




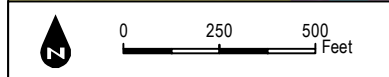
 Off-Site Mitigation Site

**Habitat Evaluation Model**

-  Agriculture
-  Very High
-  High
-  Moderate
-  Low



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## 4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

This RMP identifies activities to manage and preserve the sensitive biological resources within the Open Space Preserve. This mitigation site was selected because it is, in many ways, comparable to or better than the habitat that is being impacted on the Newland Sierra project site. The mitigation site includes a variety of topographic relief, a comparable suite of vegetation communities, and rock resources. One of the main goals is also to preserve coastal sage scrub vegetation types and linkages coastal sage scrub habitat.

### 4.1 Management Goals

**Goal: To preserve and manage lands to the benefit of the flora, fauna, and native ecosystem functions reflected in the natural communities occurring within the Open Space Preserve.**

A baseline inventory of vegetation communities and a general habitat assessment has been completed. As such, ongoing species and habitat monitoring will occur in accordance with County and regional standards. These standards typically include vegetation mapping every 5 years. Habitat maintenance may be required if vegetation mapping indicates habitat conversion that is detrimental to the preservation of native ecosystem functions. Specific management tasks are described in Section 4.2, Biological Management Tasks.

**Goal: Manage the land for the benefit of sensitive species, MSCP covered species, and existing natural communities, without substantive efforts to alter or restrict the natural course of habitat development and dynamics.**

The proposed off-site Open Space Preserve is composed of typical native vegetation communities. The Preserve will be managed to benefit the suite of species that occur or have potential to occur there. During the field surveys by PSBS and Merkel & Associates, special-status species were observed on site, including southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*) and desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*), as well as foraging raptors Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), and peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus anatum*). Observations of southwestern willow flycatcher (*Empidonax traillii extimus*) were presumed migrants based on the time of observation and the unsuitable nesting habitat on site (Merkel & Associates 1999). During the 2016 site visit, abundant mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) tracks, scat, and a few individuals were observed. Coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), and mountain lion (*Puma concolor*) sign was detected. Additionally, ringtail (*Bassariscus astutus*) scat and desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida*) middens were observed. Based on the granitic boulder fields, it is expected that several special-status reptile species would occur, including red diamondback rattlesnake (*Crotalus*

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*ruber*), granite night lizard (*Xantusia henshawi*), granite spiny lizard (*Sceloporus orcutti*), San Diego ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus similis*), rosy boa (*Lichanura trivirgata*), and possibly southern rubber boa (*Charina umbratica*). Other special-status species that would be expected include golden eagle (foraging) and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*). Satellite telemetered female golden eagles F001, F002, F004, and F008, and male M007 are known to occasionally occur on the site (Tracey et al. 2016).

## 4.2 Biological Management Tasks

The biological management tasks associated with the Open Space Preserve are outlined in Table 2 of this report. This section includes a description of each of the tasks required for management of the Open Space Preserve.

### 4.2.1 Baseline Biological Inventory

The quantity and quality of vegetation communities within the off-site Open Space Preserve will be documented during the first year of active management. This data will allow the resource manager to measure habitat changes caused by natural and human effects and to evaluate management efforts during subsequent years.

A baseline inventory survey for species within the off-site preserve will be conducted during the first year of active management. To optimize the probability of detecting sensitive species reported or expected to occur within the off-site Open Space Preserve, this survey should be conducted between March and June, when the majority of sensitive plant and animal species are most likely to be detected.

### 4.2.2 Update Biological Mapping

Every 5 years, the resource manager will update the vegetation and sensitive resources mapping on a current aerial photograph of the Site or in the field if updated aerial photography is not available. If mapping will be done from aerial photographs, sampling ground-truthing should occur to verify desktop mapping.

### 4.2.3 Sensitive Species Monitoring

If special-status species are known to occur or are documented during the baseline biological inventory, protective measures to monitor and manage these species should be implemented, as necessary, to help ensure their persistence of preserved biological resources in the Open Space Preserve. These measures may include nesting bird surveys if any management tasks, such as exotic plant control, are required. The resource manager will confirm the presence of sensitive

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species during regular Site visits at the appropriate time of year. Field notes and maps will be updated following each visit.

### **4.2.4 Exotic Plant Control**

The resource manager will identify and track exotic species infestations if they should occur. Weed control measures will be implemented, as necessary, to prevent establishment of new exotic species in the Open Space Preserve.

If the use of herbicide is deemed necessary, application should be minimal and may only occur in compliance with all federal and state laws. Use of chemical herbicides should be determined in coordination with the County Department of Environmental Health. All herbicide use will be applied by backpack sprayers or stump painting directly on target weeds and will involve short-duration, biodegradable chemicals.

### **4.2.5 Predator/Pest Control**

Non-native predator/pest species are not anticipated to be an issue within the Open Space Preserve. The resource manager will evaluate the need for predator/pest control and identify appropriate measures (e.g., pesticides and traps) to reduce/eliminate the problem. In general, a moderate to high tolerance of predator/pest species will be afforded before action is taken. If significant predator/pest eradication actions are determined to be necessary, the resource manager will notify the appropriate regulatory oversight agencies. To the extent practicable, predator/pest control will be coordinated with similar activities conducted on adjacent lands.

## **4.3 Adaptive Management**

The resource manager is responsible for interpreting the results of Site monitoring to determine the ongoing success of the RMP. If it is necessary to modify the plan between regularly scheduled updates, plan changes will be submitted to the County and wildlife agencies for approval, as required.

## **4.4 Operations, Maintenance, and Administrative Tasks**

Table 2 and Section 4.2, Biological Management Tasks, describe a list of tasks such as baseline inventory, vegetation mapping, and regular visits to be conducted by the resource manager. Regular visits will occur quarterly.

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### 4.4.1 Goals

**Goal: To manage, maintain, and administer the proposed project in an ongoing setting to ensure the integrity of the preserved off-site Open Space Preserve.**

### 4.4.2 Tasks

The general operations, maintenance, and administrative tasks to be conducted by the resource manager will include the following tasks:

#### **Annual Monitoring Reports**

A letter report will be submitted to the County that will summarize the overall condition of vegetation communities and sensitive species in the Open Space Preserve, outline proposed management tasks for the following year, and provide results of management activities proposed in the previous report. Submitted annually by the end of January, this letter report will compare the most recent data with those collected in previous years, evaluate sensitive species status and local wildlife corridor use, and outline appropriate remedial measures, per County guidelines. The report will also address any adaptive management (changes) resulting from previous monitoring results and provide a methodology for measuring the success of adaptive management. Copies of California Natural Diversity Database forms submitted to the State for any new sensitive species observations or significant changes to species previously reported shall be included, as well as copies of invasive plant species forms submitted to the State or County Fees for County review will also be included with submittal of the annual report.

The results of all updated vegetation mapping (every 5th year) and sensitive species monitoring shall be included in the appropriate annual letter reports.

#### **Management Plan Review**

This RMP will be reviewed every 5 years to determine the need for revisions or updates. Due to changing conditions within the Open Space Preserve, it may be necessary to revise the tasks outlined in this plan to ensure continued success of the stated goals.

#### **Access Control**

To prevent human-induced degradation of the off-site Open Space Preserve due to illegal occupancy, trespassing (especially off-highway-vehicle (OHV) activity), removal of resources, or dumping of trash or debris, the resource manager will restrict public access to the Open Space Preserve. Permanent signage will be posted consistent with California Penal Code requirements

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at locations of unauthorized trails entering the Open Space Preserve and will be maintained by the resource manager. All signs will be corrosion-resistant, measure at a minimum 12 inches by 18 inches, be posted on a metal post or on the fencing at least 3 feet above ground level, and state

### **Sensitive Environmental Resources**

#### **Area Restricted by Easement**

Entry without express written permission from the County of San Diego is prohibited. To report a violation or for more information about easement restrictions and exceptions, contact the County of San Diego,  
Planning & Development Services  
Reference: (PDS2015-ER-15-08-001)

Proposed sign locations will be determined following the determination and location for fencing and/or barriers.

### **Fencing/Barriers**

The determination for fencing and/or barriers will be made following an assessment of potential human activity. If excess trespassing occurs within the proposed off-site mitigation area, fencing will help prevent inadvertent access into open space areas. In addition, barriers may be needed to prevent access to certain areas that may be susceptible to OHV activity. These barriers may consist of large boulders, K-Rail, fencing, or similar material that will prevent OHV use.

### **Illegal Occupancy**

The resource manager will survey the Open Space Preserve for evidence of illegal access concurrently with other Site management activities and file a report with the local sheriff, if necessary, to ensure the Open Space Preserve remains free of human occupancy.

### **Removal of Resources**

Removal of any plants, animals, rocks, minerals, or other natural resources from the off-site Open Space Preserve is prohibited unless determined to be beneficial to the management of the Open Space Preserve and allowed by the wildlife agencies. The resource manager will maintain a log of illegal collecting and may report individuals caught removing natural resources from the Open Space Preserve to the USFWS, CDFW, County, and/or sheriff's office. The resource manager may allow and supervise seed collection and plant cuttings as part of revegetation efforts within the Open Space Preserve, if necessary, and/or in nearby areas. Any such collected plant materials should be limited to such that is necessary and in accordance with state law to ensure successful revegetation while not adversely affecting local plant populations.

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## Trash Removal and Vandalism Repair

The resource manager will also conduct general trash removal within the Open Space Preserve during regular management Site visits. Additionally, damage caused by vandalism will be repaired. Trash removal and vandalism repair will occur as needed during regular Site visits every other month. Upon initiation of the off-site Open Space Preserve, existing trash will be removed to provide for a clean baseline.

## 4.5 Public Use Tasks

The Open Space Preserve will not have public trails or other facilities. The Open Space Preserve is intended to serve as a habitat preserve and as such is not compatible with most activities.

Activities that will be specifically prohibited include the following:

- Use of herbicides (except to remove non-native species, as necessary), pesticides, rodenticides, biocides, fertilizers, or other agricultural chemicals
- Use of OHVs and any other motorized vehicles except in the execution of management duties
- Grazing or other agricultural activity of any kind
- Recreational activities, including horseback riding, biking, target shooting, hunting, and fishing
- Commercial or industrial uses
- Construction, reconstruction, or placement of any building or other improvement, billboard, or sign
- Depositing or accumulation of soil, trash, ashes, refuse, waste, bio-solids, or any other material
- Planting, introduction, or dispersal of non-native or exotic plant or animal species
- Altering the general topography of the Open Space Preserve, including building of roads and flood control work
- Removing, destroying, or cutting of trees, shrubs, or other vegetation, except as required by federal, state, or local law, or by governmental order for (1) emergency fire breaks, (2) maintenance of existing roads, (3) prevention or treatment of disease, or (4) required mitigation programs
- Manipulating, impounding, or altering any natural watercourse, body of water, or water circulation on the open space (if present), except as specified for restoration activities, and activities or uses detrimental to water quality, including degradation or pollution of any surface or subsurface waters



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### **5 MANAGEMENT CONSTRAINTS**

This RMP has been written to satisfy the requirements of the County and attempts to identify possible issues in the future; however, unforeseeable changes may occur that are out of the control of the resource manager. For example, changes in rainfall patterns may affect the populations of sensitive plant and animal species within the Open Space Preserve. Likewise, changes in other environmental factors such as air pollution, hazardous waste runoff, and erosion could have detrimental effects on the habitat within the management areas. An adaptive management approach will be taken to provide the flexibility to address unforeseen conditions.

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## 6 REFERENCES

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