

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section 8	Biological Resources	8-1
8.1	Sensitive Species.....	8-1
8.2	Results	8-2
8.3	Not Used.....	8-2
8.4	Mitigation.....	8-2

8.0 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The Hanford Energy Park Peaker (HEPP) will be located on previously disturbed vacant land in an industrial park. The transmission line route will run along existing roadways. Certain areas in Kings County provide habitat for a number of sensitive plant and animal species. Biological surveys were conducted in the project area in June 1999 and February 2000. The surveys were conducted primarily for federal- and state-listed plant and animal species in accordance with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) approved survey methodologies for sensitive species. Concurrently, other special status plant and wildlife species with potential to occur in the areas were surveyed. The surveys in the area of the HEPP included the 10-acre facility site surrounded by a 500-foot primary buffer area and a one-mile secondary buffer area. The transmission line corridor was surveyed using a method suggested by the CEC that involved a 100-foot corridor centered on the transmission line with a primary buffer area 500 feet on either side of the corridor. A secondary buffer zone, consisting of an additional 500 feet on either side of the primary buffer zone, was also surveyed.

During the surveys, all dens, burrows, and other evidence of special status species were noted. A vascular plant list was also compiled. Sensitive plants and animals were found at or near the proposed facilities and associated utility corridor, as listed in Section 8.2. No significant biological resources were identified within the area to be impacted by the construction and operation of the HEPP. Consequently, no significant impacts to biological resources are expected.

Intensively managed agricultural and industrial complexes dominate the HEPP site. Natural vegetation is restricted to fallow farm fields, the Burlington Northern & Santa Fe (BNSF) Railway right-of-way, along fence lines, and on the banks of agricultural drainage sumps. All of these areas are disturbed on a regular basis, and plants are predominantly weedy and non-native to California. The HEPP lies outside of any biologically sensitive areas.

8.1 SENSITIVE SPECIES

Lists of special status wildlife and plant species known to occur or to potentially occur in the vicinity of the HEPP site are shown in Table 8.2-1 of Exhibit 8A. These species were identified by searching the California Natural Diversity Database, reviewing unpublished biological reports produced for other projects in the area of the HEPP, and staff experience and knowledge of sensitive flora and fauna in the central San Joaquin Valley.

Surveys at the HEPP site were conducted by William J. Vanherweg on June 9, 1999, and February 1, 2000. The surveys were conducted primarily for listed plant and animal species, following USFWS- and CDFG-approved survey methodologies for sensitive species, while concurrently surveying for other special status plant and wildlife species having potential to occur in the area.

The proposed transmission route and the proposed HEPP site were surveyed by walking transects 50 feet wide. Additional buffer zones of 1,000 feet on each side of the routes and around the proposed HEPP site were also surveyed. During the surveys, all dens, burrows, and other evidence of special status species were noted.

8.2 RESULTS

The proposed HEPP site is currently undeveloped, previously disturbed land. The land has evidence of prior agricultural use. The site has no habitat features that would be of value to any sensitive species. There are no sensitive wildlife or plant resources at the site.

The proposed transmission route follows a paved city street and county road. The buffer areas on either side of the proposed route consist entirely of intensively managed agriculture and industrial complexes. No sensitive wildlife or plant resources were found in the proposed transmission route or within 1,000 feet of the route. No designated critical habitats, wetlands, vernal pools, or preserves have been identified on site or immediately adjacent to the site.

8.3 NOT USED**8.4 MITIGATION**

Preconstruction biological surveys will need to be undertaken at least 10 days before the start of construction activity for the electrical transmission line. If San Joaquin kit foxes, burrowing owls, or nesting raptors are found in or near the corridors during these surveys, additional mitigation measures may be necessary to comply with relevant laws, ordinances, regulations, and standards. In addition, GWF will provide funds to the Kern Water Mitigation Bank for the purchase of compensation acreage to mitigate any impacts from the small amount of land disturbance resulting from construction of the HEPP.