

SECTION B

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

Job: TT-5381/PD-1955/CUPs-5269, 5270, 5271 **Requester:** Kim Rodriguez
Applicant: Saticoy Land Development **Date:** November 13, 2002
Survey Type: Field **Rationale:** Adjacent River

Site Description: A field visit of the site (Parcel nos. 090-0-110-04, -18, -25, -26, -27) was conducted on November 13, 2002. The site is located in the Santa Clara River valley, in the community of Saticoy, adjacent to State Route 118. Approximately 32 of the 50.17 acre site is used to produce ornamental flowers and other row crops. Approximately 14 acres (Parcel A) is comprised of the Santa Clara River. The balance of the site supports commercial land uses. The Franklin Barranca, a concrete-lined flood control channel is located along the eastern site boundary. Parcel A and portions of the adjacent Ventura County Flood Control easement support giant reed (*Arundo donax*) and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), with a few scattered red willows (*Salix laevigata*).

	Project Impact Degree of Effect*				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect*			
	N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
6. <u>Biological Resources</u>								
a. endangered, threatened, or rare species			X				X	
b. wetland habitat		X				X		
c. coastal habitat			X				X	
d. migration corridors		X				X		
e. locally important species/communities			X				X	

*N No Impact
 LS Less Than Significant Impact
 PS-M Potentially Significant Impact Unless Mitigation Incorporated
 PS Potentially Significant Impact

SECTION C

DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES

a. Plant or animal species listed under either the Federal or California Endangered Species Acts reported within 10 miles of the project site include:

- Southern steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*, Federal Endangered) - reported from the Santa Clara River, on-site (Parcel A).
- Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*, Federal Endangered) – reported from the Santa Clara River, 5 miles to the northeast (introduced) (Swift et al., 1993).

Tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*, Federal Endangered) – reported from the Santa Clara River estuary, 7.5 miles to the southwest (NDDB, 2002).

- California least tern (*Sterna antillarum browni*, Federal Endangered) – reported from the Ventura Harbor, 8 miles to the southwest (NDDB, 2002).

Western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*, Federal Endangered) reported from Ormond Beach, 9.5 miles to the south (NDDB, 2002)

- Belding's savannah sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis beldingi*, State Endangered) - reported from Ormond Beach, 9.5 miles to the south (NDDB, 2002)
- Least Bell's vireo (*Vireo belli pusillus*, Federal and State Endangered) – reported from the Santa Clara River, 3,500 feet east of Parcel A (Sweetwater Environmental Biologists, 1992).

The proposed project includes a water wash-down sump to minimize the potential of concrete residues entering the Santa Clara River. However, parking, operation and maintenance of vehicles and equipment at the proposed County Maintenance Facility may result in the discharge of hydrocarbons to the Santa Clara River via stormwater run-off. Such discharges may substantially reduce the habitat quality of the Santa Clara River for steelhead, Santa Ana sucker and tidewater goby. This impact is considered potentially significant.

Suitable habitat for least Bell's vireo occurs at the Franklin Barranca/Santa Clara River confluence, immediately adjacent to Parcel A and Lot 2. The project includes a ready-mix concrete plant, a hot-mix asphalt plant and rock crushing/aggregate sorting facility, all immediately adjacent to the Santa Clara River. In particular, the proposed asphalt plant would be located within 80 feet of suitable least Bell's vireo habitat. These facilities may operate at night. The combined noise, lighting and dust associated with these operations may disrupt existing nesting and/or prevent nesting at suitable habitat at the Franklin Barranca/Santa Clara River confluence. This indirect impact is considered potentially significant.

Habitat for least tern, snowy plover and Belding's savannah sparrow are sufficiently distant from the project site that impacts are not expected.

- b. Wetlands occur within Parcel A and at the Franklin Barranca/Santa Clara River confluence. Construction of the proposed berm within the Flood Control easement would result in the loss of about 0.4 acres of wetland vegetation. However, most of this area is comprised of giant reed, an invasive species. Due the dominance by giant reed, this area is not considered a significant wetland for the purposes of General Plan Policy 1.5.2.3. Since the project would primarily replace invasive species with a landscaped berm, the loss of wetlands is considered a less than significant impact.
- c. The project site is located approximately 4 miles northeast of the coastal zone and coastal resources do not occur in the vicinity of the site. However, stormwater discharge of hydrocarbons from the County Maintenance Facility may reach the Santa Clara River estuary and adversely affect the water quality and habitat value of this regionally important wetland. This impact is considered potentially significant.
- d. The Santa Clara River is considered a regional wildlife movement corridor. Noise, dust and lighting may reduce the value of adjacent portions of the Santa Clara River as a movement corridor. However, the proposed landscaped berm along the boundary of Parcel A and Lots 2 and 4 would provide an adequate buffer. Therefore, impacts to wildlife migration are considered less than significant.
- e. Special-status species known to occur within or immediately adjacent to the Santa Clara River include arroyo chub, southwestern pond turtle, San Diego horned lizard, coastal western whiptail, two-striped garter snake, Cooper's hawk, white-tailed kite, loggerhead shrike, tri-colored blackbird, yellow warbler and yellow-breasted chat. Habitat for these species on the site is limited to Parcel A, which would not be developed. Therefore, potential impacts would be limited to disturbance associated with noise, dust and lighting. The proposed landscaped berm along the boundary of Parcel A and Lots 2 and 4 would provide an adequate buffer to prevent disturbance of these species, unless they were nesting in the immediate vicinity. Impacts to riparian nesting special-status birds (Cooper's hawk, yellow warbler and yellow-breasted chat) are considered potentially significant.

References:

Natural Diversity Data Base (NDDB). 2002. RAREFIND 2 output for the Saticoy 7.5-minute quadrangle. California Department of Fish and Game. Sacramento, CA.

Sweetwater Environmental Biologists, Inc. 1992. *Report on the Least Bell's Vireo Monitoring and Cowbird Removal Program for 1991*. Prepared for the California Department of Fish and Game.

Swift, C. C., T. R. Haglund, M. Ruiz, and R. N. Fischer. 1993. *The Status and Distribution of the Freshwater Fishes of Southern California*. Southern California Academy of Sciences, 1993.

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?

X

X

X

X

SECTION E
DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

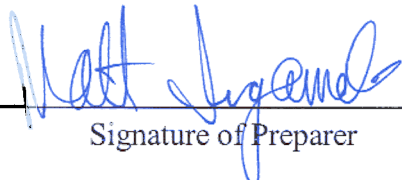
I find the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

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.

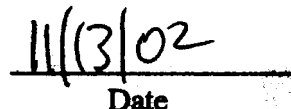
I find the proposed project, individually and/or cumulatively MAY have a significant effect on the environment and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

Mitigation Measures

- a. All exterior lighting within 500 feet of the Santa Clara River shall be shielded and directed towards the ground.
- b. The proposed landscaped berm shall be extended to the north to parallel Franklin Barranca to the drop structure, to serve as a buffer between the asphalt plant and riparian habitat at the Franklin Barranca/Santa Clara River confluence.
- c. The extended landscaped berm shall be densely planted with native cottonwoods and/or willows reaching a height of at least 30 feet, to block lighting and intercept dust.
- d. Fencing shall be installed between the Santa Clara River and Lots 2 and 4 during the construction period to prevent habitat loss outside the proposed project limits.
- e. The proposed County Maintenance Facility shall be enclosed by impervious berms to contain site run-off, and shall treat run-off using a vertical gravity separator, oil skimmer or other device approved by the Regional Water Quality Control Board, prior to discharge to the Franklin Barranca and Santa Clara River.
- f. Should grading or construction of project facilities occur between March 15 and August 15, a breeding bird survey shall be conducted in all areas within 500 feet of the project site. Construction shall be cancelled if any special-status bird nests are found within 250 feet of Lots 2 and 4, until the nests have been abandoned or the young have fledged. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service shall be consulted regarding additional requirements, should endangered species be encountered.



Signature of Preparer



Date