

# COUNTY OF VENTURA BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES INITIAL STUDY

Date: June 1, 1998

Requestor: Scott Ellison

Project: Tentative PM-5145 and Zone Change Z-2923

Field Study: ☐ Yes ☐ No

Justification: Project site located in an area known to contain sensitive plant and animal species.

## A. CHECKLIST

Biological Resources Issues	Project Impact Degree of Effect				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect			
	N	LS	S	U	N	LS	S	U
a. endangered, threatened, or rare species	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" 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 = None

LS = Less than significant effect

S = Significant effect; MND or EIR required

U = Unknown; EIR required

## B. DISCUSSION

The project site lies on a hillside in the Tierra Rejada Valley that is vegetated with primarily non-native annual grassland. Most of the southern portion of the site has recently been cleared of vegetation preparatory to housing construction. The steeper northern side of the site is dominated by wild oats (*Avena sp.*) with occasional scattered shrubs, including goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*), purple sage (*Salvia leucophylla*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*). The area has been used in the past for grazing and exotic plants are common at the site, including black and summer mustard, ripgut and red brome, hare barley, hood canary grass, cocklebur, yellow star thistle (*tocalote*), storksbill, prickly lettuce, bull thistle, and horehound. In less disturbed areas near rock outcroppings, native wildflowers are present, including blue dicks, fiddleneck, phacelia, goldfields, fascicled tarweed, plantain, blow-wives, lupine, and dwarf bladder clover. Scattered native grasses, including purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*), were also noted. Spikemoss and lichens are common on the rocky outcroppings. No significant wetland vegetation was observed at the site.

The project site contains outcroppings of Conejo volcanics on the northern portion that provide suitable habitat for several federally threatened and endangered species, in particular, the endangered Lyon's pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*) and threatened Conejo live-forever



(*Dudleya abramsii* spp. *parva*). The pentachaeta was not found at the site, but Conejo dudleya is present at the locations shown on the attached figure. Since these areas are exposed to additional land clearance such as has already occurred on the south part of the site, the project as proposed could have a significant project and cumulative effect on this threatened plant. In addition, Catalina mariposa-lily (*Calochortus catalinae*), a List 4 plant as indicated in the CDFG Special Plant List, is also present adjacent to these outcrops and scattered through the grassland.

The grassland habitat provides suitable habitat for several common animal species. Mammals observed directly or by sign (track, scat, burrow, etc.) were cottontail, California meadow mouse, pocket gopher, mule deer, and coyote. Birds seen were mockingbird, grasshopper sparrow, lesser goldfinch, Anna's hummingbird, turkey vulture, red-tailed hawk, cliff and barn swallows, raven, meadowlark, horned lark, California towhee, and California quail. Western fence lizard and gopher snake were seen, and western rattlesnake is expected to be common though it was not observed. The California horned lark had previously been listed as a sensitive species (CDFG, 1994, Special Animals), but is no longer considered so due to improving population levels. Sensitive species potentially at the site but not observed include loggerhead shrike and various bat species. Only the loggerhead would potentially breed at the site. The proposed project in itself may eliminate a few breeding sites for this species, but would not result in a substantial population loss. On a cumulative basis, the project represents an incremental loss of the habitat that supports these species, but on a regional basis, the amount of acreage loss is less than significant.

### 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 checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Does the project have impacts which are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



#### D. MITIGATION MEASURES

Recommended ☐

Required for Negative Declaration ☒

The following mitigation measures are required to reduce the potential for significant impacts to the threatened Conejo dudleya.

1. The land containing the known threatened plant populations shall be conveyed through title or by fee easement to a conservation agency, such as the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency.

2. If the land is not conveyed to a conservation agency, it shall be fenced and deed restricted from future development. Limited grazing is allowable, at no more than one horse or cow per 5 acres. Sheep or goats should not be permitted to graze within the fenced conservation area.

#### E. DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FROM A BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

EIR Required ☐

Negative Declaration ☒

Reviewer:   
Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Date: 6/1/98

Phone: 641-1000

#### F. REFERENCES

California Department of Fish and Game (July 1997a). *Endangered, Threatened, and Rare Plants of California*. 14 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Plant Conservation Program

California Department of Fish and Game (July 1997b). *Endangered and Threatened Animals of California*. 11 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.

California Department of Fish and Game (July 1997c). *Special Plants List*. 112 pgs. Natural Heritage Division, Natural Diversity Data Base.

California Department of Fish and Game (August 1994). *Special Animals*. 28 pgs.

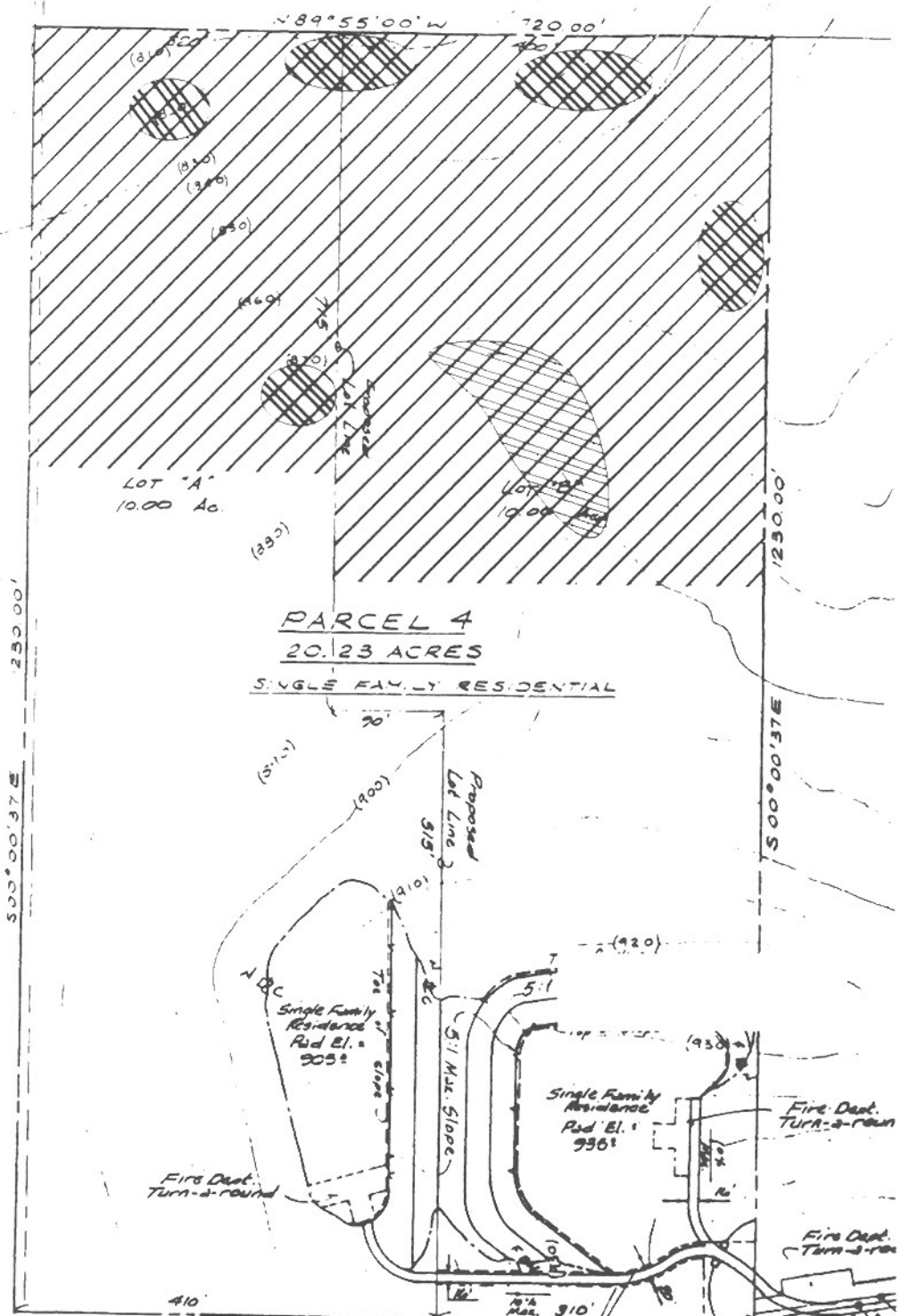
Holland, Robert F. (October 1986). *Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California*. California Department of Fish and Game, Nongame Heritage Program. 156 pgs.



United States Fish and Wildlife Service (January 31, 1997). *US Listed Flowering Plant Species Index by Lead Region and Status, as of January 31, 1997*.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service (February 28, 1996). *Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Review of Plant and Animal Taxa That Are Candidates for Listing as Endangered or Threatened Species*.

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.





-  Conejo dudleya populations
-  Proposed Conservation Easement/Restriction Area



**Sensitive Biological Resources**

Figure 1