



SUBJECT: Biological Resources Description and Recommendations,
Papparella Project: driveway widening, additions
FROM: Shirley Imsand, Ph.D., Senior Biologist, Department of Regional Planning

B Papparella Project, 1720 Tuna Canyon Road, Topanga 92090
Project No. R2015-01747
Permit Nos. CDP 201500074, RENV 201500123
APNs: 4448-018-033 & 4448-018-042
Location: part in Fernwood Rural Village
on the Dix Canyon drainage Topanga Canyon Watershed
USGS Quad: Topanga
Applicant: Shelley Coulson
Biologist: Greg Ainsworth
Planners: Joshua Huntington, Travis Seawards

Project Description with respect to Impacts to Biological Resources: The project parcels are chiefly in H3 habitat but include H1 category habitat in a part of Dix Canyon, subwatershed of the Topanga Canyon Watershed. The project parcel 4448-018-042 has a small northeastern projection into the Rural Village of Fernwood, but the construction impacts will not be in that section. The house with kitchen addition (extends 25-ft. to south), driveway widened to 20-ft, and new 998-sq.ft. garage (extends 32-ft. to south) are on a small ridge between Dix Canyon and a tributary to Dix Canyon in H3-mapped habitat. The slopes chiefly average 25-50% but some areas have slopes 50% and greater. The driveway is shown to be partially asphalt with widening by 1 to 10-ft. with asphalt and installation of a fire-turn-around and hammerhead area of gravel. No capture devices or bio-swales are indicated, but check dams are shown on SWPCEC Plan A2.1. A letter from County Fire to Coastal Commission indicates approval for paved/concrete surfaces. Runoff plans for construction are a list of Best Management Practices (BMPs). Runoff plans for permanent capture include check dams and planters off the new garage and kitchen, but runoff surface area and size of planters is unspecified.

Landscape and Fuel Modification: Driveway widening and garage placement will require tree removal (native, non-native, and invasive, with some removals of unlabeled species type). The known native removals are of Toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and the size of the trunks is not in the data. Fuel modification plans depict tree removals only and other landscaping to remain in place. Two unspecified drought-tolerant trees will be planted (SWPCEC Plan A2.1) We did not receive plans for the full 200-ft. analysis of fuel modification. The project fuel modification and extension includes H1 riparian habitat of Dix Canyon. Extension of fuel modification due to the garage and kitchen additions will possibly extend into H1 habitat not previously fuel modified.

Biological Resources: County Biologist's analysis of 200-ft. from existing structures indicates fuel modification will extend further downslope and across Tuna Canyon Road for the new garage and kitchen. The extensions of 32- and 25-ft will possibly require new fuel modification in H1 of perhaps 400 sq.ft of Dix Canyon in the south of the parcel. Part of the fuel modification area is a grassland. The Biological Assessment states brush clearance by disking is regularly done. The disked grassy area had a number of California narrowleaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) when the County biologist site visit occurred in August 2015, but the grassy area has not been assessed for natives. Dix Canyon on the project parcel has rock outcrops with lichens and bryophytes and a diverse Sycamore-Oak Woodland grove of trees around Dix Canyon and the north tributary.

Hazards: There is no designated critical habitat in the project area. There are no CNDDDB reports of special status species in the project area. All of the project area is in a landslide hazard area and an area of Very High Fire Hazard.

ERB request: The ERB should make recommendations on the plans for the driveway paving, widening, and runoff; tree removal; runoff and fuel modification for the garage and kitchen additions. Measures should target protection of the sensitive elements that may be impacted by the project: the H1 habitat includes riparian Sycamore-Oak woodland habitat which may have amphibians, birds and bats; impacts to native trees; the H1-type elements of rock outcrops with bryophytes and lichens; the grassland which may be habitat useful to migrating monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*), a species of concern with notably declining populations.

*Recommendations from the Biological Assessment Report, Greg Ainsworth, 2015.02.09.
Otherwise, Draft Recommendations of Staff Biologist, Shirley Imsand, 2016.03.07

ERB PROJECT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS:

GENERAL RUNOFF CONTROL:

1. Applicant shall supply to DRP a comprehensive Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (Construction Runoff and Pollution Control Plan CRPCP; Post-construction Runoff Plan PCRP) according to LID specifications or according to LIP specifications. These plans may be conceptual but should have a good level of detail to show specific calculations of hardscape and devices for routing all runoff for capture (using cisterns, filtration, and overflow direction into bioswales. Capture should calculate runoff from all hardscape and capture at least the minimum of a 0.75-in. storm. Further capture may be required from Building and Safety when plans are finalized. The plan must specify the total hardscape coverage and demonstrate routing all runoff from these surfaces to cistern capture on the applicant's property, minimizing impact to downslope resources. Cistern and septic overflow shall be routed to other capture on the applicant's property such as bioswales.

CONSTRUCTION RUNOFF AND POLLUTION CONTROL PLAN (CRPCP):

2. The CRPCP should depict the locations of any sediment and debris traps, any straw wattles, sand bags, or silt fence that will be used to direct flows to the traps, and flow directions. The permittee's contractor should inspect the traps and other containment devices to ensure proper function. The plan should be implemented during the rainy season or prior to rain events.

3. Equipment for grading, construction, and fuel modification should be pressure-washed before transport to the property to remove dirt and any invasive plant propagules.

4. The permittee's contractor shall comply with all litter and pollution laws and will provide covered trash receptacles so that all food scraps, food wrappers, beverage containers, etc. can be disposed of. The contractor will empty the trash receptacles at the end of each day or as needed, and dispose of it at an off-site landfill.

5. The permittee's contractor shall ensure that no debris, bark, slash sawdust, rubbish, cement or concrete or washing thereof, oil petroleum products, or other organic material from any construction, or associated activity of whatever nature, shall be allowed to enter into, or be placed where it may be washed by rainfall or runoff into the nearby stream.

6. The permittee's contractor shall refuel and lubricate all equipment over drip pans or other appropriate containment devices.

7. The permittee's contractor shall position all stationary equipment and any equipment that is to be repaired over the drip pans or other appropriate containment devices.

8. The permittee's contractor shall check and maintain all equipment on a daily basis in order to prevent leaks. If a leak occurs, the permittee's contractor shall immediately clean up any spills and fix the leak.

9. The permittee's contractor shall make available at the site all supplies necessary for clean-up of spills (absorbent and barrier materials in quantities determined by the permittee's contractor to be sufficient to capture the largest reasonably foreseeable spill and drums or containers suitable for holding and transporting contaminated materials).

PERMANENT RUNOFF CONTROL, POST-CONSTRUCTION RUNOFF PLAN PCRP:

10. The planter capture may not be sufficient at this site. The house should employ capture of rainfall into cisterns to use for fire-fighting, which will make the house safer and better protect the slope, drainages, rock outcrops, and H1 habitat. The cisterns can be on the surface and function as landscape elements.

11. As a basic plan, calculate all horizontal, impervious surface area (SA) including roofs, driveway surface, decks, etc., convert to gallons from a 3/4-in. rainfall [$SA_{sq.ft.} \times (7.48 \text{ gal/cu.ft}) \times (0.75 \text{ in.} / (12 \text{ in./sq.ft.}))$] and provide cisterns and other capture devices with sufficient capacity. Captured water should be used for landscape pools, irrigation, and fire-fighting.

12. ERB recommends browsing the internet for ideas on cisterns, water catchment, grey water, and uses of captured water.

13. Capture and overflow design should include permanent sediment and debris traps (vegetated filter strips, gravel filters, and other structures). Design should show flow direction to traps.

14. Runoff from the driveway and any other structures that may drain to the north need to be evaluated. Erosion and drainage control for this area shall be planned.

FUEL MODIFICATION:

15. Landscape plans shall include measures for fuel modification in the downslope area according to best management practice:

Zone A: 20 ft. wide; irrigated; non-invasive ground covers

Zone B: 80 ft. wide beyond Zone A; Use no irrigation beyond the parcel lines. Minimize irrigation in Zone B, 20-100-ft. from structures; contains non-invasive ground covers, native plants, deep-rooted perennials, some well-spaced shrubs and trees

Zone C: Beyond Zones A & B (only to riparian area along Dix Creek, no further), mosaic of thinned, clumped, native vegetation, pruned on a staggered 2-3 year schedule, with clumps adjacent to one another in alternate pruning times.

16. Disking for fuel modification is prohibited in the LCP §22.44.1240.A.2. To retain the grassland, fuel modification by hand tools, including weed whips, should be used.

17. In preparing Zone C for fuel modification:

a. Retain as many non-sprouting species as possible. (They usually have a single trunk.) Do not cut off the trunk in pruning, as this kills the plant.

b. Choose multiple-trunked, resprouting species for removal over non-sprouters. The remaining multi-trunked shrubs should be pruned in a staggered, clumped pattern on an alternating schedule, allowing 2-3 years between pruning for any one clump. Resprouting species can be pruned to near ground level.

18. Hand tools are preferred for initial and future fuel modification in any fuel-modified area for this project. Hand tools will allow sensitive insects and small animals to escape. Any large equipment used should be pressure-washed to remove invasive plant propagules before transport to the site.

19. Wildlife surveys should be done before any clearing, grubbing, grading, driveway expansion or fuel modification activities are scheduled to begin. See Recommendations under "Sensitive Plants and Animals" below for prescriptions.

LANDSCAPE:

20. For the landscape plan, use native plants local to the Santa Monica Mountains. Plants should be compatible with fuel modification zone requirements. See lists on the ERB webpage:

<http://planning.lacounty.gov/agenda/erb/> under "Plant Lists."

21. Submit plans first to DRP biologist in .pdf format for check of plant palette. Provide full-size plans once plant palette is agreed upon for DRP approval; then submit plans to County Fire.

22. Do NOT use any invasive plants. A list of invasive plants for LA County is on the ERB webpage and other lists of invasive plants are on California Invasive Plant Council Lists.

23. Minimize irrigation in Zone B, 20-100-ft. from structures. The requirement is for healthy plants on the project parcels.

24. Show all existing trees, native and non-native, on the landscape and fuel modification plans. Indicate any trees to be removed.

SENSITIVE HABITATS, PLANTS, AND ANIMALS

25. A fuel modification analysis of possible new fuel modification in H1 habitat of Dix Canyon is needed due to new garage and kitchen projections extending the 200-ft. zone towards Dix Canyon (32-ft. and 25-ft respectively).

26. Glass should be least reflective and/or have frit patterns that will promote energy conservation and also prevent bird strikes when the bird mistakes a reflection of habitat for available flight space.

27. A spring survey of the grassland by 3 continuous transects of about 50m each is needed for data on species list, absolute percent coverage of species, and summary data of relative cover of native and non-native species. Place the transects randomly, NOT haphazardly, so that all parts of the grassland have an equal chance to be included in a transect.

28. A tree map with table of tree dimensions is needed for all plants with 1 trunk 6-in. or more, 2 trunks summing to 8-in. or more. The map should show trunk and canopy. A table keyed to map should give trunk and canopy dimensions. This will enable determination of whether the project should do mitigation for removal of protected native plants.

29. Bat survey should be done any time of year pre-construction. CDFW protocols should be followed for removal of trees with bats and extirpation of bats from rock outcrops. Bat maternity colonies are possible and should not be disturbed (March 1-September 30). CDFW should be consulted in all cases when bat roosts are to be removed or blocked. In the event of bat expulsion, bat habitat should be constructed appropriate to the species being expelled.

30. Tree removals shall be done carefully in order to allow roosting birds and bats to escape. To the extent feasible, tree removal or relocation shall be scheduled between October 1 and November 30, in order to be outside bird nesting season (December 1 to August 30) and outside of the bat maternity roosting season (March 1 to September 30). Trees shall be removed in a manner that allows birds and bats to escape, pushed or pulled to the ground in 2-3 nudges, with a pause of approximately 30 seconds between each nudge to allow bats and birds to become active. The tree should then be pushed to the ground slowly and should remain in place for a period of 48 hours to allow any trapped animals to escape. Chain saws shall only be used after the tree has been on the ground for 48 hours.

31. The permittee's contractor should delineate the grading limits and fence the area in its entirety with green screen before beginning any work. The green screen will reduce potential for wildlife moving into the work site. A biologist should locate and remove any wildlife within the work site immediately after it has been screened 1 day before construction activity begins.

32. Beginning thirty days prior to the initiation of project activities (grading, brush clearance, etc) and regardless of time of year, a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys shall conduct weekly bird surveys to detect protected native birds occurring in suitable nesting habitat that is to be disturbed and (as access to adjacent areas allows) any other such habitat within 300 feet of the disturbance area (within 500 feet for raptors). The surveys should continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of project activities. If a protected native bird is found, the project proponent should delay all project activities until the qualified biologist determines the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Alternatively, the qualified biologist could mark a buffer zone for the nest with flagging, stakes and construction fencing to demarcate 300 feet (or 500 feet) between the project activities and the nest. CDFW must authorize closer buffer distances. Monitoring biologist shall use judgment, but in general, buffers should be determined so that construction activities result in noise less than 60 dB at the nest. The monitor shall communicate about the prohibition buffers with the foremen and work crews. Project personnel, including all contractors working on site, should be instructed on the sensitivity of the area. The project proponent should provide the results of surveys to the CEQA lead agency and CDFW the results of the recommended protective measures described above, in order to document compliance with applicable State and Federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.

33. Project should carefully follow provisions of the rural lighting ordinance §22.44.1270 for exterior lighting. Avoid trespass of light into the sky and natural areas both on and off the project parcels.

The Biological Assessment is not complete at this time. The adequacy of the biological report will be assessed when it is completed. DRP has requested:

a tree map and
table of tree data

**a fuel mod map showing fuel mod 200-ft. from structures
grassland transect data
revision of sensitive species table
assessment of impact to northern drainage as well as Dix Canyon**

ERB Meeting Date: 18 April 2016
ERB Evaluation: Consistent Consistent after Modifications & Bio Report Completion
 Inconsistent No decision

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Staff Recommendation: Consistent Consistent after Modifications & Bio Report Completion
 Inconsistent No decision

Suggested Modifications: Comply with all ERB recommendations.
