

# **Biological Report**

for

## **ALPS 3 Bridges Trail**

APNs 055-161-003, 056-391-001 & -003, and 056-401-002

City of Atascadero  
San Luis Obispo County, California



Prepared for

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## **Synopsis**

- This biological report examines a proposed trail project on an approximately 103-acre open space preserve, Three Bridges Oak Preserve, with a trailhead on an existing City creek reserve parcel in the City of Atascadero, California. The report reviews resources on an approximately 110-acre acre Study Area.
- The Applicant proposes construction of a trailhead with room for horse trailer parking and turn-around on an existing City creek reserve parcel already used for recreation.
- Habitat types identified and mapped in the Study Area consist of blue oak woodland, coast live oak woodland, sycamore riparian woodland, mixed chaparral, and anthropogenic. Ephemeral and seasonal drainages are present in the Study Area.
- One sensitive natural community is present in the Study Area: Sycamore riparian woodland (in part). Areas with sycamore canopy that are already used for recreation with existing vehicular access and lacking understory typical of riparian woodland do not meet criteria for sensitive natural communities.
- Preliminary botanical surveys conducted in September through November 2013 identified 109 species, subspecies, and varieties of vascular plants in the Study Area (Table 7). Severe drought conditions prevented conducting botanical surveys in 2014. A seasonally timed floristic survey will be conducted in Spring 2015 along the final trail route to verify that the alignment would not significantly impact rare plants.
- Wildlife species detected in the Study Area include 1 amphibian, 1 reptile, 17 birds, and 3 mammals; many other wildlife species are expected to occur (Table 8). Appropriate habitat and soil conditions are present on the property for ten special status animals. No state or federally listed animals have been detected in the Study Area. The Study Area is within designated critical habitat for California red-legged frog and the south-central California population of steelhead.





## **1.0 Introduction**

This report describes biological resources associated with an approximately 110-acre site (Study Area) in the City of Atascadero, San Luis Obispo County. Results are reported for botanical and wildlife surveys of the Study Area. A habitat inventory and results of database and literature searches of special status species reports within a six 7.5-minute quadrangle search area of the Study Area are also included. Special status species that could occur in the Study Area or be affected by the proposed project are discussed, and lists of plant and animal species that were identified or are expected in the Study Area are provided.

We provide agencies and stakeholders with information regarding biological resources in the Study Area, and assess potential impacts to biological resources that could occur from the proposed project. An evaluation of the effect of the proposed project on biological resources is included, and mitigation measures are provided.

### **1.1 Project Location**

The Study Area is located in the City of Atascadero, along Highway 41 west, at the Three Bridges Oak Preserve (Figure 1). Three parcels, APN, 056-391-001, 056-401-002, and 056-391-003, are owned by the Atascadero Land Preservation Society (ALPS); a fourth parcel, APN 055-161-003, is a City-owned parcel that is part of the creek reserve (Figure 2). The Study Area is between the west termini of Carmelita Avenue to the north, and Toloso and San Diego Roads to the South; Highway 41 divides the Study Area. A road connection between the current end of Toloso and San Diego Roads is shown on paper maps but was never constructed; this road parcel was also evaluated where relevant to proposed project activities.

Approximate coordinates for the center of the Study Area are latitude 35.452361 °N, longitude 120.690450 °W (WGS 84). The Study Area is located within the Atascadero United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5 minute quadrangle, in San Luis Obispo County, California. Elevation varies from approximately 940 to 1,690 feet above mean sea level.

### **1.2 Project Description**

The applicant proposes to construct an equestrian/pedestrian trail and trailhead. The proposed trail would be suitable for equestrian use but would be open to pedestrian use as well. Currently, proposed trails consist of approximately three miles of connector trails and two trail loops. A trailhead would be located at the end of Carmelita Avenue (Figures 2 and 3) to provide room for parking horse trailers and other vehicles. An existing connector trail would be utilized from Carmelita Avenue trailhead, under the Highway 41 bridge and across Atascadero Creek, via an encroachment agreement with Caltrans. The long-term plan includes connections to the Cerro Alto trails in the National Forest via a future connector trail through Eagle Ranch.

The proposed plan describes trail construction with hand tools following methods consistent with California Department of Parks and Recreation standards for equestrian trails. Where necessary, brush would be cleared and hauled out or chipped on-site. In areas of dense brush, ALPS proposes a 12- to 15-foot wide brush line. The trail would be compacted during the wet season to minimize dust and create a stable trail surface. No live trees would be removed for construction of the trail. No structures are proposed for Atascadero Creek. Hardened crossings consisting of native boulders would be constructed where trails intersect ephemeral drainages to

protect water quality and to provide safe crossings over the drainages. One improved crossing suitable for trucks and horse trailers is proposed to provide Carmelita trailhead access over an ephemeral tributary to Atascadero Creek. The trailhead crossing is upstream of an existing concrete apron located near the confluence of the unnamed tributary and Atascadero Creek. Preliminary plans for the trailhead are provided in Attachment A.

### 1.3 Responsible Parties

TABLE 1. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES. Applicant, biological consultant, and lead agency are provided.

<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Biological Consultant</b>
Atascadero Land Preservation Society (ALPS) P.O. Box 940 Atascadero, CA 93423 (805) 305-9412 Contact: Mike Orvis, President Bruce Bonifas, Vice-President	Althouse and Meade, Inc. 1602 Spring Street Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805) 237-9626 Contact: LynneDee Althouse, Principal Mike Hill, Project Manager/Biologist
<b>Lead Agency</b>	
City of Atascadero Community Development Department 6500 Palma Ave Atascadero, CA 93422 (805) 470-3491 Contact: Callie Taylor, Planner	

## 2.0 Methods

The Study Area was surveyed for biological resources on September 17, October 20, and November 6, 2013. Althouse and Meade, Inc. biologists Meg Perry, Jason Dart and Mike Hill conducted the surveys. Biological surveys were conducted on foot to compile species lists, search for special status plants and animals, map habitats, and photograph the Study Area. The entire Study Area was surveyed. In addition, the Carmelita trailhead site was visited on April 8, 2014 by biologists Jessica Griffiths and Dan Meade. Arborist Cory Meyer visited the Study Area on July 25, August 9, and August 28, 2014. Dates of site visits are provided in Table 2.

Each habitat type occurring in the Study Area was inspected, described, and cataloged (Section 5.0). All plant and animal species observed in the Study Area were identified and recorded (Sections 6.0 and 7.0). Vegetation transects conducted for general vegetation surveys were meandering with an emphasis on locating habitat appropriate for special status plants and assessing resources in the vicinity of the proposed trailhead and trail alignments. Transects were utilized to map boundaries of different vegetation types, describe general conditions and dominant species, compile species lists, and evaluate potential habitat for special status species.

Identification of botanical resources included field observations and laboratory analysis of collected material (Table 7). We recognize that a fall botanical survey cannot capture all special

status plant species known from the region (refer to Section 4.3, and Table 3); however, our site visits allowed us to evaluate the Study Area for potential special status plant habitat. The plant list provided in Section 6.0 is preliminary and botanical surveys conducted according to agency guidelines (United States Fish and Wildlife 2000, California Department of Fish and Wildlife 2009, and California Native Plant Society 2001) are planned for Spring of 2015. Botanical nomenclature used in this document follows the Jepson Manual, Second Edition (Baldwin et al. 2012). We also provide Jepson Manual First Edition names in brackets where nomenclature has recently changed.

Wildlife documentation included observations of animal presence, nests, tracks, and other wildlife sign. Observations of wildlife were recorded during field surveys in all areas of the Study Area (Table 8). Birds were identified by sight using 10 power binoculars or by vocalizations. Reptiles and amphibians were identified by sight, often using binoculars, and by hand-captures; traps were not used. Mammals recorded in the Study Area were identified by sight and tracks.

Mapping efforts utilized hand notation on recent land survey and aerial photos, as well as data collection using Magellan and Trimble map-grade geographic positioning systems (GPS). Maps were created using aerial photo interpretation, field notation, and GPS data imported to ArcGIS 10, a Geographic Information System (GIS) software program. Data was overlaid on a 2012 National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial of San Luis Obispo County (USDA 2012). Biological resource constraints were mapped in the field on site. Hand notation on field maps was incorporated into point and polygon layers and overlaid on high resolution aerial photographs.

We conducted a search of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB September 1, 2013 data) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) On-line Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California for special status species known to occur in six USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles within 5 miles surrounding the Study Area: Atascadero, Creston, Morro Bay North, Santa Margarita, Templeton, and York Mountain.

Additional special status species research consisted of reviewing previous biological reports for the area and searching on-line museum and herbarium specimen records for locality data within San Luis Obispo County. We reviewed online databases of specimen records maintained by the Museum of Vertebrate Zoology at the University of California, Berkeley, the California Academy of Sciences, and the Consortium of California Herbaria. Additional special status species with potential to occur on or near the Study Area were added to our special status species list (refer to Table 3 and Table 4).

Special status species lists produced by database and literature searches were cross-referenced with the described habitat types in the Study Area to identify all potential special status species that could occur on or near the Study Area. Each special status species that could occur on or near the Study Area is individually discussed (refer to Sections 4.4 and 4.6).

TABLE 2. BIOLOGICAL SURVEYS. Biological survey dates, times, weather observations, and biologist(s) are provided.

Survey Date	Start Time Stop Time	Temp.	Wind	Weather Observations	Biologist(s)
9/17/2013	1:30 – 4:00 PM	80 – 90° F	2 – 5 mph	Clear, warm, with light breezes and scattered high clouds.	M. Perry M. Hill
10/20/2013	1:45 – 6:00 PM	75 – 90° F	3 – 5 mph	Warm with scattered high cloud and breezes.	M. Perry
11/6/2013	12:30 – 2:30 PM	80 – 85° F	3 – 5 mph	Warm with breezes.	M. Perry J. Dart
4/8/2014	2:00 – 3:30 PM	70 – 80° F	5 – 10 mph	Clear, warm, breezes	D. Meade J. Griffiths
July 25, 2014	8 – 9:00 PM	70 – 90° F	3 – 5 mph	Clear, warm,	C. Meyer
August 9, 2014	10 AM -12	75 – 85° F	3 – 5 mph	Clear, warm	C. Meyer
August 28, 2014	11-12:30 PM	80° F	0 – 3 mph	Partly cloudy, calm	C. Meyer

### 3.0 Existing Conditions

#### 3.1 Environmental Setting

The Study Area is located on moderate to steep terrain adjacent to Atascadero Creek and on rugged hills south of the Creek at the western edge of the City of Atascadero. The majority of the Study Area is the Three Bridges Oak Preserve (the Preserve), consisting of three parcels acquired by the Atascadero Land Preservation Society in 2011 through a grant from the Resource Agency of California with assistance from the Trust for Public Land. Previously, the Preserve was privately owned and historically ranched. The City creek reserve parcel is currently open to the public and is used by equestrians. Fences are present, and evidence of a recent small brush fire was noted during the September 2013 site visit.

General aspect of the Preserve is northwest, although the site has uneven terrain and includes ridgelines that run approximately north-south. Drainage from the Preserve is northward toward Atascadero Creek. Approximately 2,100 linear feet of Atascadero Creek flow just outside the north edge of the Preserve between the Study Area and Highway 41. For the next 2,200 linear feet, the stream continues east with three crossings under Highway 41 at the Three Bridges. Atascadero Creek is a seasonal stream with perennial pools and mature riparian woodland canopy in this reach. The Study Area is dissected by minor ephemeral drainages that flow only briefly during and shortly after rain events.

The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) records indicate that the 1994 Highway 41 fire encroached at least as far as the south corner of the Preserve (Figure 4). CalFire maps of older fires are drawn from a variety of data sources and may not always include all small spot fires, but provide a general idea of fire extent. Old scorch marks on manzanitas and oak trunks and a September 1994 USGS aerial photo indicate that at least some spot fires likely extended onto the central ridge of what is now the Preserve during the Highway 41 fire. This is corroborated by information provided by ALPS.

An old ranch gate is present on Highway 41 south of the third of the Three Bridges. An old ranch road is evident, although it has been washed out where it crosses an ephemeral stream channel. Boulders and rock piles are present beneath oak canopy and in chaparral. Exposed rock is sedimentary and primarily sandstone. Outcrops are not prominent; rather, boulder piles are present on some slopes. No serpentine rock was observed although it is known to occur on hills to the west.

The Study Area is primarily vegetated with woodland and chaparral. Open herbaceous habitats and grasslands are limited and occur primarily as understory to woodland and in openings between mature trees rather than as unique habitat types. Aside from barbed wire fences along some property lines, structures are not present in the Preserve parcels. Fencing is present in the Creek reserve parcel, at Highway 41, and the middle of the Three Bridges.

### **3.2 Soils**

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) SSURGO data (2007) and Soil Survey of San Luis Obispo County, California, Paso Robles Part (1983) and USDA SSURGO Data (Tabular data version 3, Spatial data version 1, 2007) delineate two soil map units that intersect the Study Area boundaries (Figure 5). The Study Area is mapped as McMullin – Rock outcrop complex, 50 to 75 percent slopes (165) and Millsholm-Dibble complex, 30 to 50 percent slopes (170). The soil survey was not meant to be applied at the acre-scale, but does indicate general soil types in the vicinity of small properties.

Soil map units typically encompass one or two dominant soils that cover more than 50 percent of the mapped area, and one to several soils that occur in small patches not differentiated in mapping at the 1 to 24,000 scale used for Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil maps. Due to the procedures followed in making a soil survey, users of soil survey data are cautioned that not all areas included within a soil survey are closely sampled using soil pits and site descriptions, and a specific site may not have been sampled at all. Therefore, care must be taken in drawing conclusions regarding site-specific soil resources based solely on NRCS soil survey work. Digitized spatial data from the Paso Robles Part Soil Survey are shown as an overlay of soil map units on an aerial photo of the region with the following caution from NRCS regarding maps: “Enlargement of these maps...could cause misunderstanding of the detail of mapping. If enlarged, maps do not show the small areas of contrasting soils that could have been shown at a larger scale.”

**McMullin-Rock outcrop complex, 50 to 75 percent slopes (165)** consists of very steep soils on hills and mountains. This soil map unit overlaps the western half of the Study Area. The McMullin soil is a Mollisol, soils typically associated with grassland ecosystems. These soils usually have thick, dark topsoil layers high in organic matter. McMullin gravelly loam is a shallow, somewhat excessively drained soil that formed in material weathered from sandstone and shale. A typical profile consists of gravelly loam underlain by hard shale bedrock at about 18 inches depth. Rock outcrop in this soil map unit is typically hard sandstone or shale. This soil complex is in capability subclass 7e regardless of irrigation availability.

Included with McMullin gravelly loam and rock outcrop in mapping are small areas of Lompico loam, Shimmon loam, Henneke very cobbly clay loam, Gaviota sandy loam, Gilroy gravelly loam, Millsholm clay loam, Montara clay loam, and small areas of gentler slopes.

**Millsholm-Dibble clay loams, 30 to 50 percent slopes (170)** consists of steep soils on hills. This soil map unit overlaps the eastern half of the Study Area. The Millsholm soil is an Inceptisol, a minimally developed soil. Inceptisols tend to be fairly young, and often occur on steep slopes or in parent materials that are highly resistant to weathering. Millsholm clay loam is a shallow, well-drained soil that formed in material weathered from sandstone and shale. Hard shale is at an average depth of 16 inches. The Dibble soil is an Alfisol, a moderately fertile soil typically associated with forest and woodland ecosystems, with a subsoil in which clay minerals have accumulated. Dibble clay loam is a moderately deep, well-drained soil that formed in material weathered from sandstone and shale. Weathered shale is at an average depth of 34 inches. The Millsholm soil has a moderate permeability, with a very low to low available water capacity. The Dibble soil has a slow permeability, with a low to moderate available water capacity. This soil complex is in capability subclass 6e regardless of irrigation availability.

The complex consists of approximately 30 percent Millsholm clay loam and 20 percent Dibble clay loam. Areas of these soils are so intricately mixed or so small that it is not practical to separate them in mapping. Also included in this complex are rock outcrop, Lompico loam, McMullin gravelly loam, Lodo gravelly clay loam, Shimmon loam, a soil similar to Millsholm soil except that the depth to sandstone or shale is 20 - 40 inches, and small areas of Balcom loam and Nacimiento silty clay loam.

## **4.0 Special Status Plants and Animals**

The CNDDDB and the CNPS On-line Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California contain records for 84 special status species and 1 sensitive natural community within the designated search area. The search area includes the following six USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles surrounding the Study Area: Atascadero, Creston, Morro Bay North, Santa Margarita, Templeton, and York Mountain. Because the search area is so large over varied terrain, species with very restricted habitat requirements far from the Study Area are often reported in the search results. Appropriate habitat and soil conditions are present in the Study Area for 19 special status plants and 10 special status animals (Tables 3 and 4). One sensitive habitat type occurs in the Study Area (Section 5.8). Figures 6 and 7 depict the current GIS data for special status species and critical habitat mapped in the vicinity of the Study Area by the CNDDDB and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Figure 8 features habitat types on the Study Area in 2015.

### **4.1 Introduction to California Rare Plant Ranks (Formerly CNPS lists)**

Plant species are considered rare when their distribution is confined to localized areas, when there is a threat to their habitat, when they are declining in abundance, or are threatened in a portion of their range. The California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) categories range from species with a low threat (CRPR 4) to species that are presumed extinct (CRPR 1A). Plants ranked CRPR 1B are rare throughout their range. All but a few species are endemic to California. All of them are judged to be vulnerable under present circumstances or to have a high potential for becoming vulnerable.

## **4.2 Introduction to CNDDDB Definitions**

"Special Plants" is a broad term used to refer to all the plant taxa inventoried by the CNDDDB, regardless of their legal or protection status (CDFW April 2013). Special plants include vascular plants and high priority bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts).

"Special Animals" is a general term that refers to all of the animal taxa inventoried by the CNDDDB, regardless of their legal or protection status (CDFW January 2011). The Special Animals list is also referred to by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as the list of "species at risk" or "special status species". These taxa may be listed or proposed for listing under the California and/or Federal Endangered Species Acts, but they may also be species deemed biologically rare, restricted in range, declining in abundance, or otherwise vulnerable.

Each species included on the Special Animals list has a corresponding Global and State Rank (refer to Table 4). This ranking system utilizes a numbered hierarchy from one to five following the Global (G-rank) or State (S-rank) category. The threat level of the organism decreases with an increase in the rank number (1=Critically Imperiled, 5=Secure). In some cases where an uncertainty exists in the designation, a question mark (?) is placed after the rank. More information is available at [www.natureserve.org](http://www.natureserve.org).

Animals listed as California Species of Special Concern (SSC) are not listed under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) and may or may not be listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). They are considered rare or declining in abundance in California. The Special Concern designation is intended to provide CDFW, biologists, land planners, and managers with lists of species that require special consideration during the planning process in order to avert continued population declines and potential costly listing under federal and state endangered species laws. For many species of birds, the primary emphasis is on the breeding population in California. For some species that do not breed in California but winter here, emphasis is on wintering range. The SSC designation thus may include a comment regarding the specific protection provided such as nesting or wintering.

Animals listed as Fully Protected are those species considered by CDFW as rare or faced with possible extinction. Most, but not all, have subsequently been listed under CESA or FESA. Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of the California Fish and Game Code authorizes the issuance of permits or licenses to take any Fully Protected species.

## **4.3 Potential Special Status Plant List**

Table 3 lists 55 special status plant species reported from the region. Federal and California State status, global and State rank, and CNPS ranking status for each species are given. Typical blooming period, habitat preference, potential habitat on site, and whether or not the species was observed in the Study Area are also provided. Due to extreme drought conditions, a valid floristic survey for special status plants could not be completed in 2014. Therefore, Table 3 will be updated after completion of focused surveys for rare plants in Spring 2015.

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TABLE 3. SPECIAL STATUS PLANT LIST. We list 55 special status plants reported from the vicinity of the site or known from the region with potential to occur in the vicinity of the Study Area. Potentially suitable habitat is present in the Study Area for 19 special status plant species.

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR</b>	<b>Blooming Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
1.	<b>Red Sand-verbena</b> <i>Abronia maritima</i>	None/None G4?/S3? 4.2	February – October	Coastal dunes; <100m sCCo, Sco, ChI; Baja CA	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species.	No	No Effect
2.	<b>Douglas' Fiddleneck</b> <i>Amsinckia douglasiana</i>	None/None G3/S3.2 4.2	March – June	Unstable shaly sedimentary slopes; (100) 150–1600 m. SCoR, w WTR	Yes. Moderately appropriate rocky slopes are present in steeper parts of the Study Area.	To be Determined (TBD)	Effects TBD
3.	<b>Santa Lucia Manzanita</b> <i>Arctostaphylos luciana</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.2	February – March	Shale outcrops, slopes, chaparral, 500-700 m. Cuesta Pass, SLO County.	Yes. Appropriate shale- derived soils are present, although exposed shale was not noted.	TBD	Effects TBD
4.	<b>Bishop Manzanita</b> <i>Arctostaphylos obispoensis</i>	None/None G3?/S3? 4.3	February – March	Rocky, gen serpentine soils, chaparral, open close- cone forest near coast; 60-950 m; SCoRO	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
5.	<b>Santa Margarita Manzanita</b> <i>Arctostaphylos pilosula</i>	None/None G3/S3 1B.2	December – March	Shale outcrops, slopes, chaparral; 300-1100 m. s SCoRO Endemic to SLO County	Yes. Appropriate shale- derived soils are present, although exposed shale was not noted.	TBD	Effects TBD
6.	<b>Miles' Milk-vetch</b> <i>Astragalus didymocarpus var. milesianus</i>	None/None G5T2/S2.2 1B.2	March – June	Clay or serpentine soils in coastal scrub, grassy areas near coast. 0-90 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Appropriate habitat and soil combinations are not present.	No	No Effect
7.	<b>Salinas Milk-vetch</b> <i>Astragalus macrodon</i>	None/ None G3/S3.3 4.3	April – July	Eroded pale shales or sandstone, or serpentine alluvium; 300-950 m. SCoR	Yes. Moderately appropriate habitats are present in understory of open blue oak woodlands and in chaparral in the Study Area.	TBD	Effects TBD
8.	<b>San Joaquin Spearscale</b> <i>Atriplex joaquinana</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.2	April – October	Alkaline soils; <300 m. s ScV, SnJV, SCoRI (e slope).	No. Appropriate soils are not present.	No	No Effect

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR</b>	<b>Blooming Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
9.	<b>Round-leaved Filaree</b> <i>California macrophylla</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.1	March – May	Clay soils in cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland; 15-1200 m. ScV, n SnJV, CW, SCo, n ChI	No. Appropriate habitat and soil combinations are not present.	No	No Effect
10.	<b>San Luis Mariposa Lily</b> <i>Calochortus obispoensis</i>	None/None G2/S2.1 1B.2	May – July	Chaparral, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, often on serpentine but also sandstone; 100-500 m. SCoRO Endemic to SLO County	Yes. Appropriate habitat and sandstone substrates are present.	TBD	Effects TBD
11.	<b>La Panza Mariposa Lily</b> <i>Calochortus simulans</i>	None/None G2/S2.3 1B.3	April – May	Grassland, oak woodland & pine forest, on sand, granite, or serpentine; <1100 m. Endemic to SLO County	Yes. Appropriate woodland habitat and sandstone-derived substrates are present.	TBD	Effects TBD
12.	<b>Dwarf Calycadenia</b> <i>Calycadenia villosa</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.1	May – October	Dry, rocky hills, ridges, in chaparral, woodland, meadows and seeps; <1100 m. c&s SCoRO	Yes. Appropriate dry chaparral and woodland habitats are present.	TBD	Effects TBD
13.	<b>Cambria Morning-glory</b> <i>Calystegia subacaulis ssp. episcopalis</i>	None/None G3T3/S3 4.2	April – May	Dry, open scrub, woodland, or grassland; <500 m. c SCoRO Endemic to SLO County	Unlikely. Open areas in woodland habitats are uncommon in the Study Area and do not have typical heavy soils frequently present with Cambria morning glory.	No	No Effect
14.	<b>Hardham's Evening-primrose</b> <i>Camissoniopsis hardhamiae</i>	None/None G1Q/S1 1B.2	April – May	Decomposed carbonate soils, in chaparral, cismontane woodland. Monterey, SLO Counties	No. Appropriate carbonate soils are not present.	No	No Effect
15.	<b>San Luis Obispo Sedge</b> <i>Carex obispoensis</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.2	April – June	Serpentine springs, stream sides; <600 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR</b>	<b>Blooming Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
16.	<b>San Luis Obispo Owl's-clover</b> <i>Castilleja densiflora</i> var. <i>obispoensis</i>	None/None G5T2/S2.2 1B.2	April	Coastal grassland, <100 m. Endemic to SLO County.	No. Suitable grassland habitat is not present in the Study Area.	No	No Effect
17.	<b>Lemmon's Jewelflower</b> <i>Caulanthus lemmonii</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.2	March – May	Dry, exposed slopes;	Yes. Appropriate dry slopes are present in the Study Area.	TBD	Effects TBD
18.	<b>Lompoc Ceanothus</b> <i>Ceanothus cuneatus</i> var. <i>fascicularis</i>	None/None G5T3/S3.2 4.2	February – April	Chaparral on coastal sandy mesas; <400 m. s Cco	No. Site is too far inland. Subspecies of <i>Ceanothus cuneatus</i> onsite is common.	No	No Effect
19.	<b>Brewer's Spineflower</b> <i>Chorizanthe breweri</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.3	May – August	Chaparral, foothill woodland on serpentine; <800 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
20.	<b>Douglas' Spineflower</b> <i>Chorizanthe douglasii</i>	None/None G3/S3.3 4.3	April – July	Foothill woodland, pine forest, chaparral, sandy or gravelly soils; 200-1600 m. e SCoRO, SCoRI	Yes. Appropriate habitat is present over moderately appropriate soil.	TBD	TBD
21.	<b>Palmer's Spineflower</b> <i>Chorizanthe palmeri</i>	None/None G3?/S3.2? 4.2	May – August	Serpentine; 60–700m. SCoRO (w Monterey, w San Luis Obispo cos.)	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
22.	<b>Straight-awned Spineflower</b> <i>Chorizanthe rectispina</i>	None/None G1/S1 1B.3	May – July	Chaparral, dry woodland in sandy soil; 200-600 m. SCoRO	Yes. Appropriate habitat is present over moderately appropriate soil	TBD	TBD
23.	<b>San Luis Obispo Fountain Thistle</b> <i>Cirsium fontinale</i> var. <i>obispoense</i>	FE/CE G2T2/S2 1B.2	February – July	Serpentine seeps and streams; <300 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
24.	<b>Cuesta Ridge Thistle</b> <i>Cirsium occidentale</i> var. <i>lucianum</i>	None/None G3G4T2/S2 1B.2	April – July	Chaparral, woodland or forest openings, often on serpentine; 500-750m. s SCoRO (s Santa Lucia Range, San Luis Obispo, CA)	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect

	Common and Scientific Names	Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential Habitat?	Detected in Study Area?	Effect of Activity
25.	<b>Slender Clarkia</b> <i>Clarkia exilis</i>	None/None G3/S3.3 4.3	April – May	Woodland, <1000 m, S SNF, Teh.	Unlikely. Lone record from SLO County is a 1969 collection by Hoover from Creston, annotated as possible <i>C. tembloriensis</i> . Study Area well outside known range.	No	No Effect
26.	<b>Paniculate Tarplant</b> <i>Deinandra paniculata</i>	None/None G3G4/S3.2 4.2	May – November	Vernally mesic or sandy soils in coastal scrub and grassland habitats; <1320 m.	No. Appropriate habitat and soil combinations are not present.	No	No Effect
27.	<b>Small-flowered Gypsum-loving Larkspur</b> <i>Delphinium gypsophilum</i> ssp. <i>parviflorum</i>	None/None G4T3?Q/S3? 3.2	March – June	Clay soil in cismontane woodland; 200-350 m.	Yes. Woodlands occur on moderately appropriate soils in the Study Area.	TBD	TBD
28.	<b>Dune Larkspur</b> <i>Delphinium parryi</i> ssp. <i>blochmaniae</i>	None/None G4T2/S2 1B.2	April – May	Coastal chaparral, sand. 0-200 m. s CCo	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species	No	No Effect
29.	<b>Eastwood's Larkspur</b> <i>Delphinium parryi</i> ssp. <i>eastwoodiae</i>	None/None G4T2/S2 1B.2	March – May	Coastal chaparral, grassland, on serpentine; 100-500m sCCo, SCoRO (San Luis Obispo County)	No. Site is too far inland, and serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
30.	<b>Betty's Dudleya</b> <i>Dudleya abramsii</i> ssp. <i>bettinae</i>	None/None G3T1/S1 1B.2	May – July	Rocky outcrops in serpentine grassland; <50-180 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Serpentine outcrops are not present.	No	No Effect
31.	<b>Blochman's Dudleya</b> <i>Dudleya blochmaniae</i> ssp. <i>blochmaniae</i>	None/None G2T2/S2.1 1B.1	April – June	Open, rocky slopes, often serpentine or clay soils; <450 m. s CCo, SCo	No. Serpentine outcrops and serpentine-derived clay soils are not present.	No	No Effect
32.	<b>Small Spikerush</b> <i>Eleocharis parvula</i>	None/None G5/S3.3 4.3	Late Winter – Fall	Brackish, wet soil, coastal; <50 m. NCo, SnFrB, SCo; to BC; KS to NL, FL, LA; Mex, C.Am, Eurasia	No. Site is too far inland and lacks brackish wet soils.	No	No Effect

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR</b>	<b>Blooming Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
33.	<b>Yellow-flowered Eriastrum</b> <i>Eriastrum luteum</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.2	May – June	Bare sandy decomposed granite slopes in cismontane woodland, chaparral, forest; 360-1000 m. SCoR, Monterey, SLO Counties	No. Appropriate bare granitic slopes and granite-derived sandy soils are not present.	No	No Effect
34.	<b>Blochman's Leafy Daisy</b> <i>Erigeron blochmaniae</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.2	July – August	Sand dunes and hills; <30 m. s CCo	No. Site is too far inland, and appropriate dune soils are not present.	No	No Effect
35.	<b>Elegant Wild Buckwheat</b> <i>Eriogonum elegans</i>	None/None G3/S3 4.3	May – November	Sand or gravel; 200 – 1200 m. SnFrB, SCoR, WTR	No. Appropriate habitat and soil combination do not occur on site.	No	No Effect
36.	<b>Ojai Fritillary</b> <i>Fritillaria ojaiensis</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.2	March – May	Rocky slopes, river basins; 300-500 m. SCoRO, WTR	Yes. Moderately appropriate river basin is present along Atascadero Creek.	TBD	Effect TBD
37.	<b>San Benito Fritillary</b> <i>Fritillaria viridea</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.2	March – May	Serpentine slopes; 200-1500 m. SCoR (San Benito, SLO Counties)	No. Serpentine slopes are not present.	No	No Effect
38.	<b>Mesa Horkelia</b> <i>Horkelia cuneata var. puberula</i>	None/None G4T2/S2.1 1B.1	February – September	Dry, sandy coastal chaparral; gen 70-700 m. SCoRO, SCo.	No. Site is too far inland for coastal chaparral. Appropriate sandy soils are not present.	No	No Effect.
39.	<b>Santa Lucia Dwarf Rush</b> <i>Juncus luciensis</i>	None/None G2G3/S2S3 1B.2	April – July	Vernal pools, ephemeral drainages, wet meadow habitats, and streams;	Yes. Moderately appropriate habitat is present adjacent to Atascadero Creek	TBD	Effect TBD
40.	<b>Pale-yellow Layia</b> <i>Layia heterotricha</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.1	March – June	Alkaline or clay soils, open areas, in pinyon-juniper woodland, grassland; 270-1705 m. Teh, SnJV, SCoR, n WTR	No. Appropriate juniper woodland and grassland habitats are not present.	No	No Effect

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR</b>	<b>Blooming Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
41.	<b>Jones' Layia</b> <i>Layia jonesii</i>	None/None G1/S1 1B.2	March – May	Open serpentine or clay slopes; <400 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Serpentine outcrops and serpentine-derived clay soils are not present.	No	No Effect
42.	<b>Jones' Bush-mallow</b> <i>Malacothamnus jonesii</i>	None/None G3/S3.3 4.3	May – July	Open chaparral in foothill woodland; 250-830 m. SCoRO (Monterey, SLO Counties).	Yes. Moderately appropriate chaparral habitat is present.	TBD	Effect TBD
43.	<b>San Luis Obispo County Bush-mallow</b> <i>Malacothamnus niveus</i>	None/None G3Q/S3.3 4.3	May – July	On slopes near canyon bottoms in chaparral habitat; 365-790 m.	No. All reported collections from San Luis Obispo County are east of Atascadero. Unlikely to occur in the Study Area.	No	No Effect
44.	<b>Carmel Valley Bush-mallow</b> <i>Malacothamnus palmeri</i> var. <i>involucratum</i>	None/None G3T2Q/S2.2 1B.2	May – October	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub; 30-1100 m. s CCo, SCoRO	Yes. Appropriate chaparral and woodland habitats are present.	TBD	Effect TBD
45.	<b>Santa Lucia Bush-mallow</b> <i>Malacothamnus palmeri</i> var. <i>palmeri</i>	None/None G3T2Q/S2.2 1B.2	May – July	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub; 30-1100 m. s CCo, SCoRO	Yes. Appropriate chaparral and woodland habitats are present.	TBD	Effect TBD
46.	<b>Palmer's Monardella</b> <i>Monardella palmeri</i>	None/None G2/S2.2 1B.2	June – August	Serpentine soils in chaparral, forest; 200-800 m. SCoRO	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
47.	<b>Spreading Navarretia</b> <i>Navarretia fossalis</i>	FT/None G1/S1 1B.1	April – June	Chenopod scrub, marshes and swamps, playas, and vernal pools; 30-1300m. SCoRO, SCo, to Baja Cal.	No. Appropriate seasonally wet habitats not present.	No	No Effect
48.	<b>Shining Navarretia</b> <i>Navarretia nigelliformis</i> ssp. <i>radians</i>	None/None G4T2/S2 1B.2	May – July	Vernal pools, clay depressions, dry grasslands;	No. Appropriate habitat and soil combinations are not present.	No	No Effect

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CRPR</b>	<b>Blooming Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
49.	<b>Large-flowered Nemacladus</b> <i>Nemacladus secundiflorus</i> var. <i>secundiflorus</i>	None/None G3T3*/S3? 4.3	April – May	Dry, gravelly slopes; 200-2000m. s SNH, SCoR	Yes. Moderately appropriate dry slopes are present.	TBD	Effect TBD
50.	<b>Chaparral Popcornflower</b> <i>Plagiobothrys torreyi</i> var. <i>perplexans</i>	None/None G4T3/S3 4.3	April – June	Burned areas and igneous soils in chaparral, coniferous forest habitats; 500-2100 m.	No. Moderately appropriate habitat is present in chaparral; however, this variety (previously treated as <i>P. myosotoides</i> in JM1) is only reported from eastern San Luis Obispo County and is not expected near the Study Area.	TBD	Effect TBD
51.	<b>Hooked Popcorn-flower</b> <i>Plagiobothrys uncinatus</i>	None/None G2/S2 1B.2	April – May	Canyon sides, chaparral; on sandstone 300-600 m. n SCoR (Gabilan Range, Santa Lucia Mountains)	Yes. Appropriate chaparral habitat and sandstone-derived substrates are present.	TBD	Effect TBD
52.	<b>San Gabriel Ragwort</b> <i>Senecio astephanus</i>	None/None G3/S3 4.3	January – April	Drying alkaline flats, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub; <400 m. CW, SCo, ChI	Yes. Moderately appropriate habitat is present in chaparral.	TBD	Effect TBD
53.	<b>Cuesta Pass Checkerbloom</b> <i>Sidalcea hickmanii</i> ssp. <i>anomala</i>	None/CR G3T1/S1 1B.2	May – June	Closed-cone-conifer forest, gen serpentine; 600-800 m. Endemic to SLO County	No. Serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
54.	<b>Most Beautiful Jewel-flower</b> <i>Streptanthus albidus</i> ssp. <i>peramoenus</i>	None/None G2T2/S2.2 1B.2	April – June	Open, grassy or ±barren slopes, often serpentine; ±150-800 m. c SCoRO	No. Appropriate open grassland and serpentine-derived soils are not present.	No	No Effect
55.	<b>California Seablite</b> <i>Suaeda californica</i>	FE/None G1/S1 1B.1	July – October	Margins of coastal salt marshes; <5 m. CCo	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species	No	No Effect

Habitat characteristics are from the Jepson Manual, the CNDDDB, and CNPS, as appropriate.

\*not listed in the CNDDDB or CNPS for the search area, but possibly for the location.

**Abbreviations:**

CCo: Central Coast  
SCo: South Coast  
SCoR: South Coast Ranges  
SCoRO: Outer South Coast Ranges  
SCoRI: Inner South Coast Ranges

SnFrB: San Francisco Bay  
TR: Transverse Ranges  
WTR: Western Transverse Ranges  
SnJV: San Joaquin Valley  
ScV: Sacramento Valley

SLO: San Luis Obispo  
SN: Sierra Nevada  
SnJt: San Jacinto Mtns  
SnBr: San Bernardino  
Teh: Tehachapi Mtn Area

CW: Central West  
SW: South West  
DMoj: Mojave Desert  
PR: Peninsular Range

**Status/Rank Abbreviations:**

FE: Federally Endangered  
FT: Federally Threatened  
PE: Proposed Federally Endangered  
PT: Proposed Federally Threatened

CE: California Endangered  
CR: California Rare  
CT: California Threatened  
Cand. CE: Candidate for California Endangered  
Cand. CT: Candidate for California Threatened



#### 4.4 Special Status Plants Discussion

Nineteen special status plant species could potentially occur in the Study Area based on an analysis of known ecological requirement of these species, known range, and the habitat conditions that were observed in the Study Area. We discuss each species and describe habitat, range restrictions, known occurrences, and survey results for the Study Area. Many of these species cannot be definitively identified or may not be visible at all outside the growing season, particularly in drought years. Because California experienced an extreme drought during the 2012-13 and 2013-14 rain years, floristic surveys could not be completed in 2014. To be consistent with regulatory agency botanical survey guidelines (USFWS 2000, CDFW 2009), a seasonally timed floristic survey can be conducted in Spring 2015 as conditions allow.

- A. Douglas' Fiddleneck** (*Amsinckia douglasiana*) is a CRPR 4.2 species known from unstable shaly sedimentary slopes. Reports from San Luis Obispo County include collections from Camp Roberts, Neals Spring, Huerhuero, Carrizo Plain, and Arroyo Grande on sedimentary rock slopes. Sedimentary rock underlies soil in the Study Area, and sandstone boulder piles are evident in many areas, although exposed rock slopes are not common. Preliminary surveys were conducted outside the typical blooming period for this species. A spring botanical survey will be conducted to determine if Douglas' fiddleneck occurs the Study Area.
- B. Santa Lucia Manzanita** (*Arctostaphylos luciana*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species endemic to San Luis Obispo County. Santa Lucia manzanita is known from woodland and chaparral at elevations between 350 and 850 meters, typically on shale or shale-derived soils. This species occurs on shale slopes on the east side of Cuesta Pass, and is also reported from old herbarium specimens collected in northern San Luis Obispo County near Adelaida. The nearest reported occurrence is from Santa Margarita Ranch, approximately 7 miles south-southeast of the Study Area (CNDDB #8), on steep slopes in manzanita/bush poppy chaparral. Moderately appropriate habitat in the Study Area consists of thin soils and slopes within chaparral. Other *Arctostaphylos* species were present in the Study Area. This species has not been observed along the proposed trail route and vicinity.
- C. Santa Margarita Manzanita** (*Arctostaphylos pilosula*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species known from shale outcrops and slopes in chaparral. Its range is limited to San Luis Obispo County. Taxonomic revisions to *Arctostaphylos* in the Second Jepson Manual have included *A. wellsii* W. Knight as part of *A. pilosula* Jeps. & Wiesel. Several CCH records are reported from Atascadero, including records from Los Padres National Forest on the west side. The nearest reported occurrences are from 1.5 to 2.4 miles away, to the east and southeast, including collections from (CNDDB #8, #27, #53), on Monterey shale and limestone slopes with chamise and bush poppy chaparral. Occurrence 27 is from Eagle Ranch adjacent to the Preserve. Appropriate habitat in the Study Area consists of thin soils and slopes within chaparral. Other *Arctostaphylos* species were present in the Study Area. This species has not been observed along the proposed trail route and vicinity.
- D. Salinas Milk-vetch** (*Astragalus macrodon*) is a CRPR 4.3 species known from San Benito County south to San Luis Obispo County and east to Kern County. It is uncommon in most areas but occurs regularly in appropriate soil conditions. Salinas milk vetch is known from the North County, and has been tentatively identified at Stadium

Park on shale-derived steep slopes, but was not observed along the proposed trail route at the Preserve.

- E. San Luis Mariposa Lily** (*Calochortus obispoensis*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species endemic to San Luis Obispo County. It typically occurs in association with serpentine outcrops and serpentine bunchgrass communities but can occur on sandstone. The nearest reported occurrence is from approximately 5 miles south of the Study Area (CNDDDB #1), on Cuesta Ridge. It was observed in both shale and serpentine substrates with ceanothus, chamise, and manzanita chaparral. Moderately appropriate habitat is present at the Preserve where chaparral occurs in thin soils. Spring surveys are required to determine if San Luis mariposa lily occurs in the vicinity of the proposed trail.
- F. La Panza Mariposa Lily** (*Calochortus simulans*) is a CRPR 1B.3 species endemic to San Luis Obispo County. La Panza mariposa lily is a perennial bulb-forming plant that blooms in large numbers when conditions are right. It occurs in the City of San Luis Obispo and outlying areas southwest to See Canyon on soils derived from serpentinite. In the Santa Margarita, Creston, and Atascadero areas it occurs on various sandy or gravelly substrates in foothill woodlands, grasslands, and in chaparral. In years with above-average rainfall La Panza mariposa lily can be locally common, and in below-average rainfall years it may only bloom in small patches or not at all. Habitat and soil conditions on the Property are suited to supporting San Luis Obispo mariposa lily. The closest reported occurrence is from 4.6 miles east-southeast of the property along El Camino Real (CNDDDB #35). Spring surveys are required to determine if La Panza mariposa lily occurs in the vicinity of the proposed trail.
- G. Dwarf Calycadenia** (*Calycadenia villosa*) is a CRPR 1B.1 species with a limited range in Fresno, Kern, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. The CNPS considers this species to be seriously endangered. Occurrences in the CNDDDB for San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties include the vicinity of Nacimiento and San Antonio Lakes, north to Jolon, with scattered occurrences in Parkfield to the east and in La Panza District, east of Santa Margarita. It occurs on gravel barrens and other thin soils in dry grassland habitats and washes. The closest reported occurrence to the Study Area is approximately 11 miles northeast, near the Creston Cemetery, on slopes with scattered blue oaks (CNDDDB #11). Moderately appropriate habitat is present in open blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*) woodland with grassy understory. Spring surveys are required to determine if dwarf calycadenia occurs in the vicinity of the proposed trail.
- H. Lemmon's Jewelflower** (*Caulanthus lemmonii*) is a CRPR 1B.2 subspecies that grows on dry, exposed slopes in the Coast Ranges. Numerous old collection records are from Lake Nacimiento, Paso Robles area, Pozo, Carrizo Plain, and Bitterwater Valley Road. The species is not reported from the Atascadero area, but is reported from 10 miles north near Peachy Canyon, and 16 miles east near Highway 58 (CNDDDB #21 and #38). Moderately appropriate habitat is present on west-facing slopes on the property. A spring survey for Lemmon's jewel flower will be required in Spring 2014.
- I. Douglas' Spineflower** (*Chorizanthe douglasii*) is a CRPR 4.3 species known from San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo Counties. It is considered rare, but found in sufficient numbers and distributed widely enough within its known range that the threat of extinction is low at this time. This spineflower grows in gravelly or sandy substrates -

in the Santa Margarita area (Hoover #11352, Crampton #6978, etc.), Adelaida (Rose #36265), Nacimiento River (Hardham #4396), Bee Rock (Bacigalupi #7434), and other areas of San Luis Obispo County. Douglas' spineflower was identified on the subject property in the fall of 2005. A spring survey for Douglas' spineflower will be required in Spring 2014.

- J. Straight-awned Spineflower** (*Chorizanthe rectispina*) is a CRPR 1B.3 species known only from Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. It occurs on sandy or gravelly soils in open areas of chaparral and woodland, from fine sands in Arroyo Grande through Lopez Canyon and from decomposed granite in the Santa Margarita and Atascadero area. Appropriate habitat for this species is found on the subject property. One previous reports of *Chorizanthe rectispina* is a 1959 collection from Santa Barbara Road, approximately 2 miles east southeast from the Study Area (CNDDDB #9, Hardham #4804 and #4843, CAS). Straight-awned spineflower could occur on the Property, and spring surveys will be required to determine if it is present.
- K. Small-flowered Gypsum-loving Larkspur** (*Delphinium gypsophilum* ssp. *parviflorum*) is a CRPR 3.2 subspecies known from scattered localities in the North County. This species is a perennial herb found on rocky clay, sometimes serpentine soil, in cismontane woodlands and valley and foothill grasslands. CNPS has recently updated the status of this plant to Rank 3.2 from Rank 4.3 and is considering the more rare status of Rank 1B. CNPS states that this subspecies may be rarer than previously thought and requires further study and documentation. However, Jepson Manual, second edition, does not consider it to be a valid taxon, and treats it as a synonym of *Delphinium gypsophilum*. It could occur in clearings and openings in blue oak woodland. Spring surveys will be required to determine if it is present.
- L. Ojai Fritillary** (*Fritillaria ojaiensis*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species known from Monterey, Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, Sonoma, and Ventura Counties. Ojai Fritillary is known from rocky slopes and river basins. The range reported in the Jepson Manual is limited to the Western Transverse Range, although CNDDDB reports state that it occurs in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties as well, and a 2011 collection by Dr. David Keil documents this species from Reservoir Canyon in San Luis Obispo County. Moderately appropriate habitat is present on the property. The closest occurrence to the Study Area is an unconfirmed report from the vicinity of Little Falls Springs, 16 miles southeast. The CNDDDB record from a 1986 map states, "Questionable occurrence: could be *Fritillaria lanceolata*" (CNDDDB #12). Spring surveys are required to determine if Ojai fritillary occurs on the Property.
- M. Santa Lucia Dwarf Rush** (*Juncus luciensis*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species known from specimens collected in coastal counties from San Diego north to Monterey, and from scattered localities in northern California. It is a very small annual plant that grows in wet soils in a variety of seasonally moist environments. It is caespitose, with small leaves and branches arising from the base, and rarely exceeds two inches in height. The closest reported occurrence to the Study Area is approximately 9 miles north-northeast, from damp grain fields east of Paso Robles on Creston Road (CNDDDB #8). Moderately suitable wet habitats are located along Atascadero Creek and tributary drainages. Spring surveys will be required to determine if it is present.

- N. Jones' Bush-mallow** (*Malacothamnus jonesii*) is a CRPR 4.3 species with a limited range in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Santa Barbara Counties. It typically occurs in chaparral pockets within foothill woodland communities, blooming from May through July. It is reported from collections made in the 1930s, 50s, and 60s from Traffic Way, Santa Rosa Road, and Morro Road in Atascadero within a few miles of the Property (Hardham #6983; Lee #967; Hardham #6988). More recent collections are not reported from the immediate vicinity of the site, but chaparral habitat is appropriate for this species. Bush-mallow was not noted along the preliminary proposed trail route as flagged in the field during our Summer and Fall site visits, but could occur in chaparral and spring surveys would be required to verify that any changes to the preliminary trail alignment do not affect this species.
- O. Carmel Valley Bush-mallow**, (*Malacothamnus palmeri* var. *involucratus*) and **Santa Lucia Bush-mallow** (*Malacothamnus palmeri* var. *palmeri*) are CRPR 1B.2 subspecies that occur in cismontane woodland, chaparral, and coastal scrub habitats in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. Potentially appropriate habitat is found on the subject property for these subspecies of bush mallow. Both varieties are reported from Los Padres National Forest within a few miles west of the site, near the Cerro Alto Campground. Bush-mallow was not noted along the preliminary proposed trail route as flagged in the field during our Summer and Fall site visits, but could occur in chaparral and spring surveys would be required to verify that any changes to the preliminary trail alignment do not affect this species.
- P. Large-flowered Nemacladus** (*Nemacladus secundiflorus* var. *secundiflorus*) is a CRPR 4.3 species. It occurs on dry, gravelly slopes at elevations below 2,000 meters. Large-flowered Nemacladus is endemic to California and has documented occurrences in Kern, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, and Tulare Counties. This species may be present in other areas where conditions are favorable. Most reported collections from San Luis Obispo County are north or east of the Property; however, a documented occurrence near the project includes a 1927 collection with nonspecific locality in Atascadero noted on the herbarium label (Mason #3736). Spring surveys will be required to determine if it is present.
- Q. Hooked Popcorn Flower** (*Plagiobothrys uncinatus*) is a CRPR 1B species with a limited distribution centered in Monterey County. It is usually associated with dry soils in chaparral habitat, but has been reported from heavy clay soils in meadows. Appropriate habitat for this species is present within the subject parcels. The closest reported occurrence to the Study Area is approximately 4 miles south in the Los Padres National Forest, in chaparral on shale-derived substrates (CNDDB #16). Spring surveys will be required to determine if it is present.
- R. San Gabriel Ragwort** (*Senecio astephanus*) is a CRPR 4.3 species that can be found on steep rocky slopes in coastal bluff scrub or chaparral habitats of the outer South Coast and Transverse Ranges of California. Moderately suitable habitat for San Gabriel ragwort is present in the Study Area. It is reported from about 4 miles south of the Study area, from the north side of Tassajera Summit (Hoover #9443). Spring surveys will be required to determine if it is present.

#### **4.5 Potential Special Status Animals List**

Table 4 lists 29 special status animal species reported from the region. Federal and California State status, global and State rank, and CDFW listing status for each species are given. Typical nesting or breeding period, habitat preference, potential habitat on site, and whether or not the species was observed in the Study Area are also provided.

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TABLE 4. SPECIAL STATUS ANIMAL LIST. Twenty-nine special status animals known or reported from the region are listed. Nine special status animals could potentially occur in the Study Area based on review of preferred habitat types, and one species (Foothill yellow-legged frog) is not likely to occur but warrants further discussion due to historic records near the Study Area.

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Rank</b>	<b>Nesting/ Breeding Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
1.	<b>Grasshopper Sparrow</b> <i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	None/None G5/S2 SSC	March 15 - August 15	Nests in grassland habitats on mountain slopes, foothills, and valleys. May nest colonially.	No. Appropriate grassland habitat is not present on site.	No	No Effect
2.	<b>Silvery Legless Lizard</b> <i>Anniella pulchra pulchra</i>	None/None G3G4T3T4Q/S3 SSC	May - September	Sandy or loose loamy soils under coastal scrub or oak trees. Soil moisture essential.	Yes. Appropriate loose loamy soils occur concurrent with appropriate habitats.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Mitigated
3.	<b>Pallid Bat</b> <i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	None/None G5/S3 Species of Concern	Spring - Summer	Rock crevices, caves, tree hollows, mines, old buildings, and bridges.	Yes. Moderately appropriate roosting habitat is present in mature trees.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Mitigated
4.	<b>Golden Eagle</b> <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	None/ None G5/S3 FP	March 15 - August 15	Nests in large, prominent trees in valley and foothill woodland. Requires adjacent food source.	Yes. Golden eagles could nest in large trees in the Study Area.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Avoided
5.	<b>Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp</b> <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	Threatened/ None G3/S2S3 SA	Rainy Season	Clear water sandstone depression pools, grassed swale, earth slump, or basalt flow depression pools.	No. Appropriate vernal pool habitat is not present on the property.	No	No Effect
6.	<b>Ferruginous Hawk</b> <i>Buteo regalis</i>	None/ None G4/S3S4 SA	October - April (Wintering)	Winters locally in open grassland or savannah habitats. More common in interior SLO County than coast.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present on site.	No	No Effect
7.	<b>Western Snowy Plover</b> <i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i>	FT/None G3T3/S2 SSC	March 15 - August 15	Sandy beaches, salt pond levees, and shorelines of large alkali lakes. Needs friable soils for nesting.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present on site.	No	No Effect

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Rank</b>	<b>Nesting/ Breeding Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
8.	<b>Sandy Beach Tiger Beetle</b> <i>Cicindela hirticollis gravida</i>	None/None G5T2/S1 SA	n/a	Adjacent to non-brackish water near the coast from San Francisco to N. Mexico. Clean, dry, light-colored sand in the upper zone.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species.	No	No Effect
9.	<b>Globose Dune Beetle</b> <i>Coelus globosus</i>	None/None G1/S1 SA	n/a	Coastal sand dune habitat. Inhabits foredunes and sand hummocks.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species.	No	No Effect
10.	<b>Townsend's Big-eared Bat</b> <i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	None/None G3G4/S2S3 SSC	Spring - Summer	Caves, buildings, and mine tunnels. Cave like attics as day roosts. On coast roosts are normally within 100 m. of creeks.	No. May forage but appropriate roosts are not present.	No	No Effect
11.	<b>Monarch Butterfly</b> <i>Danaus plexippus</i>	None/None G5/S3 SA	September - March (aggregations)	Roosts located in wind-protected tree groves with nectar and water nearby.	No. Aggregation sites are not present in west Atascadero for Monarch butterfly.	No	No Effect
12.	<b>White-tailed Kite</b> <i>Elanus leucurus</i>	None/None G5/S3 FP	March 15 - August 15	Nests in dense tree canopy near open foraging areas	Yes. Appropriate dense canopy is present in the Study Area.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Avoided
13.	<b>Western Pond Turtle</b> <i>Emys marmorata</i>	None/None G3G4/S3 SSC	April - August	Permanent or semi-permanent streams, ponds, lakes.	Yes. Pond turtles are known from Atascadero Creek.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Mitigated
14.	<b>Tidewater Goby</b> <i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>	FE/None G3/S2S3 SSC	n/a	Found in shallow lagoons and lower stream reaches, they need fairly still but not stagnant water and high oxygen levels.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species.	No	No Effect



	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Rank</b>	<b>Nesting/ Breeding Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
15.	<b>Morro Shoulderband (=Banded Dune) Snail</b> <i>Helminthoglypta walkeriana</i>	FE/None G1/S1 SA	n/a	Restricted to the coastal strand and sage scrub habitats in the immediate vicinity of Morro Bay.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species.	No	No Effect
16.	<b>California Linderiella</b> <i>Linderiella occidentalis</i>	None/ None G3/S2S3 SA	Rainy season	Seasonal pools in unplowed grasslands with alluvial soils.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present on site.	No	No Effect
17.	<b>Steelhead - South/Central California Coast ESU</b> <i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i>	Threatened/ None G5T2Q/S2 SSC	February - April	Fed listing refers to runs in coastal basins from Pajaro River south to, but not including, the Santa Maria River.	Yes. Steelhead trout are known to occur in Atascadero Creek.	No	No Effect
18.	<b>Coast Horned Lizard</b> <i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i>	None/None G3G4/S3S4 SSC	May - September	Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes.	Yes. Coast horned lizards are known from Atascadero.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Mitigated
19.	<b>Morro Bay Blue Butterfly</b> <i>Plebejus icarioides moroensis</i>	None/None G5T1T3/S1S3 SA	n/a	Inhabits stabilized dunes and surrounding areas in coastal SLO County (Morro Bay) and nw SB County.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of Species.	No	No Effect
20.	<b>Atascadero June Beetle</b> <i>Polyphylla nubila</i>	None/None G1/S1 SA	n/a	Known only from sand dunes in Atascadero and San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo County.	No. Appropriate soil and habitat type not present on site.	No	No Effect
21.	<b>Purple Martin</b> <i>Progne subis</i>	None/None G5/S3 SSC	March 15 - August 15	In San Luis Obispo County prefers nesting in Sycamore trees along riparian corridors.	Yes. Appropriate habitat exists at the site.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Mitigated

	<b>Common and Scientific Names</b>	<b>Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Rank</b>	<b>Nesting/ Breeding Period</b>	<b>Habitat Preference</b>	<b>Potential Habitat?</b>	<b>Detected in Study Area?</b>	<b>Effect of Activity</b>
22.	<b>San Luis Obispo Pyrg</b> <i>Pyrgulopsis taylori</i>	None/None G1/S1 SA	n/a	Freshwater habitats in San Luis Obispo County.	No. All collections are from coast side of the Coast Range.	No	No Effect
23.	<b>Foothill Yellow-legged Frog</b> <i>Rana boylei</i>	None/None G3/S2S3 SSC	March - September	Partly shaded, shallow streams and riffles with rocky substrate. Min. 15 weeks for larval development.	Yes. Appropriate habitat is present on site.	No	No Effect
24.	<b>California Red-legged Frog</b> <i>Rana draytonii</i>	Threatened/None G2G3/S2S3 SSC	January - September	Lowlands and foothills in or near sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation. Requires 11-20 weeks for larval development.	Yes. Appropriate habitat is present on site.	No	Potentially Adverse Effect Can Be Avoided
25.	<b>Western Spadefoot</b> <i>Spea hammondi</i>	None/None G3/S3 SSC	January – August	Vernal pools in grassland and woodland habitats	No. Appropriate habitat is not present on site.	No	No Effect
26.	<b>Coast Range Newt</b> <i>Taricha torosa</i>	None/None G4/S4 SSC	December - May	Slow moving streams, ponds, and lakes with surrounding evergreen/oak forests along coast.	Unlikely. The site does not have perennial water in all years. Nearest reported locations are from lower Graves Creek where perennial water is often present.	No	No Effect
27.	<b>American Badger</b> <i>Taxidea taxus</i>	None/None G5/S4 SSC	February – May	Needs friable soils in open ground with abundant food source such as California ground squirrels.	Unlikely. Grassland habitat is very limited onsite.	No	No Effect
28.	<b>Lompoc Grasshopper</b> <i>Trimerotropis occulens</i>	None/None GH/SH SA	n/a	Unknown. Known only from Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties	No. Historic record with limited locality and habitat information.	No	No Effect

	Common and Scientific Names	Fed/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Rank	Nesting/ Breeding Period	Habitat Preference	Potential Habitat?	Detected in Study Area?	Effect of Activity
29.	<b>San Joaquin Kit Fox</b> <i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>	FE/CT G4T2T3/S2S3 SA	December – July	Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Needs loose textured sandy soil and prey base.	No. Appropriate habitat is not present; Study Area is outside known range of species.	No	No Effect

Habitat characteristics are from the CNDDDB, USFWS, and species-specific references as appropriate.

\*not listed in the CNDDDB for the search area, but possibly for the location.

**Abbreviations:**

FE: Federally Endangered

FT: Federally Threatened

PE: Proposed Federally Endangered

PT: Proposed Federally Threatened

CE: California Endangered

CT: California Threatened

Cand. CE: Candidate for California Endangered

Cand. CT: Candidate for California Threatened

SA: CDFW Special Animal

SSC: CDFW Species of Special Concern

FP: CDFW Fully-Protected

WL: CDFW Watch List

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#### 4.6 Special Status Animals Discussion

Ten special status animal species could potentially occur in the Study Area. We discuss each species and describe habitat, range restrictions, known occurrences, and survey results.

- A. Silvery Legless Lizard** (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*) is a California Species of Special Concern that inhabits friable soils in a variety of habitats from coastal dunes to oak woodlands and chaparral. Loamy soils in oak woodlands in the Study Area are adequate for silvery legless lizard. The closest reported occurrence is from a residential neighborhood, under coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) trees 3.4 miles north of the subject property. Silvery legless lizard was not identified in the Study Area but could occur in leaf litter beneath oak trees.
- B. Pallid Bat** (*Antrozous pallidus*) is a California Species of Special Concern. This is a large, long-eared bat occurring throughout the state from deserts to moist forests. *Antrozous pallidus* is primarily a crevice roosting species and selects roosts where they can retreat from view. They frequently occur in oak woodlands where they roost in tree cavities. These roosts are generally day or night roosts for one or a few bats. Attics may be used as roosts and during hot days they may emerge from crevices and roost on open rafters. Communal wintering or maternity colonies are more common in rock crevices and caves. This species has been recorded at 22 localities in San Luis Obispo County. Althouse and Meade, Inc. biologists working with Paul Collins of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History in 2003, identified this species acoustically in the Santa Margarita area, and identified a pallid bat night roost under the Highway 101 bridge over Santa Margarita Creek. The Highway 41 bridges across Atascadero Creek could provide night roosts, and pallid bat could occur in oak tree cavities in the Study Area.
- C. Golden Eagle** (*Aquila chrysaetos*) is designated a Fully Protected species by the CDFW. Fully Protected species may not be taken under any circumstances, and authorization for take may not be granted (refer to Section 4.1.2). The primary federal legislation governing golden eagles is the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. Golden eagles are also protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). Golden eagles occur throughout the western United States, Alaska, and large portions of Canada and Mexico. They occupy nearly all habitats in the western U.S., including deserts, grasslands, woodlands, and all but the densest forests where hunting is impractical (Johnsgard 1990). Highly adaptable, golden eagles readily occupy habitats where basic needs are met. These basic needs include suitable nesting sites (typically large trees or cliffs), dependable food supplies, and large open areas for foraging. Golden eagles nest on cliffs and in large trees in open areas. They build large platform nests, often up to 3 meters (10 feet) across and 1 meter (3 feet) high, of sticks, twigs, and greenery (Polite and Pratt 1990).

California supports both wintering and nesting golden eagle populations. Golden eagles are known to nest in Paso Robles on the west side of Huerhuero Creek between Golden Hill Road and Airport Road, approximately 14 miles north-northeast. No nests of appropriate size were noted in the vicinity of the proposed trail route at

the Preserve in 2013 and 2014. Golden eagles could roost and forage there, and could nest in large trees in the future.

- D. White-tailed Kite** (*Elanus leucurus*) is a Fully Protected species that nests primarily in evergreen trees, especially coast live oaks, near meadows, marshes, or grasslands. There are no reports of nesting white-tailed kites within five miles of the Study Area, but this species is known to nest in Santa Margarita approximately 6 miles southeast of the site (CNDDDB #65), and young white tailed kites have been observed in south Atascadero near Santa Barbara Road, approximately 4 miles from the Study Area. Appropriate foraging habitat is present, and moderate quality nesting habitat is present, particularly in dense coast live oak woodland near the west edge of the Property. Kites were not observed during our surveys in 2013 and 2014.
- E. Western Pond Turtle** (*Emys marmorata*) is a California Species of Special Concern that inhabits ponds and slow moving streams with adequate pools. Pond turtles will move up seasonal streams during the winter months, and can over-summer in underground burrows during dry years when ponds are empty. Pond turtles are known to occur in Atascadero Creek and have been documented on multiple occasions in the vicinity of Lewis Avenue Bridge, approximately 2 miles northeast of the Study Area (CNDDDB #1156) and approximately 2.5 miles west on the other side of the coastal divide in Morro Creek (CNDDDB #1097). Pond turtles could utilize seasonal and perennial pools in Atascadero Creek adjacent to the proposed trail. Pond turtles were not observed in the Study Area during our site surveys in 2013 and 2014 but could occur there.
- F. Steelhead - South/Central California Coast ESU** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) is a federally listed threatened species in this area of California. Steelhead are known to occur in coastal streams and rivers in San Luis Obispo County, including the Salinas River to the vicinity of Santa Margarita. The Salinas River is considered to be critical spawning habitat for steelhead. Critical habitat extends up Atascadero Creek to just west of the Study Area. The National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) is the agency responsible for review of this federally listed species. A typical nexus for NMFS review is the permit process with the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE). The proposed at-grade crossing in an ephemeral drainage just upstream of Atascadero Creek is close to adjacent steelhead critical habitat and project details should be carefully considered with respect to storm water quality and habitat.

The Study Area is within the upper end of designated critical habitat for steelhead. Steelhead were found in Atascadero Creek within the Study Area and in upstream surveys during stream surveys conducted in 1999 (CDFW, 2000). Juvenile and subadult steelhead were present in Atascadero Creek at and upstream from the Study Area. Steelhead were also found in Hale Creek and Eagle Creek, both of which flow into Atascadero Creek upstream from the Study Area. Suitable rearing habitat for steelhead is present at the Study Area when surface flows are present. Upstream from the Study Area, suitable spawning habitat was found in Atascadero Creek, Hale Creek, and Eagle Creek. However, spawning habitat was determined not to be present at the Study Area itself (CDFW, 2000).

The existing unimproved trail crossing site would be at a shallow location with a gravel bottom. A deep pool (dry in 2013) is present just upstream of the crossing location. Steelhead are unlikely to spawn at this location due to unsuitable habitat.

The proposed Carmelita trailhead culvert crossing would not adversely affect steelhead trout or its habitat if construction occurs in the dry season, and the work area is stabilized prior to the rainy season.

- G. Coast horned lizard** (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) is a California Species of Special Concern. Horned lizards are found in dry habitats from coastal dunes to inland deserts. Populations in San Luis Obispo County are widespread, but the lizards are always uncommon. The closest reported occurrence in inland San Luis Obispo County of the coast horned lizard is located 21 miles north in San Miguel (CNDDDB #727); the species has been reported anecdotally from Atascadero, though no records are present in the CNDDB. Appropriate habitat for the coast horned lizard is present in the Study Area in chaparral. Coast horned lizard was not found in the Study Area during wildlife surveys conducted in 2013 and 2014, but could be present in very low numbers.
- H. Purple Martin** (*Progne subis*) is a California Species of Special Concern with a limited range and low abundance in California. Purple martins nest colonially in abandoned woodpecker and natural cavities in trees, especially California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), and typically return to the same site year after year. There are two nesting localities documented in San Luis Obispo County in the CNDDB. Occurrence 26 is approximately 0.75 mile northeast of the Study Area along Highway 41. Occurrence 15 is from 9 miles southeast of the property, on the Santa Margarita Ranch. The purple martin typically prefers dense sycamore groves. There are sycamore trees present in the Study Area along Atascadero Creek. Purple martin could potentially nest in the vicinity of the proposed trail.
- I. Foothill Yellow-legged Frog** (*Rana boylei*) is a California Species of Special Concern. They range from western Oregon south to Los Angeles County in California and east to the foothills of the Sierra Nevada but are absent in the Central Valley. Breeding occurs March through May in streams that have slowed after the winter runoff. The Foothill yellow-legged frog prefers gravelly or sandy streams with sunny banks and open woodlands nearby in locations up to 6,000 feet. The closest reported occurrence is mapped as occurring in Santa Margarita, five miles southeast of the Study Area (CNDDDB #825), from a 1917 collection. No recent collections or observations of this species are reported from inland San Luis Obispo County. Atascadero Creek provides some potential habitat where gravelly substrates are present along with openings in vegetation, although foothill yellow-legged frogs are not known from the immediate vicinity. Foothill yellow-legged frogs are unlikely to occur in the Study Area.
- J. California Red-legged Frog** (*Rana draytonii*) is a federally listed threatened species known from sporadic occurrences documented throughout San Luis Obispo County. It generally requires seasonal pools or streams that hold water until late summer for successful breeding. Bullfrogs and introduced fish are detrimental to its breeding success, and have severely reduced many populations in larger watercourses and

perennial ponds. Atascadero Creek provides potential habitat for California red-legged frogs, although bullfrogs have been documented in the creek, particularly in the lower reaches where perennial water is present in most years. The Study Area is within designated critical habitat for California red-legged frog (CRLF), near the eastern edge of the relevant subunit.

CRLF were reported from a tributary to Atascadero Creek in 2000 (CNDDDB #395), approximately 2.5 miles south-southeast of the Study Area in the Los Padres National Forest. The reach of Atascadero Creek that passes through the Study Area typically dries up in late spring, although late-seasonal to perennial pools are present nearby. No structures or construction actions are proposed within the creek.

**4.7 Special Status Species Not Expected to Occur**

The remaining 55 special status species (19 animals and 36 plants) reported to occur in the Atascadero, Creston, Morro Bay North, Santa Margarita, Templeton, and York Mountain quadrangles are not expected to occur in the Study Area due to the absence of required soil type, lack of appropriate habitat, or because the Study Area is substantially outside the known range of the species.

**4.8 Potential Sensitive Natural Communities**

The CNDDDB reports one sensitive natural community in the Atascadero, Creston, Morro Bay North, Santa Margarita, Templeton, and York Mountain quadrangles. Sensitive Natural Communities as defined by the CNDDDB do not occur in the Study Area.

TABLE 5. SENSITIVE NATURAL COMMUNITIES LIST. One sensitive natural community is reported from the 6 quadrangles within 5 miles of the Study Area.

Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank	Potential Habitat?	Effect of Proposed Activity
Northern Interior Cypress Forest	None/none G2/S2.2	No. Cypress trees do not occur on-site.	No Effect

This sensitive natural community, Northern Interior Cypress Forest, occurs south of the Study Area, in the Los Padres National Forest west of Cuesta Grade. Cypress trees do not occur in the Study Area.

Sensitive natural communities listed in the CNDDDB represent a previous effort to identify and conserve uncommon and sensitive vegetation and habitat types. More recent work to classify vegetation and prioritize communities in need of conservation has been conducted by CNPS and the CDFW in a cooperative vegetation classification and mapping effort. A hierarchical list of vegetation types is published on the CDFW VegCamp website. Vegetation types with a ranking of S3 or rarer, identified with an asterisk in the alliance code, are considered potentially sensitive, contingent on the quality and extent of the stand.

Vegetation types under the Manual of California Vegetation, 2nd Edition (MCV2) are listed in Section 6 of this document. One vegetation type present in the Study Area (sycamore riparian woodland) meets criteria for a sensitive natural community, California Sycamore Woodland,



ranked G3/S3. Sycamore woodland is present in patches along Atascadero Creek that meets the definition of California Sycamore Woodland. Sycamore canopy is also present within the creek reserve proposed for the Carmelita trailhead, at a location already used recreationally. This patch of sycamore does not meet the criteria for California Sycamore Woodland. Trails should be constructed to avoid sycamore roots and prevent the removal or trimming of sycamore trees to the maximum extent possible.

## 5.0 Habitat Types

We describe five habitat types in the Study Area and provide approximate acreages for each habitat type present during 2013 and 2014 (Table 6): blue oak woodland, coast live oak woodland, sycamore riparian woodland around a seasonal stream, mixed chaparral, and anthropogenic areas. Non-native annual grassland is present as understory to blue oak woodland, and small patches of native perennial bunchgrasses are present. Ephemeral and intermittent drainages occur within blue oak and coast live oak woodland. A seasonal drainage with perennial pools (Atascadero Creek) occurs within riparian woodland. Habitats intermix along ecotones, forming a matrix of vegetation that does not always fit cleanly into one of the described habitats. In particular, patches of coast live oak woodland intermix with chaparral in the southwest portion of the Study Area. An existing highway corridor also passes through the site; the proposed trail would include access underneath a Highway 41 bridge at Caltrans postmile 13.3. Figure 8 indicates the locations of each habitat type in the Study Area as of 2014 along with preliminary trail locations. One sensitive natural community, California Sycamore Woodland, a subtype of sycamore riparian woodland, occurs in the Study Area.

TABLE 6. HABITAT DATA. The approximate acreage and location are provided for all habitat types occurring in the Study Area.

Habitat Type	Area (acres)
Blue oak woodland	33.3
Coast live oak woodland	46.2
Sycamore riparian woodland	5.3
Chaparral	25.4
Anthropogenic features	<0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>110.2</b>

### 5.1 Blue Oak Woodland

Blue oak woodland occurs over approximately 33.3 acres of the Study Area. This vegetation type is consistent with the MCV2 *Quercus douglasii* Woodland Alliance vegetation type. At the Preserve, blue oak woodland ranges from dense spacing of trees such that canopies almost touch, to park-like areas with large clearings. Blue oak woodland occurs primarily on slopes and hillsides. Trees are mature but small in stature, with few seedlings and saplings observed.

Poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) is present in some areas, though it was more commonly encountered in coast live oak woodland and chaparral.

The understory is similar to a California annual grassland habitat, with common to abundant non-native annual grasses such as soft chess (*Bromus hordeaceus*), rip gut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), rattail fescue (*Festuca myuros*), and oats (*Avena barbata*). Many native herbs, wildflowers, and bulbs are also present, including western thistle (*Cirsium occidentale*), blue-dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), soap root (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*), clarkias (*Clarkia purpurea*), sanicles (*Sanicula* spp.), and hummingbird sage (*Salvia spathacea*). Ferns such as maiden hair fern (*Adiantum jordanii*) and wood fern (*Dryopteris arguta*) are present in shady areas. Some nonnative herbs are common in the understory, including rose clover (*Trifolium hirtum*) and hedge parsley (*Torilis arvensis*).

Occasional patches with abundant native grasses were also observed as a component of the areas mapped as blue oak woodland. These areas support abundant purple needlegrass (*Nassella [=Stipa] pulchra*) and typically include native herbs as well. Patches of melic grass (*Melica californica*) and blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*) were noted in shadier areas of the blue oak woodland. Occasional shrubs such as coffeeberry (*Rhamnus [=Frangula] californica*) and snow berry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*) are also present.

Ephemeral drainages begin on the hillside and cross through blue oak woodland toward a larger tributary to Atascadero Creek. In areas where these drainages pass through oak woodland, vegetation is not consistently different from adjacent woodland; rather similar annual grasses and herbs are present on banks of these ephemeral channels, with oaks providing shade.

Rock piles and outcrops beneath blue oak canopy provide suitable shelter for reptiles and small wildlife. Birds are common in blue oak woodlands, including hawks, woodpeckers, and several species of songbirds.

## 5.2 Coast Live Oak Woodland

Coast live oak woodland occurs on north and east facing hillsides, and along ephemeral drainages over approximately 46 acre of the Study Area. This vegetation type is consistent with the MCV2 *Quercus agrifolia* Woodland Alliance. Canopy is primarily coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) but some scattered blue oak and occasional California laurel (*Umbellularia californica*) are also present. Laurel trees were observed primarily along drainages, especially the larger ephemeral drainage that forms from confluence of the smaller headwater drainages noted in the habitat description for blue oak woodland. A few madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) saplings were observed at the interface of coast live oak woodland and chaparral near the south corner of the Study Area, and larger madrone also occur.

The understory of coast live oak woodland in the Study Area is similar to understory described for blue oak woodland, with additional shrub species noted. Along the larger ephemeral drainage, cream bush (*Holodiscus discolor*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), and spiny leaf redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*) are present. Wood fern, poison oak, and snow berry are also regular components of the understory.

Numerous birds, including chestnut-backed chickadees (*Poecile rufescens*), acorn woodpeckers (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), dark-eyed juncos (*Junco hyemalis*), Bewick's wrens (*Thryomanes bewickii*), northern flickers (*Colaptes auratus*), oak titmice (*Baeolophus inornatus*), western scrub-jays (*Aphelocoma californica*), spotted towhees (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*), and Steller's

jays (*Cyanocitta stelleri*), as well as gray squirrels (*Sciurus griseus*), were noted in coast live oak woodland.

### 5.3 Sycamore Riparian Woodland

Sycamore riparian woodland is present along Atascadero Creek, and was mapped in the Study Area over approximately 5.3 acres. This riparian habitat is characterized by regular presence of California sycamore as a major component of the riparian canopy. Some areas mapped as sycamore riparian woodland are consistent with the MCV2 *Platanus racemosa* Woodland Alliance, particularly where this habitat occurs on immediate edges of stream channels, banks, and terrace edges. Sycamore riparian woodland continues outside the Study Area both up and downstream.

Willows (*Salix* spp.) and valley oak (*Quercus lobata*) are the other major tree components of this vegetation type. Black walnut (*Juglans californica*) and bay are also present. The shrub stratum supports intermittent patches of wild rose (*Rosa californica*), mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), snowberries (*Symphoricarpos* spp.), currants (*Ribes* sp.), skunk bush (*Rhus aromatica*), non-native Himalayan blackberry (*Rubus armeniacus*), and native blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*). Tree and shrub vegetation primarily occurs on the banks and terraces along Atascadero Creek; a few small trees and shrubs occur on sand and gravel bars within the channel bed.

The channel bed supports some herbaceous vegetation that occurs when water recedes, including mint (*Mentha* sp.), bromes (*Bromus* spp.), and rabbitsfoot grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*). Most of the channel bed is sparsely vegetated to bare. Cobbles, gravels, and sand bars are common.

Areas immediately adjacent to the creek and its immediate banks support relatively diverse, multi-layer canopy. These areas are high-quality habitat consistent with the MCV2 description of Sycamore Woodland, a sensitive vegetation type.

Sycamores and valley oaks are also present upslope from the creek at the proposed Carmelita trailhead location. The understory at this location is substantially disturbed. Shrub vegetation is sparse and limited to disturbance followers such as coyote brush. Herbaceous vegetation is limited and mostly consists of non-native herbs and grasses. This City-owned open space area is bounded by existing fences, and is already used recreationally by equestrians. Vehicular access is already possible at this location. This area is of lower quality, lacking well-developed multi-layer canopy and consistent understory vegetation.

The Highway 41 bridges cross the creek and interrupt sycamore woodland at each of the bridge sites. These existing transportation corridors have been present for many years.

An ephemeral drainage borders the proposed trailhead along its northeast side. An existing concrete apron is present between the open space parcel and the confluence of this ephemeral tributary with Atascadero Creek. Vegetation in this drainage consists of upland annuals, primarily Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) and Italian rye grass (*Festuca perennis*).

Sycamore woodland and the seasonal stream with which it is associated provide habitat for wildlife, including many species of birds, amphibians, reptiles, fish, and mammals. Deep pools provide late season water that may be perennial during wet years.

## 5.4 Chaparral

Mixed chaparral is present on ridgelines and exposed slopes in the Study Area, occupying approximately 25.4 acres. Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) is common to abundant, but several other chaparral species are present. Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*, tentatively two subspecies), at least two species of *Ceanothus*, mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*) and two species of scrub oaks (*Quercus berberidifolia*; *Quercus wislizeni* var. *frutescens*) are present in patches. Chaparral in the Study Area burned in the 1994 fire (Perry pers comm 2014.), and evidence of the burn is visible on old manzanitas that have regenerated from basal burls, as well as scorch marks on some trees. Basal burls on several manzanita individuals are notably large, more than 24 inches across in some cases. *Ceanothus* in this habitat has reached maturity, and scrub oaks show evidence of reproduction.

Other components of this mixed chaparral type include poison oak, toyon, virgin's bower (*Clematis ligusticifolia*), woolly blue curls (*Trichostema lanatum*), pitcher sage (*Lepechinia calycina*) and honeysuckle (*Lonicera interrupta*). Lichens are common on many of the shrubs. In the herb layer, sanicle (*Sanicula crassicaulis*), soap root, yerba buena (*Satureja douglasii*), California everlasting (*Pseudognaphalium californicum*) and goldback fern (*Pentagramma triangularis*) are present in openings.

Wren tits (*Chamaea fasciata*) and California towhees (*Pipilo crissalis*) were commonly observed in chaparral habitat, and many other wildlife species are expected to utilize this habitat.

## 5.5 Anthropogenic Areas

The Carmelita trailhead has some limited features consistent with anthropogenic habitat. These include existing fences, lack of understory vegetation, modifications of an ephemeral drainage at the confluence with Atascadero Creek, and existing recreational use. However, this site was described as a subset of the sycamore riparian woodland habitat type due to the presence of numerous mature sycamore and valley oaks.

## 5.6 Drainages and Aquatic Resources

Small ephemeral drainages begin within the Study Area where sheet flow becomes concentrated in narrow draws with enough volume to carve small channels. These headwater drainages flow only ephemeraly, ranging from hours to days following storms, and probably do not flow every year. Where several of these small channels meet, a larger ephemeral drainage is formed. This drainage has a cobble and gravel bed, indicating more frequent flow of greater volume.

Another ephemeral drainage begins north of the Study Area, and flows through the proposed Carmelita trailhead location to Atascadero Creek. Ephemeral drainages in the Study Area are all tributaries to Atascadero Creek, which is seasonal in the vicinity of the Study Area. Vegetation along drainages is described above with the habitat type in which the drainage occurs.

## 6.0 Botanical Inventory

### 6.1 Botanical Survey Results

Late-season botanical surveys conducted in September, October, and November 2013 identified 109 species, subspecies, varieties, and hybrids of vascular plant taxa in the Study Area (Table 7). The survey was not continued in 2014 due to extreme drought. The plant list includes 85 species native to California and 23 introduced (naturalized or planted) species. The specific identification of the mint (*Mentha*) will be determined when it blooms and can be identified to species. Special status plant species have not been identified in the Study Area but could occur there. Additional surveys will be conducted during appropriate blooming periods to determine if special status plants are present. Native plant species account for approximately 78 percent of the taxa within the Study Area; introduced species account for approximately 22 percent.

#### 6.1.1 Plant list

TABLE 7. PRELIMINARY VASCULAR PLANT LIST. The 109 species of vascular plants identified in the Study Area consist of 85 native species, 23 planted or introduced species, and 1 species of origin to be determined upon flowering. The vascular plant list is separated into general life form categories, within which the taxa are listed alphabetically by scientific name.

Scientific Name	Special Status	Origin	Common Name
<b>Ferns – 3 Species</b>			
<i>Adiantum jordanii</i>	None	Native	Maidenhair fern
<i>Dryopteris arguta</i>	None	Native	Wood fern
<i>Pentagramma triangularis</i> ssp. <i>triangularis</i>	None	Native	Goldback fern
<b>Trees – 8 Species</b>			
<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	None	Native	Madrone
<i>Juglans californica</i>	None	Native	California black walnut
<i>Platanus racemosa</i>	None	Native	Western sycamore
<i>Quercus agrifolia</i> var. <i>agrifolia</i>	None	Native	Coast live oak
<i>Quercus douglasii</i>	None	Native	Blue oak
<i>Quercus lobata</i>	None	Native	Valley oak
<i>Salix laevigata</i>	None	Native	Red willow
<i>Umbellularia californica</i>	None	Native	California laurel
<b>Shrubs – 34 Species</b>			
<i>Acmispon glaber</i> [= <i>Lotus scoparius</i> ]	None	Native	Deerweed
<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>	None	Native	Chamise
<i>Arctostaphylos</i> sp.( #1)	None	Native	Manzanita – species TBD
<i>Arctostaphylos</i> sp.( #2)	None	Native	Manzanita – species TBD
<i>Artemisia californica</i>	None	Native	Coastal sagebrush
<i>Baccharis pilularis</i>	None	Native	Coyote brush
<i>Baccharis salicifolia</i>	None	Native	Mule fat

Scientific Name	Special Status	Origin	Common Name
<i>Ceanothus cuneatus</i>	None	Native	Buckbrush
<i>Ceanothus</i> sp.	None	Native	Ceanothus
<i>Cercocarpus betuloides</i>	None	Native	Mountain mahogany
<i>Clematis lasiantha</i>	None	Native	Pipestems
<i>Eriogonum fasciculatum</i>	None	Native	California buckwheat
<i>Frangula [=Rhamnus] californica</i> ssp. <i>californica</i>	None	Native	Coffeeberry
<i>Heteromeles arbutifolia</i>	None	Native	Toyon
<i>Holodiscus discolor</i>	None	Native	Ocean spray
<i>Lepechinia calycina</i>	None	Native	Pitcher sage
<i>Lonicera interrupta</i>	None	Native	Chaparral honeysuckle
<i>Lonicera subspicata</i> var. <i>denudata</i>	None	Native	Southern honeysuckle
<i>Lupinus albifrons</i>	None	Native	Bush lupine
<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i>	None	Native	Bush monkeyflower
<i>Pyracantha fortuneana</i>	None	Introduced	Firethorn
<i>Quercus berberidifolia</i>	None	Native	Scrub oak
<i>Quercus wislizeni</i> var. <i>frutescens</i>	None	Native	Scrub form of interior live oak
<i>Rhamnus ilicifolia</i>	None	Native	Holly-leaf redberry
<i>Rhus aromatica</i> [= <i>R. trilobata</i> ]	None	Native	Fragrant sumac
<i>Ribes speciosum</i>	None	Native	Fuschia-flowered gooseberry
<i>Rosa californica</i>	None	Native	California rose
<i>Rubus armeniacus</i> [= <i>R. discolor</i> ]	None	Introduced	Himalayan blackberry
<i>Rubus ursinus</i>	None	Native	California blackberry
<i>Salix lasiolepis</i>	None	Native	Arroyo willow
<i>Salvia mellifera</i>	None	Native	Black sage
<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	None	Native	Common snowberry
<i>Symphoricarpos mollis</i>	None	Native	Creeping snowberry
<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>	None	Native	Poison oak
<i>Trichostema lanatum</i>	None	Native	Woolly blue-curls
<b>Herbs – 45 Species</b>			
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	None	Native	Yarrow
<i>Acourtia microcephala</i>	None	Native	Perezia
<i>Artemisia douglasiana</i>	None	Native	Mugwort
<i>Amsinckia</i> sp.	None	Native	Fiddleneck
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	None	Introduced	Scarlet pimpernel

Scientific Name	Special Status	Origin	Common Name
<i>Bloomeria crocea</i>	None	Native	Common goldenstar
<i>Calochortus</i> sp.	None	Native	Mariposa lily
<i>Carduus pycnocephalus</i>	None	Introduced	Italian thistle
<i>Carex</i> sp.	None	Native	Sedge
<i>Centaurea melitensis</i>	None	Introduced	Tocolote
<i>Centaurea solstitialis</i>	None	Introduced	Yellow star thistle
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i> var. <i>pomeridianum</i>	None	Native	Amole lily
<i>Cirsium occidentale</i>	None	Native	Cobweb thistle
<i>Clarkia</i> sp.	None	Native	Clarkia
<i>Clinopodium</i> [= <i>Satureja</i> ] <i>douglasii</i>	None	Native	Yerba buena
<i>Conium maculatum</i>	None	Introduced	Poison hemlock
<i>Corethrogyne</i> [= <i>Lessingia</i> ] <i>filaginifolia</i>	None	Native	California aster
<i>Cyperus eragrostis</i>	None	Native	Umbrella sedge
<i>Datisca glomerata</i>	None	Native	Durango root
<i>Daucus pusillus</i>	None	Native	Rattlesnake weed
<i>Dichelostemma capitatum</i>	None	Native	Blue dicks
<i>Epilobium canum</i>	None	Native	California fuschia
<i>Erigeron foliosus</i> var. <i>foliosus</i>	None	Native	Leafy daisy
<i>Eriogonum nudum</i>	None	Native	Naked buckwheat
<i>Galium andrewsii</i>	None	Native	Phlox-leaved bedstraw
<i>Galium porrigens</i>	None	Native	Climbing bedstraw
<i>Helenium puberulum</i>	None	Native	Sneezeweed
<i>Juncus patens</i>	None	Native	Spreading rush
<i>Marah fabacea</i> [= <i>M. fabaceus</i> ]	None	Native	California man-root
<i>Mentha</i> sp.	None	TBD	Field mint
<i>Navarretia</i> sp.	None	Native	Navarretia
<i>Paeonia californica</i>	None	Native	California peony
<i>Phoradendron leucarpum</i> ssp. <i>tomentosum</i> [= <i>P. villosum</i> ]	None	Native	Oak mistletoe
<i>Plantago major</i>	None	Introduced	Broad-leaved plantain
<i>Pseudognaphalium</i> [= <i>Gnaphalium</i> ] <i>californicum</i>	None	Native	California everlasting
<i>Salvia spathacea</i>	None	Native	Hummingbird sage
<i>Sanicula</i> sp.	None	Native	Sanicle
<i>Sanicula crassicaulis</i>	None	Native	Sanicle
<i>Torilis arvensis</i>	None	Introduced	Hedge parsley

Scientific Name	Special Status	Origin	Common Name
<i>Trifolium hirtum</i>	None	Introduced	Rose clover
<i>Trifolium willdenovii</i>	None	Native	Tomcat clover
<i>Urtica dioica</i> ssp. <i>holosericea</i>	None	Native	Stinging nettle
<i>Verbena lasiostachys</i>	None	Native	Verbena
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	None	Introduced	Common vetch
<i>Vicia villosa</i>	None	Introduced	Vetch
Grasses – 19 Species			
<i>Aira caryophyllea</i>	None	Introduced	Silver European hairgrass
<i>Avena fatua</i>	None	Introduced	Wild oat
<i>Brachypodium distachyon</i>	None	Introduced	False brome
<i>Briza maxima</i>	None	Introduced	Rattlesnake grass
<i>Bromus diandrus</i>	None	Introduced	Ripgut brome
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	None	Introduced	Soft chess brome
<i>Bromus madritensis</i> ssp. <i>rubens</i>	None	Introduced	Red top brome
<i>Cynosurus echinatus</i>	None	Introduced	Hedgehog dogtail
<i>Elymus glaucus</i>	None	Native	Blue wildrye
<i>Elymus [=Leymus] triticoides</i>	None	Native	Creeping wild rye
<i>Festuca [=Vulpia] microstachys</i>	None	Native	Annual fescue
<i>Festuca [=Vulpia] myuros</i>	None	Introduced	Rattail sixweeks grass
<i>Festuca perennis [=Lolium multiflorum]</i>	None	Introduced	Italian rye grass
<i>Koeleria macrantha</i>	None	Native	Junegrass
<i>Melica californica</i>	None	Native	California melicgrass
<i>Melica imperfecta</i>	None	Native	Melic
<i>Stipa [=Nassella] lepida</i>	None	Native	Foothill needlegrass
<i>Stipa [=Piptatherum] miliacea</i>	None	Introduced	Smilo grass
<i>Stipa [=Nassella] pulchra</i>	None	Native	Purple needlegrass

## 6.2 Native Trees

Coast live oak, blue oak, valley oak, scrub oak, California sycamore, walnut, and willow occur in the Study Area. A few madrone are present near the west edge of the Study Area. Blue oak and coast live oak trees occur in habitats mapped as oak woodland. Valley oaks occur in and adjacent to riparian woodland, and sycamores and willows are common in the riparian woodland in and adjacent to Atascadero Creek. Scrub oaks occur as part of chaparral habitat. Additionally, individual trees occurring as part of other habitats, such as grasslands, are important resources, and provide habitat for many small wildlife.



A certified arborist identified the size and species of all native trees that would be affected by the Project. Impacts to native trees will be mitigated pursuant to the arborist’s recommendations (Attachment B).

## 7.0 Wildlife Inventory

### 7.1 Wildlife Survey Results

At least one hundred thirty-two (132) animal species are listed that could occur in the Study Area (Table 8). These include 1 fish, 8 amphibians, 12 reptiles, 87 birds, and 26 mammals. Small mammal trapping studies were beyond the scope of this report, although several species are likely to occur. We provide this list as a guide to the wildlife observed in the Study Area and to the species that could potentially be present at least seasonally. Other species could occur as transients, particularly avian fauna.

Wildlife species detected in the Study Area include 1 amphibian, 1 reptile, 17 birds, and 3 mammals. We observed acorn woodpeckers, northern flickers, dark-eyed juncos, spotted towhees, chestnut-backed chickadees, and western scrub-jays on multiple occasions in oak woodlands. We also noted Steller’s jay and oak titmouse. Western fence lizards (*Sceloporus occidentalis*) were common. Yellow-rumped warblers (*Setophaga coronata*) and Bewick’s wrens were observed in riparian woodland. We expect that songbirds and woodpeckers nest in trees and shrubs in the vicinity of the proposed Project. Coyote (*Canis latrans*) scat and prints were noted in woodlands and chaparral. Gray squirrel were observed in trees. Mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) were noted on several occasions.

TABLE 8. WILDLIFE LIST. At least 132 animal species have the potential to occur in the Study Area. The Special Status column indicates listing status of the organism under FESA, CESA, or by CDFW. Species observed at the site during our surveys are designated by the check symbol (✓) in the fourth column. FT = Federally threatened; SSC = species of special concern; Special Animal refers to all of the animal taxa inventoried by the CNDDDB, regardless of their legal or protection status. Refer to discussion of Special Animals in Section 5.1.2.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
<b>Fish – 1 Species</b>				
Steelhead - South/Central ESU	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>	FT		Coastal streams
<b>Amphibians – 8 Species</b>				
California (Western) Toad	<i>Anaxyrus boreas halophilus</i>	None		Grassland, woodland
Arboreal Salamander	<i>Aneides lugubris</i>	None		Oak savanna
Black-bellied Slender Salamander	<i>Batrachoseps nigriventris</i>	None		Oak woodlands, moist areas
Monterey Ensatina	<i>Ensatina eschscholzi</i>	None		Riparian, oak woodlands, grasslands
Bullfrog	<i>Lithobates catesbeianus</i>	None		Perennial streams, ponds

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
Sierran Treefrog	<i>Pseudacris sierra</i>	None	✓	Many habitats near water
California Red-legged Frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	FT		Streams, creeks, and ponds
Coast Range Newt	<i>Taricha torosa torosa</i>	SSC		Slow moving streams, ponds, and lakes with surrounding evergreen/oak forests along coast.
<b>Reptiles – 12 Species</b>				
Western Pond Turtle	<i>Emys marmorata</i> [= <i>Actinemys</i> ]	SSC		Lakes, ponds, streams
California [=Silvery] Legless Lizard	<i>Anniella pulchra</i>	SSC		Sandy soils in dunes, woodlands, coastal scrub
Western Yellow-bellied Racer	<i>Coluber constrictor mormon</i>	None		Grasslands, open areas
Northern Pacific Rattlesnake	<i>Crotalus oreganus oreganus</i>	None		Dry, rocky habitats
Monterey Ringneck Snake	<i>Diadophis punctatus vandenburgii</i>	None		Woodlands, grasslands, chaparral
California Alligator Lizard	<i>Elgaria multicarinata multicarinata</i>	None		Open grassland, woodland, chaparral
Common Kingsnake	<i>Lampropeltis getulus</i>	None		Woodland, grassland, streams
Pacific Gopher Snake	<i>Pituophis catenifer catenifer</i>	None		Woodland, grassland, rural
Skilton's [=Western] Skink	<i>Plestiodon</i> [= <i>Eumeces</i> ] <i>skiltonianus skiltonianus</i>	None		Woodland, grassland, chaparral, inland and coastal
Western Fence Lizard	<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	None	✓	Wide range
California Red-sided Garter Snake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis infernalis</i>	None		Many habitats near water
Side-blotched Lizard	<i>Uta stansburiana</i>	None		Dry habitats
<b>Birds – 87 Species</b>				
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Special Animal (Nesting)		Oak and riparian woodlands
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Special Animal (Nesting)		Oak and riparian woodlands
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	None		Marshes, fields
Wood duck	<i>Aix sponsa</i>	None		Streams, lakes, ponds
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	None		Lakes, ponds, streams

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
Western Scrub-Jay	<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	None	✓	Oak and riparian woodlands
Golden Eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Fully Protected; Eagle Act		Mountainous areas, hunts over open plains, fields, valleys
Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	None		Water habitats, grasslands
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	None		Water habitats
Oak Titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	Special Animal (Nesting)	✓	Oak woodland
Cedar Waxwing	<i>Bombycella cedrorum</i>	None		Wooded habitat with berry bushes; urban
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	None		Varied habitats
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	None	✓	Open, semi-open country
Red-shouldered Hawk	<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	None	✓	Oak and riparian woodlands
Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsoni</i>	CT (wintering only)		Grasslands or agricultural with trees, riparian
Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	None		Marshes, riparian, ponds
California Quail	<i>Callipepla californica</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Anna's Hummingbird	<i>Calypte anna</i>	None	✓	Oak, riparian woodland, scrub
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	None		Riparian, oak woodlands
American Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis tristis</i>	None		Weedy fields, woodlands
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	None	✓	Wide habitat range
Purple Finch	<i>Carpodacus purpureus</i>	None		Riparian and woodlands
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	None	✓	Open country, oak woodlands
Hermit Thrush	<i>Catharus guttatus</i>	None		Woodland and brush
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Cerle alcyon</i>	None		Riparian, lakes and streams
Wrentit	<i>Chamaea fasciata</i>	None	✓	Riparian, chaparral
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferous</i>	None		Mud flats, stream banks
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	Special Animal		Woodland edges
Northern Flicker	<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	None	✓	Woodlands
Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>	None		Urban areas
Western Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	None		Riparian woodlands

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
American Crow	<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	None		Open oak, riparian woodland,
Common Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	None		Riparian, chaparral and woodlands
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	None	✓	Woodlands
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	None	✓	Riparian, oak woodlands
Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i>	SSC		Riparian woodlands
Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendii</i>	None		Riparian, oak woodlands
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	FP		Nests in dense live oaks
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax difficilis</i>	None		Riparian, oak woodlands
Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	None		Open habitats
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	Special Animal (Wintering)		Open country with adjacent woodlands
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	None		Open, semi-open country
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	None		Marshes, streamsides
Yellow-breasted Chat	<i>Icteria virens</i>	SSC		Riparian woodlands
Bullock's Oriole	<i>Icterus bullockii</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Dark-eyed Junco	<i>Junco hyemalis</i>	None	✓	Oak woodland
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	SSC		Nests in shrubs, trees near open areas
Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	None	✓	Oak woodlands
Lewis's Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes lewis</i>	Special Animal (Nesting)		Open woodlands
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodland
Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	None		Riparian, chaparral and woodlands. Also urban
Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	None		Open areas near oaks
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Western Screech-Owl	<i>Otus kennicottii</i>	None		Oak woodland
Phainopepla	<i>Phainopepla nitens</i>	None		Oak, riparian, scrub
Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	None		Woodlands

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
Yellow-billed Magpie	<i>Pica nuttalli</i>	Special Animal (Nesting & Communal Roosts)		Oak savannah
Nuttall's Woodpecker	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Special Animal (Nesting)		Oak woodland, savanna
Downy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides pubescens</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	None		Riparian and woodlands
California Towhee	<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>	None	✓	Brushy habitats
Spotted Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	None	✓	Dense brushy areas
Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Chestnut-backed Chickadee	<i>Poecile rufescens</i>	None	✓	Mixed woods
Blue-gray gnatcatcher	<i>Poliophtila caerulea</i>	None		Chaparral
Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	None		Oak, riparian, chaparral, scrub
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calundula</i>	None		Oak and riparian woodlands
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	None		Near water
Allen's Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	SSC		Riparian, chaparral and woodland
Western Bluebird	<i>Sialia mexicana</i>	None		Riparian woodland, ranch land
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	None		Oak savannah, woodland
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	None		Riparian, lakes
European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	None		Agricultural, urban
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	None		Wooded habitats, water
Violet-green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	None		Woodland habitats
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	None	✓	Shrubby areas
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	None		Shrubby areas
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	None		Streamsides, woodlands
Barn Owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>	None		Agricultural, woodlands
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttonii</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	None		Open and semi-open area
Golden-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia atricapilla</i>	None		Shrubby, weedy areas
White-crowned Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	None		Shrubby, weedy areas
<b>Mammals – 26 Species</b>				
Blacktail Jackrabbit	<i>Lepus californicus</i>	None		Grasslands
Bobcat	<i>Lynx rufus</i>	None		Chaparral and woodlands
Brush Mouse	<i>Peromyscus boylei</i>	None		Shrubby habitats
California Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	None		Grasslands
California Mouse	<i>Peromyscus californicus</i>	None		Oak woodland, chaparral
California Myotis	<i>Myotis californicus</i>	None		Tunnels, hollow trees, crevices
California Vole	<i>Microtus californicus</i>	None		Grassland meadows
Coyote	<i>Canis latrans</i>	None	✓	Open woodlands, brushy areas, wide ranging
Deer Mouse	<i>Peromyscus maniculatus</i>	None		All dry land habitats
Desert Cottontail	<i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>	None		Brushy areas
Dusky-footed Woodrat	<i>Neotoma fuscipes</i>	None		Oak, riparian woodlands, chaparral
Feral Cat	<i>Felis catus</i>	None		Varied
Gray Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	None		Chaparral, dry woodlands
Long-tailed Weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>	None		Grasslands
Merriam's Chipmunk	<i>Eutamias merriami</i>	None		Brushy habitats
Mountain Lion	<i>Puma concolor</i>	Specially Protected Species**		Mountains, woodlands, stream corridors
Mule Deer	<i>Odocoileus hemionus</i>	None	✓	Many habitats
Opossum	<i>Didelphis marsupialis</i>	None		Woodlands, streams
Pallid Bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	SSC		Riparian, woodland, urban
Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	None		Streams, lakes, rock cliffs,
Red Fox	<i>Vulpes fulva</i>	None		Forest and open country

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Found On-site?	Habitat Type
Striped Skunk	<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	None		Mixed woods, chaparral
Valley Pocket Gopher	<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	None		Variety of habitats
Virginia Opossum	<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>	None		Woodlands, streams
Western Gray Squirrel	<i>Sciurus griseus</i>	None	✓	Oak, conifer woodlands
Western Harvest Mouse	<i>Reithrodontomys megalotis</i>	None		Grassland, dense vegetation near water

\*\*With the passage of Proposition 117 in 1990, mountain lions became a "specially protected species," making mountain lion hunting illegal in California. This status and other statutes prohibit the Department of Fish and Game from recommending a hunting season for lions, and it is illegal to take, injure, possess, transport, import, or sell any mountain lion or part of a mountain lion. Mountain lions may be killed only 1) if a depredation permit is issued to take a specific lion killing livestock or pets; 2) to preserve public safety; or 3) to protect listed bighorn sheep.

**Abbreviations:**

FE: Federally Endangered	PT: Proposed Federally Threatened	Cand. CE: Candidate for California Endangered	SSC: CDFW Species of Special Concern
FT: Federally Threatened	CE: California Endangered	Cand. CT: Candidate for California Threatened	FP: CDFW Fully-Protected
PE: Proposed Federally Endangered	CT: California Threatened	SA: CDFW Special Animal	WL: CDFW Watch List

**7.2 Wildlife Movement Corridors**

Most of the site consists of steep terrain. Many areas have dense brush, and limited game trails were noted. The Preserve presents high-quality habitat for foraging and breeding wildlife, but does not constitute a major movement corridor for migrating wildlife. The proposed project would not adversely affect wildlife movement.

The Atascadero Creek corridor is a feature that has potential to facilitate movement of wildlife in larger numbers. Aquatic organisms utilize the creek corridor. Portions of Atascadero Creek have suitable habitat for steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) which is known to occur in the creek. The subject location does not have perennially flowing water, but perennial pools are present in some areas.

## **8.0 Project Overview**

### **8.1 General Discussion**

The Study Area is situated on the side of steeply sloping hills near the western edge of the City of Atascadero, along Atascadero Creek. The Study Area is currently undeveloped, except for existing fencing and old ranch trails. The site would be permanently preserved as open space, with developed trails to grant public access for recreational use. The site consists of blue oak woodland with California annual grassland understory, coast live oak woodland, chaparral, and sycamore riparian woodland. Existing mature trees, standing snags, fallen logs, and shrubby vegetation provide habitat for songbirds, raptors, and small wildlife. Drainages are present, ranging from small ephemeral headwater tributaries to a seasonal reach of Atascadero Creek.

Proposed trails would pass through all habitat types, providing access for hikers, naturalists, and equestrians to enjoy and appreciate the Preserve. The proposed connector trail that would link the preserve through Eagle Ranch to the existing Cerro Alto trail system would enhance recreational uses and public access to the natural world.

Sensitive resources identified within the Study Area include potential habitat for rare plants, suitable habitat for special status wildlife, sycamore riparian woodland, and aquatic resources.

### **8.2 Regulatory Framework**

#### *8.2.1 CEQA guidance*

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires the lead agency to evaluate potential environmental effects of the project. The lead agency must also identify other State and local agencies (known as responsible agencies) that will be issuing a discretionary approval subject to CEQA for an activity that is part of the project. The following section of the State CEQA Guidelines provides general direction for the evaluation of biological resource impacts as a part of the environmental review of proposed projects.

CEQA Guidelines Section 15070 states that a Lead Agency shall prepare or have prepared a negative declaration or mitigated negative declaration for a project subject to CEQA when the initial study shows that there is no "... substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or the initial study identifies potentially significant effects but revisions in the project plans or proposals made by, or agreed to by the applicant before a proposed mitigated negative declaration and initial study are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and there is no substantial evidence in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment."

The following definition of a significant effect is defined in Section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines, "Significant effect on the environment" means a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance."



### 8.2.2 *Federal and state resource protections*

The agencies that administer the FESA and CESA formally list plant and animal species determined to be Threatened or Endangered, and they have adopted regulations to implement these laws to protect such species. Other federal statutes that provide protection for species and/or their habitats include but are not limited to the National Environmental Policy Act, Clean Water Act (CWA) for protection of federal wetlands and other waters, Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, MBTA, Executive Order 11990 (wetlands protection), and California Fish and Game Code sections 1601 through 1616 (Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements) (LSAA).

### 8.2.3 *Flora and fauna*

All of the plants constituting CNPS CRPR 1B status meet the definitions of Section 1901, Chapter 10 of the California Native Plant Protection Act or CESA (sections 2062 and 2067 of the California Fish and Game Code) and are eligible for State listing. Nesting birds are protected from disturbance by the MBTA and by sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3800 of the California Fish and Game Code.

## **9.0 Potential Impacts to Biological Resources**

Construction of the proposed equestrian trail is expected to directly impact approximately 3 miles of trail. Permanent disturbance for trails would be 12 to 15 feet wide including brush clearing, with disturbance expected to be smaller in areas without dense brush. At this size, a maximum of approximately 4.5 acres would be permanently affected within the Preserve, consisting of both the trail surface (approximately 4 feet wide) and vegetation trimmed adjacent to the trail. Construction of a formal trail would preclude use of multiple informal trails and paths noted in the creek reserve.

The Preserve permanently protects over 100 acres from development, protecting diverse chaparral and woodland habitats with a high proportion of native species. The steep terrain and dense brush in much of the Study Area would discourage off-trail use. Herbaceous understory in woodland habitats would be managed for fuel risk and thatch buildup via grazing.

Direct impacts from trail construction would affect less than 5 percent of the Preserve. The trail would be constructed using hand tools. Proposed trail routes can be adjusted to avoid removal of live trees and any sensitive botanical resources identified during spring surveys.

The proposed Carmelita Road trailhead site is currently accessible by pedestrians, equestrians, and vehicles for recreational use. Improvements to the site would include a 60-inch diameter high density polyethylene pipe (HDPE) culvert installed in an ephemeral tributary to Atascadero Creek and improvements to a fire access route and turnaround. Approximately 400 feet of compacted native roadway would be built to connect Carmelita Road with the proposed parking and turnaround area. An additional 200 linear feet of Class II-based fire road and approximately 250 linear feet of circular turnaround would be built to provide fire access via an existing paved road at the west end of the proposed trailhead. Vehicle parking and horse trailer parking would be available on approximately 12,000 square feet adjacent to access roads. Total area of use would be approximately 29,000 square feet for roads, crossings, and parking.

## **9.1 Introduced Species Impacts**

Trails pose some risk of introducing and spreading non-native species. The Study Area was previously part of a Ranch and has existing transportation corridors and residential uses on all sides. Non-native species are already present in the Study Area. We provide measures in Section 11 to minimize risk of new introductions and manage existing populations of introduced species.

## **9.2 Potential Habitat Impacts**

A preliminary trail route and preliminary plans proposed for the trailhead are provided in Figure 2 and Attachment A, respectively. The final project may have an adjusted route. Prior to construction, the final proposed route would be field-checked for any additional resource issues.

The greatest impact in terms of use would occur at the Carmelita Avenue Trailhead, where approximately 29,900 square feet would be altered to improve fire access and allow for more parking. A drainage crossing consisting of a buried HDPE culvert pipe would be installed in the ephemeral drainage above its confluence with Atascadero Creek. Construction of the proposed trails would have temporary and permanent impacts on native vegetation in a small, approximately 4.5-acre footprint. Temporary impacts would occur initially until disturbed soils adjacent to the trail are stabilized. Recommendations to prevent significant impacts to trees in woodland habitats during trail construction are provided in Section 11.2.1 of this document. We address potential impacts to nesting birds in Section 11.4 and to sensitive plants and wildlife in Section 11.5. The trail would cross some ephemeral drainages, and drainages are addressed in Section 11.6 of this document.

### *9.2.1 Blue oak woodland*

Approximately 1.25 miles of trail would meander through blue oak woodland. Most of the 33.3 acres of blue oak woodland in the Study Area would not be directly affected. No live trees would be removed for construction of the trail, and no direct removal of oak woodland would occur.

Construction of the trail with hand tools would include clearing leaf litter and making minor modifications of the ground surface to provide a stable walking surface and proper non-erosive drainage. Work could include creating narrow benches where trails cross steep slopes. The trail surface would then be compacted with hand tools. Where work would occur beneath oak canopies, some roots are likely to be present but less than 25 percent of the root zone would be affected.

### *9.2.2 Coast live oak woodland*

The trail would pass through less than one mile of coast live oak woodland. Most of the 46.2 acres of coast live oak woodland in the Study Area would not be directly affected. No live trees would be removed for construction of the trail, and no direct removal of oak woodland would occur.

Construction of the trail with hand tools would include clearing leaf litter, and making minor modifications of the ground surface to provide a stable walking surface and allow for proper non-erosive drainage. Work could include creating narrow benches where trails cross steep slopes. The trail surface would then be compacted with hand tools. Where work would occur

beneath oak canopies, some roots are likely to be present but less than 25 percent of the root zone would be affected.

### *9.2.3 Sycamore riparian woodland*

The proposed Carmelita trailhead would directly affect approximately 0.68 acre of disturbed sycamore riparian woodland in an existing creek reserve parcel already used for recreation. Additionally, the trail would cross through sycamore woodland on an existing short connector trail on Caltrans property. Approximately 4.6 acres of sycamore riparian woodland of greater habitat quality would be retained in the reserve and along the Highway.

The existing trail connection through Atascadero Creek has some potential to erode banks. Additionally, this trail segment has some potential to affect aquatic resources and aquatic habitat. Potential effects on aquatic habitat and recommendations to reduce effects are provided in Sections 11.5.5 and 11.6.

### *9.2.4 Chaparral*

Approximately 1.5 miles of trail would pass through mixed chaparral habitat, a small portion of the 25.4 acres of chaparral present. Species such as scrub oak and manzanita are slower-growing and less abundant in the region than chamise. We provide recommendations in Section 11.2.2 to preferentially preserve slower-growing and less flammable chaparral species.

## **9.3 Potential Impacts to Native Trees**

The City of Atascadero Tree Ordinance requires assessment of project potential to impact or remove native trees listed in the ordinance, including madrone, black walnut, coast live oak, blue oak, valley oak, bay, and sycamore trees. Deciduous native trees 2 inches or greater in DBH and evergreen trees 4 inches or greater in DBH must be considered. Listed activities, including grading and road building, that occur within 20 feet of the drip line of any native tree require a tree protection plan. The proposed trailhead improvements at Carmelita Road would require work under the canopy of existing mature valley oak and sycamore, thus a tree protection plan is required. The extent of tree impacts at the trailhead is being evaluated by the City contract arborist.

Construction of the proposed trail using hand tools is unlikely to substantially impact individual trees. No live trees would be removed for construction of the project.

Additionally, fuel management may impact native trees. For the trailhead, fuel reduction generally consists of picking up dead wood and removing limbs of live trees to approximately six feet from the ground. For the trail area, fuel management would focus on dead wood. We recommend removal of dead wood be minimized, and limited to brushy material wherever possible to retain important habitat functions provided by downed logs and branches. Tree trimming required at the time of construction for fuel reduction or clearance that affects branches three inches in diameter or greater would be conducted under supervision of a licensed arborist.

## **9.4 Potential Impacts to Nesting Birds**

Vegetation removal and construction activities associated with the proposed trailhead and trails could result in adverse impacts to nesting birds if conducted during nesting season (March 15 through August 1).

Construction of trails with hand tools by crews on foot is unlikely to substantially affect nesting birds. Vegetation management via grazing is unlikely to have a significant effect on nesting birds if managed appropriately. Vegetation maintenance along brush lines in shrubby habitats could affect nesting birds if conducted during nesting season. The potential for the Project to adversely affect nesting birds can be reduced (refer to Section 11.4).

## **9.5 Potential Impacts to Special Status Plants**

Special status plants have not been documented in the Study Area during late season botanical surveys, but appropriate habitat for 19 species known from the vicinity is present. Because some flexibility is possible in final construction routes of the trail, we recommend appropriately timed floristic surveys to be conducted in Spring 2015 to determine presence or absence of rare plant species with potential to occur. See Section 11.5.1.

## **9.6 Potential Impacts to Special Status Animals**

Moderately appropriate habitat is present for one special status mammal, three special status reptiles, three special status birds, two special status amphibians, and critical habitat is reported for one special status fish.

### *9.6.1 Special status birds*

Construction activities at trail heads could result in nest abandonment or loss of special status bird species if appropriate pre-construction surveys, setback requirements, and management practices are not implemented (refer to Section 10.4 and 10.5). Construction of the trail using hand tools and recreational use of the site is unlikely to adversely affect special status birds.

White-tailed kite, golden eagle, and purple martin could nest in the Study Area. Pre-construction surveys are recommended prior to construction activities that affect trees and shrubs during the nesting season (refer to Section 10.4).

### *9.6.2 Bats*

Pallid bat is a special concern bat species that is known to roost under bridges in North County. Documented roosts were night roosts rather than maternal colonies. Maternal bat colonies are protected by the CDFW. The proposed project would not remove trees and is not expected to affect existing bridge structures, thus the project would not significantly affect pallid bat.

### *9.6.3 Special status reptiles*

Potential habitat for silvery legless lizard, coast horned lizard, and western pond turtle is present in the Study Area. Silvery legless lizard is most likely to occur in oak woodland and could be affected during trail shaping activities because this lizard is typically found in loose soil or buried in leaf litter. Coast horned lizard could occur in chaparral, but typically occurs above ground and moves very quickly when disturbed. Work with hand tools is unlikely to

significantly affect coast horned lizard. Recommendations are provided in Section 11.5.3 to protect legless lizards during trail construction.

Western pond turtle is known from Atascadero Creek. Pond turtles can be found in adjacent vegetation types when creeks are dry, and can be found wintering under bushes and in leaf piles. Construction of the Carmelita Trailhead could affect pond turtles if appropriate protective measures and preconstruction surveys are not implemented (See Section 11.5.3).

### **9.7 Potential Impacts to Drainages**

The proposed Project includes installing an HDPE culvert in an ephemeral drainage near the Carmelita Trailhead. The proposed crossing is near an existing concrete apron already present in this drainage. Additionally, where trails cross ephemeral drainages, foot bridges may be used in a few locations, depending on final trail alignment. Activities that require construction of structures, placement of fill, or removal of vegetation within the bed or bank, ordinary high water mark, or between tops of banks of drainages would require approval from regulatory agencies, the USACE, Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and CDFW. If project activities may affect resources protected by other agencies, additional consultation with USFWS or NMFS would be conducted as part of the USACE permitting process.

### **9.8 Potential Impacts to Wildlife Movement Corridors**

The proposed project does not include construction of any substantial structures, alteration of major drainages, or construction of new fences. No major wildlife migration corridors are known from the Preserve property, and the proposed project would not impede movement of wildlife within Atascadero Creek. The project is not expected to significantly affect wildlife movement.

## **10.0 Recommendations and Mitigations**

Sycamore riparian woodland, native trees, and appropriate habitat for special status plants and wildlife are present in the Study Area. Additionally, the proposed project would require long-term management to sustain natural resources within the Preserve. This section provides recommendations and mitigations to reduce effect of the Project on biological resources. Where potentially adverse impacts to biological resources could occur during construction of the Project or due to the presence of the Project, we provide biological resource (BR) mitigation measures designed to offset the adverse effect.

### **10.1 Long-Term Management**

Preserve lands may require regular management actions to retain high-quality habitat, manage fuels, and meet long-term preservation goals. Sites with trails require periodic maintenance to prevent excessive erosion and retain high-quality sustainable trails with recreational value. Therefore, we recommend the following measures to address the need for foreseeable maintenance activities at the Preserve trail site.

- BR-1.** Prepare a brief Management Plan for Three Bridges Oak Preserve to address foreseeable short- and long-term trail maintenance needs. At a minimum the plan must address management strategies for:

- a. Inspection of crossing sites for erosion, and plans for stabilizing any areas that are unstable, particularly after large storms in the first year following construction.
- b. Trash/litter containment and removal.
- c. Guidelines for preventing excessive horse manure from washing into the creek at the trailhead
- d. Dog waste management (e.g. “mutt mitt” stations)
- e. Techniques for fuel management, such as grazing
- f. Strategies for management of downed trees across trails.
- g. Techniques for managing and monitoring weeds, and control methods to be used if new invasive species are introduced.
  - i. Develop a priority rating system for weeds on the Preserve
  - ii. For weeds that require eradication, start by getting rid of weeds that occur singly or in groups of four or five in areas where native plants are dominant. Check seasonally for missed weeds.
  - iii. Establish native plants where weeds are removed.
  - iv. Keep accurate records of periodic surveys and weed infestations, and management methods used.
- h. Adaptive strategies for addressing problems that may arise with crossing stability.
- i. A proposed schedule for performing regular monitoring. The purpose of monitoring is to check that management strategies are working, and identify any areas needing work in a timely manner.

**BR-2.** For the first three years following trail construction, prepare and submit a brief annual report to the City summarizing dates and outcome of management activities. If no major issues arise in the first three years, reports can be submitted on an as-needed basis thereafter.

## **10.2 Habitats**

The proposed Project would affect very small amounts of oak woodland and chaparral habitats relative to the quantity preserved. The project would also affect disturbed sycamore riparian woodland at the trailhead.

We provide the following recommendations to avoid, minimize and/or mitigate potential Project effects on habitats. Mitigation recommendations provided in Section 11.5 address potential adverse effects of habitat removal on special status species and nesting birds.

### *10.2.1 Blue oak woodland and coast live oak woodland*

Construction of the trail would affect but not remove small amounts of blue oak and coast live oak woodland. Construction of the trail with hand tools would include clearing leaf litter, and making minor modifications of the ground surface to provide a stable walking surface and allow

for proper non-erosive drainage. Work could include creating narrow benches where trails cross steep slopes. The trail surface would then be compacted with hand tools. Where work occurs beneath oak canopies, some roots are likely to be present. To minimize impacts on native trees we recommend the following measures:

- BR-3.** Wherever trail shaping requires disturbance of soil that exposes roots 1 inch or greater in diameter, roots must be pruned cleanly using appropriate pruners or hand saws. Tools must be clean and should be disinfected regularly to minimize risk of introducing pathogens into trimmed roots.
- BR-4.** If roots are encountered that are greater than 2.5 inches in diameter, consult with the City contract arborist regarding appropriate treatment to minimize impacts to trees.
- BR-5.** Implement any additional recommendations made by the arborist for protection of the trees during trail construction.

We provide recommendations in Section 11.2 to prevent significant impacts to trees in woodland habitats during trail construction.

#### 10.2.2 *Mixed chaparral*

Mixed chaparral in the Study Area supports abundant chamise in addition to a number of slower-growing, less common native shrubs. Chamise is extremely flammable and regenerates quickly. Shrubs identified thus far along the proposed trail route do not include rare manzanitas or scrub oaks, but because these species are less common and slower growing, we recommend the following measures for trail construction in chaparral:

- BR-6.** Where practical, preferentially retain manzanita, scrub oak, and mountain mahogany, species by routing the trail through chamise wherever possible.

#### 10.2.3 *Sycamore riparian woodland*

The proposed Carmelita Trailhead would require direct modification of approximately 0.68 acre of disturbed sycamore riparian woodland. The area to be altered does not meet the description of high-quality habitat that is listed as a rare vegetation type in California, although such habitat is present up and downstream within Atascadero Creek.

- BR-7.** Maintain a minimum 25 foot setback from the top of bank of Atascadero Creek wherever possible. Provide clear delineation of the limits of parking and use by including fencing or other barricades as appropriate at the trailhead.
- BR-8.** The trails and trailhead should be constructed to avoid sycamore roots and prevent the removal or trimming of sycamore trees to the maximum extent possible. If mature sycamores are directly impacted, provide replacement sycamore plantings in the Atascadero Creek watershed at a two to one ratio or as recommended by the project arborist to ensure continued success of sycamore woodland in the area.

#### 10.2.4 *Anthropogenic*

The Project would alter existing anthropogenic habitat for other anthropogenic uses. Conversion of anthropogenic habitat to other uses does not typically require mitigation.

### **10.3 Native Tree Impacts**

The proposed Project would impact but not remove native trees at the trailhead. We recommend the following measures to minimize impacts to native trees:

- BR-9.** To the maximum extent possible, proposed construction shall avoid impacts to native trees.
- BR-10.** Recommendations made by the project arborist shall be implemented to protect trees at the trailhead and trails during construction.
- BR-11.** Upon preparation of final plans for the trailhead and trails, a qualified arborist or biologist shall quantify the number of trees impacted. The applicant shall comply with City permit conditions to compensate for impacted trees if avoidance is not possible. Mitigation can be via replanting or via payment of tree mitigation fees. If replacement planting is selected, replacement trees shall be planted onsite or within the Atascadero Creek reserve, where feasible, and shall be monitored and maintained for no less than 5 years. Replacement trees that do not survive must be replanted and maintained for an additional 5 years.
- BR-12.** In the event that trail construction would require work affecting more than 25 percent of the root zone around an existing tree, the project applicant shall consult with an approved arborist on a case by case basis to minimize effects on the impacted tree.

### **10.4 Nesting Birds**

Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the Federal MBTA of 1918 (50 C.F.R. Section 10.13). Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code prohibit take (as defined therein) of all native birds and their active nests, including raptors and other migratory non-game birds (as listed under the MBTA).

- BR-13.** Within one week of ground disturbance activities, if work occurs between March 15 and August 1, nesting bird surveys shall be conducted. If surveys do not locate nesting birds, construction activities may be conducted. If nesting birds are located, no construction activities shall occur within 100 feet of nests until chicks are fledged. A pre-construction survey report shall be submitted to the lead agency within two weeks of completing the survey. The report shall detail appropriate fencing or flagging of the buffer zone and make recommendations on additional monitoring requirements. A map of the Project Site and nest locations shall be included with the report. The Project biologist conducting the nesting survey shall have the authority to reduce or increase the recommended buffer depending upon site conditions.
- BR-14.** During routine brush maintenance activities, if work occurs between March 15 and August 1, trail crews shall be instructed to avoid disturbance of nesting birds. Vegetation to be trimmed must be inspected before cuts are made, and if nests are found near work areas, the trail crew shall move at least 100 feet down the trail and avoid the nest location.



## **10.5 Avoidance, Minimization, and Mitigation for Special Status Species**

### *10.5.1 Special status plants*

Nineteen rare plant species have the potential to occur in the Study Area. Because some flexibility is possible in final construction routes of the trail, we recommend appropriately timed floristic surveys to be conducted in Spring 2015 to determine presence or absence of rare plant species with potential to occur.

**BR-15.** The final proposed trail route shall be staked or flagged in the field. A qualified biologist shall conduct a seasonally timed floristic survey in Spring of 2015 to determine presence or absence of rare plant species within and immediately adjacent to the proposed trail. If rare plants are identified in the vicinity of the trail, locations will be mapped and clearly marked in the field.

**BR-16.** Results of the survey will be provided to the Lead Agency in a Final Biological Report. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures for rare plants, if found, shall be recommended in the Final Biological Report.

### *10.5.2 Special status birds*

In order to reduce the potential for disturbance of purple martin, white-tailed kite, and golden eagle during nesting season, the applicant shall implement BR-13 one week prior to ground disturbance or tree pruning activities at the trailhead (refer to Section 10.3). If nests of sensitive birds are identified in the work area, the following additional mitigation measures shall be implemented:

**BR-17.** If construction occurs between March 1 and August 1, preconstruction surveys shall be conducted to determine the presence of nesting birds. If active nests of raptors or special-status birds are found, no work will occur within 300 feet of the nest until the young have fledged. If other nests are found, work will not occur within 100 feet of the nest until the young have fledged.

### *10.5.3 Special status reptiles*

Potential habitat for silvery legless lizard and western pond turtle are present in the Study Area. To reduce potential for take of legless lizard during trail construction, we recommend the following measure:

**BR-18.** Prior to trail construction activities that disturb the ground in oak woodland areas where leaf litter is present, rake away leaf litter to ensure legless lizards are not present. If lizards are found, they shall be captured and relocated to the nearest adjacent woodland habitat away from the proposed trail route and outside Project limits.

To reduce potential for take of Western pond turtle during trailhead construction at Carmelita Road, we recommend the following measure:

**BR-19.** Train workers involved in groundbreaking and construction of trailhead improvements on sensitive resources in the vicinity of the project, including protection measure for Western pond turtle.

**BR-20.** A pre-construction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist within seven days of beginning construction work to determine if pond turtles are present or likely to be present within the work area. Based results of the preconstruction survey, the biologist shall make additional recommendations for monitoring of ground breaking activities if the survey determines a reasonable probability that turtles could be present in or move into the work area during construction. If the preconstruction survey determines that turtles are not present and are not likely to be present during the proposed work period, no further action is necessary.

#### 10.5.4 *California red-legged frog*

The proposed project does not include construction activities within Atascadero Creek, and would not alter potential breeding pools. California red-legged frog have not been documented in this portion of Atascadero Creek, but if they occur there in the future, the project would not significantly impact frogs or their habitat, thus no specific mitigation measures are required.

#### 10.5.5 *Steelhead*

The existing connector trail from Carmelita Road to the Preserve crosses Atascadero Creek at a location mapped as designated critical habitat for steelhead. The CDFW determined that spawning habitat is not present at the site. The project does not require construction of structures within the channel, utilizes the existing trail across Atascadero Creek, and impacts to steelhead are unlikely.

### **10.6 Drainages**

Atascadero Creek and its tributaries is within the permitting jurisdiction of the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW. All activities that result in fill within the ordinary high water mark (e.g. at-grade crossing at Carmelita Trailhead) would require permits from the USACE (Section 404, CWA) and RWQCB (Section 401,CWA), and CDFG LSAA. Activities that affect riparian habitat or the banks of the stream above the ordinary high water mark, such as a span bridge, would only require a SAA permit.

If project activities are proposed that may result in impacts to the seasonal drainage, a mitigation, monitoring, and reporting plan may be required by the agencies to assess proposed habitat impacts and recommend appropriate mitigation and reporting obligations related to drainage impacts.

The proposed project would require construction of an at-grade crossing in an ephemeral drainage, very close to its confluence with Atascadero Creek. Additionally, a footbridge or two may be constructed on the trail system to protect ephemeral drainages; if footings of these structures are within top of bank, riparian vegetation, ordinary high water mark, or channel bed, permits may be required. We recommend the following measures to protect drainages.

Obtain permits for construction of the proposed crossing at the Carmelita trailhead and any other proposed activities that would require fill within ordinary high water mark, bed, or banks of drainages: USACE 404 permit; RWQCB 401 Certification, and CDFW LSAA. As part of the USACE permit process, consultation with other federal agencies, such as USFWS and NMFS, may occur if other agency interests could be affected by the proposed project.

As part of the application process, we strongly recommend identifying all points where the proposed trail loop would require hikers to cross drainages and explain what each of those crossing points would consist of, e.g., natural surface, foot bridge, etc., and what maintenance activities would be necessary to maintain those points.

### **10.7 Wildlife Movement Corridors**

The project would not significantly affect wildlife movement corridors, thus no mitigation measures are required.

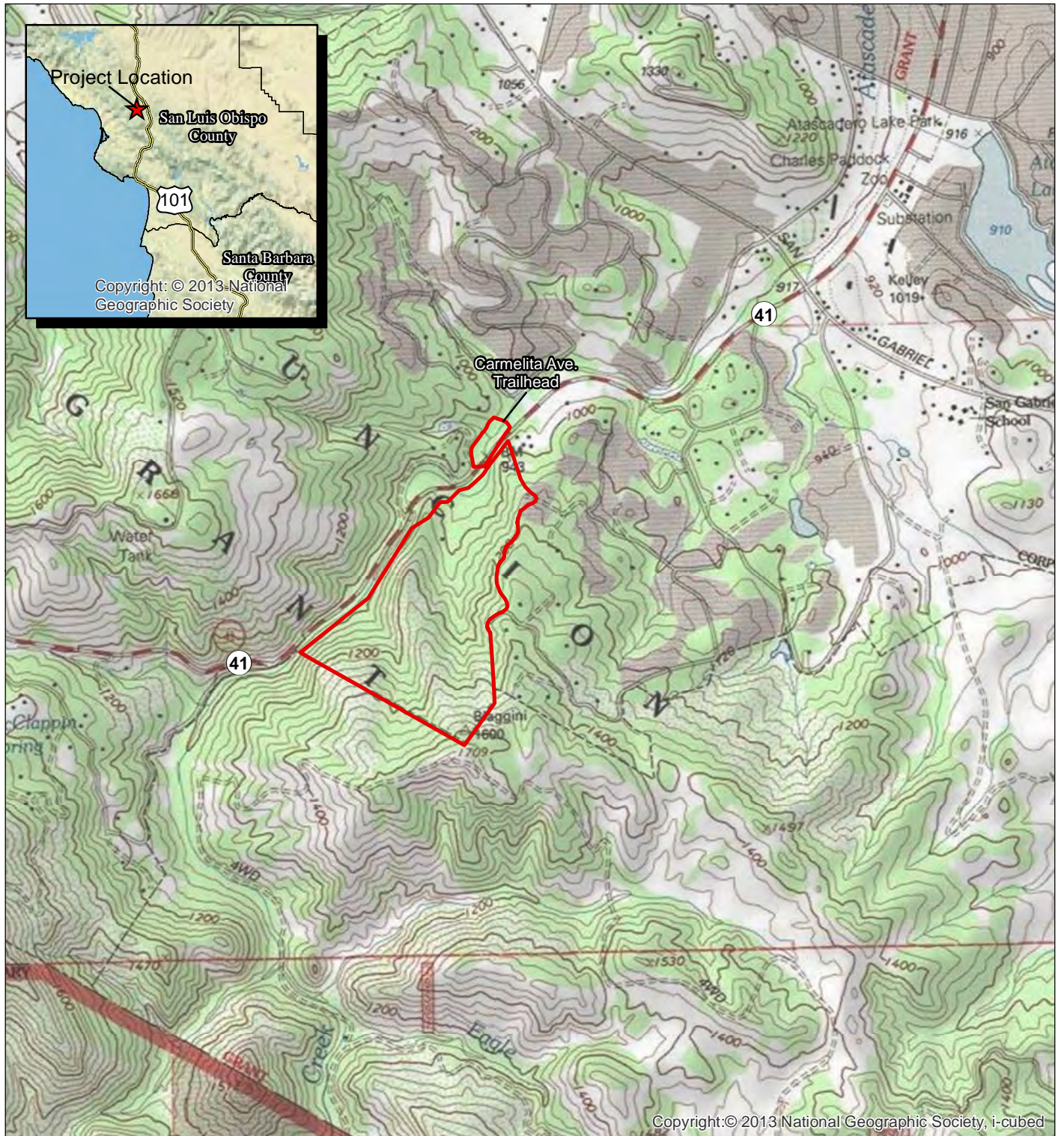
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## **11.0 Figures**

- Figure 1. USGS Topographic Map
- Figure 2. Assessor's Parcel Map
- Figure 3. Aerial Photograph
- Figure 4. Fire History Map
- Figure 5. USDA Soils Map
- Figure 6. CNDDDB & FWS Critical Habitat – Animals Figure 7. CNDDDB & FWS Critical Habitat – Plants Figure 8. ALPS Habitat Map with Preliminary Trail Locations

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# Figure 1. USGS Topographic Map



 Study Area

0 0.25 0.5 1 Mile






# Figure 2. Assessor's Parcel Map

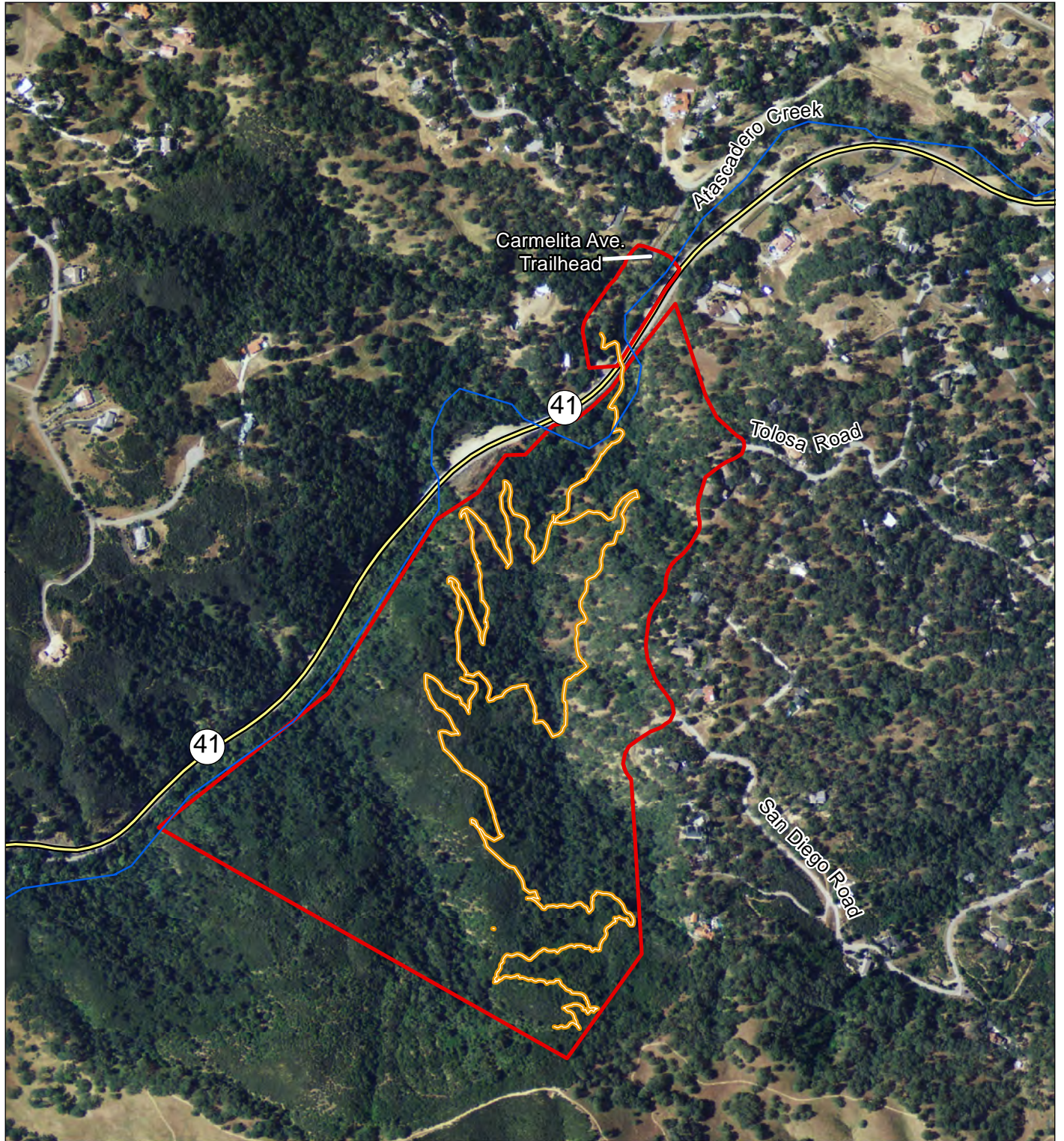


## Legend

 Study Area

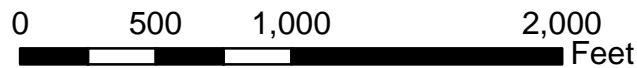


# Figure 3. Aerial Photograph



## Legend

-  TBOP Trail
-  Study Area





# Figure 4. Fire History Map

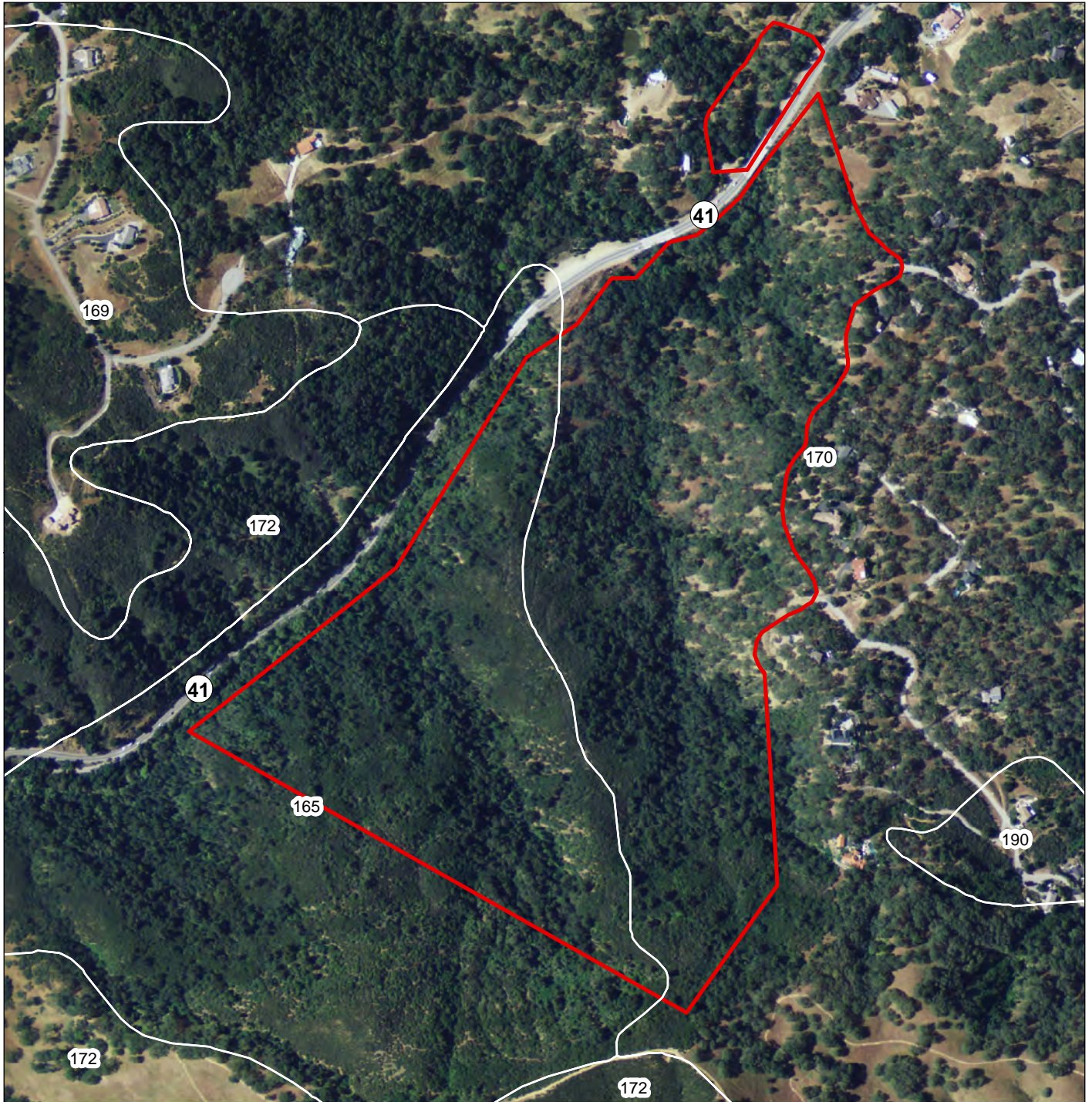


0 1 2 4 Miles

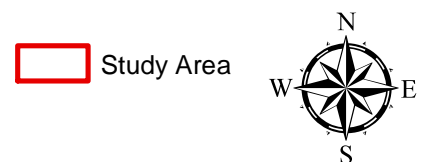
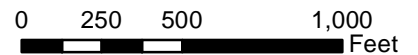
Year: 1921, 5931 Acres    Year: 1956, 609 Acres    Year: 1994, 50729 Acres    Study Area



# Figure 5. USDA Soils Map



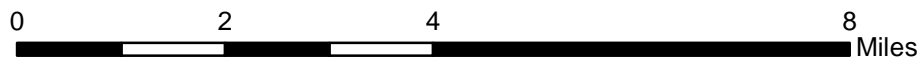
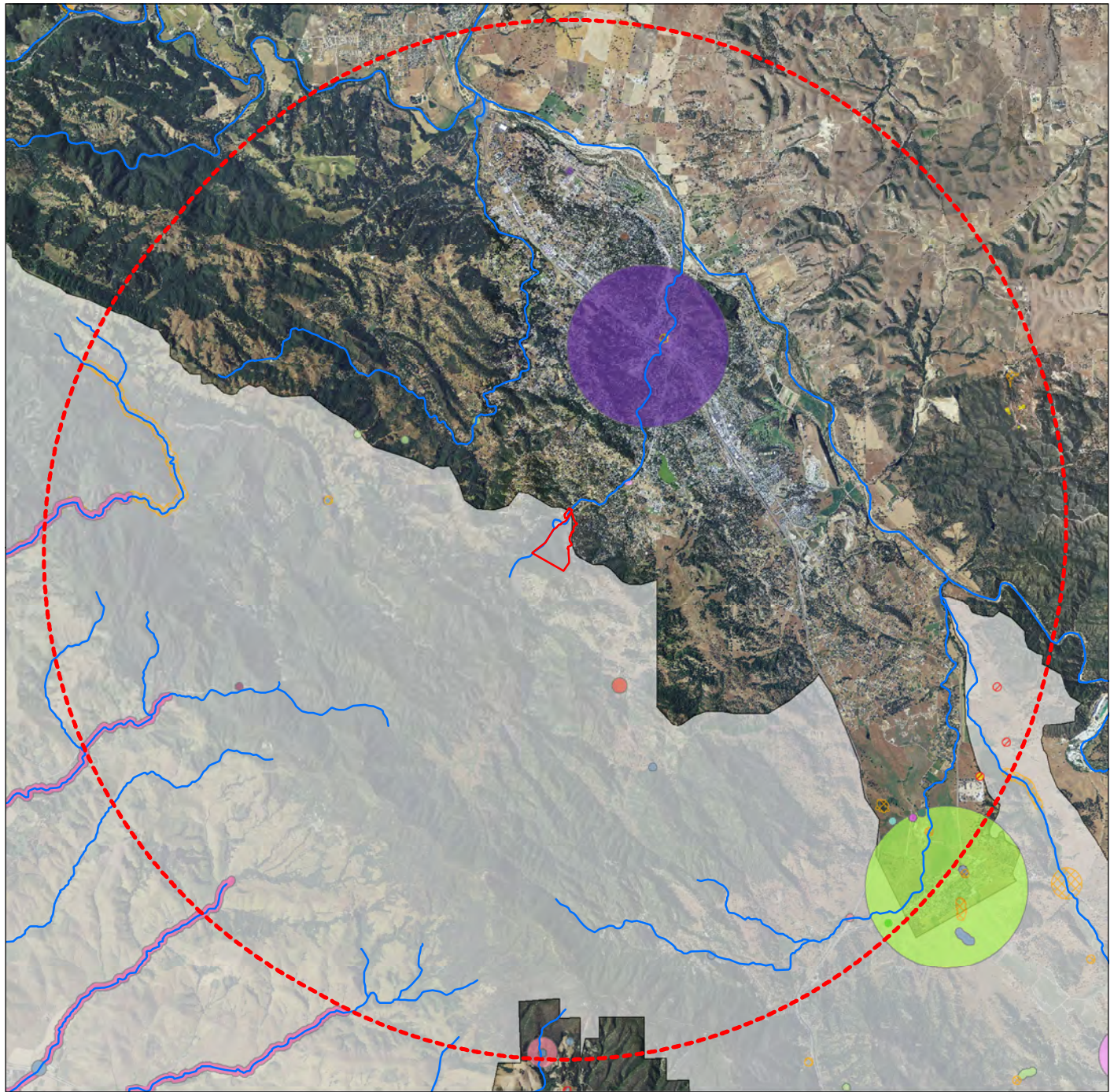
- 165: McMullin-Rock outcrop complex, 50-75 percent slopes
- 169: Millsholm-Dibble complex, 15-30 percent slopes
- 170: Millsholm-Dibble complex, 30-50 percent slopes
- 172: Millsholm-Rock outcrop complex, 50-75 percent slopes
- 190: Rock outcrop-Gaviota complex, 30-75 percent slopes







# Figure 6. CNDDDB & FWS Critical Habitat-Animals



- |                        |                            |                             |  |
|------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--|
| 5-mile buffer          | California red-legged frog | foothill yellow-legged frog | silvery legless lizard                         |
| Study Area             | Coast Range newt           | golden eagle                | steelhead - south/central California coast DPS |
| American badger        | San Luis Obispo pyrg       | grasshopper sparrow         | western pond turtle                            |
| Atascadero June beetle | Townsend's big-eared bat   | pallid bat                  | western spadefoot                              |
| California linderiella | ferruginous hawk           | purple martin               | Steelhead Critical Habitat                     |
|                        |                            |                             | California red-legged frog Critical Habitat    |



# Figure 7. CNDDDB & FWS Critical Habitat-Plants



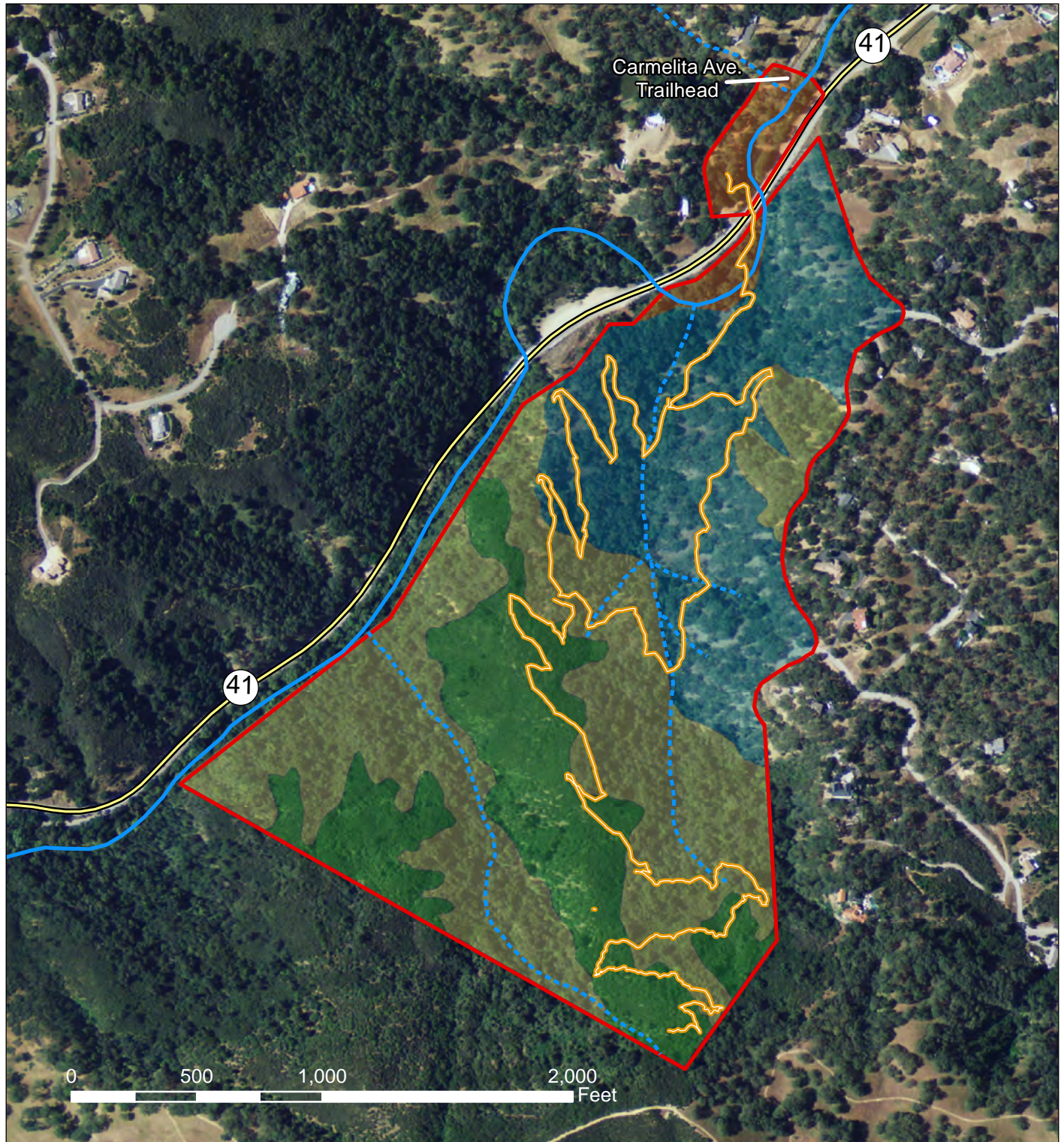
0 1.25 2.5 5 Miles

- |                           |                                  |                           |                             |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Study Area                | Cuesta Ridge thistle             | San Luis Obispo sedge     | most beautiful jewel-flower |
| 5-mile buffer             | Eastwood's larkspur              | San Luis mariposa-lily    | round-leaved filaree        |
| Brewer's spineflower      | La Panza mariposa-lily           | Santa Lucia bush-mallow   | shining navarretia          |
| Cambria morning-glory     | Miles' milk-vetch                | Santa Margarita manzanita | straight-awned spineflower  |
| Carmel Valley bush-mallow | Northern Interior Cypress Forest | dwarf soaproot            | yellow-flowered eriastrum   |
| Chorro Creek bog thistle  | Palmer's monardella              | hooked popcornflower      |                             |
| Cuesta Pass checkerbloom  | San Benito fritillary            | mesa horkelia             |                             |





# Figure 8. ALPS Habitat Map with Preliminary Trail Locations



- |                    |                   |                            |
|--------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|
| Study Area         | Blue Oak Woodland | Coast Live Oak Woodland    |
| Ephemeral Drainage | Mixed Chaparral   | Sycamore Riparian Woodland |
| Atascadero Creek   | TBOP Trail        |                            |





## 12.0 Photographs



Photo 1. Sycamore canopy and existing ground condition at proposed Carmelita Trailhead. Photo taken 9/17/2013.



Photo 2. Access point under existing Highway 41 bridge. Photo taken 9/17/2013.



Photo 3. View from Atascadero Creek north toward ephemeral drainage at the Carmelita Trailhead. Note existing concrete apron already present in ephemeral drainage. Photo taken 9/17/2013.



Photo 4. Streambed of Atascadero Creek at proposed ford location. View southwest toward the Preserve. Photo taken 10/20/2013.



Photo 5. Blue oak woodland with grassy understory at the Preserve. Photo taken 10/20/2013.



Photo 6. Ephemeral drainage with oak and bay trees at the Preserve. Photo taken 10/20/2013.





Photo 7. Mixed chaparral, adjacent to coast live oak woodland at the Preserve. Photo taken 10/20/2013.



Photo 8. Manzanita within mixed chaparral at the Preserve. Photo taken 10/20/2013.



Photo 9. Oak woodland with poison oak thicket in the foreground near the west edge of the Preserve Photo taken 10/20/2013.



Photo 10. Typical condition of ephemeral drainages that start within the Study Area. Photo taken 10/20/2013.

### **13.0 References**

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## **Attachment A - Preliminary Plan Sheets**

- Preliminary Plans - ALPS Three Bridges Oak Preserve Trailhead and Public Access Plan (Eric Gobler Engineering)





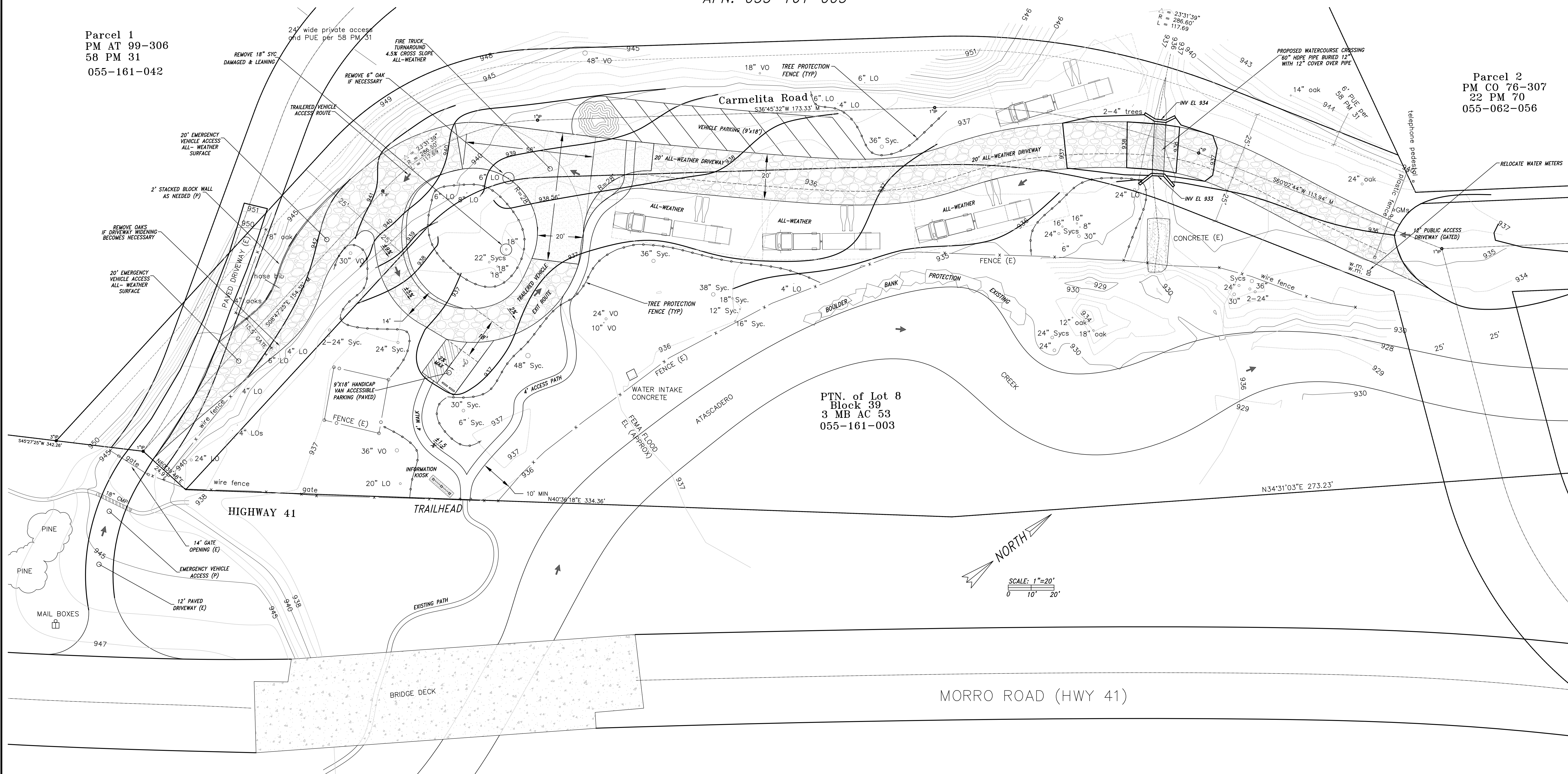
# THREE BRIDGES OAK PRESERVE TRAILHEAD AND PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN

NOTE: ALL FENCING, SIGNAGE AND INFORMATION DETAILS ARE ON SITE MANAGEMENT PLAN BY OTHERS

CARMELITA ROAD ACCESS LOCATION  
APN: 055-161-003

Parcel 1  
PM AT 99-306  
58 PM 31  
055-161-042

Parcel 2  
PM CO 76-307  
22 PM 70  
055-062-056



**SURVEY NOTES:**  
THE BOUNDARY LINES ALONG CARMELITA AVE. ARE BASED ON A BOUNDARY SURVEY. THE CALTRANS RIGHT OF WAY IS CALCULATED FROM RECORD INFORMATION. THE BASIS OF BEARINGS IS GEODETIC NORTH USING GPS TECHNIQUES WITH NO ROTATION ANGLE.  
THE ELEVATIONS SHOWN ARE BASED ON CALTRANS MONUMENT DESIGNATED SLO 41 PM 13.26 AND HAVING A PUBLISHED ELEVATION OF 954.78' NAVD88.  
THE F.E.M.A. INFORMATION SHOWN IS BASED ON F.I.R.M. PANEL 829 OF 2050, MAP NUMBER 06079C0829G DATED 11-16-2012.  
THERE MAY OR MAY NOT BE OTHER EASEMENTS AFFECTING THE PROPERTY SHOWN WHICH A TITLE REPORT WOULD DISCLOSE.  
FIELD SURVEY PERFORMED 5-6-2014.

**SCOPE OF WORK:**  
1. DEVELOP A TRAILHEAD AND TRAILHEAD ACCESS FOR THE THREE BRIDGES OAK TRAIL.  
2. CONSTRUCT A 12' WIDE ALL-WEATHER PUBLIC ACCESS DRIVEWAY FROM CARMELITA ROAD TO THE TRAILHEAD AREA.  
3. INSTALL A PUBLIC PARKING AREA THAT INCLUDES 6-8 VEHICLE SPACES, 3 HORSE TRAILER SPACES AND ONE VAN ACCESSIBLE HANDICAPPED SPACE.  
4. CONSTRUCT A 20' WIDE, ALL-WEATHER EMERGENCY VEHICLE ACCESS DRIVEWAY INCLUDING A CITY APPROVED FIRE TRUCK TURN AROUND (HAMMERHEAD TYPE).  
5. INSTALL A 4' WIDE ACCESS PATH FROM THE PARKING AREAS TO THE TRAILHEAD KIOSK.  
6. INSTALL AN INFORMATION KIOSK IDENTIFYING TRAIL INFORMATION.

**ENGINEER OF RECORD:**  
ERIC J. GOBLER, P.E. #C30438  
9110 ATASCADERO AVENUE  
ATASCADERO, CA 93422  
(805) 466-1125  
(805) 466-8632 OFFICE  
(805) 459-3268 CELL  
(805) 466-6485 FAX

**CONTRACTOR:**  
TO BE DETERMINED

**PROJECT MANAGER:**  
JOHN W. GOERS  
ALPS, VICE PRESIDENT  
www.supportalps.org  
(805) 466-1125  
(805) 712-8717

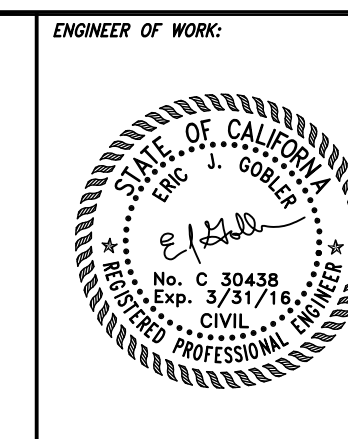
**ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT:**  
DANIEL MEADE  
ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.  
1602 SPRING STREET  
PASO ROBLES, CA 93446  
(805) 705-2479

**ARBORIST:**  
CORY MEYER  
7345 OINAL AVENUE  
ATASCADERO, CA 93422  
(805) 610-2486  
WE #76784

REVISIONS
1
2
3

PROPRIETARY NOTES:  
THESE PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS AND DESIGNS ARE INSTRUMENTS OF WORK AND SERVICES PREPARED FOR THIS PROJECT BY ERIC GOBLER CIVIL ENGINEERING. NO PART OF THESE PLANS SHALL BE USED IN PART OR IN WHOLE FOR ANY OTHER PROJECT UNLESS WRITTEN CONSENT IS OBTAINED FROM ERIC GOBLER, CIVIL ENGINEER.

TOPOGRAPHIC SURVEY BY:  
Mark Lewis Surveys  
3370 Oak Knoll Dr.  
Paso Robles Ca. 93446  
805 239-0063  
DATE: 5-6-2014



PROJECT DESCRIPTION: THREE BRIDGES OAK PRESERVE TRAILHEAD AND PUBLIC ACCESS PLAN	
SHEET DESCRIPTION: PRELIMINARY DRIVEWAY AND EMERGENCY ACCESS LAYOUT	PLAN #3 JUNE 2014
DESIGN/DRAWN:	COUNTY PLAN CHECKER:
JOB NUMBER: 14-036	CO. PERMIT NUMBER: DATE: 6-7-14
CALIFORNIA COORDINATES: N	E



## **Attachment B – Certified Arborist Report**



# ARBORIST REPORT

for

**Atascadero Land Preservation Society**

**Three Bridges Oak Preserve**

**Trailhead and Public Access Project**



September 2, 2014

Atascadero Land Preservation Society  
P.O. Box 940  
Atascadero CA 93423

Re: Tree Protection Plan for Three Bridges Oak Preserve Trailhead and Trailhead Access Project

### **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT:**

The Three Bridges Oak Preserve is a 103 acre parcel of property on the west side of Atascadero. It was purchased by the Atascadero Land Preservation Society for the purpose of preserving open space land for public use. This report is specifically for the trailhead and trailhead access area to the Three Bridges Oak Preserve. The trailhead and trailhead access are located on City of Atascadero Property located at the end of Carmelita Road. This area will allow pedestrian access and parking, horse trailer parking, and a van-accessible parking space for persons with disabilities. Also an emergency vehicle access driveway will be constructed.

It is the responsibility of the construction manager to provide a copy of this tree protection plan to any and all contractors and subcontractors that work within 20 feet of the drip line of native trees.

There are 40 native trees that are within the City of Atascadero Tree Protection Guidelines at the project site. All these trees will require tree protection. These trees are identified on the tree protection plan, the spreadsheet and also in the field with numbered aluminum tags. There is also one tree, an Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) tagged as Tree No. 33, that is not protected.

### **TREES WITH SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS:**

**Tree No. 1** - Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) 29 inch dbh (diameter at breast height) is going to be impacted by a retaining wall to be constructed approximately 6 feet out from the trunk. This oak already is in a low area east of the existing access road. Monitoring for root impacts in the critical root zone (CRZ = within the drip line) is recommended during excavation for the retaining wall. Root pruning may be necessary. It is also recommended that 2"x 4" x 8' fir studs be placed vertically against and around the trunk and secured with wire (see detail). Canopy pruning will be necessary to meet the 13'6" clearance requirement.

**Tree No. 2** - Coast Live Oak 5.5" dbh is in the path of the grading work for the road. **Recommendation is for removal** of this tree due to the grade changes.

**Tree No. 3** - California Sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) 23 in. & 17.5 in. dbh double trunk will also be impacted by the retaining wall to be constructed approximately 7 feet away from the trunks. Monitoring for root impacts within CRZ will be necessary during excavation for the retaining wall. Root pruning may be necessary. Canopy pruning will be necessary to meet 13'6" clearance requirement.

**Tree No. 6** - Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) 42 in. dbh will have possible root impacts due to grading and asphalt construction for the van accessible parking in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act. Arborist monitoring is recommended.

**Tree No. 12** - California Sycamore 23 in. dbh recommending removal of dead limbs for pedestrian safety. Possible moderate impacts due to grading. Arborist monitoring for root impacts is necessary.

**Tree No. 13** - California Sycamore 22.5 in. dbh has major decay and a extreme lean into proposed circular access driveway. **Recommendation is for removal.** This should not have too much visual impact due to other existing sycamores growing in close proximity. (See photo.)

**Tree No. 16** - Coastal Live Oak 7 in. dbh is too close to proposed road and will have severe root impacts due to grading and clearance issues for vehicle access. **Recommendation is for removal.** (See photo.)

**Tree No. 26** - California Sycamore 42 inch dbh, grading and compaction during construction of proposed road as planned is going to **severely** impact the critical root zone. Arborist monitoring is necessary. **Recommendation is to move planned road as far away from the tree trunk as possible and keep grading to a minimum within the CRZ.** (See photo.)

**Tree No. 32** - Valley Oak 28 inch dbh is going to have a head wall and culvert installed near it. Root impacts are imminent. Root pruning will be necessary. Arborist monitoring during installation of culvert and headwall within the CRZ is necessary. A significant limb will need to be removed as well as other low limbs to meet the 13'6" clearance requirement. (See photo.)

**Tree No. 33** - Elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*) 6 & 4 inch dbh double trunk. This tree is not on the City of Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance list of protected trees in accordance with Chapter 11 Native Tree Regulations 9-11.104 definitions. **Recommendation is for removal of this tree** so the culvert can be installed as to have less impact on Tree No. 32. (See photo.)

**Tree No. 40** - Coast Live Oak 4.5 in. dbh is too close to the proposed road due to grade changes. **Recommendation is for removal.**

**Tree No. 41** - Coast Live Oak 6" dbh is close to the proposed road. **Recommendation is to try to save this tree.** Arborist monitoring is necessary.



**Removals - Native Trees** (listed above)

Coast Live Oaks Nos. 2, 16, 40

Total all trees dbh = 17 inches

California Sycamore No. 13

Total dbh = 22.5 inches

Elderberry No. 33 (not a protected tree)

Total dbh = 10 inches

**All trees that need to be trimmed for vehicle clearance are listed in the report or on the spread sheet. It is further recommended that each tree be accessed for additional pruning needs, have dead wood removed and safety pruning as necessary as this is a public access area.**

**All trees listed on the spread sheet require protective fencing with the exception of trees listed for removal.**

**Arborist monitoring will be required periodically during construction.**

**TREE RATING SYSTEM**

A rating system of 1-10 was used for visually establishing the overall condition of each tree on the spreadsheet. The rating system is defined as follows:

<u>Rating</u>	<u>Condition</u>
0	Deceased
1	Evidence of massive past failures, extreme disease and is in severe decline.
2	May be saved with attention to pruning, insect/pest eradication and future monitoring.
3	Some past failures, some pests or structural defects that may be mitigated with pruning.
4	May have had minor past failures, excessive deadwood or minor structural defects that can be mitigated with pruning.
5	Relatively healthy tree with little visual structural and or pest defects.
6	Healthy tree that probably can be left in its natural state.
7-9	Have had proper arboricultural pruning and attention or have no apparent structural defects.

The following mitigation measures and methods must be fully understood and followed by anyone working within the drip line of any native tree. Any necessary clarification will be provided by the arborist upon request.

◆ **Fencing**

Fencing will need to be in place. See plans for proper installation location.

◆ **Trenching Within Drip Line**

All major roots shall be avoided whenever possible. All exposed roots larger than 1-inch in diameter shall be clean cut with sharp pruning tools and not left ragged. Upon arborist inspection, hand digging, auguring or boring may be necessary if there are major root impacts.

◆ **Grading Within the Drip Line**

Grading should not encroach within the drip line unless authorized.

◆ **Exposed Roots**

Any exposed roots shall be re-covered the same day they were exposed if possible. If they cannot, they must be covered with burlap or another suitable material and wetted down 2 times per day until re-buried.

◆ **Existing Surfaces**

The existing ground surface within the drip line of all native trees shown on the plan shall not be cut, filled, or compacted unless shown on the grading plans and approved by the arborist.

◆ **Construction Materials and Waste**

No liquid or solid construction waste shall be dumped on the ground within the drip line of any native tree. The drip line areas are not for storage of materials.

◆ **Arborist Monitoring**

An arborist shall be present for selected activities (trees identified on spreadsheet). The monitoring does not have to be continuous but observational at times during these activities. It is the responsibility of the owner or their designee to inform the arborist prior to the work so he/she can be present.

It was a pleasure working with you. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions or concerns.

Cory Meyer

Certified Arborist No. WE-7678A

## TREE PROTECTION SPREADSHEET

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TREE NO.	TREE SPECIES	TRUNK DBH	TREE CONDITION	CONST STATUS	DRIP-LINE % IMPACT	CONST IMPACT	MITIGATION PROPOSAL	MONT REQUIRED	PRUNING CLASS	FIELD NOTES
1	LO	29	5	I	40	GC	FM	Y		PRUNE FOR CLEARANCE
2	LO	5.5	4	R	—	G	—	—	REMOVAL	COMPETITION FROM SYC
3	SYC	23 & 17.5	5	I	35	GC	FM	Y		PRUNE FOR CLEARANCE
4	VO	34	6	I	50	GC	F	Y		CANOPY THINNING
5	SYC	27	5	I	10	GC	F	Y		DEAD WOOD
6	VO	42	7	I	15	G	F	Y		DEAD WOOD
7	LO	28	5	A	0	G	—	Y		CANOPY THINNING
8	SYC	41	6	I	10	G	F	Y		SPLIT TRUNK EAST SIDE
9	SYC	48	7	I	5	G	F	Y		DEAD WOOD
10	SYC	21	3	I	75	G	F	Y		LEANS SOUTH
11	SYC	23	3	I	—	G	F	Y		DEAD WOOD LEANS WEST
12	SYC	23	4	I	20	G	F	Y		DEAD WOOD
13	SYC	22.5	1	R	—	G	—	—	REMOVAL	
14	LO	6	4	I	0	G	F	Z		MINOR TRIMMING
15	LO	11	5	I	0	G	F	Z		MINOR TRIMMING
16	LO	7	5	R	—	G	—	—	REMOVAL	
17	VO	50	5	I	25	G	F	Z		DEAD WOOD LEANS NORTH
18	LO	9.5	3	I	0	G	F	Z		
19	VO	29	3	I	10	G	F	Z		DEAD WOOD
20	SYC	35	5	R	20	G	F	Z		MINOR TRIMMING

1 - TREE NO.: MOSTLY CLOCKWISE FROM DUE NORTH

2 = TREE TYPE: COMMON NAME (W.O. = WHITE OAK)

3 = TRUNK DIAMETER @ 4' 6"

4 = TREE CONDITION: 1 = POOR, 10 = EXCELLENT

5 = CONSTRUCTION STATUS: AVOIDED, IMPACTED, REMOVAL

6 = DRIP-LINE: PERCENT OF IMPACTED DRIP-LINE

7 = CONSTRUCTION IMPACT TYPE: GRADING, COMPACTION, TRENCHING

8 = MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS: FENCING, MONITORING, ROOT PRUNING

9 = ARBORIST MONITORING REQUIRED: YES/NO

10 = PRESCRIBED PRUNING CLASS: 1-4

11 = FIELD NOTES

## TREE PROTECTION SPREADSHEET

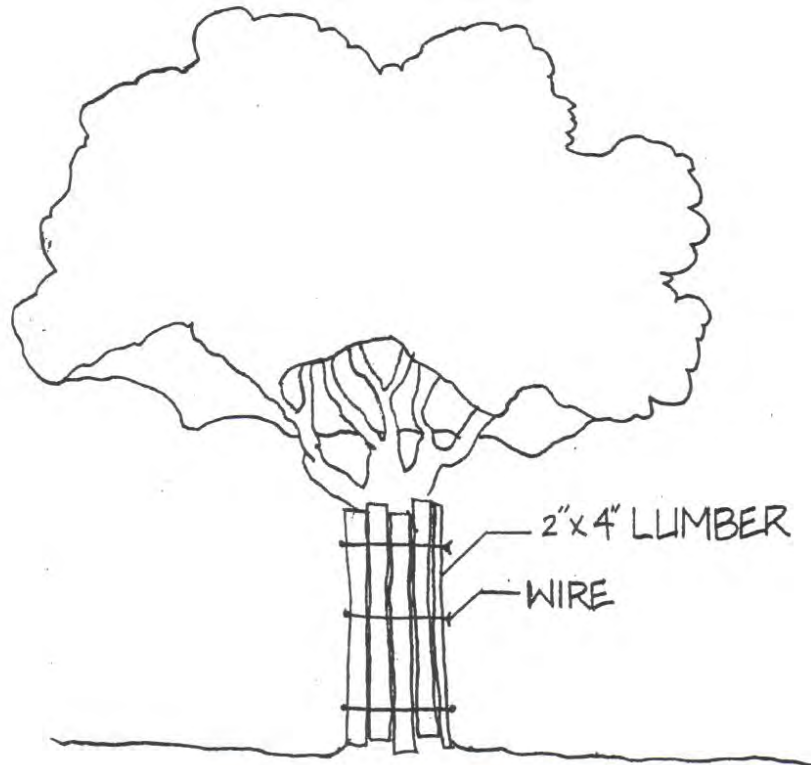
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
TREE NO.	TREE SPECIES	TRUNK DBH	TREE CONDITION	CONST STATUS	DRIP-LINE % IMPACT	CONST IMPACT	MITIGATION PROPOSAL	MONT REQUIRED	PRUNING CLASS	FIELD NOTES
21	SYC	38.5	3	I	30	G	F	Y		PRUNING NEEDED - DEAD WOOD
22	SYC	16.5	4	A	0	—	F	Z		
23	VO	6.5	3	A	0	—	F	Z		
24	VO	20	3	A	20	G	F	Y		CANOPY THINNING - DEAD WOOD
25	LO	7	4	A	0	—	F	Z		
26	SYC	42	6	I	35	G	F	Y		OF MOST CONCERN - MOVE ROAD
27	SYC	25	5	A	0	A	F	Z		
28	SYC	20	5	A	10	G	F	Z		NEAR HORSE TRAILER PARKING
29	SYC	17	4	I	30	G	F	Z		NEAR HORSE TRAILER PARKING
30	SYC	9	2	A	0	—	F	Z		PRUNE FOR VEHICLE CLEARANCE
31	SYC	23	1	A	0	—	F	Z		
32	VO	28	4	I	50	CULVERT	F	Y		REMOVE LARGE LIMB FOR CLEARANCE
33	ELDER	6.4	3	R	—	CULVERT	—	—	REMOVAL	
34	SYC	21	4	A	0	A	F	Z		CANOPY THINNING
35	SYC	42	7	A	10	G	F	Z		CANOPY THINNING
36	VO	30.5	6	I	15	G	F	Y		PRUNE FOR VEHICLE CLEARANCE
37	LO	9	5	I	10	G	F	Z		PRUNE FOR VEHICLE CLEARANCE
38	LO	5	4	I	5	G	F	Y		
39	LO	5#2.5	3	I	0	G	F	Y		
40	LO	4.5	3	R	—	G	—	—	REMOVAL	
41	LO	6	6	I	0	G	F	Y		POSSIBLE REMOVAL
42										
43										
44										
45										

1 = TREE NO.: MOSTLY CLOCKWISE FROM DUE NORTH  
 2 = TREE SPECIES: COMMON NAME (V.O. = VALLEY OAK)  
 3 = TRUNK DIAMETER @ 4'6"  
 4 = TREE CONDITION: 1 = POOR, 10 = EXCELLENT

5 = CONSTRUCTION STATUS: AVOIDED, IMPACTED, REMOVAL  
 6 = DRIP LINE: PERCENT OF IMPACTED DRIP LINE  
 7 = CONSTRUCTION IMPACT TYPE: GRADING, COMPACTION, TRENCHING  
 8 = MITIGATION REQUIREMENTS: FENCING, MONITORING, ROOT PRUNING

9 = ARBORIST MONITORING REQUIRED: YES / NO  
 10 = PRESCRIBED PRUNING CLASS: 1-4  
 11 = FIELD NOTES

## BARK PROTECTION



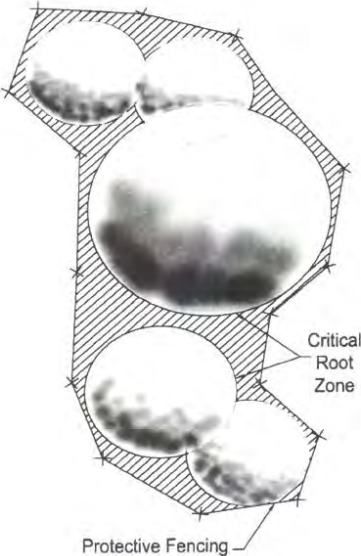
In situations where a protected tree remains in the immediate area of intended construction and the tree may be in danger of being damaged by construction equipment or other activity, the contractor or subcontractor shall protect the tree with 2"x4" lumber encircled with wire or other means that do not damage the tree. The intent is to protect the trunk of the tree against incidental contact by large construction equipment.

**TREE PROTECTION FENCING**  
Examples of appropriate protective fencing

*Protective fencing for a single tree*



*Protective fencing for multiple trees*





**Tree No. 1 - Live Oak:** Retaining wall to be built near the fence line.  
Tree to be pruned for 13'6" vehicle clearance.



**Tree No. 3- Sycamore:** Retaining wall to be built approximately 7 ft. away from the trunk. Tree to be pruned for 13'6" vehicle clearance. Dead wood needs to be trimmed out of the tree.



**Tree No. 9- Sycamore:** Remove dead tree next to Tree No. 9.





**Tree No. 13 - Sycamore:** Has severe decay and an extreme lean into proposed circular access driveway.  
**Recommendation is for removal.**



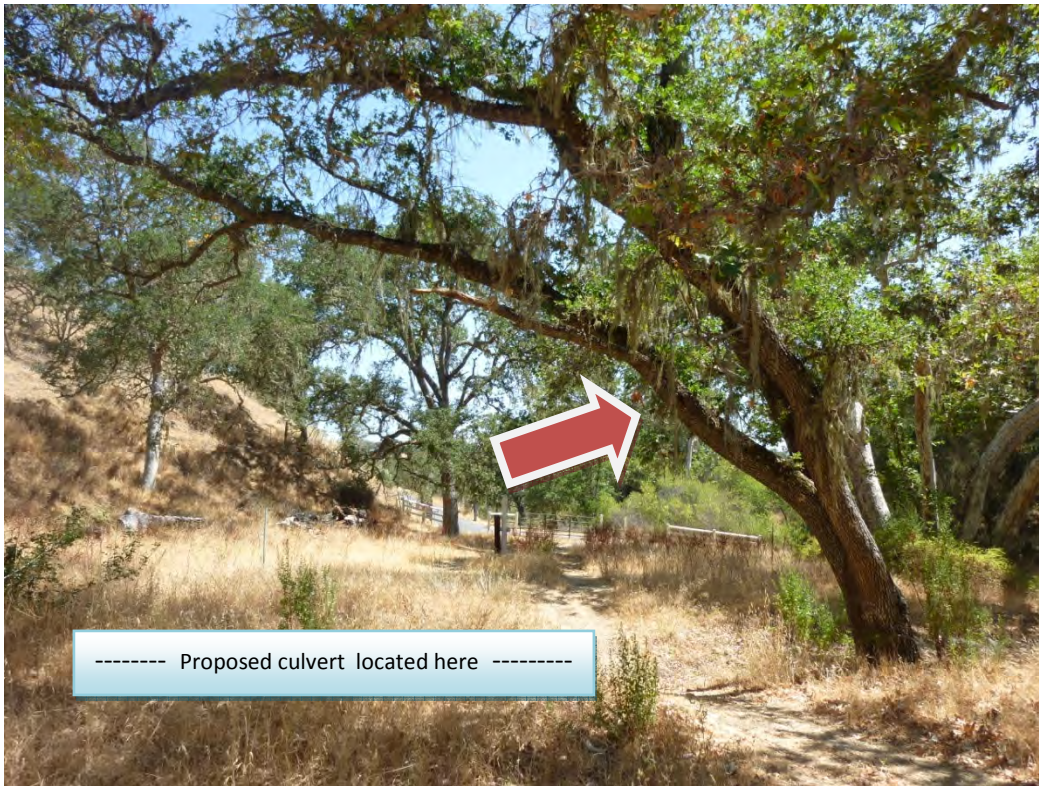
**Tree No. 16 - Live Oak:** Too close to proposed road. Will have severe root impacts due to grading and clearance issues for vehicle access.  
**Recommendation is for removal.**



**Tree No. 21 - Sycamore:** Dead wood needs to be pruned out of canopy.



**Tree No. 26 - Sycamore:** Grading and compaction during construction of proposed road is going to highly impact the critical root zone.  
**Recommendation:** Move the planned road as far away from the trunk as possible.



**Tree No. 32 - Valley Oak:** This tree is going to have a head wall and culvert installed near it. Pruning low limbs will be necessary for 13'6" vehicle clearance.



**Tree No. 33 - Elderberry:** This tree is not on the City of Atascadero Native Tree Ordinance list of protected trees.

**Recommendation: Removal of this tree so the culvert can be installed.**



**Tree No. 36 - Valley Oak:** This tree needs to be trimmed for 13'6" vehicle clearance.



**Tree No. 2 - Live Oak:** Recommend removal due to grading for proposed road  
**Tree No. 40 - Live Oak:** Recommend removal due to grading for proposed road.



**Tree No. 41 - Live Oak:** Recommendation: Removal if necessary. Other small Live Oak trees in this area under 4 inch dbh may be removed if necessary.