

To: Robert Peterson, CPUC Project Manager
CC: Tom Engels, CPUC Third-Party Project Manager, Horizon Water and Environment
From: Lincoln Allen, Senior Biologist/Environmental Compliance Supervisor, SWCA Environmental Consultants
Date: January 31, 2019
Re: *Pre-construction Survey Results for NextEra Energy Transmission West's Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project, San Diego County, California*

Introduction

SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) has prepared this survey memorandum for NextEra Energy Transmission West (NEET West) in support of the Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Project (Project) located in San Diego County, near Alpine, California. The purpose of this memorandum is to document the results of the pre-construction surveys conducted by SWCA biologists Jessie Henderson-McBean and Mike Zerwekh on January 28, 2019 and January 29, 2019. Information contained in this document is consistent with the Mitigation Measure (MM) requirements contained in the project's Mitigation Monitoring, Compliance, and Reporting Plan (MMCRP).

Methods

Surveys were conducted from 0900 to 1600 on January 28, and from 0800 to 1530 on January 29, 2019. Weather during the surveys included: partially cloudy skies with 20% cloud cover, 55 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit, and 2 to 8 mile per hour winds. The survey area was limited to the SVC permanent disturbance area, temporary disturbance area, and the temporary material yard (Photo 1; Figure 1). Additional work areas associated with the underground transmission line alignment will be surveyed at a later date prior to construction in those areas.

In compliance with MM BIO-3 biologists walked meandering transects through the SVC permanent disturbance area, temporary disturbance area, and the temporary material yard as well as a 100-foot buffer. Previously mapped occurrences identified during rare plant surveys conducted in 2018 were reviewed. Rare plants that were identified during previous surveys were staked for avoidance within the Project area. In addition, in compliance with MM BIO-12 drip lines of oak trees were staked for avoidance to ensure that root structures of oak trees are protected during construction activities.

In compliance with MM BIO-6 pre-construction surveys for nesting birds were conducted by walking meandering transects through the SVC permanent disturbance area, temporary disturbance area, and the temporary material yard as well as a 500-foot buffer surrounding these areas. All potential nesting habitat was searched for nesting activity, including: ground, trees, shrubs, grasses, nearby structures, and all other vegetation. Areas that were not accessible by foot were scanned with binoculars.

In compliance with MM BIO-13 biologists walked meandering transects through the SVC permanent disturbance area, temporary disturbance area, and the temporary material yard, and flagged burrows with pinflags. Biologists then excavated all burrows that could provide suitable temporary refuge for wildlife (Photo 2). Burrows were carefully examined prior to excavation to ensure that no wildlife were injured by excavation activities. Burrows were then carefully excavated with hand tools to ensure that no wildlife became trapped within the burrows.

Results and Conclusion

Rare plants identified during the surveys were limited to Engelmann oaks (*Quercus engelmannii*) within the survey area. The drip lines of Engelmann oaks were clearly marked with stakes and flagging in the field (Photos 3 and 4). The locations of the ESA areas were mapped with a GPS unit, and are shown on the attached map. If additional rare plants are identified within 100 feet of the construction area, the onsite Environmental Inspector/Biologist will install additional stakes and flagging to delineate avoidance areas.

No active nesting bird activity was observed during the pre-construction nesting bird surveys. However, a moderate level of avian activity was observed within and adjacent to the project site. Avian species observed during the surveys included: red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*), western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*), California towhee (*Melospiza crissalis*), white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), and Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*).

Biologists identified numerous burrows throughout the project area during the surveys. These burrows were carefully removed with hand tools to ensure that potential habitats become inaccessible to wildlife. Wildlife discovered during excavations were limited to: one Pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*), and one side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*).

In addition to the above results, 7 woodrat middens were observed within the SVC permanent disturbance area, temporary disturbance area, and the temporary material during the surveys. Additional woodrat middens were observed within oak woodlands to the north and west outside of the Project area. In compliance with MM BIO-13 SWCA recommends that a qualified biologist dismantle the middens by hand the day prior to construction and relocate all midden material outside of the project footprint. If young are observed within the midden during dismantling, the biologist will stop dismantling, and install a buffer for 24-48 hours to allow time for the adults and young to disperse offsite. Once adults and young have dispersed offsite, the biologist will then complete dismantling of the midden.

Photos



Photo 1: View looking northeast at the SVC Project area from the southwestern corner of the survey area.



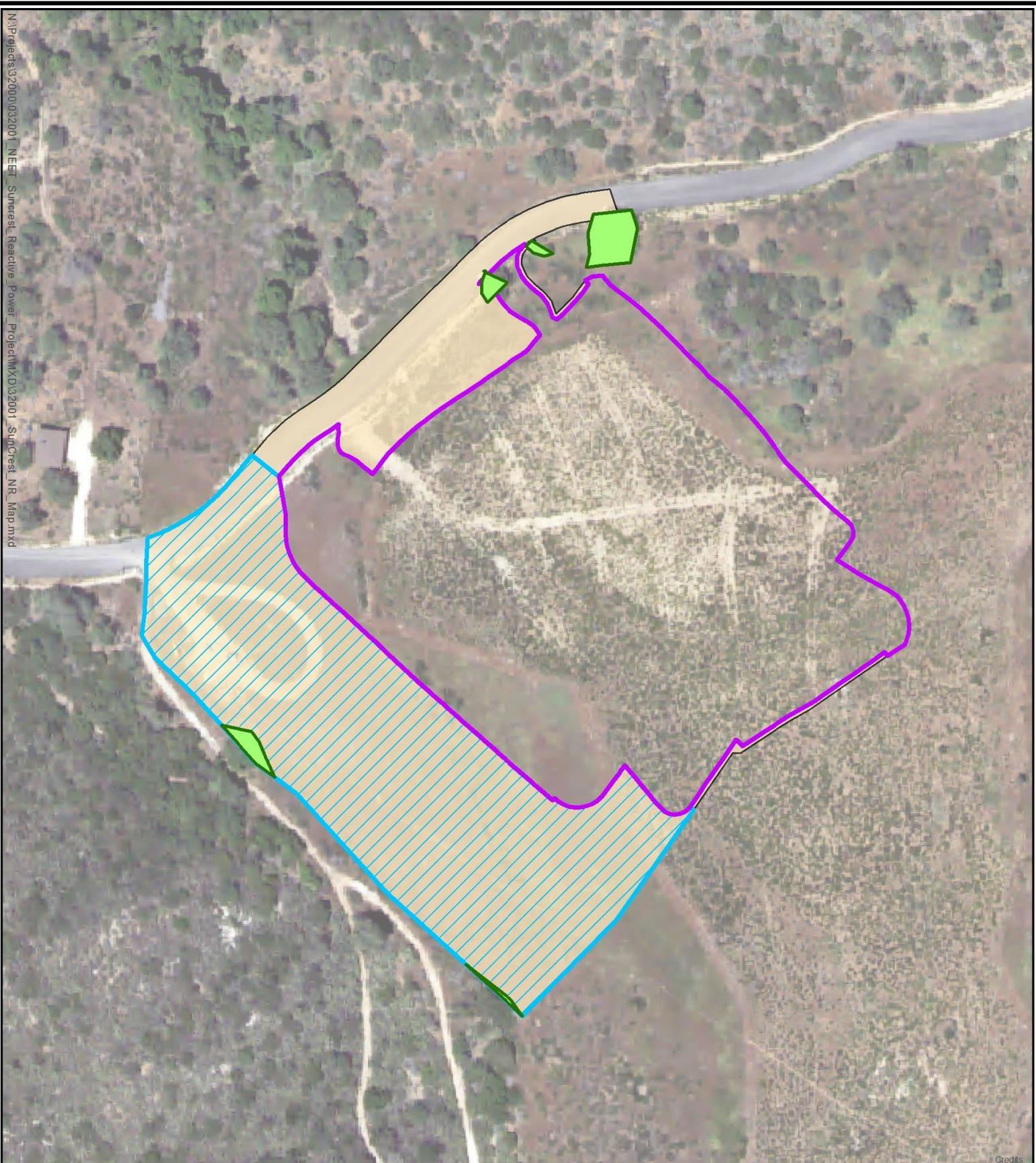
Photo 2: Example of burrows found throughout the Project Area.



Photo 3: View looking southeast from Bell Bluff Trail at an Engelmann oak marked for avoidance with stakes and flagging.



Photo 4: Example of the stakes and flagging used to delineate rare plant avoidance areas.

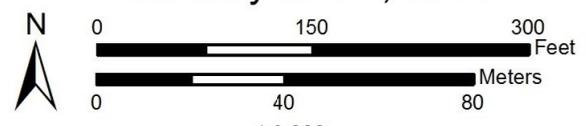


Credits

Legend

-  Environmentally Sensitive Area
-  SVC Permanent Disturbance Area
-  Temporary Disturbance Area
-  Temporary Material Yard

**Fig 1: Pre-Construction Survey Areas
January 28-29, 2019**



1:2,000
 USDA NAIP Imagery (2016)
 San Diego County, CA
 NAD 1983 UTM Zone 11N
 1/31/2019



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