



INFORMATION SUMMARY

- A. Report Date: April 23rd, 2022
- B. Report Title: Coastal California Gnatcatcher United States Fish and Wildlife Service Focused Surveys for the 2.60-Acre Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site, City of Lake Elsinore, Western Riverside County, California.
- C. Project APN: Portion of 394-150-001, -011, 394-140-001, -003, and -004.
- D. Project Contact: Albert A. Webb Associates
3788 McCray Street, Riverside CA 92506
Contact: Autumn DeWoody (951) 320-6046
- E. Project Biologist: Cadre Environmental
701 Palomar Airport Road, Suite 300
Carlsbad, CA. 92011
Contact: Ruben S. Ramirez, Jr. (949) 300-0212
USFWS Permit #TE780566-14
- F. Date of Surveys: March 17th, 24th, 31st, April 7th, 14th, and 23rd, 2022.
- G. Summary: A 16.85-acre survey area was established within and adjacent to the 2.60-acre project site.

Suitable habitat for the federally threatened/state species of special concern coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) documented within the survey area included Riversidean sage scrub and ecotones with southern mixed chaparral. Other vegetation communities documented within the survey area included coast live oak woodland, coast live oak/sycamore riparian, and Riversidean alluvial fan sage scrub. All habitats within the survey area were covered during the focused survey efforts to determine the current status of the species within and immediately adjacent to the project site.

The coastal California gnatcatcher was not documented within or adjacent to the project site during the 2022 focused surveys.

SUBJECT

Focused United States Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys for the Elsinore Valley Municipal Water District (EVMWD) Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site, City of Lake Elsinore, Western Riverside County, California.

This report presents the findings of focused United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila californica californica*) surveys conducted for the 2.60-acre project Site (Project Site) located within partially within Assessor Parcel Numbers (APN) 394-150-001, -011, 394-140-001, -003, and -004 in the western region of the City of Lake Elsinore, Western Riverside County, California, as illustrated in Attachment A, *Regional Location Map*, and Attachment B, *Project Site Map*. The Project Site is depicted on the United States Geological Survey (USGS) Alberhill topographic quadrangle, as illustrated in Attachment C, *USGS Map*.

In addition to conducting focused surveys within the Project Site, all adjacent habitats were surveyed to ensure no potential indirect impacts to the coastal California gnatcatcher occurred as a result of the proposed action. A 16.85-acre survey area (Survey Area) was established which included the 2.60-acre Project Site. This report incorporates the findings of a habitat assessment, literature review, compilation of existing documentation, and focused USFWS coastal California gnatcatcher surveys conducted on March 17th, 24th, 31st, April 7th, 14th, and 23rd, 2022.

METHODS OF STUDY

APPROACH

Prior to initiating the focused surveys, a review of aerial photography, topographic map data, and the USFWS species occurrence database were examined. Cadre Environmental initiated the focused surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher during the spring breeding season of 2022.

General/Sensitive Wildlife Inventory

All general and sensitive wildlife identified during the focused coastal California gnatcatcher surveys by sight, call, tracks, scat, or other characteristic sign were recorded. 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.

Focused Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys

Protocol surveys for the federally threatened/state species of special concern, coastal California gnatcatcher were performed in all areas of suitable habitat within and immediately adjacent to the Project Site. A total of 16.85-acres of suitable and bordering habitats were surveyed including Riversidean sage scrub and ecotones with

southern mixed chaparral as shown in Attachment D to G, *Current Project Site Photographs* and Attachment H, *Survey Area Map*. As stated by the USFWS:

“Surveys shall be conducted between 6:00am and 12:00pm. Surveys shall avoid periods of excessive or abnormal heat, wind, rain, or other inclement weather. Taped coastal California gnatcatcher vocalization shall be used only until individuals have been initially located. Tapes shall not be used frequently or to illicit further behaviors from the birds. Surveys shall be conducted by slowly walking survey routes. Sites with deep canyons, ridgelines, steep terrain, and thick shrub cover should be surveyed more slowly. Prevailing site conditions and professional judgment must be applied to determine appropriate survey routes and acreage covered per day. These factors may dictate that the maximum daily coverage specified below is not prudent under certain conditions. No more than 100 acres (40ha) shall be surveyed per biologist per day.”
 (USFWS 1997)

Surveys were conducted in accordance with the 1997 USFWS coastal California gnatcatcher guidelines. Guidelines stipulate that during the breeding season (March 15th to June 30th), a minimum of six (6) surveys shall be conducted in all areas of suitable habitat with at least seven (7) days between site visits and surveys. Therefore, six (6) surveys were conducted during the breeding season. Surveys were not conducted during extreme weather conditions (i.e., winds exceeding 15 miles per hour, rain, or temperatures in excess of 95° F). The Study Area was surveyed on foot by walking slowly and methodically throughout and adjacent to all suitable habitats. Presence/absence of coastal California gnatcatchers was determined by identification of sight and call, using a combination of taped vocalization and "pishing" sounds. Focused surveys were conducted on March 17th, 24th, 31st, April 7th, 14th, and 23rd, 2022 by permitted coastal California gnatcatcher biologist Ruben Ramirez (USFWS Permit 780566-14), as outlined in Table 1, *Coastal California Gnatcatcher Survey Schedule*.

Table 1. Coastal California Gnatcatcher Survey Schedule

Survey	Dates (Conditions) 2022	Results
1	March 17 th - 58°F to 65°F, winds 4-12 mph, no rain Start 7:30 am, Stop 9:30am	No CAGN Detected
2	March 24 th - 56°F to 68°F, winds 2-4 mph, no rain Start 7:30 am, Stop 9:30am	No CAGN Detected
3	March 31 st - 55°F to 55°F, winds 4-8 mph, no rain Start 7:30 am, Stop 9:30am	No CAGN Detected
4	April 7 th - 62°F to 72°F, winds 4-10 mph, no rain Start 7:30 am, Stop 9:30am	No CAGN Detected
5	April 14 th - 52°F to 60°F, winds 2-8 mph, no rain Start 7:30 am, Stop 9:30am	No CAGN Detected
6	April 23 rd - 48°F to 58°F, winds 4-10 mph, no rain Start 7:30 am, Stop 9:30am	No CAGN Detected

EXISTING CONDITIONS

VEGETATION COMMUNITIES

The two (2) vegetation communities representing suitable habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher documented within and adjacent to the Project Site include Riversidean sage scrub and ecotones with southern mixed chaparral as described below.

Riversidean Sage Scrub

The Riversidean sage scrub vegetation community documented within and adjacent to the Project Site was dominated by brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber*), and common sandaster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*).

Southern Mixed Chaparral

The southern mixed chaparral ecotone was dominated by both those species noted in the previous vegetation community description as well as thick leaved yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), sugarbush (*Rhus ovata*), chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), white flowering currant (*Ribes indecorum*), Coulter's Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*), Hollyleaf redberry (*Rhamnus ilicifolia*), and blue elderberry (*Sambucus cerulea*).

RESULTS

No federally threatened coastal California gnatcatcher were documented within the Survey Area during 2022 spring breeding season focused survey efforts.

General wildlife species documented onsite are included in Appendix A, Wildlife Species Compendium.

REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB). 2021. Sensitive Element Record Search for the Alberhill Quadrangle. California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Sacramento, California. Accessed April 2022.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. 2022. Species Occurrence Database. Accessed April 2022.

U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. December 19, 2007. Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Poliioptila californica californica*), Final Rule. Federal Register 72 (No. 243):72010-72213.

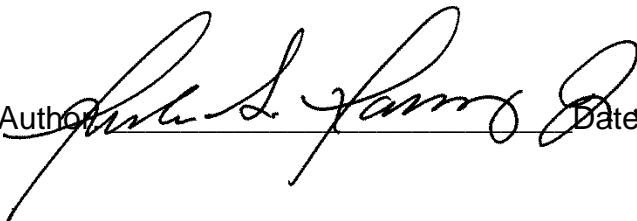
U.S. Department of the Interior, Fish and Wildlife Service. 1997. Coastal California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) Presence/Absence Survey Guidelines.

Attachments

- A – Regional Location Map
- B – Project Site Map
- C – USGS Map
- D – Current Project Site Photographs
- E – Current Project Site Photographs
- F – Current Project Site Photographs
- G – Current Project Site Photographs
- H – Survey Area 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."

Fieldwork Performed By, Author  Date: April 23rd, 2022

Appendix A – Wildlife Species Compendium:

Galliformes - Gallinaceous Birds

Odontophoridae - New World Quail

California Quail *Callipepla californica*

Columbiformes - Pigeons and Doves

Columbidae - Pigeons and Doves

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

Apodiformes - Swifts and Hummingbirds

Apodidae - Swifts

White-throated Swift *Aeronautes saxatalis*

Trochilidae - Hummingbirds

Anna's Hummingbird *Calypte anna*

Costa's Hummingbird *Calypte costae*

Allen's Hummingbird *Selasphorus sasin*

Cathartiformes - New World Vultures

Cathartidae - New World Vultures

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Accipitriformes - Hawks, Kites, Eagles, and Allies

Accipitridae - Hawks, Kites, Eagles, and Allies

Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus*

Red-shouldered Hawk *Buteo lineatus*

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis*

Strigiformes - Owls

Tytonidae - Barn Owls

Barn Owl *Tyto alba*

Piciformes - Puffbirds, Jacamars, Toucans, Woodpeckers, and Allies

Picidae - Woodpeckers and Allies

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*

Nuttall's Woodpecker *Dryobates nuttallii*

Falconiformes - Caracaras and Falcons

Falconidae - Caracaras and Falcons

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

Passeriformes - Passerine Birds

Tyrannidae - Tyrant Flycatchers

Ash-throated Flycatcher *Myiarchus cinerascens*

Cassin's Kingbird *Tyrannus vociferans*

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*
Say's Phoebe *Sayornis saya*

Vireonidae - Vireos

Warbling Vireo *Vireo gilvus*

Corvidae - Crows and Jays

California Scrub-Jay *Aphelocoma californica*
American Crow *Corvus brachyrhynchos*
Common Raven *Corvus corax*

Paridae - Chickadees and Titmice

Oak Titmouse *Baeolophus inornatus*

Alaudidae - Larks

California Horned Lark *Eremophila alpestris actia*

Hirundinidae - Swallows

Northern Rough-winged
Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis*
Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*

Aegithalidae - Long-tailed Tits and Bushtits

Bushtit *Psaltriparus minimus*

Sylviidae - Sylviid Warblers

Wrentit *Chamaea fasciata*

Regulidae - Kinglets

Ruby-crowned Kinglet *Corthylio calendula*

Poliptilidae - Gnatcatchers and Gnatwrens

Blue-gray Gnatcatcher *Poliptila caerulea*

Troglodytidae - Wrens

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*
Bewick's Wren *Thryomanes bewickii*

Mimidae - Mockingbirds and Thrashers

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos*

Sturnidae - Starlings

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*

Turdidae - Thrushes

Western Bluebird *Sialia mexicana*
Hermit Thrush *Catharus guttatus*

Passeridae - Old World Sparrows

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Motacillidae - Wagtails and Pipits

American Pipit *Anthus rubescens*

Fringillidae - Fringilline and Cardueline Finches and Allies

House Finch *Haemorhous mexicanus*

Lesser Goldfinch *Spinus psaltria*

American Goldfinch *Spinus tristis*

Passerellidae - New World Sparrows

Lark Sparrow *Chondestes grammacus*

Dark-eyed Junco *Junco hyemalis*

White-crowned Sparrow *Zonotrichia leucophrys*

Song Sparrow *Melospiza melodia*

Spotted Towhee *Pipilo maculatus*

Icteridae - Blackbirds

Hooded Oriole *Icterus cucullatus*

Parulidae - Wood-Warblers

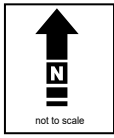
Orange-crowned Warbler *Leiothlypis celata*

Yellow-rumped Warbler *Setophaga coronata*



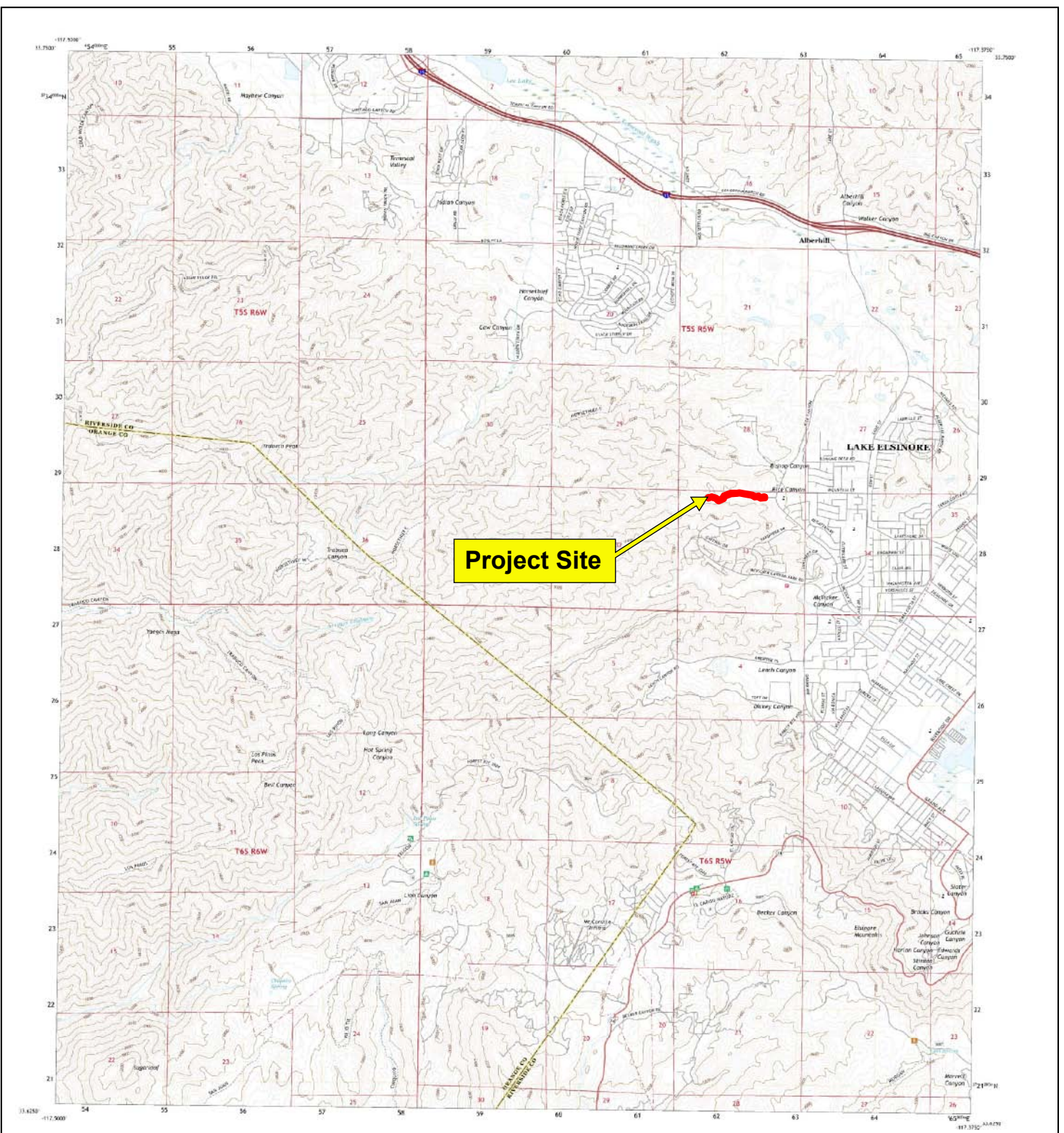
APNs Portion of 394-150-001, -011, 394-140-003, and -004.

Attachment A - Regional Location Map
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
EVMWD Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site

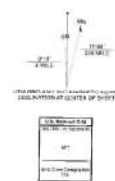




→ Photo Point & Direction — Project Site Boundary



Produced by the United States Geological Survey
 North American Datum of 1983 (NAD83)
 7.5-Minute Digital Elevation Model (DEM) and
 1:250,000 Scale Topographic Map Series
 This map is a derivative product. Accuracy may be
 greater than the original data. Please refer to the
 metadata for more information. Users are responsible for
 using the product data.



SCALE 1:24 000
 METERS
 FEET
 CONTIGUOUS AT 1/4 INCH TO 1/8 INCH
 NORTH AMERICAN VERTICAL DATUM OF 1983
 This map was produced by computer with the
 National Geographic Program of Topographic Data, 2011.
 All data are based on the ground truth survey data.

ROAD CLASSIFICATION

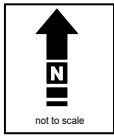
Primary Road	Local Connector
Secondary Road	Local Road
Route	Trail
Interstate	State Road
US Primary Road	US Interstate
US Secondary Road	US Interstate

Check with local Postal Service units
 for current street conditions and mail routes

**ALBERHILL, CA
 2018**

USGS Alberhill, (7.5 minute series)

Attachment C - USGS Topographic Map
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
EVMWD Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site





PHOTOGRAPH 1



PHOTOGRAPH 2

Refer to Attachment B for Photographic Key Map

Attachment D - Current Project Site Photographs
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
EVMWD Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site





PHOTOGRAPH 3



PHOTOGRAPH 4

Refer to Attachment B for Photographic Key Map

Attachment E - Current Project Site Photographs
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
EVMWD Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site





PHOTOGRAPH 5



PHOTOGRAPH 6

Refer to Attachment B for Photographic Key Map

Attachment F - Current Project Site Photographs
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
EVMWD Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site





PHOTOGRAPH 7

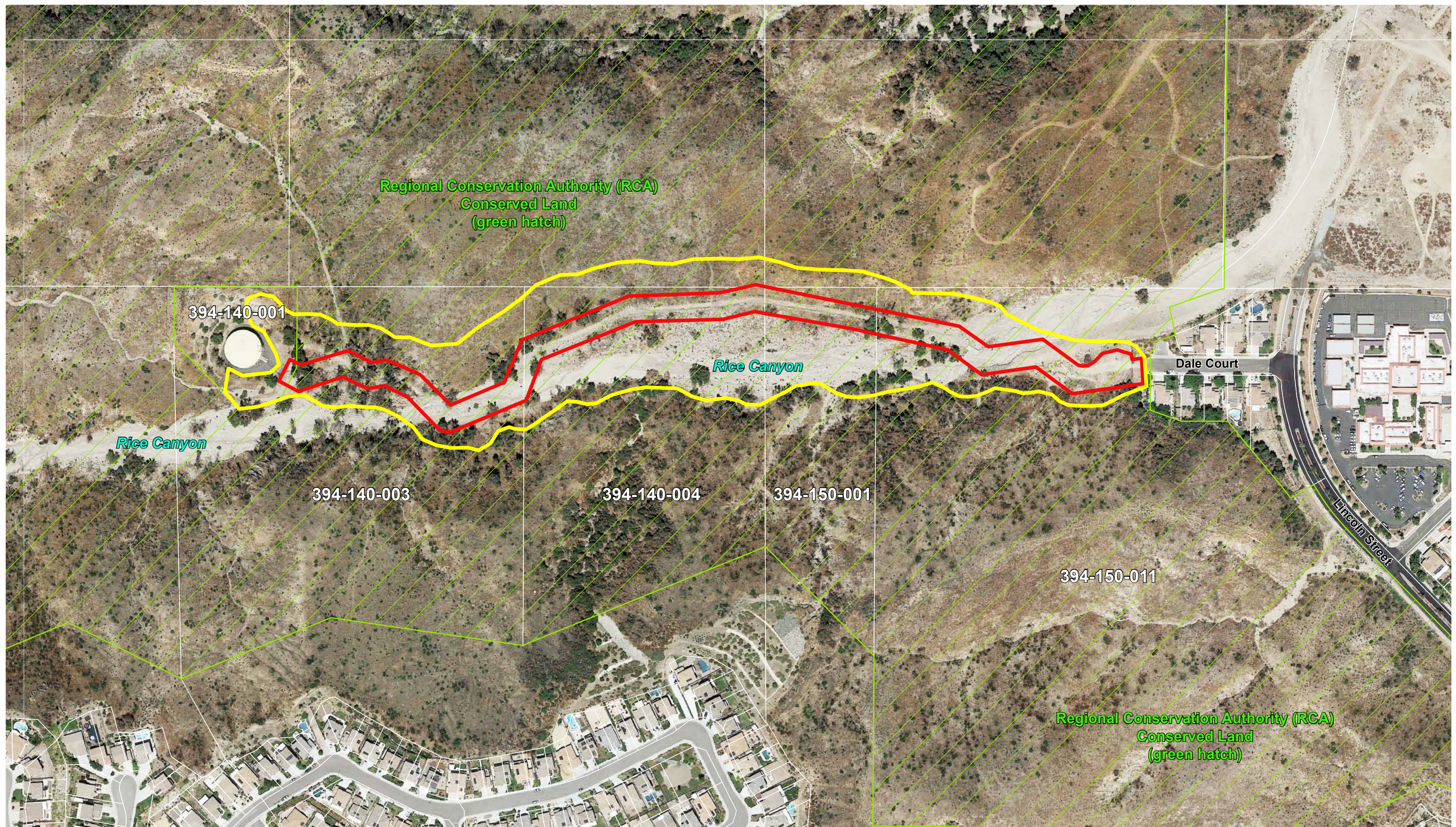


PHOTOGRAPH 8

Refer to Attachment B for Photographic Key Map

Attachment G - Current Project Site Photographs
Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys
EVMWD Rice Canyon Reservoir Access Road & New Conduit Project Site





— Project Site Boundary
 — Survey Area Boundary

