

SUNCREST DYNAMIC REACTIVE POWER SUPPORT PROJECT
Bat Survey Report

Prepared for

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1 INTRODUCTION

SWCA Environmental Consultants (SWCA) has prepared this survey report for NextEra Energy Transmission West, LLC (NEET West) in support of Suncrest Reactive Power Support Project (Project) located in San Diego County, California. Information contained in this document is consistent with the requirements of the draft Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) of the Suncrest Dynamic Reactive Power Support Project Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR).

An SWCA biologist conducted bat roost and night time emergence surveys on August 8, 2018 in compliance with California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) Mitigation Measure (MM) Mitigation Measure BIO-13(b) which states:

- Prior to initial vegetation clearance, grubbing, and ground-disturbing activities, NEET West or their contractor(s) shall ensure that a qualified biologist shall conduct pre-construction sweeps of the Project site for special-status wildlife and plants. During these surveys, the biologist shall:
- Survey for bat roosts by performing a daytime pedestrian survey to inspect potential habitat within 100 feet of the Proposed Project limits for indications of bat use (e.g. occupancy, guano, staining, smells or sounds) and a night roost/emergence survey. The survey must be performed by a qualified bat biologist. If the bat biologist determines that habitat within the survey area is used, or is likely to be used, as a bat roost, and may be affected by construction, then specific measures will be developed and implemented to minimize impacts on the roost. Such measures may include minimizing construction activity near the roost during the maternity season (May 1—August 15) or other measures developed by a qualified bat biologist that will minimize the disturbance to a level that would not cause long-term roost abandonment or failure of a maternity roost.

1.1 Project Location and Description

The Project involves two primary components: the Static Var Compensator (SVC) facility and the 230 kV single circuit underground transmission line (underground transmission line). The proposed SVC is an approximate 112,000-square-foot facility that would produce and consume reactive power and interconnect with the 230 kV bus of the existing San Diego Gas and Electric Company (SDG&E) Suncrest Substation through the proposed underground transmission line, which is approximately one mile long. The proposed transmission line will be installed underground within polyvinyl chloride (PVC) conduits in a concrete-encased duct bank system beneath an existing paved, private road known as Bell Bluff Truck Trail. At the western terminus of the underground transmission line, the conductors would surface at a riser pole structure where they would transition to a 300-foot long overhead transmission line span and terminate into the existing Suncrest Substation's 230 kV bus.

The Project would connect to the existing electric transmission network at the Suncrest Substation 230 kV bus, which SDG&E built as part of the Sunrise Powerlink Transmission Project (Sunrise Powerlink) in 2012. The Project is located in the south central portion of San Diego County, approximately 33 miles east of the Pacific Ocean, in an unincorporated area approximately four miles southwest of the community of Descanso, and approximately three miles southeast of the community of Alpine (Figure 1). The city of El Cajon is situated approximately 13 miles to the west. Interstate 8 (I-8) is located approximately two miles to the north, and Japatul Valley Road (State Highway 79) is located approximately two miles to the south.

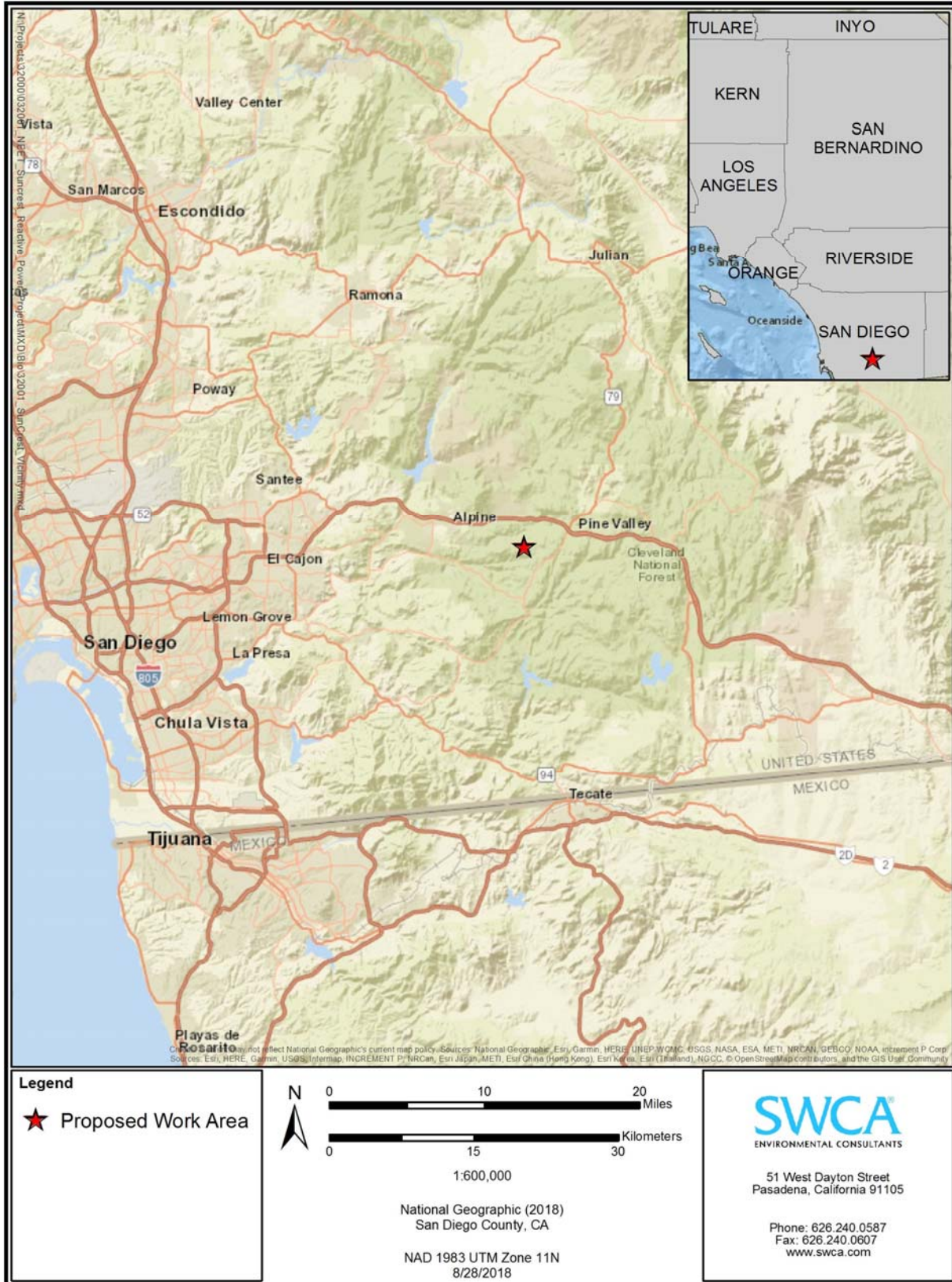


Figure 1. General Vicinity Map

The proposed Project is located on privately owned land in proximity to the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Cleveland National Forest (CNF).

2 METHODS

A qualified biologist conducted bat roost and emergence surveys on August 8, 2018. Suitable roosting habitat within 100 feet of the Project limits was surveyed for presence and examined for indications of bat use (e.g., occupancy, guano, staining, smells, or sounds) during the daytime.

A visual night roost emergence survey was conducted on the evening of August 8, 2018 at four survey stations near suspected roosting habitat (Survey Stations 1–4; Figure 2). These survey stations were located adjacent to potential roosting habitat or at a vantage point where habitat could be observed, as described in Table 1. Nighttime emergence surveys began 30 minutes prior to the time of sunset and continued until one hour after sunset. Each survey station was surveyed for 20 minutes. Environmental conditions at the time of survey were approximately 75°F, slightly hazy, and 5-10 mph west winds. The night roost emergence survey was conducted with the use of a high-powered head lamp and also included active acoustic survey techniques. Acoustic survey equipment consisted of a handheld Anabat SD1. Call files were manually saved with each bat pass.

Table 1. Nighttime Emergence Survey Stations, Survey Time, and Descriptions

Survey Station	Survey Time (pm)	Location Description and Notes
1	7:09 – 7:29	At water tower overlooking road cut. Oak trees to north. A large snag is visible to the west
2	7:31 – 7:51	At turnoff to water tower. Large boulders to south and forest opening to north
3	7:52 – 8:12	Adjacent to small rock outcropping on north side of road.
4	8:15 – 8:35	Adjacent to storage garage.

All collected acoustic files were examined in AnaLookW software and categorized to frequency groups and species, if possible. Frequency groups were used because some species have acoustic signatures so similar that it is impossible to assign them to a particular species. Analysis filters or automatic software programs were not used. A desktop analysis was done to determine the suite of bat species with the potential to occur in San Diego County and the available habitat of the Project. Species with potential to occur in the region and habitat type were assigned to each detected frequency group.

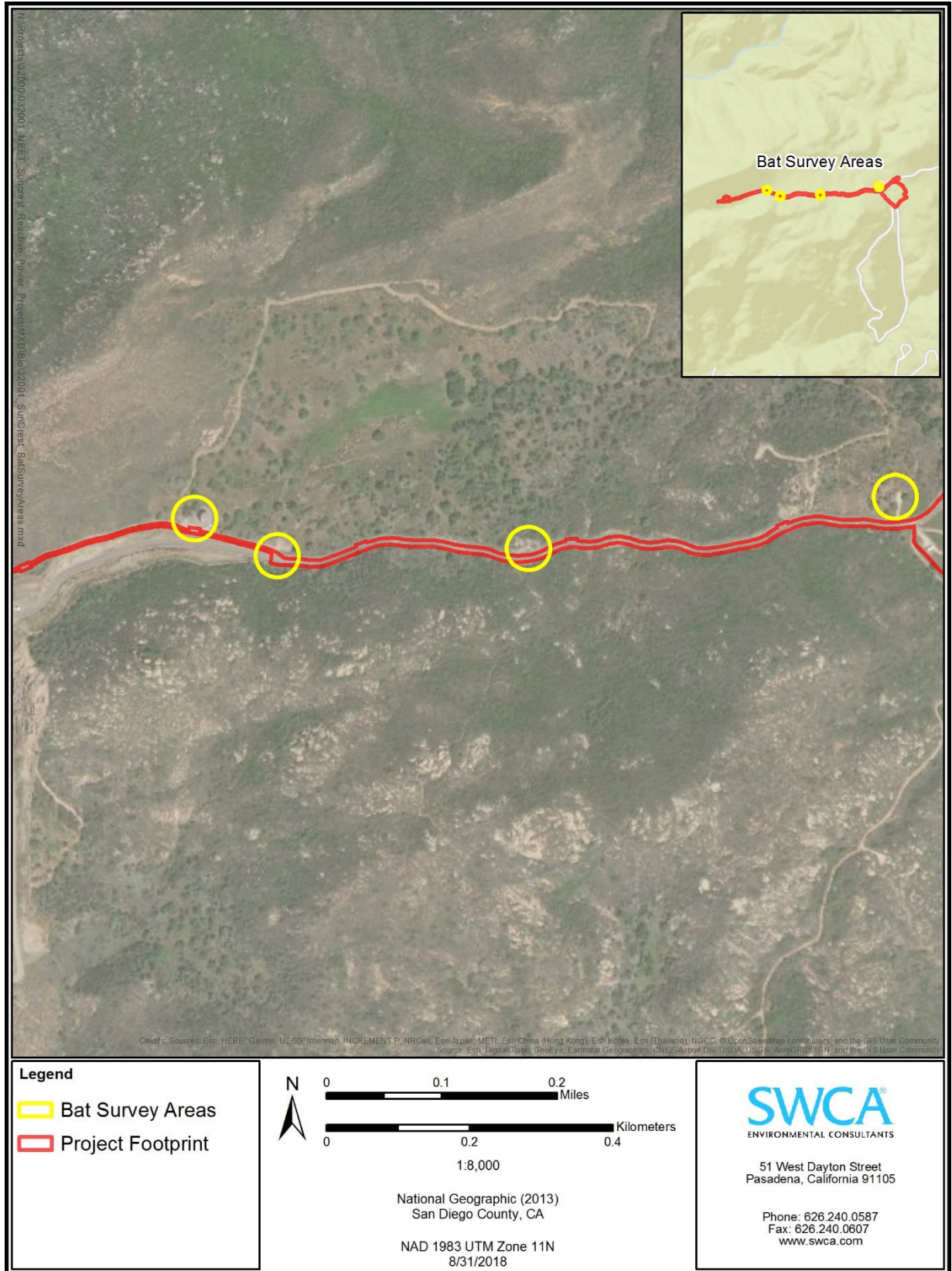


Figure 2. Bat Survey Areas

3 RESULTS

Potential roosting habitat was observed within 100 feet of the Project in the form of trees, rock outcroppings and exposed faces, and a storage garage. No sign of bat roosting was observed on or near any of the roosting habitat, indicating no roosting by large colonies.

Table 2 displays the frequency groups detected at each survey station, number of files recorded, and survey notes. Note that the number of files recorded does not indicate a bat count or even activity index, as the field methodology does not support that type of conclusion. Parastrellus calls were recorded most frequently. No bat individuals were observed exiting a roost location. Feeding buzzes were recorded frequently, indicating the bats were foraging at the time of survey. The only special-status bat species with potential to occur in the habitat of the Project and that produced calls in a frequency group that was recorded during the survey is the long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*), which is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) species of special concern (CDFW 2015).

Table 2. Acoustic Survey Results

Survey Station	Frequency Groups* Detected	Files Recorded	Survey Notes
1	None	0	None
2	Parastrellus	36	Bats flying west to east along road edge and are foraging in forest opening north of the road. Three bats were observed at one time.
3	Parastrellus	2	Bat flying west to east along road.
4	40 kH Myotis, Parastrellus, and 30 kH bats	50	Many bats at once.

40 kH Myotis = Little brown myotis (*Myotis lucifugus*), Small-footed myotis (*Myotis ciliolabrum*), and Long-legged myotis (*Myotis volans*)

Parastrellus = Canyon bat (*Parastrellus hesperus*)

30 kH bats = Silver-haired bat (*Lasiorycteris noctivagans*) and big brown bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*)

4 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Given that no colonial bat emergence was observed, it is unlikely that colonial maternity roosting species were using any roosting habitat within 100 feet of the Project. Of all species potentially detected, two choose maternity roost locations either singly or in small groups: silver-haired bat and small-footed myotis. The silver-haired bat roosts under bark and in live or dead tree hollows, and the small-footed myotis has been spotted under rock slabs, in rock crevices, under loose tree bark, and in buildings. The presence of maternity roosts of these species cannot be ruled out based on the survey results.

To eliminate the potential to disturb a maternity roost or impact a non-flying juvenile bat during the maternity season, tree trimming and removal of snags, trees, and rock outcroppings should be conducted outside of the maternity season (May 1–August 15) to the extent possible. If it is not possible to avoid the maternity season with these activities, a biological monitor shall be onsite during these activities to visually search for bats. If any non-flying bats are found they will be taken to a wildlife care center. It is assumed the storage garage will not be impacted by the project.

In addition, per Project MM BIO-13(b) (described above), the following mitigation measures are recommended to further avoid impacts to bats:

BIO-10 Educational Training.

NEET West or their contractor(s) shall ensure that before conducting construction activities all Proposed Project personnel shall participate in an educational training session conducted by a qualified biologist. All on-site personnel shall be informed about relevant special-status species and their habitat, conservation goals, identification, and procedures to follow in the event of a possible sighting. Personnel who miss the first training session or are hired later in the season must participate in a make-up session before conducting Project activities. A record of the personnel that attended the training shall be kept by the qualified biologist.

Project MM BIO-15: Minimize Night Lighting.

NEET West or their contractor(s) shall minimize construction night lighting on adjacent habitats. Exterior lighting within the Proposed Project area adjacent to habitat shall be the lowest illumination allowed for human safety and security, selectively placed, shielded, and directed downward to the maximum extent practicable. Vehicle traffic associated with Proposed Project activities shall be kept to a minimum volume and speed to prevent mortality of nocturnal wildlife species.

5 LITERATURE CITED

- Bradley, P. V., M. J. O'Farrell, J. A. Williams, and J. E. Newmark. Editors. 2006. The Revised Nevada Bat Conservation Plan. Nevada Bat Working Group. Reno, Nevada. 216 pp. Accessed August 2018. Available at:
http://www.ndow.org/uploadedFiles/ndoworg/Content/public_documents/Nevada_Wildlife/Nevada%20Bat%20Conservation%20Plan%20-%20Review%20the%20plan.pdf
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APPENDIX A
Photo Compendium



Photo 1. View facing southwest from Survey Station 1. The exposed road cut is potential roosting habitat. Photo taken on August 8, 2018.



Photo 2. View facing southwest from Survey Station 1. The snag is potential roosting habitat. Photo taken on August 8, 2018.



Photo 3. View facing south from Survey Station 1. The rock crevices are potential roosting habitat. Photo taken on August 8, 2018.



Photo 4. View facing northeast from Survey Station 3. The rock crevices are potential roosting habitat. Photo taken on August 8, 2018.



Photo 5. The storage garage could serve as potential roosting habitat. Photo taken on August 8, 2018.