FINAL Initial Study / Mitigated Negative Declaration

Eucalyptus Pruning

Carmel Area Wastewater District Wastewater Treatment Plant

April 2021

Carmel Area Wastewater District
3945 Rio Road
P.O. Box 221428
Carmel, CA. 93922

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Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared in accord with the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and assesses the potential environmental impacts of the proposed Project. The proposed Project includes pruning of approximately ninety (90) existing Eucalyptus Trees at the Carmel Area Wastewater District Wastewater Treatment Plant.

1. Project title:	Eucalyptus Pruning
2. Lead agency name and address:	Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) 3945 Rio Road Carmel, CA 93922
3. Contact person and phone number:	Barbara Buikema General Manager 831-624-1248
4. Project location:	Monterey County
5. Project sponsor name and address:	Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) 3945 Rio Road Carmel, CA 93922
6. General plan designation:	Coastal Zone
7. Zoning:	Public Quasi Public (PQP)
8. Other Agency Approvals Required:	Coastal Commission, CA Dept of Fish and Wildlife

Section 2: General Description and Location

2.1 General Description

Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) proposes to prune existing eucalyptus trees at the CAWD Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). The pruning is being done to control the growth of the trees and to mitigate falling branches. The existing eucalyptus trees have the potential to fall or drop debris which could damage existing wastewater treatment plant infrastructure. Where eucalyptus trees are spreading new seedlings, new eucalyptus trees would be removed as part of the work to avoid propagation of this non-native species.

There are a total of approximately ninety (90) full grown eucalyptus trees surrounding the WWTP. The majority of the trees, approximately sixty-four (64), exist along the Southern property line. Less eucalyptus, approximately twenty-five (25), exist on the Westerly side of the Northern property line. Other than the eucalyptus, the Northern property contains mostly cottonwood trees which provide a large part of the visual screen on the North side. There is one eucalyptus on the East property line that would be completely removed, and there are no eucalyptus on the West property line.

The existing eucalyptus trees were planted during the 1980's to create a visual screen around the existing wastewater treatment plant. Many of the existing trees have grown to be much higher than they need to be to screen the existing facility. Existing eucalyptus trees around the WWTP range from about 75 feet to 90 feet tall. CAWD proposes to prune the trees to 42 feet tall along the Southern boundary of the WWTP, and 52 feet tall along the westerly side of the Northern property line.

Potential impacts to nesting birds will be mitigated by conducting bird surveys and not pruning trees with nests. Work will be timed to avoid the breeding and nesting seasons (after September 16 and before January 31).

A certified arborist and a wildlife biologist specialized in birds were commissioned to review the eucalyptus trees and provide recommendations which inform this mitigated negative declaration. The respective arborist and bird survey reports are included in this mitigated negative declaration in the appendices.

2.2 Project Location

The general location of the Project is shown in Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map. The WWTP is located South of the Carmel River, as shown in Figure 2. The closest residences to the WWTP are across the river on the northeast side, approximately 100 yards from the closest process structure on the plant site. Directly north of the WWTP site, across the river, is the Larsen

Youth Baseball field, approximately 200 yards away. The Carmel Elementary School is over 0.3 miles northwest of the WWTP site. The other sides of the WWTP site are bounded by undeveloped land. The west boundary of the plant site is slightly more than 800 yards from the Pacific Ocean and Highway 1 is approximately 600 yards to the east and south of the WWTP site.

The existing facilities located on the WWTP site are typical industrial facilities that are found on a site of a publicly owned wastewater treatment plant. The WWTP site is categorized as Public/Quasi-Public in the Monterey County Land Use Plan.

Figure 1: Project Vicinity Map

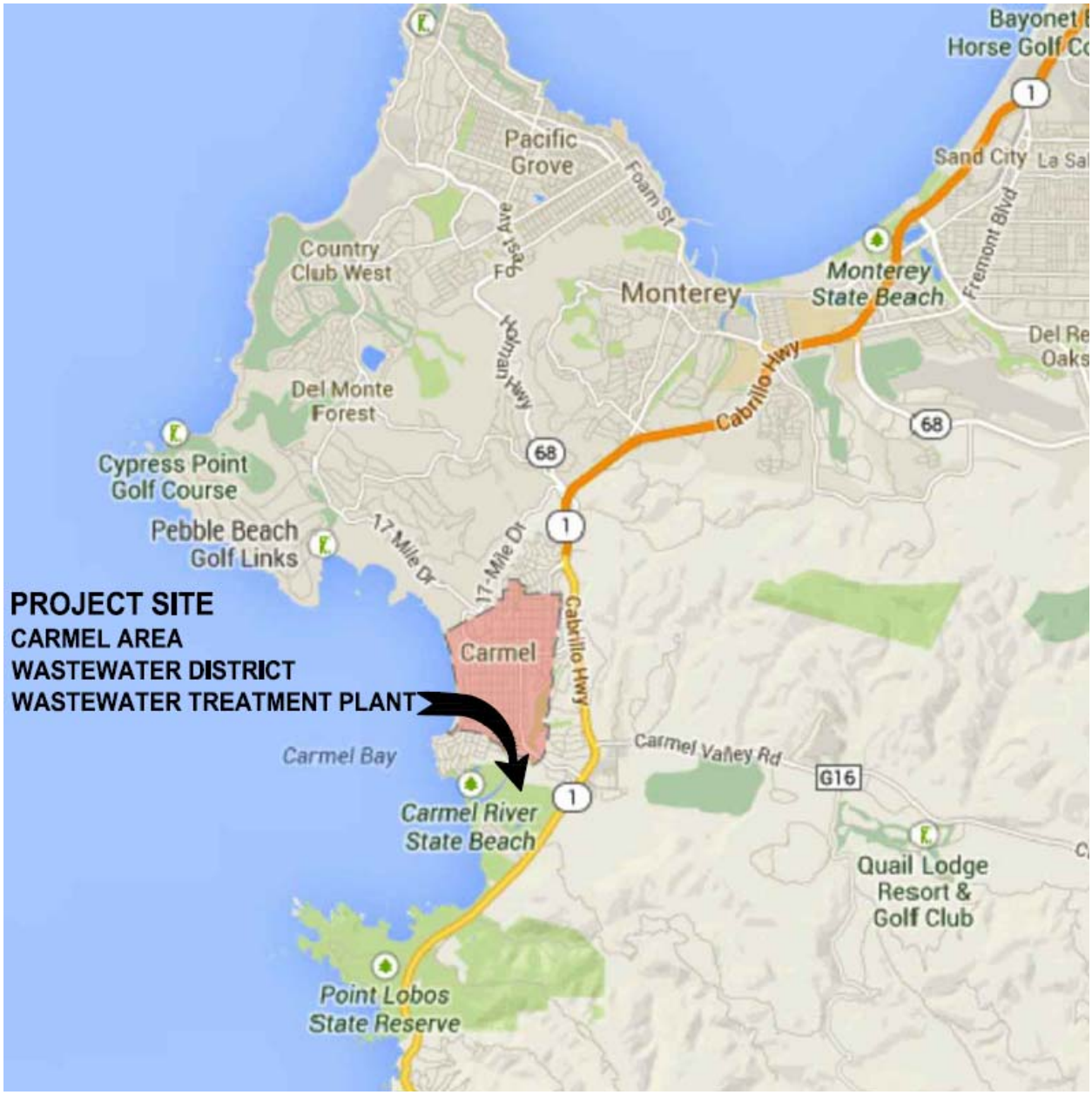


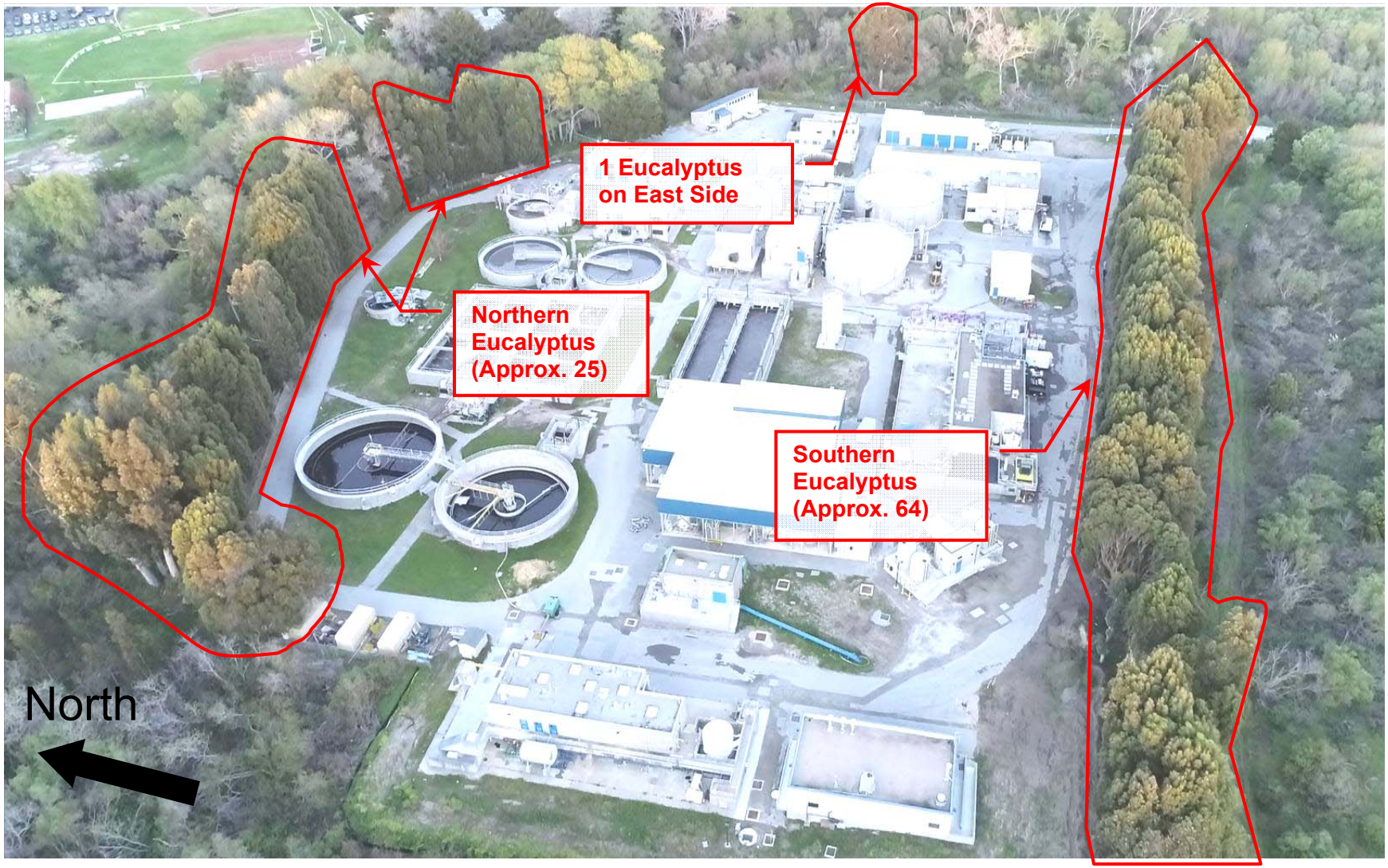
Figure 2: Project Location

Address: 26900 State Route 1, Carmel, CA 93923

2.3 Description of Existing Trees

Figure 3 is an aerial photograph of the WWTP that shows the eucalyptus trees around the perimeter of the property that are proposed to be pruned. Figures 4, 5 and 6 show photos of the eucalyptus trees viewed from inside the WWTP property and also viewed from outside of the property.

Figure 3: Aerial Photo



2.3.1 Southern Property Line

The majority (about 64) of the trees are along the Southern property line as seen in Figure 3.

Figure 4: Photos of Existing Eucalyptus Trees Along Southern Property Line

Photo 1: Taken from on top of an existing building inside the WWTP looking Southeasterly at southern property line.

Photo 2: Taken from on top of an existing building inside the WWTP looking Southwesterly at southern property line.

Photo 3: Taken from Hwy 1 Looking North West at the WWTP.

Photo 4: Taken from Hwy 1 Looking North West at the WWTP.

Photo 5: Taken from Hillside South of Carmel Lagoon looking North at the WWTP.

Photo 6: Taken from Ribera Rd. Looking North at the WWTP

2.3.2 Northern Property Line

About 25 eucalyptus trees exist along the northern property line. There is also a significant contingent of cottonwood trees on the Northern property line which provide part of the visual screen. The eucalyptus trees on the North side of the WWTP are less dominant than on the South side of the WWTP. Most of them are located on the Northwest side of the plant. The Northeast side of the plant does not have any eucalyptus trees.

Figure 5: Photos of Existing Eucalyptus Trees Along Northern Property Line

Photo 7: Taken from on top of an existing building inside the WWTP looking Northwesterly at Northern property line.

Photo 8: Taken from on top of an existing building inside the WWTP looking North at Northern property line. Note gap in eucalyptus filled in with cottonwood trees.

Photo 9: Taken from on top of an existing building inside the WWTP looking Northeasterly at Northern property line (No Eucalyptus). Note that buildings can be seen in the distance through gaps in the existing cottonwood trees.

Photo 10: Taken from Rio Rd at Santa Lucia Ave Looking South at the WWTP.

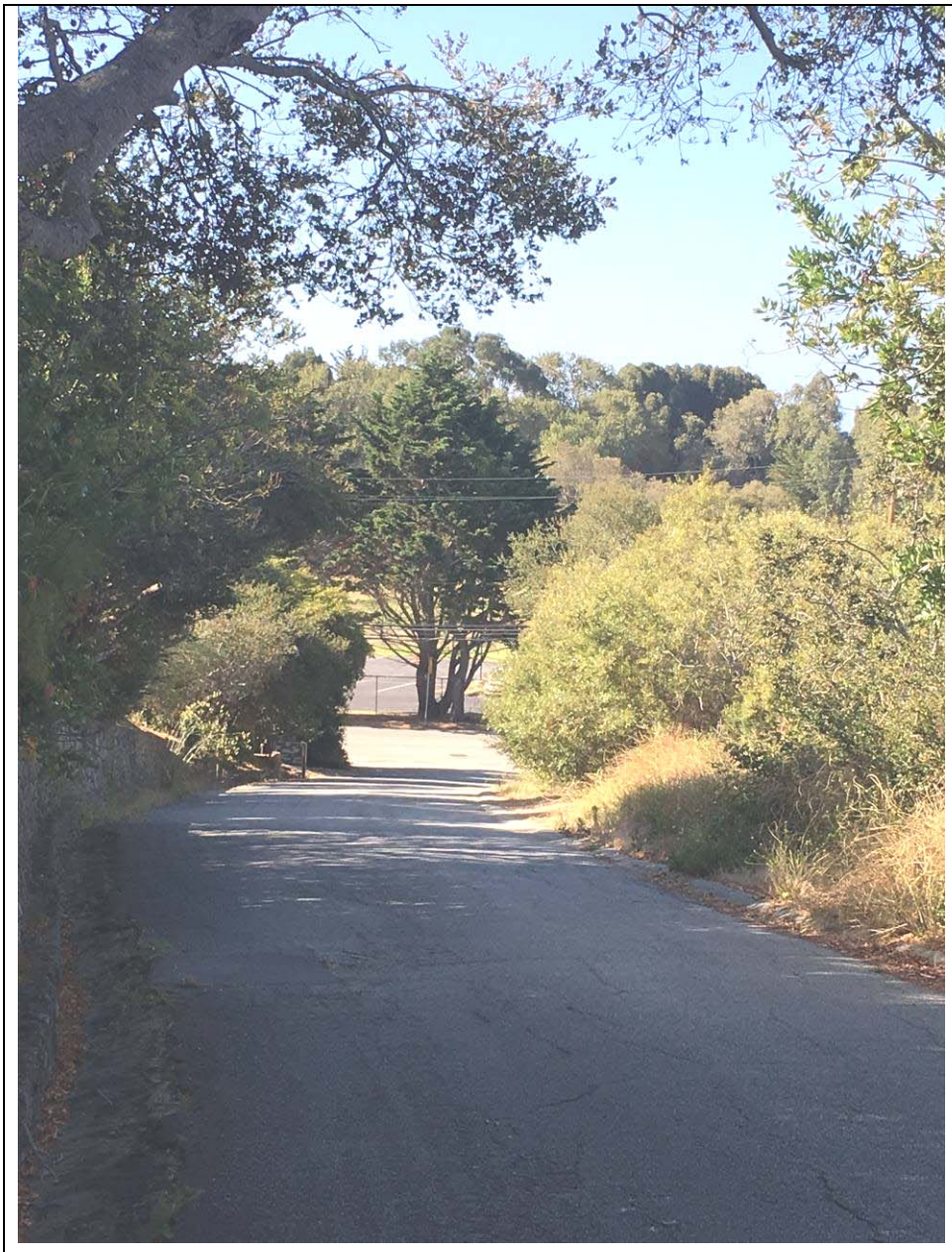


Photo 11: Taken from Ladera Dr Looking Southwest at the WWTP.

Photo 12: Taken from end of Atherton Pl Looking Southwest at the WWTP.

Photo 13: Taken from Atherton Dr Looking Southwest at the WWTP.

2.3.3 Eastern Property Line

There is one eucalyptus tree just East of the WWTP that would be removed as part of the project as it does not provide any visual screening. There is no development East of the WWTP that is at a high enough elevation to see the WWTP.

Figure 6: Photo of Existing Eucalyptus Tree at Eastern Property Line

Photo 14: Taken from on top of an existing building inside the WWTP looking northeast at eastern property line. One eucalyptus tree is seen on East property line would be removed. Note that buildings can be seen in the distance through gaps in the existing trees.

2.3.4 Line of Sight Analysis

Based on a line of site analysis, there would be no significant change to the visual aesthetic of the WWTP associated with trimming the eucalyptus trees to no shorter than 42 feet tall along the Southern property line and 52 feet tall along the Northern property line. Ground survey data at the WWTP and the surrounding neighborhoods was used to develop site line scenarios (See Figure 7 and 8). These figures illustrate the continued visual screening provided by shorter eucalyptus trees. The existing cottonwoods on the North and Northeast property line will not be modified and there are currently gaps in those trees that allow “peekaboo” views of the treatment plant from offsite (as seen in Photo 9, 12, and 14).

Figure 7: Line of Sight Analysis – From South of WWTP

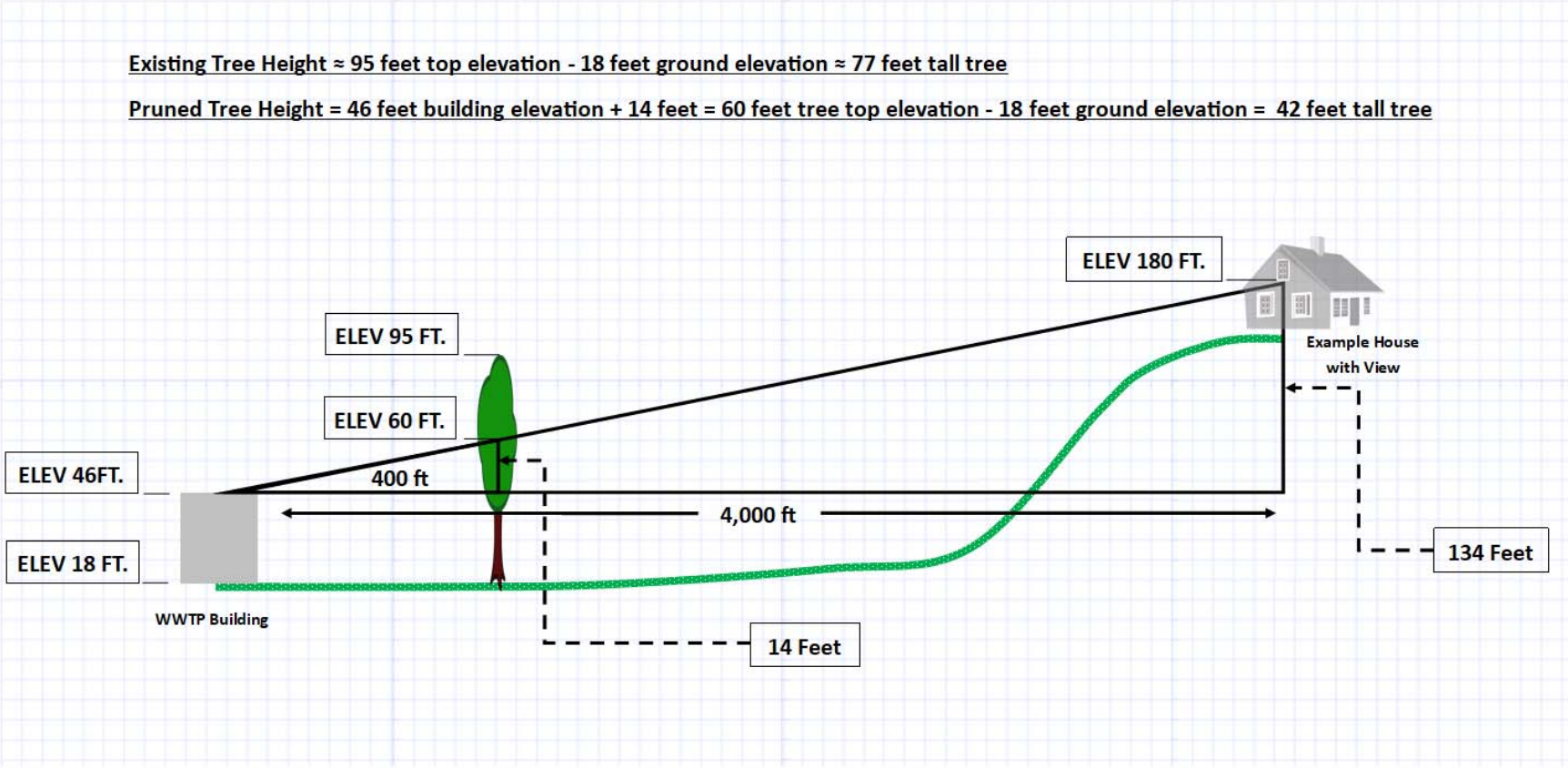


Figure 7 illustrates the site line analysis looking from the South. A tree height of 42 feet is considered adequate to screen the WWTP from residences with a view from the South of the treatment plant.

Figure 8: Line of Sight Analysis – From North of WWTP

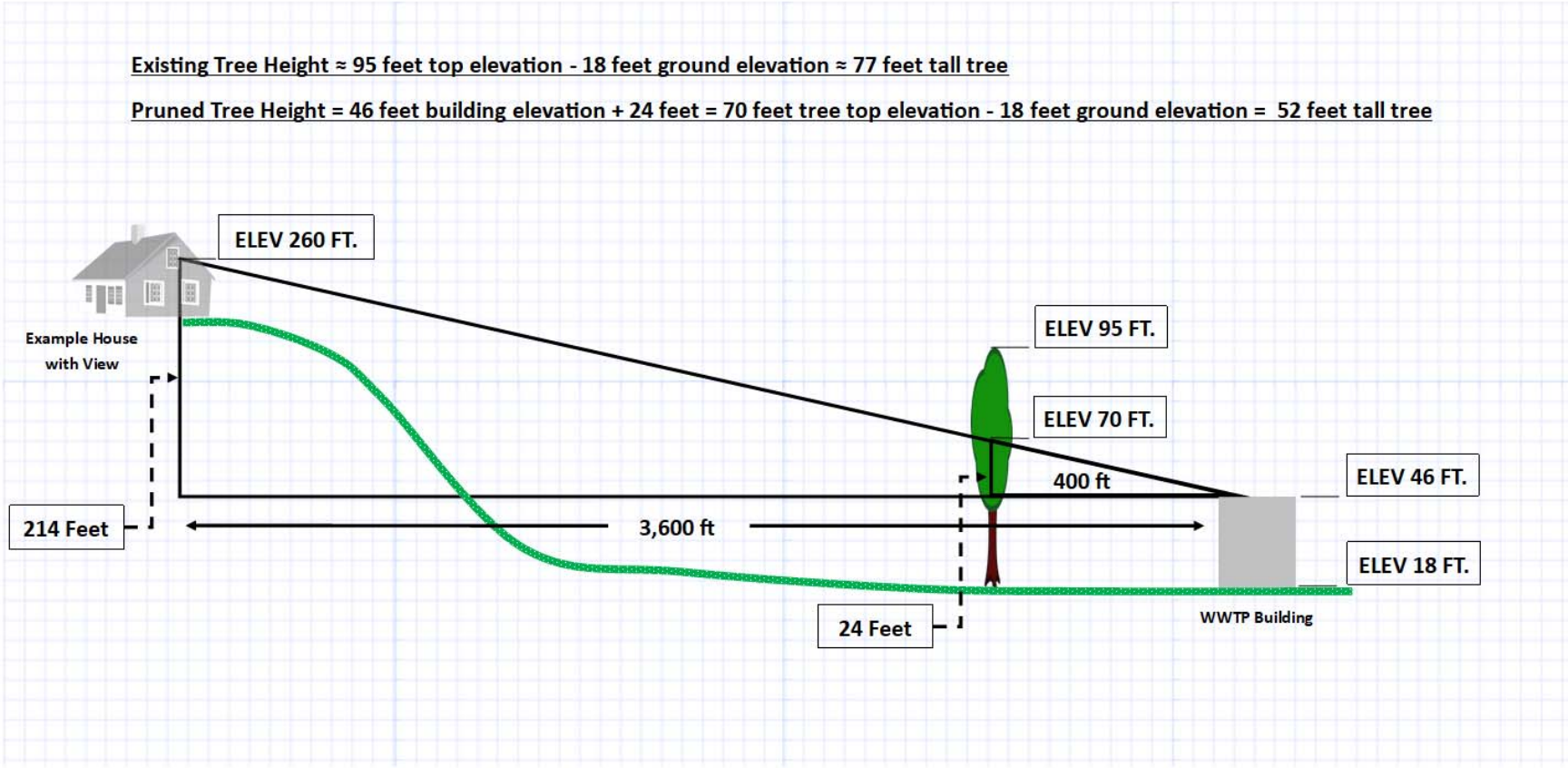


Figure 8 illustrates the site line analysis looking from the North. A tree height of 52 feet is considered adequate to screen the WWTP from residences with a view from the North of the treatment plant. A significant portion of the North side of the treatment plant is screened by cottonwood trees and these trees will not be modified. There are no eucalyptus trees on the Northeast and East boundaries of the WWTP and there are existing "peekaboo" views of the WWTP through these areas (see Photos 9, 12, and 14).

Section 3: Determination

3.1 Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially significantly affected by this Project as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

☒ Aesthetics	☐ Agricultural & Forestry Resources	☐ Air Quality
☒ Biological Resources	☐ Cultural Resources	☐ Geology/Soils
☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions	☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials	☐ Hydrology/Water Quality
☐ Land Use/Planning	☐ Mineral Resources	☐ Noise
☐ Population/Housing	☐ Public Services	☐ Recreation
☐ Transportation/Traffic	☐ Utilities/Service Systems	☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

3.2 Determination by Lead Agency

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed Project, nothing further is required.

Signature

4/13/21

Date

Plant Engineer

Title

Carmel Area Wastewater District

For

Section 4: Evaluation of Environmental Impacts

The Carmel Area Wastewater District, as the CEQA Lead Agency, has prepared this initial study to identify potentially significant effects of the project and revisions to the project that would avoid or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur. This document includes a checklist for each resource topic, supporting explanations, and a discussion of mitigation measures that have been incorporated into the proposed project.

The resource topics considered in this Initial Study include:

- Aesthetics
- Agricultural and Forestry Resources
- Air Quality
- Biological Resources
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Land Use and Planning
- Mineral Resources
- Noise
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

4.1 Aesthetics

Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?	☐	☐	☒	☐
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?	☐	☐	☒	☐

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The existing visual aesthetic of the WWTP would not be significantly altered because trees are being kept in place and pruning will be limited to upper portions of trees. By keeping tree heights of 42 feet along the South of the WWTP, and 52 feet along the North of the WWTP, the WWTP site will not be significantly exposed to surrounding views. See Figures 7 & 8.

Mitigation Measures.

AES-1: Tree Trimming Height
Minimize the tree trimming to a tree height of 42 ft along the South property line and 52 ft along the North property line.

4.2 Agricultural and Forestry Resources

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?	☐	☐	☐	☒

In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The site is not used for any agricultural resources.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for agricultural resources.

4.3 Air Quality

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
	☐	☐	☐	☒

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:	**Potentially Significant Impact**	**Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated**	**Less Than Significant Impact**	**No Impact**
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				
b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions, which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The tree trimming activity does not have the potential to significantly effect air quality.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for air quality.

4.4 Biological Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have substantial adverse effects, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?	☐	☒	☐	☐
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
policy or ordinance?				
f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional or state habitat conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

To avoid impacts to riparian habitat all heavy equipment used for trimming work will be kept within the developed areas of the existing wastewater treatment plant. Workers will access and remove pruned branches using manlift and crane equipment parked on the roads inside the fence of the treatment plant. Branches will be removed from the trees and placed on the ground inside the treatment plant site using crane equipment.

Biological mitigations are included in the project to avoid impacts to California Red-legged Frog, Monarch butterflies, migratory birds, raptors, and other special status species that may occur within or around the eucalyptus trees to be pruned.

The work methodology of accessing trees from equipment parked inside the developed wastewater treatment plant will avoid ground disturbance in riparian habitat. There will be no impacts to the banks of the Carmel River.

Mitigation Measures.

General Site Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP):
Prior to tree trimming work, all personnel associated with the trimming shall attend WEAP training, conducted by a qualified biologist, to aid workers in recognizing special status species and sensitive biological resources that may occur on site. The program shall include identification of the special status species and their habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, and review of the limits of the work area and Mitigation Measures required to reduce impacts to biological resources within the work area. A fact sheet conveying this information shall be prepared for distribution to all workers and other personnel involved with the tree trimming. All employees shall sign a form documenting that they have attended the WEAP and understand the information presented to them.

BIO-2: Biological Monitoring:
A qualified biologist will be present during all tree trimming activities to monitor such activities for compliance and protection of all special status species and natural resources. The qualified biological monitor will have the authority to stop work in the event any special status species are encountered that may be at risk of injury or death due to project activities. The qualified biological monitor will establish appropriate buffers for any special status species discovered on site and allow these individuals to move away at their own volition before work commences. If any special status species are encountered during biological monitoring, CDFW will be immediately notified.

BIO-3: Tree Debris Stockpiles:
The tree trimming crew shall ensure that tree debris stockpiles are placed where debris cannot pass into "Waters of the State," including the Carmel River which borders the northern WWTP boundary. All tree trimming stockpiles will be inspected for special status species by the qualified biologist before and during removal from the WWTP.

BIO-4: Project Trash:
During tree trimming activities, all trash that could attract predators shall be properly contained, removed from the work area, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris shall be removed from the project site.

BIO-5: Construction/Work Hours:
All tree trimming activities shall be confined to daylight hours. Night work will be prohibited for this project.

BIO-6: California Natural Diversity Database:
Any special status species or natural communities detected during project surveys or monitoring will be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB).

BIO-7: Reporting:
A biological monitoring report will be developed and submitted by the qualified biologist documenting construction progress, mitigation measures implemented, and special status species encountered. Photographs of all activities will be included to support documentation.

<u>Species Specific Mitigation Measures</u>

Nesting Birds
BIO-8: Nesting Birds Avoidance Timing:
Work will be timed to occur after September 16 and before January 31 to avoid the bird nesting season.

BIO-9: Nesting Birds Survey:
A qualified biologist will conduct a pre-activity bird survey no more than 10 days prior to start of vegetation disturbance work. Surveys will include identification of any nests in nearby trees to determine if these nests may be disturbed by the work. The survey will include establishing a behavioral baseline of all identified nests.

BIO-10: Nesting Birds Avoidance:
If active nests are discovered during the non-nesting season when work is to occur, a qualified biologist will continuously monitor nests during the work to detect behavioral changes resulting from the work. If behavioral changes occur, work that is causing the behavioral change will be halted. If continuous monitoring is not feasible a no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet will be established around active nests of bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of raptors. Inactive raptor nests, if discovered in a eucalyptus tree to be trimmed, would not be disturbed. A qualified wildlife biologist will advise and support any variance from these buffers and notify California Department of Fish and Wildlife in advance of implementing a variance.

California Red-legged Frog
BIO-11: California Red-legged Frog Initial Site Assessment:
Prior to award of tree trimming work, a qualified wildlife biologist will conduct surveys for CRLF in accordance with the USFWS "Revised Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog" (USFWS 2005) to determine if CRLF are within or adjacent to the project area.

BIO-12: California Red-legged Frog Pre-activity Survey:
A qualified biologist will conduct a pre-activity survey for CRLF no more than 48 hours prior to the start of vegetation disturbance. In the event a CRLF is discovered during the preconstruction survey, CDFW will be immediately notified, avoidance buffers will be established, and the frog will be monitored until it has move on at its own volition.

BIO-13: California Red-legged Frog Avoidance:
Each morning, before the beginning of work, a qualified biologist will inspect the work area (including under staged equipment and vehicles) for any life stage of CRLF. All staging and storage areas for equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants and solvents, shall be located inside of the WWTP property on previously areas cleared by the qualified biologist. A qualified biologist will monitor the work site on an ongoing basis for CRLF. If individuals are discovered and are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, a no disturbance buffer will be established, and the special status species will be allowed to move away at its own volition before work can commence in the area. Any sightings and/or injuries of CRLF shall be immediately reported to CDFW.

BIO-14: Non-native Species:
If non-native predators of the California red-legged frog, such as bullfrogs, are encountered during project activities, they shall be captured and permanently removed from within the project limits during project activities, and if such activities follow State laws

Western Monarch Butterfly
BIO-15: Monarch Butterfly Initial Habitat Assessment:
Prior to award of tree trimming work a qualified wildlife biologist will conduct a habitat assessment to determine if the project area or its immediate vicinity contain habitat suitable to support monarchs.

BIO-16: Monarch Butterfly Surveys:
If suitable habitat is present, the presence of monarchs will be assessed no more than 10 days prior to start of vegetation disturbance work by conducting surveys following recommended protocols, or protocol-equivalent surveys.

BIO-17: Monarch Butterfly Avoidance:
Detection of monarchs within or in the vicinity of the Project area will trigger consultation with CDFW and USFWS to discuss how to implement the project while avoiding take. A biological monitor will be on site fulltime during tree trimming activities and in the event that monarchs are discovered, work will immediately halt. Consultation with CDFW and USFWS will commence for advice on how to proceed.

Other Special Status Species
BIO-18: Other Special Status Species Assessment and Avoidance:
Other special status species (i.e. USFWS IPaC listed species) will be assessed to evaluate presence/absence of suitable habitat. If any other special status species are encountered during preconstruction surveys or biological monitoring, CDFW will be immediately notified. Appropriate avoidance buffers will be established until the individual(s) have moved away at its own volition before work can commence.

4.5 Cultural Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The eucalyptus trees are not a historical resource. There would not be any digging involved in the work, so there is no potential for impacts to buried archaeological resources.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for cultural resources.

4.6 Geology and Soils

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:				
i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42.	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv) Landslides?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or offsite landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The pruning work would not change the existing soil conditions. One of the reasons for tree trimming is to mitigate risk of loss, injury or death involving falling debris from existing trees.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for geology and soils resources.

4.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gasses?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The tree trimming activities does not have the potential to significantly effect greenhouse gas emissions.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for greenhouse gasses.

4.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?				
g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒
h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?	☐	☐	☐	☒

There would not be an increased hazard associated with hazardous materials. The existing eucalyptus trees have the potential to fall or drop debris which could damage existing wastewater treatment plant infrastructure.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for hazards or hazardous materials.

4.9 Hydrology and Water Quality

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?	☐	☐	☐	☒
i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?	☐	☐	☐	☒
j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Tree pruning would not cause any impacts to hydrology and or water quality.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for hydrology and water quality.

4.10 Land Use and Planning

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Tree pruning would not conflict with existing land use regulations. A tree trimming permit will be obtained from the County of Monterey.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for land use and planning.

4.11 Mineral Resources

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan?	☐	☐	☐	☒

There are no known mineral resources in the project area.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for mineral resources.

4.12 Noise

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project result in:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
vicinity above levels existing without the project				
d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above level, existing without the project	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Noise from tree trimming chainsaw noise would be temporary and would only occur between 7 AM and 5 PM.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for noise.

4.13 Population and Housing

Would the proposed project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The work would have no impact on population. There is no housing on the Plant site, and the project does not involve housing.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for population and housing.

4.14 Public Services

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services:				
i. Fire protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
ii. Police protection?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iii. Schools?	☐	☐	☐	☒
iv. Parks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
v. Other public facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project would have no impact on public services.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for public services.

4.15 Recreation

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The WWTP site is not used for public, or private recreation, hence the project has no impact on recreation.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for recreation.

4.16 Transportation/Traffic

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
components of the circulation system, including, but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit?				
b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
e) Result in inadequate emergency access?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?	☐	☐	☐	☒

There would be no long term increase in traffic.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for transportation or traffic.

4.17 Utilities and Service Systems

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?	☐	☐	☐	☒
b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?	☐	☐	☐	☒
d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?	☐	☐	☐	☒

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the providers existing commitments?	☐	☐	☐	☒
f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the projects solid waste disposal needs?	☐	☐	☐	☒
g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project would not effect existing utilities or services.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are necessary for utilities and service systems.

Section 5: Mandatory Findings of Significance

	Potentially Significant Impact	Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?	☐	☒	☐	☐
b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?	☐	☐	☐	☒
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?	☐	☐	☐	☒

The project consists of trimming existing eucalyptus trees around the existing WWTP. The project would help keep eucalyptus trees from spreading and would mitigate risk associated with falling debris from trees, fire spread, and falling trees.

The project would not have significant environmental impacts during the work given the mitigations to avoid impacts to nesting birds, riparian habitat, and other special status species.

Once work is completed, the project could not have a significant impact on the environment. A Mitigated Negative Declaration will be prepared for the project to account for the mitigations to avoid impacts to nesting birds.

Appendix A
Arborist Report
Eucalyptus Pruning and Management Guidelines

Frank Ono

International Society of Arboriculture
Certified Arborist # 536
Professional Member Society of American Foresters 48004
1213 Miles Avenue
Pacific Grove CA, 93950
Telephone (831) 373-7086
Cellular (831) 594-2291

October 14, 2019

Mr. Patrick Treanor
Carmel Area Wastewater District
26900 Highway 1
Carmel, CA 93923

RE: Wastewater Treatment Plant – Eucalyptus Pruning and Management Guidelines
APN: 009-521-004-000

Mr. Treanor;

You recently contacted me to assess Eucalyptus trees owned on a property located at 26900 Highway 1, Carmel, CA 93923. The purpose for the assessment is to determine the condition of the trees with respect to health, safety, and make recommendations for pruning allowances. A visual inspection of the trees was conducted on October 11, 2019 for the trees adjacent to the property area resulting in some trees identified as being hazardous with most in need of desired pruning. The following report discusses my findings was well as recommendations for the property.

Sincerely,

Frank Ono
Certified Arborist #536

The following report is based on a visual inspection of tree condition and for obvious defects. It is not intended to constitute a complete health and hazard evaluation. Further investigation would be required to more definitively evaluate the health and hazards posed by the subject trees, some of which may not be disclosed by visual inspections. Investigations include but are not limited to core samples, root crown excavation, and visual inspection of the entire trees by climbing. Please be advised that healthy trees and/or limbs may fail under certain conditions, and that the above recommendations are based on industry standards of tree care. This report is made with the understanding that no representations or warranties, either expressed or implied are made that any trees referred to in the report or located on or adjacent to the subject property are sound or safe. Acceptance and use of this report constitutes the acknowledgement of the following stated facts and that the Client shall pay to Consultant consulting fees in accordance with the Fee Schedule attached hereto and made a part hereof as Exhibit A for the services actually performed and shown on such statement within thirty (30) days after receipt thereof.

Wastewater Treatment Plant
Eucalyptus Pruning and Management Guidelines

ASSIGNMENT/SCOPE OF WORK

I was requested to evaluate two rows of Eucalyptus trees bordering the Carmel Area Wastewater District's Treatment Plant, located at 26900 Highway 1, Carmel, CA 93923. The assignment's purpose is to determine tree health, their structural condition, and treatments to manage risk for limb failure. From the findings of the evaluation, a report will be created making recommendations for treatments to reduce risk to an acceptable level.

LIMITATIONS OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The findings of this report are limited to a visual assessment of the trees. No further tests such as a complete root collar examination or climbing of the tree were made as part of the assessment diagnosis as these were neither requested nor considered necessary.

Disclosure Statement

It is important to note that Urban Foresters/Arborists are tree specialists who use their education, knowledge training and experience to examine trees, recommend measures to enhance their health and beauty and to attempt to reduce the risk of living near trees. Clients may choose to accept or disregard the recommendations of the arborist or to seek additional advice. Trees and other plant life are living, changing organisms affected by innumerable factors beyond our control. Trees fail in ways and because of conditions we do not fully understand. Urban Foresters/Arborists cannot detect or anticipate every condition or event that could possibly lead to the structural failure of a tree. Conditions are often hidden within the trees and below ground. Urban Foresters/Arborists cannot guarantee that a tree will be healthy or safe under all circumstances, for any specific period or when a tree or its parts may fail. Further, remedial treatments, as with any treatment or therapy, cannot be guaranteed. Treatment, pruning, bracing and removal of trees may involve considerations beyond the scope of the arborists skills and usual services such as the boundaries of properties, property ownership, site lines, neighbor disputes and agreements and other issues. Therefore, urban forester/arborists cannot consider such issues unless complete and accurate information is disclosed in a timely fashion. Then, the urban forester/arborist can be expected, reasonably, to rely upon the completeness and accuracy of the information provided. Trees can be managed but not controlled. To live near trees, regardless of their condition, is to accept some degree of risk. The only way to eliminate all risk associated with trees is to eliminate all trees.

Hazard/hazard potential: For the purposes of this evaluation and/report, a tree or tree part that presents a threat to humans, livestock, vehicles, structures, landscape features or other entity of civilization from uprooting, falling, breaking or growth development (e.g., roots). While all large landscape trees in proximity to such targets present some degree of hazard regardless of their condition, such inherent hazard is not intended as within this definition and its usage in this evaluation and report.

Inspection limitations: The inspection of these trees consisted solely of a visual inspection from the ground. While more thorough techniques are available for inspection and evaluation, they were neither requested nor considered necessary or appropriate at this time.

As trees and other plant life are living, changing organisms affected by innumerable factors beyond our control, Frank Ono (dba F. O. Consulting) and its personnel offer no guarantees, stated or implied, as to tree, plant or general landscape safety, health, condition or improvement, beyond that specifically stated in writing in accepted contracts. This report is based on a visual inspection of tree condition and for obvious defects. It is not intended to constitute a complete health and hazard evaluation. Further investigation would be required to more definitively evaluate the health and hazards posed by the subject trees, some of which may not be disclosed by visual inspections. Investigations include but are not limited to core samples, root crown excavation, and visual inspection of the entire trees by climbing. Please be advised that healthy trees and/or limbs may fail under certain conditions, and that any recommendations given are based on industry standards of tree care.

BACKGROUND

The two rows of large mixed blue gum and dwarf blue gum Eucalyptus trees (*Eucalyptus globulus* and *Eucalyptus globulus* 'Compacta') line the north and south ends of the water treatment plant located at 26900 Highway 1, Carmel, CA 93923. The majority of the trees are on the property outside the fence and owned by Carmel Area Wastewater District. Included in the report are several trees on neighboring adjacent properties that were previously headed that may need additional attention. I have been requested to visually assess the trees to make recommendations for treatment, in an effort to reduce what risk of failure the trees may present.

OBSERVATIONS

The following are observations taken on site:

- The majority of the trees are mature and range in height from 75 to 90 feet with diameters of 12 to over 40 inches.
- The majority of the trees have been pruned in the past utilizing heading cuts to reduce the trees height.
- The majority of the trees have included bark at their branch attachments and stem junctions.
- A suppressed tree adjacent to the entrance gate has a dead stem that will need to be removed.
- Two trees were observed with large fugal conks growing from their stems, the trees and their locations are as follows:
    - A multi-stemmed tree across from the solid waste conveyor belt.
    - The westmost tree in the north row of trees adjacent to several storage containers.
- Most trees have a high amount of water sprout “sucker” growth at the base. These sprouts may be removed to avoid future tree growth or retained for lower visual screening.

- One multi-stemmed cluster across from building 15 has a dead stem that will need removal.
- Several trees across the sodium bisulphate tanks in the southwest of the property have corrected leans and will need to be removed.
- A long, overextended branch across from the sodium bisulphate tanks needs to be pruned back to the main canopy to minimize its encroachment over the compound.
- A large multi-stemmed cluster outside of the fence in the northwest corner of the property has small weakly attached stems growing from previous heading cuts. This tree will need to be reduced to the old cuts to avoid future breakage.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The Eucalyptus trees have been entered into a cycle of heading cuts that will need to be repeated to avoid failure of weakly attached new growth. In the past the trees were reduced to approximately 1/3 or more of their current height. The new sprouts that formed from these heading cuts do not originate from the center of the tree like normal branches but are instead formed in the cambial layer just underneath the bark. This produced new epicormic growth which is much weaker and prone to breaking and failing during windstorm events.

This is a limited case where heading cuts may be appropriate for the mature trees where there is a high risk of structural failure and thinning cuts (reduction cuts) cannot be used on some of the trees observed. During crown reduction treatments, whenever possible, use reduction cuts to reduce height and branch removal cuts (thinning cuts) to reduce branch end weights. When reduction and branch removal cuts are not possible (such as when interior lateral branches are not present) and tree hazard potential is high, then heading cuts will be needed, but their use should be minimized.

Additionally, several of the trees were also observed with fungal fruiting bodies in their stems. This fungus; Chicken of the woods (*Laetiporus gilbertsonii*) is usually found on dead material and is likely originating from previously cut branches or stems. The pathogen observed on the trees can invade live trees but does not constitute a significant risk in the trees which may be mitigated through pruning and monitoring.

Overall, the tree observed may be reduced by one third of their height through the mixed use of thinning, crown reduction, and some heading cuts. Also, follow-up pruning to minimize risk associated with weakly-attached shoots may be needed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Tree Removal

The smaller trees prescribed for removal on the property present significant risk for failure. The trees must be removed to prevent possible injury or property damage. The tree shall be cut down by a licensed insured professional tree service, cut down in smaller manageable pieces consistent with safe arboricultural work practices, and roped down carefully so as not to damage any surrounding trees. The use of specialized equipment can be authorized if it can be shown that no damage to surrounding ecosystem will be sustained. At no time shall the trees be dropped in one piece so as to damage any surrounding trees or property. Tree wood and clippings are to be disposed of consistent with California Department of Forestry guidelines which would include stockpiling of material on site or disposal at an approved refuse site.

Tree pruning

The management of the eucalyptus should include a program where trees should be crown reduction pruned back to old heading cuts on a three to five-year cycle. Overall, they may be reduced by one third through the use of a mixture of thinning and some heading cuts. Pruning limb cuts of the eucalyptus should be performed down to the area where the old cuts previously made to minimize the occurrence of weakly attached epicormic sprouts and decrease entry points for decay in old branch stubs. Limb diameters will vary dependent on the parent stem of the limb for reduction.

Pruning of the tree will entail crown reduction to one third the tree height and entail deadwood removal down to 1-1/2" in diameter, crossing limbs where practical, clearances for access points and fences where needed, weight reduction on long heavy limbs and selective removal of interior growth. This does not completely remove all interior growth. Re-growth of the limbs of pruned eucalyptus trees will be very high in the first years, however, growth will be mainly vertical, and the new branches should not put on the significant diameter growth necessary for damage until three to five years from old pruning. Inspections of other limbs over the wastewater compound should be made during the pruning. Periodic monitoring and pruning should also occur every three to four years depending on the concerns of the district underneath the trees. All tall trees (both Eucalyptus globulus and Eucalyptus globulus compacta) should also be crown cleaned to allow better movement of wind through the canopy and help decrease breakage during storms. During this pruning event all broken, torn, cracked or weakly attached branches discovered should be removed for safety.

Sincerely,

Frank Ono
Certified Arborist #536

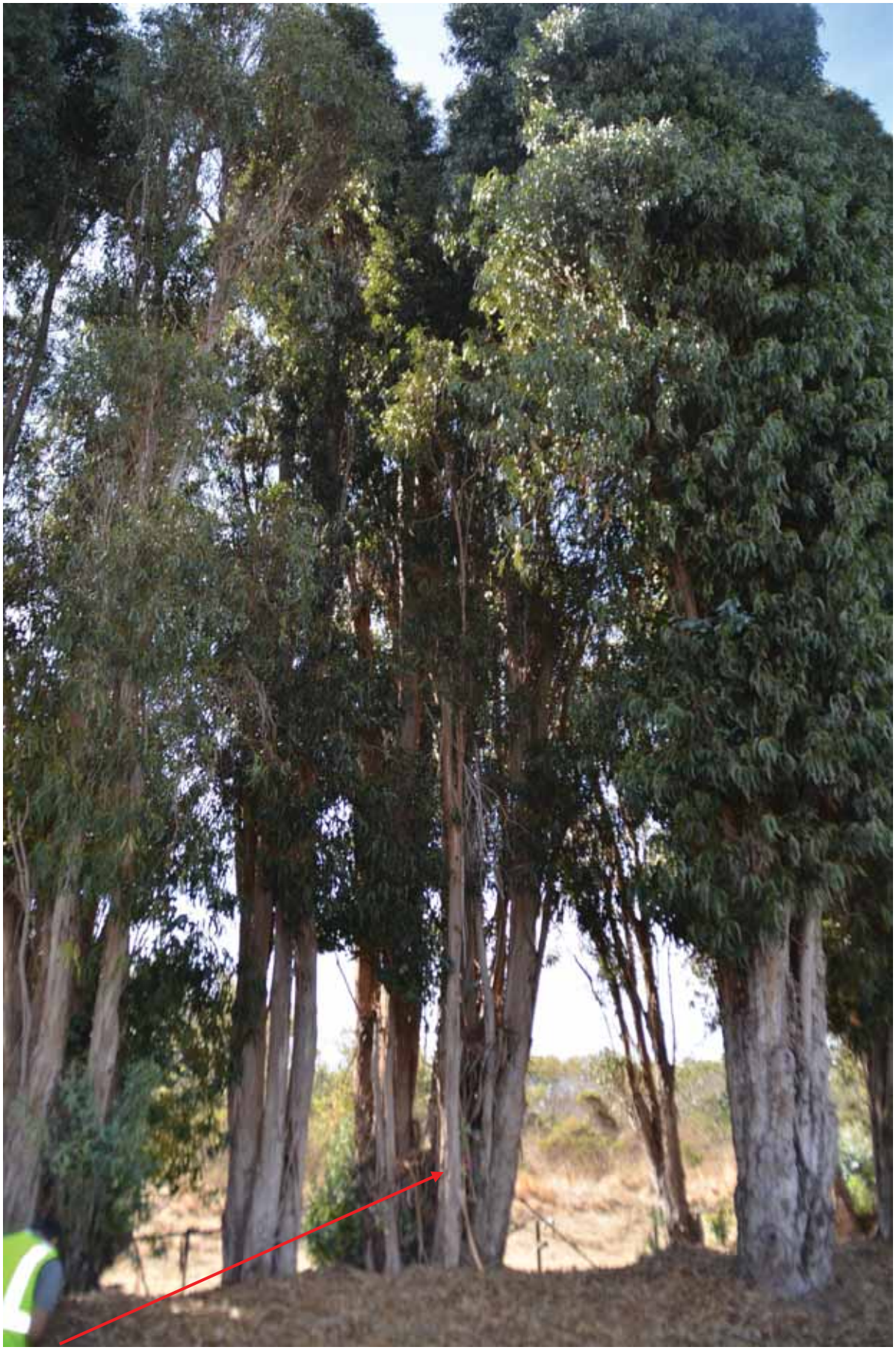
This report is based on a visual inspection of tree condition and for obvious defects. It is not intended to constitute a complete health and hazard evaluation. Further investigation would be required to more definitively evaluate the health and hazards posed by the subject trees, some of which may not be disclosed by visual inspections. Investigations include but are not limited to core samples, root crown excavation, and visual inspection of the entire trees by climbing. Please be advised that healthy trees and/or limbs may fail under certain conditions, and that the above recommendations are based on industry standards of tree care. This report is made with the understanding that no representations or warranties, either expressed or implied are made that any trees referred to in the report or located on or adjacent to the subject property are sound or safe.

PHOTOGRAPHS (not all trees are photographed, all trees need crown reduction with trees in need of removal or specific pruning are shown)

South row of trees viewing west.

North row of trees viewing east.

Tree with dead stem at entrance needs removal.



Tree with fungal fruiting bodies observed across from solid waste conveyor belt. This should be monitored

Fungal fruiting bodies on tree across from solid waste conveyor belt.

A number of trees have included bark at unions; this one appears to be separating and need attention

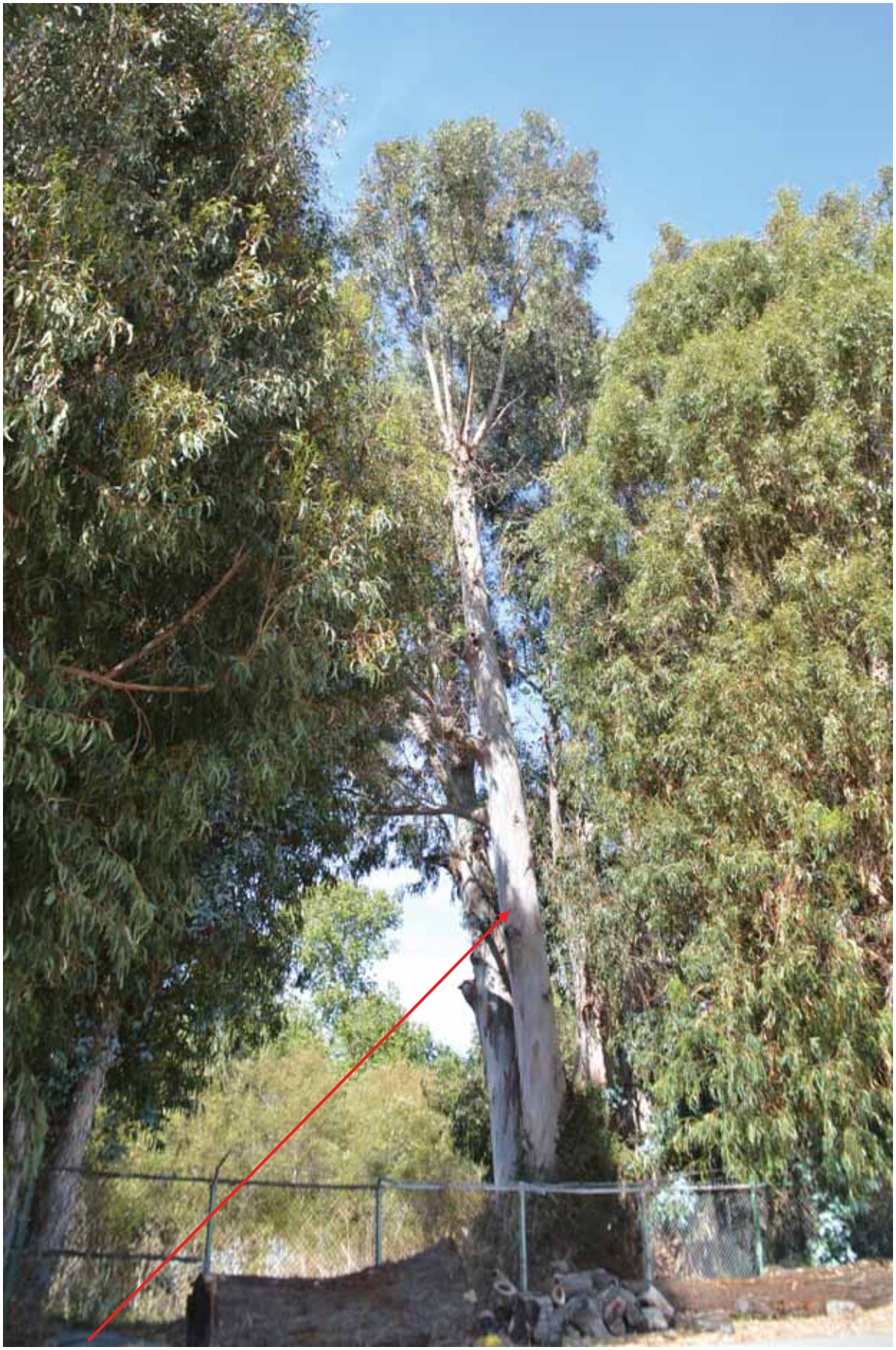
Dead stem across from building 15 needs removal.

Tree with a corrected lean located across from sodium bisulphate tanks. The tree will need the right side of its crown removed to the base

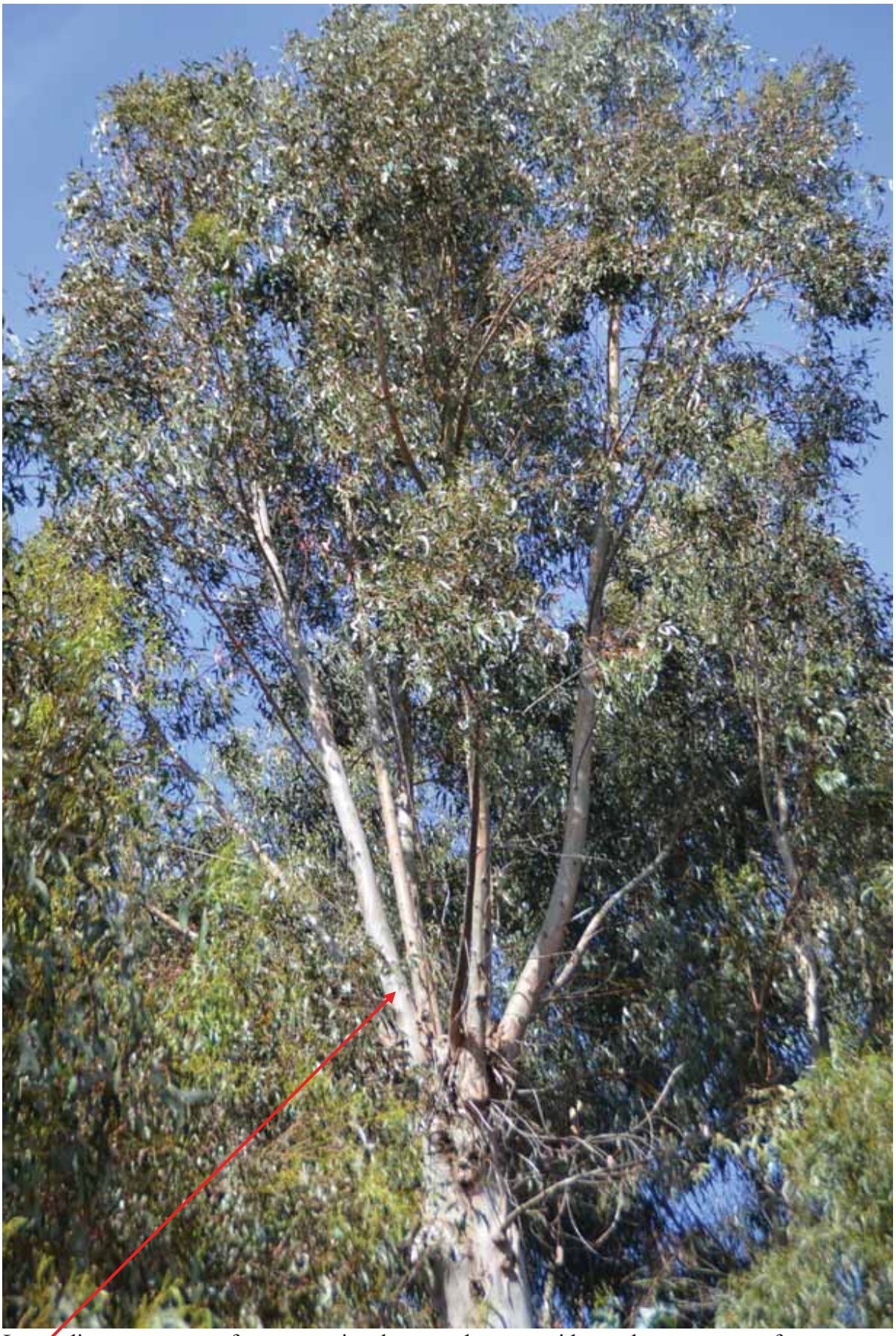
Overextended branch across from the sodium bisulphate tank needs to be shortened back.

Tree next to storage tanks with fungal fruiting bodies observed at base.

Fungal fruiting body on tree next to storage tanks in northwest corner.



Large cluster of trees outside northwest corner. The upper portion has weakly attached branches prone to breakage



Large diameter sprouts from a previously topped tree outside northwest corner of property.


North row of trees
South row of trees

Appendix B
Bird Survey Report

Burleson Consulting Inc.
Woman-Owned Small Business
Environmental Puzzle Masters

October 14, 2019

Patrick Treanor, P.E.
Plant Engineer
Carmel Area Wastewater District
3945 Rio Road
Carmel, CA 93922

Subject: Bird and Bat Survey for the Carmel Wastewater Treatment Plant, Carmel, California

Dear Mr. Treanor:

This report documents the findings of a bird and bat survey conducted by Burleson Consulting, Inc. (Burleson) on October 11, 2019. The survey was in support of the Carmel Wastewater Treatment Plant's planning and permitting efforts related to potential impacts to nesting birds and roosting bats during the trimming of up to 90 eucalyptus trees.

The purpose of this report is to document the presence/absence of nesting birds, existing nests or roosting bats on or in the eucalyptus trees proposed for trimming.

PROJECT LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The Carmel Wastewater Treatment Plant (Plant) is an approximately 8-acre facility located along the Carmel River approximately 0.4 miles west of Highway 1. The driveway leading to the facility is accessed at Highway 1 approximately 300 yards south of Oliver Road. The plant is surrounded to the north by the Carmel River and the City of Carmel. The south, east and west are surrounded by riparian woodland and floodplain.

Approximately 90 eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.) trees line the northern and southern boundary of the Plant creating a visual screen from surrounding neighborhoods. Approximately 64 eucalyptus trees line the southern boundary and approximately 26 eucalyptus trees line the northern boundary (see Photos 1, 2 and 3). One eucalyptus tree is present on the eastern boundary. Most of the trees are densely foliated with some sparse canopy mixed in (see Photo 4). The trees are approximately 80 feet tall. The Plant plans to trim the top 20-30 feet of each tree to reduce the potential for falling limbs during high winds and maintain the visual screen.

Little to no understory persists under the eucalyptus trees that line the Plant boundary due to the negative allelopathic properties (compounds which inhibit other plant species from growing nearby) of their leaves (see Photo 5). The surrounding habitat beyond the Plant is associated with the Carmel River and mixed riparian native woodland and floodplain dominated by cottonwood (*Populus* sp.) and willow (*Salix* sp.). The Plant interior is developed, and very little vegetation is present.

METHODOLOGY

The bird and bat survey was conducted by Burleson Wildlife Biologist Shawn Wagoner on October 11, 2019 between 0800 and 1130 hours. The survey focused on the 90 eucalyptus trees bordering the Plant

and tall vegetation within a 250-ft buffer surrounding the Plant. The biologist utilized binoculars (10x24) and a spotting scope (when needed) to scan each individual eucalyptus tree to detect existing nests or roosting bats. Each tree was scanned from the base to view the inside canopy and from 50-100ft away to observe the top canopy. Any bird observed within the eucalyptus tree was assessed for breeding behavior traits such as courtship displays, copulation, vegetation or food carries, presence of fledglings, and territorial displays (e.g. singing or aggression). Any nests observed in the eucalyptus trees were identified down to species group (e.g. raptor vs passerines) as best as possible. Any cavities or crevices found on eucalyptus tree trunks were closely inspected for bat sign, and tree branches were scanned for individual roosting bats.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Weather conditions during the survey were slightly overcast, with temperatures ranging between approximately 55- and 65-degrees Fahrenheit, with 50% cloud cover or less, and winds at 0 to 10 mph. No special-status species were observed during the survey. All avian species observed/detected on or in the vicinity of the project site during the survey are listed below in Table 1.

Table 1. Avian Species Observed During Survey

Scientific Name	Common Name	Behavior/Comments
Calypte anna	Anna's hummingbird	One male foraging in lower third of eucalyptus tree along southern boundary, no breeding behavior noted
Buteo lineatus	Red-shouldered hawk	One adult moving around the vicinity of the eucalyptus trees along the northern boundary, no nests found
Picoides pubescens	Downy woodpecker	One in mixed flock in cottonwoods along northern boundary, not utilizing eucalyptus trees
Picoides nuttallii	Nuttal's woodpecker	One in mixed flock in cottonwoods along northern boundary, not utilizing eucalyptus trees
Sayornis nigricans	Black phoebe	One foraging around the interior of the Plant, not seen utilizing eucalyptus trees
Sayornis saya	Say's phoebe	One foraging around the interior of the Plant, not seen utilizing eucalyptus trees
Cyanocitta stelleri	Stellar's jay	Several heard north of the Plant, none seen utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Aphelocoma californica	California scrub jay	Several seen and heard around the boundary of the Plant, none seen utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Corvus brachyrhynchos	American crow	Several seen flying above and beyond the Plant, none seen utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Poecile rufescens	Chestnut-backed chickadee	Several seen foraging in southern eucalyptus trees, no breeding behavior detected, more seen in mixed flock in cottonwood along northern boundary
Regulus calendula	Ruby-crowned kinglet	Several seen and heard around the boundary of the Plant, none utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Sitta pygmaea	Pygmy nuthatch	Several in mixed flock in cottonwoods along northern boundary, not seen in eucalyptus trees
Polioptila caerulea	Blue-grey gnatcatcher	One heard east of the Plant, not utilizing eucalyptus trees
Thryomanes bewickii	Bewick's wren	One seen south of the Plant, not observed utilizing eucalyptus trees
Toxostoma redivivum	California thrasher	Several seen and heard beyond the southern boundary of the Plant, none utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Bombycilla cedrorum	Cedar waxwing	Small flock foraging in cottonwoods along northern boundary of the Plant, not utilizing eucalyptus trees

Scientific Name	Common Name	Behavior/Comments
Junco hyemalis	Dark-eyed junco	Two individuals foraging in the middle of the Plant, not utilizing eucalyptus trees
Zonotrichia atricapilla	Golden-crowned sparrow	Small flock foraging in riparian habitat beyond the southern boundary, none utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Melospiza melodia	Song sparrow	Several individuals heard beyond the boundary of the Plant, none utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Melozone crissalis	California towhee	Several detected in riparian habitat beyond the southern Plant boundary, none utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Pipilo maculatus	Spotted towhee	Several detected in riparian habitat beyond the southern Plant boundary, none utilizing the eucalyptus trees
Dendroica townsendi	Townsend's warbler	Several in mixed flock in cottonwoods along northern boundary, not seen in eucalyptus trees
Wilsonia pusilla	Wilson's warbler	One foraging in riparian habitat west of the Plant boundary, not utilizing eucalyptus trees

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

There was a moderate level of avian activity during the survey and common resident/wintering species expected to occur in riparian and mixed native woodland areas were observed. One stick nest structure was observed within a sparse eucalyptus tree along the southern boundary. The biologist determined that this stick nest was an inactive passerine (songbird) nest and well below the planned trimming footprint. No other nests were observed during the survey. Additionally, no sign of nesting or residing owls were observed in any of the eucalyptus trees (i.e. no white-wash or pellets were found). No cavities or crevices were observed in the eucalyptus trees during the survey, and no roosting bats or roosting bat sign were observed in the canopy of any of the eucalyptus trees.

Generally, eucalyptus trees provide low to marginal avian nesting/bat roosting opportunities and based on the surrounding vegetation communities present (riparian, mixed native woodland and floodplain), it is likely that birds and bats may prefer to nest and roost in the surrounding landscape on adjacent property. However, given the sheer number of trees, dense foliage and nesting and roosting potential, we make the following recommendations:

1) tree trimming activity should remain outside of the nesting season (generally February 1-September 31), and
2) avian/bat surveys should be completed prior to future tree maintenance activities to minimize potential impacts.

Note: Although no special-status species were found, all common native birds are subject to protection under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California state laws.

Thank you for the opportunity to support the Carmel Wastewater Treatment Plant with this important project. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Sincerely,
Burleson Consulting Inc.

Shawn Wagoner
Wildlife Biologist

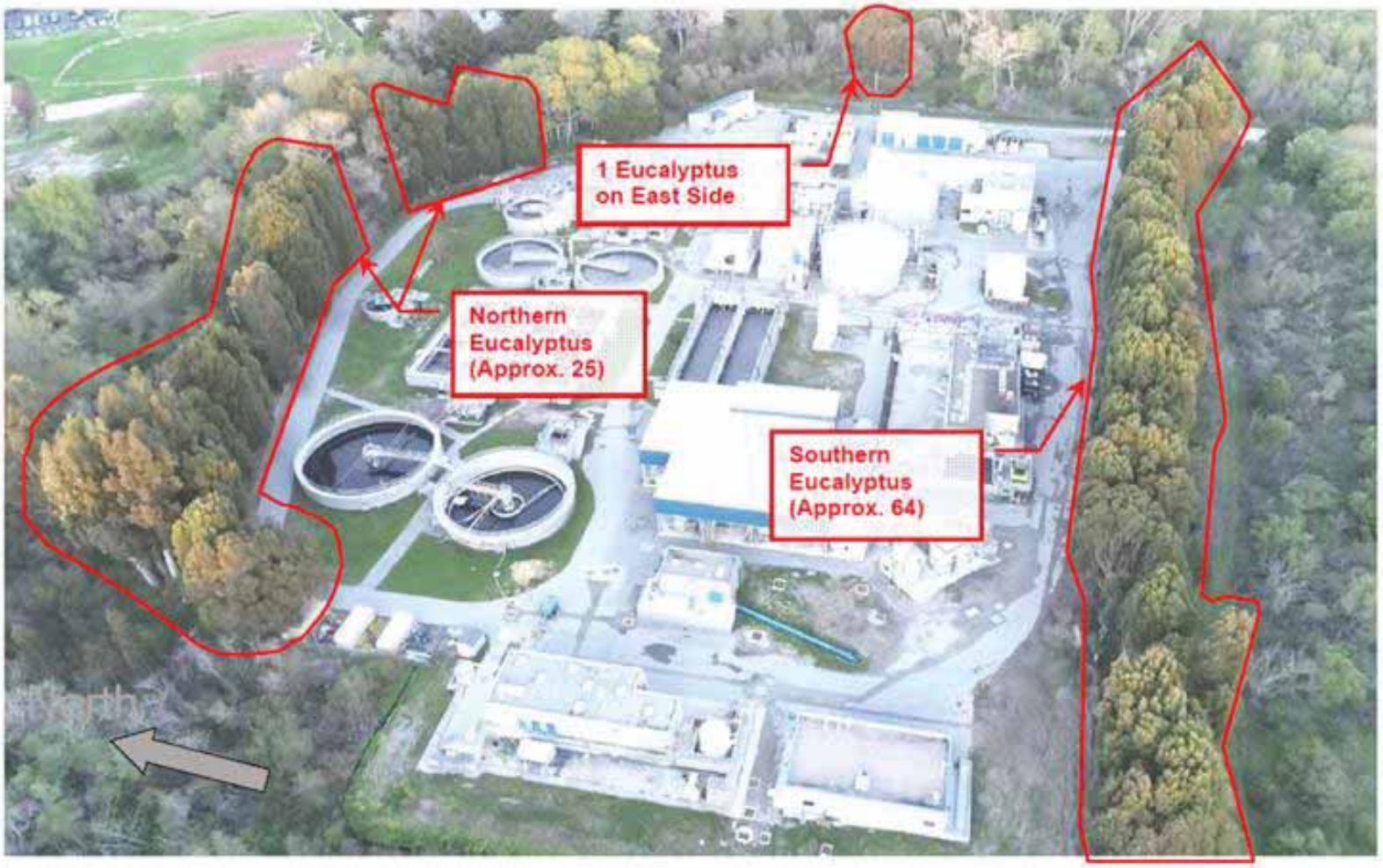


Photo 1. Aerial image of the eucalyptus trees bordering the Carmel Wastewater Treatment Plant.
(Photo courtesy of the Carmel Wastewater Treatment Plant)

Photo 2. Eucalyptus trees along the southern boundary.

Photo 3. Eucalyptus trees along the northern boundary

Photo 4. Representative canopy density of eucalyptus trees.

Photo 5. Representative understory of eucalyptus trees.

Appendix C
Record of Comments and Responses on Eucalyptus Pruning DRAFT Mitigated Negative Declaration

Patrick Treanor

From: Barbara Buikema
Sent: Saturday, January 30, 2021 8:35 AM
To: Patrick Treanor
Cc: Domine Barringer; Kristina Pacheco
Subject: FW: pruning

fyi

From: Lada Kratky <lkratky@sbcglobal.net>
Sent: Saturday, January 30, 2021 8:32 AM
To: Downstream Distrubution Group <downstream@cawd.org>
Subject: pruning

I am delighted you are pruning these messy trees. Thank you!

Lada

Patrick Treanor

From: Domine Barringer
Sent: Friday, February 5, 2021 2:11 PM
To: Patrick Treanor
Cc: Downstream Distrubution Group
Subject: FW: trees

FYI

From: Eileen Herlihy <eherlihy03@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, February 5, 2021 2:08 PM
To: Downstream Distrubution Group <downstream@cawd.org>
Subject: trees

Thank you for trimming the eucalyptus trees! We live in the Hatton Fields neighborhood and have slowly been losing our view of the pt at Pt Lobos. It is amazing how much growth has occurred in the last 5 years. We routinely prune our neighbors and our own pines and willows. We've often wondered how and when the eucalyptus might also be trimmed. As a child I grew up with these trees as wind breakers for an old citrus grove. They are messy trees. Again thank you.

--
Eileen Herlihy

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State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
(559) 243-4005
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director

March 15, 2021

Barbara Buikema, General Manager
Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD)
3945 Rio Road
Carmel, California 93922

Subject: Eucalyptus Pruning
Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND)
SCH No. 2021010383

Dear Ms. Buikema:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) received a Notice of Intent to Adopt an MND from Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD) for the Project pursuant the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and CEQA Guidelines.[1]

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding those activities involved in the Project that may affect California fish and wildlife. Likewise, we appreciate the opportunity to provide comments regarding those aspects of the Project that CDFW, by law, may be required to carry out or approve through the exercise of its own regulatory authority under the Fish and Game Code.

CDFW ROLE

CDFW is California's **Trustee Agency** for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statue for all the people of the State (Fish & G. Code, §§ 711.7, subd. (a) & 1802; Pub. Resources Code, § 21070; CEQA Guidelines § 15386, subd. (a)). CDFW, in its trustee capacity, has jurisdiction over the conservation, protection, and management of fish, wildlife, native plants, and habitat necessary for biologically sustainable populations of those species (*Id*., § 1802). Similarly, for purposes of CEQA, CDFW is charged by law to provide, as available, biological expertise during public agency environmental review efforts, focusing specifically on projects and related activities that have the potential to adversely affect fish and wildlife resources.

CDFW is also submitting comments as a **Responsible Agency** under CEQA (Pub. Resources Code, § 21069; CEQA Guidelines, § 15381). CDFW expects that it may need to exercise regulatory authority as provided by the Fish and Game Code. As

[1] CEQA is codified in the California Public Resources Code in section 21000 et seq. The "CEQA Guidelines" are found in Title 14 of the California Code of Regulations, commencing with section 15000.

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proposed, for example, the Project may be subject to CDFW's lake and streambed alteration regulatory authority (Fish & G. Code, § 1600 et seq.). Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may result in "take" as defined by State law of any species protected under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) (Fish & G. Code, § 2050 et seq.), related authorization as provided by the Fish and Game Code may be required.

Nesting Birds: CDFW has jurisdiction over actions with potential to result in the disturbance or destruction of active nest sites or the unauthorized take of birds. Fish and Game Code sections that protect birds, their eggs and nests include, §§ 3503 (regarding unlawful take, possession or needless destruction of the nest or eggs of any bird), 3503.5 (regarding the take, possession or destruction of any birds-of-prey or their nests or eggs), and 3513 (regarding unlawful take of any migratory nongame bird).

PROJECT DESCRIPTION SUMMARY

Proponent: Carmel Area Wastewater District (CAWD)

Objective: The objective of the Project is to prune existing eucalyptus trees at the CAWD Wastewater Treatment Plant. Primary Project activities include pruning of 90 full grown trees, one tree will be completely removed, while the others will be topped. The eucalyptus trees range from about 75 feet to 90 feet tall, and they will be topped to 42 feet on the southern boundary, and 52 feet along the westerly side.

Location: APN: 009-521-004. The Project is directly south of the Carmel River and approximately a half mile from the Pacific Ocean, and approximately one third of a mile from Highway 1. It is located within the CAWD Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Timeframe: Unspecified

COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CDFW offers the comments and recommendations below to assist CAWD in adequately identifying and/or mitigating the Project's significant, or potentially significant, direct and indirect impacts on fish and wildlife (biological) resources. Editorial comments or other suggestions may also be included to improve the document.

There is habitat present within and near the Project site where special-status resources may be present. These resources may need to be evaluated and addressed prior to any approvals that would allow ground-disturbing activities or land use changes. The MND indicates there is potentially significant impact unless mitigation measures are taken but the measures listed are general, and do not incorporate all potential resources that may be present. CDFW is concerned regarding potential impacts to special-status species

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including, but not limited to: the federally threatened and State species of special concern California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), and the federal candidate species monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). In order to adequately assess any potential impacts to biological resources, focused biological surveys should be conducted by a qualified wildlife biologist/botanist during the appropriate survey period(s) in order to determine whether any special-status species and/or suitable habitat features may be present within the Project area. Properly conducted biological surveys, and the information assembled from them, are essential to identify any mitigation, minimization, and avoidance measures and/or the need for additional or protocol-level surveys, especially in the areas not in irrigated agriculture, and to identify any Project-related impacts under CESA and other species of concern.

I. Environmental Setting and Related Impact

Would the Project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by CDFW or United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)?

COMMENT 1: California Red-Legged Frog (CRLF)

Issue: CRLF primarily inhabit ponds but can also be found in other waterways including marshes, streams, and lagoons, and the species will also breed in ephemeral waters (Thomson et al. 2016). CRLF have been documented to occur in the vicinity of the Project site along the Carmel River (CDFW 2021). The Project site contains habitat that may support the species. Avoidance and minimization measures may be necessary to reduce impacts to CRLF to a level that is less than significant.

Specific impact: Without appropriate avoidance and minimization measures for CRLF, potentially significant impacts associated with the Project's activities include burrow collapse, inadvertent entrapment, degradation of water quality, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs, larvae and/or young, and direct mortality of individuals.

Evidence impact would be significant: CRLF populations throughout the State have experienced ongoing and drastic declines and many have been extirpated (Thomson et al. 2016). Habitat loss from growth of cities and suburbs, invasion of nonnative plants, impoundments, water diversions, stream maintenance for flood control, degraded water quality, and introduced predators, such as bullfrogs are the primary threats to CRLF (Thomson et al. 2016, USFWS 2017). Project activities have the potential to significantly impact the species.

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Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s)
To evaluate potential impacts to CRLF, CDFW recommends conducting the following evaluation of the Project site, incorporating the following mitigation measures into the MND prepared for this Project, and that these measures be made conditions of approval for the Project.

Recommended Mitigation Measure 1: CRLF Surveys
CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist conduct surveys for CRLF in accordance with the USFWS "Revised Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog" (USFWS 2005) to determine if CRLF are within or adjacent to the Project area.

Recommended Mitigation Measure 2: CRLF Avoidance
If a qualified biologist determines that the Project site and adjacent area contains suitable habitat for CRLF, CDFW recommends that initial ground-disturbing activities be timed to avoid the period when CRLF are most likely to be moving through upland areas (October 15 and May 1). When ground-disturbing activities must take place between October 15 and May 1, CDFW recommends a qualified biologist monitor construction activity daily for CRLF if suitable habitat is present.

COMMENT 2: Monarch Butterfly

Issue: Monarchs can be found overwintering along the California coast, specifically in non-native eucalyptus trees (Pelton, 2016). Project-related activities have the potential to impact special-status species. Overwintering monarchs have been documented to occur near the Project area (CDFW 2021).

Specific impact: Without appropriate avoidance and minimization measures for the species mentioned above, potential significant impacts associated with the Project's tree trimming and tree removal activities include roost destruction, inadvertent entrapment, reduced reproductive success, reduction in health and vigor of eggs and/or larvae, and direct mortality of individual monarchs.

Evidence impact would be significant: During the last decade overwintering monarch populations have decline to nearly 90-percent (Jepsen et al, 2015). Habitat loss and fragmentation is among the primary threats to the population (USFWS 2020). Project activities have the potential to significantly impact the species by reducing possible roosting habitat.

Recommended Potentially Feasible Mitigation Measure(s)
To evaluate potential impacts of the Project to special-status species, CDFW recommends conducting the following assessment of the Project area, including the following mitigation measures, and requiring them as conditions of approval in the Project's MND.

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Recommended Mitigation Measure 3: Monarch Butterfly Habitat Assessment
CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a habitat assessment, well in advance of Project implementation, to determine if the Project area or its immediate vicinity contain habitat suitable to support monarchs.

Recommended Mitigation Measure 4: Monarch Butterfly Surveys
If suitable habitat is present, CDFW recommends assessing presence of monarchs by conducting surveys following recommended protocols or protocol-equivalent surveys. Recommended protocols vary by species.

Recommended Mitigation Measure 5: Monarch Butterfly Take Avoidance
Detection of special-status species within or in the vicinity of the Project area, warrants consultation with CDFW and USFWS to discuss how to implement ground-disturbing activities and avoid take.

II. Editorial Comments and/or Suggestions

Lake and Streambed Alteration: The Project contains activities that may result in the Project site being subject to CDFW's regulatory authority pursuant Fish and Game Code section 1600 et seq. Fish and Game Code section 1602 requires an entity to notify CDFW prior to commencing any activity that may (a) substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of any river, stream, or lake; (b) substantially change or use any material from the bed, bank, or channel of any river, stream, or lake; or (c) deposit debris, waste or other materials that could pass into any river, stream, or lake. "Any river, stream, or lake" includes those that are ephemeral or intermittent, such as the unnamed stream within the Project site, as well as those that are perennial in nature.

For additional information on notification requirements, please contact our staff in the Lake and Streambed Alteration Program at (559) 243-4593. It is important to note, CDFW is required to comply with CEQA, as a Responsible Agency, when issuing a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement (LSAA). If inadequate, or no environmental review, has occurred, for the Project activities that are subject to notification under Fish and Game Code section 1602, CDFW will not be able to issue the Final LSAA until CEQA analysis for the project is complete. This may lead to considerable Project delays.

Nesting birds: CDFW encourages that Project implementation occur during the bird non-nesting season; however, if ground-disturbing or vegetation-disturbing activities must occur during the breeding season (February through mid-September), the Project applicant is responsible for ensuring that implementation of the Project does not result in violation of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or relevant Fish and Game Codes as referenced above.

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To evaluate Project-related impacts on nesting birds, CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist conduct pre-activity surveys for active nests no more than 10 days prior to the start of ground or vegetation disturbance to maximize the probability that nests that could potentially be impacted are detected. CDFW also recommends that surveys cover a sufficient area around the Project site to identify nests and determine their status. A sufficient area means any area potentially affected by the Project. In addition to direct impacts (i.e., nest destruction), noise, vibration, and movement of workers or equipment could also affect nests. Prior to initiation of construction activities, CDFW recommends that a qualified biologist conduct a survey to establish a behavioral baseline of all identified nests. Once construction begins, CDFW recommends having a qualified biologist continuously monitor nests to detect behavioral changes resulting from the Project. If behavioral changes occur, CDFW recommends halting the work causing that change and consulting with CDFW for additional avoidance and minimization measures.

If continuous monitoring of identified nests by a qualified wildlife biologist is not feasible, CDFW recommends a minimum no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet around active nests of non-listed bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of non-listed raptors. These buffers are advised to remain in place until the breeding season has ended or until a qualified biologist has determined that the birds have fledged and are no longer reliant upon the nest or on-site parental care for survival. Variance from these no-disturbance buffers is possible when there is compelling biological or ecological reason to do so, such as when the construction area would be concealed from a nest site by topography. CDFW recommends that a qualified wildlife biologist advise and support any variance from these buffers and notify CDFW in advance of implementing a variance.

Federally Listed Species: CDFW recommends consulting with the USFWS on potential impacts to federally listed species including, but not limited to, CRLF and monarch butterfly. Take under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) is more broadly defined than CESA; take under FESA also includes significant habitat modification or degradation that could result in death or injury to a listed species by interfering with essential behavioral patterns such as breeding, foraging, or nesting. Consultation with the USFWS in order to comply with FESA is advised well in advance of any ground-disturbing activities.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATA

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental impact reports and negative declarations be incorporated into a data base which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any special status species and natural communities detected during Project surveys to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). The CNDDB field survey form can be found at the following link:

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https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Submitting-Data. The completed form can be mailed electronically to CNDDB at the following email address: CNDDB@wildlife.ca.gov. The types of information reported to CNDDB can be found at the following link: https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB/Plants-and-Animals.

FILING FEES

The Project, as proposed, would have an impact on fish and/or wildlife, and assessment of filing fees is necessary. Fees are payable upon filing of the Notice of Determination by the Lead Agency and serve to help defray the cost of environmental review by CDFW. Payment of the fee is required in order for the underlying project approval to be operative, vested, and final. (Cal. Code Regs, tit. 14, § 753.5; Fish & G. Code, § 711.4; Pub. Resources Code, § 21089.)

CONCLUSION

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the MND to assist CAWD in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources.

More information on survey and monitoring protocols for sensitive species can be found at CDFW's website (https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Survey-Protocols). Please see the enclosed Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) table which corresponds with recommended mitigation measures in this comment letter. Questions regarding this letter or further coordination should be directed to Aimee Braddock, Environmental Scientist, at (559) 243-4014, extension 243, or aimee.braddock@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:
Julie Vance
FA83F09FE08945A...

Julie A. Vance
Regional Manager

Attachment

ec: Office of Planning and Research, State Clearinghouse, Sacramento

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REFERENCES

CDFW. 2021. Biogeographic Information and Observation System (BIOS). https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Data/BIOS. Accessed March 8, 2021.

Jepsen, S., D. F. Schweitzer, B. Young, N. Sears, M. Ormes, and S. H. Black. 2015. Conservation Status and Ecology of Monarchs in the United States. 36pp. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia, and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Portland, Oregon.

Pelton, E., Jepsen, C. Schultz, C. Fallon, and S.H. Black. 2016. State of the Monarch Butterfly Overwintering Sites in California. 40+vi pp. Portland, Oregon: The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation. www.xerces.org

Thomson, R. C., A. N. Wright, and H. Bradley Shaffer, 2016. California Amphibian and Reptile Species of Special Concern. California Department of Fish and Wildlife and University of California Press.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), 2005. Revised Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog. March 2005. 26 pp.

USFWS, 2017. Species Account for California Red-legged frog. March 2017. 1 pp.

USFWS, 2020. Monarch (Danaus plexippus) Species Status Assessment Report. V2.1 96 pp + appendices.

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Attachment 1

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MONITORING AND REPORTING PROGRAM (MMRP)

PROJECT: Eucalyptus Pruning

SCH No.: 20211010383

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION MEASURE	STATUS/DATE/INITIALS
Before Disturbing Soil or Vegetation	
Mitigation Measure 1: CRLF Surveys	
Mitigation Measure 3: Monarch Butterfly Habitat Assessment	
Mitigation Measure 4: Monarch Butterfly Surveys	
During Construction	
Mitigation Measure 2: CRLF Avoidance	
Mitigation Measure 5: Monarch Butterfly Take Avoidance	

Carmel Area Wastewater District

P.O. Box 221428 Carmel California 93922 ❖ (831) 624-1248 ❖ FAX (831) 624-0811

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Robert Siegfried
Charlotte F. Townsend
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April 13, 2021

Aimee Braddock
California Department of Fish and Wildlife
Central Region
1234 East Shaw Avenue
Fresno, California 93710
aimee.braddock@wildlife.ca.gov

Dear Ms. Braddock:

Thank you for your comments on the Draft CEQA Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) for the Eucalyptus Pruning project proposed by Carmel Area Wastewater District. We will incorporate your suggested mitigations (with some enhancements) in the Final Mitigated Negative Declaration. In general, additional mitigations will include:

- project specific habitat assessments,
- pre-activity surveys,
- worker sensitivity training,
- onsite biological monitoring during the work,
- and implementation of no disturbance buffers as needed

These precautions will support the determination that the project will have no effect on California Red Legged Frog (CRLF), western monarch butterflies (monarchs) or other special status species including USFWS special status species.

Furthermore, in this letter we would like to provide further details about the proposed work including: the conditions at the site, the tree trimming methodology that will avoid ground disturbance, and other information in support of a CAWD determination that the project will have no effect on CRLF, monarchs or other special status species with mitigations incorporated.

Also, there is no need for a stream alteration permit for this project as there is no ground disturbance involved, and certainly none that impacts the banks of the Carmel River. The work is primarily occurring in the tree canopy and within the developed treatment plant site.

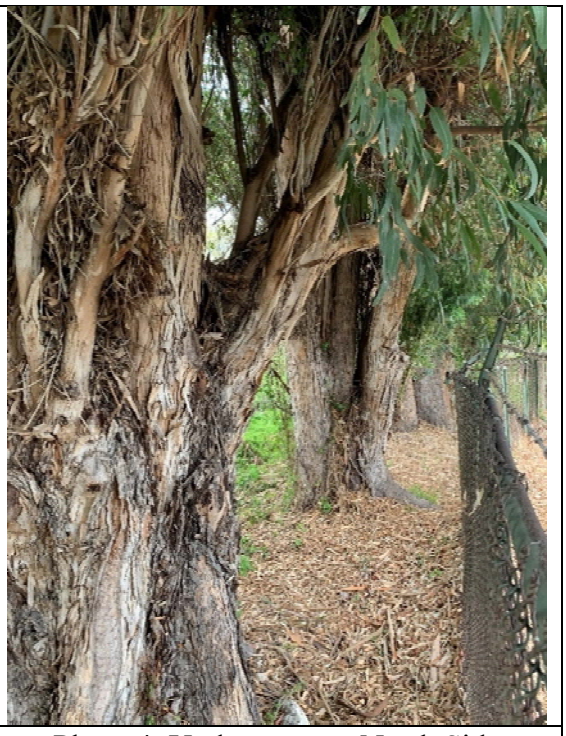
Site Conditions and Work Methods

Project avoidance measures include no ground disturbance outside of the existing developed Wastewater Treatment Plant footprint. When removing tree branches, equipment will be exclusively operated within the developed wastewater treatment plant footprint. Workers will access and remove pruned branches using manlift and crane equipment parked on developed roads inside the fence of the treatment plant. Branches will be removed and placed on the ground inside the treatment plant site (typical of areas shown in Photos 1 & 2 below). The following photos show how close the trees are to the existing roads. These roads will provide workers direct access to the tree canopy for trimming, and a location for stockpiling cut branches prior to removal from the site.

Photo 1: Line of Trees on South Side

Photo 2: Line of Trees on North Side

The understory of the eucalyptus trees is characterized by dense eucalyptus leaf and bark litter, which is allelopathic in nature, inhibiting growth of native flora. Photos 3 and 4, below, are representative of the understory of the eucalyptus trees. As mentioned in the previous paragraph there will be no ground disturbance of the understory due to the ease of accessibility from the existing road.

	
Photo 3: Understory on South Side	Photo 4: Understory on North Side

In the one location where a tree will be removed, the base of the tree is about 40 feet from the fence. A small walking trail might be used to access the base of the tree from the existing gate, but most of the access will still be by manlift parked on the paved road. Tree material would be lifted by crane to the road for processing prior to removal (See Photo 5).

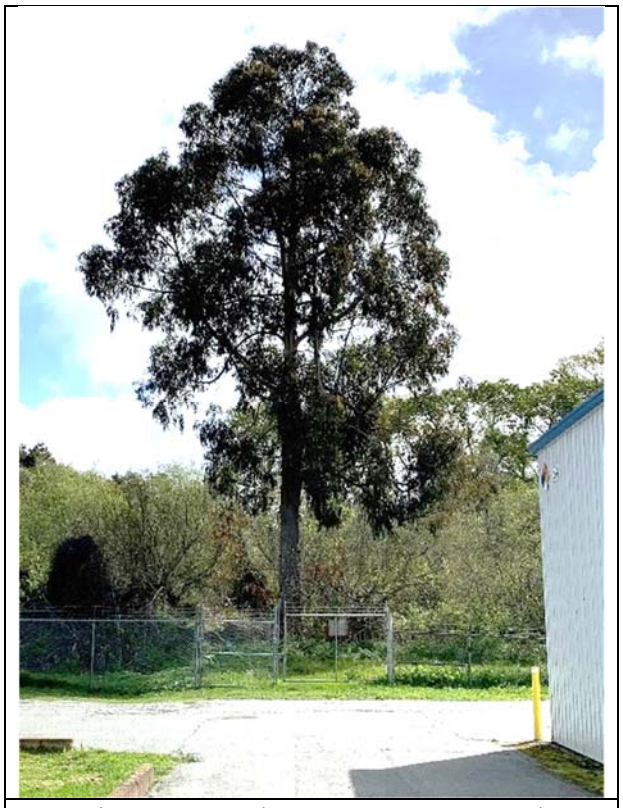


Photo 5: Eucalyptus to Be Removed

Information on Recent Site Visit by Monarch Butterfly Expert

In March 2021 a representative from the Xerxes Society of Invertebrate Conservation, who is also a local expert in Monarch overwintering habitats, came to the site to assess whether these eucalyptus trees were suitable habitat for Monarchs. Her assessment was that they were not suitable habitat due to the fact that the trees' canopy is not protected from high winds. Nonetheless, we will include requested mitigations for additional site study and avoidance measures out of an abundance of caution and to confirm the findings of the local expert.

Mitigations

The following mitigations were included in the Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration for Biological Resources:

DRAFT CEQA BIOLOGICAL MITIGATIONS

1. Perform bird survey by a qualified biologist prior to work and do not trim trees where bird nests are present. Time work to avoid the breeding and nesting seasons (after September 16 and before January 31).
2. Keep heavy equipment inside the developed area of the wastewater treatment plant.

The following mitigations will be included in the Final CEQA MND for Biological Resources.

BIOLOGICAL MITIGATION MEASURES TO BE INCLUDED IN FINAL CEQA MND

General Site Mitigation Measures

BIO-1: Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP):
Prior to tree trimming work, all personnel associated with the trimming shall attend WEAP training, conducted by a qualified biologist, to aid workers in recognizing special status species and sensitive biological resources that may occur on site. The program shall include identification of the special status species and their habitats, a description of the regulatory status and general ecological characteristics of sensitive resources, and review of the limits of the work area and Mitigation Measures required to reduce impacts to biological resources within the work area. A fact sheet conveying this information shall be prepared for distribution to all workers and other personnel involved with the tree trimming. All employees shall sign a form documenting that they have attended the WEAP and understand the information presented to them.

BIO-2: Biological Monitoring
A qualified biologist will be present during all tree trimming activities to monitor such activities for compliance and protection of all special status species and natural resources. The qualified biological monitor will have the authority to stop work in the event any special status species are encountered that may be at risk of injury or death due to project activities. The qualified biological monitor will establish appropriate buffers for any special status species discovered on site and allow these individuals to move away at their own volition before work commences. If any special status species are encountered during biological monitoring, CDFW will be immediately notified.

BIO-3: Tree Debris Stockpiles:
The tree trimming crew shall ensure that tree debris stockpiles are placed where debris cannot pass into "Waters of the State," including the Carmel River which borders the northern WWTP boundary. All tree trimming stockpiles will be inspected for special status species by the qualified biologist before and during removal from the WWTP.

BIO-4: Project Trash:
During tree trimming activities, all trash that could attract predators shall be properly contained, removed from the work area, and disposed of regularly. Following construction, all trash and construction debris shall be removed from the project site.

BIO-5: Construction/Work Hours:
All tree trimming activities shall be confined to daylight hours. Night work will be prohibited for this project.

BIO-6: California Natural Diversity Database:
Any special status species or natural communities detected during project surveys or monitoring will be reported to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB).

BIO-7: Reporting
A biological monitoring report will be developed and submitted by the qualified biologist documenting construction progress, mitigation measures implemented, and special status species encountered. Photographs of all activities will be included to support documentation.

Species Specific Mitigation Measures

Nesting Birds
BIO-8: Nesting Birds Avoidance Timing:
Work will be timed to occur after September 16 and before January 31 to avoid the bird nesting season.

BIO-9: Nesting Birds Survey:
A qualified biologist will conduct a pre-activity bird survey no more than 10 days prior to start of vegetation disturbance work. Surveys will include identification of any nests in nearby trees to determine if these nests may be disturbed by the work. The survey will include establishing a behavioral baseline of all identified nests.

BIO-10: Nesting Birds Avoidance:
If active nests are discovered during the non-nesting season when work is to occur, a qualified biologist will continuously monitor nests during the work to detect behavioral changes resulting from the work. If behavioral changes occur, work that is causing the behavioral change will be halted. If continuous monitoring is not feasible a no-disturbance buffer of 250 feet will be established around active nests of bird species and a 500-foot no-disturbance buffer around active nests of raptors. Inactive raptor nests, if discovered in a eucalyptus tree to be trimmed, would not be disturbed. A qualified wildlife biologist will advise and support any variance from these buffers and notify California Department of Fish and Wildlife in advance of implementing a variance.

California Red-legged Frog
BIO-11: California Red-legged Frog Initial Site Assessment:
Prior to award of tree trimming work, a qualified wildlife biologist will conduct surveys for CRLF in accordance with the USFWS "Revised Guidance on Site Assessment and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog" (USFWS 2005) to determine if CRLF are within or adjacent to the project area.

BIO-12: California Red-legged Frog Pre-activity Survey
A qualified biologist will conduct a pre-activity survey for CRLF no more than 48 hours prior to the start of vegetation disturbance. In the event a CRLF is discovered during the preconstruction survey, CDFW will be immediately notified, avoidance buffers will be established, and the frog will be monitored until it has move on at its own volition.

BIO-13: California Red-legged Frog Avoidance
Each morning, before the beginning of work, a qualified biologist will inspect the work area (including under staged equipment and vehicles) for any life stage of CRLF. All staging and storage areas for equipment, materials, fuels, lubricants and solvents, shall be located inside of the WWTP property on previously areas cleared by the qualified biologist. A qualified biologist will monitor the work site on an ongoing basis for CRLF. If individuals are discovered and are likely to be killed or injured by work activities, a no disturbance buffer will be established, and the special status species will be allowed to move away at its own volition before work can commence in the area. Any sightings and/or injuries of CRLF shall be immediately reported to CDFW.

BIO-14: Non-native Species:
If non-native predators of the California red-legged frog, such as bullfrogs, are encountered during project activities, they shall be captured and permanently removed from within the project limits during project activities, and if such activities follow State laws.

Western Monarch Butterfly
BIO-15: Monarch Butterfly Initial Habitat Assessment:
Prior to award of tree trimming work a qualified wildlife biologist will conduct a habitat assessment to determine if the project area or its immediate vicinity contain habitat suitable to support monarchs.

BIO-16: Monarch Butterfly Surveys:
If suitable habitat is present, the presence of monarchs will be assessed no more than 10 days prior to start of vegetation disturbance work by conducting surveys following recommended protocols, or protocol-equivalent surveys.

BIO-17: Monarch Butterfly Avoidance:
Detection of monarchs within or in the vicinity of the Project area will trigger consultation with CDFW and USFWS to discuss how to implement the project while avoiding take. A biological monitor will be on site fulltime during tree trimming activities and in the event that monarchs are discovered, work will immediately halt. Consultation with CDFW and USFWS will commence for advice on how to proceed.

Other Special Status Species
BIO-18: Other Special Status Species Assessment and Avoidance:
Other special status species (i.e. USFWS IPaC listed species) will be assessed to evaluate presence/absence of suitable habitat. If any other special status species are encountered during preconstruction surveys or biological monitoring, CDFW will be immediately notified. Appropriate avoidance buffers will be established until the individual(s) have moved away at its own volition before work can commence.

In conclusion, we expect the above mitigations, along with the non-invasive methodologies to be employed, will confirm that the eucalyptus pruning work will not have an adverse effect on special status species. We anticipate filing a notice of

determination for the MND, including payment of the associated fees to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Thank you,

Patrick Treanor, P.E.
Plant Engineer