SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS
RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL PARK
AND OPEN-SPACE DISTRICT
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

ITEM
13.2
(ID # 7597)

MEETING DATE:
Tuesday, July 31, 2018

FROM : REGIONAL PARK & OPEN SPACE DISTRICT:

SUBJECT: REGIONAL PARK & OPEN SPACE DISTRICT: Considering the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Salt Creek Trail Project ("Project"), Making Responsible Agency Findings Pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA"), Adopting a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program, and Issuing Certain Limited Approvals for the Project by Approving the License Agreement with the Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District ("District") for the Salt Creek Trail. Project No. 4-0-00110 (Encroachment Permit No. 3597); District 5 [$0]; (Companion to Minute Traq Item No. 7524 (11.4))

RECOMMENDED MOTION: That the Board of Directors:

1. Adopt Resolution 2018-13 Making Responsible Agency Findings Pursuant To CEQA For The Salt Creek Trail Project; and
2. Approve the License Agreement between the Flood Control District (District) and the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District (Parks); and
3. Authorize the Chairman to execute the Agreement documents on behalf of Parks; and
4. Authorize the General Manager, or designee, to take all actions necessary to administer the Agreement; and
5. Direct the Clerk of the Board to file the attached Notice of Determination with the County Clerk for posting within five (5) working days of Board approval; and
6. Direct the Clerk of the Board to return three (3) copies of executed agreement to Parks.

ACTION: Policy

Scott Bangle, Director General Manager / Park Director 7/19/2018

MINUTES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

On motion of Director Jeffries, seconded by Director Perez and duly carried, IT WAS ORDERED that the above matter is approved as recommended.

Ayes:	Jeffries, Tavaglione, Washington and Perez
Nays:	None
Absent:	Ashley
Date:	July 31, 2018
xc:	Parks, Flood, Recorder

Kecia Harper-Ihem
Clerk of the Board
By: _____ Deputy

(Companion Item to 11.4)

SUBMITTAL TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN-SPACE DISTRICT
COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE, STATE OF CALIFORNIA

FINANCIAL DATA	Current Fiscal Year:	Next Fiscal Year:	Total Cost:	Ongoing Cost
COST	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0
NET COUNTY COST	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0	$ 0
SOURCE OF FUNDS: None			Budget Adjustment:	No
			For Fiscal Year:	18/19

C.E.O. RECOMMENDATION: Approve

BACKGROUND:

Summary

This Agreement sets forth the terms and conditions by which a 4.3-mile segment of the Salt Creek Trail (trail) will be constructed, inspected, operated and maintained, at the sole expense of Parks, within the District's Salt Creek Channel right of way. The trail provides certain non-motorized public recreational uses.

A portion of the proposed Salt Creek trail through the City of Menifee will be constructed within District's Salt Creek channel right of way. The trail will be located on the District's maintenance road between Normandy Road on the west and I-215 on the east. All construction, inspection, operation and maintenance costs associated with the trail's components will be borne by Parks. The operation and maintenance of the existing channel will continue to be a District responsibility.

An Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared by Riverside County Transportation Department on behalf of Parks and adopted for the project by the Board of Supervisors on November 14, 2017. No further environmental review is warranted for the project at this time.

County Counsel has approved the Agreement as to legal form. A companion item appears on the Flood District's agenda this same date.

Impact on Residents and Businesses

This project is part of the adopted Salt Creek Trail Project. Upon construction completion, the project will enhance opportunity for pedestrian and bicycle use by providing a dedicated trail and will benefit residents and businesses in the area.

Other Fiscal Information

Parks was awarded a Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) program grant from The State of California Department of Transportation for construction of this trail. The Project is anticipated to be advertised for bidding in summer 2018 with construction starting in late 2018.

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Flood District License Agreement

2. Notice of Determination
3. Resolution No. 2018 – 13
4. Exhibit "A"

Alex Gann 7/24/2018

Gregory P. Priamos, Director County Counsel 7/19/2018

Board of Directors

Riverside County Regional Park & Open-Space District

RESOLUTION NO. 2018-13

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY REGIONAL PARK AND OPEN-SPACE DISTRICT CONSIDERING THE MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION FOR THE SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT ("PROJECT"), MAKING RESPONSIBLE AGENCY FINDINGS PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY ACT ("CEQA"), ADOPTING A MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM, AND ISSUING CERTAIN LIMITED APPROVALS FOR THE PROJECT BY APPROVING THE LICENSE AGREEMENT WITH THE RIVERSIDE COUNTY FLOOD CONTROL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT ("DISTRICT") FOR THE SALT CREEK TRAIL.

WHEREAS, the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District ("Parks") is to make certain limited approvals for the Project, specifically including approving the license agreement ("License Agreement") between Parks and District allowing Parks entry upon a portion of the Salt Creek Trail, which is located within District's existing right of way identified as District's Parcel Numbers 4109-500, 4110-30, 4110-31, 4110-101, 4110-102, 4110-103, and 4305-501, to construct approximately 22,750 feet (4.3 miles) of multi-purpose trail; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act ("CEQA," Pub. Resources Code, § 21000 et seq. and State CEQA Guidelines § 15000 et seq.), on November 14, 2017, an Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project was previously prepared and adopted by the County of Riverside, as the CEQA lead agency; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Riverside served as lead agency for the environmental review, analysis, and approval of the construction and operation of the Project pursuant to the requirements of CEQA; and,

WHEREAS, Parks has more limited approval and implementing authority over the Project and thus serves only as a responsible agency for the Project pursuant to the requirements of CEQA; and,

WHEREAS, the lead agency reviewed and considered the Initial Study, Mitigated Negative

FORM APPROVED COUNTY COUNSEL
BY: WESLEY W. STANFIELD 7/19/2018 DATE

Declaration at noticed public meetings on August 24, 2017 and August 31, 2017; and,

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors for the County of Riverside ("Board of Supervisors"), in regular session assembled on November 14, 2017, reviewed and adopted the Final Initial Study with Mitigated Negative Declaration and adopted a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program based on the findings in the Initial Study; and,

WHEREAS, Parks, as a responsible agency, has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration and determined that it adequately analyzes the potential environmental impacts associated with the Parks's limited role as a responsible agency in the implementation of the Project; and,

WHEREAS, all of the findings and conclusions made by the Board of Directors pursuant to this resolution are based upon the oral and written evidence presented to it as a whole and not based solely on the information provided in this resolution; and,

WHEREAS, all procedures of CEQA have been met and all other legal prerequisites to the adoption of this Resolution have occurred.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, DETERMINED AND ORDERED THAT the Board of Directors of the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Space District assembled in regular session on July 31, 2018, in the meeting room of the Board of Directors located on the 1st floor of the County Administrative Center, 2080 Lemon Street, Riverside, California, at or after 9:00 a.m., based upon the evidence and testimony presented on the matter, both written and oral, including the Mitigated Negative Declaration, as it relates to the License Agreement, that: does hereby make the following findings and resolutions:

SECTION 1. Incorporation of Recitals. The above recitations constitute findings of the Board of Directors are incorporated herein.

SECTION 2. CEQA Actions

(a) Consideration of the Mitigated Negative Declaration and Adoption of Findings Regarding CEQA Compliance. As the decision-making body for Parks, and in Parks's limited role as a responsible agency under CEQA, Parks has received, reviewed, and considered the information contained in the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Salt Creek Trail Project, all comment letters, and other related documents. Based on this review, Parks finds that, as to those

potential environmental impacts within Parks powers and authorities as responsible agency, that the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Project contains a complete, objective, and accurate reporting of those potential impacts and reflects the independent judgment and analysis of Parks.

(b) CEQA Findings on Environmental Impacts. In its limited role as a responsible agency under CEQA, Parks finds that there are no feasible alternatives to the Project which would avoid or substantially lessen the Project's potentially significant environmental impacts but still achieve most of the Project's objectives. Parks further finds that the mitigation measures imposed by the lead agency are sufficient to reduce all potentially significant impacts to a level of less than significant. As such, the Parks concurs with the environmental findings adopted by the lead agency, which are attached hereto as Exhibit A by this reference incorporated herein and therefore the Parks adopts those findings as its own and incorporates them herein.

(c) Adoption of Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program. The Board of Directors hereby approves and adopts the Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program as it relates to the License Agreement which was prepared for the Project and approved by the lead agency, which is included as Appendix B within Exhibit "A".

SECTION 3. Approval of the Project. As required by State CEQA Guidelines section 15096 and in its limited role as responsible agency under CEQA, Parks hereby approves the Project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, DETERMINED AND ORDERED by a vote of the Board of Directors that this Board approves the License Agreement for Parks's entry upon a portion of the Salt Creek Trail, which is located within District's existing right of way identified as District's Parcel Numbers 4109-500, 4110-30, 4110-31, 4110-101, 4110-102, 4110-103, and 4305-501, to construct approximately 22,750 feet (4.3 miles) of multi-purpose trail.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, DETERMIEND AND ORDERED that the Board of Directors hereby directs staff to file a Notice of Determination with the Riverside County Clerk and also with the Governor's Office of Planning and Research within five (5) working days of the approval of the Project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, DETERMINED AND ORDERED that the documents and materials that constitute the record of proceedings on which these findings are based are located at the offices

of the Riverside County Regional Park and Open-Spaced District office, 4600 Crestmore Rd., Riverside, CA 92509.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, DETERMINED AND ORDERED that the Clerk of the Board shall sign this Resolution to attest and certify to the passage and adoption thereof.

ROLL CALL:

Ayes: Jeffries, Tavaglione, Washington and Perez
Nays: None
Absent: Ashley

The foregoing is certified to be a true copy of a resolution duly adopted by said Board of Supervisors on the date therein set forth.

KECIA HARPER-IHEM, Clerk of said Board
By _____ Deputy

Exhibit "A"

Lead Agency's CEQA Findings

EXHIBIT A

Initial Study/
Mitigated Negative Declaration

Salt Creek Trail Project

Prepared for:

County of Riverside
3525 14th Street
Riverside, CA 92501

Prepared by:

POWER Engineers, Inc.
731 East Ball Road, Suite 100
Anaheim, CA 92805
Contact: Court Morgan, Project Manager
(714) 507-2764

POWER ENGINEERS

October 2017

Mitigated Negative Declaration

Project Information

Project Proponent:	County of Riverside 3525 14th Street Riverside, CA 92501
Project Title:	Salt Creek Trail Project
Project Location:	The Salt Creek Trail Project consists of two segments that generally follow the alignment of the existing Salt Creek flood control channel. The western segment of the trail spans the City of Menifee from the intersection of Goetz Road and Canyon Lake Drive north of Newport Road to the intersection of Antelope Road and Aldergate Drive east of Interstate 215. The eastern segment of the trail spans the City of Hemet from the intersection of Sanderson Avenue and Domenigoni Parkway to the intersection of State Street and Chambers Street.
Project Description:	The County of Riverside proposes to construct and operate two segments of the Salt Creek Trail, totaling approximately 7.9 miles which would contribute to the County's ultimate goal for an approximately 16-mile long multi-use trail connecting the cities of Hemet and Menifee. The western segment spans approximately 4.3 miles through the City of Menifee and the eastern segment spans approximately 3.6 miles through the City of Hemet.
Findings:	Pursuant to the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of Riverside has determined that the Project would not have a significant effect on the environment. Following an Initial Study and assessment of possible adverse impacts, the Project was determined not to have a significant impact on the environment with the inclusion of mitigation measures, which reduces potential adverse impacts to less than significant levels. Therefore, the County of Riverside has prepared a Mitigated Negative Declaration with mitigation measures in accordance with the provisions of CEQA.
Mitigation Measures:	Refer to the Sections 3.1 through 3.18 of this Initial Study and to Appendix B, Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program.

A copy of the Initial Study is available for review at the following locations:

- Riverside County Transportation Department, 3525 14th Street, Riverside, 92501
- Riverside County Transportation Department website: http://rcprojects.org/salt-creek-trail/public-documents/

Signature: Russell Williams Date: 10/10/17

Russell Williams
Environmental Division Manager
Riverside County Transportation Department

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FIGURES

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APPENDIX A: CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST FORM
APPENDIX B: MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM
APPENDIX C: AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS INPUT/OUTPUT MODELING DATA
APPENDIX D: POTENTIALLY OCCURRING SPECIAL-STATUS BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES
APPENDIX E: EXISTING NOISE CONTOURS, CITY OF MENIFEE GENERAL PLAN
APPENDIX F: SUMMARY OF NATIVE AMERICAN CONSULTATION
APPENDIX G: COMMENTS AND RESPONSES
APPENDIX H: STATE CLEARINGHOUSE DRAFT INITIAL STUDY CIRCULATION CLOSE-OUT LETTER

THE FOLLOWING TECHNICAL REPORTS ARE BOUND UNDER SEPARATE COVER

- SCENIC RESOURCES EVALUATION AND VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT
- AIR QUALITY/GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM
- NATURAL ENVIRONMENT STUDY
- MSHCP CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION OF BIOLOGICALLY EQUIVALENT OR SUPERIOR PRESERVATION
- JURISDICTIONAL DELINEATION
- HISTORIC PROPERTY SURVEY REPORT /ARCHAEOLOGICAL SURVEY REPORT
- PHASE I INITIAL SITE ASSESSMENT
- COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM
- WATER QUALITY TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM
- ZONE AE AND REGULATORY FLOODWAY ANALYSIS
- LOCATION HYDRAULIC STUDY
- NOISE TECHNICAL MEMORANDUM

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Assembly Bill
ACM	asbestos-containing materials
ADA	American with Disabilities Act
ADL	Aerially Deposited Lead
ADT	average daily trips
ALUC	Airport Land Use Commission
ALUP	Airport Land Use Plan
AMA	Archaeological Monitoring Area
APE	Area of Potential Effects
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
AQMP	Air Quality Management Plan
ATCMs	Airborne Toxic Control Measures
Basin	South Coast Air Basin
BGS	below ground surface
BMP	Best Management Practice
B.P.	Before Present
BSA	Biological Study Area
°C	Degrees Celsius
CalEEMod	California Emissions Estimator Model
CAL FIRE	California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CARB	California Air Resources Board
CBC	California Building Code
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife's
CEESP	California Long-Term Energy Efficiency Strategic Plan
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
Checklist	CEQA Environmental Checklist
CH_4	Methane
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNEL	Community Noise Equivalent Level
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CO	carbon monoxide
CO_2	carbon dioxide
CO_2eq	carbon dioxide equivalent
County	Riverside County
CRHR	California Register of Historical Resources
CRMP	Cultural Resource Mitigation Monitoring Plan
CTB	cement treated base
CWA	Clean Water Act
dBA	A-weighted decibels
DBESP	Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior
DPR	Department of Parks and Recreation
DTSC	Department of Toxic Substance Control
EAPs	Energy Action Plans
EWMD	Eastern Municipal Water District
EDR	Environmental Data Resources, Inc.
EIC	Eastern Information Center

EIR	Environmental Impact Report
EMFAC	Emissions Factors Model
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
°F	Degrees Fahrenheit
FCAA	Federal Clean Air Act
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FHSZ	Fire Hazard Severity Zone
FIRM	Flood Insurance Rate Maps
FMMP	Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program
GHG	greenhouse gas
HPSR	Historic Property Survey Report
IA	Implementing Agreement
I-215	Interstate 215
IPaC	Information for Planning and Conservation
IPCC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
ICU	Intersection Capacity Utilization
ISA	Initial Site Assessment
JPR	Joint Project Review
LBP	lead-based paints
LCB	lean concrete base
LOS	level of service
LST	local significance threshold
M	magnitude
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MLD	Most Likely Descendant
MM	mitigation measures
MRZ	Mineral Recovery Zone
MS4	Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System
MSHCP	Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan
msl	mean sea level
MWD	Metropolitan Water District
NAHC	Native American Heritage Commission
NES	Natural Environment Study
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
NOA	Naturally Occurring Asbestos
NOI	Notice of Intent
N_2O	nitrous oxide
NO_2	nitrogen dioxide
NO_X	nitrogen oxides
NPDES	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System
NWI	National Wetland Inventory
O_3	ozone
OES	Office of Emergency Services
OHP	Office of Historic Preservation
OPR	California Governor's Office of Planning and Research
OSHA	Occupational Safety and Health Administration

PCB	Polychlorinated biphenyls
PCC	Portland cement concrete
PM_{10}	particulate matter up to 10 microns
$PM_{2.5}$	particulate matter up to 2.5 microns
ppm	parts per million
PPV	peak particle velocity
PRC	California Public Resource Code
RCFD	Riverside County Fire Department
RCFC&WCD	Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District
RCIP	Riverside County Integrated Project
RECs	Recognized Environmental Conditions
RPD	Riverside Police Department
ROG	reactive organic gas
ROW	right-of-way
RTP	Regional Transportation Plan
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SCAG	Southern California Association of Governments
SCAQMD	South Coast Air Quality Management District
SCS	Sustainable Communities Strategy
SKR HCP	Stephens' kangaroo rat Habitat Conservation Plan
SMARTS	Storm Water Multiple Application and Report Tracking System
SO_2	sulfur dioxide
SO_X	sulfur oxides
SR	State Route
SRA	source receptor area
SWPPP	Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan
TMDLs	Total Maximum Daily Loads
TMP	Traffic Management Plan
TUMF	Transportation Uniform Mitigation Fee
U.S.	United States
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
USDA	U.S. Department of Agriculture
USEPA	U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
USGS	U.S. Geological Survey
UST	underground storage tank
VMT	vehicle-miles traveled
VOC	volatile organic compounds
WRCOG CAP	Western Riverside Council of Governments Climate Action Plan
WRELP	Western Riverside Energy Leader Partnership

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

The County of Riverside (County) proposes to construct and operate two (2) segments of the Salt Creek Trail (herein after referred to as the Project), totaling approximately 7.9 miles. The Project is located in the Cities of Menifee and Hemet, Riverside County, California and would contribute to the County's ultimate goal for an approximately 16-mile long multi-use trail connecting the cities. The Project offers an alternative to gasoline-powered vehicle trips, which is key to achieving State and local air quality objectives.

The Salt Creek Trail is one of five essential backbone trails in the Riverside County Integrated Project and is a major east/west trail for the Western Riverside County Trail System. Due to planned linkages with smaller trails and the accessibility to homes, schools, and businesses, the Project would become a key part of the trail system. This trail is part of the Southern California Association of Government's (SCAG's) 2035 Bikeway Network, as outlined in the 2016-2040 Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)/Sustainable Communities Strategy, identified as RTP ID RIV151210, and is incorporated into the Western Riverside Council of Governor's 2010 Non-Motorized Plan, meeting the goals of increasing active transportation and decreasing bicycle and pedestrian fatalities. The Salt Creek Trail Project is also included in SCAG's 2017 Federal Transportation Improvement Program Consistency Amendment, and is programmed to receive funding from the Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality Improvement program.

1.2 Purpose

Pursuant to Section 15063(a) of California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, the County, as the Lead Agency, is required to undertake the preparation of an Initial Study to determine if the proposed action would have a significant effect on the environment. In accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15070:

> a "public agency shall prepare ... a proposed negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration ...when: (a) The Initial Study shows that there is no substantial evidence ... that the project may have a significant effect upon the environment, or (b) The Initial Study identifies potentially significant effects but (1) revisions in the project plans or proposal ...which would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, or (2) There is no substantial evidence ...that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment."

This Initial Study is an informational document providing an environmental basis for subsequent discretionary actions that may be required from other responsible agencies.

1.3 Statutory Requirements and Authority

The State CEQA Guidelines identify specific disclosure requirements for inclusion in an Initial Study. Pursuant to those requirements, an Initial Study shall include: (1) A description of the proposed project, including the location of the project site; (2) An identification of the environmental setting; (3) An identification of environmental effects by use of a checklist, matrix, or other method, provided that entries on a checklist or other form are briefly explained to indicate that there is some evidence to support the entries; (4) A discussion of ways to mitigate significant effect identified, if any; (5) An examination of whether the proposed project is compatible with existing zoning, plans, and other applicable land use controls; and (6) The name of the person or persons who prepared or participated in the preparation of the Initial Study.

The mitigation measures included in this Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration are designed to reduce or eliminate the potentially significant environmental impacts described herein. Where a mitigation measure described in this document has been previously incorporated into the Project, either as a specific feature of design or as a mitigation measure, this is noted in the discussion. Mitigation measures are structured in accordance with the criteria in Section 15370 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

1.4 Scope of the Initial Study

This Initial Study evaluates the Project's effects on the following resource topics:

- Aesthetics
- Agriculture and forestry resources
- Air quality
- Biological resources
- Cultural resources
- Geology and soils
- Greenhouse gas emissions
- Hazards and hazardous materials
- Hydrology and water quality
- Land use and planning
- Mineral resources
- Noise
- Population and housing
- Public services
- Recreation
- Transportation/traffic
- Tribal cultural resources
- Utilities and service systems
- Mandatory findings of significance

1.5 Impact Terminology

The following terminology is used to describe the level of significance of impacts:

- A finding of *no impact* is appropriate if the analysis concludes that the project would not affect the particular topic area in any way.
- An impact is considered *less than significant* if the analysis concludes that it would cause no substantial adverse change to the environment and requires no mitigation.
- An impact is considered *less than significant with mitigation* if the analysis concludes that it would cause no substantial adverse change to the environment with the inclusion of environmental commitments or other enforceable measures that have been agreed to by the Project Proponent.
- An impact is considered *potentially significant* if the analysis concludes that it could have a substantial adverse effect on the environment. For the Project, no impacts were determined to be potentially significant.

1.6 Project Entitlements and Regulatory Permits Required

Table 1-1 list the agreements, permits and approvals anticipated to be required for this Project.

TABLE 1-1 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS

California Department of Fish and Wildlife	Streambed Alteration Agreement
California Regional Water Quality Control Board	National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System General Construction Permit [including a Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan]
California Regional Water Quality Control Board	Section 401 Water Quality Certification
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers	Section 404 Nationwide Permit
California Department of Transportation	Encroachment Permit
Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District	Encroachment Permit

1.7 Agency Consultation and Coordination

The agencies and organizations listed in Table 1-1 would require the County to obtain agreements, approvals, or permits for the Project. Although a number of Responsible and Trustee Agencies have been identified, discussions with those agencies would be required to determine the specific nature of any future permits or approvals that may be required from those agencies. When the Lead Agency has determined that an Initial Study would be required for the project, the Lead Agency is directed to consult informally with all Responsible Agencies and Trustee Agencies that are responsible for resources affected by the Project, in order to obtain the recommendations of those agencies as to whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration should be prepared. Upon receipt of any written comments from those agencies, the Lead Agency would consider any recommendations of those agencies in the formulation of the preliminary findings. As part of this Initial Study process, the Lead Agency would initiate formal consultation within these and other governmental agencies as required under CEQA and County's guidelines.

1.8 Initial Study Organization and Contents

This Initial Study is organized into five separate sections that are identified as follows:

Section 1.0, Introduction – Introduces the Project, its purpose and statutory basis for the document.

Section 2.0, Project Description – Describes the location, objectives, and principal elements of the Project.

Section 3.0, Environmental Evaluation – Contains analyses and evidence employed by the Lead Agency to arrive at the determination required in the CEQA Environmental Checklist.

Section 4.0, Initial Study Preparers and Contributors – A list of persons who contributed to the preparation of the Initial Study.

Section 5.0, References – A list of references utilized for the preparation of the Initial Study.

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2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

2.1 Project Location

2.1.1 Existing Conditions and Surrounding Land Uses

As shown on Figure 2-1, Regional Location and Figure 2-2, Local Vicinity, the Project alignment would occur within the cities of Menifee and Hemet totaling approximately 7.9 miles. The Project area consists of residential, business, institutional, transportation, and vacant land uses. There are no existing residential or business uses within the limits of the Project-related improvements. The Project alignment occurs through properties controlled by Riverside County Flood Control and Water Conservation District (RCFC&WCD), City of Hemet, City of Menifee, Metropolitan Water District (MWD), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), and private land owners.

Specifically, the Project site is located along two segments of the Salt Creek Trail. As shown on Figure 2-3, Western Segment, the western segment of the Project is located in the City of Menifee from the intersection of Goetz Road and Canyon Lake Drive north of Newport Road to the intersection of Antelope Road and Aldergate Drive east of Interstate 215 (I-215). The trail is predominantly located on an existing dirt maintenance road on the north side of the Salt Creek Channel. Other land uses include transportation uses along Goetz Road and Antelope Road, at the proposed roadway crossings at Normandy Road, Murrieta Road, Bradley Road, and I-215. At the easternmost portion of the western segment, the proposed trail trends under the Salt Creek undercrossing bridge structure associated with I-215. The western segment of the Project is surrounded by open space, recreational areas, single-family residences, businesses, commercial uses, and public facilities.

As shown on Figure 2-4, Eastern Segment, the eastern segment of the Project is located in the City of Hemet from the intersection of Sanderson Avenue and Domenigoni Parkway to the intersection of State Street and Chambers Street. No structures, roadways, or sidewalk improvements are located along the eastern segment of the Project. The eastern segment is primarily comprised of vacant land along Domenigoni Parkway and vacant MWD property along State Street. The northern portion of the eastern segment includes an existing dirt maintenance road on vacant land owned by the City of Hemet associated with an unnamed drainage feature. The eastern segment of the Project is surrounded by open space, recreational areas, schools, and single-family residences.

2.1.2 Existing General Plan and Zoning

Land use and development within the Project area is governed by the City of Menifee (western segment) and the City of Hemet (eastern segment) General Plans and zoning codes, respectively. As shown on Exhibit LU-2 in the Menifee General Plan Land Use Map, the western segment of the Project is located within areas designated as Open-Space Recreation (OS-R). The City of Menifee General Plan identifies the Salt Creek Trail in both the Open Space and Conservation Element and the Transportation and Traffic Element. The goal of OSC-2 in the Open Space and Conservation Element is to provide, "A comprehensive network of hiking, biking, and equestrian recreation trails that do not negatively impact the natural environment or cultural resources." According to the City of Menifee Zoning, dated September 2008, the eastern portion is zoned W-1 and the western portion is zoned SP Zone. According to the Audie Murphy Ranch Specific Plan, the Project site is zoned PA 41, Floodplain Riparian Area.

As shown on Figure 2-1 in the Hemet General Plan, Land Use Plan, the eastern segment of the Project is located within areas designated as Open Space (OS), Low Density Residential (LDR), and Mixed-use (MU). The City of Hemet General Plan 2030 identifies the Project in its Recreation and Trails Element, referencing the trail as an, "Offroad trail that runs along Salt Creek and connects to the County Regional Trail System on the west and Pepper Creek Trail on the east." According to the City of Hemet Official Zoning Map, dated February 2015, the Project site is zoned as the following: PCD 79-93 (Planned

Community Development); R-A (Residential Agricultural); OS (Open Space); R-3 (Multiple Family Residential); and SP 88-19 (Specific Plan).

Salt Creek Trail has been identified as one of five essential backbone trails in the Riverside County Integrated Plan, and is considered to be a major east/west trail for the western Riverside County Trail System. The Project has been identified in the Riverside County General Plan Circulation Element's Bikeways and Trails Plan and in SCAG's 2016 RTP/SCS. Additionally, the Riverside County Sun City/Menifee Valley Area Plan states that, "Both the channelized and natural portions of Salt Creek have been designated Open Space-Recreation to allow the potential for the channel to serve both flood control and recreation purposes." It is identified as such due to planned linkages with smaller trails as well as accessibility to area homes, schools and businesses.

2.1.3 Transportation Facilities

The transportation facilities within the western segment of the Project are shown below and classified in the City of Menifee's General Plan as follows:

- **I-215** – major regional traffic thoroughfare (freeway)
- **Goetz Road** – major north-south connector
- **Normandy Road** – a major east/west road
- **Murrieta Road** – major north/south arterial road
- **Bradley Road** – major north/south road
- **Antelope Road** – local collector road

The transportation facilities within the eastern segment of the Project are shown below and classified in the City of Hemet's General Plan as follows:

- **Domenigoni Parkway** – major east/west divided arterial road
- **State Street** – major north/south secondary road
- **Sanderson Avenue** – major north/south road
- **Chambers Street** – local east/west collector street

2.2 Project Objectives and Need

Project Objectives

The Project's objects are to provide a multi-use trail generally along the Salt Creek Channel within the cities of Hemet and Menifee that would:

- Implement the General Plan Circulation Element
- Provide a corridor for alternative modes of transportation
- Improve safety by decreasing bicycle and pedestrian fatalities
- Improve air quality
- Reduce congestion on local and regional highways
- Improve public health

The Project would also serve the secondary purpose of paving the unimproved service road currently being used by RCFC&WCD maintenance vehicles.

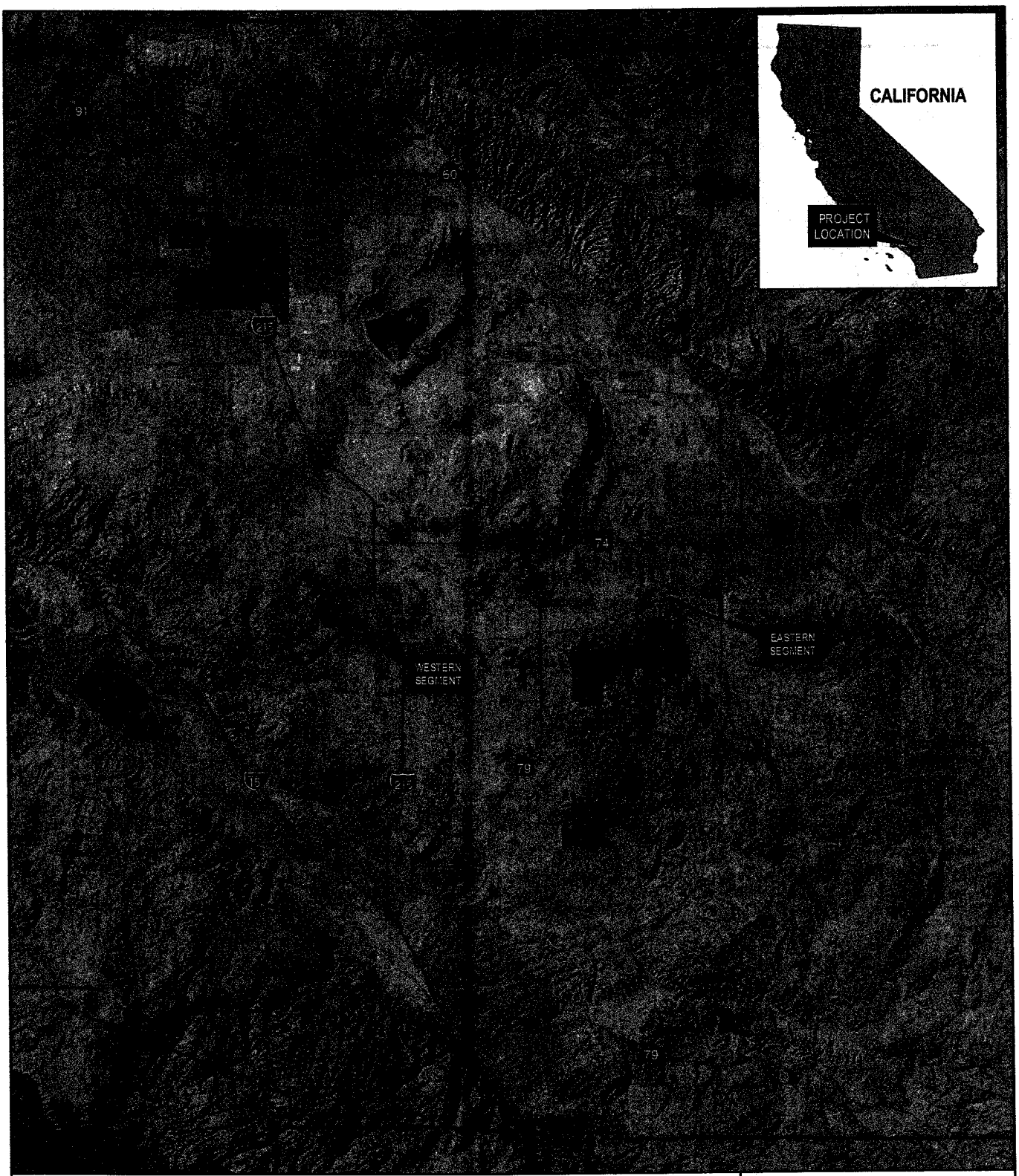

FIGURE 2-1
REGIONAL LOCATION

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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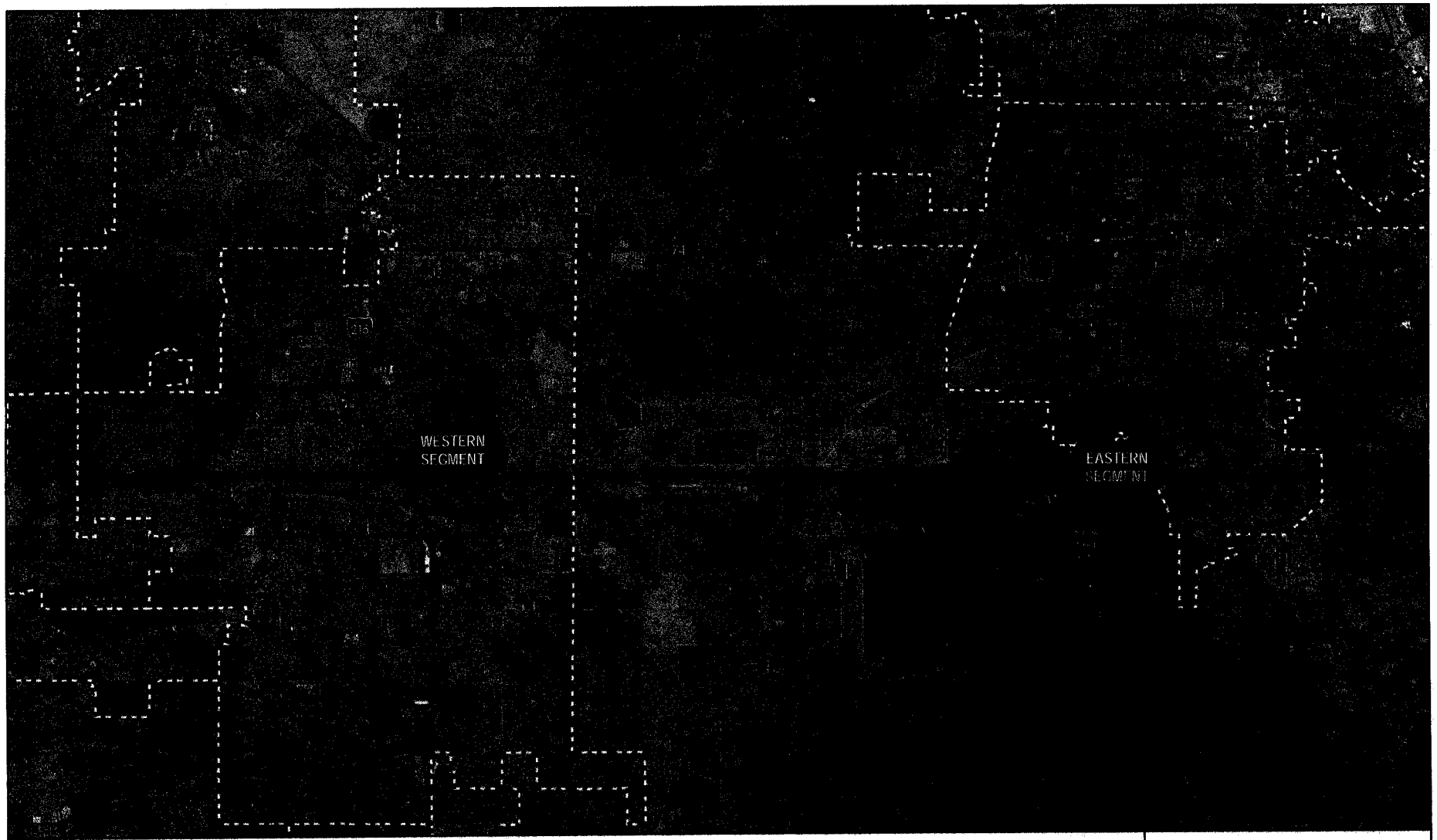

Legend

Project Location

City Boundary

Background Image:
USDA NAIP Imagery, 2014.

0 1 2 Miles

FIGURE 2-2
LOCAL VICINITY

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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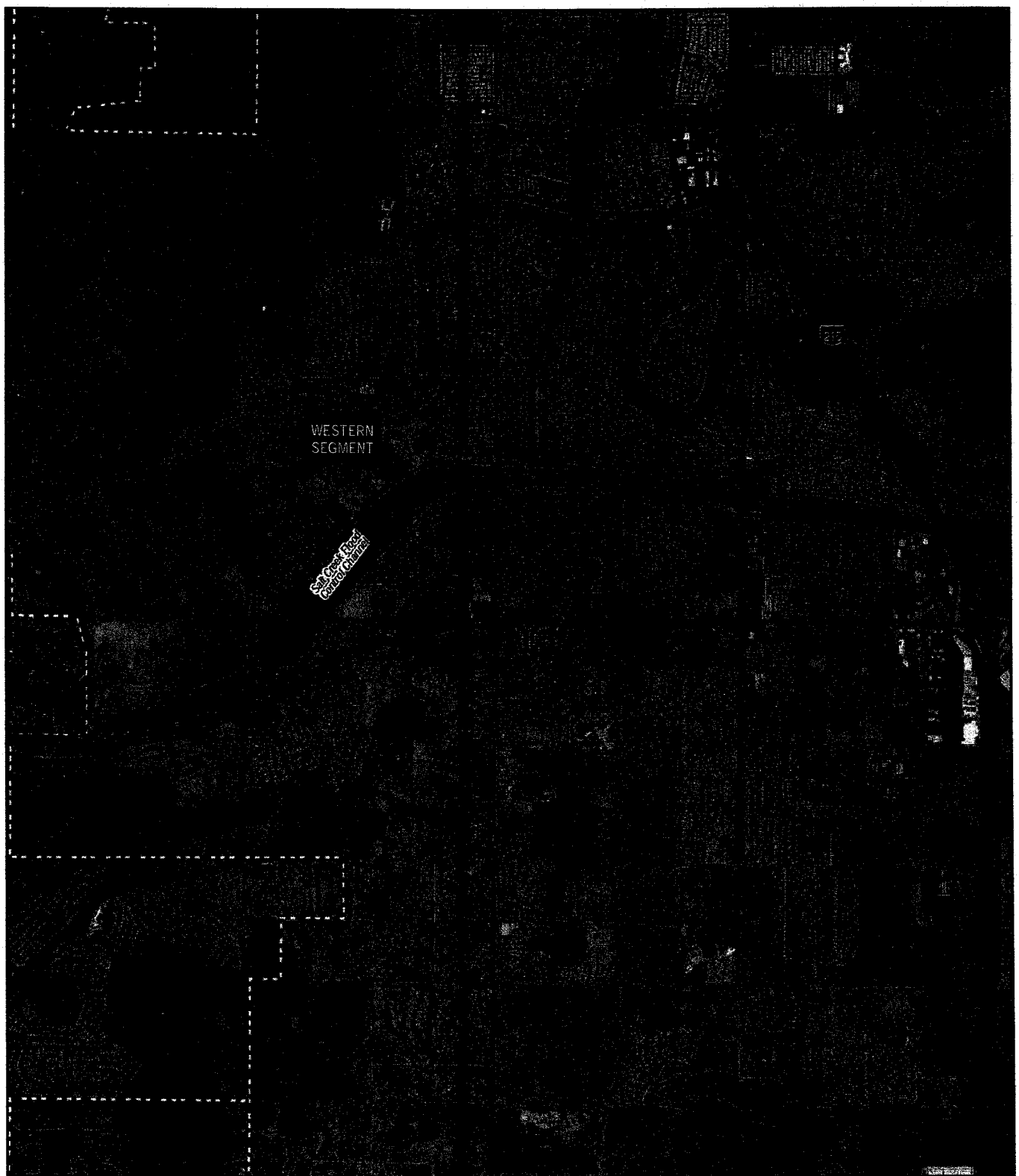

Legend

Project Location

City Boundary

Background Image:
USDA NAIP Imagery, 2016.

0 1,500 3,000 Feet

FIGURE 2-3
WESTERN SEGMENT

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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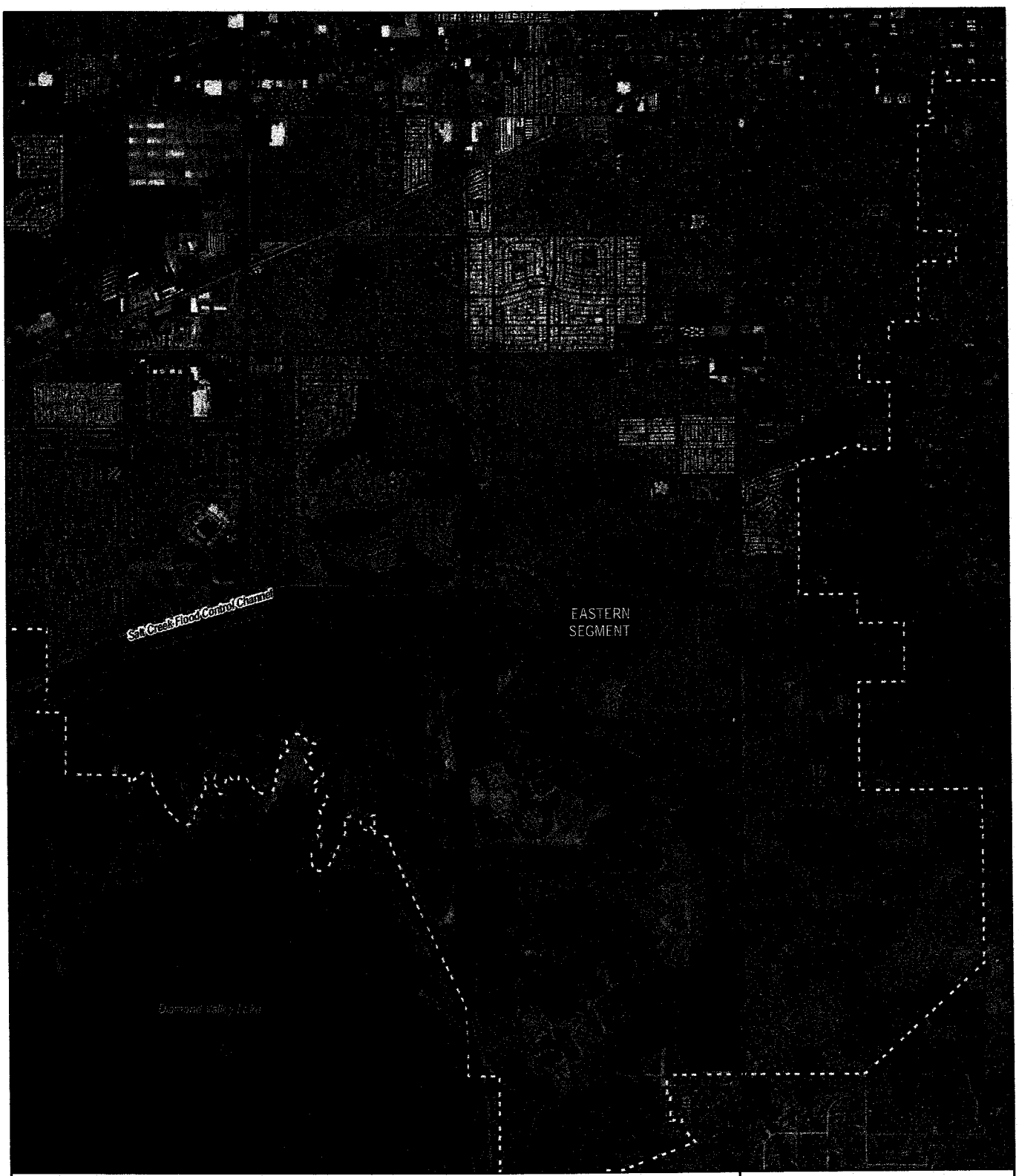

Legend

Project Location

City Boundary

Background Image:
USDA NAIP Imagery, 2016.

0 1,500 3,000 Feet

FIGURE 2-4
EASTERN SEGMENT

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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Project Need

Air Quality

According to the United States (U.S.) Census Bureau, 83.1 percent of workers in the City of Hemet and just over 71 percent of workers in the City of Menifee are employed within city limits. Both the City of Menifee and the City of Hemet are projected to experience significant employment growth over the coming decade. As such, it is reasonable to assume that a significant percentage of commuters in these cities are participating in short-distance automobile trips.

In a region where most vehicle trips are short, offering alternatives to gasoline-powered cars is a key strategy to achieve State and local air quality objectives. The Salt Creek Trail would provide an alternative to automobile travel between home and work, and would provide access to area schools, businesses, parks, and other recreational amenities.

Safety

There is a need for designated bike facilities along Newport Road and Domenigoni Parkway. Currently, cyclists traveling along these roadways use the unmarked shoulder.

Neither Newport Road nor Domenigoni Parkway has continuous sidewalks, requiring pedestrians to walk on dirt shoulders.

Traffic Congestion

Newport Road and Domenigoni Road are high-speed, high-volume arterial highways. Newport Road carries 50,542 average daily trips (ADT), and is projected to carry 60,900 ADT by 2035, while Domenigoni Parkway carries 22,100 ADT and is projected to carry 40,000 ADT by 2035. The Salt Creek Trail would offer users an alternative route instead of Newport Road, and would provide cyclists and pedestrians with an improved surface separated from vehicles by an asphalt berm and an unimproved dirt buffer along Domenigoni Parkway.

Public Health

Having access to linear open space can improve the nearby residents' health and prevent future healthcare issues. Children's obesity gained priority within the Obama administration, with Michelle Obama's Let's Move program. A Let's Move objective is to have active communities that can promote physical fitness by working to increase safe routes for kids to walk and ride to school.

2.3 Project Description

The County is proposing to construct and operate two segments of the Project, totaling approximately 7.9 miles. The Project is located within the cities of Menifee and Hemet. The proposed segment limits are described below:

- The western segment of the trail spans approximately 4.3 miles through the City of Menifee from the intersection of Goetz Road and Canyon Lake Drive just north of Newport Road to the intersection of Antelope Road and Aldergate Drive just east of I-215. The trail would be built upon the 13- to 24-foot wide dirt maintenance road that exists along the north side of the Salt Creek channel. The trail would roughly parallel and provide an alternative pedestrian and bicycle route to Newport Road, including an undercrossing at I-215. The segment begins near existing Canyon Lake residential area and planned residential development, and terminates near Menifee Lakes Country Club, providing an alternative transportation corridor for the community.

- The eastern segment of the trail spans approximately 3.6 miles through the City of Hemet from the intersection of Sanderson Avenue and Domenigoni Parkway to the intersection of State Street and Chambers Street. The trail would be built within the existing dirt parkway along the north side of Domenigoni Parkway and along the west side of State Street within and MWD property, and along an existing maintenance road on the south side of Salt Creek channel to Chambers Street. The segment begins near Brubaker Park, West Valley High School, and residential areas, and would include a connection to the existing pedestrian crossing at Searl Parkway leading to Diamond Valley Lake Community Park. The trail terminates near Diamond Valley Middle School, McSweeny Elementary School, Echo Hills Golf Course, and residential areas.

The Project involves construction of a dual track trail consisting of an approximate 12- to 14-foot wide Class I paved bike path adjacent to an approximate 5-foot wide natural surface pedestrian path. The maximum depth of excavation would be approximately 1 foot along the trail, with depths up to 4 feet at localized areas of grading, and 15 feet for traffic signal pole foundations.

The trail would cross drainage courses at two (2) currently unimproved locations: east of Murrieta Road at the crossing of the Sun City Channel; and on the east side of the I-215 Bridge. Proposed improvements at these locations would allow low flow water to pass under the trail while providing a stable surface above for trail users to traverse. The Project also involves the extension of one existing box culvert to accommodate the new trail along Domenigoni Parkway east of Searl Parkway; extending the culvert at this location would minimize impacts to the associated drainage. Existing drainage flows would not be impeded by the improvements.

The western segment of the trail includes street crossings at Normandy Road, Murrieta Road, and Bradley Road. Safety at the crossings would be improved through the installation of pedestrian activated traffic signals as part of the Project. The designed alignment of the trail includes the avoidance of utilities as much as possible; therefore, major utility relocations are not expected. Some adjustments to the grade of surface utilities, such as existing manholes or utility boxes, maybe required.

The Project is located within RCFC&WCD, City of Menifee, City of Hemet, and Caltrans ROW, for which the trail would be constructed and operated under encroachment permits with the agencies. The Project is also located within MWD, Sutter Mitland 01 and Charles McSweeny properties, for which the trail would be constructed and operated under easements and/or license agreements. Construction of the Project would not require the relocation of business or residential uses because all parcels to be traversed by the trail are currently vacant and do not contain residences or businesses. The parcels along the trail potentially requiring easements/license agreements as result of Project implementation are shown in Table 2-1. Potential temporary and permanent easements anticipated with implementation of the Project are depicted on Figure 2-5 (sheets 1 through 13). The easement areas shown on Figure 2-5 include the Project improvements and the anticipated grading limits. Final easement acquisition requirements are currently being evaluated. Potential construction staging areas are included in the Project footprint at various undeveloped locations throughout the alignment.

The Project would serve a variety of user groups with a wide range of interests and abilities ranging from casual pedestrian and family use to advanced cyclists, commuters, runners and hikers.

2.4 Project Construction

The Project would be constructed over approximately 10 months, beginning in December 2018 and completed by September 2019. Construction equipment would include graders, rollers, scrapers, paving equipment, tractors, loaders, and backhoes.

TABLE 2-1 POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/LICENSE AGREEMENTS

Western Segment					
358-070-010	No Address	Partial - Approximately 0.4 acre	N/A	Sutter Mitland 01	Vacant Land
358-070-011	No Address	Partial - Approximately 1.7 acre	N/A	Sutter Mitland 01	Vacant Land
Eastern Segment					
451-150-035	No Address	Partial - Approximately 0.8 acre	Approximately 0.2 acres	Metropolitan Water District	Vacant Land
451-150-037	No Address	Partial - Approximately 0.001 acre (41 sq. ft.)	N/A	Charles McSweeny	Vacant Land Associated with Residential Use
454-060-032	No Address	Partial - Approximately 0.7 acre	Approximately 0.3 acre	Metropolitan Water District	Vacant Land
454-060-033	No Address	Partial - Approximately 0.9 acre	Approximately 0.3 acre	Metropolitan Water District	Vacant Land
454-070-019	No Address	Partial - Approximately 1.1 acres	Approximately 0.3 acre	Metropolitan Water District	Vacant Land Associated with Water District Facility

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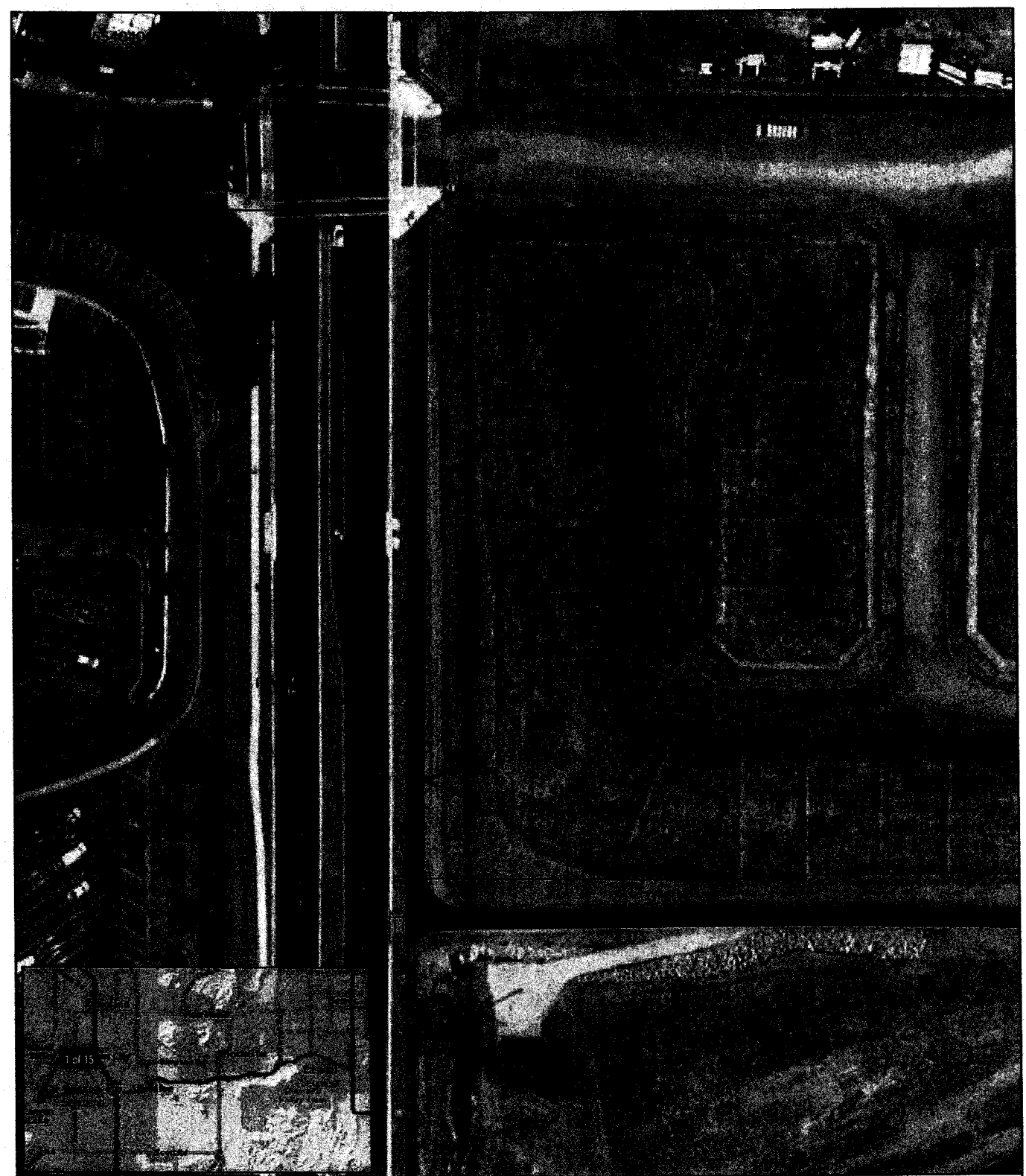

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

Feet
0 50 100

FIGURE 2-5 (1 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(WESTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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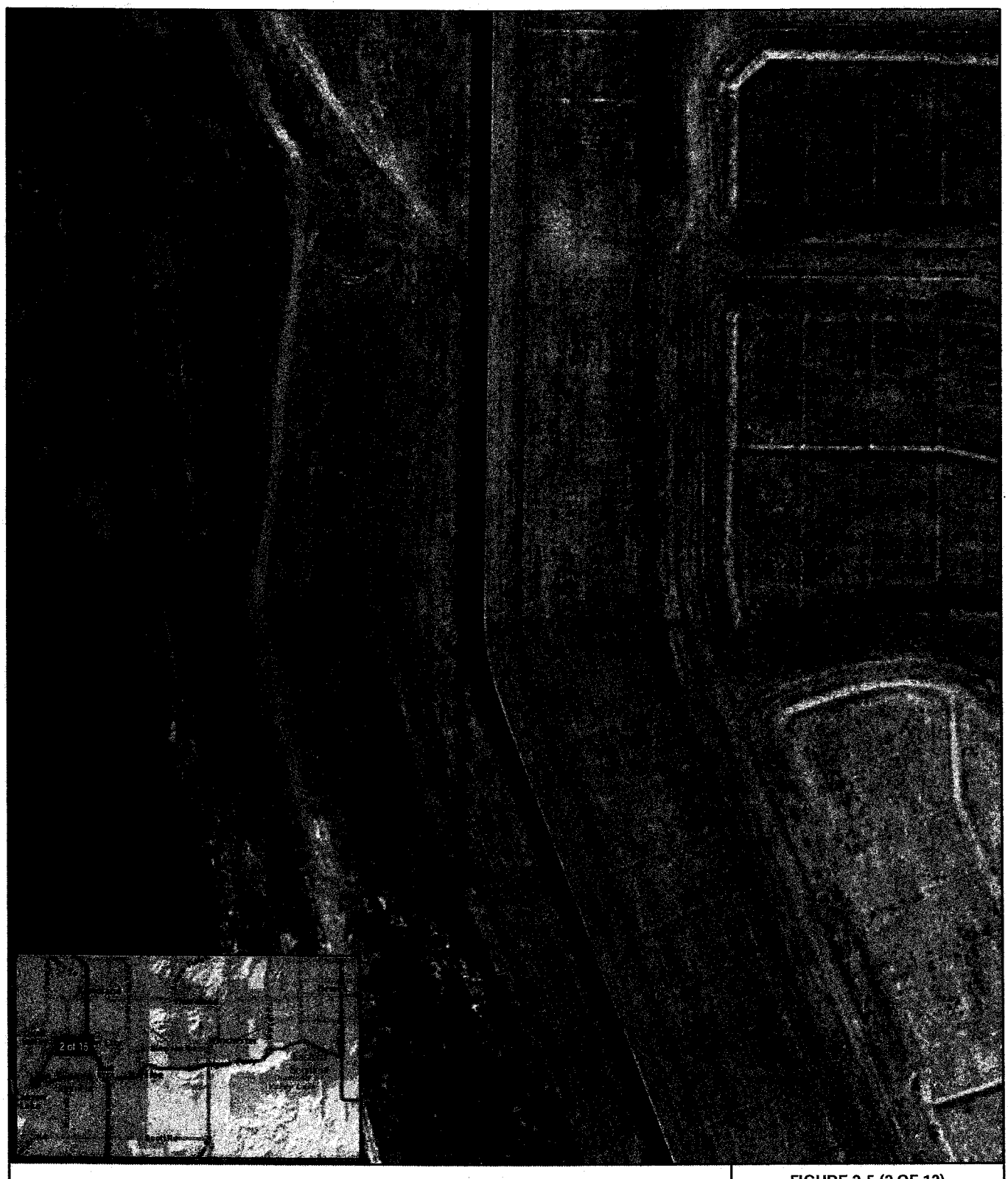

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (2 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/
LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(WESTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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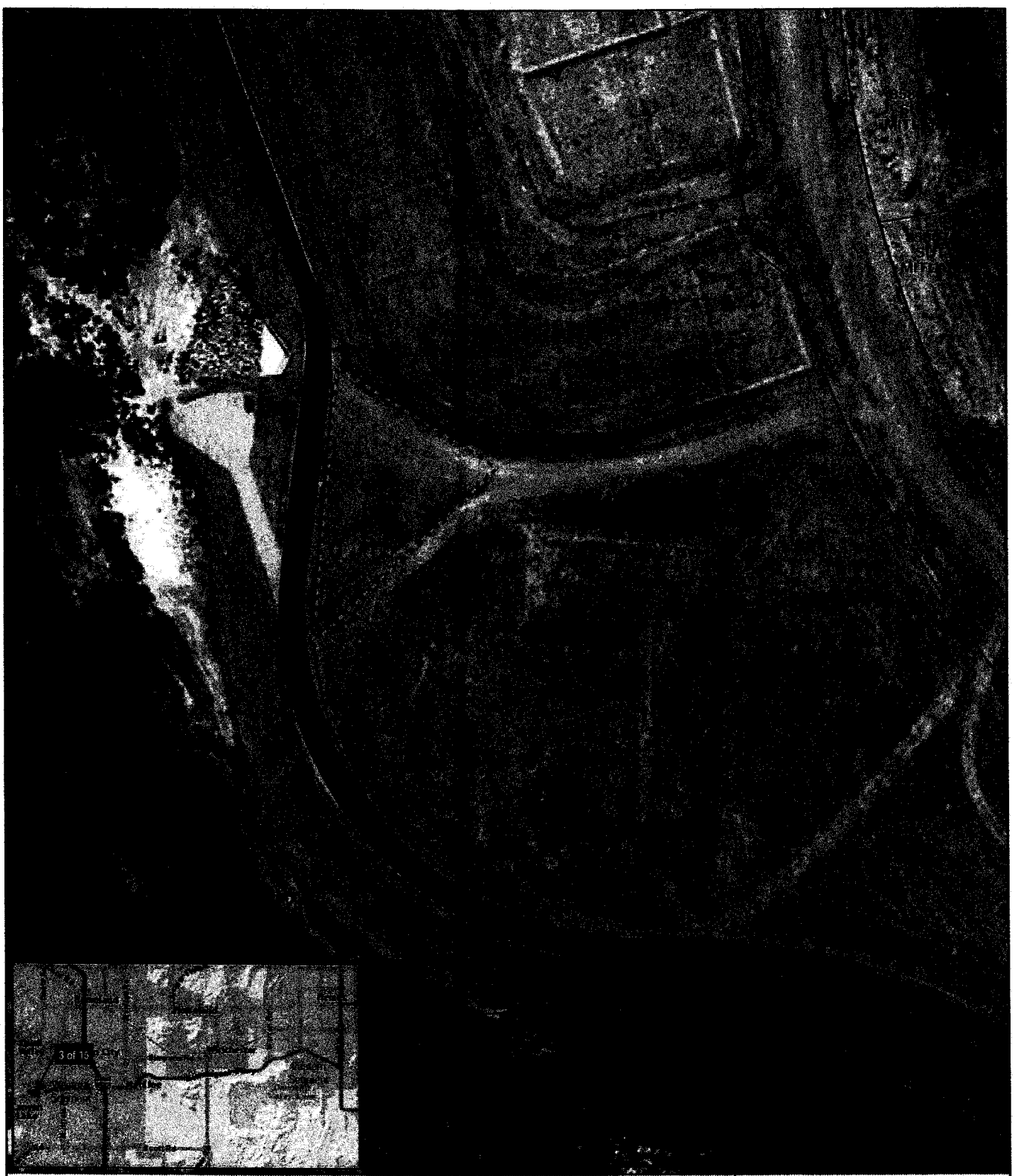

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Potential Staging Area
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

Feet
0 50 100

FIGURE 2-5 (3 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(WESTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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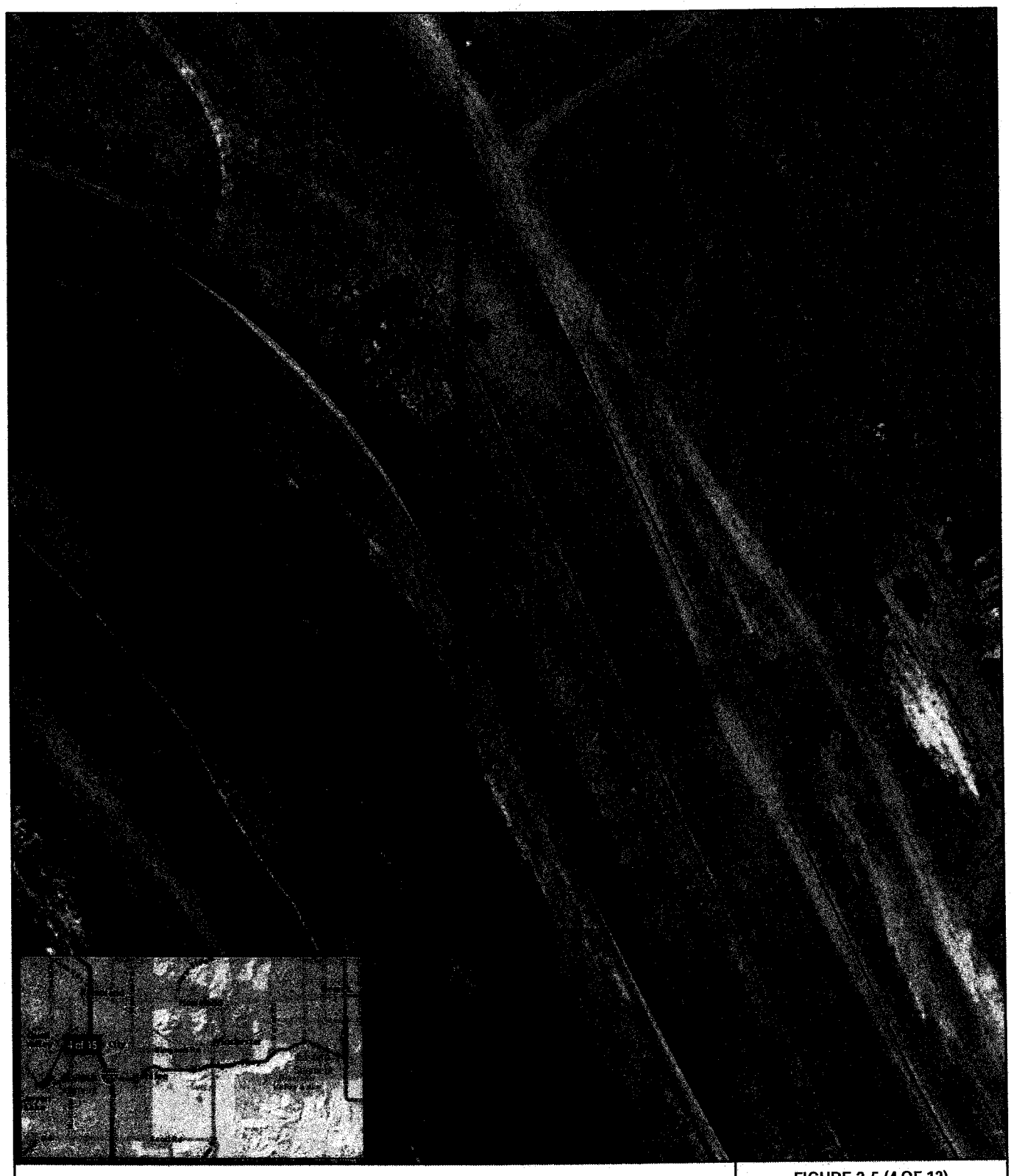

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (4 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(WESTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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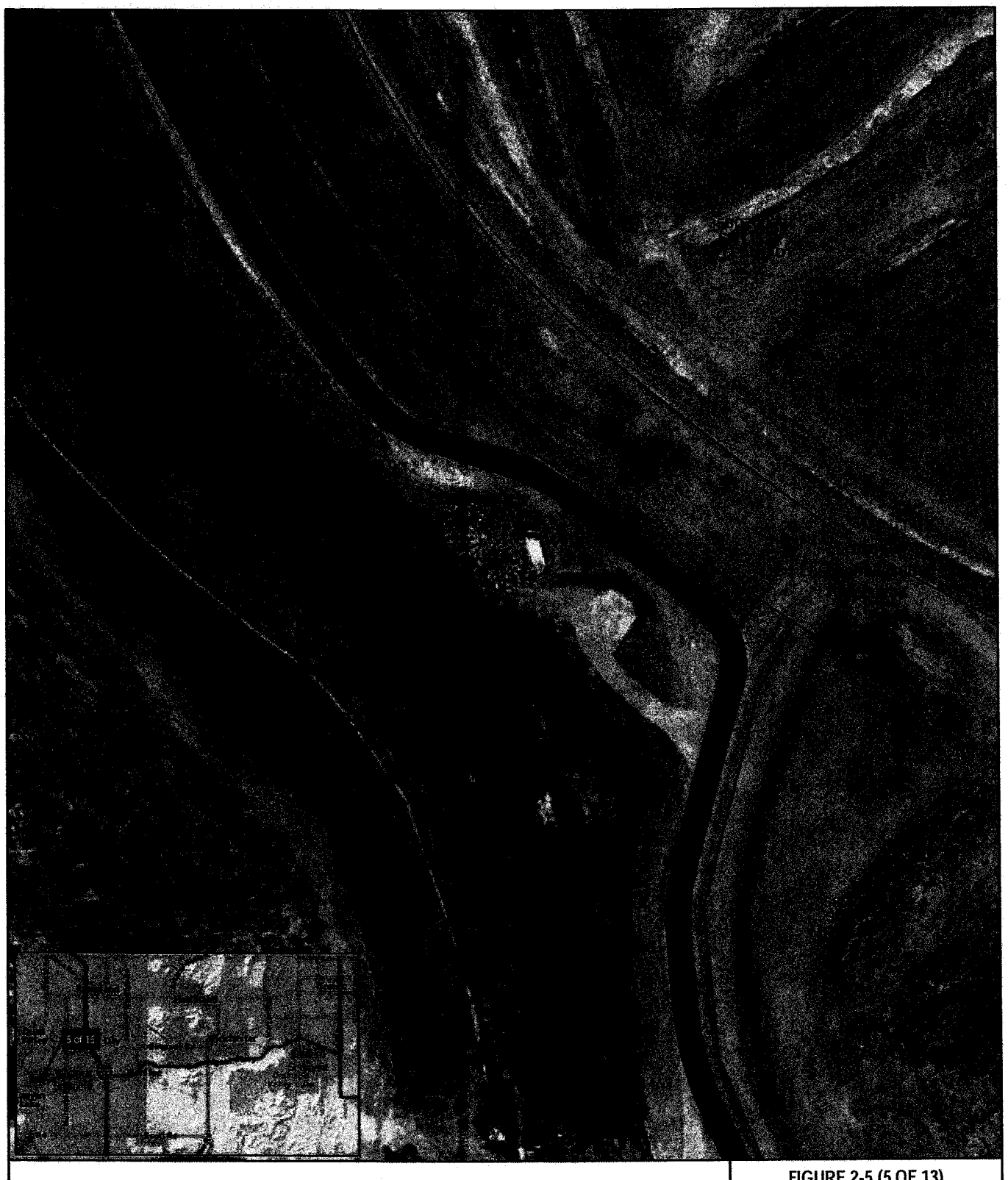

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (5 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/
LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(WESTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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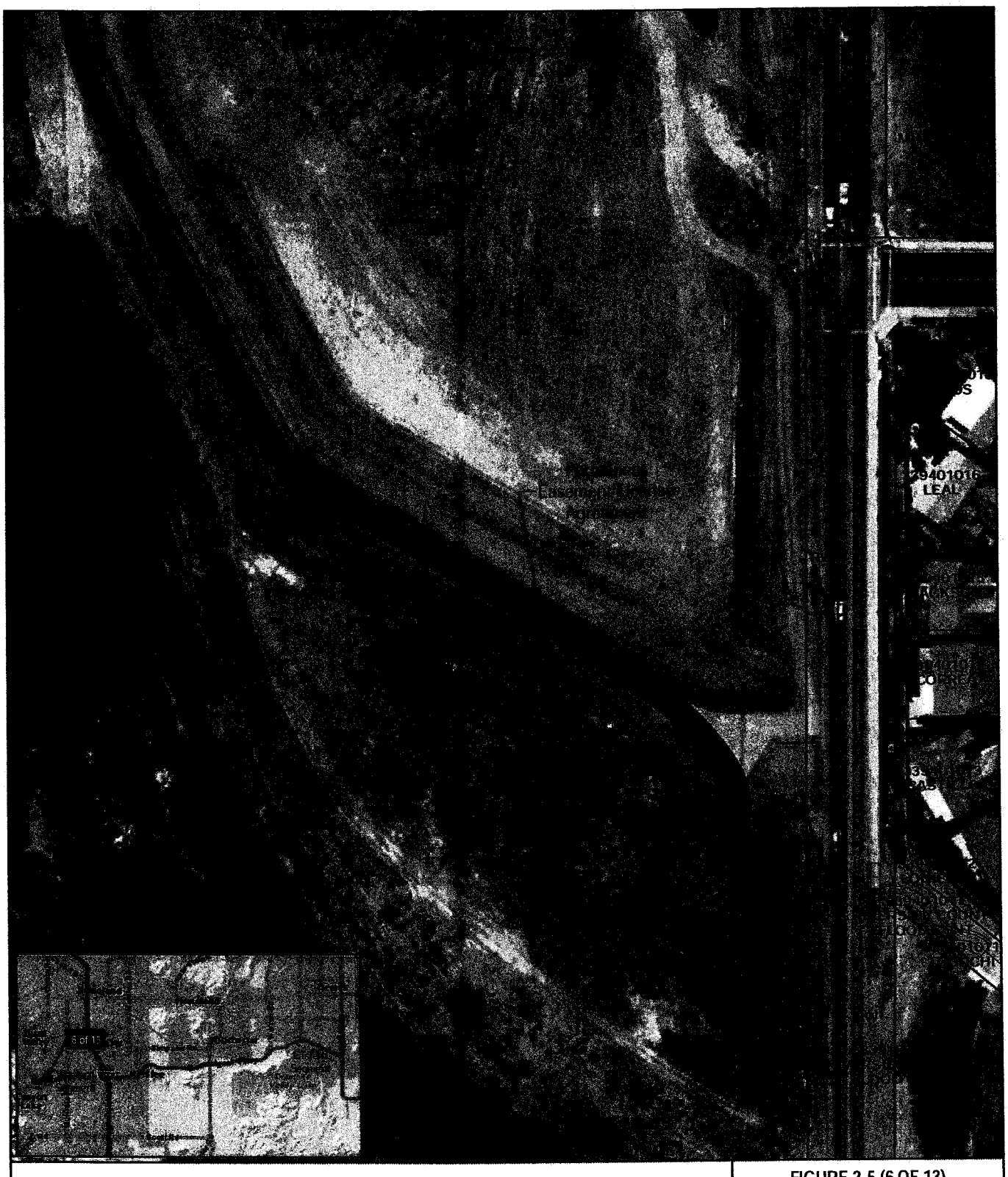

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Potential Staging Area
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

Feet
0 50 100

FIGURE 2-5 (6 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(WESTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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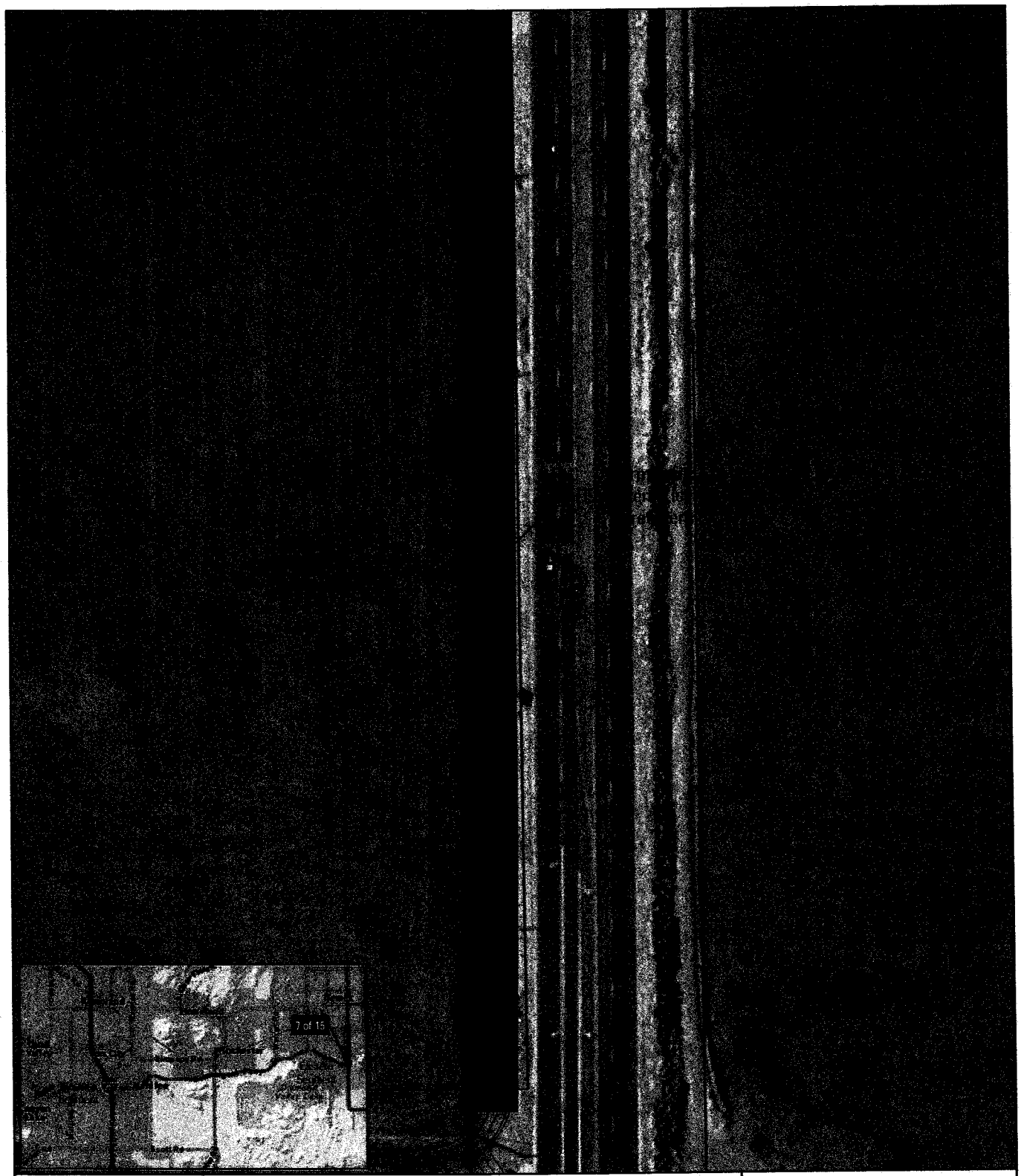

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement
- Temporary Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (7 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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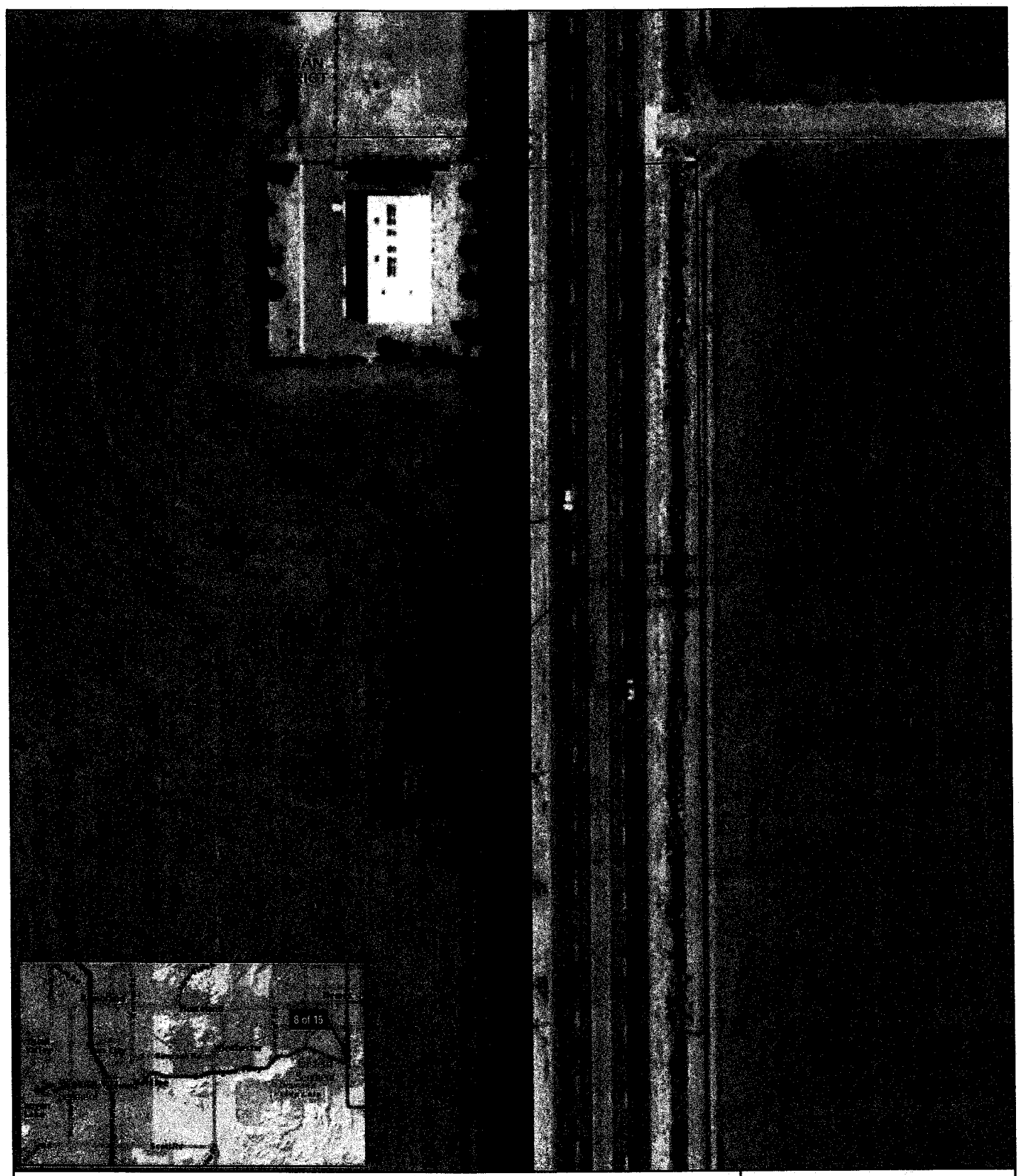

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Potential Staging Area
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement
- Temporary Easement/License Agreement

Feet
0 50 100

FIGURE 2-5 (8 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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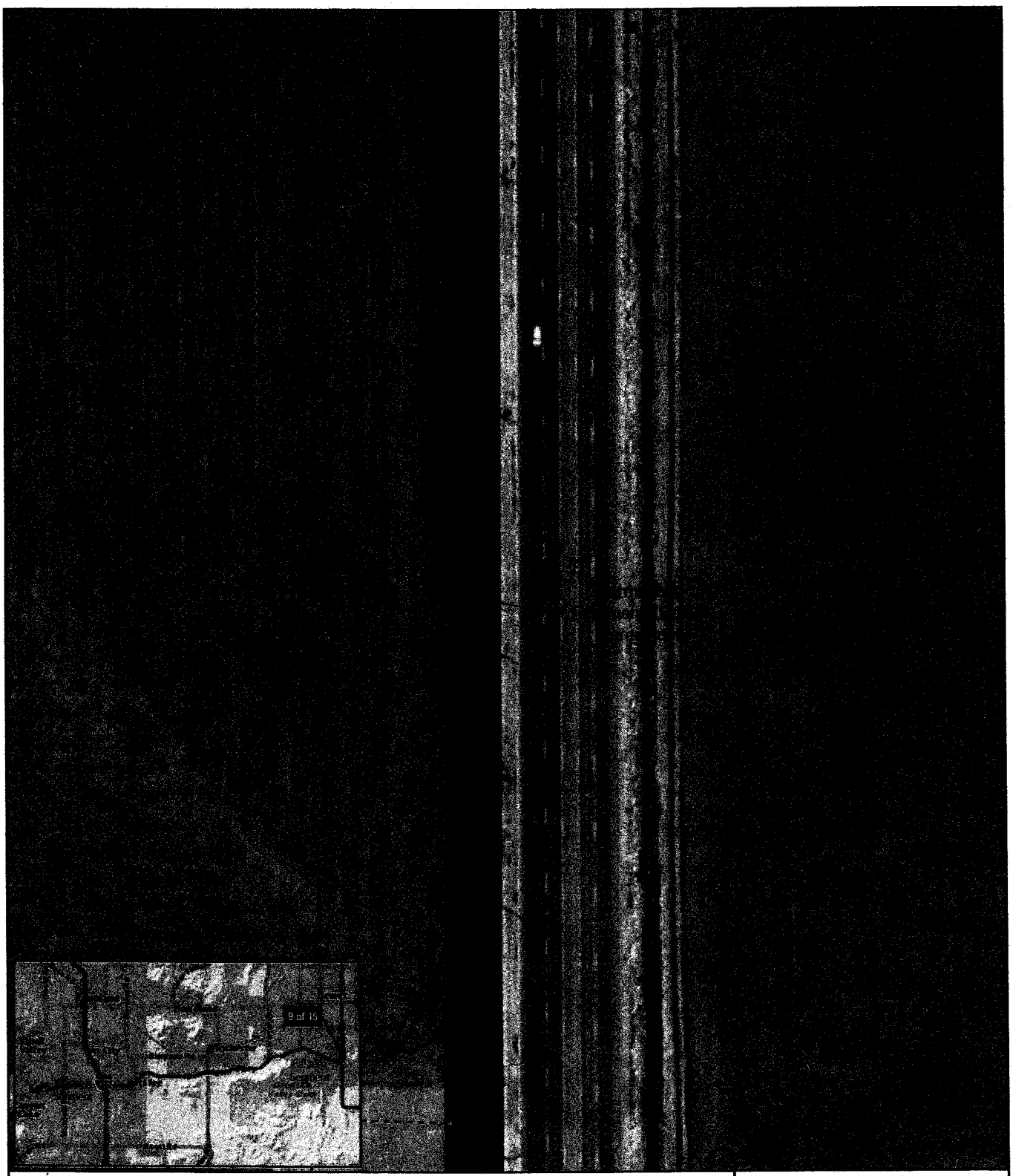

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Potential Staging Area
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement
- Temporary Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (9 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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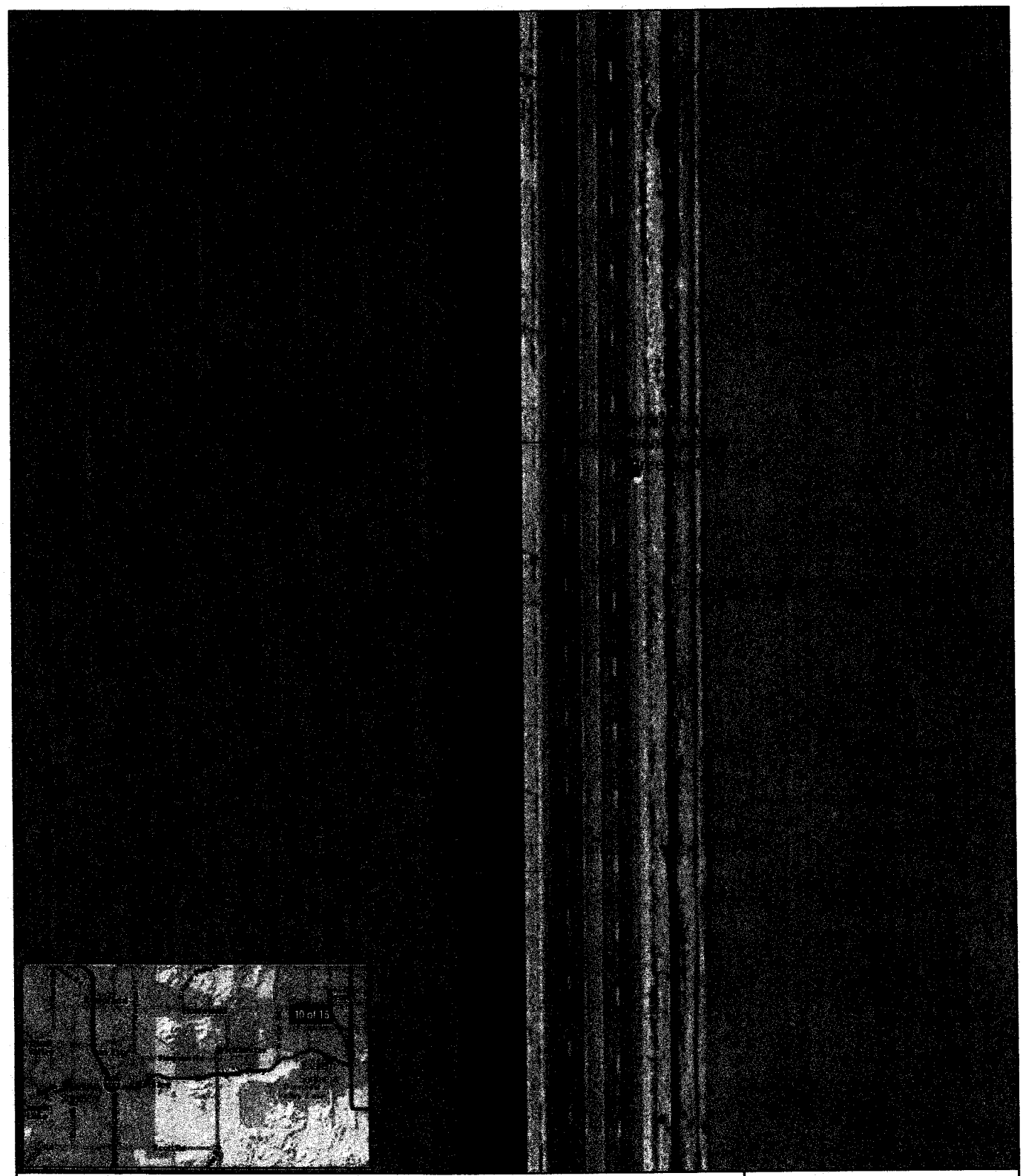

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement
- Temporary Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (10 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

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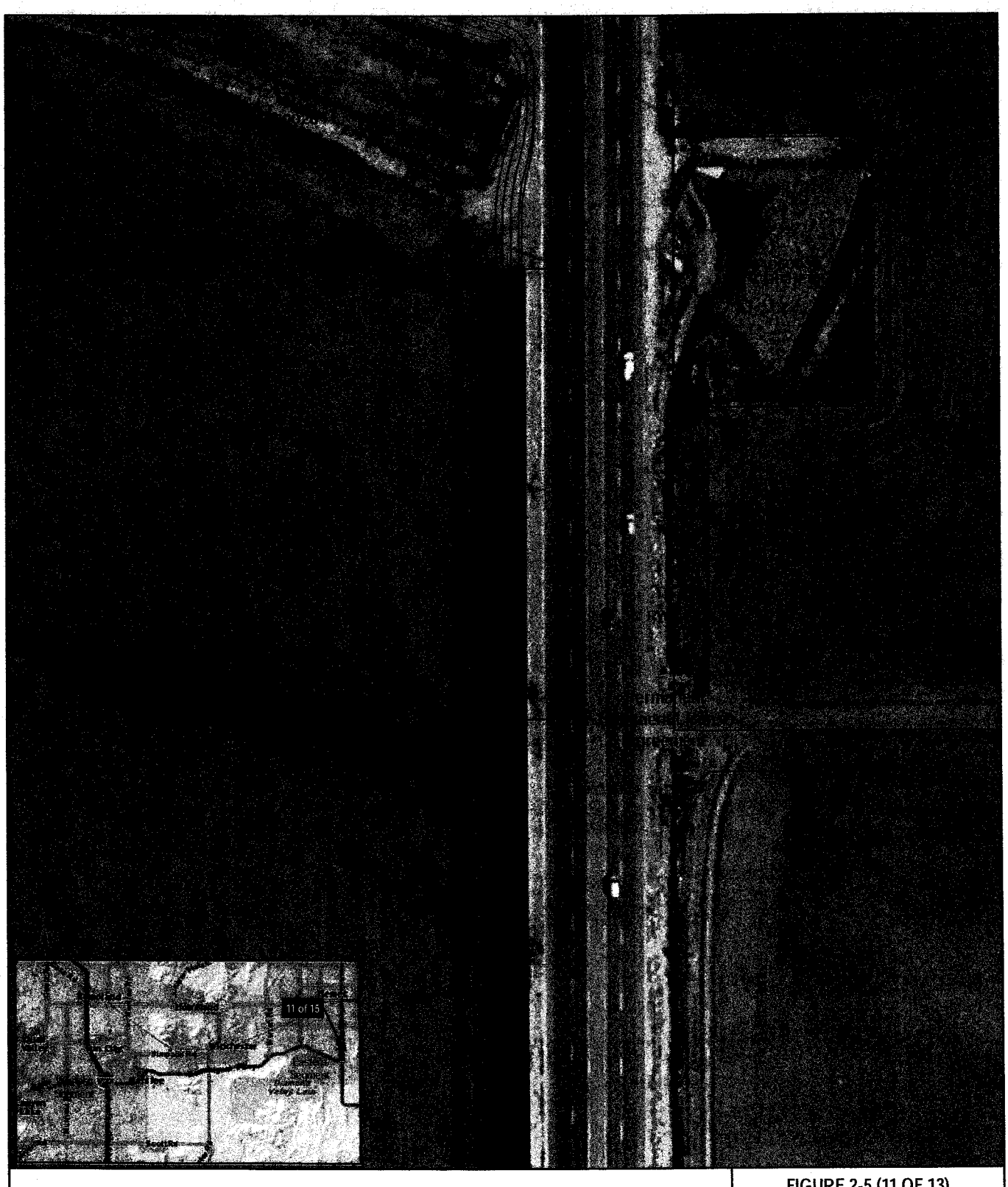

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Potential Staging Area
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement
- Temporary Easement/License Agreement

Feet
0 50 100

FIGURE 2-5 (11 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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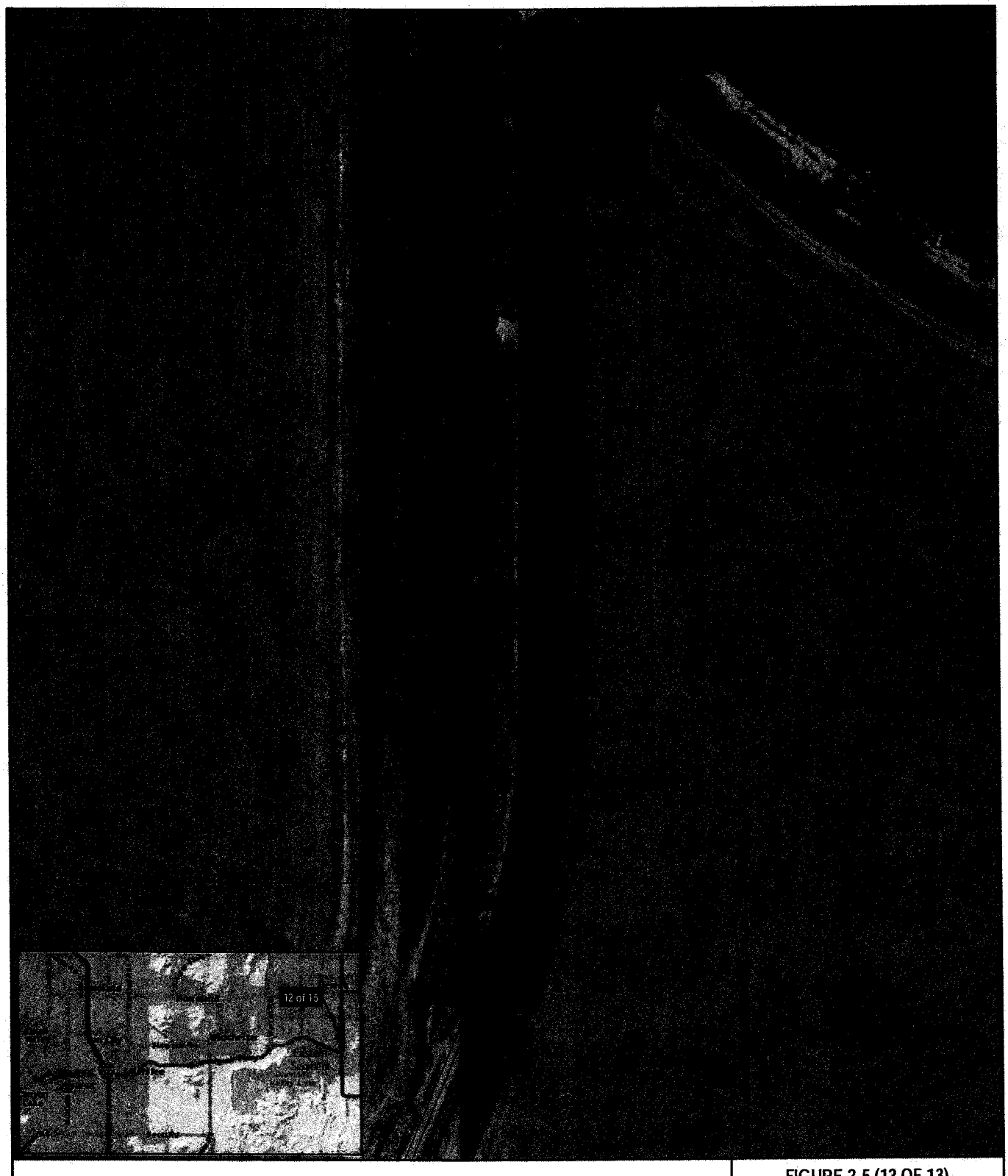

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement
- Temporary Easement/License Agreement

0 50 100 Feet

FIGURE 2-5 (12 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/
LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK
TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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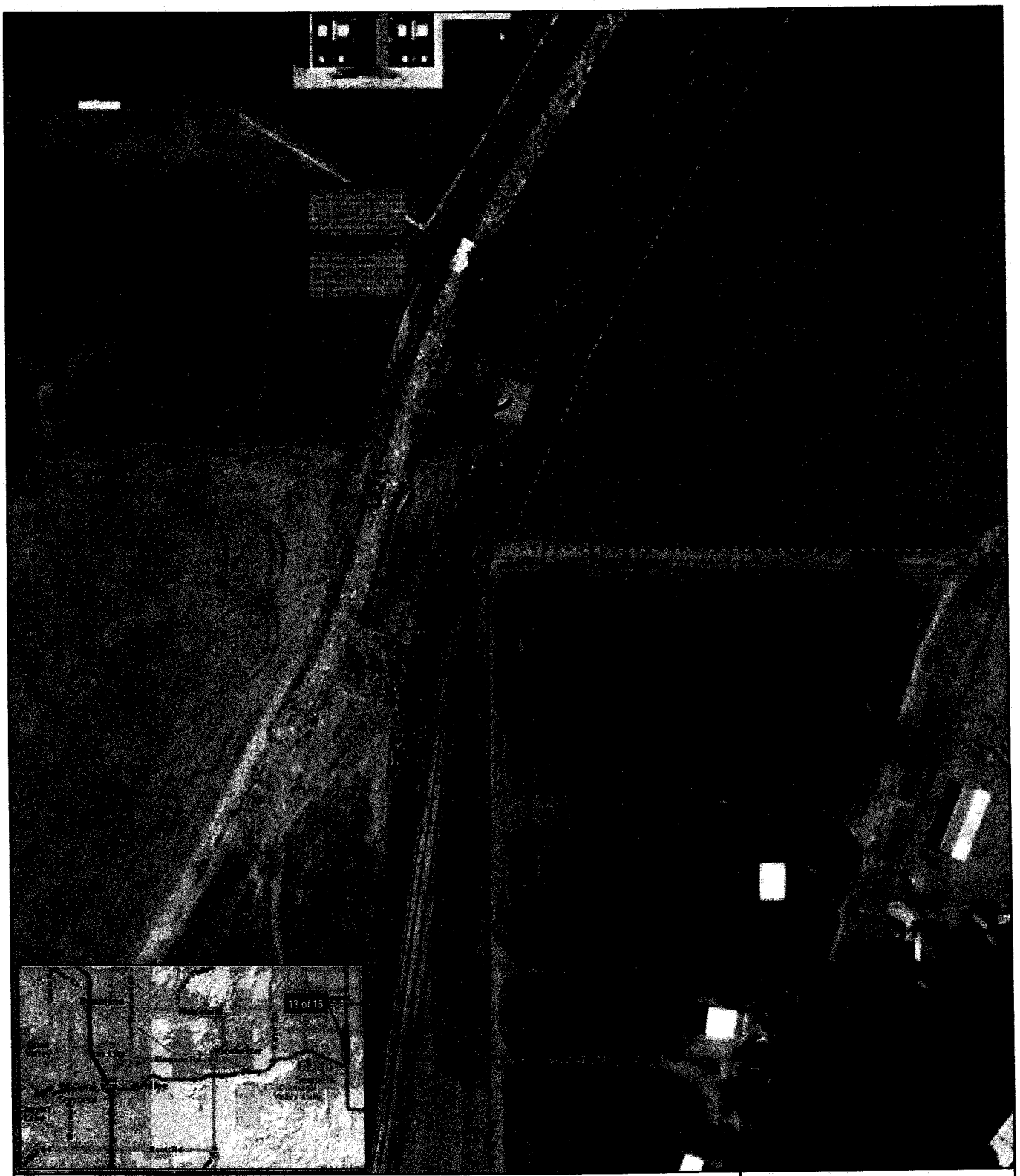

Legend

- Proposed Improvements
- Potential Staging Area
- Parcel Boundary
- Permanent Easement/License Agreement

Feet
0 50 100

FIGURE 2-5 (13 OF 13)
POTENTIAL EASEMENTS/ LICENSE AGREEMENTS
(EASTERN SEGMENT)

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

POWER ENGINEERS

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3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL EVALUATION

The following analysis of potential Project impacts is based on the Environmental Checklist provided as Appendix A and available information, including conceptual design plans. A brief explanation for each question in the Environmental Checklist is provided to adequately support each impact determination. The answers take into account the whole of the action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as Project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts. Where determined that an impact is potentially significant, mitigation measures have been incorporated to reduce the impacts to less than significant levels. The environmental resources potentially affected by the Project are presented below and organized according to the format of the checklist in Appendix A.

3.1 Aesthetics

Information in this section is based on the *Salt Creek Trail Project – Scenic Resources Evaluation and Visual Impact Assessment* prepared by Michael Baker International (2016).

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The existing visual setting reflects a combination of both manmade and natural conditions. Manmade conditions include single-family residential uses, parks, schools, and Salt Creek Channel. Both the City of Hemet and City of Menifee designate hillsides and slopes in the vicinity of the Project site as scenic resources in their respective general plans. In addition, there are eligible County-designated scenic highways in the vicinity of the Project site (as noted in the Menifee General Plan), including: I-215, McCall Boulevard from I-215 to Menifee Road, and Menifee Road from McCall Boulevard to Mapes Road.

State Route 74 (SR-74), located approximately 1.8 miles to the north of the western segment of the Project site, is designated as "Eligible State Scenic Highways – Not Officially Designated" by Caltrans. The Project site would be visible at this distance from SR-74. SR-74 is also an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway, approximately 6.1 miles east of the eastern segment of the Project site (east/northeast of Hemet). However, the Project site is not visible from this designated portion of SR-74.

3.1.2 Impact Assessment

Would the Project:

a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?

No Impact. Scenic vistas typically consist of far reaching views, such as a panoramic view of a skyline or ridgeline, and provide an aesthetic public benefit (i.e., available to the general public). The Project involves the area in the immediate vicinity along the Salt Creek Trail. There are no scenic vistas on site, nor are there any designated scenic vistas off site that would have views of the Project. Therefore, no impact to scenic vistas would occur and no mitigation would be required.

b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?

Less Than Significant Impact. A scenic corridor is associated with a road that has been designated by either Caltrans or a local agency as being a scenic highway or road or determined to be eligible for such a designation. According to the City of Hemet and the City of Menifee General Plans the Project site is not located within an area designated as a Scenic resource. However, both General Plans designate hillsides and slopes in the vicinity of the Project site as scenic resources. As stated above, SR-74 is designated as an "Eligible State Scenic Highways – Not Officially Designated"

approximately 1.8 miles to the north of the western segment of the Project site. The Project site would be visible at this distance from SR-74. SR-74 is also an Officially Designated State Scenic Highway, approximately 6.1 miles east of the eastern segment of the Project site (east/northeast of Hemet). However, the Project site is not visible from this designated portion of SR-74. The Project site is relatively flat and the only vertical elements associated with the Project are pedestrian-activated traffic signals at three crossings (Normandy Road, Murrieta Road, and Bradley Road), traffic safety signage, and graded slopes up to five feet in height. The graded slopes would be located along the Project site in areas of varying topography associated with the Salt Creek channel. As the Project consists of a multi-use trail for pedestrians and bicyclists, views to the surrounding locally-designated scenic resources from scenic routes and corridors would be preserved. In addition, there are no unique or scenic resources, including trees and rock outcroppings, within or adjacent to the Project site. No impacts to scenic resources within the viewshed of a designated scenic highway would occur. The Project would, therefore, not have an adverse effect on scenic resources and would not damage scenic resources within a State Scenic Highway.

c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

Less Than Significant Impact. A project is generally considered to have a significant aesthetic impact if the project substantially changes the character of the site such that it becomes visually incompatible in comparison to that of its surroundings. The Project site and vicinity are in a relatively developed urban area. Surrounding land uses vary from urban development to open space (e.g., residential, public facilities, and recreation/open space). The Project site is visible from surrounding public sites, including roadways and residential uses. As described above, the Project is a multi-use trail for pedestrians and bicyclists and associated improvements including pedestrian-activated traffic signals at three crossings, traffic safety signage, and graded slopes up to five feet in height located along the Project site in areas of varying topography associated with the Salt Creek channel.

The views of the Project site from surrounding vantage points would only be altered slightly due to the limited vertical elements associated with the Project, however, this would not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site or its surroundings, nor would the Project be incompatible with existing land uses in the Project area.

During Project construction activities, the existing visual character of the area may be temporarily altered. Construction activities and equipment would be visible from adjacent residential uses located to the north and south of the Project site. However, these construction activities would be temporary in nature, and would cease upon completion of the Project. Therefore, potential visual impacts to the existing character or quality of the site and its surroundings would be less than significant and no mitigation would be required.

d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?

Less Than Significant Impact. Streetlights, vehicle head lights and tail lights, and lighting associated with existing development provide the existing sources of light and glare in the Project area. The trail crossings at Normandy Road, Murrieta Road, and Bradley Road would be standard traffic signals (activated by the pedestrian push buttons only) with standard safety lights. For the crossing at Antelope Road, a new standard street light would be constructed at the northeast corner of Antelope Road and Aldergate Drive. Either wall mounted or soffit mounted lighting would be installed under I-215. No other lighting is proposed along the trail. These improvements could result in a moderate increase in lighting; however, this increase is anticipated to be minimal and consistent with the existing street lighting in the Project vicinity. In addition, the Project would not involve any components that would involve the use of reflective building materials that would result in glare.

Therefore, the Project would not create a new source of light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views and no mitigation would be required.

3.1.3 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are proposed.

3.2 Agricultural and Forest Resources

3.2.1 Environmental Setting

The Project site is predominantly surrounded by residential, public facilities, and recreation/open space. The Project alignment occurs through properties controlled by RCFC&WCD, City of Hemet, City of Menifee, MWD, Caltrans, and private land owners. The western segment would be built upon a 13- to 24-foot wide dirt maintenance road that exists along the north side of the Salt Creek channel. Along the eastern segment of the Project, the multi-use trail would be built within the existing dirt parkway along the north side of scenic Domenigoni Parkway and along the west side of State Street within MWD property, and along an existing maintenance road on the south side of Salt Creek to Chambers Street.

3.2.2 Impact Assessment

Would the Project:

a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?

No Impact. The California Department of Conservation's Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP) produces maps and statistical data used for analyzing impacts on California's agricultural resources. Agricultural land is rated according to soil quality and irrigation status. The best quality land is called Prime Farmland. The maps are generally updated every two years with the use of aerial photographs, a computer mapping system, public review, and field reconnaissance. The goal of the FMMP is to provide consistent and impartial data to decision makers for use in assessing present status, reviewing trends, and planning for the future of California's agricultural land resources.

For Prime Farmland or Farmland of Statewide Importance, the soil must meet the physical and chemical criteria as determined by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). For CEQA purposes, Prime Farmland, Farmland of Statewide Importance and Unique Farmland are collectively defined as "Important Farmland."

The Project site and surrounding area are located in areas designated as residential, public facilities, and recreation/open space. According to the 2012 California Department of Conservation FMMP, there are no Prime Farmlands, Unique Farmlands, or Farmlands of Statewide Importance on or adjacent to the Project site (California Department of Conservation 2012). Therefore, the Project would not convert Prime Farmlands, Unique Farmlands, or Farmlands of Statewide Importance; no impact would occur and no mitigation would be required.

b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

No Impact. CEQA requires the review of projects that would convert land with a Williamson Act Contract to non-agricultural uses. The main purposes of the Williamson Act are to preserve agricultural land and to encourage open space preservation and efficient urban growth. The Williamson Act provides incentives to landowners through reduced property taxes to deter the early

conversion of agricultural and open space lands to other uses. There are no agricultural land uses or property under Williamson Act contract on or adjacent to the Project site. The Project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use of a Williamson Contract. No impact would occur and no mitigation would be required.

c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?

No Impact. The Project site does not contain designated forest land or timberland as defined in *Public Resources Code* (Sections 12220[g] and 4526, respectively). There are no areas zoned as forest land or timberland within or adjacent to the proposed Project boundaries. Therefore, the Project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land or timberland. No impact would occur and no mitigation would be required.

d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project site is predominately surrounded by residential, public facilities and recreational/open space. Implementation of the Project would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion of forest land to non-forest use. Therefore, no impacts to forest land would occur and no mitigation would be required.

e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?

No Impact. The Project would not result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses and there are no forest lands or timberland on the Project site or in the vicinity of the Project. No impact would occur and no mitigation would be required.

3.2.3 Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures are proposed.

3.3 Air Quality

Information in this section is based on the *Salt Creek Trail Project – Construction Air Quality / Greenhouse Gas Emissions Technical Memorandum* prepared by Michael Baker International (2016a).

3.3.1 Environmental Setting

Project Location

The Project site is generally located along the Salt Creek trail in the cities of Menifee (western segment) and Hemet (eastern segment) and within the South Coast Air Basin (Basin). The Basin includes Orange County, Los Angeles County (non-desert portion), Riverside County (non-desert portion), and San Bernardino County (non-desert portion). The South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) administers air quality regulations in the Basin.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive populations are more susceptible to the effects of air pollution than the general population. Sensitive populations (sensitive receptors) that are in proximity to localized sources of toxics and carbon monoxide (CO) are of particular concern. Some land uses are considered more sensitive to changes in air quality than others, depending on the population groups and the activities involved. The following types of people are most likely to be adversely affected by air pollution, as identified by California Air Resources Board (CARB): children under 14, elderly over 65, athletes, and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. Locations that may contain a high concentration of these sensitive population groups are called sensitive receptors and include residential areas, hospitals, day-care facilities, elder-care facilities, elementary schools, and parks. Existing sensitive receptors located in the Project vicinity surrounding the two segments of the Project include single-family residential uses, parks, and schools. Sensitive receptors are listed in Table 3-1.

TABLE 3-1 SENSITIVE RECEPTORS

Western Segment				
Residential	Residential Uses	Adjoining	North	Residential neighborhood northeast corner of La Ladera Road and Normandy Road
		Adjoining	East	Residential neighborhood east of Murrieta Road
		450	South	Residential neighborhood south of Salt Creek Channel
		250	West	Residential neighborhood west of Goetz Road
Parks	Eastport Park	175	West	31512 Railroad Canyon Road, Canyon Lake, CA 92587
	E. L. Pete Peterson Park	550	South	29621 Park City Avenue, Menifee, CA 92584
	La Ladera Park	1,100	Northwest	29629 La Ladera Road, Menifee, CA 92584
	Lazy Creek Recreational Center	1,405	South	26480 Lazy Creek Road, Menifee, CA 92586
	Water Conservation Park	1,760	Northwest	Along Canyon Lake Drive N., Canyon Lake, CA 92587
	Outrigger Park	3,440	Northwest	23950 Outrigger Drive, Canyon Lake, CA 92587
	Steel Head Park	3,780	Northwest	Along Steel Head Drive, Canyon Lake, CA 92587
	Lyle Marsh Park	4,500	South	27050 School Park Drive, Menifee, CA 92584
	Evans Park	4,505	Northwest	Along Canyon Lake Drive N., Canyons Lake, CA 92587
	Indian Beach Park	4,700	West	Along Continental Drive, Canyon Lake, CA 92587
	Lions Park	4,800	West	Along Yellow Feather Drive, Canyon Lake, CA 92587
Schools	Ridgemoor Elementary School	2,580	North	25455 Ridgemoor Road, Sun City, CA 92586
	Good Shepherd Lutheran School	2,660	South	26800 Newport Road, Menifee, CA 92584
	Herk Bouris Elementary School	3,730	South	34257 Kalanchoe Road, Lake Elsinore, CA 92532
	Chester W. Morrison Elementary	3,950	South	30250 Bradley Road, Menifee, CA 92584

Sensitive Equipment				
Residential	Residential Uses	115	East	Residential neighborhood along S. State Street
		165	North	Residential neighborhood along W. Chambers Street
Parks	Diamond Valley Lake Community Park	1,235	South	1801 Angler Avenue, Hemet, CA 92543
	Brubaker Park	2,625	Northwest	Along Mustang Way, Hemet, CA 92545
	McSweeny Park	3,555	South	Along McSweeny Parkway, Hemet, CA 92543
Schools	Diamond Valley Middle School	240	Northwest	291 W. Chambers Street, Hemet, CA 92543
	McSweeny Elementary School	1,135	West	451 Chambers Street, Hemet, CA 92543
	Hemet Unified School District	1,845	Northwest	3401 Mustang Way, Hemet, CA 92545
	West Valley High School	1,845	Northwest	3401 Mustang Way, Hemet, CA 92545
	Harmony Elementary School	3,920	Northwest	1500 S. Cawston Avenue, Hemet, CA 92545

Note:
1. Distances are measured from the exterior Project boundary only and not from individual activity areas within the interior of the Project site.
Source: Michael Baker International 2016a.

Air Quality Thresholds

Under CEQA, the SCAQMD is an expert commenting agency on air quality within its jurisdiction or impacting its jurisdiction. Under the Federal Clean Air Act (FCAA), the SCAQMD has adopted Federal attainment plans for ozone (O_3) and particulate matter 10 microns in diameter or less (PM_{10}). The SCAQMD reviews projects to ensure that they would not: (1) cause or contribute to any new violation of any air quality standard; (2) increase the frequency or severity of any existing violation of any air quality standard; or (3) delay timely attainment of any air quality standard or any required interim emission reductions or other milestones of any federal attainment plan.

The *CEQA Air Quality Handbook* also provides significance thresholds for both construction and operation of projects within the SCAQMD jurisdictional boundaries. If the SCAQMD thresholds are exceeded, a potentially significant impact could result. However, ultimately the lead agency determines the thresholds of significance for impacts. If a project proposes development in excess of the established thresholds, as outlined in Table 3-2, a significant air quality impact may occur and additional analysis is warranted to fully assess the significance of impacts.

TABLE 3-2 SOUTH COAST AIR QUALITY MANAGEMENT DISTRICT EMISSIONS THRESHOLDS

	ROG	NO_X	CO	SO_X	PM_{10}	$PM_{2.5}$
Construction	75	100	550	150	150	55
Operational	55	55	550	150	150	55

ROG = reactive organic gases; NO_X = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO_X = sulfur oxides; PM_{10} = particulate matter up to 10 microns; $PM_{2.5}$ = particulate matter up to 2.5 microns

Source: Michael Baker International 2016a.

Local Carbon Monoxide Standards

In addition, the significance of localized project impacts depends on whether ambient CO levels in the vicinity of the project are above or below State and Federal CO standards, as follows:

- If the project causes an exceedance of either the State one-hour or eight-hour CO concentrations, the project would be considered to have a significant local impact.
- If ambient levels already exceed a State or federal standard, then project emissions would be considered significant if they increase one-hour CO concentrations by 1.0 parts per million (ppm) or more, or eight-hour CO concentrations by 0.45 ppm or more.

Localized Significance Thresholds

Localized Significance Thresholds (LSTs) were developed in response to SCAQMD Governing Boards' Environmental Justice Enhancement Initiative (I-4). The SCAQMD provided the Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology (dated July 2008) for guidance. The LST methodology assists lead agencies in analyzing localized impacts associated with project-specific level proposed projects. The SCAQMD provides the LST lookup tables for one-, two-, and five-acre projects emitting CO, nitrogen oxides (NO_X), PM_{10}. The LST methodology and associated mass rates are not designed to evaluate localized impacts from mobile sources traveling over the roadways. The SCAQMD recommends that any project over five acres should perform air quality dispersion modeling to assess impacts to nearby sensitive receptors.

Cumulative Emissions Thresholds

The SCAQMD's 2012 Air Quality Management Plan (2012 AQMP) was prepared to accommodate growth, meet State and federal air quality standards, and minimize the fiscal impact that pollution

control measures have on the local economy. According to the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook, project-related emissions that fall below the established construction and operational thresholds should be considered less than significant unless there is pertinent information to the contrary. If a project exceeds these emission thresholds, the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook states that the significance of a project's contribution to cumulative impacts should be determined based on whether the rate of growth in average daily trips exceeds the rate of growth in population.

3.3.2 Impact Assessment

Would the project:

a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?

Less Than Significant Impact.

According to the CEQA Air Quality Handbook, in order to determine consistency with the SCAQMD AQMP two main criteria must be addressed.

Criterion 1

With respect to the first criterion, SCAQMD methodologies require that an air quality analysis for a project include forecasts of project emissions in relation to contributing to air quality violations and delay of attainment.

a) Would the Project result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations?

Since the consistency criteria identified under the first criterion pertain to pollutant concentrations, rather than to total regional emissions, an analysis of the Project's pollutant emissions relative to localized pollutant concentrations is used as the basis for evaluating Project consistency. As discussed in Checklist Response 3.3.2 (d) below, localized concentrations of CO, NO_X, and particulate matter (PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$) would be less than significant. Therefore, the Project would not result in an increase in the frequency or severity of existing air quality violations. Because reactive organic gasses (ROG) are not a criteria pollutant, there is no ambient standard or localized threshold for ROGs. Due to the role ROG plays in ozone formation, it is classified as a precursor pollutant and only a regional emissions threshold has been established.

b) Would the Project cause or contribute to new air quality violations?

As discussed in CEQA Environmental Checklist (Checklist) Response 3.3.2 (b), the Project would result in emissions that would be below the SCAQMD thresholds. Therefore, the Project would not have the potential to cause or affect a violation of the ambient air quality standards.

c) Would the Project delay timely attainment of air quality standards or the interim emissions reductions specified in the AQMP?

As discussed in Checklist Response 3.3.2 (d), the Project would result in less than significant impacts with regard to localized concentrations during Project construction. As such, the Project would not delay the timely attainment of air quality standards or AQMP emissions reductions.

Criterion 2

With respect to the second criterion for determining consistency with SCAQMD and SCAG air quality policies, it is important to recognize that air quality planning within the Basin focuses on attainment of ambient air quality standards at the earliest feasible date. Projections for achieving air quality goals are based on assumptions regarding population, housing, and growth trends. Thus, the SCAQMD's second criterion for determining project consistency focuses on whether or not the Project exceeds the assumptions utilized in preparing the forecasts presented in the AQMP. Determining whether or not a project exceeds the assumptions reflected in the AQMP involves the evaluation of the three criteria outlined below. The following discussion provides an analysis of each of these criteria.

a) *Would the Project be consistent with the population, housing, and employment growth projections utilized in the preparation of the AQMP?*

A project is consistent with the AQMP in part if it is consistent with the population, housing, and employment assumptions that were used in the development of the AQMP. In the case of the 2012 AQMP, four sources of data form the basis for the projections of air pollutant emissions: the City of Menifee General Plan (Menifee General Plan), City of Hemet General Plan (Hemet General Plan), SCAG's Growth Management Chapter of the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide, and SCAG's 2012-2035 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy (RTP/SCS). The RTP/SCS also provides socioeconomic forecast projections of regional population growth. The Project involves the construction of a multi-use trail along the Salt Creek Channel within the cities of Hemet and Menifee. The two trail segments would link the trail to these communities while providing a bikeway, community pedestrian network, and non-motorized travel for improved accessibility and traffic safety, consistent with the Menifee General Plan Circulation Element and the Hemet General Plan Circulation Element. Therefore, the Project would be considered consistent with the current cities' General Plan land use designations. Furthermore, the Project does not involve any uses that would increase population beyond what is considered in the Menifee General Plan and Hemet General Plan and, therefore, would not affect City-wide plans for population growth at the Project site. Thus, the Project is consistent with the types, intensity, and patterns of land use envisioned for the site vicinity in the Regional Comprehensive Plan and Guide. The population, housing, and employment forecasts, which are adopted by SCAG's Regional Council, are based on the local plans and policies applicable to both cities; these are used by SCAG in all phases of implementation and review. Additionally, as the SCAQMD has incorporated these same projections into the 2012 AQMP, it can be concluded that the Project would be consistent with the projections.

b) *Would the Project implement all feasible air quality mitigation measures?*

The Project would result in less than significant air quality impacts. Compliance with emission reduction measures identified by the SCAQMD would be required as identified in Checklist Response 3.3.2 (b). As such, the Project meets this AQMP consistency criterion.

c) *Would the Project be consistent with the land use planning strategies set forth in the AQMP?*

The Project would serve to implement various City of Menifee, City of Hemet, and SCAG policies. The Project is located within a developed portion of the cities of Menifee and Hemet, and would provide a dual track trail alignment consisting of a paved Class I multi-use pathway adjacent to a pedestrian trail in the Project area that improves connectivity within the area. The western segment of the trail in the City of Menifee is located from the intersection of Goetz Road and Canyon Lake Drive north of Newport Road to the intersection of Antelope Road and Aldergate Drive east of I-215 in the vicinity of public facilities, recreational,

commercial, residential uses. The eastern segment of the trail in the City of Hemet is located from the intersection of Sanderson Avenue and Domenigoni Parkway to the intersection of State Street and Chambers Street in the vicinity of open space, residential, recreational, and institutional uses.

In conclusion, the determination of AQMP consistency is primarily concerned with the long-term influence of a project on air quality in the Basin. The Project would not result in a long-term impact on the region's ability to meet State and Federal air quality standards. As discussed above, the Project's long-term influence would also be consistent with the goals and policies of the 2012 AQMP and is, therefore, considered consistent with the SCAQMD's 2012 AQMP and no mitigation would be required.

b) Violate any air quality standards or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated.

Short-Term (Construction) Emissions

Future construction of the Project site would generate short-term air quality impacts. The Project involves construction activities associated with grading and paving. The Project would be constructed over approximately 10 months, beginning in December 2018 and to be completed by September 2019. Construction equipment would include graders, rollers, scrapers, paving equipment, tractors, loaders, and backhoes. Exhaust emission factors for typical diesel-powered heavy equipment are based on the California Emissions Estimator Model (CalEEMod) program defaults. Variables factored into estimating the total construction emissions include the level of activity, length of construction period, number of pieces and types of equipment in use, site characteristics, weather conditions, number of construction personnel, and the amount of materials to be transported on- or off-site. The analysis of daily construction emissions has been prepared utilizing CalEEMod (refer to Appendix C model input/output). Table 3-3 presents the anticipated daily short-term construction emissions.

Emitted pollutants would include ROG, CO, NO_X, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. ROG emissions would be the greatest during the paving phase of construction. The largest amount of CO and NO_X emissions would occur during the construction phase. PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions would occur from fugitive dust (due to earthwork and excavation) and from construction equipment exhaust. The majority of PM_{10} and $PM_{2.5}$ emissions would be generated by fugitive dust from earthwork activities. Exhaust emissions from construction activities include emissions associated with the transport of machinery and supplies to and from the Project site, emissions produced on-site as the equipment is used, and emissions from trucks transporting materials to and from the site.

As indicated in Table 3-3, construction-related emissions would not exceed the established SCAQMD thresholds for criteria pollutants. During construction activities, the Project would also be required to comply with standard SCAQMD regulations, such as Rule 403 (Dust Control). Additionally, implementation of mitigation measure AQ-1 would ensure compliance with SCAQMD standard regulations, resulting in a less than significant construction impact.

TABLE 3-3 CONSTRUCTION AIR EMISSIONS

	ROG[1]	NOx[1]	CO[1]	SO2[1]	PM10[1]	PM2.5[1]
Year 1						
Unmitigated Emissions	2.62	26.86	21.68	0.04	1.98	1.51
Mitigated Emissions[2]	2.62	26.86	21.68	0.04	1.93	1.50
SCAQMD Thresholds	*75*	*100*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Is Threshold Exceeded After Mitigation?	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**	**No**
Year 2						
Unmitigated Emissions	2.35	25.35	21.35	0.04	1.85	1.34
Mitigated Emissions[2]	2.35	25.35	21.35	0.04	1.81	1.34
SCAQMD Thresholds	*75*	*100*	*550*	*150*	*150*	*55*
Is Threshold Exceeded After Mitigation?	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***	***No***

ROG = reactive organic gases; NOX = nitrogen oxides; CO = carbon monoxide; SO2 = sulfur dioxide; PM10 = particulate matter up to 10 microns; PM2.5 = particulate matter up to 2.5 microns

Notes:

1. Emissions were calculated using the California Emissions Estimator Model, as recommended by the SCAQMD.
2. The reduction/credits for construction emission mitigations are based on mitigation included in CalEEMod and as typically required by the SCAQMD through Rule 403. The mitigation includes the following: properly maintain mobile and other construction equipment; replace ground cover in disturbed areas quickly; water exposed surfaces three times daily; cover stock piles with tarps; water all haul roads twice daily; and limit speeds on unpaved roads to 15 miles per hour.

Refer to Appendix C, for detailed model input/output data.

Source: Michael Baker International 2016a.

Naturally Occurring Asbestos

Asbestos is a term used for several types of naturally occurring fibrous minerals that are a human health hazard when airborne. The most common type of asbestos is chrysotile, but other types such as tremolite and actinolite are also found in California. Asbestos is classified as a known human carcinogen by State, federal, and international agencies and was identified as a toxic air contaminant by the CARB in 1986. Asbestos can be released from serpentinite and ultramafic rocks when the rock is broken or crushed. At the point of release, the asbestos fibers may become airborne, causing air quality and human health hazards. These rocks have been commonly used for unpaved gravel roads, landscaping, fill projects, and other improvement projects in some localities. Asbestos may be released to the atmosphere due to vehicular traffic on unpaved roads, during grading for development projects, and at quarry operations. All of these activities may have the effect of releasing potentially harmful asbestos into the air. Natural weathering and erosion processes can act on asbestos bearing rock and make it easier for asbestos fibers to become airborne if such rock is disturbed.

The Project would involve grading and paving activities in association with the construction of a dual track trail alignment. According to the *Phase I Initial Site Assessment* (Michael Baker International 2016b) prepared for the Project, the Project vicinity for the eastern segment has two mines (the Nichols Magnesite Deposit and Hemet Silica Mine), which contain the mineral serpentine that may contain Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA). Although the Nichols Magnesite Deposit mine is 1.4 miles west of the eastern trail alignment and the Hemet Silica mine is approximately 0.6 miles east of the eastern trail alignment, the magnesite deposit (mineral formation) potentially occurs within the

entire eastern alignment (USGS 2016). As such, grading associated with Project construction could disturb an underlying mineral formation that has the potential to contain NOA.

If NOA are present, it could be disturbed and emitted into the air where it could expose workers or nearby residents. CARB has established two Airborne Toxic Control Measures (ATCMs) that address NOA, which are codified in Sections 93105 and 93106 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations. Section 93106 regulates surfacing materials and amends an older ATCM for asbestos-containing serpentine. Section 93105, which applies to construction, grading, quarrying, and surface mining operations, requires more stringent dust control measures at these operations. Subdivision 93105(c) provides an exemption if, through a geological investigation or other methods, NOA can be shown not to be present in the mineral formation.[1]

For activities not exempt from Section 93105, an asbestos dust mitigation plan is required to be submitted to and approved by the SCAQMD before the start of any construction and grading operations in areas greater than one acre. The provisions of that dust mitigation plan are implemented at the beginning and maintained throughout the duration of the construction or grading activity. Per Section 93105, the asbestos dust mitigation plan must include dust suppression techniques to prevent asbestos dust, which includes track-out prevention and control measures, keeping active storage piles adequately wetted or covered with tarps, control for disturbed surface areas and storage piles, control for traffic on on-site unpaved roads, and staging areas, control for earthmoving activities, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements. Other requirements of the proposed ATCM address post-construction stabilization of disturbed areas. The disturbed areas must be stabilized by using one or more of the following methods: 1) establishment of a vegetative cover; 2) paving, placement of at least three inches of non-asbestos-containing material; 3) or any other measure deemed sufficient to prevent wind speeds of 10 miles per hour or greater from causing visible dust emissions. NOA-containing material may be transported if the loads are adequately wetted or covered with tarps.

In order to reduce impacts from NOA to a less than significant level, the Project is required to comply with all applicable CARB ATCMs that address NOA (Sections 93105 and 93106 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations); refer to mitigation measure AQ-2 in Section 3.3.3. With implementation of mitigation measure AQ-2, NOA impacts would be less than significant.

Long-Term (Operational) Impacts

Long-term air quality impacts typically consist of mobile source emissions generated from Project-related traffic and from stationary source emissions generated directly from natural gas. The Project would involve the construction of a dual track trail alignment consisting of a multi-use pathway adjacent to a pedestrian trail. The Project would not generate any new traffic trips, as the Project proposes to provide a pathway for alternative modes of transportation and reduce congestion on local and regional highways and would not result in any permanent or long-term air emissions. Additionally, the proposed multi-use trail would not generate any stationary source emissions. Therefore, the Project would not result in any new operational emissions. No significant long-term emissions are anticipated and no mitigation measure would be required.

[1] If an exemption is pursued, the lead agency (i.e., County of Riverside) is responsible for preparing the geological investigation. Per Section 93105(c) of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations, the geological investigation must be submitted to the SCAQMD for their approval. The exemption must be approved prior to construction.

c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?

Less Than Significant Impact.

Cumulative Construction Impacts

With respect to the Project's construction-period air quality emissions and cumulative Basin-wide conditions, the SCAQMD has developed strategies to reduce criteria pollutant emissions outlined in the 2012 AQMP pursuant to FCAA mandates. As such, the Project would comply with SCAQMD Rule 403 requirements, and implement all feasible mitigation measures. Rule 403 requires that fugitive dust be controlled with the best available control measures in order to reduce dust so that it does not remain visible in the atmosphere beyond the property line of the Project. In addition, the Project would comply with adopted 2012 AQMP emissions control measures. Per SCAQMD rules and mandates, as well as the CEQA requirement that significant impacts be mitigated to the extent feasible, these same requirements (i.e., Rule 403 compliance, the implementation of all feasible mitigation measures, and compliance with adopted AQMP emissions control measures) would also be imposed on construction projects throughout the Basin, which would include related projects.

Compliance with SCAQMD rules and regulations would minimize the Project's construction-related emissions and ensure that impacts are reduced to a less than significant level. Thus, it can be reasonably inferred that the Project-related construction emissions, in combination with those from other projects in the area, would not substantially deteriorate the local air quality. Therefore, a less than significant impact would occur.

Cumulative Long-Term Impacts

As discussed previously, the Project would not result in long-term air quality impacts, as the proposed multi-use trail would not result in long-term air quality impacts and emissions would not exceed the SCAQMD adopted operational thresholds. Additionally, adherence to SCAQMD rules and regulations would alleviate potential impacts related to cumulative conditions on a project-by-project basis. Emission reduction technology, strategies, and plans are constantly being developed. As a result, the Project would not contribute a cumulatively considerable net increase of any nonattainment criteria pollutant. Therefore, no impacts to cumulative operational impacts associated with Project operations would result and no mitigation would be required.

d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentration?

Less Than Significant Impact with Mitigation Incorporated. As noted above, sensitive receptors are defined as facilities or land uses that include members of the population that are particularly sensitive to the effects of air pollutants, such as children, the elderly, and people with illnesses. Examples of these sensitive receptors are residences, schools, hospitals, and daycare centers. The CARB has identified the following groups of individuals as the most likely to be affected by air pollution: the elderly over 65, children under 14, athletes, and persons with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases such as asthma, emphysema, and bronchitis.

Sensitive receptors closest to the Project site include the adjacent residential uses to the north and east of the western segment and residential uses located approximately 115 feet to the east of the eastern segment. In order to identify impacts to sensitive receptors, the SCAQMD recommends addressing LSTs for construction and operations impacts (area sources only).

Localized Significance Thresholds

LSTs were developed in response to SCAQMD Governing Boards' Environmental Justice Enhancement Initiative (I-4). The SCAQMD provided the Final Localized Significance Threshold Methodology (dated June 2003 [revised 2008]) for guidance. The LST methodology assists lead agencies in analyzing localized impacts associated with project-specific level proposed projects. The SCAQMD provides the LST lookup tables for one, two, and five acre projects emitting CO, NO_X, $PM_{2.5}$, or PM_{10}. The LST methodology and associated mass rates are not designed to evaluate localized impacts from mobile sources traveling over the roadways. The SCAQMD recommends that any project over five acres should perform air quality dispersion modeling to assess impacts to nearby sensitive receptors. The western segment of the Project is located within Source Receptor Area (SRA) 24, Perris Valley, and the eastern segment of the Project is located within the SRA 28, Hemet/San Jacinto Valley.

The SCAQMD guidance on applying CalEEMod to LSTs specifies the amount of acres a particular piece of equipment would likely disturb per day. The Project would disturb approximately 7.2 acres; therefore, the LST thresholds for the largest acreage (five acres) were utilized for the construction LST analysis. It is noted that an operational LST analysis was not prepared, as the Project would not result in operational emissions. The closest sensitive receptors to the Project site are residential uses located adjacent to the Project site. These sensitive land uses may be potentially affected by air pollutant emissions generated during on-site construction activities. LST thresholds are provided for distances to sensitive receptors of 25, 50, 100, 200, and 500 meters. As the nearest sensitive uses are directly adjacent to the Project site, the LST values for 25 meters were conservatively utilized.

Table 3-4, below, shows the construction-related emissions for NO_X, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$ compared to the LSTs for SRA 24, Perris Valley. As the Project site is located in both SRA 24 and SRA 28, Hemet/San Jacinto Valley, the more conservative significance thresholds from SRA 24 were utilized. As shown in Table 3-4, construction emissions would not exceed the LSTs thresholds. Therefore, localized significance impacts from construction would be less than significant with implementation of mitigation measure AQ-1.

TABLE 3-4 LOCALIZED SIGNIFICANCE OF EMISSIONS

	NOx	CO	PM10	PM2.5
Year 1[1]				
Total On-Site Construction Emissions	12.86	11.04	0.84	0.78
Localized Significance Threshold	*337*	*1,577*	*13*	*8*
Thresholds Exceeded?	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*
Year 2[1]				
Total On-Site Construction Emissions	10.96	8.29	0.66	0.54
Localized Significance Threshold	*337*	*1,577*	*13*	*8*
Thresholds Exceeded?	*No*	*No*	*No*	*No*

Notes:

1. For construction, the paving phase emissions and the grading phase emissions are presented as the worst-case scenarios for 2018 and 2019 respectively.
2. The Localized Significance Threshold was determined using Appendix C of the SCAQMD Final Localized Significant Threshold Methodology guidance document for pollutants NO_X, CO, PM_{10}, and $PM_{2.5}$. The Localized Significance Threshold was based on the anticipated daily acreage disturbance for construction (approximately 7.2 acres; therefore the 5-acre threshold was conservatively used), the distance to sensitive receptors, and the source receptor area (SRA 24).Refer to Appendix C, for detailed model input/output data.

Source: Michael Baker International 2016a.

Carbon Monoxide Hotspots

CO emissions are a function of vehicle idling time, meteorological conditions, and traffic flow. Under certain extreme meteorological conditions, CO concentrations near a congested roadway or intersection may reach unhealthful levels (e.g., adversely affecting residents, school children, hospital patients, and the elderly). The SCAQMD requires a quantified assessment of CO hotspots when a project increases the volume-to-capacity ratio (also called the intersection capacity utilization) by 0.02 (two percent) for any intersection with an existing level of service LOS D or worse. Because traffic congestion is highest at intersections where vehicles queue and are subject to reduced speeds, these hot spots are typically produced at intersections.

As noted previously, the Project involves construction of two multi-use trail segments and operational vehicle trips would be nominal (occasional maintenance trips). As traffic generation associated with the maintenance trips would be nominal, it would not be of sufficient volume to increase the Intersection Capacity Utilization (ICU) of nearby intersections to warrant a CO hotspot analysis.

e) Create objectionable odors that would affect a substantial amount of people?

Less Than Significant Impact. According to the SCAQMD CEQA Air Quality Handbook, land uses associated with odor complaints typically include agricultural uses, wastewater treatment plants, food processing plants, chemical plants, composting, refineries, landfills, dairies, and fiberglass molding. The Project does not include any uses identified by the SCAQMD as being associated with odors.

Construction activities associated with the Project may generate detectable odors from heavy-duty equipment exhaust. Construction-related odors would be short-term in nature and cease upon Project completion. Any impacts to existing adjacent land uses would be short-term and are less than significant and no mitigation would be required.

3.3.3 Mitigation Measures

AQ-1 Prior to approval of the Project plans and specifications, the Project Engineer shall confirm that the specifications stipulate that, in compliance with SCAQMD Rule 403, excessive fugitive dust emissions shall be controlled by regular watering or other dust prevention measures, as specified in the SCAQMD's Rules and Regulations. In addition, SCAQMD Rule 402 requires implementation of dust suppression techniques to prevent fugitive dust from creating a nuisance off-site. Implementation of the following measures would reduce short-term fugitive dust impacts on nearby sensitive receptors:

- Dust control of all of the Contractor's operations is required 24 hours per day, 7 days a week for the duration of the contract, and until the disturbed soil is permanently stabilized. The Contractor shall take every precaution to prevent emissions of fugitive dust from the Project site, from locations of stockpiled materials, from unpaved driving surfaces, from haul vehicles, from inactive construction areas, and from all other operations of the Contractor;
- All grading and excavation operations shall be suspended when wind speeds exceed 25 miles per hour;
- Disturbed areas shall be replaced with ground cover, restored to a natural state similar to adjacent or nearby natural conditions, or paved immediately after construction is completed in the affected area;
- On-site vehicle speed shall be limited to 15 miles per hour;
- Visible dust beyond the Project limits which emanates from the Project shall be prevented to the maximum extent feasible;
- All material transported off-site shall be either sufficiently watered or securely covered to prevent excessive amounts of dust prior to departing the job site; and
- Reroute construction trucks away from congested streets or sensitive receptor areas.

AQ-2 During ground disturbance activities, the Construction Contractor shall comply with CARB's ATCM addressing Naturally Occurring Asbestos (NOA) (Section 93105 and 93106 of Title 17 of the California Code of Regulations). These ATCMs regulate construction, grading, quarrying and surface mining operations, as well as surfacing applications. Per Section 93105, unless it can be shown that formations containing NOA would not be disturbed, an asbestos dust mitigation plan shall be prepared that includes dust suppression techniques to prevent asbestos dust. Asbestos dust suppression techniques include, but are not limited to track-out prevention and control measures, keeping active storage piles adequately wetted or covered with tarps, control for disturbed surface areas and storage piles, control for traffic on on-site unpaved roads, and staging areas, control for earthmoving activities, and recordkeeping and reporting requirements.

3.4 Biological Resources

The information in this section is based on the *Natural Environment Study* (NES) prepared by Michael Baker International (2017a) and the *Jurisdictional Delineation* prepared by Michael Baker International (2017b). The NES summarizes information from the *Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan* (MSHCP) consistency analysis and the *Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior Preservation* (DBESP) analysis prepared for the proposed Project. The biological resources habitat assessment was conducted by Michael Baker International on December 10, 2015 and February 24, 2016 to document baseline conditions of the habitat and to identify special-status species and natural communities of special concern potentially occurring within the Biological Study Area (BSA) that could pose a constraint to implementation of the Project. Follow-up special-status plant species surveys were conducted along both Project trail segments on May 9, 2016 and June 20, 2016. In addition, focused surveys for burrowing owl were conducted by qualified biologists on April 15, 2014. The jurisdictional delineation was conducted during the above-referenced December 10, 2015 site investigation to delineate the jurisdictional limits of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) within the proposed BSA.

3.4.1 Environmental Setting

Study Area

The Project's BSA consists of a 500-foot radius buffer around the Project site for both segments of the trail (refer to Figures 3-1A and 3-1B). The 500-foot buffer was established to evaluate areas that have the potential to be indirectly affected by the Project.

The western segment of the BSA generally includes existing residential development to the north, although the section of land to the north between Goetz Road and Normandy Road consists of a vacant, graded, planned residential development (Audie Murphy Ranch).

There are several vacant, undeveloped lots that border the western segment Salt Creek. According to Google Earth imagery this area was first graded between 2003 and 2005. The southern half of the western segment is generally associated with Salt Creek, although Salt Creek narrows slightly east of Murrieta Road and the BSA includes a portion of the residential community to the south. At I-215 the BSA includes residential development, the interstate, and a portion of the Menifee Lakes Country Club.

The eastern segment of the BSA is primarily surrounded by vacant, undeveloped land that historically been used for agricultural purposes, or left as open space. However, the northeastern section of the BSA in this segment includes residential and educational facilities.

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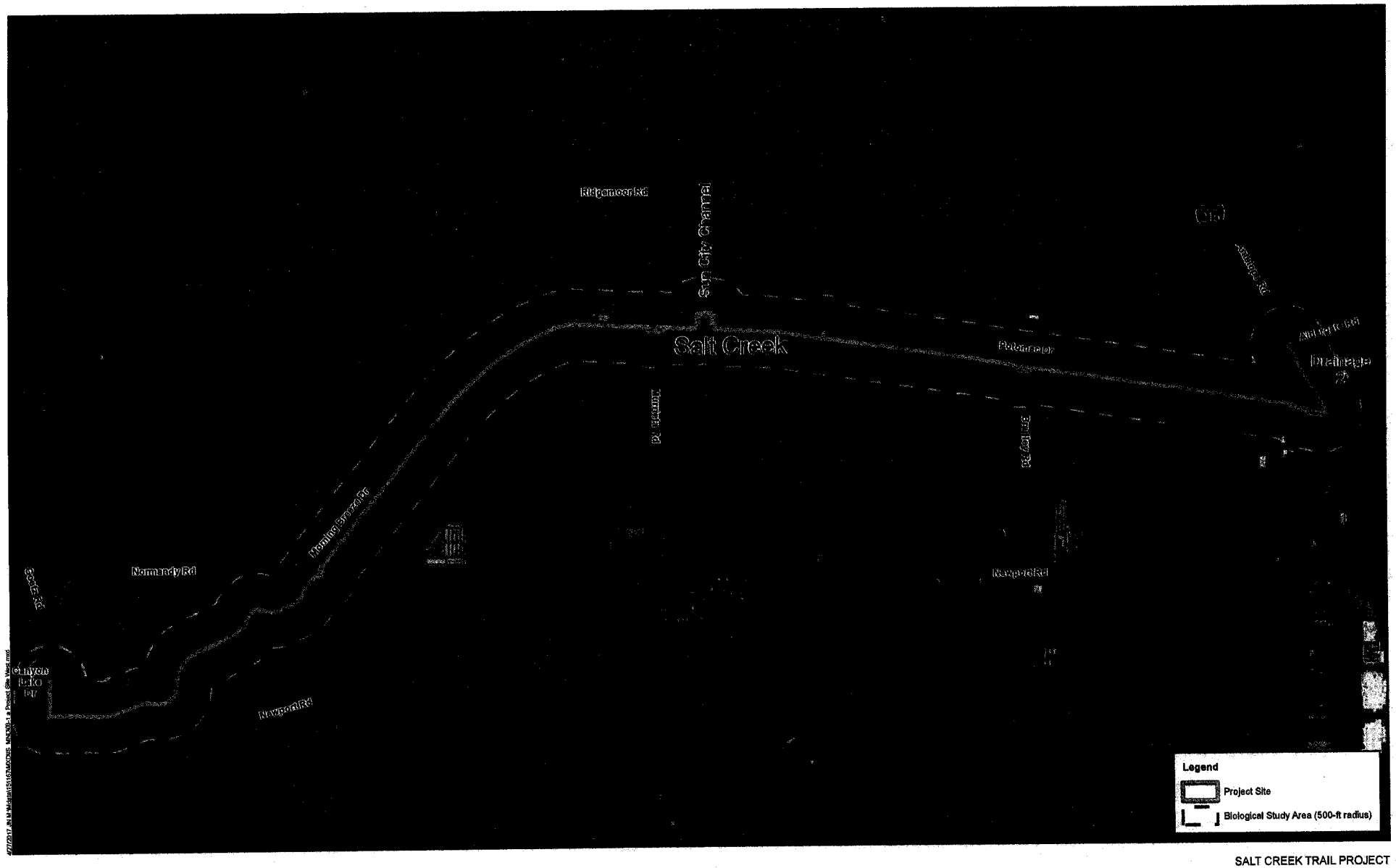

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Project Site (Western Segment)

Figure 3-1A

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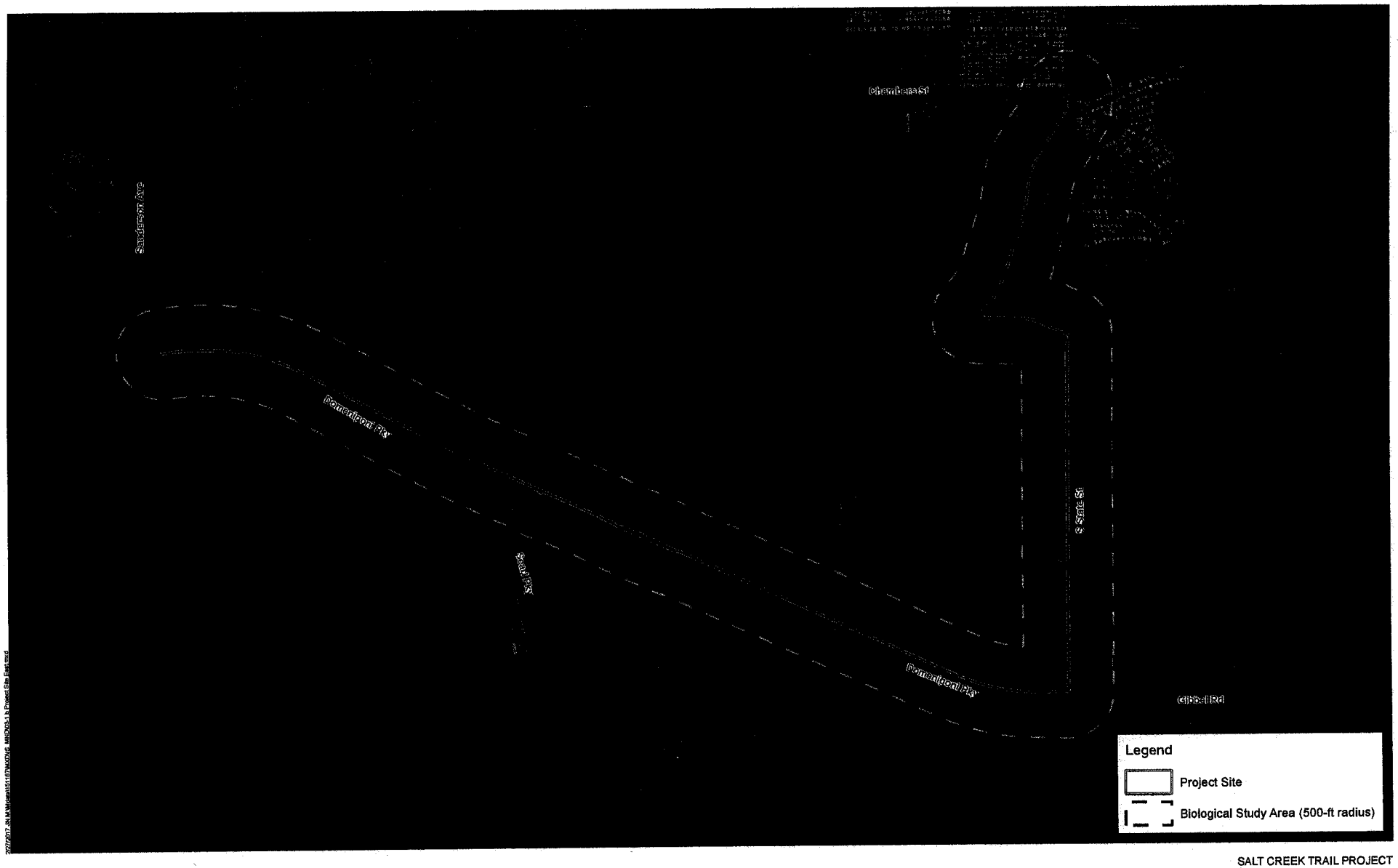

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Project Site (Eastern Segment)

Figure 3-1B

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Plant Communities

As detailed in the NES (Michael Baker International 2017a), six plant communities were observed within the BSA: southern cottonwood willow riparian forest, mulefat scrub, Riversidean sage scrub, non-native grassland, tamarisk scrub, and ornamental vegetation (refer to Figure 3-2A, Vegetation – Western Segment and Figure 3-2B, Vegetation – Eastern Segment). In addition, five land cover types were observed within the BSA: detention basins, open water, riprap, disturbed, and developed areas. These plant communities and land cover types are shown in Table 3-5 and described in further detail below.

TABLE 3-5 PLANT COMMUNITIES AND OTHER AREAS

	Existing (acres)	Project Impacts (acres)	Existing (acres)	Project Impacts (acres)
Southern Willow Riparian Forest	17.15	0	0.88	0
Mulefat Scrub	12.33	0	3.87	0
Riversidean Sage Scrub	2.12	0	24.60	0
Non-Native Grassland	180.57	1.49	30.37	0.13
Tamarisk Scrub	—	—	0.34	0
Ornamental	—	—	2.02	0
Detention Basins	19.60	0	—	—
Open Water	2.11	0	—	—
Riprap	1.96	0.04	1.52	0.18
Disturbed	106.81	11.14	320.57	14.23
Developed	205.23	3.0	81.47	0.26
Totals	**547.88**	**15.67**	**465.64**	**14.80**

Source: Michael Baker International 2017a.

Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest

The southern cottonwood willow riparian forest plant community encompasses approximately 17.15 acres on the western end of the western segment and 0.88 acre in the center of the eastern segment, north of Domenigoni Parkway. In the western segment, this plant community has been restored within Salt Creek between Goetz Road and Normandy Road and is surrounded primarily by restored mulefat scrub in the immediate vicinity on either side, as well as non-native grasslands and disturbed habitat. On the eastern segment, this plant community is found in a discreet patch north of the Project footprint. This plant community is dominated by Fremont's cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and black willow (*Salix gooddingii*), with an arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) understory.

Mulefat Scrub

The mulefat scrub plant community encompasses approximately 12.33 acres in the western segment and 3.87 acres in the eastern segment. In both segments this plant community is primarily associated with western end of the restored portion of Salt Creek. In the western segment this plant community occurs in patches of restored vegetation both north and south of the southern cottonwood willow riparian forest on the western end of the segment southwest of Normandy Road. On the eastern segment this plant

community is found in discrete patch north of the Project footprint west of Sanderson Avenue. The mulefat scrub plant community is primarily composed of mulefat and Menzies' goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii)*.

Riversidean Sage Scrub

The Riversidean sage scrub plant community encompasses approximately 2.12 acres in the western segment and 24.60 acres in the eastern segment. In the western segment this plant community is located along a public nature trail associated with and south of Salt Creek near Goetz Road, and on the eastern segment this plant community is located north and south of Domenigoni Parkway between Sanderson Avenue and Searl Parkway. This plant community is dominated by brittlebush (*Encelia californica*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), and California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), with an understory primarily consisting of red brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*). South of Domenigoni Parkway this habitat is generally associated with Diamond Valley Lake, whereas north of the road this plant community is found in an isolated patch surrounded by non-native grassland.

Non-native Grassland

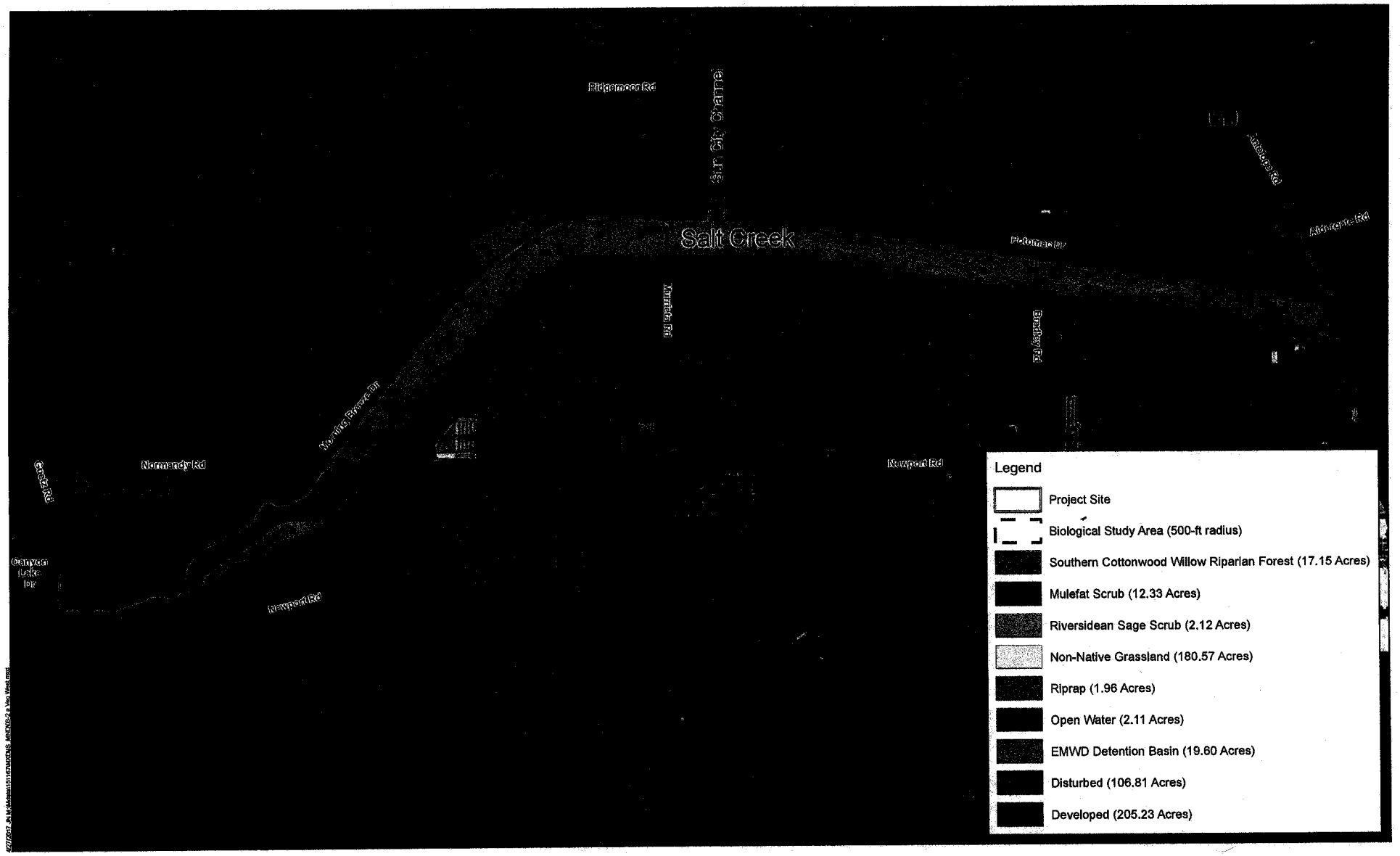
The non-native grassland plant community encompasses approximately 180.57 acres in the western segment and 30.37 acres in the eastern segment. In the western segment this plant community is located throughout much of undeveloped portion of the BSA, including Salt Creek north of the Normandy Road crossing. On the eastern segment this plant community is primarily associated with Salt Creek and with the area south of Domenigoni Parkway and west of Searl Parkway, where it is intermixed with Riversidean sage scrub. The majority of the areas, especially along Salt Creek, show signs of periodic mowing and as a result are generally covered in low-growing early successional species with few, if any, mature plants. This plant community is dominated by a variety of brome grasses (*Bromus* ssp.), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), filaree (*Erodium* sp.), and oats (*Avena* sp.). Patches of plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) are located throughout Salt Creek in the western segment, particularly along the banks of incoming drainage channels that carry runoff from surrounding development.

Tamarisk Scrub

The tamarisk scrub plant community encompasses approximately 0.34 acre in the eastern segment. This plant community is located in a tributary channel to Salt Creek, east of Searl Parkway. This habitat consists of tamarisk (*Tamarix* sp.) occurring in small patches or as individual trees. It is otherwise associated with a highly disturbed habitat, with a small patch of mulefat scrub also in the channel.

Ornamental

The ornamental plant community encompasses approximately 2.02 acres in the eastern segment. This plant community is located east and west of Searl Parkway, south of Domenigoni Parkway, and is composed of native and non-native species, including deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*), California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), pines (*Pinus* sp.), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), and others.



SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Vegetation (Western Segment)

Figure 3-2A

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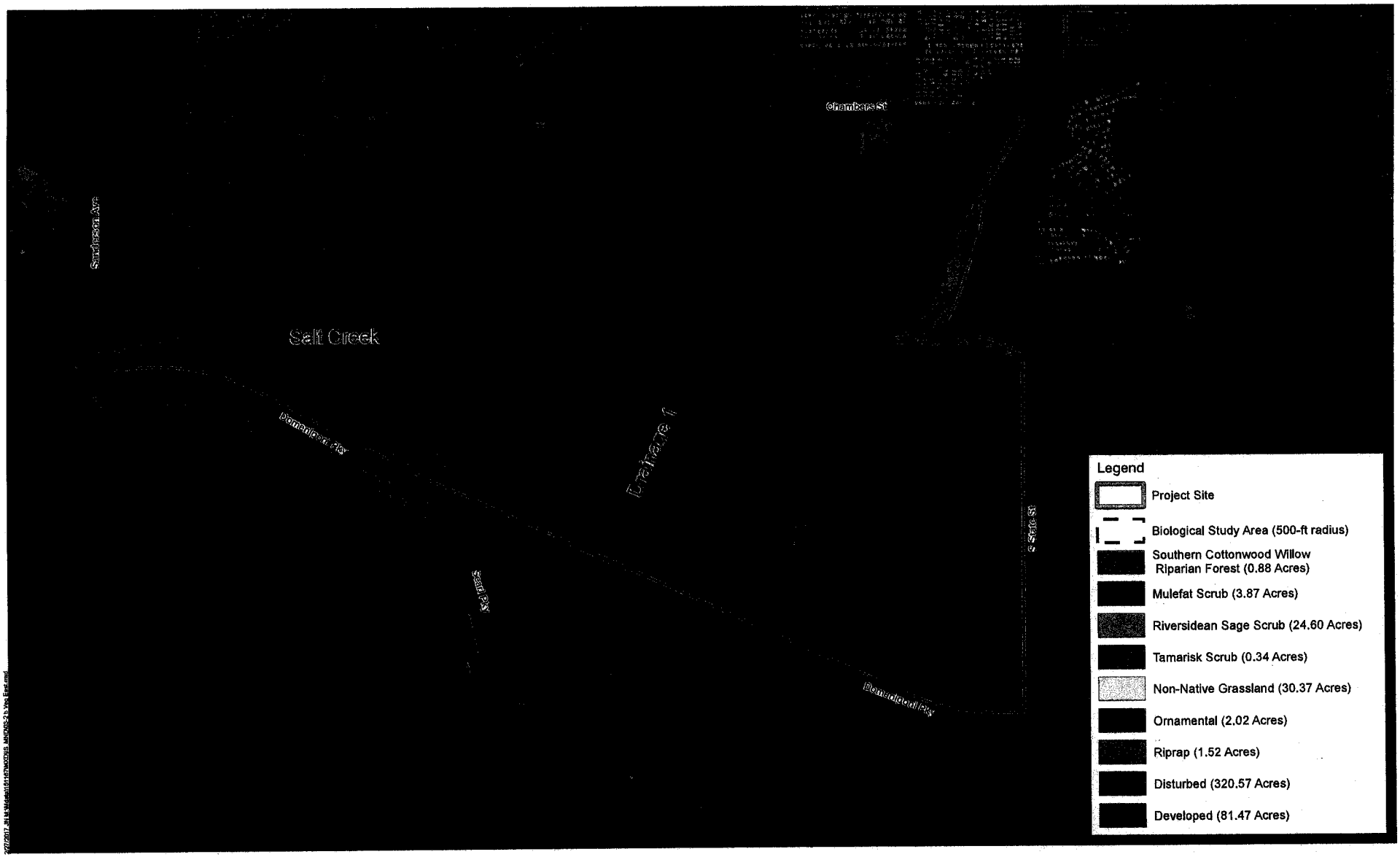

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Vegetation (Eastern Segment)

Figure 3-2B

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Detention Basins

The detention basins encompass approximately 19.60 acres and are located on the western end of the western segment, north of the Project footprint within the Menifee and Perris Desalination Facilities for the Eastern Municipal Water District (EWMD). These basins are filled or emptied as needed for water treatment purposes.

Open Water

Open water encompasses approximately 2.11 acres within the BSA and refers to those areas that are not associated with a particular vegetation community (e.g., water within a streambed). Within the BSA this includes the Canyon Lake and a pond at the Menifee Lakes Country Club.

Riprap

Riprap is used throughout the BSA, generally in association with ephemeral drainage channels or as a slope stabilizer. Within the western segment of the BSA riprap is found on portions of the slopes associated with the restored southern cottonwood willow riparian forest and on the shoulder of Antelope Road east of I-215. Within the eastern segment of the BSA riprap is found within Drainage 1 and on the banks of Salt Creek on the eastern portion of the BSA.

Disturbed

Disturbed areas encompass approximately 106.81 acres in the western segment and 320.57 acres in the eastern segment of the BSA and generally constitute unimproved dirt roads, areas that have been subject to agricultural activities (i.e., disking, mowing, and planting). These areas are unpaved and are primarily or entirely devoid of vegetation, or support ruderal/weedy plant species.

Developed

Developed areas encompass approximately 205.23 acres in the western segment and 81.47 acres in the eastern segment of the BSA and include those areas that are paved or extensively altered. Within the BSA, this includes the vehicular access road alongside Salt Creek between Goetz Road and Normandy Road, city streets, residential housing, commercial development, and other paved development.

Wildlife

Plant communities provide food sources, nesting and denning sites, and cover and protection from adverse weather or predation. This section provides a summary discussion of those animal species observed, expected, or not expected to occur in the Project area based on the field reconnaissance conducted in support of the biological resources analysis. Wildlife observations were based on calls, songs, scat, tracks, burrows and actual sightings of animals. Appendix D (Potentially Occurring Special-Status Biological Resources) provides detailed information regarding species habitat requirements and the potential for each respective species to occur within the Project's BSA.

Fish

No fish were observed on or within the vicinity of the BSA. The entire BSA was dry at the time of the field survey, except for a few small ponded areas. Suitable fish habitat is located on western end of the within Canyon Lake which associated with the City of Canyon Lake, and a small portion of a pond within the Menifee Lakes Country Club just east of I-215. Fish, primarily exotic fish, and stocked fish are likely to occur within these features. However, these features would not be impacted from implementation of the Project. Due to the highly disturbed nature of the BSA, and the ephemeral nature of hydrogeomorpic features within the BSA, no fish are expected to occur within the BSA except for the two aforementioned areas. Further, the MSHCP does not identify any covered or special-status fish species as potentially occurring within the BSA.

Amphibians

Western toad (*Anaxyrus boreas*) and Baja California treefrog (*Pseudacris hypochondriaca*) tadpoles were observed on the eastern segment in ponded water in Drainage 1. Suitable amphibian habitat is located in the riparian forest in Salt Creek, between Goetz Road and Normandy Road within the BSA, outside of the Project footprint. In addition to the above species, this area has the potential to support American bullfrog (*Lithobates catesbeianus*) if there are areas of perennial water.

Reptiles

No reptiles were observed in the BSA during the field surveys. Since the BSA is composed of a mixture of developed and undeveloped land surrounded by extensive development, it is expected to provide suitable habitat for a small number of reptilian species, primarily lizards that are acclimated to edge or urban environments. The most common reptile species that have the potential to occur in the BSA include western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), and southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*). Due to the extensive degree of development surrounding the site, snakes would be unlikely to occur in the western segment, but could occur in the eastern segment, especially in the less disturbed areas south of Domenigoni Parkway.

Birds

Most of the live animal detections within the BSA were of birds. The plant communities found within the BSA provide suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for a limited variety of resident and migrant avian species. A total of 25 avian species were detected during Michael Baker's field surveys, both of which occurred at a time when winter residents are present. Most of the avian biodiversity within the BSA was low, with only a few species making up most of the individual detections. Some of the most common bird species observed in the BSA during Michael Baker's field surveys included mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), Cassin's kingbird (*Tyrannus vociferans*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*).

Additional common winter migrants that may occur within the BSA include American pipit (*Anthus rubescens*), cedar waxwing (*Bombycilla cedrorum*), yellow-rumped warbler (*Setophaga coronata*), golden-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia atricapilla*), and vesper sparrow (*Pooecetes gramineus*). Migrants that arrive in spring and have the potential to breed in the BSA include lesser nighthawk (*Chordeiles acutipennis*), western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), and hooded oriole (*Icterus cucullatus*). Most transitory migrants would probably avoid the BSA due to the extensive surrounding development and lack of any extensive arboreal habitat on their way north or south. However, Vaux's swift (*Chaetura vauxi*) may forage over the BSA, and MacGillivray's Warbler (*Geothlypis tolmiei*), which generally forages in shrubs instead of in trees like most warblers, may rest and forage in the undeveloped area during its migration.

Mammals

No mammals were directly observed in the BSA during the field survey. The plant communities found within the BSA provide suitable habitat for a small number of mammalian species adapted to living in edge or urban environments. However, the extensive development surrounding the site limits potential mammalian species even further. Most mammal species are nocturnal and are difficult to observe during a diurnal field survey. Mammals and/or sign detected during Michael Baker's habitat assessment include coyote (*Canis latrans*) scat, desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) scat, and various small rodent burrows. Bats may forage throughout most of the open habitat in the BSA, especially over Salt Creek, but there is little roosting habitat in the BSA or general vicinity due to development. Overpasses, such as where I-215 crosses Salt Creek, provide suitable roosting opportunities, as would mature, untrimmed

palm trees in nearby residential areas. However, bats may be more likely to occur on the eastern segment, where there is more open space and more natural habitats, particularly south of Domenigoni Parkway.

Jurisdictional Areas

Four hydrogeomorphic features were observed within both the western and eastern segments of the trail: Salt Creek, Sun City Channel, and two unnamed drainage features (Drainage 1 and Drainage 2). Sun City Channel, Drainage 1, and Drainage 2 are tributaries to Salt Creek which flows in an east to west direction. Salt Creek then flows west into Canyon Lake on its eastern boundary. Canyon Lake was created in 1927 after installation of the Railroad Canyon Dam which impounds the San Jacinto River and Salt Creek to fill the reservoir. Water from Canyon Lake flows west through the dam into Lake Elsinore, from Lake Elsinore, water flows out to Temescal Wash, which is ultimately tributary to the Santa Ana River (Relatively Permanent Water) and the Pacific Ocean (Traditional Navigable Water). Therefore, the four hydrogeomorphic features would qualify as waters of the United States and fall under the regulatory authority of the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW.

Invasive Species

Noxious weed species include species designated as federal noxious weeds by USDA, species listed by the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other exotic pest plants designated by the California Invasive Plant Council. Invasive plant species are abundant throughout both the western and eastern segments of the BSA. The majority of the non-native plant species are found within the non-native grassland plant community and disturbed lands within both the western and eastern segments of the BSA. Some of the more commonly occurring exotic plants in the western and eastern segments of the BSA include wild oat (*Avena* sp.), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), red brome, tumbleweed (*Salsola tragus*), and filaree (*Erodium* sp.).

Habitat Connectivity

Habitat linkages provide links between larger undeveloped habitat areas that are separated by development. Wildlife corridors are similar to linkages, but provide specific opportunities for animals to disperse or migrate between areas. A corridor can be defined as a linear landscape feature of sufficient width to allow animal movement between two comparatively undisturbed habitat fragments. Adequate cover is essential for a corridor to function as a wildlife movement area. It is possible for a habitat corridor to be adequate for one species but inadequate for others. Wildlife corridors are significant features for dispersal, seasonal migration, breeding, and foraging. Additionally, open space can provide a buffer against both human disturbance and natural fluctuations in resources.

The primary corridor, within both the western and eastern segments of the BSA is Salt Creek which provides a linear path of open space along much of its length, for east to west wildlife movement opportunities between Canyon Lake on the western end of the western segment of the BSA and the Santa Rosa Hills just east of the eastern segment of the BSA. Although constrained by urban development, agriculture, and planned land uses, this corridor provides movement opportunities for wildlife species from the Hemet Area to Canyon Lake. In particular, Salt Creek, within both the western and eastern segments of the BSA, has the potential to provide movement opportunities for large mammals such as coyotes and bobcats (*Lynx rufus*). Birds may use Salt Creek for movement; however, due to the lack of substantial riparian habitat upstream of Normandy Road, Salt Creek is less likely to be used as such.

The western segment of the BSA is primarily surrounded by existing development and planned land uses, while the eastern segment of the BSA is primarily surrounded by vacant, undeveloped land that was historically used for agricultural purposes, or left as open space. These land uses surrounding both the western and eastern segments of the BSA have removed natural plant communities from the area immediately surrounding the proposed project footprint for both the western and eastern segments of the

trail. The proposed Project will primarily be confined to existing areas that have been heavily disturbed and or developed. The proposed trail footprint will also impact non-native grassland habitats in the western segment of the trail within Salt Creek at the Murrieta Road crossing and within Sun City Channel, and the eastern end of the eastern segment of the trail.

Additionally, the project footprint for both the western and eastern segments of the trail are not located within any MSHCP identified corridors or linkages. However, the eastern segment of the BSA is located approximately 150 feet northeast of Existing Core J, which is separated from the Project footprint by Domenigoni Parkway. Implementation of the proposed Project will not disrupt or have any adverse effects on any migratory corridors or linkages in the surrounding area.

Regional Species and Habitats and Natural Communities of Concern

The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) was queried for reported locations of listed and special-status plant and animal species as well as special-status natural plant communities in the Romoland, Winchester, and Hemet United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute quadrangles. A search of published records of these species within this quadrangle was conducted using the CNDDB Rarefind 5 online software and the CDFW BIOS database. The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California supplied information regarding the distribution and habitats of vascular plants in the vicinity of the BSA. Further, the Project was reviewed against the MSHCP to determine if the Project is located within any MSHCP survey areas for special-status plant and wildlife species, and/or located within any MSHCP designated conservation areas.

In addition, the Information for Planning and Conservation (IPaC) database was searched for special-status wildlife species that the USFWS determined to have the potential to occur within the vicinity of the BSA. This database search is based off of specific site boundaries, rather than the quadrangle(s) that a Project occurs in. It also does not necessarily indicate special regulatory protection, as many species listed in the IPaC database are migratory birds that are only protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

The IPaC database search identified sixteen listed plant and animal species that could occur within the BSA, including two additional species that were not included in the CNDDB and CNPS query results. The total number of special-status species that were considered for impact analysis within the BSA included 32 special-status plant species, 53 special-status wildlife species, and two natural communities of special concern between the CNDDB, CNPS, and IPaC. The habitat assessment was used to assess the ability of the plant communities found on-site to provide suitable habitat for relevant special-status plant and animal species. No special-status species were identified within the BSA during Michael Baker's biological survey. One of the two natural communities of concern, southern cottonwood willow riparian forest, was observed in the BSA. Special-status plant and animal species were evaluated for their potential to occur within the Project boundaries based on habitat requirements, availability and quality of suitable habitat, and known distributions.

Based on habitat requirements for specific species, availability and quality of habitats needed by special-status plant species, and known distribution, it was determined that smooth tarplant has a high potential to occur within the BSA, paniculate tarplant has a low potential to occur within the BSA, and all other special-status plant species are presumed absent and are not expected to occur since the Project site does not provide suitable habitat.

Special-status animal species determined to have a high potential to occur within the BSA include Cooper's hawk, ferruginous hawk, California horned lark, Oregon vesper sparrow, yellow warbler, and least Bell's vireo. Grasshopper sparrow, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, willow flycatcher, southwestern willow flycatcher, western mastiff bat, western yellow bat, San Diego black-tailed

jackrabbit, Nuttall's woodpecker, and Lawrence's goldfinch were determined to have a moderate potential to occur within the BSA. Bell's sage sparrow, orangethroat whiptail, coastal whiptail, Dulzura pocket mouse, Stephens' kangaroo rat, prairie falcon, loggerhead shrike, San Diego desert woodrat, long-billed curlew, southern grasshopper mouse, Los Angeles pocket mouse, coast horned lizard, white-faced ibis, coastal California gnatcatcher, and western spadefoot all were determined to have a low potential to occur within the BSA. Due to surrounding development and lack of suitable habitat, all other special-status wildlife species are presumed absent and are not expected to occur.

Two natural communities of special concern were identified during the records search as potentially occurring on the BSA: southern coast live oak riparian forest and southern cottonwood willow riparian forest. Southern cottonwood willow riparian forest, a sensitive riparian community, was found to be present within the BSA primarily between Goetz Road and Normandy Road; however, outside of the Project footprint.

Critical Habitat

Critical Habitat refers to the specific areas within the geographical area of a species, at the time it is listed, which include those physical or biological features that are essential to the survival and eventual recovery of a species. Maintenance of these physical and biological features requires special management considerations or protection, regardless of whether individuals or the species are present or not.

All federal agencies are required to consult with the USFWS regarding activities they authorize, fund, or permit which may affect a federally listed species or its designated Critical Habitat. The purpose of the consultation is to ensure that projects would not jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species or adversely modify or destroy its designated Critical Habitat. The designation of Critical Habitat does not affect private landowners, unless a project they are proposing uses federal funds, or requires federal authorization or permits (e.g., funding from the Federal Highways Administration or a permit from the USACE). If there is a federal nexus, such as the need for a Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 permit from the USACE, then the federal agency that is responsible for providing the funding or permit would consult with the USFWS.

The eastern segment of the BSA is located within coastal California gnatcatcher designated Critical Habitat Unit 10, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties (72 FR 72010-72213) (refer to Figure 3-3A, Critical Habitat - Western Segment and Figure 3-3B, Critical Habitat - Eastern Segment). A Section 7 consultation would be required for any loss or adverse modification of Critical Habitat. The Project footprint for both the western and eastern segments of the trail are not located within designated Critical Habitat; therefore, consultation with the USFWS for loss or adverse modification to Critical Habitat would not be required.

Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan

The MSHCP is a comprehensive, multi-jurisdictional Habitat Conservation Plan focusing on conservation of species and their associated habitats in western Riverside County. The goal of the MSHCP is to maintain biological and ecological diversity within a rapidly urbanizing region.

The approval of the MSHCP and execution of the Implementing Agreement (IA) by the wildlife agencies allows signatories of the IA to issue "take" authorizations for all species covered by the MSHCP, including State and federally listed species as well as other identified sensitive species and/or their habitats. Each city or local jurisdiction will impose a Development Mitigation Fee for Projects within their jurisdiction. With payment of the mitigation fee to the County and compliance with the survey requirements of the MSHCP where required, full mitigation in compliance with CEQA, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), and Federal Endangered Species ACT (FESA) will be granted. Payment of the mitigation fee and compliance with the

requirements of Section 6.0 of the MSHCP are intended to provide full mitigation under CEQA, NEPA, CESA, and FESA for impacts to the species and habitats covered by the MSHCP pursuant to agreements with the USFWS, the CDFW, and/or any other appropriate participating regulatory agencies and as set forth in the IA for the MSHCP.

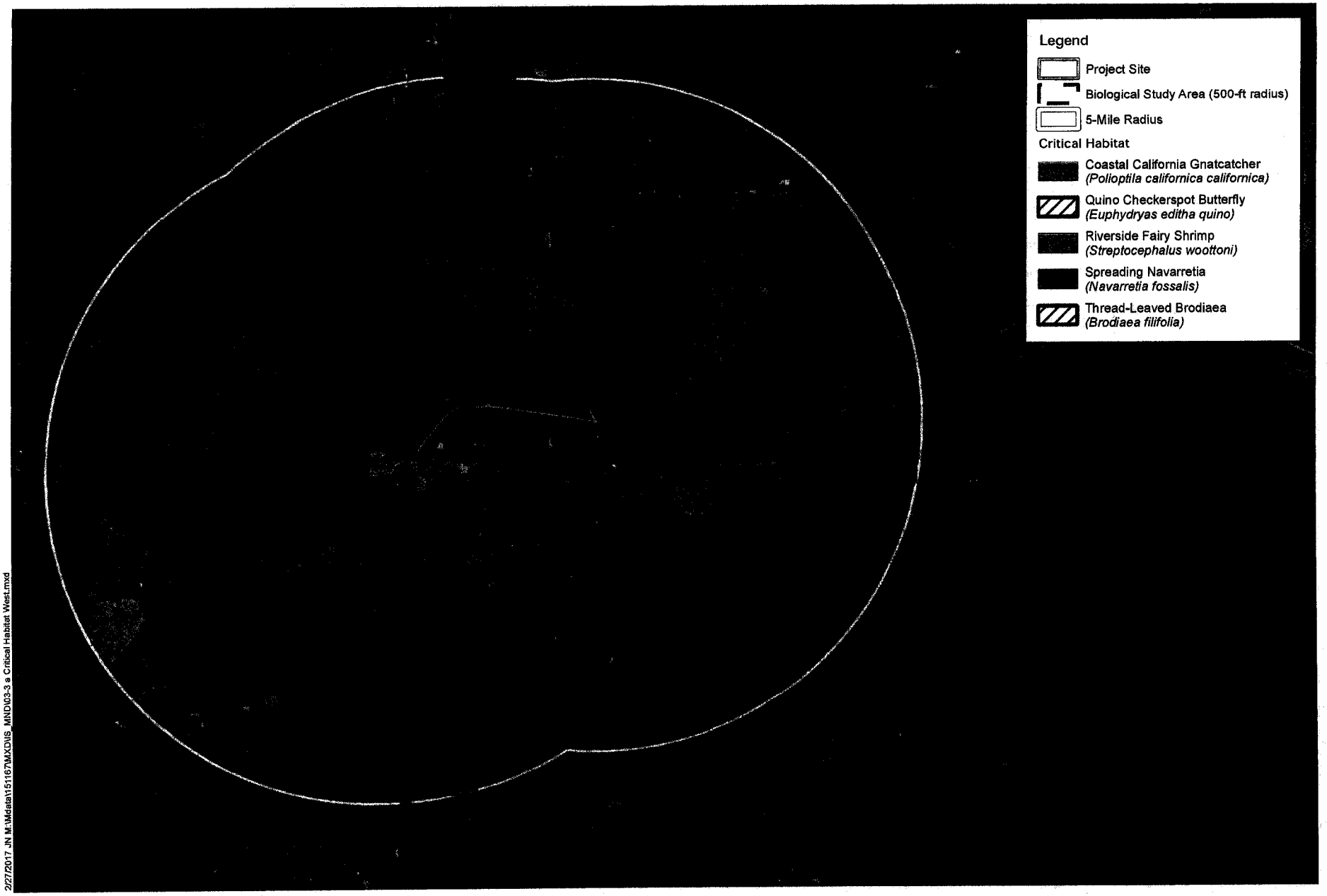
The MSHCP designates the County as a local Permittee, requiring compliance with the Joint Project/Acquisition Review Process (Authority 2004; Section 6.6.2). The County has submitted the NES report to the RCA and the wildlife agencies for joint review of the Project to ensure consistency with the MSHCP.

The Riverside County Integrated Project (RCIP) Conservation Summary Report Generator was queried to determine if the MSHCP identifies any potential survey requirements for the Project site. Additionally, the Project site was reviewed against the MSHCP to determine if the site is located within any MSHCP conservation areas including Criteria Cells and areas proposed for conservation (core habitat and wildlife movement corridors). Based on the RCIP query and review of the MSHCP, it was determined that both the western and eastern segments of the BSA are located within the designated survey area for burrowing owl as depicted in Figure 6-4 in Section 6.3.2 of the MSHCP. Further, the western segment of the BSA is located within the designated survey area for Narrow Endemic Plant Species as depicted in Figure 6-1 in Section 6.1.3 of the MSHCP. The RCIP lists the following Narrow Endemic Plant Species as potentially occurring within the BSA: Munz's onion, San Diego ambrosia, many-stemmed dudleya, spreading navarretia, California Orcutt grass, Wright's trichocoronis.

The western segment of the BSA is located within the Sun City/Menifee Area Plan of the MSHCP, and the eastern segment of the BSA is located within the San Jacinto Valley Area Plan of the MSHCP. Neither the western segment of the trail or the eastern segment of the trail are located within any MSCHP identified Criteria Cells, cores, or linkages; however, the eastern segment of the BSA is located approximately 150 feet northeast of Existing Core J, which is separated from the eastern segment of the trail by Domenigoni Parkway and the western segment of the trail between I-215 and Normandy Road and is located within designated Public/Quasi-Public Lands, which are lands included within the MSHCP Conservation Area (refer to Figure 3-4A MSHCP Conservation Area - Western Segment and Figure 3-4B MSHCP Conservation Area - Eastern Segment).

The Project is a Covered Activity, under Section 7.4.2, Conditionally Compatible Uses, of the MSHCP and is considered conditionally compatible with the overall conservation goals and objectives of the MSHCP. The Project is covered within the MSHCP Conservation Area subject to the guidelines and criteria incorporated in Section 7.4.2. As depicted in Figure 7-3 of the MSHCP, the Project is shown as an adopted planned regional trail. Section 7.4.2 states that the covered public access uses within the MSHCP Conservation Area would be comprised of trails, facilities, and passive recreational activities. Construction of and improvements to these trails would be covered under the MSHCP.

All four hydrogeomorphic features observed within the BSA qualify as riparian/riverine habitat as defined under Section 6.1.2 of the MSHCP. Therefore, any alteration or loss of riparian/riverine habitat that may occur as a result of the Project would require the preparation of a Determination of Biologically Equivalent or Superior (DBESP) analysis to ensure the replacement of any lost functions and values associated with all four hydrogeomorphic features. The DBESP analysis is separate from any regulatory approvals/permitting by the USEPA, RWQCB, and CDFW. The extent of the riparian/riverine habitat on the Project site is synonymous with the jurisdiction of CDFW.



2/27/2017 JN M:\Mdata\15167\MXD\IS_MND\03-3 a Critical Habitat West.mxd

0 1 2 4 Miles

Source: Riverside County, Critical Habitat Data Mart, ESRI World Imagery

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Critical Habitat (Western Segment)

Figure 3-3A

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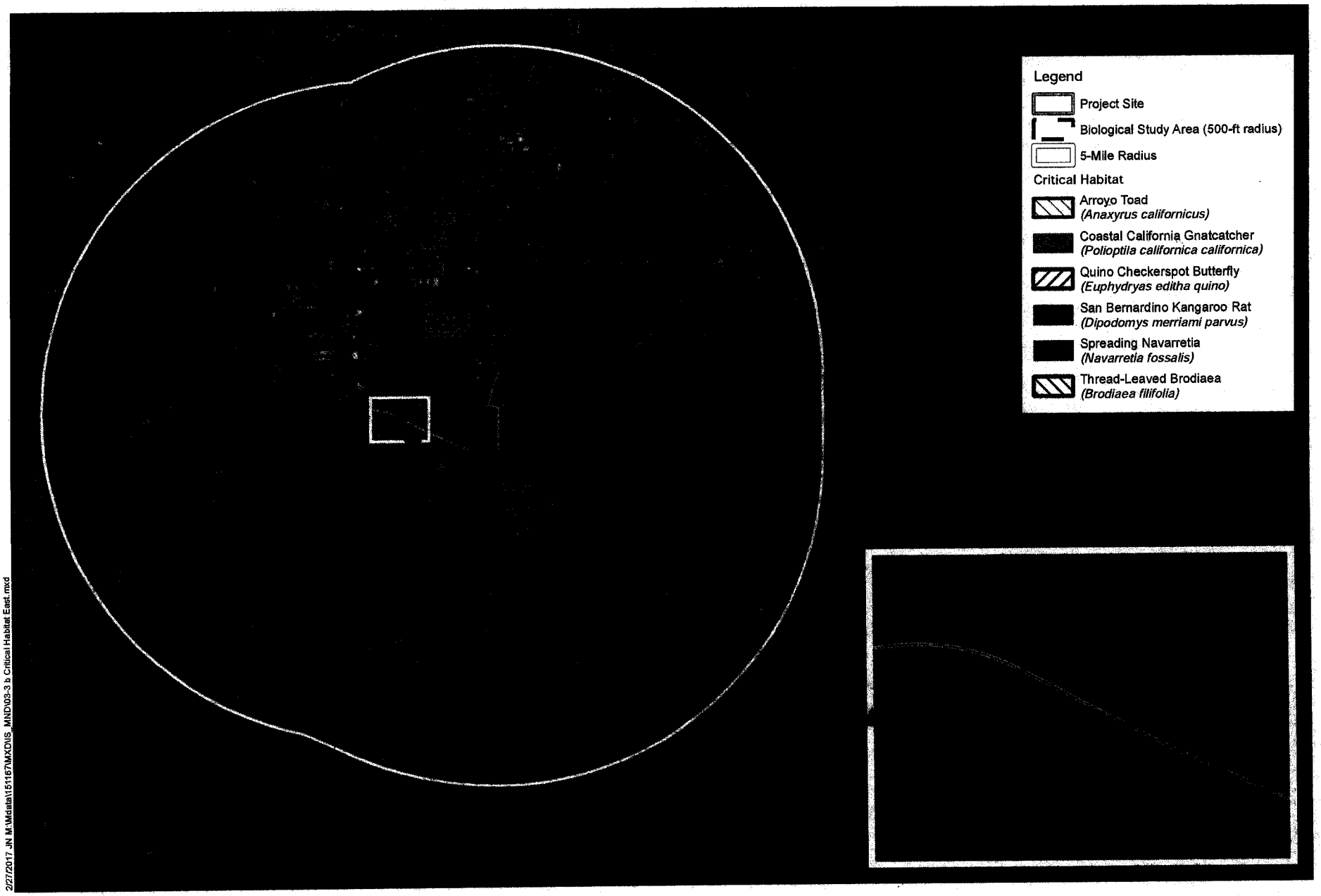

2/27/2017 JN M:\Mdata\151167\MXD\IS_MND\03-3 b Critical Habitat East.mxd

0 1 2 4 Miles

Source: Riverside County, Critical Habitat Data Mart, ESRI World Imagery

SALT CREEK TRAIL PROJECT

Critical Habitat (Eastern Segment)

Figure 3-3B

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