Appendix B

Owl Survey

30-DAY PRE-CONSTRUCTION BURROWING OWL SURVEY

APN # 432-130-002

CITY OF SAN JACINTO CONDITIONS OF APPROVAL FOR CMCP-18-04

A 6 Acre Project on a 20 Acre Property - Total Area Surveyed: ~30 Acres

PROJECT LOCATION:400 & 450 North Sanderson Avenue, San Jacinto, Riverside County. Located in Section 29 of Township 4 South, Range 1 West of the Lakeview, CA USGS 7.5 min. Topographic Map.

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Survey Date: May 25, 2021

Report Date: May 27, 2021

INTRODUCTION

This report describes the findings of a single 30-day pre-construction burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) conducted on May 25, 2021 to satisfy conditions of approval from the City of San Jacinto. All fieldwork was conducted by Kidd Biological, Inc employee, Scott Thomas, who maintains state and federal sub-permits to capture, band and translocate burrowing owls throughout California. The survey was intended to verify the presence or absence of burrowing owls on and directly adjacent to the project site to help ensure the project is in compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty act (MBTA) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) codes 3500, 3503 and 3503.5.

SITE LOCATION

The site is located in San Jacinto, western Riverside County, California, approximately 10 miles east of Interstate 215, 2 miles west of Highway 79 and 3 miles north of Highway 74. Generally, the site is located 4 miles northwest of Hemet near the northwest intersection of North Sanderson Avenue and Cottonwood Avenue with a site address of 400 and 450 North Sanderson Avenue (Figure 1). The project location can also be described as being located in Section 29 of Township 4 South, Range 1 West of the Lakeview, California U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map (Figure 2).

Ecologically, the site is located in the San Jacinto Valley between the Lakeview Mountains and San Jacinto Mountains at an elevation of 1,506 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Surrounding land uses include, but are not limited to; agricultural, residential, reservoirs, aqueducts and a sewage treatment facility.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project consists of providing individual secured cultivation premises. Each premise area is approximately 3.05 acres and will have approximately 1 acre of farmland with pre-fab portable cannabis cultivation hoop houses for cultivation production. The site will include 12 employee parking spaces per premise area (25 total spaces), storage (shipping containers), and trash enclosures. An asphalt drive isle with 6” curbs will be constructed. The site supports a rolling security gate at the driveway entrance.

BURROWING OWL BIOLOGY

The burrowing owl is a small, pale, buffy-brown owl that is unique in its habit of nesting in subterranean burrows. It occurs in grassland and other open habitats throughout much of the western United States, with a disjunct population in Florida. In California, the species is often found in areas containing California Ground Squirrels (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), whose burrows are used by the owls. It is opportunistic in its use of burrow sites, and can use pipes or other

suitable cavities at or below ground level. Burrows can be up to 10 feet long, with nesting chambers are constructed at the terminus. Clutches are laid, primarily from February to May.

Typical habitats suitable for the burrowing owl consist of two parts. First, the overall habitat type can vary significantly but would fall under some of these major habitat types: annual and perennial grasslands, deserts, scrublands and agricultural or range lands with low growing, sparse vegetation. Second, and most importantly, the site would support burrows which are the most essential component of burrowing owl habitat. Burrows provide protection from predators, shelter from adverse weather and critical nest sites. Since the burrowing owl does not typically create its own burrows, it relies on the burrows made by fossorial mammals and reptiles such as ground squirrels, badgers, foxes, coyotes and the desert tortoise. Artificial burrows made by humans such as pipes, rock piles, agricultural ditches and canals also provide suitable burrows.

Burrowing owls are not considered a long-lived species as they are subject to numerous avian predators (e.g. hawks and owls) and other causes of mortality including vehicle collisions, poisoning, feral animals, human persecution, agriculture, and urban developments to name a few. Burrowing owls throughout Riverside County are known to be a highly philopatric species hence they tend to search for familiar breeding sites near their natal territories. Natal and breeding dispersal distances average approximately 1 kilometer but are known to range from 0-4.1 kilometers (J.W. Kidd unpublished data). Because of their dispersal tendencies, single pairs of burrowing owls do not commonly establish or occupy small unfamiliar island habitats located more than 2-4 kilometers from extant breeding colonies considered to be source populations such as those found in the vicinity of Perris, and the French Valley (Kidd et al. 2008).

METHODS

The City of San Jacinto required a pre-construction survey prior to meet the requirements for permit approval. This burrowing owl survey is valid for 30 days. As part of the study, the parcel and adjacent lands were surveyed for owls, suitable burrows, their sign (e.g. feathers, excrement, pellets, tracks) and important habitat features that increase or reduce the potential for burrowing owls to occur on site (Figure 3).

The parcel was systematically walked in approximately 30 foot transects throughout the project area, remainder of parcel and buffer areas, where accessible. Transect width varied on vegetation density, height, species and cover. As appropriate, transect width was reduced when circumstances required such. Adjacent suitable areas, where accessible, were also surveyed to determine possible presence of owls within the project's zone of influence (generally considered 500 feet outside the project limits). Areas not accessible were surveyed using binoculars and spotting scope. All wildlife species observed were noted. A list of all animal species observed can be found in Appendix A - Faunal Compendium.

RESULTS

SITE CONDITIONS AND NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The project site is located at 1,500 feet above mean sea level within an agricultural area outside of the City San Jacinto, Riverside County. This project site is located in the eastern half of the parcel and is bounded by a chain link fence. Habitats within the fence/project area support disturbed ruderal grasslands and developed areas including non-native vegetation, hoop houses, and trailers. The western half of the parcel, not part of the project and outside the fence, supports disturbed non-native grasses and agricultural areas. Common plan species observed on site can be found in Appendix A.

BURROWING OWL SURVEY RESULTS

A single survey was conducted by Scott Thomas of Kidd Biological, Inc. on May 25, 2021 between the hours of 0930 and 1200. Weather conditions during the survey were warm with temperatures ranging from 86-89 degrees Fahrenheit, clear skies and 4-6 mph winds. Meandering transects were surveyed from the lease area out to the 500-foot buffer, where accessible. A list of all species detected can be found in Appendix A - Compendium.

One burrow of suitable size was found within the survey area (Figure 3, Photo 6) however this single burrow lacked signs of owl occupation, was vertical and filled with grasses. Hundreds of other gopher holes were observed; however, these were not suitable for burrowing owls (Photos 4-5). No burrowing owls or their sign (e.g. pellets, white wash, feathers, tracks) or any other sign indicative of burrowing owl presence was observed on or directly adjacent to the property. Off-site surveys were conducted within 500 feet of the project footprint however areas to the east across North Sanderson Avenue were only surveyed by binocular and spotting scope because of private property issues. No burrowing owls were detected in these adjacent offsite lands.

CONCLUSIONS

No owls or their sign were detected on or adjacent to the site within the surveyed buffer area. It is therefore concluded that the burrowing owl is absent from the site and the project will not directly or indirectly impact breeding burrowing owls.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Below are listed recommended mitigation/minimization measures in addition to previously stated mitigation measures to reduce impacts to levels less than significant.

BIO 1. Burrowing Owl. If site disturbance does not occur before June 25, 2021 a follow-up survey may be required by the City.

CONCLUSION STATEMENT

Implementation of this project while following the recommendations identified above will help reduce the potential for significant adverse impacts to those below a level of significance.

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*.

Date: May 27, 2021 Signed: Jeff Kidd

FIGURE 1. AERIAL VIEW SHOWING PARCEL BOUNDARIES AND SURROUNDING LAND USES

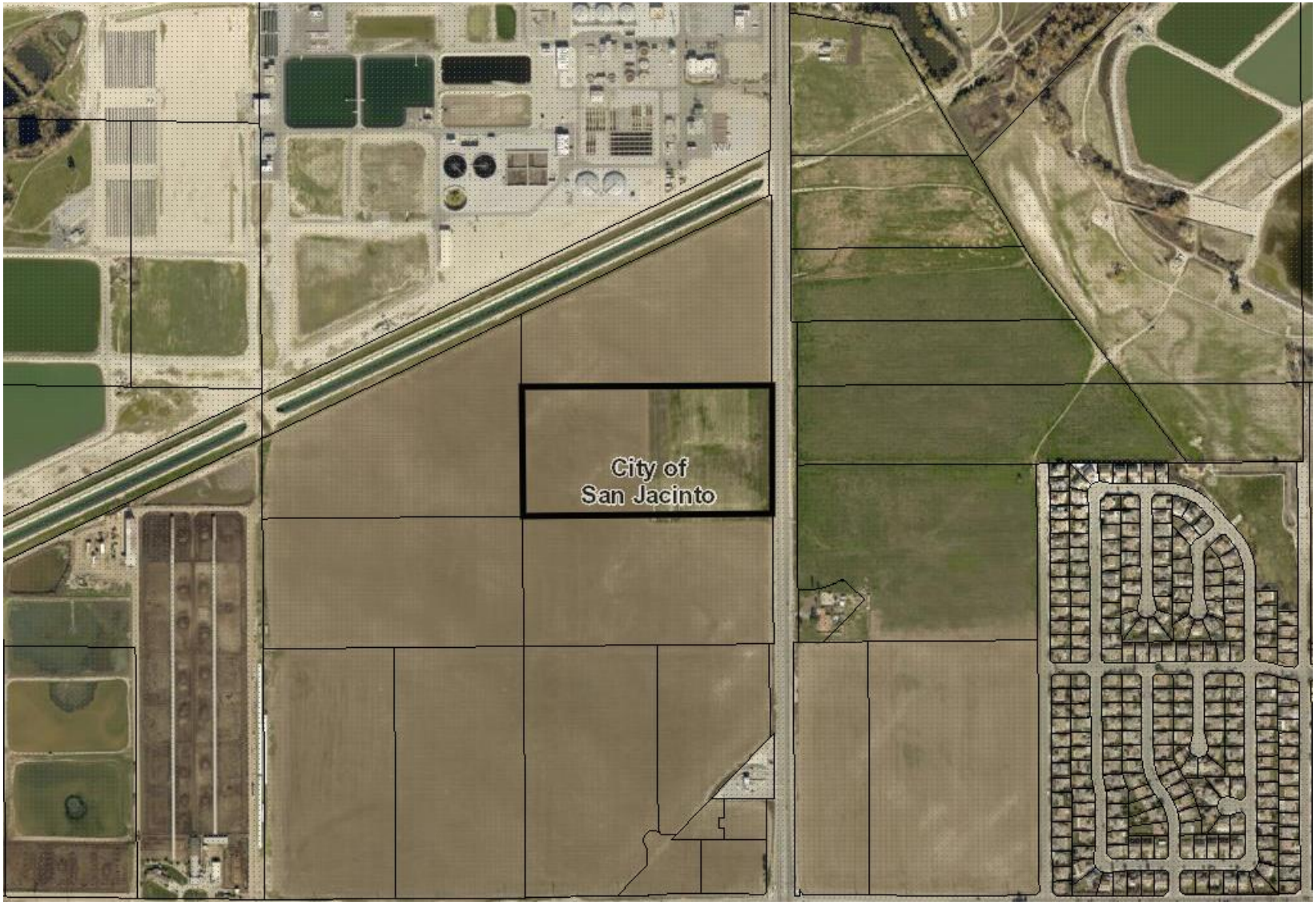
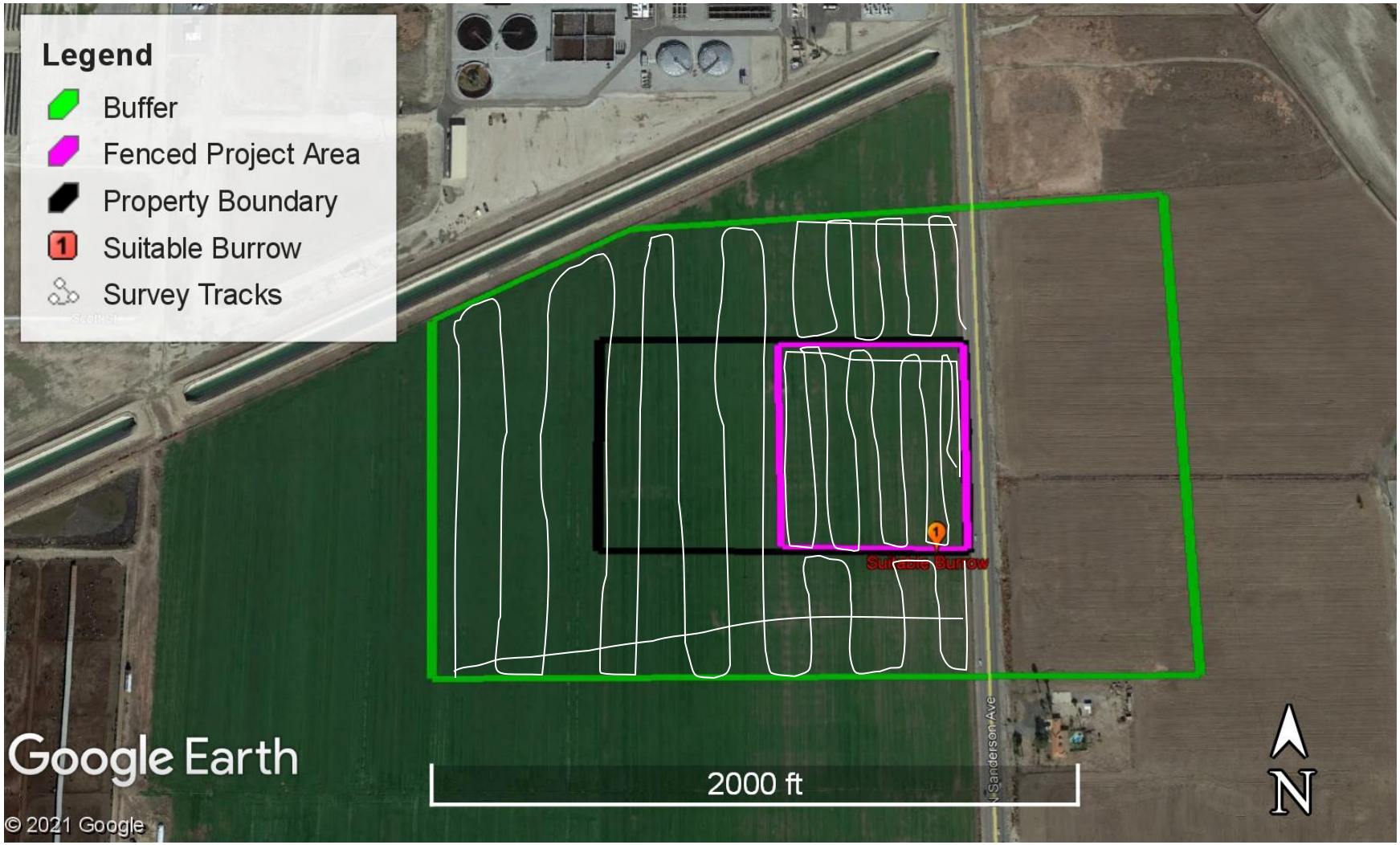


FIGURE 2. SITE LOCATION ON USGS TOPOGRAPHY MAP

FIGURE 3. PROJECT AREA, PARCEL BOUNDARY, SURVEY AREAS & SUITABLE BURROW (N=1)



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APPENDIX A
FLORAL & FAUNAL COMPENIUM

SCIENTIFIC NAME	COMMON NAME
Birds	
Corvus corax	common raven
Calypte anna	Anna's hummingbird
Haemorphus mexicanus	house finch
Zenaida macraura	mourning dove
**Sternus vulgaris*	European starling
Cathartes aura	Turkey vulture
Buteo jamaicensis	red-tailed hawk
Mammals	
Sylviligus bachmanni	Desert cottontail
Thomomys bottae	pocket gopher
Plants	
**Bassia hyssopofolia*	Five hook bassia
**Amaranthus sp.*	Pigweed
**Salsola tragus*	Russian thistle
**Euphorbia prostrata*	Prostrate spruge
**Schismus barbatus*	Mediterranean schismus
**Bromus diandrus*	Ripgut brome
**Sisymbrium irio*	London rocket

*Indicates non-native species

APPENDIX B – SITE PHOTOS

Photo 1. From NW corner looking east.

Photo 2. From SE corner looking west.

Photo 3. From SE corner looking north along Sanderson.

Photo 4. Typical small rodent burrow 1.5".

Photo 5. Typical cluster of small rodent burrows.

Photo 6. Only large diameter burrow on site ~6”.