

September 15, 2022

Connie Anderson
T&B Planning, Inc
Director of New Business Services/Project Manager
3200 El Camino Real, Suite 100
Irvine, California 92602

VIA EMAIL
canderson@tbplanning.com

Subject: Results of a Focused Survey for Blainville’s Horned Lizard for the 8th Street East Industrial Project, City of Palmdale, Los Angeles County, California

Dear Ms. Anderson:

This Letter Report summarizes the findings of focused surveys to determine the presence or absence of Blainville’s horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) for the Palmdale Logistics Park Project (hereinafter referred to as “the proposed Project”) in the City of Palmdale, Los Angeles County, California.

PROJECT LOCATION AND SETTING

The Proposed Project is located on approximately 18 acres in the southern portion of the Antelope Valley in the City of Palmdale. The Project site is situated east of Sierra Highway, west of 8th Street East, and approximately 800 feet south of East Avenue P in the City of Palmdale (Exhibit 1). The Project site is located on the Palmdale U.S. Geologic Survey 7.5-minute quadrangle map (Exhibit 2). Elevations range from approximately 2,610 feet above mean sea level (msl) to approximately 2,620 feet above msl. The Project site is currently undeveloped but has had some previous disturbance and is directly adjacent (south of) a decommissioned segment of the Pacific Union Railroad. Vegetation on the site is comprised mostly of disturbed rubber rabbitbrush scrub, with a small patch of developed/disturbed rubber rabbitbrush scrub in the eastern portion of the site and big sagebrush – rubber rabbitbrush scrub in the drainage that runs along the southern edge of the site. Most of the site has been disturbed historically (e.g., evidence of heavy machine work such as scraping), and contains many trash piles from illegal dumping.

BACKGROUND

The Blainville’s horned lizard is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s (CDFW’s) California Species of Special Concern species. This medium sized species of lizard is flat, spiny, and generally flat-bodied with an overall oval-shape. They can be reddish, brown, yellow, or gray in color with darker blotches on the back and large dark spots on the sides of the neck. The belly scales are smooth and usually cream beige or yellow, usually with dark spots. Blainville’s horned lizard can be distinguished from the desert horned lizard (*Phrynosoma platyrhinos*) which overlaps in range in the Project area by the larger crown of spines around the base of its head and two rows of pointed fringe scales on the side of the body instead of one row like the desert horned lizard.

225 South Lake Avenue
Suite 1000
Pasadena, CA 91101

Tel 626.351.2000
www.Psomas.com

Blainville’s horned lizard occurs throughout much of California, west of the desert and Cascade-Sierra highlands south to Baja California, Mexico (Stebbins 2012). This species occurs in scrubland, grassland, coniferous forests, and broadleaf woodland vegetation types (Stebbins 2012). It prefers open areas for basking and loose, friable soil for burrowing (Stebbins 2012). The Blainville’s horned lizard is considered an ant-eating specialist, eating primarily native harvester ants such as the black harvester ant (*Veromessor pergandei*) observed on the Project site. Ants comprise more than 90% of their diet in some populations (Pianka and Parker 1975 and Suarez et al. 2000, cited in UC Davis 2011). Blainville’s horned lizards mate and reproduce in spring and early summer and are generally active through summer into the early fall months. The Project site is located at the eastern edge of the Blainville’s horned lizard’s range.

Two historical observations from 1964 occur in the vicinity of the Project site—one overlaps the Project site, and one occurs approximately 3.7 miles to the north (CDFW 2022). Potentially suitable habitat for the lizard occurs in the Project site in the sandy stream bottom of the drainage that runs east-to-west along the southern border of the Project boundary.

METHODS

There are currently no agency guidelines or protocols for conducting Blainville’s horned lizard surveys. Therefore, Pomas Biologists used approved protocols for similar special status reptile species as guidelines and determined survey methodology based on previous experience and life history of the species. The presence/absence surveys for the Blainville’s horned lizard were conducted by qualified Biologists between June and July when the species are most likely to be observed. To achieve 100 percent visual coverage, appropriate habitat within the project site was surveyed three times on separate days by using meandering transects. The focused surveys were conducted on June 13, and July 6 and 27, 2022. Surveys were conducted in early morning and afternoon hours when weather conditions were acceptable for reptile activity (e.g., temperatures under 90 degrees Fahrenheit, clear skies, and sustained winds below 10 miles per hour). Table 1 below summarizes weather conditions during each day of the surveys.

**TABLE 1
 BLAINVILLE’S HORNED LIZARD SURVEY WEATHER CONDITIONS**

Survey Number	Date	Surveyor(s)	Survey Time	Weather Conditions		
				Temperature (°F) (Start/End)	Wind (mph) (Start/End)	Cloud Cover (%) (Start/End)
Survey 1	6/13/2022	Thomas	1150–1240	76/80	7/9	15/15
Survey 2	7/6/2022	Thomas	1205–1255	78/80	8/9	25/25
Survey 3	7/17/2022	Thomas	0950–1040	79/84	8/6	10/10

[°]F: degrees Fahrenheit; mph: miles per hour

RESULTS

In addition to temperature and other weather data, all lizard species encountered were recorded, as well as presence, or characteristic sign, of all observed wildlife species (Attachment A). No Blainville’s horned lizards were observed within the survey area.

Connie Anderson
September 15, 2022
Page 3

If you have any comments or questions, please call Marc Blain at 626.351.2000.

Sincerely,

P S O M A S



Marc T. Blain
Senior Project Manager



Sarah Thomas
Biologist

Enclosures: Exhibit 1 – Project Location
 Exhibit 2 – U.S. Geological Survey 7.5-Minute Quadrangle
 Attachment A – Wildlife Compendium

Connie Anderson
September 15, 2022
Page 4

REFERENCES

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 2022 (January). California Natural Diversity Database. Records of Occurrence for Palmdale, Lancaster East, Lancaster West, and Ritter Ridge 7.5-minute quadrangles. Sacramento, CA: CDFG, Natural Heritage Division.
- Stebbins, R.C. and S.M. McGinnis. 2012. *Field Guide to Amphibians and Reptiles of California*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.
- Suarez, A., and T. Case. 2002. "Bottom-Up Effects on Persistence of a Specialist Predator: Ant Invasions and Horned Lizards." *Ecological Applications* 12(1):291–298.
- UC Davis (University of California, Davis). 2011. "Taxon: Phrynosoma Blainvillii, Coast Horned Lizard." Status summary: one paragraph summary of status, including SSC priority. Accessed November 23, 2011. http://arssc.ucdavis.edu/reports/Phrynosoma_blainvillii.html.

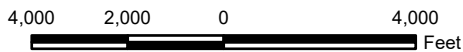


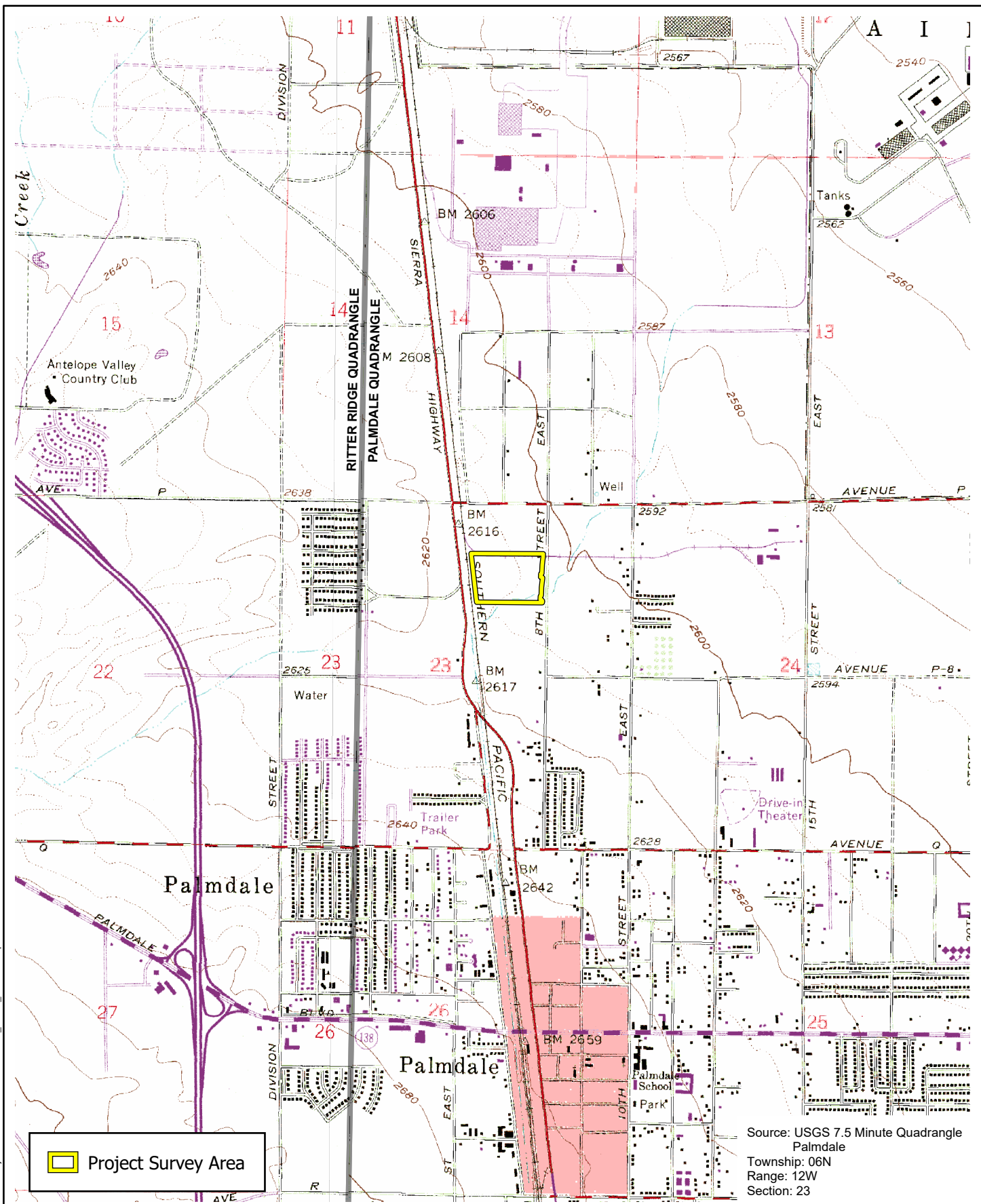
 Project Survey Area

Regional Location and Local Vicinity

Exhibit 1

8th Street East Industrial Project





D:\Projects\3TBPO10300\PROIBHL\ex_USGS_20220915.aprx

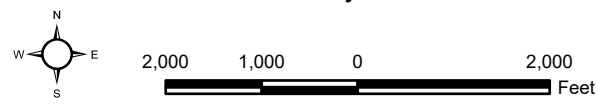
Project Survey Area

Source: USGS 7.5 Minute Quadrangle
 Palmdale
 Township: 06N
 Range: 12W
 Section: 23

USGS 7.5-Minute Digital Quadrangle

8th Street East Industrial Project

Exhibit 2



ATTACHMENT A
WILDLIFE COMPENDIUM

WILDLIFE SPECIES OBSERVED DURING SURVEYS

Species	
Scientific Name	Common Name
LIZARDS	
PHRYNOSOMATIDAE – SPINY LIZARD FAMILY	
<i>Uta stansburiana</i>	common side-blotched lizard
BIRDS	
ACCIPITRIDAE – HAWK FAMILY	
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	red-tailed hawk
CORVIDAE – JAY AND CROW FAMILY	
<i>Corvus corax</i>	common raven
ALAUDIDAE – LARK FAMILY	
<i>Eremophila alpestris</i>	horned lark
TROGLODYTIDAE – WREN FAMILY	
<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	cactus wren
STURNIDAE – STARLING FAMILY	
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> *	European starling*
FRINGILLIDAE – FINCH FAMILY	
<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	house finch
PASSERELLIDAE – NEW WORLD SPARROW FAMILY	
<i>Artemisiospiza belli</i>	Bell's sparrow
MAMMALS	
LEPORIDAE – HARE AND RABBIT FAMILY	
<i>Lepus californicus</i>	black-tailed jackrabbit
* Non-native	