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Biological Assessment of Three Parcels on Kathleen Drive

**Ventu Park, Ventura County, California
Planned Development No. LU-04-00126
October 25, 2004**



Introduction

The Resource Management Agency Planning Division of the County of Ventura is processing an application by Lausanne Properties (John Armstrong) for a Conditional Use Permit (CUP). The permit would allow grading on three adjacent parcels in order to construct three individual single family homes. The project is located on the south side of Kathleen Drive, east of Donlon Road in Ventu Park, adjacent to the City of Thousand Oaks. The parcel numbers are 673-0-130-33, 34, and 35, having a total combined gross acreage of approximately 1.34 acres. The Case Planner is Jared Rosengren (805) 654-2493. Condor Environmental has been asked to review the biological resources of the site and to prepare the biological resources section of the Initial Study pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Methods

The three parcels were briefly surveyed on foot by Condor Biologists Elihu Gevirtz and Vince Semonsen on the morning of October 13, 2004 from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Site conditions as well as all plants and animals observed were noted. Animals were noted by sight, sound, tracks, and scat. A potato rake was used to scrape the ground surface in several locations looking for reptiles and amphibians. Plants unknown to the investigators were clipped and pieces brought back (with the exception of one *Ceanothus* and one *Mimulus*) to Condor Botanist Mary Carroll for identification. Since the site is covered in dense chaparral, not all areas of the site could be surveyed. Nevertheless, much of the area was observed by walking up the slope on a trail from Kathleen Drive to the chain link fence near the top of the hill.

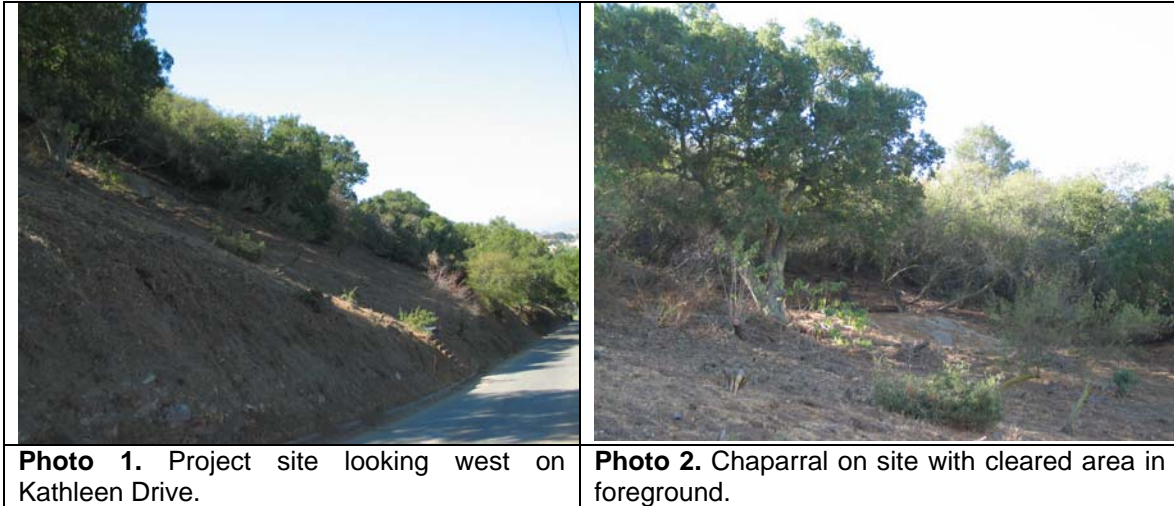
The surrounding environment was briefly observed by driving around the neighborhood to view nearby habitats and suburban development in order to obtain a preliminary understanding of the extent of development in the area and any possible wildlife corridors and surrounding habitat issues.

The California Natural Diversity Database was queried on October 13, 2004, and a list of locally rare plants of Ventura County (David Magney, 26 August 2004) and a preliminary list of Listed Animals in Ventura County (2004) was consulted.

Results

The site is within the upper and steeper portion of the existing developed rural neighborhood of Ventu Park, adjacent to the City of Thousand Oaks. Construction of new homes and associated infrastructure is occurring on several properties nearby. The north facing slopes of the hills to the south of the neighborhood are vegetated by chaparral. Chaparral (with a Coast Live Oak component) also dominates most of the undeveloped portions of the neighborhood. One or more drainages occur in the neighborhood; and of these, at least one is being developed with a home.

The three parcels are adjacent to Kathleen Drive, a narrow, paved street, developed with single family homes on its north side. Vegetation on the parcels consists of dense chaparral dominated by green-bark Ceanothus (Photos 1 and 2). Associated plant and animal species, including at least seven large, mature coast live oaks, are listed in the tables below. The northern most portions of the parcels have been cleared for fire protection purposes.



Endangered Species

No rare, threatened or endangered species, or candidates for such listing, were observed on the property.

Wetlands

There are no wetlands or riparian areas on or adjacent to the property, evidenced by a lack of wetland indicator species.

Coastal Habitats

The project is outside of the Coastal Zone.

Habitats Providing Seasonal Concentrations or Migration of Fish & Wildlife

Such habitats and areas do not exist on the property.

Locally Important Species and Communities

One Cooper's Hawk was observed on the property. The animal was perched at the top of an oak tree, was harassed by crows, and then moved under cover of the tree or shrubs. This animal is listed as a Species of Special Concern (3rd Priority) by the California Department of Fish and Game. No habitats or species identified by the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) were observed on site. No plants identified by California Native Plant Society (CNPS), as worthy of protection were observed on site.

Cumulative Impacts

Cumulative impacts in Ventu Park and the City of Thousand Oaks have apparently eliminated most of the native habitat in the area. The three parcels together (approximately 1.3 acres combined), together with the undeveloped parcel to the east and the partially? undeveloped parcel to the south provide a small island of habitat in this developed rural neighborhood. This island has ecological value and functions such as wildlife habitat, but because it is surrounded by development, its value is limited.

Mitigation Measures

No mitigation measures have been identified.

Table 1 Plants Observed October 13, 2004					
Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance on the Site	Legal Status	Local Concern	Notes
Green bark ceanothus	<i>Ceanothus spinosus</i>	dominant	none	none	
Black sage	<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	common	none	none	
Ceanothus	<i>Ceanothus cuneatus?</i>	common			
Chamise	<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>	common	none	none	at top of slope
Climbing penstemon	<i>Keckiella cordifolia</i>	common	none	none	
Coastal sage brush	<i>Artemisia californica</i>	common	none	none	
Elderberry	<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	common	none	none	a few very large
Monkey flower	<i>Mimulus sp.</i>	common			
Moutain mahogany	<i>Cercocarpus betuloides</i>	common	none	none	
Ashy-leaf buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum cinereum</i>	not on site	none	endemic	adjacent to east property line
Coast live oak	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	occassional	none	none	at least 7 on site
Coyote brush	<i>Bacharis pilularlis</i>	occassional	none	none	
Giant wild rye	<i>Leymus condensatus</i>	occassional	none	none	only in one area
Laurel sumac	<i>Malosma laurina</i>	occassional	none	none	
Sugar bush	<i>Rhus ovata</i>	occassional	none	none	
California figwort	<i>Scrophularia californica</i>	uncommon	none	none	
Eucrypta	<i>Eucrypta chrysanthemifolia</i>	uncommon	none	none	
Scrub oak	<i>Quercus berberdifolia</i>	uncommon	none	none	

Notes:

1. Neither the second *Ceanothus*, nor the *Mimulus* were brought back to the office for identification. Upon discussion with David Magney (25 October 2004), the second *Ceanothus* species on the site is probably *Ceanothus cuneatus*.

Table 2 Animals Observed October 13, 2004					
Common Name	Scientific Name	Abundance on the Site	Legal Status	Local Concern	Notes
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	common	none	none	
Botta's Pocket Gopher	<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	common	none	none	
Dusky-footed Wood Rat	<i>Neotoma fuscipes</i>	common	none	none	
Bewicks Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	occasional	none	none	uncertain
Yellow Rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	occasional	none	none	
Red Tail Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	offsite	none	none	Perched on adjacent property
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	one individual	CDFG SSC (3rd Priority)		

Abbreviations

CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
SSC	Species of Special Concern

Notes:

2. Species in the Third Priority category are not in any present danger of extirpation and their populations within most of their range do not appear to be declining seriously; however, simply by virtue of their small populations in California, they are vulnerable to extirpation should a threat materialize (CDFG, 2002).

	ISSUE (Responsible Department)	PROJECT IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT*				CUMULATIVE IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT*				
		N	LS	PS -M	PS	N	LS	PS -M	PS	
PUBLIC FACILITIES/ SERVICES:	22. <u>Transportation/Circulation:</u>									
	A. Public Roads and Highways:									
	(1) Level of Service (PWA)									
	(2) Safety/Design (PWA)									
	(3) Tactical Access (Fire)									
	B. Private Roads and Driveways (Fire):									
	(1) Safety/Design									
	(2) Tactical Access									
	C. Pedestrian/Bicycle:									
	(1) Public Facilities (PWA)									
	(2) Private Facilities									
	D. Parking (Plng.)									
	E. Bus Transit									
	F. Railroads									
	G. Airports (Airports)									
	H. Harbors (Harbors)									
	I. Pipelines									
	23. <u>Water Supply:</u>									
	A. Quality (EH)									
	B. Quantity (PWA)									
	C. Fire Flow (Fire)									
	24. <u>Waste Treatment/Disposal:</u>									
	A. Individual Sewage Disposal System (EH)									
	B. Sewage Collection/Treatment Facilities									
	C. Solid Waste Management (PWA)									
	D. Solid Waste Facilities (EHD)									
	25. <u>Utilities:</u>									
	A. Electric									
	B. Gas									
	C. Communication									
	26. <u>Flood Control/Drainage:</u>									
	A. FCD Facility (FCD)									
	B. Other Facilities (PWA)									

	<u>ISSUE</u> (Responsible Department)	PROJECT IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT*				CUMULATIVE IMPACT DEGREE OF EFFECT*			
		N	LS	PS -M	PS	N	LS	PS -M	PS
PUBLIC FACILITIES/ SERVICES (CONT.):	27. <u>Law Enforcement/Emergency Svs. (Sheriff):</u>								
	A. Personnel/Equipment								
	B. Facilities								
	28. <u>Fire Protection (Fire):</u>								
	A. Distance/Response Time								
	B. Personnel/Equipment/Facilities								
	29. <u>Education:</u>								
	A. Schools								
	B. Libraries (Lib. Agency)								
	30. <u>Recreation (GSA):</u>								
	A. Local Parks/Facilities								
	B. Regional Parks/Facilities								
	C. Regional Trails/Corridors								

DEGREE OF EFFECT:

N = No Impact.

LS = Less Than Significant

PS-M = Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated.

PS = Potentially Significant Impact.

AGENCIES:

APCD - Air Pollution Control District

GSA - General Services Agency

Harbors - Harbor Department

Lib. Agency - Library Services Agency

Airports - Department Of Airports

Fire – Fire Protection District

PWA - Public Works Agency

Plng. - Planning Division

FCD - Flood Control District

Sheriff - Sheriff's Department

EH - Environmental Health Division

Ag. Dept. - Agricultural Department

DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES TO CHECKLIST

Please refer to explanation discussion in text of Environmental Document.

<u>MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE</u>		<u>YES/MAYBE</u>	<u>NO</u>
Based on the information contained within Sections B and C:			
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 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 that 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 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 the total of those impacts on the environment is significant).		√
4.	Does the project have environmental effects that will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?		√

<u>DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT</u>	
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 type="checkbox"/> 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 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 environment 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 environment, 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.

Ronald C. Coons
Director
County of Ventura Public Works Agency

Date _____