

**Historic Biological Reports
Scan Control Sheet**

County Project Number(s):

CLL-0301

Report Type (check one):

- ☒ Initial Study
- ☐ Species Inventory/Survey
- ☐ Focused Study
- ☐ EIR
- ☐ Draft EIR
- ☐ EIS
- ☐ ND
- ☐ MND
- ☐ Other

Report Date (Month/Day/Year):

11/07/2003

Check if the following apply to the report:

- ☒ Wetland and/or aquatic habitat
- ☐ Within designated Coastal Zone
- ☒ Potential movement corridor for fish and/or wildlife

COUNTY OF VENTURA BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES INITIAL STUDY

Date: November 7, 2003

Requestor: Debbie Morriset

Project: CCC0301/PM 5404

Field Study: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Justification: Adjacent to the Santa Clara River Riparian Area

A. CHECKLIST

Biological Resources Issues	Project Impact Degree of Effect				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect			
	N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
a. endangered, threatened, or rare species	<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"/>
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 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"/>
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

PS-M = Significant effect; Mitigation incorporated for a ND

PS = Potentially Significant effect; EIR required

B. DISCUSSION

The project site consists of the legalization of an 8.62-acre parcel located on the northwest corner of South Mountain Road and South Mountain Lemon Company Road, approximately one half mile south of State Highway 126 at Santa Paula. The applicant requests a Conditional Certificate of Compliance to legalize an illegal lot.

A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), via the RAREFIND2 software, (September 2002) listed special-status biological resources within a 10-mile radius of the project vicinity. Attachment A includes a map showing the results of the CNDDDB 10-mile radius search for sensitive biological resources. A site visit was conducted by Rincon biologist Ed Miller on February 6, 2003, to determine presence or absence of drainages on the property and basic species composition of riparian habitat on the northwest property boundary.

USGS topographic maps were reviewed utilizing computer topographic maps (National Geographic, 2001). The onsite elevation ranges from approximately 270 to 280 feet above mean sea level. The site is level with a slight slope to the northwest toward the Santa Clara River. The site is currently in agricultural production as a lemon grove. This includes dirt access roads through the lemon tree rows and around the property periphery. No structures are present on the property, as observed on the site visit. The site consists primarily of lemon orchard, although native vegetation occurs on the northwest boundary, and includes riparian habitat (approximately

½ acre in size), with dominant species such as coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), willows (*Salix* sp.), and black cottonwood (*Populus balsamifera*). Pockets of non-native giant reed (*Arundo donax*) are also located within this riparian habitat.

No streams or drainages were observed onsite during the site visit and no blue-line streams are shown on the USGS topographic map. Drainage appears to be via overland flow from the southeast to the northwest. Furrows exist between orchard rows to funnel drainage toward the river, to the northwest.

The CNDDDB record search located 13 wildlife and 7 plant species. The search area incorporated a large diversity of habitats and conditions (10-mile radius from the property). Due to the current land use of agricultural production and a lack of natural habitats onsite, these species are unlikely to occur on most of the parcel. Limited riparian habitat exists along the northwest boundary of the site, which may have the potential to contain special-status species associated with the Santa Clara River corridor, especially riparian bird species. Special-status wildlife species that could occur in this area include:

- White tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*); found in foothill grasslands, marshes and river bottomlands. Federal Species of concern and CDFG fully protected species;
- Yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*); found in riparian forests areas, nesting in thick willow and undergrowth. State endangered species;
- Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*); summer resident in low riparian areas. Federal and State endangered species;
- Western spadefoot (*Scaphiopus hammondi*); occurs in grassland habitats, water necessary for breeding. State species of concern;
- Southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*); inhabits permanent or nearly permanent bodies of water in many habitat types with basking sites nearby. State species of concern.

Of the seven special-status plant species that had CNDDDB records in the area, none have the potential to occur due to a lack of required habitat.

Biological resources issues:

- a. **Endangered, threatened, or rare species.** This Conditional Certification of Compliance for a lot line adjustment would have no impacts to biological resources located on this site. These resources include approximately ½ acre of riparian habitat located at the northwestern edge of a lemon orchard that covers a majority of the 8.62 acre parcel.

Special-status species including white-tailed kite, yellow-billed cuckoo, least Bell's vireo, western spadefoot toad, and southwestern pond turtle, have the potential to occur within the riparian habitat, which is contiguous with the larger Santa Clara River riparian area adjacent to the north. The CNDDDB occurrence for the yellow-billed cuckoo was located within the Santa Clara River area adjacent to the project site, however this record occurred in 1904, and a subsequent search in 1977 did not locate this species. Due to the potential of the above listed species

to occur in this area, mitigation would be required for any development actions that would affect the riparian area along the northwestern boundary of the property.

- b. **Wetland Habitat.** No waters of the U.S. were observed on the site which is currently in agricultural production, wetland habitat may occur in the riparian habitat located on the northwest boundary of the property. No mitigation would be required for this action. However, future development actions that would potentially impact this area along the northwest boundary of the property may require mitigation per Ventura County ordinance.
- c. **Coastal Habitat.** The site is not located within the coastal zone. As such, no mitigation would be required for future development.
- d. **Migration Corridors.** The project site is approximately 8.62 acres in size and is surrounded on three sides by agricultural areas. Species passing through the project site may partially be blocked by future development, but will alternately be able to utilize other areas of the site and adjacent open land for passage, especially the adjacent Santa Clara River Corridor. Therefore any potential development would not present a significant barrier to migration. No mitigation would be required.
- e. **Locally important Species/Communities.** Native trees exist on the site within the small riparian area, including coast live oak, black cottonwood, and willow. Both oak trees and cottonwood trees are protected by the Ventura County Zoning Ordinance per section 8107-25.5 and loss of these trees would result in a potentially significant impact. The current action would not impact any of these resources. However, any future development actions that would impact these native tree resources would require mitigation, per zoning ordinance requirements.

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 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

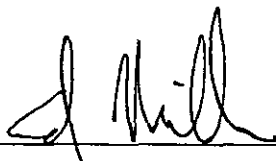
Recommended ☐

Required for Negative Declaration ☒

Although the Conditional Certificate of Compliance would not result in any impacts to biological resources, future grading or development that would impact the approximately ½ acre riparian habitat area on the northwest boundary would have the potential to impact biological resources. These resources could include white-tailed kite, yellow billed cuckoo, least Bell's vireo, spadefoot toad, southwestern pond turtle, wetland resources, and protected trees (oaks and cottonwood). Therefore, the following mitigation measures are suggested prior to any development or future grading.

- a. **Sensitive Fauna.** For any potential development actions that would impact the natural riparian forest area on the northwest boundary, surveys should be conducted for special-status wildlife species, especially riparian bird species. If sensitive species or any nesting bird or raptor species should occur, they should be avoided while nesting with the appropriate buffer zone to prevent disturbance, until it has been determined that any young have fledged.
- b. **Wetland Habitat.** Wetland habitat may occur within the riparian zone located on the northwest boundary of the property. Per the Ventura County General Plan Section 1.5.2-3 and 1.5.2-4, any significant wetland resources may require a setback buffer, 100 feet or as determined by a qualified biologist, from potential development or construction.
- e. **Native Trees.** Any oak or cottonwood trees (or other Ventura County protected trees) that may be removed by future project development shall be mitigated for in compliance with the Ventura County Coastal Zoning Ordinance.

Reviewer: _____



Ed Miller
Project Manager/Biologist for
Rincon Consultants, Inc.
Phone: 641-1000 Ext. 41

Date: _____

11/7/03

November 7, 2003

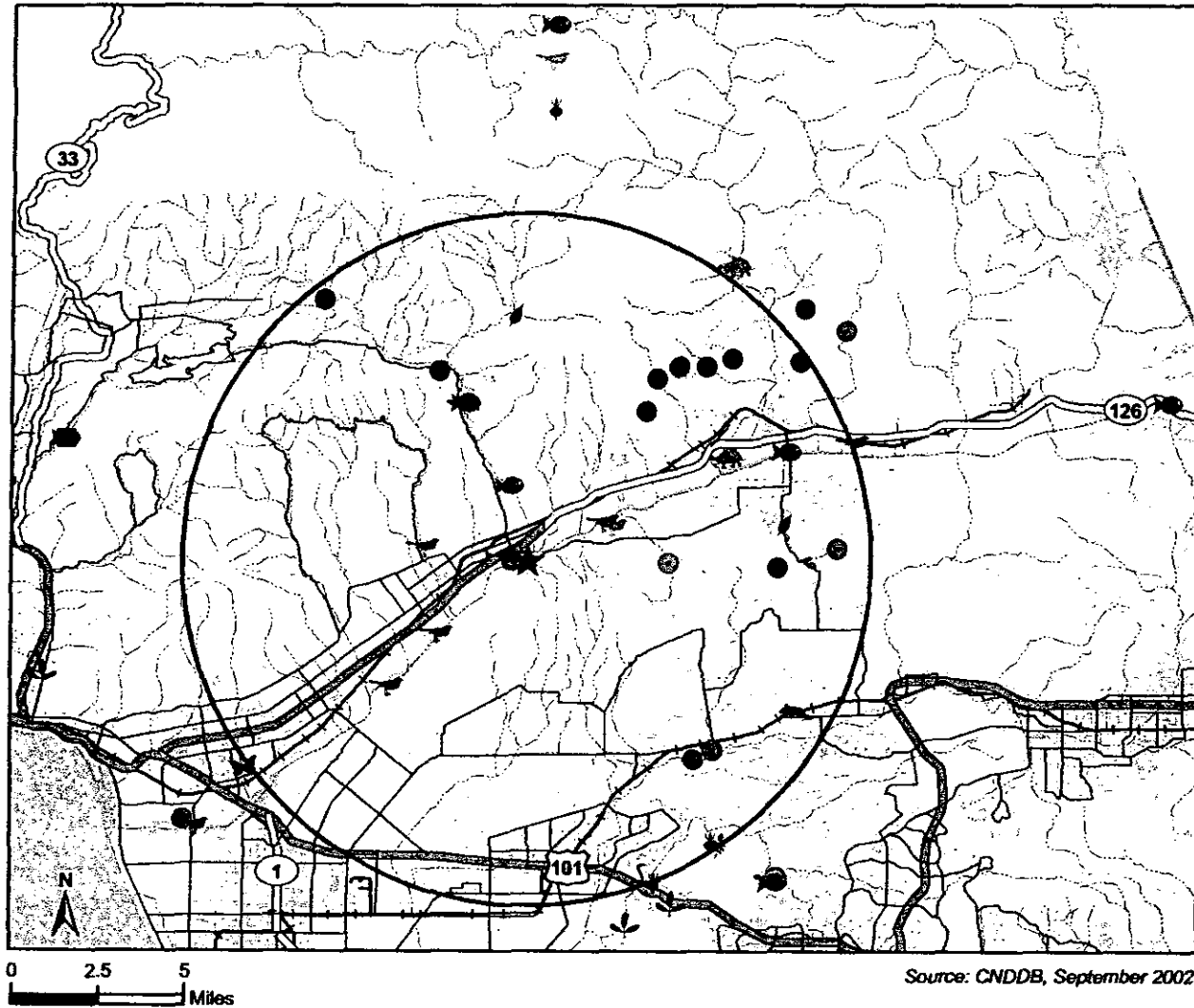
F. REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database. September 2002. RAREFIND2 software.

California Department of Fish and Game. July 2002. *Special Plants List*. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.

California Department of Fish and Game. July 2002. *Special Animals*.

Ventura County RMA CCC vj01/PM 5404
Biological Resources Initial Study



- ★ Project Site
- 10-mile radius
- AAABH01140, MOUNTAIN YELLOW-LEGGED FROG
- ABNK03010, CALIFORNIA CONDOR
- ABNK06010, WHITE-TAILED KITE
- ABNR02022, WESTERN YELLOW-BILLED CUCKOO
- ABPB08080, COASTAL CALIFORNIA GNATCATCHER
- ABPBW01114, LEAST BELL'S VIREO
- AFCHA0209J, SOUTHERN STEELHEAD - SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA ESU
- AFCJB13120, ARROYO CHUB
- AFCJC02190, SANTA ANA SUCKER
- AMAFF08041, SAN DIEGO DESERT WOODRAT
- ARAAD02032, SOUTHWESTERN POND TURTLE
- ARAD836160, TWO-STRIPED GARTER SNAKE

- CARE2310CA, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA STEELHEAD STREAM
- CTT61310CA, SOUTHERN COAST LIVE OAK RIPARIAN FOREST
- CTT61340CA, SOUTHERN MIXED RIPARIAN FOREST
- CTT62400CA, SOUTHERN SYCAMORE ALDER RIPARIAN WOODLAND
- CTT63300CA, SOUTHERN RIPARIAN SCRUB
- CTT63320CA, SOUTHERN WILLOW SCRUB
- CTT71210CA, CALIFORNIA WALNUT WOODLAND
- IIIEPP2010, MONARCH BUTTERFLY
- PDCRA04016, CONEJO DUDLEYA
- PDCRA040U0, VERITY'S DUDLEYA
- PDFAB0F7B1, VENTURA MARSH MILK-VETCH
- PDPGN081G0, CONEJO BUCKWHEAT
- PDPGN0J041, ABRAMS'S OXYTHECA
- PMLI00D150, PLUMMER'S MARIPOSA LILY
- PMLI00V0N0, OJAI FRITILLARY

**Sensitive Elements Reported by the
California Natural Diversity Database**

Attachment A

Ventura County