

SECTION B

INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

Job: LU07-0032

Requester: Lorie Baker

Applicant: Steve and Marci Lang

Date: May 21, 2007

Survey Type: Field and Office

Rationale: Grading for development of single family residence

Methodology: ENSR biologists conducted a meandering pedestrian survey of the proposed Project Site (current A.P.N. # 673-0-150-580) on May 18, 2007. The purpose of the site visit was to conduct a reconnaissance-level biological survey to determine the extent and nature of the biological resources on the Subject Property and adjacent areas that may be impacted by proposed Project activities (cumulatively referred to as the proposed Project Site). Additional resources utilized to evaluate biological resources within and in the vicinity of the proposed Project Site included a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) within the Newberry Park United States Geological Survey 7.5 minute topographic quadrangle map and a search of the Ventura County Bios Database.

Site Description: The 0.23-acre Subject Property is located at 1495 Topa View Trail near Ventu Park in unincorporated Ventura County, California (**Attachment A**). The Subject Property is located on a slight hill and is bounded by Topa View Trail to the north; two residential properties to the west and south; and vacant, undeveloped land to the east.

The proposed Project as outlined in application LU07-0032 (proposed Project) requests authorization to construct a 4,120 square foot (sq.ft.) single family residence that includes an attached garage. Access to the site will be provided to the property by the existing Topa View Trail. The proposed Project includes a fire clearance buffer that extends off of the Subject Property and onto adjacent property(s).

The development of the single-family residence (Area 3 shown on the vegetation map provided in **Attachment B**) is located on a flat area of the proposed Project Site that has been previously disturbed/graded and is dominated by non-native ruderal species. Currently, a trailer is parked on the graded pad proposed for development. The western and southern portions of the Subject Property (Area 4) are vegetated with ornamental/landscape plants. The eastern portion of the proposed Project Site (Area 1) is located on a downhill slope dominated by mix of ruderal and native plant species including deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), mustard (*Brassica sp.*), goldenbush (*Hazardia sp.*), wedgeleaf ceanothus (*Ceanothus cuneatus*), and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). Other species found in Area 1 include black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), bindweed (*Convolvulus sp.*), star thistle (*Centaurea sp.*), and horseweed (*Conyza sp.*). Area 2, located to the east of Area 1 beyond the Subject Property boundary is vegetated with coyote brush, wedgeleaf ceanothus, black sage, toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and monkey flower (*Mimulus auranticus*). The northern portion of Area 2 has been cleared of vegetation. A concreted drainage channel is located adjacent to the southern portion of the Subject Property and also runs along the toe of the slope on eastern boundary of Area 1. This channel does not support vegetation.

Ventura County requires a minimum 100-foot fire clearance buffer around the proposed single family residence. It is possible that up to a 200-foot fire clearance buffer may be required for the proposed Project. To the east of the Subject Property, the fire clearance buffer area would extend into adjacent property(s) dominated by a mix of wedge-leaf ceanothus and chamise vegetation. Patches of what appeared to be needle grass (*Nacella sp.*) were observed interspersed between the ceanothus/chamise vegetation within the fire clearance area adjacent to a trail that runs downhill toward riparian area. Additionally, there is an ephemeral

stream that runs generally west to east located within 200 feet of the southern boundary of the Subject Property. This stream likely falls under the jurisdiction of both the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the United States Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). A small portion of the stream that was readily accessible was surveyed. This area provides high quality riparian habitat with stands of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) as the dominant vegetation type.

In addition to plant species, several wildlife species were observed within the Project site and adjacent areas including California towhee (*Pipilo crissalis*), California quail (*Callipepla californica*), and northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*). Rabbit pellets were also observed within the proposed Project site.

A project site map is provided in **Attachment A**, a vegetation map in **Attachment B**, and photographs of the project site are in **Attachment C**.

SECTION C

DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES

	Project Impacts				Cumulative Impacts			
	Degree of Effect				Degree of Effect			
	N	LS	PS-M	PS	N	LS	PS-M	PS
6. <u>Biological Resources</u>								
a. Endangered, threatened or rare species	✓				✓			
b. Wetland Habitat			✓		✓			
c. Coastal Habitat	✓				✓			
d. Migration Corridors			✓		✓			
e. Locally important species/communities	✓				✓			
N: No impact LS: Less than significant PS-M: Potentially significant, unless mitigated to a level of insignificance PS: Potentially significant, even after mitigation								

a. Endangered, Threatened or Rare Species

According to the CNDDDB, several special-status species occur within at least a quarter-mile of the proposed Project Site (**Attachment D**). These species were not observed during ENSR's site visit nor are they expected to be present within the proposed Project Site.

Plants:

The following candidate, rare, threatened, or endangered plant species have been reported in the vicinity of the Project Site:

- **Rayless ragwort** (*Senico aphanactis*), a species listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as rare, threatened, or endangered in California, has been found south of Newbury Road, within one mile of the project site. Rayless ragwort typically grows in drying alkaline flats within cismontane woodland and coastal scrub habitat. No such habitat is present within the proposed Project Site.
- **Plummer's mariposa lily** (*Calochortus plummerae*), a federal species of concern and a species listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as rare, threatened, or endangered in California or elsewhere, has been found in the Conejo Valley, within 1.5 miles of the project site. Plummer's mariposa lily is more common in foothill grassland and generally occurs on rocky and sandy sites, usually of granite or alluvial material. No such habitat is present within the proposed Project Site.
- **Southern tarplant** (*Centromadia parryi ssp. australis*), a species listed by CNPS as rare, threatened,

or endangered in California or elsewhere, has been found within two miles of the Project site. Southern tarplant grows in valley and foothill grasslands, vernal pools, and marsh habitats. No such habitat is present within the proposed Project Site.

Animals:

The following candidate, rare, threatened, or endangered animal species have been reported in the vicinity of the proposed Project Site:

- **Arroyo chub** (*Gila orcutti*), a state species of special concern, requires coastal streams with mud or sand bottoms and slow moving water. This species has been observed in Conejo Creek approximately 1.5 miles north of the Project site. No such habitat exists within the Project site therefore the arroyo chub is not expected to be present within the proposed Project Site.

Plant Communities:

CDFG and CNPS have identified several native plant communities that are rare and/or diminishing within California. Substantial losses of these plant communities may be considered “significant” under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

The following sensitive plant communities have been reported within the vicinity of the proposed Project Site:

- **Valley oak woodland** is a woodland community with canopies dominated almost exclusively by valley oaks. The shrub understory typically consists of poison-oak, blue elder, California wild grape, toyon, California coffeeberry, and California blackberry. Various sorts of wild oats, brome, barley, ryegrass, and needlegrass dominate the ground cover. Valley oak woodland habitat is located within Arroyo Conejo approximately 1.5 miles north east of the proposed Project site. No such habitat is present within the proposed Project Site.
- **Southern sycamore alder riparian woodland** is a riparian community typically located in very rocky streambeds subject to seasonally high-intensity flooding. The vegetation is characterized by tall, open, broadleaved, winter-deciduous streamside woodland species dominated by California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) and often white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*). Southern sycamore alder riparian woodland habitat is located within Arroyo Conejo approximately 1.5 miles north east of the proposed Project site. No such habitat is present within the proposed Project Site.

b. Wetland Habitat

The Subject Property does not support wetland habitat. However, an ephemeral stream is located off of Subject Property but within 200 feet of the southern boundary of the proposed Project Site. There is a potential for the wetland/riparian habitat to be impacted if the fire clearance buffer associated with the proposed Project extends into this area. Mitigation Measure **MM-1** should be implemented to avoid or minimize impacts to this wetland habitat.

c. Coastal Habitat

The project site is not located within the Coastal Zone as defined by both Ventura County's Local Coastal Program and the California's Coastal Act. Thus, the proposed Project will not impact coastal habitat.

d. Migration Corridors

The Subject Property is not used as a corridor for wildlife movement. However, habitat to the south and east of the Subject Property within the proposed Project Site is identified by Ventura County as a wildlife corridor. A small portion of the wildlife corridor would be impacted by the 100-foot fire clearance buffer. This disturbance would have a less than significant impact. However, potentially significant impacts due to vegetation clearance could occur to the migration corridor if a fire clearance buffer of greater than 100 feet is implemented for the proposed Project site. Mitigation Measure **MM-2** should be implemented to minimize potential impacts to the migration corridor if a greater than 100-foot fire clearance buffer is required for the proposed Project.

e. Locally Important Species/Communities

Locally important species were not identified within the proposed Project Site.

Cumulative Impacts

A search of the Ventura County BIOS database was conducted to determine if projects with impacts to biological resources have occurred in the vicinity of the proposed Project. The results of the database search indicated that a Biological Initial Survey Report was conducted for the proposed development of three single family residences (Planned Development number LU04-00126) located on Kathleen Drive, approximately 0.2 miles north of the proposed Project Site. The project did not result in impacts to biological resources. Thus, no cumulative impacts would occur.

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?		✓

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

- MM-1:** The proposed Project should avoid impacts to wetland/riparian habitat within the fire clearance buffer. If avoidance is not possible, vegetation clearance associated with the fire clearance buffer within the wetland should be minimized to the extent feasible.
- MM-2:** The proposed Project should minimize impacts to the wildlife corridor from fire clearance activities that extend beyond 100 feet of the Project site and into the wildlife corridor by conducting selective clearing of vegetation rather than clearing the entire area.

ATTACHMENT A

PROJECT SITE MAP



- WILDLIFE MOVEMENT BOUNDARY
- 100' Brush Clearance Buffer
- PARCEL BOUNDARY



Ventura County
Resource Management Agency
GIS Development & Mapping Services
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LU07-0032
673-0-150-58 & 673-0-150-69
MAP #6B LANDSCAPE WILDLIFE MOVEMENT

0 100 200 Feet
Disclaimer: this map was created by the Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Mapping Services - GIS, which is designed and operated solely for the convenience of the County and related public agencies. The County does not warrant the accuracy of this map and no decision involving a risk of economic loss or physical injury should be made in reliance thereon.

ATTACHMENT B

VEGETATION MAP



Wildlife Habitat

- WILDLIFE MOVEMENT BOUND
- 100' Brush Clearance Buffer
- PARCEL BOUNDARY



Ventura County
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ATTACHMENT C

SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

ENSR		PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG	
Client Name: Ventura County Planning Division		Site Location: 1459 Topa View Trail	
Project No. 07020-024-001			
Photo No. 1	Date: 5/18/07		
Direction Photo Taken: North			
Description: Building pad area looking north towards driveway access			
Photo No. 2	Date: 5/18/07		
Direction Photo Taken: Southwest			
Description: Building pad showing landscaped slope to neighboring residence.			

ENSR		PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG	
Client Name: Ventura County Planning Division		Site Location: 1459 Topa View Trail	
Project No. 07020-024-001			
Photo No. 3	Date: 5/18/07		
Direction Photo Taken: North-northeast			
Description: Slope below building pad.			
Photo No. 4	Date: 5/18/07		
Direction Photo Taken: Northeast			
Description: North side of area below building pad.			

ENSR

PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG

Client Name:
Ventura County Planning Division

Site Location:
1459 Topa View Trail

Project No.
07020-024-001

Photo No.
5

Date:
5/18/07

Direction Photo Taken:

South-southwest

Description:

Building pad site from driveway area (concrete truck was at the incorrect address).



Photo No.
6

Date:
5/18/07



Direction Photo Taken:



Southwest

Description:

Building pad and disturbed/landscaped area.



ENSR		PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG
Client Name: Ventura County Planning Division		Site Location: 1459 Topa View Trail
Project No. 07020-024-001		
Photo No. 7	Date: 5/18/07	
Direction Photo Taken: Southwest		
Description: Landscaped slope adjacent to building pad (construction truck was using site as staging/parking only).		
Photo No. 8	Date: 5/18/07	
Direction Photo Taken: Southeast		
Description: South side of parcel, drainage channel generally separates disturbed area from undisturbed area.		

ENSR		PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG	
Client Name: Ventura County Planning Division		Site Location: 1459 Topa View Trail	Project No. 07020-024-001
Photo No. 9	Date: 5/18/07		
Direction Photo Taken: North			
Description: East side of parcel, drainage channel separating disturbed from undisturbed areas. Note area in upper left quadrant of photo has been cleared since County aerial image was acquired.			
Photo No. 10	Date: 5/18/07		
Direction Photo Taken: Southeast			
Description: East side of building pad showing slope break and drainage channel.			

<div>ENSR</div>		<div>PHOTOGRAPHIC LOG</div>	
<div>Client Name:</div> <div>Ventura County Planning Division</div>		<div>Site Location:</div> <div>1459 Topa View Trail</div>	
<div>Project No.</div> <div>07020-024-001</div>			
<div>Photo No.</div> <div>11</div>	<div>Date:</div> <div>5/18/07</div>		
<div>Direction Photo Taken:</div> <div>East</div>			
<div>Description:</div> <div>Transition to riparian vegetation, east of parcel. Lighter green vegetation in center of photo is willow.</div>			
<div>Photo No.</div>	<div>Date:</div>		
<div>Direction Photo Taken:</div>			
<div>Description:</div>			

ATTACHMENT D

CNDDB MAP

