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June 9, 1994

Mr. Dave Kaunisto  
City of Westminster  
4800 West 92nd Ave.  
Westminster, Co. 80030

**RE: KINNEAR DITCH REPLACEMENT PIPELINE—SURVEY FOR  
PREBLE'S JUMPING MOUSE HABITAT.**

Dear Mr. Kaunisto;

This report summarizes the results of field surveys concerning Preble's jumping mouse (*Zapus hudsonius preblei*) habitat along the proposed Kinnear Ditch Replacement Pipeline alignment. My evaluations are based on field trips conducted on June 1 and on June 7, 1994.

Most of the habitat along the proposed alignment is shortgrass prairie or grazed agricultural land and therefore is not the characteristic habitat type of the Preble's jumping mouse. At Rocky Flats, where I trapped extensively for Preble's jumping mice over a two-year period, I captured this species only in moist, shrubby riparian areas that contained willow shrub (*Salix exigua*). Based on my findings and the literature it is clear that the preferred habitat of the Preble's jumping mouse is mesic vegetation (tall and lush grasses and forbs); and, in this region at least, there seems to be a strong affinity for dense willow shrub.

Only three locations along the proposed pipeline alignment were found that came in contact with any appreciable amount of mesic vegetation. Each is discussed below:

Location 1 is at the eastern end of the alignment at the Wetlands Mitigation Area (Figure 1). The vegetation along the alignment, and at the termination of the pipeline, is not suitable jumping mouse habitat. The site is too dry. The grass/forb complex has been heavily grazed and is only moderately dense. The photograph (Figure 1) is looking west. The Wetlands Mitigation Area is immediately east, and was sampled by me in 1993. No Preble's jumping mice were captured here.

Location 2 is about one-third mile west of Indiana Street (Figure 2). The alignment crosses an irrigation ditch at this location. Although a small amount of mesic vegetation occurs, it is thin and intermittent because of heavy grazing. In my judgment, this is not potential jumping mouse habitat.

Location 3 is at the western end of the alignment at Coal Creek (Figure 3). A small amount of potential Preble's jumping mouse habitat occurs at this location. Figure 3 shows a very small, intermittent stand of willow shrub in the foreground. This is marginal habitat at best for the Freble's jumping mouse, and I do not consider disturbances here to be significant. The location that justifies some concern is the riparian vegetation along and adjacent to Coal Creek. This area is visible in the background in Figure 3 and consists of taller and mixed deciduous trees and shrubs. Based on current engineering plans, a rectangular area approximately 90 by 90 feet, and consisting largely of mixed riparian vegetation, will be disturbed during the initial construction phase. A 10 by 60 foot structure of grouted ripwrap will be constructed here. Most of the disturbance surrounding this structure, however, will be temporary and it is anticipated that regeneration of native vegetation will occur.

To summarize, in my view a minor impact to potential Preble's jumping mouse habitat will occur only where the pipeline begins, at the Coal Creek location (Location 3, Figure 3). Approximately 1/5th of an acre (90 x 90 feet) of mixed riparian vegetation will be disturbed here during the construction phase. Much of the disturbance will be temporary and regeneration of native vegetation can be anticipated. To mitigate impacts, plantings of native vegetation should be considered, along with fencing to prevent cattle grazing.

I hope the information provided here is satisfactory for your purposes. If I can provide any additional information, please feel free to call.

Sincerely,



Robert E. Stoecker, Ph.D.  
Animal ecologist

cc. Dick Moos/CH2M HILL

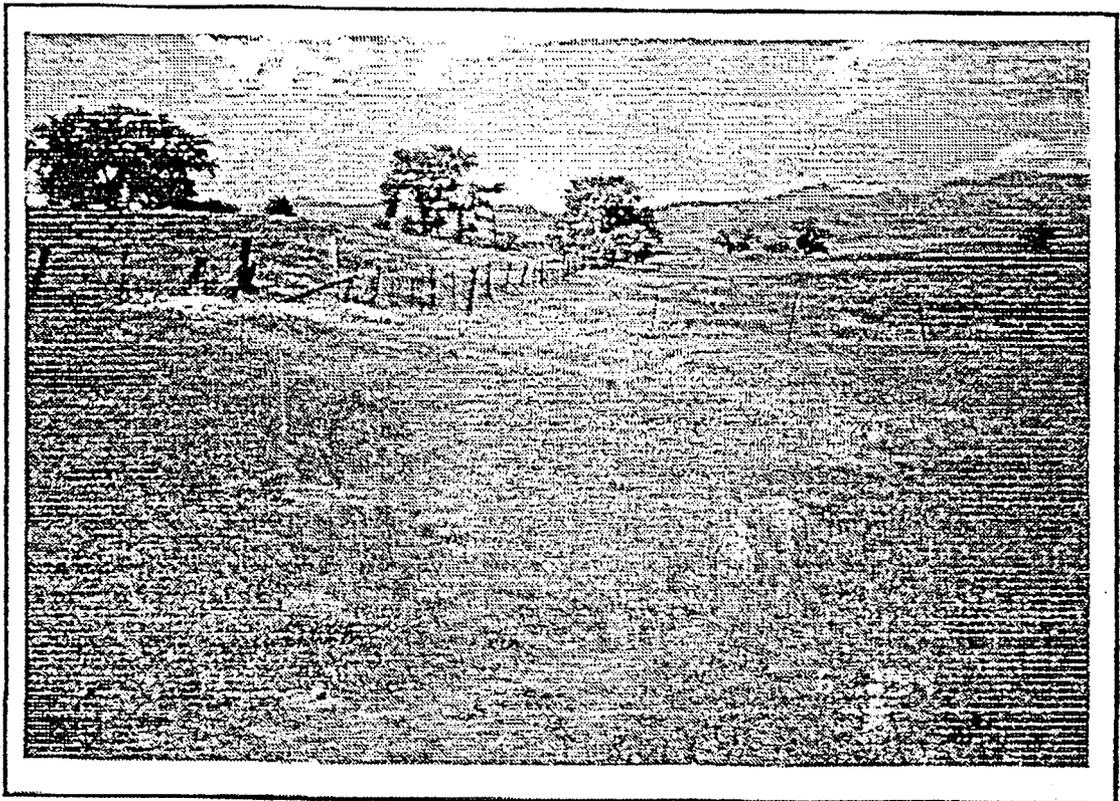


Figure 1. Location 1. The eastern end of the Kinnear Ditch Replacement Pipeline alignment, looking west.

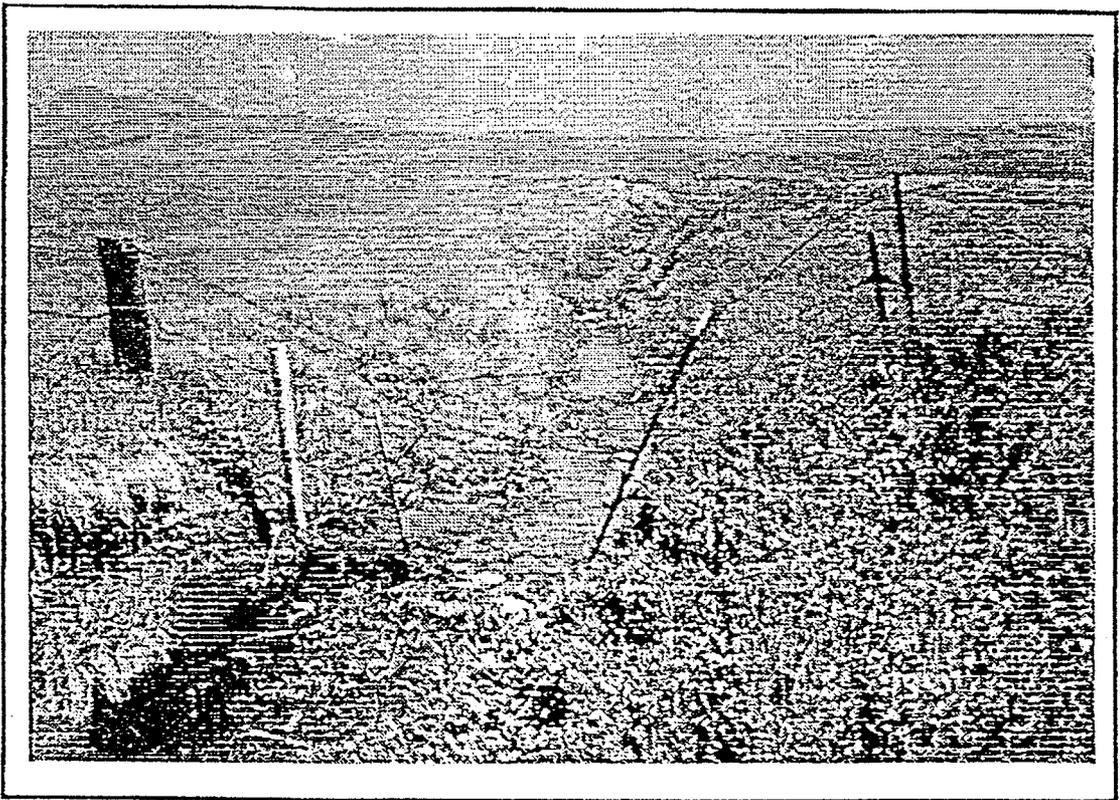


Figure 2. Location 2. One-third mile west of Indiana Street.

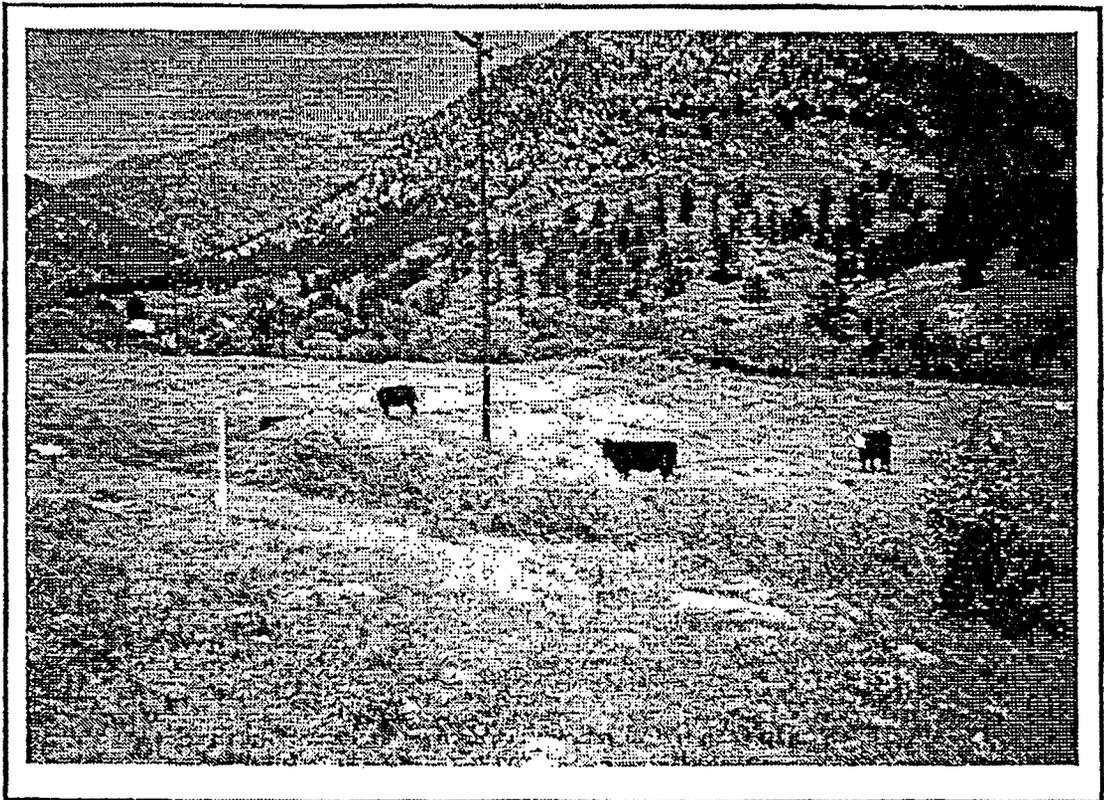


Figure 3. Location 3. The western end of the alignment at Coal Creek.