Ironwood State Prison
Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning System Project

Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration

March 2014

PREPARED FOR:
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
Facility Planning, Construction and Management
9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B
Sacramento, CA 95827

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Facility Planning, Construction and Management
9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B
Sacramento, CA 95827

Contact: Nancy MacKenzie
Environmental Planning Section

Nancy.Mackenzie@cdcr.ca.gov

PREPARED BY:

Ascent Environmental, Inc.
455 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
Sacramento, CA 95814

Contact: Gary Jakobs, AICP/Jessica Babcock

March 2014

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

Project: **Ironwood State Prison Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning System Project**

Lead Agency: **California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation**

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

This Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND), supported by the attached Initial Study (IS), evaluates the environmental effects of implementing the proposed Ironwood State Prison Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning System Project, which would occur in a noncontiguous portion of the incorporated city limits of Blythe in Riverside County, California. The applicant, California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), is proposing renovations and additions to existing electrical and air conditioning facilities, all within a developed area of CDCR property. Specifically, the project includes construction of power line, an electrical substation, a thermal energy storage tank, and a central chilled water plant. All construction would be consistent in character, design, and height with other existing structures. No high-mast lighting would be installed as part of the project. The project does not include any new beds and would not increase inmate capacity.

CDCR is the lead agency for this project and has prepared this Proposed MND.

FINDINGS

An IS has been prepared to assess the project's potential effects on the environment and the significance of those effects. Based on the IS, all potential impacts of the proposed project would be mitigated to avoid effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur. This conclusion is supported by the following findings:

1. The proposed project would have no impact related to agriculture and forest resources, land use and planning, mineral resources, population and housing, public services, recreation, and transportation and traffic.

2. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact on aesthetics, air quality, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, noise, and utilities and service systems.

3. The proposed project would have a less-than-significant impact with implementation of mitigation measures on biological resources and cultural resources.

Questions or comments regarding this Proposed MND and IS may be addressed to:

Nancy MacKenzie, Chief
Environmental Planning Section
Facility Planning, Construction and Management
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B
Sacramento, CA 95827
Ph: (916) 255-2159
Email: Nancy.MacKenzie@cdcr.ca.gov

After the close of the public comment period and review of any comments on this document, CDCR may (1) adopt the Proposed MND and approve the proposed project, (2) undertake additional environmental studies, or (3) disapprove the project. If the project is approved, CDCR may proceed with implementation of the project.

Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of the California Environmental Quality Act, CDCR has independently reviewed and analyzed the IS and Proposed MND for the proposed project and finds that the IS and Proposed MND reflect the independent judgment of CDCR.

I hereby approve this project:

(to be signed upon approval of the project after the public review period is complete)

DEBORAH HYSEN
Director (A)
Facility Planning, Construction and Management
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

[Date]

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

Alquist-Priolo Act	Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act
BMP	best management practices
Cal OSHA	State of California Division of Occupational Safety and Health
CalRecycle	California Department of Resources Recycling and Recovery
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CDCR	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	Carbon Monoxide
CVSP	Chuckwalla Valley State Prison
CWA	Clean Water Act
dB L_{dn}	decibels of day-night average noise level
DWR	California Department of Water Resources
GHGs	greenhouse gases
HCP	Habitat Conservation Plan
HVAC	heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning
I-10	Interstate 10
ISP	Ironwood State Prison
MDAQMD	Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MRZs	Mineral Resource Zones
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission

NO_2	Nitrogen Dioxide
PM_{10}	Respirable Particulate Matter
$PM_{2.5}$	Fine Particulate Matter
PVUSD	Palo Verde Unified Scholl District
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCE	Southern California Edison
SO_2	Sulfur Dioxide
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
USACE	US Army Corps of Engineers
USGS	US Geological Survey

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This Initial Study/Proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/Proposed MND) has been prepared by the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) to evaluate the potential environmental effects associated with implementing CDCR's proposed electrical and heating, ventilation, and air-conditioning (HVAC) system upgrades at Ironwood State Prison (ISP) located in a noncontiguous portion of the incorporated city limits of Blythe in Riverside County. The proposed project includes replacing the existing evaporative cooling units with a closed loop chilled water system and constructing an associated chilled water plant to serve the system. The project would also include the construction of an electrical substation to serve ISP and new power line to connect the substation to existing lines near the northwest corner of the CDCR property. The project would not increase inmate capacity.

This document has been prepared in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) (Public Resources Code Section 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (California Code of Regulations Section 15000 et seq.). Under CEQA, an IS can be prepared by a lead agency to determine if a project may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines Section 15063[a]), and thus to determine the appropriate environmental document. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a "public agency shall prepare…a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration…when: (a) The initial study shows that there is no substantial evidence…that the project may have a significant impact on the environment, or (b) The initial study identifies potentially significant effects but revisions to the project plans or proposal are agreed to by the applicant and such revisions would reduce potentially significant effects to a less-than-significant level." In this circumstance, the lead agency prepares a written statement describing its reasons for concluding that the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment and, therefore, does not require the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report.

As described in this IS (Chapter 3), all potentially significant environmental effects would be mitigated to less-than-significant levels with the implementation of mitigation measures. Therefore, an IS/Proposed MND is the appropriate document for compliance with the requirements of CEQA. This IS/Proposed MND conforms to these requirements and to the content requirements of CEQA Guidelines Section 15071.

1.2 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

Under CEQA, the lead agency is the public agency with primary responsibility over approval of the proposed project. CDCR is the lead agency for the proposed project. At the direction of CDCR, Ascent Environmental Inc., has prepared this document in compliance with CEQA. The purpose of this document is to present to decision-makers and the public the environmental consequences of implementing the proposed project. This disclosure document is being made available to the public for review and comment.

The IS/Proposed MND is available for a 30-day public review period from April 2, 2014 to May 1, 2014. Because CDCR is a state agency, it is required to submit the MND to the State Clearinghouse, pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15073(b) and (d). When submittal of the MND to the State Clearinghouse is required, the public review period is at least 30 days, unless a shorter period has been approved by the State Clearinghouse.

The IS/Proposed MND is available for public review and download at:
http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/FPCM/Environmental.html

A copy of the document is also available for public review at:

Palo Verde Valley District Library
125 W. Chanslor Way
Blythe, CA 92225

Written comments should be addressed to:

Nancy MacKenzie, Chief
Environmental Planning Section
Facility Planning, Construction and Management
California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation
9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B
Sacramento, CA 95827

E-mail comments may be transmitted to: Nancy.MacKenzie@cdcr.ca.gov.

If you have questions regarding the IS/Proposed MND, please call Nancy MacKenzie at: (916) 255-2159.

All comment must be postmarked no later than May 1, 2014. After comments are received from the public and reviewing agencies, CDCR may (1) adopt the MND and approve the proposed project; (2) undertake additional environmental studies; or (3) abandon the project. If the project is approved and funded, CDCR could proceed with all or part of the project.

1.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Chapter 3 of this document contains the analysis and discussion of potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Based on the issues evaluated in that chapter, it was determined that the proposed project would have no impact related to the following issue areas:

- Agriculture and forest resources
- Land use and planning
- Mineral resources
- Population and housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and traffic

Impacts of the proposed project were determined to be less-than-significant for the following issue areas:

- Aesthetics
- Air quality
- Geology and soils
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Hydrology and water quality
- Noise
- Utilities and service systems

Impacts of the proposed project were determined to be less-than-significant with implementation of identified mitigation for the following issue areas:

- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources

1.4 DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This IS/Proposed MND is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: Introduction. This chapter provides an introduction to the environmental review process. It describes the purpose and organization of this document and presents a summary of findings.

Chapter 2: Project Description and Background. This chapter describes the purpose of and need for the proposed project, and provides a description of the proposed project.

Chapter 3: Environmental Checklist. This chapter presents an analysis of a range of environmental issues identified in the CEQA Environmental Checklist and determines if each of a range of impacts would result in no impact, a less-than-significant impact, a less-than-significant impact with mitigation incorporated, or a potentially significant impact. If any impacts were determined to be potentially significant, an EIR would be required.

Chapter 4: References. This chapter lists the references used in preparation of this IS/Proposed MND.

Chapter 5: List of Preparers. This chapter identifies report preparers.

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2 PROJECT DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND

CDCR is proposing an upgrade of the existing HVAC system at ISP, which is aging and currently requires continuous maintenance. The existing individual evaporative cooling unit would be replaced with a site-wide chilled water system for air conditioning. ISP is located in the Colorado Desert in southeastern California. The nearby city of Blythe receives less than four inches of rainfall per year, which typically falls during the months of August and September. The temperature averages above 90 degrees (daytime high) from April through October, and over 100 degrees from June to September. Evaporative cooling is an efficient method of climate control for most of the year; however, the site's poor water quality caused premature aging of these units. A central chilled water plant and its site-wide infrastructure would substantially reduce maintenance work currently experienced at the site. Many of the infrastructure improvements required as part of this process, including structural repairs to existing buildings and roof upgrades, are exempt from CEQA analysis because they are part of normal operations and maintenance.

New facilities evaluated in this IS include a central chilled water plant and thermal energy storage tank, which would be constructed on CDCR property adjacent to ISP. To support operation of the chilled water cooling system, a separate electrical substation and associated line are also proposed for ISP. ISP currently receives primary power from the existing substation at neighboring Chuckawalla Valley State Prison (CVSP). The proposed ISP substation would provide each prison facility with its own electrical service connection.

The proposed power line and ISP substation would be constructed by Southern California Edison (SCE). CDCR, as the project applicant, has developed a proposed alignment and an alternative. SCE would construct all electrical upgrades and determine the final project footprint. The proposed project would not change the inmate capacity. ISP would add three employees to operate the new plant.

2.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

The project site is located in eastern Riverside County, approximately 20 miles west of the border between California and Arizona (Exhibit 2-1). Situated in the Chuckwalla Valley, the project site is within the low-elevation Colorado Desert. The Little Chuckwalla Mountains are south of the project area, and the McCoy Mountains are northeast (Exhibit 2-2).

The project site, which is accessed via Wiley's Well Road off of Interstate 10 (I-10), has been graded and developed. It includes two prisons (ISP and CVSP) and associated facilities. The CDCR property constitutes a non-contiguous portion of the City of Blythe that was annexed into the City in 1991.

The project would be located within a developed area, along existing utility corridors. The proposed power lines would connect to existing power lines on Wiley's Well Road. The new substation, chilled water plant, and thermal energy storage tank would be located near the eastern fence line of ISP (Exhibit 2-3). All project elements would be located on property owned by CDCR.

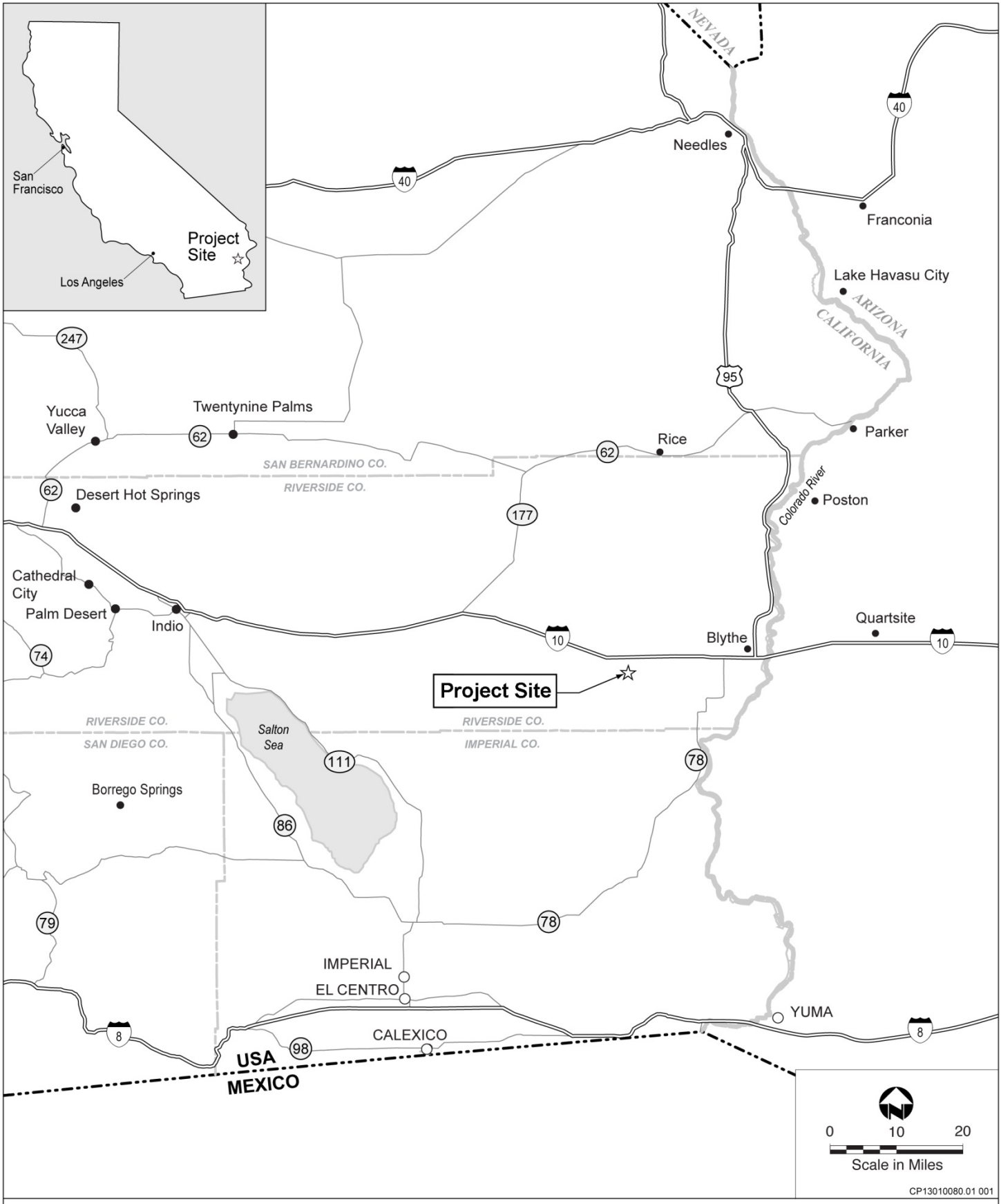

Exhibit 2-1 **Regional Location**

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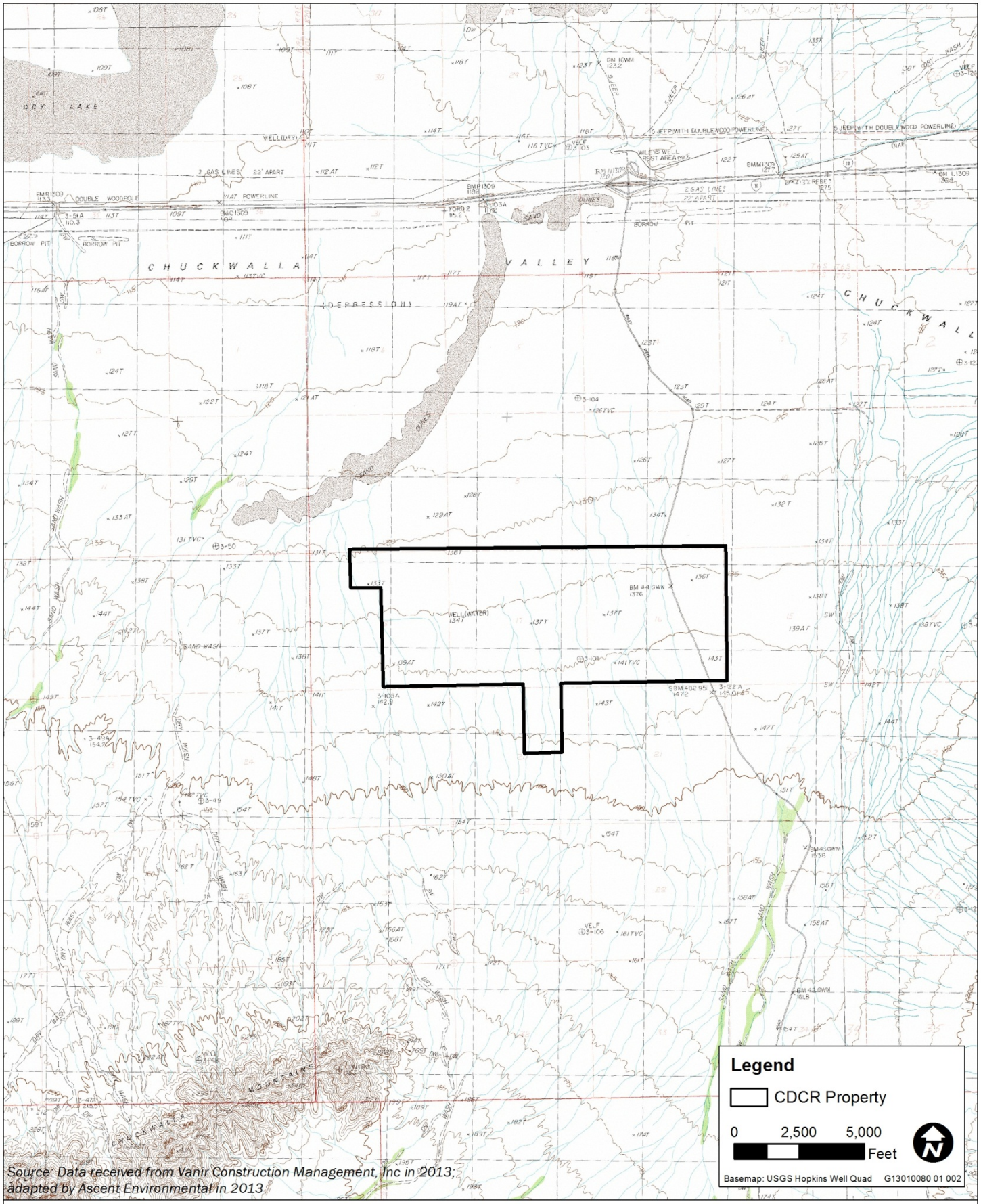
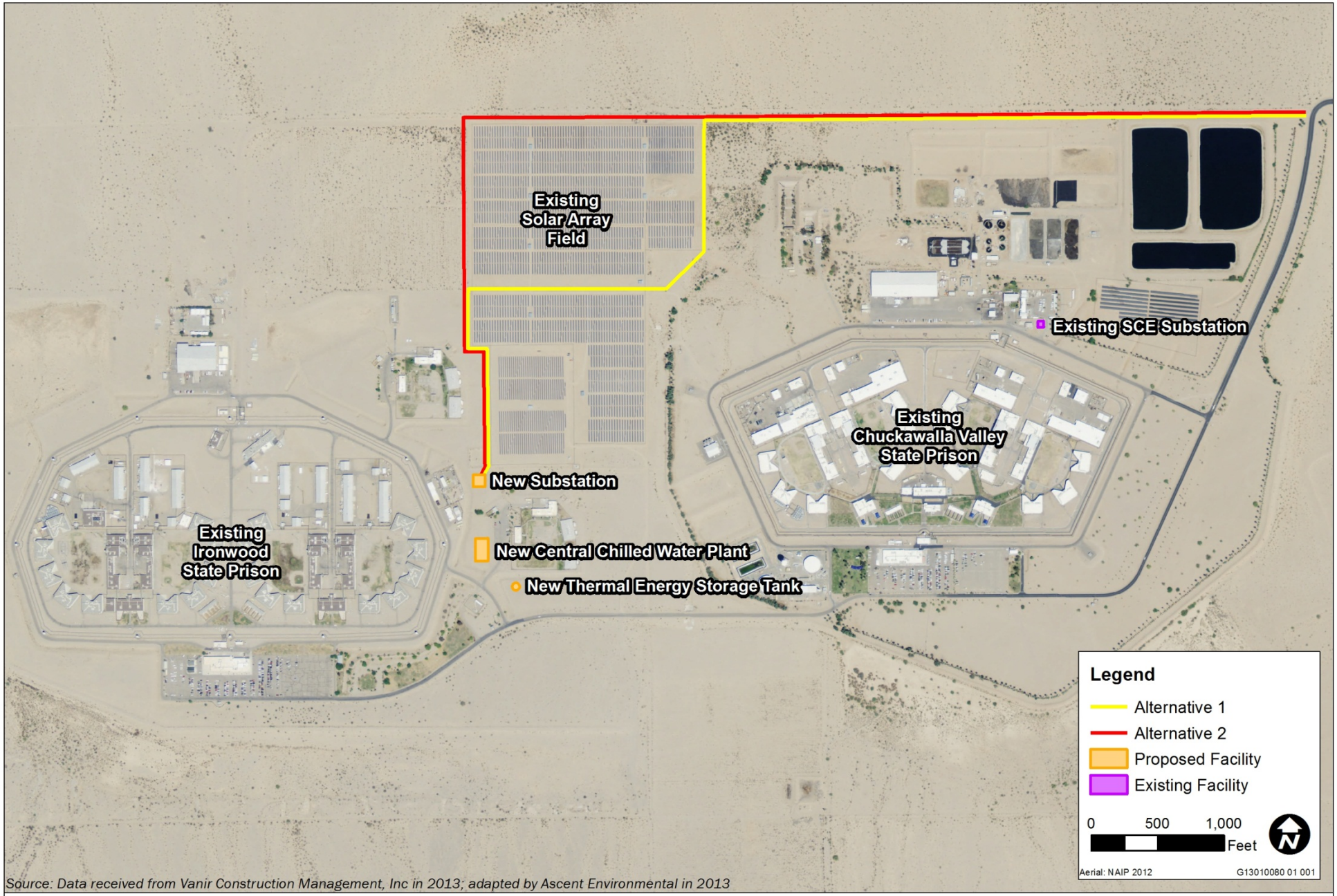


Source: Data received from Vanir Construction Management, Inc in 2013; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2013

Exhibit 2-2 **Project Site Vicinity and Topographic Map**



Source: Data received from Vanir Construction Management, Inc in 2013; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2013

Exhibit 2-3 **Site Plan**

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2.2 PURPOSE AND NEED FOR THE PROJECT

The ISP facility is located in a hot, arid climate with average temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit between June and September. Control of the indoor environment is necessary to protect the health and safety of inmates and employees at the facility. The existing HVAC system is outdated and leaking. The current system, which is based on the recirculation of humidified air, works well during the average hot and arid days. However, during monsoon season, as the temperature and humidity increase, the level of realized cooling is substantially reduced, and CDCR's temperature set points cannot be met or maintained in many of the buildings. A chilled water cooling system is being proposed because it is a more effective and reliable method of climate control in this environment. Furthermore, overall water use would be reduced by consolidating evaporation to just the cooling towers at the central plant.

The current evaporative cooling system is also operating inefficiently and causing damage to the prison facilities as the corrosive water leaks from the existing units and causes damage to the roof decking and structural elements of the buildings. Additionally, many of these buildings are not receiving code-required amounts of outside air. The new equipment would be better able to control airflow and maintain code-compliant levels of outside air in these buildings. Finally, during windy periods of the year, the wind picks up excessive amounts of dust and dirt, which quickly clog the intake filters on the existing units. Outside air intake hoods on the proposed new equipment would help to substantially increase the useful life of the filters in the equipment. With all these concepts in mind, the project is necessary to maintain good indoor air quality through adequate ventilation while also providing improved filtration and thermal comfort.

The new substation is required because the existing substation at CVSP is unable to meet the power requirements of the new central chilled water plant. The new substation would add more stability to the site's power distribution system by reducing the power fluctuations created by the switching activities of the 10 Megawatt photovoltaic solar arrays located on prison property.

2.3 DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

The proposed project consists of three key elements: a new electrical substation to serve ISP, a power line to connect the ISP substation to existing SCE facilities, and a central chilled water plant. Construction of all project elements is assumed to occur between October 2014 and April 2017.

2.3.1 ISP Substation

The proposed substation would be generally located adjacent to an existing materials staging area at the northeast side of the main ISP facility, between the prison facility and solar array field. The proposed substation would be constructed, operated, and maintained by SCE.

2.3.2 Power Line

Many project details, including the style of pole and exact pole placement, will be determined by SCE as part of their program to serve the ISP facility and have not yet been established. Pole spacing is established using a variety of engineering inputs, including SCE's Wind Load Estimator and design features such as the number of pivot points in the alignment. Typical pole spacing can vary between 200 and 300 feet, depending on the size of conductor.

The power line would be constructed, operated, and maintained by SCE. It is assumed that wooden poles would be used to support the power line. These poles would likely be installed using a drilling rig and would not require foundations. Permanent disturbance would be minimal. There would be temporary disturbance (i.e., several trucks parked at each pole) during construction. The area of disturbance would be limited to a 100 foot corridor along the selected alignment. (Note that, although there is a potential for disturbance along the entire corridor, disturbance generally would be limited to the location of the power poles.)

Through preliminary consultation with SCE, CDCR has identified a proposed alignment (Alternative 1) and alternative alignment (Alternative 2) for the power line, which would connect to existing power lines along Wiley's Well Road. Each alignment would be approximately 1.7 miles in length, and are described in detail below and depicted in Exhibit 2-3.

ALTERNATIVE 1: PROPOSED ALIGNMENT

Alternative 1 would connect to an existing SCE power line at Wiley's Well Road and parallel the northern fence line of the CDCR property for approximately 4,700 feet to the eastern side of the existing solar arrays, where the line would turn south for approximately 1,300 feet. At the existing power line that runs east to west through the existing solar arrays, the line would turn west for approximately 1,700 feet. This existing power line is not currently in use. Existing infrastructure would be upgraded and reused if feasible. West of the solar arrays, the line would extend south approximately 1,400 feet to connect to the proposed ISP substation.

Under Alternative 1, approximately 1.7 miles of power line would be installed. Conservatively assuming a power pole every 200 feet and a pole at every angle point in the line, this alternative would require approximately 48 poles. (Note, however, that as many as 15 existing poles may be re-used, which would result in only 33 new poles.)

ALTERNATIVE 2: ALTERNATIVE ALIGNMENT

Alternative 2 would connect to an existing SCE power line at Wiley's Well Road and parallel the northern fence line of the CDCR property for approximately 6,500 feet to the western side of the existing solar arrays, where the line would turn south for approximately 2,600 feet to connect to the proposed ISP substation.

Under Alternative 2, approximately 1.7 miles of power line would be installed. Conservatively assuming a power pole every 200 feet and a pole at every angle point in the line, this alternative would also require approximately 48 poles.

2.3.3 Central Chilled Water Plant

The central chilled water plant would consist of four separate components: the chiller plant building, cooling tower yard, emergency generator yard, and thermal storage tank. The plant would be located between separate, fenced components of ISP at the eastern side of the main prison grounds. The combined footprint of the central chilled water plant components would be approximately 0.4 acre. The entire site would be fenced, with two separate roadway entry points equipped with rolling security gates and a single security pedestrian gate. These two roadway entry points would allow for easy entry and exit of fuel trucks, which would periodically refill the on-site emergency generator fuel tank, and also for any equipment maintenance vehicles that may need to enter the central plant area. The thermal storage tank would be constructed approximately 300 feet to the southeast of the plant and outside of its fenced perimeter.

The central chilled water plant would support improvements to the ISP indoor cooling system. It would contain the chillers, primary and secondary chilled water pumps, thermal energy storage system pumps and all associated piping, valving and ancillary equipment necessary for the proper operation of the plant. The

plant building would also house the main control room, electrical room, tool room and storage room to support operation of the plant. (Note that modified equipment, piping, and duct work associated with upgrades to the ISP indoor cooling system that would be located within the ISP facility are not considered in this analysis.)

The central chilled water plant would be constructed, operated, and maintained by CDCR.

THERMAL ENERGY STORAGE TANK

The principal application of the thermal energy storage tank at ISP would be the production of ice or chilled water at night, which would then be used to cool buildings during the day. During the day (i.e., during times of highest utility costs) cold water would be extracted from the bottom of the tank, while warm water returning from ISP would be delivered to the top. The insulated, cylindrical tank would be constructed of pre-stressed concrete and painted a neutral color. The proposed tank would have 18,000 ton-hours of cooling capacity (1,500 tons over 12 hours). While not reducing overall cooling energy consumption at ISP, the thermal energy storage tank would offer the following benefits by shifting energy demand:

- maximum building electrical demand would be reduced, providing cost savings;
- use of off-peak (and less costly) energy;
- increased efficiency (since chillers operate at greater efficiency at night due to lower condensing temperatures); and
- lower water consumption in cooling towers.

2.3.4 Rock Refuse Area

There is currently ballast rock on the roof of ISP (approximately 720,000 square feet total) that would be removed as part of this project. The roof ballast system consists of approximately 2.5-inch clean, rounded rocks at an estimated 15 pounds per square foot of stone. This equates to nearly 6,000 tons of ballast for refuse.

The refuse ballast rock would be placed along the southern boundary of the ISP parking lot. This is a previously disturbed area that is regularly maintained. The ballast rock may also be used as ground cover around the new central chilled water plant.

2.4 MITIGATION MEASURES

The following mitigation measures have been identified to reduce the potential environmental impacts of the proposed project.

Mitigation Measure 1: Conduct Pre-Construction Special-Status Plant Survey

A focused plant survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist during the appropriate blooming period for Abram's spurge (August-November). If any individuals are identified during this survey, the biologist will establish an exclusion area to avoid disturbance and will coordinate with CDCR and SCE to notify construction personnel of the sensitive resource area. If the spurge cannot be avoided, surface soils (i.e., the top two inches of soil) will be scraped from the disturbance area before construction commences and the soils will be spread on the adjacent landscape.

Mitigation Measure 2: Conduct Pre-Construction Herpetological Survey

A preconstruction survey for desert tortoise will be conducted following the guidelines provided in the 2010 *Pre-Project Field Survey Protocol for Potential Desert Tortoise Habitats* (USFWS 2010) to locate and remove any desert tortoises that have entered the site prior to grading or actions which might result in harm to a desert tortoise. The survey shall be conducted by an authorized biologist (i.e., a wildlife biologist who has been authorized to handle desert tortoises by the US Department Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW]) within 24 hours of the onset of the surface disturbance. If any suitable burrows or desert tortoise sign (live tortoises, carcasses, scat) are identified, the biologist will consult with the USFWS to determine appropriate avoidance measures. Concurrent with the desert tortoise survey, potential habitat for the Mojave fringe-toed lizard and Couch's spadefoot toad that may be directly impacted by construction will be surveyed and any identified individuals will be relocated.

Mitigation Measure 3: Conduct Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Survey

Should construction begin during the nesting season (February 15- August 31), bird surveys will be conducted by a qualified biologist to identify nesting loggerhead shrike and Le Conte's thrasher prior to the start of construction. If no nests are found, no action will be necessary. If active nests are found, impacts will be avoided by establishing appropriate buffers around the nests. Buffers will be determined by the qualified biologist, based on the nest location, to minimize the risk of direct impacts to individuals and active nests. No active nest shall be removed or disturbed until young have fledged.

Mitigation Measure 4: Archaeological Resource Protection

In the event that any prehistoric or historic-era subsurface archaeological features or deposits are discovered during construction-related earth-moving activities, all ground-disturbing activity in the vicinity of the resources will be halted and a qualified archaeologist will be retained to assess the significance of the find. If the find is determined to be significant by the qualified archaeologist (i.e., because the find is determined to constitute either a historical resource or a unique archaeological resource), the archaeologist will develop appropriate measures (e.g., avoidance, preservation, or curation) to protect the integrity of the resource and ensure that no additional resources are affected.

Mitigation Measure 5: Human Remains Protection

If human remains are discovered during any construction activities, all ground-disturbing activity in the vicinity of the remains will be halted immediately and the County coroner will be notified, according to Section 5097.98 of the State Public Resources Code and Section 7050.5 of California's Health and Safety Code. If the remains are determined by the County coroner to be Native American, the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) will be notified within 24 hours, and the guidelines of the NAHC will be adhered to in the treatment and disposition of the remains. CDCR will also retain a professional archaeologist with Native American burial experience to conduct a field investigation of the specific site and consult with the Most Likely Descendant (MLD), if any, identified by the NAHC. Following the coroner's findings, the archaeologist, and the NAHC-designated MLD will determine the ultimate treatment and disposition of the remains and take appropriate steps to ensure that additional human interments are not disturbed.

The project will comply with California law, which recognizes the need to protect Native American human burials, skeletal remains, and items associated with Native American burials from vandalism and inadvertent destruction. The responsibilities for acting upon notification of a discovery of Native American human remains are identified in California Public Resources Code Section 5097.94. The procedures for the treatment of Native American human remains are contained in California Health and Safety Code Sections 7050.5 and 7052 and California Public Resources Code Section 5097.

3 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

PROJECT INFORMATION	
1. **Project Title:**	Ironwood State Prison Heating, Ventilation, and Air Conditioning System Project
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:**	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation 9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B, Sacramento, CA 95827
3. **Contact Person and Phone Number:**	Nancy MacKenzie, Environmental Planning Section, (916) 255-2159
4. **Project Location:**	19005 Wiley's Well Road, Blythe, CA 92225; Riverside County
5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:**	California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation 9838 Old Placerville Road, Suite B, Sacramento, CA 95827
6. **General Plan Designation:**	Unknown
7. **Zoning:**	Unknown

8. **Description of Project:** (Describe the whole action involved, including but not limited to later phases of the project, and any secondary, support, or offsite features necessary for its implementation. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

Please refer to Section 2 of this IS/Proposed MND

9. **Surrounding Land Uses and Setting:** Please refer to Section 2 of this IS/Proposed MND
(Briefly describe the project's surroundings)

10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:**
(e.g., permits, financing approval, or participation agreement)

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☐ Aesthetics	☐ Agriculture and Forest Resources	☐ Air Quality
☐ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Geology / Soils
☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Hydrology / Water Quality
☐ Land Use / Planning	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Noise
☐ Population / Housing	☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation
☐ Transportation / Traffic	☐ Utilities / Service Systems	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance
		☒ None With Mitigation

DETERMINATION (To be completed by the Lead Agency)

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project could not have a significant effect on the environment, and a **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project COULD have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A **MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION** will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a significant effect on the environment, and an **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project **MAY** have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT** is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION** pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier **EIR** or **NEGATIVE DECLARATION**, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

Nancy MacKenzie — **Signature**

March 28, 2014 — **Date**

Nancy MacKenzie — **Printed Name**

Chief, Environmental Planning Section — **Title**

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation — **Agency**

EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including offsite as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:

a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
   b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
   c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.

6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
   a) The significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
   b) The mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

3.1 AESTHETICS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
I. **Aesthetics. Would the project:**				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

Aesthetic resources are generally defined as both the natural and built features of the landscape that contribute to the public's experience and appreciation of the environment. Depending on the extent to which a project's presence would negatively alter the perceived visual character and quality of the environment, aesthetic impacts may occur.

The proposed project is located at the western edge of the Palo Verde Valley, in a relatively undeveloped, desert setting west of Blythe and east of Indio, with distant mountain views in all directions. The area is characterized by light, sandy soil and scattered shrub-like vegetation.

The project area is not readily visible, except to inmates, institutional employees, and visitors. Wiley's Well Road provides access to the prison facilities, which are located approximately three miles south of I-10. There are no other uses along Wiley's Well Road that generate substantial traffic. From I-10, north of the ISP facility, the prison facility is barely discernible between existing transmission lines in the foreground and the mountains that compose the skyline. Riverside County has identified I-10 as a county eligible scenic highway (Riverside County 2003).

The visual quality of the project site is low and is composed mostly of existing built components of ISP, CVSP, and associated infrastructure. Each of the prison facilities consists of a cluster of structures surrounded by fencing and has associated parking and out buildings. ISP's solar arrays are located between and north of the two prison facilities. A wastewater treatment facility is located north of CVSP, as well as additional solar arrays for CVSP, and an electrical substation operated by SCE. The overall character of the project site is dominated by these institutional features, which are architecturally uninteresting. Existing structures are generally light-colored buildings. The perimeter of the facilities is marked with chain-link razor-wire fencing, security towers, and lights. High-mast yard lighting is used to illuminate interior areas of the prisons. The proposed project would occur roughly in the corridor between CVSP and ISP.

3.1.2 Discussion

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed project would add approximately two miles of power line to an area characterized by institutional buildings, chain link fencing, existing power lines, and solar arrays. While the ISP and CVSP facilities are visible to motorists observing the landscape to the south of I-10, the buildings, light masts, and observation towers will remain the most prominent features of the sites. From I-10, the additional power line, small substation, and chilled water plant would not have a noticeable effect on the scenic vista. This would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

No Impact. Although Riverside County has identified I-10 as a County Eligible Scenic Highway, the project site is not located on or near a state-designated scenic highway (California Department of Transportation [Caltrans] 2013). Additionally, the project site is already developed. The proposed structures would be consistent with the scale and appearance of existing structures on the site and would, therefore, not damage the existing scenic quality of the project site. Project implementation would not require tree removal. Further, there are no existing scenic resources, such as historic buildings or rock outcroppings that would be removed and/or damaged. Therefore, **no impact** would occur to scenic resources within a state scenic highway from development of the proposed project.

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As discussed in "b" above, the proposed power line and new utility structures would be consistent with the scale and appearance of existing structures on the site and would, therefore, not substantially degrade the existing scenic quality of the project site. This would be a **less-than-significant impact**.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

No Impact. High mast exterior lighting is used on the ISP and CVSP prison grounds. No additional high mast lighting would be included as part of the proposed project. Additional exterior lighting would be limited to downward-facing lighting at the new substation and chilled water plant that would be designed to light only the immediate area. Daytime and nighttime views of the ISP and CVSP from the nearest roadways would not noticeably change from existing views. The proposed project would result in **no impact** to views of the area due to new sources of light or glare.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
II. Agriculture and Forest Resources.				
In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997, as updated) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement method provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.				
Would the project:				
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

Farmlands are mapped by the State of California Department of Conservation under the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program. Mapping is conducted on a county-wide scale, with minimum mapping units of 10 acres unless otherwise specified. The Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program has not surveyed the

project area. No agricultural operations currently exist on the project site. However, limited agricultural development has occurred east of Wiley's Well Road and there is evidence that portions of the project site were farmed in the past.

3.2.2 Discussion

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The project would be implemented on developed land at the existing ISP and CVSP. The site is not used for agricultural production. The proposed project would not result in conversion of farmland. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. Although the zoning of the project site could not be confirmed, it is most likely Public/Quasi-Public, which is the only designation in the City that allows jails and prisons (Burrow, pers. comm., 2013). The project would be located on developed land that is not used for agriculture. Therefore, **no impact** to zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract would occur as a result of project implementation.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production?

No Impact. As stated above, the project site is most likely zoned Public/Quasi-Public. In addition, there is no forest land on, or in the vicinity of, the project site. Therefore, **no impact** associated with zoning for forest or timberland would occur.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in conversion of farmland or forest resources, and there are no project elements that would otherwise affect agricultural or forest lands. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment, which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The site is developed. The proposed project would have no impact on the agricultural land east of Wiley's Well Road. No forest resources are located on the project site. **No impact** would occur relative to changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of farmland or forest land.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
III. Air Quality.				
Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied on to make the following determinations.				
Would the project:				
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

The project site is located in the Mojave Desert Air Basin. Air quality at the project site is regulated by the US Environmental Protection Agency, the California Air Resources Board, and the Mojave Desert Air Quality Management District (MDAQMD). Each agency develops rules, regulations, and policies to comply with applicable legislation.

The US Environmental Protection Agency and California Air Resources Board have set ambient air quality standards for certain air pollutants to protect public health and welfare. If an area has not achieved the ambient air quality standards for any pollutant, it is classified as nonattainment. A nonattainment area is required to have an air quality attainment plan to attain and maintain the required standards. In addition, all projects are subject to MDAQMD rules and regulations in effect at the time of construction, including prohibitions against visible emissions, fugitive dust, use and labeling of solvents, and storage of organic liquids.

Concentrations of the following air pollutants are used as indicators of ambient air quality conditions: ozone, carbon monoxide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfur dioxide (SO_2), respirable particulate matter with an aerodynamic resistance diameter of 10 micrometers or less (PM_{10}), fine particulate matter with an aerodynamic resistance diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less, and lead. Because these are the most prevalent air pollutants known to be deleterious to human health, and because there is extensive documentation available on health effect criteria for these pollutants, they are commonly referred to as “criteria air pollutants.” As indicated in Table 3-1, Local Attainment of Ambient Air Quality Standards for Criteria

Pollutants, the project area is either in attainment of state and federal standards or in an unclassified area for all criteria pollutants, except the state standard for PM_{10}.

Table 3-1 Local Attainment of Ambient Air Quality Standards for Criteria Pollutants

Pollutant	State Ambient Air Quality Standards	Federal Ambient Air Quality Standards
Nitrogen Dioxide (NO_2)	Attainment	Unclassified/Attainment
Respirable Particulate Matter (PM_{10})	Nonattainment	Unclassified
Fine Particulate Matter ($PM_{2.5}$)	Unclassified	Unclassified/Attainment
Sulfur Dioxide (SO_2)	Attainment	Unclassified
Carbon Monoxide (CO)	Unclassified	Unclassified/Attainment

Source: ARB 2012

PM_{10} is dust generated by vehicles, fires, industry, construction, landfills, and agriculture. PM_{10} exposure can increase the number and severity of asthma attacks, cause or aggravate bronchitis and other lung diseases, and reduce the body's ability to fight infections (ARB 2009).

Local sources of air pollutants include a Southern California Gas Company compressor station (100 West 14th Avenue, Blythe), the Blythe Energy Project power plant (West Chanslor Way, Blythe), and vehicular emissions from nearby I-10 (City of Blythe 2007). The inmates of the prisons adjacent to the project are the only receptors in the area that may be sensitive to air quality impacts.

3.3.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

No Impact. The emission inventories used to develop a region's air quality attainment plans are based primarily on projected population growth and vehicle miles traveled (VMT) for the region, which are based, in part, on the planned growth identified in regional and community plans. Therefore, projects that would result in increases in population or employment growth beyond that projected in regional or community plans could result in increases in VMT above that planned in the attainment plan, further resulting in mobile-source emissions that could conflict with a region's air quality planning efforts. Increases in VMT beyond that projected in area plans generally would be considered to have a significant adverse incremental effect on the region's ability to attain or maintain state and federal ambient air quality standards.

The proposed project would increase employment at ISP by only three staff and, would not conflict with planned growth projections in regional and community plans. As a result, the proposed project would not conflict or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan and **no impact** would occur.

b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed project includes construction activities associated with approximately two miles of power line, a new substation to serve ISP, and a central chilled water plant. Criteria air pollutant emissions would be temporarily and intermittently generated during construction. Project-related activities would generate limited fugitive particulate matter dust emissions and ozone precursors because minimal ground disturbance would be required. Exhaust emissions from construction-related diesel equipment operation and material transport would contribute to short-term emissions of particulate matter, reactive organic gases, and nitrogen oxides.

The project would be constructed pursuant to MDAQMD's Rule 403.2, Fugitive Dust Control for the Mojave Desert Planning Area. In compliance with this regulation, CDCR would:

(a) use periodic watering for short-term stabilization of disturbed surface area to minimize visible fugitive dust emissions (i.e., use of a water truck to maintain moist disturbed surfaces and actively spread water during visible dusting episodes);

(b) take actions sufficient to prevent project-related trackout onto paved surfaces;

(c) cover loaded haul vehicles while operating on publicly maintained paved surfaces;

(d) stabilize graded site surfaces upon completion of grading when subsequent development is delayed or expected to be delayed more than 30 days, except when such a delay is due to precipitation that dampens the disturbed surface sufficiently to eliminate visible fugitive dust emissions;

(e) cleanup project-related trackout or spills on publicly maintained paved surfaces within 24 hours; and

(f) reduce non-essential earth-moving activity under high wind conditions (i.e., when visible dusting occurs from moist and dry surfaces due to wind erosion).

Through implementation of the measures required under Rule 403.2, potential for construction of the project to contribute substantially to the nonattainment of the State Ambient Air Quality Standards for PM_{10} would be **less than significant**.

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As discussed above, the proposed project is located in a region that is not in attainment of the state standard for PM_{10}. Construction could result in the temporary, localized release of PM_{10} associated with earthmoving and erection of infrastructure. The project would be constructed in accordance with MDQMD's requirements for fugitive dust control (Rule 403.2).

As explained in the MDAQMD CEQA Guidelines (MDAQMD 2011), cumulative impacts are similar to direct and indirect impacts of the project. By its very nature, air pollution is largely a cumulative impact. No single project is sufficient in size to result, by itself, in nonattainment of ambient air quality standards. Instead, a project's individual emissions contribute to existing cumulatively significant adverse air quality impacts. Therefore, analysis in addition to that performed under threshold "b," above, is not necessary in evaluating cumulative impacts. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in an addition of criteria pollutants such that cumulative impacts, in conjunction with related projects in the region, would occur. This would be a **less-than-significant impact**.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As discussed above under "b," the proposed project would not result in a violation of an ambient air quality standard. The project would comply with applicable MDAQMD Rules, which would reduce visible and nuisance emissions as well as fugitive dust. Although the adjacent prison populations may include sensitive receptors (in particular the elderly and those with heart or lung conditions), construction-related activities would not be anticipated to result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations due to the limited duration of construction and the minimal activity required for the project. In addition, operation of the proposed project would result in virtually no increase in vehicle trips and would only include a few additional truck trips. The proposed project would have a **less-than-significant impact** on sensitive receptors.

e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Minor odors from the use of onsite vehicles and equipment during construction activities would be intermittent and temporary, and would dissipate rapidly from the source with an increase in distance. Operation of the proposed project would not substantially change existing conditions, and no increase in odors would result. Thus, project implementation would not create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people. This impact would be **less than significant**.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IV. Biological Resources. Would the project:				
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

The proposed project would occur entirely within state-owned property between ISP and CVSP. The alternative alignments for the power lines would be primarily located on land that is currently developed and disturbed.

This analysis of potential impacts to biological resources is based on the *Focused Desert Tortoise* (Gopherus agassizii) *Survey and Habitat Assessment for the Ironwood State Prison Power Line Project* (Appendix A) and a site visit conducted by an Ascent biologist on March 5, 2014 focusing on potentially jurisdictional wetlands and other waters, and early blooming rare plant species. To identify special-status biological resources that may be found on the site, a literature review was conducted to evaluate the environmental setting of the project site and a five-mile radius surrounding the project. The review included a search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) (CDFW 2013) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2013). For both the CNDDB and CNPS search, all special-status species reported within five miles of the project site and

those occurring on the Hopkins Well and the surrounding eight 7.5-minute US Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangles (Ford Dry Lake, McCoy Spring, McCoy Peak, Roosevelt Mine, Thumb Peak, Wiley Well, Little Chuckwalla Mountains, and East of Aztec Mines) were assessed for the potential to occur on site (Appendix A). The most recent USFWS critical habitat maps were also reviewed (USFWS 2013).

PLANT COMMUNITIES/LAND COVER TYPES

No sensitive plant communities occur on the project site. Most of the project site is disturbed and developed. Some less-developed portions of the CDCR property support the creosote bush scrub habitat common to the area surrounding the prisons. Land cover types present on the project site are described in more detail below.

- Disturbed/Developed - Much of the project area consists of disturbed and developed lands. These areas consist of buildings, roads (dirt and paved), paved areas, and dirt areas that are regularly cleared. Where vegetation is found, it is mostly landscaped vegetation, including native and non-native species. Plant species found in these areas include: Canary Island palm (*Phoenx canariensis*), Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), Tamarisk trees (*Tamarix* sp.), gum trees (*Eucalyptus* sp.), Mediterranean burrobush (*Ambrosia salsola* var. *salsola*.), common Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*), Asian mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*), bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea* sp.), puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens* ssp. *splendens*), and Jimsonweed (*Datura* sp.).

- Creosote Bush Scrub - This community is generally found in the least disturbed areas of the project area. The community is dominated by creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), but also includes ironwood (*Olneya tesota*), smoke tree (*Psorothamnus spinosus*), saltbush (*Atriplex* sp.), and big galleta (*Hilaria rigida*). Only the northern alignment would be located in creosote bush scrub habitat.

- Jojoba Bean/Creosote Brush Scrub – This community occurs where jojoba bean (*Simmondsia chinensis*) agricultural fields have been abandoned. Although the irrigation has been discontinued and creosote brush is reclaiming the area, jojoba continues to grow.

SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES

For this IS, “special-status” species are those that are (1) listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing under the federal Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered; (2) listed or candidates for listing under the California Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered; (3) a state fully protected species; (4) a CDFW California Species of Special Concern; or (5) California rare plant rank (CRPR) 1 or 2. All plants with a CRPR are considered “special plants” by CDFW. The term “special plants” is a broad term used by CDFW to refer to all of the plant taxa inventoried in CDFW’s CNDDB, regardless of their legal or protection status. Plants ranked as CRPR 1A, 1B, and 2 may qualify as endangered, rare, or threatened species within the definition of CEQA Guidelines, California Code of Regulations Section 15380. CDFW recommends that CRPR 1A, 1B, and 2 species be addressed in CEQA projects. In general, CRPR 3 and 4 species do not meet the definition of endangered, rare, or threatened pursuant to CEQA Section 15380. However, these species may be evaluated by the lead agency on a case by case basis to determine significance criteria under CEQA. The term “California species of special concern” is applied by CDFW to animals not listed under the California Endangered Species Act, but that are extirpated from the state, experiencing serious population decline or range retractions, or have naturally small populations exhibiting high susceptibility to risk factors for decline resulting in future qualification for state threated or endangered status.

Special-Status Plants

The literature review did not identify federally and/or state listed plant species that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5 minute-quadrangles, and none were observed during the habitat assessment. The literature review identified 10 non-listed special status plant species (Table 3-2) that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles.

Table 3-2 Special-Status Plant Species Reported to Occur within the Project Vicinity

Scientific Name Common Name	Status			Habitat Requirements and Elevation	Life Form and Flowering Period	Potential On-Site Occurrence
	Federal	State	CNPS			
Astragalus insularis var. *harwoodii* Harwood's milkvetch	–	–	CRPR 2B.2	Dunes and windblown sands below 1,200 feet.	Annual herb January – May	Less than reasonable. Suitable habitat occurs in the northern portion of the project site; however, none was observed during focused plant surveys conducted in March 2014.
Calliandra eriophylla Pink fairy duster	–	–	CRPR 2B.3	Sonoran Desert scrub in washes from 390 to 4,920 feet in elevation.	Perennial shrub January - March	Less than reasonable. Species is a perennial shrub and was not observed during focused surveys conducted during the blooming period for the species.
Camissonia arenaria sand evening primrose	–	–	CRPR 2B.2	Sandy washes and rocky slopes below 1,300 feet.	Annual/perennial herb November - May	Less than reasonable. The project site contains suitable habitat, especially associated with several of the sandy washes; however, none was observed during focused plant surveys conducted in March 2014.
Carnegiea gigantea Saguaro	–	–	CRPR 2B.2	Sonoran Desert scrub from 165 to 4,920 feet in elevation.	Perennial stem succulent May – June	Present. This species is a perennial succulent, and has been used as a landscape planting along the site entrance.
Castela emoryi Crucifixion thorn	–	–	CRPR 2B.2	Mojavean and Sonoran Desert scrubs; typically associated with drainages from 295 to 2,198 feet in elevation.	Perennial deciduous shrub June – July	Less than reasonable. Species is a perennial shrub and was not observed during focused surveys.
Chamaesyce abramsiana Abrams's spurge	–	–	CRPR 2B.2	Sandy sites in Mojavean and Sonoran Desert scrubs in eastern California from 0 to 3,000 feet in elevatoin.	Annual herb September - November	Moderate. There is a moderate potential for this species to occur on the project site where creosote bush scrub is found.
Colubrina californica Las Animas colubrina	–	–	CRPR 2B.3	Sonoran Desert creosote bush scrub at elevations less than 3,300 feet.	Perennial deciduous shrub January – May	Less than reasonable. Species is a perennial shrub and was not observed during focused surveys conducted during the blooming period for the species.
Eriastrum harwoodii Harwood's eriastrum	–	–	CRPR 1B.2	Desert dunes from 656 to 3,000 feet in elevation.	Annual herb January - March	Less than reasonable. The project site is outside of the elevation range for the species, and the species was not observed during focused surveys conducted during the blooming period.
Hymenoxys odorata Bitter hymenoxys	–	–	CRPR 2B.1	Riparian scrub and Sonoran Desert scrub, sandy flats near Colorado River, known only from the Colorado River alluvial plain at elevations of 150 to 495 feet.	Annual herb November - May	Less than reasonable. The site is more than 20 miles from the Colorado River floodplain, and the species was not observed during focused surveys conducted during the blooming period.
Teucrium cubense ssp. *depressum* Dwarf germander	–	–	CRPR 2B.2	Sandy soils, washes, fields- especially in wet areas at elevations below 1,300 feet.	Annual herb May – June	Low. The survey area lacks moist areas typically associated with this species.

STATUS KEY:

Federal: -- = None

State: -- = None

CNPS: CRPR= California Rare Plant Rank
CRPR 1B = Plants Rare and Endangered in California and elsewhere
CRPR 2B= Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere in their range
0.1 = Seriously Endangered in California
0.2 = Fairly Endangered in California
0.3= Not very threatened in California

Source: ICF International 2014

Special-Status Wildlife

Sixteen special-status wildlife species (Table 3-3) were evaluated to determine their potential to occur onsite. The literature review identified two federally and/or state listed wildlife species that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles: Desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii)* and Gila woodpecker (*Melanerpes urapygialis*).

Table 3-3 Special-Status Wildlife Species Reported to Occur within the Project Vicinity

Scientific Name Common Name	Status		Habitat Requirements	Potential Onsite Occurrence
	Federal	State		
Gopherus agassizii Desert tortoise	FT	ST	Most desert habitats below approximately 5,000 feet in elevation.	Moderate. No sign onsite but potential is high in surrounding scrub habitat.
Uma scoparia Mojave fringe-toed lizard	–	SSC	Restricted to Aeolian sandy habitats in the Mojave and northern Sonoran deserts.	Moderate. A small portion of the project site contains suitable soils.
Scaphiopus couchii Couch's spadefoot	–	SSC	Found in arid environments, particularly in grasslands and mesquite savannas. The species is also found in creosote bush scrub and sandy washes.	Moderate. The project site contains suitable habitat.
Athene cunicularia Burrowing owl	–	SSC	Occur in open areas, particularly open grasslands and sparse shrublands with suitable burrows.	Low. Few small mammal burrows were observed during the survey and no sign was observed.
Falco mexicanus Prairie falcon	–	SSC	Open treeless terrain including prairies, deserts, riverine escarpments, canyons, foothills, and mountains in relatively arid western regions.	Low. Nesting potential is low as habitat is recently and/or historically disturbed.
Lanius ludovicianus Loggerhead shrike	–	SSC	Open habitat characterized by grasses and forbs of low stature interspersed with bare ground and shrubs or low trees such as prairies, pastures, sagebrush desert, and fencerows or shelterbelts of agricultural fields, as well as old orchards, riparian areas, open woodlands, farmsteads and suburban areas.	Present. At least four individuals were observed within the project site. The site includes potential nesting habitat.
Melanerpes uropygialis Gila woodpecker	–	SSC	Habitat consists of low desert scrub typical of the Sonoran Desert. They build nests in holes made in saguaro cacti or mesquite trees.	Less than reasonable. Mesquite trees onsite were too small for cavity nesting and the one saguaro cactus observed did not contain suitable cavities.
Pyrocephalus rubinus Vermillion flycatcher	–	SSC	Marshes and swamps, riparian forest, riparian woodland, riparian scrub, and wetlands.	Less than reasonable. No habitat.
Toxostoma crissale Crissal thrasher	–	SSC	Dense mesquite and willows along desert streams and washes.	Low. Nesting potential is low as habitat is recently and/or historically disturbed.
Toxostoma lecontei Le Conte's thrasher	–	SSC	Occur in desert wash, Mojavean desert scrub and Sonoran desert scrub.	Moderate. A small amount of suitable habitat occurs where creosote bush scrub occurs.
Antrozous pallidus Pallid bat	–	SSC	Roost in rock crevices, buildings, and bridges in several desert habitats.	Moderate. The project area includes buildings, and a bridge that may provide suitable roosting habitat.
Corynorhinus townsendii Townsend's big-eared bat	–	SSC	Typically found in forested areas and semi-desert environments. Roosts in caves and manmade structures, particular cool buildings.	Less than reasonable. The project site lacks suitable roosting habitat.
Macrotus californicus California leaf-nosed bat	–	SSC	Lowland desert associate. Found in caves, mines, tunnels and old buildings.	Less than reasonable. The project site lacks suitable roosting habitat.
Myotis velifer brevis Southwestern cave myotis	–	SSC	Caves, mines and buildings in lower desert scrub habitats; also near streams and in woodlands, old agricultural fields.	Moderate. The project area includes buildings and a bridge that may provide suitable roosting habitat.

Table 3-3 Special-Status Wildlife Species Reported to Occur within the Project Vicinity

Scientific Name Common Name	Status		Habitat Requirements	Potential Onsite Occurrence
	Federal	State		
Sigmodon arizonae plenus Colorado River cotton rat	–	SSC	Confined to isolated mesic habitats such as desert riparian, grassland, and fresh emergent wetlands in alluvial bottom lands along the Colorado River. Avoid surrounding true desert habitats.	Less than reasonable. No habitat.
Taxidea taxus American badger	–	SSC	Most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with friable soils. Need sufficient food, friable soils & open, uncultivated ground. Prey on burrowing rodents. Dig burrows.	Low. No suitable burrows were identified in the project site. There is a potential for the species to occur in the surrounding habitat.

STATUS KEY:
Federal
FT= Federally Threatened

State
ST- State Threatened
SSC= California Species of Special Concern

Source: ICF International 2014

Focused Desert Tortoise Survey

Based on a review of the USFWS Critical Habitat documentation and maps, the project occurs within critical habitat for desert tortoise (USFWS 2013). Desert tortoise is a Federally and State Threatened species. The species is found in a variety of desert habitats with friable but firm soils for burrowing. The species is typically associated with creosote bush and white bursage, and, in the Mojave Desert, is commonly found on gently sloping terrain with sandy-gravelly soils with herbaceous plants.

ICF biologists James Hickman and Doug Allen conducted a focused desert tortoise survey for each proposed alignment on October 28 and 29, 2013. Methods for the focused desert tortoise survey adhered to the recommended guidelines provided by USFWS in the 2010 *Pre-Project Field Survey Protocol for Potential Desert Tortoise Habitats* (USFWS 2010). The project site is predominately disturbed and developed, and suitable habitat for desert tortoise is generally lacking. Additionally, the project site is generally surrounded by a desert tortoise exclusion fence.

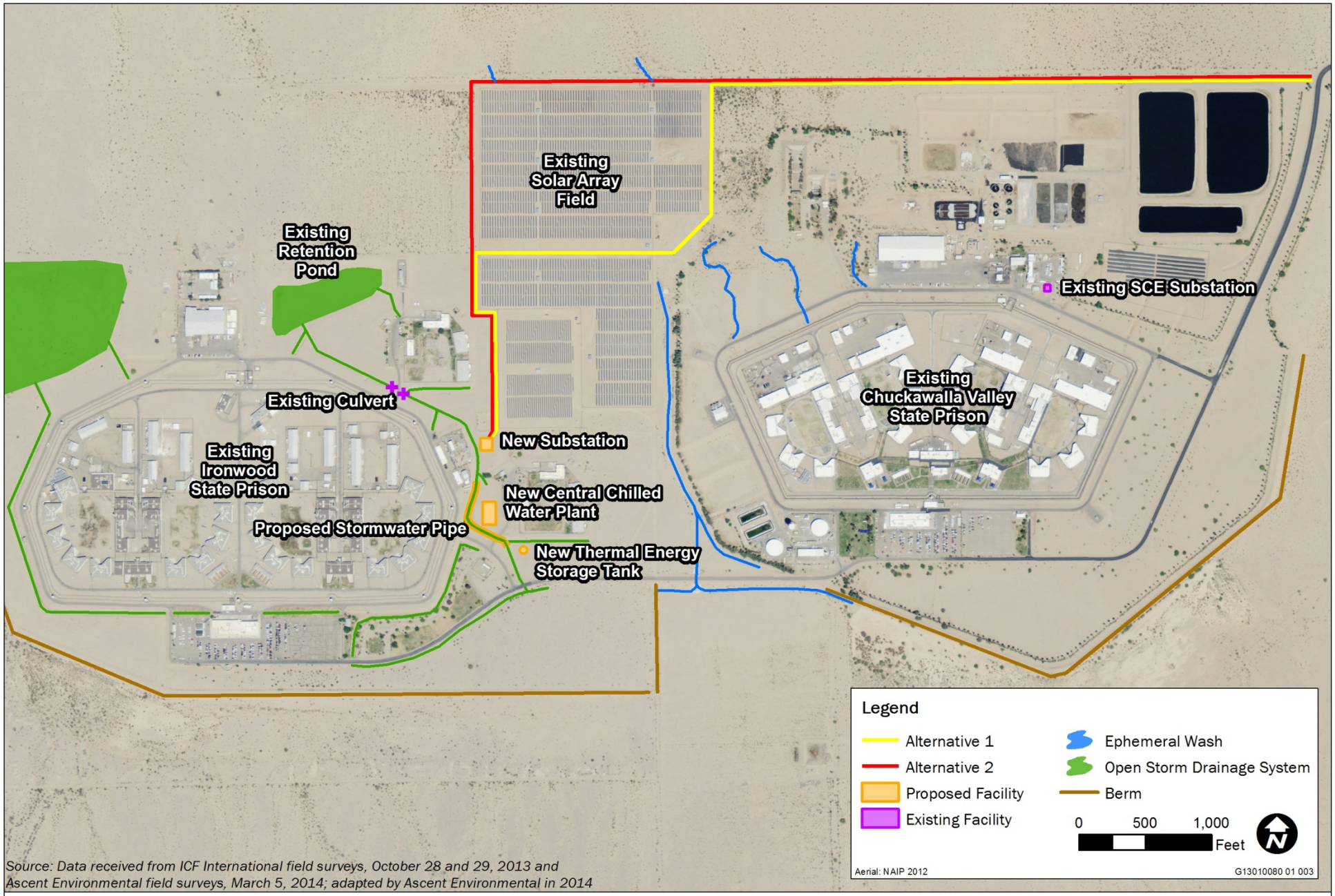
No suitable burrows or desert tortoise sign (live tortoises, carcasses, scat) were found on the project site. The exclusion fence is mostly intact, though gaps were found at open gates and at one location where approximately 100 feet of the fence was damaged by erosion. Based on the results of the focused survey, desert tortoise are presumed to be absent from the project site. However, there is potential for the species to move into the project site through the gaps in the fence.

Nesting Birds

The project site supports habitat for a wide range of nesting birds, including species detected onsite such as: mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*).

Wetlands and Other Waters of the United States

During the habitat assessment conducted by ICF International, several desert washes were identified. On March 5, 2014, following winter rains, a follow-up survey was conducted by an Ascent biologist to delineate the limits of these features. While only the individual regulatory agencies can make a formal determination as to jurisdiction of wetlands and others waters, a preliminary analysis was conducted based on field observation, connectivity of potential features to Waters of the U.S., and application of current regulatory guidance (Exhibit 3-1).



Source: Data received from ICF International field surveys, October 28 and 29, 2013 and Ascent Environmental field surveys, March 5, 2014; adapted by Ascent Environmental in 2014

Exhibit 3-1

Identified Hydrologic Features

ASCENT ENVIRONMENTAL

No areas meeting the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) criteria for wetlands were observed onsite. Additionally, no traditionally navigable waters, or relatively permanent waters were identified. A number of ephemeral features were identified. USACE decides jurisdiction over the non-navigable tributaries that are not relatively permanent based on a fact-specific analysis to determine whether they have a significant nexus with a traditional navigable water. Additionally, USACE does not exercise jurisdiction over the following features:

- Swales or erosional features (e .g., gullies, small washes characterized by low volume, infrequent, or short duration flow)

- Ditches (including roadside ditches) excavated wholly in and draining only uplands and that do not carry a relatively permanent flow of water

The eastern portion of the site, around ISP, contains a number of open ditches used as the on-site storm drainage system. These ditches are hydrologically isolated from off-site surface water features by a berm that prevents run-on along the southern perimeter of the site, and basins along the northern perimeter that retain collected storm water onsite. While many of these ephemeral drainage ditches exhibit scour, shelving, and erosion, these features were created in uplands to drain uplands, do not discharge off-site, and would not typically be considered Waters of the U.S.

A similar berm isolates the majority of the CVSP site from run-on. However, the berm is discontinuous, and an area of significant flow is present between ISP and CVSP. Run-off from the desert to the south of the site ponds behind the Chuckawalla berm, and then flows over a concrete apron and through a culvert along the eastern portion of CVSP. This well-defined ephemeral drainage enters the site along the southern perimeter, and flows in a northern direction before dissipating near the solar field. A low area west of the solar field and east of the shooting range exhibited cracked soils and is likely where the water from this drainage is contained after rain events. There was no evidence of flow leaving the site along the northern boundary. Therefore, this feature is likely to be classified as an isolated erosional feature characterized by infrequent, short, high intensity flows. Additionally, a review of aerial photographs does not show a downstream connection from these features to other relatively permanent waters. As such, these ephemeral drainages would likely not be considered jurisdictional under USACE regulatory guidance.

The project does not appear to contain any USACE regulated wetlands or other Waters of the U.S.

Wetlands and Other Waters of the State of California

The State Water Resources Control Board and nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCBs) regulate activities in Waters of the State, under the Dickey Water Pollution Act of 1949 and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter Cologne Act) of 1969. Waters of the State include Waters of the U.S., and are defined by the Porter-Cologne Act as "Any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state."

Additionally, the RWQCBs regulate discharges of fill and dredge material under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Porter-Cologne Act through the State Water Quality Certification Program. The State Water Quality Certification Program regulates proposed federally permitted activities that may result in a discharge to water bodies, including discharges of dredged or fill material permitted by USACE under Section 404 of the CWA, and ensures consistency with the Federal Clean Water Act and other regulatory programs. As the project does not contain any USACE-regulated wetlands or other Waters of the U.S., Section 401 of the CWA would not apply.

The Colorado River RWQCB has jurisdiction over the project area. Because Waters of the State are defined more broadly than Waters of the U.S., projects that do not require a federal permit may still result in dredge or fill in Waters of the State. Such projects may be regulated by the RWQCB under Waste Discharge Requirements or Certifications of Waste Discharge Requirements with the goal of protecting beneficial uses. However, the RWQCB stated during informal consultation that they would not typically regulate isolated

ephemeral features that do not fall under the USACE jurisdiction. Due to the isolated nature of these onsite drainage features, it is not anticipated that the project would impact beneficial uses of state waters.

3.4.2 Discussion

a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

Potentially Significant Impact. The project site is a fenced, developed area, and does not provide high-quality habitat.

The project site does not include sensitive plant communities and no threatened or endangered plant species have been recorded in the project vicinity. Alternative 1 would be located in creosote bush habitat for approximately 1,500 feet along the northern boundary of the CDCR property. Alternative 2 would be located in creosote bush habitat for approximately 3,000 feet along the northern boundary of the CDCR property, and adjacent to jojoba bean/creosote bush habitat along the western boundary of the solar array field.

One species identified on CRPR as 2B.2 (Abram's spurge) has a moderate potential to occur on the project site based on literature review and habitat assessment. Saguaro (also CRPR 2B.2) was observed onsite during habitat surveys. The saguaro cacti recorded on the project site is part of irrigated prison landscaping and would not be impacted by the project.

Although the project site includes suitable habitat for desert tortoise, a focused desert tortoise survey found no sign of the tortoise on the project site. It is possible, however, that desert tortoises could move into the project site prior to the start of construction through gaps in the fence and gates that are periodically opened. Although there is a recorded potential for Gila woodpecker to occur in the project area, the project site does not include suitable nesting habitat for Gila woodpecker. Two other special-status bird species, loggerhead shrike and American white pelican, were detected within the survey area.

Five additional special-status wildlife species (Mojave fringe-toed lizard, Couch's spadefoot, LeConte's thrasher, pallid bat, and southwestern cave myotis) were determined to have a moderate or greater potential to occur onsite. The Mojave fringe-toed lizard could occur on the CDCR property but was not observed during site surveys conducted in October 2013 or March 2014. Use of project site by this lizard would generally be limited and transient, since the site is developed and does not include the sand dune habitat necessary to support this species. Couch's spadefoot toad could occur in areas that support creosote scrub habitat. LeConte's thrasher may nest or forage on the site. Although bat species may forage on the site, there is not suitable roosting habitat for pallid bat or southwestern cave myotis within the area of potential disturbance.

Impacts to special-status plants, desert tortoise, Mojave fringe-toed lizard, Couch's spadefoot, and nesting special-status birds would be **potentially significant**.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Implementation of Mitigation Measure 1: Conduct Pre-Construction Special-Status Plant Survey, Mitigation Measure 2: Conduct Pre-Construction Herpetological Survey, Mitigation Measure 3: Conduct Pre-Construction Nesting Bird Survey described in Section 2.4 would reduce the project's potential to result in a substantial adverse effect on special-status species to a **less-than-significant** level.

b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?

No Impact. No riparian or other sensitive habitats are present on the project site. **No impact** would occur.

c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?

No Impact. No wetlands or other waters regulated by the CWA were identified during site surveys, and it was determined to be unlikely that waters regulated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act would occur on the project site. There would be **no impact** to federally protected wetlands.

d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?

No Impact. The project site is located in an otherwise undeveloped portion of the desert. Wildlife can easily move in all directions around the two prisons, and is most likely to avoid the existing prison sites. Barbed wire fencing and desert tortoise exclusion fencing that is currently in place discourages wildlife movement directly across the site. However, wildlife that does cross the fencing onto CDCR property can move through various corridors between buildings. For wildlife that uses the various routes between buildings and prison fences to move throughout the CDCR property, the proposed power line project would not further inhibit that mobility. **No impact** would occur.

e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?

No Impact. CDCR is not required to comply with local policies or ordinances. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinance protecting biological resources. **No impact** would occur.

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?

No Impact. CDCR has an approved Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) for its Statewide Lethal Electrified Fence Project. The HCP covers the operation of lethal electrified fences that surround 27 state prisons, including ISP. The proposed project would not include physical or operational changes to the lethal electrified fence at ISP. The HCP does not include any other activities that would apply to this project. The proposed project site is not within the boundaries of an adopted HCP, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. As such, **no impact** would occur.

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
V. Cultural Resources. Would the project:				
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☒	☐	☐
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☒	☐	☐

3.5.1 Environmental Setting

The project area is not identified as an area of archaeological sensitivity in the City of Blythe General Plan. According to the Riverside Land Information System, the site has a low potential for paleontological sensitivity and is not within or near any historic preservation district. The structures present on the project site are modern and are not considered historical resources. (CVSP was constructed in 1988 and ISP was constructed in 1994.)

3.5.2 Discussion

a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?

No Impact. All facilities on the project site were constructed within the last 30 years. There would be **no impact** to historical resources.

b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?

Potentially Significant Impact. All construction activities would occur on CDCR property. No known archaeological resources exist within the project vicinity, but unknown resources could be present beneath the soil surface. Groundwork associated with site preparation could uncover unknown cultural resources. This would be a **potentially significant** impact.

MITIGATION MEASURES

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 4: Archaeological Resource Protection, described in Section 2.4, this impact would be **less than significant**.

c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Development of the proposed facilities would require minimal grading and excavation on a site that is previously disturbed, and the project is in an area of low paleontological sensitivity. The potential that groundwork associated with site preparation could uncover unknown paleontological resources would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?

Potentially Significant Impact. No known human interments exist within the project site, but unknown human remains could be present beneath the project site soils. Although development of the proposed facilities would require minimal grading and excavation, there is a potential, however slight, that groundwork associated with site preparation could uncover human remains. This would be a **potentially significant** impact.

MITIGATION MEASURES

With implementation of Mitigation Measure 5: Human Remains Protection, described in Section 2.4, the proposed project would result in a **less-than-significant** impact related to disturbance of human remains.

3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VI. Geology and Soils. Would the project:				
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? (Refer to California Geological Survey Special Publication 42.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☒	☐
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994, as updated), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.6.1 Environmental Setting

TOPOGRAPHY

The project would be located in the Colorado Desert Region, which is the western extension of the Sonoran Desert Region of Arizona and northern Mexico. The area is a low desert, characterized by valley elevations near sea level and mountain crest rarely extending above 3,000 feet. The project site is located in the Palo Verde Valley northeast of the Little Chuckwalla Mountains, northwest of the Mule Mountains, and southwest of the McCoy Mountains. The area north of the project site is characterized by dry washes and sand dunes. Soils on the project site are alluvial (CGS 1967).

FAULTS AND SEISMIC HAZARDS

Seismic hazards include earthquake fault ground rupture and ground shaking (primary hazards), and liquefaction and earthquake-induced slope failure (secondary hazards). The Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Act (Alquist-Priolo Act) regulates development in the immediate vicinity of active faults to mitigate the hazard of surface rupture.

The Palo Verde Valley is not within an Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone. The City of Blythe is located in Seismic Zone 3, which is relatively stable. However, in the event of a major seismic event, moderate ground shaking is expected. Structures in the region are required to be designed in accordance with the values and parameters given within the California Building Code (CBC) standards for Seismic Zone 3 classification. The nearest fault is approximately 59 miles away in Imperial County, and surface rupture is considered unlikely in the project area (City of Blythe 2007).

LIQUEFACTION

Liquefaction is a phenomenon in which the strength and stiffness of unconsolidated sediments are reduced by earthquake shaking or other rapid loading. Poorly consolidated, water-saturated fine sands and silts that have low plasticity and are located within 50 feet of the ground surface are typically considered to be the most susceptible to liquefaction. The liquefaction susceptibility of the project site and surrounding area is moderate (Riverside County 2003). The project site is also located in an area that is susceptible to subsidence (Riverside County TLMA). However, there is no risk of naturally occurring landslides due to the area's flat topography.

3.6.2 Discussion

a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:

i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The Alquist-Priolo Act (Public Resources Code Sections 2621–2630) was passed in 1972 to mitigate the hazard of surface faulting to structures designed for human occupancy. The purpose of the Act is to prevent the construction of buildings used for human occupancy on the surface trace of active faults. There are no active or potentially active faults located within the project site or in the project vicinity as mapped under the Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Act (CGS 2013). Therefore, a **less-than-significant** impact would occur.

ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The project site could experience ground shaking as a result of nearby fault activity. Consistent with state requirements, CDCR is required to design project facilities in accordance with CBC standards to minimize the potential of ground shaking hazards on project features, including designing the facilities to withstand a major earthquake. Structures must be designed to meet the regulations and standards associated with CBC seismic design categories. By meeting these CBC standards, the project would not expose people or structures to substantial adverse effects of seismic events and this would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Liquefaction and related hazards such as lateral spreading and differential settlement have the potential to compromise the structural integrity of proposed new facilities and cause injury to construction workers and residents. Based on the widespread presence of sandy sediment, average low relative density of the subsurface material, the presence of past ground subsidence, and anticipated ground-shaking hazard, the potential for liquefaction, dynamic compaction, or seismically-induced settlement or bearing loss is considered moderate. CBC standards require incorporation into the project design of applicable features to minimize the potential liquefaction hazards on associated project features, including use of proper foundations, soil replacement, and other design features as needed.

As a state agency, CDCR is required to construct all new facilities in accordance with CBC standards. These standards require that appropriate, site-specific engineering design measures be implemented to appropriately minimize adverse impacts related to seismic hazards at the site. Project facilities would be designed to comply with the most recent requirements of the CBC, which has provisions for seismic safety. This would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

iv) Landslides?

No Impact. The topography of the project site area is flat. Therefore, **no impact** from potential landslide would occur.

b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction activities would involve minor grading and minimal exposure of soil. It is anticipated that the total combined soil disturbance from groundwork and equipment staging would be approximately one and a half acres. The impact would be **less than significant**.

c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Soils on the project site may be subject to liquefaction or subsidence. The project would not result in extensive site modifications such as grading, or add substantial structures that would increase the load on the substrate. The proposed project would not result in notable increased water demand or increased groundwater withdrawal and would, therefore, not increase potential for local subsidence. This impact would be **less than significant**.

d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial risks to life or property?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The project is located on alluvial soils, which can be expansive, depending on clay content. No site-specific soil surveys have been conducted to determine specific soil characteristics.

Expansive soils shrink and swell (i.e., change in volume) as a result of changes in moisture. Extremely expansive soils may damage proposed project structures and facilities and can result in collapse. Power outages, damage to nearby roads or structures, and injury or death to nearby people may result from collapse of proposed project structures and facilities.

Consistent with state requirements, CDCR is required to construct all new facilities in accordance with CBC standards (see discussion above). Conformance to these standards would minimize adverse impacts related to expansive soils. This impact would be **less than significant**.

e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems. Therefore, no impact would occur.

3.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VII. Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Would the project:				
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.7.1 Environmental Setting

Certain gases in the earth's atmosphere, classified as greenhouse gases (GHGs), play a critical role in determining the earth's surface temperature. GHGs are responsible for "trapping" solar radiation in the earth's atmosphere, a phenomenon known as the greenhouse effect. Prominent GHGs contributing to the greenhouse effect are carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, and sulfur hexafluoride.

Human-caused emissions of these GHGs in excess of natural ambient concentrations are responsible for intensifying the greenhouse effect and have led to a trend of unnatural warming of the earth's climate, known as global climate change or global warming. It is extremely unlikely that the global climate change of the past 50 years can be explained without the contribution from human activities (Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change 2007). By adoption of Assembly Bill 32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006, and Senate Bill 97, the State of California has acknowledged that the effects of GHG emissions cause adverse environmental impacts. Assembly Bill 32 mandates that emissions of GHGs must be capped at 1990 levels by the year 2020 (Health and Safety Code Section 38530).

Emissions of GHGs have the potential to adversely affect the environment because such emissions contribute, on a cumulative basis, to global climate change. Although the emissions of one single project will not cause global climate change, GHG emissions from multiple projects throughout the world could result in a cumulative impact with respect to global climate change.

Legislation and executive orders on the subject of climate change in California have established a statewide context and a process for developing an enforceable statewide cap on GHG emissions. Given the nature of environmental consequences from GHGs and global climate change, CEQA requires that lead agencies evaluate the cumulative impacts of GHGs from their projects. Small contributions to this cumulative impact (from which significant effects are occurring and are expected to worsen over time) may be potentially considerable and therefore significant. Anticipated effects of global climate change on the environment include sea level rise, reduced water supply and availability, changes in precipitation patterns, and increased frequency and intensity of extreme heat events, wildfire, and flooding.

MDAQMD adopted an annual threshold of 10,000 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent and a daily threshold of 548,000 pounds (MDAQMD 2011).

3.7.2 Discussion

a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. GHG emissions would be associated with mobile-source exhaust from construction worker commute trips and equipment used onsite (e.g., vehicles, lifts, generators). The project is relatively small and localized. It is assumed that SCE would employ only a few workers (i.e., less than 25) over a two and a half year period. Operation of the proposed project would not generate significant mobile source emissions because truck trips associated with maintenance and delivery of supplies would be infrequent and operation would require only three new employees. Operational GHG emissions would be primarily associated with energy used to power and cool ISP, which would be similar to existing conditions. Therefore, the proposed project would not have cumulatively considerable impact and would result in a **less-than-significant** impact on climate change.

b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As discussed under item "a" above, both short-term GHG emissions related to construction and long-term operational GHG emissions associated with this project would be well below MDAQMD's 10,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide per year adopted threshold, as well as their daily threshold of 548,000 pounds. As described above in "a," this would not be considered a substantial net increase of long-term operation-related GHG emissions. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not result in a substantial net increase of long-term operation-related GHG emissions from mobile, stationary, or area sources. For these reasons, the proposed project would not generate substantial GHG emissions and, therefore, would not conflict with any applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing GHG emissions. As a result, this impact would be **less than significant**.

3.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
VIII. Hazards and Hazardous Materials. Would the project:				
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.8.1 Environmental Setting

There are no sites of known or suspected contamination on or near the project site reported in the California Department of Toxic Substances Control's Envirostor database or the State Water Resource Control Board's Geotracker database. The project site is not within 0.25 mile of an existing or proposed school, and is over 10 miles southwest of the Blythe Airport. There are no private air strips or other local airports in the project vicinity. The region that includes the project site has low to moderate wildfire susceptibility (Riverside County 2003).

3.8.2 Discussion

a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Operation of the central chilled water plant would require the use of refrigerant cylinders, oils, and chemicals for the treatment of cooling tower water. These materials would be delivered to the site on a quarterly or semi-annual basis. Operation of the proposed project would comply with the State of California Division of Occupational Safety and Health's (Cal OSHA's) regulations for the use of hazardous materials in the workplace, as detailed in California Code of Regulations Title 8. These regulations include requirements for safety training, availability of safety equipment, accidents and illness prevention programs, hazardous substance exposure warnings, and emergency action and fire prevention plan preparation. Cal OSHA enforces hazard communication program regulations that contain training and information requirements, including procedures for identifying and labeling hazardous substances, communicating hazard information related to hazardous substances and their handling, and preparing health and safety plans to protect workers and employees at hazardous waste sites. The hazard communication program requires that Material Safety Data Sheets be available to employees and that employee information and training programs are documented. Following the Cal OSHA procedures would ensure project-related impacts associated with hazards to the public or environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials would be **less than significant**.

b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and/or accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction activities associated with the project would result in a short-term increase in the regional transportation, use, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and petroleum products (e.g., diesel fuel, lubricants, paints and solvents, and cement products containing strong basic or acidic chemicals). Standard accident and hazardous materials recovery training and procedures are enforced by the state and followed by private state-licensed, certified, and bonded transportation companies and contractors. Further, pursuant to 40 Code of Federal Regulations 112, a spill prevention, containment, and countermeasures plan or, for smaller quantities, a spill prevention and response plan, that identifies best management practices (BMPs) for responding to and disposing of spills and releases would be established for the project. In addition, CDCR would prepare and implement a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) that includes BMPs to avoid spills and releases of hazardous materials and wastes. BMPs would include, for example, the designation of special storage areas and labeling, containment berms, coverage from rain, and concrete washout areas. As required under state and federal law, plans for notification and evacuation of site workers and local residents in the event of a hazardous materials release would be in place throughout construction.

Due to the age of existing structures, it is unlikely that there are building materials that contain hazardous substances once commonly used in building construction (e.g., asbestos, lead, polychlorinated biphenyls) on the site.

With compliance with existing requirements a **less-than-significant** impact would occur.

c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within 0.25-mile of an existing or proposed school?

No Impact. The project site is not located within 0.25 mile of an existing school, and the proposed project would not result in substantial changes to the amount or type of hazardous materials currently stored and/or transported at ISP. Therefore, **no impact** would occur related to emissions or handling of hazardous materials close to schools.

d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code §65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?

No Impact. The project site is not included on a list of hazardous materials sites. Therefore, there would be **no impact** to the public or the environment as a result of locating the project on a hazardous materials site.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The nearest airport is the Blythe Airport, located over 10 miles northeast of the project site. The project would not be located within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public use airport, and there would be **no impact** to the safety of people working or residing in the project area as a result of project implementation.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?

No Impact. The project would not be located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, and there would be **no impact** to the safety of people working or residing in the project area as a result of project implementation.

g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?

No Impact. The California Emergency Services Act of 1970 established authority for the preparation of an Emergency Preparedness Plan for prisons. Each CDCR institution must assign an emergency coordinator to implement this plan and must prepare an Emergency Preparedness Plan for submission to CDCR's Office of Correctional Safety for review and approval. All institutions are required to ensure preparedness in dealing with disasters such as earthquakes, fires, and floods. The emergency plan for ISP includes contingency plans to respond to the following types of emergency situations: war, flood, civil disturbance, pollution, earthquake, fire, and accident-industrial transportation. Employees are trained to follow specific instructions and precautionary measures for emergencies and to use emergency equipment and medical aids.

The proposed project would operate under the terms of ISP's existing Emergency Preparedness Plan and would not physically or operationally interfere or impair implementation of the Emergency Preparedness Plan. **No impact** would occur.

h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The project site is located in an area with moderate fire potential (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2007). Project elements would be constructed and maintained to meet applicable standards, including those established by the California Public Utilities Commission, and would not create a potential ignition source. Moreover, the project site and surrounding area have limited vegetation, and there are existing emergency response services in place to respond to any potential wildland fire hazards. Therefore, impacts related to wildfires are considered **less than significant**.

3.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
IX. Hydrology and Water Quality. Would the project:				
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or offsite erosion or siltation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in on- or offsite flooding?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.9.1 Environmental Setting

The proposed project is located in a dry-hot desert climate that receives approximately 3.6 inches of rain annually (MDAQMD 2011). Runoff is channeled into washes that disperse water during rains. Several washes were identified on the project site. The washes on the CDCR property are hydrologically isolated from

the surrounding watershed and do not receive run-on or discharge from off site. (See Section 3.4, Biological Resources.)

The project site is located in the Chuckwalla Watershed. The site is not located in a flood prone area or dam hazard zone (Riverside County 2003).

The project site is located on alluvial substrate in the Palo Verde Groundwater Basin (USGS and State Water Resources Control Board 2013). The shallow aquifer is recharged through seepage from the Colorado River, as well as seepage from canals and lands irrigated with Colorado River water. As a result, the groundwater level is relatively stable (California Department of Water Resources [DWR] 2004). Groundwater quality in the shallow alluvial aquifer is generally poorer than Colorado River water. However, water quality improves at depth in some parts of the basin (DWR 2004).

3.9.2 Discussion

a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. It is assumed that approximately one and a half acres of grading would be required to prepare all of the building sites throughout the project site. The only additional impervious surfaces would be the footprint of the individual power poles and components of the substation, thermal energy storage tank, and chilled water plant. Grading of the ISP substation and central chilled water plant could contribute sediment to runoff from the site if the site is disturbed during a rain event.

CDCR or its contractor would prepare a grading and erosion control plan consistent with the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit for Discharges of Storm Water Associated with Construction Activity (General Permit, 2009-0009-DWQ as amended by 2010-0014-DWA and 202-006-DWQ). The plan would include the location, implementation schedule, and maintenance schedule of all erosion and sediment control measures; describe measures designed to control dust and stabilize the construction site road and entrance; and describe the location and methods for storage and disposal of construction materials. In addition, the plan would include a SWPPP that identifies specific actions and BMPs to prevent stormwater pollution during construction activities. The SWPPP would identify pollution prevention measures and practices to prevent polluted runoff from leaving the project site and would be consistent with the NPDES construction general permit. Examples of stormwater pollution prevention measures and practices that may be contained in the plan include:

- perimeter protection (e.g., straw wattles, fiber rolls, silt fencing) to prevent sediment escaping from the construction site;
- drainage inlet protection;
- hydroseeding or landscaping of non-paved surfaces; and
- employee training in good housekeeping practices and to inform personnel of stormwater pollution prevention measures.

The SWPPP would also contain information related to spill prevention countermeasures, measures to prevent hazardous material and waste spills, and emergency procedures for hazardous spills. All construction contractors would retain a copy of the approved SWPPP on the construction site.

Following construction, the proposed facilities would not impact existing drainage on the site. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in substantial additional stormwater discharge, and would result in a **less-than-significant** impact to water quality standards and waste discharge requirements.

b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level?

No Impact. The proposed project would not include any additional inmates, and would add only three staff members. The proposed project would, therefore, not result in increased demand for water supply. Additional groundwater pumping would not be required for implementation of the proposed project. Furthermore, as mentioned in "a" above, the proposed project would add very little impervious surface area to the site and would therefore not substantially interfere with recharge of groundwater. The proposed project would have **no impact** on aquifer volume and would not result in a lowering of the local groundwater table.

c-e) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of an area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial on- or offsite erosion, siltation, or flooding – or create or contribute to runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing of planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?

No Impact. The project site is located on developed property that does not include any creeks or other natural waterways. Under existing conditions, storm water discharges are channeled through an open drainage system to on-site containment basins and do not discharge from the site. The proposed power line, ISP substation, thermal energy storage tank, and central cooled water plant would result in localized soil disturbance and would add impervious surfaces associated with project features spread over the 1,720 acre CDCR property. While the project would result in the encasement of approximately 600 linear feet of the open storm drainage system in order to accommodate additional site access, this activity is not expected to impact the drainage patterns of the site, as all storm water is contained within existing detention basins. This small change to the currently developed prison facilities would not substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the area and, as mentioned in "a" above, would not contribute runoff water, which would exceed the capacity of the storm drain system. The project would have **no impact** on the existing drainage pattern of the area.

f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?

No Impact. No major excavation would occur as part of the proposed project. Therefore, no potential exists for encountering groundwater during project construction, and water would not discharge to a storm drain or a receiving water body beyond current levels. **No impact** to water quality would be anticipated.

g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?

No Impact. Development of the proposed project would not place housing in a 100-year flood hazard area. **No impact** would occur.

h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?

No Impact. Development of the proposed project would not place structures in a 100-year flood hazard area that would impede or redirect flood flows. **No impact** would occur.

i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?

No Impact. The project site is not within a dam inundation zone or flood prone area (Riverside County 2003). Implementing the proposed project would have **no impact** related to exposure of people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding.

j) Result in inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?

No Impact. The project site is not located near any large body of water or steep topography. As such, **no impact** would occur in relation to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow.

3.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
X. Land Use and Planning. Would the project:				
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, a general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.10.1 Environmental Setting

The project site is located in a noncontiguous portion of the incorporated City limits of Blythe in Riverside County, and is surrounded by unincorporated Riverside County. The project would be constructed between two fenced prison properties and within a fenced perimeter.

The City of Blythe's General Plan/Zoning map does not include the CDCR parcel. The zoning designation of the project site could not be confirmed, but is most likely Public/Quasi-Public, which is the only designation in the City that allows jails and prisons (Burrow, pers. comm., 2013). As a state agency, CDCR is exempt from local plans, policies, and regulations, but does consider them for the purpose of complying with federal or state law.

The land surrounding the site is undeveloped. Riverside County includes the land surrounding the project site in the Open Space component of the Land Use Plan for the Palo Verde Valley Area Plan, and designates the area as "Open Space – Rural." This designation permits one single family residence per 20 acres.

3.10.2 Discussion

a) Physically divide an established community?

No Impact. The proposed project is located within existing prison grounds. Thus, the project would not divide an established community and **no impact** would occur.

b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?

No Impact. The proposed project would be within the boundaries of the CDCR property and would support existing land uses on the state-owned property. Although the zoning of the project site has not been confirmed, local land use planning and zoning regulations do not apply to state property. Therefore, the project would have **no impact** on any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation.

c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?

No Impact. CDCR has an approved HCP for its Statewide Lethal Electrified Fence Project. The HCP covers the operation of lethal electrified fences that surround 27 state prisons, including ISP and CVSP. However, the proposed project would not include physical or operational changes to the lethal electrified fence. The HCP does not include any other activities that would apply to this project. The proposed project site is not within the boundaries of an adopted HCP, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, implementation of the proposed project would not conflict with any adopted conservation plans. No impact would occur.

3.11 MINERAL RESOURCES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XI. Mineral Resources. Would the project:				
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.11.1 Environmental Setting

The California Geological Survey and the State Mining and Geology Board are the state agencies responsible for the classification and designation of areas containing, or potentially containing, significant mineral resources. Areas known as Mineral Resource Zones (MRZs) are classified on the basis of geologic factors without regard to existing land use and land ownership. The primary objective of the process is to provide local agencies with information on the location, need, and importance of minerals within their respective jurisdictions. The areas are categorized into four general classifications (MRZ-1 through MRZ-4). As reported in the Riverside County General Plan (2003), the eastern portion of the county, including the project site, is classified as MRZ-4, an area where there is not enough information available to determine the presence or absence of mineral deposits.

3.11.2 Discussion

a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?

No Impact. The proposed project would be located within developed areas of ISP and CVSP, and would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state. The existing prison development at the project site would preclude extraction of any mineral resources. Therefore, there would be **no impact**.

b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?

No Impact. The proposed project would be located within developed areas of ISP and CVSP, and would not result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3.12 NOISE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XII. Noise. Would the project result in:				
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?				
Short-Term Construction Source Noise	☐	☐	☒	☐
Long-Term Operational Source Stationary Noise	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?	☐	☐	☒	☐
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.12.1 Environmental Setting

Existing conditions are governed by the presence of noise-sensitive receptors, the location and type of noise sources, and overall ambient levels. Noise-sensitive land uses are generally considered to include those uses where noise exposure could result in health-related risks to individuals, as well as places where a quiet setting is an essential element of their intended purpose. Residential dwellings are a primary concern because of the potential for increased and prolonged exposure of individuals to both interior and exterior noise levels. Residential uses are also considered vibration-sensitive land uses, in addition to commercial and industrial buildings where vibration would interfere with operations within the building.

The existing noise level at the project site is relatively low. The noise environment in the project area is primarily influenced by transportation noise from I-10. Other noise sources that contribute to the existing noise environment include activities at the existing ISP and CVSP (e.g., commercial equipment, truck deliveries, public address system).

There are no residences within 10 miles of the project site. Other than inmates at ISP and CVSP, the nearest potential sensitive receptors would be individuals at the Wiley's Well Campground (approximately five miles south of the project site).

Typical outdoor sources of perceptible groundborne vibration include construction equipment, trains, and roadway traffic. Caltrans recommends a level of 0.2 inches per second peak particle velocity with respect to the prevention of structural damage for normal buildings associated with groundborne vibration. The Federal Transportation Administration recommends a maximum acceptable level of 80 vibration decibels with respect to human response for residential uses (i.e., annoyance) from groundborne vibration.

3.12.2 Discussion

a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in other applicable local, state, or federal standards?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction noise levels in the vicinity of the proposed project would fluctuate depending on the particular type, number, and duration of equipment use. The effects of construction noise are largely dependent on the type of construction activities occurring on any given day, noise levels generated by those activities, distances to noise-sensitive receptors, and the existing ambient noise environment in the receptor's vicinity. Activities that occur during the more noise-sensitive evening and nighttime hours are of more concern because exterior ambient noise levels typically decrease during the late evening and nighttime hours as traffic volumes and commercial activities decrease. Construction activities performed during these more noise-sensitive periods of the day can result in increased annoyance and potential sleep disruption. The City of Blythe recognizes an area as noise impacted if noise levels exceed 65 decibels of day-night average noise level (dB L_{dn}). New noise-generating land uses are discouraged if resulting noise levels would exceed 65 dB L_{dn} at the boundary of a planned or zoned sensitive land use.

The prison facilities are located in a remote location, approximately three miles south of I-10, and approximately 10 miles west of the nearest residences. The area is not included in the noise contours developed for the City of Bythe's General Plan. Existing land uses, including the water treatment facilities and substation, generate low levels of noise, but are unlikely to adversely affect the indoor noise levels at the prison facilities.

Noise generated by the construction of project components would exceed the typical level of noise on the CDCR property, but would be limited in duration. Project operation would contribute steady, subtle noise to the environment. At the substation site, the primary sources of operating noise would be the on-site transformers. Transformer noise is caused, in part, by a phenomenon called magnetostriction, which causes the transformer to be magnetically excited and vibrate, producing a "humming" type sound. There would also be noise generated by the cooling towers at the central chilled water plant site.

Maintenance activities would include inspection, maintenance, and repair of project components. SCE personnel would visit the proposed substation to test and repair equipment. Worker vehicles used to transport maintenance staff would create a negligible amount of noise and would not be expected to conflict with applicable noise ordinances and plans. Impacts would be **less than significant**.

b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Construction of the proposed project would result in relatively minor activities involving small to medium sized construction equipment. Construction of the proposed project would not involve pile driving and would not include large construction vehicles, such as earth movers or large dozers that would generate substantial groundborne vibration. In addition, construction activities would be short term. Operation of the project would not result in substantial groundborne vibration of noise. Project-related vibration impacts would be **less than significant**.

c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. Operation of the project would not generate substantial noise. There would be a **less-than-significant** increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity.

d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The project would result in a temporary increase in ambient noise levels during construction of the power line and substations. These activities would not generate substantial noise. There would be a **less-than-significant** increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity.

e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The project site is not located in an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public airport. Airport noise would have **no impact** on people residing or working in the project area.

f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?

No Impact. The project site is not located in the vicinity of a private airstrip. Airport noise would have **no impact** on people residing or working in the project area.

3.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIII. Population and Housing. Would the project:				
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing homes, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.13.1 Environmental Setting

At the time of the 2010 census, approximately 37 percent of the City of Blythe's total population of 20,817 consisted of individuals institutionalized at ISP and CVSP (US Census Bureau 2010). In 2012, the City's population decreased to an estimated 20,400, which is 417 less than two years prior and a decrease of 65 individuals when compared to the City's 2000 population estimates. The population of Blythe comprised approximately 0.92 percent of Riverside County's population in 2012 (Southern California Association of Governments [SCAG] 2013).

The quantity of housing available in the City of Blythe has increased in recent years, although at a slower rate than the County average, and there is not a housing shortage. Between 2000 and 2012, the total number of households in the City of Blythe increased by 10 percent, while the increase in households County-wide was approximately 37 percent (SCAG 2013). In 2010, there were 5,473 total housing units in the City of Blythe, of which 4,513 were occupied (US Census Bureau 2010). This vacancy rate (i.e., the percentage of total owner-occupied residential units that are for sale and not occupied) of approximately 17.5 percent indicates that there is a sufficient housing supply to meet the current population. According to the California Department of Housing and Community Development definition, a housing shortage is a vacancy rate of less than five percent.

3.13.2 Discussion

a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in a significant increase in permanent employment. The power line and ISP substation would be primarily constructed by SCE using existing employees with limited CDCR management. The proposed project does not include a proposal for additional homes or businesses. The utility infrastructure proposed would replace aging and inefficient systems. Therefore, the proposed project would have **no impact** on regional population growth.

b) Displace substantial numbers of existing homes necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include removal of any housing. The project site is located on CDCR property and would not displace any existing homes. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?

No Impact. The project site is located on CDCR property and would not displace any people. Therefore, **no impact** would occur.

3.14 PUBLIC SERVICES

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XIV. Public Services. Would the project:				
a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

CDCR staffs ISP and CVSP with fully-armed correctional officers equipped to manage site security. Outside police services from the City of Blythe Police Department are sometimes necessary to investigate suspicious activity in the area around the prisons, manage unruly visitors, and provide other support services. The City of Blythe Police Department is headquartered approximately 19 miles northeast of the proposed project at 240 N Spring Street. Fire protection services are provided to the project site by the CVSP Fire Department. The area is also served by a Crisis Response Team, which is comprised of staff from both CVSP and ISP.

The Palo Verde Unified School District, which includes three elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools, serves the City of Blythe. As of November 2013, enrollment in the Palo Verde Unified School District (PVUSD) was 3,286 students. Enrollment is projected to decrease over the next two years (PVUSD 2013).

3.14.2 Discussion

a) Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, or the need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services: Fire protection? Police protection? Schools? Parks? Other public facilities?

No Impact. Construction of the proposed power line, electrical substation to serve the ISP, and central chilled water plant would not affect public services in the City of Blythe or result in adverse impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities.

The proposed structures would not affect the ability of the existing fire department and correctional officers to provide adequate levels of service. The project would not increase population, and would therefore not increase demand for parks, schools, or other public services or associated facilities. The project would have **no impact** on public services.

3.15 RECREATION

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XV. Recreation. Would the project:				
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.15.1 Environmental Setting

City of Blythe has seven parks and one pocket park, which are maintained by the City's parks department. Miller Park, the nearest park to the project site, is located approximately 18 miles northeast of the project site. Approximately five miles southeast of the project site, the Bureau of Land Management operates Wiley's Well Campground, which is available for short and long term recreation year-round.

3.15.2 Discussion

a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

No Impact. Implementation of the proposed project would not result in increased housing demand or add to the prison population and would, therefore, not increase demand for parks or use of existing parks. The proposed project would create **no impact** on local parks and no physical impacts associated with provision of new park facilities.

b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. As discussed above in "a," the proposed project would create **no impact** on local parks and no physical impacts associated with provision of new park facilities.

3.16 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVI. Transportation/Traffic. Would the project:				
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

3.16.1 Environmental Setting

The City of Blythe is located along I-10, a major east-west freeway that connects to Arizona to the east and the greater Los Angeles regional area to the west. Constructed in the 1970s, the I-10 opened access to the Colorado River and desert resource areas. There are seven freeway interchanges in the City of Blythe, one of which is Wiley's Well Road, which provides access to ISP and CVSP. The City of Blythe has designated Wiley's Well Road as a local collector.

The average daily traffic volume on Wiley's Well Road at I-10 was approximately 2,000 vehicle trips in 2000, which corresponds to Level of Service A (i.e., essentially free flowing conditions with minimal delays). The interchange is forecast to maintain Level of Service A volume to capacity ratios through 2025, when average daily traffic is expected to increase to 3,000 trips (City of Blythe 2007). The current configuration of Wiley's Well Road interchange is expected to be sufficient through 2025, as long as there is no expansion of ISP or CVSP.

3.16.2 Discussion

a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include any new inmate beds and would not substantially increase employment at ISP. The proposed project would not affect visiting hours or number of visitors. Project implementation would not increase demand for new transportation facilities, including streets, highways, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian facilities, and would not noticeably affect the performance of the circulation system. There would be **no impact** to applicable plans, ordinances, and policies establishing measures of effectiveness for the circulation system.

b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As mentioned above in "a," operation of the proposed project would not notably affect existing transportation facilities. There would be no change to the level of service on I-10 at Wiley's Well Road.

Project construction would generate daily construction worker trips. Project construction would typically begin at 6:00 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m. The weekday a.m. peak traffic hour is considered to be between 7:00 and 9:00 a.m., and the p.m. peak traffic hour is considered to be between 4:00 and 6:00 p.m. Therefore, construction vehicles would typically and generally be off the local roadway network during the weekday peak hour. This would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include any uses or tall structures that could have any adverse effects on air traffic patterns. Therefore, there would be **no impact.**

d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses?

No Impact. The project site is located on CDCR property that is built out with facilities associated with ISP and CVSP. Existing roadways on the site were designed to safely serve the existing facilities. The proposed project does not include any changes in roadway design, and appropriate access to the project site would be provided by the existing roadway network. In addition, the project does not include design features that increase hazards such as sharp curves or dangerous intersections. Because project construction and operation would not increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible use, there would be **no impact.**

e) Result in inadequate emergency access?

No Impact. Existing emergency access to the project site is adequate. Proposed project construction activities would occur entirely within CDCR property and would not change or impair emergency vehicle access to the facility. Project operation would not interfere with emergency access. Because emergency access is and would remain adequate, **no impact** would occur.

f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?

No Impact. The proposed project would be located on CDCR property and would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation. There would be **no impact**.

3.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVII. Utilities and Service Systems. Would the project:				
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☒	☐
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☒	☐

3.17.1 Environmental Setting

The ISP and CVSP facilities west of Blythe operate and maintain their own water and wastewater systems independent of the City of Blythe's utilities and service systems (City of Blythe 2007).

The closest landfill is the Blythe Sanitary Landfill (1000 Midland Road, Blythe). Blythe Sanitary Landfill is a Class III facility that accepts agricultural, construction/demolition, green, industrial, inert, liquid, metal, mixed, tire, and wood waste. In 2011, the remaining capacity of the landfill was 4,159,388 cubic yards (CalRecycle 2013).

3.17.2 Discussion

a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?

No Impact. The proposed project would not generate wastewater, and would result in **no impact** to wastewater treatment requirements.

b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

No Impact. The proposed project would not increase water or wastewater demand and would not result in the need for any new facilities. No expansion or other modifications to the existing wastewater treatment system would result. The project would result in **no impact**.

c) Require or result in the construction of new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed project would increase impervious surface area by a small fraction of the overall impervious surface area that exists at ISP and CVSP. This increase in impervious surface area would not occur in one location, but would be distributed across several facilities on the CDCR property. This very minor and dispersed increase in impervious surface area would not result in a noticeable increase in stormwater runoff rate or volume, and would be accommodated by ISP and CVSP's existing stormwater drainage system without substantially affecting capacity. The proposed project would result in a **less-than-significant** impact.

d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?

No Impact. Operation of the proposed project would not result in additional inmate beds or employees. There would be **no impact** on the current water demand of ISP and CVSP due to implementation of the proposed project.

e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand, in addition to the provider's existing commitments?

No Impact. As described above under "d," the proposed project would not increase wastewater treatment demand and, therefore, **no impact** to wastewater treatment capacity would occur.

f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?

No Impact. Operation of the proposed project would not result in the generation of additional solid waste. Thus, there would be **no impact** on permitted capacity of the landfill serving the project area.

g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed project would not result in the demolition of existing structures, and would not generate significant construction waste. All debris generated by construction would be sorted and disposed of in accordance with applicable regulations. Operation of the project would not generate solid waste. Thus, the proposed project would comply with all federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste, and a **less-than-significant** impact would occur.

3.18 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
XVIII. Mandatory Findings of Significance.				
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.)	☐	☐	☒	☐
c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083, 21083.5.

Reference: Government Code Sections 65088.4.
Public Resources Code Sections 21080, 21083.5, 21095; *Eureka Citizens for Responsible Govt. v. City of Eureka* (2007) 147 Cal.App.4th 357; *Protect the Historic Amador Waterways v. Amador Water Agency* (2004) 116 Cal.App.4th at 1109; *San Franciscans Upholding the Downtown Plan v. City and County of San Francisco* (2002) 102 Cal.App.4th 656.

3.18.1 Discussion

a) Does the project have the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. As evaluated in this IS/Proposed MND, the proposed project would not substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Mitigation measures are in place (see Section 2.4 of this IS/Proposed MND) to avoid impacts to special-status plants, special-status amphibians and reptiles, special-status birds, archaeological resources, and human remains. Thus, this would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The impacts of the proposed power line improvements would be well below all of the thresholds of significance with mitigation, as explained above, and would not considerably contribute to any regional impacts. This would be a **less-than-significant** impact.

c) Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

Less-Than-Significant. As discussed in the analysis above, the project would not have environmental effects that would cause substantial adverse direct or indirect effects on human beings. A **less-than-significant** impact would occur.

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Appendix A

Focused Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) Survey and Habitat Assessment for the Ironwood State Prison Power Line Project

January 6, 2014

Linda W. Leeman
Senior Biologist
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455 Capitol Mall, Suite 300
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Subject: Focused Desert Tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) Survey and Habitat Assessment for the Ironwood State Prison Power Line Project

Dear Ms. Leeman:

This report documents the results of a focused desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*) survey and habitat assessment survey conducted by ICF International (ICF) for the Ironwood State Prison Power Line Project.

Project Location

The project site is located in the City of Blythe, Riverside County, California (Figure 1). More specifically, the project site is located south of Interstate 10, at 19005 Wiley's Well Road (Figure 2). The site is located within Township 7 South, Range 20 East, Section 17 of the Hopkins Well, California, U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangle map (USGS 1971).

Project Description

The Ironwood and Chuckwalla state prisons are adjacent to one another. An existing photovoltaic (PV) solar field is located between the two prisons and a substation is located approximately 3,000 feet east of the PV solar field near at the Chuckwalla State Prison (Figure 2). The proposed project includes the construction of a power line to transmit electricity from the existing PV solar field to the substation and associated infrastructure. Three alignments are proposed, one of which will be used.

Methodology

Literature Review

To identify special-status biological resources that may be found on the site, a literature review was conducted to evaluate the environmental setting of the project site and a 5-mile radius surrounding the project. The review included a search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) (CDFW 2013) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2013). For both the CNDDB and CNPS search, all special status species reported within 5-miles of the project site and those occurring on the Hopkins Well and the surrounding eight 7.5-minute USGS quadrangles (Ford Dry Lake, McCoy Spring, McCoy Peak, Roosevelt Mine, Thumb Peak, Wiley Well, Little Chuckwalla Mountains, and East of Aztec Mines) were assessed for the potential to occur on site (Appendix A). The most recent USFWS critical habitat maps were also reviewed (USFWS 2013).

Focused Desert Tortoise Survey

ICF biologists James Hickman and Doug Allen conducted a focused desert tortoise survey for each proposed alignment on October 28 and 29, 2013. Methods for the focused survey for the desert tortoise adhered to the recommended guidelines provided by the USFWS in the 2010 Pre-Project Field Survey Protocol for Potential Desert Tortoise Habitats (USFWS 2010). 100% of the proposed alignments and 100 foot buffer (action area) was surveyed walking 10m (30 foot) transects and 10m belt transects were walked at 200 meters, 400 meters, and 600 meters around the proposed action area (Figure 3). Detailed weather conditions are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Conditions for Desert Tortoise Surveys for the Ironwood State Prison Power Line Project

Survey Date	Surveyor Name	Survey Time	Weather Conditions				Comments
			Air Temp. (°F) at 5 cm From Ground	Air Temp. (°F) at 1.3 m From Ground	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind Speed (mph)	
10/28/2013	James Hickman and Doug Allen	0845- 1645	78-82	74-83	0-20	3-10	
10/29/2013	James Hickman and Doug Allen	0740-1315	62-86	62-88	40-60	0-3	A light drizzle occurred briefly at various times in the day.

Habitat Assessment

During the focused desert tortoise survey, Mr. Hickman and Mr. Allen also conducted a habitat assessment of the survey area The habitat assessment was conducted to evaluate the current habitat conditions and to evaluate the likelihood of occurrence of special-status species, sensitive plant communities, and jurisdictional resources. For this report, "special-status" species are those that are (1) listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing under the federal ESA as threatened or endangered; (2) listed or candidates for listing under the CESA as threatened or endangered; (3) a state fully protected species; (4) a CDFW California Species of Special Concern (CSC) ; or (5) California rare plant rank (CRPR) 1 or 2.

All plant and wildlife species observed during the habitat assessment were recorded in field notes. Plants were detected and identified through direct sight. Wildlife species were detected by sight, calls, tracks, scat, or other sign. Special-status rankings for wildlife were identified through a review of the CDFW Special Animals List (CDFW 2011).

Results

Focused Desert Tortoise Survey

Desert tortoise is a federal and California Threatened species. The species is found in a variety of desert habitats with friable but firm soils for burrowing. The species is typically associated with creosote bush and white bursage. In the Mojave Desert, the species is commonly found on gently sloping terrain with sandy-gravelly soils with herbaceous plants. The project site is

predominately disturbed and developed and suitable habitat for desert tortoise is generally lacking. Additionally, the project site is surrounded by a desert tortoise exclusion fence. There is suitable creosote bush scrub habitat in the belt transect survey areas.

No suitable burrows or desert tortoise sign (live tortoises, carcasses, scat) were found in the project site or the belt transects. The exclusion fence is mostly intact, though gaps were found at open gates and at one location where approximately 100 feet of the fence was damaged by erosion.

Based on the results of the focused survey, desert tortoise are presumed to be absent from the project site. However, there is potential for the species to move into the project site through the gaps in the fence.

Habitat Assessment

Environmental Setting

The project site consists of three potential power line alignments. All three alignments are generally between and around the existing Ironwood and Chuckwalla State prisons. Much of the project site has been developed or disturbed as a part of the two prisons. Undeveloped portions of the survey area consist of creosote bush scrub and agricultural fields, further described below. Figure 4 depicts the vegetation communities found in the survey area. The surrounding area is dominated by creosote bush scrub.Plant Communities/Land Cover Types

The areas surveyed consist of two primary vegetation communities and disturbed/developed lands. Much of the survey area is disturbed as a result of the prison development. All three proposed alignments are associated with existing access roads within the prison properties. No sensitive plant communities occur on the project site.

Below is a brief description of the plant communities/land cover types identified during the habitat assessment.

- **Disturbed/Developed-** Much of the surveyed area consists of disturbed and developed lands. These areas consist of buildings, roads (dirt and paved), paved areas, and dirt areas that are regularly cleared. Where vegetation is found, it is mostly landscaped vegetation, including native and non-native vegetation. Plant species found in these areas include: Canary Island palm (*Phoenx canariensis*), Mexican fan palm (Washingtonia robusta), Tamarisk trees (*Tamarix sp.),* gum trees (*Eucalyptus sp.*), Mediterrnburrobush (*Ambrosia salsola var. salsola*.), common Mediterranean grass (*Schismus barbatus*), Asian mustard (*Brassica tournefortii*), bougainvillea (*Bougainvillea sp.*), puncture vine (*Tribulus terrestris*), ocotillo (*Fouquieria splendens ssp. splendens*), and Jimsonweed (*Datura* sp.).

- **Creosote Bush Scrub-** This community is generally found in the least disturbed areas of the survey area. The community is dominated by creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), but also includes ironwood (*Olneya tesota*), smoke tree (*Psorothamnus spinosus*), saltbush (*Atriplex sp.*), and big galleta (*Hilaria rigida*).

- **Jojoba Bean Field/Creosote Bush Scrub-** This community is found in two locations where jojoba bean (*Simmondsia chinensis*) agricultural fields have been abandoned. Although the irrigation has been discontinued, the jojoba continues to grow. Creosote bush is reclaiming those areas where the jojoba has thinned.

- **Bermuda Grass Field-** This community is found in one location on the east end of the survey area. The field is part of an actively irrigated field. The field is dominated by dense Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*).

Soils

Soils in the project area have not been completed by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). Based on observations made during the site visit, the soils are predominantly sandy and sandy loam. Some drainage features include sorted alluvium. Fine aeolian sands are found only in the northern portion of the survey area, particularly north of a dirt road along the north end of the prison properties. Patches of dune habitat are found

Critical Habitat

Based on a review of the USFWS Critical Habitat documentation and maps, the project occurs within critical habitat for desert tortoise (USFWS 2013).

Wildlife and Plants

During the site visits a number of plant and wildlife species were detected (Appendix B). A total of 3 reptile species, 33 bird species, and 2 mammal species were detected. Two of these species, loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*) and American white pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*),are California Species of Special Concern. One special status plant species, saguaro (*Carnegiea gigantea*) (CRPR 2B.2) was observed. This was a single individual that was planted and is irrigated as part of the landscaped vegetation within a disturbed portion of the survey area.

Threatened and Endangered Plants

The literature review resulted in no federally and/or state listed plant species that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5 minute-quadrangles and none were observed during the habitat assessment.

Non-Listed Special Status Plants

The literature review identified 10 non-listed special status plant species that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles. The literature review indicates that the following non-listed special status plant species have been identified in the project vicinity:

- Harwood's milkvetch (*Astragalus insularis* var. *harwoodii*) (CRPR 2B.2),
- pink fairy duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*) (CRPR 2B.3),
- sand evening primrose (*Camissonia arenaria*) (CRPR 2B.2),
- saguaro (CRPR 2B.2) ,
- crucifixion thorn (*Castela emoryi*) (CRPR 2B.2),
- Abrams's spurge (*Chamaesyce abramsiana*) (CRPR 2B.2),
- Las Animas colubrina (*Colubrina californica*) (CRPR 2B.3),
- Harwood's eriastrum (*Eriastrum harwoodii*) (CRPR 1B.2),
- bitter hymenoxys (*Hymenoxys odorata*) (CRPR 2B.1), and
- dwarf germander (*Teucrium cubense* ssp. *depressum*) (CRPR 2B.2).

The majority of the project site is regularly disturbed as part of the ongoing operations at prisons. As a result, there is a low potential for several of these species to occur within the project site. Species with a moderate or greater potential to occur are analyzed below. Some perennial shrubs were determined to have a less than reasonable potential to be onsite, even when suitable habitat occurs, because they are typically easy to observe throughout the year and they were not observed during the site visit where 100 percent of the project site was surveyed. A brief description of each of the ten species identified in the vicinity can be found in Appendix A.

Harwood's milkvetch

Hardwood's milkvetch is found in dunes and other windblown sands in desert communities. Within the project site, windblown sands are limited to an area along the proposed northern alignment and areas within the buffer north of the project site.

There is a moderate potential for Hardwood's milkvetch to occur within the project site.

Sand Evening Primrose

Sand evening primrose is found in sandy washes and rocky slopes. The project site includes sandy washes near the southern proposed alignment.

There is a moderate potential for sand evening primrose to occur within the project site.

Saguaro

Saguaro cactus is a perennial stem succulent found in desert scrub communities. One saguaro cactus was found as part of the prison landscaping. The individual is irrigated. No other saguaro cacti were observed within the project site.

One saguaro cactus occurs within the project site near the proposed southern alignment.

Abram's Spurge

Abram's spurge is found in sandy soils in desert scrub communities. Suitable habitat occurs within the project site where creosote bush scrub is found near the proposed northern and southern alignments.

There is a moderate potential for Abram's spurge to occur within the project site.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife

The literature review identified two federally and/or state listed wildlife species that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles:

- Desert tortoise is federally and state Threatened and
- Gila woodpecker (*Melanerpes urapygialis*) is state Endangered.

Information for these species is presented in Appendix A.

Gila Woodpecker

Gila woodpeckers are found in a variety of desert habitats with suitable nesting sites. The species is a cavity nester that nests in saguaro cacti and mesquite trees. One saguaro cactus was found in the project site; however, it lacked cavities used by Glia woodpeckers. Several small mesquite trees were found in the project site; however, they are too small to be used for nesting by Gila woodpeckers. Larger mesquite trees are found in the surveyed buffer beyond the project site. The project site presents foraging opportunities for the species, but lacks nesting habitat.

Non-Listed Special Status Wildlife

The literature review resulted in 13 non-listed special status wildlife species that have been recorded within the analyzed USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles. In addition, one species not previously recorded, American white pelican (*Pelecanus erythrorhynchos*) (CSC) was observed near the project site. All of these species are CSC species. While there is suitable habitat in the vicinity, the project site lacks suitable habitat for several of these species. Information on these species is presented in Appendix A.

Mojave Fringe-Toed Lizard (*Uma scoparia*)

The Mojave fringe-toed lizard is restricted to aeolian soils in desert habitats. The project site generally lacks aeolian soils except along the northern boundary of the northernmost proposed alignment. On the north side of the a dirt road, beyond the prison property fence is a narrow swath of appropriate soils. Additionally, beyond the project site, the northern portion of the survey area contains patches of aeolian soils. The species has been recorded within 1.2 miles of the project site in the past year. There is a moderate potential for this species to occur in these areas.

Couch's spadefoot (*Scaphiopus couchii*)

Couch's spadefoot is found in arid environments, particularly in grasslands and mesquite savannas. The species also inhabits creosote bush scrub and sandy washes. For breeding, the species requires temporary pools of water. The project site is mostly disturbed and generally lacks quality habitat for this species. One portion of the project site, along the northern proposed alignment, contains a patch of creosote bush scrub. Additionally, this area exhibits cracked soils which suggests that this area is at least temporarily ponded. There is a low potential for this species to occur throughout most of the project site, but there is a moderate potential for the species to occur in the above described location.

Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

Burrowing owls occur in a wide variety of open habitats, including grasslands and desert scrub. The species requires suitable burrows, typically dug by fossorial mammals. While the project site and survey area provide suitable foraging habitat throughout, the project site lacks suitable burrows. Several small mammal burrows were identified in the project area, however at approximately 2 inches wide; these burrows are too small to be occupied by burrowing owls. It is possible for burrowing owls to modify these burrows and occupy the site, or dig their own burrows at a later time. It is also possible for the suitable burrows to be present outside of the project site and for the species to utilize the site for foraging, though no sign was detected.

Based on a lack of suitable burrows onsite, the species is not currently nesting onsite. There is a moderate potential that the species can use the site for foraging.

Loggerhead Shrike

While bird counts were not conducted, based on observation locations, at least 4 individual loggerhead shrikes were observed in the project site. This species is present onsite. It is unclear if the species nests on site, however the project site does contain suitable nesting habitat.

This species is present onsite.

Vermillion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)

This species is found in marshes, swamps, riparian forests, and other most habitats. The project lacks any of these habitat types.

There is a less than reasonable potential for vermillion flycatcher to occur onsite.

Crissal Thrasher (*Toxostoma crissale*)

Crissal thrasher is found in dense mesquite and willows along desert streams and washes. While mesquite is found in the project site, it occurs as landscaping and is very sparse. A small patch of dense mesquite is found approximately 450 feet south of the project site. This is a small, disconnected patch of potential habitat.

There is a low potential for Crissal thrasher to occur within the project site.

Le Conte's Thrasher (*Toxostoma lecontei*)

Le Conte's thrasher is found in desert scrub environments, particularly associated with desert washes. The project site generally lacks suitable habitat for the species, however, portions of the

surveyed area beyond the project site contain suitable habitat. Additionally, small patches of creosote bush scrub contain suitable habitat for the species.

There is a moderate potential for Le Conte's thrasher to occur within the project site.

Pallid Bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)

Pallid bats are found in a variety of desert habitats where appropriate roosting habitat occurs. The species prefers to roost in rock crevices, but are also found in buildings and under bridges. While the project site lacks suitable day roost habitat, nearby buildings associated with the prisons may provide suitable roosting habitat. The project site may provide suitable foraging habitat. Additionally, a bridge under Wiley's Well Road within the proposed southern alignment contains evidence of bat roosting. The bridge was search with 100% cover during the site visit and while no bats were found, bat guano was found, indicating that this site is used as a night roost. It is unclear which species may be utilizing the bridge and project site.

There is a moderate potential for pallid bat to occur within the project site.

Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*)

Townsend's big-eared bat is typically found in forested areas and semi-desert environments. They typically avoid true desert environments. The species roosts in caves and manmade structures especially cool buildings. The project site lacks suitable habitat for this species.

There is a less than reasonable potential for Townsend's big-eared bat to occur on the project site.

California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*)

California leaf-nosed bat is found in in desert environments with suitable roosting sites. The species is typically found associated with caves, mines, tunnels, and old buildings. The project site lacks suitable roost sites for the species.

There is a less than reasonable potential for California leaf-nosed bat to occur on the project site.

Southwestern cave myotis (*Myotis velifer brevis*)

Southwestern cave myotis are found in desert scrub habitats with availble roost sites. The species utilizes caves, mines, and buildings as roost sites. The project site does not contain suitable day roost sites, however, buildings associated with the prisons may provide suitable roost sites. The project site may provide suitable foraging habitat. Additionally, a bridge under Wiley's Well Road within the proposed southern alignment contains evidence of bat roosting. The bridge was search with 100% cover during the site visit and while no bats were found, bat

guano was found, indicating that this site is used as a night roost. It is unclear which species may be utilizing the bridge and project site.

There is a moderate potential for southwestern cave myotis to occur within the project site.

Colorado River Cotton Rat (*Sigmodon arizonae plenus*)

Colorado River cotton rat is confined to moist habitats in alluvial bottom lands along the Colorado River. The species does not occur in adjacent desert habitats. The project site does not contain suitable habitat for the species and the project site is approximately 20 miles from the Colorado River.

There is a less than reasonable potential for the Colorado River cotton rat to occur within the project site.

American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*)

American badger occurs in a variety of arid habitats, particularly open areas. The species digs burrows in friable, yet stable soils. While the project site provides a low quality habitat for the species, no suitable burrows were identified. The species is not currently present within the project site. There is a potential for the species to move into the project site from nearby adjacent habitat. However the relatively high level of disturbance within the project site may limit the likeliness of the species to occur within the project site, particular because much of the soil is regularly disturbed to smooth out the soil.

There is a low potential for American badger to occur within the project site.

Nesting Birds

The project site supports habitat for a wide range of nesting birds throughout including some species detected onsite such as: mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), loggerhead shrike, and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*).

Wildlife Movement

The project site is located in an otherwise undeveloped portion of the desert. Wildlife can easily move in all directions around the two prisons. Barbed wire fencing and desert tortoise exclusion fencing that is currently in place may limit some wildlife movement directly across the site, however, for wildlife that does cross the fencing, they can move through various corridors between buildings and prison fencing. The proposed project is an overhead power line and it is not expected to affect wildlife movement in the area.

Jurisdictional Resources

The project site contains several features that are potentially jurisdictional. For impacts to jurisdictional drainages, appropriate permits will be required.

Conclusion/Recommendations

Sensitive Plant Communities

No sensitive plant communities occur onsite.

Threatened and Endangered Plants

No Threatened or Endangered plant species have been recorded in the project vicinity.

Non Listed Special Status Plants

10 non-listed special status plant species were evaluated to determine the potential for those species to occur on the project site. Three of those species (Hardwood's milkvetch, sand evening primrose, and Abram's spurge) were determined to have a moderate potential to occur on the project site. One species, saguaro, was found onsite. Focused plant surveys, during the appropriate blooming periods, may be required to determine the presence or absence of these species if disturbances will occur in suitable habitat.

Threatened and Endangered Wildlife

Two federally and/or state listed wildlife species (desert tortoise and Gila woodpecker) were evaluated to determine the potential for them to occur onsite. The project site includes suitable habitat for desert tortoise. However, a focused desert tortoise survey found no sign (live tortoises, carcasses, scat, or suitable burrows) not onsite. It was determined that desert tortoises can move into the project site prior to the start of construction. A preconstruction survey in the proposed project area can help determine if desert tortoises have moved into the project area.

The project site does not include suitable nesting habitat for Gila woodpecker.

Non Listed Special Status Wildlife

Thirteen non listed special status wildlife species were evaluated to determine their potential to occur onsite. Six species (Mojave fringe-toed lizard, Couch's spadefoot, burrowing owl, LeConte's thrasher, pallid bat, and southwestern cave myotis) were determined to have a

moderate or greater potential to occur onsite. Two special status species, loggerhead shrike and American white pelican, where detected within the survey area.

Wildlife Movement

The project site is located within an otherwise undeveloped area. Wildlife is most likely to move around the existing prison sites. For wildlife that does use the various routes between buildings and prison fences to move throughout the area, the proposed power line project will not further inhibit that mobility.

Nesting Birds

The project site provides suitable habitat for nesting birds. Nesting bird surveys will be required prior to construction to identify nesting birds and avoid impacts.

Jurisdictional Resources

The project site includes several waterways that are potentially jurisdictional. These features will require appropriate permits if they will be impacted.

If you have any questions or concerns about this survey visit, please call me at 909-528-6807.

Sincerely,

James Hickman
Biologist
ICF International

Attachments:
Figure 1- Regional Vicinity
Figure 2- Project Location
Figure 3- Surveyed Area
Figure 4- Plant Communities
Appendix A – California Department of Fish and Wildlife CNDDB Results

Appendix B- Wildlife Species Detected within the Survey Area
Appendix C – Site Photographs

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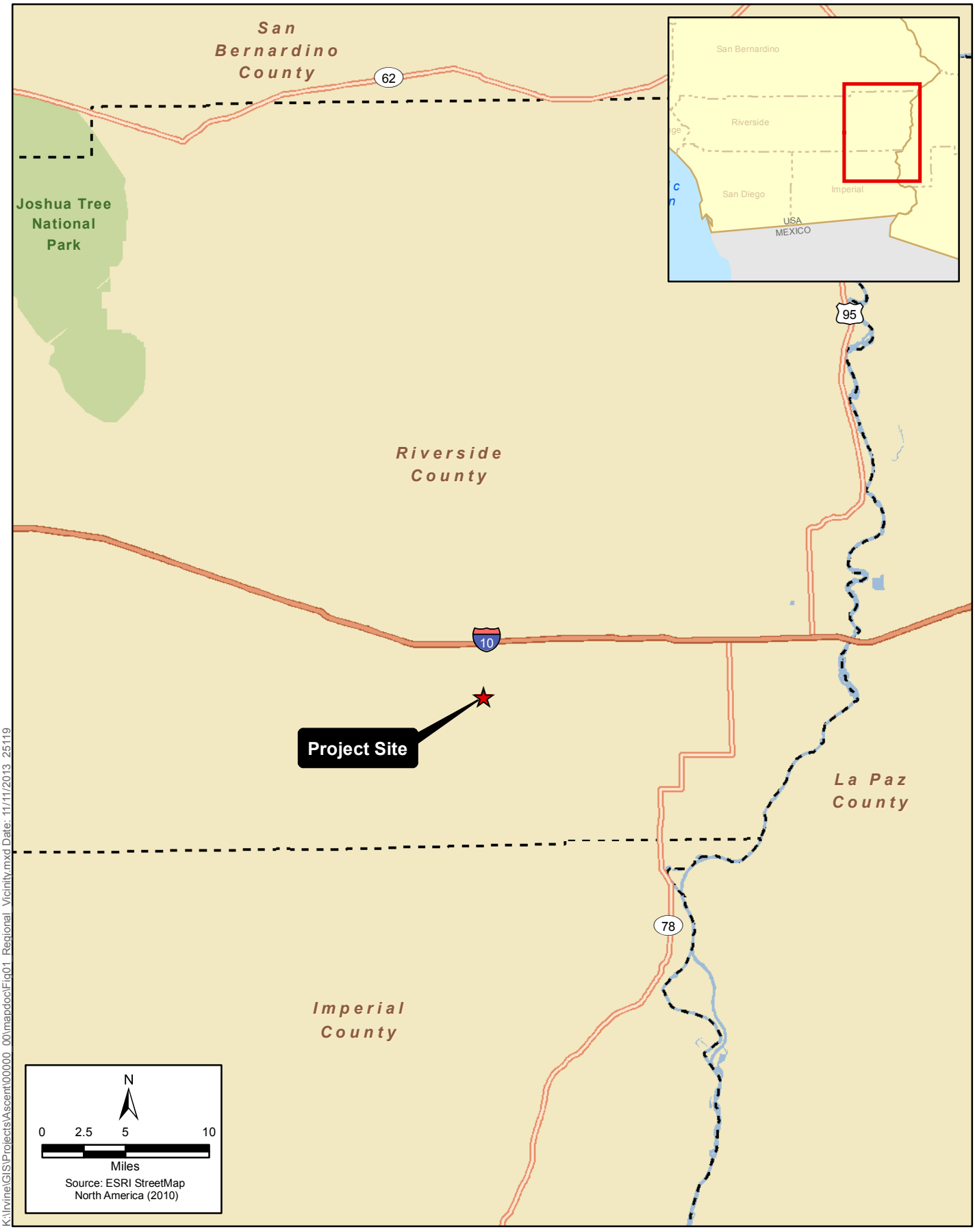

Figure 1
Regional Vicinity Map
Ironwood State Prison

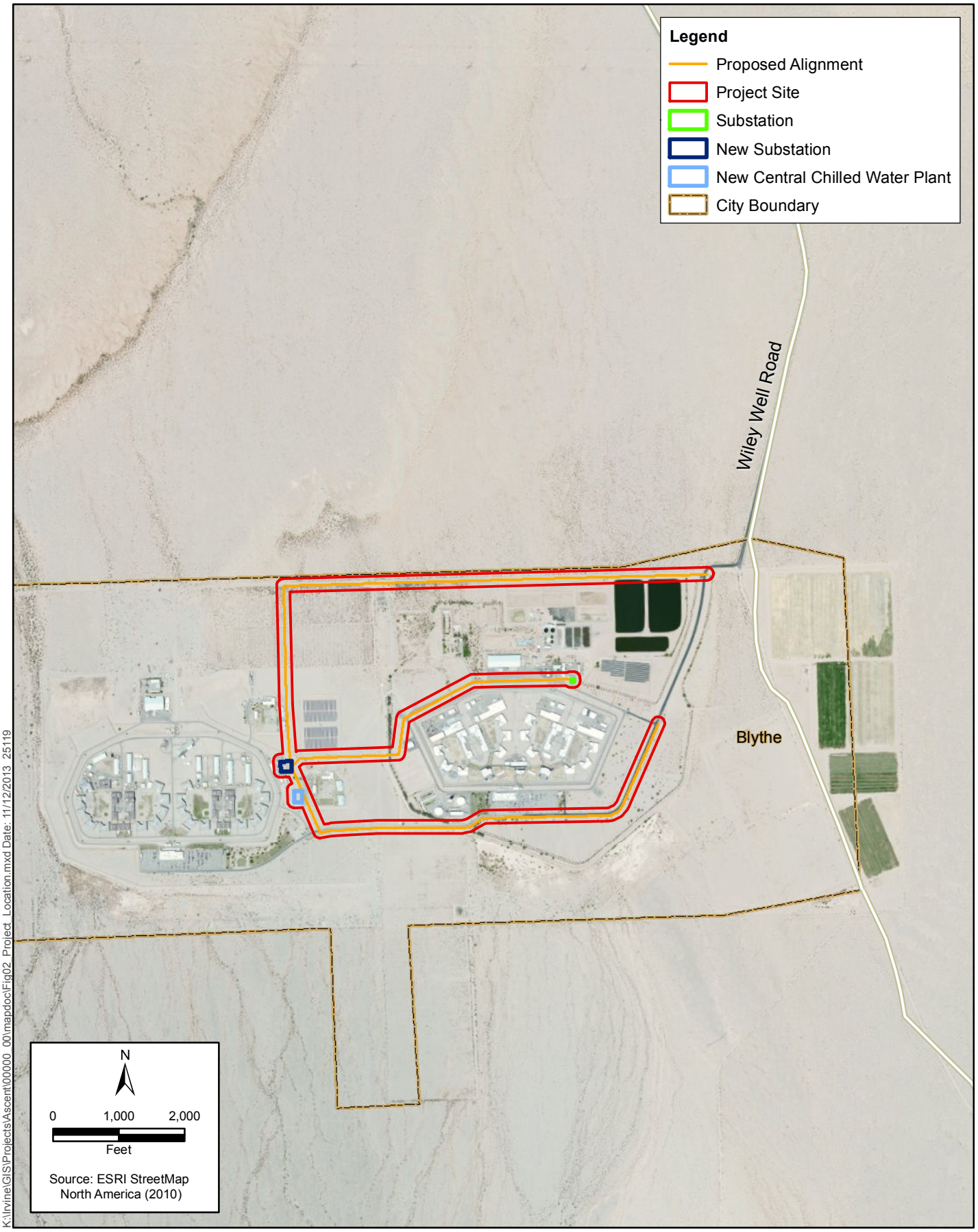

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Figure 2
Project Location
Ironwood State Prison

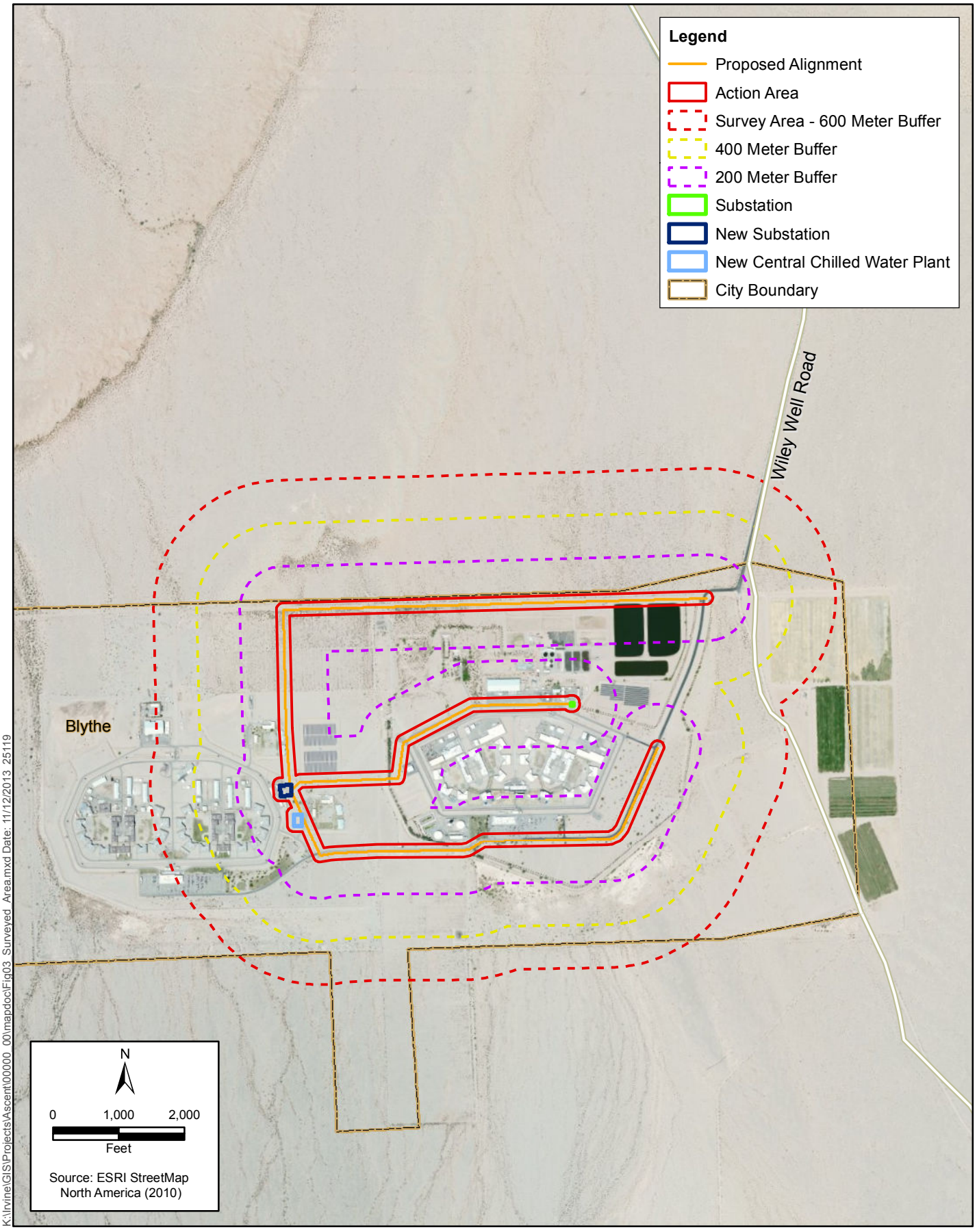

Figure 3
Surveyed Area
Ironwood State Prison

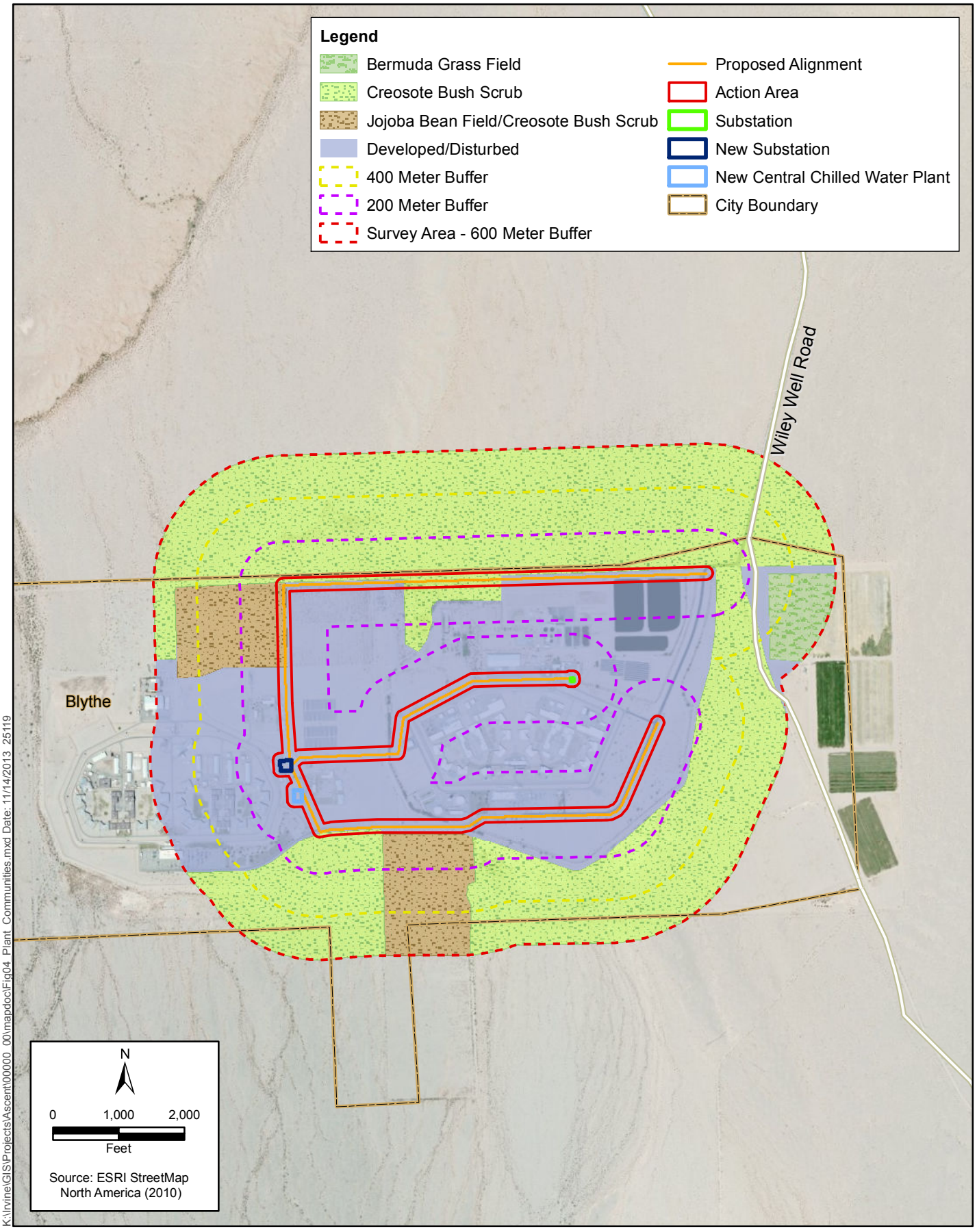

Figure 4
Plant Communities
Ironwood State Prison

Appendix A- California Department of Fish and Wildlife CNDDB Results

Special-Status Plant Species Reported to Occur within the Project Vicinity

Scientific Name Common Name	Status			Habitat Requirements and Elevation	Life Form and Flowering Period	Potential On-Site Occurrence
	Federal	State	CNPS			
Astragalus insularis var. *harwoodii* Harwood's milkvetch	--	--	CRPR 2B.2	Dunes and windblown sands below 1,200 feet,.	Annual Herb January – May	Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs in the northern portion of the project site and survey area.
Calliandra eriophylla pink fairy duster	--	--	CRPR 2B.3	Sonoran Desert Scrub in washes from 390 to 4,920 feet in elevation.	Perennial Shrub January - March	Less than reasonable. Species is a perennial shrub and was not observed.
Camissonia arenaria sand evening primrose	--	--	CRPR 2B.2	Sandy washes and rocky slopes below 1,300 feet.	Annual/Perennial Herb November - May	Moderate. The project site contains suitable habitat, especially associated with several of the sandy washes.
Carnegiea gigantea saguaro	--	--	CRPR 2B.2	Sonoran Desert scrub from 165 to 4,920 feet in elevation.	Perennial stem succulent May – June	Present. This species is a perennial succulent. One individual was observed in the survey area. No other individuals were observed.
Castela emoryi crucifixion thorn	--	--	CRPR 2B.2	Mojavean and Sonoran Desert Scrubs; typically associated with drainages from 295 to 2,198 feet in elevation.	Perennial deciduous shrub June – July	Less than reasonable. Species is a perennial shrub and was not observed.
Chamaesyce abramsiana Abrams's spurge	--	--	CRPR 2B.2	Sandy sites in Mojavean and Sonoran Desert scrubs in eastern California; 0 to 3,000	Annual herb September - November	Moderate. There is a moderate potential for this species to occur in the project

				feet.		site and survey area where creosote bush scrub is found.
Colubrina californica Las Animas colubrina	--	--	CRPR 2B.3	Sonoran Desert Creosote Bush Scrub, < 3,300 feet.	Perennial deciduous shrub January – May	Less than reasonable. Species is a perennial shrub and was not observed within the project site.
Eriastrum harwoodii Harwood's eriastrum	--	--	CRPR 1B.2	Desert dunes from 656 to 3,000 feet in elevation.	Annual herb January - March	Less than reasonable. The project site is outside of the elevation range for the species.
Hymenoxys odorata bitter hymenoxys	--	--	CRPR 2B.1	Riparian scrub and Sonoran Desert Scrub, sandy flats near Colorado River, known only from the Colorado River alluvial plain, 150- 495 feet.	Annual herb November - May	Less than reasonable. The site is more than 20 miles from the Colorado River floodplain.
Teucrium cubense ssp. *depressum* dwarf germander	--	--	CRPR 2B.2	Sandy soils, washes, fields- especially in wet areas; below 1,300 feet.	Annual herb May – June	Low. The survey area lacks moist areas typically associated with this species.

STATUS KEY:

Federal: *-- = None*

State: *-- = None*

CNPS: *CRPR= California Rare Plant Rank*
CRPR 1B = Plants Rare and Endangered in California and elsewhere
CRPR 2B= Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere in their range
0.1 = Seriously Endangered in California
0.2 = Fairly Endangered in California
0.3= Not very threatened in California

Special-Status Wildlife Species Reported to Occur within the Project Vicinity

Scientific Name **Common Name**	**Status**		**Habitat Requirements**	**Potential Onsite Occurrence**
	Federal	**State**		
Gopherus agassizii Desert tortoise	FT	ST	Most desert habitats below approximately 5,000 feet in elevation.	Absent. No sign onsite but potential is high in surrounding scrub habitat.
Uma scoparia Mojave fringe-toed lizard	--	SSC	Restricted to Aeolian sandy habitats in the Mojave and northern Sonoran deserts.	Moderate. A small portion of the project site contains suitable soils.
Scaphiopus couchii Couch's spadefoot	--	SSC	Found in arid environments, particularly in grasslands and mesquite savannas. The species is also found in creosote bush scrub and sandy washes.	Moderate. The project site contains suitable habitat..
Athene cunicularia Burrowing owl	--	SSC	Burrowing owls occur in open areas, particularly open grasslands and sparse shrublands with suitable burrows.	Low. No small mammal burrows were observed during the survey and no sign was observed.
Falco mexicanus Prairie falcon	--	SSC	Open treeless terrain including prairies, deserts, riverine escarpments, canyons, foothills, and mountains in relatively arid western regions.	Low. Nesting potential is low as habitat is recently and/or historically disturbed.
Lanius ludovicianus Loggerhead shrike	--	SSC	Open habitat characterized by grasses and forbs of low stature interspersed with bare ground and shrubs or low trees such as prairies, pastures, sagebrush desert, and fencerows or shelterbelts of agricultural fields, as well as old orchards, riparian areas, open woodlands, farmsteads and suburban areas.	Present. At least four individuals were observed in within the project site. The site includes potential nesting habitat.

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Federal	 State	Habitat Requirements	Potential Onsite Occurrence
Melanerpes uropygialis Gila woodpecker	--	SSC	Habitat consists of low desert scrub typical of the Sonoran Desert. They build nests in holes made in saguaro cacti or mesquite trees.	Less than reasonable. Mesquite trees onsite were too small for cavity nesting and the one saguaro cactus observed did not contain suitable cavities.
Pyrocephalus rubinus Vermillion flycatcher	--	SSC	Marshes and swamps, riparian forest, riparian woodland, riparian scrub, and wetlands.	Less than reasonable. No habitat.
Toxostoma crissale Crissal thrasher	--	SSC	Dense mesquite and willows along desert streams and washes.	Low. Nesting potential is low as habitat is recently and/or historically disturbed.
Toxostoma lecontei Le Conte's thrasher	--	SSC	Occurs in desert wash, Mojavean desert scrub and Sonoran desert scrub.	Moderate. A small amount of suitable habitat occurs where creosote bush scrub occurs.
Antrozous pallidus Pallid bat	--	SSC	Roost in rock crevices, buildings, and bridges in several desert habitats.	Moderate. The project area includes buildings, and a bridge that may provide suitable roosting habitat.
Corynorhinus townsendii Townsend's big-eared bat	--	SSC	Typically found in forested areas and semi-desert environments. Roosts in caves and manmade structures, particular cool buildings.	Less than reasonable. The project site lacks suitable roosting habitat.
Macrotus californicus *California leaf-nosed bat*	--	SSC	Lowland desert associate, found in caves, mines, tunnels and old buildings.	Less than reasonable. The project site lacks suitable roosting habitat.
Myotis velifer brevis *Southwestern cave myotis*	--	SSC	Caves, mines and buildings in lower desert scrub habitats; also near streams and in woodlands, old agricultural fields	Moderate. The project area includes buildings and a bridge that may provide suitable roosting habitat.
Sigmodon arizonae plenus Colorado River cotton rat	--	SSC	Confined to isolated mesic habitats such as desert riparian, grassland, and fresh emergent wetlands in alluvial bottom lands along the Colorado River. Avoid surrounding true desert habitats.	Less than reasonable. No habitat.

Scientific Name **Common Name**	**Status**		**Habitat Requirements**	**Potential Onsite Occurrence**
	Federal	**State**		
Taxidea taxus American badger	--	SSC	Most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with friable soils. Need sufficient food, friable soils & open, uncultivated ground. Prey on burrowing rodents. Dig burrows.	Low. No suitable burrows were identified in the project site. There is a potential for the species to occur in the surrounding habitat.

STATUS KEY: *<u>Federal</u>* *FT= Federally Threatened* *MBTA = Migratory Bird Treaty Act*	*<u>State</u>* *ST- State Threatened* *SSC= California Species of Special Concern*

Appendix B- Plant and Wildlife Species Detected within the Survey Area

Plant Species Observed

Scientific Name	Common Name	Special Status
EUDICOTS		
Apocynaceae - Dogbane family		
Asclepias erosa	Desert milkweed	
* *Nerium oleander*	Common oleander	
Asteraceae - Sunflower family		
Ambrosia dumosa	White bur-sage	
Ambrosia salsola var. salsola	Burrobrush	
Chaenactis fremontii	Fremont pincushion	
Encelia farinosa	Brittlebush	
Boraginaceae - Borage family		
Amsinckia sp.	Fiddleneck	
Cryptantha sp.	Cryptantha	
Tiquilia plicata	Fan-leaved tiquilia	
Brassicaceae - Mustard family		
* *Brassica tournefortii*	Asian mustard	
Cactaceae - Cactus family		
Carnegiea gigantea	Saguaro	CRPR 2B.2
Cylindropuntia ramosissima	Diamond cholla, pencil cactus	
Cylindropuntia sp.	Cholla	
Chenopodiaceae - Goosefoot family		
Atriplex sp.	Saltbush	
Euphorbiaceae - Spurge family		
Croton californicus	California croton	
Croton setigerus	Turkey-Mullein	
Fabaceae - Legume family		
* *Medicago sativa*	Alfalfa	
Olneya tesota	Ironwood	
Parkinsonia florida	Blue palo verde	
Psorothamnus spinosus	Smoke tree	
Fouquieriaceae - Ocotillo family		
Fouquieria splendens ssp. splendens	Ocotillo	
Lamiaceae - Mint family		
Hyptis emoryi	Desert lavender	
Malvaceae - Mallow family		
Sphaeralcea ambigua var. ambigua	Apricot mallow	
Myrtaceae - Myrtle family		

Scientific Name	Common Name	Special Status
Eucalyptus sp.	Gum	
Nyctaginaceae - Four O'clock family		
Abronia sp.	Sand verbena	
* *Bougainvillea sp.*	Bougainvillea	
Onagraceae - Evening Primrose family		
Camissonia sp.	Suncup	
Simmondsiaceae - Jojoba family		
Simmondsia chinensis	Jojoba	
Solanaceae - Nightshade family		
Datura sp.	Jimsonweed	
Tamaricaceae - Tamarisk family		
Tamarix sp.	Tamarisk	
Zygophyllaceae - Caltrop family		
Larrea tridentata	Creosote bush	
* *Tribulus terrestris*	Puncturevine	
MONOCOTS		
Arecaceae - Palm family		
* *Phoenix canariensis*	Canary Island palm	
* *Washingtonia robusta*	Mexican fan palm	
Poaceae - Grass family		
* *Cynodon dactylon*	Bermuda grass	
Hilaria rigida	Big galleta	
* *Schismus barbatus*	Common mediterranean grass	

Scientific Name	Common Name	Special Status

Legend

*= Non-native or invasive species

Special Status:

Federal:
FE = Endangered
FT = Threatened

State:
SE = Endangered
ST =Threatened

CRPR – California Rare Plant Rank
1A. Presumed extinct in California and elsewhere
1B. Rare or Endangered in California and elsewhere
2A. Presumed extinct in California, more common elsewhere
2B. Rare or Endangered in California, more common elsewhere
3. Plants for which we need more information - Review list
4. Plants of limited distribution - Watch list

Threat Ranks
.1 - Seriously endangered in California
.2 – Fairly endangered in California
.3 – Not very endangered in California

Wildlife Species Detected

Scientific Name	Common Name	Special Status
INVERTEBRATES		
Arachnids		
Aphonopelma sp.	Tarantula	
VERTEBRATES		
Reptiles		
Callisaurus draconoides rhodostictus	Western Zebra-tailed Lizard	
Uta stansburiana elegans	Western Side-blotched Lizard	
Aspidoscelis tigris	Western Whiptail	
Birds		
Anas platyrhynchos	Mallard	
Podilymbus podiceps	Pied-billed Grebe	
Aechmophorus occidentalis	Western Grebe	
Phalacrocorax auritus	Double-crested Cormorant	
Pelecanus erythrorhynchos	American White Pelican	CSC
Ardea herodias	Great Blue Heron	
Ardea alba	Great Egret	
Accipiter cooperii	Cooper's Hawk	
Buteo jamaicensis	Red-tailed Hawk	
Falco sparverius	American Kestrel	
Fulica americana	American Coot	
Charadrius vociferus	Killdeer	
**Columba livia*	Rock Pigeon	
**Streptopelia decaocto*	Eurasian Collared-Dove	
Zenaida macroura	Mourning Dove	
Geococcyx californianus	Greater Roadrunner	
Calypte anna	Anna's Hummingbird	
Ceryle alcyon	Belted Kingfisher	
Colaptes auratus	Northern Flicker	
Sayornis nigricans	Black Phoebe	
Sayornis saya	Say's Phoebe	
Lanius ludovicianus	Loggerhead Shrike	CSC
Corvus corax	Common Raven	
Eremophila alpestris	Horned Lark	

Scientific Name	Common Name	Special Status
Salpinctes obsoletus	Rock Wren	
Thryomanes bewickii	Bewick's Wren	
Polioptila melanura	Black-tailed Gnatcatcher	
Mimus polyglottos	Northern Mockingbird	
Setophaga coronata	Yellow-rumped Warbler	
Zonotrichia leucophrys	White-crowned Sparrow	
Sturnella neglecta	Western Meadowlark	
Quiscalus mexicanus	Great-tailed Grackle	
Haemorhous mexicanus	House Finch	
**Passer domesticus*	House Sparrow	
Mammals		
Lepus californicus	Black-tailed Jackrabbit	
Canis latrans	Coyote	

Legend

*= Non-native or invasive species

Special Status:

Federal:
FE = Endangered
FT = Threatened

State:
SE = Endangered
ST =Threatened
CSC = California Species of Special Concern
CFP = California Fully Protected Species

Appendix C- Site Photograph

Photograph: 1

Photo Date: October 28, 2013

Location: Proposed southern alignment

Direction: View facing north

Comment: This photo depicts typical developed/disturbed community within the proposed southern alignment

Photograph: 2

Photo Date: October 28, 2013

Location: Proposed southern alignment

Direction: View facing west

Comment: This photograph depicts developed/disturbed community along the proposed southern alignment. Landscaped vegetation is shown.

Photograph: 3

Photo Date: October 28, 2013

Location: Proposed northern alignment

Direction: View facing south

Comment: This photograph depicts a portion of the proposed northern alignment where aeolian are found.

Photograph: 4

Photo Date: October 28, 2013

Location: Proposed central alignment

Direction: View facing west

Comment: This photograph depicts developed/disturbed community within the proposed central alignment.

Photograph: 5

Photo Date: October 28, 2013

Location: Proposed northern alignment

Direction: View facing north

Comment: This photographs depicts creosote bush scrub community within the proposed northern alignment.

Photograph: 6

Photo Date: October 28, 2013

Location: Proposed southern alignment

Direction: View facing west

Comment: This photograph depicts a wash and potential jurisdictional feature near the proposed southern alignment.