MEMORANDUM

TO: Robert Fletcher, San Diego Gas & Electric

FROM: Melissa Busby, Busby Biological Services, Inc.

DATE: October 28, 2014

RE: Response to Data Request 103: Provide GIS data for Quino checkerspot butterfly (QCB, *Euphydryas editha quino*) localities and Mapped Areas.

The California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has identified data needs for the proposed San Diego Gas & Electric Company (SDG&E) Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project (Proposed Project), Application No. 14-04-011. Data Request 103 states the following:

> ***"Provide* [Geographic Information Systems (GIS)] *data for Quino checkerspot butterfly (QCB,* Euphydryas editha quino*) localities and Mapped Areas.***
>
> *The* [Proponent's Environmental Assessment (PEA)] *states, 'The QCB has a moderate potential to occur within the* [Biological Survey Area (BSA)]*. Host plants and suitable habitat is present within the BSA and known localities exist just outside of the BSA; however, the Proposed Project is located outside of the SDG&E Quino Mapped Area.'*
>
> *Provide GIS data that identify where QCB localities occur 'just outside the BSA' (or any within the BSA). Please also provide the most current data for the QCB Mapped Area in the BSA. According to SDG&E's QCB Low-Effect* [Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP)]*,* the [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)] *will update the Mapped Areas annually and provide the information to SDG&E.*
>
> *Finally, provide a Project-specific habitat assessment for the QCB for the BSA regardless of whether or not it is within the previously mentioned 'Mapped Areas.' The assessment needs to include GIS data and mapping of potential QCB habitat. USFWS will require protocol surveys for QCB in suitable habitat areas prior to construction."*

To respond to this data request, Busby Biological Services, Inc. (BBS) has:

- Provided GIS data that identify where QCB localities occur within and/or adjacent to the BSA
- Provided the most current data for the SDG&E QCB Mapped Area in the BSA
- Addressed the request to provide a Project-specific habitat assessment for QCB for the BSA and the comment that USFWS will require protocol surveys for QCB

This memorandum provides a description of the methods and results used to respond to this data request. The information in this memorandum is intended to supplement the information provided in the in the Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 Kilovolt Transmission Line Project Biological Technical Report (BTR) prepared by BBS (March 2014). For additional information pertaining to the biological resources associated with the Proposed Project, please refer to the BTR.

METHODS

Historical occurrence databases (e.g., California Natural Diversity Database [CNDDB], SanGIS, SDG&E's internal Sunrise Powerlink) were searched to identify historical records for QCB within the BSA as well as within a 5-mile buffer of the BSA. For each historical QCB data point, an approximately 0.6-mile (1-kilometer) buffer was placed around the occurrence to delineate areas of occupied habitat. The distance between these areas and the BSA were analyzed to assess the potential for the Proposed Project to impact the species.

In addition, a map was created using GIS layers for the BSA in relation to the most current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas to illustrate that the BSA currently lies entirely outside of the most current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas.

Finally, the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP was reviewed to better respond to the additional requests and comments presented in this data request.

RESULTS

Figure 1 shows the historical QCB occurrences that have been reported within an approximately 5-mile buffer of the BSA. Figure 1 also shows the approximately 0.6-mile (1-kilometer) buffer that was included around each of these historical QCB locations to designate occupied habitat and to assess the potential for the Proposed Project to impact QCB. Based on the results of the database search, no occupied habitat occurs within or immediately adjacent to the BSA, and the closest known location of QCB was recorded approximately 1.6 miles (2.5 kilometers) east of the Sycamore Substation. Even with the approximately 0.6-mile (1-kilometer) buffer around this point, the occupied habitat is located more than 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) from the BSA.

Figure 1 also shows the current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas within the vicinity of the BSA. This figure illustrates that the BSA is entirely outside of the current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas, and the edge of the closest SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas are approximately 2 miles from the BSA.

DISCUSSION

This section provides a discussion of the historical QCB occurrences and the current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas, and it also provides a summary of the purpose of the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP.

Historical QCB Occurrences

As shown on Figure 1, the closest QCB occurrence within the vicinity of the Proposed Project was reported approximately 1.6 miles (2.5 kilometers) east of the BSA, and the edge of the closest occupied QCB habitat that has been reported within the vicinity of the Proposed Project is located over 1 mile (1.6 kilometers) from the BSA.

SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas

Figure 1 also shows that the BSA is entirely outside of the current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas and that the closest SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas are located approximately 2 miles from the BSA. The SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas are provided to SDG&E by USFWS. Because the BSA does not occur within or even adjacent to the SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas, no further assessments, mapping, or protocol survey efforts would be required under the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP, which is discussed in further detail, below.

SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP

The SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP was established in an agreement between SDG&E and the USFWS in 2007 with the implementation of the *Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Issuance of an Incidental Take Permit Under Section 10(a)(1)(B) of the Endangered Species Act for the Federally Endangered Quino Checkerspot Butterfly for the San Diego Gas and Electric Company*.

The Federal Fish and Wildlife Permit (TE162969-0) issued by the USFWS (effective January 22, 2008) states under Section G, that, "…the Permittee and its designated agents are authorized by the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (Act), to incidentally take the federally endangered Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*, QCB), the extent that take would otherwise be prohibited under Section 9 of the Act and its implementing regulation, or pursuant to a rule promulgated under section 4(d) of the Act. Take must be incidental to otherwise lawfully covered activities associated with SDG&E's operations, maintenance and **new facility construction**, as identified more specifically in the HCP and as conditioned herein."

The SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP states in the Executive Summary, first paragraph, "…incidental take is anticipated to occur as a result of ongoing operations and maintenance activities **as well as construction of new facilities** in San Diego, Riverside, and Orange Counties, California." The SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP further states in the Executive Summary, second paragraph, "SDG&E proposes to mitigate the effects to QCB by fully implementing the Habitat Conservation Plan (Plan or HCP). The Plan emphasizes the protection of habitat through impact avoidance and use of operational protocols designed to avoid or minimize impacts to QCB."

In addition, the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP states on pages 11 and 12 in Section 3.2 Actions to Minimize Impacts, that, "The following operational protocols are proposed by SDG&E to avoid and minimize impacts to QCB from SDG&E activities occurring in potential QCB habitat, also referred to in this Plan as "Mapped Areas" (refer to Figure 3 of the HCP)." The Plan lists Operational Protocols intended to avoid and minimize impacts to QCB for Operations and Maintenance Activities, Emergency Periodic Non-Deferrable Activities, and New Construction when these actions take place within an SDG&E "Mapped Area".

Section 3.3 Actions to Mitigate Impacts, page 15, states, "If an SDG&E activity is within a QCB Mapped Area, SDG&E has the option of either considering the entire area as Suitable QCB Habitat, or SDG&E may conduct additional habitat assessments to determine whether the impact area actually includes Suitable QCB Habitat (as described in the Operational Protocols above, and in the Flowcharts depicted in Figures 4, 5, and 6 of the HCP)." **If the proposed work is located outside of a "Mapped Area", SDG&E is not required to conduct habitat assessments, protocol level surveys, or provide mitigation for potential impacts to QCB.**

CONCLUSION

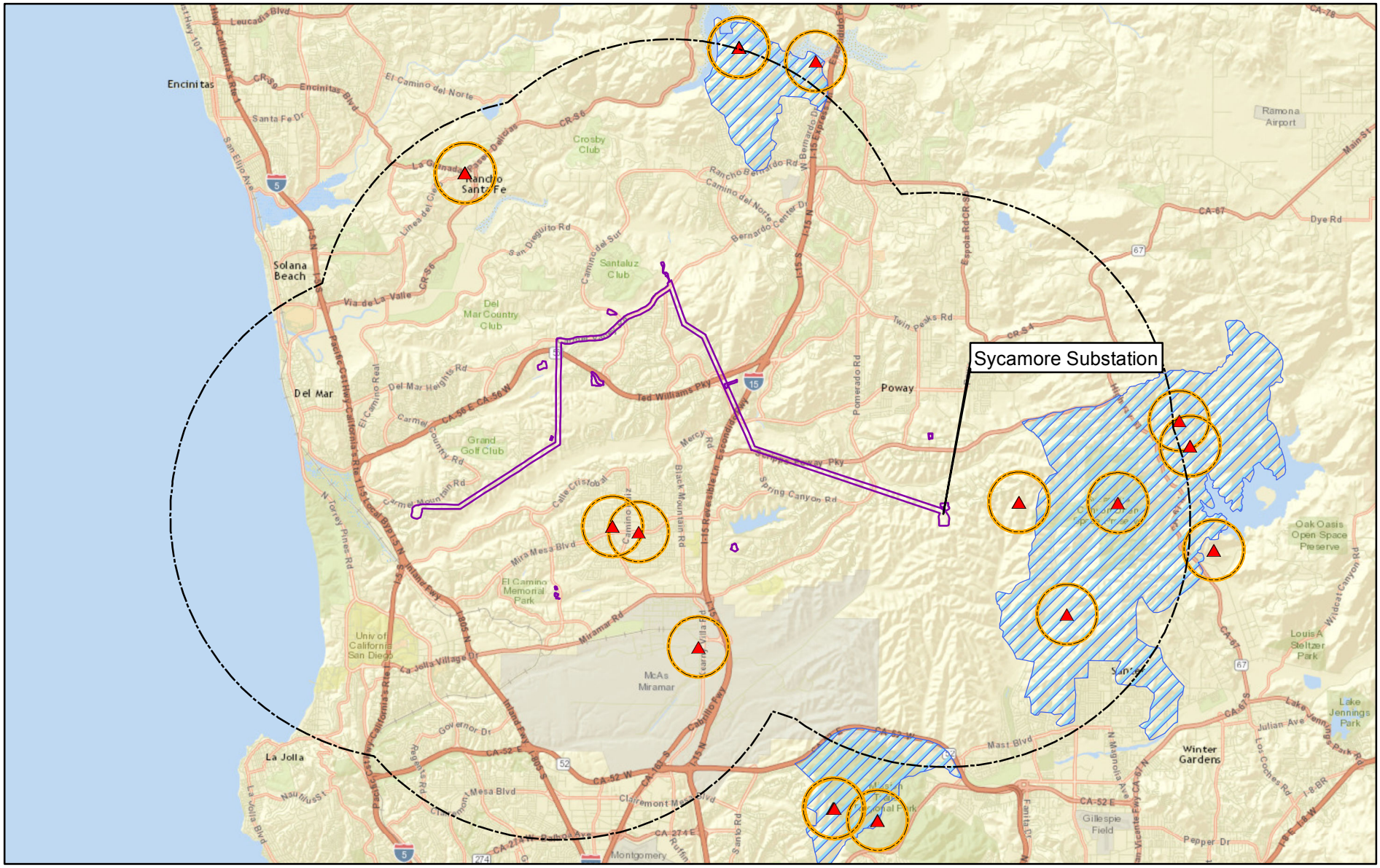
QCB has a moderate potential to occur within the BSA because historical records within the vicinity of the BSA exist for this species; however, limited suitable habitat occurs within the BSA, and the BSA is entirely outside of the SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas.

As described above, according to the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP, the Proposed Project would not require habitat assessments, protocol level surveys, or mitigation because it is located entirely outside of current SDG&E QCB Mapped Areas.

Furthermore, the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP provides SDG&E with a take permit for the incidental take of QCB during otherwise lawfully covered activities associated with SDG&E's operations, maintenance, and new facility construction. The SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP emphasizes the protection of habitat through impact avoidance and use of

operational protocols designed to avoid or minimize impacts to QCB. Incidental take of QCB is mitigated by fully implementing the SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP.

The SDG&E Low-Effect QCB HCP was prepared in consultation with the USFWS to fulfill the requirements of section 10(1)(2)(A) of the Endangered Species Act. Therefore, SDG&E is not required to conduct any further assessments, mapping, or protocol survey efforts for the Proposed Project per the existing agreement.



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BSA

QCB Historical Occurrence

5-mile (8-kilometer) Buffer Around BSA

0.6-mile (1-kilometer) Buffer Around QCB Occurrence

SDG&E QCB HCP Mapped Areas

0 2 4 6 Miles

Sycamore to Peñasquitos 230 kV Transmission Line Project

Historical QCB Locations and Mapped Areas

Figure 1

SDGE A Sempra Energy utility

Sources: CNDDB October 2014 Database, CA Dept Fish and Wildlife; Sources: Esri, HERE, DeLorme, USGS, Intermap, increment P Corp., NRCAN, Esri Japan, METI, Esri China (Hong Kong), Esri (Thailand), TomTom, MapmyIndia, © OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community