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July 7, 2021

Elizabeth Meyerhoff, Environmental Specialist
Coachella Valley Water District
75-515 Hovley Lane East
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**Subject:** Cultural Resources Assessment Letter Report, Indio Hills, Riverside County, California, APN 750-130-005

### Dear Ms. Meyerhoff:

This Cultural Resources Letter Report (Report) describes the results of an archaeological survey performed for the Coachella Valley Water District (CVWD) Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 (Project), located on a 3.67-acre parcel (Assessor Parcel Number [APN] 750-130-005) in the area of Indio Hills, Riverside County, California (see **Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The Report provides an updated records search and summarizes the results of pedestrian survey conducted by a Wood Environment & Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. (Wood) staff archaeologist to confirm current conditions for the Project site. Additionally, this Report makes effect determinations, as appropriate, pursuant to the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

Wood's effort supplements the previously prepared *Cultural Resource Assessment of the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase 2 Project, Riverside County, California* (Smallwood 2015a), which included a survey of the Project site but is now greater than 5 years old (see **Appendix B**). Wood's survey confirmed the negative results of Smallwood (2015a:27) within the Project site, finding neither substantial changes to the physical conditions of the Project site nor evidence of cultural resources.

## Project Location

The Project site is located in the northwest portion of CVWD's service area within the unincorporated community of Indio Hills and is shown on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute West Berdoo Canyon topographic quadrangle (1988), found in Section 11, Township 4 south, Range 7 east, San Bernardino Base and Meridian. The natural and cultural environments of the Project site are described in detail by Smallwood (2015a:5-15). The natural environment of the area is characterized by plant and wildlife communities typical of the transition zone between the Mojave and Sonora deserts, with access to a wide range of culturally important resources (Smallwood 2015a:5-8). The cultural environment was assumed by Smallwood (2015a:8) to include Late Prehistoric, Ethnographic, and Historical period components, each of which are evident in the Coachella Valley and include distinct suites of material culture evidence (e.g., projectile points, habitation sites, lithic scatters, trash dumps).

## Project Description

The proposed Project includes the construction of two 1,000,000-gallon (1MG) aboveground welded-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4), followed by the demolition of two existing 100,000-gallon aboveground bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2), which were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999. The construction of the proposed Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4 would include the following components:

- Excavation, grading, soil compaction, and construction of two 76-foot diameter by 5-foot deep foundations;
- Construction of two 1MG welded-steel tanks;
- Construction of all required aboveground and buried appurtenances (e.g., water meters, valves, 18-inch diameter connection to the existing Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline, etc.); and
- Construction of all required infrastructure (e.g., riprap revetment north/upstream of the new reservoirs, perimeter chain-link fence, etc.).

Following the construction and initial operation of proposed Reservoirs 4711-3 and 4711-4, the two existing bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2) and associated appurtenances and infrastructure would be demolished and removed from the Project site. This demolition would include the removal of existing aboveground meters, valves, and pipelines as well as the existing riprap revetment and perimeter chain-link fence. The buried pipelines associated with the existing tanks may be removed or abandoned in place.

CVWD is a California Special District formed in 1918 to protect and conserve local water sources to the Coachella Valley. The District provides irrigation and domestic drinking water, collects and recycles wastewater, provides regional storm water protection, replenishes the groundwater basin and promotes water conservation. The proposed Project would restore and improve water storage infrastructure and ensure reliable and sustainable domestic water supply and fire flow protection to CVWD's customers within the Sky Valley Domestic Water Production Zone / Indio Hills Pressure Zone, which serves the unincorporated community of Indio Hills.

## Cultural Resources Literature and Records Search

A records search for the Project site (see **Figure 1**) was requested on January 13, 2021 at the Eastern Information Center (EIC) of the California Historical Resources Information System (CHRIS) at University of California, Riverside. Results were received on February 16, 2021. In addition to the official records and maps for archaeological sites and surveys in Riverside County, the following historic references were also reviewed: Historic Property Data File for Riverside County; the National Register Information System website; Office of Historic Preservation, California Historical Landmarks website; California Historical Landmarks; and California Points of Historical Interest. A review of these sources indicated that there are no publicly recorded inventoried historic properties within the area of the Project site and the 0.5-mile buffer.

Four previously recorded archaeological resources were identified in the 0.5-mile buffer area. None of the resources exist within the current Project site. Three previously prepared reports have documented areas within the 0.5-mile buffer; of these, only Smallwood (2015a) covered the Project site itself. The previously

recorded resources identified within the 0.5-mile buffer of the Project site include three historical-period resources and one prehistoric isolate recorded during a 1995 survey (Love & Tang 1995).

### Prehistoric Isolate

***P-33-8022***

P-33-8022 is a prehistoric isolate, originally recorded by Love as two fragments of thin-walled orange pottery (Love 1995c; Love & Tang 1995). The isolate is located approximately 300 meters (984 feet) north-northeast of the Project site and was not observed during the survey.

### Historical-period Isolate

***P-33-8023***

P-33-8023 is a historical-period isolate, originally recorded as a single hole-in-cap can (early 20th century) (Love 1995d; Love & Tang 1995). The isolate is located approximately 100 meters (328 feet) southwest of the Project site and was not observed during the survey.

### Historical-period Resources

***P-33-5755***

P-33-5755 (CA-RIV-5514H) is a section of utility access road originally built as an unpaved access road by the Metropolitan Water District (MWD) during the construction of the Colorado River Aqueduct (CRA) (Love 1995a; Love & Tang 1995). The road was re-recorded by Smallwood (2015a), who identified subsequent improvements attributed to ongoing MWD use (Smallwood 2015b). This resource is located approximately 725 meters (approximately 2,379 feet) south-southwest of the Project site and was not observed during the survey.

***P-33-5756***

P-33-5756 (CA-RIV-5515H) is a roughly oval historical-period work camp with associated debris scatter and unpaved roadbeds extending east and west; the site dates to the 1930s and was associated with the MWD's CRA construction project (Love 1995b; Love & Tang 1995). Love (1995b) recorded numerous features within the debris scatter, including MWD survey benchmarks, distinct concentrations of trash (e.g., cans, lumber), a gravel berm, and supports for road markers. A site update in 2004 confirmed P-33-5756 is still extant, though subsequent modern trash dumping has obscured the resource (Robinson 2004). The eastern unpaved roadbed extends towards the Project site, passing approximately 250 meters (820 feet) north-northeast at its closest.

## Survey Methods

The field survey involved an intensive systematic pedestrian survey covering the entire 3.67 acres of the Project site in transects spaced no greater than 15 meters apart as required in *California Office of Historic Preservation Guidance for Section 106 Consultation Submittals* (April 2020). The pedestrian survey consisted of visual inspection of the ground surface with specific attention to any identifiable areas of concern, including exposed historic artifacts (e.g., bottles, cans, nails, etc.). The Project site was digitally rectified into a handheld Trimble R-1 global positioning system (GPS) unit which has decimeter accuracy (i.e., accuracy to approximately one tenth of a meter). This GPS unit was used during the survey to record

the transect locations, any observations if encountered, as well as to geo-reference photo documentation (see **Appendix A**).

## Survey Results

Field work was conducted by Wood Archaeologist Trisha Drennan, MSc, RPA (certified July 2009) on January 12, 2021. The survey area was accessed from an unpaved and gated road located off 30th Avenue and Sunny Rock Road. Surface visibility within the Project site was excellent (100 percent ground visibility). The survey results are therefore considered reliable for the purpose of identifying and recording cultural resources that may be impacted by the proposed Project. Photographs documenting the ground conditions during the survey are included in **Appendix A**.

Surface soils consist of a fine to medium-grained, light brownish gray alluvial sand (10YR 6/2), mixed with sub angular gravel and some cobbles. Rock types consist mainly of granite of various colors (pink, black, and gray). The dominant vegetation observed within the survey includes creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), burrowbrush (*Ambrosia dumosa*), burro weed (*Ambrosia salsola*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*), and Mojave rabbitbrush (*Ericameria paniculata*). Animal tracks included coyote (*Canis latrans*), desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), possible sheep or deer, human, and dog. As expected, several alluvial fan drainages were observed within the Project site corridor. Evidence of stormwater runoff from the foothills and alluviation were noted.

No prehistoric or historical-period cultural activity was identified within the Project site, consistent with the recent results of Smallwood (2015a). The existing 100,000-gallon aboveground bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2) and their associated infrastructure attachments (e.g., pumps, pipes, foundations, etc.) were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999 and are not themselves historic.

## Recommendations

Based on the lack of previously recorded archaeological resources, the negative pedestrian survey results, and previous development of the existing aboveground bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2), it is very unlikely that the proposed Project as currently designed will result in significant impacts to buried archaeological resources within the Project site. While rain and intermittent flooding may have occurred across the alluvial fan since 2015, the overall Project site conditions have not identifiably changed , and the recommendations presented in Smallwood (2015a:27) apply:

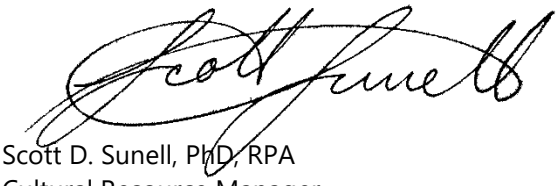
1. While a lack of surface evidence of prehistoric archaeological resources does not preclude their subsurface existence, no prehistoric archaeological resources have been previously recorded within or immediately adjacent to the Project site and only four prehistoric features have been previously recorded within a 0.5-mile radius. Because sediments within the Project site are highly disturbed, it is unlikely that intact subsurface deposits will be encountered during construction.
2. In the unlikely event that potentially significant archaeological materials are encountered during Project-related ground-disturbing activities, all work must be halted in the vicinity of the archaeological discovery until a qualified archaeologist can visit the site of discovery and assess the significance of the archaeological resource. As well, Health and Safety Code 7050.5, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines §15064.5(e), and Public Resources Code Section 5097.98 mandate the process to be followed in the unlikely event of an accidental discovery of any human remains in a location other than a dedicated cemetery.

## Conclusions Regarding Potential Effects on Cultural Resources

No prehistoric or historical-period cultural activity was identified within the Project site, consistent with the recent results of Smallwood (2015a) and the results of the updated records search conducted during the preparation of this Report. The existing 100,000-gallon aboveground bolted-steel tanks (Reservoirs 4711-1 and 4711-2) and their associated infrastructure attachments (e.g., pumps, pipes, foundations, etc.) were originally constructed in 1993 and 1999 and are not themselves historic. Therefore, the proposed Project activities would result in *No Historic Properties Affected* under Section 106 of the NHPA.

If you have any questions regarding this Report, please contact Scott D. Sunell (PhD, RPA) at **scott.sunell@woodplc.com** or at (805) 252-4269.

Sincerely,



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### References

Love, B.

1995a *P-33-5755H Primary Record*. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

1995b *P-33-5756H Primary Record*. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

1995c *P-33-8022 Isolate Primary Record*. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

1995d *P-33-8023H Isolate Primary Record*. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

Love, B., & Tang, B.

1995 *Cultural Resources Report: Parcel Map No. 27527, Indio Hills, Riverside County, California*. Prepared for Roos Land Holdings, Inc. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

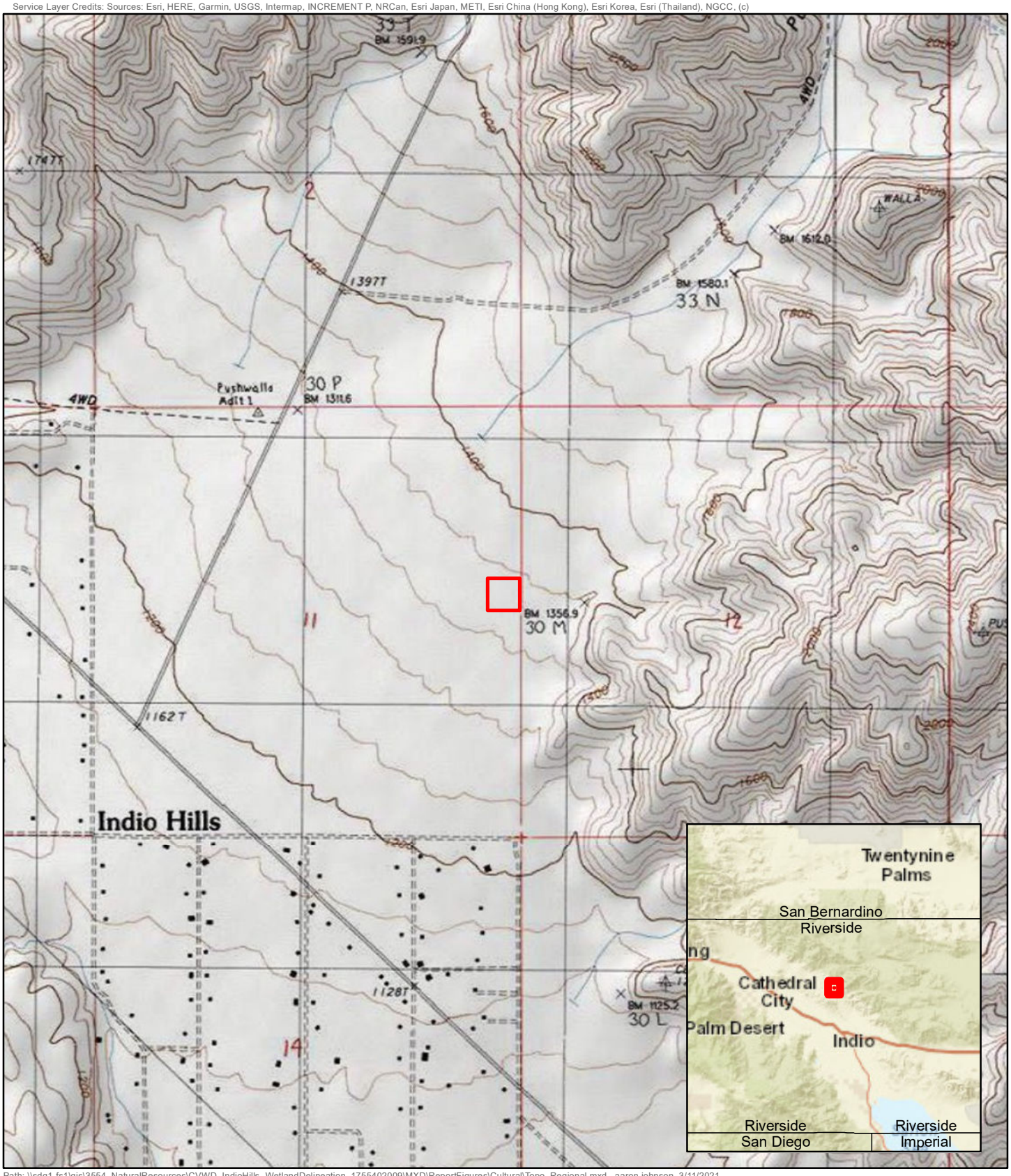
Robinson, M. C.

2004 *P-33-5756H Primary Record Update*. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

Smallwood, J.

2015a *Cultural Resource Assessment of the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase 2 Project, Riverside County, California*. Prepared for Coachella Valley Water District. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

2015b *P-33-5755H Primary Record Update*. On file at the South Central Coastal Information Center, California State University, Fullerton.

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1 inch = 2,000 feet
0 1,000 2,000 Feet

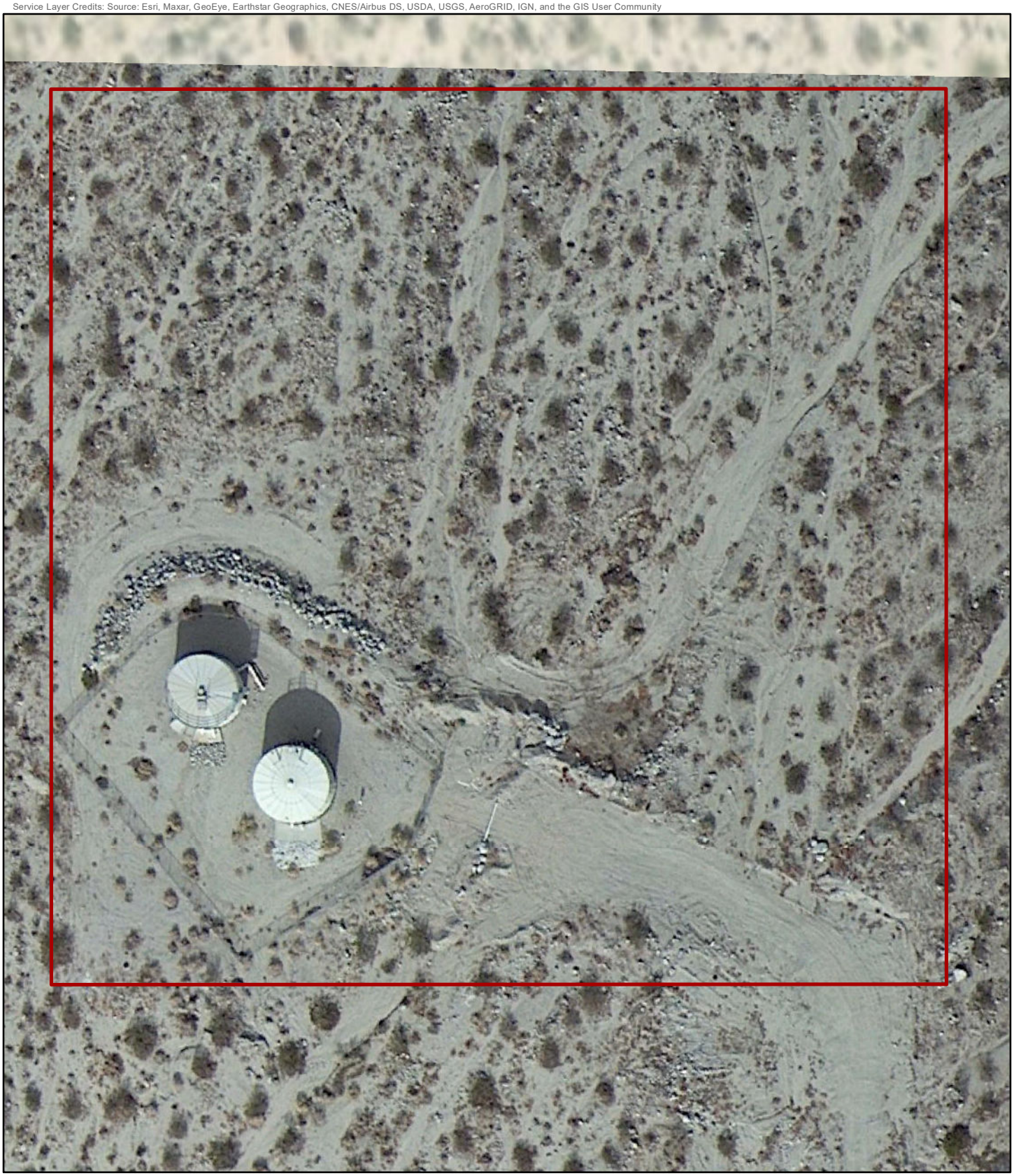
wood.

Survey Area

# FIGURE 1

Project Vicinity
USGS 7.5' Topo: West Berdoo Canyon
CVWD Indio Hills
Riverside County, CA

Service Layer Credits: Source: Esri, Maxar, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AeroGRID, IGN, and the GIS User Community



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1 inch = 60 feet

0 30 60 Feet

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Survey Area

# FIGURE 2

Survey Area
Cultural Resources Survey
CVWD Indio Hills
Riverside County, CA

# Appendix A
# Project Site Photos

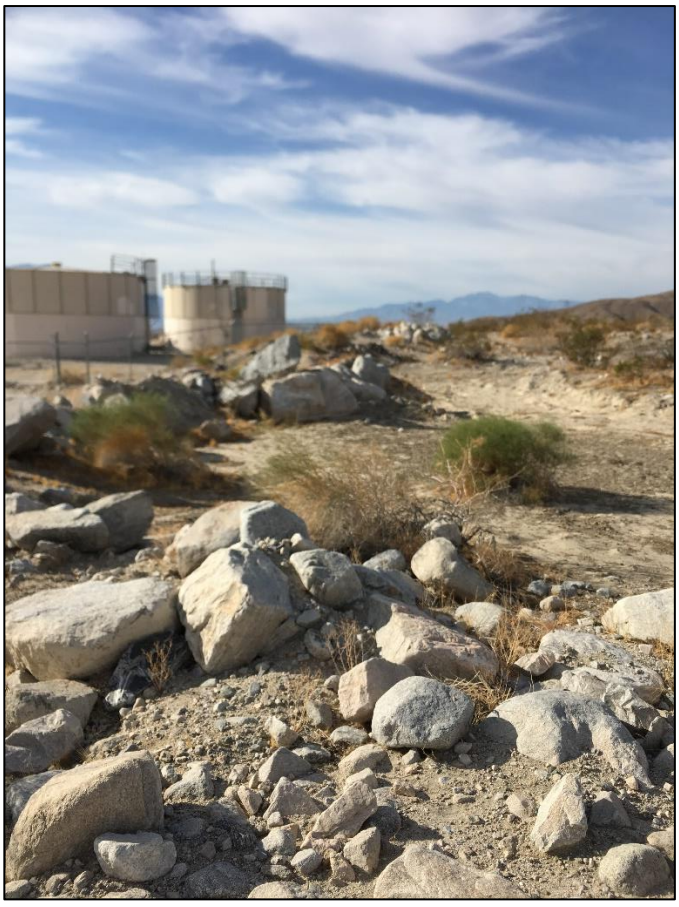
Photograph 1: Project survey view, Transect 1, facing West

Photograph 2: View to north of wash, Transect 1, facing North

Photograph 3: Project survey boundary SW corner, Transect 2, facing North

Photograph 4: Project survey view, Transect 2, facing West

Photograph 5: Project survey boundary NW corner, Transect 3, facing South



Photograph 6: Project survey view, Transect 5, facing West

# Appendix B
# Cultural Resource Assessment of the Dillon Road Transmission Pipeline Replacement Phase 2 Project Riverside County, California (Smallwood 2015a)

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