

GLOSSARY

Alliance: a vegetation classification unit that is usually defined by a dominant and/or characteristic plant species in the upper layer of vegetation.

Association: a vegetation classification unit defined by the characteristic species in the overstory (upper layer) and understory (lower layer), as well as environmental factors.

Building pad: a building site prepared by artificial means including grading, excavation or filling, or any combination thereof.

Building Site Area: the portion of the development footprint that is or will be graded, paved, constructed, or otherwise physically transformed, including the building pad, all graded slopes, areas impacted by exploratory testing, all structures, decks, patios, impervious surfaces, retaining walls, and parking areas. To calculate the area of the proposed building site, include the building pad, all graded slopes, all structures, decks, patios, impervious surfaces, and parking areas. The applicant may exclude the following development associated with the primary use:

- The area of one access driveway or roadway that does not exceed 300 feet in length and 20 feet in width, and is the minimum design necessary to meet Los Angeles County Fire Department requirements;
- The area of one turn-around that is not located within the approved building pad, and is the minimum design necessary to ensure safety and comply with Fire Department requirements;
- Graded slopes exclusively associated with the access driveway or roadway and safety turn-around indicated above; and
- Fuel modification and brush clearance required by Los Angeles County Fire Department for approved structures.

Chaparral: broadly defined as an area dominated by tall woody shrubs two meters and taller, which can be further classified to the alliance or association level utilizing *A Manual of California Vegetation* by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, and Evens, available online at www.cnps.org/vegetation.

Covenant: a formal agreement or contract between LA County and the property owner, in which the property owner gives the County certain promises and assurances, such as for the purpose of providing and recording an open space restriction over an area of land.

Crops: cultivated plants including field, tree, bush, berry, and row, including nursery stock

Cumulative impact: the incremental effects of an individual project in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects.

Deed restriction: a limitation in the deed to a property that dictates certain uses that may or may not be made of the property.

Defensible space: in firefighting and prevention, an area of non-combustible surfaces separating urban and wildland areas, which is often utilized around residences in remote and/or high fire hazard areas to give firefighters additional time to reach the residence in the event of a wildfire.

Development footprint: the area of disturbance for development, including but not limited to, the building pad, all structures, driveways and access, fire department turn-arounds, grading, test pits, septic systems, wells, fuel modification areas, and any direct habitat disturbances associated with the development.

Disturbed area: any portion of land or vegetation that is altered in any way by development, by the actions associated with development, or by use, whether intentional or unintentional, permitted or unpermitted.

Easement: a civil agreement between two parties which is used as a method of acquiring partial use rights of land with no transfer of fee title. A limited right to make use of a land owned by another, for example, a right of way across the property.

Ecosystem: a community of animals, plants, and microorganisms and the physical and chemical environment with which it is interrelated.

Ecosystem functions: natural processes and attributes that result from the complex interactions between living organisms and the physical and chemical components of their ecosystems, which contribute to the self-maintenance of an ecosystem. Ecosystem functions are complex and dependent on a wide variety of factors, such as habitat type, geology, geography, climate, position in the watershed, surrounding land use, and associated plant and animal communities.

Ecosystem services: the benefits (goods and services) provided to humans as a result of ecosystem functions, such as clean air and water, erosion and sediment control, carbon storage, fertile soils, pollination, raw materials in the form of foods, biofuels, and medicinal resources, buffering against natural disasters, regulation of temperatures, and scenic views.

Edge effects: the effects of development on adjacent natural areas due to introduction of structures and non-native and/or non-local plants and animals. Structures change the microclimate or constitute barriers to movement. Introduced species displace native species or interact with natural processes and change conditions so that the native species are no longer well-adapted to the altered environment.

Encroachment: an intrusion, disturbance, or construction activity within the protected zone of a SEA Protected Tree.

Fragmentation: the process by which a landscape is broken into small islands of natural habitat within a mosaic of other forms of land use or ownership.

General Plan: a statement of policies, including text and diagrams setting forth objectives, principles, standards, and plan proposals, for the future physical development of the County required by California State Government Code 65300 et seq.

Geological feature: landform or physical feature, such as beach, dune, rock outcrop, and rockland, formed through natural geological processes.

Grading: any excavation, fill, movement of soil, or any alteration of natural landforms through a combination thereof.

Herbland: broadly defined as an area dominated by annual or herbaceous perennial species, including native and non-native grasslands, which can be further classified to the alliance or association level utilizing

A Manual of California Vegetation by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, and Evens, available online at www.cnps.org/vegetation.

Heritage tree: any SEA Protected Tree with a trunk diameter that measures 36 inches or more in a single trunk or with two trunks that measure a total of 54 inches or more in diameter, as measured 54 inches above natural grade.

Infrastructure: basic utilities and facilities necessary for development, such as water, electricity, sewers, streets, and highways

Invasive plants: plants that are not native to a region or ecosystem that, once introduced, tend to spread aggressively, disrupting native species occurring in the area, and even changing ecosystem processes such as hydrology, fire regimes, and soil chemistry.

Lake: a large naturally occurring body of water that is surrounded by land. A lake is formed due to pooling of surface-water runoff and/or groundwater seepage in a low spot relative to the surrounding countryside.

Land division: division of improved or unimproved land, including subdivisions (through parcel map or tract map), and any other divisions of land including lot splits, lot line adjustments, redivisions, mergers, and legalization of lots created unlawfully through the approval of a certificate of compliance or other means.

Landscaping: Any activity that modifies the visible features of an area of land through alteration of natural elements, such as altering the contours of the ground or planting trees, shrubs, grasses, flowers, and other plants.

Land Trust: A non-profit organization that actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in land or conservation easement acquisition, and is responsible to ensure the applicable preservation mechanisms required by the SEA Ordinance for lands received and terms of the conservation easement are upheld through stewardship activities.

Marsh: a type of wetland dominated by grasses and other herbaceous plants where water covers the ground for long periods of time. There are many different kinds of marshes, ranging from coastal to inland and freshwater to saltwater. All types receive most of their water from surface runoff, and many marshes are also fed by groundwater.

Mitigation: actions or project design features that reduce environmental impacts by avoiding adverse effects, minimizing, rectifying, or reducing adverse effects, or compensating for adverse effects.

Native grassland: broadly defined as an area where native grassland species comprise 10 percent or more of the total relative cover, as determined utilizing classifications in *A Manual of California Vegetation* by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, and Evens (available online at www.cnps.org/vegetation).

Native tree: a tree species that evolved and occurs naturally in a given location.

Natural community: a natural community is a collection of plants that occurs together in a repeating pattern across a landscape. Classification of natural communities follows *A Manual of California Vegetation* by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, and Evens, available online at www.cnps.org/vegetation.

Natural open space: lands preserved in their natural, undeveloped condition.

Oak woodland: an oak stand having greater than 10 percent canopy cover, or that may have historically supported greater than 10 percent canopy cover (Fish and Game Code 1361, Oak Woodlands Conservation Act).

Open space: any parcel or area of land that is essentially unimproved, natural open landscape and is, or could be, devoted to open space uses such as the preservation of natural resources, passive outdoor recreation, or for public health and safety.

Open space conservation easement: a legally-binding recorded document that conveys an easement to a public agency over a parcel, or portion of a parcel, to conserve the area's ecological or open space values by prohibiting most types of uses in perpetuity.

Ordinance: a general term for local laws that regulate and set standards for land development.

Parcel map: a recorded map required for a subdivision where four or fewer parcels of land or condominium units are created (i.e., minor land division).

Playas/Playa lakes: a type of temporarily flooded wetland resulting from shallow, circular depressions that are seasonally or semi-permanently filled with rainwater.

Pond: a smaller and/or shallower waterbody formed in the same manner as a lake. From the perspective of the SEA Program, there is no fundamental difference between ponds and lakes.

Pruning: to trim or remove dead, overgrown, or unwanted branches or foliage from a tree or shrub.

Relative cover: the cover of a particular species as a percentage of total plant cover of a given area. In the case of perennial bunch grasses or other native herbaceous species that tend to be patchy/distributed in patches, the whole area should be delineated if native herbaceous species comprise 10 percent or more of the total relative cover, rather than delineating the patches individually.

Reservoir: a man-made lake that is created when a dam is built on a river, and river water backs up behind the dam.

Ridgeline: the line formed by the meeting of the tops of sloping surfaces of land.

Riparian vegetation: plants contiguous to and affected by surface and subsurface hydrologic features of perennial or intermittent water bodies (rivers, streams, lakes, or drainage ways). Riparian areas have one or both of the following characteristics: 1) distinctly different vegetative species than adjacent areas, and/or 2) species similar to adjacent areas but exhibiting more vigorous or robust growth forms. Riparian areas are usually transitional between wetland and upland.

River: a body of flowing water occurring within a channel or linear topographic depression. Rivers are typically larger in size than streams, but, for the purposes of the SEA Program, the terms are synonymous.

Runoff: the portion of rainfall or irrigation water that flows across ground surface and eventually is returned to streams. Runoff can pick up pollutants and debris from the air or the land and carry them to the receiving waters.

Scrub: broadly defined as an area dominated by low-growing shrubs up to two meters in height, which can be further classified to the alliance or association level utilizing A Manual of California Vegetation by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, and Evens, available online at www.cnps.org/vegetation.

SEA Protected Tree: any native tree listed in the SEA Protected Tree List (Appendix A) with a trunk diameter that meets or exceeds the diameter indicated for that species in the SEA Protected Tree List, or with two trunks that measure a total of at least eight inches in diameter, as measured 54 inches above natural grade.

Setback: a minimum distance required by zoning code to be maintained between two points, such as between two structures, between a structure or use and property lines, or between a structure and a protected resource.

Springs/Seeps: areas in which groundwater reaches the earth's surface from an underground aquifer and keeps the area wet when there is no obvious source of surface water. This results from an aquifer being filled to the point that the water overflows onto the land surface. Springs usually emerge from a single point and can be the source of a small trickle or stream of water, while seeps generally have a lower flow rate and emerge over a larger area, with no well-defined origin.

Stream: a physical feature which at least periodically conveys water through a channel or linear topographical depression, defined by the presence of hydrological and vegetative indicators. Streams in natural channels may be further classified as perennial (flowing continuously), intermittent or seasonal (flowing only at certain times of the year), and ephemeral (only flowing in direct response to precipitation). Other terms for streams include river, wash, arroyo, drainage, and creek. To accurately document the episodic streams (i.e. intermittent or ephemeral) on development sites, refer to the *Mapping Episodic Stream Activity (MESA)* protocols developed by CDFW and the California Energy Commission.

Structure: anything constructed or erected which requires a fixed location on the ground, or is attached to something having a fixed location on the ground.

Subdivision: the division of improved or unimproved land for the purpose of sale, lease, or financing, whether immediate or future.

Take: with respect to animal or plant life, take means "to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct." (Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973.)

Tract Map: a map required for a subdivision consisting of five or more lots or condominium units

Vernal pool: a type of temporarily flooded wetland resulting from a depression in the landscape where a hard underground layer (either bedrock or a hard clay pan) prevents rainwater from draining downward into the subsoils, causing the depression to fill during winter and spring rain events, and gradually evaporate until becoming completely dry in the summer and fall. Because of the weeks of inundation and months of aridity that vernal pools experience, they are not only difficult to identify, but they also provide a unique

habitat for numerous endemic rare plants and animals that are able to survive and thrive in these harsh conditions.

Water Resource: Sources of permanent or intermittent surface water, including but not limited to lakes, reservoirs, ponds, rivers, streams, marshes, seeps, springs, vernal pools, and playas. Additional information about LA County's water resources can be found in the Conservation and Natural Resources Element of the General Plan 2035.

Watershed: the geographical area of land from which runoff resulting from precipitation is collected and drained to a common point or outlet.

Wetland: an area of land that is inundated or saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances does support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, with determinations following guidelines defined in the US Fish and Wildlife Service Classification of Wetlands and Deepwater Habitats of the US (Cowardin, 1979).

Wildlife corridor: a type of habitat linkage which consists of natural areas of sufficient width to permit larger, more mobile species (such as foxes, bobcats, and coyote) to pass between larger areas of open space, or to disperse from one major open space region to another. Such areas are generally at least several hundred feet wide, unobstructed, and possess cover, food and water. The upland margins of a creek channel, open ridgelines, open valleys or the bottoms of drainages often serve as naturally occurring major corridors locally. Wildlife corridors connect two or more core habitat areas in order to promote genetic flow and continuous recolonization of habitats by all plant and animal species within an ecosystem, or between ecosystems.

Wildlife-permeable fencing: fencing that can be easily bypassed by all species of native wildlife found within the County, including but not limited to deer, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, ground rodents, amphibians, reptiles, and birds.

Woodland: broadly defined as an area dominated by trees, which may be widely spaced with as little as five percent (5%) cover (e.g. savanna), densely arrayed with nearly complete canopy closure, or various densities in between. Understory may vary from herbaceous to shrubby. Woodlands can be further classified to the alliance or association level utilizing A Manual of California Vegetation by Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf, and Evens, available online at www.cnps.org/vegetation.