

# RECLAMATION

*Managing Water in the West*

## **Land Use Plan Westwater-Blanding Water Supply and Waste Disposal Facilities Water and Sewer Extension**

**Pro-EA-08-002  
PRO-FONSI-08-003**

**San Juan County, Utah  
Upper Colorado Region  
Provo Area Office**



**U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Provo Area Office  
Provo, Utah**

**December 2008**

## **Mission Statements**

The mission of the Department of the Interior is to protect and provide access to our Nation's natural and cultural heritage and honor our trust responsibilities to Indian Tribes and our commitments to island communities.

The mission of the Bureau of Reclamation is to manage, develop, and protect water and related resources in an environmentally and economically sound manner in the interest of the American public.

# Land Use Plan Westwater- Blanding Water Supply and Waste Disposal Facilities Water and Sewer Extension

PRO-EA-08-004  
PRO-FONSI-08-005

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Provo Area Office  
Upper Colorado Region*



U.S. Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation  
Provo Area Office  
Provo, Utah

December 2008

## **PURPOSE AND NEED FOR ACTION**

The purpose of the proposed action is to provide to the Navajo Nation a land use plan for the Westwater community (Westwater) near Blanding, Utah (see attached vicinity map). The land use plan would be used by the Navajo Nation for the future installation of a water supply, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, bathroom additions, interior plumbing, and power system for the community. The need for the proposed action is lack of basic water and sewer infrastructure in this community.

This environmental assessment analyzes the biological and cultural resource impacts resulting from implementation of the land use plan.

## **PROPOSED ACTION**

The proposed action as defined in the “Community Water Supply and Waste Disposal Facilities Westwater-Blanding Water and Sewer Extension Report” dated January, 2004, is the installation of a water supply system, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, bathroom additions, interior plumbing, and power system for the Westwater community. Reclamation is presently assisting the Navajo Nation by providing a more detailed land use plan based upon the 2004 report. The project, if approved and implemented, is expected to be a cooperative effort of the Navajo Tribe, the Blue Mountain Diné, Utah Navajo Trust Fund (UNTF), Indian Health Service (IHS) and the Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation).

## **No Action Alternative**

The land use plan would not be implemented. Construction of the water supply systems, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, bathroom additions, interior plumbing, and power system for the community would not be allowed.

## **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT AREA**

Westwater is located in southeastern San Juan County, Utah, immediately west of the city of Blanding, within 500 feet of the city limits. The project homes are located on a 120-acre tract of land that is owned by the Navajo Nation. Fee simple title to this land was transferred to the Navajo Nation from the Utah Division of Indian Affairs in 1987. Westwater residents belong to various Navajo Nation Chapters including Aneth, Mexican Water, and Oljato chapters. The Westwater community is represented by the Blue Mountain Diné, a nonprofit organization dedicated to serving the socio-economic needs relating to the health, education, welfare, and cultural activities of Navajos living off-reservation in San Juan County, Utah. The terrain in the area is rolling mesa top. Elevations on the Westwater property range from 6,100 to 6,150 feet above sea level. Vegetation consists of Sagebrush (*Artemisia tridentate*), Rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus*), Snakeweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), Bunch grass (*Festuca sp.*), Reed Canary Grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*), Smooth wildrye (*Elymus sp.*), Mormon tea (*Ephedra funerea*), Yucca (*Yucca glauca*), Juniper Tree (*Juniperus osteosperma*),

prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia polyacantha*), blue bunch wheat grass (*Agropyron spicatum*), Idaho fescue (*Festuca idahoensis*), Stiff sagebrush (*Artemisia rigida*), Chokeberry (*Aronia sp.*), hedger hog cactus (*Pediocactus simpsonii*), Bladder pot (*Physaria vitulifera*), Ponderosa pine (*Pinus ponderosa*).

Westwater is separated from Blanding by a small canyon through which Westwater Creek flows. There is a dense growth of trees and bushes in the Canyon, including Russian olive (*Elaeagnus angustifolia*), willow (*Salix sp.*), sedges (*Carex sp.*), cottonwood (*Populus sp.*), and saltcedar (*Tamarix sp.*). The soil conditions in the Westwater community consist of fine sand, sandy loam, and sandy clay loam. The soil cover is shallow throughout much of the property with underlying bedrock close to the surface. Temperatures range from 20°F in winter to 90°F in the summer. The average annual precipitation is 13.4 inches.

Known cultural resources are located within and around the Westwater community. According to the Section 106 regulations, 36 CFR Part 800 ("Protection of Historic Properties"), of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (NHPA), the affected environment for cultural resources is identified as the APE (area of potential effects). The APE is the geographic area or areas within which a Federal undertaking (proposed action) may directly or indirectly cause alterations in the character or use of historic properties. The APE defined in the action alternatives and analyzed for the proposed action has been subjected to both Class I and Class III cultural resource inventories by the Provo Area Office archaeologist in August and September, 2008. A total of 120 acres were inventoried. Seven historic properties were located.

The economy of Blanding is mainly dependent on tourism in the Four Corners area. Employment is primarily in the hotel, food service, wholesale trade, and health care industries. The 2001 average per capita personal income (PCPI) for San Juan County was \$13,108. This is the lowest PCPI among counties in the State of Utah, and it is 43% of the national average of \$30,413. Housing in the Westwater community is mostly older mobile homes and small houses built by the Utah Navajo Development Council (UNDC). No electric, gas, water or sewer utilities are presently available at Westwater. The installation of utilities is likely to promote an influx of new residents. Growth potential for the Westwater area is projected to be at least 25% over the next 10 years.

## **ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES**

### **Proposed Action**

If the land use plan is implemented, the proposed action could require ground-disturbing activities on previously disturbed areas adjacent to the homes.

There are no anticipated impacts to any of the following resources as a result of the proposed action: threatened and endangered species, farmlands, flood plains, water quality, wetlands, wild and scenic rivers, hazardous or solid wastes, air quality, and cultural resources. A no effect determination was made on each of the following environmental issues as well as no adverse cumulative impacts.

EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANT CRITERIA		No	Yes	Uncertain
1.	This action or group of actions would have a significant effect on the quality of the human environment.	X		
2.	This action or group of actions would involve unresolved conflicts concerning alternative uses of available resources.	X		
EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES				
1.	This action would have significant adverse effects on public health or safety.	X		
2.	This action would have an adverse effect on unique geographical features such as: wetlands, Wild or Scenic Rivers, or Scenic Rivers, refuges, floodplains, rivers placed on the Nationwide River Inventory, or prime or unique farmlands.	X		
3.	This action would have highly controversial environmental effects.	X		
4.	This action would have highly uncertain environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risk.	X		
5.	This action would establish a precedent for future actions.	X		
6.	This action is related to other actions with individually insignificant, but cumulatively significant effects.	X		
7.	This action would affect properties listed, or eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.	X		
8.	This action would adversely affect a species listed, or proposed to be listed, as endangered or threatened.	X		
9.	This action threatens to violate federal, state, local or tribal law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.	X		
10.	This action would affect Indian trust assets.	X		
11.	This action would not accommodate access to or allow ceremonial use of Indian sacred sites by Indian religious practitioners to the extent practicable. Neither would it avoid adversely affect, to any practicable extent, the physical integrity of such sacred sites (E.O. 13007).	X		
12.	This action would disproportionately affect minority or low-income populations (E.O. 12898).	X		

### No Action Alternative

In the event that the land use plan for the Westwater community is not implemented, and the installation of the water supply systems is not allowed, the community would not have the benefits of a water supply, sewage disposal, solid waste disposal, bathroom additions, interior plumbing, and power systems that would greatly improve the community's quality of life and improve the local economy of the area.

## **Environmental Commitments**

1. Compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act must be completed before any proposed project component as recommended by the land use plan is constructed.
2. If construction proceeds, best management practices to avoid or minimize impacts, such as dust suppression, erosion prevention, and post-construction recontouring and reseeded with native vegetation, must be used.

**COMBINED FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/DECISION RECORD  
PROVO AREA OFFICE  
PRO-FONSI-08-005**

Decision: It is my decision to authorize the proposed action identified in EA No. PRO-EA-08-004.

Finding of No Significant Impact: Based on the analysis of potential environmental impacts contained in the attached environmental assessment, I have determined that impacts are not expected to be significant and an environmental impact statement is not required.

Rationale for Decision: The decision to allow the proposed action does not result in any undue or unnecessary environmental degradation.

Recommended by:

Beverly C. Heffernan 9/30/08

Chief, Environmental Group

Date

Concur:

Beverly C. Heffernan 11/13/08

*for* Chief, Water and Environmental Resources Division

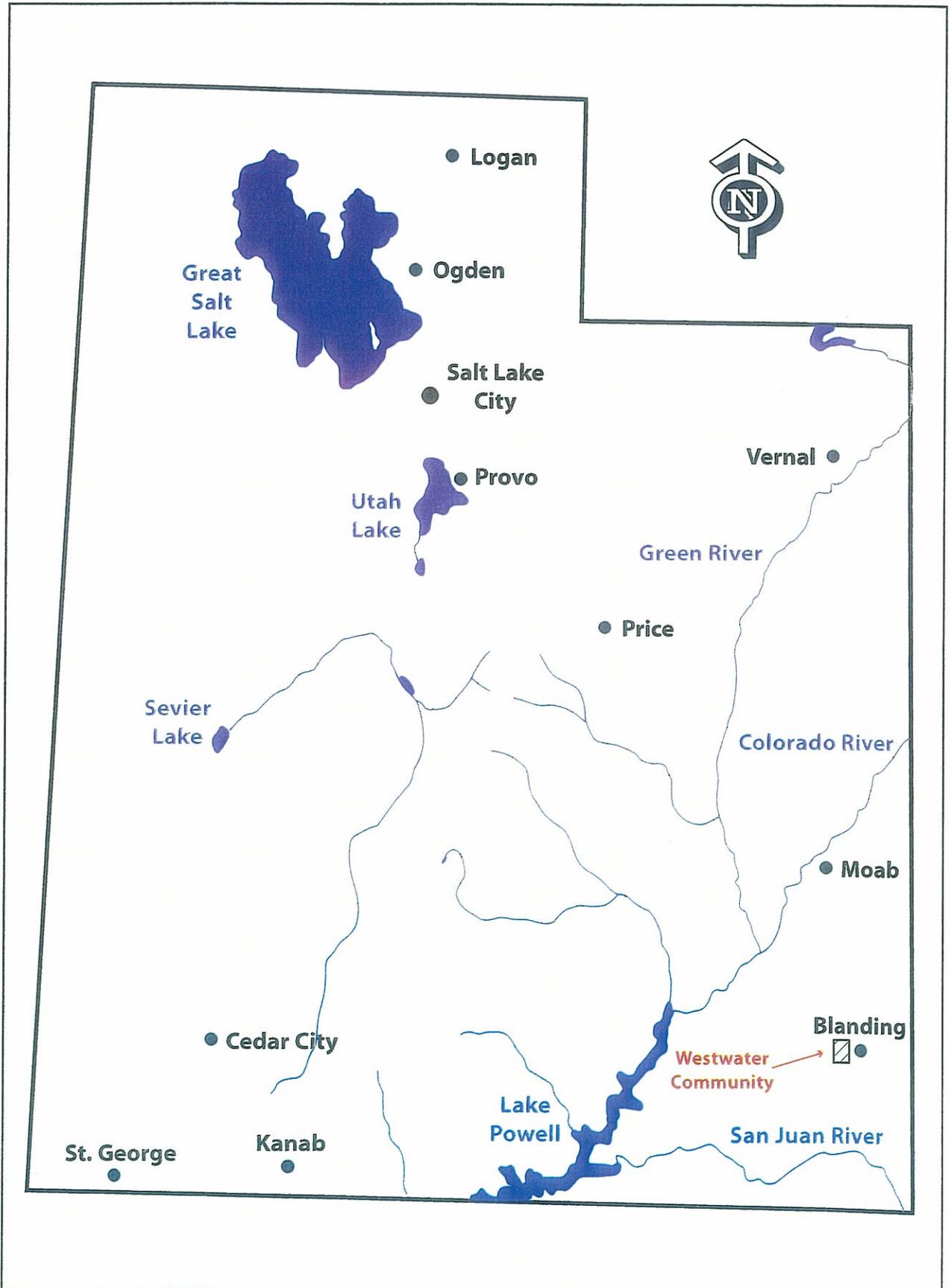
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Approved by:

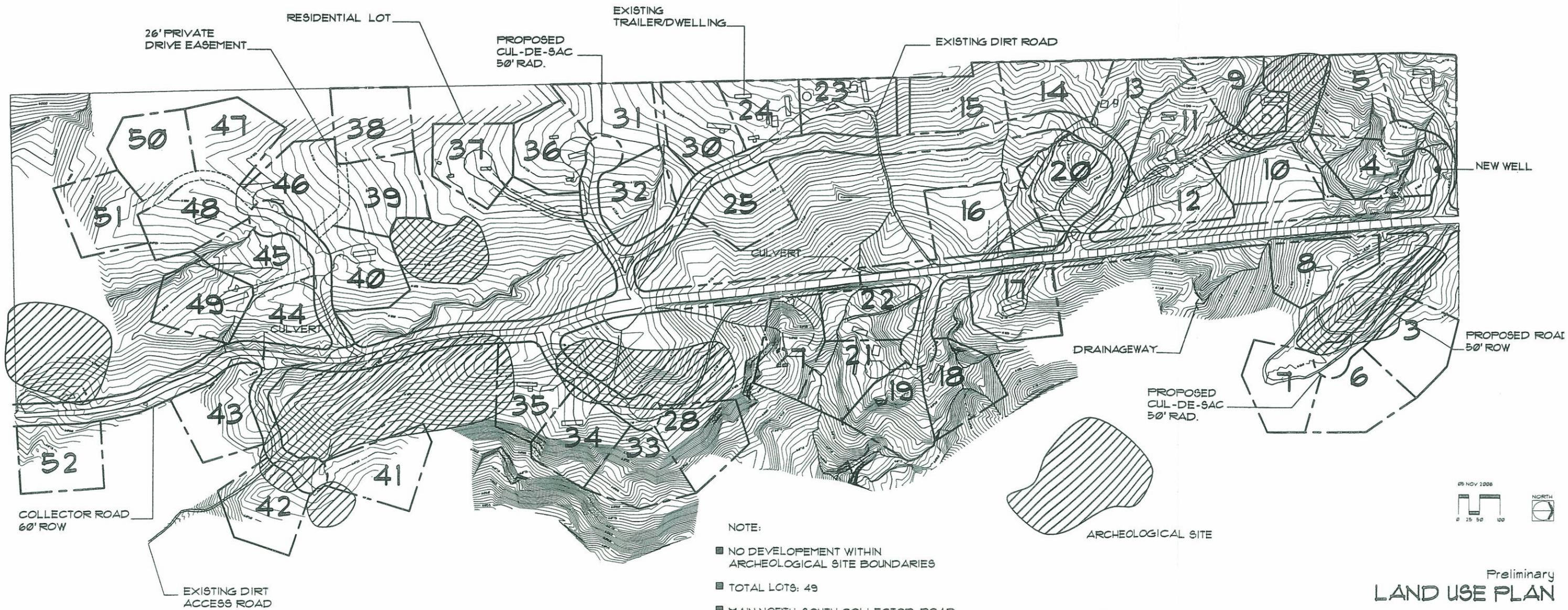
 11/13/2008

Bruce C. Barrett  
Area Manager, Provo Area Office

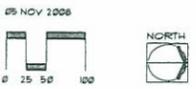
Date



Proposed Westwater Community Land Use Plan Vacinity Map.



- NOTE:
- NO DEVELOPEMENT WITHIN ARCHEOLOGICAL SITE BOUNDARIES
  - TOTAL LOTS: 49
  - MAIN NORTH-SOUTH COLLECTOR ROAD COULD BE REDUCED AFTER LAST SOUTHERN ROAD INTERSECTION
  - PROPOSED CUL-DE-SAC: MAX. 500 LF TO CENTER OF BULB.



Preliminary  
LAND USE PLAN

WESTWATER COMMUNITY

Navajo Reservation  
Blanding, Utah