Historic Biological Reports
Scan Control Sheet

County Project Number(s): CCC-0201/PM-5288

Report Type (check one):
- [x] Initial Study
- [ ] Species Inventory/Survey
- [ ] Focused Study
- [ ] EIR
- [ ] Draft EIR
- [ ] EIS

Report Date (Month/Day/Year): 03/28/2002

Check if the following apply to the report:

- [x] Wetland and/or aquatic habitat
- [ ] Within designated Coastal Zone
- [x] Movement corridor for fish and/or wildlife

E12

SECTION B
INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

Job: CCC-0201/PM 5288

Requester: Debbie Morrisset

Applicant: Mark Cywinski

Date: March 28, 2002

Survey Type: Field

Rationale: Legalization of parcel

Site Description: ENSR conducted a field visit of the project site (A.P.N. # 700-0-160-050) on March 27, 2002. The 64.87-acre property is located approximately ½ mile south of the intersection of Cotharin and Yerba Buena Road in Malibu, California. The project outlined in application CCC-0201/PM 5288 requests legalization the parcel. The general topography of the property includes steep inclines on the west side of the property, sloping into the ravine of Little Sycamore Creek, then sloping back up to the edge of Yerba Buena Road. Dominant plant types are coast live oak/sycamore riparian and chaparral (see attached site photographs). Little Sycamore Creek runs along the east side of the property, with relatively undisturbed riparian species, including sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*), California sagebrush (*Artemesia californica*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), and morning glory (*Calystegia macrostegia* ssp. *cyclostegia*).

Because the vegetation on the property is relatively undisturbed and the quality of the habitat is high, multitudes of special-species have the potential of occurring on the property. Pools and eddies within the creek could provide good habitat and cover for riparian species such as the arroyo toad (*Bufo microscaphus* ssp. *californicus*) and the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora* ssp. *draytonii*). A multitude of large trees provide nesting habitat for avian species, such as the least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii* ssp. *pusillus*), raptors, and other species.

6. Biological Resources	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				✓				✓
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

SECTION C
DISCUSSION OF RESPONSES

a. Several rare or endangered species have been reported within 5 miles of the project site and have the potential to be present at the site:

The marcescent dudleya (*Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *marscesens*), listed as threatened by the USFWS and as rare by CDFG, and the Santa Monica Mountains dudleya (*Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *ovatifolia*), listed as threatened by the USFWS, have been documented as present along the east and west sides of Yerba Buena road and above Little Sycamore Creek. Species of dudleya were observed during the site visit (see photographs) but the species and subspecies were not identified. A survey during the appropriate blooming period (May – June) should be completed before disturbance of the site.

The winter roost sites of the monarch butterfly (*Danus plexippus*) are protected by both federal and state law. Monarchs roost in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress) with nectar and water sources nearby. Roosting areas are documented at the junction of Yerba Buena Road and Hwy 1 at the mouth of Little Sycamore Canyon. Although the roosting site is near the project site, it is unlikely that trees that far up the canyon are utilized by migrating butterflies.

Both Southern California coast live oak riparian forest and southern sycamore alder riparian woodland are monitored by CDFG. Species comprising both habitats are found on the site (see site photographs).

Plummer's mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*), a federal species of concern, is usually found in coastal sage scrub or valley and foothill grassland. Soil is usually sandy or alluvial. Although there is potential habitat for the species on the property, signs of the lily were not observed in the project area. A survey during the appropriate blooming period should be completed before disturbance of the site.

The Conejo buckwheat (*Eriogonum crocatum*), a federal species of concern, is found on steep north-facing volcanic slopes throughout the western side of Conejo Valley. Although there is potential habitat for the species on the property, signs of the buckwheat were not observed in the project area. A survey during the appropriate blooming period should be completed before disturbance of the site.

The Santa Susana tarplant (*Hemizonia minthornii*), a federal species of concern, is found in chaparral on hard sandstone outcrops in the Santa Monica Mountains. The subject site includes sandstone outcrops and a survey during the appropriate blooming period should be completed before disturbance of the site.

The Sonoran Maiden Fern (*Thelypteris puberula var. sonorensis*), listed by the CNPS, is found along streams and seepage areas, and requires a high amount of available water. The streambed crossing the project site is characterized by large amounts of available water and likely supports this species. A specific survey should be completed before disturbance of the site.

The Southern Steelhead (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*), a federally endangered species, is present in the tributaries of the Arroyo Sequit. A tributary does run through the property, with the potential to support the species. A special-status survey for this species should occur prior to disturbance.

Due to the presence of a large number of special status species, development of the site could result in a significant impact to those species. To determine the occurrence and magnitude of the impact focused surveys would need to be completed at the proper time of year following the required survey protocols.

Consultation with the CDFG and USFWS would also need to be completed to ensure impacts were avoided or fully mitigated. In the absence of such surveys and consultation, impacts could be significant.

b. The banks of Little Sycamore Canyon potentially could support wetland vegetation. A delineation of the site should occur prior to disturbance.

c. The project site is over a mile away from the coast, so the impact on a coastal habitat is expected to be minimal.

d. The project site is located in a rural area of the Santa Monica Mountains and includes extensive undeveloped areas that could be used as wildlife migration corridors.

e. Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest and Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland are communities found in the area that are considered sensitive and disturbance should be limited. These communities are found on the subject property and should be assessed prior to disturbance.

SECTION D
MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Based on the information contained within Sections B and C:

	YES	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 (*check one*):

	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

Although legalization of the property would not directly result in impacts to special status species, prior to development or disturbance of the site the following mitigation measures would need to be implemented:

- Focused surveys should be completed at the appropriate time of year to demonstrate that either special-status species do not occur on the property, or that proposed activities would not impact these species
- Prior to initiation of disturbance activities, appropriate consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) should be completed.

Mitigation measures required by the CDFG and/or USFWS through the consultation process would need to be implemented as well.

Because of the uncertainty of the impacts to biological resources, even with the implementation of these mitigation measures, potentially significant impacts could still remain. It is on the basis of this uncertainty that and EIR should be prepared.

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Signature of Preparer Date