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Environmental Affairs Division, Historical Studies Branch

Historical Studies Report No. 2007-01

South Texas Ranching

By David Moore, Martha Freeman and Margarita Wuellner

South Texas Ranching

Historic Ranch Study and Preliminary NRHP Eligibility Assessments Within the New Location Corridor for the Proposed I-69/TTC in South Texas

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MANAGEMENT SUMMARY

PROJECT BACKGROUND

The Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) and Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), in conjunction with the Texas Turnpike Authority (TTA), are preparing a Tier 1 Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) for the proposed construction of a segment of the Interstate Highway 69 / Trans Texas Corridor (I-69/TTC) through South Texas. Three proposed corridors are being considered in the DEIS, two of which extend along existing roadways US 77 and US 281. The third proposed corridor is a new-location alignment that is west of US 281. The presence of the King Ranch National Historic Landmark (NHL) on these existing roadway alignments prompted TxDOT to issue Work Authorization 576 05 SH003 (WA) to identify up to three historic ranches in the proposed new-location corridor and provide preliminary National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) eligibility assessments.

TxDOT undertook this study in consultation with the Texas State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to provide an objective and independent identification and analysis of historic ranches within the proposed new-location corridor. For the purposes of this report, the study area (*Figure 1*) is based on the limits of the proposed new-location corridor, which includes an estimated 215,729 acres or 337.1 square miles. Roughly parallel to and west of US 281, the study area extends north-south for approximately 80 miles and encompasses parts of Jim Wells, Duval, Brooks, and Hidalgo Counties. However, the study area also includes any ranches with property that extends into the proposed new-location corridor. The northern limits of the proposed new-location corridor begin at SH 44 between San Diego and Alice, and the southern boundaries end at FM 490, northwest of McAllen. The proposed new-location corridor has an elongated configuration with the narrowest portion in central Brooks County.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW

The study area for the proposed new-location corridor for I-69/TTC is located in South Texas in a region that lies between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers. It includes soils that nurture both crops and livestock, and has a long growing season. Historically, the area was drained by numerous streams and had springs and surface water that made it attractive to ranchers. Spanish settlement began along the Rio Grande in 1749 and spread north into the study area after 1777. The first Spanish land grants there were made in the 1790s and embraced well-known sources of water. Within a few short decades, the study area was the location of large, multi-league land grants and enormous herds of cattle and sheep. Grantees and their families built headquarters, wells, and tanks, and began to create the ranching landscape for which the study area is still notable.

The area remained a center for ranching, where many of the characteristics of modern-day animal herding in the western United States developed. Ranching persisted through the late nineteenth century, when ownership was predominantly Hispanic or a combination of Hispanic and Anglo as families intermarried for mutual benefit. In the 1880s and 1890s, however, severe freezes and droughts had a devastating effect on the commercial livestock industry. Owners who did not have access to capital sold their land and herds, often to Anglo ranchers. Several of those acquired large holdings in the middle-to-northern portion of the study area, where they continued a ranching tradition, but also subdivided land into dairy and truck farms and sponsored settlement

by families who arrived on recently constructed railroad systems. Agriculture remained the underpinning of the economy until the 1930s, when development of oil and gas reserves occurred. That development has visually impacted the nineteenth-century agricultural landscape, but also has sustained ranching and the long-term ownership of land, despite droughts and depressions during the twentieth century. The study area remains today much as it has been for more than a century. In a few cases, ownership of ranches within one family has been sustained for more than 200 years.

SUMMARY OF REPORT FINDINGS

The work was undertaken by historians who meet the *Secretary of the Interior's Professional Qualifications Standards* (36 CFR 61). Project historians examined both primary and secondary source materials, interviewed local informants, and conducted field investigations in the study area and vicinity.

Preliminary NRHP-Eligibility Assessments of Historic Ranches

The following is a summary and preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessment and applicable National Register Criteria evaluation of two historic ranches identified as a result of this initial historic resources study:

- **Falfurrias Ranch** is located in Brooks County, south of SH 285, about three miles west of the city of Falfurrias, Texas. The ranch is associated with Edward C. Lasater, a prominent South Texas rancher and land promoter of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The historic ranch headquarters are located at La Mota, now a separate parcel of land that is completely surrounded by Laborcitas Creek Ranch. Both tracts were formerly owned by Lasater and comprised the historic core of his ranching operations, which included approximately 350,000 acres at its peak. There are additional resources within and outside the current boundaries of Laborcitas Creek Ranch, including dairy sites, a school site, a town site, and a cemetery that are also associated with the Falfurrias Ranch. Based upon the findings of this study, Falfurrias Ranch (including Laborcitas Creek Ranch, La Mota and associated sites) is preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP for its association with ranching and the introduction of dairy farming to the region (Criterion A); its association with an important historical figure who played a critical role in the history and development of South Texas (Criterion B); and its association with noted architects as well as the merits of the design of buildings at La Mota (Criterion C). In addition, the ranch may have research potential to reveal important information about settlement patterns, history and culture, and land-use practices in South Texas during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Criterion D).
- **Tacubaya** is in Brooks County, north of FM 755, about 10 miles west of the community of Rachal, Texas. Tacubaya is associated with the Eligio and Braulia Garcia family, who have owned the land for more than 100 years. Although much of the ranch has been subdivided and partitioned over time, a large amount of the land is still owned by direct descendants of the founders. Tacubaya consists of a nineteenth-century ranch complex, Realitos, and an early twentieth-century ranch headquarters, Tacubaya. Historically, it is the westernmost part of the La Encantada land grant, which was acquired by the Garcia family about 1872 or 1873. Tacubaya Ranch reflects traditional patterns of family ownership and continuity of land uses, and is noteworthy for its association with *Tejano*

culture and ranching traditions. The old ranch complex, known as Realitos, is south of the existing ranch headquarters and appears to pre-date ownership by the Garcia family. Although the house is in ruins, it nonetheless provides a vivid illustration of vernacular building traditions unique to South Texas that were common throughout the region in the pre-railroad era. The old water trough (*tarjella*) and water tank (*pila*) associated with the Realitos ranch headquarters are intact and are good representative examples of a now rare and rapidly vanishing regional property type. The associated cattle pens appear to have been in continuous use over a long period of time. To the north, the early twentieth-century ranch complex at Tacubaya is associated with the patterns of development and change in ranching activities in South Texas during the twentieth century, which were influenced by a variety of factors including advancements in technology, development of transportation, changes in labor practices, industrial development, and changes in agricultural practices. The buildings, structures, and layout of the resources associated with the early twentieth-century Tacubaya ranch headquarters reflect both the continuity of local ranching traditions and the influence of later regional building practices. Based upon the findings of this study, Tacubaya is preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP because it is representative of important historic ranching activities in the area. The ranch's significance results from its continued association with a local *Tejano* ranching family (Criterion A), for the merits of its design, use of materials, and construction techniques (Criterion C). Extant resources at the Realitos headquarters may have the potential to yield information about nineteenth- and early twentieth-century *Tejano* settlement, history and culture, and land-use practices, as well as further information on local nineteenth-century *sillar* stone building traditions (Criterion D).

These ranches appear to meet at least one of the National Register Criteria and thus are preliminarily recommended to be eligible for the NRHP. Additional information and documentation are necessary before final NRHP-eligibility recommendations can be made. The historic boundaries of each ranch include significant portions of or lie almost entirely within the proposed new-location corridor (*Figure 1*). This study was limited to the documentation of two to three historic ranches; however, a more comprehensive survey and analysis of the area likely will identify other ranches that are eligible for the NRHP.

Historic Ranches Listed in the NRHP

In addition, the project historians also studied one historic property (McAllen Ranch) that subsequently attained listing in the NRHP. The nomination was signed by the Texas SHPO in February 2007, forwarded to the Keeper of the National Register for final review, and was listed on April 18, 2007. Most of the ranch lies within the proposed new-location corridor. The following is a brief summary of the National Register nomination.

- **McAllen Ranch** is in Hidalgo County, along FM 1017, about 13 miles west of the community of Linn, Texas. Historically known as Rancho San Juanito, the ranch has been owned continuously by the same family since 1790 and contains extant and still-in-use resources that date to the Spanish Colonial era. The ranch provides an intact and well-preserved example of a South Texas ranch and illustrates the rich and complex history and culture associated with ranching-related activities in the region. The ranch is significant for its association with important trends in history in the area of exploration and settlement (Criterion A). Furthermore, extant buildings and structures are good examples of their respective types and display noteworthy craftsmanship and/or design

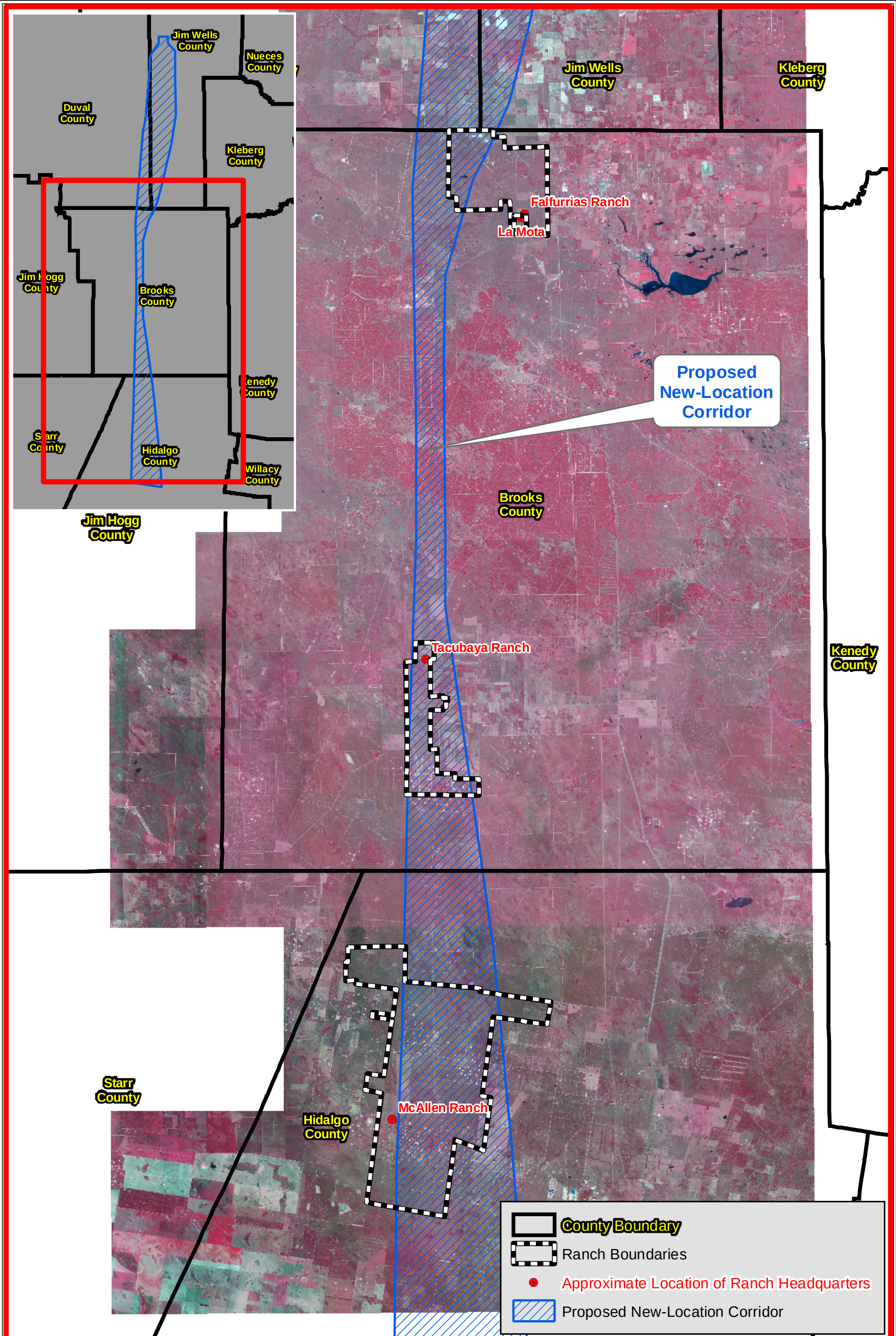
qualities (Criterion C), and archaeological sites at the ranch have the potential to yield important information about the history and prehistory of the region (Criterion D). The McAllen Ranch was listed at the local level of significance.

Other Observations and Assessments

In the process of preparing this report, the team of historians learned much about ranching traditions within the study area and the history and culture associated with agricultural land-use practices in the region. These insights are critical to understanding the aforementioned ranches as well as others in South Texas. Based on the project's findings, additional historic properties in the region may also merit further study to determine NRHP eligibility. The following are critical observations and conclusions associated with ranching in South Texas and serve as a foundation for this study as well as for further NRHP evaluations and recommendations:

- The study area is part of a much larger and remarkably intact agricultural landscape that contains a diverse collection of historic properties. This larger agricultural landscape covers the region generally bounded by US 281 on the east, FM 490 on the south, the town of Alice on the north and the Rio Grande River on the west. This landscape reflects long-term and highly complex layers of agricultural use between ca. 1790 and the present, originating with Spanish and Mexican land grants. This agricultural landscape and the ranches within it have been sustained by the continuity of traditional family ownership and agricultural practices throughout the period of significance.
- The study area contains numerous representative examples of ranches and agricultural landscapes that illustrate the Spanish and Mexican Colonial periods, post-Mexican War consolidation of ownership and further development of the livestock industry, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century continuation of ranching and simultaneous diversification of agricultural activities (dairy and truck farms), and development of the oil and gas industries with their accompanying support of ranching and agriculture throughout the twentieth century.
- The study area contains numerous examples of properties associated with individuals and families significant in the exploration and settlement of South Texas, development of agriculture, and creation of financial institutions that furthered development of the region. Additionally, families and communities in the study area employed and developed commercial ranching practices and technologies significant in the development of cattle ranching in the western United States and influential in the broad patterns and trends of history in the nation.
- The study area contains numerous outstanding and representative examples of architecturally distinctive property types that are associated with the exploration, settlement, and development of the study area between ca. 1790 and the present. A number of these property types are specific to South Texas; others are more widely distributed due to the development of transportation networks beginning in the late nineteenth century. The existence of ranches and agricultural landscapes that are more than 200 years old and that have been in continuous use by descendants of original property owners may be rare in the United States.
- The study area contains numerous archaeological sites and standing structures that appear to have information potential and the capacity to address important research questions.

- The integrity of the historic landscape and individual properties appears to be high. The region conveys its significance as an intact agricultural landscape, and individual properties convey the physical features that identify their functions and associations with important regional themes through integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association. For this reason, NRHP eligibility may extend across a broad swath of the region beyond the confines of the specific ranches identified in this study.



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Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 1
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
Study Area with
Preliminarily Recommended Eligible Ranches

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SELECTED LIST OF ACRONYMS

CFR – Code of Federal Regulations
DEIS – Draft Environmental Impact Statement
GLO – General Land Office
NEPA – National Environmental Policy Act
NRHP – National Register of Historic Places
RTHL – Recorded Texas Historic Landmark
SHPO – State Historic Preservation Officer
THC – Texas Historical Commission
THO – Texas Historic Overlay
THSI – Texas Historic Sites Inventory
TTA – Texas Turnpike Authority
TTC – Trans Texas Corridor
TxDOT – Texas Department of Transportation
USGS – United States Geological Service

SELECTED LIST AND DEFINITIONS OF SPECIALIZED TERMS[1]

Acequia – small water channel or ditch
Caliche – a crusted layer of soil hardened by lime
Chipichil – a building material that includes a mixture of lime, sand, and gravel
Jacal – a small mud-plastered dwelling that is constructed of brush, mesquite, and rivercane
League – a unit of land that equals 4,428.2 acres, also *sitio*
Lindero – property marker of stone or something else permanent
Mojonera – stone post or any signal nailed in the ground that serves to mark the limit of a territory or a property, or to indicate the distances or the direction in a way
Noria de buque – a hand-dug well where the water is raised to the top by a bucket made of rawhide or tin
Pila – water storage tank
Porcion – an elongated tract of land that fronts on water
Presa – a dam
Sillar – hand-hewn block of caliche
Sitio – a unit of land that equals 4,428.2 acres, also league
Tarjella – water trough for animals
Tejano(a) – a Texan of Hispanic descent
Tinaja – large container made of cooked mud, and sometimes glass finish, much more wide in its central part, fitted in a foot or embedded hoop or in the ground, that is used to keep water, oil, or other liquids.

[1] Many of the terms are defined in *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas* by Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson, James A. McAllen and Margaret H. McAllen

INTRODUCTION

TxDOT undertook this project in consultation with the Texas SHPO to provide an objective and independent analysis to identify any ranches within the proposed new-location corridor that may be preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP.

Issuing a work authorization (WA) under an existing scientific services agreement (576 XX SH003), TxDOT tasked a team of qualified historians to complete the study. The team included Hardy·Heck·Moore, Inc. (HHM), an Austin-based cultural resources management firm, which served as the prime contractor. In addition, the team included Martha Doty Freeman, a free-lance Austin-based historian, and Margarita Wuellner, Ph.D., an architectural historian with a Los Angeles-based environmental planning firm, PCR Services Corporation (PCR). The WA was issued on September 20, 2006, and called for the team to undertake the following tasks and produce associated deliverables:

Task 1	Research Design
Task 2a	Research in Austin
Task 2b	Research in Study Area
Task 3	Data Synthesis and Analysis
Task 4	Methodology for the Identification of Historic Ranches in the Study Area
Task 5a	Select Locations to Field Test
Task 5b	Windshield Survey of Selected Ranches
Task 5c	Preliminary NRHP-Eligibility Assessments
Task 6	Draft Report
Task 7	Final Report

As Senior Professional Historian, David Moore oversaw the project's completion and contributed to the preparation of the report. Martha Doty Freeman and Margarita Wuellner served as Professional Historians and undertook most of the historical research, data analysis, and report preparation. Serving as Assistant Historians for the project, Justin Edgington and Emily Payne Thompson, both of HHM, undertook research and contributed to the report's preparation. Stephan Geissler of PCR prepared most of the maps used in the report and, along with Karen Hughes of HHM, created GIS-based maps that were used to identify historic ranch locations and associated features of the cultural landscape. Lori Smith of HHM edited and formatted the report.

This report is narrowly focused and addresses the central issue at hand: does the study area include any historic ranches that are listed in the NRHP or are preliminarily recommended to be eligible for the NRHP. The report's findings will be incorporated into a Tier 1 level DEIS, which is being prepared in compliance with NEPA regulations. As such, this report provides a broad examination of historical trends and patterns that are associated with historic ranching-related activities within the 337.1-square mile study area. It is not intended to be a comprehensive survey and analysis of the proposed new-location corridor.

The preparation of this report was made possible through the help and cooperation of numerous groups and individuals. The authors would specifically like to acknowledge the following for their contributions:

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ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The study area for the proposed new-location corridor for I-69/TTC in South Texas is generally referred to as the Rio Grande Plain region of Texas, although this is a somewhat blanket description of a diverse area. From north to south, the study area transverses a number of sub-regions with differing topography, geology, soils, vegetation, wildlife, and climate.

The topography of the region slopes downward to the southeast, toward the Gulf of Mexico. Consequently, most rivers and creeks flow in a southeasterly direction. Elevations above sea level range from about 300 feet at the north end of the study area to about 100 feet at the south end, with generally flat terrain. The northern third of the study area features a significant number of seasonal creeks. The largest of these, Los Olmos Creek (which runs near Premont), feeds into the Baffin Bay and then into the Laguna Madre and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico. Additional creeks flowing through the study area include, from north to south, San Andreas Creek, Trinidad Creek, Narciseno Creek, Jaboncillos Creek, Cibolo Creek, Laborcitas Creek, Palo Blanco Creek, and Arroyo Baluarte. These creeks form shallow depressions and escarpments that lend variation to the topography.

The shallow clay, sandy loam, and loose sands that form the soils of the northern third of the study area encourage erosion. While sandy loam soils are present throughout the study area, additional soil types are intermittent. At the northernmost end of the study area, in western Jim Wells County and eastern Duval County, soils are mostly sand with some gravel, which lends high-permeability yet stability. Along the northern border of Brooks County, the sandy soils begin to contain more silt and become looser. The soils of central Brooks County are composed of sand dunes and blowout, which is loose and mobile unless stabilized by vegetation. Southwestern Brooks County and northeastern Hidalgo County feature sandy and silty soils similar to the soils along the northern border of Brooks County. All of these soils have a very limited capacity to store moisture. A great variety of soil types converge at the southern portion of the study area. The sandy loam and silt that are present further north are supplemented by pockets of expansive clays, karstic caliche, calcite, and alluvium. Differences in soils within the study area also support different mineral and agricultural economies. The sandy soils indicate subterranean oil and gas resources, while the expansive clay and alluvial soils are more easily tilled and nurture the wide variety of crops cultivated in the Rio Grande Valley. Sandy soils also support livestock and game more readily.

In terms of vegetation and climate, the study area is often referred to as the Nueces-Rio Grande River Basin. Grasses and Mesquite-Granejo scrub brush dominate the natural landscape throughout study area, with denser brush to the north and more sparse brush to the south. Vegetation is more abundant and varied along creek beds. In central Brooks County, a large cluster of live oaks grows in response to the well-drained sandy soil. In southern Hidalgo County, the natural landscape historically supported chapote, guayacan, ebony, huisache, Brazilwood, and yucca. The introduction of agriculture, however, altered the natural landscape of much of the study area. Domesticated animals such as cattle, sheep, and goats have overgrazed the natural grasses, allowing brush to encroach upon more and more of the landscape. Suppression of natural brush fires has complicated this problem further. However, increased brush land provides a larger habitat for some species of wildlife, especially deer. In southern Hidalgo County, the majority of

natural vegetation has been cleared for cultivation of crops. Today, southern Hidalgo County produces cabbage, onions, cantaloupes, carrots, watermelon, grapefruit, oranges, and pecans.

Like most of Texas, the study area has a humid, subtropical climate. Annual rainfall in the Nueces-Rio Grande River Basin ranges from approximately 20 to 30 inches. Tropical storms occurring from June through October account for much of the precipitation. Accordingly, locations closer to the coast receive more rainfall. The average annual temperature throughout the study area is about 73 degrees Fahrenheit, ranging from an average minimum temperature of about 45 degrees Fahrenheit in January to an average maximum temperature of about 97 degrees Fahrenheit in July. The growing season lasts about 300 days of the year, ranging from about 298 days at the northern end of the study area to about 320 days at the southern end.

HISTORICAL SETTING

HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

The study area lies between the Nueces River on the north and the Rio Grande River on the south. Colonization on the Rio Grande in South Texas began in 1749 with the establishment of Camargo and Reynosa, Dolores and Revilla in 1750, Mier in 1752, and Laredo in 1755. Two years later, the six settlements, or *villas*, founded by Don Jose de Escandon, had 1,800 residents and more than 200,000 head of livestock, primarily sheep and goats (Jackson 1986:23; Scott 1970:28-29), statistics that were prognosticators of the ranching industry that would develop throughout the region.

Escandon was interested not only in settling the area of the Rio Grande, but also in establishing settlements north of the river that would bridge the area between the Rio Grande and the Nueces and San Antonio Rivers. Such settlements would make travel between the regions safer while establishing a connection between the provinces of Texas and Nuevo Santander. New colonists soon joined older ones in the Rio Grande *villas* and began to establish ranches adjacent to the towns. Pressure for agricultural land resulted in the appointment of a royal commission in 1767, the purposes of which were to appoint surveyors to survey towns and jurisdictions, arrange for the granting of land to colonists, and record legal transactions. The exercise resulted in the creation of *porciones*, elongated tracts that fronted on the river and extended back from it a sufficient distance to provide each grantee an amount of pastureland that would allow him to establish a stock ranch (Scott 1970:38-39, 60-62, 68-69).

As a result of the activities of the royal commission of 1767, settlers could assert claims to *porciones* for farming and grazing. Within a short time, however, the growth of sheep and cattle herds created demand for ever-larger tracts of land. Several landowners made applications for large grants in the Rio Grande Plain after 1777 so that they could establish ranches in the land north of the Rio Grande *porciones*. Such grants went primarily to the elite, families such as the Canos, Hinojosas, Garzas, Garza Falcones, Cavazoses, and Ballis. The grants were as large as 25 to 100 leagues, and they became breeding grounds for the enormous herds of cattle that were marketed to areas beyond South Texas. Between 1778 and 1786, there were 68 legal cattle drives to Louisiana alone (Amberson et al. 2003:48; Jackson 1986:444; Scott 1970:100-101).

As families along the Rio Grande looked north, they focused on areas where surface water was available for watering stock, or where shallow wells could be dug. In Hidalgo County on the Santa Anita Grant of more than 95,000 acres (see McAllen Ranch [Rancho San Juanito]), there were two prominent springs, including the Santa Anita Seeps identified by Spanish surveyors in 1794 and now marked by a limestone *pila* (water storage tank). Nearby was a cemetery with graves dating to the late 1700s. To the west were the San Juanito Springs, where artifacts point to settlement there dating back to the early 1800s. Physical and documentary evidence indicate that a travel route ran through the area in the mid-nineteenth century on the trail between Fort Ringgold on the Rio Grande and Sal del Rey east of present-day Linn. Water sources in Brooks County, on or near the study area, included Palo Blanco Springs on the present-day Mills Bennett Palomas Ranch and the nearby Charco Redondo and Charco de Late; another Charco Redondo northwest of present-day Falfurrias on Cibolo Creek; Arroyo Baluarte Creek on the Mills Bennett estate southwest of Falfurrias; and Una de Gato, also southwest of Falfurrias. In eastern Duval County was Laguna Travesada southeast of Benavides, and seeps on Concepcion Creek. Western

Jim Wells County included Lagunas Negras, natural lakes that were filled with fresh water; and small springs west-northwest of present-day Premont that fed a chain of *lagunas* called Los Olmos and were described by U.S. Commissioner John Bartlett in 1852 (Brune 1981:98-100, 171, 228, 267).

The land within the Rio Grande Plain and study area was beneficial to ranching and was opened for settlement in the late eighteenth century. However, the process of claiming and developing it was complicated and expensive. Jose Manual Gomez, who eventually received title to the Santa Anita land grant in the study area, initiated the process in 1790 by publishing a notice of his intentions and sending his *vaqueros* and livestock into the area. There, he built extensive improvements, including permanent structures and wells. After seven years, he applied for the land, and a judge and surveyor examined its boundaries, marking corners at natural features or setting large *caliche* rocks called *linderos* or *mojoneras*. In 1798-1799, the property was placed at auction, after which Gomez was the successful bidder and the Royal Counselor of His Majesty approved the grant. Gomez then submitted a final petition, and in 1801, officials convened at the property where they awarded him the grant (Amberson 2003:13-17). Other ranchers in the Rio Grande Plain who successfully claimed land in or near the study area during the Spanish Colonial period included:

- Julian Farias, ca. 1804, San Roman Ranch west of Santa Anita and encompassing 22,602.47 acres in Hidalgo County,
- Guadalupe Sanchez, ca. early 1800s, La Rucia Ranch north of Santa Anita and encompassing 22,140 acres in Hidalgo and Brooks Counties,
- Juan Jose Guerra, 1808, El Tule (Charco Redondo) Ranch on Los Olmos Creek and encompassing 22,538 acres in Brooks County,
- Vicente Ynojosa, early 1800s, Las Anacuas Ranch encompassing 16,026 acres in Duval and Jim Wells Counties, and possibly,
- Julian and Ventura Flores, ca. 1809, the San Diego de Arriba and San Diego de Abajo Ranches encompassing 39,680 acres in Duval and Jim Wells Counties (Jackson 1986:445, 638-642; Texas General Land Office 2003).

Each of these grantees established ranches and built headquarters, wells, and tanks that made livestock production possible in a semi-arid region that averaged 23-28 inches of rain per year and frequently suffered from prolonged and severe droughts. They prospered, not only because they were experienced stock raisers, but also because they understood the importance of family alliances. In-laws sometimes united in order to acquire land, and other times to retain it within the family. Alliances through marriage helped families accumulate large amounts of land, and to retain it within the family through leases, mortgages, trades, and sales. As Casstevens (1994:44) noted, such arrangements created political and economic strength. It also "enabled the family and the workers who lived with them to build the physical environment that was mandated by the elements for survival, such as shelter, food, water, and physical security. This environment provided these people with the ability to be as self-sufficient as they could be." Indeed, the extent of their success is readily reflected in the increase in livestock in Nuevo Santander between 1757, when ranches on the Rio Grande River and Plain reported more than 380,000 head of livestock, and 1836, when the region contained more than 350 ranch headquarters and more than 3,000,000 head of livestock (Graham 1994:5).

A second wave of grants in the study area occurred after Mexico became independent of Spain in 1821; some of these may have been the result of a special act passed in 1833. The act was intended to validate the claims of settlers who had moved to the area after 1821, who were inhabitants of the Rio Grande towns, and had livestock but no land. They were entitled to as many as five leagues each (Scott 1970:127-128). Individuals who received grants in the study area after 1821 were:

- Jose Antonio Morales Garcia and Apolinario Morales Garcia, 1835, the San Antonito Grant encompassing 27,812 acres in Hidalgo, Starr, and Brooks Counties,
- Jose Manuel and Luciano Chapa, 1832, La Encantada Grant encompassing 39,855.6 acres in Brooks County,
- Ygnacio de la Pena, 1831, Los Olmos y Loma Blanca Grant encompassing 44,280 acres in northern Brooks and southern Jim Wells Counties,
- Juan Joseph Manuel de la Garza Falcon, 1831, the San Francisco Grant encompassing 20,721 acres in Duval and Jim Wells Counties,
- Dionisio Elizondo, 1835, El Senor de la Carrera Grant encompassing 10,078 acres in Duval County,
- Vital Ynojosa, 1836, La Anima Sola Grant encompassing 20,009 acres in Duval and Jim Wells Counties, and
- Sanos Moreno, 1830 (possession), 1836 (grant), La Trinidad Grant encompassing 17,157 acres in Jim Wells County (Jackson 1986:445, 638-642; Texas General Land Office 2003).

These grantees, like those before them, built shelter in the form of *jacals*, rectangular-shaped dwellings of sticks and mud; and more-permanent homes of *caliche* blocks (*sillares*) that might have multiple rooms, windows and doors, dirt or sandstone floors, flat roofs of *chipichil*, and exterior *sillar* block fences. They dug *sillar*-lined wells (*norias de buque*), and built dams (*presas*), troughs for animals (*tarjellas*), water storage tanks (*pilas*), *tinajas*, and corrals. In time, they built chapels, schools, and cemeteries, creating self-sufficient ranch communities of related families (Casstevens 1997:11-23; Saenz 2001:28-35, 43-44).

By the late-1830s, the Spanish- and Mexican-era ranch owners found themselves residents of territory disputed by Texas and Mexico and besieged by frequent Indian raids. Many families abandoned their property, moving south of the Rio Grande River for safety. But they returned after the Texas Revolution and U.S.-Mexican War a decade later, perhaps encouraged by the terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which guaranteed them certain property rights. In an effort to satisfy the legal requirements of those claiming vested interests (original grantees, their heirs, and, in some cases, newcomers who had purchased property with pre-1836 titles) and those who were interested in acquiring grants and parts of previously granted tracts, the State of Texas created a mechanism to investigate the validity of Spanish- and Mexican-era grants. Between 1850 and 1851, the Bourland-Miller Commission gathered evidence, which Governor Peter H. Bell presented to the State Legislature. The Legislature then reviewed the evidence and by 1852 had confirmed more than 200 claims, including approximately 18 within the study area (see *Figure 2*) (Alonzo 1996:4:656-659; Jackson 1986:445).

Adjudication of titles protected the rights of those families who chose to keep their large ranches intact and made it possible for others to sell all or parts of their property if they chose to do so. Interest in the area from Anglo-American investors boomed as an initial period of recovery in

commercial ranching occurred, and the agricultural economy grew apace. In many cases, Tejano families proved adept at changing as the need arose. A number of them arranged marriages between their daughters and the newly arrived Euro-American merchants who were "flush with cash." Each side understood the underlying benefits of new alliances, which included the maintenance or acquisition of heritage, religion, culture, social status, and land (Amberson 2003:125-126). Stable land ownership helped the agricultural economy grow, and by 1860, ranchers in Hidalgo County, alone, claimed 10,695 cattle and 3,300 sheep. Those numbers increased to 18,141 cattle and 11,270 sheep in 1870, a period that saw a boom in sheep raising throughout the four-county area. Duval County, particularly, was noted as the sheep ranching capital of Texas, and from 1873 to 1883, the county supposedly had more sheep than any other in the United States. San Diego, one of the oldest ranching communities near the study area, became a market center, and in 1873 merchants there exported 2,000,000 pounds of wool. Their activities were stimulated further by construction of the Corpus Christi, San Diego and Rio Grande Railroad in 1879 (extended to Laredo as the Texas Mexican Railroad in 1881) (Alonzo 1994:53, 59; Garza 1996b:3:943-945; Kohout 1996:2:742-744).

Commercial ranching remained strong and viable in the study area until ca. 1890 because of market demand, the long-lived tradition of ranching among *Tejano* settlers, availability of unfenced and cheap pasture land, and a mild climate. Indeed, the vast majority of stockraisers in the Trans-Nueces region in the late nineteenth century were *Tejanos*, who raised approximately 80 percent of all livestock (Alonzo 1994:58, 63). As early as 1880, however, a series of weather events began to take their toll on the livestock industry. A cold, wet winter in 1880-1881 killed lambs and adult sheep. Extremely cold weather occurred in 1886-1887, and a devastating multi-year drought began in 1891. Pastures deteriorated, as did the quality of livestock (Alonzo 1994:61), and ranchers who sold off their herds contributed to falling prices as animals flooded the markets. The national Panic of 1893 contributed to lower prices, and many ranchers, both Tejano and Anglo, were forced to sell out. Survivors of the debacle tended to be individuals who had access to capital and were not debt-averse.

One such investor was Edward Cunningham Lasater, who purchased sizable tracts in Brooks County from ranchers who had been droughted out in the early 1890s. He established his headquarters at La Mota on Ygnacio de la Pena's Los Olmos y Loma Blanca Grant where he overcame the effects of drought by deepening old wells and installing mechanical pumps and windmills. During the next decade, he acquired approximately 350,000 acres and began a career as one of the state's leading cattle breeders. Most importantly for the cultural landscape of northern Brooks County, he capitalized on the extension of the San Antonio and Aransas Pass Railway south from Alice and, following a pattern of development and promotion characteristic of the Valley and coastal areas of the state, subdivided 60,000 acres of his ranch into smaller parcels. He founded the town of Falfurrias and encouraged dairy, fruit, and garden truck producers to establish farms in the study area and beyond. His Falfurrias Creamery, which was one of the earliest creamery plants to produce sweet cream butter in Texas, developed and maintained a singular brand identity that exists today (*Falfurrias Facts*, June 15, 1934; Lasater 1985:50; 1996:4:88; Moore 2006).

Agriculture, whether ranching or farming, was the underpinning of the South Texas economy during the first third of the twentieth century, and contributed to significant population growth. Throughout the region, land and railroad companies advertised the availability of fertile land, plentiful water, a tropical climate, and promises not just of self-sufficiency, but economic wealth.

The acreage cultivated for farming in Hidalgo County alone increased by more than 800 percent during the second decade of the twentieth century, and it grew another 70 percent between 1920 and 1924. Land that was subject to irrigation, either from surface supply or from irrigation wells, was particularly desirable, and South Texas became renowned for its citrus, vegetable, and milk products (Kibler and Freeman 1993:22)

Although oil was discovered as early as 1905 in the study area, major production did not occur until 1928, when it resulted in a full-scale boom. About the same time, important discoveries of gas were made, and the two resources helped mitigate problems usually associated with drought and depression during the 1930s. Production in Jim Wells and Duval Counties was especially noteworthy: by 1938, Duval County ranked third in Texas in oil production, and between 1933 and 1991, Jim Wells County was one of the all-time leaders in oil production in Texas. Important finds near the study area included the Premont Field and the Seeligson Field, the latter of which produced significant amounts of gas, as well (Garza 1996a:1:753; 1996b:3:592, 944; Kohout 1996:2:743-744). Development of the fields brought with them improved roads, well pads, pipelines, and local refineries. Agriculture has remained a strong and persistent factor in the regional economy throughout the twentieth century, but revenues from exploitation of oil and gas reserves also have played a strong supporting role in the local economy. These assets often have mitigated the impacts of cyclic drought and economic depression, encouraged the persistence of ranching, and facilitated the long-term ownership of land within related family groups.

ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPE FEATURES

Property types are physical links to the trends and patterns described in the historic context, and the study area contains a wide variety of property types that reflect the rich historic ranching and other agricultural-based traditions of South Texas. These property types possess distinctive physical and associative qualities that distinguish them from one another. A ranch house, for example, is obviously very different from a windmill. However, understanding the relative significance of these resources extends beyond the individual examples that exist within the study area. Instead, it is the grouping of these various property types and the relationships they share both spatially and functionally with one another and with the surrounding lands that provide the basis for determining significance and providing preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessments for this study. This assessment can only be accomplished by considering the entire cultural landscape that includes the ranch headquarters and associated lands as well as land-use patterns, vegetation and plantings, and other aspects of the built and natural environment that made ranching and other agricultural-based operations viable and important to the history of South Texas. Indeed, such an approach has already been set with the designation of the King Ranch as a National Historic Landmark (NHL). The NHL not only includes the ranch headquarters and support buildings, but also the vast acreage and associated landscape that supported the ranch's successful operation.

Within this framework, a ranch represents a single entity or resource type for the purposes of this study and for providing preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessments. A ranch not only includes the cluster of buildings and structures that comprise the headquarters but also the pastures on which livestock were raised, the fences that defined the pastures, and the other types of resources (e.g., windmills, tanks, troughs, and vats) that enabled the ranch to function successfully.

Ranches from the Late-Eighteenth and Late-Nineteenth Centuries

In the semi-arid plains of South Texas, the ability to access water was the key factor that influenced not only how the land was used and where the ranches were established, but also how settlement patterns and even the road network evolved over time. Spanish and Mexican colonial ranchers, such as Manuel Gomez, established their operations based on the availability of fresh surface water or natural land depressions (*lagunas*) where hand-dug wells could tap water sources at relatively shallow depths. Locations where water was available became primary focal points of activity and preferred sites for ranch headquarters or watering holes for livestock. The remoteness of the ranches forced pioneers to utilize readily available local materials for construction and helped to establish a distinctive and regionalized vernacular building tradition that continued until the railroad era. Large blocks of caliche (*sillar*) were a popular building material, particularly for the main residence at the ranch headquarters. In contrast, residences for ranch workers typically were *jacales* that were smaller and were made of brush, mesquite, and rivercane and plastered with mud. Other man-made features commonly included within the main compound were agriculture-related resources such as wells, pens, and corrals that likewise used local building materials. Although the headquarters functioned as the hub of these early ranches and contained the largest concentrations of buildings and structures, other features, such as hand-dug wells, water troughs, and reservoirs, dotted the landscape and were vital to the viability of the ranches. Many of these ranches also included small cemeteries that were another distinctive feature of the landscape; they typically reflected Spanish-based traditions as well as the family relationships that contributed to longevity of land ownership. Thus, the evolution of the ranch as resource type included both the built environment and the surrounding landscape on which it depended.

Ranches from the Late-Nineteenth to Mid-Twentieth Centuries

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, ranches and their associated cultural landscapes began to evolve both in the way the land was used and in the forms and materials used for building construction. Water remained critical to the organization and successful operation of the ranches, and the fundamental spatial and layout concepts established in earlier decades endured in basic form: a main residence that stood within a cluster of support buildings (further study and analysis are need to explore such topics). New technologies and expanding trade and transportation networks during the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century eras ushered in a period of more rapid change, which affected the physical character of the ranches and associated lands. The introduction of barbed wire fencing, for example, delineated property boundaries and ended the long-standing tradition of open ranges. Improved metal fencing also allowed ranchers to segregate their herds more easily and improve the quality of livestock through selective breeding and the control of diseases, such as tick fever. Improvements in drilling technologies and windmill construction enabled ranchers such as Ed C. Lasater to tap deeper sources of water. With greater and more reliable sources of water, ranchers could expand their operations, some of which extended into multiple counties.

The advent of rail service in the region and an expanding road network allowed area ranchers to purchase building materials that previously were not available or were too expensive to obtain. As a result, vernacular building traditions that had developed slowly over time and made use of locally available materials began to give way to new forms, finishes, and details. The wide-spread use of milled lumber and wood-frame construction and other building-related innovations changed both the region's architectural character and its associated cultural landscape. In addition, new types of agricultural-related facilities were introduced to the region. Dipping vats, for example, became commonplace during this era and helped to eradicate Texas fever. The

growing popularity of the automobiles led to roadway improvements and the construction of new and better public roads. The introduction of telephones and electrical service resulted in the construction of utility lines that extended along roadways and through ranchlands. The exploitation of oil in the region in the 1920s and 1930s also brought further changes to the landscape. Derricks, drill rigs, and pumps that tapped into and extracted oil from underground reserves and operated within pastures that had long been used for the raising of livestock. Similarly, the abundance of natural gas reserves also led to increased drilling activity. Continued expansion of the oil and gas industries spurred the construction of pipelines and support structures, such as field storage tanks and pipeline fountain heads. Oil and gas facilities became a prominent part of the cultural landscape and reflected the growing significance of the industry to the local economy. Furthermore, profits from the oil and gas industries helped sustain the financial viability of ranches in the region, many of which would have struggled without the supplemental income that oil and gas exploitation provided. Lease and royalty checks often paid for major ranch improvements, including housing, infrastructure, and improved animal stock.

Dairy and Truck Farms From the Early- to Mid-Twentieth Century

Although ranches historically have been the primary resource type within the study area, smaller agricultural units whose histories began after the construction of railroads also exist throughout the region and are associated with the early twentieth-century visions of promoters and land and townsite developers. These properties are associated with the development of the dairy industry in Texas, truck farming, and, to a lesser extent, the citrus industry. Examples in the study area occur primarily in northern Brooks County and in southern Duval and Jim Wells Counties. They are associated with the activities of Ed C. Lasater and the Miller family in the vicinity of Falfurrias, and with the activities of Charles Premont in the vicinity of the Premont community. Because the associated agricultural activities are heavily water dependent, it is likely that they are more commonly found in areas that historically had surface water (e.g., Olmos Creek), or artesian deposits that could be mined using twentieth-century technology. Generally encompassing areas that are smaller than ranches, these farms typically include clusters of buildings and associated lands within fenced and clearly defined parcels of land. Since the farms were established after the railroad extended into the area, most of the buildings were constructed of milled lumber and reflected “popular” rather than vernacular architectural forms and designs. Barns, silos, granaries, windmills and tanks were among the most common resources within the farm complexes. Whereas dairy farms included areas for the herds to graze, truck farms devoted more land to the cultivation of crops and featured tilled fields. Unlike the ranches, the dairy and truck farms have not endured for reasons not yet fully documented (out of the project’s scope). Vestiges of this resource type still exist within the study area and provide a link to and important chapter in the local history.

Each of the resource types includes groupings of buildings as well as features within the surrounding landscape and land-use patterns, all of which functioned together as a single entity. Although some changes have occurred over time, many of the ranches and farms in the study area appear to retain their salient and character-defining features, convey a strong sense of the past, and may possess significance within the framework of established historical themes and National Register criteria. However, further study of the region’s history and the cultural landscape is still needed to understand the relative significance and integrity of these and the other resource types in the study area.

PREVIOUSLY IDENTIFIED RESOURCES

Project historians examined the Texas Historic Sites Atlas online, a website maintained by the Texas Historical Commission (THC), to identify any properties within the study area that had been previously listed in the NRHP, documented as part of the Texas Historic Sites Inventory (THSI) or other local survey, designated as Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHLs), or were the subject of Official State Historical Markers.

Brooks County
Although no resources in the county are officially listed in the NRHP, the county boasts 11 state historical markers, most of which are in the city of Falfurrias. The other historical markers are not within the study area. The THSI includes 31 historic properties in Brooks County, but survey forms are only partially completed and contain only minimal amounts of historical and/or architectural data. The only THSI resource within the study area is La Mota, the home of Ed C. Lasater.

Duval County
Like Brooks County, Duval County has no resources that are listed in the NRHP; however, the Texas Historical Atlas lists 7 historical markers in the county. Based on locational information provided in the Atlas, none of the markers are in the study area; however, the Barronena Ranch marker is just west of the proposed new-location corridor. The Duval County Historical Commission received a grant-in-aid from the THC to conduct a county-wide historic resources survey in 1989-90. Undertaken by Sally S. Victor and Larry D. Hodge, the survey identified 129 historic resources. The survey forms completed for the project do not provide specific addresses but identify nearby county roads. Several of the resources appear to be in the proposed new-location corridor and likely are associated with dairy and truck farms of the early twentieth century. Efforts to locate the survey map that noted resource locations were not successful.

Jim Wells County
The only property in Jim Wells County that is listed in the NRHP is an archaeological site that is outside the proposed new-location corridor. The Texas Historical Atlas also lists ten state historical markers in the county, none of which are in the proposed new-location corridor. The only resource listed in the THSI is a recycling plant in La Gloria.

Hidalgo County
The Texas Historical Atlas includes 1,037 entries for Hidalgo County, of which 18 resources are listed in the NRHP. None of the NRHP-listed properties identified in the Atlas are in proposed new-location corridor; however, the McAllen Ranch in Hidalgo County was officially listed during the course of this study. The Texas State Board of Review approved its nomination to the NRHP in 2006, and the Texas SHPO signed the form in February 2007 and subsequently forwarded it to the National Park Service in Washington for final review. The McAllen Ranch was listed in the NRHP in April 2007. The McAllen Ranch was documented for this study, and an assessment of existing conditions is presented in the Survey Results chapter of this report. In summary, however, the McAllen Ranch is listed at the local level of significance in the areas of exploration and settlement (Criterion A), architecture (Criterion C), and archaeology (Criterion D).

The Texas Historical Atlas also notes 123 state historical markers in Hidalgo County, most of which are in the southern part of the county where the bulk of the population lives. One marker, however, is in the proposed new-location corridor and commemorates the Laguna Seca Ranch. The marker is located along Laguna Seca Road, which extends north from SH 44 near the southeast corner of the proposed new-location corridor. The THSI includes a large number of entries, but most were included as part of a city-wide historic resources survey of Mission, Texas, which is well outside the proposed new-location corridor.

HISTORICAL RESEARCH

At the outset of the project, historians undertook research at major repositories in Austin to determine broad trends in local history, obtain information on previously recorded historic properties, and locate and copy historic maps and other materials related to ranching-related activities in South Texas. The historians examined materials at the following repositories:

- Texas Historical Commission, including National Register files, Official State Historical Marker files, and other relevant materials;
- Texas Department of Agriculture, information on family farms within the proposed new-location corridor associated with the Family Land Heritage Program;
- Center for American History and the Perry Castaneda Library at the University of Texas at Austin, including historic maps and secondary source materials; and
- Texas State Library and Archives, including historic maps and agricultural schedules.

Although they examined a variety of primary and secondary source materials, the historians concentrated their efforts selecting and reviewing historic maps that depicted cultural features that could be used to identify historic ranch locations in the region. This information served as the basis for subsequent map analyses and assessment of the cultural landscape and changes over time. The historians examined historic aerials and land-surface ownership maps from P2 Energy Solutions (formerly Tobin Map Company) that TxDOT had purchased earlier for this project. The low-resolution quality of the historic aerials proved to be of marginal value; however, the historians could still discern general land-use patterns in rural areas, as wells as roads, trails, and building complexes within the proposed new-location corridor.

Another important source of information was the Texas Historic Overlay (THO), a TxDOT-funded project that catalogued, scanned, and geo-referenced approximately 2,500 maps into a GIS-based application. The maps came from major libraries, museums, and other repositories in Texas and provided a wealth of information about ranching-related activities in the region and changes to the landscape over time. Working with a GIS specialist, the historians identified relevant maps and created a series of overlays that depicted the proposed new-location corridor onto historic maps. This method enabled the historians to identify historic ranches in the proposed new-location corridor and note their continuity (or lack thereof) over time.

Historians also conducted research on the internet. Although the historians reviewed a number of websites, the two that provided the most useful data were the Texas Historical Atlas and the Handbook of Texas Online. The Texas Historical Atlas contains site-specific information from THC files including resources listed in the Texas Historic Sites Inventory, Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks, Subject Markers, and National Register nominations. The Handbook of Texas Online is a web-based version of the multi-volume set of books published by the Texas State Historical Association. Using the website's search engine capabilities, the historians obtained information on a variety of research topics.

Additional repositories in South Texas yielded still more information and helped identify historic ranches in the region and the ranchers who owned, operated, and maintained them. Among the two most important repositories were the Special Collections at The University of Texas-Pan American Library in Edinburg and the Museum of South Texas History at Texas A&M

University-Kingsville. Historians examined a variety of materials including historic land ownership maps, published and unpublished histories relating to South Texas ranching, oral histories, and ranching- and oil-related data. The Ed Rachal Memorial Library in Falfurrias contained a particularly helpful collection of materials and vertical subject files in the local history room.

County governmental offices (county clerk and tax appraisal offices) in Edinburg, Falfurrias, Alice, and San Diego, Texas also yielded important information about the land history and former owners. Primary data sources included historic plat maps and tax abstracts. Since the Brooks County Courthouse is scheduled for restoration, all county records have been moved temporarily to a building on the county fairgrounds. Although most of the information was accessible, some of the older public records, specifically older volumes of the county commissioners' court minutes and cattle brands registers, were not available, and their status is unknown.

DATA ANALYSIS AND APPLICATION OF NATIONAL REGISTER CRITERIA

METHODOLOGY DEVELOPMENT

This task involved the development of a methodology to provide the basis for identifying, documenting, and evaluating ranching-related and other historic resources within the study area for providing preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessments. As defined earlier, the study area includes the proposed new-location corridor and ranches with lands that extend into the corridor. The methodology was based upon preliminary analysis of the data collected during the previous tasks, which included historic maps, historic aerials, and published secondary sources. Development of the methodology consisted of two major tasks: 1) historic map review and analysis and 2) review and analysis of published sources on the study area. As a result of these reviews and analyses, the key periods of significance and important historical themes associated with the history of ranching in the study area were established, the trends and patterns of settlement were defined, and selected initial candidates for preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessments were identified. These candidates include specific properties as well as certain property types, described below. The attributes and associations of the initial candidates were analyzed within the context of the available historical background information to develop the evaluation framework. The methodology was developed at a macro-level in order to describe the conditions that must be present and/or met for a ranch to be preliminarily recommended to be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP within the parameters of this planning-related study. The resulting methodology provides a decision-making framework that states how the National Register Criteria and the Seven Aspects of Integrity will be applied for ranching-related historic resources in the study area.

Results of the Historic Map Review and Preliminary Map Analysis

Review and preliminary analysis of maps and historic photographs resulted in the identification of numerous cultural features. These maps and photographs contain information about the presence and functions of cultural features, property ownership, and settlement patterns. However, they contain little information about historic property boundaries other than the outlines of Spanish- and Mexican-period grants.

The level and quality of cartographic information is not consistent throughout the study area. For example, while the outlines of Spanish- and Mexican-era grants are available within the proposed new-location corridor, there is very limited information about the persistence of those configurations after the 1850s. Maps depicting cultural features during the World War I period are specific to much of the corridor. However, although those maps depict specific cultural features in great detail, they appear to provide very limited information about property boundaries that can be compared with maps depicting current boundaries.

A description of each of the selected cartographic sets and discussion of the importance of the information contained in them follows:

1. Jack Jackson map (*Figure 2*) of Spanish and Mexican grants confirmed in the 1850s by the Bourland-Miller Commission. Cartographer and historian Jackson created a map that depicted all Spanish and Mexican grants investigated by the Bourland-Miller Commission and confirmed by the State of Texas in the 1850s. Overlays of these confirmed grants on the proposed new-location corridor provide information about the

scale of the late eighteen- to mid-nineteenth-century ranching in the region, a baseline for assessing the extent to which historical boundaries remain intact, and guidance concerning periods of significance where those boundaries have changed.

2. *Map of the Rio Grande Frontier, Texas*, prepared in the Engineer Office, Department of Texas, San Antonio, 1893; updated 1911. This map (*Figure 3*) depicts roads and ranches in the proposed new-location corridor where those ranches were proximate to roads. As a result, the map provides a limited rather than comprehensive inventory. It does provide evidence of the locations of selected ranch headquarters and the persistence of ranches from the Mexican and Spanish periods. The map also may provide evidence of the density of ranches in northern Brooks County and importance of waterways such as Palo Blanco Creek. On the other hand, the depiction of density may reflect proximity to military roads and new information incorporated during the 1911 update of the map following construction of the railroad and founding of Falfurrias. Potentially important resources depicted on the map include the Santa Anita Ranch (Hidalgo County), a cluster of Hispanic ranches in the vicinity of Baluarte Creek and San Francisco Ranch (Brooks County), and a community called Palito Blanco (Jim Wells County).

3. General Land Office map of Brooks County, 1912. Land not included within the 1850s confirmed grants reverted to State ownership and became available for patenting. The 1912 Brooks County map (GLO) (*Figure 4*) provides cartographic evidence of the way in which subsequent patenting differed from the scale of the Spanish and Mexican grants. What is not apparent from the GLO map is the extent to which smaller, post-1850s grants reflected actual ownership and settlement patterns and whether or not those smaller grants became incorporated within larger ranches. Additionally, the fact that a tract was not covered by a grant depicted by Jackson leaves open the possibility that it could have been part of a pre-1850s Spanish or Mexican grant that was not confirmed. Such a tract might be the location of pre-1850s historic properties.

4. Reconnaissance quadrangles for Hidalgo, Brooks, Duval, and Jim Wells Counties, 1916-1917. This map set (*Figures 5-7*) depicts most of the proposed new-location corridor in detail, showing cultural features and their functions, identifying some owners, and suggesting land use. While fence lines are depicted, it is not possible to determine property boundaries because the functions of the fences are open to a variety of interpretations. In addition, overlays of these maps on more-recent quadrangles reveal that they are not accurately drawn, and that their cartographic character tends to be more schematic than topographically accurate. The maps are a rich source of information about the general locations of specific agricultural activities, a guide to the relative density of occupation and associated cultural properties, and excellent records of change as portions of the proposed new-location corridor responded to the vision of developers such as Edward C. Lasater and the construction of a South Texas railroad system.

5. Highway maps, 1936, 1961. The Hidalgo, Brooks, and Jim Wells County highway maps from 1936 provide a bridge between the 1916-1917 reconnaissance quadrangles and modern quadrangles. They depict cultural data with a relatively high degree of accuracy, show historic properties that are depicted on the earlier quadrangles, make it possible to assess the accuracy of those quadrangles, suggest the presence of properties that may still exist, and provide clues to their locations on more-current quadrangles. The 1961

highway maps serve similar functions while also recording changes to transportation systems and the presence or absence of buildings along existing roadways. In some cases, ranch and cemetery names are provided, creating a record of changes in ownership and clues to current ownership. On the other hand, depictions of cultural properties are not consistent, with more comprehensive coverage occurring in proximity to roadways.

6. Land-surface ownership maps, 1953, 1958, 1960, 1962, and 1965. The historians analyzed a series of land-surface ownership maps from Petroleum Place (P2) Energy Solutions, LP, including maps for Duval, Jim Wells, Brooks, and Hidalgo Counties. They are commonly known as Tobin maps in recognition of their publisher, Tobin Surveys, Inc., of San Antonio, Texas. The map sets were originally published in the 1940s, but they were updated through the 1950s and 1960s (Brooks [1953], Jim Wells [1962], Duval [1962], and Hidalgo [1965]). The maps delineate the boundaries of original land grants and surveys and indicate property boundaries, as well as the owner(s) and size of each parcel of land. Among the other cultural features that the maps depict are highways, roads, trails, and, in some cases, fence lines within parcels of land. Besides noting important natural features such as waterways, the maps also include information about oil and gas wells, and drilling-related activities. The maps enabled the historians to identify property owners as well as the extent of land holdings associated with those individuals. With specific site locations identified through an analysis of other documents, primarily historic maps, the historians plotted historic ranch locations using a GIS-based application and overlaid this information with the Tobin maps to identify past owners and associated lands.

   The historians also digitally photographed another set of land-surface ownership maps for Brooks (1958) and Duval (1960) Counties that were published by J. R. Beard of McAllen, Texas. The maps are on file at the library at The University of Texas-Pan American. Although the maps were not geo-referenced into the GIS-based system for technical reasons, historians extrapolated historic ranch locations from previous research and analyses and identified property owners and land parcel boundaries.

7. Modern USGS quadrangles. Topographic maps published by USGS depict cultural features such as ranch headquarters, ranch communities, cemeteries, churches, schools, windmills, fence lines, and transportation networks. They are helpful in documenting the continued presence and integrity of properties that appeared on earlier maps.

8. Aerials. Historic aerials obtained from P2 Energy Solutions, as well as 2004 aerials provided by TTA, were geo-referenced and integrated into the GIS-based file created for the project. These materials provided photographic documentation of the proposed new-location corridor and were used to note existing conditions, land-use patterns, and cultural features associated with the landscape. The historians used these aerials, as well as satellite photographic imagery available online through Google maps, to view current conditions at historic ranch locations.

Many of the above-referenced materials were already part of the Texas Historic Overlay (a map digitization effort undertaken by TxDOT) and were integrated into a GIS-based (ArcView) file developed for this project. This ArcView file enabled historians to view historic maps with an overlay that delineated the limits of the proposed new-location corridor. Additional research

materials gathered specifically for this project, such as the Tobin maps and county highway maps, also were scanned, geo-referenced, and integrated into the ArcView file. The historians subsequently identified historic ranches in the study area, the results of which are listed in Table 1. It is worthwhile to note that the preliminary map analysis also identified a significant concentration of early twentieth-century dairy and truck farms. These farms extend through a large segment of the north-central part of the study area and represent another significant theme within the region's multi-layered history.

Table 1.
Historic Map Analysis

Map	Date of Map	County	Ranches That Appear on Maps Within or Adjacent to the Proposed New-Location Corridor
USGS Topographic Map	Current	Hidalgo	Casa Blanca Ranch (Linn Siding Quad) El Desierto Ranch (Linn Siding Quad) Laguna Seca (Faysville Quad) McAllen Ranch (McAllen Ranch Quad) Santa Anita Ranch (Linn Siding Quad) Serraldo Ranch (Faysville Quad) Tijerina Ranch (Linn Siding Quad)
USGS Topographic Map	Current	Brooks	Alto Colorado (Tacubaya Quad) Cage Ranch (Cage Ranch Quad) Coyote Ranch (Hartland Quad) La Mota Ranch (Falfurrias Quad) Longoria Cemetery (Encino Quad) Miller Ranch (Falfurrias Quad) Palomas Ranch (Palomas Ranch Quad) Santa Cruz (Concepcion Quad) Tepeguaje Ranch (Encino Quad) Tacubaya (Tacubaya Quad)
USGS Topographic Map	Current	Jim Wells	Moos Ranch (Palito Blanco Quad) Saltiero Ranch (Palito Blanco Quad) Seeligson Ranch (Seeligson Ranch Quad) Palito Blanco (Palito Blanco Quad)
USGS Topographic Map	Current	Duval	Cibolo Ranch (Laguna del Toro Quad) La Bandera Ranch (Palito Blanco Quad) Santa Cruz (Concepcion Quad) Vera Cruz (Concepcion Quad)
Texas State Highway Department, *General Highway Maps* (1973)	1973	Brooks	La Mota Ranch Longoria (community) Old Cachucha Ranch (Palomas Ranch) Tacubaya
J. R. Beard, *Brooks County, Texas*	1958	Brooks	Old Cachucha Ranch (Palomas Ranch) owned by Mills Bennett Estate-"El Tule" Juan Jose Guerra and Palo Blanco de Charco Redondo
Tobin Map	1947	Brooks	Old Cachucha Ranch (Palomas Ranch)- "El Tule" Juan Jose Guerra

Map	Date of Map	County	Ranches That Appear on Maps Within or Adjacent to the Proposed New-Location Corridor
Beard, *Hidalgo County*	1935	Hidalgo	La Reforma La Rucia San Antonito San Jose San Ramon (Santa Monica Ranch/Longoria Ranch/Los Novillos Ranch/La Puerta Ranch/Cypres Ranch/Guadalupe Ranch) Santa Anita (Juanita Ranch-McAllen Ranch Headquarters/McAllen Ranch/La Rucia Ranch)
U.S. Army, Corps of Engineers, *La Reforma, Texas*	1932	Brooks Hidalgo	Bella Vista Ranch Christalina Ranch Desierto Ranch El Realito Ranch Encantada Ranch Garcia Ranch ("La Mestena") Jose Calderon Ranch Novillos Ranch (Timothy P.O.) La Reforma (Alta Bonita Ranch) La Rucias Ranch Los Peres Ranch Longoria Ranch Petamosa Ranch Rucia Ranch San Juanito Santanita (Young's Ranch) Santa Rita Ranch Tacubaya Ranch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tactical Map, *Ben Bolt Quadrangle*	1917	Jim Wells	Canales Ranch Foster Ranch La Vendera Lomalda Ranch Mardero Ranch Moos Ranch Saltiero Ranch
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tactical Map, *Falfurrias Quadrangle*	1917	Brooks	Santa Cruz La Mota Old Cachucha Ranch (Palomas Ranch)

Map	Date of Map	County	Ranches That Appear on Maps Within or Adjacent to the Proposed New-Location Corridor
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tactical Map, *La Reforma Quadrangle*	1916	Brooks Hidalgo	Bella Vista Ranch Christalina Ranch Decierto Ranch/Desierto Ranch El Realito Ranch Encantada Ranch Garcia Ranch ("La Mestena") Jose Calderon Ranch La Reforma Ranch (Alta Bonita Ranch) Las Rucias Ranch Los Peres Ranch Longoria Ranch Novillos Ranch (Timothy P.O.) Petamosa Ranch Rucia Ranch San Juanito Santa Monica Ranch Santa Rita Ranch Santa Anita Ranch (Young's Ranch) Tepeguaje Tucabaya Ranch
E. M. Card, *Map of Hidalgo County Showing Road Districts*	1913	Hidalgo	Laguna Seca La Rucia Santanita (Laguna Seca/Santanita Ranch/Juanita Ranch)
Map of Brooks County, Texas	1912	Brooks	[Old Cachucha Ranch (Palomas Ranch)]- El Tules-Juan Jose Guerra Palo Blanco-Isador Guerra La Encantada-Jose Manuel Chapa & Luciano Chapa "La Mestena" and "Los Animas"-Rafael Garcia Salinas, Ysidor Garcia, Rafael Garcia, N & B Garcia, G. Garcia "La Rucia"-Guadalupe Sanchez (Las Rucias Ranch)
Progressive Military Map of the United States, *San Diego*	1907	Jim Wells Duval	Bandera Ranch Guajilla Ranch Locai Ranch Palito Blanco Saltiero Ranch Trinidad Ranch
H. L. Ripley, *Map of the Rio Grande Frontier, Texas* (San Antonio, Texas: Engineer Office, Headquarters Department of Texas, July 1893)	1893, updated 1911	Jim Wells Duval Brooks Hidalgo	Bandera Ranch Guajilla Ranch Locai Ranch Palito Blanco Saltiero Ranch Santa Anita Ranch (Young Ranch) Santa Monica Ranch Trinidad Ranch

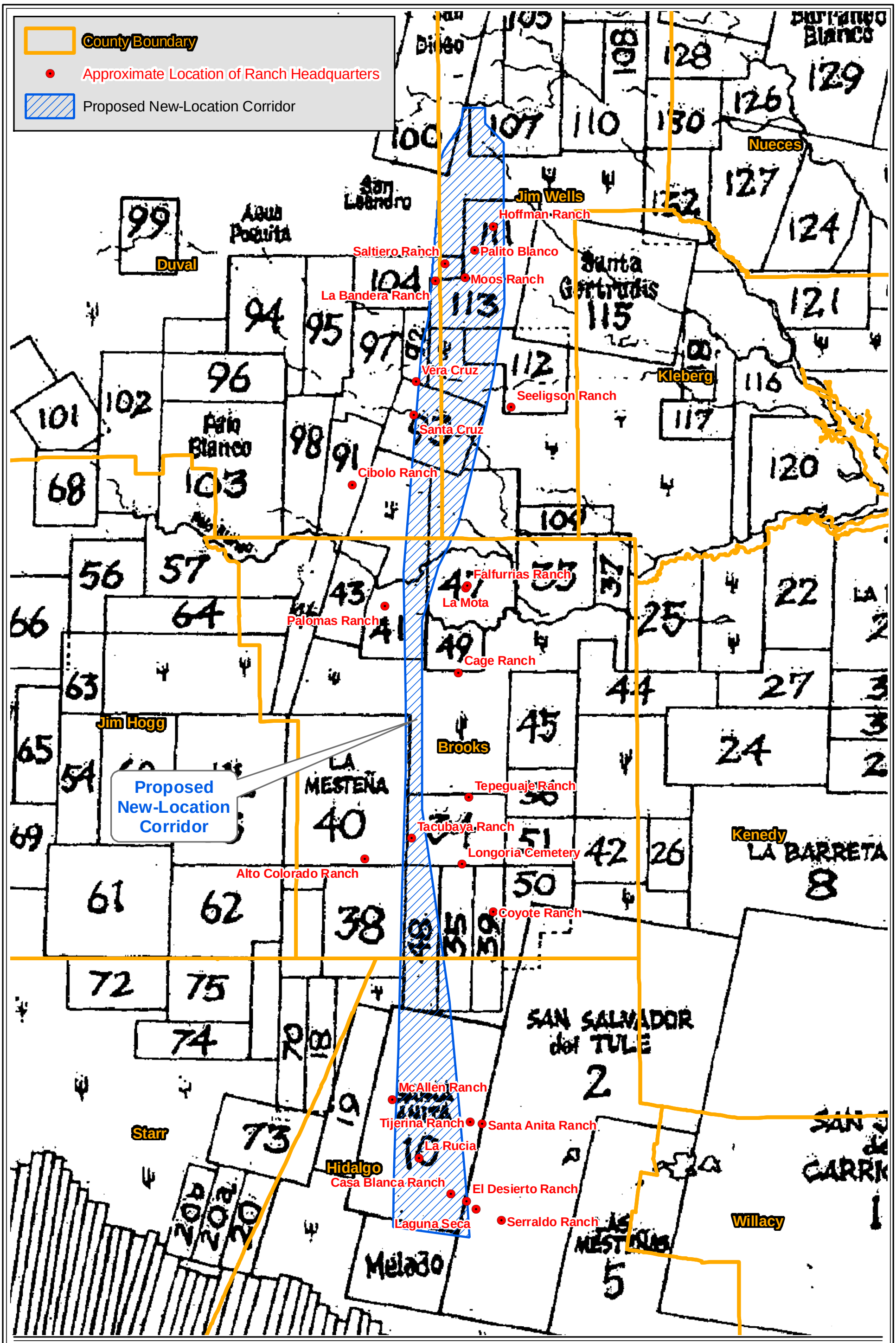


Figure 2
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
Jack Jackson's Map of Spanish and Mexican Land Grants, from *Los Mesteños* (1986)

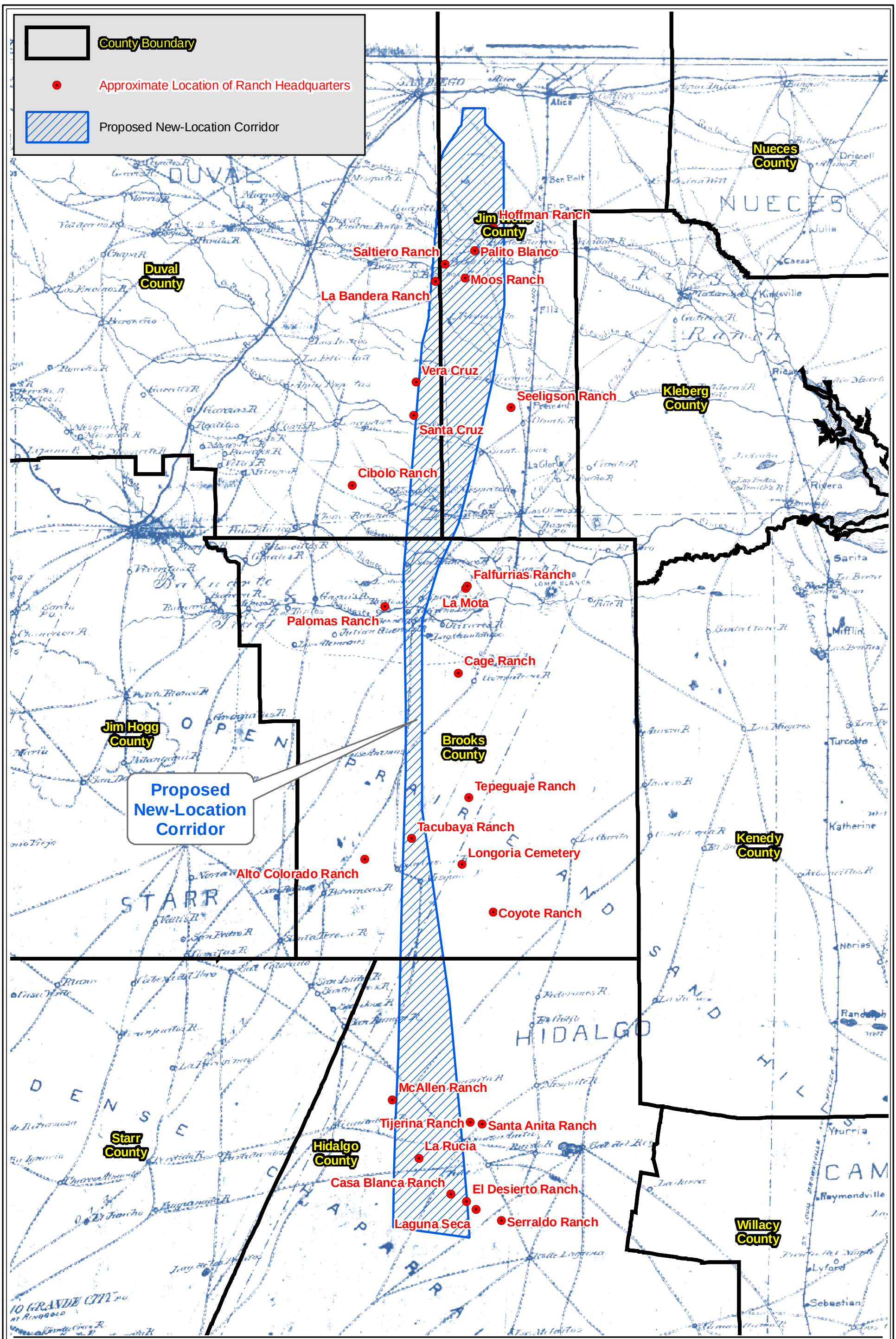
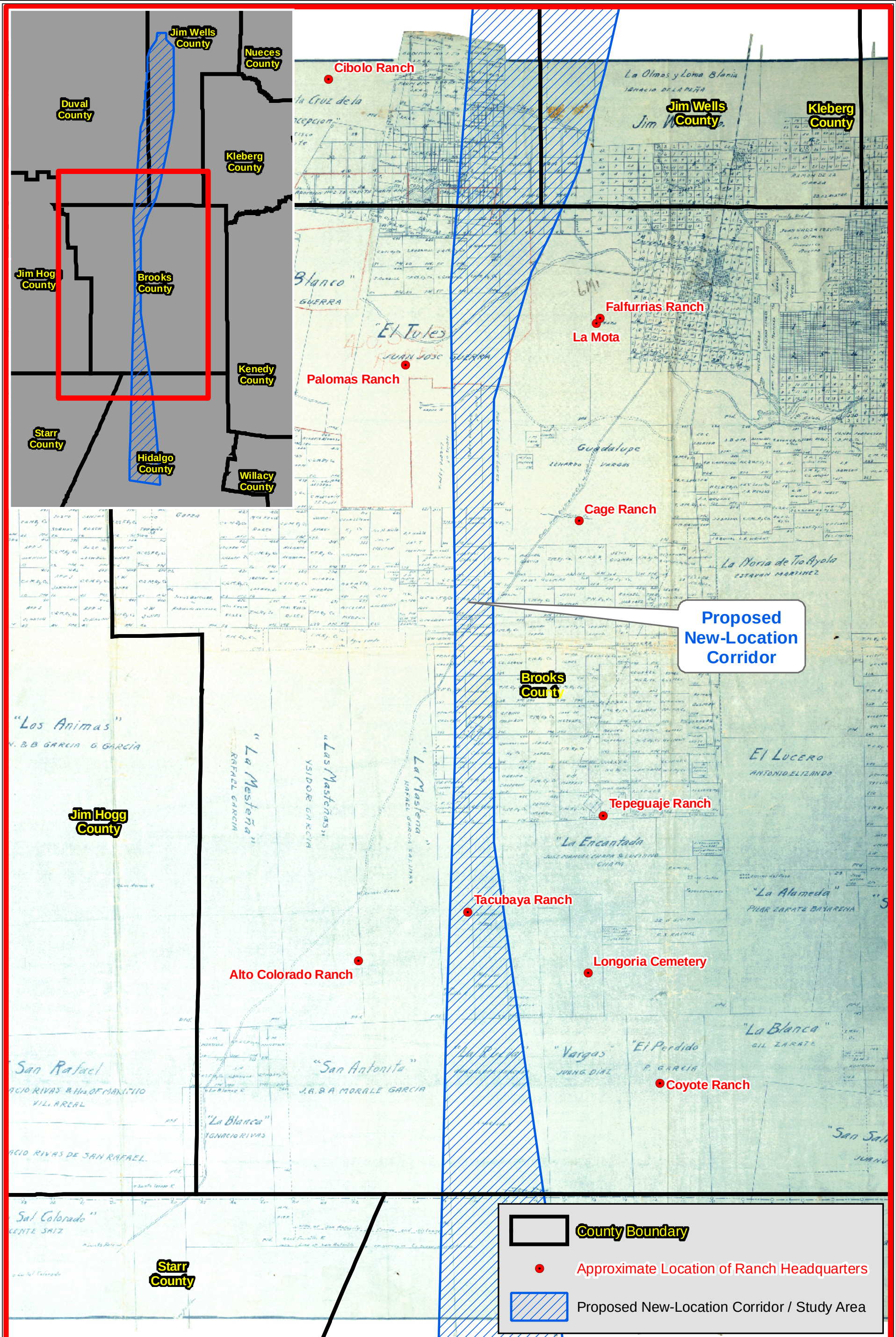


Figure 3
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
Map of the Rio Grande Frontier (1893) Showing Approximate Locations of 19th- and Early 20th-Century Ranches



PCR

N

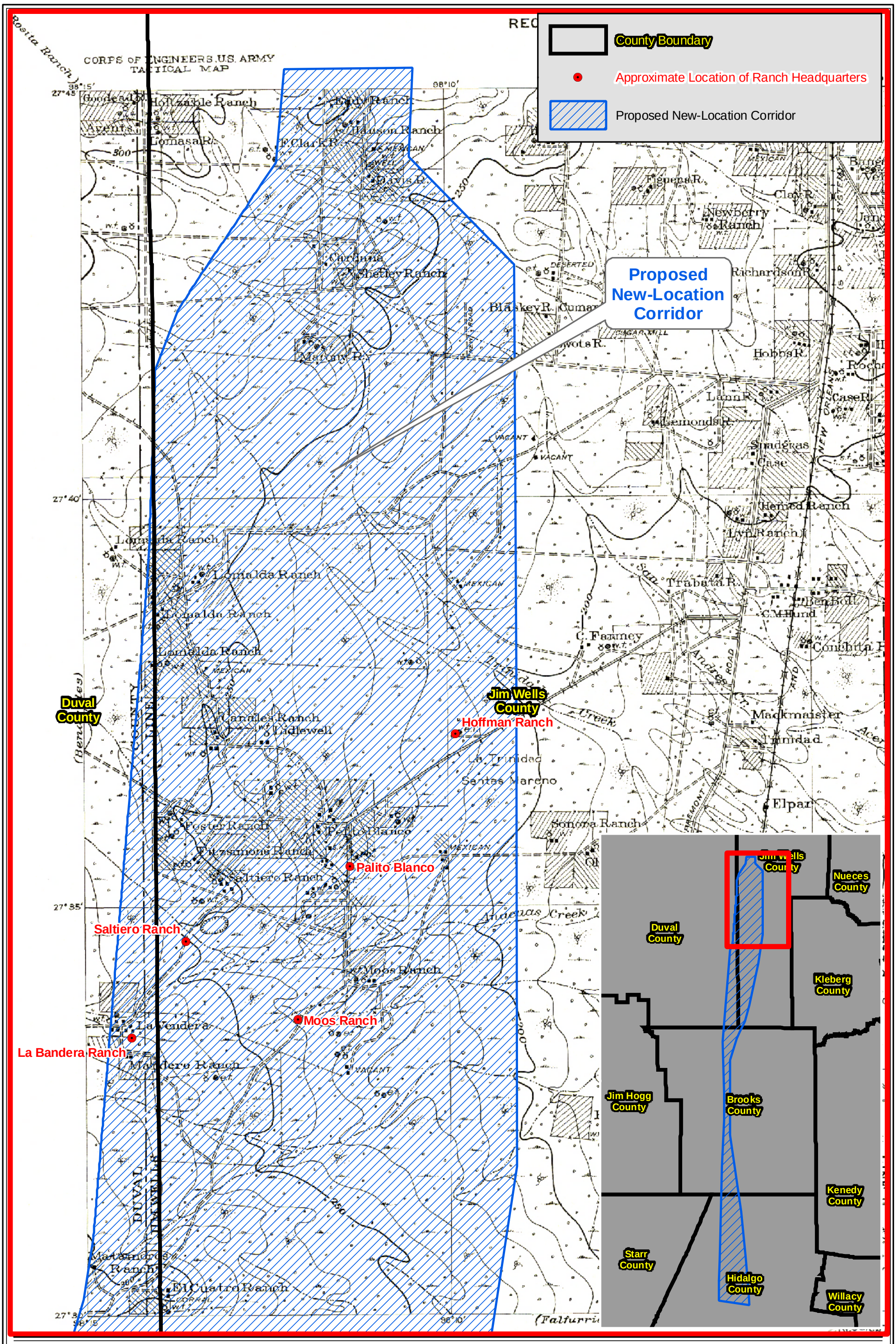
3 0 3 Miles

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 4

South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC

GLO Map of Brooks County, Texas (1912)



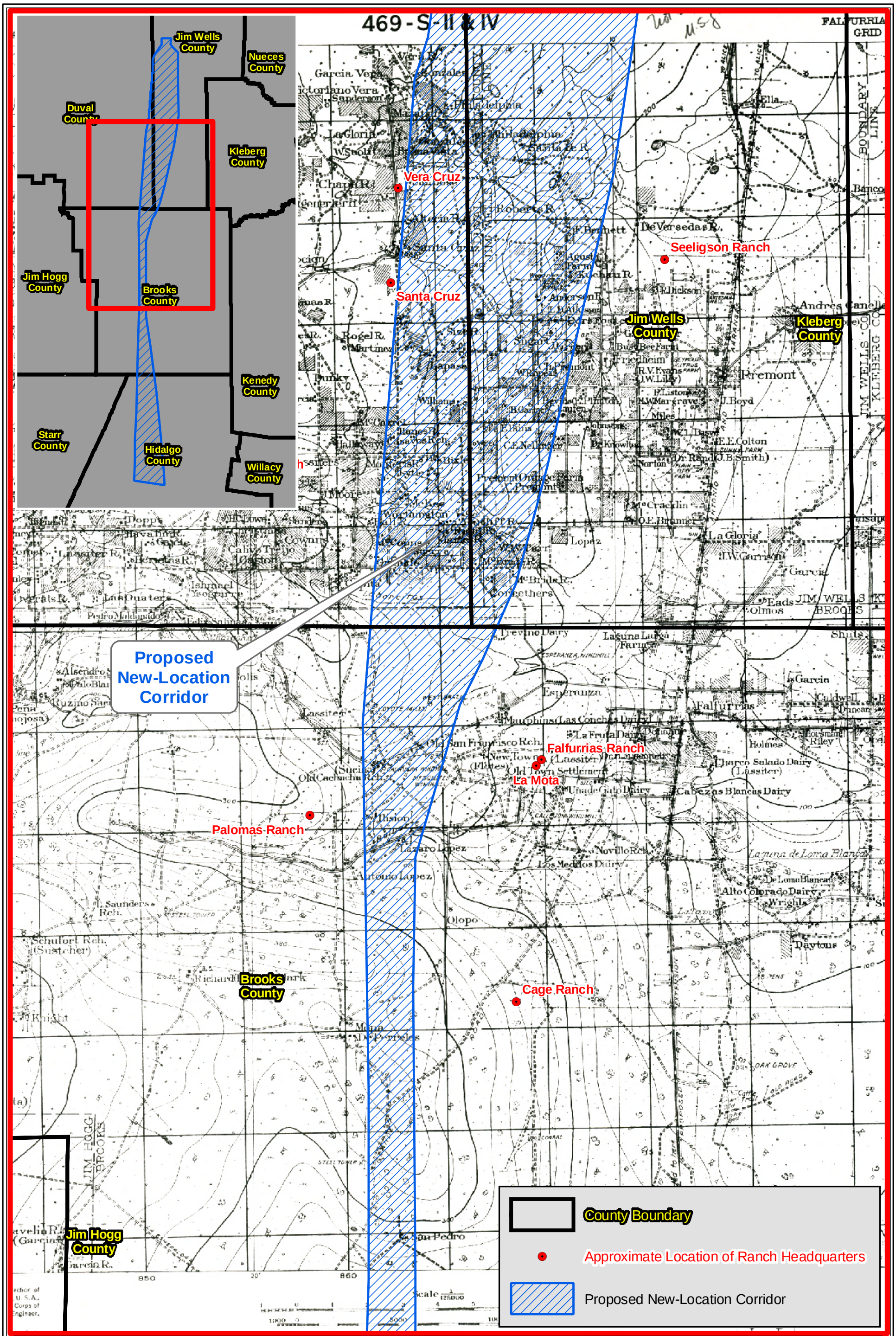
PCR

N

1.25 0 1.25 Miles

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 5
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
U.S. ACOE Tactical Map
Ben Bolt Quadrangle (1917)



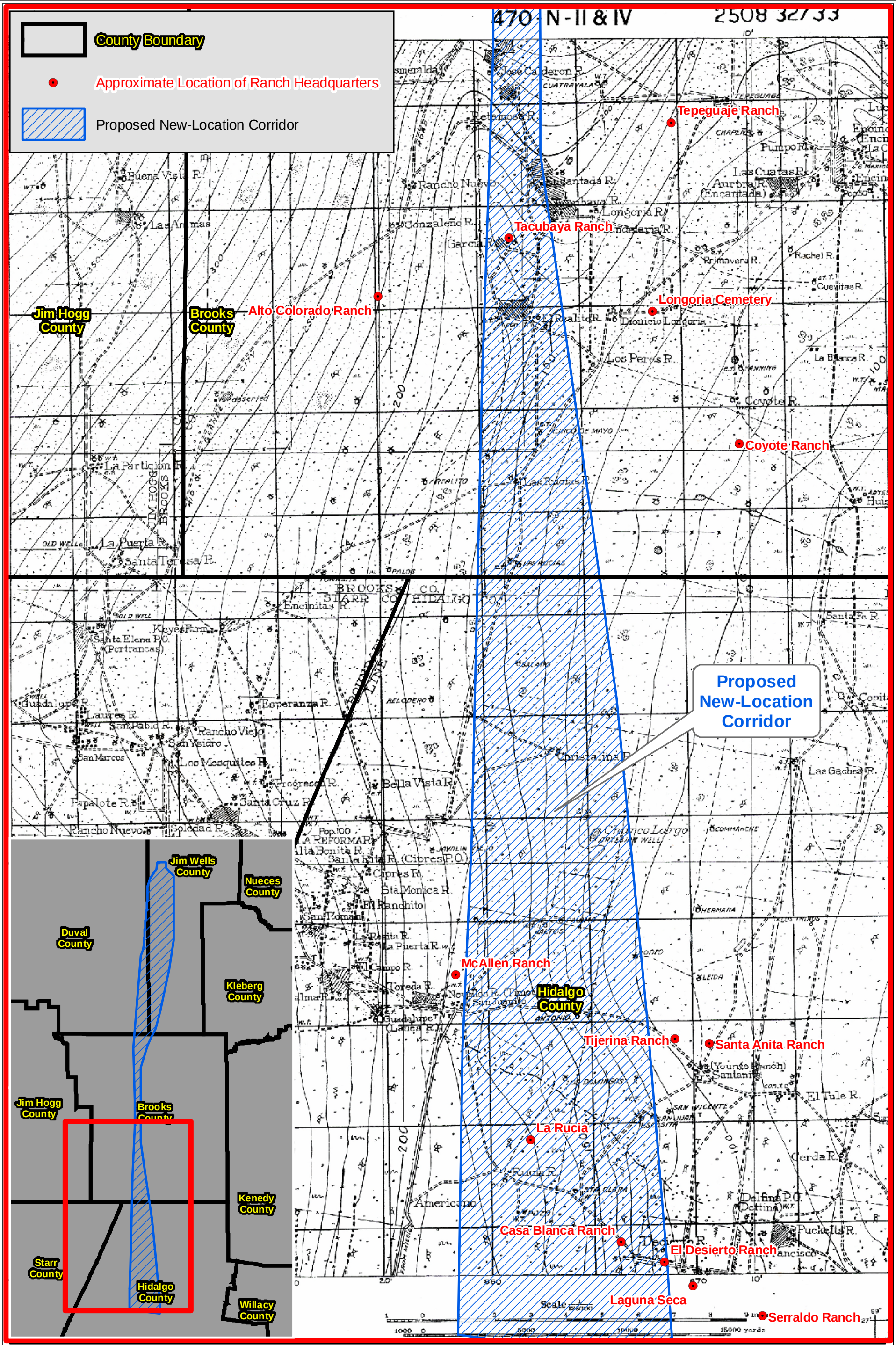
PCR

N

2.5 0 2.5 Miles

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 6
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
U.S. ACOE Tactical Map
Falfurrias Quadrangle (1917)



PCR

N

2.5 0 2.5 Miles

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 7
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
U.S. ACOE Tactical Map
La Reforma Quadrangle (1916)

Summary Results of the Map Analysis
To refine the list and target those resources for further evaluation, the historians conducted additional map analyses and considered a variety of topics, which are listed below:

- Location within the proposed new-location corridor,
- Previous historic designation,
- Cartographic and photographic data that indicate the on-going presence of cultural resources and information about their locations, and
- Representation of identified historic themes.

Prime candidates that historians identified for field investigation are highlighted in Table 2, which includes the names, locations, estimated dates of inception of operation, and associated themes for each property**.** This list is by no means complete and comprehensive but it reports the results of this macro-level and preliminary investigation within the study area.

Table 2.
Extant Ranching-Related Resources in South Texas Within or Adjacent to the Proposed New-Location Corridor for I-69/TTC New Location Corridor
Organized Geographically From North to South
Based on the Historic Map Analysis (see Table 1)

Name	Location	Inception of Operation	Theme	Maps
Palito Blanco	Jim Wells County Off FM 735 fifteen miles SW of Alice	pre-1893	The site was first settled by Mexican ranchers. The community had a population of 25 in 1891. A post office, Palito Blanco, was established at the site in 1916. In 1933 Palito Blanco had an estimated population of twenty and five businesses. In 1936 the town included one school, two cemeteries, four businesses, multiple farm units, and various dwellings. The town's population had increased to 100 by 1943 but by 1950 had dropped to 40. During the 1950s and 1960s, Palito Blanco's population remained constant, and by 1963 the town included two schools, San José church, and several dispersed dwellings. Palito Blanco saw little change during the 1970s and 1980s, and in 1990 the population was 35.	Current USGS 1917 1907 1893
Saltiero Ranch	Jim Wells County SW of Palito Blanco	pre-1893	Historic maps indicate this ranch has been in continuous use since the late nineteenth century.	Current USGS 1917 1907 1893

Name	Location	Inception of Operation	Theme	Maps
Moos Ranch	Jim Wells	pre-1917	Historic maps indicate this is a turn-of-the-twentieth-century ranch.	Current USGS 1917
Bandera Ranch	Duval County SW of Saltiero R.	pre-1893	The Bandera Ranch may be part of Las Anacuas founded by Vicente Ynojosa. Historic maps indicate this ranch has been in continuous use since the late nineteenth century or earlier.	Current USGS 1907 1893
Dairy and Truck Farms	Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells	early twentieth century	Subdivided from Ed C. Lasater's land holdings, dairy and truck farms and representative of the diversification of agriculture were dependent on technological advances in water development and management. The dairy and truck farms are also related to land development and the influx of farmers particularly from the mid-west via newly constructed railroad systems. Part of area was included in previous survey of Duval County.	1958 1947 Tobin 1912 GLO
La Mota	Brooks, Duval, Jim Wells	Acquired bulk of land holdings by 1910	La Mota is the headquarters of the former cattle ranch and dairy operations of Ed C. Lasater (d. 1930), a significant personage in development of region who founded the town of Falfurrias and also ran for governor. His son, Tom Lasater, took over ranch operations and developed the. Beefmaster breed continuing breeding methods developed by his father. The property was previously surveyed in 1982.	Current USGS 1973 1917
Palo Blanco de Charco Redondo and El Tule Old Cachucha Mills Bennett Estate Palomas Ranch	Brooks County	1808	Founded by Juan Jose Guerra in 1808, El Tule is situated on Los Olmos Creek and once encompassed 22,538 acres in Brooks County. Adjacent on the west, Palo Blanco de Charco Redondo was also part of El Tule and was founded by Ysidora Guerra on Palo Blanco Creek. The land grants appear on the 1912 GLO map, the 1947 Tobin map, and the 1958 Beard map. In 1958, the ranch was owned by the Mills Bennett Estate. The Old Cachucha Ranch site and windmill appear on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Tactical Map (1917) at the same location. Ranch headquarters (now called Palomas Ranch) and the Cachucha Windmill appear on the current USGS topo.	Current USGS 1958 (Beard) 1947 (Tobin) 1917 1912 (GLO)

Name	Location	Inception of Operation	Theme	Maps
El Tepeguaje	Brooks County	post 1834	El Tepeguaje is within an 1834 Mexican land grant known as La Encantada. The first ranch located on La Encantada land was "La Mesa" founded by Manuel Perez. Another ranch on La Encantada was "Tacubaya" founded by the Garcia family (see below). The first ranch established by the Villarreal family on La Encantada was "El Tepeguaje" (NW of Tacubaya) which was sold to Scott & Hopper. Gregorio Villarreal established a ranch called "La Primavera" (razed in the 1940s or 1950s) due west of "La Mota de la Encantada." The "Santa Rita" ranch was established during the early 1900s by Ponciano Longoria and remained the hub of the Longoria family until 1929. The ranch continued to be occupied until 1987. Many of the original ranch buildings were razed in the late 1990s.	Current USGS 1916
Garcia Ranch "Tacubaya"	Brooks County, FM430 west of CR313	pre-1827.	Located on the La Encantada land grant, Tacubaya has been associated with the Garcia family since 1872-73, when the headquarters was called Realitos. Eligio and Braulia Garcia purchased the westernmost league in the La Encantada Grant. Although the land has been subdivided over time, most of the land is still owned by descendants of Eligio and Braulia Garcia.	Current USGS 1973 1932 1916 1912
Longoria Ranch	Brooks County, FM755 near CR308	pre-1917	Longoria Ranch was part of "San Ramon," and presently includes a cemetery site, a ranching community and oil production.	Current USGS 1973 1932 1916
McAllen Ranch	Hidalgo County, FM1017 at McAllen Ranch Road	ca. 1790	The McAllen Ranch is within the Santa Anita Spanish land grant founded by Jose Manuel Gomez but also includes a small amount of land in the San Ramon land grant (ca. 1804) west of Santa Anita. Extant resources on the ranch date from the 1790s through early to mid-twentieth century that are representative of Spanish Colonial, Mexican Colonial, Republic of Texas, and subsequent periods. The history of the ranch reflects the importance of entrepreneurial alliances of Euro-Americans and prominent local Hispanic families who founded and developed the county.	Current USGS 1935 Beard 1913

Name	Location	Inception of Operation	Theme	Maps
Santa Anita Ranch (Young's Ranch)		ca. 1790s	The Santa Anita Ranch was founded by Jose Manuel Gomez and encompassed 95,202 acres in Hidalgo County. Map research indicates ranch integrity may be intact.	Current USGS 1935 Beard 1932 1913 1893
La Rucia Ranch Site	Hidalgo County	pre 1912	"La Rucia" was founded by Guadalupe Sanchez. The current USGS topo indicates a ranch headquarters site and two old windmill sites may still exist.	Current USGS Beard 1935 1932 1916 1913 1912
El Desierto Ranch	Hidalgo County	pre 1916		Current USGS 1932 1916
Laguna Seca	Hidalgo County, Laguna Seca Road west of US 281	1867	Laguna Seca lies within the Santanita Spanish land grant. The first citrus trees in Hidalgo County were planted on Laguna Seca Ranch by Carlota Vela in 1871, signaling start of an industry that became South Texas- and Valley-wide in scope. The ranch eventually totaled close to 80,000 acres and contained a post office, school, and Catholic church. It is a representative example of a ranching community in the region. Laguna Seca has a Texas Historical Marker.	Current USGS 1913

The map analysis also resulted in the identification of settlement patterns in the study area. The entire study area is primarily rural in character in contrast to the more densely populated communities, such as Falfurrias, Premont, San Diego, and Alice. Until the late nineteenth century, settlement throughout the area was sparse, except where creeks such as Baluarte and Palo Blanco in Brooks County and Anacuas and Narciseno Creeks in Jim Wells and Duval Counties attracted and sustained more-dense populations. After 1900, large ranches continued to dominate in the southern half of the corridor. In the area of northern Books County, however, railroad construction, improvements in water well drilling technology, and promotion of the area to immigrants resulted in larger populations and demand for land. Promoted by Ed C. Lasater, the area around Falfurrias assumed a distinct configuration as large tracts associated with the ranching industry were overlaid by smaller tracts associated with truck farming and dairying. Aerials dated 1930 and 2004 document the apparent continuity of the small-tract pattern south, west, and north of Falfurrias. Mid-twentieth-century quadrangles suggest that other areas, such as that southwest of Falfurrias, have reverted to the large-scale ranch patterns.

Map analysis also resulted in the identification of oil- and gas-related properties as integral to the cultural landscape. A secondary textual source (Kohout 1996:2:742-744) stated that oil was discovered in Duval County in 1905, but that full-scale production was delayed until 1928. Initial drilling occurred in 1931 in Jim Wells County, 1934 in Hidalgo County, and 1935 in Brooks County. However, no cartographic resources were examined as part of this task that recorded the presence or extent of the industry in the study area during the first third of the twentieth century.

Rather, oil and gas development is documented in a 1941 map of Hidalgo County, and in 1958 and 1967 maps of Brooks County. These sources reveal that, by the mid-twentieth century, the imprint of oil and gas development on the land was clearly seen in road networks that traversed ranches and led to the well pads visible in current aerials. Since this historic activity is an integral component to the cultural landscape, additional research and analysis would be required to establish significance and integrity necessary to evaluate resources associated with this context.

Historic Themes and Associated Property Types

Map analysis resulted in the identification of property types and National Register themes (areas of significance). These themes and their associated property types include the following:

Agriculture

Agriculture has provided the underpinnings of the South Texas economy from the late eighteenth century through the twentieth century. The practice of agriculture began with large-scale cattle and sheep ranches and evolved to include dairying, and truck and citrus farming during the twentieth century. The area has been one of the most agriculturally productive in Texas during a period of significance that began in 1790 with the founding of Spanish ranches and concluded in 1970 when large-scale ranching coexisted with dairying, truck farming, and citrus-growing operations.

Associated property types include, but are not limited to, ranch headquarters, miscellaneous buildings, and site features such as barns, coops, dumps, *hornos*, kennels, cribs, garages, kitchens, power generating facilities, shops, commissaries, curing/processing structures, gardens, granaries, housing for laborers, milk houses, mills, smithies, stables, dams, wells, *acequias*, watering troughs, cisterns, corrals, fencing, dipping vats, windmills and tanks, loading chutes, fields and field patterns, dairies, creameries, and farmsteads.

Architecture

Architecture within the study area spans more than 200 years and reflects the dominant economic activities and ethnic groups involved in its settlement. Early Hispanic ranchers were dependent on local resources, and this constraint is readily seen in the presence of building materials such as caliche blocks or *sillares*, brush, mesquite, and river cane. The harshness of the environment is reflected in the presence of fortified structures placed in locations with proximity to water resources. With improvements in transportation systems, milled lumber as well as brick became widely available by the late nineteenth century, and ranch architecture changed accordingly. After 1900, most buildings, including houses and associated outbuildings, were of wood-frame construction. The presence of a wide range of architectural materials and types reflects the evolution of the region from its earliest period of settlement through the mid-twentieth century.

Associated property types include, but are not limited to, ranch headquarters, schools, chapels, commissaries, barns, coops, dumps, *hornos*, kennels, cribs, garages, kitchens, power generating facilities, shops, commissaries, curing/processing structures, granaries, housing for laborers, milk houses, mills, smithies, stables, quarries, corrals, fencing, windmills and tanks, loading chutes, dairies, creameries, and farmsteads. (See also property types associated with Agriculture and Ethnic Heritage.)

Ethnic Heritage

Settlement of South Texas and development of its agricultural potential were initiated by families of Spanish and Mexican descent, who explored the region, established its ranches, ranch communities, and ranching traditions, created a strong social fabric, and contributed to its agricultural development throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth. The success of these families often was due to the ways in which they adapted to remote, arid landscapes, including the tools they employed, their ingenious use of local materials, and the practice of building near reliable water sources; these were also strategies adopted by later Anglo ranchers. Ownership of family land was an important aspect of Hispanic life, one result of which was subdivision of what had been large holdings into smaller tracts held by interrelated individuals. Many Hispanic ranch holdings of the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries reflected this configuration.

Associated property types include, but are not limited to, ranch headquarters with houses constructed of *sillares*, *jacales* (brush, mesquite, and rivercane, and plastered with mud), miscellaneous buildings and site features reflecting the self-sufficiency of the ranch communities (barns, coops, dumps, *hornos*, schools, cemeteries, cribs, hospitals, kitchens, shops, chapels, commissaries, curing/processing structures, gardens, granaries, housing for laborers, mills, quarries, smithies, and stables), trees and other natural or cultivated landscaping, dams across arroyos lined with *sillares*, hand-dug wells, *acequias*, watering troughs, corrals, stone or other permanent property markers (*linderos*), and fields and field patterns.

Exploration and Settlement

Exploration and settlement of South Texas occurred simultaneously during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, when Spanish and Mexican families received land grants between the Rio Grande and Nueces Rivers. The region was extraordinarily inhospitable due to the climate and presence of hostile Indians. Successful establishment of ranches between 1790 and the Texas Revolution resulted in the establishment of the livestock industry in South Texas, settlement of the frontier north of the Rio Grande River, and development of a social and economic network that continued to function into the twentieth century. The remote character of the region resulted in the establishment of fortified ranches, so that the basis of early settlement often was a community characterized by many of the attributes of a small town. Such communities formed barriers to hostile Indian raids and "created a pioneering trail into the rugged ranch country across [the Rio Grande] from the Villas del Norte" (Tijerina 1998:10).

Associated property types include, but are not limited to, roads and trails, and ranch headquarters reflecting community self-sufficiency (see also property types associated with Ethnic Heritage).

Industry

Industry in the form of oil and gas development became an important theme in the study area beginning in the mid-1920s. At a time when drought and economic depression might have taken a significant toll on the regional economy, development of energy resources provided an important underpinning that often made possible the persistence of ranching and farming when those activities might not have been self-sustaining. Oil and gas production has remained an important part of the South Texas economy through the twentieth century, and evidence of the activity as well as the improvements it made possible, are apparent on almost all South Texas ranches.

Associated property types include, but are not limited to, roads, well pads, derricks, tanks, and ranch improvements, including ranch headquarters dating to the period of oil and gas production.

Transportation

Transportation systems have lacked density in the study area largely due to the relatively sparse population. Earliest examples of transportation were ranch and military roads during the nineteenth century and county and state highways that developed during the first third of the twentieth century. The transportation type having the great impact on the study area appears to have been the railroad, which extended south from Alice in 1904 and became the impetus for the founding of Falfurrias, large-scale immigration, development and subdivision of large ranch holdings, and creation of dairies and truck farms.

Associated property types include, but are not limited to, trails, roads, bridges, culverts, rail-related features, towns, and truck and dairy farms.

EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

The National Register Criteria for Evaluation define the scope of the NRHP; they identify the range of resources and kinds of significance that will qualify properties for listing in the NRHP. Decisions concerning the significance, historic integrity, documentation, and treatment of properties can be made reliably only when the resource is evaluated within its historic context. The historic context serves as the framework within which the National Register Criteria are applied to specific properties or property types. For a property to qualify for the NRHP, it must meet one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation by being associated with an important historic context *and* retaining historic integrity of those features necessary to convey its significance. Information about the property based on physical examination and documentary research is necessary to evaluate a property's eligibility for the NRHP.

Evaluation of a property is most efficiently made when following this sequence:

1. A property must be classified as a district, site, building, structure, or object for inclusion in the NRHP.
2. Determine which historic context(s) the property represents. A property must possess significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, or culture when evaluated within the historic context of a relevant geographic area. Historic contexts are those patterns or trends in history by which a specific occurrence, property, or site is understood and its meaning (and ultimately its significance) within history or prehistory is made clear.
3. Identify the period of significance and determine which associated theme(s) the property represents. A theme is a means of organizing properties into coherent patterns based on elements such as environment, social/ethnic groups, transportation networks, technology, or political developments that have influenced the development of an area. A theme is considered significant if it can be demonstrated, through scholarly research, to be important in American history.

4. Determine whether the property is significant under the National Register Criteria. This is done by identifying the links to important events or persons, design or construction features, or information potential that make the property important.
5. Determine whether the property retains integrity. Evaluate the aspects of location, design, setting, workmanship, materials, feeling, and association that the property must retain to convey its historic significance.

National Register Criteria for Evaluation
The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, engineering, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association, and:

A. That are associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history; or

B. That are associated with the lives of significant persons in or past; or

C. That embody the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or

D. That have yielded or may be likely to yield, information important in history or prehistory.

National Register Criteria Considerations
Ordinarily cemeteries, birthplaces, graves of historical figures, properties owned by religious institutions or used for religious purposes, structures that have been moved from their original locations, reconstructed historic buildings, properties primarily commemorative in nature, and properties that have achieved significance within the past 50 years shall not be considered eligible for the NRHP. However, such properties *will qualify* if they are integral parts of districts that do meet the criteria or if they fall within the following categories:

A. A religious property deriving primary significance from architectural or artistic distinction or historical importance; or

B. A building or structure removed from its original location but which is primarily significant for architectural value, or which is the surviving structure most importantly associated with a historic person or event; or

C. A birthplace or grave of a historical figure of outstanding importance if there is no appropriate site or building associated with his or her productive life; or

D. A cemetery that derives its primary importance from graves of persons of transcendent importance, from age, from distinctive design features, or from association with historic events; or

E. A reconstructed building when accurately executed in a suitable environment and presented in a dignified manner as part of a restoration master plan, and when no other building or structure with the same association has survived; or

F. A property primarily commemorative in intent if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own exceptional significance; or

G. A property achieving significance within the past 50 years if it is of exceptional importance.

Evaluation Framework for the South Texas Ranching Study

All properties change over time. It is not necessary for a property to retain all its historic physical features or characteristics. The property must retain, however, the essential physical and character-defining features that enable it to convey its historic identity. The essential physical features are those attributes that define both why a property is significant (Applicable Criteria and Areas of Significance) and when it was significant (Periods of Significance). They are the features without which a property can no longer be identified as, for instance, a late nineteenth-century ranching community or and early twentieth-century dairy barn. The primary themes and areas of significance associated with the history of ranching in the study area that are significant for providing preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessments include the following:

- Agriculture
- Architecture
- Engineering
- Ethnic Heritage
- Exploration/Settlement
- Industry
- Politics/Government
- Transportation

Criterion A: Trends and Patterns of History.

A property that is significant for its historic associations under Criterion A is eligible if it retains the essential physical features that made up its character or appearance during the period of its association with an important event or historical pattern. Properties in the study area preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP could be significant for their association with the following trends and patterns of history within the region, which are organized below by chronological periods of significance.

1790-1852 Spanish and Mexican Land Grant/Confirmation Period

Spanish and Mexican land grants were the legal framework for the eventual establishment of early ranches on these lands during the late eighteenth through the mid-nineteenth centuries. Ranches during this period were characterized by vast land holdings and cattle and sheep ranching.

1853-1893 Consolidation of Ownership and Development of the Livestock Industry

With confirmation of ownership, remaining land vacancies became available. Large ranch holdings were subdivided among descendants. In other cases, Hispanic families acquired and developed new ranches. A number of Anglo-American ranchers moved into the area, occupying vacancies and consolidating surplus ranch lands. Some developed entrepreneurial family alliances through intermarriage with Hispanic ranchers. In other cases, ranchers acquired land in the area as a result of inclement weather in the mid-1880s and a drought in

the early 1890s that forced some owners to sell out. The development of the livestock industry during this period was reflected in the establishment of numerous ranches throughout the study area. Road networks were developed and improved, and wells and watering systems were installed in support of the livestock industry, which intensified. The owners of these ranches were the founders of their respective counties, responsible for establishing the social, political and cultural institutions of the region.

1894-1970 Continuation of Ranching Tradition/Diversification of Agriculture/Oil and Gas Exploration, Testing and Proving

Around the turn of the century, access to rail transportation and dependable watering systems provided new economic opportunities. While traditional ranching continued, some large land holdings were subdivided. Truck farming and dairying operations on subdivisions were representative of the trend toward the economic diversification of agriculture and industry through the better part of the twentieth century. Oil and gas exploration, testing, and proving is reflected in the appearance of oil wells and fields on ranch lands from the 1900s. The oil and gas industry further intensified the pattern of economic diversification in the study area, while also supplementing and supporting the continuation of the ranching tradition to the present.

Criterion B: Historic Personages.

Properties in the study area will be preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP if they are significant for their association with historic personages who were important in local, regional, state or national history. A significant personage would be someone who played a key, influential role in establishing or developing the trends and patterns of history or themes related to South Texas ranching and agriculture.

Criterion C: Architecturally distinctive/outstanding properties and representative examples of property types.

Architecturally distinctive or outstanding properties that are preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP are those that are associated with the work of a master architect or craftsman, or are an outstanding example of a particular style, workmanship or type within the locality, region or state.

A property important for illustrating a particular architectural style or construction technique must retain most of the physical features that constitute that style or technique. A property that has lost some historic materials or details can be eligible if it retains the majority of the features that illustrate its style in terms of the massing, spatial relationships, proportion, pattern of windows and doors, texture of materials, and ornamentation. The property is not eligible for the NRHP, however, if it retains some basic features conveying massing but has lost the majority of the features that once characterized its style.

Representative property types would include individual ranches as well as ranch groups and ranching communities. Additional property types would include dairy farms, truck farms or groupings thereof. A representative property type should reflect the trends and patterns of development associated with ranching in the study area in appearance, features and use, as exemplified in the extant cultural features, location, and setting. If there are multiple examples, the property selected should be among the best representative examples of its type, possess high artistic or cultural values, or important historical associations. Conversely, a property

preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP under Criterion C could also be a rare surviving example of its type in the locality, region, or state.

Criterion D: Research Potential.
For properties preliminarily recommended as eligible for the NRHP under Criterion D, including archaeological sites and standing structures studied for their information potential, less attention is given to their overall condition than if they were being considered under Criterion A, B, or C. For properties eligible under Criterion D, integrity is based upon the property's potential to yield specific data that address important research questions. A number of questions that structures and sites may address have relevance to the South Texas region. For example, the study area was one of the earliest settled in Texas, and for that reason and others, archival documentation of settlement patterns is not always readily available. However, it may be possible to reconstruct those patterns by locating and recording evidence of improvements, including houses, house ruins, cemeteries and chapels, dams, *acequias*, water troughs, *tinajas*, and water storage tanks such as those at the McAllen Ranch and Tacubaya. Similarly, regional construction types have been studied by scholars, but no typology exists that answers questions such as the distribution and chronology of those types, and the length of time traditional building techniques persisted. The study area offers unusual opportunities to use a variety of disciplines, including architectural and archaeological studies, archival research, and the collecting of oral histories to answer such questions.

Assessing Integrity
Integrity is the ability of a property to convey its significance and is a requisite for NRHP eligibility. A property must not only be shown to be significant under the National Register Criteria, but it also must have integrity grounded in an understanding of a property's physical features and how they relate to its significance. Within the concept of integrity, the National Register Criteria recognize seven aspects or qualities that, in various combinations, define integrity. To retain historic integrity, a property will always possess several, and usually most, of the aspects.

- Location
- Design
- Setting
- Materials
- Workmanship
- Feeling
- Association

Location is the place where the historic property was constructed or the place where the historic event occurred. The relationship between the property and its location is often important to understanding why the property was created or why something happened. The actual location of a historic property, complemented by its setting, is particularly important in recapturing the sense of historic events and persons.

Design is the combination of elements that create the form, plan, space, structure, and style of a property. Design includes such elements as organization of space, proportion, scale, technology, ornamentation, and materials. A property's design reflects historic functions and technologies as well as aesthetics. It includes such considerations as the structural system; massing; arrangement of spaces; pattern of fenestration; textures and colors of surface materials; type, amount, and style

of ornamental detailing; and arrangement and type of plantings. Design can also apply to districts, whether they are important primarily for historic association, architectural value, information potential, or a combination thereof. For districts, design also applies to the way in which buildings, sites, or structures are related.

Setting is the physical environment of a historic property. Whereas location refers to the specific place where a property was built or an event occurred, setting refers to the character of the place in which the property played its historical role. It involves how the property is situated and its relationship to surrounding features and open space. Setting often reflects the basic physical conditions under which a property was built and the functions it was intended to serve. In addition, the way in which a property is positioned in its environment can reflect the designer's concept of nature and aesthetic preferences. The physical features that constitute the setting of a historic property can be either natural or manmade, and may include such elements as:

- Topographic features (a low depression or valley, the crest of a hill, quarries, creeks, springs, etc.);
- Vegetation (brush and grass lands, pastures, fields, tree rows, groves of trees, etc.;
- Simple manmade features (trails, roads, paths, fence lines, windmills); and
- Relationships between buildings, structures and other features or open space.

Materials are the physical elements that were combined or deposited during a particular period of time and in a particular pattern or configuration to form a historic property. The choice and combination of materials reveal the preferences of those who created the property and indicate the availability of particular types of materials and technologies. Indigenous materials are often the focus of regional building traditions and thereby help define an area's sense of time and place. A property must retain the key exterior materials dating from the period of its historic significance.

Workmanship is the physical evidence of the crafts of a particular culture or people during any given period in history or prehistory. It is the evidence of artisans' labor and skill in constructing or altering a building, structure, object, or site. Workmanship can apply to the property as a whole or to its individual components. It can be expressed in vernacular methods of construction and plain finishes or in highly sophisticated configurations and ornamental detailing. It can be based on common traditions or innovative period techniques. Workmanship can furnish evidence of the technology of a craft, illustrate the aesthetic principles of a historic or prehistoric period, and reveal individual, local, regional, or national applications of both technological practices and aesthetic principles.

Feeling is a property's expression of the aesthetic or historic sense of a particular period of time. It results from the presence of physical features that, taken together, convey the property's historic character. For example, a rural historic district retaining original design, materials, workmanship, and setting will relate the feeling of agricultural life in the nineteenth century.

Association is the direct link between an important historic event or person and a historic property. A property retains association if it is the place where the event or activity occurred and is sufficiently intact to convey that relationship to an observer. Like feeling, association requires the presence of physical features that convey a property's historic character. Because feeling and association depend on individual perceptions, their retention alone is never sufficient to support eligibility of a property for the NRHP.

FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

Historians conducted a windshield survey of selected ranches based on the results of historical research and map analysis, and the development of a decision-making framework developed for the project. The windshield survey was intended to document existing conditions, assess the methodology developed for the project, and evaluate the selected resources for preliminary NRHP-eligibility assessments. The historian developed the list of potential ranch locations based on

- Reviews of historic maps that resulted in the identification of cultural features,
- Analysis of the resources according to four National Register Criteria and selection of prime candidates for field investigation,
- Preliminary identification of settlement patterns in the study area,
- Continuity of ranch activities associated with the property
- Continuity of ownership
- Identification of oil- and gas-related properties as integral parts of the cultural landscape that do not detract from the integrity of the overall property,
- Identification of six National Register themes (areas of significance) and numerous associated property types, and
- Development of an evaluation framework.

Prior to conducting field investigations, the historians attempted to identify and contact owners of historic ranches in the study area. Ownership information from the Family Land Heritage Program of the Texas Department of Agriculture provided an easy-to-access list of individuals and families who were associated with historic ranches identified during the map analysis phase. One of the persons on the list was Charles Hoffman who, after being contacted by the project historians, offered to inform other area ranchers about the project. He also provided a list of names and contact information. The project historians forwarded this information to the THC, which sent letters to the ranchers and asked for their help and cooperation for the upcoming field investigations. The THC also provided the historians with a generic letter of introduction that could be given to other property owners encountered during field investigations. The letter stated that the study was being undertaken in response to concerns expressed by area ranchers about the possible effect the proposed project could have on historic ranches in the area that could be eligible for the NRHP.

Selection of properties for windshield survey and more-intensive examination was based on their identification during previous phases of the project, their accessibility from public roads, the willingness of property owners to grant access, and on additional data collected through oral interviews and at county tax appraisal district offices. As a result of information developed during previous phases, data collected in the field, and contacts with property owners, the team conducted a windshield survey of much of the agricultural landscape between US 281 on the east, SH 490 on the south, FM 755 and numerous ranch roads on the west, and SH 44 on the north. During this broad survey, team members visited properties that were visible from public right-of-way including Palito Blanco and associated cemeteries (Jim Wells County), Bandera Cemetery

and associated ranch community (Duval County), and the Vela Ranch and Cemetery (Hidalgo County)..

In order to gain access for more site-specific investigation, the team reviewed tax records and large-format aerial photographs at the Jim Wells and Brooks County Appraisal Districts, identifying property owners and acquiring contact information, as well as collecting graphic evidence of current property boundaries. They contacted local property owners and other knowledgeable informants, including Mary Margaret McAllen Amberson and James McAllen (San Juanito, [McAllen Ranch]), Esteban Garcia (Tacubaya), Charles Hoffman (Hoffman Ranch), Peggy Lasater Clark (La Mota at the old Falfurrias Ranch), and Berdon Lawrence and David Grall (Miller Ranch, [Laborcitas Creek Ranch]). As a result of this effort, the team acquired access to Tacubaya, La Mota, and the McAllen, Hoffman, and Miller Ranches.

Field investigations took place during the week of January 15, 2007. While visiting each site, the historians used digital cameras to photo-document the extant resources and associated landscape. The historians also used the most current USGS topographic maps to plot site locations and make field notations.

SURVEY RESULTS

The following is a summary of the windshield survey of three historic ranches with lands that extend into the proposed new-location corridor. Besides describing existing conditions, these results incorporate data from the map analysis, historical research, and interviews with local informants. The Historic Background section includes a summary of known historical associations that are indicative of ranching traditions within the region and other noteworthy historical themes, patterns, and persons of the past. The Description section provides an overview of the physical setting and location of each ranch as well as the types, concentrations, and locations of extant resources. The inventory provides a list of identified cultural landscape features as noted in the field and as depicted on current USGS topographic maps. The Significance section applies the National Register Criteria, which are critical in preliminarily assessing the NRHP eligibility of the two previously undocumented ranches and the one NRHP-listed ranch in the study area.

FALFURRIAS RANCH (LABORCITAS CREEK [MILLER] RANCH AND LA MOTA)

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Falfurrias Ranch is the historic name of the ranch established by Ed C. Lasater. He moved to the region in 1895 when he and John M. Bennett, Sr., acquired 25,709 acres of land in the Los Olmos and Los Olmos y La Blanca Grants. They purchased the property from the granddaughter of the original grantee (Ignacio de la Peña) and her husband, Tomasa and Matías García Saldaña, who had experienced financial hardships as a result of the severe drought of the early 1890s. Lasater soon acquired additional tracts of land from other descendants of Ignacio Peña as well as other landowners and eventually amassed approximately 350,000 acres of land in Duval, Jim Wells, Jim Hogg, and Brooks Counties. He established his residence and ranch headquarters at La Mota at a grove of live oak trees that was a well-known landmark in the area. La Mota stood near the center of his vast ranch.

Lasater played a pivotal role in the history and development of South Texas. He founded the city of Falfurrias and led efforts to create Brooks County. As a member of the Bull Moose Party, he ran unsuccessfully for governor in 1912 and served briefly as a high-level administrator under Herbert Hoover within the U.S. Food Administration. However, he also remained an active civic leader in the region and held several local political offices. Seeking to diversify his business interests, he pioneered the dairy industry in the region and set aside large tracts of land for small, family-run dairy farms. As a means of providing a market for these farmers, he established the Falfurrias Creamery, which purchased milk from area farmers and produced high-quality dairy products. After his death in 1930, his son, Tom, assumed control of the family's ranching operations and is best known for developing the Beefmaster breed. Lasater's other son, Garland, took over the creamery, which remained a cornerstone of the local economy until its closure in recent years.

The historic Miller Ranch, which constitutes much of the present-day Laborcitas Creek Ranch, includes parts of Lasater's former land holdings, much of which he lost in the last years of life

when faced with financial difficulties. The Miller Ranch is associated with L.D. Miller, who was the brother-in-law of Ed C. Lasater and a business associate.

Significant portions of the Miller Ranch were acquired in recent years by Berdon Lawrence. He established the Laborcitas Creek Ranch, which is named for the small creek that extends through the ranch. At present, much of the land is being returned to its natural state and will be used for recreational hunting, which has become an increasingly significant component of the local economy.

DESCRIPTION

Falfurrias Ranch is the historic name of a ranch that was established by Ed C. Lasater in 1895. At its peak, the ranch encompassed approximately 350,000 acres of land that extended over a multi-county region; however, the ranch headquarters and surrounding land in north-central Brooks County now fall within two parcels that are currently known as the Laborcitas Creek Ranch and La Mota (*Figures 8* and *9*). These two parcels are being considered together because of their close association with Lasater and because this area served as the headquarters of his ranching operations. Moreover, La Mota – the homestead tract – is completed encircled by the Laborcitas Creek Ranch and is hardly distinguishable as a separate parcel. Falfurrias Ranch is about three miles west of the city of Falfurrias and south of FM 285. Like much of the surrounding countryside, the land is generally open and used for agricultural purposes; however, the current owner of the Laborcitas Creek Ranch has implemented a land-management program that is restoring the natural landscape in support of his recreational hunting operations. The old fences that defined the pastures historically used to segregate the cattle herds are largely intact, and many of the old windmills and water wells remain prominent cultural landscape features. Vestiges of other historic locations and activities, such as the Old Town Cemetery, the old school site, and various dairy-related operations, also remain as noteworthy features on the landscape.

The most significant concentrations of buildings are at La Mota, the Miller Ranch Headquarters, Hollywood Camp, and the recently completed Laborcitas Creek Ranch headquarters complex. La Mota is a remarkably intact and noteworthy grouping of historic resources where Lasater maintained his private residence and established his ranch headquarters. Although Lasater's house is no longer extant, its replacement, an early 1950s residence designed by one of Texas' most significant twentieth-century architects, O'Neil Ford, is a Modern one-story, concrete-block dwelling (*Figure 10*) that is integrated into the landscape with an elongated plan and sliding glass walls. It includes woodwork by Ford's brother, Lynn Ford, a notable craftsman who oversaw construction of the house. It remains virtually unaltered. Nearby, the building known as the "playhouse" is a ca. 1905 brick edifice (*Figure 11*) that exemplifies the English Arts and Crafts Movement; it was designed by San Antonio architect Alfred Giles, an English immigrant who settled in Texas in 1875 and executed plans for public and private buildings throughout Texas and northern Mexico. The hay barn (*Figure 12*) is the largest and most imposing building at the complex. With finely crafted woodwork, it features a distinctive barn design that is rarely seen in Texas and reflects the Midwestern influence of Lasater's grand experiment to develop the dairy farm industry in South Texas. Other features within the La Mota complex include an early twentieth-century vernacular wood-frame residence with a steeply pitched hipped roof, a utilitarian concrete-block dairy building (*Figure 13*), and a windmill and associated water tank.

The Miller Ranch Headquarters is just northeast of La Mota, on the unpaved private road that runs southwest from FM 285 to La Mota. Based upon its physical characteristics, form, and materials, the ranch office (*Figure 14*) was built in the 1950s. However, the complex also includes several metal sheds, pens, and corrals that may pre-date the office.

The Miller House (*Figure 15*) is northeast of the headquarters, farther up the road toward FM 285. The house exhibits characteristics that are representative of the Minimal Traditional movement of the 1950s.

Due west of the point where the road that extends to La Mota intersects with FM 285, Hollywood Camp contains a collection of buildings used by recreational hunters. The complex includes a variety of wood- and metal-clad buildings; however, the most distinctive buildings are the three, small, detached lodges (*Figure 16*) that were built in the 1950s when recreational hunting was first introduced to the ranch.

The Laborcitas Creek Ranch headquarters is in the northern end of the ranch, near FM 285. It contains a large grouping of modern buildings, the most prominent of which is the owner's residence.

Other historic cultural-landscape features that exist in the surrounding ranchlands include the Old Town Cemetery (*Figure 17*), a schoolhouse site, and brick-lined underground silos (*Figure 18*). The following is an inventory of resources, as recorded in the field in January 2007 and as noted on available USGS quads. These resources correspond to the locations depicted on *Figures 8* and *9*.

Inventory of Resources at Falfurrias Ranch (Figure 8)
1. La Mota Ranch Headquarters
2. Miller Ranch Headquarters
3. Fruta Windmill and Dairy Site
4. Novia Windmill
5. Hollywood Camp
6. Miller Residence
7. Eucalyptus Tree Row
8. Llano Windmill
9. Esperanza Windmill
10. Laborcitas Creek Ranch Headquarters
11. Trevino Windmill
12. Montana Windmill
13. Rodeo Windmill
14. Rancho Nuevo Windmill
15. Soledad Windmill
16. Old Town Cemetery
17. School House Site
18. Old Town Windmill
19. Rancho Nuevo Grain Silo
20. San Juan Windmill
21. Mesquites Windmill
22. Palomas Windmill

23. Una de Gato Windmill and Dairy Site
24. San Francisco Windmill
25. Laguna Windmill site
26. Los Medano Windmill and Dairy Site
27. Maria Windmill
28. Uracas Windmill
29. Tecolot Windmill
30. Justo Windmill
31. Coyote Windmill
32. Tecolote Windmill
33. Cabezas Blancas Dairy Site

Inventory of Resources at La Mota (Figure 9)
1. Modern Ranch House
2. Old Ranch House Site
3. Windmill and Water Tank
4. Playhouse
5. Hay Barn
6. Early Twentieth-Century Residence
7. Dairy Building

SIGNIFICANCE

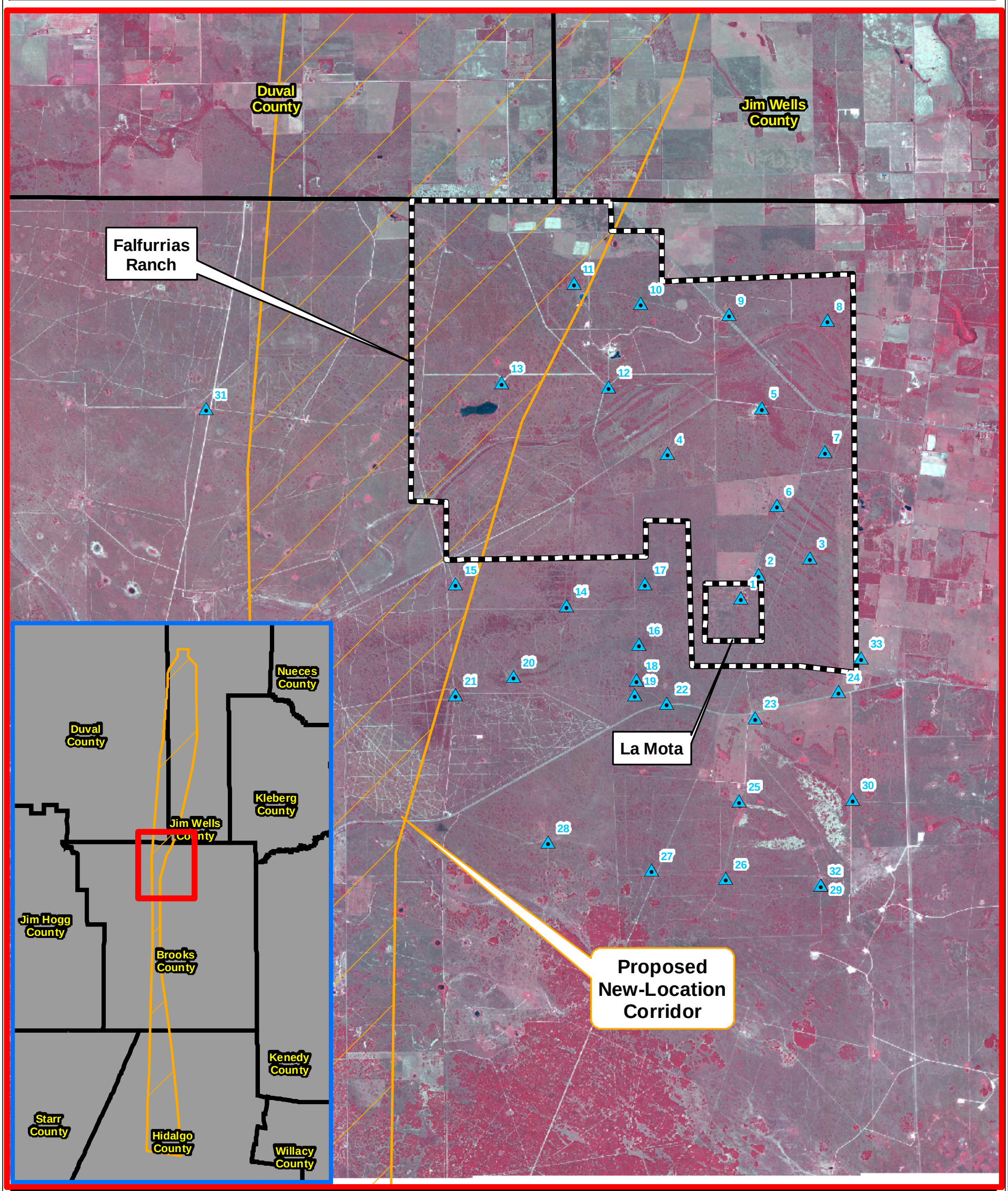
The Falfurrias Ranch is closely associated with Ed C. Lasater, a prominent South Texas rancher, civic leader, and land promoter of the very late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Although the ranch at one point encompassed 350,000 acres, its headquarters was located at La Mota, which presently includes the homestead tract (La Mota) and adjoining areas that are within present-day Laborcitas Creek Ranch. Since the La Mota homestead tract is completed surrounded by Laborcitas Creek Ranch, both parcels of land best represent the Falfurrias Ranch and are closely associated with Ed C. Lasater. Historical research has shown that the ranch is significant within the context of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century ranching in South Texas and is also the most direct and intact link to Lasater's efforts to develop the dairy farm industry in the region. For these reasons, Falfurrias Ranch appears to meet Criterion A of the National Register Criteria. Lasater also played a critical role in the development of South Texas and helped to create Brooks County. He was an active civic leader who held several local elected positions and ran unsuccessfully for governor of the state of Texas. Since it is associated with a significant individual who made important contributions to the history of the region, Falfurrias Ranch appears to meet Criterion B. The La Mota complex contains several significant architectural landmarks that also reflect the work of two very prominent Texas architects, Alfred Giles and O'Neil Ford. Falfurrias Ranch possesses architectural significance and appears to meet Criterion C. Finally, the landscape contains historic sites that could provide much useful information about early twentieth-century agricultural practices and thus appears to meet Criterion D for its research potential. A significant portion of the historic core of the Falfurrias Ranch lies within the proposed new-location corridor.

Falfurrias Ranch / La Mota Boundaries

Proposed New-Location Corridor

Inventory of Sites and Objects

1 - La Mota Ranch Headquarters
2 - Old Miller Ranch Headquarters
3 - La Fruta Windmill and Dairy Site
4 - Novia Windmill
5 - Hollywood Camp
6 - Miller Residence
7 - Eucalyptus Tree Row
8 - Llano Windmill
9 - Esperanza Windmill (1928)
10 - New Ranch Headquarters (Berdon Lawrence Residence)
11 - Trevino Windmill
12 - Montana Windmill
13 - Rodeo Windmill
14 - Rancho Nuevo Windmill
15 - Soledad Windmill
16 - Old Town Cemetery
17 - School House Site
18 - Old Town Windmill
19 - Rancho Nuevo Grain Silo
20 - San Juan Windmill
21 - Mesquites Windmill
22 - Palomas Windmill
23 - Una de Gato Windmill and Dairy Site
24 - San Francisco Windmill
25 - Laguna Windmill Site
26 - Los Medanos Windmill and Dairy Site
27 - Maria Windmill
28 - Uracas Windmill
29 - Tecolot Windmill
30 - Justo Windmill
31 - Coyote Windmill
32 - Tecolote Windmill
33 - Cabezas Blancas Dairy Site



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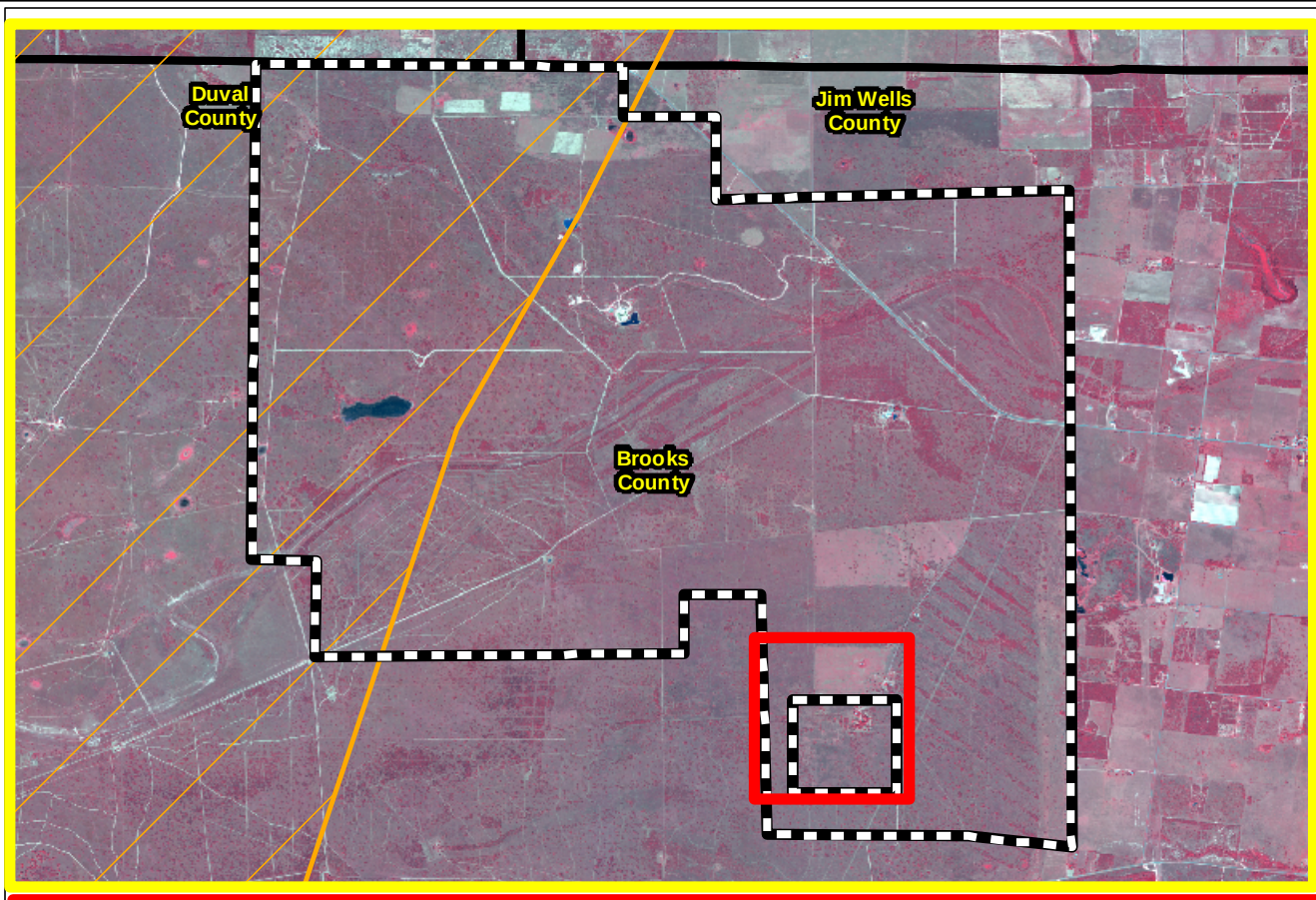
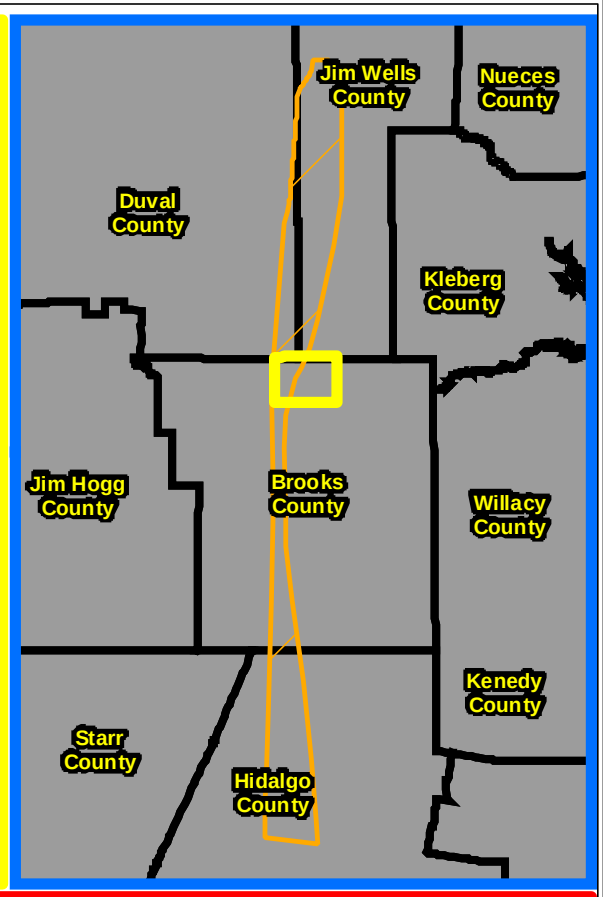
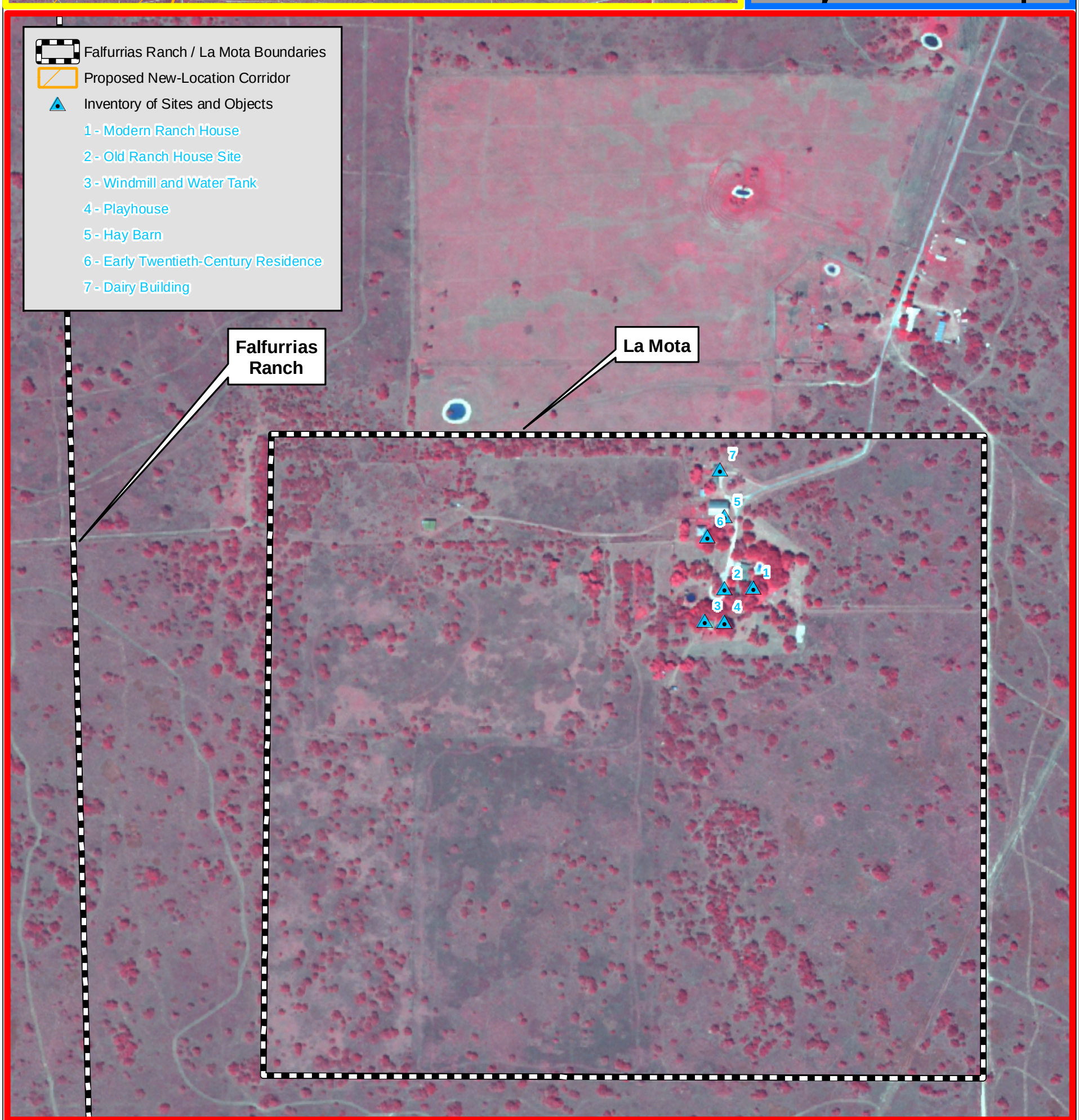
1 0 1 Miles

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 8
South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
Falfurrias Ranch
and La Mota







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500 0 500 Feet

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 9

South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC

La Mota

Figure 10. Modern Ranch House at La Mota (Falfurrias Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

Figure 11. Playhouse at La Mota (Falfurrias Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

Figure 12. Hay Barn at La Mota (Falfurrias Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

Figure 13. Dairy Building at La Mota (Falfurrias Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

Figure 14. Miller Ranch Headquarters at Laborcitas Creek Ranch (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 19, 2007).

Figure 15. Miller Ranch House at Laborcitas Creek Ranch (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 19, 2007).

Figure 16. Hollywood Camp Lodges at Laborcitas Creek Ranch (Miller Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 19, 2007).

Figure 17. Old Town Cemetery at Laborcitas Creek Ranch (Falfurrias Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 19, 2007).

Figure 18. Underground Silo at Uno de Gato Dairy Farm site on the Laborcitas Creek Ranch (Falfurrias Ranch) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 19, 2007).

TACUBAYA

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Tacubaya, which is located on the La Encantada Grant, is historically associated with the Eligio and Braulia de Garcia family since 1872-73. La Encantada was originally granted to José Manuel and Luciano de Chapa in 1834. Chapa sold La Encantada to Antonio Martinez, a resident of Matamoros, Mexico, on April 10, 1837. He held the property for only two weeks and sold it French Strother, also of Matamoros. Strother sold the grant to Frederick Belden, a member of a prominent Matamoros family in 1838. The Belden family retained ownership of La Encantada until May 16, 1872, when Frederick Belden's widow sold the grant to Gregorio Villarreal, a resident of Camargo. Within a year, Villarreal began selling off La Encantada in one-league parcels. He sold the most westerly league, location of the Realitos Ranch, to Eligio Garcia prior to September 1873. According to oral history, Eligio and his wife Braulia de Garcia occupied the pre-existing *sillar* house at Realitos for an unknown number of years. Eligio was born in Camargo, south of Rio Grande City. Prior to settling at Realitos, the Garcia family lived in Mexico on the Rio Grande. After moving to Realitos, they continued to travel back and forth frequently, and the family still maintains strong ancestral and cultural ties. By the 1920s, they were living approximately three miles north of Realitos at a site now identified as Tacubaya. The U.S. ACOE tactical map of 1917 (*Figure 7*) depicts both "Tacubaya Ranch" and "El Realito Ranch," indicating both the continuity of activities at Realitos Ranch headquarters through the early twentieth century, and the existence of Tacubaya Ranch headquarters by that time. After her death, Braulia de Garcia divided the family ranch among 13 heirs, each receiving 411.89 acres. Since that time, descendants have kept their shares and, when they became available, reacquired the shares of relatives. Presently, four owners now own the original ranch. Members of the Garcia family continue to use the property primarily to raise livestock but also have several active oil and gas wells.

DESCRIPTION

Tacubaya is north of FM 755, about 10 miles west of the community of Encino in south-central Brooks County (*Figure 19*). Much of the land is used to raise cross-bred cattle; a number of oil and gas wells are at the south end of the ranch.

The oldest resource on the property is an abandoned dwelling known locally as "Realitos" (*Figures 22* and *23*). About three miles south of the current headquarters, it is in the mid-section of the ranch, near the ranch's west boundary. Although the building is in ruins, its construction and use of native materials reflect vernacular building traditions of the South Texas region. Its date of construction is not known but likely dates to the mid-nineteenth century. The house features load-bearing *sillar*-block walls. The chimney is of similar construction and has a large firebox with an arched opening. Other associated resources in the western part of the nineteenth-century Realitos Ranch headquarters complex included a large *pila*, or water storage tank (*Figure 24*). The *pila*, also constructed of *sillar* blocks, is entirely intact and in good condition. The site of old cattle pens associated with "Realitos" is located immediately north of the *pila*. The level of the earth within the cattle pens is about a foot or more lower than the surrounding land, suggesting that the area has been in use as a pen for many years, and is still in use. An extensive watering trough for cattle, or *tarjella* (*Figure 25*), is located immediately to the north of the *pila*

and is situated within the cattle pens. The *tarjella* is also constructed entirely of *sillar* blocks sealed with *caliche* plaster similar to the "Realitos" ranch house ruin. The *tarjella* has a high back wall that runs the entire length of the watering trough, approximately 50-feet long. The watering trough is a traditional type of structure, which was used by Spanish and Mexican cattle ranchers to water large herds of cattle. The adjacent cattle pens are constructed of a combination of wood planks, metal bars, and mesquite. A concrete cattle dip (partially filled with earth) is situated along the north side of the cattle pens. The mesquite fencing leading up to and located along the sides of the trough is still intact.

To the north, resources associated with the Tacubaya Ranch headquarters include a row of early twentieth-century, wood-frame, workers housing located along the south side of FM 755, immediately south of the present ranch headquarters. According to the current owner, a ranch house and barns from the 1930s-1940s and a square water trough built about 1927 also exist on the ranch. The family cemetery is located to the northwest of the present ranch headquarters. The current headquarters is a two-story dwelling that was built within the last few years. It is near the northern end of the ranch and fronts onto FM 430.

The following is an inventory of resources, as recorded in the field in January 2007 and as noted on available USGS quads. These resources correspond to the locations depicted on *Figures 19, 20* and *21*.

Inventory of Resources at Tacubaya Ranch Headquarters (Figure 20)

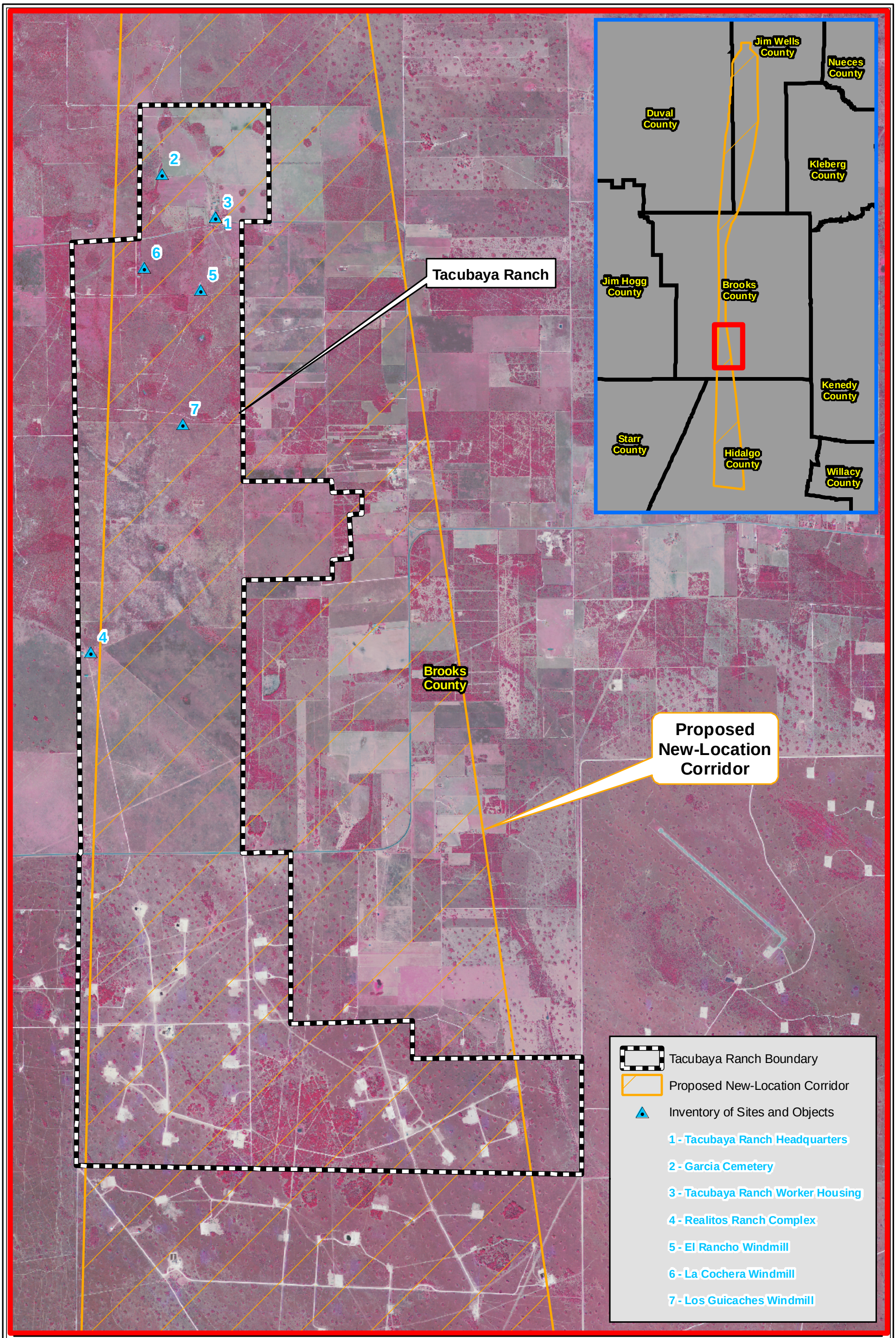
1. Tacubaya Ranch House
2. Small Early Twentieth Century Residence
3. Ranch House Annex
4. Large Barn
5. Residence No. 1
6. Agricultural Building No. 1
7. Ancillary Buildings/Sheds
8. Agricultural Building No. 2
9. Agricultural Building No. 3
10. Agricultural Building No. 4
11. Agricultural Building No. 5
12. Pen and Animal Shelter No. 1
13. Pen and Animal Shelter No. 2
14. Corrals
15. Pen and Animal Shelter No. 3
16. Residence No. 2
17. Residence No. 3
18. Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 1
19. Early Twentieth Century Worker's Residence No. 1
20. Early Twentieth Century Worker's Residence No. 2
21. Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 2
22. Barn/Garage
23. Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 3
24. Agricultural Buildings and Pens

Inventory of Resources at Realitos Ranch Complex (Figure 21)
1. Realitos Ranch House Ruin
2. Water Tank
3. Stone Pila
4. Stone Tarjella
5. Cattle Pens
6. Cattle Dipping Vat and Run
7. Large Metal Barn
8. Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 1
9. Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 2.
10. Metal Building
11. Sheds

SIGNIFICANCE

Closely associated with the Garcia family, Tacubaya is a historic ranch property in south-central Brooks County consisting of a nineteenth-century ranch complex, Realitos, and an early twentieth-century ranch headquarters, Tacubaya. Historically, it is the westernmost part of the La Encantada land grant, which the Garcia family acquired about 1872 or 1873. Tacubaya is noteworthy because it survives as a good example of a ranch that has been maintained and developed by the same family for multiple generations, which is significant for its association with *Tejano* culture and ranching traditions in South Texas. The property reflects the continuity of traditional family ownership and land uses that prevails throughout the region. It has remained within the same family for multiple generations, and the land is still used primarily for the raising of livestock. Tacubaya is also associated with the patterns of development in ranching activities in South Texas during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, which were influenced by a variety of factors including changes in technology, transportation, labor, industrial and agricultural practices. It also includes numerous oil and gas wells, which have helped to sustain agricultural activities on the ranch.

The ranch has been subdivided and partitioned over time, but much of it is still owned by direct descendants of the Garcias. The ranch is representative of *Tejano* ranching traditions that extend back to the late nineteenth century, which are still maintained through traditional patterns of ownership, continuity of land uses, and strong ancestral and cultural ties. It possesses significance with an important trend in local history and appears to meet Criterion A of the National Register Criteria. The historic ranch headquarters (Realitos) and associated ranching structures are also significant example of regional vernacular buildings traditions that are unique to South Texas. Although common in South Texas during the nineteenth century, few examples of *sillar* stone structures are extant today. The resource types associated with the early twentieth-century complex reflect both the continuity of local ranching traditions as well as the changes in building practices over time. Thus, Tacubaya appears to meet Criterion C. Further research, documentation, and analysis of the Realitos and Tacubaya ranching complexes could also provide useful information about nineteenth- and early twentieth-century *Tejano* ranching traditions, culture and land-use patterns. The *sillar* stone structures are substantial and well preserved and would be important for their research value in studying the history and typology of this rapidly vanishing resource type. Since it has the potential to yield important information about the past, Tacubaya appears to meet Criterion D. Much of the land associated with Tacubaya falls within the study area of the proposed new-location corridor.



PCR

N

3,000 0 3,000 Feet

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 19

South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC

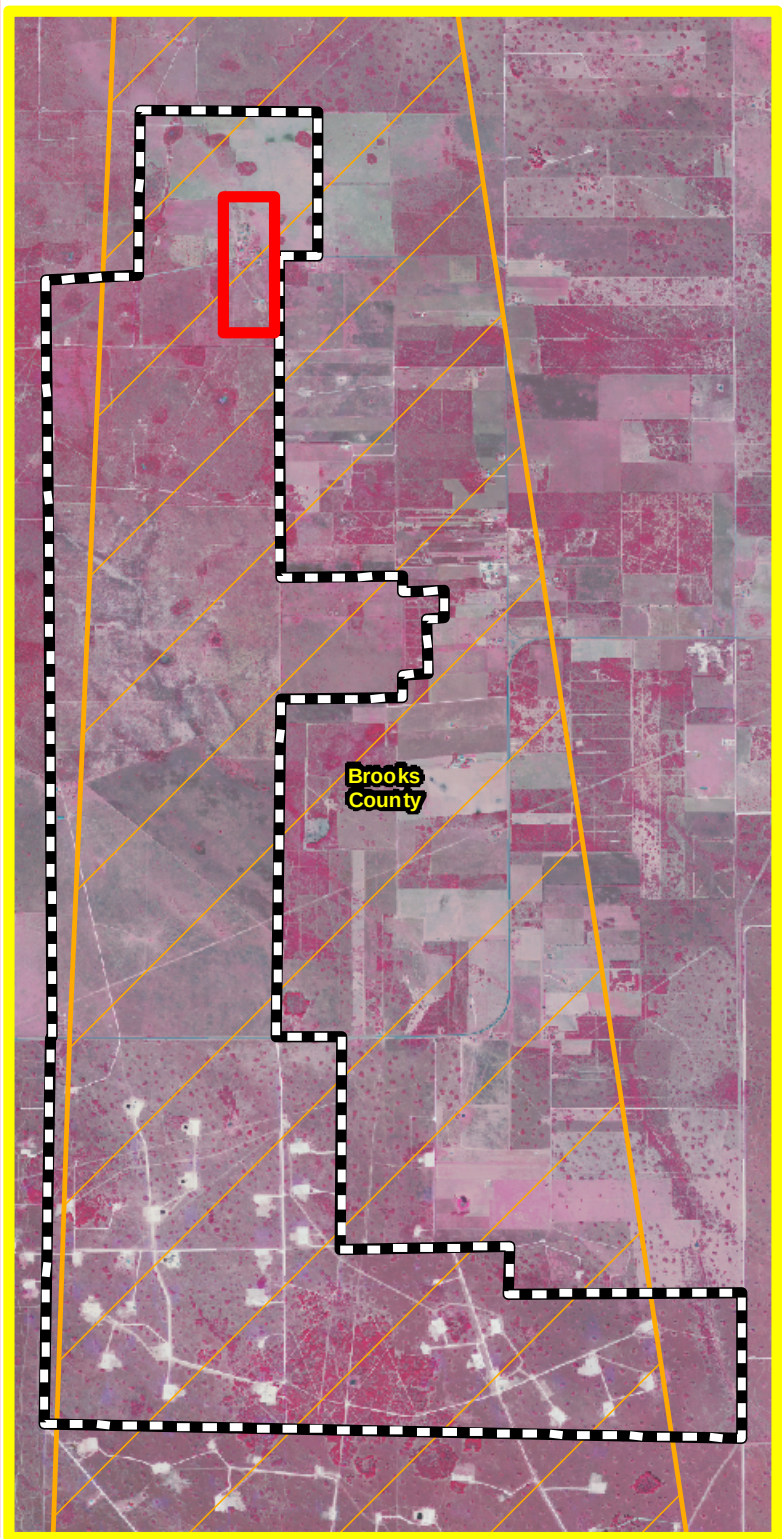
Tacubaya Ranch

Tacubaya Ranch Boundaries

Proposed New-Location Corridor

Inventory of Sites and Objects

1 - Tacubaya Ranch House
2 - Small Early Twentieth Century Residence
3 - Ranch House Annex
4 - Large Barn
5 - Residence No. 1
6 - Agricultural Building No. 1
7 - Ancillary Buildings/Sheds
8 - Agricultural Building No. 2
9 - Agricultural Building No. 3
10 - Agricultural Building No. 4
11 - Agricultural Building No. 5
12 - Pen and Animal Shelter No. 1
13 - Pen and Animal Shelter No. 2
14 - Corrals
15 - Pen and Animal Shelter No. 3
16 - Residence No. 2
17 - Residence No. 3
18 - Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 1
19 - Early Twentieth Century Worker's Residence No. 1
20 - Early Twentieth Century Worker's Residence No. 2
21 - Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 2
22 - Barn/Garage
23 - Early Twentieth Century Residence No. 3
24 - Agricultural Buildings and Pens



PCR

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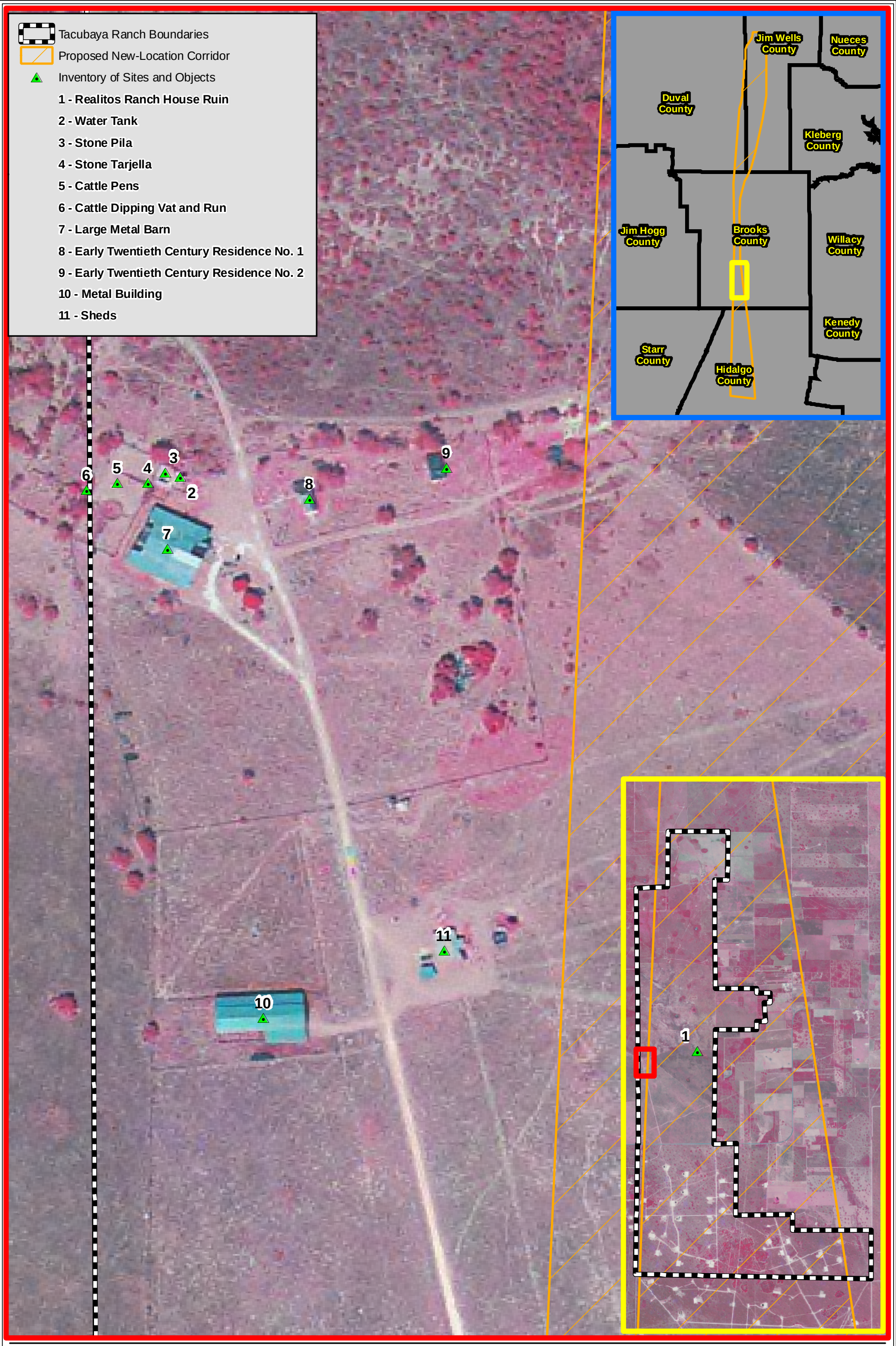
250 0 250 Feet

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 20

South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC

Tacubaya Ranch Headquarters



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150 0 150 Feet

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 21

South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC

Realitos Ranch Complex

Figure 22. Realitos Ranch House (former Tacubaya Ranch Headquarters) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

Figure 23. Realitos Ranch House (former Tacubaya Ranch Headquarters) (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

Figure 24. Water storage tank (pila) at Realitos Ranch complex (2007).

Figure 25. Watering trough for cattle (tarjella) at Realitos Ranch complex (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 18, 2007).

MCALLEN RANCH (RANCHO SAN JUANITO)

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

The McAllen Ranch lies within the Santa Anita Grant, which was originally claimed and used by Manuel Gómez in 1790. Like most of the early Spanish settlers in the area, Gómez established a ranch, which he maintained until his death in 1803. His widow, Donna Maria Gregoria Ballí Dominguez, and her two sons from a previous marriage, took over the Santa Anita Grant and Gómez Ranch. The sons, Antonio and Estanislado Dominguez, became the next heirs in 1819, and Estanislado assigned his share to his brother in 1825. The two brothers continued to improve the ranch by developing water wells and building corrals. After Antonio's death in 1845, one of his children maintained the Santa Anita Grant for his siblings. A relative and great-granddaughter of Maria Gregoria, Maria Salomé Ballí de la Garza, began to acquire interests in the ranch, purchasing 3,000 acres of the Santa Anita Grant in 1850 at the age of twenty-two. Three years later, Salomé married John Young, a Scottish immigrant, and together they operated a general store and trading center in nearby Brownsville. With profits from his mercantile and shipping operations, John and Salome Young expanded their ranch holdings. The first brand recorded in county records after the organization of Hidalgo County in 1852 was the "JY" used by Young at the Santa Anita Ranch. After Young died in 1859, the ranch and all other properties and land holdings were conveyed to his widow Salomé Ballí and their child, John J. Young. Two years later, Salomé married John McAllen, a business associate of her late husband, and they continued raising livestock in the tradition of the family's historic ranching operations. They were eventually aided by their son, James Ballí McAllen, and her son from her previous marriage, John J. Young. By 1885, the two sons created a partnership that consolidated all of the family's land holdings that, at its peak, encompassed more than 160,000 acres.

Salomé Ballí McAllen died in 1898, and her interest in the ranch was divided between her two sons and her husband. Five years later, the land was partitioned. John J. Young received the eastern portion of the Santa Anita Ranch, which included the family's historic ranch headquarters. James Ballí McAllen obtained the western half of the ranch and established the Rancho San Juanito, which is currently known as the McAllen Ranch and is a subject of this cultural resources study.

James Ballí McAllen continued ranching operations but endured turmoil and hostilities that spilled into the United States during the 1910s as part of the political upheaval and instability in Mexico. The ranch headquarters developed near the San Juanito water well (#22 on *Figure 26*) and included a new residence, workers' housing, commissary, and cook house. This complex served as the nucleus of the McAllen ranching operations and has continued to fulfill that role into the twenty-first century.

The raising of cattle remained the underpinnings of the McAllen Ranch, and it is known for its Beefmaster cattle. The discovery of oil in Hidalgo County in 1934 eventually led to drilling within the ranch. Today, oil and gas operations supplement ranching operations and are an important part of the landscape. The McAllen Ranch is still owned and operated by direct descendants of the original Spanish land grantee.

DESCRIPTION

Historically known as Rancho San Juanito, the McAllen Ranch (*Figure 26*) is 32 miles northwest of the city of Edinburg in Hidalgo County and presently encompasses over 32,000 acres. FM 1017 extends through the south-central section of the ranch and links the ranch to the surrounding road network. Most of the land is used for agricultural purposes and includes active commercial ranching operations. The ranch also boasts a significant number of active oil and gas wells and drilling operations that are a prominent part of the existing landscape. The historic ranching headquarters is north of FM 1017, near the western limits of the ranch. The main house is a one-story, wood-frame dwelling (*Figure 27*) with a steeply pitched hipped roof. It is located at the northern end of a private ranch road that extends to FM 1017 and serves as the primary entrance into the ranch. The headquarters complex includes other residences and ancillary buildings that historically have supported ranching operations; however, other historic resources exist throughout the ranch including early Spanish Colonial and Mexican-era ranching related structures (*Figures 28* and *29*).

The following is an inventory of resources, as reported in the Draft National Register nomination that was prepared in 2006; it corresponds to the locations depicted in *Figure 26*.

1. McAllen Ranch Main House, 1905
2. Guest House, 1905
3. Garage, 1960
4. Servants Quarters, 1960
5. Mechanical Barn, Saddle Room, and Feed Storage, 1957
6. Stable, 1948
7. Hay Barn, 1975
8. Rock House, 1880 (rebuilt 1970)
9. Tool House, 1905
10. Commissary, 1905
11. Ignacio Treviño House, 1948
12. Original Employee House, 1905
13. Hanging Tree, 1880
14. Camp/Cook House, 1960
15. Five Employee Houses, 1949
16. Employee House, 1970
17. Mr. and Mrs. James A. McAllen House Complex, 1962
18. Hide Salting Shed, 1880
19. and 19a. San Juanito Alto Water Well, Shower House, and Storage Tank, 1933
20. Wooden Corral Fencing, 1790
21. Corral Extension/Loading Chutes, 1935
22. San Juanito Water Well, Windmill, and Trough, ca. 1790
23. Mobile Home, 1975
24. Vineyard, 2003

24a. Shed Antler Portal, ca. 1960

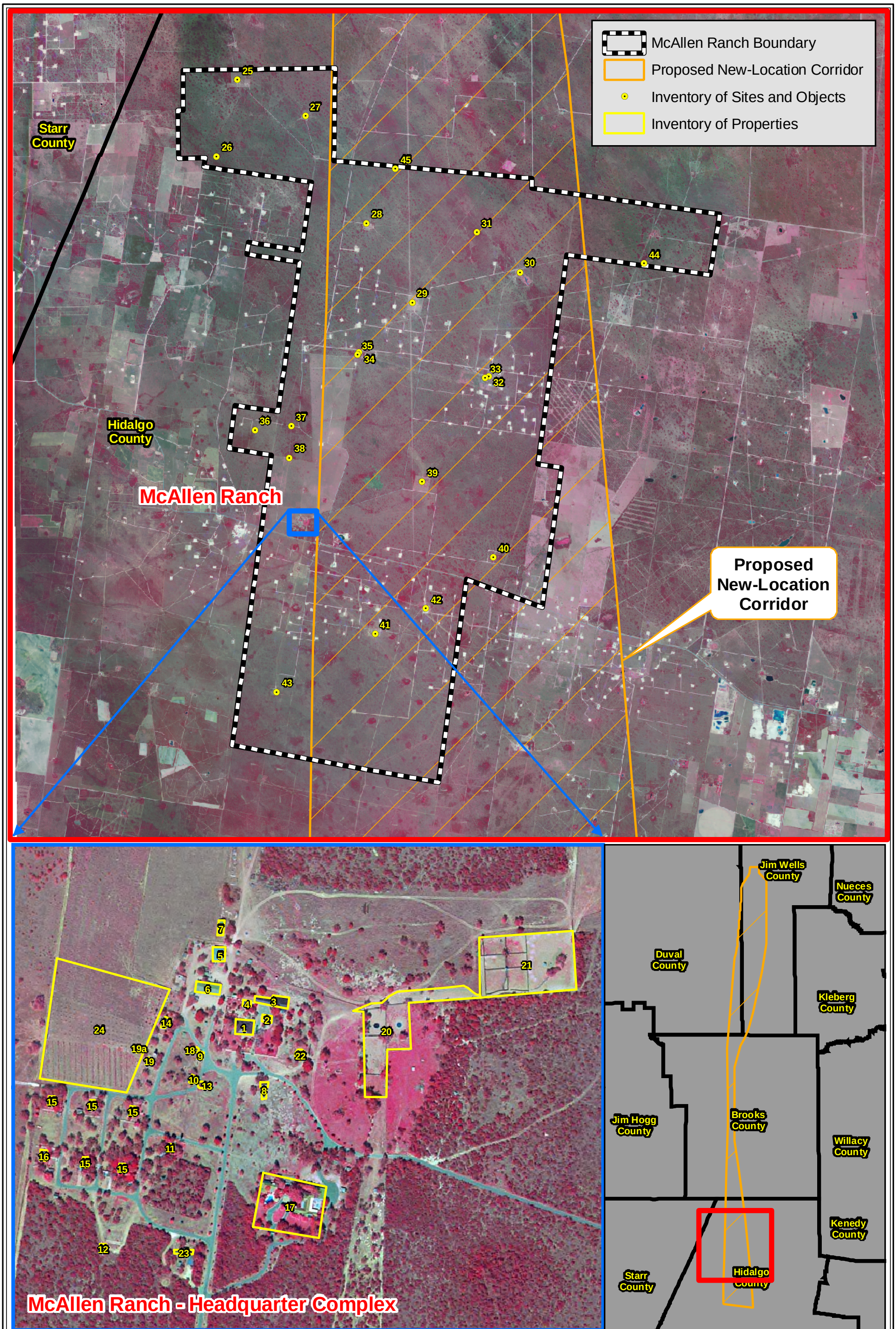
25. Bella Vista Water Well, Windmill, and Tank, 1940
26. Noche Buena Water Well, Windmill, and Tank, 1940
27. El Perro Water Well, Windmill, and Tank, 1940
28. El Javelin Well and Windmill, 1904

29. Alto Bonito Water Well and Trough, 1946
30. Charco Largo Water Well, Storage Tank, and Lake, ca. 1790, redrilled 1950
31. La Huisachosa Water Well, ca. 1790
32. Las Palomas Water Well, Windmill, Pens, and Troughs, 1952
33. Los Medanos Water Well, ca. 1790
34. Los Angeles Water Well, Windmill, and Pens, ca. 1790, redrilled 1908
35. Los Angeles Alto Water Well, ca. 1790, 1875
36. La Florida Pasture, Windmill and Water Wells, ca. 1790, 1875
37. El Torito Well, 1957
38. El Toro Water Well, Windmill, and Storage, 1910
39. Las Margaritas Water Well, Storage Tank, Trough, 1908
40. El Santiago Water Well, Windmill, and Trough, 1904
41. Santa Teresa Water Well, Windmill, and Storage Tank, 1910
42. Santa Teresa Camp House and Well, 1950
43. San Pedro Water Well, Windmill, Storage Tank, 1910
44. Noche Buena East Water Well and Windmill, 1960
45. Lindero Marker Stone, 1790

SIGNIFICANCE

The McAllen Ranch meets Criterion A of the National Register Criteria and is significant in the area of exploration and settlement that reflects local history from the Spanish Colonial era to the modern era. It also possesses significance for its design qualities and physical attributes. The ranch contains several intact structures that date to the Spanish Colonial era and reflect regional vernacular building traditions. The main ranch house and ancillary buildings possess significance for their physical and design merits and represent a good and intact example of a South Texas ranch complex from the early twentieth century. For these reasons, the McAllen Ranch also meets Criterion A in the area of architecture. Finally, the McAllen Ranch contains a rich collection of cultural resources, including historic and prehistoric archaeological sites, that have the potential to yield important information about the past. Thus, it is meets Criterion D in the area of archaeology. Since it meets National Register Criteria and retains its integrity to an exceptional degree, the McAllen ranch was nominated to and is officially listed in the NRHP.

The McAllen Ranch is a significant example of a ranching-related cultural landscape that illustrates the relationships between the land-use patterns and the built environment and how they have evolved over time. The proposed new-location corridor would extend into the NRHP-listed McAllen Ranch.



PCR

N

1.5 0 1.5 Miles

Source: PCR Services Corporation, 2007.

Figure 26

South Texas Ranching Study for I-69/TTC
McAllen Ranch

Figure 27. McAllen Ranch House (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 17, 2007).

Figure 28. Water trough for cattle (tarjella) and San Juanito Water Well near McAllen Ranch Headquarters (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 17, 2007).

Figure 29. Water trough, reservoir, windmill and cattle pen on the McAllen Ranch (Photograph by Margarita Wuellner, January 17, 2007).

DATA GAPS AND MODIFICATIONS TO THE RESEARCH DESIGN

The team of historians identified a number of data gaps during the course of this project and developed modifications to the research design to answer those gaps.

Data Gap 1
The team lacked specific information about eighteenth- and early-to-mid-twentieth-century cultural properties and historic landscapes. It had been determined earlier that historic maps dating to those periods had very little usefulness because of the relative lack of features and inconsistencies in scales that made it difficult to execute accurate overlays on more-current maps. As a result, it was determined that later maps would be more useful for the purposes of this study. However, that determination made it difficult to identify significant pre-twentieth-century cultural properties.

Modification 1
As the project progressed, it was found from oral interviews and site visits that further study of the early maps would be important for developing a better understanding of the cultural landscape. In particular, trails on the maps, often indicative of routes used to move cattle to markets, indicated the early trade routes across the region. The trails were developed to take advantage of important watering stops with reliable sources of water. Field investigations undertaken by the historians indicated that remnants of the early trails still cross the ranches or have been incorporated into county roads. Many of the watering places also appear to remain. In addition, ranch headquarters and camps tend to be located in proximity to key sources of water, adding a social and cultural dimension to the role of water in South Texas. Hence, the network of trails and watering places is significant for its direct association with the trends and patterns of settlement, trade and use of natural resources in South Texas ranching.

Data Gap 2
An additional data gap was the lack of information on property owners and the difficulty of obtaining information on the current property boundaries. While the literature review provided the names of individuals from the historical record, without conducting intensive genealogical and property ownership research, it was very difficult to identify current family members and owners associated with the existing ranches. The difficulties caused by lack of contact information for property owners were compounded by the short time frame of this study, leaving little time for the networking necessary to contact ranch owners. Comprehensive review of appraisal data and identification of property boundaries of ranches for the study area was not possible because of the lack of information about current ranch owners. The fact that many old ranches are now owned by large, extended families, or have passed to new owners is a complicating factor and has resulted in a complex pattern of property ownership across the region.

Modification 2
Oral histories were conducted to obtain information about owners of the selected ranches. Research was conducted at the County Appraisal Districts to obtain tax parcel maps and ownership data for selected ranches, which also aided efforts to make personal contact with

property owners. These individuals frequently were able to provide information about the locations of cultural properties and the history of property boundaries and changes in land use.

Data Gap 3

The inaccessibility of the ranches and lack of contact information for property owners contributed to the difficulty of identifying ranch boundaries and assessing existing conditions. Most of the land in the study area is ranch and farm land secured by fences and locked gates without any signs. While the general character of the overall landscape is visible from the public roads, the names or brands on the main gates of the ranches are the only means of identification. There is no way of visibly determining the extent or boundary of the ranch lands associated with each ranch with any degree of accuracy because most of the gates and fences are unmarked. In addition, the cultural features within the ranches are generally not visible from the public road and are inaccessible because they are within secured areas.

Modification 3

The only way to obtain accurate information about existing conditions including property boundaries, cultural features, and current land use is to obtain a guided tour by a property owner or ranch foreman. This information is essential to the identification and assessment of features and to understanding the historical context of each property.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Following an analysis of historic maps and other primary and secondary source materials, as well as the results of a windshield survey of selected ranch locations, the team of historians offers the following conclusions:

- The proposed new-location corridor extends through one historic ranch that was officially listed in the NRHP while this study was undertaken. The following historic property is the only NRHP-listed resource in the study area, and it lies almost entirely within the proposed new-location corridor:
    - McAllen Ranch in Hidalgo County
- The proposed new-location corridor also extends through other ranches operating within the study area. Through archival research and analyzing a series of historic maps, project historians identified and documented two previously undocumented historic ranches with lands that extend into the study area. Project historians applied the National Register Criteria and NRHP-eligibility assessments developed for this study and recommend the following ranches as preliminarily eligible for inclusion in the NRHP:
    - Falfurrias Ranch in Brooks County
    - Tacubaya in Brooks County

Additional research, documentation, and analysis are needed to finalize the preliminary NRHP-eligibility recommendations for these ranches. Moreover, a more indepth and comprehensive survey will likely identify other ranches and agriculture-related properties that meet National Register Criteria and retain sufficient integrity to be eligible for inclusion in the NRHP.

Research conducted in conjunction with field investigations in county records and at agricultural properties, as well as data collected from local informants, confirmed many of the assumptions developed earlier in the project but also provided additional insights into the region's unique history, as well as the integrity and distinctive character of its architecture and associated cultural landscape. Specifically, the team found that:

- The study area is part of a much larger and remarkably intact agricultural landscape that contains a diverse collection of historic properties. This larger agricultural landscape covers the area generally bounded by US 281 on the east, F.M. 490 on the south, the town of Alice on the north, and the Rio Grande River on the west. This landscape reflects long-term and highly complex layers of agricultural use between ca. 1790 and the present. The agricultural landscape and the ranches within it have been sustained by continuity of traditional family ownership and agricultural practices.
- The study area contains numerous representative examples of ranches and agricultural landscapes that illustrate the Spanish and Mexican Colonial periods, post-Mexican War consolidation of ownership and further development of the livestock industry, late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century continuation of ranching and simultaneous diversification of agricultural activities (dairy and truck farms), and development of the

oil and gas industries with their accompanying support of agriculture throughout the twentieth century.

- The study area contains numerous examples of properties that are associated with significant individuals and families in the exploration and settlement of South Texas, development of agriculture, and creation of financial institutions that furthered development of the region. Additionally, families and communities in the study area employed and developed commercial ranching practices and technologies that were significant in the development of cattle ranching in the United States and influenced the broad patterns and trends of history in the nation.
- The study area contains numerous examples of architecturally distinctive, outstanding, and representative property types that are associated with the exploration, settlement, and development of the study area between ca. 1790 and the present. A number of these property types are specific to South Texas; others are more widely distributed due to the development of transportation networks beginning in the late nineteenth century. The existence of agricultural properties and landscapes that are more than 200 years old and that have been in continuous use by descendants of original property owners may be rare in the United States.
- The study area contains numerous archaeological sites and standing structures that appear to have information potential and the capacity to address important research questions.

The integrity of the historic landscape and individual properties appears to be high: the area conveys its significance as an intact agricultural landscape, and individual properties convey the physical features that identify their functions and associations with identified regional themes through integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association

Topics for Further Study

- Conduct further research and survey work to determine the full extent of the agricultural landscape and to identify and evaluate other historic properties within the larger region.
- Conduct an intensive-level survey of the study area to identify and evaluate additional ranches and agricultural landscapes. Information obtained from an intensive-level survey could also provide rural historic landscape assessments, in accordance with NRHP guidelines.
- Although representative property types were identified as a part of this investigation, additional research is required to further distinguish the character-defining features and spatial organization of each property type. Research should also consider how these property types have evolved over time.
- Likewise, although distinctive structure types were identified as a part of this investigation, further work is required to accurately determine the approximate dates and physical characteristics of the structure types. For example, little is presently known about the structural typology or frequency of vernacular nineteenth-century *sillar* stone structures, which are distinctive in the South Texas region. Further research is required to identify, compare, document and date these structures in the study area and the larger region.

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