

GENERAL BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

**TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19569
APN 3070-141-17**

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
(USGS Badly Mesa, CA Quad.; Township 4 North, Range 6 West, Section 3)

Prepared for:

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**Project No: RCA#2014-75Updated
Report Prepared by Randall C. Arnold, Jr.**

July 10, 2018

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The project proponent is proposing a tentative parcel map (TMP No. 19569) for a 10 acre parcel northeast of Phelan, CA in San Bernardino County, CA (Township 4 North, Range 6 West, Section 3) (Figures 1, 2, and 3). The site currently supports a relatively undisturbed creosote bush community. The common perennials observed included creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), Joshua tree (*yucca brevifolia*), yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), and burrobrush (*Franseria dumosa*). Common annuals on the site included schsimus (*Schismus barbatus*), brome grasses (*Bromus sp.*), and ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*).

Updated surveys were conducted on July 10, 2018; however, no sensitive species were observed during the general biological surveys, nor were any desert tortoises or burrowing owls observed during the focused/protocol surveys performed on the property. Sensitive species documented in the area included desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizzi*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) and coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) (CNDDB, 2018). 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 southeast corner of Middleton Road and Seventh Street, Township 4 North, Range 6 West, Section 3 in San Bernardino County, California (Figures 1 and Figure 2). The site is approximately 10-acres in size and currently supports an undisturbed creosote bush plant community.

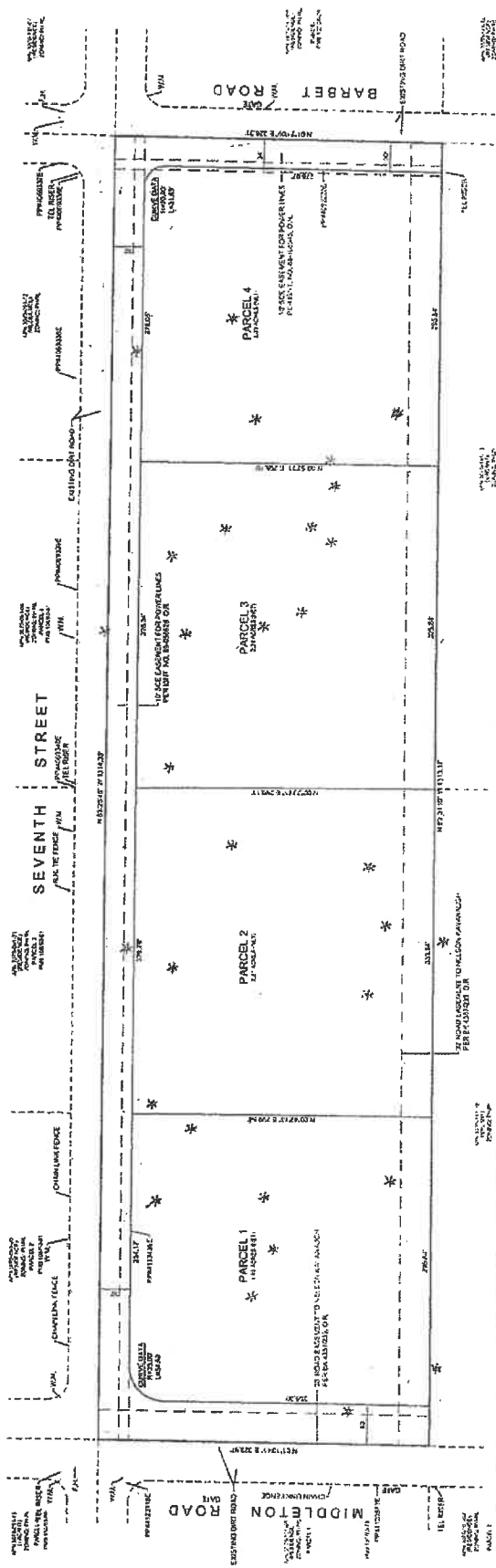
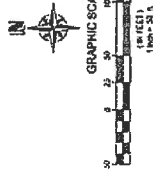
Updated general biological surveys were conducted on the property on July 10, 2018 during which data on the existing biological conditions were recorded, and the results of the survey are presented in this report. Focused surveys for the desert tortoise and burrowing owl were also conducted and the reports are provided under separate cover. The site is dominated by creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), Joshua tree (*yucca brevifolia*), yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), and burrobrush (*Franseria dumosa*) (Figure 3). See Section 4.0 for a more detailed discussion of the biological resources.

The proponent is proposing to subdivide the site into 4 parcels (1.99-acres, 2.27-acres, 2.24-acres & 2.03-acres) as part of Tentative Parcel Map No. 19569 (Figure 1). Elevations ranged from about 3,550 to 3,570 feet (MSL) with a slight slope to the north (Figure 2). Soils consisted of sandy loam with a few small rocks. The site is bordered on the north, south, east and west by existing single family homes.

The USGS Baldy Mesa, CA Quadrangle does not show any blueline channels on the site, and no streams, desert washes or other water features were observed during the July 2018 field investigations. No wildlife corridors bisect the property, and no sensitive wildlife species were observed during the general biological surveys or the focused/protocol surveys for the desert tortoise and burrowing owl. There are no document observations of any special status species in the immediate area according to the California Natural Diversity Data Base (2018). Weather conditions during the July field investigations consisted of winds of 5 to 10 mph from the south, temperatures of 70 to 85 (°F) (AM) with no cloud coverage.

TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19569

BEING A SUBDIVISION OF THE NORTH ONE-HALF OF THE NORTH ONE-HALF OF THE WEST ONE-HALF OF LOT ONE, OF THE NORTHEAST ONE-QUARTER SECTION 3, T4N, R6W, S.B.M., IN THE COUNTY OF SAN BERNARDINO, STATE OF CALIFORNIA
 HIGH DESERT MAPPING
 SEPTEMBER, 2014



- OWNER:**
 28 EDWIN
 28 EDWIN
 28 EDWIN
 28 EDWIN
 28 EDWIN
 28 EDWIN
- REPRESENTATIVE:**
 HIGH DESERT MAPPING
 APPLE VALLEY CA 92307
 (951) 566-6556
- STATUTES:**
 21464, 21465, 21466, 21467, 21468, 21469, 21470, 21471, 21472, 21473, 21474, 21475, 21476, 21477, 21478, 21479, 21480, 21481, 21482, 21483, 21484, 21485, 21486, 21487, 21488, 21489, 21490, 21491, 21492, 21493, 21494, 21495, 21496, 21497, 21498, 21499, 21500
- BRIDGE:**
 403 BRIDGE
 BRIDGE
 BRIDGE
 BRIDGE
 BRIDGE
 BRIDGE
- LEGAL DESCRIPTION:**
 PART OF THE NORTH ONE-HALF OF THE WEST ONE-HALF OF LOT ONE OF THE NORTHEAST ONE-QUARTER SECTION 3, T4N, R6W, S.B.M.
- UTILITY SYMBOLS:**
 WATER
 GAS
 POWER
 TELEPHONE
 CABLE TV
 FIBER OPTIC
- LEGEND:**
 PROPERTY LINE
 EASEMENT
 RIGHT OF WAY
 EGRESS
 EGRESS

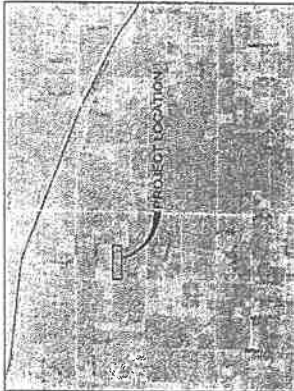


FIGURE 1

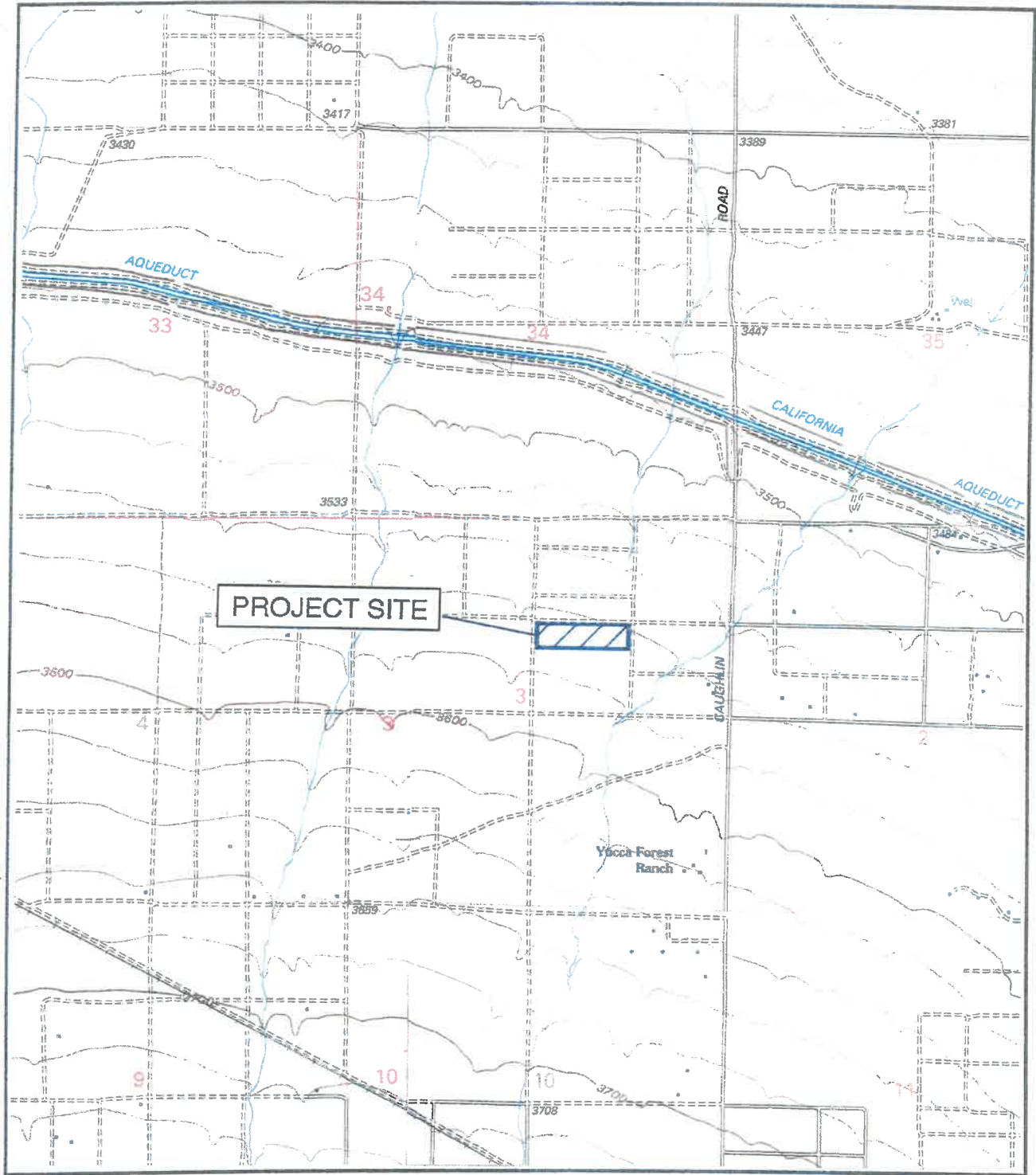


FIGURE 2
PROPERTY LOCATION
 (Tentative Parcel 19569)
 (Source: USGS Baldy Mesa, CA Quad., 1996)





CENTER OF SITE LOOKING EAST



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING NORTH

FIGURE 3
PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE
(TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19569)



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING WEST



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING SOUTH

FIGURE 3. cont.
PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE
(TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19569)

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 immediate 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 CDFG data bases, and a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), it was determined that there are four sensitive wildlife species documented in the surrounding region including desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), and coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*). 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 July 10, 2018 during which the biological resources on the site and in the surrounding areas were documented by Randall C. Arnold, Jr. (biologist from RCA Associates, Inc.). 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. In addition, focused surveys were conducted for the desert tortoise and burrowing owl from about 0630 to 1100 hours.

3.0 METHODOLOGIES

General Vegetation and Wildlife

General biological surveys were conducted on July 10, 2018 during which Randall C. Arnold, Jr. from RCA Associates, Inc. walked meandering transects (i.e., “transects of opportunity”) throughout the site. During the general 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.

Special Status Species

Focused/protocol surveys were conducted for the desert tortoise and burrowing owl on July 10, 2018. The site was surveyed for desert tortoises by Randall Arnold and as required by the CDFW and USFWS survey protocol, 10 meter, parallel belt transects were walked in a north-south direction until the entire property had been checked for tortoises and/or tortoise sign (burrows, tracks, scats, etc.). Surveys in the zone of influence (ZOI) were not conducted in the surrounding areas due to the presence of houses to the north, south, east, and west. All transects were walked at a pace that allowed careful observations along the transect routes and in the immediate vicinity. Field notes were recorded regarding native plant assemblages, wildlife sign, and human affects in order to determine the presence or absence of suitable tortoise foraging habitat. Surveys were performed on the site and in the surrounding area from about 0630 to about 1100 hours. Protocol surveys for the burrowing owl were also in conjunction with the tortoise surveys. The protocol reports are provided under separate cover.

4.0 GENERAL BIOLOGICAL SURVEY RESULTS

A creosote bush community covers the entire site and is relatively undisturbed. Most of the vegetation throughout the site consists of moderately tall creosote bushes (1 to 5 feet) and other shrubs about 1 to 3 feet in height (Figure 3). About thirty Joshua trees (*Yucca brevifolia*) were also scattered throughout the site. Creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), Joshua trees, and burrobrush (*Franseria dumosa*) were the most common perennials. (Appendix A, Tables 3). Annuals scattered throughout adjacent areas included schismus (*Schismus barbatus*), brome grasses (*Bromus sp.*), and ricegrass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*). Figure 4 depicts the general biological resources present on the site and in the surrounding area.

Ravens (*Corvus corax*), desert cottontail (*sylvilagus audubonii*), sage sparrows (*Artemisiospiza*), and side-blotched lizards (*Uta stansburiana*) were the only wildlife species observed during the July 2018 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 may occur on the site include California ground squirrels (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), western whiptail lizards (*Cnemidophorus tigris*), and desert spiny lizards (*Sceloporus magister*) (Appendix A, Table 2). 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
AERIAL VIEW OF SITE
(TMP NO. 13569, NOT TO SCALE)

5.0 IMPACTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 General Biological Resources

Future development activities on the parcel would result in the removal of most of the vegetation present on the property. Wildlife species would be displaced into adjacent areas, and wildlife such as small mammals and reptiles may experience an increased mortality rate due to their limited mobility. Birds would be able to disperse over larger areas; consequently, birds would likely experience only a slight increase in mortality 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

Coast Horned Lizard: No horned lizards were observed during the July 2018 field investigation and the site is not expected to inhabit the site. The nearest observation (1992) is about 2-miles to the south (CNDDDB, 2018). CDFW may require a focused survey for the species prior to any disturbance activities, and could be conducted in conjunction with the pre-construction surveys conducted for the burrowing owls.

Mohave Ground Squirrel: Mohave ground squirrels have been documented in the general region; however, the site is not expected to support populations of the species given the small size of the site and the fact the site is surrounded by existing houses. In addition, the nearest documented observation (2005) is about 5.5 miles to the east and was recorded in 2005 (CNDDDB, 2018).

Desert Tortoise: The nearest documented tortoise populations (2000) are about 4.5-miles southeast of the site (CNDDDB, 2018). The species was not observed during the focused surveys conducted on the property. Furthermore, the species is not expected to move onto the site in the future given the presence of houses to the north, south, east, or west which presents a barrier to movement of the species.

Burrowing Owl: Burrowing Owls have been documented in the general region (CNDDDB, 2018); however; no owls or owl sign (i.e., whitewash, castings, etc.) were observed on the site. As noted above, a focused survey was performed for the species in conjunction with the tortoise survey. Although no owls were observed, CDFW will likely require a 30-day pre-construction survey be conducted immediately prior to the start of any future construction.

Sensitive Plants: Approximately thirty Joshua trees are present on the site and the County may require relocation of those trees which are suitable for transplanting.

6.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

No additional surveys or any mitigation measures are recommended at the present time; however, CDFW will require a pre-construction survey for the burrowing owl be conducted 30-days prior to the start of any future on-site grading/clearing activities. Owls were not observed on the site during the July 2018 surveys; although, it is a mobile species and has been documented in the surrounding area. Owls could potentially occur on the site if suitable burrows become available and CDFW will need documentation that owls are not present on the site at the time of future development activities. As noted in Section 2.0, the coast horned lizard is also a special status wildlife species which has been observed in the surrounding area and could potentially occur on the site. Therefore, CDFW may require focused surveys be performed for the species in conjunction with pre-construction owl surveys.

If any sensitive species are identified during future surveys or other site 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

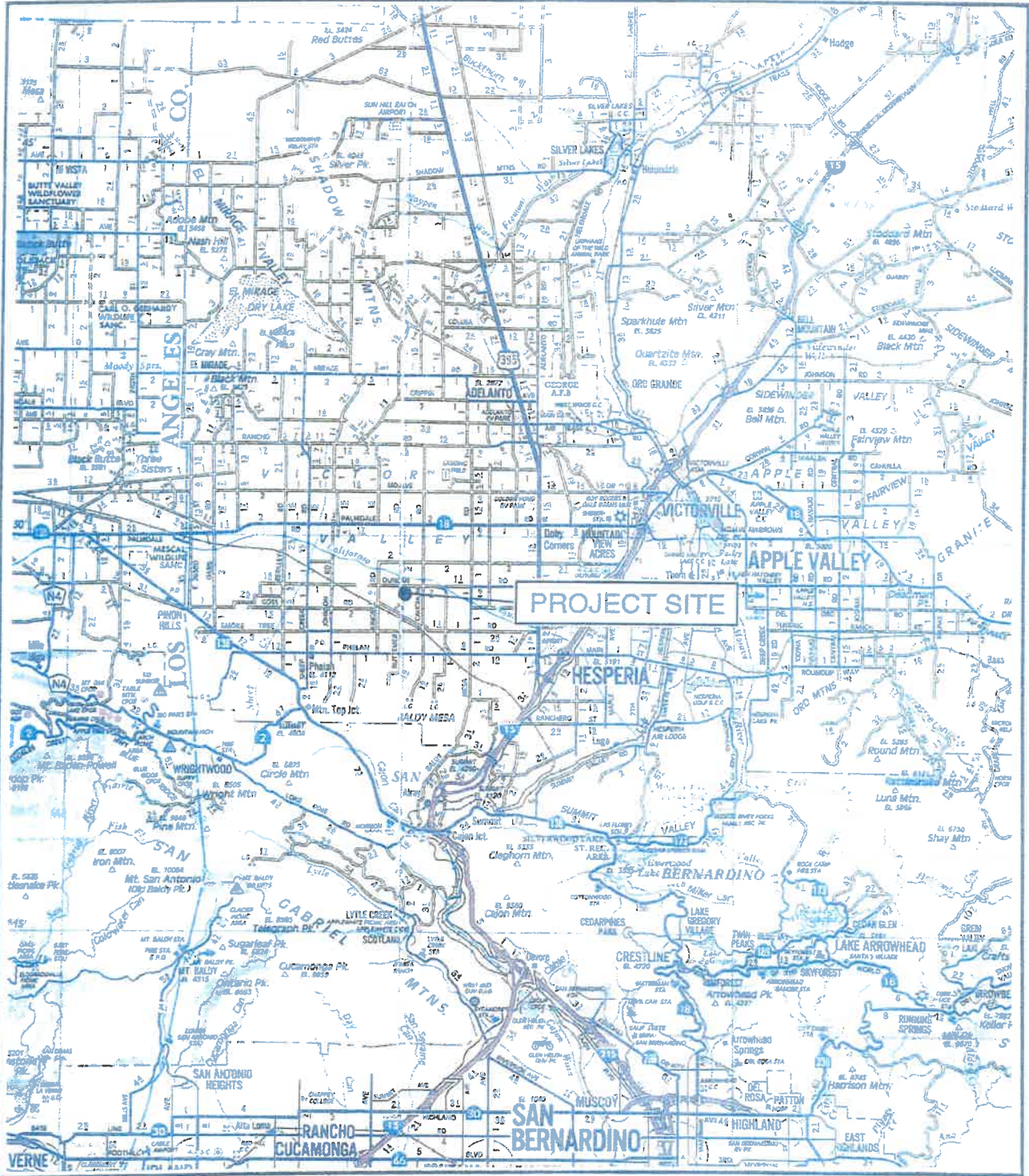
**(Note: See Appendix A for CNDDDB Table
&
Flora and Fauna Compendium Tables)**

FIGURES

Vicinity Map

Southern Range of the Mohave Ground Squirrel

Site Photographs

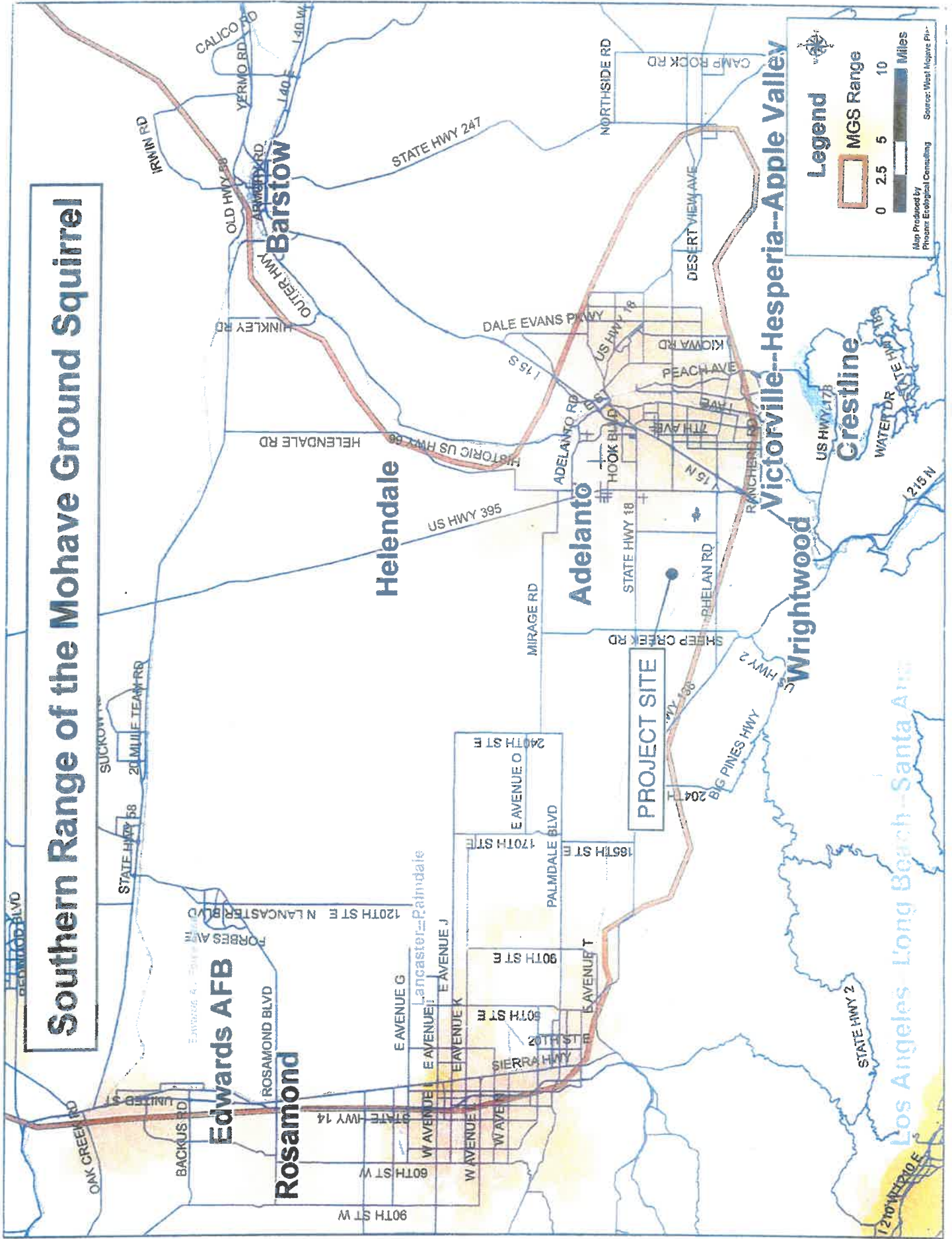


VICINITY MAP

(Tentative Parcel 19569)
 (Source: ACSC Map Source, 2014)



Southern Range of the Mohave Ground Squirrel



Edwards AFB

Rosamond

Helendale

Adelanto

Victorville--Hesperia--Apple Valley

Wrightwood

Crestline

Los Angeles Long Beach--Santa Ana

PROJECT SITE



Legend

MGS Range



Map Produced by
Phoenix Ecological Consulting
Source: West Mojave Pla...



SOUTHWEST CORNER LOOKING NORTHEAST



NORTHWEST CORNER LOOKING SOUTHEAST

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS
(TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19569)



SOUTHEAST CORNER LOOKING NORTHWEST



NORTHEAST CORNER LOOKING SOUTHWEST

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS, cont.
(TENTATIVE PARCEL MAP NO. 19569)

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 Within Five Miles of the Site.

(Fed; T = Threatened; 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	Species not observed on-site during focused survey.	Occ. #66 (2000) 4.5-miles southeast of site. (CNDDDB, 2018).
Mohave ground squirrel (<i>Spermophilus mohavensis</i>)	Fed: None State: T	Desert scrub	Species not expected to inhabit site.	Occ. #318 (2005) 5.5 miles east of site. (CNDDDB, 2018).
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Fed: None State: None CDFW: SC	Various habitats	No owls or suitable burrows observed on site..	Occ. #917 (2007) 4-miles southeast of site. (CNDDDB, 2018).
Coast horned lizard (<i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>)	Fed: None State: None CDFW: SC	Desert shrub	Site supports suitable habitat but no CHL observed during surveys.	Occ. #224 (1992) 2-miles south of site. (CNDDDB, 2018)

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 & ZOI.
Joshua tree	<i>Yucca brevifolia</i>	“
Burrobush	<i>Franseria dumosa</i>	“
Creosote bush	<i>Larrea tridentate</i>	“
Ricegrass	<i>Oryzopsis hymenoides</i>	“
Brome grasses	<i>Bromus sp.</i>	“
Schismus	<i>Schismus barbatus</i>	“

ZOI = Zone of Influence (surrounding area)

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 & ZOI
Song sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	ZOI
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>	On-site
Coyotes	<i>Canis latrans</i>	On-site & ZOI
California ground squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	May occur on-site & ZOI
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 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: 7-10-2018 Signed: 
Report Author

Field Work Performed By: Randall Arnold
Senior Biologist