

Environmental Minor Project Refinement Form



Project Name: West of Devers Upgrade Project Request Prepared By: Sylvia Granados

Date Approval Required: 1/9/2020 Variance Request No.: 33

Date Submitted: 1/8/2019 Location: SCE 115-kV ROW, South of M43-T5 (2N28)

Landowners: City of Grand Terrace Landowner Parcel Numbers: NA

Current Vegetative Cover/Land Use: Developed/Disturbed

Existing Sensitive Resource? NO YES Specify: Mapped Critical CAGN Habitat and Red-tailed Hawk Nest adjacent

Modifying (check as many as apply):
 MITIGATION MEASURE PLAN/PROCEDURE SPECIFICATION
 DRAWING PERMIT CONDITION OTHER

Specify Source (e.g., Mitigation Measure B.5): NTP #4 - Transmission

Description of Change and Justification (Attach additional sheets if needed.)

Attachments:

CONSTRUCTION DRAWING ADDITIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS CORRESPONDENCE OTHER: MODIFICATION TO NTP #4

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Supersite WA-2-2N28-NestStand-MPR-33

Supersite WA-2-2N28-NestStand-MPR-33 will be used to facilitate the construction of a temporary artificial nest stand, to provide an alternate nesting substrate for Red-tailed Hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) FRED Nest Event 000498, which is located in existing structure M43-T5 (2N28). The proposed additional work area includes an existing 115-kV structure associated with the Moreno-Moval-Vista circuit and its associated O&M work area. In addition, use of an existing access road, an extension from previously-approved project access roads, is requested. The 115-kV structure site is a suitable alternative nesting location, which will not be adversely affected by active construction activities associated with the current Move 6 double line outage.

The nest platform will be constructed of materials and methods consistent with those described in the West of Devers (WOD) Nesting Bird Management Plan (NBMP) and in accordance with the WOD Mitigation Monitoring Compliance and Reporting Program. The nest platform will be constructed upon the existing 115-kV wooden H-frame power pole with a wooden platform mounted to the top, likely above the southern-most pole, in accordance with SCE-provided guidelines. The nest platform will be located within the existing SCE 115-kV right-of-way (ROW), approximately 25-feet south of the WOD 500 kV ROW. Construction equipment such as boom trucks, cranes, and digger-derricks would be limited to the existing access road and O&M work area. The nest platform will be removed at project completion, when the nest is inactive.

The temporary nest stand location and access road, shown in Figure 1, are located within an existing SCE easement in the City of Grand Terrace, in Riverside County. No additional work space will be required for the construction described above.

Environmental Analysis

No impacts to regulated trees, jurisdictional waters, biological, or cultural resources are anticipated during the use of the new work area.

Biological Resources

A desktop analysis of publicly available data and relevant project data was conducted to determine the potential for

special-status species to occur in the work area. Since included in early iterations of project design, the work area was included in the study area for previous biological surveys (e.g., habitat assessments and focused surveys).

The nest stand work area and access road are covered within active preconstruction FRED Survey ID 000115:

Nesting Birds – Suitable substrates for nesting birds protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code, including transmission structures, trees, shrubs, and the ground surface, are located within the vicinity. Regionally, red-tailed hawks are among the most common tower nesting species.

A Red-tailed Hawk (RTHA) (*Buteo jamaicensis*) nest was observed on January 6, 2020, approximately 80 feet above the ground in the south corner of the southern top arm in structure M43-T5, and within the work area of 2N28. The nest height provides a visual and acoustic buffer to ground sites below the nest. The new nest is in the same location as previous FRED Nest Event #000161, approximately 280 feet from heavily traveled Barton Way. Nest Event #000161 fledged on June 3, 2019 and was removed on November 2, 2019. The nest has been under close observation since its discovery. By noon on January 7, 2020 the avian biologist estimated the nest to be approximately 35% complete. Because the nest is in the early stages of development, the avian biologists presume no eggs or young are present.

The nest details, construction constraints, and a procedure for relocation of the red-tailed hawk nest was provided to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Service (CDFW). CDFW approved the proposed nest relocation activities. The purpose of this MPR is to establish a location for a nest platform to which the nest in M43-T5 will be relocated.

Listed Riparian Birds – No suitable habitat for riparian birds (least Bell's vireo [LBVI]/Southwestern willow flycatcher [SWFL]) occurs within the vicinity of the proposed work area. No impacts to riparian birds are expected.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher – The requested work space is located within mapped USFWS-designated Critical Habitat Unit 10 for coastal California gnatcatcher (CAGN). Suitable habitat for CAGN is mapped approximately 700 feet east of the proposed work area. However, no suitable CAGN habitat exists within the vicinity of the new nest platform. Suitable coastal sage scrub habitat in the general area is significantly degraded and exists in only very small patches scattered on the north-facing slopes. Focused surveys for CAGN were conducted several consecutive years in advance of and since the initiation of the project. No CAGN nests have been detected in Segment 2. Preconstruction clearance surveys will be conducted prior to the start of work. No impacts to CAGN are expected as a result of construction in the work area. The requested access road and work area are comprised of disturbed/developed land, which are not primary constituent elements of CAGN Critical Habitat. Therefore, no offsets for compensatory mitigation are needed.

Stephens' Kangaroo Rat – No suitable habitat for Stephens' kangaroo rat (SKR) occurs within the vicinity of the proposed work area. Nonetheless, preconstruction surveys will be conducted prior to the start of work. Therefore, no impacts to SKR are anticipated.

Special-status Small Mammals – Special-status small mammals such as the pallid San Diego pocket mouse, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse, American badger, desert kit fox, and/or San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit can occur in many parts of the project area. Ringtail and Palm Springs round-tailed ground squirrel are not expected. The work area is outside the known range of the Palm Springs pocket mouse. No mapped suitable habitat for the Los Angeles Pocket Mouse (LAPM) occurs within the work area. No impacts to special-status mammals are expected, however, if any of these species are found, potential impacts will be addressed in accordance with the Small Mammals Avoidance and Minimization Plan.

Special-status Bats – A palm oasis located approximately 1,000 feet west of the proposed work area provides potentially suitable habitat for roosting bats (see FRED Habitat Event 000003). A 165-foot ESA buffer has been established around this site. Ed West (Qualified Bat Biologist) believes that as long as physical alteration of these trees is avoided, then there will be no impacts to the species using these trees as day-time or maternal roosts. Bats using any of the trees in this area as a roost site are likely habituated to loud and abrupt sounds from nearby high-traffic roadways and would not be likely to respond negatively to typical construction noise.

No suitable habitat for special status bats is mapped within the vicinity of the nest stand. No impacts to special status bats are expected.

Special-status Plants – No special-status plants occurrences are mapped within or in the vicinity of the proposed work area. No impacts to special status plants are expected.

Burrowing Owl – Burrowing owls have a moderate potential to occur within 500 feet of the proposed work area. No burrowing owls or burrowing owl sign were observed within the survey area. Preconstruction clearance surveys will be conducted prior to the start of construction activities. No impacts are anticipated.

Desert Tortoise – The proposed work area is not located within the range of the species. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Golden Eagle – Based on aerial habitat assessments and protocol surveys conducted for the project, no suitable nesting habitat for golden eagles is located within 2 miles of the proposed work area. Therefore, no impacts are anticipated.

Regulated Trees – No tree trimming or tree removal is required for the proposed activities.

Special-status Terrestrial Herpetofauna – No special-status herpetofauna were observed within the vicinity of the proposed work area during previous preconstruction surveys. No impacts to special status herpetofauna are expected as a result of construction of the nest stand.

Jurisdictional Waters

Several non-wetland jurisdictional waters are located within the vicinity of the proposed work area; however, the nest stand work area does not intersect jurisdictional water features. In the field, ESA signs are used to conspicuously mark jurisdictional features where appropriate. Therefore, no impacts to jurisdictional waters are anticipated.

Cultural Resources

The nest stand work area is located within the WOD APE and was covered within the record search data that was conducted during previous WOD surveys and studies *West of Devers: Cultural Resources Assessment and Class III Inventory* (LSA, 2013) and *Area of Potential Effects for the Engineering Refinements Survey and Recommendation of Eligibility for Cultural Resources with Southern California Edison Company's West of Devers Project* (ASM, 2015). The record search and survey results for the area were negative for cultural resources.

Paleontological Resources

The WOD Paleontological Resources Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (PRMMP) requires full-time, qualified paleontological construction monitoring in areas determined to have moderate (PFYC 3) to very high (PFYC 5) sensitivity. Sediments of unknown (PFYC U) sensitivity shall be monitored by a qualified paleontological monitor on a part-time basis and geologic units with very low (PFYC 1) or low (PFYC 2) sensitivity may be spot checked to confirm paleontological sensitivity.

Per the PRMMP, the types of construction activities that require monitoring or spot-checking include:

- Grading
- Drilling (if drill bit is greater than two feet in diameter)
- Excavation for retaining walls
- Excavation of construction areas

Types of construction activities that will not require monitoring or spot-checking, regardless of paleontological sensitivity include:

- Small diameter drill holes (less than two feet in diameter)
- Pile driving
- Project activities that do not involve ground disturbance

The proposed work area is located in an area of very high (PFYC 5) paleontological sensitivity, however no ground disturbance will occur since the nest platform will be constructed upon an existing 115-kV wooden pole. Therefore, no paleontological monitoring is required.

Resources:

Biological NO SENSITIVE RESOURCES PRESENT SENSITIVE RESOURCES PRESENT N/A

New Survey Report Attached: YES NO

If No, Previous Biological Survey Reference: The nest stand work area was covered within active FRED Survey ID 000115.

Cultural: NO RESOURCES PRESENT RESOURCES PRESENT WITH PROJECT APE: YES NO

If in APE, Previous Cultural Survey Reference:

The nest stand work area is located within the WOD APE and was covered within the record search data that was conducted during previous WOD surveys and studies. The record search and survey results for the area were negative for cultural resources. *West of Devers: Cultural Resources Assessment and Class III Inventory (LSA, 2013)* and *Area of Potential Effects for the Engineering Refinements Survey and Recommendation of Eligibility for Cultural Resources with Southern California Edison Company's West of Devers Project (ASM, 2015)*.

If not in APE, cite new survey report:

Other Potential Impacts: (Check any potential changes to permitted impacts and provide details below. Attach additional sheets if needed.)

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> AIR QUALITY | <input type="checkbox"/> LAND USE | <input type="checkbox"/> TRAFFIC |
| <input type="checkbox"/> BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES | <input type="checkbox"/> NOISE | <input type="checkbox"/> VISUAL |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CONTAMINATED SOILS | <input type="checkbox"/> PALEO RESOURCES | <input type="checkbox"/> WATER RESOURCES |
| <input type="checkbox"/> CULTURAL RESOURCES | <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIOECONOMIC | <input type="checkbox"/> WETLANDS |
| <input type="checkbox"/> HAZARDOUS MATERIALS | <input type="checkbox"/> STORM WATER (SWPPP) | |

NA

CEQA and Permitting: (Provide details for any "Yes" answer and attach additional information if needed.)

1. Will modification involve substantial changes that will require major changes to the CEQA document?
 YES NO
2. Will modification result in new significant environmental effects or a substantial increase in the severity of previously identified impacts?
 YES NO
3. Additional agency notifications and/or permit modifications required? YES NO

Conditions of Approval or Reasons for Denial: (Attach additional information if needed.)

Required Signatures: (Attached email approvals may be used in lieu of signatures.)

X Chief Construction Inspector or Foreman: VARIANCE MODIFICATION IS NEEDED FOR SAFE AND EFFICIENT CONSTRUCTION

Name: Jeff Miller Signature: [Signature] Date: 1/8/2019

Environmental Inspector: FIELD REVIEW COMPLETE

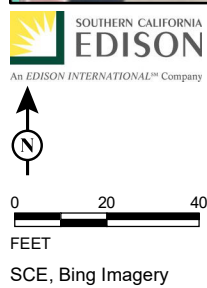
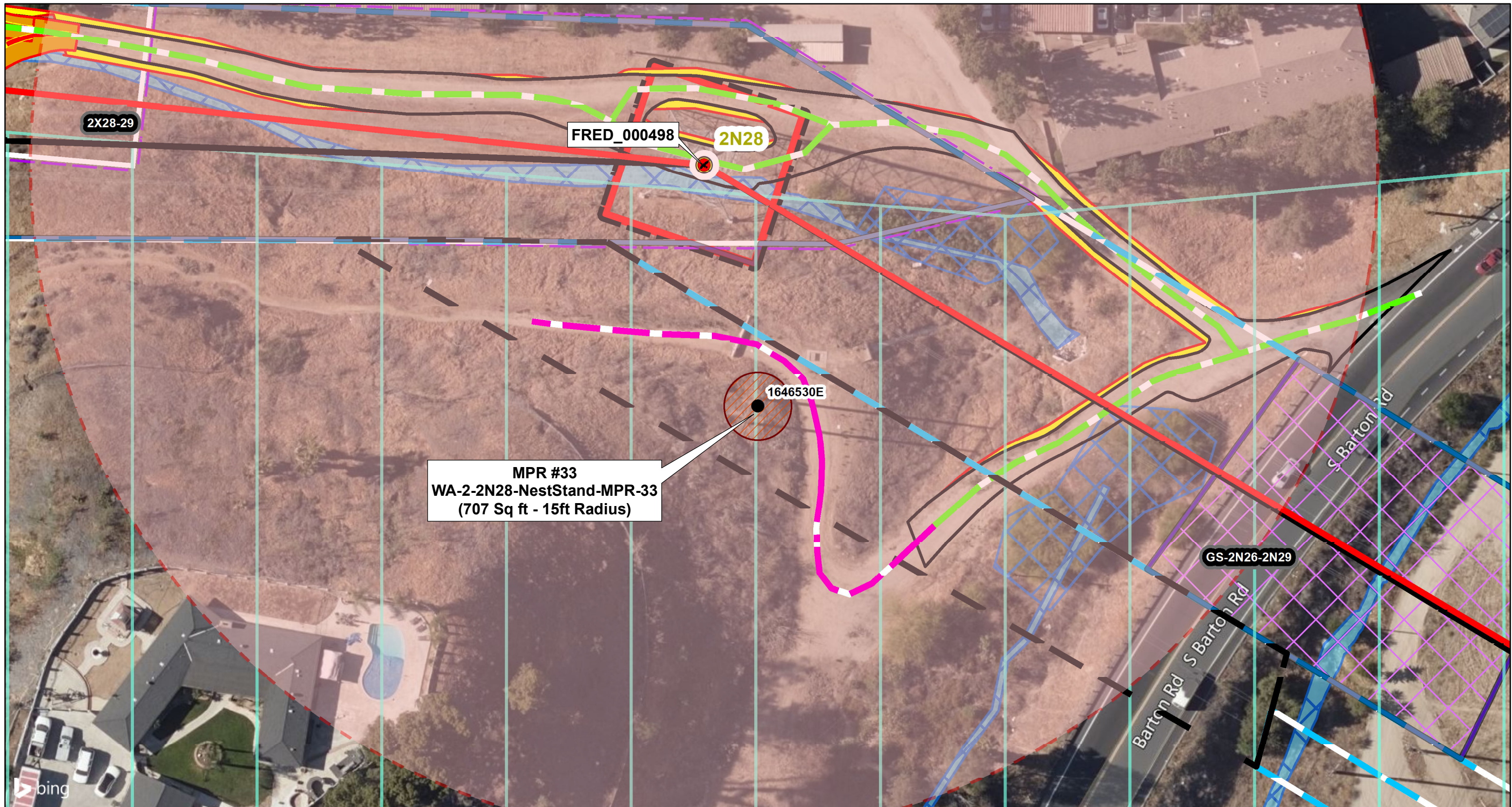
Name: Lisa Amador Signature: [Signature] Date: 1/8/2019

X Land Agent: CONSISTENT WITH EXISTING RIGHTS NEW RIGHTS OBTAINED

Name: James Spence Signature: [Signature] Date: 1/8/2019

X Environmental Compliance Lead: APPROVED APPROVED WITH CONDITIONS (SEE CONDITIONS ABOVE) DENIED

Name: Sylvia Granados Signature: [Signature] Date: 1/8/2019



LEGEND

- MPR #33 Proposed Nest Relocation Work Area
- Red-tailed Hawk Nest
- Red-tailed Hawk Nest (300ft Buffer)
- Proposed Access Road

- Existing Moreno-Moval-Vista 115kV Pole
- Existing Moreno-Moval-Vista 115kV ROW
- Supersite Boundary
- Major Trans Structure**
- Modify

- Major Trans Line**
- Proposed
- Existing
- Civil Access Roads Lines**
- New Access Road
- Existing Access Road

- Civil Access Road Areas**
- Existing Road Edge
- Designed Road Boundary
- Potential Road Widening
- Existing ROW

- Construction Areas**
- Guard Pole
- O&M Tower Area
- Structure Work Area
- Coastal California Gnatcatcher Critical Habitat

- Non-wetland Waters**
- CDFW Jurisdiction
- USACE/RWQCB Jurisdiction

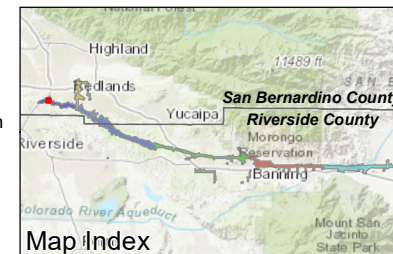


FIGURE 1

Southern California Edison
West of Devers Upgrade Project
2N28 Nest Relocation
MPR #33