



**Engineering, Planning,
Environmental Sciences and
Management Services**

Corporate Office:
605 Third Street 760.942.5147
Encinitas, California 92024 Fax 760.632.0164

September 13, 2005

4456-02

Mr. Greg Millikan
Anacapa GeoServices, Inc.
5282 Paseo Ricoso
Camarillo, CA 93012

Subject: Results of Biological Site Assessments Conducted for the 68.9-Acre West Palm Development Corporation Project Area, Situated Southeast of Avenue L at 80th Street West, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California

Dear Mr. Millikan:

This letter reports on reconnaissance surveys conducted by Dudek and Associates, Inc. (Dudek) to determine potential biological constraints which may delay implementation of the proposed West Palm Development Corporation Project. The approximate 68.9-acre project area is located southeast of Avenue L at 80th Street West, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California (Figures 1-3). Specifically, the project is located on the U.S.G.S. 7.5 minute Del Sur Quadrangle W1/2NE1/4 of Section 33 (Township 7 North; Range 13 West, SBB&M). It is Dudek's understanding that a project has been approved (including appropriate CEQA documentation) which utilizes the entire property.

METHODS

Dudek wildlife biologist Brock Ortega and botanist Scott Boczkiewicz conducted a reconnaissance survey of the entire 68.9 acre project area on 7 December 2004. A follow-up visit was conducted on 23 March 2005 over a previously surveyed, but not reported on, 14.4 acres in the northeastern portion of the site. The surveys consisted of walking the entire project area while searching for biological resources, including wildlife, plants, and wetland resources. The surveys were conducted such that 100% visual coverage of the entire project area was made. Meandering transects at approximate 30- to 50-foot intervals were walked by foot across the entire site.



Mr. Greg Millikan

Re: Results of a Biological Site Assessment Conducted for the 68.9 Acre West Palm Development Corporation Project Area, Situated Southeast of Avenue L at 80th Street West, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California

Sensitive biological resources present or potentially present onsite were identified through a literature search using the following sources: California Department of Fish and Game (2004a-d) and California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants (2001). General information regarding wildlife species present in the region was obtained from Stebbins (1985, 2003) for reptiles and amphibians, and Emmel and Emmel (1973) for butterflies.

Plant communities were mapped in the field directly onto 2,000-scale (1"=2,000') black and white aerial photographs of the site. Plant community classifications used in this letter follow Holland (1986), with modifications to accommodate the lack of conformity of the observed communities to those of Holland. All plant species encountered during the field surveys were identified and recorded. Latin and common names of plants used in this report follow Hickman (1993).

Wildlife species detected during field surveys by sight, vocalizations, burrows, tracks, scat, or other sign were recorded. Binoculars (8 x 32 power) were used to aid in the identification of observed wildlife. In addition to species actually observed, expected wildlife use of the site was determined by known habitat preferences of local animal species and knowledge of their relative distributions in the area.

Latin and common names of animals referred to in this report follow Stebbins (2003) for reptiles and amphibians, American Ornithologists' Union (1983, 2003) for birds, Jones et al. (1997) for mammals, and Emmel and Emmel (1973) for butterflies.

Both surveys were conducted during suitable climatic conditions (*i.e.*, 1000 to 1200 hours; 80-100% cloud cover; 5-7 mile per hour breezes, and; 35 degree Fahrenheit to 50 degree Fahrenheit temperatures) for observing or detecting wildlife.

RESULTS

Based on species composition and general physiognomy, one vegetation association was identified within the sphere of influence for the project: disturbed desert scrub. The site is dominated by non-native annual grasses, non-native herbs and occasional native grasses, herbs, and shrubs. Vegetative cover on the site at the time of the surveys was approximately 85 percent, consisting mainly of newly germinating non-native annual grasses and native and non-native herbs dominated by cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), pygmy poppy (*Eschscholzia minutiflora*), sky-lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp.), filaree (*Erodium botrys*, *E. cicutarium*) and dove weed (*Eremocarpus setigerus*). Shrub cover on the site

Mr. Greg Millikan

Re: Results of a Biological Site Assessment Conducted for the 68.9 Acre West Palm Development Corporation Project Area, Situated Southeast of Avenue L at 80th Street West, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California

was less than 5 percent of total cover and is represented by two common species including rubber rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus nauseosus* ssp. *mohavensis*) and occasional horsebrush (*Tetradymia canescens*).

The site appears to have been extensively disced within the past three to four years, and grazed by sheep within the last growing season. Annual grazing has presumably been relatively intensive onsite, as many rangeland plants associated with intensive herbivory are present onsite including some species that are poisonous to sheep and cattle. The history of agricultural discing and grazing onsite severely limits the native plant community and favors the growth of non-native plants. The site most likely supported desert scrub dominated by rubber rabbitbrush prior to agricultural use. No rare, threatened, endangered or otherwise sensitive plant species were observed or are expected to be present onsite due to the high degree of annual disturbance associated with the site.

Wildlife species detected during the visit represent those that would be expected during the winter. A number of hibernating side-blotched lizards (*Uta stansburiana*) were found under various debris piles on site. Based on the available habitat, no sensitive lizard or snake species are expected. Wintering bird species observed included mountain bluebird (*Sialia currucoides*), Savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), lark sparrow (*Chondestes grammacus*), and horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*). Given the disturbed habitat, no sensitive bird species are expected to occur other than occasional foraging raptors. In addition, kangaroo rat burrows, and smaller burrows were distributed throughout the site. The likely small mammal species associated with these burrows may include: Merriam's kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami merriami*), little pocket mouse (*Perognathus longimembris longimembris*), long-tailed pocket mouse (*Perognathus formosus mohavensis*), desert pocket mouse (*Chaetodipus penicillatus*), deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and to a lesser extent, cactus mouse (*Peromyscus eremicus*), and harvest mouse (*Reithrodontomys megalotis*). None of these species are sensitive. No sensitive mammal species are expected.

A complete list of plant and wildlife species detected onsite follows this letter in Appendix A.

DISCUSSION

No sensitive plant or wildlife species are known to occur within a radius of 2.5 miles from the project site. Based on the degree of disturbance the site has historically experienced and lack of known sensitive species occurrences, it is highly unlikely that sensitive species occur onsite and no additional measures or surveys are recommended.

Mr. Greg Millikan

Re: Results of a Biological Site Assessment Conducted for the 68.9 Acre West Palm Development Corporation Project Area, Situated Southeast of Avenue L at 80th Street West, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California

Please contact me at (760)942-5147 or bortega@dudek.com with questions or comments.

Very truly yours,

DUDEK & ASSOCIATES, INC.



Brock A. Ortega
Senior Wildlife Biologist

CITATIONS

American Ornithologists' Union. *The Check-list of North American Birds, 6th edition.* Lawrence, Kansas: Allen Press, 1983.

American Ornithologists' Union. "Forty-fourth Supplement to the American Ornithologists' Union Check-List of North American Birds." *The Auk* 120 (2003):923-932.

California Department of Fish and Game. Wildlife and Habitat Data Analysis Branch. California's Wildlife. Accessed via <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/whdab/html/cawildlife.html>. January 2004a.

California Department of Fish and Game. California Natural Diversity Data Base. *Rarefind* Version 3.0.2. 2004b. On-line database.

California Department of Fish and Game. Natural Diversity Database. *Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List*. Quarterly publication, Mimeo. 88 pp. January 2004c.

California Department of Fish and Game. California Natural Diversity Data Base. *State and Federally Listed Endangered, Rare and Threatened Plants of California*. Sacramento, California, January 2004d.

Mr. Greg Millikan

Re: *Results of a Biological Site Assessment Conducted for the 68.9 Acre West Palm Development Corporation Project Area, Situated Southeast of Avenue L at 80th Street West, City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California*

CNPS. *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California (Sixth Edition)*. Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee, David Pl Tibor, Convening Editor. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, CA + 388pp. 2001

Emmel. T.C. and J.F. Emmel. *The butterflies of Southern California*. Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County, Science Series 26:1-148. 1973.

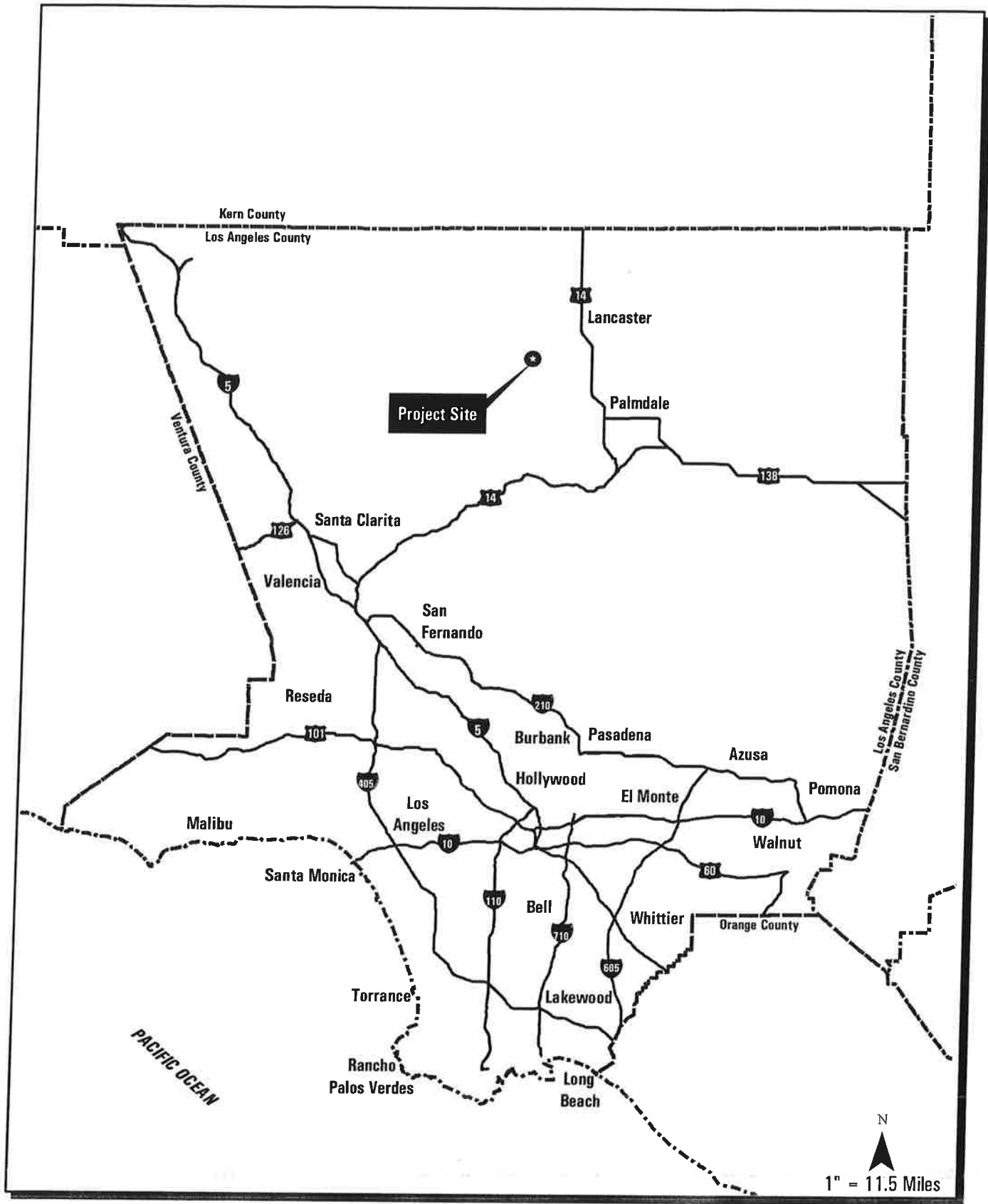
Hickman, J. C. *The Jepson Manual: Higher plants of California*. University of California Press, Berkeley. 1993.

Holland, R.F. *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California*. Nongame-Heritage Program, California Department of Fish and Game. 1986.

Jones, C., R.S. Hoffmann, D.W. Rice, R.J. Baker, M.D. Engstrom, R.D. Bradley, D.J. Schmidly, and C.A. Jones. *Revised Checklist of North American Mammals north of Mexico*. Occasional Papers, Museum of Texas Technical University, No. 173. 1997.

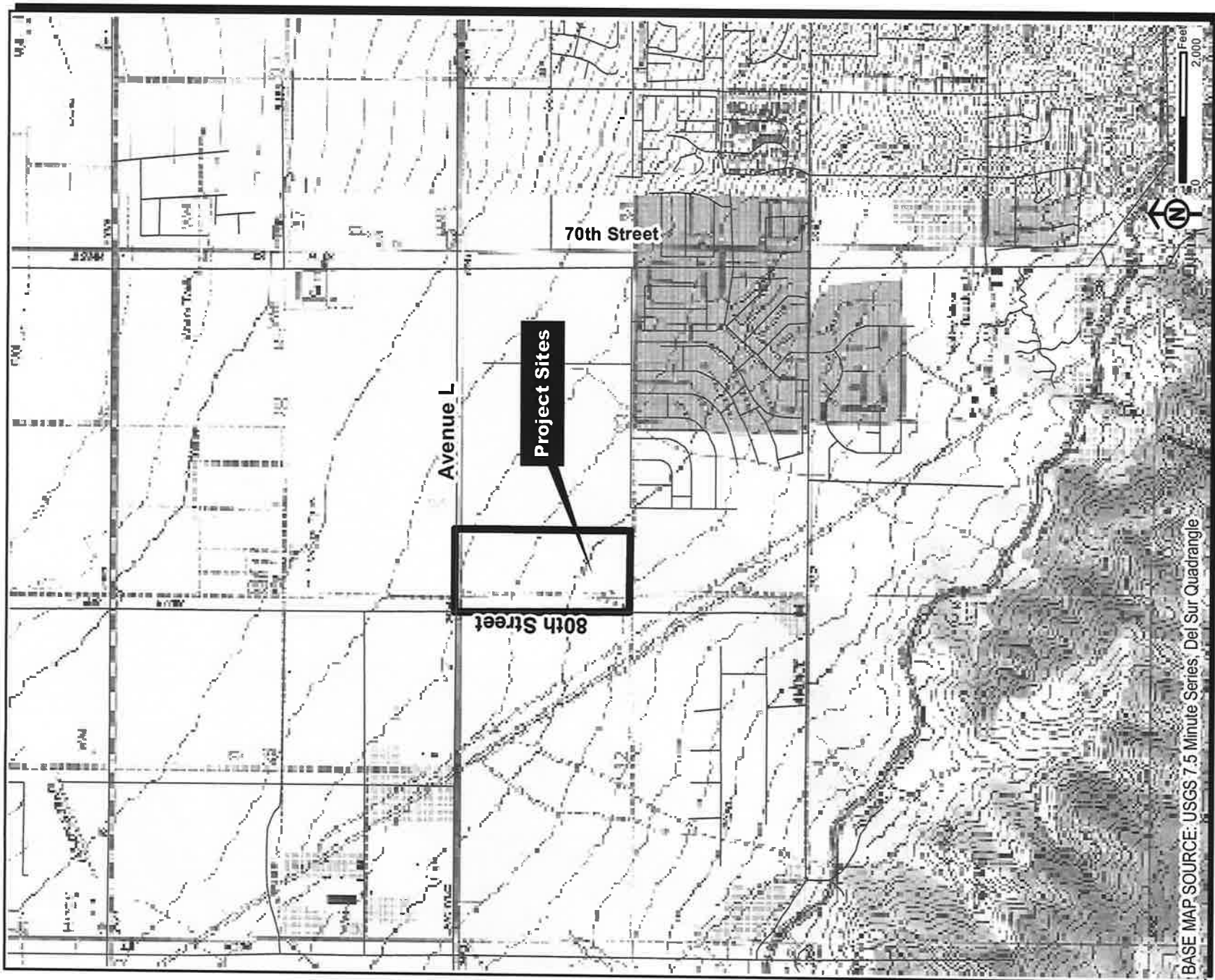
Stebbins, R. C. *A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians*. McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, New York. 1985.

Stebbins, R. C. *A field guide to western reptiles and amphibians – Third Edition*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston, Mass. P. 514. 2003.



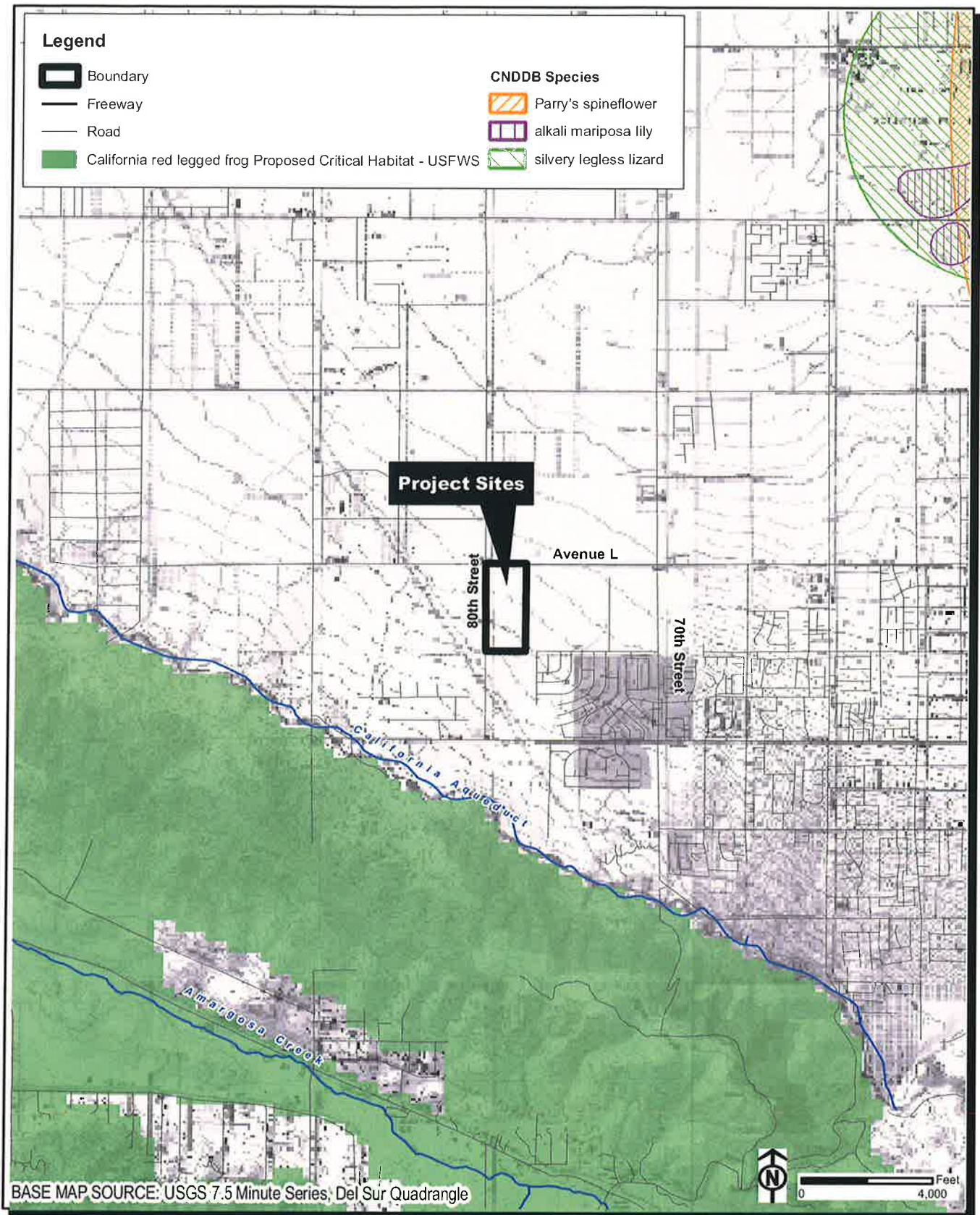
Biological Assessment for 68.9 Acres - West Palm Development Corporation Project
 on West Avenue L at 80th Street West
Regional Map

FIGURE
1



Biological Assessment for 68.9 Acres - West Palm Development Corporation Project
on West Avenue L at 80th Street West
Vicinity Map

FIGURE
2



Biological Assessment for 68.9 Acres - West Palm Development Corporation Project
 on West Avenue L at 80th Street West
CNDDDB Species Data on USGS Topographic Base

FIGURE
 3

APPENDIX A

SPECIES OBSERVED ON THE PROJECT SITE

APPENDIX A

VASCULAR PLANT SPECIES OBSERVED

ANGIOSPERMAE (DICOTYLEDONES)

AMARANTHACEAE - AMARANTH FAMILY

- * *Amaranthus albus* - tumbleweed

ASTERACEAE - SUNFLOWER FAMILY*

- Chrysothamnus nausoesus* ssp. *mohavensis* - rubber rabbitbrush
- * *Conyza bonariensis* - flax-leaved horseweed
- * *Sonchus oleraceus* - common sow-thistle
- Tetradyma canescens* - horsebrush
- * *Tragopogon dubius* - goats beard
- Xanthium spinosum* - spiny cocklebur

BORAGINACEAE - BORAGE FAMILY

- Amsinckia* sp. (probably *A. intermedia*) - fiddleneck
- Lappula* sp. (probably *L. redowski*) - stickseed

BRASSICACEAE - MUSTARD FAMILY

- * *Arabis* sp. - rock cress
- Descurainia pinnata* - western tansy mustard

CHENOPODIACEAE - GOOSEFOOT FAMILY

- * *Salsola tragus* - Russian-thistle

EUPHORBIACEAE - SPURGE FAMILY

- Eremocarpus setigerus* - doveweed

FABACEAE - PEA FAMILY

- Astragalus trichopodus* - Santa Barbara locoweed
- Lupinus nanus* - pygmy lupine

GERANIACEAE - GERANIUM FAMILY

- * *Erodium botrys* - broad-lobed filaree
- * *Erodium cicutarium* - red-stemmed filaree

APPENDIX A (Continued)

PAPAVERACEAE - POPPY FAMILY

Eschscholzia minutiflora - pygmy poppy

POLYGONACEAE - BUCKWHEAT FAMILY

Eriogonum sp. - annual buckwheat

SOLANACEAE - NIGHTSHADE FAMILY

* *Datura wrightii* - western jimsonweed

ANGIOSPERMAE (MONOCOTYLEDONES)

LILIACEAE - LILY FAMILY

Yucca brevifolia - Joshua tree (dead)

POACEAE - GRASS FAMILY

Bromus carinatus

* *Bromus hordeaceus* - soft chess

* *Bromus tectorum* - cheat grass

Festuca rubra - red fescue

* *Poa sp.* - bluegrass

* Signifies introduced (non-native) species

WILDLIFE SPECIES OBSERVED

REPTILES

PHRYNOSOMATIDAE - SPINY & HORNED LIZARDS

Uta stansburiana - side-blotched lizard

BIRDS

CATHARTIDAE – NEW WORLD VULTURES

Cathartes aura – turkey vulture

APPENDIX A (*Continued*)

ACCIPITRIDAE - HAWKS

Buteo jamaicensis - red-tailed hawk

FALCONIDAE - FALCONS

Falco sparverius – American kestrel

COLUMBIDAE - PIGEONS & DOVES

Zenaida macroura - mourning dove

TYRANNIDAE - TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Sayornis saya - Say's phoebe

ALAUDIDAE - LARKS

Eremophila alpestris – horned lark

CORVIDAE - JAYS & CROWS

Corvus corax - common raven

TURDIDAE - BLUEBIRDS, SOLITAIRES, THRUSHES, & ROBINS

Sialia currucoides – mountain bluebird

PARULIDAE - WARBLERS, CHATS, REDSTARTS, & YELLOWTHROATS

Dendroica coronata - yellow-rumped warbler

EMBERIZIDAE - JUNCOS, SPARROWS, TOWHEES, & SEEDEATERS

Chondestes grammacus - lark sparrow

Pipilo crissalis - California towhee

Passerculus sandwichensis – Savannah sparrow

Zonotrichia leucophrys - White-crowned sparrow

ICTERIDAE - BLACKBIRDS, GRACKLES, & ORIOLES

Sturnella neglecta - western meadowlark

FRINGILLIDAE - FINCHES

Carpodacus mexicanus - house finch

APPENDIX A (*Continued*)

MAMMALS

LEPORIDAE - HARES & RABBITS

Sylvilagus audubonii - desert cottontail

SCIURIDAE - SQUIRRELS

Spermophilus beecheyi - California ground squirrel

GEOMYIDAE - POCKET GOPHERS

Thomomys bottae - Botta's pocket gopher

HETEROMYIDAE – POCKET MICE & KANGAROO RATS

Dipodomys merriami merriami – Merriam's kangaroo rat

CANIDAE - WOLVES & FOXES

Canis latrans - coyote