

GENERAL BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

**4382 PHELAN ROAD
APN 0544-472-01**

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

(USGS Phelan, CA Quad.; Township 4 North, Range 7 West, Section 13)

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December 21, 2015

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proponent is proposing to construct a commercial project on a 1.87-acre site located in Phelan, San Bernardino County CA. (Township 4 North, Range 7 West, Section 13) (Figures 1, 2, and 3). The site currently supports a disturbed mixed desert shrub community. The dominant perennial was Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and other perennials observed included yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), lycium (*Lycium* sp.), and buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). Annuals observed were limited to schismus (*Schismus barbatus*) and brome grasses (*Bromus* sp.). No sensitive species were observed during the biological surveys conducted on December 18, 2015.

Various special status wildlife species such as desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), and Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*) have been documented in the region. Two special status plants have also been observed and include white pygmy-poppy (*Canbya candida*), and short-joint beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada*). However, none of these plant or animal species are expected to occur on the site given the small size (1.87-acres) of the property, the existing level of disturbance, and the fact the site is surrounded on all sides by existing developments (residential, and commercial). No sensitive habitats (i.e., blue-line channels, wetlands, etc.) or wildlife movement corridors were noted on the property.

1.0 PROJECT AND PROPERTY DESCRIPTION

The property is located at the northwest corner of Phelan Road and Sierra Vista Road, Township 4 North, Range 7 West, Section 13 in Phelan, California (Figures 1 and Figure 2). The site is approximately 1.87-acres in size and currently supports a disturbed mixed desert shrub plant community. Biological surveys were conducted on the property on December 18, 2015 during which data on the existing biological conditions was recorded and the results of the survey are presented in this report. The site was also evaluated for the potential presence of special status species that are known to occur in the general region. Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) was the dominant perennial and other species observed yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), lycium (*Lycium* sp.), and buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) (Figure 3). See Section 4.0 for a more detailed discussion of the biological resources.

The proposed project would consist of a commercial development consisting of 6 commercial buildings for a combined total of 77,817 square feet, with a total of 370 parking spaces as depicted in Figure 1. The development would consist of a 9,100 sf building and 36 parking spaces (Figure 1). Elevations ranged from 4,090 to 4,100 feet (MSL) with a slight slope to the northeast (Figure 2). Soils consisted of sandy loam with small rocks present. The property is bordered on the north and west by residential dwellings, and on the east by Sierra Vista Road beyond which is a commercial development. Phelan Road borders the site along its southern boundary beyond which is a commercial development.

The USGS Phelan, CA Quadrangle does not show any blue-line channels on the site, and no streams, desert washes or other water features were observed during the December 18, 2015 field investigations. No wildlife corridors bisect the property, and no special status wildlife species were observed during the biological surveys. Although the site does support some native plant species, the site does not support suitable habitat for any special status wildlife known to occur in the area, including desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and burrowing owl based on the small size of the site, the level of existing disturbance, and the fact that the site is surrounded by existing residential and commercial development. Weather conditions during the December field investigations consisted of winds of 0 to 5 mph from the south, temperatures in the low 50's (°F) (AM) with no cloud coverage.

PRELIMINARY SITE PLAN

PHELAN, CA
4382 PHELAN ROAD @ SIERRA VISTA ROAD

PROTOTYPE	F	DEVELOPER		DESIGNER		DATE:
BLDG/SALES SF	9,002/7,385	COMPANY	SIMON CRE	COMPANY	MVA ARCHITECTS, INC.	12-11-15
ACREAGE	1.87	NAME:	JOSHUA SIMON	NAME:	LEONARDO DALE	
REG'D PARKING SPACES	36	PHONE #:	480-745-1956	PHONE #:	619-236-0525	

LEGEND

[Symbol]	HEAVY DUTY CONCRETE
[Symbol]	HEAVY DUTY ASPHALT
[Symbol]	STANDARD DUTY ASPHALT
[Symbol]	LANDSCAPE

PARKING REQUIREMENTS:

SPACE PER 250 SQ. FT.	1.5
STAND. PARKING	36 SPACES
COMPACT PARKING	14A

PARKING SPACE DIMENSIONS:

STAND. PARKING	7'0" x 20'0"
COMPACT PARKING	5'0" x 14'0"

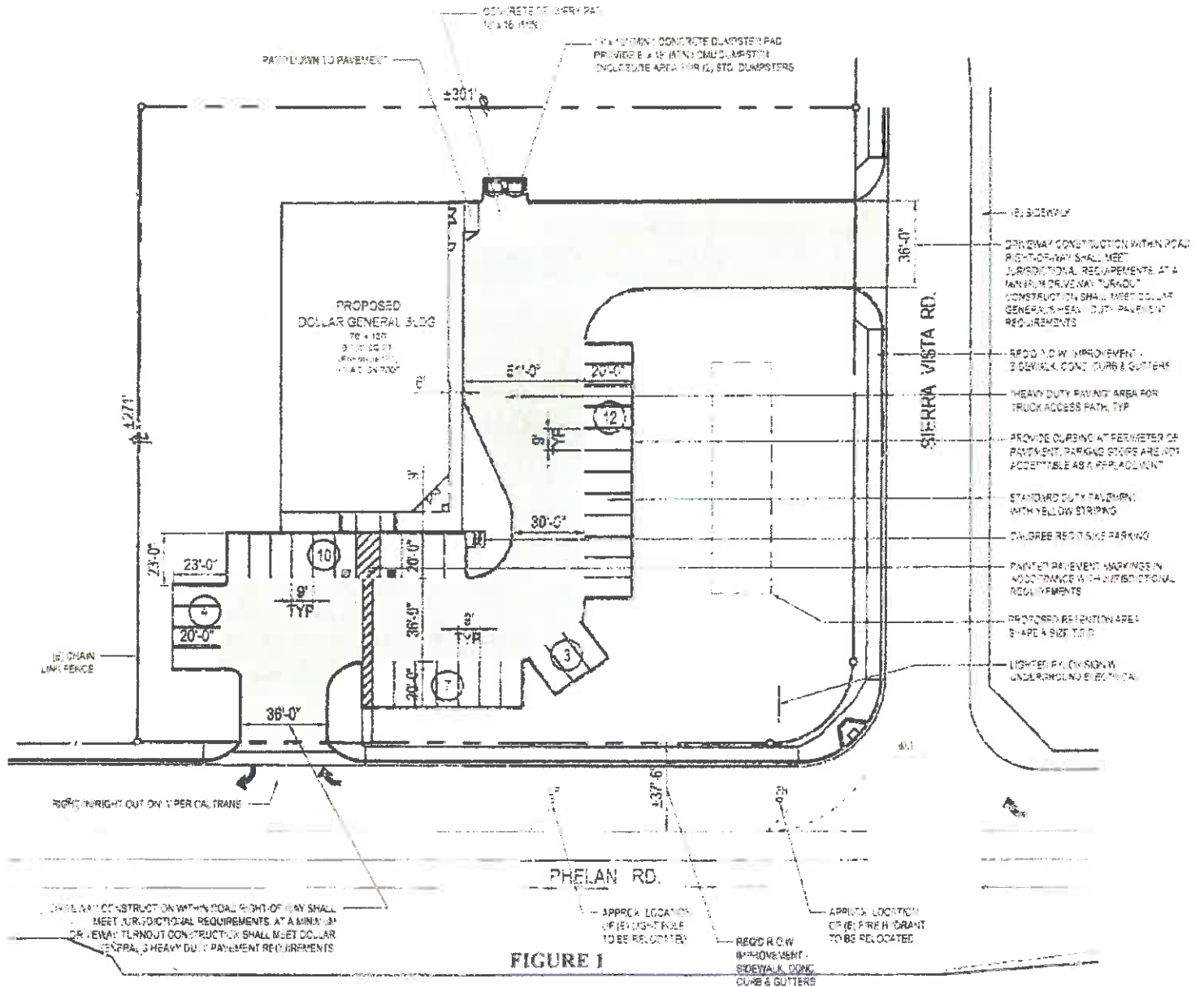
USE/SETBACKS:
SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY

FLOORING SETBACKS:

FRONT	0'
STREET SIDE	25'
INTERIOR SIDE	0'
REAR	0' (TYPE ABUTMENT)

NOTES:

1. SITE LAYOUT BASED ON AERIAL DATA ONLY. LOT LINES AND PROPERTY DIMENSIONS MUST BE VERIFIED BY A T.A.S. (TAX MAP).
2. LANDSCAPE, UTILITY, STORM DRAINAGE ARE PRELIMINARY AND SHOWN FOR REFERENCE ONLY.
3. SITE LAYOUT SUBJECT TO CHANGE PER LOCAL JURISDICTION RESTRICTIONS AND APPROVALS.



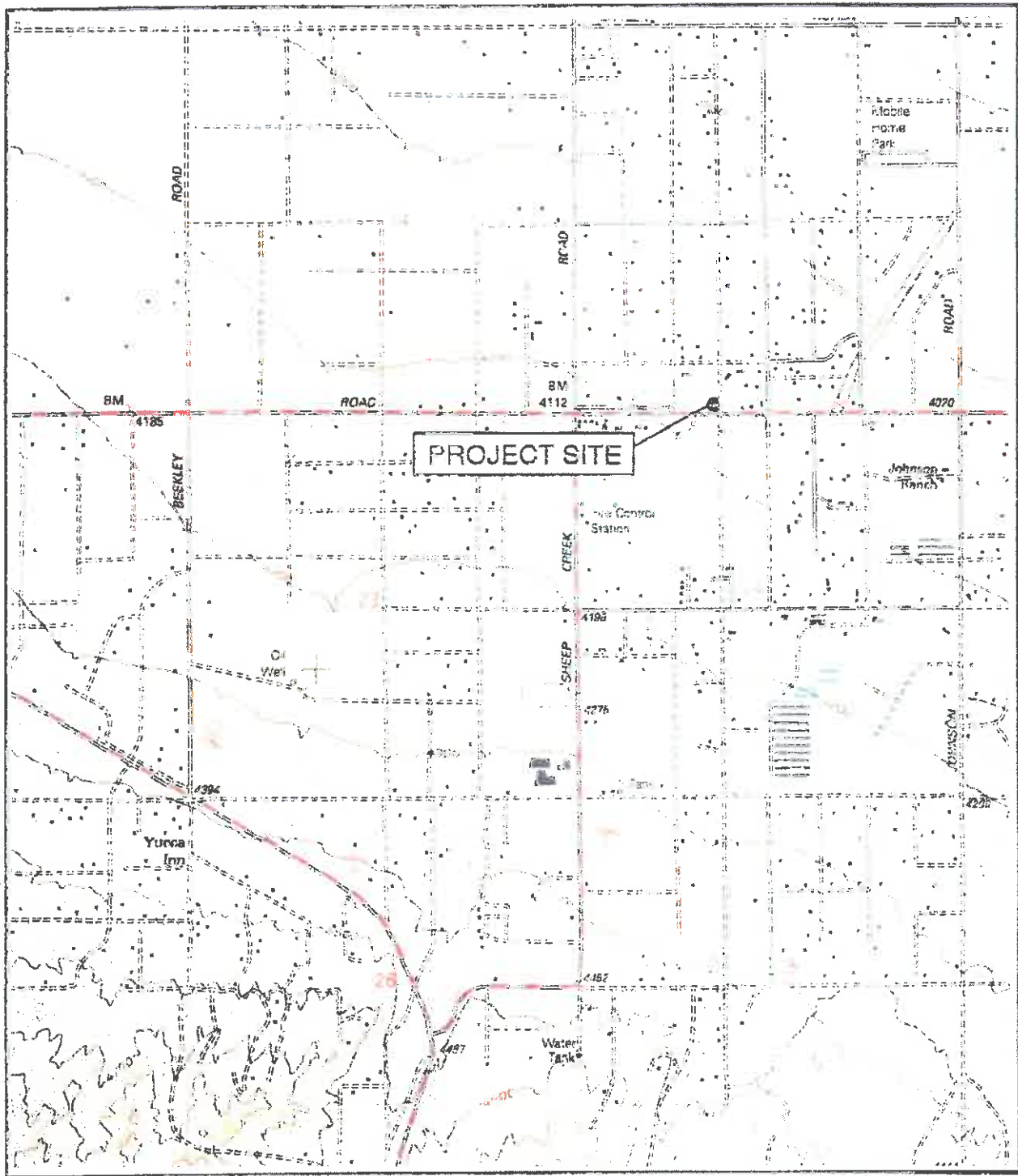


FIGURE 2
 PROPERTY LOCATION
 (Source: USGS Phelan, CA Quad., 1996)





SOUTHEAST CORNER LOOKING NORTHWEST



SOUTHWEST CORNER LOOKING NORTHEAST

FIGURE 3
PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE
(4382 Phelan Road)



NORTHWEST CORNER LOOKING SOUTHEAST



NORTHEAST CORNER LOOKING SW

FIGURE 3, cont.
PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE
(4382 Phelan Road)

2.0 LITERATURE & RECORD REVIEW – SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

As part of the environmental process, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) data sources were reviewed to determine if any listed and/or sensitive species have been documented in the area surrounding the site. The Federal Endangered Species Act provides protection for species of fish, wildlife, and plants that are listed by the US Government as threatened or endangered in the U.S., and the Act outlines procedures for Federal agencies to follow when evaluating projects which may jeopardize any listed species. In addition, the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) provides protection to those species which are deemed to be threatened with a significant decline or extinction within California and the CESA provides CDFW with the responsibility of evaluating projects which may affect sensitive species.

Based on a general literature review, a search of USFWS and CDFW data bases, and a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), it was determined that there are five sensitive wildlife species and two sensitive plant species that have been documented in the surrounding region within approximately five miles of the site (CNDDDB, 2015). Sensitive wildlife species include desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), and Le Conte's thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*). Sensitive plants in the area include white pygmy-poppy (*Canbya candida*), and short-joint beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada*). Scientific nomenclature for this report is based on the following references: Hickman (1993), Munz (1974), Stebbins (2003), Sibley (2000) and Whitaker (1980). Table 1 (Appendix A) provides a detailed summary of the sensitive species listed above.

Following the data review, general biological surveys were performed on the site on December 18, 2015 during which the biological resources on the site and in the surrounding areas were documented by Randall C. Arnold, Jr. (RCA Associates, LLC) from 0700 to 0900 hours. As part of the surveys, the project site and the adjoining lands (where possible) were evaluated for the presence of native habitats which could potentially support populations of sensitive species.

3.0 METHODOLOGIES

General Vegetation and Wildlife

General biological surveys were conducted on December 18, 2015 during which Randall C. Arnold, Jr. (Senior wildlife biologist) from RCA Associates, LLC walked 10-meter transects throughout the site from about 0700 to 0900 hours. During the surveys, data was collected on the plant species present on the site and in the immediate surrounding area and the wildlife species observed were also documented. Those plants which could not be identified in the field were collected and taken back to the lab for identification.

Birds which use the site and adjacent areas were identified by visual observations and sound; whereas, mammals were identified by scats, tracks, burrows, or direct observations. All plants and animals detected during the field investigations were recorded and are provided in compendium Tables 2 & 3 (Appendix A). The site was also evaluated for the presence of any sensitive habitats (e.g., wetlands, streams, etc.) and any native habitats which could potentially support sensitive species.

Sensitive Species

The site is small (1.87-acres); consequently, the entire site was covered during the field investigations performed on December 18, 2015. Parallel transects (10-meters) were walked in a north-south direction which provided total coverage of the habitat, and which would provide detection of any sensitive species, if present.

4.0 GENERAL BIOLOGICAL SURVEY RESULTS

A mixed desert shrub community covers the site and has been disturbed (Figure 3). Most of the vegetation throughout the site consists of shrubs (1 to 4 feet in height) with a few large bushes (4 to 6 feet). Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) is the dominant species and other species observed included yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), lycium (*Lycium* sp.), and buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) (Figure 3) (Appendix A, Tables 3). Other species scattered throughout adjacent areas included schismus (*Schismus barbatus*), brome grasses (*Bromus* sp.), cholla (*Opuntia acanthocarpa*), and ephedra (*Ephedra nevadensis*). One California juniper (*Juniperus californica*) was also observed on the site. Figure 4 depicts the general biological resources present on the site and in the surrounding area.

Ravens (*Corvus corax*) and sage sparrows (*Amphispiza belli*) were the only observed wildlife species during the December 2015 surveys. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), which are the most common carnivore in the desert, may occasionally traverse the site during hunting activities. Other common species which have been observed in the general area during other recent surveys performed by RCA Associates, LLC include California ground squirrels (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), side-blotched lizards (*Uta stansburiana*), western whiptail lizards (*Cnemidophorus tigris*), and desert spiny lizards (*Sceloporus magister*) (Appendix A, Table 2). These species may occur on the site and/or in adjacent areas. No distinct wildlife corridors were identified on the site or in the immediate surrounding area, and no breeding activities were observed among any of the wildlife observed.

5.0 IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 General Biological Resources

Future construction of the proposed commercial development would result in the removal of most, if not all, of the vegetation present on the property. Wildlife species will be displaced into adjacent areas, and wildlife such as small mammals and reptiles will experience an increased mortality due to their limited mobility. Birds will be able to disperse over larger areas; consequently, birds would likely experience only a slight increase in mortality, if any at all, assuming adjacent areas are not at carrying capacity at the time of displacement. Cumulative impacts to the general biological resources are not expected to be significant, and no recommendations are proposed at this time.

5.2 Sensitive Species

No special status species were observed during the general biological surveys conducted on December 18, 2015. The site supports a disturbed mixed desert shrub community and is not expected to support any special status plant or animal species given the small size of the site, the level of disturbance, and the fact the site is surrounded by existing developments.

Desert Tortoise: Tortoises have been documented in the general region, however, no occurrences have been recorded to the CNDDB (2015) within a five mile radius of the site, and no tortoise sign (burrows, scats, tracks, etc.) were observed on the site. As previously indicated, the site is surrounded on all four sides by existing residential and commercial developments which significantly limits the potential for tortoises moving onto the site in the future.

Mohave Ground Squirrel: Mohave ground squirrels have been documented in the general region; however, no occurrences have been recorded within a five mile radius of the site (CNDDB, 2015). Furthermore, the site is very small and is surrounded by developments; consequently, the site is not expected to support any populations of the species.

Burrowing Owls: Burrowing owls occur in the general region; although, no suitable burrows were observed on the site which limits the possibility of the species moving onto the site in the future. However, a pre-construction survey may be required by CDFW immediately prior to the start of future grading/clearing activities.

Coast Horned Lizards and Le Conte's Thrashers: Neither species was observed during the surveys and it is very unlikely horned lizards or thrashers occur on the site. However, CDFW may require surveys for these two species be included in the pre-construction surveys for the burrowing owl.

Short-jointed Beavertail Cactus & White Pygmy-poppy: Focused surveys for special status plants were not conducted on the site as part of the surveys performed on December 18, 2015. However, beavertail cactus are readily identifiable, if present, and no cactus were observed during the field investigations. White pygmy-poppy plants occur in desert shrub habitats, and the site does support habitat suitable for the species. However, it is very unlikely the species occurs on the site given the small size of the property, and the limited number of populations of the species which have been documented in the Mohave Desert (CNDDDB, 2015).

6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

The proposed project is not expected to have an adverse effect on any special status species based on the results of the December 18, 2015 field investigations. The site is bordered on all sides by existing developments (residential and commercial) which significantly limits the possibility of any species (i.e., desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, coast horned lizards, and Le Conte's thrasher) moving onto the site in the future. In addition, no beavertail cacti were observed nor are any white pygmy-poppy plants expected to occur on the site. No mitigation measures are recommended at this time; however, a pre-construction survey for burrowing owls may be required by CDFW 30-days prior to the start of any grading/clearing activities on the property. If owls are observed during the pre-construction survey, CDFW will be contacted immediately upon completion of the survey, and appropriate mitigation measures will be implemented as per CDGW direction.

In summary, if any special status species are identified during future surveys or during any other development activities, all on-site activities should cease and CDFW and USFWS (as applicable) should be contacted to discuss specific mitigation measures which may be required for the individual species. CDFW and USFWS are the only agencies which can grant authorization for the "take" of any sensitive species.

7.0 BIBLIOGRAPHY

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TABLES

**(Note: See Appendix A for CNDDDB Table
&
Flora and Fauna Compendium Tables)**

FIGURES

Vicinity Map

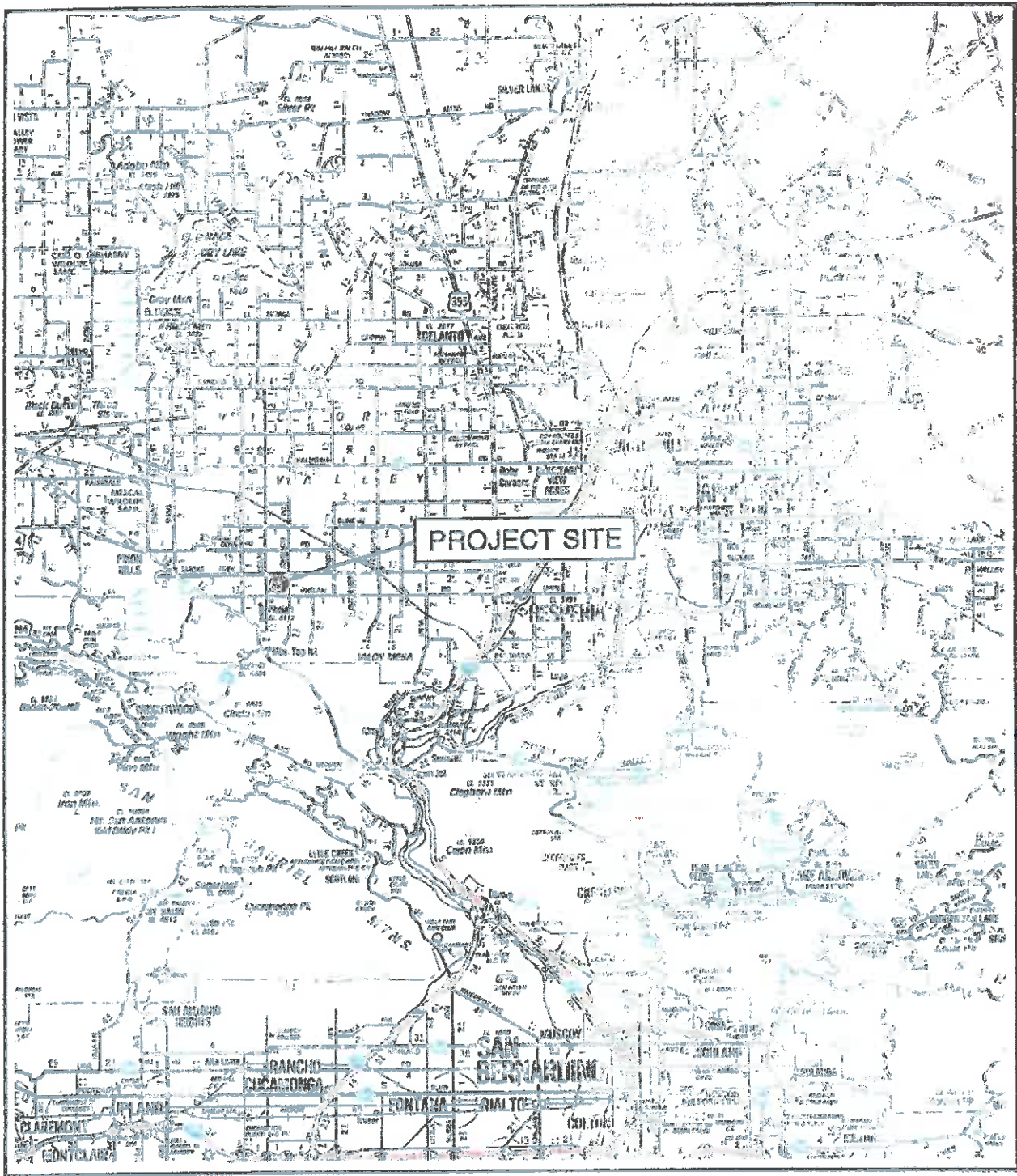


FIGURE 5

VICINITY MAP

(Source: ACSC Map Source)



SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING EAST



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING SOUTH

FIGURE 6
PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE
(4382 Phelan Road)

Appendix A
CNDDDB Sensitive Species List
&
Flora and Fauna Compendium Tables

Table 1 - Federal and State Listed Species and State Species of Special Concern Occurring in the Surrounding Region.

(Fed: E – Endangered; SC = Species of special concern; CNDDDB = California Natural Diversity Data Base
CNPS: California Native Plant Society)

Name	Listing Status	Habitat Requirements	Presence/Absence	Comments
Desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>)	Fed: T State: T	Desert scrub	Site does not support suitable habitat for the species. No tortoises or sign observed during field investigations.	No recorded occurrences within five miles of site (CNDDDB, 2014).
Mohave ground squirrel (<i>Spermophilus mohavensis</i>)	Fed: None State: T	Desert scrub	Site does not support suitable habitat for the species.	No recorded occurrences within five miles of site (CNDDDB, 2014).
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Fed: None State: None CDFW: SC	Various habitats	No owls or suitable owl burrows observed during field investigations.	No recorded occurrences within five miles of site (CNDDDB, 2014).
Coast horned lizard (<i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>)	Fed: None State: None CDFW: SC	Desert scrub	Site supports marginal habitat for the species.	Occ# 224 (1989) 3-miles southwest of site (CNDDDB, 2014).
Le Conte's thrasher (<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>)	Fed: None State: None CDFW: SC	Desert scrub	Site does not support suitable habitat for the species.	Occ# 16 (1921) 0.5-miles northeast of site (CNDDDB, 2014).
Short-joint beavertail (<i>Opuntia basilaris</i> var. <i>brachyclada</i>)	Fed: None State: None CNPS: List 1B.2	Desert scrub	No beavertail cactus observed during the field investigations.	Occ# 114 (1970) 3-miles south of site (CNDDDB, 2014).
White pigmy-poppy (<i>Campha candida</i>)	Fed: None State: None CNPS: List 4.2	Desert scrub	Not expected to occur on the site.	Occ# 6 (1989) 4-miles northwest of site (CNDDDB, 2014).

Table 2 - Plants observed on the site and in the immediate surrounding area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Yellow-green matchweed	<i>Gutierrezia sarothrae</i>	On-site
Cholla	<i>Opuntia acanthocarpa</i>	
Brome grasses	<i>Bromus sp.</i>	"
Ephedra	<i>Ephedra nevadensis</i>	"
Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	"
California juniper	<i>Juniperus californica</i>	"
Russian thistle	<i>Salsola tragus</i>	"
Schismus	<i>Schismus barbatus</i>	"
Lycium	<i>Lycium sp.</i>	"

Table 3 - Wildlife observed on the site and those species expected to occur in surrounding area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Common raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	On-site and in the ZOI.
Song sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	"
Mourning dove	<i>Zenaidura macroura</i>	"
Side-blotched lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>	May occur on-site.
Western whiptail lizard	<i>Cnemidophorus tigris</i>	"
Desert spiny lizard	<i>Sceloporus magister</i>	"
Desert cottontail rabbit	<i>Sylvilagus auduboni</i>	"
Coyotes	<i>Canis latrans</i>	"
California ground squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	Surrounding area
American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	"
Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californica</i>	"

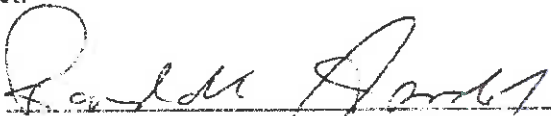
ZOI = Zone of Influence (surrounding area)

Note: The above Tables are not comprehensive lists of every plant or animal species which may occur in the area, but are a list of those common species which were identified on the site during the one-day survey, or which are relatively common in the region.

Appendix B
Certification

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits, present the data and information required for this biological evaluation, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Fieldwork conducted for this assessment was performed by me or under my direct supervision. I certify that I have not signed a non-disclosure or consultant confidentiality agreement with the project applicant or applicant's representative and that I have no financial interest in the project.

Date: 12 21-2015 Signed: 
Report Author

Field Work Performed By: Randall Arnold
Senior Biologist