

GENERAL BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES ASSESSMENT

ADELANTO, SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA
(Township 6 North, Range 5 West, Section 30)
(APN: 0459-092-03)

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Table of Contents

1.0	INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY	1
2.0	EXISTING CONDITIONS.....	2
3.0	METHODOLOGIES	4
4.0	LITERATURE SEARCH	5
5.0	RESULTS	7
5.1	General Biological Resources	7
5.2	Federal and State Listed Species.....	8
5.3	Species of Special Concern	8
5.4	Jurisdictional Waters and Riparian Habitat.....	9
5.5	Protected Plants	9
6.0	IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES	10
6.1	General Biological Resources	10
6.2	Federal and State Listed and Species of Special Concern	10
7.0	CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS	11
8.0	BIBLIOGRAPHY	12
	CERTIFICATION	14

Appendix A – Tables and Figures
REGULATORY CONTEXT

1.0 INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

Biological surveys were conducted on a 20-acre parcel (Approximate), located southwest of the intersection of Crippen Ave. and Stevens St. in the City of Adelanto, California (Township 6 North, Range 5 West, Section 30, USGS Adelanto, California Quadrangle, 1956) (Figures 1 and 2). The property is located in an area zoned as Single Family (R-S1) in Adelanto, California.

As part of the environmental process, California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) data sources were reviewed. Following the data review, surveys were performed on the site on February 19, 2026, during which the biological resources on the site and in the surrounding areas were documented by biologists from RCA Associates, Inc. As part of the surveys, the property and adjoining areas were evaluated for the presence of native habitats which may support populations of sensitive wildlife species. The property was also evaluated for the presence of sensitive habitats including wetlands, vernal pools, riparian habitats, and jurisdictional areas.

Habitat assessments were also conducted for the desert tortoise, burrowing owl, and Mohave ground squirrel. Based on data from USFWS, CDFW, and a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB, 2026). Scientific nomenclature for this report follows the Jepson eFlora (Jepson Flora Project 2025) for vascular plants; Stebbins and McGinnis (2018) for reptiles and amphibians; Sibley (2016) for birds; and Kays and Wilson (2009) for mammals.

2.0 EXISTING CONDITIONS

The property is approximately 20 acres in size and is located southwest of the intersection of Crippen Avenue and Stevens Street in the City of Adelanto, California (APN: 0459-092-03). The site is located in Section 30, Township 6 North, Range 5 West (USGS Adelanto, CA 7.5-minute quadrangle) (Figures 1 and 2). Vacant desert land occurs to the south and west, while residential development borders portions of the northern and eastern boundaries.

The relatively flat site occurs at an elevation of approximately 875 meters (2,870 feet) above mean sea level and exhibits minimal topographic relief. The vegetation community present on site consists of Mojave Desert creosote bush scrub with scattered Joshua trees. Dominant shrub species observed during the February 19, 2026 field investigation included creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*). Additional perennial species observed on site included silver cholla (*Cylindropuntia echinocarpa*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), and Indian rice grass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*). Herbaceous annual species documented during the survey included Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), red-stem storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*), and desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*).

The site supports open desert scrub habitat with areas of sparse annual cover and sandy soils. Vegetation density is moderate and typical of the western Mojave Desert in proximity to existing residential development.

Wildlife observations during the February 19, 2026 field investigation were limited. Avian species observed on site included Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*). No active nests were observed during the survey. No burrowing owl sign, burrows, or castings were identified.

No mammals were directly observed during the survey; however, the site provides suitable habitat for common Mojave Desert species such as desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) and black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*). No desert tortoise sign (e.g., burrows, scat, tracks, carcasses) was observed.

No defined drainage features, riparian vegetation, wetlands, or other hydrologic features were identified within the site boundaries during the February 2026 field investigation.

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3.0 METHODOLOGIES

General biological surveys were conducted on February 19, 2026, during which biologists from RCA Associates, Inc. initially walked meandering transects throughout the property. During the surveys, data was collected on the plant and animal species present on the site. All plants and animals detected during the surveys were recorded and are provided in Tables 1 & 2 (Appendix A). The property was also evaluated for the presence of habitats which might support sensitive species. Scientific nomenclature for this report follows the Jepson eFlora (Jepson Flora Project 2025) for vascular plants; Stebbins and McGinnis (2018) for reptiles and amphibians; Sibley (2016) for birds; and Kays and Wilson (2009) for mammals. Following completion of the initial reconnaissance survey, habitat assessments were conducted for the desert tortoise, burrowing owl, and Mohave ground squirrel. Weather conditions consisted of wind speeds of 10 to 15 mph, temperatures in the mid to high 30's (°F) (AM), and 50% cloud cover. The applicable methodologies are summarized below.

General Plant and Animal Surveys: Meandering transects were walked on the site and in surrounding areas (i.e., the zone of influence) where accessible at a pace that allowed for careful documentation of the plant and animal species present on the site. All plants observed were identified in the field or sampled and brought back for further identification. Wildlife was identified through visual observations and/or by vocalizations. Habitat assessments were conducted for the desert tortoise, burrowing owl, and Mohave ground squirrel. Tables 1 and 2 (Appendix A) provides a comprehensive compendium of the various plant and animal species observed during the field investigations.

4.0 LITERATURE SEARCH

As part of the environmental process, a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) search was performed. Based on this review, it was determined that five special status species have been documented within the Adelanto quad of the property. The following tables provide data on each special status species which has been documented in the area.

Table 4-1: Federal and State Listed Species and State Species of Special Concern.

E = Endangered; T = Threatened; SSC = Species of special concern; CNPS = California Native Plant Society; CNDDDB = California Natural Diversity Data Base

NAME	STATUS	HABITAT REQUIREMENTS	PRESENCE/ ABSENCE ON PROPERTY
Wildlife Species			
Within Adelanto Quadrangle			
Desert tortoise (<i>Gopherus agassizii</i>)	Federal: Threatened State: Threatened	Most common in desert scrub, desert wash, and Joshua tree habitats; occurs in almost every desert habitat. Require friable soil for burrow and nest construction. Creosote bush habitat with large annual wildflower blooms preferred.	Species was absent during February 2026 field investigations.
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Federal: None State: None CDFW: SSC	Open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. Subterranean nester, dependent upon burrowing mammals, most notably, the California ground squirrel.	Species was absent during February 2026 field investigations.
Mohave ground squirrel (<i>Xerospermophilus mohavensis</i>)	Federal: None State: Threatened	Open desert scrub, alkali scrub and Joshua tree woodland. Also feeds in annual grasslands. Restricted to Mojave Desert. Prefers sandy to gravelly soils, avoids rocky areas. Uses burrows at base of shrubs for cover. Nests are in burrows.	Species was absent during February 2026 field investigations.

<p>Swainson's Hawk (<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>)</p>	<p>Federal: None State: Threatened</p>	<p>Breeds in grasslands with scattered trees, juniper-sage flats, riparian areas, savannahs, and agricultural or ranch lands with groves or lines of trees. Requires adjacent suitable foraging areas such as grasslands, or alfalfa or grain fields supporting rodent populations.</p>	<p>Species was absent during February 2026 field investigations.</p>
<p>Le Conte's thrasher (<i>Toxostoma lecontei</i>)</p>	<p>Federal: None State: None CDFW: SSC</p>	<p>Desert resident; primarily of open desert wash, desert scrub, alkali desert scrub, and desert succulent scrub habitats. Commonly nests in a dense, spiny shrub or densely branched cactus in desert wash habitat, usually 2-8 feet above ground.</p>	<p>Species was absent during February 2026 field investigations.</p>

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5.0 RESULTS

5.1 General Biological Resources

The project site supports Mojave Desert creosote bush scrub habitat with scattered Joshua trees (Figure 3). The dominant shrub species observed during the February 19, 2026 field investigation were creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*). Additional perennial plant species documented during the survey included silver cholla (*Cylindropuntia echinocarpa*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), and Indian rice grass (*Achnatherum hymenoides*). Herbaceous annuals observed included Menzies' fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), red-stem storksbill (*Erodium cicutarium*), and desert lily (*Hesperocallis undulata*). These species are characteristic of moderately disturbed Mojave Desert scrub habitats in the Adelanto region.

Wildlife observed during the field investigation was limited to common avian species including Say's phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and common raven (*Corvus corax*). No raptors, burrowing owls, or other special-status bird species were observed. No active nests were identified at the time of survey.

No mammals were directly observed during the field investigation; however, the site provides suitable habitat for common desert mammals such as desert cottontail and black-tailed jackrabbit. No evidence of desert tortoise was detected, and no burrowing owl burrows or sign were observed. Reptiles were not observed during the February 2026 survey.

The site does not contain distinct wildlife corridors or unique habitat features and represents typical Mojave Desert scrub habitat adjacent to existing residential development.

The following are the listed and special status species that have the ability to occur on the project site. It is not a comprehensive list of all the species in the quad. This information has been taken from the California Natural Diversity Database and is using the most current version.

5.2 Federal and State Listed Species

Desert Tortoise: The site is located within the documented tortoise habitat according to CNDDDB (2026). The property does support suitable habitat for the desert tortoise based on the location of the site in a semi-developed area of Adelanto. However, no tortoises were observed anywhere within the property boundaries during the February 19, 2026 surveys. The species is not expected to move onto the site in the near future based on the absence of any potential burrows or sign, absence of any recent observations in the immediate area, and the presence of busy roadways and developments in the immediate area which may act as barriers to migration of tortoises. The survey results are valid for one year as per CDFW and USFWS requirements.

Mohave Ground Squirrel: The Mohave ground squirrel is a California state threatened species that have a short, flat, furred, white, underside tail, uniformly brown (with no spots or stripes). They inhabit open desert scrub, alkali desert scrub, and annual grasslands on sandy to gravelly surfaces in the Mojave Desert. No Mohave ground squirrels were detected. It is the opinion of RCA Associates, Inc. that the habitat is not prime Mohave ground squirrel habitat and is very unlikely to support populations of the species. Although the species has been documented within the Adelanto quadrangle within the past 20 years, the habitat on site is not considered prime and no individuals were detected during the survey.

5.3 Species of Special Concern

Burrowing Owl: The site is located within documented burrowing owl habitat according to CNDDDB (2026). No owls were seen on the property during the survey and no suitable or active burrows were observed. No owl signs, individuals or castings were present during the field investigation. The burrowing owl is a very mobile species and may move onto the site at a future date so it is the recommendation that preconstruction surveys be performed on site to mitigate for any owls that may move on to the site in the future.

Le Conte's thrasher: Le Conte's thrashers have not been recently observed in the area according to CNDDDB (2026). Thrashers are not expected to occur on the site due to lack of critical vegetation used by the species, such as saltbush and catclaw acacia. Thrashers may be very

infrequent in the area given the low population levels in the region as well as the lack of any recent sightings according to the CNDDDB.

5.4 Jurisdictional Waters and Riparian Habitat

No riparian vegetation (e.g., *Populus* spp. [cottonwood], *Salix* spp. [willow]) was observed within the project site. No defined drainage features exhibiting an ordinary high water mark (OHWM), bed and bank, hydrophytic vegetation, or other indicators of Waters of the United States or Waters of the State were identified within the site boundary during the field investigation. Based on current site conditions, a formal jurisdictional delineation is not anticipated to be required at this time.

5.5 Protected Plants

As of July 10, 2023, California legislature passed and signed the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (WJTCA, Senate Bill 122) into effect listing the western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*) as an endangered species. The WJTCA authorizes CDFW to oversee the various permitting processes dealing with mitigation and/or removal of western Joshua trees. Western Joshua trees were observed in the field during the February 2026 field surveys. Therefore, any attempt to remove a Joshua tree from its current position will require a California Endangered Species Act Incidental Take Permit (CESA, ITP) or a Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act Incidental Take Permit (WJTCA, ITP).

6.0 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

6.1 General Biological Resources

Future development of the site will impact the general biological resources present on site, because most if not all of the vegetation will be removed during future construction activities. The site is expected to support very few wildlife species which will be impacted by development activities. Those species with limited mobility (i.e., small mammals and reptiles) will experience increases in mortality during the construction phase. However, more mobile species (i.e., birds, large mammals) will be displaced into adjacent areas and will likely experience minimal impacts. Therefore, loss of about 20-acres of a moderately disturbed desert scrub habitat is not expected to have a significant cumulative impact on the overall biological resources in the region given the presence of similar habitat throughout the surrounding area. No sensitive habitats (e.g., wetlands, vernal pools, critical habitats for sensitive species, etc.) were observed on the site during the field investigations.

6.2 Federal and State Listed and Species of Special Concern

No federal or State-listed species were observed on the site during the field investigations including the Mohave ground squirrel and desert tortoise. In addition, there are no documented observations of these species either on the site or in the immediate area. The site is not expected to support populations of the desert tortoise based on the absence of suitable burrows or signs.

The Western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*), a state threatened species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA), was observed on site. Refer to section 5.5 for more information on the status and requirements on this species.

A pre-construction burrowing owl survey may be required by CDFW to determine if any owls have moved on to the site since the February 19, 2026 surveys. As stated in CDFW's *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation*, the most effective method of completing a pre-construction survey (take avoidance survey) should be performed within 30 days of ground disturbance, followed by a final pre-construction survey within 24 hours of breaking ground.

7.0 CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS

Future development activities include the grading and removal of all vegetation from the 20-acre parcel; however, cumulative impacts to the general biological resources (plants and animals) in the surrounding area are expected to be negligible. This assumption is based on the habitat containing moderately disturbed Mojave Desert scrub habitat dominated by native perennial shrubs. As discussed above, the site does not currently support any burrowing owl and no suitable burrows or owl sign were observed. No sign or individuals of desert tortoise were detected during survey. Western Joshua trees were observed during the field investigations throughout the February 19, 2026 surveys. A Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (WJTCA) Incidental Take Permit application (ITP) will be needed if construction results in removal or ground disturbance of the WJT. The following mitigation measures should be considered:

1. Pre-construction surveys for burrowing owls, desert tortoise, and nesting birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Section 3503 of the California Fish and Wildlife Code shall be conducted prior to the commencement of Project-related ground disturbance.
 - a. Appropriate survey methods and timeframes shall be established, to ensure that chances of detecting the target species are maximized. In the event that listed species, such as the desert tortoise, are encountered, authorization from the USFWS and CDFW must be obtained. If nesting birds are detected, avoidance measures shall be implemented to ensure that nests are not disturbed until after young have fledged.
2. A WJT Census and ITP may be required if WJT are removed or disturbed as a result of construction activities.

If any sensitive species are observed on the property during future activities, CDFW and USFWS (as applicable) should be contacted to discuss specific mitigation measures which may be required for the individual species.

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CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits, presents the data and information required for this biological evaluation, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief. Fieldwork conducted for this assessment was performed by Ryan D. Hunter and Brian S. Bunyi. I certify that I have not signed a non-disclosure or consultant confidentiality agreement with the project applicant or applicant's representative and that I have no financial interest in the project.

Date: 2/27/2026 Signed:



Field Work Performed By: Ryan D. Hunter
Senior Environmental Scientist/Biologist

Field Work Performed By: Brian S. Bunyi
Environmental Scientist/Wildlife Biologist

Appendix A
Tables and Figures

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Legend
 Project Boundary



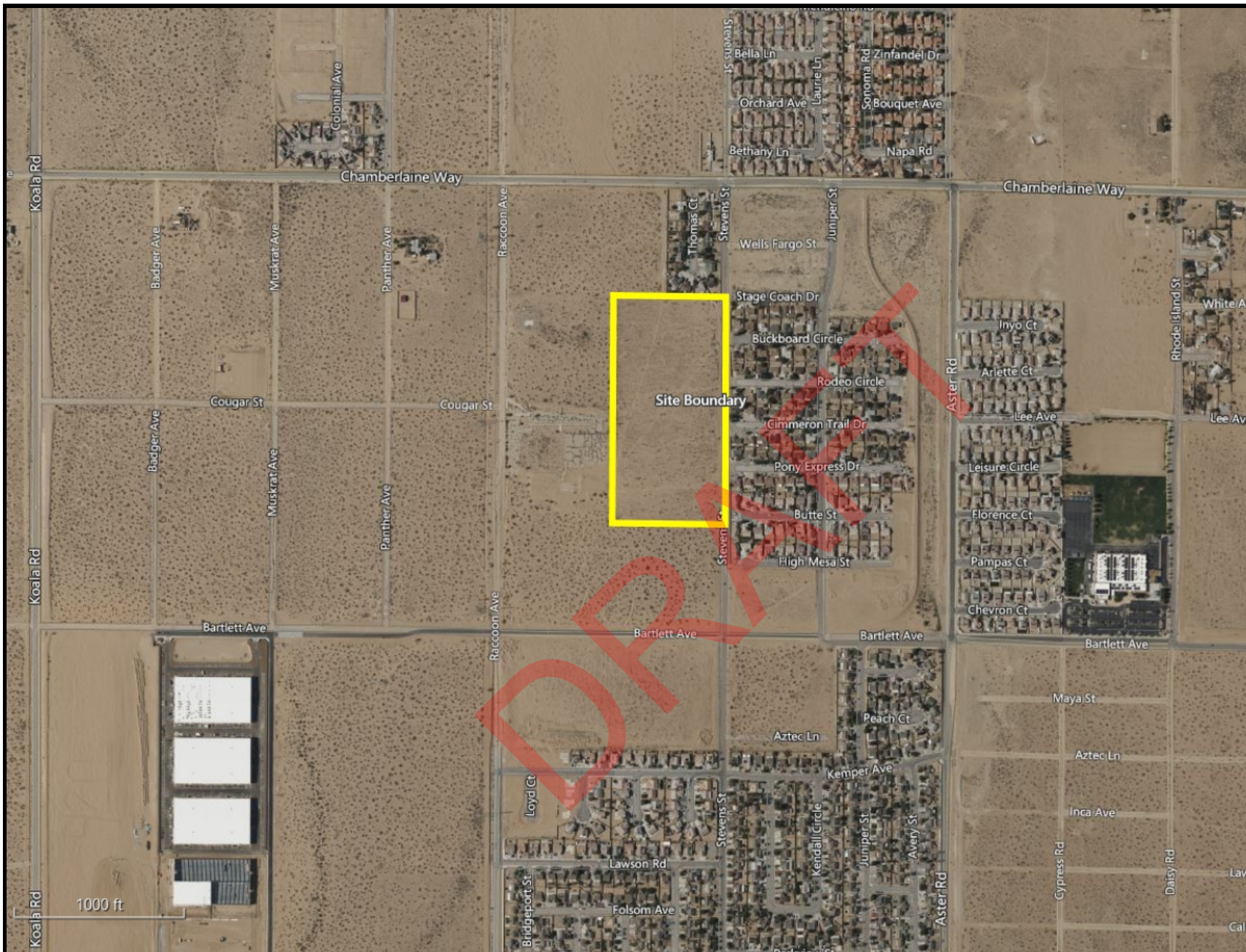
Figure 1: Regional Exhibit

Produced By: RCA Associates Inc.

18400 Stevens Street in the City of Adelanto, CA.

Source:	Uinta Software
Acreeage:	20-Acres (Approximately)
Project #:	2026-18





Legend
 Project Boundary

	Figure 2: Vicinity Exhibit		20 Acres (Approximately) Produced By: RCA Associates Inc.	20-Acres (Approximately)	Project #: 2026-18		
	Produced By: RCA Associates Inc.						Source: Uinta Software
	City of 5XY'Ubhc, CA.						

CENTER OF SITE LOOKING NORTH



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING EAST



FIGURE 3: PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE

CENTER OF SITE LOOKING SOUTH



CENTER OF SITE LOOKING WEST



FIGURE 3, cont: PHOTOGRAPHS OF SITE

Table 1 - Plants observed on the site and known to occur in the immediate surrounding area.

Family	Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Asparagaceae	Western Joshua tree	<i>Yucca brevifolia</i>	On Site and in the surrounding area.
Zygophyllaceae	Creosote bush	<i>Larrea tridentata</i>	“
Asteraceae	White bursage	<i>Ambrosia dumosa</i>	“
Cactaceae	Silver cholla	<i>Cylindropuntia echinocarpa</i>	“
Asteraceae	Rubber rabbitbrush	<i>Ericameria nauseosa</i>	“
Rosaceae	Chamise	<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>	“
Poaceae	Indian rice grass	<i>Achnatherum hymenoides</i>	“
Boraginaceae	Menzies' fiddleneck	<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i>	“
Geraniaceae	Red-stem storksbill	<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	“
Asparagaceae	Desert lily	<i>Hesperocallis undulata</i>	“
Brassicaceae	Asian mustard	<i>Brassica tournefortii</i>	“
Brassicaceae	Shortpod mustard	<i>Hirschfeldia incana</i>	“
Brassicaceae	London rocket	<i>Sisymbrium irio</i>	“
Poaceae	Red brome	<i>Bromus madritensis</i>	“
Poaceae	Cheatgrass	<i>Bromus tectorum</i>	“
Poaceae	Kelch grass	<i>Schismus barbatus</i>	“
Amaranthaceae	Tumbleweed	<i>Kali tragus</i>	“

Note: The above list is not intended to be a comprehensive list of every plant which may occur on the site or in the zone of influence.

Table 2 - Wildlife observed on the site during the field investigations.

Family	Common Name	Scientific Name	Location
Tyrannidae	Say's phoebe	<i>Sayornis saya</i>	On Site and in the surrounding area.
Fringillidae	House finch	<i>Haemorhous mexicanus</i>	“
Corvidae	Common raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	“
Canidae	Coyote (scat and tracks)	<i>Canis latrans</i>	“

Note: The above Table is not a comprehensive list of every animal species which may occur in the area, but is a list of those common species which were identified on the site or which have been observed in the region by biologists from RCA Associates, Inc.

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REGULATORY CONTEXT

The following provides a summary of federal and state regulatory jurisdiction over biological and wetland resources. Although many of these regulations may not directly apply to the project site due to the limited presence of sensitive resources, they provide important regulatory context.

Federal Endangered Species Act

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) have jurisdiction over species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) (16 U.S.C. §1531 et seq.). Section 9 of the ESA prohibits the “take” of listed wildlife species. “Take” is defined as harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Federal regulation (50 CFR §17.3) defines “harass” as an intentional or negligent act that creates the likelihood of injury to wildlife by significantly disrupting normal behavioral patterns such as breeding, feeding, or sheltering. “Harm” is defined to include habitat modification or degradation that results in death or injury by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns. Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies to ensure that any action they authorize, fund, or carry out is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species or destroy or adversely modify designated critical habitat. Section 10(a) establishes a process for non-federal entities to obtain an Incidental Take Permit for otherwise lawful activities that may result in incidental take of listed species. Issuance of a Section 10 permit typically requires preparation of a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). Although federally listed wildlife are protected regardless of landownership, endangered plant protections under the ESA primarily apply to federal lands or where federal nexus exists.

California Endangered Species Act

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) administers the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish and Game Code §2050 et seq.). Section 2080 prohibits the take of species listed by the State as threatened or endangered. Under Fish and Game Code §86, “take” means to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to do so. Project proponents must obtain authorization pursuant to Fish and Game Code §2081 if a project may result in take of a state-listed species. CDFW may issue an Incidental Take Permit or consistency determination where appropriate.

Clean Water Act – Sections 404 and 401

Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into Waters of the United States (WOTUS). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) administers this program. Following the 2023 rulemaking and Sackett v. EPA decision, federal jurisdiction generally includes relatively permanent waters and wetlands with a continuous surface connection to such waters. Section 401 of the Clean Water Act requires water quality certification from the appropriate Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) prior to issuance of a federal permit. In the High Desert region, jurisdiction typically falls under the Lahontan Regional Water Quality Control Board. If activities occur elsewhere, coordination with the corresponding Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB). Activities that may result in discharges of pollutants, including stormwater from construction activities, may require coverage under the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit program.

California Fish and Wildlife Code §§1600–1616

Under California Fish and Game Code §§1600–1616, CDFW regulates activities that may substantially divert, obstruct, or change the natural flow or the bed, bank, or channel of any river, stream, or lake. Project proponents must notify CDFW pursuant to Section 1602 if such activities are proposed. If CDFW determines that the project may substantially adversely affect existing fish or wildlife resources, a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement will be required.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code §§3503 and 3503.5

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 U.S.C. §703 et seq.) protects migratory birds, their eggs, and active nests from unlawful take. California Fish and Game Code §§3503 and 3503.5 protect native birds and birds of prey, including protection of active nests. Disturbance of an active nest that results in abandonment or loss of young may constitute unlawful take under state law.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Sensitive natural communities are evaluated pursuant to CEQA Guidelines §15380 and Appendix G. Natural communities identified by CDFW as rare or sensitive, including those tracked in the

California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), may warrant special consideration under CEQA if project impacts would substantially diminish their extent or function.

Protected Desert Plants and Western Joshua Tree

The California Desert Native Plants Act (Food and Agricultural Code §80001 et seq.) regulates the harvest, transport, and sale of designated native desert plant species. In addition, the Western Joshua Tree Conservation Act (Public Resources Code §1927) provides specific regulatory protection for western Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*). The Act authorizes CDFW to regulate removal, relocation, or take of western Joshua trees and establishes permitting requirements and mitigation measures where applicable.

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