

**Visual Resources Impact  
Report  
for  
Hoskings Ranch  
LOG# 3910 03-10-005**



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**ABBREVIATIONS**

CEQA - California Environmental Quality Act

RPO – Resource Protection Ordinance

SR - State Route

TM – Tentative Map



## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

A visual analysis was conducted on the proposed project TM 5213 Rpl<sup>2</sup> known as Hoskings Ranch, an agricultural subdivision of approximately 1416.5 acres designated (19) Intensive Agriculture and (24) National Forest. The proposed project will subdivide the property into 24 large lots for agricultural use. Uses in the area are primarily rural in nature: agriculture, undeveloped land and scattered residential. A rural fire station is proposed on Hwy 78/79, approximately one-quarter mile west to the intersection with Pine Hills Road.

The property is approximately one mile southwest of Julian and scattered rural residences are located to the east and south of the proposed project. It is bordered on the north by Julian Road also known as State Route 78/79. The Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan designates State Route 78 as a third priority and State Route 79 as a second priority. The two highways merge in this area and the roadway was treated as a second priority scenic highway for the purposes of the analysis.

It was concluded after field visits and photographic studies that as a result of design measures, the proposed project will have no significant adverse effects to visual resources of the area, including the scenic highway. Design measures include incorporating natural topography, existing vegetation and landscaping with natural vegetation, which will screen the large lots along SR 78/79 and Pine Hills Road. Pads on these lots are set back from the roadway and located to minimize the view from the highway. These design measures will minimize potential visual impacts. No mitigation is required.

The cumulative impact analysis area of the proposed project is based on the viewshed. The only current project within the area is a cell tower. The project does not add to any cumulative impacts to visual resources.



## CHAPTER 1.0      INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose of the Visual Resources Report

The purpose of this study is to assess the visual impacts of the proposed project, determine the significance of the impacts under CEQA, and to propose measures that will avoid, minimize or mitigate adverse visual impacts on the surrounding visual environment that may be associated with the development of Hoskings Ranch on the surrounding visual environment.

### 1.2 Key Issues

The key issues this study will examine are the potential effects to visual resources of a rural oriented development on the surrounding areas and to determine if there are any significant effects to the visual resources of the scenic Highway 75/79 on the north.

### 1.3 Principal Viewpoints to be covered

Nine key views were selected to analyze potential impacts to visual resources. Key views 1, 2 and 3 are taken along SR 78/79, looking east. Key view 4 is taken from the Pine Hills area to the southeast of the site and looks north into the proposed project. Key views 5 through 8 are taken heading south to north along Pine Hills Road, looking west into the proposed project. Key view 9 is the perspective from Van Duesen Road and looks west into the site. Figure 6, "Key View Index," page F-6 shows the perspective and locations of the views.

Additionally, the site of the proposed fire station was reviewed. The proposed location is on the south side of Hwy 78/79, approximately one quarter mile west of the intersection with Pine Hills Road.



## CHAPTER 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project is approximately 1,416.5 acres located one mile west of the historic town of Julian. The proposed development of Hoskings Ranch will consist of an agricultural subdivision to 24 large lots that preserve and enhance the potential for agricultural use on each lot. State Routes (SR) 78/79 form the northern boundary of the site. SR 78 and 79 are designated scenic highways by the Scenic Highway Element of the San Diego County General Plan. SR79 is listed as second priority and SR 78 is a third priority route. The combined stretch of highway adjoining the property will be treated as a second priority scenic highway.

The area is primarily rural in character, with scattered large lots to the east and west. Pine Hills is a dense rural residential development to the south. Open land, agriculture and scattered residential uses are the main features of land to the north. The southwest portion of the property is within the Cleveland National Forest, which extends beyond the site to the south and west. Figure 1, "Vicinity Map," page F-1 shows the location of the site relative to the surrounding areas and features. Figure 2, "Tentative Map," page F-2, shows the proposed project.

The surrounding architectural design varies but trends toward large single family residences that present a central mass surrounded by clusters of outbuildings. Barns are a common feature on many properties.

### **2.1 Land Use Designations and Zoning**

The area is in an Agricultural Preserve and under a Williamson Act Contract, which sets the minimum lot size at 40 acres and reserves the property for agricultural uses. The Contract limits future residential development as "incidental" uses. The project site is subject to the ECA Environmentally Constrained Area Regional Category of the General Plan due to the agricultural preserve and sensitive resources found on site. The western quarter area of the subject property is designated (19) Intensive Agriculture, which is intended to promote a variety of agricultural uses including minor commercial, industrial and public facility appropriate to agricultural operation or supportive of the agricultural population. The proposed uses and lot sizes are consistent with the (19) General Plan designation. The project site is subject to the A72 Intensive Agriculture use regulations of the zoning ordinance. The proposed uses and lot sizes are consistent with the A72 zone.

The area is under a Williamson Act Contract, which sets the minimum lot size at 40 acres. The area is designated (19) Intensive Agriculture.

## **2.2 Regulatory Framework**

The project is in conformance with the relevant regulatory documents.

The proposed project is subject to the following regulatory documents for an evaluation of potential impacts to visual resources:

San Diego County General Plan – Scenic Highway Element

Scenic Highway Program

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance – S – Scenic Area Regulation

San Diego County Zoning Ordinance – Design Review Area Regulations – D Designator  
Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO)

Board of Supervisor’s Policy I-73 (Hillside Development)

## **2.3 Design Policies and Guidelines**

The project is in conformance with the relevant design policies and guidelines.

Local design policies covering the proposed project have been reviewed. These are:

### **2.3.1 Julian Community Plan**

#### **GENERAL GOAL**

Encourage a continuing rural atmosphere by planning for a balanced ecological community and a healthy environment for all forms of life. Project: Lots are a minimum of 40 acres. Visual effects are minimized through use of large lot designs, topography, and vegetation,

#### **POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

3. Promote maintenance and preservation of forested areas. Encourage vegetation management and planting of young trees. Regulatory review shall attempt to protect forested areas during project review. Project: In-holding areas within the Cleveland National Forest are largely preserved in open space. A total of 1,209.8 acres of the site are protected in open space.

4. Grading should be designed to protect the natural terrain and minimize visual impacts. Project: Grading will follow existing traveled ways and topography to the greatest extent possible. Most grading occurs in the western part of the site that is not visible from a public viewing place.

9. Discourage noise, lighting, and signs that detract from and are not consistent with the historic and rural atmosphere. The regulatory process shall consider these potential impacts during project review. Project: No project lighting or signage is proposed. Large lot design will minimize noise impacts to adjacent lots on- and off-site.

10. Discourage off-premise advertising and signs that detract from and are not consistent with the historic and rural atmosphere. Aesthetic impacts shall be reviewed during the regulatory process. Project: No project signage is proposed

## CIRCULATION

### POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7. Design roads to follow natural contours, avoid grid pattern streets, minimize cuts and fills and the disturbance of natural rock-outcroppings and trees wherever possible. Project: Roads will follow existing contours where possible and will utilize existing traveled ways, where feasible.

## OPEN SPACE

### GOAL

Encourage the preservation and careful management of open space. Project: A block of open space consisting of 1,209.8 acres will be protected and managed, preserving visual resources throughout the site.

## SCENIC HIGHWAYS

### GOAL

Recognition that the major roads and highways provide views of scenic vistas throughout the plan area.

Project: The project was evaluated for impacts to scenic vistas, as discussed below.

### POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Scenic highways should be implemented for these roads shown on the accompanying map. (See Map on page 32) [sic]

Project: SR 78/79 in the vicinity of the project is a scenic highway and it was evaluated for visual impacts, as discussed below.

2. Buildings and structures shall be so designed and located on the site as to create a harmonious relationship with surrounding development and the natural environment.

Project: Project structures will be sited so that existing topography and vegetation can provide screening. As a result, only small areas of any structure will be visible from public viewing areas or the scenic highway.

3. Buildings, structures, and plant materials shall be constructed, installed, or planted so as not to unnecessarily obstruct scenic views visible from the area.

Project: The large lot design allows buildings and associated landscaping will be set back from the roads where they will not obstruct scenic views.

4. Potentially unsightly features shall be located so as to be inconspicuous from streets, highways, public walkways, and surrounding properties, or effectively screened from view by planting and/or fences, walls, or grading.

Project: Large lots allow flexibility in the use of natural topography and vegetation to screen structures.

5. Insofar as feasible, natural topography, vegetation and scenic features of the site shall be retained and incorporated into the proposed development;

Project: Large scale alteration of the terrain is not proposed. Slopes are limited in height, most of which are less than 15 feet. The larger manufactured slopes are located along an isolated section of roadway in the western part of the site.

6. Any grading or earth moving operation in connection with the proposed development shall be planned and executed so as to blend with the existing terrain both on and adjacent to the site, and vegetative cover shall be provided to hide scars on the land resulting from such operations.

Project: Grading will follow natural terrain to the greatest extent possible. Pads will use flat areas of the site, minimizing the need for alterations and avoiding steep slopes.

### **2.3.2 Design Guidelines for the Julian Historical District**

The proposed project is not located within the Julian Historical District.

### **2.3.3 Resource Protection Ordinance**

The RPO protects environmentally sensitive lands, steep slopes and sensitive prehistoric and historic resources, and floodplains. The RPO calls for a resource protection study to ensure these resources have not been impacted. The project meets the requirements of the RPO because it avoids steep slopes and avoids to the maximum extent feasible natural

habitats. Both natural habitat and cultural resources are protected in open space. Floodplains are avoided. An RPO wetland delineation was used to ensure that impacts to wetlands are minimized.

### **2.3.4 Board of Supervisors Policy I-78**

The purpose of Board of Supervisors Policy I-78, also known as the Hillside Development Policy, is to minimize disturbance of natural terrain and provide for creative design for Hillside Developments. The project is not a hillside development. While there are steep slopes on the site, the project avoided these slopes in favor of the flatter areas of the site. In those instances where a proposed pad is near a steep slope, the pads are on the flattest part of the land and are isolated from public view. Guidelines set forth in the policy have been followed. For example, physiographic features are reserved, open space is preserved, and watercourses are preserved. The project does not conflict with this policy.



**CHAPTER 3.0 VISUAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE PROJECT**

**3.1 Project Setting**

The general visual environment of Hoskings Ranch is rolling terrain vegetated with native habitat. The proposed site consists of approximately 1,416.5 acres in the Community Plan Area of Julian, located one mile southwest of the Julian town Center. The property is bounded on the north by SR 78/79. This section of SR 79 is designated a second priority scenic highway and SR 78 is designated a third priority scenic highway in the scenic highway element of the San Diego County General Plan. The Cleveland National Forest lies to the southwest and a portion of Forest extends into the southwest corner of the project site. The general location is shown on Figure 1, “Vicinity Map,” page F-1 and the relation of the project to Julian and surrounding environs is seen on Figure 3, “Quad Map”, page F-3.

**3.2 Project Viewshed**

The viewshed of the project represents a viewer’s perspective from the surrounding area that includes the landforms as diagrammed in Figure 4, “Topographic Viewshed,” page F-4.

**3.3 Landscape Units**

Landscape units (LU) are distinctive areas of the project which are separated visually from one another by landform characteristics. On the Hoskings Ranch site four landscape units are identified:

*Landscape Unit 1*

The eastern third of the property bounded by SR 78/79 on the north and Pine Hills Road on the east is characterized by gentle grassy slopes and scattered groves of trees. There is a prominent knoll in the north-center of this area located just south of SR 78/79 that dominates the northeast corner of the property.

*Landscape Unit 2*

The majority of the site, extending from Orinoco Road on the northeast to the western boundary, with the exception of the southwest portion of the site, is distinguished by moderate to steep slopes with intermittent plateaus. The vegetation is primarily chaparral and small trees.

*Landscape Unit 3*

The southwest corner of the property is flatter and with a rolling gentle terrain than the area to the east defined in Landscape Unit 2. There is one long narrow plateau extending diagonally across the area from the western border to the south. A ridge rises in the most southwesterly corner of the site.

*Landscape Unit 4*

The Orinoco Creek crosses the site in four locations along the southern boundary. Taken together, they form Landscape Unit 4. They are characterized by gradually to steeply sloping

terrain on either side of the creek bed, which form a drainage pattern across the southern area of the property.

## CHAPTER 4.0 EXISTING VISUAL RESOURCES

### 4.1 Existing Visual Resources

The project's existing visual resources have been generally described as landscape units. The following discussion provides a more detailed analysis.

#### 4.1.1 Visual Character

##### 4.1.1.1 Landscape Unit 1

*Elements* – The northeast and eastern sections of the site are relatively flat, compared to the majority of the area. This unit is dominated by a moderately-sized knoll located adjacent to SR 78/79, which forms the northern boundary. The knoll rises approximately 165 feet above the surrounding area, providing form to the unit. Color and texture are of native grasses and small groupings of scattered shrubs and trees, resulting in a landscape primarily green with patches of brown. The line is flat and unbroken beyond the base of the knoll.

*Pattern* – This unit features the most dominant feature of the northeast portion of the project site. The existence of the knoll gives the area diversity in appearance and a sense of scale; the flatter, grassy areas define its continuity across the northeast corner of the proposed project. The scale relative to the full site is roughly one-third of the area, yet it is the primary feature seen from SR 78/79 and Pine Hills Road.

*RPO* – The character of slopes in Landscape Unit 1 is gentle, with the exception of the knoll rising in the middle of the unit, near the highway. At the southeast corner of the unit, the slope begins to get steeper as it transitions into Landscape Unit 2. Proposed pads in Lots 1 through 11 are located in the flat areas of the Landscape Unit. Any future grading will be minimal, limited to pad areas and will not alter the topographical configuration

##### 4.1.1.2 Landscape Unit 2

*Elements* – The largest area comprising the middle section of the site is characterized by moderate to steep slopes that drain from south to north. The resulting terrain has ridges and gullies that vary in elevation from 20 feet to 60 feet. The form and line of the unit is irregular. The color and texture are similar to Landscape Unit 1, with the addition of rock outcroppings, native chaparral, and small scrub oak. The line is varied and broken by differentials in elevation.

*Pattern* – This unit is the most dominant in the project area. It covers the majority of the site from the western boundary, tapering to the flatter area of Landscape Unit 1. There are three prominent plateaus within the area that give it a sense of diversity in contrast to the ridge formations. It is uniform in scale and continuous through the center of the proposed project area.

*RPO* – The character of slopes in Landscape Unit 2 is moderate to steep. There are isolated areas that are between zero and 15 percent slope. Proposed pads in Lots 12

through 24 are located in the flatter areas of the Landscape Unit. Any future grading will be minimal, limited to pad areas and will not alter the topographical configuration.

#### **4.1.1.3 Landscape Unit 3**

*Elements* – The area adjacent to the western boundary of the site is distinguished by gentle slopes, not as steep as those noted in Landscape Unit 2. However, this area is steeper than the flat contour patterns of Landscape Unit 1. The terrain slopes westerly from Landscape Unit 2. A meandering valley traverses the area from west to the southern boundary and is approximately 280 feet lower in elevation than the hills which define it. Moving toward the southwest, the terrain begins a gentle slope upward again, gaining about 70 feet in elevation at the most southwest corner. The landscape color and texture are similar to the elements found throughout the site, featuring small trees, chaparral, and some rock outcroppings. The area features gentle slopes that appear as graceful curves.

*Pattern* – This area is less dominant than units one and two. The diagonal valley gives the area a diverse composition. The sense of scale is defined by the sloping terrain to the southwest of the valley; the extended valley provides a sense of continuity to the southwest section of the property.

*RPO* – The character of slopes in Landscape Unit 3 is variable, with the flatter area forming a depression which begins at the property's western border and extends to the southeast. No proposed pads are located in the flat areas of the Landscape Unit.

#### **4.1.1.4 Landscape Unit 4**

*Elements* – There are four areas where the Orinoco Creek crosses the proposed project, and together they form Landscape Unit 4. The primary element is a meandering line cutting through the terrain with steep slopes on either side. The first creek crossing occurs at the mid-southeastern corner of the site. The second and third crossings are located in the rectangular middle of the site boundary. The fourth crossing is through the southernmost extension of the boundary. The color element contrasts with the native foliage located on the banks of the creek. The texture would appear to be smoother than the native vegetation found on the slopes.

*Pattern* – The stream areas are the least dominant features on the Hoskings Ranch site. Their scale is relatively small compared to the size of Landscape Unit 2. The stream sections are uniform in appearance and while they are diverse from the adjoining landscape. They are uniform with respect to the entire Orinoco Creek.

*RPO* – Landscape Unit 4 is primarily the streambed of Orinoco Creek as it passes through the project site. There are no proposed pads located in this Landscape Unit. No future grading is proposed for the southern area of the site, which includes the location of the creek.

## 4.1.2 Visual Quality

The visual quality of the site is high and typical of the surrounding area.

### 4.1.2.1 *Vividness*

Each of the landscape components is distinctive in its own setting. They are equally memorable and taken together form a distinct visual pattern of gently rising slopes from the northwest to steeper elevations in the southern areas. The Orinoco Creek produces a meandering valley across the site from east to west. The site can be viewed from different internal vantage points, each with its unique sense of visual patterns.

### 4.1.2.2 *Intactness*

The site taken as a whole has a sense of integrity as a natural landscape typical to the semi-mountainous character of the surrounding area. The ruggedness over the majority of the site protects it from encroaching development elements.

### 4.1.2.3 *Unity*

When viewed as a complete landscape, the units described above take on the characteristic of unity. The landscape units make a smooth linear transition from one to the next without abrupt changes to the overall harmony of the site.

## 4.2 Viewer Responses

Viewer response is defined by describing the sensitivity of the viewer to the visual resources of the site and the experience of the viewer, including the location and duration of the view.

### 4.2.1 **Viewer Sensitivity**

The Julian Community Plan primarily addresses the potential viewer sensitivity from the perspective of visitors to the area, stating that, “Julian is a natural destination for recreational drivers heading into or out of the desert. The transition between two very different geographic zones – the coastal plain and foothills to the west and the desert to the east – creates added scenic interest as wooded slopes give way to spectacular vistas.”<sup>1</sup>

The residents of the town of Julian and its immediate environs are over a mile distant from the proposed project. Their potential visual experience with the area is comparable to a commuter that travels a given route on a regular basis. While they are familiar with the area, local residents have reported they enjoy the visual experience of traveling in the Julian area.

### 4.2.2 **Viewer Groups**

One potential viewer group of the proposed project is travelers along SR 78/79, which would fall generally into two categories: tourists passing through the area on the way to Julian or the desert beyond, and local residents. Those who live distant from the proposed site (in Julian or Wynola) may pass by the site primarily on business trips. The more stationary viewer group would be comprised of residents in the vicinity, in particular the

<sup>1</sup> Part X Julian Community Plan, San Diego General Plan – 1990 pg. 30

development of Pine Hills to the south of the site. Other stationary viewers would be found in scattered homesites in the surrounding area to the east across Pine Hills Road. Recreational users of the Cleveland National Forest would also be a potential viewer group. Additionally, researchers, historians, naturalists and other special interest groups are possible transitory viewers of the area.

### **4.2.3 Viewer Exposure**

Exposure of the viewer to the proposed project is dependent on their relationship to the site. Stationary viewers living in the surrounding areas would have a static view of the property. The intensity of the view would be dependent on the distance from the site and the denseness of the natural vegetation. For the traveler, both local and a visitor to the area, the view would be transitory and change as the location of the viewer moved through the viewshed. At times this view may be shielded by vegetation or other impediments to the line of sight.

Stationary viewers would have the clearest view of the proposed site. In proximity to the project they are low in number. To the north of the site, homesites are scattered throughout the rolling terrain and are themselves surrounded by foliage, both native and non-native. There are approximately five to seven homes in the approximately 1,300 acres to the north of the site to SR 78/79. East of Pine Hills Road, three to four homes occupy the frontage sites along the roadway. Southeast of the site the development of Pine Hills supports several homesites, the nearest of which is at least one mile from the southern boundary of the Hoskings Ranch property. These homes are also well landscaped and the area between them and the proposed project area feature a heavy concentration of natural vegetation that will be retained.

Viewers traveling along the northern boundary defined by SR 78/79 would be going at or near the posted speed limit of 55 miles per hour. The highway comprises about nine-tenths of mile of the property boundary, and would be traversed in approximately one minute. The number of viewers from this vantage point would vary according to the season, with more expected during the high tourist seasons of the fall and spring.

Recreational viewers in the undeveloped areas of the Cleveland National Forest would have little exposure to the site. They would most likely be on foot and unable to see the proposed project because of the intervening natural landscape and vegetation. It would be difficult to predict the number of viewers in this group; however, the impact to them would be negligible given the restrictions to their views of the site.

### **4.2.4 Viewer Awareness**

The awareness of potential viewers of the project is predicated on their activity, location and visual details of the viewpoint. As noted in the discussion of exposure, the awareness of a viewer group is also affected by the amount of time they are within a line of sight of the project area.

The primary categories of viewer groups are moving and stationary. Within the moving group, two types of viewers are evaluated: those living in and around the area and who

are familiar with the communities, and those who are tourists and other visitors to the vicinity. Stationary viewers are evaluated based on the distance from the proposed project, the form of the natural terrain, and screening properties of the vegetation and other obstructions.

The northernmost portion of the project boundary is adjacent to SR 78/79, which is designated as a priority two scenic highway, and is the link between Julian and points west. It is a two-lane paved road with a speed limit of 55 miles per hour (mph). Users include light commercial traffic, commuters, and visitors to the tourist attractions of the area. The awareness of these travelers will vary based on the time it takes to traverse the approximately 4,750 feet from which the site is potentially in view. Commercial and commuter drivers will be less likely to be aware of the surrounding views as they make regular trips along the highway. They are also more likely to be driving at the posted limit, not below it. Visitors to the area are more likely to be driving more slowly, taking in the ambience of the rural nature of the area. They would pay more attention to the surrounding areas as they drive through them.

The awareness of moving viewers is also subject to the topographic and biological features of the property adjacent to SR 78/79. A prominent knoll is located near the roadway in the northeast corner of the property. The roadway elevation is slightly below the property. The awareness of moving viewers is moderate.

Stationary viewers of the proposed site are located to the east across Pine Hills Road, which forms the eastern boundary of the property, and to the southeast in the development of Pine Hills. Few homesites are located in these areas and they are well landscaped. The homes to the southeast are approximately one and one-half miles or more from the site. There are three homes to the east that have frontage on Pine Hills Road, which is lined with trees and heavy native vegetation. The awareness of stationary viewers is low to moderate.

Viewers who may potentially view the site from the perspective of hiking and camping activities, which may be recreational or educational, in the Cleveland National Forest are lesser in number than those from the highway or living in the area. The portion of the site that lies within the Cleveland National Forest does not support any sanctioned trails or camping sites. The areas of the forest where these activities may take place are distant from the site and in rugged terrain. There are no direct sight lines into the project site due to the topography and heavy concentration of native vegetation. The awareness of viewers in this category is extremely low.



**CHAPTER 5.0 VISUAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**5.1 Guidelines for Determining Significance**

1. Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?
2. Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?
3. Would the project substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?

**5.2 Key Views**

Nine key views were selected for assessing the visual impact of the proposed project. Figure 6, “Key View Index,” page F-6 identifies the perspective of each view.

**5.2.1 Key Views 1, 2, and 3**

Key Views 1 and 2 are taken along SR 78/79 from the point of view of travelers headed east along the roadway and Key View 3 illustrates the view as travelers approach the site headed west. With the exception of orientation, the analysis of these key views, as seen by the primary viewer group, are similar. The northern border of the site is formed by approximately one mile of SR 78/79.

**5.2.1.1 Key Views 1 and 2**

Drivers approaching the site from the west will have a view approaching the northwest corner of the site as shown in Figure 7, “Key Views 1 and 2, SR78/79 Plan and Profile, Looking East,” page F-7. The approximate locations of Lots 1, 2 and 3 are shown in the photo. The building pads of Lots 1 and 3 will be below the line of sight of the traveler. The location of the building pad for Lot 1 is screened by a small knoll.

The profile views in Figure 7 demonstrate the topography and sight lines from the Highway. The views are both taken from point B<sub>1</sub> on Highway 78/79.

The pad for Lot 2 is designed at grade and is approximately 1,500 feet from SR 78/79. The line of terrain, as shown on the profile line B<sub>1</sub> to B<sub>3</sub>, from the roadway gradually slopes upward to an elevation approximately 60 feet above the roadway. From there the grade gently levels out to the pad location at a proposed grade of 3,986 feet, which is approximately 20 feet below the sight line from the roadway. Any future incidental structure placed on the pad will be 35 feet or less in height. The dashed line at Lot 2 in the profile view demonstrates the low profile that is potentially in view of the observer on SR 78/79. The proposed fill bank is six feet high and well below the line of sight. Any future structure would be in view for approximately 30 seconds at maximum speed and will be screened by landscaping with natural vegetation in harmony with the existing plant communities. Viewer response will be minimal and visual impacts will be below a level of significance.

The pad for Lot 3 is at a proposed elevation of 4,010 feet and is approximately 30 feet below the sight line shown along profile line B<sub>1</sub> to B<sub>3</sub> in the profile view. Any incidental structure on the pad will be a maximum of 35 feet in height, leaving approximately five to seven feet in potential view of the highway. The cut and fill slopes for the pad are located on the east and west sides of the pad and are not in the line of sight. The fill slope is approximately 12 feet at its maximum and the cut slope is approximately 10 feet. Landscaping with natural vegetation that matches existing plant communities will effectively screen any future structures from view. Viewer response will be minimal and visual impacts will be below a level of significance.

The pad for Lot 1 is designed at an elevation of 3,988, requiring only two feet of fill above grade; the profile line of B<sub>1</sub> to B<sub>2</sub> shows the pad to be approximately 40 feet below the sight line as shown on the profile view of Figure 7. Any future incidental structures on Lot 1 will not be visible to viewers along Hwy 78/79. Additionally, the site will retain natural vegetation.

Figure 7A, “Key Views Photosimulation Looking East on SR 78/79,” shows the locations of Lots 1, 2 and 3. The proposed pad elevations are slightly below the line of sight from the roadway.

#### **5.2.1.2 Key View 3**

Drivers approaching the site from the east will encounter a predominant knoll at the intersection of Pine Hills Road and SR 78/79, which is the northeast corner of the project. Figure 8, “Key View 3, SR 78/79, Looking West,” page F-9 illustrates this perspective. Along this portion of SR 78/79 the roadway is bordered by natural vegetation that will remain. Any potential development of the site will not be visible from this vantage point. The site is under the Williamson Act, and any structures will be incidental to agricultural use. Viewer response to this view will be low to moderate. The existing topography and proposed project design will minimize visual impact to the viewer and it will be below a level of significance.

#### **5.2.2 Key View 4**

This view is representative of the perspective of the residential viewer group to the south of the project. Figure 9, “Key View 4, Looking North from Pine Hills Residential Area,” page F-10. The view looks northwesterly into the project from the nearest point of the residential viewer group in the development of Pine Hills. Homesites within the area are scattered and the closest residence is approximately one mile from the area of the site proposed for building pads. The terrain is hilly, dipping into a depression and rising to the flatter areas of the project site. The locations of Lots 7, 8 and 9 are noted in the panoramic view from Eagle Peak Road as shown on Figure 9A, “Key View 4 Photosimulation,” Page F-11.

In the foreground of the view photograph in Figure 9A, the top of an existing residence is barely visible. This homesite is approximately one-half mile from the view. All of the proposed pad locations are slightly below grade with respect to the existing topography, and they range from 0.8 tenths of a mile to just over a mile distant from the nearest point

in Pine Hills as shown on the profile view in Figure 9. The profile view demonstrates that the pad proposed for Lot 8 is well below the line of sight. The cut slope would be approximately 6 feet and the fill slope is proposed at 4 feet in height. The pad is approximately forty feet below the line of sight. At this distance, combined with the existing native vegetation and the pad grading design, any incidental buildings will be less visible than the existing residence. Visual response of this viewer group will be minimal and no visual impacts are anticipated to this viewer group.

### 5.2.3 Key View 5

Key View 5 is a perspective of Lot 8 taken from the southeast corner of the property at the intersection of Pine Hills Road with Deer Lake Park Road. The view is to the northwest from travelers heading north on Pine Hills Road. The road reaches the top of a grade near this point and the proposed pad is located approximately 0.5 miles from the roadway. The existing natural terrain will not be disturbed and any future pad and building will be partially obscured by the natural landscape. Additionally, the area supports natural vegetation that will screen a potential pad from view. Many trees actually border the roadway, blocking the view westward.

The inset in Figure 10 demonstrates the distance the proposed pad from existing residences to the east. The presence of existing vegetation and landscaping around the established homes screens the view of the pad location.

### 5.2.4 Key View 6

Key View 6, as shown on Figure 11, page F-13, is taken from Pine Hills Road, approximately 600 feet north of the southeast corner of the property. A proposed pad on Lot 7 is approximately 0.3 miles from the roadway. Terrain and vegetation will screen the view of travelers. Additionally, any improvements to the lot will be screened by landscaping consisting of natural vegetation. As the traveler moves north, trees and other vegetation bordering the roadway become denser. The pad will not require any cut or fill slopes.

### 5.2.5 Key Views 7 and 8

Key Views 7 and 8 are shown on Figure 12, “Key Views 7 and 8, From Pine Hills Road,” page F-14. They represent potential views of Lot 5 from Pine Hills Road for travelers headed north (see Key View 7) or south (see Key View 8) along the western boundary of the property. As noted in other views, the vegetation bordering Pine Hills Road is very dense and will effectively screen the view of any incidental structures on Lots 8, 7, and 5 to drivers going north. Key View 8 indicates a break in the natural vegetation along Pine Hills Road. A cut slope of 2 feet will be visible to drivers going south. The fill slope is located on the south side of the pad and will not be visible from Pine Hills Road. The slopes will be revegetated to blend with the natural terrain. The pad is located approximately 400 feet from Pine Hills Road. Views will be intermittent due to the trees along the road that will remain in place. It will appear similar to existing residences in the area, which are characterized by setbacks from the road and a rural setting. As such structures on the lot will be set back and screened by natural vegetation that will blend in with the existing rural character of the area.

### **5.2.6 Key View 9**

Key View 9 as shown on Figure 13, “Key View 9, Looking West from Van Duesen Road” is illustrative of the view of residents to the east of the proposed project. Heavy existing vegetation on both sides of Pine Hills Road forms a visual barrier. Additionally, the existing homesites to the east of the proposed project have mature landscaping that visually screens their views of the roadway.

## **5.3 Assessment of Visual Character and Visual Quality**

The change in visual character and visual quality will be minimal and no significant impacts to the visual resource will affect the identified viewer groups.

### **5.3.1 Assessment of Visual Character**

The visual character of the proposed project will not significantly alter the existing view as experienced by the identified viewer groups. As seen in Figures 7 through 13 of the Key Views, the four elements of visual character (dominance, scale, diversity and continuity) are not significantly impacted by the proposed project. The grading of pads is minimal and at or close to grade. Buildings are only permitted as incidental to agricultural use per the Williamson Act, therefore no structures that will be out of scale or dominant to the view are anticipated in the final design. Continuity of the topography and community character of the surrounding area will be maintained.

The proposed fire station, which would be located on Hwy 78/79 approximately one-quarter mile from the intersection with Pine Hills Road, is projected to be approximately 250 feet from the highway. Drivers headed east will be screened from the site by vegetation and topography until opposite the site. Drivers headed west will have a longer view of the site. However, planned vegetation and use of natural colors on the building will lessen the visual impact. The proposed location and photosimulation are detailed on Figure 15, “Fire Station Location Looking West Along SR 78/79,” page F-17, and Figure 16, “Fire Station, Location, Plan View.”

### **5.3.2 Assessment of Visual Quality**

Visual quality is defined by the changes in vividness and/or intactness or unity. The proposed project will not substantially change the landform of the site. The grading is minimal and buildings are not planned in the proposed development. Pads are provided for the use of structures incidental to agricultural use as provided in the Williamson Act. From each of the key views examined, the change to the visual landscape does not exceed the level of significance. The identified viewer groups will be minimally affected by the development. The visual quality of the area is not substantially impacted by the proposed project.

## **5.4 Assessment of Viewer Response**

Viewer response to the project is low to moderate and does not rise to a level of significance. There is little change to the quality or character of the visual resource from the view points examined. The stages of development progressing from existing conditions to construction to maturity produce little change to the existing landscape. The topography is considered in the grading design and no existing vegetation, with the exception of the pad areas, will be

altered. All screening native vegetative resources will remain. Buildings will be incidental to agricultural use and in scale with the community character of the area. Viewer response of all identified viewer groups will be minimal and no adverse impacts will be created by the proposed project.

### **5.5 Determination of Significance**

The guidelines for determination of significance are not exceeded by the proposed project.

Guideline 1: There is no substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista because views are brief, pads are located away from the roadway and potential buildings will be screened by topography, existing vegetation and landscaping.

Guideline 2: No scenic resources within a State scenic highway will be substantially damaged because no physical changes to the scenic highway are proposed.

Guideline 3: The project does not substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surrounding area lots are large, pads are set back from the roadway, and topography, vegetation and landscaping will screen views of structures.

In conclusion, the proposed project does not have substantial adverse effect to visual resources. No mitigation will be required.

### **5.6 Cumulative Impact Analysis**

The cumulative boundaries selected for Hoskings Ranch are the limits of the viewshed. Figure 14, “Cumulative Projects Map,” page F-18 shows the location of past, present and reasonably anticipated projects in the area that have been determined to have a visual impact. The listed projects are: MUP 06-016 – cell tower; MUP 92-005 – cell tower; MUP 00-044 – cell tower; and TM 4489 – 41 lot subdivision. Of the projects listed, only MUP 06-016 is within the cumulative boundary of the proposed project.

The visual impacts of the proposed project are less than significant and do not add to the cumulative effect of MUP 06-016, which have been mitigated by design. The effects of a large lot agricultural project are not cumulative with respect to that of a cell tower. In any case, the proposed project does not create any adverse effects to the visual resources. Therefore, the proposed project does not have a significant cumulative impact to visual resources on the surrounding area.

### **5.7 Summary of Project and Significance and Conclusions**

The proposed project will use topography to screen structures from view. Existing vegetation and landscaping will further screen views. Viewer experiences will not be disrupted because views will be limited to brief glimpses of isolated portions of structures, which will largely be screened from view. The majority of the natural habitat will remain. Changes include minimal grading and the potential agricultural development of the lots. In conclusion, the proposed project does not have any significant adverse effects on the visual resources of the area. No mitigation is required.



**CHAPTER 6.0 VISUAL MITIGATION AND DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS**

The proposed project does not have a negative impact on the visual resources of the area and no mitigation is required. Design considerations include large lots, retention of the rural setting, and minimal grading of pads for potential future structures. The road design follows existing road patterns and topography. Open space is provided in all lots and designated opens space preservation is maintained. All drainage systems follow existing natural contours and are minimal.



**CHAPTER 7.0      REFERENCES**

USGS Mapping

Discretionary Projects Layer (GIS) County of San Diego DPLU

County of San Diego Guidelines for Determining Significance and Report Format and Content Requirements

Visual Resources – July 20, 2007

Google Earth – aerial views



**CHAPTER 8.0      REPORT PREPARERS**

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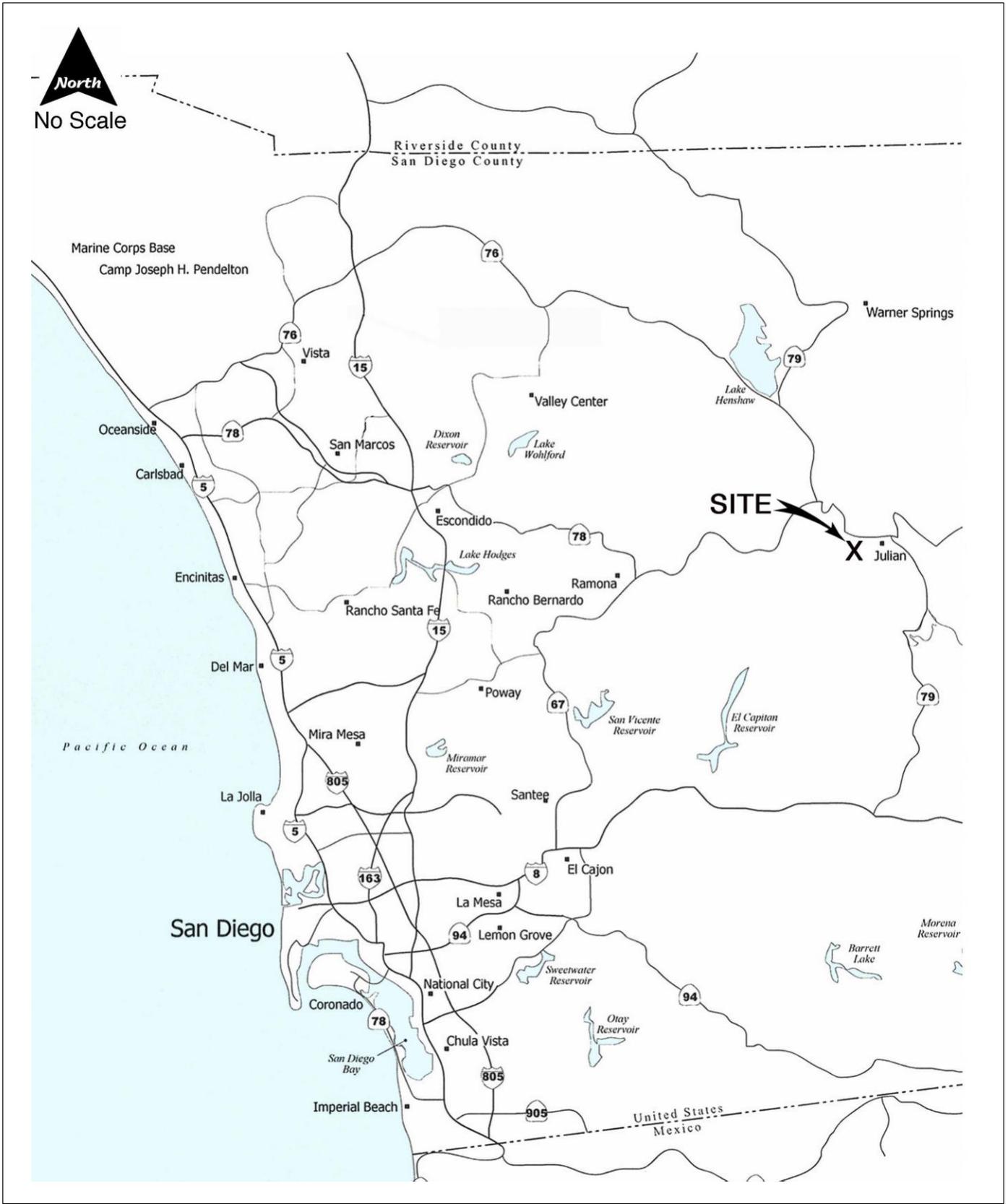
Primary Author – Jerelyn B. Dilno, County Approved Visual Consultant

Field visits, photography and cumulative research – Andrea Beach

Field visits and graphic support – Eric Kallen

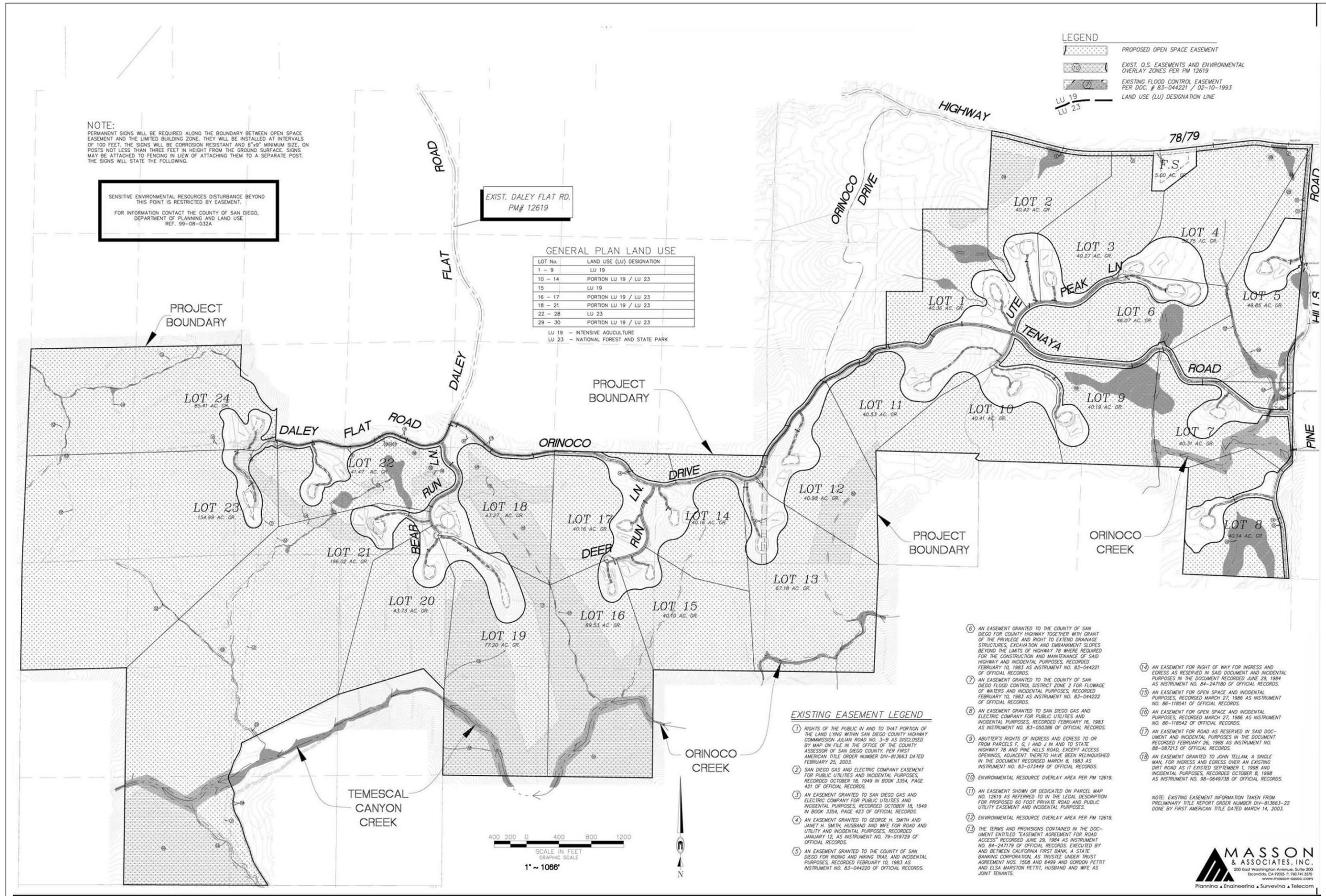
Editor – Mark H. Thompson

# FIGURES



**Vicinity Map**

**Figure 1**



Tentative Map

Figure 2

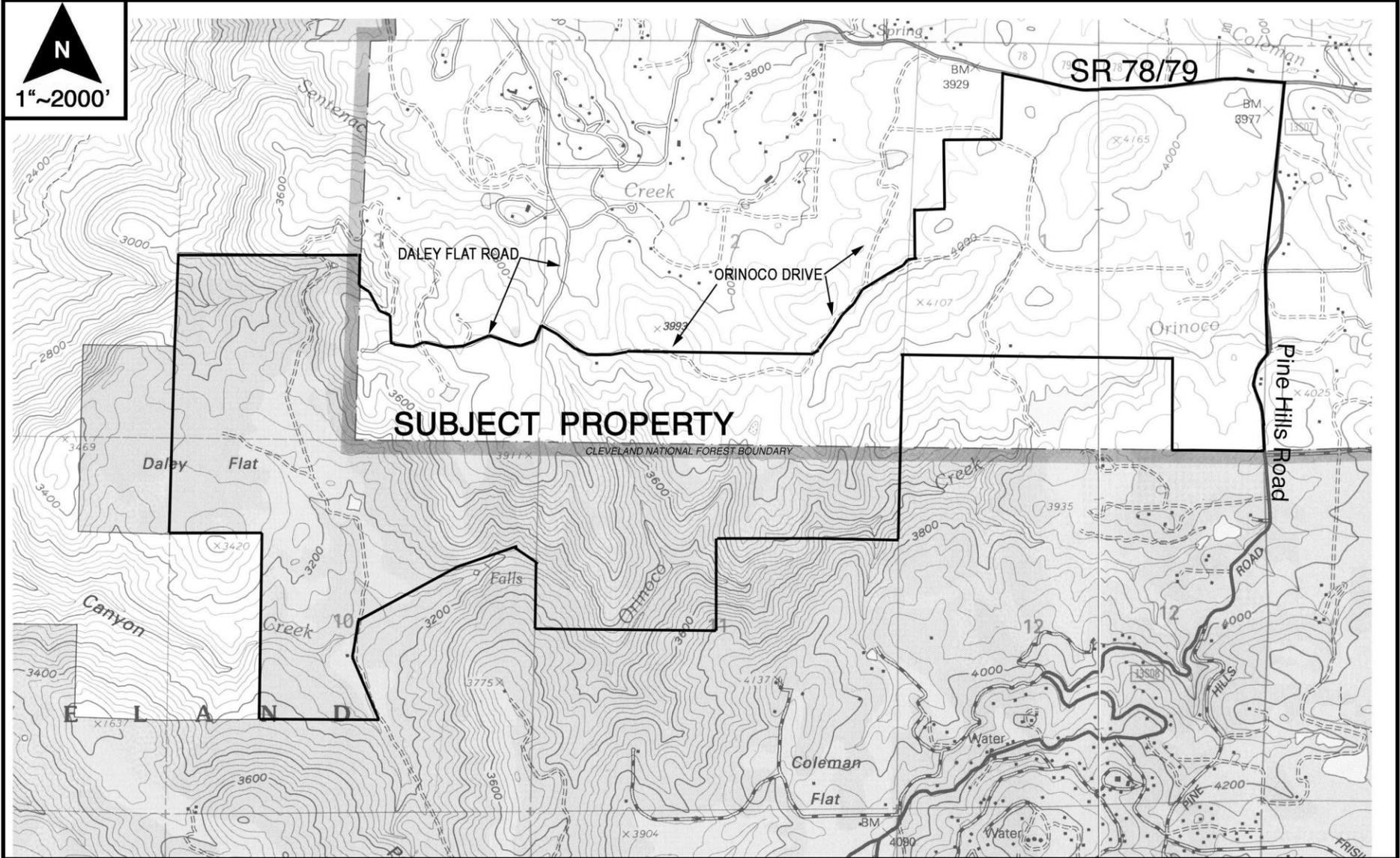
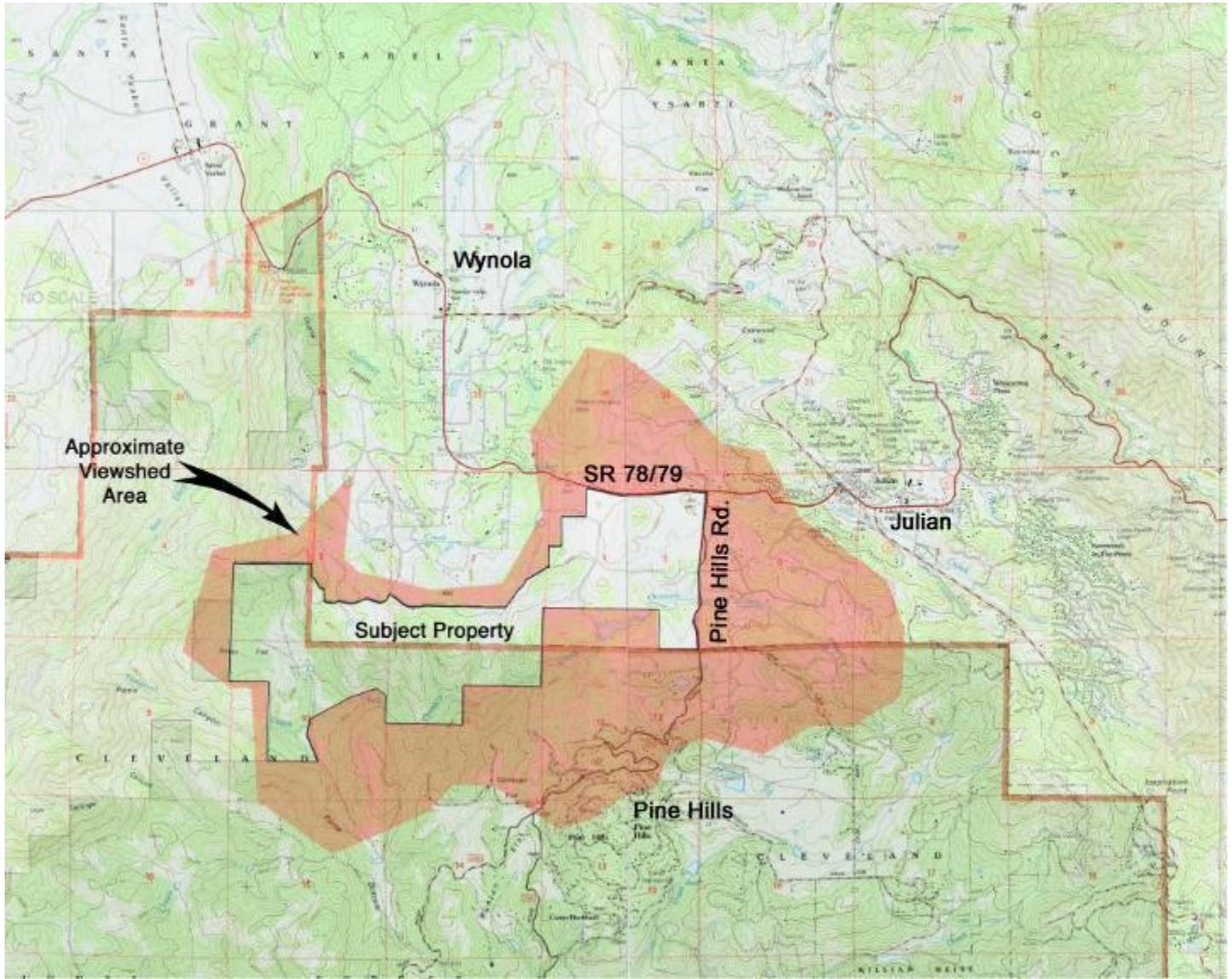


Figure  
3

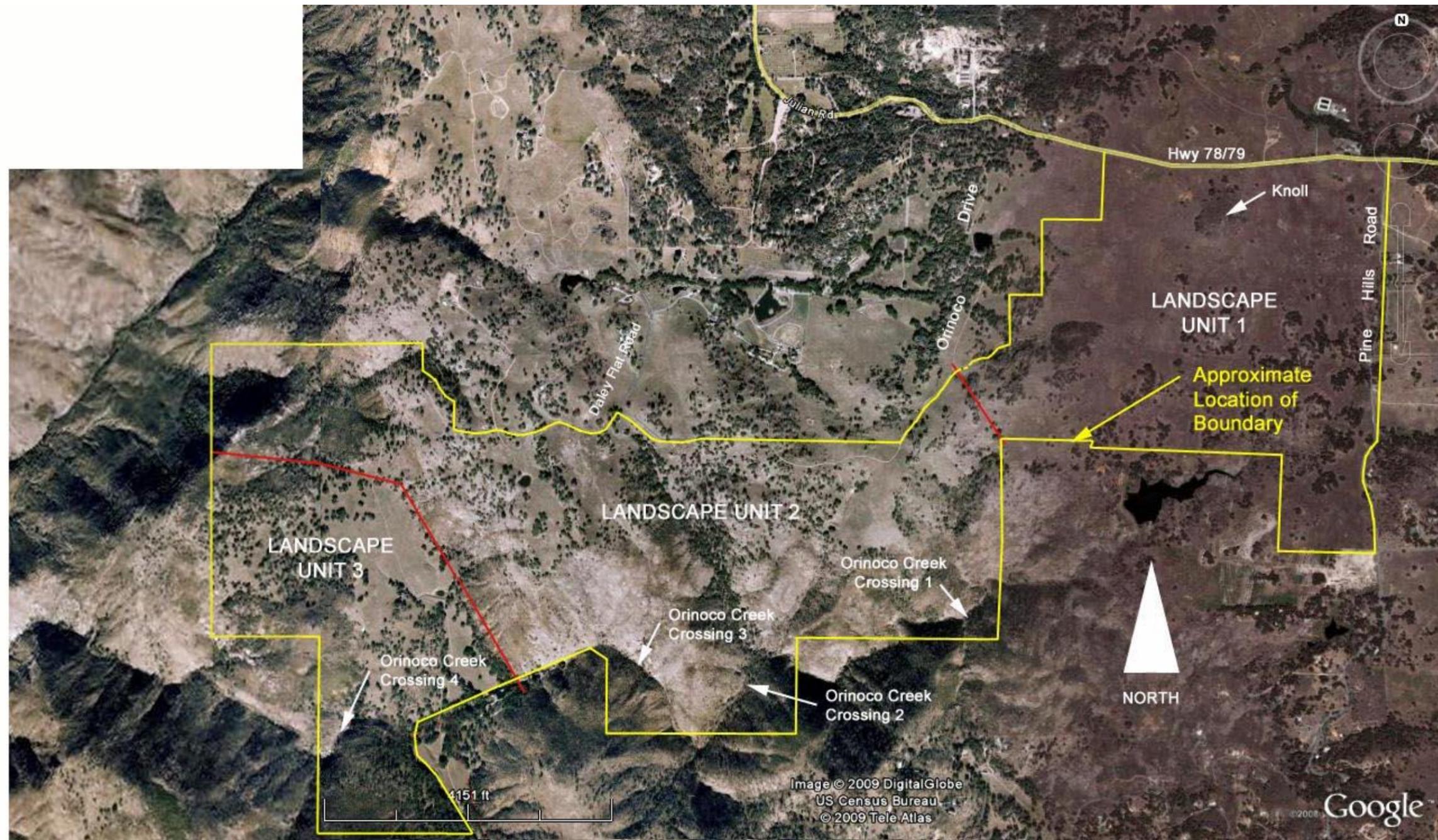
Quad Map





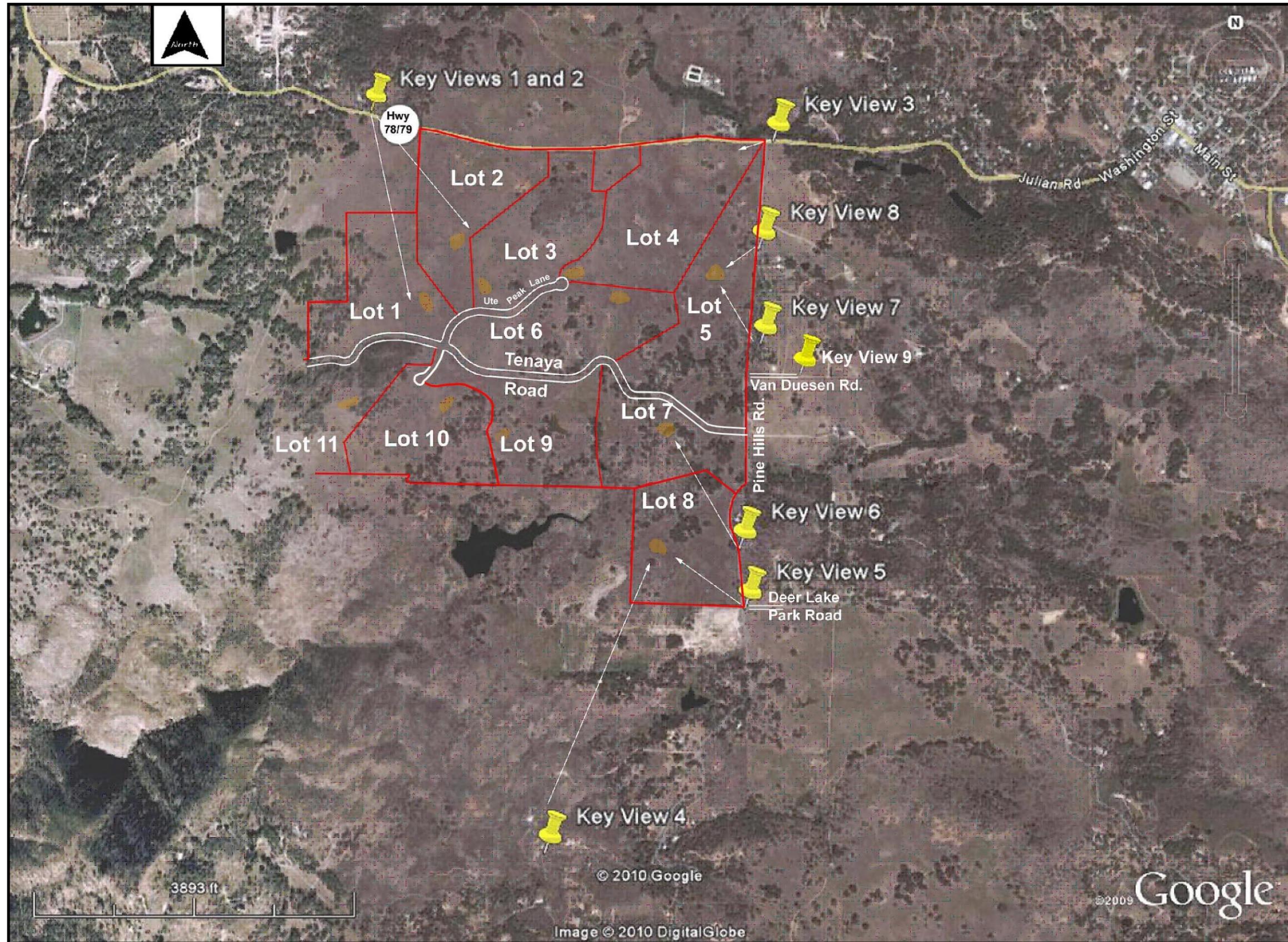
Topographic Viewshed

Figure  
4



Landscape Units

Figure 5



**Figure  
6**

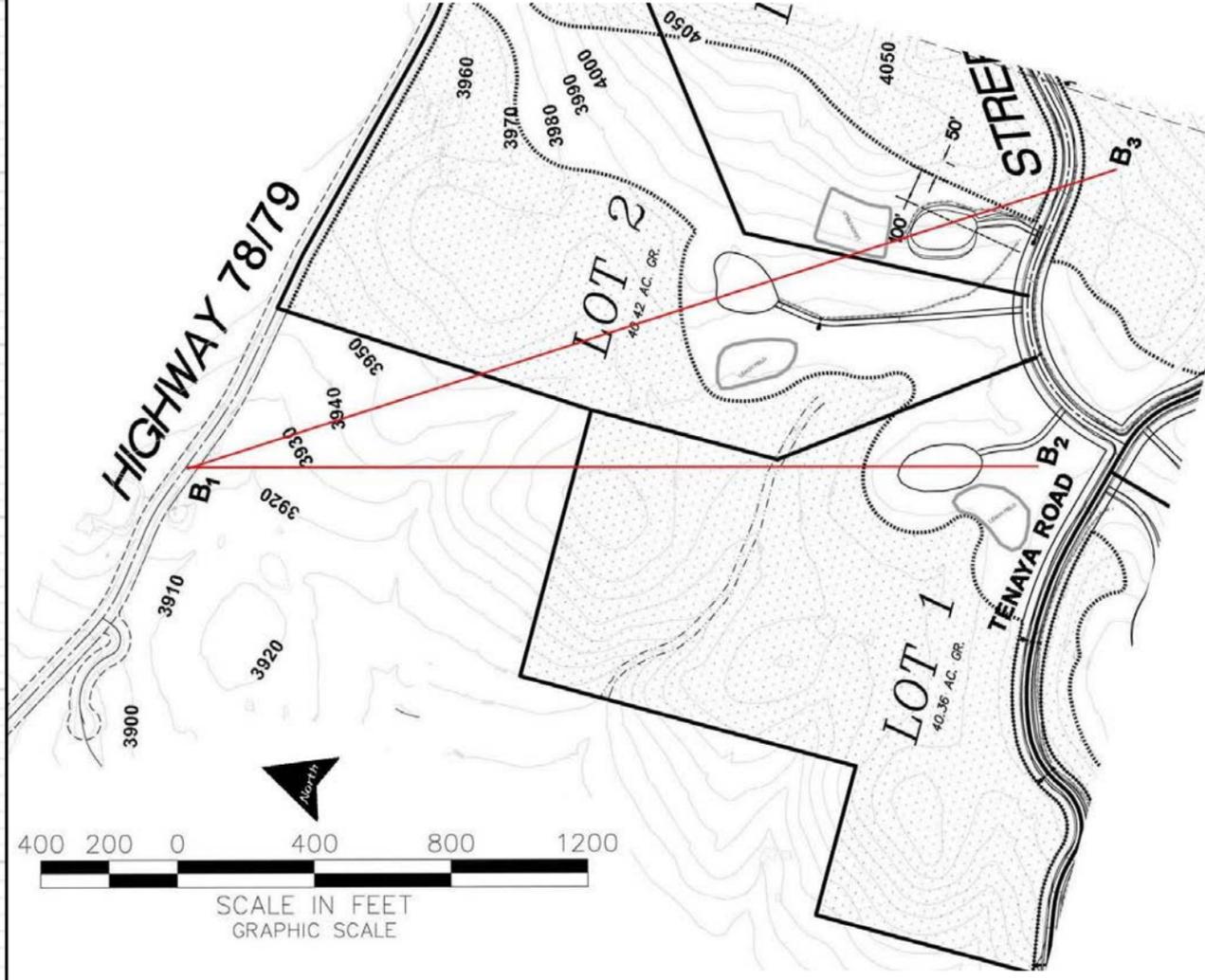
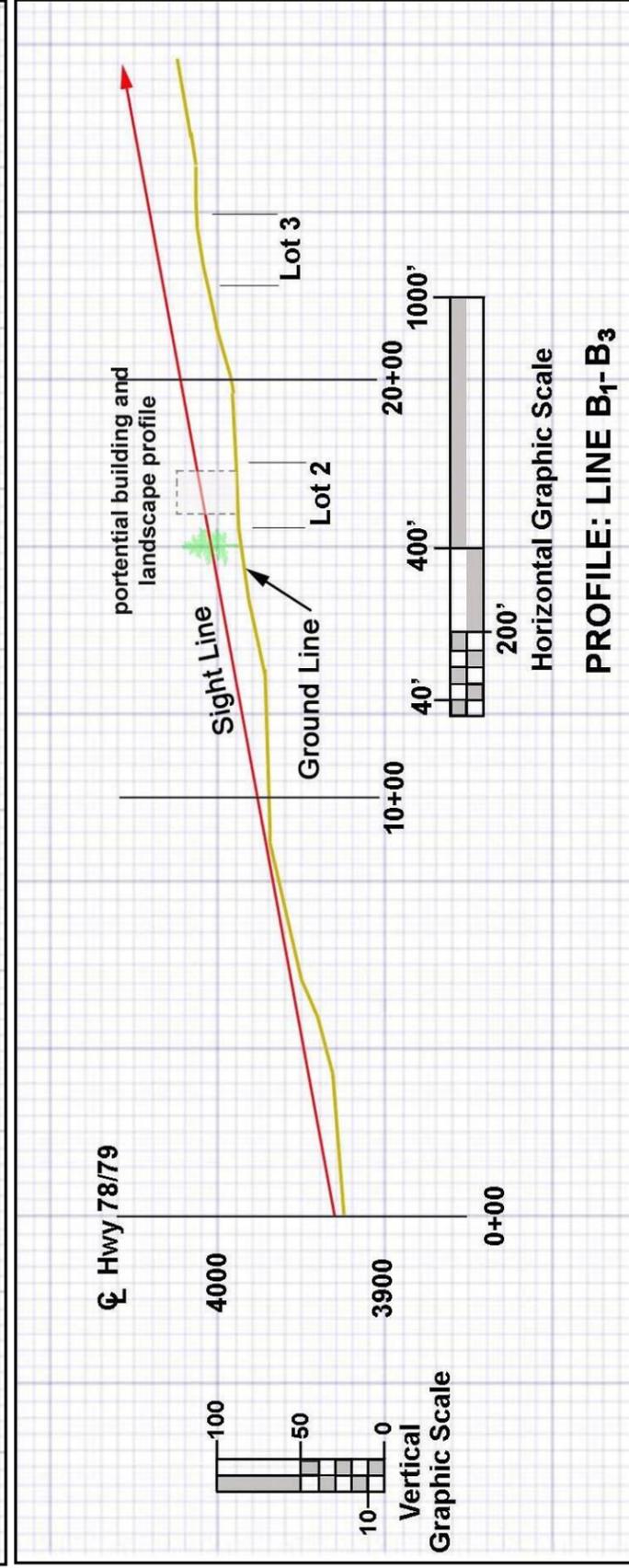
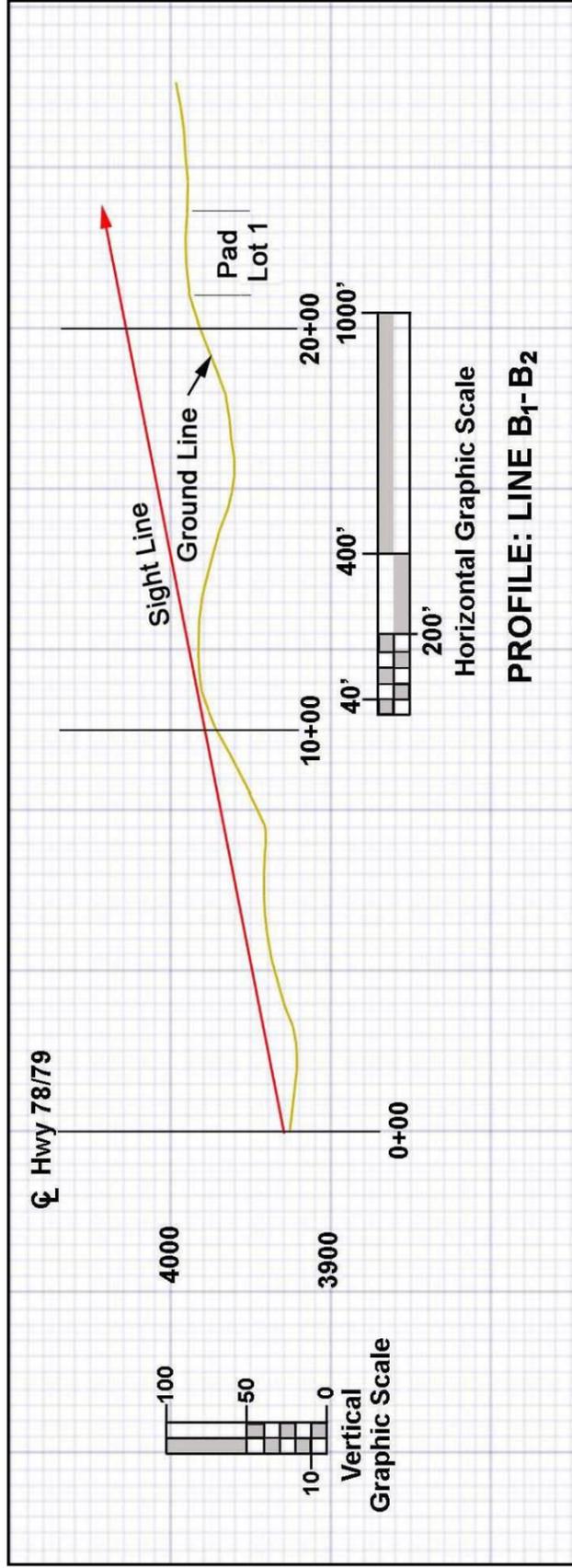
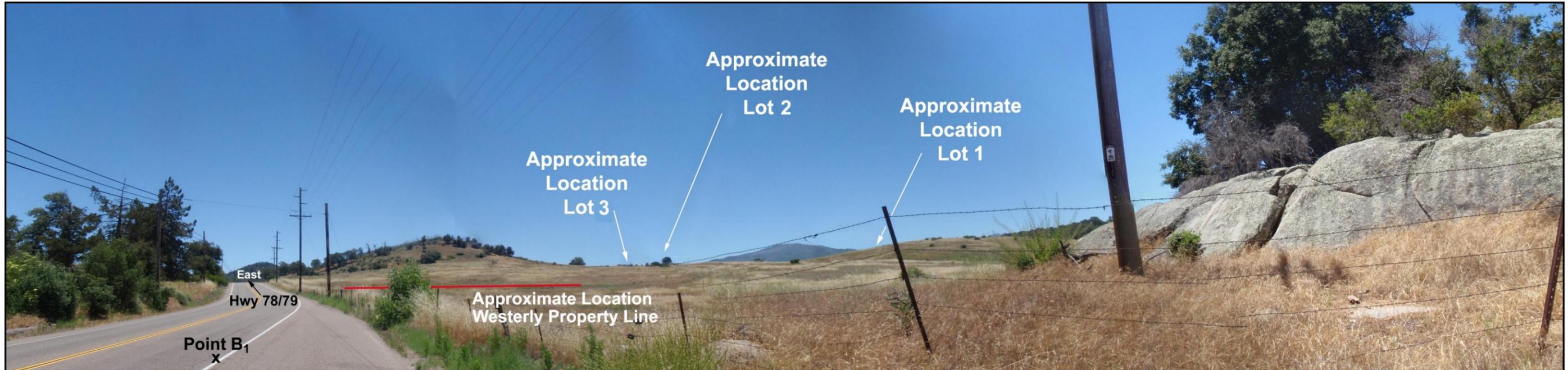


Figure 7

KEY VIEWS 1 and 2  
SR 78/79  
Plan and Profile, Looking East



**NOTE:**  
See Figure 7 for plan and profile of proposed lots.

**KEY VIEWS**  
Photosimulation Looking East on SR 78/79

**Figure 7A**



**Upper View**

The perspective is that of travelers approaching the site from the east, looking to the west.

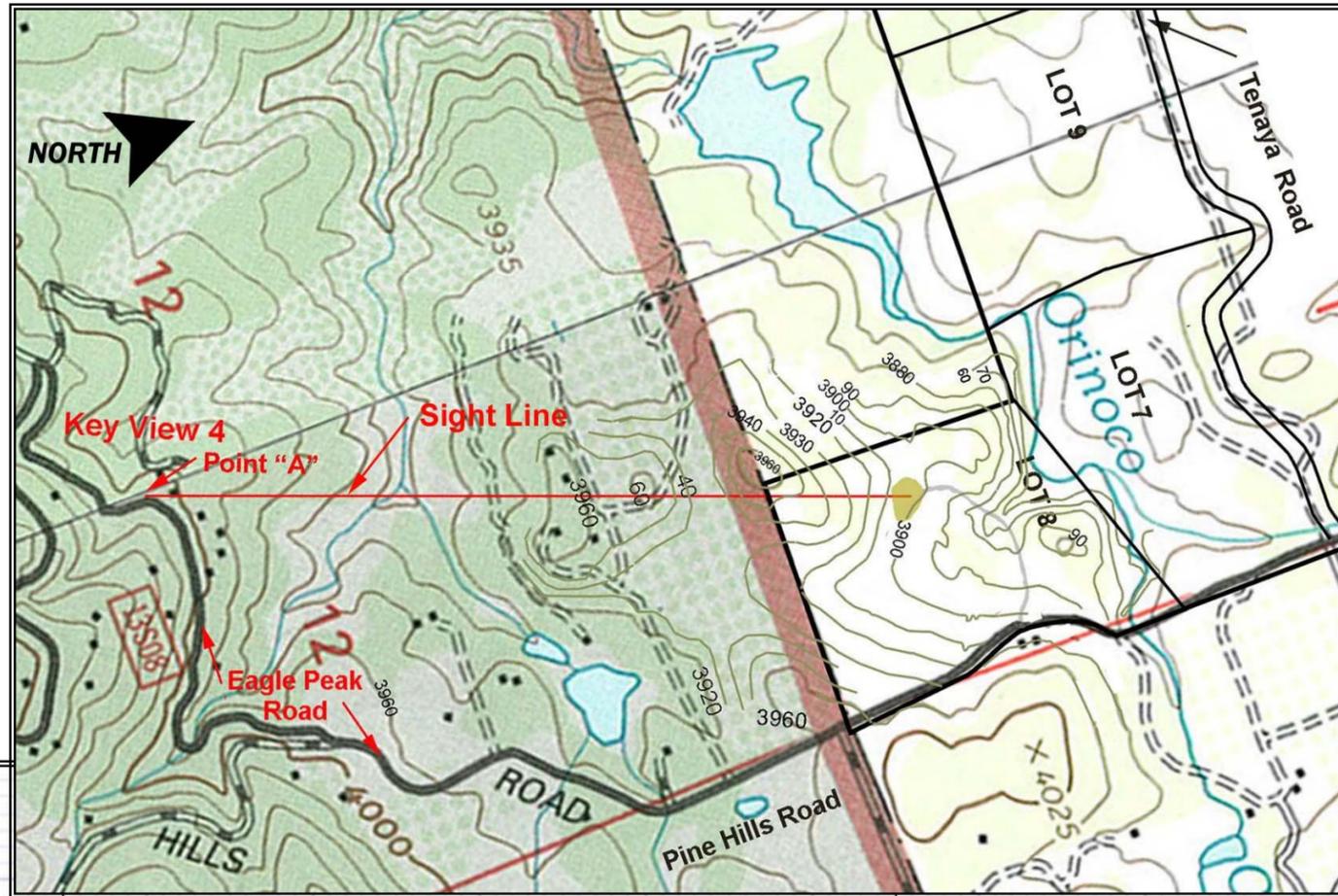
**Lower View**

An enlarged view of the northeast corner of the project site: Pine Hills Road at SR 78/79.



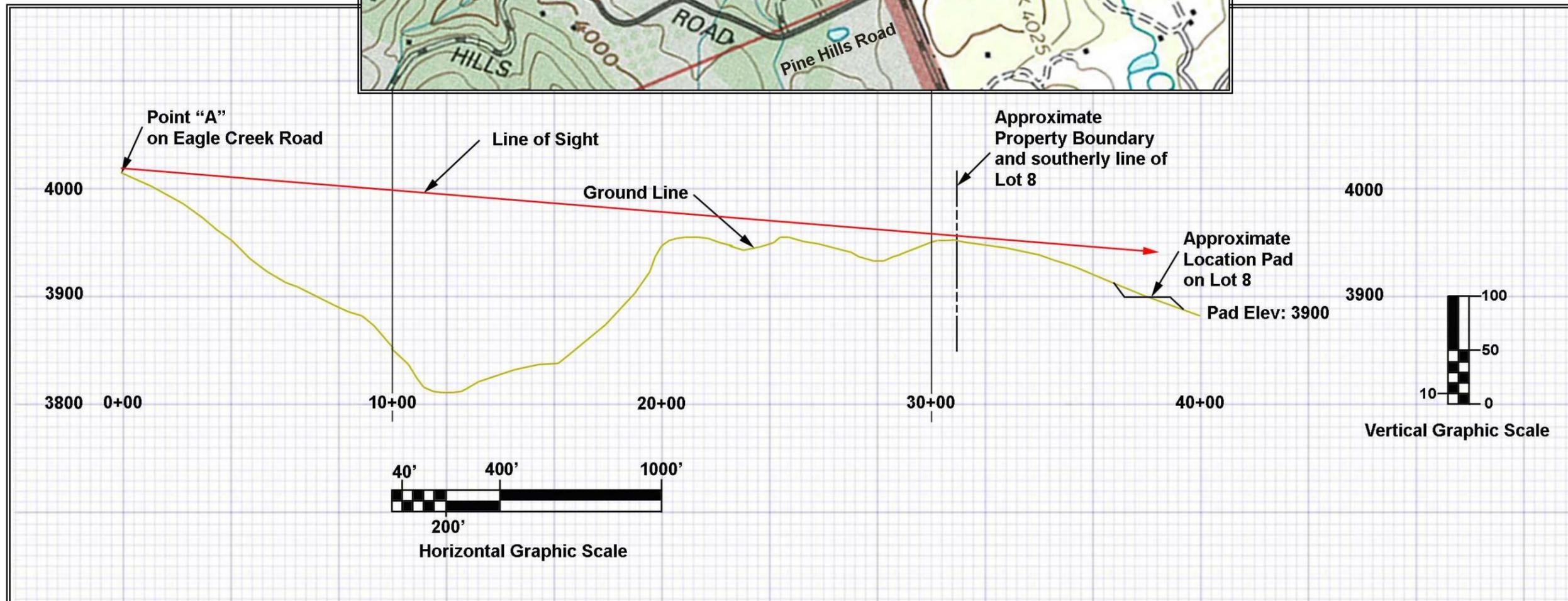
**KEY VIEW 3**  
**SR 78/79 Looking West**

**Figure 8**



Datum is from USGS Mapping.

See Figure 9A for photosimulation of the view.



**KEY VIEW 4**  
**Looking North from Pine Hills**  
**Residential Area**

**Figure 9**



**KEY VIEW 4**  
Photosimulation

**Figure**  
**9A**



Line of sight from nearest properties to Lot 8

**KEY VIEW 5**  
From Southeast Corner of Project  
Looking North on Pine Hills Road

**Figure 10**



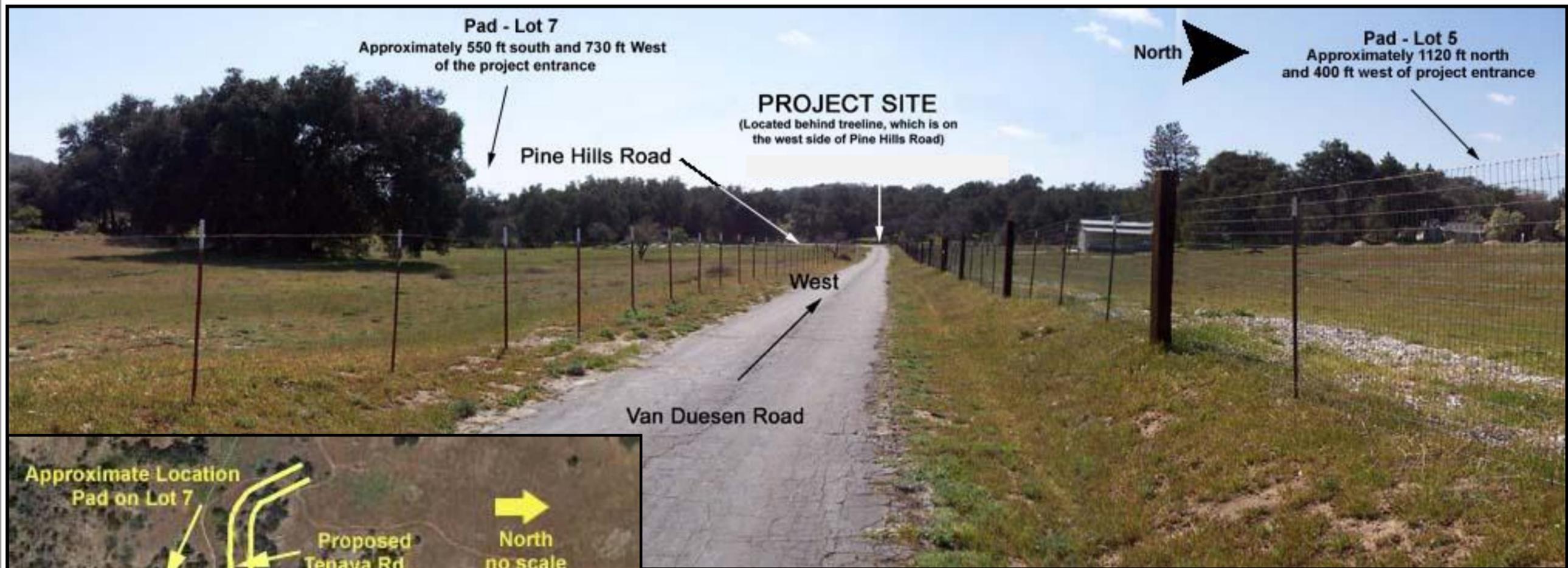
**KEY VIEW 6**  
**Looking Northwest from Pine Hills Road**

**Figure  
11**



KEY VIEWS 7 and 8  
From Pine Hills Road

Figure  
12

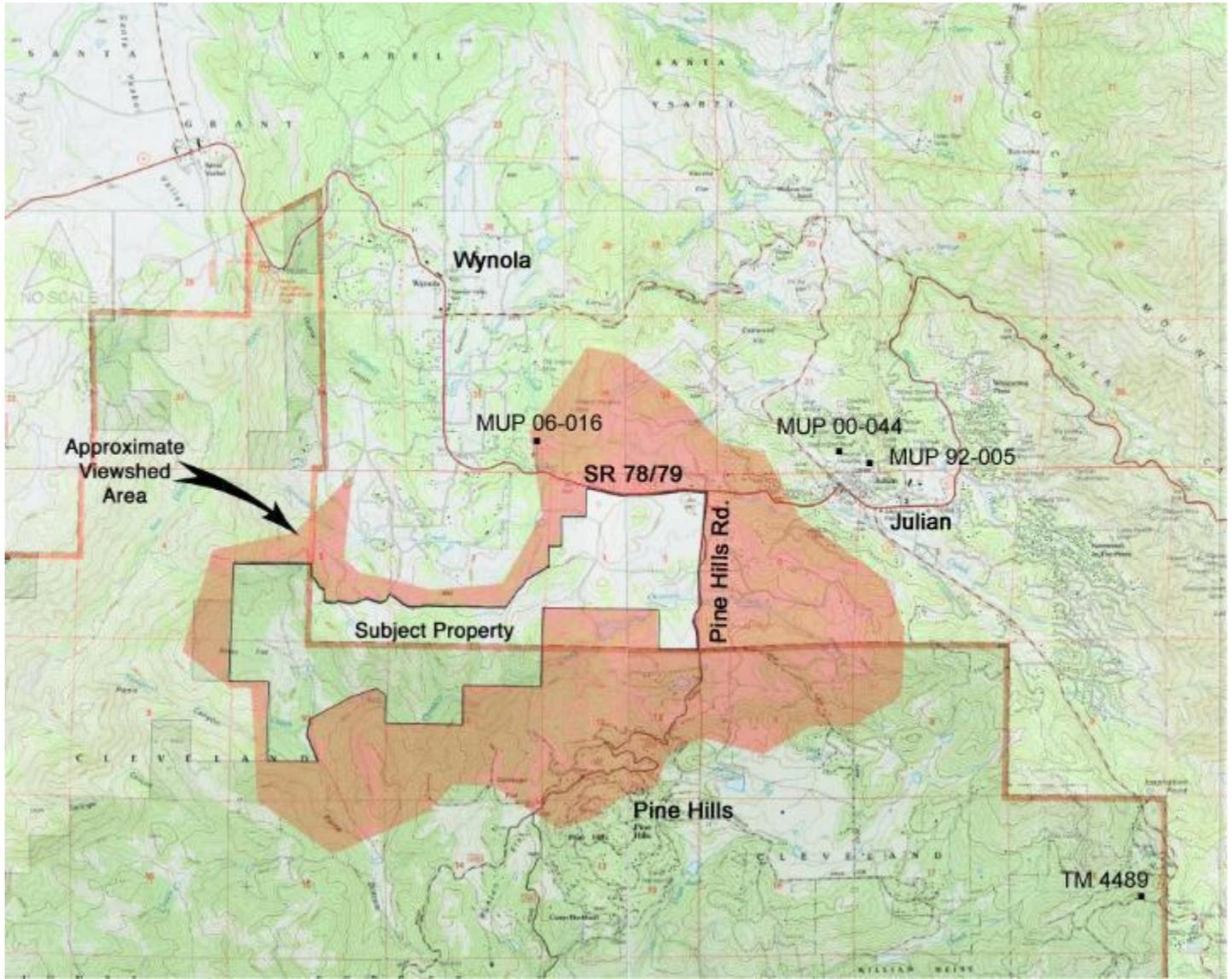


Photosimulation  
Looking West along Van Duesen Road  
To Project Entrance – Tenaya Road

Aerial  
Plan View

KEY VIEW 9  
Looking West from Van Duesen Road

Figure  
13



Cumulative Projects Map

Figure 14



**View of proposed FS location  
looking west on Hwy 78/79**

**Fire Station Location  
Looking West along SR 78/79**

**Figure  
15**



Fire Station Location  
Plan View

Figure  
16