

# Biological Technical Memorandum

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## Jeffries Tank and Plant Improvements Project

Los Angeles County, California

### Prepared For:



Golden State Water Company  
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### Prepared By:



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**CONTENTS**

1.0 INTRODUCTION ..... 1

2.0 METHODS ..... 1

    2.1 Database Search and Literature Analysis ..... 1

    2.2 Site Visit ..... 1

3.0 SITE CHARACTERISTICS ..... 1

    3.1 Vegetation and Land Cover ..... 2

    3.2 Wildlife Species Observed ..... 2

4.0 SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES ..... 2

5.0 OTHER SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ..... 3

    5.1 Nesting Birds ..... 3

    5.2 Critical Habitat ..... 4

    5.3 Aquatic Resources ..... 4

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS ..... 4

7.0 REFERENCES ..... 5

## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The Golden State Water Company (GSWC) proposes to install a 1.25-million-gallon (MG) above ground potable water storage tank, three booster pumps within a new block building, a new block disinfectant building, and associated fencing, lighting, landscaping, control panels and appurtenances at the Jeffries Plant site. Existing plant site piping would be modified as needed and the existing storage building, chemical building and motor control center (MCC) would be demolished. The Project would also include replacing approximately 1,000 feet of existing 8-inch steel water main with a 12-inch PVC water main in Jeffries Avenue from approximately Tree Lane Avenue to Peck Road. Grading is anticipated in the areas of the proposed tank, booster building, disinfectant building, in the areas of the structures to be removed, areas where the existing onsite road is re-aligned, and in areas of proposed new and existing subsurface piping.

The Jeffries Plant site is located at 124 West Jeffries Avenue in the City of Monrovia, California 91016 (APN 8511-015-800, 801). The City of Monrovia is located just twenty miles northeast of Los Angeles and eight miles east of the City of Pasadena. The site is located within Section 2, Township 1 South, Range 11 West, San Bernardino meridian of the USGS 7.5-minute Series El Monte topographic quadrangle. The Jeffries Plant site is located with the City of Monrovia and a portion of the pipeline replacement is located in unincorporated Los Angeles County. The Proposed Project Site is approximately 1.01 acres in size, is generally flat, and at an elevation of approximately 366 feet above mean sea level.

## **2.0 METHODS**

### **2.1 Database Search and Literature Analysis**

ECORP Consulting, Inc. (ECORP) conducted a database search to identify any special-status plant and wildlife species known to occur within the vicinity of the Project Site. The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) (CDFW 2022) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Electronic Inventory (CNPS 2022) were reviewed for reported occurrences for the United States Geological Service (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle containing the Project Site (i.e., El Monte) and the eight surrounding quadrangles (Azusa, Mt. Wilson, Pasadena, Los Angeles, Baldwin Park, La Habra, Whittier, and South Gate). The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information, Planning and Consultation (IPaC) System (USFWS 2022a) was also used to identify any federally listed species that may be associated with the Project Site.

### **2.2 Site Visit**

A site visit was performed by biological consultant Lindsay Liegler on May 19, 2021, to verify existing conditions at the Project Site. The Project Site is barren and devoid of vegetation, covered in gravel, pavement, and buildings. Results were peer-reviewed by senior biologist Kristen Wasz.

### **3.0 SITE CHARACTERISTICS**

The Project Site contains modern structures and associated fencing, lighting, control panels, and appurtenances at the existing Jeffries Plant water well site. The site consists of a flat field area covered with modern gravel, an asphalt road, structures associated with the existing water well, a landscaped grass lawn, wood and metal fencing, and an open dirt area for soil stockpiles (northwest corner) with the surface covered sparsely in low-lying vegetation.

The Project Site is in a generally flat area surrounded by residential buildings, commercial/industrial buildings, a school/church (Pearl Preparatory School & Annunciation Church) and a retail convenience store. To the north are residential buildings, to the south are residential buildings and a school/church; to the west are residential buildings; and to the east are retail, commercial and industrial buildings. No major topographical features are located in the immediate area. Depressions from active gravel pits are located approximately 0.5 to 1 mile to the east.

#### **3.1 Vegetation and Land Cover**

No native vegetation communities are present on or adjacent to the Project Site, and no riparian vegetation is present or adjacent to the Project Site. The site consists of a flat field area covered with gravel, an asphalt road, structures associated with the existing water well, a landscaped grass lawn, wood and metal fencing, and an open dirt area for soil stockpiles (northwest corner) with the surface covered sparsely in low-lying vegetation.

#### **3.2 Wildlife Species Observed**

Three bird species were observed during the site visit: American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), house finch (*Haemorrhous mexicanus*), and mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*). Two California ground squirrels (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) were observed on the Project Site. Multiple burrows were present on the site, primarily in the northern central portion that was not covered in gravel. However, none of the California ground squirrel burrows were suitable in size or shape for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) use or presence. No burrowing owl sign was observed at any of the burrows. No amphibian or reptile species were observed during the survey.

### **4.0 SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES**

For the purposes of this assessment, special-status species are defined as plants or wildlife that:

- have been listed, or are a candidate for future listing, as threatened or endangered under the federal ESA and/or CESA;
- are designated by CDFW as a fully protected species under the California Fish and Game Code (Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515);
- are ranked as rare or endangered in California by the CNPS;
- are of expressed concern to resource and regulatory agencies or local jurisdictions; and/or

- meet the definition of rare, threatened, or endangered pursuant to Section 15380 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines.

The Project Site, consisting wholly of disturbed and/or developed land, was devoid of native vegetation communities. The literature review and CNPS database search identified 62 special-status plant species that have been documented near the Project Site but, due to the lack of suitable habitat for special-status plant species on Project Site, all of the special-status plant species identified in the literature review were presumed absent from the Project Site. The development of the Project Site will not contribute to the overall decline of any of the special-status plant species identified in the literature review and database searches. No significant impacts to special-status plant species are anticipated to result from the development of this Project.

The CNDDDB database review identified 45 special-status plant species and 45 wildlife species documented within the vicinity of the Project Site. No special-status species have been documented on or adjacent to the Project Site. The nearest documented occurrence of a special-status species is least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) approximately 0.8 mile southeast of the Project Site. The least Bell's vireo observation was recorded in July 2013 in riparian vegetation associated with the Sawpit Wash and Peck Road Park Lake, approximately 0.25 mile northwest of the Peck Road and Clark Street intersection (Occurrence #554). The least Bell's vireo is presumed absent from the Project Site and is not expected to occur on or use any portion of the Project Site due to the lack of riparian vegetation the species depends on for survival.

The IPaC database review identified California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), and Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevini*) with potential to occur at the Project Site. However, the Project Site is entirely developed and disturbed and does not provide any suitable habitat for special-status wildlife or plant species. Therefore, these species are presumed absent from the site. No significant impacts to special-status species are anticipated to result from the development of this Project.

## **5.0 OTHER SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **5.1 Nesting Birds**

Ornamental trees adjacent to the Project Site and Jeffries Avenue provide habitat for nesting birds. Nesting birds are protected under both the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the California Fish and Game Code (Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3513, and 3800) and cannot be subjected to take (as defined in California Fish and Game Code) during the bird breeding season, which typically runs from February 15 through August 31. If construction of the Proposed Project occurs during the bird breeding season, ground-disturbing construction activities could directly affect native and nongame birds and their nests through direct removal of nests and indirectly through increased disturbances associated with the Project such as noise, ground vibrations, and human and vehicular activity.

## **5.2 Critical Habitat**

Aside from conserving and protecting special-status species and their habitat through the enforcement of federal wildlife laws, the USFWS also designates critical habitat for species protected under the ESA. Critical habitat is intended to include the areas essential for the species' survival and conservation. The Project Site is not located within or adjacent to any USFWS designated critical habitat.

## **5.3 Aquatic Resources**

A review of the National Wetlands Inventory did not identify any potentially jurisdictional water features or wetlands (e.g., emergent, forested/shrub, estuarine and marine deep water, estuarine and marine, freshwater pond, lake, riverine) on or in the immediate vicinity of the Project Site (USFWS 2022b). As such, the Proposed Project would not result in the direct removal, filling, or hydrological interruption of a state or federally protected waters or wetlands as defined by Sections 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act.

## **6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following includes recommendations for development of mitigation measures for the Proposed Project.

1. If construction (including vegetation removal) or tree trimming activities are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season (February 15 through August 31), a pre-construction nesting-bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified avian biologist to ensure that active bird nests will not be disturbed or destroyed on the Project Site. The survey shall be completed no more than three days prior to initial ground disturbance. If an active nest is identified, the biologist shall establish an appropriately sized disturbance limit buffer around the nest using flagging or staking. Project-related activities shall not occur within any disturbance limit buffer zones until the nest is deemed inactive by the qualified biologist.

## 7.0 REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2022. RareFind 5.0 California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). California. Sacramento, CA, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Biogeographic Data Branch.

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