

Appendix D: Cultural Resources



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
4101 JEFFERSON PLAZA NE
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87109-3435

March 7, 2025

Planning, Project and Program Management Division
Planning Branch
Environmental Resources Section

Honorable Eugene Jiron
Governor, Pueblo of Isleta
Post Office Box 1270
Isleta, New Mexico 87022

Dear Governor Jiron:

Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District (Corps), Operations Division, seeks your comment on determinations of **no adverse effect** for the staging and access areas to be used for the Mountain View Unit of the Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Project, Bernalillo to Belen, New Mexico. The overall project is located within Bernalillo and Valencia Counties, New Mexico (Enclosure 1). The project sponsor is the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD).

The Bernalillo to Belen project itself includes rehabilitation of the existing spoil-bank levee (non-engineered) by constructing a structurally sound, engineered earthen levee extending approximately 30 miles along parts of the east and west banks of the Rio Grande, from its northernmost point at the Albuquerque South Diversion Channel southward to the town of Jarales, downstream of Belen. Section 106 consultation was completed for the overall project in 2014, with the State Historic Preservation Office concurring with a determination of **no adverse effect to historic properties** (HPD Log # 98447, 21 January 2014). At the time of original consultation, some staging and access areas for construction had not yet been identified. The present consultation is for a staging area and access for construction of the Mountain View unit of the project.

The Mountain View phase of this project will require an area to stage materials and equipment, and will use existing access roads maintained by MRGCD. The area selected for staging is shown in Enclosure 2, consisting of an approximately 1.75 acres to the east of the construction area, and bounded to the south by Interstate 25. The area of potential effect (APE) for this portion of the project includes the area to be cleared of vegetation for the staging area, and the access roads to the construction location. Access will be provided on existing roads, so the only area that might experience effects is the vegetation clearing location itself. This area has not been previously surveyed for cultural resources. Corps archaeologist Jonathan Van Hoose visited the location on 10 September 2024 to assess whether a survey would be possible, and determined based on the condition of the area that vegetation is far too dense to conduct an archaeological survey (see Enclosures 2 through 4 for photographs). Vegetation was so dense that personnel were unable to force their way more than a few meters into the proposed area.

Use of the area for staging would require preparing the area and removing vegetation through grubbing and clearing with heavy equipment. Because survey is not possible before vegetation clearing occurs, the Corps has analyzed existing information about the area to determine the likelihood that any intact cultural materials are likely to exist within the anticipated area of disturbance. To do so, we examined a series of aerial photographs of the area taken over the last several decades, and were able to identify a long history of ground disturbance (including plowing and previous vegetation clearing) taking place in this same area. We conclude from this information that it is highly unlikely that the proposed vegetation

clearing in this location would introduce any new effects to the area beyond what it has experienced over many decades of agricultural and other use.

The City of Albuquerque provides historic aerial imagery for much of the current Albuquerque metropolitan area spanning the years 1935 to 2018, publicly available at <https://www.cabq.gov/gis/advanced-map-viewer/historical-aerial-viewer>. Within this archive, aerial images of the present APE are available starting in the year 1949. As shown in Enclosure 5, construction of Interstate 25 had not yet occurred in 1949. It shows a plot among various plots with agricultural use, with a mix of trees and other vegetation. In 1959, the APE is seen devoid of vegetation and entirely plowed like the adjacent agricultural plots (Enclosure 5). The bridge across the Rio Grande and the adjacent portion of Interstate 25 were constructed in the early 1970s, and the bridge was rebuilt in 1991. In the 1990s, it is shown again with natural vegetation, but 2006 shows extensive and thorough removal of vegetation and apparent leveling of the ground surface, with deep parallel gouge marks made by heavy equipment (Enclosure 6). This reworked surface with parallel grooves persists through subsequent years as vegetation was allowed to regrow (see closeup aerials in Enclosures 7 through 10).

Clearing of vegetation for the present undertaking, and use of the area for staging equipment and materials, will be activities of a type and degree that are similar to what the APE has experienced multiple times in the last several decades. In addition, the previous clearing, plowing, and other earth-moving activity make it very unlikely that the APE contains intact cultural deposits, at least to the depths that would be impacted by the proposed vegetation clearing. As such, the Corps determines that while it is likely that there are no historic properties affected here, the proposed activity would result in **no adverse effect** to any unknown properties within the APE.

We seek your comment on the proposed undertaking. In addition to any comments about the cultural aspects of the proposed project, we also welcome comments regarding any concerns you may have regarding the environment such as natural, biological, or cultural resources; wildlife, vegetation, and special status species; air, water, or sound quality; aesthetics; health and safety; Traditional Cultural Properties (TCPs); or Indian Trust Assets that may occur within or adjacent to the proposed project area.

If you have any questions or require additional information concerning staging and access for the Bernalillo to Belen Project Mountain View Phase, please contact archaeologist Jonathan Van Hoose at (505) 342-3687 (jonathan.e.vanhoose@usace.army.mil) or me at (505) 342-3661 (Danielle.a.galloway@usace.army.mil). You may also provide comments to the above address.

Sincerely,

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(Acting for) Danielle Galloway
Chief, Environmental Resources Section

Enclosures



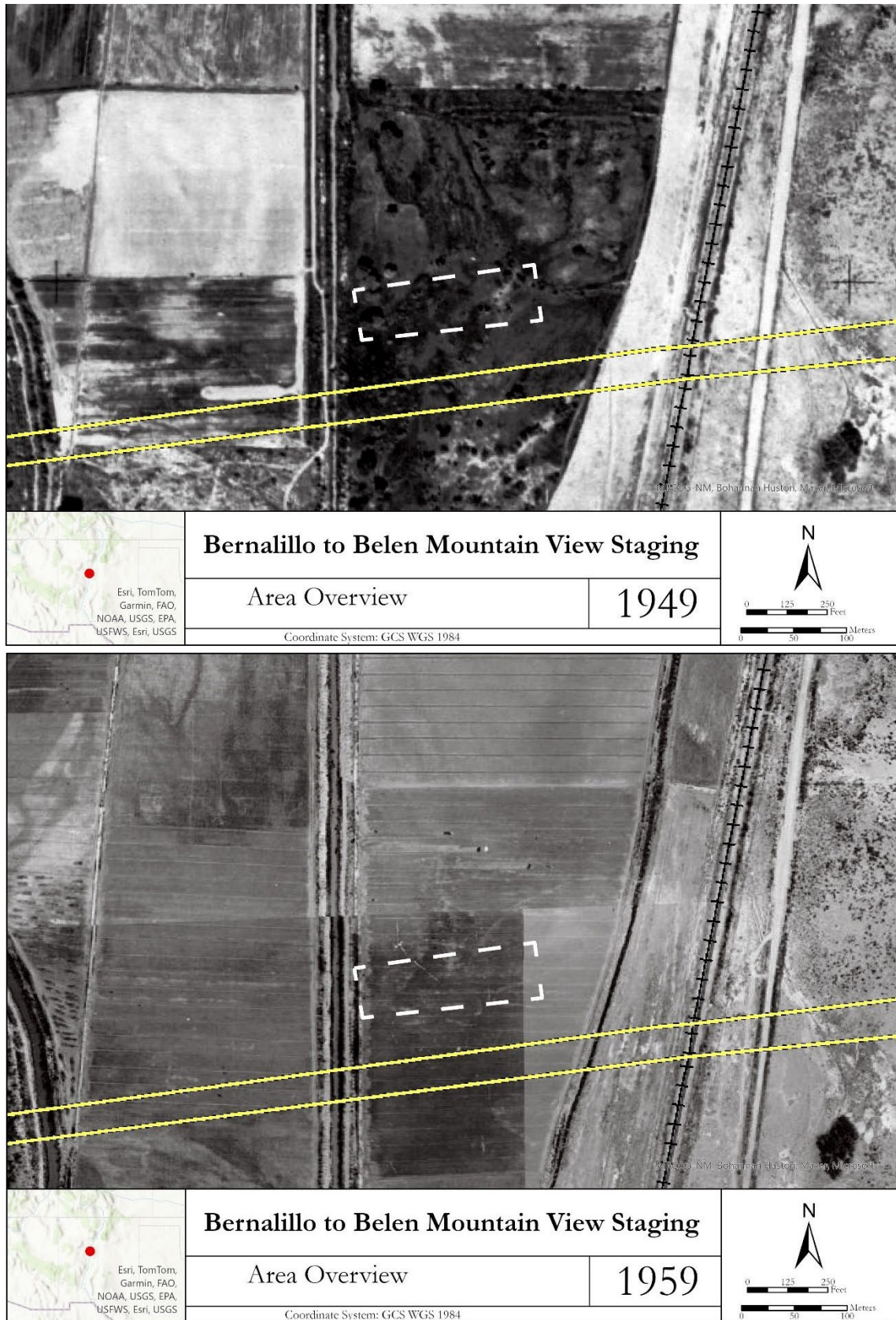
Enclosure 2. Current photograph of proposed staging area, showing extensive vegetation cover, facing northwest.



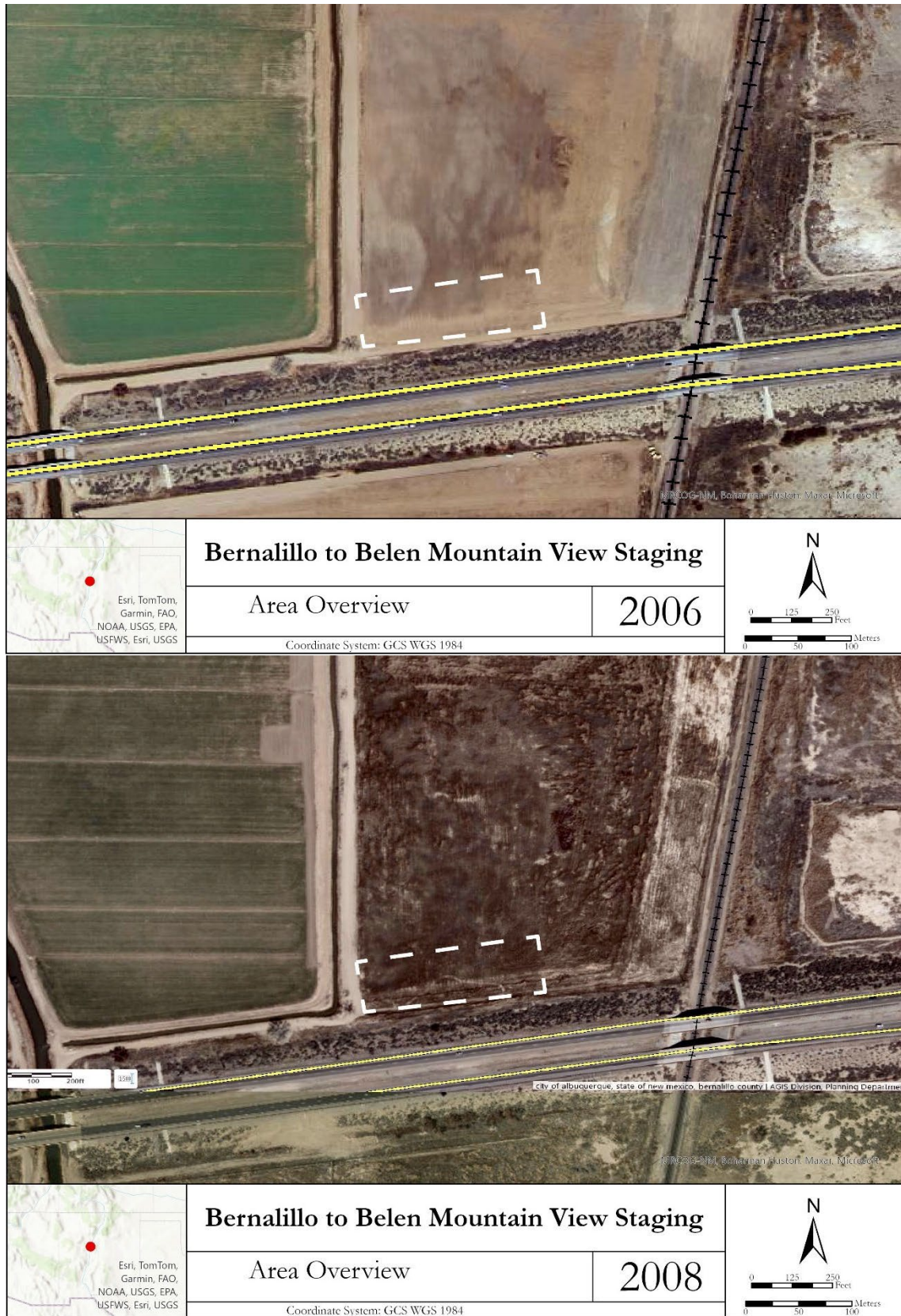
Enclosure 3. Current photograph of proposed staging area, showing extensive vegetation cover, facing north.



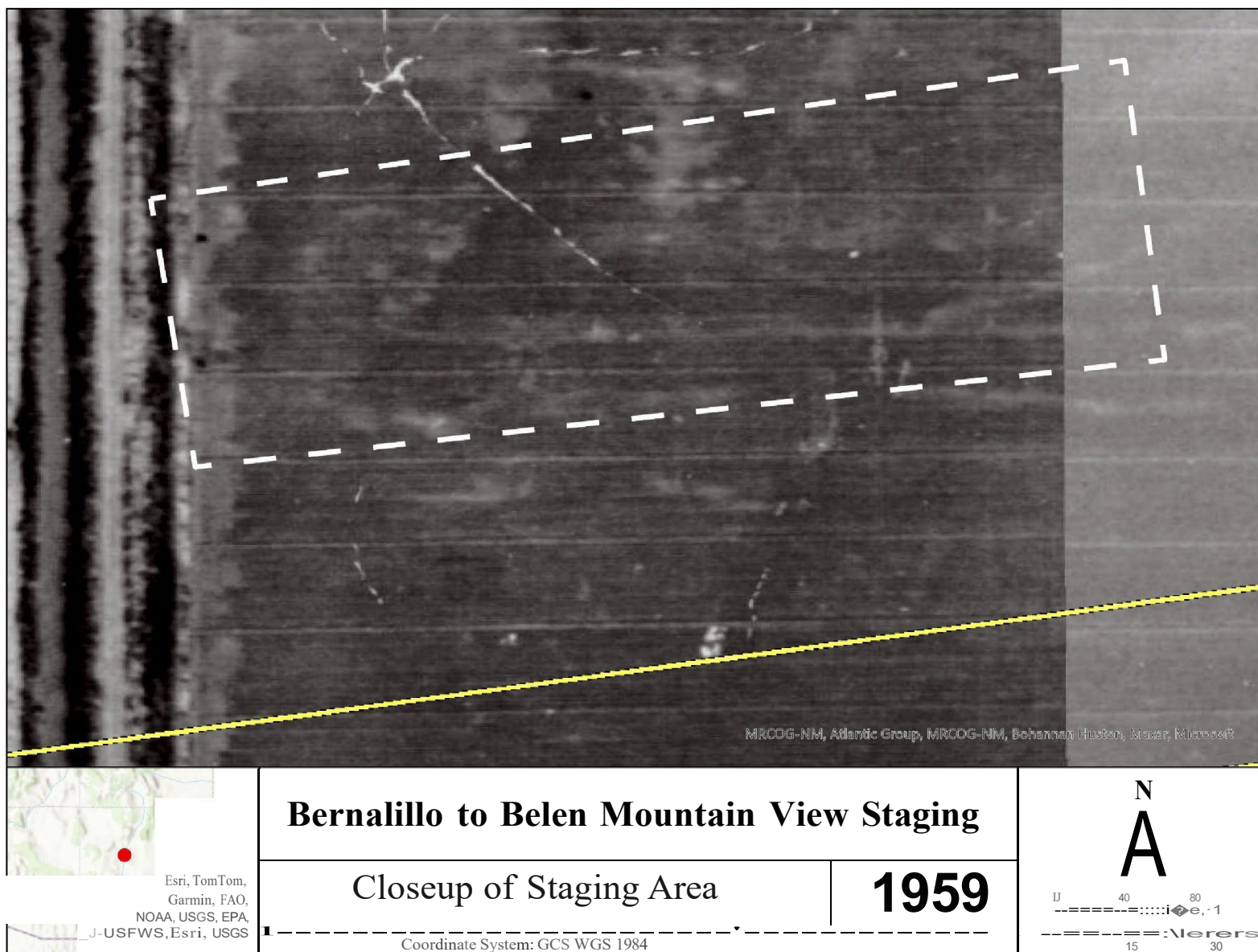
Enclosure 4. Current photograph of proposed staging area, showing extensive vegetation cover, facing east.



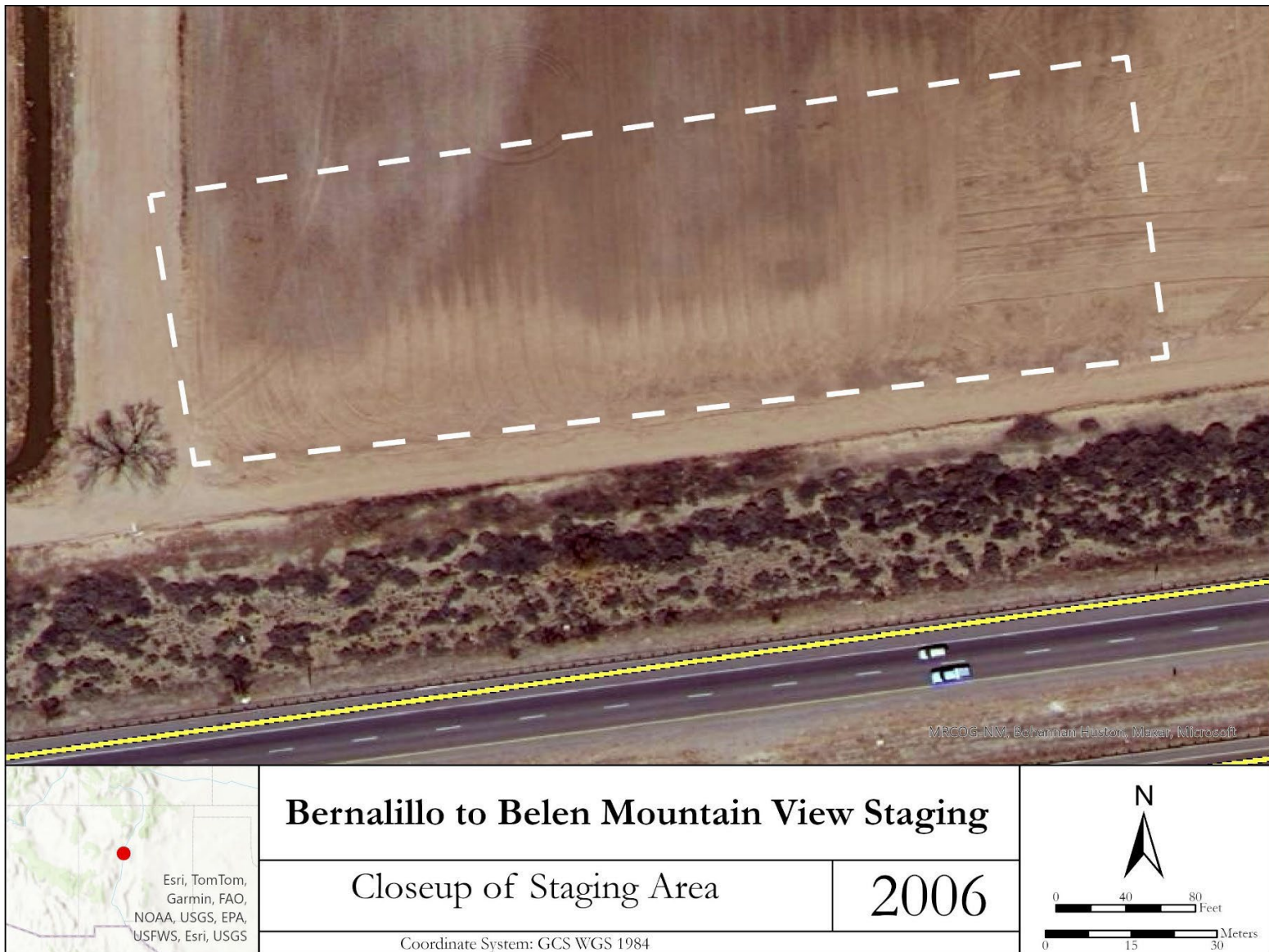
Enclosure 5. Overview of staging area in 1949 (top) and 1959 (bottom), before highway construction.



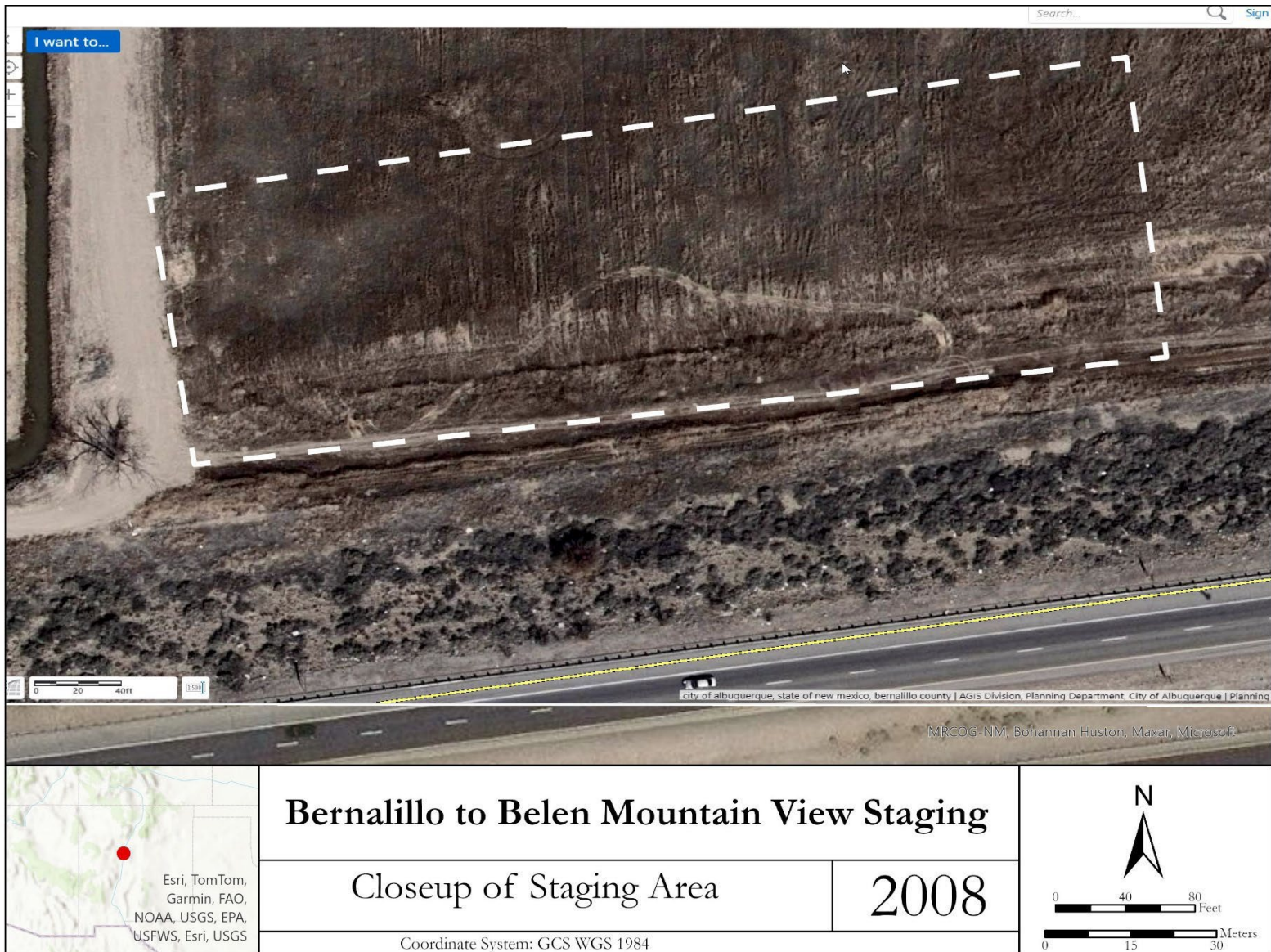
Enclosure 6. Overview of staging area in 2006 (top) and 2008 (bottom), showing plowing and ground disturbance.



Enclosure 8. Closeup of area in 1959, showing vegetation removal and extensive plowing.



Enclosure 9. Closeup of area in 2006, showing highway embankment and continued plowing / vegetation removal.



Enclosure 10. Closeup of area in 2008, showing deep marks from heavy equipment as vegetation begins to regrow.



DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
CORPS OF ENGINEERS, ALBUQUERQUE DISTRICT
4101 JEFFERSON PLAZA NE
ALBUQUERQUE, NM 87109-3435

March 7, 2025

HPD Log #124881
Received 3/7/2025

Planning, Project and Program Management Division
Planning Branch
Environmental Resources Section

Michelle M. Ensey
State Historic Preservation Officer
New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs
Historic Preservation Division
Bataan Memorial Building
407 Galisteo Street, Suite 236
Santa Fe, New Mexico 87501

Dear Ms. Ensey:

Pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Albuquerque District (Corps), Operations Division, seeks your concurrence on determinations of **no adverse effect** for the staging and access areas to be used for the Mountain View Unit of the Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Project, Bernalillo to Belen, New Mexico. The overall project is located within Bernalillo and Valencia Counties, New Mexico (Enclosure 1). The project sponsor is the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District (MRGCD).

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long history of ground disturbance (including plowing and previous vegetation clearing) taking place in this same area. We conclude from this information that it is highly unlikely that the proposed vegetation clearing in this location would introduce any new effects to the area beyond what it has experienced over many decades of agricultural and other use.

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If you have any questions or require additional information concerning staging and access for the Bernalillo to Belen Project Mountain View Phase, please contact archaeologist Jonathan Van Hoose at (505) 342-3687 (jonathan.e.vanhoose@usace.army.mil) or me at (505) 342-3661 (Danielle.a.galloway@usace.army.mil). You may also provide comments to the above address.

Sincerely,

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(Acting for) Danielle Galloway
Chief, Environmental Resources Section

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I CONCUR

for Michelle Ensey
New Mexico State Historic Preservation Officer

Enclosures



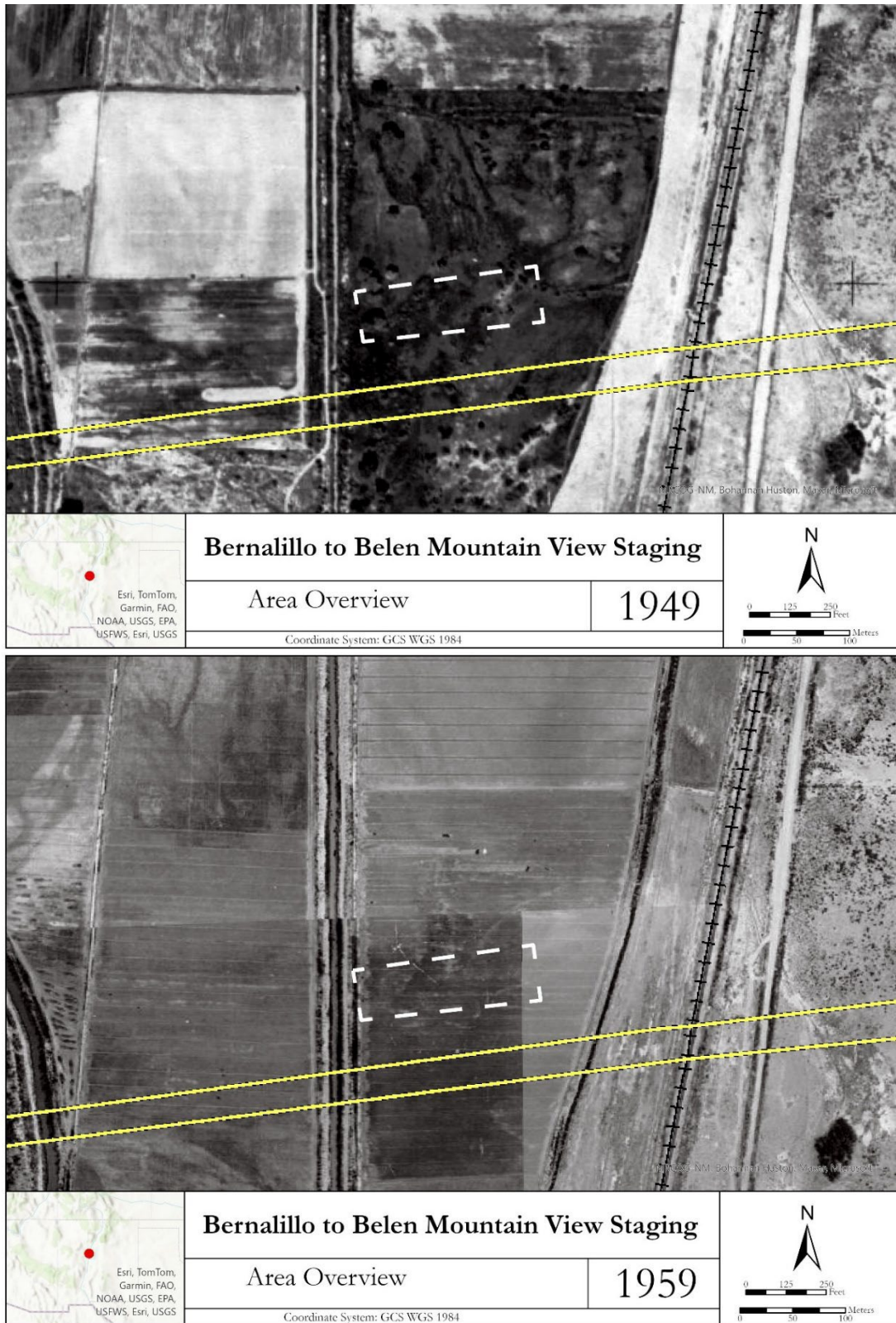
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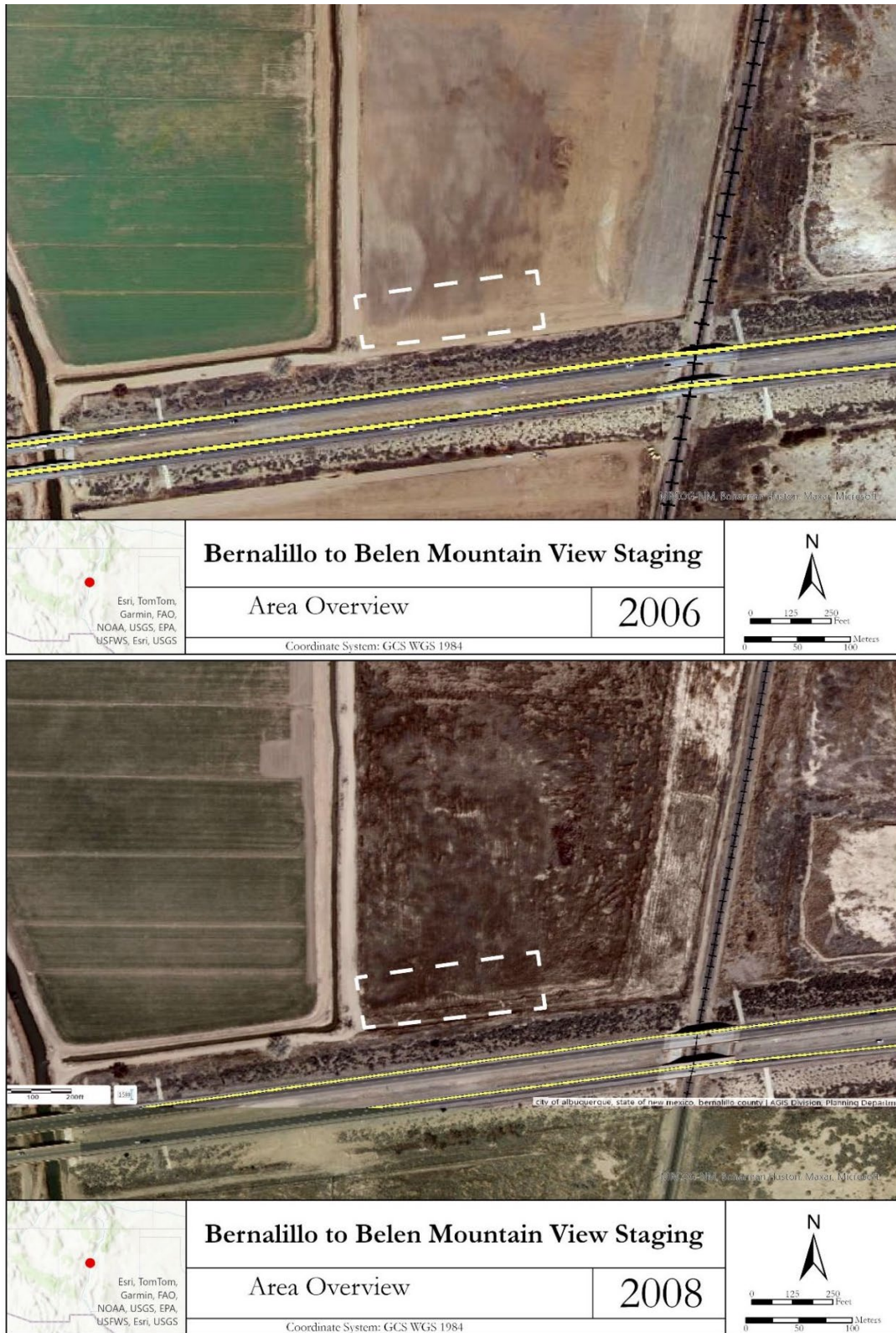


Enclosure 3. Current photograph of proposed staging area, showing extensive vegetation cover, facing north.

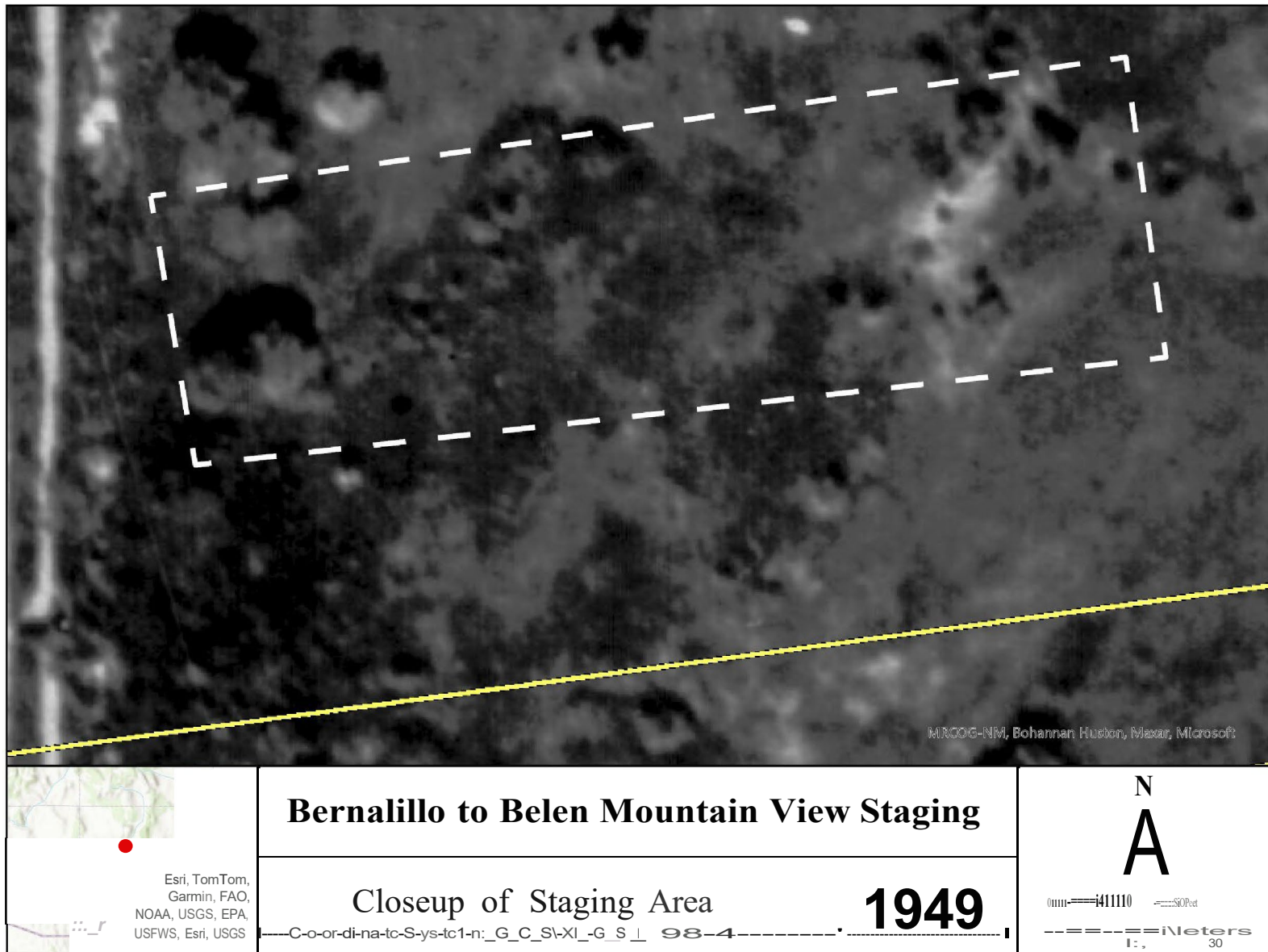


Enclosure 4. Current photograph of proposed staging area, showing extensive vegetation cover, facing east.

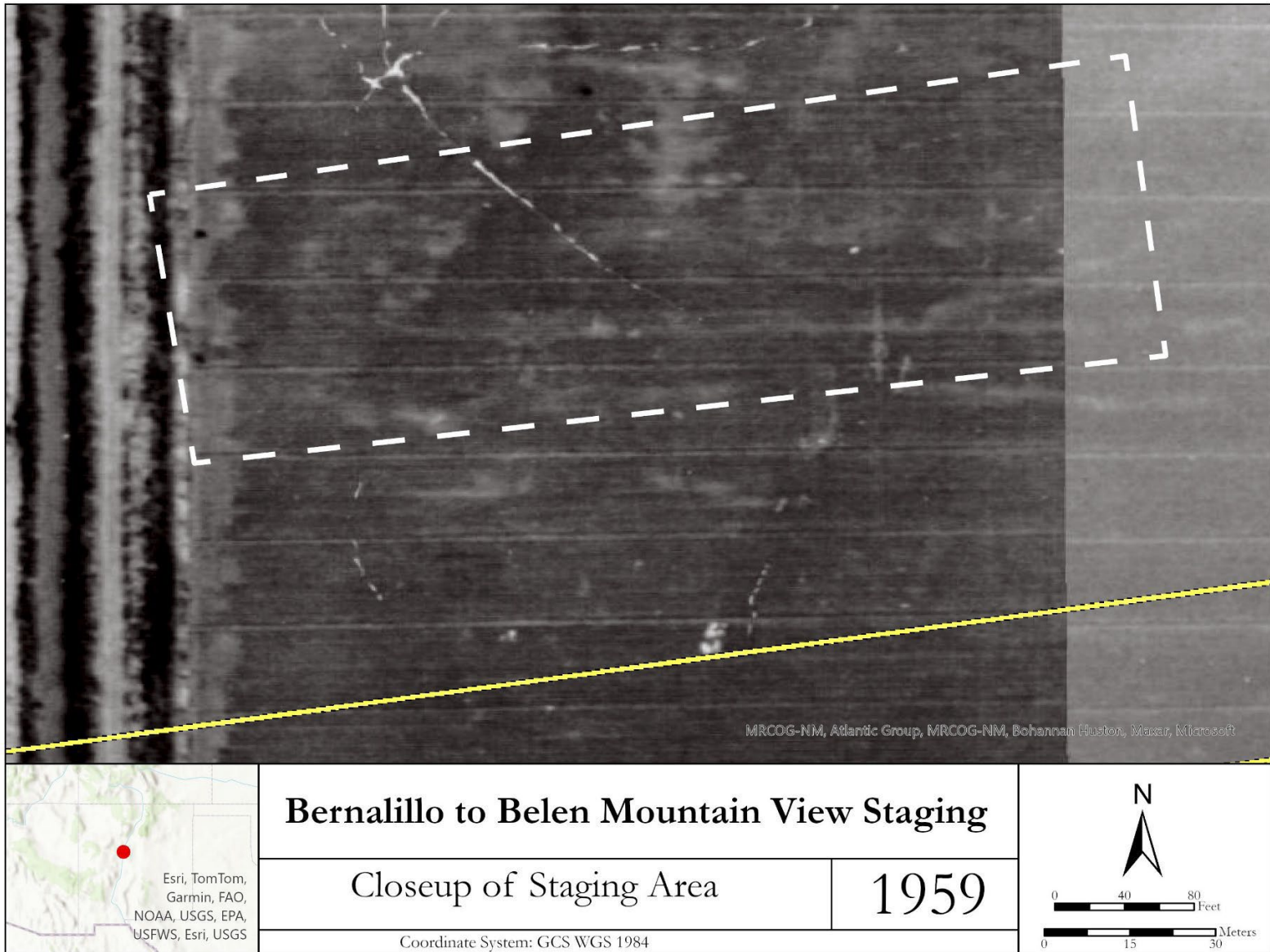




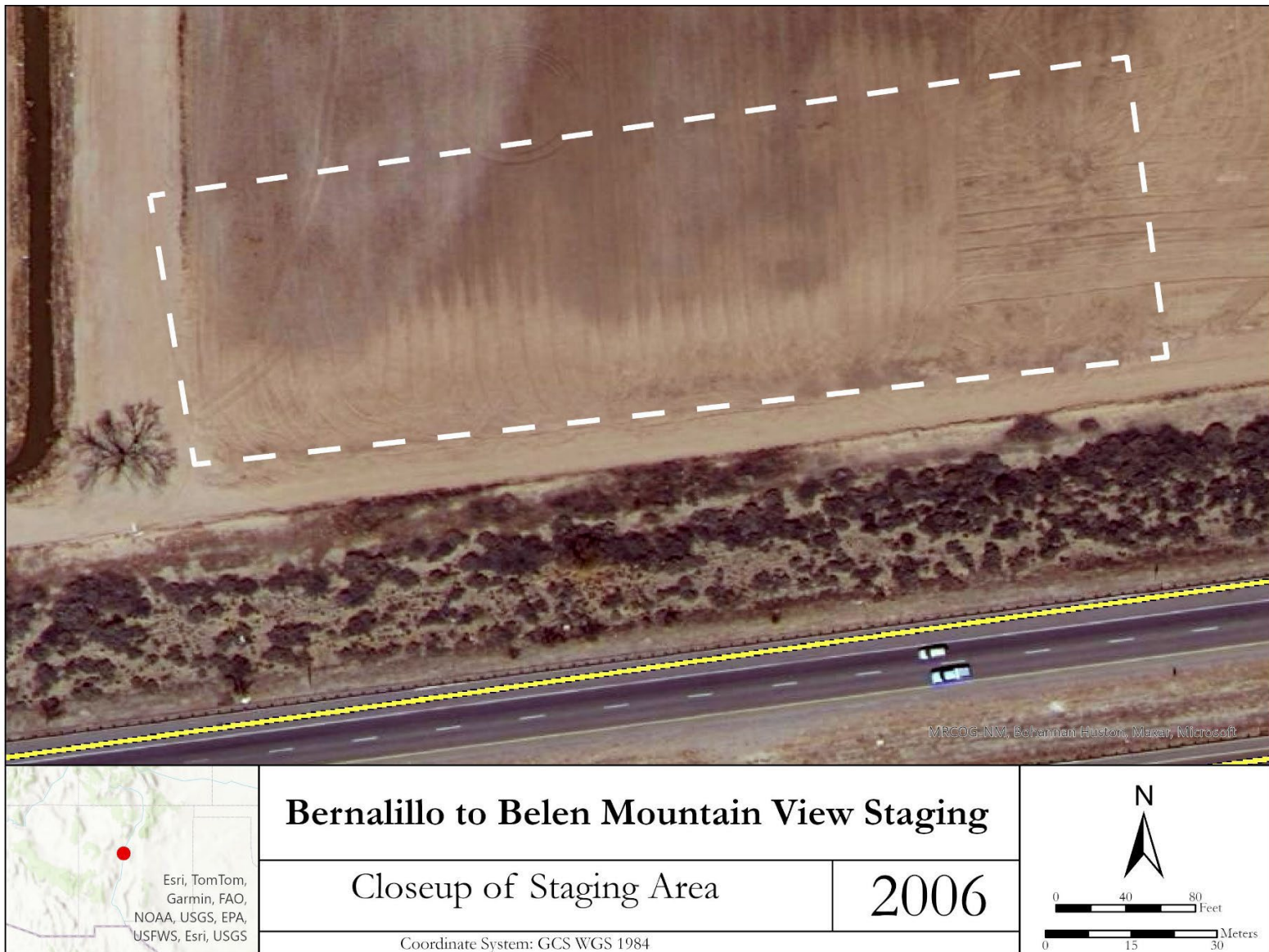
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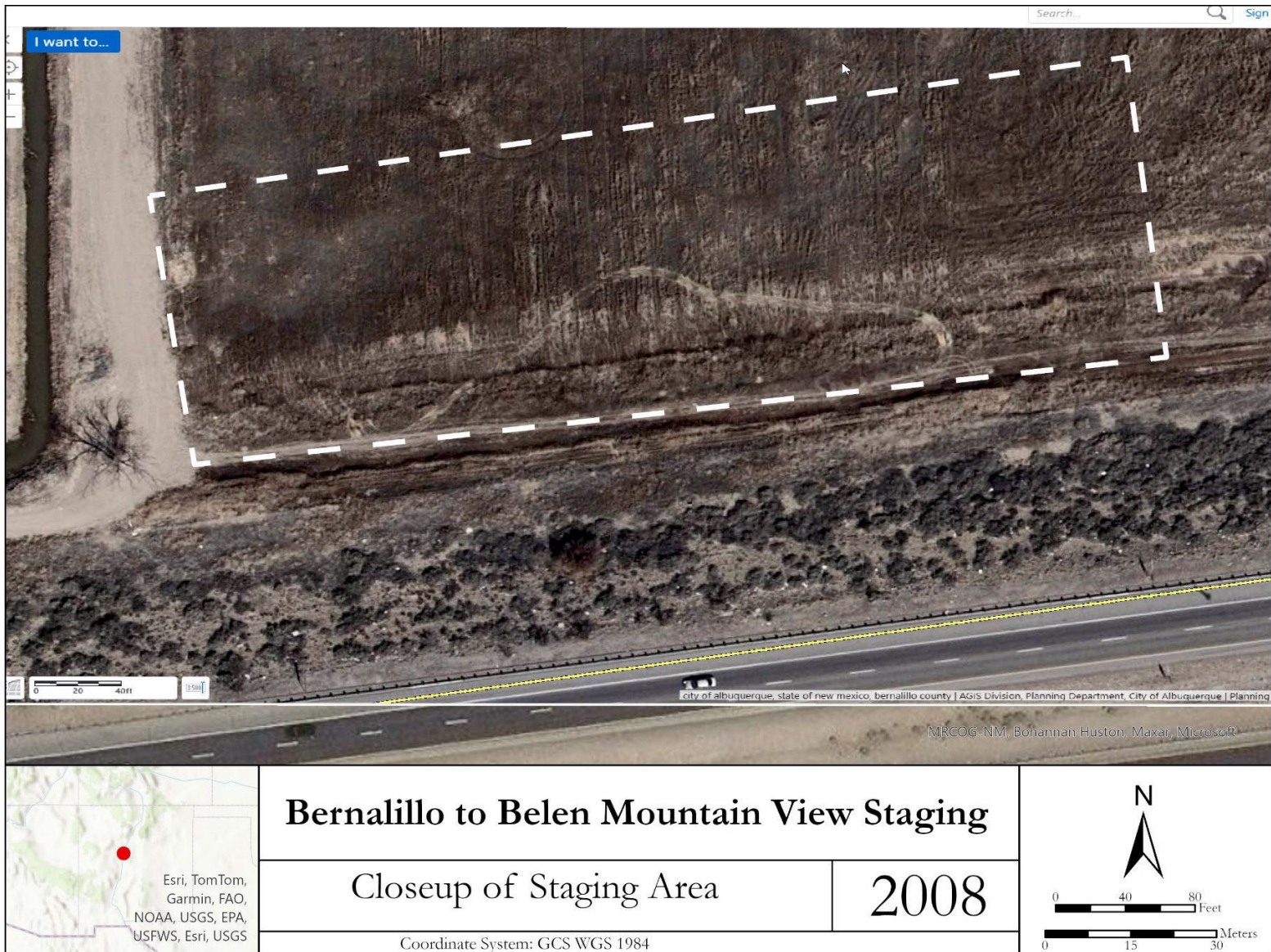
Enclosure 7. Closeup of area in 1949, showing vegetation.



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Enclosure 10. Closeup of area in 2008, showing deep marks from heavy equipment as vegetation begins to regrow.



White Mountain Apache Tribe

Office of Historic Preservation

PO Box 1032

Fort Apache, AZ 85926

Ph: (928) 338-3033 Fax: (928) 338-6055

To: Danielle Galloway – Chief, Environmental Resources Section

Date: March 15, 2025

Re: *Middle Rio Grande Conservancy Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Project*

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The White Mountain Apache Tribe Historic Preservation Office appreciates receiving information on the project dated; March 07, 2025. In regard to this, please refer to the following statement(s) below;

Thank you for allowing the White Mountain Apache tribe the opportunity to review and respond to the above proposed staging and access areas to be used for the Mountain View Unit of the Middle Rio Grande Flood Protection Project, in Bernalillo to Belen, New Mexico.

Please be advised, we have reviewed the information provided, and we have determined the proposed rehab & improvement project will have a ***“No Adverse Effect”*** to the tribe’s cultural heritage resources and/or Traditional Cultural Properties.

Thank you for the continued tribal engagement and consultation, and collaborations in protecting and preserving places of cultural and historical importance.

Sincerely,

Mark Altaha

White Mountain Apache Tribe – THPO
Historic Preservation Office