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ENGINEERS, GEOLOGISTS & ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENTISTS

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Letter Report Concerning Field Surveys for San Diego Horned Lizard at Parcel 138-0-050-09 (Shozi Brothers)

Introduction

Padre prepared an Initial Study (biological resources portion) for the Ventura County Resource Management Agency, Planning Division for a 2 lot Parcel Map (PM-5246). The findings of the Initial Study included a requirement to conduct a spring/summer field survey to determine the presence of and potential impacts to San Diego horned lizard, a State species of special concern. The purpose of these surveys was to fulfil this requirement.

Methods

Padre conducted a field survey of the Parcel on April 19, consisting of walking north-south transects spaced 30 feet apart. At the completion of the field survey, pit traps were set at three locations on the Parcel. The pit traps consisted of one-gallon plastic cookie jars with a 1.5 inch wide lip, set flush with the ground surface. Wooden boards were placed over the traps to provide cover and entice lizards to the trap. Traps were set in locations with a high density of California harvester ant (*Pogonomyrmex californicus*) colonies, which are preferred prey of the San Diego horned lizard. These locations were the southeastern corner, south central and northwestern portions of the Parcel. Traps were checked between 11 a.m. and 1 p.m. on April 20 through 22. Weather conditions were generally sunny with afternoon temperature exceeding 65° F. However, April 21 was overcast and cooler. These conditions are suitable for surface activity by San Diego horned lizard.

Results

Reptiles observed during the field survey and during trapping were limited to side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), Great Basin fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis biseriatus*) and red coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum piceus*). In addition, a lizard skin that appeared to belong to a southern alligator lizard (*Gerrhonotus multicarinatus*) was found under a board on the site. Side-blotched lizard was the most common, with about 10 observed during the field survey. In addition, one side-blotched lizard was caught in the trap located at the northwestern corner of the Parcel. No other reptiles were found in the traps. However, stink beetles (*Eleodes* sp.) were caught in the traps in the southern portion of the parcel, with 8 beetles found in one trap.

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Conclusion

Surveys were conducted during periods of peak annual activity (April to October) and peak daily activity (10 a.m. to 5 p.m. for spring) as indicated by Surface Activity of the San Diego Horned Lizard, *Phrynosoma coronatum blainvillii* by Stephen Hager and Batard Brattstrom (1997 Southwestern Naturalist 42:339). Therefore, this species should have been detected if present. However, San Diego horned lizard is very cryptic and could be overlooked if present at low density. The nearest reported location of this species is over 3 miles from the Parcel, and suitable habitat found on the Parcel is isolated by roadways to the north and west, the Olivas Park Golf Course to the east and wetlands to the south. Therefore, it is highly unlikely San Diego Horned lizard occurs on the Parcel. In summary, development of the Parcel is not expected to result in impacts to this species.

Should you have any questions regarding this report, please contact me at extension 13 at your earliest convenience.

Sincerely,

Padre Associates, Inc.

Matt Ingamells
Senior Biologist