
IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

An evaluation of the significance of potential impacts on biological resources must consider both direct effects to the resource and indirect effects in a local or regional context. Potentially significant impacts would generally result in the loss of a biological resource or obviously conflict with local, state, or federal agency conservation plans, goals, policies, or regulations. Actions that would potentially result in a significant impact locally may not be considered significant under CEQA if the action would not substantially affect the resource on a population-wide or region-wide basis.

THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following thresholds of significance are based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G. For purposes of this EIR, the proposed project may have a significant adverse impact on biological resources if it would do any of the following:

- 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service.
- Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Clean Water Act Section 404 (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.
- 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.
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

EXPLANATION OF FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Impacts to special-status vegetation communities, plants, wildlife species, and jurisdictional waters, including wetlands, must be quantified and analyzed to determine whether such impacts are significant under CEQA. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064(b) states that an ironclad definition of

“significant” effect is not possible because the significance of an activity may vary with the setting. CEQA Guidelines Appendix G, however, provides “examples of consequences which may be deemed to be a significant effect on the environment” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064[e]). These effects include substantial effects on rare or endangered species of animals or plants or the habitat of the species. CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a) is also helpful in defining whether a project may have a significant effect on the environment. Under that section, a proposed project may have a significant effect on the environment if the project has 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 a rare or endangered plant or animal; or
- Eliminate important examples of a major period of California history or prehistory.

PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION

HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL EFFECT ON CANDIDATE, SENSITIVE, OR SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES

Impact 3.3-1 **The project would have a potentially 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation.**

SENSITIVE PLANTS

DIRECT IMPACTS

No special-status plant species were observed within the impact areas of the project sites. Therefore, no direct impacts are anticipated.

INDIRECT IMPACTS

Two special-status plant species, Borrego milk-vetch and beaver Indian breadroot, were observed approximately 100 feet off the southwest corner of the Calcite Substation impact area and 800 feet south of the Calcite Substation parcel, respectively; see **Exhibit 3.3-5, Biological Resources Impacts**. Most of the indirect impacts to vegetation communities can also affect sensitive plants.

During project construction, indirect effects may include dust, which could disrupt plant vitality in the short term, or construction-related soil erosion and runoff. Long-term edge effects could include intrusions by humans and possible trampling of individual plants, invasion by exotic plant and wildlife species, exposure to urban pollutants (fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, and other hazardous materials), soil erosion, litter, fire, and hydrologic changes (e.g., surface water and groundwater level and quality).

Indirect impacts to special-status plants at the Calcite Substation site are considered potentially significant. However, mitigation measure **BIO-1** would provide for best management practices and erosion control, revegetation of temporary impact areas, and avoidance of toxic substances that could affect plant life at the Calcite Substation site, and would reduce indirect impacts to special-status plants to less than significant levels.

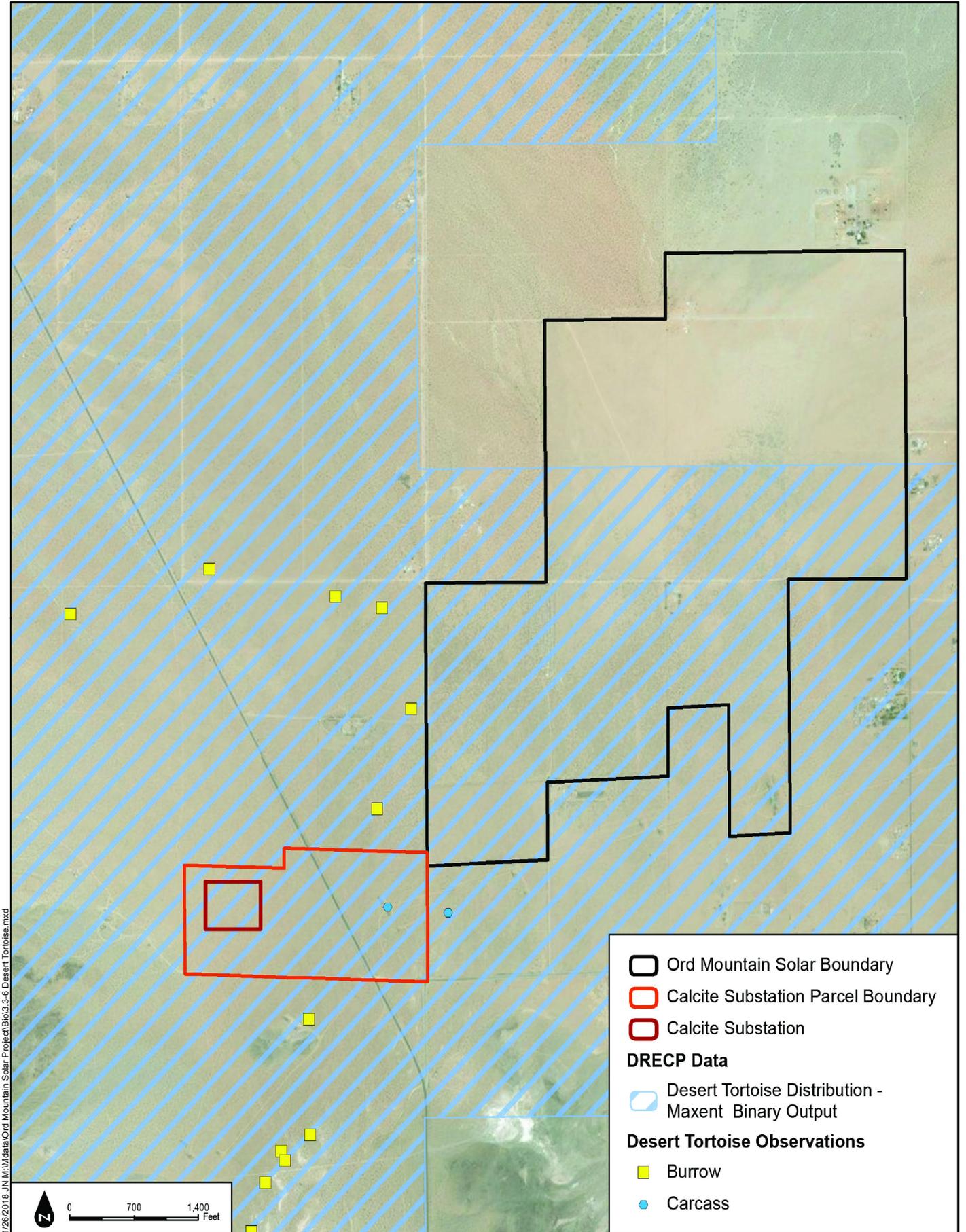
SENSITIVE WILDLIFE

DIRECT IMPACTS

DESERT TORTOISE

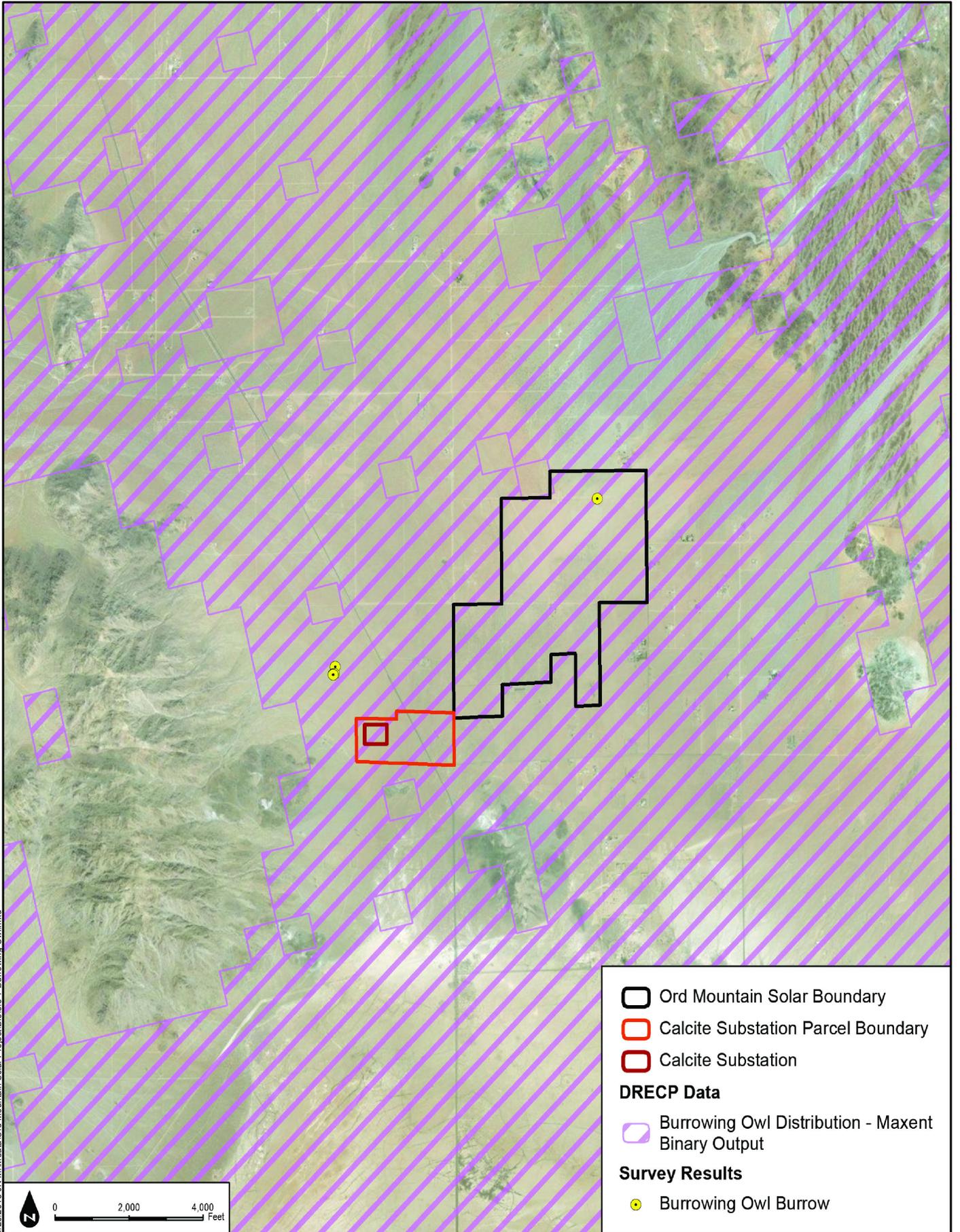
No desert tortoises were detected on the project site during the protocol-level surveys conducted in 2016 and 2017. However, tortoise occur in low densities in the general project vicinity. The DRECP distribution data shows that desert tortoise may occur on the project site, and there is nearby suitable habitat; see **Exhibit 3.3-5, Biological Resources Impacts**, and **Exhibit 3.3-6, Desert Tortoise Distribution and Occurrence**. Therefore, there is the potential for desert tortoise to traverse onto the project site. Mitigation measure **BIO-2** would require environmental awareness training, an on-site biologist during construction, and perimeter tortoise fencing be installed to preclude tortoise from the site, and to reduce impacts to desert tortoise to less than significant.

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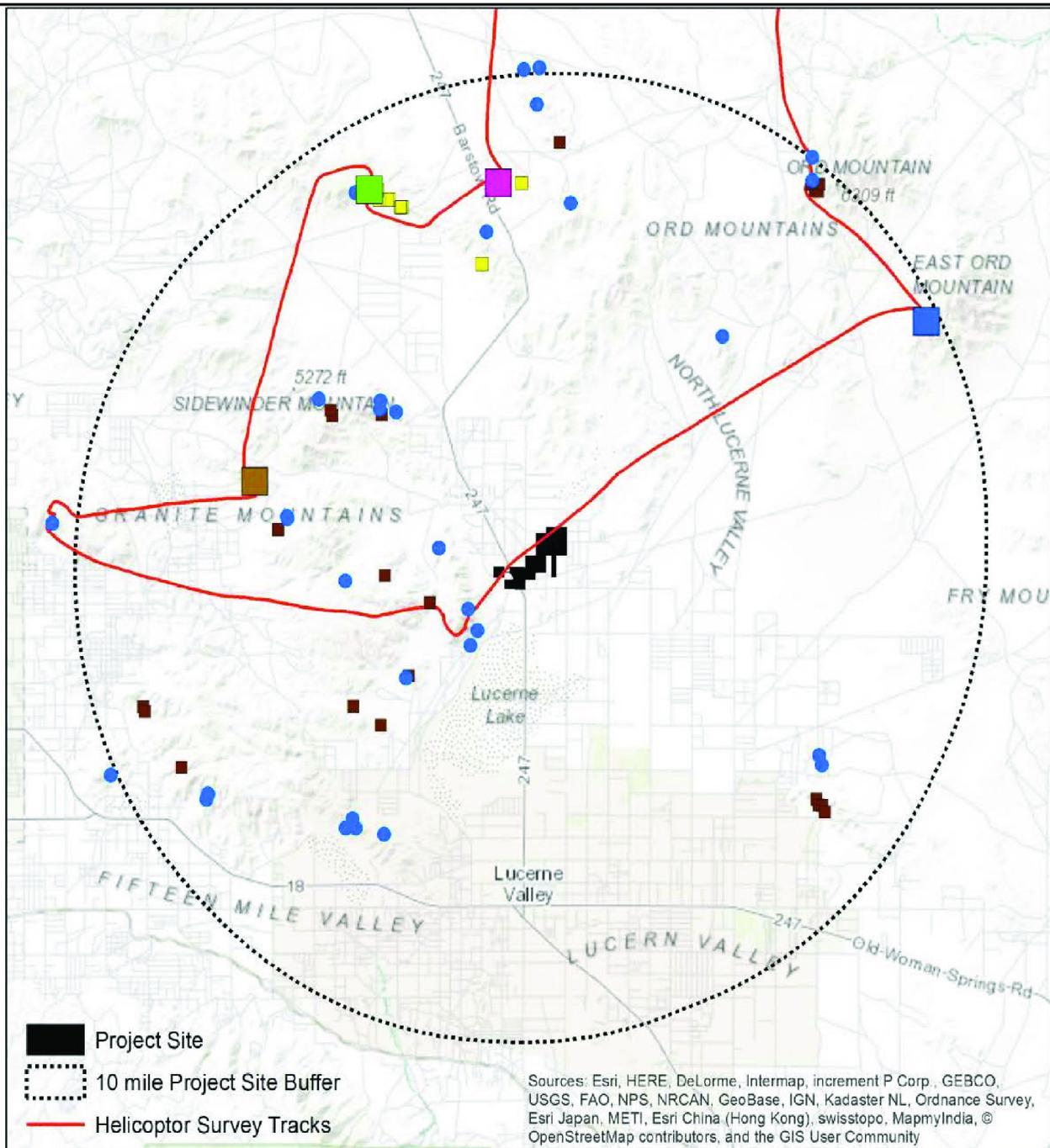


-  Ord Mountain Solar Boundary
-  Calcite Substation Parcel Boundary
-  Calcite Substation
- DRECP Data**
-  Burrowing Owl Distribution - Maxent Binary Output
- Survey Results**
-  Burrowing Owl Burrow



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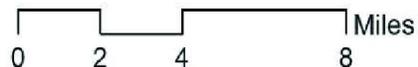
Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, Intermap, increment P Corp., GEBCO, USGS, FAO, NPS, NRCAN, GeoBase, IGN, Kadaster NL, Ordnance Survey, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), swisstopo, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Active Golden Eagle Nest Locations

- Stoddard Ridge Nest
- Goat Springs Nest
- Margaritaville Nest
- East Ord Mountain Nest

Other Golden Eagle Nest Locations

- Inactive GOEA Nest Site
- No nest discovered, no GOEA observed
- Not surveyed due to proximity to active GOEA nest



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BURROWING OWL

Burrowing owl sites were identified on the project site during the protocol-level surveys, consisting of a perching location, a potential burrow, a concrete pipe, and two burrows found with sign. Additionally, suitable foraging and nesting habitat is present throughout the project site. The project will directly impact suitable habitat for burrowing owl and has the potential to impact burrowing owl individuals if they are present on the project site at the time of construction; see **Exhibit 3.3-3, DRECP Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Linkages**. Therefore, mitigation measure **BIO-3**, which requires preconstruction surveys for burrowing owl, would be implemented to reduce impacts to less than significant.

GOLDEN EAGLE

Protocol-level surveys conducted at the project site and in the vicinity identified suitable foraging habitat within the project site but did not identify potentially suitable nesting habitat. The nearest nest detected is approximately 1 mile to the west of the Calcite Substation site, and further west of the solar and energy storage project site (BioResource Consultants 2014). The project may result in direct, permanent and temporary, impacts to foraging habitat for golden eagle. However, this impact would be less than significant and would not require mitigation due to the amount of remaining foraging habitat in the vicinity. There is the potential for impacts to special-status bird nests. Mitigation measure **BIO-4** would require preconstruction surveys and would reduce impacts to less than significant.

PRAIRIE FALCON

Suitable foraging habitat for this species is present on the project site. However, no nesting habitat was identified. The project may result in direct permanent and temporary impacts to foraging habitat for prairie falcon. However, this impact would be less than significant and would not require mitigation due to the amount of remaining foraging habitat in the vicinity.

LE CONTE'S THRASHER, BENDIRE'S THRASHER, AND LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE

The project would remove suitable nesting and foraging habitat for Le Conte's thrasher, Bendire's thrasher, and loggerhead shrike, potentially resulting in direct impacts to these species if they are present on the project site at the time of construction. There is the potential for direct impacts to special-status bird nests, requiring implementation of mitigation measure **BIO-4**, which requires preconstruction surveys, to reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

MOHAVE GROUND SQUIRREL

No Mohave ground squirrels were observed during the habitat assessment conducted by SWCA Environmental Consultants in 2010 on the solar and energy storage project site. Due to the

disturbed nature of the site and monotypic vegetation communities, suitable habitat for this species is not present on the site. Therefore, no direct impacts to this species are anticipated.

Trapping was conducted to determine presence/absence at the Calcite Substation site, which supports more varied vegetation, and as a result, suitable habitat was determined to be present on the site. No Mohave ground squirrels were captured or observed during the 2017 protocol-level trapping effort, which provides evidence that the Calcite Substation site is unlikely to be occupied by Mohave ground squirrel. Therefore, no direct impacts to this species are anticipated at the Calcite Substation site. However, if Mohave ground squirrels are found on-site, mitigation measure **BIO-6**, which requires consultation with the CDFW, would be implemented.

NESTING BIRDS/AVIAN COLLISIONS

DIRECT IMPACTS

Direct impacts to native vegetation communities, such as allscale scrub and creosote scrub, could result in direct impacts to the bird nests, which would be considered significant absent mitigation. Impacts could result from project activities if nesting birds are present on the project site at the time of construction and if activities cause nest abandonment or mortality of young. Mitigation measure **BIO-5** would reduce potential impacts to nesting and migratory birds to less than significant.

Direct impacts to birds (i.e., collisions with project structures) after construction of the project would be reduced to less than significant through implementation of mitigation measure **BIO-7**, which would require avian monitoring during project construction and operations.

INDIRECT IMPACTS

Most of the indirect impacts during grading and fill activities associated with the construction of the proposed project to the vegetation communities and sensitive plants previously described can also affect sensitive wildlife. Dust can impact vegetation surrounding the project site, resulting in changes in community structure and function. These changes could result in impacts to suitable habitat for special-status wildlife species.

Wildlife may also be indirectly affected in the short term and long term by construction-related noise, which can disrupt normal activities, cause lasting stress, and subject wildlife to higher predation risks. Trash and garbage from project-related activities could attract invasive predators such as ravens, gulls, crows, opossums, skunks, and raccoons that could impact the native wildlife species in the project area, including increased predation on desert tortoise.

Accidental spills of hazardous chemicals could contaminate surface waters and indirectly impact wildlife species through direct or secondary poisoning and other sub-lethal effects (e.g., endocrine

impacts), reduced prey availability, or alteration of suitable habitat. Indirect impacts to wildlife would be significant absent mitigation and would be avoided with the implementation of mitigation measure **BIO-1**, which would require impacts to occur only within the disturbance limits, use of best management practices and erosion control, revegetation of temporary impact areas, minimization of noise, avoidance of wildlife entrapment, trash removal, and avoidance of toxic substances.

DECOMMISSION OF FACILITIES

ORD MOUNTAIN SOLAR AND ENERGY STORAGE PROJECT

Over time, as the newly installed infrastructure becomes part of the environmental setting, vegetation may re-establish through succession, and wildlife may inhabit the project site. Impacts associated with decommissioning would be similar in nature to those from construction but would occur at a time in the future. Any on-site vegetation and wildlife would have the potential to be directly impacted by decommissioning activity. Off-site species would have the potential to be indirectly impacted in the form of noise and dust. Mitigation measures applied during construction would be similarly applicable to decommissioning activities.

CALCITE SUBSTATION

The Calcite Substation would not be decommissioned during decommissioning of the solar and energy storage portion of the project.

Mitigation Measures:

Ord Mountain Solar Energy and Storage project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special-Status Resources, **BIO-2** Desert Tortoise, **BIO-3** Burrowing Owl, **BIO-4** Golden Eagle Nests, **BIO-5** Nesting Birds, and **BIO-7** Worker Response Reporting System

Calcite Substation project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special Status Resources, **BIO-2** Desert Tortoise, **BIO-4** Golden Eagle Nests, **BIO-5** Nesting Birds, and **BIO-6** Mohave Ground Squirrel

BIO-1 **Indirect Impacts to Special-Status Resources.** The following best management practices shall be implemented to minimize indirect impacts to special-status species:

1. **Minimize construction impacts.** The construction limits shall be flagged prior to ground-disturbing activities. All construction activities, including equipment

staging and maintenance, shall be conducted within the flagged disturbance limits.

2. **Avoid toxic substances on road surfaces.** Soil binding and weighting agents used on unpaved surfaces shall be nontoxic to wildlife and plants.
3. **Avoid wildlife entrapment**
 - a. **Backfill trenches.** At the end of each workday, check that all potential wildlife pitfalls (trenches, bores, and other excavations) have been backfilled, covered, or sloped to allow wildlife egress. Should wildlife become trapped, a qualified biologist shall remove and relocate the individual(s). A qualified biologist is defined as a biologist who has minimally received a 4-year college degree in the biological sciences, is familiar with the potential suite of species, has a species-specific permit or authorization required to handle listed species, and is knowledgeable about proper handling techniques.
 - b. **Cover materials.** All pipes or other construction materials or supplies shall be covered or capped in storage or laydown areas at the end of each workday. No pipes or tubing of sizes or inside diameters ranging from 3 to 10 inches shall be left open either temporarily or permanently. Any construction pipe, culvert, or other hollow materials will be inspected for wildlife before it is moved, buried, or capped.
4. **Minimize spills of hazardous materials.** All vehicles and equipment shall be maintained in proper condition to minimize the potential for fugitive emissions of motor oil, antifreeze, hydraulic fluid, grease, or other hazardous materials. Hazardous spills shall be immediately cleaned up and the contaminated soil shall be properly handled or disposed of at a licensed facility. Servicing of construction equipment shall take place only at a designated staging area.
5. **Worker guidelines.** All trash and food-related waste shall be placed in self-closing containers and removed regularly from the site to prevent overflow. Workers shall not feed wildlife or bring pets to the project site.
6. **Invasive weeds.** The spread of invasive weeds shall be minimized through the revegetation of temporarily disturbed areas. Temporarily disturbed areas shall be revegetated with a native seed mix and/or container plants. A qualified biologist/restoration ecologist shall review the revegetation plan prior to implementation. Revegetated areas shall be monitored and maintained for 3 years or until native vegetation has been established. Maintenance shall

include removal of non-native weed species and remedial measures as determined during routine monitoring.

7. **Best management practices/erosion/runoff.** The project shall incorporate methods to control runoff, including a stormwater pollution prevention plan to meet National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations. Implementation of stormwater regulations is expected to substantially control adverse edge effects (e.g., erosion, sedimentation, habitat conversion) during and following construction, both adjacent to and downstream from the project area. Typical construction best management practices specifically related to reducing impacts from dust, erosion, and runoff generated by construction activities shall be implemented. During construction, material stockpiles shall be placed such that they cause minimal interference with on-site drainage patterns, which will protect sensitive vegetation from being inundated with sediment-laden runoff. Dewatering shall be conducted in accordance with standard regulations of the Colorado River Regional Water Quality Control Board. An NPDES permit, issued by the RWQCB to discharge water from dewatering activities, shall be required prior to the start of dewatering. This permit will minimize erosion, siltation, and pollution in sensitive vegetation communities.

BIO-2 Desert Tortoise. No desert tortoises were observed during the protocol-level surveys that were completed. However, suitable habitat is present, and the following avoidance and minimization measures shall be implemented:

- Environmental awareness training shall be provided for all construction personnel to educate them on desert tortoise, protective status, and avoidance measures to be implemented by all personnel, including looking under vehicles and equipment prior to moving.
- Pre-activity Surveys: Immediately prior to ground-disturbing activities, a qualified biologist—with experience monitoring and surveying for desert tortoise—would conduct a pre-activity survey in all work areas within potential desert tortoise habitat to ensure tortoises are not present.
- A biological monitor shall be present during initial grading activities, until tortoise fencing is installed around the perimeter of the site, and as needed thereafter. The biological monitor shall have the authority to stop work as needed to avoid direct impact to desert tortoise. Periodic biological inspections and maintenance shall be conducted during the construction to ensure the integrity of the tortoise fencing.

- Should a desert tortoise be found during construction activities, activities shall cease and consultation with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall commence.
- Prior to clearing and grubbing activities, a perimeter fence with mesh shall be installed around the project perimeter. Tortoise mesh shall be attached to the fence fabric and will extend from approximately 12 inches below grade to approximately 24 inches above grade to ensure no tortoises enter the project site. Preconstruction surveys and monitoring shall be conducted for any activity areas that lack tortoise fencing (e.g., temporary work areas, splicing locations).
- Under-Vehicle Checks. Project personnel are required to check under their equipment or vehicles before they are moved. If desert tortoises are encountered, the vehicle will not be moved until the tortoise has voluntarily moved away from the equipment or vehicle, or a qualified biologist has moved the tortoise out of harms way.
- Disposal of Trash. Trash and food items shall be contained in closed containers and removed daily to reduce attractiveness to opportunistic predators (e.g., ravens, coyotes, feral dogs).
- Pets Prohibited. Employees shall not bring pets to the proposed project area.
- Vehicle speed within the project area shall not exceed 20 miles per hour.

BIO-3 Burrowing Owl. Burrowing owl sign and potential nest locations were observed during protocol-level surveys conducted at the project site; therefore, preconstruction surveys for burrowing owl shall be conducted in accordance with CDFW guidelines. Preconstruction surveys shall include the project footprint and the appropriate legally accessible buffer as required in the most recent guidelines. The surveys shall be conducted no more than 30 days prior to initiation of ground-disturbing or site-mobilization activities. If burrowing owls are not detected during the clearance survey, no additional mitigation is required.

If an active burrowing owl burrow is located within 500 feet from any project work area or disturbance area, a Burrowing Owl Relocation and Mitigation Plan shall be prepared and implemented following approval from the CDFW. The plan shall include the following:

1. Avoidance and minimization measures, including at a minimum:

- a. **Non-disturbance buffer.** Fencing or flagging shall be installed at a 250-foot radius from the occupied burrow to create a buffer area where no work activities may be conducted. The non-disturbance buffer and fence line may be reduced to 160 feet if all project-related activities that might disturb burrowing owls would be conducted during the nonbreeding season (i.e., conducted September 1 through January 31). Buffers may be reduced to less than the 250 feet breeding/160 feet nonbreeding buffers through consultation with the CDFW.
- b. **Monitoring.** If construction activities occur within 500 feet of the occupied burrow during the nesting season (February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall monitor to determine whether these activities have the potential to adversely affect nesting efforts, and shall implement measures to minimize or avoid such disturbance.
- c. **Relocation Plan.** A relocation plan may be implemented if construction activities occur during the non-breeding season (occupied burrows may not be disturbed during the nesting season [February 1 to August 31] to avoid take under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the California Fish and Game Code). The plan shall:
 2. Describe detailed methods and guidance for passive relocation of burrowing owls.
 3. Describe monitoring and management of the replacement burrow site(s) and a reporting plan. The objective shall be to manage the sites for the benefit of burrowing owls, with the specific goals of maintaining the functionality of the burrows for a minimum of 2 years and minimizing weed cover.
 4. Ensure that a minimum of two suitable, unoccupied burrows are available off-site for every burrowing owl or pair of burrowing owls to be passively relocated.

BIO-4 Golden Eagle Nests. Eagle nest surveys shall be performed when construction activities are scheduled to occur in or near golden eagle nesting habitat from January 1 through July 31 to determine if any eagle nests are active within a 1-mile radius of the project site. Should active eagle nests be present, the nest shall initially receive a 1-mile line of sight, 0.5-mile no line of sight no construction activity buffer. Buffers and buffer modifications for golden eagles will be established by the qualified biologist, until the nest is vacated, and juveniles have fledged, as determined by the biologist.

BIO-5 Nesting Birds. Ground-disturbing activities shall be avoided during nesting bird season, from approximately February 1 through August 31. If such activities cannot be completed outside the nesting bird season, the following measures shall be implemented:

- Surveys shall be conducted within 500 feet of disturbance areas no earlier than 7 days prior to the commencement of disturbance. If ground-disturbing activities are delayed, additional preconstruction surveys shall be conducted such that no more than 7 days will have elapsed between the survey and the ground-disturbing activities.
- If active nests are found, clearing and construction shall be postponed or halted within a buffer area, established by the qualified biologist, that is suitable to the particular bird species and location of the nest, until the nest is vacated, and juveniles have fledged, as determined by the biologist. The construction avoidance area shall be clearly demarcated in the field with highly visible construction fencing or flagging, and construction personnel shall be instructed on the sensitivity of nest areas. A biologist shall serve as a construction monitor during those periods when construction activities will occur near active nest areas to ensure no inadvertent impacts on these nests occur. The results of the surveys, including graphics showing the locations of any active nests detected, and documentation of any avoidance measures taken, shall be submitted to the County of San Bernardino within 14 days of completion of the preconstruction surveys or construction monitoring to document compliance with applicable state and federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.

BIO-6 Mohave Ground Squirrel. Should a Mohave ground squirrel be found before or during construction activities, activities shall cease and consultation with the CDFW shall commence immediately. Observations should only be made or confirmed by a qualified Mohave ground squirrel biologist.

BIO-7 Worker Response Reporting System. Avian monitoring will be conducted during construction and operations:

1. Implement a Worker Response Reporting System (WRRS). A WRRS will provide a means of recording and collecting information on incidental bird and bat species found dead or injured within the proposed project area by site personnel. The WRRS will be used by site personnel who discover bird and bat carcasses during construction and routine maintenance activities. Site

personnel will be provided a set of standardized instructions to follow in response to wildlife incidents in the proposed project.

2. In accordance with the WRRS, during construction, site personnel will notify the project Biologist to collect the following data on the incidentally detected avian wildlife: species, date, time, location (e.g., nearest project structure), and how the animal died, if known. Results shall be reported to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) on a quarterly basis unless listed species are involved. During operations, site personnel will collect the same data, take photographs, and notify the project's environmental manager, who will then notify CDFW on a quarterly basis unless listed species are involved. In the event of an injury, CDFW will be contacted for instruction on how to handle the situation. Workers will be trained on the WRRS during the Worker Environmental Awareness Program. The WRRS shall be used for the life of the project. To accommodate these requirements, a project biologist shall be on retainer throughout the construction period, and one should be available during the life of the project to assist in avian identifications, data collection, identify cause of death or injury, and implement the WRRS.

Level of Significance: Less than significant with mitigation.

HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON RIPARIAN HABITAT

Impact 3.3-2 The project would potentially 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service. This impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

VEGETATION COMMUNITIES

DIRECT IMPACTS

A total of 496.41 acres will be impacted by the proposed project. The portion of the gen-tie line within the Calcite Substation parcel is included in the impact for the Calcite Substation, and the portion that overlaps the Solar and Energy Storage Project is included with those impacts. Table 3.3-4, *Solar and Energy Storage Project: Impacts to Vegetation Communities/Land Covers*, summarizes permanent direct impacts to vegetation communities and land covers within the solar and energy storage project site, and Table 3.3-5, *Calcite Substation: Impacts to Vegetation Communities*, summarizes the impacts at the Calcite Substation. As stated in the Environmental Setting subsection, CDFW state rankings of 1, 2, or 3 are considered high priority for inventory or

special-status, and impacts to these communities typically require mitigation. On the project site, none of the vegetation communities are considered special-status; therefore, impacts to vegetation communities with project implementation would not be significant under CEQA and would not require mitigation.

**Table 3.3-4:
Solar and Energy Storage Project: Impacts to Vegetation Communities/Land Covers**

Vegetation Community	Permanent Impact Acreage	Temporary Impact Acreage	Total Impact Acreage
Schismus Playa (<i>Schismus arabicus</i>)	196.63	—	196.63
Allscale Scrub (<i>Atriplex polycarpha</i>)	255.65	1.78	257.43
Creosote Bush Scrub (<i>Larrea tridentata</i>)	13.43	—	13.43
Developed	2.37	—	2.37
Disturbed Land	13.91	0.03	13.94
Total	481.99	1.81	483.80

Source: Dudek 2017

**Table 3.3-5:
Calcite Substation: Impacts to Vegetation Communities**

Vegetation Community	Permanent Impact Acreage	Temporary Impact Acreage	Total Impact Acreage
Allscale Scrub (<i>Atriplex polycarpha</i>)	4.29	2.91	7.20
Creosote Bush Scrub (<i>Larrea tridentata</i>)	5.19	—	5.19
Developed	0.13	0.09	0.22
Total	9.60	3.00	12.61

Source: Dudek 2017

INDIRECT IMPACTS

Although there are no special-status vegetation communities on the project site, there is potential for special-status vegetation communities to occur adjacent to the project site. Potential short-term indirect impacts on vegetation communities adjacent to the project site include dust, construction-related soil erosion and runoff, invasive plant species, and increased human presence.

Indirect impacts to vegetation communities would be significant absent mitigation and would be avoided with implementation of mitigation measure **BIO-1**, which would require implementation of best management practices and erosion control, revegetation of temporary impact areas, and avoidance of the use of toxic substances that could affect plant life.

Mitigation Measure:

Calcite Substation project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special-Status Resources.

Level of Significance: Less than significant with mitigation.

HAVE A SUBSTANTIAL ADVERSE EFFECT ON WETLANDS

Impact 3.3-3 The project would have a potentially substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Clean Water Act Section 404 (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.

DIRECT IMPACTS

No wetlands or non-wetland waters under USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW jurisdiction occur within the solar energy and storage project site. There would be impacts to 0.02 acre of USACE/RWQCB jurisdictional resources on the Calcite Substation site with project implementation. Impacts to jurisdictional resources would be considered significant absent mitigation. Direct impacts to this jurisdictional resource would be reduced to less than significant through the project requirements in mitigation measure **BIO-8** which would require mitigation at a 1:1 ratio (subject to the approval of the USACE and RWQCB) for permanent impacts, restoration of temporary impact areas, and obtaining the appropriate agency permits before work occurs in non-wetland waters. Table 3.3-6, *Impacts to Jurisdictional Resources on the Calcite Substation*, summarizes the impacts to features on the Calcite Substation site, and the features are shown on **Exhibit 3.3-6, Biological Resources Impacts**.

**Table 3.3-6:
Impacts to Jurisdictional Resources on the Calcite Substation (acres)**

JD Feature Type (Number)	Jurisdiction	Permanent Impacts	Temporary Impacts	Total Impacts
Non-wetland waters (US0003)	USACE/RWQCB	0.01	0.01	0.02
Total		0.01	0.01	0.02

Source: Dudek 2017

INDIRECT IMPACTS

The project and surrounding area supports jurisdictional resources that are regulated by the USACE and RWQCB. Jurisdictional aquatic resources are typically affected in the short term by dust and construction-related soil erosion and runoff.

Indirect impacts to jurisdictional resources associated with the Calcite Substation site would be significant absent mitigation and would be avoided with the implementation of mitigation measure **BIO-1**, which would require impacts to occur only within the disturbance limits, use of best management practices and erosion control, and avoiding the use of toxic substances that could affect waterways.

Mitigation Measures:

The following mitigation measures are recommended:

Ord Mountain Solar Energy and Storage project:

BIO-8 Regulatory Permits

Calcite Substation project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special-Status Resources, and **BIO-8** Regulatory Permits

BIO-8 **Regulatory Permits.** The owner/permittee shall provide evidence that all required regulatory permits, such as those required under Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act, and the Porter–Cologne Water Quality Control Act, have been obtained for the Calcite Substation site. In addition, mitigation for permanent impacts would occur at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio (subject to the approval of USACE and RWQCB) and restoration of all temporary impact areas.

Level of Significance: Less than significant with mitigation.

INTERFERE SUBSTANTIALLY WITH THE MOVEMENT OF ANY NATIVE RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY FISH OR WILDLIFE SPECIES OR WITH ESTABLISHED NATIVE RESIDENT OR MIGRATORY WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Impact 3.3-4 **The project would potentially 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. Impacts would be less than significant with mitigation.**

There are no wildlife corridors traversing the project site, but the project site is within a habitat linkage for desert tortoise. Due to the lack of desert tortoise observations and suitable habitat on the project site, and given that the extent of the project site does not block the connection between the larger adjacent open spaces or habitat areas, the project would not prevent desert tortoise from using the habitat linkage; see **Exhibit 3.3-7, Habitat Linkages**.

Additionally, the project site is within a Golden Eagle Conservation Area, and golden eagles' nests do occur in the project vicinity; see **Exhibit 3.3-8, Golden Eagle Protocol-Level Survey Results**. In addition, the project site may feature bird nests. Also see discussion in Impact 3.3-4 regarding these topics. Mitigation measures have been recommended to address potential impacts to desert tortoise, golden eagle, and other nesting birds, and would serve to reduce impacts to wildlife movement and nursery sites to less than significant.

Mitigation Measures:

The following mitigation measures are recommended:

Ord Mountain Solar Energy and Storage project:

BIO-2 Desert Tortoise, **BIO-3** Burrowing Owl, **BIO-4** Golden Eagle Nests, **BIO-5** Nesting Birds, and **BIO-7** Worker Response Reporting System

Calcite Substation project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special-Status Resources, **BIO-2** Desert Tortoise, **BIO-4** Golden Eagle Nests, **BIO-5** Nesting Birds, and **BIO-6** Mohave Ground Squirrel

Level of Significance: Less than significant with mitigation.

CONFLICT WITH ANY LOCAL POLICIES OR ORDINANCES PROTECTING BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Impact 3.3-5 **The project would not conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance. Impacts would be less than significant.**

The project site is located within and adjacent to multiple adopted local plans such as the West Mojave Plan (BLM 2006), the San Bernardino County General Plan (San Bernardino 2007a), the proposed Apple Valley MSHCP/NCCP, and the DRECP. However, the West Mojave Plan and the DRECP apply only to BLM-administered lands and therefore do not apply to the project. Additionally, the project site is outside the area covered by proposed Apple Valley MSHCP/NCCP.

The project would be required to comply with the San Bernardino County General Plan implemented through the County Development Code. To comply with the Development Code, a

development permit or approval of a land use application must be obtained before removal of any plants protected or regulated by the Desert Native Plants Act. Additionally, by implementing the mitigation measures included in this section of the EIR, impacts to biological resources would be reduced or eliminated and compliance with the San Bernardino County Development Code would be achieved. Therefore, the project would comply with regional resource plans.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

CONFLICT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF AN ADOPTED HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN, NATURAL COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PLAN, OR OTHER APPROVED LOCAL, REGIONAL, OR STATE HABITAT CONSERVATION PLAN

Impact 3.3-6 The project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. The impact would be less than significant.

The project area is not located within an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. There would be no take of critical habitat. No land use conflict with existing management plans would occur and no impact would result. Therefore, neither the proposed solar and energy storage project or the Calcite Substation project would conflict with the provisions of an adopted habitat conservation plan, natural community conservation plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. The proposed project would have a less than significant impact in this regard.

Mitigation Measures: None required.

Level of Significance: Less than significant.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Impact 3.3-7 The project would potentially result in cumulative impacts related to biological resources. Impacts would be less than cumulatively significant with mitigation.

The geographic scope for considering cumulative impacts on biological resources includes renewable energy projects within the Lucerne Valley region of the Mojave Desert in San Bernardino County. **Table 3-1, Cumulative Projects**, lists the projects considered for the biological resources cumulative impact analysis. Generally, in instances where a potential impact could occur, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service have promulgated

a regulatory scheme that limits impacts to these species. The effects of the projects would be rendered less than significant through mitigation requiring compliance with all applicable regulations that protect plant, fish, and animal species, as well as waters of the United States and the State. Other cumulative projects in the study area would also be required to avoid impacts to special-status species and/or mitigate to the satisfaction of the CDFW and USFWS for the potential loss of habitat. As described in this section of the EIR, the proposed project has the potential to result in impacts to biological resources. However, given that the project would limit impacts to less than significant through a comprehensive set of biological mitigation specific to the potential biological concerns of the two project sites. With the implementation of mitigation, project contribution to cumulative impacts would not be considerable.

Mitigation Measures:

Ord Mountain Solar Energy and Storage project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special Status Resources, **BIO-2** Desert Tortoise, **BIO-3** Burrowing Owl, **BIO-4** Golden Eagle Nests, **BIO-5** Nesting Birds, **BIO-7** Worker Response Reporting System, and **BIO-8** Regulatory Permits

Calcite Substation project:

BIO-1 Indirect Impacts to Special Status Resources, **BIO-2** Desert Tortoise, **BIO-4** Golden Eagle Nests, **BIO-5** Nesting Birds, **BIO-6** Mohave Ground Squirrel, and **BIO-8** Regulatory Permits

Level of Significance: Less than significant with mitigation.

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