



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Inland Deserts Region
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GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
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November 3, 2022

Mr. Brandon Cleary, Associate Planner
City of Menifee
29844 Haun Street
Menifee, CA 92584
BCleary@cityofmenifee.us

Subject: Mitigated Negative Declaration
Quail Hills Residential Development Project
State Clearinghouse No. 2022100107

Dear Mr. Cleary:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) from the City of Menifee (City) for the Quail Hills Residential Development Project (Project) for Quail Hills, LP (Project Applicant/Proponent) pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.¹

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute for all the people of the State. (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)) CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (Fish & G. Code, § 1802.). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW provides, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a Responsible Agency under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381.). CDFW expects that it may

¹ CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.). Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), the Project proponent may seek related take authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW issued Natural Community Conservation Plan approval and take authorization in 2004 for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP), as per Section 2800, et seq., of the California Fish and Game Code. The MSHCP established a multiple species conservation program to minimize and mitigate habitat loss and the incidental take of covered species in association with activities covered under the permit. The City of Riverside is a permittee to the MSHCP and is responsible for implementation of the MSHCP and its associated Implementation Agreement. CDFW is providing the following comments as they relate to the Project's consistency with the MSHCP and CEQA.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Project Location

The Project site comprises approximately 44.7 acres in the City of Menifee within Riverside County, California, in Section 30 West, Township 5 South, Range 3 West, of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5" Romoland, California topographic quadrangle map, Assessor's Parcel Numbers 341-060-002, 341-060-010, 341-060-011, and 350-245-004. The Project is located north of the intersection of Goetz Road and Ave Roble, east of Williams Drive, south of Rancho Road, and west of Goetz Road.

Project Description

The Project proposes to construct 130 single-family residential lots on approximately 30 acres. Additional Project activities would include the construction of 9 lots for public street right-of-way, a water detention basin, 13.2 acres of open space, two homeowners' association-maintained parks, 10-foot-wide dirt walking trails along the eastern edge of the Project site, and private streets.

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations presented below to assist the City in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's potentially significant direct and indirect impacts to biological resources, and in Attachment 1 "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program" for consideration by the City prior to adoption of the MND for the Project. CDFW is concerned about the adequacy of the impact analysis and the mitigation measures proposed in the IS/MND and the ability of the Project to mitigate

the significant, or potentially significant, direct and indirect impacts to native habitats and species that rely on these habitats. The comments and recommendations are offered to enable the City to update the MND to adequately disclose impacts and measures for CDFW and the public to review and comment on the proposed Project with respect to the Project's compliance with the Western Riverside County MSHCP and Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 and ensure that proposed impacts to fish and wildlife resources are properly identified and mitigated. CDFW recommends that each of these be addressed prior to finalization of the MND.

Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

Western Riverside MSHCP Implementation

Compliance with approved habitat plans, such as the MSHCP, is discussed in CEQA. Specifically, Section 15125(d) of the CEQA Guidelines requires that the CEQA document discuss any inconsistencies between a proposed project and applicable general plans and regional plans, including habitat conservation plans and natural community conservation plans. An assessment of the impacts to the MSHCP as a result of this Project is necessary to address CEQA requirements.

The proposed Project occurs within the MSHCP area and is subject to the provisions and policies of the MSHCP. To be considered a covered activity, Permittees need to demonstrate that proposed actions are consistent with the MSHCP, the Permits, and the Implementing Agreement. The City is the Lead Agency and is signatory to the Implementing Agreement of the MSHCP. To demonstrate consistency with the MSHCP, as part of the CEQA review, the City shall ensure the Project pays Local Development Mitigation Fees and other relevant fees as set forth in Section 8.5 of the MSHCP; and demonstrates compliance with: 1) the Protection of Species Associated with Riparian/Riverine Areas and Vernal Pools (Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP); 2) the Protection of Narrow Endemic Plant Species (Section 6.1.3 of the MSHCP); 3) the Urban/Wildlands Interface Guidelines (Section 6.1.4 of the MSHCP); 4) the policies set forth in Section 6.3.2; and 5) the Best Management Practices and the siting, construction, design, operation and maintenance guidelines as set forth in Section 7.0 and Appendix C of the MSHCP.

Burrowing Owl

In California, burrowing owl are in decline primarily because of habitat loss, as well as disease, predation, and drought². Burrowing owl require specific soil and microhabitat

² DeSante, D. F., E. D Ruhlen, and R. Scalf. 2007. The distribution and relative abundance of burrowing owls in California during 1991–1993: Evidence for a declining population and thoughts on its conservation. Pages 1-41 in J. H. Barclay, K. W. Hunting, J. L. Lincer, J. Linthicum, and T. A. Roberts, editors. Proceedings of the California Burrowing Owl Symposium, 11-12 November 2003 Sacramento, California, USA. Bird Populations Monographs No. 1. The Institute for Bird Populations and Albion Environmental, Inc., Point Reyes Station, CA.

conditions, occur in few locations within a broad habitat category of grassland and some forms of agriculture land, require a relatively large home range to support its life history requirements, occur in relatively low numbers, and are semi-colonial. One mechanism the MSHCP employs to provide for conservation of burrowing owls is to require burrowing owl surveys in suitable habitat to identify suitable occupied nesting habitat for owls that may be required for conservation. The MND identifies that suitable habitat for burrowing owl was identified through aerial imagery and focused burrowing owl surveys were completed during the 2021 field season. However, CDFW reviewed the results of the surveys and found that all focused burrowing owl surveys were conducted between March 22 and 26, 2021. CDFW is concerned that nesting owls may be missed by the close spacing of the surveys, and CDFW recommends that surveys are conducted at least one week apart to adequately detect presence of nesting owls on the site in order to evaluate if the site may be required for conservation. CDFW recommends that the surveys be repeated during the 2023 breeding season and that the focused surveys are conducted at least a week apart to avoid missing owls that may be using the site. CDFW recommends the inclusion of a process to avoid direct take of burrowing owls and to avoid project delays if the owls are detected during the pre-construction surveys.

CDFW requests the City evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to burrowing owl before approval and certification of the MND. Appropriate analysis would include a discussion of the results of the focused burrowing owl surveys and suitable habitat surveys for the Project site. To avoid take of active nests, appropriate avoidance and minimization measures need to be identified in the MND to protect burrowing owl during the burrowing owl nesting season. CDFW recommends creation of a Burrowing Owl Plan if owls are detected on the Project Site.

To avoid take of active burrowing owl burrows (nests), CDFW requests the addition of the following mitigation measure. Requested additions are identified in **bold** and removed measures are in ~~strikeout~~.

MM BIO-2: Burrowing Owl Survey. ~~Four protocol-level burrowing owl surveys were conducted during the breeding season (February 1 through August 31) on March 22-23 and March 25-26, 2021, in accordance with the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). Although no sign of burrowing owl or live burrowing owls were identified during the survey, 16 potential burrowing owl burrows were identified on the project site during the four protocol surveys.~~ To avoid project-related impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or in the vicinity of the project site, it is recommended that a preconstruction survey shall be conducted **by a qualified biologist** no more than 30 days prior to construction **(e.g., vegetation clearing, clearing, and grubbing, tree removal, site watering)** to determine the presence of owl or sign thereof. The results of the survey should be submitted to the City and California Department of Fish and Wildlife within three days of survey completion.

If no burrowing owls are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If burrowing owls are found to be present, then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken in consultation with the City of Menifee and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). ~~Measures shall include establishment of an avoidance buffer until nesting has been completed. The width of the buffer will be recommended by the project biologist and approved by the City of Menifee.~~ **CDFW shall be sent written notification within 48 hours of detection of burrowing owls. If active burrowing owl burrows are detected, the Project applicant shall not commence activities until no sign is present that the burrows are being used by adult or juvenile owls or following CDFW approval of a Burrowing Owl Plan as described below. If owl presence is difficult to determine, a qualified biologist shall monitor the burrows with motion-activated trail cameras for at least 24 hours to evaluate burrow occupancy. The onsite qualified biologist will verify the nesting effort has finished according to methods identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan.**

The Burrowing Owl Plan shall be prepared in accordance with guidelines in the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl (March 2012³) and MSHCP. The qualified biologist and Project Applicant shall coordinate with the City, CDFW, and USFWS to develop a Burrowing Owl Plan to be approved by the City, CDFW, and USFWS prior to commencing Project activities. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall describe proposed avoidance, relocation, monitoring, minimization, and/or mitigation actions. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites and details on proposed buffers if avoiding the burrowing owls or information on the adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls for relocation. If no suitable habitat is available nearby for relocation, details regarding the creation and funding of artificial burrows (numbers, location, and type of burrows) and management activities for relocated owls shall also be included in the Burrowing Owl Plan. the City shall implement the Burrowing Owl Plan following CDFW and USFWS review and approval.

If burrowing owls are observed within Project Site(s) during Project implementation and construction, the Project applicant shall notify CDFW immediately in writing within 48 hours of detection. A Burrowing Owl Plan shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval within two weeks of detection and no Project activity shall continue within

³ California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). 2012. Staff report on burrowing owl mitigation. State of California, Natural Resources Agency. Available for download at: <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=83843&inline=true>

1000 feet of the burrowing owls until CDFW approves the Burrowing Owl Plan. the City shall be responsible for implementing appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, including burrow avoidance, passive or active relocation, or other appropriate mitigation measures as identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan.

If ground-disturbing activities occur but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted and reported to CDFW as described above. If a burrowing owl is found, the same coordination described above shall be necessary.

A final letter report shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the passive relocation. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW prior to the start of Project activities.

Nesting Birds

It is the Project proponent's responsibility to avoid Take of all nesting birds. Fish and Game Code section 3503 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by Fish and Game Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto. Fish and Game Code section 3513 makes it unlawful to take or possess any migratory nongame bird except as provided by the rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 703 et seq.). Fish and Game Code section 3503.5 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by Fish and Game Code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto. These regulations apply anytime nests or eggs exist on the Project site.

The timing of the nesting season varies greatly depending on several factors, such as the bird species, weather conditions in any given year, and long-term climate changes (e.g., drought, warming, etc.). CDFW staff have observed that changing climate conditions may result in the nesting bird season occurring earlier and later in the year than historical nesting season dates. CDFW recommends the completion of nesting bird survey regardless of time of year to ensure compliance with all applicable laws pertaining to nesting and to avoid take of nests.

The duration of a pair to build a nest and incubate eggs varies considerably, therefore, CDFW recommends surveying for nesting behavior and/or nests and construction within three days prior to start of Project construction to ensure all nests on site are identified and to avoid take of nests.

CDFW is concerned that potential impacts to nesting birds are not identified or discussed within the MND and strongly suggests the City evaluate the direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to nesting birds, before approval and certification of the MND. Appropriate analysis would include conducting focused nesting bird surveys throughout the project site. To address the above issues and help the Project applicant avoid unlawfully taking of nests and eggs, CDFW requests the City include the following mitigation measures in the MND per below (edits are in ~~striketrough~~ and **bold**), and also included in Attachment 1 "Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program".

MM BIO-1: Nesting Bird Survey. **Regardless of the time of year, the Project applicant shall ensure nesting bird surveys are completed prior to the start of any development activities (such as ground disturbance, construction activities, and/or removal of trees and vegetation)** within the project site ~~shall be conducted during the non-breeding season for birds (approximately September 1 through February 15).~~ **to the greatest extent possible.** This will avoid violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513. The nest surveys shall include the project site and adjacent areas where project activities have the potential to cause nest failure.

~~If activities with the potential to disrupt nesting birds are scheduled to occur during the bird breeding season (February through August for raptors and March through August for songbirds), a preconstruction nesting bird survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist. The survey results shall be provided to the City's Planning Department.~~ **The Project Applicant shall adhere to the following:**

- 1. Applicant shall designate a biologist (Designated Biologist) experienced in: identifying local and migratory bird species of special concern; conducting bird surveys using appropriate survey methodology; nesting surveying techniques, recognizing breeding and nesting behaviors, locating nests and breeding territories, and identifying nesting stages and nest success; determining/establishing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures; and monitoring the efficacy of implemented avoidance and minimization measures.**
- 2. Pre-activity field surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time of day/night, during appropriate weather conditions, no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of Project activities. Surveys shall encompass all suitable areas including trees, shrubs, bare ground, burrows, cavities, and structures. Survey duration shall take into consideration the size of the Project site; density, and complexity of the habitat; number of survey**

participants; survey techniques employed; and shall be sufficient to ensure the data collected is complete and accurate.

If no nesting birds are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If nesting birds (including nesting raptors) are found to be present, then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken in consultation with the City of Menifee and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Measures shall include **immediate establishment of an avoidance buffer until nesting has been completed. The width of the buffer will be recommended by the project biologist and approved by the City of Menifee. an appropriate buffer zone to be established by a qualified biologist, and approved by the City of Menifee, based on their best professional judgement and experience. The buffer around the nest shall be delineated and flagged, and no construction activity shall occur within the buffer area until a qualified biologist determines nesting species have fledged and the nest is no longer active or the nest has failed. The Designated Biologist shall monitor the nest at the onset of project activities, and at the onset of any changes in such project activities (e.g., increase in number or type of equipment, change in equipment usage, etc.) to determine the efficacy of the buffer. If the Designated Biologist determines that such project activities may be causing an adverse reaction, the Designated Biologist shall adjust the buffer accordingly or implement alternative avoidance and minimization measures, such as redirecting or rescheduling construction or erecting sound barriers. All work within these buffers will be halted until the nesting effort is finished (i.e., the juveniles are surviving independent from the nest). The onsite qualified biologist will review and verify compliance with these nesting avoidance buffers and will verify the nesting effort has finished. Work can resume within these avoidance areas when no other active nests are found. Upon completion of the survey and nesting bird monitoring, a report shall be prepared and submitted to the City for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.**

MITIGATION AND MONITORING REPORTING PLAN

CDFW recommends updating the MND's proposed Biological Resources Mitigation Measures to include mitigation measures recommended in this letter. Mitigation measures must be fully enforceable through permit conditions, agreements, or other legally binding instruments [(Pub. Resources Code, § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines, § 15126.4(a)(2)]. As such, CDFW has provided comments and recommendations to assist the City in developing mitigation measures that are (1) consistent with CEQA Guidelines section 15126.4; (2) specific; (3) detailed (i.e., responsible party, timing, specific actions, location), and (4) clear for a measure to be fully enforceable and implemented successfully via mitigation monitoring and/or reporting program (Pub.

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Resources Code, § 21081.6; CEQA Guidelines, § 15097). The City is welcome to coordinate with CDFW to further review and refine the Project's mitigation measures. Per Public Resources Code section 21081.6(a)(1), CDFW has provided the City with a summary of our suggested mitigation measures and recommendations in the form of an attached Draft Mitigation and Monitoring Reporting Plan (MMRP; Attachment 1).

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). The CNDDDB field survey form can be filled out and submitted online at the following link: <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>. The types of information reported to CNDDDB can be found at the following link: <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Plants-and-Animals>.

ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of environmental document filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the environmental document filing fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the MND for the Quail Hills Residential Development Project, State Clearinghouse No. 2022100107 to assist in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources. CDFW personnel are available for consultation regarding biological resources and strategies to minimize impacts. CDFW requests that the City of Menifee addresses CDFW's comments and concerns prior to adoption of the MND for the Project.

Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Katrina Rehrer, Environmental Scientist, at katrina.rehrer@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:


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Kim Freeburn
Environmental Program Manager

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ec: **California Department of Fish and Wildlife**
Heather Pert, Senior Environmental Scientist Supervisory
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ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: MMRP for CDFW-Proposed Mitigation Measures

ATTACHMENT 1: MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)

PURPOSE OF THE MMRP

The purpose of the MMRP is to ensure compliance with mitigation measures during Project implementation. Mitigation measures must be implemented within the time periods indicated in the table below.

TABLE OF MITIGATION MEASURES

The following items are identified for each mitigation measure: Mitigation Measure, Implementation Schedule, and Responsible Party for implementing the mitigation measure. The Mitigation Measure column summarizes the mitigation requirements. The Implementation Schedule column shows the date or phase when each mitigation measure will be implemented. The Responsible Party column identifies the person or agency that is primarily responsible for implementing the mitigation measure.

Biological (BIO) Mitigation Measures (MM)	Implementation Schedule	Responsible Party
<p>MM BIO-1: Nesting Bird Survey. Regardless of the time of year, the Project applicant shall ensure nesting bird surveys are completed prior to the start of any development activities (such as ground disturbance, construction activities, and/or removal of trees and vegetation) within the project site. This will avoid violations of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513. The nest surveys shall include the project site and adjacent areas where project activities have the potential to cause nest failure.</p> <p>The survey results shall be provided to the City’s Planning Department. The Project Applicant shall adhere to the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applicant shall designate a biologist (Designated Biologist) experienced in: identifying local and migratory bird species of special concern; conducting bird surveys using appropriate survey methodology; nesting surveying techniques, recognizing breeding and nesting behaviors, locating nests and breeding territories, and identifying nesting stages and nest success; determining/establishing appropriate avoidance and minimization measures; and monitoring the efficacy of implemented avoidance and minimization measures. 2. Pre-activity field surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time of day/night, during appropriate 	<p>Prior to commencing ground- or vegetation disturbing activities</p>	<p>Project Proponent</p>

weather conditions, no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of Project activities. Surveys shall encompass all suitable areas including trees, shrubs, bare ground, burrows, cavities, and structures. Survey duration shall take into consideration the size of the Project site; density, and complexity of the habitat; number of survey participants; survey techniques employed; and shall be sufficient to ensure the data collected is complete and accurate.

If no nesting birds are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If nesting birds (including nesting raptors) are found to be present, then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken in consultation with the City of Menifee and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Measures shall include immediate establishment of an appropriate buffer zone to be established by a qualified biologist, and approved by the City of Menifee, based on their best professional judgement and experience. The buffer around the nest shall be delineated and flagged, and no construction activity shall occur within the buffer area until a qualified biologist determines nesting species have fledged and the nest is no longer active or the nest has failed. The Designated Biologist shall monitor the nest at the onset of project activities, and at the onset of any changes in such project activities (e.g., increase in number or type of equipment, change in equipment usage, etc.) to determine the efficacy of the buffer. If the Designated Biologist determines that such project activities may be causing an adverse reaction, the Designated Biologist shall adjust the buffer accordingly or implement alternative avoidance and minimization measures, such as redirecting or rescheduling construction or erecting sound barriers. All work within these buffers will be halted until the nesting effort is finished (i.e., the juveniles are surviving independent from the nest). The onsite qualified biologist will review and verify compliance with these nesting avoidance buffers and will verify the nesting effort has finished. Work can resume within these avoidance areas when no other active nests are found.

<p>Upon completion of the survey and nesting bird monitoring, a report shall be prepared and submitted to the City for mitigation monitoring compliance record keeping.</p>		
<p>MM BIO-2: <u>Burrowing Owl Preconstruction Survey</u>. MM BIO-2: Burrowing Owl Survey. To avoid project-related impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring on or in the vicinity of the project site, a preconstruction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 30 days prior to construction (e.g., vegetation clearing, clearing, and grubbing, tree removal, site watering) to determine the presence of owl or sign thereof. The results of the survey should be submitted to the City and CDFW within three days of survey completion.</p> <p>If no burrowing owls are observed during the survey, site preparation and construction activities may begin. If burrowing owls are found to be present, then avoidance or minimization measures shall be undertaken in consultation with the City of Menifee and California Department of Fish and Wildlife. CDFW shall be sent written notification within 48 hours of detection of burrowing owls. If active burrowing owl burrows are detected, the Project applicant shall not commence activities until no sign is present that the burrows are being used by adult or juvenile owls or following CDFW approval of a Burrowing Owl Plan as described below. If owl presence is difficult to determine, a qualified biologist shall monitor the burrows with motion-activated trail cameras for at least 24 hours to evaluate burrow occupancy. The onsite qualified biologist will verify the nesting effort has finished according to methods identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan.</p> <p>The Burrowing Owl Plan shall be prepared in accordance with guidelines in the CDFW Staff Report on Burrowing Owl (March 2012) and MSHCP. The qualified biologist and Project Applicant shall coordinate with the City, CDFW, and USFWS to develop a Burrowing Owl Plan to be approved by the City, CDFW, and USFWS prior to commencing Project activities. The</p>	<p>Prior to commencing ground- or vegetation disturbing activities</p>	<p>Project Proponent</p>

<p>Burrowing Owl Plan shall describe proposed avoidance, relocation, monitoring, minimization, and/or mitigation actions. The Burrowing Owl Plan shall include the number and location of occupied burrow sites and details on proposed buffers if avoiding the burrowing owls or information on the adjacent or nearby suitable habitat available to owls for relocation. If no suitable habitat is available nearby for relocation, details regarding the creation and funding of artificial burrows (numbers, location, and type of burrows) and management activities for relocated owls shall also be included in the Burrowing Owl Plan. the City shall implement the Burrowing Owl Plan following CDFW and USFWS review and approval.</p> <p>If burrowing owls are observed within Project Site(s) during Project implementation and construction, the Project applicant shall notify CDFW immediately in writing within 48 hours of detection. A Burrowing Owl Plan shall be submitted to CDFW for review and approval within two weeks of detection and no Project activity shall continue within 1000 feet of the burrowing owls until CDFW approves the Burrowing Owl Plan. the City shall be responsible for implementing appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures, including burrow avoidance, passive or active relocation, or other appropriate mitigation measures as identified in the Burrowing Owl Plan</p> <p>If ground-disturbing activities occur but the site is left undisturbed for more than 30 days, a preconstruction survey for burrowing owl shall be conducted and reported to CDFW as described above. If a burrowing owl is found, the same coordination described above shall be necessary.</p> <p>A final letter report shall be prepared by the qualified biologist documenting the results of the passive relocation. The letter shall be submitted to CDFW prior to the start of Project activities.</p>		
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