California Environmental Quality Act Environmental Checklist Form
Biological Resources
County of Ventura, Planning Division

DMEC

PROJECT REFERENCE NO.: CCC-9802 & PM-5121

PROJECT PLANNER: Debbie Morrisset

DATE: ? May 1998 (site visit conducted on 6 May 1998)

PROJECT BIOLOGIST: David L. Magney & Cher Wellonen, David Magney Environmental Consulting

PROJECT LOCATION: Wells Road off Yerba Buena Road, Santa Monica Mountains; Ventura County; SW¼ NE¼ & NW¼ SE¼, Section 14, T1S, R20W; Lat. 34°06'N, Long. 119°00'W.

PROJECT ADDRESS: Wells Road off Yerba Buena Road.

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT: The purpose of the project is to legalize a 2.5 acre parcel for the possible future construction of residential homes.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING: The project site occurs on a steep, south-facing slope in a highland area of the Santa Monica Mountains, and it is approximately 1/3 mile south from where Yerba Buena Road begins and ¼ mile east of the road. The vegetation types present on the site consists of Chamise/Laurelleaf Sumac Chaparral, with Coastal Sage Scrub intermixed, and annual grasses and forbs as ground cover.

The Chamise/Laurelleaf Sumac Chaparral located on site consists of primarily woody, perennial, small and large shrubs that are characteristically fire-adapted. The site chaparral vegetation was scarred due to past fires, but was clearly having no difficulty producing new growth, especially with the effects of the 1998 winter/spring rains. The vegetation of this Chamise/Laurelleaf Sumac Chaparral include the following: Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), Laurelleaf Sumac (*Malosma laurina*), Chaparral Currant (*Ribes malvaceum*), Bush Mallow *(Malacothamnus* sp.),Deer Weed (*Lotus scoparius*) and California Buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

The Coastal Sage Scrub layer filled in the areas that the chaparral did not cover, creating a densely covered slope with an array of diverse vegetation. The most abundant plants of this vegetation type occurring on site include: Black Sage (*Salvia mellifera*), Purple Sage (*Salvia leucophylla*),and Bush Monkey Flower *(Mimulus aurantiacus*). Other flora observed in the Coastal Sage Scrub community include the following: Branching Phacelia (*Phacelia ramosissima*), Our Lord's Candle (*Yucca whipplei*), Sawtooth Golden Bush (*Hazardia squarrosa*) California Bush Sunflower (*Encelia californica*), Common Morning Glory *(Calystegia macrostegia*), Mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*), Black Mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Summer Mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), Wild Cucumber (*Marah fabaceus*), Fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Chaparral Nightshade (*Solanum xanti*), and Golden Yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*).

The grasses that create the ground cover under the chaparral and scrub vegetation in the site vicinity include: Red Brome (*Bromus madritensis* ssp. *rubens*), Soft Chess Brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), Ripgut Grass (*Bromus diandrus*), Slender Oats (*Avena barbata*), Common Oats (*Avena fatua*), and Summer Barley (*Hordeum murinum* ssp. *glaucum*). The forbs that accompany the grasses include the following: Sow Thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), Red Stem

Filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), Yellow Sweet Clover (*Melilotus indica*), Italian *Thistle (Carduus pycnocephalus*), Windmill Pink (*Silene lacinata*), Succulent Lupine (*Lupinus succulentus*), Scarlet Pimpernel (*Anagallis arvensis*), Parry's Phacelia (*Phacelia parryi*), Annual Sunflower (*Helianthus anuus*), Common Eucrypya (*Eucrypa crysanthemifolia* var. *crysanthemifolia*), and Tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*).

A drainage, on the west boarder of the site, contains vegetation indicators of a wetland habitat. For example, Narrowleaf Cattail (*Typha angustifolia*) is present onsite, and indicates that waters frequent the drainage during rains. This drainage empties into the active stream running parallel to the length of the site, east to west, just across the dirt drive way from the site. The riparian zone created by the active stream is dominated by Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*).

Several special-status plant species are known to occur in the region of the project site, and the site has suitable habitat for many of the plants' potential establishment. The special-status plants that could occur in the vicinity of the project site include: *Antirrhinum ovatum, Acanthomintha obovata* ssp. *cordata, Astragalus brauntonii, Aphanisma blitoides, Baccharis plummerae* ssp. *plummerae, Calandrinia breweri, Calandrinia maritima, Calochortus catalinae, Calochortus plummerae, Cerocarpus betuloides* var. *blancheae, Chorizanthe procumbens, Dudleya abramsii* ssp. *parva, Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *marcescens, Dudleya cymosa* ssp. *ovatifolia, Eriogonum crocatum, Eriophyllum jepsonii, Galium cliftonsmithii, Hemizonia minthornii, Juglans californica* ssp. *californica, Pentachaeta lyonii, Perideridia pringlei,* and *Senecio aphanactis.*

No wildlife were observed during the site analysis; however, several birds and mammals are expected to occur in the site location and its vicinity, including:

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:

	Yes	Maybe	No	Discussion of Impact, Significance, and Mitigation Measures
IV. PLANT LIFE. *Will the proposal result in:*				
a) Change in the diversity of species, or number of any species of plants (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)?			X	No trees would be removed, but all chaparral and shrubs would be removed; however, no adverse impact to the areas bio-diversity is expected.
b) Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare, or endangered species of plants?		X		No rare and endangered species of plants occur, nor will be affected, by the proposed project.
c) Introduction of new species of plants into an area, or in a barrier to the normal replenishment of existing species?			X	The proposed project is not expected to result in introduction of new plant species into the area, or create a barrier to normal replenishment of existing species.
d) Reduction in acreage of any agricultural crop?			X	The proposed project would not reduce the acreage of any agricultural crop. The project site is currently used for horse pasture.
V. ANIMAL LIFE. *Will the proposal result in:*				
a) Change in the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals (birds; land animals, including reptiles; fish and shellfish, benthic organisms, or insects)?			X	The proposed project would not change the diversity of species, or numbers of any species of animals in the Hidden Valley area.
b) Reduction of the numbers of any unique, rare, or endangered species of animals?			X	The proposed project is not expected to result in any reductions of unique, rare, or endangered species of animals.
c) Introduction of new species of animals into an area, or result in a barrier to the migration or movement of animals?			X	The proposed project is not expected to result in the introduction of new species of animals, or result in a barrier to migration or movement of animals.
d) Deterioration to existing fish or wildlife habitat?			X	The proposed project is not expected to deteriorate existing fish or wildlife habitat.

Additional comments or explanations:

IV.b. Several mature Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) are present in the adjacent riparian zone, just outside (south) of the site, but can be spared any impacts by preventative measures such as keeping construction activities away from the driplines and root zones.

Several special-status plant species have the potential to occur in the vicinity of the project site because chaparral and coastal scrub communities are their optimal habitats. Therefore, seasonal surveys should be conducted regularly to assess any new special-status species occurrences before any construction begins.

MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANT ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT

	Yes	Maybe	No
a. Does the project have the potential to 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 major periods of California's history or prehistory?			X
b. Does the project have the potential to achieve short-term, to the disadvantage of long-term, environmental goals?			X
c. Does the project have environmental effects which are individually limited but are cumulatively considerable?			X
d. Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?			X
Alternatives to the Proposed Action. Does the project require the discussion and evaluation of a range of reasonable alternatives which could feasibly attain the basic objectives of the project?			X

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYST:

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

___ I find the proposed project will NOT have a significant adverse environmental effect, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

__ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant adverse environmental effect, there would not be a significant effect in this case if the mitigation measures described herein are included in the project, A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION should be prepared.

___ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant adverse environmental effect, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT should be prepared.

_____ _____

Signature Date

David L. Magney

Initial Study Preparer