Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

May 10, 2023 JN 194283

NorthPoint Development
Attn: *Jack Lac*
3315 North Oak Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64116

SUBJECT: Results of a Biological Resources Assessment for the Proposed SPR 23-003 Project – City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California

Dear Mr. Lac:

Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) has prepared this report to document the results of a biological resources assessment for the proposed SPR 23-003 Project (project or project site) located in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California. Michael Baker conducted a thorough literature review and a field survey to confirm existing site conditions and assess the potential for special-status plant and wildlife species[1] that have been documented or that are likely to occur on or within the immediate vicinity of the project site. Specifically, this report provides a detailed assessment of the suitability of the on-site habitat to support special-status plant and wildlife species that were identified in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database RareFind 5 (CNDDB; CDFW 2023a), the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (CIRP; CNPS 2023), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation Project Planning Tool (IPaC; USFWS 2023a), and other databases as potentially occurring in the vicinity of the project site.

Project Location

The project site is generally located north of West Avenue G, east of 60th Street West, south of West Avenue F, and west of North 45th Street West in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California (refer to Figure 1, *Regional and Project Vicinity* Attachment A). The project site is depicted in Section 36 of Township 8 North, Range 13 West, on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) *Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle. Specifically, the project site totals approximately 31.9 acres and encompasses

[1] As used in this report, "special-status" refers to plant and wildlife species that are federally-/State-listed, proposed, or candidates; plant species that have been designated a California Rare Plant Rank species by the California Native Plant Society; wildlife species that are designated by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as Fully Protected, Species of Special Concern, or Watch List species; State/locally rare vegetation communities; and species that warrant protection under local or regional preservation policies.

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Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3105-001-042 (refer to Figure 2, *Project Site*). It is situated immediately south of the General William Fox Airfield (Fox Field), a county-owned public airport.

Proposed Project

The proposed project would include construction of a new distribution warehouse consisting of one 581,000 square-foot building footprint, which includes approximately 40,000 square feet of office space. Ancillary improvements would include truck and passenger vehicle parking, lighting, utility improvements, landscaping, and drainage/water quality features, among others.

Methodology

Literature Review

Michael Baker conducted thorough literature reviews and records searches to determine which special-status biological resources have the potential to occur on or within the general vicinity of the project site. Previous special-status plant and wildlife species occurrence records within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles was determined through a query of the CNDDB (CDFW 2023a) and CIRP (CNPS 2023), and for the project region through a review of the IPaC (USFWS 2023a).

The current regulatory/conservation status of special-status plant and wildlife species was verified through lists and resources provided by the CDFW, specifically the *Special Animals List* (CDFW 2023b), *Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List* (CDFW 2023c), *State and Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Animals of California* (CDFW 2023d), and *State and Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California* (CDFW 2023e). USFWS-designated Critical Habitat for species listed under federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) was reviewed online via the Environmental Conservation Online System: Threatened and Endangered Species Active Critical Habitat Report (USFWS 2023b). In addition, Michael Baker reviewed previously prepared reports, survey results, and literature, as available, detailing the biological resources previously observed on or within the vicinity of the project site to understand existing site conditions, confirm previous species observations, and note the extent of any disturbances, if present, that have occurred within the project site that would otherwise limit the distribution of special-status biological resources. Standard field guides and texts were reviewed for specific habitat requirements of special-status species, as well as the following resources:

- Calflora Database (Calflora 2023)
- Google Earth Pro Historical Aerial Imagery from 1985 to 2020 (Google Inc. 2023)
- *City of Lancaster General Plan 2030* (City of Lancaster 2009)
- Species Accounts provided by Birds of the World (Billerman et. al 2020)
- Cornell Lab of Ornithology's eBird Database (eBird 2023)

- *Custom Soil Resource Report for Antelope Valley Area, California* (U.S. Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2023)
- National Wetlands Inventory Mapper (USFWS 2023c)

Biological Field Survey/Habitat Assessment

Michael Baker biologists Anna Jullie and John Parent conducted a biological field survey/habitat assessment on March 8, 2023, to document existing conditions and assess the potential for special-status biological resources to occur within the boundaries of the project site. Michael Baker biologists were able to survey the entire project site and encountered no limitations or access restrictions. Refer to Table 1 below for a summary of the survey date, timing, surveyors, and weather conditions.

Table 1: Survey Date, Time, Surveyors, and Weather Conditions

Date	Time (start / finish)	Surveyors	Weather Conditions (start / finish)	
			Temperature (°F)	Wind Speed (mph)
March 8, 2023	1030 / 1130	Anna Jullie, John Parent	58 / 58	14 / 16

Any vegetation communities occurring within the project site are mapped on aerial photography and classified in accordance with the vegetation descriptions provided in *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer et al. 2009) and cross referenced with the *California Sensitive Natural Communities List* (CDFW 2022) and the *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California* (Holland 1986) for the purposes of evaluating the presence or absence of special-status vegetation communities identified in the CNDDB records search, which uses the Holland vegetation classification system. In addition, site characteristics such as soil condition, topography, hydrology, anthropogenic disturbances, indicator species, condition of on-site vegetation communities, and the presence of potentially regulated jurisdictional features (e.g., streams, flood control channels) were noted within the project site. Michael Baker used Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ArcView software to digitize the mapped vegetation communities and then transferred these data onto an aerial photograph to further document existing conditions and quantify the acreage of each vegetation community.

All plant and wildlife species observed/detected, as well as dominant plant species within each vegetation community, were recorded. Plant species observed during the field survey were identified by visual characteristics and morphology in the field, while unusual and less familiar plant species were photographed and identified later using taxonomic guides. Plant nomenclature used in this report follows the *Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, Second Edition* (Baldwin et al. 2012) and scientific names are provided immediately following common names of plant species (first reference only).

Wildlife species were identified by sight, calls, tracks, scat, or other types of evidence. Field guides used to assist with identification of wildlife species during the habitat assessment included *The Sibley Guide to Birds* (Sibley 2014), *A Field Guide to Western Reptiles and Amphibians* (Stebbins 2003), *Bats of the United*

States and Canada (Harvey et al. 2011), and *A Field Guide to Mammals of North America* (Reid 2006). Although common names of wildlife species are well standardized, scientific names are provided immediately following common names of wildlife species in this report (first reference only). To the extent possible, nomenclature of birds follows the most recent annual supplement of the American Ornithological Society's *Checklist of North American Birds* (Chesser et al. 2020), nomenclature of amphibians and reptiles follows *Scientific and Standard English Names of Amphibians and Reptiles of North America North of Mexico, with Comments Regarding Confidence in Our Understanding* (Crother 2017), and nomenclature for mammals follows the *Revised Checklist of North American Mammals North of Mexico* (Bradley et al. 2014).

Existing Site Conditions

The project site is relatively flat with an approximate elevation of 2,330 to 2,339 feet above mean sea level. According to the *Custom Soil Resource Report for Antelope Valley Area, California, Southwestern Part* (USDA 2023), the project site is underlain by the following soil units: Pond-Oban complex (Px) (refer to Figure 3, *USDA Soils*). This soil complex is moderately well drained with a soil profile of silt or clay loamy soils.

Based on a review of historic aerial imagery (Google, Inc. 2023) and results from the field survey, the project site has been comprised of an open disturbed plot since at least 1985. The project site is mostly bare of vegetation and surface soils are highly disturbed, with the entire site having been rough graded and including several water retention channels which contained standing water during the time of the survey.

Directly north of the site is Fox Field, an active airfield, with industrial buildings directly to the south, east, and west of the project site. However, there is also vast undisturbed desert scrub surrounding the project site in all directions. Refer to Attachment B for representative photographs of the project site taken during the field survey.

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

No natural vegetation community was observed and mapped within the entire 31.9-acre project site. The only land cover type present within the project site is classified as disturbed (refer to Figure 4, *Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses*). The disturbed on-site habitat is primarily composed of bare ground, with some areas of vegetative cover by non-native herbaceous species, such as brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), short-pod mustard (*Hirschfedlia incana*), red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), and other herbaceous species that were beginning to sprout during the field visit. An occasional native allscale (*Atriplex polycarpa*) shrub was observed.

Wildlife

Natural vegetation communities provide foraging habitat, nesting/denning sites, and shelter from adverse weather or predation. This section provides a general discussion of common wildlife species that were detected on-site by Michael Baker or that are expected to occur based on existing site conditions. The

discussion is to be used as a general reference and is limited by the season, time of day, and weather conditions during the field survey.

Fish

No fish or hydrogeomorphic features (e.g., perennial creeks, ponds, lakes, reservoirs) that would support populations of fish were observed in the project site during the field survey. Therefore, no fish are expected to occur.

Amphibians

No amphibians or hydrogeomorphic features (e.g., perennial creeks, ponds, lakes, reservoirs) that would provide suitable breeding habitat for amphibians were observed within the project site during the field survey. Therefore, no amphibians are expected to occur.

Reptiles

No reptile species were observed in the project site during the field survey. The project site is expected to provide habitat for a limited number of reptilian species that are acclimated to edge or urban environments. Common reptilian species that may be present within the project site include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) and western side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana elegans*).

Birds

One (1) bird species, common raven (*Corvus corax*), was detected during the field survey. Nesting birds are protected pursuant to the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 and the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC)[2]. To maintain compliance with the MBTA and CFGC, clearance surveys are typically required prior to any ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities to avoid direct or indirect impacts to active bird nests and/or nesting birds. Consequently, if an active bird nest is destroyed or if project activities result in indirect impacts (e.g., nest abandonment, loss of reproductive effort) to nesting birds, it is considered "take" and is potentially punishable by fines and/or imprisonment. Although the project site provides suitable nesting habitat for various year-round and seasonal bird species, no active nests or birds displaying overt nesting behavior were observed during the field survey.

Mammals

The project site provides marginal habitat for a limited number of mammalian species adapted to living in edge or urban environments. No mammal species were observed during the field survey. Common mammalian species that may occur within the project site include coyote (*Canis latrans*), black-tailed

[2] Section 3503 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by the California Fish and Game Code or any regulation made pursuant thereto; Section 3503.5 makes it unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey); and Section 3513 makes it unlawful to take or possess any migratory non-game bird except as provided by the rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. § 703 *et seq.*).

jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), and domestic dog (*Canis lupus familiaris*). Bats occur throughout most of California; however, no bats are expected to occur within the project site due to the absence of suitable foraging and/or roosting habitat (e.g., hollow tree trunks/limbs, tree foliage, caves, bridges, buildings).

Migratory Corridors and Linkages

Wildlife corridors and linkages are key features for wildlife movement between habitat patches. Wildlife corridors are generally defined as those areas that provide opportunities for individuals or local populations to conduct seasonal migrations, permanent dispersals, or daily commutes, while linkages generally refer to broader areas that provide movement opportunities for multiple keystone/focal species or allow for propagation of ecological processes (e.g., for movement of pollinators), often between areas of conserved land.

Although the project area is not developed, and undisturbed open areas are located directly adjacent to the site's southern, eastern, and western boundaries, wildlife movement into or out of the project site is likely reduced by the presence of surrounding roadways, the adjacent airfield (i.e., Avenue G, North 45th Street), and existing industrial developments to the west and south, which have fragmented the connection between the project site and surrounding naturally occurring vegetation communities. Elevated noise levels, vehicle roadway/traffic, airline noise/disturbance, lighting, and presence of humans are also expected to further decrease the suitability of the project site to serve as a significant wildlife movement corridor or linkage.

The project site is not located within any designated wildlife corridor or Significant Ecological Area (SEA) identified in the City of Lancaster General Plan 2030 or Los Angeles County General Plan (County of Los Angeles 2015). The Antelope Valley SEA is located approximately 4.6 miles northeast of the project site, extending from the Angeles National Forest to the playa lakes within Edwards Air Force Base and encompassing the two largest drainages along the northern slope of the San Gabriel Mountain range. The San Andreas SEA occurs approximately 10 miles to the south and is aligned along the San Andreas fault line, providing a valuable connection between the San Gabriel and Tehachapi Mountain ranges. These SEAs protect significant desert drainage features and areas of native desert habitat that serve as major linkages and movement corridors for wildlife species within the region. Migrating wildlife are more likely to utilize the Antelope Valley SEA as a wildlife corridor or linkage to other natural habitats than the project area. However, undisturbed desert scrub habitat surrounds the project site, Fox Field facility, and adjacent industrial facilities, providing opportunities for movement around the project site and general Fox Field area.

State and Federal Jurisdictional Resources

There are three agencies that regulate activities within inland streams, wetlands, and riparian areas in California. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) Regulatory Branch regulates discharge of dredged or fill material into "waters of the U.S." pursuant to Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) and Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act. Of the State agencies, the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulates discharges to surface waters pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA and Section 13263

of the California Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, and the CDFW regulates alterations to streambed and associated vegetation communities under Section 1600 *et seq.* of the CFGC.

Standing water was present during the field survey within stormwater detention channels occurring on-site and had ponded in low areas within the project site during significant rain events occurring in January and February 2023. However, no jurisdictional drainage or potential wetland features were observed within the boundaries of the project site. Therefore, development of the proposed project is not expected to result in impacts to State or federal jurisdictional areas or require regulatory approvals/permits from the USACE, RWQCB, or CDFW.

Special-Status Biological Resources

The CNDDB (CDFW 2023a), CIRP (CNPS 2023), and IPaC (USFWS 2023a) were queried for reported locations of special-status plant and wildlife species as well as special-status natural vegetation communities in the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. The biological field survey/habitat assessment was conducted to assess and evaluate the conditions of the habitat(s) within the boundaries of the project site to determine if the existing vegetation communities, at the time of the field survey, have the potential to provide suitable habitat(s) for special-status plant and wildlife species. Additionally, the potentials for special-status species to occur within the project site were determined based on the reported occurrence locations in the CNDDB, CIRP, and Calflora databases and the following criteria:

- **Present**: the species was observed or detected within the project site during the field survey.
- **High**: Recent (within 20 years) occurrence records indicate that the species has been known to occur on or within 1 mile of the project site and the site is within the normal expected range of this species. Intact, suitable habitat preferred by this species occurs within the project site and/or there is viable landscape connectivity to a local known extant population(s) or sighting(s).
- **Moderate**: Recent (within 20 years) occurrence records indicate that the species has been known to occur within 1 mile of the project site and the project site is within the normal expected range of this species. There is suitable habitat within the project site, but the site is ecologically isolated from any local known extant populations or sightings.
- **Low**: Recent (within 20 years) occurrence records indicate that the species has been known to occur within 5 miles of the project site, but the site is outside of the normal expected range of the species and/or there is poor quality or marginal habitat within the project site.
- **Not Expected**: There are no occurrence records of the species occurring within 5 miles of the project site, there is no suitable habitat within the project site, and/or the project site is outside of the normal expected range for the species.

Sixteen (16) special-status plant species and twenty-three (23) special-status wildlife species were identified during the review of the CNDDB and CIRP as occurring within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles and in the IPaC for the project region. Two (2)

special-status vegetation communities were identified. Special-status plant and wildlife species were evaluated for their potential to occur within the project site based on specific habitat requirements, availability/quality of suitable habitat, and known distributions of species/populations. Special-status biological resources identified during the literature review are presented in *Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources*, provided in Attachment C.

Special-Status Plants

A total of sixteen (16) special-status plant species have been recorded in the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles by the CNDDB and CIRP (refer to Attachment C). None of these records coincide with the project site and no special status plant species were identified in the project site during the field survey. As a result, Michael Baker determined that no special-status plant species identified by the CNDDB, CIRP, and IPaC are expected to occur within the project site.

Special-Status Wildlife

A total of twenty-three (23) special-status wildlife species have been recorded in the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle by the CNDDB and project region by the IPaC (refer to Attachment C). Based on the results of the field survey and a review of specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known distributions, and elevation ranges, Michael Baker determined that the project site is not expected to support burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*; a State Species of Special Concern). All remaining special-status wildlife species identified by the CNDDB and IPaC are not expected to occur within the project site. Due to their regional significance in the Antelope Valley, desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii,* federally and State-listed threatened), Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*; State-listed threatened), Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni,* State-listed threatened), and burrowing owl (CDFW Species of Special Concern) were evaluated in relation to the project site. Based on results of the field survey, the specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known current distributions, and elevation ranges, desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and Swainson's hawk are not expected to occur on-site and are not discussed further; however, further discussion of burrowing owl is provided below.

<u>Burrowing Owl</u>

The burrowing owl is a grassland specialist distributed throughout western North America where it occupies open areas with short vegetation and bare ground within shrub, desert, and grassland environments. Burrowing owls use a wide variety of arid and semi-arid environments with well-drained, level to gently sloping areas characterized by sparse vegetation and bare ground (Haug and Didiuk 1993; Dechant *et al.* 1999). Burrowing owls are dependent upon the presence of burrowing mammals (e.g., California ground squirrels, coyotes, American badger [*Taxidea taxus*]) whose burrows are used for roosting and nesting. The presence or absence of mammal burrows is often a major factor that limits the presence or absence of burrowing owls. Where mammal burrows are scarce, burrowing owls have been found occupying man-made cavities, such as buried and non-functioning drainpipes, stand-pipes, and dry culverts. Burrowing owls may also burrow beneath rocks and debris or large, heavy objects such as abandoned cars, concrete

blocks, or concrete pads. They also require open vegetation allowing open line-of-sight of the surrounding habitat to forage as well as watch for predators.

According to the CNDDB, there are thirty-six (36) occurrence records for burrowing owl within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangle. The closest extant occurrence (Occurrence Number 1579) was recorded in 2009, approximately 1.72 miles feet northwest of the project site; four (4) owls were observed near a burrow (CDFW 2023a).

The project site is located near existing industrial developments and an airfield, with Avenue G to the south of the site. In addition, there are several utility poles along Avenue G, North 45th Street West, and other nearby roadways that could provide perching opportunities for predatory raptors. The level of disturbed bare ground does not provide foraging habitat for burrowing owl and no burrows potentially suitable for the species were observed. As a result, the project site is unlikely to support burrowing owl. However, due to the known distribution of this species in the project vicinity, a focused burrowing owl habitat assessment following California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG; now CDFW) (2012) guidelines was completed on April 17, 2023. No individuals, suitable burrows, or any sign of burrowing owl were detected during this assessment, and with a lack of suitable foraging habitat on-site, the species is currently not expected to occur within the project site. A focused burrowing owl habitat assessment survey report detailing the methods and results of this effort is included in Attachment D.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Two (2) sensitive natural communities (wildflower field, valley needlegrass grassland) were reported in the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles by the CNDDB. However, no sensitive natural communities were observed within the survey area during the field survey.

Critical Habitat

Under the definition included in the FESA, designated Critical Habitat refers to specific areas within the geographical range of a species that were occupied at the time it was listed that contain the physical or biological features that are essential to the survival and eventual recovery of that species. Areas of Critical Habitat may require special management considerations or protection, regardless of whether the species is still extant in the area. Areas that were not known to be occupied at the time a species was listed can also be designated Critical Habitat if they contain one or more of the physical or biological features that are essential to that species' conservation and if the other areas that are occupied are inadequate to ensure the species' recovery. If a project may result in take or adverse modification to a species' designated Critical Habitat and the project has a federal nexus, the project proponent may be required to provide suitable mitigation. Projects with a federal nexus may include projects that occur on federal lands, require federal permits (e.g., CWA Section 404 permit), or receive any federal oversight or funding. If there is a federal nexus, then the federal agency that is responsible for providing funds or permits would be required to consult with the USFWS pursuant to the FESA.

The project site is not located within USFWS-designated Critical Habitat for any federally listed species (refer to Figure 5, *Critical Habitat*).

Regional and Local Policies and Ordinances

County of Los Angeles Significant Ecological Areas

Significant Ecological Areas (SEA) are areas within Los Angeles County that include irreplaceable biological resources and have been formally identified in the Los Angeles County General Plan (County of Los Angeles 2015). The SEA Program is intended to conserve genetic and physical diversity within Los Angeles County by designating biological resource areas that are capable of sustaining themselves into the future. On December 17, 2019, a SEA ordinance was adopted by the County Board of Supervisors which establishes permitting requirements, development standards, and review processes for new development within SEAs, unless it is exempt. As previously described, the project site does not coincide with any SEA (refer to Figure 6, *Significant Ecological Areas*).

City of Lancaster Municipal Code

Lancaster Municipal Code (Municipal Code) Chapter 15.66, *Biological Impact Fee*, establishes a biological impact fee to mitigate long-term incremental impacts of new development on biological resources on a regional basis. The fee is based upon expected regional effects from new development and fees necessary to contribute to the City's "fair share" to mitigate impacts on a regional basis. The fee applies to all new development on vacant land which has not been previously developed. This includes land subdivisions, new development approvals, and requests for extension. Additionally, Municipal Code Chapter 22.102, *Hillside Management and Significant Ecological Areas*, establishes development guidelines and required permits for development in or near SEAs.

The proposed project would be subject to the biological impact fee established in Municipal Code Chapter 15.66; however, as the nearest SEA is over 4 miles from the site, Municipal Code Chapter 22.102 would not apply to the project.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Approximately 31.9 acres of disturbed land cover was observed and mapped within the boundaries of the project site during the field survey. No special-status plant species were observed within the project site during the field survey. Based on the results of the field survey and a review of specific habitat preferences, distributions, and elevation ranges, Michael Baker determined that alkali mariposa-lily has a low potential to occur on site, but no other of the special-status plant species identified by the CNDDB, CIRP, and IPaC are expected to occur within the project site.

No special-status wildlife species were observed within the project site during the field survey or the focused burrowing owl habitat assessment. Based on the results of these surveys and a review of specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known distributions, and elevation ranges, Michael Baker

determined that the project site is not expected to support any special-status wildlife species identified by the CNDDB and IPaC. However, burrowing owl are known from the project vicinity and while currently considered absent from the project site, could potentially occur prior to project implementation.

In order to avoid and/or minimize potential impacts to biological resources, it is recommended that the following Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMM) be implemented:

AMM BIO-1: If project-related activities are to be initiated during the nesting season (January 1 to August 31), a pre-construction nesting bird clearance survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than three (3) days prior to the start of any vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities. The qualified biologist shall survey all suitable nesting habitat within the project impact area, and areas within a biologically defensible buffer zone surrounding the project impact area. If no active bird nests are detected during the clearance survey, project activities may begin, and no additional avoidance and minimization measures shall be required. If an active bird nest is found, the species shall be identified, and a "no-disturbance" buffer shall be established around the active nest. The size of the "no-disturbance" buffer shall be increased or decreased based on the judgement of the qualified biologist and level of activity and sensitivity of the species. The qualified biologist shall periodically monitor any active bird nests to determine if project-related activities occurring outside the "no-disturbance" buffer disturb the birds and if the buffer shall be increased. Once the young have fledged and left the nest, or the nest otherwise becomes inactive under natural conditions, project activities within the "no-disturbance" buffer may occur following an additional survey by the qualified biologist to search for any new bird nests in the restricted area.

AMM BIO-2: A pre-construction burrowing owl clearance survey shall be conducted no more than 30 days prior to any vegetation removal or ground disturbing activities to avoid impacts to burrowing owls and/or occupied burrows. The pre-construction clearance survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist and in accordance with the methods outlined in the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (California Department of Fish and Game 2012). Documentation of surveys and findings shall be submitted to the City of Lancaster for review and file. If no burrowing owls or occupied burrows are detected, project activities may begin, and no additional avoidance and minimization measures shall be required.

If an occupied burrow is found outside, but within 500 feet, of the development footprint, the qualified biologist shall establish a "no-disturbance" buffer around the burrow location(s). The size of the "no-disturbance" buffer shall be determined in consultation with CDFW and be based on the species status (i.e., breeding, non-breeding) and proposed level of disturbance. If an occupied burrow is found within the development footprint and cannot be avoided, a burrowing owl exclusion and mitigation plan shall be prepared and submitted to CDFW for approval prior to initiating project activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (616) 502-1186 or anna.jullie@mbakerintl.com or Tom Millington at (949) 246-7004 or tommillington@mbakerintl.com should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Anna Jullie
Biologist

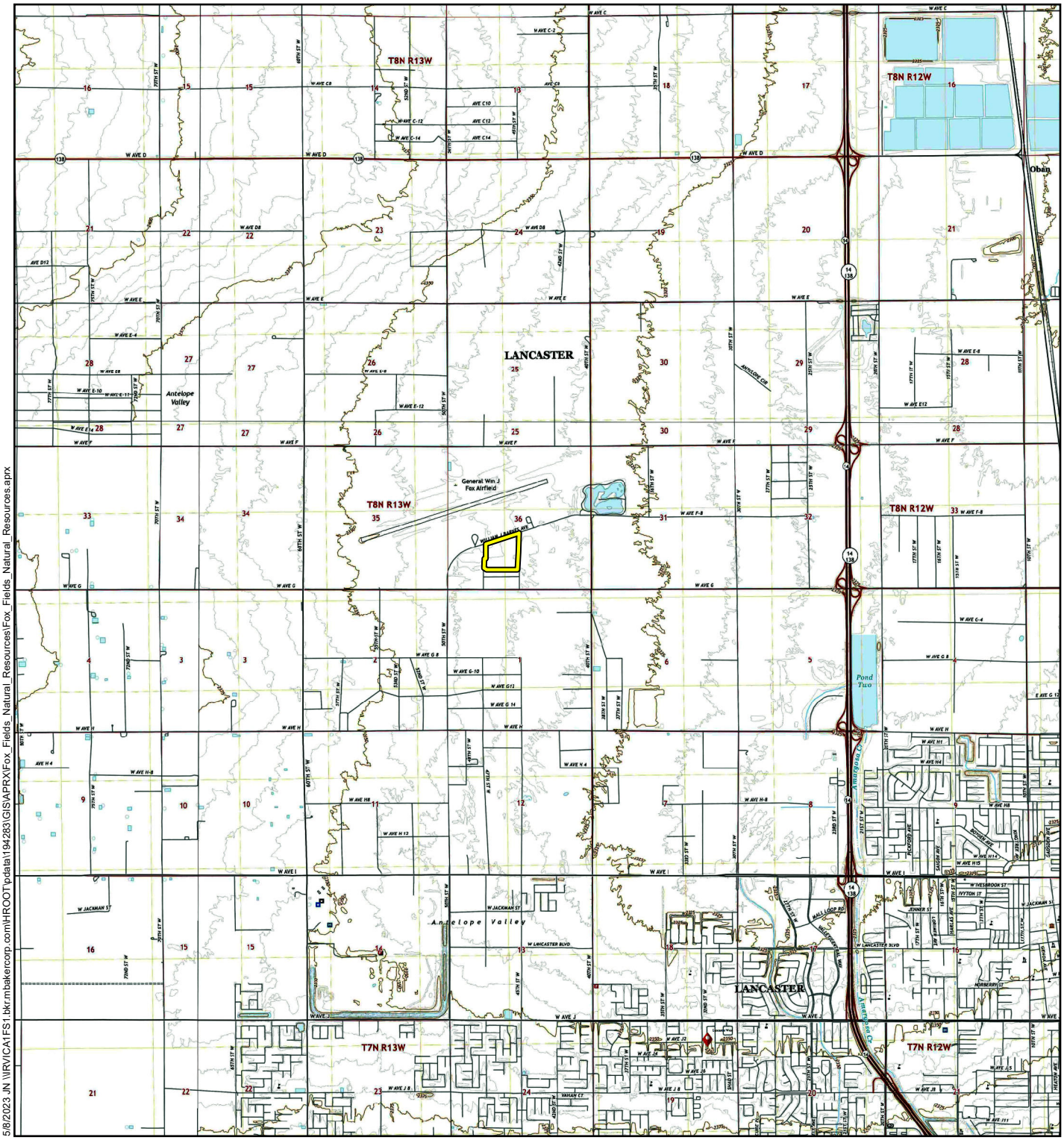
Tom Millington
Senior Biologist

Attachments:

A. *Project Figures*
B. *Site Photographs*
C. *Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources*
D. *Burrowing Owl Survey Report*
E. *References*

Attachment A

Project Figures



5/8/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

Project Site (31.92 acres)

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0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: USGS 7.5-Minute topographic quadrangle maps: *Del Sur and Little Buttes, California (2021), Lancaster and Rosamond, California (2022)*

SPR 23-003

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Regional and Project Vicinity

Figure 1

5/8/2023 JN \\RV\CA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

Project Site (31.92 acres)

Reference Point

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0 100 200 Feet

Source: Nearmap (09/2021)

SPR 23-003
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Project Site

Figure 2

5/8/2023 JN \\RV\CA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

- Project Site (31.92 acres)
- Px — Pond-Oban complex
- Reference Point

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0 100 200 Feet

Source: Nearmap (09/2021), USDA (09/2022)

SPR 23-003
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

USDA Soils

Figure 3

5/8/2023 JN \\RV\CA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

Project Site (31.92 acres)

Disturbed (31.92 acres)

Reference Point

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0 100 200 Feet

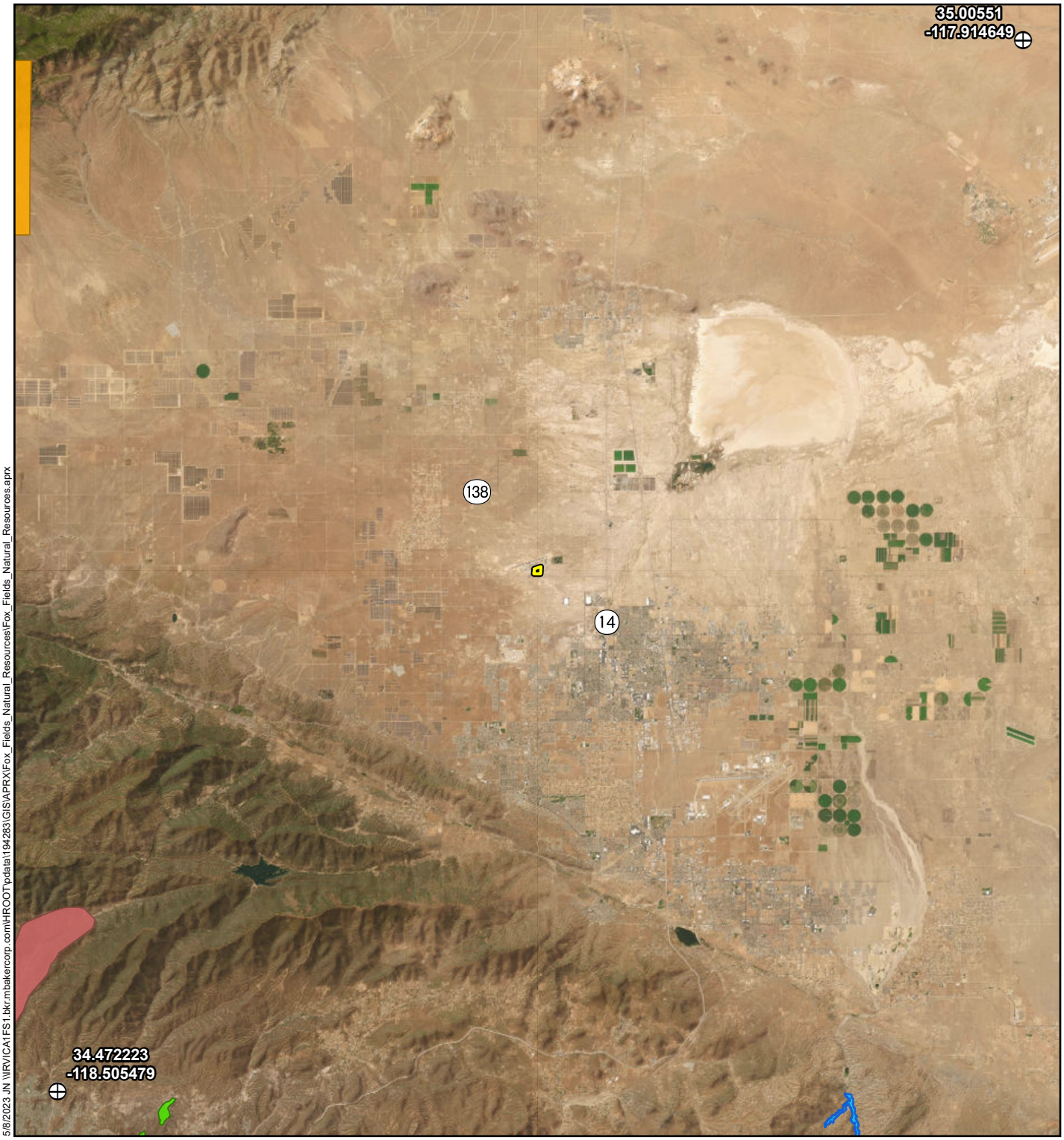
Source: Nearmap (09/2021)

SPR 23-003

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses

Figure 4



5/8/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

- Project Site (31.92 acres)
- Reference Point
- Arroyo Southwestern Toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*)
- California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)
- California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*)
- Spreading Navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

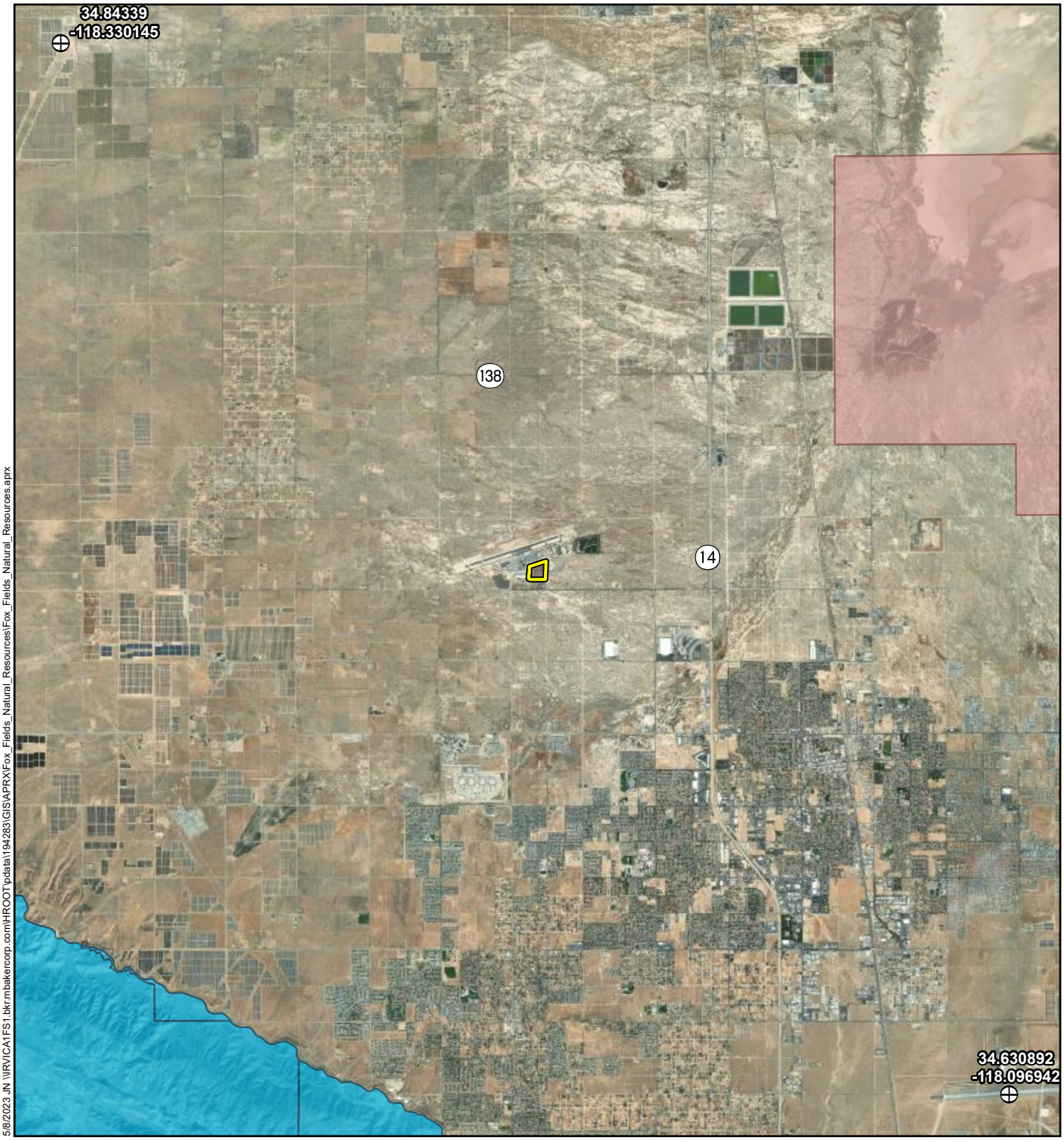
0 2.5 5 Miles

Vivid/Esri (2021), USFWS (02/2023)

SPR 23-003
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Critical Habitat

Figure 5



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Legend

- Project Site (31.92 acres)
- Reference Point
- Antelope Valley SEA
- San Andreas SEA

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 1 2 Miles

Vivid/Esri (2021), USFWS (02/2023)

SPR 23-003

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas

Figure 6

Attachment B

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: View of the northeast corner of the project site, looking west.

Photograph 2: View of the center of the project site, looking south.

Photograph 3: View of the southeast corner of the project site, looking west.

Photograph 4: View of the northeast corner of the project site, looking south.

Photograph 5: View of the southwest corner of the project site, looking northeast.

Photograph 6: View of the northwest corner of the project site, looking southeast.

Attachment C

Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
- SPECIAL STATUS WILDLIFE SPECIES				
Agelaius tricolor tricolored blackbird	SSC ST G1G2 S1S2	Year-round resident of freshwater marshes, requires open water, protected nesting substrate, and foraging area with insect prey within a few kilometers of the colony. Nest with cattails, bulrushes, and willows.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitat preferred by this species is not present within the project site.
Anniella pulchra Northern California legless lizard	SSC G3 S2S3	Inhabits moist warm soil with plant cover, needs moisture. Occurs in beach dunes, chapparal, pine-oak woodlands, desert scrub, sandy washes, stream terraces with sycamores (*Platanus* spp.), cottonwoods (*Populus* spp.), oaks (*Quercus* spp.).	No	**Not Expected**: Although legless lizards are known to occur approximately two miles southwest of the project site, suitable habitat preferred by this species is not present within the project site.
Aquila chrysaetos golden eagle	FP G5 S3	Yearlong resident of California. Occupies nearly all terrestrial habitats of the western states except densely forested areas. Favors secluded cliffs with overhanging ledges and large trees for nesting and cover. Hilly or mountainous country where takeoff and soaring are supported by updrafts is generally preferred to flat habitats. Deeply cut canyons rising to open mountain slopes and crags are ideal habitat.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitat preferred by this species is not present within the project site.
Athene cunicularia burrowing owl	SSC G4 S3	Yearlong resident of California. Inhabit open, treeless areas with low, sparse vegetation, typically with sloping terrain. Habitats include grasslands, deserts, and steppe environments, but can also be found on golf courses. The overriding characteristics of suitable habitat appear to be burrows for roosting and nesting and relatively short vegetation with only sparse shrubs and taller vegetation.	No	**Not Expected**: A focused burrowing owl habitat assessment and burrow survey was conducted on April 17, 2023. No individuals, suitable burrows, or any indications of the presence of the species was detected and it is currently not expected to occur on-site.
Bombus crotchii Crotch bumble bee	CSE G2 S2	Found from coastal California east to the Sierra-Cascade crest and south into Mexico. Primarily occurs in California, including the Mediterranean region, Pacific coast, western desert, great valley, and adjacent foothills through most of southwestern California. Has also been recorded in Baja California, Baja California Sur, and in southwest Nevada. Inhabits open grassland and scrub habitats. Primarily nests underground. Food plant genera include *Antirrhinum*, *Phacelia*, *Clarkia*, *Dendromecon*, *Eschscholzia*, and *Eriogonum.*	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species is not present within the project site.
Branchienecta lynchi vernal pool fairy shrimp	FT G3 S3	Endemic to California and only found in vernal pools. Vernal pool habitats form in depressions above an impervious substrate layer, or claypan/duripan. This species does not occur in riverine, marine, or other permanent bodies of water. When the temporary pools dry, offspring persist in suspended development as desiccation-resistant embryos (commonly called cysts) in the pool substrate until the return of winter rains and appropriate temperatures allow some of the cysts to hatch.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable habitats preferred by this species is not present within the project site.

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Buteo regalis ferruginous hawk	WL G4 S3S4	Common winter resident of sandy herbaceous areas, usually in association with rocks or course gravel in southwestern California. Occurs mainly in arid coastal and desert border areas. Prefers open grasslands, low foothills. This species does not breed in California.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable foraging habitat is not present within the project site and this species does not breed in California.
Buteo swainsoni Swainson's hawk	FT G5 S3	Summer migrant in California. Forage in open habitats, alfalfa or suitable grain fields, pastures, native prairie, or grassland containing scattered, large trees. Require trees for nesting. Breeds in stands with few trees in juniper-sage flats, riparian areas, and oak savannah in the Central Valley.	No	**Not Expected:** The project site does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat preferred by this species. .
Charadrius montanus mountain plover	SSC G3 S2S3	Uncommon winter resident in southern California, primarily from September to mid-March, with peak numbers from December through February. At all seasons, mountain plovers are strongly associated with short-grass prairie habitats, or their equivalents, that are flat and nearly devoid of vegetation. Overall, it avoids high and dense cover. Within southern California, the largest numbers occur in grasslands and agricultural areas in the interior. Does not nest in California.	No	**Not Expected:** The project site does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat preferred by this species. However, this species could cross the project site as a foraging or migrating transient
Circus hudsonius northern harrier	SSC G5 S3	Yearlong resident of California. Frequents meadows, grasslands, open rangelands, desert sinks, fresh and saltwater emergent wetlands; seldom found in wooded area. In general, it prefers saltwater marshes, wet meadows, sloughs, and bogs for nesting and foraging. Nests on the ground in shrubby vegetation or patches of dense vegetation, usually at the marsh edge.	No	**Not Expected:** The project site does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat preferred by this species.
Corynorhinus townsendii Townsend's big-eared bat	SSC G4 S2	Now considered uncommon in California. Details of its distribution are not well known. This species is found in all but subalpine and alpine habitats and may be found at any season throughout its range. Most abundant in mesic habitats. Requires caves, mines, tunnels, buildings, or other human-made structures for roosting.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable roosting locations such as caves, mines, tunnels, or buildings are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Danaus plexippus Monarch butterfly	FC G4T1T2Q S2	Aggregate in clusters in forested groves across the Pacific coast from Mendocino County to Baja California. Majority of overwintering sites are within 1.5 miles of the Pacific Ocean. Seek out dappled sunlight, high humidity, access to fresh water, and absence of freezing temperatures. Blue gum eucalyptus, Monterey pine, and Monterey cypress are commonly used for roosting. Arrive to overwinter in September and persist through January. After breeding, surviving monarchs disperse in February and March.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitat for this species does not occur within the project site and there are no known wintering roosts within or near the project
Falco columbarius merlin	WL G5 S3S4	Inhabits open and semi open areas across North America, does not breed in in California. During winter migration, is found in open forests, grasslands, and coastal areas with flocks of small songbirds and shorebirds. This species does not breed in California.	No	**Not Expected**: The project site does not contain suitable foraging habitat and this species does not breed in California.

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Gopherus agrassizii desert tortoise	FT G3 S2S3	Occurs in the Mojave Desert north and west of the Colorado River in southeastern California. Spends majority of its life underground, lives in sandy flats, rocky foothills, alluvial fans, washes, canyons, where suitable soils for den construction.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Gymnogyps californianus California condor	FE SE G1 S1	Current distribution of California condor is considered to be all of the Los Padres National Forest and western half of the Angeles National Forest (USDA Forest Service 2000), with some occasionally found in the Sequoia National Forest. Nest sites are typically located in chaparral, conifer forest, or oak woodland habitats. Nest sites are in cliff caves in the mountains. Some have nested in large cavities within sequoias *(Sequoiadendron giganteum*), up to 6,000 feet amsl.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Lanius ludovicianus loggerhead shrike	SSC G4 S4	Yearlong resident of California. Prefers open habitats with bare ground, scattered shrubs, and areas with low or sparse herbaceous cover including open-canopied valley foothill hardwood, riparian, pinyon-juniper desert riparian, creosote bush scrub, and Joshua tree woodland. Requires suitable perches including trees, posts, fences, utility lines, or other perches. Nests in branches up to 14 feet above the ground frequently in a shrub with thorns or with tangled branching habitats.	No	**Not Expected:** The project site does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat preferred by this species.. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Phrynosoma blainvilli coast horned lizard	SSC G3 S4	Occurs in a wide variety of vegetation types including coastal sage scrub, annual grassland, chaparral, oak woodland, riparian woodland and coniferous forest. Its elevational range extends up to 4,000 feet in the Sierra Nevada foothills and up to 6,000 feet in the mountains of Southern California. In inland areas, this species is restricted to areas with pockets of open microhabitat, created by disturbance (e.g., fire, floods, unimproved roads, grazing lands, and fire breaks). The key elements of such habitats are loose, fine soils with a high sand fraction; an abundance of native ants or other insects; and open areas with limited overstory for basking and low, but relatively dense shrubs for refuge.	No	**Not Expected**: Project site is heavily disturbed habitat that is subject to grading and routine weed abatement, resulting in disturbed, compacted surface soils, likely preventing this species from occurring. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Plegadis chihi white-faced ibis	WL G5 S3S4	Locally rare resident/migrant in southern California. Prefers to feed in fresh emergent wetland, shallow lacustrine waters, muddy ground of wet meadows, and irrigated or flooded pastures and croplands. Nests in dense, fresh emergent wetland.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site.

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Taxidea taxus American badger	SSC G5 S3	Occupies a wide variety of habitats including dry, open grassland, sagebrush, and woodland habitats. Require dry, friable, often sandy soil to dig burrows for cover, food storage, and giving birth. Occasionally found in riparian zones and open chaparral with less than 50% plant cover.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site and burrows potentially suitable for this species were not observed during the field survey. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Toxostoma lecontei Le Conte's thrasher	SSC G4 S3	Common yearlong resident in southern California. Typically occurs primarily in open desert wash, desert scrub, alkali desert scrub, and desert succulent shrub habitats; also occurs in Joshua tree habitat with scattered shrubs. Habitats with a high proportion of one or more species of saltbush (*Atriplex* spp.) and/or cylindrical cholla cactus (*Cylindropuntia* spp.) is preferred. The ground is generally bare or with sparse patches of grasses and annuals forming low ground cover. Prefers thick, dense, and thorny shrubs or cholla cactus for nesting.	No	**Not Expected:** The project site does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat preferred by this species. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Vireo bellii pusillus least Bell's vireo	FE SE G3G4 S4	Summer resident in southern California. Breeding habitat generally consists of dense, low, shrubby vegetation in riparian areas, and mesquite brushlands, often near water in arid regions. Early successional cottonwood willow riparian groves are preferred for nesting. The most critical structural component of nesting habitat in California is a dense shrub layer that is 2 to 10 feet above ground. The presence of water, including ponded surface water or moist soil conditions, may also be a key component for nesting habitat.	No	**Not Expected**: The project site does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat preferred by this species.
Xerospermophilus mohavensis Mohave ground squirrel	ST G3 S3	Inhabits open desert scrub, alkali scrub and Joshua tree woodland. Restricted to Mojave Desert, feeds in annual grasslands. Prefers sandy to gravelly soils but avoids rocky areas. Nests in burrows and uses them at base of shrubs for cover.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no known occurrences within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES				
Astragalus hornii* var. *hornii Horn's milk-vetch	1B.1 GUT1 S1	Annual Herb. Lives in meadow, seeps, and playas. Found at elevations 173 feet to 2,366 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Blooms May-October.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species such as meadows, seeps, and playas, are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Astragalus preussii* var. *laxiflorus Lancaster milk-vetch	1B.1 G4T2 S1	Perennial herb. Lives in chenopod scrub. Found at elevations ranging from 2,307 feet to 2,508 feet amsl. Blooms March-May.	No	**Not Expected**: Chenopod scrub preferred by this species is not present within the project site.

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Calochortus striatus Alkali mariposa-lily	1B.2 G3 S2S3	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Grows in chaparral, chenopod scrub, Mojavean desert scrub, meadows, and seeps. Found at elevations ranging from 297 feet to 5,460 feet amsl. Blooms April-June.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. However, an occurrence of this species was recorded from approximately 0.23 mile southwest of the project site in 2005. This occurrence is expected to be extirpated due to development (CDFW 2023a).
Calystegia peirsonii Peirson's morning-glory	4.2 G4 S4	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Occurs in chaparral, chenopod scrub, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, valley and foothill grassland. Found at elevations ranging from 67 feet to 6,910 feet amsl. Blooms April-June.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Canbya candida White pygmy-poppy	4.2 G3G4 S3S4	Annual Herb. Grows in Joshua tree woodland, Mojavean desert scrub, pinyon and juniper scrub. Found at elevations ranging from 1,561 feet to 5,320 feet amsl. Blooms March-June.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable Joshua tree woodland and desert scrub habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Castilleja plagiotoma Mojave paintbrush	4.3 G4 S4	Perennial herb (hemiparasitic). Occurs in great basin scrub, Joshua tree woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, pinyon and juniper woodland. Found at elevations ranging from 871 feet to 8,541 feet amsl. Blooms April-June.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Chorizanthe parryi* var. *parryi Parry's spineflower	1B.1 G3T2 S2	Annual Herb. Occurs on sandy and/or rocky soils in chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and sandy openings within alluvial washes and margins. Found at elevations ranging from 7 feet to 5,568 feet amsl. Blooms April-June.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats including chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and sandy openings within alluvial washes preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Chorizanthe spinosa Mojave spineflower	4.2 G4 S4	Annual herb. Occurs in chenopod scrub, Joshua tree woodlands, Mojavean desert scrub, playas. Found at elevations ranging from 1,393 feet to 3,537 feet amsl. Blooms March-July.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Cryptantha clokeyi Clokey's cryptantha	1B.2 G3 S3	Annual herb. Lives in Mojavean desert scrub. Found at elevations ranging from 2,438 feet to 5,739 feet amsl. Blooms in April.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable Mojavean desert scrub habitat preferred by this species is not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Eriastrum rosamondense Rosamond eriastrum	1B.1 G1? S1?	Annual Herb. Occurs in chenopod scrub, vernal pools. Found at elevations ranging from 2,300 feet to 2,369 feet amsl. Blooms April-May.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable chenopod scrub and vernal pool habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site.
Gilia interior inland gilia	4.3 G4 S4	Annual herb. Occurs in cismontane woodland, Joshua tree "woodland", Lower montane coniferous forest. Found at elevations ranging from 1,569 feet to 8,762 feet amsl. Blooms March-May.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable Joshua tree woodland and cismontane woodland habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Gilia latiflora* ssp. *cuyamensis Cuyama gilia	4.3 G5?T4 S4	Annual herb. Grows in pinyon and juniper woodland. Found at elevations 36 feet to 7,003 feet amsl. Blooms April-June.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable pinyon and juniper woodland habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Goodmania luteola Golden goodmania	4.2 G3 S3	Annual Herb. Occurs in meadows and seeps, Mojavean desert scrub, playas, valley and foothill grassland. Found at elevations ranging from 165 feet to 7,148 feet amsl. Blooms April-August.	No	**Not Expected**: Suitable habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
Loeflingia squarrosa* var. *artemisiarum sagebrush loeflingia	1B.2 G5T3 S2	Annual Herb. Occurs in desert dunes, Great Basin scrub, and Sonoran Desert scrub. Occurs at elevations 2,295 feet to 5,300 feet amsl. Blooms April-May.	No	**Not Expected:** Desert dune, Great Basin scrub, and Sonoran Desert scrub habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site.
Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada short-joint beavertail	1B.2 G5T3 S3	Perennial stem. Occurs in chaparral, Joshua tree "woodland", Mojavean desert scrub, Pinyon and juniper woodland. Occurs at elevations 1,563 feet to 6,221 feet amsl. Blooms April to June.	No	**Not Expected:** Suitable chaparral, Joshua tree woodland and Mojavean desert scrub, and pinyon and juniper woodland habitats preferred by this species are not present within the project site. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Yucca brevifolia western Joshua tree	CSE	Perennial evergreen, found in flats, gentle slopes, mesas, typically on igneous substrate that is silty, loamy, or sandy. Occurs at elevations ranging from 748 feet to 7,544 feet amsl. Blooms March to June.	No	**Not Expected**: This species was not observed within the project site during the field survey.
SPECIAL-STATUS VEGETATION COMMUNITIES				
CNDDB/Holland (1986) Wildflower Field **MCV (1995)** California annual grassland series **NVCS (2009)** Not treated	G2 S2.2	Occurs at elevations ranging from 0 to 1,000 feet amsl on all topographic locations. Soils are well drained, sandy to loamy, derived from many substrates, including serpentine, and often have high levels of bioturbation. These species: *Eschsolzia californica* (California poppy), *Lupinus nanus (*sky lupine), and/or another *Eschsolzia* species is characteristically abundant in the herbaceous layer with *Amsinckia menziesii (*Mensies' fiddleneck), *Avena barbata* (slender wild oat), *Bromus spp.*, *Chaenactis glabruiscula* (yellow pincushion), *Clarkia* spp.,, *Eriogonum* spp., *Erodium cicutarium* (redstem fillaree), *Hirschfeldis incana* (shortpod mustard), *Hypochaeris radicata* (flatweed), *Lotus purshianus* (American bird's-foot trefoil), *Lupinus biocolor* (miniature lupine), *Rumex salicifolius* (willow dock), *Salvia carduacea* (thistle sage) and *Vulpia myuros* (annual fescue). Emergent trees and shrubs may be present at low cover, including trees *Pinus sabiniana* (California foothill pine) and shrubs: *Eriogonum fasciculatum* (California buckwheat). Herbs are less than 0.5 feet; cover is intermittent to continuous.	No	**Absent:** This vegetation community does not occur within or adjacent to the project site**.**

Table C-1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources

Scientific Name Common Name	Special-Status Rank*	Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities	Observed On-site	Potential to Occur
CNDDB/Holland (1986) Valley Needlegrass Grassland **MCV (1995)** Foothill Needlegrass Series, Nodding Needlegrass Series, Purple Needlegrass Series **NVCS (2009)** *Nassella cernua* Herbaceous Alliance, *Nassella lepida* Herbaceous Alliance, *Nassella pulchra* Herbaceous Alliance	G3 S3.1	Occurs at elevations ranging from 0 to 5,577 feet amsl on all topographic locations. Soils may be deep with high clay content, loamy, sandy, or silty derived from mudstone, sandstone, or serpentine substrates. California melicgrass (*Melica californica*), Torrey melic (*Melica torreyana*), nodding needle grass (*Stipa cernua*), foothill needle grass (*Stipa lepida*) and/or purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*) is dominant or characteristically present in the herbaceous layer with other perennial grasses and herbs including spidergrass (*Aristida ternipes*), milkvetch (*Astragalus* spp.), wild oat (*Avena* spp.), bromes (*Bromus* spp.), fire reedgrass (*Calamagrostis koelerioides*), mariposa (*Calochortus* spp.), morning glory (*Calystegia* spp.), amole (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), clarkia (*Clarkia* spp.), common sandaster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*), turkey-mullein (*Croton setiger*), cryptantha (*Cryptantha* spp.), American wild carrot, (*Daucus pusillus*), blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), erodium (*Erodium* spp.), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), California fescue (*Festuca californica*), shortpod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), narrow tarplant (*Holocarpha virgata*), meadow barley (*Hordeum brachyantherum*), June grass (*Koeleria macrantha*), goldfields (*Lasthenia* spp.), plantain (*Plantago* spp.), one sided blue grass (*Poa secunda*), sanicle (*Sanicula* spp.), western blue eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*), clover (*Trifolium* spp.) and/or fescue (*Vulpia* spp.). Emergent trees and shrubs may be present at low cover. Herbs are less than 3 feet; cover is open to continuous.	No	**Absent:** This vegetation community does not occur within or adjacent to the project site.

***** **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)**

FE Endangered – any species which is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

FT Threatened – any species which is likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

FC Candidate – any species which is currently designated a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

SE Endangered – any native species subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range due to one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, or disease.

ST Threatened – any native or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of the special protection and management efforts required under the California Endangered Species Act.

FP Fully Protected – any native species or subspecies of bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, or reptile that were determined by the State of California to be rare or face possible extinction.

SSC Species of Special Concern – any species, subspecies, or distinct population of fish, amphibian, reptile, bird, or mammal native to California that currently satisfies one or more of the following criteria: is extirpated from California or, in the case of birds, in its primary seasonal or breeding role; is listed as Federally-, but not State-, threatened or endangered; meets the State definition of threatened or endangered but has not formally been listed; is experiencing, or formerly experienced, serious (noncyclical) population declines or range retractions (not reversed) that, if continued or resumed, could qualify it for State

threatened or endangered status; or has naturally small populations exhibiting high susceptibility to risk from any factor(s), that if realized, could lead to declines that would qualify it for State threatened or endangered status.

WL Watch List – taxa that were previously designated as "Species of Special Concern" but no longer merit that status, or which do not yet meet SSC criteria, but for which there is concern and a need for additional information to clarify status.

CSE Candidate Endangered – The classification provided to a native species or subspecies of a bird, mammal, fish, amphibian, reptile, or plant that the Fish and Game Commission has formally noticed as being under review by the Department of Fish and Wildlife for addition to the list of endangered species, or a species for which the commission has published a notice of proposed regulation to add the species to the list of endangered species.

California Native Plant Society (CNPS) California Rare Plant Rank

1B Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.

2B Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere.

3 Plant that lack the necessary information to assign them to one of the other ranks or to reject them.

4 Plants of limited distribution – Watch List.

Threat Ranks

.1 Seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree any immediacy of threat).

.2 Moderately threatened in California (20 to 80 percent of occurrences threatened/moderate degree and immediacy of threat).

.3 Not very threatened in California (less than 20 percent of occurrences threatened/low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known).

NatureServe Conservation Status Rank

The Global Rank (G#) reflects the overall condition and imperilment of a species throughout its global range. The Infraspecific Taxon Rank (T#) reflects the global situation of just the subspecies or variety. The State Rank (S#) reflects the condition and imperilment of an element throughout its range within California. (G#Q) reflects that the element is very rare but there are taxonomic questions associated with it; the calculated G rank is qualified by adding a Q after the G#). Adding a ? to a rank expresses uncertainty about the rank.

G1/T1 Critically Imperiled – At very high risk of extinction due to extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer populations), very steep declines, or other factors.

G2/T2 Imperiled— At high risk of extinction due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors.

G3/T3 Vulnerable— At moderate risk of extinction due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors.

G4/T4 Apparently Secure— Uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors.

G5/T5 Secure – Common; widespread and abundant.

S1 Critically Imperiled – Critically imperiled in the state because of extreme rarity (often 5 or fewer occurrences) or because of some factor(s) such as very steep declines making it especially vulnerable to extirpation from the State.

S2 Imperiled – Imperiled in the State because of rarity due to very restricted range, very few populations (often 20 or fewer), steep declines, or other factors making it very vulnerable to extirpation from the nation or State.

S3 Vulnerable – Vulnerable in the State due to a restricted range, relatively few populations (often 80 or fewer), recent and widespread declines, or other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation.

S4 Apparently Secure – Uncommon but not rare; some cause for long-term concern due to declines or other factors.

Attachment D

Burrowing Owl Survey Report

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

May 9, 2023 JN 194283

NORTHPOINT DEVELOPMENT
Attn: *Jack Lac*
3315 North Oak Trafficway
Kansas City, MO 64116

SUBJECT: Results of Focused Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*) Habitat Assessment for the Proposed SPR 23-003 Project – City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California

Dear Mr. Lac:

This report has been prepared to document the results of a focused burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*; BUOW) habitat assessment and burrow survey that was conducted by Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) during the 2023 breeding season for the proposed SPR 23-003 Project (project or project site) located in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California. Based on the results of Michael Baker's initial review of the California Natural Diversity Database RareFind 5 (CDFW 2023), there are multiple records of BUOW in the project vicinity. During a general biological resources assessment field survey conducted in March 2023 it was determined that the project site is likely unsuitable for the species and no individuals, suitable burrows, or sign of BUOW were detected. However, to confirm that the site does not contain suitable habitat and burrows for the species, a focused BUOW habitat assessment and burrow survey was conducted in accordance with the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (*Staff Report*) (California Department of Fish and Game [CDFG] 2012). The focused BUOW habitat assessment/burrow survey was conducted on April 17, 2023 during the species breeding season to document any suitable habitat within the project site.

Project Location

The project site is generally located north of West Avenue G, east of 60th Street West, south of West Avenue F, and west of 45th Street West in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California (refer to Figure 1, *Regional and Project Vicinity*, Attachment A). The project site is depicted in Section 36 of Township 8 North, Range 13 West, on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) *Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle. Specifically, the project site totals approximately 31.9 acres and encompasses Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 3105-001-042 (refer to Figure 2, *Project Site*). It is situated immediately south of the General William Fox Airfield (Fox Field), a county-owned public airport.

Proposed Project

The proposed project would include construction of a new distribution warehouse consisting of one 581,000 square-foot building footprint, which includes approximately 40,000 square feet of office space. Ancillary improvements would include truck and passenger vehicle parking, lighting, utility improvements, landscaping, and drainage/water quality features, among others.

5 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 500 | Santa Ana, CA 92707
Office: 949.472.3505 | Fax: 949.472.8373 | mbakerintl.com

Species Background

Burrowing Owl

The BUOW is a grassland specialist distributed throughout western North America, where it is known to occupy a wide variety of arid and semi-arid open areas within shrub, desert, and grassland environments. The CDFW currently lists the BUOW as a State Species of Special Concern. BUOWs require large open, sparsely vegetated areas, on rolling or level terrain with an abundance of fossorial mammal burrows (> 4 inches in diameter). In addition, BUOWs require open vegetation allowing open line-of-sight of the surrounding habitat to forage as well as watch for predators. BUOWs are dependent upon the presence of burrowing mammals (e.g., California ground squirrel [*Otospermophilus beecheyi*], coyote [*Canis latrans*], American badger [*Taxidea taxus*]) whose burrows are used for roosting and nesting (Haug et al. 1993). The presence or absence of fossorial mammal burrows is often a major factor that limits the presence of BUOW. Where mammal burrows are scarce, BUOWs have been observed digging their own burrows in soft, friable soil and have been observed utilizing man-made cavities such as buried and non-functioning storm drainpipes, stand-pipes, and dry culverts. Additionally, BUOWs may burrow beneath rocks and debris or large, heavy objects such as abandoned cars, concrete blocks, or concrete pads which stabilize burrow entrances from collapse and may inhibit excavation by predators.

Adult BUOWs are small owls (approximately 7.5 to 9.8 inches) with long legs and short tails that are speckled brown and white, with yellow eyes and yellow bill. A bold white throat and eyebrows are also typical distinguishing features for BUOWs. Juvenile BUOWs are usually less mottled than adults, with buffy-yellow underparts. BUOWs have crepuscular (dawn and dusk) hunting habits but are often observed perched in or near the burrow entrance during the day. One burrow is typically selected for use as the main nest burrow, however, BUOWs also utilize satellite burrows that are often located within the immediate vicinity of the main nest burrow. BUOWs prey upon invertebrates and small vertebrates through the low growing vegetation which allows for foraging visibility (Thomsen 1971). They typically forage in short grass, mowed, or overgrazed pastures, golf courses, and airports (Thomsen 1971). BUOWs in California may migrate southerly, but often remain in their breeding area during the non-breeding months. The BUOW was once abundant and widely distributed within southern California, but it has declined precipitously in counties such as Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego, Riverside, and San Bernardino.

Regulatory Framework

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The BUOW is a resident and migratory bird species protected by international treaty under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918. The MBTA reflects agreements made between the U.S., England, Mexico, the former Soviet Union, and Japan to protect all of North America's migratory bird populations. The MBTA protects migratory bird nests from possession, sale, purchase, barter, transport, import and export, and collection. The other prohibitions (i.e., capture, pursue, hunt, and kill) of the MBTA are inapplicable to nests. The regulatory definition of take, as defined in Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations (C.F.R.) Part 10.12, means to pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or attempt to hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect. Only the verb "collect" applies to nests. It is illegal to collect, possess, and by any means transfer possession of any migratory bird nest. The MBTA prohibits the destruction of a nest when it contains birds or eggs, and no possession shall occur during the destruction (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2017). Certain exceptions to this prohibition are included in Title 50 C.F.R. Section 21.

California Fish and Game Code

Pursuant to Section 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) enforces the MBTA consistent with rules and regulations adopted by the Secretary of the Interior under provisions of the MBTA. Additionally, BUOW is protected under Sections 3503, 3503.3, 3511, and 3513 of the CFGC which prohibit the take, possession, or destruction of birds, their nests or eggs. Implementation of the take provisions requires that project-related disturbance at active nesting territories be reduced or eliminated during critical phases of the nesting cycle (March 1 through August 15, annually). Section 3503.5 of the CFGC protects birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (Birds of Prey, such as hawks and owls, including BUOWs) which makes it unlawful to take, posses, or destroy their nest or eggs. Further, the *Staff Report* offers long-term assurances for conservation of this species in exchange for biologically appropriate levels of incidental take and/or habitat loss as defined in the approved plan.

Methodology

A focused habitat assessment/burrow survey was conducted by Michael Baker biologists Anna Jullie, John Parent, and Art Popp on April 17, 2023, coinciding with the 2023 breeding season (March 1 through August 31) in accordance with the survey guidelines. Please refer to Table 1 below for a summary of the survey date, surveyors, times, and weather conditions for the April 2023 survey.

Table 1: Survey Dates, Timing, Surveyors, and Weather Conditions

Date	Time (start / finish)	Surveyors*	Weather Conditions (start / finish)	
			Temperature (°F)	Wind Speed (mph)
April 17, 2023	0900 / 1000	AJ, JP, AP	68 clear / 70 clear	10 –12
*AJ = Anna Jullie, JP = John Parent, AP = Art Popp				

The focused habitat assessment/burrow survey was conducted during the 2023 breeding season (March 1 through August 31) in accordance with the survey guidelines (CDFG 2012). The entire project site was surveyed for suitable, occupied, and remnant burrows consisting of natural and man-made structures capable of providing suitable roosting/nesting opportunities. The focused habitat assessment/burrow survey was conducted on April 17, 2023 and consisted of a systematic search for suitable burrows (> 4 inches in diameter) within all portions of the project site. Survey transects were conducted at approximately 3- to 6-meter (10 to 20 feet) intervals to ensure 100% visual coverage of all areas within suitable habitat, as applicable based on topography and site access. The survey was not conducted during rain, high winds (> 12 miles per hour), dense fog, or temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

Binoculars were used to scan areas that were inaccessible due to the lack of right-of-entry to observe and identify distant birds; identify any suitable, occupied, and remnant burrows consisting of natural and man-made substrates; and identify any activity around suitable habitat for BUOW. Methods to detect the presence of BUOWs included direct observation, aural detection, and signs of presence (i.e., pellets, white wash, feathers, tracks, and prey remains). If detected, the location of any suitable habitat, potential burrows,

sign (i.e., pellets, whitewash, feathers, or prey remains), and BUOWs observed within the survey area are recorded and mapped using a hand-held Global Positioning System (GPS) unit.

Existing Conditions

The project site is approximately 32 acres in size and currently undeveloped. No natural vegetation community are present and the project site is composed of hard-compacted bare ground across the southern portion of the project site, while the northern portion consists of areas with vegetative cover by non-native herbaceous species, including brome grass (*Bromus* sp.), short-pod mustard (*Hirschfedlia incana*), red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), and other species that were not fully sprouted and identifiable during the field visit. An occasional native allscale (*Atriplex polycarpa*) shrub was observed in the northern portion. Additionally, unvegetated stormwater capture channels occur within the central portion of the project site. During the time of the survey, most of the channels contained standing water; one channel was dry. Please refer to Attachment B for representative photographs taken within the project site.

Based on a review of the California Natural Diversity Database RareFind 5 there are thirty-six (36) occurrence records for burrowing owl within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangle. The closest extant occurrence (Occurrence Number 1579) was recorded in 2009, approximately 1.72 miles feet northwest of the project site; four (4) owls were observed near a burrow (CDFW 2023a).

Survey Results

No individuals, potentially suitable habitat, suitable burrows, or sign of BUOW were observed within the project site during the focused habitat assessment/burrow survey conducted on April 17, 2023. Additionally, no California ground squirrel were observed within the project site. As a result, no further focused surveys for BUOW were conducted.

One bird species, common raven (Corvus corax) was observed during the survey. No other wildlife were detected.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of the focused surveys, no BUOW, sign, occupied burrows, or remnant burrows were observed within the project site. Therefore, BUOW is presumed to be absent from the project site and project-related activities are not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts to BUOWs or occupied burrows.

Although BUOW is currently considered absent from the project site, with known records of BUOW in the project region, some potential exists for BUOW to occur on-site prior to implementation of the proposed project. Therefore, a pre-construction clearance survey would be required to reconfirm the absence of BUOWs and maintain compliance with the MBTA and CFGC. In accordance with the *Staff Report*, the pre-construction clearance survey would need to be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 30 days prior to initiating any ground disturbing activities to avoid direct take of BUOWs. Once the survey is completed, the qualified biologist should prepare and submit a final report documenting the results of the clearance survey to the City of Lancaster for review and file. If no BUOWs or occupied burrows are detected, project activities may begin, and no additional avoidance or minimization measures would be required. However, if an occupied burrow is found within the project impact area during the pre-

construction clearance survey, a BUOW avoidance and minimization plan would need to be prepared and submitted to CDFW for approval prior to initiating project activities.

Please do not hesitate to contact me at (714) 394-5646 or John.Parent@mbakerintl.com should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

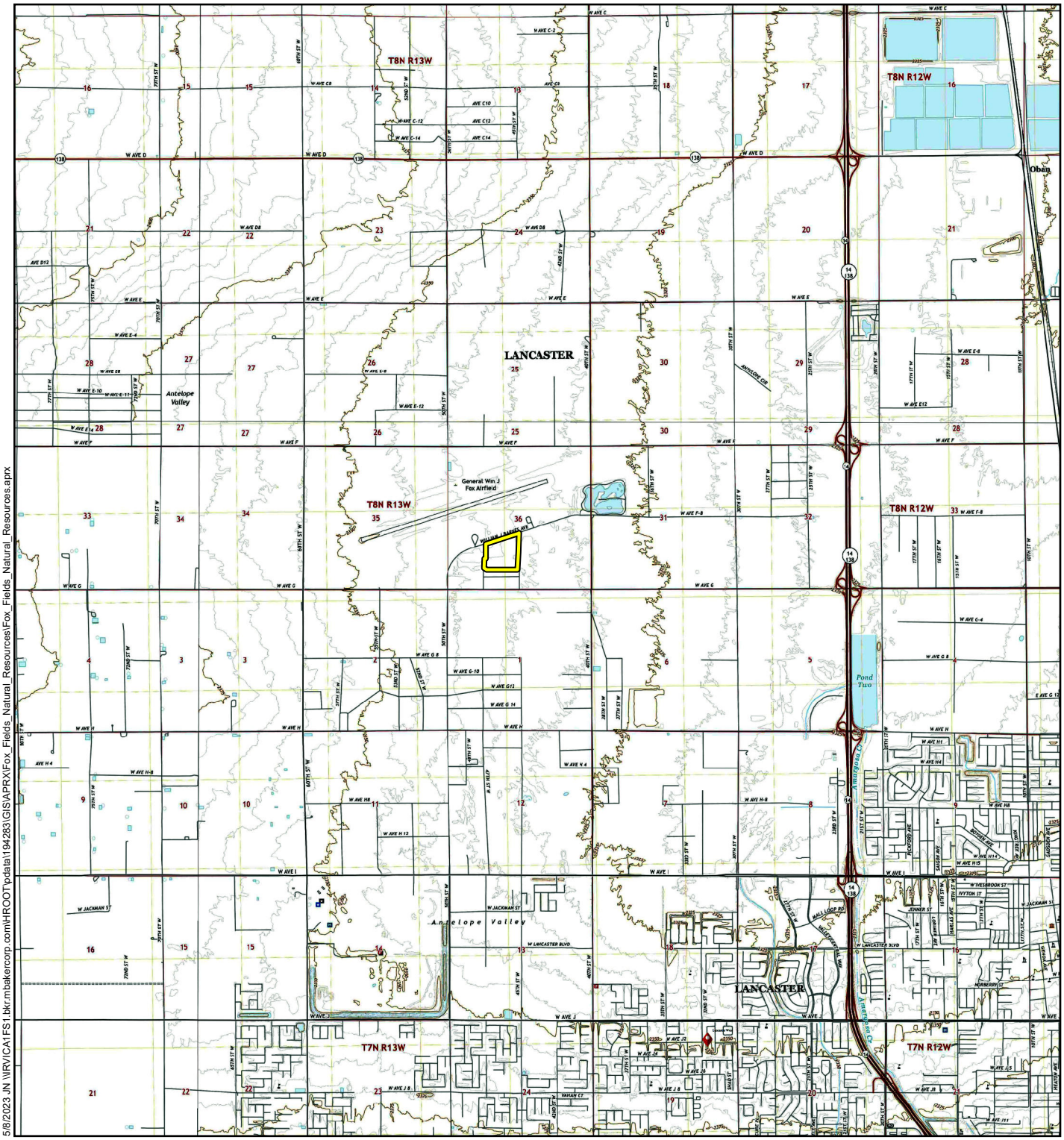
John Parent
Biologist
Natural Resources

Attachments:

A. *Project Figures*
B. *Site Photographs*
C. *References*

Attachment A

Project Figures



5/8/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

Project Site (31.92 acres)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: USGS 7.5-Minute topographic quadrangle maps: *Del Sur and Little Buttes, California (2021), Lancaster and Rosamond, California (2022)*

SPR 23-003

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Regional and Project Vicinity

Figure 1

5/8/2023 JN \\RV\CA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

Project Site (31.92 acres)

Reference Point

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 100 200 Feet

Source: Nearmap (09/2021)

SPR 23-003
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Project Site

Figure 2

Attachment B

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: Northwest-facing view of bare ground across the southern portion of the project site.

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Photograph 2: East-facing view of bare ground at right in southern portion of project site and vegetated areas at left in northern portion of the site. Stormwater capture channels, aligned east-west in the central portion of the site are visible in this view.

Photograph 2: Southwest-facing view from northeast portion of project site.

Attachment C

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