

## PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

505 VAN NESS AVENUE  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA 94102-3298



March 10, 2008

Michael L. Wells, Ph.D.  
Superintendent  
Colorado Desert District  
California State Parks  
200 Palm Canyon Drive  
Borrego Springs, California 92004

**Re: Request for Information Regarding Proposed Sunrise Powerlink  
Transmission Project, Application No. 06-08-010**

Dear Mike,

As you are aware, the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) have published the Draft Environmental Impact Report/Environmental Impact Statement (EIR/EIS) for SDG&E's proposed Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project, and we are in the 90-day comment period. In order to clarify the viability of one of the Draft EIR/EIS alternatives, we would like some information from you.

**Background.** The Draft EIR/EIS includes analysis of a transmission line alternative that would be installed immediately adjacent to the existing 500 kV Southwest Powerlink transmission line for about 36 miles. After publication of the Draft EIR/EIS, we became aware that The Nature Conservancy had purchased some land along this transmission corridor (see attached newspaper article and map), and that the Conservancy intends to sell the land to the State Parks Department for addition to Anza-Borrego Desert State Park. Specific questions:

**Request CDP-1:** The existing Southwest Powerlink passes through this land now, so SDG&E holds an existing easement. Is it correct that any sale or transfer would be subject to the existing easement?

**Request CDP-2:** If the Parks Department and/or Anza-Borrego Desert State Park take possession of the land identified in the attached map, would an expanded corridor be preserved that would allow an additional 500 kV transmission line adjacent to the existing Southwest Powerlink? What would be the process for identification and preservation of such an easement?

**Request CDP-3:** If the Parks Department and/or Anza-Borrego Desert State Park take possession of the land identified in the attached map, would a new corridor be identified and preserved for the installation of a 500 kV transmission line as defined in the Draft EIR/EIS as the Interstate 8 Alternative in the segment where this alternative diverges

from the existing Southwest Powerlink? What would be the process for identification and preservation of such an easement?

Please respond within two weeks if possible (by March 24, 2008). Any questions on this information request should be directed to me at (415) 703-2068.

Sincerely,

Billie C. Blanchard, AICP, PURA V  
Project Manager for Sunrise Powerlink Project  
Energy Division, CEQA Unit

cc: Sean Gallagher, CPUC Energy Division Director  
Ken Lewis, CPUC Program Manager  
Steve Weissman, ALJ  
Traci Bone, Advisor to Commissioner Grueneich  
Nicholas Sher, CPUC Legal Division  
Lynda Kastoll, BLM  
Susan Lee, Aspen Environmental Group

## Article from SD Union Tribune

### **Desert property is near Jacumba**

**By Anne Krueger**

UNION-TRIBUNE STAFF WRITER

January 18, 2008

The Nature Conservancy has bought more than 1,000 acres of desert in the southeastern corner of San Diego County, with plans to use the property to expand Anza-Borrego Desert State Park.

The national conservancy organization purchased the \$2.3 million property near Jacumba with donations. David Van Cleve, the conservancy's senior project director, said the property was owned by five investors who bought the land intending to develop or sell it. The conservancy intends to sell the land to the state park.

Van Cleve said the property is a critical link between the state park, federal Bureau of Land Management property and land in Baja California. It will provide a habitat for endangered species including bighorn sheep and the Quino checkerspot butterfly, he said.

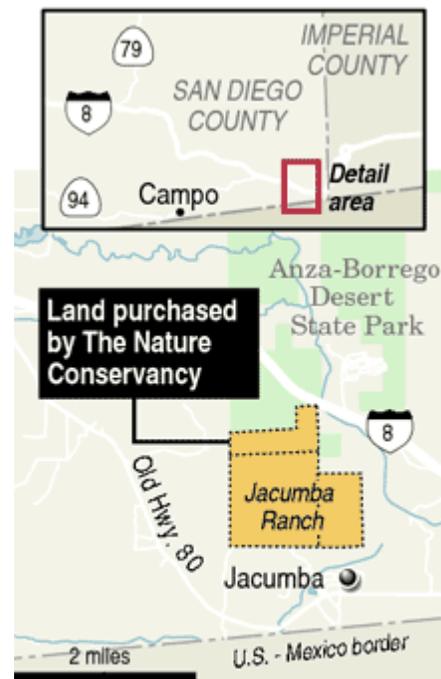
Van Cleve said the region on both sides of the border is one of five places in the world with the climate and geography to create diverse habitats of chaparral, grasslands and oak and coastal forests.

Van Cleve said the conservancy is meeting with state park officials to discuss selling the land. One person already has donated \$900,000 toward the sale, he said.

Mark Jorgensen, superintendent of Anza-Borrego, said that park officials are interested in the property but that its purchase will depend on resolution of the state budget crisis. Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has proposed closing 48 state parks to save \$14.3 million.

“We're going into hard budget times, so we'll have to find funds dedicated to” buying the land, he said.

Jorgensen said the purchase allows the land to be preserved until the state can buy it. Developers are already eyeing other parts of Jacumba. On 1,250 acres near the town center, a developer is proposing a project with 2,125 homes.



AARON STECKELBERG / Union-Tribune

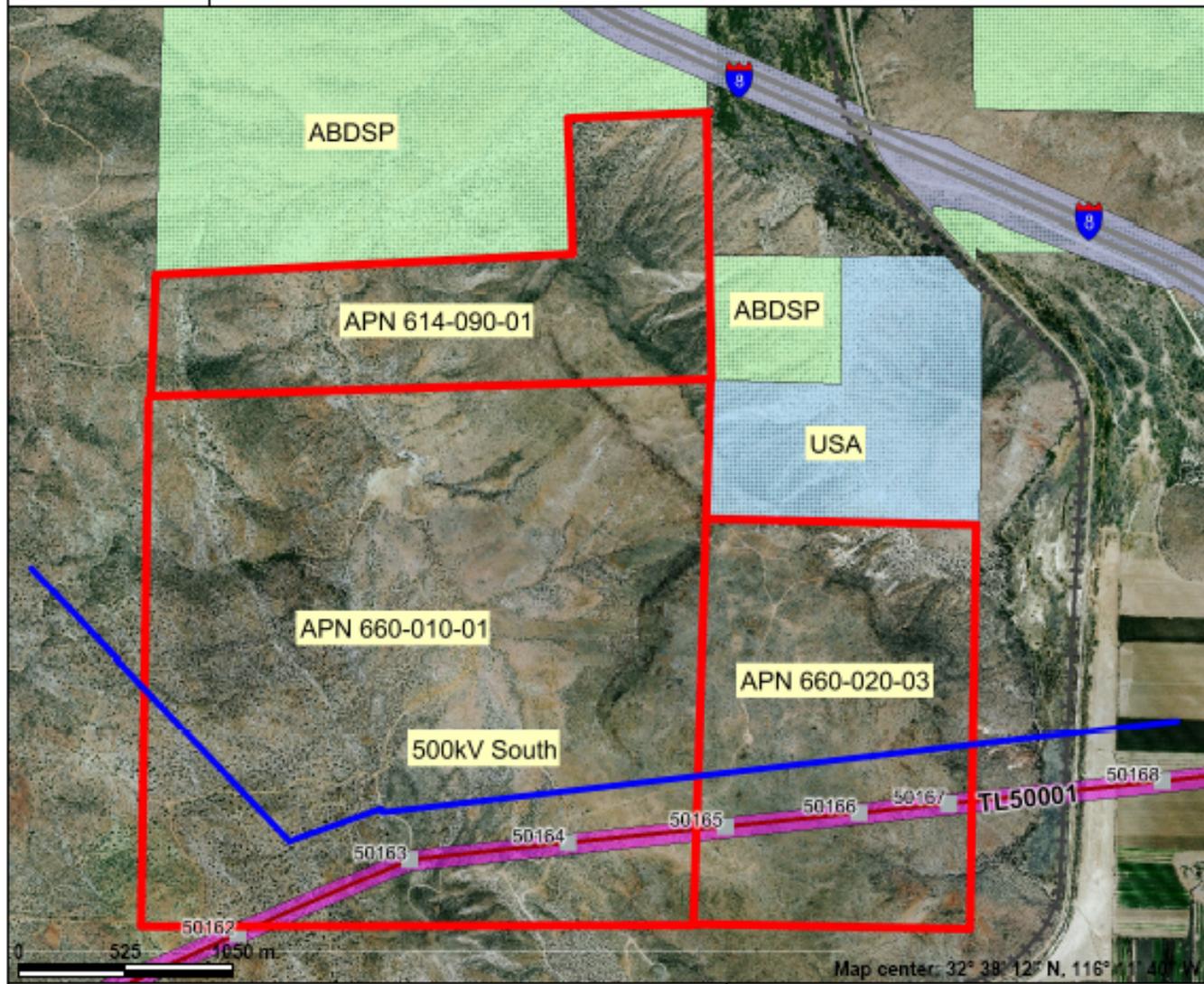
Anza-Borrego Desert State Park, with more than 600,000 acres, is the largest state park in the contiguous United States. Jorgensen said the addition of the property to the park would help ensure that wildlife can move freely between the United States and Mexico.

“It would be a pretty sad day to think we were cutting off that movement with triple fences and continued development,” he said.

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■Anne Krueger: (619) 593-4962; [anne.krueger@uniontrib.com](mailto:anne.krueger@uniontrib.com)

# Nature Conservancy Purchase



### Legend

- Structures**
  - Tower
  - Steel
  - Wood
- Freeway**
- Highway**
- Major Roads**
- Minor Road**
- Orange County Roads**
- Railroad**
- Gas Pipelines**
  - SCG LDS
  - SCG TS
  - SDGE LDS
  - SDGE TS
  - STORAGE
- Transmission Tielines**
  - 138kV
  - 230kV
  - 500kV
  - 69kV
- Electric Transmission Corridor Shaded**
  - Old or Quit claimed ROW
  - Active ROW
- Land Ownership**
  - Bureau of Land Management
  - California Department of Fish and Game
  - City
  - County
  - Fire Districts
  - Indian Reservations

Scale: 1:29,565

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