

PM070839 STAFF BIOLOGIST PRELIMINARY REVIEW COMMENTS

ONSITE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

4-3-13

The major biological issue appears to be oak trees. There are several west of Sloan Canyon Road that comprise a woodland, and a single isolated oak tree on the eastern parcel. This isolated tree wouldn't be considered part of the woodland, but it would trigger the need for an OTP if encroached upon or removed. All of the oaks west of Sloan Cyn Rd would also need an OTP for removal or encroachment.

The understory of the oak woodland is highly degraded by livestock/equestrian-related activities. It also looks like the impactful use has been in place for a long time, probably pre-dating 2005. Development would therefore not displace a high-quality woodland, and tree replacement per the County Oak Tree Ordinance within a semi-natural setting may be sufficient to reduce impacts to the woodland to a less than significant level.

A single large holly-leaf cherry tree is present on the western parcel. Cherries aren't protected by county ordinance, but they are noteworthy components of the local biota and should be included in landscaping plans if removed by development.

A small drainage course is present along the southern flank of the ridge on the eastern parcel. This drainage has a bed and bank and exhibits soil-sorting characteristics that may subject it to CDFW regulation. There is no riparian vegetation to speak of, although the above-mentioned cherry tree is likely dependant on the drainage for its water. A larger drainage course is present to the west of Sloan Cyn Rd and is showing a fair amount of erosion along its banks. I'm confident that this one would be subject to CDFW regulation.

Special-status plants and animals reported from the region are listed at the end of these comments. Those with potential to utilize on-site habitats include the following:

Plants

Peirson's morning-glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*)

chaparral ragwort (*Senecio aphanactis*)

Greata's aster (*Symphotrichum greatae*)

slender mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus* var. *gracilis*)

Animals

coastal whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*)

coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*)

Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*)

Bell's sage sparrow (*Amphispiza belli belli*)

California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*)

loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)

spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*)

western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*)

San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus bennettii*)

California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*)

San Diego desert woodrat (*Neotoma lepida intermedia*)

American badger (*Taxidea taxus*)

If the eastern parcel is to be developed, a spring survey for the above-listed plants should be conducted this April – May. Direct impacts to special-status bird species listed above can be mitigated by implementation of a pre-construction nesting bird survey and protection of active bird nests if any are found. Special-status reptile and (non-bat) mammal species can be relocated manually prior to and during construction as they are discovered on site by a biological monitor. Bat roosts can be evicted during non-sensitive times of the year if their host trees must be removed for project construction; otherwise, roosts should be allowed to remain in place.

Indirect impacts to wildlife are likely to be less than significant due to the small affected area of natural habitat; however, replacement of oak and cherry trees, utilization of locally-indigenous native plant species in landscaping, minimization of outdoor lighting, and use of wildlife permeable fencing will encourage the continued use of the site by native wildlife.

SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Plants

Braunton's milk-vetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*)

Nevin's barberry (*Berberis nevinii*)

round-leaved filaree (*California macrophylla*)

Peirson's morning-glory (*Calystegia peirsonii*)

San Fernando Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*)

Santa Susana tarplant (*Deinandra minthornii*)

slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecahema leptoceras*)

Conejo dudleya (*Dudleya parva*)

San Gabriel bedstraw (*Galium grande*)

Palmer's grapplinghook (*Harpagonella palmeri*)

Newhall sunflower (*Helianthus inexpectatus*)

Los Angeles sunflower (*Helianthus nuttallii* ssp. *parishii*)

mesa horkelia (*Horkelia cuneata* var. *puberula*)

Ross' pitcher sage (*Lepechinia rossii*)

Davidson's bush-mallow (*Malacothamnus davidsonii*)

Tehachapi monardella (*Monardella linoides* ssp. *oblonga*)

Ojai navarretia (*Navarretia ojaiensis*)

short-joint beavertail (*Opuntia basilaris* var. *brachyclada*)

Lyon's pentachaeta (*Pentachaeta lyonii*)

white rabbit-tobacco (*Pseudognaphalium leucocephalum*)

chaparral ragwort (*Senecio aphanactis*)

Greata's aster (*Symphotrichum greatae*)

Mt. Pinos onion (*Allium howellii* var. *clokeyi*)

slender mariposa lily (*Calochortus clavatus* var. *gracilis*)

late-flowered mariposa lily (*Calochortus fimbriatus*)

Plummer's mariposa-lily (*Calochortus plummerae*)

California Orcutt grass (*Orcuttia californica*)

Animals

Riverside fairy shrimp (*Streptocephalus woottoni*)

monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*)

Santa Ana sucker (*Catostomus santaanae*)

unarmored threespine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus williamsoni*)

arroyo chub (*Gila orcuttii*)

arroyo toad (*Anaxyrus californicus*)

foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*)

California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*)

western spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*)

coastal whiptail (*Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri*)

western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*)

coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*)

two-striped garter snake (*Thamnophis hammondi*)

Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*)

southern California rufous-crowned sparrow (*Aimophila ruficeps canescens*)

grasshopper sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*)

Bell's sage sparrow (*Amphispiza belli belli*)

burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*)

yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*)

white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*)

California horned lark (*Eremophila alpestris actia*)

California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*)

yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*)

loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*)

coastal California gnatcatcher (*Polioptila californica californica*)

bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*)

least Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*)

pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*)

spotted bat (*Euderma maculatum*)

western mastiff bat (*Eumops perotis californicus*)

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