Biological Assessment Report
for the
First Wilson III
Redevelopment Project
City of Perris

Prepared For:

First Industrial Realty Trust, Inc.
First Industrial, L.P., First Industrial Acquisitions II, LLC and their Affiliates
and Assigns
C/O Weis Environmental LLC
1938 Kellogg Avenue, Suite 116
Carlsbad, CA 92008

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Prepared By:

Michael K. Jefferson
Senior Biologist
BLUE Consulting Group

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report documents the findings of an evaluation of biological resources conducted by BLUE for the proposed First Wilson III Project (Project). The proposed Project includes the development of four parcels totaling approximately 9.86-acres off of Wilson Avenue within the City of Perris, County of Riverside, California. The Project site is bound by undeveloped land approved for development and East Rider Street to the north, undeveloped lots and Placentia Avenue to the south, undeveloped lots and Redlands Avenue to the west and Wilson Avenue to the east. The eastern property line is adjacent to Wilson Avenue (frontage street).

The Project area totals approximately 9.86 acres and is located within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP) Mead Valley Area Plan area. APN numbers include: 300-210-014 (2.49 acres), 300-210-015 (2.49 acres), 300-210-023 (2.44 acres), 300-210-024 (2.44 acres). The Project area is not located within any MSHCP designated Criteria Areas or Subunits. As such, the Project is not subject to Cell Criteria compliance under the MSHCP. The Project footprint does not fall within any Public/Quasi-Public (PQP) or other MSHCP Conserved Lands but is located approximately 1.9 miles west of the San Jacinto Wildlife Area and Lake Perris; both are PQP lands.

The Biological Study Area (BSA) includes the Project proposed ground disturbance footprint, plus a 500-foot buffer. The BSA is located within the United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute Perris Topographic Map. The Project BSA falls within the San Bernardino Meridian, Section 5, Township 4 South, Range 3 West on the Perris, CA 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map (USGS 1979) in the City of Perris, at an approximate elevation of 1,450 feet. The longitude and latitude coordinates near the center of the survey area are 33°49'36.4"N 117°12'50.9"W (33.826770, -117.214142).

The Project BSA is composed of four lots/parcels; one commercial store and parking lot that was operational at the time of the field surveys, two residential lots that were occupied at the time of the surveys, and an undeveloped lot. The lots with the commercial store and residences on them are dominated by disturbed and developed area while the undeveloped lot is divided between disturbed habitat and annual Non-Native Grasslands (NNG). The lots are generally flat undeveloped terrain that is disturbed. The surrounding land uses consists of undeveloped lots that are zoned for Light Industrial uses, a few non-conforming residential lots, a recently developed lot (directly across the street to the east), and public infrastructure (road/sidewalk).

The intended use of this document is to disclose and evaluate habitat conditions and determine the potential for occurrence of common and special-status species and their habitats within survey area limits pursuant to the MSHCP. Special-status species refers to any species that has been afforded special protection by federal, state, or local resource agencies (e.g., U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS], California Department of Fish and Game [CDFW]) or resource conservation organizations (e.g., California Native Plant Society [CNPS]). The term "special-status species" excludes those avian species solely identified under Section 10 of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) for federal protection. The MBTA species protected by Section 10 are afforded avoidance and minimization measures per state and federal requirements.

2.0 METHODS

Prior to beginning the field survey, a literature review was completed to determine locations and types of biological resources having the potential to exist within the region (USFWS Critical Habitat Mapper and File data

[USFWS 2019a], USFWS Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) [USFWS closed and not accessible], CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) [CDFW, 2018], and CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants [CNPS, 2015]). CNDDB and CNPS file data was queried for records of occurrence of special-status species and habitats within the Perris quadrangle. The MSHCP Transportation and Land Management Agency Geographic Information Services Database and Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority (RCA) website and GIS data bank was also reviewed (County of Riverside, 2021).

In addition to utilizing on-line databases and mapping tools, the Perris topographic map was reviewed to determine the locations of any potential special aquatic resource areas (e.g., wetlands or other Waters of the United States or Waters of the State) under regulatory jurisdiction of the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), CDFW, and Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and Riparian/Riverine habitats prior to beginning field surveys of the BSA.

Additionally, the United States Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA-NRCS) on-line Web Soil Survey tool (NRCS 2015) and Figure 2-4 of the MSHCP were reviewed to determine the types and percent cover of soils within the BSA.

Lands within the BSA that were potentially suspected of being potential special aquatic resource and Riparian/Riverine habitats were then assessed by visual observation during the field survey. Potential special aquatic resource areas and riparian/riverine habitats were further evaluated by determining the presence of definable channels and/or hydrophytic vegetation, riparian habitat, and hydrologic regime.

Michael Jefferson, senior BLUE biologist, then conducted a pedestrian-based biological survey to observe, document, and evaluate plant and wildlife resources and determine the potential for occurrence of special-status plant and wildlife species. Approximately 100-foot-wide meandering transects were utilized to provide visual coverage of the BSA.

Vegetation community type descriptions were based on observed dominant vegetation composition and derived from the criteria and definitions of vegetation classification systems (Holland, 1986; Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf, 1995; Sawyer et al., 2009). Plants were identified in the field to the lowest taxonomic level sufficient to determine positive identity and status. Plants of uncertain identity were subsequently identified using taxonomic keys, and scientific and common species names were recorded according to Baldwin (2012).

The presence of a wildlife species was based on direct observation or wildlife sign (e.g., tracks, burrows, nests, scat, or vocalization). Field data compiled for wildlife species included scientific name, common name, and evidence of sign when no direct observations were made. Wildlife of uncertain distinctiveness was documented and subsequently identified from field guides and related literature (Burt and Grossenheider, 1980; Halfpenny, 2000; Sibley, 2000; Elbroch, 2003; and Stebbins, 2003).

The BSA was also assessed for its potential to support special-status species, based on habitat suitability comparisons with reported occupied habitats.

The following definitions were used to determine the need for subsequent surveys and to assess project-related effects to special-status species:

- Absent (A): No habitat occurs within the survey area and no further surveys are necessary

- Habitat Present (HP): Habitat is present within the survey area
- Present (P): The species was observed within the survey area during the survey
- Critical Habitat (CH): The survey area is located within designated critical habitat

3.0 RESULTS

BLUE biologist Mike Jefferson conducted two biological surveys for the Project. The first on August 25, 2021; beginning at 8:45 and ending at 10:00. Weather conditions during the surveys included mostly clear skies, with temperatures ranging from 73° to 82° Fahrenheit, and winds from 1 to 3 miles per hour. The second on January 10, 2022 beginning at 12:00 and ending at 12:30. Weather conditions during the surveys included mostly 80% cover cloudy skies, with temperatures ranging from 73° to 74° Fahrenheit, and winds from 1 to 3 miles per hour.

3.1 VEGETATION COMMUNITIES/LAND COVER TYPES

A total of three (3) vegetation community/land cover types was observed onsite; Developed, Disturbed and Non-Native Grasslands (Table 1; Figure 3). No native plant species were located within the survey area.

Table 1: On-Site Vegetation

Community Type	Acres
Disturbed	6.96
Developed	0.86
Non-Native Grassland (disturbed)	2.04
Total	**9.86**

Communities/Land Cover Types Observed Onsite

3.1.1 Disturbed

Disturbed lands dominate within the BSA. The area is actively utilized and maintained. The plant community consists of Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and one individual prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), both non-native species, with no herbaceous layer present.

3.1.2 Developed

Disturbed lands onsite and within the BSA consist of the commercial store and parking area, the two single-family residences, garages and paved areas (onsite) and offsite Wilson Avenue and the newly developed parcel to the east. No vegetation is present within this land cover type.

3.1.3 Annual Non-Native Grassland

Annual Non-Native Grassland is present on a portion of the undeveloped northern lot. Within the last 18 months, this area appears to have burned in a localized brush fire. This vegetation type describes areas dominated by non-native European annual grasses, with a large component of ruderal forbs. The best fit under the Sawyer et al. 2009 system would be Avena semi-natural herbaceous stands or Bromus-Brachypodium distachyon semi-natural herbaceous stands. However, neither of these stands contains significant amounts of barley, which is one of the dominants at the project site. So, the best fit for this vegetation type is California annual non-native grassland (used in the older version of Sawyer et al). The majority of the project site consisted of non-native grassland. Non-native grasslands are associated with areas of historic grazing, disking and off-road recreational vehicle use.

The dominant species in the California annual grassland included barley (*Hordeum murinum*), oats (*Avena fatua*),

brome grasses (*Bromus* spp.) and summer mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*). Other species present included Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and common phacelia (*Phacelia distans*).

3.2 PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES

Plant and wildlife species observed within the survey area were typical of developed and disturbed habitats. All plant and wildlife species observed within the survey area are listed in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

Table 2: Plant Species Observed within the Survey Area

Species	Common Name
***ANGIOSPERMAE* -FLOWERING PLANTS**	
DICOTYLEDONES	
***ASTERACEAE (COMPOSITAE)* -SUNFLOWER FAMILY**	
*Lactuca serriola**	prickly lettuce
***CHENOPODIACEAE* -GOOSEFOOT FAMILY**	
*Salsola tragus**	Russian thistle
POACEAE - GRASS	
*Bromus madritensis**	Red Brome
*Hordeum murinum**	Barley
*Avena fatua**	Oats
*Hirschfeldia incana**	Summer Mustard
Phacelia distans	Common phacelia
** non-native species*	

Table 3: Wildlife Species Observed within the Survey Area

Scientific Name	Common Name
Birds	
Corvidae	**Jays and Crows**
Corvus corax	common raven
Mammals	
Otospermophilus beecheyi	California ground squirrel (burrow)
Sylvilagus sp.	rabbit (sign)

3.2.1 SPECIAL-STATUS PLANTS

Eleven special-status plant species have been reported to occur within the Perris quadrangle (Appendix B) (CDFW 2015, CNPS 2015, County of Riverside 2003). Three species are designated with federal and/or state listing status: San Jacinto Valley crownscale (*Atriplex coronata* var. *notatior*), thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*), and spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*).

All eleven special-status plant species were determined to have an “Absent” potential for occurrence within the survey area and no further survey is necessary to determine presence or absence of those species.

3.2.2 SPECIAL-STATUS WILDLIFE

Fifteen special-status wildlife species have been reported to occur within the Perris quadrangle (Appendix C) (CDFW 2015, County of Riverside 2003). Three species, Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi),* coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica)* and least Bell's vireo (*Vireo belli pusillus*) are listed as federally and/or state threatened or endangered.

All fifteen special-status wildlife species were determined to have an "Absent" potential for occurrence within the survey area and no further survey is necessary to determine presence or absence of these species.

3.2.3 WESTERN RIVERSIDE COUNTY MULTIPLE SPECIES HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN (MSHCP)

The Project BSA is located within the Mead Valley Area Plan outside of any MSHCP designated Criteria Cells or Cell Groups (Tables 4 and 5) (County of Riverside, 2021). The Project is not subject to Cell Criteria compliance under the MSHCP. The Project BSA does not include any MSHCP Conserved Lands or PQP lands. Public and private development projects that are carried out within the Mead Valley Area Plan, but outside of the Criteria Areas and Public/Quasi-Public Lands (e.g., such as this Project), are permitted under the MSHCP subject to compliance with MSHCP policies that apply outside Criteria Areas.

Table 4: MSHCP Cell Group, Area Plan, and Sub-Unit within the Project

APN	Cell	Cell Group	Acres	Area Plan	Sub Unit
300-210-014	Not A Part	Independent	2.49	Mead Valley	Not A Part
300-210-015	Not A Part	Independent	2.49	Mead Valley	Not A Part
300-210-023	Not A Part	Independent	2.44	Mead Valley	Not A Part
300-210-024	Not A Part	Independent	2.44	Mead Valley	Not A Part

The Project BSA does not occur within any Amphibian, Mammalian, or Special Linkage Areas identified by MSHCP Section 6.3.2 Additional Surveys Needs and Procedures. Applicable MSHCP policy areas include burrowing owl, Criteria Area Species, and Narrow Endemic Plant Species (Figure 4).

Table 5: Riverside County Integrated Project

APN	Amphibian Species	Burrowing Owl	Criteria Area Species	Mammalian Species	Narrow Endemic Plant Species	Special Linkage Area
All parcels	No	Yes	No	No	Yes	No

A burrowing owl assessment was completed according to the Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area (County of Riverside 2006). No burrowing owls, or owl sign, were located during the assessment. Potentially appropriate burrows were observed onsite and within the BSA.

A habitat assessment for nine potential Criteria Area Species was completed and there is no potential for occurance. Species include: Coulter's goldfields (*Lasthenia glabrata* ssp. *coulteri*), Davidson's saltscale (*Atriplex serenana* var. *davidsonii*), little mouestail (*Myosurus minimus* var. *apus*), mud nama (*Nama stenocarpum*), Parish's

brittlescale (*Atriplex parishii*), round-leaved filaree (*Erodium macrophyllum*), San Jacinto Valley crownscale (*Atriplex coronata* var. *notatior*), smooth tarplant (*Centromadia pungens* ssp. *laevis*), and thread-leaved brodiaea (*Brodiaea filifolia*).

A habitat assessment for five Narrow Endemic Plant Species was completed and there is no potential for occurance. Species include: San Diego ambrosia (*Ambrosia pumila*), many-stemmed dudleya (*Dudleya multicaulis*), spreading navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*), California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*), and Wrights trichocoronis (*Trichocoronis wrightii* var. *wrightii*).

3.2.4 RIPARIAN/RIVERINE

Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP defines Riparian/Riverine areas as "lands which contain Habitat dominated by trees, shrubs, persistent emergents, or emergent mosses and lichens, which occur close to or which depend upon soil moisture from a nearby fresh water source; or areas with fresh water flow during all or a portion of the year." Riparian/Riverine areas as defined by the MSHCP are not present within the survey area and will not be impacted by the Project.

3.2.5 VERNAL POOL AND FAIRY SHRIMP

Vernal pools, vernal swales, alkali scalds or flats, or other seasonal wet habitats were not identified within the BSA during field surveys conducted by a qualified biologist. The BSA lacks suitable habitat for fairy shrimp species or other vernal pool species, including plants.

3.3 AQUATIC RESOURCES

The BSA does not contain any special aquatic resource area such as wetlands or other Waters of the United States or Waters of the State under regulatory jurisdiction of the USACE, CDFW, or RWQCB.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

The literature review and field assessment data confirm that no special-status species currently utilize the BSA. The BSA lacks suitable habitat that would typically support special-status species or receive state or federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) protections. Consequently, there is no reasonable presumption of adverse impact to any special status species or their habitats as a result of Project implementation.

Suitable habitat for burrowing owl was observed within the survey area. No direct observations or burrowing owl sign (feathers, pellets, fecal material, prey remains, etc.) were made during the site assessment. The potentially suitable burrows were present on site due to small mammal colonies (e.g. ground squirrel). No ground squirrels (an important indicator species) were observed on site. Burrowing owl has historically been observed in the project vicinity; however no evidence of burrowing owl was observed within the survey area. The nearest previously-documented burrowing owl occurrences were located approximately 2 miles northwest of the BSA and were observed in 2001, and five burrowing owl were observed downstream in the flood control channel in 2009 (CDFW 2015). An additional occurrence of three burrowing owls located approximately 2 miles south of the BSA was observed in 2007.

Although no burrowing owl was observed, they could potentially inhabit the survey area in areas that were previously determined to be unoccupied. Per MSHCP Section 6.3.2, this Project BSA is within a mandatory Burrow Survey Area and is obligated to survey for burrowing owls during the environmental review process as indicated

in the MSHCP "Additional Survey Needs and Procedures." As such, a pre-construction protocol survey for burrowing owls following the Burrowing Owl Survey Instructions for the Western Riverside Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan Area (County of Riverside 2006) should be conducted to determine whether burrowing owls are subsequently occupying the survey area.

Surveys must be conducted within at least 30-days prior to any ground disturbance.

No Narrow Endemic Plant Species/Criteria Area plant species were observed on site during the habitat assessment. Given the site's exposure to recurring surface disturbances associated with vegetation management, these species are not expected to occur on site. The BSA supports no riparian/riverine/vernal pool habitats or species associated with these habitat types were observed on site.

No special aquatic resource areas were discovered within the BSA and none are expected to be impacted by the Project.

To comply with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and relevant sections of California Fish and Game Code (e.g., Sections 3503, 3503.4, 3544, 3505, et seq.), vegetation clearing should take place outside of the typical avian nesting season (i.e., generally February 1st -August 31st although the nesting season may be extended due to weather and drought conditions), to the maximum extent practical.

The services performed by BLUE and documented in this report have been conducted in a manner consistent with the level of care and skill ordinarily exercised by other professional consultants under similar circumstances. No other representations are either expressed or implied, and no warranty or guarantee is included in this report. Opinions relating to presence, absence, or potential for occurrence of biological resources are based on limited data and actual conditions may vary from those encountered at the times and locations where the data were obtained despite due professional care. The services provided have been performed in accordance with the negotiated scope of work. Any reliance on this report by any other party shall be at such party's sole risk unless that party has written authorization from BLUE to use this work product.

5.0 REFERENCES

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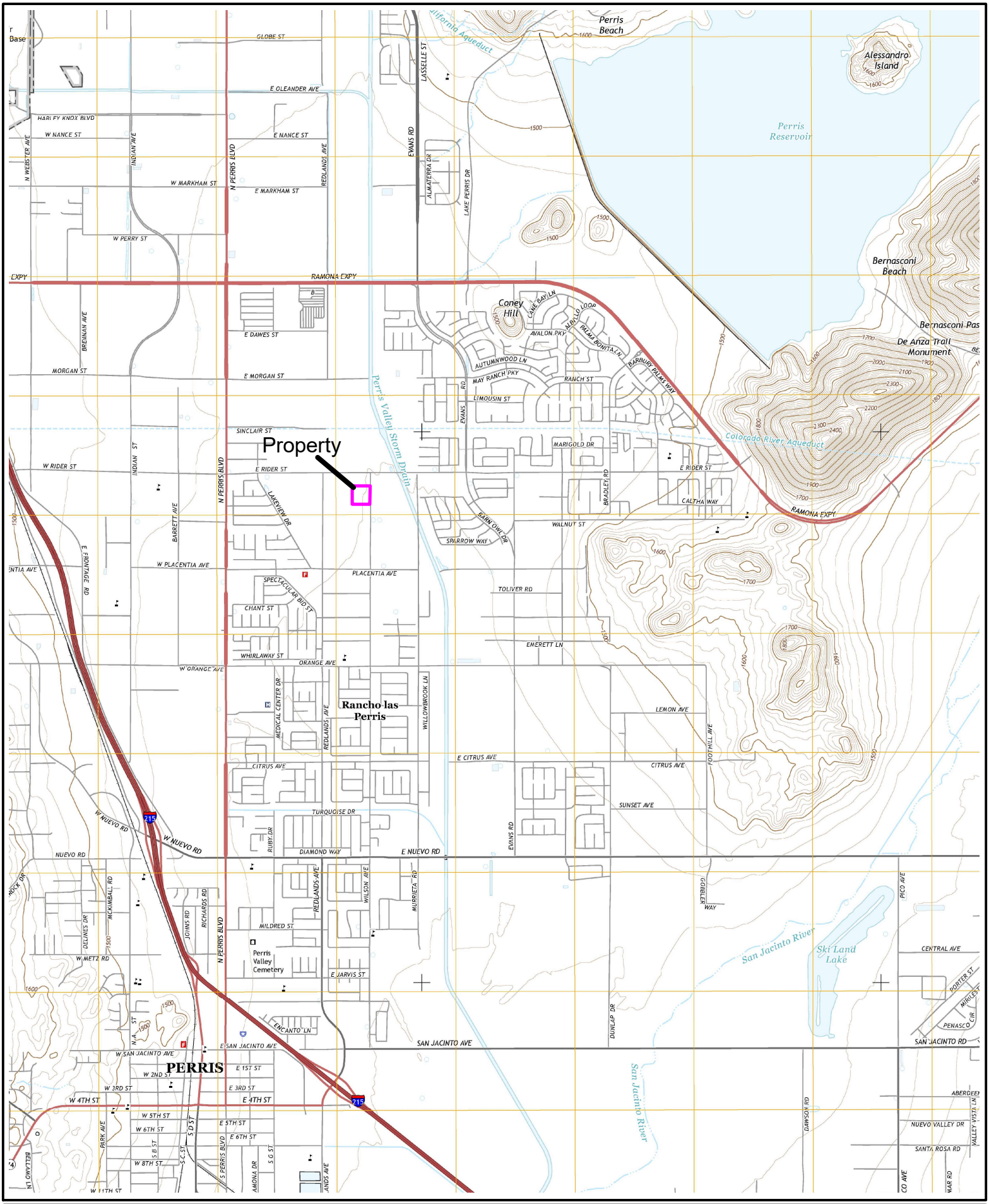
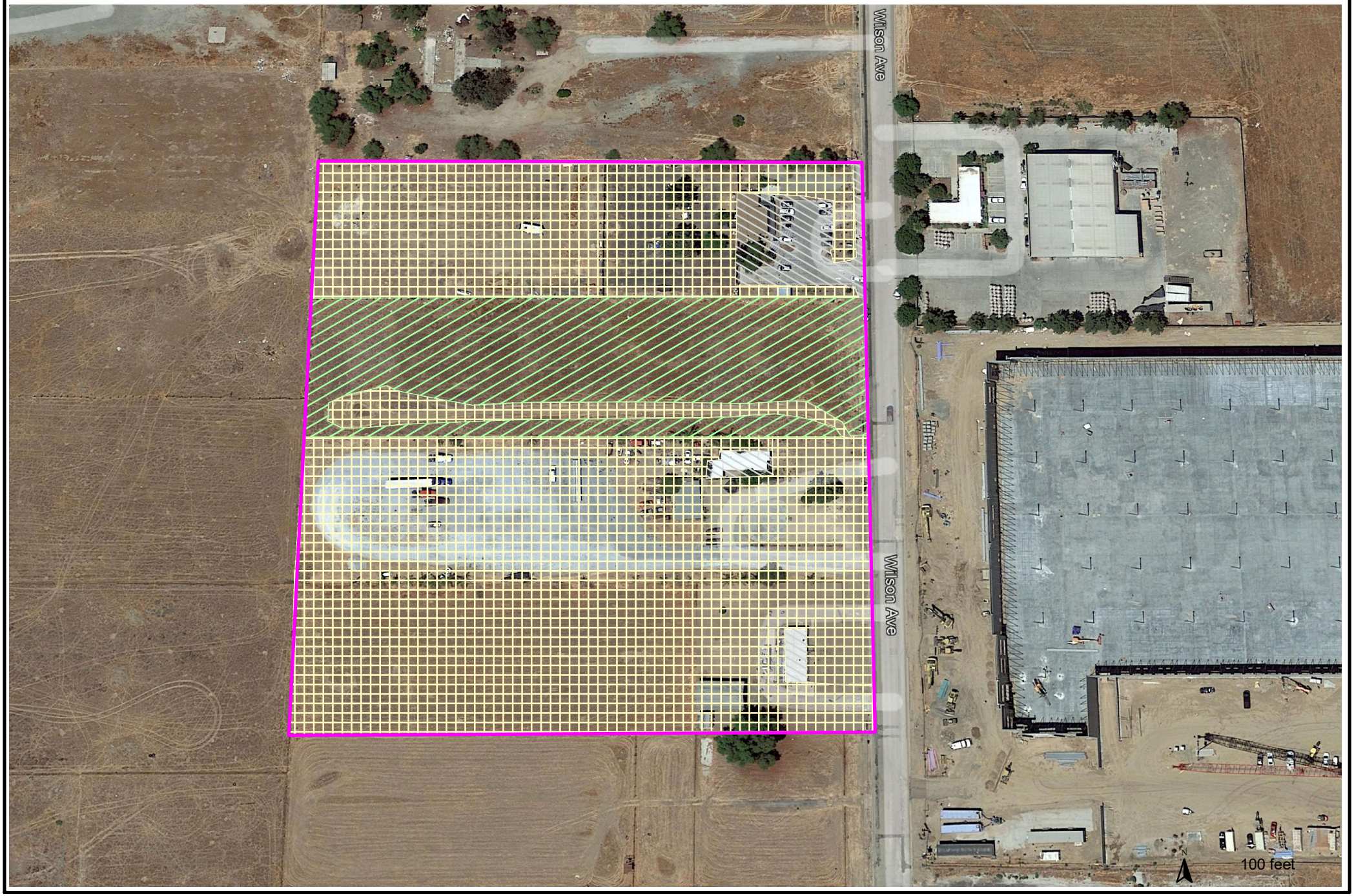


Property (4-lots)

FIGURE 1
USGS Topo
Project Location

Property

FIGURE 2
Property Aerial



Property

Non-Native Grassland

Agricultural/Disturbed

Developed

FIGURE 3
Habitat Map

Photograph 1 Southern Property Line, Looking East.
Maintained Rear Yard and Store With Parking (behind eucalyptus, pepper and pine trees)

Photograph 2 Southern Property Line, Looking West - Mainainted Dirt Back Yard

Photograph 3 Eastern Property Line Looking West - Residential Parcel With Maintained Backyard

Photograph 4 From the Eastern Property Line Looking South -
Burned NNG (disturbed) and Burned-Out Residential Parcel With Maintained Backyard