

Recommended Alternative for Long-Term Water Supply Coal Basin Water Association

**Prepared for Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments
Gallup, New Mexico**

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Recommended Alternative for Long-Term Water Supply Coal Basin Water Association

1. Background and Overview

This document summarizes the recommendations for providing long term public water service to the Coal Basin Water Association in McKinley County, New Mexico (Figure 1). Water service for a number of existing or potential small rural water systems in McKinley County was examined in the report *McKinley County Small Rural Water Systems Appraisal Level Investigation*, prepared by Daniel B. Stephens & Associates, Inc. (DBS&A) in partnership with DePauli Engineering and Surveying Co. The report was published June 9, 2015. The Appraisal Level Investigation was prepared for McKinley County, through the Northwest New Mexico Council of Governments (NWNMCOG) pursuant to the Reclamation Rural Water Supply Act of 2006 (43 USC §§ 2401-2409 (Supp. 2011)) and appraisal criteria included in the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation's (USBR's) Rural Water Supply Program interim final rule (43 CFR Part 404).

2. Existing Conditions

The Coal Basin Water Association provides water to approximately 34 customers (households) within the system service area located just north of Gallup's municipal boundary (Figure 1). The water supply system consists of one well, two water storage tanks, and a single chlorination station (NMED, 2011). The Coal Basin Water Association service area is characterized by homes built on 2.5- and 5.0-acre lots. Some parts of this community are upscale, with large, relatively expensive homes. On the larger lots, some residents have horses and pastures, the likely reason why water use reported for this area is much higher than for other systems (Longworth et al., 2013). Coal Basin Water Association is a member of the Mariposa Domestic Water Alliance. The estimated current population is 96.

3. Alternatives Examined

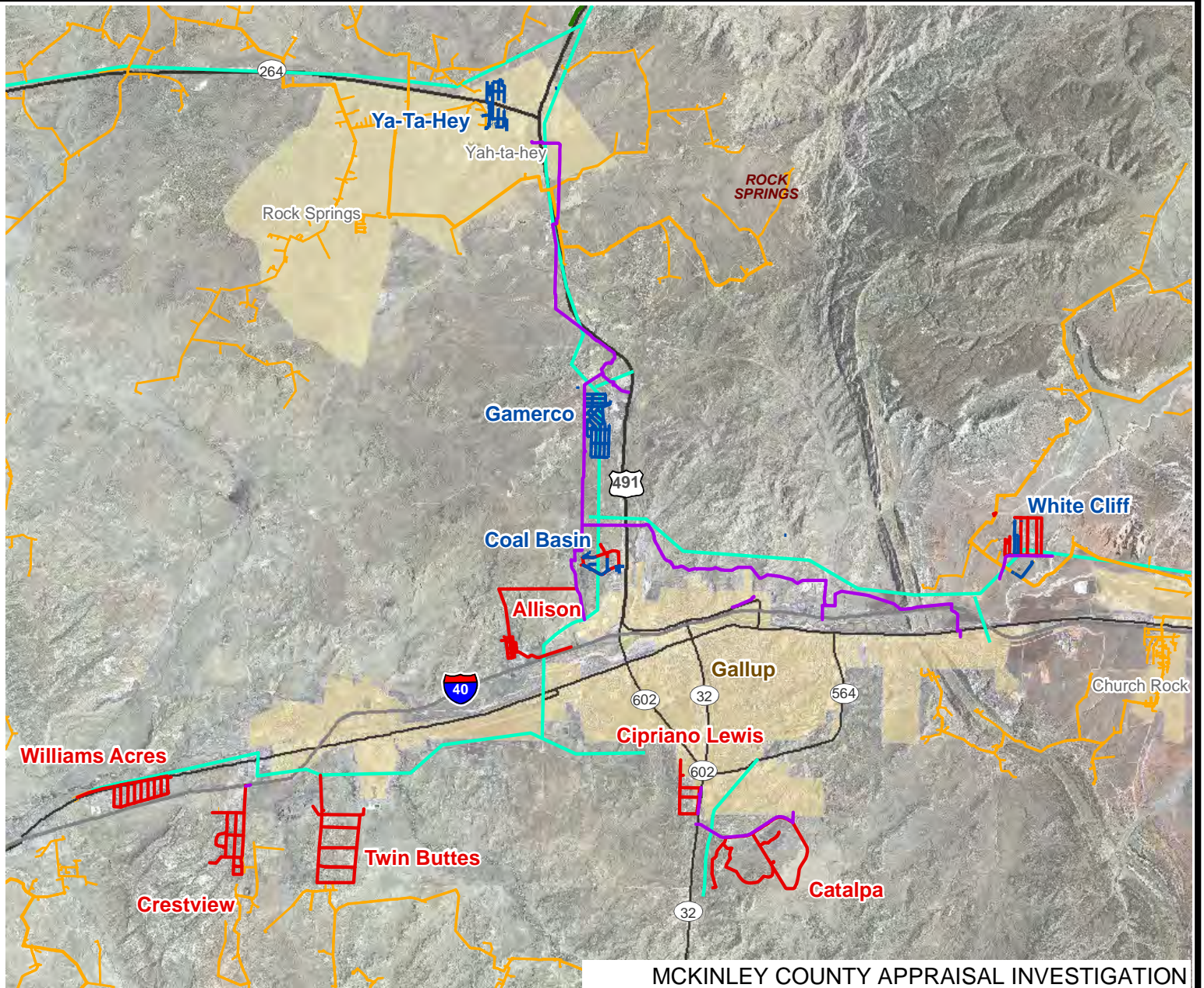
Three alternatives were examined for sustainable domestic water service to homes in Coal Basin: (1) No Action (Groundwater), (2) Connection to the Navajo Gallup Regional Water



System	Number of Connections	
	2012	2060
Allison	31	38
Catalpa	97	120
Cipriano Lewis	27	33
Crestview	93	115
Coal Basin	34	42
Gamerco WSD	484	598
Twin Buttes	57	70
White Cliffs	48	59
Williams Acres	180	223
Yah ta hey	125	155
	1,176	1,453

Explanation

- █ **Catalpa** Proposed water lines
- █ **Gamerco** Existing water lines
- Proposed water line
- Existing water line
- San Juan Lateral
- Navajo Tribal Utility Authority pressurized main
- Navajo Gallup Water Supply Pipeline water line



MCKINLEY COUNTY APPRAISAL INVESTIGATION
**McKinley County Rural Water Systems and
 Navajo Gallup Water Supply Project**

Figure 1





Supply Project (NGWSP) with a Master Meter, and (3) Connection to the NGWSP with individual meters.

To evaluate future infrastructure needs, population and water demand projections were calculated for the year 2060. It is estimated that by 2060 the Coal Basin Water Association will include 42 households and water demand will reach an average of 8,357 gallons per day (gpd), or 9.4 acre-feet per year (ac-ft/yr).

3.1 No Action Alternative

For the Coal Basin Water Association, the No Action Alternative would only require the installation of 2,000 feet of new 8-inch C-900 polyvinyl (PVC) line, together with a 2,000-foot-deep supply well and a 140,000-gallon storage tank. The No Action Alternative would thus use the existing distribution system, with the addition of only eight new service connections and two fire hydrants. The new well and tank are proposed to be placed at the west end of the system. A 3-horsepower pump would provide 10 gallons per minute (gpm) directly to the water system.

3.2 Connection with Master Meter Alternative

Under the master meter alternative, the existing distribution system—with 4-inch lines—would be used, with the addition of only eight new service connections and two fire hydrants, and only 2,000 feet of new 8-inch C-900 PVC line. In contrast to the No Action Alternative, however, the Coal Basin small water system would be connected to the City of Gallup distribution system off of U.S. Highway 491.

3.3 Connection with Individual Meters Alternative

The connection with individual meters alternative would require that the water system meet the City of Gallup standards for distribution; therefore, the 4-inch distribution lines would need to be replaced with 8-inch C-900 PVC distribution lines. This requirement increases the new water line installation to 6,300 feet. The requirement of having isolation valves installed every 500 feet would result in 13 new valves.



4. Recommended Project

The alternatives described in Section 3 were scored based on performance goals that were associated with performance measures and attributes. Scores were assigned from 1 to 100, and criteria were weighted from 1 to 5. The scores for Coal Basin Water Association alternatives are provided in Appendix A and summarized in Table 1. Based on the scoring, the connection alternative with individual meters is the preferred alternative, as shown in Figure 2.

Table 1. Alternative Scores

Alternative	Score
No action (groundwater)	1,575
Connection with master meter	2,570
Connection with individual meters	2,835

5. Costs

The estimated capital cost of the preferred alternative is \$355,000. The annual household water cost (which would be billed to households by the City of Gallup) is \$414. The operating and maintenance costs have not been calculated, as they are included in the rates the utility company would charge to the individual customers. The detailed capital cost estimate is provided as Appendix B.

6. Permitting and Environmental Compliance

6.1 *Biological setting*

The Southwest Regional Gap Analysis Project (SWReGAP) maps the Coal Basin area as Colorado Plateau pinyon-juniper woodland, developed (medium-high intensity), developed (open space-low intensity), inter-mountain basins greasewood flat, inter-mountain basins mixed salt desert scrub, inter-mountain basins semi-desert grassland, inter-mountain basins semi-desert shrub steppe, Madrean pinyon-juniper woodland, and North American warm desert



May 2012 aerial photograph from Google Earth



0 250 500 Feet



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Explanation

- Proposed water system (6,300 ft total pipe length)
- Existing water line (8,212 ft total pipe length)
- Proposed Navajo Gallup Water Supply Pipeline water line (Reach 27.9)

— City of Gallup water line

MCKINLEY COUNTY APPRAISAL INVESTIGATION
Coal Basin Water System Preferred Alternative



bedrock cliff and outcrop. These vegetation categories (termed “ecological systems”), together with typical wildlife of McKinley County, are described in Appendix C.

6.2 Special-Status Species

Federally listed endangered and threatened plant and animal species receive protection under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973. In McKinley County the black-footed ferret (*Mustela nigripes*), the southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), the least tern (*Sternula antillarum athalassos*), and the Zuni bluehead sucker (*Catostomus discobolus yarrowi*) are all listed as endangered, and the Mexican spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis lucida*), yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus*), and Zuni fleabane (*Erigeron rhizomatus*) are listed as threatened.

Some of the above species, along with others, also receive protection under New Mexico’s Wildlife Conservation Act [17-2-37 to 17-2-46 NMSA 1978] or at the Navajo Nation level. All of these species, including the bald eagle (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*), peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*), Costa’s hummingbird (*Calypte costae*), and gray vireo (*Vireo vicinior*) must be considered for planning purposes.

6.3 Permitting and Compliance

Prior to construction of the preferred alternative, the contractor would be required to address applicable state and federal requirements for construction, including right-of-way for water lines. Additionally, this project falls within the project area of the NGWSP. Key requirements for that project are included here for reference. The *Record of Decision for the Navajo-Gallup Water Supply Project Planning Report and Final Environmental Impact Statement* (USBR, 2009) indicates steps needed for meeting all environmental compliance regarding final designs. Construction of water lines is expected to create temporary turbidity and other water quality concerns, and USBR is tasked with obtaining required permits under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) for impacts associated with jurisdictional waters of the United States. Nationwide permits authorization under Nationwide Permits (NWP) No. 12 (Utility Line Activities) will be requested for temporary construction disturbances to perennial and



intermittent stream pipeline crossings. Compliance with General Condition 18, Endangered Species, is required for all NWP's.

The New Mexico Wildlife Conservation Act (WCA) (NMSA 17-2-37) authorizes the New Mexico Department of Game and Fish to create a list of endangered or threatened wildlife within the state, and to take steps to protect and restore populations of species on the list. Actions causing the death of a state listed endangered animal are in violation of the WCA. For all of these reasons, in addition to other federal and state regulations and guidelines, the planning phase for any proposed new water line should include a biological survey with the following objectives:

- Determination of the ordinary high water mark at each stream crossing, in order to determine disturbance acreages for jurisdictional waters
- Wetland delineations, as needed
- Identification of noxious weeds along the route of the proposed water line
- Assessment of habitat for federal and state threatened and endangered species, as well as any additional species listed by the Navajo Nation, as needed

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act makes it unlawful to hunt, take, capture, kill, possess, import, or export any migratory birds, their nests, and eggs. Construction of the new water line should therefore occur outside the nesting season or be preceded by nest surveys to locate and protect any active nest at risk from construction activities.

Archaeological surveys are also needed along the route of the proposed new water line to avoid or mitigate losses of cultural resources that could be affected by the construction and operation of the water line. Native American human remains, funerary objects, or objects of cultural patrimony may also be encountered during the construction of new water lines of the NGWSP. Therefore, prior to issuing any approvals or permits for activities related to the NGWSP, USBR is tasked with not just the implementation of a program to avoid and mitigate the loss of cultural resources, but also full compliance with the relevant sections of the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) and 43 CFR 10.3 (USBR, 2009).



References

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Appendix A
Alternative Scoring

Alternative Evaluation

Name of System: Coal Basin

Alternative:

No Connection Alternative: Drill New or Supplemental well with service from small system

Connection with master meter to Gallup or NTUA (Water system still responsible for service)

Connection to Gallup or NTUA, who provides service to individual customers (water system no longer in place)

Goals	Performance Measures/Attributes	Score (0–100)	Criteria Weight	Evaluation Total
Long-term sustainable supply	Renewable water supply	40	4	160
Implementable	Project complexity	45	3	135
	Water right acquisition or transfer	25	4	100
Cost	Projected capital and O&M costs	40	4	160
Local environmental and health and safety benefits	Environmental considerations	50	4	200
	Health, safety, and welfare	60	4	240
	Watershed and regional approach	20	4	80
Community preference	Reliability of service	60	5	300
	Complexity of managerial and operations and maintenance requirements for systems and communities	50	4	200
Total				1575

Alternative Evaluation

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Connection to Gallup or NTUA, who provides service to individual customers (water system no longer in place)

Goals	Performance Measures/Attributes	Score (0–100)	Criteria Weight	Evaluation Total
Long-term sustainable supply	Renewable water supply	70	4	280
Implementable	Project complexity	60	3	180
	Water right acquisition or transfer	90	4	360
Cost	Projected capital and O&M costs	60	4	240
Local environmental and health and safety benefits	Environmental considerations	60	4	240
	Health, safety, and welfare	70	4	280
	Watershed and regional approach	90	4	360
Community preference	Reliability of service	70	5	350
	Complexity of managerial and operations and maintenance requirements for systems and communities	70	4	280
Total				2570

Alternative Evaluation

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Alternative:

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Connection with master meter to Gallup or NTUA (Water system still responsible for service)

Connection to Gallup or NTUA, who provides service to individual customers (water system no longer in place)

Goals	Performance Measures/Attributes	Score (0–100)	Criteria Weight	Evaluation Total
Long-term sustainable supply	Renewable water supply	70	4	280
Implementable	Project complexity	65	3	195
	Water right acquisition or transfer	95	4	380
Cost	Projected capital and O&M costs	85	4	340
Local environmental and health and safety benefits	Environmental considerations	60	4	240
	Health, safety, and welfare	70	4	280
	Watershed and regional approach	90	4	360
Community preference	Reliability of service	80	5	400
	Complexity of managerial and operations and maintenance requirements for systems and communities	90	4	360
Total				2835

Appendix B

**Preliminary
Cost Estimate for
Preferred Alternative**

Appendix C
Vegetation and Wildlife



Appendix C. Vegetation and Wildlife

C.1 Vegetation

The Southwest Regional Gap Analysis Project (SWReGAP) maps the Coal Basin area as Colorado Plateau pinyon-juniper woodland, developed (medium-high intensity), developed (open space-low intensity), inter-mountain basins greasewood flat, inter-mountain basins mixed salt desert scrub, inter-mountain basins semi-desert grassland, inter-mountain basins semi-desert shrub steppe, Madrean pinyon-juniper woodland, and North American warm desert bedrock cliff and outcrop. These vegetation categories (termed “ecological systems”) are described in the following subsections.

C.1.1 Colorado Plateau Pinyon-Juniper Woodland

The Colorado Plateau pinyon-juniper woodland ecological system occurs in dry mountains and foothills of the Colorado Plateau region, including the western slope of Colorado to the Wasatch Range, south to the Mogollon Rim, and east into the northwestern corner of New Mexico. It is typically found at lower elevations ranging from 4,900 to 8,000 feet above mean sea level (feet msl). Woodlands of this ecological system occur on warm, dry sites on mountain slopes, mesas, plateaus, and ridges. Severe climatic events occurring during the growing season, such as frosts and drought, are thought to limit the distribution of pinyon-juniper woodlands to relatively narrow altitudinal belts on mountainsides. Soils supporting this system vary in texture, ranging from stony, cobbly, gravelly sandy loams to clay loam or clay.

Twoneedle pinyon (*Pinus edulis*) and/or Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) dominate the tree canopy. In the southern portion of the Colorado Plateau in northern Arizona and northwestern New Mexico, oneseed juniper (*Juniperus monosperma*) and hybrids of juniper species (*Juniperus* spp.) may dominate or co-dominate the tree canopy. Rocky Mountain juniper (*Juniperus scopulorum*) may co-dominate or replace Utah juniper at higher elevations. Understory layers are variable and may be dominated by shrubs, graminoids, or be absent. Associated species include greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), big sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentata*), littleleaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus intricatus*), alderleaf mountain



mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus*), blackbrush (*Coleogyne ramosissima*), Stansbury cliffrose (*Purshia stansburiana*), antelope bitterbrush (*Purshia tridentata*), Gambel oak (*Quercus gambelii*), blue grama (*Bouteloua gracilis*), James' galleta (*Pleuraphis jamesii*), or muttongrass (*Poa fendleriana*). The Colorado Plateau pinyon-juniper woodland occurs at higher elevations than the Great Basin pinyon-juniper woodland and Colorado Plateau shrubland systems.

C.1.2 Developed, Medium-High Intensity

This land cover type includes areas with a mixture of constructed materials and vegetation. Impervious surface accounts for 50 to 79 percent of the total cover. These areas most commonly include single-family housing units.

C.1.3 Developed, Open Space-Low Intensity

This land cover type includes areas with a mixture of some construction materials, but mostly vegetation in the form of lawn grasses. Impervious surfaces account for less than 20 percent of total cover. These areas most commonly include large-lot single-family housing units, parks, golf courses, and vegetation planted in developed settings for recreation, erosion control, or aesthetic purposes.

C.1.4 Inter-Mountain Basins Greasewood Flat

This ecological system occurs in intermountain basins throughout much of the western United States and extends onto the western Great Plains. It typically occurs near drainages on stream terraces and flats or may form rings around more sparsely vegetated playas. Sites typically have saline soils and a shallow water table and flood intermittently, but remain dry for most growing seasons. The water table remains high enough to maintain vegetation, despite salt accumulations. This system usually occurs as a mosaic of multiple communities, with open to moderately dense shrublands dominated or co-dominated by greasewood (*Sarcobatus vermiculatus*). Fourwing saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), shadscale saltbush (*Atriplex confertifolia*), or winterfat (*Krascheninnikovia lanata*) may be present to co-dominant. Occurrences are often surrounded by mixed salt desert scrub. The herbaceous layer, if present, is usually dominated by graminoids. There may be inclusions of alkali sacaton



(*Sporobolus airoides*), saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*) (where water remains ponded the longest), or common spikerush (*Eleocharis palustris*) herbaceous types.

C.1.5 Inter-Mountain Basins Mixed Salt Desert Scrub

This extensive ecological system includes open-canopied shrublands of typically saline desert basins, alluvial slopes, and plains across the Intermountain western United States. This type also extends in limited distribution into the southern Great Plains. Substrates are often saline and calcareous, medium- to fine-textured, alkaline soils, but include some coarser-textured soils. The vegetation is characterized by a typically open to moderately dense shrubland composed of one or more *Atriplex* species such as *Atriplex confertifolia*, *Atriplex canescens*, *Atriplex polycarpa*, or *Atriplex spinifera*. Other shrubs present to co-dominant may include *Artemisia tridentata* ssp. *wyomingensis*, *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*, *Ericameria nauseosa*, *Ephedra nevadensis*, *Grayia spinosa*, *Krascheninnikovia lanata*, *Lycium* spp., *Picrothamnus desertorum*, or *Tetradymia* spp. *Sarcobatus vermiculatus* is generally absent, but if present does not co-dominate. The herbaceous layer varies from sparse to moderately dense and is dominated by perennial graminoids such as *Achnatherum hymenoides*, *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Elymus lanceolatus* ssp. *lanceolatus*, *Pascopyrum smithii*, *Pleuraphis jamesii*, *Pleuraphis rigida*, *Poa secunda*, or *Sporobolus airoides*. Various forbs are also present.

C.1.6 Inter-Mountain Basins Semi-Desert Grassland

This widespread ecological system occurs throughout the Intermountain western United States on dry plains and mesas, at approximately 1,450 to 2,320 meters (4,750 to 7,610 feet) in elevation. These grasslands occur in lowland and upland areas and may occupy swales, playas, mesa tops, plateau parks, alluvial flats, and plains, but sites are typically xeric. Substrates are often well-drained sandy- or loamy-textured soils derived from sedimentary parent materials, but are quite variable and may include fine-textured soils derived from igneous and metamorphic rocks. When they occur near foothills grasslands they will be at lower elevations. The dominant perennial bunch grasses and shrubs within this system are all very drought-resistant plants. These grasslands are typically dominated or co-dominated by *Achnatherum hymenoides*, *Aristida* spp., *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Hesperostipa comata*,



Muhlenbergia torreyana, or *Pleuraphis jamesii*, and may include scattered shrubs and dwarf-shrubs of species of *Artemisia*, *Atriplex*, *Coleogyne*, *Ephedra*, *Gutierrezia*, or *Krascheninnikovia lanata*.

C.1.7 Inter-Mountain Basins Semi-Desert Shrub Steppe

This ecological system occurs throughout the Intermountain western United States, typically at lower elevations on alluvial fans and flats with moderate to deep soils. This semi-arid shrub-steppe is typically dominated by graminoids (>25 percent cover) with an open shrub layer, but includes sparse mixed shrublands without a strong graminoid layer. Characteristic grasses include *Achnatherum hymenoides*, *Bouteloua gracilis*, *Distichlis spicata*, *Hesperostipa comata*, *Pleuraphis jamesii*, *Poa secunda*, and *Sporobolus airoides*. The woody layer is often a mixture of shrubs and dwarf-shrubs. Characteristic species include *Atriplex canescens*, *Artemisia filifolia*, *Chrysothamnus Greenei*, *Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*, *Ephedra* spp., *Ericameria nauseosa*, *Gutierrezia sarothrae*, and *Krascheninnikovia lanata*. Scattered *Artemisia tridentata* may be present but does not dominate. The general aspect of occurrences may be either open shrubland with patchy grasses or patchy open herbaceous layer. Disturbance may be important in maintaining the woody component. Microphytic crust is very important in some occurrences.

C.1.8 Madrean Pinyon-Juniper Woodland

This system occurs on foothills, mountains and plateaus in the Sierra Madre Occidentale and Sierra Madre Orientale in Mexico, Trans-Pecos Texas, southern New Mexico, and in southern and central Arizona, from the Mogollon Rim south to the Sky Islands. Substrates are variable, but soils are generally dry and rocky. The presence of *Pinus cembroides*, *Pinus discolor*, or other Madrean trees and shrubs is diagnostic of this woodland system. *Juniperus coahuilensis*, *Juniperus deppeana*, *Juniperus pinchotii*, *Juniperus monosperma*, and/or *Pinus edulis* may be present to dominant. Madrean oaks such as *Quercus arizonica*, *Quercus emoryi*, and *Quercus grisea* may be co-dominant. *Pinus ponderosa* is absent or sparse. If present, understory layers are variable and may be dominated by shrubs or graminoids.



C.1.9 North American Warm Desert Bedrock Cliff and Outcrop

This ecological system is found from subalpine to foothill elevations and includes barren and sparsely vegetated landscapes (generally less than 10 percent plant cover) of steep cliff faces, narrow canyons, and smaller rock outcrops of various igneous, sedimentary, and metamorphic bedrock types. Also included are unstable scree and talus slopes that typically occur below cliff faces. Species present are diverse and may include elephant tree (*Bursera microphylla*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens*), Bigelow's nolina (*Nolina bigelovii*), teddybear cholla (*Opuntia bigelovii*), and other desert species, especially succulents. Lichens are predominant life forms in some areas. This ecological system may include a variety of desert shrublands less than 2 hectares (5 acres) (USGS, 2004).

C.2 Wildlife

Mammals occurring in McKinley County and in the Great Basin Conifer Woodland biotic community (Brown and Lowe, 1977; Brown, 1982) typically include small mammals such as squirrels, mice, gophers, rats, rabbits, badgers, raccoon, and skunks, as well as larger mammals such as gray, kit, and red foxes (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*, *Vulpes macrotis*, *V. vulpes*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*).

Resident and migratory birds expected in the area include western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), broad-tailed and rufous hummingbirds (*Selasphorus platycercus*, *S. rufus*), black-chinned hummingbird (*Archilochus alexandri*), redheaded woodpecker (*Melanerpes erythrocephalus*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*), red-breasted, white-breasted, and pygmy nuthatches (*Sitta canadensis*, *S. carolinensis*, *S. pygmaea*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), pinyon jay (*Gymnorhinus cyanocephalus*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), several species of warblers, vireos, wrens, swallows, and sparrows, and numerous others.



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