



Memorandum

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division
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DATE: September 11, 2012

TO: Andrea Ozdy, LCA Program Planner

FROM: Christina Danko, Planning Staff Biologist

SUBJECT: Review of Application PL12-0071 for Open Space LCA Contract on APNs 046-0-160-390 and 046-0-160-400 – Summary of Significant Biological Resources

To qualify for an Open Space Land Conservation Act (OS/LCA) contract, a property must be designated as a Wildlife Habitat Area, which is defined as "an area of great importance for the protection or enhancement of the wildlife resources of the state." (Government Code Section 51201 (j).) The LCA Guidelines further instruct that "the existence of Significant Biological Resources on the Subject Property may be established by (1) identification on a County Significant Biological Resources map, or (2) a survey performed by a qualified biological consultant. If the Contract Area is found by a qualified biological consultant to be an area where significant biological resources do not presently exist, but which is capable of being restored to have such resources, then the OS/LCA Contract shall include a Restoration Plan which will re-establish the significant biological resources within a reasonable time frame."

The majority of the property (82.6 acres out of 111.6 acres) proposed for an Open Space LCA Contract contains river bottom and riparian habitat associated with the Santa Clara River. The Santa Clara River is the largest river system in southern California that remains mostly in its natural, undeveloped state. The river supports sensitive natural communities including southern riparian scrub. The following rare, threatened, and endangered species have been observed and documented within the section of river that flows adjacent to these properties: southern California steelhead trout, a federally listed endangered fish; Santa Ana sucker, a federally listed threatened fish; least Bell's vireo, a state and federally listed endangered bird; bank swallow, a state listed threatened bird; southwestern willow flycatcher, a state and federally listed endangered bird; unarmored threespine stickleback, a state and federally listed endangered fish; and western pond turtle, a California Species of Special Concern.¹ The Santa Clara River is identified by the US Fish and Wildlife Service as Critical Habitat for the endangered southern California steelhead trout.

¹ California Department of Fish and Game. September 2012. California Natural Diversity Database.

The aquatic and riparian habitats on these properties support significant biological resources, and future restoration of the riparian habitat within the floodplain of the Santa Clara River would increase habitat for many threatened and endangered species that are important resources of the state. Therefore, these properties can be identified as "an area of great importance for the protection or enhancement of the wildlife resources of the state" and designated as a Wildlife Habitat Area.