



June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2019

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Attn: Luis Machado  
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***Subject: Trapping for Mohave Ground Squirrel within 18 Acre Property in Pearsonville,  
within Inyo County, California, July 2019***

Dear Luis,

This report documents the results of a live trapping study conducted by Jeff Johnson on the project site located at the southwest corner of the intersection of Highway 395 and 9 Mile Canyon Road in the community known as Pearsonville, California. The purpose is to determine the presence or absence of the State of California listed as threatened Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*). Guidelines established by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG 2003) was followed for three trapping sessions occurring during the prescribed periods. Protocol trapping effort was conducted on the site within potentially suitable habitat. No Mohave ground squirrels were observed or captured.

## 1. STUDY AREA

The project site includes a parcel of approximately 18 acres located at the southwest corner of Highway 395 and 9 Mile Canyon Road in Pearsonville, California. Investigative trapping effort was conducted in marginally suitable habitat located along the frontage road Sterling Road adjacent to Highway 395 at the southern end of the parcel. This portion of the parcel is approximately 5 acres in size. All other areas appear to have been developed or highly disturbed in the past and are considered unsuitable habitat for MGS.

The study area is surrounded by undeveloped open desert land with Highway 395 occurring immediately to the east.

The project site is relatively flat at an elevation of approximately 2,600 feet above mean sea level. Soils observed include fine and medium coarse sands. The site has some disturbance due to off-road utility vehicles, and a few randomly scattered trash dumps.

## 2. VEGETATION

The plant community found within the project site is desert scrub. Shrubs predominantly found in this plant community are: creosote (*Larrea tridentata*) and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*) with few indigo bush (*Psoralea argophylla* var. *minutifolia*).

## 3. METHODS

On April 5, 2019, the site was visually inspected by biologist Jeff Johnson for potential presence of Mohave ground squirrels (MGS). Because the initial survey rendered no visual observations of MGS, live trapping was conducted following the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines (2003). Trapping days for each of the three sessions were: April 6-10, May 8-12, and June 15-19, 2019.

Jeff Johnson was present and responsible for the entire trapping effort and is permitted under a Memoranda of Understanding (MOU) with CDFG, issued as an attachment to his Scientific Collectors Permit (SC-6876).

A trapping grid consisting of 35 standard Sherman™ (12-inch ventilated PXLK Model) aluminum folding traps was set within suitable habitat for MGS. The grid configuration consisted of 28 traps arranged in four rows of seven traps each and spaced 35 meters apart. Each trap was shaded by a 6-inch by 6-inch by 18-inch cardboard box frame oriented north-south to minimize thermal stress on captured animals. The four perimeter points of the grid location were recorded using a global position system (NAD83) unit and are as follows: Trap A-1: 35.839103, -117.877765, Trap A-7: 35.839255, -117.875580, Trap D-1: 35.838473, -117.877794, and Trap D-7: 35.838474, -117.875592.

The grid location was maintained for five consecutive days during each of the three sessions with a 28-trap grid configuration, for a total of 420 trap-days.

Bait used for the traps was “4-way-grain-mix” which includes a blend of corn, barley, and wheat with added molasses.

Traps were opened and baited within one hour of sunrise in the morning and checked at least every four hours until being closed within one hour of sunset or when the air temperature at ground level exceeded 90 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Periods of high winds, precipitation and low temperatures were avoided during all times as they are not optimal trapping conditions.

Data for all captured animals included: date and time of capture, trap number, species, sex, age (adult or juvenile), and reproductive condition. All animals were released unharmed at the point of capture after being processed. A Mohave Ground Squirrel Trapping Data Sheet was completed each trapping day.

## 5. RESULTS

### 5.1 Literature Review

A review of the CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) resulted in a single documentation of Mohave ground squirrel observations that occurred approximately 6.2 miles southeast of the project area. This occurrence (CNDDDB Element Occurrence Record 59) is a historical record and dates back to 1985; however, no observations of MGS within the same vicinity have been documented since then.

### 5.2 Survey Review

A live-trapping survey was conducted after no MGS were observed or detected during the initial visual survey.

Daily temperatures during the trapping period (times when traps were opened) never reached or exceeded 90°F at 1 ft above the ground surface. Although, during the daytime temperatures ranged from 54°F to 102°F. A total of 32 white-tailed antelope ground squirrels (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*) were captured. No MGS were trapped or observed during this period. Mohave ground squirrels were not observed nor detected on or in the vicinity of the grid during the focused protocol live-trapping study.

## 6. CONCLUSION

Although no MGS were observed or captured during the visual and live-trapping surveys, it does not affirm that MGS do not exist within the study area or that the area is not actual or potential habitat of the species. However, given the circumstance of the results, the presence of MGS is not likely, although possible in the future.

Sincerely,



Principal Biologist  
Pacific BioScience, Inc.

Att:

Attachment A – Figures

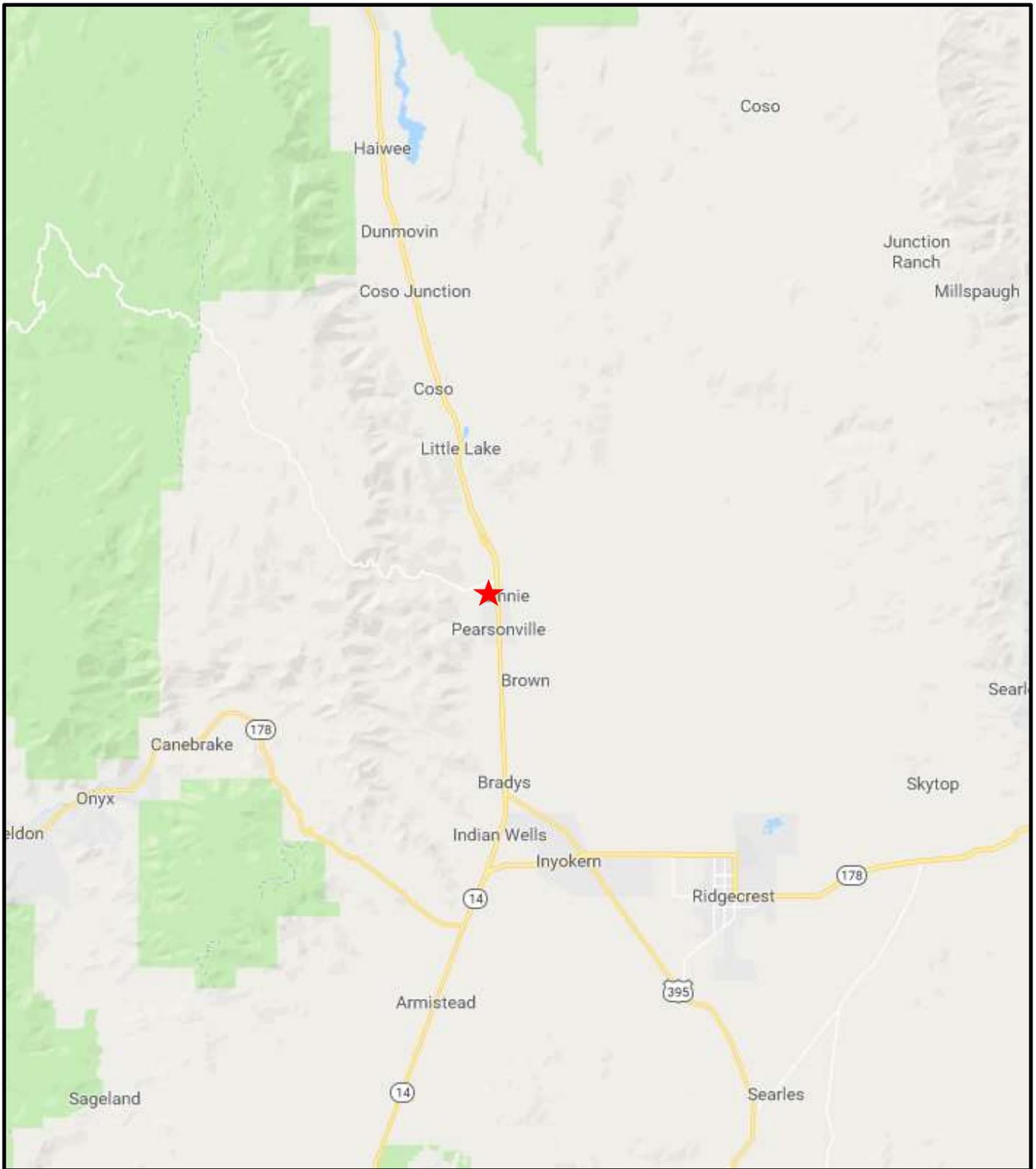
## 7. LITERATURE CITED

California Department of Fish and Game. 2003. Mohave Ground Squirrel Survey Guidelines, California Department of Fish & Game.

Google Earth. Google Earth Enterprise. Retrieved April 10, 2019, from <http://ctearth.dot.ca.gov/IMAPS> Viewer. California Natural Diversity Database & Spotted Owl Data Viewer (CNDDDB).

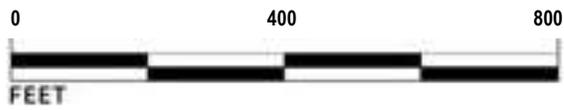
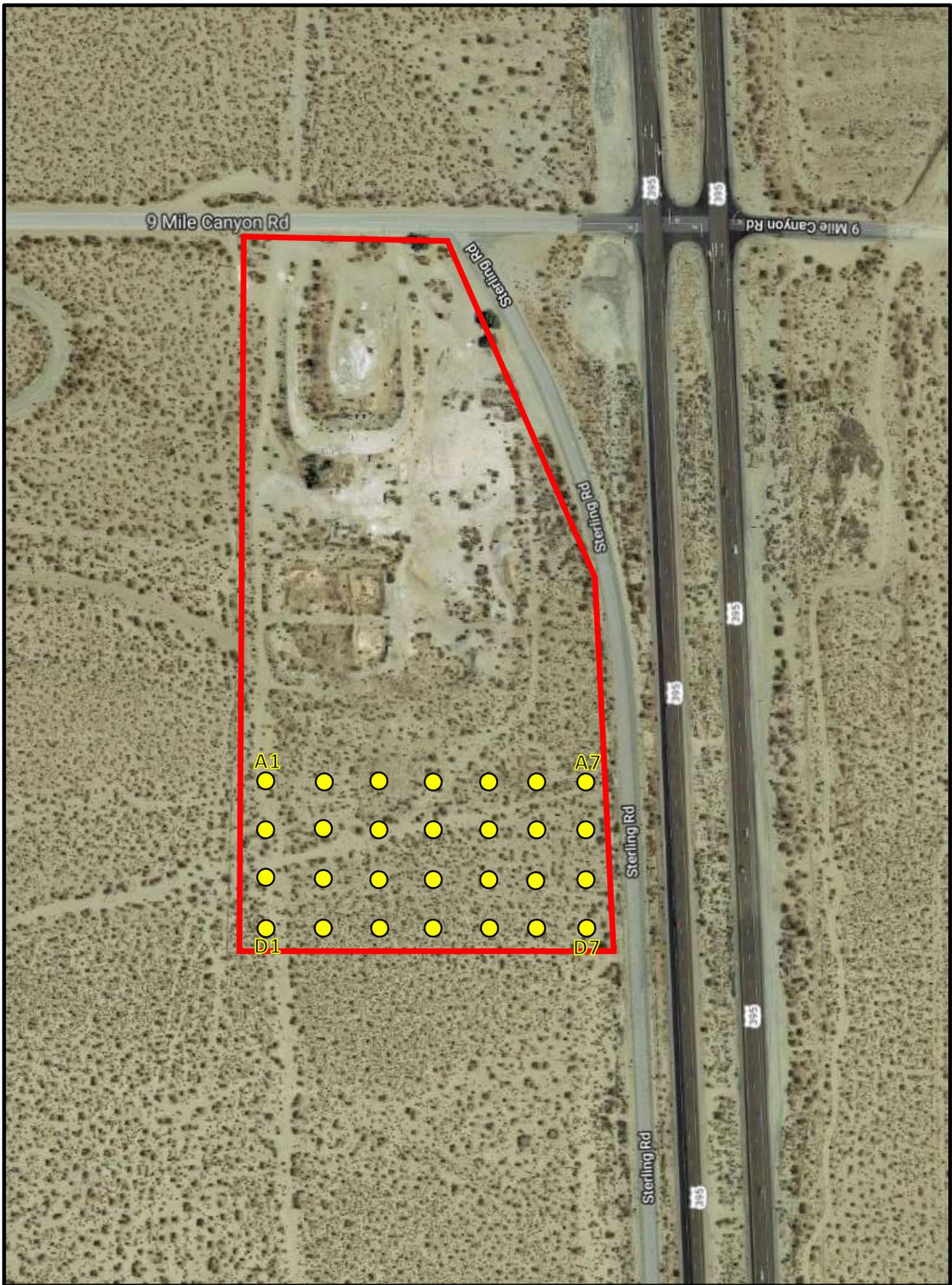
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Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf. 1995. A Manual of California Vegetation. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, California.



**★ Project Location**

**Attachment A - Figures  
Figure 1 – Project Vicinity**



-  Project Limits
-  Trap Location

Attachment A - Figures  
Figure 2 – Survey Area