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July 20, 2010

Sandra Marquez  
Recovery Permit Coordinator  
Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
6010 Hidden Valley Road  
Carlsbad, California 92011

**RE: 30-Day Summary Report of 2010 Focused Surveys for the Arroyo Toad for the Manzanita Energy Project**

Dear Ms. Marquez:

In compliance with the Special Terms and Conditions for Endangered and Threatened Wildlife Species Permit TE-820658-4.6, AECOM submits this letter report summarizing the results of focused surveys conducted during 2010 for the federally listed arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus [=Bufo] californicus*; ARTO) associated with the Manzanita Wind Energy Project. AECOM currently holds an Endangered and Threatened Species Permit issued by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) under Section 10(a) of the federal Endangered Species Act.

**Project Description**

The proposed Project is composed of three different parts, described as Part A: Manzanita Wind Power Generation Project; Part B: Crestwood to Boulevard Transmission Line System Improvement Project; and Part C: New Substation on Private Land Project. Each part is described in further detail below.

*Part A: Manzanita 50-MW Wind Power Generation Project*

The Manzanita Wind Power Generation Project (Project) consists of the installation of up to 22 wind turbines on the Manzanita Reservation. Each turbine could generate up to 2.5 MW of power. The general alignment for 15 of the turbines follows the Tecate Divide, starting at the approximate mid-point of the reservation's southern boundary and extending north and west to the northern boundary of the reservation. Of the remaining seven proposed turbines, four would extend from north-to-south approximately 1,000 feet west of the Tecate Divide, and three would extend approximately 3,000 feet south from the northern boundary of the reservation in the northeastern portion of the reservation. There are 25 existing 2.0-MW wind turbines located along the Tecate Divide on the Campo Indian Reservation, immediately south of the Manzanita Indian Reservation and north of Interstate 8 (I-8).

Road improvements on the Manzanita Indian Reservation would be necessary along the Tecate Divide and other existing roads to gain access to the three turbines proposed in the northeastern portion of the reservation. This work would include both improvements to existing dirt roads and the potential construction of new dirt roads, depending on the final Project design. In addition, a new access road would be required to access and provide a loop for the four proposed turbines west of the Tecate Divide. Other areas of disturbance would result from lay-down and staging areas during installation.

Sandra Marquez, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
July 20, 2010  
Page 2

A buffer of approximately 1,000 feet around proposed turbine locations has been used to provide flexibility for the Project design and to determine acreages for biological survey work. Using this methodology, up to 1,600 acres of disturbance could result from implementation of the Project, although the actual impact area will likely be much smaller. Anticipated impacts include disturbance associated with installation of a generation tie line (gen-tie line) that extends approximately 3 miles from the southernmost proposed turbine to the existing Crestwood Substation on the Campo Indian Reservation, south of I-8.

*Part B: Crestwood to Boulevard Transmission Line System Improvement Project*

The Crestwood to Boulevard Transmission Line System Improvement Project (Project) traverses between the existing Crestwood and Boulevard substations. The Project extends for approximately 4.5 miles following the existing 69-kilovolt (kV) line alignment and right-of-way. Additional right-of-way may be required along this transmission line depending on final structure design and placement. Some type of disturbance will likely occur along the length of the transmission line and would be increased in those areas where direction changes occur to allow for pulling sites and staging areas. Specific pulling sites and staging yards have not yet been identified for the Project. However, the Biological Study Area (BSA) includes a 100-foot buffer on either side of the easement, with a 500-foot buffer at angle points, to accommodate potential staging areas and pulling sites. Up to 150 acres of disturbance could result from implementation of the Project.

*Part C: New Substation on Private Land Project*

The New Substation on Private Land Project consists of the construction of a new substation or switchyard on private land. This proposed facility will be necessary in conjunction with the wind energy generation project. The survey area is approximately 5 acres.

**Site Description**

The Manzanita Indian Reservation lies along the Tecate Divide north of I-8 in eastern San Diego County (Figure 1). The Tecate Divide is a north/south-trending ridgeline that divides the Colorado River Basin watershed from the coastal watershed that drains to the Pacific Ocean. The reservation is located northwest of the community of Manzanita and directly north of Live Oak Springs, approximately 2 miles north of I-8 (Figure 2). On-site elevation ranges from approximately 3,400 to 5,000 feet above mean sea level.

The BSA, which includes lands both on and off of the Manzanita and Campo Indian Reservations, supports a variety of habitat types and vegetation communities, but is dominated by chamise chaparral with both a monotypic phase and a mixed chaparral phase. Additional vegetation communities found throughout the site and especially along ridges and slopes include redshank chaparral, big sagebrush scrub, and Sonoran subshrub scrub. A series of north/south-running ridges is located throughout the proposed Project site, separated by shallow valleys consisting of coast live oak woodland, nonnative grassland, and southern willow scrub vegetation. Interspersed throughout the chamise chaparral are areas dominated by buckwheat in shallow valleys, along riparian washes and roads, and

Sandra Marquez, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
July 20, 2010  
Page 3

along firebreaks. Various large rock outcrops are scattered throughout the site but are primarily located along the ridgelines.

### **Background Information**

The ARTO was listed by USFWS on December 16, 1994 (USFWS 1994). This listing status applied to the entire population of ARTO. Critical habitat was proposed by USFWS on June 8, 2000. A recovery plan for the species has been adopted by USFWS, which identifies critical habitat and survey protocols (USFWS 1999a). ARTO are distributed in the semiarid parts of the southwest from near Santa Margarita in San Luis Obispo County to northwestern Baja California (Jennings and Hayes 1994).

This subspecies of southwestern toad has perhaps the most specialized habitat requirements of any Californian toad (Jennings and Hayes 1994). They are typically associated with gravelly or sandy washes, stream and river banks, and arroyos. Adult ARTO spend most of the year in burrows in upland habitat near washes and streams. Nonbreeding aestivating habitat can include sage scrub, chaparral, and woodland communities.

Breeding activity is known to occur from February to June, depending on temperatures and precipitation (Sullivan 1992; Sweet 1993). Breeding occurs in quiet, clear backwaters of streams as waters recede from the floods of the wet season. Males call from suitable breeding habitat at night, and the call is a musical trill emitted in 10-second bursts. Eggs are laid on the bottom of shallow pools, usually in tangled strings of one to three rows. The eggs are sensitive to siltation and require good water quality. Because the eggs are laid in shallow water and are not anchored or attached to the substrate, they are susceptible to rapid changes in stream flow that can strand them dry or wash them downstream. The tadpoles are typically mottled or spotted black and brown, and reach a maximum length of about 1.5 inches. Tadpoles are solitary and extremely cryptic. Metamorphosed toadlets bask during the day on sandy or gravelly beaches in the late summer before beginning the subterranean life of the adults. The adults typically spend the majority of the year in burrows, are nocturnal, and are occasionally found at night foraging on open, sandy areas around the drainage. Burrows are shallow and are usually located in sandy soils on terraces adjacent to streams (USFWS 1994).

An estimated 75% of the historical habitat of the species has been destroyed, and many of the remaining populations are threatened. The primary reasons for the decline of the species include dams and water projects, urban development, agriculture and grazing, and human recreational activities in breeding areas.

### **Survey Methodology**

This report summarizes 2010 ARTO survey activities as conducted by AECOM in the BSA. The habitat assessment was conducted prior to protocol ARTO surveys to focus efforts in suitable areas. All surveys were conducted according to the USFWS *Survey Protocol for the Arroyo Toad* (USFWS 1999b).

Sandra Marquez, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
July 20, 2010  
Page 4

### Habitat Assessment

Prior to the initiation of surveys, regional databases were searched to determine the closest known occurrences of ARTO in the vicinity of the BSA. The California Natural Diversity Database, USFWS, and U.S. Forest Service databases resulted in one documented ARTO location, 8.5 miles to the west of the BSA, in Cottonwood Creek where it intersects with Buckman Springs Road, within Cleveland National Forest.

A focused habitat assessment of the entire Project site was conducted on April 14, 2010, by AECOM biologists Michael Anguiano and Matt Kedziora. These biologists reviewed aerial photos to identify riparian areas with potentially suitable arroyo toad habitat. The riparian areas within the BSA were characterized based on presence of predominately sandy substrates in the channel, flat sandy terraces adjacent to the channel (upland habitat), and a watercourse of braided channels. Water was present within some stream channels; however, characterization of habitat was not contingent on the amount of water present in the channel. After field verification of these potential areas identified during the aerial photo review, biologists determined that there was 0.42 acre of potential ARTO habitat along Part B, Crestwood to Boulevard Transmission Line System Improvement Project (Figure 3). No suitable habitat for the ARTO was found within the BSA for Part A, Manzanita 50-MW Wind Power Generation Project on the Manzanita or Campo Indian Reservations, or Part C, the New Substation on Private Land Project. Appendix A contains a description and photo of the area of suitable habitat found along the transmission line corridor, which was determined to be poor habitat quality. Although there are flat sandy terraces adjacent to the stream (Appendix A), there is little to no sand present in the stream and there is no stream braiding. The streambed is several feet wide and consists of a single channel.

### Protocol Surveys

Presence/absence surveys were performed in accordance with the most current guidelines set forth in the USFWS survey protocol for the ARTO (USFWS 1999b). Presence/absence surveys do not require a permit under section 10(a)(1)(A) of the Endangered Species Act of 1973. Protocol ARTO surveys were conducted over six survey sessions, each including 1 day and 1 night survey component. At least 7 days separated each survey session. Surveys occurred from April 25 through June 10, 2010. No "take" of the species occurred during protocol surveys.

Protocol surveys were conducted by AECOM biologists Michael Anguiano, Andrew Fisher, Richard Hermann, Brennan Mulrooney, and Erin Riley. Approximately 0.42 acre is considered potentially suitable ARTO breeding habitat within the Project site (Figure 3). Visual encounter surveys based on the area of known suitable habitat were used to detect ARTO.

Sandra Marquez, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office

July 20, 2010

Page 5

During diurnal surveys, pools and still eddies at the water's edge were surveyed for the presence of egg masses or tadpoles. Surveys included walking slowly along suitable habitat edges. Headlamps and flashlights were used during nocturnal surveys to slowly scan the ground within the suitable habitat. All nocturnal surveys were conducted between 1 hour after dusk and midnight, and were conducted when temperature at dusk was 55 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) or greater. Riparian and adjacent upland trails were surveyed at night within the floodplain. Surveyors periodically stopped and remained still and silent for up to approximately 15 minutes to wait for ARTO calling, as per the USFWS protocol.

## **Results**

No federally designated critical habitat for ARTO occurs in the BSA. A summary of survey efforts and field conditions is presented in Table 1. The site was visited 12 times (six sessions, each with day and night survey components); a cumulative total of approximately 5.5 person-hours were spent during the survey period conducting the USFWS protocol surveys. No ARTOs were observed or recorded. Copies of field data sheets are included in Appendix B. Wildlife species observed during the ARTO focused surveys are presented in Appendix C.

## **Discussion**

No ARTO were detected during protocol surveys. The protocol ARTO survey area focused on potentially suitable habitat identified during the habitat assessment. The survey area was limited to Part B, the Crestwood to Boulevard Transmission Line System Improvement Project, and contained low-quality ARTO habitat. Overall, the ARTO habitat is sparse and fragmented by topographical features (e.g., mountains) from known arroyo toad locations. The nearest known documented location of ARTO is within the Cleveland National Forest, approximately 8.5 miles west of the BSA at Cottonwood Creek where it intersects with Buckman Springs Road. The well-documented population of ARTO at Cottonwood Creek was used as a reference site throughout the survey sessions. Cottonwood Creek contains high-quality habitat, with sandy substrates in the channel, flat sandy terrain immediately adjacent to the channel, and a watercourse of braided channels. The reference site contains more components of habitat necessary to support ARTO, such as extensive braiding; large flat and sandy banks and terraces; and frequent shallow, protected pools. Most of these habitat components were minimally represented within the Project survey area. This reference site was visited following each protocol ARTO survey. Adult ARTO were detected at Cottonwood Creek each time the area was visited in 2010 during the protocol survey season, thus verifying that ARTO were active during all six survey sessions and, if present on-site, would have likely been detected.

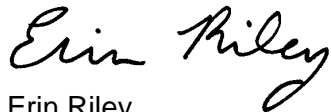
**Table 1**  
**Protocol Arroyo Toad Surveys**  
**Dates, Personnel, Weather Conditions, and Observations**

<b>Survey # and Timing</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Weather</b>	<b>Personnel</b>	<b>ARTO Observations</b>
1 – Day	4/25/2010	1820–1840	Start: 63°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 miles per hour (mph) End: 63°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph	Michael Anguiano, Andrew Fisher, Erin Riley	None
1 – Night	4/25/2010	2210–2230	Temp at dusk: 58°F Start: 53°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph End: 53°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph	Michael Anguiano, Andrew Fisher, Erin Riley	None
2 – Day	5/6/2010	1530–1545	Start: 72°F, 0% clouds, wind 2–5 mph End: 72°F, 0% clouds, wind 2–5 mph	Michael Anguiano, Andrew Fisher	None
2 – Night	5/6/2010	2032–2049	Temp at dusk: 60°F Start: 54°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph End: 54°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph	Michael Anguiano, Andrew Fisher	None
3 - Day	5/13/2010	1548–1607	Start: 72°F, 20% clouds, wind 1–5 mph End: 72°F, 20% clouds, wind 1–5 mph	Michael Anguiano	None
3 – Night	5/13/2010	2034–2053	Temp at dusk: 60°F Start: 55°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph End: 55°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph	Michael Anguiano	None
4 – Day	5/20/2010	1710–1725	Start: 76°F, 0% clouds, wind 1 mph End: 76°F, 0% clouds, wind 1 mph	Andrew Fisher, Richard Hermann	None
4 – Night	5/20/2010	2040–2053	Temp at dusk: 61.1°F Start: 56°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph End: 56°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph	Andrew Fisher, Richard Hermann	None
5 – Day	6/2/2010	1728–1755	Start: 78°F, 5% clouds, wind 0 mph End: 76°F, 5% clouds, wind 0 mph	Andrew Fisher, Richard Hermann	None
5 – Night	6/2/2010	2050–2105	Temp at dusk: 59°F Start: 55°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph End: 50°F, 0% clouds, wind 0 mph	Andrew Fisher, Richard Hermann	None
6 – Day	6/10/2010	1736–1746	Start: 75°F, 0% clouds, wind 4.2 mph End: 75°F, 0% clouds, wind 5 mph	Andrew Fisher, Brennan Mulrooney	None
6 – Night	6/10/2010	2055–2106	Temp at dusk: 55°F Start: 52°F, 0% clouds, wind 3.6 mph End: 52°F, 100% clouds, wind 3.6 mph	Andrew Fisher, Brennan Mulrooney	None

Sandra Marquez, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
July 20, 2010  
Page 7

If you have any questions or comments regarding this letter report, please contact me at (619) 233-1454. Thank you.

Sincerely,



Erin Riley  
Wildlife Biologist

Attachments: Figure 1 – Regional Map  
Figure 2 – Vicinity Map  
Figure 3 – Arroyo Toad Survey Area  
Appendix A – Habitat Assessment Memo  
Appendix B – Field Data Sheets  
Appendix C – Wildlife Species Detected During Arroyo Toad Surveys



Sandra Marquez, Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office  
July 20, 2010  
Page 8

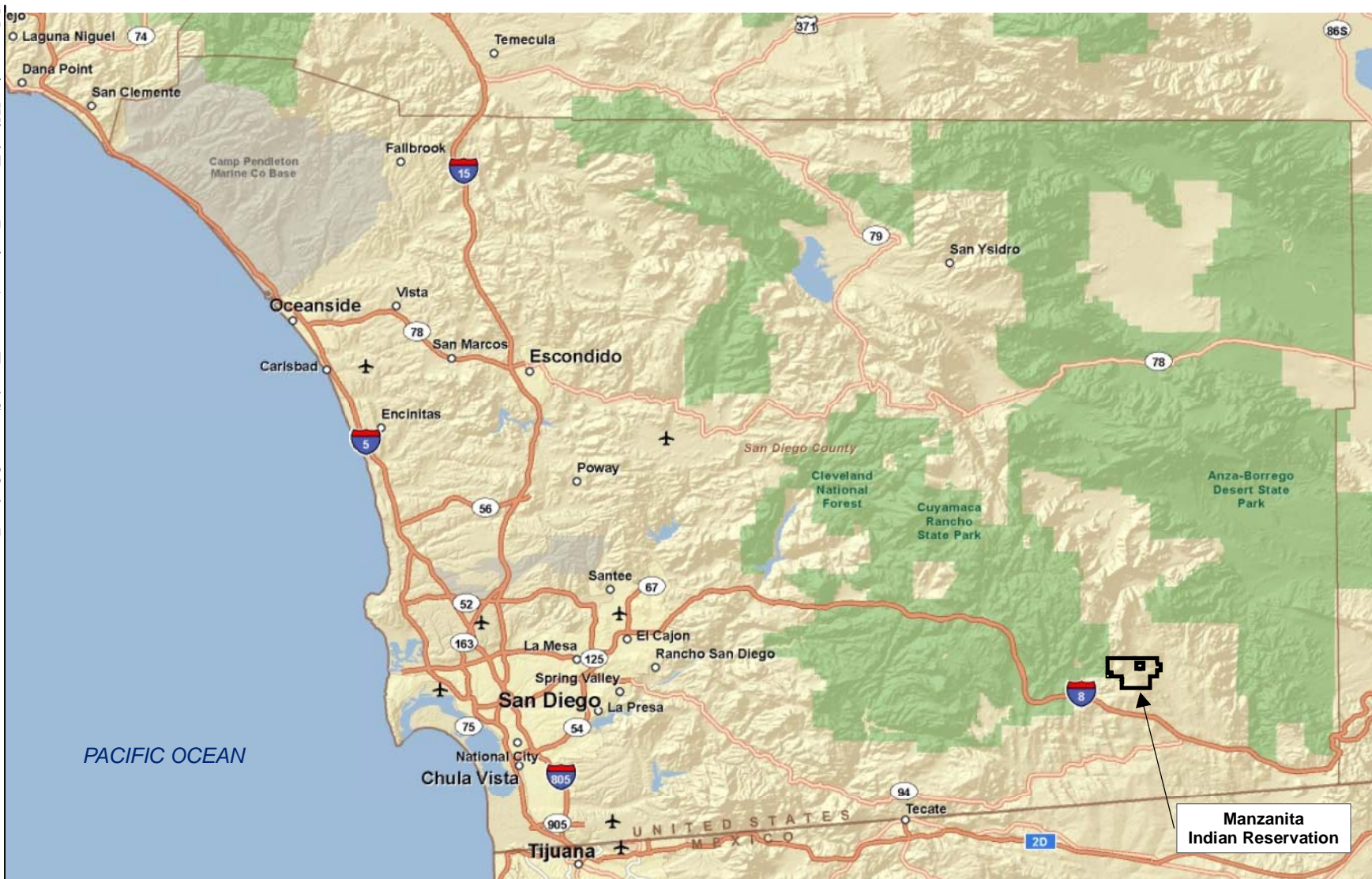
### **Literature Cited**

- Jennings, M. R., and M. P. Hayes  
1994 Amphibian and Reptiles Species of Special Concern in California. California Department of Fish and Game. i + 255 pp.
- Sullivan, B. K.  
1992 Calling Behavior of the Southwestern Toad (*Bufo microscaphus*). *Herpetologica* 48 (4): 383–389.
- Sweet, S. S.  
1993 Second Report on the Biology and Status of the Arroyo Toad (*Bufo microscaphus californicus*) on the Los Padres National Forest of Southern California. Report to the United States Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Los Padres National Forest, Goleta, California. ii + 73 pp.
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)  
1994 Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Determination of Endangered Status for the Arroyo Southwestern Toad. Federal Register 59 (241): 64859-64866.
- 1999a Arroyo Southwestern Toad (*Bufo microscaphus californicus*) Recovery Plan. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Portland, Oregon. vi + 119 pp.
- 1999b Survey Protocol for the Arroyo Toad. Available at [http://www.fws.gov/ventura/speciesinfo/protocols\\_guidelines/U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](http://www.fws.gov/ventura/speciesinfo/protocols_guidelines/U.S.%20Fish%20and%20Wildlife%20Service). May 19.

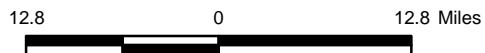


## FIGURES





Source: ESRI 2009

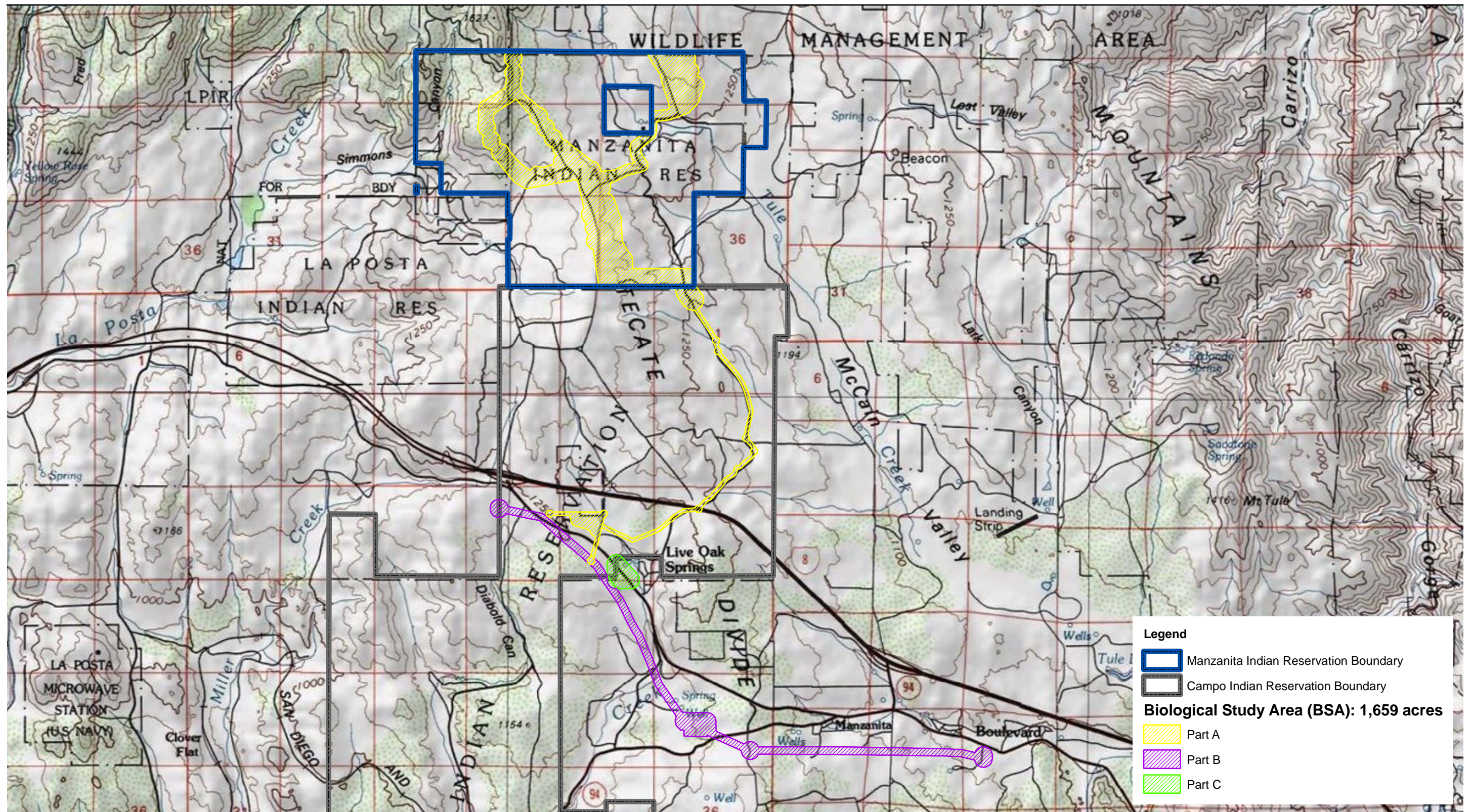


Scale: 1 = 810,771.7; 1 inch = 12.8 mile(s)

**Figure 1**  
**Regional Map**







Source: Tierra del Sol 1959; Live Oak Springs 1975; Campo 1959; Cameron Corners 1988

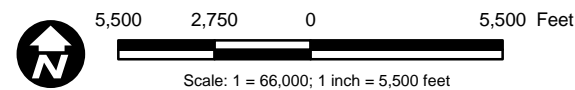


Figure 2  
Vicinity Map

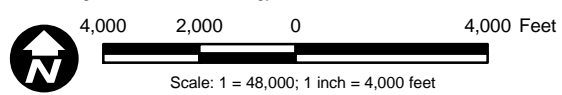











Source: DigitalGlobe 2008; Invenergy 2010



**Legend**

-  Manzanita Indian Reservation
-  Project Study Area
-  Arroyo Toad Suitable Habitat (0.42 acre total)

**Figure 3**  
**Arroyo Toad Survey Area**





**APPENDIX A**  
**HABITAT ASSESSMENT MEMO**



## Memorandum

To	Beverly Blessent, SDGE	Page	1 of 2
CC			
Subject	Arroyo Toad Habitat Assessment at Manzanita Wind Energy Project		
From	Matt Valerio/Erin Riley, AECOM		
Date	April 19, 2010		

Arroyo toad (*Bufo californicus*) habitat assessments were conducted on April 14, 2010 from approximately 9 AM until 1 PM for the Manzanita Wind Energy Project. The assessments were conducted by AECOM biologists Michael Anguiano and Matt Kedziora. Prior to arriving onsite, biologists reviewed aerial photos to identify areas that may potentially contain arroyo toad habitat. After field verification of these potential areas identified during the aerial photo review, biologists determined that there was one area that contained low suitable arroyo toad habitat (Figure 1). The habitat was characterized based on the following: presence of predominately sandy substrates in the channel; flat sandy terraces immediately adjacent to the channel (upland habitat); and having a watercourse of braided channels. Although water was present within the stream channel, characterization of habitat was not influenced by the amount of water present in the channel.

The suitable habitat present in the study area is considered to be of low habitat quality. Although there are flat sandy terraces adjacent to the stream (Photo 1), there is little to no sand present in the stream and there is no stream braiding. The streambed is several feet wide and consists of a single channel.

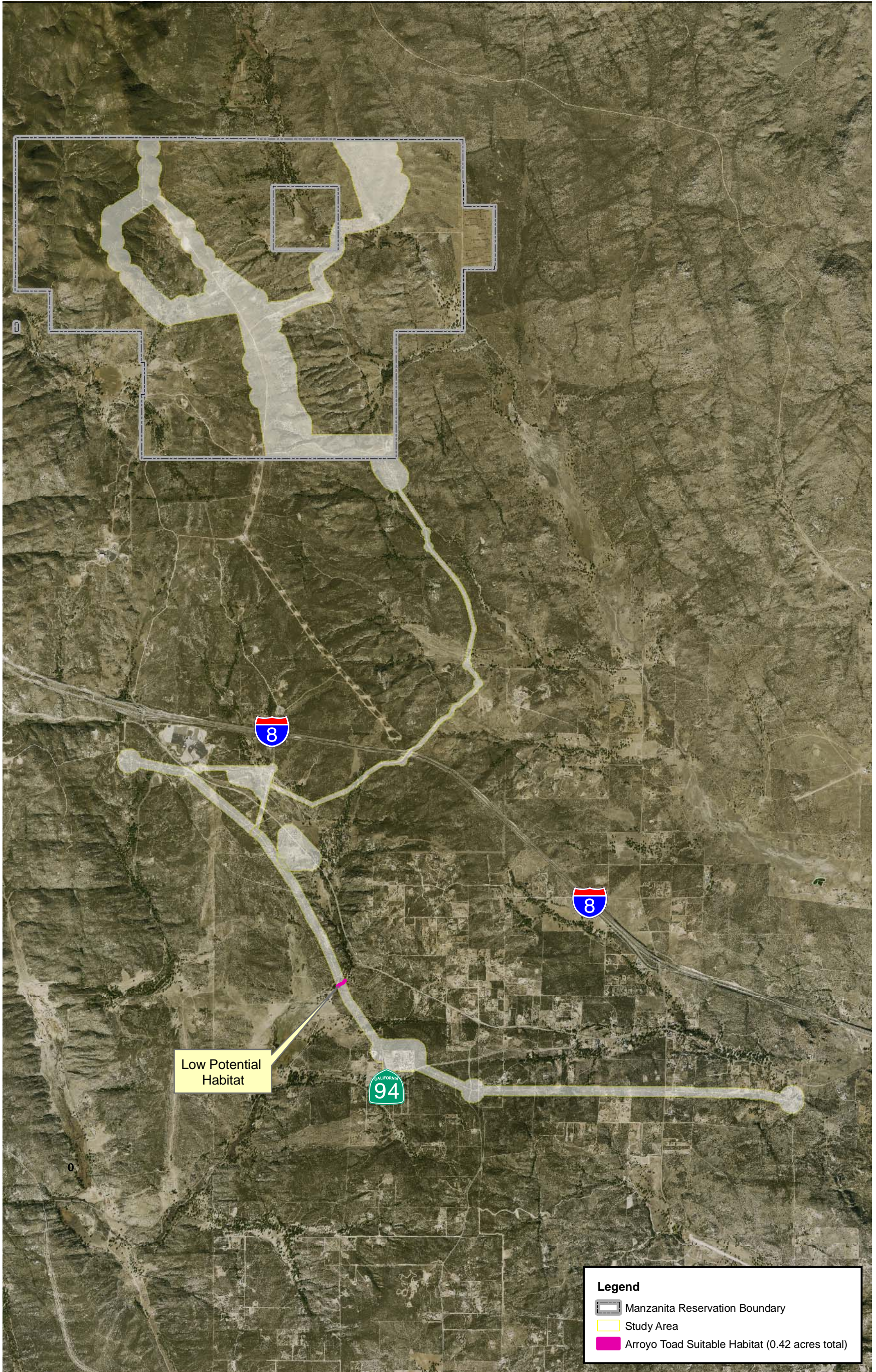
Focused protocol arroyo toad surveys will be completed in this riparian areas and the adjacent upland habitat. The arroyo toad survey area includes approximately 0.4 acre of habitat suitable for arroyo toad within the Study Area (Figure 1). This is an area reasonable to survey in 1 day during each of the 6 surveys completed at least 7 days apart.

The arroyo toad habitat present in the study area is sparse and fragmented from known arroyo toad locations. The nearest known location is approximately 8.5 miles to the west of Campo at Cottonwood Creek where it intersects with Buckman Springs Rd.

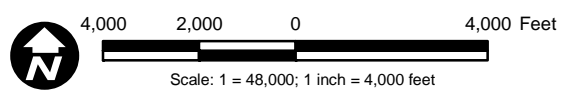


Photo 1 - Sandy uplands in the low quality arroyo toad habitat at Manzanita.





Source: DigitalGlobe 2008; Invenery 2010



**Figure 1**  
**Arroyo Toad Survey Areas**







**APPENDIX B**  
**FIELD DATA SHEETS**



# ARTO SURVEYS

Dusk T = 58

Observer: MAN Add'l Person: AFD/ERT GPS Unit: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Project: Mazunta Survey Section: \_\_\_\_\_ Map #: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Date: 4-25-10 Survey Type: Arroyo Toads Survey 1 of 6  
 Time Start: 6:20 Time End: 6:50

Start T: 63 CC: 0 Wind Sp/Dir: 0 Relative Humidity: 30

Day/Start  
6:20  
end  
6:50

Map/ GPS #	Time	Species	Lifestage	Location (trail, leaf litter, veg. type, etc)	Distance/ Direction (if not GPS'd at exact point)
	<u>6:25</u>	<u>W. Toad</u>	<u>tadpole</u>	<u>n trailer</u>	
		<u>PA Frog</u>	<u>tadpole</u>	<u>in water</u>	
		<u>W. Toad</u>	<u>adult</u>	<u>" "</u>	
		<u>PA Frog</u>	<u>adult</u>	<u>Dead in water</u>	
<p><u>End T = 63 CC = 0 Wind = 0 Humidity = 30</u></p> <hr style="border: 1px solid black;"/>					
		<p><u>Start T = 63 CC = 0 Wind = 0 Humidity 71.8</u></p>			
		<u>PA Frog</u>	<u>adult</u>		
		<p><u>End T 63 CC 0 Wind 0 Humidity 71</u></p>			
<div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 80%; margin: auto; padding: 20px; display: inline-block;"> <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">No ARTO</p> </div>					

Night  
10:10  
10:20

Comments:

Lifestage = eggmass      S. Willow Scrub = SWS      Upland = UPL \_\_\_\_\_  
 tadpole                      Tamarisk = TAM                      \_\_\_\_\_  
 adult                              Arundo = ARU                      \_\_\_\_\_

End T: \_\_\_\_\_ CC: \_\_\_\_\_ Wind Sp/Dir: \_\_\_\_\_ Relative Humidity: \_\_\_\_\_













**APPENDIX C**

**WILDLIFE SPECIES DETECTED  
DURING ARROYO TOAD SURVEYS**



## APPENDIX C

### Wildlife Species Detected during Arroyo Toad Surveys

Scientific Names	Common Names
<b>Amphibians</b>	
Order Anura	Frogs and Toads
Family Bufonidae	
<i>Anaxyrus (Bufo) boreas</i>	western toad
Family Hylidae	
<i>Pseudacris regilla</i>	Pacific chorus frog

