



Save Oak Savanna

4606 San Feliciano Dr.
Woodland Hills, CA 91364
www.saveoaksavanna.org

March 27, 2007

Ms. Morgan Wehtje
Department of Fish and Game
South Coast Region
4949 Viewridge Ave.
San Diego, CA 92123

Dear Ms. Wehtje:

We would like to thank you for your letter in response to the **Notice of Preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Report for Vesting Tentative Tract No 61553, EAF No, ENV-2005-EIR, Los Angeles County.**

The DEIR came out February 20, 2007 and I believe there are some issues that will need your attention. The TeraCor report, which was done by the use of binoculars and the J. Byer Group, Inc., which was conducted August 11, 12, and 22nd, and September 9, 2003 through actual bore drillings, are conflicting in nature. This makes me believe the findings of TeraCor might be jaded as they seem to be pro-development. The TeraCor reports appear to downplay and/or gloss over the environmental impacts.

I have pulled some pages of the reports to help direct your attention to areas that I believe fall into the jurisdiction of the Department of Fish and Game.

- **Blue Line Stream** – Please see:

Exhibit 1 pg 1 The TeraCor report, Page 2, states that the Blue Line Stream “is no longer connected to the project site” and goes on to state “though delineation was not performed, these features did not *appear* to be jurisdictional under provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Harbors and Rivers Navigation Act, or the California Fish and Game Code”.

Exhibit 1 pg 2 The J. Byers Group geographical report was conducted August 11, 12, and 22nd, and September 9, 2003 through samples of earth materials obtained from the test pits and borings and delivered to the soils engineering laboratory for testing and analysis.

Exhibit 1 pg 3 The J. Byers Group encountered groundwater and is indicated on the boring logs and is also plotted on the geologic cross sections.

Exhibit 1 pg 4 This is a chart showing not 1 but 2 blue line streams. There is also a strong probability of intermittent streams in this area. These charts also indicate the Lot #'s of the housing footprints.

Exhibit 1 pg 5 For your convenience, I have outlined the corresponding plot plan and the footprints of houses to be built directly over the blue line streams.

• **Protected trees and shrubs to be removed -** Please see:

Exhibit 2 pg 1 An overview of the tree and shrub grouping put together by TeraCor. In their reports, there is no mention of the California Black Walnuts as being a protected species as per the Protected Tree Ordinance which went into effect April 2, 2006. Since the TeraCor reports seem to gloss over much of the protected trees and shrubs, I am sure that quite a few native plant life is omitted or downplayed in their quantities that will be effected by this development.

Exhibit 2 pg 2 There is a strong native grass component, consisting of purple needlegrass. Purple needlegrass grassland is considered a rare vegetation community by the CNDDDB.

Exhibit 2 pg 3 This is a chart of the trees slated for removal. Please note that the yellow dots are the California Black Walnuts to be removed. The developer plans on removing 9 out of the 11 existing on this property. The red dots indicate the Oaks to be removed. Please know that Oak #10 and #11 are the largest and oldest oaks on the property. Please also note that the Coastal Sage and the Purple Needlegrass are not addressed.

• **Wildlife Habitats and Wildlife Corridor Linkages**

Exhibit 3 pg 1 While the TeraCor report states "Wildlife values in areas surrounding the project site are moderately low", it also states "those which remain have little or no value due to lack of connectivity". I would like to state that this IS an area of connectivity!

Exhibit 3 pg 2 Please see the last paragraph on this page in the TeraCor report which states "Biogeographic theory maintains that any habitat patch, or island, which experiences genetic isolation will undergo eventual extinction if the habitat is too small to support genetic variability in any given species".

Exhibit 3 pg 3 These are some photos taken of some of the wildlife on the proposed development site. I think at least the blue heron would involve the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

Exhibit 3 pg 4 We find the outlined paragraph extremely disturbing, especially the sentence "Continuing urbanization in the Woodland Hills area displaces and destroys wildlife and permanently removes native plant communities."

These are just a few of the issues that involve the Department of Fish and Game, The Army Corps of Engineers, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

We are depending on your knowledge and well train eyes to be able to respond to the DEIR which is due on April 6, 2007. We have all written letters requesting a 60 day extension to:

Ms. Gail Goldberg, Director
Los Angeles City Planning Dept.
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

cc: City Clerk
200 N. Spring St., Room 360
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Cc: David Somers
Environmental Review Coordinator
Environmental Review Section
Department of City Planning
200 N. Spring St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012

Councilman Dennis Zine
19040 Vanowen
Reseda, CA 91355

I have spoken with the Army Corps of Engineers and they told me that they will get involved if the Department of Fish and Game deems it appropriate for them to be involved. Should we get in touch with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act or is that an agency under your jurisdiction?

I would also like to inform you that the same developer has applied for a permit for a sub-division of 29 single family lots. The date of application was 3/13/07: Case #APCSV-2007-1255-SPE-ZAA-ZAD; address 22241 Mulholland Drive, 91364. Request Type: SPE-Specific Plan Exemption ZZAA-Area, Height, Yard, and Building Line Adjmts – 20% (slight modifications) ZAD-ZA Determination per LAMC 12.27. (This is the same plot plan on our Exhibit 1 page 5)

We think the developer did this to bypass the findings in the DEIR.

We are appalled at the apathetic attitude of the natural riparian habitat and the TeraCor agency the developer hired to put such a slant and candy coat their reports.

We would appreciate any advice you might be able to give us or any other agencies we contact.

Thank you in advance for your attention.

Sincerely,

Lauri Hope
Save Oak Savanna

Encl: Disk of the DEIR

Copy of Notice of Completion and Availability of Draft Environmental Impact Report

edge of the site remains vegetated with mixed native grassland (NG) and coastal sage scrub (CSS) elements (Mixed NG/CSS). This relictual CSS patch is very small (less than 0.25 acre).

A USGS-designated blue line stream is depicted on-site on the *Canoga Park, CA USGS Quadrangle*. The former stream is modified on-site and off-site and no longer is connected to the project site as it is intercepted under Mulholland Drive and conveyed into a subdrain. The only water which enters the site now is street runoff from Mulholland Drive which enters the site via several incipient gullies on a slope leading down from the road. A curb on Mulholland Drive would likely eliminate runoff. Presently, leaf litter and debris from this incipient runoff is lodged against chainlink fencing at the bottom of the slope. On-site, a former pond is discernable but no longer retains water. Emergent willow scrub vegetation developed in two small areas on-site. Downstream of the former pond, the watercourse was only partially visible with no evidence of recent flow. Though a delineation was not performed, these features did not appear to be jurisdictional under provisions of the Clean Water Act, the Harbors and Rivers Navigation Act, or the California Fish and Game Code.

Topography on-site ranges from gently-sloping in lower areas to hilly in the western and eastern central portions. Elevation on-site ranges from approximately 1,000 feet above mean sea level (msl) at the northern edge to approximately 1,048 feet above msl at the southwestern edge of the subject site. The physical condition of the subject site and surrounding properties is shown in *Exhibit 3 - Aerial Photograph - 2004*, attached.

The following characteristics of the soil present on-site is stated in the *Geologic and Soils Engineering Exploration* produced by The J. Byer Group, Inc., dated 22 March 2005. Earth materials present on-site generally consists of fill, alluvium, and bedrock. Fill, associated with previous grading, blankets the majority of the site. The fill generally consists of silty sand, and does not appear to be compacted. Natural alluvium underlies the majority of the western and eastern portions of the subject site. The alluvium consists of silty sand, clayey sand, and sand which ranges from moist to saturated. In addition, bedrock is present on the ridge in the southern portion of the property. This bedrock is comprised of siltstone and sandstone mapped as part of the Modelo Formation by T.W. Dibblee, 1992 (*Geologic Map of the Topanga and Canoga Park (South 1/2) Quadrangles*).

Project Description

The project includes the subdivision of the subject site into two (2) lots and the development of 37 residential condominium homes. The 37 residential units will be comprised of three (3) plan types, (Plan Types: A, B, and C). Project implementation will additionally involve the construction of vehicle access ways and driveways for the proposed units, and associated infrastructure.

EXPLORATION

The scope of the field exploration was determined from our initial site visit and consultation with the client. Exploration was conducted using techniques normally applied to this type of project in this setting. This report is limited to the area of the exploration and the proposed project as shown on the enclosed Geologic Map and cross sections. Conditions affecting portions of the property outside the area explored, are beyond the scope of this report.

Exploration was conducted on August 11, 12, and 22, and September 9, 2003 with the aid of hand labor, a hollow-stem auger drill rig, and an electronic piezocone rig (CPT). It included excavating four test pits, drilling 12 borings, and advancing two CPT soundings to depths of 10 to 35 feet. Samples of the earth materials were obtained from the test pits and borings and delivered to the soils engineering laboratory for testing and analysis. The test pits were downhole logged by personnel of The J. Byer Group.

Office tasks included laboratory testing of selected soil samples, reviewing the United States Department of Agriculture 1952 series air photos, reviewing the City of Los Angeles grading records, preparing the Geologic Map and cross sections, and performing engineering analysis. Earth materials exposed in the test pits and borings are described on the enclosed Log of Test Pits and Log of Borings. Appendix I contains a discussion of the laboratory testing procedures and results. Appendix II contains a discussion of the CPT procedures and the interpreted results and calculations.

The proposed project, surface geologic conditions, and the locations of the test pits, borings, and CPT soundings are shown on Geologic Map #1. Geologic Map #2 is the removal and shoring plan. Subsurface distribution of the earth materials, projected geologic structure, and the proposed project are shown on Sections A and B.

GROUNDWATER

Groundwater was encountered on portions of the site. Generally, groundwater is present within the alluvium in the axis of the main and secondary canyons at 16 to 23 feet below grade and is perched on the bedrock. The water level at the time of the exploration is indicated on the boring logs and is plotted on the geologic cross sections.

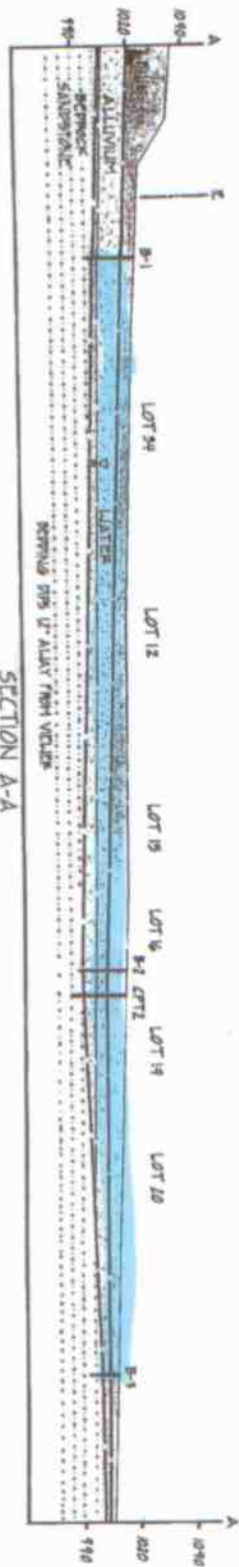
EARTH MATERIALS

Fill

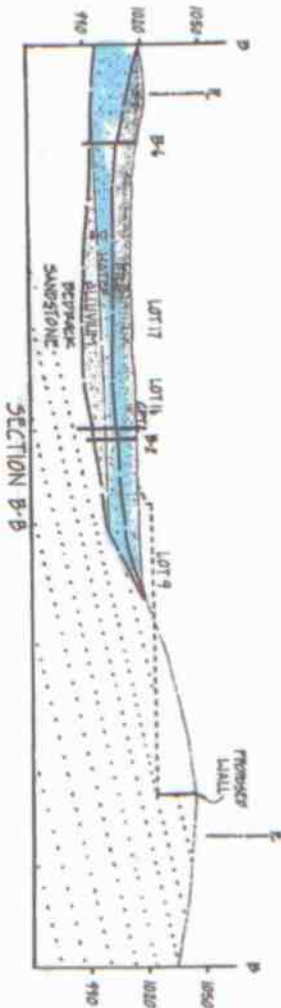
Fill, associated with previous site grading, blankets the majority of the site. In the main canyon, Borings 1, 2, 6, 7, and 8 encountered fill ranging from 7 to 10 feet. Between four and five feet of fill was observed in Borings 3, 4, and 5, on the northern portion of the site. For the easterly secondary canyon, in Borings 9 through 11, the fill is generally less than three feet. The fill consists of silty sand that is mottled brown and dark brown, slightly moist to moist, and slightly dense to dense. Fill on the bedrock ridge ranges from less than 12 inches to 3 feet. The fill does not appear to have been compacted and no record of compaction certification was located in the Building Department records.

Alluvium

Natural alluvium underlies the majority of the western and eastern portions of the study area. Within the main canyon, the thickness of alluvium encountered in the borings ranges from 9 to 25 feet. The alluvium likely thickens to on the order of 30 to 35 feet near the axis as shown on the geologic cross sections. For the easterly secondary canyon, the alluvium observed in the borings ranges in thickness from 8 to 23 feet. The alluvium consists of silty sand, clayey sand, and sand that is mottled brown,

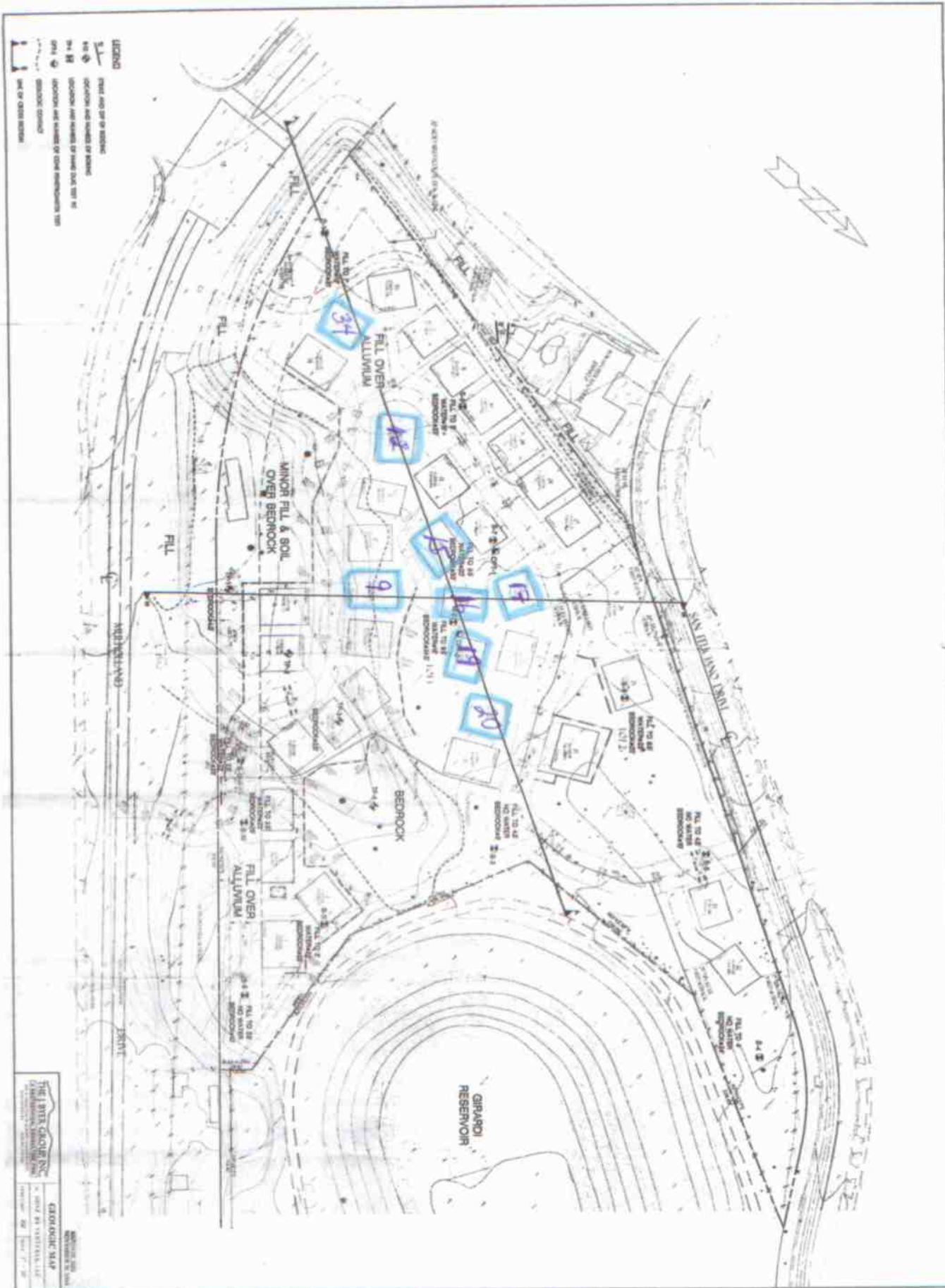


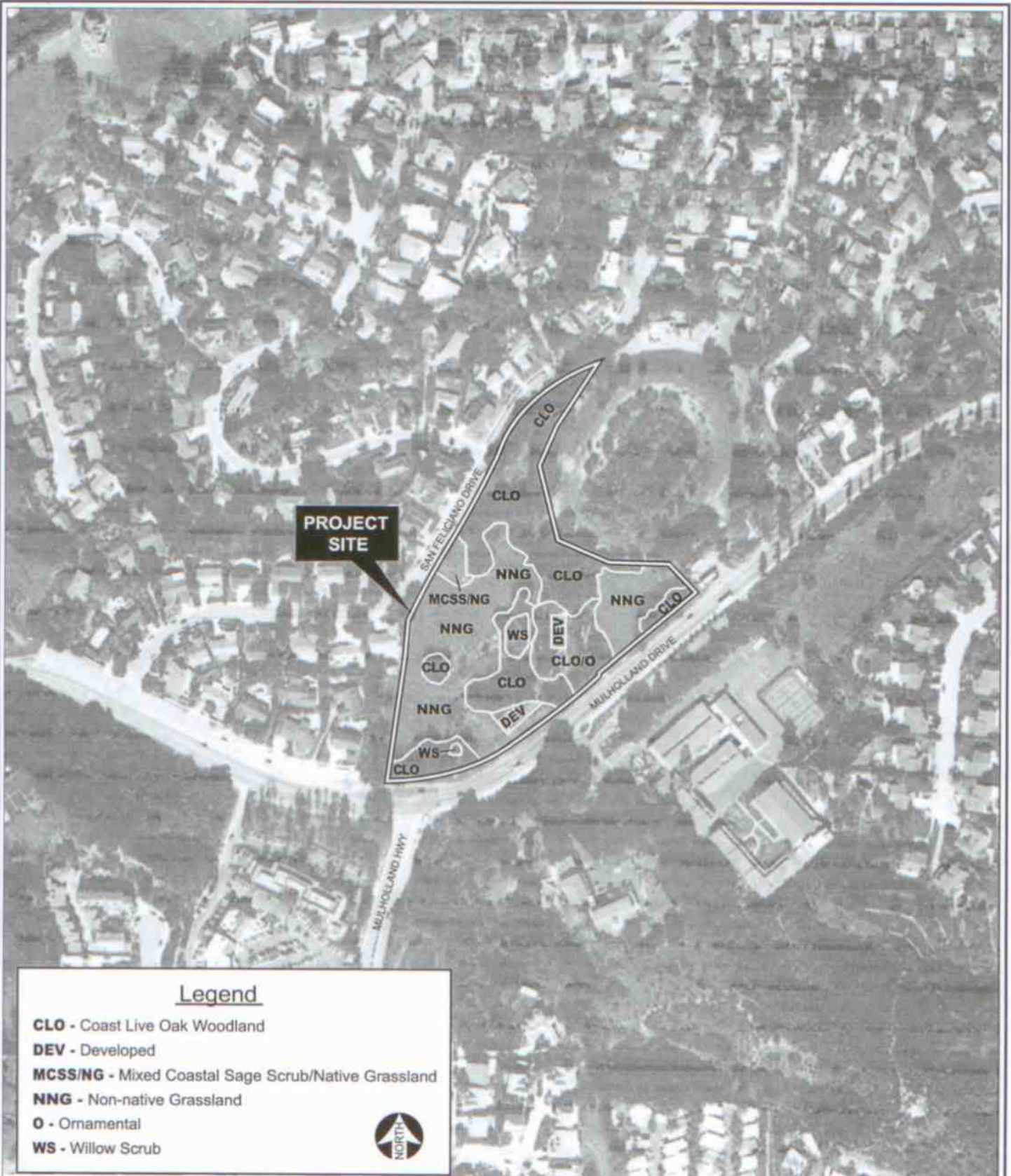
SECTION A-A



SECTION B-B

THE J. BYER GROUP, INC.	
SECTION A-A & B-B	
DATE: 10/10/2013	
DRAWN BY: J. BYER	
CHECKED BY: J. BYER	
TOTAL: 1-10	





Source: TeraCor Resource Management, February 2006.



CHRISTOPHER A. JOSEPH & ASSOCIATES
Environmental Planning and Research

Figure V.D-1
Vegetation Communities Map

Coast Live Oak Forest and Woodland (CNDDB Code No. 71.060.00)

Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) woodland is located throughout the project site in fairly descent formations or cells. This vegetation community type is dominated by one tree species, coast live oak, and is comprised mainly of mature trees. The understory component consists of non-native grassland. The site contains 145 coast live oaks, according to the *Horticultural Tree Report Proposed Residential 22255 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, California* (Project No. 504-1-03), prepared by Trees, etc. dated 19 April 2004.

Mixed Coastal Sage Scrub (CNDDB Code No. 32.000.00) with Purple Needlegrass (CNDDB Code No. 41.150.00)

Remnant coastal sage scrub (CSS) mixed with purple needlegrass (NG) on-site is limited to a small knoll located in the western portion of the property along San Feliciano Drive. The CSS on-site is comprised primarily of goldenbush (*Isocoma menziesii*), goldenbush (*Ericameria palmeri*), deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), and California cudweed (*Gnaphalium californicum*). There is a strong native grass component, consisting of purple needlegrass (*Nasella pulchra*), intermixed with the CSS in this area. Purple needlegrass grassland is considered a rare vegetation community by the CNDDB.

Non-native Grassland (CNDDB Code No. 42.000.00)

Non-native grassland (NNG) mapped on the property contained various species of grasses; mapping distinctions between brome (CNDDB Code No. 42.070.00) or other grassland associations were not possible or particularly relevant. Grasses recorded within open areas of the assessment area included riggut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), foxtail chess (*Bromus madritensis ssp. rubens*), and barley (*Hordeum* sp.). Other non-native species detected within the NNG on-site consisted of horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*), London rocket (*Sisymbrium irio*), and prickly sow thistle (*Sonchus asper*). Habitat values were moderately low in non-native grassland areas. Isolated patches of NNG provide little value to wildlife as compared to naturally-occurring scrub and native grassland systems.

Coast Live Oak Woodland (CNDDB Code No. 71.060.00) / Ornamental (No Corresponding CNDDB Code)

Ornamental species were observed in close proximity to the home and other structures on-site. Ornamental vegetation on-site consists of various species including Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*), bottle tree (*Brachychiton populneus*), and fig tree (*Ficus carica*). A complete inventory of ornamental tree species on the property is depicted in the *Horticultural Tree Report Proposed Residential 22255 Mulholland Drive, Los Angeles, California* (Project No. 504-1-03), prepared by Trees, etc. dated 19 April 2004. The non-native ornamental vegetation is considered to be low in ecological value to wildlife due to 1) displacement of

Source: Photos, July 6, 2006.

- Legend**
- Oak Trees to be Retained
 - So. California Black Walnut Trees to be Retained
 - Other Trees to be Retained
 - All Trees to be Retained

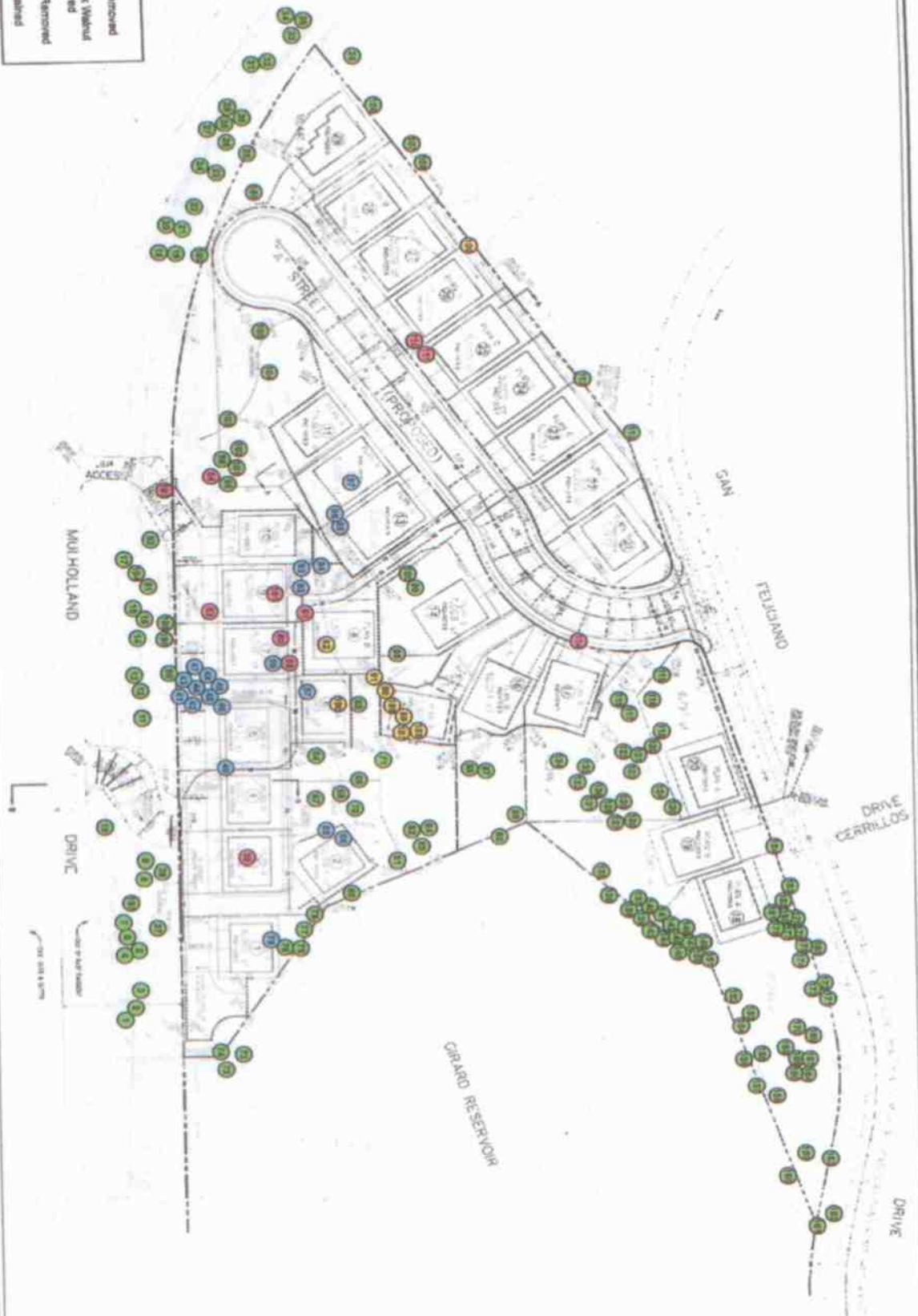


Figure VII-3
Alternative 2 Tree Impact Map

native plant species, 2) alleopathic suppression of understory plants, and 3) lowered potential for utilization by wildlife for cover and foraging.

Willow Scrub (CNDDDB Code No. 63.100.00)

Two small patches of riparian scrub vegetation on-site; both patches are within the historic alignment of the blueline stream on the site. One patch is located at the south edge of the site, along Mulholland Drive at the location of a presumed drainage outlet into the property. The second patch is found in the vicinity of the pond in the southwest corner of the property. These willow scrub areas are very small in extent, and would not support the range of riparian species normally associated with this vegetation type. We identified the willows with leaves remaining as arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*).

4.0 WILDLIFE, BIOGEOGRAPHY AND WILDLIFE CORRIDORS

Wildlife in the Vicinity of the Project Area

Wildlife values in areas surrounding the project site are moderately low. Urbanization surrounds the property due to many decades of development in the Woodland Hills area. There are few native communities remaining within this area, and those which remain have little to no value to wildlife due to lack of connectivity. Urban areas are considered to be of little value to wildlife, other than to those that are adapted to urbanized areas (e. g. European starling, house sparrow, and rock pigeon).

Wildlife within the Project Area

Though the project area is disturbed and is considered to have a moderately low value to wildlife, a number of common and urban-tolerant species probably utilize the property for foraging. Appendix B - Faunal Compendium records those species observed and those which have the potential to occur. Some species (those adapted to urbanized areas) with high mobility, such as coyote (*Canis latrans*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), and urban-tolerant songbirds utilize the project area on a transitory and sometimes regular basis, depending on environmental factors present within their primary habitat and their degree of fear of humans and human activities. TERACOR field personnel detected several urban-tolerant bird species during field surveys which included but was not limited to black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), mourning dove (*Zenaidura macroura*), and house finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*).

Habitat values within the site are substantially diminished because the areas adjacent to the site have become developed. Although the coast live oak woodland on-site remains relatively intact, the isolated nature of the woodland and habitat conversion of the understory to mainly non-native grassland and ornamental species displaces native habitat and introduces exotic species. Wildlife usage of the site is probably largely restricted to common mammals, reptiles, and avian species.

These organisms, and their utilization of the project area, are discussed more specifically in the sections that follow. Also discussed are those wildlife species potentially present which are considered sensitive due to their general rarity or human-induced population declines.

Wildlife Corridors and Habitat Linkages

Wildlife use of corridors may be fixed or flexible, depending upon the type of organism and the size and complexity of the corridor zone. Animals that move along corridors as part of an evolutionary-based pattern of migration or dispersal may be genetically programmed to follow predetermined, and sometimes ancient migration routes and may have little or no individual ability to modify their behavior, even in the face of abrupt physical changes or barriers. When confronted with impassible barriers, they may have no appropriate avoidance or alternative choice response behaviorally. In such cases, actions that physically obstruct corridors may result in population dislocation, inability to reach essential seasonal resource areas, loss of individual animals, and overall population declines.

Organisms are generally driven to disperse through mechanisms such as the scarcity of support resources (such as food, water, microhabitats, shelter, etc.), migratory genetic programming, and accidental dispersal, such as flooding events carrying individuals to downstream locations, fire-driven flight, or similar mechanisms. They sometimes do so along well-defined corridors (for example, the Pacific flyway for migratory birds or through connected stream systems in the case of amphibians dependent on moist environments). Terrestrial generalists (for example, black bear, deer, rattlesnakes, coyote, bobcat, woodrats, pocket mice, etc.) usually do not migrate or move substantially unless seasonal behaviors or ecological factors necessitate movement in order to locate and exploit critical support resources.

Biogeographic theory maintains that any habitat patch, or island, which experiences genetic isolation will undergo eventual extinction if the habitat unit is too small to support genetic variability in any given species. In the Los Angeles area today, the most common type of "corridor" is actually a remnant habitat patch which serves to connect two or more otherwise isolated habitat areas. It is not the movement of the animal which is important; it is the movement of genetic material on a per species basis through an ecosystem which is important over time. The connection is vital not so that individual animals can move freely (although that can



Photo taken 10/15/05

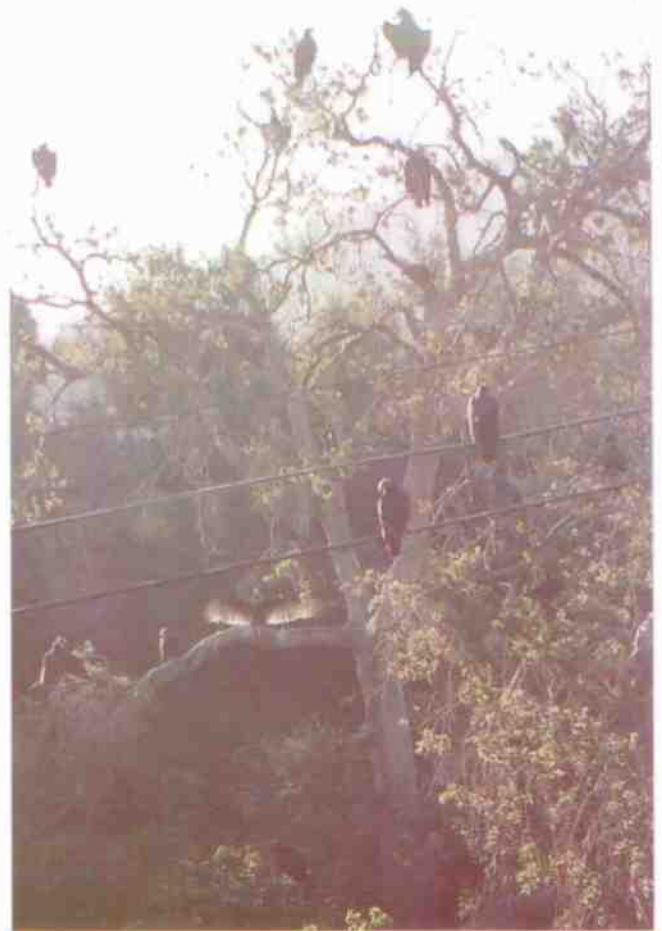


Photo taken 10/17/05



Photo taken 3/8/07



Photo taken 3/8/07

Species	Sensitive Species Status	Probability of Occurrence within Proposed Project
Los Angeles pocket mouse (<i>Perognathus longimembris brevinasus</i>)	FSC, CSC	Moderately Low. Pocket mice are the smallest members of the family Heteromyidae. Los Angeles pocket mouse is generally believed to occur in low elevation grasslands and sage scrub. Marginally suitable habitat is present on-site, however, the probability of occurrence is not considered likely.

6.0 IMPACTS AND PROPOSED MITIGATION MEASURES

Purpose

The purpose of this section is to assess the impacts which are likely to occur to biological resources present on and near the proposed development area. This section identifies the potential impacts and recommended mitigation measures of the proposed project on natural habitats and organisms found within or in close proximity to the project site.

In response to these potential impacts, mitigation measures identified below have been proposed for consideration in order to avoid or minimize these effects. Proposed mitigation measures in this assessment are considered preliminary and subject to modification until such time as responsible, trustee and/or advisory agencies have determined that relevant impacts associated with the project have been avoided, or substantially reduced and mitigated.

Potential Impacts

1. Removal of natural habitat on-site contributes incrementally to the loss of natural habitats in the City of Los Angeles. Continuing urbanization in the Woodland Hills area displaces and destroys wildlife and permanently removes native plant communities.

2. Implementation of the project would result in the removal of several coast live oak trees (*Quercus agrifolia*) as defined by the City of Los Angeles at the time the Oak Tree Report was prepared. The removal of any oak tree as defined by the City requires an oak tree permit from the City of Los Angeles, along with appropriate mitigation. The removal of several coast live oaks, with City-approved mitigation, is not considered a significant impact.