

# COUNTY OF VENTURA

## BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES INITIAL STUDY

Date: April 18, 2000  
 Requestor: Debbie Morrisset  
 Project: CUP-5096

Field Study: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Justification: Performed field check for habitat suitability for the California gnatcatcher.

### A. CHECKLIST

| Biological Resources Issues                | Project Impact Degree of Effect     |                                     |                          |                          | Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect  |                                     |                          |                          |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
|  | N                                   | LS                                  | S                        | U                        | N                                   | LS                                  | S                        | U                        |
| a. endangered, threatened, or rare species | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b. wetland habitat                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c. coastal habitat                         | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d. migration corridors                     | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e. locally important species/communities   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

#### Degree of Effect Explanation

*N = None*

*LS = Less than significant effect*

*S = Significant effect; MND or EIR required*

*U = Unknown; EIR required*

### B. DISCUSSION

The project site is composed of native coastal sage scrub mixed with chaparral and a small amount of ruderal non-native annual grassland. Removal of coastal sage scrub could have a significant impact on sensitive animal species. Specifically, the Federally listed California gnatcatcher is historically known to occur in the Santa Paula area. Additionally, a new California gnatcatcher population has been recently discovered in the Moorpark area to the southeast of the site. However, the project has been designed so that grading activities for the pad, trench digging for the underground portion of the power lines and incidental ground disturbance for placement of the proposed overhead power line poles would not remove coastal sage scrub vegetation and potential California gnatcatcher habitat. Specifically, these project components would be constructed in discrete areas where coastal sage scrub is not present. In addition, no gnatcatchers have been recorded in the immediate vicinity of the project site for many years. Since the proposed project is not expected to remove gnatcatcher habitat, a US Fish and Wildlife survey protocol is not necessary.

No other special-status species are expected to inhabit the project site. No wetland habitat is present at the site. The project could potentially affect migratory species that could use the existing vegetation for foraging activities. However, given the small size of the project, these impacts are considered less than significant. In addition, after project construction is

completed, migratory hawks such as the red-tailed hawk and ferruginous hawk (a state-listed species of concern, CDFG, 1998) may use the antenna and power line poles as perch locations. Antennas typically do not pose an electrocution hazard to birds, and no significant impacts are anticipated.

Animals seen within the site included California towhee, raven, California thrasher, white-crowned sparrow and common crow. No reptiles were seen, but western fence lizard, western rattlesnake, common kingsnake and California whipsnake would be expected. Numerous mule deer tracks were noted, as well as deer bedding areas. Given the small size of the project, significant impacts to common wildlife species would not be expected. The project would not cause a significant constraint to wildlife movement.

### C. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

- |   | <u>Yes/Maybe</u>         | <u>No</u>                           |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. Does the project have the potential to significantly 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? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?  | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?   | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

### D. MITIGATION MEASURES

Recommended ☐

Required for Negative Declaration ☐

None

### E. DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FROM A BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Negative Declaration ☒ Mitigated Negative Declaration ☐ EIR Required ☐

Reviewer: Jason Kirschenstein  
Jason Kirschenstein, Associate Biologist  
Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Date: 04/18/00

Phone: 641-1000

## F. REFERENCES

Rick Ferris, US Fish and Wild life Service, telephone communication, September 29, 1999.

California Department of Fish and Game (April 1999). *Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California*. 15 pgs. Habitat Conservation Division, Wildlife & Habitat Data Analysis Branch.

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Holland, Robert F. (October 1986). *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California*. California Department of Fish and Game, Nongame Heritage Program. 156 pgs.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (January 31, 1997). *US Listed Flowering Plant Species Index by Lead Region and Status*.

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Zeiner, D., W.F. Laudenslayer, Jr., and K.E. Mayer (May 1988). *California's Wildlife*. California Statewide Wildlife Habitat Relationship System, Volumes I, II, & III. California Department of Fish and Game.