

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT
Acquisition, Installation, and Operation of Remote Video Surveillance Systems,
Imperial County, California

PROJECT HISTORY: The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Services (INS) released a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) and Environmental Assessment (EA) in June 2002 on the installation of Remote Video surveillance (RVS) systems in Imperial County, California. Subsequently, it was determined that several of the sites needed modification or relocation. This was due to an inability to gain access some sites, technical issues, and because some sites needed redesign to maximize the RVS system potential. This Supplemental EA addresses only those sites that require modification/relocation or, are new sites.

PURPOSE AND NEED: The U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) needs RVS systems at specific strategic locations near Calexico, California. The primary purpose of the proposed action is to enhance the USBP's effectiveness by providing necessary surveillance to monitor a larger area, improve response time, and enhance the safety of the USBP agents.

PROPOSED ACTION: The USBP will install, operate and maintain 16 RVS systems near Calexico, California to monitor illegal alien traffic entering the U.S. The RVS equipment is mounted on a rectangular or triangular platform that holds the microwave and antennae systems, cameras mounted on pan-and-tilt pedestals, and control equipment. This equipment will be mounted approximately 30-80 feet above ground level. In addition, one or more small solid parabolic antennas are mounted on the platform railings or on a separate antenna mount.

For 13 of the sites, the RVS platform will be mounted on steel poles that are three to four feet in diameter. They consist of a drill pile foundation approximately 4-foot in diameter by 24-foot deep. The remaining sites would consist of similar equipment mounted on 3-legged steel towers. One site, Coyote 1, is on a 260-foot high tower.

Construction of some RVS sites requires road construction/improvement and/or installation of powerlines. These areas have all been surveyed for sensitive resources and the impacts associated with this construction have been addressed in the EA.

ALTERNATIVES: Alternatives carried forward for analyses in the Supplemental EA include the No Action and the Proposed Action alternatives. The No Action alternative will not satisfy the necessary surveillance requirements. Of the alternatives considered, the Proposed Action will result in the most strategically effective approach to monitoring large areas and will provide for a safer working environment.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES: No significant adverse affects to the natural or human environment are expected upon implementation of the proposed action.

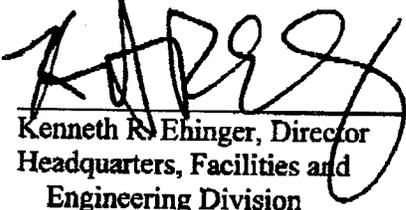
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MITIGATION MEASURES: Environmental design measures to be implemented for the proposed actions include:

1. Construction of all RVS systems within critical habitat (Coyote 1 and Sugarloaf) for the peninsular bighorn sheep would be timed to avoid the lambing season (i.e. construction must take place from 1 July to 31 December). In addition, all sites located within the Yuha Desert Management Area for the flat-tailed horned lizard would be monitored by trained personnel during construction activities to ensure no accidental take of flat-tailed horned lizard occurs.
2. Proper maintenance of construction equipment and best management practices during construction activities would be used to minimize the possibility of accidental spills of fuels or lubricants that, if they occurred, could affect surface and ground water quality.
3. In order to minimize the amount of project-related dust emissions, the following management practices shall be implemented during project construction:
 - Minimize land disturbance; and
 - Water trucks shall be used to wet exposed areas and control emissions of fugitive dust caused by grading and hauling activities and vehicular travel on unpaved road surfaces.
 - In addition, all construction equipment shall be maintained and operated in a manner that produces the least amount of emissions and maintains the lowest possible noise levels.
 - Standard noise attenuation equipment, such as mufflers, must be used on all construction equipment and vehicles and must be maintained in good operating condition, free from leaks and holes.
4. Due to the close proximity of cultural sites on the Sugarloaf site, the Bureau of Land Management requires that an archaeologist from their local field office be present during construction to ensure avoidance of the known sites. In addition, if any cultural resources or human remains are encountered during the construction, all work will cease in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and a qualified US Army Corps of Engineers archaeologist and the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will be contacted to assess significance and determine appropriate mitigation measures.

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Imperial County, California

Finding: Based upon the results of the Supplemental EA and the environmental design measures incorporated as part of the proposed action, the proposed action will not have a significant effect on the environment. Therefore, no further environmental impact analysis is warranted.


Kenneth R. Ehinger, Director
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Engineering Division

9/27/02
Date

FINAL
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE ACQUISITION, INSTALLATION, AND OPERATION OF
REMOTE VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS,
IMPERIAL COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

October 2002

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**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT
FOR THE ACQUISITION, INSTALLATION, AND OPERATION OF
REMOTE VIDEO SURVEILLANCE SYSTEMS,
IMPERIAL COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and U.S. Border Patrol (USBP) El Centro Sector proposes to install Remote Video Surveillance (RVS) systems at specific strategic locations along the U.S./Mexico border to enhance their capabilities of deterring, detecting, and assisting in the apprehensions of illegal entries into the United States. The acquisition, installation, and operation of 24 RVS sites were addressed in an Environmental Assessment (EA) and Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) signed on 16 May 2002. However, shortly after public distribution of the Final EA, the USBP and their RVS design contractor determined that some sites needed to be relocated due to technical issues and/or their inability to gain access to the property. In addition, some sites needed to be redesigned and/or added to accommodate proper transmission and reception of signals. This document updates and supplements the June 2002 EA and addresses only those sites that have been modified or relocated. The design changes and additional RVS systems documented in this Supplemental Environmental Assessment (SEA) includes the addition of 4 relay sites, 5 equipment sheds, 7 new or relocated RVS sites, and 12 design changes.

This SEA provides the required National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documentation for this action.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

This document supplements the June 2002 INS Final Environmental Assessment (EA) that addressed the Acquisition, Installation, and Operation of 24 Remote Video Surveillance (RVS) Systems near Calexico, Imperial County, California (INS 2002). Other relative background information was obtained from the 2002 Bureau of Land Management (BLM) Final Environmental Assessment on Remote Video Surveillance Cameras on the U.S./Mexico Border (BLM 2002).

1.1 Project Location and Vicinity

The proposed project is located in Imperial County, California (Figure 1-1) near the towns of Calexico and El Centro, California.

1.2 Project History

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) prepared a Final EA and issued a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI), on 16 May 2002. The authorized project included the installation and operation of 24 RVS systems near Calexico, California. It was later determined that several of the sites needed modification or relocation due to an inability to access the property, technical issues, and some sites needed redesign to maximize the RVS systems' potential. In addition, some new locations were incorporated to enhance the signal transmission and reception. Also, the BLM prepared a separate EA for RVS sites located on their lands. The BLM EA also supported lease/easement agreements between BLM, Bureau of Reclamation (BOR), and USBP. The BLM EA, based upon the original 2002 INS EA, was developed to comply with BLM and BOR policy. Upon completion of the BLM EA and a verbal concurrence for informal consultation regarding protected species from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the BLM issued a separate FONSI for all RVS sites located on BLM lands; thus, construction activities would be allowed to take place.

This SEA was developed to address only those sites that require design modification, relocation, or are new sites including any changes to the BLM designated sites.



Figure 1-1: Project Vicinity

gsrC GULF SOUTH RESEARCH CORPORATION

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DATE: OCTOBER 2002

1.3 Project Purpose And Need

The purpose and need of the proposed action, as stated in the June 2002 EA (INS 2002), has not changed and is incorporated herein by reference. Briefly, there is a need to monitor expansive areas along the U.S./Mexican border to detect and facilitate apprehension of undocumented aliens (UDA) and smugglers. The proposed RVS systems provide necessary surveillance to more effectively monitor a larger area, improve response times, and enhance the safety of the USBP agents without increasing the number of USBP agents in the field. The RVS system would also facilitate the USBP's mission to gain, maintain and extend control of the U.S./Mexico border.

2.0 ALTERNATIVES

2.1 Proposed Action Alternative

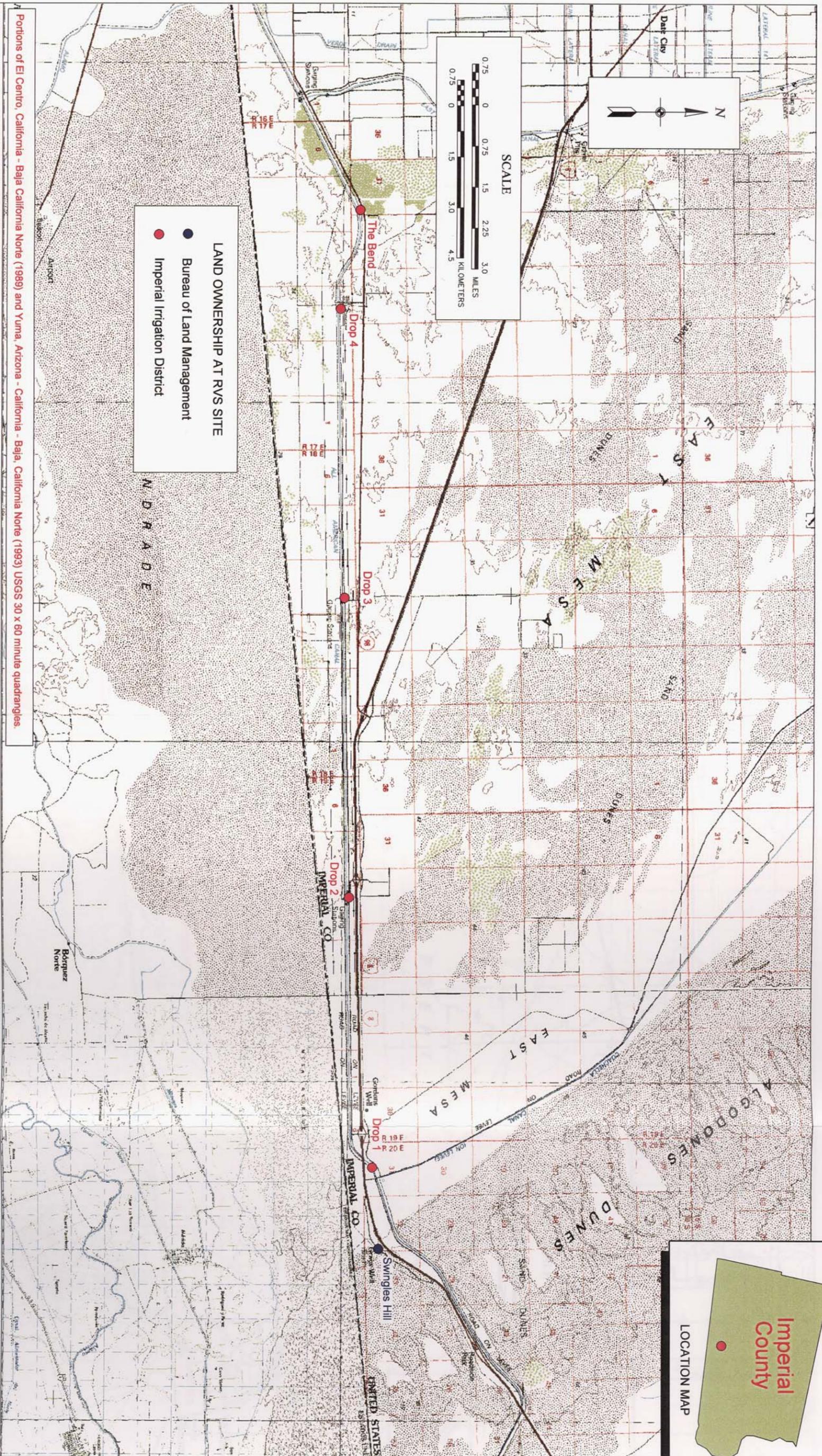
The USBP proposes to install, operate, and maintain 16 RVS systems (13 RVS sites plus 3 relay stations) near Calexico, California (Figures 2-1 and 2-2). The configuration of systems would essentially remain the same as described in the previously mentioned INS June 2002 Final EA. However, some tower heights would change from 60 feet to 80 feet. New locations have been identified for seven sites, one of which (Mauldin Hill) would also require a 1,100-foot long access road. Three new sites have also been added; however, these sites are at existing USBP stations and/or existing tower/antennae sites. The revised and new sites are discussed in the following paragraphs. In addition, Table 2-1 presents the proposed design changes, relocation distances, and other actions to be completed at each site.

2.1.1 Sites with Design Changes

The Drop 1 site, formerly known as the Rock Pile, would change from the original monopole design to a 165-foot (ft) freestanding tower, and would have a relay station attached. The following proposed sites would change from 60-foot monopole designs to 80-foot monopole designs: Swingles Hill, Drop 2, Drop 3, Drop 4, The Bend, Mauldin Hill, Westside Main/Hwy 98, Coyote 2, and West of S2. In addition to these changes, the Coyote 1 tower site would be a freestanding 260-foot tower rather than the original 200-foot guyed tower. Due to the tower changing from a guyed tower to a freestanding tower, the footprint for the Coyote 1 site would be reduced from 150-feet X 150-feet to 100-feet X 100-feet.

Table 2-1 Proposed actions at each RVS site

RVS Sites Names	Design Changes	Relocation Distance	Other
Swingles Hill	60 to 80-ft monopole	200-ft west	
Drop 1	monopole to 165-ft tower		Relay station, equipment shed
Drop 2	60 to 80-ft monopole		
Drop 3	60 to 80-ft monopole		
Drop 4	60 to 80-ft monopole	500-ft east	Relay station on existing tower, equipment shed, 900-ft of fiber optic cable
The Bend	60 to 80-ft monopole		
Westside Main/Hwy 98	60 to 80-ft monopole		
Dump Road		300-ft south	
Mauldin Hill	60 to 80-ft monopole	1.25 miles southeast	
West of S2	60 to 80-ft monopole	150-ft northwest	
Coyote 2	60 to 80-ft monopole	200-ft east	
Coyote 1	guyed to freestanding 200-ft tower		
Sugarloaf	60 to 30-ft monopole	200-ft northeast	
El Centro Relay		New site	Relay station on existing tower, equipment shed
El Centro Station		New site	Relay station on existing tower, equipment shed
Calxico Station		New site	Relay station on existing tower, equipment shed



Portions of El Centro, California - Baja California Norte (1989) and Yuma, Arizona - California - Baja, California Norte (1993) USGS 30 x 60 minute quadrangles.

LAND OWNERSHIP AT RVS SITE

- Bureau of Land Management
- Imperial Irrigation District



Figure 2-1: East Calexico RVS Sites

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DATE: October 2002

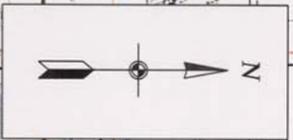
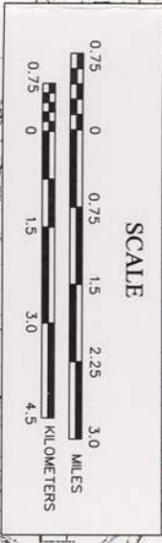
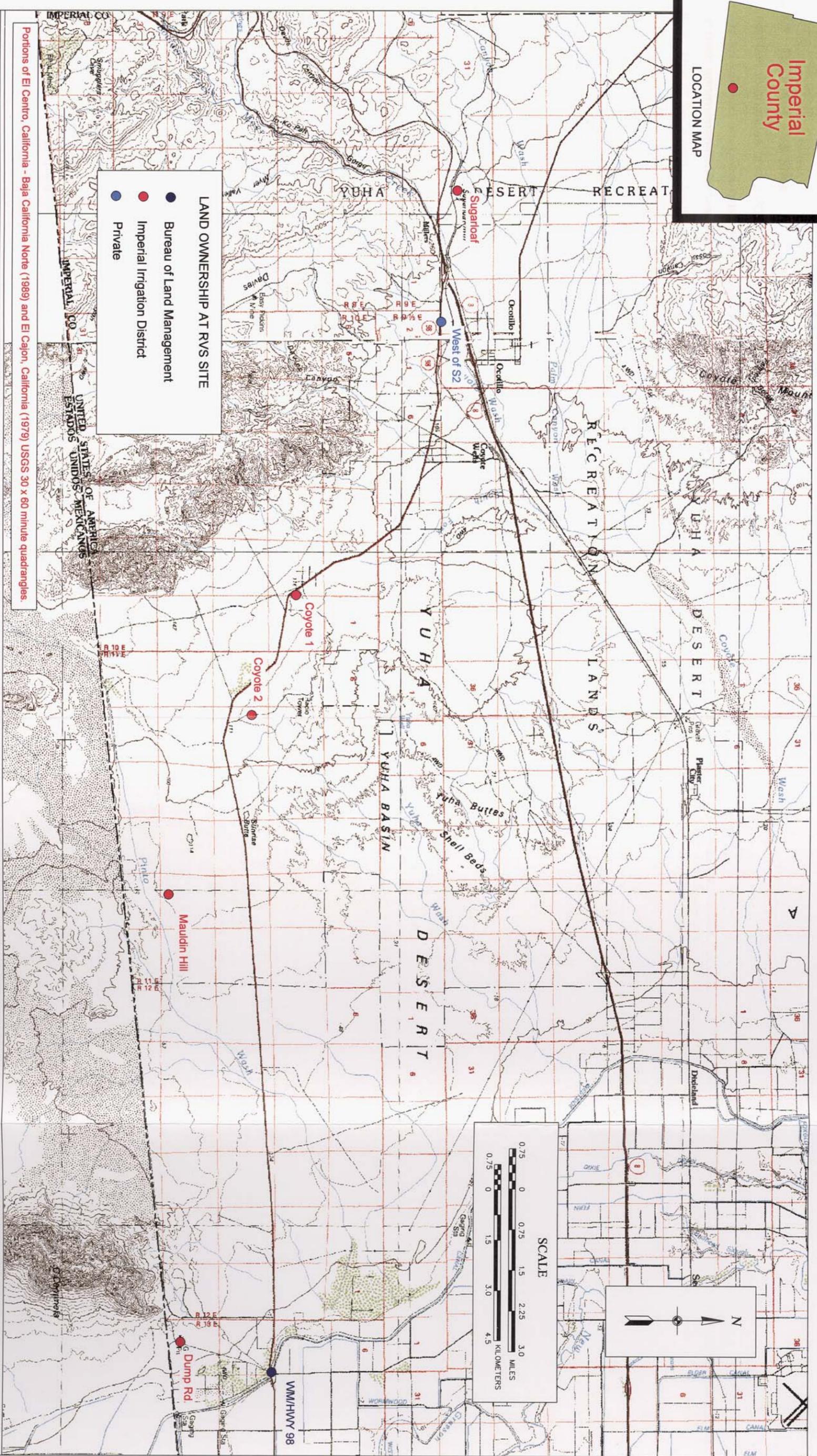


Figure 2-2: West Calexico RVS Sites



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DATE: October 2002

2.1.2 Relocated RVS Sites

In addition to changes from a 60-foot to 80-foot monopole, the Swingles Hill site, located in the Algodones Dunes area, would be moved approximately 200 feet west. The Drop 4 site would be moved approximately 500 feet east and would incorporate an existing relay tower associated with it. Use of the extant relay tower, however, would require the installation of approximately 900 feet of underground fiber optic cable from the relay tower to the new Drop 4 RVS site. Two power poles would also be installed.

The Mauldin Hill site, replaces the Little Sunrise site (INS 2002), and is located 1.25 miles southeast of the original site. This move would require approximately 1,100 feet of new access road to facilitate the installation and maintenance of the RVS system. This system would be mounted on a standard 80-foot monopole and powered by a solar source (for description of solar power, see INS 2002).

The Dump Road site design features would remain the same; however, it would be relocated to a new site 300 feet south. No new access roads would be needed.

The Coyote 2 site would be relocated approximately 200 feet to the east to ensure that a cultural resources site is avoided. No new access roads would be needed.

The Sugarloaf site would be relocated approximately 200 feet northeast and would change from a 60-foot to a 30-foot monopole design. No new access roads would be needed.

The West of S2 site would be moved to the north side of Highway 98 on private property, while keeping the same design features. No new access roads would be needed.

2.1.3 New RVS Relay Sites

Three new relay stations would be constructed as part of this proposed action. These new relay stations (antennas) would be placed on existing towers. The El Centro Relay station would be mounted to an Imperial Irrigation District (IID) tower located on Dogwood Road in El Centro, California. The two remaining stations would be located at the USBP El Centro Station and the Calexico Station located in El Centro and Calexico, California, respectively.

2.1.4 Equipment Sheds

Equipment sheds would also be placed adjacent to the relay stations. These sheds are 12-feet X 16-feet and would be used to house equipment needed for the operation of the relay stations. The sheds would be located at Drop 1, Drop 4, El Centro Relay, El Centro Station, and Calexico Station and would be situated entirely within the construction footprint of the RVS relay towers.

2.2 No Action

The No Action Alternative would preclude the installation and operation of the 16 modified or relocated RVS systems. Under this alternative, illegal entrants would be less likely to be apprehended, thus indirectly creating additional habitat destruction due to illegal pedestrian and vehicle traffic. Also, additional agents would be needed in the region. The increased USBP agents and their subsequent patrols would impact the flora and fauna.

The installation and operation of the 11 sites of the original 24 sites that did not change would be completed under the No Action Alternative. The impacts associated with these sites were discussed in the June 2002 Final EA and FONSI. These discussions and mitigation commitments are incorporated by reference and thus will not be discussed further in this document. A list of these sites is provided below:

1. Swingles East
2. Gordon's
3. Midway
4. 3^{3/4}
5. Westside Main North
6. BP Hill
7. Exit 5
8. Pinto Wash
9. Caltrans
10. Clark Road
11. Boulder Park

3.0 AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT

The 16 proposed RVS sites would be located within a 43-mile long corridor along the U.S./Mexico border on either side of the City of Calexico, California. The affected environment of the region was discussed in detail in the original Final EA (INS 2002) and the BLM Final EA (BLM 2002), incorporated by reference per 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) 1502.21. The site conditions at each site are briefly described in the following paragraphs.

3.1 Biological Resources

3.1.1 Vegetation

Vegetation density at the project sites is very low, with most of the actual footprints of the proposed sites devoid of vegetation. The Swingles Hill site had no ground cover and was completely devoid of vegetation. The Drop 1 site and Drop 4 (site, fiber optic cable route, and power right-of-way (ROW)) had low densities of vegetation (less than 10 percent), with species that included creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), four-winged saltbush (*Atriplex canescens*), and white bursage (*Ambrosia dumosa*). Vegetation at the other sites was comprised of similar species, but at slightly higher densities (up to 15 percent ground cover). The relocated sites (Mauldin Hill, Dump Rd, Coyote 2) and their access roads were previously disturbed as well and consisted of similar species, with the addition of mustard (*Brassica* sp.) and sweetbush (*Bebbia juncea*). The Sugarloaf and West of S2 sites also supported California barrel cactus (*Ferocactus cylindraceus*), cholla (*Opuntia* sp.), and agave (*Agave* spp.), in addition to the species present at the other sites. The new relay sites (El Centro Relay, El Centro Station, and Calexico Station) are completely devoid of vegetation as they are located on pavement or on existing towers.

3.1.2 Wildlife

No wildlife was observed at any of the proposed sites during field surveys conducted during the weeks of 4 February and 29 July 2002. Wildlife expected to occur within the region was described in the previous EA; this information is incorporated herein by reference (INS 2002).

3.1.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

No threatened or endangered species were observed during past and recent biological surveys. No Algodones Dunes sunflowers (*Helianthus niveus* ssp. *tephrodes*) or Pierson's milk-vetch (*Astragalus magdalenae* var. *peirsonii*) was observed at the new Swingles Hill site. Three of the

proposed RVS sites including (Coyote 2, Mauldin Hill, and Dump Road) are located within an area designated by the BLM as the Yuha Desert Management Area (YDMA) for the flat-tailed horned lizard (*Phrynosoma mcallii*) (Figure 3-1). In addition to those sites being in the YDMA, two of the proposed RVS sites including (Coyote 1 and Sugarloaf) are located within an area designated by the USFWS as critical habitat for the peninsular bighorn sheep (*Ovis canadensis cremnobates*) (Figure 3-2). More detailed discussions of the affected environment for threatened and endangered species within the project area are contained in the previously mentioned INS June 2002 EA and are incorporated herein by reference (INS 2002).

3.2 Land Use

Land use for the project corridor and region was previously discussed in the aforementioned INS June 2002 EA; thus this information is incorporated herein by reference. Similar land uses (i.e., open rangeland) occurs at the Mauldin Hill site, which is the only site that was relocated a substantial distance. The land use at the El Centro and Calexico Station sites is urban/developed and, more specifically, USBP stations.

3.3 Air Quality

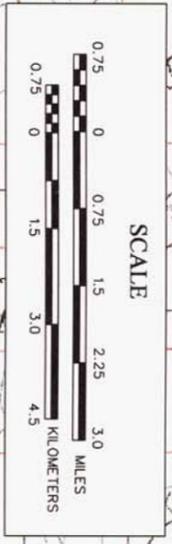
Air quality within the project region was previously discussed in the aforementioned INS June 2002 EA; thus, this information is incorporated herein by reference.

3.4 Water Quality

Water quality within the project region was previously discussed in the aforementioned INS June 2002 EA; thus, this information is incorporated herein by reference.

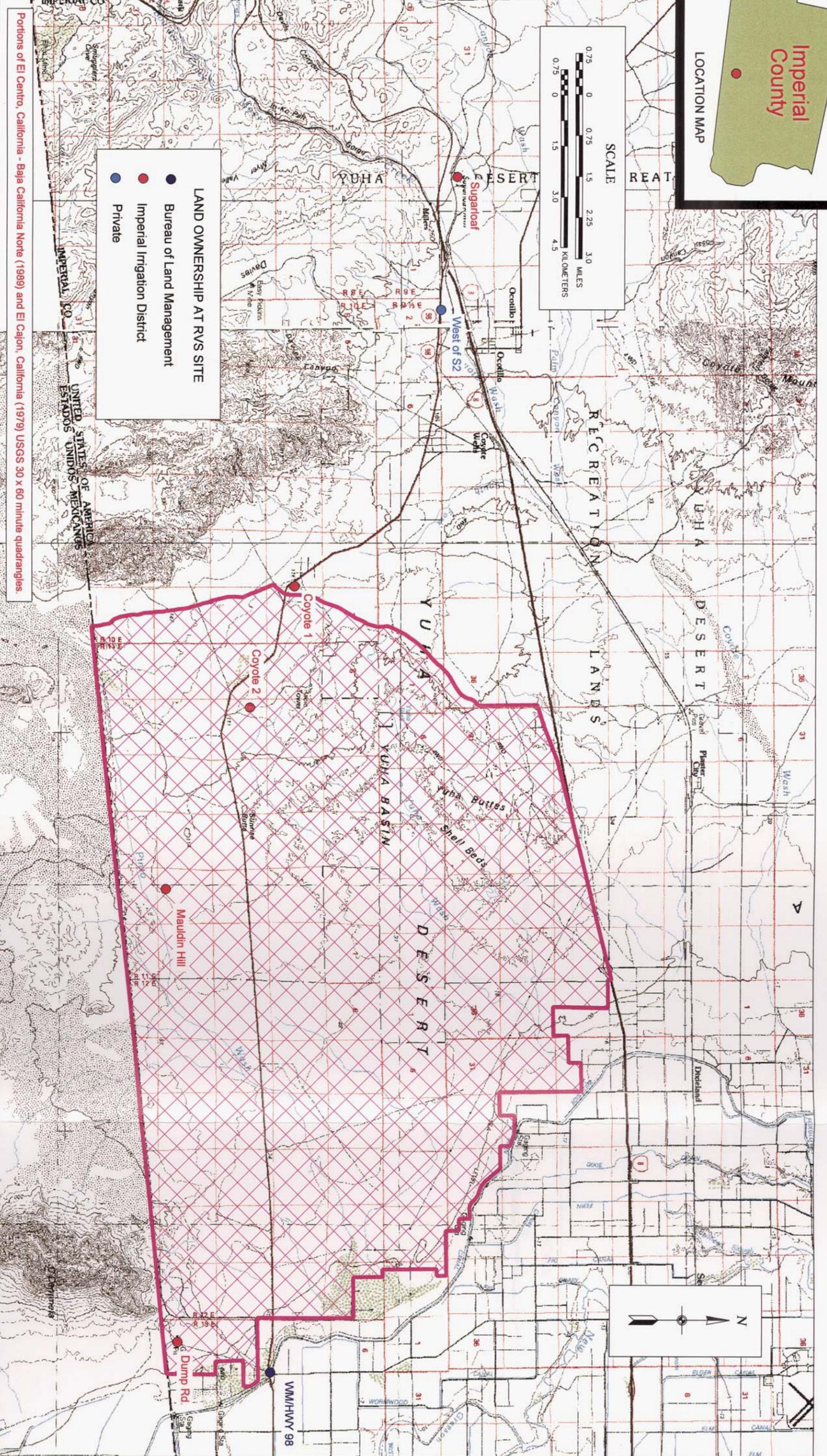
3.5 Cultural Resources

Archaeological pedestrian surveys of the site locations, power ROW, and access roads were completed during preparation of the previously mentioned INS June 2002 Final EA and BLM 2002 Final EA. Surveys of the power ROW, fiber optic cable route, and site location for the Drop 4 site as well as the Dump Road and Swingles Hill sites were conducted during the week of 29 July 2002. A BLM archaeologist surveyed the Mauldin Hill site and access road as well as the Sugarloaf site and reported that no cultural materials were found (BLM 2002). In fact, no cultural materials were found at any of the proposed new/relocated sites, except the West of S2 site.



LAND OWNERSHIP AT RVS SITE

- Bureau of Land Management
- Imperial Irrigation District
- Private

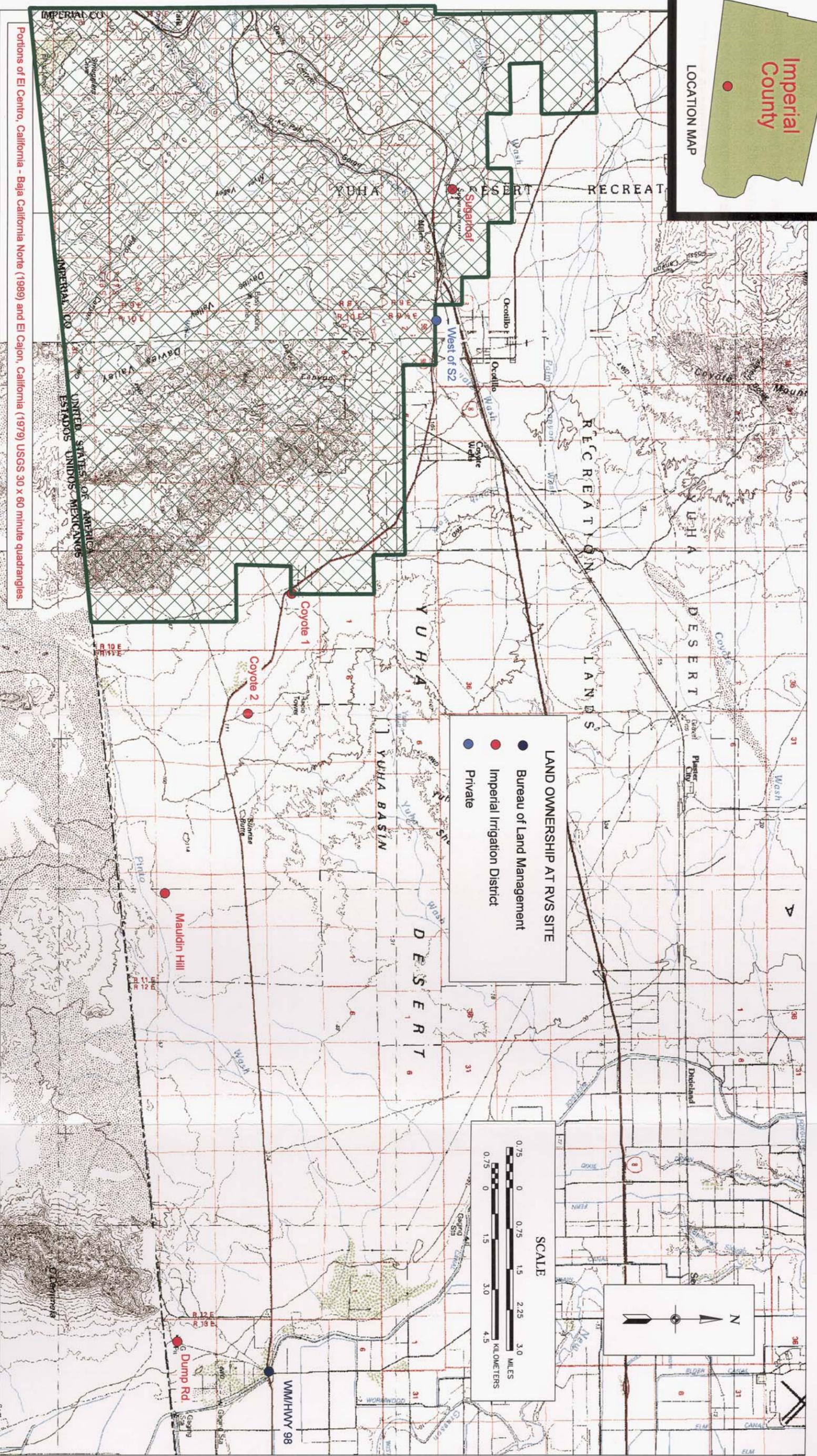


Portions of El Centro, California - Baja California Norte (1989) and El Cajon, California (1979) USGS 30 x 60 minute quadrangles

Figure 3-1: Yuha Desert Management Area for flat-tailed horned lizard



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DATE: October 2002



Portions of El Centro, California - Baja California Norte (1989) and El Cajon, California (1979) USGS 30 x 60 minute quadrangles.

Figure 3-2: Designated Critical Habitat for the peninsular bighorn sheep within the project area

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SCALE: on map

DATE: October 2002

However, this site has been cleared through the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) for their 2002 Pavement Rehabilitation and Shoulder, Bridge Culvert Widening Project according to BLM (2002) (see Appendix A).

3.6 Socioeconomics

Socioeconomics within the project region was previously discussed in the aforementioned INS 2002 Final EA. Thus, this information is incorporated herein by reference (INS 2002).

3.7 Unique and Sensitive Areas

The unique and sensitive areas surrounding the project corridor were previously discussed in the aforementioned Final EA; thus, this information is incorporated herein by reference (INS 2002).

4.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Environmental impacts resulting from the construction and operation of the proposed RVS systems are summarized in this section.

4.1 Biological Resources

4.1.1 Vegetation

4.1.1.1 Proposed Action Alternative

Very little vegetation exists at the proposed RVS sites, power/road ROW or fiber optic cable route; in fact, most exhibited vegetation densities less than 15 percent. These low densities were caused by natural rocky terrain or past and on-going human disturbances. The ROW for the fiber optic cable would be less than seven feet wide and about 14 feet wide for the Maldin Hill access road. Consequently, installing the access road and fiber optic cable at these locations would disturb about 0.5 acre. Therefore, negligible effects to the region's vegetation would be expected due to the construction and operation of the RVS systems, access road, and fiber optic cable.

4.1.1.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no construction of proposed RVS systems and the USBP would not be as effective in detecting and apprehending illegal entrants and foot traffic. Illegal activity along the borders would continue at its current level and probably increase. Therefore, illegal traffic would continue to adversely impact vegetation communities in the region. Illegal entrants would continue to alter vegetation communities by cutting vegetation for shelter and fire, by causing accidental wildfires, and trampling vegetation in the region.

4.1.2 Wildlife

4.1.2.1 Proposed Action Alternative

No direct impacts to wildlife are expected. Although wildlife adjacent to the site would be subjected to noise and general disturbance during construction, these impacts are not considered significant due to the localized nature of the disturbance and the short duration of construction (i.e., less than two weeks).

Installation of RVS systems was considered regarding the potential increase for raptors to be electrocuted or to become entangled in overhead powerlines. Although injuries and deaths to

raptors due to collision with powerlines do occur, studies have indicated these structures do not present a major problem. The relative infrequency of collisions is due to the high visual acuity of raptors and the large size of transmission line conductors (Raptor Research Foundation, Inc. 1996). The possibility exists for raptors and birds of prey to use the power lines and RVS systems as perches which may increase predation upon smaller animals; however, if this were to occur, no significant adverse impacts are expected. Due to the proposed Coyote 1 site tower exceeding 200-feet in height, lighting would be installed as required by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA). A white strobe light would be installed on the tower to avoid or minimize potential effects to migratory birds. In addition, the tower would also be a freestanding tower (i.e., no guy wires), thus reducing potential collisions by birds.

The operation and maintenance of the systems would have no effect on the region's wildlife populations once the RVS towers are installed. Impacts associated with the RVS systems that had design changes only (i.e., not new/relocated sites) have been previously discussed in the INS 2002 EA and are incorporated herein by reference.

4.1.2.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, there would be no construction of the 16 proposed RVS systems. As a result, the USBP would not be as effective in detecting and apprehending illegal entrants and foot traffic would continue at its current level and probably increase. This illegal traffic damages vegetation and thereby causes synergistic impacts to wildlife from the trampling of vegetation. As a result, the No Action Alternative has the potential to adversely impact wildlife communities.

4.1.3 Threatened and Endangered Species

4.1.3.1 Proposed Action Alternative

No Federal or state listed species were observed at any of the proposed RVS sites or along road/power ROWs. However, two of the new/relocated sites (Coyote 1 and Sugarloaf) are located within an area designated by the USFWS as critical habitat for the peninsular bighorn sheep (see Figure 3-2).

As discussed in the INS 2002 EA, due to vegetation densities and location of the proposed sites, there would be no effect to the peninsular bighorn sheep, provided that construction at these sites occurs outside of the lambing season (i.e., construct between 1 July and 31

December). Thus, construction of the RVS systems for these two sites could occur during this set time frame resulting in no effects to peninsular bighorn sheep or their critical habitat. Routine maintenance (e.g., replacement of propane tanks) would not have an effect on peninsular bighorn sheep, since these activities would be the same or similar to public, BLM, and USBP activities that occur daily.

Several of the proposed sites are located within the YDMA for the flat-tailed horned lizard (Coyote 2, Mauldin Hill, and Dump Road) (see Figure 3-1). These sites consist of habitat, which is potentially suitable for the flat-tailed horned lizard (proposed threatened). Construction of the Mauldin Hill site and access road would require alteration of about 0.35 acres of natural habitat. However, the access road would be similar to those that currently exist within the YDMA. A professional biologist or other trained USBP personnel would monitor all sites within this area during construction activities to ensure no accidental take of the flat-tailed horned lizard occurs. Thus, the implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative would result in no significant adverse impacts to this species.

The Proposed Action Alternative would indirectly benefit vegetation, wildlife, and Federal or state listed species throughout the entire project area through the reduction or elimination of illegal traffic, brush clearing, and fires caused by illegal aliens. Impacts to protected species for those sites, which are not new/relocated sites have been thoroughly discussed in the INS 2002 EA and are incorporated herein by reference.

4.1.3.2 No Action Alternative

Continuation of illegal foot and vehicle traffic would impact vegetation within the region. Synergistic impacts to wildlife would occur as a result of disturbances to vegetation communities. Adverse impacts to protected species could occur as a result of illegal traffic. Thus, the No Action Alternative has the potential to affect protected species within the region (INS 2002).

4.2 Land Use

4.2.1 Proposed Action Alternative

Land use would change from its existing use to that of an RVS system at the seven new/relocated RVS sites, the fiber optic line, and the Mauldin Hill access road. Land use for those RVS systems, which are to be installed on existing towers would change as a result of the

Proposed Action Alternative. Land use for those systems that have been redesigned only, and are not relocated or new sites, have been previously discussed in the INS 2002 EA and are herein incorporated by reference.

4.2.2 No Action Alternative

With the implementation of the No Action Alternative there would be no impacts to land use because the 16 RVS systems would not be constructed; thus, land use within the region would continue as it currently exists.

4.3 Air Quality

4.3.1 Proposed Action Alternative

No long-term impacts are expected to air quality as a result of the project. Impacts to air quality would be local and short term due to the construction activities. These impacts would be primarily associated with vehicle emissions and dust generation, and are expected to be below *de minimus* thresholds.

4.3.2 No Action Alternative

The region's air quality would not be directly affected by the implementation of the No Action Alternative. Without the RVS sites, however, additional patrol activities would be required, which could exacerbate fugitive dust emissions or hydrocarbon emissions within the region. The magnitude of these effects would depend upon several variables including number of vehicle trips, climatic conditions, and soil types.

4.4 Water Quality

4.4.1 Proposed Action Alternative

Surface waters in the area include the All American Canal; the New River, which runs near the western edge of Calexico; and the Alamo River, located approximately six miles east of Calexico. The proposed RVS systems would not require ground disturbance deep enough or wide enough to disturb ground water supplies or cause unnecessary amounts of runoff into surface waters. Furthermore, proper maintenance of construction equipment and best management practices during construction activities would minimize the possibility of accidental spills of fuels or lubricants that, if they occurred, could affect surface and ground water quality. Operation and maintenance of the RVS systems would have no effect on the region's surface or groundwater supplies and/or quality. Indirect impacts could occur to waterbodies and wetlands

as the number of agents necessary to patrol the same area would not increase thus decreasing the potential for erosion/sedimentation.

4.4.2 No Action Alternative

No direct impacts to the water quality of the region's surface or groundwater supplies would occur under the No Action Alternative. However, additional patrols would be required to monitor the same area, which could indirectly result in effects to waterbodies and wetlands by increasing erosion/sedimentation.

4.5 Cultural Resources

4.5.1 Proposed Action Alternative

With the exception of the West of S2 site location, there are no resources listed or eligible for the National Register of Historic Places in the project area. However, Caltrans cleared the West of S2 site through the Section 106 process of the National Historic Preservation Act for their 2002 Pavement Rehabilitation and Shoulder, Bridge Culvert Widening Project according to the BLM 2002 Final EA (see Appendix A). Therefore, no cultural resources sites would be impacted. Furthermore, due to the close proximity of known cultural sites to the Sugarloaf site, BLM has required that an archaeologist from their local field office be present during construction to ensure avoidance of these known sites (BLM 2002). If any cultural resources or human remains are encountered during the construction, all work will cease in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and a qualified USACE archaeologist and the California State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) will be contacted to assess significance and determine appropriate mitigation measures.

4.5.2 No Action Alternative

The No Action Alternative would have no direct effect on cultural resources. Reductions in the USBP's ability to gain and maintain control of the border, however, would allow illegal entrants to continue to drive or walk through undisturbed areas in the areas surrounding Calexico. This illegal traffic could have adverse impacts upon the region's cultural resources, many of which have not been discovered yet. The potential magnitude of such effects, therefore, is unknown.

4.6 Socioeconomics

4.6.1 Proposed Action Alternative

The labor for this alternative would be provided by private contractors from outside the region, resulting in only temporary and negligible increases in the population of the project area. Materials and other project expenditures would also be obtained from outside the region, providing little or no temporary direct economic benefits. No displacement would result from this action and, therefore, there would be no direct impacts to housing in the area or environmental justice issues.

Some indirect, beneficial impacts would occur as a result of the operation of the RVS systems. A reduction in illegal drug and alien traffic would have synergistic socioeconomic benefits associated with insurance costs, property losses, law enforcement expenses, and other social costs (i.e., drug rehabilitation, medical expenses, and labor opportunities).

4.6.2 No Action Alternative

Under the No Action Alternative, no construction would take place. As a result, the current illegal foot traffic, and other illegal activity would continue which would result in a probable increase in insurance costs, property losses, law enforcement expenses, and other social costs (i.e., drug rehabilitation, medical expenses, and labor opportunities).

4.7 Unique and Sensitive Areas

4.7.1 Proposed Action Alternative

Under the implementation of the Proposed Action Alternative, six of the proposed sites are located within unique and sensitive areas (Jacumba Wilderness Area and Yuha Desert Basin); however, the proposed sites for the RVS systems have been previously disturbed and would not be significantly impacted. Furthermore, the Proposed Action Alternative would indirectly benefit unique and sensitive areas by reducing or eliminating illegal traffic, brush clearing, trampling of sensitive resources, and reduce the litter left behind and fires caused by illegal aliens.

4.7.2 No Action Alternative

No direct impacts to the unique and sensitive areas within the project corridor would occur under the No Action Alternative. However, the continuation of illegal foot and vehicle traffic in addition to the increased USBP patrols, which would be necessary to monitor the same area, could indirectly result in effects to unique and sensitive areas.

5.0 ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS / MITIGATION MEASURES

5.1 Biological Resources

Construction of the two RVS systems within critical habitat (Coyote 1 and Sugarloaf) for the peninsular bighorn sheep would be timed to avoid the lambing season (i.e., construction must take place from 1 July to 31 December). In addition, trained personnel would monitor all sites located within the YDMA for the flat-tailed horned lizard during construction activities to ensure no accidental take of this sensitive species.

5.2 Water Resources

Proper maintenance of construction equipment and best management practices during construction activities would be used. This would minimize the possibility of accidental spills of fuels or lubricants that, if they occurred, could affect surface and ground water quality.

5.3 Air Quality

In order to minimize the amount of project-related dust emissions, the following management practices shall be implemented during project construction: (1) minimize land disturbance; and (2) water trucks shall be used to wet exposed areas and control emissions of fugitive dust caused by grading and hauling activities and vehicular travel on unpaved road surfaces. In addition, all construction equipment shall be maintained and operated in a manner that produces the least amount of emissions and maintains the lowest possible noise levels. Standard noise attenuation equipment, such as mufflers, must be used on all construction equipment and vehicles and must be maintained in good operating condition, free from leaks and holes.

5.4 Cultural Resources

Due to the close proximity of known cultural sites to the Sugarloaf site, BLM has required that an archaeologist from their local field office be present during construction to ensure avoidance of these known sites (BLM 2002). In addition, if any cultural resources or human remains are encountered during the construction, all work will cease in the immediate vicinity of the discovery and a qualified USACE archaeologist and the California SHPO will be contacted to assess significance and determine appropriate mitigation measures.

6.0 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

6.1 Agency Coordination

This section discusses consultation and coordination that has occurred during preparation of this document. This includes contacts that were made during the development of the proposed action and writing of the SEA. Due to the short duration of time between the release of the original June 2002 INS EA and the development of this SEA, coordination conducted between agencies is incorporated by reference herein (INS 2002). Formal and informal coordination was conducted with the following agencies:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
- California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO)
- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
- U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Los Angeles District (USACE)
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA)
- Native American Nations
- Bureau of Reclamation (BOR)

6.2 Public Review

The Draft SEA was made available for public review, and the Notice of Availability (NOA) was published in local newspapers. No comments were received during the 15-day comment period.

7.0 LIST OF PREPARERS

The following people were primarily responsible for preparing this Environmental Assessment.

NAME	AGENCY/ORGANIZATION	DISCIPLINE/EXPERTISE	EXPERIENCE	ROLE IN PREPARING EA
Eric Verwers	INS A-E Resource Center	Biology	14 years in NEPA and related studies	Program manager and EA review and coordination
Charles McGregor	USACE, Ft. Worth District	Chemistry	5 years technical review of NEPA documents	Technical manager, EA review and coordination
Paddie Patterson	USACE, Ft. Worth District	Archaeology	25 years Professional Archaeologist/Resource Manager	Cultural Resources Manager, EA review and coordination
Joe Lamphear	INS Western Region	Hazardous Toxic Waste	16 year EA review and 4 years NEPA and related studies	EA review
Chris Ingram	Gulf South Research Corporation	Biology/Ecology	22 years NEPA and related studies	EA review
Suna Knaus	Gulf South Research Corporation	Forestry and Wildlife	14 years NEPA and related studies	EA review
Josh McEnany	Gulf South Research Corporation	Forestry and Wildlife	1 year NEPA and related studies	Project Manager; EA preparation, field surveys
John Lindemuth	Gulf South Research Corporation	Anthropology/Project Archaeologist	8 years archaeological studies	Cultural resources and socioeconomics
Sharon Newman	Gulf South Research Corporation	GIS/Graphics	7 years GIS analysis	Graphics and GIS
Brady Turk	Gulf South Research Corporation	Forestry/Wildlife	10 years in NEPA and related studies	EA review and field surveys

8.0 REFERENCES

Bureau of Land Management. 2002. Environmental Assessment on Remote Video Surveillance Cameras on the U.S./Mexico Border. BLM El Centro Field Office, California Desert District. June 2002.

Immigration and Naturalization Service. 2002. Environmental Assessment for the Acquisition, Installation, and Operation of Remote Video Surveillance Systems near Calexico, Imperial County, California. June 2002.

Raptor Research Foundation (RRF). 1996. Suggested Practices for Raptor Protection on Powerlines. University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota.

APPENDIX A
BLM EA on Remote Video Surveillance Cameras



United States Department of the Interior

BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

El Centro Resource Area
1661 South 4th Street
El Centro, California 92243-4561

06/24/02
1150
CA 67032

TO: Pete Sorenson
U.S Fish & Wildlife Service
2730 Loker Ave West
Carlsbad CA 92008

FROM: Greg Thomsen/Field Manager
Bureau of Land Management
1661 S. 4th st
El Centro CA 92243

Subject: EA on Remote Video Surveillance Cameras on the U.S Mexico Border.

The U.S Border Patrol has proposed implementation of a Remote Video Surveillance System in Flat tailed Horned Lizard and Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep Habitat.

With regard to the enclosed project description for Remote Video Surveillance cameras, we are seeking concurrence that the proposed action is not likely to adversely affect Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep and the Flat Tailed Horned Lizard. This project may benefit the above species by deterring cross-country travel by illegal immigrants and the U.S Border Patrol. Chris Knauf/Natural Resource Specialist, has informed me that you have discussed this with him as a subject for informal consultation. An EA is enclosed.

Greg Thomsen
Field Manager

cc: Larry Foreman/Wildlife Biologist BLM, CDD
Julian DeSantiago/Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma AZ
Andrea Campbell/Bureau of Reclamation, Yuma AZ
Ken Stitt/Chief Patrol Agent, El Centro Sector, U.S Border Patrol

Environmental Assessment & Finding of No Significant Impact

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

EA Number:

El Centro Field Office, California Desert District, Bureau of Land Management
Lease/Serial/Case File No.:

Proposed Action Title/Type: Remote Video Surveillance (RVS) System

Location of Proposed Action: Imperial County, CA.

Applicant (if any): United States Border Patrol

Conformance With Applicable Land Use and other Plans:

This proposed action is subject to the following land use and other plans:

Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement
For JTF-6 Activities Along the U.S./Mexico
International Border

Date Approved: 1994

Supplemental Programmatic Environmental
Impact Statement for INS and JTF-6 Activities

Date Approved: 2001

California Desert Conservation Area Plan

Date Approved: 1980

The following plans are tiered from the above CDCA Plan:

Yuha Basin ACEC Management Plan

Date Approved: 1982

Yuha Desert Habitat Management Plan

Date Approved: 1983

Yuha Desert Management Plan

Date Approved: 1985

Imperial Sand Dunes Recreation Area Management Plan

Date Approved: 1987

Algodones Dunes Habitat Management Plan

Date Approved: 1987

Flat-tailed Horned Lizard Rangewide Strategy.

Date Approved: 1997

Recovery Plan for Bighorn Sheep in the Peninsular
Ranges, CA

Date Approved: 2000

These plans have been reviewed to determine if the proposed action conforms with the land use plans terms and conditions as required by 43 CFR 1610.5.

Purpose And Need for Proposed Action:

In 1994 the United States Border Patrol apprehended over 27,000 illegal aliens in the El Centro Sector. That number rose steadily and in 2000, the Border Patrol apprehended over 238,000 illegal aliens. Because of its proximity to the International Boundary, the El Centro Sector is a preferred corridor for both illegal alien and narcotics smugglers. This exponential increase in smuggling in this area poses an immediate danger to the public, to law enforcement, and to the environment.

In areas where the RVS System is already being used, illegal alien and narcotics traffic has been forced to move to other areas. The system was deployed in and around the City of Calexico, California (the center of the El Centro Sector at the southern end) in 2000, and the number of apprehensions in the El

Centro Sector dropped to 172,000 in 2001. For this reason, the United States Border Patrol would like to install RVS System sites in the outlying areas of the sector that are not yet under control.

The installation of this system is consistent with the deterrence based strategy that the United States Border Patrol is currently exercising. Under this plan, a high presence at the immediate border will have a deterring effect on illegal traffic.

Description of Proposed Action:

The United States Border Patrol proposes to install, operate and maintain 24 Remote Video Surveillance System sites along the International Boundary near Calexico, California, as well as two relay antennas to be attached to already existing towers. The Remote Video Surveillance sites, herein referred to as RVS sites, will utilize two different power source types. Those proposed sites that are near existing power grid would be hard wired to the existing power. Those sites that are considered to be too far from existing power to be practical, will utilize solar power with propane back up generator power. All following specific site descriptions list power type.

The tower construction for most of the RVS sites will utilize monopole construction, 60-80 feet in height, 3-4 feet in diameter, and will be anchored by five feet wide by 25 feet deep concrete footings. A 3-4 foot triangular or rectangular platform will be attached atop each pole to hold the camera units, both low light and infrared types, as well as antenna systems and control equipment. Each pole will support four cameras and each camera will be mounted on a pan and tilt device. The RVS sites that utilize existing grid power will require an area of approximately 20 feet by 20 feet of space per site. The solar powered RVS sites will require approximately 50 feet by 50 feet of space.

The RVS site at Coyote One will utilize a 280 feet tall freestanding tower. This site will double as a relay site for all cameras on the west side and to accommodate the line of site requirement for this system, 280 feet in height is necessary.

The Boulder Park RVS site will utilize an already existing communications tower retrofitted to accommodate this system. A complete site description follows in the next section.

In addition to the RVS sites, relay antennas will be added to two already existing towers to complete this system. The first tower is located at Drop 4 of the All American Canal. This tower is an Imperial Irrigation District relay tower and Border Patrol will attach a parabolic relay antenna to this already existing structure. Approximately 1000 feet of fiber optic cable will need to be run underground at this site, to connect the relay tower to the Drop 4 RVS site. The second tower is located on Dogwood Road in El Centro and will require the addition of the same style parabolic antenna as the one at Drop 4. No digging for cable will be necessary at this site because this site is serviced by existing power poles.

Each site will require approximately 2 weeks to complete which includes a 1 week concrete curing period. Equipment necessary on site will typically be a cement truck, a boom truck, an auger truck, and flat bed trucks.

RVS System Site Descriptions:

This environmental assessment addresses 24 total RVS System sites. There are 14 RVS sites proposed that are located on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management and 10 RVS sites proposed that

are located on land managed by the Bureau of Reclamation/Imperial Irrigation District. The RVS sites are mainly dispersed along the International Boundary from the West Side Main Canal to the eastern side of In-Ko-Pah, California for the El Centro Station, and from the East Highline Canal to Grey's Well Road for the Calexico Station. While boundaries of patrol coverage sometimes change between stations, this EA will refer to RVS sites as being part of either those located on land managed by the BLM or those located on land managed by the BOR. (See the provided map)

The RVS Sites proposed in locations north of the immediate border area are intended to assist the Border Patrol with the Border Safety Initiative. These cameras will survey areas that have historically been heavily traveled and have also proven to be extremely dangerous for people attempting to travel through.

The RVS sites have been chosen and their GPS locations are included with the individual camera descriptions. GPS coordinates are in NAD 83, D.M.S.

Individual RVS System Descriptions for Sites Located on Land Managed by the Bureau of Land Management (See Attached Map)

Dump Road RVS Site

Power Type: Solar

Tower Type: 60-ft monopole

Located at the base of Dump Road to the east of Mount Signal, this camera will detect entries in the Jackson's Ranch area as well as overlapping coverage with cameras to the east and west. This site has access from Dump Road (BLM Route 424) and will not need additional roadwork.

32 39 10.0 N

115 41 1.7 W

BP Hill RVS Site

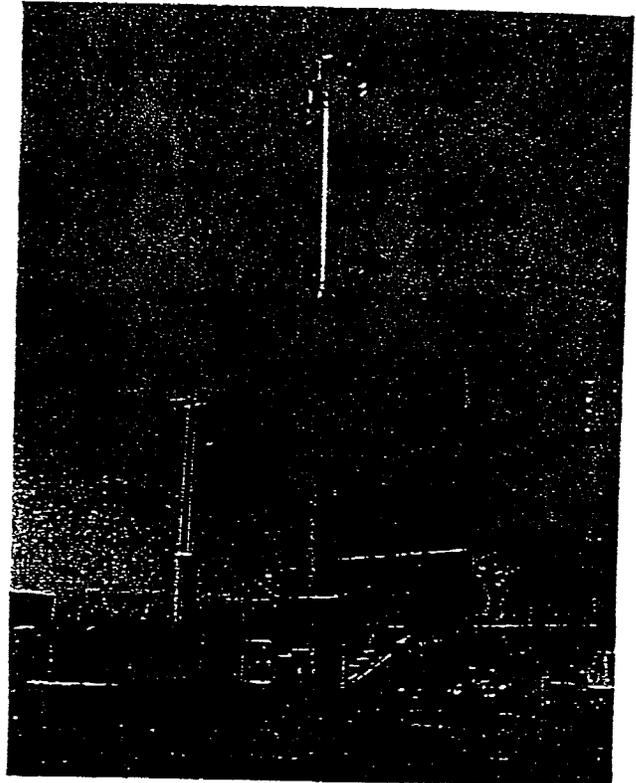
Power Type: Solar

Tower Type: 30-ft monopole

This camera is located south of Highway 98 on the northwestern slope of Mount Signal and will be placed atop BP Hill. This vantage point surveys nearly the entire zone and overlaps coverage with both the Dump Road camera and the Exit 5 camera. This is considered a high traffic area with both foot and vehicle incursions. This site is partially accessible from BLM Route 288 but will need to be installed utilizing a helicopter lift. Subsequent refueling of propane tank for backup generator system will need to be done using long hose sections from the roadway approximately 300 feet from the site.

32 39 3.29 N

115 43 15.49 W



Exit 5 RVS Site**Power Type: Solar****Tower Type: 60-ft monopole**

The Exit 5 RVS site is located south of Highway 98, at the intersection of Exit 5 (BLM Route 406) and the border road (BLM Route 288). This area is very flat, with little distance between the border and Highway 98, so this area is heavily used by drive through traffic. A camera here, in concert with an anti-vehicle barrier system, will greatly reduce traffic in this area. This camera overlaps coverage with both the BP Hill and Roy's Road cameras.

32 38 50.46 N**115 45 37.76 W****Pinto Wash (Roy's Road) RVS Site****Power Type: Solar****Tower Type: 60-ft monopole**

Pinto Wash runs parallel with the border from Exit 7 to Roy's Road. Moving westward, Pinto Wash actually dips into Mexico. Pinto Wash turns northeast and crosses Highway 98. Because of this, Pinto Wash is heavily used by smugglers attempting to drive illegal aliens and narcotics across the International Boundary. This area is also heavily used by people attempting to cross the International Boundary afoot, because it requires less than 20 minutes to walk from the border road to Highway 98. Often this is not enough time for agents to detect the illegal entry and push the sign north before the illegal aliens are able to catch their rides at Highway 98. This camera will be positioned to detect both vehicle and foot traffic, and will overlap with the Exit 5 camera as well as the Little Sunrise camera. This site has full access from a dirt road branching off of BLM Route 406. No additional road will be needed.

32 40 10.96 N**115 45 55.32 W****Little Sunrise RVS Site****Power Type: Solar****Tower Type: 60-ft monopole**

Little Sunrise is a small hill on the south side of Highway 98 on BLM Route 403. Because this hill is already atop a mesa, it provides an excellent vantage point for this area. It is highly accessible because it sits along the side of BLM Route 389, which intersects with Highway 98. This area is also a high traffic zone with both foot and vehicle entries.

32 39 22.99 N**115 50 39.95 W****Mauldin Ridge RVS Site (Alternate for Little Sunrise)****Power Type: Solar****Tower Type: 80-ft monopole**

This site is located approximately 1.25 miles southeast of the Little Sunrise site. This site provides an excellent vantage point to survey the area, and was selected to avoid cultural resources found on the

Little Sunrise site. There is currently an existing dirt road to this site that branches off of BLM Route 400.

32 39 7.7 N

115 49 31.9 W

Coyote 2/ Anza Trail RVS Site

Power Type: **Solar**

Power Type: **80-ft monopole**

Anza Trail (BLM Route 310) runs northwest from Highway 98 and overlooks the area south of Highway 98 from Caltrans Hill to Little Sunrise. This camera will detect both vehicle and foot traffic emerging from the west end of Pinto Wash and will also detect traffic traveling from the Jacumba Wilderness to Highway 98. This camera was originally planned to utilize existing grid power, but the power ROW would have impeded existing cultural resource sites. *For this reason, this site was changed to a solar site.* The actual site is already heavily impacted by vehicle traffic, and will require no new road construction.

32 40 29.15 N

115 52 54.93 W

Coyote 1 RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**

Tower Type: **280-ft Free Standing Tower**

Foot traffic crossing through the Jacumba Wilderness often travels toward Highway 98 through canyons that empty out south of Coyote 1. This camera tower will be substantially higher than the other towers, as this tower will function as a camera site and a relay tower for other camera signals from the west. This RVS site will utilize a 280-foot free standing tower. This site will require approximately 725 feet of new power line

32 41 12.42 N

115 55 10.56 W

Caltrans RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**

Tower Type: **60-ft monopole**

Caltrans Hill sits on the south side of Highway 98, just east of Nomirage, California. This camera will overlap coverage with the Coyote 1 camera and the Clark Road camera. Like Coyote 1, there are canyons dumping into the desert floor south of Caltrans. This site will require a Heavy Airlift Helicopter for the site's installation as the access road to the top of Caltrans Hill isn't suitable for heavy equipment. This site will require approximately 1100 feet of new power line.

32 41 59.86 N

115 56 4.38 W

Clark Road RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**

Tower Type: **60-ft monopole**

Clark Road in Nomirage, California, runs along the edge of Clark Wash. This wash is heavily traveled by foot traffic originating from the south end of both Davies and Skull Valleys. This camera will also pick up traffic passing out of numerous canyons descending from the Jacumba Mountains, and from the eastern side of Davies Valley. This site is heavily impacted by recreational use, and has access directly to the site from Clark Road, via an existing dirt road. This site will require .7 miles of new power line that will follow Clark Road to the nearest pole.

32 42 46.88 N

115 58 36.19 W

West of S-2 RVS Site

Power Type: **Solar**

80-ft monopole

This RVS site will be located just west of the intersection of county road S-2 and Highway 98. It will overlap coverage with the Sugarloaf camera and the Clark Road camera and will be able to pick up traffic from the west "y" of Interstate 8 and Highway 98 to the Clark Road area. Traffic heading for this area originates in both Davies and Skull Valleys, as well as further west in the Jacumba Mountains. This site is located on the north side of Highway 98, on a heavily impacted pad that has been used as a turn out in the past. Originally planned to utilize existing power grid, *this site was changed to solar power to avoid cultural resources* that would impede the installation of the new power line. Also, this site was *originally planned for the south side of Highway 98, but was relocated to avoid cultural resources*. Access is directly adjacent to Highway 98, and no new road is needed.

32 43 32.91 N

116 60 16.1 W

Sugarloaf RVS Site

Power Type: **Solar**

40-ft monopole

Sugarloaf Hill is located just west of Ocotillo, California and is on the north side of Interstate 8. This camera will be positioned to see traffic approaching the interstate from the south side from the west "y" of Interstate 8 and Highway 98 to the large curve of the eastbound lane of Interstate 8 at the 1,000-foot elevation sign. This camera site is also in a great position to pick up traffic that makes it north of the interstate farther to the west. This area is notorious for both narcotics and illegal alien smuggling. This site is accessible via an existing pole line road, but the road will need upgrading to accommodate equipment (grading to 10 ft. in width). This site was planned to utilize the existing power grid, but was changed to solar power to avoid cultural resources.

32 43 49.6 N

116 02 48.5 W

Boulder Park RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**

Tower Type: **Existing Tower (Custom)**

Located near the top of the Mountain Springs Grade, just east of In-Ko-Pah, California, this camera will be able to see traffic in Boulder Creek as well as traffic exiting from Palm Canyon. This site will utilize an already existing communications site, and therefore has an access road already in place. The RSV System will be attached to an already existing tower.

32 39 39.58 N
116 05 29.19 W

Swingles Hill RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid

Tower Type: 60-ft monopole

Swingles Hill is the high point on the eastern edge of the Imperial Sand Dunes. From this vantage point, a camera will be able to survey both the east and west sides of the zone, with minimal blind spots. This Eastern site has access from the existing camping pad, and has been heavily impacted through recreational use, as this is within an ORV open area.

32 42 42.73 N
114 55 13.12 W

Swingles East RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid

Power Type: 80-ft monopole

This camera will be able to detect both vehicle and foot traffic traveling north through low spots between Swingles Hill and the Imperial Sand Dunes that the Swingles Hill camera won't see. This Eastern site is accessed from Grey's Well Road, and no additional road will be needed. This site is heavily impacted by recreational use, as this is within an ORV open area.

32 43 39.08 N
114 55 30.07 W

Individual RVS System Descriptions for Sites Located on Land Managed by the Bureau of Reclamation/Imperial Irrigation District

The Bend RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid

Tower Type: 80-ft monopole

This camera will be located on the large bend of the All American Canal between the 13-13 Check and Drop 4, on the north bank of the canal. Access will be directly from the canal road, and no new road will be required.

32 42 41.15 N
115 14 47.50 W

Drop 4 RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid

Tower Type: 80-ft monopole

Located at Drop 4 of the All American Canal, this RVS site will detect both vehicle and foot traffic. This site is located just below the north Levee Road east of an access road from Highway 98 and the northern canal bank road near the Drop 4 hydro-electric site. This site will, however, require approximately 1000 feet of new fiber optic cable line, which will require trenching, to a nearby existing

relay tower.
32 42 21.2 N
115 12 56.2 W

3 3/4 RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid
Tower Type: 60-ft monopole

Located between Drops 3 and 4 on the north bank of the All American Canal, this RVS site will primarily detect traffic attempting to cross the canal, although vehicle traffic moving south of the canal will be visible as well. Access on the canal road is adequate and no new roads or upgrading is necessary. The site has been heavily impacted by various types of traffic.

32 42 20.44 N
115 11 34.47 W

Drop 3 RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid
Tower Type: 80-ft monopole

Drop 3 is located south of Highway 98, just west of the eastern intersection of Highway 98 and Interstate 8. This RVS site is on the north bank of the All American Canal and will be capable of detecting traffic approaching the drop or attempting to raft on either side of the drop. The existing access road to this site is adequate and the site has been heavily impacted by IID and Border Patrol traffic.

32 42 20.87 N
115 7 30.28 W

Midway RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid
Tower Type: 60-ft monopole

This camera will be located approximately half way between Drops 2 and 3 near the east "y" of Highway 98 and Interstate 8, on the north bank of the All American Canal. This site will require 1,500-feet of new power line, which will require new road. This road will be temporary, however. The site itself is heavily impacted, and the access along the canal bank road is adequate. This site has no cultural resources, but is near a recorded site. For this reason, the site will require flagging to avoid any damage to adjacent cultural resource sites.

32 42 20.95 N
115 5 16.66 W

Drop 2 RVS Site

Power Type: Existing Grid
Tower Type: 80-ft monopole

Because the distance between the International boundary and Drop 2 is so small, this area is heavily used. This camera is located on the north bank of the All American Canal at Drop 2. The already existing access road is adequate and the site is heavily impacted. Power is from an existing circuit for the Border Patrol lighting system.

32 42 20.64 N
115 01 50.40 W

Gordon's RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**
Tower Type: **60-ft monopole**

This camera will be located at Gordon's Well Road and the All American Canal on the north bank of the canal. There is a bridge over the canal at this location, and the camera will be of utmost importance. The distance from the International boundary to the bridge is approximately ¼ mile. The site is heavily impacted and access is adequate.

32 42 21.19 N
114 57 17.96 W

Drop 1 (Rock Pile) RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**
Power Type: **165-ft Free Standing Tower**

Drop 1 is on the north side of Interstate 8, and overlooks the border from Gordon's Well Road to Swingles Hill. This site is in an area worked heavily by IID and is impacted. The existing IID road is adequate and goes directly to the site. This will be a camera site and a relay tower for the Eastern sites. This site will require 560 feet of new power line.

32 42 38.73 N
114 56 43.91 W

Westside Main North RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**
Tower Type: **60-ft monopole**

This site is located south of Highway 98 and just west of the Westside Main Canal, approximately half way between the International Boundary and Highway 98. The site has been heavily impacted by commercial and recreational traffic, and there is an adequate access road already existing.

32 39 52.68 N
115 39 54.04 W

Westside Main and Highway 98 RVS Site

Power Type: **Existing Grid**
Tower Type: **80-ft monopole**

The site is located on the northwest corner of the intersection of Highway 98 and the Westside Main Canal. The site is heavily impacted by commercial traffic and has adequate access requiring no new roads or off road travel.

32 40 42.74 N
115 40 28.92 W

Description of Alternative Actions:

Alternative 1: No action. The Remote Video Surveillance System will not be installed.

Alternative 2: All designated RVS System sites will be constructed and maintained as described in the preferred action, except the alternate sites will be used for Coyote 1, Little Sunrise, and Sugarloaf sites, to avoid Archaeological concerns. (SEE MAP 2.) The alternate sites will provide the Border Patrol with adequate coverage of the area while avoiding construction in environmentally sensitive areas.

Affected Environment:

Common wildlife of the area include the flat-tailed horned lizard (federally proposed as threatened), desert iguana, whiptail lizard, fringe-toed lizard, side-blotched lizard, zebra-tail lizard, leopard lizard, banded gecko, sidewinder, patchnose snake, shovel-nosed snake, coachwhip, roundtail ground squirrel, kangaroo rat, blacktail jackrabbit, badger, kit fox, gray fox, coyote, bobcat, mule deer, mountain lion, loggerhead shrike, black-tailed gnatcatcher, sharp-shinned hawk, Cooper's hawk, Swainson's hawk, ferruginous hawk, American Kestrel, white-winged dove, mourning dove, ground dove, burrowing owl, yellow warbler, desert cottontail and Gambel's quail. No federally or state listed animal species are known from the area, with the exception of the Desert Pupfish in San Felipe Creek, the Yuma Clapper Rail and Black Rail in the All-American Canal and the Peninsular Ranges Bighorn Sheep in the Jacumba, Coyote and Fish Creek Mountains.

The East Mesa area is dominated creosote bush scrub with an understory of *Schismus barbatus*, saltbush and burrobush (white bursage). In the Yuha and West Mesa, burrobush tends to predominate. Spanish needle, wooly plantain and sand verbenia are common annual plants, especially abundant in springs following wet winters. Other plant associations found include salt-bush scrub and small areas of desert dry wash.

Environmental Impacts:

The proposed action and each of the alternatives have been analyzed to assess direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to critical elements of the human environment listed below. Those critical elements that may be significantly affected by the action are marked 'yes' in the table below. However, if the action may be mitigated so that the critical element is not significantly affected the table is marked 'no'. Those critical elements that are not significantly affected by the action are marked 'no'. In addition, those elements that are not present are marked 'no' on the table below. Each of the critical elements is discussed in further detail following the table.

Critical Element	Preferred Alternative (full camera installation and maintenance)		Alternative 1 (no action)		Alternative 2 (camera installation using alternate sites and maintenance)		Subject Area expert
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	
Significant Effect?							
Air Quality		X		X		X	LL
ACECs		X	X			X	RAE for CK
Cultural Resources	X		X			X	MIS
Farmlands, Prime / Unique		X		X		X	LL
Floodplains		X		X		X	LL
Native American Relation Concerns	X		X			X	MH
T&E Wildlife	X		X			X	RAE for CK
T&E Vegetation		X	X			X	RAE for CK
Water Quality		X		X		X	LL
Wastes, Hazardous/solid		X		X		X	LL
Wetlands/Riparian Zones		X		X		X	RAE
Wild and Scenic Rivers		X		X		X	RAE
Wilderness		X		X		X	RAE
Visual		X		X		X	LL

Description of Impacts:

Air Quality: Preferred Alternative (full RVS System installation): The Border Patrol currently detects, pursues, and apprehends vehicles entering the United States illegally from Mexico in this area, both on and off road as part of their routine operations. The construction of RVS sites will allow the U.S. Border Patrol to gain control of this area and effectively deter the illegal entry of unauthorized vehicles into the United States. Although the construction of RVS sites will disperse some particulate matter into the air, the long term affect from this action will be greatly offset by reduction in particulate matter that is dispersed by unauthorized driving on and off road.

Alternative 1 (No Action): Illegal traffic in this area would continue at the current rate and possibly increase, and activity would continue to disperse some level of particulate matter.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): The Border Patrol currently detects, pursues, and apprehends vehicles entering the United States illegally from Mexico in this area, both on and off road as part of their routine operations. The construction of RVS sites will allow the U.S. Border Patrol to gain control of this area and effectively deter the illegal entry of unauthorized vehicles into the United States. Although the construction of RVS sites will disperse some particulate matter into the air, the long term affect from this action will be greatly offset by reduction in particulate matter that is dispersed by unauthorized driving on and off road.

Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC): Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation): Illegal alien and narcotics traffic passes through ACECs. This traffic more often travels off road attempting to avoid law enforcement interdiction. This off road travel causes significant damage to both plant and animal life. The construction of RVS System sites could have an impact on the ACECs due to the use of heavy equipment, although this impact would be brief. The impact itself, would be an increase in noise, and an increase in exhaust emissions during construction only. This impact would be heavily outweighed by the benefit of the reduction in illegal traffic passing through the ACECs.

Alternative 1 (No Action): The impact to the ACECs would be significant if this alternative is implemented. Off road travel would continue to batter and deteriorate plant and animal life here. Continuing off road travel would change the characteristics of the ACECs and deteriorate their value. The management strategies for these areas would not be achieved.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): Illegal alien and narcotics traffic passes through ACECs. This traffic more often travels off road attempting to avoid law enforcement interdiction. This off road travel causes significant damage to both plant and animal life. The construction of RVS System sites could have an impact on the ACECs due to the use of heavy equipment, although this impact would be brief. The impact itself, would be an increase in noise, and an increase in exhaust emissions during construction only. This impact would be heavily outweighed by the benefit of the reduction in illegal traffic passing through the ACECs.

Cultural Resources: ; *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* A Class III pedestrian survey was conducted by Brian Smith and Associates of 24 proposed camera locations, 2 alternate camera locations, access roads to the cameras, and the linear corridors that might be needed to connect to RVS sites to commercial power lines. The survey resulted (See cultural report CA-670-2002-25) in the identification of sites CA-IMP-103 and 3708, which are located just east and west of the USBP Sugarloaf RVS site. CA-IMP-1427 located within the West of S-2 RVS location and CA-IMP-6915 is located within the West of S-2 alternate RVS location. CA-IMP-7958 is a newly recorded site that is located along a power line access route to RVS camera site Coyotes 2 and CA-IMP-7959 is a newly recorded site within the Little Sunrise RVS location. Approximately 7 of the camera locations, The Bend, Drop 4 and the Alternative, 3 ¼, Drop 3, Midway, Drop 2, and Rock Pile, are located on All-American Canal (CA-IMP-7130H).

AAC was determined to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) in 2001. None of the prehistoric archaeological sites that were identified have been evaluated for their NRHP

eligibility. Therefore they will be considered potentially eligible for the NRHP until they have been evaluated.

The preferred alternative will have an "effect" on NRHP eligible cultural resources, but probably not an "adverse effect." All of the prehistoric sites identified during the pedestrian survey are large and have already incurred considerable impacts due to USBP activity. Therefore this action would only effect areas within the cultural sites that are already heavily impacted, but should not further effect the intact portions of the cultural sites located outside of the camera locations.

The preferred alternative will have a slight visual effect to the AAC. Installation of the poles on the banks of the AAC should not affect the physical integrity of the canal because the actual amount of ground disturbing activity will be minimal. However the cameras and their poles will have a slight impact on the visual integrity of the canal. The integrity of the canal is already severely compromised by all of the border activities particularly the effects of the USBP agents driving on the canal and the amount of rubber rafts that are sucked into the turbos at the drops. The cameras should increase the effectiveness of the USBP, which would in turn help to preserve the integrity of the canal. Therefore, the cameras will have an effect on the integrity of the canal, but the effect will be mitigated by an increase in the USBPs ability to deter illegal crossing.

Alternative 1 (No Action): Cultural resources may be significantly affected if this alternative is selected. As illegal vehicle and foot traffic continues, this could significantly impact fragile cultural resources. A large part of this area has not been surveyed, so the cultural resources are not surveyed, identified, or inventoried. Vehicles driving over or people walking on cultural resources could destroy the resources. The loss of the cultural resources and the knowledge gained by studying the cultural resources would be significant

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): The issues with the RVS camera locations Sugarloaf, West of S-2, Coyote 2, and Little Sunrise, identified in the preferred alternative as having a potential to effect NRHP eligible sites, have been addressed in this alternative. The Sugarloaf camera has been relocated to an area closer to an exiting KV power line and outside of the eastern boundary of site CA-IMP-3708. The West of S-2 camera was relocated to a new alternate location east of the original location and the first alternate location, to a small area of private land north of Highway 98 and West of S-2. This location was cleared for Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act by Caltrans for their 2002 Pavement Rehabilitation and Shoulder, Bridge Culvert Widening Project.

The power source for the Coyote 2 location was changed. The power line to the camera would have impacted site CA-IMP-7959. Therefore the power source for the camera was changed from a commercial line to solar power.

The Little Sunrise camera location was relocated to an alternate location east of Little Sunrise, along the north rim of Pinto Wash. A Class III pedestrian survey was conducted of the new camera location and the access road to the location. No cultural resources were identified.

Under this alternative, the potentially negative impacts to cultural resources have been avoided by either moving the camera locations or redesigning the camera. Therefore, no effect should occur to NRHP eligible cultural resources.

Farmlands, Prime / Unique: *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* This alternative does not involve prime or unique farmlands.

Alternative 1 (No Action): This alternative does not involve prime or unique farmlands.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): This alternative does not involve prime or unique farmlands.

Floodplains: *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* This alternative does not impact floodplains.

Alternative 1 (No Action): This alternative does not impact floodplains.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): This alternative does not impact floodplains.

Native American Relations: *Concerns Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* Many Native American tribes have expressed concerns that cultural resources in this area are fragile and can be destroyed by off highway vehicle use. The Native American tribes have expressed a desire to preserve the cultural resources in the project area. Construction of RVS sites, as described in this alternative, would support Native American relationships: the impact would be positive. Construction on three RVS sites would have a direct impact on known archaeological sites: Coyote 1, Sugarloaf, and Little Sunrise.

Alternative 1 (No Action): The impact of this alternative could be significant. Native American tribes would be concerned about allowing off road travel to continue. The off road travel could impact cultural resources which the Native Americans desire to protect.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): Many Native American tribes have expressed concerns that cultural resources in this area are fragile and can be destroyed by off highway vehicle use. The Native American tribes have expressed a desire to preserve the cultural resources in the project area. Construction of RVS sites, as described in this alternative, would support Native American relationships: the impact would be positive. This alternative would utilize alternate sites for Coyote 1, Sugarloaf, and Little Sunrise, avoiding the destruction of currently recorded archaeological sites.

T&E Wildlife: *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* About 5.5 acres of wildlife habitat would be impacted by the installation of the RVS sites. For the most part, these installations would occur in creosote bush scrub or saltbush scrub habitats. These sites have all experienced significant previous degradation due to vehicle traffic and other activities. For that reason, impacts to wildlife habitat would be minor, as the sites are already seriously degraded. The use of remote cameras would reduce the need for Border Patrol Agents to drive off-road and allow quicker apprehension of immigrant vehicles, prior to impacts to habitat. For these reasons, positive impacts to wildlife habitat would be expected to outweigh harmful impacts.

Alternative 1 (No Action): Impacts to wildlife from OHV travel by both Border Patrol and illegal immigrants would be expected to increase. Significant impacts could occur due to route proliferation and off road travel. Such proliferation and off road travel increases mortality, devegetation and soil compaction, all of which adversely impact wildlife populations.

Viable sheep habitat could be expected to degrade as illegal traffic would be allowed to continue and possibly increase.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): About 5.5 acres of wildlife habitat would be impacted by the installation of the RVS sites. For the most part, these installations would occur in creosote bush scrub or saltbush scrub habitats. These sites have all experienced significant previous degradation due to vehicle traffic and other activities. For that reason, impacts to wildlife habitat would be minor, as the sites are already seriously degraded. The use of remote cameras would reduce the need for Border Patrol Agents to drive off-road and allow quicker apprehension of immigrant vehicles, prior to impacts to habitat. For these reasons, positive impacts to wildlife habitat would be expected to outweigh harmful impacts.

T&E Vegetation: Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation): No significant impacts are expected from RVS site construction, as long as construction is limited to the designated sites. In the general Hyduke Road area, the Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), is the only sensitive species known. Its status with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is rare, but common outside of California. Fairy Dusters do not have a Federal or State status. Habitat for this species is typically in rocky washes containing some sand.

RVS site construction within the Imperial Sand Dunes may impact vegetation established at the sites. Wiggins' Croton (*Croton wigginsii*) is the most likely sensitive species to be affected by this activity, as it prefers disturbed areas. Its status with the State of California is proposed threatened. It has no Federal status.

The following sensitive species are present within the Imperial Sand Dunes:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Fed. Status</u>	<u>CA Status</u>	<u>BLM</u>
<i>Astragalus magdalenae</i> var. <i>personii</i>	Proposed	Endangered	Sensitive
<i>Helianthus nevius</i> ssp. <i>tephrodes</i>	Category 2	Proposed	Sensitive
<i>Palafoxia arida</i> var. <i>gigantea</i>	Category 3C	Endangered	Sensitive
<i>Pholisma sonora</i>	Category 2	CNPS List 1B	Sensitive
<i>Cryptantha costata</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none
<i>Lyrocarpa coulteri</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none
<i>Larrea tridentata</i> var. <i>arenaria</i>	none	CNPS List 3	none
<i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> var. <i>borreganus</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none

There are no known threatened or endangered plants in the Yuha and West Mesa areas, located west of El Centro. However, one rare plant, formerly listed as a Category 3C candidate, is found within the project area. *Pilostyles thurberi* is a rare inconspicuous parasite on several species of *Dalea* shrubs. Indigo bush (*D. emoryi*), is common throughout the project area, and could be a potential host for *P. thurberi*. Two other sensitive CNPS species are found in the Yuha. They are the Baja California gilia, (*Lipomopsis effusa*) and Crucifixion Thorn (*Castela emoryi*). These plants could be non-significantly

affected by this alternative.

Alternative 1 (No Action): Significant impacts may occur if this alternative is selected. As more illegal traffic traverses the desert floor, the area will deteriorate. Eventually, illegal roads are created. The off road activity and illegal roads impact all vegetation in the area as vehicles will crush vegetation in the pathway.

In the general Hyduke Road area, the Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), is the only sensitive species known. Its status with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is rare, but common outside of California. Fairy Dusters do not have a Federal or State status. Habitat for this species is typically in rocky washes containing some sand. Travel off road in this area may significantly impact the Fairy Duster. Within the Imperial Sand Dunes, off road travel may impact Wiggin's Croton (*Croton wigginsii*), but to a lesser extent than the other alternatives as this species prefers a disturbed habitat. Its status with the State of California is proposed threatened. It has no Federal status.

The following sensitive species also have the potential to be affected by this alternative within the Imperial Sand Dunes:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Fed. Status</u>	<u>CA Status</u>	<u>BLM</u>
<i>Astragalus magdalenae</i> var. <i>personii</i>	Proposed	Endangered	Sensitive
<i>Helianthus nevius</i> ssp. <i>tephrodes</i>	Category 2	Proposed	Sensitive
<i>Paloufia arida</i> var. <i>gigantea</i>	Category 3C	Endangered	
<i>Pholisma sonora</i>	Category 2	CNPS List 1B	Sensitive
<i>Cryptantha costata</i>	none	CNPS List 1B	Sensitive
<i>Lyrocarpa coulteri</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none
<i>Larrea tridentata</i> var. <i>arenaria</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none
<i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> var. <i>borreganus</i>	none	CNPS List 3	none
		CNPS List 4	none

There are no known threatened or endangered plants in the Yuha and West Mesa areas, located west of El Centro. However, one rare plant, formerly listed as a Category 3C candidate, is found within the project area. *Pilostyles thurberi* is a rare inconspicuous parasite on several species of *Dalea* shrubs. Indigo bush (*D. emoryi*), is common throughout the project area, and could be a potential host for *P. thurberi*. Two other sensitive CNPS species are found in the Yuha. They are the Baja California gilia, (*Ipomopsis effusa*) and Crucifixion Thorn (*Castela emoryi*). Each of these plants could be significantly impacted by off road travel.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): No significant impacts are expected from RVS site construction, as long as construction is limited to the designated sites. In the general Hyduke Road area, the Fairy Duster (*Calliandra eriophylla*), is the only sensitive species known. Its status with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is rare, but common outside of California. Fairy Dusters do not have a Federal or State status. Habitat for this species is typically in rocky washes containing some sand.

RVS site construction within the Imperial Sand Dunes may impact vegetation established at the sites. Wiggin's Croton (*Croton wigginsii*) is the most likely sensitive species to be affected by this activity, as it prefers disturbed areas. Its status with the State of California is proposed threatened. It has no Federal status.

The following sensitive species are present within the Imperial Sand Dunes:

<u>Species</u>	<u>Fed. Status</u>	<u>CA Status</u>	<u>BLM</u>
<i>Astragalus magdalenae</i> var. <i>personii</i>	Proposed	Endangered	Sensitive
<i>Helianthus nevius</i> ssp. <i>tephrodes</i>	Category 2	Proposed	Sensitive
<i>Palafoxia arida</i> var. <i>gigantea</i>	Category 3C	Endangered	
<i>Pholisma sonora</i>	Category 2	CNPS List 1B	Sensitive
<i>Cryptantha costata</i>	none	CNPS List 1B	Sensitive
<i>Lyrocarpa coulteri</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none
<i>Larrea tridentata</i> var. <i>arenaria</i>	none	CNPS List 4	none
<i>Astragalus lentiginosus</i> var. <i>borreganus</i>	none	CNPS List 3	none
		CNPS List 4	none

There are no known threatened or endangered plants in the Yuha and West Mesa areas, located west of El Centro. However, one rare plant, formerly listed as a Category 3C candidate, is found within the project area. *Pilostyles thurberi* is a rare inconspicuous parasite on several species of *Dalea* shrubs. Indigo bush (*D. emoryi*), is common throughout the project area, and could be a potential host for *P. thurberi*. Two other sensitive CNPS species are found in the Yuha. They are the Baja California gilia, (*Ipomopsis effusa*) and Crucifixion Thorn (*Castela emoryi*). These plants could be non-significantly affected by this alternative.

Water Quality: Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation): Water quality will not be affected by this alternative.

Alternative 1 (No Action): Water quality will not be affected by this alternative.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): Water quality will not be affected by this alternative.

Wastes, Hazardous / Solid: Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation): The proposed action does not involve the generation of hazardous or solid waste. The proposed action does not involve land that contains hazardous or solid waste. Waste is occasionally encountered in the area of the project due to illegal dumping. Typical waste that is found in the area is general domestic trash and tires. If waste is found during this project, the Border Patrol will arrange for legal disposal.

Alternative 1 (No Action): This alternative does not involve the generation of hazardous or solid waste. This alternative does not involve land that contains hazardous or solid waste. Waste is occasionally encountered in the area to illegal dumping. Typical waste is found in the area is general domestic trash and tires.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): This alternative does not involve the generation of hazardous or solid waste. The alternative does not involve land that contains hazardous or solid waste. Waste is occasionally encountered in the area of the project due to illegal dumping. Typical waste that is found in the area is general domestic trash and tires. If waste is found during this project, the Border Patrol will arrange for legal disposal.

Wetlands/Riparian Zones: *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* There are no wetlands or riparian zones in the project area.

Alternative 1 (No Action): There are no wetlands or riparian zones in the project area.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): There are no wetlands or riparian zones in the project area.

Wild and Scenic Rivers: *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* The proposed action does not involve designated wild and Scenic Rivers or waters being considered for designation as Wild and Scenic.

Alternative 1 (No Action): The proposed action does not involve designated wild and Scenic Rivers or waters being considered for designation as Wild and Scenic.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): The proposed action does not involve designated wild and Scenic Rivers or waters being considered for designation as Wild and Scenic.

Wilderness: *Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation):* While none of the RVS System sites are located within wilderness, they are positioned to help detect and deter illegal traffic in the Jacumba Wilderness area. The installation of the RVS System is expected to reduce the amount of unauthorized traffic in the Jacumba wilderness area.

Alternative 1 (No Action): Illegal foot and vehicle traffic will be allowed to continue to traverse the Jacumba Wilderness, further degrading the area.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): While none of the RVS System sites are located within wilderness, they are positioned to help detect and deter illegal traffic in the Jacumba Wilderness area. The installation of the RVS System is expected to reduce the amount of unauthorized traffic in the Jacumba wilderness area.

Visual Resources: The degree to which an action affects the visual quality of the landscape can be measured in terms of the impacts to the elements of form, line, color, and texture of the landscape. The landscape is a focal one, with a limited central focus point and which has a repetitive creosote vegetation sequence. The overall texture is a medium one, with patchy and broken vegetation dominant. The desert colors are muted shades ranging from desert brown and sand beige to juniper green (Munsell Soil Color Charts).

The VRM Objective class for the involved BLM lands is Class 3. Visual resource management objectives for Class 3 lands are to partially retain the existing character of the landscape. The level of change to the characteristic landscape should be moderate. Conducting the proposed action would not raise the contrast rating.

The RVS poles are tall and will stand out because of their height, and paint to blend will offset this as much as possible. This action will not significantly affect the visual integrity of this resource area because the RVS sites are placed in already degraded areas and will help reduce traffic.

Preferred Alternative (RVS System installation): The proposed action will help reduce both off road vehicle and foot traffic, which will help maintain the visual integrity of this resource area.

Alternative 1 (No Action): This alternative will adversely affect the visual integrity of this resource area because, if allowed to continue, illegal vehicle and foot traffic will cause further degradation.

Alternative 2 (RVS System installation using alternate sites): The proposed action will help reduce both off road vehicle and foot traffic, which will help maintain the visual integrity of this resource area.

Coordination with other Agencies:

California State Historic Preservation Office -Archaeology: Pursuant to Section 5 of the State Protocol Agreement (1998) between the California State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) and the Bureau of Land Management - California (BLM), and in accordance with 36 CFR Part 800, this memorandum documents BLM's efforts to identify, evaluate and assess effects for historic properties that might be affected by this undertaking as required by Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

United States Fish & Wildlife Service: Numerous RVS sites are located in Flat Tailed Horned Lizard habitat. As this species is proposed for listing with the USFWS, they are being consulted on this project. None of the RVS sites are located in critical Habitat for the Peninsular Bighorn Sheep, but since they are adjacent to habitat, USFWS is being consulted on this issue.

Bureau of Reclamation: Ten of the RVS sites are located on land managed by the Bureau of Reclamation and for this reason, they have been consulted on this project.

Coordination with Environmental Organizations:

U.S. Border Patrol met with representatives from the Sierra Club on numerous occasions to explain Border Patrol plans for this RVS System. On 08/12/2002, members of the Sierra Club California/Nevada Desert Committee voted in favor of supporting the RVS System project.

Description of Mitigation Measures and Residual Impacts:

Archaeology: RVS SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STIPULATIONS:

1) BLM Archaeologist to be present at ground breaking of Sugarloaf site to ensure that there are no subsurface Archaeological concerns.

2) BLM archaeologist will flag the boundaries of site CA-IMP-4401. This site is out of the project area, but Brian Smith and Associated noted a potential effect when the power line to the camera is constructed.

3) Construct only on sites indicated on the map attached to this document.

Botany: RVS SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STIPULATIONS:

Avoidance of vegetation outside construction zones whenever possible is necessary. Work crews should be able to recognize Wiggin's Croton within the Imperial Sand Dunes. Restricted disturbance can be

beneficial to Croton as a species, however, individual plants should be avoided outside the construction zones where possible to maintain a reproductive stock.

Equipment operators should be aware of vehicle use that may try to pass during the project. Pointing users to wide areas, and areas of disturbance, will aid in avoiding vegetation and corresponding wildlife habitat. No woody trees (e.g. Palo Verde, Ironwood, Mesquite, Acacia, etc.) will be removed from washes (e.g. during operations repairing washouts) without prior clearance from the Resource Area Biologist or Botanist.

Wildlife: RVS SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STIPULATIONS:

- 1) Within Management Areas (MA) only, a Border Patrol agent would survey the construction area prior to vehicle access, moving any flat-tailed horned lizards out of harm's way. No such clearance would be required outside of Mas. RVS sites 33 and 35 - 41 are within an MA and would require clearance of lizards prior to surface disturbance. Clearance should also occur along access roads.
- 2) Since the proposed action is likely to reduce impacts to flat-tail habitat rather than increase them and because installation sites are already highly degraded, no monetary compensation would be required for the installation of the RVS sites.
- 3) All surface disturbance would be minimized during construction.
- 4) The construction of new towers creates a potentially significant impact on migratory birds. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712) prohibits the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department of the Interior. While the Act has no provision for allowing unauthorized take, it must be recognized that some birds may be killed at structures such as communications or camera towers even if all reasonable measures to avoid it are implemented.

Residual Impacts: Impacts to cultural and biological resources would be reduced substantially by the mitigations, and wildlife mortality could be greatly reduced.

Cumulative Impacts: Off road travel, both afoot and in vehicle, is widespread in the desert of Imperial County and has led to substantial degradation of natural habitats through soil compaction, devegetation, disturbance, injury, mortality and exotic plant vectoring. The implementation of this action would probably have a net beneficial effect because illegal traffic would likely be reduced, reducing the adverse effects associated with off road travel due to illegal immigration and narcotics smuggling. The RVS System would likely cut down on the amount of off road travel by Border Patrol as well.

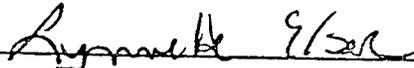
It is possible that some illegal alien traffic could be driven into the Jacumba Wilderness area, but the overall net reduction in impacts would be positive.

Other impacts in the project area include paved roads, power lines, geothermal plants, off-road vehicle travel, irrigation berms, mining, military impacts and sundry other activities. These actions have also degraded natural habitats and their associated biota to a wide extent in Imperial County. The impacts will likely increase as the human population of the County grows leading to increased detrimental impacts. However, adequate maintenance of an existing route network would alleviate these impacts somewhat.

Preparer(s): Chris Knauf, Natural Resource Specialist
Gavin Wright, Senior Wildlife Biologist
Margaret Hangan, Archaeologist
Patrick Whipple, Senior Border Patrol Agent

Date: 04/18/2002

Reviewer:


Lynnette Elser, Environmental Coordinator

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT/DECISION RECORD.

I have reviewed this environment assessment including the explanation and resolution of any potentially significant environmental impacts. I have determined that the proposed action is unacceptable due to its potential impact on cultural resources. I have determined that alternative 2, Installation of the RVS System using alternate sites, with the mitigation measures described below will not have any significant impacts on the human environment and that an EIS is not required. I have determined that alternative 2 is in conformance with the approved land use plan. It is my decision to implement alternative 2 with the mitigation measures identified below.

Mitigation Measures/Remarks:

Archaeology: RVS SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STIPULATIONS:

- 1) BLM Archaeologist to be present at ground breaking of Sugarloaf site to ensure that there are no subsurface Archaeological concerns.
- 2) BLM archaeologist will flag the boundaries of site CA-IMP-4401. This site is out of the project area, but Brian Smith and Associated noted a potential effect when the power line to the camera is constructed.
- 3) Construct only on sites indicated on the map attached to this document.

Botany: RVS SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STIPULATIONS:

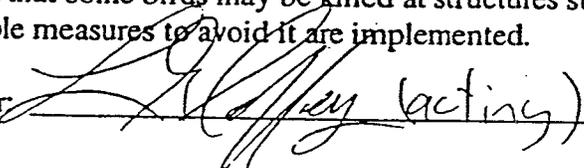
Avoidance of vegetation outside construction zones whenever possible is necessary. Work crews should be able to recognize Wiggin's Croton within the Imperial Sand Dunes. Restricted disturbance can be beneficial to Croton as a species; however, individual plants should be avoided outside the construction zones where possible to maintain a reproductive stock.

Equipment operators should be aware of vehicle use that may try to pass during the project. Pointing users to wide areas, and areas of disturbance, will aid in avoiding vegetation and corresponding wildlife habitat. No woody trees (e.g. Palo Verde, Ironwood, Mesquite, Acacia, etc.) will be removed from washes (e.g. during operations repairing washouts) without prior clearance from the Resource Area Biologist or Botanist.

Wildlife: RVS SYSTEM CONSTRUCTION STIPULATIONS:

- 1) Within Management Areas (MA) only, a Border Patrol agent would survey the construction area prior to vehicle access, moving any flat-tailed horned lizards out of harm's way. No such clearance would be required outside of Mas. RVS sites 33 and 35 - 41 are within an MA and would require clearance of lizards prior to surface disturbance. Clearance should also occur along access roads.
- 2) Since the proposed action is likely to reduce impacts to flat-tail habitat rather than increase them and because installation sites are already highly degraded, no monetary compensation would be required for the installation of the RVS sites.
- 3) All surface disturbance would be minimized during construction.
- 4) The construction of new towers creates a potentially significant impact on migratory birds. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 U.S.C. 703-712) prohibits the taking, killing, possession, transportation, and importation of migratory birds, their eggs, parts, and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department of the Interior. While the Act has no provision for allowing unauthorized take, it must be recognized that some birds may be killed at structures such as communications or camera towers even if all reasonable measures to avoid it are implemented.

Field Manager:

 (acting) Date: 6-21-02

The Bureau of Land Management has signed this document under the condition that we receive concurrence from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service.

APPENDIX B
Correspondence



**U.S. Department of Justice
Immigration and Naturalization Service
U.S. Border Patrol
Office of the Chief Patrol Agent**

ELC 40/11-C

1111 N. Imperial Ave.
El Centro, CA. 92243

September 30, 2002

**MEMORANDUM FOR KENNETH EHINGER, DIRECTOR
HEADQUARTERS FACILITIES AND
ENGINEERING DIVISION**

FROM: Kenneth R. Stitt
Chief Patrol Agent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kenneth R. Stitt", written over a horizontal line.

**SUBJECT: Environmental Commitments/Mitigation Measures, Final Report,
Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Acquisition, Installation and
Operation of Remote Video Surveillance (RVS) Systems, Imperial County,
California**

The Environmental Assessment for the RVS installations mentioned above has been completed. Section 5.0 of the report establishes the Environmental Commitments/Mitigation measures (Attachment A) that will be necessary for the final implementation phase.

It will be the responsibility of Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Randall L. Stickle of the U.S. Border Patrol, El Centro, working with the construction contractor, to monitor the construction and installation of the RVS sites and to implement as necessary the four (4) mitigation measures outlined in Section 5.0. These are titled:

- 5.1 Biological Resources,
 - 5.2 Water Resources,
 - 5.3 Air Quality, and
 - 5.4 Cultural Resources
- of the Final Report dated September 2002.

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Memorandum for Kenneth Ehinger, Director
Subject: Environmental Commitments/Mitigation Measures, Final Report, Supplemental Environmental Assessment for the Acquisition, Installation and Operation of Remote Video Surveillance (RVS) Systems, Imperial County, California

Mr. Charles Reynolds of the U. S. Border Patrol will monitor and document the actions taken to insure that these commitments are realized through final construction.

If you have any questions or comments, please contact Assistant Chief Patrol Agent Randall L. Stickles at (760) 352-3241 for additional information.

Attachment