000 people live on the reservation and rely on the groundwater and surface-water resources for domestic, agricultural, and industrial uses. The San Carlos Reservoir, located on the Gila River, has a maximum usable capacity of more than 900,000 acre-ft of water, which is used to irrigate crops in downstream areas.

3.3.1 Surface Water

In the northern part of the Reservation, surface-water drainage is northward into either the westward-flowing Black or Salt Rivers, which are perennial. In the southern part, streams drain to the Gila River or the San Carlos River, a tributary to the Gila River. The Gila River on the Reservation is perennial during most years. Tributary streams to the Gila River between the head of San Carlos Reservoir and Bylas are dry most of the year and flow only in response to large amounts of rainfall (Brown, 1989). Water throughout much of the Reservation is suitable for most uses except for that in the alluvium along the Gila River, which contains large concentrations of dissolved solids (Brown, J.G., 1989).

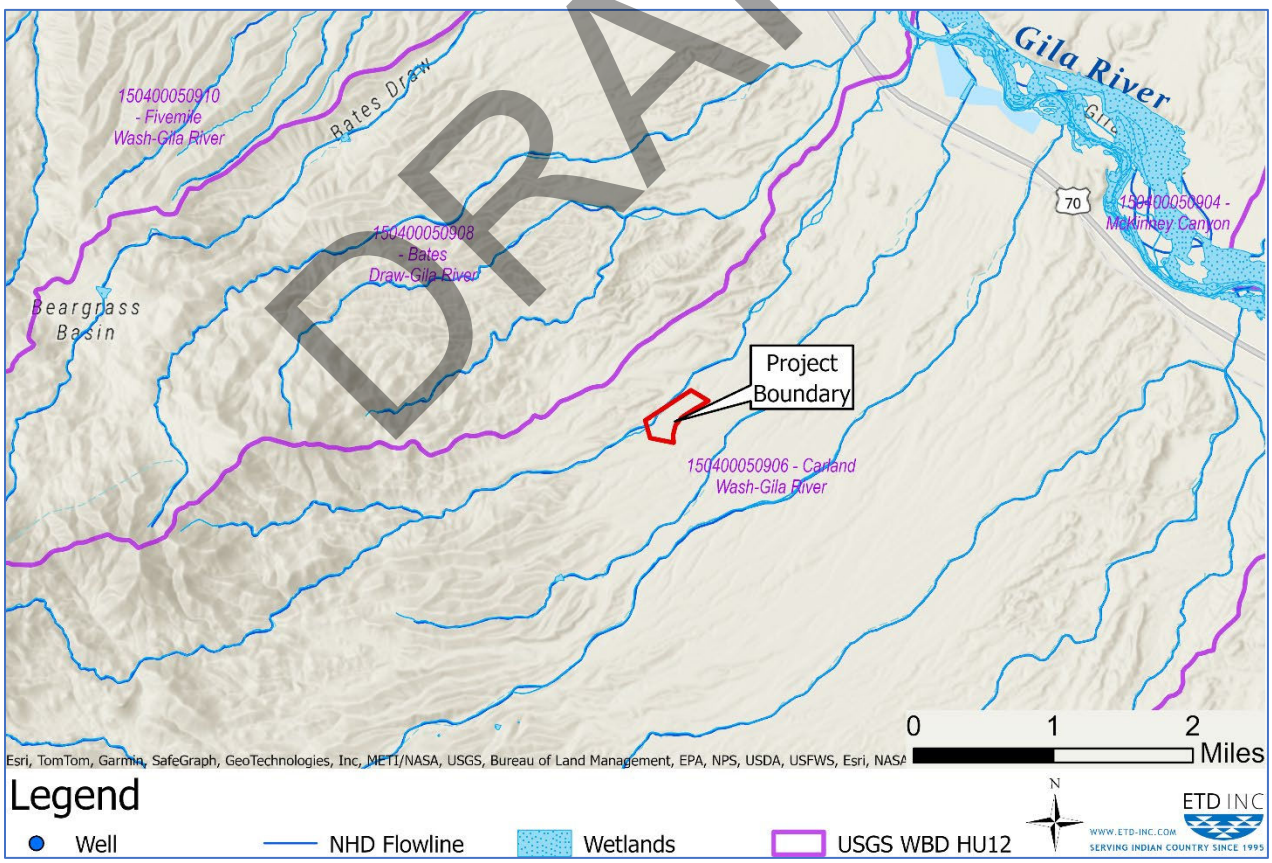

FIGURE 3. WATER RESOURCES OF PROJECT AREA.

3.3.2 Wetlands

According to the National Wetlands Inventory Map (USFWS, 2024), the boundary of the health center lease area overlaps with two wetland features, a seasonally flooded streambed and intermittently flooded streambed. These features cross over the northwestern corner of the lease area for approximately 900 feet; however, according to the drainage plan, these areas have been entirely avoided (CMG, 2023).

3.3.3 Groundwater

Ground-water resources are developed mostly along the San Carlos and Gila Rivers, where more than 900 gal/min may be pumped from individual wells completed in the stream alluvium and in the uppermost part of the basin fill. The water source for the Bylas community is currently fed by groundwater. Along the Gila River, water from stream alluvium is used mainly for irrigation or livestock because it contains large concentrations of dissolved solids and is unsuitable for human consumption (Brown, 1989).

According to the Arizona Well Registry, there are no wells within 1 mile of the project area. The nearest well is operated by *Asarco, LLC*, 4 miles north of the site. It is an environmental monitor well which collects water at a depth of 400 feet. (ADWR, 2024).

3.3.4 Floodplains

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provides floodplain hazards maps called Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs). According to the FEMA FIRM Panel 04009C0950D, effective September 28, 2007, the site is located within FEMA Zone D, defined as areas with possible but undetermined flood hazard(s). To this end, SCAHC hired CMG Drainage Engineering, Inc. to conduct a drainage study to determine the off-site and on-site 100-year peak discharges, as well as an onsite drainage design and improvements to convey the runoff through the project site.

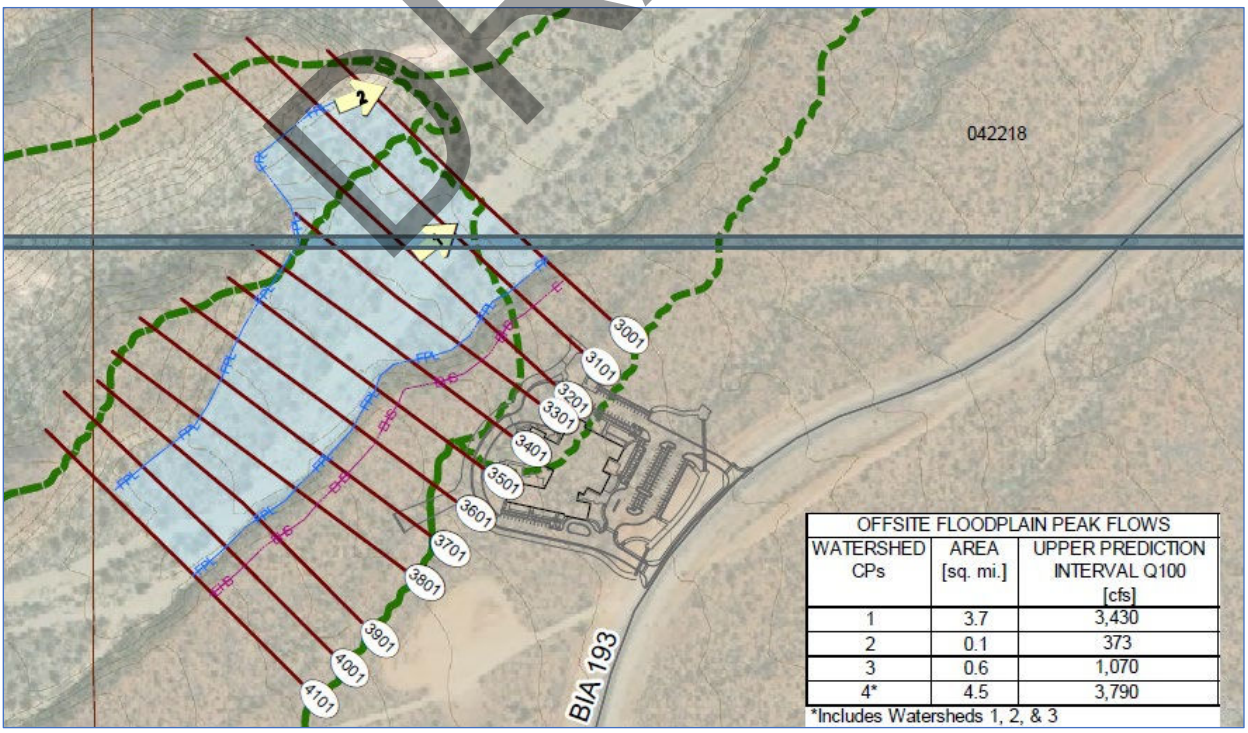

FIGURE 4. OFFSITE FLOODPLAIN AND DRAINAGE MAP (FROM CMG DRAINAGE ENGINEERING, INC. 2023).

The report focused on a large wash which flows easterly along the north project boundary. The peak flow rates for the offsite watersheds from the USGS Stream stats program were utilized in the hydraulic analysis of the wash. An excerpt of a map from the report showing the wash flood limits (shown as blue lines), and erosion hazard setback (shown as red lines) is presented in **Figure 5**. The developments are shown to be outside of the flood limits and erosion hazard setback and will not be affected by the floodplain (CMG, 2023).

3.3 Atmospheric Resources

This section describes the current air quality, climate, and climate change conditions on the SCAT Reservation.

3.4.1 Air Quality

According to U.S. EPA AirNow website, the Air Quality Index on June 10, 2023, was "good." The primary pollutant was PM 10 with a level of 20. Sources for air pollution on and near the Reservation are nearby manufacturing of metal at the Freeport McMoRan Mine, open burning, wildfires, and windblown dust (ADEQ, 2023). According to maps from U.S. EPA Region 9 (USEPA, 2024a), the SCAT Reservation is in attainment of National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS).

3.4.2 Climate

The climate on the Reservation is semiarid with hot summers and cool winters. In the town of San Carlos, the average daily maximum and minimum temperatures in July are 101 °F and 68°F, respectively. In January the average maximum and minimum daily temperatures are 61 °F and 27°F respectively. Average temperatures in areas of higher altitudes are slightly cooler (Brown, 1989).

Rainfall occurs mainly in the winter and summer. During the winter, frontal storms that move in from the Pacific Ocean cause widespread, light to moderate rainfall (and snowfall at higher altitudes). During the summer, convective storms cause localized but sometimes intense rainfall. Average annual rainfall ranges from less than 15 inches in the relatively low-lying area southwest of San Carlos Reservoir to more than 20 inches in the mountains southwest of the confluence of the White and Black Rivers and at Mount Turnbull (Brown, 1989).

3.4.3 Climate Change

Human activities, primarily the burning of fossil fuels, have fundamentally increased the concentration of greenhouse gases in the earth's atmosphere, warming the planet. Arizona's climate has warmed approximately 2°F in the last century, and this trend is expected to continue (USEPA, 2016).

3.4 Biotic Resources

This section discusses the vegetation, wildlife, and threatened, endangered, and sensitive (TES) species found in the project area.

3.4.1 Vegetation and Wildlife.

The project area lies in the Arizona Upland Subdivision-Sonoran Desert Scrub biotic community (Brown, 1994). The main dominant vegetation includes the Foothills Palo Verde and Saguaro series, which are best developed away from valley floors and on bajadas and mountain sides. At lower elevations, this series meets the boundary of the creosote-white bursage series. Jojoba-mixed scrub series are seen at the desert's upper limits, along with creosote bush-crucifixion thorn series. The community offers

habitat to limited range reptiles such as the regal horned lizard, western whiptail, Gila monster, Doral snake, and tiger rattlesnake (Brown, 1994).

3.4.2 TES Species

Section 7 of the Federal ESA requires that federally funded projects and federally approved projects must have a determination as to whether the continued existence of federally listed TES species is likely to be affected and whether it will result in their critical habitats being destroyed or adversely modified.

A biological resource impact evaluation was conducted by the San Carlos Recreation and Wildlife Department and the Forestry Program. Three threatened or candidate species were identified as potentially occurring in the project area; yellow-billed cuckoo, monarch butterfly, and Arizona cliffrose. The yellow-billed cuckoo was found to occur well outside of the proposed project site and potential impacts to any monarch butterfly were determined to be minimal to none. The range of the Arizona cliffrose was found to be well outside of the project boundary. There was a bald eagle nest located roughly 3 miles southwest of the project site, however this nest has been unoccupied since 2019, and all recent surveys have concluded that it continues to be unoccupied with no bald eagles observed each year. The potential presence of known wildlife and or fish species is limited to mostly a few small game and reptile species, of which occupations are brief and few. All migratory birds are infrequently seen within or near the proposed project site (SCRWD, 2023).

3.4.3 Agriculture

The San Carlos Apache Tribal land is diverse, ranging from alpine meadows to desert landscapes. Over one-third of the land is forested or wooded, providing a habitat for various wildlife species. The Reservation includes significant forest and range lands used for grazing cattle. Agriculture and grazing are important economic activities for the community, contributing to local employment and sustenance (Tribal Extension, 2024).

Beginning in the 19th century, tribal members built up herds from cattle granted to them by the U.S. government. According to USDA Census of Agriculture in 2017, there were 198 farms on the San Carlos Reservation, covering 1,824,400 acres with 3,811 cattle and 14 horses (USDA, 2019). The formation of the R100 Tribal Ranch, in 1938, and San Carlos Cattle Associations, in 1954, began the development of cattle ranching that still exists today. Currently, tribally owned and managed ranches include the R100 and IDT Ranches. Two separate crossbreed cattle ranches, owned individually by 3 tribal members, have recently started up on the Reservation.

As for farming, the San Carlos Tribal Farm, owned by the tribe and managed by a non-tribal member, grew 469 acres of cotton and 75 acres of alfalfa hay on irrigated lands in 2007 (Arizona Cooperative Extension, 2008). Community members grow squash, gourds, watermelon, corn, and sugar cane in family plots.

3.5 Cultural Resources

A cultural resource or cultural property has a definite location of human activity, occupation, or use, normally greater than 50 years of age, and is identifiable through field inventory, historical documentation, or oral evidence. They may include archaeological, historical, or architectural sites, structures, or places with important public and scientific uses, or traditional cultural or religious importance to specified social and/or cultural groups (USDA, 2022). The Director of the San Carlos Historic Preservation and Archaeology Department is known as the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer

(THPO) with the authority to determine if any historic or cultural artifacts are present within sites in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. A report prepared by the Department revealed no historic or cultural resources were identified during the cultural resource investigation (SCHPAD, 2024).

3.5 Socioeconomics

This section discusses demographics, economics, and community infrastructure in the project area. Land use is primarily open range grazing and recreation, with a minor amount of forestry in the national forests.

3.6.1 Demographics

The Reservation towns and communities of Cutter, San Carlos, Peridot, Calva, and Bylas are the central areas of development where the majority of the population resides. According to the U.S. Census Bureau (2020), the total population on the Reservation was 10,251 in 2020, an increase of 183 persons from 2010. This represents an average annual growth rate of 1.8% over ten years.

Other statistics reveal the median age of the total population was 26.8 in 2020 and the total number of households was 2,584, an increase of 489 households from 2010. The average number of persons per household is 4.1. See **Table 1**.

Table 1. Demographic Summaries (US Census Bureau, 2020)

	Total Population	Median Age	Number of Households	Persons Per Household
San Carlos Apache Reservation (2020)	10,251	26.8	2,584	4.1
San Carlos Apache Reservation (2010)	10,068	24.6	2,095	4.8

3.6.2 Economics

Most of the jobs on the Reservation are in the educational services/health care/social assistance industry followed by the arts/entertainment/recreation/accommodation/food services industry. The median household income was 34,583 in 2020, which increased significantly from 26,915 in 2010. Unemployment has remained around 19% for the past decade. About 40% live below the poverty line. See **Table 2**.

Table 2. Economic Summaries (US Census Bureau, 2020)

	Major Industry and Percent	Unemployment Rate	Median Household Income	Below Poverty Line	Average Commute to Work
San Carlos Apache Reservation (2020)	Educational services, and health care and social assistance (30.1 %)	19.4 %	$34,583	39.5 %	26.0 minutes
San Carlos Apache Reservation (2010)	Educational services, and health care and social assistance (30.3 %)	19.8 %	$26,915	X	20.7 minutes

3.6.3 Community Infrastructure

Educational and Cultural Facilities. These facilities include San Carlos Apache College, Rice Primary School, Rice Intermediate School, San Carlos Middle School, and San Carlos High School that are all part of the San Carlos Unified School District. Many tribal members also attend schools in the nearby city of Globe.

Commercial Facilities. The Tribe operates the Apache Gold Casino with 600 slot machines and table games and a hotel with 74 rooms and a sports bar and grill. Grocery stores and markets include Bashas', Noline's Country Store, and San Carlos Older Adult Center (age 55 or older), Mt. Turnbull Apache Market, and Apache Bartering and Trade. Gas Stations include the Chevron and Marathon gas stations.

Housing. The total number of housing units including occupied and unoccupied was 3,022 in 2020. About 88% of units include complete plumbing facilities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2020).

Health Care and Social Services. Health care is available through Izeè Baa Gowąh, SCAHC located at 103 Medicine Way Road in Peridot. The Clarence Wesley Health Center will also provide healthcare.

3.6.4 Infrastructure

Solid Waste Disposal / Recycling. Russell Gulch Landfill is the nearest landfill, located in Globe, AZ. Solid waste is handled by the *Turnbull Sanitation Services* located on US-70 in Bylas, AZ. Dozens of illegal dumping sites litter the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, partly due to the cost and logistics of transporting trash to the Gila County Landfill outside the Reservation. Recycling programs are found in nearby communities of Safford and Maricopa County.

Wastewater/Sanitary Sewers. Wastewater is managed through a centralized lagoon disposal facility in the more populated communities. Other portions of the San Carlos Apache Reservation use individual septic systems for wastewater disposal. Most systems are outdated and threaten groundwater supplies that provide the communities' drinking water source (Alexander, 2022).

Water Supply. The Reservation relies on ground water for domestic and commercial use mainly from water along the rivers' banks. Agricultural water is from the San Carlos Lake, formed by the construction of Coolidge Dam and is the second largest body of water in Arizona (19,500 acre-feet). Also known as the San Carlos Irrigation Project (SCIP), it is a federally owned electric utility that was authorized by an Act of Congress in 1924 to provide irrigation water to the project landowners (BIA, N.D.). The reservoir receives water from the Gila River and seasonal runoff from the surrounding mountain ranges, which is stored for irrigation, power generation, and municipal use. It is a valuable source of water supply for agriculture in the region, with crops such as cotton, wheat, and alfalfa being grown in the surrounding areas.

In 2022, the San Carlos Apache Tribe signed a $1.5 million contract with the U.S. Department of Interior to provide water to the Reservation from the Central Arizona Project (CAP). The Tribe says that the water will be used to replenish aquifers, increase agricultural development and revitalize its cattle industry (Native News, 2023).

Telecommunications. San Carlos Apache Telecommunications Utility Inc. maintains over 207 miles of copper and fiber optic facilities throughout the Reservation and is interconnected by a state-of-the-art soft switch providing local and long-distance calling.

Public Safety – Police, Fire, and Emergency Medical. San Carlos Tribal Court and Police Department are located at Building #5 Medicine Way in Peridot. The San Carlos Fire Department has five stations. The Fire Management Program includes Geronimo Hotshots and manages naturally ignited or human-caused wildfires in accordance with current policies and management regulations (SCAT, 2024). Emergency Medical Service and Transportation are provided from the hospital at 101 Medicine Way Road in Peridot. SCAHC offers emergency medical services 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

3.6.5 Environmental Justice

Environmental justice has been defined as the pursuit of equal justice, protection, and involvement under law for all environmental status and regulations without discrimination based on race, ethnicity, and/or socioeconomic status (USEPA, 2022). The population of the SCAT is primarily Native American and economically in the low-income category. No environmental justice issues have been identified.

3.6 Resource Use Patterns

This section discusses resource use patterns such as recreation, hunting, fishing, gathering; timber harvesting; and land use plans.

3.7.1 Recreation, Hunting, Fishing, and Gathering

The Reservation contains 5 lakes. San Carlos Lake is one of the largest lakes in Arizona. Formed by the Coolidge Dam along the Gila River, deep blue waters surrounded by rocky, cactus-speckled mountains set the scene for remote outdoor adventures. These lakes are recreational areas that observes tribal regulations. Permits are required for all hiking, fishing and camping in the area from the San Carlos Recreation and Wildlife Department.

3.7.2 Timber Harvesting

The Reservation has timber resources that are sold for economic value. The San Carlos Forestry Program operates 2 portable mills for creating timber projects. These projects are marketed for many purposes off and on the Reservation. The program offers permits for wood harvesting (SCAT, 2024).

3.7.3 Land Use Plans

The Bylas Community is a newly planned development area. Roads and utilities were installed, followed by the Bylas Elementary School. The Clarence Wesley Health Center is the most recent development of the master-planned community. Future housing is also proposed according to the plan.

3.7 Other Values

This section discusses various other characteristics involved throughout the project area, including wilderness; noise and light; visual setting; public health and safety; Indian trust assets; and hazardous waste.

3.8.1 Wilderness

In 1964, the Wilderness Act was passed, establishing a network of over 800 federally designated wilderness areas in the National Wilderness Preservation System. This act essentially prohibits commercial activities and infrastructure additions from occurring in wilderness areas and aims to preserve and protect the natural ecosystems and wild areas “where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain” (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136)…. Five designated wilderness areas are found within or near the Reservation boundaries: White Canyon, Needle’s Eye, Aravaipa Canyon, North Santa Terasa, Fishhooks, and Redfield Canyon wilderness areas.

The nearest designated wilderness area is the North Santa Teresa Wilderness located just over 9 miles from the project area. The 5,800-acre wilderness houses Black Rock, a spectacular 1,000-foot-high volcanic monolith that has special spiritual significance for the Tribe. It is managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM, 2023).

3.8.2 Noise and Light

The Noise Control Act of 1972 (42 U.S.C. §4901 et seq.) was passed to preserve the health and welfare of the U.S. population, especially in urban areas. Noise restrictions and orders are largely controlled by State and Local Governments. Sources of noise at the project area include natural phenomena such as wind, thunder, and rain as well as manufactured noise such as traffic along Highway 70.

Lights at night stem from vehicle head lights and the nearby school lights in the project area. The project will have parking lot lights that will illuminate the area at night.

3.8.3 Visual Setting

The Reservation is naturally beautiful from mountainous areas to desert valleys and rivers that flow through. Housing and commercial or municipal developments are found mainly along US Hwy 70 but are also scattered throughout the Reservation.

3.8.4 Public Health and Safety

The San Carlos Apache Police Department works alongside off-reservation law enforcement agencies, such as the FBI, Arizona Department of Public Safety, Gila and Graham County Sheriffs, and other police departments to protect the public. Additionally, they provide the following programs: correctional services, internal affairs, police services, criminal investigation, emergency management, fire and rescue, and emergency medical.

3.8.5 Indian Trust Assets

The status of the project area is tribal trust land. The BIA is required to follow NEPA processes for approval of leases on tribal trust lands. Land use and delegation of trust lands also requires approval by the San Carlos Apache Tribe.

3.8.6 Medical Waste/Hazardous Waste

Medical Waste. Regulated medical waste is generally regulated at a state level for its collection, transportation, treatment, and disposal. In the State of Arizona, it is a subset of solid waste which is regulated under the Arizona Revised Statutes (ARS § 49-76) and Arizona Administrative Code (18 AAC 13, Article 14), administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. Under these regulations, biohazardous medical waste must be treated on site or transported off site for treatment which meets environmental standards, requires no further processing, and is considered solid waste. Chemical safety and hazardous substances are regulated under the Occupational Health and Safety Administration, which provides federal standards for clinics to properly label, store, and handle chemicals. Clinics must also report hazardous chemical inventories to state and local authorities under the Emergency Planning and Community Right-to-Know Act (42 USC 116).

A healthcare worker may generate a variety of different types of medical waste during their care delivery, including the following: regulated medical waste with the potential to cause infection; sharps, a subset of regulated medical waste which can puncture the skin; unused or expired pharmaceuticals which may or may not be hazardous; hazardous chemicals including cleaning fluids or other toxic

chemicals; chemotherapeutic waste; and controlled substances as regulated by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

Medical waste is segmented by type and disposed of in appropriate containers for transfer to a waste management facility. Department of Transportation guidelines must be followed for proper marking, box weight, shipping paper details, and other applicable areas for all waste transferred by a waste hauler. Once at the waste management facility, waste is treated in alignment with the facility's permit. The most common treatment method is use of an autoclave, which renders the waste non-infectious via high pressure and temperature. Once rendered non-infectious or destroyed, waste is sent to the Cactus Landfill.

Hazardous Waste. U.S. EPA also provides an online tool for identifying proximity of controlled sites and environmental concerns to areas of interest. According to this source, there are no Superfund or RCRA sites within 1 mile of the site. The nearest RCRA site listed is the Klondyke Tailings Project (FRS ID 110024246993), located 24.11 miles southwest of the health center site. According to the USEPA Enforcement and Compliance History Online (ECHO) report, there are no violations identified for the site. It is classified as "inactive other" for RCRA compliance. See **Appendix A** for the full NEPAssist report.

4.0 Environmental Consequences

This chapter discusses short-term and long-term impacts and effects of the Proposed Action and the No-Action Alternative on the resources described in **Chapter 3**. The impacts are described as after the fact because development has already occurred. The impacts are essentially the same for both alternatives; the only difference will be that, under the No-Action Alternative, the SCAHC would be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations.

Impacts to soil and water resources were minimized under a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)-General Construction Permit required for construction projects with soil disturbances impacting more than 1-acre. In addition, Mitigation Measures and Best Management Practices (BMPs) were employed to further minimize impacts.

4.1 Land Resources

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, earthmoving activities, such as soil excavation and grading activities, can lead to destabilization and erosion. These were likely short-term, minor impacts and were mitigated with the implementation of a NPDES-Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) required under Section 402 of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same short-term, minor impacts as described in the Proposed Action were likely incurred on soils and mitigated with an SWPPP. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

Mitigation Measure: Ground disturbing activities exceeding 1 acre are subject to Section 402 of the CWA (33 USS §1251 et seq.) which requires general contractors to obtain a General Construction Permit under NPDES Permit and develop a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP). The project SWPPP aims to minimize soil erosion and promote soil stabilization following construction.

4.2 Water Resources

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action during construction, earthmoving activities such as soil excavation and grading activities likely increased storm runoff and sedimentation into nearby streambeds. This impact was mitigated under a NPDES Permit and SWPPP, as well as the drainage plan developed by CMG Drainage Engineering, Inc., (CMG, 2023). The impacts were minor and short-term. During operation of the health center there will be no impacts to water resources

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same impacts on water resources as described for the Proposed Action were likely incurred on water resources and mitigated by a NPDES permit, SWPPP, and drainage plan. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

Mitigation Measure: Ground disturbing activities exceeding 1 acre are subject to Section 402 of the CWA (33 USS §1251 et seq.) which requires general contractors to obtain a General Construction Permit under NPDES and develop a SWPPP. The project SWPPP will minimize soil erosion that can lead to stream sedimentation. Also, potential floodplain hazards were mitigated by a drainage plan (CMG, 2023).

BMPs: Rip rap aprons were installed to reduce peak flow rates of storm water and mitigate against scour and sediment distribution. The site was designed to minimize runoff volume and improve water quality by replicating the natural hydrology using a series of retention ponds based on historical conditions and undeveloped ecosystems in the region to avoid contributing to flooding downstream in frontline communities. Long-term low maintenance solutions for erosion control include rip rap, check dams, erosion control blanket and native seeding.

4.3 Atmospheric Resources

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action during construction, the air quality conditions and visibility were likely impaired slightly by fugitive dust and vehicle emissions. These impacts were likely minor and short-term and minimized with dust suppression measures.

During operation, greenhouse gas emissions will be generated from direct emissions including fossil fuel combustion for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning; lighting; and appliances, and plug loads. The impact to greenhouse gas emissions will be minor and long-term

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same impacts on air quality and visibility as described for the Proposed Action were likely incurred during construction. The same minor, long-term impact to greenhouse gas emissions as the Proposed Action will occur. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

4.4 Biological Resources

4.4.1 Vegetation and Wildlife

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, vegetation in the project area has been cleared for development. Since the area was previously undeveloped, 26 acres of vegetation and wildlife habitat

was lost. Due to the vast open spaces on the Reservation with similar habitat, this impact is minor but long-term.

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same minor, long-term impacts are incurred on vegetation and wildlife. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations.

BMPs: BMPs were employed to prevent the spread of invasive weeds where ground disturbance or vegetation removal occurred. Existing natural areas were restored to provide habitat and promote biodiversity including native plantings to reduce water and irrigation use. Long term low maintenance solutions for erosion control include rip rap, check dams, erosion control blanket and native seeding.

4.4.2 TES Species

Proposed Action: The SCAT Recreation and Wildlife Department provided an impact analysis that revealed there are no adverse effects to any listed species and no modifications planned that will negatively affect any critical habitat under the Proposed Action. The SCAT Forestry Department also determined that there is no evidence of any federally listed TES plant species or their habitats within the project vicinity (SCATFD, 2024; SCRWD, 2024). See **Appendix B** for the determination letters.

No-Action Alternative: The SCAT Recreation and Wildlife Department provided the same impact analysis of no adverse effects for the No-Action Alternative. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

4.5 Cultural Resources

Proposed Action: The Tribal Historic Preservation Office determined no historic places were affected concerning the proposed undertaking by the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer. This clearance includes an "after-the-fact clearance" for the construction activities which occurred before a proper environmental review and clearance was granted. The clearance letter states "should cultural materials be encountered in the course of construction or project activity, work should cease at that location and the Tribal Archaeologist should be notified immediately at (928) 475-5797." See **Appendix C** for the determination letter.

No-Action Alternative: The Tribal Historic Preservation Office issued the same determination of no historic places affected for the No-Action Alternative. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

4.6 Socioeconomic

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, community access to healthcare services will be improved and local short-term and long-term jobs will be created. This impact is moderate, beneficial, and long-term.

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same moderate, beneficial, and long-term socioeconomic impacts will be realized. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

4.7 Resource Use Patterns

Recreation, hunting, fishing, gathering, or timber resources are not found on or near the project area. There will be no impacts under the Proposed Action or No-Action Alternative.

4.8 Other Values

There are no wilderness areas on or near the project area. BIA Indian Trust assets include land leasing approvals being addressed in this EA; no other assets will be impacted. Impacts on noise and light, visual setting, and public health and safety are described below.

4.8.1 Noise and Light

Proposed Action. Under the Proposed Action, higher than average noise levels were experienced in the project area during construction. This impact was minor and short-term, ceasing after construction. During operation there will be increased noise level with people coming to and from the health center. This impact will be minor and long-term.

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same minor, short-term impacts on noise and light were experienced during construction and the same minor, long-term impacts of increased noise levels will be incurred as the Proposed Action. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations for the Health Center.

4.8.2 Visual Setting

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, the exiting visual setting will be changed by the addition of the health center. These changes will be seen locally and by travelers along Highway 70. This impact will be minor and long-term.

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same minor, long-term impacts as the Proposed Action will be incurred on the visual setting. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations.

4.8.3 Public Health and Safety

Proposed Action: Under the Proposed Action, the new health center would increase healthcare access for the surrounding community. This impact will be beneficial and long-term.

No-Action Alternative: Under the No-Action Alternative, the same beneficial, long-term impacts to healthcare access would be realized. Without a formal land lease, SCAHC will be in non-compliance with federal leasing regulations.

4.8.4 Medical Waste/Hazardous Waste.

Medical waste is regulated at the state level and administered by the Arizona Department of Environmental Quality. As regulated, biohazardous medical waste must be treated to meet environmental and health standards before being handled and disposed of as solid waste. Hazardous waste will not create impacts under the Proposed Action or No-Action Alternative with adherence to laws and regulations.

4.9 Cumulative Impacts

The CEQ regulations (40 CFR 1500-1508) implementing the procedural provisions of NEPA, as amended (42 USC 4321) defines cumulative impacts as “the impact on the environment which results from the incremental impact of the action when added to other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions regardless of what agency (Federal or non-federal) or person undertakes such other action (40 CFR 1508.7).”

Minor and short-term impacts were identified for soils, surface water, air quality, and noise levels. As construction is completed, these impacts will be resolved. Other projects in the area will be housing and other public facilities. The master planned area was previously undeveloped and in a natural state. Future developments in accordance with the master plan will create loss of vegetation and wildlife habitat.

5.0 Document Preparers' Qualifications and Signature

This document has been prepared by Eunice L. Tso, NEPA Specialist, ETD, Inc., and Madelyn Norstrem, Environmental Scientist, ETD, Inc. Madelyn Norstrem holds a B.S. Degree in Environmental Science, with an Emphasis on Resource Management. Ms. Tso has over 25 years of experience in environmental regulatory compliance in Indian Country and is an expert in the environmental policies and regulations that affect development in Indian country. She holds an M.S. Degree in Environmental Geology from Northern Arizona University.

10/2/24

Eunice L. Tso, M.S. Geology — Date
NEPA Specialist

10/02/2024

Madelyn Norstrem, B.S. Environmental Science — Date
Environmental Scientist

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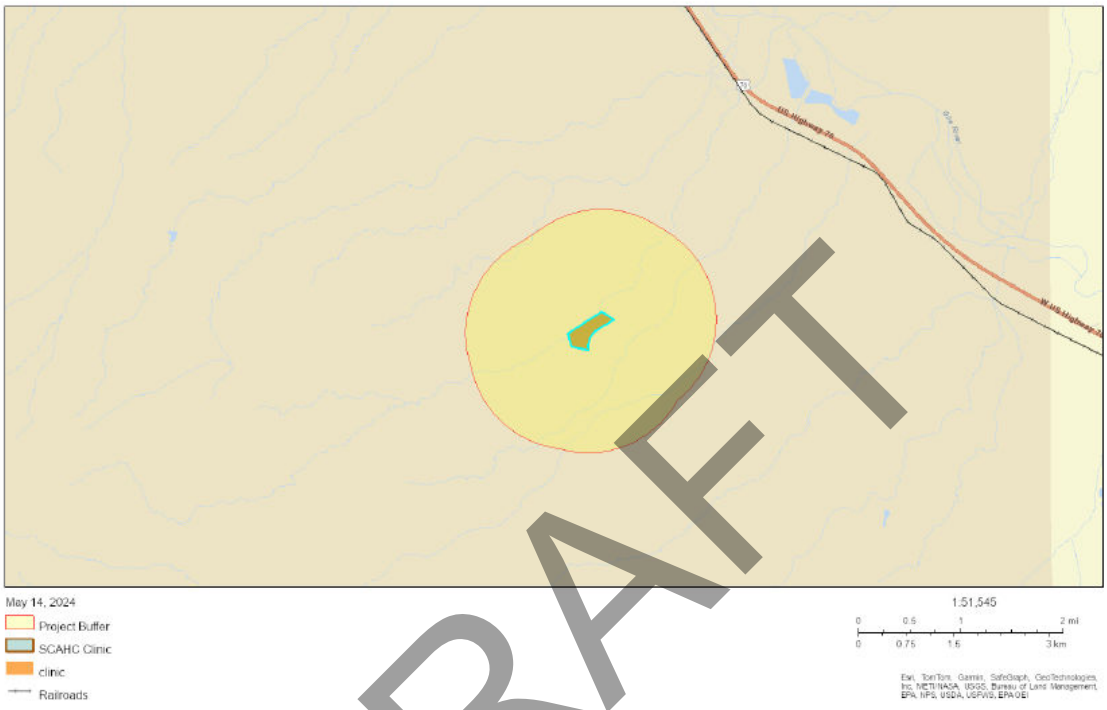
NEPAssist Report

SCAHC Clinic

A3 Landscape



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Project Area	0.07 sq mi
Within 1 mile of an Ozone 1-hr (1979 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of an Ozone 8-hr (1997 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of an Ozone 8-hr (2008 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of an Ozone 8-hr (2015 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a Lead (2008 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a SO2 1-hr (2010 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a PM2.5 24hr (2006 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a PM2.5 Annual (1997 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a PM2.5 Annual (2012 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a PM10 (1987 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a CO Annual (1971 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a NO2 Annual (1971 standard) Non-Attainment/Maintenance Area?	no
Within 1 mile of a Federal Land?	no
Within 1 mile of an impaired stream?	no
Within 1 mile of an impaired waterbody?	no
Within 1 mile of a waterbody?	no
Within 1 mile of a stream?	yes
Within 1 mile of an NWI wetland?	Available Online

Within 1 mile of a Brownfields site?	no
Within 1 mile of a Superfund site?	no
Within 1 mile of a Toxic Release Inventory (TRI) site?	no
Within 1 mile of a water discharger (NPDES)?	no
Within 1 mile of a hazardous waste (RCRA) facility?	no
Within 1 mile of an air emission facility?	no
Within 1 mile of a school?	no
Within 1 mile of an airport?	no
Within 1 mile of a hospital?	no
Within 1 mile of a designated sole source aquifer?	no
Within 1 mile of a historic property on the National Register of Historic Places?	no
Within 1 mile of a Land Cession Boundary?	yes
Within 1 mile of a tribal area (lower 48 states)?	yes
Within 1 mile of the service area of a mitigation or conservation bank?	no
Within 1 mile of the service area of an In-Lieu-Fee Program?	yes
Within 1 mile of a Public Property Boundary of the Formerly Used Defense Sites?	no
Within 1 mile of a Munitions Response Site?	no
Within 1 mile of an Essential Fish Habitat (EFH)?	no
Within 1 mile of a Habitat Area of Particular Concern (HAPC)?	no
Within 1 mile of an EFH Area Protected from Fishing (EFHA)?	no
Within 1 mile of a Bureau of Land Management Area of Critical Environmental Concern?	no
Within 1 mile of an ESA-designated Critical Habitat Area per U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service?	no
Within 1 mile of an ESA-designated Critical Habitat river, stream or water feature per U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service?	no

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SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE
Recreation and Wildlife Department
P.O. Box 97
San Carlos, Arizona 85550
1-888-475-2344 or (928) 475-2343
FAX (928) 475-2701

Tao Eptison
Vice-Chairman

Terry Rambler
Tribal Chairman

Timothy Stevens
Director

July 9, 2024

Isaiah Belknap, MBA
Deputy Chief Executive Officer
San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corp.
102 Medicine Way Rd
Peridot, AZ 85542
Phone: (928) 475-1400

RE: Threatened & Endangered species survey for the Clarence Wesley Clinic Project BIA route 193.

Mr. Belknap,

The San Carlos Recreation & Wildlife Department has the latest list of federally listed, proposed, and candidate species in Arizona from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. There are 20 federally listed species in Gila County, 18 species listed in Graham County, and 17 species listed in Pinal County. The San Carlos Apache Reservation occupies all three counties.

I have reviewed the request regarding the proposed business lease for the Clarence Wesley Clinic Project located on BIA route 193 on the San Carlos Apache Reservation. After visiting the site, there are no adverse effects to any listed species and no modifications planned that will negatively affect any critical habitat. Therefore, no comments or further evaluation will need to be pursued.

We thank you for letting the Wildlife Management Staff identify and avoid impacts to threatened and endangered species. If you should have any questions or need additional information you can reach me at (928) 475-2343.

Sincerely,

Daniel Juan, Senior Wildlife Biologist
San Carlos Recreation & Wildlife Department

Terry Rambler
Chairman

SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE
P.O. Box 0, San Carlos, Arizona 85550
Phone (928) 475-1600 ❖ Fax (928) 475-2567

Tao Etpison
Vice-Chairman

M-E-M-O-R-A-N-D-U-M

To: Cedar Polk, Land Use Planner

From: Seth Pilsk, Botanist

Date: February 9, 2024

Subject: Threatened and Endangered Plant Species

The Forest Resources Program is in possession of the latest list of Federally-listed threatened, endangered, and candidate species in Arizona from the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The Fish and Wildlife Service has identified several threatened or endangered species that may be found in Gila or Graham Counties.

The Arizona Cliffrose (*Purshia subintegra*) is the only verified threatened or endangered plant species on the San Carlos Reservation. The only other threatened, endangered or candidate plant species that may be found on the Reservation is the Arizona hedgehog cactus (*Echinocereus triglochidiatus arizonicus*). A map is attached showing the general vicinity of the Arizona cliffrose habitat, and the areas of potential Arizona hedgehog cactus and the formerly-listed Arizona agave habitat.

There is no evidence of any Federally-listed threatened, endangered, or candidate plant species or their habitats elsewhere on the Reservation.

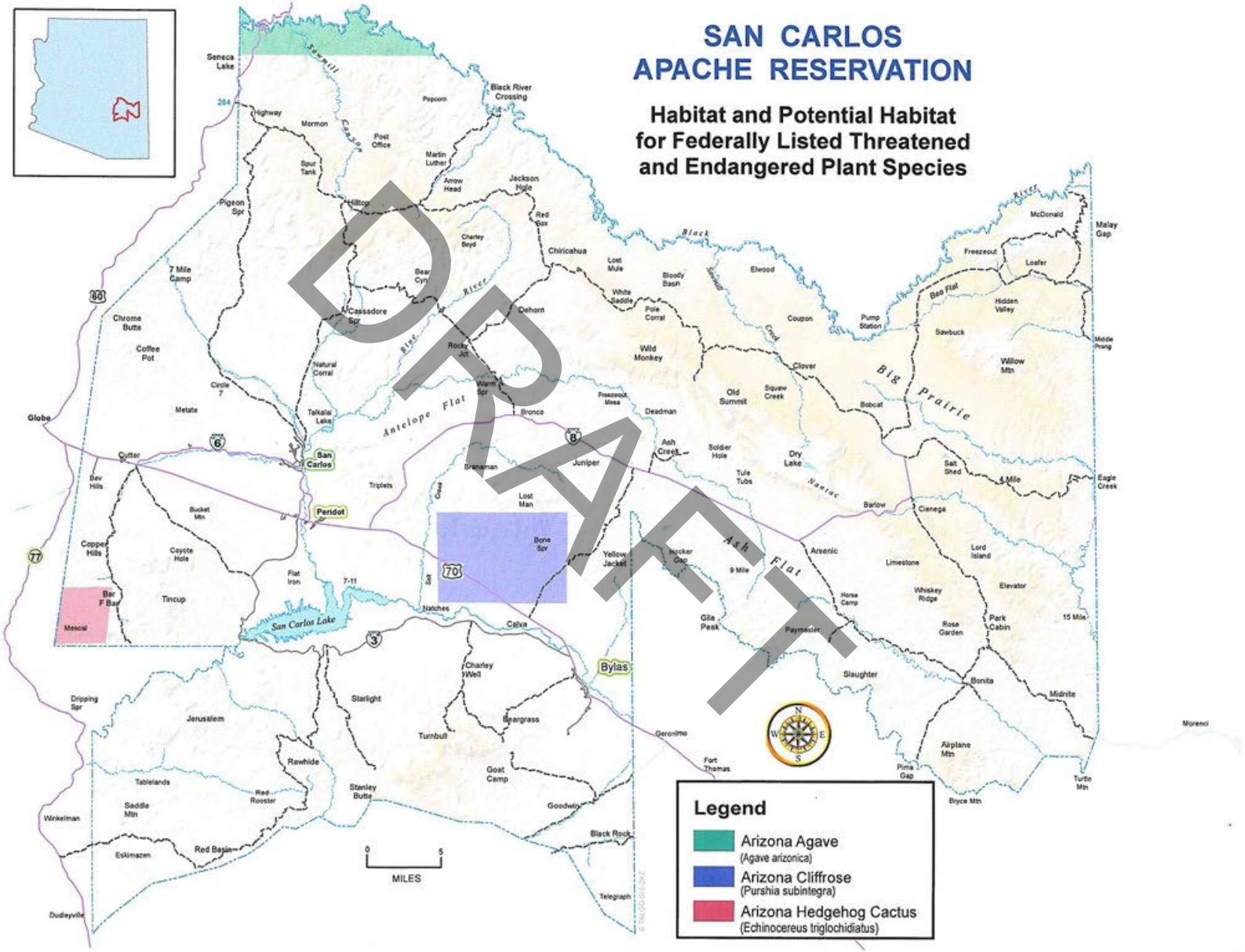
Please notify us of any projects that may take place within the areas shown on the attached map. Those projects taking place outside of the areas delineated on the attached map need not be brought to our attention for Threatened and Endangered Plant clearance.

This letter will be updated every year, to reflect new issuances of the Threatened and Endangered species listing from the US Fish and Wildlife Service.

CC:
Cassie Moses, Acting Forest Manager
Tim Stevens - Recreation and Wildlife Department
Vernelda Grant, Archaeologist – Historic Preservation and Archaeology
Leon Ben, BIA Superintendent

SAN CARLOS APACHE RESERVATION

Habitat and Potential Habitat for Federally Listed Threatened and Endangered Plant Species



Appendix C. THPO Determination Letter

SAN CARLOS APACHE TRIBE
HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND ARCHAEOLOGY DEPARTMENT
Cultural Resource Compliance Form

NO HISTORIC PROPERTIES AFFECTED

Attn: Isaiah Belknap, Deputy Chief Executive Officer San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation

Project Name: An Archaeological Clearance Report for the proposed Clarence Wesley Clinic Projects Site in the Bylas District on the San Carlos Apache Reservation, Bylas, AZ

Project Number: 2024-110-357

Report Date: August 8, 2024

Undertaking: The proposed project will be San Carlos Apache Health Corporation expanding its facility to include the Clarence Wesley Clinic Project within the newly planned Bylas Community. The clinic is 33,400 square feet facility. This project is supported by the new roads and utilities. Ground disturbance will be intensive and extensive.

Property Delineation:

Area of Potential Effect (acres):	50.0 ac	Area Surveyed:	50.0 ac
Linear Feet Water Line: Sewer Line:	 * *	USGS Quad Name & Year:	*Bylas, AZ*
Area FT^2 STDF:	*	Township:	T4S
Right-of-Way:	None	Range:	R22E
Land Status:	Tribal	Section:	18
Zone:	12	Tribal District:	Bylas

Survey Type: Class III, fifteen meters transect survey.

Survey/Field Date: August 2, 2024

Archaeologist/Para-Arch Survey Crew: Vanessa Nosie, Archaeology-Aide

Remarks: No historic or cultural resources were encountered.

Page 2 of 2- Project Name: An Archaeological Clearance Report for the proposed Clarence Wesley Clinic Projects Site in the Bylas District on the San Carlos Apache Reservation, Bylas, AZ

The Historic Preservation and Archaeology Department recommends that the construction of the project site and associated utilities/facilities will have no effect on any historic or traditional cultural properties potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

The Historic Preservation and Archaeology Department recommends a no historic properties affected determination for this undertaking.

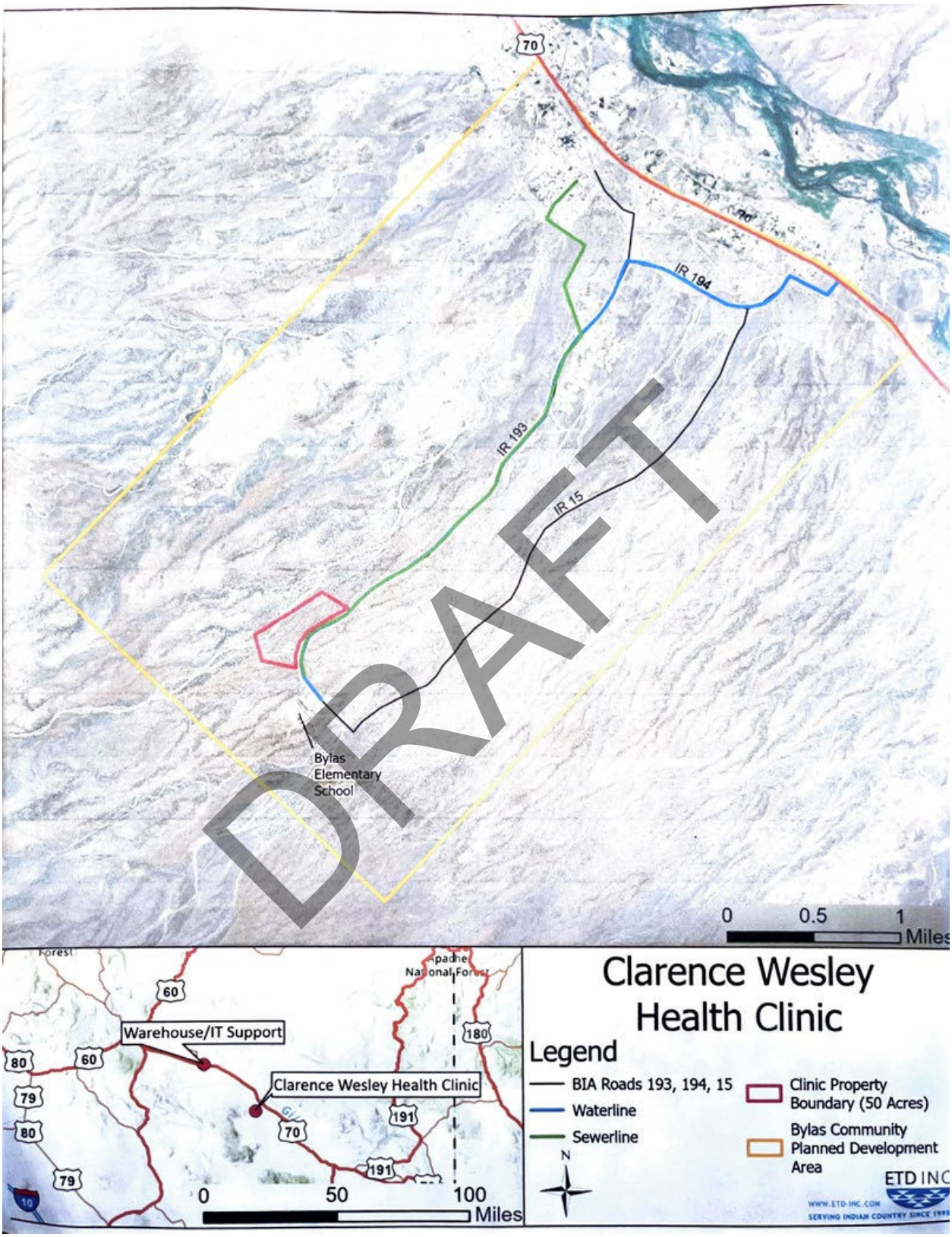
Should cultural materials be encountered in the course of construction or project activity, work should cease at that location and the Tribal Archaeologist should be notified immediately at (928) 475-5797.

Vanessa Nosie, Archaeology-Aide — Date 08/08/24

Tribal Historic Preservation Office Clearance:

Vernelda J. Grant, Tribal Historic Preservation Officer — Date 08/08/24

Historic Preservation & Archaeology Department
San Carlos Apache Tribe
P. O. Box 0
San Carlos, Arizona 85550
W: (928)475-5797


70
IR 194
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Elementary
School
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1
Miles
Forest
Apache
National Forest
60
Warehouse/IT Support
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Clarence Wesley Health Clinic
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79
191
10
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50
100
Miles
Clarence Wesley
Health Clinic
Legend
BIA Roads 193, 194, 15
Waterline
Sewerline
Clinic Property
Boundary (50 Acres)
Bylas Community
Planned Development
Area
N
ETD INC
WWW.ETD-INC.COM
SERVING INDIAN COUNTRY SINCE

Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI)
Clarence Wesley Health Center
San Carlos Apache Tribe, Graham County, Arizona

SUMMARY

The San Carlos Apache Tribe (Tribe) is considering the approval of the lease of 50 acres of tribal trust land owned by the Tribe. The Tribe's approval of the lease constitutes a federal action, requiring preparation of an Environmental Assessment (EA) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), as amended.

PURPOSE AND NEED

The Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared on behalf of the Tribe following the guidance of the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs ("BIA"). The EA has been prepared to supplement the lease agreement between the Tribe and the San Carlos Apache Healthcare Corporation ("SCAHC").

The 50-acre health center site is situated in the Bylas community located south of U.S. Highway 70, where the highway crosses the Gila River. From Highway 70, the site can be accessed via Indian Route 193 within Section 18, Township 4 South, Range 22 East, Gila and Salt River Meridian, San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation, Graham County, Arizona.

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED

The project as described in the EA is the preferred alternative. Other alternatives considered but eliminated from further consideration included other tribal-owned parcels but were eliminated from further consideration for various reasons. The No Action Alternative was also considered.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

The Tribe's Interdisciplinary Team provided recommendations on the EA through meetings at the Tribe's Administration Building in San Carlos. The public was given a thirty-day period to provide comments on the EA. The EA is available for public review upon request to Cedar Polk at cedar.polk@ped.scat-nsn.gov.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The EA documents the planning process and describes the comprehensive analysis of the impacts of the project, not only on the lease, but also on the development of the facility. No unmitigated adverse environmental impacts are indicated by the EA.

MITIGATION

Cultural Resources

There will be no identified adverse effects to cultural or historic resources. Should any unrecorded cultural resources sites be encountered during ground disturbing activities, work will stop in the area of discovery and stipulations of 36 C.F.R. § 800.11 will be followed. The Tribe's Historic Preservation Officer shall be contacted immediately.

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

The FONSI is a finding on environmental effects, not a decision to proceed with an action, therefore cannot be appealed. 25 C.F.R. Part 2.7 requires a 30-day appeal period after the decision to proceed with the action is made before the action may be implemented. Appeal information will be made publicly available when the decision to proceed is made.

Based on the attached Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Clarence Wesley Health Center project and proposal to lease 50-acres of Tribal trust lands by the San Carlos Apache Tribe to SCAHC in Graham County, Arizona, I have determined that by implementation of the agency proposed action and environmental mitigation measures as specified in the EA, the proposed lease will have no significant impact on the quality of the human environment. In accordance with Section 102 (2) (c)) of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended, an Environmental Impact Statement will not be required.

_____ _____

Terry Rambler, Chairman
San Carlos Apache Tribe

Date

_____ _____

Ben Leon, Superintendent
San Carlos Agency
Bureau of Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior

Date