Ventura Veterans Home Project

Biological Resources Assessment

prepared for

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1 Introduction

Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) prepared this Biological Resources Assessment (BRA) to provide A Community of Friends with an assessment of the potential impacts to biological resources associated with the Ventura Veterans Home Project (project) in the City of Ventura, California. This report documents the existing conditions of the project site and evaluates the potential for impacts to special status species, sensitive communities, jurisdictional waters, wildlife movement near the proposed project, and locally protected resources such as native trees. The biological evaluation herein includes the results of a background literature review and field reconnaissance survey conducted by Rincon.

1.1 Project Location

The project is in the City of Ventura (City) in Ventura County (County), California within the *Saticoy*, *California* United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (quad), and the Public Land Survey System depicts the project within Township 2N, Range 22W, Section 2, San Bernardino Meridian (Earth Point 2019). The project is within Assessor's Parcel Number 128-0-050-625 at 10900 Telephone Road, Ventura, California (34.280179° N, -119.152267° W) (Figure 1).

1.2 Project Description

The proposed project is a new development on a 9.68-acre site that will include 120 housing units for veterans and their families and two manager units. The project's mission is to create a community that will enrich the lives of local veterans and their families who may have a disability, or who have experienced homelessness or economic challenges that have made it difficult to afford quality housing. The project is designed to create the experience of a traditional, family-oriented neighborhood with pedestrian sidewalks and residential front doors that face the street. The buildings are designed as three-story elevator buildings, two-story walk-ups, and three-bedroom units designed in the style of two-story townhomes. The project's 78 one-bedroom, 32 two-bedroom, and 10 three-bedroom units will be dispersed throughout the site, with buildings forming clusters, surrounding vibrant community courtyards with a variety of uses and activities. The project footprint is shown on Figure 2.

The proposed construction methods will include clearing and grubbing the project site and excavation of the building footprint. Typical construction equipment will be used for the work including excavators, soil compactor, water truck, and dump trucks to transport soil.

Figure 1 Regional Location Map

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Project Location

N

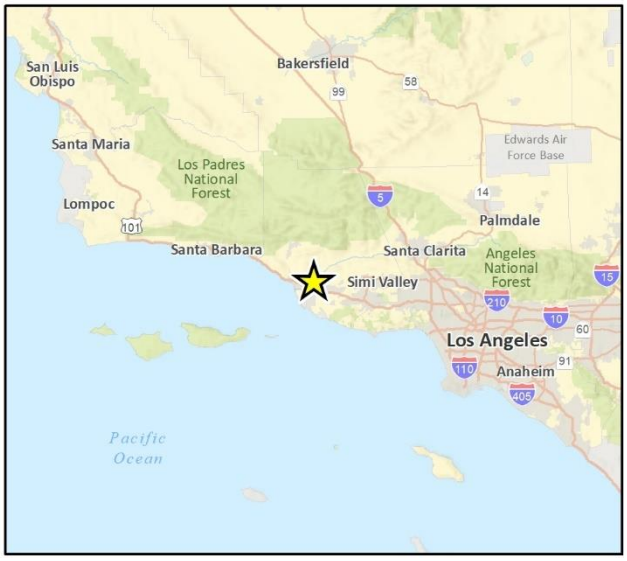
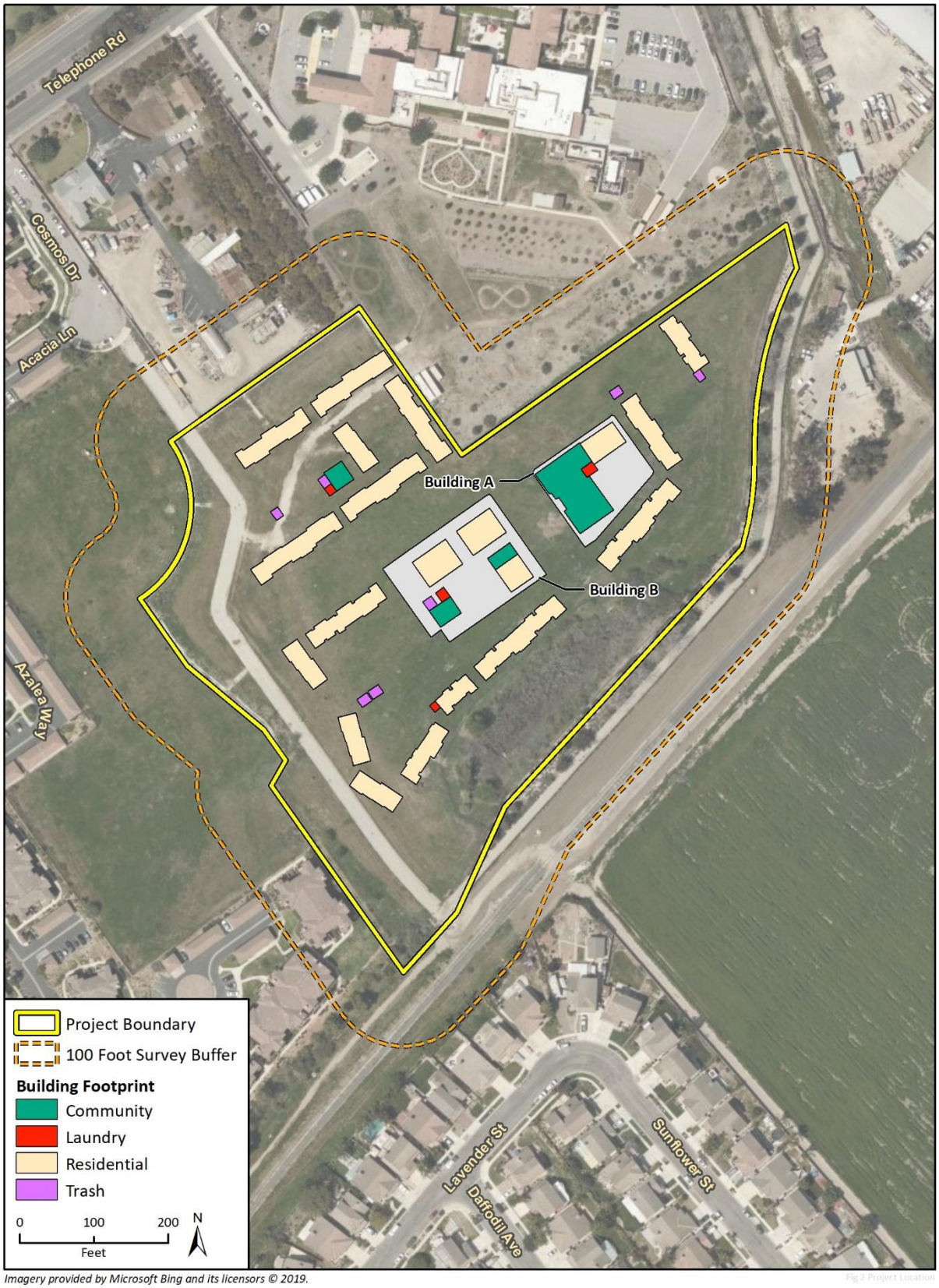


Figure 2 Project Footprint and Study Area



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2 Methodology

2.1 Regulatory Overview

Regulated or sensitive resources studied and analyzed herein include special status plant and animal species, nesting birds and raptors, sensitive plant communities, jurisdictional waters and wetlands, wildlife movement corridors, and locally protected resources, such as protected trees. Regulatory authority over biological resources is shared by Federal, State, and local authorities. Primary authority for regulation of general biological resources lies within the land use control and planning authority of local jurisdictions (in this instance, the City).

2.1.1 Definition of Special Status Species

For the purposes of this report, special status species include:

- Species listed as threatened or endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA); species that are under review may be included if there is a reasonable expectation of listing within the life of the project
- Species listed as candidate, threatened, endangered, or rare by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) or Native Plant Protection Act
- Plants occurring on lists 1 and 2 of the CNPS California Rare Plant Rank system
- Species designated as Fully Protected, Species of Special Concern, or Watch List by the California Fish and Game Code or CDFW
- Species designated as locally important by the Local Agency and/or otherwise protected through ordinance or local policy

2.1.2 Environmental Statutes

For the purpose of this report, the evaluation of potential impacts to biological resources was guided by the following statutes (Appendix A):

- California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)
- Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA)
- California Endangered Species Act (CESA)
- Federal Clean Water Act (CWA)
- California Fish and Game Code (CFGC)
- Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)
- The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
- Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
- City of Ventura General Plan

2.1.3 Guidelines for Determining CEQA Significance

The following threshold criteria, as defined by the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Initial Study Checklist, were used to evaluate potential environmental effects. Based on these criteria, the proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

a) *Have substantial adverse effects, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

b) *Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, and regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service.*

c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.*

d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.*

e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.*

f) *Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan.*

2.2 Literature Review

Prior to conducting the field reconnaissance survey of the project site, Rincon biologist reviewed recent aerial photography of the project site and consulted the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California were searched for the *Saticoy*, *California* quad and the surrounding seven quads (the eighth quad consist of the Pacific Ocean) for previously documented occurrences of special status species. A USFWS query of the Information, Planning, and Conservation System (IPAC) was conducted on November 11, 2019 for federally listed species that may be affected by the project and USFWS Critical Habitat Portal (USFWS 2019) was reviewed for information on critical habitat designations. The CNDDB records of special status species within a five-mile radius of the project site and the USFWS IPAC-generated species list were further evaluated (Appendix B). The USFWS National Wetlands Inventory (NWI) Wetlands Mapper (USFWS 2019) was utilized to determine waters, wetland, and streambed resources in the project area, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Web Soil Survey (NRCS 2019) was queried to determine soil map units in the project site.

2.3 Field Reconnaissance Survey

Rincon biologist Jaime McClain conducted the field reconnaissance survey on November 11, 2019, between the hours of 1300 and 1530. Weather conditions during the survey included an average temperature of 70 to 73 degrees Fahrenheit (°F), with winds between 1 and 3 miles per hour (mph)

and sunny, clear skies. The field reconnaissance survey documented existing site conditions and the potential presence of special status or sensitive biological resources. The survey area included the limits of the project site and a 100-foot buffer defined herein as the "study area" (Figure 2).

The survey consisted of the biologist walking the extent of the project site, documenting general site conditions and habitats, recording the plants and animals observed (Appendix C), and evaluating for potential jurisdictional waters, wetlands and streambeds within the study area. For areas that were inaccessible (e.g., private property, area behind locked fences and Brown Barranca), the biologist visually inspected those areas with binoculars (10x42). Wildlife species were identified by direct observation, vocalization, or by sign (e.g., burrows). Plant species nomenclature and taxonomy followed The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, second edition (Baldwin et al. 2012). The vegetation classification used for this analysis is based on (Sawyer et al. 2009), but it has been modified as needed to most accurately describe the existing vegetation communities on site. Refer to Appendix D for site representative photographs.

3 Existing Conditions

3.1 Physical Characteristics

Within the portion of the City where the project is proposed, much of the coastal plain extending for 18 miles along the Pacific Ocean and 9 miles inland is developed or has been historically disturbed by agricultural uses. Native vegetation within the study area is limited and fragmented, but includes and is not limited to, mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), and a variety of willow species (*Salix* spp.).

The project site is located approximately 0.50-mile north of the Santa Clara River and within the South Coast subregion of the Jepson ecoregion system, which extends from Point Conception southward to Mexico, along the immediate coast in Ventura County, but also extends inland to the San Gabriel and San Bernardino mountains farther east and south (Baldwin et al. 2012).

At an elevation of roughly 150 feet above mean sea level, the topography of the study area is characterized as gently sloping in a southerly direction and a small portion of the eastern study area contains the Brown Barranca, a concrete lined channel. The northern portion of the study area includes the established "Veterans Home of California" property and developed/ agricultural land owned by "Rancho Attilio." The western border of the study area is conserved as a Chumash preservation site (City of Ventura 1998). The extent of the project site is characterized as disturbed except for an approximate one-acre area in the southern extent of the project site that is composed of native and riparian habitat. This area is surrounded by a locked chain-link fence, in good condition, separating the proposed development from this area. The project site is completely enclosed by a locked fence along all borders.

3.1.1 Watershed and Drainages

The Santa Clara River, an 83-mile long river that drains systems north and northwest of Los Angeles and flows west onto the Oxnard Plain and eventually into the Santa Barbara Channel of the Pacific Ocean, occurs 0.50-mile south of the study area. The Brown Barranca, a concrete lined drainage channel maintained by Ventura County Watershed Protection District, occurs in the eastern portion of the study area and drains into the Santa Clara River. Based on the project footprint and design, no access to and from the Barranca will be included in the proposed project. The Brown Barranca is approximately 50 feet from the project site separated by a developed/landscaped pedestrian walkaway and fence. During the time of the reconnaissance survey the channel was dry with limited native vegetation present along the banks. The perimeter fence was in good condition limiting access into the Brown Barranca.

Within the project site two concrete lined drainage channels were present in the northern and northwestern project boundary. The concrete lined drainage channel in the northern project site eventually drains into a pipe culvert storm drain and the drainage channel in the northwestern project site drains to a paved road that transitions through the western project area. During the time of the reconnaissance survey all drainage channel components were dry, and minimal limited native vegetation was present adjacent to the channels. The channels were approximately six feet

wide and totaled approximately 1,600 feet. Sediment and leaf litter was observed within the drainage channels.

3.1.2 Soils

Based on the most recent NRCS soil survey for Ventura County, California, Salinas clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, (SaA) underlines the majority of the study area (35.06 percent) and Salinas clay loam, 2 to 9 percent slopes (SaC) underlies the smallest portion of the study area (21.38 percent). Salinas clay loam is classified as a well-drained soil derived from sedimentary rock, and prime farmland if irrigated. Terrace escarpments (TeF) underlies the next greatest percentage of the study area (25.50 percent). This soil is classified as a terrace landform derived from sedimentary rock, and not considered prime farmland. Mocho clay loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, underlies the third greatest potion of the study area (18.04 percent) and are classified similar to SaA/SaC soil. All soils present within the study area are not hydric. The soil types present in the study area are present in Figure 3.

3.2 Vegetation and Other Land Cover

Vegetation communities and land cover types documented within the study area during the reconnaissance survey include: Disturbed with ruderal vegetation; developed/ landscaped; mulefat thickets; and Brown Barranca and Concrete Lined Channel. These general vegetation/land cover types can be further categorized across vegetation alliances as described in A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition (Sawyer et al. 2009).

Table 1 summarizes the vegetation communities and land cover types along with associated acreages within the study area. A map illustrating terrestrial vegetation communities and land cover types is presented as Figure 4. A list of all plant species observed during the field survey is provided in Appendix C.

Table 1 Summary of Vegetation and Land Cover Types within the Study Area

Habitat Type	Approximate Acreage	Approximate Percent (%) of Area
Disturbed with Ruderal Vegetation	10.30	58.29%
Developed/ Landscaped	6.23	35.26%
Mulefat Thickets	0.82	4.63%
Brown Barranca and Concrete Lined Channel	0.32	1.81%
Total	**17.67**	**100%**

Figure 3 Soils Map

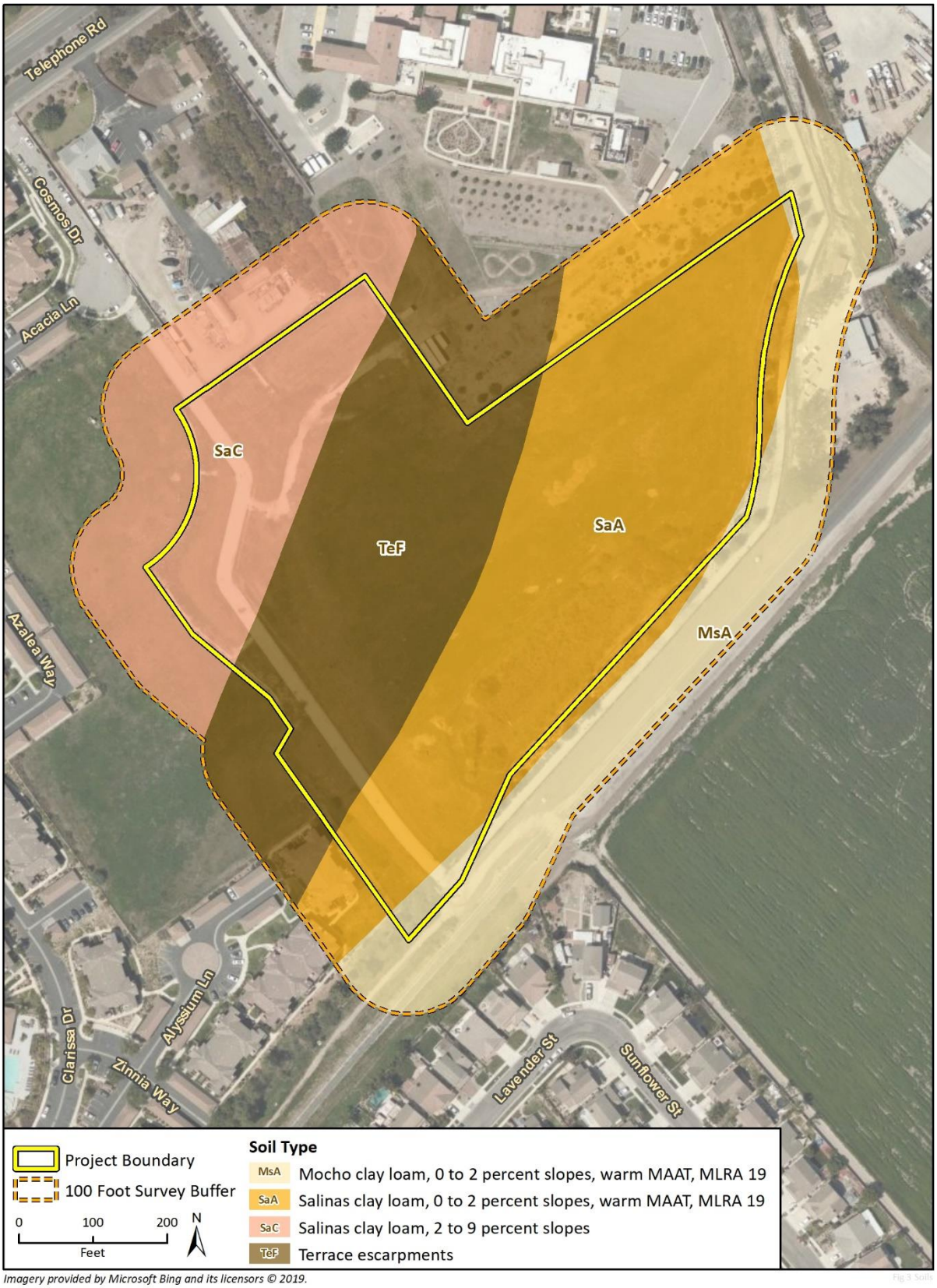

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Figure 4 Vegetation Communities

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3.2.1 Disturbed with Ruderal Vegetation

The dominant land cover type within the study area is characterized as disturbed with ruderal vegetation. Ruderal vegetation is characterized by pre-dominantly non-native species (e.g., thistles, non-native grasses) introduced and established through human action. These areas have been physically disturbed and are no longer recognizable as a native or naturalized vegetation community. The project site shows sign of previous disturbance (e.g., tilled soil and stockpiles) and is composed primary of non-native, weedy species including mustard (*Brassica* sp.), cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), white sweet clover (*Melilotus albus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), caster bean (*Ricinus* communis), and tecolote (*Centaurea melitensis*).

3.2.2 Developed/ Landscaped

The second most dominant land cover type throughout the study area is characterized as developed and/or landscaped. These areas consist of buildings, residential communities, roads, agriculture land, and other infrastructure. These areas are generally paved with little to no vegetation, or planted ornamental landscape species. The proposed project would utilize these previously developed areas for access to the project site. The developed portion of the study area is also made up of landscaped vegetation, dominated by various shrubs typically used in landscaping, and ornamental trees such as redwood (*Sequoia* spp.), jacaranda (*Jacaranda arborea*), acacia (*Acacia* spp.) and other unidentified ornamental trees.

3.2.3 Mulefat Thickets

Native riparian vegetation was limited in the study area. However, an approximate 1-acre area within the project site is characterized as *Baccharis salicifolia* Shrubland Alliance (mulefat thickets). In the *Baccharis salicifolia* Shrubland Alliance, mulefat is the dominant species in the shrub canopy however, sandbar willow, tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), and other emergent trees may be present at a low over. Mulefat thickets are typically found in canyon bottoms, floodplains, irrigation ditches, lake margins, and stream channels. The USACE Wetland Inventory National List recognizes mulefat as a facultative wetland plant (FACW) (Lichvar et. al 2016).

3.2.4 Brown Barranca and Concrete Lined Channel

The Brown Barranca covered 0.19 acre of the study area, and concrete lined drainage channels covered 0.13 acre of the study area. At the time of survey the Brown Barranca and drainage channels were dry with no ponded or flowing water. Minimal native vegetation was present adjacent to these features.

3.3 General Wildlife

The study area contains habitat suitable for wildlife species that commonly occur in southern California suburban areas. Wildlife observed within the study area include bird species such as turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*), California towhee (*Melozone crissalis*), and house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*). Mammals included desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*) and California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*). Wildlife not observed, but likely to occur, include Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and a variety of other song birds. A complete list of all the plant and wildlife species observed on site during the reconnaissance field survey is presented as Appendix C.

4 Sensitive Biological Resources

Local, state, and federal agencies regulate special status species and other sensitive biological resources and require an assessment of their presence or potential presence to be conducted on-site prior to the approval of proposed development on a property. This section discusses sensitive biological resources observed on the project site, and evaluates the potential for the project site to support additional sensitive biological resources. Assessments for the potential occurrence of special status species are based upon known ranges, habitat preferences for the species, species occurrence records from the CNDDB, species occurrence records from other sites in the vicinity of the survey area, previous reports for the project site, and the results of surveys of the project site. The potential for each special status species to occur in the study area was evaluated according to the following criteria:

- **No Potential.** Habitat on and adjacent to the site is clearly unsuitable for the species requirements (foraging, breeding, cover, substrate, elevation, hydrology, plant community, site history, disturbance regime), or the species would have been identified on-site if present (e.g., oak trees).
- **Low Potential.** Few of the habitat components meeting the species requirements are present, and/or the majority of habitat on and adjacent to the site is unsuitable or of very poor quality. The species is not likely to be found on the site.
- **Moderate Potential**. Some of the habitat components meeting the species requirements are present, and/or only some of the habitat on or adjacent to the site is unsuitable. The species has a moderate probability of being found on the site.
- **High Potential.** All of the habitat components meeting the species requirements are present and/or most of the habitat on or adjacent to the site is highly suitable. The species has a high probability of being found on the site.
- **Present.** Species is observed on the site or has been recorded (e.g., CNDDB, other reports) on the site recently (i.e., within the last 5 years).

4.1 Special Status Species

4.1.1 Special Status Plant Species

Rincon biologists determined the study area does not contain suitable habitat for any special status plant species (Appendix B). While 26 special status plant species have been previously documented within a five-mile radius by the CNDDB and/or within the CNPS 8-quad search (ninth quad consisted of Pacific Ocean) and/or the USFWS list, the study area does not contain suitable habitat for these species based on a variety of factors, including the disturbance history of the site, lack of suitable soils, elevation of the site, inappropriate hydrologic conditions, or absence of appropriate vegetation communities.

4.1.2 Special Status Animal Species

Based on the database and literature review, 17 special status wildlife species are known or have the potential to occur within the vicinity; species with documented occurrences within five miles of the study area or USFWS list that were considered in this analysis are included in Appendix B. Of these 17 species, one has a moderate potential to occur, yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia*), and four have a low potential to occur, tricolored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), and least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii*). The remaining 12 special status species are not expected to occur based on the criteria presented above. This includes some bird species previously documented near the study area, but which are likely to be only traversing through the area during limited foraging or migratory movements, and for which no suitable nesting habitat is present. The species that can be reasonably anticipated to occur were determined based on the published ranges of the species, and the type, extent, and condition of habitat available at the site. No special status wildlife species were observed within the study area during the survey.

Special status species with a moderate potential to occur within or adjacent to the study are discussed below, and, if applicable evaluated under Section 5. Species with a low potential to occur are only included if further discussion is warranted.

Yellow Warbler

The yellow warbler is a state species of special concern (SSC) bird with a moderate potential to occur within the riparian habitat identified within the study area. Yellow warblers are frequently found nesting and foraging in willow shrubs and thickets, and in other riparian plants including cottonwoods, sycamores, ash, and alders (Rodewald 2015). Elements of suitable habitat (e.g., riparian vegetation, cottonwood trees) were observed along the southern project boundary, which is outside the proposed project development and behind a locked fence. This area may provide potential foraging and nesting habitat for this species.

Least Bell's Vireo

The federal and state endangered least Bell's vireo is known to occur in the Santa Clara River watershed and has a low potential to occur within the study area. A discussion of the species is warranted due to the study area providing marginally suitable habitat (i.e. willow shrubs and thickets). However, the species requires dense riparian habitat that the study area does not provide. Therefore, the species has a low potential to occur.

4.1.3 Other Protected Species

Nesting Birds

The study area contains habitat that can support nesting birds, including raptors, protected under the CFGC Section 3503 and the MBTA (16 United States Code §§ 703–712). Potential nesting locations for raptors were observed throughout the study area with the most suitable locations being native and non-native mature trees (e.g., cottonwood, eucalyptus, scrub oak) located outside of the project site. No active or inactive nests were observed during the reconnaissance survey. However, the survey was outside of the typical active nesting bird season.

4.2 Sensitive Plant Communities and Critical Habitats

Plant communities are considered sensitive biological resources if they have limited distributions, have high wildlife value, include sensitive species, or are particularly susceptible to disturbance. CDFW ranks natural and sensitive communities using NatureServe's Heritage Methodology (CDFW 2018), the same system used to assign global and state rarity ranks for plant and animal species in the CNDDB. No communities identified as sensitive by the CDFW was observed within the study area. According to the CNDDB, one sensitive plant community, southern riparian scrub, has been documented within five-miles of the project; however, no CNDDB sensitive plant communities were observed within the study area during the reconnaissance survey.no

The study area is not within designated critical habitat. The Santa Clara river and adjacent riparian habitat, approximately 0.5 mile from the study area, is designated federal critical habitat for southern California steelhead Distinct Population Segment (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) and southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii*).

4.3 Jurisdictional Waters and Wetlands

Areas potentially subject to the permitting authority of the USACE pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the RWQCB pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act and the California Water Code (Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act), CDFW pursuant to California Fish and Game Code 1600, and the Ventura County Watershed Protection District, were assessed during the literature review and reconnaissance survey. Results of the research and field visit determined one potentially jurisdictional feature occurs within the study area: the Brown Barranca.

The concrete-lined Brown Barranca located in the eastern study area is a flood control channel that may experience significant flows during storm events but generally is limited in flow a majority of the year. The purpose of the Brown Barranca is to maintain flood control and drain urban and agricultural runoff into the Santa Clara River, which eventually leads to the Pacific Ocean. Therefore, this drainage is a tributary to the Pacific Ocean, which is a navigable water, and thus is subject to USACE jurisdiction. Presence of a defined bed, bank, and channel indicate that the Brown Barranca is also within the CDFW's and RWQCB's jurisdiction. The proposed project will not impact the Brown Barranca, including access and disturbance to the Barranca.

The concrete-lined drainage channels located in the north and northwestern project area are limited to flows during storm events and/or runoff and consisted of non-native vegetation on either side of the channels. Many roadside stormwater drains are artificially created, unconnected to natural waterways, and do not support protected habitat or important wetland functions. These drains are generally not subject to stream and wetland regulations therefore, not within USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdiction.

4.4 Wildlife Movement

Wildlife movement corridors, or habitat linkages, are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated animal populations. Such linkages may serve a local purpose, such as providing a linkage between foraging and denning areas, or they may be regional in nature. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein animals periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return.

Others may be important as dispersal corridors for young animals. A group of habitat linkages in an area can form a wildlife corridor network.

The habitats in the link do not necessarily need to be the same as the habitats that are being linked. Rather, the link merely needs to contain sufficient cover and forage to allow temporary inhabitation by ground-dwelling species. Typically, habitat linkages are contiguous strips of natural areas, though dense plantings of landscape vegetation can be used by certain disturbance-tolerant species. Depending upon the species using a corridor, specific physical resources (e.g., rock outcroppings, vernal pools, or oak trees) may need to be in the habitat link at certain intervals to allow slower-moving species to traverse the link. For highly mobile or aerial species, habitat linkages may be discontinuous patches of suitable resources spaced sufficiently close together to permit travel along a route in a short period of time.

Wildlife movement corridors can be both large- and small-scale. Overall, the study area is heavily developed and is divided by major roadways and locked fences. At the regional/landscape level scale, the study area is not within any mapped landscape models, such as an Essential Connectivity Area or Natural Landscape block in the California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project: A Strategy for Conserving a Connected California (Spencer et al. 2010). Small scale habitat corridors are present within the study area and include the Brown Barranca.

The Brown Barranca is located within the southern portion of the study area and could act as a movement corridor for typical wildlife species adapted to urban environments. Fully developed properties are present adjacent to the Barranca and common wildlife adapted to urban and suburban areas (e.g., raccoon and striped skunk) could use the concrete-lined drainage for local movement. The Brown Barranca is considered a highly degraded wildlife corridor according to the City EIR for the City General Plan (City of Ventura 2005) and is composed of a concrete and rip-rap lined channel devoid of vegetation within the study area and a majority of the reach. The proposed project will not include the Brown Barranca and therefore will not likely affect wildlife movement in the area.

4.5 Resources Protected By Local Policies and Ordinances

The proposed project occurs within the limits of the City. Below is discussion of resources protected by policies and ordinances in the City of Ventura General Plan and Environmental Impact Report (EIR).

4.5.1 City of Ventura General Plan and Environmental Impact Report

Policy 1B Increase the area of open space protected from development impacts

The Purpose of this policy is to buffer proposed developments from barrancas and creeks that retain natural soil slopes. Additionally, this policy prohibits the placement of material in watercourses other than native plants and required flood control structures. This policy is relevant to the Brown Barranca, which occurs with the study area; however, the proposed project will occur at least 50-feet from the top of bank and will be separated by a fence and pedestrian walkway. No material will be placed within the Brown Barranca.

Policy 1C Improve protection for native plants and animals

Under this policy, new development adjacent to rivers, creeks, and barrancas to will use native or non-invasive plant species, preferably drought tolerant, for landscaping. Additionally, projects near watercourses, shoreline areas, and other sensitive habitat areas should provide appropriate buffers and other mitigation necessary to protect habitat for listed species. This policy requires new development to maintain all indigenous tree species or provide adequately sized replacement native trees on a 3:1 basis. This policy is potentially relevant to the riparian habitat (i.e. mulefat thickets) in the southern project boundary. The proposed building development will be buffered by approximately 25 feet and will not require the removal of riparian vegetation. Additionally, no native trees are proposed for removal.

4.6 Habitat Conservation Plans

The proposed project does not occur within any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan. Therefore, conservation plans are not addressed further within this analysis.

5 Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures

The criteria used to evaluate potential project-related impacts to biological resources are presented in Section 2.1. This section discusses the possible adverse impacts to biological resources that may occur from implementation of the project and includes recommended avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures that would reduce impacts to less than significant levels.

For each impact identified in this report, a statement of the level of significance of the impact is provided. Impacts are categorized in one of the following categories:

- No impact would result when no adverse change in the environment is expected; no mitigation would be required
- A beneficial impact would result when the proposed project would have a positive effect on the natural or human environment and no mitigation would be required
- A less than significant impact would not cause a substantial change in the environment, although an adverse change in the environment may occur; only compliance with standard regulatory conditions would be required
- A significant (but mitigable) impact would have a substantial adverse impact on the environment, but could be reduced to a less-than-significant level through successful implementation of identified mitigation measures
- A significant unavoidable impact would cause a substantial adverse effect on the environment, and application of all feasible mitigation measures would not reduce the impact to a less-than-significant level

5.1 Special-Status Species

The proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

a) *Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.*

5.1.1 Special Status Plant Species

No special status plant species have potential to occur within the study area. Special status plant species have specialized habitat requirements, including plant community types, soils, and other components. The project site generally lacks these requirements. In addition, none of the species analyzed were documented in the study area during the November 11, 2019 survey. Based on the lack of suitable habitat within the study area, no special status plants are expected to occur within the study area. Therefore, there would be no potential impacts to special status plant species.

5.1.2 Special Status Wildlife Species

Generally, the site is not suitable for special status wildlife species based upon known ranges, habitat preferences for the species, species occurrence records from the CNDDB, and species

occurrence records from other sites in the vicinity of the study area. However, there is potential for special status special wildlife species with a low potential to occur (i.e. American badger, coast horned lizard) to be foraging or transiting through the site. Therefore, BIO-2 is recommended to ensure no special status wildlife species are present on site prior to initial vegetation removal or ground disturbance.

The yellow warbler was identified as having a moderate potential to occur within the study area. Additionally, the study area contains habitat that may support other nesting birds and raptors protected under the CFGC and the MBTA and the federal and state threatened least Bell's vireo. Therefore, the project could adversely affect raptors and other nesting birds if initial vegetation removal and ground disturbance occurs while they are present within or adjacent to the project footprint, through direct mortality or abandonment of nests. The adjacent native trees and ornamental vegetation throughout the study area provide suitable nesting habitat for avian species. Specifically, the riparian vegetation may be suitable for least Bell's vireo and yellow warbler. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 is recommended for compliance with the ESA, CESA, MBTA and CFGC 3503 and to ensure special status/nesting birds are not impacted, thereby reducing indirect effects to a less than significant level.

BIO-1 Least Bell's Vireo and Nesting Bird Avoidance and Surveys

Initial vegetation removal and ground disturbance within 500-feet of riparian vegetation will be avoided during the least Bell's vireo breeding season (April 10 to July 31). Additionally, to avoid disturbance of other nesting and special status birds, including raptor species protected by the MBTA and CFGC 3503, activities related to the project including, but not limited to, vegetation removal, ground disturbance, and construction and demolition will occur outside of the bird breeding season for migratory birds (February 1 through August 31), if practicable.

If construction must begin during the breeding season, then a pre-construction nesting bird survey will be conducted no more than seven days prior to initiation of ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities. The nesting bird pre-construction survey will be conducted on foot inside the project footprint, including a 100-foot buffer (500-foot for raptors), and in inaccessible areas (e.g., private lands) from afar using binoculars to the extent practicable. The survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with the identification of avian species known to occur in southern California coastal communities and least Bell's vireo. If nests are found, an avoidance buffer (dependent upon the species, the proposed work activity, and existing disturbances associated with land uses outside of the site) will be determined and demarcated by the biologist with fencing, flagging, construction lathe, or other means to mark the boundary. All construction personnel will be notified as to the existence of the buffer zone and instructed to avoid entering the buffer zone during the nesting season. No ground-disturbing activities will occur inside this buffer until the qualified biologist has confirmed that breeding/ nesting is completed, and the young have fledged the nest. Encroachment into the buffer will occur only at the discretion of the qualified biologist.

If least Bell's vireo is found nesting within the survey area, the USFWS and CDFW will be notified immediately. All project activities will be halted within 500 feet of the nest site and territory for the remainder of the breeding season, unless the City (in consultation with CDFW/USFWS) approves impact reduction strategies.

BIO-2 Pre-activity Survey

Prior to vegetation removal or initial ground disturbance a qualified biologist should conduct a pre-construction survey for potential rare, listed, or other special status wildlife species within 48-hours. The survey should include all proposed work areas, access routes, and staging areas plus a 50-foot buffer. If special status species are observed during the survey, they should be relocated by the biologist to nearby suitable habitat but far enough where they will not re-enter the project site. However, if an ESA or CESA listed species is observed, further consultation with the appropriate regulatory agency will be conducted prior to moving the species and work will not commence until approved by regulatory agency, if necessary.

5.2 Sensitive Plant Communities

The proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

b) *Have a substantial adverse impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service.*

The proposed project is not anticipated to result in direct impacts to riparian habitat, or to sensitive plant communities identified by the CNDDB as well as List of Vegetation Alliances and Associations (CDFW 2018). However, construction material (e.g., stockpiled material, construction equipment) may have a potential impact riparian habitat (e.g. mulefat thickets) if the project removes riparian vegetation or requires ground disturbance within the area. Therefore, with implementation of BIO-3 potential impacts to riparian habitat would be reduced to a less than significant level.

BIO-3 Riparian Habitat Fencing

Prior to project mobilization, where the project is adjacent to riparian habitat (i.e., mulefat thickets); temporary construction fencing will be erected by the contractor at the edge of the temporary construction easement to avoid construction material or personnel from entering the habitat. The fencing will be installed throughout the duration of construction and maintained as needed.

5.3 Jurisdictional Waters and Wetlands

The proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

c) *Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.*

Direct impacts to Brown Barranca or the concrete lined drainage channels are not anticipated based on the proposed project. However, impacts may occur if construction material or personnel enter the Barranca or stockpiled material along the drainage channels and/or project boundary adjacent to the Barranca enters the channel or watercourse. Implementation of mitigation measures BIO-4 would help ensure impacts are avoided, thereby reducing impacts to jurisdictional waters to a less than significant level.

BIO-4 Best Management Practices

The following Best Management Practices (BMPs) should be implemented for project construction activities.

- Erosion control BMPs will be installed around any stockpiled material to reduce potential run-off into jurisdictional waters. Any material/spoils from project activities will be stored at least 50 feet from potential jurisdictional areas
- Materials will be stored on impervious surfaces or plastic ground covers to prevent any spills or leakage. Material storage will be at least 50-feet from channels and/or waterways
- Construction materials and spoils will be protected from stormwater runoff using temporary perimeter sediment barriers such as berms, silt fences, fiber rolls, covers, sand/gravel bags, and straw bale barriers, as appropriate
- Site washout areas will be at least 50-feet from a storm drain, open ditch or surface water and ensure that runoff flows from such activities do not enter receiving water bodies
- All re-fueling, cleaning, and maintenance of equipment will occur at least 50-feet from potentially jurisdictional waters
- Prevent the off-site tracking of loose construction and landscape materials by implementing street sweeping, vacuuming, and rumble plates, as appropriate
- All vehicles and equipment will be in good working condition and free of leaks. The contractor will prevent oil, petroleum products, or any other pollutants from contaminating the soil or entering a watercourse (dry or otherwise). When vehicles or equipment are stationary, mats or drip pans will be placed below vehicles to contain fluid leaks.
- All food related trash will be disposed of in closed containers and removed from the project site each day during the construction period or covered such that it will not enter jurisdictional waters or will otherwise attract wildlife to the construction area. At project completion, all project-generated debris, vehicles, building materials, and rubbish will be removed from the project footprint.

5.4 Wildlife Movement

The proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

d) *Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of wildlife nursery sites.*

Direct impacts to wildlife movement as a result of the proposed project would be less than significant. Movement along the Brown Barranca would not be obstructed, and the completed project would not impede the movement of wildlife through the region.

5.5 Local Policies and Ordinances

The proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

e) *Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance*

The City of Ventura General Plan & EIR

Policy IB: Increase the area of open space protected from development impacts requires proposed developments to buffer from barrancas and creeks that retain natural soil slopes. The project site is adjacent to the Brown Barranca; however, the proposed project will not directly impact the Brown Barranca and the project site is currently buffered by approximately 50 feet from the top of bank. Therefore, the Brown Barranca will not be impacted from development. Indirect impacts to the Barranca during construction will be reduced to a less than signification level with the implementation of BIO-7 described above.

Policy 1C: Improve protection for native plants and animals requires new development adjacent to rivers, creeks, and barrancas to use native or non-invasive plant species, preferably drought tolerant, for landscaping. Additionally, requires new development to maintain all indigenous tree species or provide adequately sized replacement native trees on a 3:1 basis. The proposed project may have a significant impact to the requirements set forth in this policy; however, the implementation of BIO-5 and BIO-6 will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

BIO-5 Native Species Planting

The area within the proposed project site adjacent to the Brown Barranca and riparian habitat will be planted with native non-invasive plant species, preferably drought tolerant, for landscaping.

BIO-6 Native Tree Replacement

If the proposed project requires the removal of any native trees (e.g., cottonwood), the project will plant a replacement native tree adequately sized on a 3:1 basis.

5.6 Habitat Conservation Plans

The proposed project would have a significant effect on biological resources if it would:

f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Conservation Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

The project does not occur within any Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan areas. The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of any such plans. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with a Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans and no impact would occur.

6 Limitations, Assumptions, and Use Reliance

This Biological Resources Assessment has been performed in accordance with professionally accepted biological investigation practices conducted at this time and in this geographic area. The biological investigation is limited by the scope of work performed. Reconnaissance biological surveys for certain taxa may have been conducted as part of this assessment but were not performed during a particular blooming period, nesting period, or particular portion of the season when positive identification would be expected if present, and therefore, cannot be considered definitive. The biological surveys are limited also by the environmental conditions present at the time of the surveys. In addition, general biological (or protocol) surveys do not guarantee that the organisms are not present and will not be discovered in the future within the site. In particular, mobile wildlife species could occupy the site on a transient basis, or re-establish populations in the future. Our field studies were based on current industry practices, which change over time and may not be applicable in the future. No other guarantees or warranties, expressed or implied, are provided. The findings and opinions conveyed in this report are based on findings derived from site reconnaissance, jurisdictional areas, review of CNDDB RareFind5, and specified historical and literature sources. Standard data sources relied upon during the completion of this report, such as the CNDDB, may vary with regard to accuracy and completeness. In particular, the CNDDB is compiled from research and observations reported to CDFW that may or may not have been the result of comprehensive or site-specific field surveys. Although Rincon believes the data sources are reasonably reliable, Rincon cannot and does not guarantee the authenticity or reliability of the data sources it has used. Additionally, pursuant to our contract, the data sources reviewed included only those that are practically reviewable without the need for extraordinary research and analysis.

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Appendix A

Regulatory Setting

Regulatory Setting

Special-status habitats are vegetation types, associations, or sub-associations that support concentrations of special-status plant or animal species, are of relatively limited distribution, or are of particular value to wildlife.

Listed species are those taxa that are formally listed as endangered or threatened by the federal government (e.g. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS]), pursuant to the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) or as endangered, threatened, or rare (for plants only) by the State of California (i.e. California Fish and Game Commission), pursuant to the California Endangered Species Act or the California Native Plant Protection Act. Some species are considered rare (but not formally listed) by resource agencies, organizations with biological interests/expertise (e.g. Audubon Society, CNPS, The Wildlife Society), and the scientific community.

The following is a brief summary of the regulatory context under which biological resources are managed at the federal, state, and local levels. A number of federal and state statutes provide a regulatory structure that guides the protection of biological resources. Agencies with the responsibility for protection of biological resources within the project site include:

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (wetlands and other waters of the United States);
- Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board (waters of the State);
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (federally listed species and migratory birds);
- California Department Fish and Wildlife (riparian areas, streambeds, and lakes; state-listed species; Species of Special Concern; nesting birds);
- City of San Buenaventura General Plan (Policy 1B and 1C)

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) has authority to regulate activities that could discharge fill of material into wetlands or other “waters of the United States.” Perennial and intermittent creeks are considered waters of the United States if they are hydrologically connected to other jurisdictional waters (typically a navigable water). The USACE also implements the federal policy embodied in Executive Order 11990, which is intended to result in no net loss of wetland value or acres. In achieving the goals of the Clean Water Act, the USACE seeks to avoid adverse impacts and offset unavoidable adverse impacts on existing aquatic resources. Any fill of wetlands that are hydrologically connected to jurisdictional waters would require a permit from the USACE prior to the start of work. Typically, when a project involves impacts to waters of the United States, the goal of no net loss of wetland acres or values is met through avoidance and minimization to the extent practicable, followed by compensatory mitigation involving creation or enhancement of similar habitats.

Regional Water Quality Control Board

The State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) and the local Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) have jurisdiction over “waters of the State,” pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act, which are defined as any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters,

within the boundaries of the State. The SWRCB has issued general Waste Discharge Requirements (WDRs) regarding discharges to "isolated" waters of the State (Water Quality Order No. 2004-0004-DWQ, Statewide General Waste Discharge Requirements for Dredged or Fill Discharges to Waters Deemed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to be Outside of Federal Jurisdiction). The RWQCB administers actions under this general order for isolated waters not subject to federal jurisdiction, and is also responsible for the issuance of water quality certifications pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act for waters subject to federal jurisdiction.

United States Fish and Wildlife Service

The USFWS implements the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 United States Code [USC] Section 703-711) and the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (16 USC Section 668). The USFWS and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) share responsibility for implementing the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) (16 USC § 153 et seq.). Generally, the USFWS implements the FESA for terrestrial and freshwater species, while the NMFS implements the FESA for marine and anadramous species. Projects that would result in "take" of any federally threatened or endangered species are required to obtain permits from the USFWS or NMFS through either Section 7 (interagency consultation with a federal nexus) or Section 10 (Habitat Conservation Plan) of the FESA, depending on the involvement by the federal government in permitting and/or funding of the project. The permitting process is used to determine if a project would jeopardize the continued existence of a listed species and what measures would be required to avoid jeopardizing the species. "Take" under federal definition means to harass, harm (which includes habitat modification), pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct. Proposed or candidate species do not have the full protection of the FESA; however, the USFWS and NMFS advise project applicants that they could be elevated to listed status at any time.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) derives its authority from the Fish and Game Code of California. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish and Game Code Section 2050 et. seq.) prohibits take of state listed threatened or endangered. Take under CESA is restricted to direct mortality of a listed species and the law does not prohibit indirect harm by way of habitat modification. Where incidental take would occur during construction or other lawful activities, CESA allows the CDFW to issue an Incidental Take Permit upon finding, among other requirements, that impacts to the species have been minimized and fully mitigated.

The CDFW also enforces Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515 of the Fish and Game Code, which prohibits take of species designated as Fully Protected. The CDFW is not allowed to issue an Incidental Take Permit for Fully Protected species; therefore, impacts to these species must be avoided.

California Fish and Game Code sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3513 describe unlawful take, possession, or destruction of native birds, nests, and eggs. Section 3503.5 of the Code protects all birds-of-prey and their eggs and nests against take, possession, or destruction of nests or eggs. Section 3513 makes it a state-level office to take any bird in violation of the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. CDFW administers these requirements.

Species of Special Concern (SSC) is a category used by the CDFW for those species which are considered to be indicators of regional habitat changes or are considered to be potential future protected species. Species of Special Concern do not have any special legal status except that which may be afforded by the Fish and Game Code as noted above. The SSC category is intended by the

CDFW for use as a management tool to include these species in special consideration when decisions are made concerning the development of natural lands. The CDFW also has authority to administer the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) (Fish and Game Code Section 1900 et seq.). The NPPA requires the CDFW to establish criteria for determining if a species, subspecies, or variety of native plant is endangered or rare. Effective in 2015, CDFW promulgated regulations (14 CCR 786.9) under the authority of the NPPA, establishing that the CESA's permitting procedures would be applied to plants listed under the NPPA as "Rare." With this change, there is little practical difference for the regulated public between plants listed under CESA and those listed under the NPPA.

Perennial, intermittent, and ephemeral streams and associated riparian vegetation, when present, also fall under the jurisdiction of the CDFW. Section 1600 *et seq*. of the Fish and Game Code (Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements) gives the CDFW regulatory authority over activities that divert, obstruct, or alter the channel, bed, or bank of any river, stream or lake.

Local Jurisdiction

The City of San Buenaventura *Ventura General Plan, 2005* is the primary planning document for the City. It establishes the goals for the community's future. State Planning and Zoning Law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan for the physical development of a city and any land outside its boundaries which, in its judgment, bears relation to its planning (i.e., sphere of interest). The General Plan is required to contain the following seven elements: Land Use, Circulation, Conservation, Housing, Noise, Open Space, and Safety. The following policies were considered in this BRA:

- **Policy 1B: Increase the area of open space protected from development impacts.**
  - Action 1.8: buffer barrancas and creeks that retain natural soil slopes from development according to State and Federal guidelines.
  - Action 1.9: prohibit placement of material in watercourse other than native plants and required flood control structures, and remove debris periodically.
- **Policy 1C: Improve protection for native plants and animals.**
  - Action 1.18: require new development adjacent to rivers, creeks, and barrancas to use native or non-invasive plant species, preferably drought tolerant, for landscaping.
  - Action 1.19: require projects new watercourses, shoreline areas, and other sensitive habitat areas to include surveys for State and/or federally listed sensitive species and to provide appropriate buffers and other mitigation necessary to protect habitat for listed species.
  - Action 1.22: adopt development code provisions to protect mature trees, as defined by minimum height, canopy, and/or trunk diameter.
  - Action 1.24: require new development to maintain all indigenous tree species or provide adequately sized replacement native trees on a 3:1 basis.

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Appendix B

Special Status Species Evaluation Tables

Special Status Plant Species in the Regional Vicinity of the Project Site

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Fed/State ESA CRPR	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Abronia maritima red sand-verbena	None/None 4.2	Coastal dunes	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Aphanisma blitoides aphanisma	None/None 1B.2	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal dunes, coastal scrub. On bluffs and slopes near the ocean in sandy or clay soils. 3-305 m. annual herb. Blooms Feb-Jun	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Astragalus brauntonii Braunton's milk-vetch	FE/None 1B.1	Chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Recent burns or disturbed areas; usually on sandstone with carbonate layers. Soil specialist; requires shallow soils to defeat pocket gophers and open areas, preferably on hilltops, saddles or bowls between hills. 3-640 m. perennial herb. Blooms Jan-Aug	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Astragalus didymocarpus var. *milesianus* Miles' milk-vetch	None/None 1B.2	Coastal scrub	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Astragalus pycnostachyus var. lanosissimus Ventura Marsh milk-vetch	FE/SE 1B.1	Marshes and swamps, coastal dunes, coastal scrub. Within reach of high tide or protected by barrier beaches, more rarely near seeps on sandy bluffs. 1-35 m. perennial herb. Blooms (Jun)Aug-Oct	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Atriplex coulteri Coulter's saltbush	None/None 1B.2	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Ocean bluffs, ridgetops, as well as alkaline low places. Alkaline or clay soils. 2-460 m. perennial herb. Blooms Mar-Oct	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Arenaria paludicola marsh sandwort	FE/SE 1B.1	Occurs in sandy substrates and openings within freshwater or brackish marshes and swamps. This species blooms between May and August, and typically occurs at elevations ranging from 3-170 meters	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Atriplex pacifica South Coast saltscale	None/None 1B.2	Alkali playa, Coastal bluff scrub, Coastal dunes, Coastal scrub	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Atriplex serenana var. davidsonii Davidson's saltscale	None/None 1B.2	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal scrub. Alkaline soil. 0-460 m. annual herb. Blooms Apr-Oct	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Chaenactis glabriuscula var. orcuttiana Orcutt's pincushion	None/None 1B.1	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal dunes. Sandy sites. 3-80 m. annual herb. Blooms Jan-Aug	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Chloropyron maritimum ssp. maritimum salt marsh bird's-beak	FE/SE 1B.2	Marshes and swamps, coastal dunes. Limited to the higher zones of salt marsh habitat. 0-10 m. annual herb (hemiparasitic). Blooms May-Oct(Nov)	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Fed/State ESA CRPR	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Delphinium parryi ssp. blochmaniae dune larkspur	None/None 1B.2	Chaparral, coastal dunes (maritime). On rocky areas and dunes. 18-305 m. perennial herb. Blooms Apr-Jun	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Dudleya blochmaniae ssp. blochmaniae Blochman's dudleya	None/None 1B.1	Coastal scrub, coastal bluff scrub, chaparral, valley and foothill grassland. Open, rocky slopes; often in shallow clays over serpentine or in rocky areas with little soil. 5-450 m. perennial herb. Blooms Apr-Jun	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Eriogonum crocatum conejo buckwheat	None/Rare 1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Conejo volcanic outcrops; rocky sites. 90-580 m. perennial herb. Blooms Apr-Jul	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Heterotheca sessiliflora ssp. sessiliflora beach goldenaster	None/None 1B.1	Coastal dunes, coastal scrub, chaparral (coastal). Sandy sites. 0-5 m. perennial herb. Blooms Mar-Dec	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Imperata brevifolia California satintail	None/None 2B.1	Coastal scrub, chaparral, riparian scrub, Mojavean desert scrub, meadows and seeps (alkali), riparian scrub. Mesic sites, alkali seeps, riparian areas. 3-1495 m. perennial rhizomatous herb. Blooms Sep-May	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Lasthenia glabrata ssp. coulteri Coulter's goldfields	None/None 1B.1	Coastal salt marshes, playas, vernal pools. Usually found on alkaline soils in playas, sinks, and grasslands. 1-1375 m. annual herb. Blooms Feb-Jun	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Lepidium virginicum var. robinsonii Robinson's pepper-grass	None/None 4.3	Chaparral, coastal scrub. Dry soils, shrubland. 4-1435 m. annual herb. Blooms Jan-Jul	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Monardella hypoleuca ssp. hypoleuca white-veined monardella	None/None 1B.3	Chaparral, cismontane woodland. Dry slopes. 50-1280 m. perennial herb. Blooms (Apr)May-Aug(Sep-Dec)	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Monardella sinuata ssp. sinuata southern curly-leaved monardella	None/None 1B.2	Coastal dunes, coastal scrub, chaparral, cismontane woodland. Sandy soils. 20-305 m. annual herb. Blooms Apr-Sep	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Orcuttia californica California orcutt grass	FE/	Vernal pools and wetlands from. 10- 60 m	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Phacelia ramosissima var. austrolitoralis south coast branching phacelia	None/None 3.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, coastal dunes, coastal salt marsh. Sandy, sometimes rocky sites. 5-300 m. perennial herb. Blooms Mar-Aug	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Pseudognaphalium leucocephalum white rabbit-tobacco	None/None 2B.2	Riparian woodland, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, chaparral. Sandy, gravelly sites. 35-515 m. perennial herb. Blooms (Jul)Aug-Nov(Dec)	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Fed/State ESA CRPR	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Sagittaria sanfordii Sanford's arrowhead	None/None 1B.2	Marshes and swamps. In standing or slow-moving freshwater ponds, marshes, and ditches. 0-605 m. perennial rhizomatous herb (emergent). Blooms May-Oct(Nov)	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Senecio aphanactis chaparral ragwort	None/None 2B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub. Drying alkaline flats. 20-855 m. annual herb. Blooms Jan-Apr(May)	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Sidalcea neomexicana salt spring checkerbloom	None/None 2B.2	Playas, chaparral, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, Mojavean desert scrub. Alkali springs and marshes. 3-2380 m. perennial herb. Blooms Mar-Jun	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Sensitive Natural Communities			
Southern Riparian Scrub	None/None	–	**Not Expected.** Not observed during the reconnaissance survey on November 11, 2019

Regional Vicinity refers to within a 9-quad search radius of site.

FE = Federally Endangered FT = Federally Threatened FC = Federal Candidate Species

SE = State Endangered ST = State Threatened SC = State Candidate SR = State Rare

CRPR (CNPS California Rare Plant Rank)

1A=Presumed Extinct in California

1B=Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere

2A=Plants presumed extirpated in California, but more common elsewhere

2B=Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere

CRPR Threat Code Extension

.1=Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat)

.2=Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened)

.3=Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened)

Special Status Animal Species in the Regional Vicinity of the Project Site

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Fed/State ESA CDFW	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Invertebrates			
Danaus plexippus pop. 1 monarch - California overwintering population	None/None	Winter roost sites extend along the coast from northern Mendocino to Baja California, Mexico. Roosts located in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress), with nectar and water sources nearby.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Fish			
Catostomus santaanae Santa Ana sucker	FT/None G1/S1	Endemic to Los Angeles Basin south coastal streams. Habitat generalists, but prefer sand-rubble-boulder bottoms, cool, clear water, and algae.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni unarmored threespine stickleback	FE/SE FP	Weedy pools, backwaters, and among emergent vegetation at the stream edge in small Southern California streams. Cool (<24 C), clear water with abundant vegetation.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 10 steelhead - southern California DPS	FE/None	Federal listing refers to populations from Santa Maria River south to southern extent of range (San Mateo Creek in San Diego County). Southern steelhead likely have greater physiological tolerances to warmer water and more variable conditions.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Amphibians			
Rana draytonii California red-legged frog	FT/SC	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation; requires 11-20 weeks of permanent water for larval development and must have access to estivation habitat	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Reptiles			
Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri coastal whiptail	None/None SSC	Found in deserts and semi-arid areas with sparse vegetation and open areas. Also found in woodland & riparian areas. Ground may be firm soil, sandy, or rocky.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Fed/State ESA CDFW	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Emys marmorata western pond turtle	None/None SSC	A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation, below 6000 ft elevation. Needs basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0.5 km from water for egg-laying.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Phrynosoma blainvillii coast horned lizard	None/None SSC	Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes. Open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burial, and abundant supply of ants and other insects.	**Low Potential.** Suitable habitat (open areas and bushes for cover) present within the study area. CNDDB indicates one species occurrences within 3-miles of the study area (along Santa Clara River). However, significant development within the study area is present and species not observed during the reconnaissance survey on November 11, 2019.
Thamnophis hammondii two-striped gartersnake	None/None SSC	Coastal California from vicinity of Salinas to northwest Baja California. From sea to about 7,000 ft elevation. Highly aquatic, found in or near permanent fresh water. Often along streams with rocky beds and riparian growth.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Birds			
Agelaius tricolor tricolored blackbird	None/ST SSC	Highly colonial species, most numerous in Central Valley & vicinity. Largely endemic to California. Requires open water, protected nesting substrate, and foraging area with insect prey within a few km of the colony.	**Low Potential.** CNDDB documents the species within the general vicinity of the study area, however it was a “best guess” sighting and likely along the Santa Clara River. No suitable habitat (nettle thicket and cattails).
Athene cunicularia burrowing owl	None/None SSC	Open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. Subterranean nester, dependent upon burrowing mammals, most notably, the California ground squirrel.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Coccyzus americanus occidentalis western yellow-billed cuckoo	FT/SE	Riparian forest nester, along the broad, lower flood-bottoms of larger river systems. Nests in riparian jungles of willow, often mixed with cottonwoods, with lower story of blackberry, nettles, or wild grape.	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.

Scientific Name Common Name	Status Fed/State ESA CDFW	Habitat Requirements	Potential to Occur
Empidonax traillii extimus southwestern willow flycatcher	FE/SE	Riparian woodland	**Not Expected.** No suitable riparian woodland habitat present within the study area. The CNDDB does not document the species within a 5-mile radius of the study area.
Gymnogyps californianus California condor	FE/SE	Near Require vast expanses of open savannah, grasslands, and foothill chaparral in mountain ranges of moderate altitude	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Polioptila californica californica coastal California gnatcatcher	FT/None	Obligate, permanent resident of coastal sage scrub below 2500 ft in Southern California	**Not Expected.** No suitable habitat present within the study area.
Setophaga petechial yellow warbler	None/None SSC	Frequently found nesting and foraging in willow shrubs and thickets, and in other riparian plants including cottonwoods, sycamores, ash, and alders	**Moderate Potential.** The study area provides suitable habitat (i.e. willow shrubs and cottonwoods). The CNDDB documents the species within 5-miles of the study area.
Vireo bellii pusillus least Bell's vireo	FE/SE	Summer resident of Southern California in low riparian in vicinity of water or in dry river bottoms; below 2000 ft. Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways, usually willow, Baccharis, mesquite.	**Low Potential.** The CNDDB documents an occurrence of the species one-mile from the study area, along the Santa Clara River. The study area does provide a small riparian area (mulefat thickets) however, no water a majority of the year is present, the Brown Barranca does carry flows during storm events but does not provide suitable substrate (i.e. concrete lined channel).
Mammals			
Taxidea taxus American badger	None/None SSC	Most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with friable soils; needs sufficient food, friable soils and open, uncultivated ground. Preys on burrowing rodents. Digs burrows	**Low Potential.** The CNDDB documents two occurrences of the species within two miles of the study area. However, the study area is surrounded by developed land use and would likely not support the species.

Regional Vicinity refers to within a 9-quad search radius of site.

FE = Federally Endangered FT = Federally Threatened FC = Federal Candidate Species FS=Federally Sensitive

SE = State Endangered ST = State Threatened SC = State Candidate SS=State Sensitive

SSC = CDFW Species of Special Concern SFP = State Fully Protected

Appendix C

Floral and Faunal Compendium

Plant Species Observed within the Study Area on November 11, 2019

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Native or Introduced
Shrubs			
Baccharis salicifolia	mulefat	–	Native
Ricinus communis	castor bean	–	Introduced
Herbs			
Centaurea melitensis	tocalote	–	Introduced
Salsola tragus	Russian thistle	–	Introduced
Brassica nigra	black mustard	–	Introduced
Malva parviflora	cheeseweed	–	Introduced
Malva multiflora	tree mallow	–	Introduced
Aster spp.	Asteraceae family	–	Introduced
Salvia rosmariuns	rosemary	–	Introduced
Marrubium vulgare	white horehound	–	Introduced
Solanum lycopersicum	tomato	–	Introduced
Melilotus albus	white sweet clover	–	Introduced
Trees			
Quercus agrifolia	coast live oak	–	Native
Platanus racemosa	California sycamore	–	Native
Eucalyptus sp.	eucalyptus species	–	Introduced
Nicotiana glauca	tree tobacco	–	Introduced
Populus fremontii	Femont's cottonwood	–	Native
Sequoia sp.	redwood	–	Native
Persea Americana	avocado	–	Introduced
Acacia sp.	acacia	–	Introduced
Jacaranda arborea	jacaranda	–	Introduced
Salix exigua	sandbar willow	–	Native
Salix lasiolepis	arroyo willow	–	Native
Washingtonia robusta	Mexican palm	–	Introduced
Populus balsamifera spp. *trichocarpa*	black cottonwood	–	Native
Grasses			
Bromus sp.	brome species	–	Introduced
Erodium cicutarium	redstem filaree	–	Introduced
Cortaderia selloana	pampas grass	–	Introduced
Stipa milacea	smilo grass	–	Introduced
Pennisetum clandestinum	kikuyu grass	–	Introduced

Calflora. 2019. Information on wild California plants for conservation, education, and appreciation. Berkeley, CA. www.calflora.org (accessed January 2019).

California Native Plant Society. 2019. Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants. V.7-08c-Interim 8-22-02. www.rareplants.cnps.org (accessed January 2019).

Animal Species Observed within the Study Area on November 11, 2019

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Native or Introduced
Birds			
Calypte anna	Anna's hummingbird	–	Native
Sayornis nigricans	black phoebe	–	Native
Melozone crissalis	California towhee	–	Native
Psaltriparus minimus	bushtit	–	Native
Haemorhous mexicanus	house finch	–	Native
Cathartes aura	turkey vulture	–	Native
Mammals			
Sylvilagus audubonii	desert cottontail	–	Native
Otospermophilus beecheyi	California ground squirrel	–	Native
Reptiles			
Sceloporus occidentalis	western fence lizard	–	Native

Rodewald, P. (Editor). 2015. The Birds of North America. Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology, Ithaca, NY. https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/home (accessed January 2019).

California Herps. 2018. A Guide to the Amphibians and Reptiles of California. http://www.california herps.com/index.html (accessed January 2019).

Appendix D

Site Photographs

Photograph 1. View from northwest project site boundary facing south along paved access road (aspect south; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 2. View of northern project site boundary. Note concrete lined drainage channel (aspect south; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 3. View of center of project site (aspect southeast; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 4. View of southern project boundary. Note, mulefat thickets behind fence (aspect east; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 5. View from southwest project site boundary from paved road. Note, mulefat thickets in background (aspect east; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 6. View of project site from western boundary (aspect north; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 7. View of concrete lined drainage channel in western project boundary. Note, overgrown non-native vegetation (aspect southwest; November 11, 2019).

Photograph 8. View of eastern project boundary. Note, Brown Barranca behind fencing (aspect east; November 11, 2019).