MEMO

To: Rob Fletcher, San Diego Gas & Electric

From: Ian Maunsell

Date: June 22, 2015

RE: Inclusion of the Camino Del Sur Staging Yard to the Biological Survey Area

This memorandum provides a summary of general biological surveys conducted for the proposed San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project (Proposed Project), Application No. 14-04-011 pertaining to the inclusion of one new proposed staging yard. The proposed Camino Del Sur Staging Yard is located near the intersection of Camino Del Sur and Carmel Valley Road within the City of Escondido, and was not previously evaluated within the existing Proposed Project Biological Survey Area (BSA).

This memorandum provides a description of the methods and results used for the general biological surveys the proposed staging yard. This information is intended to supplement the information provided in the Biological Technical Report (BTR) prepared for the Proposed Project (BBS 2014a). For additional information pertaining to the biological resources associated with the Proposed Project, please refer to the BTR.

SURVEY AREA

The general biological surveys included approximately 6.84 acres of the proposed Camino Del Sur Staging Yard plus a 50-foot buffer (approximately 4.97 acres). Thus, the total area evaluated including the yard and buffer totaled 11.81 acres (Survey Area).

METHODS

Vegetation Mapping

Vegetation communities and land cover types within the proposed staging yard were delineated by hand in the field using color aerial imagery and the Arc GIS Mobile Data Collector Mobile Application.

Biologists mapped the vegetation communities and land cover types by walking through the proposed staging yard and documenting the dominant plant species within each of the vegetation communities and land cover types. After the field mapping was completed, biologists reviewed each map for consistency or errors, and the drawn vegetation community and land cover type boundaries were further digitized in the office using Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software.

Vegetation communities were classified according to those described within the *SDG&E Subregional NCCP*. NCCP vegetation community classifications are consistent with, or similar to, the *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California* (Holland 1986). For the Proposed Project, vegetation communities within the Survey Area were identified according to the estimated percent cover of the combination of dominant plant species observed. Vegetation community

classifications are based on a dominant species within the mapped unit relative to the list of dominant species for a given Holland vegetation community.

Special-status Species Habitat Assessment

In addition to the vegetation mapping, Chambers Group also conducted habitat assessments within the proposed staging yard and associated buffer. These habitat assessments were intended to determine if;

1. The potential for occurrence of any of the previously identified special-status species discussed in the BTR needed to be updated;
2. Additional special-status species needed to be added to the lists of special-status species with a potential to occur within the BSA, and/or;
3. Additional focused special-status species surveys may be required to assess potential impacts that are anticipated to occur from implementation of the Proposed Project.

SURVEY RESULTS

Vegetation Communities

Chambers Group biologists mapped vegetation communities and land cover types within the Survey Area on Thursday June 4, 2015 and Thursday June 11, 2015 (refer to the attached Vegetation Communities Map). The following four distinct vegetation communities were observed to occur within the Survey Area: nonnative grassland, disturbed habitat, meadow/seep, and developed lands. Descriptions of these communities are provided below. The total vegetation acreages per vegetation community type within the Survey Area are presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Vegetation Communities within the Survey Area

Vegetation Communities	Acreage
Developed Lands	2.19
Disturbed Areas	8.03
Meadow/Seep	0.23
Nonnative Grassland	1.36
Grand Total	**11.81**
*Acreages of individual vegetation communities are rounded to the nearest hundredth of an acre	

Developed Lands

Developed lands, an NCCP-vegetation classification, are not recognized by Holland (1986) because they support no naturally occurring native vegetation and are characterized by the presence of human-made structures, such as buildings or roads. The level of soil disturbance is such that only the most early succession plant species would be expected. In many areas, ornamental plantings are included in developed lands where they are immediately adjacent and part of the residential and/or commercial development.

Nonnative Grassland (Holland Code 42200)

Nonnative grassland generally occurs on fine-textured loam or clay soils that are moist or even waterlogged during the winter rainy season and very dry during the summer and fall. It is characterized by a dense to sparse cover of annual grasses, often with native and nonnative annual forbs (Holland 1986). This habitat is a disturbance-related community most often found in old agricultural fields or openings in native scrub habitats. This association has replaced native grassland and coastal sage scrub at many localities throughout southern California. This vegetation classification is described SDG&E's NCCP as grassland habitat, regardless of prevalence of non-native species. Typical nonnative grasses found within the Survey Area include red brome (*Bromus rubens*), ripgut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), wild oat (*Avena barbata*), and soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*). Characteristic forbs include red-stem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), mustard (*Brassica* spp.), and tar plant (*Deinandra* spp.). Nonnative grassland habitat within the Survey Area showed signs of recent disturbance in the form of tire tracks, and had large components of Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*).

Meadow/Seep (Holland Code 45400)

Meadow/seeps, an NCCP-vegetation classification, include annual and perennial herbs, including wildflowers and bulbs such as mariposa lily (*Calochortus* spp.), lupine (*Lupinus* spp.), and bluedicks. Where meadow/seeps occur, groundwater keeps the soil moist longer; and vegetation often includes rushes (*Carex* spp.) and spike rushes (*Eleocharis* spp.) and other plants typically associated with wet areas. This habitat frequently occurs in disturbed areas where wetlands have not yet become fully established. Meadow-seep habitat within the Survey Area is largely disturbed and can be further characterized by dominant species including curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), slender creeping spike-rush (*Eleocharis montevidensis*), Italian ryegrass (*Festuca perennis*), and non-native grasses such as wild oat.

Disturbed Areas (no Holland Code)

Disturbed areas, an NCCP-vegetation classification, refers to any land on which the native vegetation has been significantly altered by agriculture, construction, or other land-clearing activities, and the species composition and site conditions are not characteristic of the disturbed phase of a particular vegetation community (e.g., disturbed chaparral). Disturbed areas are typically found in vacant lots, roadsides, construction staging areas, or abandoned fields, and are dominated by nonnative and/or invasive species. Within the Survey Area this community was characterized by heavily disturbed and previously graded areas intersperse with developed and paved areas. Soils within the Survey Area exhibit various levels of disturbance ranging from tire tracks, scattered rip-rap, man-made surface water control systems, and gravel/crushed rock base. Vegetation appears previously mowed within disturbed areas as evidenced by lower vegetation height than that in the surrounding areas (typically less than 1 foot in height compared to surrounding areas up to 2-3 feet in height). Vegetation within the Survey area was largely dominated Russian thistle, with co-dominant species including non-native filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), mustard (*Heirshfeldia* sp.), wild oat, and red brome (*Bromus madritensis*). Sub-dominant species occurring occasionally throughout the yard included artichoke thistle (*Cynara cardunculus*), crab grass (*Digitaria* sp.), cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), smooth cats ear (*Hypochaeris glabra*), and in areas accumulating water, salt cedar (*Tamarix* sp.). Occasional native species such as ragweed (*Ambrosia psilostachya*), coyote bush (*Baccharis pilularis*), and needle grass

(*Stipa* sp.) occur, primarily within small fragmented patches immediately adjacent to the paved areas, likely due to previous landscaping as they are intermixed with non-native wattle trees (*Acacia* sp.).

Special-status Species Habitat Assessment Results

The habitat assessments conducted within the Survey Area indicate that additional special-status species surveys may be required to assess potential impacts that are anticipated to occur from implementation of the Proposed Project. Suitable habitat for both special-status plant species and special status wildlife species was identified during these surveys. However, no additional special status species that were not covered in the BTR have the potential to occur within the Survey Area, and the potential for occurrence for all of the special-status species did not change based on the habitat assessments in these areas (BBS 2014a and BBS 2014b).

DISCUSSION

The inclusion of the Proposed Staging is expected to result in a total of an additional 6.84 acres of temporary work area as a result of the Proposed Project. A summary of anticipated impacts to habitat by type within the proposed staging yard is included in Table 2.

Table 2: Anticipated Temporary Vegetation Communities Impacts

Vegetation Communities	Acreage
Developed Lands	5.64
Disturbed Areas	1.20
Grand Total	**6.84**
*Acreages of individual vegetation communities are rounded to the nearest hundredth of an acre	

No focused special-status species surveys were conducted within the proposed staging yard Survey Area as part of the general biological surveys described above. Based on the results of the vegetation mapping and habitat assessments conducted in these areas, it is anticipated that focused special-status plant species surveys and burrowing owl surveys will be required. In addition, a focused wetland assessment/delineation should be performed at these locations if avoidance of potentially jurisdictional aquatic features cannot be feasibly achieved. The results of these surveys should be should be presented in survey summary memorandums/reports for each individual task. No other focused special status species surveys are anticipated for the Proposed Project based on the surveys discussed above.

REFERENECES

Busby Biological Services, Inc. (BBS)

2014a Biological Technical Report for Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project, City of San Diego, San Diego County, California. March 2014.

2014b Special-Status Plant Survey Summary Report for the Proposed San Diego Gas & Electric Company Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project, San Diego County, California. June 2014.

Legend

Survey Corridor

Staging Yard Concept

Vegetation Community

Disturbed Areas

Meadow/Seep

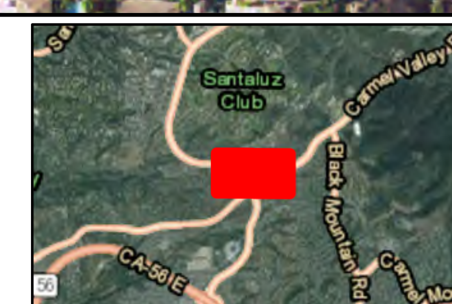
Non-native Grassland

Developed Lands

N

0 125 250 500

Feet



Vegetation Communities Map

Name: 20824 BIO SY Concepts.Mxd
Print Date: 6/22/2015, Author: stondre

CHAMBERS GROUP