

Proposed Alternative Easement
to the Kotzin Property

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The current easement application, from the Town of Tusayan, has several issues that need to be considered before the application is approved by the Forest Service. Many of the issues can be resolved by using an alternative route into the Kotzin property.

The application shows the easement going up South Long Jim Loop next to a sports court. The width of the requested easement is 80 feet. A measurement of the road next to the basketball court shows that an 80 foot road *could* be squeezed in if the edge of the road were right up next to the court's fence line. The danger of having construction trucks continuously driving next to a center of youth activity (and the Tot Lot) is obvious. The other side of the easement is next to a dropoff going down to a private home. There are very few nice looking homes in Tusayan and it would be a shame if a boulder were to drop into the home's living room during construction of the roadway. If the road is widened out on the south side of the easement, then a corner of the basketball court would have to be removed. This is not an option anyone in the community wants to take. (See Fig 1,2,3)

The easement continues down next to an employee housing area. (see Fig 4) Again, this would have the detrimental effect of construction equipment driving, unnecessarily, through a populated area.

The applicant wants to run a road through school property. This has created much rancor from community members, even leaving aside the larger issue of the whole development. The school board has already rejected this proposal.

The easement continues up to the power line on FS605 and turns north towards the sewage pond. If the overriding concern of the Forest Service is to disturb as few trees as possible, that concern has not been met here. (See Fig 5, 6) The clear area from the base of the power poles to the west edge of the current roadway is approximately 30 feet. That means another 50 feet of trees would have to be clearcut to make the 80 foot width. And this is only if the width is measured from the base of the poles and not from the edge of APS's easement.

The roadway would continue northward to the edge of the sewage pond. (Fig 7) Several years ago the developer had a layout showing some expensive homes on top of the bluff overlooking Coconino Wash. Does he really want homeowners driving by a sewage pond to get to these homes?

The pond is frequented by many kinds of birds such as hawks, bald eagles, heron and ducks. Road construction and heavy traffic would disrupt wildlife in this area. (Fig. 8)

The sanitary district sewage pond lies in the Coconino Wash. (Fig. 9) During times of heavy rain, rainwater makes the ponds overflow and run down the Wash. Should a road be constructed downstream of the ponds (even with culverts under the road) there is a possibility of untreated sewage collecting in stagnant pools against the roadbed. This would not only be unsightly but could be a breeding ground for mosquitoes.

There is another point that should be considered. The developer and the Sanitary District have not finalized a route for a sewer pipe to run from Kotzin to the sewage treatment plant. Strictly speaking, this is not the concern of the Forest Service. If the current easement is granted and a pipe running from the west is not approved by the Sanitary District, then the developer will have to find another route to run the pipe. This would entail a second easement request and a lot of time and effort by the Forest Service. This problem should be resolved up front during this study.

The easement would run for about 300 feet across Coconino Wash, a known floodplain. There are countless examples, across the nation, of construction in flood plain areas where a catastrophic flood was unknown for decades. Then, one day, the inevitable happened. In 1970 I stood in a creek bed that barely wet the soles of my shoes. The next month the owners of the business, next to where I worked, were killed in a flash flood near the spot where I had stood. Building in a floodplain, and any future damage or deaths, can be prevented by the Forest Service saying no to this application. This is the most important reason for saying: No! Find another route.

An Alternative Route.

An alternative route would come in on North Long Jim Loop road from State route 64. Approximately 1500 feet from the cattle guard – 605MC- there is, currently, a stump of (lightning blasted?) Ponderosa pine tree. Long Jim Canyon narrows to about 50 feet wide at this point and has the added advantage of a limestone ledge on the farside that would serve as an abutment for a short bridge across the canyon. (See Fig 10,11) If the road grade was started a few hundred feet back, the roadbed could be raised to about 20 or 25 feet at the point of crossing. (Does the Forest Service have data about the highest flood level down this wash?)

Once out of Long Jim Canyon, the landscape is a park-like setting. There is much open space between the older pines. Some mature Ponderosa pines would have to be cut down, but the road could be designed to curve around many others. (See Fig. 13,14)

A course of approx. 280° MN would come out close to where the developers want to access Kotzin ranch using the current easement application. (See Fig. 15)

There is a second wash that would have to be bridged. The unnamed wash is the route for FS 9421Z. (Fig. 16) While this is still a drainage channel for rain runoff, it is only about 1/3rd as wide as Coconino Wash and can easily be crossed with a short bridge. (Does the Forest Service have data on the highest flow in this channel?)

This alternative route would:

- 1) Take the road through a much more scenic area, rather than going by a sewage pond.
- 2) Eliminate the problem of overflowing sewage ponds.
- 3) Eliminate construction traffic in the populated areas, keeping our kids safe.
- 4) Eliminate the need for clear cutting of trees.
- 5) Take the road out of a potentially dangerous floodplain.
- 6) Reduce the disturbance of wildlife. The elk in this area would be disturbed to a much greater degree by the buildout of Kotzin.
- 7) There would not be restrictions and problems trying to shoe-horn a wide road in narrow areas.
- 8) Eliminate objections from the school board.
- 9) There would not be a problem with APS's easements. The road would pass under the high power lines along FS605.
- 10) Objections from the community would be greatly reduced.



Fig. 1



Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

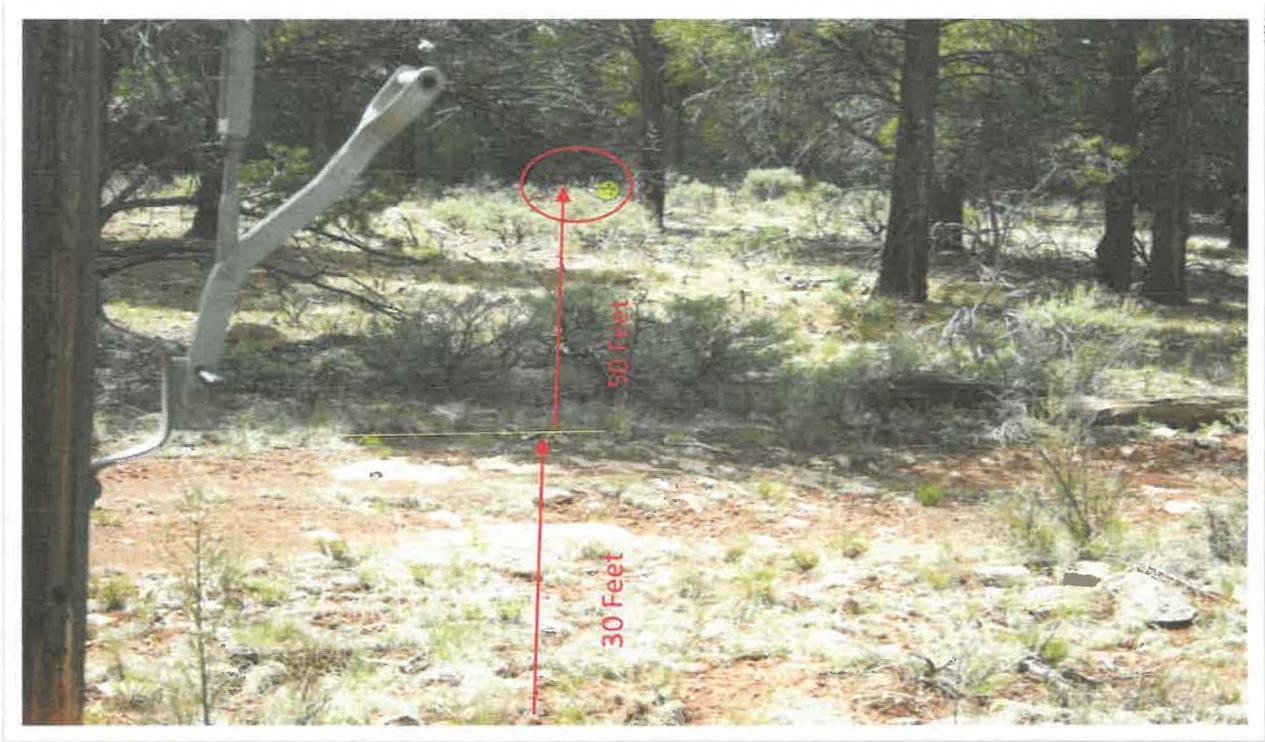


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

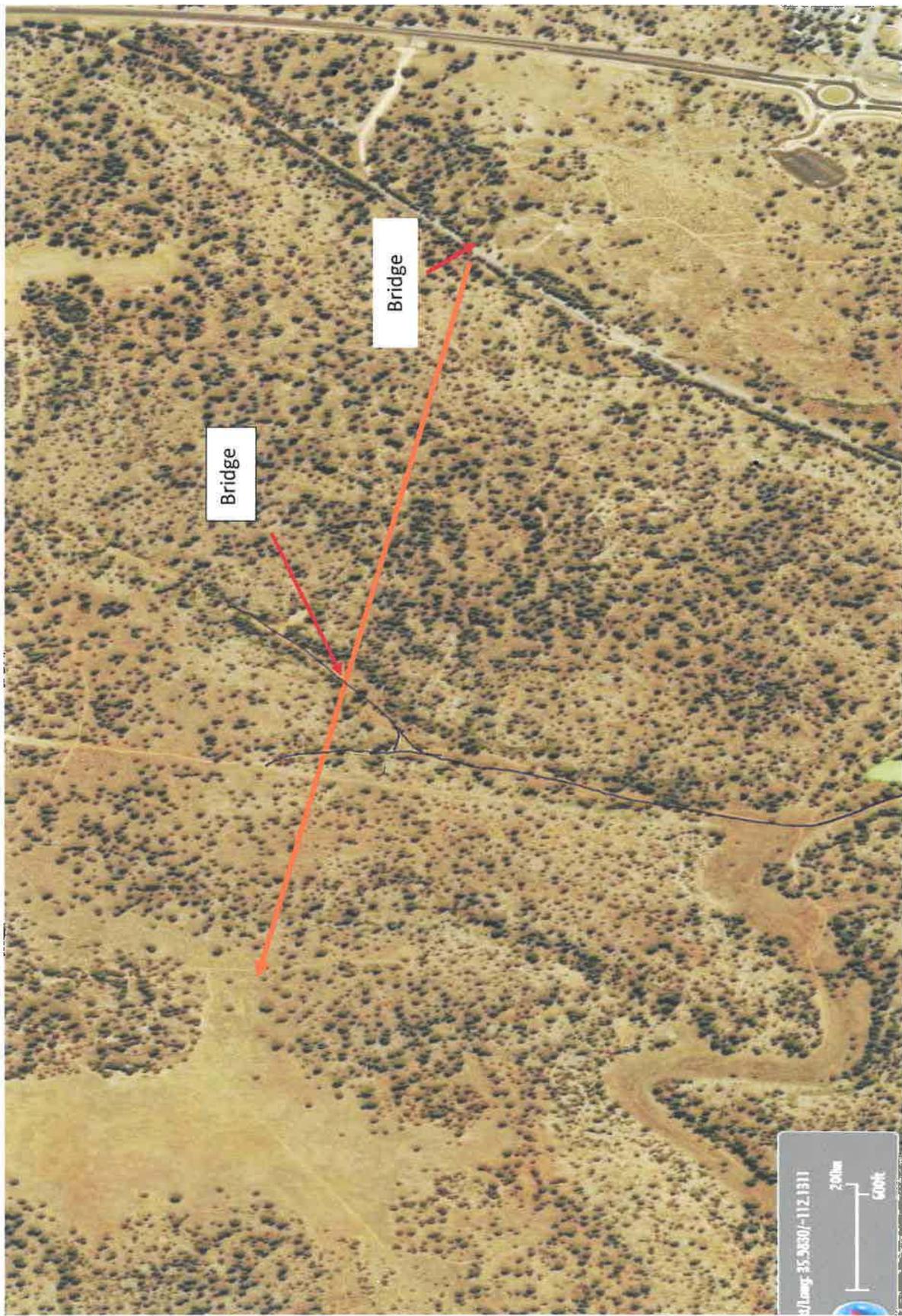


Fig. 15



Fig 16