

**PECOS DISTRICT  
ROSWELL FIELD OFFICE  
ROSWELL, New Mexico**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
NM-510-2007 -0022**

**Township 9S, Range16E Section 29 NW 1/4**

**Rio Bonito Acquired Lands  
Tract Three  
BLM PARKING LOT**

PREPARED BY     //SS//      
PAUL T. HAPPEL

    January 23, 2007      
DATE

## I. INTRODUCTION

### A. Background

The project is located in the Rio Bonito Acquired Lands on Tract three on the north side of the Town of Lincoln, an un-incorporated town in Lincoln County. The legal description of this project is Township 9 South., Range 16 East., Section 29 NW ¼

The Parking Lot is a portion of a parcel of the Rio Bonito Acquired Lands (RBAL) in Tract Three directly across from the Lincoln Pageant Grounds on the north side of U.S. Highway 280. Through the RBAL Final Activity Plan of 2004 planning process this three acres of land was designated to be used as a parking lot for the town of Lincoln. The parking lot was discussed and agreed upon by the public participating in the Final Activity Plan for the Rio Bonito Acquired Lands. The parking lot is also used as a trail head for the BLM trails adjacent to the town of Lincoln. (see appendix's 1,2,3.)

### B. Purpose And Need For The Proposed Action

There is a perceived need for off site parking within the historic town of Lincoln. The BLM parking lot would provide a solution for this challenge. The Rio Bonito Final Acquired Lands Plan recommended the following: "The field be used as a parking area for the town of Lincoln. The parking lot will provide off-street parking to people visiting the town during events and on a daily basis. The lot has previously been used for parking during the Billy the Kid Pageant and other events in Lincoln. The Village of Lincoln Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association has requested a location to place a water hydrant or stand pipe within the parking lot for a location to fill up fire trucks for wildfires within the Lincoln Historic District. In preliminary planning the BLM requested the NM-DOT to plan for acceleration and deceleration traffic lanes in the area of the parking lot and gravel surfacing of the parking lot when U.S. Highway 380 is improved through the town of Lincoln

The proposal from the parking lot in the RBAL Plan would be to:

- Develop a landscape architecture plan that effectively screens the parking lot from U.S. highway 380 (completed and approved in 2005 by the Lincoln Historic Board, See attachment A).
  - Aesthetic wood fence consisting of cedar posts and smooth wire.
  - Cattleguard/pedestrian/equestrian gates would be placed at the back of the parking lot.

- Use the field as a trail head for trails within tract three ( EA No. NM-510-2006-019 Completed and trails constructed in 2006).
- Request NM-DOT to place acceleration and deceleration lanes to enter the field (preliminary studies are currently taking place for U.S. highway 380 within the historic district).
- Place conifer trees around the perimeter of the field to screen the area from private property owners (Alligator juniper or Pinon trees have been recommended).
- Provide a drip irrigation system to provide water for the conifer trees around the parking lot.
- Use the area as staging for equestrian use and wheeled conveyance.
- Use the area continually as a parking lot, or on an as-needed basis for special events.
- Base course and gravel the parking lot to allow year round use and to keep down fugitive dust in the parking lot.
- Place a water hydrant or stand pipe within the parking lot for a location to fill up fire trucks for wildfires within the Lincoln Historic District.
- Place a row of electrical outlets at the back of the parking lot for special events. The faces of the electrical outlet boxes would be wood to reflect the historic atmosphere of the area.
- Place interpretive signing within the parking lot
- Place a restroom facility within the parking lot.

**Restrictions Placed by the Historic District:**

- The Lincoln Historic District has requested that no overhead lighting facilities be installed within the parking lot for historic reasons.
- The Lincoln Historic District requested that no asphalt be placed on the parking lot except for the lead in from U.S. Highway 380. The parking lot will remain a gravel surface

**C. Conformance with Land Use Planning**

The Proposed action is consistent with Bureau Policy and guidance as well as actions analyzed in the Roswell Approved Resource Management Plan and Record of Decision of October 1997(RMP) and Through the RBAL Final Activity Plan of 2004.

## **D. Relationship to Statutes, Regulations, or Other Plans**

Other pertinent statutes affecting the proposed action include:

Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of October 21, 1976, as amended;  
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (36 CFR 800);  
Clean Air Act (CAA) as amended (42 U.S.C. 7401);  
Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), as amended (42 U.S.C. 300f);  
Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977 (33 U.S.C.)1251;  
Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) of 1976, as amended (42 U.S.C. 6901);

## **II. PROPOSED ACTION AND ALTERNATIVES**

### **A. Description of the Proposed Action**

The parking lot can be an integral part of Tract three within the RBAL. The parking lot will have a gravel surface and Cedar fence with smooth wire surrounding the area. The developed trails will be clearly marked with uniform signing. Signing will conform to the Lincoln Historic Preservation Ordinance as amended. Trail brochures will be developed and placed at the trailhead within the parking lot. The parking lot will be designed to blend with the environment and will follow the contour of the land. Erosion control will be accomplished by grading the parking lot to let the water run off to the north. Any culvert extending into the parking lot from U.S. Highway 380 will be directed to allow water to flow and exit the parking lot on the north side.

### **B. Alternatives To The Proposed Action**

**Alternative 1 :** Construct the parking lot as proposed in the environmental assessment.

**Alternative 2:** Move the parking lot to another location

**Alternative 3 (No Action Alternative):**

The No Action alternative would be to not allow the parking lot to be constructed.

### **III. DESCRIPTION OF THE AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT**

#### **A. General Setting**

The general setting would be the upper bench of Tract Three of the Rio Bonito Acquired Lands directly across from the Lincoln Pageant Grounds where the field used as a parking lot exists (see attached map).

#### **B. Affected Resources/Critical Elements**

The following critical elements have been evaluated and are either not present or are not affected by the Proposed Action or the alternative in this assessment: Farmland - Prime or Unique, Native American Religious Concerns, Wastes-Hazardous or Solid, Wild and Scenic Rivers, Wilderness, Threatened and Endangered Species, Low income or Minority populations or communities will not be affected by the proposed action.

##### **1. Geology**

Large-scale disharmonic folds occur within sediments of the middle Permian Yeso Formation near Lincoln. These flexural-slip and flexural-flow folds contrast with the near homoclinal attitude of the conformable, overlying San Andres Formation. Folded sediments of the Yeso Formation of Leonardian (middle Permian) age are exposed in low-lying hills north of Lincoln. The folded Yeso units are overlain by the flat-lying San Andres Formation. This distorted folded geologic formation are called the Lincoln folds. The Lincoln folds are exposed for about 7 miles in the bluffs north of the river. Theories of fold origin include soft-sediment deformation, doming with gravitational gliding and mass slumping. The Lincoln folds may be interpreted by signage at a later date along the trail.

##### **2. Soil**

Soil types present within the trail sites are: Gabaldon-Riverwash association, Hightower Variant sandy loam, Hightower-Oro Grande complex and Deama-Pastura Association

##### **3. Topography**

The topography of the area is the upper bench land adjacent to the River.

##### **4. Water Quality/Drinking Ground**

The Rio Bonito is a perennial river located in the project area. Fresh groundwater sources are in the Quaternary Alluvium, Yeso Formation, and the San Andres Formation. Depth to fresh groundwater in the area ranges from 10 to 30 feet in Quaternary Alluvium, Yeso Formation, and the San Andres Formation (New Mexico State Engineer Office data).

##### **5. Climate**

Temperatures vary from an average of 90 degrees F in the summer to 20

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degrees F in the winter months. Precipitation averages 16.1 inches annually.  
The area is considered semi arid as the evaporation exceeds the precipitation.

**6. Wildlife**

Wildlife species inhabiting the area include mule deer, elk, coyote, rabbit, raccoon, skunk, bobcat, badger, occasional cougars, bears, and various small rodents and reptiles. Common bird species observed includes raptors, killdeer, mallard, bufflehead, mourning dove, scaled quail, and sparrows. Additionally, some salmonids and cyprinids inhabit the perennial sections of the river.

**7. Wilderness**

There is no designated wilderness or Wilderness study areas within the area.

**8. Livestock**

Livestock will not be allowed into the parking lot unless they are managed by the person using the parking lot.

**9. Recreation**

The proposed parking lot will add to the visitor enjoyment while visiting Lincoln. The parking lot will provide a jump off location for the BLM acquired lands tract three and the trails developed by BLM within this area. The parking lot will also allow visitors and vehicles to exit U.S. Highway 380 within the area and enjoy the undeveloped BLM land within the area. Interpretive panels would be placed along the edge of the parking lot and on the Lincoln Trail to interpret the geologic, history and cultural resources of the area.

**10. Vegetation**

The aggregate base and gravel surface will provide a sterile surface to prevent vegetation from occurring within the parking lot. Because of the traffic pattern within the parking lot vegetation will not continue to grow and will be crushed by the tires of the vehicles using the parking lot. Along the edges of the parking lot native grass will be allowed to grow, and be mowed by mechanical means. The conifer trees along the borders will provide a buffer to the neighboring properties and will be watered by a drip irrigation system hooked to the Town of Lincoln's water system.

**11. Karst**

No cave or karst has been found within the proposed area.

**12. Nonnative/Invasive Species**

No weeds are expected to grow on the surface of the parking lot due to the

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passage of vehicles within the parking lot. If nonnative or invasive species grow in the parking lot, an approved herbicide will be used to spot kill weeds within the area if necessary. Herbicides will be applied as per the restrictions or specifications outlined in appendix 9, Treating vegetation with herbicides, Roswell RMP1997. Mechanical means such as hand tools could be used to lessen unwanted noxious/invasive species of plants within this area.

**13. Threatened and Endangered Species**

The area has been previously inventoried and no T&E Species have been found.

**14. Cultural Resources**

The area of disturbance was inventoried for cultural resources. No significant cultural resources are present in the area of effect.

**15. Wetlands/Riparian Zone**

The area is on the upper bench above the Rio Bonito and should not significantly affect the wetlands or riparian zone of the Rio Bonito. Surface water will be drained towards the Rio Bonito and will carry some materials washed off vehicles. There is enough buffer between the Rio Bonito and to catch any materials and deposit them in this buffer between the river and the parking lot.

**16. Floodplains**

The parking lot is above the 100-year floodplain. For administrative purposes, the 100-year floodplain serves as the basis for floodplain management on public land. It is based on Flood Insurance Rate Maps prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (1983). Current development on the floodplain in the area consists of irrigation ditches, irrigation pipelines, two-track roads and fencing.

**17. Air Quality**

Air quality in the region is generally good. The area is in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality as defined in the public Clean Air Act. Class II areas allow a moderate amount of air quality degradation.

**18. Fire Protection**

The Village of Lincoln Mutual Domestic Water Consumers Association has requested a location to place a water hydrant or stand pipe within the parking lot for a location to fill up fire trucks for wildfires within the Lincoln Historic District. The hydrant or stand pipe would be placed in the north west portion of the parking lot as far away from U.S. Highway 380 as possible.

## **IV ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS**

## **A. Impacts Of The Proposed Action**

Following are critical elements and other resources that may be impacted by the Proposed Action:

### **Critical Elements**

1. **Cultural Resources.**  
The proposed action area has been surveyed using the class three method of cultural survey. No cultural resources have been found within the area proposed as a parking lot. If during the excavation of the parking lot cultural or historic resources are found the construction will stop immediately and the proponent will contact the BLM Roswell Field Office Archaeologist.
2. **Threatened and Endangered Species.**  
The area has been previously inventoried and no T&E Species have been found.
3. **Water Quality/Drinking Ground.**  
Direct impacts to surface water quality would be minor, short-term impacts may occur during storm flow events from increased siltation to the Rio Bonito River. Indirect impacts to water-quality related resources, such as fisheries, would not occur. The proposed action would not have a significant effect on ground water.
4. **Recreation.**  
The proposed action will allow the visitor to use off street parking within the town of Lincoln and take small and larger vehicles such as recreation vehicles off the street and allow them to park in an area that will not degrade the historic scene in Lincoln. The parking lot will be a jumping off location for the BLM trail system in tract three of the Lincoln Acquired Lands. It will also allow visitors to enter Tract Three of the acquired land in a controlled way. The parking lot would also provide interpretive panels so the visitor can learn about the natural history, cultural history, as well as geology of the area.
5. **Floodplains.**  
The floodplain will not be affected by the proposed action. The area will not be affected or impacted by new soil disturbances and loss of vegetation. The impact from new soil disturbances and loss of vegetation from the construction and maintenance of trails is minimal.
6. **Air Quality.**  
Dust levels under the proposed action would be slightly higher than under the no action alternative due to construction and management activities. The levels would be within the limits allowed in a Class II area for the Prevention of Significant Deterioration of air quality.



## **OTHER KNOWN RESOURCES**

1. Karst  
No cave or karst features are known to exist within the proposed area. The area is in a potential Medium Cave/karst area, although no cave features have been found in this area.
2. Soil  
The construction of the proposed action would physically disturb the topsoil. The exposed soil would be covered by an aggregate base and top surfaced with gravel. The area would not be susceptible to wind and water erosion because of the surfacing.
3. Vegetation  
A swath 470 feet in length and 440 feet wide would be denuded of vegetation. Aggregate base materials up to one foot thick with crushed gravel surface would be used to stabilize the proposed area. Vegetation would be trampled out by vehicle tires using the parking lot.
4. Noxious and Invasive Species  
There should be minimal noxious and invasive species spread by vehicle traffic within the area. If nonnative or invasive species grow in the parking lot, an approved herbicide will be used to spot kill weeds within the area if necessary. Herbicides will be applied as per the restrictions or specifications outlined in appendix 9, Treating vegetation with herbicides, Roswell RMP1997. Mechanical means such as hand tools could be used to lessen unwanted noxious/invasive species of plants within this area.

## **B. IMPACTS OF ALTERNATIVES**

### **Relocate the Proposed Action**

Relocating the parking lot to another part of the area would be considered if there was a need. However the proposed location for the proposed parking lot has been identified in the Rio Bonito Acquired Lands Final Activity Plan of December 2004 for this location. Relocation of the proposed parking lot would be counter productive to the final plan.

### **No Action Alternative**

This alternative denies the Proposed Action. This alternative will result in no new environmental impacts. However, a No Action Alternative may reduce BLM's recreation management efforts within tract three. Further, the Proposed Action will add to recreation potential of the Lincoln area and solve part of the on street parking problems that Lincoln is experiencing.

### **C. MITIGATION MEASURES**

Depending of the final design of the parking lot a sump area could be used to catch run off water from the parking lot to lessen the potential of contaminants reaching the Rio Bonito.

### **CRITICAL ELEMENTS**

#### **CULTURAL RESOURCES**

To prevent possible negative impacts, or loss of cultural resources the area has been previously surveyed. In the event that cultural resources are discovered during the excavation, the Bureau of Land Management Roswell Field Office archaeologist will be notified immediately.

#### **D. RESIDUAL IMPACTS**

There will be little or no residual impacts from the Proposed Action.

#### **E. CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

Population increases and recreational demand for parking are considered the primary multipliers of cumulative resource use effects for the future. There will be positive effects resulting from providing a parking lot for off street parking within the town of Lincoln. Increase in regional metropolitan populations and collateral recreation demands may also impact Lincoln's natural, cultural, and recreational resources. Other southwest recreational sites, areas, parks and facilities have experienced a general increase in resource use within the past fifteen years. The trend is expected to continue as the public becomes more aware of the value of public land to the nation.

## **V. CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION**

### **PERSONS CONSULTED**

Ernest Jaquez, Wildlife Biologist

Dan Baggao, Wildlife Biologist

Joseph Navarro, Rangeland Management Specialist

Howard Parman, Planning Coordinator

Irene Gonzales, Realty Specialist

Al Collar, Geologist

Michael McGee, Hydrologist

Pat Flanary, Archaeologist

Paul Happel, Natural Resource Specialist/ Acting Outdoor Recreation Planner

Helen Miller, Range Mgt. Specialist /noxious weeds

Jerry Dutchover, Geologist

Pat Flanary, Archaeologist

Richard Hill, Environmental Protection Specialist

Tim Kreager, Assistant Field Manager, Resources

Dee Ann Kessler, Lincoln State Monuments

Glen Kay Pugh, Civil Engineer

**VI. DECISION RECORD/FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT**  
**DECISION DOCUMENT EA# NM-060-2001-0079**

I recommend that the Proposed Action, be approved as proposed. I have determined that the Proposed Action, with the mitigation measures described in this EA, will not have any significant impacts on the natural and human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required.

Authority of this action is the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321, es seq.), as amended.

**RATIONALE FOR DECISION**

The Proposed Acton would not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation. The placement of a trail system will allow the visitor to enjoy the natural surroundings learn about the geology, cultural resources and the history of the area. The proposal is consistent with the Roswell Field Office Resource Management Plan of 1997 and the Rio Bontio Acquired Lands Final Activity Plan of December 2004.

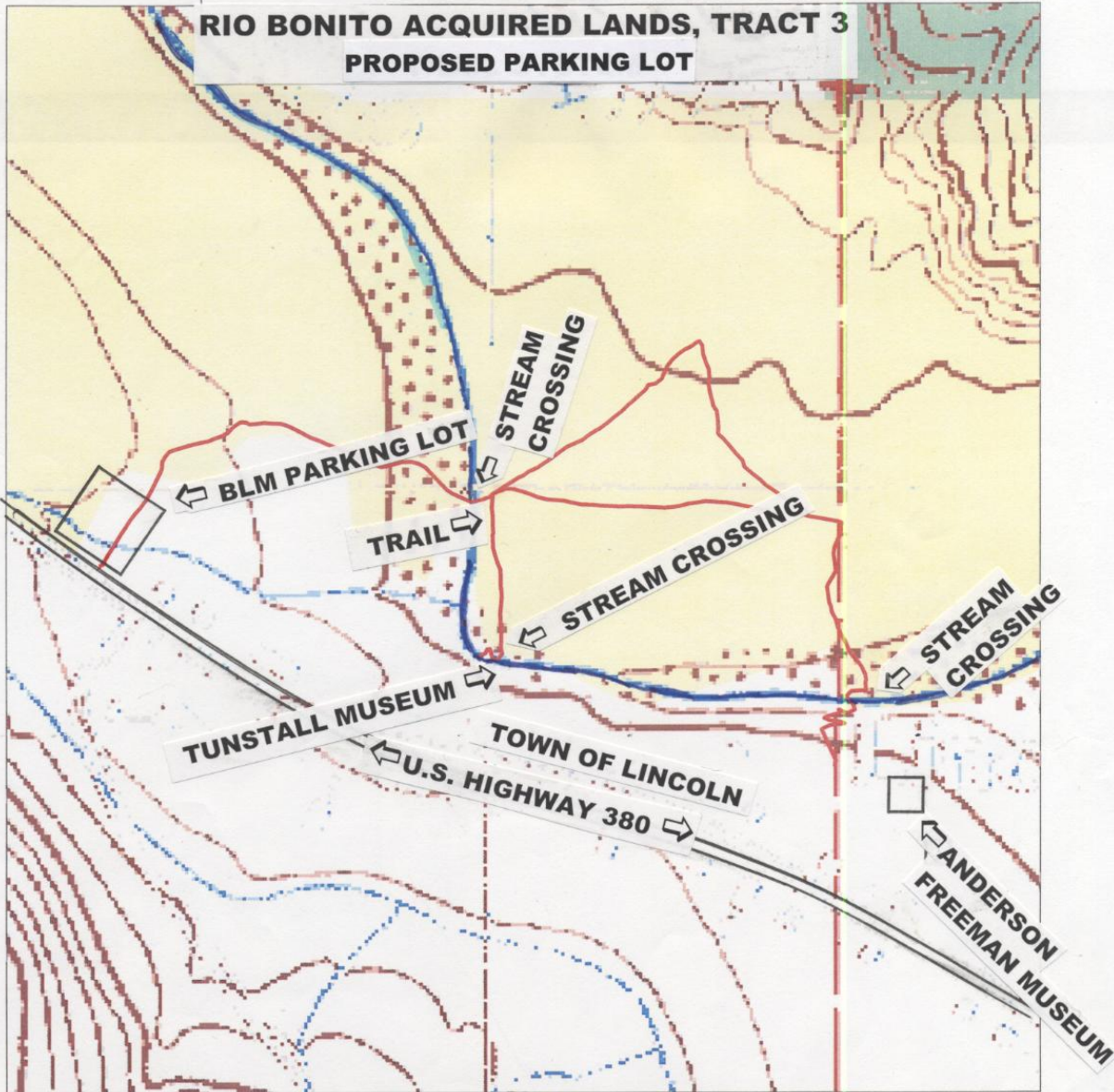
The Proposal was presented to the Lincoln Historic Board on May 18,2006. Because the proposal is within the Lincoln Historic District the board members recommended and approved the trail system. The three Bridges as designed in the Environmental Assessment were recommended by the Historic Board instead of the culverts for the river crossings be.

//SS//  
**Timothy R. Kreager**  
**Assistant Field Manager Resources**

1/31/07  
**Date**

Rio Bonito Parcel 3 Trails

APPENDIX 1:  
New Mexico



1:4205

T. 9S., R.16E., SECTION 29

LOCATION MAP



Produced by the Bureau of Land Management



Map printed on January 30, 2006



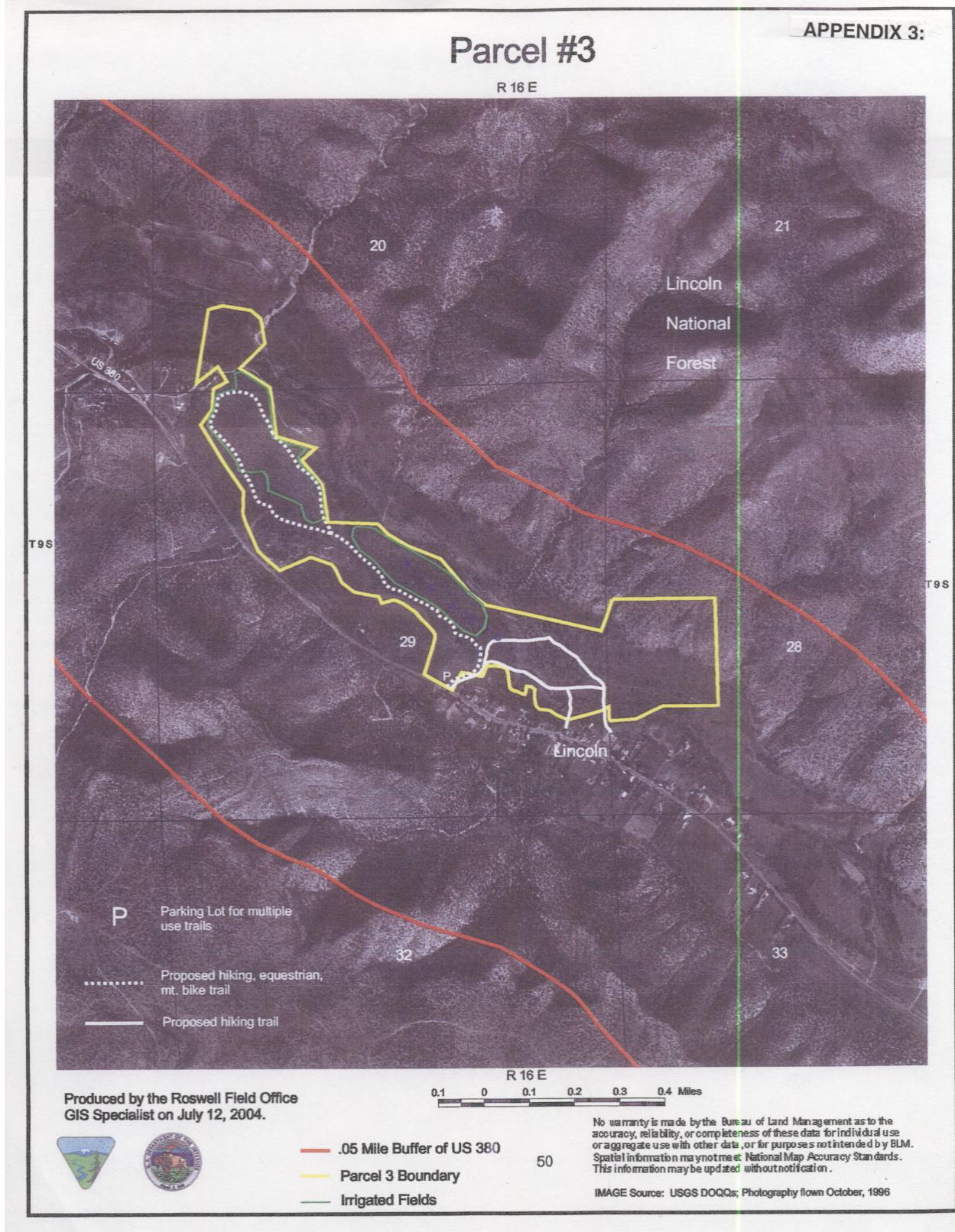
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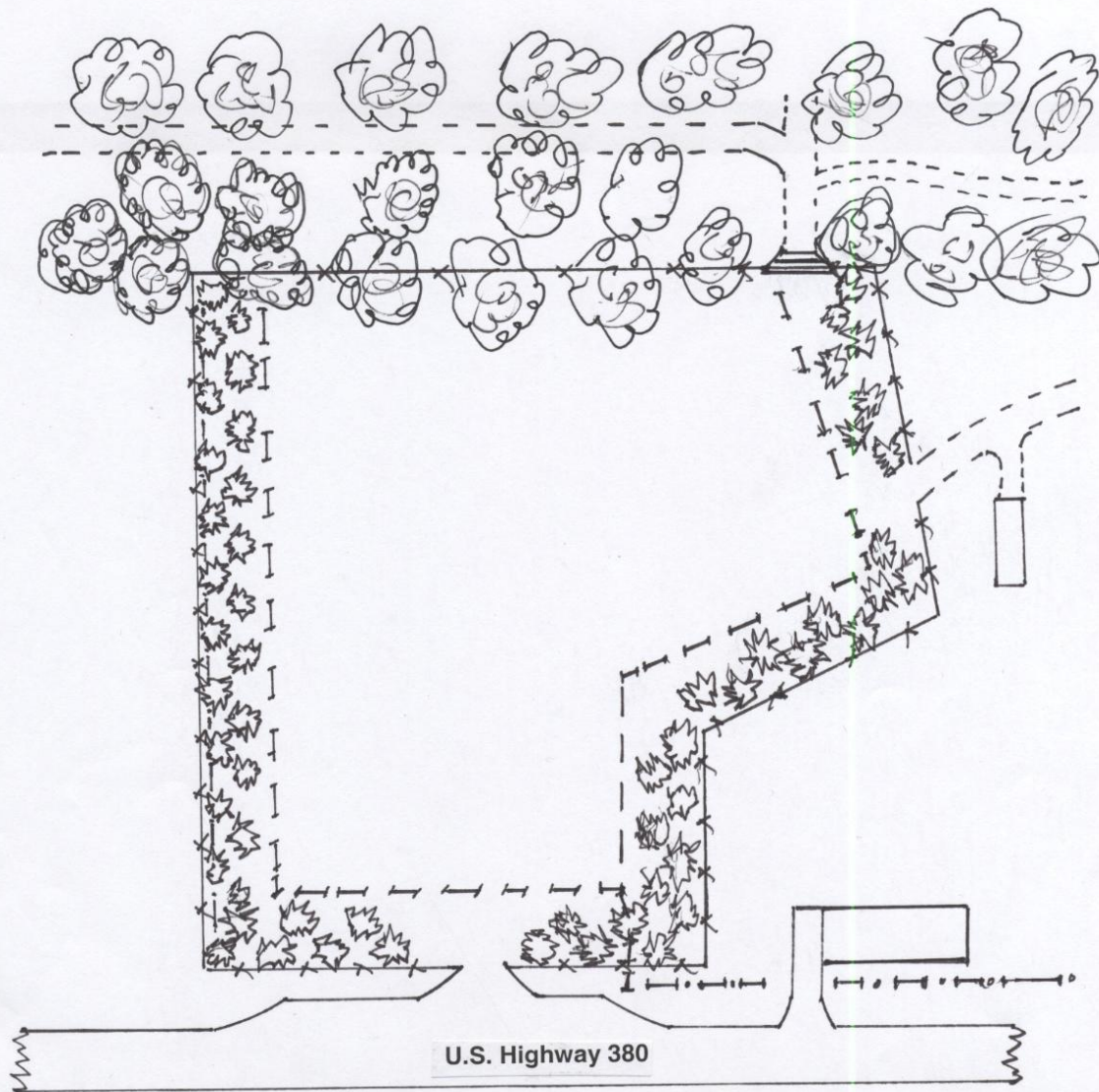
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Statewide Land Status Legend

Bureau of Land Management	Tribal Lands
Bureau of Reclamation	National Park Service
Dept. of Agriculture	Private
Dept. of Defense	State
Dept. of Energy	State Game & Fish
Forest Service	State Park
Fish & Wildlife Service	







Bureau of Land Management Proposed  
**LINCOLN ACQUIRED LANDS TRACT THREE  
 OFF STREET PARKING**

- LEGEND**
- Parking Lot Fence (Boundary)
  - ☉ Existing Deciduous Trees
  - ☎ Conifer Tree
  - ☐ Cattle Guard
  - ☐ Structures Outside of Parking Lot
  - Trails
  - Roads
  - Above Ground Electric Line
  - Drip Irrigation Pipeline
  - Village Water Line
- Scale One Inch = 100 Feet

