



United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
Bandelier National Monument
15 Entrance Road
Los Alamos, NM 87544-9508

IN REPLY REFER TO:
D5015(BAND)

OCT 22 2013

Dear Friends and Neighbors:

The National Park Service (NPS) has initiated the planning process to complete an Environmental Assessment (EA) for the replacement of the Frijoles Canyon section of primary and secondary electrical systems at Bandelier National Monument. The purpose of the proposed action is to provide the Monument with a reliable electrical system that is readily and easily serviceable and complies with Los Alamos County and federal regulations.

The Monument's current electrical system, which is approximately 50 years old, has exceeded its anticipated life cycle of 30-40 years and is in need of replacement. Further, the existing lines were direct buried (not installed within a conduit) making them difficult to locate and repair. In 2011, the primary electrical system experienced three critical failures along Entrance Road resulting in damage to both the electrical lines themselves and the road. Additionally, the transformer between the primary and secondary electrical systems is within the 100-year floodplain and could be damaged in a major flood event.

The NPS is developing alternatives that would solve these critical electrical issues for the Monument and have the potential to provide solutions to other existing or future utility issues. The NPS is considering five preliminary action alternatives for alignment of the new electrical lines. Four of the alignments would use horizontal directional drilling (HDD). Each of these alignments would originate near the stables area in Frijoles Canyon. HDD would be used to bore upward from the Canyon, terminating in developed areas on top of the mesa (Alternatives B-E). The fifth alignment would involve trenching along Entrance Road (Alternative A) from the developed area in Frijoles Canyon near the Visitor Center. All alignments assume trenching in Frijoles Canyon along the road from the stable area to the developed area in the vicinity of the Visitor Center. The EA will analyze the environmental effects of the alternatives on the human environment including natural and cultural resources at Bandelier National Monument.

To comply with the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), an EA is being prepared to assess potential impacts on natural and cultural resources. This letter serves as notification that the Monument has begun the NEPA compliance process and is proposing to have an EA available for public and agency review in the spring of 2014. NPS is also soliciting comments or concerns about the

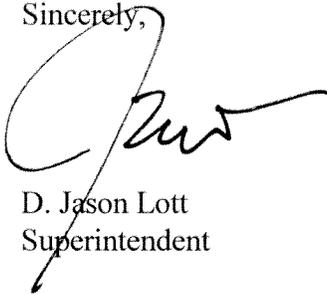
historic properties within the project area and the effects that the project could have on them in accordance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

There will be two opportunities to comment on the project; once during initial project scoping and again following release of the Environmental Assessment. The Monument is currently in the scoping phase of the proposed project and invites the public to submit written suggestions, comments, and concerns regarding the proposed project online at the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/band>.

If you are not able to submit comments electronically through this website, you may submit written comments at the address on this letterhead. Please provide comments by November 25, 2013. These comments will be considered during preparation of the Environmental Assessment.

We appreciate your initial input on this project and look forward to working with you as we move forward. If you need any additional information or should you have any questions regarding this project, please feel free to contact Chief of Resource Management Barbara Judy by telephone at (505) 672-3861 x701 or email (Barbara_Judy@nps.gov).

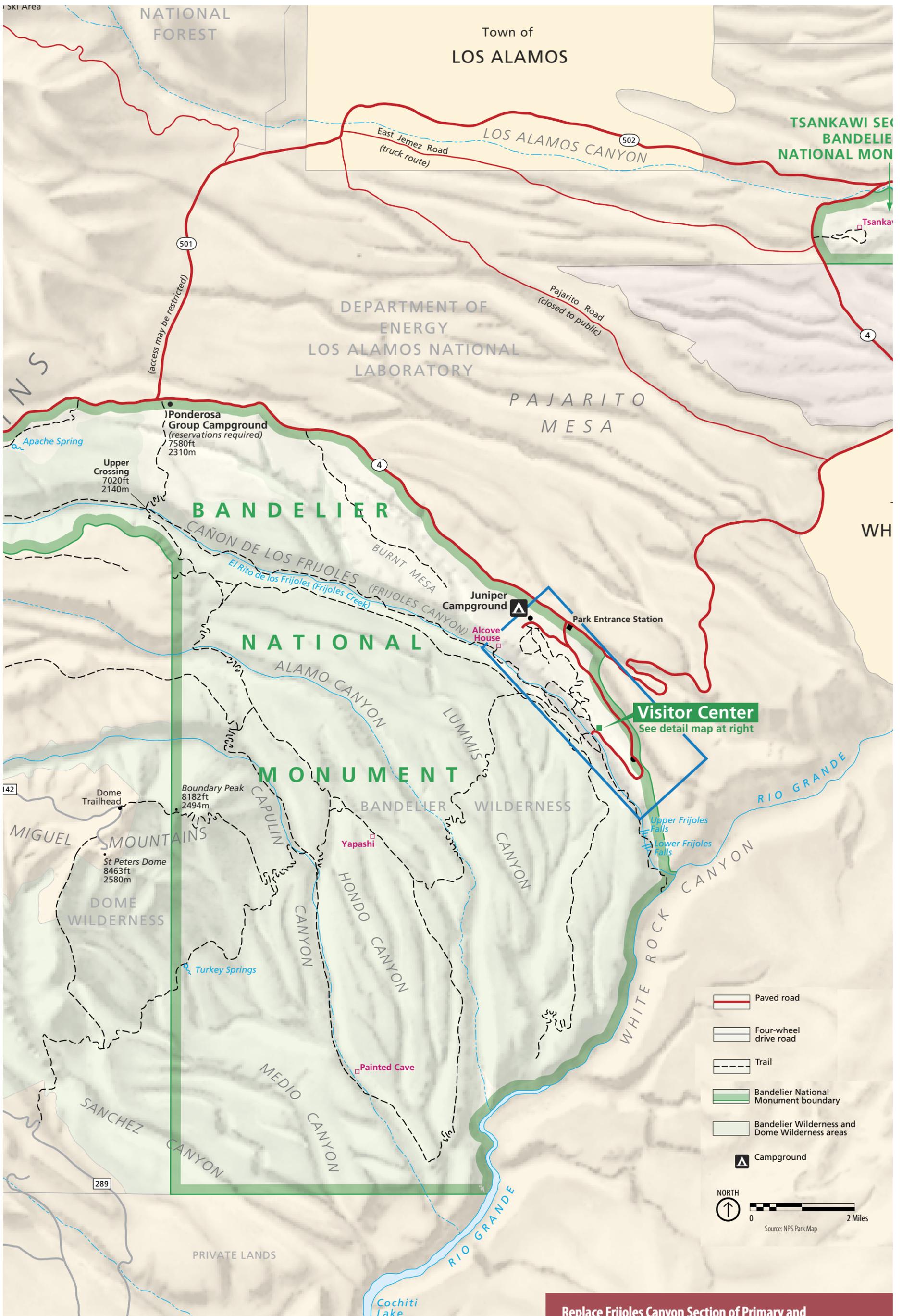
Sincerely,



D. Jason Lott
Superintendent

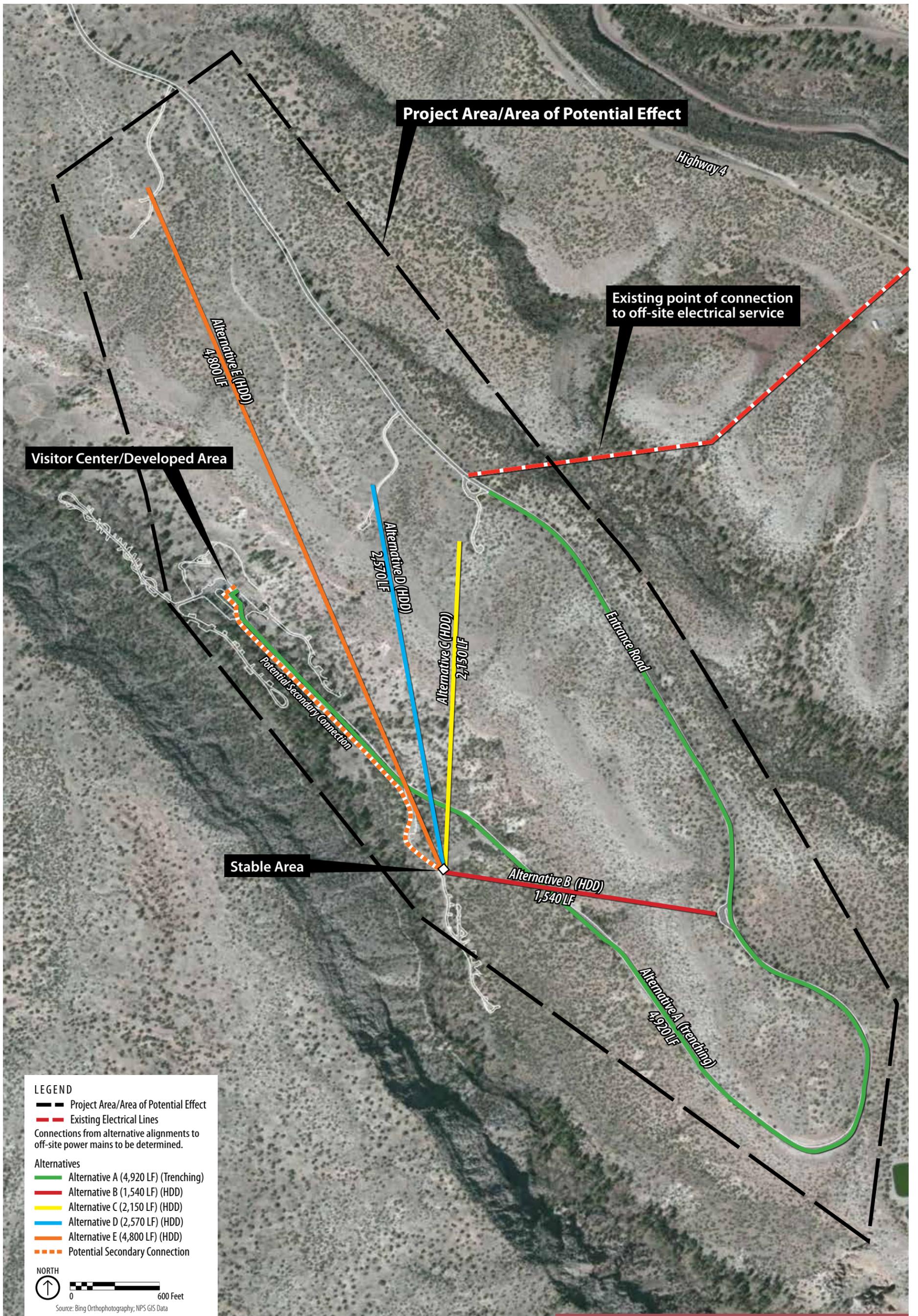
cc: Andrea Vaughn, NPS-DSC
Connie Chitwood, NPS-DSC
Kimberly Threlfall, VHB





Replace Frijoles Canyon Section of Primary and Secondary Electrical Systems - Environmental Assessment

**FIGURE 1
Project Vicinity Map**



Replace Frijoles Canyon Section of Primary and Secondary Electrical Systems - Environmental Assessment

FIGURE 2
Project Area/Area of Potential Effect and Preliminary Alternative Alignments

