



Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc.

PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTING

MEMORANDUM

Date: August 1, 2017

To: Lisa Rheinheimer, Director of Planning and Marketing, Monterey-Salinas Transit

From: Erin Harwayne, AICP, Senior Environmental Scientist, DD&A
Jami Colley, Associate Environmental Scientist, DD&A

Subject: *Draft Biological Study for the Monterey-Salinas Transit South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project*

This memorandum describes the existing and potential biological resources within and adjacent to the site for the proposed Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project (proposed project). In addition, this memorandum evaluates the potential impacts to the identified resources that may occur as a result of the proposed project.

Project Description

The proposed project consists of developing an approximately 4.8-acre, vacant parcel in King City, California, to construct an operations and maintenance facility for public transit vehicles that primarily serve southern Monterey County (**Figure 1**). The proposed project would accommodate future transit needs in the surrounding rural communities of Monterey's South County. The proposed project site is part of the existing industrial park site for which King City has approved the East Ranch Business Park Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The Specific Plan Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Final IS/MND) was certified as adequate and the Specific Plan was approved by the King City Council on August 14, 2007. The proposed project is allowed under the Specific Plan as an industrial type use pursuant to acquiring a Conditional Use Permit and Architectural Review approval.

Methodology

Reconnaissance-level biological and focused rare plant surveys were conducted on April 16, 2017, by Associate Environmental Scientist, Jami Colley. The survey area included all areas that could potentially be disturbed during project construction (**Figure 2**). Available reference materials were reviewed prior to conducting the surveys, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW's) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) occurrence reports (**Appendix A**) and Special Animals list, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service's) Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Resources List for the site (**Appendix B**), and aerial photographs of the site. The surveys included walking the entire site and identifying general and potentially sensitive habitat types, areas known or with potential habitat for special-status plant and wildlife species, and all plants to the intra-specific taxon necessary to dismiss them as special-status. Data from the surveys provide the basis of the analysis contained within this memorandum.

Site Description

Ruderal/disturbed habitat was the only vegetation type observed within the proposed project site (**Figure 3**). Ruderal areas are those areas which have been developed or have been subject to historic and ongoing disturbance by human activities (e.g., existing roads or agricultural areas) and are either devoid

of vegetation or impacted by non-native and/or invasive weed species. This habitat type is considered to have low biological value, as it is dominated generally by non-native plant species and consists of relatively low quality habitat from a wildlife perspective. The majority of the proposed project site was disked at the time of the survey; however, the non-native, ruderal vegetation observed along the edges of the site is indicative of the species present within the remainder of the site. These species included cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), melilot (*Melilotus* sp.), prickly sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis*), foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum* ssp. *leporinum*), slender oat (*Avena barbata*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and filaree (*Erodium* sp.). Additionally, a row of Italian cypress trees (*Cupressus sempervirens*) is present along the northern border of the project site.

Common wildlife species that do well in urbanized and disturbed areas that may occur within the project site include California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), coast range fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis bocurtii*), and rock dove (*Columba livia*).

Special-Status Species

Special-status species are those plants and animals that have been formally listed or proposed for listing as Endangered or Threatened, or are Candidates for such listing under the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) or the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Listed species are afforded legal protection under the ESA and CESA. Species that meet the definition of Rare or Endangered under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Section 15380 are also considered special-status species. Animals on the CDFW's list of "species of special concern" (most of which are species whose breeding populations in California may face extirpation if current population trends continue) meet this definition and are typically provided management consideration through the CEQA process, although they are not legally protected under the ESA or CESA. Additionally, the CDFW also includes some animal species that are not assigned any of the other status designations in the CNDDDB on their "Special Animals" list. The CDFW considers the taxa on this list to be those of greatest conservation need, regardless of their legal or protection status.

Plants listed as rare under the California Native Plant Protection Act (CNPPA) or included in California Native Plant Society (CNPS) California Rare Plant Ranks (CRPR; formerly known as CNPS Lists) 1A, 1B, 2A, and 2B, are also treated as special-status species as they meet the definitions of Sections 2062 and 2067 of the CESA and in accordance with CEQA Guidelines Section 15380. In addition, species of vascular plants, bryophytes, and lichens listed as having special-status by CDFW are considered special-status plant species.

Raptors (e.g., eagles, hawks, and owls) and their nests are protected under both federal and state laws and regulations. The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code Section 3513 prohibit killing, possessing, or trading migratory birds except in accordance with regulation prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. Birds of prey are protected in California under Fish and Game Code Section 3503.5. Section 3503.5 states that it is "unlawful to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted pursuant thereto." The bald eagle and golden eagle are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, which prohibits the "take of bald and golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior. In addition, fully protected species under the Fish and Game Code Section 3511 (birds), Section 4700 (mammals), Section 5515 (fish), and Section 5050 (reptiles and amphibians) are also considered special-status animal species. Species with no formal special-status designation but thought by experts to be rare or in serious decline are also considered special-status animal species.

No special-status plant or wildlife species were observed within or adjacent to the proposed project site and none are expected to occur based on the lack of suitable habitat. The Specific Plan Final IS/MND identifies two special-status species, San Joaquin kit fox (SJKF, *Vulpes macrotis mutica*) and western burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*) have the potential to occur within the Specific Plan area based on occurrences documented in the vicinity. However, suitable habitat for these species is not present within the project site, and no burrows of sufficient size to support either species were observed during the survey.

Common birds protected under the MBTA, such as northern mockingbird, mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), have the low potential to nest within the Italian cypress trees present within the project site and forage within other areas of the project site. However, these areas provide only low quality habitat for avian species. The project will implement the following measure to avoid and minimize impacts to migratory birds during construction:

- 1) To avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds, construction activities within 300 feet of the Italian cypress trees shall occur outside of the nesting season (February 15 through September 1). If this is not possible, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted for nesting bird species in the Italian cypress trees by a qualified biologist within 15 days prior to the commencement of construction activities. If nesting birds are identified during pre-construction surveys, an appropriate buffer will be imposed within which no construction activities or disturbance will take place (generally 100-300 feet in all directions). A qualified biological monitor shall be on-site during work re-initiation in the vicinity of the nest offset to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. No work may proceed in the vicinity of an active nest until such time as all young are fledged, or until after September 1 (when young are assumed fledged).

Sensitive Habitats

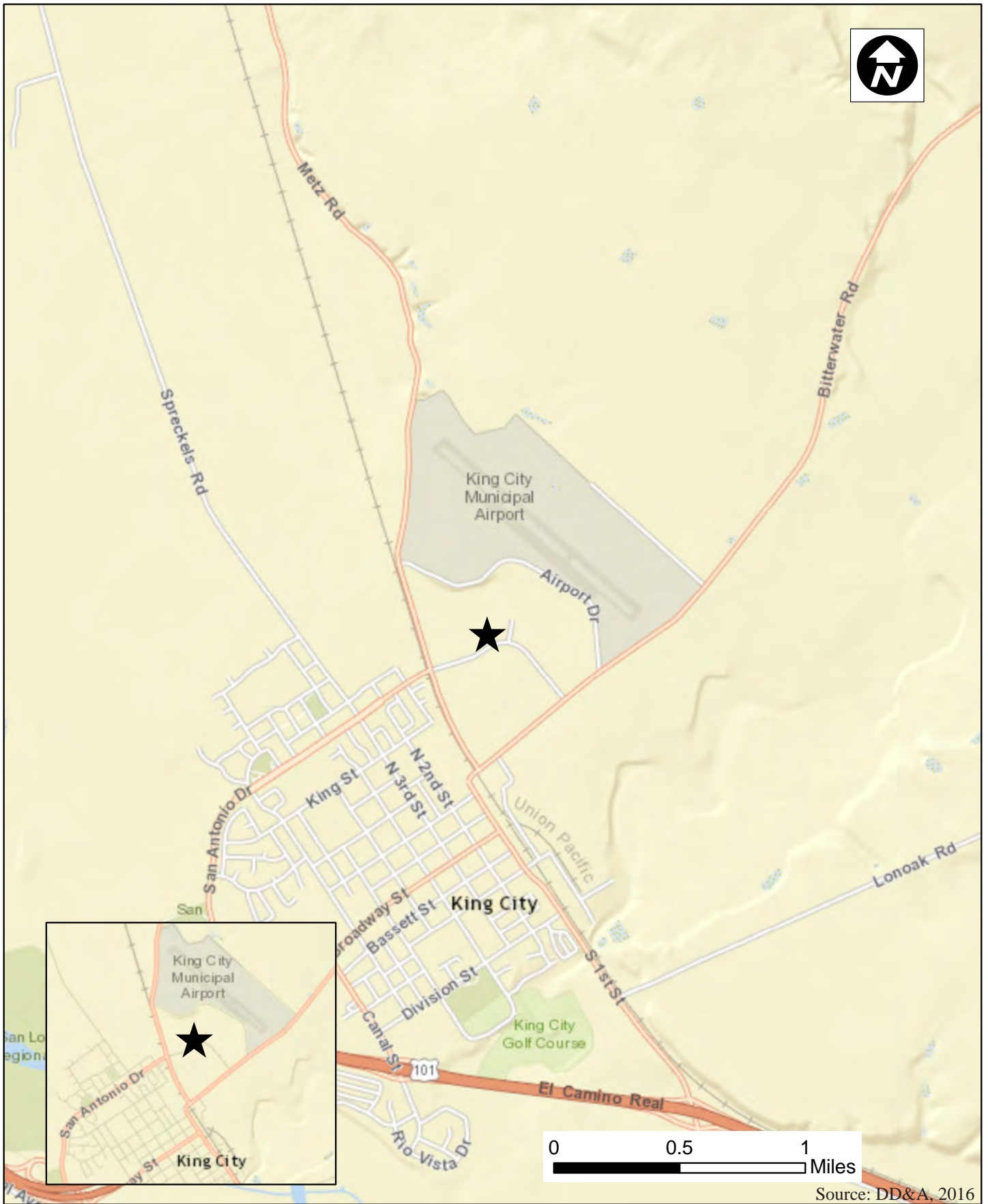
Sensitive habitats include riparian corridors, wetlands, habitats for legally protected species, areas of high biological diversity, areas supporting rare or special-status wildlife habitat, and unusual or regionally restricted habitat types. Habitat types considered sensitive include those listed on the CDFW's *List of Vegetation Alliances and Associations* (i.e., those habitats that are rare or endangered within the borders of California), those that are occupied by species listed under ESA or CESA or are critical habitat in accordance with ESA, and those that are defined as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) under the California Coastal Act (CCA). Specific habitats may also be identified as sensitive in city or county general plans or ordinances. Sensitive habitats are regulated under federal regulations (such as the Clean Water Act [CWA] and Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands), state regulations (such as CEQA and the CDFW Streambed Alteration Program), or local ordinances or policies (such as city or county tree ordinances and general plan policies).

No regulated sensitive habitats were observed or recorded within the project site.

Conclusion

The proposed project will not result in impacts to any sensitive biological resources. Implementation of the measure identified above will avoid and reduce any potential impacts to avian species protected under the MBTA.

If you have any questions or comments regarding this memorandum, please feel free to contact Erin or Jami at (831) 373-4341.



Regional Map

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
1



Project Vicinity Map

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
2



Photo 1. View of the proposed project site looking north from San Antonio Drive onto existing energy facility.



Photo 2. View of the proposed project site looking west from Don Bates Way.



Photo 3. View from the site of industrial/commercial buildings bordering the south, southwest of the site.



Photo 4. View of the proposed project site looking east from San Antonio Drive onto Don Bates Way.

Source: DD&A, 2016

Site Photos

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
3

Appendix A

California Natural Diversity Database – Occurrence Reports
MST South County Operations and Maintenance Facilities Project



Selected Elements by Scientific Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database



Query Criteria: Taxonomic Group IS (Fish OR Amphibians OR Reptiles OR Birds OR Mammals OR Mollusks OR Arachnids OR Crustaceans OR Insects OR Ferns OR Gymnosperms OR Monocots OR Dicots OR Lichens OR Bryophytes)
 AND Quad IS (San Lucas (3612121) OR Thompson Canyon (3612122))

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i> tricolored blackbird	ABPBXB0020	None	Candidate Endangered	G2G3	S1S2	SSC
<i>Athene cunicularia</i> burrowing owl	ABNSB10010	None	None	G4	S3	SSC
<i>Bombus occidentalis</i> western bumble bee	IIHYM24250	None	None	G2G3	S1	
<i>Chorizanthe pungens</i> var. <i>pungens</i> Monterey spineflower	PDPGN040M2	Threatened	None	G2T2	S2	1B.2
<i>Collinsia multicolor</i> San Francisco collinsia	PDSCR0H0B0	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
<i>Delphinium recurvatum</i> recurved larkspur	PDRAN0B1J0	None	None	G2?	S2?	1B.2
<i>Delphinium umbraculorum</i> umbrella larkspur	PDRAN0B1W0	None	None	G3	S3	1B.3
<i>Emys marmorata</i> western pond turtle	ARAAD02030	None	None	G3G4	S3	SSC
<i>Layia heterotricha</i> pale-yellow layia	PDAST5N070	None	None	G2	S2	1B.1
<i>Malacothamnus davidsonii</i> Davidson's bush-mallow	PDMAL0Q040	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
<i>Plagiobothrys uncinatus</i> hooked popcornflower	PDBOR0V170	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
<i>Riparia riparia</i> bank swallow	ABPAU08010	None	Threatened	G5	S2	
<i>Sidalcea hickmanii</i> ssp. <i>hickmanii</i> Hickman's checkerbloom	PDMAL110A2	None	None	G3T2	S2	1B.3
<i>Taxidea taxus</i> American badger	AMAJF04010	None	None	G5	S3	SSC
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> least Bell's vireo	ABPBW01114	Endangered	Endangered	G5T2	S2	
<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> San Joaquin kit fox	AMAJA03041	Endangered	Threatened	G4T2	S2	

Record Count: 16

Appendix B

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service – Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) Resources List
MST South County Operations and Maintenance Facilities Project



United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ventura Fish And Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, CA 93003-7726
Phone: (805) 644-1766 Fax: (805) 644-3958



In Reply Refer To:

June 13, 2017

Consultation Code: 08EVEN00-2017-SLI-0447

Event Code: 08EVEN00-2017-E-01042

Project Name: MST South County Operations & Maintenance Facility Project

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed list identifies species listed as threatened and endangered, species proposed for listing as threatened or endangered, designated and proposed critical habitat, and species that are candidates for listing that may occur within the boundary of the area you have indicated using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Information Planning and Conservation System (IPaC). The species list fulfills the requirements under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the species list should be verified after 90 days. We recommend that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists following the same process you used to receive the enclosed list. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any correspondence about the species list.

Due to staff shortages and excessive workload, we are unable to provide an official list more specific to your area. Numerous other sources of information are available for you to narrow the list to the habitats and conditions of the site in which you are interested. For example, we recommend conducting a biological site assessment or surveys for plants and animals that could help refine the list.

If a Federal agency is involved in the project, that agency has the responsibility to review its proposed activities and determine whether any listed species may be affected. If the project is a major construction project*, the Federal agency has the responsibility to prepare a biological assessment to make a determination of the effects of the action on the listed species or critical habitat. If the Federal agency determines that a listed species or critical habitat is likely to be adversely affected, it should request, in writing through our office, formal consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act. Informal consultation may be used to exchange information and resolve conflicts with respect to threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat prior to a

written request for formal consultation. During this review process, the Federal agency may engage in planning efforts but may not make any irreversible commitment of resources. Such a commitment could constitute a violation of section 7(d) of the Act.

Federal agencies are required to confer with the Service, pursuant to section 7(a)(4) of the Act, when an agency action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat (50 CFR 402.10(a)). A request for formal conference must be in writing and should include the same information that would be provided for a request for formal consultation. Conferences can also include discussions between the Service and the Federal agency to identify and resolve potential conflicts between an action and proposed species or proposed critical habitat early in the decision-making process. The Service recommends ways to minimize or avoid adverse effects of the action. These recommendations are advisory because the jeopardy prohibition of section 7(a)(2) of the Act does not apply until the species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated. The conference process fulfills the need to inform Federal agencies of possible steps that an agency might take at an early stage to adjust its actions to avoid jeopardizing a proposed species.

When a proposed species or proposed critical habitat may be affected by an action, the lead Federal agency may elect to enter into formal conference with the Service even if the action is not likely to jeopardize or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. If the proposed species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated after completion of the conference, the Federal agency may ask the Service, in writing, to confirm the conference as a formal consultation. If the Service reviews the proposed action and finds that no significant changes in the action as planned or in the information used during the conference have occurred, the Service will confirm the conference as a formal consultation on the project and no further section 7 consultation will be necessary. Use of the formal conference process in this manner can prevent delays in the event the proposed species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated during project development or implementation.

Candidate species are those species presently under review by the Service for consideration for Federal listing. Candidate species should be considered in the planning process because they may become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. Preparation of a biological assessment, as described in section 7(c) of the Act, is not required for candidate species. If early evaluation of your project indicates that it is likely to affect a candidate species, you may wish to request technical assistance from this office.

Only listed species receive protection under the Act. However, sensitive species should be considered in the planning process in the event they become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. We recommend that you review information in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Diversity Data Base. You can contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at (916) 324-3812 for information on other sensitive species that may occur in this area.

[*A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having

similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.]

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Ventura Fish And Wildlife Office

2493 Portola Road, Suite B

Ventura, CA 93003-7726

(805) 644-1766

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 08EVEN00-2017-SLI-0447

Event Code: 08EVEN00-2017-E-01042

Project Name: MST South County Operations & Maintenance Facility Project

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: construct an operations and maintenance facility for vehicles that primarily serve southern Monterey County

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/36.22331534287798N121.12418868605502W>



Counties: Monterey, CA

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 7 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on your species list. Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
San Joaquin Kit Fox (<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2873	Endangered

Birds

NAME	STATUS
California Condor (<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>) Population: U.S.A. only, except where listed as an experimental population There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8193	Endangered
Least Bell's Vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945	Endangered
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered

Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
California Red-legged Frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891	Threatened

Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498	Threatened

Flowering Plants

NAME

STATUS

Marsh Sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*)

Endangered

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

Species profile: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2229>

Critical habitats

There are no critical habitats within your project area.

***Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and
Maintenance Facility Project***



Draft Biological Assessment
August 1, 2017

Prepared For:

U.S. Department of Agriculture

and

Federal Transit Administration



Prepared By:

Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc.



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Summary of Findings, Conclusions, and Determinations

Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) is proposing construction of the MST South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project (proposed project), which consists of constructing an operations and maintenance facility for public transit vehicles that primarily serve southern Monterey County. The proposed project would accommodate future transit needs in the surrounding rural communities of Monterey's South County. The proposed project is located at an approximately 4.8-acre, vacant parcel in King City, California (Area of Potential Impact [API]). The API is part of the existing industrial park site for which King City has approved the East Ranch Business Park Specific Plan (Specific Plan). The Specific Plan Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (Final IS/MND) was certified as adequate and the Specific Plan was approved by the King City Council on August 14, 2007.

The purpose of the proposed project is to support existing and future bus maintenance and operations needs to sustain public transportation beginning and ending service in South County and along the Highway 101 corridor. The primary project objective is constructing a maintenance and operations facility to accommodate the bus fleet and to provide maintenance services. The proposed project approach, design, and implementation must align with MST guiding principles. As such, MST developed several project objectives which support the organization's overarching goals and objectives. These include:

- Accommodate future transit needs in rural communities.
- Reduce operational costs, vehicle wear and tear, fuel consumption, and vehicle emissions relative to fleet size by providing a maintenance and operations facility in Monterey's South County, thus reducing the effects of deadhead trips from Salinas and Monterey, where the existing fleet is housed and maintained.
- Modernize facility and equipment to improve service efficiency and quality.
- Reduce potable water usage relative to fleet size.
- Increase facility energy efficiency.
- Provide a comfortable and safe environment within the building and around the usable site areas that promotes improved occupant health, safety, and productivity.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) provided an official species list for the project on June 13, 2017 (**Appendix A**). No suitable habitat is present within the API for any species identified in the official species list.

Migratory bird species protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) have a low potential to nest and forage within the Action Area and API, although these areas provide only low quality habitat for avian species. Temporary disturbance may occur to foraging migratory birds during construction activities. Additionally, if construction occurs during the nesting season construction activities could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment within API and immediately adjacent areas of the Action Area. However, if work must occur within the nesting season, avoidance and minimization through buffers and monitoring is proposed to ensure no impacts to migratory bird species occurs. No suitable nesting habitat for the bald or golden eagle, which are protected under the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act, is present within the Action Area or API.

As such, the project will have no effect on any federally-listed, candidate, or proposed species under the federal Endangered Species Act, and will not result in impacts to migratory bird species or the bald or golden eagle.

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List of Abbreviated Terms

AFY	Acre feet per year
API	Area of Potential Impact
AMBAG	Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments
APN	Assessor's Parcel Number
BA	Biological Assessment
Cal Water	California Water Services Company
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CNDDDB	California Natural Diversity Data Base
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
DD&A	Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc.
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
Final IS/MND	Final Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration
FR	Federal Register
FTA	Federal Transit Administration
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918
MST	Monterey-Salinas Transit
PG&E	Pacific Gas and Electric
Service	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
SJKF	San Joaquin Kit Fox
Specific Plan	East Ranch Business Park Specific Plan
sq ft	square feet
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USGS	United States Geologic Survey

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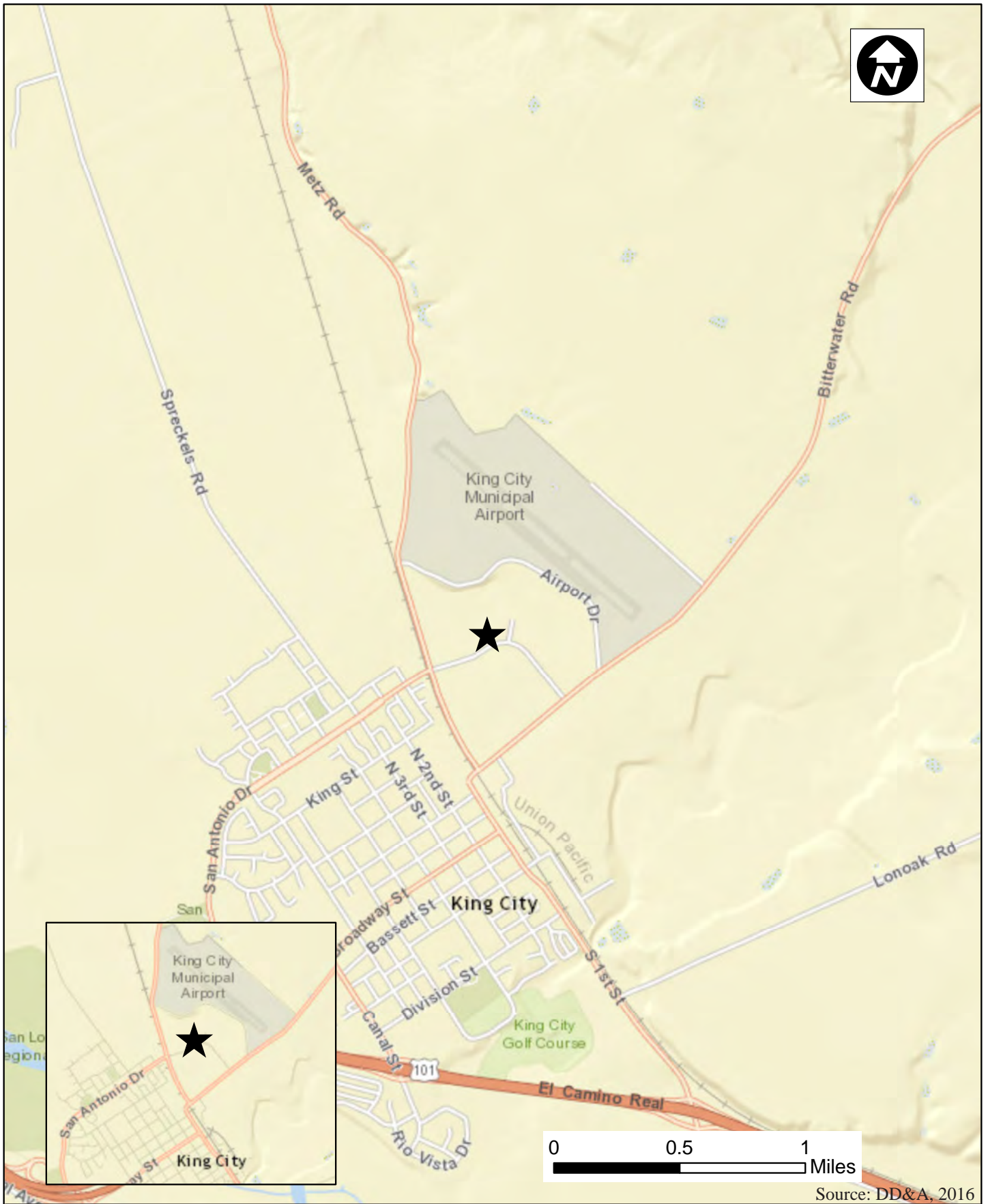
Chapter 1. Introduction

The purpose of this biological assessment (BA) is to provide required information for consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act (ESA; 16 U.S. C 1536(c)), including technical information and review of the proposed project in sufficient detail to determine to what extent the proposed project may affect federally threatened, endangered, candidate, or proposed species; designated and proposed critical habitat; and avian species protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). The BA is prepared in accordance with legal requirements found in Section 7 (a)(2) of the ESA, and with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service), U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) regulation, policy, and guidance. The USDA may function as the Lead Federal Agency as grant funding may be via Rural Development, Rural Business-Cooperative and Rural Utilities Services (see 7 CFR Part 1970.54). Requirements for funding mandates an Environmental Review (ER) incorporating information from authoritative sources acceptable to the USDA confirming the presence or absence of sensitive environmental resources in the area that could be affected by the project. Additional NEPA compliance may be required under 23 CFR Part 771 administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for Categorical Exclusions (23 CFR Part 771.117). The document presents technical information upon which later decisions regarding project impacts are developed.

The Monterey-Salinas Transit (MST) South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project (proposed project) consists of constructing an operations and maintenance facility for public transit vehicles that primarily serve southern Monterey County. The proposed project would accommodate future transit needs in the surrounding rural communities of Monterey's South County. The proposed project is located at an approximately 4.8-acre, vacant parcel (Assessor's Parcel Number [APN] 026-521-031-000) in King City, California (Area of Potential Impact [API]) (**Figure 1**). The API is part of the existing industrial park site for which King City has approved the East Ranch Business Park Specific Plan (Specific Plan) (Specific Plan, 2007). The API is bounded to the west by a vacant lot, to the south by San Antonio Drive, to the north by the King City Energy Center, and to the east by Don Bates Way (**Figure 2**). The API is flat, surrounded by industrial uses, and is heavily disturbed due to mowing and maintenance activities (**Figure 3**). The approximate elevation of the proposed project site is 340 feet above mean sea level.

1.1. Background

MST is a transit district that provides fixed route, demand-response, and special seasonal transit service to a 293.9-square mile area of Monterey County with connections to: Santa Cruz County in Watsonville and Santa Cruz; Santa Clara County in Gilroy, Morgan Hill, and San Jose; and San Luis Obispo County in Paso Robles and Templeton. MST operates 55 fixed-routes within a service area comprised of an estimated 433,898 people and has a total of 73, 35- and 40-foot standard diesel buses, 6 MCI 45-foot commuter coaches, 7 diesel trolley style buses, one electric trolley style bus, 25 medium gasoline powered buses, and 4 hybrid diesel-electric medium buses. On the demand response side, MST operates 41 medium gasoline powered buses; 34 for paratransit and 7 for general public dial-a-ride service in the neighborhoods of Marina, Gonzales, Greenfield, Soledad, and King City. The vehicles are maintained and stored in one of three bus yards: the Thomas D. Albert



Regional Map

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
1



Project Vicinity Map

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
2



Photo 1. View of the proposed project site looking north from San Antonio Drive onto existing energy facility.



Photo 2. View of the proposed project site looking west from Don Bates Way.



Photo 3. View from the site of industrial/commercial buildings bordering the south, southwest of the site.



Photo 4. View of the proposed project site looking east from San Antonio Drive onto Don Bates Way.

Source: DD&A, 2016

Site Photos

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
3

Division in Monterey, the Clarence J. Wright Division in central Salinas, and the MV Transportation (a contract transit service provider) facility in southwest Salinas near the city limits. Transit services operate through two major transit hubs in Monterey and Salinas as well as secondary hubs in Marina and at the Edgewater Shopping Center in Sand City. Annual boardings on the fixed-route system total 4.3 million (Fiscal Year 2016).

Regional service connects residents and visitors of Monterey County to Watsonville, Carmel Valley, and South Monterey County and to a variety of other destinations and attractions. Interregional services make the following connections:

- Monterey northward to Santa Cruz and San Jose
- Salinas southward to Fort Hunter Liggett, Camp Roberts, Paso Robles, and Templeton
- Salinas northward to San Jose

Since 2002, MST has provided fixed-route transit service between the Salinas Valley communities of Chualar, Gonzales, Soledad, Greenfield, and King City. What began as a handful of round trips per day has grown into nearly hourly service along the Highway 101 corridor, connecting these communities to the Central Coast and beyond. MST currently operates lines 23, 82, 84, 85, and 86, which begin their routes at South County locations. For Line 23, the predominant commute pattern in the morning is from the south to the north and the opposite direction in the evening. To support this commute pattern, MST operates service from King City and travels northward with stops in Greenfield, Soledad, Gonzales, Chualar, and Salinas. Line 86 provides service farther north to San Jose. MST also operates public transportation serving the military at Camp Roberts and Fort Hunter Liggett, both in southern Monterey County. These military-focused routes reach as far south as Templeton in San Luis Obispo County.

Currently, MST deploys these fixed route buses from either its Monterey bus yard approximately 60 miles away or its Salinas bus yard, approximately 50 miles away. This results in “deadhead” trips which increase MST’s operating costs in fuel, maintenance, and labor due to additional distance and time. This type of operation is inefficient and causes unnecessary wear and tear on transit buses. Additionally, service restoration is substantially delayed in the event of a mechanical failure or other unforeseen event. The South County communities are expected to grow in the coming years, as this is one of few areas in Monterey County that has "water rights" to develop residential units. The Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments (AMBAG) estimates that the populations of South Monterey County cities, including King City, Greenfield, Soledad, and Gonzales, will increase by 45%, 45%, 31%, and 136%, respectively, over the next 20 years. With increased development, there would be additional demand for public transit service. In order to plan for this growth, MST will need to have a maintenance and operations facility in South County to run transit services for the increased number of people living in those cities.

MST's Facilities Committee meets quarterly to discuss agency issues. Several site locations were considered, including Soledad, Greenfield, and King City:

- Soledad Unified School District – This location was considered, but rejected because a joint agreement to use the school district's bus yard was deemed financially infeasible. In addition, the City of Soledad has in excess of 20,000 residents according to the US Census, and, hence,

is not eligible for a USDA rural assistance loan. In addition, this location was not large enough to accommodate a long-range buildout scenario and was in a densely populated residential area adjacent to a school.

- Greenfield – This location was considered, but rejected because of its close proximity to a residential area with a primarily minority population, which raised federal Title VI civil rights and Environmental Justice concerns.

King City was determined to be the most centrally located and economically feasible option that had the fewest impacts on residential areas, including those with primarily minority occupants. Multiple industrial parcels were considered within King City, but ultimately the proposed project site was selected because it has access to two public roads, allowing for alternate egress if one of the two roads were blocked due to natural disaster or vehicle accident. It is also one mile from a planned multi-modal transit center that will be served by MST buses and future passenger rail. In addition, there are no easements or rights-of-way issues.

Project Goals and Objectives

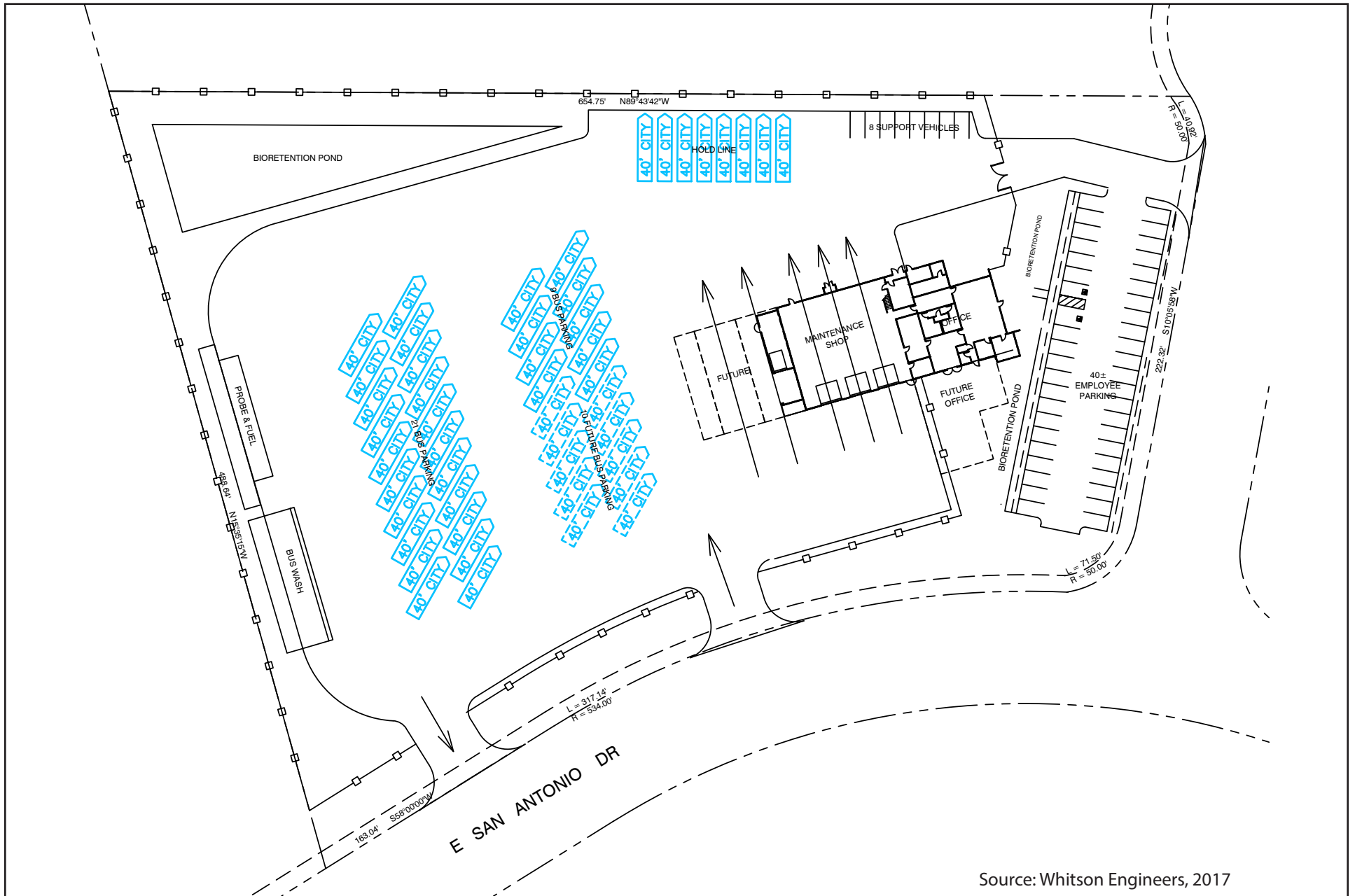
As described above, the need to connect rural communities along the Highway 101 corridor has grown. As a result, MST needs to develop a bus maintenance and operations facility in southern Monterey County to accommodate future transit needs in these rural communities. The purpose of the proposed project is to support existing and future bus maintenance and operations needs to sustain public transportation beginning and ending service in South County and along the Highway 101 corridor.

The primary project objective is constructing a maintenance and operations facility to accommodate the bus fleet and to provide maintenance services. The proposed project approach, design, and implementation must align with MST guiding principles. As such, MST developed several project objectives which support the organization's overarching goals and objectives. These include:

- Accommodate future transit needs in rural communities.
- Reduce operational costs, vehicle wear and tear, fuel consumption, and vehicle emissions relative to fleet size by providing a maintenance and operations facility in Monterey's South County, thus reducing the effects of deadhead trips from Salinas and Monterey, where the existing fleet is housed and maintained.
- Modernize facility and equipment to improve service efficiency and quality.
- Reduce potable water usage relative to fleet size.
- Increase facility energy efficiency.
- Provide a comfortable and safe environment within the building and around the usable site areas that promotes improved occupant health, safety, and productivity.

1.2. Project Description

The proposed project consists of developing an approximately 4.8-acre, vacant parcel in King City, California to construct an operations and maintenance facility for public transit vehicles that primarily serve southern Monterey County (**Figure 4**). The proposed project would accommodate future transit needs in the surrounding rural communities of Monterey's South County.

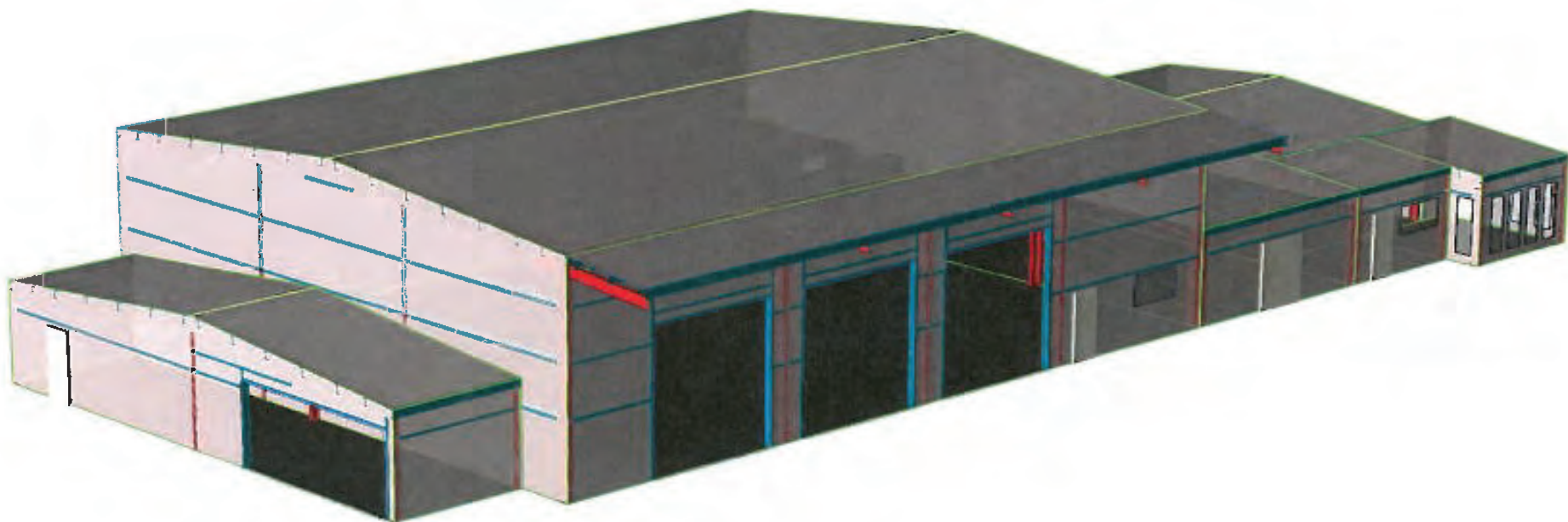


Source: Whitson Engineers, 2017

Site Plan

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
4

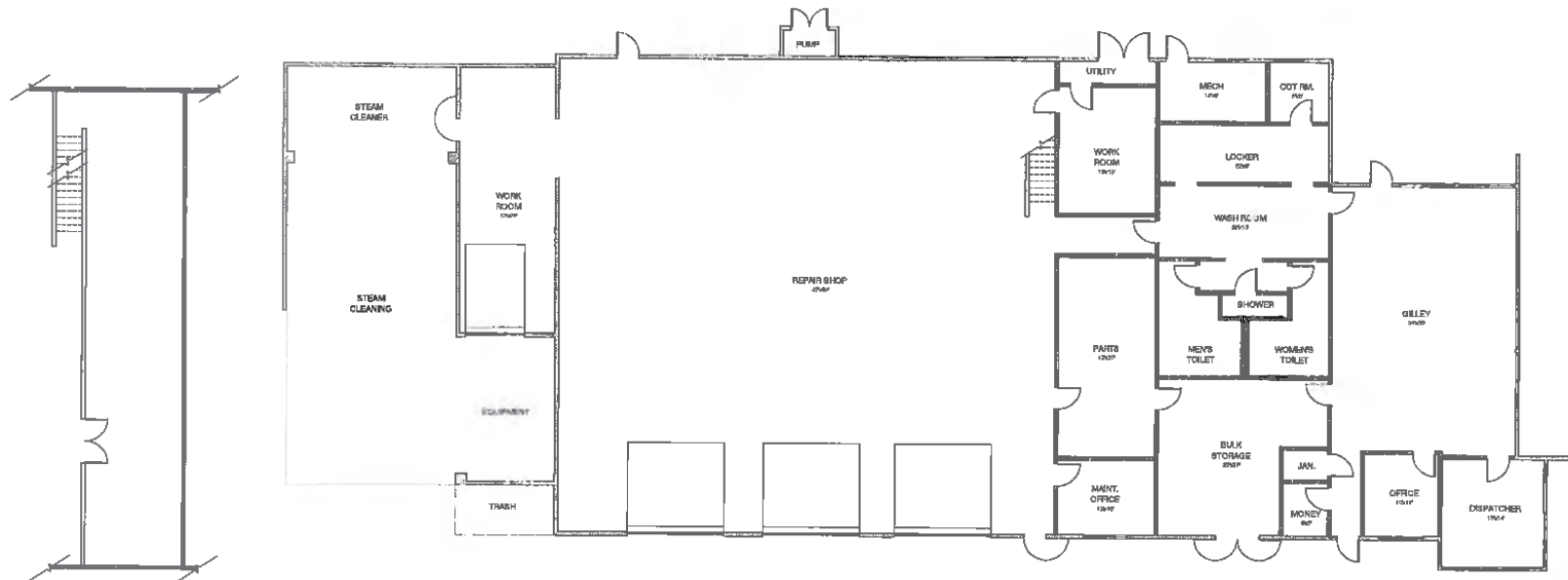


Source: Paul Davis Partnership, 2016

Building Rendering

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
5



Mezzanine Floor
Plan

Main Floor Plan

Source: Paul Davis Partnership, 2016

Floor Plans

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
6

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Through a formal procurement process, MST would select a design-build contractor to build the new facility. The building would be a pre-engineered (Butler) type of building, constructed on a concrete slab and would have a metal roof and siding (**Figure 5**). The proposed building includes a maintenance area; an administration area; an area for parts storage, a mezzanine, steam cleaning, and other miscellaneous uses; and parking (**Figure 6**).

As such, the proposed project would fall under the permitted uses and adhere to the design requirements as stipulated by the Specific Plan. The Specific Plan defines the development framework, establishes the development and design standards, and identifies implementation measures to accommodate a well-planned business park. Manufacturing and other industries can be located in the East Ranch Business Park and operate away from the restricting influences of non-industrial uses, while maintaining an environment free from offensive or objectionable noise, dust, odor, or other nuisances (Specific Plan, 2007). The proposed project is allowed under the Specific Plan as an industrial type use, pursuant to acquiring a Conditional Use Permit and Architectural Review approval.

Maintenance Area

A 4,600 square foot (sq ft) maintenance area would be constructed with three maintenance bays to service buses. The one-story building would include services for drivers, mechanics, and equipment related to bus maintenance. The new facility would be capable of maintaining 40 buses of varying sizes and types, including support vehicles which have been previously been serviced at off site vendors due to lack of facilities on-site. Additionally, the building would include: a machine and rebuild shop for engines, transmissions, and small components; overhead consumable services as required throughout the service bays; special dedicated HVAC and exhaust systems; parts storage areas; utilities and parts cleaning facilities.

Administration Area

The southeast half of the building would include a 2,830 sq ft administrative area for office work stations, restrooms, a break room, training room, storage, and a dispatch communication center. The drivers' facilities would include: a drivers' lounge with adjacent day lockers, a quiet room, kitchen with vending machine area, and toilet rooms with showers.

Mezzanine, Steam Cleaning, and Other Miscellaneous Uses

The northwest corner of the building would include an area (6,580 sq ft) for parts storage, mezzanine, steam cleaning, and other miscellaneous uses.

Landscape and Irrigation

Landscaping would be confined to the building entry, parking lot perimeter, and site perimeter. Existing plantings that are not removed during construction, if in good condition and climate appropriate, would be maintained. An irrigation system would be installed that meets current water efficiency standards.

Parking

The parking areas would accommodate 45 employee vehicles and 40 buses. Electrical infrastructure will be designed to accommodate as many as four all-electric buses and several all-electric agency cars.

Utilities

Domestic Water

The domestic water service provides water for the interior (domestic) uses, industrial processes (steam clean), and landscape irrigation. The King City water supply system is owned and operated by California Water Services Company (Cal Water), a public utility regulated by the State Public Utilities Commission. New water system piping would be installed, including purple pipe to connect with future recycled water pipelines. The proposed project would include a new efficient bus wash as well as a mechanical and steam cleaning system. It is anticipated that the project would use two acre feet per year (AFY) of water.

Wastewater System

The proposed project site would receive sanitary sewer collection service from the King City Public Works Department. The proposed project would be served by a sanitary sewer main connecting to the existing City sewer line in the street right-of-way adjacent to the property.

Natural Gas

Pacific Gas and Electric Company (PG&E) would provide natural gas service to the proposed project site.

Storm Drainage

The proposed project site is located within the King City Specific Plan planning area for which storm drainage facilities have been developed. On-site storm drainage improvements would be provided in conformance with multiple permits.

Site Fencing

The proposed project site would include a security fence. In addition, a new site gate would be installed as part of the proposed project with secure access.

Security

The project would include security fencing with an access gate secured by cameras and electronic readers for authorized personnel only. The buildings would be equipped with multiple security cameras to monitor interior and exterior areas, as well as security access into the buildings.

Information Technology Infrastructure

MST will arrange for a dedicated connection via the existing fiber infrastructure approximately 400 yards from the site for its technology needs.

Construction Schedule and Equipment

Construction of the proposed project is expected to occur over a period of 12 months, beginning March 2018 and continuing until the anticipated completion in February 2019. Construction would be limited to weekdays between the hours of 8 AM to 5 PM (no night-time construction).

In support of these activities and for the assumptions for this document, the types of equipment that may be used at any one time during construction may include, but not be limited to:

- Excavator
- Backhoe
- Dump Truck
- Delivery Truck
- Water Truck
- Winch/Pulling Unit and Cable with Bursting Head
- Slurry Separation Unit
- Asphalt Paver
- High reach forklift

Staging areas for storage of construction equipment and other materials would be located within the project site.

1.3. Summary of Consultation to Date

No consultation has occurred to date.

1.4. Document Preparation History

Denise Duffy & Associates, Inc. (DD&A) Associate Environmental Scientist, Jami Colley, was the primary author of this BA. Ms. Colley coordinated with DD&A Senior Project Manager/Environmental Scientist, Erin Harwayne. All DD&A staff may be reached at:

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Chapter 2. Study Methods

The following sections discuss sources used to develop information on the proposed API. Study methods and sources used consisted of a review of a list of Threatened and Endangered species with the potential to be affected by the project as provided by the Service (**Appendix A**), review of existing documentation relevant to the proposed project, field reconnaissance, and evaluation of impacts to identified resources.

The Action Area is defined by the Specific Plan area, which includes the API, and consists of approximately 107 acres of industrial and related uses (**Figure 7**). The API includes all areas where all impacts are expected to occur as a result of the project activities (**Figure 2**).

2.1. Listed, Candidate, and Proposed Species Potentially in the Biological Study Area

In order to determine which federally-listed, candidate, or proposed species are known to, or have the potential to occur in the API, a list of threatened and endangered species with the potential to be affected by the project was provided by the Service (**Appendix A**; Service 2017), the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) occurrence reports (**Appendix B**; California Department of Fish and Wildlife [CDFW] 2017), and other materials were reviewed. From these sources, a table of federally-listed or proposed species known, or with the potential to occur, in the API was compiled. **Table 1** lists these species along with their legal status, habitat requirements, and a brief statement of their likelihood to occur within the API. All species are assumed absent within the API based on the species-specific reasons presented. The San Joaquin kit fox (SJKF, *Vulpes macrotis mutica*) is discussed in Section 4 of this BA due to occurrences in the region; however, it is unlikely to occur within the API.

2.2. Studies Required

Literature Review

Literature and data sources reviewed include: current agency status information from the Service for species listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered under ESA (**Appendix A**, Service 2017) and the CNDDB occurrence reports (**Appendix B**; CDFW 2017). The CNDDB RareFind occurrence reports were reviewed from the U.S. Geologic Survey (USGS) San Lucas and Thompson Canyon quadrangles.



Source: Specific Plan, 2007

Action Area

Monterey-Salinas Transit
South County Operations and Maintenance Facility Project

Figure
7

Table 1. Listed, Candidate, and Proposed Species, and Critical Habitat Potentially Occurring or Known within the Project Area.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/Absent	Potential to Occur
PLANTS					
Marsh sandwort	<i>Arenaria paludicola</i>	E	Known from only two natural occurrences in Black Lake Canyon and at Oso Flaco Lake. Sandy openings of freshwater of brackish marshes and swamps at elevations of 3-170 meters. Stoloniferous perennial herb in the Caryophyllaceae family; blooms May-August.	A	Not Present: No suitable habitat within the API. Not identified during focused rare plant surveys conducted in 2017. API is outside of the highly endemic range for this species.
Monterey spineflower	<i>Chorizanthe pungens</i> ssp. <i>pungens</i>	T/CH	Maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, valley and foothill grassland, sandy soils at elevations of 3-450 meters. Annual herb in the Polygonaceae family; blooms April-June.	A	Not Present: No suitable habitat within the API. Not identified during focused rare plant surveys conducted in 2017. API is not within a critical habitat unit for this species.
MAMMALS					
San Joaquin kit fox	<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>	E	Open, level areas with loose-textured soils supporting scattered, shrubby vegetation with little human disturbance. Live in annual grasslands or grassy open stages dominated by scattered brush, shrubs, and scrub.	A	Unlikely: No suitable habitat within the API. No burrows of sufficient size to support this species were observed within the API. The nearest CNDDB occurrence is approximately 0.7 mile from the API where one to two adults were observed in 1986.
INVERTEBRATES					
Vernal pool fairy shrimp	<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	E	Require ephemeral pools with no flow. Associated with vernal pools/grasslands from near Red Bluff (Shasta County), through the central valley, and into the south Coast Mountains region.	A	Unlikely: No vernal pool habitat within the API.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Status	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Potential to Occur
BIRDS					
Southwestern willow flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>	E	Dense willow thickets are required for nesting and roosting. Low, exposed branches are used for singing posts and hunting perches. Open, cup nest is placed in an upright fork of willow or other shrub, or occasionally on a horizontal limb. Most numerous where extensive thickets of low, dense willows edge on wet meadows, ponds, or backwaters.	A	Unlikely: No suitable habitat within the API.
California condor	<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	E/CH	Roosting sites in isolated rocky cliffs, rugged chaparral, and pine covered mountains 2000-6000 ft above sea level. Foraging area removed from nesting/roosting site (includes rangeland and coastal area - up to 19 mile commute one way). Nest sites in cliffs, crevices, and potholes.	A	Unlikely: No suitable habitat within the API. API is not within a critical habitat unit for this species.
Least Bell's Vireo	<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	E/CH	Riparian areas and drainages. Primarily found south of the API.	A	Unlikely: No suitable habitat within the API. API is not within a critical habitat unit for this species.
AMPHIBIANS					
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	T/CH	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent or late-season sources of deep water with dense, shrubby, or emergent riparian vegetation. During late summer or fall adults are known to utilize a variety of upland habitats with leaf litter or mammal burrows.	A	Unlikely: No suitable habitat within the API. API is not within a critical habitat unit for this species. The nearest CNDDDB occurrence is approximately 15 miles from the API, outside of the known dispersal distance for this species.
Definitions E = species listed as Endangered under the federal Endangered Species Act T = species listed as Threatened under the federal Endangered Species Act CH = critical habitat has been designated for this species (the API is not necessarily located within critical habitat) A = Habitat Absent P = Habitat Present					

Botanical Resources

The following materials were reviewed in order to determine if federally-listed plant species have the potential to occur within the API: the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California* (CNPS 2017) and CNDDDB occurrences (CDFW 2017). The final classification and characterization of the vegetation within the API is based on field observations. Vegetation types identified in *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer et.al. 2009) were utilized to determine if vegetation types identified as sensitive on CDFW's *List of Vegetation Alliances and Associations* (CDFW 2010) are present within the API. Scientific nomenclature for plant species identified within this document follows *The Jepson Manual: Vascular Plants of California, Edition 2* (Baldwin et al. 2012).

Wildlife Resources

The following literature and data sources were reviewed to determine which federally-listed wildlife species have the potential to occur within the API: CNDDDB occurrences (CDFW 2017), *Monterey Birds* (Roberson 2002), CDFW reports on special-status wildlife (Remsen 1978; Williams 1986; Jennings and Hayes 1994; Thelander 1994), California Wildlife Habitat Relationships Program species-habitat models (CDFW 2008; Zeiner et al. 1988 and 1990), and general wildlife references (Stebbins 1985).

Survey Methods

Reconnaissance-level biological surveys were conducted to identify any federally-listed plant or wildlife species or suitable habitat for these species, and characterize habitats present within the API. Data was recorded on the physiognomy of the vegetation and on dominant and characteristic species, as well as basic ecological factors, including topography, hydrologic regime, and evident disturbance.

The API was surveyed for botanical resources following the applicable guidelines outlined in: *Guidelines for Conducting and Reporting Botanical Inventories for Federally-listed, Proposed and Candidate Plants* (Service 2000), *Protocols for Surveying and Evaluating Impacts to Special Status Native Plant Populations and Natural Communities* (CDFW 2009), and *CNPS Botanical Survey Guidelines* (CNPS 2001). Prior to conducting focused botanical surveys, an analysis of federally-listed plant species known to occur within the vicinity was conducted to determine the potential for their presence within the API based on presence of suitable habitats, soils, elevation range, and currently known geographic range.

No focused surveys for sensitive wildlife species were conducted as a part of this survey effort.

2.3. Personnel and Survey Dates

Reconnaissance-level biological surveys and focused botanical surveys were conducted by DD&A Associate Environmental Scientist, Jami Colley, on April 16, 2017.

2.4. Limitations That May Influence Results

Protocol-level surveys for federally-listed wildlife species were not necessary based on the lack of potential habitat, the range of the species, or other reasons identified in **Table 1**.

The majority of the API was disked during the survey conducted in April 2017 and the vegetation observed along the edges of the site is assumed to be indicative of the species present within the remainder of the site. Botanical surveys were not conducted during the blooming period for marsh sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*); however, surveys for this species were not necessary based on the lack of potential habitat and the currently known range of the species as identified in **Table 1**.

Chapter 3. Results: Environmental Setting

3.1. Description of Existing Biological and Physical Conditions

Action Area

The Action Area (107 acres) is located northeast of King City and is defined by the Specific Plan area. The Action Area is bordered by Metz Road to the west, Bitterwater Road to the south, and Airport Drive to the east (**Figure 2**). The Mesa Del Rey Airport is located northeast of the Action Area. The majority of the Action Area is developed and includes a mixture of industrial and industrial-related uses and roadways. Portions of the Action Area are also undeveloped; however, these areas have been subject to ongoing tilling, grading, or other disturbance that results in significant areas of bare ground or ruderal, weedy vegetation. Almost all other vegetation within the Action Area has been introduced or planted.

Physical Conditions

The Action Area and API are located on the Salinas Valley floor, which consists of alluvium and sand or gravel sediments deposited by the Salinas River (Specific Plan 2007). The Salinas Valley is bounded by the Santa Lucia Mountains to the west and the Gabilan and Diablo ranges to the east. The Salinas River runs north from San Luis Obispo County, through the Salinas Valley, and empties into the Monterey Bay near the City of Marina.

Soils

Soils within the API are highly disturbed, and had been recently tilled at the time of the field surveys. The Monterey County Soil Survey indicates one mapping unit within the API: Mocho silty clay loam, 0-2% slopes (USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service [NRCS] 2016). The Mocho series consists of well drained soils that formed in alluvium that was derived mostly from sedimentary rocks (USDA 1978). The surface layer is silty loam, approximately 12 inches thick, underlain by silty clay loam and silt loam, extending to a depth of 68 inches or more. Permeability is moderate and the available water capacity is 10 to 12 inches. Runoff is slow and the erosion hazard is slight.

Hydrology

The USGS National Hydrography Dataset does not identify any hydrologic features within the API (USGS 2017). Hydrologic input within the API is solely from precipitation and runoff, and hydrologic output is percolation and runoff. The site is relatively flat and no depressions or drainages were observed during the field surveys. The Salinas River is located approximately 1.5 miles southwest of the API, and San Lorenzo Creek is located approximately 0.5 mile southeast of the API.

Biological Conditions in the Biological Study Area

Vegetation

Ruderal/disturbed habitat was the only vegetation type observed within the API (**Figure 3**). Ruderal areas are those areas which have been developed or have been subject to historic and ongoing disturbance by human activities (e.g., existing roads or agricultural areas) and are devoid of vegetation or impacted by non-native and/or invasive weed species. This habitat type is considered to

have low biological value, as it is dominated generally by non-native plant species and consists of relatively low quality habitat from a wildlife perspective. The majority of the API was disked at the time of the survey; however, the non-native, ruderal vegetation observed along the edges of the API is indicative of the species present within the remainder of the site. These species included cheeseweed (*Malva parviflora*), black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), melilot (*Melilotus* sp.), prickly sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis*), foxtail barley (*Hordeum murinum* ssp. *leporinum*), slender oat (*Avena barbata*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), and filaree (*Erodium* sp.). Additionally, a row of Italian cypress trees (*Cupressus sempervirens*) is present along the northern border of the API.

Wildlife

No wildlife species were observed during the surveys. A few small mammal burrows, likely California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*), were observed within the API. Common wildlife species that do well in urbanized and disturbed areas that may occur within the API include California ground squirrel, raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), American crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*), coast range fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis bocurtii*), and rock dove (*Columba livia*).

Chapter 4. Results: Biological Resources, Discussion of Impacts and Mitigation

4.1. Federally-Listed, Candidate, or Proposed Plant Species

No federally-listed or proposed plant species were identified within the API during focused surveys in April 2017. The project will not affect federally-listed or proposed plant species.

4.2. Federally-Listed, Candidate, or Proposed Animal Species

Of the federally-listed species in **Table 1**, none have the potential to occur within the API and/or to be affected by the project. The rationale for determination of presence or absence within the API and Action Area is based on local occurrence data and the habitat features documented to occur within the API and Action Area. All federally-listed or proposed wildlife species are assumed absent for the species-specific reasons presented in **Table 1** and therefore, will not be affected by the proposed project. The SJKF is discussed below due to occurrences in the region; however, it is unlikely to occur within the API.

Discussion of San Joaquin Kit Fox

The SJKF was listed as a federally endangered species on March 11, 1967 (32 FR 4001). Its present range extends from the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, north to Stanislaus County along the east, and along the interior Coast Range valleys and foothills to central Contra Costa County. The SJKF typically inhabits valley alkaline scrub, valley and foothill grasslands, and open oak woodlands of low to moderate relief. SJKF are known to occupy human-altered habitats, such as vineyards, orchards, and petroleum fields, where denning opportunities and suitable prey are available. Man-made features, such as culverts in roadbeds and pipes, are frequently used in developed landscapes in the southern range of the SJKF. SJKF are thought to be weak excavators and largely dependent on rodent burrows, which they enlarge as den sites. Studies of SJKF in the northern part of their range support this presumption, as SJKF are largely dependent on California ground squirrel burrows for the creation of den sites. In the course of a year, up to 70 different dens may be used by a single individual. Mating occurs from December to February with pups born between February and late March. Pups emerge above ground, and are fed primarily by the male adult, at approximately one month old. Pups are fed 4 to 5 months, after which, the pups begin to forage independently. Juveniles disperse as far as 19 kilometers (11.08 miles) away from natal dens. Home ranges vary in size, depending on prey availability. Average home range is approximately 500 hectares.

Survey Results

The CNDDB identifies 10 occurrences within the quadrangles reviewed, the nearest of which is located approximately 0.7 mile from the API. This occurrence record is from 1986 and identifies that one to two adults were observed in a weedy area at the old city dump. All other occurrences are from 1972-1975, and most are identified within or at the base of the foothills surrounding the Salinas Valley. All of the occurrences were documented prior to the development of most of the Action Area. No suitable habitat for SJKF is present within the API based on the lack of cover and

disturbance regime, combined with the presence of the surrounding development. Although a few small mammal burrows were observed within the API, no burrows of sufficient size to support this species were observed. As such, SJKF is unlikely to occur within the API.

Critical Habitat

No critical habitat has been designated for SJKF.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

None required.

Project Effects

The proposed project will not result in impacts to SJKF or result in habitat loss for this species.

Modifications to the Project to Mitigate Effects

No modifications to the project to mitigate effects to individual SJKF are necessary as SJKF are unlikely to occur within the API.

Cumulative Effects

No cumulative effects to SJKF will result from the proposed project.

4.3. Species Protected Under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The MBTA of 1918 prohibits killing, possessing, or trading migratory birds except in accordance with regulation prescribed by the Secretary of the Interior. Most actions that result in taking or in permanent or temporary possession of a protected species constitute violations of the MBTA. The Service is responsible for overseeing compliance with the MBTA and implements Conventions (treaties) between the United States and four countries for the protection of migratory birds – Canada, Mexico, Japan, and Russia. The Service maintains a list of migratory bird species that are protected under the MBTA, which was updated in 2010 to: 1) correct previous mistakes, such as misspellings or removing species no longer known to occur within the United States; 2) add species, as a result of expanding the geographic scope to include Hawaii and U.S. territories and new evidence of occurrence in the United States or U.S. territories; and 3) update name changes based on new taxonomy (Service 2010). Avian species protected under the MBTA have the low potential to occur within or adjacent to the API. This federally regulated natural resource has a low potential be affected by the project and is discussed below.

The Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act prohibits the “take” of bald and golden eagles, including their parts, nests, or eggs without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior. Take is defined as “pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb.” To disturb an eagle includes actions that result in the direct injury of an eagle, or activities that would substantially interfere with normal feeding, breeding, or sheltering behavior, or result in nest abandonment. Due to the urbanized setting of the area and lack of known breeding sites within the Action Area and API, no

suitable nesting habitat (typically tall trees in forested areas and cliffs), impacts to bald or golden eagles will not occur.

Survey Results

Common birds protected under the MBTA, such as northern mockingbird, mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), house finch (*Haemorhous mexicanus*), and American robin (*Turdus migratorius*), have the low potential to nest within the Italian cypress trees present within the API and forage within other areas of the API. However, these areas provide only low quality habitat for avian species.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

Implementation of the following measure will avoid and minimize impacts to migratory birds during construction:

- 1) To avoid impacts to nesting migratory birds, construction activities within 300 feet of the Italian cypress trees shall occur outside of the nesting season (February 15 through September 1). If this is not possible, pre-construction surveys shall be conducted for nesting bird species in the Italian cypress trees by a qualified biologist within 15 days prior to the commencement of construction activities. If nesting birds are identified during pre-construction surveys, an appropriate buffer will be imposed within which no construction activities or disturbance will take place (generally 100-300 feet in all directions). A qualified biological monitor shall be on-site during work re-initiation in the vicinity of the nest offset to ensure that the buffer is adequate and that the nest is not stressed and/or abandoned. No work may proceed in the vicinity of an active nest until such time as all young are fledged, or until after September 1 (when young are assumed fledged).

Project Effects

If construction occurs during the nesting season (generally February 15 to September 1), there is the potential for the proposed project to impact migratory bird species. Construction activities during the breeding season could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment within the API and immediately adjacent areas of the Action Area. Implementation of the measure identified above will avoid or reduce these potential effects.

Modifications to the Project to Mitigate Effects

No modifications to the project to mitigate effects to migratory birds are necessary as negative effects will be avoided with implementation of the measure identified above.

Cumulative Effects

Threats to migratory bird species include loss of nesting and foraging habitat and disturbance of nests by recreational activities, stream channelization, development, logging, grazing, and water diversion throughout the west. As the proposed project is located in a mostly urban location and impacts to individuals will be avoided and minimized, no cumulative impacts to migratory bird species are anticipated.

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Chapter 5. Conclusions and Determination

5.1. Conclusions

The official Service species list for the project was received on June 13, 2017. No suitable habitat is present within the API for any species identified in the official species list. As such, the project will have no effect on any federally-listed, candidate, or proposed species under the ESA.

Migratory bird species protected by the MBTA also have a low potential to nest and forage within the API and Action Area, although these areas provide only low quality habitat for avian species. Temporary disturbance may occur to foraging migratory birds during construction activities. Additionally, if construction occurs during the nesting season construction activities could result in the incidental loss of fertile eggs or nestlings, or otherwise lead to nest abandonment within API and immediately adjacent areas of the Action Area. However, if work must occur within the nesting season, avoidance and minimization through buffers and monitoring is proposed to ensure no impacts to migratory bird species occurs. No suitable nesting habitat for bald or golden eagles is present within the Action Area or API. As such, the proposed project will not result in impacts to migratory bird species or the bald or golden eagle.

5.2. Determination

The project will have no effect on any federally-listed, candidate, or proposed species under the ESA. Avoidance and minimization measures included in this document will avoid and minimize any potential impacts to migratory birds protected under the MBTA.

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Chapter 6. References

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Appendix A – U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service IPaC Trust Resource Report
(generated June 13, 2017)

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United States Department of the Interior

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

Ventura Fish And Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, CA 93003-7726
Phone: (805) 644-1766 Fax: (805) 644-3958



In Reply Refer To:

June 13, 2017

Consultation Code: 08EVEN00-2017-SLI-0447

Event Code: 08EVEN00-2017-E-01042

Project Name: MST South County Operations & Maintenance Facility Project

Subject: List of threatened and endangered species that may occur in your proposed project location, and/or may be affected by your proposed project

To Whom It May Concern:

The enclosed list identifies species listed as threatened and endangered, species proposed for listing as threatened or endangered, designated and proposed critical habitat, and species that are candidates for listing that may occur within the boundary of the area you have indicated using the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's (Service) Information Planning and Conservation System (IPaC). The species list fulfills the requirements under section 7(c) of the Endangered Species Act (Act) of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.). Please note that under 50 CFR 402.12(e) of the regulations implementing section 7 of the Act, the species list should be verified after 90 days. We recommend that verification be completed by visiting the IPaC website at regular intervals during project planning and implementation for updates to species lists following the same process you used to receive the enclosed list. Please include the Consultation Tracking Number in the header of this letter with any correspondence about the species list.

Due to staff shortages and excessive workload, we are unable to provide an official list more specific to your area. Numerous other sources of information are available for you to narrow the list to the habitats and conditions of the site in which you are interested. For example, we recommend conducting a biological site assessment or surveys for plants and animals that could help refine the list.

If a Federal agency is involved in the project, that agency has the responsibility to review its proposed activities and determine whether any listed species may be affected. If the project is a major construction project*, the Federal agency has the responsibility to prepare a biological assessment to make a determination of the effects of the action on the listed species or critical habitat. If the Federal agency determines that a listed species or critical habitat is likely to be adversely affected, it should request, in writing through our office, formal consultation pursuant to section 7 of the Act. Informal consultation may be used to exchange information and resolve conflicts with respect to threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat prior to a

written request for formal consultation. During this review process, the Federal agency may engage in planning efforts but may not make any irreversible commitment of resources. Such a commitment could constitute a violation of section 7(d) of the Act.

Federal agencies are required to confer with the Service, pursuant to section 7(a)(4) of the Act, when an agency action is likely to jeopardize the continued existence of any proposed species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat (50 CFR 402.10(a)). A request for formal conference must be in writing and should include the same information that would be provided for a request for formal consultation. Conferences can also include discussions between the Service and the Federal agency to identify and resolve potential conflicts between an action and proposed species or proposed critical habitat early in the decision-making process. The Service recommends ways to minimize or avoid adverse effects of the action. These recommendations are advisory because the jeopardy prohibition of section 7(a)(2) of the Act does not apply until the species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated. The conference process fulfills the need to inform Federal agencies of possible steps that an agency might take at an early stage to adjust its actions to avoid jeopardizing a proposed species.

When a proposed species or proposed critical habitat may be affected by an action, the lead Federal agency may elect to enter into formal conference with the Service even if the action is not likely to jeopardize or result in the destruction or adverse modification of proposed critical habitat. If the proposed species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated after completion of the conference, the Federal agency may ask the Service, in writing, to confirm the conference as a formal consultation. If the Service reviews the proposed action and finds that no significant changes in the action as planned or in the information used during the conference have occurred, the Service will confirm the conference as a formal consultation on the project and no further section 7 consultation will be necessary. Use of the formal conference process in this manner can prevent delays in the event the proposed species is listed or the proposed critical habitat is designated during project development or implementation.

Candidate species are those species presently under review by the Service for consideration for Federal listing. Candidate species should be considered in the planning process because they may become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. Preparation of a biological assessment, as described in section 7(c) of the Act, is not required for candidate species. If early evaluation of your project indicates that it is likely to affect a candidate species, you may wish to request technical assistance from this office.

Only listed species receive protection under the Act. However, sensitive species should be considered in the planning process in the event they become listed or proposed for listing prior to project completion. We recommend that you review information in the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Natural Diversity Data Base. You can contact the California Department of Fish and Wildlife at (916) 324-3812 for information on other sensitive species that may occur in this area.

[*A Biological Assessment is required for construction projects (or other undertakings having

similar physical impacts) that are major Federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment as defined in the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4332(2)(c)). For projects other than major construction activities, the Service suggests that a biological evaluation similar to a Biological Assessment be prepared to determine whether the project may affect listed or proposed species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat. Recommended contents of a Biological Assessment are described at 50 CFR 402.12.]

Attachment(s):

- Official Species List

Official Species List

This list is provided pursuant to Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act, and fulfills the requirement for Federal agencies to "request of the Secretary of the Interior information whether any species which is listed or proposed to be listed may be present in the area of a proposed action".

This species list is provided by:

Ventura Fish And Wildlife Office

2493 Portola Road, Suite B

Ventura, CA 93003-7726

(805) 644-1766

Project Summary

Consultation Code: 08EVEN00-2017-SLI-0447

Event Code: 08EVEN00-2017-E-01042

Project Name: MST South County Operations & Maintenance Facility Project

Project Type: TRANSPORTATION

Project Description: construct an operations and maintenance facility for vehicles that primarily serve southern Monterey County

Project Location:

Approximate location of the project can be viewed in Google Maps:

<https://www.google.com/maps/place/36.22331534287798N121.12418868605502W>



Counties: Monterey, CA

Endangered Species Act Species

There is a total of 7 threatened, endangered, or candidate species on your species list. Species on this list should be considered in an effects analysis for your project and could include species that exist in another geographic area. For example, certain fish may appear on the species list because a project could affect downstream species. See the "Critical habitats" section below for those critical habitats that lie wholly or partially within your project area. Please contact the designated FWS office if you have questions.

Mammals

NAME	STATUS
San Joaquin Kit Fox (<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>) No critical habitat has been designated for this species. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2873	Endangered

Birds

NAME	STATUS
California Condor (<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>) Population: U.S.A. only, except where listed as an experimental population There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/8193	Endangered
Least Bell's Vireo (<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/5945	Endangered
Southwestern Willow Flycatcher (<i>Empidonax traillii extimus</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/6749	Endangered

Amphibians

NAME	STATUS
California Red-legged Frog (<i>Rana draytonii</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2891	Threatened

Crustaceans

NAME	STATUS
Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>) There is a final critical habitat designated for this species. Your location is outside the designated critical habitat. Species profile: https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/498	Threatened

Flowering Plants

NAME

STATUS

Marsh Sandwort (*Arenaria paludicola*)

Endangered

No critical habitat has been designated for this species.

Species profile: <https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/species/2229>

Critical habitats

There are no critical habitats within your project area.

Appendix B – California Department of Fish and Wildlife's California Natural
Diversity Data Base Occurrence Report
(generated March 31, 2017)

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Selected Elements by Scientific Name

California Department of Fish and Wildlife

California Natural Diversity Database



Query Criteria: Taxonomic Group IS (Fish OR Amphibians OR Reptiles OR Birds OR Mammals OR Mollusks OR Arachnids OR Crustaceans OR Insects OR Ferns OR Gymnosperms OR Monocots OR Dicots OR Lichens OR Bryophytes)
 AND Quad IS (San Lucas (3612121) OR Thompson Canyon (3612122))

Species	Element Code	Federal Status	State Status	Global Rank	State Rank	Rare Plant Rank/CDFW SSC or FP
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i> tricolored blackbird	ABPBXB0020	None	Candidate Endangered	G2G3	S1S2	SSC
<i>Athene cunicularia</i> burrowing owl	ABNSB10010	None	None	G4	S3	SSC
<i>Bombus occidentalis</i> western bumble bee	IIHYM24250	None	None	G2G3	S1	
<i>Chorizanthe pungens</i> var. <i>pungens</i> Monterey spineflower	PDPGN040M2	Threatened	None	G2T2	S2	1B.2
<i>Collinsia multicolor</i> San Francisco collinsia	PDSCR0H0B0	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
<i>Delphinium recurvatum</i> recurved larkspur	PDRAN0B1J0	None	None	G2?	S2?	1B.2
<i>Delphinium umbraculorum</i> umbrella larkspur	PDRAN0B1W0	None	None	G3	S3	1B.3
<i>Emys marmorata</i> western pond turtle	ARAAD02030	None	None	G3G4	S3	SSC
<i>Layia heterotricha</i> pale-yellow layia	PDAST5N070	None	None	G2	S2	1B.1
<i>Malacothamnus davidsonii</i> Davidson's bush-mallow	PDMAL0Q040	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
<i>Plagiobothrys uncinatus</i> hooked popcornflower	PDBOR0V170	None	None	G2	S2	1B.2
<i>Riparia riparia</i> bank swallow	ABPAU08010	None	Threatened	G5	S2	
<i>Sidalcea hickmanii</i> ssp. <i>hickmanii</i> Hickman's checkerbloom	PDMAL110A2	None	None	G3T2	S2	1B.3
<i>Taxidea taxus</i> American badger	AMAJF04010	None	None	G5	S3	SSC
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> least Bell's vireo	ABPBW01114	Endangered	Endangered	G5T2	S2	
<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> San Joaquin kit fox	AMAJA03041	Endangered	Threatened	G4T2	S2	

Record Count: 16