RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

A. **Proposed Action:** Western Area Power Administration (Western) plans to upgrade the existing Upper and Lower Davis Dam 230-kV switchyards in order to provide additional operational flexibility and reliability to the bulk electric system. Project activities, which include ordering equipment with long lead times, are expected to occur between August 1, 2010 and February 28, 2013. Construction activities will take place within the existing switchyard fences in areas previously graded and covered with gravel. Existing gravel access roads will be used to reach the project area. Project activities include:

1. Converting the lower and upper 230-kV switchyard connections from a main and transfer bus arrangement to a double breaker, double bus arrangement;
2. Removing all remaining oil-based breakers in the switchyards;
3. Installing 20 new gas-based SF6 breakers to replace the removed breakers and meet the needs of the new bus arrangement;
4. Installing 9 new switches;
5. Constructing concrete foundations, up to four feet deep, for the above-mentioned equipment as needed;
6. Any existing underground piping associated with the old oil-based breakers will be left in place and capped.

The attached map shows the project area location. Western owns the land. The legal description is the north half of the northwest quarter of Section 19, Township 21 North, Range 21 West on the Gila and Salt River Baseline and Meridian. The corresponding USGS seven-minute topographic map is Davis Dam, Ariz. (1983).

B. **Categorical Exclusion Applied:** 10 CFR, Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B, B4.11: "Construction of electric power substations (including switching stations and support facilities) with power delivery at 230 kV or below or modification (other than voltage increases) of existing substations and support facilities that could involve the construction of powerlines approximately 10 miles in length or less or relocations of existing powerlines approximately 20 miles in length or less, but not the integration of major new generation resources into a main transmission system."

C. **Regulatory Requirements in 10 CFR 1021.410 (b):**

1. The proposed action fits within a class of actions that is listed in Appendix B to Subpart D.

   a. The proposed action was reviewed for the requirements of the Endangered Species Act, the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the National Historic Preservation Act, and all applicable Department of Energy Orders.

b. The proposed action does not require the siting, construction, or major expansion of waste storage, disposal, recovery, or treatment facilities.

c. The proposed action does not disturb hazardous substances, pollutants, contaminates, or CERLA-excluded petroleum and natural gas products that pre-exist in the environment such that there would be uncontrolled and unpermitted releases.

d. The proposed action was reviewed and surveyed for impacts to cultural and sensitive biological resources. Cultural and sensitive biological resources have been determined to not be affected.

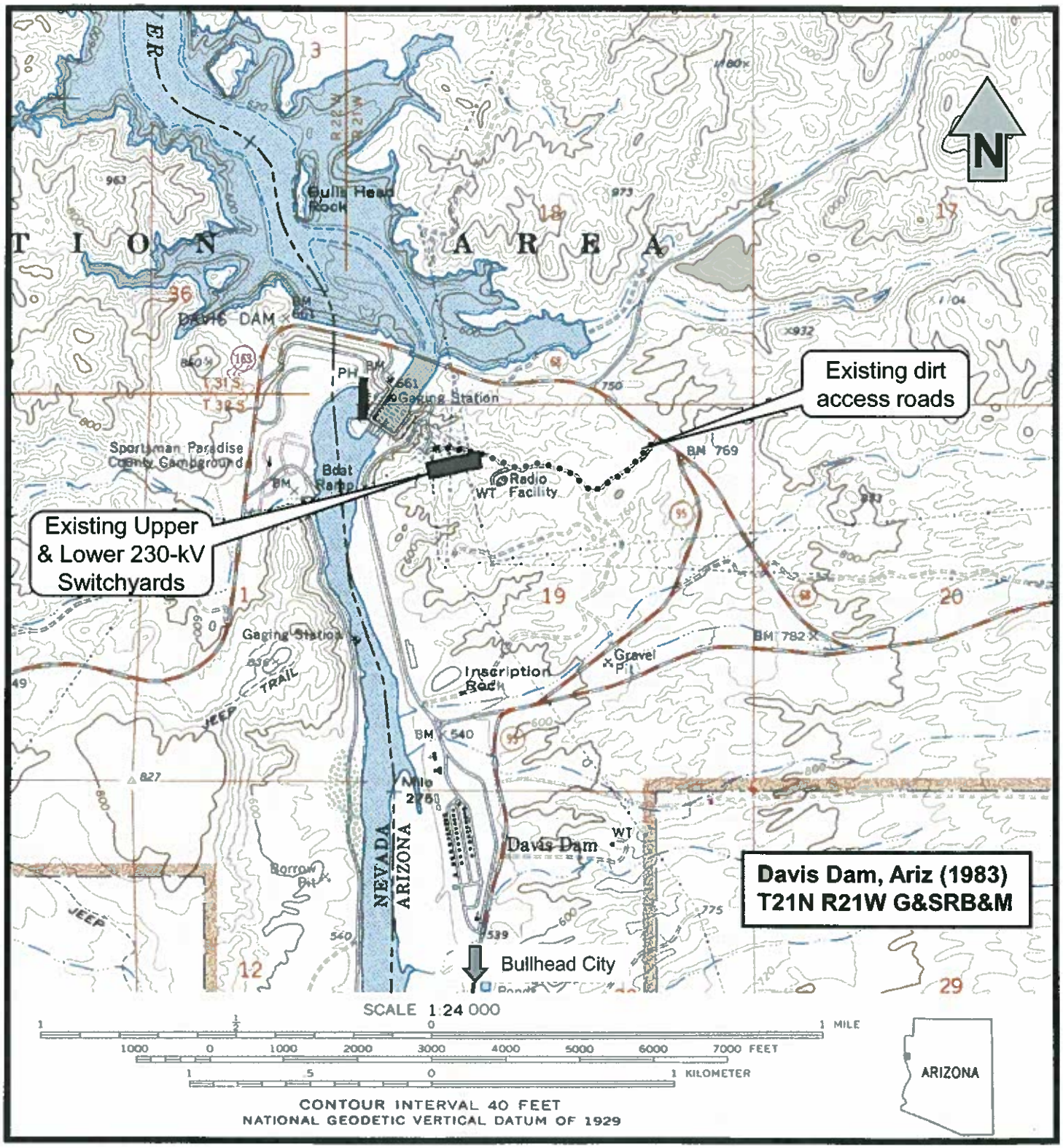
2. There are no extraordinary circumstances related to the proposal that may affect the significance of the environmental effects of the proposal; and

3. The proposal is not "connected" to other actions with potentially significant impacts, is not related to other proposed actions with cumulatively significant impacts, and is not precluded by 40 CFR 1506.1 or 10 CFR 1021.211.

D. Determination: Based on my review of information conveyed to me and in my possession (or attached) concerning the proposed action, as NEPA Compliance Officer (as authorized under DOE Order 451.1A), I have determined that the proposed action fits within the specified class of actions, the other regulatory requirements set forth above are met, and the proposed action is hereby categorically excluded from further NEPA review.

E. Special Conditions: none.

John R. Holt
NEPA Compliance Officer

6/30/10
Date

Davis Dam Switchyard
Stage 06 Upgrade Project