SIGNIFICANT ECOLOGICAL AREAS
TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE (SEATAC)
PROCEDURES AND GUIDELINES

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

AUGUST 2011

Items that should be discussed

Current Item that will be replaced due to revision

Items determined by revision, including those with adoption of the new SEA ordinance

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

SEATAC PROCESS

The County Department of Regional Planning (DRP) requires special biological review for proposed development on any parcel that has a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) overlay, a Sensitive Environmental Resource Area (SERA, Coastal Zone), or an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (ESHA, Coastal Zone). Consult the GIS-section of the DRP website to determine the applicable overlay in the applicant's development parcel(s).
http://planning.lacounty.gov/gis
Information on the biological resources in the SEAs is found at:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/sea-existing
Development in an SEA/SERA/ESHA will be reviewed by the SEATAC (Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee), except in the unincorporated Coastal Zone of the Santa Monica Mountains, where review will be done by the County Environmental Review Board (ERB).

The biological review required is presentation of 2 biological reports to the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC) and revision of the reports as required by the committee. (For process in the Coastal Zone reviewed by ERB in the Santa Monica Mountains unincorporated areas, consult County biologist. The webpage for process is in preparation. This document covers preparation of the BCA report starting on page 5.) For SEATAC, the reports must be prepared and presented by a **biologist on the SEATAC consultant list**. The applicant is expected to hire the consultant to prepare these reports. This list and contact information may be found on the DRP website:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/project/consultants_seatac.pdf.

SEATAC meetings are held once a month, usually on the first workday Monday afternoon. We need the materials (consult coordinator for number of hardcopies and CD/DVDs of .pdf format needed) 1 month in advance of the meeting where the project is reviewed, to mail to the SEATAC members, who are all volunteers and do the SEATAC reading and work in their spare time.

The two reports are a **Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA) and a Biota Report**, usually in a combination of 8.5 x 11" format and as .pdf on CD/DVDs. The BCA is first reviewed by County Biologist, who may recommend changes before the BCA is reviewed by SEATAC. The BCA is usually presented at the first SEATAC meeting. A revision may be requested if the BCA does not meet guideline criteria. The Biota Report is based on SEATAC recommendations for modification of the BCA, and incorporates impacts and mitigations as well. The Biota Report is presented at a subsequent meeting. The BCA has a description of the project area, with the proposed project outlined, and chiefly gives descriptions of the biological organisms and communities of special interest on the parcels or that could potentially occur on the parcels. The Biota Report uses the data in the BCA and further surveys, gives a more complete picture of the

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project, and discusses possible and probable impacts from the development. It should also suggest mitigations for the impacts. A description of how to prepare these reports (this document) is on the DRP website at:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/assets/upl/case/sea_proc-guide.pdf

The objectives of the biological review of the two reports Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA) and the Biota Report by the SEATAC are

(1) To advise on making the biological review accurate (principally covered in the BCA review)
(2) To recommend project modification and mitigations to make the impacts as minimal as possible. (comments principally directed to the Biota Report)

At the end of the review, which usually lasts for three (3) SEATAC meetings, the SEATAC makes a conclusion of whether the project is compatible with the SEA or incompatible. If the biological reports are accurate, there could be fewer than 3 meetings. There could be more than 3 meetings needed, but an applicant is only required to appear at 3 meetings before the decision of "compatible" or "incompatible" is made. A decision of "compatible with mitigation" is also possible.

The reports and minutes from the SEATAC review shall be considered by the planner and the Regional Planning Commission in making decisions about permitting the project.

The biologists on the SEATAC certified list are usually responsible for preparing the reports, and they can consult the website for fairly complete descriptions of what is expected in the reports. Most of the biologists will be familiar with the preparation of reports, which are very similar to the biological sections of Environmental Impact Reports. Again, **it is the responsibility of the applicant or applicant's agent to hire one of the listed biologists to prepare the reports** for SEATAC review.

Addition to the SEATAC certified list of biologists is a procedure subject to review by SEATAC and the Director of Regional Planning. Criteria include demonstration of relevant field experience, experience in writing reports similar to those reviewed by SEATAC (described in this document), and adequacy of a sample report authored by applicant. County biologist provides a description of procedure for application to the list upon request. This list is updated annually for accurate information. The Planning Director shall be empowered to remove biologists from the Certified List.

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DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING
SEATAC PROCEDURES

Membership: Seven members from the private and public sector with a range of expertise shall be appointed by the Planning Director to serve on the committee. The staff biologist from the Department of Regional Planning will serve as coordinator. There will be additional adjunct

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members, at-large members, or alternates that can complete a quorum when necessary. These additional members will have completed the same application process as the seven members of SEATAC, and they will be appointed by the Planning Director.

Meetings: Meetings are held on the first working Monday of each month in Room 1385 of the Hall of Records (320 West Temple Street, Los Angeles), beginning at 1:00 p.m, unless otherwise scheduled and notified. In the event that the first Monday falls on a County holiday, the following Monday will be scheduled for the meeting. Agendas are published on the DRP website, about one week before the meeting:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/seatac/

The public is advised that the meetings are open to the public. The public may observe, and there will be a short period available for the public to make comments related to the biology of the projects at the meeting. The public will be allowed to submit written comments for consideration by SEATAC up to one week prior to the meetings. Notice of SEATAC meetings (agendas), report materials, and minutes of those meetings shall be posted on the Department's website: http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/seatac/
("View all recent sessions" is a link for sessions not in the archive.)

The minutes shall be made available for public hearings for projects that have been reviewed by SEATAC. A representative of SEATAC shall brief the Regional Planning Commission at least once a year on its activities and present any suggestions the SEATAC has at that time.

Attendance: Applicants are advised that the presence of the biota report preparer (biologist) at the meeting is required as the discussion can be technical in nature and problems can be more readily resolved by direct interface between the preparer and SEATAC. If the preparing biologist is not present, SEATAC may elect to postpone the hearing until an appropriate representative is present.

Adequate representation shall be: Three members, unless the project is identified by the Department of Regional Planning or SEATAC as a complex project requiring additional expertise.

Submittals: Consult County Biologist for current requirements of materials for submission. (The usual submission is three (3) hardcopies of all materials as well as .2 CD/DVDs of all materials in .pdf file format.) The .pdf files are uploaded to the DRP website and provided with a link on the SEATAC page. Biological Constraints Analyses and Biota Reports must be prepared by a biologist selected from the Department of Regional Planning's Certified List of Biologists.

Filing deadline for submittals: One (1) month prior to the first Monday of the following month. If the first Monday is a holiday, then submittals shall be due 1 month prior to the second Monday.

Meetings: A maximum of three (3) projects will be reviewed per meeting, so filing prior to the

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deadline is advised. A Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA) is submitted for review by the staff biologist at the time of application. The BCA is reviewed at the first meeting with SEATAC. County biologist shall make a site visit before this meeting, if possible.

Actions: At the conclusion of the discussion of each project, SEATAC can approve the report as written, recommend changes in the report, and/or make recommendations [compatible, not compatible, compatible with modification, compatible with mitigation] about the design or appropriateness of a project to the SEA.

Projects will be reviewed for consistency with the Los Angeles County General Plan, applicable local plans, and the Significant Ecological Area Conditional Use Permit outlined in the Zoning Code [§22.56.215.F.2; §22.42]. Applicants seeking approval of the reports are required to prepare a BCA that is approved by SEATAC as accurate. After preparation of an accurate BCA, the applicant is required to appear before SEATAC the minimum number of meetings needed for their report to be approved or three times for each project. SEATAC shall complete a recommendation on each project by the close of the third SEATAC meeting on the Biota Report for the project, or SEATAC may agree with the applicant to have more meetings before a final recommendation is made. An applicant may notify SEATAC that they no longer wish to attempt to obtain SEATAC approval of the report and/or the project. In this case, SEATAC will prepare a memo to the Regional Planning Commission indicating its concerns and recommendation on the project.

No action of SEATAC is final until the minutes of the meeting are approved, usually at the following meeting.

It is the policy of the Department of Regional Planning to generally require an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) for all projects in SEAs (as defined in the Zoning Code). Planning staff shall rely on SEATAC comments in making environmental determinations on projects (i.e. EIR, MND, or ND) with respect to biotic impacts. If a Negative Declaration (ND) or Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is recommended by staff, this decision shall be forwarded along with all SEATAC minutes concerning the project to the Regional Planning Commission for the Commission's review and determination prior to completion of planning decisions.

Schedule for Regional Planning Commission (RPC) hearings on SEA projects will be published on the Department website in the central schedule area with links to detailed materials. Posting shall include notification that a project reviewed by SEATAC is coming before the RPC. Links to SEATAC minutes relevant to the project shall be posted.
http://planning.lacounty.gov/

Annual Report: The Planning Director shall brief the Regional Planning Commission biennially on SEATAC activities and present a status report on the preservation of biotic diversity within the Significant Ecological Areas. The status report shall include maps showing conserved areas and descriptions of the status of all resources in each SEA, based on annual site visits to determine the health and function of each SEA [§22.42.060.C]. The report shall summarize the acreage appraisal forms of projects reviewed by SEATAC [§22.42.060.A]. The report shall incorporate data from the photographic aerial surveys of the County (resurveyed approximately biennially).

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Regulatory Design considerations and policies for Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs)
To be considered "compatible" with the SEA, a project will need to satisfy the following criteria.

I. Preserve the **resources and functions listed in the criteria table for the particular SEA and the SEA descriptions.** These are given in the General Plan Technical Appendix E and can be accessed using the webpage:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/sea-existing

II. Satisfy the **Burden of Proof** that is given in Los Angeles Zoning Code [§22.56.215, F2]

a. That the requested development is designed to be highly compatible with the biotic resources present, including the setting aside of appropriate and sufficient undisturbed areas, and
b. That the requested development is designed to maintain water bodies, watercourses, and their tributaries in a natural state, and
c. That the requested development is designed so that wildlife movement corridors (migratory paths) are left in an undisturbed and natural state, and
d. That the requested development retains sufficient natural vegetative cover and/or open spaces to buffer critical resource areas from said requested development, and
e. That where necessary, fences or walls are provided to buffer important habitat areas from development, and
f. That roads and utilities serving the proposed development are located and designed so as not to conflict with critical resources, habitat areas or migratory paths.

SEA descriptions of sensitive resources in the Technical Appendices may be accessed through the SEA page on the Regional Planning web site:
http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/sea-existing

II. (Revision:) Satisfy the **Burden of Proof** that is given in Los Angeles Zoning Code [§22.42.050.C]. In lieu of the burden of proof required for conditional use permits and minor use permits by section xx.xx.xxx, an application for a project within a Significant Ecological Area shall substantiate the following facts to the Review Authority:

1. The development is consistent with the Countywide General Plan and any local plans, and
2. The development conforms to the design standards, as specified in this section 22.42.040, and is compatible with supporting and sustaining the biological resources present and natural ecological functions of the Significant Ecological Area;

[Compatibility Criteria – not in revision, but embedded in design standards]

III. Be a designated **compatible use**. **Compatible uses** are listed in the General Plan. The General Plan (Countywide General Plan; page LU-30) established the following **land uses as compatible**, by definition, within the SEAs:

a. Regulated scientific study
b. Passive recreation including wildlife observation and photography
c. Limited picnicking, riding, hiking, and overnight camping

In addition, the following uses may be compatible as determined from the biotic survey and from such conditions that may be necessary to protect the biological resources within

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the SEA:

d. Residential uses at densities compatible with resource values present and consistent with community character in terms of overall density and magnitude as defined in adopted community, area-wide, or countywide plans
e. Where provided for in an adopted community or area-wide plan, commercial uses of a minor nature serving local residents and visitors,
f. Where no alternative site or alignment is feasible, public and semi-public uses essential to the maintenance of public health, safety, and welfare,
g. Agricultural uses compatible with the resources present
h. Where compatible with identified biotic resources, extractive uses, including oil and gas recovery, and rock, sand, and gravel quarrying.

[Compatible Uses– not in revision, but embedded in design standards]

III. The project will need to demonstrate substantial compliance with designated **design standards**

SEA CUP §22.42.040 **Design Standards and Guidelines**

The proposed development shall be designed to protect resources and meet the burden of proof described in subsection 22.42.050.C. The Review Authority may modify the design standards below if a biologically superior project alternative is proposed and impose additional conditions to effectively protect biological resources and ecological systems. The Review Authority may also modify design standards, if the site has environmental conditions which make it infeasible to meet all standards, and the project design is found to be biologically equivalent to the design standards and does not adversely impact the conservation of sensitive species, habitat or ecological function.

A. Biological Resources. Preservation of biologically valuable vegetation, species, corridors and linkages shall be given the highest priority in project design.

1. Sensitive species and vegetation. The following sensitive species and vegetation types have a high biological value and shall be conserved on the site with priority given to areas with the highest quality and quantity of each species or vegetation type:
   a. Sensitive species listed by the California Department of Fish and Game; or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; or that are identified on the California Native Plant Society lists 1A, 1B, 2, 3, and 4; or species in lists of parts I and II of the current version of Los Angeles County's Sensitive Bird Species, WESTERN TANAGER. The current version of the sensitive bird list as of this version of Procedures and Guidelines is:
   Jan/Feb 2009, 75(3):
   http://losangelesaudubon.org/images/stories/pdf/vol.%2075%20no.%2003%20january%20february%202009,%20color%20web%20version.pdf
   b. Sensitive vegetation tracked by the California Natural Diversity Database, which may include, but is not limited to, the following:
      i. Oak woodland, including individual oaks;
      ii. Riparian habitat;
      iii. Wetlands, including seasonal wetlands such as vernal pools;
      iv. Walnut woodland;

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v. Grassland, including any grassland with a strong component of native grass and forb species;
vi. Coastal sage scrub;
vii. Alluvial fan scrub;
viii. Joshua Tree woodland; and
ix. Desert wash.

c. Species populations that are unique and rare in Los Angeles County or designated by appropriate authority as sensitive in Los Angeles County.

2. Woodlands. Woodland habitats, including but not limited to oak, walnut and Joshua trees, shall be protected from development impacts.

3. Wildlife corridors and habitat linkages. Regional and local wildlife corridors and habitat linkages shall be preserved, to the greatest extent feasible, to maintain animal movement and reduce the potential of choke points.

B. **Riparian Resources.** Water resources and the riparian habitats they support shall remain in a natural dynamic state.

1. Riparian habitats along a watercourse, wetland or waterbody, whether natural or created, shall be protected from disturbance and from offsite incursion, including excessive or tainted runoff.

a. Riparian resources, including: oak, scrub, woodlands and forests shall be protected, including the dripline of any native riparian vegetation on either side of a stream channel. If the riparian vegetation is absent or sparse, the bed and bank of the stream channel shall be protected.

b. Desert wash and riparian vegetation shall be protected including, the bed, bank and full extent of braided channel.

c. Vernal pools shall be protected, including the supporting sub-watershed.

d. Marshes, ponds, seeps and springs shall be protected, including the extent of saturated soil and adjacent upland that supports the hydrological processes and biotic resources.

e. Groundwater levels contributing to the resources identified in subsection a, b, c, or d above shall be protected from direct and cumulative drawdowns that would adversely affect these resources.

2. Structures shall be set back based on the type and extent of riparian resources, unless a configuration with a lesser setback will protect more sensitive species and habitat or the sensitive nature of a resource requires a greater setback than described below.

a. Riparian resources, include: oak, scrub, woodland, forest, and desert wash:

i. A minimum 300 foot setback from riparian habitat on each side of a watercourse greater than 100 feet wide in a wet year,

ii. A minimum 150 foot setback from riparian habitat on each side of a watercourse 50 to 100 feet wide in a wet year, or

iii. A minimum 75 foot setback from riparian habitat on each side of a watercourse less than 50 feet wide.

b. Vernal pools: A minimum 150 foot setback from the edge of the pool or the extent of adjacent upland in a wet year, whichever is greater.

c. Marshes, ponds, seeps and springs:

i. A minimum 300 foot setback from riparian habitat greater than 1 acre,

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ii. A minimum 150 foot setback from riparian habitat .5 to 1 acre, or
iii.A minimum 75 foot setback from riparian habitat less than .5 acre.

C. Site Design. The siting of structures and associated infrastructure shall avoid sensitive resources identified by the Biological Constraints Analysis, the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC) and Biota Report, to the greatest extent possible and adhere to the following standards:

1. Proposed or required open space shall be contiguous on the project site to maintain opportunities for habitat linkages;
2. Proposed or required open space shall be contiguous with dedicated open space on adjacent parcels to maintain connectivity;
3. Landscaped parks and open space shall be located between natural open space and structures on the developed area of the site, as feasible;
4. Structures and infrastructure shall be set back 200 feet from dedicated natural open space on the site and on adjacent parcels to avoid vegetation clearance for fire safety;
5. Structures, infrastructure and fencing shall be designed and installed so as to not significantly impact the movement of wildlife temporarily or permanently and shall be located adjacent to existing infrastructure, as feasible. A proposal that includes any adverse impacts in this regard shall include a mitigation and remediation plan for those impacts;
6. Landscape design and materials shall correspond to the native vegetation of the site and be installed in a manner that does not negatively impact remaining native vegetation (No invasive species on the CalIPC list nor the County Invasive Species List shall be approved); and
7. Structures and landscaping shall be designed to avoid unnatural water flows off the site into habitat areas.

D. **Open Space.** Areas conserved as open space shall represent and include the biologically valuable areas of the site.

1. Preservation Instrument. A dedication of open space for the benefit of Los Angeles County shall be recorded at the time of final map recordation or prior to the effective date of the permit that requires the dedicated open space to remain as permanent open space in perpetuity and extinguishes all development rights. All dedicated open space shall be recorded as Open Space – Restricted Use Area in the preservation instrument and on all maps. Dedication of open space shall be established using one of the following preservation instruments:
   a. Recordation of a deed restriction;
   b. Recordation of a conservation easement;
   c. Recordation of a covenant; or
   d. Any other preservation instrument the Review Authority deems appropriate.
2. Ownership and management of the open space shall be established to protect the identified resources and associated processes until the open space is self-sustaining or forever through one of the following:
   a. Dedication and endowment for sustainability to a government entity such as a county, city, state, federal or joint powers authority, which will hold and manage the land under a mandate to protect natural resources in perpetuity;

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b. Dedication and endowment for sustainability to a non-profit land conservation organization that meets the Statement of Qualifications of Non-Profits Requesting to Hold Mitigation Land according to Government Code Section 65965; or

c. Dedication and endowment for sustainability to any other entity the Review Authority deems appropriate.

E. **Landscaping.** Where determined by the Director to be appropriate, a plan for landscaping common or improved open space areas shall be submitted to and approved by the Director, pursuant to section xx.xx.xxx, prior to the issuance of a grading or building permit. The planting materials shall be native, locally indigenous, and reflect the structure and function of the onsite natural biotic communities. No invasive species on the California Invasive Plants Council list nor the County Invasive Species List shall be approved.

F. **Roadways.** Roadways or access corridors, including fire roads, should not bisect or impact dedicated open space or movement corridors. Where there is no feasible, less invasive route, and the roadway crosses a known corridor or linkage, the following shall apply:

1. Vegetation, fencing, under crossings, and culverts shall be designed to guide animals to safe passage,
   a. Vegetation designed to sustain traversing pollinators, shall be planted, if deemed appropriate; and
2. Permanent cautionary road signs shall be installed to identify known or suspected corridors of significant wildlife movement and human access to the area shall be discouraged by effective means.

G. **Noise and Lighting.** The development shall submit satisfactory evidence that the proposed development will not generate light and noise impacts sufficient to disturb local wildlife behavior.

1. Noise levels shall remain below 45db(A) at night in canyons and along drainages between 5pm and 7am, unless expressly permitted.
2. Outdoor lighting shall be directed toward structures or activities and away from biological resources. Outdoor lights shall be shielded, directing the light downward.

H. **Vegetation Clearance and Agriculture.** Vegetation clearance, including but not limited to agricultural activities, that are greater than 2.5 acres shall not encroach upon woodlands or riparian corridors or core sensitive Significant Ecological Area resources, pursuant to this section. Where agricultural operations are proposed, pest management strategies and irrigation practices shall follow applicable standards set by the California Department of Fish and Game, United States Fish and Wildlife Service and Regional Water Quality Control Boards.

IV. Survey and present data for a biological appraisal of loss and gain of resources from the SEA. [§22.42.050.B.]

B. Application Requirements. A Conditional Use Permit or Minor Use Permit application for a site within a Significant Ecological Area shall contain the following information and maps, in addition to the material required for Conditional Use Permit and Minor Use Permit applications by xx.xx.xxx.

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1. Biological Constraints Analysis. A biological constraints analysis shall be prepared according to the Department of Regional Planning Biological Constraints Analysis Report Guidelines.
2. Biota Report. A biota report shall be prepared according to the Department of Regional Planning Biota Report Guidelines.
3. Biological Appraisal. Appraisal of project and mitigation measures proposed to protect biological and other ecological resources. The following shall reflect the project site only:
    a. Number of acres within the Significant Ecological Area;
    b. Number of acres within the Significant Ecological Area retained as natural open space valuable to the SEA function and any associated management provisions;
    c. Number of acres and percentage of each sensitive vegetation permanently protected as natural open space;
    d. List of sensitive species and description of any proposed reduction of such species;
    e. List and description of streams or drainages and description of any regulatory water of the State of California or the United States bisected, blocked, diverted or otherwise impacted directly or indirectly by development and if applicable state or federal permit is required;
    f. Description of any wildlife corridor or regional habitat linkage bisected, blocked, diverted, or otherwise impacted by development; and
    g. A determination of project compatibility with the Significant Ecological Area by the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee;
4. Appraisal of measures taken to meet the recommendations of resource agencies;
5. Appraisal of measures taken to meet the recommendations of the Significant Ecological Area Technical Advisory Committee or County ERB; and
6. Recommended changes or conditions of approval to ensure that the proposed development will comply with the required design standards.

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Regulatory Design considerations for Sensitive Environmental Resource Areas (SERAs) and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs) of the Coastal Zone

For projects in the Coastal Zone, in the SERA/ESHAs, the regulatory framework for these areas shall reference all pertinent policies of the relevant Local Coastal Plan and any specific plan for the area. These often differ according to the particular SERA/ESHA and Local Coastal Plan.

A. Coastal Resources.

1. Coastal Resource Areas. Development within the Coastal Resource Area shall be subject to the requirements within the applicable Local Coastal Plan or Program regulations, in lieu of this section.

a.Development on Santa Catalina Island is subject to the following Local Coastal Program components:

i.Santa Catalina Island Local Coastal Plan,

ii.Santa Catalina Island Specific Plan, pursuant to Part 2 of Chapter 22.46, and

iii.Review by SEATAC under the Significant Ecological Area Ordinance 22.56.215, as it existed upon the certification date of the Santa Catalina Island Local Coastal Plan, located in the Los Angeles County General Plan.

b.Development within the Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone is subject to the following Local Coastal Program components:

i.Malibu Land Use Plan, and

ii.Review by the Environmental Review Board, pursuant to the provisions in Part 6 of Chapter 22.44 of this Title.

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS REPORT GUIDELINES

Purpose

The Department of Regional Planning requires a community-level[1] Biological Constraints Analysis (BCA) as a part of the Initial Study environmental review process whenever a proposed development project is to be located wholly or in part in any area containing significant biological resources. Such areas include but are not limited to all Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) outside the Coastal Zone and Sensitive Environmental Resource Areas (SERAS) and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs) in the Coastal Zone, as defined in the County Zoning Code.

Indicators of biological significance, and thus of the need for a BCA, can vary widely depending on the setting and ecological phenomena of concern associated with a parcel. For instance, a large, undisturbed area of native habitat is almost universally acknowledged as biologically significant, due to the intact nature of native associations and ecological functions likely to be found there. Even "degraded" areas, such as fallow agricultural land or those with invasives (non-native plant or animal species), that are undeveloped land are undoubtedly important habitat for the biota living there. Furthermore, lands such as these may provide ecological functions beyond that of "primary residence" for sensitive species. Such functions include dispersal corridors, buffer areas and foraging habitat (especially for wide-ranging predators like raptors). Many "significant" biological organisms and processes are cryptic, and BCAs may be requested in instances when such significance is not obvious to the applicant.

The BCA is intended to provide a technical identification and community-level assessment of the biological resources and sensitivities both on the site and in the surrounding area. It is a broad scope, comprehensive survey drawing from literature and on-site investigations. On-site investigations are expected to be approximately 1 year old or more recent for the BCA. An evaluation of the long-term stability of the affected ecosystems is provided in the BCA, emphasizing key indicator species from a diversity of higher level taxa (i.e. invertebrates, mammals, birds, herpetofauna and vascular plants) and sensitive vegetative habitats. Agency-listed sensitive resources in particular must be given consideration in the constraints analysis. Quantitative data gathering may be requested for certain selected resources.

Identification of biological constraints should be completed by the applicant prior to detailed project design. It is hoped that early identification of constraints will assist in creating projects that are mindful of the natural environment and may reduce the need for extensive (and expensive) project revisions after submittal. If any portion of a project parcel has an overlay of an SEA, the BCA will be reviewed by the Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Committee (SEATAC). For a SERA or ESHA in the unincorporated Santa Monica Mountains Coastal Zone, the Environmental Review Board (ERB), will do the review. The BCA will serve

[1]"Community-level" refers to the suite of organisms and physical factors that interact with each other in a defined area. The area of interest may vary, but for a BCA it will be the parcel(s) or which the development site is a part. Thus, the community of concern will be all of the organisms and physical factors interacting within the parcel(s).

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as a prescription for any future full Biota Report which may be required by the Department in connection with projects in these areas. BCAs submitted for SEATAC or ERB review will be generally broader in scope and will address the required points to a higher level of detail than materials submitted for projects outside of SEAs, SERAs, or ESHAs. However, the fundamental points to be addressed, and the format with which the BCA is to be presented are the same for all BCAs. For SEA, SERA or ESHA projects, it is expected that BCAs include a discussion of the entire resource area (SEA/SERA/ESHA, as appropriate), as opposed to being focused only on the development site. This is due to the higher standard of significance that these areas have been afforded by the County, arising from the significant regional ecological influence they exert.

Summary Outline of the Biological Constraints Analysis and Purpose of the Sections

The objective of the BCA is to identify important sensitive biological resources so that projects can be designed in ways that preserve those resources. The BCA will be structured in four major sections: Introduction, Characteristics of the Site, Characteristics of the Surrounding Area, and Conclusion. The minimum contents of these sections are described following the underlined section titles below. The details are discussed in the following section and are summarized in the BCA Checklist on page 22-24 of these guidelines.

Introduction

Background information is presented in the introduction of the BCA. The title page should uniquely identify the project giving name of the project, applicant, essential County planning numbers, and information on the author and company that prepared the biological report with date of preparation. The introduction should outline the development envisioned, biological resources on the property, and methodology employed to prepare the BCA. For the development, give the general type of development, kind and number of structures and access roads needed if known. If more than one alternative is being considered, this should be mentioned. There should be a detailed description of the location, with labeling of well-known and significant geographical features, project parcel boundaries, and SEA/SERA/ESHA boundaries. These feature and boundary labels should continue on maps of other sections. Several reference illustrations are required to depict the location. In addition there should be color site photographs with a photo key to illustrate site characteristics, especially the various vegetative habitats. If soils are referred to in the text, there should be a soils map for the project site.

There should be a description of the SEA(s) involved with summary of the criteria and descriptions of resources for which the SEA was designated. Reference may be made to the 9-quad survey from CNDDB and CNPS of the "site characteristics" section if appropriate. A review of the pertinent scientific literature is essential.

Biological studies methodology shall be described, and reference to standards for procedures and focused surveys should be given. A table should include a description of the dates, methodology, and conditions under which any surveys were conducted. The introduction shall include the name of the lead biologist responsible for overseeing the biological reports, the

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responsible lead company preparing the report, and refer to a statement of qualifications of each biologist and investigator contributing work to the report in an appendix with this information.

At least one preliminary biological field reconnaissance is necessary. This reconnaissance should explore site biota considering the broadest possible scope of information. It is best to first compile the preliminary sensitive species table, which can be a guide to seasonal survey and species and vegetation of interest.

Characteristics of the Site

The site characteristics section presents the basic biological data of literature and data from at least one field reconnaissance survey of the site. The survey must be less than or about 1 year old at the time the BCA is presented.. It details both floral and faunal ecological data with aerial photos, maps, and tables. Essential resources of the BCA are the vegetative maps, table of vegetative aerial coverage, and the table of possible species of special interest. Basic references that must be used in preparing these data are the 9-quad analysis of the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), the 9-quad analysis of the inventory of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), the lists of the "Los Angeles County's Sensitive Bird Species" study, and observational data from eBIRD. 9-quad analyses must include lists for all quads lapped by project parcels.

The preliminary table of all biota and vegetative habitats in 9-quad lists and other probable additions must be evaluated and presented, and is usually in an appendix. Species in the preliminary table judged "unlikely," must have an explanatory paragraph detailing why each species is unlikely. This preliminary table is then extracted to a table of sensitive species possible and observed for the site. The table of sensitive species is presented in the main text. Explanatory paragraphs are written for each possible species, explaining salient characteristics as they pertain to whether the species was observed, judged possible, and whether the species has potential for impact by the project and development.

Areas of potential wildlife movement and habitat linkages over the site shall be identified and quantitatively studied in the field. These data must be available to substantiate any claim of insignificant wildlife movement over the property. Otherwise, substantive movement over the property shall be presumed; areas of movement shall be avoided by the development or mitigated for impact.

Ideally, protocol surveys should be done for the BCA, so that these constraints can be mapped. If not possible, the on-site habitat for these species should be indicated and further design analysis of the conclusion section should indicate the studies needed.

Characteristics of the Surrounding Area

Information about biological conditions on neighboring properties is necessary to provide a portrait of how the subject property fits into important ecological patterns in the region. The extent of the surrounding area to be evaluated outside of the project site will depend upon the

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consulting biologist's opinion of the degree and importance of the interrelationship. Any adjacent drainages, streams or water bodies and any adjacent areas likely to conduct fire, pollution or non-native biota to or away from the project site shall be considered in forming this opinion. This section should include discussion of existing land uses, especially public conserved areas, areas designated for open space, development, and approved development.

There shall be wildlife movement and habitat linkage analysis for the project's place in the region, discussed with the understanding that assessments such as "absence of wildlife movement" or "regionally insignificant wildlife movement" can only be carried forward to the biota report if verified through study by the project on the site of the project. For most projects in undeveloped, open space areas, there will need to be a study on the project site of wildlife movement in standard ways using roadkill, sign such as tracks, and motion-triggered cameras. Without study of wildlife movement, the project shall presume important movement through the property and delineate the most likely places this would occur such as ridgetops, drainages, unpaved roads, etc.

The associations and vegetative communities in the region and relation to subject property is discussed. Population sizes of biological resources shall be discussed. The overall biological value of the property with respect to the region and natural communities present shall be stated.

Conclusion

The conclusion is the most important section from the applicant's point of view, as it is the section in which the consulting biologist informs the applicant of those areas on the site which should be avoided by future development. First, the section presents regulatory law and legislation and ordinances that apply to the subject property. The conclusion will incorporate the findings of the Site and Surrounding Area Characteristics sections, summarizing all data of the BCA study. Emphasis should be on topics in Appendix G of the Public Resources Code and the Burden of Proof section of Los Angeles County Zoning Code for the SEAs. This section shall make explicit any assumptions incorporated, and outline logic of steps taken to come to the conclusions by reference to substantiating data including that of other studies. The conclusion shall include a discussion of the ecological services provided by the site (eg. erosion control, fire resistance, maintenance of water quality, and connectivity for plant and animal movement). It shall provide a clear statement of constraints (which biological resources on the subject parcel are the most valuable and thus should be preserved, or avoided by the project design), a map of constraints, and the consulting biologist's opinion of the value of the biological resources on the site—their degree of uniqueness or redundancy in terms of individuals, populations and communities. The constraints map should represent sensitive resources as polygons except where this is impractical, as in locations of unitary resources such as isolated trees or springs. For an outline of the kinds of constraints that should be addressed use the California Public Resources Code, Appendix G .IV.Biological Resources.

In the regulatory setting for SEA/SERA/ESHA projects, the conclusion section must include an explicit statement of prior reductions by development of the SEA/SERA/ESHA, what is left of the SEA/SERA/ESHA, and how its function remains, relative to that when it was initially designated by the County (for example, what corridors are intact, blocked or eliminated).

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Reference shall be made to the County-required form stating existing SEA area in the whole SEA and on the proposed project site. Later in the biota report this will be augmented to show proposed changes to these values by the project. Reference shall be made to all design standards of the SEA program and how the project could address these with respect to existing resources (§**22.42.040): biological resources, riparian resources, site design, open space, landscaping, roadways, noise and lighting, vegetation clearance and agriculture.**

If further study is needed, the conclusion shall have a **design for data collection**, specifying studies to be done in the future that are needed to inform the biota report.

GUIDELINES FOR BCA REPORT SECTIONS

Format:

A combination of hardcopy reports and CD/DVDs with .pdf format files is required. Consult County biologist to determine number needed of each type for submission.

1. The reports shall be bound. The cover (& spine if label is appropriate) shall include the following information:
   a. Project Name, Type of Report (eg.Biological Constraints Analysis), Project Number and other applicable planning numbers (eg. Tract number, Parcel Map Number, APNs)
   b. Applicant information and contact information
   c. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)
   d. Preparer of report and company contact information
   e. Date
2. In an effort to be environmentally sensitive, all BCA and Biota Report documents should be double-sided and preferably printed on recycled paper.
3. All pages shall be numbered consecutively, including maps, exhibits, appendices, etc.
4. Maps, fold-outs, and loose items shall be clearly labeled with the project number and exhibit identification.
5. Loose items shall be enclosed in a sleeve or map pocket.

To be retained as a permanent record in the case file, all documents, maps and photos should be arranged to fit into standard 8.5 x 11-inch size file folders. Because some elements of documents must be large scale to be useful, durable folding techniques may be employed to assure proper filing and long life. Because the documents are public record, units used should be English system of feet and acres, giving metric system units in parentheses.

Color photocopies are acceptable as long as details are sharp and legible.

For SEA/SERA/ESHA projects in the Coastal Zone, 1 hardcopy and 1 CD/DVD digital copy of submissions are required. Additional copies may be needed. Consult County biologist for submission requirements.

BCA and Biota Report documents are public record documents, and they are posted on the Department of Regional Planning website.

I. Cover/Spine (if applicable) **/Title page**

A. Project name & "Biological Constraints Analysis". Address of project on title page.

B. County identification numbers (Project number, CUP number, APNs). For more than 5 APNs, list 5 and state "and others"

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C. Applicant name and contact information
D. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)
E. Name of head biologist for report and consulting company directive information
F. Date of the report

II. <u>Introduction</u>

A. Project description

1. Project name and address
2. County application identification numbers (eg. project, CUP, Oak Tree Permit, Assessor Parcel Numbers--APNs). Give acreage for one parcel.
3. Applicant name and address
4. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)
5. Supervising biologist and company directive information
6. For more than one parcel, give total acreage and provide a table of parcel APNs and acreage.
7. Location data (3 types of maps should be used and referred to for location. Scale needs to be one in which clear, understandable information can be shown.) Scale and directional arrow must be shown on map. All maps and photographs in this and other sections must have site boundaries accurately delineated. Labeling of significant geographical features and SEA/SERA/ESHA boundaries should continue onto maps of other sections.
   a. Provide broad **vicinity description** of the project site referring to well-known, regional features such as highways, communities, street address, bordering roads, and waterbodies. Refer to a **vicinity map** that shows major roads, communities, water bodies, named drainages, etc. and project location. Identify government/public-domain natural resource areas that show at the scale of the map.
   b. Provide a **color USGS 7.5-minute topographic map with parcel boundaries outlined** and any boundaries of any SEA, SERA, ESHA or public conservation area outlined (scale approximately 1:24000) and identified. Parcel boundaries should be identified with assessor parcel numbers (APNs). APN acreage can be presented in a table for more than 1 parcel. Conservation easement boundaries should be shown if known. Any geographic feature named in the text of the BCA such as landforms, geologic features, and drainage (watershed boundaries, significant ridgelines, waterbodies, wetlands, stream courses, etc.) should be identified on this map (or a series of maps, if necessary). Label with the name of the USGS quad, if map is extracted. Topographic lines should show clearly in any reproduction. A folded USGS map with these data may be used.
   c. Provide a **color, vertical, high quality aerial photograph** showing boundaries as in b. above, with labeling of at least some of the main features shown in b. above. The photograph shall be dated and less than one year old. Legible color photocopies are acceptable.
8. **Descriptive outline of the possible project**. Outline the type of development, approximate number and type of structures needed, infrastructure needed if known. If more than one alternative is being considered, this should be mentioned. Refer to any

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maps of location data as needed.

B. Description of natural geographic features

1. The text should summarize the relationship of primary biological resources and:
   a. Landforms and geomorphology
   b. drainage features and watersheds of project parcels and nearby biological water resources shall be described. All drainages and wetlands named in text shall be shown on a map of drainages and wetlands.
   c. Soil map. A general description of site habitats and associations in relation to soil types and/or geomorphology is useful.
   d. vegetation communities of the project region
   e. SEAs: The text shall name the SEA/SERA/ESHAs and describe criteria and biotic resources in the SEA/SERA/ESHA, and how the project site relates. The SEA criteria and descriptions are listed on the Dept. of Regional Planning website. http://planning.lacounty.gov/view/sea-existing
2. Color site photography, ground level, including panoramas; low level oblique aerials, and off-site photos are useful. Depictions of typical site vegetation may be included and referred to later in "Characteristics of site" section. These should be accompanied by photokey maps, showing photographer position and direction, and coordinating by number or letter coding to photos.
3. Summary description of primary biological resources of the site and those present in the vicinity, with reference to scientific literature and color site photography. For any project affecting a portion of a watercourse, linear percentage of the watercourse on the project parcels is the relevant statistic. A review of pertinent scientific literature is essential, giving citations referring to bibliography (final section of BCA). References used but not cited in text shall be in a separate bibliography. All references should be detailed in bibliography at end of report or in appendix. (Bibliography should have only references cited in the text, but all citations should be present.) Reference may be made to the tables of sensitive species and habitats that are presented in the section "Characteristics of the Site." Discuss any relevant broadscale documents that relate to the biological resources of the project site. For example, relevant documents for a project in the Antelope Valley might be the West Mojave Plan of the Bureau of Land Management; Town and Country plan of the Dept. of Regional Planning for the Antelope Valley; The Nature Conservancy report; an analysis by a Missing Linkages study. In the reference list, URLs directing readers to the document online would be useful.

C. Methodology of biological survey

- **Surveys for wildlife** must adhere to standard techniques expected by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game or other resource agency, as applicable. Surveys must be conducted during the optimum period for observing the taxa of concern, for example, spring for most plants, butterflies, birds or insects; summer for mammals; other seasons as needed to cover sensitive elements. Surveys conducted outside of these times, in most cases, will need to be repeated and supplemented by surveys conducted at the optimal time. Surveys shall include butterflies and produce a list of **butterfly fauna** potentially present on site as well as

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those observed. Due to the large invertebrate fauna present at any site and the extreme difficulty of invertebrate identification with the exception of butterflies, general invertebrate surveys do not have to be conducted except when specifically directed by SEATAC or the Department of Regional Planning. For the BCA, surveys must be approximately 1 year old or more recent when the BCA is presented. SEATAC/ERB may direct that additional surveys are needed.

- **Survey reports:**

1. Tabulation of survey: focus, dates, daytime of field work, methodology, conditions (weather) under which any surveys were conducted, and survey personnel. Examples of methods would be "transects of convenience," "habitat search,." "tapes," etc.
2. Describe survey methods in text. Give references describing any protocol or focus surveys.
3. Name, firm and appropriate permit information (where necessary) for all biologists contributing to report. Statement of qualifications of each biologist and other investigators contributing work to the report should be included in an appendix.

- Proof of permits or Memoranda of Understanding for trapping shall be in the appendix.

III. <u>Biological Characteristics of the Site</u>

A. Vegetation Data

1. A vegetation map of the entire area of parcels of the project is required. The goal of the vegetation analysis is to walk and survey the entire site and produce a complete species list of plants. For the map, aerial photographs are often the most effective way of showing vegetation data. Best presentation is a translucent layer of keyed color and/or pattern for the various vegetation types over an aerial photo that shows significant landforms and drainage features below.
   a. **Optional map of vegetation using Holland (1986) system** with key. The same symbology should be used throughout the report for maps of these vegetative habitats. Try to use distinct colors and/or patterns for the Holland categories on the map. This map should be in an appendix.
      - Parcel boundaries and any SEA/SERA/ESHA boundaries should be outlined.

   b. **Map the alliances determined according to Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens (2009) and any relevé quadrat positions**. Alliances should be shown as translucent, colored and/or patterned overlay layer on an aerial photo with key. The goal is to report all alliances present. The same symbology should be used throughout the report for maps of these vegetative habitats. Try to use shades in the Holland category color that would contain the Sawyer *et al*. alliances. For shades that are difficult to distinguish from one another, incorporate text symbols or pattern on the map and key so that each alliance can be distinguished.
      - Parcel boundaries and any SEA/SERA/ESHA boundaries should be outlined.

   c. **Optional** Soil map as a transparent overlay for vegetative map (may be detached to facilitate overlay on vegetative maps.)

   d. **Optional** Summary of **relevé analyses,** with details about sensitivity for habitats of project area**.** (Use CNPS procedures. Actual measurement may be shown in meters, the standard for analysis.) Report in an appendix **absolute percentage cover analysis, conversion to relative percentage cover, and alliances**

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determined according to Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens (2009) habitat categories (alliances). The goal is to report all or most alliances present with at least one relevé each. The biologist's judgment with reference to aerial photos and soil map should determine the actual number of areas to be analyzed by relevé. Note that shape of relevé quadrats is adjusted to configuration of stands. For example, quadrats may be linear for elongate habitats such as riparian corridors, or circular for something like a vernal pool. What is important is to have uniform, appropriate quadrats for an alliance.

- Recommended relevé methods are outlined by the California Native Plant Society:
  http://www.cnps.org/cnps/vegetation/protocol.php
  (See 4/25/11 protocols.)
- Recommended relevé quadrat sizes by habitat for evaluation of all species:
  - Herbaceous communities: 100 sq.m. plot (10 m side if square)
  - Special herbaceous communities, such as vernal pools: 10 sq.m. plot, (3.16 m side if square)
  - Shrublands, Riparian forest, Woodlands: 400 sq.m. plot (20 m side if square)
  - Open desert, Widely dispersed woodlands: 1000 sq.m. plot (31.6 m side if square)
  - Upland Forest, Woodland: 1000 sq.m. plot (31.6 m side if square)
- Average of about 4 subsamples is used to evaluate % cover within the larger plots.

e. At the end of SEATAC review, the applicant is required to give County a CD or DVD with **georeferenced GIS files** of this vegetation data. (Metadata of basis projection and ft or m must be supplied. An ESRI shape file (.shp) of geographic-referenced data is preferred. (.dwg file from CAD-based data could work. The DRP will re-project to State plain zone 5 in ft.) Applicants without resources to produce the GIS data must discuss provision with the SEATAC coordinator.

2. **Vegetation and cover table** describing categories (Holland 1986 & Sawyer *et al*. 2009) and acreage on parcels. Use the Holland vegetation types as main titles and organize relevant Sawyer *et al*. alliances beneath relevant Holland headings. Later in biota report, columns shall be added that show acreage of impact and percentage of impact for that vegetation type.

3. **Map of trees** (DBH 3 inches and larger) with species distinguished. In areas of dense stands of trees, for the SEATAC maps it will be sufficient to subsample three (3) or more representative quadrats to make statistical estimates of native species, and for each species, state estimates of number of trees and present a size-frequency distribution for each species. Location of sample quadrat sites should be shown on map. Include 95% confidence limits on number estimates. For native oaks, DBH 5 inches and larger, an oak tree report (in appendix) will also be necessary.

4. **Text** should describe site habitats and associations in relation to soil types, and their significance; location of major plant communities and any sensitive plant communities (alliances/associations). Discussion should include special soil types that might have sensitive plants. Discussion should include the kind of rainfall year ("wet" would be

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rainfall of average or better amounts) for the season of sampling and how this may influence the vegetation reported.

B. **Fauna and Flora sensitive species tables and discussion**

Sensitive species are biological indicators of the health of an ecosystem, and data is available to use them as surrogates for the ecological communities. A species maintains itself only if all the essential factors for its existence are preserved. Survey of the flora, butterflies, and vertebrate fauna shall be done. Initial surveys should be approximately 1 year old or more recent at the time the BCA is presented. Other surveys may be recommended by SEATAC according to habitats onsite and project type.

1. **Preliminary table of possible sensitive species and possible sensitive vegetation**
   This table must be included, and is usually in an appendix. The biological review must include, at a minimum, a tabulation of the most current edition of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) for nine USGS quads including that of the project site and the eight surrounding quads. Include all species listed using both the verified data set and the unverified data set. Include Holland (1986) sensitive vegetation habitats. Include all plants in the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) nine quad list. Include any species possible in the habitats of the project parcels from Endangered, Threatened, Rare or unique species, taxa, or taxa of special concern to Local, State, Federal, or International Agencies. If the project extends onto more than one quad, the analysis must include the quads pertinent to all development parcels and all surrounding quads. Organize by invertebrates, vertebrate classes, sensitive vegetative habitats of CNDDB (Holland 1986), and all plants together. Organize individual species alphabetically in these major groupings or phylogenetically where that is standard. Sensitive species known to be possible by expert biologists or by reference to published species lists (such as those of nearby natural parks) of the area should be added. For plants, use of the Consortium of California Herbaria records is advised. For SEATAC, species on the Part 1 & Part 2 lists of "Los Angeles County's Sensitive Birds" possible for the site shall be included. The watch list of "LACo Sensitive Birds" should not be included.

Los Angeles County's Sensitive Birds:
http://losangelesaudubon.org/images/stories/pdf/vol.%2075%20no.%2003%20january%20february%202009,%20color%20web%20version.pdf

- Data columns shall include:
  a. Scientific name, full Latin binomial or trinomial as appropriate. For any possible sensitive species that is a subspecies, the species shall be identified to subspecific levels.
  b. Common name
  c. Statuses of sensitivity (status for Federal; CA state; CDFG; LA County; CA fully protected, if possible in habitats on project parcels; and CNPS)
  d. Elevation range
  e. Brief summary of habitats occupied for species
  f. Rough estimate of population size (abundant, common, uncommon, rare)
  g Rating: Observed / Possible / Unlikely

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For any species with habitat available on the parcels, the rating should be "Possible." Even the slightest indication or probability of existence of biotic resources requires mention of that possibility. In general, if habitat for a species exists in the parcel(s), however limited, the species should be rated "possible" for the site.

It is not appropriate to include all County sensitive species in this table, which would present a false impression of low diversity of the site. Entries must be listed for the 9-quad lists or be possible in the habitats on the project parcels. Examples of inappropriate species would be (a) a species known from habitat such as those onsite but known only from San Diego County—i.e. regionally very unlikely and (b) a species such as the Southern California steelhead (fish) on a site without an appropriate watercourse—i.e. the project site is without appropriate habitat. Do not include such a species if it is absent from the 9-quad lists.

Some of the entries may have a rating "observed" from the field reconnaissance. For avifauna, use eBIRD to augment the observed ratings, the species list, and to plan season of surveys for birds. Observations due strictly to eBIRD should be denoted with superscript "e".

http://ebird.org/ebird/eBirdReports?cmd=Start

This preliminary table shall be updated with any species observed throughout the SEATAC and project study period. Headings shall include date of preparation (version) of the table.

2. Any **rating of "unlikely" must have valid reasons** given. Short paragraphs/statement lines should describe reasoning on a judgment of "unlikely" for any sensitive species that will not be further analyzed.
3. Provide **rough estimates of the population sizes** of observed flora and fauna on the project site as abundant, common, uncommon, rare. Break points could vary by species. Devise an appropriate scale for each organism. Show break points on rough estimates in a separate table. One suggested scheme: abundant (>100 individuals), common (11-99 individuals), uncommon (2-10), rare (1 or fewer).
4. **Optional metric of diversity of region represented by the potential sensitive species of the subject parcels** (appendix)**:**

   The **numbers of sensitive species possible out of total sensitive species in the list** of the preliminary table may be stated. **Numbers of Holland sensitive vegetation classes possible out of total sensitive vegetation classes for the region** may be stated. Conversion to **percentages** shall be stated if this metric is used. This is a numerical indicator of diversity on the project site with respect to the diversity of the 9-quad region. Reasoning on low percentage values can be given showing restricted habitat onsite compared to the region. However, an area with restricted habitats can be important to the region because of rarity or importance of function.
5. **Table of possible sensitive species**, extracted from the preliminary table. The possible sensitive species table is in the main text. This table of possible sensitive species will be updated with observations for any species observed throughout the SEATAC and project study period. Headings should always include date of preparation (version) of the table. Observations due strictly to eBIRD should be denoted with superscript "e".
   - This table of possible sensitive species should guide the arrangement of field study seasons and type of biological surveys done.
   - The table shall be updated for all versions. Heading shall show date as version.

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6. **Short paragraphs** should describe sensitive species' possible occurrences or observed occurrences. The short paragraph should describe the species' habitat and characteristics that might lead to impact by the project. Analysis should be "habitat based," in that the complex functioning community of organisms is probably necessary to continued existence of any sensitive species. Any possible CNPS-listed plants (lists 1-4) should be discussed in the text.

- The report should place descriptions of any listed species (federal or state "endangered" or "threatened") in a separate section for focus.

C. Maps of occurrence for sensitive species, usually, points of observation. For protocol studies this may be a habitat polygon.

- If sensitive resources are known or suspected to occur on the project site, a study by the appropriate specialists will be required. Surveys shall be done for any possible sensitive species, and possible sensitive species shall be identified to subspecies level if that is appropriate. Survey shall include sufficient detail to make the rough estimates of population size. Ideally, protocol surveys should be done for the BCA, so that these constraints can be mapped. If not possible, the on-site habitat for these species should be indicated. The protocol and focus surveys that need to be done shall be part of the future design analysis in the "Conclusion" section.
- All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and such vouchers and institutions shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists (See BCA III.F.& G.)

D. Wildlife movement and habitat linkage analysis and map. Identify and map possible wildlife movement areas and habitat linkage areas and discuss. Quantitative study by traditional methods (roadkill, sign and track analysis, motion-activated cameras, etc.) on the project site should be part of the study for the BCA. In the absence of site-specific quantitative study on site, areas typically used for movement **(especially along drainages, ridgelines, trails, and unpaved roads)** shall be presumed to be regionally used and shall be avoided by development or mitigated for development.

E. In Appendices provide a **floristic list** (all plant species observed) alphabetized by family, genera, species and variety or subspecies. Species on CNPS lists should be denoted with superscript of list category.

- All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and such vouchers and institutions shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists.

F. In Appendices provide a **list of all fauna observed**, organized by phylum for invertebrates and class for vertebrates, with species listed by both scientific binomial or trinomial and common name. Vertebrate lists shall be in systematic order by family. Potentially sensitive species shall be identified to subspecies level. Observations due strictly to eBIRD should be denoted with superscript "e". Species on range edge should be denoted with superscript "r". Species for which observation is a range extension should be denoted with superscript "x".

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- All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and such vouchers and institutions shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists.

IV. Characteristics of the Surrounding Area

A. Describe **existing land uses in the neighborhood**, including proposed and approved development and lands in the public domain.

B. **Table of development projects in the vicinity** including data such as acreage, number of units. Text should have a summary **discussion of regional development** relevant to project.

C. Map of appropriate scale showing generalized land use on the project site and on surrounding properties of immediate adjoining parcels and/or any physical or biotic features that affect adjacent drainage (watershed) patterns. Include the boundaries of nearby projects with project number and case summary (at least the case number, area, and number of lots). (Information within 500 ft. of parcels is available using the DRP GIS functions and in the local plans, both available on the DRP site. Parcel and tract map information is available from the DRP case planner.)

D. Identify **open space reserves** in the area and any **movement corridors or habitat linkages that may connect** those reserves or any other open space to the subject property. Show these on a **map**. Identify actual or potential wildlife movement and gene flow between surrounding open space to and through the subject property. There shall be analysis of wildlife movement/habitat linkage potential for the project's place in the region, discussed with the understanding that assessments such as "absence of wildlife movement" or "regionally insignificant wildlife movement" can only be carried forward to the biota report if verified through field study by the project on the site of the project. For most projects in undeveloped, open space areas, there will need to be a study on the project site of wildlife movement in standard ways using roadkill, sign such as tracks and scat, and motion-triggered cameras. Without field study of potential wildlife movement, the project must presume regional (CEQA significant) movement through the property and delineate the most likely places this would occur such as ridgetops, drainages, unpaved roads, etc. These areas shall be avoided and if impacted, mitigation shall be required.

E. Reference and discuss **relevance of project to any conservation plans** in the vicinity.

F. Identify major/dominant vegetation habitats, **alliance and associations, and communities in the vicinity, their locations and connectivity with the subject parcel**. Reference to the vegetation maps will be useful.

G. Provide **rough estimates of the overall population sizes of species of flora and fauna in the range of which the subject property** is a part and discuss how species on project parcels relate to overall population size.

H. Describe the **overall biological value of the area** (diversity, special interest populations, etc.) Discuss how the site relates to or represents the **biological mosaic** of the

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surrounding area. (i.e. Is it at the edge of a habitat type? What is the principal potential wildlife movement corridor? Does it have the last remnant of a certain type of flora?) This may include discussion of percentage statistic for number of sensitive species possible out of number of sensitive species in preliminary table in appendix and may include discussion of percentage of sensitive vegetation habitats on the project compared to those possible in region. Discuss **how the project site contributes to the surrounding area and how it supports SEA ecological functions**.

V. Conclusion

A. Regulatory framework describes all environmental laws and ordinance that pertain to the subject property. Relevant topics should include:

1. **CEQA**: For an outline of the kinds of constraints that should be addressed with respect to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) use the California Public Resources Code Appendix G [§IV.Biological Resources].
2. **Jurisdictional waters** of the federal Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Game, and the Regional Water Quality Control Board should all be addressed.
3. **Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs)** shall be thoroughly examined for compliance with Burden of Proof, Compatible Uses, Design Specifications, and Appraisal of Loss and Gain from the SEA. Components of these should all be listed in the regulatory section. (See pp. 5-11 of this document for SEA measures [County Zoning Code 22.56], [County Zoning Code 22.42.10].) For **SERA/ESHAs,** all relevant policies of the Local Coastal Plans shall be considered and listed in the regulatory section. (See p.11 of this document for SERA/ESHA relevant documents. Projects on Santa Catalina Island will need to reference both SEA regulations and regulations of the relevant Coastal Zone regulations and policies.)

B. **Summarizing all data of the BCA study sections of Site and Surrounding Area Characteristics**, the conclusion will be directed towards findings of the Site and Surrounding Area Characteristics sections as they relate to compatibility with the SEA resources, Los Angeles County Zoning Code [§22.56.215.F.2]. This section shall make explicit any assumptions incorporated, and outline logic of steps taken to come to the conclusions. The conclusion shall include a discussion of the ecological services provided by the site (eg. erosion control, fire resistance, maintenance of water quality, and connectivity for plant and animal movement). It shall provide a clear assessment statement of constraints (which biological resources on the subject parcel are the most valuable and thus should be preserved, or avoided by the project design), and the consulting biologist's opinion of the value of the biological resources on the site—their degree of uniqueness or redundancy in terms of individuals, populations and communities.

C. **Map of constraints.** The constraints map should represent sensitive resources as polygons except where this is impractical, as in locations of unitary resources such as isolated trees or springs. For clear depiction of multiple resources, more than one map may be needed.

D. For SEA/SERA/ESHA projects, the conclusion section must include an **explicit statement of analysis of acreage and development of the SEA in the project parcels, what is left of the SEA/SERA**, and how its function remains, relative to that when it was initially

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designated by the County (for example, what corridors are intact, blocked or eliminated?)

•**§22.42.050.B**.3.f.) Reference the required SEA acreage form for the Planning Commission and staff, which should be in an appendix.

(§22.42.050.B.3.a-c.)

1. For the **land analysis table**, reorganize the vegetation alliance data into categories according to (a) areas valuable to SEA function (examples i-vi below) and (b) developed areas (examples in vii. below). Notice that areas valuable to SEA function include some kinds of impacted areas, and developed areas could possibly be restored to natural conditions that would contribute to SEA function.

a.Total acreage of the SEA

b.Total acreage of project parcels

c.Total original acres designated as SEA (total for project area) and subcategories:

i. Intact, completely natural, not disturbed including not grazed by livestock

ii. Intact (minimal disturbance such as grazed by livestock)

iii. Grassland (less than 25% relative cover by shrubs)

a) Native grassland has at least 10% native component (forbs and grasses) relative cover

b) Non-native grassland has less than 10% relative cover of native forbs and grasses

iv. Other ruderal fields

v. Fallow agricultural

vi. Other (impacted), including heavily irrigated areas, active agriculture, built areas, roads with the SEA overlay (Restorable development)

d. Acres of SEA in categories A-F **to be developed** (includes categories a-f changed to roads, parks, trails, structures, or graded etc.) and percentage of total project SEA acres to be developed (loss). This may be blank for BCA with no planned project.

e. Acres of natural SEA permanently **protected as natural open space by deed or by deed restriction** (eg. Conservation easement) with breakdown according to vegetation alliance. This may be blank for BCA with no planned project.

f. Acres to be "**restored**" (includes graded and otherwise impacted areas replanted to native habitat): amount in SEA; amount outside SEA. This may be blank for BCA with no planned project.

2. [**§22.42.050.B**.3.e.] For the **drainage analysis table**, give **length of drainages** in project parcels, categorized by watershed names. Give **length of total watershed drainages downstream** and **total length of main watershed course**. Give percentage length of watershed course potentially affected on project parcels. (This may be blank for BCA with no planned project.) Give percentage length of main watershed course potentially affected by project.

3. A **map of drainages** can be helpful in showing relationships.

E. Outline of possible significant impacts.

F. If further study is needed, the conclusion shall have a **design for future data collection**, specifying studies to be done in the future that are needed to inform the biota report.

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Surveys must adhere to standard techniques expected by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game or other resource agency, as applicable. Surveys must be conducted during the optimum period for observing the taxa of concern, for example, spring for most plants, birds or insects; summer for mammals; etc. Surveys conducted outside of these times, in most cases, will need to be repeated and supplemented by surveys conducted at the optimal time. Surveys must include a list of butterfly fauna potentially present on site. Due to the large invertebrate fauna present at any site and the extreme difficulty of invertebrate identification with the exception of butterflies, general invertebrate surveys do not have to be conducted except when specifically directed by SEATAC or the Department of Regional Planning. For the BCA, surveys must be approximately 1 year old or more recent.

VI. Bibliography

List of source information for all literature cited in text. Bibliography should have only references cited in the text, but all citations should be present. URLs are helpful.

VII. Appendices

A. Data on qualifications of biologists and other contributors
B. **Optional** map showing Holland categories
C. **Optional** Vegetation alliance relevé data
D. Oak Tree report for sites with jurisdictional native oak trees (5" DBH and larger)
E. Preliminary table of sensitive species and vegetative habitats
F. Paragraphs/statement of explanation for sensitive species judged "unlikely"
G. Table of break-points for rough estimates of population size by species
H. **Optional** metric of percentage sensitive species possible out of sensitive species of 9-quad region
I. Floristic table
J. Observed fauna
- All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and such vouchers and institutions shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists.

K. Copies of past SEATAC minutes for project review shall be in appendix.
L.Completed BCA Checklist (included in these guidelines as an appendix)
M. Form with preliminary figures of total SEA acreage, drainage length on project parcels

VIII. Digital Copies of BCA as .pdf; georeferenced files of vegetative data and sensitive species occurrences for Dept. Regional Planning (DRP).

BCA Checklist

A checklist is provided to assist in the assembly of the BCA report. If items are missing, please explain why in the appropriate section of the report (for instance, certain photos or maps may be omitted if they are obviated by others, or if their inclusion does not contribute useful

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information to the report).

BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS Checklist	Page	Initials
I.Cover/ Spine/ Title Page A. Project name, type of report (Biological Constraints Analysis)		
B. County identification numbers (Project number, CUP number, APNs).		
C. Applicant name and contact information		
D. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)		
E. Name of head biologist for report and consulting company directive information		
F. Date of report		
II. Introduction A. Project description		
1. Project name, type of report, address of project		
2. County application identification numbers including APNs		
3. Applicant name and contact information		
4. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)		
5. Supervising biologist, company, directive information		
6. Parcel and Acreage Table (for more than one parcel)		
7. Location		
a. Map of regional features in vicinity showing project location; all drainages and wetlands referenced in text must be shown on a map		
b. Color USGS topographic map with outline of project parcels, SEA, open space resource areas, etc.; scale about 1:24000		
c. Color vertical aerial showing project parcels, SEA, open space, etc.		
8. Descriptive outline of possible project, alternatives		
B. Description of natural geographic features 1. Summary of biological resources known including description of relation to a. landforms and geomorphology b. drainage and wetland features c. soils; include soil map d. Vegetation communities e. SEA criteria and resources		
2. Color site photography with keys		
3. Summary of biological resources incorporating pertinent literature review		
C. Methodology of biological survey 1. Table of surveys (surveys approximately 1 year old or more recent)		
2. Text description of survey methods		
3. Table of information on biologist(s) and other contributors for BCA; appendix of contributors' experience		
• Proof of permits or Memoranda of Understanding for trapping shall be in the appendix.		
III. Biological Characteristics of the site A. Vegetation data 1a. **Optional** map of vegetation using Holland (1986) system (appendix)		
1b. Vegetation map of Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, Evens (2009) alliances and associations of vegetation types, relevé locations		
BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS Checklist	**Page**	**Initials**
1c. **Optional** soil map; same scale as vegetation map; may be a transparent overlay on vegetative map(s)		
1d. **Optional** summary of percentage cover analysis (Relevé percentage cover data in appendix, absolute and relative)		
2. Vegetation cover table		
3. Map of trees (For jurisdictional oaks, State and County, an oak tree report		

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will be needed. Oak tree reports will be in an appendix.)		
4. Summary of vegetation site habitats in relation to soil, sensitivity, rainfall, potential for impact		
5. CD/DVD of georeferenced files for vegetation data as ESRI .shp including metadata (May be combined with other data on CD/DVD of project .pdf)		
B. Fauna and Flora sensitive species tables and discussion 1. Preliminary table of possible sensitive species and possible sensitive vegetation (appendix).		
2. Paragraphs/explanatory lines on sensitive species judged unlikely for project site. (appendix)		
3. Table of break points on rough estimate of population size (appendix)		
4. **Optional** statement on percentage of species possible out of total sensitive species for the region and Holland sensitive vegetation classes possible out of total sensitive vegetation classes for the region (appendix)		
5. Table of possible sensitive species		
6. Paragraphs for each sensitive species on characteristics that might lead to project impact. Listed species paragraphs are to be in separate section.		
C. Maps of occurrence for sensitive species		
D. Wildlife movement/habitat linkage analysis with map of site and movement areas		
E. Floristic list (all flora observed, in appendix, updated for latest observation, version date)		
F. List of all fauna observed (in appendix, updated for latest observation, version date)		
• All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and such vouchers and institutions shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists.		
IV. Characteristics of the Surrounding Area A. Description of existing land uses in the neighborhood		
B. Table of development projects in the vicinity and summary discussion (acreage, units, etc.)		
C. Map of land uses		
D. Description of Open space reserves in the area and depiction of wildlife movement/habitat linkage relationships to open space. Include known conservation easements in perpetuity. Refer to maps II.A.7		
E. Reference to any conservation plans in the vicinity and project relationship		
F. Description of Habitats, alliances, associations and vegetative communities in the vicinity with respect to those on site		
G. Rough estimates of the overall population sizes of species of flora and fauna on site and in vicinity		
H. Description of overall biological value of the area: fit to the biotic mosaic; contribution to surrounding area and SEA ecological functions		
V. Conclusion A. Regulatory framework		
B. Summarized biological data with respect to regulatory framework		
C. Constraints map(s)		
BIOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS ANALYSIS Checklist	**Page**	**Initials**
D. Explicit statement of SEA/SERA/ESHA acreages total and in project parcels; explicit statement of length of watersheds on project parcels and total; potential affected area of watercourses (refer to required form in appendix)		
1. Land analysis table		
2. Drainage analysis table		
3. Drainage relationship map		
E. Outline of possible significant impacts		

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F. Design for further studies needed to prepare Biota Report		
VI. Bibliography: A. Bibliography of references cited in text		
B. Bibliography of general references used to prepare document but not cited		
VII. Appendices A. Data on qualifications of biologists and other contributors		
• Proof of permits or Memoranda of Understanding for trapping		
B. **Optional** vegetation map using Holland (1986) system of categories		
C. **Optional** Vegetation alliance relevé data		
D. Oak Tree report for sites with jurisdictional native oak trees (5" DBH and larger)		
E. Preliminary table of sensitive species and vegetative habitats		
F. Explanatory lines/paragraphs on judgment of "unlikely" sensitive species		
G. Table of break points for rough population estimates		
H. **Optional** metric of percentage sensitive species possible out of sensitive species of region		
I. Floristic table		
J. Observed fauna		
•All voucher collections shall be deposited in an appropriate, recognized public institution, and such vouchers and institutions shall be tabulated in the floristic and faunal lists.Form for SEA reduction		
K. Copies of past SEATAC minutes for project review		
L. Completed BCA Checklist (included in these guidelines as an appendix)		
M. Form with preliminary figures of total acreage in SEA, acreage in project parcels, acreage of SEA in categories valuable to SEA; watercourse length and relationships		
VIII. Digital Copies of BCA as .pdf for final version; georeferenced files of vegetative data and sensitive species occurrences.		

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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF REGIONAL PLANNING

BIOTA REPORT GUIDELINES

The Biota Report follows from the Biological Constraints Analysis and incorporates any recommendations from SEATAC or the Regional Planning Biologist along with the project details and mitigations. Updates of the preliminary and sensitive species tables are mandatory. A combination of hardcopies and .pdf files on CD/DVD are to be submitted. Consult County biologist for number of copies of each to submit. Omission of any of the following sections or negligence of formatting requirements may be cause for SEATAC to return the biota report to the consultants without review.

Some of the elements of this report may be supplied to the project biologist by the client, and it is advised that the client meet with the biologist, and that they go over the SEATAC guidelines together, assigning responsibility as appropriate for the different items, and insuring that the client, in particular, understands the purpose and nature of this report. It is essential that the client know and understand that being in an SEA imparts responsibilities as regards the natural resources of their property, and that they must work cooperatively with the biologist to fulfill the requirements of SEA guidelines.

BIOTA REPORT REQUIREMENTS

Format:
Format is the same as for BCA, but type of report changes to "Biota Report." (See p.10.) Consult County biologist for number of hard copies and CD/DVDs to be submitted.

Resubmittal Format
Copies of the complete biota report with revisions shall be submitted for the case records. Consult County biologist for media type and number of copies needed. The cover of the report shall be identical to the initial Biota Report submittal with an additional statement of "Supplemental Information Submitted To SEATAC At Their Request On [date]." The revised date shall be beneath the previous date. Dividers, sections or photographs shall be included that explicitly state such material is a response to an issue or question raised by SEATAC. These responses shall be on colored sheets. The colored sheets will be placed directly behind the page that the response addresses. Different colored sheets are to be used for separate resubmittals. Each issue or question and its corresponding response shall be numbered in sequence. If changes are made to the project boundaries, the delineation of the original project shall be included on any maps for comparison.

Comment [s1]: Should this be changed to a letter responding to each comment and recommendation item in SEATAC minutes of previous review? Page numbers of revision should be referenced.
See Levine letter for July 2011 meeting as example.

Final Format
Consult County Biologist for number of hardcopies and CD/DVD copies of .pdf files for County case records. (The usual materials are three hardcopies of final BCA and final Biota Report and two CD/DVD copies of .pdf files of final BCA and complete final Biota Report including all revisions, and georeferenced data of vegetation map, tree map, and sensitive species.

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I. Cover, Spine (if applicable)**, Title Page,**

A. Project name & "Biota Report" (type of report). Address of project on title page.
B. County identification numbers (Project number, CUP number, APNs).
C. Applicant name and contact information
D. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)
D. Name of head biologist for report and consulting company directive information
E. Date of report

II. Project description

A. Project description
1. Project name and address, "Biota Report," address of project
2. County permit application identification numbers including APNs
3. Applicant name and contact information
4. SEA/SERA/ESHA name(s)
5. Preparing biologist, company, and contact information
6. **Parcel and Acreage Table**
7. **Location**
   a. Map of regional features in vicinity showing project in relation to nearby communities, streets, significant geological and drainage features, and geographical landmarks.
   b. Color USGS 7.5-minute topographic map with outline of project parcels, SEA, open space resource areas, drainage, etc.
   c. Color vertical aerial showing project parcels, SEA, open space, etc.
8. **Project & alternatives description**
   a. Provide **site plans** at a legible scale showing the maximum extent of buildable sites with all required or anticipated roads, easements and driveways. At least one site plan should be layered on the vegetation map with topographic base so that landforms and impacts can be seen.
   b. Provide a conceptual plan for all potential **grading** cuts and fills that would be required; pads, roads, driveways, etc. must be shown. Trees to be removed must be shown. This is required of projects where subdividing the land is the only action. Again it is useful to have this overlaid on vegetation and topography.
   c. **Description of all phases of disturbance**, from site grading to final landscaping; construction impacts, approximate schedule, with terrain disturbance detail: number of lots, amount of grading, etc. Include illustrative figures as needed.
   d. **Permits requested** (Zone Change, Plan Amendment, etc.)
   e. **Alternatives**

B. **Summary of all impacts and mitigations** (statement summarizing significant impacts of the project and referencing the pages of detailed discussion within the report)

III. Setting

A. **Summary of Natural Geographic Characteristics of the Site**, discussing geography, vegetation, fauna.
   1. **Habitat summary**, **describing biota of the project with respect to regional geography.** Describe project parcels with respect to landforms and geomorphology;

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watershed boundaries and drainage patterns, soils, vegetation, SEA/SERA/ESHA criteria and resources. Refer to a soil map. Use reference to the location maps of II.A.7 Refer to photographs of site, soils map, vegetation map of alliances, vegetation table updated in part IV.

2. **High quality photographs** of vegetation and surrounding areas including site boundaries. Photographs must include a **photokey** on a map of the site. All submittals shall contain original color photographs or equally legible color photocopies. Legible color photocopies are acceptable if they clearly depict the site.
3. **Summary discussion of sensitive species and vegetation** habitats referring to updated sensitive species table of section III.B General Biota Survey. Literature review of sensitive species including discussion of relevant broadscale documents that relate to biological resources of the project site, such as a regional development and land use plan, a regional wildlife movement study, etc.
4. Summary discussion of **Overall biological value of site and value to the SEA**.

B. **General biota survey**

1. **Table of surveys** giving dates and time periods spent on the site for the flora, vertebrate, and butterfly fauna or other significant biota of the site. (More detail on contents of this table is in BCA, Characteristics of the Site.) Surveys must adhere to standard techniques expected by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and other resource agencies of authority. Surveys for the BCA must be approximately 1 year old or more recent.
   - Related data in appendix:
   a. Table of personnel (names and addresses) involved in the field and laboratory work. List of persons contacted for technical assistance and their institutional affiliations shall be included.
   b. Lists of qualifications
   c. Proof of permits and/or Memoranda of Understanding for trapping, collection, etc.
2. **Description of survey methods.**
3. **Vegetation map** showing Sawyer *et al*. (2009) alliances and associations. (More detail is in BCA, Characteristics of the Site, III.A.1.b.)
   Optional related appendix items include
   a. Holland (1986) category map
   b. relevé data including absolute and relative cover
   c. soil map at same scale as main vegetation map; may be a transparent overlay
4. **Updated table of vegetation types and changes proposed** (Initial table details in BCA, Characteristics of the Site, III.A.2) Columns of proposed vegetation changes should show acres changed and percentage of original. Discuss the relationship of areas left natural to acreage changed with respect to adjacent natural communities. Contiguity with respect to wildlife use and movement should be featured.

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5. **Table of acreage additions and deductions for SEA**. Reorganize the vegetation data under categories of land useful to the SEA function and form. Show existing categories, original acreage, proposed acreage changes, and percentage changes. Notice that converted open space with ornamental planting, parks, trails, etc. is considered as taken out of the SEA open space (negative increment to the SEA). Conversion by restoration plantings of locally native plants should have a separate column and percentage. SEATAC will recommend whether restored areas or those proposed for restoration are considered an addition to SEA open space.
   - Categories of acreage of value to SEA include:
     - i. Intact, completely natural, not disturbed including not grazed by livestock
     - ii. Intact (minimal disturbance such as grazed by livestock)
     - iii. Grassland (less than 25% relative cover by shrubs)
       - a) Native grassland has at least 10% native component (forbs and grasses) relative cover
       - b) Non-native grassland has less than 10% relative cover of native forbs and grasses
     - iv. Other ruderal fields
     - v. Fallow agricultural
   - Categories that will deduct from acreage of value to SEA include:
     - vi. Active agriculture (crop type determines whether this is of value to SEA)
     - vii. Heavily irrigated (eg. Parks, athletic fields)
     - viii. Man-made infrastructure
     - ix. Paved
     - x. Has buildings or structures
6. **Table of drainage lengths, wetland acreage**
7. **Map of drainage relationships**
8. **Map of trees** (Details in BCA, Characteristics of the Site, A.3.)
9. **Summary of vegetation and relation to soil, drainage, rainfall, sensitivity and potential for impact**
10. **Updated preliminary table of sensitive species and vegetation habitats** of the region for the project site is to be included as an appendix to the Biota Report. (More detail on this table is in BCA, Characteristics of the Site, B.1).
    Appendix will also have:
    a. Statements of reasons for determination of "unlikely"
    b. Table of rough estimate break points
    c. Optional metric of percentage of 9-quad species possible in project parcels compared to species in 9-quad analysis for region
11. **Table of sensitive species possible on the project parcels**, extracted from preliminary table. This table is updated from updated preliminary table and BCA and date of preparation is in headings. (More detail on this is in BCA, Characteristics of the Site, B.2.)
12. **Paragraphs** following the table describe **species characteristics and possible impact** by the project. Paragraphs for listed species are in a separate section.
13. **Map(s) of observations for sensitive species**
14. **Wildlife movement/habitat linkage discussion and map**

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15. **Floristic list** (all flora observed, appendix)
16. List of all **fauna observed** (appendix)
17. **Provide information on sensitive species and communities to resource agencies.** **Information** on all Endangered, Threatened, Rare or unique species, taxa, or vegetative alliances and associations of special concern to Local, State, Federal, or International Agencies must be presented to responsible authority if observed on the project site. If Endangered, Threatened, Rare, Unique or Special Concern species and vegetative alliances/associations or their sign are identified on the site, their exact locations and estimates of abundance must be given. The methods used to estimate population size must be given. The **California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base must be contacted** regarding the presence of Endangered, Threatened, Rare, Unique or Special Concern elements.
    a. First call the CDFG Information Services: (916) 324-3812, and confer with a staff member about your observations. You will probably be leaving information on species observed, location, your contact information. The relevant staff member will call you back. Staff will tell you whether they need a form filled out for your observation or not. Staff can inform you how to request prioritization of information you are providing for entry into the CNDDB. For a state-listed species, the staff contact can advise you on how to proceed for any permissions the project may need.
    b. Contact Sacramento to obtain current information on any previously reported sensitive species and habitats, including Significant Natural Areas at Information Services: (916) 324-3812
    c. If instructed to do so, download forms from the website, fill them out, and mail to:
    Biogeographic Data Branch
    California Department of Fish and Game
    1807 13th Street, Suite 202
    Sacramento, CA 95811
    d. For federally listed species, contact the appropriate Fish and Wildlife Service Office. The relevant staff member will advise you on information needed from you and how to proceed.
    - **Copies of all correspondence concerning listed species** are to be included with the Biota Report in an appendix. Written responses shall be expected from appropriate specialists on the identified SEA sensitive resources (e.g. freshwater ichthyologists knowledgeable about the unarmored three-spine stickleback for SEAs along the Santa Clara River, etc.)

C. **Summary of Characteristics of the Surrounding Area**.
1. **Discussion of existing land uses** in the neighborhood, development in the region, lands in public domain
2. **Table of development projects in region**
3. **Map of land use** at appropriate scale showing generalized use on the project site and on surrounding properties. Show watershed and effect on adjacent drainage patterns. Include boundaries of nearby projects with project number and case summary (case number, area, number of lots).
4. **Map and discussion of open space reserves in the area and reference to wildlife**

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movement/habitat linkage. Regional movement is presumed to occur on project site, unless quantitative wildlife movement field study on project site has demonstrated otherwise.

5. Reference and discuss **relevance of project to any conservation plans in vicinity**
6. **Habitats, alliance-associations, and vegetation communities of surrounding area as they relate to site biota**. Refer to photographs and maps of previous sections. Relation of site to biotic mosaic of the surrounding area
7. **Rough estimates of the overall population sizes and distributions of species of flora and fauna within range of the subject property**. Relate to population of each species onsite and in surrounding area.
8. **Overall biological value of the are**a. Discuss how the site relates to or represents the **biological mosaic** of the area. This may include discussion of percentage statistic for number of sensitive species possible out of number of sensitive species in preliminary table in appendix and may include discussion of percentage of sensitive vegetation habitats on the project compared to those possible in region. Discuss **how the project site contributes to the surrounding area and how it supports SEA ecological functions**.

IV. Impacts

Impacts are defined as any aspect of project implementation which affects natural biological resources or processes in the SEA. This section presents standards of significance criteria defined and applied, before and after mitigation, and is based on CEQA, NEPA, SEA program, etc. SEATAC will consider land use history of the SEA, maintenance of integrity of the SEA, and future benefits of possible mitigation to SEA. This section shall include an extension of the Conclusion section of the Biological Constraints Analysis report.

A. **Regulatory framework (See outline for BCA, pp. 5-11)**

B. **Table of sensitive species impact, sensitive habitat impact, and mitigation proposed**. Each sensitive species and sensitive vegetative habitat shall be considered in the following ways (column headings) as to whether proposed development is an observed or potential impact to that species or habitat.

Row entries: Sensitive Species' scientific name / (Common Name)

Column headings/entries of considerations:

1. Was the species observed? (Yes/No)
2. Is habitat for species present so that the species is possible (Yes/No)
3. Is the species impacted directly by the habitat loss (Yes/No)
4. Is habitat loss onsite substantial? (Yes/No)
5. Is species impacted indirectly on adjacent lands by edge effects? (Yes/No)
6. Is there potential to eliminate species onsite? (Yes/No)
7. Is there potential to reduce population size below self-sustaining levels? (Yes/No)
8. Is there restriction of range due to project impact? (Yes/No)
9. Is impact significant? (Yes/No)
10. Mitigation – This can reference numbered mitigation measures in later text.

C. Discussion of logic on conclusions of significance

D. Map of constraints showing the relationship between **major vegetation types, sensitive vegetation types, and plan for land alteration**, including the location of cuts and fills

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for building pads as well as access roads. The locations of proposed grading and trees that will be removed are to be shown on these map(s). A translucent overlay of project impacts on vegetation map with topographic lines is preferred format. Use the number of maps needed to clearly convey the impacts proposed.

1. **Table of the amount (volume) of proposed grading** for building pads, roads, and driveways. The acreage and percentage of the vegetation communities to be altered or graded shall be included. These amounts shall include accidental loss. Amounts shall be in table as well as shown on grading plan.
2. **Grading plan** (may be 3 x 4 ft. size, folded into envelope in appendix location)
3. **Table and map of number and species of trees** [DBH diameter at breast height (4.5 ft.)] three (3) inches and greater] for all native trees. A separate oak tree report will be required if native oaks are on the project parcels. This may be in the appendix. For large acreages, estimates of numbers of each species shall be made from 3 samples of relevant size measuring size frequency distribution for each species. Clearly differentiate estimates and actual counts. For estimates give 95% confidence limits. The effect of any impact resulting from development at the site is to be discussed.
4. [§22.42.050.B.3.f] **Discussion and map of potential damage to wildlife habitats and vegetation communities from structures, infrastructure, accessory structures** such as horse corrals, stables, trails, driveways, etc. shall be discussed. This should be in three superimposed layers with transparency as needed: orthogonal image with topographic lines, vegetation map, and proposed grading and structures of project plan
5. The **effect of brush clearance (fuel modification)** on plant and animal species and on any ecological cycles shall be **discussed and mapped**. The ordinances and effective fuel clearance required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department shall be included.

E. **Map(s) of species constraints** showing relationship of observations **of sensitive species** and land alteration [§22.42.050.B.3.d]

1. **Discuss short and long term impacts to life history of all sensitive plant or animal species**, or to any ecological cycles.
2. **Discuss potential damage to wildlife habitats and vegetation communities from structures, infrastructure, accessory structures** such as horse corrals, stables, trails, driveways, etc.
3. The **effect of brush clearance (fuel modification)** on plant and animal species and on any ecological cycles is to be **discussed and mapped**. The ordinances and effective fuel clearance required by the Los Angeles County Fire Department shall be included.

F. [§22.42.050.B.3.f] An **analysis of wildlife corridors and habitat linkages** relevant to the SEA and surrounding open space shall be provided. Connection of wildlife movement must be presumed unless quantitative evidence collected on the project site shows otherwise.

G. **Discussion of development and cumulative impacts in the region** (past, present, and future) referring to Table III.C.2 and referring to maps depicting project boundaries. The discussion must include upstream and downstream impacts to a logical distance. Impacts to linear resources such as drainages must be analyzed for linear percentage (%) of drainage affected by project. This section should refer to land use map of section III.C.1

H. The **effect of the project on the integrity of the SEA** shall be discussed. Discuss how the project is consistent with the SEA compatibility criteria and resources for which it

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was designated. Address:

1. Burden of Proof (See p.5)
2. Compatible Uses (See pp.5-6),
3. **Discussion of how the project meets** Design Standards (see pp. 6-9, §**22.42.040.C-H)** Reference shall be made to all design standards of the SEA program and how the project maintains biological resources such as sensitive species and vegetation habitat, woodlands, riparian habitat, and open space habitat linkages by addressing: buffering of SEA from development; landscaping; fuel modification; wildlife movement; habitat linkage; compatibility with natural, dynamic drainage; noise requirements; minimized lighting spillover into SEA areas; and preservation instruments and monitoring.
4. **Loss and gain from the SEA/SERA/ESHA acreage**. The conclusion section must include an **explicit statement of proposed reductions by development of the SEA, what will be left of the SEA/SERA**, **and how its function will remain with completion of project as proposed** (§22.42.060.A)**.** This should be relative to function when it was initially designated by the County (for example, what corridors are intact, blocked or eliminated). Refer to the standard form, which should be in an appendix and the vegetation table showing proposed changes to acreage.
   a. [§22.42.050.B.3.a-c]. T**able of vegetation alteration proposed (may refer to III.B.4)**
   b. **Table of alteration of acreages in SEA (may refer to III.B.5)**

   For the Biota Report a table in the main text should show:
   - i. Total acreage of the SEA
   - ii. Total acreage of project parcels
   - iii. Total original acres designated as SEA (total for project area) and subcategories:
   - •Examples of categories of value to SEA include
     - (a) Totally natural, ungrazed
     - (b) Natural with some impact, eg. grazed by non-native livestock
     - (c) Grassland (less than 25% relative cover by shrubs)
       1) Native grassland has at least 10% native component (forbs and grasses) relative cover
       2) Non-native grassland has less than 10% relative cover of native forbs and grasses
     - (d) Ruderal field
     - (e) Fallow agricultural
   - •Examples of categories that are probably not of value for the SEA include heavily irrigated areas, active agriculture (depends on crop), built areas, roads with the SEA overlay
   - iv. acres of SEA in categories i. to v. to be developed [includes categories 1) to 6) changed to roads, parks, trails, structures, or graded etc.] and percentage of total project SEA acres to be developed (loss).
   - v. acres of natural SEA permanently protected as natural open space by deed or by deed restriction (eg. Conservation easement) with breakdown according to vegetation alliance.

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vi. acres to be "restored" (includes graded and otherwise impacted areas replanted to native habitat): amount in SEA; amount outside SEA. **Map of land alteration**—showing proposed development and remaining SEA land.

c. **Map of vegetation alteration**

d. **Table showing watershed influenced by project** [§22.42.050.B.3.e]. The watershed table should reference map(s) that illustrate relationships of the drainages involved. Give length of drainages in project parcels, categorized by watershed names. Give length of total main watershed, length of downstream watershed, and percentage length affected by project parcels. Show length and percentages to be affected by proposed development both on the project parcels and for the total watercourse downstream. (If drainage from development goes to a part of the watercourse, then that length of the watercourse is affected on the project parcels, and the whole of the watershed length downstream is affected.)

e. **Map illustrating drainage(s) influenced by proposed project**

f. **Appendix** should have the **one-page form** prepared by applicant for the Planning Commission and staff that shows an evaluation of **acreage changes** the applicant proposes with the resources on the site.

V. Mitigation measures [§22.42.050.B.4-6)

A. Specific mitigation measures that are to be incorporated into the project shall be listed together with impacts addressed.

B. Other mitigation measures that were considered must be included along with the reasons for rejection.

C. At a minimum, mitigation measures should specifically address the following considerations important to the SEA integrity.

1. **SEA impacts of land conversion**: The **acreage and percentage of the site that is to be left as undisturbed, natural open area shall be defined** (as compared to "developed" area and areas in which ornamental non-native vegetation is to be introduced). This should be related to overall change in the natural area of the SEA. **Area to be restored** with locally native plantings should also be discussed, and likely diversity of this area compared to natural communities should be a factor in SEATAC recommendation for restoration to count as addition or no addition to the SEA.
2. The **relationship of the on-site natural open area to the surrounding vegetation** communities is to be discussed.
3. Short and long term **measures that will be taken to protect and manage the natural open areas** (e.g. fencing, giving conservation easements or deed to land trust, etc.) must be listed.
4. The type and amount of **landscaping** is to be discussed. Plant taxa native to the immediate area shall be utilized unless infeasible. An explanation shall be provided if it is determined that using native plants is not feasible.

- Relocation of plant and animal individuals generally will not be an acceptable mitigation measure, unless this is the accepted resource agency standard.
- Permissive language (e.g. "should," "could," "may," "might," "if practicable," "if feasible," etc.) shall not be used.

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VI. Monitoring program — For each mitigation measure a monitoring program must be included that directly relates to compensating for the impact in some measure. It shall address performance standards to be met that have biological objectives and monitoring related to the biological impact. Alternatives shall be given for cases where the performance standard is not met. Bonding for completion of the mitigation shall be addressed. Funding responsibility, timing, and the responsible parties shall be identified. Adaptive management plans are recommended.

VII. Bibliography of the references cited in the report

VIII. Appendices

A. Data on qualifications of biologists and other contributors including permits, MOU
B. **Optional** Vegetation alliance-association relevé data
C. Oak Tree report for sites with jurisdictional native oak trees (5" DBH and larger)
D. Preliminary table of sensitive species and vegetative habitats
E. Explanatory line/paragraph for "unlikely" sensitive species
F. Table of break point for rough population estimates
G. **Optional** metric of percentage sensitive species possible out of sensitive species of region
H. Floristic table
I. Observed fauna
J. Copies of communications with respect to listed species and vegetation communities
K. Copies of past SEATAC or ERB minutes for project review
L. Form for SEA reduction
M. Completed Biota Report Checklist (included in these guidelines as an appendix)

IX. Consult County biologist for final materials needed. Usually, one hardcopy of final BCA and Biota reports; two (2) CD/DVDs of BCA and Biota reports as .pdf; and georeferenced shapefile data for ARCGIS referenced to geographic or California State Plane for vegetative maps; observation data on sensitive species; and constraint maps.

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BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST	PAGE	INITIALS
I. Cover/Spine/Title Page – see p.16-17,28; identify as "Biota Report"		
II. Project Description A.1-5. Project Details: name, address, County numbers, applicant info, SEA name, biologist info, date of report		
6. Parcel and acreage table		
7. Maps of location a. vicinity map		
b. Color USGS topo of parcel(s) of project showing SEA & public conservation area boundaries, geographic features		
c. Color vertical aerial photograph showing project parcels, SEA, etc.		
8. Project and alternatives description a. Site plans; at least one superimposed on vegetation map with topo lines		
b. Grading plans; at least one superimposed on vegetation map, topo lines		
c. Description of disturbance schedule		
d. Permits requested		
e. Alternatives		
B. Summary of project impacts and mitigation		
III. Setting A. Summary of Natural Geographic Characteristics of the Project Site 1. Summary of natural geographic features a. Summary of biota of the project with respect to regional geography landforms; refer to location maps II.A.7		
b. watershed and drainage; refer to location maps II.A.7		
c. soils map		
d. reference to vegetation alliances map and table III.B.4,5,6		
e. SEA description and relation of project to SEA; refer to location maps II.A.7		
2. High quality photographs and key map of site, vegetation, surroundings		
3. Summary of resources of sensitive species and vegetation using literature review of documents on resources, development, land use plan, regional wildlife movement, etc.		
4. Overall biological value of site: mosaic with respect to region and value to SEA		
B. General biota survey 1. Table of surveys (approximately 1 year old) -Table of personnel; qualifications; collection permits & MOUs in appendix		
2. Survey methods description		
3. Vegetation map – Sawyer *et al*. (2009) alliances and associations, relevé locations -Appendix has optional materials: a. map of Holland (1986) vegetation categories b. data of relevé analysis, including absolute cover, conversion to relative cover c. soils map at same scale as vegetation alliance map • 2 CD/DVDs with georeferenced ESRI .shp file of vegetation map data		
4. Updated table of vegetation type and proposed changes		
5. Table of acreage additions and deductions of SEA land		
6. Map of vegetation changes proposed		
7. Table of drainage lengths and wetland acreage		
8. Map of drainage relationships		
9. Map of trees • 2 CD/DVDs include georeferenced ESRI .shp file of tree map data		

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BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST	PAGE	INITIALS
10. Updated preliminary table of sensitive species and vegetation habitats (appendix) -Appendix has further materials a. statements justifying any species of 9-quad analysis considered "unlikely" b. rough estimate break point table c. Optional metric of % species of 9-quad region possible on project site		
11. Table of sensitive species possible on project parcels		
12. Paragraphs on possible impact on sensitive species and vegetation; Listed species in a separate section for focus		
13. Map(s) of observed sensitive species and sensitive vegetation habitat locations • 2 CD/DVDs include georeferenced ESRI .shp file of species map data		
14. Wildlife movement/habitat linkage discussion and map		
15. Floristic list (appendix)		
16. List of all fauna observed (appendix)		
17. Information provision to State and Federal agencies (appendix) • Copies of correspondences with appropriate specialists and CA DFG		
B. Summary of Characteristics of Surrounding Area 1. Land use description including development and planned development		
2. Table of development including planned development in region		
3. Map of Land use		
4. Map and discussion of Open space reserves and wildlife movement/habitat linkage		
5. Discussion of any conservation plans for region		
6. Habitats & vegetation alliance-associations of surrounding area as they relate to vegetation of site		
7. Relation of population sizes onsite to population sizes of region		
8. Overall biological value of the site as it supports SEA mosaic and SEA ecological functions		
VI. Impacts A. Regulatory framework		
B. Table of impact for sensitive vegetation and species (see last page questions?)		
C. Discussion of logic on conclusions of significance		
D. Maps of vegetation constraints (Translucent overlays of project impacts over vegetation maps with topographic lines is preferred.)		
1. Map, refer to Tables III.B.5 & Table III.B.6, w/ grading superimposed		
2. Discussion of proposed grading; refer to Grading plan (appendix)		
3. Tree impact discussion & map of trees showing removals and disturbance planned		
4. Discussion & Map of impact to wildlife habitat and vegetation communities from structures, infrastructure, and accessory structures proposed		
5. Fuel modification and brush clearance: Discussion & Map		
E. Map of constraints of sensitive species. Discussion of impacts		
F. Analysis of wildlife corridors and habitat linkages with map		
G. Discussion of cumulative impacts and development in region		
H. Discussion of project impact on integrity of the SEA, addressing		
1. Burden of proof (see p..5)		
2. Compatible land use (see pp.5-6)		
3. Design standards- refer to pp. 6-9		
a. Preserve biological resources: sensitive species and vegetation habitat		
b. Preserve woodland habitats		
c. Preserve wildlife corridors and habitat linkages		
d. Preserve riparian habitats, drainages, wetlands, and watershed functions		

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BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST	PAGE	INITIALS
e. Allocate open space of type valuable to SEA that is contiguous with onsite and offsite open space for habitat connectivity		
f. Landscaped buffers between structures and SEA open space		
g. Siting of development to avoid impact to wildlife movement and habitat linkage		
h. Landscape design with native vegetation, avoiding invasive plants		
i. Preserve natural and dynamic water flow from site onto natural. Preserve natural and dynamic water flow from site onto natural adjacent areas		
j. Preservation instrument that incorporates bond, endowment, management in perpetuity		
k. Roadways with facilitation for wildlife crossing and guidance		
l. Noise curtailment		
m. Minimal artificial lighting, directed away from biological resources		
n. Minimal vegetation clearing		
4. Discussion of SEA alteration. a. Refer to Table of vegetation changes III.B.4. b. Table III.B.5 of SEA land changes c. Map of vegetation alterations d. Table of drainages and proposed alterations e. Map of drainage relationships II.B.8 f. Refer to Form of SEA analysis in appendix		
VII. Mitigation measures A. List of impact and mitigation measures that apply The following aspects of SEA impact must be addressed:		
1. Acreage remaining as natural open space and percentage of original		
2. Open space relation to surrounding open space and vegetation per design criteria		
3. Short and long term measures & preservation instruments that will provide protection of natural open areas		
4. Type and amount of landscaping; utilization of locally native plants; prohibition on invasive plants		
VIII. Monitoring program		
A. Directly applicable to addressing impact; measurement of biological response to mitigation		
B. Performance standards		
C. Alternatives for failure to meet performance standards		
D. Funding and bond establishment		
E. Schedule		
F. Responsible parties		
G. Adaptive management		
IX. Bibliography: A.Bibliography of cited references		
B. Bibliography of general references used to prepare report but not cited		
X. Appendices A. Table of biologists and other contributors; Preparer and other contributor qualifications; permits, MOUs		
B. **Optional** Vegetation alliance relevé data		
C. Oak Tree report for sites with jurisdictional native oak trees (5" DBH and larger)		
D. Updated preliminary table of sensitive species & vegetation		
E. Explanatory line/paragraph for "unlikely" sensitive species		
F. Table of break points for rough population estimates		

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BIOTA REPORT CHECKLIST	PAGE	INITIALS
G. **Optional** metric of percentage sensitive species possible out of sensitive species of region		
H. Floristic table		
I. Table of observed sensitive fauna		
J. Copies of communications on listed species and vegetation communities		
K. Copies of minutes from SEATAC/ERB review of project		
L. Form for SEA reduction		
M. Completed Biota Report Checklist (this table)		
IX. CD or DVD of BCA and Biota reports as .pdf & Georeferenced shapefiles (ESRI .shp, geographic) for vegetative maps and observations of sensitive species		

REFERENCES

Holland, R.F. 1986. Preliminary descriptions of the terrestrial natural communities of California. State of California, The Resources Agency.

Sawyer, John, Todd Keeler-Wolf, & J.Evens. 2009. A Manual of California Vegetation, 2nd edition. Sacramento, CA. California Native Plant Society.

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