Michael Baker
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October 6, 2023 JN 195377

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

SUBJECT: Results of a Biological Resources Assessment for SPR 23-012 – 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 23-012 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 during reviews of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) (CDFW 2022a), the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (CIRP; CNPS 2022), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation project planning tool (IPaC; USFWS 2022a), and other databases as potentially occurring in the vicinity of the project site.

Project Location

The project site is situated approximately 0.4 miles west of State Route 14 (SR-14), at the northeastern corner of Avenue G and 30th Street West in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California (refer to Figure 1, *Regional and Project Vicinity* in Attachment A). The project site is depicted in Section 32 of Township 8 North, Range 12 West, on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) *Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle. Specifically, the project site totals approximately 76.8 acres and encompasses Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 3114-010-011, 3114-010-003, 3114-010-002 (refer to Figure 2, *Project Site*, Attachment A).

[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.

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

Proposed Project

The proposed project involves construction of a high-cube distribution warehouse. The tilt-up concrete warehousing and distribution facility would be approximately 1,227,596 square feet in size. Other ancillary improvements would include lighting, utility, and landscaping improvements, 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 were determined through a query of the CNDDB (CDFW 2023a) and CIRP (CNPS 2023a), and for the project region through a review of 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 the 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 April 17, 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)
April 17, 2023	0600 / 1000	Anna Jullie, John Parent	68 / 70	10 / 12

Vegetation communities occurring within the project site were mapped on an aerial photograph 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 2021) 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 2,313 to 2,319 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 Pond-Oban complex (Px) soils (refer to Figure 3, *USDA Soils*, Attachment A). This soil complex is very deep, moderately well drained, and in places contains slight to moderate amounts of soluble salts or alkali. Based on a review of historic aerial imagery (Google, Inc. 2023) and results from the field survey, the project site has remained undisturbed with native vegetative cover since at least 1985. Surface soils within the project site are generally undisturbed, with some evidence of vehicular disturbance along the western and northern site perimeter.

The project site is surrounded by undisturbed desert scrub habitat, with 30th Street West along the western perimeter of the site and West Avenue G along the southern perimeter. Refer to Attachment B for representative photographs of the project site taken during the field survey.

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

One (1) vegetation community was observed and mapped within the approximate 76.8-acre project site, classified as disturbed shadscale scrub (refer to Figure 4, *Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses*, Attachment A).

Shadscale Scrub

The project site consists of disturbed *Atriplex confertifolia* Shrubland Alliance (*Atriplex confertifolia – Atriplex polycarpa* Association). This vegetation community is dominated by shadscale (*Atriplex confertifolia*), with allscale saltbush (*Atriplex polycarpa*), and other native desert scrub species present, in some instances occurring on hummocks of soil. Non-native herbaceous species including Spanish brome (*Bromus madritensis*), coastal heron's bill (*Erodium cicularium*), and tumble mustard (*Sismbrium altissimum*) dominated the understory, contributing to the disturbed nature of the project site. Further, disturbance to the desert scrub community present on-site from vehicles driving along a dirt road in the northeastern corner of the project site was observed. In some areas, evidence of the alkali nature of the Pond-Oban complex soils underlying the project site was apparent by the presence of nearly white surface soils. No trees, including western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) occur within the project site. A list of plant species observed within the project site is included in Table C-1 in Attachment C.

Wildlife

Natural vegetation communities such as the desert scrub community found on-site, provide wildlife foraging habitat, nesting/denning sites, and shelter from adverse weather or predation. The occurrence of wildlife within or across the project site is however reduced by human disturbances associated with

industrial development and the airfield occurring in the area surrounding the project site. Further, vegetative cover across the site is generally sparse, further reducing the site's suitability to provide wildlife habitat.

This section provides a general discussion of common wildlife species that have been 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. Refer to Table C-2 in Attachment C for a list of wildlife species observed 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

Western fence lizard (*Scleroporus occidentalis*), western side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana elegans*), long-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia wislizenii)*, and Great Basin whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris tigris*) were observed in the project site during the field survey. Other reptiles such as long-nosed leopard lizard (*Gambelia wislizenii*) and Mohave rattlesnake (*Crotalus scutulatus*) could also occur within the project site.

Birds

A total of seven (7) bird species, including special-status species, Bell's sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*, CDFW Watch List [WL]), and California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*; CDFW WL) were detected during the field survey.

Nesting birds are protected pursuant to the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)[2] of 1918 and the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC)[3]. 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

[2] The Migratory Bird Treaty Act prohibits the take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Refer to: https://www.fws.gov/law/migratory-bird-treaty-act-1918

[3] 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.*).

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. Desert scrub habitat occurring within the project site provides some suitable nesting habitat for various year-round and seasonal bird species; however, 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. Two mammal species were observed during the field survey, including black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*) and desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*). Other common mammalian species that may occur within the project site include coyote (*Canis latrans*) and California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*). While burrows potentially suitable for fossorial mammals such as California ground squirrel were observed, no individuals of this species were detected. Burrows potentially suitable for other fossorial mammals, such as coyote, kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis*), or American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), or sign of any of these species were not observed on-site.

Bats occur throughout most of California; however, no bats are expected to occur within the project site due to the absence of suitable roosting habitat (e.g., hollow tree trunks/limbs, tree foliage, caves, bridges, buildings). Bats may occasionally forage across the project site, but noise and light disturbances from vehicular traffic and human presence, related to surrounding land uses, reduce the site's suitability to provide foraging habitat for bats.

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 undisturbed, with open areas surrounding the site, wildlife movement into or out of the project site is likely reduced by the presence of surrounding roadways (i.e., Avenue G, 30th Street West, State Route 14) and the nearby airfield. As a result, vehicle roadway/traffic, airline noise/disturbance, lighting, and presence of humans further decreases 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 3.0 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 8.0 miles to the southwest 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 is present in the vicinity of the project site, providing opportunities for movement around the project site.

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 (Corps) Regulatory Branch regulates discharge of dredged or fill material into "waters of the U.S." (WofUS) 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 (Porter-Cologne), and the CDFW regulates alterations to streambed and associated vegetation communities under Section 1600 *et seq*. of the CFGC.

No aquatic features are identified within the project site by the USFWS's National Wetlands Inventory Mapper (USFWS 2023c) and no such features are evident in aerial photography or on the USGS topographic map. Further, no aquatic features that potentially fall under State and/or federal regulatory jurisdiction were identified during the field survey. No areas dominated by hydrophytic plants or areas exhibiting strong evidence of hydrology typical of jurisdictional areas were observed.

Special-Status Biological Resources

The CNDDB (CDFW 2023a) and CIRP (CNPS 2023a) were queried for reported locations of special-status plant and wildlife species as well as special-status natural vegetation communities occurring in the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles, while IPaC was quired for such resources occurring in the project region. 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 have the potential to provide suitable habitat(s) for special-status plant and wildlife species. Additionally, the potential for each special-status species identified during the database reviews to occur within the project site was 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, twenty-three (23) special-status wildlife species, and two (2) sensitive natural communities were identified during reviews of the CNDDB, CIRP, and IPaC. 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 Attachment D*: Special-Status Biological Resources Identified During Database Reviews*.

Special-Status Plants

A total of sixteen (16) special-status plant species were identified during database reviews (refer to Table D-1 in Attachment D). Based on results of the field survey, the specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known current distributions, and elevation ranges, Michael Baker determined that no plant species listed under the federal Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act are expected to occur within the project site; however, special-status plant species assigned a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) by CNPS were determined to have high potential to occur on-site, including alkali mariposa-lily (*Calochortus striatus*; CRPR 1B.2) and Rosamond eriastrum (*Eriastrum rosamondense*; CRPR 1B.1). These species are discussed further below.

Alkali mariposa-lily

Alkali mariposa-lily is a perennial bulbiferous herb native to the Mojave Desert in California and Nevada, where it is known from chaparral, chenopod (*Atriplex*) scrub, meadows and seeps, and Mojavean desert scrub, preferring alkaline microhabitats in these communities. According to the CNDDB, there are twenty-eight (28) occurrence records for alkali mariposa-lily within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. The closest extant occurrence (Occurrence Number 98) was recorded in 2005, approximately 1.98 miles west of the project site, in undisturbed habitat consisting of *Atriplex* scrub (CDFW 2023a), a vegetation community similar to that occurring on-site. An occurrence from 2 miles of the project site is recorded within the CNDDB (Occurrence Number 98); however, it is assumed extirpated from that location due to development. Multiple occurrences of this species from within the past 20 years occur within 5 miles north-northwest of the project site. With suitable habitat and alkaline soils (Pond-Oban complex) preferred by this species occurring on-site, Michael Baker determined that this species has high potential to occur on-site.

Rosamond eriastrum

Rosamond eriastrum is an annual herb that is native to California. It is endemic to a small area between Rosamond and Lancaster in Los Angeles County, where it is known from openings in chenopod (*Atriplex*) scrub and along the edges of vernal pools, preferring alkaline hummock microhabitats. According to the CNDDB, there are seven (7) occurrence records for Rosamond eriastrum within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. The closest extant occurrence (Occurrence Number 2) was recorded in 2005, approximately 0.67 mile west of the project site, in alkali habitat (CDFW 2023a). Another occurrence recorded in 2010 occurs approximately 3 miles to the north. With suitable habitat and alkaline conditions preferred by this species occurring on-site, Michael Baker determined that this species has high potential to occur on-site.

As a result of the high potential for at least these two special-status plant species to occur on-site, Michael Baker conducted focused rare plant surveys in 2023 during the peak blooming period for plant species occurring in the Antelope Valley region. Surveys were conducted in accordance with accepted survey protocols and guidelines (CDFW 2018; CNPS 2001) using systematic field techniques across the entire project site. Two survey efforts of the project site were completed on May 22 and July 11, 2023. A total of four special-status plant species, including alkali mariposa-lily, Rosamond eriastrum, Mojave spineflower (*Chorizanthe spinosa*; CRPR 4.2), and Golden goodmania (*Goodmania luteola*; CRPR 4.2) were detected and their distribution mapped within the project site. A survey report detailing the methods and results of the 2023 rare plant surveys has been prepared by Michael Baker and is included as Attachment E. Table 2 below provides the results of the count and acreage quantities for each special-status plant species identified on-site.

Table 2: Special-Status Plant Survey Results

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State/CRPR	Count	Acreage*
Calochortus striatus	alkali mariposa lily	None/None/1B.2	1,880	0.72
Chorizanthe spinosa	Mojave spineflower	None/None/4.2	6,146,024	72.32/25.31**
Eriastrum rosamondense	Rosamond eriastrum	None/None/1B.1	1,145	N/A
Goodmania luteola	golden goodmania	None/None/4.2	181	N/A

* Areas containing small numbers of rare plant individuals (areas of negligible acreage) were mapped using points rather than polygons and therefore are accounted for in the count section of the table.

** A total of 72.32 acres were mapped containing approximately 35-percent coverage by Mojave spineflower, resulting in 25.31 acres of occupied Mojave spineflower habitat.

Special-Status Wildlife

A total of twenty-two (22) special-status wildlife species have been recorded in the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangles by the CNDDB and project region by the IPaC (refer to Attachment D). California horned lark (CDFW WL) and Bell's sparrow were the only special-status wildlife species observed during the field survey and could potentially nest within the project site. Based on results of the field survey, the specific habitat preferences, occurrence records, known current distributions, and elevation ranges, one federal and/or State-listed species, Swainson's hawk (*Buteo swainsoni*; State-threatened [ST]) has low potential to occur across the site as a foraging or migrating

transient. Additionally, Michael Baker determined that a number of non-listed special-status raptor and songbird species known from the region also have low or moderate potential to occur within the project site as foraging or migrating transients but are not expected to nest within the project site (refer to Attachment D). This includes ferruginous hawk (*Buteo regalis*; CDFW WL), mountain plover (*Charadrius montanus*, CDFW Species of Special Concern [SSC]), northern harrier (*Circus hudsonius*; CDFW SSC), merlin (*Falco columbarius*; CDFW WL), and loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*; CDFW SSC).

While no individuals were detected, suitable burrows and sign of burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*; CDFW SSC) were detected during the field survey. This species is known from the Antelope Valley region and it was determined that the species has potential to nest and forage within the project site.

Due to their regional significance in the project area, burrowing owl, Swainson's hawk, Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*; ST) and desert tortoise (*Gopherus aggassizii*, federally-listed Threatened [FT] and ST) are described in further detail below.

Burrowing Owl

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) 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 drain pipes, 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-two (32) occurrence records for burrowing owl within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. The closest extant occurrence (Occurrence Number 1,888) was recorded in 2013, approximately 2.36 miles south of the project site, where three (3) owls were observed near a burrow, two adults and one juvenile (CDFW 2023a).

Due to the known occurrences of this species in the Antelope Valley region, observations of potentially suitable burrows and sign of the species on-site, Michael Baker conducted focused burrowing owl surveys in accordance with the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (*Staff Report*) (California Department of Fish and Game [CDFG] 2012). Focused surveys were conducted on April 17, May 23, June 14, and July 5, 2023. While potentially suitable burrows and sign of the species were observed, no burrowing owl were detected on-site during focused surveys. A survey report detailing the methods and results of burrowing owl focused surveys has been prepared by Michael Baker and is included as Attachment F.

Swainson's Hawk

Swainson's hawk has historically nested around grasslands, shrublands, and open woodlands, particularly in California and in other agriculture-heavy regions where native habitat has been converted to farmland. This species has adapted to nesting in the vicinity of agricultural fields, particularly irrigated pastures and in row, grain, and hayfields (Bechard et al. 2020). Nests are constructed in trees in close proximity to foraging habitat and may be constructed in lone trees or within a row of trees. This species is known to nest in the Antelope Valley, with 17 records of active nests documented in the CNDDB within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. All but one of these records is from the past 20 years and approximately half of these nest records occur 8 to 10 miles north-northwest of the project site in the vicinity of Avenue A and 100th Street Southwest. The nearest record of an active nest (Occurrence Record 2,773) occurs approximately 2.5 miles east of the project site and was last active in 2016. The most recent record of an active nest, from 2020, occurs approximately 6 miles north-northwest of the project site.

Trees are absent from the project site and as a result, this species is not expected to nest within the project site. Native vegetation occurring on-site provides value as foraging habitat; however, this species often prefers foraging in and around agricultural areas that provide a suitable food source of small mammals, birds, and insects, species which are often attracted to agricultural areas, and which provide food and water sources for prey of Swainson's hawk. Agricultural areas are generally absent from a 5-mile radius around the project site. This species has low potential to occur across the project site as a foraging or migrating transient but is not expected to nest in the project site.

Mohave Ground Squirrel

The Mohave ground squirrel (MGS) is a small diurnally-active rodent endemic to the western Mojave Desert of California in San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Kern, and Inyo counties. It has one of the smallest geographic ranges of any North American ground squirrel and spends much of the year in underground burrows to avoid the harsh conditions of its desert environment. Optimal habitats are open desert scrub, alkali desert scrub, Joshua tree, and annual grasslands. MGS feed on a wide variety of green vegetation, seeds, and fruits and forage on the ground or in shrubs and Joshua trees. This species prefers sandy to gravelly soils and avoids rocky areas. Populations are reduced by urban development, off-road vehicle use, and agriculture.

According to the CNDDB, there are two (2) occurrence records for MGS within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles. The nearest known extant record in the CNDDB (No. 26) occurs approximately 5.3 miles southeast of the project site and was recorded roughly 40 years ago in 1984. This record is from an area that has since been developed and this species likely does no persist at this location. The second record identified during the CNDDB review (Occurrence Record 281) is from approximately 8.4 miles north-northeast of the project site and was recorded 50 years ago in 1973. The project site is located along the far southwestern-most edge of the MGS geographic range, but it is not within any area containing a core or peripheral MGS population (CDFW 2019). In addition, MGS were not detected within any regional surveys or protocol grids conducted within the Palmdale/Lancaster area between 2008 and 2012, and MGS have not been trapped or observed anywhere

in Los Angeles County away from Edwards Air Force Base and its immediate boundary since 1991 (Leitner 2015). A recent update on the status of MGS by Leitner (2021) indicates that results of trapping efforts since the 2000's have largely failed to document the species' occurrence in Los Angeles County, except for recent occurrences in the extreme northeastern corner of the county, on or adjoining Edwards Air Force Base. These results strongly suggest the species is essentially extirpated in Los Angeles County (Leitner 2021).

Due to the lack of occurrence records within the vicinity, results of past and recent Leitner studies (2015, 2022) reflecting negative results, and distance from existing populations, MGS is not expected to occur on-site. It should be noted that no MGS or sign of the species were detected during all field surveys conducted across the site to date, including rare plant and burrowing owl surveys.

Desert Tortoise

The desert tortoise is currently designated as a State and federally threatened species. The Mojave population of the desert tortoise inhabits areas north and west of the Colorado River in the Mojave Desert of California, Nevada, Arizona, and southwestern Utah, and in the Sonoran Desert in California. Throughout the majority of the Mojave Desert, desert tortoise occurs most commonly on gentle sloping soils characterized by an even mix of sand and gravel and sparsely vegetated low-growing vegetation where there is abundant inter-shrub space. The typical habitat for this species is creosote bush scrub below approximately 5,500 feet in elevation. Wildflowers, grasses, and in some cases, cacti make up the bulk of their diet. Some of the more common forbs consumed by desert tortoise include desert dandelion (*Malacothrix glabrata*), primrose (*Camissonia* spp. and *Oenothera* spp.) desert plantain (*Plantago ovata*), milkvetches (Astragalus spp.), gilia (Gilia spp.), desert marigold (*Baileya multiradiata*), Mojave lupine (*Lupinus odoratus*), phacelia (*Phacelia* spp.), desert wishbone-bush (*Mirabilis laevis*), lotus (*Lotus* spp.), forget-me-nots (*Cryptantha* spp.), goldfields (*Lasthenia californica*), California coreopsis (*Leptosyne californica*), white-margin sandmat (*Euphorbia albomarginata*), and the introduced red stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*). The desert tortoise spends 95 percent of its life underground and will opportunistically utilize burrows of various lengths, deep caves, rock and caliche crevices, or overhangs for cover. Therefore, a moderately friable soil is required to allow for burrow construction and ensure that burrows do not collapse.

The project is not located within designated Critical Habitat for desert tortoise. There are no CNDDB occurrence records of desert tortoise within the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles The closest extant record in the CNDDB (No. 1) was recorded in 2004 and is over 15 miles away to the east of the project site. The project site is located near the southwestern-most edge of the desert tortoise's geographic range.

Due to the presence of habitat that is only marginally suitable for the species, the lack of occurrence records within the vicinity, and distance from existing populations, desert tortoise is not expected to occur on-site. It should be noted that no desert tortoise or sign of the species were detected during all field surveys conducted across the site to date, including rare plant and burrowing owl surveys.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Two (2) sensitive natural vegetation communities, including wildflower field and valley needlegrass grassland, were reported from the USGS *Lancaster West, Del Sur, Little Buttes,* and *Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangles by the CNDDB. These sensitive natural communities do not occur on-site and the disturbed shadscale scrub habitat present is not listed by CDFW as a California Sensitive Natural Community (CDFW 2023f).

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*, Attachment A).

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*, Attachment A).

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.

It is anticipated the proposed project would be subject to the biological impact fee established in Municipal Code Chapter 15.66; however, as the site is not located in or near an SEA, Municipal Code Chapter 22.102 would not apply to the project.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Approximately 76.8 acres of disturbed shadscale scrub was observed and mapped within the boundaries of the project site during the field survey.

Four (4) special-status plant species were mapped during focused rare plant surveys conducted in 2023 by Michael Baker, including alkali mariposa-lily, Mojave spine flower, golden goodmania, and Rosamond eriastrum. Results of the rare plant survey are included in Attachment E. Special-status species with a CRPR of 4 do not require evaluation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and as a result, mitigation for Mojave spineflower and golden goodmania is not anticipated at this time. Impacts to alkali mariposa lily and Rosamond eriastrum would be considered significant under CEQA and as such, mitigation to reduce impacts to these species to below a level of significance is anticipated. At this time, participation in the City of Lancaster's existing in lieu fee program is anticipated to mitigate for impacts to rare plants under the project.

California horned lark (CDFW WL) and Bell's sparrow (CDFW WL) were the only special-status wildlife species observed during the field survey and could potentially nest within the project site. Additionally, several other special-status raptor and songbird species identified during the literature review have low or moderate potential to occur within the project site, primarily as foraging or migrating transients (refer to Attachment D). While potentially suitable burrows for burrowing owl and sign of the species were detected on-site, no burrowing owl were identified during focused surveys conducted for the species in 2023. Results of the focused burrowing owl surveys are included in Attachment F.

In order to avoid and/or minimize potential significant impacts to the special-status biological resources outlined above, it is recommended that the following Avoidance and Minimization Measures (AMM) be implemented.

For special-status raptor and songbird species identified as potentially occurring on-site, as well as common bird species protected under the MBTA and CFGC that may occur on-site, the following measure is recommended:

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.

Although no individual burrowing owl were detected during focused surveys conducted in 2023, since potentially suitable habitat for the species is present on-site, the following measure is recommended for burrowing owl:

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* (CDFG 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.

Since special-status plant species were documented in the project site, the following is anticipated:

AMM BIO-3:

To reduce impacts to alkali mariposa-lily and Rosamond eriastrum to below a level of significance, participation in the City of Lancaster's existing in lieu fee mitigation program is anticipated.

Please do not hesitate to contact Anna Jullie at (616) 502-1186 or anna.jullie@mbakerintl.com, or Arthur Popp at (949) 379-0383 or arthur.popp@mbakerintl.com should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Anna Jullie
Biologist

Arthur Popp
Natural Resources Technical Manager

Attachments:

A. *Project Figures*
B. *Site Photographs*
C. *Plant and Wildlife Species Observed List*
D. *Special-Status Biological Resources Identified During Database Reviews*
E. *Rare Plant Survey Report*
F. *Burrowing Owl Survey Report*

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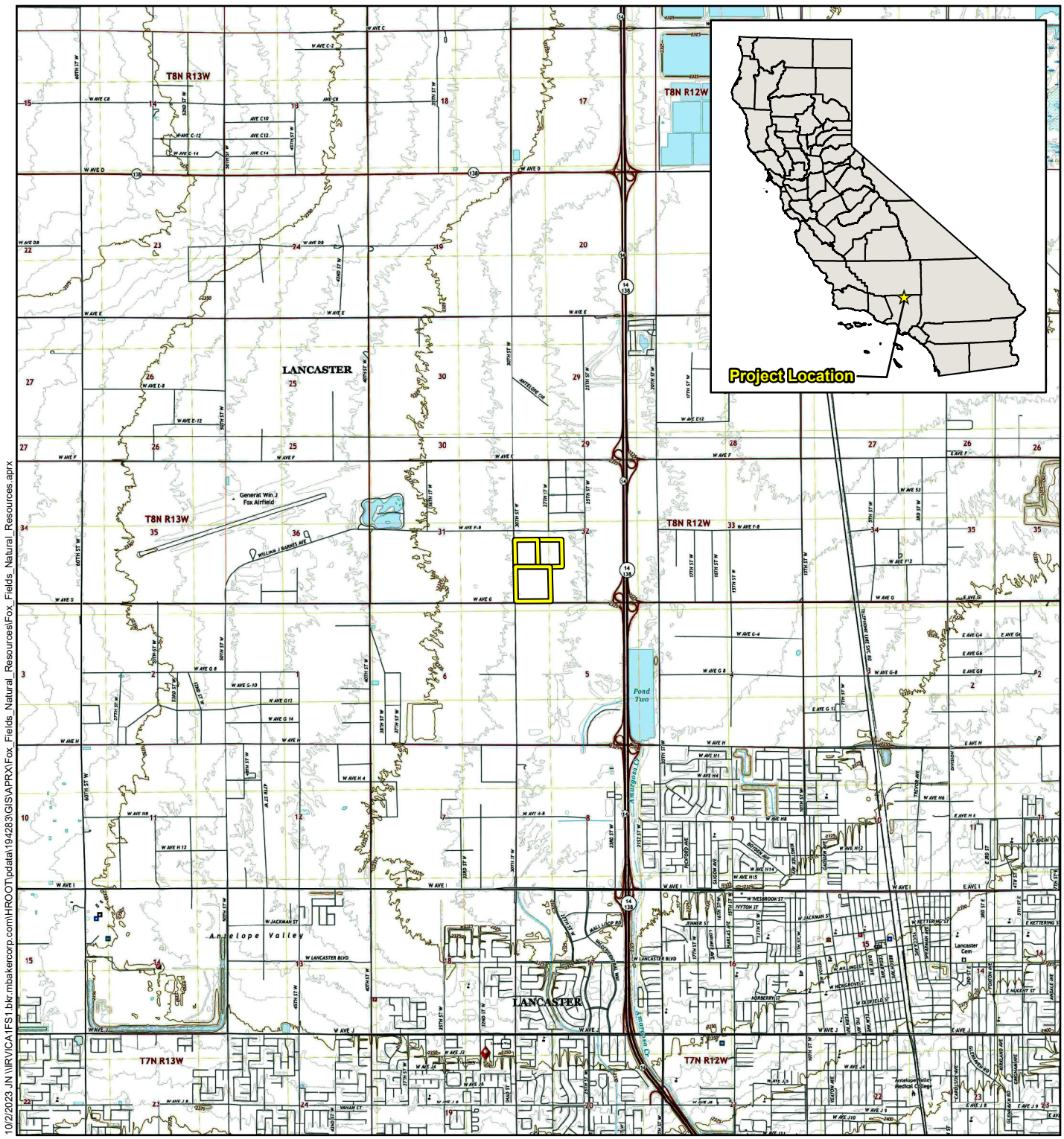
Attachment A

Project Figures



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Legend

Project Site

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: USGS 7.5-Minute topographic quadrangle maps: *Rosamond Lake, California (2021), Lancaster West, Lancaster East, and Rosamond, California (2022)*

SPR 23-012

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Regional and Project Vicinity

Figure 1

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Legend

Project Site

Reference Point

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

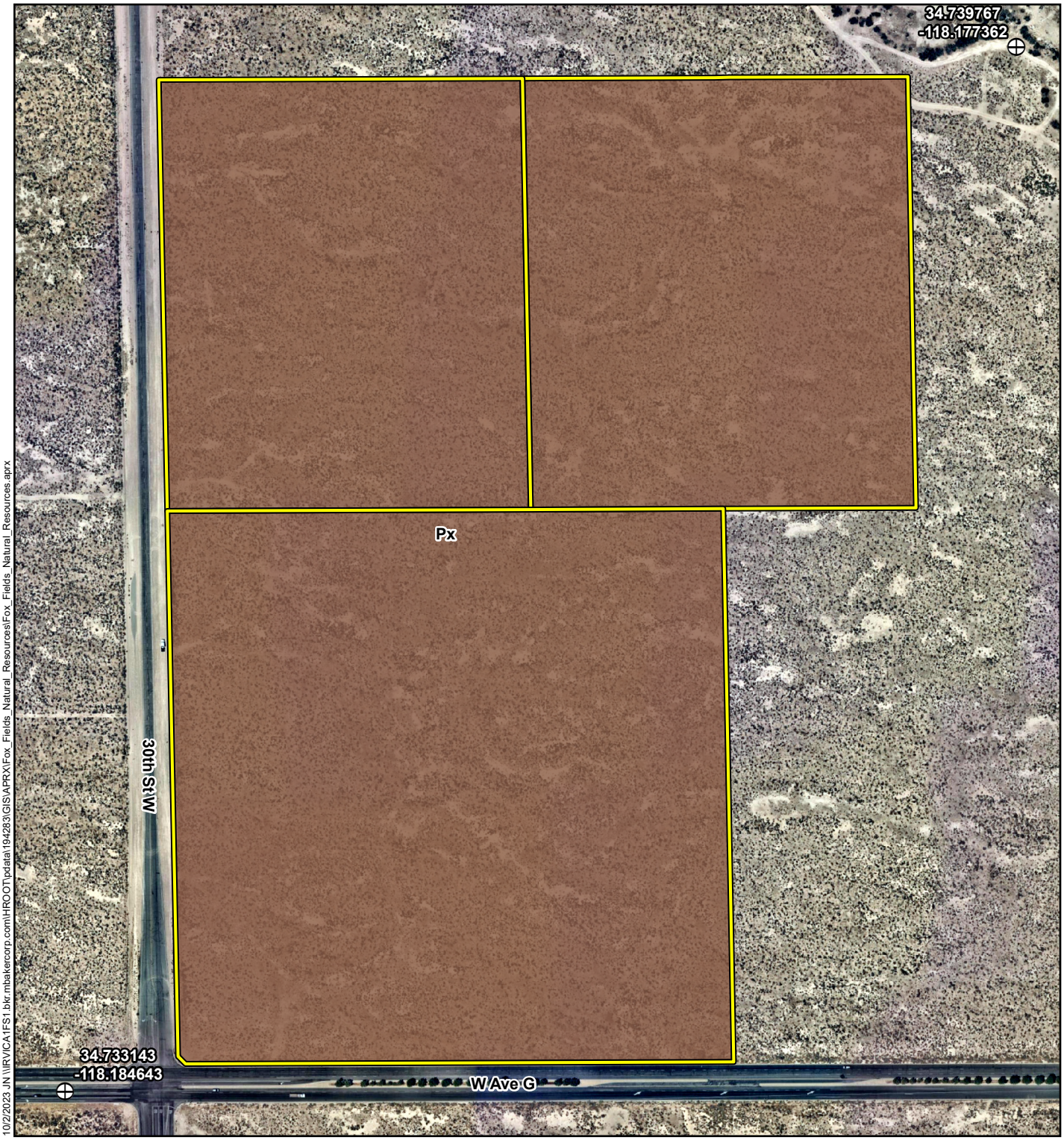
0 165 330 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023)

SPR 23-012
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Project Site

Figure 2



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Legend

- Project Site
- Px — Pond-Oban complex
- Reference Point

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 165 330 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023), USDA (09/2022)

SPR 23-012
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

USDA Soils

Figure 3

10/2/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

- Project Site
- Reference Point
- Disturbed Shadscale Scrub (*Atriplex confertifolia* Shrubland Alliance, 76.79 acres)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

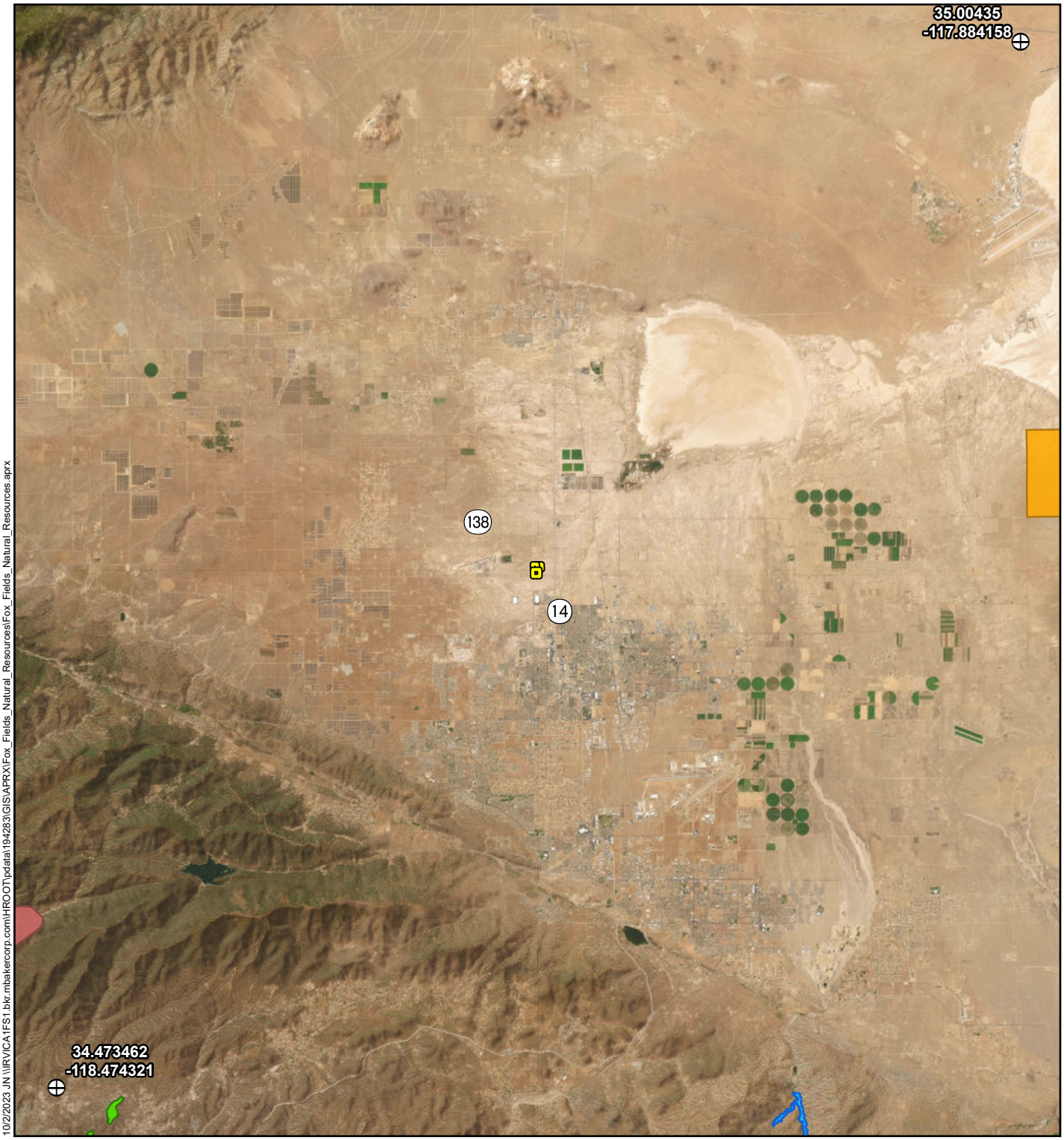
0 165 330 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023)

SPR 23-012
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses

Figure 4



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Legend

- Project Site
- Reference Point
- Arroyo Southwestern Toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*)
- California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*)
- Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*)
- Spreading Navarretia (*Navarretia fossalis*)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

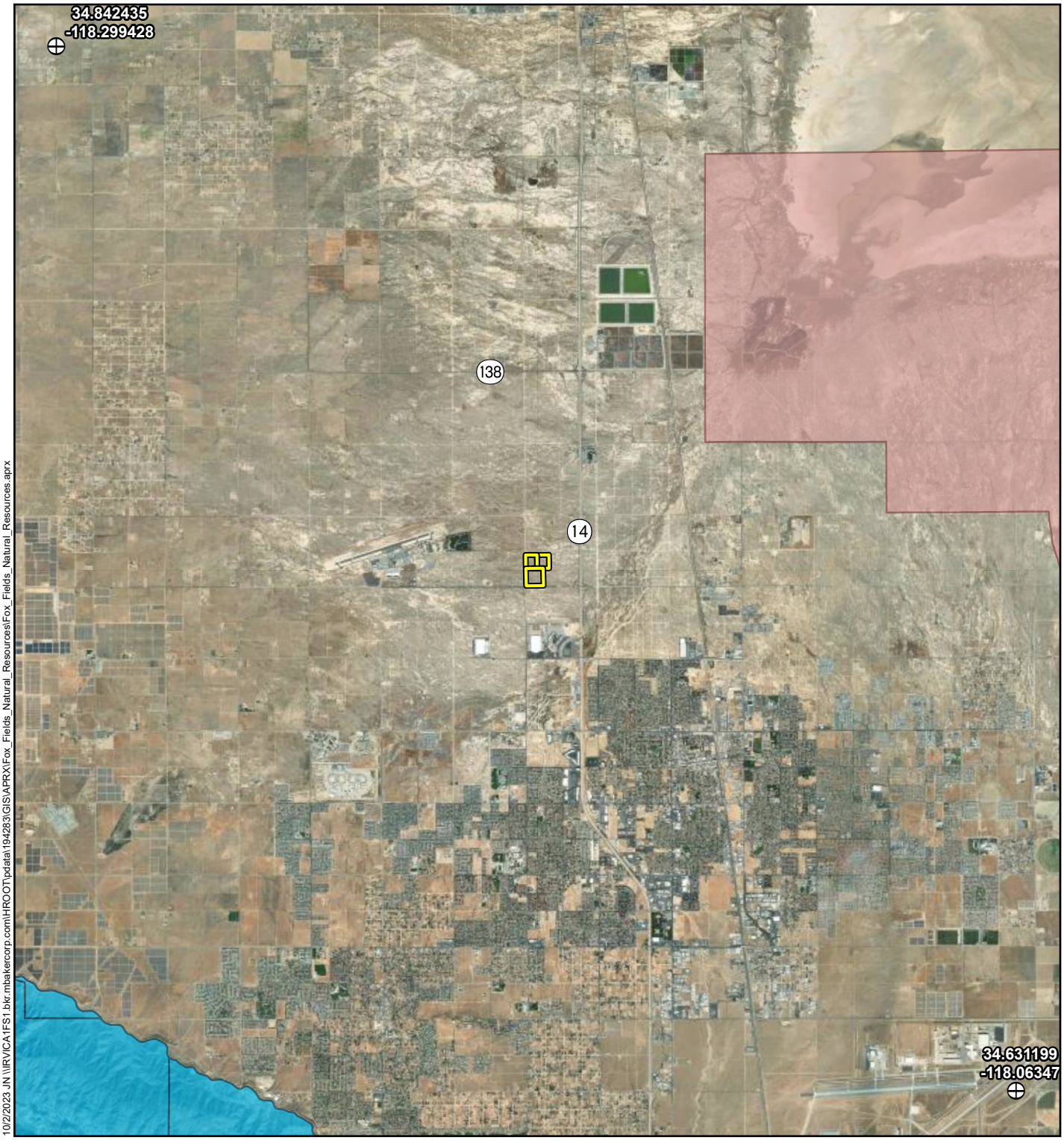
0 2.5 5 Miles

Vivid/Esri (2021), USFWS (09/2023)

SPR 23-012
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Critical Habitat

Figure 5



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Legend

- Project Site
- Reference Point
- Antelope Valley SEA
- San Andreas SEA

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 1 2 Miles

Vivid/Esri (2021), County of Los Angeles (12/2022)

SPR 23-012
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

Los Angeles County Significant Ecological Areas

Figure 6

Attachment B

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: Southwest-facing view from northeast portion of the project site.

Photograph 2: East-facing view from western boundary of project site.

Photograph 3: West-facing view from eastern boundary of the project site.

Photograph 4: South-facing view from western boundary of the project site (20th Street West at right).

Attachment C

Plant and Wildlife Species Observed Lists

Table C-1 Plant Species Observed List

Scientific Name*	**Common Name**	**Cal-IPC Rating**
Plants		
Ambrosia dumosa	white-bur sage	
Amsinckia sp.	fiddleneck	
Asclepias fasicularis	narrow-leaf milkweed	
*Atiplex prostrata**	fat-hen	
Atriplex confertifolia	shadscale	
Atriplex lentiformis	big saltbush	
Atriplex polycarpa	allscale saltbush	
*Bromus madritensis**	Spanish brome	High
Calochortus striatus	alkali mariposa lily	
Centromadia pungens ssp. *pungens*	common spikeweed	
Chorizanthe spinosa	Mojave spineflower	
Cleomella obtusifolia	Mojave stinkweed	
Distichlis spicata	salt grass	
Elymus multisetus	big squirreltail grass	
Ephedra nevadensis	Nevada ephedra	
Eremothera boothii	Booth's sun cup	
Eriastrum rosamondense	Rosamond eriastrum	
Ericameria sp.	rabbitbrush	
Eriogonum sp.	buckwheat	
*Erodium cicutarium**	coastal heron’s bill	Limited
Frankenia salina	alkali heath	
Goodmania luteola	golden goodmania	
Heliotropium curassavicum	seaside heliotrope	
*Hordeum murinum**	wall barley	Moderate
*Kochia scoparia**	summer cypress	Limited
Lasthenia gracilis	common goldfields	
Lepidium fremontii	desert pepperweed	
Malacothrix coulteri	snake's-head	
Matricaria discoidea	pineapple weed	
Mentzelia albicaulis	whitestem blazingstar	
Neokochia californica	Mojave red sage	

*Scientific Name**	Common Name	Cal-IPC Rating
Pectocarya penicillata	northern pectocarya	
*Schismus barbatus**	common mediterranean grass	Limited
*Sisymbrium altissimum**	tumble mustard	
Sporobolus airoides	alkali sacaton	
Suaeda nigra	bush seepweed	

* Non-native species

** **California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) Ratings**

High These species have severe ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal and establishment. Most are widely distributed ecologically.

Moderate These species have substantial and apparent—but generally not severe—ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal, though establishment is generally dependent upon ecological disturbance. Ecological amplitude and distribution may range from limited to widespread.

Limited These species are invasive, but their ecological impacts are minor on a statewide level or there was not enough information to justify a higher score. Their reproductive biology and other attributes result in low to moderate rates of invasiveness. Ecological amplitude and distribution are generally limited, but these species may be locally persistent and problematic.

Table C-2: Wildlife Species Observed

*Scientific Name**	Common Name	Special-Status Rank**
Birds		
Artemisiospiza belli belli	Bell's sparrow	Watch List
Callipepla californica	California quail	
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American crow	
Corvus corax	common raven	
Eremophila alpestris actia	California horned lark	Watch List
Melospiza melodia	song sparrow	
Zenaida macroura	mourning dove	
Mammals		
Lepus californicus	black-tailed jackrabbit	
Sylvilagus audubonii	desert cottontail	
Reptiles		
Aspidoscelis tigris tigris	Great Basin whiptail	
Gambelia wislizenii	long-nosed leopard lizard	
Scleroporus occidentalis	western fence lizard	
Uta stansburiana elegans	western side-blotched lizard	

* Non-native species

** **Special-Status Rank**

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

WL Watch List – taxa designated as Watch List were previously designated as Species of Special Concern (SSC) by CDFW but do not currently meet SSC criteria, and for which there is concern and a need for additional information to clarify status. Generally, taxa designated as Watch List species are of less conservation concern that SSC, whose populations and ranges have clearly declined, making them vulnerable to extinction.

Attachment D

Special-Status Biological Resources Identified During Database Reviews

Table D-1. Special-Status Plant Species and Sensitive Vegetation Communities

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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**: Potentially suitable chenopod scrub preferred by this species is present within the project site. A record of this species occurs approximately 3 miles southeast of the project site, but is more than 100 years old.
Calochortus striatus Alkali mariposa-lily	1B.2 G3 S2S3	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Grows in chaparral, chenopod scrub, Mojavean desert scrub, meadows, and seeps. Prefers alkaline habitats. Found at elevations ranging from 297 feet to 5,460 feet amsl. Blooms April-June.	No	**High**: Suitable habitat preferred by this species, including alkaline conditions, is present within the project site and numerous records of this species occur within 5 miles of the project site from the past 20 years.
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).

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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	**Low:** Potentially suitable Mojavean desert scrub habitat is present within the project site; however, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).

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	**Low:** Potentially suitable Mojavean desert scrub habitat is present within the project site; however, 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	**High**: This species has been detected within the project site during rare plant surveys conducted in May 2023.
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.	Yes	**Present**: This species has been detected within the project site during rare plant surveys conducted in May 2023.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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. Although a record of this species occurs approximately 2.5 miles northeast of the project site, the record is based on a nearly 90-year-old observation of the species.
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:** Mojavean desert scrub habitat potentially suitable for this species occurs within the project site. However, as a succulent, this species would have been identifiable during the time of the field survey. Additionally, there are no occurrence records within five miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a).
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.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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**.**

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.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)

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.

Table D-2. Special-Status Wildlife Species

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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 (CDFW 2023a), 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	**Low**: This species is known from the Antelope Valley region and relatively undisturbed desert scrub habitat occurs on-site. Although no individuals of this species were observed during focused surveys conducted in 2023, potentially suitable burrows and sign of the species was observed on-site. This species could reoccur on-site.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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**: Potentially suitable habitat for this species may occur on-site with the presence of a few individual *Eriognum* sp.; however, the nearest record in the CNDDB from 2.5 miles south of the project site is 50 plus years old. Additionally, this is the only CNDDB record of this species identified during the literature review for the project region.
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.
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	**Low:** Potentially suitable foraging habitat is present within the project site and a CNDDB record occurs approximately 2 mile east of the project site. This species does not breed in California. It may occur across the project site as a foraging or migrating transient.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
Buteo swainsoni Swainson's hawk	ST 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	**Low:** Potentially suitable foraging habitat is present within the project site and two CNDDB records occur approximately 2 and 4 miles northeast of the project site. Trees suitable for nesting are not present on-site and in the surrounding area and agricultural fields preferred by this species as foraging habitat is generally absent from within 5 miles of the project site. This species may occur across the project site as a foraging or migrating transient.
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	**Low:** Suitable habitat for this species is marginal within the project site; however a CNDDB record occurs approximately 4 miles north of the project site. 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	**Low:** The project site generally does not contain suitable foraging or nesting habitat for this species. However, there are multiple CNDDB records within 5 miles of the project site. This species may occur across the project site to forage or as a transient.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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	**Moderate:** Potentially suitable foraging habitat for this species is present in the project site and multiple records occur within 5 miles of the project site (CDFW 2023a). This species does not breed in California. It may occur across the project site to forage or as a migrating transient.
Gopherus agrassizii desert tortoise	FT ST 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 marginally suitable for this species. Additionally, there are no CNDDB occurrence records within 15 plus miles of the project site.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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	**Moderate:** Potentially suitable habitat and perches for this species are present in the project site and multiple records occur within 5 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**: Habitats preferred by this species are generally absent from the project site and the nearest CNDDB record is from approximately 7 miles to the southeast and is 60 plus years old.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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.
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 generally absent from the project site and no suitable burrows were observed during the field survey. Additionally, the nearest CNDDB record is undated and from 10 miles north of the project site.
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 ten miles of the project site.
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.

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank***	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Observed On-site**	**Potential to Occur**
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**: Potentially suitable habitats preferred by this species may occur on-site; however, no individuals or sign of this species have been detected during field surveys conducted to date. Only two CNDDB records of this species were identified during the literature review and this species is expected to be extirpated from Los Angeles County.

* **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.

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 E

Rare Plant Survey Report

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

August 31, 2023 JN 195377

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

SUBJECT: Results of Rare Plant Surveys for the Proposed Fox Field Commerce Center - East Project, Los Angeles County, California

Dear Mr. Lac:

Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) is pleased to submit this report to Northpoint Development documenting the results of rare plant surveys conducted for the proposed Fox Field Commerce Center – East Project (project) located in the City of Lancaster, Los Angeles County, California. Michael Baker biologists conducted rare plant surveys during the 2023 blooming season to document the presence or absence of special-status[1] plant species that were determined to have a potential to occur within the project site, also referred to as the survey area.

Project Location

The project site is generally located north of West Avenue G, east of 30th Street West, south of West Avenue F, and east of 25th Street West in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California (refer to Figure 1, *Regional Vicinity*, Attachment A). The project site is depicted in Section 32 of Township 8 North, Range 12 West, on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) Lancaster West, California 7.5-minute quadrangle. Specifically, the project site totals approximately 76.79 acres and encompasses Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 3114-010-002, 3114-010-003, 3114-010-011 (refer to Figure 2, *Project Vicinity*, Attachment A).

Project Description

The proposed project involves construction of a high-cube distribution warehouse. The tilt-up concrete warehousing and distribution facility would be approximately 1,227,596 square feet in size. Other ancillary improvements would include lighting, utility, and landscaping improvements, among others.

[1] As used in this report, "special-status" refers to plant species that are federal or State-listed, proposed, or candidates; plant species that have been designated a California Rare Plant Rank by the California Native Plant Society; and State/locally rare plant species.

5 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 500 | Santa Ana, CA 92707
Office: 949-472-3505 | Fax: 949-472-8373

Methodology

Literature Review

Prior to field surveys, Michael Baker conducted a literature review and records search for special-status plant species documented within 5 miles of the survey area. Previously recorded occurrences of special-status plant species within a 5-mile radius in the USGS *Lancaster East, Lancaster West, Rosamond Lake, and Rosamond, California* 7.5-minute quadrangles were identified through a query of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB; CDFW 2023a) and the California Native Plant Society's (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California (CIRP; CNPS 2023a). In addition, a Species List was generated utilizing the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation project planning tool (IPaC) (USFWS 2023).

The current conservation status of plant species was verified through lists and resources provided by the CDFW, specifically the *Special Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, and Lichens List* (CDFW 2023b) and the *State and Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California* (CDFW 2023c). 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 survey area to gain an understanding of existing site conditions, confirm previous species observations, and note the extent of any disturbances that have occurred within the survey area 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:

- *A Manual of California Vegetation, Online Edition* (CNPS, 2023b)
- *California Sensitive Natural Communities* (CDFW 2023d)
- *Custom Soil Resource Report for Antelope Valley Area, California* (United States Department of Agriculture [USDA] 2023)
- Google Earth Pro Historical Aerial Imagery from 2003 to 2023 (Google, Inc. 2023)

In total, 13 special-status plant species have been recorded in the USGS *Lancaster East, Lancaster West, Rosamond Lake, and Rosamond California* 7.5-minute quadrangles (CDFW 2023a; CNPS 2023a; USFWS 2023). The potentials for special-status species to occur within the survey area were determined based on known occurrence records and the following:

- **Present**: Species was observed or detected within the survey area during the field survey.
- **High**: Occurrence records (within 20 years) indicate that the species has been known to occur on or within 1 mile of the survey area and the site is within the normal expected range of this species. Intact, suitable habitat preferred by this species occurs within the survey area and/or there is viable landscape connectivity to a local known extant population(s) or sighting(s).
- **Moderate**: Occurrence records (within 20 years) indicate that the species has been known to occur within 1 mile of the survey area and the site is within the normal expected range of this species. There is suitable habitat within the survey area, but the site is ecologically isolated from any local known extant populations or sightings.

- **Low**: Occurrence records (within 20 years) indicate that the species has been known to occur within 5 miles of the survey area, but the site is outside of the normal expected range of the species and/or there is poor quality or marginal habitat within the survey area.
- **Not Expected**: There are no occurrence records of the species within 5 miles of the survey area, there is no suitable habitat within the survey area, and/or the survey area is outside of the normal expected range for the species.

Table 1: Potentially Occurring Special-Status Plant Species

Scientific Name Common Name	**Special-Status Rank**	**Habitat Preferences and Distribution Affinities**	**Potential to Occur**
Calochortus striatus alkali mariposa lily	1B.2	Perennial herb (bulb). Habitats include chaparral, chenopod scrub, meadows and seeps, and Mojavean desert scrub. Found at elevations ranging from 230 to 5,235 feet amsl. Blooming period is April through June.	**Present:** This species was detected in the survey area during the 2023 rare plant surveys.
Chorizanthe spinosa Mojave spineflower	4.2	Annual herb. Habitats chenopod scrub, Joshua tree "woodland", Mojavean desert scrub, and playas. Found at elevations ranging from 20 to 4,265 feet amsl. Blooming period is March through July.	**Present:** This species was detected in the survey area during the 2023 rare plant surveys.
Eriastrum rosamondese Rosamond eriastrum	1B.1	Annual herb. Habitats include chenopod scrub (openings) and vernal pools (edges). Found at elevations ranging from 2,295 to 3,855 feet amsl. Blooming period is April through May.	**Present:** This species was detected in the survey area during the 2023 rare plant surveys.
Goodmania luteola Golden goodmania	4.2	Annual herb. Habitats include meadows and seeps, Mojavean desert scrub, playas, and valley and foothill grassland. Found at elevations ranging from 65 to 7,220 feet amsl. Blooming period is April through August.	**Present:** This species was detected in the survey area during the 2023 rare plant surveys.
Source: Michael Baker International, 2023.			

Field Surveys

Michael Baker biologists conducted the 2023 rare plant surveys during the peak blooming periods for plant species occurring in the Antelope Valley region. All surveys were conducted in accordance with accepted survey protocols and guidelines (CDFW 2018; CNPS 2001) using systematic field techniques across all habitats within the survey area to ensure thorough coverage of the entire project site. Special-status species, as detected, were mapped using GPS devices. Small populations with negligible acreage were quantified using clicker counters and GPS point data was recorded. Polygons were mapped for larger populations. One or multiple survey plots were taken within each polygon. Special-status species were quantified within

each survey plot and counts were extrapolated for the overall polygon. Refer to Table 2 below for a summary of the survey dates, timing, surveyors, and weather conditions.

Table 2: Survey Dates, Timing, Surveyors, and Weather Conditions

Date	Time (start / finish)	Surveyors*	Weather Conditions	
			Temperature (°F) (start / finish)	Wind Speed (mph) (start / finish)
May 22, 2023	0612 / 1155	TM, AN	63 sunny / 87 sunny	5 - 7
July 11, 2023	0750 / 0930	TM, OE	75 sunny / 83 sunny	2 - 2
* TM=Trina Ming, AN = April Nakagawa, OE = Oscar Escobar				

The surveys were floristic in nature, indicating that all plants observed were identified to the lowest taxonomic level necessary to determine rarity or listing status. Plant nomenclature used in this report follows the *Jepson eFlora* (Jepson Flora Project 2023) and scientific names are provided immediately following common names of plant species (first reference only). Vegetation communities were mapped and classified to the alliance level in accordance with *A Manual of California Vegetation, Online Edition* (CNPS 2023b). Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ArcGIS Pro software was then used to digitize the mapped vegetation communities and display these data onto an aerial photograph.

Existing Conditions

The project site is vacant and void of any structures. The site is generally flat and lies at an elevation of approximately 2,313 to 2,319 feet above mean sea level. Refer to Attachment B for representative photographs of the survey area taken during the field surveys.

According to the *Custom Soil Resource Report for Antelope Valley Area, California* (USDA 2023), the survey area is underlain by one soil unit: Pond-oban complex (Px). Based on a review of Google Earth Pro aerial imagery from 2003 to 2023 (Google, Inc. 2023) and results of the field surveys, it was determined that the survey area historically consisted of, and was surrounded by undeveloped, open land generally consisting of desert scrub habitat. Currently, the survey area and surrounding land remains undeveloped.

Higher than average amounts of rainfall were recorded in the region during the 2022/2023 wet season. The average seasonal rainfall at William J. Fox Airfield, approximately two miles west of the project site, is 6.68 inches; the 2022-2023 season total was 7.47 inches (Los Angels Almanac 2023). Such conditions lead to exceptional plant growth during the 2023 spring months and likely resulted in an above-average number of rare plants to germinate than would be expected during a typical blooming season.

Survey Results

One (1) vegetation community, disturbed *Atriplex confertifolia* Shrubland Alliance (*Atriplex confertifolia – Atriplex polycarpa* Association), was mapped within the survey area. This vegetation community is identified in Table 3 below and depicted on Figure 3, *Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses*, in Attachment A.

Table 3: Vegetation Community within the Survey Area

Vegetation Community	Acreage[2]
Disturbed Shadcale Scrub (*Atriplex confertifolia* Shrubland Alliance)	76.79
TOTAL	**76.79**

Special-Status Vegetation Communities

No special-status vegetation communities, as designated by CDFW (2023d), are present within the survey area. The on-site community consisted of disturbed shadscale scrub habitat.

Special-Status Plant Species

A total of 36 plant species were observed within the survey area during the 2023 rare plant surveys, each identified to the lowest taxonomic level necessary to determine rarity or listing status. Of those, 81 percent (29 species) are native species. Refer to Attachment C for a complete list of plant species observed during the 2023 rare plant surveys.

Four (4) special-status plant species were detected during the 2023 rare plant surveys, including alkali mariposa lily (*Calochortus striatus*) (California Rare Plant Rank [CRPR] 1B.2), Mojave spineflower (*Chorizanthe spinosa*) (CRPR 4.2), Rosamond eriastrum (*Eriastrum rosamondense*) (CRPR 1B.1), and golden goodmania (*Goodmania luteola*) (CRPR 4.2). The outer extent of Mojave spineflower was mapped during survey in order to show the limits of suitable habitat for this species. However, it was noted that the mapped polygon was comprised of approximately 35-percent coverage by Mojave spineflower. Therefore, the entire acreage mapped was 72.32 acres, of which 25.31 acres were occupied by Mojave spineflower. No plant species listed as threatened, endangered, or as a candidate species under the federal Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act were observed within the survey area. Table 4 below provides the results of the count and acreage quantities for the survey performed for each special-status species.

Table 4: Special-Status Plant Survey Results

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State/CRPR	Count	Acreage[3]
Calochortus striatus	alkali mariposa lily	None/None/1B.2	1,880	0.72
Chorizanthe spinosa	Mojave spineflower	None/None/4.2	6,146,024	72.32[4]
Eriastrum rosamondense	Rosamond eriastrum	None/None/1B.1	1,145	N/A
Goodmania luteola	golden goodmania	None/None/4.2	181	N/A

[2] Total may not equal sum due to rounding.
[3] As noted in the *Field Surveys* portion of this report, areas containing small numbers of rare plant individuals (areas of negligible acreage) were mapped using points rather than polygons and therefore are accounted for in the count section of the table.
[4] A total of 72.32 acres were mapped containing approximately 35-percent coverage by Mojave spineflower therefore resulting in 25.31 acres of occupied area.

Potential Impacts

Based on the survey results and project description, implementation of the project would result in direct impacts to alkali mariposa lily, Mojave spineflower, Rosamond eriastrum and golden goodmania (refer to Figure 4, *Survey Results* in Attachment A). At this time, it is anticipated that the entire project site would be disturbed, resulting in the removal of all individual special-status plant species.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The project has the potential to impact up to 1,880 individual alkali mariposa-lily covering 0.72 acre, up to 6,146,024 Mojave spineflower covering up to 72.32 acres (of which 25.31 acres were occupied by Mojave spineflower), up to 1,145 individual Rosamond eriastrum, and up to 181 individual golden goodmania. Special-status species with a CRPR of 4 do not require evaluation under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and as a result, mitigation for Mojave spineflower and golden goodmania are not anticipated at this time. Impacts to alkali mariposa lily and Rosamond eriastrum would be considered significant under CEQA and as such, mitigation to reduce impacts to these species to below a level of significance is anticipated. At this time, participation in the City of Lancaster's existing in lieu fee program is anticipated to mitigate for impacts to rare plants under the project.

Please feel free to contact me at (949) 472-3495 or at trina.ming@mbakerintl.com with any questions you may have regarding the results and/or recommendations provided in this report.

Sincerely,

Trina Ming

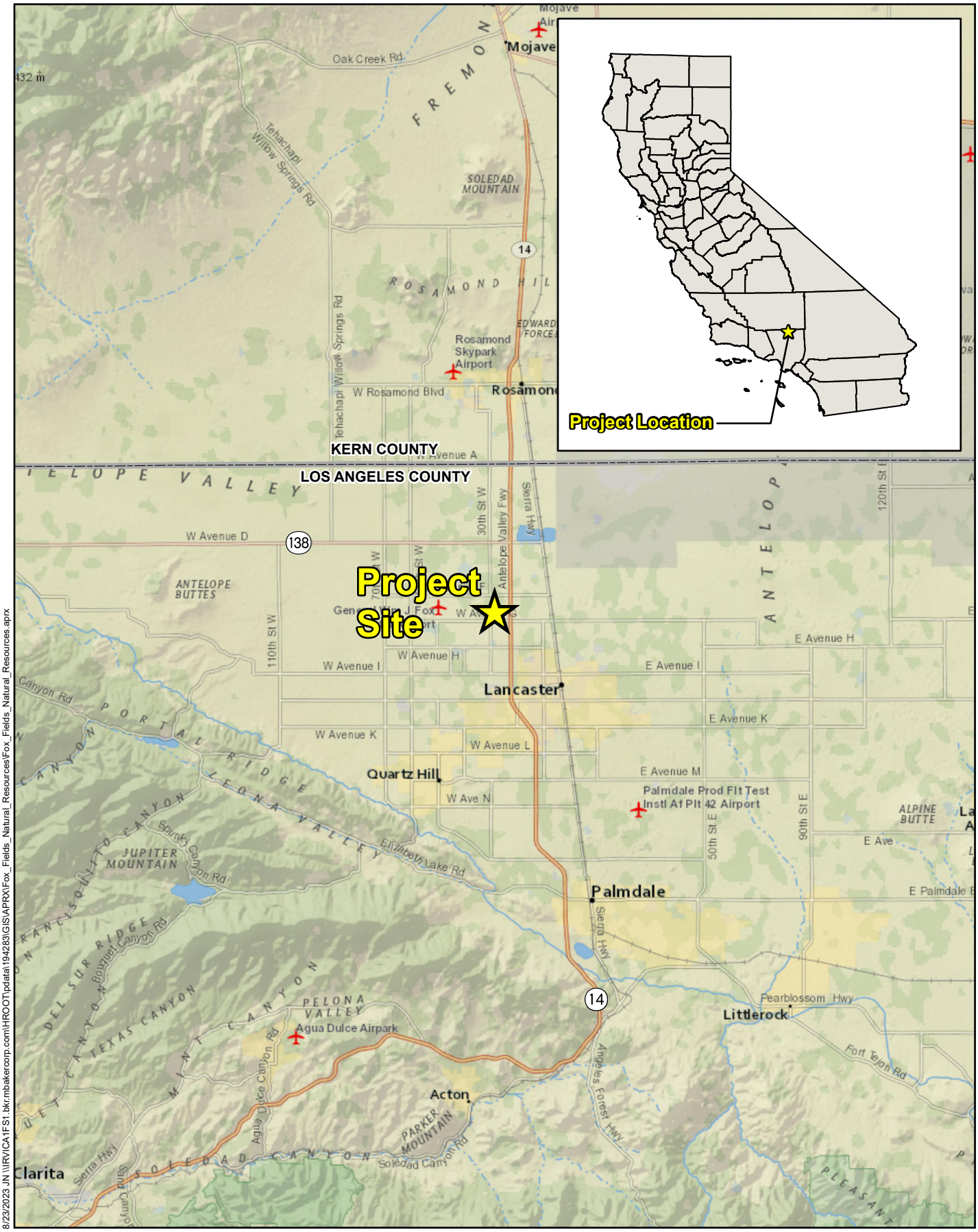
Trina Ming
Biologist
Natural Resources

Attachments:

A. Project Figures
B. Site Photographs
C. Plant Species Observed List
D. References

Attachment A

Project Figures



8/23/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mibakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

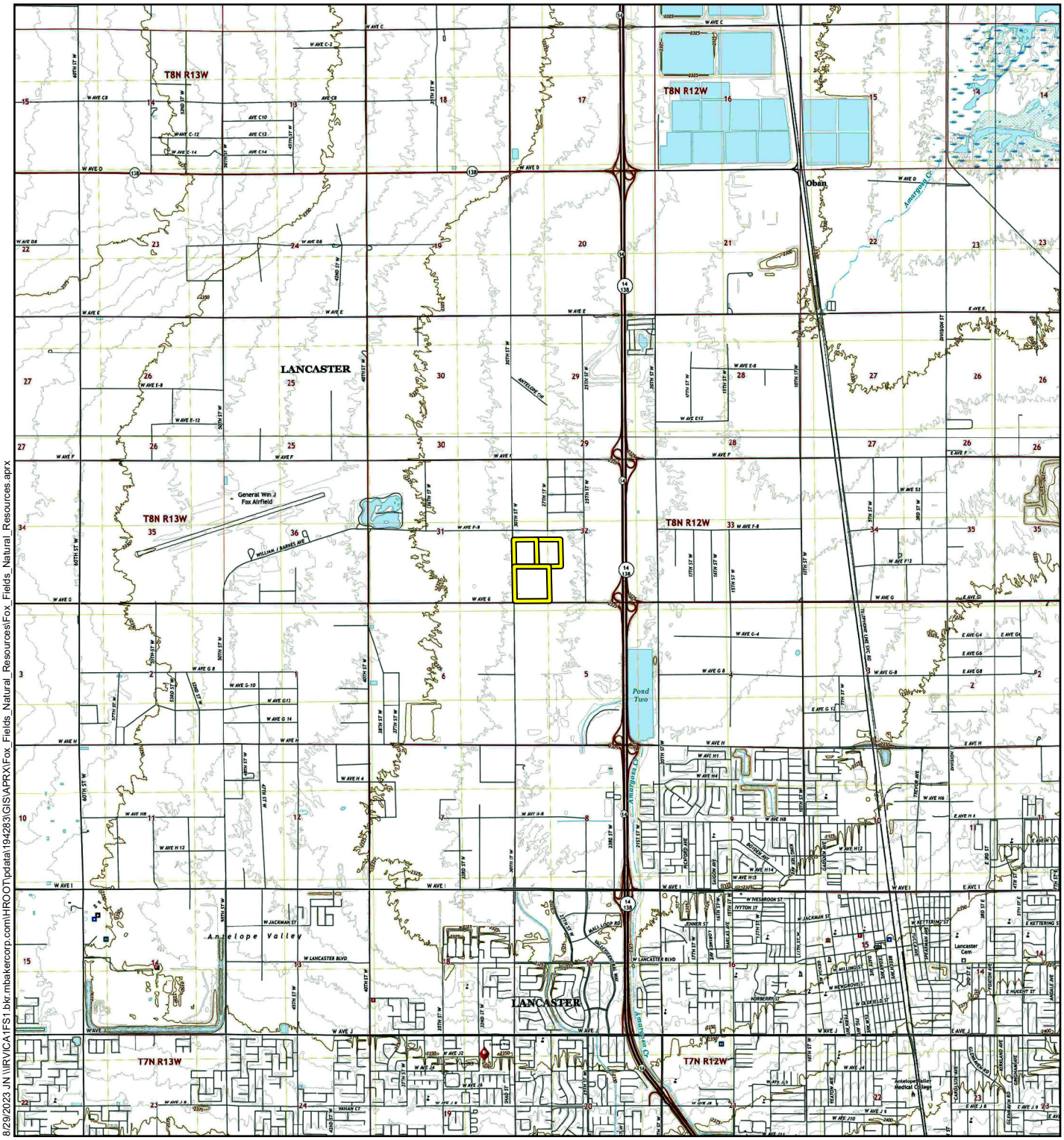
0 2.5 5 Miles

Source: ArcGIS Online, 2018

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
RARE PLANT SURVEY REPORT

Regional Vicinity

Figure 1



8/29/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

Project Site/Survey Area

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: USGS 7.5-Minute topographic quadrangle maps: *Rosamond Lake, California (2021), Lancaster West, Lancaster East, and Rosamond, California (2022)*

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
RARE PLANT SURVEY REPORT

Project Vicinity

Figure 2

8/29/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

- Project Site/Survey Area
- Reference Point
- Disturbed Shadscale Scrub (*Atriplex confertifolia* Shrubland Alliance, 76.79 acres)
- Photograph Point and Direction

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

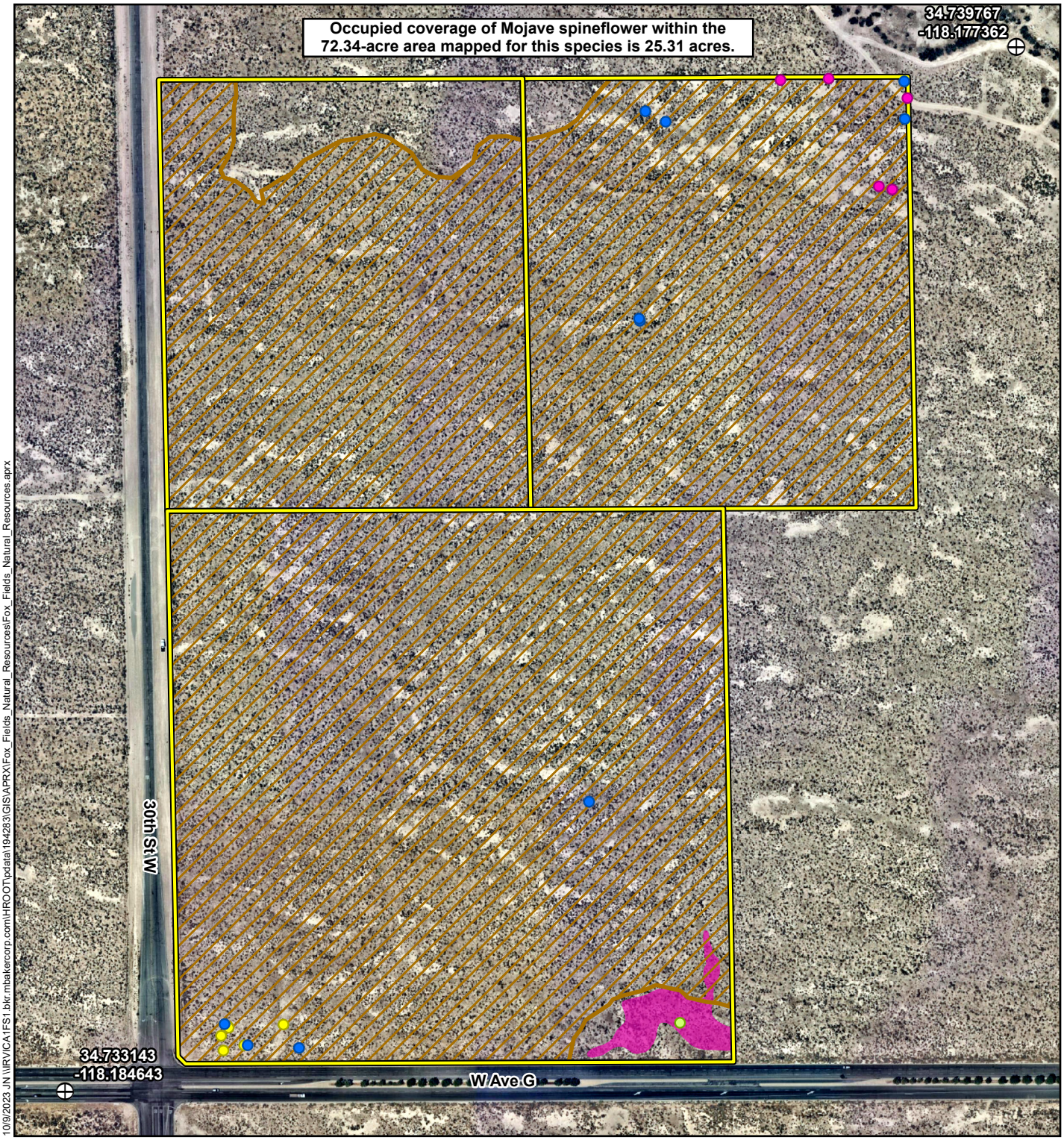
0 165 330 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023)

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
RARE PLANT SURVEY REPORT

Vegetation Communities and Other Land Uses

Figure 3



10/9/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

- Project Site/Survey Area
- Reference Point
- Alkali Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus striatus*)
- Mojave Spineflower (*Chorizanthe spinosa*)
- Rosamond Eriastrum (*Eriastrum rosamondense*)
- Golden Goodmania (*Goodmania luteola*)
- Alkali Mariposa Lily (0.72 acre)
- Mojave Spineflower (72.32 total acres acres / 25.31 acres of occupied Mojave Spineflower Area)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 165 330 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023)

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
RARE PLANT SURVEY REPORT

Survey Results

Figure 4

Attachment B

Site Photographs

Photo 1: Standing at the northwestern portion of the survey area facing southeast.

Photo 2: Standing at the northeastern portion of the survey area facing south.

Photo 3: Standing at the northern portion of the survey area facing south.

Photo 4: Standing at the northeastern portion of the site facing south.

Photo 5: Standing within the eastern midsection portion of the survey area facing north.

Photo 6: Standing within the central portion of the survey area facing southwest..

Photo 7: Close up view of a Mojave spineflower.

Photo 8: Standing within the southwestern portion of the survey area facing north..

Photo 9: Close up review of a golden goodmania.

Photo 10: Close up view of a Rosamond eriastrum.

Photo 11: Close up view of alkali mariposa lily blooms.

Photo 12: Standing on the southeastern portion of the survey area facing northwest.

Attachment C

Plant Species Observed List

Table C-1: Plant Species Observed List

Scientific Name*	**Common Name**	**Cal-IPC Rating****	**CRPR*****
Ambrosia dumosa	white-bur sage		
Amsinckia sp.	fiddleneck		
Asclepias fasicularis	narrow-leaf milkweed		
*Atiplex prostrata**	fat-hen		
Atriplex confertifolia	shadscale		
Atriplex lentiformis	big saltbush		
Atriplex polycarpa	allscale saltbush		
*Bromus madritensis**	Spanish brome	High	
Calochortus striatus	alkali mariposa lily		1B.2
Centromadia pungens ssp. *pungens*	common spikeweed		
Chorizanthe spinosa	Mojave spineflower		4.2
Cleomella obtusifolia	Mojave stinkweed		
Distichlis spicata	salt grass		
Elymus multisetus	big squirreltail grass		
Ephedra nevadensis	Nevada ephedra		
Eremothera boothii	Booth's sun cup		
Eriastrum rosamondense	Rosamond eriastrum		1B.1
Ericameria sp.	rabbitbrush		
Eriogonum sp.	buckwheat		
*Erodium cicutarium**	coastal heron’s bill	Limited	
Frankenia salina	alkali heath		
Goodmania luteola	golden goodmania		4.2
Heliotropium curassavicum	seaside heliotrope		
*Hordeum murinum**	wall barley	Moderate	
*Kochia scoparia**	summer cypress	Limited	
Lasthenia gracilis	common goldfields		
Lepidium fremontii	desert pepperweed		
Malacothrix coulteri	snake's-head		
Matricaria discoidea	pineapple weed		
Mentzelia albicaulis	whitestem blazingstar		
Neokochia californica	Mojave red sage		
Pectocarya penicillata	northern pectocarya		
*Schismus barbatus**	common mediterranean grass	Limited	
*Sisymbrium altissimum**	tumble mustard		
Sporobolus airoides	alkali sacaton		
Suaeda nigra	bush seepweed		

* Non-native species

** **California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) Ratings**

High — These species have severe ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal and establishment. Most are widely distributed ecologically.

Moderate — These species have substantial and apparent—but generally not severe—ecological impacts on physical processes, plant and animal communities, and vegetation structure. Their reproductive biology and other attributes are conducive to moderate to high rates of dispersal, though establishment is generally dependent upon ecological disturbance. Ecological amplitude and distribution may range from limited to widespread.

Limited — These species are invasive, but their ecological impacts are minor on a statewide level or there was not enough information to justify a higher score. Their reproductive biology and other attributes result in low to moderate rates of invasiveness. Ecological amplitude and distribution are generally limited, but these species may be locally persistent and problematic.

*** **California Rare Plant Rank**

1B — Plants rare throughout their range with the majority endemic to California

Threat Ranks

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

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

4 — Plants of limited distribution – Watch List.

Threat Ranks

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

Attachment D

References

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Attachment F

Burrowing Owl Survey Report

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

We Make a Difference

September 6, 2023 JN 195377

NORTPOINT 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 Fox Field Commerce Center - East 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 surveys that were conducted by Michael Baker International (Michael Baker) during the 2023 breeding season for the proposed Fox Field Commerce Center – East (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. As such, focused BUOW surveys were conducted during the 2023 breeding season (February 1 through August 31) to document the presence/absence of BUOW within the project site and suitable habitat within 500 feet (survey area) 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 30th Street West, south of West Avenue F, and east of 25th Street West in the City of Lancaster, County of Los Angeles, California (refer to *Figure 1, Regional and Project Vicinity*, in Attachment A). The project site is depicted in Section 32 of Township 8 North, Range 12 West, on the U.S. Geological Survey's (USGS) *Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle. Specifically, the project site totals approximately 77 acres and encompasses Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN) 3114-010-002, 3114-010-003, 3114-010-011.

Project Description

The proposed project involves construction of a high-cube distribution warehouse. The tilt-up concrete warehousing and distribution facility would be approximately 1,227,596 square feet in size. Other ancillary improvements would include lighting, utility, and landscaping improvements, among others.

5 Hutton Centre Drive, Suite 500 | Santa Ana, CA 92707
Office: 949-472-3505 | Fax: 949-472-8373 | mbakerintl.com

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 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) currently lists the BUOW as a California 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 and Didiuk 1993). The presence or absence of fossorial mammal burrows is often a major factor that limits the presence or absence 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 drainpipes, standpipes, and dry culverts. Additionally, BUOWs may burrow beneath rocks and debris or large, heavy objects such as abandoned cars, concrete blocks, or concrete pads. Large, hard objects at burrow entrances stabilize the entrance from collapse and may inhibit excavation by predators.

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 pasture, golf courses and airports (Thomsen 1971). Based on the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012), the BUOW breeding season in California extends from February 1 through August 31. 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

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 2017). Certain exceptions to this prohibition are included in Title 50 C.F.R. Section 21. Pursuant to Section 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code (CFGC), 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 (February 1 – August 31, 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.

Methodology

The entire project site was determined by Michael Baker to provide suitable habitat and foraging opportunities for BUOW. As such, a focused burrow survey and focused BUOW surveys were conducted by Michael Baker biologists Anna Jullie, John Parent, Art Popp, Marcel Young, and Allexis Cruz on four (4) separate days during the 2023 breeding season. The focused burrow survey was conducted concurrently with the first focused BUOW survey on April 17, 2023. Surveys were not conducted during rain, high winds, dense fog, or high temperatures. Please refer to Table 1 below for a summary of the survey dates, times, surveyors, and weather conditions for each of the surveys.

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

Date	Surveyors*	Time (start / finish)	Temperature (°F) (start / finish)	Wind Speed (mph) (start / finish)
April 17, 2023	AJ, JP, AP	0600 / 0950	68 clear / 70 clear	10 - 12
May 23, 2023	AJ, JP, AC	0600 / 0900	59 clear / 61 clear	0 - 5
June 14, 2023	AJ, MY, AC	0600 / 0900	63 clear / 85 clear	2 - 5
July 5, 2023	AJ, JP, MY, AC	0600 / 0900	70 clear / 83 clear	2 - 10
*JP = John Parent, AJ = Anna Jullie, AP = Art Popp, AC = Allexis Cruz, MY = Marcel Young				

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. During the focused habitat assessment/burrow survey conducted on April 17, 2023, a systematic search for suitable burrows (> 4 inches in diameter) within all portions of the project site was conducted. Survey transects were spaced out at approximately 3- to 6-meter (10 to 20 feet) intervals to ensure 100% visual coverage of the entire project site. Areas within the 500-foot buffer around the project site were surveyed indirectly, as these areas either did not provide suitable habitat (to the north and west) or access to directly survey these areas was not provided (to the south and east). In accordance with the *Staff Report*, surveys were not conducted during rain, high winds (> 12 miles per hour), dense fog, or temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit. BUOW surveys across this project site were conducted in conjunction with another site in the project vicinity. As a result, biologists were generally on-site between the hours of 0900 and 1000 to complete surveys across this project site.

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.

Results and Discussion

Existing Conditions

The survey area is primarily characterized as disturbed *Atriplex confertifolia* Shrubland Alliance (*Atriplex confertifolia – Atriplex polycarpa* Association), or disturbed shadscale scrub habitat. The project site is surrounded by similar habitat, with paved roads West Ave G and 30th Street West to the south and west, respectively, and dirt roads to the east and north of the project site. Refer to Attachment B for representative photographs of the vegetation community present on-site.

Regional Context

According to the CNDDB, there are four (4) occurrence records for BUOW within the USGS *Lancaster West, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle (CDFW 2023). All 4 records are from within 5 miles southwest of the project site. The closest extant occurrence in the CNDDB (Occurrence Number 1,888) was recorded in 2013, approximately 2.30 miles south-southwest of the project site where two adults and one juvenile were detected in habitat consisting of ruderal agricultural fields surrounded by commercial and residential development (CDFW 2023). There are also several records of this species in the eBird database from within the last 20 years, within and just outside of a 5-mile radius from the project site (eBird 2023).

Focused Survey Results

A total of ten (10) potentially suitable burrows were observed within the survey area during the focused burrow survey conducted on April 17, 2023 (refer to *Figure 3, Survey Results* in Attachment A). The burrows were observed primarily in the northern two-thirds of the project site. One suitable burrow also exhibited sign of BUOW in the form of pellets and whitewash near the burrow. Refer to Attachment B for representative photographs of suitable burrows recorded on-site.

A total of twelve (12) wildlife species were detected over the course of the focused survey effort, including seven (7) birds, three (3) reptiles, and two (2) mammals. The most common bird species observed or detected within the survey area included horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), Bell's sparrow (*Artemisiospiza belli belli*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), and California Quail (*Callipepla californica*). Refer to Attachment C for a complete list of wildlife species observed during the focused surveys.

Suitable foraging habitat with open lines of sight for the species, as well as suitable burrows capable of providing roosting and nesting habitat opportunities for BUOWs were detected within the survey area. No BUOWs were observed during any of the focused survey; however, BUOW sign including pellets and whitewash were observed at several potential burrows. In addition, California ground squirrel burrows (>4 inches in diameter) capable of providing roosting and nesting opportunities for BUOW were recorded throughout the project site.

Impact Assessment

No BUOWs were observed within the survey area during the focused surveys. However, BUOW sign (i.e., pellets, whitewash, feathers, or prey remains) was observed at one burrow within the survey area.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the results of the 2023 focused surveys, no BUOWs were observed within the survey area. Therefore, BUOW is currently presumed to be absent from the survey area and project-related activities are not expected to result in any direct or indirect impacts to BUOWs or occupied burrows.

Although BUOW were not observed during the focused surveys, the survey area does contain suitable burrows, sign, and suitable habitat that has been occupied by BUOW within the past three years, based on the presence of pellets and whitewash at one burrow, and could become occupied by BUOW prior to implementation of the proposed project. Therefore, a pre-construction clearance survey would be required to reconfirm the absence of BUOWs. In accordance with CDFW *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation,* 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 John.Parent@mbakerintl.com should you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

John Parent
Wildlife Biologist, Survey Lead

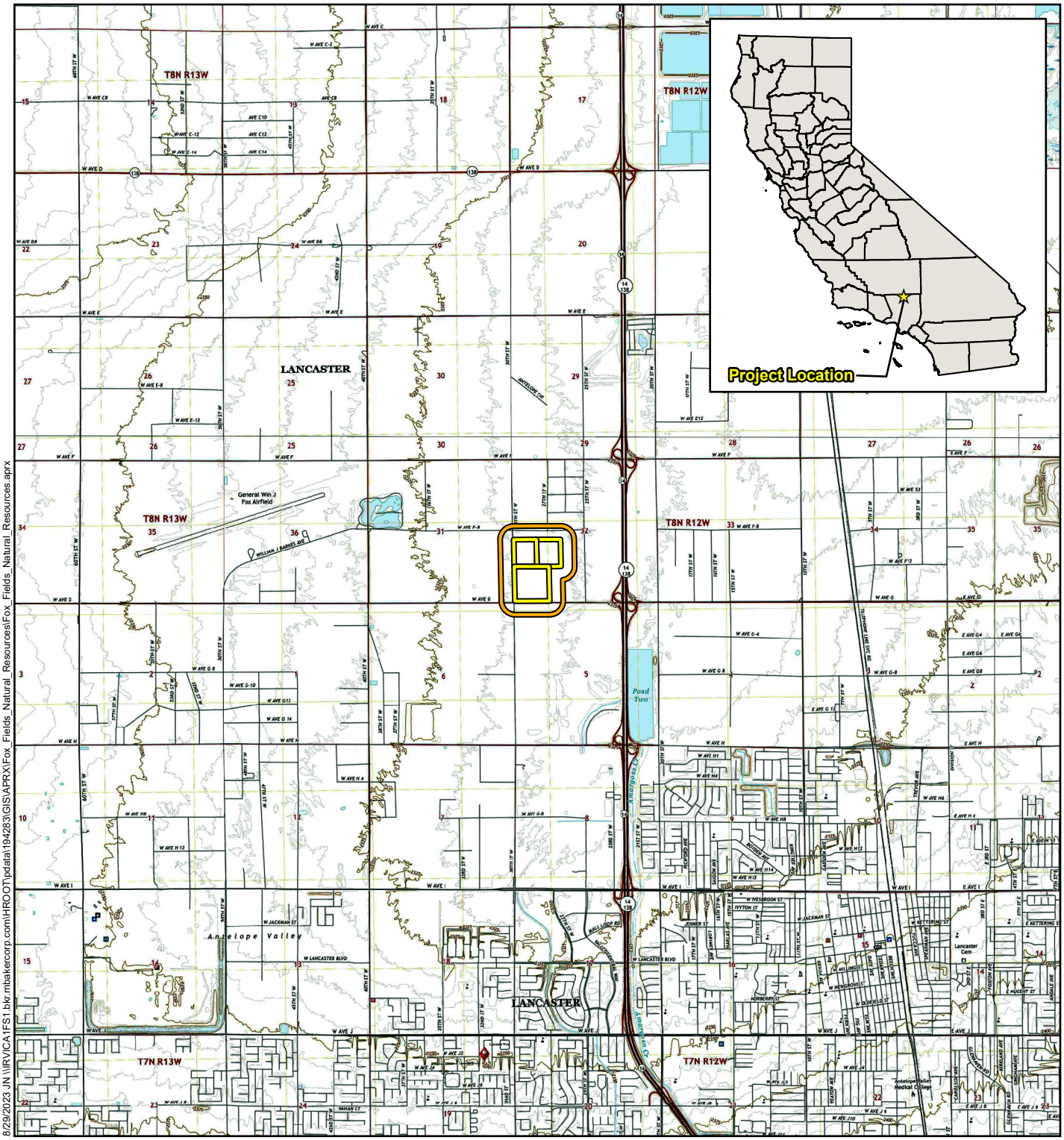
Anna Jullie
Biologist

Attachments:

A. Project Figures
B. Site Photographs
C. Wildlife Species Observed List
D. References

Attachment A

Project Figures



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Legend

- Project Site
- Survey Area (500-foot Buffer)

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

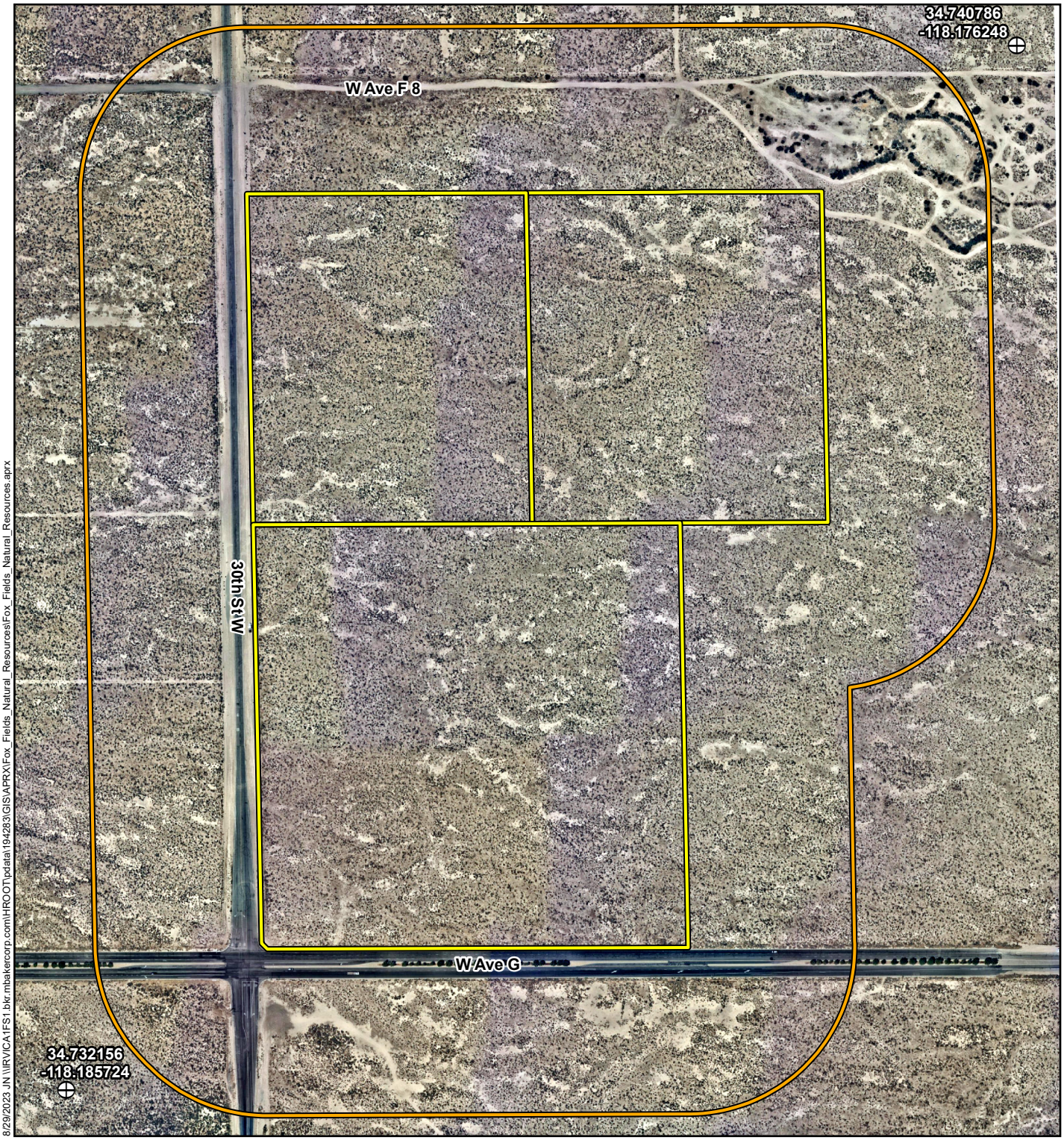
0 0.5 1 Miles

Source: USGS 7.5-Minute topographic quadrangle maps: *Rosamond Lake, California (2021), Lancaster West, Lancaster East, and Rosamond, California (2022)*

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
BURROWING OWL SURVEY REPORT

Project Vicinity

Figure 2



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Legend

- Project Site
- Survey Area (500-foot Buffer)
- Reference Point

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

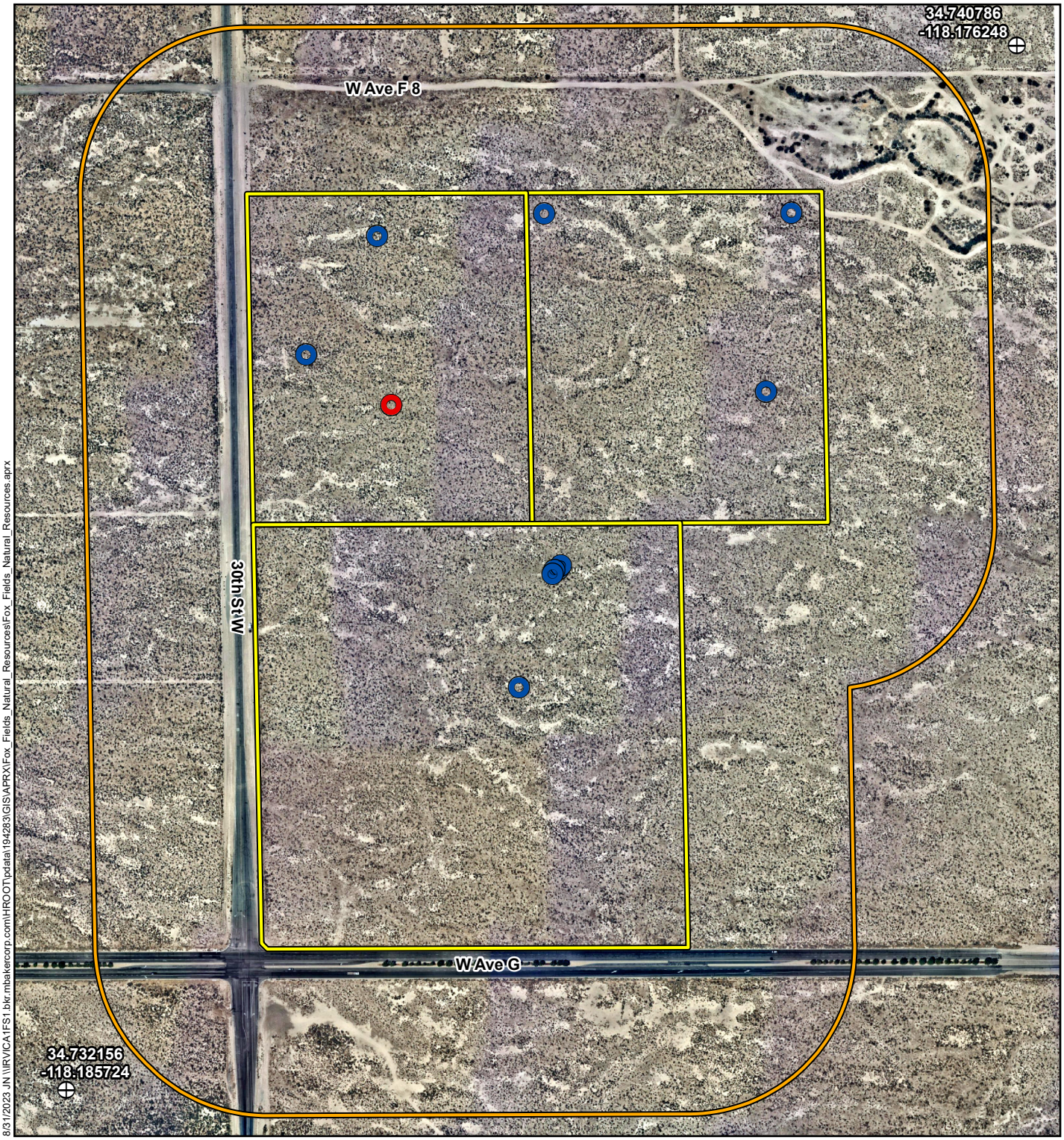
0 215 430 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023)

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
RARE PLANT SURVEY REPORT

Survey Area

Figure 2



8/31/2023 JN \\RVICA1FS1.bkr.mbakercorp.com\HROOT\pdata\194283\GIS\APRX\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources\Fox_Fields_Natural_Resources.aprx

Legend

- Project Site
- Survey Area (500-foot Buffer)
- Reference Point
- Suitable Burrows
- Suitable Burrow with Sign

Michael Baker INTERNATIONAL

0 215 430 Feet

Source: Nearmap (07/2023)

FOX FIELD COMMERCE CENTER - EAST
RARE PLANT SURVEY REPORT

Survey Results

Figure 3

Attachment B

Site Photographs

Photograph 1: Southwest-facing view from northeast portion of project site.

Photograph 2: East-facing view from west portion of project site.

Photograph 3: West-facing view from eastern portion of project site.

Photograph 4: Suitable burrow with BUOW sign observed in northwestern portion of project site.

Photograph 5: Suitable burrow in southern portion of project site.

Photograph 6: Suitable burrow in northwest portion of project site.

Attachment C

Wildlife Species Observed List

Table C-1 Wildlife Species Observed List

Scientific Name	**Common Name**	**Status***
Birds		
Artemisiospiza belli belli	Bell's sparrow	Watch List
Callipepla californica	California quail	-
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American crow	-
Corvus corax	common raven	-
Eremophila alpestris	horned lark	-
Melospiza melodia	song sparrow	-
Zenaida macroura	mourning dove	-
Mammals		
Lepus californicus	black-tailed jackrabbit	-
Sylvilagus audubonii	desert cottontail	-
Reptiles		
Aspidoscelis tigris tigris	great basin whiptail	-
Scleroporus occidentalis	western fence lizard	-
Gambelia wislizenii	long-nosed leopard lizard	-

Attachment D

References

California Department of Fish and Game [CDFG]. 2012. *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation*. March 7. State of California Natural Resource Agency, Department of Fish and Game. 36 pp.

CDFW. 2023. Rarefind 5, California Natural Diversity Database, California. Database report on threatened, endangered, rare or otherwise sensitive species and communities for the USGS *Lancaster West, Little Buttes, Rosamond, and Del Sur, California* 7.5-minute quadrangle.

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