

**PROJECT REFERENCE NO.:** CUP-5035

**PROJECT PLANNER:** Debbie Morrisset

**DATE:** 20 July 1998 (site visit conducted on  
16 July 1998)

**PROJECT BIOLOGIST:** David L. Magney,  
David Magney Environmental Consulting

**PROJECT LOCATION:** Southwestern toe of Nordhoff Ridge above McDonald Canyon, Meiners Oaks, Ojai Valley, Ventura County; SW¼ SE¼ SW¼ SE¼ of Section 34, T5N, R23W San Bernardino Base Meridian, Matilija, Calif. 7½-minute quadrangle; Latitude 34°27'45"N, Longitude 119°16'45"W; at an elevation of approximately 1,080 feet above mean sea level.

**PROJECT ADDRESS:** 505 Fairview Road, Meiners Oaks, California 93023.

**DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:** The purpose of the project is to install a new telecommunications facility, including a 10x20-foot equipment building, and two 15-foot poles for antennas.

**ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING:** The project site occurs on a steep, south-facing slope in a highland area of the Ojai Valley on the south flank of Nordhoff Ridge, a east-west-trending mountain ridge that is part of the western Transverse Ranges. The Nextel project site is approximately ½ mile north of Fairview Road. The vegetation types presented on the 107-acre property include avocado and lemon orchards, Ceanothus Chaparral.

The project site is located in an existing avocado orchard. Lemon orchards are also present on the property. Avocado orchards occur to the south, east, and west of the project site. Two large water tanks are present approximately 300 feet to the north. The natural vegetation located onsite but north and east of the water tanks (and not affected by the proposed project) consists of a mix of Ceanothus Chaparral and Coastal Sage Scrub, consisting of primarily woody, perennial, small and large shrubs that are characteristically fire-adapted.

The vegetation of this Ceanothus Chaparral/Coastal Sage Scrub include the following: Bigpod Ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus*), Jim Brush (*Ceanothus spinosus*), Laurel Sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Heart-leaved Penstemon (*Keckiella cordifolia*), Bush Mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), Deer Weed (*Lotus scoparius*), Hollyleaf Cherry (*Prunus ilicifolia*), Scrub Oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*), and California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

The project site consists of ruderal (disturbed) vegetation next to the avocado orchard. It is dominated by nonnative Mediterranean grasses that include Red Brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), Soft Chess Brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Ripgut Grass (*Bromus diandrus*), Smilo Grass (*Piptatherum miliacea*), and Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*). The forbs that are also present in the orchard and ruderal areas with the grasses include: Summer Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), Prickly Lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), Twiggy Wreath Plant (*Stephanomeria virgata*), South American Horseweed (*Conyza bonariensis*), Spurge (*Chamaesyce* sp.), Muhly Grass (*Muhlenbergia* sp.), and Dove Weed (*Eremocarpus setigerus*).

Several special-status plant species are known to occur in the region of the project site, and the site has suitable habitat for many of the plants' potential establishment if the orchards were abandoned. The special-status plants that could occur in the vicinity of the project site include:

*Antirrhinum ovatum*, *Baccharis plummerae* ssp. *plummerae*, *Calochortus catalinae*, *Calochortus plummerae*, *Fritillaria ojaiensis*, *Galium cliftonsmithii*, *Juglans californica* ssp. *californica*, and *Polygala cornuta* ssp. *fishae*. No special-status species were found or expected to occur at the project site, which is currently an avocado orchard.

The project site vegetation is not considered a sensitive habitat; therefore, no special consideration in this evaluation is warranted.

No wildlife were observed during the site visit and none are expected to occur in the orchard habitats of the project site. One special-status reptile species, San Diego Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillei*), may occur in suitable habitat to the north and east of the water tanks in the Ceanothus Chaparral/Coastal Sage Scrub habitat.

**California Environmental Quality Act Environmental Checklist Form**  
**Biological Resources**  
**County of Ventura, Planning Division**



**ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>No</u>	<b>Discussion of Impact, Significance, and Mitigation Measures</b>
<b>IV. PLANT LIFE.</b> <i>Will the proposal result in:</i>				
a) Change in the diversity of species, or number of any species of plants (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X	No native trees or natural vegetation would be removed.
b) Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare, or endangered species of plants?			X	No special-status plant species occur at the project site.
c) Introduction of new species of plants into an area, or in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?			X	The proposed project is not expected to result in introduction of new plant species into the area, or create a barrier to normal replenishment of existing species. To prevent invasive, exotic plant introduction, any future landscaping should not include invasive, exotic plant species.
d) Reduction in acreage of any agricultural crop?		X		The proposed project would reduce the acreage of an existing avocado orchard by two (2) trees; however, the loss of a small area for this project would not cause a significant impact. The project site is currently used for avocado production.

**V. ANIMAL LIFE.** *Will the proposal result in:*

a) Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds; land animals, including reptiles; fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, or insects)?			X	The proposed project would not change the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals in the Ojai Valley area.
b) Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare, or endangered species of animals?			X	The proposed project is not expected to result in any reductions of unique, rare, or endangered species of animals.
c) Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?			X	The proposed project is not expected to result in the introduction of new species of animals, or result in a barrier to migration or movement of animals.
d) Deterioration to existing fish or wildlife habitat?			X	The proposed project is not expected to deteriorate existing fish or wildlife habitat unless vegetation is removed.



**MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT**

	<u>Yes</u>	<u>Maybe</u>	<u>No</u>
a. Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of major periods of California's history or prehistory?			X
b. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?			X
c. Does the project have environmental effects which are individually limited but are cumulatively considerable?			X
d. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X
<u>Alternatives to the Proposed Action.</u> Does the project require the discussion and evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project?			X

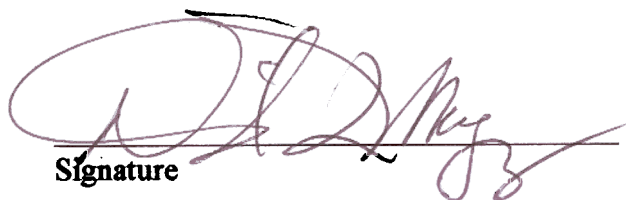
**RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYST:**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

X I find the proposed project will NOT have a significant adverse environmental effect, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

I find that although the proposed project could have a significant adverse environmental effect, there would not be a significant effect in this case if the mitigation measures described herein are included in the project, A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant adverse environmental effect, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT should be prepared.

  
Signature

20 July 1998  
Date

David L. Magney  
Initial Study Preparer