



State of California  
 The Natural Resources Agency  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

# NOTICE OF EXEMPTION

2019090295

<b>PROJECT TITLE</b>	Lake Skinner Remote Area Weather Station (3100-RRU-2019-002)		
<b>PROJECT LOCATION</b>	Portion of Section 11, T7S, R2W, SBB&M, Bachelor Mountain USGS 7.5' Quadrangle	<b>COUNTY</b>	Riverside
<b>LEAD AGENCY</b>	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE)		
<b>CONTACT</b>	Gregg Bratcher, Unit Forester	<b>PHONE</b>	(951)-940-6902
<b>ADDRESS</b>	210 W. San Jacinto Ave, Perris CA, 92570		

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this project is for installation and future maintenance of a Remote Area Weather Station (RAWS) in the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve adjacent to Lake Skinner. The site is in the Auld Valley approximately 10 miles northeast of Temecula, California. The need for the RAWS is due to several factors including: the lack of RAWS coverage in that area, the abundant fire history for that area, the location of State Responsibility Area (SRA) adjacent to the community of Temecula and the amount of VMP burning CAL FIRE conducts for fuels reduction projects at the Lake Skinner State Preserve. A permanent RAWS station in that area will support the Fire Danger Operating plan with quantifying data to set the management decisions concerning dispatch levels and staffing levels, while using the data outputs during fuel reduction efforts to make sound management decisions for broadcast burning. These efforts will reduce the amount of fire starts in the SRA while reducing the acreage size of any starts due to the number of treated acres and due to the appropriate staffing levels made by the FDOP recognition. The RAWS station will be installed on a disturbed site near an existing tower that has an access trail in place. The project area consists of grassland at approximately 1660 feet in elevation. No new roads will be constructed. Installation will produce negligible levels of ground disturbance, as the installation requires only three eighteen-inch nails to set the three legs of the station in place. Existing roads will be utilized to transport materials to site, and for any maintenance activities once installed.

**EXEMPTION STATUS**

- Categorical Exemption Type and Section: Class 3 §15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures
- Statutory Exemption (state code section):
- Ministerial (§21080(b)(1); 15268)
- Declared Emergency (§21080(b)(3); 15269(a))
- Emergency Project (§21080(b)(4); 15269(b)(c))

**REASONS PROJECT IS EXEMPT**

This project fits under portions of 3 Categorical Exemption "15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" - "Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small, facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure." Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland or timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation or traffic, or to utilities and service systems. Documentation of the environmental review completed by the Department is kept on file at the CAL FIRE, Riverside Unit, 25380 Franklin Dr. Idyllwild CA, 92549.

**DATE RECEIVED FOR FILING**

Governor's Office of Planning & Research

SEP 11 2019

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

 9/6/19  
 Matthew Reischman, Assistant Deputy Director Date  
 California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection



# California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection Environmental Review Report for an Exempt Project

**Note:** This report form is intended for use by California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) staff to document a limited environmental impact analysis supporting the filing of a notice of exemption document for a proposed CAL FIRE project. Although the project appears to fit within the descriptions for allowable categorical exemptions, this report presents CAL FIRE's review for possible exceptions that would preclude finding the project to be categorically exempt as discussed in CEQA Guidelines Section 15300.2. This report will be filed with the CEQA administrative record for this project to document the environmental impact analysis conducted by CAL FIRE.

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Project Name:	Lake Skinner Remote Area Weather Station
Project Number:	3100-RRU-2019-002
Program Type:	Unit Allocated CCI Grant Funds
CAL FIRE Unit:	RRU
County:	Riverside
Acres:	~1/10 <sup>th</sup> acre
Legal Location:	Portion of Section 11, T7S, R2W, SBB&M
Name of USGS 7.5' Quad Map(s):	Bachelor Mountain
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Vicinity Map Attached <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Project Location Map Attached <input type="checkbox"/> Photos Attached	

<b>Other Public Agency Review or Permit Required:</b>		
Would the project result in:	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
Alterations to a watercourse (DFW - Lake and Stream Alteration Agreement)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Conversion of timberland (CAL FIRE - Conversion Permit or Exemption)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Demolition (Local Air District - Demolition Permit)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Soil disturbance over 1 acre (RWQCB - SWPPP)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Fill of possible wetlands (404 Permit - USACE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Discuss any above-listed topic item checked Yes and consultation with agencies:</b>		

**PROJECT DESCRIPTION**

The purpose of this project is for installation and future maintenance of a Remote Area Weather Station (RAWS) in the Southwestern Riverside County Multi-Species Reserve adjacent to Lake Skinner. The site is in the Auld Valley approximately 10 miles northeast of Temecula, California. The need for the RAWS is due to several factors including: the lack of RAWS coverage in that area, the abundant fire history for that area, the location of State Responsibility Area (SRA) adjacent to the community of Temecula and the amount of VMP burning CAL FIRE conducts for fuels reduction projects at the Lake Skinner State Preserve. A permanent RAWS station in that area will support the Fire Danger Operating plan with quantifying data to set the management decisions concerning dispatch levels and staffing levels, while using the data outputs during fuel reduction efforts to make sound management decisions for broadcast burning. These efforts will reduce the amount of fire starts in the SRA while reducing the acreage size of any starts due to the number of treated acres and due to the appropriate staffing levels made by the FDOP recognition. The RAWS station will be installed on a disturbed site near an existing tower that has an access trail in place. The project area consists of grassland at approximately 1660 feet in elevation. No new roads will be constructed. Installation will produce negligible levels of ground disturbance, as the installation requires only three eighteen-inch nails to set the three legs of the station in place. Existing roads will be utilized to transport materials to site, and for any maintenance activities once installed.

### Environmental Impact Analysis

**Aesthetics**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:  
 The aesthetics of the area will not be negatively impacted by the installation of the RAWS. The station itself is small in size and will not be visible from long distances. No new roads or assessor structures will be constructed. No significant adverse impacts to aesthetics are anticipated from the installation of the RAWS.

**Agriculture and Forest Resources**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 Yes  No Would any trees be felled? If yes, discuss protection of nesting birds, if necessary.  
 Yes  No Would the project convert any prime or unique farmland?  
 Yes  No Would the project result in the conversion of forest land or timberland to non-forest use?  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:  
 The RAWS station will have no impact on Agriculture or Forest Resources.

**Air Quality**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 Yes  No The local Air Quality Management District guidelines for dust abatement and other air quality concerns were reviewed for this project.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:  
 The only impact to air quality will come from the use of vehicles to transport the RAWS station to the site for installation, which will occur over a short period of time with likely a single vehicle. No significant adverse impacts to Air Quality will occur as a result of project operations.

**Biological Resources**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 Yes  No Will the project potentially effect biological resources?  
 Yes  No Was a current California Natural Diversity Database review completed? Results discussed below:  
 Yes  No Was a biological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:  
 A one mile search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was conducted on March 14, 2019, with a special focus on species that are on the Federal or State Threatened, Endangered, Proposed, or Candidate lists. The list was evaluated for likelihood of sensitive species occurring within the project area. Species evaluations are documented below.

Species and Listing Status	Habitat	Analysis
<i>Abronia villosa</i> var. <i>aurita</i> , chaparral sand-verbena State: None Federal: None CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1	Chaparral Coastal scrub Desert dunes	Chaparral sand-verbena is an annual herb that typically blooms between January and September. This species has a potential to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i> , tricolored blackbird State: Candidate Endangered Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern	Freshwater marsh Marsh & swamp Swamp Wetland	The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the tricolored blackbird within 1 mile of the project area, however no occurrences have been observed during site visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.

<p><i>Allium munzii</i>, Munz's onion                  State: Threatened                  Federal: Endangered                  CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Cismontane woodland                  Coastal scrub                  Pinon &amp; juniper woodlands</p>	<p>Munz's onion is a perennial herb that typically blooms between March and May. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during filed visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Ambrosia pumila</i>, San Diego ambrosia                  State: None                  Federal: Endangered                  CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Coastal scrub                  Valley &amp; foothill grassland</p>	<p>San Diego ambrosia is a perennial herb that typically blooms between April and October. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during filed visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Anniella stebbinsi</i>, southern California legless lizard                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Broadleaved upland forest                  Chaparral                  Coastal dunes                  Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the southern California legless lizard within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The southern California legless lizard occurs in sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation, generally in moist, loose soil. They prefer soils with a high moisture content. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i>, coastal whiptail                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Desert                  Riparian woodland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the coastal whiptail in proximity to the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The coastal whiptail is found in deserts and semi-arid areas with sparse vegetation and open areas, as well as woodland &amp; riparian areas. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>

<p><i>Athene cunicularia</i>, burrowing owl                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal prairie                  Coastal scrub                  Great Basin grassland                  Great Basin scrub                  Mojavean desert scrub                  Sonoran desert scrub                  Valley &amp; foothill grassland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the burrowing owl within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>, vernal pool fairy shrimp                  State: None                  Federal: Threatened</p>	<p>Valley &amp; foothill grassland                  Vernal pool                  Wetland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the vernal pool fairy shrimp within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Centromadia pungens ssp. Laevis</i>, smooth tarplant                  State: None                  Federal: None                  CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Alkali playa                  Chenopod scrub                  Meadow &amp; seep                  Riparian woodland                  Valley &amp; foothill grassland                  Wetland</p>	<p>Smooth tarplant is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and September. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during field visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Chaetodipus fallax fallax</i>, northwestern San Diego pocket mouse                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the northwestern San Diego pocket mouse within 1 mile of the project area which primarily inhabits coastal scrub, chaparral, grasslands, and sagebrush in western San Diego County. They prefer sandy, herbaceous areas, usually in association with rocks or coarse gravel, areas of which are not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Chorizanthe parryi var. parryi</i>, Parry's spineflower                  State: None                  Federal: None                  CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Cismontane woodland                  Coastal scrub                  Valley &amp; foothill grassland</p>	<p>Parry's spineflower is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and June. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during field visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. No negative impacts will occur as a result of project operations.</p>

<p><i>Chorizanthe polygonoides</i> var. <i>longispina</i>, long-spined spineflower                  State: None                  Federal: None                  CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Coastal scrub                  Meadow &amp; seep                  Ultramafic                  Valley &amp; foothill grassland                  Vernal pool</p>	<p>Long-spined spineflower is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and July. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during filed visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Circus hudsonius</i>, northern harrier                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal scrub                  Great Basin grassland                  Marsh &amp; swamp                  Riparian scrub                  Valley &amp; foothill grassland                  Wetland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the northern harrier within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Coleonyx variegatus abbotti</i>, San Diego banded geko                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the San Diego banded geko within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Crotalus ruber</i>, red-diamond rattlesnake                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Chaparral                  Mojavean desert scrub                  Sonoran desert scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the potential for the red-diamond rattlesnake to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Cryptantha wigginsii</i>, Wiggins' cryptantha                  State: None                  Federal: None                  CA Rare Plant Rank: 1B.2</p>	<p>Coastal scrub</p>	<p>Wiggins' cryptantha is an annual herb that typically blooms between February and June. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during filed visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>

<p><i>Dipodomys stephensi</i>, Stephen's kangaroo rat State: Threatened Federal: Endangered</p>	<p>Coastal scrub, Valley &amp; foothill grassland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the Stephen's kangaroo rat within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred within the proposed project area during field visits. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Elanus leucurus</i>, white-tailed kite State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Fully Protected</p>	<p>Cismontane woodland Marsh &amp; swamp Riparian woodland Valley &amp; foothill grassland Wetland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the white-tailed kite within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred within the proposed project area during field visits. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Emys marmorata</i>, western pond turtle State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Aquatic Artificial flowing waters Klamath/North coast flowing waters Klamath/North coast standing waters Marsh &amp; swamp Sacramento/San Joaquin flowing waters Sacramento/San Joaquin standing waters South coast flowing waters South coast standing waters Wetland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the western pond turtle within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Euphydryas editha quino</i>, quino checkerspot butterfly State: None Federal: Endangered</p>	<p>Chaparral Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the quino checkerspot butterfly within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>, bald eagle State: Endangered Federal: Delisted</p>	<p>Lower montane coniferous forest Oldgrowth</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the bald eagle within one mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>

<p><i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>, loggerhead shrike                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Broadleaved upland forest                  Desert wash                  Joshua tree woodland                  Mojavean desert scrub                  Pinon &amp; juniper woodlands                  Riparian woodland                  Sonoran desert scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the loggerhead shrike within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The loggerhead shrike prefers open country for hunting, with perches for scanning, and fairly dense shrubs and brush for nesting. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Lepus californicus bennettii</i>, San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit within 1 mile of the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. Necessary habitat is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Navarretia fossalis</i>, spreading navarretia                  State: None                  Federal: Threatened                  Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Alkali playa                  Chenopod scrub                  Marsh &amp; swamp                  Vernal pool                  Wetland</p>	<p>Spreading navarretia is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and June. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during field visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i>, San Diego desert woodrat                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the San Diego desert woodrat within 1 mile of the project area which primarily inhabit coastal scrub of Southern California from San Diego County to San Luis Obispo County. They prefer moderate to dense canopies, and are particularly abundant in rock outcrops, rocky cliffs, and slopes. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>

<p><i>Orcuttia californica</i>, California <i>Orcutt grass</i> State: Endangered Federal: Endangered Rare Plant Rank: 1B.1</p>	<p>Vernal pool Wetland</p>	<p>California Orcutt grass is an annual grass that typically blooms between April and August. While the CNDDDB indicates the presence of the species within 1 mile of the project area, no detections have been made during field visits. No herbaceous species will be removed during project operations. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Perognathus longimembris brevinasus</i>, Los Angeles pocket mouse State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the potential for the Los Angeles pocket mouse to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Perognathus longimembris internationalis</i>, Jacumba pocket mouse State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal scrub Desert wash Sonoran desert scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the potential for the Jacumba pocket mouse to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>, coast horned lizard State: None Federal: None Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Chaparral Cismontane woodland Coastal bluff scrub Coastal scrub Desert wash Pinon &amp; juniper woodlands Riparian scrub Riparian woodland Valley &amp; foothill grassland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the coast horned lizard in proximity to the project area, however no detections have occurred in the proposed project area during field visits. The coast horned lizard frequents a variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes, which is a habitat type that is not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Polioptila californica californica</i>, coastal California gnatcatcher State: None Federal: Threatened Other: CDFW Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Coastal bluff scrub Coastal scrub</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the potential for the coastal California gnatcatcher to be in the area, but no populations were observed in the area during the site visit. The required habitat types are not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>

<p><i>Spea hammondi</i>, Western spadefoot                  State: None                  Federal: None                  Other: Species of Special Concern</p>	<p>Grasslands                  Valley-foothill                  hardwood woodlands                  Vernal pools</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the Western spadefoot within 1 mile of the project area which inhabits primarily grassland habitats, but can be found in valley-foothill hardwood woodlands. Vernal pools are essential for breeding and egg-laying. The required habitat types are not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Streptocephalus wootoni</i>, Riverside fairy shrimp                  State: None                  Federal: Endangered</p>	<p>Coastal scrub                  Valley &amp; foothill                  grassland                  Vernal pool                  Wetland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the Riverside fairy shrimp within 1 mile of the project area which inhabit seasonally astatic pools filled by winter/spring rains, and hatch in warm water later in the season. The required habitat types are not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>
<p><i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>, least Bell's vireo                  State: Endangered                  Federal: Endangered</p>	<p>Riparian forest                  Riparian scrub                  Riparian woodland</p>	<p>The CNDDDB indicates the presence of the least Bell's vireo within 1 mile of the project area which inhabits riparian forest, scrub, and woodlands. The required habitat types are not present in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to this species are not anticipated.</p>

No detections of threatened, rare, or endangered species or nesting bird activity occurred during field visits. The area has been surveyed prior to commencement of operations. No sensitive species are observed in or around the project area.

**Cultural Resources**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

Yes  No Was a current archaeological records check completed? Results discussed below:  
 The project area lies within the project boundary of an existing Vegetation Management Plan (Lake Skinner MSR VMP) burn unit that has already gone through complete Archeological review including a records check. No additional records check was needed for project preparation.

Yes  No Was a CAL FIRE staff or contract archaeologist consulted? Results discussed below:  
 CAL FIRE Senior State Archaeologist, Larynn Carver was consulted during project preparation. She recommended that no further Archeological review was required since the project area lies within the project boundary of an existing Vegetation Management Plan (Lake Skinner MSR VMP) burn unit that has already gone through complete Archeological review.

Yes  No Was an archaeological survey of the project area completed? Results discussed below:  
 Archeological surveys were completed during the Archeological review for the Lake Skinner MSR VMP.

Yes  No Will the project effect any historic, archaeological or tribal cultural resources?

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:  
 The project area lies within the project boundary of an existing Vegetation Management Plan (Lake Skinner MSR VMP) burn unit that has already gone through complete Archeological review. No sites are located in the project area. The project consists of installing a single Remote Area Weather Station which will cause negligible ground disturbance. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, significant negative impacts to cultural resources are not anticipated. Should project activities reveal cultural resources, CAL FIRE's standard post-review discovery procedures shall be enacted: work shall cease within 100 feet of the discovery and the unit archaeologist will be contacted; work will not resume until further contact from the archaeologist. Per California Health and Safety Code (HSC 7050.5(b)), in the event human remains or burials

are encountered, all work shall cease and the Riverside County Coroner's office and the CAL FIRE archaeologist shall be contacted; work will not resume until clearance is granted.

#### Geology and Soils

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

CAL FIRE Foresters determined that there will likely be no significant impacts to geological or soil resources as a result of the project activities. Soil disturbance will be limited to inserting three 18-inch nails into the ground to secure the legs of the RAWS in place. Vehicles will not be operated off existing road surfaces. Due to these factors, no significant adverse impacts to geology or soils will occur as a result of project operations.

#### Greenhouse Gas Emissions

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 Yes  No Would the project generate significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions?  
 Yes  No Would these GHG emissions result in a significant impact on the environment? Discuss below:  
 Yes  No Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? Discuss below:

No significant impacts from Green House Gas (GHG) emission are expected to occur as a result of project activities. Emissions of GHGs will occur during transportation of the Remote Area Weather Station to the site through the burning of gas fuel in internal combustion engines. The total quantity of GHGs released during vehicle operation is estimated at .1063 metric tons CO<sub>2</sub>e. A detailed GHG calculation is presented at the end of this document. CAL FIRE Foresters have determined that the volume of GHG emissions generated by vehicle operation will be below a level which would be considered significant. The pick-ups utilized all meet state and federal emissions requirements, and will not generate significant GHG emissions. No significant adverse impact to greenhouse gas emission levels will occur as a result of project operations.

#### Hazards and Hazardous Materials

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

There are no known hazardous materials within the project site. No significant adverse impacts as a result of hazardous materials will occur.

#### Hydrology and Water Quality

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 Yes  No Will the project potentially affect any watercourse or body of water?  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

There are no watercourses in the vicinity of the project area, and project operations do not have the potential to affect water quality in any way. No significant adverse impacts to Hydrology or Water Quality will occur as a result of project operations.

#### Land Use and Planning

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No significant adverse impacts to current land use or planning will occur as a result of project operations.

#### Population and Housing

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Project activities are restricted to installing a Remote Area Weather Station on non-residential lands. No significant adverse impacts to population or housing will occur as a result of project operations.

#### Noise

- This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.  
 This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The installation of the Remote Area Weather Station will not create significant noise. No significant adverse impacts to current noise levels will occur as a result of project operations.

**Mineral Resources**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

No road construction or soil disturbance will occur. Due to the low impact nature of the operations, no significant adverse impacts to current mineral resources will occur as a result of project operations.

**Utilities and Service Systems**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

Project operations are restricted to the installation of a permanent RAWS station and will have no impact on existing utility or service systems. No significant adverse impacts to Utilities or Service Systems will occur as a result of project operations.

**Recreation**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

The location and small size of the project area will not impact recreational use in any way. The installation of a permanent RAWS station will not significantly impact the view shed or recreational use potential of the area.

**Public Services**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A permanent RAWS station in that area will support the Fire Danger Operating plan with quantifying data to set the management decisions concerning dispatch levels and staffing levels, while using the data outputs during fuel reduction efforts to make sound management decisions for broadcast burning. These efforts will reduce the amount of fire starts in the SRA while reducing the acreage size of any starts due to the number of treated acres and due to the appropriate staffing levels made by the FDOP recognition. The project has the potential to improve the public service potential in the area.

**Transportation and Traffic**

This topic does not apply to this project and was not evaluated further.

This topic could apply to this project, and results of the assessment are provided below:

A minimal increase of traffic will occur as a result of the transportation of labor and equipment to the work locations. However, the number of vehicles will be very few in number, and operations will be conducted during time periods when traffic is low, between the hours of 8:00 AM and 5:00 PM, Monday through Friday. No significant adverse impacts to transportation or traffic will occur as a result of project operations.

**Changes Made to Avoid Environmental Impacts:**

None

**Justification for Use of a Categorical Exemption (discuss why the project is exempt, cite exemption number(s), and describe how the project fits the class):**

This project fits under portions of 3 Categorical Exemption "15303 New Construction or Conversion of Small Structures" - "Class 3 consists of construction and location of limited numbers of new, small, facilities or structures; installation of small new equipment and facilities in small structures; and the conversion of existing small structures from one use to another where only minor modifications are made in the exterior of the structure." Field review by CAL FIRE staff confirmed that no exceptions apply that would preclude the use of a notice of exemption for this project. The Department has concluded that no significant environmental impact would occur to aesthetics, agriculture and forestland or timberland, air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, geology and soils, greenhouse gas emissions, hazards and hazardous materials, hydrology and water quality, land use planning, mineral resources, noise, population and housing, public services, recreation, transportation or traffic, or to utilities and service systems.

<b>Mandatory Findings of Significance:</b>	<b>YES</b>	<b>NO</b>
(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probably future projects.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

**Conclusion:**

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project fits within one or more of the exemption classes and no exceptions exist at the project site which would preclude the use of this exemption. CAL FIRE considered the possibility of (a) sensitive location, (b) cumulative impact, (c) significant impact due to unusual circumstances, (d) impacts to scenic highways, (e) activities within a hazardous waste site, and (f) significant adverse change to the significance of a historical resource. A notice of exemption will be filed at the State Clearinghouse.

After assessing potential environmental impacts and evaluating the description for the various classes of categorical exemptions to CEQA, CAL FIRE has determined that the project does not fit within the description for the various exemption classes or has found that exceptions exist at the project site that precludes the use of a categorical exemption for this project. Additional environmental review will be conducted and the appropriate CEQA document used may be a negative declaration or a mitigated negative declaration.

Lake Skinner RAWS	
Estimative Green House Gas (GHG) Emission Calculation Table	
Number of estimated days for project : 2 days	
A. Staff vehicle	
2 days X 100 miles/day = 200 miles; 15 miles/gal = ~13 gal gas	
B. Equipment operations: None	
C. Totals	
Total gasoline: 13 gallons of gasoline	
Gasoline GHG: $13 \times 8.18 = 106.34 \text{ kg/gal}/1000 = .1063 \text{ metric tons of CO}_2\text{e}$	
Total estimated GHG emissions/project : 0.1063 metric tons of CO <sub>2</sub> e	

Figure 1. Estimative Green House Gas (GHG) Emission Calculation Table

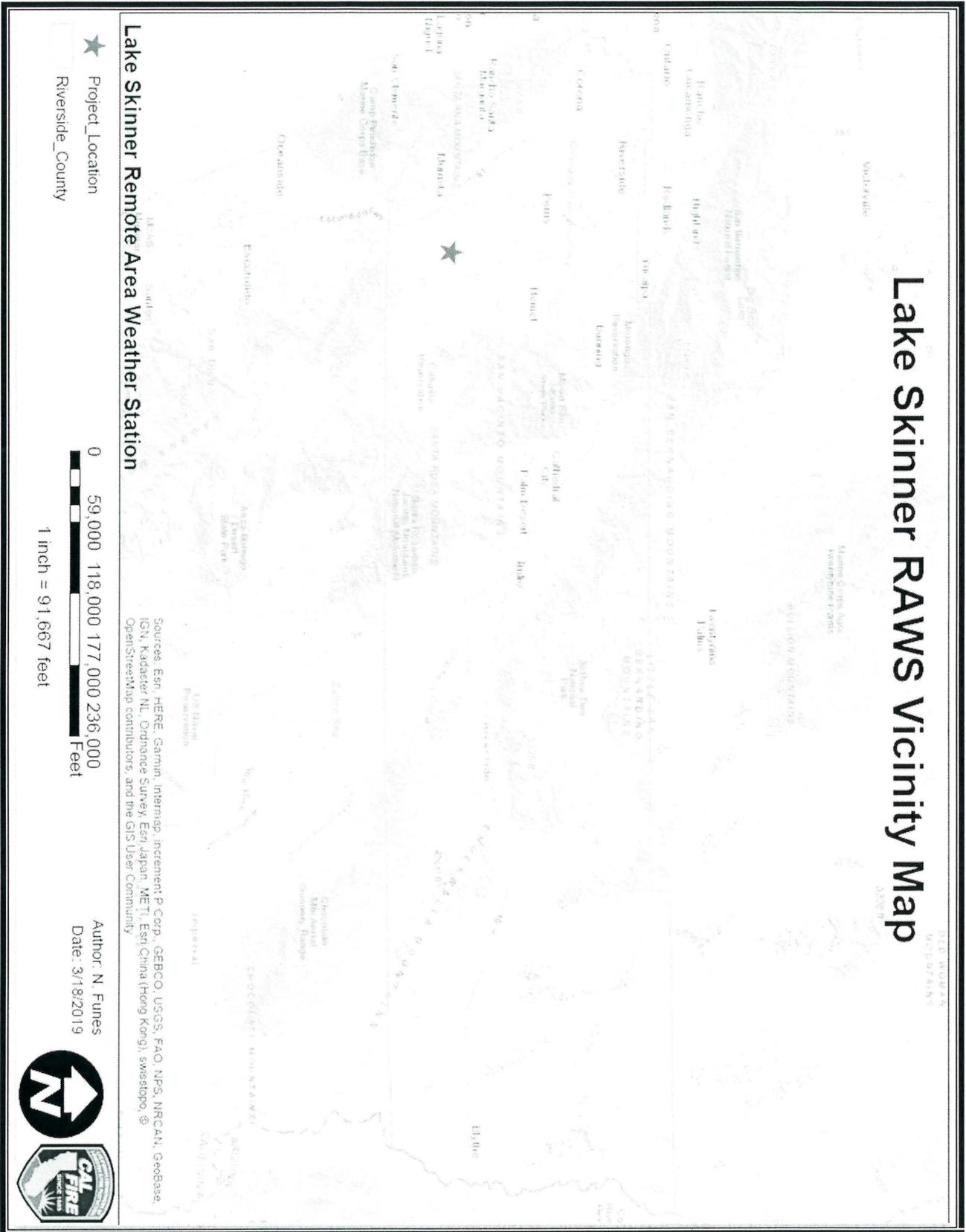


Figure 2. Project Vicinity Map

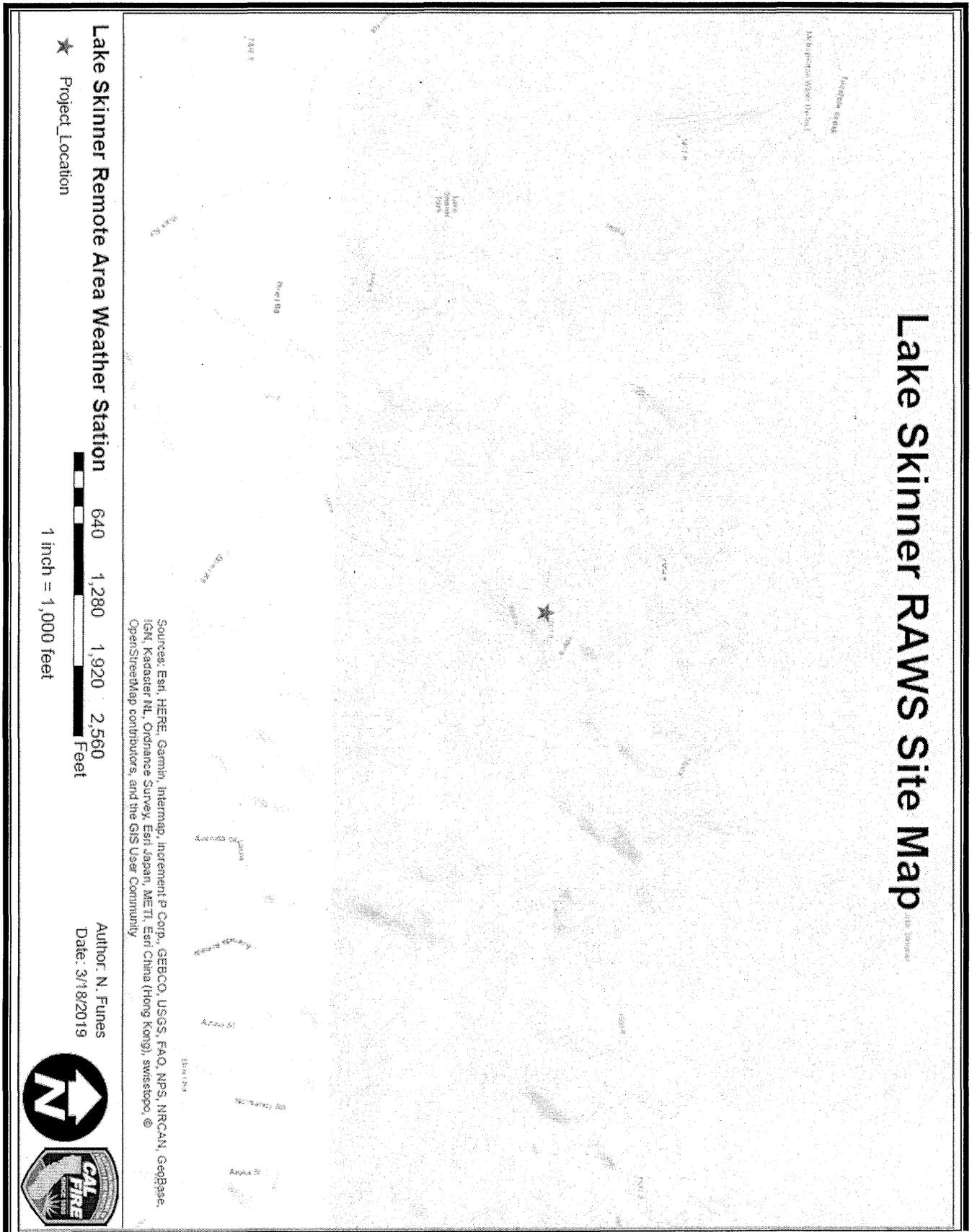


Figure 3. Project Site Map



Figure 4. Project Site Map-Imagery