

## Initial Study Biological Assessment

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**Original ISBA report date:** June 8, 2009

**Revision report date:** July 6, 2009

**Case number:** SD09-0007

**Permit type:** Parcel Map Waiver/Large Lot Subdivision

**Applicant:** Richard Holly

**Planning Division case planner:** Andrea Ozdy

**Total parcel(s) size (acres):** 191.92


**Assessor Parcel Number(s):** 037-0-050-140, -150, -170, -180, -190 (revised 2/22/08)

**Development proposal description:**

The property was subdivided into 4 parcels under Case No. SD05-0043, approved November 10, 2006. A Biological Restrictive Covenant was recorded on November 21, 2006 and protected all areas outside designated development areas and access roads. The current proposal involves modification to the boundaries of the Biological Restrictive Covenant, and a lot line adjustment.

**Prepared for Ventura County Planning Division by:**

As an approved and contracted biologist with the Ventura County Planning Division, I hereby certify that this Initial Study Biological Assessment was prepared according to the Planning Division's requirements and that the statements furnished in the report and associated maps are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief; and I further certify that I was present throughout the site visit associated with this report.

<b>Approved Biologist (signature):</b> 		<b>Date:</b>  July 6, 2009
Name (printed): Matt Ingamells	Title: Senior Biologist	Company: Padre Associates
Phone: 805/644-2220 ext. 13	email: mingamells@padreinc.com	
<b>Other Biologist (signature):</b>		<b>Date:</b>
Name (printed):	Title:	Company:
Phone:	email:	
Role:		

## Initial Study Checklist

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This Biological Assessment DID provide adequate information to make CEQA findings regarding potentially significant impacts.

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		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	X				X			
B	Wetland habitat	X				X			
C	Coastal habitat	X				X			
D	Wildlife movement routes		X				X		
E	Locally important species/communities		X				X		

N: No impact

LS: Less than significant impact

PS-M: Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated.

PS: Potentially significant

\* DO NOT check this box unless the Biological Assessment provided information adequate enough to develop mitigation measures that reduce the level of impact to less than significant.

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## Summary

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The project focuses on the resolution of a grading violation in which an access road was graded within an area protected under a Biological Restrictive Covenant recorded as part of a previously approved large lot subdivision. Based on review of pre-grading aerial photographs and past biological surveys, a few Catalina mariposa lilies and suitable habitat for coastal western whiptail and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow were removed by grading. However, significant impacts to these resources would be avoided by the Biological Restrictive Covenant and other mitigation measures included as part of the adopted Mitigated Negative Declaration.

## Section 1: Construction Footprint Description

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*Construction Footprint Definition (per the Ventura County Planning Division): The construction footprint includes the proposed maximum limits of direct land disturbance for the project including such things as the building pad(s), roads/road improvements, grading, septic systems, wells, drainage improvements, fire hazard brush clearance area(s), storage/stockpile areas, construction staging areas, fire department turnarounds, utility trenching and other grading areas. The construction footprint on some types of projects, such as mining, oil and gas exploration or agricultural operations, may be quite different than the above.*

### Development Proposal Description

Three revisions to the Biological Restrictive Covenant are proposed, and are comprised of the re-alignment of access roads. The three access road realignments consist of:

1. A new access road to the approved development area was graded in the southern portion of Parcel B (APN 037-0-050-15) in late 2006, which violates the Biological Restrictive Covenant;
2. The existing access road in the northern portion of Parcel B was mis-mapped and a portion was included within the area protected under the Biological Restrictive Covenant;
3. The existing access road on Parcel A (APN 037-0-050-17) was mis-mapped and a portion was included within the area protected under the Biological Restrictive Covenant;

The focus of this ISBA is to assess impacts of the new access road, which lies in the area protected by the Biological Restrictive Covenant.

### Construction Footprint Size

The portion of the new access road within the area protected by the Biological Restrictive Covenant is 0.18 acres (400 feet long by 20 feet wide). This area includes brush clearance/fuel reduction zones along the road (see photograph P2).

### Overlay Zones

The northern portion of the property has a Scenic Resource Protection overlay.

### Zoning

All affected APNs are zoned OS-40 ac.

## Elevation

Elevation across the property ranges from approximately 2400 to 2600 feet, including the ridgeline of Sulphur Mountain and adjacent hills.

## Section 2: Survey Information

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### 2.1 Survey Purpose

The purpose of this Initial Study Biological Assessment (ISBA) is to gather enough information about the biological resources associated with the proposed project, and their potential to be impacted by the project, to make a CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) Initial Study significance finding for biological resources. In general, ISBA's are intended to:

- Provide an inventory of the biological resources on a project site and the values of those resources.
- Determine if a proposed project has the potential to impact any significant biological resources.
- Recommend project redesign to avoid, minimize or reduce impacts to significant biological resources.
- Recommend additional studies necessary to adequately assess potential impacts and/or to develop adequate mitigation measures.
- Develop mitigation measures, when necessary, in cases where adequate information is available.

### 2.2 Survey Area Description

*Survey Area Definition (per the Ventura County Planning Division): The physical area a biologist evaluates as part of a biological assessment. This includes all areas that could potentially be subject to direct or indirect impacts from the project, including, but not limited to: the construction footprint; areas that would be subject to noise, light, dust or runoff generated by the project; any required buffer areas (e.g., buffers surrounding wetland habitat). The construction footprint plus a 100-foot buffer—beyond the required fire hazard brush clearance boundary—(or 20-foot from the cut/fill boundary or road fire hazard brush clearance boundary – whichever is greater) is generally the minimum size of a survey area. Required off-site improvements—such as roads or fire hazard brush clearance—are included in the survey area. Survey areas can extend off the project's parcel(s) because indirect impacts may cross property lines. The extent of the survey area shall be determined by the biologist in consultation with the lead agency.*

## **Survey Area 1 (SA1)**

The survey area encompassed the new access road to the development area in the southern portion of Parcel B, including a 100 foot wide area on both sides.

### ***Location***

The survey area is located on the crest of Sulphur Mountain, south of the Upper Ojai Valley and north of Ventura.

### ***Survey Area Boundaries***

The survey area boundaries included the new access road, the approved access road alignment and development area, and extended to the southern parcel boundary.

### ***Survey Area Environmental Setting***

The survey area consists of the top of a hill extending south from the ridgeline of Sulphur Mountain. The survey area supports coast live oak woodland to the east, and purple sage scrub to the west.

### ***Surrounding Area Environmental Setting***

The survey area lies within a oil production area; however, most facilities have been abandoned and removed. Low density (40 acre parcels or larger) residential development is occurring in the area.

### ***Cover***

78% native vegetation

20% non-native vegetation

0% agriculture/grazing

2% bare ground/cleared/graded

0% buildings, paved roads and other impervious cover

## **Survey Area 2 (SA2)**

The survey area encompassed the actual existing access road and the mis-mapped alignment of the access road in the northern portion of Parcel B as shown on the Biological Restrictive Covenant.

### ***Location***

The survey area is located on the crest of Sulphur Mountain, south of the Upper Ojai Valley and north of Ventura.

### ***Survey Area Boundaries***

The survey area boundaries included the actual existing access road and the mis-mapped alignment, and extended to Sulphur Mountain Road.

### ***Survey Area Environmental Setting***

The survey area consists of a portion of the southern side of the ridgeline of Sulphur Mountain. The survey area supports coast live oak woodland.

### ***Surrounding Area Environmental Setting***

The survey area lies within a oil production area; however, most facilities have been abandoned and removed. Low density (40 acre parcels or larger) residential development is occurring in the area.

**Cover**

90% native vegetation  
8% non-native vegetation  
0% agriculture/grazing  
2% bare ground/cleared/graded  
0% buildings, paved roads and other impervious cover

**Survey Area 3 (SA3)**

The survey area encompassed the actual existing access road and the mis-mapped alignment on Parcel A as shown on the Biological Restrictive Covenant.

**Location**

The survey area is located on the crest of Sulphur Mountain, south of the Upper Ojai Valley and north of Ventura.

**Survey Area Boundaries**

The survey area boundaries included the actual existing access road and the mis-mapped alignment, and extended from Sulphur Mountain Road to the approved building pad.

**Survey Area Environmental Setting**

The survey area consists of a portion of the northern side of the ridgeline of Sulphur Mountain. The survey area supports coast live oak woodland.

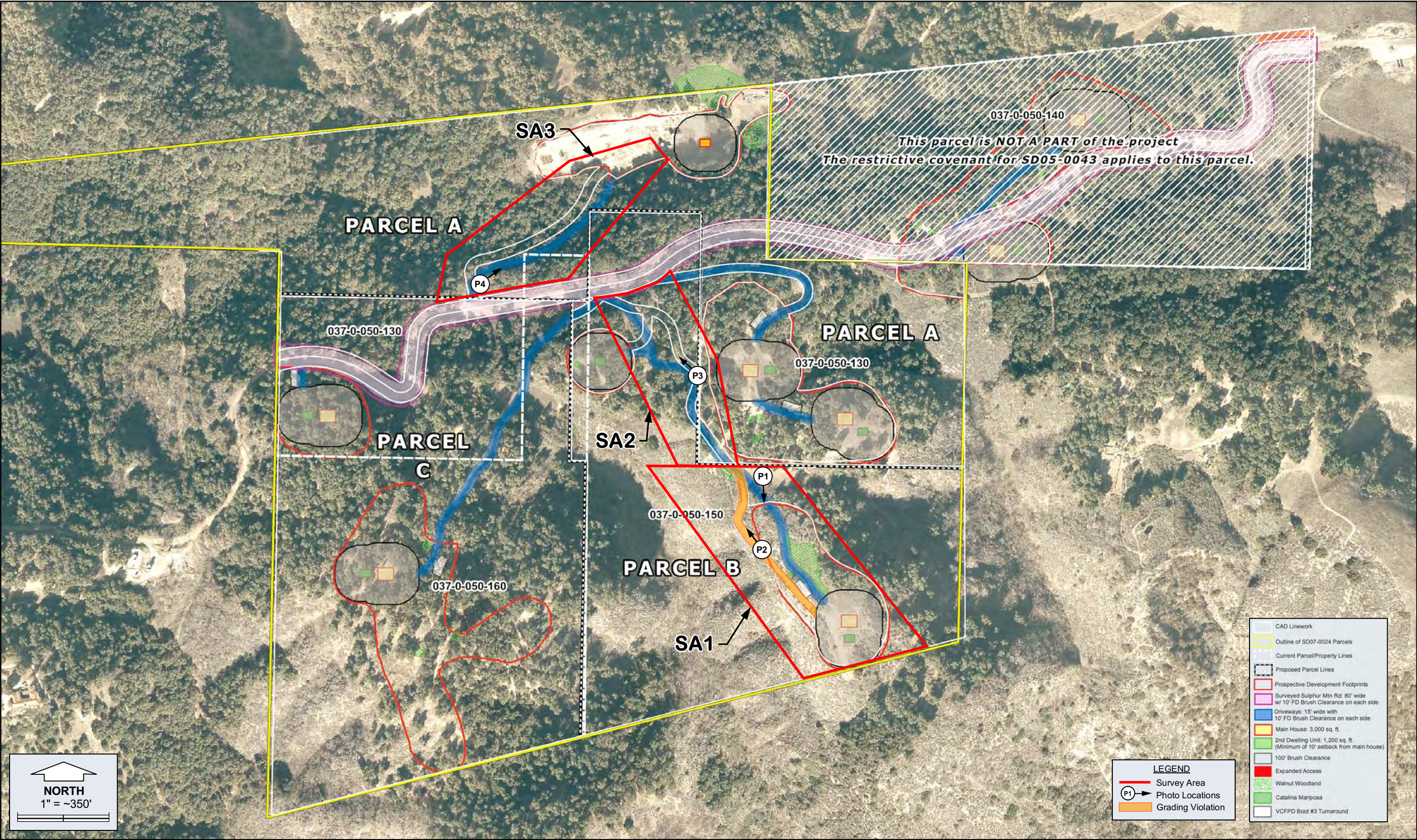
**Surrounding Area Environmental Setting**

The survey area lies within a oil production area; however, most facilities have been abandoned and removed. Low density (40 acre parcels or larger) residential development is occurring in the area.

**Cover**

95% native vegetation  
2% non-native vegetation  
0% agriculture/grazing  
3% bare ground/cleared/graded  
0% buildings, paved roads and other impervious cover





SOURCE: Ventura County RMA



## 2.3 Methodology

### References

- California Department of Fish and Game, BIOS. (2009). BIOS is an internet-based biological data map server. This database was searched to identify other projects that have occurred in the vicinity of the subject property.
- California Department of Fish and Game, RAREFIND3. (2009).
- California Department of Fish and Game, Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program, List of California Vegetation Alliances, October 22, 2007. [www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/vegcamp/pdfs/NaturalCommunitiesList\\_Oct07.pdf](http://www.dfg.ca.gov/biogeodata/vegcamp/pdfs/NaturalCommunitiesList_Oct07.pdf)
- CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants database.
- Biological Resources CEQA Checklist for SD05-0043 (PMW/LLS) (David Magney Environmental Consulting [DMEC], 2005);
- Botanical Survey letter report for SD05-0043 (Padre Associates, 2006a).
- Subsequent Botanical Survey letter report for SD05-0043 (Padre Associates, 2006b).
- Adams Canyon Ranch Biological Surveys (Rincon Consultants, 2006). Prepared for the Ventura County Resources Management Agency.

Survey Date & Details							
Survey Key (1)	Survey Date (2)	Survey Area Map Key(s) (3)	Survey Type (4)	Time Period (5)	Methods/Constraints (6)	GPS (7)	Surveyors
SD1	5/23/09	SA1, SA2, SA3	ISBA	900-1230	Walked through all habitat areas affected by proposed project revisions.		Matt Ingamells
Recon .....Reconnaissance ISBA .....Initial Study Biological Assessment Botanical.....Botanical Survey							

## Section 3: The Biological Inventory

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See Appendix One for an overview of the types of biological resources that are protected in Ventura County.

### 3.1 Habitats: Plant Communities, Physical Features and Wetlands

(Initial Study Checklist A, B, C & E)

#### Background Research

Each of the references listed in Section 2.3 were consulted to identify biological resources of concern.

#### Plant Communities

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Locally important or rare plant communities were found within the survey area(s).

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#### Major Plant Communities Summary

The following is a description of each major plant community, based on the Vegetation Classification of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (CDFG et al., 2006).

***Salvia leucophylla* Shrubland Association.** Dominant species within the survey area are purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*) and coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*). This community occurs in the western and southern portions of Survey Area SA1 and southwestern portion of Survey Area SA2.

***Bromus diandrus* Herbaceous Association.** This classification is used to describe annual grasslands dominated by non-native grasses. Dominant species include rip-gut grass (*Bromus diandrus*) and red brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*). This community occurs in Survey Areas SA1 and SA3.

***Quercus agrifolia* South Coastal Woodland/Forest Association.** This community occurs in the eastern portion of Survey Area SA1, and in Survey Areas SA2 and SA3. It is dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) with an understory of non-native annual grasses. *Quercus agrifolia* South Coastal Woodland/Forest Association is considered oak woodland and is protected under the California Oak Woodlands Act.



Plant Communities							
Map Key (1)	Association (Santa Monica Mountains Vegetation Classification)	Misc. (2)	Status (3)	Condition (4)	Acres Total	Acres Impacted	Comments (5)
PC1	<i>Salvia leucophylla</i>		G4, S4	Dense cover	SA1: 5.1 SA2: 0.7	0.18	Area of new road protected by Restrictive Covenant
PC2	<i>Bromus diandrus</i>			Good	SA1: 1.0 SA3: 0.3	0.00	
PC3	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>		G5, S4 Cal OWA	Low diversity understory	SA1: 2.6 SA2: 4.6 SA3: 4.5	0.00	
LIC..... Locally Important Plant Community ESHA ..... Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (Coastal Zone) NatureServe Status: G3/S3 Vulnerable G4/S4 Apparently Secure G5 Secure Cal OWA Protected by the California Oak Woodlands Act							

## Physical Features

No potentially important physical features were found within the survey area.

## Wetlands

*See Appendix One for an overview of the local, state and federal regulations protecting waters, wetlands and riparian habitats. Wetlands are complex systems; delineating their specific boundaries, functions and values generally takes a level of effort beyond the scope of an Initial Study Biological Assessment (ISBA). The goal of the ISBA with regard to waters and wetlands is simply to identify whether they may exist or not and to determine the potential for impacts to them from the proposed project. This much information can be adequate for designing projects to avoid impacts to waters and wetlands. Additional studies are generally warranted to delineate specific wetland boundaries and to develop recommendations for impact minimization or impact mitigation measures.*

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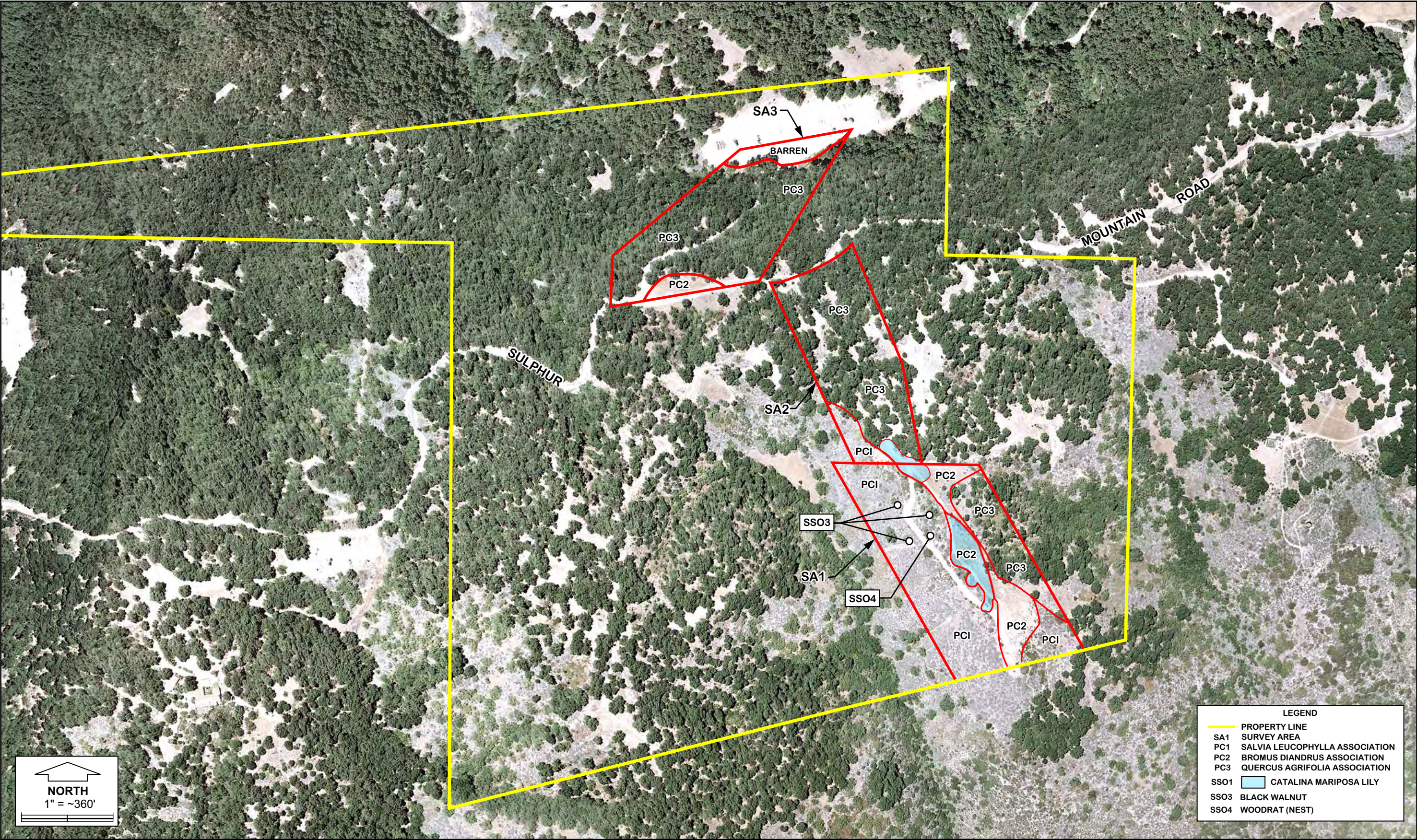
Protected wetlands or waters were not found within the survey area(s).

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## Wetlands Summary

For the purposes of this ISBA, wetlands are defined as areas that support a prevalence of vegetative or aquatic life that requires saturated or seasonally saturated soil conditions (see Ventura County General Plan Goals, Policies and Programs). A tributary (blue-line stream) of Salt Marsh Canyon is located 500 feet southwest of Survey Area SA1, and has been mapped as a wetland by the National Wetlands Inventory. However, no evidence of wetland indicators was observed in the vicinity of Survey Area SA1.





SOURCE: Ventura County RMA



## 3.2 Plant and Animal Species

Species Observed			
Scientific Name	Common Name	Native (1)	Notes (2)
Plants			
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	Yes	
<i>Adiantum jordanii</i>	California maiden-hair	Yes	
<i>Agoseris grandiflora</i>	Mountain dandelion	Yes	
<i>Amsinckia menziesii</i>	Fiddleneck	Yes	
<i>Artemisia californica</i>	California sagebrush	Yes	
<i>Asclepias eriocarpa</i>	Indian milkweed	Yes	
<i>Avena barbata</i>	Slender wild oat	No	
<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	Coyote brush	Yes	
<i>Bloomeria crocea</i>	Golden-star	Yes	
<i>Bromus carinatus</i> var. <i>carinatus</i>	California brome	Yes	
<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	Ripgut grass	No	
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft chess	No	
<i>Bromus madritensis</i> ssp. <i>rubens</i>	Red brome	No	
<i>Calochortus albus</i>	White globe lily	Yes	
<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	Yes	
<i>Calystegia macrostegia</i> ssp. <i>cyclostegia</i>	Morning-glory	Yes	
<i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i>	Italian thistle	No	
<i>Castilleja exerta</i> ssp. <i>exerta</i>	Purple owl's clover	Yes	
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	Yellow star thistle	No	
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i> var. <i>pomeridianum</i>	Soap lily	Yes	
<i>Clarkia purpurea</i> ssp. <i>quadrivulnera</i>	Purple clarkia	Yes	
<i>Clarkia unguiculata</i>	Elegant clarkia	Yes	
<i>Cordylanthus rigidus</i> ssp. <i>rigidus</i>	Birds beak	Yes	
<i>Coronopus didymus</i>	Swine cress	No	
<i>Cryptantha muricata</i>	Cryptantha	Yes	
<i>Dichelostemma capitatum</i> ssp. <i>capitatum</i>	Blue dicks	Yes	
<i>Emmenanthe peduliflora</i>	Whispering bells	Yes	
<i>Epilobium canum</i> ssp. <i>canum</i>	Californian fuchsia	Yes	
<i>Eriogonum elongatum</i>	Wand buckwheat	Yes	
<i>Eremocarpus setigerus</i>	Dove weed	Yes	
<i>Erigeron foliosus</i>	Fleabane daisy	Yes	
<i>Eriophyllum confertiflorum</i> var. <i>confertiflorum</i>	Golden yarrow	Yes	
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Redstem filaree	No	
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Goose grass	No	
<i>Galium angustifolium</i> ssp. <i>angustifolium</i>	Chaparral bedstraw	Yes	
<i>Gnaphalium californicum</i>	Green everlasting	Yes	
<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	Toyon	Yes	
<i>Hirschfeldia incana</i>	Summer mustard	No	

<i>Hordeum murinum</i> ssp. <i>leporinum</i>	Wild barley	No	
<i>Juglans californica</i> var. <i>californica</i>	Southern California black walnut	Yes	
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	Prickly lettuce	No	
<i>Lamarckia aurea</i>	Golden-top	No	
<i>Lathyrus vestitus</i>	Chaparral pea	Yes	
<i>Lessingia filaginifolia</i> var. <i>filaginifolia</i>	Cudweed-aster	Yes	
<i>Leymus triticoides</i>	Creeping wild-rye	Yes	
<i>Lolium multiflorum</i>	Italian rye-grass	No	
<i>Lotus scoparius</i>	Deerweed	Yes	
<i>Lupinus bicolor</i>	Minature lupine	Yes	
<i>Lupinus longifolius</i>	Bush lupine	Yes	
<i>Madia gracilis</i>	Slender tarplant	Yes	
<i>Malacothrix saxatilis</i> ssp. <i>tenuifolia</i>	Malacothrix	Yes	
<i>Malosma laurina</i>	Laurel sumac	Yes	
<i>Marah macrocarpus</i>	Man-root	Yes	
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	Horehound	No	
<i>Medicago polymorpha</i>	Bur clover	No	
<i>Melica imperfecta</i>	Melic grass	Yes	
<i>Melilotus indica</i>	Yellow sweet-clover	No	
<i>Nassella pulchra</i>	Purple needlegrass	Yes	
<i>Navarretia atractylodes</i>	Navarretia	Yes	
<i>Paeonia californica</i>	California peony	Yes	
<i>Phacelia cicutaria</i>	Caterpillar phacelia	Yes	
<i>Phacelia imbricata</i>	Imbricate phacelia	Yes	
<i>Piperia elongata</i>	Piperia	Yes	
<i>Potentilla glandulosa</i> ssp. <i>glandulosa</i>	Cinquefoil	Yes	
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i> var. <i>agrifolia</i>	Coast live oak	Yes	
<i>Rafinesquia californica</i>	California chicory	Yes	
<i>Rhamnus ilicifolia</i>	Holly-leaf redberry	Yes	
<i>Ribes californica</i>	California gooseberry	Yes	
<i>Salvia leucophylla</i>	Purple sage	Yes	
<i>Sambucus mexicana</i>	Mexican elderberry	Yes	
<i>Sanicula crassicaulis</i>	Pacific sanicle	Yes	
<i>Scrophularia californica</i>	California figwort	Yes	
<i>Silybum marianum</i>	Milk thistle	No	
<i>Sisyrinchium bellum</i>	Blue-eyed grass	Yes	
<i>Sisymbrium officinale</i>	Hedge mustard	No	
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Sow thistle	No	
<i>Stachys bullata</i>	Hedge nettle	Yes	
<i>Stephanomeria virgata</i> ssp. <i>virgata</i>	Stephanomeria	Yes	
<i>Thysanocarpus laciniatus</i>	Lace pod	Yes	
<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i> [ <i>Rhus diversiloba</i> ]	Poison oak	Yes	
<i>Verbena lasiostachys</i> var. <i>scabrida</i>	Verbena	Yes	
<i>Vicia benghalensis</i>	Purple vetch	No	
<i>Viola pedunculata</i>	Johnny jump-up	Yes	



<i>Vulpia microstachys</i> var. <i>pauciflora</i>	Annual fescue	Yes	
<b>Reptiles</b>			
<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	Fence lizard	Yes	
<b>Birds</b>			
<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	Acorn woodpecker	Yes	
<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	Spotted towhee	Yes	
<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird	Yes	
<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	Oak titmouse	Yes	
<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Mourning dove	Yes	
<i>Callipepla californica</i>	California quail	Yes	
<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	Scrub jay	Yes	
<i>Toxostoma redivivum</i>	California thrasher	Yes	
<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>	California towhee	Yes	
<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	Violet-green swallow	Yes	
<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	Wrentit	Yes	
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	Northern flicker	Yes	
<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	Dark-eyed junco	Yes	
<i>Psaltirparus minimus</i>	Bushtit	Yes	
<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	Lesser goldfinch	Yes	
<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	House wren	Yes	
<i>Corvus corax</i>	Raven	Yes	
<b>Mammals</b>			
<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	Black-tailed deer	Yes	
<i>Canis latrans</i>	Coyote	Yes	
<i>Neotoma</i> sp.	Woodrat (nest)	Yes	
<i>Sciurus griseus</i>	Western gray squirrel (nest)	Yes	

### Endangered, Threatened, Rare, and Locally Important Species and Nests (Initial Study Checklist A & E)

See Appendix One for definitions of the types of special status species that have federal, state or local protection and for more information on the regulations that protect birds' nests.

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Endangered, threatened, rare, or locally important species were observed or have a moderate to high potential to occur within the survey area(s).

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Habitat suitable for nests of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does exist within the survey area(s).

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## Special Status Species Summary

Catalina mariposa lily is common on the property, with several hundred individuals observed within development areas during spring surveys in 2006. Several individuals were mapped in 2006 within the area affected by the newly graded road.

Showy plectritis was observed near existing access roads during spring botanical surveys conducted in 2006 (southwestern Parcel A, northern Parcel B). Based on these surveys and lack of suitable habitat, this species is not expected to occur within the current survey areas.

Approximately six southern California black walnut trees occur within SA1. Based on review of aerial photographs taken in July 2006 (prior to grading), large specimens of this species were not present within the graded area.

A woodrat nest was observed within SA1 and may have been occupied. However, it is unclear if this species (if present) is desert woodrat or dusky-footed woodrat.

Coastal western whiptail and southern California rufous-crowned sparrow have been observed in coastal scrub in Wheeler Canyon and Adam's Canyon south of the property. Suitable habitat occurs within SA1, and these species may be present. However, the status of these two species in woodland areas of Sulphur Mountain is unclear.

## Nesting Bird Summary

Nests of birds protected by the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act may be present in the survey areas, including *Salvia leucophylla* shrublands and *Quercus agrifolia* woodlands.

Special Status Species						
Map Key (1)	Survey/Source (2)	Scientific Name (3)	Common Name	Species' Status (4)	Potential to Occur (5)	Habitat Requirements (6)
SSO1	SD1, Padre 2006b	<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	CNPS 4	Observed	Occurs in a variety of habitat types, including grassland and open shrubland
SSO2	Padre 2006a	<i>Plectritis ciliosa</i> ssp. <i>insignis</i>	Showy plectritis	LIS	Observed	Woodlands, chaparral
SSO3	SD1	<i>Juglans californica</i>	Southern California black walnut	CNPS 4	Observed	Woodlands, chaparral
SSO4	SD1	<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i>	San Diego desert woodrat	SSC	Nest observed, may be dusky-footed woodrat	Coastal scrub, chaparral
SSP1	Adams Canyon (Rincon, 2006)	<i>Cnemidophorus rigris multiscutatus</i>	Western whiptail	SA	Moderate	Coastal scrub, chaparral
SSP2	Adams Canyon (Rincon, 2006)	<i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i>	Rufous-crowned sparrow	WL	Moderate	Coastal scrub, chaparral
Special Status Species (continued)						
Map Key	Adequate Habitat Onsite	Adequate Habitat Size (7)	Acreage Impacted	Comments (8)		
SSO1	Yes	Yes	0.18			
SSO2	Yes	Yes	None			

Special Status Species				
SSO3	Yes	Yes	None	
SSO4	Yes	Yes	0.18	
SSP1	Yes	Yes	0.18	Species occurs in coastal scrub to south, status in survey area unclear
SSP2	Yes	Yes	0.18	Species occurs in coastal scrub to south, status in survey area unclear
FE ..... Federal Endangered FT ..... Federal Threatened FC ..... Federal Candidate Species FSC ..... Federal Species of Concern SA ..... CDFG Special Animal SFP ..... California Fully Protected Species SE ..... California Endangered ST ..... California Threatened SR ..... California Rare SSC ..... California Species of Special Concern WL ..... CDFG Watch List CDFG/NatureServe Rank G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state) G2 or S2 - Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state) G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction Globally or Subnationally (state) CNPS 1A ..... California Native Plant Society listed as presumed to be extinct CNPS 1B ..... California Native Plant Society listed as rare or endangered in California and elsewhere CNPS 2 ..... California Native Plant Society listed as rare or endangered in California but more common elsewhere CNPS 3 ..... <b>A review list only.</b> California Native Plant Society listed as in need of more information. CNPS 4 ..... <b>A watch list only.</b> California Native Plant Society listed as of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California; vulnerability to threat appears relatively low. LIS ..... Locally Important Species				

### 3.3 Wildlife Movement and Connectivity

(Initial Study Checklist D)

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Wildlife movement or connectivity features, or evidence thereof, were found within the survey area(s).

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#### Mapped Corridors or Linkages

The project site and survey areas are located on Sulphur Mountain, which is part of a large region designated as the Sierra Madre-Castaic Landscape Linkage by the South Coast Missing Linkages Project.

#### Connectivity Feature

SA1 includes two unpaved roads, and links Sulphur Mountain Road to a knoll (building pad) surrounded by steep slopes. SA2 and SA3 consist of an existing access roads connecting Sulphur Mountain Road to building pads. These small survey areas do not provide any specific connectivity features or barriers, and do not link habitat areas. However, the survey areas are part of a large relatively undisturbed habitat block, and located adjacent to Sulphur Mountain Road, a lightly used road which may facilitate wildlife movement through dense shrublands and wooded areas. The Sulphur Mountain habitat block provides adequate habitat to support large mammals, such as mountain lion which require extensive habitat areas. In addition, the project area provides a regional linkage between the Castaic Range and Sierra Madre Range, allowing large mammals to disperse as needed to maintain genetic diversity.



## 4.1 Sufficiency of Biological Data

Biological data is sufficient for the purposes of the ISBA.

## 4.2 Impacts and Mitigation

Cumulative projects assessed in this section include adjacent projects listed in the Planning Division Pending Projects List: LU08-0021 (New CUP for expired CUP 4894 for existing cell antenna site) and LU08-0107 (new hay barn on existing agricultural property).

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<b>A. Endangered, Threatened, or Rare Animal or Plant Species, or Their Habitats</b>	<b>Project: N; Cumulative: N</b>
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Based on field surveys and habitat assessment, endangered, threatened or rare species were not observed or anticipated to occur on the project site.

*Significance Finding – Project Impacts: No Impact.*

*Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts: No Impact.*

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<b>B. Wetland Habitats</b>	<b>Project: N; Cumulative: N</b>
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Wetlands do not occur within the survey areas, and direct or indirect impacts to wetlands would not result from project implementation.

*Significance Finding – Project Impacts: No Impact.*

*Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts: No Impact.*

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<b>C. Coastal Habitats</b>	<b>Project: N; Cumulative: N</b>
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The project site is not located within or adjacent to the coastal zone, nor is there significant habitat connectivity between the survey area and the coastal zone.

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<b>D. Wildlife Movement and Connectivity (migration corridors)</b>	<b>Project: LS; Cumulative: LS</b>
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No wildlife movement or connectivity features or barriers were found within the survey areas. The proposed change to the boundaries of the restrictive covenant involves re-alignment of access roads to individual building pads. These access roads would not be considered barriers to wildlife movement, and no increase in wildlife movement impacts would occur. However, consistent with the previously approved project, planned development on the approved four parcels may adversely affect wildlife use of Sulphur Mountain Road.

*Significance Finding – Project Impacts: Less than Significant.*

*Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts: Less than Significant.*

### **Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

Mitigation measures adopted as part of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the PMW/LLS (SD05-0043), including MM-1 (Restrictive Covenant), MM-2 (Speed Limit Signs), MM-3 (Speed Strips) and MM-4 (Fencing) will prevent significant adverse impacts to wildlife movement.

**Special-status (non-listed) Wildlife Species.** Suitable habitat for San Diego desert woodrat occurs within both the previously approved and proposed access road alignment in the southern portion of Parcel B. A nest potentially associated with San Diego desert woodrat was found adjacent to the access road graded within the area protected under the Biological Restrictive Covenant. It is unknown if a nest was removed during grading of this road. No woodrat nests were found within the previously approved access road alignment. In any case, the recorded Biological Restrictive Covenant protects most of the suitable habitat for San Diego desert woodrat on the property, which will ensure the persistence of this species on the property (if currently present).

Suitable habitat (0.18 acres) for coastal western whiptail and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow was removed during grading of the new access road within the area protected under the Biological Restrictive Covenant. However, it is unclear if these species occur at the property. The area of habitat removed is sufficient to support the home range of a single coastal western whiptail (about 0.1 to 0.18 acres), but not a pair of rufous-crowned sparrow which requires about 2 acres. In any case, the recorded Biological Restrictive Covenant protects most of the suitable habitat for these species on the property, which will ensure the persistence of coastal western whiptail and Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow on the property (if currently present).

*Significance Finding – Project Impacts:* Less than Significant.

*Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts:* Less than Significant.

#### **Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

Mitigation measures adopted as part of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the PMW/LLS (SD05-0043), including MM-1 (Restrictive Covenant) will prevent significant adverse impacts to special-status wildlife species.

**Special-status (non-listed) Plant Species.** Catalina mariposa lily was found within the area affected by recent access road grading during botanical surveys conducted in 2006, and several individuals were likely removed. Sixteen Catalina mariposa lilies were found within the previously approved access road alignment during the May 23, 2009 field survey. Therefore, the proposed change in access road alignment is unlikely to increase impacts to Catalina mariposa lily. The previously recorded Biological Restrictive Covenant protects most of the population of this species on the property, and impacts to this relatively common species are considered less than significant.

Showy plectritis was not found within areas affected by the proposed revisions to the Biological Restrictive Covenant and lot line adjustment. Therefore, no impacts to this species are anticipated.

Approximately six southern California black walnut trees occur near the area affected by grading of the new access road within the area protected under the Biological Restrictive Covenant. Based on review of pre-grading aerial photographs (July 2006), no large black walnut trees (detectable on the aerial photograph) were removed during access road grading within the area protected under the Biological Restrictive Covenant. However, a few seedlings may have been present and removed by grading.

*Significance Finding – Project Impacts:* Less than Significant.

*Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts:* Less than Significant.

### **Avoidance and Minimization Measures**

Mitigation measures adopted as part of the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the PMW/LLS (SD05-0043), including MM-1 (Restrictive Covenant) and MM-5 (Flagging prior to grading) will prevent significant adverse impacts to special-status plant species.



**Locally Important Communities.** *Quercus agrifolia* Coastal Woodland/Forest Association was not affected by the grading violation and is protected by the Biological Restrictive Covenant.



*Significance Finding – Project Impacts:* No Impact.

*Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts:* No Impact.



## Section 5: Photos

Photos		
<b>Location</b> Southern portion of Parcel B <b>Map Key</b> P1 <b>Direction</b> South <b>Description</b> View of approved access road alignment		
<b>Location</b> Southern portion of Parcel B <b>Map Key</b> P2 <b>Direction</b> North <b>Description</b> View of graded access road within protected area		

Photos		
<b>Location</b> Northern portion of Parcel B		
<b>Map Key</b> P3		
<b>Direction</b> North		
<b>Description</b> View of the existing access road (mis-mapped on Restrictive Covenant)		
<b>Location</b> Northwestern portion of Parcel A		
<b>Map Key</b> P4		
<b>Direction</b> Northeast		
<b>Description</b> View of the existing access road (mis-mapped on Restrictive Covenant)		

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## Appendix One

# Summary of Biological Resource Regulations

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The Ventura County Planning Division, as “lead agency” under CEQA for issuing discretionary land use permits, uses the relationship of a potential environmental effect from a proposed project to an established regulatory standard to determine the significance of the potential environmental effect. This Appendix summarizes important biological resource regulations which are used by the Division’s biologists (consultants and staff) in making CEQA findings of significance:

- Sensitive Status Species Regulations
- Nesting Bird Regulations
- Plant Community Regulations
- Waters and Wetlands Regulations
- Coastal Habitat Regulations
- Wildlife Migration Regulations
- Locally Important Species/Communities Regulations

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## Sensitive Status Species Regulations

### ***Federally Protected Species***

Ventura County is home to 29 federally listed endangered and threatened plant and wildlife species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulates the protection of federally listed endangered and threatened plant and wildlife species.

**FE (Federally Endangered):** A species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

**FT (Federally Threatened):** A species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

**FC (Federal Candidate):** A species for which USFWS has sufficient information on its biological status and threats to propose it as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), but for which development of a proposed listing regulation is precluded by other higher priority listing activities.

**FSC (Federal Species of Concern):** A species under consideration for listing, for which there is insufficient information to support listing at this time. These species may or may not be listed in the future, and many of these species were formerly recognized as “Category-2 Candidate” species.

The USFWS requires permits for the ‘taking’ of any federally listed endangered or threatened species. Take is defined by the USFWS as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct; may include significant habitat modification or degradation if it kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns including breeding, feeding, or sheltering.”

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) does not provide statutory protection for candidate species or species of concern, but USFWS encourages conservation efforts to protect these species. USFWS can set up voluntary Candidate Conservation Agreements and Assurances, which provide non-Federal landowners (public and private) with the assurance that if they implement various conservation activities to protect a given candidate species, they will not be subject to additional restrictions if the species becomes listed under the ESA.

### ***State Protected Species***

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) regulates the protection of endangered, threatened, and fully protected species listed under the California Endangered Species Act. Some species may be jointly listed under the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts.

**SE (California Endangered):** A native species or subspecies which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range due to one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, or disease.



**ST (California Threatened):** A native species or subspecies that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of the special protection and management efforts required by this chapter. Any animal determined by the commission as "rare" on or before January 1, 1985, is a "threatened species."

**SFP (California Fully Protected Species):** This designation originated from the State's initial effort in the 1960's to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and birds. Most fully protected species have also been listed as threatened or endangered species under the more recent endangered species laws and regulations.

**SR (California Rare):** A species, subspecies, or variety of plant is rare under the Native Plant Protection Act when, although not presently threatened with extinction, it is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may become endangered if its present environment worsens. Animals are no longer listed as rare; all animals listed as rare before 1985 have been listed as threatened.

**SSC (California Species of Special Concern):** Animals that are not listed under the California Endangered Species Act, but which nonetheless 1) are declining at a rate that could result in listing, or 2) historically occurred in low numbers and known threats to their persistence currently exist.

The CDFG requires permits for the taking of any State-listed endangered, threatened, or fully protected species. Section 2080 of the Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species that the California Fish and Game Commission determines to be endangered or threatened. Take is defined in Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill."

The California Native Plant Protection Act protects endangered and rare plants of California. Section 1908, which regulates plants listed under this act, states: "no person shall import into this state, or take, possess, or sell within this state, except as incident to the possession or sale of the real property on which the plant is growing, any native plant, or any part or product thereof, that the commission determines to be an endangered native plant or rare native plant, except as otherwise provided in this chapter."

The California Endangered Species Act does not provide statutory protection for California species of special concern, but they should be considered during the environmental review process.

### ***California Native Plant Society Listed Species***

Plants with CNPS listings 1A, 1B and 2 should always be addressed in CEQA documents. Plants with CNPS listings 3 and 4 do not explicitly qualify for legal protection, but can be addressed in CEQA documents depending on the circumstances and opinion of the biologist conducting the assessment.

**CNPS 1A:** Plants presumed to be extinct because they have not been seen or collected in the wild in California for many years. This list includes plants that are both presumed extinct in California, as well as those plants which are presumed extirpated in California. A plant is extinct in California if it no longer occurs in or outside of California. A plant that is extirpated from California has been eliminated from California, but may still occur elsewhere in its range.

**CNPS 1B:** Plants that are rare throughout their range with the majority of them endemic to California. Most of the plants of List 1B have declined significantly over the last century.

**CNPS 2:** Plants that are rare throughout their range in California, but are common beyond the boundaries of California. List 2 recognizes the importance of protecting the geographic range of widespread species.

Plants identified on CNPS Lists 1A, 1B, and 2 meet the definitions of Sec. 1901, Chapter 10 (Native Plant Protection Act) or Secs. 2062 and 2067 (California Endangered Species Act) of the California Department of Fish and Game Code, and are eligible for state listing. They should be fully considered during preparation of environmental documents relating to CEQA.

**CNPS 3:** A review list for plants for which there is inadequate information to assign them to one of the other lists or to reject them.

**CNPS 4:** A watch list for plants that are of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California and their vulnerability or susceptibility to threat appears relatively low at this time.

## ***Global and Subnational Rankings***

Though not associated directly with legal protections, species have been given a conservation status rank by NatureServe, an international non-profit conservation organization that is the leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. The Ventura County Planning Division considers the following ranks as sensitive for the purposes of CEQA impact assessment (G = Global, S = Subnational or State):

- G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled
- G2 or S2 – Imperiled
- G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction

## ***Locally Important Species***

Locally important species' protections are addressed in a separate Appendix document, "Locally Important Species/Communities Regulations."

For lists of some of the species in Ventura County that are protected by the above regulations, go to [www.ventura.org/rma/planning/bio\\_resources/index.htm](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/bio_resources/index.htm).

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## **Nesting Bird Regulations**

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Code (3503, 3503.5, 3511, 3513 and 3800) protect most native birds. In addition, the federal and state endangered species acts protect some bird species listed as threatened or endangered. Project-related impacts to birds protected by these regulations would occur during the breeding season, because unlike adult birds, eggs and chicks are unable to escape impacts.

The MBTA implements various treaties and conventions between the U.S. and Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Russia for the protection of migratory birds, which occur in two of these countries over the course of one year. The Act maintains that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer to or sell, barter, purchase, deliver or cause to be shipped, exported, imported, transported, carried or received any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not. Bird species protected under the provisions of the MBTA are identified by the List of Migratory Birds (Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 10.13 as updated by the 1983 American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist and published supplements through 1995 by the USFWS).

CDFG Code 3513 upholds the MBTA by prohibiting any take or possession of birds that are designated by the MBTA as migratory nongame birds except as allowed by federal rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the MBTA. In addition, there are CDFG Codes (3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3800) which further protect nesting birds and their parts, including passerine birds, raptors, and state "fully protected" birds.

NOTE: These regulations protect almost all *native nesting birds*, not just sensitive status birds.

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## **Plant Community Regulations**

Plant communities are provided legal protection when they provide habitat for protected species, when the community is in the coastal zone and qualifies as environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA), or when the community qualifies as locally important.

## ***Global and Subnational Rankings***

Though not associated directly with legal protections, plant communities have been given a conservation status rank by NatureServe, an international non-profit conservation organization that is the leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. The Ventura County Planning Division considers the following ranks as sensitive for the purposes of CEQA impact assessment (G = Global, S = Subnational or State):

- G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled
- G2 or S2 - Imperiled
- G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction

## **CDFG Rare**

Rare natural communities are those communities that are of highly limited distribution. These communities may or may not contain rare, threatened, or endangered species. Though the Native Plant Protection Act and the California Endangered Species Act provide no legal protection to plant communities, CDFG considers plant communities that are ranked G1-G3 or S1-S3 (as defined above) to be rare or sensitive, and therefore these plant communities should be addressed during CEQA review.

## **Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas**

The Coastal Act specifically calls for protection of “environmentally sensitive habitat areas” or ESHA, which it defines as: “Any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments” (Section 30107.5).

ESHA has been specifically defined in the Santa Monica Mountains. For projects in this location, the Coastal Commission, the agency charged with administering the Coastal Act, has developed a specific three-part test for determining whether habitat there should be considered coastal sage scrub/chaparral ESHA. A memo from a Coastal Commission biologist outlining this test can be found at:

[www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/bio\\_resources/ESHA\\_Santa\\_Monica\\_Mountains.pdf](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/bio_resources/ESHA_Santa_Monica_Mountains.pdf).

## **Locally Important Communities**

The Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines defines a locally important community as one that is considered by qualified biologists to be a quality example characteristic of or unique to the County or region, with this determination being made on a case-by-case basis. The County has not developed a list of locally important communities, but has deemed oak woodlands to be a locally important community.

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## **Waters and Wetlands Regulations**

Numerous agencies control what can and cannot be done in or around streams and wetlands. If a project affects an area where water flows, ponds or is present even part of the year, it is likely to be regulated by one or more agencies. Many wetland or stream projects will require three main permits or approvals (in addition to CEQA compliance). These are:

- 404 Permit (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
- 401 Certification (Regional Water Quality Control Board)
- Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Department of Fish and Game)

In addition, the Ventura County General Plan calls for protection of wetlands and there are several other federal, state and local permits that could be required when a project involves disturbance to wetlands or waters. For a more thorough explanation of wetland permitting, see the Ventura County’s “Wetland Project Permitting Guide” at [www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/prog\\_serve/bio\\_resources/FinalPDF.pdf](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/prog_serve/bio_resources/FinalPDF.pdf).

### **404 Permit (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)**

Most projects that involve streams or wetlands will require a 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act is the primary federal program regulating activities in wetlands. The Act regulates areas defined as “waters of the United States.” This includes streams, wetlands in or next to streams, areas influenced by tides, navigable waters, lakes, reservoirs and other impoundments. For nontidal waters, USACE jurisdiction extends up to what is referred to as the “ordinary high water mark” as well as to the landward limits of adjacent Corps-defined wetlands, if present. The ordinary high water mark is an identifiable natural line visible on the bank of a stream or water body that shows the upper limit of typical stream flow or water level. The mark is made from the action of water on the streambank over the course of years.

**Permit Triggers:** A USACE 404 Permit is triggered by moving (discharging) or placing materials—such as dirt, rock, geotextiles, concrete or culverts—into or within USACE jurisdictional areas. This type of activity is also referred to as a “discharge of dredged or fill material.”

## ***401 Certification (Regional Water Quality Control Board)***

If your project requires a USACE 404 Permit, then you will also need a Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) 401 Certification. The federal Clean Water Act, in Section 401, specifies that states must certify that any activity subject to a permit issued by a federal agency, such as the USACE, meets all state water quality standards. In California, the state and regional water boards are responsible for certification of activities subject to USACE Section 404 Permits.

**Permit Trigger:** A RWQCB 401 Certification is triggered whenever a USACE 404 Permit is required, or whenever an activity could cause a discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. or wetlands.

## ***Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Department of Fish and Game)***

If your project includes alteration of the bed, banks or channel of a stream, or the adjacent riparian vegetation, then you may need a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). The California Fish and Game Code, Sections 1600-1616, regulates activities that would alter the flow, bed, banks, channel or associated riparian areas of a river, stream or lake—all considered “waters of the state.” The law requires any person, state or local governmental agency or public utility to notify CDFG before beginning an activity that will substantially modify a river, stream or lake.

**Permit Triggers:** A Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) is triggered when a project involves altering a stream or disturbing riparian vegetation, including any of the following activities:

- Substantially obstructing or diverting the natural flow of a river, stream or lake
- Using any material from these areas
- Disposing of waste where it can move into these areas

Some projects that involve routine maintenance may qualify for long-term maintenance agreements from CDFG. Discuss this option with CDFG staff.

## ***Ventura County General Plan***

The Ventura County General Plan contains policies which also strongly protect wetland habitats.

Biological Resources Policy 1.5.2-3 states:

Discretionary development that is proposed to be located within 300 feet of a marsh, small wash, intermittent lake, intermittent stream, spring, or perennial stream (as identified on the latest USGS 7½ minute quad map), shall be evaluated by a County approved biologist for potential impacts on wetland habitats. Discretionary development that would have a significant impact on significant wetland habitats shall be prohibited, unless mitigation measures are adopted that would reduce the impact to a less than significant level; or for lands designated "Urban" or "Existing Community", a statement of overriding considerations is adopted by the decision-making body.

Biological Resources Policy 1.5.2-4 states:

Discretionary development shall be sited a minimum of 100 feet from significant wetland habitats to mitigate the potential impacts on said habitats. Buffer areas may be increased or decreased upon evaluation and recommendation by a qualified biologist and approval by the decision-making body. Factors to be used in determining adjustment of the 100 foot buffer include soil type, slope stability, drainage patterns, presence or absence of endangered, threatened or rare plants or animals, and compatibility of the proposed development with the wildlife use of the wetland habitat area. The requirement of a buffer (setback) shall not preclude the use of replacement as a mitigation when there is no other feasible alternative to allowing a permitted use, and if the replacement results in no net loss of wetland habitat. Such replacement shall be "in kind" (i.e. same type and acreage), and provide wetland habitat of comparable biological value. On-site replacement shall be preferred wherever possible. The replacement plan shall be developed in consultation with California Department of Fish and Game.



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## Coastal Habitat Regulations

Ventura County's Coastal Area Plan and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance, which constitute the "Local Coastal Program" (LCP) for the unincorporated portions of Ventura County's coastal zone, ensure that the County's land use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning maps, and implemented actions meet the requirements of, and implement the provisions and policies of California's 1976 Coastal Act at the local level.

### ***Environmentally Sensitive Habitats***

The Coastal Act specifically calls for protection of "environmentally sensitive habitat areas" or ESHA, which it defines as: "Any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments" (Section 30107.5).

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states:

- (a) "Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas."**
- (b) "Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas."**

There are three important elements to the definition of ESHA. First, a geographic area can be designated ESHA either because of the presence of individual species of plants or animals or because of the presence of a particular habitat. Second, in order for an area to be designated as ESHA, the species or habitat must be either rare or it must be especially valuable. Finally, the area must be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities.

Protection of ESHA is of particular concern in the southeastern part of Ventura County, where the coastal zone extends inland (~5 miles) to include an extensive area of the Santa Monica Mountains. The Coastal Commission, the agency charged with administering the Coastal Act, developed a specific three-part test for determining whether habitat in the Malibu area of the Santa Monica Mountains should be considered coastal sage scrub/chaparral ESHA. Given that Malibu is immediately adjacent to the Ventura County part of the Santa Monica Mountains, this three-part test can be used for assessing whether coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitat in the Ventura County coastal zone meets the definition of ESHA. A memo from a Coastal Commission biologist outlines this test and can be found at: [www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/bio\\_resources/ESHA\\_Santa\\_Monica\\_Mountains.pdf](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/pdf/bio_resources/ESHA_Santa_Monica_Mountains.pdf).

The County's Local Coastal Program outlines other specific protections to environmentally sensitive habitats in the Coastal Zone, such as to wetlands, riparian habitats and dunes. Protections in some cases are different for different segments of the coastal zone.

Copies of the Coastal Area Plan and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance can be found at: [www.ventura.org/rma/planning/programs\\_services/local\\_coast/local\\_coast.htm](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/programs_services/local_coast/local_coast.htm).

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## Wildlife Migration Regulations

The Ventura County General Plan specifically includes wildlife migration corridors as an element of the region's significant biological resources. In addition, protecting habitat connectivity is critical to the success of special status species and other biological resource protections. Potential project impacts to wildlife migration are analyzed by biologists on a case-by-case basis. The issue involves both a macro-scale analysis—where routes used by large carnivores connecting very large core habitat areas may be impacted—as well as a micro-scale analysis—where a road or stream crossing may impact localized movement by many different animals.

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## Locally Important Species/Communities Regulations

Locally important species/communities are considered to be significant biological resources in the Ventura County General Plan, thus one of the County's threshold criteria for the evaluation of impacts to biological resources is whether the project impacts locally important species/communities.

## ***Locally Important Species***

The following criteria were developed with the assistance of local biologists:

### **Locally Important Animal Species Criteria**

1. Taxa for whom habitat in Ventura County is crucial for their existence either globally or in Ventura County. This includes taxa for whom:
  - Populations in Ventura County represents 10% or more of the known extant global distribution; or
  - In Ventura County, there are less than 6 element occurrences, or less than 1,000 individuals, or less than 2,000 acres.
2. Native taxa that are generally declining throughout their range and/or are in danger of extirpation in Ventura County.

### **Locally Important Plant Species Criteria**

A locally important plant is a taxon that is declining throughout the extent of its range AND has a maximum of five (5) element occurrences in Ventura County.

### **Locally Important Animal and Plant Species Criteria**

In some cases, to be determined on an individual basis, there are taxa whose population(s) do not qualify as locally important species; however, certain locations where a taxon occurs will be defined as locally important. This includes:

- If known, the published type locality for a holotype specimen.
- The edge of a taxon's range. This criteria does not apply to non-native taxa or those taxa whose range and population(s) size is expanding.

The County maintains a list of locally important species, which can be found on the Planning Division website at: [www.ventura.org/rma/planning/programs\\_services/bio\\_resources/bio\\_resources.htm](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/programs_services/bio_resources/bio_resources.htm). *This list should not be considered comprehensive.* Any species that meets the criteria qualifies as locally important, whether or not it is included on this list.

## ***Locally Important Communities***

The Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines defines a locally important community as one that is considered by qualified biologists to be a quality example characteristic of or unique to the County or region, with this determination being made on a case-by-case basis. The County has not developed a list of locally important communities. Oak woodlands have however been deemed by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to be a locally important community.

The state passed legislation in 2001, the Oak Woodland Conservation Act, to emphasize that oak woodlands are a vital and threatened statewide resource. In response, the County of Ventura prepared and adopted an Oak Woodland Management Plan that recommended, among other things, amending the County's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines to include an explicit reference to oak woodlands as part of its definition of locally important communities. The Board of Supervisors approved this management plan and its recommendations.





Parcels/Property Lines

Development Footprint

National Wetlands Inventory



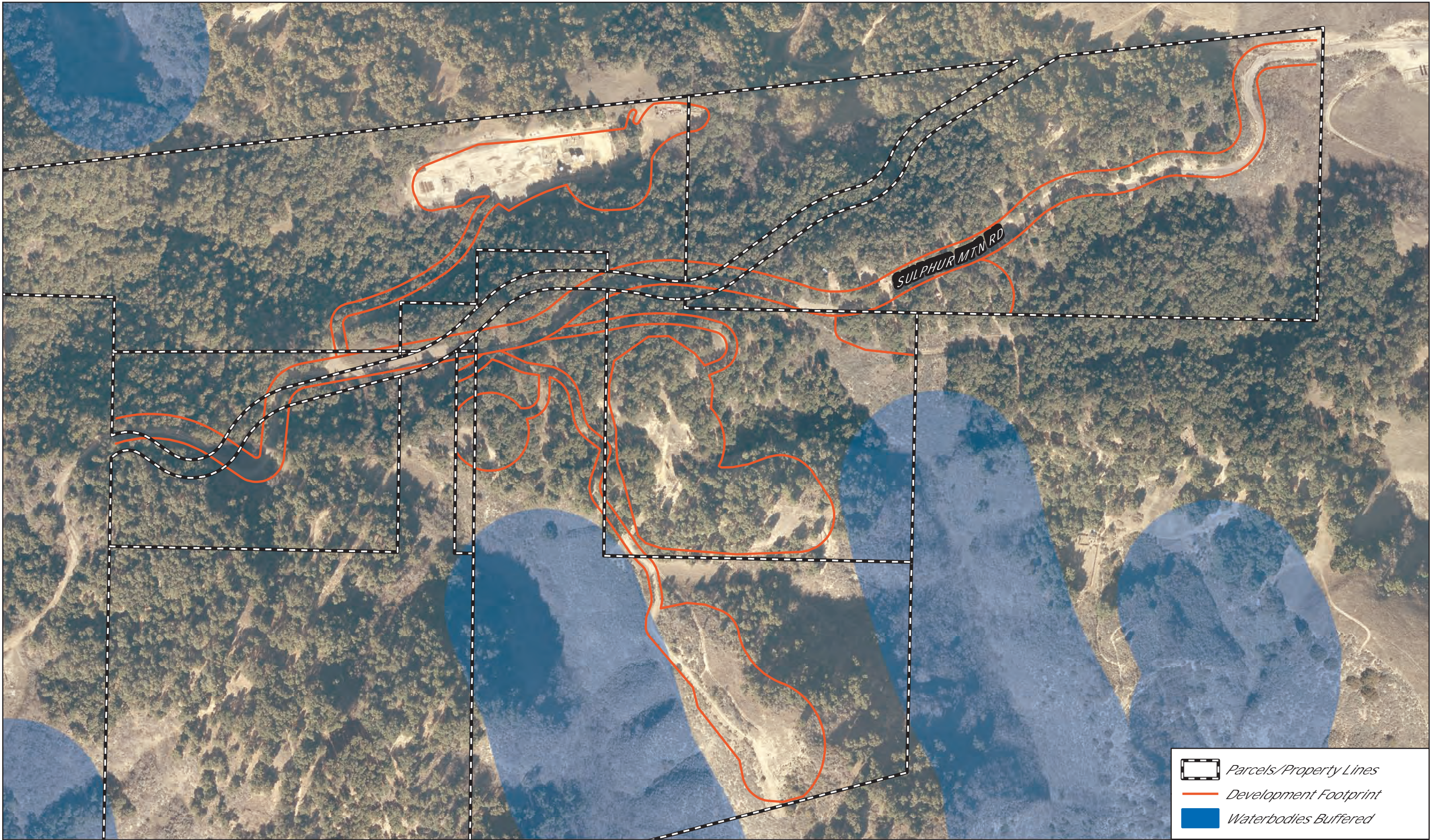
Ventura County  
Resource Management Agency  
GIS Development & Mapping Services  
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# SD09-0007 Wetlands Map

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-  *Parcels/Property Lines*
-  *Development Footprint*
-  *Waterbodies Buffered*

0 200 400  
Feet



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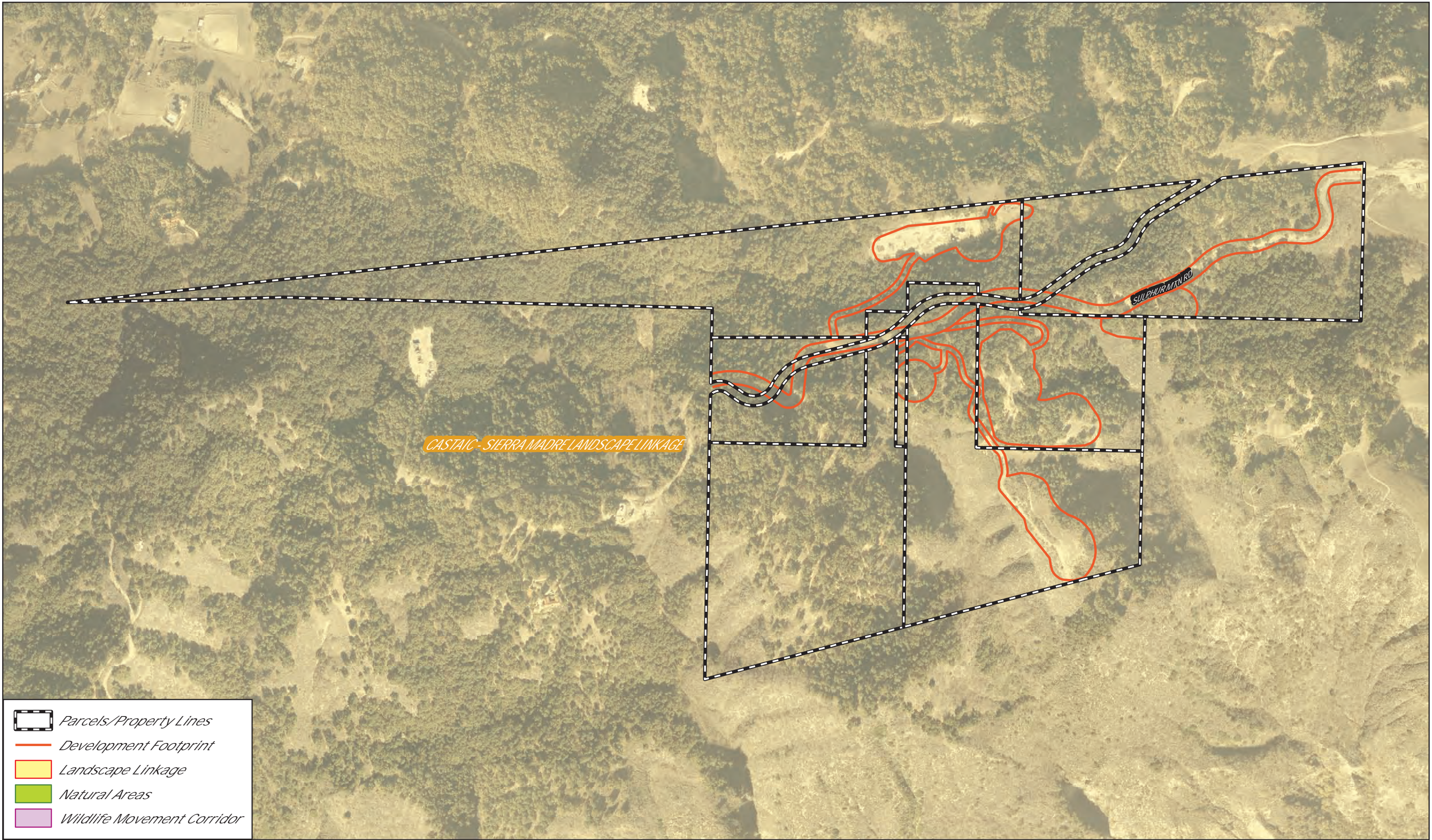


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## SD09-0007 Water Bodies Map





 *Parcels/Property Lines*  
 *Development Footprint*  
 *Landscape Linkage*  
 *Natural Areas*  
 *Wildlife Movement Corridor*



# SD09-0007 Connectivity Map



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