

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
ROAD IMPROVEMENTS NEAR EAGLE PASS
AND CINCO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH
CUEVAS CREEK BRIDGE
MAVERICK COUNTY, TEXAS
U.S. Customs and Border Protection

PROJECT HISTORY: The Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) updates the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6) road improvements near Eagle Pass and Cinco Cattle Company Ranch, Texas prepared in May 2000. The road improvements project was in response to a supported request from the Office of Border Patrol (OBP) under U.S. Customs and Border Protection.

The original EA addressed the potential for adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of improvements to 15.9 miles of existing primitive road and the construction of five water crossings near Eagle Pass and on the Cinco Ranch. The Cinco Ranch section consists of 11.1 miles of improvements to existing primitive roads and the construction of a Texas bridge (low-water concrete crossing) and a timber trestle bridge at Cuevas Creek near the U.S.-Mexico border west of El Indio, Texas. In addition another 2.8-mile section of road on Cinco Ranch was identified for possible future upgrade activities. The SEA was prepared to address the potential for adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of a change in bridge design at Cuevas Creek from a timber trestle bridge to a Bailey bridge. The Bailey bridge design evaluated in the SEA elevated the bridge above the 50-year floodplain, eliminated some of the impacts to Cuevas Creek, and allowed training more conducive to JTF-6's mission.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The primary purpose of the proposed action is to support the OBP's mission to reduce illegal drug traffic and potential terrorist activities along the southwestern border. A secondary purpose of the proposed action is to provide civil engineering training for JTF-6 personnel. The need is based on the current inability of OBP agents to pursue illegal entrants across Cuevas Creek.

PROPOSED ACTION: The proposed action includes a change in bridge design from a timber trestle bridge to a Bailey bridge at a previously approved crossing at Cuevas Creek on Cinco Cattle Company Ranch and, the construction and upgrade of roads required to access the bridge. Military personnel will complete the construction of the Bailey bridge, scheduled to begin in the summer of 2004 and will continue for approximately 9-weeks. Two bivouac areas are considered for the proposed action: one located on the Cinco Cattle Company Ranch and there is an alternate location on the future site of a Maverick County waste disposal facility.

ALTERNATIVES: The National Environmental Policy Act requires that the no action alternative be analyzed in an EA. In addition to the proposed action and the no action alternatives, the SEA analyzes four other alternatives, including three alternate Bailey bridge designs and the timber trestle bridge design proposed in the original EA.

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AND CINCO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH
CUEVAS CREEK BRIDGE
Customs and Border Protection**


Two additional alternatives, a Bailey bridge with pile driven piers and a low water crossing, were eliminated from consideration because they would not satisfy the purpose and need.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: The only impacts that would occur beyond those identified in the original EA would be additional, minor impacts to vegetation and soils. Impacts to water resources would be reduced under the proposed action, compared to the status quo, as described in the original EA. No additional impacts to cultural resources will occur.

ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MEASURES: A professional archeologist will monitor construction activities to ensure potentially adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated, as required under the Historic Preservation Act's Section-108 process.

FINDING: No significant adverse effects to the natural or human environment are expected with the implementation of the proposed action. In addition, no adverse effects to Federally protected threatened/endangered species or habitats are expected. The proposed action will be coordinated through the appropriate agencies.

Based upon the results of the SEA and the environmental design measures to be incorporated as part of the proposed action, it has been concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.


Kevin Feeney
Environmental Program Officer
Customs and Border Protection

6/11/2004
Date

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

JTF-6 ROAD IMPROVEMENTS NEAR EAGLE PASS AND CINCO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH CUEVAS CREEK BRIDGE MAVERICK COUNTY, TEXAS JOINT TASK FORCE SIX

The primary purpose of the proposed action is to support the Office of Border Patrol's (OBP) mission to reduce illegal drug traffic and potential terrorist activities along the southwestern border. A secondary purpose of the proposed action is to provide training for Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6) personnel. The need is based on the current inability of OBP agents to pursue illegal entrants across Cuevas Creek in a timely manner.

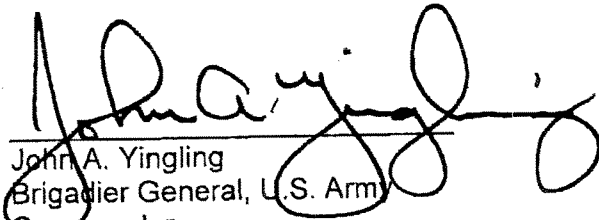
The Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) updates the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed JTF-6 road improvements near Eagle Pass and Cinco Cattle Company Ranch, Texas prepared in May 2000. The road improvements project was in response to a supported request from the OBP. The original EA addressed the potential for adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of improvements to 15.9 miles of existing primitive road and the construction of five water crossings near Eagle Pass and on the Cinco Ranch. The Cinco Ranch section consists of 11.1 miles of improvements to existing primitive roads and the construction of one Texas Bridge (low-water concrete crossing) and one timber trestle bridge at Cuevas Creek near the U.S.-Mexico border west of El Indio, Texas. In addition another 2.8-mile section of road on Cinco Ranch was identified for possible future upgrade activities. The SEA was prepared to address the potential for adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of a change in bridge design at Cuevas Creek from a timber trestle bridge to a Bailey bridge. The Bailey bridge design evaluated in the SEA elevated the bridge above the 50-year floodplain, eliminated some of the impacts to Cuevas Creek, and allowed training more conducive to JTF-6's mission.

The proposed action would include a change in bridge design from a timber trestle bridge to a Bailey bridge at a previously approved crossing at Cuevas Creek on Cinco Cattle Company Ranch and the construction and upgrade of roads required to access the bridge. Military personnel would complete the construction of the Bailey bridge, which is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2004 and would continue for approximately nine weeks. The bivouac area considered for the proposed action is located on the future site of a Maverick County waste disposal facility.

Alternatives considered include the no action and the proposed action, described above. In addition to the proposed action and the no action alternatives, the SEA analyzes four other alternatives, including three alternate Bailey bridge designs and the timber trestle bridge design proposed in the original EA. Two additional alternatives, a Bailey bridge with pile driven piers and a low water crossing, were eliminated from consideration because they would not satisfy the purpose and need.

No significant adverse effects to the natural or human environment are expected with the implementation of the proposed action. Furthermore, no adverse effects to federally protected threatened/endangered species or habitats are expected. The proposed action will be coordinated through the appropriate agencies. Archeological site 41MV249 is near the project area and has been tested previously as part of JTF-6's original project actions. The site was determined to be eligible for listing on the National

Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, concurrence was received from the Texas Historical Commission that the level of erosion in the portion of the site that would be impacted by construction prevents that portion from contributing to the site's eligibility under the NRHP. Therefore, a professional archeologist would monitor construction activities to ensure potentially adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated, as required under the Section 106 process. Based upon the results of the SEA and the environmental design measures to be incorporated as part of the proposed action, it has been concluded that the proposed action will not have a significant adverse effect on the environment.



John A. Yingling
Brigadier General, U.S. Army
Commander

18 JUNE 04
Date

SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

**PROPOSED JTF-6 ROAD IMPROVEMENTS
NEAR EAGLE PASS AND
CINCO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH
MAVERICK COUNTY, TEXAS**

APRIL 2004

Lead Agency:

Department of Homeland Security
Bureau of Customs and Border Protection

Cooperating Agency:

Joint Task Force Six
Fort Bliss, Texas

Point of Contact:

Mr. Glenn Bixler
Environmental Resource Specialist
Fort Worth District, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
819 Taylor Street, Room 3A14
Fort Worth, Texas 76102
Fax (817) 886-6499

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROPOSED JTF-6 ROAD IMPROVEMENTS NEAR EAGLE PASS AND CINCO CATTLE COMPANY RANCH, TEXAS

PROPOSED ACTION: This Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) updates the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6) road improvements near Eagle Pass and Cinco Cattle Company Ranch, Texas prepared in May 2000. These road improvements were in response to a supported request from the Office of Border Patrol (OBP). The original EA addressed the potential for adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of improvements to 15.9 miles of existing primitive road and the construction of five water crossings near Eagle Pass and on the Cinco Ranch. The Cinco Ranch section consists of 11.1 miles of improvements to existing primitive roads and the construction of one Texas bridge (low-water concrete crossing) and one timber trestle bridge near the U.S.-Mexico border west of El Indio, Texas. In addition, another 2.8-mile section of road on Cinco Ranch was identified for possible future upgrade activities.

The Proposed Action of this SEA consists of a change in the original bridge crossing design at Cuevas Creek near El Indio from a timber trestle bridge to a Bailey bridge. This new design also elevates the connecting approach roads to and from the proposed bridge and upgrades the surface with caliche aggregate. The Bailey bridge design would raise the road grade above the water surface elevation (50-year floodplain) in Cuevas Creek. This Bailey bridge design, relative to the timber trestle design, would have fewer impacts within the streambed.

**PURPOSE AND NEED
FOR THE PROPOSED
ACTION:**

The Purpose and Need would remain within the scope of the Final EA, of which this document supplements. In summary, the purpose of this project is to support the OBP's mission to reduce illegal drug trafficking and potential terrorist activities along the southwestern border. A secondary benefit is to provide training for JTF-6 units that would construct the project. The need for the Proposed Action is to ensure reliable and rapid access to areas north and south of Cuevas Creek.

**PROPOSED ACTION
AND ALTERNATIVES:**

The Proposed Action involves construction of a Bailey bridge across Cuevas Creek and the construction and upgrade of roads required to access the bridge. The National Environmental Policy Act also requires that the No Action Alternative be analyzed in an EA. In addition to the Proposed Action and the No Action Alternative, this SEA analyzes four other alternatives, including three alternate Bailey bridge designs and the timber trestle bridge proposed in the original EA.

**ENVIRONMENTAL
IMPACTS OF THE
PROPOSED ACTION:**

The only impacts that would occur beyond those identified in the original EA would be additional, minor impacts to vegetation and soils. Impacts to water resources would be less under the Proposed Action, compared to the Status Quo Action, which was described in the original EA. No additional impacts to cultural resources would occur. Construction activities would be monitored by a professional archeologist to ensure potentially adverse impacts are avoided or mitigated, as required under the Section 106 process.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P. O. BOX 17300
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-0300

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OF:

February 26, 2004

Planning, Environmental and Regulatory Division

Mr. Allen Strand
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
c/o TAMU-CC
6300 Ocean Drive, Campus Box 338
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412

Dear Mr. Strand:

On behalf of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Department of Homeland Security, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) intends to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for installation of a Bailey bridge across Cuevas Creek in Maverick County, Texas. The project is located on Cinco Ranch near the town of El Indio, Texas. Cinco Ranch is a privately owned ranch located approximately 13 miles southeast of Eagle Pass, Texas. The main entrance to Cinco Ranch is located on County Road 1021. Cuevas Creek a tributary of the Rio Grande, which enters the river near El Indio, Texas.

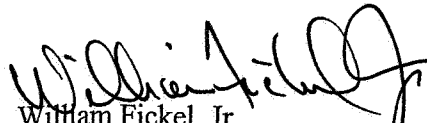
This document supplements the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6) Road Improvements near Eagle Pass and Cinco Cattle Company Ranch, Texas. A FONSI was signed for that original EA in May 2000. The original EA addressed the potential for significant adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of improvements to 15.9 miles of existing primitive road and the construction of five water crossings near Eagle Pass and on the Cinco Ranch. The Cinco Ranch section consisted of 11.1 miles of improvements to existing primitive roads, the construction of one Texas-bridge (low-water concrete crossing) and construction of one timber trestle bridge near the U.S.-Mexico border west of El Indio, Texas.

The Proposed Action of this SEA consists of a change in the original bridge crossing design at Cuevas Creek, near El Indio from a timber trestle bridge to a Bailey bridge. This new design elevates the connecting approach roads to and from the proposed bridge and upgrades the surface with caliche aggregate. The Bailey bridge would require additional fill material to raise the grade of the approach roads, and the abutments on either side of the stream. However, the Bailey bridge design, relative to the timber trestle design, would eliminate impacts within the streambed, as abutments and piers would be position out side to the streambed. Attached is the original correspondence and response concerning the original bridge design.

Attached is a portion of the 7.5-minute USGS topographic quadrangle showing the project site. USACE is currently in the process of updating to the most current information available regarding Federally and state listed species potentially occurring within this area of Maverick County. USACE respectfully requests that your agency provide any additional recommendations concerning current protected species of Maverick County. USACE intends to provide your agency with a copy of the Draft SEA once it is completed.

Your prompt attention to this request would be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions, please call Mr. Glenn Bixler of my staff at (817) 886-1713.

Sincerely,


William Fickel, Jr.
Chief, Planning, Environmental
and Regulatory Division

Attachment

Copy Furnished:

Mr. Ernesto Reyes, Jr.
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
Alamo Sub-Office Route 2
Alamo, Texas 78516



OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER
UNITED STATES SECTION

INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY AND WATER COMMISSION
UNITED STATES AND MEXICO

RECEIVED
HDR
SAN ANTONIO

APR 15 2004

APR 13 2004

Carmen B. Abad-Fitts, P.E.
Del Rio Sector PDT Program Manager
HDR Engineering, Inc.
1100 NE Loop 410, Suite 200
San Antonio, Texas 78209

Dear Ms. Abad-Fitts:

Reference is made to your letter, dated April 8, 2004, in which you requested that the U. S. Section of the International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC) review and comment on a proposed bridge over the Cuevas Creek in Maverick County, Texas, for the U.S. Border Patrol - Del Rio Sector.

The USIBWC's hydraulic (HEC-RAS) model for the Rio Grande Amistad-Falcon reach shows that the calculated water surface elevation at River Station (RS) 41 (x-sec 47) is at 193.90 m (636.00 ft) for the design flood of 3,965 cms (140,000 cfs). According to the information you provided that the proposed Cuevas Creek bridge is located approximately 3.1 river miles upstream from the confluence with the Rio Grande. Our survey data shows that the confluence is approximately 1 river mile upstream from RS 41 (x-sec 47). It is estimated that the water surface elevation for the Rio Grande at the confluence would be about 640 ft for the design flood of 140,000 cfs.

According to the bridge plans you submitted, the lowest point of the bridge is at 660.33 ft, which indicated that the proposed bridge is placed above the elevation of the design flood of 140,000 cfs and that the bridge piers (portions that are at the existing natural ground) are set at about 640 ft.

With the setting of the bridge and its location, it is concluded that: 1) the proposed bridge would not cause obstruction nor deflection of the normal or flood flows of the Rio Grande; therefore, it will not violate Article IV-B of the 1970 Boundary Treaty between United States and Mexico, 2) the proposed bridge would not be the USIBWC's area of jurisdiction, and 3) there is no need to obtain approval from the U. S. International Boundary and Water Commission for the proposed bridge.

If you have any questions regarding my comments, please call me at 915 832-4152.

Sincerely,

James M. Robinson, Division Engineer
Engineering Services Division

January 22, 2004

LT. Commander Keen
Eighth Coast Guard District
Hale Boggs Federal Building
501 Magazine St. Room 1324
New Orleans, LA. 70130-3396

Dear Sir,

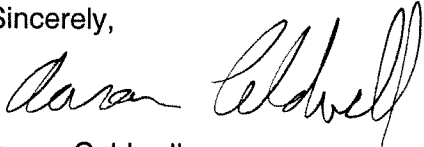
On behalf of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and Department of Homeland Security (DHS), the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has contracted Gulf South Research Corporation (GSRC) to prepare a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for installation of a Bailey Bridge across Cuevas Creek in Maverick County, Texas. The project is located on Cinco Ranch near the town of El Indio, Texas. Cinco Ranch is a privately owned ranch located approximately 13 miles southeast of Eagle Pass, Texas. The main entrance to Cinco Ranch is located on County Road 1021. Cuevas Creek a tributary of the Rio Grande, which enters the river near El Indio, Texas. An existing dam structure is located just north of the project site and on the Cinco ranch.

The proposed bridge project consists of a design change of the original proposed bridge crossing at Cuevas Creek from a 180 foot (ft) Timber Trestle Bridge to a 240 ft Bailey Bridge. As you may know a Bailey Bridge is a pre-engineered system of ready-to-assemble components, utilizing standardized pre-fabricated components, and are designed to match a wide range of vehicular traffic. In particular the design proposed in the project requires only two pier support columns that are located outside of the streambed. The Bailey Bbridge can be assembled in a matter of days as apposed to a timber trestle configuration, which requires placement of numerous piers within and near the streambed and would require much greater level of work. In cooperation with the OBP and the DHS Military units from Joint Task Force-Six are scheduled to install this pre-manufactured bridge in the June – July 2004 timeframe.

In preparation of the SEA, it is imperative to determine the need for appropriate permits. Since the design of the bridge is configured in such a way that no impacts would occur within jurisdictional waters of the U.S. or wetlands, a USACE Nationwide Permit will not be required. However, we still need to clarify that the Cuevas Creek is not considered a navigable waterway under the jurisdiction of the USCG. Attached, you will find a portion of the 7.5 minute quad map identifying the location of the project and the above mentioned creek.

I am requesting a determination from your office as to whether or not the USCG considers this stream a navigable waterway under USCG jurisdiction. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (225) 757-8088 for any additional information you will need or any clarification of my request. Thank you in advance for your assistance in this matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Aaron Caldwell". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

Aaron Caldwell
Project Manager

enclosures (1)

FAX: ATTN NANCY PARISH

3 PGS

REPLY TO
ATTENTION OFPADDY PATTERSON
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
FORT WORTH DISTRICT, CORPS OF ENGINEERS
P.O. BOX 17300, 819 TAYLOR STREET
FORT WORTH, TEXAS 76102-0300

RECEIVED

FEB 03 2004

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

February 2, 2004

Planning, Environmental and Regulatory Division

SUBJECT: Customs and Border Protection, Office of Border Patrol, Del Rio Sector, Section 106
Compliance for Construction of a Bridge Over Cuevas Creek, near El Indio, Texas, Maverick
CountyMr. F. Lawrence Oaks
Attn: Ms. Debra Beene
State Historic Preservation Office
Texas Historical Commission
P.O. Box 12276
Capital Station
Austin, Texas 78711

Dear Mr. Oaks:

In accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Fort Worth District is continuing the consultation process with your office regarding the proposed project noted above. The Fort Worth District is acting for the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Joint Task Force Six (JTF-6), and the Office of Border Patrol (OBP) in preparing a Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) for bridge construction to cross Cuevas Creek (also known as Saus Creek) near El Indio, Texas in Maverick County.

This project has been idle since late 2000 (under JTF-6), recently efforts to complete the needed improvements have been resumed (under CBP and JTF-6). Our work in 2000 included survey and testing at the proposed bridge location. As a result of the testing, site 41MV249 was recorded on the west bank of the creek. The southern edge of this site is located within the proposed bridge construction area. In a letter dated August 1, 2000, you concurred that while overall the site is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, the level of erosion in the portion of the site that will be impacted by construction prevents that portion from contributing to the site's eligibility (see enclosed letter, Attachment A). In addition to this comment, comments on the draft report of the testing were also provided. In a letter dated April 9, 2001, Wendy Lopez & Associates (WLA) submitted 20 copies of the final report to your office

-2-

(Attachment B). By this time, the project had been tabled for various reasons not pertaining to cultural resources.

Late in 2003, the project was reassessed and a decision was made to resume work on the bridge. A new bridge design was produced as the project moved forward. While the centerline of the new bridge remains in the same location as the first design surveyed, the overall impacts to the project area have changed slightly due to the new configuration. We have enclosed the new design schematic (Attachment C, Figure 1) as well as a topographic map showing the bridge location (Attachment C, Figure 2) and an aerial photograph of the area with the design overlaid to show the extent of the expected impacts under the revised design (Attachment C, Figure 3). Changes in impacts include creating temporary construction access roads (CARs) on the southern side of the bridge on both banks, and moving the west abutment of the bridge further up the bank (west) than the original design.

The existing vegetation communities on the southern side of the proposed bridge consists of buffelgrass (*Pennisetum ciliare*) zones and pastureland, honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) / acacia (*Acacia* sp.) scrub zones, and switch cane (*Arundinaria gigantea*) zones. The riparian zone along Cuevas Creek consists of giant reed (*Arundo donax*) although an investigation by wetland biologists determined no jurisdictional wetlands exist in the project area. Soils are loose unconsolidated recent alluvium deposits up to 5 ½ feet (1.7 m) deep (WLA 2001:83-107). The planned CARs will be 18 feet (5.5 m) wide with no shoulder. Because the soils are unconsolidated, the roads will require temporary side slopes to support heavy construction equipment. To encompass this slope from top to toe as well as the 18-foot road, a 30-foot (9 m) wide corridor is necessary. Construction of the CARs will begin with the removal of all existing vegetation along the 30-foot wide route. According to the Project Engineer, expected soil removal during this process will be approximately 3 inches (7 cm).

For design and estimating purposes, we estimate that the upper 6 inches of soil will be in a loose state requiring removal and replacement with compact engineered fill or Caliche. In-place scarification and compaction may not be adequate to densify all soil below a depth of about 6 inches due to the unconsolidated nature of the soils. Therefore, over-excavation of soil, scarification and compaction of the exposed subgrade, and replacement with engineered fill may be required to sufficiently densify some soil within the corridor. The CAR vertical alignments will generally parallel existing grade thus limiting the cuts and fills necessary to approximately 24 (60 cm) inches in depth. In areas where the required compaction cannot be met within 24 inches of the surface, processed Caliche will be used as a surface course to stabilize the CAR.

The newly designed abutment on the west bank of the creek will require the excavation of 4 to 6 feet (1.2-1.8 m) of soil to create the required grade from the existing road to the bridge (depicted on Figure 1 as "All Cut/Fill, Slopes 4:1"). This excavation will be in the southern portion of site 41MV249. In 2000, backhoe trenches and 1 x 1 m units were excavated in this area. This testing revealed that the site density drops off significantly to the south. In your August 1, 2000 letter, your office concurred that this portion of the site is too eroded to contribute to the site's NRHP eligibility. As per your recommendation in that same letter, we

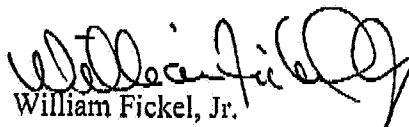
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plan to have this area monitored by a qualified archaeologist during all of the initial construction, prior to actual placement of the bridge. We also plan to have a qualified archaeologist monitor the construction of the CARs.

Changes in the bridge design will not increase impacts to cultural resources on the east bank. On the east bank of the creek, it is our opinion that the testing conducted during the 2000 survey provides accurate coverage for the new bridge design. Site 41MV248 was recorded on the east bank of the project area east and north of the existing road (WLA 2001, pg 53). The abutment for the bridge on the east side will require fill rather than cutting, and the current plan for the bridge and construction access roads does not include excavation or other impacts in the area where the site is located. A backhoe trench excavated in 2000 (BHT 4) indicates that no archaeological material extends west or south of the existing road.

We request your concurrence on our monitoring plan for this project. Troop deployment for this construction mission is on the schedule for July 2004; therefore it is imperative that we receive your response as soon as possible. Your prompt attention to this request would be appreciated. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Ms. Nancy Parrish (817) 886-1725 or Ms. Patience Patterson (817) 886-1723.

Sincerely,

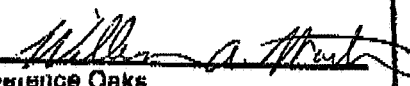

William Fickel, Jr.
Chief, Planning, Environmental
and Regulatory Division

Enclosures

Copy furnished w/o enclosure

Mr. John Mire
Gulf South Research Corporation
7602 GSRI Avenue
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70820

Mr. Milton Blankenship
Joint Task Force-Six
Building 11603, Biggs Army Air Field
Fort Bliss, Texas 79918-0058

CONCUR	
by	
	for F. Lawrence Oaks State Historic Preservation Officer
Date	3/6/04

Ms. Parrish, Ext. 1725
PATTERSON, CESWF-PER-EC
HATHORN, CESWF-PER-E
FICKEL, CESWF-PER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	ii
1.0 INTRODUCTION.....	1-1
1.1 Purpose and Need	1-2
1.2 Location of the Proposed Action	1-3
1.3 Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations	1-3
2.0 ALTERNATIVES.....	2-1
2.1 Selection Criteria.....	2-1
2.2 Proposed Action.....	2-1
2.3 Alternative 1	2-3
2.4 Alternative 2	2-5
2.5 Alternative 3	2-7
2.6 Alternative 4 (Status Quo)	2-7
2.7 No Action.....	2-10
2.8 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated	2-10
2.8.1 Bailey Bridge Design with Pile Driven Piers	2-10
2.8.2 Low Water Crossing	2-10
3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT	3-1
3.1 Biological Resources.....	3-1
3.1.1 Vegetation	3-1
3.1.2 Wildlife.....	3-1
3.1.3 Threatened and Endangered Species.....	3-2
3.2 Cultural Resources.....	3-2
3.3 Water Resources	3-2
3.3.1 Waters of the U.S. and Wetlands	3-2
3.4 Soils	3-3
3.5 Air Quality.....	3-3
4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES	4-1
4.1 Biological Resources.....	4-1
4.1.1 Vegetation	4-1
4.2 Cultural Resources.....	4-3
4.3 Water Resources	4-4
4.4 Soils	4-5
4.5 Air Quality.....	4-6
4.6 Cumulative Impacts.....	4-7
5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MEASURES.....	5-1
6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT	6-1
6.1 Agency Coordination.....	6-1
6.2 Public Review.....	6-1
7.0 REFERENCES.....	7-1

8.0	LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS.....	8-1
9.0	LIST OF PREPARERS	9-1

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1-1	Project Location Map.....	1-4
Figure 2-1	Schematic Design Profile of the Proposed Action.....	2-2
Figure 2-2	Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 1.	2-4
Figure 2-3	Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 2.	2-6
Figure 2-4	Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 3.	2-8
Figure 2-5	Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 4.	2-9
Figure 4-1	Cuevas Creek Bridge Impact Areas.	4-2

LIST OF PHOTOGRAPHS

Photograph 1-1.	Oblique Aerial View of the Project Area	1-5
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LIST OF TABLES

Table 1-1.	Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations.....	1-6
Table 4-1.	Summary of Temporary and Permanent Impacts to Vegetation	4-1
Table 4-2.	Summary of Temporary and Permanent Impacts to Soils.....	4-5

APPENDIX A CORRESPONDENCE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document supplements the Final Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed Joint Task Force-Six (JTF-6) road improvements near Eagle Pass and Cinco Cattle Company Ranch, Texas prepared in May 2000 (United States Army Corps of Engineers [USACE] 2000). The original EA addressed the potential for significant adverse or beneficial environmental impacts of improvements to 15.9 miles of existing primitive road and the construction of five water crossings near Eagle Pass and on the Cinco Ranch. The USACE and JTF-6 prepared the EA in support of the U.S. Border Patrol (now Office of Border Patrol [OBP]) in response to a support request to conduct the road improvements. The Cinco Ranch section consisted of 11.1 miles of improvement to existing primitive roads and construction of one Texas bridge (low-water concrete crossing) and one timber trestle bridge near the U.S.-Mexico border west of El Indio, Texas. In addition, a 2.8-mile section of road on Cinco Ranch was identified for possible future upgrade activities. The Final EA (USACE 2000) can be viewed at the following URL address: <http://ins.swf.usace.army.mil>.

In addition to updating the JTF-6 2000 EA, this Supplemental EA (SEA) is tiered from the 2001 Supplemental Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement (INS 2001) that addressed the legacy Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and JTF-6 activities along the U.S.-Mexico Border. This SEA was prepared in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, the President's Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for the Implementation of the NEPA, Army Regulations 200-2, as well as the legacy INS's Procedures for Implementing NEPA (28 Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] 61).

The Proposed Action of this SEA consists of a design change from the originally proposed 180 foot (ft) timber trestle bridge design at Cuevas Creek near El Indio to a 240 ft Bailey bridge. A Bailey bridge is a pre-engineered system of ready-to-assemble components, utilizing standardized pre-fabricated components, and is designed to match a wide range of vehicular traffic. In particular, the design in the Proposed Action requires only two pier support columns, while the timber trestle bridge would require three support columns. The Bailey bridge can be assembled in much less time as opposed to a timber trestle bridge, which requires the placement of numerous piers within and near the streambed and would require a much greater temporary construction footprint. For more information concerning engineering for the Bailey bridge design see the structural selection report (U.S. Customs and Border Protection [CBP]

2004). A copy of this document is available at the Eagle Pass Public Library, 589 East Main Street, Eagle Pass, Texas 78852. A copy of the *Structural Selection Report for Cuevas Creek* is also available for viewing at the following Internet address <http://ins.suf.usace.army.mil>.

The proposed design for the Bailey bridge would include raising the grade elevation of the approach roads and construction of abutments on either side of the stream. The approach roads leading to and from the proposed bridge would be upgraded with caliche aggregate obtained from nearby borrow pits identified in the original EA. The Bailey bridge would also require cut and fill activities outside of the riparian zone and the Cuevas Creek channel.

1.1 Purpose and Need

The purpose and need remains the same as described in the original Final EA (USACE 2000). In summary, the purpose of this project is to support the OBP's mission to improve border security against terrorist threats, reduce or eliminate illegal entrants, illegal drug trafficking by improving control of borders between entry points. The need for the Proposed Action is to ensure reliable and rapid access to areas north and south of Cuevas Creek. Furthermore, there are several reasons for evaluating an alternative to the original timber trestle bridge:

- Recent hydrologic analyses indicated that the Cuevas Creek 50-year flood elevation is at 625 feet mean sea level (msl). The original 180 ft long timber trestle design would have encroached within the 50-year floodplain and potentially impeded flood flows, increased upstream water levels, and increased scouring around the piers and downstream of the bridge. In order to raise the bridge above the Cuevas Creek 50-year flood elevation, a longer (i.e., 240 ft) bridge is required.
- If the timber trestle bridge proposed in the original design was lengthened to 240 ft then additional end spans would be required, which would further increase impacts to the Cuevas Creek riparian zone.
- Military units from JTF-6 would serve as the construction contractors for this project. This work (i.e., Bailey bridge construction) is considered high quality training that is compatible with the construction unit's Mission Essential Task List (METL) training objectives and experience. The Bailey bridge construction is inherently adapted to

military training. In fact, this bridge type is currently being utilized in ongoing military operations such as Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom.

1.2 Location of the Proposed Action

The Proposed Action is located in Maverick County on Cinco Ranch near the town of El Indio, Texas and near the mouth of Cuevas Creek, a tributary of the Rio Grande (Figure 1-1). El Indio is located at the junction of Farm to Market Road (FM) 2644 and 1021, approximately 143 miles southwest of San Antonio, Texas. Cinco Ranch is a privately owned ranch located approximately 13 miles southeast of Eagle Pass, Texas. The main entrance to Cinco Ranch is located on FM 1021. Photograph 1-1 provides an aerial view of the project with a general location of the proposed bridge. Two bivouac sites are being considered for use under the Proposed Action (Figure 1-1). Bivouac Site 1 has been surveyed and was discussed in the original Final EA (USACE 2000), a second proposed bivouac site (Bivouac Site 2) is located 2 miles north of El Indio, Texas along FM 1021, and has not had an environmental survey. Therefore, Bivouac Site 2 would require additional environmental documentation if chosen.

1.3 Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations

This SEA was prepared in accordance with, but not limited to NEPA; Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended; the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended; the Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974, as amended; Executive Order (E.O.) No. 11593, "Protection and Enhancement of the Cultural Environment"; E.O. No. 11988, "Floodplain Management"; E.O. No. 11990, "Protection of Wetlands"; E.O. No. 13007, "Indian Sacred Sites"; E.O. No. 13045, "Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks"; and E.O. No. 12898 "Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice." Table 1-1 summarizes the pertinent environmental requirements that guided the development of this SEA.

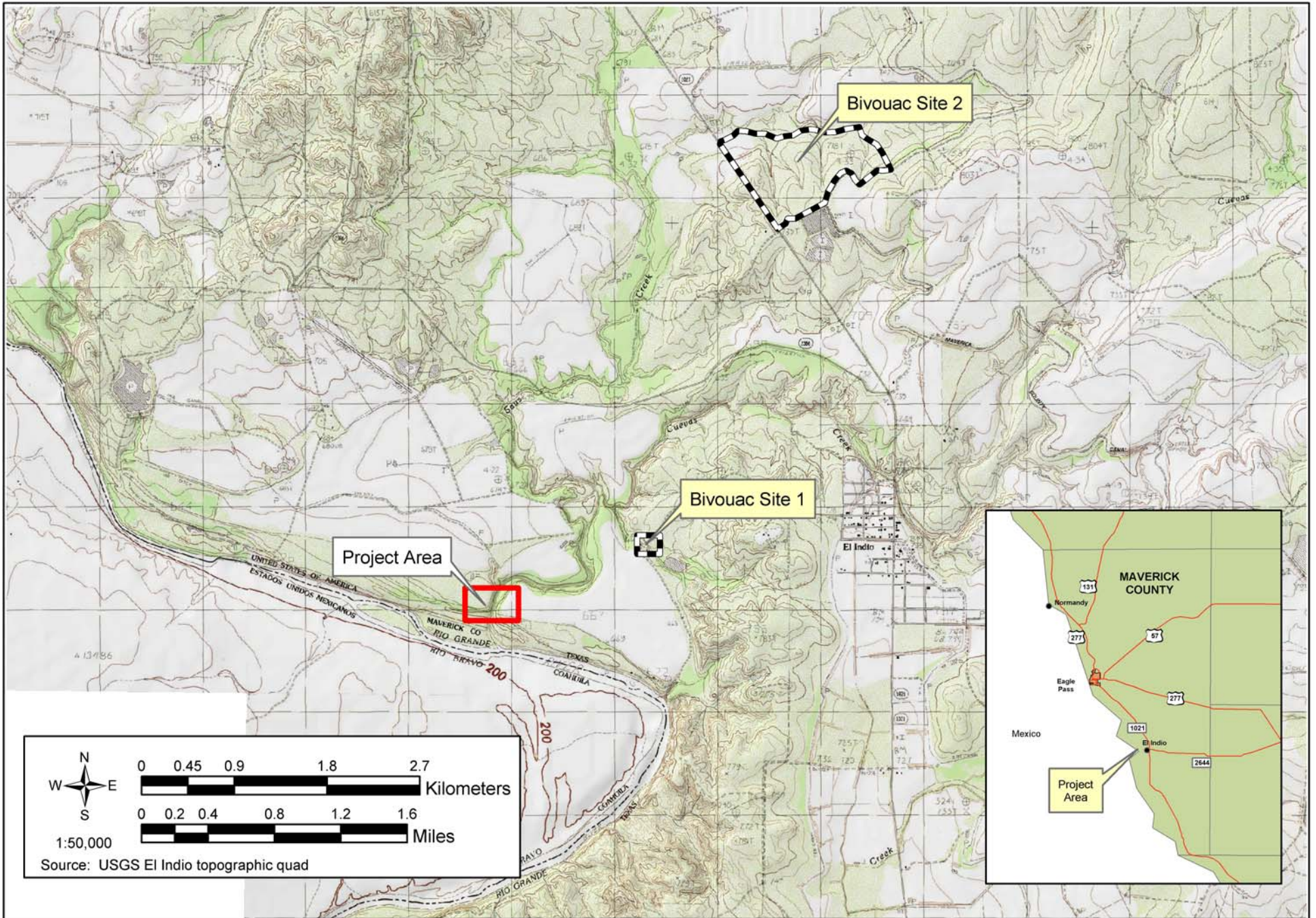
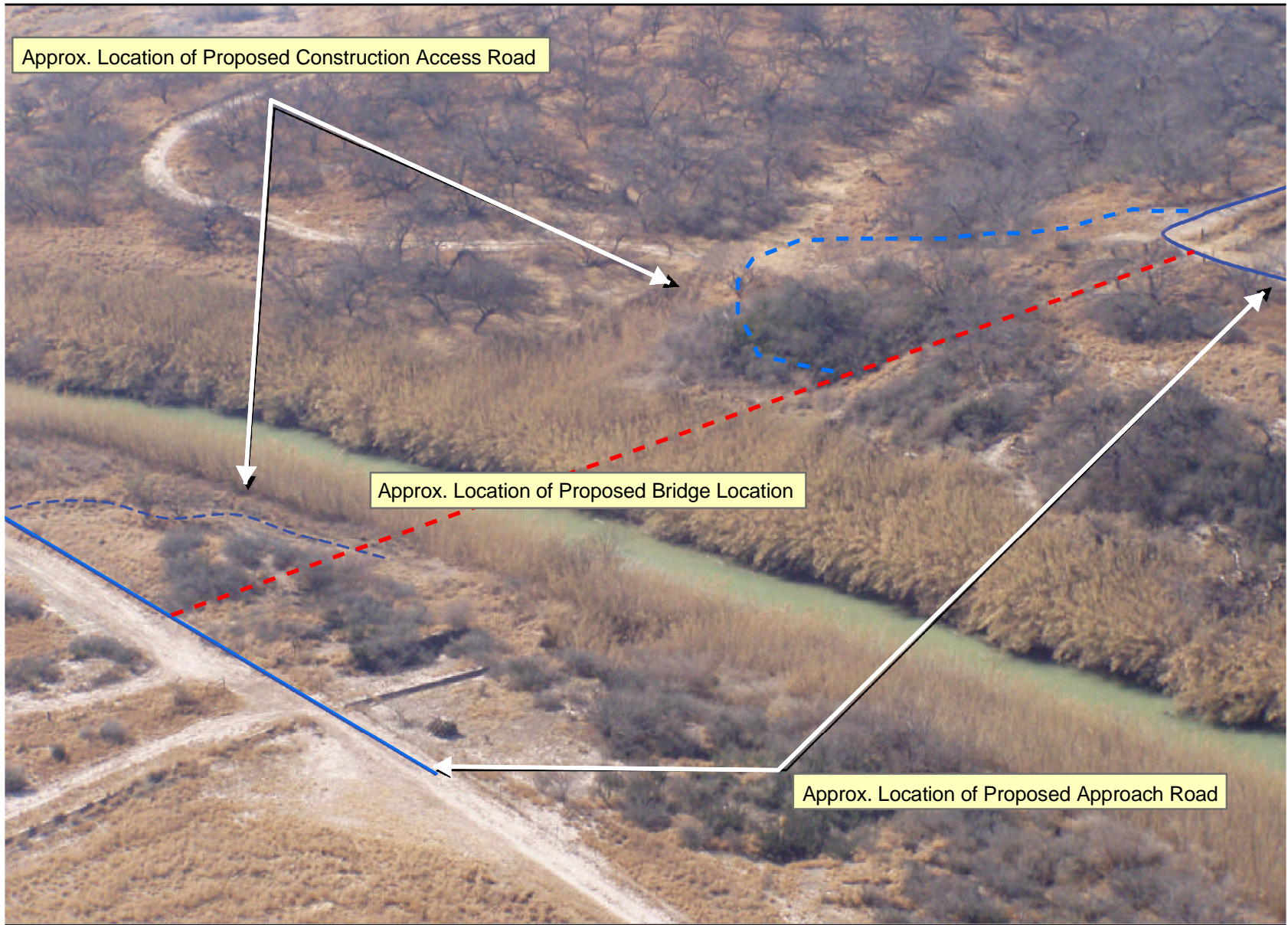


Figure 1-1: Project Location Map



Photograph 1-1: Aerial Photograph of Project Area

Table 1-1. Applicable Environmental Statutes and Regulations

Federal Statutes
Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act of 1954
National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended
Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968, as amended
National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended
Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1972
Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended
Archaeological and Historic Preservation Act of 1974
Farmland Protection Policy Act of 1980
Clean Air Act of 1990, as amended
Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act of 1990
Clean Water Act of 1997, as amended
Executive Orders, Memorandums, etc.
Floodplain Management (E.O. 11988) of 1977
Protection of Wetlands (E.O. 11990) of 1977
Government-to-Government Relations with Native American Tribal Governments (Presidential Memorandum) of 1994
Federal Actions to Address Environmental Justice to Minority Populations and Low-Income Populations (E.O. 12898) of 1994
Indian Sacred Sites (E.O. 13007) of 1996
Protection of Children from Environmental Health Risks (E.O. 13045) of 1997
Consultation and Coordination with Indian Tribal Governments (E.O. 13175) of 2000
Protection of Migratory Birds & Game Mammals (E.O. 11629) of 2001

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

Six alternatives were considered during the preparation of this SEA: The Proposed Action, the Status Quo Alternative (original timber trestle bridge design), three additional Bailey bridge alternatives, and the No Action Alternative. This section provides a brief description of the alternatives that are carried forward for analysis under the NEPA process.

2.1 Selection Criteria

Each alternative, as well as the No Action Alternative, has been evaluated relative to the stated purpose and need and the potential environmental consequences. Selection criteria relevant to the purpose and need, JTF-6 training requirements, and potential impacts include:

- Provide a safe and effective crossing with road grades of 10% or less
- Enhance response time of OBP Agents
- Avoid or reduce impedances to flood flows
- Avoid or reduce impacts to jurisdictional waters of the U.S., including wetlands
- Implement a design that would provide necessary training for JTF-6 units

2.2 Proposed Action

The 240 ft long Bailey bridge (Figure 2-1) would be constructed by placing abutments near the top of both banks of Cuevas Creek. The earthwork would occur at four locations: abutments, pier foundations, approach roads, and staging area. The entire project area is located on a private ranch; therefore, public access is restricted. Construction is estimated to require approximately 60 days.

Two support piers (each approximately 20 ft high) would be placed on a shallow-spread concrete foundation within the Cuevas Creek riparian zone. Excavation would be required to pour the piers' concrete foundation. Three bridge spans (50, 120, and 70 feet) would be placed across the abutments and piers to complete the bridge.

To meet the higher elevation of the new bridge, the approach roads would need to be raised. In total, 260 feet of existing approach roads would be raised. Project construction would require excavation activities to install the pier foundations on each side of the creek and a staging area

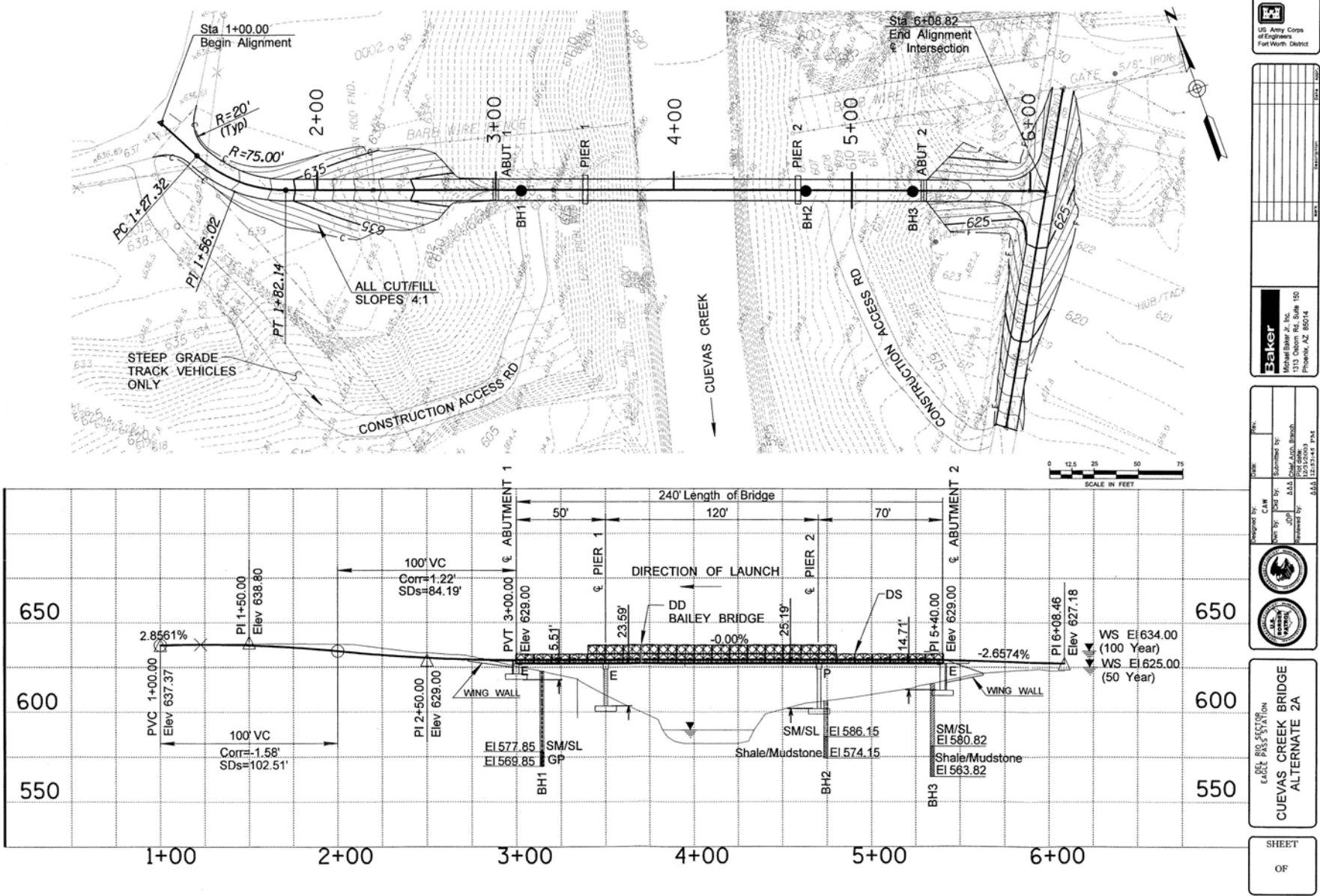


Figure 2-1 Schematic Design Profile of the Proposed Action

for assembly of the bridge. While the exact amount of excavation is not known, it is estimated that approximately 5,000 cubic yards (yds³) would be required. This material would be stockpiled at two nearby 0.6-acre stockpile sites (identified in the original EA). If this material is determined to be suitable for engineering fill then it would be replaced once the pier foundations are installed. If the material were not suitable then it would be left at the stockpile site or moved to an approved off-site location. Due to the existing elevations on the east side of Cuevas Creek, approximately 2,000 yds³ would be borrowed for the original quarry site to elevate the abutments and access roads. No additional fill would be required on the west side. Therefore, there would not be any trucking of fill back and forth.

The Proposed Action is considered the most environmentally preferable alternative. Environmentally preferable is defined as “the alternative that will promote the national environmental policy as expressed in the NEPA Section 101. Ordinarily, this means the alternative that causes the least damage to the biological and physical environment; it also means the alternative which best protects, preserves, and enhances historic, cultural, and natural resources” (Council on Environmental Quality 1981). Section 101 of NEPA specifically states that:

“... it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal Government to... (1) fulfill the responsibilities of each generation as trustee of the environment for succeeding generations; (2) assure for all Americans safe, healthful, productive, and aesthetically and culturally pleasing surroundings; (3) attain the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without degradation, risk to health or safety, or other undesirable and unintended consequences; (4) preserve important historic, cultural, and natural aspects of our national heritage, and maintain, wherever possible, an environment which supports diversity, and variety of individual choice; (5) achieve a balance between population and resource use which would permit high standards of living and a wide sharing of life’s amenities; and (6) enhance the quality of renewable resources and approach the maximum attainable recycling of depletable resources.”

2.3 Alternative 1 (220 ft two-span Bailey bridge with two 110 ft spans)

This alternative consists of a 220 ft long, two-span Bailey bridge (Figure 2-2). The design consists of a single pier that would be positioned directly in the center of Cuevas Creek. Therefore, both spans would be of equal length (110 feet) and share a single 2x20 ft pier for support. The pier would be supported with a shallow-spread foundation.

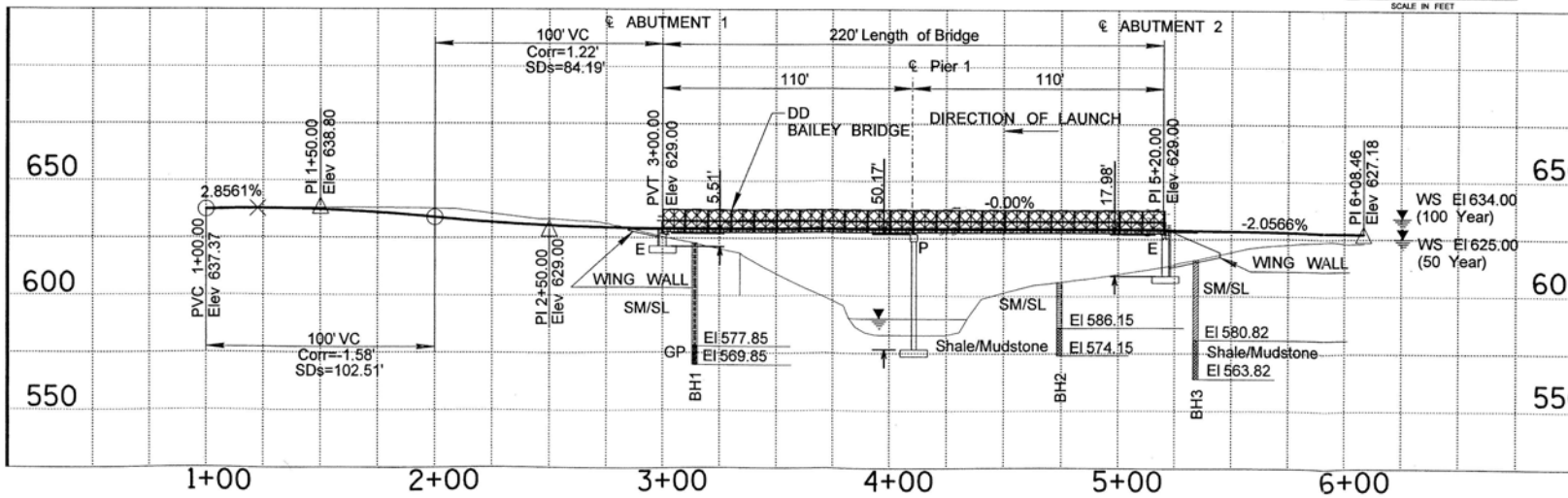
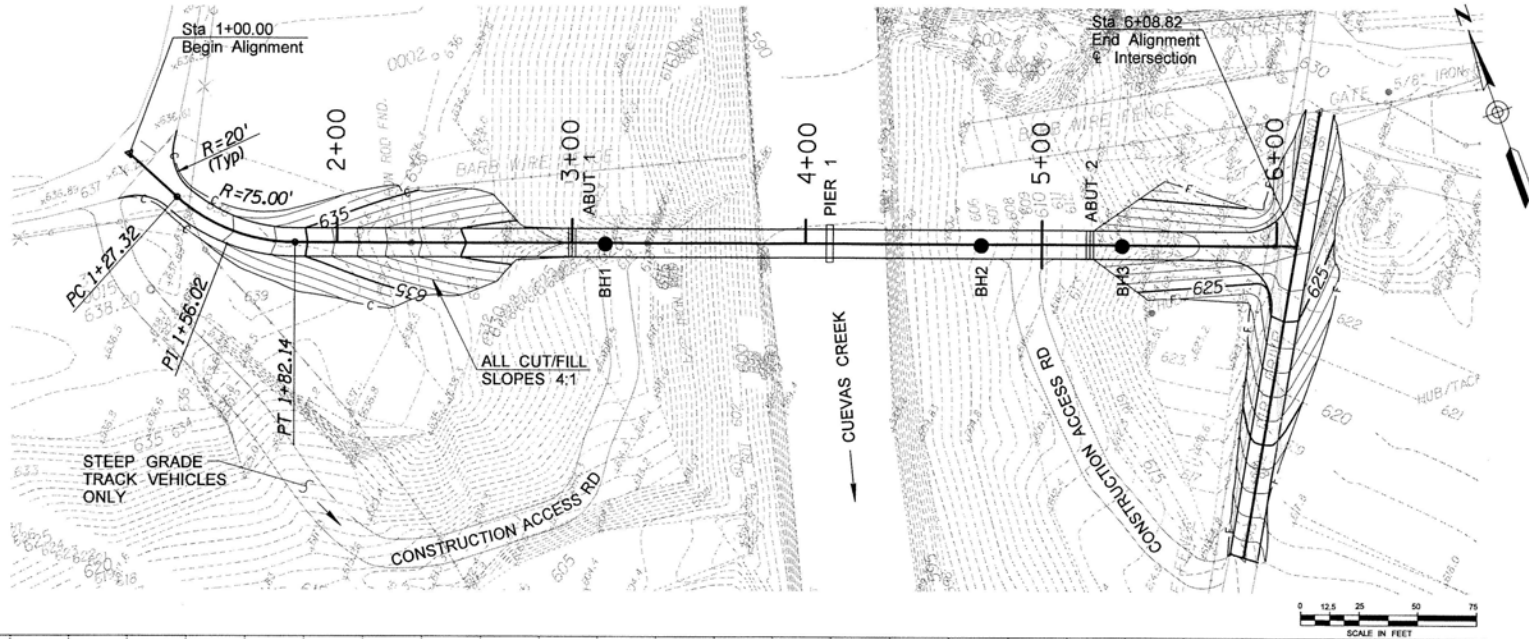


Figure 2-2 Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 1

 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Fort Worth District	
 Eaker Michael Eaker & Inc. 1313 Dobson Rd., Suite 150 Phoenix, AZ 85014	
Designed by: EAK Drawn by: JCF Checked by: JCF Approved by: JCF	Date: 12/11/12 Scale: AS SHOWN
 State of Texas License No. 125702023 Michael Eaker, P.E.	
EAGLE PASS STATION CUEVAS CREEK BRIDGE ALTERNATE 1	
SHEET OF	

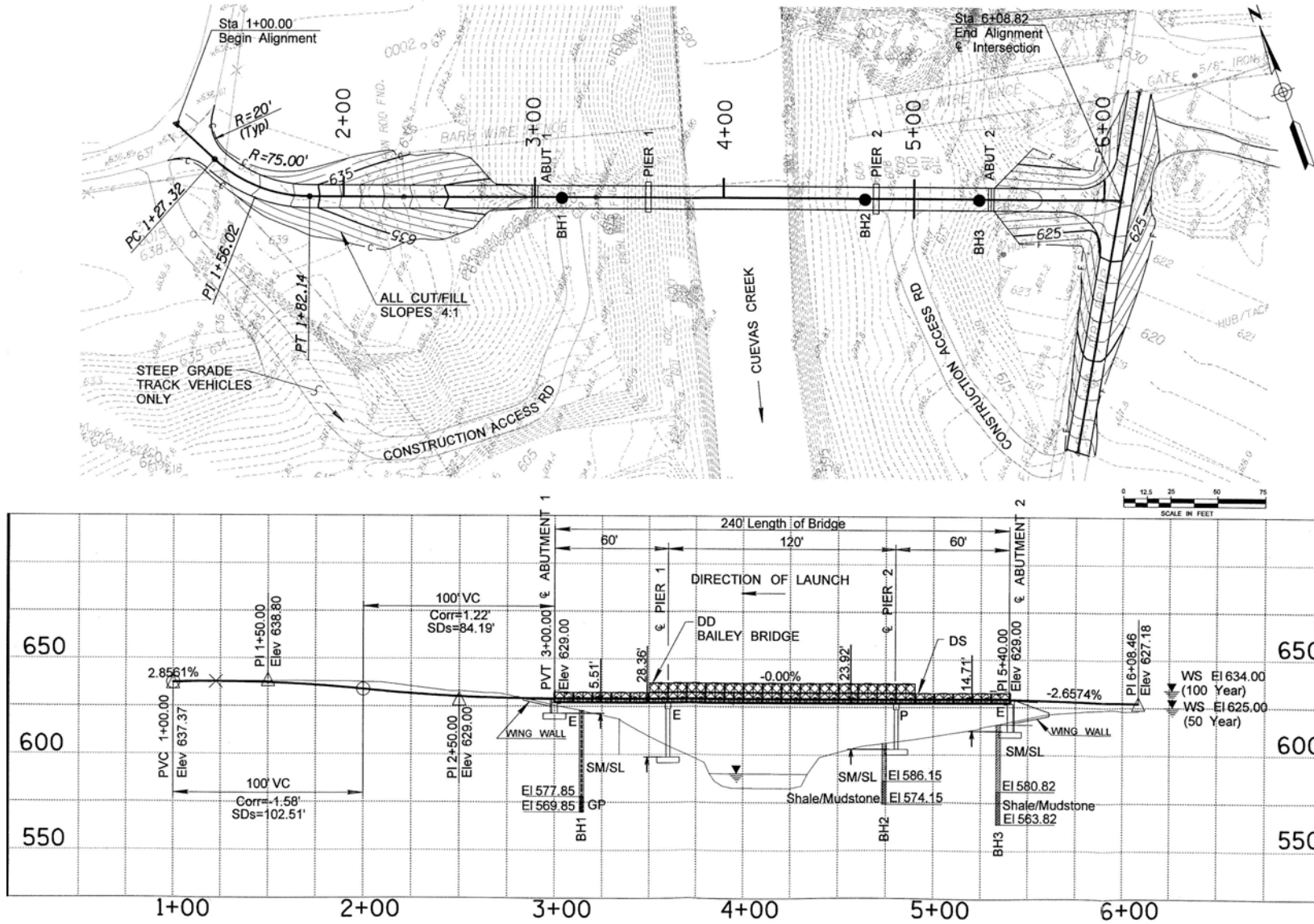
Due to the placement of a pier located in Cuevas Creek, a cofferdam (temporary construction used to de-water a construction site) would be required for the construction of the pier and foundation. Because military units are not equipped for construction activities that involve cofferdams, construction would be restricted to periods when the creek is dry.

The bridge is also shorter in length; therefore, the abutment required on the eastern shore would reduce the channel cross section by approximately 375 square feet (ft²), reducing channel capacity and potentially impeding flood water conveyance.

Alternative 1 would involve improvements of approximately 300 feet of existing approach road, requiring similar earth work as the Proposed Action. In total, construction would involve approximately 880 yd³ of earthwork (CBP 2004). The extent of construction required and the engineering performance of the bridge for Alternative 1 were the least desirable of the four Bailey bridge design alternatives considered (CBP 2004).

2.4 Alternative 2 (240 ft three-span Bailey bridge with 60 ft end spans and a 120 ft mid- span)

This alternative consists of a 240 ft long, three-span Bailey bridge (Figure 2-3). The design includes two 2x20 ft piers that would be positioned on both banks of Cuevas Creek and three spans of 60, 60, and 120 ft. The 120-ft mid-span would be supported at both ends by the piers. Each pier would be set upon a shallow spread foundation. Abutments would be placed on each side of the bridge near the top of the bank. The proximity of the pier to the western bank of the creek would make foundation work more difficult (i.e., more time consuming), but not as difficult as the single pier in Alternative 1. This design also features piers closer to the streambed than those in the Proposed Action. Piers that are closer to the streambed are more difficult to install because digging foundations near the streambed requires building cofferdams. Furthermore, the chances of increased sedimentation of Cuevas Creek would be greater than if construction occurs farther from the waterway. The abutment required on the eastern shore would reduce the channel cross section by an amount similar to Alternative 1 (i.e., 375 ft²). As with the Proposed Action, Alternative 2 would involve improvements of approximately 260 feet of existing approach road, requiring similar earth work. Construction would involve approximately 5,000 yd³ for earthwork (CBP 2004).



Prepared by: C.A.M. Checked by: J.D.P. Drawn by: J.D.P. Date: 03.10.14 Scale: 1/8" = 1'-0"	Project No.: 101-12-000-AM Sheet No.: 2-6
EAGLE PASS SECTION CUEVAS CREEK BRIDGE ALTERNATE 2	
SHEET OF	

Figure 2-3 Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 2

2.5 Alternative 3 (220 ft three-span Bailey bridge with spans of 70, 80, and 70 ft and two piers)

This alternative is a 220 ft long, three-span Bailey bridge (Figure 2-4). The design consists of three spans of 70, 80, and 70 ft and two 2x20 ft piers that would be positioned on both banks of Cuevas Creek. The 80 ft mid span would be supported at both ends by the piers. Each pier would be set upon a shallow spread foundation. Abutments required would be similar to Alternatives 1 and 2. Relative to the Proposed Action, one of the two piers would be located closer to the Cuevas Creek streambed. This would make foundation work more time consuming and the construction of scour protection more difficult, because digging foundations near the streambed requires building cofferdams. Furthermore, the chances of increased sedimentation of Cuevas Creek would be greater than if construction occurs farther from the waterway.

Alternative 3 would involve improvements of approximately 300 feet of existing approach road, requiring earthwork similar to that described in the Proposed Action. Construction would involve approximately 8000 yd³ for earthwork (CBP 2004). The cost of constructing this alternative is marginally less than the Proposed Action and Alternative 2, but the reduction in performance and constructability makes this a less attractive alternative.

2.6 Alternative 4 (Status Quo)

This alternative was the original Proposed Action (Figure 2-5) identified in the Final EA (USACE 2000). The description of this bridge design is incorporated by reference. However, as can be seen in Figure 2-5, piers would have to be installed within and adjacent to the streambed. The advantages and disadvantages would be the same as those identified in the original EA. The benefits of the Bailey bridge (i.e., more desirable training for military personnel from JTF-6, less abutment fills, and fewer piers) would not be realized under this alternative. The timber trestle bridge would also restrict flood conveyance during 50-year and more frequent storm events, thereby increasing water levels up stream. JTF-6 would have to hire a subcontractor to drive the piers used in this design.

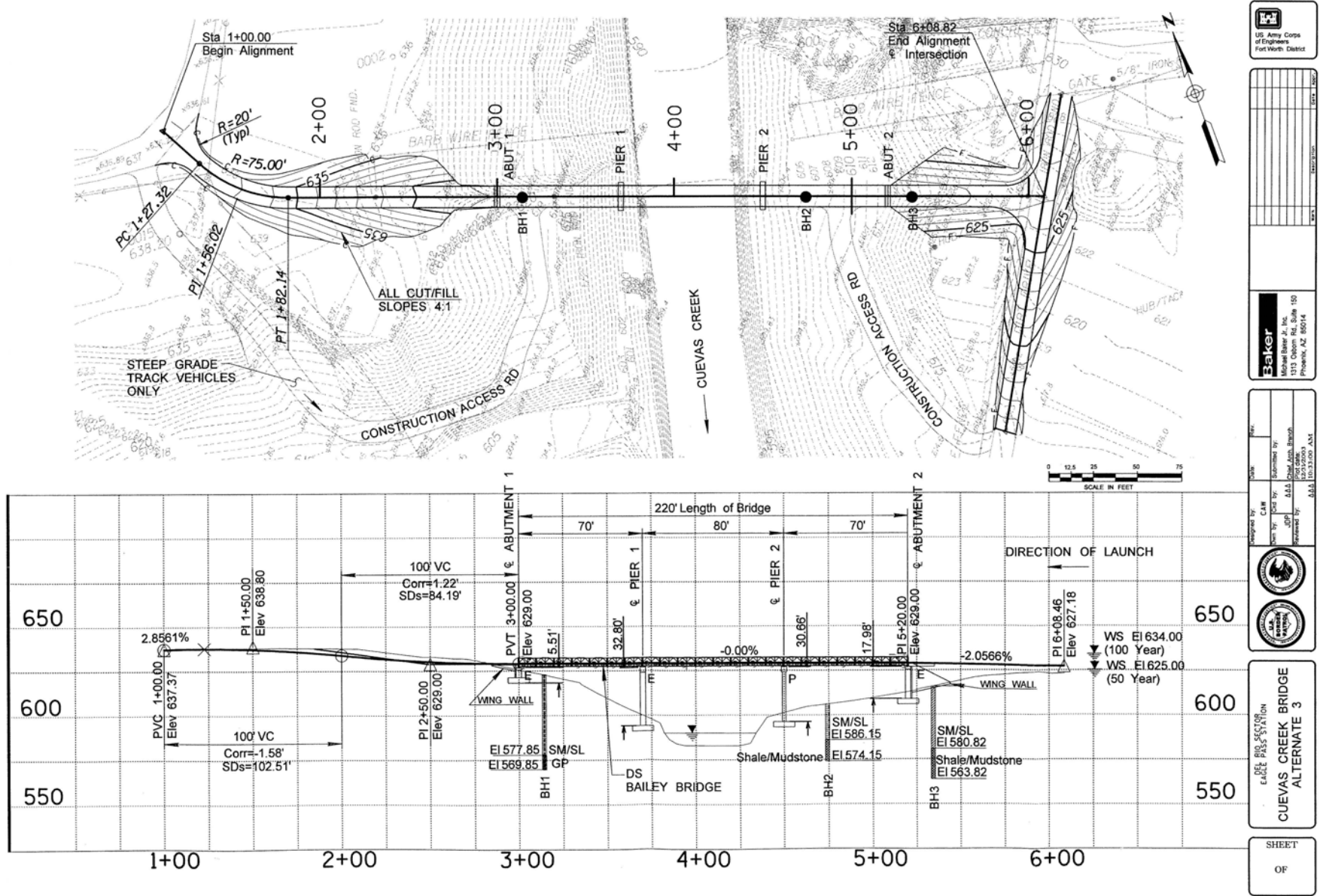


Figure 2-4 Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 3

SHEET OF	EAGLE PASS STATION CUEVAS CREEK BRIDGE ALTERNATE 3
DESIGNED BY: CAR CHECKED BY: JEP DRAWN BY: JEP SUBMITTED BY: JEP DATE: 12/21/2010 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"	AUTHORITY: U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FORT WORTH DISTRICT
PREPARED BY: JEP DATE: 12/21/2010 SCALE: 1/8" = 1'-0"	PROJECT NO.: DRAWING NO.: SHEET NO.:
EAKER Michael Baker Jr. Inc. 1313 Oxbow Rd., Suite 150 Phoenix, AZ 85014	U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS FORT WORTH DISTRICT

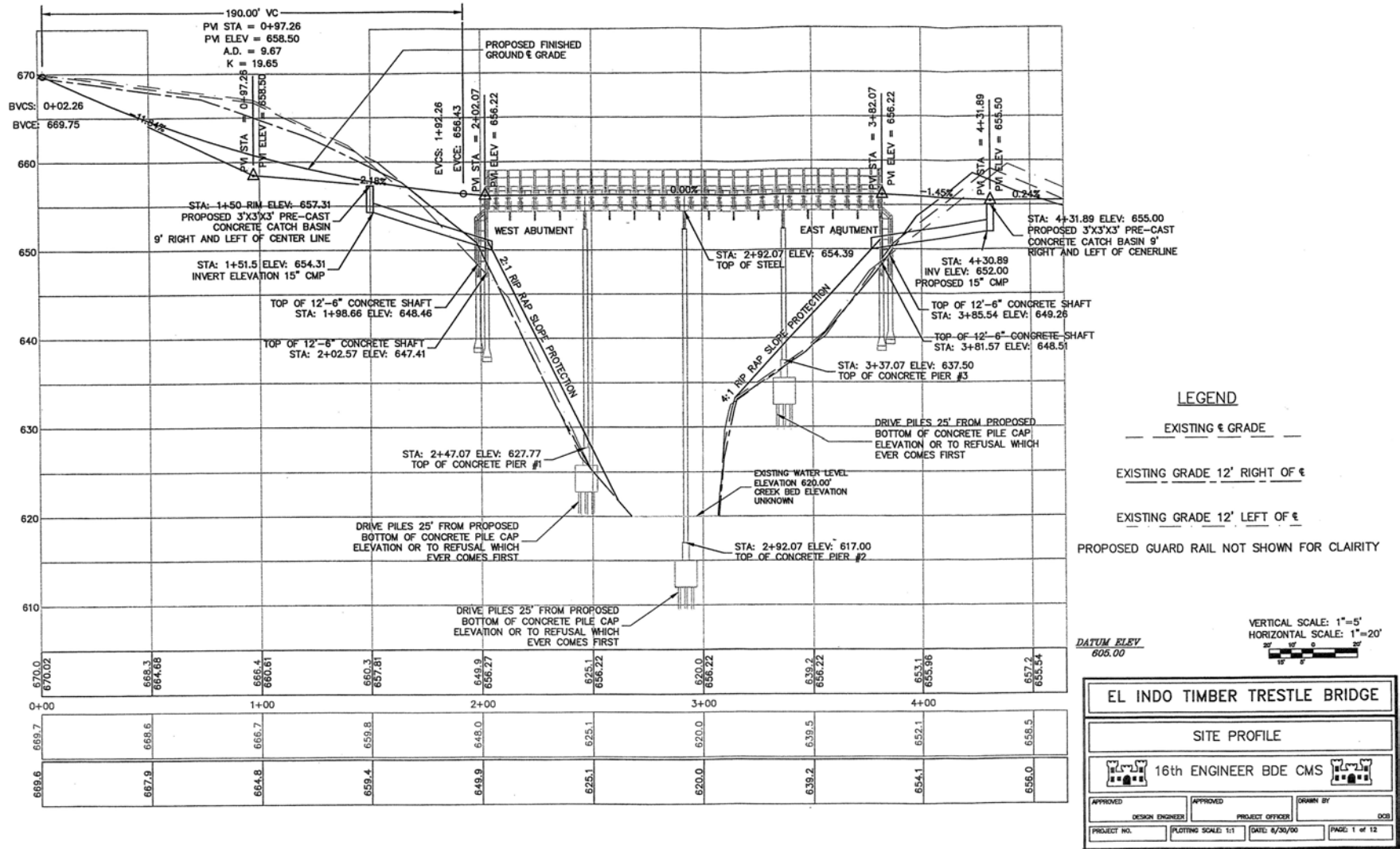


Figure 2-5 Schematic Design Profile of Alternative 4

2.7 No Action

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no bridge construction across Cuevas Creek. Therefore, the timber trestle bridge previously approved for construction would not come to fruition. The OBP agents would be required to continue to travel to the nearest bridge in El Indio to get to a location on the opposite side of the creek. If the No Action Alternative is implemented, the travel distance from one shore of Cuevas Creek to the other is 9.5 miles and the travel time is approximately 30 minutes using existing roads.

2.8 Alternatives Considered but Eliminated

2.8.1 Bailey Bridge Design with Pile Driven Piers

Although a typical foundation system for a Bailey bridge would consist of drilled or driven piles extending down to the bedrock (25 to 40 ft below the surface), the JTF-6 units do not readily have the equipment or capabilities to accomplish such a design. Additionally, alternatives that require driven piles would not meet the training requirements of the unit's METL. Therefore, Bailey bridge alternatives with driven piles do not meet the stated purpose and need or selection criteria and was eliminated from further analyses.

2.8.2 Low Water Crossing

A low water crossing was eliminated from further consideration because the crossing would not be functional during flood events. Frequent maintenance would be required to remove debris to allow normal streamflow. In addition, extensive excavation on both banks would have to be performed to achieve road grades of 10% or less.

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The entire project area analyzed in this SEA remains within the scope and alignment of the original EA (USACE 2000). Since the project footprint of the bridge is similar as that presented in the original EA, this SEA will address only those resources potentially impacted by the Proposed Action or alternatives. Resources not impacted by the changes in bridge design (i.e., land use and socioeconomics) are incorporated by reference from the original EA, and thus, will not be discussed further in this SEA.

For more detailed descriptions of the existing conditions of the impacted resources, please refer to the original EA (USACE 2000), which can be reviewed at the following URL address: <http://ins.swf.usace.army.mil>. Prior to assessing impacts, the description of the existing conditions of each resource were reviewed for any changes since the original EA was conducted. In particular, a biological survey was conducted at the proposed bridge site on 21 January 2004. The survey's purpose was to update the description of the natural resources and determine the environmental consequences of the proposed Bailey bridge and alternative designs.

3.1 Biological Resources

3.1.1 Vegetation

The 21 January 2004 survey revealed that the vegetation had not changed since the original EA (USACE 2000). The riparian zone along the banks of Cuevas Creek is comprised of a monoculture of giant cane (*Arundo donax*). Blackbrush (*Acacia rigidula*)--honey mesquite (*Prosopis glandulosa*) thorn scrub dominates the upland areas beyond the riparian corridor. Pasturelands dominated by buffel grass (*Pennisetum ciliare* var. *ciliare*) are located in the surrounding areas.

3.1.2 Wildlife

Wildlife species observed during the 21 January 2004 survey were wild turkey (*Meleagris gallopavo*), javelina (*Pecari tajacu*), feral hog (*Sus scrofa*), belted kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), and crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*). With the additional observation of the javelina and feral hog, survey results were similar to those described in the original EA.

3.1.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) currently lists two Federally protected species with the potential of occurring in Maverick County (ocelot [*Leopardus {=Felis} pardalis*] and jaguarundi [*Herpailurus {=Felis} yagouaroundi cacomitli*]) (USFWS 2004). However, no threatened or endangered species or their habitats were found during the January 2004 survey or previous surveys. Therefore, the discussions regarding these species contained in the original EA are incorporated herein by reference.

3.2 Cultural Resources

Cultural resources survey and testing were conducted at the proposed bridge location for the original EA. As a result of the testing, archaeological site 41MV249 was recorded and determined to be eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP). However, concurrence was received from the Texas Historical Commission (THC) that the level of erosion in the portion of the site that would be impacted by construction prevents that portion from contributing to the site's eligibility under the NRHP (see correspondence in Appendix A). Consultation with the THC is ongoing for changes to the bridge design.

3.3 Water Resources

The January 2004 survey revealed no change to the water resources since the original EA (USACE 2000) was prepared; therefore, the information contained in the 2000 EA is incorporated herein by reference. Arroyos, creeks, and springs characterize the water resources within the proposed project area. The Rio Grande is the only major river system in the area. Cuevas Creek, a tributary of the Rio Grande, is approximately 20 feet wide and 5 to 15 feet deep at the project site. Its confluence with the Rio Grande is approximately 0.2 miles downstream from the proposed bridge crossing.

3.3.1 Waters of the U.S. and Wetlands

The findings of the wetland delineation conducted during the January 2004 survey determined that Cuevas Creek would be considered as potential jurisdictional unvegetated waters of the U.S. The creek flows intermittently and the jurisdictional waters of the U.S. are approximately 20 feet wide. No jurisdictional vegetated wetlands occur at the proposed bridge location. Although giant cane is considered a facultative wet species, the riparian areas are not

considered wetlands due to the lack of hydrology and hydric soil indicators as required for the presence of jurisdictional wetlands (USACE 1987). The findings of the wetland delineation were submitted to the USACE Fort Worth District along with a description of the Proposed Action for concurrence and a jurisdictional determination.

3.4 Soils

The January 2004 survey revealed no change to the affected soils since the original EA was prepared. Detailed information pertaining to prime farmlands that occur near the proposed project site were addressed in the original EA and is herein included by reference.

3.5 Air Quality

The US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards (OAQPS) has set National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) for six criteria pollutants. These standards were discussed in the original EA (USACE 2000) and are incorporated by reference since no changes have occurred. Areas where air pollution levels persistently exceed the NAAQS may be designated non-attainment. Maverick County is located within EPA's Region 6 and is currently in attainment with established national and state air quality standards for all criteria pollutants (EPA 2003).

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

This section will address effects to only those resources that are potentially impacted beyond that described in the original EA (USACE 2000). The environmental consequences discussions of the remaining resources are herein incorporated by reference. The only resources found to have potential additional impacts beyond those described in the original EA were vegetation, cultural resources, water resources, soils and air quality.

There are two types of impacts that will be analyzed in this section: temporary and permanent. For the purposes of this SEA, a temporary impact is defined as impacts that would affect a resource only during the construction period. Following construction, these impacts would revert back to preexisting conditions within one to two years. As the term implies, permanent impacts would include those impacts that would occur throughout the life of the project. In addition, impacts include those that would result directly or indirectly from an activity. Permanent and temporary impact areas can be seen in Figure 4-1.

4.1 Biological Resources

4.1.1 Vegetation

Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4

Construction of the Proposed Action, and the other Bailey bridge alternatives (alternatives 1, 2, and 3) would result in similar permanent and temporary impacts to vegetation. These three alternatives and the Proposed Action would permanently impact approximately 0.8 acre of vegetation and temporarily impact approximately 1.2 acre of vegetation (Table 4-1). The Status Quo Alternative (Alternative 4) would have an undetermined amount of temporary impacts to vegetation, and would permanently impact 0.4 acre of vegetation (Table 4-1).

Table 4-1. Summary of Temporary and Permanent Impacts to Vegetation (Acres)

	Mesquite-Acacia Thorn Scrub	Buffel Grass Pasture	Giant Cane	Total
Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 2 and 3				
Permanent	0.6	0.1	0.1	0.8
Temporary	0.5	0.7	0.0	1.2
Alternative 4 Status Quo (timber trestle)				
Permanent	0.2	0.0	0.2	0.4
Temporary	-	-	-	-

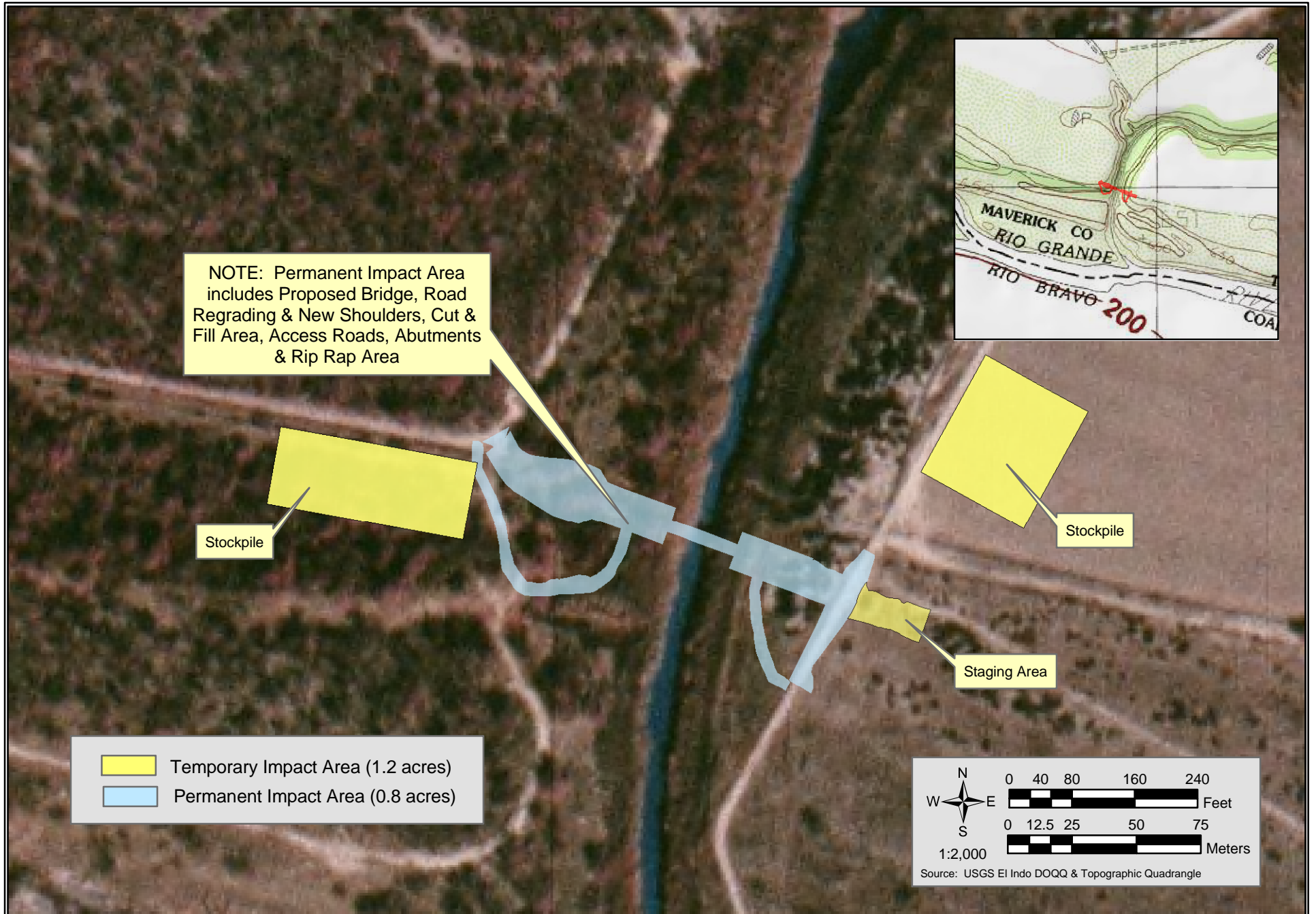


Figure 4-1: Cuevas Creek Bridge Impacts

All temporary impacts to vegetation communities from the Bailey bridge alternatives are associated with the construction of stockpiles and the staging area. These areas would be revegetated upon completion of construction. All vegetation impacts, permanent or temporary, would occur within plant communities that are common both locally and regionally. Impacts to vegetation in the Cuevas Creek riparian zone would be to giant reed, an invasive, nonnative plant species. Therefore, impacts to vegetation from all alternatives evaluated are considered minimal. The Proposed Action Alternative would result in 0.8 acres of permanent impacts to vegetation, which is slightly more than the 0.4 acres of permanent impacts to vegetation that would result from the Status Quo Alternative. The permanent impacts of the Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 2 and 3 would include 0.1 acres of rip-rap on the western bank. The rip rap area would not revegetate.

No Action

No additional impacts as those described in the original EA would occur under the No Action Alternative. Impacts associated with this alternative are incorporated by reference.

4.2 Cultural Resources

Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 2, 3, and 4

In January 2004, the THC was consulted to revisit the original monitoring agreement pursuant to the original EA. This correspondence, as well as the response and recommendation are provided in Appendix A. All activities before, during, and after placement of any of the bridge alternatives (including the Alternative 4 [Status Quo]) would strictly adhere to the THC recommendations under the Section 106 process as described in the original EA. This description is incorporated by reference. Therefore, impacts to cultural resources would be insignificant due to the commitment to implement the recommended monitoring or mitigation plan agreed to under the original EA.

No Action Alternative

No additional impacts to cultural resources from the original EA would occur under the No Action Alternative. Therefore, impacts associated with this alternative are incorporated by reference.

4.3 Water Resources

Proposed Action and Alternatives 2 and 3

Based upon the wetlands delineation conducted in January 2004, areas within the ordinary high-water mark (OHWM) of Cuevas Creek are considered Waters of the U.S. (WUS) under USACE jurisdiction and the Clean Water Act (CWA). The Proposed Action and Alternatives 2 and 3 would not impact WUS, because pier placement and bridge construction would take place above the OHWM of Cuevas Creek. No Nationwide Permit(s) (NWP) would be required for these designs.

The Proposed Action, and alternatives 2 and 3 would be constructed within the 100-year floodplain as noted in the Flood Hazard Boundary Map of Maverick County (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1977), and would require a floodplain permit from Maverick County Floodplain Office in support of Executive Order (E.O.) 11988.

Pier and abutment construction and temporary access would have a risk of causing soil erosion into the creek. However, this impact and associated mitigation measures were addressed in the original EA and are incorporated by reference.

Gray water from the JTF-6 units' shower facilities and/or water withdrawn from the Rio Grande would be applied to temporary construction areas and access roads to control fugitive dust. No water from toilets or field kitchens would be applied. The water would be applied sparingly so that the water is bound to soil particles and does not run off into surrounding water drainages. Thus, no effect to water quality would be anticipated under these alternatives. A discharge permit from Maverick County and/or the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) will be required prior to the use of gray water.

Alternative 1 and 4 (Status Quo)

Alternatives 1 and 4 involve the placement of piers in the streambed and would require compliance with Section 404 of the CWA, E.O. 11990, and E.O. 11988. Alternative 1 would require about 210 yd³ of earthwork and impact 310 ft² within WUS to create the pier footing. Impacts identified in the original EA for Alternative 4 are incorporated by reference. Of all the alternatives evaluated, the greatest impacts to water resources are associated with Alternative

4, which was previously approved for construction under the original EA. Both alternatives would require a NWP.

Alternatives 1 and 4 would be constructed within the 100 and 50-year floodplain, respectively, as noted in the Flood Hazard Boundary Map of Maverick County (U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development 1977), and would require a floodplain permit from Maverick County Floodplain Office in support of E.O. 11988.

Pier and abutment construction would have a greater risk of causing soil erosion since this construction would occur within or adjacent to the creek under these alternatives. However, associated mitigation measures such as cofferdams, rip-rap, and revegetation would be implemented to reduce these effects.

Gray water, as discussed above, would be applied to temporary construction areas. No impacts to the area's surface or ground water supplies or quality would be anticipated.

No Action Alternative

Because no construction would take place, no direct impacts to water resources would occur from the No Action Alternative.

4.4 Soils

A summary of temporary and permanent soil impacts from each of the bridge alternatives is provided in Table 4-2. The types of soils (Lagloria Laredo Association) would be the same for all five action alternatives. These soils can be considered prime farmlands if they are irrigated (USACE 2000); however, the area is not currently in agricultural production and is not irrigated.

Table 4-2. Summary of Temporary and Permanent Impacts to Soils (Acres)

		Soils impacted
Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 2 and 3		
	Permanent	0.8
	Temporary	1.2
Alternative 4 Status Quo (timber trestle)		
	Permanent	0.4
	Temporary	0.0

No Action Alternative

Because no construction would take place, no direct impacts to soils would occur from the No Action Alternative.

4.5 Air Quality

Proposed Action and Alternatives 1, 2, 3 and 4

Temporary, minor increases in hydrocarbon emissions and fugitive dust would be generated during the construction period. Hydrocarbon emissions would be generated by vehicles, heavy equipment and power generators. The equipment would be operated continuously during the construction activities, either at the construction site or at the staging/bivouac site. Vehicles and heavy equipment would be operated about 12 hours per day for 6 days per week. Due to the temporary nature of these construction activities (i.e., 60 days), the remote location of the proposed project site, and the good dispersion patterns, no excursions to the air quality standards would occur.

Fugitive dust would be generated by the excavation and fill activities, as well as by normal construction vehicle traffic along unimproved roads. Wetting components, including gray water from shower and water withdrawn from the Rio Grande, would be applied to the temporary construction sites and roads to reduce fugitive dust emissions. Therefore, these effects are considered negligible and temporary.

No Action Alternative

Because no construction would take place, no direct impacts to air quality would occur under the No Action Alternative. However, minor, long term indirect impacts could occur as a result of the OBP traffic along the additional 9.5 miles of road required to go around the creek.

4.6 Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts were addressed in the original EA and are incorporated herein by reference. Since the original EA was completed, other projects have been proposed or implemented. The Del Rio Sector is currently in the early stages of planning additional

infrastructure improvements. In particular, the Del Rio Sector is preparing a programmatic EA that will address the installation, operation, and maintenance of critical infrastructure in the Carrizo Springs Station of the OBP, which includes infrastructure from the original EA, as well as this SEA. At the present time, infrastructure and improvements include the construction of approximately 20 to 50 miles of all-weather roads; improvements and upgrades to existing unimproved roads; construction and installation of ancillary structures such as bridges, culverts, and low-water crossings pertinent to this road construction; installation and operation of approximately 25 additional remote video surveillance systems (RVS); and construction of up to 10 boat ramps and six observation points along the Rio Grande. One of the proposed RVS sites is located adjacent to the proposed Cuevas Creek bridge. The impacts of the RVS are or will be discussed in another EA. Cumulative impacts from the proposed RVS site are small and may be reduced if construction were to occur before the temporary impact areas from the proposed action have revegetated. Many of the projects envisioned in this document are expected to upgrade past improvements. These proposed actions would further enhance the ability of OBP agents to safely and rapidly access the remote areas where illegal entrants and drug trafficking occur.

These projects, if they come to fruition, would add to the cumulative effects within the region. However, these actions and their consequent effects cannot be quantified at the present time. No other development plans near or within the proposed project areas are currently known by the SEA preparers. Impacts to vegetation, water resources, cultural resources, and soils are minimal in all the alternatives evaluated; therefore, this project would not result in significant cumulative impacts.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN MEASURES

All the environmental design measures specified in the original EA (USACE 2000) would be adhered to and thus are incorporated by reference. A professional archeologist(s) will monitor the project site during the construction activity to ensure no adverse impacts to archeological site 41MV249 occur.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

6.1 Agency Coordination

This chapter discusses consultation and coordination that has or will occur during preparation of the draft and final versions of this document. This includes contacts that are made during the development of the Proposed Action and preparation of the SEA. Formal and informal coordination was conducted with the following agencies:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Fort Worth District, Regulatory Branch
- U.S. Department of Agriculture
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) – Informal coordination only; formal Section 7 consultation was not necessary
- Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD)
- Texas Council of Environmental Quality (TCEQ)
- U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission (USIBWC)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS)
- State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)/Texas Historical Commission (THC)
- U.S. Coast Guard (USCG)
- Maverick County Floodplain Office

6.2 Public Review

The Draft SEA will be made available for public review on 22 April 2004 to 24 May 2004. On 22 April 2004, the Notice of Availability (NOA) will be published in the *Eagle Pass News Guide* and the *Del Rio News Herald*. A copy of the original document, *Final EA for Proposed JTF-6 Road Improvement near Eagle Pass and Cinco Cattle Company Ranch, Texas*, can be reviewed at the URL address: <http://ins.swf.usace.army.mil/>, or by contacting the USACE Fort Worth District. A copy of the *Structural Selection Report for Cuevas Creek* can be reviewed at the Eagle Pass Public Library or at the following URL address specified above.

7.0 REFERENCES

- Council on Environmental Quality. 1981. Forty Most Asked Questions Concerning Council on Environmental Quality's National Environmental Policy Act Regulations, 1981.
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 2003 National Ambient Air Quality Standards. Last updated on 10 December 2003 at: <http://epa.gov/air/criteria.html>
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- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). 1987. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual.
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- U.S. Bureau of Customs and Border Protection (CBP). 2004. Cuevas Creek Bridge: Structural Selection Report. USBS Del Rio Sector, Texas.
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- U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. 1977. Flood Hazard Boundary Map for Maverick County. Community # 480470; map panel 0012. Effective date November 20, 1977.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). 2004. Southwest Region Species List for Maverick County, Texas. <http://endangered.fws.gov/wildlife.html#Species>. 27 January 2004.

8.0 LIST OF ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

CBP	U.S. Customs and Border Protection
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CWA	Clean Water Act
EA	Environmental Assessment
E.O.	Executive Order
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
FM	Farm to Market Road
ft	Foot
ft ²	Square foot
GSRC	Gulf South Research Corporation
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service
JTF-6	Joint Task Force Six
METL	Mission Essential Task List
MSL	Mean Sea Level
NAAQS	National Ambient Air Quality Standards
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act of 1969
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NOA	Notice of Availability
OAQPS	Office of Air Quality Planning and Standards
OBP	Office of Border Patrol
OHWM	Ordinary High-Water Mark
SEA	Supplemental Environmental Assessment
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer
TCEQ	Texas Council of Environmental Quality
THC	Texas Historical Commission
TPWD	Texas Parks and Wildlife Department
URL	Uniform Resource Locator
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USCG	U.S. Coast Guard
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USFWS	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USIBWC	U.S. Section, International Boundary and Water Commission
WUS	Waters of the U.S.
yds ³	Cubic yards

9.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

The following people were primarily responsible for preparing this SEA.

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	DISCIPLINE/EXPERTISE	EXPERIENCE	ROLE IN PREPARING EA
Glenn Bixler	USACE, Ft. Worth District	Biology/NEPA	7 years natural resources, 5 years NEPA	Project Management and EA review
Milton Blankenship	JTF-6	Geology/Biology	24 years geology, biology, and NEPA management	JTF-6 EA coordination and review
Aaron Caldwell	GSRC	Biology/Wildlife Mgmt	1 year EA/EIS studies	EA preparation
Kevin Feeney	CBP Headquarters	CBP Environmental Program Manager	30 years NEPA and related studies	EA Review
Mark Gable	DHS/CBP National Logistics Center, Dallas Office	NEPA/Environmental Compliance	5 years NEPA experience, 13 years environmental compliance experience	EA review
James Henderson	GSRC	Biology/Ecology	11 years EA/EIS studies	Biological surveys, water resources
Chris Ingram	GSRC	Biology/Ecology	24 years EA/EIS studies	EA review
John Mire	GSRC	Biology/Ecology	8 years archaeological studies	EA review and impact analysis
Sharon Newman	GSRC	GIS/Graphics	9 years GIS experience	Graphics
Nancy Parrish	USACE, Ft. Worth District	Archaeologist	6 years NEPA and cultural resources management	Archaeological Management and EA Review
Patience Patterson, RPA	USACE, Ft. Worth District	Archaeology	28 years professional archaeologist/cultural resource manager	EA review and SHPO coordination
Eric Webb, Ph.D.	GSRC	Ecology	13 Years NEPA and related studies	EA Review