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10 March 2020

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Subject: March 2020 Burrowing Owl Survey Update for the Aggie Research Campus Project, Yolo County, CA

Dear Mr. Estacio,

This letter transmits the initial results of surveys for burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) conducted in accordance with the CDFW 2012 *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* guidelines (CDFW Guidelines), for the Aggie Research Campus (ARC) Project, located just east of the City of Davis in Yolo County, CA. Four CDFW Guideline surveys have been conducted since January 2020. An additional five CDFW Guideline surveys are planned through the 2020 burrowing owl breeding season, which extends from 1 February through 31 August. A final report documenting the results of the full set of breeding season surveys for burrowing owl will follow the final survey, anticipated in June/July 2020.

Please note that a survey targeting burrowing owl also occurred in August 2019. The results of the August 2019 survey are included in Table 2, below.

METHODS

Surveys are being conducted in accordance with the CDFW Guidelines. Table 1 summarizes the area surveyed, biological staff conducting the surveys, and the date and hours of the surveys.

Table 1. Summary of CDFW Guideline Burrowing Owl Surveys Conducted January 2020 to Present

DATE	SURVEY TIMING	AREA SURVEYED	BIOLOGISTS ¹	HOURS
24 Jan 2020	Non-breeding	Project Site, Stormwater Capacity Area, & 500-foot buffer	Mike Bower, M.S. Juan Mejia, B.S. Elliot Maldonado, B.S.	6:30 AM - 4:00 PM
6 Feb 2020	Breeding	Project Site, Stormwater Capacity Area, & 500-foot buffer	Juan Mejia, B.S. Elliot Maldonado, B.S. Monica Coll, B.S.	6:45 AM – 3:30 PM
21 Feb 2020	Breeding	Project Site, Stormwater Capacity Area, & 500-foot buffer	Juan Mejia, B.S. Elliot Maldonado, B.S. Suzanne Thomas, B.S.	6:45 AM – 2:00 PM
4 Mar 2020	Breeding	Project Site, Stormwater Capacity Area, & 500-foot buffer	Elliot Maldonado, B.S. Monica Coll, B.S. Suzanne Thomas, B.S.	10:00 AM – 6:45 PM

¹ Mike Bower, Juan Mejia, Elliot Maldonado, Monica Coll, and Suzanne Thomas are Certified Yolo HCP/NCCP Qualified Biologists for burrowing owl.

The Burrowing Owl Survey Area is shown on the map in Attachment A. The Survey Area includes 1) the Project site, 2) annexation areas south of the Project site, 3) the northern and eastern sewer line alternatives, 4) the area considered for stormwater capacity work approximately 2 miles east of the Project site, and 5) suitable habitat within 500 feet of the aforementioned areas. The survey was performed by biologists with experience surveying for burrowing owl. The biologists walked transects through suitable habitat while searching for burrowing owl and potentially suitable burrows, as defined in the CDFW Guidelines. Binoculars were used to increase visual coverage and detection distances. The locations of reported burrowing owl sightings noted on eBird.org were reviewed and inspected in the field during surveys to verify whether the sightings corresponded with occupied burrows.

The CDFW Guidelines consider burrow sites to be *occupied* if a burrowing owl has been observed occupying a burrow, or burrowing owl sign has been observed at a burrow, within the last three years.

PRELIMINARY RESULTS

Table 2 is a summary of all burrowing owl survey results from August 2019 to present.

Table 2. Summary of Burrowing Owl Occupancy

SITE	LOCATION DESCRIPTION	OWLS / SIGN OBSERVED					OWLS LAST OBSERVED
		7 AUG 2019 ¹	24 JAN 2020	6 FEB 2020	21 FEB 2020	4 MAR 2020	
A	Approximately 530 ft north of the Project Site, along north side of County Rd 30B	2 owls	2 owls	2 owls	2 owls	2 owls	4 Mar 2020
B	Northwestern edge of Project Site, along east side of County Rd 104	1 owl	Sign ²	1 owl	2 owls	2 owls ³	4 Mar 2020
C	Western edge of the Project Site, along east side of Mace Blvd, north and south of intersection with County Rd 104	--	--	1 owl	1 owl	1 owl	4 Mar 2020
D	Approximately 400 ft west of the Project Site, in vacant lot north of 2nd St	1 owl	--	--	1 owl	--	21 Feb 2020
E	Approximately 100 ft west of the Project Site, along west side of Mace Blvd, south of 2 nd St; includes artificial burrows	3 owls	Sign ²	1 owl	1 owl	2 owls ³	4 Mar 2020
F	Approximately 360 ft east of Mace Blvd, along south side of County Rd 32A, and in the vacant field east of Ikeda's Market	--	Sign ²	Sign ²	Sign ²	Sign ²	No owls observed

¹ The 7 August 2019 survey was conducted by biologists Mike Bower, M.S., and Juan Mejia, B.S. The survey covered the ARC site and areas within 500 feet. The August 2019 survey targeted burrowing owl, but is not considered part of the full set of 2020 CDFW Guideline surveys.

² Sign noted only if no owls observed. Sign at Site B consisted of white wash markings and pellets. Sign at Site E consisted of white wash markings and pellets. Sign at Site F consisted of white wash markings and small mammal bones (potential prey remains).

³ Courtship behavior displayed among owl pairs at Sites B and E on 4 March 2020.

Attachment A contains a map showing the locations of occupied and unoccupied burrow complexes documented thus far. A total of six occupied burrow complexes occur within approximately 500 feet of the Project (Sites A through F). Hundreds of currently unoccupied burrows occur in the Burrowing Owl Survey Area, mostly within the 500-foot survey buffer as shown on Attachment A. As of the 4 March 2020 survey, breeding pairs are confirmed at Sites B and E, and a suspected breeding pair is associated with Site A. The remaining three occupied burrow complexes (Sites C, D, and F) are likely refuge or wintering burrows. No evidence of breeding has been observed at Sites C, D, and F during surveys or in the observations recorded on eBird.org.

The January 2016 Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Mace Ranch Innovation Center (MRIC) Project identified occupied burrowing owl complexes at Site A (CNDDDB Occurrences #994), Site C (CNDDDB Occurrence #614), and Site E (CNDDDB Occurrence #695) (FEIR Chapter 4, pages 15-16). No owls or their sign had been observed at Sites B, D, and F in 2015.

These results are preliminary. The CDFW Guidelines recommend breeding season surveys include at least one site visit between 15 February and 15 April and three survey visits between 15 April and 15 July, with at least one visit after 15 June (a total of four survey events). As of 4 March 2020, four surveys have been conducted in 2020, three of which occurred during the early portion of the burrowing owl breeding season (Table 2). An additional five burrowing owl surveys conducted in accordance with the CDFW Guidelines are planned during the peak of the 2020 breeding season.

Yours truly,



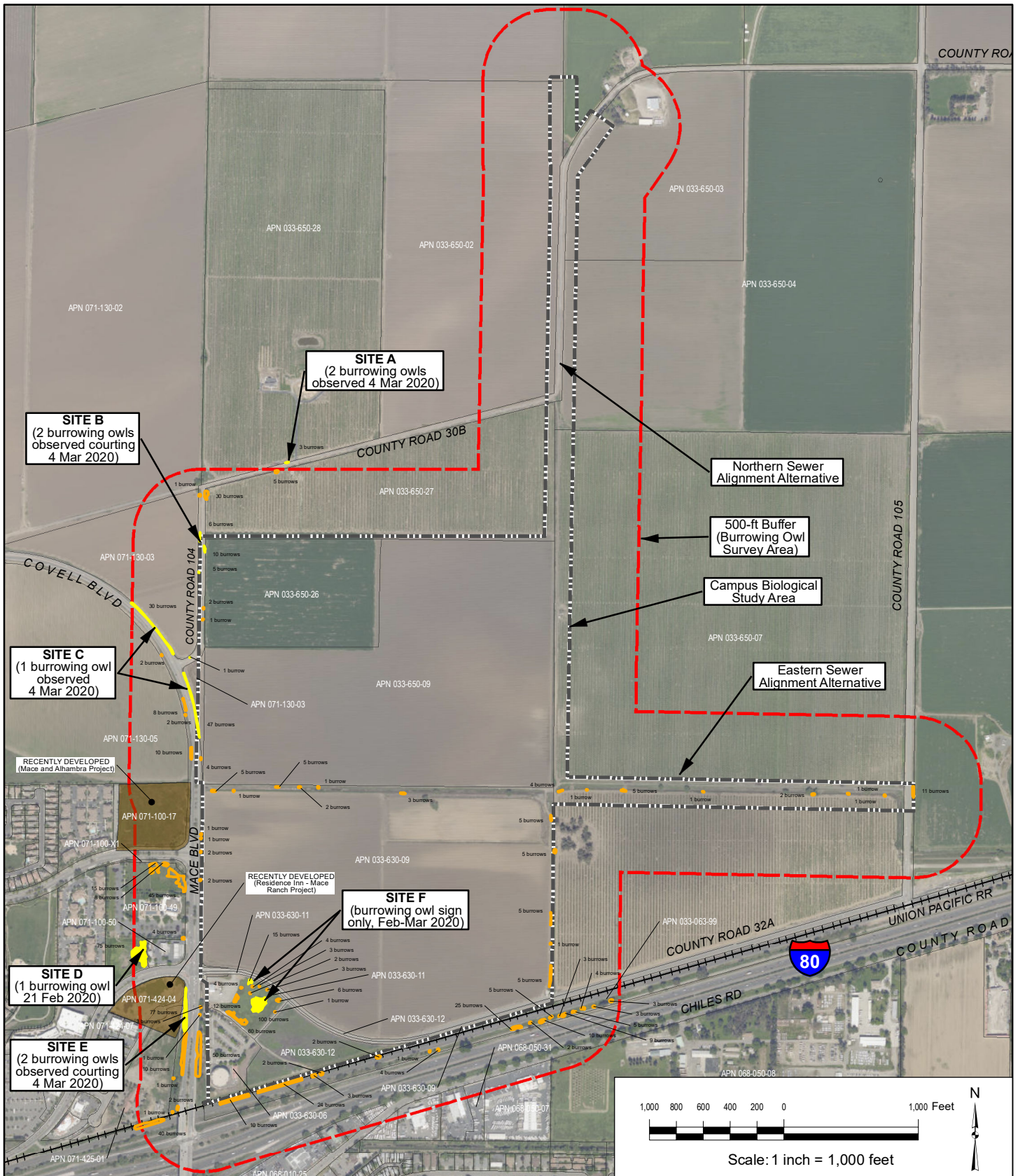
Mike Bower, M.S.
Botanist/Biologist

Attachment A. Preliminary Burrowing Owl Survey Results Map

Attachment A.







Preliminary Burrowing Owl Survey Results Map

March 2020



Aggie Research Campus
Yolo County, CA
10 March 2020

Attachment A.
Preliminary Burrowing Owl
Survey Results Map
Sheet 1 of 2, (Main Site)

-  Campus Biological Study Area
-  500-ft Buffer (Burrowing Owl Survey Area)
-  Burrow Complex With Owl Occupancy (Date of most recent owl observation)
-  Burrow Complex - No Occupancy
-  Parcel Boundary
-  Recently Developed Areas



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Aerial Photograph: 13 August 2018
2018 Yolo County Orthos Imagery
ESRI World Imagery Arcmap Service Layer

