



State of California – Natural Resources Agency
DEPARTMENT OF FISH AND WILDLIFE
Northern Region
601 Locust Street
Redding, CA 96001
www.wildlife.ca.gov

GAVIN NEWSOM, Governor
CHARLTON H. BONHAM, Director



April 3, 2025

Danny Castro
Associate Planner
City of Redding
777 Cypress Avenue
Redding, CA 96001
dcastro@cityofredding.org

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF CANBY APARTMENTS, CITY OF REDDING, STATE CLEARING HOUSE NUMBER 2025030123

Dear Danny Castro:

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) has reviewed the Initial Study and Mitigated Negative Declaration (ISMND), dated March 3, 2025, for the above-referenced project (Project). CDFW appreciates this opportunity to comment on the Project, pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines¹.

CDFW's Role

CDFW is California's Trustee Agency for fish and wildlife resources and holds those resources in trust by statute 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 Agency 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. Likewise, to the extent implementation of the Project as proposed may

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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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.) or state listed rare plants pursuant to the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA; Fish & G. Code, § 1900 et seq.), authorization as provided by the applicable Fish and Game Code may be required.

Project Description:

The Project activities are described in the ISMND including the following:

The Project, as described in the ISMND, is requesting approval of a Site Development Permit Application SDP-2023-00085 to construct a 120-unit housing facility on two currently undeveloped parcels totaling 8.04 acres, located at the northwest corner of Canby Road and Browning Street, addressed as 990 and 930 Canby Road. The ISMND describes the Project area to include approximately 4.23 acres of annual grasslands, 3.39 acres of blue oak woodlands, 0.61 developed/disturbed, and 0.20 acres of riparian habitat.

Comments and Recommendations

In August 2023, CDFW responded to an early consultation solicitation from the City of Redding (Lead Agency). CDFW staff have since reviewed the ISMND with updated attachments and proposed avoidance and minimization measures (AMM's).

Crotch's Bumble Bee

As stated in CDFW's August communication, on September 30, 2022, the California Fish and Game Commission accepted a petition to list Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*; CBB) as endangered under CESA, advancing the species to the candidacy stage of the CESA listing process. Candidate species are granted full protection under CESA during this period. Take of any endangered, threatened, or candidate species that results from the Project is prohibited, except as authorized by state law (Fish & G. Code, §§ 86, 2062, 2067, 2068, 2080, 2085; Cal. Code Regs., tit. 14, § 786.9). Additionally, CBB has a state ranking of S2, of which are imperiled and extremely rare (often five or fewer populations) and is listed as an invertebrate of conservation priority under the Terrestrial and Vernal Pool Invertebrates of Conservation Priority.

This Project bisects this species' recently updated distribution range. As stated in Section 5.4.2.6 of the Revised Biological Resources Assessment for the Redding Canby Apartments Project, the Project area contains suitable habitat for CBB. Oak woodlands, annual grasslands, and riparian habitats all serve as

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potential nesting, overwintering, and foraging habitat for CBB. The ISMND does not offer AMM's for CBB.

Until the recent petition for CESA listing, bumble bees were not widely surveyed for, although efforts are underway to improve survey coverage for the species. Therefore, the lack of CNDDDB occurrences cannot be used to justify the species' lack of potential to occur in the Project area. With the Project's proposed activities including permanent removal of blue oak woodland and grassland habitat, this Project has the potential to significantly impact CBB habitat and could result in take as defined in Fish and Game Code, section 86, which is prohibited under Fish and Game Code, section 2080. Therefore, further analysis of this Projects potentially significant impacts is warranted to avoid potential significant impacts to the species.

Without appropriate AMM's, direct mortality and potentially significant indirect impacts associated with ground and vegetation-disturbing activities may occur as a result of Project activities. Due to potentially suitable habitat throughout the Project site and the potential for significant impacts to CBB with the implementation of this Project CBB, protocol level surveys should be performed by a qualified biologist in accordance with [June 2023 Survey Considerations for California Endangered Species Act \(CESA\) Candidate Bumble Bee Species](#)².

Please note, conducting protocol-level surveys for CESA-listed species before finalizing an environmental document is important to ensure an accurate environmental assessment is performed, avoid inadequate mitigation decisions, and to accurately comply with CESA regulatory requirements. Surveys will help to identify species presence, preventing potentially costly Project modifications, delays, or the need for CESA permitting. Conducting these surveys prior to Project approval supports a comprehensive approval process and minimizes the likelihood of potentially costly Project revisions.

Oak Woodland and Redding Checkerbloom

As discussed in the ISMND, the Project area contains approximately 3.39 acres of oak woodland habitat, with a population of Redding checkerbloom (*Sidalcea celata*) growing in association with the oak woodland.

² <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=213150&inline>

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Blue oak woodland is classified as a State Rank 4 [Sensitive Natural Community](#)³, which are at moderate risk of extinction due to restricted range, relatively few populations, low regeneration, overall ecological benefits and their susceptibility to long term climatic changes. The ongoing loss of oak woodlands throughout Shasta County without adequate mitigation is resulting in a cumulative total loss of oak woodlands in our region. The Redding checkerbloom is listed as California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Rare Plant Rank 3. For some Rank 3 species, CNPS lacks the necessary information to assign these plants to one of the other ranks or reject them. The 2012 CNPS status review of Redding checkerbloom ranked the species as a 3 not because of taxonomic issues, but because of the uncertainty about its distribution.

The MND offers Bio-1, which proposes consultation with CDFW to develop a mitigation and/or avoidance strategy for Redding checkerbloom prior to ground disturbing activities. CDFW staff supports the avoidance of Redding checkerbloom and looks forward to further consultation regarding AMM's to be implemented for the reduction of impacts to this species.

The ISMND does not offer AMM's for the permanent removal of blue oak woodland and only discusses removal of oaks from the City of Redding Tree Management Ordinance perspective, not from a CEQA level of significance perspective. While CDFW staff are pleased to see 69 oak trees will be used in the landscape plan of the Project, landscape trees do not adequately address the loss of the habitat type. While CDFW staff understand this Project area occurs in an otherwise urban landscape, the 3.39 acres of oak woodland habitat that remains, providing ecosystem services to local botanical and wildlife species. CDFW recommends the Lead Agency consult the [Oak Woodland Impact Decision Matrix](#)⁴ for most appropriate mitigation considerations for this Project's oak woodland impacts.

Since comprehensive onsite oak woodland habitat establishment appears infeasible, offsite oak woodland mitigation strategies should be considered as a condition of this Project's approval by the Lead Agency. Such mitigation could benefit both the oak woodland habitat and Redding checkerbloom from impacts of this Project. Oak woodlands may be mitigated by establishing a conservation easement to offset impacts to oak woodlands (acres protected

³ <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP/Natural-Communities#sensitive%20natural%20communities>

⁴ https://docs.vcrma.org/images/pdf/planning/bio/Oak_Impact_Matrix.pdf

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to acres affected at a minimum 3:1 ratio) or contributions to an appropriate compensation fee to an Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, such as those managed by the [California Wildlife Conservation Board](#)⁵. The goal of mitigation should be to effectively attain no net loss of oak woodland habitat.

If mitigation for the direct and indirect impacts of oak woodland habitat includes onsite/offsite establishment and/or restoration, the Lead Agency should condition the formulation of a Habitat Restoration Plan, or similar, prior to the approval of land modification, which would explicitly quantify the number of trees to be removed, acres of habitat impacted, trees to be planted, monitoring and success criteria, and any additional onsite/offsite mitigation strategies, to be reviewed and approved by CDFW.

California Endangered Species Act

This Project has the potential to impact CESA-listed species, including CBB. Please be advised that a [CESA permit](#)⁶ must be obtained if the Project has the potential to result in "take" (hunt, pursue, catch, capture, kill, or attempt thereof) of plants or animals listed under CESA, either during construction or over the life of the project. Issuance of a CESA permit is subject to CEQA documentation; the CEQA document must specify impacts, mitigation measures, and a mitigation monitoring and reporting program. If the Project has the potential to result in the take of a CESA-listed species, early consultation is encouraged, as significant modification to the Project may be necessary to minimize and fully mitigate impacts as required by Fish and Game Code, section 2081 (b)(2).

Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement

Little Churn Creek and its associated riparian habitat flows through the northern part of the Project area. Please note that Project activities may be subject to Fish and Game Code section 1602, which requires any person, state or local governmental agency, or public utility to notify CDFW prior to beginning any activity that may do one or more of the following:

- Substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or
- Substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or

⁵ <https://wcb.ca.gov/Programs/Oaks>

⁶ <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/CESA/Permitting>

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- Deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it may pass into any river, stream, or lake.

Lake and Streambed Alteration Program staff are available to assist and can be contacted at r1lsaredding@wildlife.ca.gov. To obtain information about the 1602 Notification process, please access the [Lake and Streambed Alteration Program](#)⁷.

Submitting Data

CEQA requires that information developed in environmental documents is incorporated into a database which may be used to make subsequent or supplemental environmental determinations. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21003, subd. (e).) Accordingly, please report any observation of special status species to the CNDDDB. Use this link to access the [CNDDDB field survey form](#)⁸ and this link for additional information on the type of [information reported to CNDDDB](#)⁹. Additionally, a copy of the form should be sent to the Northern Region office at R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov.

Promoting Collaboration

CDFW is charged with preserving and protecting the state's diverse ecosystems and wildlife; therefore, CDFW maintains a strong commitment to collaborate with local government entities. CDFW is enthusiastic to continue assisting the Lead Agency in implementing comprehensive avoidance and minimization for the benefit of California's sensitive resources and aligning regulatory frameworks and appreciates the collaboration thus far.

⁷ <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Environmental-Review/LSA>

⁸ <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/fieldSurvey/default.aspx>

⁹ <https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDDB/Submitting-Data>

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Conclusion

CDFW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the MND to assist the Lead Agency in identifying and mitigating Project impacts on biological resources. If you have any questions, please contact Erika Iacona, Senior Environmental Scientist (Specialist) by email at R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:

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Tina Bartlett, Regional Manager
Northern Region

ec: George Schmidbauer, Danco Communities
georgeschmidbauer@gmail.com

State Clearing House
State.Clearinghouse@opr.ca.gov

Erika Iacona, California Department of Fish and Wildlife
R1CEQARedding@wildlife.ca.gov