Nest Buffer Reduction Request #3

To: Billie Blanchard, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

Cc: Sheila Hoyer (Panorama), Susanne Heim (Panorama)

Subject: Mitigation Measure (MM) Biology-7 Nest Buffer Reduction Request

From: Amy Trexler, Qualified Biologist

Date: 03/30/2018

In accordance with MM Biology-7 of the Sycamore-Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project (Project) San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is requesting a nesting bird buffer reduction to accommodate scheduled wire pulling activities associated with construction of the overhead alignment of the Project. If granted, the duration of these buffer reductions would be effective until construction activities are complete within the reduced buffer or the nest becomes inactive, whichever occurs sooner.

A total of 3 new common bird species nests have been identified at structures E40, E42, and E43. The attached table contains the following information for the recorded nests SDG&E is requesting buffer reductions for:

- Species
- Location
- Pre-existing conditions present on site
- Description of the work to be conducted within the reduced buffer
- Size and expected duration of proposed buffer reduction
- Reason for the buffer reduction

Also, please find attached a map showing the locations of the documented nests, the standard nest buffer limits identified in MM Biology-7, and the reduced buffer limits being recommended by the Qualified Biologist.

If SDG&E does not receive a response to the request for a buffer reduction within 1 business day, SDG&E will proceed with the buffer reductions recommended by the Qualified Biologist until the CPUC's independent biologist can review and approve or deny the buffer reduction requests. If SDG&E proceeds with a reduced buffer, the nest will be monitored on a daily basis during construction activities. If the buffer request is denied, or the Qualified Biologist determines that the nesting birds(s) are not tolerant of project activity, the specified buffer(s) listed in MM Biology-7 will be implemented.

If you have any questions regarding the details of this request, please contact the Qualified Biologist making the buffer reduction request at the contact information below:

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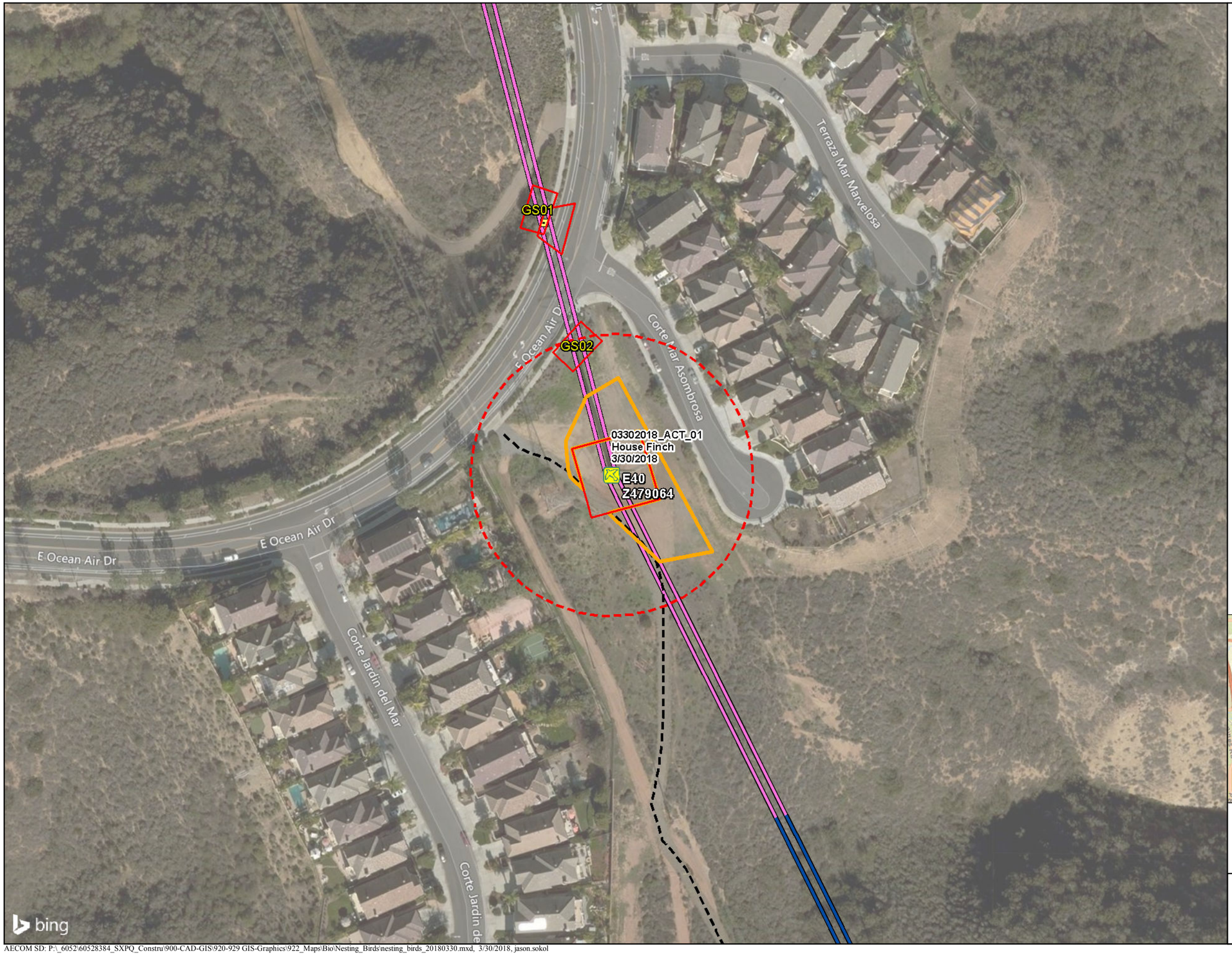
322 Encinitas Blvd. #290
Encinitas, CA 92024

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Bird Buffer Reduction Request
Date: 03/30/2018

Nest Information									Buffer Reduction Request						
Nest ID[1]	Species[2]	Listing Status[3]	Nest Stage[4]	Observation Notes[5]	Latitude (decimal degrees)	Longitude (decimal degrees)	Estimated Fledge Date	Nesting Bird Behavior	Standard Buffer	Reduced Buffer Necessary for Construction	Pre-Existing Conditions Onsite	Reason for Buffer Reduction/Biologist Recommendation	Duration of Buffer Reduction	Work Activity Description	Monitoring Approach
03302018_ACT_01	House finch (HOFI)	Common	Incubating	Observed the female sitting on the nest and the male displaying territorial behavior to other birds.	32.91296	-117.21722	Unknown Standard incubation is 13-14 days; standard nestling period is 12-19 days	Incubating Appears tolerant of human activity.	150 feet	0 feet	Nest is located within the arm of tower structure E40.	Nest is located within the tower structure and is physically shielded from work that will occur on the outer arms of the tower. Recommendation is to approve buffer with full time monitoring for duration of overhead alignment outage.	For duration of remaining overhead work (3/30/18 - 5/31/18), or until nest is no longer active	Construction activities at tower include replacing travellers (2-3 hours) and dead ending/jumper replacement (1-2 days) Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule during outage for completion date per CPUC permit.	Nests will be monitored full time while work is occurring at the corresponding tower location in order to determine the birds' noise tolerance. The qualified biologist will communicate with construction crews to limit noise (e.g., using hand tools, limiting vehicles onsite) and time spent at each tower location. The nest buffers will be increased or reinstated if there are signs of significant disturbance and risk of project- induced nest abandonment consistent with MM Biology-7. Monitoring will occur from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope whenever possible to minimize nest disturbance. If nest cannot be adequately monitored from a distance, the CPUC qualified biologists (qualified biologist) will approach the nest to gather nest data. When approaching a nest, the qualified biologist will first determine whether there are any potential nest predators nearby, such as raptors, corvids, jays, and brown-headed cowbirds. If no predators are observed, the qualified biologist will approach the nest and collect nest data. The qualified biologist will observe the nest for a sufficient amount of time based on their professional judgment (usually between 30-60 minutes if an adult is not immediately observed on the nest) to determine nest status and will record the nest status (e.g., nest building, incubating, nestlings, etc.), and observe avian behavior (carrying food, agitation or distress, etc.). If the qualified biologist is unable to make a determination on nest status and has not detected the nest pair in the vicinity of the nest, the qualified biologist will continue to monitor the nest daily for a period of 5 days. If the qualified biologist is not able to determine nest status after 5 days due to lack of activity at the nest (including the observation of fledgling groups in the vicinity of the nest), the biologist will determine the nest is no longer active. The qualified biologist will gather appropriate nest data to allow proper documentation of nest stage and recommended buffer effectiveness. The qualified biologist will make assessments based on their experience, professional judgment and the following considerations: incubation period and nestling period (i.e., fledge date) of species, geographic location, existing ambient conditions (human activity such as traffic, jet noise, rail noise, etc.), type and extent of construction within nest buffer, visibility of construction to nest, and other environmental factors such as the species' site-specific level of habituation to disturbance.
03302018_ACT_02	House finch (HOFI)	Common	Incubating	Observed the female sitting on the nest and the male displaying territorial behavior to other birds.	32.90924	-117.21490	Unknown Standard incubation is 13-14 days; standard nestling period is 12-19 days	Incubating Appears tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	0 feet	Nest is located within the arm of tower structure E42.	Nest is located within the tower structure and is physically shielded from work that will occur on the outer arms of the tower. Recommendation is to approve buffer with full time monitoring for duration of overhead alignment outage.	For duration of remaining overhead work (3/30/18 - 5/31/18), or until nest is no longer active	Construction activities at tower include replacing travellers (2-3 hours) and dead ending/jumper replacement (1-2 days) Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule during outage for completion date per CPUC permit.	
03302018_ACT_03	House finch (HOFI)	Common	Incubating	Observed the female sitting on the nest and the male displaying territorial behavior to other birds.	32.90399	-117.21170	Unknown Standard incubation is 13-14 days; standard nestling period is 12-19 days	Incubating Appears tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	0 feet	Nest is located within the arm of tower structure E43.	Nest is located within the tower structure and is physically shielded from work that will occur on the outer arms of the tower. Recommendation is to approve buffer with full time monitoring for duration of overhead alignment outage.	For duration of remaining overhead work (3/30/18 - 5/31/18), or until nest is no longer active	Construction activities at tower include replacing travellers (2-3 hours) and dead ending/jumper replacement (1-2 days) Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule during outage for completion date per CPUC permit.	



Legend

Bird Nests

Tracking

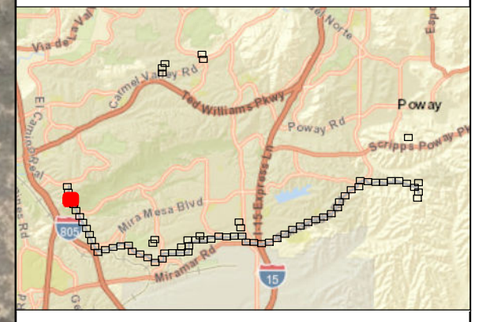
- Active

Standard Bird Nest Buffers

- 150 ft
- AC Mitigation Location
- Existing Structure
- Access Roads
- Temporary Work Space
- MPR 7 - Temporary Work Space

Alignment C

- Segment 7
- Segment 8



100 50 0 100 Feet

1:1,200 1 inch = 100 feet

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Bird Survey Buffer Reduction Request

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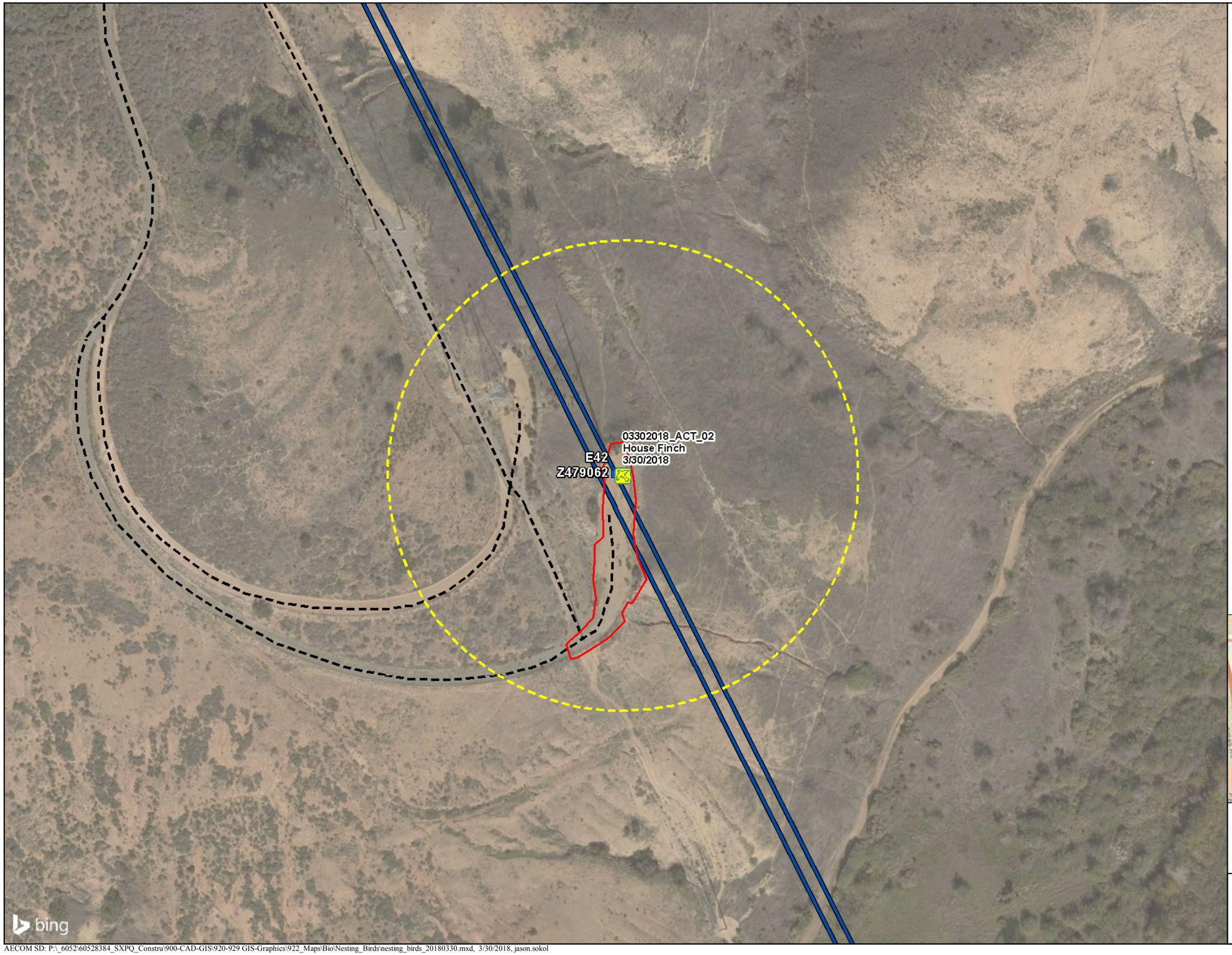
3/30/2018



Legend

Bird Nests

Tracking

Active

Standard Bird Nest Buffers

250 ft

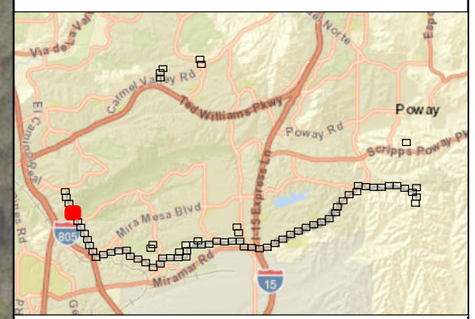
Existing Structure

Access Roads

Temporary Work Space

Alignment C

Segment 7



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3/30/2018

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Legend

Bird Nests

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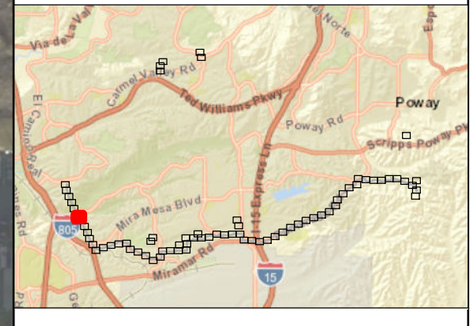

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