

Memorandum

Date: October 23, 2015

To: Gary Koontz, Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services

From: Juan J Hernandez, Principal Biologist

Subject: Burrowing Owl Protocol Habitat Assessment for the Yucca Valley Facility

This memorandum provides the methods and results of a protocol burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) [BUOW] survey for the proposed Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services Yucca Valley Facility. The approximately 36.7 acre project site consists of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 0601-551-09, 0601-551-10, and 0601-551-11 (Figures 1 and 2). The proposed project would relocate the existing facility and all operations to the subject project site. Project development includes a truck terminal for Burrtec Waste and Recycling Services' collection fleet and an approximately 16,200 square foot solid waste transfer station. Additional improvements include landscape frontages on Indio Avenue and Sunnyslope Drive, a maintenance shop, a fueling station, an operations facility, in-ground truck scales, a stormwater detention basin, and associate parking (Figure 3).

The BUOW study area was conducted over the entire 36.7-acre project site. Where possible, a 150-meter buffer was also surveyed if suitable habitat was present. The Burrowing Owl Protocol Habitat Assessment was conducted on October 2, 2015 by Principal Biologist Juan J. Hernandez.

Project Contact Information

Owner/Applicant: Gary Koontz
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Field Survey Methods

The October 2, 2015 survey began at 8:00 a.m. and ended at 11:00 a.m. The sky was clear and the temperatures ranged from 65 to 76 degrees Fahrenheit. Winds were zero to three miles per hour from the northwest. The survey was not conducted within five days of precipitation.

The field survey methods employed for the BUOW Habitat Assessment survey consisted of a one-day focused BUOW survey. Specifically, the survey was conducted during weather that was conducive to observing owls outside their burrows and detecting BUOW signs. The survey was not conducted during rain, high winds (> 20 miles per hour), dense fog, or temperatures above 90 degrees Fahrenheit.

The BUOW survey involved walking through potentially suitable habitat within the survey area (i.e., the survey area included areas that will be directly or indirectly impacted by the project). The pedestrian survey transects were spaced approximately 30 to 50 feet apart to allow 100 percent visual coverage of the ground surface. During the survey, special attention was paid to those habitat areas that appeared to provide suitable habitat for BUOWs. If suitable habitat was present, the biologist also walked a 150-meter (approximately 500 feet) buffer zone around the project boundary. If permission to access the buffer areas was not obtainable, the biologist did not trespass, but instead visually inspected adjacent habitats with binoculars.

All encountered burrows or structure entrances were checked for the presence of BUOWs, molted feathers, cast pellets, prey remains, eggshell fragments, tracks, or excrement at or near a burrow entrance. Natural or man-made structures and debris piles that could support BUOW were also surveyed.

The methods used to detect and identify BUOWs included observation of key signs identified by the California Burrowing Owl Consortium (CBOC), such as sight, scat, tracks, burrows, nests, and calls. All wildlife species encountered visually or audibly during the field survey were identified and recorded in field notes. Binoculars were used to aid in the identification of observed wildlife. Photographs were taken to document existing conditions within the survey area, as shown in the attached photographs.

Results

The 36.7-acre project site consisted of a vacant site characterized by a mix of Joshua tree woodland, disturbed habitat, and crossed by an upland vegetated ephemeral stream which runs south to north across the southeastern portion of the site. Due to the dominance of the site by Joshua tree woodland, there was no suitable habitat for BUOWs. No mammal burrows suitable for BUOW were observed within the study area. Further, no BUOW were observed within the study area and no burrows with the potential to support BUOWs were found.

Based on the lack of direct or indirect evidence of the presence of BUOWs the survey indicates that BUOW does not currently occupy or use the study area.

Certification

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above, the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Date: October 23, 2015

Signed: _____

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Juan J. Hernandez", written over a horizontal line.

Juan J. Hernandez
Principal Biologist

Attachments:

Figure 1 - Location Map

Figure 2 - Vicinity Map

Figure 3 - Site Plans

Figure 4 - Survey Area Map

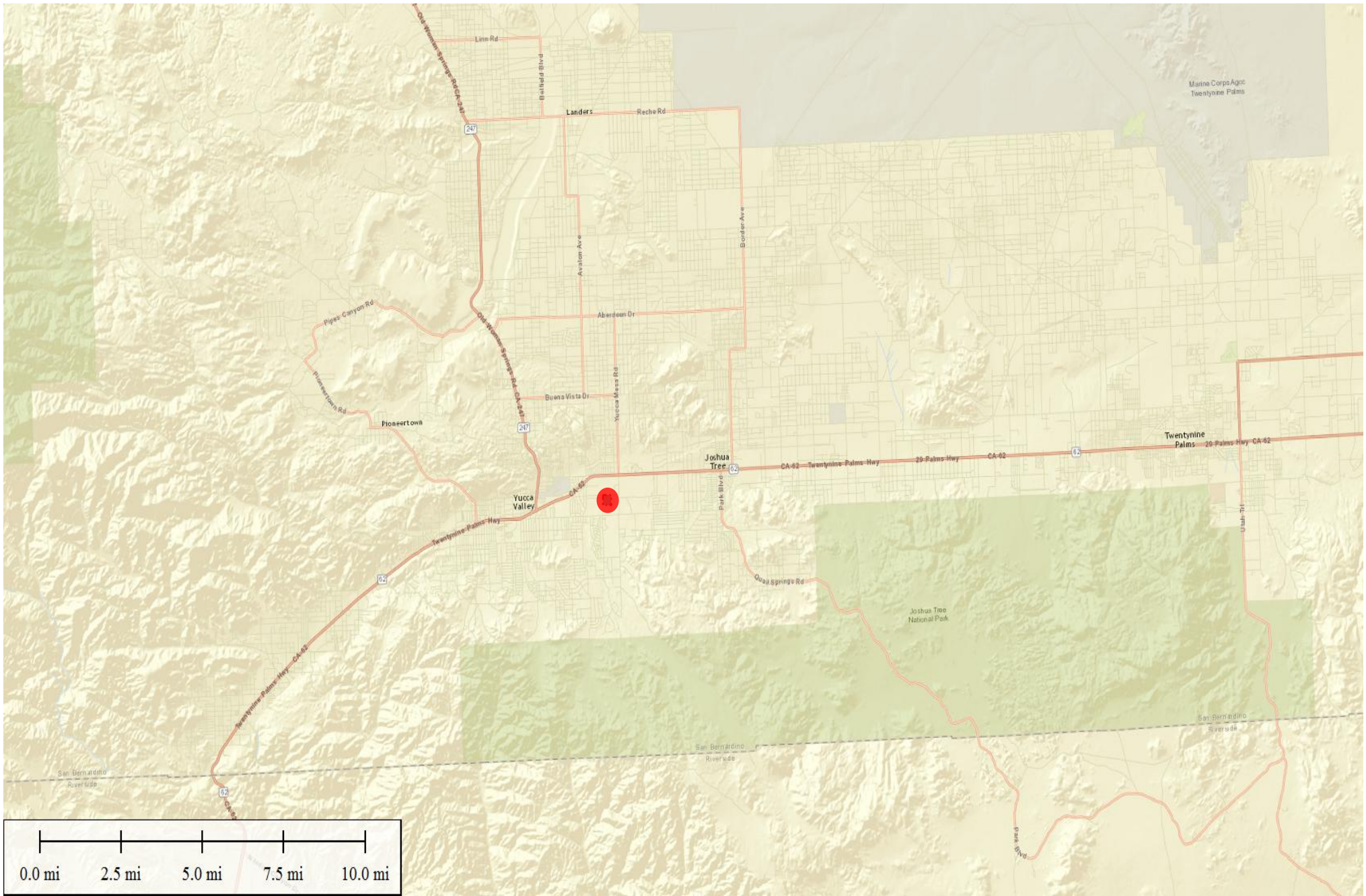



Figure 1
 Vicinity Map
 Biological Resources Study
 Burrtec Yucca Valley Facility
 Yucca Valley, San Bernardino County, CA

Legend

 Project Location



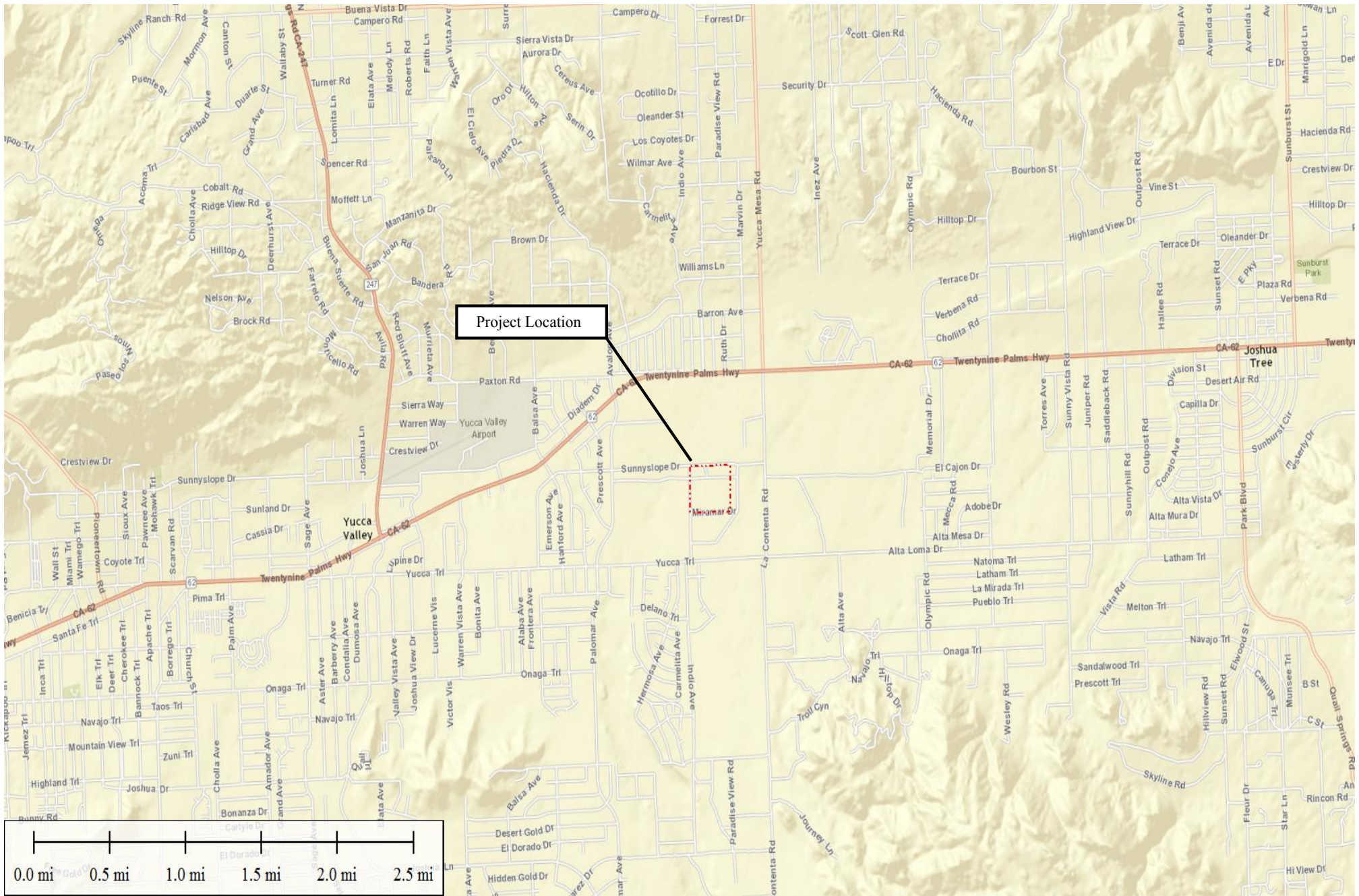


Figure 2
 Location Map
 Biological Resources Study
 Burretec Yucca Valley Facility
 Yucca Valley, San Bernardino County, CA

Legend



Project Location



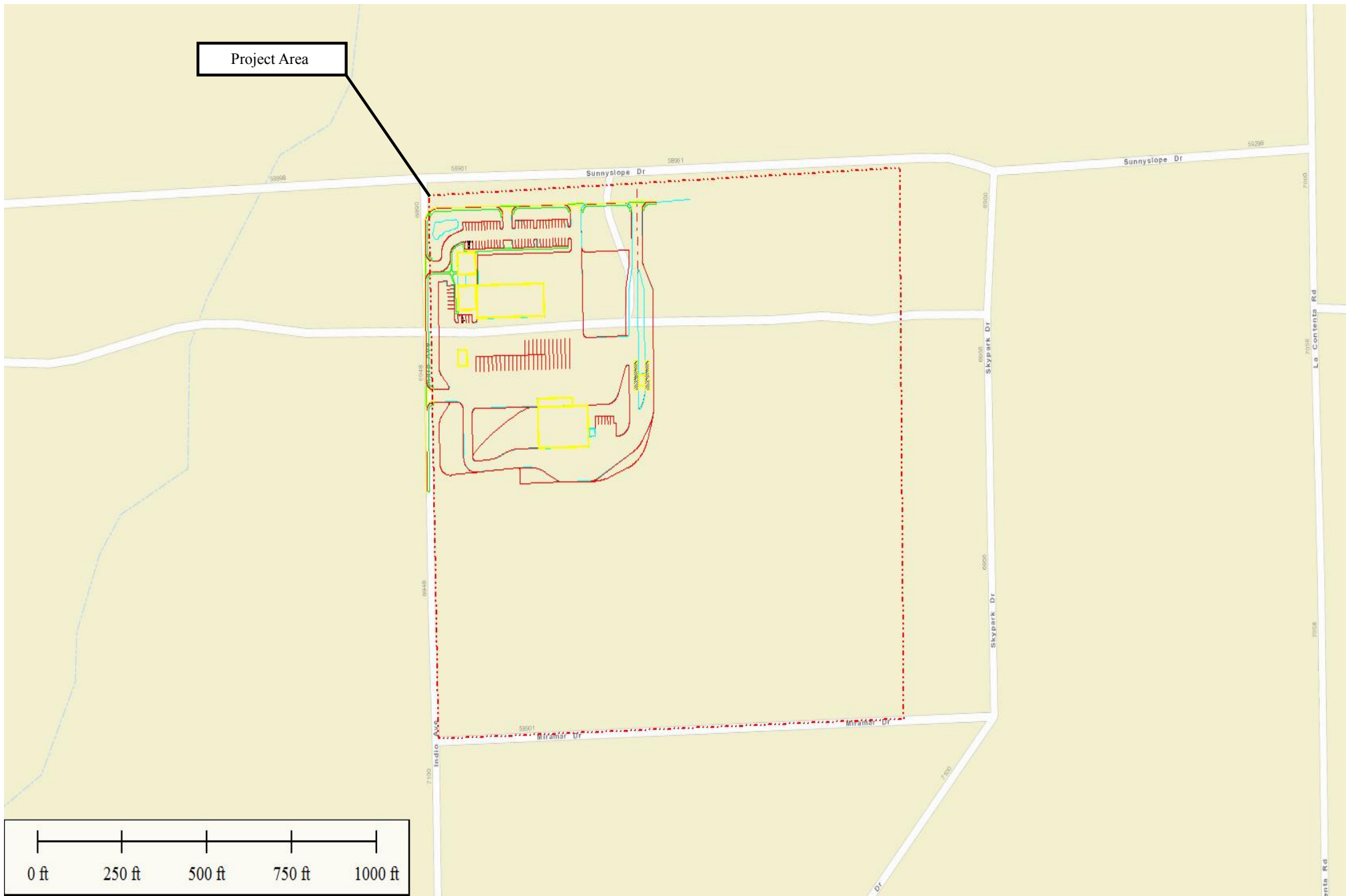



Figure 3
 Project Plans
 Biological Resources Study
 Burrtec Yucca Valley Facility
 Yucca Valley, San Bernardino County, CA

Legend

-  Property Boundary



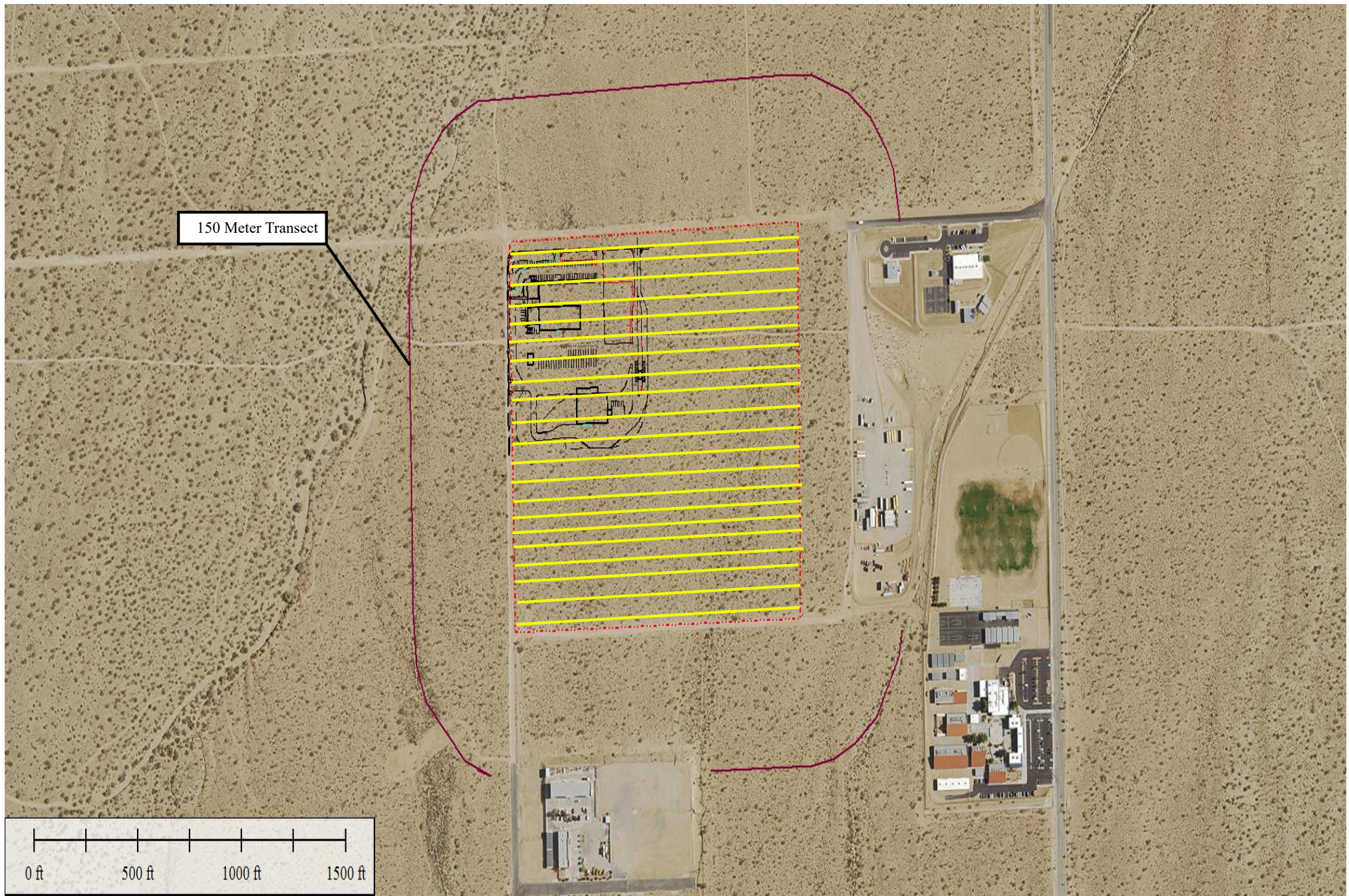


Figure 4
 Burrowing Owl Survey Areas
 Biological Resources Study
 Burrtec Yucca Valley Facility
 Yucca Valley, San Bernardino County, CA



Legend
 36.7 Acre Property Boundary



Survey Transects

