



February 4, 2015

Mr. Eric Cherniss
431 Burgess Drive, Second Floor
Menlo Park, CA 94025

**Re: San Joaquin Kit Fox Trapping and Collaring for the Panoche Valley Solar Project,
San Benito County, California**

Dear Mr. Cherniss:

To meet anticipated regulatory agency requirements and proposed Conservation Measures included in the Panoche Valley Solar Project Biological Assessment, San Joaquin kit fox trapping and radio collaring was performed by permitted biologist Dr. Brian Cypher of the California State University (CSU) Stanislaus, Endangered Species Recovery Program January 5th through 11th, 2015. All trapping efforts were completed prior to January 16th, when pup rearing season begins and in accordance Dr. Cypher's federal and state permits. These permits were provided via memo on December 3, 2014. Dr. Cypher's field crew included other biologists that are listed as authorized individuals on these permits.

January's trapping effort was preceded by camera station surveys conducted by biologists in December, a component of Dr. Cypher's proposed scope of work. The results of these camera station surveys; knowledge of kit fox movement within home ranges; and potential locations of dens were all used to decide trap locations. These trap locations were all placed in the northwestern, southwestern, and eastern portions of the project site (Figure 1). Some traps are located within 15 feet of each other and therefore may be represented on the map as directly adjacent or overlapping given the scale.

Beginning on Monday, January 5th, 18 Havahart® style traps were deployed in the western and eastern portions of the site. Each trap was baited with pieces of hot dogs and small amounts of canned cat food. The traps were covered with canvas to provide protection and were placed facing north/south directions to avoid direct sunlight and prevent overheating. The traps were placed in areas with bare ground or grazed grass, as foxes will avoid areas of high vegetation. Hay and hand-pulled grass was placed at the bottom of each trap to protect paws. To help prevent tooth damage to foxes trying to escape the traps, soft fiber dog chew toys were attached to each end of the trap. San Joaquin kit foxes are nocturnal - therefore traps were set in the afternoon and early evening on the 5th and left open until the 11th for captures. Beginning at sunrise on the 6th and continuing through the 11th, traps were inspected each morning for

possible captures. On the 11th, traps were closed and removed from the site. The results of these trapping efforts are described below.

Beginning on the 6th of January, several traps had been false-triggered and moved around by cattle. Out of 18 traps deployed, one trap (PV 18) on the southeastern portion of the project site produced a San Joaquin kit fox capture (Figure 1). The captured fox was processed, fitted with a GPS/VHF radio collar, and released. Data including weight, sex, age, tooth assessments, location, and reproductive condition were taken. A hair sample and a scat sample were also collected. The fox was determined to be a male, was given ear tag number 6573 and outfitted with a GPS collar with a radio frequency set at 149.290 megahertz (MHz). After release, the kit fox was observed entering a den nearby. All 18 traps including empty and false-triggered traps were re-baited as needed and left open in preparation for another night of trapping. Some were relocated slightly to offer more protection from cattle. Two additional traps were deployed on the western side of the project site for a total of 20 traps.

No kit fox were captured on the 7th and 8th. Traps were reset and re-baited as needed. Four traps were relocated from the western to the eastern side of the project on January 8th, following suggestions by Dr. Cypher. The likelihood of trapping foxes on the west side was becoming reduced. Thus, the crew concentrated more of the trapping effort on the eastern side of the site within higher quality habitat.

The morning trap check of the 9th produced a recapture of the male (tag number 6573) that was collared earlier in the week. This particular trap (PV 24) was relatively close to the original capture site (Figure 1). Weight and tooth information was documented and a second scat sample was collected.

A female kit fox was discovered on January 10th in the same trap that the male had been recaptured (PV 24). The female fox was processed, fitted with a VHF radio collar, and released. She is assumed to be the male's mate. Data including weight, sex, age, tooth assessments, location, and reproductive condition were taken. A hair sample and a scat sample were collected. The female fox was given ear tag number 6651 and outfitted with a VHF collar with a radio frequency set at 148.802 MHz. After release, the kit fox was observed entering a den nearby.

At Dr. Cypher's direction, all traps were removed on Sunday, January 11th due to the low probability of capturing any more foxes at this time. Most traps were within a half mile of another trap or at the project boundary. Given the average home range sizes and movement capabilities, Dr. Cypher determined that the site had been adequately covered and assumes that the pair's home range covers most of the project site (subsequent monitoring will indicate if this is the case). Also, additional kit foxes were not visiting the traps and the team usually detects consistent visits to the traps when foxes are present. The male and female captured will be tracked periodically until the start of construction and their movements recorded and analyzed. Once construction begins they will be monitored daily.

An additional trapping effort will be planned after May 1st focusing on the eastern portion of the site to capture any foxes that may have moved onto the higher quality habitat in the interim.

Panoche Valley Solar Project
San Joaquin Kit Fox Trapping and Collaring
February 2015

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at (858) 300-4338.

Respectfully submitted,

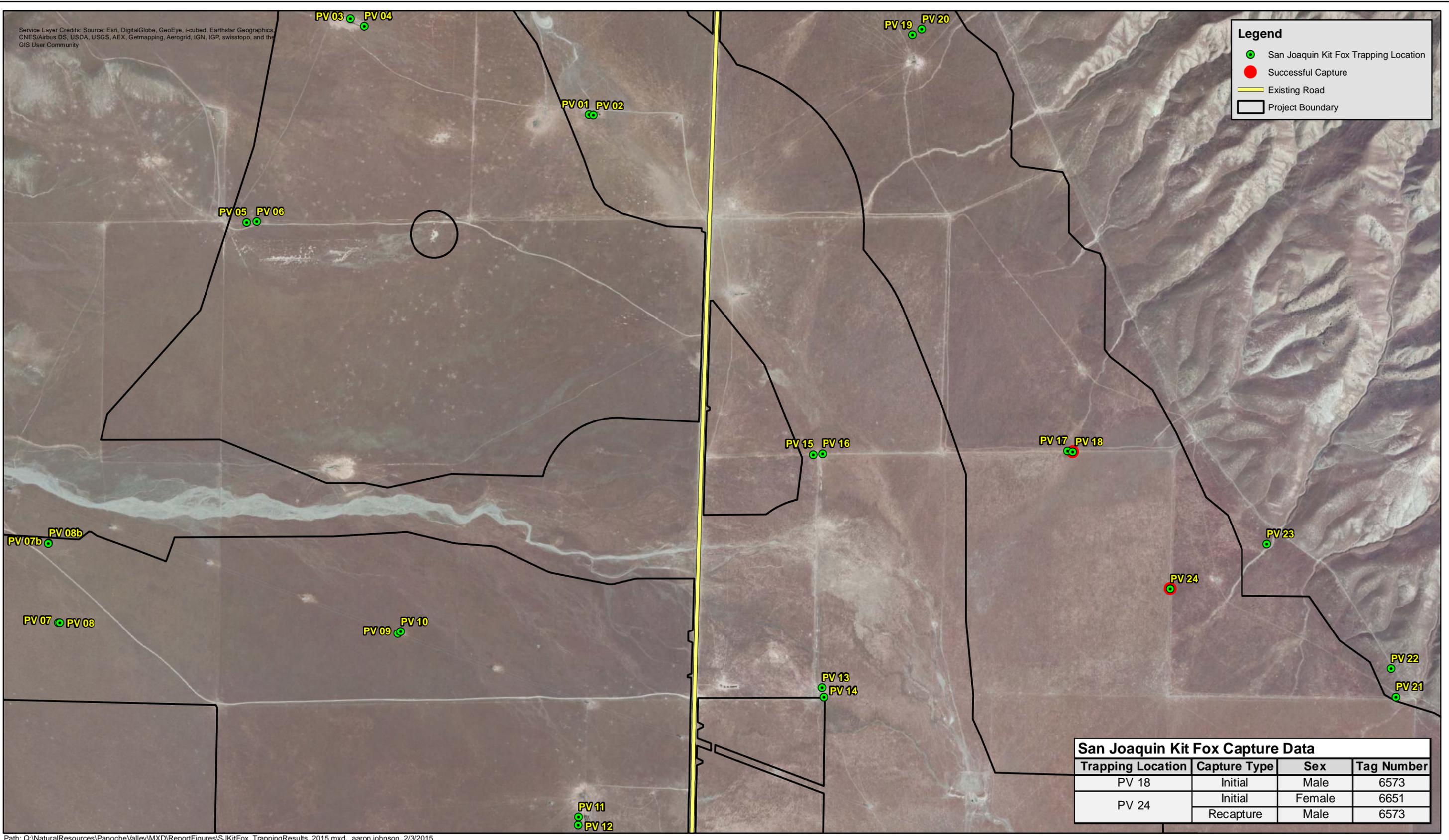
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Angie Harbin-Ireland". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Angie Harbin-Ireland
Senior Biologist
Amec Foster Wheeler

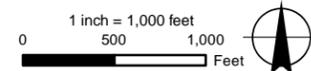
Attachments:

- Figure 1. 2015 San Joaquin Kit Fox Trap Locations and Results
- Representative Kit Fox Trapping Photos

cc: Wayne Haff, AMEC
Heather Munoz, AMEC



2014 San Joaquin Kit Fox Trapping Locations and Successful Captures
Panoche Valley Solar Project



FIGURE

1



Photograph 1. View of the Havahart® trap set-up used that included protective canvas, chew toy, hay and bait.



Photograph 2. View of trap set-up with bait on site.



Photograph 3. Male San Joaquin kit fox (#6573) in a Havahart® trap.



Photograph 4. Male San Joaquin kit fox (#6573) in a Havahart® trap.



Photograph 5. CSU Stanislaus kit fox expert Tory Westall removes the kit fox from the trap.



Photograph 6. Stanislaus kit fox expert Tory Westall preparing to conduct a health assessment.



Photograph 7. Tory Westall conducts a health assessment.



Photograph 8. San Joaquin kit fox male 6573 receiving a tooth assessment.



Photograph 9. GPS type radio collar to be outfitted on male 6573.



Photograph 10. Male #6573 post-release with view of outfitted GPS collar.