

**APPENDIX S**  
*U.S/Mexico Border*  
*Wildlife Corridor and Crossings*



## MEMORANDUM

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**To:** Geoff Fallon, BayWa  
**From:** Callie Amoaku, Senior Biologist, Dudek  
**Subject:** U.S./Mexico Border Wildlife Corridor and Crossings (JVR Energy Park Project)  
**Date:** June 1, 2021  
**cc:** Candice Magnus, Dudek

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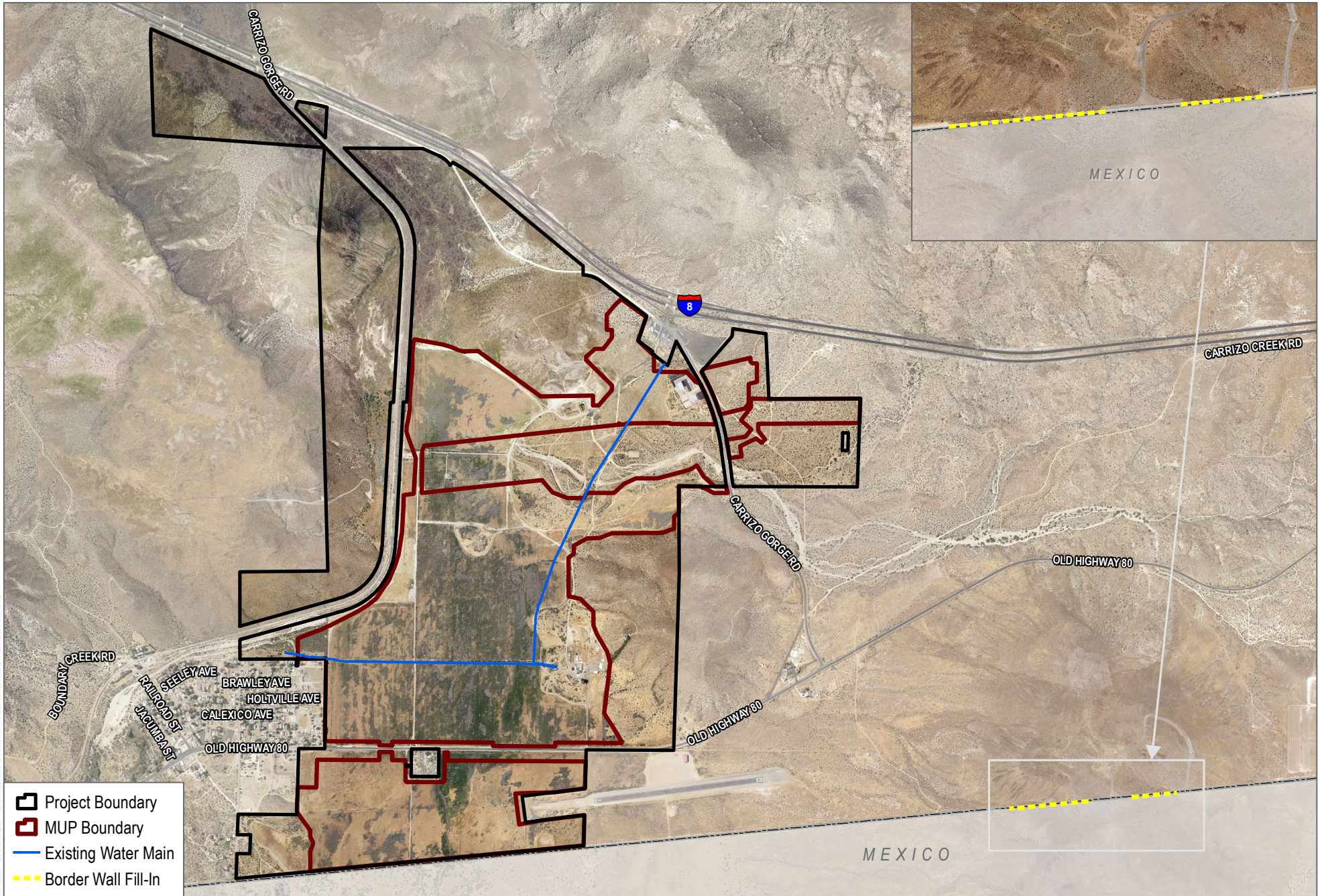
This memorandum provides information related to wildlife movement and off-site wildlife crossings in response to comments received on the JVR Energy Park Project Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR) regarding cumulative impacts arising from possible future construction of a border wall along the U.S./Mexico border. The southern boundary of the JVR Energy Park Project (Proposed Project) area is bordered by an existing fence separating the U.S. from Mexico, which is frequently patrolled by U.S. Border Patrol. The existing border fence is a metal fence approximately 30 feet in height with 6-inch-wide vertical metal bars. The spacing between the bars is approximately 4 inches. The existing international border fence has limited the ability of the Project site to function as a linear north-south wildlife corridor for large mammals since it was erected in the mid-1990's.

The 1,356-acre Project site is located south of Interstate 8 (I-8) and Old Highway 80 transects the southern portion of the site. The community of Jacumba Hot Springs is located adjacent to the southwestern portion of the site. The Project site is currently undeveloped, except for abandoned structures north of Old Highway 80 associated with a prior ranch/dairy complex. There are no wildlife crossings along Old Highway 80, but wildlife are generally able to make at-grade crossings over the highway. Wildlife currently are able to traverse the Project site and surrounding undeveloped areas in an unencumbered manner until they arrive at the U.S./Mexico border fence. The mesquite-dominated floodplain (Boundary Creek) along the western boundary of the proposed development footprint may serve as a wildlife movement area between the Project site and the north side of I-8 for a variety of wildlife species, including mammals, birds, reptiles, and invertebrates. The western portion of the floodplain narrows, but larger wildlife may still move through the area at night if they are traveling to the west. The eastern portion of the Project site is flatter and more open, with smaller drainages and dirt roads that could serve as movement areas for wildlife travel. Birds can move freely through the region; invertebrates and smaller mammals can also move relatively freely through the region. All terrestrial species' movement is hindered by I-8, and, to a lesser degree, Old Highway 80, and surface streets within the community of Jacumba Hot Springs. The I-8 exit to Carrizo Gorge Road and the San Diego and Eastern Railway/Carrizo Gorge Road underpasses are the only routes across I-8 in the vicinity. These north-south constraints, along with the existing border fence, make the Project site a connection between blocks of habitat to the east and west rather than north and south. (See Draft EIR, 2.3-31, 33.)

At the time of the biological surveys for the Proposed Project and Draft EIR preparation there were openings in the border fence approximately 1.2 miles to the east and 2 miles to the west of the Project site (see Figure 1, 2020 U.S./Mexico Border Fence Closures Near JVR Energy Park Project). These border fence openings would have provided the north-south movement for larger wildlife in the vicinity. It is the understanding of the Draft EIR preparers that these two openings were closed in 2020 as part of border fence improvements.

The closure of these border fence openings does not change the analysis of the Proposed Project's potential environmental impacts provided in the Draft EIR. Larger wildlife (e.g., coyotes, bobcats, cougars) could still move along the mesquite-dominated floodplain and unvegetated portion of Boundary Creek to access undeveloped lands on either side of the Project site. Wildlife movement would be more restricted along the eastern side of the Project site since there are fewer topographic features for cover; however, the undeveloped SDG&E easements, which is approximately 700 – 1,100 feet wide and over 4,000 feet long would allow uninterrupted movement from Boundary Creek to the undeveloped land to the east. There is also land between Carrizo Gorge Road and I-8 that would allow movement for some wildlife species, particularly nocturnal wildlife. In addition, although not an ideal movement corridor, the approximately 60-foot-wide border patrol road along the southern portion of the Project site will continue to allow for wildlife movement.

The Project site itself was not subjected to construction of a new border wall. The presence of the existing border fence already hindered large wildlife movement between Project site and Mexico. Any crossings of large wildlife would have to occur in openings away from the Project site. The development of the Proposed Project would not result in cumulative impacts to north-south movement of larger wildlife. The Proposed Project is designed to allow for east-west movement of larger wildlife post-development, as discussed above. Smaller terrestrial species and birds can continue to move throughout the site post-development. The construction of the border wall in areas to the east and west of the Project site would not impact the existing SDG&E easement corridor or the undeveloped area along north side of the border fence.



**FIGURE 1**

2020 U.S./Mexico Border Fence Closures Near JVR Energy Park Project

JVR Energy Park Project

Memorandum

Subject: *Wildlife Corridor and Crossings at JVR Energy Park Project*

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