

Initial Study Biological Assessment

UPDATED BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT OF PROPOSED CAMP RAMAH EXPANSION PROJECT, 385 FAIRVIEW ROAD, OJAI, VENTURA COUNTY, CALIFORNIA



Prepared for:

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20 February 2019

<p>County of Ventura Planning Commission Hearing Case No. PL18-0052 Exhibit 4 (MND), Attachment 9 - Initial Study Biological Assessment, prepared by Hunt and Associates Biological Consulting Services February 20, 2019</p>

Original ISBA report date: 8 August 2017

Revision report date(s): 20 February 2019

Case number (to be entered by Planning Div.):

Permit type:

Applicant:

Case Planner (to be entered by Planning Div.):

Total parcel(s) size:

Assessor Parcel Number(s): APN 010-007-031

Development proposal description: New Construction for Camp Ramah

Prepared for Ventura County Planning Division by:

As a Qualified Biologist, approved by the Ventura County Planning Division, I hereby certify that this Initial Study Biological Assessment was prepared according to the Planning Division's requirements and that the statements furnished in the report and associated maps are true and correct to the best of my knowledge.

Qualified Biologist (signature):		Date: 11 June 2018
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Other Biologist (signature):		Date:
Name (printed):	Title:	Company:
Phone:	email:	
Role:		

Initial Study Checklist

This Biological Assessment DID provide adequate information to make recommended CEQA findings regarding potentially significant impacts.

	Project Impact Degree of Effect				Cumulative Impact Degree of Effect			
	N	LS	PS-M*	PS	N	LS	PS-M*	PS
Biological Resources			X		X			
Species			X		X			
Ecological Communities			X		X			
Habitat Connectivity	X				X			

N: No impact

LS: Less than significant impact

PS-M: Potentially significant unless mitigation incorporated.

PS: Potentially significant

* DO NOT check this box unless the Biological Assessment provided information adequate enough to develop mitigation measures that reduce the level of impact to less than significant.

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A. List of California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)-tracked species with recorded occurrences within at least a 10-mile radius of the project site – See Table on p. 22.	

Summary

Camp Ramah of California is a summer camp located at 385 Fairview Avenue, approximately 1.4 air miles northwest of the City of Ojai. Camp Ramah proposes to construct six sleeping quarters (bunks) and a separate building containing a meeting room and staff offices on approximately 0.60 acres of open space adjacent to developed camp facilities in the northwestern section of the Camp property (Fig. 1). Hunt & Associates Biological Consulting Services prepared a Biological Assessment of the proposed project in August 2017 (Hunt & Associates, 2017). This report was updated in February 2018 because “existing conditions” in the project area were significantly altered in December 2017 by crews fighting the Thomas Fire.

Potential special-status plants found in the project area included several small scrub oaks in the understory of coast live oak woodland in the southwestern portion of the project area. These were tentatively identified as Nuttall’s scrub oak, *Q. dumosa*, a CNPS List 1B.1 species (Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in CA), or hybrids between *Q. dumosa* and the common scrub oak (*Q. berberidifolia*). Two special-status birds (Watch List species), Nuttall’s woodpecker and oak titmouse occur as residents in and around the project site. A number of animals classified as Species of Special Concern in California have a moderate to high potential of occurring onsite. No Federal- or State-listed (threatened or endangered) species were observed or are expected to occur or around the proposed project area.

There are no wetlands within the project area, but an unnamed seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that may contain USACE and/or CDFW jurisdictional areas runs approximately 25 feet east of the project area footprint.

The project elements have been sited to reduce impacts to adjacent native plant communities from required fire fuel management zones.

There are no Class I impacts to biological resources associated with the proposed project. A number of Class II impacts to biological resources were identified and mitigation measures are proposed to avoid or minimize these impacts to less than significant levels.

Section 1: Construction Footprint Description

Construction Footprint Definition (per the Ventura County Planning Division): The construction footprint includes the proposed maximum limits of temporary or permanent direct land or vegetation disturbance for a project including such things as the building pad(s), roads/road improvements, grading, septic systems, wells, drainage improvements, fire hazard brush clearance area(s), tennis courts, pools/spas, landscaping, storage/stockpile areas, construction staging areas, fire department turnarounds, utility trenching and other grading areas. The construction footprint on some types of projects, such as mining, oil and gas exploration or agricultural operations, may be quite different than the above.

Development Proposal Description:

Camp Ramah of California proposes to construct six new sleeping quarters (bunks) and a separate building containing a meeting room and staff offices on approximately 0.60 acres of open space immediately adjacent to developed portions of the Camp. The site will be accessed by an existing paved road/track that parallels the western border of a soccer field. Widening improvements to this driveway will remove four (4) small (3-inch to 7.5-inch dbh) coast live oak trees. No other trees will be removed for the project, and precautions will be taken to protect oaks adjacent to the project area from disturbance (see tree-specific recommendations in Knight, 2019). Most of 0.60-acre project

area footprint will be graded for this project. Fire fuel management zones extending 100 feet outward from all structures will be created and maintained for the lifetime of the project and will encompass approximately 1.9 acres in addition to the 0.60-acre project site proper. The fire fuel modification zones will extend into adjacent native plant communities.

Construction Footprint Size

The project area proper (project footprint) encompasses approximately 0.60 acres. The 100-foot fire fuel management zone around the project footprint encompasses approximately 1.9 acres.

Project Design for Impact Avoidance or Minimization

The project elements within the project footprint have been clustered to reduce the size of the footprint and have been sited to minimize the amount of grading required, especially on shallow slopes in the western portion of the project area. The footprint also has been sited to avoid removal of mature coast live oak and other native trees (see Knight, 2019), and to maintain a minimum 25-foot buffer from a seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that runs east of the project area.

Zoning

The project area is zoned RE-20; the fire fuel modification zone around the western and northern sides of the project footprint is zoned OS-20 and OS-80.

Elevation

Project area surface elevations range between 925 feet and 955 feet above sea level.

Section 2: Survey Information

2.1 Survey Purpose

Discretionary actions undertaken by public agencies are required to demonstrate compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). The purpose of this Initial Study Biological Assessment (ISBA) is to gather enough information about the biological resources associated with the proposed project, and their potential to be impacted by the project, to make a CEQA Initial Study significance finding for biological resources. In general, ISBA's are intended to:

- Provide an inventory of the biological resources on a project site and the values of those resources.
- Determine if a proposed project has the potential to impact any significant biological resources.
- Recommend project redesign to avoid, minimize or reduce impacts to significant biological resources.
- Recommend additional studies necessary to adequately assess potential impacts and/or to develop adequate mitigation measures.
- Develop mitigation measures, when necessary, in cases where adequate information is available.

2.2 Survey Area Description

Survey Area Definition (per the Ventura County Planning Division): The physical area a biologist evaluates as part of a biological assessment. This includes all areas that could potentially be subject to direct or indirect impacts from the project, including, but not limited to: the construction footprint; areas that would be subject to noise, light, dust or runoff generated by the project; any required buffer areas (e.g., buffers surrounding

wetland habitat). The construction footprint plus a 100 to 300-foot buffer—beyond the required fire hazard brush clearance boundary—(or 20-foot from the cut/fill boundary or road fire hazard brush clearance boundary – whichever is greater) is generally the size of a survey area. Required off-site improvements—such as roads or fire hazard brush clearance—are included in the survey area. Survey areas can extend off the project's parcel(s) because indirect impacts may cross property lines. The extent of the survey area shall be determined by the biologist in consultation with the lead agency.

The survey area for this report encompassed the 0.6-acre project area footprint, the 100-foot fire fuel management zone around the footprint, and a 250-foot radius around the 100-foot fire fuel management zone. Thus, the survey area totals approximately 4.5 acres.

Survey Area 1 (SA1)

Location

The survey area totals approximately 4.5 acres and is located approximately 0.3 air miles N of Fairview Road in the northwestern portion of Camp Ramah. The southern portion of the survey area included developed portions of Camp Ramah while the northern, western, and eastern portions of the survey area included open space vegetated by non-native annual grassland, coast live oak woodland, and chaparral.

The survey area did not coincide with parcel boundaries or other site features because the parcel boundaries were irrelevant. Rather, the survey extended approximately 250 feet beyond the 100-foot fire fuel management zone in order to fully evaluate biological resources and impacts. The survey area was not flagged.

Survey Area Environmental Setting

The survey area straddles the interface between a portion of the relatively flat floodplain of McDonald Canyon Creek, a seasonal drainage, and the lower, south-facing slopes of the Topa Topa Mountain Range. There are no wetlands within the proposed project area. A seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek runs north-south approximately 25 feet east of the project footprint. The proposed project footprint currently supports open space: non-native annual grassland and coast live oak woodland (and single mature oaks). Chaparral and non-native annual grassland occurs on slopes immediately west, north, and east of the project area. A soccer field and other Camp facilities border the project area on the south and southeast. An old, disused paved driveway/dirt track parallels the western side of the soccer field up to the southern border of the project area.

The project area footprint lies mostly on the floodplain, with small portions extending onto shallow slopes west of the project area proper. The project area slopes gently to the south-southeast and is drained by a poorly-developed seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek. Currently, the project area is undeveloped open space, as are the slopes bordering the western and northern side of the area. Sloping ground east of the seasonal drainage appeared to have been dry farmed in the recent past and currently supports ruderal, non-native annual grassland.

Chaparral is the predominant vegetation type covering the slopes west, north, and northeast of the project area. Patches of coast live oak woodland occur in the southern portions of the project area and extend southwestward and southward and southeastward throughout Camp Ramah. Non-native annual grassland, disturbed by infrequent disking, occurs east of the project area. A seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek separates the project area from this grassland. Extensive citrus orchards occur several hundred feet southwest of the project

area and are separated from it by chaparral. Developed portions of Camp Ramah cover several dozen acres south and southeast of the project area.

Surrounding Area Environmental Setting

The project area sits at the base of the Topa Topa Mountains and abuts extensive open space on the south-facing slope of this range. Large portions of these slopes, including parcels abutting the northeast corner of Camp Ramah are managed by the U.S. Forest Service. The land west, south, and southeast of Camp Ramah has been converted to a mixture of agriculture and low-density single-family residential lots of varying sizes.

Cover

Percent native vegetation: 55%
Percent non-native vegetation: 35%
Percent recently burned: 30%
Percent ag/grazing: 0%
Percent bare ground/cleared/graded: 30%
Percent buildings, paved roads and other impervious cover: 20%

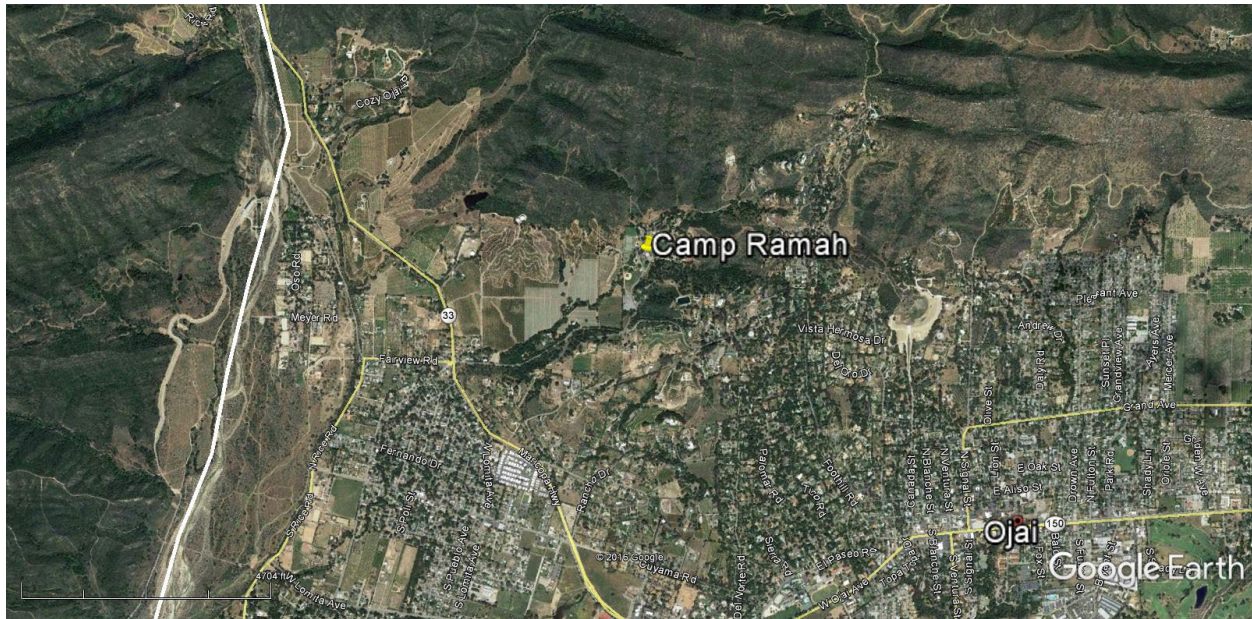


Figure 1. Project location. Northwest of the City of Ojai. Highway 33 is yellow line at left.

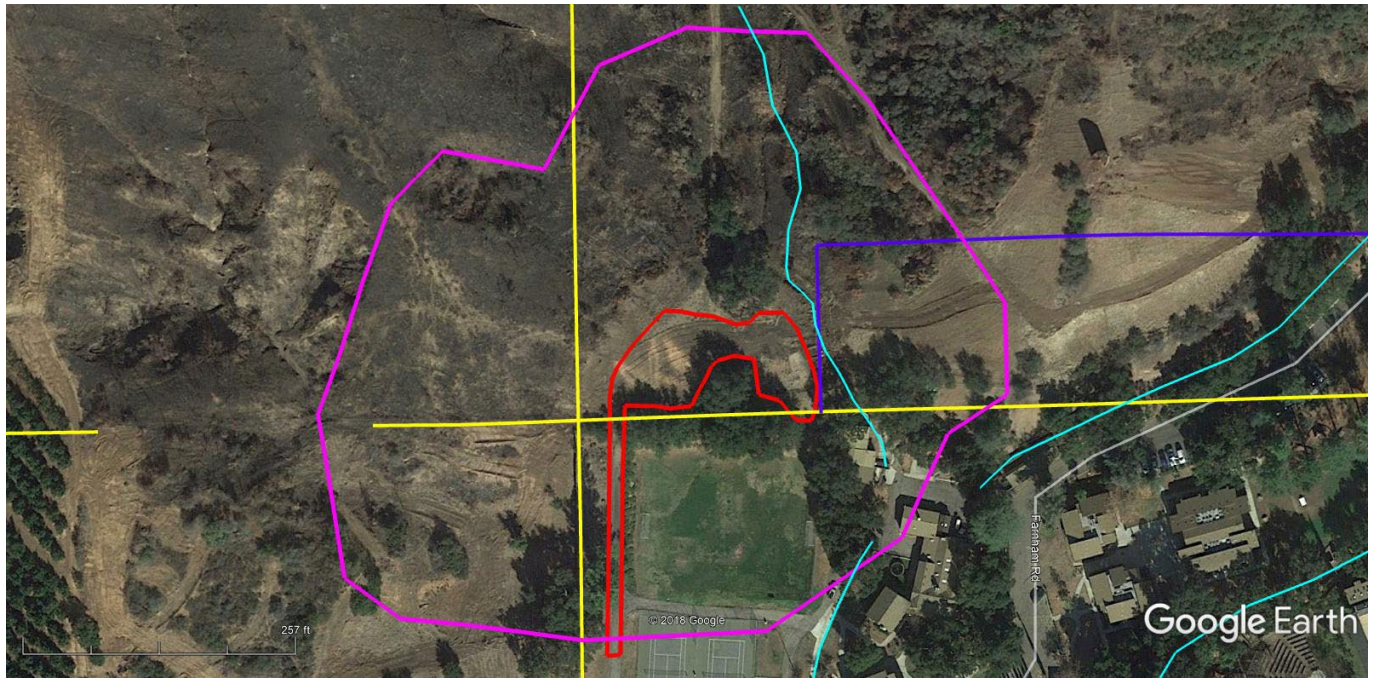


Figure 2. Survey area (purple line). Project area footprint is outlined in red. The light blue line shows the approximate centerline of a seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that runs just east of the project area. All other lines show approximate parcel boundaries. Camp Ramah buildings are visible in lower right quadrant.

2.3 Methodology

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Survey Date & Details							
Survey Key	Survey Date	Survey Area Map Key	Survey Type	Time Period	Methods/Constraints	GPS	Surveyor
SD 1	1/16/2017	SA 1	ISBA	8:00 am-10:30 am	Walking transects; entire site was surveyed	Garmin, GPSmap, Model 60CSx; +-8 ft accuracy	Lawrence E. Hunt
SD 2	3/13/2017	SA 1	Botanical	9:00 am-12:45 pm	Random walk; entire site was surveyed	Garmin, GPSmap, Model 60CSx; +-8 ft accuracy	Lawrence E. Hunt
SD 3	5/5/2017	SA 1	Botanical	10:30 am-2:15 pm	Random walk; entire site was surveyed	Garmin, GPSmap, Model 60CSx; +-8 ft accuracy	Lawrence E. Hunt

SD 4	2/16/2018	SA 1	ISBA	9:15 am- 2:15 pm	Random walk; entire site was surveyed	Garmin, GPSmap, Model 60CSx; +-8 ft accuracy	Lawrence E. Hunt
ISBAInitial Study Biological Assessment Botanical.....Botanical Survey							

Section 3: The Biological Inventory

See Appendix One for an overview of the types of biological resources that are protected in Ventura County.

3.1 Ecological Communities: Plant Communities, Physical Features and Wetland

Plant Communities

Locally important or rare plant communities were found within the survey area(s).

Major Plant Communities Summary

Four vegetation alliances (Sawyer et al., 2008) occur in the survey area:

- *Quercus agrifolia* Woodland Alliance. This association is the Coast Live Oak Woodland of Holland (1986). Coast live oaks border the proposed project area on the south, east, and north as single trees and clumps of trees. Prior to development in this area, oak woodlands probably would have been the dominant community on the relatively flat floodplain of McDonald Canyon Creek. Dominant trees include coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*). Understory shrubs include elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), California man-root (*Marah fabaceus*), and poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), with an herbaceous ground cover dominated by brome grasses (see next association).

Two other species of oaks also occur in and adjacent to the proposed project area. Several individuals of a Scrub oak (tentatively identified as *Q. berberidifolia*) occur adjacent to coast live oak woodland in the southwestern portion of the project area. Scrub oaks also were found in adjacent chaparral on slopes west of the project area. These scrub oaks appeared to show hybrid characteristics of *Q. berberidifolia* x *Q. dumosa* (Nuttall's scrub oak) the latter listed by the CA Native Plant Society as a List 1B.1 species (see Table 1). A single, 12-inch dbh canyon live oak (*Q. chrysolepis*), occurs in the approximate center of the project area (Fig. 4). This species also is a dominant species in chaparral in the Transverse Range in northern Ventura County (Sawyer, et al. 2008). **This canyon live oak and all suspected scrub oaks in the project area were removed by fire-fighting activities during the Thomas Fire in December 2017.**

- *Bromus diandrus* Semi-Natural Herbaceous Stand. This is the Non-Native Annual Grassland/Ruderal of Holland (1986). This is the most extensive plant association in the

proposed project area. Dominants include ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), rattail fescue (*Vulpia myuros*), hare barley (*Hordeum murinum*), red brome (*Bromus rubens*), wild oats (*Avena* sp.), redstem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*), wild radish (*Raphanus sativa*), and annual wildflowers, including fiddleneck (*Amsinckia menziesii*), truncate-leaved lupine (*Lupinus truncatus*), sky lupine (*Lupinus nanus*), tuberous skullcap (*Scutellaria tuberosa*), soap lily (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum* var. *pomeridianum*), telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Mediterranean mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), and other species. Much of this habitat within the project area, as well as extensive areas southwest and east of the project area, were cleared (graded) by fire crews during the Thomas Fire in December 2017.

- *Malacothamnus fasciculatus* Shrubland Alliance. This is the Bush Mallow Scrub of Holland, 1986). This very diverse type of chaparral occurs on slopes west, north, and northeast of the proposed project area and is the most extensive vegetation type around the project area. Dominant shrub species here include (in order of dominance): chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), bigpod ceanothus (*Ceanothus megacarpus*), elderberry (*Sambucus mexicanus*), redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), and birchleaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus montanus* [= *C. betuloides*]). Extensive areas of the Topa Topa Mountains that support this and other chaparral associations, including the northwestern quadrant of the survey area for this report, burned completely in the Thomas Fire of December 2017.
- *Baccharis salicifolia* Shrubland Alliance. This is the Mule-fat Scrub community of Holland (1986). This plant community is closely associated with the channel bed and banks of the unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that borders the eastern side of the proposed project area. Shrub species predominate and the physiognomy is generally open in most places along the subject reach of the creek: mule-fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and non-native grasses. Chaparral shrubs, such as black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), are common here, also. All of the vegetation associated with this seasonal drainage adjacent to the project area was removed and the channel was completely filled with soil by fire crews during the Thomas Fire in December 2017.

Undifferentiated Exotic Vegetation and Ornamental Shrubland is present immediately southwest, south, and southeast of the surveyed area, and includes lawn (soccer field), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus molle*), ornamental geranium (*Pelargonium* sp.), oleander (*Oleander* sp.), unidentified pines (*Pinus* sp.), and other non-native species.

Graded/Cleared land now occurs over large portions of the project area and in areas southwest and east of the project area that were previously vegetated with non-native annual grassland as a result of fire-fighting activities in December 2017. Fire crews also created a number of firebreaks through grassland and chaparral west, north, and east of the project area.

Urban/Disturbed or Built-Up Land occurs south and southeast of the surveyed area (Camp Ramah proper, with buildings, campgrounds, roadways, parking lots, athletic fields, etc.).

Agricultural lands (citrus orchards) occur several hundred feet southwest of the surveyed area and cover extensive portions of the McDonald Canyon Creek floodplain.

Plant Communities								
Map Key (1)	SVC Alliance	SVC Association	Misc. (2)	Status (3)	Condition (4)	Acres Total	Acres Impacted	Comments (5)
PC1	Coast Live Oak Woodland (<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>)	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i> - <i>Sambucus mexicana</i> - <i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>		LIC, G5, S4	Disturbed	0.57	0.57	Disturbed by invasive landscaping and previous vegetation management practices; impacts come from fire fuel mgmt. practices
PC2	Ripgut brome Semi-Natural Herbaceous Stand	<i>Bromus diandrus</i> - <i>Vulpia myuros</i> - <i>Erodium cicutarium</i>			Graded-No Permits Assumed; Burned	0.92	0.92	Most of this vegetation association in project area graded and cleared by firefighting crews in Dec 2017
PC3	Bush mallow Shrubland Alliance (<i>Malacothamnus fasciatus</i>)	<i>Malacothamnus fasciatus</i> - <i>Malosma laurina</i> - <i>Salvia mellifera</i>		G4, S4	Burned	0.58	0.58	Found outside of, but adjacent to project area on slopes; burned during Thomas Fire in Dec 2017; impacts come from fire fuel mgmt. practices
PC4	Mule-fat Shrubland Alliance (<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>)	<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i> - <i>Sambucus mexicana</i> - <i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>		G5, S4	Graded-No Permits Assumed; Burned	0.05	0.02	Associated with unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek; reach adjacent to project area graded and channel filled by firefighting crews in Dec 2017
PC5			Ornamental Shrubland			0.26	0.0	Landscaping planted along S border of project area, in coast live oak woodland
PC6			Built-Up Land			0.10	0.02	Camp Ramah and existing paved roads
Totals						2.48	2.09	
LIC Locally Important Plant Community ESHA Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (Coastal Zone) CDFG Rare: G1 or S1 Critically Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state) G2 or S2 Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state) G3 or S3 Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction Globally or Subnationally (state) G4 or S4 Low Vulnerability G5 or S5 Not Vulnerable Cal OWA Protected by the California Oak Woodlands Act								

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA)

ESHA is “any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments” (Public Resources Code § 30107.5). ESHA includes coastal dunes, beaches, tidepools, wetlands, creek corridors, and certain upland habitats in the Santa Monica Mountains (Ventura County Coastal Area Plan).

Habitats that meet the definition of ESHA were not found within the survey area(s).

Waters and Wetlands

See Appendix One for an overview of the local, state and federal regulations protecting waters, wetlands and riparian habitats. Wetlands are complex systems; delineating their specific boundaries, functions and values generally takes a level of effort beyond the scope of an Initial Study Biological Assessment (ISBA). The goal of the ISBA with regard to waters and wetlands is simply to identify whether they may exist or not and to determine the potential for impacts to them from the proposed project. This much information can be adequate for designing projects to avoid impacts to waters and wetlands. Additional studies are generally warranted to delineate specific wetland boundaries and to develop recommendations for impact minimization or impact mitigation measures.

Waters and/or wetlands were found within the survey area(s).

Waters and Wetlands Summary

An approximately 125-foot long reach of an unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek runs north-south about 35 feet east of the eastern edge of the project area. This highly seasonal drainage supports poorly-developed *Baccharis salicifolia* Shrubland Alliance. There are no riparian trees associated with this drainage. Shrub species predominate and the physiognomy is generally open in most places along the subject reach of the creek: mule-fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*), horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and non-native grasses. Chaparral shrubs, such as black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), and chaparral mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), are common here, also. Habitat quality along this reach is low, but it connects to better-developed riparian scrub habitat upstream of the project area. The drainage enters a buried culvert as it passes through Camp Ramah before connecting with the main stem of McDonald Canyon Creek. The project area reach is dry except during and immediately following storm events. **All of the vegetation associated with this seasonal drainage along the reach adjacent to the proposed project area was cleared and the channel was completely filled with soil by fire crews to create a fire break during the Thomas Fire in December 2017.**

The proposed project construction footprint has been sited to maintain a minimum 30-35-foot buffer from this seasonal drainage. The proposed project will not directly impact the drainage, but restoring and replanting the reach affected by fire-fighting activities is part of the proposed project.

Waters and Wetlands						
Map Key (1)	Wetland Type (2)	Wetland Name (if any)	Wetland Status (3) (if known)	Wetland Size (4)	Hydrologic Status (5)	Primary Water Source (6)
W1	Stream/drainage	Unnamed	Unknown	125 linear ft run east of project area; entire tributary drainage is about 1,050 linear ft long	Dry	Runoff
USACE U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regulated CDFG California Department of Fish & Game regulated County County General Plan protected wetland						

Waters and Wetlands

WPD Co. Watershed Protection District (red-line stream)

Waters and Wetlands (continued)
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Map Key	County Wetland Significance (7)	Wetland Distance from Project (8)	Comments (9)
W1	Unknown, but probably Insignificant	30-35 ft E of project area	125 ft-long reach adjacent to project site was completely filled with soil and associated vegetation was removed by fire crews during Thomas Fire in December 2017 to create a firebreak. Drainage is a highly seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek. Supports very patchy mule-fat (<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>) and non-native annual grasses; poor riparian habitat development. Drainage enters buried culvert 60 ft east of SE corner of project area footprint for distance of 80 ft before 'daylighting' again. Confluence with main channel of McDonald Canyon Creek is approximately 460 feet further downstream from 'daylight' point..

Water/Wetland Buffers

Map Key (1)	Recommended Buffer (2)	Comments
W1B1	35 ft	The habitat value of this drainage, especially the reach adjacent to the project area, is very low because the drainage channel, banks, and associated vegetation, are poorly developed. Moreover, vegetation along the reach adjacent to the project area was cleared and the channel completely filled with soil by fire-fighting crews constructing a firebreak during the Thomas Fire in December 2017. Restoration of the affected reach, including restoration of native, locally-occurring riparian scrub vegetation will significantly improve this habitat over existing conditions, and so a 35-foot buffer from project area elements will provide adequate protection of wildlife habitat values in the restored reach.

Plant Community Map:

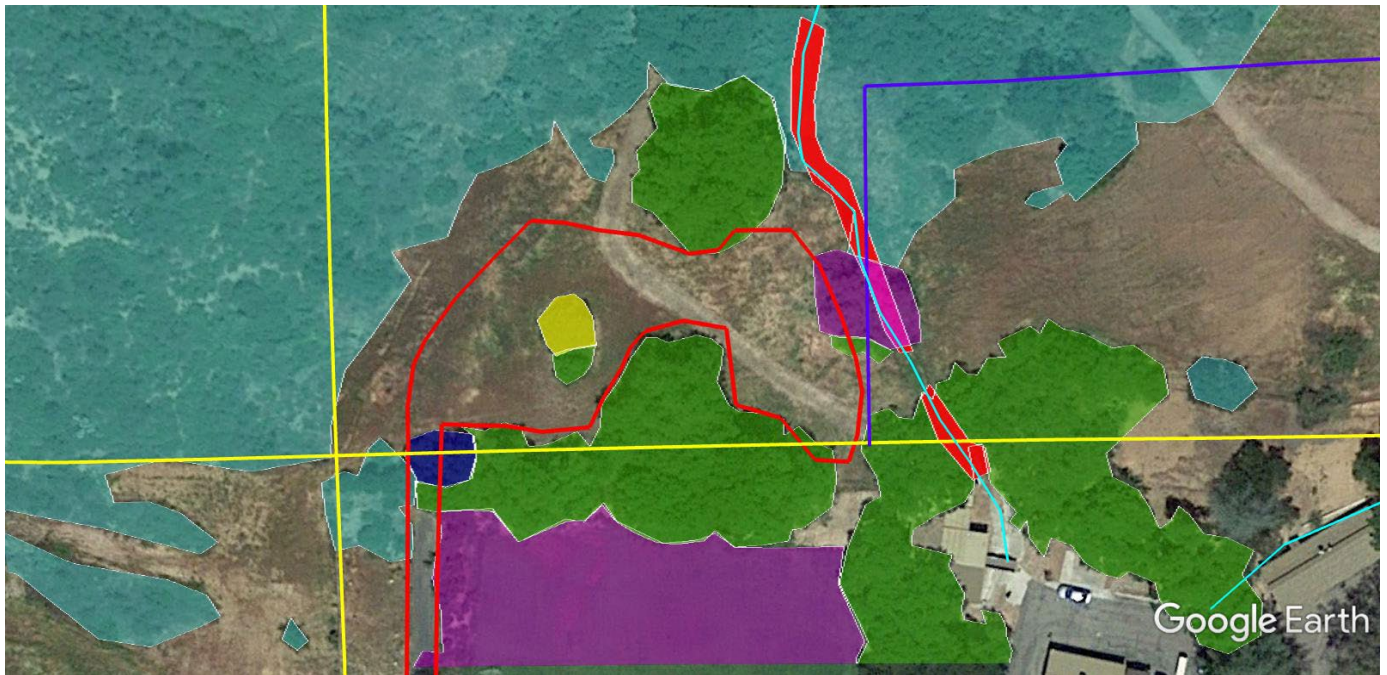


Figure 3. Plant Community Map--Pre-Thomas Fire. Imagery date 14 April 2017. Project area outlined in red.

Quercus agrifolia Woodland Alliance (PC1) shown in green; circular, dark blue and yellow polygons show former locations of possible *Quercus berberidifolia* x *Q. dumosa* hybrids, and mature canyon live oak, respectively. All were removed by fire crews during Thomas Fire in Dec. 2017.

Bromus diandrus Semi-Natural Herbaceous Stand (PC2): uncolored areas.

Malacothamnus fasciculatus Shrubland Alliance (PC3), shown in light blue.

Baccharis salicifolia Shrubland Alliance (PC4), shown in red.

Ornamental plantings (PC5), such as lawn grass and pepper trees (*Schinus molle*) shown in purple.

Camp Ramah buildings (PC6) are visible in lower right corner.

Parcel boundaries are shown by yellow and dark blue lines (approximate).

Seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek shown by light blue lines.

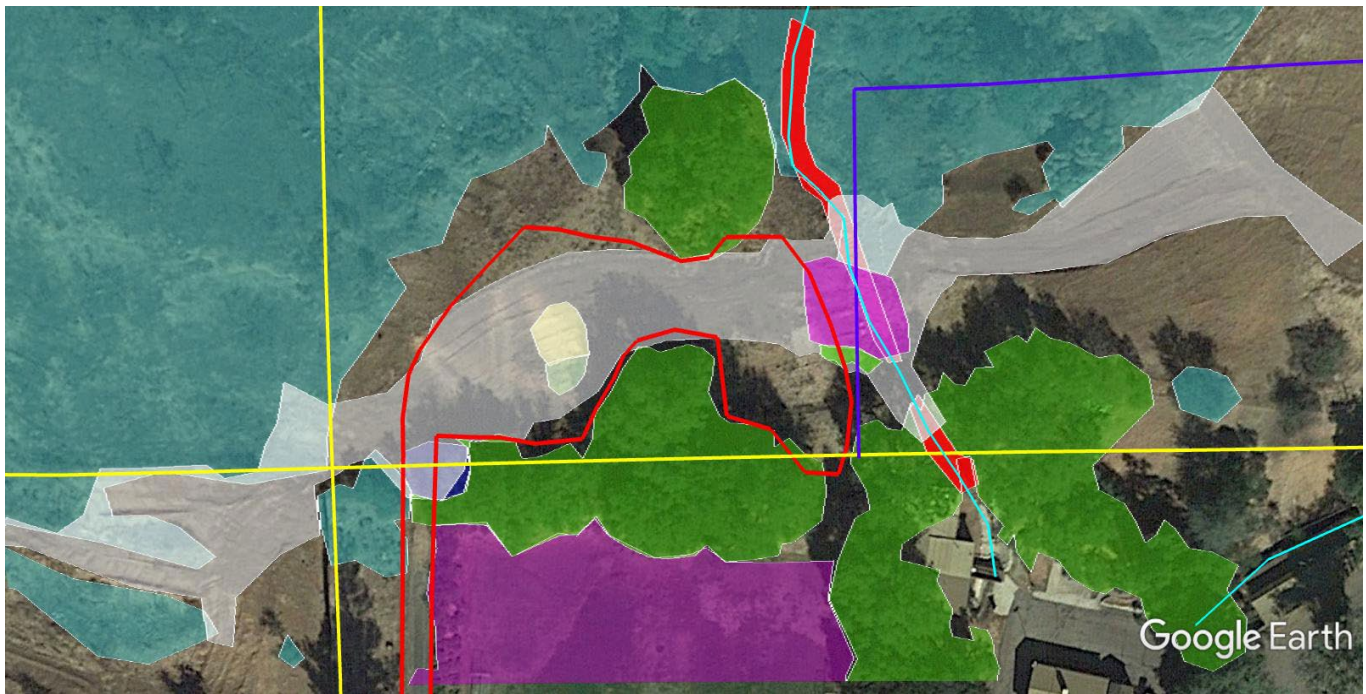


Figure 4. Plant Community Map--post-Thomas Fire. Vegetation polygons as in Fig. 3. Imagery dated 12 January 2018. A firebreak (east-west-trending white swath) was bulldozed through the project area in mid-December 2017 in advance of the fire. All vegetation within this polygon, including scrub oaks and the canyon live oak, was removed and a 100-foot long reach of a tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek (pale blue line) was filled with soil. Bush Mallow Shrubland (PC3-light blue) and Rig-gut Brome Semi-Natural Herbaceous Stand (PC2-uncolored areas) burned in the Thomas Fire in December 2017.

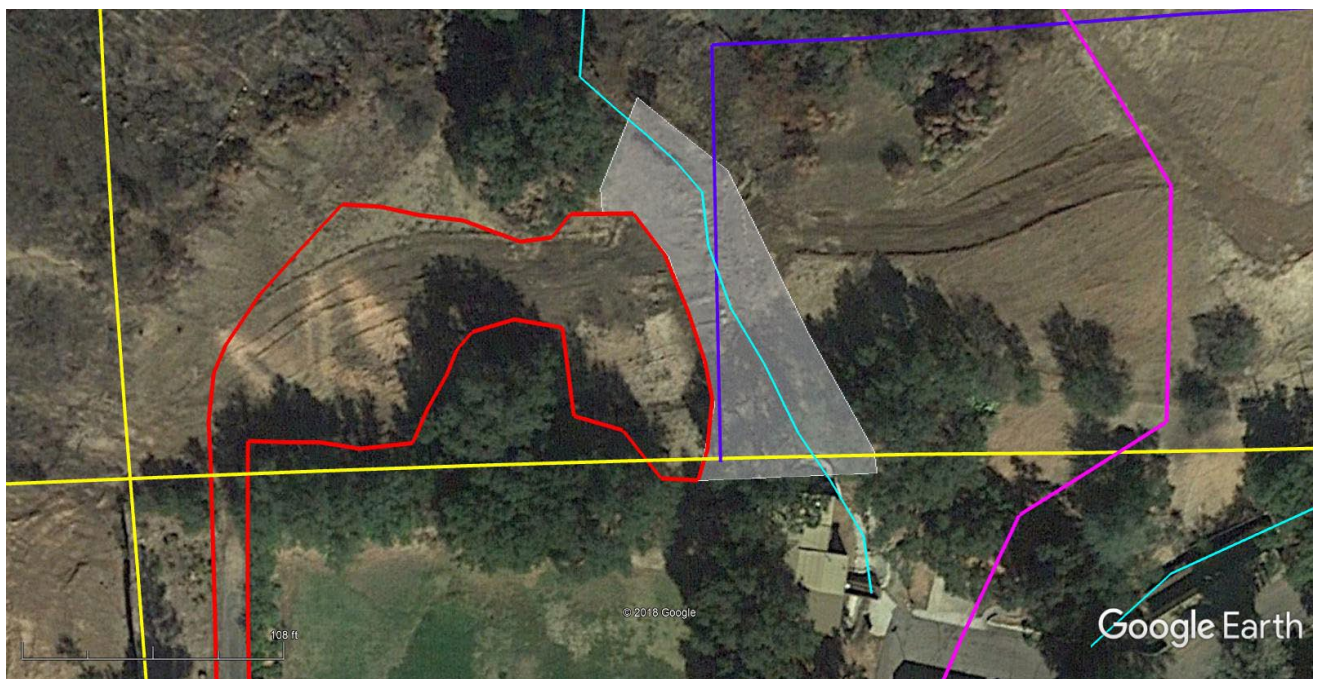


Figure 5. Wetlands and Wetland Buffer Map. Unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek shown in light blue (W1). White overlay shows proposed 25-35-foot buffer/restoration area adjacent to project area (W1B1).

3.2 Plant and Wildlife Species

Plants. A list of plant species observed in the survey area is included in Appendix 2. Fourteen special-status plants have been found within a five-mile radius of the project area (see table below). Several small scrub oaks, tentatively identified as Nuttall's scrub oaks (*Quercus dumosa*) or a hybrid between *dumosa* and the common scrub oak (*Q. berberidifolia*), were found in 2017 in the understory of coast live oak woodland in the southwestern portion of the project area and in chaparral on slopes west and north of the project area (Hunt & Associates, 2017) (see Fig. 3). According to some authors, Nuttall's scrub oaks occur at lower and more coastal locations than the common scrub oak (Pavlik, et al. 1991; Smith, 1998). However, Nuttall's scrub oak has been collected north, east, and south of the project area (CalFlora, 2017; Table 1). Because of the proximity of these records, the scrub oaks found in the project area in 2017 were assumed to be Nuttall's scrub oak or possibly *dumosa* x *berberidifolia* hybrids. **Fire suppression activities by several governmental agencies in December 2017 removed all or nearly all of the scrub oaks that were present in the southwestern portion of the project area (see Fig. 4).**

None of the other special-status species evaluated in Table 1 were observed in the project area footprint or in the survey area. Overall, floristic diversity in the project area is low compared to that found in scrub habitat on adjacent slopes because it is mostly covered by annual grassland which is dominated by non-native, invasive species.

Protected Trees. A large canyon live oak tree in the center of the project area was removed by fire-fighting crews creating a firebreak during the Thomas Fire in December 2017. Widening the existing driveway to access the project area will remove approximately four (4) coast live oaks with trunk diameters at breast height (dbh) ranging between 3 and 7.5 inches. None of these trees qualify for listing as "Protected Trees", but larger coast live oaks adjacent to the southern and northern portions of the project area qualify as "Protected Trees" and will be protected per the recommendations in the Arborist's Report (see Knight (2019) for detailed information on the location, size, condition, and protective measures for these trees).

Protected Trees				
Map Key (1)	Species (2)	Common Name	Girth (3) (circumference)	Impact (4)
PC1 on Fig. 3	<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	Coast live oak	See separate Arborist's Report (Knight, 2019)	Encroachment

Wildlife Species and Bird Nests

See Appendix One for definitions of the types of special status species that have federal, state or local protection and for more information on the regulations that protect birds' nests.

Special status species were observed or have a moderate to high potential to occur within the survey area(s).

Habitat suitable for nests of birds protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act does exist within the survey area(s).

Special Status Species Summary

Observed and Potentially Occurring Special Status Species						
Map Key (1)	Survey/ Source (2)	Scientific Name (3)	Common Name	Species' Status (4)	Potential to Occur (5)	Habitat Requirements (6)
PLANTS						
	CNDDDB	<i>Astragalus didymocarpus</i> var. <i>milesianus</i>	Mile's milk-vetch	List 1B.2	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Coastal sage scrub; clay soils.
	CNDDDB	<i>Atriplex seranana</i> var. <i>davidsonii</i>	Davidson's saltbush	List 1B.2	None. Perennial shrub, would have been observed, if present	Riparian scrub/coastal sage scrub
	CNDDDB	<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	List 4.2	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Chaparral, coastal sage scrub, woodland, grassland.
	CNDDDB	<i>Calochortus fimbriatus</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	List 1B.3	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Chaparral; clay soils.
	CNDDDB	<i>Calochortus plummerae</i>	Plummer's mariposa lily	List 4.2	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Chaparral, coastal sage scrub, grassland; rocky soils.
	CNDDDB	<i>Fritillaria ojaiensis</i>	Ojai fritillary	List 1B.2	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Found in sandy loam soil in chamise chaparral (burned in 1985); N-facing chaparral with <i>Ceanothus oliganthus</i> and <i>C. crassifolius</i> ; N-facing slope along creek, and N-facing slope in mesic habitat.
	CNDDDB	<i>Horkelia cuneata</i> var. <i>puberula</i>	Mesa horkelia	1B.1	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Sandy soils.
	CNDDDB	<i>Lepidium virginicum</i> var. <i>robinsonii</i>	Robinson's pepper grass	4.3	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Chaparral, coastal sage scrub.

Observed and Potentially Occurring Special Status Species						
	CNDDB	<i>Monardella hypoleuca</i> ssp. <i>hypoleuca</i>	White-veined monardella	1B.3	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Chaparral, woodland
	CNDDB	<i>Navarretia ojaiensis</i>	Ojai navarretia	List 1B.1	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Found in sparse grassland openings in chaparral; clay soil; sparse grassland in openings in Coast Live Oak Alliance and <i>Ceanothus-Cercocarpus</i> Alliance; clay soils
	CNDDB	<i>Navarretia peninsularis</i>	Baja navarretia	List 1B.2	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate to high potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Grassland meadow
	CNDDB	<i>Nolina cismontana</i>	Chaparral nolina	List 1B.2	None. Perennial shrub; would have been observed, if present	Chaparral/coastal sage scrub on soils derived from Sespe Red Bed Formation
SS1	SD1-3	<i>Quercus dumosa</i>	Nuttall's scrub oak	List 1B.1	Tentative Observation. Scrub oaks tentatively identified as either <i>Quercus dumosa</i> or hybrids between <i>dumosa</i> and common scrub oak, <i>Q. berberidifolia</i> observed at SW edge of project area beneath <i>Q. agrifolia</i> canopy. All trees removed by fire crews during Thomas Fire in December 2017	Chaparral
	CNDDB	<i>Sidalcea neomexicana</i>	Salt Spring checkerbloom	List 2B.2	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate potential to occur in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Riparian scrub/coastal sage scrub
ANIMALS						
		<i>Haplotrema caelatum</i>	Slotted lancetooth snail	LIS	Low potential to occur in project area; moderate potential in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	May occur beneath cover objects (logs, rocks, etc.) or in decaying yucca plants in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area.

Observed and Potentially Occurring Special Status Species						
	Hunt, pers. observ.; Roth and Sadeghian (2003)	Various species of shoulderband snails, genus <i>Helminthoglypta</i> , including <i>H. phlyctaena</i> (Zaca shoulderband), <i>H. traskii traskii</i> (Trask shoulderband), <i>H. tudiculata convicta</i> (southern shoulderband), <i>H. venturensis</i> (Ventura shoulderband), and <i>H. willetti</i> (Matilija shoulderband)	Shoulderband snails	LIS	Low potential to occur in project area because of lack of suitable microhabitat; moderate to high potential in scrub habitats in fire fuel mgmt. area	Systematics, distribution, and habitat preferences of these species are poorly known; one or more of these species may occur on-site beneath cover objects (logs, rocks, etc.) or in decaying yucca plants and cactus patches in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area.
	CNDDB	<i>Bombus crotchii</i>	Crotch's bumble bee	SSC/E	Low potential; has not been observed in region in 70+ years	Grassland and scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area contain suitable foraging habitat.
	CNDDB	<i>Phrynosoma blainvillei</i>	Coast horned lizard	SSC	Moderate potential	High potential in scrub habitats in and around project area.
	CNDDB	<i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i>	Coastal whiptail	SSC	Moderate potential	High potential in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area and in open woodlands in project area.
	CNDDB	<i>Anniella</i> (cf. <i>A. stebbinsi</i>)	California legless lizard	SSC	Moderate to high potential	High potential in sandy loam soils in woodland and scrub habitats within and around the project area.
	CNDDB	<i>Diadophis punctatus modestus</i>	San Bernardino ringneck snake	SSC	Moderate to high potential	High potential in woodland and scrub habitats in and around project area.
	CNDDB	<i>Salvadora hexalepis virgulata</i>	Coast patch-nosed snake	SSC	Moderate potential	High potential in scrub habitats in and around project area.
	CNDDB	<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i>	Two-striped garter snake	SSC	Low potential	Moderate potential in chaparral and mule-fat scrub habitat in and around project site.
	CNDDB	<i>Accipiter cooperi</i>	Cooper's hawk	BCC	Moderate to high potential	Probable nesting species in trees on and around project area
	CNDDB	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Sharp-shinned hawk	BCC	Moderate to high potential	Fall transient and wintering individuals likely in woodlands on and around project site

Observed and Potentially Occurring Special Status Species						
	CNDDDB	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	White-tailed kite	FP	Low potential	Potential foraging species on and around project area; no fall/winter communal roosts known from immediate area
	CNDDDB	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Golden eagle	FP	Moderate to high potential	May forage over slopes west, north, and northeast of project area from montane roosts/nests
	CNDDDB	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Prairie falcon	BCC	Moderate to high potential	May forage over slopes west, north, and northeast of project area/from montane roosts/nests
	CNDDDB	<i>Calypte costae</i>	Costa's hummingbird	LIS	Moderate to high potential	Possible spring/summer migrant to project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Selasphorus rufus</i>	Rufous hummingbird	LIS	Moderate to high potential	Probable breeder in or around project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	Allen's hummingbird	LIS	Moderate to high potential	Probable breeder in or around project area
SS2	Observed	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker	LIS	Observed	Observed in oaks in project area during field surveys for this document
	CNDDDB	<i>Sphyrapicus ruber</i>	Red-breasted sapsucker	LIS	Moderate to high potential	Probable foraging and possible nesting species in woodlands around project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Loggerhead shrike	SSC	Moderate to high potential	Observed in scrub habitat north of project area during field surveys for this document
SS3	Observed	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	Oak titmouse	LIS	Observed	Observed in oaks in project area during field surveys for this document
	CNDDDB	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	Yellow warbler	SSC	Moderate potential	Potential foraging species in willows and riparian scrub habitats around project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i>	Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow	BCC	Moderate to high potential	Potential foraging/nesting species in rocky scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Amphispiza belli belli</i>	Bell's sage sparrow	BCC	Moderate to high potential	Potential foraging/nesting species in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area

Observed and Potentially Occurring Special Status Species						
	CNDDDB	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	Lark sparrow	LIS	Moderate to high potential	Potential foraging species in grassland and scrub habitats in and around project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper sparrow	SSC	Moderate to high potential	Potential foraging species in grasslands and lawns in and around project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Carduelis lawrencei</i>	Lawrence's goldfinch	LIC	Moderate to high potential	Potential foraging species in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	Pallid bat	SSC	Moderate potential	May forage in grassland, woodland, and open scrub habitats in and around project area; suitable roosts (buildings or structures) occur in vicinity of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's big-eared bat	SSC	Moderate potential	May occasionally forage in scrub and woodland habitats in and around project area from off-site roosts
	CNDDDB	<i>Choeronycteris mexicana</i>	Mexican long-tongued bat	SSC	Low potential	May occasionally forage in scrub and woodland habitats in and around project area from off-site roosts
	CNDDDB	<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	Western mastiff bat	SSC	Low potential	May occasionally forage in scrub and woodland habitats in and around project area from off-site roosts
	CNDDDB	<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>	Red bat	SSC	Moderate potential	May forage in grassland, woodland, and open scrub habitats in and around project area; suitable roosts (buildings) occur in vicinity of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	Hoary bat	SSC	Moderate potential	May forage in grassland, woodland, and open scrub habitats in and around project area; suitable roosts (buildings) occur in vicinity of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Myotis volans</i>	Long-legged bat	SSC	Moderate potential	May occasionally forage in scrub and woodland habitats in and around project area from off-site roosts

Observed and Potentially Occurring Special Status Species						
	CNDDDB	<i>Chaetodipus californicus femoralis</i>	Dulzura pocket mouse	SSC	Moderate to high potential	Probable resident in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i>	San Diego woodrat	SSC	Moderate potential	Probable resident in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area. No stick nests were observed in or adjacent to the project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Lepus californicus bennettii</i>	San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit	SSC	Low potential	Possible resident in scrub habitats west, north, and northeast of project area
	CNDDDB	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	American badger	PF	Moderate potential	Uncommon resident of scrub, open woodland, and grassland habitats, including undisturbed floodplains, in project region. One or more badgers may include scrub habitat west, north, and northeast of project area in large home range.
	CNDDDB	<i>Felis concolor</i>	Mountain lion	PF	Moderate to high potential	One or more lions likely include project area in home range

Special Status Species (continued)				
Map Key	Adequate Habitat Onsite	Adequate Habitat Size (7)	Acreage Impacted	Comments (8)
SS1	Yes	Yes	0.1	Scrub oaks found in and adjacent to project area removed in December 2017 by firefighting crews during Thomas Fire.
SS2	Yes	Yes	0.0	One or more Nuttall's woodpeckers observed in coast live oak trees during surveys; nesting not observed, but nesting habitat present. The four coast live oaks to be removed are too small to harbor nest holes of this species.
SS3	Yes	Yes	0.0	Three oak titmouse observed foraging in mature coast live oaks in project area during surveys. No mature live oaks are to be removed by proposed project. The four coast live oaks to be removed are too small to harbor nests of this species.

Special Status Species (continued)

FE	Federal Endangered
FT	Federal Threatened
FC.....	Federal Candidate Species
FSC.....	Federal Species of Concern
SFP.....	California Fully Protected Species
SE.....	California Endangered
ST.....	California Threatened
SR.....	California Rare
SSC	California Species of Special Concern
CDFG/NatureServe Rank	
G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state)	
G2 or S2 - Imperiled Globally or Subnationally (state)	
G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction Globally or Subnationally (state)	
California Rare Plant Rank (RPR)	
RPR 1A - California Native Plant Society/CDFG listed as presumed to be extinct	
RPR 1B - California Native Plant Society/CDFG listed as rare or endangered in California and elsewhere	
RPR 2 - California Native Plant Society/CDFG listed as rare or endangered in California but more common elsewhere	
RPR 3 - California Native Plant Society/CDFG listed as in need of more information.	
RPR 4 - California Native Plant Society/CDFG listed as of limited distribution or infrequent throughout a broader area in California.	
LIS	Locally Important Species
Rare plant records also taken from: www.rareplants.cnps.org ; and www.calflora.org .	

Nesting Bird Summary

There is a high potential for one or more migratory and resident bird species to nest in and around the project area, especially in the mature coast live oaks that are common here and form open oak woodlands in places. There also is the potential for swallows (cliff, violet-green, northern rough-winged) and black phoebes to nest under eaves of buildings on the Camp Ramah campus.

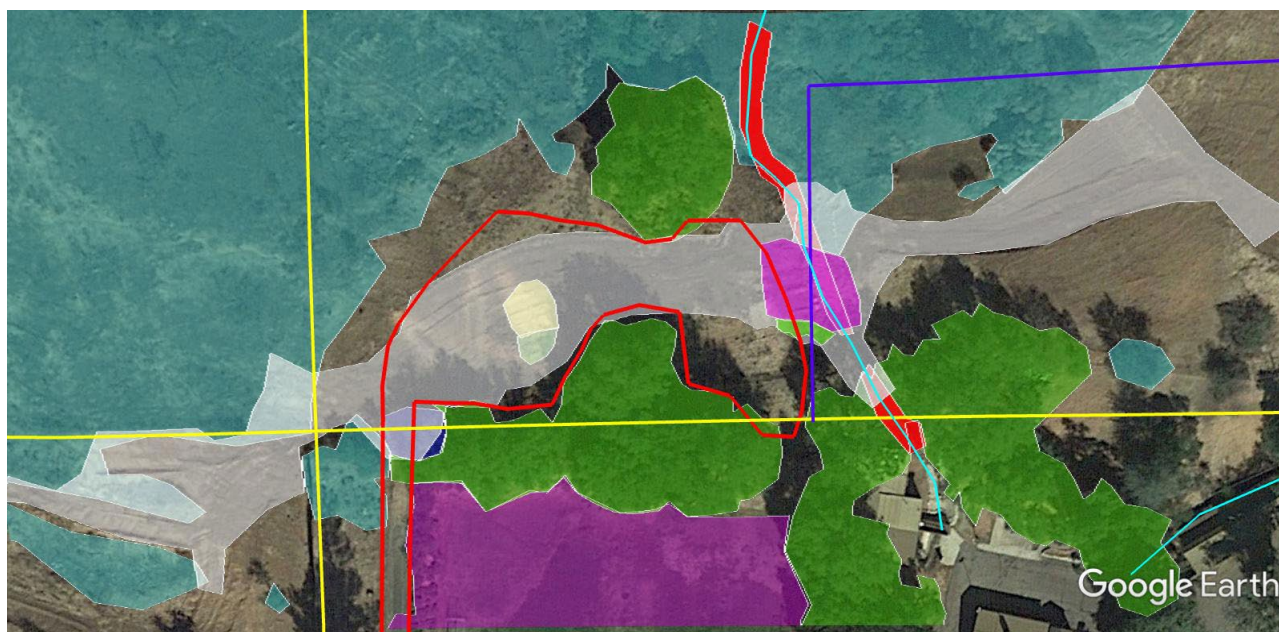


Figure 6. Special-status species and habitat connectivity map. Scrub oaks, tentatively identified as either Nuttall's scrub oak (*Quercus dumosa*) or hybrids between this species and the more widespread scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), were found in the purple area in the southwest corner of the project area (red outline). **Fire-fighting activities during the Thomas Fire in December 2017 (white polygon) completely removed these scrub oaks.** Nuttall's woodpeckers

and oak titmouse were observed in coast live oaks and oak woodlands in and around the project area (green polygons). See Figure 4 for explanation of other polygons.

3.3 Wildlife Movement and Connectivity

(Initial Study Checklist D)

Wildlife movement or connectivity features, or evidence thereof, were not found within the survey area(s).

Connectivity Features

No, the nearest documented Corridor is the Ventura River floodplain, which runs in a north-south direction approximately 1.25 miles west of the project area. The project area lies at interface between built-up areas (Camp Ramah and low-density residential lots and agriculture) and open space on south-facing slopes of Topa Topa Mountains. The poorly-developed, highly seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that runs about 25 feet east of the project area is not a wildlife corridor because it has no discernible riparian corridor or aquatic features that would facilitate or concentrate wildlife movements.

Connectivity Features							
Map Key (1)	Type of Connectivity Feature (2)	Description (3)	Species Observed (4)	Evidence (5)	Functional Group/Species Expected (6)	Habitats Connected (7)	Comments
C1	corridor	watercourse	many species	tracks, scat, direct observations	fish, amphibians, reptiles, birds, mammals	Matilija Creek watershed; N Fk Matilija Creek watershed; Ventura River watershed, Pacific Ocean	River floodplain runs north-to south approximately 1.25 air miles W of the project area

Crossing Structures Table. Not Applicable. There are no roadways proposed with this project; project will use existing access road. See discussion under Connectivity Barriers (below) for more information.

Connectivity Barriers Table. Not Applicable. There are no barriers to dispersal in or around the project area. The project area is open space that abuts extensive open spaces to the west, north, and east. The southern portion of the project area abuts developed parts of Camp Ramah, including driveways, internal access roads, and parking lots. These roadways are narrow and have an enforced speed limit of 20 mph, which is unlikely to cause road kills or present barriers to dispersal. See Figure 6 for existing habitat connectivity.

Section 4: Recommended Impact Assessment & Mitigation

4.1 Sufficiency of Biological Data

Additional information needed to make CEQA findings and develop mitigation measures:

The project area and survey area have been adequately surveyed at times of the year that maximize species detection, if present. The information presented herein is sufficient to make CEQA findings. No additional surveys are recommended.

Additional biology-related surveys or permits needed prior to issuance of land use permit:

1603 Streambed Alteration Agreement (Restoration Category) from CA Department of Fish and Wildlife needed for restoration of unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that was damaged by CalFire and other firefighting crews in December 2017 during the Thomas Fire.

4.2 Impacts and Mitigation

Impacts

Impact BIO-1 (Impacts to Native Habitats Adjacent to the Project Area). The project footprint has been sited to minimize or avoid impacts to native trees, drainages, and slopes. However, grading and construction of the proposed project could significantly disturb about 0.25 acres of scrub and grassland habitats adjacent to the project footprint. The use of non-native landscaping for the project has the potential to degrade plant and wildlife communities if invasive species that were planted as landscaping were to escape cultivation and disperse to adjacent areas. These habitats may support one or more special-status species. ***These are significant impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).***

Impact BIO-2 (Impacts to Special-Status Plants in Fire Fuel Modification Zones). Approximately 1.9 acres of chaparral occurs within the 100-foot fire fuel management zone that the Fire Department requires around structures to create and maintain “defensible spaces”. Fire fuel modification activities could significantly impact special-status plants, native plant communities, including riparian scrub, chaparral, and individual coast live oak trees through direct removal of native vegetation and by creating and maintaining ideal conditions for spreading invasive, non-native species (Fig. 7). Aggressive non-native grasses, such as fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*), can rapidly invade disturbed habitats and can prevent native shrubs and grasses from re-colonizing disturbed sites. The resulting grass-dominated community is more fire-prone than the original scrub habitat it replaced. Additionally, non-native plants do not support the insect fauna that birds and other wildlife use as food sources.

A number of the special-status plant and animal species listed in the tables above are rare, threatened, or endangered taxa that have a moderate to high likelihood of occurring in scrub habitats on slopes west, north, and northeast of the project area. These species, if present, could be eliminated or significantly disturbed by fire fuel modification practices (Fig. 7). ***These are significant impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).***

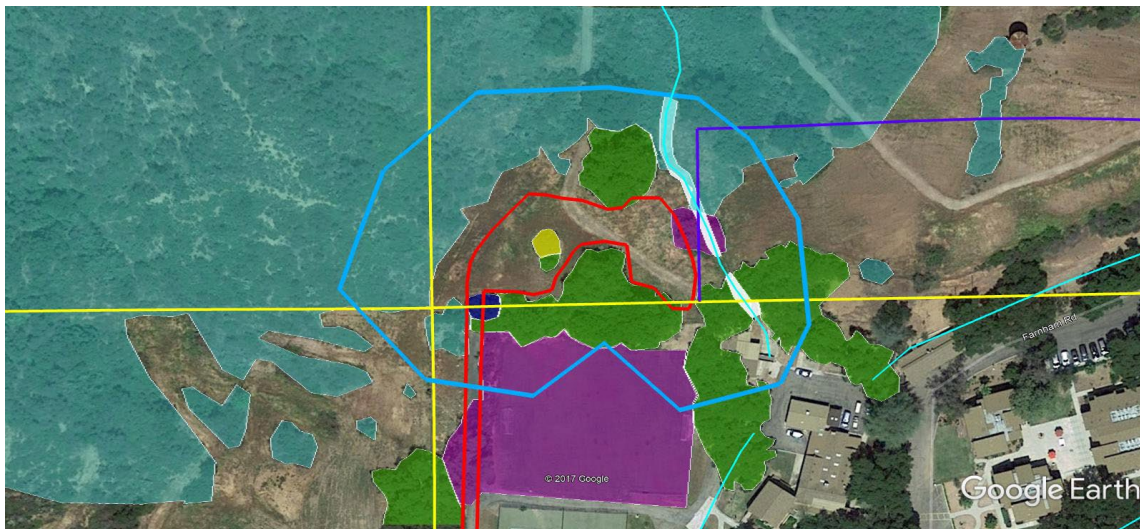


Figure 7. 100-foot fire fuel management zone (pale blue line) around proposed project area (red line). Vegetation: chaparral (light blue); oak woodland (green); riparian scrub (white); non-native annual grassland (uncolored); ornamental/landscaping (purple). CUP-related boundaries are shown in yellow and dark blue.

Impact BIO-3 (Impacts to Individual Oak Trees within Project Footprint – Class II). The proposed project has been sited to minimize impacts to oak woodland and individual oak trees. A patch of oak woodland, composed of dozens of coast live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) that range in size from 1-inch dbh to over 12 inches dbh, occurs along the southern side of the project area (see figures in Knight, 2019). Prior to the Thomas Fire in December 2017, there was a 12-inch dbh canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) and a 10-inch dbh coast live oak in the center of the proposed project area. (yellow and green polygon Figure 7). **These trees were removed by fire crews during construction of a firebreak through the proposed project area.**

Impacts to oaks from the proposed project may come from three sources: a) grading and construction along the southern edge of the project area could impact the root zones of individual coast live oaks; b) widening the existing driveway to access the proposed project area will remove 4 small coast live oaks (3 inches to 7.5 inches dbh), and; c) fire fuel modification activities after during operation of the project could damage mature oak trees, decrease structural heterogeneity, remove smaller trees, and reduce or eliminate seedling recruitment and understory development. **These are significant impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).**

Impact BIO-4 (Impacts to Federal and/or State Jurisdictional Wetlands and Riparian Habitat). The proposed project was designed to avoid impacts to the seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek by establishing a minimum 35-foot wide buffer between the drainage and the project footprint. However, fire suppression activities by several governmental agencies in December 2017 impacted approximately 1,519 s.f. (0.035 acres) of potential Federal (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers) and State (CA Department of Fish and Wildlife) jurisdictional areas along an approximately 125-foot long reach of the unnamed seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek, east of the proposed project area. An approximately 125-foot long reach of the channel was completely filled with soil and associated riparian scrub vegetation on both sides of the creek was removed to create a firebreak. The buried reach of the channel will have to be reconfigured, stabilized, and restored. **These are significant impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels through habitat restoration (Class II).**

Impact BIO-5 (Impacts to Ground-Dwelling Animals, Special-Status Plants and Wildlife Species, and Nesting Birds). Approximately 0.60 acres of non-native annual grassland will be graded or otherwise disturbed in the proposed project area. An additional 1.9 acres of chaparral and individual coast live oaks could be affected by fire fuel management practices in a 100-foot wide zone around the project area. The tables above list a variety of special-status invertebrates and vertebrates that could

occur within or around the project area and the scrub and woodland habitats around the project area. Some of these species are ground-dwelling, i.e., they are found within the soil beneath leaf litter and woody debris and have little ability to disperse out of the project area footprint. These may include gastropods, reptiles, and small mammals that can be directly impacted by ground disturbance. Gastropods, specifically land snails, are expected to occur beneath cover objects and in leaf litter beneath oak trees in the project area. Sandy loam soils that occur throughout the project area are suitable for California legless lizards (genus *Anniella*), which are known from the region and could be killed by grading. Small mammals also could be impacted by grading. Oak woodland and riparian scrub south and east of the project area may provide nesting habitat for a number of special-status, as well as non-regulated bird species. Noise and increased human presence during grading and construction could disrupt bird nesting activity. ***These are significant impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).***

Impact BIO-6 (Impacts to Water Quality in Unnamed Tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek). Surface runoff from the proposed project is likely to be directed into the unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek that borders the eastern edge of the project area. This could transport sediment-laden runoff into the drainage from the site and could erode the bed and banks of the creek at the entry point(s). ***These are significant impacts that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).***

Impact BIO-7 (Use of Rodenticides). Grassland, scrublands, and woodlands within and around the project area supports pocket gophers, chipmunks, California ground squirrels, cricetid mice, pocket mice, kangaroo rats, woodrats. A wide variety of raptors and carnivores depend on these rodent populations for food, including white-tailed kites, Cooper's hawks, golden eagles, American badgers, bobcats, coyotes, mountain lions, and other species. The use of rodenticides in the project area during construction and especially during long-term occupancy could reduce rodent populations that are critical food resources for special-status raptors and carnivores and could directly poison these predators as the rodenticide moves through the food chain. ***This is a Class II impact that can be mitigated to less than significant levels.***

Impact BIO-8 (Loss of Non-Regulated Wildlife). The proposed project has the potential to destroy the nests of non-regulated species of ground-nesting birds that may use the subject property (e.g., sparrows; killdeer, western meadowlarks, etc.), and disrupt nesting behavior of tree-nesting species that may nest in oaks in and around the project area. A number of common, generalist terrestrial species, such as western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), western skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*), southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*), gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*), western rattlesnake (*Crotalus oreganus*), and a number of small mammal species likely occur in the project area and could be killed or injured during grading of the site. ***This is an adverse impact that can be further mitigated to minimize impacts to unregulated wildlife populations (Class III).***

Impact BIO-9 (Night-Lighting). Because of the small size and location of the project site, lighting in the parking areas and Assembly Building, including the residence, could disturb raptor nesting, roosting, and foraging behavior and nocturnal wildlife behavior in open space areas west, north, and northeast of the project area. ***Interference with movement patterns, nesting, foraging, and/or roosting behavior of non-regulated and protected wildlife is a significant impact that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).***

Impact BIO-10 (Trash). Trash generated during construction and project occupancy could be an attractive nuisance for wildlife. ***Trash accumulation is a significant impact that can be mitigated to less than significant levels (Class II).***

Impact BIO-11 (Building Architecture). Project design elements, such as overhanging eaves, could attract cliff swallows, house finches, and other birds to opportunistically nest on buildings. Removing or otherwise disturbing active bird nests of any species is a violation of the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and the State Fish and Game Code because it diminishes the reproductive effort of these species. ***This is a Class II impact that can be mitigated to less than significant levels.***

Mitigation Measures. The following mitigation measures are numbered in association with impacts identified in the previous section.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1a (Delineate disturbance limits): Orange construction fencing (4-6 ft high) shall be installed at the surveyed grading limits and along the 25-foot creek buffer along the east side of the project area. Fencing shall be installed prior to initial grading or any other soil disturbance. Silt fence shall be installed along the base of the orange construction perimeter and buffer fencing to prevent small animals from entering the construction footprint and to conform to Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan requirements to prevent sediment-laden runoff from entering the drainage. Installation of the fencing shall be supervised by a qualified biologist. Both types of fencing shall be maintained for the duration of construction and final landscaping.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1b (Use native plant for landscaping): The landscape architect for the project shall design a planting plan that uses only native, locally-occurring plant species to create landscaping that has both aesthetic value and value to wildlife and will not pose a hazard to native vegetation in open space areas. Native plants shall be used for landscaping for the life of the project. A qualified biologist shall review and approve planting plans prior to implementation.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1c (Chemicals): Fertilizers, herbicides, and/or pesticides shall not be used on any landscaping of the project site. Only organic methods, such as composting, mulching, and hand-pulling of weeds shall be used for the life of the project.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2a (Fire Fuel Management Plan): Fire fuel management practices could pose a significant impact to native plant communities, special-status plants, and wildlife communities if they are not implemented properly. Prior to issuing a development permit, a qualified biologist should prepare a *Fire Fuel Management Plan* that details methods for achieving fire safety while preserving the integrity and function of native plant communities on the various parcels to the maximum extent feasible and that ensures that consistent fire fuel management practices are applied across the parcels. The Plan should focus on removing and controlling invasive, non-native vegetation, conserving native vegetation in the modification zones, especially annual species, and developing fuel management practices that will discourage or prevent non-native grasses and other non-native invasive species from dominating areas in the fire fuel management zones. Landowner education of sustainable fire fuel clearance practices should be a component of these plans. Because the 0 to 30-foot- and 30 to 100-foot fuel management zones get different vegetation treatments, the 30-foot boundary should be permanently staked in the field. The boundaries of the 100-foot fuel management zone should likewise be permanently marked in the field to prevent fire fuel modification activities from occurring further than 100 feet from structures. This Plan should be reviewed by the local Fire Marshall for consistency with fire fuel management practices prior to approval.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2b (Fire fuel management practices impacting scrub oaks): Concurrent with development of the FFMP, a qualified biologist shall locate and field-mark any scrub oaks within the 100-foot fuel modification zone. Scrub oaks within the 100-foot fire fuel management zones shall not be mowed, trimmed, or otherwise disturbed during fuel modification activities. The occurrence of these trees is naturally sparse and leaving them intact would likely not increase fire fuel loads.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2c (Scrub oak recruitment): Mowing, weed-whipping, or other vegetation management activities that are designed to reduce the standing biomass of ground cover vegetation in the fire fuel management zones shall avoid scrub oak seedlings and saplings to the maximum extent possible in order to encourage natural oak recruitment. Scrub oaks in the fire fuel management zones should be flagged for avoidance before vegetation clearing activities begin each year.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3a (Replacement for loss of four (4) coast live oaks ranging in size from 3 inches to 7.5 inches dbh due to driveway widening): A certified arborist has determined that four small coast live oaks, ranging in size from 3 inches to 7.5 inches dbh, will be removed as a result of widening the existing driveway into the project site, and has recommended that the loss of these trees be mitigated at a 10:1 ratio by planting 40 15-gallon coast live oaks elsewhere on the Camp Ramah property, including the planting restoration area for the impacted reach of McDonald Canyon Creek (see

Mitigation Measure BIO-4). These trees should be grown from acorns collected on the Camp Ramah site to preserve genetic integrity.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3b (Nesting birds): Regardless of the seasonal timing of grading and/or construction, a qualified biologist shall survey trees within and surrounding the project area to assess bird nesting, including occupation by resident, cavity-nesting birds. The biologist shall determine if construction is likely to impact nesting or resident occupation and, if so, shall contact CDFW to determine an appropriate course of action.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3c (Protection of oak root zones): Concurrent with fencing the grading limits (Mitigation Measure BIO-2a), orange construction fencing shall be placed at the drip line of all oaks to be protected and shall be maintained for the duration of construction and final landscaping. A certified arborist shall be present during all grading work that occurs beneath the dripline of coast live oak trees in order to avoid unnecessary damage to coast live oak trees and their roots. See tree-specific recommendations in Knight, 2019.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3d (Permeable paving): Permeable paving shall be used for all parking areas that encroach into the dripline of oak trees. The paving shall be designed to capture oils and other automobile products and reduce the presence of these hydrocarbons and oils in surface runoff.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3e (Fire fuel modification): Oak trees adjacent to the proposed project area may have to be limbed up to six feet above ground in order to conform to fire fuel modification requirements. A certified arborist shall supervise all initial trimming activities. Such activities shall be timed to occur between 1 August and 15 September, in order to avoid the nesting season for birds.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4 (Channel Restoration): A qualified biologist shall prepare a brief *Riparian Habitat Restoration Plan* that details how the affected reach of the unnamed tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek will be re-configured, stabilized, and restored. All work shall be conducted under permits obtained from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Streambed Alteration Agreement) and a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Nationwide Permit).

Mitigation Measures BIO-5a (Salvage of gastropods and legless lizards): A qualified biologist shall monitor initial grading for the driveway and building pads and shall salvage all native land snails and California legless lizards that might be uncovered by soil disturbance. The biologist shall consult with the equipment operator prior to commencing grading, to maximize the likelihood of observing individuals, if uncovered. Land snails and lizards, if in good condition, shall be relocated to suitable soils and microhabitats out of the disturbance footprint; if killed, they shall be collected and deposited in the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History or University of California-Santa Barbara collections.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5b (Nesting birds): Grading and other construction activities involving heavy equipment shall be timed to occur between 1 July and 1 March in order to avoid potential impacts to nesting birds. If the nesting season (Mar-July) cannot be avoided, then a qualified biologist shall survey the project area and all trees within a 300-foot radius of the project area no more than two weeks prior to ground-disturbing activities. If active nests are found, the biologist shall contact CDFW to determine an appropriate course of action, which could, depending on the species involved, include delaying noise-producing activities until nesting has been completed.

Mitigation Measure BIO-5c (Bats): Oak trees on and around the project area may provide temporary (seasonal) roosts for bats. Prior to the start of grading or any construction activities, a qualified biologist shall conduct an acoustic survey to assess bat activity on-site. If bats are found roosting in oak trees in or within a 50-foot radius of the project area, the biologist shall confer with CDFW staff to determine how to proceed.

Mitigation Measure BIO-6 (Avoiding soil erosion from surface runoff): Site drainage shall be designed to avoid the need for concrete channels or other modifications to the existing seasonal unnamed tributary on the east edge of the project area. Storm drain outfalls, if necessary, shall be designed to flow into vegetated swales located in the 25-foot creek buffer. Hardscaping, if necessary to prevent soil erosion, shall consist of ungrouted rock rip-rap.

Mitigation Measure BIO-7 (Prohibit rodenticides): Because of the small size of the project site and its location adjacent to regionally important wildlife habitat, rodenticides shall be banned from use anywhere on-site during construction and building occupancy, i.e., for the life of the project. Only mechanical traps (snap-traps) shall be used to control rodents, if necessary.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8a (Timing of grading for vegetation removal): Vegetation removal and/or construction shall be timed to avoid the nesting season for raptors and other birds, generally 1 February-15 September. If this is not feasible, a qualified biologist shall conduct a series of surveys for nesting birds starting no more than four weeks and no less than one week prior to construction. Measures to protect active nest shall be evaluated by a qualified biologist on a case-by-case basis, but could include maintaining a minimum 50-foot buffer around active non-raptor nests and 300-foot buffer around raptor nests. All active nests shall be monitored weekly until the young have fledged.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8b (Supervision of initial grading): A qualified biologist shall direct the initial site clearing to include having a bulldozer or grader make several passes to first remove vegetation (grasses and shrubs) from development envelope, then the upper six inches of soil in two lifts of three inches/lift in order to capture and relocate any lizards, snakes, and/or small mammals that are found in good condition. Individuals that are killed during grading and are in good condition shall be collected for accession into the zoology collections of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History and/or the University of California-Santa Barbara.

Mitigation Measure BIO-8c (Environmental training): A qualified biologist shall conduct a pre-construction meeting on-site for all construction personnel prior to commencing any grading or construction activities. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss biological sensitivities associated with the project, permit conditions, BMPs to avoid or minimize environmental impacts, and other topics. The biological monitor shall conduct "tailgate" sessions to review these issues, as-needed. The biologist shall also perform regular site inspections to ensure permit compliance, subject to County requirements.

Mitigation Measure BIO-9 (Limits on lighting): Night-lighting throughout the site shall use the lowest wattage and least number of lights consistent with safety. All lighting shall be shielded and directed downward and away open space west, north, and northeast of the project area, in order to minimize light pollution of adjacent areas.

Mitigation Measure BIO-10 (Trash pickup): Trash receptacles shall be provided and maintained for the duration of construction and trash pick-up throughout the project area shall occur daily. Site clean-up shall be a routine component of maintenance and trash receptacles shall be emptied immediately following any social functions during project occupancy.

Mitigation Measure BIO-11 (Bird-friendly architecture): Impacts can be reduced or avoided by designing structures to make them less attractive to nesting birds, or by installing bird netting beneath eaves before nests have been constructed. The project shall be designed to incorporate structural components that do not promote nesting by swallows, finches, or other birds (no eaves on buildings or use of netting under eaves, etc.).

A. Species

Project: PS-M; Cumulative: N

Significance Finding – Project Impacts: See previous section.

Significance Finding – Cumulative Impacts: See previous section.

Avoidance and Minimization Measures

Project footprint and size has been modified to avoid or minimize impacts to coast live oaks and unnamed drainage.

MM: See BIO-1A, 1B, 1C, 2C, 3A, 3B, 3C, 3D, 3E, 5B, 5C, AND 11 in previous section.

B. Ecological Communities

Project: PS-M; Cumulative: N

Sensitive Plant Communities: See MM BIO-2a, 2b, 4, 6, 7, 8a, and 8b in previous section.

Waters and Wetlands: See MM BIO-4 in previous section.

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas – Not applicable.

C. Habitat Connectivity (migration corridors)

Project: N; Cumulative: N

Not Applicable.

Section 5: Photos

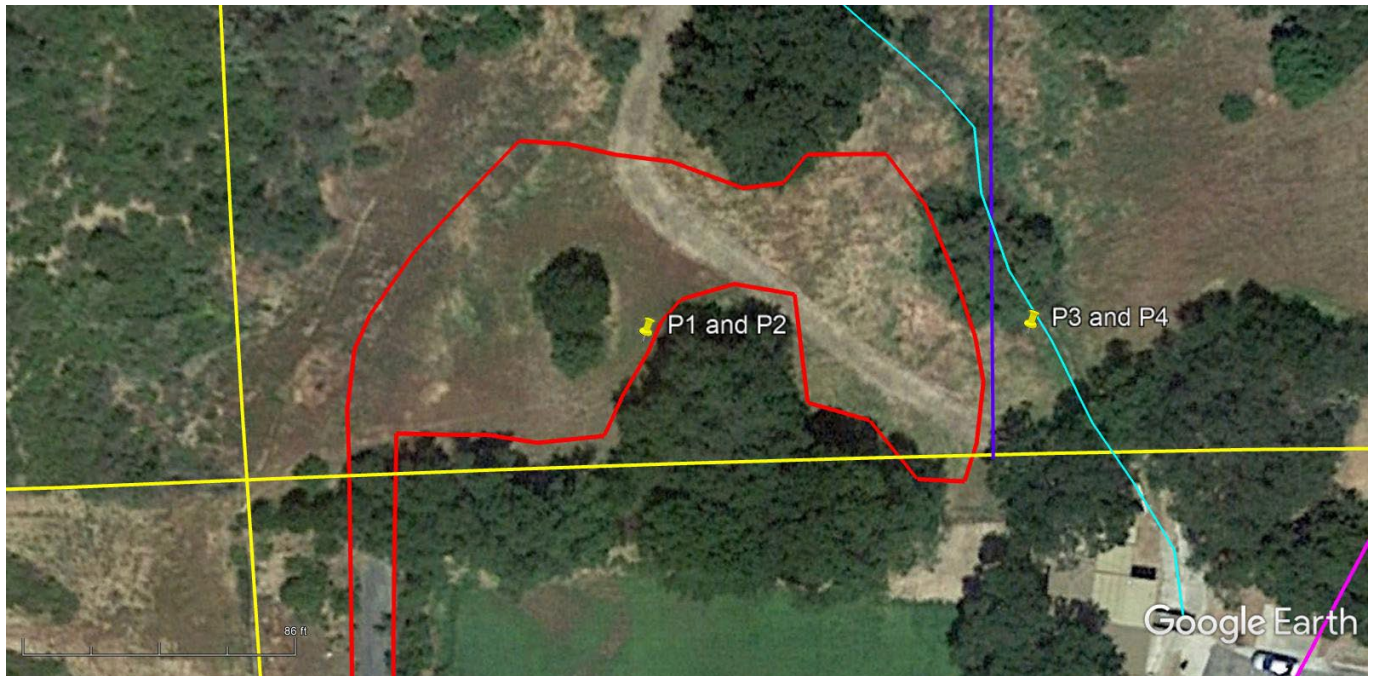






Figure 7. Photodocumentation locations. Project area outlined in red. Seasonal drainage in light blue. Yellow and dark blue lines denote parcel boundaries. Image date 14 April 2017.

Photos	
Location Project Area Map Key P1 View Direction Southwest Description Proposed project area in annual grassland pre-Thomas Fire, looking west. Canyon live oak and coast live oak at right were removed by fire crews during Thomas Fire in December 2017. Scrub on slope in distance will be affected by fire fuel mgmt. activities. 13 March 2017	
Location Project Area Map Key P2 View Direction Southwest Description Same view as in previous photo, post-Thomas Fire. Grassland in proposed project area in foreground has been graded to create a firebreak; scrub in background burned. Coast live oak and canyon live oak in previous photo removed by bulldozer creating firebreak. 16 February 2018	

Photos	
Location Unnamed Tributary Map Key P3 View Direction North Description Unnamed seasonal tributary of McDonald Canyon Creek adjacent to east side of project area, pre-Thomas Fire. Note poor development of channel, banks, and associated riparian scrub vegetation. 13 March 2017	
Location Unnamed Tributary Map Key P4 View Direction North Description Same view as in previous photo, post-Thomas Fire. Fire crews cleared vegetation and filled channel with soil to create firebreak/access road along about 100-foot reach of drainage. 16 February 2018	

Appendix One

Summary of Biological Resource Regulations

The Ventura County Planning Division, as “lead agency” under CEQA for issuing discretionary land use permits, uses the relationship of a potential environmental effect from a proposed project to an established regulatory standard to determine the significance of the potential environmental effect. This Appendix summarizes important biological resource regulations which are used by the Division’s biologists (consultants and staff) in making CEQA findings of significance:

- Sensitive Status Species Regulations
- Nesting Bird Regulations
- Plant Community Regulations
- Tree Regulations
- Waters and Wetlands Regulations
- Coastal Habitat Regulations
- Wildlife Migration Regulations
- Locally Important Species/Communities Regulations

Sensitive Status Species Regulations

Federally Protected Species

Ventura County is home to 29 federally listed endangered and threatened plant and wildlife species. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulates the protection of federally listed endangered and threatened plant and wildlife species.

FE (Federally Endangered): A species that is in danger of extinction throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

FT (Federally Threatened): A species that is likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.

FC (Federal Candidate): A species for which USFWS has sufficient information on its biological status and threats to propose it as endangered or threatened under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), but for which development of a proposed listing regulation is precluded by other higher priority listing activities.

FSC (Federal Species of Concern): A species under consideration for listing, for which there is insufficient information to support listing at this time. These species may or may not be listed in the future, and many of these species were formerly recognized as “Category-2 Candidate” species.

The USFWS requires permits for the “take” of any federally listed endangered or threatened species. “Take” is defined by the USFWS as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct; may include significant habitat modification or degradation if it kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns including breeding, feeding, or sheltering.”

The Endangered Species Act (ESA) does not provide statutory protection for candidate species or species of concern, but USFWS encourages conservation efforts to protect these species. USFWS can set up voluntary Candidate Conservation Agreements and Assurances, which provide non-Federal landowners (public and private) with the assurance that if they implement various conservation activities to protect a given candidate species, they will not be subject to additional restrictions if the species becomes listed under the ESA.

State Protected Species

The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) regulates the protection of endangered, threatened, and fully protected species listed under the California Endangered Species Act. Some species may be jointly listed under the State and Federal Endangered Species Acts.

SE (California Endangered): A native species or subspecies which is in serious danger of becoming extinct throughout all, or a significant portion, of its range due to one or more causes, including loss of habitat, change in habitat, overexploitation, predation, competition, or disease.

ST (California Threatened): A native species or subspecies that, although not presently threatened with extinction, is likely to become an endangered species in the foreseeable future in the absence of the special protection and

management efforts required by this chapter. Any animal determined by the commission as "rare" on or before January 1, 1985, is a "threatened species."

SFP (California Fully Protected Species): This designation originated from the State's initial effort in the 1960's to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, mammals, amphibians, reptiles, and birds. Most fully protected species have also been listed as threatened or endangered species under the more recent endangered species laws and regulations.

SR (California Rare): A species, subspecies, or variety of plant is rare under the Native Plant Protection Act when, although not presently threatened with extinction, it is in such small numbers throughout its range that it may become endangered if its present environment worsens. Animals are no longer listed as rare; all animals listed as rare before 1985 have been listed as threatened.

SSC (California Species of Special Concern): Animals that are not listed under the California Endangered Species Act, but which nonetheless 1) are declining at a rate that could result in listing, or 2) historically occurred in low numbers and known threats to their persistence currently exist.

The CDFG requires permits for the "take" of any State-listed endangered or threatened species. Section 2080 of the Fish and Game Code prohibits "take" of any species that the California Fish and Game Commission determines to be endangered or threatened. "Take" is defined in Section 86 of the Fish and Game Code as "hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill."

The California Native Plant Protection Act protects endangered and rare plants of California. Section 1908, which regulates plants listed under this act, states: "no person shall import into this state, or take, possess, or sell within this state, except as incident to the possession or sale of the real property on which the plant is growing, any native plant, or any part or product thereof, that the commission determines to be an endangered native plant or rare native plant, except as otherwise provided in this chapter."

Unlike endangered, threatened, and rare species, for which a take permit may be issued, California Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no licenses or permits may be issued for their take except for collecting these species for necessary scientific research and relocation of the bird species for the protection of livestock.

The California Endangered Species Act does not provide statutory protection for California species of special concern, but they should be considered during the environmental review process.

California Rare Plant Ranks (RPR)

Plants with 1A, 1B, 2 or 4 should always be addressed in CEQA documents. Plants with a RPR 3 do not need to be addressed in CEQA documents unless there is sufficient information to demonstrate that a RPR 3 plant meets the criteria to be listed as a RPR 1, 2, or 4.

RPR 1A: Plants presumed to be extinct because they have not been seen or collected in the wild in California for many years. This list includes plants that are both presumed extinct in California, as well as those plants which are presumed extirpated in California. A plant is extinct in California if it no longer occurs in or outside of California. A plant that is extirpated from California has been eliminated from California, but may still occur elsewhere in its range.

RPR 1B: Plants that are rare throughout their range with the majority of them endemic to California. Most of the plants of List 1B have declined significantly over the last century.

RPR 2: Plants that are rare throughout their range in California, but are more common beyond the boundaries of California. List 2 recognizes the importance of protecting the geographic range of widespread species.

Plants identified as RPR 1A, 1B, and 2 meet the definitions of Sec. 1901, Chapter 10 (Native Plant Protection Act) or Secs. 2062 and 2067 (California Endangered Species Act) of the California Department of Fish and Game Code, and are eligible for state listing.

RPR 3: A review list for plants for which there is inadequate information to assign them to one of the other lists or to reject them.

RPR 4: A watch list for plants that are of limited distribution in California.

Global and Subnational Rankings

Though not associated directly with legal protections, species have been given a conservation status rank by NatureServe, an international non-profit conservation organization that is the leading source for information about

rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. The Ventura County Planning Division considers the following ranks as sensitive for the purposes of CEQA impact assessment (G = Global, S = Subnational or State):

G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled

G2 or S2 – Imperiled

G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction

Locally Important Species

Locally important species' protections are addressed below under "Locally Important Species/Communities Regulations."

For lists of some of the species in Ventura County that are protected by the above regulations, go to http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/ceqa/bio_resource_review.html.

Migratory Bird Regulations

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) Code (3503, 3503.5, 3511, 3513 and 3800) protect most native birds. In addition, the federal and state endangered species acts protect some bird species listed as threatened or endangered. Project-related impacts to birds protected by these regulations would normally occur during the breeding season, because unlike adult birds, eggs and chicks are unable to escape impacts.

The MBTA implements various treaties and conventions between the U.S. and Canada, Japan, Mexico, and Russia for the protection of migratory birds, which occur in two of these countries over the course of one year. The Act maintains that it is unlawful to pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer to or sell, barter, purchase, deliver or cause to be shipped, exported, imported, transported, carried or received any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not. Bird species protected under the provisions of the MBTA are identified by the List of Migratory Birds (Title 50 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Section 10.13 as updated by the 1983 American Ornithologists' Union (AOU) Checklist and published supplements through 1995 by the USFWS).

CDFG Code 3513 upholds the MBTA by prohibiting any take or possession of birds that are designated by the MBTA as migratory nongame birds except as allowed by federal rules and regulations promulgated pursuant to the MBTA. In addition, there are CDFG Codes (3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3800) which further protect nesting birds and their parts, including passerine birds, raptors, and state "fully protected" birds.

NOTE: These regulations protect almost all *native nesting birds*, not just sensitive status birds.

Plant Community Regulations

Plant communities are provided legal protection when they provide habitat for protected species or when the community is in the coastal zone and qualifies as environmentally sensitive habitat area (ESHA).

Global and Subnational Rankings

Though not associated directly with legal protections, plant communities have been given a conservation status rank by NatureServe, an international non-profit conservation organization that is the leading source for information about rare and endangered species and threatened ecosystems. The Ventura County Planning Division considers the following ranks as sensitive for the purposes of CEQA impact assessment (G = Global, S = Subnational or State):

G1 or S1 - Critically Imperiled

G2 or S2 - Imperiled

G3 or S3 - Vulnerable to extirpation or extinction

CDFG Rare

Rare natural communities are those communities that are of highly limited distribution. These communities may or may not contain rare, threatened, or endangered species. Though the Native Plant Protection Act and the California Endangered Species Act provide no legal protection to plant communities, CDFG considers plant communities that are ranked G1-G3 or S1-S3 (as defined above) to be rare or sensitive, and therefore these plant communities should be addressed during CEQA review.

Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas

The Coastal Act specifically calls for protection of “environmentally sensitive habitat areas” or ESHA, which it defines as: “Any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments” (Section 30107.5).

ESHA has been specifically defined in the Santa Monica Mountains. For ESHA identification in this location, the Coastal Commission, the agency charged with administering the Coastal Act, has described the habitats that are considered ESHA. A memo from a Coastal Commission biologist that describes ESHA in the Santa Monica Mountains can be found at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/ceqa/bio_resource_review.html.

Locally Important Communities

The Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines defines a locally important community as one that is considered by qualified biologists to be a quality example characteristic of or unique to the County or region, with this determination being made on a case-by-case basis. The County has not developed a list of locally important communities, but has deemed oak woodlands to be a locally important community through the County's *Oak Woodland Management Plan*.

Tree Regulations

Selected trees are protected by the Ventura County Tree Protection Ordinance, found in Section 8107-25 of the Ventura County Non-Coastal Zoning Ordinance. This ordinance, which applies in the unincorporated areas of the County outside the coastal zone, regulates—through a tree permit program—the removal, trimming of branches or roots, or grading or excavating within the root zone of a “protected tree.” Individual trees are the focus of the ordinance, while oak woodlands are additionally protected as “locally important communities.”

The ordinance allows removal of five protected trees (only three of which can be oaks or sycamores; none of which can be heritage or historical trees) through a ministerial permit process. Removal of more/other than this may trigger a discretionary tree permit.

If a proposed project cannot avoid impacts to protected trees, mitigation of these impacts (such as replacement of lost trees) is addressed through the tree permit process—**unless the impacts may affect biological resources beyond the tree itself**, such as to sensitive status species that may be using the tree, nesting birds, the tree's role as part of a larger habitat, etc. These secondary impacts have not been addressed through the tree permit program and must be addressed by the biologist in the biological assessment in accordance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

A tree permit does not, however, substitute as mitigation for impacts to oak woodlands. The Public Resources Code requires that when a county is determining the applicability of CEQA to a project, it must determine whether that project “may result in a conversion of oak woodlands that will have a significant effect on the environment.” If such effects (either individual impacts or cumulative) are identified, the law requires that they be mitigated. Acceptable mitigation measures include, but are not limited to, conservation of other oak woodlands through the use of conservation easements and planting replacement trees, which must be maintained for seven years. In addition, only 50% of the mitigation required for significant impacts to oak woodlands may be fulfilled by replanting oak trees.

The following trees are protected in the specified zones. Girth is measured at 4.5 feet from the midpoint between the uphill and downhill side of the root crown.

PROTECTED TREES			
Common Name/Botanical Name (Genus species)	Girth Standard (Circumference)	Applicable Zones	
		All Base Zones	SRP ₁
Alder (<i>Alnus</i> all species)	9.5 in.		X
Ash (<i>Fraxinus</i> all species)	9.5 in.		X
Bay (<i>Umbellularia californica</i>)	9.5 in.		X

Cottonwood (<i>Populus</i> all species)	9.5 in.		X
Elderberry (<i>Sambucus</i> all species)	9.5 in.		X
Big Cone Douglas Fir (<i>Pseudotsuga macrocarpa</i>)	9.5 in.		X
White Fir (<i>Abies concolor</i>)	9.5 in.		X
Juniper (<i>Juniperus californica</i>)	9.5 in.		X
Maple (<i>Acer macrophyllum</i>)	9.5 in.		X
Oak (Single) (<i>Quercus</i> all species)	9.5 in.	X	X
Oak (Multi) (<i>Quercus</i> all species)	6.25 in.	X	X
Pine (<i>Pinus</i> all species)	9.5 in.		X
Sycamore (<i>Platanus</i> all species)	9.5 in.	X	X
Walnut (<i>Juglans</i> all species)	9.5 in.		X
Historical Tree ³ (any species)	(any size)	X	X
Heritage Tree ⁴ (any species)	90.0 in.	X	X

X Indicates the zones in which the subject trees are considered protected trees.

1. SRP - Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zone

2. SHP - Scenic Highway Protection Overlay Zone

3. Any tree or group of trees identified by the County or a city as a landmark, or identified on the Federal or California Historic Resources Inventory to be of historical or cultural significance, or identified as contributing to a site or structure of historical or cultural significance.

4. Any species of tree with a single trunk of 90 or more inches in girth or with multiple trunks, two of which collectively measure 72 inches in girth or more. Species with naturally thin trunks when full grown or naturally large trunks at an early age, or trees with unnaturally enlarged trunks due to injury or disease must be at least 60 feet tall or 75 years old.

Waters and Wetlands Regulations

Numerous agencies control what can and cannot be done in or around streams and wetlands. If a project affects an area where water flows, ponds or is present even part of the year, it is likely to be regulated by one or more agencies. Many wetland or stream projects will require three main permits or approvals (in addition to CEQA compliance). These are:

- 404 Permit (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)
- 401 Certification (California Regional Water Quality Control Board)
- Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Department of Fish and Game)

For a more thorough explanation of wetland permitting, see the Ventura County's "Wetland Project Permitting Guide" at http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/ceqa/bio_resource_review.html.

404 Permit (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers)

Most projects that involve streams or wetlands will require a 404 Permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). Section 404 of the federal Clean Water Act is the primary federal program regulating activities in wetlands. The Act regulates areas defined as "waters of the United States." This includes streams, wetlands in or next to streams, areas influenced by tides, navigable waters, lakes, reservoirs and other impoundments. For nontidal waters, USACE jurisdiction extends up to what is referred to as the "ordinary high water mark" as well as to the landward limits of adjacent Corps-defined wetlands, if present. The ordinary high water mark is an identifiable natural line visible on the bank of a stream or water body that shows the upper limit of typical stream flow or water level. The mark is made from the action of water on the streambank over the course of years.

Permit Triggers: A USACE 404 Permit is triggered by moving (discharging) or placing materials—such as dirt, rock, geotextiles, concrete or culverts—into or within USACE jurisdictional areas. This type of activity is also referred to as a "discharge of dredged or fill material."

401 Certification (Regional Water Quality Control Board)

If your project requires a USACE 404 Permit, then you will also need a Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) 401 Certification. The federal Clean Water Act, in Section 401, specifies that states must certify that any activity subject to a permit issued by a federal agency, such as the USACE, meets all state water quality standards. In California, the state and regional water boards are responsible for certification of activities subject to USACE Section 404 Permits.

Permit Trigger: A RWQCB 401 Certification is triggered whenever a USACE 404 Permit is required, or whenever an activity could cause a discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the U.S. or wetlands.

Streambed Alteration Agreement (California Department of Fish and Game)

If your project includes alteration of the bed, banks or channel of a stream, or the adjacent riparian vegetation, then you may need a Streambed Alteration Agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). The California Fish and Game Code, Sections 1600-1616, regulates activities that would alter the flow, bed, banks, channel or associated riparian areas of a river, stream or lake. The law requires any person, state or local governmental agency or public utility to notify CDFG before beginning an activity that will substantially modify a river, stream or lake.

Permit Triggers: A Streambed Alteration Agreement (SAA) is triggered when a project involves altering a stream or disturbing riparian vegetation, including any of the following activities:

- Substantially obstructing or diverting the natural flow of a river, stream or lake
- Using any material from these areas
- Disposing of waste where it can move into these areas

Some projects that involve routine maintenance may qualify for long-term maintenance agreements from CDFG. Discuss this option with CDFG staff.

Ventura County General Plan

The Ventura County General Plan contains policies which also strongly protect wetland habitats.

Biological Resources Policy 1.5.2-3 states:

Discretionary development that is proposed to be located within 300 feet of a marsh, small wash, intermittent lake, intermittent stream, spring, or perennial stream (as identified on the latest USGS 7½ minute quad map), shall be evaluated by a County approved biologist for potential impacts on wetland habitats. Discretionary development that would have a significant impact on significant wetland habitats shall be prohibited, unless mitigation measures are adopted that would reduce the impact to a less than significant level; or for lands designated "Urban" or "Existing Community", a statement of overriding considerations is adopted by the decision-making body.

Biological Resources Policy 1.5.2-4 states:

Discretionary development shall be sited a minimum of 100 feet from significant wetland habitats to mitigate the potential impacts on said habitats. Buffer areas may be increased or decreased upon evaluation and recommendation by a qualified biologist and approval by the decision-making body. Factors to be used in determining adjustment of the 100 foot buffer include soil type, slope stability, drainage patterns, presence or absence of endangered, threatened or rare plants or animals, and compatibility of the proposed development with the wildlife use of the wetland habitat area. The requirement of a buffer (setback) shall not preclude the use of replacement as a mitigation when there is no other feasible alternative to allowing a permitted use, and if the replacement results in no net loss of wetland habitat. Such replacement shall be "in kind" (i.e. same type and acreage), and provide wetland habitat of comparable biological value. On-site replacement shall be preferred wherever possible. The replacement plan shall be developed in consultation with California Department of Fish and Game.

Coastal Habitat Regulations

Ventura County's Coastal Area Plan and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance, which constitute the "Local Coastal Program" (LCP) for the unincorporated portions of Ventura County's coastal zone, ensure that the County's land

use plans, zoning ordinances, zoning maps, and implemented actions meet the requirements of, and implement the provisions and polices of California's 1976 Coastal Act at the local level.

Environmentally Sensitive Habitats

The Coastal Act specifically calls for protection of "environmentally sensitive habitat areas" or ESHA, which it defines as: "Any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments" (Section 30107.5).

Section 30240 of the Coastal Act states:

- (a) **"Environmentally sensitive habitat areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on such resources shall be allowed within such areas."**
- (b) **"Development in areas adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitat areas and parks and recreation areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade such areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of such habitat areas."**

There are three important elements to the definition of ESHA. First, a geographic area can be designated ESHA either because of the presence of individual species of plants or animals or because of the presence of a particular habitat. Second, in order for an area to be designated as ESHA, the species or habitat must be either rare or it must be especially valuable. Finally, the area must be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities.

Protection of ESHA is of particular concern in the southeastern part of Ventura County, where the coastal zone extends inland (~5 miles) to include an extensive area of the Santa Monica Mountains. For ESHA identification in this location, the Coastal Commission, the agency charged with administering the Coastal Act, has described the habitats that are considered ESHA. A memo from a Coastal Commission biologist that describes ESHA in the Santa Monica Mountains can be found at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/ceqa/bio_resource_review.html.

The County's Local Coastal Program outlines other specific protections to environmentally sensitive habitats in the Coastal Zone, such as to wetlands, riparian habitats, dunes, and upland habitats within the Santa Monica Mountains (M Overlay Zone). Protections in some cases are different for different segments of the coastal zone.

Copies of the Coastal Area Plan and the Coastal Zoning Ordinance can be found at: <http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/Programs/local.html>.

Wildlife Migration Regulations

The Ventura County General Plan specifically includes wildlife migration corridors as an element of the region's significant biological resources. In addition, protecting habitat connectivity is critical to the success of special status species and other biological resource protections. Potential project impacts to wildlife migration are analyzed by biologists on a case-by-case basis. The issue involves both a macro-scale analysis—where routes used by large carnivores connecting very large core habitat areas may be impacted—as well as a micro-scale analysis—where a road or stream crossing may impact localized movement by many different animals.

Locally Important Species/Communities Regulations

Locally important species/communities are considered to be significant biological resources in the Ventura County General Plan.

Locally Important Species

The Ventura County General Plan defines a Locally Important Species as a plant or animal species that is not an endangered, threatened, or rare species, but is considered by qualified biologists to be a quality example or unique species within the County and region. The following criteria further define what local qualified biologists have determined to be Locally Important Species:

Locally Important Animal Species Criteria

Taxa for which habitat in Ventura County is crucial for their existence either globally or in Ventura County. This includes:

- Taxa for which the population(s) in Ventura County represents 10 percent or more of the known extant global distribution; or

- Taxa for which there are five or fewer *element occurrences*, or less than 1,000 individuals, or less than 2,000 acres of habitat that sustains populations in Ventura County; or,
- Native taxa that are generally declining throughout their range or are in danger of extirpation in Ventura County.

Locally Important Plant Species Criteria

- Taxa that are declining throughout the extent of their range AND have five (5) or fewer element occurrences in Ventura County.

The County maintains a list of locally important species, which can be found on the Planning Division website at: http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning/ceqa/bio_resource_review.html. *This list should not be considered comprehensive.* Any species that meets the criteria qualifies as locally important, whether or not it is included on this list.

Locally Important Communities

The Ventura County Initial Study Assessment Guidelines defines a locally important community as one that is considered by qualified biologists to be a quality example characteristic of or unique to the County or region, with this determination being made on a case-by-case basis. The County has not developed a list of locally important communities. Oak woodlands have however been deemed by the Ventura County Board of Supervisors to be a locally important community.

The state passed legislation in 2001, the Oak Woodland Conservation Act, to emphasize that oak woodlands are a vital and threatened statewide resource. In response, the County of Ventura prepared and adopted an Oak Woodland Management Plan that recommended, among other things, amending the County's Initial Study Assessment Guidelines to include an explicit reference to oak woodlands as part of its definition of locally important communities. The Board of Supervisors approved this management plan and its recommendations.

Appendix Two

Observed Species Tables

Species Observed			
Scientific Name (Species or Genus)	Common Name	Native (1)	Notes (2)
PLANTS			
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i>	Coast live oak	X	
<i>Sambucus mexicanus</i>	Blue elderberry	X	
<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>	Poison oak	X	
<i>Marah fabaceus</i>	Manroot	X	
<i>Q. dumosa</i> , or <i>Q. berberidifolia</i> x <i>dumosa</i>	Scrub oak or Nuttall's scrub oak hybrid	X	
<i>Quercus chrysolepis</i>	Canyon live oak	X	
<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	Rip-gut brome		
<i>Vulpia myuros</i>	Rattail fescue		
<i>Hordeum murinum</i>	Hare barley		
<i>Bromus rubens</i>	Red brome		
<i>Avena</i> sp.	Wild oat		
<i>Erodium cicutarium</i>	Filaree		
<i>Raphanus sativa</i>	Wild radish		
<i>Amsinckia</i> sp.	Fiddleneck	X	
<i>Lupinus truncata</i>	Truncate lupine	X	
<i>Lupinus nanus</i>	Sky lupine	X	
<i>Scutellaria tuberosa</i>	Tuberous skullcap	X	
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i>	Soap lily	X	
<i>Heterotheca grandiflora</i>	Telegraph weed	X	
<i>Brassica nigra</i>	Black mustard		
<i>Hirschfeldiana incana</i>	Mediterranean mustard		
<i>Marrubium vulgare</i>	Common horehound		
<i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i>	Italian thistle		
<i>Malacothamnus fascicularis</i>	Chaparral mallow	X	
<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	Mule-fat	X	
<i>Malosma laurina</i>	Laurel sumac	X	
<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	Black sage	X	
<i>Ceanothus megacarpus</i>	Bigpod ceanothus	X	
<i>Rhamnus crocea</i>	Redberry	X	
<i>Lotus scoparius</i>	Deerweed	X	
<i>Cercocarpus montanus</i>	Mountain-mahogany	X	
<i>Schinus molle</i>	Brazilian pepper		

<i>Pinus canariensis</i>	Canary Island pine		
<i>Pelargonium</i> sp.	Ornamental geranium		
FUNGI			
Unid. mushroom	fungus	X	
ANIMALS			
Invertebrates			
<i>Helix aspera</i>	European brown snail		
<i>Eleodes</i> sp.	Darkling beetle	X	
Fish – None			
Amphibians – None			
Reptiles			
<i>Elgaria coeruleus</i>	Southern alligator lizard	X	Observed
<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	Western fence lizard	X	Observed
Birds			
	Turkey vulture	X	Observed
	Red-tailed hawk	X	Observed
	California quail	X	Observed
	Mourning dove	X	Observed
	Anna's hummingbird	X	Observed
	Allen's hummingbird	X	Observed
	Acorn woodpecker	X	Observed
	Northern flicker	X	Observed
	Nuttall's woodpecker	X	Observed
	Downy woodpecker	X	Observed
	Black phoebe	X	Observed
	Say's phoebe	X	Observed
	Ash-throated flycatcher	X	Observed
	Western kingbird	X	Observed
	Hutton's vireo	X	Observed
	Western scrub-jay	X	Observed
	American crow	X	Observed
	Cliff swallow	X	Observed
	Wrentit	X	Observed
	Oak titmouse	X	Observed

	Bushtit	X	Observed
	House wren	X	Observed
	Bewick's wren	X	Observed
	Western bluebird	X	Observed
	American robin	X	Observed
	Northern mockingbird	X	Observed
	California thrasher	X	Observed
	European starling		Observed
	Cedar waxwing	X	Observed
	Yellow-rumped warbler	X	Observed
	Townsend's warbler	X	Observed
	California towhee	X	Observed
	Spotted towhee	X	Observed
	Song sparrow	X	Observed
	White-crowned sparrow	X	Observed
	Dark-eyed junco	X	Observed
	Black-headed grosbeak	X	Observed
	House finch	X	Observed
Mammals			
<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	Botta's pocket gopher	X	Digs
<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	California ground squirrel	X	Digs
<i>Sciurus occidentalis</i>	Western grey squirrel	X	Observed
<i>Sylvilagus bachmani</i>	Brush rabbit	X	Scat
<i>Neotoma macrotis</i>	Big-eared woodrat	X	Stick nest
<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	Black-tailed deer	X	Scat