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Least Bell's Vireo Concern

On April 9, 2017, Craig Rudolph and I had the opportunity to conduct a survey of the bird species on the Nature Conservancy's Hanson Property near the proposed site of the Mission Rock Energy Center. Craig is a vertebrate ecologist who has had extensive involvement in recovery efforts for the Red-cockaded Woodpecker. I was the Ventura Christmas count compiler for approximately 20 years with the responsibility of determining if the sightings of rare and unusual birds were accurate. We are both avid birders each with 50 years of birding experience.

However, we are not well acquainted with the Hanson Property. And we spent only one morning on the property which is not long enough to survey the entire property.

Nonetheless, we saw or heard a minimum of eight Least Bell's Vireos at seven different locations on the property. One observation was very surprising to us. A pair of vireos was apparently nesting in a small patch of mulefat approximately 100 feet from the entrance to the property. This area is quite degraded and we did not expect that vireos would use it.

We suggest, therefore, that property and the transmission line, water line and natural gas line rights-of-way to be used by the Mission Rock Energy Center project need to be considered as Least Bell's Vireo habitat in the absence of evidence to the contrary.

Thank you for your consideration.

Karl Krause and Craig Rudolph