Prepared for:
Rajesh Patel
California

Biological Survey for 6943 Solano Verde Drive Somis, California

ENSR Corporation
February 2006
Document No.: 08709-336-001

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Prepared By Catrina Mangiardi

Reviewed By Arrie Bachrach

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SECTION B

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

Job: Biological Survey for Grading Permit No. 9751

Requester: Rich Guske, Public Works Agency

Applicant: Rajesh Patel

Date: February 9, 2006

Survey Type: Office and field

Rationale: Grading permit (No. 9751) for ~20 acre parcel

Site Description*:* ENSR conducted a field visit of the project site (Parcel no. 108-0-140-14) on February 9, 2006. The approximately 20-acre is located at 6943 Solano Verde Dr., off Bradley Road, approximately 3 miles north of East Los Angeles Avenue (Highway 118) in Somis, California. The project, as outlined in the Grading Permit Application 9751, requests authorization to grade the parcel for development of a single family residence.

The topography of the property is flat, except for a 30 foot hill in the north central portion of the property, where a house, pool and tennis court is to be placed. Weedy grasses and forbs are the dominant vegetation since the entire property had been cleared at some earlier date. On the flat land surrounding the hill, fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), and telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*) were abundant in addition to the grasses. On the hill area, small clumps of California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*) were present. Around the west and southern perimeter of the property is a shallow, sandy drainage area bordered with Jacaranda trees next to the road. In the shallow area where two drain pipes carry water from adjacent areas, vegetation consists mostly of tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*) with some cocklebur (*Xanthium strumarium*) and California sagebrush. A site map is provided as **Figure 1** and photographs of the project site are provided in **Attachment A**.

SECTION C

DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES

	Project Impacts				Cumulative Impacts			
	Degree of Effect				Degree of Effect			
	N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
6. Biological Resources								
a. Endangered, threatened or rare species	✓				✓			
b. Wetland Habitat		✓*				✓*		
c. Coastal Habitat	✓				✓			
d. Migration Corridors	✓				✓			
e. Locally important species/communities	✓				✓			

N: No impact
LS: Less than significant
PS-M: Potentially significant, unless mitigated to a level of insignificance
PS: Potentially significant, even after mitigation

*Note: Based on the site visit ENSR does not believe that the project will have a significant impact on the ephemeral drainage. However, a formal wetland delineation was not performed to determine if the drainage would be recognized as a wetland by ACOE and/or CDFG. Thus, ENSR recommended that CDFG and ACOE be consulted to determine if the drainage falls within their respective jurisdictions. Additional evaluation and permitting may be necessary if the drainage falls within either CDFG or ACOE jurisdiction.

a. Endangered, Threatened or Rare Species

According to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), several special-status species occur within five miles of the project site (see **Attachment B**). However, the results of the CNDDB search did not reveal occurrences of special-status species within the boundaries of the project site. Additionally, these species were not observed during ENSR's site visit nor are they expected to be present on site.

Plants:

No candidate, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species have been reported within five miles of the project site.

Animals:

The following candidate, rare, threatened or endangered animal species have been reported within five miles of the project site:

- **least Bell's vireo** (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), a federal and state endangered species, has been observed in the vicinity of the Santa Clara River, approximately five miles northwest of the project site. The vireo

nests in low-lying riparian vegetation. No such habitat exists on the project site, and therefore the least Bell's vireo is not expected to be present on the site.

- **Santa Ana sucker** (*Catostomus santaanae*), a federal threatened species and state species of special concern, requires coastal streams with rubble-boulder bottoms and cool, clear water. No such habitat exists on the project site, and therefore the Santa Ana sucker is not expected to be present on the site.

- **southern steelhead** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), a federal endangered species and a state species of special concern, requires a stream with closed canopy woodland area. This species has been reported in the Santa Clara River drainage system. No such stream habitat is present on the project site, and therefore the southern steelhead is not expected to be present on the site.

- **western yellow billed cuckoo** (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*), a federal candidate and state endangered species, requires riparian habitat for nesting. Although there is a very shallow, sandy drainage area on the perimeter of the property, no riparian vegetation was observed, and therefore the western yellow billed cuckoo is not expected to be present on the site.

- **white-tailed kite** (*Elanus leucurus*), a state fully-protected species, generally nests in rolling foothills with scattered oaks or in woodlands with dense-topped trees. The kite forages in open grasslands or marshes. No such habitat is present on the project site, and therefore the white-tailed kite is not expected to be present on the site.

Plant Communities:

CDFG and CNPS have identified several native plant communities that are rare and/or diminishing within California. Substantial losses of these plant communities may be considered "significant" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The following sensitive plant communities have been reported within five miles of the project site:

- **southern coast live oak riparian forest** is a closed canopy riparian woodland often found in valley bottoms and outer floodplains along larger streams, in sandy soils or alluvium. Dominant species include coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) as well as western sycamore, Fremont's cottonwood, black willow, and arroyo willow. No such habitat is present on the project site.

- **southern riparian scrub** is a riparian community often found in dense thickets adjacent to creeks and ponded areas, and in less dense stands near seeps and areas with high water tables. This habitat is usually associated with areas of loose, sandy alluvium, and requires frequent flooding or scouring to prevent succession to a riparian forest dominated by cottonwoods and sycamores. Dominant species typically include arroyo willow shrubs and mulefat. No such habitat is present on the site.

- **southern willow scrub** is a riparian community consisting of dense, broad-leafed, winter-deciduous riparian thickets occurring within and adjacent to seasonal or permanent water courses. The southern willow scrub formation generally is sub-mature and may attain woodland or forest stature if undisturbed for several decades. Dominant species of this community are mulefat, sandbar willow, and arroyo willow. No such habitat is present on the site.

b. Wetland Habitat

An ephemeral drainage was observed in the western portion of the property. The drainage enters the northwest portion of the property through two drainage pipes and the shallow, sandy drainage follows the

western boundary of the property, terminating at the western corner. The current grading plan indicates that a 12-foot swale is proposed to be constructed along the southwest corner in the vicinity of the existing drainage.

As discussed in Section B, the drainage is vegetated with tree tobacco, cocklebur and California sagebrush. A wetland delineation was not performed for this property thus ENSR can not make a determination on whether the ephemeral drainage would be considered a wetland, a Waters of the United States, and/or a Waters of the State. However, no wetland or riparian vegetation was observed in the drainage and it does not appear that the drainage is inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted to saturated soil conditions. Thus, it is considered unlikely that this drainage is regulated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) as "Waters of the United States". However, since the definition of "Waters of the State" is much broader than the definition for "Waters of the United States", it is more likely that the drainage is classified as "Waters of the State" and thus regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). ENSR recommends that the CDFG as well as the ACOE be consulted to determine if the drainage falls within the jurisdiction of either of these two agencies. If the drainage does fall within the jurisdiction of either agency, permits will be needed prior to impacting the drainage area.

c. Coastal Habitat

This project is not located within the coastal zone, thus no impact on coastal habitat should occur.

d. Migration Corridors

The project site lies within an area designated by the County of Ventura as a landscape linkage for wildlife movement (See Attachment C). While this site may be used by some wildlife species as a migration corridor, it is unlikely that that the proposed project would impact wildlife movement. The property is located within a gated, residential community and is surrounded by a mix of agricultural land that has been converted into single family residences. Therefore, the project site does not contain the amount of habitat necessary to provide shelter and foraging for migrating wildlife, nor is it likely that wildlife other than species endemic to the surrounding area (deer, coyote, mice, rabbit, reptiles, ground squirrel, etc.) would migrate through these areas. It is not expected that the proposed project would create significant impacts to migration corridors, and therefore, impacts are considered less than significant.

e. Locally Important Species/Communities

No locally important species or communities are present on the parcel, and therefore no impact is likely to occur.

SECTION D

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the information contained within Sections B and C:	**YES/ MAYBE**	**NO**
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, or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?		✓
2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals? (A short-term impact on the environment is one which occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future).		✓
3. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (Several projects may have relatively small individual impacts on two or more resources, but the total of those impacts on the environment is significant).		✓
4. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		✓

SECTION E

DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

- ☑ I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

- ☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measure(s) described below will be applied to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

- ☐ I find the proposed project, individually and/or cumulatively MAY have a significant effect on the environment and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

Recommendation

As discussed in Section C Part b., ENSR recommends that the CDFG as well as the ACOE be consulted to determine if the drainage falls within the jurisdiction of either of these two agencies. If the drainage does fall within the jurisdiction of either agency, permits will be needed prior to impacting the drainage area.

FIGURES

SOURCE: Ventura County Resource Management Agency

Scale 1 : 2,455

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FIGURE 1
SITE MAP
Single Family Residence (APN 108-0-140-14)
6943 Solano Verde Drive
Somis, California

DRAWN: CDM	DATE: February 2006	PROJECT NO:	REV:
CHECKED: CDM		08709-336-001	0

ATTACHMENT A

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

View of north western portion of the property and surrounding land taken from on top of hill in the center of the property.

View of south western portion of the property and surrounding land taken from on top of hill in the center of the property.

View of southern portion of the property and surrounding land taken from on top of hill in the center of the property

View of south eastern portion of the property and surrounding land taken from on top of hill in the center of the property

View of north eastern portion of property and surrounding land taken from on top of the hill in the center of the property.

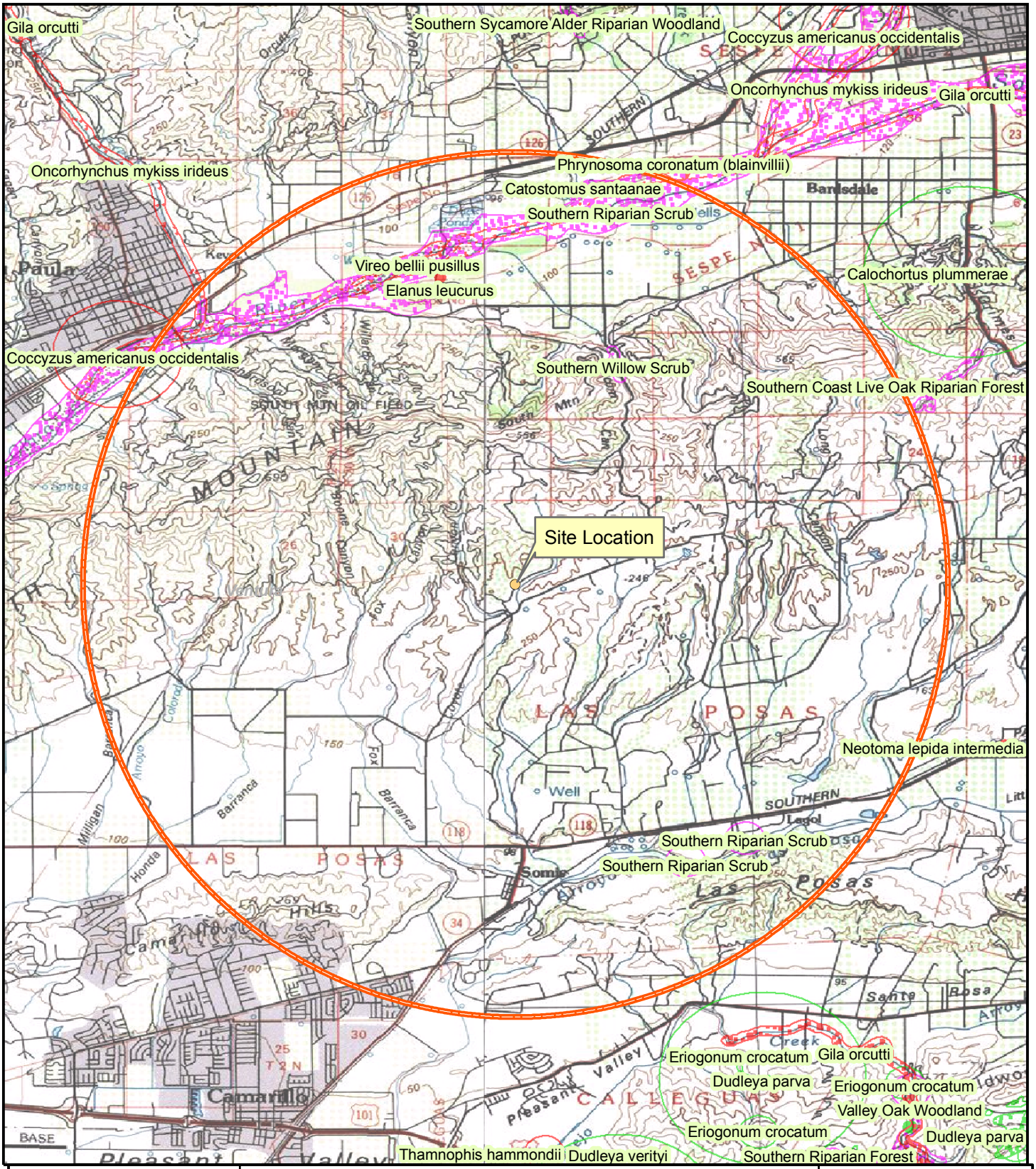
View of the drainage area and two pipes which convey water onto the property.

View of the drainage area taken from the western corner of the property facing north.

View of the drainage area taken from just south of the drainage pipes taken north.

ATTACHMENT B

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES MAP



Map Location

Single Family Residence (APN 108-0-140-14)
6943 Solano Verde Drive
Somis, California

Legend

- 5 Mile Buffer
- Animal (specific)
- Animal (circular)
- Terr. Comm. (specific)
- Terr. Comm. (circular)
- Plant (specific)
- Plant (circular)

Scale: 1:100,000

0 2,500 5,000 10,000 15,000 Feet

USGS 100K Topo Map

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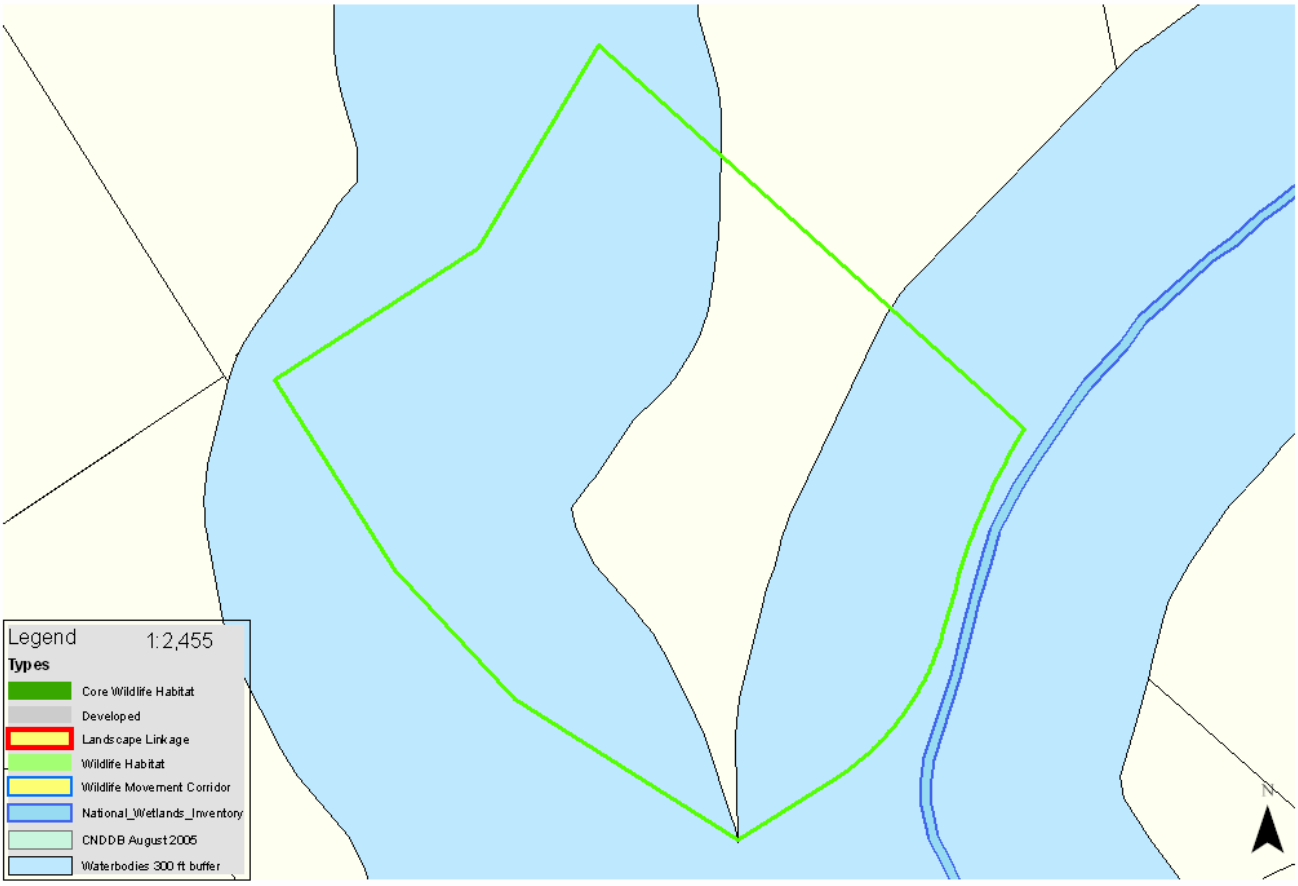
Figure:

Date: February 2006

Y:\Projects\CNDDB\08709-336\MXD\08709-336.mxd

ATTACHMENT C

LANDSCAPE LINKAGE MAP



SOURCE: Ventura County Resource Management Agency

Scale 1 : 2,455

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LANDSCAPE LINKAGE MAP
Single Family Residence (APN 108-0-140-14)
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DRAWN: CDM	DATE: February 2006	PROJECT NO:	REV:
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