

MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM CONFORMANCE STATEMENT

For Alpine 21

PDS2005-3100-5431

APN(s) 403-160-15-00

May 19, 2020

I. Introduction

The project proposes to subdivide the 80.7-acre parcel into twenty single-family residential lots and open space. The project site is located north of Interstate 8, in between East and West Victoria Drives in the Alpine Community Planning Group, within unincorporated San Diego County. The project is also located within the County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) within designated unincorporated land in the Metro-Lakeside-Jamul segment. Access to the northern section of the site will be via on-site extension of Country Meadows Road to a cul-de-sac. Access to the southern section of the site will be via an internal private road, Chelsea Leigh Way, off of Country Meadows Road. The parcel is surrounded by residential lots to the west, north, and east and Interstate 8 to the south. The site does not qualify as Biological Resource Core Area (BRCA) and is not located in proximity to any Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas or undeveloped land.

Biological resources on the site were evaluated in a Biological Resources Letter Report (Cummings Environmental Inc, May 2020). The site contains 72.0 acres of granitic southern mixed chaparral, 0.8 acres of coast live oak woodland, 6.6 acres of southern coast live oak riparian forest, 0.2 acres of open water, and 1.1 acres of developed habitat. Sensitive wildlife species identified on site are Orange-throated Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis hyperythra*), Coastal Western Whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*), San Diego Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*), Cooper's Hawk (*Accipiter cooperi*), Rufous-crowned Sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps ssp. Canescens*), and the Western Bluebird (*Sialia Mexicana*). Sensitive plant species identified onsite are Engelmann Oak (*Quercus engelmannii*), San Diego Sagewort (*Artemisia palmeri*), Chaparral Rein-Orchid (*Piperia cooperi*), Palmer's Grappling Hook (*Harpagonella palmeri*), and Fish's Milkwort (*Polygala cornuta var. fishiae*). The project will impact 38.40 acres of granitic southern mixed chaparral, 0.3 acres of cost live oak woodland, 0.3 acres of southern coast live oak riparian forest, and 0.22 acres of developed habitat. In addition, 150 square feet of permanent impacts to waters of the U.S./waters of the state, and 1,800 square feet temporary impacts to federal jurisdictional wetlands and waters of the state will occur.

Impacts to biological resources will require mitigation. Mitigation measures will include offsite purchase of 19.2 acres of Tier III habitat and 0.3 acres of Tier I habitat within a BRCA in the MSCP, the dedication of an open space easement over the RPO wetlands and buffers, creation and restoration of 0.6 acres of southern cost live oak riparian forest habitat, and the removal of an earthen dam to restore natural flow. Breeding

season avoidance will also be implemented to ensure project consistency with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA).

Table 1. Impacts to Habitat and Required Mitigation

Habitat Type	Tier Level	Existing On-site (ac.)	Proposed Impacts (ac.)	Mitigation Ratio	Required Mitigation
Granitic Southern Mixed Chaparral	III	72.0	38.4	0.5:1	19.2
Coast Live Oak Woodland	I	0.8	0.3	1:1	0.3
Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	I	6.6	0.3	2:1	0.6
Open Water	--	0.2	0.0	--	--
Urban/Developed	IV	1.1	0.22	--	--
Total:	--	80.7	39.22	--	20.02

The findings contained within this document are based on County records and the Biological Resources Letter Report prepared by Cummings Environmental Inc, dated February 2020. The information contained within these Findings is correct to the best of staff's knowledge at the time the findings were completed. Any subsequent environmental review completed due to changes in the proposed project or changes in circumstance shall need to have new findings completed based on the environmental conditions at that time.

The project has been found to conform to the County's Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan, the Biological Mitigation Ordinance (BMO) and the Implementation Agreement between the County of San Diego, the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife and the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Third Party Beneficiary Status and the associated take authorization for incidental impacts to sensitive species (pursuant to the County's Section 10 Permit under the Endangered Species Act) shall be conveyed only after the project has been approved by the County, these MSCP Findings are adopted by the hearing body and all MSCP-related conditions placed on the project have been satisfied.

II. Biological Resource Core Area Determination

The impact area and the mitigation site shall be evaluated to determine if either or both sites qualify as a Biological Resource Core Area (BRCA) pursuant to the BMO, Section 86.506(a)(1).

A. Report the factual determination as to whether the proposed Impact Area qualifies as a BRCA. The Impact Area shall refer only to that area within which project-related disturbance is proposed, including any on and/or off-site impacts.

The Impact Area does not qualify as a BRCA since it does not meet any of the following BRCA criteria:

i. The land is shown as Pre-Approved Mitigation Area on the wildlife agencies' Pre-Approved Mitigation Area map.

The project site is not within a Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA). Therefore, it does not meet this requirement.

ii. The land is located within an area of habitat that contains biological resources that support or contribute to the long-term survival of sensitive species and is adjacent or contiguous to preserved habitat that is within the Pre-Approved Mitigation Area on the wildlife agencies' Pre-Approved Mitigation Area map.

While the site contains habitat and drainages suitable for wildlife, there is no offsite connectivity for wildlife. The site is surrounded by development and is not adjacent to preserved habitat that is within a Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA). Therefore, it does not meet this requirement.

iii. The land is part of a regional linkage/corridor. A regional linkage/corridor is either:

a. Land that contains topography that serves to allow for the movement of all sizes of wildlife, including large animals on a regional scale; and contains adequate vegetation cover providing visual continuity so as to encourage the use of the corridor by wildlife; or

b. Land that has been identified as the primary linkage/corridor between the northern and southern regional populations of the California gnatcatcher in the population viability analysis for the California gnatcatcher, MSCP Resource Document Volume II, Appendix A-7 (Attachment I of the BMO.)

The project site has not been identified as a regional linkage/corridor. The project site is surrounded by residential development to the west, north, and east and Interstate 8 to the south. Therefore, it does not meet this requirement.

iv. The land is shown on the Habitat Evaluation Map (Attachment J to the BMO) as very high or high and links significant blocks of habitat, except that land which is isolated or links small, isolated patches of habitat and land that has been affected by existing development to create adverse edge effects shall not qualify as BRCA.

The project site is shown to have low habitat value, with a small section of high habitat value, on the Habitat Evaluation Map. However, the habitat onsite is isolated and surrounded by development. Therefore, it does not meet this requirement.

- v. The land consists of or is within a block of habitat greater than 500 acres in area of diverse and undisturbed habitat that contributes to the conservation of sensitive species.**

The project site is not within a block of habitat greater than 500 acres in area of diverse and undisturbed habitat. The project site is surrounded by residential development to the west, north, and east and interstate 8 to the south. Therefore, it does not meet this requirement.

- vi. The land contains a high number of sensitive species and is adjacent or contiguous to surrounding undisturbed habitats, or contains soil derived from the following geologic formations which are known to support sensitive species:**

- a. Gabbroic rock;**
- b. Metavolcanic rock;**
- c. Clay;**
- d. Coastal sandstone**

Available data indicates that the project site contains Cieneba rocky coarse sandy loam and Cieneba-Fallbrook rocky sandy loam. These soils are not known to contain a high number of sensitive species and the land is not contiguous to surrounding undisturbed habitat. Therefore, it does not meet this requirement.

- B. Report the factual determination as to whether the Mitigation Site qualifies as a BRCA.**

The project will mitigate for impacts through an offsite mitigation bank located within a BRCA in the MSCP.

III. Biological Mitigation Ordinance Findings

A. Project Design Criteria (Section 86.505(a))

The following findings in support of Project Design Criteria, including Attachments G and H (if applicable), must be completed for all projects that propose impacts to Critical Populations of Sensitive Plant Species (Attachment C), Significant Populations of Narrow Endemic Animal Species (Attachment D), Narrow Endemic Plant Species (Attachment E) or Sensitive Plants (San Diego County Rare Plant List) or proposes impacts within a Biological Resource Core Area.

The project would not impact Critical Populations of Sensitive Plant Species (Attachment C), Significant Populations of Narrow Endemic Animal Species (Attachment D), Narrow Endemic Plant Species (Attachment E) or Sensitive Plants (San Diego County Rare Plant List), or within a Biological Resource Core Area. Therefore, the project design criteria does not apply.

B. Preserve Design Criteria (Attachment G)

In order to ensure the overall goals for the conservation of critical core and linkage areas are met, the findings contained within Attachment G shall be required for all projects located within Pre-Approved Mitigation Areas or areas designated as Preserved as identified on the Subarea Plan Map.

The project is not located within a Pre-Approved Mitigation Area (PAMA) or areas designated as Preserve land. Therefore, the Preserve Design Criteria from Attachment G does not apply.

C. Design Criteria for Linkages and Corridors (Attachment H)

For project sites located within a regional linkage and/or that support one or more potential local corridors, the following findings shall be required to protect the biological value of these resources:

The project site is not located within a regional linkage or corridor. Therefore, the Design Criteria for Linkages and Corridors from Attachment H does not apply.

IV. Subarea Plan Findings

Conformance with the objectives of the County Subarea Plan is demonstrated by the following findings:

1. The project will not conflict with the no-net-loss-of-wetlands standard in satisfying State and Federal wetland goals and policies.

The permanent and temporary impacts to wetlands will be mitigated at a minimum of a 1:1 ratio by removing an existing earthen dam and recontouring the area to its pre-berm, natural flows. Therefore, the project will not conflict with the no-net-loss of wetlands standard.

2. The project includes measures to maximize the habitat structural diversity of conserved habitat areas including conservation of unique habitats and habitat features.

The site does not support any unique habitats or habitat features. The loss of 0.3 acres of coast live oak woodland and 38.4 acres of southern mixed chaparral will be mitigated by the preservation of Tier I and Tier III habitat within a BRCA in the MSCP. The impacts to 0.3 acres of southern coast live oak riparian forest will be mitigated by the creation/restoration of 0.6 acres of southern coast live oak riparian forest and the removal of an existing dam to restore natural flows. These measures will contribute towards maximizing diversity by preserving habitat in areas known to have unique habitats and habitat features.

3. The project provides for conservation of spatially representative examples of extensive patches of Coastal sage scrub and other habitat types that were

ranked as having high and very high biological values by the MSCP habitat evaluation model.

The project site does not include extensive patches of Coastal sage scrub. Habitats ranked as having high/very high biological values will be mitigated through creation and restoration components and the removal of an earthen dam to restore natural flows.

4. The project provides for the creation of significant blocks of habitat to reduce edge effects and maximize the ratio of surface area to the perimeter of conserved habitats.

The onsite preservation is not being used toward the required mitigation, but as an avoidance measure to prevent impacts to the RPO wetlands and buffers. Due to the existing development surrounding the project site, it is not possible or desirable to create a significant block of habitat through onsite preservation. Impacts to onsite habitat will be mitigated through offsite purchase, a creation/restoration component, and removal of an earthen dam to restore natural flows. Offsite mitigation will contribute toward creating large blocks of high-quality habitats where edge effects are minimal and the land is protected in perpetuity.

5. The project provides for the development of the least sensitive habitat areas.

The project site was determined to not be appropriate for onsite preservation due to the lack of adjacent open space and the existing development surrounding the site. The onsite preservation is for the avoidance of the RPO wetlands and buffers. Mitigation for impacts to biological resources will include offsite preservation, a creation and restoration component, and the removal of an earthen dam to restore natural flows.

6. The project provides for the conservation of key regional populations of covered species, and representations of sensitive habitats and their geographic sub-associations in biologically functioning units.

No threatened, endangered, narrow endemic species were detected on the project site. Developing the site will not eliminate highly sensitive habitat or impact key populations of covered species.

7. Conserves large interconnecting blocks of habitat that contribute to the preservation of wide-ranging species such as Mule deer, Golden eagle, and predators as appropriate. Special emphasis will be placed on conserving adequate foraging habitat near Golden eagle nest sites.

No wide-ranging species are expected to occur onsite due to adjacent development and surrounding land uses. Offsite purchase and preservation of high-quality habitat to mitigate for impacts to coast live oak woodland and granitic southern mixed chaparral will occur in an approved mitigation bank or BRCA. This will contribute to

the development of large interconnecting blocks of habitat that support wide ranging species.

- 8. All projects within the San Diego County Subarea Plan shall conserve identified critical populations and narrow endemics to the levels specified in the Subarea Plan. These levels are generally no impact to the critical populations and no more than 20 percent loss of narrow endemics and specified rare and endangered plants.**

No critical or narrow endemic species were detected on the site. Most sensitive species have a low potential to be present due to the existence of surrounding development.

- 9. No project shall be approved which will jeopardize the possible or probable assembly of a preserve system within the Subarea Plan.**

The project site is not within an area of regional significance with regard to conservation of sensitive species and habitats. The site is not part of or adjacent to large interconnecting blocks of habitat, lands identified as PAMA or Preserve, or other sensitive resources. The surrounding development does not aid in conservation or wildlife dispersal. Therefore, developing the site will not hinder possible preserve systems.

- 10. All projects that propose to count on-site preservation toward their mitigation responsibility must include provisions to reduce edge effects.**

The proposed onsite preservation will be used as an avoidance measure to prevent impacts to RPO wetland and buffers. Therefore, since the onsite preservation will not be counted towards the required mitigation, provisions to reduce edge effects are not necessary.

- 11. Every effort has been made to avoid impacts to BRCAs, to sensitive resources, and to specific sensitive species as defined in the BMO.**

The project site does not qualify as a BRCA. No threatened, endangered, or narrow endemic species were detected on the project site. Due to the surrounding development, the project site is suitable for development with the incorporation of mitigation measures. Mitigation measures will include the offsite preservation of Tier I and Tier III habitats within a BRCA in the MSCP, restoration and creation of 0.6 acres of southern coast live oak riparian forest, and the removal of an earthen dam to restore natural flows. Every effort has been made to avoid impacts to BRCAs, to sensitive resources, and to specific sensitive species as defined by the BMO.

Kendalyn White, Planning & Development Services

May 19, 2020

MSCP Designation

