

## 4.0 RESOURCES ONSITE

### 4.1 OVERVIEW OF RESOURCES ONSITE

Sensitive resources in the Valiano Specific Plan area include biological resources (vegetation, wetlands and wildlife), agricultural resources (orchards and apiary uses), and cultural resources (archaeological and historical). This section of the Plan describes these resources and their proposed management.

### 4.2 ONSITE RESOURCES

Onsite resources within the plan area include;

#### 4.2.1 Biological Resources

Biological resources within the Plan area are presented in **Figures 4-1a and 4-1b**. Acreage of each vegetation type is presented in **Table 4-1**. Agriculture and non-native grassland represent the largest vegetation types, covering over approximately 81 percent of the Plan area.

#### Flora and Fauna Observed in the Planning Area

A total of 187 plant species were observed within the Plan area during biological resources surveys, with 94 of the species (50 percent) being non-native species. The predominance of non-native species is indicative of the fact that most of the site is in active agriculture use or contains non-native grasslands.

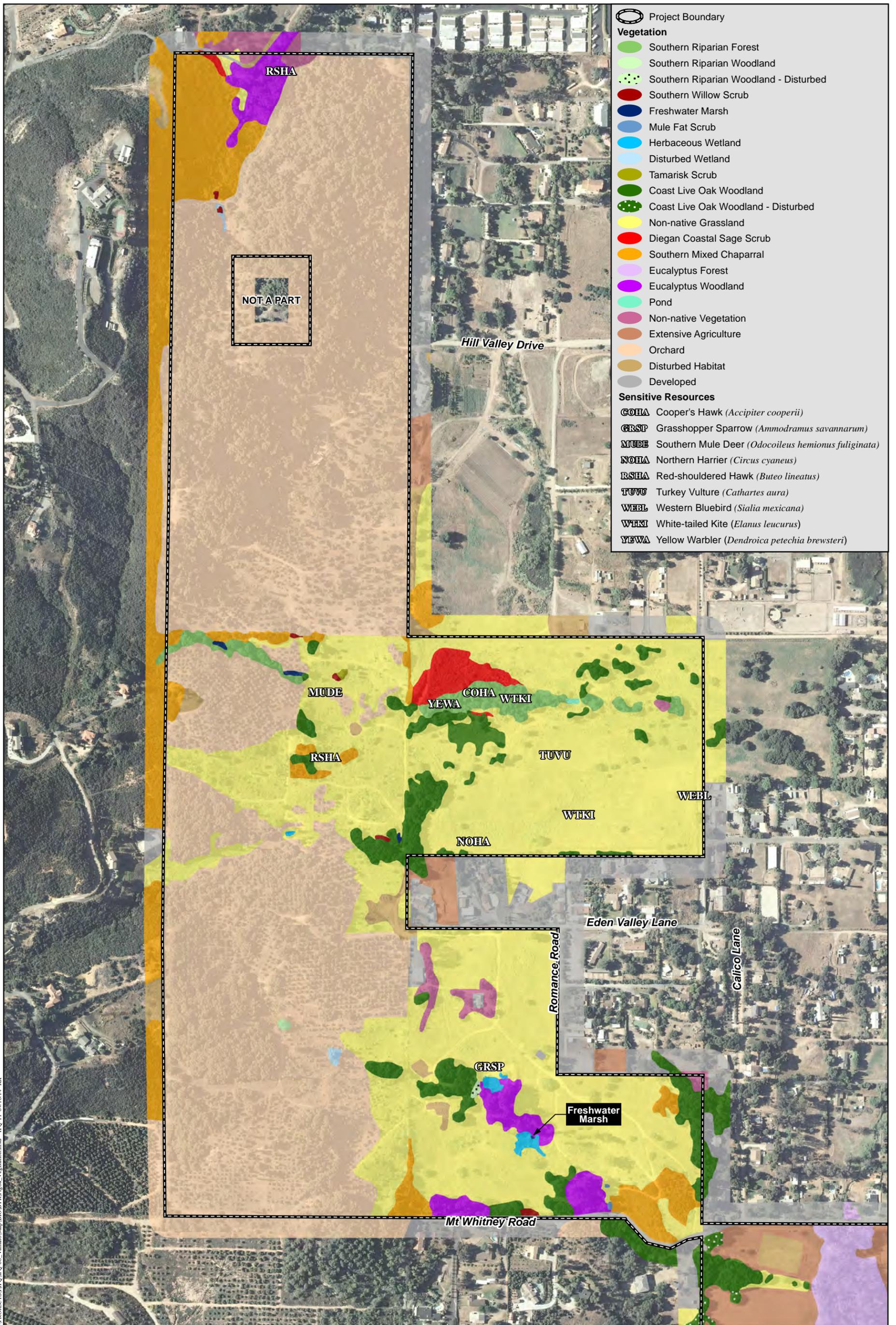
A total of 91 animal species were observed and/or detected within the Plan area, including 11 invertebrates, one amphibian, four reptiles, 65 bird, and ten mammals.

#### Sensitive Habitats

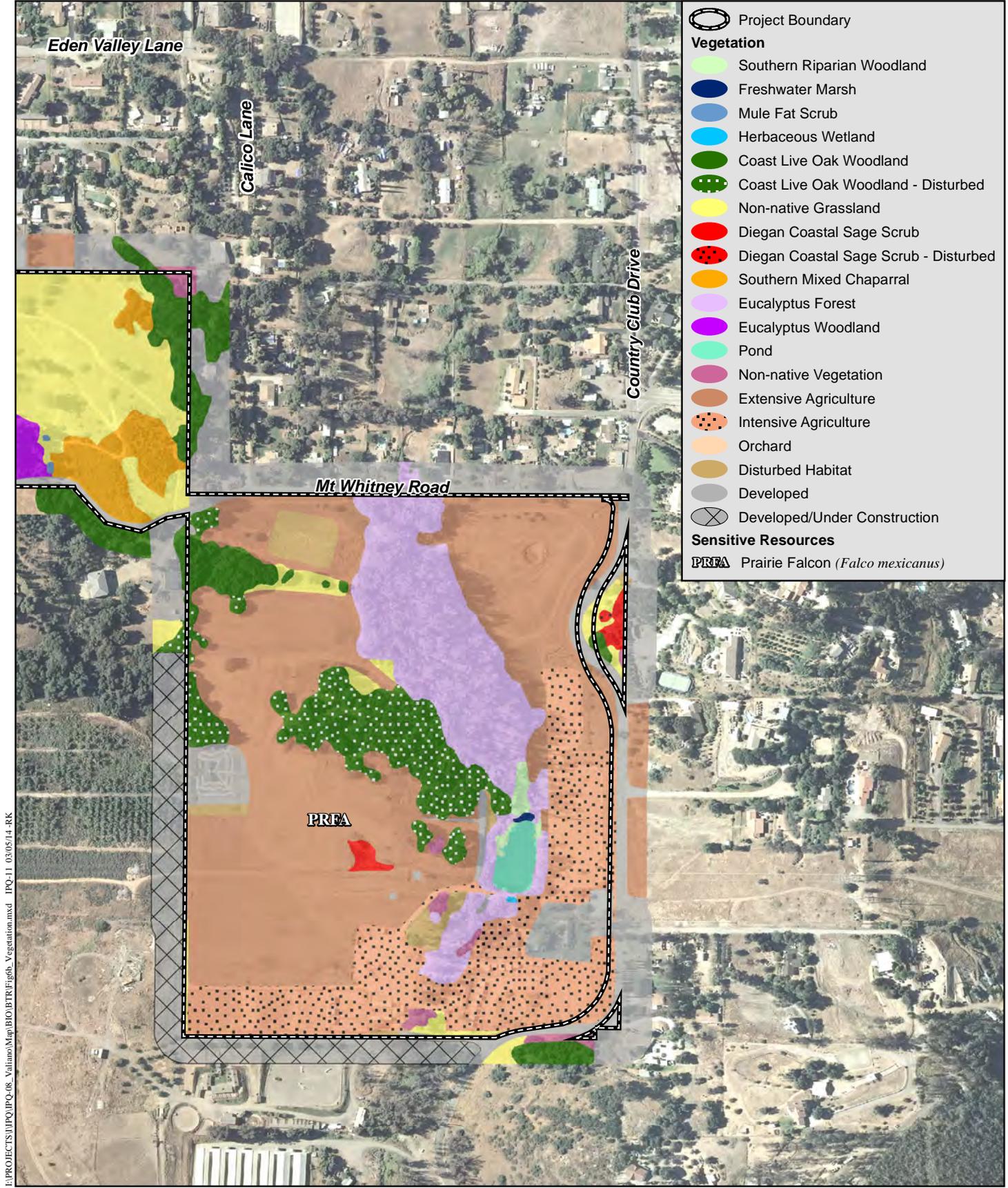
Sensitive habitats that occur on the site include: southern riparian forest, southern riparian woodland, southern willow scrub, mule fat scrub, freshwater marsh, herbaceous wetland, disturbed wetland, open water/pond, coast live oak woodland, Diegan coastal sage scrub, southern mixed chaparral, and non-native grassland.

#### Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Species

A rare plant survey was conducted in May 2013. No sensitive plant species were observed. Ten sensitive wildlife species were observed within the Plan area: Cooper's hawk, grasshopper sparrow, red-



**Vegetation and Sensitive Resources Map**



**Vegetation and Sensitive Resources Map**

VALIANO

Figure 4-1b

shouldered hawk, turkey vulture, northern harrier, white-tailed kite, prairie falcon, southern mule deer, yellow warbler, and western bluebird. Protocol surveys for coastal California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo were completed in 2013. Neither of these species were observed or otherwise detected on the site.

**Table 4-1. Vegetation/Habitat Types in the Plan Area**

<b>Vegetation/Habitat Type</b>	<b>Acreage</b>
Southern Riparian Forest	2.50
Southern Riparian Woodland	0.29
Southern Willow Scrub	0.15
Mule Fat Scrub	0.02
Freshwater Marsh	0.12
Herbaceous Wetland	0.35
Disturbed Wetland	0.13
Open Water/Pond	0.51
Tamarisk Scrub	0.04
Coast Live Oak Woodland (including disturbed)	11.7
Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub (including disturbed)	1.8
Southern Mixed Chaparral (including disturbed)	8.0
Eucalyptus Forest	7.2
Eucalyptus Woodland	3.5
Non-native Grassland	63.9
Non-native Vegetation	1.5
Orchard	100.2
Intensive Agriculture	8.8
Extensive Agriculture	21.3
Disturbed Habitat	2.4
Developed Land	4.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>238.8</b>

### **Open Space for Biological Resources**

The protection of sensitive biological resources, including wetlands has been considered in the Land Use Plan for the Valiano Specific Plan. Approximately 28.2 acres (11.8 percent of the Plan area) will be protected within a biological open space easement (**Figure 4-2**).

To deter unauthorized access, the outer edge of the biological open space will be fenced with 3-strand wire fencing (or similar). Signage identifying the area as open space will be placed approximately every 100 feet along the biological open space boundary as shown on figure 16a and 16b of the Biological Technical Report.

**Open Space Maintenance** Biological open space within the Valiano Specific Plan shall be maintained by the homeowners association. The HOA shall be responsible for maintaining fences and signs, monitoring for unauthorized entry, and trash removal on at least a quarterly basis, and invasive weed abatement if deemed necessary. Any vegetation removal within the biological open space must be supervised by a qualified biologist from the County's approved consultant list. Additionally homeowners shall be made aware all biological open space areas are to remain off-limits to human activities and to homeowners' pets.

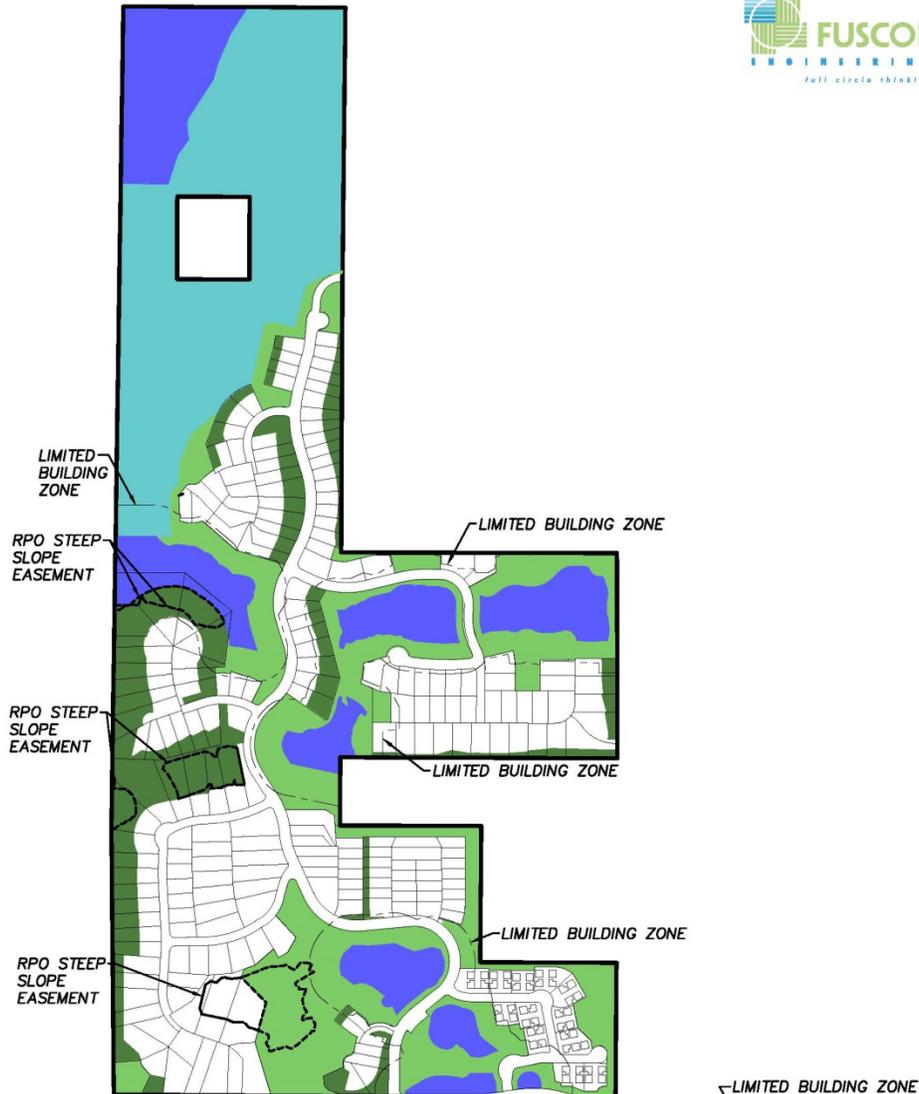
### **4.2.2 Agricultural Resources**

Approximately 137.16 acres of the project site contains agricultural resources of varying degrees of health, including areas used currently or historically for commercial agricultural operations. The quality of the agricultural resources on the site varies, from poor quality to better quality. This includes 116.96 acres of active avocado orchards, and 0.4 acre of active apiary (bee keeping) use, 12.9 acres of historic orchard use in the southeastern portion of the site, 1.59 acres of historic orchard use in the east-central portion of the site, 1.35 acres of historic row/field crop production in the east-central portion of the site, and areas mapped as Unique Farmland and Farmland of Local Importance by the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program (FMMP). The orchards are primarily located on the steep slopes on the site. Agriculture is an important part of the San Diego County economy. In addition agricultural uses provide an aesthetic value and can contribute to a less urban community character.

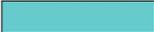
### **Open Space for Agricultural Resources**

The protection of existing agricultural operations on the site has been considered in the Land Use Plan for the Valiano Specific Plan. Approximately 36.5 acres of existing agricultural acreage on the site will be retained as an agricultural preserve, via an easement that would preclude development or other uses that could prevent or diminish the availability or viability of this area for continued agricultural use.

Specifically, the 36.5-acre agricultural easement would be granted to the County of San Diego to protect the viability of the associated agricultural uses. All non-agricultural uses would be prohibited, including: (1) the construction or placement of any residence, garage, or any accessory structures designed or intended for human occupancy; (2) the construction or placement of any recreational amenities such as tennis courts or swimming pools; and (3) other non-agricultural related grading or construction that would render any portion of the noted easement unavailable or non-viable for agricultural use. Exceptions to the described prohibitions may include grading and construction for wells, water distribution systems or other activities/facilities required for agricultural operation, as well as fuel management activities required by a written order from the Fire Marshal. Agriculture activities on the site would not include the growing of invasive plants that could spread to native habitats.



**LEGEND**

BIOLOGICAL OPEN SPACE	28.2 ACRES	11.8%	
AGRICULTURAL EASEMENT	36.5 ACRES	15.3%	
COMMON AREAS	56.4 ACRES	23.6%	
LANDSCAPE EASEMENTS	25.4 ACRES	10.6%	
<b>TOTAL OPEN SPACE</b>	<b>146.5 ACRES</b>	<b>61.3%</b>	
DEVELOPED AREA	92.3 ACRES	38.7%	

**TOTAL PROJECT AREA 238.8 ACRES**

VALIANO OPEN SPACE EXHIBIT  
FEBRUARY 19, 2015



Source: Fuscoe Engineering

The Homeowner's Association would retain an agricultural manager to oversee the continued operation of the land, following all applicable regulations and best management practices. Irrigation for ongoing agricultural activities would come from an existing on-site well and related facilities that are currently used to irrigate the existing avocado orchards. In addition, uses such as small orchards and gardens would be allowable within individual residential lots on the proposed development. Such uses would constitute a design feature on residential lots to provide transitional/buffer areas with off-site agriculture and/or open space.

The open space area has been designed to retain a large connected block of agriculture to ensure the viability of ongoing agricultural operations. In addition, the retention of agriculture provides a unique feel to the Valiano Plan area and retains a connection to past uses within the Plan area. **Figure 4-2** shows the proposed open space.

### 4.2.3 Cultural Resources

A cultural resources analysis was conducted in order to assess the presence of any prehistoric or historic cultural resources within the Plan area and to determine their significance under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and the County of San Diego Resource Protection Ordinance (RPO). The archaeological investigation identified nine archaeological sites, one isolate and two historic farm/ranch complexes.

Eight of the archaeological sites and the one isolate were determined not to be significant under CEQA or the RPO. One site was assessed as a significant resource under CEQA but did not meet the requirements for significance under the RPO. Impacts to this resource will be mitigated to below a level of significance by implementation of a research design and data recovery program.

Both of the historic farm/ranch complexes were evaluated for significance and determined to not be significant resources under CEQA or RPO. While the cultural resources analysis concluded the standing structures at the Fines historic complex (the current Harmony Grove Equestrian Center) are not significant resources, they are located in an area where a family farm was in operation from the 1870s to the mid-1930s and there is a potential for subsurface historic cultural resources materials in the area surrounding the buildings and structures.

The historic barn at the Fines Complex will be retained and used as part of the proposed equestrian center as shown on **Figure 2-7**. The barn will be adjacent to the Public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area. Maintenance of the barn will be the responsibility of the Homeowners Association.