



EST. 1990

15555 Main Street, #D4-235
Hesperia, CA 92345
(760) 956-9212
rarnold@rcaassociatesllc.com
www.rcaassociatesllc.com

May 20, 2020

Mr. Matthew Poonamallee
Ecological Resources Specialist II
County of Riverside, Planning Department
Environmental Programs Division
4080 Lemon Street, 12th Floor
Riverside, CA 92501

RE: Riverside County Case File #CUP 200002 (APN 480-462-004), City of Winchester, California. RCA#2019-90Update

Dear Mr. Poonamallee:

The project proponent, Aziz, LLC contracted with our firm to conduct updated biological surveys on the site referenced above. The purpose of the updated survey was to determine if site conditions had changed since a previously approved Biological Resources Assessment and HANS analysis (HANS00335) in 2003. The 2003 analysis was conducted by Glenn Lukos Associates (Dated October 27, 2003). The 2003 analysis was conducted on a 29.3-acre (Tract 31330) (APN 467-240-0140) property located within the French Valley area of western Riverside County. The site was located northwest of Winchester Road, east of Leon Road, and south of Jean Nicholas Road.

The updated surveys and analysis were performed by RCA Associates, Inc. on January 6, 2020 on a 2.9-acre parcel (APN 4804-004) which was part of the area previously evaluated by Glenn Lukos Associates. The purpose of the 2020 survey was to evaluate the existing conditions on the 2.9-acre parcel in question, and to compare the existing conditions with those which were encountered in 2003 by biologists from Glenn Lukos Associates. This updated report prepared by RCA Associates, Inc. describes the results of the site visit conducted on January 6, 2020. The updated surveys assessed the property for the potential to support special-status species, and the presence of other sensitive biological resources protected by local, state, and federal laws and regulations.

The 2020 updated assessment included a review of pertinent literature, a review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), field investigations, and analysis of potential impacts to biological resources. Prior to conducting the field investigations, a literature review was conducted of all available background data as well as the environmental setting of the project

Mr. Matthew Poonamallee
Ecological Resources Specialist II
Environmental Programs, Planning Department
County of Riverside
Page 2

site. The literature reviewed included, but was not limited to, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA 1971) Soil Survey for the project site, U.S. Fish, and Wildlife Service (USFWS) data sources, and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB, 2020). The closest recorded location of sensitive species was determined through a five-mile radius query of the CNDDDB (2019). A search of the CNDDDB database was conducted for the Winchester USGS quadrangle and the surrounding eight quadrangles.

The property site has been disturbed by past human activities, and has been cleared of native vegetation in previous years. The property supports a very disturbed plant community and is flat with a slight slope to the south. The project site is located within an area of the City of Winchester that has been developed and/or disturbed over the last two decades. Vegetation on the site was limited with yellow-green matchweed (*Gutierrezia sarothrae*), sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), and various grass species (*Festuca* sp., *Avena* sp., and *Bromus* sp.) the dominant species. Other plants scattered throughout the site included sage (*Salvia mellifera*), buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), Encelia (*Encelia farinosa*), and fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*). Several western yellow pine trees (*Pinus jeffreyi*) and ornamental shrubs (unidentified) have been planted along the southern and western edge of the property.

Conclusion:

1. The site exhibited signs of heavily degradation in 2003 including signs of past agricultural activities and had numerous areas which supported ruderal vegetation. Similar conditions were noted during the 2020 surveys.
2. The site did not support any native habitats either in 2003 nor were any native habitats observed in 2020.
3. No State or federal listed or special status plant or wildlife species or sensitive habitats were observed in 2003 nor were any special status species or sensitive habitats observed during the 2020 survey. In addition, the property did not contain any vernal pools, urban/wildlands interface areas, riparian habitats, or wildlife linkages during the surveys conducted in 2003 and 2020.
4. The 2003 surveys characterized the area encompassing the 2.9-acre parcel evaluated by RCA Associates, Inc. in 2020 as supporting “sparse ruderal vegetation.” The parcel in question has not changed since 2003 and currently supports ruderal vegetation very similar to that document in 2003.

Mr. Matthew Poonamallee
Ecological Resources Specialist II
Environmental Programs Division, Planning Department
County of Riverside
Page 3

Based on the 2020 evaluation, it is the opinion of RCA Associates, Inc. the current site conditions have not changed significantly since the initial analysis in 2003, and the conclusions discussed in the 2003 MSHCP Consistency Analysis and the Biological Resources Assessment Report are still valid and accurate. Based on our review of the 2003 report and the additional site surveys conducted in 2020, an additional full habitat assessment and HANS analysis are deemed unnecessary. If any sensitive species are observed on the property during future development activities, Riverside County, CDFW and USFWS (as applicable) should be contacted to discuss specific mitigation measures which may be required for the individual species.

We appreciate the opportunity to submit this updated report for your review, and if you have any questions please don't hesitate to contact me at (760) 956-9212 or (760) 596-0017.

Sincerely,

Randall Arnold

Randall C. Arnold, Jr.
Principal & Senior Biologist
Certified Associate Wildlife Biologist