

**RIVERSIDE ENERGY RESOURCE CENTER
SMALL POWER PLANT EXEMPTION
RESPONSE TO CEC DATA REQUESTS
04-SPPE-01**

Technical Area: Biological Resources

BACKGROUND

The Application for the Riverside Energy Resource Center (RERC) Small Power Plant Exemption (SPPE) Section 6.3 page 143 discusses the Western Riverside County Multispecies Habitat Conservation Plan (WRC MSHCP). There are several sections cited (1.5.1-1.5.4) that describe mitigation measures, but it is unclear whether they are sections in the MSHCP or the SPPE Application. Staff could not find the appropriate sections. On the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) website it says that permits for the WRC MSHCP have not been issued yet.

Data Request 21: Please provide the sections that were cited and clarify in which document they can be found. Additionally, please provide a copy of the MSHCP.

Response: The citations refer to “Mitigation and Monitoring” subsections of the biological resources section of the SPPE document. However, when the biological section was formatted into the larger SPPE document, the references to Section 1.5.1, 1.5.2, 1.5.3, 1.5.4, and 1.5.5 were not updated to reflect the SPPE numbering format. These references refer to subsections in “Mitigation and Monitoring” (originally Section 1.5 in the biology report). They include “Incidental Take Minimization Measures Identified in the WRC MSHCP” (originally Section 1.5.1), “Preconstruction Surveys” (originally Section 1.5.2), “Environmental Awareness Training” (originally Section 1.5.3), “Species-Specific Measures” (originally Section 1.5.4), and “Best Management Practices” (originally Section 1.5.5). The final Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan is located at the following address: <http://www.rcip.org/conservation.htm>.

Data Request 22: Please provide confirmation from the CDFG and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that the MSHCP can be used. If it can not be used provide an alternate schedule and process to obtain the necessary permits or confirmation that no take permits are required for special status species

Response: According to the County of Riverside in a telephone conversation dated Monday 17 May 2004, the 10(a) permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Section 2081 permit from the California Department of Fish and Game are expected to be issued the week of 17 – 21 May 2004. Per a subsequent telephone conversation on Wednesday 2 June 2004 with Ms. Caroline Luna, General manager of the Western Riverside County Regional Conservation Authority, the 10(a) permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Section 2081 permit from the California Department of Fish and Game are expected to be issued by 4 June 2004.

BACKGROUND

The SPPE Application contains information about the transmission line in Section 4. Raptors that are protected by LORS identified in Section 6.3.2 can be adversely affected by colliding with transmission lines or electrocution while perching on power poles. Red-tailed hawks were observed over the area during the staff site visit and are also included in the species list in Appendix 6.3.

Data Request 23: Please provide additional information on the proposed transmission line spacing, the pole design, and grounding measures that the RERC is implementing. The information can be provided in writing and/or in a figure. Measures should be consistent with the Avian Power Line Interaction Committee *Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Power Lines: The State of the Art in 1996* (1996).

Response: The transmission lines are designed in accordance with typical industry practices. The structures are designed with horizontal and vertical spacings to optimize the necessary electrical clearances. These clearances also provide basic raptor protection for possible line faults involving the raptors.

The grounding design for the project will consist of the following:

- a. Ground wire connected to steel pad at base of all poles
- b. Ground wire connected to ground rod and installed below ground.
- c. Resistivity measurements for each ground rod installed.

BACKGROUND

The SPPE Application, Section 6.3 page 147 lists several mitigation measures for burrowing owls. One of the measures includes constructing artificial burrows adjacent to the site, with the locations identified on the final landscaping plan.

Data Request 24: Please provide the potential locations for the artificial burrows on the landscaping plan and a description of the habitat around the potential burrow sites. Include in the description any future changes to the habitat due to landscaping.

Response: The burrowing owl artificial burrows will be located on the steep slope to the east/northeast of the plant site. These slopes are currently barren or support sparse flat-top buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) shrubs. As part of the landscape plan, the slope around the artificial burrows will be hydroseeded with a slurry consisting of native seeds, mulch, tackifier and water. Local seeds of flat-top buckwheat, deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), California poppy (*Eschscholzia californica*), rancher's fireweed (*Amsinckia menziesii*), and miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*) will be applied at a rate of about 15-20 pounds per acre. As such, post-landscaping the habitat on the slopes may be more diverse than at present, with species that are present at the site but not currently on the slopes. The conceptual landscape plan is attached.

