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- Attachment 4.4–C: SDG&E Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

4.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the Proposed Project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated	Less-than-Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or United States (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service?			✓	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			✓	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?			✓	
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?				✓
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?				✓
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?				✓

4.4.0 Introduction

This section describes the biological resources in the vicinity of San Diego Gas & Electric Company's (SDG&E's) Tie Line 649 Wood-to-Steel Replacement Project (Proposed Project) and identifies potential impacts to habitats and species that could result from the construction, operation, and maintenance of the Proposed Project. Potential impacts to riparian communities, jurisdictional wetlands and waters, and migratory wildlife corridors are also addressed. For construction of the Proposed Project, SDG&E will consult with the United States (U.S.) Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) for compliance with the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) and California Endangered Species Act (CESA). SDG&E will also implement Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions during construction, which include specific Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols identified in SDG&E's Subregional Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), which are listed in Chapter 3 – Project Description. For operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project, SDG&E will use the NCCP to comply with the FESA and CESA.

With the implementation of the Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions, impacts to biological resources from the Proposed Project will be less than significant. SDG&E's Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restriction are included in Chapter 3 – Project Description. Further detail on the NCCP appears in Section 4.4.2 Existing Conditions.

The analysis in this section is based on the Biological Technical Report (BTR) prepared by Chambers Group, Inc. (Chambers). Chambers identified biological resources that could be impacted by the Proposed Project and conducted general and focused biological resource assessments for the preparation of the BTR, which is included as Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report.

4.4.1 Methodology

Definitions

Special-Status Species

Species are considered to be special-status, and are therefore subject to analysis in this section, if they meet one or more of the following criteria:

Federal

- Plant and animal species listed as endangered (FE), threatened (FT), or candidates (FC) for listing under the FESA

State

- Plant and animal species listed as endangered, threatened, or candidates for listing under the CESA
- Animals designated as Fully Protected Species (FP), as defined in California Fish and Game Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515

- Plants that are state-listed as Rare 1
- Animal species designated as Species of Special Concern (SSC) by the CDFW
- Plant species ranked by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as having a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) of 1 or 2.2

Species that fall under the following categories are not considered special-status, but are also discussed: Former Federal Species of Concern (FCC), Birds of Conservation Concern (BCC), and California Watch List (WL) species.

Sensitive Natural Communities

Sensitive natural communities are communities that have a limited distribution and are often vulnerable to the environmental effects of projects. These communities may or may not contain special-status species or their habitats. For purposes of this assessment, sensitive natural communities are considered to be any of the following:

- Vegetation communities listed in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB);
- Communities listed in the Natural Communities List with a rarity rank of S1 (critically imperiled), S2 (imperiled), or S3 (vulnerable); or
- Tier I or Tier II vegetation communities, as defined by the City of San Diego Biology Guidelines (City of San Diego 2001).

Literature Review

The BTR includes a study of the most recent records of the CDFW CNDDDB and the CNPS Electronic Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California. Both of these databases were queried for special-status species documented from the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangles (quads) occurring within the Proposed Project area (i.e., Imperial Beach and Otay Mesa USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles), as well as the quads surrounding the Imperial Beach and Otay Mesa quads, referred to as a nine-quad search. The nine-quad search for special-status species was combined with a query of all CNDDDB and USFWS species occurrence records within five miles of the Proposed Project area.

Additional investigations into potential biological resources in the Proposed Project area included reviews of relevant scientific literature, recovery plans, and regulatory documents. These additional data-gathering efforts are incorporated into the results and analysis in the sections that follow.

Areas Surveyed

The areas surveyed (hereafter referred to as the Survey Area) consist of an approximately 150-foot buffer around the power line centerline, except as noted otherwise in the following subsections. For Proposed Project features that are more than 150 feet from the centerline, the

¹ Plants that were previously state listed as “Rare” have been re-designated as state threatened.

² Under the CEQA review process only CRPR 1 and 2 species are considered, as these are the only CNPS species that meet CEQA’s definition of “rare” or “endangered.” Impacts to List 3 and 4 species do not meet CEQA’s definition of “rare” or “endangered.”

Survey Area includes an approximately 50-foot buffer around Proposed Project facilities (e.g., staging yards and stringing sites), and an approximately 20-foot buffer on either side of Proposed Project access roads to include potential additional work space that may be required during normal construction activities. The Survey Area is depicted on Figure 4: Vegetation Communities Map within Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report.

Evaluation of Potential for Occurrence

Following the literature and database review, Chambers biologists conducted a preliminary reconnaissance-level survey of the Proposed Project area. Subsequent focused surveys were also conducted, as described in the sections that follow. Using information from the literature review and survey results, specific criteria were developed to evaluate special-status plant and wildlife species' potential for occurrence, and the criteria were applied to evaluate target plant and wildlife species. The specific criteria are described as follows:

- **Absent:** Species is restricted to habitats or environmental conditions that do not occur within the Proposed Project area, or a species was not observed within Survey Area during focused surveys.³
- **Low:** Historical records for this species do not exist within the immediate vicinity (approximately five miles) of the Proposed Project area, and/or habitats or environmental conditions needed to support the species are of poor quality.
- **Moderate:** Either a historical record exists of the species within the immediate vicinity (approximately five miles) of the Proposed Project and marginal habitat exists in the Proposed Project area; or the habitat requirements or environmental conditions associated with the species occur within the Proposed Project area, but no historical records exist within the immediate vicinity (approximately five miles) of the Proposed Project.
- **High:** Both a historical record of the species exists within the Proposed Project area or in the immediate vicinity (approximately five miles), and the habitat requirements and environmental conditions associated with the species occur within the Proposed Project area.
- **Present:** Species was detected within the Proposed Project area at the time of the survey.

Vegetation Mapping

Plant communities within the Survey Area were identified, qualitatively described, and mapped onto aerial photographs. The mapped plant communities were digitized in geographic information system (GIS), and acreages were calculated based on the vegetation types within the Survey Area. Plant communities correspond to those described by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf and

³ Perennial plant species that were not observed were considered absent from the Survey Area, while herbaceous or perennial bulb species that were not observed but cannot be confirmed absent from the Survey Area due to 2013 and 2014 drought conditions are “presumed absent.”

Evens (2009). All plant species observed within the Proposed Project area were noted during this survey, as well as the special-status plant surveys.

Special-Status Plant Surveys

Due to the presence of suitable environmental conditions for multiple special-status plant species to occur within the Survey Area, focused special-status plant surveys were conducted according to the guidelines set forth by the CNPS (2001), the CDFW (2009), and the USFWS (1996). Fifty-three special-status plant species were analyzed for potential to occur within the Survey Area, and were targeted during special-status plant surveys. Two separate surveys were conducted within the Survey Area to correspond with the blooming periods for each of the 53 special-status plant species. The special-status plant species considered included federally threatened or endangered plant species, state threatened or endangered plant species, and plant species with a CRPR of 1 or 2. In addition, any plant species with a CRPR of 3 or 4 that were found to occur within the Survey Area were documented. The first round of spring surveys commenced on April 10, 2014 and concluded on April 23, 2014. The second round of surveys commenced on June 2, 2014 and concluded on June 12, 2014. A team consisting of four to five botanists walked transects within the Survey Area spaced approximately 30 feet (nine meters) apart and visually surveyed for any signs of special-status plant species. Special-status plant species observed during the survey were documented by counting individuals or estimating numbers for larger populations, characterizing the approximate population size, and recording a Global Positioning System (GPS) location.

Areas that were designated as private property and separated by fences and signs were avoided unless specific permission to enter was granted by the landowner. In those instances, surveys were conducted with binoculars from outside the property boundary. This includes the Survey Area within the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility property between pole locations 89 and 97, where binoculars were used in place of foot surveys. Precipitation in 2014 was well below the average for San Diego County, and temperatures were above-average. Considering these drought conditions, it is possible that some of the herbaceous or perennial bulb species targeted during the focused plant surveys may not have germinated or flowered during 2014. As a result, these species cannot be confirmed absent from the Survey Area, and instead are described as “presumed absent”.

Focused Wildlife Surveys

Due to the presence of suitable environmental conditions for multiple special-status wildlife species to occur within the Survey Area, a series of focused special-status wildlife surveys was conducted in accordance with guidelines set forth by the USFWS.

Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

Habitat Assessment

A habitat assessment for Quino Checkerspot Butterfly (QCB) (*Euphydryas editha quino*) was conducted during the 2015 adult flight season to determine QCB suitable and unsuitable habitat pursuant to the Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP). The habitat assessment identified areas deemed suitable and unsuitable for QCB. Suitable QCB Habitat is defined in SDG&E’s Low-Effect HCP for QCB as:

“shrub communities, such as coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and desert scrub, with 50 percent shrub cover or less, and the potential to support dot-seed plantain [*Plantago erecta*] and other larval host plants. Areas that meet the shrub cover standard are excluded if the ground cover vegetation is disturbed and/or covered by understory vegetation to the extent that larval host plants do not grow. Areas of solid rock substrate and the surfaces of solidly compacted access roads which are not likely to support vegetation are also excluded. All areas of vernal pool complexes are included as Suitable QCB Habitat regardless of upland vegetation surrounding the vernal pools. Areas meeting the 50 percent shrub cover with QCB Host Plants, native herbaceous species, cryptobiotic crusts, or the potential to support any of these elements are included as Suitable QCB Habitat. Also included in Suitable QCB Habitat for this Plan are all native grasslands and non-native grasslands that show evidence of potential to support larval host plants. Evidence for a potential to support larval host plants included presence of native grasses, native wildflowers, and cryptobiotic crusts.”

A habitat assessment for QCB was conducted to determine QCB suitable and unsuitable habitat pursuant to the HCP. Habitat deemed unsuitable for QCB was not included in subsequent protocol level surveys.

Focused Surveys

Following the initial habitat assessment, the Survey Area was divided into three sections, with each section surveyed on separate days. Focused surveys for QCB were conducted from February 17 to May 10, 2015. A total of 12 surveys were completed for each section per the USFWS 2014 Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Survey Guidelines, resulting in 36 surveys overall.

The surveys were performed by carefully walking slowly through and adjacent to QCB-suitable habitats delineated during the initial habitat assessment while looking for QCB adults. All host plant patches were mapped using a submeter accurate Trimble GPS unit or directly onto high-resolution aerial maps for follow-up GIS translation. Host plant patches were characterized as low, moderate or high density as appropriate. Low density patches generally contained 10 or fewer individual host plants per 11 square feet (one square meter); moderate density patches generally contained between 10 and 100 individual host plants per 11 square feet (one square meter); and high density patches generally contained 100 or more individual host plants per 11 square feet (one square meter). The biologists also noted all other butterfly species present. All QCB-relevant data and butterfly species were recorded in the field notes of the biologists.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher and Coastal Cactus Wren

Surveys were conducted in April, May, and June, 2014 concurrently for two upland bird species: coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*) and coastal cactus wren (*Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus*).

Habitat Assessment

A habitat assessment for coastal California gnatcatcher and coastal cactus wren surveys was conducted during focused plant surveys conducted by Chambers botanists in April 2014 and during the initial round of focused surveys for coastal California gnatcatcher May 27 through

June 3, 2014. Subsequent surveys were conducted in all areas that contained suitable nesting habitat for these species. Surveys for coastal cactus wren were assigned to locations with mature cactus stands suitable for nesting, including large patches of coastal cholla (*Cylindropuntia proliferata*) and coastal prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*).

Focused Surveys

Focused surveys for coastal California gnatcatcher were conducted from May 27 through June 3, 2014 by Chambers biologists holding the necessary FESA Section 10(a)(1)(A) survey permit. Surveys were conducted according to the USFWS Presence/Absence Survey Guidelines (USFWS 1997). No survey protocol for coastal cactus wren exists; these surveys occurred concurrently with coastal California gnatcatcher surveys. Surveys were conducted by biologists slowly walking transects within suitable habitat in the Survey Area and using binoculars to achieve 100-percent visual coverage. All cacti encountered were visually searched for coastal cactus wren nests. Taped vocalizations were used only to initially locate individual coastal California gnatcatchers, and tapes were not used frequently or to further elicit behaviors from any previously detected individuals. Data were collected on the number, approximate age, class, sex, and color band information (if any were observed). All coastal California gnatcatcher and coastal cactus wren detections (e.g., vocalization, foraging behavior, and nesting behavior) were recorded using hand-held GPS units and documented with photographs, when possible.

Riparian Birds

Surveys were conducted in April 2014 for southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*), least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), and western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*).

Habitat Assessment

A habitat assessment was conducted during an initial round of focused surveys for least Bell's vireo to determine the appropriate locations of the 2014 riparian bird surveys. Subsequent surveys were conducted in all areas that contained riparian habitat suitable for nesting by the three target species listed previously.

Focused Surveys

USFWS-permitted biologist Travis Cooper conducted focused surveys for southwestern willow flycatcher in accordance with USFWS-approved guidelines (Sogge et al. 2010). Qualified avian biologists Philip Howard, Ian Maunsell, and Travis Cooper conducted focused surveys for least Bell's vireo in accordance with USFWS-approved guidelines (USFWS 2001). CDFW-permitted biologist Travis Cooper conducted focused surveys for western yellow-billed cuckoo in accordance with CDFW-approved guidelines (Halterman et al. 2011).

Burrowing Owl

Habitat Assessment

In accordance with survey guidelines contained in the CDFW Burrowing Owl Staff Report (CDFW 2012), an initial habitat assessment for western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia hypogeia*) was conducted on April 18, 2014. The assessment was performed by systematically

searching for potential foraging and nesting habitat within the Survey Area and within an additional buffer area to cover a total of 492 foot- (150 meter-) buffer around Proposed Project components. Suitable habitat was identified by the presence of low vegetation cover; presence of potential burrows; perch sites; and/or burrowing owl sign, such as scat, tracks, pellets, or feathers (CDFW 2012).

Focused Surveys

Following the initial habitat assessment, Chambers Group biologists conducted three focused breeding season surveys for western burrowing owl throughout the Survey Area in the spring of 2014. An additional round of four non-breeding season surveys was performed in the winter of 2014 and 2015 to evaluate presence or absence of western burrowing owl at the Main Street Staging Yard, which was added to the Proposed Project after the completion of the spring 2014 surveys. Both breeding and non-breeding season surveys were completed throughout the entire Survey Area, accounting for two complete survey passes within the Survey Area and adjacent habitat, with the exception of one round of surveys for the Main Street Staging Yard. During breeding and non-breeding season surveys, the western burrowing owl survey areas included the entire Survey Area and the additional buffer to meet the 492 foot (150-meter) survey area within suitable habitat identified during the habitat assessment. Each survey was conducted by walking transects spaced no more than 100 feet (33 meters) apart throughout Survey Area to allow for 100 percent visual ground coverage. The locations of all suitable burrows, sign, and individuals observed were recorded and mapped using GPS coordinates. Burrows were mapped as active, potential, or inactive. Active burrows were determined by presence of eggs or chicks. Potential burrows were determined by the presence of fresh pellets, prey remains, whitewash, or decorations. Inactive burrows were determined as those capable of supporting western burrowing owl but with no signs of recent use. Surveys were conducted during weather that did not adversely affect the ability to detect burrowing owl or their sign. The survey was not performed during periods of rain or dense fog, high winds (greater than 20 miles per hour [mph]), or temperatures over 90 degrees Fahrenheit (°F). Surveys were conducted within one hour before sunrise to two hours after sunrise to provide the highest detection probabilities.

Fairy Shrimp

The fairy shrimp habitat assessment was conducted concurrently with, and as an additional evaluation to, the jurisdictional delineation effort. To identify the distribution and abundance of vernal pools, which may support federally listed fairy shrimp, RECON Environmental, Inc. (RECON) identified vernal pools as part of its delineation of jurisdictional waters and mapped vernal pool boundaries. An additional survey was conducted by Chambers and RECON on November 3, 2014, after a rain event to identify areas where ponding (basins) occurred. Because fairy shrimp are known to occur within marginal habitats and may persist outside of natural vernal pool areas, the habitat assessment also took into consideration potential fairy shrimp habitat other than jurisdictional vernal pools. For the purposes of the fairy shrimp habitat assessment, all permanent or semi-permanent seasonally ponded areas (such as road ruts), which lacked fill or other evidence of regular maintenance (i.e., grading), and that were likely or observed to support water at least 1.95 inches (3 centimeters) within 24 hours following a rain event were considered suitable habitat for fairy shrimp.

The survey effort included all seasonally wetted areas, which included non-jurisdictional road ruts that may support fairy shrimp. The purpose of the survey effort was to fully document the existing conditions of potential fairy shrimp habitat within the Survey Area. The boundaries of the ponded areas and areas where there was hydrological evidence of ponding were mapped for avoidance during construction. Additional information on the methods used to evaluate vernal pools within the Survey Area is provided in the following section and in Attachment 4.9-A: Wetland Delineation Report in Section 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality. Results of the fairy shrimp habitat assessment will be used as a baseline for fairy shrimp habitat when protocol-level surveys are conducted in the summer of 2015 and winter of 2015/2016.

General Wildlife and Other Special-Status Species

During focused survey efforts, all wildlife observed and wildlife signs detected (e.g., tracks, scat, carcasses, burrows, excavations, and vocalizations) were recorded. Additional survey time was spent in those habitats most likely to be utilized by wildlife (e.g., undisturbed native habitat or wildlife trails) or in habitats with the potential to support state and/or federally listed or proposed listed species. Notes were made on the general habitat types, species observed, and the conditions of the site.

Wetlands and Waters of the United States Assessment

Potential wetland and waters locations observed within the Survey Area were evaluated using the methodology set forth in the USACE Wetlands Delineation Manual (USACE 1987) and the Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region (Version 2.0) (USACE 2008). Prior to conducting the delineation, the USGS Otay Mesa quad topographic map and historical aerial photographs were examined. Once on site, the potential wetland sites were examined to determine the presence of any of the three wetland indicators—hydrophytic vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils—or drainage channels. Soil data used in the delineation was obtained from the Natural Resource Conservation Service's (NRCS's) web soil survey (NRCS 2014). RECON delineated jurisdictional waters within the Survey Area on May 14, May 22, July 28, and November 3, 2014.

Wetland hydrology indicators included evidence of inundation, saturation, watermarks, drift lines, and sediment deposits. Vegetation was analyzed by using a dominant species wetland indicator status (USACE 2014). In ponding areas, special attention was paid to vernal pool indicator species (USACE 1997; Bauder and McMillan 1998). Suspected jurisdictional areas were evaluated for the presence of definable channels, wetland vegetation, an ordinary high water mark (OHWM), and connectivity to a traditional navigable waterway.

No soil test pits were dug due to the documented presence of the federally endangered San Diego fairy shrimp (*Branchinecta sandiegonensis*) in the Survey Area. Hydric soils in vernal pools were inferred based on soil mapping, the presence of strong hydrology indicators, and results of the soil test pits dug by AECOM (AECOM 2009).

4.4.2 Existing Conditions

The following subsections provide the regulatory context applicable to the Proposed Project, and summarize the results of the vegetation community mapping, special-status species surveys, and delineation of jurisdictional wetlands and waters.

Regulatory Background

The following federal, state, and local regulations and policies pertain to biological resources and are relevant to the Proposed Project.

Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973

The FESA protects plants and wildlife that are listed as endangered or threatened by the USFWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries). The FESA prohibits take of endangered wildlife, where "take" is defined as to "harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, collect, or attempt to engage in such conduct" (16 U.S. Code [U.S.C.] §§ 1532(19), 1538). For plants, this statute governs removing, possessing, maliciously damaging, or destroying any listed plant on federal land and removing, cutting, digging up, damaging, or destroying any listed plant on non-federal land in knowing violation of state law (16 U.S.C. § 1538(c)).

When a private project that has no federal funding and for which no federal action is required may affect a listed species, the private applicant may receive authorization for incidental take of species listed under the FESA. In these situations, Section 10 of the FESA provides for issuance of incidental take permits (ITPs) to private entities with the development of a HCP, such as SDG&E's NCCP and Low-Effect HCP for QCB. An ITP allows take of the species that is incidental to another authorized activity.

Final Rule for Revised Designation of Critical Habitat for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher

The USFWS designates critical habitat for endangered and threatened species under the FESA (16 USC § 1533 (a)(3)). Critical habitat is designated for the survival and recovery of federally listed endangered and/or threatened species. Critical habitat includes areas used for foraging, breeding, roosting, shelter, and movement or migration. In the USFWS 2003 Proposed Rule to Revise Designation of Critical Habitat for the Coastal California Gnatcatcher, the USFWS considered but did not propose as critical habitat, pursuant to sections 3(5)(A) and 4(b)(2) of the Act, reserve lands covered by three completed and approved regional/subregional HCPs (68 FR 20228). These lands include SDG&E right-of-way (ROW) within SDG&E's NCCP. Although these areas were not included in the proposed critical habitat, the USFWS sought public review and comment on these lands, provided maps to facilitate the public's ability to comment, and alerted the public that the lands could potentially be included in the final designation. Lands considered but not proposed for designation were also analyzed for potential economic impacts in the Draft Economic Analysis.

In 2007, USFWS issued the Revised Final Rule, reaffirming exclusion of lands within approved regional and subregional HCPs under section 4(b)(2) of the FESA. USFWS determined that lands owned by SDG&E and covered under SDG&E's NCCP provided greater benefits to

coastal California gnatcatcher than other areas designated as critical habitat. As such, the USFWS designation of critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher specifically excludes SDG&E ROW within SDG&E's NCCP area.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918, as amended, provides legal protection for almost all bird species occurring in, migrating through, or spending a portion of their life cycle in North America by restricting the killing, taking, collecting, and selling or purchasing of native bird species or their parts, nests, or eggs. The USFWS determined it was illegal under the MBTA to directly kill—or destroy an active nest (i.e., a nest with eggs or nestlings)—of nearly any bird species, with the exception of non-native species through the MBTA Reform Act of 2004. The intent of the MBTA is to eliminate any commercial market for migratory birds, feathers, or bird parts, especially for eagles and other birds of prey. As authorized by the MBTA, the USFWS issues permits to qualified applicants for the following types of activities:

- Falconry
- Raptor propagation
- Scientific collecting
- Special purposes, such as rehabilitation, education, migratory game bird propagation, and salvage
- Take of depredating birds, taxidermy, and waterfowl sale and disposal

The regulations governing migratory bird permits can be found in Title 50, Part 13 (General Permit Procedures) and Part 21 (Migratory Bird Permits) of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR).

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA) was established in 1940 to protect bald eagles (*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*) and golden eagles (*Aquila chrysaetos*) from any actions that may take, possess, sell, purchase, barter, offer to sell, purchase or barter, transport, export or import—at any time or any manner—any bald or golden eagle, alive or dead, or any part, nest, or egg thereof. Under the BGEPA, take of an eagle is defined as to “pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest, or disturb.” The BGEPA also extends to potential impacts to bald and golden eagles caused by human-induced environmental changes near a previously used nest when the eagles are not present. On September 11, 2009, the USFWS published a Final Eagle Permit Rule under the BGEPA authorizing limited issuance of permits to take bald and golden eagles where take is associated with, but not the purpose of, otherwise lawful activities.

Clean Water Act of 1977

The purpose of the Clean Water Act (CWA) is to “restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the nation’s waters.” Section 404 of the CWA prohibits the discharge of fill material into waters of the U.S. without a permit from the USACE. The definition of waters of the U.S. includes rivers, streams, estuaries, the territorial seas, ponds, lakes, and wetlands. Wetlands are defined as those areas “that are inundated or saturated by surface or

groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions” (33 CFR § 328.3(b)). The goals and standards of the CWA are enforced through permit provisions. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency also has authority over wetlands and may override a USACE permit.

When a project may create impacts for wetlands, the project requires a permit or a waiver. Substantial impacts to wetlands may require an Individual Permit. Projects that only minimally affect wetlands may meet the conditions of one of the existing Nationwide Permits. A Water Quality Certification or waiver pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA is required from the RWQCB for Section 404 permit actions.

Clean Water Rule

The Clean Water Rule: Definition of Waters of the United States—published in the Federal Register on June 29, 2015 and effective August 28, 2015—was enacted to ensure that waters protected under the CWA are more precisely defined and predictably determined.

State

California Endangered Species Act

The CESA, adopted in 1984, generally parallels the main provisions of the FESA. Section 2080 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibits the taking, possession, purchase, sale, and import or export of endangered, threatened, or candidate species, unless otherwise authorized by permit or in the regulations. Section 86 of the California Fish and Game Code defines take as to “hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.” CESA allows for take that is incidental to otherwise lawful projects. State lead agencies are required to consult with the CDFW to ensure that any action they undertake is not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered or threatened species or result in destruction or adverse modification of essential habitat.

Native Plant Protection Act

The Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) of 1977 (California Fish and Game Code §§ 1900-1913) was created with the intent to “preserve, protect, and enhance rare and endangered plants in this State.” The NPPA is administered by the CDFW. The California Fish and Game Commission has the authority to designate native plants as “endangered” or “rare” and to protect them from take. Rare plants protected by CDFW generally include species with California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B of the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California. In addition, sometimes CRPR 3 and 4 plants are considered rare if the population has local significance in the area and is impacted by a project. Section 1913(b) includes a specific provision to allow for the incidental removal of endangered or rare plant species, if not otherwise salvaged by CDFW, within a ROW to allow a public utility to fulfill its obligation to provide service to the public.

When the CESA was passed in 1984, it expanded on the original NPPA, enhanced legal protection for plants, and created the categories of “threatened” and “endangered” species to parallel the FESA. The CESA converted all rare animals to threatened species under the NPPA,

but did not do so for rare plants, which resulted in three listing categories for plants in California: rare, threatened, and endangered. The NPPA remains part of the California Fish and Game Code, and mitigation measures for impacts to rare plants are specified in a formal agreement between the CDFW and a project proponent.

California Environmental Quality Act

CEQA was enacted in 1970 to provide for full disclosure of environmental impacts to the public before approval of a project by a public agency. Federally or state-listed species and special-status plants and animals receive consideration under CEQA. Special-status species include wildlife SSCs, which are listed by the CDFW. Pursuant to the CEQA Guidelines Section 15380, some SSCs could be considered “rare.” Any unmitigated impacts to rare species could be considered a “significant effect on the environment” (CEQA Guidelines Section 15382). Thus, SSCs must be considered in projects subject to CEQA review.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 1600 to 1606

Sections 1601 through 1606 of the California Fish and Game Code require that a Notification of Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement Application must be submitted to the CDFW for “any activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake.” The CDFW reviews the proposed actions and, if necessary, submits to the applicant a proposal that includes measures to protect affected riparian vegetation, fish, and wildlife resources. The final proposal that is mutually agreed upon by the CDFW and applicant is the Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3513, and 3800

Sections 3503, 3513, and 3800 of the California Fish and Game Code protects against the destruction of native bird species’ nests or eggs, and it states that no birds in the orders of *Falconiformes* or *Strigiformes* (i.e., birds of prey) can be taken, possessed, or destroyed.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 3511 and 4700

According to Sections 3511 and 4700 of the California Fish and Game Code—which regulate birds and mammals, respectively—a “Fully Protected” species may not be taken or possessed, and incidental take of these species is not authorized. The State of California first began to designate species as “fully protected” prior to the creation of the CESA and the FESA. Lists of fully protected species were initially developed to provide protection to animals that were rare or faced possible extinction, including fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most fully protected species have since been listed as threatened or endangered under the CESA and/or the FESA. Nonetheless, fully protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time, except under certain circumstances, such as scientific research and live capture and relocation of such species pursuant to a permit for the protection of livestock (California Fish and Game Code § 3511).

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The intent of the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, California Water Code Section 13000 et seq., is to protect water quality and the beneficial uses of water. It applies to both surface and groundwater. Under this law, the State Water Resources Control Board develops

statewide water quality plans, and the RWQCBs develop basin plans, which identify beneficial uses, water quality objectives, and implementation plans. The RWQCBs have the primary responsibility to implement the provisions of both statewide and basin plans. Waters regulated under the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, referred to as “waters of the State,” include isolated waters that are no longer regulated by the USACE. Any person discharging, or proposing to discharge, waste to waters of the State must file a Report of Waste Discharge and obtain either waste discharge requirements (WDRs) or a waiver to WDRs before beginning the discharge.

Local

Because the California Public Utilities Commission (CPUC) has exclusive jurisdiction over the siting, design, and construction of the Proposed Project, the Proposed Project is not subject to local discretionary land use regulations. The following discussion of local regulations relating to biological resources is provided for informational purposes. As outlined in the following subsections, the construction and operation of the Proposed Project will not conflict with any environmental plans, policies, or regulations adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over local regulations related to biological resources.

County of San Diego General Plan

The County of San Diego General Plan (County of San Diego 2011) provides direction for future growth in the unincorporated areas of San Diego County and provides policies related to land use, mobility, conservation, housing, safety, and noise. The County of San Diego General Plan Land Use Element provides a framework for managing future development so that it is thoughtful of the existing character of the current communities and the sensitive natural resources within the county. Goal LU-6, within the Land Use Element, pertains to the development-environmental balance, with specific policies related to environmental sustainability, conservation-oriented design, and sustainable subdivision design and storm water management.

In addition, the Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan includes multiple goals and policies related to biological resources. Relevant policies include the following:

- **Conservation and Open Space (COS) Policy COS-1.2: Minimize Impacts.** Prohibit private development within established preserves. Minimize impacts within established preserves when the construction of public infrastructure is unavoidable.
- **COS Policy COS-1.3: Management.** Monitor, manage, and maintain the regional preserve system facilitating the survival of native species and the preservation of healthy populations of rare, threatened, or endangered species.
- **COS Policy COS-2.1: Protection, Restoration and Enhancement.** Protect and enhance natural wildlife habitat outside of preserves as development occurs according to the underlying land use designation. Limit the degradation of regionally important natural habitats within the Semi-Rural and Rural Lands regional categories, as well as within Village lands where appropriate.

- **COS Policy COS-2.2: Habitat Protection through Site Design.** Require development to be sited in the least biologically sensitive areas and minimize the loss of natural habitat through site design.

City of Chula Vista General Plan

The City of Chula Vista General Plan provides a broad framework of policies, objectives, and land use designations to guide the future development of the City of Chula Vista. The zoning ordinance further refines the General Plan and provides additional detail pertaining to allowed and conditional uses and specific development standards for the various zoning districts.

The conservation vision for the City of Chula Vista is to “preserve and enhance the unique features that give Chula Vista its character and identity, while at the same time improving our community and meeting opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.” To address this vision, the City of Chula Vista adopted the City of Chula Vista Multiple Species Conservation Plan (MSCP) Subarea Plan as part of its General Plan in May 2003. The Subarea Plan is the policy document through which the County of San Diego MSCP Subregional Plan is implemented within the City of Chula Vista’s jurisdiction.

San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Plan

Under the Natural Community Conservation Planning Act of 1991, an MSCP has been developed for southwestern San Diego County in order to protect 85 species in the area. The MSCP was approved in 1997 and is the result of a joint planning effort between the County of San Diego and the cities in the southwestern part of the county, including San Diego and Chula Vista. The County of San Diego, City of San Diego, and City of Chula Vista have each adopted subarea plans that conform to and implement the MSCP requirements, as described in the following sections.

County of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan

The County of San Diego MSCP Subarea Plan was adopted in 1997 and applies to unincorporated lands in the Survey Area. The MSCP Subarea Plan designates certain lands in the vicinity of the Proposed Project as Public Lands and Dedicated Private Open Space. These lands are part of the Otay Valley Regional Park.

City of San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan

The City of San Diego adopted its own MSCP Subarea Plan in 1997 to implement the regional MSCP. Broken down into priority areas, the MSCP Subarea Plan designates the undeveloped canyons in the Otay Mesa area as protected coastal sage scrub. New development must comply with the boundaries established within the plan, and guidelines for development include restoration of coastal sage scrub when disturbed. In addition, the MSCP Subarea Plan includes policies and design guidelines regarding utilities.

City of Chula Vista Multiple Species Conservation Program Subarea Plan

The City of Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan, which is part of the City of Chula Vista General Plan, was adopted in 2003 and provides for the conservation of covered species and their associated habitats, consistent with the regional plan. The Subarea Plan shows land uses in the

area of the Proposed Project to be designated as Development, 100 Percent Conservation Areas – Habitat Preserve, and Planned Active Recreation Area.

Additionally, the City of Chula Vista Wetlands Protection Program (WPP) is incorporated in the City of Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan. The WPP provides wetlands protection through project entitlement reviews and the associated CEQA process. This process provides an evaluation of wetlands avoidance and minimization and ensures compensatory mitigation for unavoidable impacts, thereby achieving an overall “no net loss” of wetlands. Impacts to wetlands must be avoided or minimized to the maximum extent practicable pursuant to the City of Chula Vista WPP and Section 5.2.4 WPP of the Subarea Plan. Depending on the type of wetland, the City of Chula Vista will apply a wetland mitigation ratio based on habitat type, as detailed in Table 5-6: Wetlands Mitigation Ratios of the Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan.

Otay Valley Regional Park Concept Plan

The County of San Diego and the cities of San Diego and Chula Vista adopted the Otay Valley Regional Park Concept Plan after a multi-year planning effort to coordinate an inter-jurisdictional approach to park and recreational planning for the area. The plan calls for a regional park to extend from the salt ponds on the coast, through the Otay River Valley, to Upper and Lower Otay Lakes. The goal of the Otay Valley Regional Park Concept Plan is to provide policy direction to the three jurisdictions for the acquisition of properties and development of a regional park. The plan also provides for a regional trail system to be developed along the river, as well as viewpoints, recreational areas, and two interpretive centers. Within the boundaries established by the San Diego MSCP, the plan calls for sensitive areas to be designated as Open Space/Core Preserve Areas. Efforts toward implementation of this plan have been made by the cooperating jurisdictions, including the partial development of a trail system and a large acquisition of open space by the County of San Diego. The portions of the regional trail system that have been developed are outside of the Proposed Project area, but land acquired for open space by the County of San Diego is located immediately south of the Proposed Project.

County of San Diego Tree Ordinance

Title 7, Division 1, Chapter 5 of the San Diego County Regulatory Code of Ordinances regulates the planting, trimming, and removal of trees on county-owned property and county highways.

Existing San Diego Gas & Electric Company Plans

San Diego Gas & Electric Company Subregional Natural Community Conservation Plan

Under Section 10(a) of the FESA, SDG&E developed a comprehensive multiple species and habitat NCCP in 1995 to effectively preserve and enhance covered sensitive species and their native habitats during operation, maintenance, and expansion of the electric and natural gas transmission system (16 U.S.C. § 1539). In addition, the NCCP is also a permit issued pursuant to California Fish and Game Code Section 2081⁴ with an implementation agreement with the CDFW for the management and conservation of multiple species and their associated habitats, as

⁴ California Fish and Game Code Sections 2081(b) and (c) allow the CDFW to issue an ITP for a state-listed threatened and endangered species only if specific criteria are met. 14 California Code of Regulations Section 783.4(a) and (b) provide additional information.

established according to the CESA and the state's Natural Community Conservation Planning Act.

The purpose of the NCCP is to establish and implement a long-term agreement between SDG&E, USFWS, and CDFW for the preservation and conservation of sensitive species and their habitats while allowing SDG&E to develop, install, maintain, operate, and repair its facilities as necessary to provide energy services to customers living within SDG&E's service area.

A revision to the NCCP was filed in 2004 entitled the SDG&E Subregional Plan Clarification Document, which addressed vernal pool resources located both on and off SDG&E access roads. The NCCP, as revised, identifies 69 Operational Protocols designed to avoid and minimize potential impacts to sensitive (i.e., special-status) species and their habitats, and to provide appropriate mitigation where such impacts are unavoidable, to ensure survivability and conservation of protected species and their habitat. As detailed in Attachment 4.4-B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols, these 69 protocols include provisions for personnel training, pre-activity studies, maintenance, and repair and construction of facilities, including access roads, survey work, and emergency repairs.

The Proposed Project falls within the area where SDG&E's utility operations are governed by the NCCP. Nevertheless, SDG&E will not seek incidental take coverage for temporary and permanent impacts to natural habitat resulting from construction of the Proposed Project through the NCCP, and SDG&E will not rely on the mitigation bank associated with the NCCP to fulfill the mitigation requirements for those impacts. SDG&E will instead consult with USFWS and CDFW for compliance with the FESA and CESA for construction of the Proposed Project. Compliance may require a Proposed Project-specific ITP under Section 10 of the FESA and California Fish and Game Code Section 2081. For operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project, SDG&E will use the NCCP to comply with the FESA and CESA.

Even though SDG&E will not rely on the NCCP for construction of the Proposed Project, the NCCP Operational Protocols listed in Chapter 3 – Project Description will be applied to the Proposed Project, which are detailed in Attachment 4.4-B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. SDG&E will also implement additional Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions to further minimize potential impacts to ensure the protection and conservation of listed and covered species and their habitats. Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions are detailed in Chapter 3 – Project Description.

San Diego Gas & Electric Company's Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for the Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

SDG&E prepared a Low-Effect HCP to minimize and mitigate the effects of its activities on the federally endangered QCB and to obtain incidental take authorization for QCB from the USFWS. The Low-Effect HCP is provided in Attachment 4.4-C: SDG&E Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for Quino Checkerspot Butterfly. The Low-Effect HCP addresses potential impact to the QCB from the use, maintenance, and repair of existing gas and electric facilities and allows for typical expansions to those systems. Other than maintenance of existing access

roads, SDG&E activities include, without limitation, all current and future actions arising out of, or in any way connected with, the siting, design, installation, construction, use, maintenance, operation, repair, and removal of facilities within SDG&E's service territory. Pole and tower replacement is one example of these covered activities.

The Low-Effect HCP emphasizes protection of habitat through impact avoidance and use of operational protocols designed to avoid or minimize impacts to the QCB. The Low-Effect HCP was prepared in consultation with the USFWS to fulfill the requirements of a FESA Section 10(a)(1)(B) permit application for SDG&E activities.

SDG&E proposes to conduct fire-hardening activities on an existing power line. These actions will increase the fire safety and service reliability of existing facilities and continue ongoing operation and maintenance activities for these facilities. Therefore, all the activities associated with the Proposed Project are covered by the Low-Effect HCP.

Environmental Setting

Physical Setting

San Diego County is a biologically diverse region that supports rare and declining native habitats, numerous federally and state-listed plant and animal species, and an increasing amount of federally designated critical habitat for listed species. Topography along the Proposed Project area varies from relatively flat, developed, urban/residential areas in Chula Vista to the west, through relatively flat river valleys, steep canyons, and flat mesa tops and grassland communities on the eastern and southern portions of the Proposed Project. Elevations on the far eastern end of the Proposed Project area range from approximately 400 to 600 feet above mean sea level (amsl). Elevations at the far western end of the Proposed Project area range from 150 feet to 400 feet amsl.

Existing land uses are predominately open space areas, with some limited institutional uses (e.g., the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility) at the eastern end of the Proposed Project area, and residential subdivisions at the western end of the Proposed Project area. Figure 8: Habitat Plan Areas of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report shows locations of four open space areas adjacent to or crossing the Proposed Project area. All of these open space areas support habitat for, and have occurrences of, special-status wildlife and plant species (CDFW 2014a). These open space areas include the following:

- Otay Valley Regional Park represents one of the largest open space areas within the southern area of San Diego County, linking south San Diego Bay with Otay Mountain, San Miguel Mountain, and the Jamul Mountains.
- Otay Lakes County Park is located approximately 0.7 mile northeast of the Proposed Project area at 2270 Wueste Road in the City of Chula Vista.
- Otay County Open Space Preserve is located approximately 0.7 mile east of the Proposed Project area at 2155 East Beyer Boulevard in the City of San Diego.

- The City of San Diego's Multiple Habitat Planning Area (MHPA) is located generally south of the Proposed Project and is contiguous to or comprises portions of the Otay Valley Regional Park.

Vegetation Communities

Vegetation communities observed within the Survey Area and the plants that typically occur within those communities were evaluated and described according to communities in Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf and Evens (2009). A complete list of plant species observed in the study area is presented in Appendix B of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report. Nomenclature used for plant names follow *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, Second Edition* (Baldwin 2012). Nomenclatural changes made after the publication date of this manual follow the Jepson eFlora website (2014).

Thirty distinct vegetation communities or land cover types occur within the Survey Area, as shown in Table 4.4-1: Vegetation Communities within the Survey Area. Native habitats are primarily upland communities, such as California sagebrush-California buckwheat scrub, coast prickly pear scrub, and purple needlegrass grassland. Bare ground and disturbed areas also cover nearly one-third of the total Survey Area. Detailed vegetation descriptions, as well as maps depicting the different vegetation communities in relation to the Proposed Project location, are provided in Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report. Table 4.4-1: Vegetation Communities within the Survey Area provides acreages of each mapped vegetation community.

Sensitive Natural Communities

The Proposed Project area contains the sensitive natural communities listed in Table 4.4-1: Vegetation Communities within the Survey Area.

Special-Status Species

Special-Status Plants

Based on the literature and database search, 53 special-status plant species were analyzed for potential to occur within the Survey Area and were targeted during special-status plant surveys.

The life history, habitat, and potential for these special-status plant species to occur are described in Table 4.4-2: Special-Status Plant Species' Potential to Occur. Plant species within five miles of the Survey Area documented in the CNDDDB are depicted on Figure 2: Documented Species Occurrences in Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report. Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report discusses each special-status plant considered and details the life history, blooming period, and habitat requirements of each species.

Plant species identified within the Survey Area during the spring and summer 2014 focused special-status plant surveys are listed in Appendix B Plant Species List in Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report. Of these, 17 special-status plant species were identified during the surveys. These special-status plant species and their population counts are listed in Table 4.4-3: Special-Status Plant Species Observations within the Survey Area. In addition, seven CRPR 4 plant species were observed within the Survey Area. These CRPR 4 species have also been included in Table 4.4-3: Special-Status Plant Species Observations within the Survey Area.

Table 4.4-1: Vegetation Communities within the Survey Area

Vegetation Community⁵	Approximate Area (acres)
Disturbed or Developed	
Bare Ground	34.27
Disturbed Areas	43.08
Landscape/Ornamental	6.14
Urban and Developed	35.08
Scrub and Chaparral	
California Sagebrush-California Buckwheat Scrub*	58.80
California Sagebrush-California Buckwheat Scrub (disturbed)*	0.97
Castor Bean Thicket	0.52
Coast Prickly Pear Scrub*	27.91
Coast Prickly Pear Scrub (disturbed)*	5.26
Lemonade Berry Stand*	2.45
Singlewhorl Burrowbush-Broom Baccharis Scrub*	0.93
Singlewhorl Burrowbush Scrub*	0.29
Grasslands, Vernal Pools, Meadows, and Other Herbaceous Communities	
Annual Brome Grassland	80.55
Creeping Ryegrass Grassland	0.06
Purple Needlegrass Grassland*	24.62
San Diego Mesa Claypan Vernal Pool*	0.56
San Diego Mesa Claypan Vernal Pool (disturbed)*	0.24
San Diego Mesa Claypan Vernal Pool Native Grassland Mix*	11.74
Bog and Marsh	
Bulrush Marsh*	0.03

⁵An asterisk designates a sensitive natural community, defined as follows:

- Vegetation communities listed in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB);
- Communities listed in the Natural Communities List with a rarity rank of S1 (critically imperiled), S2 (imperiled), or S3 (vulnerable); or
- Tier I or Tier II vegetation communities, as defined by the City of San Diego Biology Guidelines (City of San Diego 2001)

Vegetation Community⁵	Approximate Area (acres)
Pale Spike Rush Marshes*	0.02
Spiny Rush Marsh*	0.17
Riparian and Bottomland Habitat	
Arroyo Willow – Mulefat Woodland*	0.30
Fremont Cottonwood Forest*	0.71
Giant Reed Breaks	0.09
Mulefat Thickets*	0.82
Mulefat Thickets (disturbed)	0.90
Tamarisk Thickets	2.39
Vegetated Rip-Rap Channel	0.25
Woodland	
Black Willow Forest*	0.87
Tecate Cypress Stands*	0.67
Total	340.67

Source: Biological Technical Report (Chambers 2015).

Detailed information on the special-status plant species identified in the Survey Area is provided in Appendix D: Sensitive Plant Species Descriptions of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report. Detailed location point and polygon data for special-status plant species identified in the Survey Area are mapped in Figure 5: Plant Species Observed of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report.

The remaining 36 special-status plant species identified as potentially occurring with the Survey Area were not observed during the 2014 focused special-status plant surveys. Of these, five species were determined to be absent because required habitats are not present within the Survey Area. Twenty-one are herbaceous species, such as San Diego thorn-mint (*Acanthomintha ilicifolia*) or perennial bulbs, such as Dunn’s mariposa-lily (*Calochortus dunnii*). Because 2014 was the third year of a drought, it is possible that some of the herbaceous species or perennial bulb species may be present, but did not germinate or flower during 2014. As a result, these species are described as “presumed absent” to reflect the low possibility that these annual or perennial bulbs may be present within the Survey Area.

Special-Status Wildlife Species

A total of 41 special-status wildlife species are known to occur in the vicinity of the Survey Area. Figure 2: Documented Species Occurrences of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report provides a graphical representation of the known CNDDDB occurrences of special-status wildlife species within five miles of the Survey Area. The surveys identified an additional 14 special-status wildlife species as either present or potentially occurring in the vicinity of the Survey Area. Table 4.4-4: Special-Status Wildlife Species’ Potential to Occur provides a list of these 57 special-status wildlife species, as well as their listing status, habitat requirements, and their likelihood to occur within the Survey Area. Further details on the life history and conservation status of these species are provided in Appendix E of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report.

Seven of the 57 species (Pacific pocket mouse, green turtle, light-footed clapper rail, California black rail, Belding’s savannah sparrow, western snowy plover, and California least tern) in Table 4.4-4: Special-Status Wildlife Species’ Potential to Occur are presumed absent, either because they are considered extirpated from the area or because they are associated with beach habitat, tidal wetlands, or coastal salt marsh habitats, which do not occur within the Survey Area.

Some avian species in this list were only observed foraging, but not nesting. The olive-sided flycatcher (*Contopus cooperi*), osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), white-faced ibis (*Pandion haliaetus*), and double-crested cormorant (*Phalacrocorax auritus*) were observed foraging within the Survey Area and are considered to have low or no potential to nest within the Survey Area due to limited or no suitable nesting habitat. Lawrence’s goldfinch (*Spinus lawrencei*), Allen’s hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*), northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), Cooper’s hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), Nuttall’s woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), and yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*) are determined to have a moderate potential to nest within the Survey Area. The Clark’s marsh wren (*Cistothorus palustris clarkae*) and southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*) have a high potential to nest within the Survey Area. Only coastal California

Table 4.4-2: Special-Status Plant Species' Potential to Occur

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
Baja California birdbush (<i>Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia</i>)	--/CE/2B.1	January-April	This species is a perennial evergreen shrub. It is typically found in chaparral habitat at elevations between 328 and 2,624 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
Beach goldenaster (<i>Heterotheca sessiliflora</i> ssp. <i>sessiliflora</i>)	--/--/1B.1	March-December	This species is an herbaceous perennial. It is commonly found on beaches, dunes, and mud flats below 197 feet.	The Survey Area is within the elevation range of the species, but specific micro-habitat appears to be lacking. This species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
California adolphia (<i>Adolphia californica</i>)	--/--/2B.1	December-May	This species is a perennial deciduous shrub. It occurs in clay, coastal scrub, chaparral, and valley and foothill habitats. California adolphia can be found at elevations between 148 and 2,427 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area. Present
California Orcutt grass (<i>Orcuttia californica</i>)	FE/CE/1B.1	April-August	This species is an annual herb. It is found growing in vernal pool habitats at elevations between 49 and 2,363 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys, and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Chaparral ragwort (<i>Senecio aphanactis</i>)	--/--/2B.2	January-April	This species is an annual herb. It is found growing in chaparral, coastal scrub, cismontane woodland, and sometimes in alkaline habitats at elevations between 49 and 2,600 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Cliff spurge (<i>Euphorbia misera</i>)	--/--/2B.2	December-August	This species is a perennial shrub. This euphorb is found on rocky slopes and coastal bluffs in coastal and desert scrub below 1,640 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present

⁶ This column lists federal/state/CNPS CRPR coverage. A dash (--) indicates that the species is not listed.

Federal listing codes:

FE: Federally listed as Endangered
FT: Federally listed as Threatened

California listing codes:

CE: State-listed as Endangered
CT: State-listed as Threatened
CR: State-listed as Rare

CRPR:

1B.1: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California or elsewhere; seriously threatened in California
1B.2: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California or elsewhere; fairly threatened in California
1B.3: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California or elsewhere; not very threatened in California
2B.1: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California only; seriously threatened in California
2B.2: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California only; fairly threatened in California
2B.3: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California only; not very threatened in California
3.1: Plants that are on a review list and require additional information
4.1: Uncommon in California; seriously threatened in California
4.2: Uncommon in California; fairly threatened in California
4.3: Uncommon in California; not very threatened in California

⁷ Source: Attachment 4.4-A: Biological Technical Report

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
Coast woolly-heads (<i>Nemacaulis denudata</i> var. <i>denudata</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-September	This species is an annual herb. It occurs on coastal dunes below 328 feet.	The Survey Area is within the elevation range of the species, but specific micro-habitat appears to be lacking. This species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
Coulter's saltbush (<i>Atriplex coulteri</i>)	--/--/1B.2	March-October	This species is a perennial herb. It often grows in alkaline or clay soils, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, and coastal bluff scrub. Coulter's saltbrush can be found at elevations below 1,500 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Coulter's goldfields (<i>Lasthenia glabrata</i> ssp. <i>coulteri</i>)	--/--/1B.1	February-June	This species is an annual herb. It is almost always found in areas with seasonal water accumulation, including vernal pools, marshes, and swamps below 3,281 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Dean's milk vetch (<i>Astragalus deanei</i>)	--/--/1B.1	February-May	This species is a perennial herb. It occurs in chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian forest habitats. It can be found at elevations between 250 and 2,280 feet.	Habitat for this species occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Decumbent goldenbush (<i>Isocoma menziesii</i> var. <i>decumbens</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-November	This species is a perennial shrub. This variety of goldenbush favors hillsides and arroyos in sandy soils in coastal scrub, grassland, and disturbed habitat	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Delicate clarkia (<i>Clarkia delicata</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-June	This species is an annual herb. It often grows in gabbroic soils in chaparral and cismontane woodland. Delicate clarkia can be found at elevations between 770 and 3,280 feet.	The Survey Area is within the elevation range of the species, but specific micro-habitat appears to be lacking. This species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
Dunn's mariposa-lily (<i>Calochortus dunnii</i>)	--/CR/1B.2	April-June	This species is a perennial, bulbiferous herb. It occurs in gabbroic or metavolcanic soils and rocky, closed-cone, coniferous forest, chaparral, and valley and foothill grassland. Dunn's mariposa-lily can be found at elevations between 600 and 6,000 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Encinitas baccharis (<i>Baccharis vanessae</i>)	FT/CE/1B.1	August-November	This species is a perennial deciduous shrub. It occurs in chaparral (maritime) and cismontane woodland habitats. Encinitas baccharis can be found at elevations between 200 and 2,360 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
Gander's pitcher sage (<i>Lepechinia ganderi</i>)	--/--/1B.3	June-July	This species is a perennial shrub. It grows in gabbroic or metavolcanic soils in closed-cone coniferous forest and chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland habitats. Gander's pitcher sage can be found at elevations between 1,000 and 3,300 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
Golden-spined cereus (<i>Bergerocactus emoryi</i>)	--/--/2B.2	May-July	This species is a perennial stem succulent. It occurs in closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, and coastal scrub. Golden-spined cereus can be found at elevations between 10 and 1,300 feet.	This species is present in the Survey Area. Present
Jennifer's monardella (<i>Monardella stoneana</i>)	--/--/1B.2	June-September	This species is a perennial herb. It grows in rocky, intermittent streambeds within closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral coastal scrub, and riparian scrub habitats. Jennifer's monardella occurs at elevations between 30 and 2,600 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent
Lakeside ceanothus (<i>Ceanothus cyaneus</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-June	This species is an evergreen shrub. It occurs in sandy or rocky openings of closed-cone coniferous forests and chaparral habitats. Lakeside ceanothus can be found at elevations between 770 and 2,550 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. This species is restricted to a small area near Lakeside in San Diego County. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent
Long-spined spineflower (<i>Chorizanthe polygonoides</i> var. <i>longispina</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-July	This species is an annual herb. It occurs in clay soils of chaparral, coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools. Long-spined spineflower can be found at elevations between 100 and 5,020 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Mexican flannelbush (<i>Fremontodendron mexicanum</i>)	FE/CR/1B.1	March-June	This species is a Perennial shrub. It is found growing in cismontane woodland, chaparral, and closed cone conifer forest habitats at elevations between 33 and 2,349 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent
Mud nama (<i>Nama stenocarpum</i>)	--/--/2B.2	January-July	This species is an annual/perennial herb. It is found growing in marsh and swamp habitats (e.g., lake margins and riverbanks) at elevations between 16 and 1,640 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Munz's sage (<i>Salvia munzii</i>)	--/--/2B.2	February-April	This species is a perennial shrub. This sage species is typically found in coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats below 2,625 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Nuttall's acmispon (<i>Acmispon prostratus</i>)	--/--/1B.1	March-July	This species is an annual herb. It occurs in coastal scrub (sandy) and coastal dune habitats. Nuttall's acmispon can be found at elevations less than 33 feet.	No suitable habitat for this species occurs within the Survey Area, and it was not observed during focused surveys. This species is presumed absent from the Survey Area. Absent
Nuttall's scrub oak (<i>Quercus dumosa</i>)	--/--/1B.1	February-August	This species is a perennial evergreen shrub. It is found growing in sandy, clay loam, closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, and coastal scrub habitats at elevations between 49 and 1,300 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. Historical records show this species has occurred within the Survey Area. This species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
Orcutt's bird's-beak (<i>Dicranostegia orcuttiana</i>)	--/--/2B.1	March-September	This species is an annual herb. It typically occurs in coastal scrub habitats at elevations below 1,148 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Orcutt's brodiaea (<i>Brodiaea orcuttii</i>)	--/--/1B.1	May-July	This species is an annual herb. It occurs in grassland near streams and vernal pools. Orcutt's brodiaea can be found at elevations between 98 and 5,560 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Otay manzanita (<i>Arctostaphylos otayensis</i>)	--/--/1B.2	January-April	This species is a perennial evergreen shrub. It occurs in metavolcanic, chaparral, and cismontane woodland habitats. Otay manzanita can be found at elevations below 1,300 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Otay mesa mint (<i>Pogogyne nudiuscula</i>)	FE/CE/1B.1	May-July	This species is a perennial herb. It often grows in clay soils within vernal pool habitats. Otay Mesa mint can be found at elevations between 295 and 820 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. Historical records show this species has occurred within the Survey Area. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Otay Mountain ceanothus (<i>Ceanothus otayensis</i>)	--/--/1B.2	January-April	This species is an evergreen shrub. It occurs on rocky slopes in chaparral habitats at elevations between 394 and 3,609 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Otay tarplant (<i>Deinandra conjugens</i>)	FT/CE/1B.1	May-June	This species is an annual herb. It grows on clay soils within coastal scrub and valley and foothill grassland habitats. It is found at elevations between 80 and 980 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. A portion of the Proposed Project area is located within USFWS critical habitat for this species. Present
Palmer's goldenbush (<i>Ericameria palmeri</i> var. <i>palmeri</i>)	--/--/1B.1	July - November	This species is a perennial, evergreen shrub. It is found in mesic soils within chaparral and coastal scrub habitats. The elevation range of this species ranges between 98 and 1,970 feet amsl.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. Historical records show this species has been observed within one mile of the Main Street Staging Yard. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent
Parry's tetraococcus (<i>Tetraococcus dioicus</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April - May	This species is a perennial shrub. It is found on dry, stony slopes. Its habitat includes chaparral and coastal scrub at elevations between 500 feet and 3,300 feet amsl.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. Historical records show this species has occurred within five miles of the Survey Area. This species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
Purple stemodia (<i>Stemodia durantifolia</i>)	--/--/2B.1	Year-round	This species is a perennial herb. It can be found in Sonoran desert scrub, often on mesic, sandy soils at elevations between 591 and 984 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. Historical records show this species has occurred within the Survey Area. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Round-leaved filaree (<i>California macrophylla</i>)	--/--/1B.1	March-May	This species is an annual herb. It occurs in cismontane woodland and valley and foothill grassland habitats. Round-leaved filaree can be found at elevations between 50 and 3,930 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent within the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Salt marsh bird's-beak (<i>Chloropyron maritimum</i> subsp. <i>maritimum</i>)	FE/CE/1B.2	May-October	This species is an annual herb. This federally listed endangered species is associated with coastal salt marshes in elevations below 33 feet.	The Survey Area is marginally within the species' range, but habitat is lacking. This species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent
San Diego ambrosia (<i>Ambrosia pumila</i>)	FE/--/1B.1	April-October	This species is a perennial rhizomatous herb. It occurs in disturbed areas, chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pool habitats, and can be found at elevations below 1,360 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. Historical records show this species has occurred within the Survey Area. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
San Diego barrel cactus (<i>Ferocactus viridescens</i>)	--/--/2B.1	May-June	This species is a stem succulent. This barrel cactus species grows in sandy and rocky areas within chaparral, coastal sage scrub, vernal pools, and valley grassland habitats at elevations between 10 and 1,476 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
San Diego bur sage (<i>Ambrosia chenopodiifolia</i>)	--/--/2B.1	April-June	This species is a perennial shrub. It occurs in coastal scrub and can be found at elevations between 180 and 508 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area. Present
San Diego button-celery (<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>parishii</i>)	FE/CE/1B.1	April-June	This species is an annual/perennial herb. It can be found in mesic soils of coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools. San Diego button-celery can be found at elevations between 65 and 2,034 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
San Diego goldenstar (<i>Bloomeria clevelandii</i>)	--/--/1B.1	April-May	This species is a perennial bulbiferous herb. It occurs in chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, coastal scrub, and vernal pool habitats. It can be found at elevations between 164 and 1,525 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
San Diego marsh-elder (<i>Iva hayesiana</i>)	--/--/2B.2	April-October	This species is a perennial herb and is associated with streambeds, depressions, and alkaline sinks. San Diego marsh-elder can be found at elevations between 33 and 1,640 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
San Diego thorn-mint (<i>Acanthomintha ilicifolia</i>)	FE/--/ 1B.1	April-June	This species is an annual herb. It occurs in vernal pools, clay, openings, chaparral, valley and foothill grassland, and coastal sage scrub habitats, and can be found at elevations between 33 and 3,150 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area, and the upper reaches of the site are within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
San Miguel savory (<i>Clinopodium chandleri</i>)	--/--/1B.2	March-July	This species is a perennial herb. It is often found growing on rocky slopes in chaparral habitats below 3,609 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this perennial species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Santa Catalina Island currant (<i>Ribes viburnifolium</i>)	--/--/1B.2	February-April	This species is a perennial evergreen shrub. This currant species can be found growing in chaparral and forest openings at elevations between 98 and 1,969 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
Singlewhorl burrobush (<i>Ambrosia monogyra</i>)	--/--/2B.1	August-November	This species is a perennial shrub. It occurs in sandy, chaparral, and Sonoran desert scrub habitats, and can be found at elevations between 36 and 1,640 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area. Present
Small-leaved rose (<i>Rosa minutifolia</i>)	--/CE/1B.1	January-June	This species is a perennial deciduous shrub. It is found growing in chaparral and coastal scrub habitats at elevations between 492 and 525 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Snake cholla (<i>Cylindropuntia californica</i>)	--/--/1B.1	April-May	This species is a perennial stem succulent. This cactus species is almost always found on the coast in chaparral and sage scrub habitats. Snake cholla typically occurs at elevations below 820 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur within the Survey Area. Absent
South coast saltscale (<i>Atriplex pacifica</i>)	--/--/1B.2	March-October	This species is an annual herb. It occurs in coastal bluff scrub, dunes, and playa habitats. South coast saltscale can be found at elevations below 460 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Spreading navarretia (<i>Navarretia fossalis</i>)	FT/--/1B.1	April-June	This species is an annual herb. It is found growing in chenopod scrub, marsh/swamp, playa, and vernal pool habitats at elevations between 98 and 2,040 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is presumed absent from the Survey Area. It should be noted that surveys were conducted during a sustained drought and this species may occur during periods of sufficient rainfall. Presumed absent
Summer holly (<i>Comarostaphylis diversifolia</i> ssp. <i>diversifolia</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-June	This species is an evergreen shrub that occurs in chaparral habitats at elevations between 328 and 1,804 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs within the Survey Area and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent

Species Name	Listing Status ⁶	Bloom Period	Habitat	Potential to Occur ⁷
Tecate cypress (<i>Hesperocyparis forbesii</i>)	--/--/1B.1	Not Applicable (NA)	This species is a perennial, evergreen tree. It often grows in clay, gabbroic, or metavolcanic soils in closed-cone coniferous forest and chaparral habitats. Tecate cypress can be found at elevations between 840 and 4,900 feet.	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Variiegated dudleya (<i>Dudleya variegata</i>)	--/--/1B.2	April-June	This species is a perennial herb. It is found in heavy clay soils within chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pool habitats at elevations between 10 and 1,900 feet	This species is present within the Survey Area and in immediately adjacent areas. Present
Wart-stemmed ceanothus (<i>Ceanothus verrucosus</i>)	--/--/2B.2	January-April	This species is an evergreen shrub that occurs on rocky slopes in chaparral habitats at elevations below 1,148 feet.	Suitable habitat occurs on site and is within the elevation range of the species. However, this species was not observed during the focused surveys and is not expected to occur in the Survey Area. Absent

Table 4.4-3: Special-Status Plant Species Observations within the Survey Area

Species Name	Listing Status ⁸	Total Observed
Ashy spike-moss	--/--/4.1	2,500+ (Species too abundant to count)
California adolphia	--/--/2B.1	16
Cliff spurge	--/--/2B.2	17
Decumbent goldenbush	--/--/1B.2	1,556
Golden-spined cereus	--/--/2B.2	184
Graceful tarplant	--/--/4.2	165
Munz's sage	--/--/2B.2	2,008
Otay manzanita	--/--/1B.2	1
Otay Mountain ceanothus	--/--/1B.2	1
Otay tarplant	FE/CE/1B.1	49
Palmer's grapplinghook	--/--/4.2	221
San Diego barrel cactus	--/--/2B.1	361
San Diego bur sage	--/--/2B.1	173
San Diego button-celery	FE/CE/1B.1	82
San Diego County viguiera	--/--/4.2	2,500+ (Species too abundant to count)
San Diego goldenstar	--/--/1B.1	33
San Diego marsh-elder	--/--/2B.2	1,149
San Diego sagewort	--/--/4.2	21
Singlewhorl burrobush	--/--/2B.1	1,735
Small-flowered morning-glory	--/--/4.2	169
Small-leaved rose	--CE/1B.1	20
Southwestern spiny rush	--/--/4.2	12,500+ (Species too abundant to count)
Tecate cypress	--/--/1B.1	1,033
Variegated dudleya	--/--/CRPR List 1B.2	302

Source: Biological Technical Report (Chambers 2015)

⁸ This column lists federal/state/CNPS CRPR status, which is described further in Table 4.4-2: Special-Status Plant Species' Potential to Occur. A dash (--) indicates that the species is not listed.

gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo were confirmed to be both foraging and breeding within the Proposed Project Survey Area.

Of the species for which focused or protocol-level surveys were conducted, only coastal California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo were observed within the Survey Area. Foraging southwestern willow flycatcher and coastal cactus wren were observed in suitable habitat adjacent to but outside of the Survey Area. Detailed results of the focused surveys are included as Appendices G, H, I, and J in Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report.

Critical Habitat

To the extent prudent and determinable under the FESA, the USFWS is required to designate critical habitat for endangered and threatened species (16 U.S.C. § 1533 (a)(3)). Critical habitat is defined as areas of land, water, and air space containing the physical and biological features essential for the survival and recovery of endangered and threatened species. Critical habitat is designated by identifying areas that possess the physical or biological features essential to the conservation of a species, also known as the primary constituent elements. Designated critical habitat includes sites for breeding and rearing, movement or migration, feeding, roosting, cover, and shelter.

Designated critical habitat requires special management and protection of existing resources, including water quality and quantity, host animals and plants, food availability, pollinators, sunlight, and specific soil types. The critical habitat designation delineates all suitable habitat, occupied or not, essential to the survival and recovery of the species.

The locations of USFWS critical habitat areas for listed species were evaluated using GIS data relative to the Survey Area. Four USFWS-designated critical habitat areas were identified within the Survey Area, and are shown in Figure 3: USFWS Mapped Critical Habitat of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report. The following four species have critical habitat in the Proposed Project area:

Coastal California gnatcatcher: Critical habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher occurs throughout much of the east-west portion of the Proposed Project area. However, the USFWS designation of critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher specifically excludes areas within functioning HCPs, including SDG&E ROW within the SDG&E Subregional NCCP. Since the Proposed Project is in SDG&E ROW within SDG&E's NCCP, the Proposed Project is not located in critical habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher.

- **San Diego fairy shrimp:** Fourteen pole locations are located within critical habitat for San Diego fairy shrimp. These include pole locations 83 through 86 and 88 through 97.
- **QCB:** Seventeen pole locations are located within critical habitat for QCB. These include locations 80 through 88 and 98 through 105.
- **Otay tarplant:** Sixty-seven pole locations are located within critical habitat for Otay tarplant. These include pole locations 8 through 10, 14, 16, 17 through 26, 28 through 32, 39 through 44, and 46 through 79.

Table 4.4-4: Special-Status Wildlife Species' Potential to Occur

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
CLASS MAMMALIA			
American badger (<i>Taxidea taxus</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species is most abundant in drier, open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats. American badgers need sufficient food, friable soils, and open, uncultivated ground. They prey on burrowing rodents and dig burrows themselves.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, approximately 12,814 feet from the Proposed Project. Marginal quality habitat for this species exists within the Survey Area. Moderate
Hoary bat (<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>)	--/--/WBWG medium-priority species	This species prefers open habitats or habitat mosaics, with access to trees for cover and open areas or habitat edges for feeding. Hoary bats roost in dense foliage of medium to large trees. They feed primarily on moths and require water.	Although CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 22,471 feet from the Proposed Project), the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
Long-eared myotis (<i>Myotis evotis</i>)	--/--/WBWG medium-priority species	This species occurs primarily in coniferous forests at elevations between 7,000 and 9,600 feet. Their diet consists of insects and moths.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 21,703 feet from the Proposed Project), and the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
Mexican long-tongued bat (<i>Choeronycteris mexicana</i>)	--/SSC/WBWG high-priority species	This species occurs in a variety of habitats, such as desert and montane riparian, chaparral, and woodlands. Mexican long-tongued bat feeds primarily on nectar, and may also consume fruit juices and pollen.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 22,471 feet from the Proposed Project), and the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
Northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (<i>Chaetodipus fallax fallax</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in chaparral, sage scrubs, and grasslands with rocks and coarse gravel. Northwestern San Diego pocket mouse is primarily granivorous; however, it will also consume green vegetation and insects.	CNDDDB lists two records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest being approximately 570 feet from the Proposed Project. Marginal quality habitat for this species exists within the Survey Area. Moderate
Pacific pocket mouse (<i>Perognathus longimembris pacificus</i>)	FE/SSC/--	This species occurs in coastal sage scrub dominated by sagebrush and maritime chaparral sage scrub; it requires loose sandy soils within the immediate vicinity of the Pacific Ocean. This species' diet ranges from seeds, forbs, and arthropods.	This species is considered extirpated from southern San Diego. As a result, Pacific pocket mouse is considered absent from the Survey Area. Absent
Pallid bat (<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>)	--/SSC/WBWG high-priority species	This species inhabits elevations below 6,000 feet and rocky, arid deserts and canyon lands, shrub-steppe grasslands, karst formations, and higher-elevation coniferous forests. Pallid bats are most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting; these roosts must protect the bats from high temperatures. This species is very sensitive to the disturbance of roosting sites.	CNDDDB lists four records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest is approximately 15,880 feet from the Proposed Project. In addition, the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low

⁹ Federal/State/Other list or Coverage under either the SDG&E Subregional NCCP or the Low-Effect HCP for QCB. A dash (--) indicates that the species is not listed.

Federal listing codes:

FE: Federally listed as Endangered
 FT: Federally listed as Threatened
 FC: Federally listed as Candidate
 BCC: Bird of Conservation Concern
 FSS: Forest Service Sensitive

California listing codes:

CE: State-listed as Endangered
 CT: State-listed as Threatened
 CR: State-listed as Rare
 FP: Fully Protected Species
 SSC: Species of Special Concern
 WL: California Watch List Species

Other listing codes:

WBWG: Western Bat Working Group

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Pocketed free-tailed bat (<i>Nyctinomops femorosaccus</i>)	--/SSC/WBWG medium priority species	This species occurs in pinyon-juniper habitats and a wide variety of desert habitats, such as alkali desert scrub, desert succulent scrub, and desert washes. It forages over open water for moths, flies, lacewings, and other insects.	CNDDDB lists three records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest being approximately 2,801 feet from the Proposed Project. ¹⁰ However, the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (<i>Lepus californicus bennettii</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species is found in intermediate canopy stages of shrub habitats and open shrub/herbaceous and tree/herbaceous edges in coastal sage scrub habitats in Southern California	This species was observed within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists 11 records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest occurrence 214 feet from the Proposed Project. Present
San Diego desert woodrat (<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in coastal scrub of Southern California from San Diego County to San Luis Obispo County. It prefers moderate to dense canopies, particularly abundant in rock outcrops and rocky cliffs and slopes.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 570 feet from the Proposed Project), and the Survey Area contains moderate-quality suitable habitat to support this species. Moderate
Townsend's big-eared bat (<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>)	--/SSC/WBWG high-priority species/--	This species is found in all habitats except alpine, and it is elusive and rare throughout its range. Its diet primarily consists of moths.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 21,703 feet from the Proposed Project). However, the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
Western mastiff bat (<i>Eumops perotis</i>)	--/SSC/WBWG high-priority species	This species occurs in many open, semi-arid to arid habitats, including conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, grasslands, and chaparral. They roost in crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels.	CNDDDB lists three records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest is approximately 2,801 feet from the Proposed Project. ¹⁰ However, the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
Western red bat (<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>)	--/SSC/WBWG high-priority species	This species occurs in edge areas near streams and open fields, far from humans. Western red bat is primarily insectivorous, and consumes moths, crickets, cicadas, and beetles.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project and approximately 2,801 feet from the Proposed Project. ¹⁰ The Survey Area contains suitable roosting habitat along the edges of streams to support this species; however, no bat hibernaculum will be permanently affected. Moderate
Western small-footed myotis (<i>Myotis ciliolabrum</i>)	--/--/WBWG medium-priority species	This species occurs in a wide variety of habitats, such as open grasslands, canyons, and woodlands. Moths and beetles make up most of this species' diet.	CNDDDB lists two records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, and the closest is approximately 2,801 feet from the Proposed Project. ¹⁰ However, the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
Yuma myotis (<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>)	--/--/WBWG Low-Medium Priority	This species is found in various habitat types, though it is most closely associated with open woodlands near large, open water sources. Yuma myotis feeds over water sources for moths, caddisflies, midges, and termites.	CNDDDB lists six records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest occurrence approximately 2,801 feet from the Proposed Project. ¹⁰ However, the Survey Area contains low-quality roosting habitat to support this species. Low
CLASS AVES			
Allen's hummingbird (<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>)	BCC/--/--	This species occurs in coastal chaparral, open riparian woodlands below 1,000 feet in elevation, mixed evergreen, and oak woodlands. Allen's hummingbird prefers open habitats near the coast and along the forest edge. It feeds on floral nectar and small insects. This species will nest in trees or shrubs, placing their nests 1 to 50 feet off the ground.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, and there is marginal quality nesting habitat present within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)

¹⁰ One CNDDDB occurrence documented on July 15, 2003 noted the following five species of bats in the same location (2,801 feet from the Proposed Project): pocketed free-tailed bat, western mastiff bat, western red bat, western small-footed myotis, and Yuma myotis.

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Belding's savannah sparrow (<i>Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi</i>)	CE/--/--	This species is a year-round resident of the coastal salt marshes of Southern California. Belding's savannah sparrow primarily nests in pickleweed (<i>Salicornia virginica</i>) and is ecologically associated with dense patches of pickleweed. Its diet consists of insects, seeds, and grasses.	CNDDDB lists three records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest observation being approximately 20,882 feet from Proposed Project. However, no suitable nesting habitat occurs within or immediately adjacent to the Survey Area. Absent
Bell's sage sparrow (<i>Artemisiospiza belli belli</i>)	BCC/WL/--	This species is a year-round resident in chaparral dominated by chamise (<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>), as well as coastal scrub dominated by sage. Bell's sage sparrow is predominantly insectivorous, but also consumes seeds and green foliage. It typically builds nests on the ground, beneath shrubs.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence approximately 25,102 feet from the Proposed Project. Marginal quality habitat for this species occurs within sage dominant coastal sage scrub habitats, however the chamise dominated communities preferred by this species were not observed. Moderate (foraging/nesting)
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrub characterized by low-growing vegetation. It is a subterranean nester and is dependent on burrowing mammals, most notably the California ground squirrel (<i>Otospermophilus beecheyi</i>).	CNDDDB lists 17 records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project with three records within 1,500 feet of the Proposed Project. The Survey Area contains good-quality habitat for burrowing owl. This species was not observed during focused surveys conducted by Chambers in 2014. High (foraging/nesting)
California black rail (<i>Laterallus jamaicensis conturmiculus</i>)	BCC/FP/--	This species occurs in tidal emergent wetlands, salt marshes, freshwater marshes, and wet meadows. Its diet mainly consists of small aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. This record was documented in 1908, and is located approximately 25,676 feet from the Proposed Project. This species is considered extirpated from San Diego and the last known breeding records are from the 1950s. Absent
California horned lark (<i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i>)	--/WL/--	This species occurs in open habitats with sparse vegetation, such as prairies, deserts, and agricultural lands. Its diet consists of weed and grass seeds and the occasional invertebrate.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. This observation was approximately 12,959 feet from the Proposed Project. High quality nesting habitat for this species occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/High (nesting)
California least tern (<i>Sternula antillarum browni</i>)	FE/CE/--	This species occurs in marine estuaries, bays, and near-shore marine waters. California least tern feeds on small fish caught in estuaries and lagoons where the water is shallow. Its nests are shallow depressions made on sandy or gravelly substrate.	CNDDDB lists one record within five miles of the Proposed Project, and specifically approximately 24,000 feet from the Proposed Project. This species is determined to be absent from the Survey Area for nesting, as it requires specific habitat conditions for nesting that are not present. Low (foraging)/Absent (nesting)
Clark's marsh wren (<i>Cistothorus palustris clarkae</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in emergent wetland habitat dominated by cattails, bulrushes, and sedges. Its diet primarily consists of insects, spiders, and invertebrates gleaned from vegetation.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. However, there is high quality nesting habitat in a wetland within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/High (nesting)
Coastal cactus wren (<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>)	BCC/SSC/--	This species occurs in coastal sage scrub interlaced with patches of opuntia. Its diet is primarily insectivorous, and it forages on the ground for prey items, such as caterpillars, moths, and grasshoppers.	CNDDDB lists 15 records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, and two are less than 1,000 feet from the Proposed Project. This species was not observed during focused surveys conducted by Chambers in 2014. Low quality nesting habitat for this species was observed to occur within the Survey Area. Moderate (foraging)/Low (nesting)

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Coastal California gnatcatcher (<i>Poliopitila californica californica</i>)	FT/SSC/--	This species is an obligate, permanent resident of coastal sage scrub below 2,500 feet in elevation in Southern California. It is found in low, coastal sage scrub in arid washes, on mesas and slopes. Not all areas classified as coastal sage scrub are occupied.	CNDDDB lists 31 records of occurrence of this species within five miles of the Proposed Project. Two of these observations were within 1,000 feet of the Proposed Project. USFWS species occurrence data lists 623 records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Three of these observations were within the Survey Area. In addition, the Survey Area contains good-quality, suitable habitat. The USFWS designation of critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher specifically excludes SDG&E right-of-way within SDG&E's NCCP. Since the Proposed Project is in SDG&E right-of-way within SDG&E's NCCP, the Proposed Project is not located in critical habitat for coastal California gnatcatcher. During the 2014 focused surveys, approximately 30 pairs of gnatcatchers were observed within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Present (nesting)
Cooper's hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>)	--/WL/--	Cooper's hawk (nesting) is a California SSC. This species occurs as a migrant and/or resident over most of the U.S. from southern Canada to northern Mexico.	This species was observed within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Suitable nesting habitat for this species is limited within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)
Double-crested cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i>)	--/WL (nesting colony)/--	This species is found along the California coast, on inland lakes, and in fresh, salt, and estuarine waters throughout the year. Double-crested cormorants feed primarily on fish, and will rarely eat crustaceans, amphibians, or insects.	CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. This species is presumed absent from the Survey Area, as it has special habitat restrictions that are not present within the Survey Area. Absent
Grasshopper sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum perpallidus</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species is found in most coastal counties, along the western side of the Sacramento Valley, and in the western foothills of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. It prefers breeding habitat comprised of open grasslands, preferably with bunch grass (versus sod-type) as the predominant cover; however, through much of California, non-native annual grasslands and agricultural fields are used in the absence of native bunch-grass ecosystems.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. High quality nesting habitat for this species was observed to occur within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/High (nesting)
Lawrence's goldfinch (<i>Spinus lawrencei</i>)	BCC/--/--	This species occurs in a broad range of habitats, such as open woodlands, chaparral, desert riparian, and lower montane habitats. It gleans vegetation and ground for seeds, and its preferred seeds include, pigweed, fiddleneck, starthistle, and chamise.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Moderate quality nesting habitat for this species was observed to occur within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)
Least Bell's vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>)	FE/CE/--	This species occurs in early successional habitats along rivers with low, dense vegetation. Its diet consists of insects and spiders.	This species was documented foraging and nesting within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists 14 records of occurrence of this species within five miles of the Proposed Project. One of these occurrences was documented within the Survey Area. In addition, the Survey Area contains good-quality, suitable habitat. Present (foraging/nesting)
Light-footed clapper rail (<i>Rallus longirostris levipes</i>)	FE/CE/--	This species is found year-round in coastal wetlands and brackish areas. It gleans for crabs, mussels, clams, insects, spiders, and worms in areas with high vegetation in the marsh.	CNDDDB lists four records of occurrence of this species within five miles of the Proposed Project (all more than 20,000 feet from the Proposed Project). However, the Survey Area contains low-quality habitat to support this species and no suitable nesting habitat. Low (foraging)/Absent (nesting)
Northern harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in a wide variety of habitats, with wetlands, marshes, fields, and grasslands being the most common. It preys on small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Moderate quality habitat for nesting occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Nuttall's woodpecker (<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>)	BCC/--/--	This species occurs in low-elevation riparian deciduous and oak woodland habitats. It pecks, drills, and gleans insects and spiders from trunks, branches, and foliage.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Moderate quality habitat for nesting occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)
Olive-sided flycatcher (<i>Contopus cooperi</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs along edges and openings lining dense coniferous forests. It is insectivorous, sallies flying insects from a high perch, and has a mild preference for bees.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Low quality habitat for nesting occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Low (nesting)
Osprey (<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>)	--/WL/--	This species is found near large bodies of water, such as rivers, lakes, and bays. It is largely piscivorous, and it catches fish found near the water's surface.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Low quality habitat for nesting occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Low (nesting)
Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (<i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i>)	--/WL/--	This species occurs in coastal sage scrub, chaparral, and rocky brush-laden hillsides. Its diet consists primarily of small grass and forb seeds, and occasionally it will also consume insects.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists four records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, approximately 5,660 feet from the Proposed Project. High quality habitat for nesting occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/High (nesting)
Southwestern willow flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>)	FE/CE/--	This species breeds in a variety of riparian habitats with multi-tiered canopies and surface water and/or saturated soils along streams. Its habitat types may include a variety of willow, cottonwood, coast live oak, alder, and tamarisk woodlands.	CNDDDB and the USFWS list no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. In addition, breeding habitat for this species is limited within the Survey Area, due to the lack of habitat structure and occurrence of standing water. Moderate (foraging)/Low (nesting)
Western snowy plover (<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>)	FT/SSC/--	This species occurs in sandy dune-type habitats along coastlines. It forages for insects, amphipods, and other small invertebrates in wet and dry, sandy or gravelly substrates.	This species is considered absent within the Survey Area for foraging and nesting, as it requires specific habitat conditions for foraging and nesting that are not present within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists one record within five miles of the Proposed Project, approximately 20,882 feet from the Proposed Project. Absent
Western yellow-billed cuckoo (<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>)	FT/CE/--	This species is found in cottonwood-willow riparian habitat. Its diet in California primarily consists of caterpillars, tree frogs, katydids, and grasshoppers.	CNDDDB lists two records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest approximately 2,461 feet from the Proposed Project. No USFWS occurrences were documented within 5 miles of the Proposed Project. This species was not observed in the Survey Area during focused surveys conducted by Chambers in 2014. Moderate (foraging)/Low (nesting)
White-faced ibis (<i>Pelgadis chihi</i>)	--/WL/--	This species occurs mostly in freshwater marshes, and it can also occasionally be found in flooded meadows and saltwater marshes. It probes muddy substrate for earthworms, insects, crustaceans, amphibians, fishes, and invertebrates.	This species was documented foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. This species is considered absent from the Survey Area for nesting, as it has special nesting habitat restrictions that are not present within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Absent (nesting)
White-tailed kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>)	--/FP/--	This species occurs in low to moderate elevation grasslands, savannas, agricultural areas, wetlands, marshes, and riparian woodlands. Its diet consists of small mammals, amphibians, lizards, and large insects.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Low to marginal quality nesting habitat was observed within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Low (nesting)

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Yellow-breasted chat (<i>Icteria virens</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in dense riparian thickets. It gleans vegetation for spiders, insects, and berries.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists three records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest approximately 237 feet from the Proposed Project. Moderate quality habitat for nesting occurs within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)
Yellow warbler (<i>Dendroica petechia</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species is found in riparian woodlands, swamp edges, and willow thickets, and it prefers early successional understories with medium-high shrub and tree density.	This species was observed foraging within the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists no records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project. Moderate quality habitat for nesting is present within the Survey Area. Present (foraging)/Moderate (nesting)
CLASS REPTILIA			
Coast horned lizard (<i>Phrynosoma coronatum</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in a variety of habitats, such as coastal sage scrub, chaparral, various woodlands, and annual grasslands. Its diet consists almost exclusively of ants.	CNDDDB lists six records of occurrence for this species within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest being approximately 9,398 feet from the Proposed Project. Although not observed during the survey effort, high quality habitat for this species occurs within the Survey Area. High
Coast patch-nosed snake (<i>Salvadora hexalepis virgultea</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in California from the northern Carrizo Plains in San Luis Obispo County, south through the coastal zone, south and west of the deserts, and into coastal northern Baja California. This species inhabits semi-arid, brushy areas and chaparral in canyons, rocky hillsides, and plains up to 7,000 feet in elevation.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 13,125 feet from the Proposed Project), and the Survey Area contains moderate-quality suitable habitat. Moderate
Coronado Island skink (<i>Plestiodon skiltonianus interparietalis</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in early successional stages of habitats, such as coastal sage scrub, chaparral, open woodland, and conifer forests. It forages through leaf litter for small invertebrates.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, approximately 22,399 feet from the Proposed Project. This species was not observed during the survey effort, and moderate quality habitat exists within the Survey Area. Moderate
Green turtle (<i>Chelonia mydas</i>)	FT/--/--	This species occurs in shallow waters within reefs, bays, and inlets. It diets only on seagrasses and algae.	CNDDDB list one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 24,648 feet from the Proposed Project). However, the green turtle is considered absent from the Proposed Project as this species is restricted to habitats that do not occur within the ROW. Absent
Orange-throated whiptail (<i>Aspisdoscelis hyperythra beldingi</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats with sandy washes, rocky outcrops, and adequate shading. Its diet consists mainly of insects and spiders.	This species was observed throughout the Survey Area. CNDDDB lists nine records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest occurrence approximately 2,000 feet from the Proposed Project. Present
Red diamond rattlesnake (<i>Crotalus ruber</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species is found in several habitat types, such as coastal sage scrub, grassland, and woodland associated large rocks or boulders. Its diet consists mainly of squirrels for adults and lizards for juveniles.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 6,812 feet from the Proposed Project), and the Survey Area contains good-quality suitable habitat. Moderate
Rosy boa (<i>Lichanura trivirgata</i>)	FSS/--/--	This species occurs in rocky coastal sage, inland sage, and chaparral-covered hillsides and canyons. It predates on small mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds.	CNDDDB lists one record of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project (approximately 7,837 feet from the Proposed Project), and the Survey Area contains good-quality, suitable habitat. High

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Two-striped garter snake (<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species occurs in coastal California from the vicinity of Salinas to northwest Baja California. This species is highly aquatic, and is found in or near permanent fresh water. It is often along streams with rocky beds and riparian growth up to 7,000 feet in elevation.	CNDDDB lists four records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest approximately 7,220 feet from the Proposed Project. Suitable habitat for this species is present within the Survey Area. Moderate
CLASS AMPHIBIA			
Western spadefoot (<i>Spea hammondi</i>)	--/SSC/--	This species is found in grasslands, floodplains, washes, and playas. Its diet consists of invertebrates, beetles, moths, earthworms, crickets, flies, and ants.	This species was observed in larval form within the Survey Area generally east of SR-125 within road ruts and vernal pool features. CNDDDB lists two records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, with the closest being approximately 13,155 feet from the Proposed Project. Present
CLASS INSECTA			
Quino checkerspot butterfly (<i>Euphydryas editha quino</i>)	FE/--/--/Covered under the SDG&E Low-Effect Habitat Conservation Plan for QCB	Adults are found along low hilltops, rocky outcrops, and ridges.	The CNDDDB lists 18 records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest being approximately 1,137 feet from the Proposed Project. A portion of the Survey Area is located within USFWS critical habitat for this species. Focused survey efforts during the 2015 adult flight season resulted in no detections within the Survey Area. High
Hermes copper butterfly (<i>Lycaena hermes</i>)	FC/--/--	Hermes copper butterfly is found in mixed woodlands, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub from San Diego County to adjacent Baja California Norte, Mexico. Spiny redberry (<i>Rhamnus crocea</i>) is the host larval food plant for this species, which is common in cismontane California coastal sage scrub and chaparral vegetation communities. However, this species is limited to only a portion of the redberry range, usually along north-facing hillsides or within deeper, well-drained soils of canyon bottoms where host (spiny redberry) and nectar (California buckwheat) plants are present. In addition, mature spiny redberry plants appear to be essential to this species' survival. It may take as long as 18 years after a wildfire for this species to re-colonize an area.	No CNDDDB records of occurrence are documented within five miles of the Proposed Project. There are approximately only 20 known populations of Hermes copper butterfly. While suitable habitat for this species is present within the Survey Area, the closest documented population occurs near the Otay Lakes Reservoir, approximately 3 miles from the Proposed Project. Low
Thorne's hairstreak (<i>Mitoura thornei</i>)	--/--/Covered under the County of San Diego MSCP Subarea Plan	This species is only found on Otay Mountain in interior cypress woodland between 800 and 3,290 feet in elevation. Immature Thorne's hairstreaks are herbivorous and adults are nectivorous.	Present within the Survey Area at the far northeastern end, in habitats not proposed for construction activities. The CNDDDB lists six records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest is approximately 9,726 feet from the Proposed Project. Present
CLASS BRANCHIPODA			
Riverside fairy shrimp (<i>Streptocephalus woottoni</i>)	FE/--/--	This species is found in deep, cool vernal pools. It lives as a filter feeder, and consumes algae, bacteria, and various detritus in water.	This species has a high potential to occur within the Survey Area. The Survey Area contains good-quality, suitable habitat, and the CNDDDB lists 16 records of occurrence within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest is approximately 1,359 feet from the Proposed Project. USFWS critical habitat for this species is located more than 1,000 feet south of the Proposed Project. High

Species Name	Listing Status ⁹	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
San Diego fairy shrimp (<i>Branchinecta sandiegonensis</i>)	FE/--/--	This species occurs only in high-quality vernal pools. It lives as a filter feeder, and consumes algae, bacteria, and various detritus in water.	This species has high potential to occur within the Survey Area. The CNDDB lists 18 records of occurrences within five miles of the Proposed Project, the closest being approximately 1,288 feet from the Proposed Project. USFWS critical habitat for this species is located along the eastern portion of the Proposed Project near the Richard J. Donovan Correctional Facility. High

Source: Biological Technical Report (Chambers 2015)

The total area of critical habitat for these three species within the Proposed Project is provided in Table 4.4-5: Critical Habitat within the Proposed Project Area.

Table 4.4-5: Critical Habitat within the Proposed Project Area

Species	Approximate Area (acres)
San Diego fairy shrimp	0.24
Quino checkerspot butterfly	0.93
Otay tarplant	4.31
Total	5.48

Source: USFWS Critical Habitat Portal (2014)

Wildlife Migration Corridors

Wildlife corridors are defined as areas that connect suitable habitat in a region otherwise fragmented by rugged terrain, changes in vegetation, or human disturbance. Natural features (e.g., canyon drainages, ridgelines, or areas with vegetation cover) provide corridors for wildlife travel. Wildlife corridors are important because they provide access to mates, food, and water; allow the dispersal of individuals away from high-population-density areas; and facilitate genetic diversity. CEQA Guidelines, Appendix G, requires that Proposed Project proponents disclose potential impacts to wildlife corridors. This section discusses the wildlife corridors present or potentially present within the Survey Area.

Terrestrial Species

Terrestrial wildlife species migrate through both upland and drainage areas, depending on the species. Species that need protective cover from predators (e.g., mammals, reptiles, and smaller avian species) tend to migrate along natural drainages and riparian corridors that have a high vegetative cover. These areas also serve as an important source of food resources (e.g., insects and seeds) for these species. There are numerous natural drainages and riparian corridors, including the Otay River Valley, adjacent to the Proposed Project area that may be used as migration corridors by a variety of species. Predator species, such as bobcat (*Lynx rufus*) or mountain lion (*Puma concolor*), require larger portions of intact habitat, including interconnected upland and riparian systems for migration. The Proposed Project area is within and adjacent to a large preserve area, which can provide for wildlife movement and migration in the region.

Aquatic Species

Aquatic species are known to migrate within wetland and drainage areas. The Otay River serves as a linkage for aquatic species. For instance, the Otay River was determined to be at least seasonally accessible to southern steelhead trout—a federally endangered fish species—entering from the ocean (NOAA Fisheries 2012). In addition, the Proposed Project contains vernal pool habitat that could potentially support fairy shrimp species. Fairy shrimp cysts can be transferred from one pool to another when vehicles drive between pools along existing roads within the

Proposed Project area. This is particularly true when the vernal pools are wet and vehicle tires pick up and transfer mud from pool to pool.

Preserve Areas

Ecological preserves represent the biodiversity of an area, and provide habitat for species with needs that may not be fully met on managed land. As shown on Figure 8: Habitat Plan Areas of Attachment 4.4-A: Biological Technical Report, the following pole locations on the Proposed Project occur within a designated preserve: pole locations 1 through 10, 14, 16, 18 through 21, 39, 40 through 46, 53, 56, and 59 through 109. These preserves include the Otay Ranch Preserve, the Otay Valley Regional Park, and a portion of the City of San Diego's MHPA, designated as part of the MSCP.

In addition, the Otay Lakes Regional Park is adjacent to, but not within, the Proposed Project area. All four preserve areas provide habitat for special-status and common plant and wildlife species.

Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters

The Survey Area contains aquatic features that may be subject to regulation by at least three agencies—the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW—as wetlands or other jurisdictional waters. The waters under each agency's jurisdiction are described in the following paragraphs. A detailed description of each wetland and water feature is provided in the Wetland Delineation Report, included as Attachment 4.9-A: Wetland Delineation Report in Section 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality. Figure 5: Jurisdictional Resources of Attachment 4.9-A: Wetland Delineation Report shows the locations of these potentially jurisdictional features in relation to the Proposed Project components. Temporary or permanent fill in jurisdictional waters require a Section 404 permit from the USACE, a 401 water quality certificate from the RWQCB, and a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFW, as described in Attachment 4.9-A: Wetland Delineation Report in Section 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality.

United States Army Corps of Engineers

A total of 5.55 acres of USACE-jurisdictional waters of the U.S. are located in the Proposed Project area. Of these waters, 4.45 acres are potentially USACE-jurisdictional wetlands, including 0.80 acre of vernal pool wetlands. Jurisdictional wetlands within the survey area include coastal and valley freshwater marsh, emergent wetland, southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, and vernal pool wetlands. An additional 11.74 acres of San Diego Mesa Claypan vernal pool habitat occur within the survey area and likely are jurisdictional USACE vernal pool wetland waters of the U.S.¹¹ USACE-jurisdictional other waters of the U.S. (i.e., drainages) display an OHWM and have connectivity with navigable waters. A total of 1.09 acres of other waters of the U.S. occur within the Survey Area.

¹¹ San Diego Mesa Claypan vernal pool habitat was not formally delineated to preserve habitat and minimize impacts to these areas, and jurisdictional area was mapped based on the species and topography present.

Regional Water Quality Control Board

The RWQCB has jurisdiction over waters of the State, as defined by the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. A total of 5.55 acres of RWQCB-jurisdictional features are located in the Proposed Project area, including 0.80 acre of vernal pools. Although not formally delineated, an additional 11.74 acres of San Diego Mesa Claypan vernal pool habitat occur within the survey area and likely are jurisdictional RWQCB waters of the State vernal pools. Waters of the State include unvegetated streambed, coastal and valley freshwater marsh, emergent wetland, riparian scrub, southern willow scrub, disturbed wetland, and vernal pools.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

A total of approximately 5.79 acres of waters that are subject to CDFW jurisdiction occur in the Proposed Project area. CDFW jurisdiction includes all non-tidal streambeds mapped at the width of the channel's top of bank, and extends to the edge of riparian canopy and/or associated wetlands, when present. A total of 1.09 acres of streambed, and 4.70 acres of riparian vegetation fall within the jurisdiction of the CDFW. The vernal pools present within the Proposed Project area do not fall within the jurisdiction of the CDFW.

4.4.3 Impacts

The following subsections describe the criteria of significance used to assess potential impacts to biological resources that may result from implementation of the Proposed Project, and examine those potential impacts.

Potential impacts to biological resources are separated into those likely to occur from construction (both short- and long-term impacts) and those that may occur as a result of power line operation and maintenance. SDG&E anticipates that the duration of construction activities (i.e., when temporary impacts will occur) will be approximately seven months.

SDG&E will operate in compliance with all State and federal laws, regulations, and permit conditions. This includes compliance with the CWA, Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, ESA, MBTA, BGEPA, CESA, and CEQA. For construction of the Proposed Project, SDG&E will consult with USFWS and CDFW for compliance with the FESA and CESA. Compliance may require a Proposed Project-specific ITP under Section 10 of the FESA and California Fish and Game Code Section 2081. For operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project, SDG&E will use the NCCP to comply with the FESA and CESA.

SDG&E will also implement the Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions in Chapter 3 – Project Description during construction, which include implementation of specific NCCP Operational Protocols and the Vernal Pool Protocols in the NCCP. The SDG&E NCCP Operational Protocols are designed to provide avoidance and minimize impacts to all sensitive resources. The NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols are provided in Attachment 4.4–B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols.

With SDG&E's implementation the Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions, and through compliance with the FESA and CESA, all impacts associated with the Proposed Project are anticipated to be less than significant.

A preliminary impact assessment is provided in the subsections that follow. Locations of annual and bulbiferous perennial special-status plants, as well as most wildlife species, change from year to year and, therefore, may differ slightly in their spatial location during actual construction of the Proposed Project. General impacts to special-status plant and wildlife species are based on the Proposed Project design and the focused surveys that have been conducted to date.

Anticipated impacts resulting from Proposed Project activities are provided in Table 4.4-6: Anticipated Impacts to Vegetation Communities and are further designated by vegetation community.

Significance Criteria

Standards of impact significance were derived from Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. Under these guidelines, the Proposed Project may have a potentially significant impact if it will:

- Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS
- Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the CDFW or USFWS
- Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the CWA (including, but not limited to marsh, vernal pool, coastal, or other wetland areas) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted HCP, NCCP, or other approved local, regional, or state HCP

Direct take of a federally or state-listed species will be considered a significant impact. For species not federally or state-listed, such as SSC species, temporary and/or permanent habitat loss is not considered a significant impact unless a significant percentage of total suitable habitat throughout the species' range is degraded or somehow made unsuitable, or areas supporting a large proportion of the species population are substantially and adversely impacted. Potential impacts to nesting bird species will be considered significant due to their protection under the MBTA.

Table 4.4-6: Anticipated Impacts to Vegetation Communities

Vegetation Community	Total within Impact Area (acres)	Impact Area (acres)	
		Permanent	Temporary
Bare Ground	7.70	0.01	7.69
Disturbed Areas	6.46	0.02	6.45
Landscape/Ornamental	0.15	<0.01	0.15
Urban and Developed	28.05	<0.01	28.05
California Sagebrush-California Buckwheat Scrub*	1.56	0.01	1.54
Coast Prickly Pear Scrub*	0.44	0.00	0.44
Coast Prickly Pear Scrub (disturbed)*	0.04	0.00	0.04
Lemonade Berry Stand*	<0.01	0.00	<0.01
Annual Brome Grassland	2.73	0.02	2.71
Purple Needlegrass Grassland*	0.47	0.01	0.47
Tamarisk Thickets	0.23	0.00	0.23
Total	47.84	0.08	47.76

Source: Biological Technical Report (Chambers 2015)

Note: Numbers may not add up due to rounding.

* Sensitive natural community as defined in the Definitions subsection of Section 4.4.1: Methodology.

Question 4.4a – Sensitive Species

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

Special-Status Plants

Seventeen special-status plant species, as defined in Section 4.4.1 Methodology, and seven CRPR 4 plant species were documented within the Survey Area. These species are listed in Table 4.4-3: Special-Status Plant Species Observations within the Survey Area. Of these 24 plant species observed within the Survey Area, the following nine species were observed within the areas proposed for temporary construction activities:

- Singlewhorl burrowbush
- Small-flowered morning glory
- San Diego barrel cactus
- Munz's sage
- San Diego bur sage
- San Diego marsh elder
- San Diego County viguiera
- Ashy spike-moss
- Decumbent goldenbush

Four species—singlewhorl burrowbush, small-flowered morning glory, Munz’s sage, and San Diego County viguiera—were observed within areas proposed within the footprint of the poles and, therefore, will be directly impacted by the Proposed Project. The total area of impact anticipated to singlewhorl burrowbush is approximately 31.62 square feet, the total area of impact anticipated to small-flowered morning glory is approximately 15.81 square feet, the total area of impact anticipated to Munz’s sage is approximately 38.29 square feet, and the total area of impact anticipated to San Diego County viguiera is approximately 10.82 square feet. The location of special-status plant species within the Proposed Project area are included in Figure 5: Plant Species Observed of Attachment 4.4–A: Biological Technical Report.

Direct impacts to the special-status plant species observed within the temporary or permanent impact areas associated with the Proposed Project may include plant destruction during construction and unauthorized vehicle access outside of the approved access roads. These potential impacts will not result in a regional decline of these species because the numbers of individuals impacted are small in comparison to regional subpopulations of these species.

Impacts to special-status species not documented during focused surveys, such as annuals or bulbiferous perennials that did not germinate in the survey year, could occur within the Proposed Project area. Proposed project activities will result in a total of approximately 0.08 acre of permanent impacts from installation of the steel poles. Therefore, the maximum permanent impacts that may occur to special-status annuals or bulbiferous perennials not detected during focused surveys will total in up to 0.08 acre. As a result, potential permanent impacts to special-status plant species will not have a substantial adverse effect and can be considered negligible.

Indirect impacts may occur to all 24 special-status and CRPR 4 plant species observed within the broader Survey Area. Permanent indirect impacts include population fragmentation and introduction of non-native species that may out-compete special-status plants for resources. Temporary indirect impacts include construction-related runoff, sedimentation, and erosion that could adversely impact plant populations by altering site conditions sufficiently to favor the establishment of other native and non-native species. Construction-related dust could also reduce the rates of these special-status plants’ metabolic processes.

SDG&E’s NCCP Operational Protocols will apply to all special-status plant species. Consistent with NCCP Operational Protocol 14, locations of special-status plants to be avoided will be flagged during construction. Additional NCCP Operation Protocols that will minimize inadvertent damage and destruction of special-status plants include restricting vehicles to existing roads when feasible, minimizing impacts by defining the disturbance areas, providing biological monitoring to assist crews in avoiding and minimizing impacts at sites with the potential for direct impacts, and designing the construction activities to avoid or minimize new disturbance and erosion. As such, impacts to special-status plant species will be less-than-significant with the implementation of the NCCP Operational Protocols.

Special-Status Mammals

Proposed construction activities may cause both permanent and temporary impacts to five special-status mammal species that are either present within the Survey Area or have a moderate or high potential to occur within the Survey Area. Black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*

bennettii) is present within the Survey Area. Northwestern San Diego pocket mouse (*Lepus californicus bennettii*), San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), and western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) have moderate potential to occur. Although the western red bat has a moderate potential to occur, riparian and deciduous trees that may support roosting bats will not be directly affected by the Proposed Project.

Proposed construction activities—including the removal of wood poles, the installation of steel poles, and the clearing of vegetation during the creation of work areas and stringing sites—may cause impacts to these mammal species. Permanent impacts from these activities may include a reduction of foraging, burrowing, and nesting (woodrat) habitat as a result of vegetation trimming during construction of the steel poles. Temporary impacts may result from construction noise and ground vibration, as mammals may be deterred from inhabiting or foraging in areas near such activities. Total permanent impacts resulting from the construction of the Proposed Project will be approximately 0.08 acre. As a result, total permanent impacts will be limited because the maximum percentage of suitable habitat that may be removed is small (0.08 acre) in comparison to the total amount of available habitat for special-status mammals in the area.

The addition of power lines and other structures generally will provide new perching opportunities for raptor species, which can increase the potential for predation of special-status mammal species. However, the Proposed Project will result in an overall reduction of poles and does not include an extension of the existing power line. Therefore, the extent of predation on special-status and common mammal species is not anticipated to differ from existing conditions.

SDG&E will implement NCCP Operational Protocols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 54, 55, and 57, 64, 66, and 69 as provided in Attachment 4.4–B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, training, pre-construction surveys, monitoring during clearing and grading activities, avoidance of active burrows and dens, requiring all trenches and excavations to be inspected twice daily for wildlife entrapment, and requiring excavations to be sloped on one end to provide an escape route. NCCP Operation Protocols include avoidance and minimization measures for both upland and wetland/riparian habitats that these species may use at some time in their life cycle. Impacts to special-status mammal species will be less-than-significant with implementation of the NCCP Operational Protocols.

Special-Status Avian and Nesting Avian Species

Proposed construction activities may cause both permanent and temporary impacts to 23 special-status avian species that have either been observed on site or have a moderate or high potential to breed or forage within the Proposed Project area, as depicted in Table 4.4-4: Special-Status Wildlife Species' Potential to Occur. Direct impacts are possible to avian species that breed within the Proposed Project area, whereas minimal to no direct impacts will be expected to affect avian species that only forage over the Proposed Project area.

Direct and indirect impacts could affect the following avian species, which have either been confirmed or are suspected (i.e., high or moderate potential) of breeding within the Proposed Project area:

- Coastal California gnatcatcher (foraging and breeding confirmed)
- Least Bell's vireo (foraging and breeding confirmed)
- Clark's marsh wren (foraging confirmed, high breeding potential)
- Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (foraging confirmed, high breeding potential)
- Lawrence's goldfinch (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Allen's hummingbird (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Northern harrier (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Cooper's hawk (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Nuttall's woodpecker (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Yellow-breasted chat (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Yellow warbler (foraging confirmed, moderate breeding potential)
- Bell's sage sparrow (moderate foraging and breeding potential)

Proposed Project activities that could impact these 12 special-status avian species include the removal of wood poles (which can support cavity nesters and raptors depending on the design of cross arms) and the removal of vegetation, such as during installation of new steel poles. These impacts could result in the temporary or permanent loss of nesting and foraging habitat. Potential permanent impacts may include direct mortality of individuals as a result of construction or inadvertent destruction of nests; degradation or loss of foraging and/or breeding habitat; or removal of some food sources. Total permanent impacts resulting from the installation of the steel poles will be 0.08 acre, so the permanent loss of potential avian habitat will be negligible.

Temporary impacts may include an increase in noise and human presence from construction equipment and vehicles, which may cause birds to avoid that area, thus effectively and temporarily reducing available habitat for that species. Increased noise and human presence also may cause temporary disruptions in breeding or foraging behaviors. All of these potential impacts may result in a reduced reproduction rate for these species. However, both temporary and permanent impacts will be limited because the percentage of suitable habitat that will be removed is small in comparison to the total amount of available habitat for these species in the area.

While seven avian special-status species—the southwestern willow flycatcher, coastal cactus wren, olive-sided flycatcher, osprey, white-faced ibis, white-tailed kite, or double-crested cormorant—were documented to forage within the Survey Area or have a high or moderate potential to forage within the Survey Area, these species are either not expected to breed or have a low potential to breed within the Survey Area. As a result, no direct impacts to these species are anticipated. Indirect impacts anticipated to affect these seven species may include degradation or loss of foraging habitat, and/or removal of some food sources, and an increase in noise and human presence from construction equipment and vehicles. These impacts may cause

birds to avoid that area, thus effectively and temporarily reducing available habitat. Increased noise and human presence also may cause temporary disruptions in foraging behaviors.

Given the results of the 2014 protocol surveys, burrowing owls were unlikely to have used the Survey Area during the 2014 nesting season or 2014/2015 non-breeding season; however, this species has a high potential to occur within the Survey Area in future years. Temporary impacts to this species include noise and visual disturbance, and temporary loss of foraging habitat in discrete locations (i.e., pole work, staging yard, and stringing site locations). SDG&E will implement the following Ordinary Construction/Operating Restriction:

- If work is scheduled to occur within burrowing owl habitat (as determined in the Biological Technical Report), burrowing owl surveys will be conducted prior to construction consistent with the Take Avoidance Surveys described in the 2012 Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFW 2012). If burrowing owls are identified within approximately 150 meters (492 feet) of the proposed work area, SDG&E will implement the recommendations of said staff report to avoid impacts to burrowing owl.

Concerns regarding potential electrocution of wildlife species from power lines, which is considered a permanent impact to species protected under the MBTA, are primarily focused on avian species. Electrocution of avian species can occur from wing contact with two conductors or other energized equipment. Electrocution of avian species poses a greater potential hazard to larger birds, such as raptors, because their body sizes and wing spans are large enough to bridge the distance between the conductor wires and, thus, complete the electrical circuit. Power line structures will be constructed in compliance with SDG&E standards for avian protection. These measures minimize the potential for wildlife electrocution.

Power lines and other structures also provide potential perching opportunities for raptor species, which can increase the potential for predation of special-status wildlife and avian species by raptors. Special-status avian species that could be affected by increased predation in the Proposed Project area include coastal California gnatcatcher, least Bell's vireo, and other small songbirds. The Proposed Project will reduce the total number of poles. Therefore, construction of the Proposed Project is anticipated to have a less-than-significant impact on the predation of smaller wildlife species.

SDG&E will implement NCCP Operational Protocols 2 through 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 34, 35, 39, 40, 41, 44, 54, 55, and 57 to avoid impacts to special-status avian species and nesting avian species, as described in Attachment 4.4–B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, restricting vehicles to existing roads when feasible, avoiding wildlife to the extent practicable, conducting pre-construction surveys, and avoiding nesting season to the extent practicable, thus limiting the potential for direct impacts to these avian species. Potential impacts to special-status avian species and nesting avian species will be less-than-significant with implementation of the Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions, which include specific NCCP Operational Protocols.

Special-Status Amphibians and Reptiles

Construction activities could potentially impact one special-status amphibian species and seven special-status reptile species that are either present or have a moderate or high potential of occurring within the Proposed Project area: western spadefoot toad (*Spea hammondi*), orange-throated whiptail (*Aspisdoscelis hyperythra beldingi*), coast horned lizard (*Aspisdoscelis hyperythra beldingi*), Coronado Island skink (*Plestiodon skiltonianus interparietalis*), coast patch-nosed snake (*Salvadora hexalepis virgultea*), rosy boa (*Lichanura trivirgata*), two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), and red diamond rattlesnake (*Crotalus ruber*).

Permanent impacts resulting from the installation of new poles may result in the loss of potential habitat for these amphibian and reptile species, as well as the possibility of direct mortality of individuals during construction. Temporary disturbance may be caused by the increase in vehicles, equipment noise, and human activity, which may result in disruption of hibernation, feeding, and breeding. In addition, burrows used by these species may be removed, resulting in the potential for both direct mortality and indirect impacts (e.g., loss of access to thermal and protective cover). The presence of open, steep-walled trenches or excavations could lead to wildlife becoming entrapped, possibly leading to direct mortality of these individuals. Total permanent impacts resulting from the construction of the Proposed Project will be approximately 0.08 acre. As a result, permanent impacts will be limited because the maximum percentage of suitable habitat that will be removed is extremely small (0.08 acre) in comparison to the total amount of available habitat for these species in the area.

SDG&E will implement NCCP Operational Protocols 1 through 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 20, 24, 25, 27, 29, 34, 35, 37, 38, 41, 44, 54, 55, and 57, as provided in Attachment 4.4-B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, training, pre-construction surveys, monitoring during clearing and grading activities, avoidance of burrows, requiring the inspection of all trenches and excavations twice daily for wildlife entrapment, and requiring excavations to be sloped on one end to provide an escape route. Potential impacts to special-status reptile and amphibian species will be less-than-significant with implementation of the NCCP Operational Protocols.

Special-Status Invertebrates

Construction activities could potentially impact four special-status invertebrate species: Thorne's hairstreak, QCB, San Diego fairy shrimp, and Riverside fairy shrimp. Thorne's hairstreak was observed at the far northeastern end of the Survey Area and the remaining three species have a high potential to occur within suitable habitat in the Proposed Project area.

Thorne's Hairstreak and Quino Checkerspot Butterfly

The Proposed Project area is located in an area that is occupied by Thorne's hairstreak, and this area has also been historically occupied or has the potential for occupation by QCB and is within a USFWS-recommended survey area for the QCB. Potential permanent impacts resulting from the installation of new poles may result in the loss of potential foraging and breeding habitat, as well as direct mortality during construction of these two butterfly species. Total permanent impacts to all vegetation communities resulting from installation of the steel poles will be 0.08 acre, so permanent impacts to potential habitat for these two species will be minor.

Thorne's hairstreak butterfly is covered under the County of San Diego MSCP. Under the MSCP, suitable habitat for Thorne's hairstreak—Tecate cypress forest or habitats with dominant components of Tecate cypress—is protected. No permanent or temporary impacts to Tecate cypress forest or habitats with dominant components of Tecate cypress are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project. As such, no direct impacts to this species are anticipated.

Temporary impacts resulting from the installation of new poles, vehicle traffic, and stringing sites may disrupt QCB foraging behavior. These impacts will constitute take of the QCB. SDG&E has acquired take coverage for QCB under its Low-Effect HCP for QCB. In addition, SDG&E will implement the following Ordinary Construction/Operating Restriction:

- SDG&E will mitigate for impacts to QCB in accordance with the applicable ratio in SDG&E's Low Effect HCP for QCB

In addition, SDG&E will implement NCCP protocols 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 24, 25, 29, 34, 35, 41, 44, 54, 55, and 57, as provided in Attachment 4.4-B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, training, pre-construction surveys, monitoring during clearing and grading activities, and reducing speeds to 15 mph along Proposed Project access roads to reduce fugitive dust. Therefore, impacts to Thorne's hairstreak and QCB will be less-than-significant.

Special-Status Fairy Shrimp

Pole locations and work areas have been designed to avoid all mapped vernal pools. In addition, SDG&E will conduct protocol-level surveys prior to construction to determine the presence or absence of fairy shrimp species in suitable habitat in the following locations: Main Street Staging Yard, pole locations 1 through 78, and pole locations 96 through 117. If surveys cannot be feasibly completed prior to construction in these locations, the Proposed Project will avoid suitable habitat for special-status fairy shrimp when soils are wet. Surveys are not proposed between pole locations 78 and 96 because suitable habitat for special-status fairy shrimp within these areas are limited to vernal pools, which will not be temporarily or permanently impacted by the Proposed Project.

In addition, RECON performed a delineation of jurisdictional wetlands and waters within the Proposed Project area, included as Attachment 4.9- A: Jurisdictional Wetland Delineation Report in Section 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality. As discussed further in the report, no permanent dredge or fill impacts on vernal pools or fairy shrimp species are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project.

SDG&E will implement applicable Vernal Pool Protocols in the NCCP. These include Operational Protocols 64, 66, and 69, which require a biological monitor to be present for construction activities occurring adjacent to vernal pools, and ensure that vehicles are fueled and maintained at least 100 feet away from the nearest vernal pool. In addition, SDG&E will implement the following Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restriction:

- SDG&E will conduct protocol-level surveys prior to construction to determine the presence or absence of San Diego and/or Riverside fairy shrimp species in suitable habitat in the following locations: Main Street Staging Yard, within the access roads and proposed work areas between pole locations 1 through 78, and within the access roads and proposed work areas between pole locations 96 through 117. If the surveys identify the presence of San Diego and/or Riverside fairy shrimp species, Proposed Project-related activities will avoid impacts to occupied habitat when wet as determined by the aquatic or biological monitor. If surveys cannot be feasibly completed prior to construction in these locations, Proposed Project-related activities will avoid suitable habitat for San Diego and/or Riverside fairy shrimp when soils are wet as determined by the aquatic or biological monitor.

SDG&E anticipates it will need to drive through suitable special-status fairy shrimp habitat, when dry, during construction. Road ruts are continually shifting in location due to year-round vehicular disturbance from non-Proposed Project use of these access roads. SDG&E's use of these access roads for construction of the Proposed Project will not appreciably increase the baseline disturbance to road ruts caused by non-Proposed Project use of these access roads year-round. Protocol-level surveys for special-status fairy shrimp species will be performed during the 2015 to 2016 dry and wet seasons, and areas determined to support special-status fairy shrimp species will be avoided when wet. As such, temporary impacts such as disruption of foraging and/or breeding behavior from vehicle traffic are not anticipated to impact special-status fairy shrimp species beyond existing activity levels within the Proposed Project area.

In addition, SDG&E will implement NCCP Operational Protocols 1, 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 17, 24, 25, 29, 34, 35, 41, 44, 54, 55, and 57, as provided in Attachment 4.4-B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, training, pre-construction surveys, monitoring during clearing and grading activities, and reducing speeds to 15 mph along Proposed Project access roads to reduce the potential for direct impacts to special-status fairy shrimp species. With avoidance of vernal pool and road rut impacts, as described in this section, impacts to San Diego fairy shrimp and Riverside fairy shrimp vernal pool habitat will be less-than-significant.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat for two special-status wildlife species—San Diego fairy shrimp, and QCB—and one special-status plant species—Otay tarplant—is located within the Proposed Project area. Maps showing the location of critical habitat in the Proposed Project area are provided in Attachment 4.4-A: Biological Technical Report.

The maximum total area of permanent and temporary impacts to critical habitat designated for QCB, San Diego fairy shrimp, and Otay tarplant that may result from the Proposed Project is provided in Table 4.4-7: Anticipated Impacts to Critical Habitat.

Table 4.4-7: Anticipated Impacts to Critical Habitat

Species	Impacts to Critical Habitat within the Proposed Project Area (acres)		
	Permanent	Temporary	Total
San Diego fairy shrimp	<0.01	0.30	0.31
QCB	<0.01	0.94	0.95
Otay tarplant	0.03	4.10	4.13
Total¹²	0.05	5.34	5.39

Source: USFWS Critical Habitat Portal (2014)

As described previously, any impacts to critical habitat for QCB will be mitigated in accordance with the applicable ratio in SDG&E's Low Effect HCP for QCB. In accordance with FESA Section 3(5)(A)(i), the USFWS considers primary constituent elements (PCEs)—which represent physical and biological features that are essential to the conservation of the species—when determining critical habitat for federally listed species. For San Diego fairy, the USFWS defines PCEs as:

- Vernal pools with shallow to moderate depths (2 to 12 inches) that hold water for sufficient lengths of time (7 to 60 days) necessary for incubation, maturation, and reproduction of the San Diego fairy shrimp, in all but the driest years;
- Topographic features characterized by mounds and swales and depressions within a matrix of surrounding uplands that result in complexes of continuously, or intermittently, flowing surface water in the swales connecting the pools described in above, providing for dispersal and promoting hydroperiods of adequate length in the pools (i.e., the vernal pool watershed); and
- Flat to gently sloping topography, and any soil type with a clay component and/or an impermeable surface or subsurface layer known to support vernal pool habitat (including Carlsbad, Chesterton, Diablo, Huerhuero, Linne, Olivenhain, Placentia, Redding, and Stockpen soils).

The USFWS defines the PCEs for Otay tarplant as: soils with a high clay content (generally greater than 25 percent) (or clay intrusions or lenses) that are associated with grasslands, open coastal sage scrub, or maritime succulent scrub communities between 80 and 1,000 feet elevation.

¹² Figures may not add up due to rounding.

Critical habitat for San Diego fairy shrimp and Otay tarplant that meet the PCEs—as defined above—is also considered to be habitat suitable for these federally listed species. As a result, impacts to critical habitat that meets the PCEs for these species will be minimized and mitigated as specified in the following Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restriction:

- Temporary and permanent impacts to federally and state-listed species and their habitats will be mitigated at a one-to-one ratio, or as required by the USFWS and the CDFW.

In addition, impacts to these three species will be minimized and avoided as specified for the individual species or species groups through implementation of NCCP Operational Protocols 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 17, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 34, 35, 39, 41, 44, 54, 55, 57, 64, 66, and 69, as described in previous sections. With the implementation of these Operational Protocols and the Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions, impacts to critical habitat for San Diego fairy shrimp, QCB, and Otay tarplant will be less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Operation and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project will be conducted in the same manner as the existing facilities. Operation and maintenance activities are expected to decrease slightly as a result of the Proposed Project due to the lower maintenance requirements of the replacement steel poles relative to the existing wood poles. As a result, there will be no increase in vehicle trips and activities and no increase in the potential to impact species and habitat as a result of the Proposed Project.

To further minimize operation and maintenance activities within the Proposed Project area, SDG&E will utilize NCCP Operational Protocols 1 through 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13 through 17, 20, 24, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30, 34, 35, 37 through 44, 54, 55, and 57, as described in Attachment 4.4–B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, designing the operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project to minimize disturbance, minimizing impacts by defining the disturbance areas, restricting vehicles to existing roads when feasible, monitoring during clearing and grading activities, and minimizing erosion. With implementation of these NCCP Operational Protocols there will be no impacts from operation and maintenance activities.

Question 4.4b – Sensitive Natural Communities

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

Sensitive natural communities are communities that have limited distribution statewide or within a county or region and are often vulnerable to the environmental effects of projects. Sensitive natural communities in the Proposed Project area are listed in Section 4.4.2 Existing Conditions. The Proposed Project is anticipated to result in permanent and temporary impacts to sensitive natural communities, as detailed in Table 4.4-8: Anticipated Impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities. Permanent direct impacts to these communities will occur as a result of vegetation clearing to install steel poles. Temporary direct impacts to sensitive natural communities may include vegetation clearing during construction activities. Indirect impacts

will be considered temporary and may include additional dust deposition on the leaves of plants comprising sensitive natural communities, thus reducing their photosynthetic vigor.

Table 4.4-8: Anticipated Impacts to Sensitive Natural Communities

Vegetation Community	Total within Impact Area (acres)	Impact Area (acres)	
		Permanent	Temporary
Scrub and Chaparral			
California Sagebrush-California Buckwheat Scrub	1.56	0.01	1.54
Coast Prickly Pear Scrub	0.44	0.00	0.44
Coast Prickly Pear Scrub (disturbed)	0.04	0.00	0.04
Lemonade Berry Stand	<0.01	0.00	<0.01
Grasslands, Meadows, and Other Herbaceous Communities			
Purple Needlegrass Grassland	0.47	0.01	0.47
Total	2.52	0.02	2.50

To minimize impacts to sensitive natural communities, SDG&E will implement NCCP Operational Protocols 7, 11, 13 through 17, 20 through 25, 28, 29, 30, 35, 36, 39, 41 through 44, and 57, as detailed in Attachment 4.4-B: SDG&E Subregional NCCP Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocols. These protocols include, but are not limited to, designing the Proposed Project to avoid or minimize new disturbance and erosion, minimizing impacts by defining the disturbance areas, flagging habitats for avoidance during construction, and restricting vehicles to existing roads when feasible. Implementation of the previously listed NCCP Operational Protocols will ensure that impacts to sensitive natural communities will be less than significant.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Operation and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project will be conducted in the same manner as the existing facilities, which includes the implementation of NCCP Operational Protocols. Operation and maintenance activities are expected to decrease slightly as a result of the Proposed Project due to the lower maintenance requirements of the replacement steel poles relative to the existing wood poles. As a result, there will be no increase in the number of vehicle trips and activities and no increase in the potential to impact sensitive natural communities over baseline conditions.

Question 4.4c – Effects on Jurisdictional Waters

Construction – Less-than-Significant Impact

The Proposed Project has been designed to avoid impacts to wetlands and non-wetland waters that are regulated by USACE, CDFW, and RWQCB pursuant to the applicable federal and state regulations.

When an existing access road crosses through a jurisdictional feature, driving through the feature is allowed and is not an activity requiring permits. However, conducting work activities, parking of vehicles, staging equipment, or the placement of fill of any sort, is not allowed within jurisdictional features without acquiring appropriate state and federal aquatic resource permits. Additional Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions are described in Section 4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality to minimizing impacts to jurisdictional drainage crossings.

With the implementation of these Project Design Features and Ordinary Construction/Operating Restrictions, including NCCP Operational Protocol 11 and Vernal Pool Protocolss 64, 66, and 69, impacts to wetlands (e.g., vernal pools) under the jurisdiction of the USACE, CDFW, and RWQCB will be avoided.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Operation and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project will be conducted in the same manner as the existing facilities. Operation and maintenance activities are expected to decrease slightly as a result of the Proposed Project due to the lower maintenance requirements of the replacement steel poles relative to the existing wood poles and the reduction of the total number of poles. As a result, there will be no increase in the number of vehicle trips and activities, and no increase in the potential to impact vernal pool habitats as a result of operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project. Therefore, no additional impacts to jurisdictional waters (e.g., vernal pools) are anticipated as a result of the Proposed Project.

Question 4.4d – Interfere with Native Wildlife Movement

Construction – No Impact

The proposed construction activities are not anticipated to impact or restrict terrestrial or aquatic wildlife movement, due to the temporary and intermittent locations of construction activities outside the drainage features. In addition, the new poles will be installed in a pre-existing power line ROW. No extension of this power line is proposed; therefore, the quality of the adjacent wildlife movement corridors for terrestrial species will not be affected during construction. No additional impacts to terrestrial or aquatic wildlife corridors are anticipated.

Operation and Maintenance – No Impact

Operation and maintenance activities for the Proposed Project will be conducted in the same manner as the existing facilities. Operation and maintenance activities are expected to decrease slightly as a result of the Proposed Project due to the lower maintenance requirements of the replacement steel poles relative to the existing wood poles and the reduction of the total number of poles. As a result, operation and maintenance activities will not directly impact or restrict general wildlife movement, either for terrestrial or aquatic (i.e., vernal pool) species due to the temporary and intermittent nature of operation and maintenance activities typically associated with such facilities. These operation and maintenance activities will occur outside existing drainage features and within pole areas and/or along access roads. As a result, no impacts are anticipated.

Question 4.4e – Conflict with Local Policies – *No Impact*

Construction and operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project will not conflict with any local environmental policies or ordinances promulgated to protect biological resources. The Proposed Project is located within the cities of San Diego and Chula Vista, and in unincorporated San Diego County. Based on a review of applicable local policies, the Proposed Project will not conflict with local policies, which include the City of San Diego MSCP Subarea Plan and the City of Chula Vista MSCP Subarea Plan. The Proposed Project is also consistent with relevant policies in the County of San Diego's General Plan. The Proposed Project is not a new construction project, and impacts within the City of San Diego's MHPA and the Otay Ranch Preserve are temporary in nature and consistent with the policies outlined in those plans. In addition, the Proposed Project will not conflict with the monitoring, management, or maintenance of either the City of San Diego's MHPA or the Otay Ranch Preserve. Therefore, the Proposed Project will not conflict with any local policies or plans protecting biological resources. Additional detail on the Proposed Project's consistency with existing land use regulations is provided in Table 4.10-A: Policies Consistency Analysis in Section 4.10 Land Use and Planning.

Question 4.4f – Conflict with Conservation Plan – *No Impact*

SDG&E's existing NCCP and Low-Effect HCP for QCB are the only conservation plans that apply to the Proposed Project area. The Proposed Project will not conflict with the provisions of either of these conservation plans, and there will be no impact.

SDG&E will follow the Operational Protocols and Vernal Pool Protocolss identified in the NCCP for construction and operations and maintenance of the Proposed Project. SDG&E will follow the Low-Effect HCP for QCB for construction and operations and maintenance of the Proposed Project.

SDG&E will not seek incidental take coverage for temporary and permanent impacts to natural habitat resulting from construction of the Proposed Project through the NCCP, and SDG&E will not rely on the mitigation bank associated with the NCCP to fulfill the mitigation requirements for those impacts. SDG&E will instead consult with USFWS and CDFW for compliance with the FESA and CESA for construction of the Proposed Project. Compliance may require a project-specific ITP under Section 10 of the FESA and California Fish and Game Code Section 2081. For operation and maintenance of the Proposed Project, SDG&E will use the NCCP to comply with the FESA and CESA.

4.4.4 Applicant-Proposed Measures

Because the Proposed Project will not result in significant impacts to biological resources, no applicant-proposed measures have been proposed.

4.4.5 References

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