

COUNTY OF VENTURA BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES INITIAL STUDY

Date: 3/22/99

Requestor: Kim Prillhart

Project: PM-5134

Field Study: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Justification: Creek/drainage and oak woodland is in vicinity of project.

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 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"/> |
| b. wetland habitat | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" 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 a 2.37 acre parcel occupied with a single family, two-story residence and a maintained field. The house is separated from the disced field by a natural drainage, Live Oak Creek, which flows south to the Ventura River. The proposed project involves splitting the parcel into two 1+ acre parcels; the second parcel would be created out of the northwest portion of the project site, to the west of the creek. While not proposed at this time, a bridge would eventually be constructed across the creek to the new parcel. Adjacent land uses include single-family homes to the north, east and south, and an approximately 30-foot hill with grazing land beyond to the east. A paved driveway serves the existing house in the southeastern portion of the project site. A large coast live oak tree is located adjacent to the existing residence. The undeveloped portion to the northwest appears to be used for grazing by horses. The creek that separates the two portions of the project site contains wetland vegetation. Numerous coast live oak trees exist in the northwest portion of the project site, particularly in the southern terminus of the proposed new parcel.

The vegetation on the active portion of the project site appears to be regularly removed. Ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*) grasses are found throughout the proposed parcel. Coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) is found commonly scattered throughout the proposed parcel. The site is also heavily impacted by horses. The creek has approximately 85% coverage of mulefat



(*Baccharis salicifolia*) and arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*). Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) is uncommonly present along the creek. Although not a migration corridor per se, Live Oak Creek represents a local movement pathway for animals based upon the vegetation coverage and numerous mammal tracks present within the creek bottom.

At least six coast live oak trees are located either within the creek bed or along the creek bank. Two large and six smaller sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) trees are situated along Live Oak Creek, on either side of where the existing vehicular access ends at the creek. The southernmost portion of the proposed parcel contains several large Mexican elderberry trees and four coast live oaks. These four oak trees are a continuation of additional oaks located outside the property boundaries.

Because of the past disturbance associated with the site and the general lack of vegetation, no rare or endangered plant or animal species would be expected within the upland portion of the proposed project. Although habitat for coast horned lizard could be located within the creek bottom, no sign of coast horned lizards were noted. The downstream Ventura River is a migratory pathway for the recently federally listed endangered steelhead trout - Southern California ESU (Evolutionary Significant Unit). Any chemical-related disturbance to the creek could result in downstream impacts to the biological resources within the Ventura River.

Native trees, particularly oaks, are protected by the Ventura County Zoning Ordinance Section 8107-25, which requires offset mitigation for loss of protected trees. While no trees are currently proposed for removal, the construction of new structures and roadways could result in some removal or damage to native trees. Given the size of those present, the loss of the trees would be considered a significant impact until such time that replacement trees could become established and grow to a similar size, which would not occur for at least 20 years. Therefore, the potential loss of sensitive native tree species is considered significant.

The vegetation associated with Live Oak Creek may be classified as southern coast live oak riparian woodland and sycamore riparian woodland, which are both sensitive communities as listed by the California Natural Diversity Data Base. While the parcel split in itself would not alter existing conditions, future construction of a residence, roadways, and out buildings could encroach into these sensitive areas and cause a significant cumulative impact.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

D. MITIGATION MEASURES

Recommended ☐

Required for Negative Declaration ☒

1. A 50-foot buffer zone from Live Oak Creek shall be established at the site. This boundary shall be appropriately fenced using materials such as construction fencing, chain link or five-strand barbed wire. Rev
pe
5/21
Le

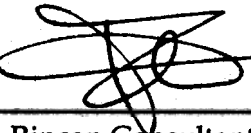
2. Any access and/or bridge over the creek to the proposed second parcel shall avoid the sycamore trees and any other mature trees found along the creek banks. All construction activity shall avoid any area that falls within the drip line.

3. Prior to approval of the building permit for construction of a bridge over Live Oak Creek, the applicant shall submit to the County proof of a California Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement and an Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 permit.

E. DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FROM A BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Negative Declaration ☐ Mitigated Negative Declaration ☒ EIR Required ☐

Reviewer: _____

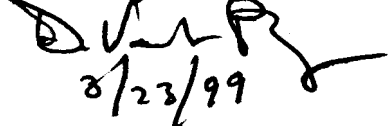


Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Date: _____

3/23/99

Supervisor


8/23/99

Phone: 641-1000

F. REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Game (July 1997a). *Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California*. 14 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Plant Conservation Program

California Department of Fish and Game (July 1997b). *Endangered and Threatened Animals of California*. 11 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.

California Department of Fish and Game (July 1997c). *Special Plants List*. 112 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.

California Department of Fish and Game (August 1994). *Special Animals*. 28 pgs.

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, as of January 31, 1997*.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (February 28, 1996). *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Review of Plant and Animal Taxa That Are Candidates for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species*.

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.

