

# **GENERAL BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT**

(UPDATED)

**APN 3066-251-07**

**SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

(USGS Phelan, CA Quad.; Township 4 North, Range 7 West, Section 24)

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Project No: RCA#2014-77**

**Report Prepared by Randall C. Arnold, Jr.**

**November 30, 2015**

## Table of Contents

<b>Section</b>	<b>Page</b>
Executive Summary	1
1.0 Project and Property Description	2
2.0 Literature & Records Review - Species of Special Concern	7
3.0 Methodologies	8
4.0 General Biological Survey Results	9
5.0 Impacts and Recommendations	11
5.1 General Biological Resources	11
5.2 Sensitive Species	11
6.0 Mitigation Measures	13
7.0 Bibliography	14
Tables	
Figures	
Site Photographs	
Appendix A – CNDDDB Table & Flora and Fauna Compendium Tables	
Appendix B – Certification	

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proponent is proposing to construct a general commercial project on an approximately 8.43-acre site located in Phelan, San Bernardino County CA. (Township 4 North, Range 7 West, Section 24) (Figures 1, 2, and 3). The site currently supports a relatively undisturbed mixed desert shrub community typical of this portion of the Mojave Desert. The common perennials observed were burrobush (*Franseria dumosa*), yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), and burrobush (*Ambrosia dumosa*). Annuals observed were limited to buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), schsimus (*Schismus barbatus*), and brome grasses (*Bromus sp.*). No sensitive species were observed during the biological surveys conducted on October 14, 2014.

Various sensitive species such as desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), and burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) have been documented in the general region. However, the site is relatively small (~8.43-acres) and is surrounded on all sides by existing developments (residential, and commercial) significantly limiting the possibility of the site supporting any sensitive species. Given the small size of the property, the entire site was surveyed on October 14, 2014 and no tortoises, tortoise burrows, burrowing owls, suitable owl burrows, or Mohave ground squirrels were observed during the field investigations. 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 southwest corner of Phelan Road and Valle Vista Road, Township 4 North, Range 7 West, Section 24 in Phelan, California (Figures 1 and Figure 2). The site is approximately 8.43-acres in size and currently supports an undisturbed native plant community (i.e., mixed desert shrub). Biological surveys were conducted on the property on October 14, 2014 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 sensitive species that are known to occur in the general region. Currently, the site supports a mixed desert shrub community dominated by, saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), burrobrush (*Franseria dumosa*), 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 general 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 6 separate commercial structures ranging in size from about 3,900 to 12,500 square feet (Figure 1). Elevations ranged from 4,060 to 4,040 feet (MSL) with a slight slope to the northeast (Figure 2). Soils consisted of sandy loam with small rocks present. The site is bordered on the south by an existing single-family development and on the west and north by commercial structures. The site is bordered on the east by Valle Vista Road and a single commercial structure.

The USGS Phelan, CA Quadrangle does not show any blueline channels on the site, and no streams, desert washes or other water features were observed during the October 14, 2014 field investigations. No wildlife corridors bisect the property, and no sensitive wildlife species were observed during the biological surveys. Although the site does support a native plant community which is associated with sensitive species such as desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and burrowing owl, these species were not observed during the field investigations, and are not expected to occur on the site in the future given the small size of the site and the fact the property is surrounded by existing developments. Weather conditions during the October field investigations consisted of winds of 0 to 5 mph from the south, temperatures in the high 50's (°F) (AM) to low-70's (°F) (PM) with no cloud coverage.

<b>PROJECT DATA</b>	<b>CLIENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>
APPLICATION TYPE: PRELIMINARY GENERAL COMMERCIAL	VVR LLC	MARCH 2015
APPLICANT: VVR LLC		
PROJECT ADDRESS: 12345 MAIN ST, SUITE 100, CHICAGO, IL 60601		
OWNER: VVR LLC		
DESIGNER: STEEN ARCHITECTS, P.C.		
DATE: MARCH 2015		
<b>SCOPE OF WORK</b>	<b>SITE DATA</b>	<b>BUILDING DATA</b>
TO OBTAIN APPROVAL FROM THE CHICAGO DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING AND ZONING FOR THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT. THIS DRAWING IS NOT TO BE USED FOR CONSTRUCTION.	APPLICANT: VVR LLC PROJECT ADDRESS: 12345 MAIN ST, SUITE 100, CHICAGO, IL 60601 OWNER: VVR LLC DESIGNER: STEEN ARCHITECTS, P.C. DATE: MARCH 2015	NO. OF BUILDINGS: 1 TOTAL AREA: 50,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL FLOOR AREA: 100,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL GARAGE AREA: 10,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL OFFICE AREA: 10,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL RETAIL AREA: 10,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL SERVICE AREA: 10,000 SQ. FT. TOTAL OTHER AREA: 10,000 SQ. FT.

<b>KEYED NOTES</b>	<b>UTILITIES</b>	<b>SITE NOTES</b>
1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 3. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 4. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 5. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 6. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 7. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 8. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 9. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 10. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.	1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 3. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 4. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 5. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 6. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 7. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 8. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 9. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 10. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.	1. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 2. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 3. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 4. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 5. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 6. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 7. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 8. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 9. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED. 10. ALL DIMENSIONS ARE TO CENTERLINE UNLESS OTHERWISE NOTED.

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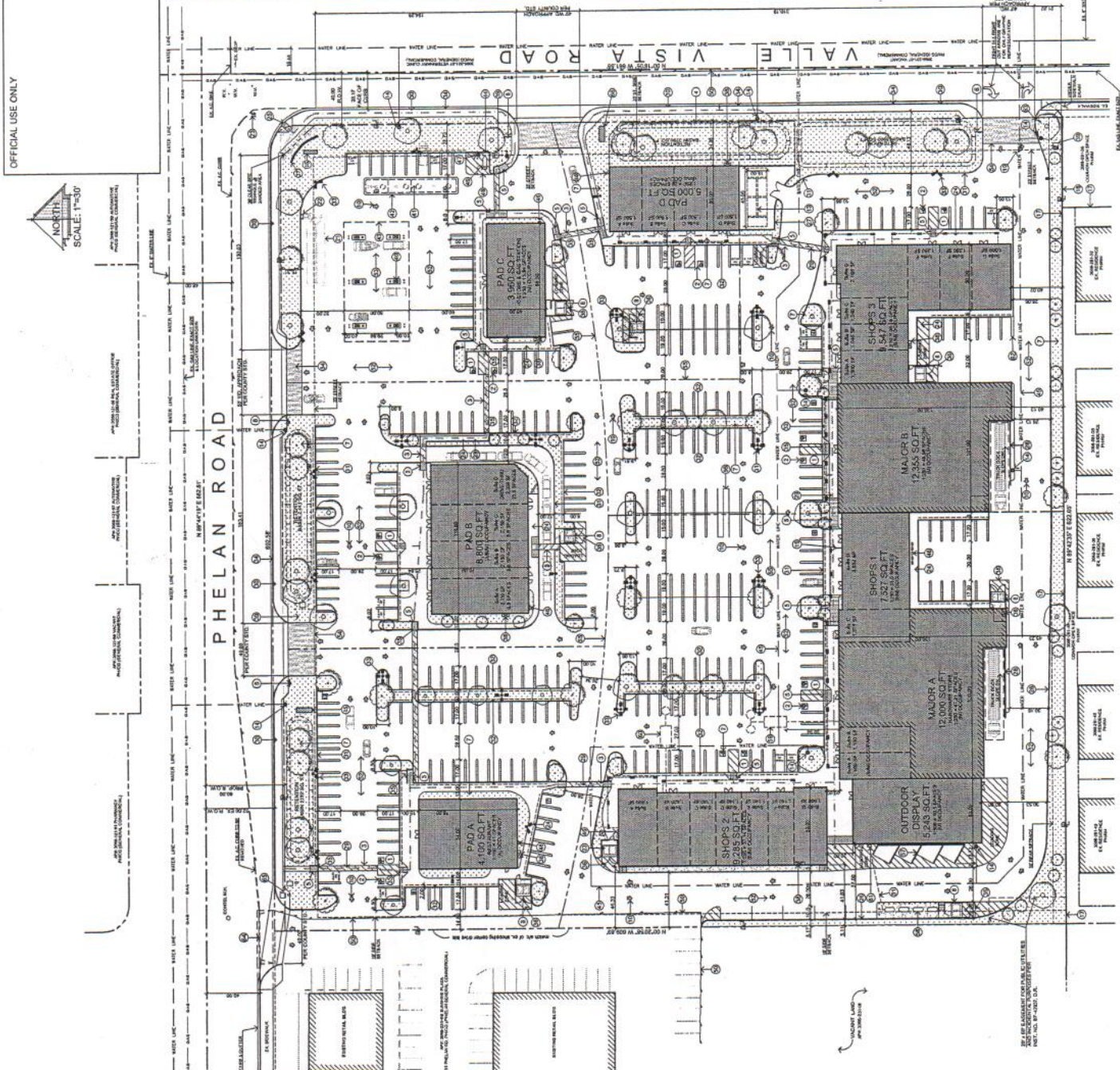


Figure 1

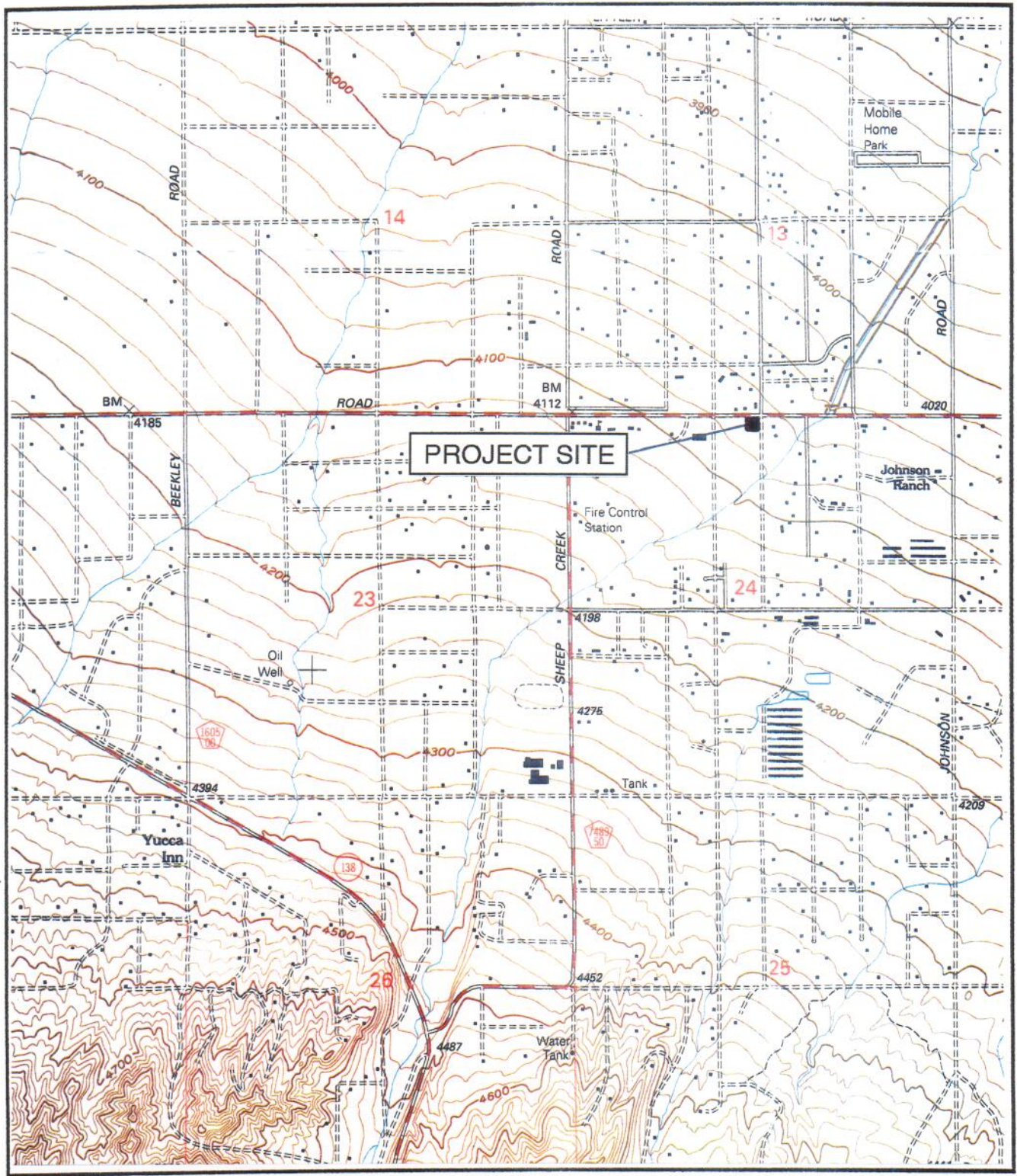
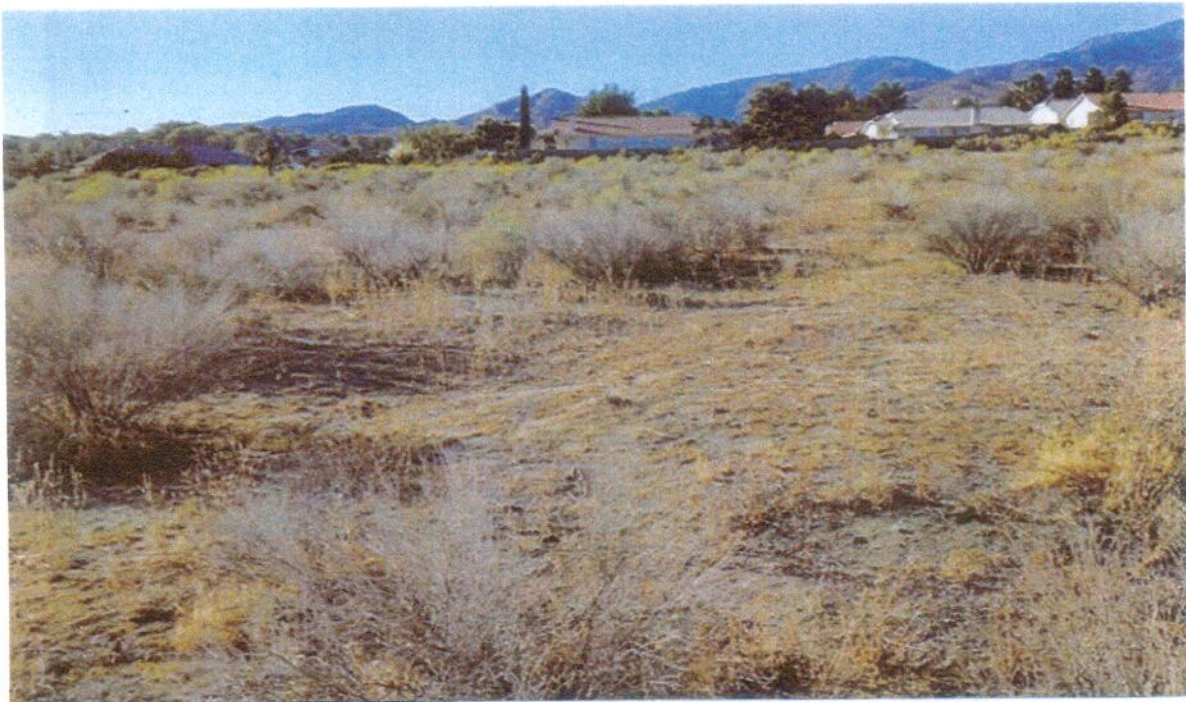


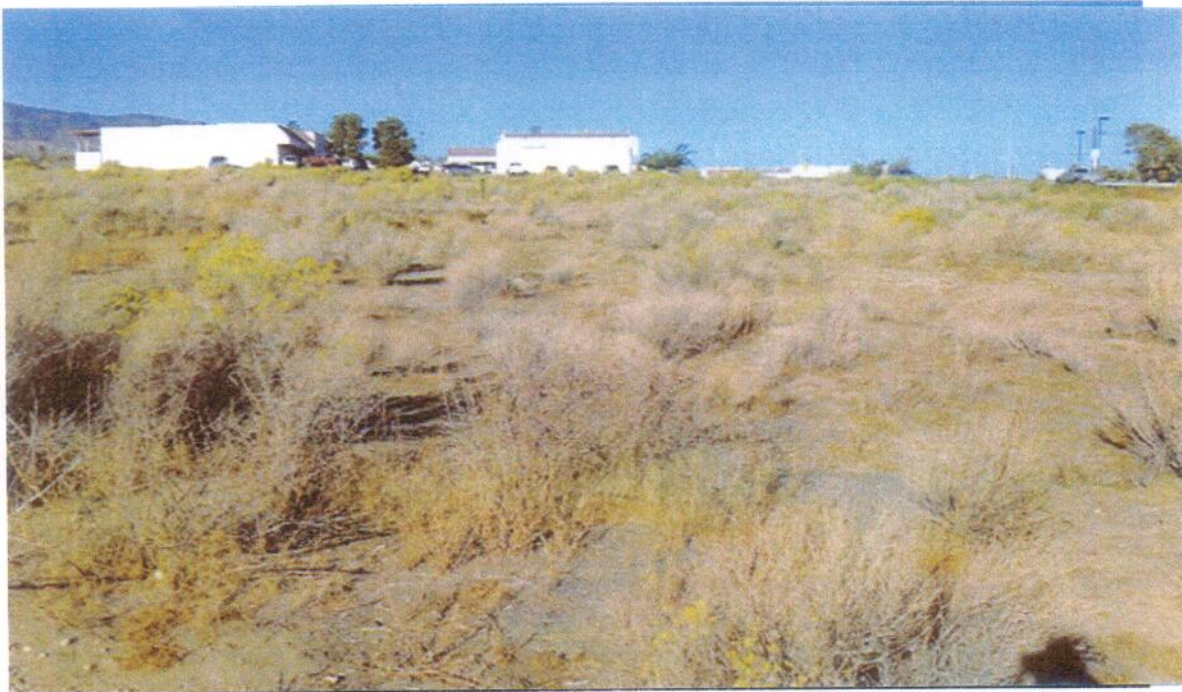
FIGURE 2

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





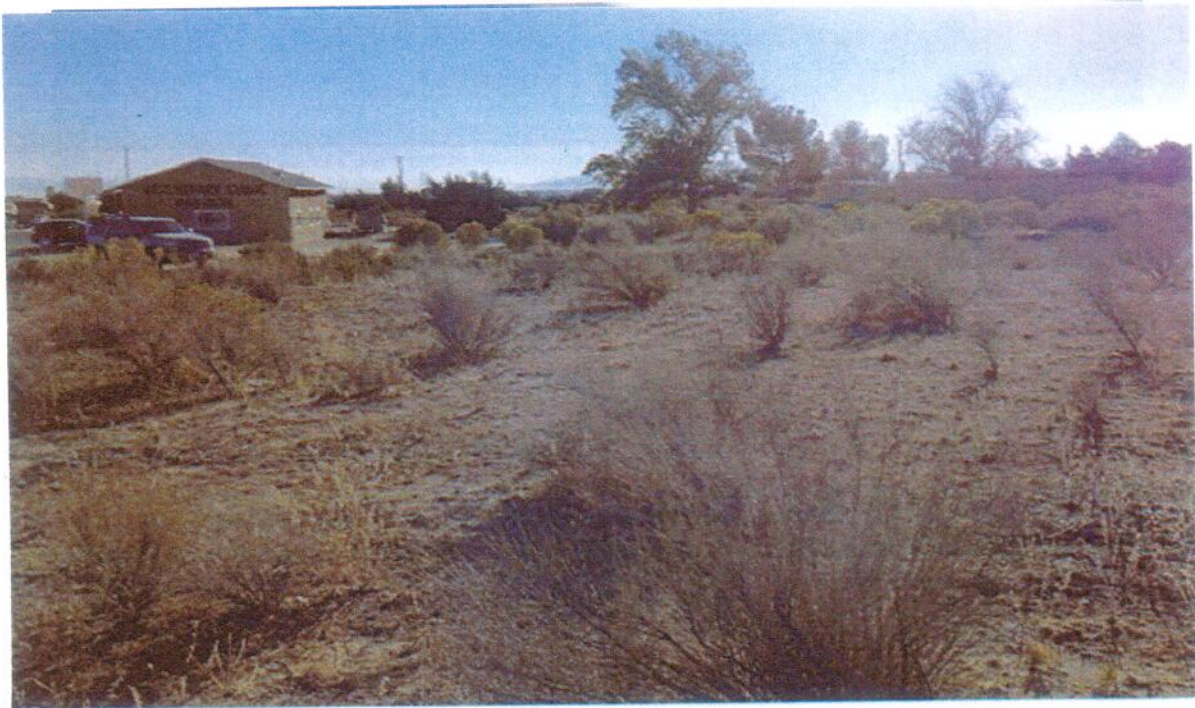
CENTER OF SITE LOOKING NORTH



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING WEST

**FIGURE 3**

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE  
(VVR, LLC, APN 3066-251-07)**



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING EAST



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING NORTH

**FIGURE 3, cont.**

**PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE  
(VVR, LLC, APN 3066-251-07)**



## 2.0 LITERATURE & RECORD REVIEW - SPECIES OF SPECIAL CONCERN

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 two sensitive wildlife species and two sensitive plant species that have been documented in the surrounding region within approximately five miles of the site (CNDDDB, 2014). Sensitive wildlife species include 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 October 14, 2014 during which the biological resources on the site and in the surrounding areas were documented by Randall C. Arnold, Jr. and Parker Smith (RCA Associates, LLC) from 0700 to 0930 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 October 14, 2014 during which Randall C. Arnold, Jr. (Senior wildlife biologist) and Parker Smith (Biological field technician) from RCA Associates, LLC walked 7 to 10-meter transects throughout the site from about 0700 to 0930 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 relatively small (~8.43-acres); consequently, the entire site was covered during the field investigations performed on October 14, 2014. Parallel transects (7 to 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 is relatively undisturbed; although, portions along the northern and eastern boundary show signs of some human disturbance (i.e., walking paths). Most of the vegetation throughout the site consists of moderately tall shrubs (1 to 4 feet) with a few large bushes (4 to 6 feet). Saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*) was common throughout the site along with burrobush (*Franseria dumosa*) (Figure 3) (Appendix A, Tables 3). Other species scattered throughout adjacent areas included Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), schismus (*Schismus barbatus*), and brome grasses (*Bromus sp.*). Figure 4 depicts the general biological resources present on the site and in the surrounding area.

Ravens (*Corvus corax*), jackrabbits (*Lepus californica*), and sage sparrows (*Artemisiospiza*) were the only observed wildlife species during the October 2014 surveys. Coyotes (*Canis latrans*), which are the most common carnivore in the desert, occasionally traverse the site during hunting activities as indicated by the presence of scats and tracks. 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.



FIGURE 4

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES MAP  
(VVR, LLC, APN 3066-251-07)



## 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 sensitive species were observed during the general biological surveys conducted on October 14, 2014. The site supports a mixed desert shrub community which is associated with various sensitive species; however, the entire site was surveyed during the field investigations, and no desert tortoises, burrowing owls, Mohave ground squirrels were observed.

Desert Tortoise: Tortoises have been documented in the general region, however; no occurrences have been recorded to the CNDDDB 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 (CNDDDB, 2014). 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 will be required by CDFW immediately prior to the start of 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 October 14, 2014. 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, 2014).

## 6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

The proposed project is not expected to have an adverse effect on any sensitive species based on the results of the October 14, 2014 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 cactus 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 will be required by CDFW 30-days prior to the start of any grading/clearing activities on the property. If owls have moved onto the site since the October 2014 surveys, 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 sensitive 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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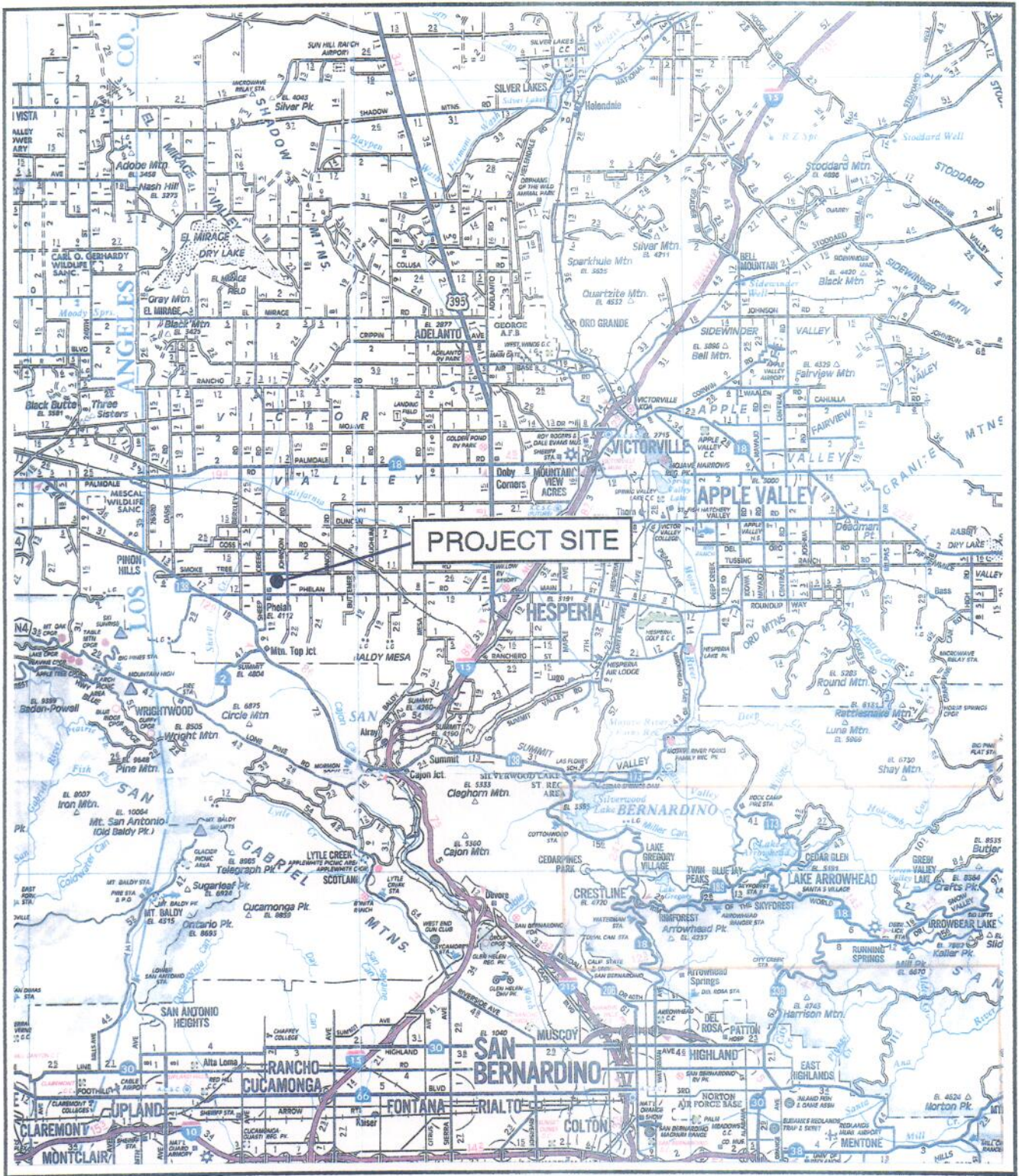
## **TABLES**

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

**FIGURES**

**Vicinity Map**

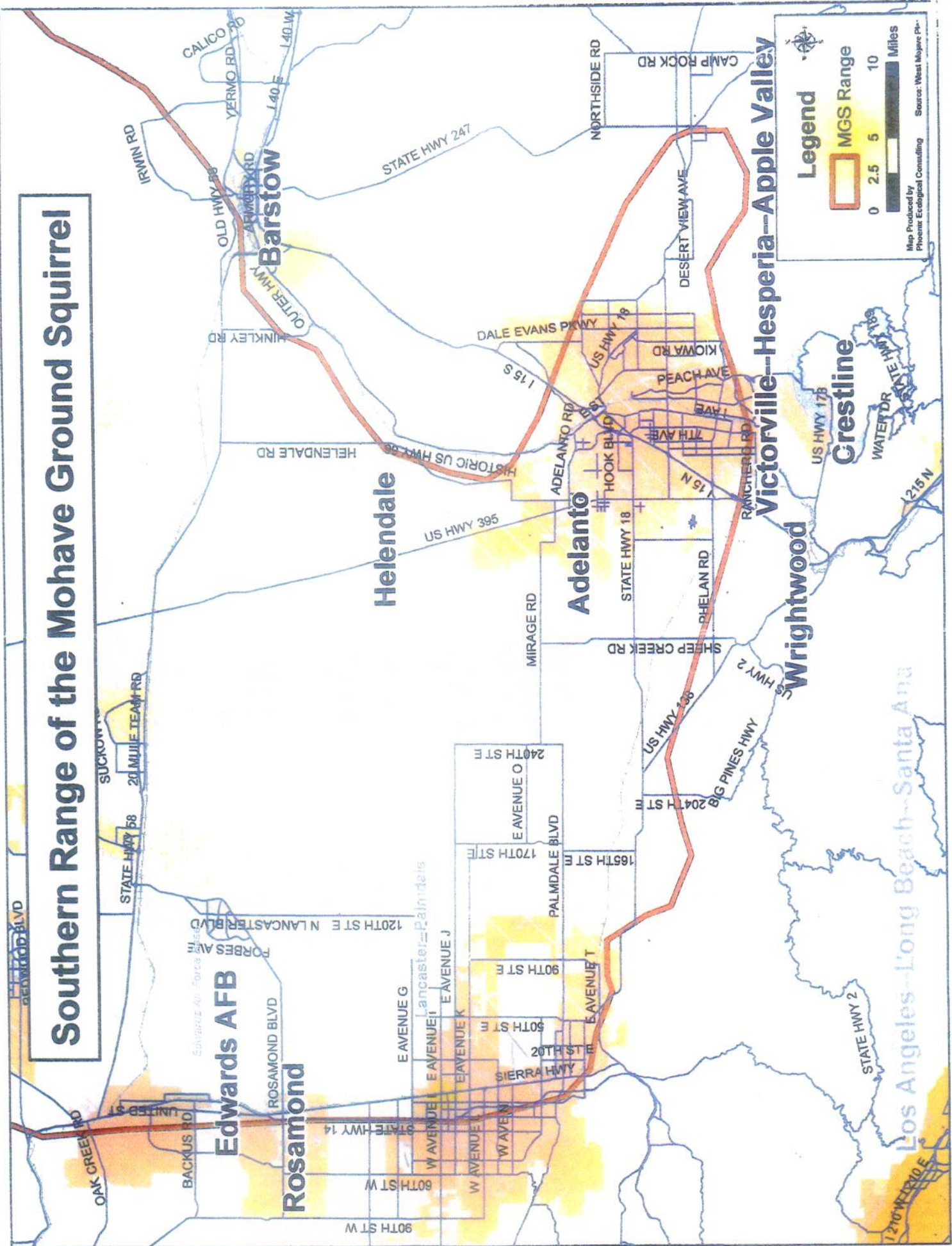
**Mohave Ground Squirrel Distribution Map**



VICINITY MAP  
(VVR, LLC, APN 3066-251-07)



# Southern Range of the Mohave Ground Squirrel



**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	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	No Mohave ground squirrels observed during field investigations.	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 blainvilli</i> )	Fed: None State: None CDFW: SC	Desert scrub	Site supports suitable habitat for the species; however none observed.	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 supports suitable habitat for the species, however none observed.	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>Canbya 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
Burrobush	<i>Franseria dumosa</i>	“
Brome grasses	<i>Bromus sp.</i>	“
Saltbush	<i>Atriplex canescens</i>	“
Buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	“
POT looking plant		“
Russian thistle	<i>Salsola tragus</i>	“
Schismus	<i>Schismus barbatus</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>Zenaida 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>	“
American robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	Surrounding area
Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californica</i>	On-site & ZOI

**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.

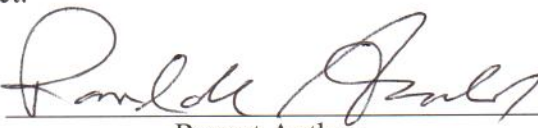


**Appendix B**

**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: 11-30-2015 Signed:   
Report Author

Field Work Performed By: Randall Arnold  
Senior Biologist

Field Work Performed By: Parker Smith  
Biological Field Technician