LEAST BELL'S VIREO
(*Vireo bellii pusillus)*
FOCUSED SURVEY REPORT
FOR THE SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC
CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST
MASTER SERVICES PERMIT PROJECT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

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SECTION 1.0 – INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Cleveland National Forest (CNF) is requesting an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) be prepared for the issuance of a Master Special Use Permit to the San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E). The Master Special Use Permit would cover the operations and maintenance of the existing electric distribution and transmission lines, appropriate access roads, and facilities within the Trabuco, Palomar, and Descanso Ranger Districts of the CNF. The existing facilities are needed to supply power to local communities, residents, and government-owned facilities located within and adjacent to the CNF The CNF is also analyzing operational and equipment upgrades and improvements to the existing lines. The Master Special Use Permit would also include conditions necessary for resource protection. Chambers Group, Inc (Chambers Group) has conducted biological surveys including focused sensitive wildlife species surveys and focused surveys for rare plants along the distribution and transmission line Rights of Way (ROW) within the CNF (Project Area[1]). The survey results will be submitted by SDG&E to the CNF in support of the EIS to help analyze potential impacts to sensitive species within the Project Area. The Project Area includes approximately 167 linear miles of 12 transmission and distribution lines and includes the associated access roads and work areas. In addition to the data gathered from the Chambers Group surveys, the United States Forest Service (USFS) Biological Assessment/Biological Evaluation (BA/BE) for the CNF will be used to support this effort and report analysis.

The objective of this study was to determine the presence or absence of least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*; LBVI) and suitable LBVI habitat within the proposed Project Area.

1.2. SURVEY AREA

Chambers Group conducted focused LBVI surveys within the Project Area. Chambers Group biologists conducted a helicopter survey of the Project Area to determine where species specific surveys should be conducted (see Section 2.1 for Habitat Assessment). Areas identified as LBVI "suitable" habitat within CNF models were included in the review.

The Survey Area is a 150-foot buffer around transmission/distribution pole centerlines and was extended to a 250-foot radius around each pole where the overhead line makes an angle greater than 2 degrees. The additional buffer is to include potential additional work space that is typically required during operation and maintenance work at angle points within the overhead lines.

Survey Areas were identified first by geographical locations within the county and were also referenced by the associated transmission/distribution line. These areas were then further refined to individual drainages that were surveyed and were graphically depicted on an accompanying aerial mapbook. One master mapbook was created for the entire Project Area; however, due to its size only the relevant mapbook pages are included in this report. Appendix A contains maps showing the Survey Areas.

[1] A complete Mapbook and description of the entire Project Area can be submitted upon request.

1.3. LEAST BELL'S VIREO NATURAL HISTORY

The least Bell's vireo was state-listed as an endangered subspecies of Bell's vireo by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) in 1980 and federally listed as endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) in 1986. Critical habitat for the LBVI was designated in 1994 (USFWS 1986, 1994). The LBVI subspecies is restricted to coastal and inland southern California and Baja California, Mexico. Its winter range extends along the Pacific coast from northern Mexico south to northern Nicaragua.

LBVI is a small, gray songbird with pale yellow wash on its sides, two faint wing bars, and a faint eye ring. Preferred nesting habitat is low, dense, scrubby vegetation in early successional areas that are particularly dependent on riparian areas. Habitats may include willow woodlands and dense mule fat, scrub oak, coastal chaparral, and mesquite patches with dense early successional understories. It builds a suspended cup nest about 0.5 to 2.0 meters above the ground and, on average, lays four eggs. It may produce two broods per season. On the breeding grounds, the least Bell's vireo feeds primarily on insects and small spiders.

The two major factors in the decline of LBVI populations are loss of habitat and nest parasitism by the brown headed-cowbird (*Molothrus ater*; BHCO). Habitat loss and degradation, especially along streams and rivers, due to development, agriculture, flood control projects, logging operations, and intensive cattle grazing practices, are the greatest threats to the continued existence of the LBVI. Cowbird parasitism is also an important factor in population declines. The cowbird lays its egg in an unsuspecting vireo nest, and the vireo then may raise the cowbird chick as its own. The cowbird egg hatches earlier than the vireo eggs; and the cowbird chick then grows much larger in less time, eventually outcompeting the vireo chicks and causing nest failure. Fragmentation of habitat also increases cowbird parasitism by artificially creating favored habitats of cowbirds, and it isolates small, fringe vireo populations. In turn these populations are more susceptible to localized extirpations, which contribute to large-scale range reductions. Despite historic population losses, recent trends indicate that populations are on the rise and that the least Bell's vireo is returning to parts of its former range as well as colonizing some new areas.

SECTION 2.0 – METHODOLOGY

2.1. HABITAT ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the LBVI habitat assessment was to determine the presence potential for LBVI within the Project Area. Least Bell's vireos are obligate riparian breeders and nest in various riparian habitat types, such as cottonwood-willow woodlands and mule fat scrub. Since most nest sites are generally found between one to two meters off of the ground, preference is shown toward willow dominated areas of early successional habitat that supports dense shrub cover for nesting (Goldwasser 1981; Gray and Greaves 1984) and a diverse canopy for foraging, often near water in arid and semi-arid areas.

Chambers Group biologists conducted a helicopter survey of the Project Area to determine where species specific surveys (Survey Areas) should be conducted. LBVI habitat suitability was assessed during this helicopter flyover. All drainages, washes, creeks, and rivers, both permanent and temporary that intersect the Project ROWs were reviewed for the presence of suitable vegetation structure that would support LBVI: early successional riparian habitat (dense shrubs with diverse canopy) necessary for breeding. Handheld Global Positioning System (GPS) units and aerial maps were used to outline portions of the Project Area that would be surveyed during the 2010 LBVI focused surveys. In addition, to areas identified by Chambers' biologists, modeled data supplied by the CNF was also reviewed. Areas identified as LVBI "suitable" habitat within CNF models were included in the focused surveys. However, protocol-level surveys were not conducted in areas identified as "occupied" by USFWS and CNF, unless directly adjacent to larger Survey Areas within the Project Area.

Areas classified as potential LBVI habitat were further assessed during the first round of focused surveys. Potential breeding areas were determined by the specific vegetation structure requirements. Observations were recorded on standardized field data sheets. Notes were made on the general vegetation types, species observed, and the potential for LBVI to occur within the Survey Area. Plant communities and associations were determined in accordance with the categories set forth in Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf (1995). Plant nomenclature follows that of *The Jepson Manual, Higher Plants of California* (Hickman 1993).

2.2. FOCUSED SURVEYS

Potential LBVI habitat was surveyed eight times during the period of May 10 to July 28, 2010. Least Bells' vireo focused survey protocol (USFWS 2001) suggests that surveys be conducted at least 10 days apart to maximize the detection of late and early arrivals, females, territorial males, "non-vocal" birds of both sexes, and nesting pairs. However, some focused surveys were conducted less than 10 days apart during the peak of breeding season to maximize detection of all individuals within the Survey Area.

Surveys were conducted by qualified biologists familiar with LBVI songs, whisper songs, calls, scolds, and plumage characteristics of adults and juveniles. Survey periods generally occurred between dawn and 1200 hours; and extreme weather conditions, such as excessive or abnormal temperatures, wind, and precipitation, were avoided. Surveyors did not survey more than 50 hectares of habitat on any given survey day. Survey stations were selected in the best possible locations to hear or see LBVI; and precautions were taken to prevent disturbance of potential and actual habitat, birds, and nesting behavior.

All LBVI detections (e.g. vocalization, foraging behavior, nesting behavior, etc.) were recorded using hand held GPS units and photo documented when possible. Information on any LBVI individuals observed was recorded to document the numbers and locations of paired or unpaired territorial males, ages and sexes of all birds observed, and nesting behavior. In addition, numbers and locations of any brown-headed cowbirds observed were also recorded.

SECTION 3.0 – RESULTS

3.1. HABITAT ASESSMENT

Surveys for least Bell's vireo were conducted between May 10 and July 28, 2010. Surveys were conducted by the following qualified biologists familiar with LBVI songs, whisper songs, calls, scolds, and plumage characteristics of adults and juveniles, and suitable habitat: Kris Alberts, Paul Morrissey, Linette Lina, Laure Gorman, Rob Fletcher, Saraiah Skidmore, Shannan Shaffer, Leslie Buena, and Damien Edwards.

Habitat types found within the Survey Areas included: Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest, Mulefat Scrub, Coastal Sage Scrub, Chamise Chaparral, California Sycamore Woodland, and Riparian Forest with dominant overstory plant species including arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), black willow (*Salix gooddingii*), narrowleaf willow (*Salix exigua*), red willow (*Salix laevigata*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). Understory plant species included mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), stinging nettle (*Urtica dioica*), blackberry bush (*Rubus discolor*), California rose (*Rosa californica*), mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*), golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia* sp), and non-native plants including eupatory (*Ageratina adenophora*), tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.), shortpod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*). Potential LBVI habitat observed within the Survey Area was found along or in the vicinity of Lake Henshaw and upper San Luis Rey River, Loveland Reservoir, Barrett Lake, Kitchen Creek, Pine Valley Creek, Samataguma Creek and Sweetwater River near Descanso, and along various roads within the CNF. Table 1 lists the habitat types found within the Survey Area and the potential for LBVI to occur in the area.

3.2. FOCUSED SURVEYS

Surveys were conducted at least eight times for all survey segments. However, not all surveys were conducted with 10 days between each survey. Please see Table 1 for survey segment areas and Appendix C for LBVI survey data table. Representative site photographs can be found in Appendix D.

Table 1: Suitable Least Bell's Vireo Habitat Within Survey Area

Location (Map Page)	Nearby Feature	Habitat Type(s)	Suitable LBVI Habitat?	Brown-headed Cowbirds Observed	Other Sensitive Species Observed
006	CA-76, La Jolla Band of Indians Area	Black, red and arroyo willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest	Yes	multiple	Yellow warbler, southwestern willow flycatcher
007	North end of Reservation La Jolla and west of Lake Henshaw	Black, red and arroyo willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest	Yes	multiple	yellow warbler, southwestern willow flycatcher
008	West of Lake Henshaw Dam	Black, red and arroyo willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest	Yes	multiple	southwestern willow flycatcher, least Bell's vireo (early migrant), Ca spotted owl, yellow warbler
010	West Bank of Lake Henshaw	Black willow riparian forest	Yes	none	yellow warbler
039	Samagatuma Creek east of SR 79 along Old Hwy 80/Guatay	Southern coast live oak and young willow riparian forest with a grassland understory, and residential areas throughout	Yes	multiple	yellow warbler
040	Los Terrenitos Area	Southern coast live oak riparian forest with burned oaks and emergent willow and sycamore	Future	none	Belding's orange throated whiptail
046	Japatul Rd	Southern mixed chaparral	Not suitable in accessible areas, surveys not conducted on properties with no trespassing signs	none	none
047	Loveland Reservoir, Sweetwater River (center inlet), and Taylor Creek (east inlet)	Mixed-Series black, red and arroyo willow riparian forest	Yes	multiple	3 least Bell's vireo pair locations, yellow warbler, yellow breasted chat

Location (Map Page)	Nearby Feature	Habitat Type(s)	Suitable LBVI Habitat?	Brown-headed Cowbirds Observed	Other Sensitive Species Observed
051	Lawson Peak Trail, Lyons Valley Rd	Southern coast live oak, red willow and sycamore riparian forest with grassland understory	Yes	multiple	none
052	Barrett Lake	Southern coast live oak riparian forest, black and red willow, and tamarisk riparian forest	Yes	multiple	none
053	Skye Valley Rd/Forest Route 17504, east of Barrett Lake	Southern coast live oak and willow riparian forest, tamarisk woodland	Marginal (only surveyed once due to non-compliance with private landowner)	none	none
068	Mile 6.5 Bridge on Buckman Springs Road	Black willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest with mule fat, grassland, and nettle understory	Yes	multiple	yellow warbler
069	I-8 and Kitchen Creek Rd	Thin mixed willow and cottonwood riparian forest with open canopy	Marginal	none	yellow warbler
075	Traverses Old Hwy 80, I-8, and Kitchen Creek Rd	Mature black willow and cottonwood riparian forest with arroyo willow, rose, and nettle understory and open canopy	Yes	none	yellow warbler
076	Buckman Springs Rd, just north of Morena Stokes Valley Rd	Black willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest with mule fat, grassland, and nettle understory	Yes	multiple	yellow warbler
078	I-8 and Old Buckman Springs Rd	Mostly narrow southern coast live oak and cottonwood riparian forest with open canopy and willow understory	Yes, (marginal)	none	yellow warbler, Lawrence's goldfinch
079	Old Hwy 80 north of map 78, north end of map 79 excluded due to CNF Eagle Closure Area	Southern coast live oak riparian forest, arroyo willow and sycamore understory, open canopy (Eagle Closure Area to the north not surveyed)	Yes	none	yellow warbler, Lawrence's goldfinch
091	Samagatuma Creek east of SR 79 along Old Hwy 80/Guatay	Southern coast live oak riparian forest with a grassland understory and residential areas throughout	Yes	none	yellow warbler

Location (Map Page)	Nearby Feature	Habitat Type(s)	Suitable LBVI Habitat?	Brown-headed Cowbirds Observed	Other Sensitive Species Observed
094	Pine Valley Creek	Mature riparian black willow forest with mulefat and rose understory	Yes	multiple	yellow warbler, Lawrence's goldfinch, partially unarmored three-spine stickleback fish

3.2.1 San Luis Rey River - Lake Henshaw Area

Surveys were conducted within the upper San Luis Rey River and adjacent to Lake Henshaw along Transmission Line (TL) 682, downstream of the Lake Henshaw Dam. The Survey Area for TL 682 runs along State Route (SR) 76 and the San Luis Rey River and works its way around the northern end of Lake Henshaw. The Survey Areas as depicted on Maps MS-006, -007, and -008 were characterized by southern coast live oak and black, red and arroyo willow riparian forest with a dense canopy surrounded by chamise chaparral, grassland understory, and residential areas. In addition, a thin black willow riparian area along the west bank of Lake Henshaw (Map MS-010) was also suitable LBVI habitat. Sensitive species observed in the Survey Area below the Henshaw Dam included 10 locations for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) in the CNF "occupied" areas, 2 locations on private lands, in addition to yellow warblers (*Dendroica petechia*), and raptor species including red shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) and sharp shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*). The information regarding southwestern willow flycatchers will be provided in the *Southwestern Willow Flycatcher Focused Survey Report for the San Diego Gas & Electric CNF Master Services Permit Project, San Diego County, California 2010*.

Suitable LBVI habitat was found in this area. One area below the Henshaw Dam was identified as CNF "occupied" (Map MS-007 and -008). One LBVI was observed approximately 800 feet upstream of this area identified as "occupied" on May 10, 2010, singing continually during a diurnal arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*) assessment for this Project. However, no LBVI were observed or detected in this area during the formal LBVI surveys. Based on the early observation within the breeding season, this observation was believed to be a migrant LBVI. Therefore, no LBVI were observed in breeding pairs since no LBVI were observed during the eight subsequent visits. BHCO were prevalent along the Survey Area, especially the western area near the La Jolla Band of Indians campground area.

3.2.2 Descanso Area

Surveys were conducted within portions of the Samagatuma Creek along Old Highway 80 just east of SR 79 (Maps MS-039 and -091). The creek follows along the north side of Old Highway 80, on privately owned lands. Much of the northern extent of the roadside is fenced (barbed wire, chain link, and metal rail), and concrete k-rails are occasional, making access to the riparian corridor difficult throughout. Regardless, several access points to the riparian corridor were available via private driveways. This Survey Area is characterized by a southern coast live oak riparian forest with a grassland understory and

residential areas throughout. Sensitive species observed during the surveys included yellow warblers and raptor species, such as Cooper's hawk, red-tailed and red shouldered hawks. This portion of the Survey Area was considered suitable habitat for LBVI. No LBVI were observed during the surveys. BHCO were observed within the western area during the surveys.

Surveys were also conducted north of where SR-79 connects to Interstate 8 (I-8) in the Los Terrenitos area (Map MS-040). This area was characterized by southern coast live oak riparian forest with burned oaks and emergent willow and sycamore. This portion of the Survey Area was considered marginal habitat for LBVI due to the emergent vegetation recovering from a recent fire. In addition to numerous bird species (please see Appendix B for wildlife species list), a Belding's orange throated whiptail and red-tailed hawk were observed during the surveys. LBVI were not observed in this area, but surveys are recommended in this area in the future as the vegetation recovers and transitions into more suitable LBVI habitat.

3.2.3 Loveland Reservoir Area

Surveys were conducted within the Sweetwater River and Taylor Creek inlet into Loveland Reservoir along areas that intersected with TL 625. A few drainages in the area were considered not suitable for LBVI during the initial survey effort. Three small unnamed drainage features to the west of the Sweetwater River inlet (Map MS-047) and an unnamed drainage feature to the southeast of Taylor Creek along Japatul Road between Arabian Avenue and Hidden Glen Road (Map MS-046) were primarily southern coast live oak riparian forest and chamise chaparral habitats with no willows present; these areas were not considered suitable LBVI habitat. Although a small area (Map MS-046) was identified as "suitable" by the CNF models and appeared to host a few willow species, this area was inaccessible due to non-compliant land owners (several no trespassing signs with the words Sunrise depicted). However, this area was observed from the road as highly disturbed due to the land owner developments near Taylor Creek, lowering the potential for LBVI to successfully breed (if present) in the immediate area.

On June 15 and 16, two LBVI were heard singing along the Taylor Creek inlet into the Loveland Reservoir within the Survey Area along TL 625 (Map MS-047), and were observed east of the Japatul Road bridge and between TL 625 and the bridge. This area is located within the Sweetwater Authority owned lands. A small area immediately west of the bridge along Taylor Creek was identified as "occupied" by data provided by CNF. This new observation has extended the "occupied" area east of the bridge at this location. On June 24, two LBVI were observed along the Taylor Creek inlet. In addition, one LBVI was observed scolding from chaparral within 50 feet of TL 625 (middle section of Map MS-047), then it flew north to the willows along the Sweetwater River inlet. This area was not identified as "occupied" by data provided by CNF. On June 28, the two pairs were observed and heard along the Taylor Creek inlet near the centerline of the Survey Area along TL 625 and were observed east and west of the Japatul Road Bridge. The male to the northeast was highly vocal but was observed with a female in the area. The male of the southwestern pair was less vocal and was observed paired. Along the Sweetwater inlet, one LBVI was observed and heard singing only periodically.

On July 13, 2010, the two pairs of LBVI near TL 625 were observed on the east and west sides of the Japatul Road Bridge over Taylor Creek. Both males in each pair were observed singing. One pair was situated approximately 100 feet on the east side of the bridge to 200 feet to the west side of the bridge. The female was observed in the area, and the male was observed making territorial calls and scolding. The other pair was situated approximately 150 feet to the west of the first pair. This pair scolded at the biologist, suggesting the presence of a potential nest in the large willows on site, near GPS point

32.79371°N -116.74352°W (NAD 83, decimal degrees). In addition, a fledgling was observed 30 feet to the west near the scolding adults, which also suggests that this was a successful and active nesting site. Four BHCO were observed in this area.

At the Sweetwater River inlet just to the west of the Taylor Creek inlet, two vireo scolds were heard. In previous surveys, only one vireo was heard and observed from the mature willow riparian area up to the top of the hill in the upland laurel sumac (*Malosma* sp.). On July 27, only the southern LBVI pair along the Taylor Creek inlet was observed and heard scolding, the northern pair was not heard. The pair along the Sweetwater Creek inlet was observed and heard singing during the surveys. One LBVI was also observed during CNF focused plant surveys conducted by Chambers Group on August 11. The LBVI was observed in riparian habitat near Japatul Road approximately 170 feet southwest of the Japatul Road Bridge.

Other sensitive species observed included yellow warblers and yellow breasted chat (*Icteria virens*). In addition, red-tailed hawks and many BHCO were observed. Based on the result of the surveys, three LBVI pair locations exist within the Loveland Reservoir inlets along Sweetwater River and Taylor Creek.

3.2.4 Barrett Lake Area

Surveys were conducted within Wilson Creek along TL 625 and Barrett Lake Road. The Survey Areas (Map MS-051) were located within southern coast live oak riparian forest with a dense canopy and non-native grassy fields with scattered stands of poison oak on the City of San Diego owned lands. Several California chorus frogs (*Pseudacris cadaverina*) and Pacific chorus frogs (*Pseudacris regilla*) were detected. Sensitive species observed included southwestern pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata pallida*) observed in a tributary to the east along Barrett Lake Road, a patch-nosed snake (*Salvadora hexalepis*) along Skye Valley Road, and a Cooper's hawk. This area was considered suitable LBVI habitat, and CNF models also identified the southern area along Barrett Lake Road off Lyon's Valley Road as "suitable" habitat for LBVI. However, no LBVI were detected during the surveys at these locations.

Surveys were conducted in the Pine Valley Creek inlet and unnamed creeks that empty into the northern area of Barrett Lake along Skye Valley Road as depicted on Map MS-052 and portions of Map MS-053. Survey Areas were located within a series of five small unnamed tributaries to the Cottonwood Creek basin area, just north of Barrett Lake and downstream of Camp Barrett Juvenile Detention Facility. Drainages were surveyed from west to east along Skye Valley Road. Although five drainage features exist in this area, three small unnamed drainages at the eastern end of the Survey Area (Map MS-053) were located on private property and were not visited after the initial assessment due to non-compliance from the land owner. Only two drainage features to the west of the property were surveyed (Map MS-052). The first Survey Area was located immediately downstream of the Camp Barrett Juvenile Detention Facility on City of San Diego owned lands. This area was southern coast live oak and black and red willow riparian forest with sparse tamarisk, as well as mule fat and annual grassland in the understory. The second Survey Area immediately to the east was located on City and CNF lands along the southern end of Pine Valley Creek in the northeastern reach of the Barrett Lake inlet and does not maintain a typical riparian corridor throughout its extent. This area along the drainage on the east side (Map MS-052) was characterized as a lacustrine community (lake) with red willow and tamarisk along the lake edge and an annual grassland understory. These two Survey Areas were considered suitable LBVI habitat, and CNF "suitable" habitat models exist in the Pine Valley Creek inlet. A small area to the north of the Project Area upstream along Pine Valley Creek was identified as "occupied"; however, no LBVI were observed or detected within the Survey Areas during the survey efforts. In addition, no LBVI

were observed or detected during arroyo toad surveys within the same areas. Multiple BHCO were observed during the surveys at these locations.

3.2.5 Kitchen Creek Areas

Surveys were conducted in three main areas. The first Survey Area was located along Buckman Springs Road south of Old Highway 80 along Kitchen Creek on CNF lands and surveyed in one linear stretch (Maps MS-068 and -076). This area was suitable LBVI habitat with black willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest with mule fat, grassland, and nettle understory. The second Survey Area was along Kitchen Creek between Old Highway 80 and I-8 approximately 1.65 miles upstream on private lands (as depicted on Map MS-075). This suitable LBVI habitat area was mature black willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest with mule fat, grassland, nettle, and California rose understory. The third Survey Area was approximately 1. 5 miles to the east of Survey Area one located on private lands along Kitchen Creek near I-8 (Map MS-069). Habitat in this location was thin willow and cottonwood riparian forest with an open canopy. This area was considered marginal LBVI habitat due to the developments and grazed areas. Yellow warblers and red-tailed and red shouldered hawks were observed during the surveys. Multiple BHCO were also observed in these Survey Areas. No LBVI were detected during the survey efforts.

3.2.6 Cottonwood Creek Areas

Surveys were conducted along Old Hwy 80 and I-8 just north Buckman Springs Road on private lands as depicted on Map MS-078. The southern section of this Survey Area was marginal LBVI habitat with mostly narrow southern coast live oak and cottonwood riparian forest with an open canopy and narrow willow understory. A small area identified as "occupied" by data provided by the CNF was located within the larger Survey Area. No LBVI were detected in this area. Surveys continued north along Old Hwy 80 (northern section of Map MS -078 and -079) within CNF lands. The habitat transitioned into more suitable LBVI habitat; although most areas were narrow, areas with wider southern coast live oak and cottonwood riparian forest with arroyo willow and sycamore understory were identified. The northern section of this Survey Area (Map MS-079) and continuing north along Cottonwood Creek was not surveyed due to the Glenn Cliff eagle closure area. Sensitive species including yellow warbler, Lawrence's goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*), and raptors such as red shouldered hawks were observed in the area. No LBVI were detected during the surveys.

3.2.7 Pine Valley Creek Area

Surveys were conducted along Pine Valley Creek (Map MS-094). This area was located on private lands and LBVI suitable habitat with mature black willow and cottonwood riparian forest with mule fat, nettle, and California rose understory. Much of the area along Old Hwy 80 to the south is thin and marginal LBVI habitat. More suitable habitat exists to the west near the Pine Creek Road Bridge. Sensitive species observed included yellow warblers, Lawrence's goldfinch, and partially unarmored three-spine stickleback fish (*Gasterosteus aculeatus microcephalus*). Red shouldered hawks and multiple BHCO were also detected during the surveys. LBVI were not detected at this Survey Area location.

3.2.8 Boulder Creek Road

On August 12, one LBVI was heard during CNF focused plant surveys conducted by Chambers Group. The LBVI was heard in riparian habitat off Boulder Creek road along TL 626 (Map MS-029). This area was

characterized by emergent riparian vegetation (post-fire recovery) near a private residence along an unnamed tributary just north of King Creek. Based on the area and the vocalization heard, the LBVI is assumed to be a juvenile dispersing in the area. Future surveys are recommended for this area as vegetation recovers.

SECTION 4.0 – CONCLUSIONS

Least Bell's vireos were observed in suitable habitat in or near the Loveland Reservoir in CNF "occupied" areas and areas immediately adjacent. The LBVI were located within Sweetwater Authority owned lands. Based on the result of the surveys, three LBVI pair locations exist within the Loveland Reservoir inlets, one within the Sweetwater River inlet and two within the Taylor Creek inlet. One pair west of the Japatul Road Bridge appeared to have an active nesting site. In addition, an individual LBVI was observed 170 feet southwest of the Japatul Road Bridge during focused plant surveys in August. This LBVI could be a juvenile that dispersed from the LBVI territories observed during the focused LBVI surveys. One LBVI was observed in the upper San Luis Rey just west of the Lake Henshaw Dam early in the breeding season during a formal arroyo toad survey conducted by Chambers Group on May 10. This individual was observed only once and was not heard or detected during the eight formal LBVI surveys conducted in the area and is therefore believed to have been an early migrant bird which ultimately did not have an active nest this season in the upper San Luis Rey area. These observations suggest that LBVI may utilize a larger area of riparian habitat outside of the breeding season. Brown-headed cowbirds were observed near the Loveland Reservoir where LBVI pairs were detected. This species is likely to be present in the area in the future and may have a negative impact on the LBVI population. In addition, BHCO were observed on several other occasions within the Survey Areas (Table 1).

Future surveys are recommended in areas that were considered marginal due to post-fire recovery, including the area near Los Terrenitos area and areas along Boulder Creek where one LBVI was heard during CNF focused plant surveys conducted by Chambers Group on August 12. No other LBVI were observed during other surveys or in other locations within the Survey Areas.

Future surveys are also recommended for the area along Old Hwy 80 and I-8 just north Buckman Springs Road (Map MS-078 and -079). A small area within the Survey Area was identified as "occupied". Although no LBVI were detected in this area or adjacent to this area during the survey efforts, there is a moderate to high potential for LBVI to occur since this area has historically hosted LBVI.

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APPENDIX A – SURVEY AREA MAPS

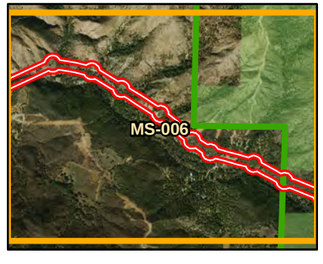
Least Bell's Vireo Survey Sites

LEGEND

- Survey Area
- LBVI Identified
- Suitable Habitat
- Not Suitable Habitat
- Marginal Suitable Habitat
- Future Suitable Habitat
- CNF Occupied Habitat
- Cleveland National Forest Congressional District Boundary
- CNF Managed Lands

0 410 820 1,230

Feet



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Least Bell's Vireo Survey Sites

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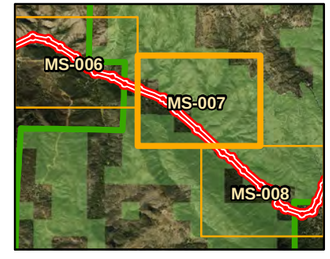

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Least Bell's Vireo Survey Sites

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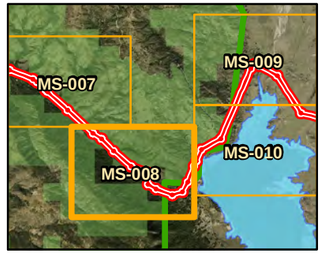

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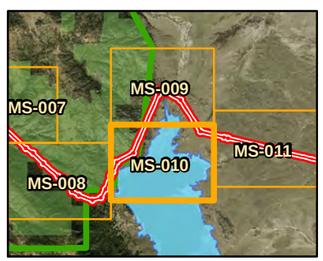

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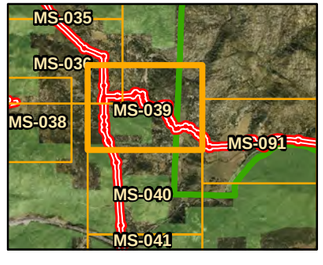

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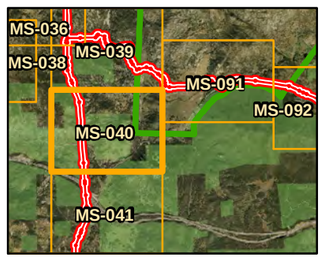

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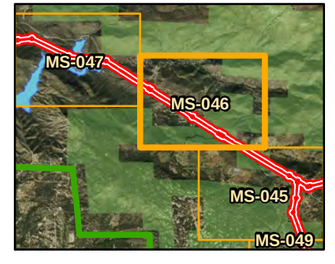

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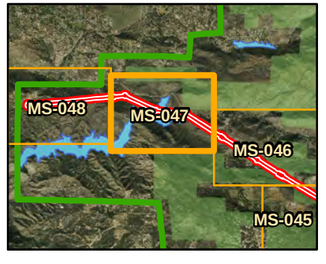

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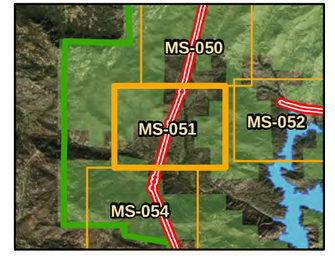

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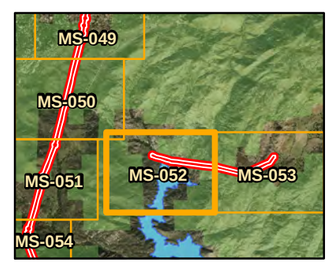

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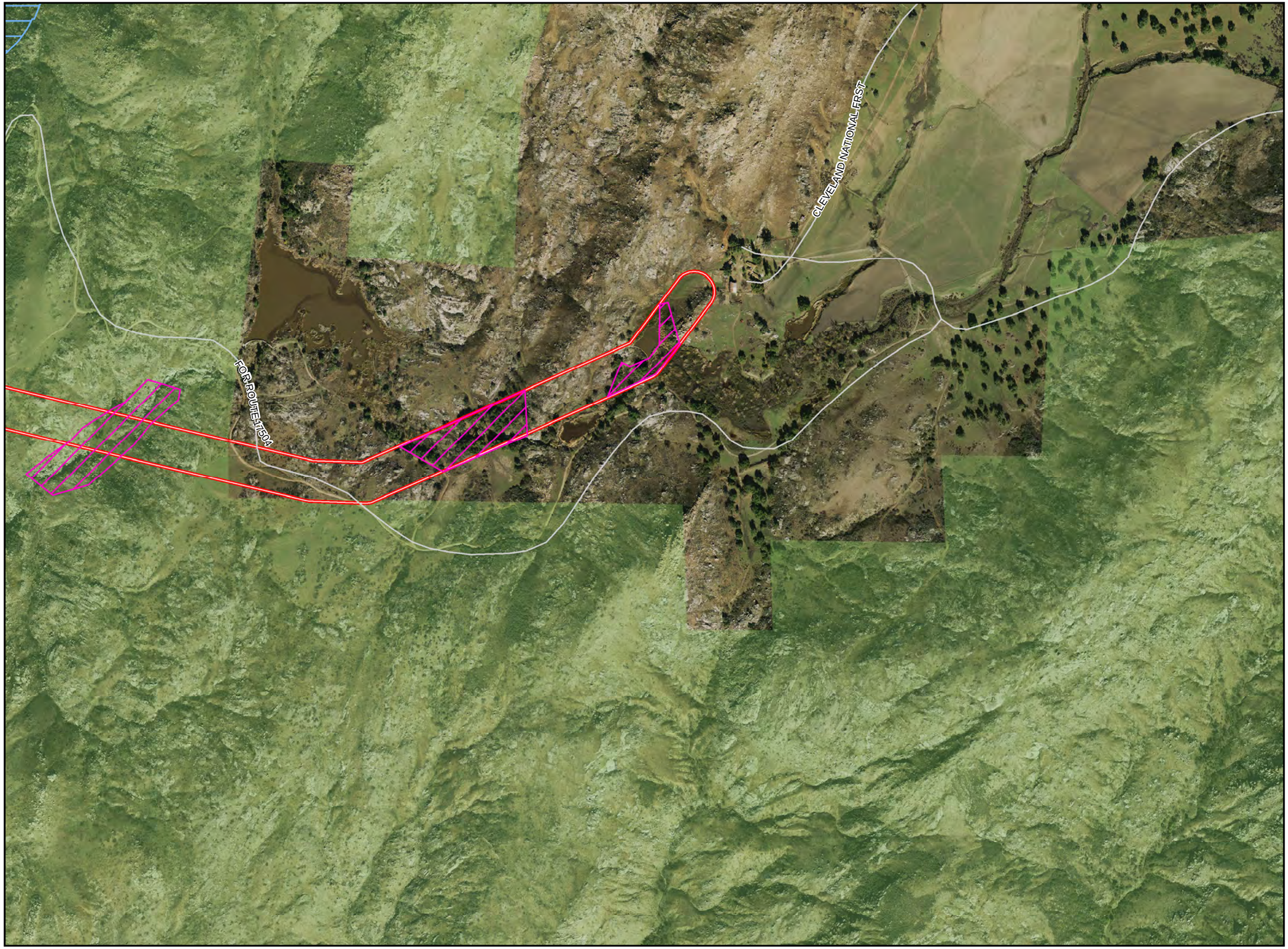

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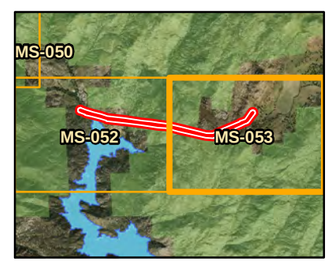

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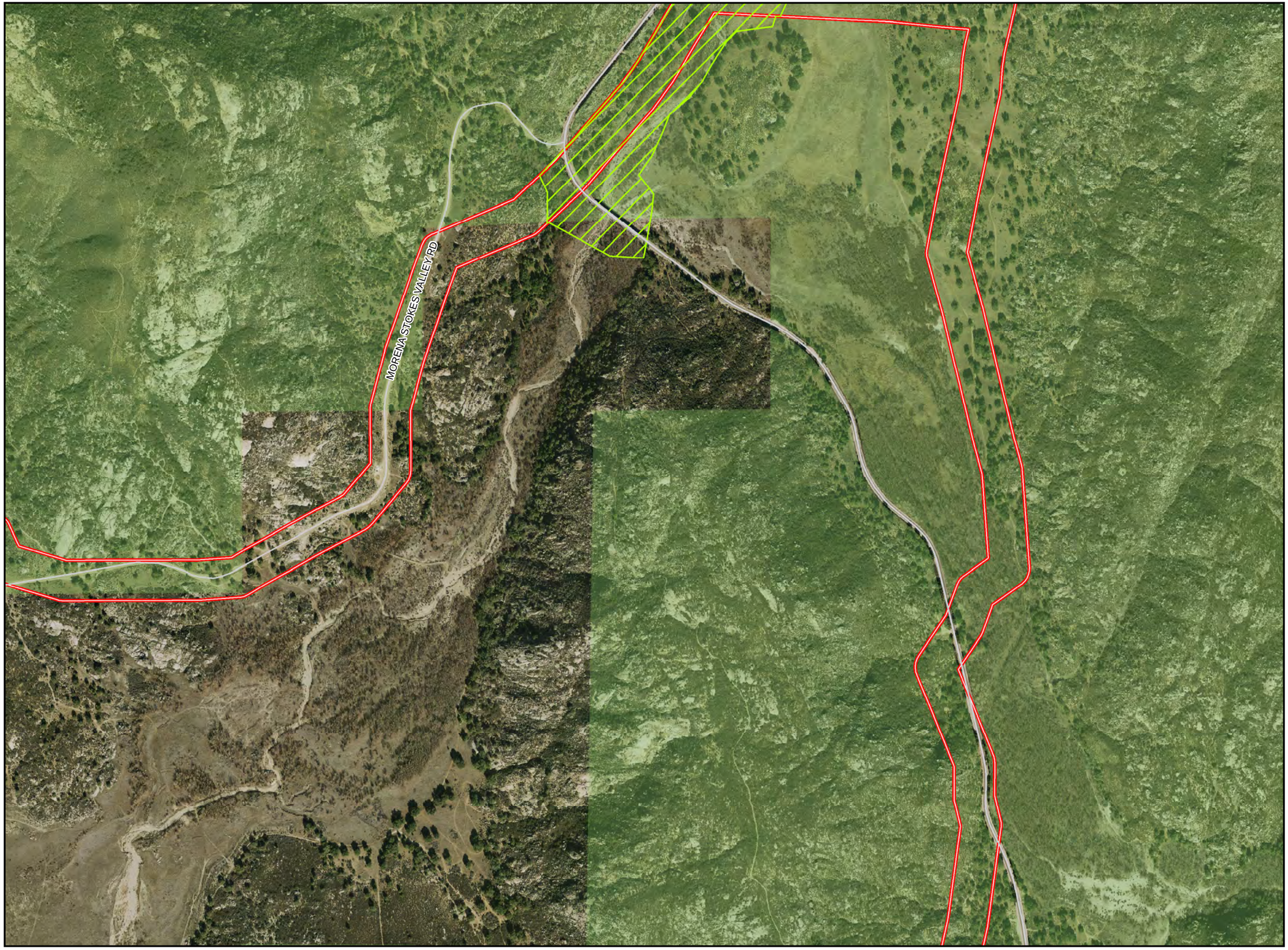

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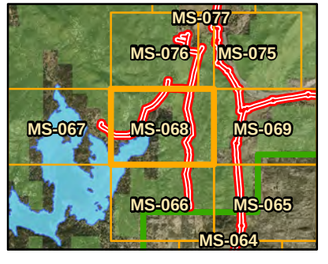

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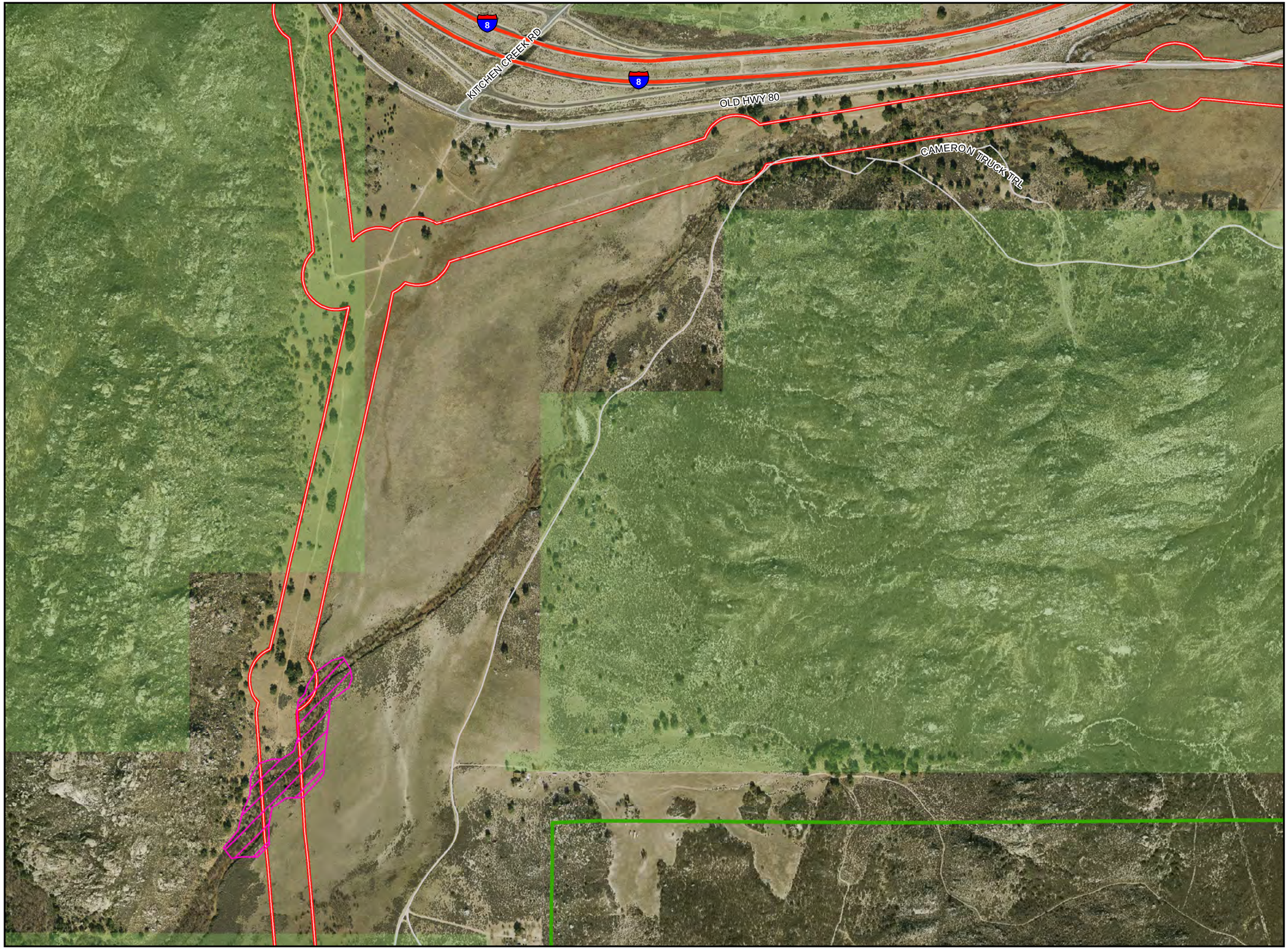

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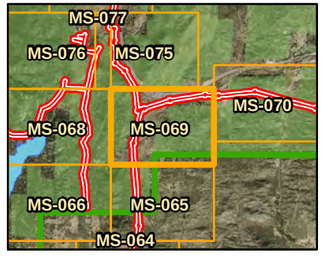

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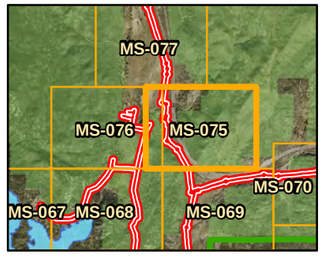

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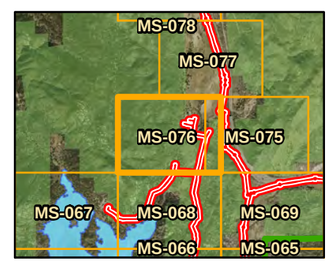

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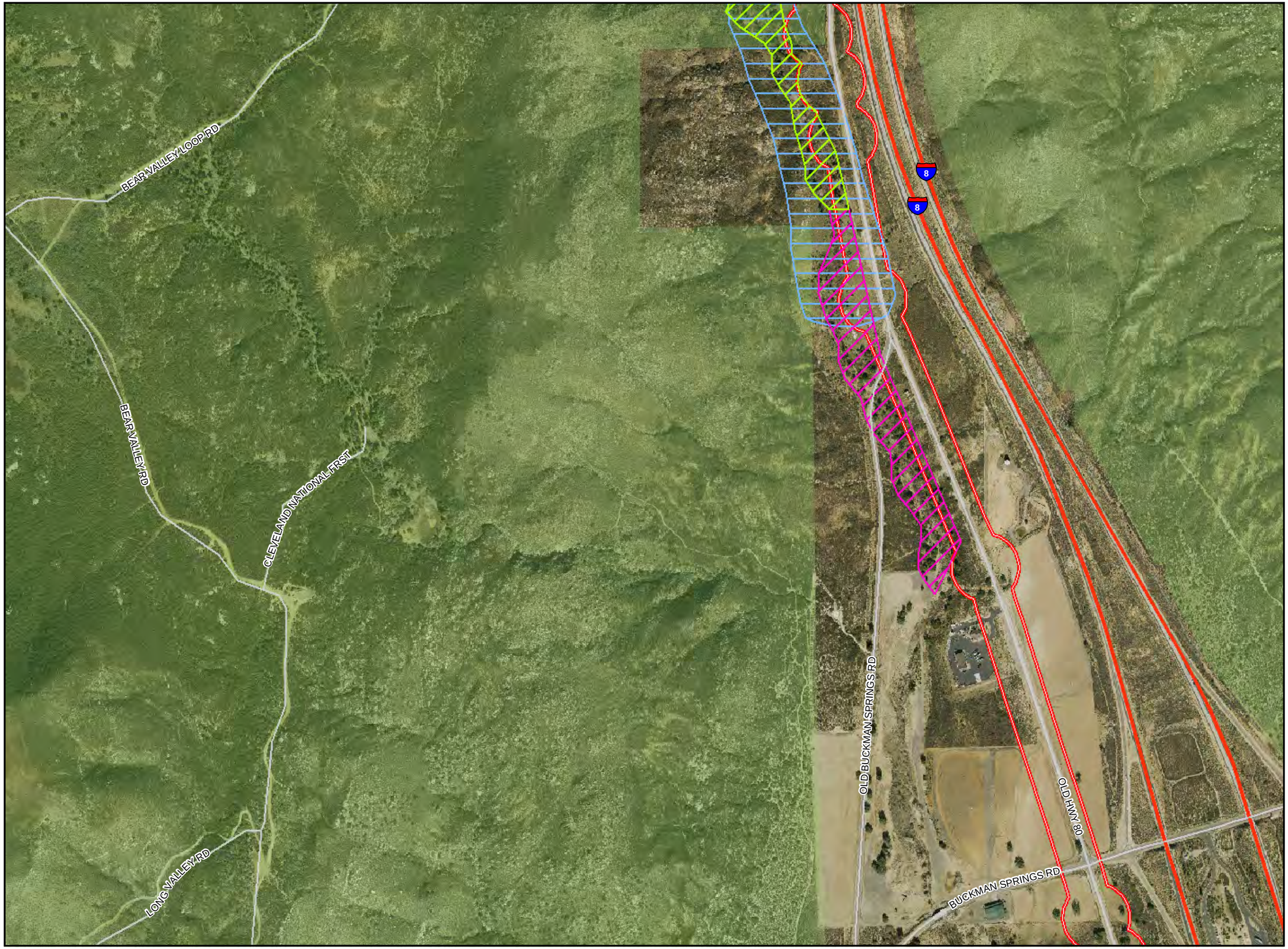

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0 400 800 1,200

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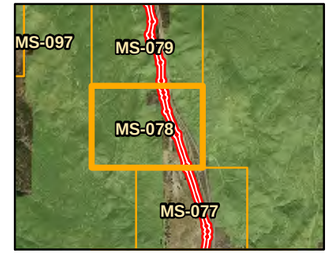

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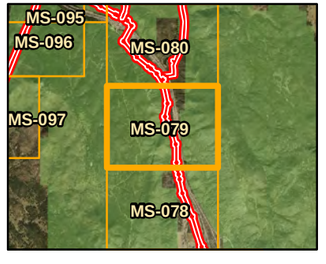

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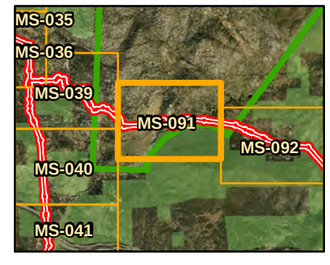

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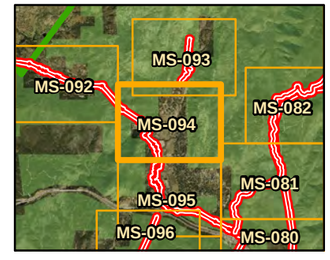

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MS-094

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APPENDIX B – WILDLIFE SPECIES LIST

APPENDIX B – WILDLIFE SPECIES LIST

Scientific Name	Common Name
CLASS ACTINOPTERYGII	**RAY-FINNED FISHES**
CENTRARCHIDAE	**SUNFISH**
Micropterus salmoides	largemouth bass
Lepomis macrochirus	bluegill
CYPRINIDAE	**CYPRINIDS**
Cyprinus carpio	common carp
GASTEROSTEIDAE	stickleback fish
Gasterosteus aculeatus microcephalus	partially armored threespine stickleback
POECILIIDAE	**MOSQUITOFISH, MOLLIES & SWORDTAILS**
Gambusia affinis	mosquito fish
CLASS AMPHIBIA	**AMPHIBIANS**
BUFONIDAE	**TRUE TOADS**
Anaxyrus californicus	arroyo toad
Anaxyrus boreas halophilus	California toad
HYLIDEA	**TREE FROGS AND THEIR ALLIES**
Pseudacris regilla	Pacific chorus frog
Pseudacris cadaverina	California chorus frog
PELOBATIDAE	**SPADEFOOT TOADS AND RELATIVES**
Spea hammondii	western spadefoot
RANIDAE	**TRUE FROGS**
Rana catesbeiana	bullfrog
BUFONIDAE	**TRUE TOADS**
Anaxyrus californicus	arroyo toad
CLASS AVES	**BIRDS**
ACCIPITRIDAE	**HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES**
Accipiter striatus	sharp-shinned hawk
Accipiter cooperii	Cooper's Hawk
Buteo jamaicensis	red-tailed hawk
Buteo lineatus	red-shouldered hawk
AEGITHALIDAE	**LONG-TAILED TITS & BUSHTITS**
Psaltriparus minimus	bushtit
ANATIDAE	**DABBLING DUCKS**
Anas platyrhynchos	mallard
ARDEIDAE	**HERONS & EGRETS**
Ardea alba	great egret
CARDINALIDAE	**CARDINALS**
Pheucticus melanocephalus	black-headed grosbeak
CATHARIDAE	**NEW WORLD VULTURES**
Cathartes aura	turkey vulture

Scientific Name	Common Name
CHARADRIIDAE	**PLOVERS**
Charadrius vociferus	killdeer
COLUMBIDAE	**PIGEONS & DOVES**
Zenaida macroura	mourning dove
CORVIDAE	**JAYS, MAGPIES, & CROWS**
Aphelocoma californica	western scrub jay
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American crow
Corvus corax	common raven
Cyanocitta stelleri	Steller's jay
EMBERIZIDAE	**EMBERIZIDS**
Junco hyemalis	dark-eyed junco (Oregon var.)
Melospiza melodia	song sparrow
Pipilo crissalis	California towhee
Pipilo maculatus	spotted towhee
FRINGILLIDAE	**FINCHES**
Carduelis lawrencei	Lawrence's goldfinch
Carpodacus purpureus	purple finch
Spinus psaltria	lesser goldfinch
Spinus tristis	American goldfinch
HIRUNDINIDAE	**SWALLOWS**
Tachycineta bicolor	tree swallow
Tachycineta thalassina	violet-green swallow
ICTERIDAE	**BLACKBIRDS & ORIOLES**
Agelaius phoeniceus	red-winged blackbird
Quiscalus mexicanus	great-tailed grackle
Icterus bullockii	Bullock's oriole
Molothrus ater	brown-headed cowbird
MIMIDAE	**MOCKINGBIRDS & THRASHERS**
Mimus polyglottos	northern mockingbird
Toxostoma redivivum	California Thrasher
ODONTOPHORIDAE	**NEW WORLD QUAIL**
Callipepla californica	California quail
PARIDAE	**TITS & CHICKADEES**
Baeolophus inornatus	oak titmouse
PARULIDAE	**NEW WORLD WARBLERS**
Dendroica coronata	yellow-rumped warbler
Dendroica townsendi	Townsend's Warbler
Dendroica petechia	yellow warbler
Geothlypis trichas	common yellowthroat
Vermivora celata	orange-crowned warbler

Scientific Name	Common Name
Icteria virens	yellow-breasted chat
PHASIANIDAE	**UPLAND GAME BIRDS**
Meleagris gallopavo	wild turkey
PICIDAE	**WOODPECKERS**
Colaptes auratus	northern flicker
Melanerpes formicivorus	acorn woodpecker
Picoides nuttallii	Nuttall's woodpecker
PODICIPEDIDAE	**GREBES**
Aechmophorus clarkii	Clark's grebe
Aechmophorus occidentalis	western grebe
PTILOGONATIDAE	**SILKY FLYCATCHERS**
Phainopepla nitens	phainopepla
SITTIDAE	**NUTHATCH**
Sitta carolinensis	white-breasted nuthatch
STURNIDAE	**STARLINGS**
Sturnus vulgaris	European starling
TIMALIIDAE	**BABBLERS**
Chamaea fasciata	wrentit
TROCHILIDAE	**HUMMINGBIRDS**
Calypte anna	Anna's hummingbird
Calypte costae	Costa's hummingbird
Selasphorus sasin	Allen's Hummingbird
TROGLODYTIDAE	**WRENS**
Thryomanes bewickii	Bewick's wren
Troglodytes aedon	house wren
TURDIDAE	**THRUSHES**
Sialia mexicana	western bluebird
TYRANNIDAE	**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS**
Contopus sordidulus	Western wood-pewee
Empidonax difficilis	Pacific-slope flycatcher
Empidonax traillii	willow flycatcher
Empidonax traillii extimus	southwestern willow flycatcher
Myiarchus cinerascens	ash-throated flycatcher
Sayornis nigricans	black phoebe
Tyrannus verticalis	western kingbird
VIREONIDAE	**VIREOS**
Vireo bellii pusillus	least Bell's vireo
Vireo huttoni	Hutton's vireo
CLASS MAMMALIA	**MAMMALS**
CANIDAE	**DOGS**

Scientific Name	Common Name
Canis latrans	coyote (tracks, scat)
CERVIDAE	**DEER**
Odocoileus hemionus	mule deer
CRICETIDAE	WOODRATS & PACKRATS
	unid. woodrats (dens)
HERTEROMYIDEA	**KANGAROO RATS**
Dipodomys sp.	kangaroo rat
LEPORIDAE	**HARES & RABBITS**
Lepus californicus	black-tailed jackrabbit
Sylvilagus auduboni	cottontail
MEPHITIDAE	**SKUNKS**
Mephitis mephitis	striped skunk
PROCYONIDAE	**RACOONS**
Procyon lotor	raccoon (tracks)
SCIURIDAE	**SQUIRRELS**
Spermophilus beecheyi	California ground squirrel
CLASS REPTILIA	**REPTILES**
CLASS REPTILIA	**REPTILES**
COLUBRIDAE	**COLUBRIDS**
Diadophis punctatus similis	San Diego ring-necked snake
Lampropeltis getula californiae	California kingsnake
Masticophis lateralis lateralis	California striped racer
Salvadora hexalepis virgultea	patch-nosed snake
PHRYNOSOMATIDAE	**ZEBRA-TAILED, EARLESS, FRINGE-TOED, SPINY, TREE, SIDE-BLOTCHED, AND HORNED LIZARD**
Sceloporus occidentalis occidentalis	northwestern fence lizard
Sceloporus orcutti	granite spiny lizard
Uta stansburiana	common side-blotched lizard
VIPERIDAE	**VIPERS**
Crotalus mitchellii pyrrhus	southwestern speckled rattlesnake
Crotalus helleri	southern Pacific rattlesnake

CHAMBERS GROUP

APPENDIX C – LEAST BELL'S VIREO HABITAT SURVEY RESULTS

APPENDIX C – LEAST BELL'S VIREO HABITAT SURVEY RESULTS

Survey Pass	Date and Time (hours)	Location (Map Page)	LBVI Observed	Weather Conditions	Surveyors
Pass 1	May 10 0630 - 1115	51, 52, 53 at Loveland Reservoir and Barrett Lake	0	Temp: 57 – 77°F Winds: 0-2 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Shannan Shaffer and Leslie Buena
Pass 1	May 11 0720 - 1148	6, 7, 8, 10, 68, 69, 78, 79	0	Temp: 53 – 63°F Winds: 1-7 mph Cloud cover: 85 - 90% with slight drizzle	Kris Alberts, Paul Morrissey, and Damien Edwards
Pass 1	May 12 0730 - 1215	75, 78, 94	0	Temp: 54 – 68°F Winds: 1-7 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Paul Morrissey and Damien Edwards
Pass 2: 51, 52 Pass 1: 47	May 20	47, 51, 52	0	NA	Shannan Shaffer
Pass 2	May 24 0700 - 1155	68, 69, 78, 79	0	Temp: 37 – 71°F Winds: 1-5 mph Cloud cover: 0 – 3%	Paul Morrissey
Pass 2	May 25 0700 – 1220	6, 7, 8, 10, 75, 79, 94	0	Temp: 39 – 71°F Winds: 1-5 mph Cloud cover: 0 – 2%	Kris Alberts, Paul Morrissey and Saraiah Skidmore
Pass 3	June 2 0705 – 1230	6, 7, 8, 10	0	Temp: 56 – 80°F Winds: 1-5 mph Cloud cover: 20 - 30%	Kris Alberts and Laurie Gorman
Pass 3	June 3 0630 – 1115	68, 69, 78, 79	0	Temp: 56 – 82°F Winds: 0 - 2 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Paul Morrissey
Pass 3	June 4 0645 - 1100	75, 78, 79, 94	0	Temp: 62 – 79°F Winds: 0 - 6 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Paul Morrissey and Laurie Gorman
Pass 4*	June 10 0745 - 1255	68, 69, 75, 78, 79, 94; (Pass 1: 39, 40, 91)	0	Temp: 63 – 73°F Winds: 0 - 4 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Kris Alberts and Paul Morrissey
Pass 4	June 11 0620 – 1300	6, 7, 8, 10	0	Temp: 53 – 66°F Winds: 2 - 10 mph Cloud cover: 0 - 75% no precipitation	Kris Alberts, Laurie Gorman
Pass 2: 47 Pass 3: 51, 52	June 11 0620 – 1110	47, 51, 52	0	Winds: 2 – 3 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Shannan Shaffer

Survey Pass	Date and Time (hours)	Location (Map Page)	LBVI Observed	Weather Conditions	Surveyors
Pass 3: 47*; Pass 4: 51, 51*, 52*, 68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79	June 15 0614 - 1300	47, 51, 52, 68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79	2 LBVI singing between survey area and bridge and north of bridge	Temp: 64 – 74°F Winds: 0-2 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Kris Alberts
Pass 2: 39, 40, 91; Pass 4: 47*; Pass 4: 76, 79, 79, 94	June 16 0642 - 1213	39, 40, 47, 76, 79, 91, 94	LBVI heard singing under power lines at Map 47	Temp: 60 – 77°F Winds: 0-3 mph Cloud cover: 0 - 15%	Kris Alberts
Pass 5	June 23 0655 - 1240	6, 7, 8, 10	0	Temp: 63 – 87°F Winds: 0 - 10 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Kris Alberts, Linette Lina
Pass 3: 39, 40, 91; Pass 5: 47; Pass 5: 51, 52	June 24 0618 - 1150	39, 40, 47, 51, 52, 91	1 LBVI at the large mid-inlet creek scolding from chaparral within 50 feet of poles. 2 LBVI to south of bridge at the east inlet. Flew to North side. Another LBVI on south side of bridge observed singing under power lines (from 0652-0712 hours)	Temp: 64 – 87°F Winds: 0 - 3 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Kris Alberts
Pass 5	June 25 0640 - 1050	68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79, 94	0	Temp: 64 – 78°F Winds: 1 - 3 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Kris Alberts and Paul Morrissey
Pass 4*: 39, 40, 91; Pass 6*: 47, 51, 52	June 28 0650 - 1125	39, 40, 47, 51, 52, 91	2 LBVI at bridge and under ROW, the male highly vocal. The LBVI from ROW and south is paired and less vocal. Observed from 0832-0918 hours.	Temp: 66 – 79°F Winds: 0 - 3 mph Cloud cover: 0 - 100% with no precipitation	Kris Alberts
Pass 6*	June 29 0642 - 1055	68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79, 94	0	Temp: 62 – 82°F Winds: 0 – 6 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Kris Alberts

Survey Pass	Date and Time (hours)	Location (Map Page)	LBVI Observed	Weather Conditions	Surveyors
Pass 6	July 6 0645 - 1242	6, 7, 8, 10	0	Temp: 57 – 77°F Winds: 2 – 6 mph Cloud cover: 0 %	Kris Alberts, Paul Morrissey, Linette Lina, Laurie Gorman, Rob Fletcher
Pass 5: 39, 40, 91; Pass 7: 47, 51, 52	July 13 0620-1220	39, 40, 47, 51, 52, 91	5 LBVI - (Map 47) Two pairs with males singing, one juvenile scolding at the Taylor Creek inlet. Two fledgling scolding to the west at the Sweetwater inlet area. Nested successfully, observed from 0620-0715.		Kris Alberts and Paul Morrissey
Pass 7: 68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79, 94; Pass 6*: 39, 40, 91	July 14 0609 - 1109	68, 69, 75, 76, 78, 79, 91, 94	0	Temp: 67 – 87°F Winds: 0 – 2 mph Cloud cover: 10 %	Kris Alberts
Pass 7	July 16 0540 - 1210	6, 7, 8, 10	0	Temp: 69 – 93°F Winds: 1 – 5 mph Cloud cover: 0 - 2%	Kris Alberts, Laurie Gorman, Linette Lina, Rob Fletcher
Pass 7*: 39, 40, 91	July 20 0630 - 1115	39, 40, 91	0	Temp: 66 – 81°F Winds: 1 – 2 mph Cloud cover: 10 - 15%	Paul Morrissey
Pass 8	July 26 0550 - 1055	6, 7, 8, 10	0	Temp: 64 – 80°F Winds: 1 – 3 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Kris Alberts, Laurie Gorman, Linette Lina, Rob Fletcher
Pass 8: 39, 40; Pass 8: 47 51, 52	July 27 0634 - 1120	39, 40, 47, 51, 52	LBVI heard singing from 0641 – 0649 at the mid inlet; 2 LBVI to the south scolded twice, north pair not observed	Temp: 58 – 80°F Winds: 1 – 3 mph Cloud cover: 0%	Kris Alberts

Survey Pass	Date and Time (hours)	Location (Map Page)	LBVI Observed	Weather Conditions	Surveyors
Pass 8: 68, 69, 75, 76, 79, 91, 94 Pass 9*: 39, 40	July 28 0641 - 1121	68, 69, 75, 76, 79, 91, 94	0	Temp: 60 – 81°F Winds: 0 – 3 mph Cloud cover: 0 - 10%	Kris Alberts

*survey conducted less than 10 days apart
Note: (Map 47) On August 11, 2010, one male was heard signing at NAD83 32 degrees 47.619 minutes, 116 degrees 44.586 minutes.

APPENDIX D – SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

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	**Photo 1.** This photo was taken facing east along the southern end of Pine Valley Creek in the northeastern reach of the Barrett Lake inlet within Cottonwood Creek Basin on Map 052. This photo depicts suitable LBVI habitat along the banks of Barrett Lake.
	**Photo 2.** This photo was taken facing northeast on Map 047 looking towards the Taylor Creek inlet from the Loveland Reservoir. Three pairs of LBVI were found in this area, including two pairs in the riparian habitat by the bridge in the background.
	**Photo 3.** This photo was taken facing southeast depicting suitable LBVI habitat along Buckman Springs Road (Map 068). Habitat included black willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest with mule fat, grassland, and nettle understory.

	**Photo 4.** This photo was taken along Kitchen Creek near I-8 on Map 069. Habitat in this location was identified as thin willow and cottonwood riparian forest with an open canopy. This area was considered marginal LBVI habitat.
	**Photo 5.** This photo was taken along the upper San Luis Rey River along TL 682 on Map 008. Habitat in this location was identified as black, red and arroyo willow and southern coast live oak riparian forest. Southwestern willow flycatchers were observed this year in this known SWFL "occupied" location. A migrant LBVI was observed downstream of this location.
	**Photo 6.** This photo was taken along the northern survey area of Map 079, identified as marginal LBVI habitat within Cottonwood Creek with mostly narrow southern coast live oak and cottonwood riparian forest with an open canopy and narrow willow understory.

	**Photo 7.** This photo was taken at the western end of Map 094 near the Pine Creek Road Bridge, an area identified as LBVI suitable habitat with mature black willow and cottonwood riparian forest with mule fat, nettle, and California rose understory.
	**Photo 8.** This photo was taken along Map 091, within portions of the Samagatuma Creek along Old Highway 80 just east of SR 79. Much of the northern extent of the roadside is fenced, making access to the riparian corridor difficult throughout. This survey area was characterized by a southern coast live oak riparian forest with a grassland understory and residential areas throughout.
	**Photo 9.** This photo was taken on Map 040 in the Los Terrenitos area. This area was characterized by southern coast live oak riparian forest with burned oaks and emergent willow and sycamore, and was identified as marginal habitat for LBVI due to the emergent vegetation recovering from a recent fire.

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APPENDIX E – SIGNATURE PAGE

LEAST BELL'S VIREO
(*Vireo bellii pusillus)*
FOCUSED SURVEY REPORT
FOR THE SAN DIEGO GAS & ELECTRIC
CLEVELAND NATIONAL FOREST
MASTER SERVICES PERMIT PROJECT
SAN DIEGO COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Prepared for:

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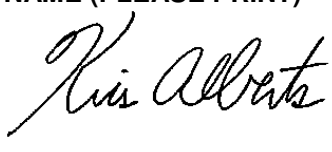
February 2011

The undersigned certify this report to be a complete and accurate account of the findings and conclusions of focused surveys for least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus)* conducted during the spring of year 2010, within suitable LBVI habitat on the San Diego Gas & Electric Cleveland National Forest Master Services Permit Project, San Diego County, California.

Kris Alberts
NAME (PLEASE PRINT)



March 8, 2011
SIGNATURE **DATE**

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ADDRESS