



**MINUTES OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW BOARD (ERB)  
Unincorporated Coastal Zone, Santa Monica Mountains, Los Angeles County  
Meeting of 22 February 2016**

(Approved, 18 April 2016)

**Persons in Attendance**

**ERB Members**

Rosi Dagit  
Ron Durbin  
Richard Ibarra  
David Magney  
Andrew Nickerson

**Regional Planning Staff**

James Bell, Planner  
Joseph Decruyenaere, Biologist, Pro Tempore ERB  
Gary Fountain, Planner  
Shirley Imsand, Ph.D, Biologist  
Marie Pavlovic, Planner, ERB Coordinator  
Rudy Silvas, Planner

**Topanga Community Club, 1440 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd., & SFR, 1414 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd.,  
LLA, R2015-02865-(3) Topanga 90290**

John MacNeil

**Savaterri-Zurzulo SFR Project, R2012-00046-(3) 25604 Wildwood Drive, Calabasas 91302**

Andrew Forde  
Sharyl Beebe

**Public**

Denise Lin  
Brandon Prince  
Hafsa Shurbayi

**Pagination**

**Topanga Community Club & SFR LLA R2015-02865-(3), p.1-2**

**Savaterri-Zurzulo SFR Project, R2012-00046-(3), p.3-4**

**Landscape guidelines, p.4**

**ERB Announcements: membership, recognition, guidelines, p.4-5**

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**MINUTES**

**OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Minutes of 25 January 2016 meeting were approved.**  
Motion to approve: Rosi Dagit, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ron Durbin, Ayes: Unanimous

**NEW BUSINESS**

For this project Joseph Decruyenaere served as ERB pro tempore. David Magney was not yet present.

- B.. Project: Lot Line Adjustment, R2015-02865-(3)**  
**Permits: CDP 2015000103**  
**Location: Topanga Community Club, 1440 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd. &  
SFR, Ralph Meyer & Sandra Garber, 1414 N. Topanga Canyon Blvd.**
- Vicinity: Topanga Woods Rural Village, Topanga Canyon Watershed**  
**APNs: 4441-027-001, 4441-026-013, & 4441-037-013**

**Applicant:** John MacNeil  
**Biologist:** none  
**Planner:** James Bell  
**USGS Quad:** Topanga

**Planner Presentation:** The SFR receives needed side yard and encroachment area via the LLA. The Community Club receives an equal area along the Rugged Trail. The Community Club needs to identify alternative wastewater facilities

**Biological Resources Summary:**

The project parcels are in the Topanga Canyon Watershed and drain west directly down a 50% slope with Coast Live-oak (CLO) woodland at the base and scrub oak woodland on the upper areas to Topanga Canyon Blvd and Topanga Creek beyond. On the south they drain down a 45% slope with coastal sage scrub, oak trees, and some riparian elements to Rugged Trail with a small mesic tributary along Rugged Trail that eventually runs to Topanga Canyon. The project woodland is designated as H3 category habitat and in the H1 buffer overlay. The project is to transfer the elongate east section of APN 4441-037-013 (owned by SFR) to the Community Center, and to transfer an equal area of land north of the SFR from 4441-027-001 (owned by the Community Center) to 4441-037-013 (owned by the SFR). This will place most of encroached land by development at the SFR into SFR ownership. Fuel modification requirements will not change, but responsibility for fuel modification will change. The owners of the SFR will have 150-ft. of standard fuel modification of the SFR under ownership of the Community Center. Most of the area needing fuel modification for the SFR is dense scrub oak woodland, an H1 type element in the H3 habitat. Fuel modification may need to increase limbing up and clearing of the understory over what is currently done for the SFR. For the area transferred along Rugged Trail, the Community Center may eventually need an oak encroachment CDP permit depending on where they may need to construct utility access over this area.

**ERB COMMENTS:**

**1. The SFR will need to remove lower limbs and understory for fire safety. The objective is a canopy of the oak woodland and an understory of oak leaf litter in the fuel modification for the SFR.**

**ERB PROJECT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1. For extension of fuel modification for the single family residence into the scrub oak woodland, which includes trimming low branches (limbing up) the owner should obtain an oak tree permit for cutting and/or removing any oak branch (live or dead) that is greater than 2-in. diameter.**

Recommendation/2nd: Ron Durbin/ Richard Ibarra, Ayes: Unanimous

**2. The project is consistent with the biological resource protection policies and development standards of the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program and Local Implementation Program after incorporation of ERB recommendations.**

Recommendation/2nd: Joseph Decruyenaere/Rosi Dagit, Ayes: Unanimous

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**ERB date of review: 2016.02.22**

**ERB Evaluation:**             Consistent                     Consistent after Modifications  
                                   Inconsistent                     No decision

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**ERB date of review: 2016.02.22**

**Staff Biologist Recommendation:**             Consistent                     Consistent after Modifications  
                                   Inconsistent                     No decision

**Staff Recommendation:**

**3. The Topanga Community Club may need a permit for any utility provision in the acquired lot area next to Rugged Trail. There are resources there that include oaks, oak woodlands, coastal sage scrub, and a small riparian area. An alert shall be placed on the APN in the new project tracking system of the Dept. of Regional Planning, APN 4441-027-001.**

**4. The SFR at 1414 N. Topanga Canyon Boulevard, APN shall have an alert notice for OTP needed to cut limbs 2-in. and larger, APNs 4441-026-013, & 4441-037-013.**

For this project and subsequent discussion David Magney replaced Joseph Decruyenaere.

**C. Project:** Savaterra-Zurzulo Residence, R2012-00046-(3)  
**Permits:** Minor CDP 20140011, RENV 201200011; OTP201200004  
**Location:** 25604 Wildwood Drive, Calabasas 91302  
**Vicinity:** Monte Nido Rural Village, Dark Canyon, Malibu Canyon Watershed  
**APN:** 4456-018-001  
**Applicant:** Sharyl Beebe, Prism Permit Expediting  
**Biologist:** Andrew Forde, Forde Biological Consultants  
**Planner:** Rudy Silvas  
**USGS Quad:** Malibu Beach

**Planner Presentation:** The current review is of the proposal to amend land mapped as H1 habitat that overlies the subject parcel and house to H3 habitat in the LCP map. The project was formerly approved in concept for alteration of storage area to living space and garage space, retaining walls, and yard modification. The project will remove 1 and encroach substantially on three other protected oak trees. The oak tree impacts will be mitigated by 15 oak trees planted according to the mitigation required by the 2014 LCP on the Gillette Ranch property also in the Malibu Canyon Watershed supervised by the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA). Monitoring of remaining trees will continue for 10 years, and appropriate additions will be made for subsequent deaths. Former approvals of the project concept were in 2014.04.

**Applicant Presentation:** Oak trees will actually be retained, except the one surrounded by the patio deck. They will be monitored and further mitigation trees added if any of the three encroachments die. Because of the flat nature of the driveway it will be possible to use permeable material for the driveway. Fire access and turn-around is provided by Wildwood Drive and the residence driveway does not need to be an all-weather surface.

#### **Biological Resources Summary:**

The project was first approved by ERB in 2005 and revisions approved in 2012. The project has not changed physically since 2012, but in October 2014 we began using the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program of Los Angeles County. With the new requirements for a Coastal Development Permit, we examine how the project complies with the new ordinance. The project is on the west bank of Dark Canyon as it enters the community of Monte Nido from the State Park area to the south. It is within the Cold Creek and Malibu Canyon watershed. The project parcel is in the rural village of Monte Nido and has mapped H3 category habitat on west and north sides and on much of the residence. The parcel is mapped with an overlap of H1 habitat extending onto the house. The project biologist has recommended that the part of the H1 habitat on the house extending to the west bank of Dark Canyon be remapped as H3 habitat. Field observation by DRP biologist confirms this recommendation due to use of this area for parking, dating from before the time of project approval in 2012. The project is in a high fuel hazard area, on the west is in a landslide hazard area, and on the east is in a liquefaction zone. Fuel modification will not change since the time of project approval in 2012. Since approval the mitigation for encroached oak trees has been arranged with MRCA on the King Gillette Ranch area, a conserved area also in the Malibu Canyon watershed. The area is adjacent to Sycamore-Coast Live-oak riparian forest, and according to the biological report and field observation, within this habitat. There is no designated critical habitat in the project area, nor reports of sensitive species on the property in CNDDDB reports.

#### **ERB COMMENTS:**

- 1. Mitigation now for oak removals and substantial encroachment will not be a substantial additional cost now and will save possible greater later expenses for further planting and new 10-year monitoring periods.**
- 2. New materials are available for driveways that substantially promote oxygen and water transfer to oak roots. This will greatly enhance chances for survival of the encroached oak near the driveway.**
- 3. Because of aerial mapping used by the LCP and constraints of pixels rather than ground truth, remapping of habitat categories will probably be a frequent recommendation of ERB.**

#### **ERB PROJECT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 1. The project should mitigate now for oak trees that are substantially encroached by the project as well as the removal.**

Recommendation/2nd: David Magney/ Richard Ibarra, Ayes: Unanimous

2. The H1 mapped habitat that overlies the project parcel should be remapped as H3 habitat, disturbed by development but with sensitive elements that should be preserved. The sensitive elements are the stream course, the rock outcrops with bryophyte and lichen flora, and the Sycamore-Coast Live-oak riparian forest and its community.

Recommendation/2nd: David Magney/ Rosi Dagit, Ayes: Unanimous

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3. The project is consistent with the biological resource protection policies and development standards of the Santa Monica Mountains Local Coastal Program and Local Implementation Program after incorporation of ERB recommendations.

Recommendation/2nd: David Magney/Rosi Dagit, Ayes: Unanimous

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ERB date of review: 2016.02.22

ERB Evaluation:             Consistent                             Consistent after Modifications  
                                  Inconsistent                             No decision

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ERB date of review: 2016.02.22

Staff Biologist                     Consistent                             Consistent after Modifications  
Recommendation:                 Inconsistent                             No decision

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#### D. Landscape Guidelines – ERB Comments

1. Draft the guidelines with a brief introductory paragraph of environmental considerations, then have a bulleted outline form for specific recommendations.
2. For requests for qualified design preparation suggest the County Fire approved list of landscape architects/designers; the California Native Plant Society certification program for Landscape Designer; Landscape Architects familiar with native plants of the Santa Monica Mountains; and note that no certification is actually required but the plans will be held to standards of the above groups.
3. Include content guidelines.
4. Include links to lists of native plants.
5. Include links to invasive plant lists that should not be used.
6. Include use of weed-free native plant mulch but prohibition against use of chemicals such as fertilizer, herbicides, pesticides, growth amendments, etc.
6. Identify irrigation zone desiderata.
7. Specify understory for new oak plantings to be mulch.
8. Specify oak leaf litter as best for mulch of new oak plantings.
7. Prohibition of rodenticides is important to include on plans.
8. Examine AB32 for provisions that relate to carbon sequestration with respect to removal of native vegetation and replacement with non-native vegetation.

#### E. Other Announcements

##### 1. New Member Needs and Process

- Andrew Nickerson needs to resign from ERB due to increased job duties. He has recommended a biologist of his company to take his place.
- When a member needs to resign, we will need a letter of resignation.
- ERB does not track member attendance.
- The ERB member process:
  - a. Application form and resume are submitted. Expertise that relates to ERB reviews is the requirement.
  - b. These are published on the ERB webpage for the next meeting.

**c. Application form and resume are reviewed by ERB. ERB makes a recommendation on the person as a member.**

**d. Recommendation goes for approval to successive levels of the DRP: Impact Analysis Supervisor, Deputy Director of Advance Planning, Director.**

**e. The invitation for membership comes from the Director of the Department of Regional Planning.**

**2. The DRP is working on scrolls of recognition and stipend for the members.**

**3. The ERB needs to work on handouts for applicants: landscapes, runoff plans, and restoration plans. The Oak Woodland Conservation Management Plan for the County will be consulted for restoration guidelines.**

**F. Public comment pursuant to Section 54954.3 of the Government Code.**

No Public Comment was made.