

## Brightwater Ranch

Biological Technical Report

TM 5306

Log No. 03-14-007

November 9, 2015



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Prepared for:  
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Prepared by:  
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La Mesa, CA 91942

# **BRIGHTWATER RANCH PROJECT**

## **BIOLOGICAL TECHNICAL REPORT**

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**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

<b><u>Section</u></b>	<b><u>Title</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
S	SUMMARY .....	S-1
1.0	INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.1	1.1 Purpose of The Report.....	1
1.2	1.2 Project Location and Description .....	1
1.2.1	1.2.1 Project Location .....	1
1.2.2	1.2.2 Project Description.....	1
1.3	1.3 Survey Methods.....	1
1.3.1	1.3.1 Literature Review.....	1
1.3.2	1.3.2 General Biological Survey .....	2
1.3.3	1.3.3 Focused Surveys .....	3
1.3.4	1.3.4 Jurisdictional Delineation .....	3
1.3.5	1.3.5 Nomenclature.....	5
1.4	1.4 Environmental Setting.....	5
1.4.1	1.4.1 Regional Context .....	5
1.4.2	1.4.2 General Land Uses.....	6
1.4.3	1.4.3 Disturbance .....	6
1.4.4	1.4.4 Topography and Soils .....	6
1.4.5	1.4.5 Habitat Types/Vegetation Communities.....	6
1.4.6	1.4.6 Flora .....	8
1.4.7	1.4.7 Fauna.....	8
1.4.8	1.4.8 Sensitive Plant Species .....	8
1.4.9	1.4.9 Sensitive Animal Species.....	9
1.4.10	1.4.10 Jurisdictional Waters and Wetlands.....	11
1.4.11	1.4.11 Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors.....	12
1.5	1.5 Applicable Regulations .....	13
1.5.1	1.5.1 Federal.....	14
1.5.2	1.5.2 State.....	15
1.5.3	1.5.3 Local .....	16
2.0	PROJECT EFFECTS .....	21
2.1	2.1 Special Status Species .....	21
2.2	2.2 Riparian Habitat or Sensitive Natural Community .....	22
2.3	2.3 Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waterways.....	23
2.4	2.4 Wildlife Movement and Nursery Sites .....	24

TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)

<u>Section</u>	<u>Title</u>	<u>Page</u>
3.0	SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES.....	25
3.1	Guidelines For Determining Significance .....	25
3.2	Analysis of Project Effects .....	26
3.3	Cumulative Impact Analysis .....	29
3.4	Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations.....	29
3.5	Conclusions .....	30
4.0	RIPARIAN HABITAT OR SENSITIVE NATURAL COMMUNITY .....	30
4.1	Guidelines For Determining Significance .....	30
4.2	Analysis of Project Effects .....	31
4.3	Cumulative Impact Analysis .....	32
4.4	Mitigation Measures AND Design Considerations.....	32
4.5	Conclusions .....	33
5.0	JURISDICTIONAL WETLANDS AND WATERWAYS .....	34
5.1	Guidelines For Determining Significance .....	34
5.2	Analysis of Project Effects .....	34
5.3	Cumulative Impact Analysis .....	34
5.4	Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations.....	34
5.5	Conclusions .....	34
6.0	WILDLIFE MOVEMENT AND NURSERY SITES.....	35
6.1	Guidelines For Determining Significance .....	35
6.2	Analysis of Project Effects .....	35
6.3	Cumulative Impact Analysis .....	37
6.4	Mitigation Measures and Design Considerations.....	37
6.5	Conclusions .....	37
7.0	LOCAL POLICIES, ORDINANCES, AND ADOPTED PLANS .....	38
7.1	Guidelines For Determining Significance .....	38
7.2	Analysis of Project Effects .....	39
7.3	Cumulative Impact Analysis .....	41
7.4	Mitigation Measures And Design Considerations.....	42
7.5	Conclusions .....	42
8.0	SUMMARY OF PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION .....	42
9.0	LIST OF PREPARERS AND PERSONS/ORGANIZATIONS CONTACTED .....	48
10.0	REFERENCES .....	50

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)**

**LIST OF APPENDICES**

A Plant Species Observed  
B Animal Species Observed or Detected  
C Sensitive Plant Species with Potential to Occur  
D Sensitive Animal Species with Potential to Occur  
E Representative Site Photos  
F Explanation of Status Codes for Plant and Animal Species  
G Supporting Documentation

**LIST OF FIGURES**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Follows Page</u></b>
1	Regional Location Map.....	2
2	Project Vicinity Map (Aerial Photograph).....	2
3	Project Vicinity Map (USGS Topography).....	2
4	MSCP Designations.....	2
5	Site Plan.....	2
6	Soils Map.....	6
7	Vegetation and Sensitive Resources.....	6
8	USACE/RWQCB Jurisdiction.....	12
9	CDFW Jurisdiction.....	12
10	Critical Habitat.....	14
11	Vegetation and Sensitive Resources/Impacts.....	22
12	Quino Site Assessment Results.....	22
13	Hermes Copper Survey Results.....	22
14	USACE/RWQCB Jurisdiction/Impacts.....	22
15	CDFW Jurisdiction/Impacts.....	22
16	Proposed Biological Open Space/Conceptual Fencing and Signage.....	22
17	Proposed Preserve/Conceptual Linkage.....	22

**TABLE OF CONTENTS (cont.)**

**LIST OF TABLES**

<b><u>No.</u></b>	<b><u>Name</u></b>	<b><u>Page</u></b>
1	Biological Survey Information .....	2
2	Existing Vegetation Communities .....	7
3	Existing Jurisdictional Waters .....	12
4	Impacts to Vegetation Communities.....	23
5	Impacts to Jurisdictional Waters .....	24
6	Summary of Vegetation Communities, Impacts, and Mitigation for the Brightwater Ranch Project .....	43
7	Summary of Mitigation Measures for the Brightwater Ranch Project .....	44

## SUMMARY

At the request of Pulte Homes (project applicant), HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) has completed a biological technical report for the proposed Brightwater Ranch Project (project) located within an approximately 76-acre property (project site or site) in the unincorporated community of Lakeside, San Diego County, California. The project generally consists of a residential development with 66 single-family dwelling units, four HOA lots, and open space. The project site occurs within the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul segment of the adopted County of San Diego (County) Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan. The specific MSCP designation for the majority of the site is Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA), with a small portion of the site designated as Unincorporated Land outside of PAMA.

The project site supports five vegetation communities/habitat types. In the context of the MSCP, sensitive uplands on the site include Diegan coastal sage scrub (Tier II) and non-native grassland (Tier III). Non-sensitive habitat types or land uses on the site include non-native vegetation (Tier IV), disturbed habitat (Tier IV), and developed land. The project site also supports several non-wetland ephemeral drainage features potentially subject to the regulatory jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). None of these features support wetland or riparian habitat or County Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO) wetlands.

No listed or narrow endemic plant species were observed on site during rare plant surveys performed in April and May 2014. Two non-listed sensitive plant species were observed on the project site, including approximately 507 San Diego sunflower (*Bahiopsis laciniata*) and 38 Coulter's matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*) individuals. A single listed animal species, coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*), was determined present based on the results of protocol-level surveys performed in May and June 2014. Five non-listed sensitive animal species were also observed on the site, including monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*), orange-throated whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra beldingi*), southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), and turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*). Protocol surveys for Hermes copper (*Lycaena hermes*) began in May 2014 and were completed in July 2014. Potential Hermes copper habitat is limited on site and of low quality; no Hermes copper were observed during protocol surveys and the site is considered to be unoccupied. A focused site assessment for Quino checkerspot butterfly (*Euphydryas editha quino*) was completed in April 2014 and determined the species has a low potential to occur within limited portions of the site.

Potential significant impacts would occur to special status species, sensitive natural communities, and jurisdictional waters and wetlands. The project would result in direct permanent impacts to sensitive upland habitat types, including 27.1 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub (Tier II) and 0.05 acre of non-native grassland (Tier III) requiring compensatory mitigation. The project would result in direct permanent impacts to approximately 0.11 acre (2,272 linear feet) of USACE/RWQCB jurisdiction, 0.04 acre (1,765 linear feet) of waters of the State subject to exclusive RWQCB jurisdiction, and 0.24 acre (3,260 linear feet) of CDFW jurisdiction within the site.

The Diegan coastal sage scrub on site is occupied by the coastal California gnatcatcher and meets the criteria to be considered sensitive habitat lands and Biological Resource Core Area (BRCA), as defined in the County's RPO and Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO). The majority of the scrub on site is mapped as very high quality habitat on the BMO habitat evaluation map. In addition to providing live-in habitat for gnatcatcher and other animals, it also functions to facilitate bird movement through the local area as part of an archipelago or stepping stone linkage through urbanized portions of the communities of Winter Gardens and Lakeside. Bird movement is most likely to occur through the western half of the site, which is also where one of the two gnatcatcher pairs was confirmed during the 2014 surveys.

The project proposes 41.8 acres of open space preserve, which will be placed in a biological open space easement and managed in perpetuity for the purposes of conservation. In total, the project would preserve 57 percent of the coastal sage scrub present on site, including habitat occupied by gnatcatcher and located along the north-south flight route and linkage habitat in the western half of the site. The project has been specifically sited and designed in areas that abut existing development in order to minimize edge interface, consolidate development to the far northeast portion of the site, and conserve high quality coastal sage scrub that supports breeding gnatcatchers and functions as important linkage habitat. The project abuts existing development on three of its four sides and maximizes avoidance of high quality habitat located along the linkage route that is least disturbed by adjacent developments. The project would not introduce new barriers or pinch points to existing linkages, and would conserve the existing movement functions and values for gnatcatcher and other animals using the local area. In summary, the project would benefit the overall MSCP preserve configuration by providing for an optimal preserve design; preserving key habitat along the Lakeside Linkage; conserving gnatcatcher breeding and dispersal functions; incorporating adequate buffer zones at edges; maintaining appropriate linkage widths; and providing management of the preserve in perpetuity.

Measures related to the following topics are proposed herein to fully mitigate potential impacts of the project: coastal California gnatcatcher avoidance; nesting bird and raptor avoidance; compensatory mitigation for sensitive habitat; and wetland permits and mitigation. Successful implementation of these measures would mitigate potential impacts to below a level of significance.

# 1.0 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

At the request of Pulte Homes (project applicant), HELIX Environmental Planning, Inc. (HELIX) has completed a biological technical report for the proposed Brightwater Ranch Project (proposed project) located within an approximately 76-acre property (project site or site) in the unincorporated community of Lakeside, San Diego County, California. The proposed project generally consists of subdivision of Assessor's Parcel Number (APN) 397-180-13 into 66 individual lots for single-family residential use, four HOA lots, and biological open space. The purpose of this report is to document the existing biological conditions on and in the immediate vicinity of the project site, and provide an analysis of potential impacts to sensitive biological resources with respect to local, state, and federal policy. This report provides the biological resources technical documentation necessary for project review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) by the County of San Diego Planning & Development Services (PDS).

## 1.2 PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

### 1.2.1 Project Location

The approximately 76-acre project site is generally located in the unincorporated community of Lakeside in San Diego County, California (Figure 1). Specifically, the site is located northwest of Business Route 8/East Main Street, southwest of Los Coches Road, at the eastern terminus of Jackson Hill Drive (Figure 2) within unsectioned lands in Township 15 South, Range 1 East on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute El Cajon quadrangle map (Figure 3).

The project site is located on unincorporated lands within the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul segment of the County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan (Figure 4). The majority of the site is within the MSCP's Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA; Figure 4).

### 1.2.2 Project Description

The project proposes a 66-unit single-family residential subdivision with four HOA-maintained lots (Figure 5). The remainder of the site will remain undeveloped and placed within biological open space, with the exception of a proposed water utility line, 16-foot-wide access road, and 24-foot-wide easement over the access road and underlying utility line in the southern portions of the site. An existing water tank, access road, and 30-foot-wide easement occur internal to the project site and are not a part of the proposed project.

## 1.3 SURVEY METHODS

### 1.3.1 Literature Review

Prior to conducting biological field surveys, a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) for information regarding sensitive species known to occur within 5 miles of

the Project site was performed by HELIX in 2014, as well as a review of U.S. Fish and Wildlife (USFWS), SanBIOS, and MSCP sensitive species databases. A search of the San Diego Plant Atlas (SDNHM 2010) also was conducted.

### 1.3.2 General Biological Survey

On February 17, 2014, HELIX biologists Stacy Nigro and Tara Baxter mapped vegetation and conducted general botanical and zoological surveys (Table 1). A follow-up general biological survey was conducted on November 1, 2014 by HELIX biologist Karl Osmundson. Vegetation communities within the Project site and 100 feet off site were mapped on a 1"=200' scale aerial photograph of the Project site. Vegetation was classified and mapped according to the County's biological resource mapping requirements (County 2010a). Plant identifications were made in the field or later in the laboratory through comparison with photographs or voucher specimens. Animal identifications were made by direct visual observation or indirectly by detection of calls or scat.

<b>Table 1 BIOLOGICAL SURVEY INFORMATION</b>		
<b>DATE</b>	<b>PERSONNEL</b>	<b>SURVEY TYPE</b>
02/17/2014	Stacy Nigro Tara Baxter	Vegetation Mapping and General Botanical and Zoological Surveys
04/08/2014	Jasmine Bakker	Quino Checkerspot Butterfly Site Assessment
04/16/2014	Amy Mattson	Rare Plant #1/2
04/28/2014	Larry Sward Jason Kurnow	Jurisdictional Delineation #1/2
05/16/14	Jason Kurnow	Coastal California Gnatcatcher #1/3
05/27/14	Jasmine Bakker	Hermes Copper #1/4
05/29/14	Amy Mattson Laura Moreton	Rare Plant #2/2
06/05/14	Jasmine Bakker	Hermes Copper #2/4
06/06/14	Jason Kurnow	Coastal California Gnatcatcher #2/3
06/13/14	Jason Kurnow	Coastal California Gnatcatcher #3/3
06/18/14	Jasmine Bakker Laura Moreton	Hermes Copper #3/4
07/09/14	Stacy Nigro	Hermes Copper #4/4
11/01/14	Karl Osmundson	General Biological Survey
11/07/14	Joshua Zinn	Jurisdictional Delineation #2/2
7/01/15	Karl Osmundson Joshua Zinn Lisa Honma Melanie Tymes Beth Ehsan	Field Verification of Jurisdictional Delineation

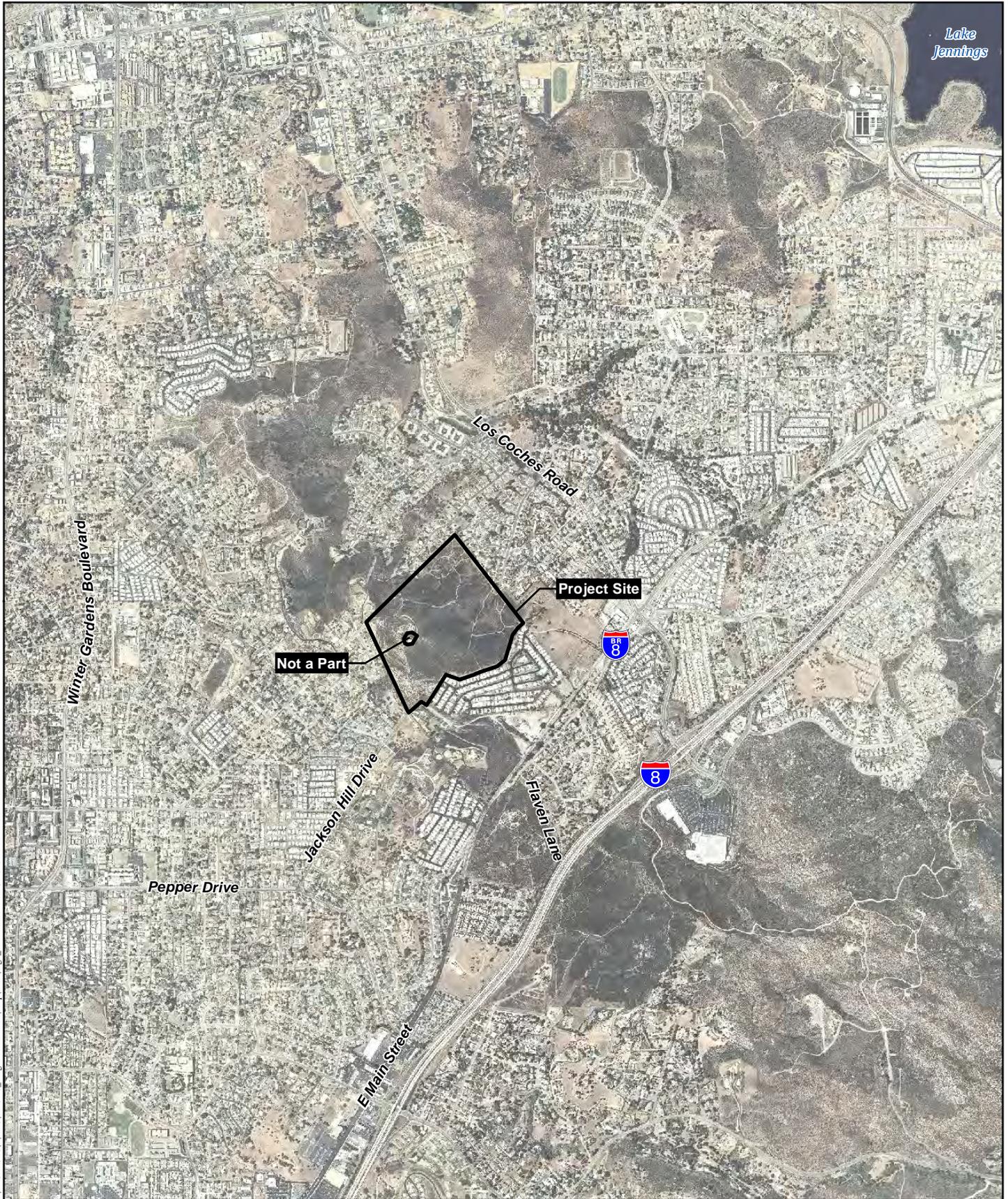


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## Regional Location Map

BRIGHTWATER RANCH

Figure 1

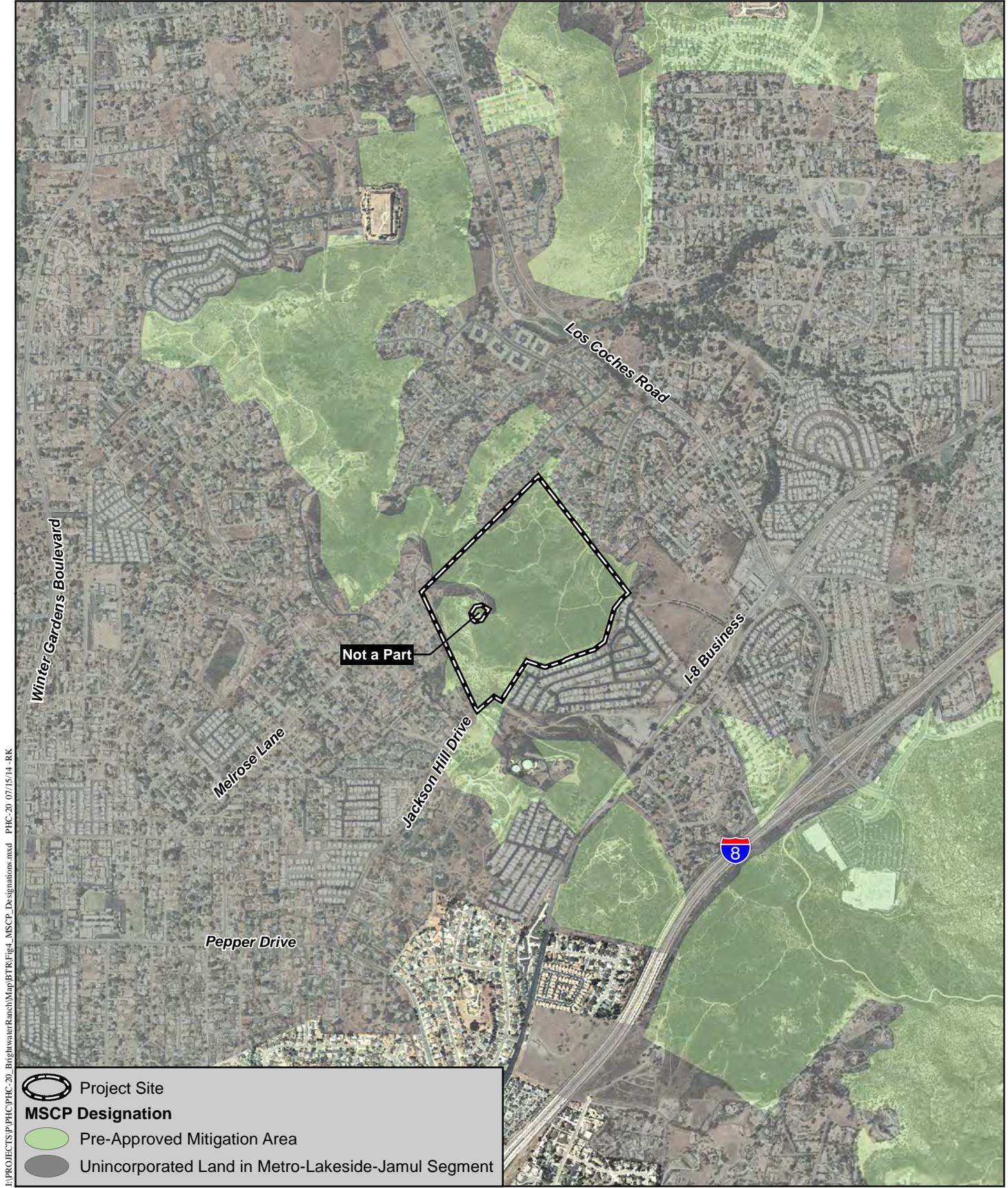


**Project Vicinity Map (Aerial Photograph)**

BRIGHTWATER RANCH

Figure 2





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## MSCP Designations

BRIGHTWATER RANCH