



ASSOCIATES INC

EST 1990

P201900287

15555 Main Street, #D4-235  
Hesperia, CA 92345  
(760) 956-9212  
[ramold@rcaassociatesllc.com](mailto:ramold@rcaassociatesllc.com)  
[www.rcaassociatesllc.com](http://www.rcaassociatesllc.com)

August 31, 2018

All Era Properties, LLC  
Attn: Mr. Kirk Wallace  
2403 Cliff Road  
Upland, CA 91784

Re: Surveys for burrowing owls and nesting birds; Tract 32704, Jurupa Valley, California  
RCA#2018-83

Dear Mr. Wallace:

Biologists from RCA Associates, Inc. conducted a focused pre-construction survey for the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) and a nesting bird survey on August 30, 2018 on Tract 32704 located along Jurupa Road east of Pyrite Street in Jurupa Valley, California (Figure 1). The surveys were conducted as per survey methodologies required by California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as outlined below.

The property is bordered on the south by Jurupa Road and on the north, east, and west by existing single-family dwellings. The site supports a ruderal vegetation community dominated by various grass species (*Bromus* sp., etc.) and Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*). Other plant species observed included buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), sunflower (*Glyptopleura marginata*), palm tree (*Washingtonia filifera*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia tessellata*), beavertail cactus (*Opuntia* sp.), and peppertrees (*Schinus molle*). A few wildlife species were observed during the field investigations including ravens (*Corvus corax*), mourning doves (*Zenaida macroura*), and song sparrows (*Melospiza melodia*). No mammals were observed; although, a few small rodent burrows were scattered throughout the property. These burrows may be utilized by various rodent species such as deer mice (*Peromyscus maniculatus*).

The burrowing owl is a year-long resident of open, dry grassland and desert habitats. The species was formerly common throughout central and southern California; however, the species has seen a significant reduction over the last few decades due to development activities; farming activities, predation by dogs and cats, and habitat destruction (CDFW, 1990). Conversions of grassland and desert habitats to agricultural fields and residential developments have contributed to the greatest amount of habitat destruction in recent decades. The reduction in population levels was noted as early as the 1940s. Burrowing owls primarily prey upon insects; although,

small mammals, lizards, birds, and carrion make up a portion of the owl's diet (CDFG, 1990). Burrowing owls typically utilize abandoned rodent burrows for roosting and nesting.

Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. 703 et seq.). In addition, sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 of the Fish and Game Code (FGC) stipulate that nesting bird surveys should be conducted to determine if a proposed project will impact nesting activities of any species protected under the MBTA.

### **Methodologies**

Survey protocol requires surveys to be performed at sunrise or sunset in areas that provide suitable habitat for the burrowing owl. Therefore, surveys were conducted at sunrise on August 30, 2019 during which transects were walked throughout the property until the entire site had been surveyed for the species, as required by the Staff Report for Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW, March 2012). In addition, the site was evaluated for the presence of any occupiable burrows (e.g., abandoned ground squirrel burrows, etc.) since owls typically utilize burrows which have been dug by other animals. Survey protocol requires that the centerline of transects be no more than 30 meters apart to allow for 100 percent visual coverage. However, widths between transects were modified where necessary in order to maintain 100 percent coverage. Transect widths varied from about 15 to 30 meters during the owl survey.

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 owl habitat. Surveys were performed on the site from 0630 to about 0900 hours. Temperatures during the August 30, 2018 survey were in the mid 60's to high 70's (°F), wind speeds of about 0 to 5 mph, and cloud cover was about 10 percent. No precipitation was recorded during the survey. CDFW survey protocol also requires surveys be performed out to a distance of 150 meters (~500 feet) beyond the property boundaries to identify owls or owl burrows outside the project area; however, surveys were not conducted in areas surrounding the site due to the presence of single-family dwellings to the north, east, and west, and Jurupa Road to the south.

In addition, surveys for nesting birds were conducted in conjunction with the burrowing owl survey. Birds present on the site were identified by visual observations and vocalizations. The site was also evaluated for the presence of any nests in the trees and shrubs present on the property. Focused surveys combined with identification of the habitat on the site and in the surrounding area provide data on the potential presence or absence of the owls and active nests. Although we did not have access to adjacent properties, binoculars and spotting scopes were used to evaluate adjacent habitats for the presence of burrowing owls and any active nests.

Mr. Kirk Wallace  
All Era Properties, LLC  
Page 3

## Results

**Burrowing Owl:** No burrowing owls or owl sign were observed within the boundaries of the property during the field investigations or in the surrounding area. In addition, no suitable burrows were identified during the surveys which were of appropriate size and shape for use by owls, and no owl sign (i.e., casting, whitewash, etc.) was observed. Therefore, it is the opinion of RCA Associates, Inc. that the site does not support populations of the burrowing owl and the species is not expected to inhabit the site in the future. Furthermore, based on the results of the August 30, 2018 surveys, no Phase II surveys (i.e., owl surveys, census, and mapping) are deemed necessary as per CDFW survey protocol.

**Nesting Birds:** A few trees are located along the southern boundary of the property adjacent to Jurupa Road which do provide suitable habitat for nesting; however, no nests (active or inactive) were observed and no nesting activities (i.e., nest building, mating behavior, etc.) were observed during the field investigations.

## Conclusions

Construction of the proposed project is not expected to have any direct or indirect impacts on burrowing owls or occupied owl habitat based on the results of the focused survey conducted on August 30, 2018. No suitable owl burrows were observed on the site and based on the absence of any occupiable burrows, the site does not currently support any populations of burrowing owls. However, if burrowing owls are observed on the site in the future, the owls should not be removed, harassed, or in any way disturbed regardless of the results of this survey. To do so constitutes a violation of State and City regulations. If owls are encountered during future development activities, all activities should cease and CDFW and the City of Jurupa Valley should be notified.

In addition, no nests or nesting activities were identified during the field investigations; therefore, the proposed project is not expected to have any adverse impact on nesting activities of any bird species protected under the MBTA. No additional investigations are recommended at this time for either burrowing owls or nesting birds.

If you have any questions, please call me at (760) 596-0017.

Sincerely,



Randall C. Arnold, Jr.  
Principal & Senior Biologist

Mr. Kirk Wallace  
All Era Properties  
Page 4

**References**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
April 1995 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. September 25, 2003. 8 pp.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
March 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. March 7, 2012. 34 pp.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
1990 California's Wildlife, Volumes 1, 2, and 3. Sacramento.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife  
2018 Natural Diversity Data Base. Sacramento.

**APPENDIX A**

**Exhibit**



