

**Historic Biological Reports
Scan Control Sheet**

County Project Number(s):

pm-4952

Report Type (check one):

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

Report Date (Month/Day/Year):

03/01/2000

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: March 1, 2000
Requestor: Kim Rodriguez
Project: Parcel Map 4952

Field Study: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Justification: Check of site for possible suitable habitat for sensitive animal species.

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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. wetland 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"/>
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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Degree of Effect Explanation

N = No effect

LS = Less than significant effect

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

PS = Potentially Significant effect; EIR required

B. DISCUSSION

The proposed project consists of the subdivision of 4.16 acres into two parcels and the subsequent grading of about half the site (2.2 acres) for the development of two single-family home sites. Most of the project site is a hillside that contains coastal sage scrub vegetation. In addition, there is a barren area associated with a dirt road near the eastern boundary of the site, a eucalyptus grove along a dirt road at the base of the hillside at the western boundary, and two small planted eucalyptus trees near the southern end of the site. Dominant plants within the coastal sage scrub vegetation include buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*). Other common species include Lord's candle (*Yucca whipplei*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), mustard (*Brassica* sp.), storksbill (*Erodium* sp.), chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), California aster (*Lessingia filaginifolia*), and various annual grasses. Club moss was found under the shrubs on the northwest facing side of the hill. The coastal sage scrub area adjacent to the road shows signs of frequent disturbance (various amounts of trash) related to apparent use of the site as an overlook to the valley.

Animal species seen at the site included numerous Audubon cottontail rabbits, ground squirrel burrows, multiple pocket gopher holes, red-tailed hawk, turkey vulture, Say's phoebe, California thrasher, wrenit, Anna's hummingbird, white-crowned sparrow, and Cassin's

kingbird. No raptor nests were observed in the eucalyptus trees, nor was there any evidence of wintering Monarch butterflies (a state "watch" species).

On a regional basis, the site is at the urban fringe of the City of Simi Valley. South of the site is a vacant parcel with ruderal vegetation and a residential neighborhood. West of the site is a barren debris basin. North of the site is extensive coastal sage scrub habitat. It should be noted that immediately north of the site this habitat has been recently disturbed by extensive trenching for seismic studies (several trenches are still open). To the east of the site is additional coastal sage scrub vegetation that adjoins a water reservoir (steel tank) and residential neighborhood about 850 feet to the east.

The proposed grading for two home sites would result in the removal of approximately half of the coastal sage scrub at the site, and fuel modification needs for the homes is expected to remove an additional quarter acre. Given the proposed plan, the eucalyptus tree row at the western property boundary would remain, as would some of the coastal sage scrub located on the northwestern slope. Given the amount of coastal sage scrub still present in the vicinity adjacent to the site and its location adjacent to existing urban areas, the loss of this amount of sage scrub vegetation would not cause a significant impact.

No rare, threatened, or endangered animal species are known to be located in the immediate vicinity of the site. The federally-listed threatened California gnatcatcher occurs within coastal sage scrub habitat, with the nearest known population located about 6 miles west of the site. Sensitive animal species known to occur in the area and for which the habitat at the site could potentially include important habitat are the coast horned lizard (California species of concern) and loggerhead shrike (California species of concern). Other sensitive animal species that may use the site (such as Cooper's hawk and prairie falcon) would only use the site for part of their much larger habitat requirements.

No sign of loggerhead shrike nesting was observed at the site. At best, the site could support one pair, and the loss of a single pair would not have a significant effect on this species. Habitat and food (open areas of scrub and harvester ants) are present at the site in low quantities. Given the amount of habitat still existent north of the site, any onsite losses to horned lizards would be considered an adverse, but less than significant impact. The habitat at the site could potentially support breeding California gnatcatcher, but no populations are known to occur in the Simi Valley area. Given the extent of offsite habitat and low probability of this species presence, no significant impacts are anticipated. It is noted, however, that if any federal permits are determined to be necessary for the site, a protocol survey for this species may be required.

No rare, threatened, or endangered plant species are known to occur in the immediate vicinity of the project site. The state-listed rare Santa Susana tarplant is known to occur within the massive sandstone boulders of the Chatsworth Formation located in the east end of the Simi Valley and north of the site along Tapo Canyon Road, but suitable habitat is lacking at the site. The Catalina mariposa lily (a California Native Plant Society list 4 species, but not a state listed sensitive species) could occur in the area, and there is a low possibility for the Plummer's mariposa-lily (state species of concern). The site was checked for bulbs and residual stalks, but the only bulbs found were blue dicks (*Dichlostoma* sp.). No significant effects to state or federal listed rare, threatened, or endangered species are expected.

The project site is located inland and is not within the coastal zone. No coastal habitat is present.

The project site is at the fringe of the urban portion of the City of Simi Valley. Wildlife movement through the site is expected to be confined to local patterns associated with wildlife species and not part of a major wildlife movement corridor or primary movement pathway for any organism. The project does not pose a significant constraint to wildlife movement.

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 type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

D. MITIGATION MEASURES

Recommended ☐

Required for Negative Declaration ☒

No specific mitigation measures are necessary. It is noted that some of the coastal sage scrub habitat will be retained at the site, and where this habitat is not directly removed by grading, it should be maintained to reduce potential slope erosion. It is recommended that manufactured slopes at the site be replanted with low growing, less flammable scrub elements such as dwarf coyote brush. While the California gnatcatcher is not expected at the site, it nonetheless has a low probability of presence and a protocol survey may be required if federal permits are needed for the site.

E. DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FROM A BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Negative Declaration ☒ Mitigated Negative Declaration ☐ EIR Required ☐

Reviewer: _____

Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Date: _____

3/8/00

Phone: 641-1000

F. REFERENCES

- California Department of Fish and Game (October 1999a). *State and Federally Listed Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California*. 16 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Plant Conservation Program
- California Department of Fish and Game (October 1999b). *State and Federally Listed Endangered and Threatened Animals of California*. 12 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.
- California Department of Fish and Game (June 1999a). *Special Plants List*. 119 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.
- California Department of Fish and Game (June 1999b). *Special Animals*. 42+ pgs.
- County of Ventura (August 3, 1999). *Administrative Supplement to State CEQA Guidelines for the Implementation of California Environmental Quality Act*. 72 pgs.
- Holland, Robert F. (October 1986). *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California*. California Department of Fish and Game, Nongame Heritage Program. 156 pgs.
- United States Fish and Wildlife Service (November 30, 1998). *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants*. Special Reprint, Code of Federal Regulations, Title 50, Part 17, Subpart B.
- Zeiner, D., W.F. Laudenslayer, Jr., and K.E. Mayer (May 1988). *California's Wildlife*. California Statewide Wildlife Habitat Relationship System, Volumes I, II, & III. California Department of Fish and Game.