Nest Buffer Reduction Request #2

To: Billie Blanchard, California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC)

Cc: Jeff Thomas (Panorama), Sheila Hoyer (Panorama)

Subject: Mitigation Measure (MM) Biology-7 Nest Buffer Reduction Request

From: Amy Trexler, Qualified Biologist

Date: 04/06/2017

In accordance with MM Biology-7 of the Sycamore-Penasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project (Project) San Diego Gas & Electric (SDG&E) is requesting nesting bird buffer reductions to accommodate scheduled potholing, sawcutting, and trenching activities associated with construction of the underground alignment of the Project. If granted, the duration of these buffer reductions would be effective from 4/06/2017 until ground disturbing activities are complete within the reduced buffer or the nest becomes inactive, whichever occurs sooner.

A total of 5 common bird species nests have been identified between STA 68 + 00 and STA 75+00 as identified in the Nest Survey Report dated April 5, 2017. Four of these nests were previously identified in the Nest Survey Report dated March 30, 2017. The attached table contains the following information for each recorded nest SDG&E is requesting a buffer reduction for:

- Species
- Location
- Pre-existing conditions present on site
- Description of the work to be conducted within the reduced buffer
- Size and expected duration of proposed buffer reduction
- Reason for the buffer reduction

Also, please find attached a map showing the location of the documented nest, the standard nest buffer limits identified in MM Biology-7, and the reduced buffer limits being recommended by the Qualified Biologist.

If SDG&E does not receive a response to the request for a buffer reduction within 1 business day, SDG&E will proceed with the buffer reduction recommended by the Qualified Biologist until the CPUC's independent biologist can review and approve or deny the buffer reduction request. If SDG&E proceeds with a reduced buffer, nests will be monitored on a daily basis during construction activities. If the buffer request is denied, or the Qualified Biologist determines that the nesting birds(s) are not tolerant of project activity, the specified buffer(s) listed in MM Bio-7 will be implemented.

If you have any questions regarding the details of this request, please contact the Qualified Biologist making the buffer reduction request at the contact information below:

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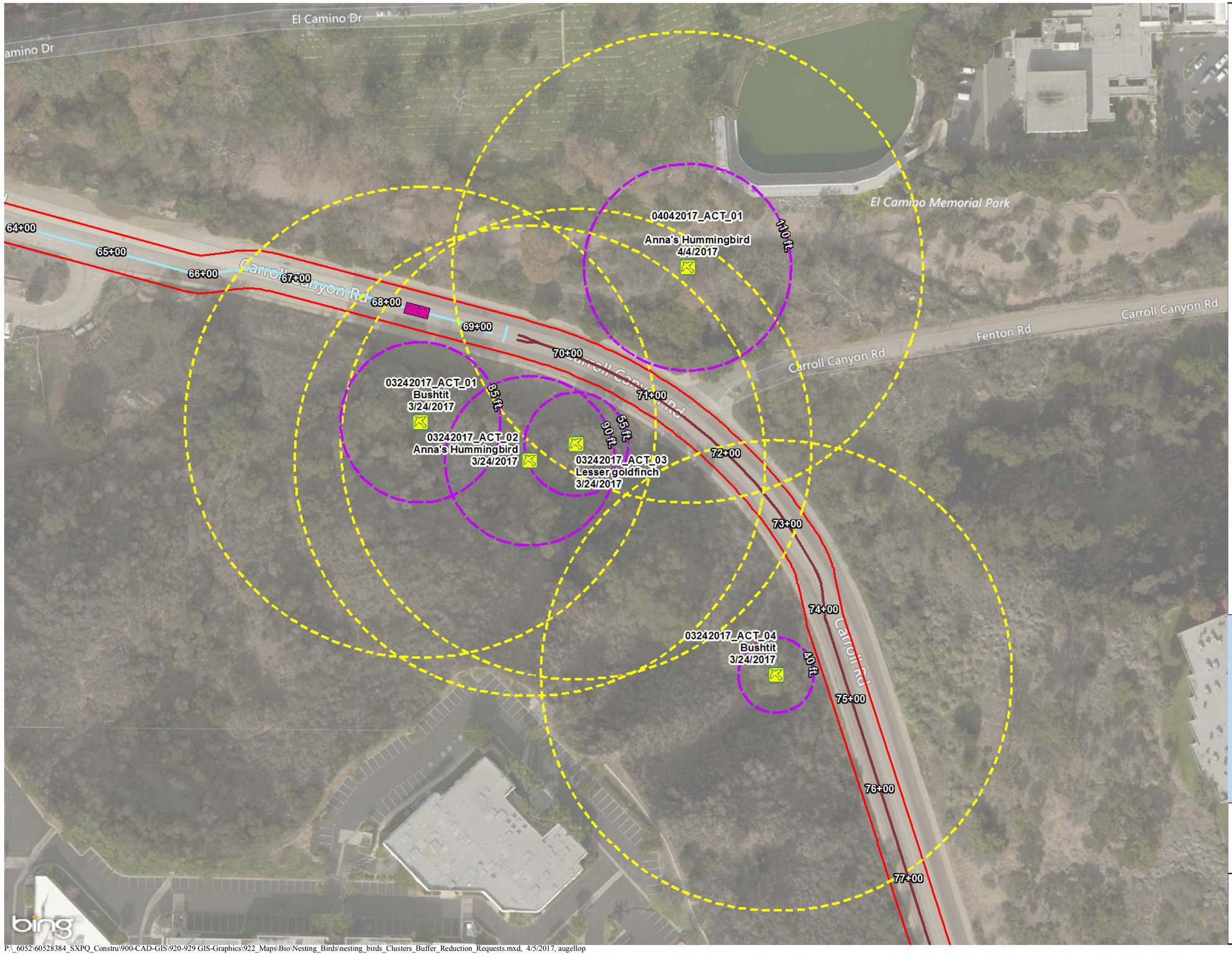
Sycamore to Penasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Bird Buffer Reduction Request
Date: 04/05/2017

Nest Information									Buffer Reduction Request						
Nest ID[1]	**Species[2]**	**Listing Status[3]**	**Nest Stage[4]**	**Observation Notes[5]**	**Latitude (decimal degrees)**	**Longitude (decimal degrees)**	**Estimated Fledge Date**	**Nesting Bird Behavior**	**Standard Buffer**	**Reduced Buffer Necessary for Construction**	**Pre-Existing Conditions Onsite**	**Reason for Buffer Reduction/Biologist Recommendation**	**Duration of Buffer Reduction**	**Work Activity Description**	**Monitoring Approach**
03242017_ACT_01	Bushtit (BUSH)	Common	Building, Incubating	**3/24-** A flock of 3 birds (potentially nesting bird and helpers) were foraging in area of nest; one bird visited and tended to the nest. **3/29-** No activity observed, possibly incubating. **4/04-** Adult observed entering the nest.	32.89202	-117.18609	Unknown Standard incubation is 12-13 days; standard nestling period is 18 days	Possibly incubating nest. Appear tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	85 feet	Nest is located south of Carroll Canyon road within open space. Nest is near busy, active roadway.	Nest is near busy, active roadway. Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (4/2/17 - 8/31/17), or until nest is no longer active	Proposed construction activities include pot-holing and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Work requiring road closure may occur at night. Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	Nests will be monitored in the morning within 4 hours of sunrise immediately following construction from a distance using binoculars or a spotting scope whenever possible to minimize nest disturbance. If nest cannot be adequately monitored from a distance, the CPUC qualified biologists (qualified biologist) will approach the nest to gather nest data. When approaching a nest, the qualified biologist will first determine whether there are any potential nest predators nearby, such as raptors, corvids, jays, and brown-headed cowbirds. If no predators are observed, the qualified biologist will approach the nest and collect nest data. The qualified biologist will observe the nest for a sufficient amount of time based on their professional judgment (usually between 30-60 minutes if an adult is not immediately observed on the nest) to determine nest status and will record the nest status (e.g., nest building, incubating, nestlings, etc.), and observe avian behavior (carrying food, agitation or distress, etc.). If the qualified biologist is unable to make a determination on nest status and has not detected the nest pair in the vicinity of the nest,the qualified biologist will continue to monitor the nest daily for a period of 5 days. If the qualified biologist is not able to determine nest status after 5 days due to lack of activity at the nest (including the observation of fledgling groups in the vicinity of the nest), the biologist will determine the nest is no longer active. The qualified biologist will gather appropriate nest data to allow proper documentation of nest stage and recommended buffer effectiveness. The qualified biologist will make assessments based on their experience, professional judgment and the following considerations: incubation period and nestling period (i.e., fledge date) of species, geographic location, existing ambient conditions (human activity such as traffic, jet noise, rail noise, etc.), type and extent of construction within nest buffer, visibility of construction to nest, and other environmental factors such as the species' site-specific level of habituation to disturbance. The nest buffers will be increased or reinstated if there are signs of significant disturbance and risk of project-induced nest abandonment consistent with MM Biology-7.
03242017_ACT_02	Anna's Hummingbird (ANHU)	Common	Incubating	**3/21**-Female observed sitting in nest. **3/24**-Female observed sitting in nest. **3/29**- No activity observed **4/04-** No activity observed	32.89191	-117.18571	Unknown Standard incubation is 16 days; standard nestling period is 20 days	No activity observed in last 2 surveys. May be inactive or incubating nest. Appear tolerant of human	250 feet	90 feet	Nest is located south of Carroll Canyon road within open space. Nest is near busy, active roadway.	Nest is near busy, active roadway. Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (4/2/17 - 8/31/17), or until nest is no longer active	Proposed construction activities include pot-holing and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Work requiring road closure may occur at night. Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	
03242017_ACT_03	Lesser goldfinch (LEGO)	Common	Building	**3/21**-Female observed building nest while male stayed close by. **3/29**-Male and female observed in area, and nest is approximately 85% complete. **4/04** - Could not locate during survey.	32.89196	-117.18555	Unknown Standard incubation is 12-13 days; standard nestling period is 12-14 days	Building nest. Appear tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	55 feet	Nest is located south of Carroll Canyon road within open space. Nest is near busy, active roadway.	Nest is near busy, active roadway. Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (4/2/17 - 8/31/17), or until nest is no longer active	Proposed construction activities include pot-holing and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Work requiring road closure may occur at night. Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	
03242017_ACT_04	Bushtit (BUSH)	Common	Building, Incubating	**3/21**- Pair observed foraging in area of nest; nest is new with fresh, green vegetation. **3/24-** Pair observed foraging in area of nest; nest is new with fresh, green vegetation. **3/29-** No activity observed, possibly incubating. **4/04-** No activity observed	32.89129	-117.18485	Unknown Standard incubation is 12-13 days; standard nestling period is 18 days	Possibly incubating nest. Appear tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	40 feet	Nest is located south of Carroll Canyon road within open space. Nest is near busy, active roadway.	Nest is near busy, active roadway. Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (4/2/17 - 8/31/17), or until nest is no longer active	Nighttime Construction. Proposed construction activities include pot-holing and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	
04042017_ACT01	Anna's Hummingbird	Common	Incubating	**4/04-** Female observed sitting in nest	32.89248	117.18517	Unknown Standard incubation is 12-13 days; standard nestling period is 18 days	Incubating nest. Appear tolerant of human activity.	250 feet	110 feet	Nest is located north of Carroll Canyon road and is a drainage area below grade..	location, and noise effects would be negligible.Birds have been exposed to high levels of noise and human activity. Recommendation is to approve buffer with daily monitoring for duration of construction.	For entire duration of proposed work (4/2/17 - 8/31/17), or until nest is no longer active	Proposed construction activities include pot-holing and excavation and trenching for installation of new underground 230kV line and vaults. Buffer reduction is being requested to allow construction to remain on schedule for completion date per CPUC permit.	



Legend

Bird Nests

Tracking

Active

Bird Nest Buffers

250 ft

Reduced Bird Nest Buffers

Proposed Reduced Buffer

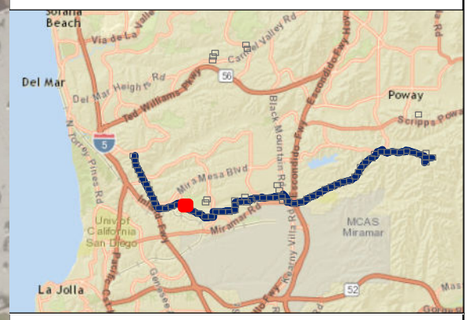
Temporary Work Space

Underground Vault

Segment B

Segment 5, Section 4

Segment 5, Section 5



100 50 0 100 Feet

1:1,200 1 inch = 100 feet

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230kV Transmission Line Project Nesting Birds Survey Buffer Reduction Request

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