

# GLENN LUKOS ASSOCIATES

Regulatory Services



October 16, 2019

Mr. Jonathon Siemsen  
KB Homes Coastal, Inc.  
36310 Inland Valley Drive  
Wildomar, California 92595

**SUBJECT:** Results of an Updated Biological Survey for the 40.36-acre Somerset Project (Tentative Tract Map 20275 [Formerly 16805]), City of Victorville, San Bernardino County, California.

Dear Mr. Siemsen:

This report provides the results of updated focused special-status species assessments performed for the Somerset Development (Tentative Tract Map 20275 [Formerly 16805]; Project site), per City of Victorville (City) Conditions of Approval 21 and 22 associated with the withdrawn tract map 16805, which are expected to be carried over to the conditions of approval to be required for Tract 20275. Specifically, this report documents the updated evaluation of the property to support federal and/or state listed as threatened or endangered species and other non-listed special-status species and is supplemental to the results of biological survey work and habitat assessments that were originally conducted at the Project site during April through June of 2016. Per Conditions of Approval 23 and 24 for Tract 16805, which are expected to be carried over to the conditions of approval to be required for Tract 20275, both a pre-construction burrowing owl survey and nesting bird survey will be conducted prior to initiating any activities that will result in vegetation removal or ground disturbance.

## **SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION**

The 40.36-acre Project site is located in Victorville, San Bernardino County, California [Exhibit 1 – Regional Map]. The Project site is located southwest of the City of Victorville proper with the north boundary of the property adjacent to Luna Road, the west boundary along Monte Vista Road, and the east boundary along Daisy Road. It is depicted on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Baldy Mesa, California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle map (quadrangle; dated 1956 and photorevised in 1988) at Section 29, Township 5 North, and Range 5 West [Exhibit 2 – Vicinity Map].

Lands surrounding the Project site are undeveloped with high-density residential development occurring to the north and east of the project site. Exhibit 3 provides an aerial image of the site including the Project site boundary.

## METHODOLOGY<sup>1</sup>

On October 8, 2019 GLA biologists Zack West and Jason Fitzgibbon visited the Project site. Ten-meter (33 feet) wide belt transects were walked to ensure thorough and complete visual coverage of the Project site. Per Conditions of Approval 21 and 22 for Tract 16805, which are expected to be carried over to the conditions of approval to be required for Tract 20275, the Project site was evaluated for its potential to support federal and/or state listed as threatened or endangered species and/or other non-listed special-status species, and habitat assessments were evaluated in regard to their consistency with those documented during the original site visit in April of 2016.

**Special-Status Plants and Animals.** To determine which endangered or threatened plants have the potential to occur in the region, the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) rare plant inventory<sup>2</sup> was consulted for the Baldy Mesa quadrangle. For a list of threatened or endangered animals with potential to occur in the region, a United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) Trust Resources Report was generated for the Project site<sup>3</sup> and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was consulted for the Baldy Mesa USGS quadrangle<sup>4</sup>.

On October 8, 2019 GLA biologists Zack West and Jason Fitzgibbon walked ten-meter (33 feet) wide belt transects to provide thorough and adequate visual coverage of the Project site. Binoculars were utilized to aid in the identification of wildlife, and species were documented and recorded based on visual observation, sign (tracks, scat, burrows, remains, etc.), call or song.

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that this report is an assessment of the potential for listed (i.e., threatened or endangered) and/or special-status wildlife and plant species to be present on site and does not include an assessment of other potential resources present, such as drainage features. GLA is available to conduct such an assessment, if needed.

<sup>2</sup> CNPS, Rare Plant Program. 2019. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (online edition, v8-02). California Native Plant Society, Sacramento, CA. Website <http://www.rareplants.cnps.org> [accessed 07 October 2019].

<sup>3</sup> USFWS. 2019. Information for Planning and Conservation Trust Resources Report. Generated on October 7, 2019. Accessed at <http://ecos.fws.gov/ipac/>.

<sup>4</sup> CNDDDB. 2019. California Natural Diversity Database, RareFind 4. Element reports for Baldy Mesa, California USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle map. Available: <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/cndddb/mapsanddata.asp>. Accessed: 07 October 2019.

## RESULTS

### Existing Conditions

The Project site occurs in the western Mojave Desert with the dominant vegetation composed of creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*) and white bur-sage (*Ambrosia dumosa*) with occasional desert tea (*Ephedra californica*), cheesebush (*Ambrosia salsola*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Joshua tree (*Yucca brevifolia*), desert fiddleneck (*Amsinckia tessellata*), along with non-native grasses (e.g., *Schismus* sp.) and non-native weedy species such as Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and red-stemmed filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*). Site topography is relatively flat and occurs at an elevation of approximately 3,260 feet above mean sea level.

Wildlife detected at the site in 2016 and 2019 consisted of species common to the region and included desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*), white-tailed antelope ground squirrel (*Ammospermophilus leucurus*), desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), common side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), California whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila caerulea*), and sagebrush sparrow (*Artemisiospiza nevadensis*). No special-status species were observed or detected within the Project site.

**Mohave Ground Squirrel.** Philippe Vergne, a permitted Mohave ground squirrel (*Xerospermophilus mohavensis*; MGS) biologist at ENVIRA, Inc. performed a focused habitat evaluation for MGS on April 7, 2016 to assess the potential for the species to be present on the property. Based on site conditions, a protocol MGS trapping survey was recommended. The survey consisted of a series of three trapping sessions with each trapping session composed of five consecutive days of trapping. The required time between sessions is no less than two weeks. If no MGS are captured during the first session, then a second session is required. If no animals are captured during the second session, then a third session is needed. The first trapping session occurred April 23-27, 2016, the second trapping session during May 15-19, 2016, and the third and final trapping session during June 16-20, 2016. No MGS were documented during any of the trapping sessions.

**Desert Tortoise.** GLA biologist Jeff Ahrens visited the property on April 27, 2016 to conduct a site review and desert tortoise pre-project survey following the USFWS 2010 Pre-project Field Survey Protocol.<sup>5</sup> The objectives of this protocol are to: (1) determine the presence or absence of the desert tortoise, (2) estimate the number of tortoises, and (3) assess the distribution of tortoises.

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<sup>5</sup> GLA also referred to the USFWS 2009 General Ecology and Survey Protocol for Determining Presence/Absence and Abundance for the Desert Tortoise – Mojave Population.

Ten-meter (33 feet) wide belt transects were traversed throughout the property (100-percent coverage) looking for any evidence of desert tortoise occupation, including live tortoises, tortoise burrows, cover sites, tortoise scat (in the open, at middens, or at tortoise burrows/cover sites) and carcasses/bones.

All burrows and cover sites (natural occurring shelters including rock crevices and caliche caves) that appeared accessible to tortoise (all life stages) were searched for tortoise sign. Table 1 summarizes the desert tortoise survey visit.

**Table 1. Summary of Desert Tortoise Pre-Project Survey**

Survey Date	Biologist	Start/End Time	Start/End Temperature (Fahrenheit)	Start/End Wind Speed (mph)	Cloud Cover
April 27, 2016	Jeff Ahrens	0610/1130	48/66	4/7	Clear/Clear

**Threatened/Endangered Species (Condition of Approval 21 & 22 for Tract 16805, which are expected to be carried over to the conditions of approval to be required for Tract 20275)**

According to October 2019 CNDDDB and CNPS queries, no threatened or endangered plants are known to occur on lands depicted on the Baldy Mesa USGS quadrangle map. Thus, there is very limited potential for listed plants to be present on the Project site.

There are three listed animals documented as occurring in the region based on a CNDDDB query of the Baldy Mesa quadrangle; desert tortoise, Mohave ground squirrel, and California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*). A focused survey was performed for desert tortoise in 2016 and the species was confirmed absent, additionally, no desert tortoise or sign were observed during the updated biological survey conducted in 2019. Although the project site occurs within the range of the California condor, it is less than reasonable to expect the species to be present given the extreme rarity of the species, the lack of large prey to scavenge on, and the level of human disturbance in the area.

A habitat evaluation for Mohave ground squirrel was conducted and it was confirmed that there was low potential for the species to be present. As such, a focused trapping survey for Mohave ground squirrel was conducted in 2016 and found the species to be absent from the project site.

No threatened or endangered plant or animal species were observed during site visits conducted in 2016 or 2019.

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**Burrowing Owl Preconstruction Survey (Condition of Approval 23 for Tract 16805, which are expected to be carried over to the conditions of approval to be required for Tract 20275)**

A single-visit pre-construction survey for burrowing owls will be performed within 14 days of project ground disturbance.

A brief letter-format report documenting the results of the survey will be provided to the City upon completion.

**Nesting Bird Survey (Condition of Approval 24 for Tract 16805, which are expected to be carried over to the conditions of approval to be required for Tract 20275)**

A single-visit pre-construction survey for nesting birds will be performed within 3 days of project ground disturbance.

A brief letter-format report documenting the results of the survey will be provided to the City upon completion. This letter-format report may be combined with that prepared for the burrowing owl pre-construction survey.

A subsequent report will be provided detailing final results of the preconstruction burrowing owl survey, and the nesting bird survey.

If you have any questions regarding this report, please call me at (949) 837-0404, ext. 27 or on my mobile at (949) 374-1376.

Sincerely,

GLENN LUKOS ASSOCIATES, INC.

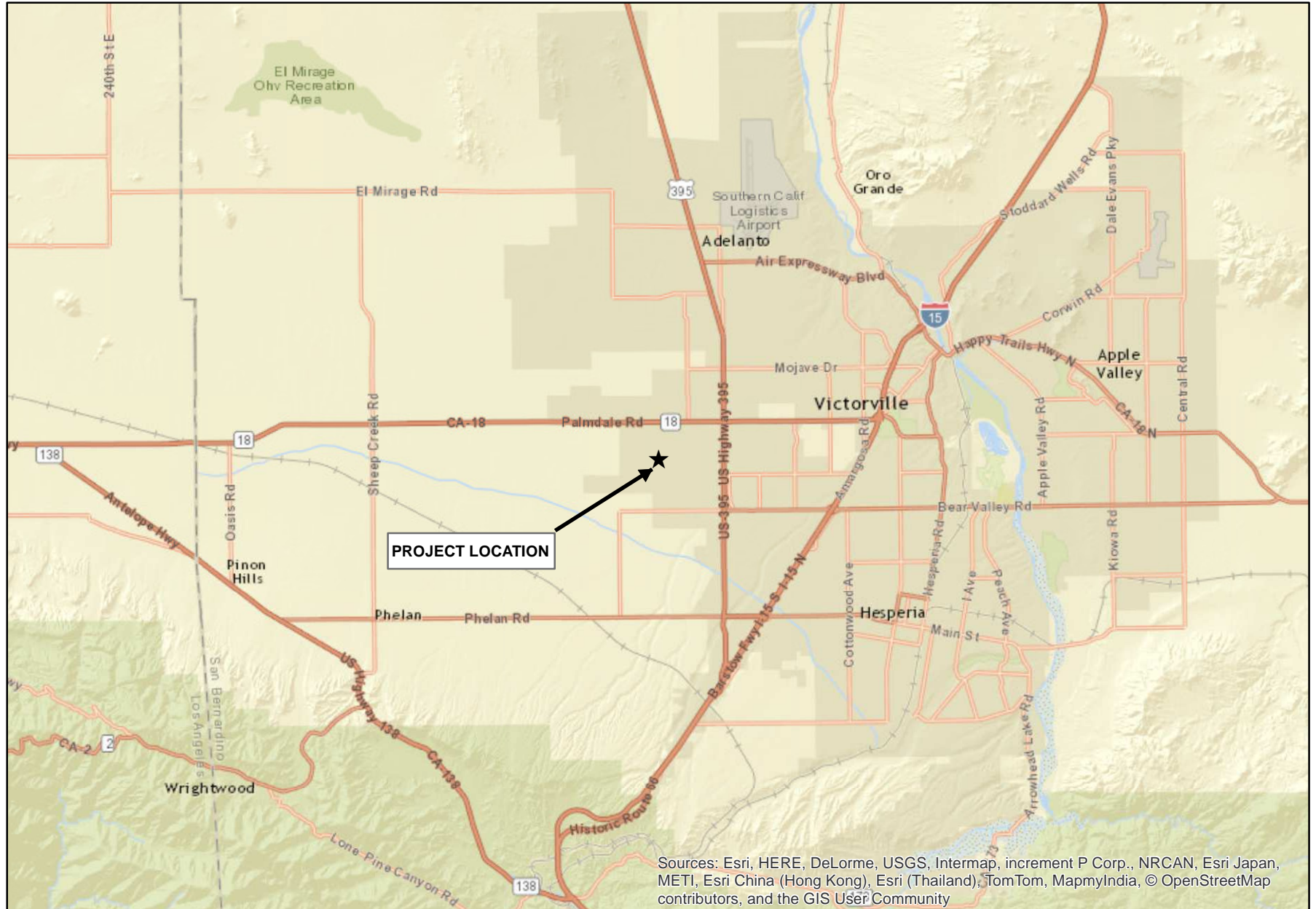
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'J. Fitzgibbon', with a stylized, overlapping loop structure.

Jason Fitzgibbon  
Biologist/Regulatory Specialist

Source: ESRI World Street Map



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## SOMERSET DEVELOPMENT

Regional Map

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Exhibit 1









Luna Road

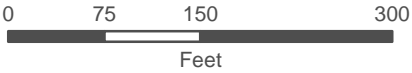
Daisy Road

Monte Vista Road

# Legend

 Project Site Boundary\*

\* Project site boundaries were approximated



1 inch = 150 feet

Coordinate System: State Plane 5 NAD 83  
Projection: Lambert Conformal Conic  
Datum: NAD83  
Map Prepared by: C. Lukos, GLA  
Date Prepared: May 3, 2016

## SOMERSET DEVELOPMENT

Aerial Map

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Exhibit 3

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