

COUNTY OF VENTURA BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES INITIAL STUDY

Date: August 8, 2005

Requestor: Rita Graham

Project: SD 05-0003 (Parcel Map 5575)

Field Study: ☒ Yes ☐ No

Justification: Potential habitat and soil conditions onsite may support several rare plants and sensitive vertebrates. Field check performed to determine if specialized habitat for rare species was present.

A. CHECKLIST

Biological Resources Issues	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	<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"/>
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 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"/>
e. locally important species/communities	<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"/>

Degree of Effect Explanation

N= None

LS = Less than significant effect

PS-M = Significant effect; Mitigation incorporated for a ND

PS = Potentially Significant effect; EIR required

B. DISCUSSION

The proposed project would subdivide one existing residential lot (0.65 acres) into four residential lots: Parcel 1 at 6105 ft² (0.14 ac), Parcel 2 at 8449 ft² (0.19 ac), Parcel 3 at 7662 ft² (0.18 ac), and Parcel 4 at 6163 ft² (0.14 ac). Two mobile homes and an accessory shed are currently on the property and would be removed.

The subject property is located at 919 and 923 North Main Street in the Community of Piru in an area zoned R-1 (Single Family Residential). It is located in Section 20, Township 04 North, Range 18 West on USGS 7.5' Quad Piru. Site access is from Main Street. The topography is gently to moderately sloped from SE to NW (from Main Street toward the back of the property). Elevation on the property ranges between 700-735 feet above mean sea level. Nearby drainages include Piru Creek 0.1 mile to the east, the Santa Clara River channel approximately 1.4 miles to the south, and Real Wash 0.6 mile to the west. No drainage channels were apparent on the property.

A site visit was conducted by Rincon biologists Nancy Fox-Fernandez and John Dreher on August 10, 2005 to determine the general extent of biological resources on the property. Most of the property was observed on foot, however borders of the property were not determined precisely because the property is currently occupied.



Soils on the site consist of the Moho loam association, and as such are calcareous, well-drained, and slightly hard (USDA, SCS, 1970). Gravel and small rocks are found throughout the property, as well as very dry, fine dirt and sand. No aquatic resources or drainages are on the property.

The subject property is in a fire clearance zone. It contains two currently inhabited trailers, a chicken coop, and numerous other personal belongings. There was also a pile of trash including metal pieces, wood, and fencing on the property. The vegetation is dominated by ruderal, weedy annual grasses and forbs including wild oats (*Avena fatua* and *A. barbata*), mustard (*Brassica* or *Sisymbrium* spp.), tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), California croton (*Croton californicus*), stephanomeria (*Stephanomeria virgata*), tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), morning glory (*Calystegia macrostegia*), telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*), California encelia (*Encelia californica*), and jimson weed (*Datura wrightii*). Locust trees (*Robinia pseudoacacia*), California pepper trees (*Schinus molle*), and avocado trees (*Persea americana*) also occur on either side of the property. Outside and to the northwest of the site, habitat is very dry coastal sage scrub dominated by buckwheat (*Eriogonum* spp.), and includes California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), lemonadeberry (*Rhus integrifolia*), Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicanus*), and our lord's candle (*Yucca whipplei*). This area is characterized by the California Sagebrush Series (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf 1995), which is considered Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub by Holland (Holland 1998).

A search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) via the RAREFIND software (May 2005) listed several special-status species that could be present within native coastal sage scrub areas. Given this habitat, the elevation range, and the underlying geology, the following special-status species have the potential to occur in the vicinity.

- California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) is found in the arid foothills and mountain ranges of southern and central California. They roost in rocky cliffs or in trees, and forage in foothills, grasslands and oak woodlands. State and federally listed endangered.
- Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*) nests in growth coniferous stands or in the deciduous riparian areas that are closest to streams and forages from the protection of dense tree cover from which it ambushes small birds. State Species of Special Concern.
- Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*), found in riparian habitat. Designated critical habitat is located approximately two miles from the site. State and federally listed as endangered.
- Plummer's Mariposa lily (*Calochortus plummerae*), found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, and coastal scrub. CNPS List 1B. Blooms from May to July.
- San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*), occurs in coastal sage scrub habitats with sandy or calcareous soil. CNPS List 1A; state listed as endangered and a federal candidate for listing as threatened. Blooms from April through June.
- Slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*) occurs on alluvial fans in Chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and cismontane woodland habitats. CNPS List 1B; state and federally listed as endangered. Blooms from April through June.
- Greata's aster (*Aster greatae*), found in riparian woodland and mesic habitats, located approximately 2 miles from site, CNPS list 1B.
- Coast (San Diego) horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum* (*blainvillei*)), found in coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats. A State Species of Concern.
- Two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*), found in perennial and intermittent streams having rocky beds bordered by willow thickets or other dense vegetation, uses small mammal holes to overwinter, state listed as threatened.

Biological resources issues:

- a. **Endangered, threatened, or rare species.** This subdivision would have no direct impacts to endangered, threatened, or rare species located in the site vicinity. The site has already been heavily disturbed and bears evidence of past excavation and dumping, and the vegetation is comprised almost exclusively of ruderal species of little value to wildlife and of low likelihood to support listed plants.

Pepper and locust trees on the property might provide both nesting and foraging habitat for Cooper's hawk, which is known to nest in urban settings. The California condor has a limited population (approximately 125) in the wild as the majority of birds are being bred in captivity. The nearest released individuals are found in the Los Padres National Forest (USDA 1999), but designated critical habitat occurs within 4 miles of the site. The presence of condors on site is unlikely and would be limited to foraging within the project area.

Compact soils and a lack of harvester ants greatly reduce the chances of horned lizards occurring on site. Ground disturbance and isolation from known populations make it highly unlikely that mariposa lily or spineflower would occur on site, and none were seen during the site survey. Therefore, because the habitat is of marginal quality for listed or sensitive species, no significant impacts to these species are anticipated.

Two visible holes were found in the hills behind the property, which may or may not have been historically used by nesting raptors. Trees on the edges of the subject property, as well as these cliffs holes and cliff peaks adjacent to the site, could provide roosting or nesting locations for raptors or migrating birds. Migratory birds, their nests and eggs, are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (U.S.C 16(7)II) and the California Fish and Game Code. However, considering the time of year and the extent of proposed actions, disturbance from construction would be considered temporary; therefore, significant impacts to individuals or populations are not anticipated.

- b. **Wetland Habitat.** The site is not located within or adjacent to a wetland. As such, future development would not cause significant impacts.
- c. **Coastal Habitat.** The site is not located within the coastal zone. As such, no mitigation would be required for future development.
- d. **Migration Corridors.** The subject property is within the Sespe to Santa Monica Mountains corridor which extends down Piru Creek and across the Santa Clara River and south towards Oak Ridge and Big Mountain. However, the parcel is surrounded on three sides by existing development. Therefore, although it is within a mile of the foothills of the Sespes at the mouth of the Piru Creek canyon, it is too isolated and of too small a size to serve as a functional corridor and animals will alternately be able to utilize larger tracts of contiguous land nearby. Therefore any potential development would not present a significant barrier to migration. No mitigation is necessary.
- e. **Locally Important Species/Communities.** There are no locally important species or communities occurring on the site. Therefore, no mitigation would be required.

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

D. MITIGATION MEASURES

Recommended ☐

Required for Negative Declaration ☐

None Necessary ☒

E. DETERMINATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENT FROM A BIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

Negative Declaration ☒ Mitigated Negative Declaration ☐ EIR Required ☐

Reviewer:

Nancy Fox-Fernandez

Date:

11 Aug 2005

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August 11, 2005

F. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

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