

Docket Number 06-SPPE-2
First Round Data Requests
EI Centro Unit 3 Repower Project
July 2006

DATA REQUEST #5
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

BACKGROUND

The burrowing owl is considered a California Species of Concern by the California Department of Fish and Game and a Bird of Conservation Concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The SPPE Application for the EI Centro Unit 3 Repower Section 6.3, page 6.3-17, notes that a burrowing owl pair resides on the southern border of the IID property. This page also indicates that mitigation for potential impacts is presented in Section 6.3.3. However, no specific mitigation measures for burrowing owls are given. Other SPPE applications in the vicinity, such as that of the Niland Gas Turbine project (06-SPPE-1), have noted similar potential impacts and included species-specific mitigation measures for burrowing owls. In addition, past biological resources reports for the EI Centro Unit 2 Repowering project (90-SPPE-2) indicate a likelihood for additional burrowing owls on the ECGS site.

DATA REQUEST

5. Please provide a discussion of the proposed mitigation measures for burrowing owls considering the likelihood of more than one active burrow on-site, including a discussion of the method used to create relocation burrows, if necessary.

DATA RESPONSE

IID currently manages their natural resources in accordance with a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), which was developed in 2002 for the IID Water Conservation and Transfer Project. The Applicant proposes to manage burrowing owl resources associated with the Project in accordance with the existing HCP. The HCP referenced is a public document available via the Internet (www.iid.com/water/transfer.html). The HCP also meets the requirements for a Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP) as outlined in the California Endangered Species Act. The HCP is currently in draft form. However, as the Unit 3 Repower Project moves forward the conservation measures and mitigation requirements as they relate to the burrowing owl are not expected to change. Therefore, the Applicant proposes to follow the conservation measures and mitigation requirements set forth for the burrowing owl in the HCP.

Furthermore, with respect to owl relocation, a determination will be made to build burrows (1) during the pre-construction survey to determine presence versus absence, or (2) during construction monitoring if activities appear to result in

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perturbation to the owls. If owls are not present during the pre-construction survey for areas that will be impacted as a result of the Project, no burrow construction will be considered necessary. A biologist (experienced in installing artificial burrowing owl burrows) would select suitable locations regarding the least potential for disturbances, based upon assessment and favorable habitat attributes.