RECORD OF CATEGORICAL EXCLUSION DETERMINATION

A. **Proposed Action:** Western proposes to construct a new access road along the existing Tucson-Apache 115-kV transmission line within the existing right-of-way and to repair erosion damage at transmission line structures. Access road construction will consist of stripping, clearing and removing vegetation and blading and leveling to create a road within the existing right-of-way between structures 24/7-25/2 & 25/3-26/5. We will be installing two gates to limit right-of-way access from Houghton Road. We will be creating reinforced embankments through the placement of structural fill where necessary for access to transmission line structures and applying an EPA approved herbicide in repaired areas. We will be repairing eroded areas and installing culverts adjacent to structures 24/1, 24/7-25/5 & 25/7-26/5. Cactus relocation will consist of relocating saguaro, barrel, hedgehog and mammilaria cacti from within the work areas to outside the work areas but within Western's existing right-of-way. A contractor or Western will use dozers, front end loaders, motor graders, dump trucks, transport trucks, water trucks, crew trucks and pickup trucks during construction and to bring equipment and personnel to the project area. This work is necessary to maintain the safety and reliability of the bulk electrical system.

The attached map shows the project areas are situated within Sections 15, 23 & 24 Township 16 South Range 15 East on the Gila and Salt River Meridian, Pima County, Arizona. Work will be conducted within Western's right of way. The corresponding U.S.G.S. 7.5-minute topographic map is Tucson SE, Arizona. This work is planned to begin in April 2011 and end in November 2011.

B. **Categorical Exclusion Applied:** 10 CFR, Part 1021, Subpart D, Appendix B,B1.3: "Routine maintenance activities and custodial services for buildings, structures, right-of-way, infrastructures (e.g. pathways, roads and railroads), vehicles and equipment and localized vegetation and pest control during which operations may be suspended and resumed."

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. <u>Determination:</u> 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. <u>Special Conditions:</u> NONE

John R. Holt

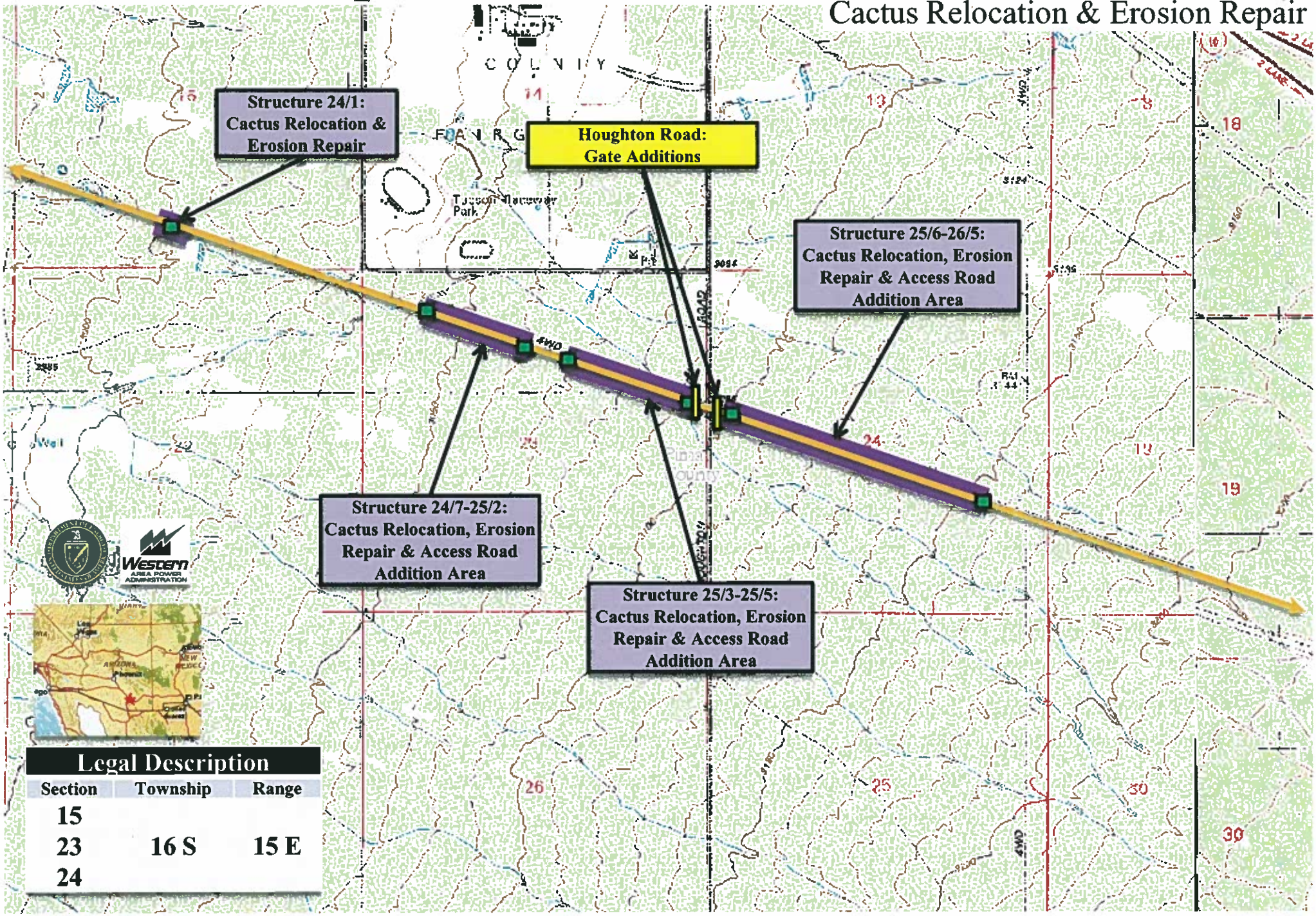
John R. Holt
NEPA Compliance Officer

2/23/11

Date

Tucson-Apache 115-kV Transmission Line

Cactus Relocation & Erosion Repair



Legal Description

Section	Township	Range
15		
23	16 S	15 E
24		