

## INFORMATION SUMMARY



- A. Report Date: July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022
- B. Report Title: Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Focused Burrowing Owl Surveys for the 35.65-Acre (5.60-acre offsite) Duke Patterson & Nance Warehouse Project Site, City of Perris, Riverside County, California.
- C. APN#s: Onsite, 314-160-003 to -012, 314-153-015 to -030, 314-153-032 to -040, 314-153-042, -044, -046, Portion of 314-153-048, and -031. Offsite, Right of Ways, Portion of 314-153-031, -048, -050, -052, -072, and -077.
- D. Project Location: USGS 7.5' Series Steele Peak and Perris Quadrangles, Township 4 South, Range 4 West, Section 1, East of Patterson Avenue, West of Nevada Street and bisected by Nance Street, as shown in Attachment A, *Project Site Map*.
- E. Applicant Rep: Albert A. Webb Associates  
3788 McCray Street  
Riverside, CA 92506  
Contact: Eliza Laws (951) 320-6055
- F. MOU Principal: Cadre Environmental  
701 Palomar Airport Road, Suite 300,  
Carlsbad, CA. 92011  
Contact: Ruben S. Ramirez, Jr. (949) 300-0212  
USFWS permit #TE780566-14, CDFW permit #02243
- G. Date of Surveys: March 4<sup>th</sup>, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021.
- H. Summary: The 35.65-acre property (5.60-acre offsite impact area) is located within the MSHCP Mead Valley Area Plan. The project site is not located within an MSHCP Criteria Area, Cell Group, or Linkage Area.
- The project site is characterized primarily as field croplands (fallow) as shown in Attachment, B *Vegetation Communities Map*, and Attachments C to F, *Current Project Site Photographs*.
- The MSHCP has determined that all of the sensitive species potentially occurring onsite have been adequately covered (MSHCP

Table 2-2 Species Considered for Conservation Under the MSHCP Since 1999, 2004). However, additional surveys may be required wildlife species if suitable habitat is documented onsite and/or if the property is located within a predetermined “Survey Area” (MSHCP 2004).

The project site occurs almost completely within a predetermined Survey Area for the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*). Suitable burrowing owl burrows potentially utilized for refugia and/or nesting were documented within the property including foraging habitat throughout the project site. Based on the presence of suitable habitat, focused MSHCP burrowing owl surveys were conducted during the summer of 2021 to determine the presence/absence and status of the species within and adjacent to the project site.

No burrowing owl or characteristic sign such as white-wash, feathers, tracks, or pellets were detected within or immediately adjacent to the project site during the 2021 survey effort.

A 30-day pre-construction survey for burrowing owls is required prior to initial ground-disturbing activities (e.g. vegetation clearing, clearing and grubbing, tree removal, site watering) to ensure that no owls have colonized the site in the days or weeks preceding the ground-disturbing activities. If burrowing owls have colonized the project site prior to the initiation of ground-disturbing activities, the project proponent will immediately inform the Wildlife Agencies and the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), and will need to coordinate further with RCA and the Wildlife Agencies, including the possibility of preparing a Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan, prior to initiating ground disturbance. If ground-disturbing activities occur but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a pre-construction survey will again be necessary to ensure burrowing owl has not colonized the site since it was last disturbed. If burrow owl is found, the same coordination described above will be necessary.

## **SUBJECT**

### **Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Focused Burrowing Owl Surveys for the 35.65-Acre (5.60-Acre Offsite Impact Area) Duke Patterson & Nance Warehouse Project Site, City of Perris, Western Riverside County, California.**

This report presents the findings of focused Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) burrowing owl surveys conducted for the 35.65-acre (5.60-acre offsite impact area) Duke Patterson and Nance Warehouse project site “Project Site” located within the City of Perris, western Riverside County, California. Specifically, the Project Site is located within Assessor Parcel Numbers (APNs) 314-160-003 to -012, 314-153-015 to -030, 314-153-032 to -040, 314-153-042, -044, -046, Portion of 314-153-048, and -031: Offsite, Right of Ways, Portion of 314-153-031, -048, -050, -052, -072, and -077.

The Project Site is located within United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5’ Series Steele Peak and Perris Quadrangles, Township 4 South, Range 4 West, Section 1. Specifically, the Project Site extends east of Patterson Avenue, west of Nevada Avenue and is bisected by Nance Street, as shown in Attachment A, *Project Site Map*.

The Project Site is located within the MSHCP Mead Valley Area Plan. The Project Site is not located within an MSHCP Criteria Area, Cell Group, or Linkage Area.

This report incorporates the findings of a literature review, compilation of existing documentation, and a field reconnaissance and focused surveys conducted on March 4<sup>th</sup>, August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> 2021.

This documentation is consistent with accepted scientific and technical standards and the requirements of the MSHCP. When appropriate, general biological resources are described in summary form in an effort to provide the reader with adequate background information.

## **METHODS OF STUDY**

### **APPROACH**

Prior to visiting the Project Site, a review of all available and relevant data on the biological characteristics, sensitive habitats, and species potentially present on or adjacent to the Project Site was conducted. Additionally, aerial photography, and USGS topographic map data were examined. After reviewing the available information, Cadre Environmental conducted a physical site assessment/burrow and focused survey.

As required by the MSHCP, and during the initial property assessment process, the Project Site APN was searched using the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) GIS database to determine if additional surveys for wildlife not adequately covered by the

MSHCP may be required. The Project Site is located completely within a predetermined Survey Area for the burrowing owl.

### **Plant Community/Habitat Classification and Mapping**

Plant communities were preliminarily mapped with the aid of an aerial photograph using the MSHCP uncollapsed vegetation communities classification system. When a vegetation community could not be accurately characterized using this classification system, an updated community classification code was developed to more accurately represent onsite habitat types.

### **General Wildlife Inventory**

All animals identified during the reconnaissance survey by sight, call, tracks, scat, or other characteristic sign were recorded onto a 1:200 scale orthorectified color aerial photograph or documented using a global positioning system (GPS). In addition to species actually detected, expected use of the site by other wildlife was derived from the analysis of habitats on the site, combined with known habitat preferences of regionally occurring wildlife species.

Vertebrate taxonomy followed in this report is according to the Center for North American Herpetology (2021 for amphibians and reptiles), the American Ornithologists' Union (1988 and supplemental) for birds, and Baker et al. (2003) for mammals. Both common and scientific names are used during the first mention of a species; common names only are used in the remainder of the text.

### **Burrowing Owl Surveys**

In accordance with the MSHCP Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions (2006), survey protocol consists of two steps, Step I – Habitat Assessment and Step II – Locating Burrows and Burrowing Owls. Step II is comprised of two parts, Part A: Focused Burrow Surveys and Part B: Focused Burrowing Owl Surveys.

Each step is briefly outlined below, followed by the methodology and results of each survey conducted within the Project Site. All initial habitat assessment, burrow and focused surveys were conducted by Ruben Ramirez.

Surveys were conducted during weather that is conducive to observing owls outside their burrows and detecting burrowing owl sign. Surveys were not conducted during rain, high winds (> 20 mph), dense fog, or temperatures over 90 °F. None of the surveys were conducted within five (5) days of measurable precipitation.

In addition to the MSHCP guidelines, field notes were taken daily. These notes recorded the date, location, animal species observed, and general habitat characteristics of each area and habitat examined that day.

## **Step I – Habitat Assessment**

Step 1 of the MSHCP habitat assessment for burrowing owl consists of a walking survey to determine if suitable habitat is present onsite. Cadre Environmental conducted the habitat assessment on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Upon arrival at the Project Site, and prior to initiating the assessment survey, Cadre Environmental used binoculars to scan all suitable habitats on and adjacent to the property, including perch locations, to ascertain owl presence.

All suitable areas of the Project Site were surveyed on foot by walking slowly and methodically while recording/mapping areas that may represent suitable owl habitat onsite. Primary indicators of suitable burrowing owl habitat in western Riverside County include, but are not limited to, native and non-native grassland, interstitial grassland within shrub lands, shrub lands with low density shrub cover, golf courses, drainage ditches, earthen berms, unpaved airfields, pastureland, dairies, fallow fields, and agricultural use areas. Burrowing owls typically use burrows made by fossorial mammals, such as ground squirrels (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) or badgers (*Taxidea taxus*), but they often utilize man-made structures, such as earthen berms, cement culverts, cement, asphalt, rock, or wood debris piles, or openings beneath cement or asphalt pavement. Burrowing owls are often found within, under, or in close proximity to man-made structures.

According to the MSHCP guidelines, if suitable habitat is present the biologist should also walk the perimeter of the property, which consists of a 150-meter (approximately 500 feet) buffer zone around the Project Site boundary. If permission to access the buffer area cannot be obtained, the biologist shall not trespass, but visually inspect adjacent habitats with binoculars.

Results from the habitat assessment indicated that suitable burrowing owl burrows potentially utilized for refugia and/or nesting were documented within the property including foraging habitat documented throughout the Project Site. Accordingly, if suitable habitat is documented onsite, both Step II surveys and the 30-day pre-construction surveys are required in order to comply with the MSHCP guidelines.

## **Step II – Locating Burrows and Burrowing Owls**

Concurrent with the initial habitat assessment, a detailed focused burrow survey was conducted and included documentation of appropriately sized natural burrows or suitable man-made structures that may be utilized by burrowing owl - as part of the MSHCP protocol, which is described below under Part A. Focused Burrow Survey. The MSHCP protocol indicated that no more than 100 acres should be surveyed per day/per biologist.

### **Part A: Focused Burrow Survey**

A systematic survey for burrows, including burrowing owl sign, was conducted by walking across all suitable habitats mapped within the Project Site on March 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021. Pedestrian survey transects were spaced to allow 100% visual coverage of the ground surface. The distances between transect centerlines were no more than 20 meters (approximately 66

ft.) apart, and owing to the terrain, often much smaller. Transect routes were also adjusted to account for topography and in general ground surface visibility.

All observations of suitable burrows or dens, natural or man-made, or sightings of burrowing owl, were recorded and mapped during the survey.

### **Part B: Focused Burrowing Owl Surveys**

Four (4) focused burrowing owl surveys (in addition to the initial focused burrow survey – Step II, Part A) were conducted on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, and 19<sup>th</sup> 2021 from one hour before sunrise to two hours after sunrise as outlined in Table 1, *Burrowing Owl Survey Schedule*. During visual surveys, all potentially suitable burrow or structure entrances were investigated for signs of owl occupation, such as feathers, tracks, or pellets, and carefully observed to determine if burrowing owls utilize these features, when present. All burrows are monitored at a short distance from the entrance, and at a location that would not interfere with potential owl behavior, when present. In addition to monitoring potential burrow locations, all suitable habitats in the Project Site were walked along transects averaging 20 meters (approximately 66 feet) between centerlines as shown in Attachment G, *Burrowing Owl Survey Area Map*.

**Table 1.  
 Burrowing Owl Survey Schedule**

<b>Survey</b>	<b>Dates (Conditions) 2021 Start – End Times</b>	<b>Results</b>
1	<b>August 3<sup>rd</sup></b> 70°F to 85°F, winds 2-8 mph, no rain 6:30am – 9:30am	No burrowing owls or characteristic sign detected within the Project Site.
2	<b>August 5<sup>th</sup></b> 72°F to 83°F, winds 4-10 mph, no rain 6:30am – 9:30am	No burrowing owls or characteristic sign detected within the Project Site.
3	<b>August 12<sup>th</sup></b> 70°F to 80°F, winds 0-4 mph, no rain 6:30am – 9:30am	No burrowing owls or characteristic sign detected within the Project Site.
4	<b>August 19<sup>th</sup></b> 69°F to 82°F, winds 2-4 mph, no rain 6:30am – 9:30am	No burrowing owls or characteristic sign detected within the Project Site.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

The Project Site is generally flat and currently dominated by fallow field croplands. Disturbed and developed regions of the Project Site include the offsite alignments of Patterson Avenue, Nevada Avenue, and Nance Street as illustrated in Attachment, B *Vegetation Communities Map*, Attachments C to F, *Current Project Site Photographs*, and outlined in Table 2, *Project Site Vegetation Community Acreages*.

**Table 2**  
**Project Site Vegetation Community Acreages**

<b>Vegetation Community</b>	<b>Project Site (ac)</b>	<b>Offsite (ac)</b>	<b>TOTAL Project Site (ac)</b>
Field Croplands (fallow)	32.06	1.13	33.19
Developed	--	2.27	2.27
Disturbed	3.59	2.20	5.79
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>35.65</b>	<b>5.60</b>	<b>41.25</b>

Source: Cadre Environmental 2022.

### **Field Croplands (Fallow)**

The majority of the Project Site is characterized as fallow field croplands dominated by false barley (*Hordeum murinum*), ripgut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), wild oat (*Avena fatua*), stinknet (*Oncosiphon piluliferum*), red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), white-stemmed filaree (*Erodium moschatum*), tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), and common fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*).

### **Developed**

The developed region of the Project Site includes the paved portion of Patterson Avenue.

### **Disturbed**

Disturbed habitat documented within the Project Site include areas generally devoid of vegetation including Nevada Avenue and Nance Street right of ways.

## **RESULTS**

No burrowing owl or characteristic sign such as white-wash, feathers, tracks, or pellets were detected within or immediately adjacent to the Project Site during the summer 2021 MSHCP focused survey efforts.

General wildlife species documented onsite or within the vicinity during the site visits include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Anna’s hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), cliff swallow (*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*), Phainopepla (*Phainopepla nitens*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), Say’s phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), house finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), great egret (*Ardea alba*), desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), and California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*).

A 30-day pre-construction survey for burrowing owls is required prior to initial ground-disturbing activities (e.g. vegetation clearing, clearing and grubbing, tree removal, site watering) to ensure that no owls have colonized the site in the days or weeks preceding the ground-disturbing activities. If burrowing owls have colonized the project site prior to the initiation of ground-disturbing activities, the project proponent will immediately inform the Wildlife Agencies and the Regional Conservation Authority (RCA), and will need to coordinate further with RCA and the Wildlife Agencies, including the possibility of preparing a Burrowing Owl Protection and Relocation Plan, prior to initiating ground disturbance. If ground-disturbing activities occur but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a pre-construction survey will again be necessary to ensure burrowing owl has not colonized the site since it was last disturbed. If burrow owl is found, the same coordination described above will be necessary.

## **REFERENCES**

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB). 2021a. Sensitive Element Record Search for the Steele Peak and Perris Quadrangles. California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Sacramento, California. Accessed August 2021.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2021b. Special Animals. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2012. Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation, State of California Natural Resources Agency.
- County of Riverside. 2006. Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions – Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area.
- Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), March 2004.

**ATTACHMENTS**

- A – Project Site Map
- B – Vegetation Communities Map
- C – Current Project Site Photographs
- D – Current Project Site Photographs
- E – Current Project Site Photographs
- F – Current Project Site Photographs
- G – Burrowing Owl Survey Map

**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”*

Author:  Date: July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

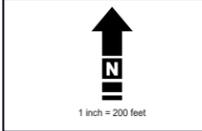
Fieldwork Performed By:  Date: July 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022



**#** → Photo Point & Direction

----- Offsite Impact Area

**Attachment A - Project Site Map**  
 MSHCP Burrowing Owl Surveys  
 Duke - Patterson & Nance Warehouse Project

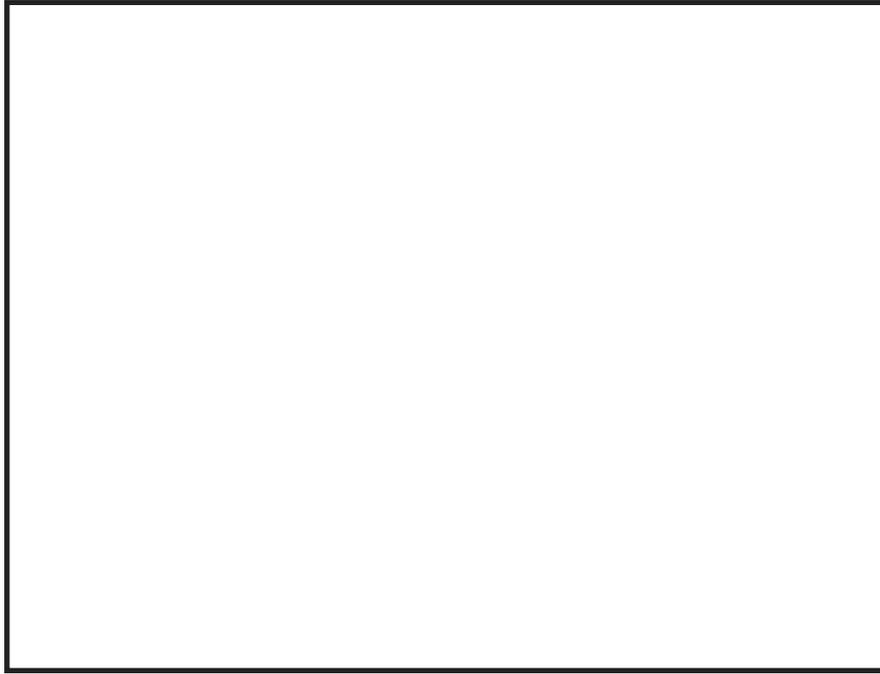




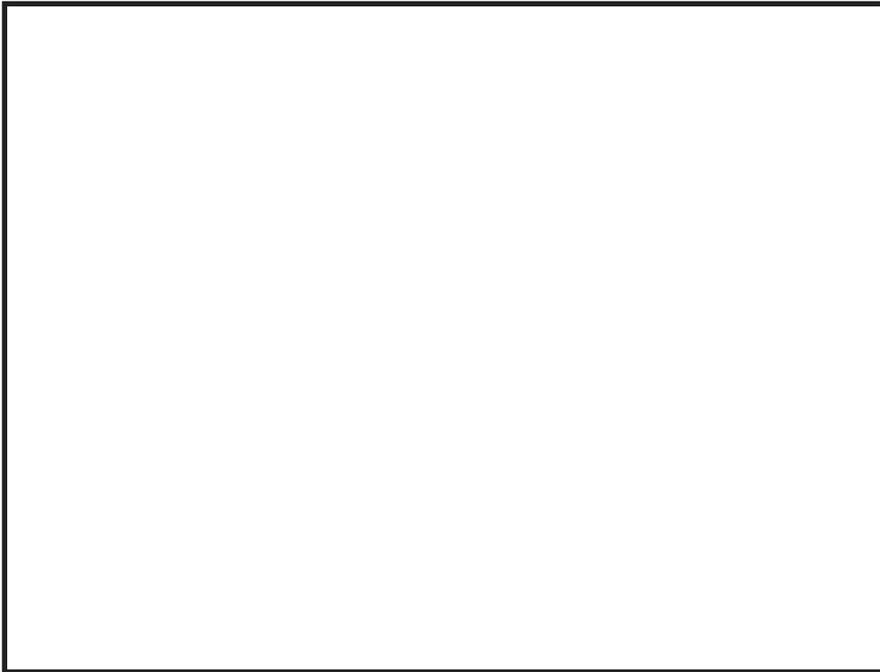








PHOTOGRAPH 7



PHOTOGRAPH 8

Refer to Attachment A - Project Site Map

**Attachment F - Current Project Site Photographs**

*MSHCP Burrowing Owl Surveys*

*Duke - Patterson & Nance Warehouse Project*





Suitable Burrowing Owl Burrows  
 Survey Transects

----- Offsite Impact Area