

**Riverside County  
Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan  
Interim Management Evaluation and Recommendations**

SITE NAME: BADLANDS1  
EDA NAME: **SCHMELLING**

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**I. SITE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION**

**1.A. Site Physical Location & Access:**

The Badlands1 site is located between State Highway 60 and Gilman Springs Road within the Moreno Badlands. The site is bisected by the old and unmaintained road, Jackrabbit Trail. The site is rectangular in shape, and is composed of 10 parcels. Access is off of Jackrabbit Trail via dirt roads, primarily from two utility easement roads. Four-wheel drive is necessary to access the site once off of Jackrabbit Trail. The site is generally located at:

State Plane Coordinates: 6320050E, 2281044N (NAD-83, feet)

UTM Coordinates: 495738E, 3753608N (ND-27, meters)

Township / Range / Section: Portions of sections 11, 12, 13 and 14  
T3S, R2W (SBBM)

**1.B. APNs & Acreage:**

APN	ACRES
422-250-006	35.33
422-250-007	66.90
422-250-008	35.98
422-250-009	35.05
422-250-010	26.14
422-250-005	18.83
422-250-004	25.22
422-250-003	22.79
422-250-002	23.14
422-250-001	19.50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>308.88</b>

**1.C. Topography:**

The site is entirely composed of the swell-and-swale topography associated with badlands. Intimate, very steep-sided canyons support small drainages. Soils are

sandy and silty conglomerates and erode quickly. This makes for an area that is very hard to get around in, except for the canyon bottoms and the ridgelines.

#### **1.D. Surrounding Land Use:**

The site is surrounded by the natural open space of the badlands formation. However, the site and the entire surrounding areas are used extensively for OHV activity, with the result that most of the ridgelines and canyon bottoms have been impacted heavily by trails which promote erosion. Additionally, these trails and the two utility roads have allowed extensive trash dumping and hunting/target shooting throughout the area.

## **2. BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT**

#### **2.A. Plant Communities:**

The site is subject to relatively frequent wildfires. As a result, the majority of the site support what appears to be burned sage scrub. A few patches of unburned scrub remain, primarily supporting individuals of California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*) and various sages (*Salvia sp.*). As a result of the fires, non-native annual grasses, primarily red brome (*Bromus madritensis rubens*), and mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*) are rapidly colonizing the site.

Two major drainages are found on the site, one to the southeast of Jackrabbit Trail and one to the northwest, more or less paralleling it. These drainages support [sometimes] dense growths of the desert willow (*Chilopsis linearis*).

#### **2.B. Likely Animal Species:**

Animals likely to be found on the site could include the valley pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), Pacific kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys agilis*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), common raven (*Corvus corax*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), California towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*), southern Pacific rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), western whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), and possibly the western toad (*Bufo boreas*). It can be expected that the small patches of green desert willow could serve as cover for migrant songbirds during the late spring months.

#### **2.C. Other Habitat or Wildlife Features:**

The Moreno Badlands serve as one of the last two or three remaining wildlife movement corridors from the San Jacinto and San Bernardino Mountains into the Box Springs Mountains.

## **2.D. Target Species:**

Please see Appendix A for a qualitative checklist of MSHCP target animal species, and Appendix B. for plant species. The site has the potential to support the Stephens' kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys stephensi*) and to a lesser degree the San Bernardino kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys merriami parvus*).

## **3. IMPACTS AND CURRENT CONDITIONS**

### **3.A. Current Uses:**

There is at least one gas pipeline which crosses the site, along with its maintenance road for access. However, the site is currently used extensively for OHV activities, trash dumping and shooting/hunting. The eastern canyon particularly has extensive dumping, in places covering thousands of square meters. A small "movie set" is located on the adjacent parcel of the western canyon. It includes a series of World War I trenches, bunkers and trip wires. The Quail Ranch Golf Course lies about 1 kilometer to the west-southwest of the site.

### **3.B. Fencing & Access Controls:**

Access into the two main canyons is from the utility roads. These roads have been gated, but OHVs just go around them. Fencing along Jackrabbit Trail is mostly unnecessary due to the steepness of the terrain, but the few remaining fences are dilapidated.

### **3.C. Off-Road Vehicle (OHV) Use / Damage:**

OHV activity in this area is rampant. Every weekend hundreds of individuals and their "rigs" show up and set up operations, primarily in the two main canyons. They use these sites as staging areas for rides further into the site and the Badlands in general. Virtually all ridgelines have roads and/or trails on them. Large areas of the canyon bottoms are denuded of vegetation. Several of the steep canyon walls have motorcycle "runs" and swirls.

### **3.D. Illegal Dumping:**

Dumping is also rampant in the area. Large areas of the eastern canyon are completely covered by trash. This trash includes all types from household garbage to vandalized automobiles. These dumps often serve as targets for target shooting.

### **3.E. Target Shooting & Hunting**

Target shooting is the third extensive use of the site. As mentioned, many of the trash dumps are used for targets, and so there is usually a large area of spent

shells and broken clay pigeons near them. Targets can be found placed on the hillsides, again, usually with a large pile of spent shells on the opposite side of the canyon.

**3.F. Weed Abatement::**

No weed abatement activities are currently required on this site.

**3.G. Other Recreational Opportunities and Constraints:**

With proper management, opportunities could exist in the future for: hiking, nature study, mountain biking, equestrian use, esthetics and solitude, hang gliding, and camping.

**3.H. Special Conditions of Purchase:**

None

**4. RESTORATION OPPORTUNITIES**

**4.A. Target Species:**

The canyon bottoms, given proper access controls, may lend themselves to supporting the San Bernardino kangaroo rat (SBKR). This critically endangered species is found along the San Jacinto River, which these canyons drain to. It may be possible for some of these sandy wash bottoms to serve recipient areas for individuals from development sites where they are unavoidably to be killed.

Restoration of the sage scrub communities can best be accomplished by naturally allowing the scrub species to re-establish themselves. However, this process would be hastened by the control of OHVs and the prevention of "re-inoculation" of the sites by the prevention of future dumping. Additionally, control of non-native annual grasses and weeds could also facilitate this recovery.

**4.B. Multi-Species Aspects:**

The multiple species importance of this site primarily lies in it serving as a component of the movement corridor between the rest of the Moreno Badlands and the Box Springs Mountains.

**5. RERSERVE DESIGN AND CONNECTIVITY**

**5.A. Boundary, Edge and Community Location:**

By virtue of its large size and rectangular shape, the site supports a high degree of edge. However, little can be done to alleviate this, and future acquisitions

should keep this in mind; trying as best as possible to coordinate such acquisitions to minimize increasing the overall edge extents.

**5.B. Connectivity:**

This site forms an excellent core from which to solidify the connections between the Badlands / San Jacinto Mountains and the Box Springs Mountains. With State Highway 60 and Lamb Canyon being the only major exceptions, there are currently little or no infrastructure elements that prevent this connection.

**5.C. Nearby Existing Reserves:**

The site shares its northwest corner with the Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) Potrero ACEC preserve. The San Timoteo Wildlife Conservation Area (a.k.a. Norton Younglove preserve / De Anza Cycle Park) is located about 2 kilometers to the northwest, across State Highway 60. This latter area will most likely be acquired from County Parks by California Department of Parks & Recreation as part of a proposed San Timoteo Canyon State Park.

**5.D. Priority for Future Purchases:**

Priority should be given to acquiring the parcels lying between the BLM Potrero ACEC and the site. This would go a long way to solidifying the northern end of the movement corridor into the Box Spring Mountains, south of Highway 60.

**6. INTERIM MANAGEMENT**

**6.A. Public Issues:**

Far and away the pressing public issues on this site, namely trash dumping, OHV use and target shooting, all stem from a lack of sufficient access control. Control of access off of Jackrabbit Trail could be accomplished by closing it off on both ends. Since this is a non-maintained road, such closure would have little or no effect on regional travel. This could be done by the use of k-rails and the construction of substantial gates for a relatively small expense. Gates would be necessary to allowed continued access for utility companies, rangers and CDF fire crews. These barriers should be clearly signed.

The canyons however present a very difficult problem in controlling access. It could be possible to fence and gate the canyon bottoms at the property boundaries, but this would be expensive, and even in the short term, probably ineffective as they would be vandalized almost immediately. Additionally, such [potentially] internal fencing might be a waste of precious funds should the adjacent sites be acquired. As a result, for the interim management, it is recommended to post "aggressive" signs within the canyon bottoms, and in conjunction with Ranger patrols, seek cooperation with the County Sheriff to begin backcountry enforcement of OHVs in the two main canyons. Finally, a