A BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES SURVEY REPORT

for the

PROSPECT ESTATES II PROJECT

Santee, California

Prepared for

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INTRODUCTION

This report addresses biological resources, anticipated project-related impacts, and recommended mitigation measures relating to biological resources associated with the Prospect Estates II Project in the City of Santee in San Diego County, California (Figure 1). The subject project site is an approximately 6.83-acre property situated north of Prospect Avenue and east of Marrokal Lane in Santee (Figures 2 and 3). Complete site development is proposed, resulting in impacts to 100% of this small property.

SITE AND PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The Prospect Estates II Project ("Project") is located in the southwestern part of the City, immediately north of Prospect Avenue and fronting Marrokal Lane. Mission Gorge Road is a short distance to the north, with California State Route (SR) 52 about 750 feet from the northern property line. SR 125 is about 1,600 feet to the east. The San Diego River is located a short distance to the north across SR 52. The Project site, which consists of two parcels (APN 383-112-32 & -55), is flat to gently sloping to the north. The northern parcel (APN 383-112-55) is developed with a rural residential home, a driveway, barn, greenhouses, and mature landscape trees and shrubs covering the majority of the property. The southern parcel (APN 383-112-32) was disturbed in the recent past by grading and the stockpiling of material, which took place in late 2002 to early 2003. These modifications include a manufactured pad, some related infrastructure, signs of soil import, etc. Access to the northern parcel is currently provided off Prospect Avenue, a public road that runs along a portion of the southern property edge. Access to the southern parcel is from Marrokal Lane, an unimproved road that runs along the western property edge. One hundred percent of the Project site supports either development or disturbance-responsive vegetation including weedy and ruderal species. Elevations on the property range between approximately 339 feet MSL at the north and 375 feet MSL at the south. A single soil-type is mapped as occurring onsite - Diablo Clay (DaC) on slopes between 2 to 9 percent - although the aforementioned site grading and soil import on the southern parcel has buried most of this material. Diablo Clay is known to support rare and endemic plants.

The Project as proposed would result in the creation of 38 residential condominiums and 15 single-family residential lots along with improvements to Marrokal Lane and Prospect Avenue, the construction of new roads (Lot D), common-area landscaping, a bioretention basin to manage runoff, a park site (Lot C), and the construction of infrastructure such as electrical lines, waterlines, gas lines, and other utilities. Future site access would come off Marrokal Lane, Prospect Avenue, and roads associated with Prospect Estates, Phase I.

PURPOSE OF STUDY

The purpose of this study is to (1) assemble a species inventory of the subject property, identify and map all onsite habitats/plant communities, and identify and map any signs of any special status plants or animals that could occur onsite, and; (2) identify and quantify project-related impacts and proposed mitigation, as necessary, to bring the project into conformance with the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), the City's draft Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Subarea Plan, and other local, state, and federal regulations.

METHODS

Biological field surveys of the Project site, including a general site survey, a species inventory, and a directed survey for sensitive plants, were completed for the southern parcel in the late fall of 2015. A survey of the northern parcel was completed in the spring of 2017. All studies were conducted by the author (VS) and/or Brandon Myers (BM), Field Assistant, on the dates and under the weather conditions presented in Table 1:

Table 1. Field Surveys – Prospect Estates II Project

Date	Hours	Personnel	Conditions
29 September 2015	13:30-14:30	VS	clear, high 70°s, no wind
6 November 2015	09:00-11:00	VS, BM	clear, high 60°s, no wind
11 May 2017	11:00-13:55	VS	clear, low 70°s, light wind

All areas of the property were slowly walked on each survey day, and all plants, animals, and habitats were identified in the field. Because of the season of the surveys and the methods used (visual and auditory identifications only), some of the plants and many of the cryptic or migratory animals, which might have been observed at other times or by using other techniques, were not detected. Animal activity was moderate, although some of the animal detections were based on characteristic signs of inhabitance, rather than a visual sighting of the specimens themselves.

RESULTS

Habitats/Plant Communities

A single ecotonal habitat or plant community was identified in association with the Project site (Figures 3 and 4). This is Disturbed/Developed Habitat.

Disturbed/Developed Habitat (Holland Code 11300/12000) - 6.83 acre
Disturbed/Developed Habitat (DDH) covers the entire Project site. This habitat supports various weedy annuals including Stinkwort *(Dittrichia graveolens)*, Russian Thistle *(Salsola pestifer),* Silver-leaf Nightshade (*Solanum elaeagnifolium),* Black Mustard *(Brassica nigra)*, and many others. Ornamental landscape plants on the northern parcel include Bottlebrush (*Melaleuca* sp.), Peruvian Pepper Tree *(Schinus molle),* European Olive, *(Olea europa)*, Mexican Palo Verde (*Parksonia aculeata*), Canary Island Palm (*Phoenix canariensis*), and many more. A few natives, including Toyon *(Heteromeles arbutifolia)*, Engelmann Oak *(Quercus engelmannii)*, and Lemonadeberry *(Rhus integrifollia)* were planted onsite and have been used as part of the landscaping. About twenty Coast Live Oaks *(Quercus agrifolia)*, again all planted, are found on this parcel as well. This property was first developed in the late 1950s, with full conversion to rural residential use in the early 1960s. Prior to that, the site probably supported a Native Grassland with few if any shrubs and no trees. The biological resource value of the DDH currently found on this site habitat-type is low.

Flora and Fauna

The flora and fauna identified during the survey is typical of disturbed areas in the Santee area. Nearly all of the plants and animals associated with the property are locally-common, although one rarely-reported but widely-distributed species of plant (Small-flowered Morning-glory) was observed in low numbers.

Seventy-one species of plants and twenty species of animals were detected during the field surveys of the project site (Table 3). The plants observed are expected to represent at least 80-90 percent of the naturalized species occurring on this property. Common species are those listed above in the habitat description, with both parcels dominated by either weeds or ornamental landscaping. The animals observed likely represent only about 10-20 percent of the total site fauna, as most of the animals (particularly invertebrates and nocturnal or burrowing species) are cryptic and difficult to detect. Common animals onsite include Desert Cottontail *(Sylvilagus audubonii)*, Valley Pocket Gopher *(Thomomys bottae)*, Side-blotched Lizard *(Uta stansburiana)*, Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), and California Towhee (Pipilo crissalis).

SENSITIVE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Sensitive Vegetation Communities

Vegetation communities (habitats) are generally considered "sensitive" if they; *(a)* are recognized by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as being locally depleted; *(b)* are considered rare within the region by local experts, *(c)* are known to support sensitive animal or plant species, including Listed Species; and/or *(d)* they are known to serve as important wildlife corridors. These sensitive habitats are typically depleted throughout their known ranges, or are localized and/or highly fragmented.

The vegetation on the Project site is not sensitive and is not considered a significant biological resource for analysis purposes in this report.

Sensitive Plants and Animals

A single sensitive plant species (Small-flowered Morning-glory) and a single sensitive animal species (Monarch) were observed on the Project site during the field surveys. Sensitive plants are those listed as "Rare", "Endangered", "Threatened", "of Special Concern", or otherwise noteworthy by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), or other conservation agencies, organizations, or local botanists.

- Small-flowered Morning-glory *(Convolvulus simulans)* is a locally rare but regionally common species of flowering annual with small pink flowers and a prostrate growth-form. It is fairly wide-spread on clay soils in California and Arizona, as well as in Baja California, Mexico. *C. simulans* has been assigned a California Rare Plant Ranking (CRPR) of 4.2, meaning that it is on the State of California's "Watch List - Plants of Limited Distribution" as defined by the CNPS. Only two specimens were observed during the survey, and it is likely that this species is being managed as a weed by the current property owners. Because of its relatively low degree of sensitivity and the low numbers observed, *C. simulans* is not considered a significant site resource.

- Monarch *(Danaus plexippus)* is a large and well-known species of butterfly. A single Monarch was observed flying across the middle of the site during the survey. Monarchs fly in search of milkweed (*Asclepias)* plants upon which to lay their eggs. Milkweed does not occur on this site, so it is likely that this specimen was dispersing to other areas. Monarch does not currently have legal protection, although the California Department of Fish and Wildlife recognizes it as a "Special-status Invertebrate" and it is currently a Candidate for federal listing as a "Threatened Species" under the Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). In any case, the subject project site does not support any Monarch habitat in terms of either foraging or overwintering.

Certain other sensitive plants and animals are known from the vicinity of the property. Plants include San Diego Ambrosia *(Ambrosia pumila)* and Graceful Tarplant *(Holocarpha virgata* ssp. *elongata)*, both of which were searched for during the site surveys as they are resident on the adjoining property to the east. Other sensitive plants known from the area include San Diego Thorn Mint *(Acanthomintha ilicifolia)*, San Diego Sagewort *(Artemisia palmeri)*, Orcutt's Brodiaea *(Brodiaea orcuttii)*, Long-spinned Spineflower *(Chorizanthe polygonoides* var. *longispina)*, Palmer's Grapplinghook *(Harpagonella palmeri)*, and others. Sensitive vertebrates known from the area, in habitat similar to that found onsite, might include Coronado Skink, Red-shouldered Hawk, Cooper's Hawk, and several other wide-ranging species, including various native bats, and others. None of these were encountered in spite of a directed search, and none are expected given the nature of the Project site.

Jurisdictional Wetlands and Waters

The Project site does not support any jurisdictional wetlands and "waters". No areas on Project site qualifies as jurisdictional wetlands or "waters", which are subject to regulation by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Development of the Project site, as currently proposed, will result in certain measurable losses of a biological resource values found in association with this property. These losses would be a direct result of site development and related activities. All anticipated losses would be associated with the conversion of vacant land to residential homesites, including grading to construct residential pads and City-required infrastructure (roads, etc.), ornamental landscaping, and other improvements. Impacts are assessed at a level which is either "significant" or "less than significant" as defined by CEQA. Also, an assessment is made as to whether or not project-related impacts are fully mitigable. In this instance, all anticipated Project impacts are considered "less than significant".

The project as proposed will directly impact:

- 6.83 acres of Disturbed/Developed Habitat
- Two "low priority" sensitive species that were detected in low numbers

As stated, this loss is considered "less than significant", as defined by CEQA. Mitigation for impacts to this resource is not required pursuant to the requirements of the City's Interim Take Authorization Agreement with the Wildlife Agencies (California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) or CEQA.

An Impact/Mitigation Analysis for the Project is presented in Table 2.

RECOMMENDED MITIGATION

No habitat-based or species-based mitigation for direct impacts to Disturbed/Developed Habitat is recommended.

In order to protect and avoid impacts to potential wildlife nursery sites, standard seasonal restrictions on clearing and grading should be implemented. Therefore, site brushing, grading, and/or the removal of vegetation within 300 feet of any potential migratory songbird nesting location, including nesting locations for ground-nesting birds, will not be permitted during the spring/summer migratory songbird breeding season, defined as from 15 February to 31 August of each year. This is required in order to ensure compliance with the Sections 3503, 3503.5, 3511, and 3513 of the California Fish and Game Code and the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Limiting activities to the non-breeding season will minimize chances for the incidental take of migratory songbirds or raptors. Should it be necessary to conduct brushing, grading, or other site activities during the songbird breeding season, a preconstruction nesting survey of all areas within 300 feet of the proposed activity will be required. The results of the survey will be provided in a report to the Director, City of Santee Planning Department, for concurrence with the conclusions and recommendations.

Table 2. Impact/Mitigation Analysis – The Prospect Estates II Project

Biological Resource	Pre-development Resource	Resource Impacts (Post-development)	Mitigation Required
Disturbed/Developed Habitat	6.83 acres	6.83 acres	none
Totals	**6.83 acres**	**6.83 acres**	**none**

REFERENCES

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Figure 1. Vicinity: The Prospect Estates II Project, Santee

Figure 2. Regional Location: The Prospect Estates II Project

U.S.G.S. "La Mesa" 7.5′ Quadrangle Map

Figure 3. Aerial Photo with Biological Resources:

The Prospect Estates II Project

Figure 4. Site Plan with Biological Resources: The Prospect Estates II Project

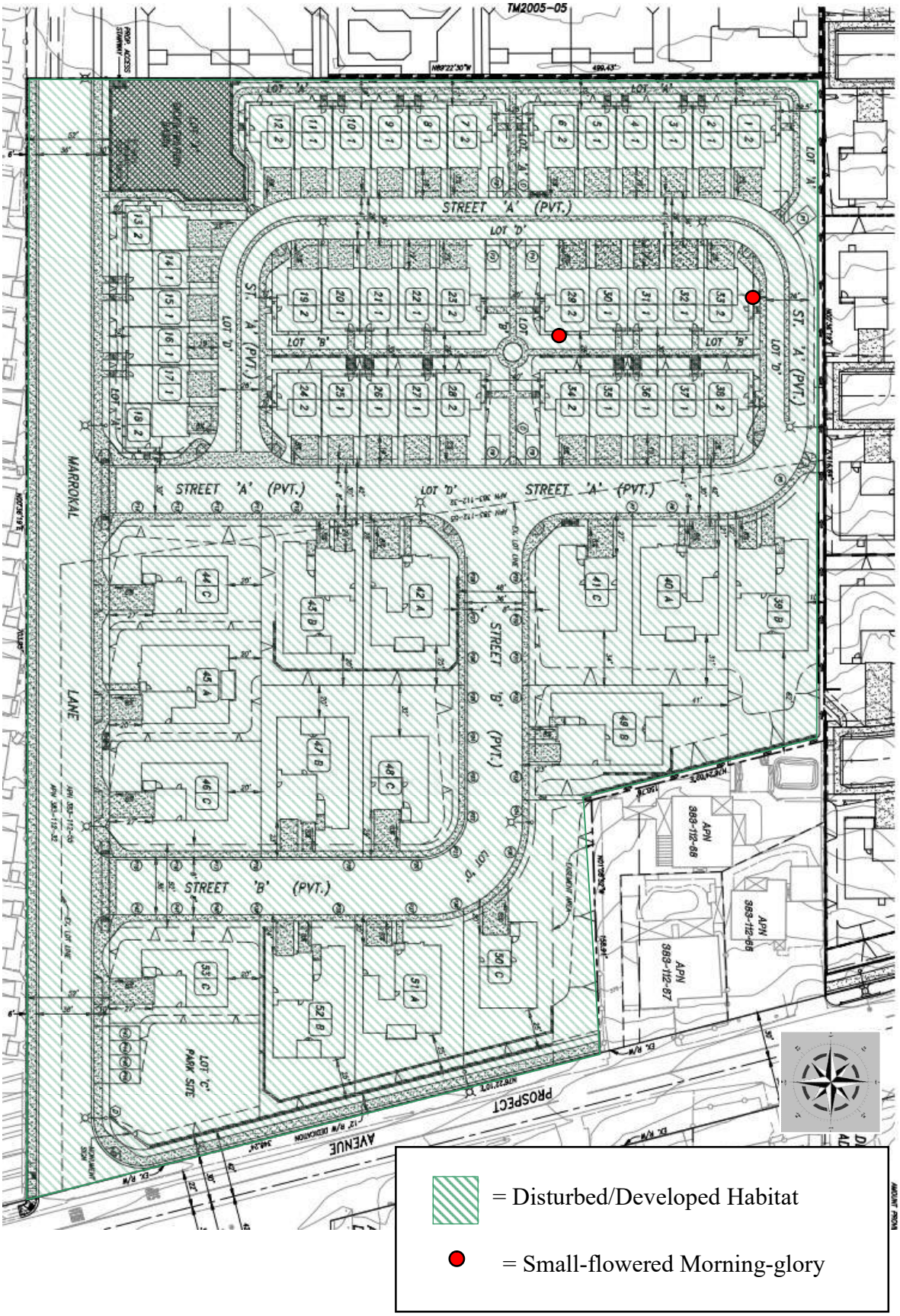

Table 3. Flora and Fauna Detected – The Prospect Estates II Project

Scientific Name	Common Name
Plants	
Acacia longifolia *	Golden Wattle Acacia
Amaranthus albus *	White Tumbleweed
Amsinckia intermedia	Common Fiddleneck
Anagallis arvensis *	Scarlet Pimpernel
Atriplex semibaccata *	Australian Saltbush
Baccharis glutinosa	Mule Fat
Baccharis sarothroides	Broom Baccharis
Bauhinia variegata *	Orchid Tree
Brachypodium distachyon *	Purple False-brome
Brassica nigra *	Black Mustard
Centaurea melitensis *	Tocalote
Clarkia epilobioides	Canyon Clarkia
Convolvulus simulans	Small-flowered Morning-glory
Conyza canadensis *	Common Horseweed
Croton setiger	Doveweed
Chrysanthemum coronarium *	Chrysanthemum
Datura meteloides *	Jimsonweed
Dittrichia graveolens *	Stinkwort
Erodium cicutarium *	Red-stem Stork's-bill
Eucalyptus globulus *	Blue Gum Tree
Eucalyptus sp. *	Gum Tree
Euphorbia maculata *	Spotted Spurge
Euphorbia polycarpa	Small-Seed Sandmat
Foeniculum vulgare *	Wild Anise
Fraxinus sp. *	Ash Tree
Grevillea robusta *	Silk Oak
Helianthus annus *	Common Sunflower
Heteromeles arbutifolia	Toyon
Heterotheca grandiflora	Telegraph Weed
Hirshfeldia incana *	Perennial Mustard
Juniperus sp. *	Juniper
Lactuca serriola *	Wild Lettuce
Lepidium didymum *	Swine Cress
Malva parviflora *	Cheeseweed
Melaleuca sp. *	Bottlebrush
Morus alba *	Mulberry
Nerium oleander *	Oleander
Olea europa *	European Olive
Panicum miliaceum	Broomcorn Millet
Parksonia aculeata *	Mexican Palo Verde
Pelargonium sp. *	Geranium
Phoenix canariensis *	Canary Island Palm

Table 3. Flora and Fauna Detected – The Prospect Estates II Project

Scientific Name	Common Name
Picris echioides *	Bristly Ox-tongue
Plumbago auriculata *	Cape Plumbago
Prunus domestica *	Plum
Pseudognaphalium californicum	California Cudweed
Pseudognaphalium luteo-album *	Jersey Cudweed
Punica granatum *	Pomegranate
Quercus agrifolia *	Coast Live Oak
Quercus engelmannii *	Engelmann Oak
Rhus integifolia	Lemonadeberry
Robinia pseudocacacia *	Black Locust
Rumex crispus *	Curly Dock
Rupertia sp.	Rupertia
Salsola pestifer *	Russian Thistle
Schinus molle *	Peruvian Peppertree
Schinus sp. *	Pepper Tree
Schinus terebinthifolius *	Brazilian Pepper Tree
Sisymbrium orientale *	Eastern Rocket
Solanum elaeagnifolium *	Silver-leaf Nightshade
Solanum rantonnetii *	Blue Potato Bush
Sonchus asper *	Spiny Sow Thistle
Sonchus tenerrimus *	Slender Sowthistle
Sorghum sp. *	Sorghum
Stipa hymenoides	Indian Ricegrass
Tribulus terrestris *	Puncture Vine
Trichostemma lanceolatum	Vinegar Weed
Ulmus parvifolia *	Asian Elm
Urtica urens *	Dwarf Nettle
Vinca minor *	Periwinkle
Washingtonia robusta *	Mexican Fan Palm
Birds	
Archilochus anna	Anna's Hummingbird
Carpodacus mexicanus	Housefinch
Corvus brachyrhynchos	Common Crow
Fulica americana	American Coot
Pipilo crissalis	California Towhee
Sayornis nigricans	Black Phoebe
Sayornis saya	Say's Phoebe
Zenaida macroura	Mourning Dove
Reptiles	
Gerrhonotus multicarinatus	Southern Alligator Lizard
Sceloporus occidentalis	Western Fence Lizard
Uta stansburiana	Side-blotched Lizard

Table 3. Flora and Fauna Detected – The Prospect Estates II Project

Scientific Name	Common Name
Mammals	
Canis latrans	Coyote
Peromyscus maniculatus	Deer Mouse
Spermophilus beecheyi	California Ground Squirrel
Sylvilagus audubonii	Desert Cottontail Rabbit
Thomomys bottae	Valley Pocket Gopher
Butterflies	
Danaus plexippus	Monarch
Nymphalis antiopa	Mourning Cloak
Phoebis sennae	Cloudless Sulphur
Pontia protodice	Common White

* - Denotes non-native taxon

71 plants, 20 animals