

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

PROJECT REFERENCE NO.: ZC-2937/PM 5286/Blackwell	PROJECT PLANNER: Kim Rodriguez
DATE: 19 October 2000	PROJECT BIOLOGIST: Carl G. Thelander, BioResource Consultants, P.O. Box 1539, Ojai, 93024 Ph. 805-646-3932

PROJECT LOCATION: Hidden Meadows Estates, Santa Rosa Valley, Lot 16 of Tract 2732

PROJECT ADDRESS: None provided

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: Rezone from R-E-20 Acre to both R-E-10 Acre and R-E-5 Acre; Subdivision of approximately 24.46 acres into three parcels: Parcel 1 of 6.04 acres, Parcel 2 of 11.61 acres, Parcel A of 6.81 acres.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: This report is based on an evaluation of aerial photos and materials developed by BioResource Consultants and Dave Magney Environmental Consulting that were compiled recently for an adjoining property (Caldwell; Lot 17). Field visits were conducted for that neighboring property, and photographs of Lot 16 were taken at that time. Based on these data, no field visit was considered necessary for this CEQA checklist process.

The project site is on Marvella Court, south of Santa Rosa Valley Road near its intersection with Moorpark Road and west of Norwegian Grade. The area is a mix of disturbed, ruderal vegetation near existing and proposed housing development mixed with patches of native vegetation apparently including Coastal Sage Scrub, California Annual Grassland, and Coyote Brush Scrub.

A search of the California Natural Diversity Data Base records for the area indicate habitat is present onsite, OR in the Santa Rosa Valley region, for several special-status species, including those listed below.

Special-Status Wildlife Species:

Riverside Fairy Shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*)
California Red-legged Frog (*Rana aurora draytoni*)
Coastal Western Whiptail (*Cnemidophorus tigris multiscutatus*)
Two-striped Garter Snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*)
California Gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica*)
Loggerhead Shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)
Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) – nesting
San Diego Desert Woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*)

Special-Status Plant Species:

Braunton's Milkvetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*)
Catalina Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus catalinae*)

Plummer Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus plummerae* ssp. *plummerae*)
Small-flowered Morning-glory (*Convolvulus simulans*)
Conejo Live-forever (*Dudleya abramsii* ssp. *parva*)
Blochman Live-forever (*Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *blochmaniae*)
Verity Live-forever (*Dudleya verityi*)
Conejo Buckwheat (*Eriogonum crocatum*)
Santa Susana Tarplant (*Hemizonia minthornii*)
Southern Spikeweed (*Hemizonia parryi* ssp. *australis*)
Southern California Black Walnut (*Juglans californica* ssp. *californica*)
California Orcutt Grass (*Orcuttia californica*)
Lyon Pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*)
Rayless Ragwort (*Senecio aphanactis*)

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There are also approximately fifteen (15) species of lichens in Ventura County that are considered rare (Magney in ed.)¹, one or more of which may occur at the project site:

Acarospora thelocoides
Caloplaca chrysophthalma
Caloplaca epithallina
Caloplaca invadens
Caloplaca supracella
Endocarpon subnitescens
Parmotrema austrosinense
Pertusaria flavicunda
Phaeophyscia kairamoi
Phaeophyscia sciastra
Protoparmelia punctilla
Vermilacinia ceruchoides
Xanthoparmelia angustiphylla

An east-facing slope supports extensive coastal sage scrub vegetation that may support California gnatcatchers, a federal endangered species. The vegetation in the lower (northern) portions and bordering Marvella Court has been altered to varying degrees in the past; however, soil disturbance does not appear to have been substantial in any portion of the property.

Five natural vegetation types appear to occur on site. These are (minimum): Coastal Sage Scrub, Coyote Brush Scrub, Southern California Walnut Woodland, Perennial Grassland, and Ruderal Grasslands [including areas dominated by Black Mustard (*Brassica nigra*) and Sweet Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*)]. Coastal Sage Scrub, Perennial Grassland, and Southern California Black Walnut Woodland are all considered sensitive plant communities.

¹ Magney, D.L. In ed. Preliminary List of Rare California Lichens. Submitted to California Lichen Society for publication.

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IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES:	PROJECT IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT ¹				CUMULATIVE IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT			
	N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
What level of impact will the proposal have on:								
A. Endangered, Threatened, or Rare Species			<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>	
B. Wetland Habitat	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			
C. Coastal Habitat	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			
D. Migration Corridors	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			
E. Locally Important Species/Communities			<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>	
<i>Will the proposal:</i>								
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>	
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?			<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>	
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetland as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?	<u>X</u>				<u>X</u>			

¹ N = No Impact; LS = Less Than Significant; PS-M = Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated; PS = Potentially Significant Impact.

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Additional comments or explanations:

Item A. Habitat is present that might support sensitive, threatened, rare, or otherwise listed plant species. Habitat is present that may support California gnatcatchers, an endangered species associated with coastal sage scrub habitat.

Item B. Portions of the property contain sensitive habitats.

Item C. The parcel is not located in the coastal zone. Therefore, no adverse impacts are expected.

Item D. The parcel supports no native vegetation that would act as a significant migration corridor for wildlife. Therefore, no adverse impacts are expected.

Item E. The property contains locally important species or communities, namely coastal sage scrub, perennial grassland, and possibly walnut woodland.

Recommendations:

Items A and B. We recommend that a vegetation map be prepared that accurately documents the boundaries of the sensitive plant communities found on the property. These data should be used as a baseline from which mitigation and protection efforts can be monitored.

Surveys for sensitive plant species need to be conducted at the proper time of year (March-July, depending on the species involved) to ensure that they include periods of highest probability for determining presence/absence. A qualified rare plant expert/botanist should conduct these surveys.

Coastal sage scrub that appears to be suitable habitat for California gnatcatchers is present on the property. If the owner conveys in title suitable protection for coastal sage scrub habitat, gnatcatcher surveys that meet USFWS protocols may not be needed. The boundaries of this habitat set aside needs to be based on vegetation mapping and they must take into account any buffers possibly required as part of fire control constraints.

If the above described habitat protection is not conveyed in title, we recommend that appropriate surveys be conducted to meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and other statutes. These surveys will determine if endangered species are present. The guidelines for conducting these surveys are available from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Ventura Field Office. The owner should contact this agency with respect to addressing the requirements of the Endangered Species Act.

The presence of Walnut Woodland/riparian habitat represents development constraints, as do Coastal Sage Scrub and Perennial Grassland vegetation, both of which are sensitive plant communities. We recommend avoidance of each of these plant communities. To accomplish this, a detailed vegetation map is needed.

Mitigation for impacts to any sensitive habitats would require enhancing disturbed habitats of similar composition at a high ratio of impact to enhancement, or replacement at a ratio of 3:1 in the Santa

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Rosa Valley area. Permanent preservation of existing habitat, in-kind, may be used to reduce restoration/creation mitigation from 3:1 to 1:1. Without replacing habitat impacted by the project, a cumulative loss of these habitats would remain..

Item E. The issues are addressed concurrently with Items A and B.

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D. <u>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>	<u>Yes/Maybe</u>	<u>No</u>
Based on the information contained with Section B6:		
1. 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	
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 that occurs in a relatively brief, definitive period of time while long-term impacts will endure well into the future.)		x
3. Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? "Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effect of other current projects, and the effect of probable future projects. (Several projects may have relatively small individual impacts on two or more resources, but that total of those impacts on the environment is significant.)	x	
4. Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		x

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E. DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environmental, there would not be a significant effect in this case because the mitigation measure(s) described in section C of the Initial Study will be applied to the project. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find the proposed project, individually and/or cumulatively, MAY have a significant effect on the environmental, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environmental, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.



Carl G. Thelander

19 October 2000

Date