Lockwood Valley Road Emergency Repairs Project NES

Natural Environment Study

Lockwood Valley Road, Ventura County

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

District 7-Ventura County-Lockwood Valley Road-Post Miles 1.75 and 12.69

MP 1.75 ER-15Y2(020), MP 12.69 ER-15Y2(025)

September 2025

Caltrans
CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Natural Environment Study

Lockwood Valley Road, Ventura County

STATE OF CALIFORNIA

District 7-Ventura County-Lockwood Valley Road-Post Miles 1.75 and 12.69

MP 1.75 ER-15Y2(020), MP 12.69 ER-15Y2(025)

September 2025

Prepared By: Tyler Barns Date: 9/25/2025

Tyler Barns, Supervising Biologist
805-941-0430
180 N. Ashwood Avenue, Ventura, California, 93003
Rincon Consultants, Inc.

Prepared By: Cody Stults Date: 9/24/25

Cody Stults
805.477.1975
800 S. Victoria Avenue / #1600
Ventura County Public Works Agency

Approved By: Rico Ramirez Date: 10/2/25

Rico Ramirez, Environmental Scientist; Biologist
213.266.3783
Division of Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation, District 7

Approved By: Paul Caron Date: 10/02/25

Paul Caron, Senior Environmental Scientist; Biologist
213.326.3783
Division of Environmental Planning
California Department of Transportation, District 7

For individuals with sensory disabilities, this document can be made available in Braille, in large print, on audiocassette, or on computer disk. To obtain a copy in one of these alternate formats, please use the California Relay Service (800) 735-2929 (TTY to Voice), (800) 735-2922 (Voice to TTY) or 711

Table of Contents

Acronyms List v
Summary 1
Chapter 1 – Introduction 3
Project History 3
Project Purpose and Need 3
Project Description 4
Chapter 2 – Study Methods 8
Regulatory Requirements 8
Federal Policies and Regulations 8
State Policies and Regulations 13
Studies Required 16
Literature Search 16
Field Reviews 17
Personnel and Survey Dates 17
Non-Wetland Waters of the U.S. 17
Wetland Waters of the U.S. 18
Waters of the State 18
Lakes and Streambeds 19
Agency Coordination and Professional Contacts 19
Limitations That May Influence Results 19
Chapter 3 – Results: Environmental Setting 20
Description of the Existing Physical and Biological Conditions 20
Biological Study Area 20
Physical Conditions 20
Biological Conditions 21
Invasive Species 27
Habitat Connectivity 27
Regional Species and Habitats and Natural Communities of Concern 28
Chapter 4 – Results: Biological Resources, Discussion of Impacts, and Mitigation 35
Habitats and Natural Communities of Special Concern 35
Discussion of Natural Community 35
Discussion of Jurisdictional Features 38
Special Status Plant Species 47
Discussion of Kern mallow (Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis) 47
Discussion of Pale-yellow layia (Layia heterotricha) 47

Discussion of Salt spring checkerbloom (Sidalcea neomexicana) 48
Special Status Animal Species 48
Discussion of Coast horned lizard (Phrynosoma blainvillii), Northern California legless lizard (Anniella pulchra), and California legless lizard (Anniella sp.). 49
Discussion of Crotch's bumble bee (Bombus crotchii) 49
Survey Results 50
Project Impacts 50
Avoidance and Minimization Efforts 50
Compensatory Mitigation 50
Cumulative Impacts 51
Nesting Birds 51
Survey Results 51
Project Impacts 51
Avoidance and Minimization Efforts 51
Compensatory Mitigation 52
Cumulative Impacts 52
Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Regulatory Determinations 53
Federal Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary 53
California Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary 54
Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Summary 55
Wetlands and Other Waters Coordination Summary 55
Invasive Species 55
Other 56
Chapter 6 – References 57

List of Tables

Table 1 Area of Natural Community or Land Cover Type within BSAs 22
Table 2 Plants Observed in the BSA that are Included in the Cal-IPC Inventory 27
Table 3 Special-Status Species, Sensitive Natural Communities, and Critical Habitat Potentially Occurring or Known to Occur in the Biological Study Areas. 29
Table 4 Estimated Impacts to Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types 36
Table 5 Hydroseed Mix Prescription 37
Table 6 USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW Jurisdictions within the BSAs 38
Table 7 Temporary Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Areas 42
Table 8 Permanent Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Areas 42
Table 9 Federal Endangered Species Act Effects Determination 53
Table 10 California Endangered Species Act Impact Determination 54

List of Figures

Figure 1 Project Location Map 5
Figure 2 MP 1.75 Biological Study Area 6
Figure 3 MP 12.69 Biological Study Area 7
Figure 4 MP 1.75 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types 25
Figure 5 MP 12.69 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types 26
Figure 6 MP 1.75 Jurisdictional Delineation 45
Figure 7 MP 12.69 Jurisdictional Delineation 46

Appendices

Appendix A Project Plans
Appendix B CDFW CNDDB & CNPS Rare Plant Inventory 12-Quad List and Query Results
Appendix C USFWS IPaC List
Appendix D NMFS California Species List
Appendix E Floral Compendium
Appendix F Photograph Documentation

This page intentionally left blank.

Acronyms List

AC	Asphalt Concrete
ADA	Americans with Disabilities Act
BGEPA	Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act
BSA	Biological Study Area
Cal-IPC	California Invasive Plant Council
Caltrans	California Department of Transportation
CDFW	California Department of Fish and Wildlife
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CESA	California Endangered Species Act
CFG Code	California Fish and Game Code
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
CH	Critical Habitat
CLSM	Controlled Low-Strength Material
CMP	Corrugated Metal Pipe
CNDDB	California Natural Diversity Database
CNPS	California Native Plant Society
CWA	Clean Water Act
EO	Executive Order
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
FE	Federally Endangered
FESA	Federal Endangered Species Act
FHWA	Federal Highway Administration
FP	Fully Protected (State of California)
FT	Federally Threatened
IPaC	Information for Planning and Consultation
LPNF	Los Padres National Forest
LSAA	Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement
MBTA	Migratory Bird Treaty Act
MP	Mile Post

NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NES	Natural Environment Study
NMFS	National Marine Fisheries Service
NOI	Notice of Intent
NRCS	Natural Resources Conservation Service
OHWM	Ordinary High Water Mark
Other Waters	Other Waters of the United States
PCN	Pre-Construction Notice
Porter-Cologne	Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act
PMB	Processed Miscellaneous Base
Rincon	Rincon Consultants Inc.
RWQCB	Regional Water Quality Control Board
SA	Special Animal
SB	Senate Bill
SCCC	south/central California coast
SCE	State Candidate Endangered
SCT	State Candidate Threatened
SE	State Endangered
SER	Standard Environmental Reference
SSC	Species of Special Concern
ST	State Threatened
USACE	United State Army Corps of Engineers
USC	United State Code
USFWS	United State Fish and Wildlife Service
USGS	United State Geological Survey
WL	Watch List (CDFW)

Summary

The Ventura County Public Works Agency – Roads and Transportation (Agency) is proposing to complete emergency repair work along Lockwood Valley Road following storm damage that occurred in February 2024. In coordination with Caltrans District 7, the Agency intends to rehabilitate the roadway and associated infrastructure at Mile Posts 1.75 and 12.69, where high-flow and pressure events have damaged the roadbed and culvert.

The project includes the reconstruction and repair of approximately 310-linear feet of Lockwood Valley Road at MP 1.75, including removal and recycling of damaged road material, excavation and replacement of rock rip-rap revetment with a buried rock toe along the Cuyama River, re-creation of the road foundation, and reconstruction of the roadway with asphalt concrete and processed miscellaneous base. Project work at MP12.69 includes removal and disposal of an existing corrugated metal pipe culvert, and construction of a new headwall, culvert and other erosion control measures.

A query of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) was conducted in 2025 (Appendix B; CDFW 2025a). Official species lists were requested and obtained from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (Appendix C and D NMFS 2025, USFWS 2025a).

The studies conducted for this Natural Environmental Study included a reconnaissance field survey and aquatic resources delineation. A floral compendium is included in Appendix E. The vegetation communities and land cover types observed at MP 1.75 included big sagebrush scrub, river wash and developed/disturbed. The vegetation communities and land cover types at MP 12.69 included singleleaf pinyon pine woodland and developed/disturbed.

Based on the reconnaissance field survey, CNDDB query, and the official species list, three special-status plant species have potential to occur in the BSAs. These species are Kern mallow (*Eremalche parryi* ssp. *kernensis*), pale-yellow layia (*Layia heterotricha*) and salt spring checkerbloom (*Sidalcea neomexicana*). However, no special-status plant species were observed within the BSA during the habitat assessment. No natural communities of special concern or federally designated critical habitats occur within the BSA.

The reconnaissance field survey which included all areas of proposed disturbance within the BSAs was conducted to document existing conditions and potential presence of sensitive biological resources and habitats. Based on the results of the reconnaissance survey, CNDDB query, and the official species lists, four special-status wildlife species have potential to occur in the BSAs. These species include Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), California legless lizard (*Anniella* sp.) and the coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma*

blainvillii). No special-status wildlife species were observed during the habitat assessment.

During the reconnaissance field survey, an aquatic resources delineation was conducted, and concluded that four potentially jurisdictional features occur in the BSAs, including the Cuyama River and Unnamed Drainages 1, 2, and 3. The Cuyama River and Unnamed Drainage 3 are likely subject to the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction pursuant to Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA, and the CDFW pursuant to California Fish and Game (CFG) Code Section 1600 et seq. Unnamed Drainages 1 and 2 are likely pursuant to CDFW jurisdiction under CFG Code Section 1600 et seq. and to Central Coast RWQCB jurisdiction under the Porter-Cologne Act.

Expected impacts to potentially jurisdictional CDFW features will require a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement, which would be obtained prior to ground disturbance or issuance of a grading permit. The impacts to potentially jurisdictional USACE features may require a Nationwide Permit Pre-Construction Notification as well as a Nationwide Permit 14: Linear Transportation Projects which would be obtained prior to ground disturbance or issuance of a grading permit. In addition, the RWQCB may require the submission of a Notice of Intent.

A total of eight invasive plant species as identified by the California Invasive Plant Council Inventory were observed within the BSA. Avoidance and minimization measures have been included to address invasive species onsite. Non-native vegetation will be removed in accordance with Executive Order 13112 (Invasive Species).

Chapter 1 – Introduction

This Natural Environment Study (NES) report contains the findings of biological surveys and analyses performed by Rincon Consultants, Inc. (Rincon) for the Ventura County Public Works Agency – Roads and Transportation (Agency's) Lockwood Valley Road Emergency Repairs Project (project) to complete emergency repair work along Lockwood Valley Road following storm damage that occurred in February 2024. Rincon was retained by the Agency to complete a reconnaissance field survey and aquatic resources delineation on April 23, 2025 to document baseline conditions of existing habitat and to identify special-status species, natural communities of special concern, and potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources occurring or with potential to occur throughout the biological study area (BSA) that could pose a constraint to implementation of the proposed project.

The project is subject to federal environmental review requirements and the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) is the lead agency under the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA).

Project History

Project Purpose and Need

The purpose of the project is to perform repairs at two locations along Lockwood Valley Road, the first at mile post (MP) 1.75 and the second at MP 12.69 in unincorporated Ventura County (County) (Figure 1). The proposed project would accomplish the following:

1. Facilitate reopening of Lockwood Valley Road at MP 1.75
2. Allow for effective stormwater drainage at MP 12.69

Following severe storm events that occurred in February 2024, Lockwood Valley Road was damaged and requires repair. Lockwood Valley Road is a rural road connecting local communities to California State Route 33. It is currently only open to emergency vehicles and to residents who rely on the road for daily transportation. At MP 1.75, the Cuyama River undermined the roadbed, breaking apart the asphalt and causing severe damage, leading to the closure of the road in both directions. The southern shoulder at MP 1.75 has been backfilled and fortified with road base allowing residents to drive onto the shoulder and around the damaged roadway. Non-resident drivers must detour around the closure, resulting in increased commute times and vehicle miles traveled. At MP 12.69, the corrugated metal pipe (CMP) culvert passing beneath the roadway was damaged by high water pressure during the storm events. The culvert needs to be repaired for proper stormwater management, and to prevent additional erosion and undercutting of the roadway. The proposed project is necessary to repair and reopen

Lockwood Valley Road, ensuring safe and direct travel while preventing future damage to the roadway.

Project Description

The Agency intends to complete repair work within existing Agency rights of way or within temporary construction easements obtained by the Agency, as illustrated in the attached project plans (Appendix A).

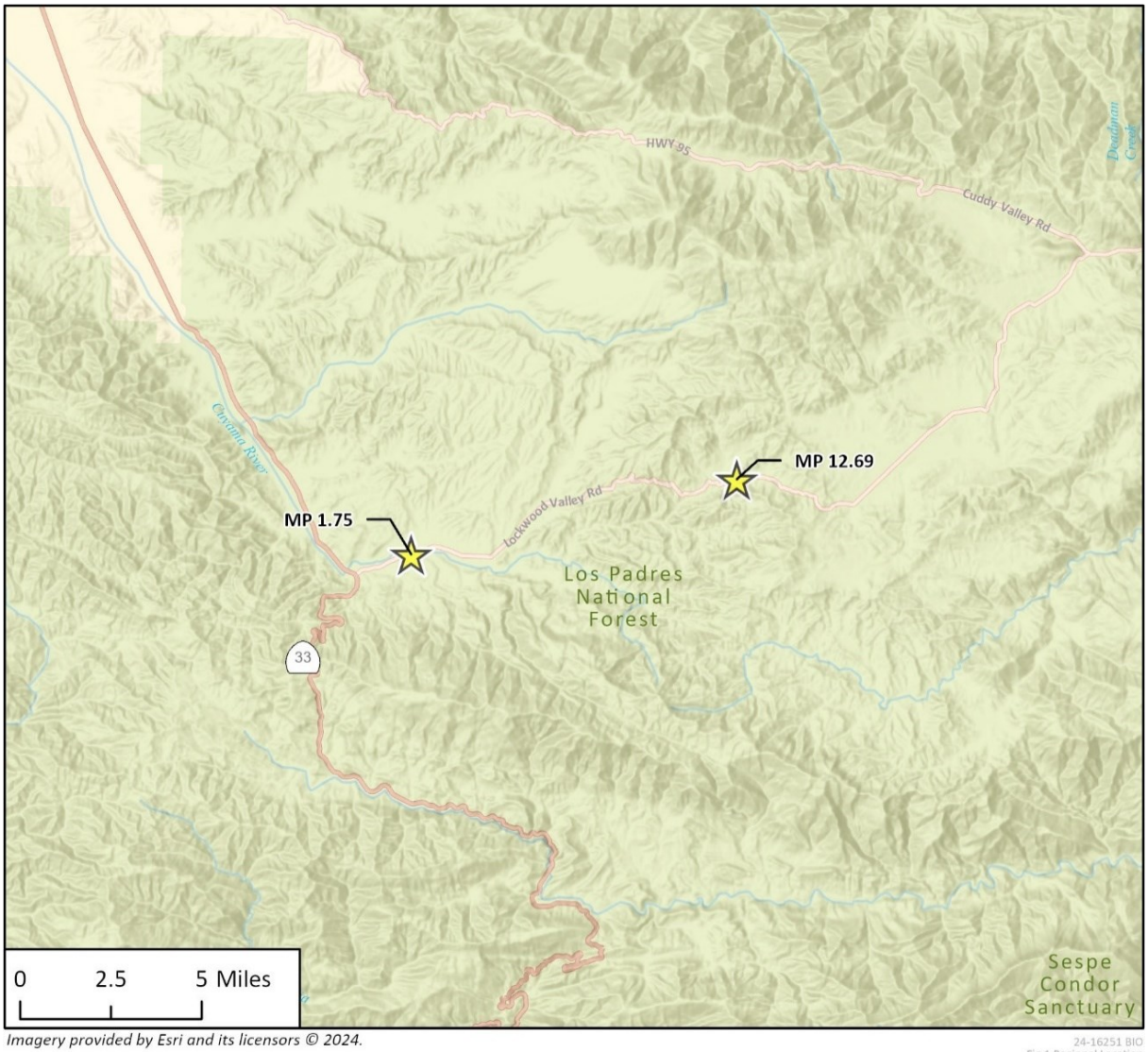
Improvements at MP 1.75 include the reconstruction and repair of an approximately 310-linear-foot segment of Lockwood Valley Road (Figure 2). The repairs necessitate removal and recycling of damaged road material, excavation and placement of rock rip-rap revetment with a buried rock toe along the Cuyama River, re-creation of the road foundation, and reconstruction of the roadway with asphalt concrete (AC) and processed miscellaneous base (PMB). Temporary diversion of river water would be required to facilitate these improvements; a project-specific water diversion plan would be prepared in compliance with the Ventura County Watershed Protection District's Water Diversion Guide (Ventura County 2019). The project would also entail reconstruction of the southerly shoulder, restriping of the road, and re-construction of a rumble strip along the roadway centerline. Erosion and slope control measures would include armored rock rip-rap to protect the soil and road from erosion caused by future water flow. These proposed improvements would not expand the existing roadway. Following completion, the lane widths at MP 1.75 would remain 12 feet, and the southern shoulder width would remain 10 feet.

At MP 12.69 (Figure 3) the project involves removal and disposal of an existing rusted CMP that ruptured on the south side roadway embankment, construction of a new headwall, installation of a reinforced concrete pipe connecting to the existing functional CMP with a concrete collar, placement of Class IV rock rip-rap with filter fabric, backfill with controlled low-strength material (CLSM), and implementation of erosion control measures, including hydroseeding, to mitigate future erosion around the new culvert.

The BSA for the project occurs in two distinct work areas within the Agency's rights of way on the Los Padres National Forest (LPNF). The two work areas include MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 (Figure 1). These two work areas are collectively referred to as the BSAs (i.e., the work areas plus a 100-foot buffer).

The BSA at MP 1.75 is within the Reyes Peak, California United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle, while the BSA at MP 12.69 is within the San Guillermo Mountain, California USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle (USGS 2025a). The Public Land Survey System depicts the BSA at MP 1.75 within Township T07N, Range R23W Section16, (34.695363, -119.328995) and the BSA at MP 12.69 within Township T07N, Range R22W Section 1 (34.726938, -119.172040) (California Department of Conservation, 2018).

Figure 1 Project Location Map



Imagery provided by Esri and its licensors © 2024.

24-16251 BIO
Fig 1 Regional Location

Project Location

N

Figure 2 MP 1.75 Biological Study Area

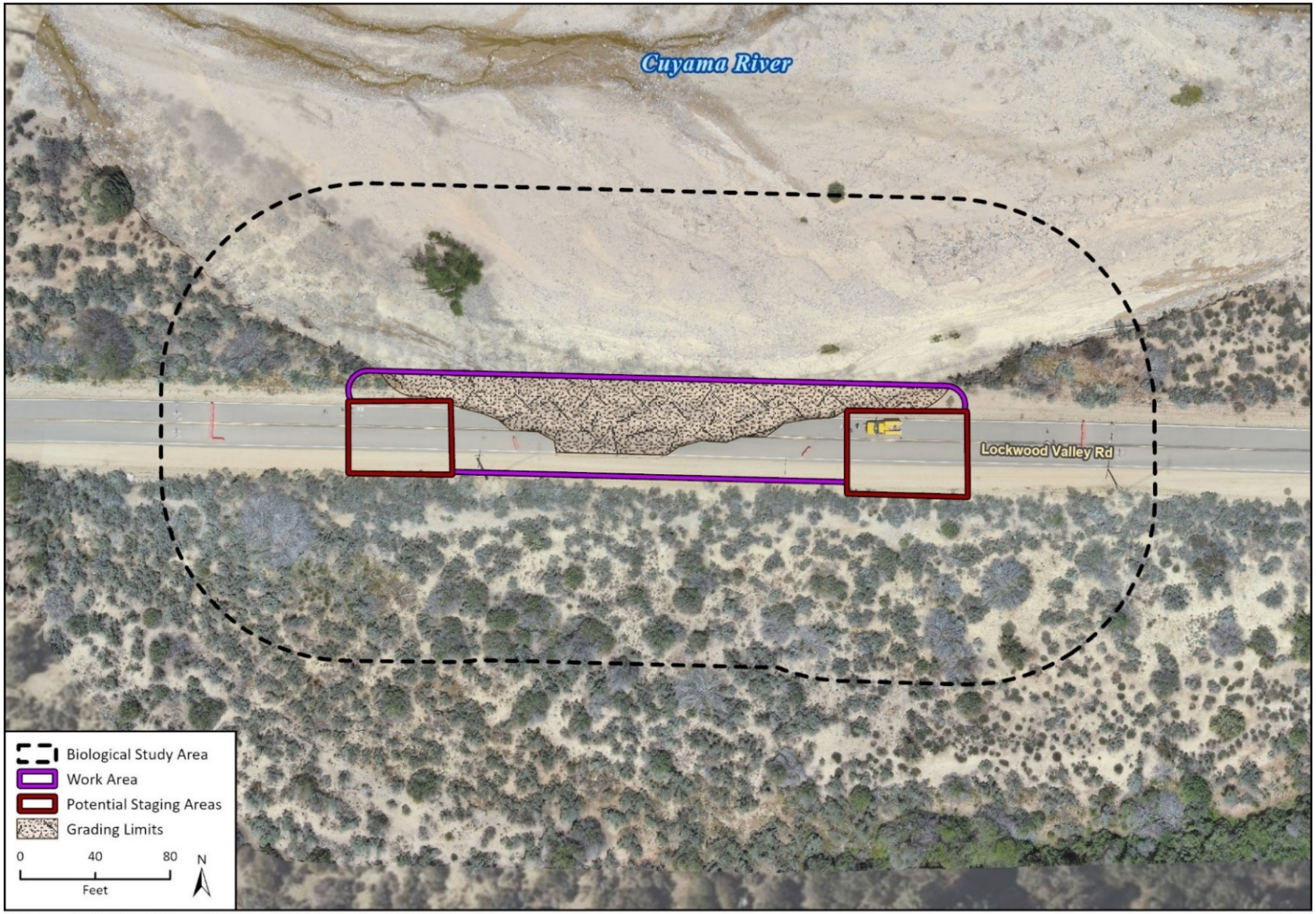
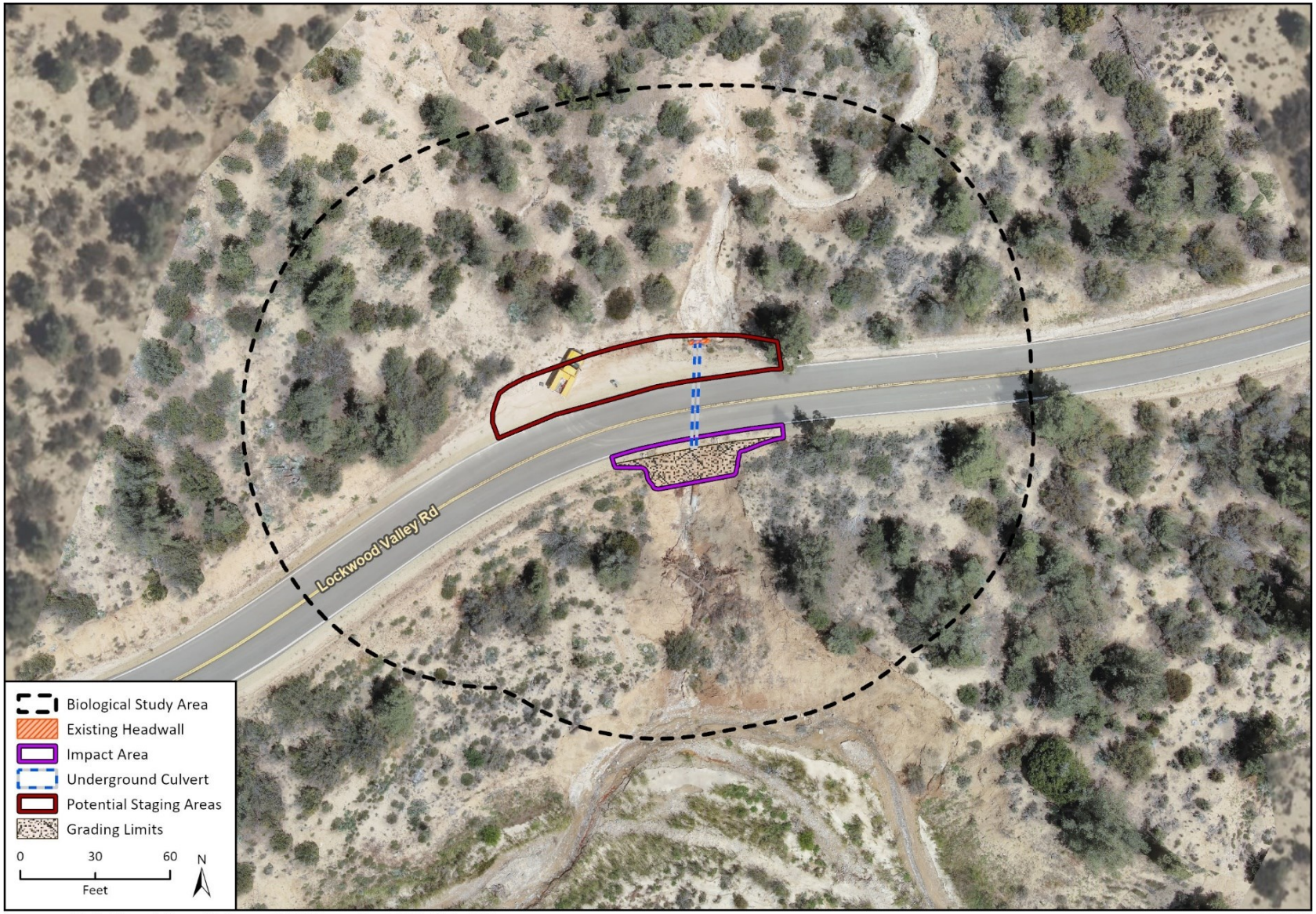


Figure 3 MP 12.69 Biological Study Area



Chapter 2 – Study Methods

Regulatory Requirements

The project may require federal, state, and/or local regulatory authorizations for construction. These authorizations may be issued in the form of legal permits, agreements, or other forms of environmental review. The project was analyzed to ensure compliance with the NEPA, California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA), California Endangered Species Act (CESA), Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA), Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), Executive Orders (EOs) 11990 and 13112, Sections 404 and 401 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), Sections 1600 et seq. and 3500 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code (CFG Code), and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (Porter-Cologne Act).

Federal Policies and Regulations

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The NEPA directs “a systematic, interdisciplinary approach” to planning and decision-making and requires environmental statements for “major federal actions significantly affecting the quality of the human environment.” Implementing regulations by the Council on Environmental Quality (Code of Federal Regulations [CFR] Title 40, Parts 1500–1508) requires federal agencies to identify and assess reasonable alternatives to actions that will restore and enhance the quality of the human environment and avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts. Federal agencies are directed to emphasize significant environmental issues in project planning and to integrate impact studies required by other environmental laws and EOs into the NEPA process.

Federal Endandered Species Act

The FESA of 1973 provides legal protection for plant and animal taxa that are in danger of extinction and classified as either threatened or endangered, candidate species and/or designated critical habitat. Section 7 of FESA requires federal agencies to make a finding on federal actions as to the potential to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species and/or critical habitat potentially affected by the action, including the approval by an agency of a public or private action, such as issuance of a United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permit under CWA Section 404. As part of its NEPA assignment of federal responsibilities by FHWA, effective October 1, 2012, and pursuant to 23 USC 326, Caltrans is acting as the lead federal agency for Section 7 of the FESA.

Section 9 of FESA protects federally listed plant and animal species from unlawful “take,” which is defined as “to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.” The United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) regulates activities that may result in take of federally endangered or threatened species, or candidate species. project related activities that could result in impacts, such as take, to listed species would require any involved federal agencies to consult with USFWS to determine the extent of impacts to listed species. project related activities that could result in impacts, such as take, to listed marine fish species would require any involved federal agencies to consult with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Nation Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) to determine the extent of impacts to listed marine fish species.

If there is the potential for a project to impact federally listed species and/or designated critical habitat, and there is a federal nexus, a Biological Assessment must be prepared by the applicant and submitted to the federal lead agency involved with the project. The Biological Assessment is a study analyzing specific effects on species listed under the FESA. The Biological Assessment would likely include certain recommended measures prior to construction, including, but not limited to: 1) surveying and mapping any locations where listed species are observed; 2) surveys for listed plant species during the appropriate time periods (blooming season); 3) avoidance/minimization measures for special-status plant species; 4) pre-construction surveys for special-status animal species during the appropriate time periods (protocol surveys); and 5) avoidance/minimization measures for special-status animal species.

Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act

The BGEPA, enacted in 1940, and amended several times since, prohibits anyone, without a permit issued by the Secretary of the Interior, from "taking" bald or golden eagles, including their parts (including feathers), nests, or eggs.

The BGEPA defines "take" as "pursue, shoot, shoot at, poison, wound, kill, capture, trap, collect, molest or disturb." Regulations further define "disturb" as “to agitate or bother a bald or golden eagle to a degree that causes, or is likely to cause, based on the best scientific information available, 1) injury to an eagle, 2) a decrease in its productivity, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior, or 3) nest abandonment, by substantially interfering with normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering behavior" (50 CFR 22.6).

In addition to immediate impacts, this definition also covers effects that result from human-induced alterations initiated around a previously used nest site during a time when eagles are not present, if, upon the eagle's return, such alterations agitate or bother an eagle to a degree that interferes with or interrupts normal breeding, feeding, or sheltering habits, and causes injury, death, or nest abandonment.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA)

The MBTA of 1918 implements four international conservation treaties that the U.S. entered into with Canada in 1916, Mexico in 1936, Japan in 1972, and Russia in 1976. It is intended to ensure the sustainability of populations of all protected migratory bird species. The law has been amended with the signing of each treaty, as well as when any of the treaties were amended, such as with Mexico in 1976 and Canada in 1995. The MBTA prohibits the take (including killing, capturing, selling, trading, and transport) of protected migratory bird species without prior authorization by the USFWS.

The list of migratory bird species protected by the law, in regulations at 50 CFR Part 10.13, is primarily based on bird families and species included in the four international treaties. A migratory bird species is included on the list if it meets one or more of the following criteria:

It occurs in the United States or U.S. territories as the result of natural biological or ecological processes and is currently, or was previously listed as, a species or part of a family protected by one of the four international treaties or their amendments.

Revised taxonomy results in it being newly split from a species that was previously on the list, and the new species occurs in the United States or U.S. territories as the result of natural biological or ecological processes.

New evidence exists for its natural occurrence in the United States or U.S. territories resulting from natural distributional changes and the species occurs in a protected family.

In 2004, the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act (MBTRA) limited the scope of the MBTA by stating the MBTA applies only to migratory bird species that are native to the United States or U.S. territories, and that a native migratory bird species is one that is present as a result of natural biological or ecological processes. The MBTRA requires the USFWS to publish a list of all non-native, human-introduced bird species to which the MBTA does not apply, and an updated list was published in 2020. The 2020 update identifies species belonging to biological families referred to in treaties the MBTA implements but are not protected because their presence in the United States or U.S. territories is solely the result of intentional or unintentional human-assisted introductions.

Clean Water Act (CWA)

Congress enacted the CWA “to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation's waters.” The CWA establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The basis of the CWA was enacted in 1948 and was called the Federal Water Pollution Control Act, but the law was significantly reorganized and expanded in 1972. “Clean Water Act” became the law’s common name with amendments in 1972.

Section 404 of the CWA establishes a program to regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands. Section 404 of the CWA authorizes the Secretary of the Army, acting through the USACE, to issue permits regulating the discharge of dredged or fill materials into the "navigable waters at specified disposal sites." Section 404 requires that a permit be issued before dredged or fill material may be discharged into waters of the United States, unless the activity is exempt from regulation under Section 404 (e.g., certain farming and forestry activities).

Section 401 of the CWA requires an applicant requesting a federal license or permit for an activity that may result in any discharge into navigable waters (such as a Section 404 Permit) to provide state certification that the proposed activity will not violate state and federal water quality standards. In California, CWA Section 401 Water Quality Certification (Section 401 Certification) is issued by the RWQCBs and by the SWRCB for multi-region projects. The process begins when an applicant submits an application to the RWQCB and informs the USACE (or the applicable agency from which a license or permit was requested) that an application has been submitted. The USACE will then determine a “reasonable period of time” for the RWQCB to act on the application; this is typically 60 days for routine projects and longer for complex projects but may not exceed one year. When the period has elapsed, if the RWQCB has not either issued or denied the application for Section 401 Certification, the USACE may determine that Certification has been waived and issue the requested permit. If a Section 401 Certification is issued it may include binding conditions, imposed either through the Certification itself or through the requested federal license or permit.

Rivers and Harbors Act

Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899 requires authorization from the USACE for the construction of any structure in or over any navigable water of the United States. Structures or work outside the limits defined for navigable waters of the United States require a Section 10 permit if the structure or work affects the course, location, or condition of the water body. The law applies to any dredging or disposal of dredged materials, excavation, filling, re-channelization, or any other modification of a navigable water of the United States, and applies to all structures and work. It further includes, without limitation, any wharf, dolphin, weir, boom breakwater, jetty, groin, bank protection (e.g., riprap, revetment, bulkhead), mooring structures such as pilings, aerial or subaqueous power transmission lines, intake or outfall pipes, permanently moored floating vessel, tunnel, artificial canal, boat ramp, aids to navigation, and any other permanent, or semi-permanent obstacle or obstruction. It is important to note that Section 10 applies only to navigable waters, and thus does not apply to work in non-navigable wetlands or tributaries. In some cases, Section 10 authorization is issued by the USACE concurrently with CWA Section 404 authorization, such as when certain Nationwide Permits are used.

Executive Order 11990 – Protection of Wetlands

EO 11990 established a national policy to avoid adverse impacts on wetlands whenever there is a practicable alternative. The United States Department of Transportation promulgated Department of Transportation Order 5660.1A in 1978 to comply with this direction. On federally funded projects, impacts on wetlands must be identified. Alternatives that avoid wetlands must be considered. If wetland impacts cannot be avoided, then all practicable measures to minimize harm must be included.

Executive Order 13112 – Invasive Species

On February 3, 1999, President Clinton signed EO 13112, requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. This EO defines invasive species as “any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health." The Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) guidance issued August 10, 1999 directs the use of the State’s invasive species list, maintained by the Invasive Species Council of California to define the invasive plants that must be considered as part of the NEPA analysis for a project.

Under EO 13112, federal agencies cannot authorize, fund, or carry out actions that it believes are likely to cause or promote the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States or elsewhere unless all reasonable measures to minimize risk of harm have been analyzed and considered.

National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act

The National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act prohibits federal agencies from activities that would adversely affect the values for which a river was designated. FHWA consults with the managing agencies during the NEPA process on projects that affect designated rivers or their immediate environments to reduce potential conflicts with wild and scenic river values that are protected by the Act.

Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act

The Magnuson-Stevens Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 was established to conserve and manage fishery resources found off the coast, as well as anadromous species and Continental Shelf fishery resources of the United States, by exercising (A) sovereign rights for the purposes of exploring, exploiting, conserving, and managing all fish within the exclusive economic zone established by Presidential Proclamation 5030, dated March 10, 1983, and (B) exclusive fishery management authority beyond the exclusive economic zone over such anadromous species, Continental Shelf fishery resources, and fishery resources in special areas.

Marine Mammal Protection Act

The Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA) establishes a federal responsibility to conserve marine mammals, with management vested in the Department of Commerce (NOAA's National Marine Fisheries Service [NOAA Fisheries]) for cetaceans and pinnipeds other than walrus. The Department of the Interior (U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS]) is responsible for all other marine mammals, including sea otter, walrus, polar bear, dugong, and manatee. The Act generally assigns identical responsibilities to the Secretaries of the two departments.

The MMPA is the main regulatory vehicle that protects marine mammal species and their habitats in an effort to main sustainable populations. In doing so, the statute outlines prohibitions, required permits, criminal and civil penalties, and international aspects in addressing marine mammals. The Act requires consultation on any action that may adversely affect marine mammals and provides a mechanism for an "incidental" take of species not listed under the FESA.

State Policies and Regulations

California Environmental Quality Act

Guidance for determining impacts under CEQA is based on the State CEQA Guidelines. Using these guidelines, project related activities will have a significant impact on biological resources if they would:

- 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 the CDFW, USFWS, or NMFS;
- Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by CDFW, USFWS, or NMFS;
- Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the CWA;
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory species of wildlife, wildlife corridors, or wildlife nursery sites;
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources; and/or,
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan (NCCP), or other approved State, regional, or local habitat conservation plan.

California Endangered Species Act

The CESA (CFG Code Section 2050 et. seq.) prohibits take of state listed threatened or endangered. Take under CESA is defined as "Hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill" (CFG Code Section 86). This definition does not prohibit indirect harm by way of habitat modification, except where such harm is the proximate cause of death of a listed species. Where incidental take would occur during construction or other lawful activities, CESA allows the CDFW to issue an Incidental Take Permit upon finding, among other requirements, that impacts to the species have been minimized and fully mitigated. Unlike the FESA, CESA's protections extend to candidate species during the period (typically one year) while the California Fish and Game Commission decides whether the species warrants CESA listing.

California Fish and Game Code Section 1600 et seq.

Pursuant to Sections 1600–1616 of the CFG Code, CDFW regulates diversions, obstructions, or changes to the natural flow or bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake. This jurisdiction includes dry washes that carry water ephemerally during storm events. The California Code of Regulations Title 14, Section 1.72 defines a stream as:

> *"[A] stream is a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic life. This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation."*

The term "stream," which includes creeks and rivers, is defined in 14 California Code of Regulations 1.72 as:

> *"a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic life. This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation."*

In addition, the term stream can include ephemeral streams, dry washes, watercourses with subsurface flows, canals, aqueducts, irrigation ditches, and other means of water conveyance if they support aquatic life, riparian vegetation, or stream-dependent terrestrial wildlife.

The limits of CDFW jurisdiction are defined in the CFG Code as:

> *"the bed, channel or bank of any river, stream or lake designated by the department in which there is at any time an existing fish or wildlife resource or from which these resources derive benefit."*

In practice, CDFW usually extends its jurisdictional limit to the top of a stream/lake bank, or outer edge of the riparian vegetation, whichever is wider.

Other California Fish and Game Code Sections

Under the CFG Code Section 3503, it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird. Under CFG Code Section 3503.5 it is unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the orders Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds-of-prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird.

CFG Code Sections 3511, 4700, 5050, and 5515 include provisions to protect Fully Protected (FP) species, such as: 1) prohibiting take or possession “at any time” of the species listed in the statute, with few exceptions; 2) stating that “no provision of this code or any other law shall be construed to authorize the issuance of permits or licenses to “take” a species that has been designated as FP; and 3) stating that no previously issued permits or licenses for take of these species “shall have any force or effect” for authorizing take or possession. The CDFW is unable to authorize incidental take of FP species when activities are proposed in areas inhabited by those species.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

The Porter-Cologne Act is the principal law governing water quality regulation in California. It establishes a comprehensive program to protect water quality and the beneficial uses of water. The Porter-Cologne Act applies to surface waters, wetlands, and ground water and to both point and nonpoint sources of pollution. Pursuant to the Porter-Cologne Act (California Water Code Section 13000 et seq.), the policy of the State is as follows:

- The quality of all the waters of the State shall be protected
- All activities and factors affecting the quality of water shall be regulated to attain the highest water quality within reason
- The State must be prepared to exercise its full power and jurisdiction to protect the quality of water in the State from degradation

The Porter-Cologne Act established nine RWQCBs (based on watershed boundaries) and the SWRCB, which are charged with implementing its provisions and which have primary responsibility for protecting water quality in California. The SWRCB provides program guidance and oversight, allocates funds, and reviews RWQCB decisions. In addition, the SWRCB allocates rights to the use of surface water. The RWQCBs have primary responsibility for individual permitting, inspection, and enforcement actions within each of nine hydrologic regions. The SWRCB and RWQCBs have numerous nonpoint source related responsibilities, including monitoring and assessment, planning, financial assistance, and management.

Studies Required

Literature Search

Prior to the field survey, Rincon reviewed aerial imagery (Google Earth Pro 2025) of the BSAs, the USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles (USGS 2025a), the Web Soil Survey (United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service [USDA, NRCS] 2025a), and the National Hydric Soils List by State (USDA, NRCS 2025b). These resources were reviewed to better characterize the site and its surroundings from a hydrologic, geologic, and topographic perspective and to determine if any soil units mapped in the BSAs were classified as hydric. Additionally, the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI; USFWS 2025) and the National Hydrography Dataset (NHD; USGS 2025b) were reviewed to determine if any potential non-wetland and wetland waters were mapped within the BSAs. Additional database records reviewed consisted of the following:

- CDFW California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) information for the Reyes Peak, San Guillermo Mountain, Cuyama Peak, Apache Canyon, Sawmill Mountain, Cuddy Valley, Lockwood Valley, Topatopa Mountains, Lion Canyon, Wheeler Springs, Old Man Mountain and Rancho Nuevo Creek USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles. This database covers special-status plant and animal species as well as sensitive natural communities that occur in California (Table 3 (Appendix B).
- California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Rare Plant Inventory for the Reyes Peak, San Guillermo Mountain, Cuyama Peak, Apache Canyon, Sawmill Mountain, Cuddy Valley, Lockwood Valley, Topatopa Mountains, Lion Canyon, Wheeler Springs, Old Man Mountain and Rancho Nuevo Creek USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles. This database covers special-status plant species that occur in California (Table 3 and Appendix B).
- USFWS Information for Planning and Consultation (IPaC) provides a preliminary list of federally listed species and critical habitat in many locations across the United States (Appendix C).
- NMFS California Species List query was performed for the project locations, which also provides a preliminary list of federally listed species and critical habitat (Appendix D).

For the purposes of this NES, special-status species include:

- Species listed as threatened or endangered under the FESA, including proposed and candidate species;
- Species listed as candidate, threatened, or endangered under the CESA;
- Wildlife species designated as Fully Protected, Species of Special Concern, or Watch List under the CFG Code and/or by the CDFW;
- Plant species listed as State Rare under the Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA);

- Plant species designated by the CNPS with California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) of 1A, 1B, 2A or 2B;
- Species designated as sensitive by the U.S. Forest Service or Bureau of Land Management, if the project would affect lands administered by these agencies; and
- Species designated as locally important by the Local Agency and/or otherwise protected through ordinance, local policy, or HCPs/NCCPs.

Field Reviews

On April 23, 2025, Rincon biologists conducted a reconnaissance field survey and aquatic resources delineation. The survey documented baseline site conditions, identified existing biological resources within the BSAs, and evaluated potential jurisdictional features present within those areas.

Personnel and Survey Dates

Rincon biologists Kyle Gern and Emma Youngquist—both experienced in local flora and fauna, including special-status species, vegetation communities, and riparian resources—conducted the survey/delineation on April 23, 2025, within the BSAs. The survey/delineation was conducted at each BSA to characterize the biological resources and to ascertain the presence or absence of sensitive biological resources, including, but not limited to, special-status plants and animals, sensitive natural communities, riparian resources, and protected trees in or immediately adjacent to the BSAs. Current federal and State policies, methods, and guidelines were used to identify and delineate potential jurisdictional features and are summarized in the subsections below.

General site characteristics were noted, and vegetation present on-site was documented. Data collection for potentially jurisdictional features were selected in areas that served as the best representation of the conditions of that feature. Representative photographs of the BSAs are included in Appendix F.

The extent of potential jurisdictional aquatic features, vegetation communities, and land cover types were mapped in the field with the use of a Global Positioning System unit with sub-meter accuracy capabilities.

Non-Wetland Waters of the U.S.

The lateral limits of USACE jurisdiction (i.e., width) for non-wetland waters are defined by the presence of physical characteristics indicative of the ordinary high water mark (OHWM). The OHWM was identified in accordance with the applicable CFR sections (33 CFR 328.3 and 33 CFR 328.4) and Regulatory Guidance Letter 05-05 (USACE 2005), as well as in reference to various relevant technical publications, including, but not limited to: Review of Ordinary High Water Mark Indicators for Delineating Arid

Streams in the Southwestern United States (USACE 2004), Distribution of Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) Indicators and Their Reliability in Identifying the Limits of "Waters of the United States" in Arid Southwestern Channels (USACE 2006), A Field Guide to Identification of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) in the Arid West Region of the United States (USACE 2008a), and Updated Datasheet for the Identification of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) in the Arid West Region of the Western United States (USACE 2024).

Rincon evaluated sources of water, potential connections and distances to Traditional Navigable Waters, stream flow duration and other factors that affect whether waters may qualify as "waters of the U.S." under current USACE regulations (33 CFR 328.3), including, but not limited to, the recent Sackett v. USEPA court ruling and the conforming Revised Definition of Waters of the United States (United States Environmental Protection Agency [USEPA] 2023).

Wetland Waters of the U.S.

Potential wetland features were evaluated for presence of wetland indicators; specifically, hydrophytic vegetation, hydric soils, and wetland hydrology, generally in accordance with routine delineation procedures within the Wetlands Delineation Manual (USACE 1987) and Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region (USACE 2008b). However, no wetland waters were found at either BSA. The USACE Arid West 2022 Regional Wetland Plant List was used to determine the wetland status of the examined vegetation by the following indicator status categories: Upland, Facultative Upland, Facultative, Facultative Wetland, and Obligate Wetland (USACE 2022).

Potential wetland waters of the U.S. were evaluated in accordance with the Sackett v. USEPA court ruling and the conforming Revised Definition of Waters of the United States (USEPA 2023). The court ruling and conforming Revised Definition of Waters of the United States decided "adjacent wetlands" are waters of the U.S. only if there is a continuous surface connection between the wetland and a navigable or relatively permanent water body, such that it is difficult to determine the boundary between the wetland and the water body. The revised definition notes "temporary interruptions to surface connection may sometimes occur because of phenomena like low tides or dry spells." The Conforming Rule defines the term "adjacent" to mean "having a continuous surface connection."

Waters of the State

The limits of "waters of the State," as defined under the Porter-Cologne Act, are any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the State. The top of bank or outer edge of riparian vegetation (whichever is greater) was used to represent the limits of non-wetland waters of the State.

Potential State wetland features were evaluated pursuant to the SWRCB's State Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredged or Fill Material to Waters of the State (SWRCB 2019). Potential State wetlands were evaluated following the SWRCB's definition, which relies on the same three parameters as the USACE definition (hydrophytic vegetation, wetland hydrology, and hydric soils) but allows for naturally unvegetated areas meeting the other two parameters to be considered wetlands.

Lakes and Streambeds

The extent of potential streambeds, streambanks, lakes, and riparian habitat subject to CDFW jurisdiction under Section 1600 et seq. of the CFGC was delineated by reviewing the topography and morphology of potentially jurisdictional features to determine the outer limit of riparian vegetation, where present, or the top of bank for stream features.

Agency Coordination and Professional Contacts

On January 23, 2025, an official species list was requested and received from the USFWS Ventura Field Office through the IPaC scoping program, and is attached as Appendix C. However, because IPaC does not display species or critical habitats under the sole jurisdiction of NOAA Fisheries, Rincon separately reviewed the NMFS species directory for the West Coast Region (accessed July 3, 2025) to identify any federally listed fish species potentially present in the project area. No other formal agency coordination has occurred to date.

Limitations That May Influence Results

Sensitive plant species with the potential to occur in the BSAs may be annual species that may be difficult to detect following seasons of abnormal rainfall, or during those times of the year when particular species do not typically flower. The reconnaissance survey conducted in support of this NES was timed to accommodate the spring flowering period of the species considered in this document. The reconnaissance survey was floristic and all plant species encountered during the survey was identified to the lowest possible taxonomic level, which is required for accurate identification and reporting.

Sensitive wildlife species with the potential to occur in the BSAs may be cryptic (difficult to detect) or transient, migratory species. The population size and locations of sensitive species may fluctuate through time. Because of this, the data collected for this NES represents a "snap shot" in time and may not reflect actual future conditions.

Chapter 3 – Results: Environmental Setting

Description of the Existing Physical and Biological Conditions

Biological Study Area

The BSAs, developed and provided by Caltrans, include all areas that may be directly, indirectly, temporarily or permanently impacted by construction and construction-related activities (the work area), plus a 100-ft buffer to encompass all indirect effects to surround natural areas (Figure 2, Figure 3). The BSAs are located within the Agency's rights of way on the LPNF. The BSA at MP 1.75 is within the Reyes Peak, California USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle, Township 7 north, and Range 23 west (USGS 2025a, California Department of Conservation [CDC] 2018). The BSA at MP 12.69 is within the San Guillermo Mountain, California USGS 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle, Township 7 north and Range 23 west (USGS 2025a, CDC 2018).

Physical Conditions

The BSAs at MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 are located along Lockwood Valley Road in the LPNF, within the Transverse Range. The BSA located at MP 1.75 includes an approximately 310-linear-foot section of Lockwood Valley Road that runs parallel to the Cuyama River and is between approximately 3,654 feet (ft) and 3,660 ft above mean sea level (amsl). The BSA located at MP 12.69 of Lockwood Valley Road contains three unnamed drainages (Unnamed Drainages 1, 2, and 3) that discharge into Wagon Road Canyon and is between approximately 4,882 ft and 4,934 ft amsl.

The BSAs are located in the Cuyama River Watershed in District Zone 4 of Ventura County. Zone 4 watershed climates are characterized by having extended warm, dry periods with a short window of precipitation during the winter season, which typically occurs between November and March (Ventura County Public Works Agency 2024). Average annual precipitation for the Cuyama River is 8.2 inches (Ventura County Public Works Agency 2024).

Hydrologic Resources

The BSA at MP 1.75 occurs within the 21,386-acre Reyes Creek-Cuyama River Subwatershed (Hydrologic Unit Code 180600070105) (USGS 2025b). The Cuyama River flows in a westerly direction into the Twitchell Reservoir, which has scheduled releases downstream into the Santa Maria River (i.e., the confluence between the Cuyama and Sisquoc rivers), which ultimately discharges into the Pacific Ocean (SLOCPW n.d.). The NWI defines portions of the BSA at MP 1.75 as forested/shrub wetland (Rp1SS; USFWS 2025). The NWI has also mapped riverine (R4SBC) and freshwater forested/shrub wetland (PSS/USA) directly north of the BSA at MP 1.75

(USFWS 2025). The NHD maps the Cuyama River as a perennial stream/river (USGS 2025b).

The BSA at MP 12.69 occurs within the 14,988-acre Wagon Road Canyon Subwatershed (Hydrologic Unit Code 18060007010) (USGS 2025b). The BSA at MP 12.69 contains three jurisdictional features that will be referred to as Unnamed Drainage 1, Unnamed Drainage 2, and Unnamed Drainage 3. Unnamed Drainage 1 flows in a southernly direction, draining through a 24-inch corrugated metal pipe culvert (culvert) into Unnamed Drainage 3. Unnamed Drainage 2 flows in a westerly direction parallel to Lockwood Valley Road and intersects Unnamed Drainage 1 at the culvert. Unnamed Drainage 3 flows in a westerly direction, ultimately conjoining with Alamo Creek which subsequently merges with the Cuyama River just above MP 1.75. The NWI classifies Unnamed Drainage 3 as riverine (R4SBA), whereas Unnamed Drainage 1 and Unnamed Drainage 2 do not have classifications (USFWS 2025). The mapped riverine areas occur directly south of the BSA at MP 12.69, outside of the project site but inside the BSA. The NHD maps Unnamed Drainage 3 as an intermittent stream/river (USGS 2025b).

Soil Conditions

Within the BSA at MP 1.75, soils are mapped as the Agua Dulce-Los Robles-Modjeska families association (10 to 60 percent slopes) occurring in mountainous areas (USDA, NRCS 2025a). The profile is typical for sandy loam from 0 to 7 inches, loam to very gravelly sandy clay loam from 7 to 47 inches, and weathered bedrock at 47 inches (USDA, NRCS 2025a). This association of soils is well-drained, and does not have a hydric soil rating (USDA, NRCS 2025b).

Within the BSA at MP 12.69, soils are mapped as the Modjeska-Modesto families association (30 to 60 percent slopes) occurring on mountainous areas (USDA, NRCS 2025a). The profile is typical of sandy loam from 0 to 4 inches, gravelly sandy clay loam from 4 to 30 inches, and unweathered bedrock from 30 to 34 inches (USDA, NRCS 2025a). These well-drained soils do not have a hydric soil rating (USDA, NRCS 2025b).

Biological Conditions

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

The dominant natural communities within the BSA were characterized by using A California Manual of Vegetation, Second Edition (Sawyer et al. 2009). The natural community classification was cross referenced with the CNDDB to determine which natural communities were recognized as sensitive by CDFW. The single vegetation community within the BSA at MP 1.75 is big sagebrush scrub (*Artemisia tridentata* Shrubland Alliance). The land cover types documented within the BSA at MP 1.75 included riverwash and developed/disturbed roadway areas (Figure 4). The vegetation community documented within the BSA at MP 12.69 is singleleaf pinyon pine woodland, and specifically the singleleaf pinyon pine / Tucker oak association (*Pinus*

monophylla/Quercus john-tuckeri), which is rated as sensitive by CDFW (CDFW 2025). Land cover types include developed/disturbed roadway areas. Vegetation communities and land cover types in the BSA at MP 12.69 are shown in Figure 5. Table 1 includes the total area for each natural community or land cover type within the BSAs. Each of these natural communities and land cover types are described in greater detail below. Appendix E includes lists of species observed within the BSAs and Appendix F includes representative photographs of the BSAs.

The vegetation within the BSAs was correlated with the List of Vegetation Alliances and Associations (Natural Communities List) (CDFW 2025). This document provides lists of plant communities occurring in the State of California. In the document plant communities are assigned a conservation status rank (also known as “rarity rank”), which is used to determine the sensitivity of the plant community. Plant communities with global or state status ranks of G1 through G3, or S1 through S3, respectively, are sensitive and are referred to as “natural communities of special concern.” Plant communities are classified based on plant species composition and abundance, as well as the underlying abiotic conditions of the stand, such as slope, aspect, or soil type.

Table 1 Area of Natural Community or Land Cover Type within BSAs

Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type	Area within BSAs (acres [square feet])	Rarity Rank
Big Sagebrush Scrub (*Artemisia tridentata*)	1.26 [54885.6]	G5S5
Singleleaf Pinyon Pine Woodland (*Pinus monophylla/Quercus john-tuckeri)*	1.23 [53578.8]	Unranked, Sensitive
Riverwash	1.06 [46173.6]	N/A
Developed/Disturbed	0.87 [37897.2]	N/A

Big Sagebrush Scrub

Big sagebrush scrub is characterized by dominant big sagebrush in the shrub layer with a variety of shrubs potentially present as subdominant species, including but not limited to green rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus viscidiflorus*), black brush (*Coleogyne ramosissima*), and ephedras (*Ephedra* spp.) potentially present as subdominant. Big sagebrush constitutes at least two percent absolute cover in the shrub layer, with no other single species with greater cover. This alliance is characterized by an open to dense (10-70 percent cover) shrub layer. Vegetation reaches approximately 6.5 ft (two meters) in height. The alliance forms large, continuous stands on mid-elevation mountain slopes and foothills. Sites are variable and range from flats to steep slopes to ridgetops with deep to shallow rocky soil (Sawyer et al. 2009). This vegetation community is ranked G5S5 and is not considered sensitive (CDFW 2025). Big sagebrush scrub is typically found within plains, alluvial fans, bajadas, pediments, lower slopes, valley bottoms, hills, ridges, seasonal and perennial stream channels, and dry washes between 984 and 9,840 ft (30 to 3,000 meters) amsl.

Within the BSA at MP 1.75, big sagebrush is dominant in the shrub canopy with sub-dominant shrub species including thick-leaved yerba santa (*Eriodictyon crassifolium*), rubber rabbitbrush (*Ericameria nauseosa*), chaparral yucca (*Hesperoyucca whipplei*), and coffeeberry (*Frangula californica*). Species dominant in the herbaceous layer included red brome (*Bromus rubens*), flat-spine bur ragweed (*Ambrosia acanthicarpa*), and tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*). Approximately 1.26 acres of big sagebrush scrub was mapped within the BSA at MP 1.75.

Singleleaf Pinyon Pine Woodland

Pinyon – Juniper woodland communities are widespread in the rain shadows of various California mountain areas. These communities typically occur at elevations ranging between 3,937 and 7,874 ft (1,200 and 2,400 meters) amsl. In this region, pinyon-juniper woodlands occur in the Transverse Ranges of Kern, Los Angeles, Ventura and Santa Barbara counties. These woodlands extend north into the South Coast Ranges where they intergrade in places with the blue oak woodlands. Junipers tend to dominate at lower elevations and pinyon pines tend to dominate at higher elevations. In southern California, junipers will often grade into Joshua tree woodlands or desert scrub at low elevations and pinyon pines (*Pinus* spp.) will grade into the lower fringes of Jeffrey pine forests at higher elevations. Pinyon – juniper woodlands usually consist of scattered trees 10 to 50 ft (three to 15 meters) tall with highly variable density, depending on local climatic and edaphic conditions (Sawyer et al. 2009). The most common species of pinyon pine is singleleaf pinyon pine.

Within the BSA at MP 12.69, the vegetation community of singleleaf pinyon pine woodland was identified to the association level of *Pinus monophylla/Quercus john-tuckeri* which is unranked and is considered sensitive by CDFW (CDFW 2025). Singleleaf pinyon pine was dominant in the tree canopy while Tucker oak (*Quercus john-tuckeri)* was found dominant in the shrub canopy. Other sub-dominant shrubs included bigberry manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glauca*), rubber rabbitbrush, silver lupine (*Lupinus albifrons*), narrowleaf goldenbush (*Ericameria linearifolia*), California wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), and sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*). Species found in the herbaceous layer included California milkweed (*Asclepias californica*), cheatgrass (*Bromus tectorum*), California Indian breadroot (*Pediomelum californicum)*, miniature lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), bottlebrush squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), chia (*Salvia columbariae*), and scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*). Approximately 1.23 acres of singleleaf pinyon pine woodland was mapped within the BSA at MP 12.69. Appendix E has a complete list of species observed within the BSA.

Riverwash

Riverwash is present within the active channel of the Cuyama River. This land cover type consists of sand and cobble which has accumulated in the channels and low terraces in the riverbed. This vegetation community typically contains little to no vegetation; however, the community occurs within the bed of the Cuyama River, which is a naturally dynamic system. As such, vegetation abundance and structure may shift

depending on water availability within the channel. In addition, the position of the riverwash land cover may shift and change position depending on flood volumes and regularity.

Within the BSA at MP 1.75, the land cover type of riverwash is mapped at approximately 1.06 acres. Scattered shrubs are present in this land cover type, including arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), California buckwheat, red brome, toothed bur clover (*Medicago polymorpha*), and California mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*).

Developed/Disturbed

Developed areas consist of buildings, other infrastructure, and paved areas with little to no vegetation (e.g., concrete outfall structure, paved roads, trails, and buildings). Ruderal plants grow in disturbed areas as a result of recent and continual surface soil disturbance. Disturbed areas typically contain a high percentage of bare ground and are dominated by nonnative species. Due to the low plant species diversity and predominance of invasive weeds in most disturbed areas, the habitat value of this vegetation type is generally low, and these areas do not conform to a defined alliance in A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition (Sawyer et al. 2009).

The BSAs for MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 have developed and disturbed areas that include paved road, compacted dirt areas, and gravel berms. Common species include red brome and cheatgrass. Approximately 0.87 acre has been mapped as developed/disturbed in the BSAs.

Figure 4 MP 1.75 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

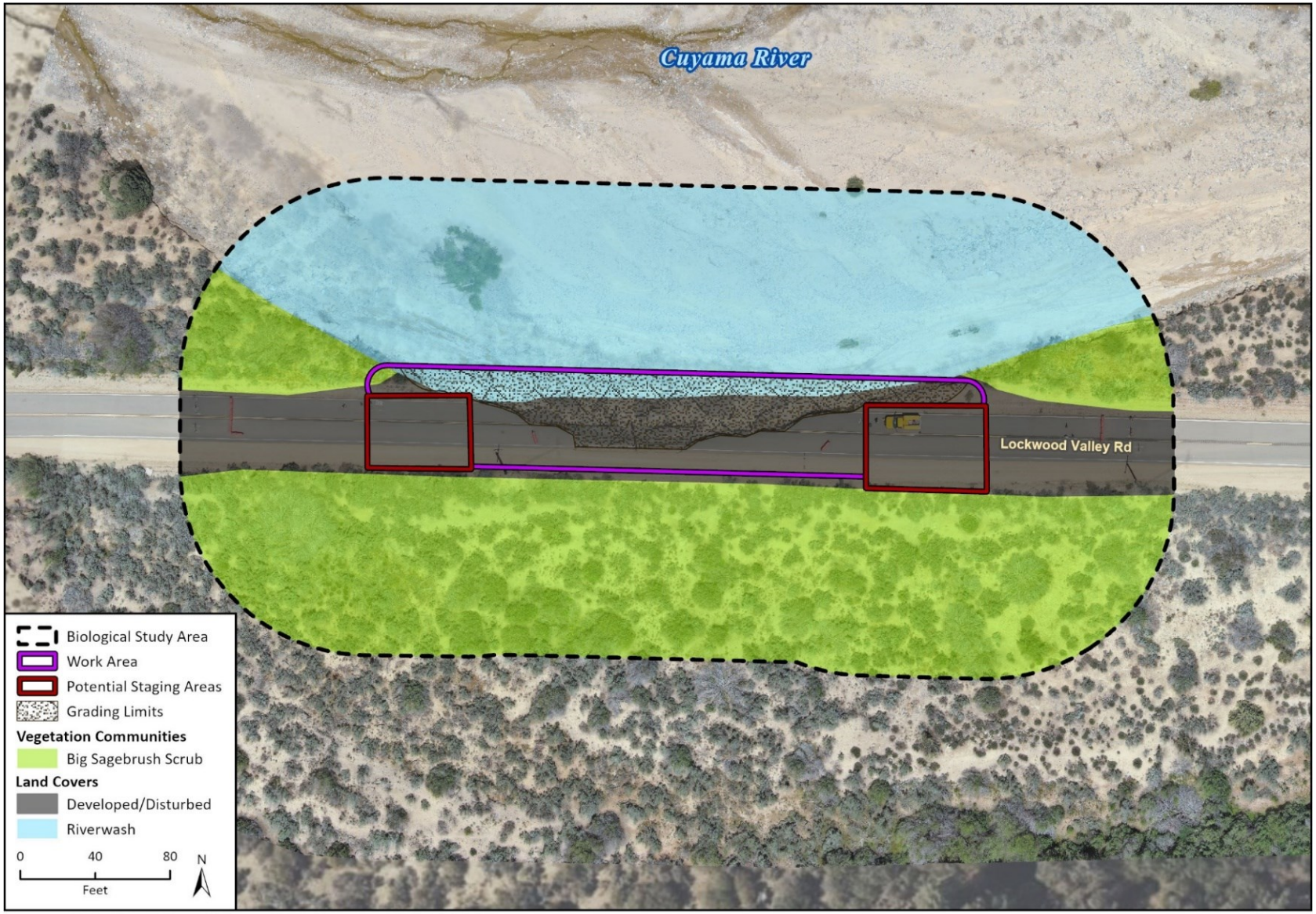
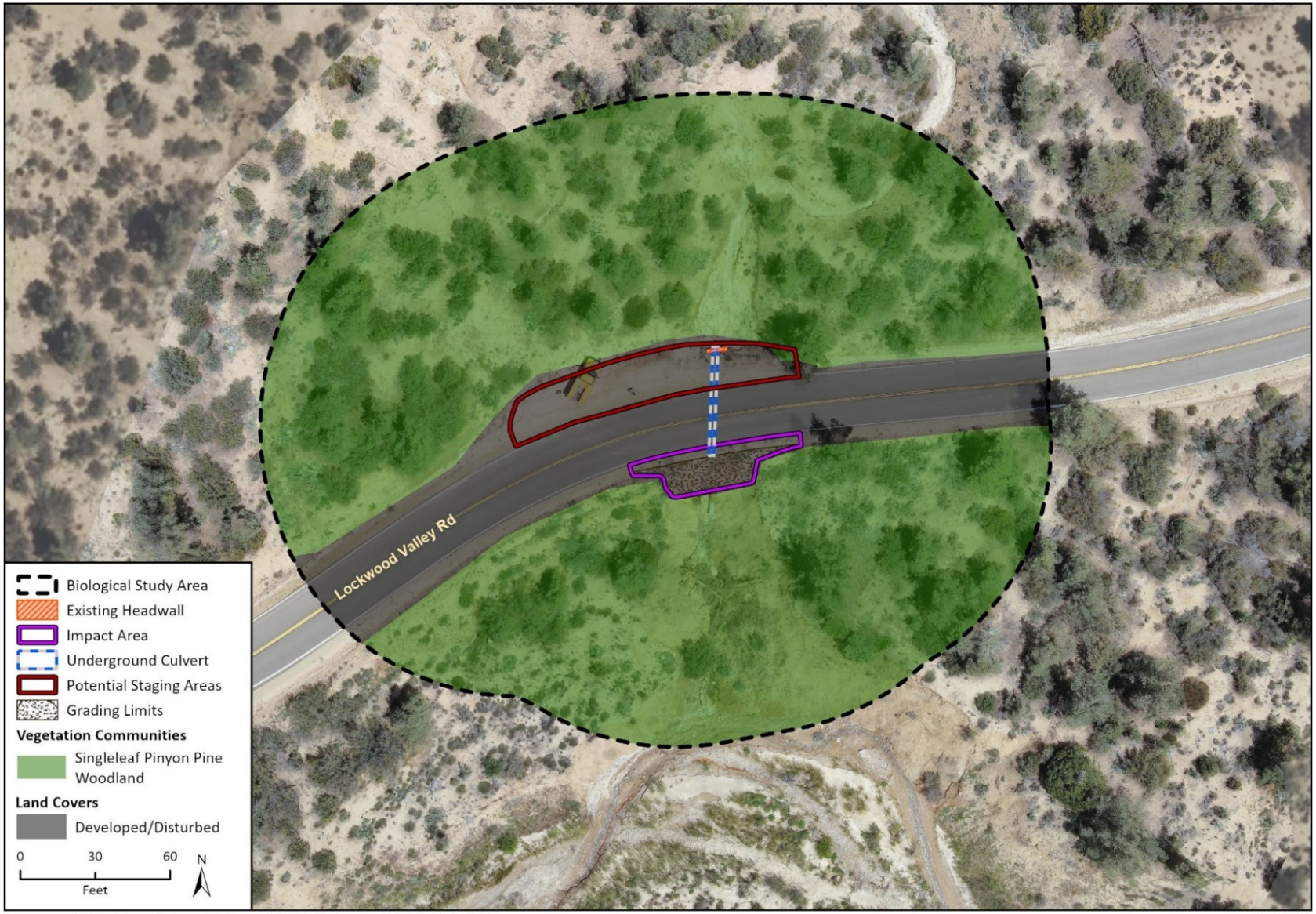


Figure 5 MP 12.69 Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types



Invasive Species

A total of eight invasive plant species as identified by the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) Inventory were observed with both BSAs (Table 2). Of these, three non-native plant species have a Cal-IPC category rating of High. These four species ranked as High include red brome, cheatgrass, and tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*). One plant species was observed within the BSAs with a Cal-IPC category rating of Moderate and four species were observed with a category rating of Limited. Table 2 below provides a summary of the invasive species observed on-site during the field surveys.

Table 2 Plants Observed in the BSA that are Included in the Cal-IPC Inventory

Common Name	Scientific Name	Cal-IPC Rating	Relative Density within the BSA
red brome	*Bromus rubens*	Cal-IPC High	Moderate
cheatgrass	*Bromus tectorum*	Cal-IPC High	Moderate
coastal heron's bill	*Erodium cicutarium*	Cal-IPC Limited	Moderate
rattail sixweeks grass	*Festuca myuros*	Cal-IPC Moderate	Low/Sparse
bur clover	*Medicago polymorpha*	Cal-IPC Limited	Low/Sparse
annual beard grass	*Polypogon monspeliensis*	Cal-IPC Limited	Low/Sparse
common mediterranean grass	*Schismus barbatus*	Cal-IPC Limited	Low/Sparse
tamarisk	*Tamarix ramosissima*	Cal-IPC High	Low/Sparse

Habitat Connectivity

Wildlife movement corridors, or habitat linkages, are generally defined as connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between otherwise isolated animal populations. Such linkages may serve a local purpose, such as providing a linkage between foraging and denning areas, or they may be regional in nature. Some habitat linkages may serve as migration corridors, wherein animals periodically move away from an area and then subsequently return. Others may be important as dispersal corridors for young animals. A group of habitat linkages in an area can form a wildlife corridor network. The BSAs are located within the LPNF, a vast and ecologically diverse landscape that inherently supports wildlife movement and provides critical nursery sites for a variety of species. The forest's extensive network of riparian corridors, mixed chaparral, oak woodlands, and coniferous habitats offers both connectivity and refuge for terrestrial and aquatic wildlife. These natural features facilitate regional wildlife dispersal and seasonal migration, while also supporting breeding, foraging, and sheltering opportunities for numerous native and special-status species. In addition, the Cuyama River and its tributaries provide suitable water sources for wildlife during precipitation events. Although the Cuyama River provides adequate habitat for fish species, the Twitchell Dam acts as a barrier for migrating fish species (e.g., southern California steelhead [*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*]) from accessing upstream habitat and spawning grounds throughout the BSAs (California Trout 2022).

Regional Species and Habitats and Natural Communities of Concern

"Regional species" and "habitats of concern," as used within this NES, are terms synonymous with "special-status" or "sensitive" species and habitats. Special-status species include taxa that are: 1) federally or state listed as endangered, threatened, or rare; 2) candidates for federal or state listing as endangered, threatened or rare; 3) proposed for federal or state listing as endangered, threatened, or rare; or 4) considered special concern species by the federal government (i.e., former USFWS Federal Species of Concern) and the CDFW (SSC), or those that appear on the CNDDB Special Animals List (CDFW 2025b). Sensitive species also include taxa afforded protection or considered sensitive under various laws (e.g., NEPA, CEQA, MBTA) or under Sections 3503 and 3503.5 of the CFG Code (e.g., nesting birds), and those taxa recognized as locally important or sensitive by the CNPS (CNPS 2025, CDFW 2025b). Sensitive natural communities/habitats include those that are regulated or considered sensitive by federal, state, and/or local agencies or NEPA/CEQA. The known occurrences of sensitive species and sensitive habitats have been inventoried and mapped, to varying degrees of accuracy, by the CNDDB (Appendix B, CDFW 2025a).

There are 62 special-status plants and animals and one sensitive natural community with recorded occurrences in the CNDDB, the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory, and the USFWS IPaC for the *Reyes Peak, San Guillermo Mountain, Cuyama Peak, Apache Canyon, Sawmill Mountain, Cuddy Valley, Lockwood Valley, Topatopa Mountains, Lion Canyon, Wheeler Springs, Old Man Mountain,* and *Rancho Nuevo Creek* USGS 7.5-minute quadrangles (Table 3)

Table 3 Special-Status Species, Sensitive Natural Communities, and Critical Habitat Potentially Occurring or Known to Occur in the Biological Study Areas.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Plants					
Abrams' oxytheca	*Acanthoscyphus parishii* var. *abramsii*	None/None G4?T1T2/S1S2 1B.2/FSS	Annual herb. Chaparral. Shale or sandy places. Elevations: 3750-6750ft. (1143-2057m.) Blooms Jun-Aug.	Absent	Although the BSAs for both MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 contain marginally suitable sandy chaparral habitat, the impact/work areas are both primarily developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1928 record approximately 5.5 miles east of MP 12.69.
Mt. Pinos onion	*Allium howellii* var. *clokeyi*	None/None G3G4T2/S2 1B.3/FSS	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Great basin scrub, meadows and seeps, pinyon and juniper woodland. Elevations: 4265-6070ft. (1300-1850m.) Blooms Apr-Jun.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contains suitable pinyon-juniper woodland habitat, Rincon biologists confirmed the absence of the target species within the BSA during the April 23, 2025 field survey. While the species was not observed within the survey boundaries, biologists did verify its presence in a vegetative state in nearby areas outside the BSA, confirming its local occurrence but absence from the impact area.
Rock Creek broomrape	*Aphyllon validum* ssp. *validum*	None/None G4T2/S2 1B.2/FSS	Chaparral, Pinyon and juniper woodland. Granitic 1030-2000m. Blooms May-Sep.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contains marginally suitable pinyon and juniper woodland, the work area is primarily developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1993 observation approximately 15.5 miles southeast of MP 12.69.
late-flowered mariposa-lily	*Calochortus fimbriatus*	None/None G3/S3 1B.3/FSS	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Chaparral, cismontane woodland, riparian woodland. Serpentinite (sometimes). Elevations: 900-6250ft. (275-1905m.) Blooms Jun-Aug.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable riparian woodland habitat. Work areas are largely developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025.
Palmer's mariposa-lily	*Calochortus palmeri* var. *palmeri*	None/None G3T2/S2 1B.2/FSS	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps. Mesic. Elevations: 2330-7840ft. (710-2390m.) Blooms Apr-Jul.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable mesic habitat. Work areas are largely developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025.
California jewelflower	*Caulanthus californicus*	FE/SE G1/S1 1B.1	Annual herb. Chenopod scrub, pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Sandy. Elevations: 200-3280ft. (61-1000m.) Blooms Feb-May.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contains marginally suitable pinyon and juniper woodland, the work area is primarily developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1993 observation approximately 19 miles northwest of MP 12.69. The FESA effect determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Lemmon's jewelflower	*Caulanthus lemmonii*	None/None G3/S3 1B.2/FSS	Annual herb. Pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Elevations: 260-5185ft. (80-1580m.) Blooms Feb-May.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contains marginally suitable pinyon and juniper woodland, the work area is primarily developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1994 observation approximately 9 miles northwest of MP 12.69.
Blakley's spineflower	*Chorizanthe blakleyi*	None/None G2/S2 1B.3/FSS	Annual herb. Chaparral, pinyon and juniper woodland. Elevations: 1970-5250ft. (600-1600m.) Blooms Apr-Jun.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contain marginally suitable pinyon and juniper woodland and MP 1.75 contains marginally suitable sagebrush scrub habitat, the work areas for both MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 are primarily developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1994 observation approximately 2.5 miles west of MP 1.75.
recurved larkspur	*Delphinium recurvatum*	None/None G2?/S2 1B.2	Perennial herb. Chenopod scrub, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Alkaline. Elevations: 10-2590ft. (3-790m.) Blooms Mar-Jun.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable chenopod scrub, cismontane woodland or foothill grassland habitat. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025.
umbrella larkspur	*Delphinium umbraculorum*	None/None G3/S3 1B.3	Perennial herb. Chaparral, cismontane woodland. Mesic sites. Elevations: 1310-5250ft. (400-1600m.) Blooms Apr-Jun.	Absent	The BSAs contain marginally suitable chaparral habitat, but no suitable cismontane woodland or mesic habitat. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1965 observation approximately 1 mile southeast of MP 1.75.
Kern mallow	*Eremalche parryi* ssp. *kernensis*	FE/None G3G4T3/S3 1B.2	Annual herb. Chenopod scrub, pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland. On dry, open, sandy to clay soils; usually within valley saltbush scrub; often at edge of balds. Elevations: 230-4230ft. (70-1290m.) Blooms Jan(Feb)Mar-May.	Habitat Present	The BSAs of MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 contain suitable pinyon and juniper woodland habitat and suitable sandy soils. However, the work areas are developed/ disturbed, and do not contain suitable habitat to support this species. Rincon Biologists did not observe species with the BSAs during field surveys on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 2016 observation approximately 3 miles from MP 1.75.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Hoover's eriastrum	*Eriastrum hooveri*	FD G3/S3 4.2	Annual herb. Chenopod scrub, pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Gravel. Elevations: 165-3000ft. Blooms March-Jul.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 has pinyon and juniper woodland, it does not contain the suitable elevation to support the species. The work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
southern alpine buckwheat	*Eriogonum kennedyi* var. *alpigenum*	None/None G4T3/S3 1B.3/FSS	Perennial herb. Alpine boulder and rock field, subalpine coniferous forest. Dry granitic gravel. Elevations: 8530-11485ft. (2600-3500m.) Blooms Jul-Sep.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable habitat at necessary elevations. Most of the work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
southern mountain wild-buckwheat	*Eriogonum kennedyi* var. *austromontanum*	FT/None 1B.2	Perennial herb. Pebble plain habitat with loamy, non-saline soils. Elevations: 2050 to 2700 meters. Blooms June-Sept.	Absent	The BSAs do not satisfy elevation requirements for the species. Most of the work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025. The FESA effect determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Ojai fritillary	*Fritillaria ojaiensis*	None/None G3/S3 1B.2/FSS	Perennial bulbiferous herb. Broadleafed upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest. Rocky sites. Sometimes on serpentine; sometimes along roadsides. Elevations: 740-3275ft. (225-998m.) Blooms Feb-May.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable broad-leafed upland forest, cismontane woodland, or lower montane coniferous forest. Most of the work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
mesa horkelia	*Horkelia cuneata* var. *puberula*	None/None G4T1/S1 1B.1/FSS	Perennial herb. Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub. Sandy or gravelly sites. Elevations: 230-2660ft. (70-810m.) Blooms Feb-Jul(Sep).	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable chaparral, cismontane woodland, or coastal scrub habitat below 2660ft. Most of the work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
California satintail	*Imperata brevifolia*	None/None G3/S3 2B.1/FSS	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Chaparral, coastal scrub, meadows and seeps, mojavean desert scrub, riparian scrub. Mesic sites, alkali seeps, riparian areas. 3-. Elevations: 0-3985ft. (0-1215m.) Blooms Sep-May.	Absent	Although MP 1.75 contains marginally suitable riverine habitat within the BSA, the work area is primarily developed/disturbed and would not support this species. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025 with the BSA. Closest CNDDB record is a 2001 observation 13.5 miles south of MP 1.75.
pale-yellow layia	*Layia heterotricha*	None/None G2/S2 1B.1/FSS	Annual herb. Cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Alkaline or clay soils; open areas. Elevations: 985-5595ft. (300-1705m.) Blooms Mar-Jun.	Habitat Present	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contain suitable pinyon and juniper woodland habitat, the work area is mostly developed/disturbed and would not support this species. Rincon Biologists did not observe any species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 2003 observation 0.3 miles west of MP 12.69.
Munz's tidy-tips	*Layia munzii*	None/None G2/S2 1B.2	Annual herb. Chenopod scrub, valley and foothill grassland. Hillsides, in white-grey alkaline clay soils, w/grasses and chenopod scrub associates. Elevations: 490-2295ft. (150-700m.) Blooms Mar-Apr.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable chenopod scrub or valley and foothill grasslands habitat below 2295ft. Most of the work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
southwestern mountain monardella	*Monardella australis* ssp. *occidentalis*	None/None G4T1/S1 1B.1	Perennial herb. Chaparral, upper montane coniferous forest. Clay, Loam, Rocky, Scree. Elevations: 6200-7990ft. (1890-2435m.) Blooms Jun-Jul.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable upper montane coniferous forest habitat above 6200ft. Most of the work areas are developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
white-veined monardella	*Monardella hypoleuca* ssp. *hypoleuca*	None/None G4T3/S3 1B.3	Perennial herb. Chaparral, cismontane woodland. Dry slopes. Elevations: 165-5005ft. (50-1525m.) Blooms (Apr)May-Aug(Sep-Dec).	Absent	The BSAs contain marginally suitable chaparral habitat and elevation. However, Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1948 observation approximately 14 miles southeast of MP 1.75.
Tehachapi monardella	*Monardella linoides* ssp. *oblonga*	None/None G5T2/S2 1B.3/FSS	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Lower montane coniferous forest, pinyon and juniper woodland, upper montane coniferous forest. On dry slopes of yellow pine forest, decomposed granitic soils; also in roadside disturbed areas. Elevations: 2955-8105ft. (900-2470m.) Blooms (May)Jun-Aug.	Absent	Although the BSA at MP 12.69 contain suitable pinyon and juniper woodland habitat, the work area is mostly developed/disturbed and does not support this species. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1994 observation 2 miles northwest of MP 12.69.
aparejo grass	*Muhlenbergia utilis*	None/None G4/S2S3 2B.2	Perennial rhizomatous herb. Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, marshes and swamps, meadows and seeps. Alkaline (sometimes), Serpentinite (sometimes).Elevations: 80-7630ft. (25-2325m.) Blooms Mar-Oct.	Absent	BSAs have marginally suitable chaparral habitat, however, do not have cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, marshes and swamps or meadow habitat. Work areas are mostly developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1964 observation 14 miles southwest of MP 1.75.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Spreading navarretia	*Navarretia fossalis*	FT/None 1B.1	Annual herb. Found in freshwater marshes and vernal pools. Communities include freshwater wetlands, shadscale scrub, and wetland-riparian. Elevation: 310-4690ft. Blooms: April-June.	Absent	BSAs do not have suitable freshwater marsh, vernal pools or wetland habitat to support species. Work areas are mostly developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during the field survey on April 23, 2025. The FESA effect determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Baja navarretia	*Navarretia peninsularis*	None/None G3/S2 1B.2/FSS	Annual herb. Chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, pinyon and juniper woodland. Wet areas in open forest. Elevations: 4920-7545ft. (1500-2300m.) Blooms (May)Jun-Aug.	Absent	The BSA at MP 12.69 contains marginally suitable pinyon juniper woodland habitat, however, the work area is largely developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 2003 observation 3.5 miles southeast of MP 12.69 in vernal pools.
Robbins' nemacladus	*Nemacladus secundiflorus* var. *robbinsii*	None/None G3T2/S2 1B.2/FSS	Annual herb. Chaparral, valley and foothill grassland. Dry, sandy or gravelly slopes. Openings. Elevations: 1150-5580ft. (350-1700m.) Blooms Apr-Jun.	Absent	The BSAs contain marginally suitable chaparral habitat, however, the work areas are largely developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025. Closest CNDDB record is a 1954 observation 3 miles southeast of MP 12.69.
California orcutt grass	*Orcuttia californica*	FE/SE 1B.1	Annual grasslike herb. Occurs in wetlands, vernal-pools, freshwater wetlands, valley grasslands and wetland-riparian communities. Blooms April-August.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable wetlands or vernal pool habitat to support this species. The work areas are largely developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025. The FESA and CESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
salt spring checkerbloom	*Sidalcea neomexicana*	None/None G4/S2 2B.2/FSS	Perennial herb. Chaparral, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, mojavean desert scrub, playas. Alkali springs and marshes. Elevations: 50-5020ft. (15-1530m.) Blooms Mar-Jun.	Habitat Present	The BSA at MP 1.75 contains marginally suitable chaparral habitat, however, the work area is largely developed/disturbed. Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field surveys on April 23, 2025 within the BSA, and do not anticipate any impact to the species. Closest CNDDB record is from a 1966 CNDDB collection 0.14 miles from MP 1.75.
San Bernardino aster	*Symphyotrichum defoliatum*	None/None G2/S2 1B.1/FSS	Cismontane woodland, Coastal scrub, Lower montane coniferous forest, Marshes and swamps, Meadows and seeps, Valley and foothill grassland (vernally mesic). Elevation: 5-6695ft. Blooms Jul-Nov	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable cismontane woodland, coastal scrub or marsh/swamp/meadow/seep habitat to support this species. The work areas are largely developed/disturbed. Rinon Biologists did not observe this species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
Grey-leaved violet	*Viola pinetorum* ssp. *grisea*	None/None G4G5T3/S3 1B.2	Meadows and seeps, Subalpine coniferous forest, Upper montane coniferous forest. Elevation: 4920-11155ft. Blooms April-June.	Absent	The BSAs do not have suitable meadow and seep habitat or suitable elevation to support this species. The work areas are largely developed/disturbed. Rinon Biologists did not observe this species during field surveys on April 23, 2025.
Invertebrates					
Crotch's bumble bee	*Bombus crotchii*	None/SCE G2/S2	Coastal California east to the Sierra-Cascade crest and south into Mexico. Food plant genera include *Antirrhinum spp., Phacelia spp., Clarkia, Dendromecon spp. , Eschscholzia spp., and Eriogonum spp..*	Habitat Present	The BSA at MP 12.69 contains marginally suitable foraging habitat for Crotch's bumblebee including *Eriogonum* spp. and *Phacelia spp.* food sources. MP 12.69 was mapped in a CNDDB occurrence record from 2000. However, the work areas are largely developed/disturbed and do not support CBB foraging or nesting habitat. The CESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Conservancy fairy shrimp	*Branchinecta conservatio*	FE/None G2/S2	Endemic to the grasslands of the northern two-thirds of the Central Valley; found in large, turbid pools. Inhabit astatic pools located in swales formed by old, braided alluvium; filled by winter/spring rains, last until June.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable astatic rain-filled pools, sandstone-depression pools or grassed swale, earth slump or basalt-flow depression pools. Closest CNDDB record is a 1989 observation 3.5 miles east of MP 12.69. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
vernal pool fairy shrimp	*Branchinecta lynchi*	FT/None G3/S3	Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast mountains, and South Coast mountains, in astatic rain-filled pools. Inhabit small, clear-water sandstone-depression pools and grassed swale, earth slump, or basalt-flow depression pools.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable vernal pools, swales or depression pools. Closest CNDDB record is a 1989 observation 3.5 miles east of MP 12.69. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Monarch butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	Proposed FT FSS	Found in Closed-cone coniferous forest. Winter roost sites extend along the coast from northern Mendocino to Baja California, Mexico.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable overwintering habitat for monarch butterfly and contain marginally suitable foraging habitat for migrating butterflies. The work areas are primarily developed/disturbed and do hot have suitable habitat. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
Kern primrose sphinx moth	*Euproserpinus euterpe*	FT/None G1G2/S1	Found in the Walker Basin, Kern County, and in the Carrizo Plain and Cuyama Valley. Host plant is Camissonia contorta epilobioides (evening primrose) in Kern County and Camissonia campestris (field primrose) elsewhere.	Absent	Host plant was not found in the BSA at either MP 1.75 or MP 12.69 during field surveys by Rincon Biologists on April 23, 2025. Work areas are largely developed/disturbed. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
white cuckoo bee	*Neolarra alba*	None/None GH/SH	Known only from localities in Southern California. Cleptoparasitic in the nests of perdita bees.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable habitat. Work areas are developed/disturbed. No white cuckoo bees observed during field survey by Rincon Biologists on April 23, 2025.
Fish					
arroyo chub	*Gila orcuttii*	None/None G1/S2 SSC FSS	Native to streams from Malibu Creek to San Luis Rey River basin. Introduced into streams in Santa Clara, Ventura, Santa Ynez, Mojave and San Diego river basins. Slow water stream sections with mud or sand bottoms. Feeds heavily on aquatic vegetation and associated invertebrates.	Absent	Although arroyo chubs have been documented in the Cuyama River, there are no CNDDB records within the 12-quadrangle analysis completed. The nearest CNDDB record is in the Sespe Creek, 10 miles south of MP 1.75. There is not any suitable habitat in either work area at MP 12.69 or MP 1.75, therefore, no impact to the species is expected to occur.
steelhead - southern California DPS	*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 10*	FE/SCE G5T1Q/S1	Federal listing refers to populations from Santa Maria River south to southern extent of range (San Mateo Creek in San Diego County). Southern steelhead likely have greater physiological tolerances to warmer water and more variable conditions.	Absent	The Twitchell Dam on the Cuyama River blocks steelhead trout from accessing the Cuyama River as habitat and spawning grounds. The closest CNDDB record is a 1983 study in the Sespe Creek, 9 miles southeast. The FESA and CESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Amphibians					
arroyo toad	*Anaxyrus californicus*	FE/None G2G3/S2 SSC	Semi-arid regions near washes or intermittent streams, including valley-foothill and desert riparian, desert wash, etc. Rivers with sandy banks, willows, cottonwoods, and sycamores; loose, gravelly areas of streams in drier parts of range.	Absent	Marginally suitable intermittent stream habitat along the BSAs of MP 1.75 and MP 12.69. However, Rincon Biologists did not observe species during field survey on April 23, 2025, and no suitable habitat is found within the work areas. Closest CNDDB record is a 1992 observation in Sespe Creek, 11 miles southeast of MP 1.75. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
yellow-blotched salamander	*Ensatina eschscholtzii croceater*	None/None G5T3/S3 WL FSS	Forests and well-shaded canyons, as well as oak woodlands and old chaparral. Needs surface objects, such as logs, boards, and rocks. Also needs old rodent burrows or other underground retreats.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable forest and well-shaded canyon or oak woodland habitat.
foothill yellow-legged frog – south coast DPS	*Rana boylii* pop. 6	FE/SE G3T1/S1 FSS	Southern Coast Ranges from Monterey Bay south through San Gabriel Mountains; west of the Salinas River in Monterey Co, south through Transverse Ranges, and east through San Gabriel Mountains. Historically may have ranged to Baja California. Partly shaded shallow streams and riffles with a rocky substrate in a variety of habitats. Needs at least some cobble-sized substrate for egg-laying and at least 15 weeks to attain metamorphosis.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable habitat. The FESA and CESA determination is that the Project will have no effect on the species.
California red-legged frog	*Rana draytonii*	FT/None G2G3/S2S3 SSC	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation. Requires 11-20 weeks of permanent water for larval development. Must have access to estivation habitat.	Absent	BSAs do not contain suitable habitat - no near permanent sources of deep water. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Reptiles					
southwestern pond turtle	*Actinemys pallida*	FPT/None G2G3/SNR SSC	A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation, below 6000 ft elevation. Needs basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0.5 km from water for egg-laying. Occurs in southern California from Monterey County south to Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Diego Counties into northern Baja California, Mexico.	Absent	BSAs do not contain suitable ponds, marshes, rivers or stream habitat. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Northern California legless lizard	*Anniella pulchra*	None/None G3/S2S3 SSC FSS	Sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation. Soil moisture is essential. They prefer soils with a high moisture content.	Habitat Present	BSA at MP 1.75 provides suitable sandy or loose loamy soils with soil moisture, however, the BSA is on the eastern boundary for habitat range. Closest CNDDB record is a 1996 observation 3 miles west of MP 1.75.
California legless lizard	*Anniella* spp.	None/None G3G4/S3S4 SSC FSS	Contra Costa County south to San Diego, within a variety of open habitats.This element represents California records of Anniella not yet assigned to new species within the Anniella pulchra complex. Variety of habitats; generally in moist, loose soil. They prefer soils with a high moisture content.	Habitat Present	BSA at MP 1.75 provides suitable sandy or loose loamy soils with soil moisture. Closest CNDDB record is a 2013 observation 1 mile east of MP 1.75.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
southern rubber boa	*Charina umbratica*	None/ST G2G3/S2 FSS	Found in a variety of montane forest habitats. Previously considered morphologically intermediate, recent (2022) genomic analysis clarifies individuals from Mt Pinos, Tehachapi Mts, and southern Sierra Nevada are southern rubber boa. Found in vicinity of streams or wet meadows; requires loose, moist soil for burrowing; seeks cover in rotting logs, rock outcrops, and under surface litter.	Absent	BSAs do not have suitable stream/wet meadow habitat to support this species. The CESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
blunt-nosed leopard lizard	*Gambelia sila*	FE/SE G1/S2 FP	Resident of sparsely vegetated alkali and desert scrub habitats, in areas of low topographic relief. Seeks cover in mammal burrows, under shrubs or structures such as fence posts; they do not excavate their own burrows.	Absent	BSAs do not have suitable alkali and desert scrub habitats. The FESA and CESA determination is that the Project will have no effect on the species.
coast horned lizard	*Phrynosoma blainvillii*	None/None G4/S4 SSC	Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes. Open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burial, and abundant supply of ants and other insects.	Habitat Present	The BSA at MP 1.75 contains suitable sandy washes and the BSA at MP 12.69 contains suitable pinyon and juniper woodland habitat. However, both of the work areas do not contain suitable habitat. The closest CNDDB observation occurred 1.5 miles west of MP 1.75. No species were observed by Rincon Biologists during the field survey on April 23, 2025.
two-striped gartersnake	*Thamnophis hammondii*	None/None G4/S3S4 SSC FSS	Coastal California from vicinity of Salinas to northwest Baja California. From sea to about 7,000 ft elevation. Highly aquatic, found in or near permanent fresh water. Often along streams with rocky beds and riparian growth.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain adequate suitable permanent fresh water habitats.
Birds					
Yellow-billed cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	FT FSS	Inhabit wooded habitat with dense cover and water nearby, including woodlands with low, scrubby vegetation and dense thickets along streams and marshes.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable riparian scrub habitat to support the yellow-billed cuckoo. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Southwestern willow flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii extimus*	FE FSS	Dense, riparian habitats with cottonwood/willow and tamarisk vegetation. Saturated soils, standing water or nearby streams and pools that influence necessary microhabitat.	Absent	The BSAs do not contain suitable riparian habitat to support nesting or foraging habitat for the southwestern willow flycatcher. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
prairie falcon	*Falco mexicanus*	None/None G5/S4 WL	Inhabits dry, open terrain, either level or hilly. Breeding sites located on cliffs. Forages far afield, even to marshlands and ocean shores.	Absent	CNDDB maps both BSAs for MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 as having suitable habitat for prairie falcon. Potential foraging habitat within the BSAs. However, no suitable nesting habitat is found at either BSA, and the work areas contain no suitable foraging or nesting habitat as they are both developed/disturbed.
California condor	*Gymnogyps californianus*	FE/SE G1/S2 FP	Require vast expanses of open savannah, grasslands, and foothill chaparral in mountain ranges of moderate altitude. Deep canyons containing clefts in the rocky walls provide nesting sites. Forages up to 100 miles from roost/nest.	Absent	BSAs do not contain adequate nesting habitat for condors. BSAs may provide marginally suitable foraging habitat, however, the work areas contain no suitable foraging habitat. Closest CNDDB record is 3 miles southeast of MP 1.75. The FESA and CESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Least Bell's vireo	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	FE	Breeding habitat is primarily willow-dominated riparian woodlands. Forages in neighboring mulefat scrub, oak woodlands and chaparral.	Absent	BSAs do not contain adequate willow-dominated riparian woodlands or mule fat stands to support foraging. The FESA determination is that the project will have no effect on the species.
Mammals					
hoary bat	*Lasiurus cinereus*	None/None G3G4/S4	Typically roosts in trees in deciduous and coniferous forests and woodlands but occasionally roosts in rocks crevices. Forages in open areas, typically along riparian corridors or over water. Diet primarily consists of moths.	Absent	BSAs do not contain suitable roosting habitat.
Mount Pinos chipmunk	*Neotamias speciosus callipeplus*	None/None G4T2/S2	Occurs in open forests with a mix of shrubs and trees on Mount Abel and Mount Frazier in southern California. Prefers rocky outcrops and crevices for nesting.	Absent	BSAs do not support habitat: are not found on Mount Abel and Mount Frazier.
Tulare grasshopper mouse	*Onychomys torridus tularensis*	None/None G5T1T2/S1S2 SSC	Hot, arid valleys and scrub deserts in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Diet almost exclusively composed of arthropods, therefore needs abundant supply of insects.	Absent	BSAs do not contain suitable habitat. Closest CNDDB record is from 1932, 12 miles northwest of MP 1.75.
Tehachapi pocket mouse	*Perognathus alticola inexpectatus*	None/None G2T1T2/S1S2 SSC FSS	Arid annual grassland and desert shrub communities, but also taken in fallow grain fields and in Russian thistle. Burrows for cover and nesting. Aestivates and hibernates during extreme weather. Forages on open ground and under shrubs.	Absent	BSAs contain marginally suitable desert shrub communities, but project work areas are developed/disturbed. Closest CNDDB record is a 1926 observation 8 miles northeast of MP 12.69.
San Joaquin pocket mouse	*Perognathus inornatus*	None/None G3/S2S3	Grassland, oak savanna and arid scrubland in the southern Sacramento Valley, Salinas Valley, San Joaquin Valley and adjacent foothills, south to the Mojave Desert. Associated with fine-textured, sandy, friable soils.	Absent	BSAs do not contain suitable grassland, oak savanna and arid scrubland habitats.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status[1]	General Habitat Description	Habitat Present/ Absent	Rationale
American badger	*Taxidea taxus*	None/None G5/S3 SSC	Most abundant in drier open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats, with friable soils. Needs sufficient food, friable soils and open, uncultivated ground. Preys on burrowing rodents. Digs burrows.	Absent	Although BSAs contain marginally suitable shrub and forest habitat, no burrows were observed during field surveys conducted by Rincon Biologists on April 23, 2025. Project works areas are developed/disturbed and do not support habitat for this species.
San Joaquin kit fox	*Vulpes macrotis mutica*	FE/ST G4T2/S3	Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Need loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and suitable prey base.	Absent	BSAs do not contain suitable grasslands or grassy open stages. No burrows were observed by Rincon Biologists on April 23, 2025. Project work areas are developed/disturbed. The FESA and CESA determination is that the Project will have no effect on the species.
Habitats					
Southern California Steelhead Stream	Southern California Steelhead Stream	None/None GNR/SNR		Absent	Closest CNDDB Record of this natural community is the Ventura River, 13 miles south of MP 1.75.

[1]Status Codes: No status (--); Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT); Federal Proposed (FP); Federal Proposed Endangered (FPE); Federal Proposed Threatened (FPT); Federal Critical Habitat (FCH); Proposed Federal Critical Habitat (PCH); Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act (BGEPA); Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA); State Fully Protected (FP); State Endangered (SE); State Candidate (SC); State Threatened (ST); State Candidate Threatened (SCT); State Species of Special Concern (SSC); Not formally listed but included in CDFW "Special Animal" List (SA); Not formally listed but included in CDFW "Watch List" (WL); CNPS CRPR: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere (1B); Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere (2); Plants that about which more information is needed (3); A watch list plant of limited distribution (4) and Threat Code: Seriously endangered I California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat) (.1); Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened) (.2); Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened or no current threats known) (.3); and Forest Service Sensitive (FSS) species.

Absent - no suitable habitat present and no further work needed; Habitat Present - suitable habitat is or may be present. Critical Habitat Present - Project footprint is located within a designated critical habitat unit but does not necessarily mean that appropriate habitat is present; Present - the species is present.

Chapter 4 – Results: Biological Resources, Discussion of Impacts, and Mitigation

Habitats and Natural Communities of Special Concern

Habitats are considered to be of special concern based on: (1) federal, State, or local laws regulating their development; (2) limited distributions; and/or (3) the habitat requirements of special-status plants or animals occurring on site. Federal, State, and local governments have passed laws protecting certain natural communities, particularly wetlands, streams and rivers and the riparian habitats associated with them and/or habitat areas known to contain special-status plant or animal species. Federally designated critical habitat areas are considered areas of special concern and are defined as those areas essential to the conservation of a federally listed species. Not all federally listed species have designated critical habitat.

Plant communities are also considered sensitive biological resources if they have limited distributions, have high wildlife value, include sensitive species, or are particularly susceptible to disturbance. CDFW ranks sensitive communities as "threatened" or "very threatened". Sensitive natural communities were previously tracked in the CNDDB, although the system is not currently updated for sensitive natural communities. Additionally, vegetation alliances are ranked 1 through 5 based on NatureServe's (2010) methodology, with those alliances ranked globally (G) or statewide (S) as 1 through 3 considered sensitive by CDFW, as well as certain additional associations identified in the current CDFW List (2025).

Discussion of Natural Community

Survey Results

There are no critical habitat areas in the BSAs. Singleleaf pinyon pine woodland is unranked, but is considered sensitive by CDFW (CDFW 2025). This vegetation community is present at MP 12.69 and totals approximately 0.001 acre (44 square feet) of habitat within the work area.

Project Impacts

Impacts anticipated within the BSAs have been quantified as either permanent or temporary. Impacts to natural communities would result from activities such as ground disturbance, vegetation disturbance, and tree removal. The total amount of impacts anticipated from the project was quantified using Geographic Information System software. The project impacts, based on the project plans and mapped vegetation communities and land cover types, were calculated and are presented in Figure 4 and Figure 5. The Agency has confirmed that tree trimming and removals are not anticipated, so impacts to singleleaf pinyon pine woodland are limited to soil

disturbance, outside the critical root zone, which would not be considered significant and would not require mitigation. Estimated impacts to natural communities and land cover types are presented in Table 4.

Table 4 Estimated Impacts to Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

Vegetation Community or Land Cover Type	Temporary Project Impact (Acres)	Permanent Project Impact (Acres)	Habitat Type	CDFW Sensitive Natural Community (Yes/No)
Big Sagebrush Scrub	0.002	0	Scrubland	No
Singleleaf Pinyon Pine Woodland	0	0	Woodland	Yes
Riverwash	0	0.077	Alluvial	No

[1] Vegetation community ranks are from CDFW (2025).

The only sensitive natural community occurring within the BSAs is singleleaf pinyon pine woodland within the BSA at MP 12.69. However, as previously stated, the project would not impact this vegetation community. No other sensitive natural communities occur within the BSAs.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

The following avoidance and minimization efforts will be implemented to avoid impacts to habitats or communities of special concern:

- Prior to any ground-disturbing activities, environmentally sensitive area (ESA) fencing shall be installed around the singleleaf pinyon pine woodland at MP 12.69. Caltrans-defined ESAs shall be noted on design plans and delineated in the field prior to the start of construction activities.

In accordance with California State Transportation Agency's Standard of Specifications, 14-1.02 Environmentally Sensitive Area:

- If an ESA is shown, the boundaries shown are approximate. The Department marks the exact boundaries on the ground. Do not enter an ESA unless authorized. If an ESA is breached, immediately:
    1. Stop all work within 60 feet of the ESA boundary
    2. Secure the area
    3. Notify the Engineer

If an ESA is damaged, the Department determines the necessary remediation and the party to perform the work. The Department deducts the cost for this work.

Compensatory Mitigation

Following the completion of the project, a hydroseeding mix of appropriate local native species will be distributed along cleared and grubbed areas to restore and promote bank stabilization for future wash-outs.

The seed mix comprised of species in Table 5 will be obtained from local commercial sources in Ventura, Santa Barbara, Los Angeles, and/or Kern County. It will be clearly tagged or labeled showing type of seed, test date, name of supplier and the percentage

of the following: crop seed, inert matter, weed seed and noxious weeds. Product containing noxious weed see will be rejected. Fiber will be derived from cellulose such as wood pulp or similar organic material.

The species provided below are subject to change with availability of suitable replacements based on upland habitat goals from the native seed supplier. Actual species and amounts of each species installed shall be dependent on those locally suitable species and quantities that are available at the time of implementation.

Seeding shall occur in the fall, if feasible. Ideally, all restoration installation should be conducted after the first rains, typically beginning in October to December.

Table 5 Hydroseed Mix Prescription

Common Name	Scientific Name	Form	Blooming Period
deerweed	*Acmispon glaber*	perennial forb	mid
western ragweed	*Ambrosia psilostachya*	perennial herb	late
big sagebrush	*Artemisia tridentata*	perennial forb	late
farewell to spring	*Clarkia purpurea*	annual herb	mid
California buckwheat	*Eriogonum fasiculatum*	perennial shrub	mid-late
rubber rabbitbrush	*Ericameria nauseosa*	perennial shrub	late
California poppy	*Eschscholzia californica*	annual forb	early-mid
fescue	*Festuca microstachys*	annual grasslike herb	early-mid
meadow barley	*Hordeum brachyantherum*	perennial grasslike herb	mid
goldfields	*Lasthenia californica*	annual herb	early-mid
tidy tips	*Layia platyglossa*	annual forb	early
silver bush lupine	*Lupinus albifrons*	perennial shrub	mid
bush monkey flower	*Diplacus aurantiacus*	perennial shrub	early-mid
one sided blue grass	*Poa secunda*	perennial grasslike herb	mid
purple needlegrass	*Stipa pulchra*	perennial grasslike herb	early-mid

Cumulative Impacts

The project will have no impacts to habitats or communities of special concern. Therefore, there are no cumulative impacts as a result of the project.

Discussion of Jurisdictional Features

Survey Results

Based upon the findings of Rincon's jurisdictional delineation, portions of the BSAs may be potentially subject to USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW jurisdiction(s). (Figure 6 and Figure 7). Four potentially jurisdictional features occur within the BSAs, including the Cuyama River, and Unnamed Drainages 1, 2, and 3. These features are described in greater detail below.

Table 6 below summarizes the total acreage of potentially jurisdictional aquatic resources within the BSA. Figure 6 and Figure 7 depict the locations and extent of these resources within the BSAs.

Table 6 USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW Jurisdictions within the BSAs

	USACE Waters of the U.S.		RWQCB Waters of the State		CDFW
Feature	Non-wetland Waters of the U.S.[1] (acres/ linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres/ linear feet)	Non-wetland Waters of the State[1] (acres/ linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the State (acres/ linear feet)	Jurisdictional Streambed[2] (acres/linear feet)
Cuyama River	1.08/200	0.00/0	1.16/200	0.00/0	1.16/200
Unnamed Drainages 1	0.00/0	0.00/0	0.17/190	0.00/0	0.17/190
Unnamed Drainage 2	0.00/0	0.00/0	0.007/110	0.00/0	0.007/110
Unnamed Drainage 3	0.01/60	0.00/0	0.09/130	0.00/0	0.09/130
Total	**1.09/260**	0.00/0	**1.427/630**	0.00/0	**1.427/630**

[1] Determined based upon the extent of the OHWM.

[2] Determined based upon the extent of the top of bank or extent of riparian vegetation, whichever was greater.

The BSAs contain approximately 1.09 acres of non-wetland waters of the U.S potentially under the jurisdiction of the USACE, approximately 1.427 acres of non-wetland waters of the State potentially under the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB, and approximately 1.427 acres of jurisdictional streambed potentially under the jurisdiction of the CDFW.

Cuyama River

The Cuyama River flows in a westerly direction in the northern half of the BSA at MP 1.75. The Cuyama River is recognized by the NWI as Riverine (R4SBC), Freshwater Forested/Shrub Wetland (PSS/USA) and Forested/Shrub Wetland (Rp1SS), and by the NHD as a perennial stream/river (USFWS 2025, USGS 2025b). Assessment of the Cuyama River during the field survey indicates that this feature is an intermittent river that flows for at least three months of the year during the winter and spring months following seasonal precipitation events (Appendix F, Photograph 1). Water flowing into the Cuyama River is sourced from multiple smaller creeks and unnamed drainages upstream of MP 1.75, including Reyes Creek, Beartrap Creek and Alamo Creek, which collect water from mountainous runoff of the LPNF. The Cuyama River flows for approximately 200 linear feet within the project boundary (Figure 6). The right

(southern) top of bank extends south onto Lockwood Valley Road where the washout road damage occurs. The southern top of bank only extends onto Lockwood Valley Road after the storm damage caused the road to wash out into the Cuyama River. The bank is moderately sloped and approximately 6 feet in depth. Scattered patches of riparian vegetation associated with the Cuyama River in the BSA include arroyo willow and sandbar willow. Although riparian vegetation was present, it was scattered in isolated patches of vegetation, and the streambed was primarily unvegetated throughout the BSA at MP 1.75.

The right (southern) OHWM of the Cuyama River extends south into the work area at MP 1.75 where Lockwood Valley Road has washed out. The OHWM is defined by the presence of a well-defined break in slope, shelving at the top of bank, changes in vegetation cover and species above the OHWM, and a change in average sediment texture from sand to cobble (Appendix F, Photograph 4). The OWHM was mostly unvegetated, with flowing water present at the time of the survey. Small, scattered sandbar willows (FACW) were found growing on the margins. Due to the presence of flowing water observed within the Cuyama River, the several sub-watersheds contributing to flows of the river, and the establishment of geomorphic indicators, this feature is determined to be a Relatively Permanent Water (RPW), as it flows for at least three months of the year and is a tributary to the Pacific Ocean via the Santa Maria River. Wetlands were determined to be absent from the Cuyama River within the BSA at MP 1.75, as although wetland hydrology (i.e., surface water) was observed, predominant hydrophytic vegetation and hydric soil indicators were absent.

Based upon the field survey, the Cuyama River is potentially subject to the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW jurisdictions. The Cuyama River constitutes non-wetland waters of the U.S. subject to the jurisdiction of the USACE per Section 404 of the CWA and was delineated to the width of the OHWM through the BSA at MP 1.75. The Cuyama River constitutes non-wetland waters of the U.S. and State subject to the jurisdiction of the Central Coast RWQCB per Section 401 of the CWA and the Porter-Cologne Act, respectively. The limits of RWQCB jurisdiction extend to top of bank based on current interpretation of jurisdiction by the Central Coast RWQCB. The Cuyama River also constitutes a CDFW streambed under the jurisdiction of the CDFW per Section 1600 et seq. of the CFG Code. The limits of CDFW jurisdiction also extend to the top of bank. Table 6 above summarizes the total acreage of jurisdictional waters associated with the Cuyama River within the BSA at MP 1.75.

Unnamed Drainages

The jurisdictional delineation identified three unnamed drainages within the BSA at MP 12.69 (Figure 7). As discussed above, Unnamed Drainage 1 flows in a southern direction through a culvert and discharges into Unnamed Drainage 3. Unnamed Drainage 3 flows in a westerly direction, eventually contributing to surface flows in the Cuyama River. Unnamed Drainage 2 flows in a westerly direction, intersecting Unnamed Drainage 1

above the culvert. As described above, NWI recognizes Unnamed Drainage 3 as Riverine (R4SBA), while Unnamed Drainages 1 and 2 are not classified (USFWS 2025).

Unnamed Drainage 1

Unnamed Drainage 1 flows for approximately 200 linear feet within the BSA at MP 12.69. No water was present in the drainage at the time of the field survey. The drainage flows through a culvert underneath Lockwood Valley Road. There is an old, exposed steel pipe throughout portions of the drainage, while the rest is an open channel (Appendix F, Photographs 7, 8, and 11). The drainage is primarily unvegetated sandy soils, and the banks are vegetated with upland plant species such as singleleaf pinyon, Tucker oak, bigberry manzanita, and multiple species of buckwheat. The top of bank ranges from 30 to 60 feet wide, and 2 to 8 feet deep. The OHWM is unvegetated, consisting of course sand and cobbles, with the soil texture transitioning to sandy loam above the OHWM. The OHWM is defined by a clear break in slope, an undercut bank, a change in sediment texture, and a change in vegetation cover from unvegetated to singleleaf pinyon pine woodland.

Due to the ephemeral flow regimes of Unnamed Drainage 1, lack of surface water observed during the field survey, and relatively small size of the watershed contributing flows to the drainage system, this feature is determined to be a non-RPW since it does not flow at least seasonally (i.e., three months out of the year). In addition, Unnamed Drainage 1 did not exhibit any wetland characteristics (e.g., predominance of hydrophytic vegetation, evidence of hydric soil formation, and/or multiple indicators of wetland hydrology). Therefore, wetland sample points were not collected in this drainage feature, and wetlands were determined to be absent.

Based on the field survey, Unnamed Drainage 1 is potentially subject to RWQCB and CDFW jurisdictions. Unnamed Drainage 1 constitutes a CDFW streambed under the jurisdiction of the CDFW per Section 1600 et seq. of the CFGC. The limits of CDFW jurisdiction extend to the top of bank of this feature, as riparian vegetation is absent. Unnamed Drainage 1 is also subject to the Central Coast RWQCB jurisdiction as a non-wetland water of the State per the Porter-Cologne Act. The limits of RWQCB jurisdiction extend to top of bank based on current interpretation of jurisdiction by the Central Coast RWQCB. As Unnamed Drainage 1 is an ephemeral non-RPW, it is not anticipated to be subject to USACE jurisdiction per Section 404 of the CWA. Table 6 above summarizes the total acreage of jurisdictional waters associated with each of the unnamed drainages within the BSAs.

Unnamed Drainage 2

Unnamed Drainage 2 flows for approximately 110 linear feet alongside Lockwood Valley Road within the BSA at MP 12.69. Surface flows in Unnamed Drainage 2 are sourced from south-facing hillsides to the north of Lockwood Valley Road, and flow in a southernly direction, conjoining with OHWM of Unnamed Drainage 1 at the culvert (Appendix F, Photographs 9 and 10). No water was present in Unnamed Drainage 2 at

the time of the field survey. The top of bank of Unnamed Drainage 2 is 2.5 feet wide and 0.5 foot deep. The OHWM is defined by a clear break in bank slope.

Due to the ephemeral flow regime of Unnamed Drainage 2, lack of surface water observed during the field survey, and relatively small size of the watershed contributing flows to the drainage system, this feature was determined to be a non-RPW that does not flow at least seasonally (i.e., three months out of the year). In addition, Unnamed Drainage 2 did not exhibit any wetland characteristics (e.g., predominance of hydrophytic vegetation, evidence of hydric soil formation, and/or multiple indicators of wetland hydrology). Therefore, wetland sample points were not collected in this drainage feature, and wetlands were determined to be absent.

Based on the field survey, Unnamed Drainage 2 is potentially subject to RWQCB and CDFW jurisdictions. Unnamed Drainage 2 constitutes a CDFW streambed under the jurisdiction of the CDFW per Section 1600 et seq. of the CFGC. The limits of CDFW jurisdiction extend to the top of bank of this feature, as riparian vegetation is absent. Unnamed Drainage 2 is also subject to Central Coast RWQCB jurisdiction as a non-wetland water of the State per the Porter-Cologne Act. The limits of RWQCB jurisdiction extend to top of bank based on current interpretation of jurisdiction by the Central Coast RWQCB. As Unnamed Drainage 2 is an ephemeral non-RPW, it is not anticipated to be subject to USACE jurisdiction per Section 404 of the CWA. Table 6 above summarizes the total acreage of jurisdictional waters associated with each of the unnamed drainages within the BSAs.

Unnamed Drainage 3

Unnamed Drainage 3 flows in a westerly direction at the southernmost border of the BSA at MP 12.69 for approximately 60 linear feet. This feature was determined to be an intermittent drainage, with water present at the time of the survey (Appendix F, Photograph 15, 16, 17). The drainage supports vegetation such as sandbar willow and scattered singleleaf pinyon pine. Unnamed Drainage 3 is a tributary of Alamo Creek, which subsequently flows into the Cuyama River just above MP 1.75. The left (northern) top of bank is moderately sloped, with shrub and herb cover in the mid-succession stage. The right (southern) top of bank extends out of the BSA at MP 12.69. The OHWM is unvegetated, consisting of clay silt and sand, with the soil texture transitioning to sandy loam above the OHWM. The OHWM is defined by a clear break in slope, shelving berms, an undercut bank, a change in sediment texture, and a change in vegetation cover from unvegetated to willow/pine woodland.

Unnamed Drainage 3 was determined to be a RPW due to its intermittent flow, relatively large local watershed and upstream drainages that contribute to the drainage system, the presence of scattered riparian vegetation, and downstream drainage into the Cuyama River. Wetlands were determined to be absent from Unnamed Drainage 3 within the BSA at MP 12.69, as although wetland hydrology (i.e., surface water) was observed, predominant hydrophytic vegetation and hydric soil indicators were absent.

Based on the field survey, Unnamed Drainage 3 is potentially subject to USACE, RWQCB and CDFW jurisdictions. Unnamed Drainage 3 constitutes a CDFW streambed under the jurisdiction of the CDFW per Section 1600 et seq. of the CFGC. The limits of CDFW jurisdiction extend to the top of bank of this feature, as riparian vegetation is absent. Unnamed Drainages 3 is also subject to Central Coast RWQCB jurisdiction as a non-wetland water of the State per Section 401 of the CWA. The limits of RWQCB jurisdiction was determined to coterminous with CDFW jurisdiction. Unnamed Drainage 3 constitutes non-wetland waters of the U.S. subject to the jurisdictions of the USACE and RWQCB per Sections 404 and 401 of the CWA, respectively, and was delineated to the width of the OHWM. Table 6 above summarizes the total acreage of jurisdictional waters associated with each of the unnamed drainages within the BSAs.

Project Impacts

Temporary and permanent impacts to jurisdictional features during project implementation include grading and installation of rip-rap at both MP 1.75 and MP 12.69 (see below Table 7 and Table 8, respectively). The grading limit footprints and overlapping jurisdictional features are shown in Figure 6 and Figure 7.

Table 7 Temporary Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Areas

	USACE Jurisdiction		RWQCB Jurisdiction		CDFW Jurisdiction
Feature	Non-Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres/ linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres)	Non-Wetland Waters of the State (acres/ linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the State (acres)	Streambed and Associated Riparian Habitat (acres/ linear feet)
Cuyama River	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0
Unnamed Drainage 1	0/0	0	0.0011/28	0	0.0011/28
Unnamed Drainage 2	0/0	0	0.0013/30	0	0.0013/30
Unnamed Drainage 3	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0
Total	**0/0**	**0**	**0.0024/58**	**0**	**0.0024/58**

Table 8 Permanent Impacts to Potentially Jurisdictional Areas

	USACE Jurisdiction		RWQCB Jurisdiction		CDFW Jurisdiction
Feature	Non-Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres/ linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the U.S. (acres)	Non-Wetland Waters of the State (acres/ linear feet)	Wetland Waters of the State (acres)	Streambed and Associated Riparian Habitat (acres/ linear feet)
Cuyama River	0.07/252	0	0.161/335	0	0.161/335
Unnamed Drainage 1	0/0	0	0.006/67	0	0.006/67
Unnamed Drainage 2	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0
Unnamed Drainage 3	0/0	0	0/0	0	0/0
Total	**0.07/252**	**0**	**0.167/402**	**0**	**0.167/402**

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

A total of 0.161 acre of the Cuyama River at MP 1.75 under CDFW and RWQCB jurisdictions, and 0.07 acre under USACE jurisdiction, are anticipated to be permanently

impacted. Additionally, 0.006 acre (261 square feet) of Unnamed Drainage 1 within the BSA at MP 12.69 would be permanently impacted.

These expected impacts to potentially jurisdictional CDFW features will require a Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement, which shall be obtained prior to ground disturbance or issuance of a grading permit. The impacts to potentially jurisdictional USACE features may require a Nationwide Permit Pre-Construction Notification (PCN) as well as a Nationwide Permit 14: Linear Transportation Projects which shall be obtained prior to ground disturbance or issuance of a grading permit. In addition, the RWQCB may require the submission of a Notice of Intent (NOI).

Temporary impacts are limited to the staging area at the BSA at MP 12.69. Approximately 0.0011 acre (48 square feet) of Unnamed Drainage 1 and 0.0013 acre (57 square feet) of Unnamed Drainage 3 occur within the potential staging area at MP 12.69. Temporary impacts are not expected to require restoration due to the staging areas being unvegetated, and the area is expected to return to its previous conditions after completion of the project. Although there are permanent impacts to jurisdictional features, compensatory mitigation is not expected to be required. The permanent impact footprint, or grading limit in the work zone, occurs in either unvegetated riverwash or developed/disturbed land cover types at MPs 1.75 and 12.69 (Figure 4 and Figure 5).

The following best management practices for construction within jurisdictional habitat should be followed by construction personnel:

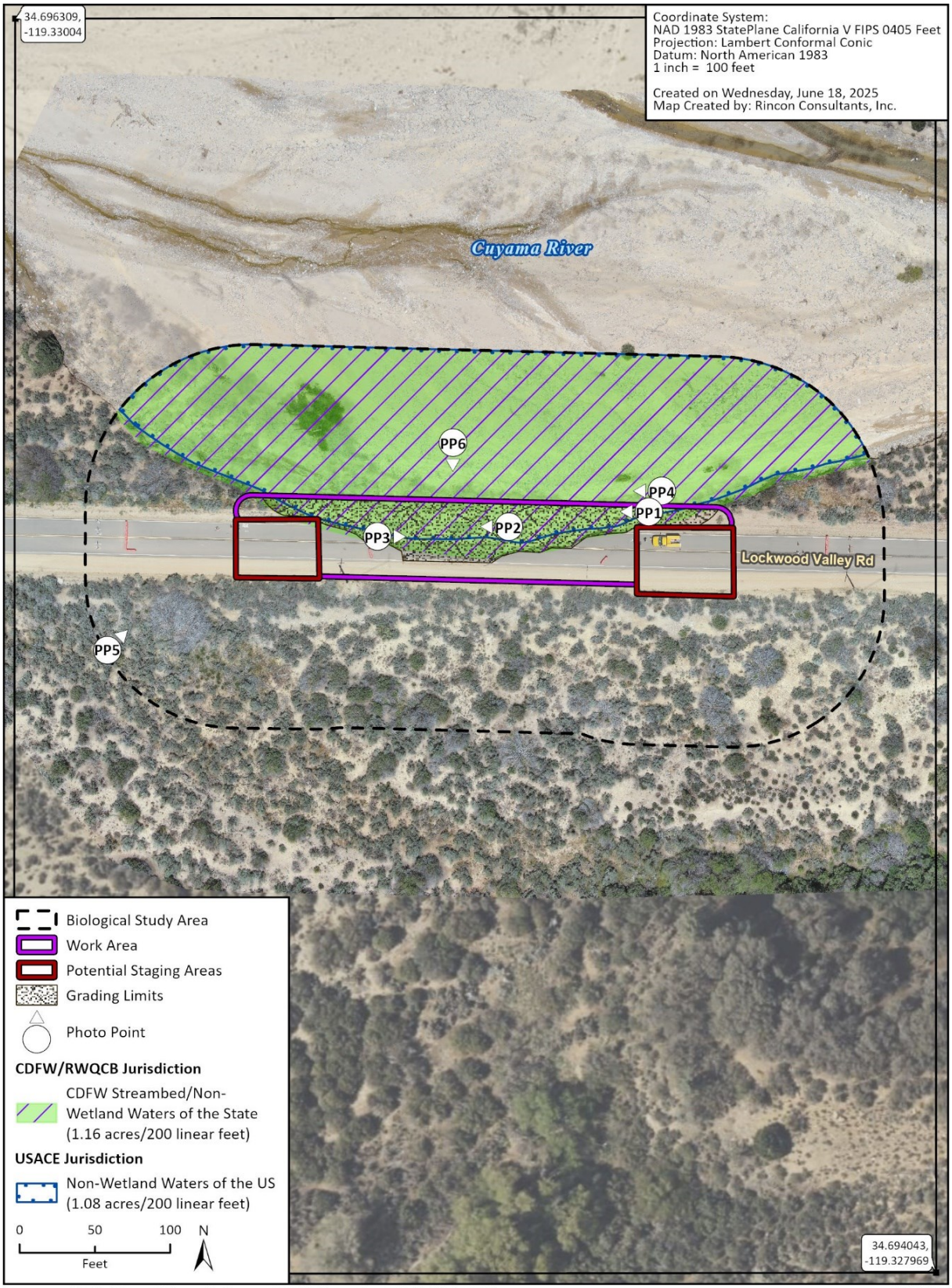
- Prior to initiation of all construction activities including staging and mobilization, all personnel associated with project construction shall attend a Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training, conducted by a qualified biologist, to assist workers in recognizing special-status biological resources that occur on site.
- A full-time construction monitor is recommended to ensure that construction impacts on jurisdictional resources remain within the designated work area and are minimized.
- Materials should be stored on impervious surfaces or plastic ground covers to prevent any spills or leakage and should be at least 50 feet from drainage features. Construction materials and spoils should be protected from stormwater runoff using temporary perimeter sediment barriers such as berms, silt fences, fiber rolls, covers, sand/gravel bags, and straw bale barriers, as appropriate.
- All vehicles and equipment should be in good working condition and free of leaks. The contractor should prevent oil, petroleum products, or any other pollutants from contaminating the soil or entering a watercourse (dry or otherwise). When vehicles or equipment are stationary, mats or drip pans should be placed below vehicles to contain fluid leaks.
- All re-fueling, cleaning, and maintenance of equipment will occur at least 50 feet from potentially jurisdictional waters.

- Adequate spill prevention and response equipment should be maintained on-site and readily available to implement to ensure minimal impacts to the aquatic environment.

Compensatory Mitigation

Although compensatory mitigation for permanent impacts is not proposed, compensatory mitigation may be required by the regulatory agencies (USACE, RWQCB, and/or CDFW) at the time that permits are issued. If compensatory mitigation is required, it may be accomplished through purchase of credits at an approved mitigation bank, through applicant sponsored mitigation (e.g., on-site and/or off-site restoration), and/or through applicant sponsored habitat enhancement on-site and/or off-site, typically within the same watershed.

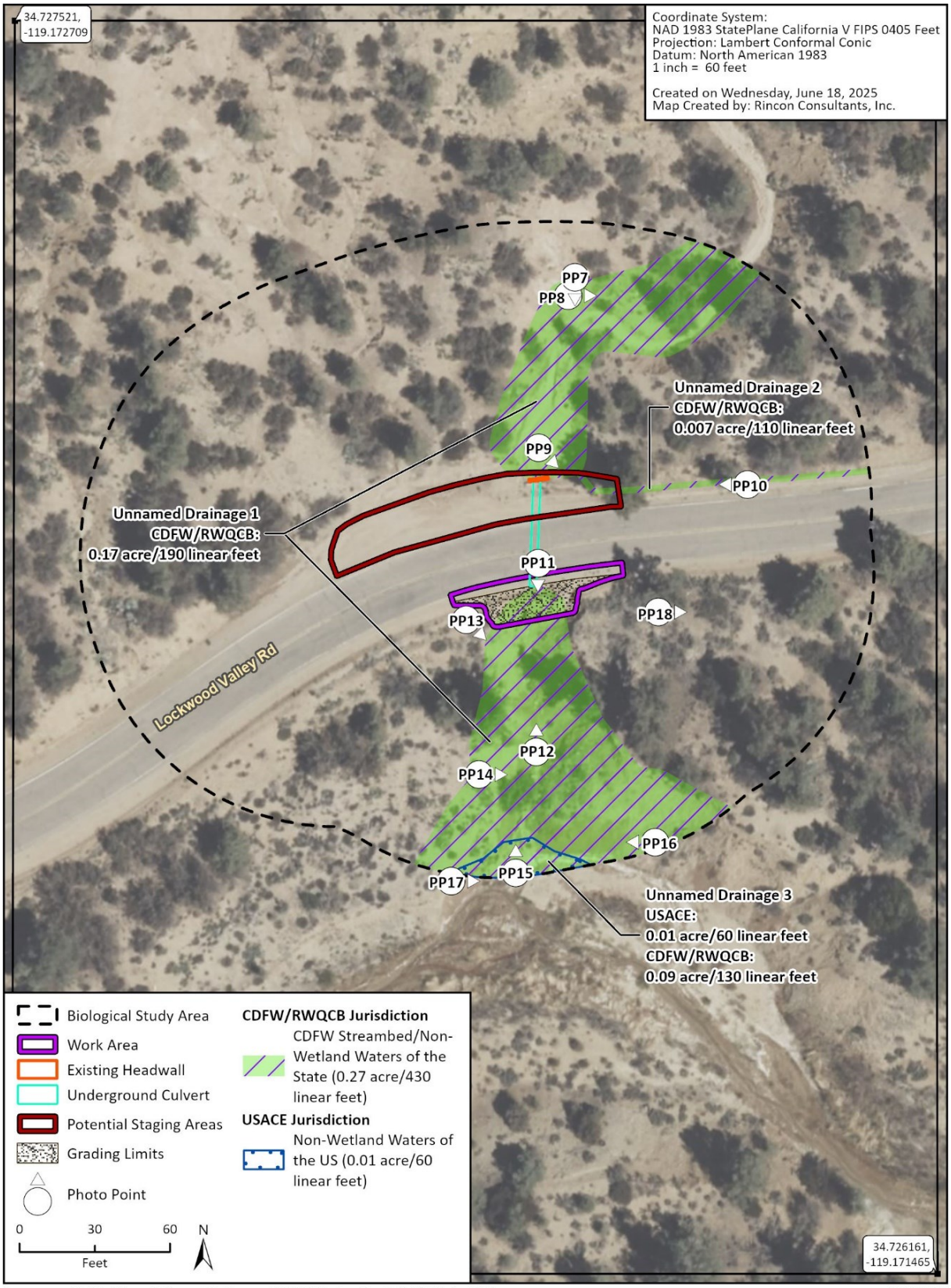
Figure 6 MP 1.75 Jurisdictional Delineation



Imagery provided by Microsoft Bing and its licensors © 2025, Ventura County Public Works, 2024.

24-16251 BIO
Fig X JD MP 1.75

Figure 7 MP 12.69 Jurisdictional Delineation



Cumulative Impacts

With implementation of the above avoidance and minimization efforts, no adverse cumulative impacts to jurisdictional waters are anticipated.

Special Status Plant Species

Plants are considered to be of special concern based on: (1) federal, State, or local laws regulating their development; (2) limited distributions; and/or (3) the presence of habitat required by the special-status plants occurring on site. No focused surveys for special-status plants were performed for this project; however, the survey/delineation inventoried all plant species within the BSAs during the appropriate blooming period for most of the special-status species with potential to occur at one or both of the sites. This section only discusses the special-status plant species with potential to occur within the BSAs, as no special-status plant species were detected during the survey.

Discussion of Kern mallow (Eremalche parryi ssp. kernensis)

Kern mallow [CRPR 1B.2] has a moderate to high potential of occurring within the BSA at MP 1.75 in open, dry sandy soils, or within the BSA at MP 12.69 in pinyon juniper woodland. A CNDDB observation from 2016 recorded the species approximately three miles east of MP 1.75, in sandy loam soils within pinyon juniper woodland. The CNDDB occurrence records notes that the kern mallow was associated with singleleaf pinyon pine, narrowleaf golenbush, and big sage brush. Although Kern mallow has a moderate to high potential of occurring withing the BSAs, it has no potential to occur within the work/impact areas, as they are primarily unvegetated, developed/disturbed areas. Furthermore, Rincon biologists did not observe the species during their field survey on April 23, 2025 which was within the blooming period of Kern mallow (March-April). Therefore, no impact to the species is expected to occur.

Discussion of Pale-yellow layia (Layia heterotricha)

Pale-yellow layia [CRPR 1B.1] has a moderate to high potential of occurring within the BSA at MP 12.69 in pinyon and juniper woodlands. A CNDDB observation from 2003 noted 600+ individuals in two subcolonies in California juniper-scrub oak woodland 0.3 mile west of the BSA at MP 12.26. CNDDB notes that pale-yellow layia was associated with big bluegrass (*Poa secunda*), Spanish brome (*Bromus madritensis*), and little desert trumpet (*Eriogonum trichopes*). Although pale-yellow layia has a moderate to high potential of occurring within the BSA at MP 12.69, it has no potential to occur within the work/impact areas, as they are primarily unvegetated, developed/disturbed areas. Rincon biologists did not observe the species during the field survey on April 23, 2025 which was within the blooming period of pale-yellow layia (March-June). Therefore, no impact to the species is expected to occur.

Discussion of Salt spring checkerbloom (Sidalcea neomexicana)

Salt spring checkerbloom [CRPR 2B.2] has a moderate to high potential of occurring within the BSA at MP 1.75 in desert scrub habitat. A CNDDB observation from 1966 noted species found within a *Juncus spp*. meadow approximately 0.14 mile east from the BSA at MP 1.75. Although salt spring checkerbloom has a moderate to high potential of occurring within the BSA at MP 12.69, it has no potential to occur within the work/impact areas, as they are primarily unvegetated, developed/disturbed areas. Rincon biologists did not observe the species during the field survey on April 23, 2025 which was within the blooming period of salt spring checkerbloom (March-June). Therefore, no impact to the species is expected to occur.

Survey Results

No focused surveys were performed; however, Rincon biologists performed a habitat assessment/jurisdictional delineation on April 23, 2025, in which they mapped vegetation communities and created a plant species list for those found within the BSAs which is attached in Appendix E. Furthermore, the survey was conducted within the blooming periods for special-status species with potential to occur as described above and no special-status species were found within the BSAs.

Project Impacts

Temporary and permanent impacts to special-status plant species are not anticipated to occur as a result of project activities since no special-status plant species are expected to occur within the work/impact areas.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

No avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures are required and therefore, none are proposed.

Compensatory Mitigation

No compensatory mitigation is required and none is proposed.

Cumulative Impacts

The project will not result in impacts to special-status plant species. Therefore, there would not be any cumulative impacts.

Special Status Animal Species

Animals are considered to be of special concern based on: (1) federal, State, or local laws regulating their development; (2) limited distributions; and/or (3) the habitat requirements of special-status animals occurring on site. This section only discusses the special-status wildlife species with potential to occur within the BSAs even though no special-status wildlife species were found to be present within the BSAs. Most of the

special-status wildlife species that may potentially occur within the BSAs are capable of escaping harm during construction, while very few are vulnerable to direct impacts, including injury and mortality. In this case, the special-status species that could be directly impacted include potentially occurring land dwelling animals are discussed below.

Discussion of Coast horned lizard (Phrynosoma blainvillii), Northern California legless lizard (Anniella pulchra), and California legless lizard (Anniella sp.).

Each of these reptile species is a SSC. The presence of the Northern California legless lizard and the California legless lizard have a moderate potential to occur in the BSA at MP 1.75, as suitable sandy or loose loamy soils occur, and ground-disturbing activities will take place during construction. The coast horned lizard also has a moderate potential to occur at both the BSAs at MP 1.75 and MP 12.69, as suitable pinyon and juniper woodland and sandy wash habitat is present.

Discussion of Crotch's bumble bee (Bombus crotchii)

The Crotch bumble bee is currently listed as a State Candidate Endangered. The Crotch bumble bee is nearly endemic to California, and historically occupied grasslands and shrublands in southern to central California, with occasional records in the northern portion of the state. Like all bumble bees, the species requires floral resources, and undisturbed nest sites and overwintering sites (CDFW 2023). The Crotch bumble bee occurs primarily in California, including the Mediterranean region, Pacific Coast, Western Desert, and adjacent foothills throughout most of the state's southwestern region. Historically, the Central Valley of California served as a primary population center for the species. Once ubiquitous throughout this region, today the bumble bee is absent from much of its historic range. The species has experienced a relative abundance decline of almost 98% over the last decade. Crotch bumble bee inhabits grasslands and shrublands and requires a hotter and drier environment than other bumble bee species (CDFW 2023). It is characterized as a short-tongued species and therefore prefers certain plant species as a food source including milkweeds (*Asclepias spp.*), dusty maidens (*Chaenactis spp*.), lupines (*Lupinus spp.*), medics (*Medicago spp.*), phacelias (*Phacelia spp*.), sages (*Salvia spp*.), farewell to springs (*Clarkias spp*.), poppies (*Eschscholzia spp.*), and wild buckwheats (*Eriogonum spp.*).

Crotch's bumble bee has a low potential to occur within the BSA at MP 12.69 as marginally suitable foraging habitat exists, including buckwheats and phacelias that were observed within this BSA.

Survey Results

No focused surveys were performed; however, no special-status wildlife species were detected within the BSAs as a result of the reconnaissance-level field survey conducted on April 23, 2025.

Project Impacts

Direct loss or injury to individuals of any of the special-status reptile species identified above would be a significant, but mitigable impact. Although individuals could be directly and/or indirectly impacted, if present, the habitat loss associated with the project would not significantly impact the local population of any of these special-status reptile species, given the low acreage of habitat that would be affected and the amount of remaining suitable habitat in the surrounding areas.

Direct loss or injury to individuals of Crotch's bumble bee is not expected. Although there are marginally suitable food sources within the BSA of MP 12.69, the work area is located within developed/disturbed areas and lack potential nesting or foraging habitat. Therefore, the determination is that the project will have no impact on the species.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

The following avoidance and minimization efforts are proposed:

1. A full-time biological monitor will be present during initial ground disturbing activities.
2. A Worker Environmental Awareness Training will be provided for all construction personnel prior to the start of any ground-disturbance or vegetation removal to discuss Crotch bumble bee identification, ecology, habitat, and avoidance and minimization measures.
3. Pre and post construction sweeps of the work areas for special-status species. If a special-status species is found, the individual should be avoided. If avoidance is not feasible, the species should be captured and transferred to appropriate habitat and location by a qualified Biologist where it would not be harmed by project activities. Caltrans and/or CDFW shall be consulted regarding the presence of a federal or state listed species within the BSA.
4. Once ground disturbing activities are finished, biological monitoring may be reduced to spot checks.

Compensatory Mitigation

No compensatory mitigation is required and none is proposed

Cumulative Impacts

With implementation of the above avoidance and minimization efforts and compensatory mitigation, no adverse cumulative impacts to special-status wildlife species are anticipated.

Nesting Birds

Ground and vegetation disturbing activities if conducted during the nesting bird season (February 1 to August 31) would have the potential to result in removal or disturbance to trees and shrubs that could contain active bird nests. In addition, these activities would also affect herbaceous vegetation that could support and conceal ground-nesting species. Birds nesting in the vicinity of project activities may potentially be disturbed by noise, lighting, dust, and human activities associated with the project, which could result in nesting failure and the loss of eggs or nestlings.

Survey Results

No focused surveys were performed; however, no nesting birds were detected within the BSAs as a result of the reconnaissance-level field survey conducted on April 23, 2025.

Project Impacts

Project activities that result in the loss of bird nests, eggs, and young, would be in violation of one or more of CFG Code sections; 3503 (any bird nest), 3503.5 (birds-of-prey), or 3511 (FP birds). In addition, removal or destruction of one or more active nests of any other birds protected by the MBTA, whether nest damage was due to vegetation removal or to other construction activities, would likely be considered a violation of the MBTA. The loss of protected bird nests, eggs, or young due to project activities would be a significant, but mitigable impact.

Avoidance and Minimization Efforts

The Agency and/or its designer shall conduct nesting bird surveys, establish buffer(s) for active nest, and perform nest monitoring, as applicable, in accordance with the following:

- No earlier than 14 days prior to ground or vegetation disturbing activities that would occur during the nesting/breeding season of native bird species potentially nesting on the site (typically February 1 through August 31), a qualified biologist shall perform a nesting bird survey at each of the two sites to determine if active nests of any bird species protected by the FESA, CESA, MBTA, and/or CFG Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and/or 3511 are present in the work areas or within 100 feet of the BSA for songbirds or within 300 feet of the BSA for raptors and special-status bird species.

- A second nesting bird survey shall be conducted within three days of the start of ground or vegetation disturbing activities at each of the two sites to determine if active nests of any protected bird species are present in the work areas or within 100 feet of the BSA for songbirds or within 300 feet of the BSA for raptors and special-status bird species.
- In the event that an active nest is found within the survey area(s), construction activities should be temporarily suspended until a suitable buffer area can be established to ensure protection of the nest. The size of the buffer area should be determined by the monitoring biologist in coordination with Caltrans and based on the species, location of the nest, type of work being conducted, surrounding habitat conditions, and adjacent land uses (typically up to 100 feet for songbirds and 300 feet for raptors, but no smaller than 25 feet for songbirds and 100 feet for raptors). The buffer shall be demarcated with flagging or other highly visible material.
- The biologist shall monitor the active nest(s) and project activities within the buffer should be postponed or halted, at the discretion of the biologist, until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged, as determined by the biologist, and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting.

Compensatory Mitigation

No compensatory mitigation is required and none is proposed.

Cumulative Impacts

With implementation of the above avoidance and minimization efforts, no adverse cumulative impacts to nesting birds are anticipated.

Chapter 5 – Conclusions and Regulatory Determinations

Federal Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary

No federally listed species or designated critical habitat are anticipated to be impacted within the project limits; therefore, Section 7 consultation is not expected to be required by the project proponent. However, because the project would necessitate permits from the USACE, the USACE would initiate consultation with the appropriate federal agencies pursuant to Section 7 of the FESA, as applicable. The IPaC species and critical habitat lists were obtained on January 23, 2025 from the USFWS. Furthermore, no federally listed species or designated critical habitat is within the project limits, based on official NMFS lists obtained on May 15, 2025. See Table 9 for a summary of effects determinations.

Table 9 Federal Endangered Species Act Effects Determination

Common Name	Scientific Name	Legal Status	Effects Determination
Mammals			
San Joaquin kit fox	*Vulpes macrotis mutica*	Endangered	No effect
Birds			
California condor	*Gymnogyps californianus*	Endangered	No effect
least Bell's vireo	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	Endangered	No effect
southwestern willow flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii extimus*	Endangered	No effect
yellow-billed cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	Threatened	No effect
Reptiles			
southwestern pond turtle	*Actinemys pallida*	Proposed Threatened	No effect
blunt-nosed leopard lizard	*Gambelia sila*	Endangered	No effect
Amphibians			
arroyo toad	*Anaxyrus californicus*	Endangered	No effect
foothill yellow-legged frog - south coast DPS	*Rana boylii pop. 6*	Endangered	No effect
California red-legged frog	*Rana draytonii*	Threatened	No effect
Insects			
monarch butterfly	*Danaus plexippus*	Proposed Threatened	No effect
Kern primrose sphinx moth	*Euproserpinus euterpe*	Threatened	No effect
Crustaceans			
Riverside fairy shrimp	*Streptocephalus woottoni*	Endangered	No effect
conservancy fairy shrimp	*Branchinecta conservation*	Endangered	No effect
vernal pool fairy shrimp	*Branchinecta lynchi*	Threatened	No effect
Fish			
south/central California coast steelhead DPS	*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*	Endangered	No effect

Common Name	Scientific Name	Legal Status	Effects Determination
Plants			
California orcutt grass	*Orcuttia californica*	Endangered	No effect
California jewelflower	*Caulanthus californicus*	Endangered	No effect
Kern mallow	*Eremalche parryi* ssp. *kernensis*	Endangered	No effect
southern mountain wild-buckwheat	*Eriogonum kennedyi* var. *austromonatum*	Threatened	No effect
spreading navarretia	*Navarretia fossalis*	Threatened	No effect
Habitats			
South/central California coast steelhead DPS	*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*	Designated	No effect

California Endangered Species Act Consultation Summary

No State listed species are anticipated to be impacted within the project limits; therefore, an Incidental Take Permit is not expected to be required by the project proponent. However, because the project would necessitate a Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from CDFW, the CDFW will perform an independent evaluation to confirm compliance with the CESA. See Table 10 for a summary of impacts determinations.

Table 10 California Endangered Species Act Impact Determination

Common Name	Scientific Name	Legal Status	Impact Determination
Mammals			
San Joaquin kit fox	*Vulpes macrotis mutica*	Threatened	No impact
Birds			
yellow-billed cuckoo	*Coccyzus americanus*	Endangered	No impact
southwestern willow flycatcher	*Empidonax traillii*	Endangered	No impact
California condor	*Gymnogyps californianus*	Endangered	No impact
least Bell's vireo	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	Endangered	No impact
Reptiles			
southern rubber boa	*Charina umbratical*	Threatened	No impact
blunt-nosed leopard lizard	*Gambelia sila*	Endangered	No impact
Amphibians			
foothill yellow-legged frog - south coast DPS	*Rana boylii pop. 6*	Endangered	No impact
Invertebrates			
Crotch bumble bee	*Bombus crotchii*	Candidate	No impact
Fish			
south/central California coast steelhead DPS	*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*	Candidate	No impact
Plants			
California jewelflower	*Caulanthus californicus*	Endangered	No impact

Essential Fish Habitat Consultation Summary

No essential fish habitat occurs within the BSAs, based on the Essential Fish Habitat Mapper.

Wetlands and Other Waters Coordination Summary

The delineation concluded that four potentially jurisdictional features occur in the BSAs, including the Cuyama River and Unnamed Drainages 1, 2, and 3. The Cuyama River and Unnamed Drainage 3 are likely subject to USACE jurisdiction pursuant to Section 404 of the CWA, the Central Coast RWQCB pursuant to Section 401 of the CWA, and the CDFW pursuant to CFG Code Section 1600 et seq. Unnamed Drainages 1 and 2 are likely pursuant to CDFW jurisdiction under CFG Code Section 1600 et seq. and to Central Coast RWQCB jurisdiction under the Porter-Cologne Act. Any proposed actions that would cause temporary (e.g., fill or vegetation removal) or permanent impacts (e.g., permanent fill) to jurisdictional waters and streambeds would likely require permitting with the aforementioned agencies. Final jurisdictional areas are confirmed by the State and federal authorities at the time that permits are requested. Rincon recommends corresponding with these agencies and acquiring any necessary authorizations prior to conducting work within agency jurisdictions.

Invasive Species

On February 3, 1999, President Clinton signed EO 13112 (Invasive Species), requiring federal agencies to combat the introduction or spread of invasive species in the United States. This EO defines A as "…any species, including its seeds, eggs, spores, or other biological material capable of propagating that species, that is not native to that ecosystem whose introduction does or is likely to cause economic or environmental harm or harm to human health." FHWA guidance issued August 10, 1999, directs the use of the State's noxious weed list to define the invasive plants that must be considered as part of CEQA analysis for a proposed project in California.

Eight invasive species have been identified within the BSAs. The species are comprised of both shrubs and herbaceous species and accounted for approximately 10 percent of the total species observed during the habitat assessment on April 23, 2025.

Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that exotic invasive plant species are located within the BRA's. If invasive vegetation is proposed to be removed during this project, the Agency will take precautionary measures to dispose of all invasive vegetation properly.

Other

- Fish Passage. The project would not affect fish passage; thus, no consultation with the CDFW or NMFS is warranted.
- Wild and Scenic Rivers. The BSAs do not include Wild and Scenic rivers; thus, no consultation is warranted.
- California Coastal Commission. The BSAs are not within the California Coastal Zone; thus, no coordination is warranted.

Chapter 6 – References

California Department of Conservation (CDC) 2018. *Public Land Survey System (PLSS): Sections*. California Natural Resources Agency. Available at: https://maps-cnra-cadoc.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/cadoc::public-land-survey-system-plss-sections/explore?location=34.726938%2C-119.172040%2C18.37. Accessed May 2025.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). 1994. A Field Guide to Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements

_____. 2013 *Arroyo chub (Gila orcutti)*. Available at: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=104270&inline. Accessed May 2025.

_____2023. *Survey considerations for California Endangered Species Act (CESA) candidate bumble bee species* Available at: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=213150&inline. Accessed July 2025.

_____.2025a *California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)*. Available at: https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/CNDDB. Accessed: July 2025.

_____. 2025b California Natural Community List. Available at: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=153398&inline. Accessed May 2025.

California Native Plant Society.(CNPS) 2025. *Rare Plant Inventory (online edition, v9.5.1)*. Available at: https://www.rareplants.cnps.org/. Accessed July 2025.

California Trout. (2022). *Santa Maria River*. California Trout. Available at: https://caltrout.org/regions/south-coast-region/santa-maria-river . Accessed July 2025.

Earth Point. 2025. Available at: https://www.earthpoint.us/Townships.aspx. Accessed April 2025.

Google Earth Pro. 2025. Available at: https://earth.google.com/web. Accessed April 2025.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. (NMFS) (2025). NOAA Fisheries. Available at: https://www.fisheries.noaa.gov/ Accessed: July 2025.

San Luis Obispo County Public Works. (SLOCPW) n.d. Cuyama River. County of San Luis Obispo. Available at: https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/public-works/current-public-works-projects/slo-watershed/watersheds/south-county/cuyama-river. Accessed May 2025.

Sawyer, J. O., T. Keeler-Wolf, and J.M. Evens. 2009. A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition. California Native Plant Society. Sacramento, California. Accessed May 2025.

State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB). 2019. *Wetland Definition and Procedures for Discharges of Dredge and Fill Material to Waters of the State.* Adopted April 2, 2019. Available at: https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/cwa401/docs/procedures_conforme d.pdf. Accessed April 2025.

United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Environmental Laboratory. 1987. Technical Report Y-97-1. In: United States Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual. United States Army Corps of Engineers Waterways Experiment Station. Vicksburg, Mississippi.

_____. 2004. Review of Ordinary High Water Mark Indicators for Delineating Arid Streams in the Southwest United States. Technical Report ERDC TR-04-1. U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory. Hanover, New Hampshire.

_____. 2005. Regulatory Guidance Letter No. 05-05: Ordinary High Water Mark Identification. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Washington, D.C.

_____. 2007. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Jurisdictional Determination Form Instructional Guidebook. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Washington, D.C. Available at: https://usace.contentdm.oclc.org/utils/getfile/collection/p16021coll11/id/2310. Accessed May 2025.

_____. 2008a. Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region (Version 2.0). United States Army Corps of Engineers Research and Development Center. Vicksburg, Mississippi.

_____. 2008b. A Field Guide to the Identification of the Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) in the Arid West Region of the Western United States. Technical Report ERDC/CRREL TR-08-12. U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory. Hanover, New Hampshire.

_____. 2022. Arid West 2022 Regional Wetland Plant List. Available at: https://wetland-plants.sec.usace.army.mil/download/

_____. 2024. Rapid Ordinary High Water Mark (OHWM) Field Identification Data Sheet. OMB No. 0710-0024. Expires September 30, 2027. U.S. Army Engineer Research and Development Center, Cold Regions Research and Engineering Laboratory. Hanover, New Hampshire.

United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (USDA, NRCS). 2025a. Web Soils Survey: Custom Area of Interest in the *Los Padres National Forest Area, California* Survey Area. Available at: https://websoilsurvey.sc.egov.usda.gov/App/HomePage.htm. Accessed April 2025.

_____. 2025b. State Soils Data Access (SDA) Hydric Soils List: California. Available at: https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/Internet/FSE_DOCUMENTS/nrcseprd1316619.html. Accessed April 2025.

United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) 2023. Definition of "Waters of the United States": Rule Status and Litigation Update. Available at: https://www.epa.gov/wotus/definition-waters-united-states-rule-status-and-litigation-update. Accessed April 2025.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (USFWS) 2025a. Available at: https://www.fws.gov/. Accessed July 2025.

_____. 2025b. National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). Available at: https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/data/mapper.html. Accessed April 2025.

United States Geological Survey (USGS). 2025a. California 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle. Available at: https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/. Accessed April 2025.

_____. 2025b. National Hydrography Dataset. Available at: https://apps.nationalmap.gov/viewer/. Accessed April 2025.

Ventura County. 2019. Water Diversion Guide for the Ventura County Maintenance Program EIR. Prepared for the Ventura County Watershed Protection District. Prepared by URS in 2007, Revised 2019.

Ventura County. n.d. County Map Viewer. [map] Tabular digital data and vector digital data. 1:9,000. County of Ventura Resource Management Agency. Ventura, CA. maps.ventura.org/countyview/. Accessed April 2025.

Ventura County Public Works Agency (Agency) 2024. Cuyama River. County of Ventura. Available at: https://publicworks.venturacounty.gov/wp/cuyama-river/. Accessed May 2025.

Western Regional Climate Center. 2025. Climate of California. Available at: www.wrcc.dri.edu/Climate/narrative_ca.php. Accessed April 2025.

Appendix A – Project Plans

Appendix B - CDFW CNDDB & CNPS Rare Plant Inventory 12-Quad List and Query Results

Appendix C – USFWS IPaC List

Appendix D – NMFS California Species List

Appendix E – Floral Compendium

MP 1.75 Plant Species Observed

Common Name	Scientific Name	Native	Cal-IPC Ranking/ NWPL Indicator Rating
annual bursage	*Ambrosia acanthicarpa*	Yes	–/NL
Menzie's fiddleneck	*Amsinckia menziesii*	Yes	–/NL
big sagebrush	*Artemisia tridentata*	Yes	–/NL
California mugwort	*Artemisia douglasiana*	Yes	–/FAC
tarragon	*Artemisia dracunculus*	Yes	–/FACU
Santa Barbara milk vetch	*Astragalus trichopodus*	Yes	–/NL
California goosefoot	*Blitum californicum*	Yes	–/NL
red brome	*Bromus rubens*	No	High/NL
cheatgrass	*Bromus tectorum*	No	High/NL
Spencer primrose	*Camissoniopsis micrantha*	Yes	–/NL
cobweb thistle	*Cirsium occidentale*	Yes	–/NL
common sandaster	*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*	Yes	–/NL
Fremont's monkeyflower	*Diplacus fremontii*	Yes	–/NL
bottlebrush squirreltail	*Elymus elymoides*	Yes	–/FACU
rubber rabbitbrush	*Ericameria nauseosa*	Yes	–/NL
thick leaf yerba santa	*Eriodictyon crassifolium*	Yes	–/NL
California buckwheat	*Eriogonum fasiculatum*	Yes	–/NL
coastal heron's bill	*Erodium cicutarium*	No	Limited/NL
rattail sixweeks grass	*Festuca myuros*	No	Moderate/NL
California coffeeberry	*Frangula californica*	Yes	–/NL
American licorice	*Glycyrrhiza lepidota*	Yes	–/FAC
chaparral yucca	*Hesperoyucca whipplei*	Yes	–/NL
California broomsage	*Lepidospartum squamatum*	Yes	–/FACU
silver bush lupine	*Lupinus albifrons*	Yes	–/NL
bur clover	*Medicago polymorpha*	No	Limited/FACU
blazing star	*Mentzelia laevicaulis*	Yes	–/NL
desert needle grass	*Pappostipa speciosa*	Yes	–/NL
sleeping combseed	*Pectocarya penicillata*	Yes	–/NL
scarlet bugler	*Penstemon centranthifolius*	Yes	–/NL
branching phacelia	*Phacelia ramosissima*	Yes	–/FACU
sandbar willow	*Salix exigua*	Yes	–/FACW
arroyo willow	*Salix lasiolepis*	Yes	–/FACW
common mediterranean grass	*Schismus barbatus*	No	Limited/NL
tamarisk	*Tamarix ramosissima*	No	High/FAC

MP 12.69 Plant Species Observed

Common Name	Scientific Name	Native	Cal-IPC Ranking/ NWPL Indicator Rating
big berry manzanita	*Arctostaphylos glauca*	Yes	–/NL
big sagebrush	*Artemisia tridentata*	Yes	–/NL
California milkweed	*Asclepias californica*	Yes	–/NL
red brome	*Bromus rubens*	No	High/NL
cheatgrass	*Bromus tectorum*	No	High/NL
Sierra false bindweed	*Calystegia malacophylla*	Yes	–/NL
Fremont pincushion	*Chaenactis fremontii*	Yes	–/NL
inland saltgrass	*Distichlis spicata*	Yes	–/FAC
bottlebrush squirreltail	*Elymus elymoides*	Yes	–/FACU
giant eriastrum	*Eriastrum densifolium*	Yes	–/NL
narrowleaf goldenbush	*Ericameria linearifolia*	Yes	–/NL
rubber rabbitbrush	*Ericameria nauseosa*	Yes	–/NL
California buckwheat	*Eriogonum fasiculatum*	Yes	–/NL
desert trumpet	*Eriogonum inflatum*	Yes	–/NL
naked buckwheat	*Eriogonum nudum*	Yes	–/NL
California poppy	*Eschscholzia californica*	Yes	–/NL
California primrose	*Eulobus californicus*	Yes	–/NL
gayophytum	*Gayophytum sp.*	Yes	–/NL
chaparral yucca	*Hesperoyucca whipplei*	Yes	–/NL
silver bush lupine	*Lupinus albifrons*	Yes	–/NL
bicolored lupine	*Lupinus bicolor*	Yes	–/NL
bur clover	*Medicago polymorpha*	No	Limited/FACU
California Indian breadroot	*Pediomelum californicum*	Yes	–/NL
scarlet bugler	*Penstemon centranthifolius*	Yes	–/NL
caterpillar phacelia	*Phacelia cicutaria*	Yes	–/NL
imbricate phacelia	*Phacelia imbricata*	Yes	–/NL
single leaf pinyon pine	*Pinus monophylla*	Yes	–/NL
annual beard grass	*Polypogon monspeliensis*	No	Limited/FACW
Tucker's oak	*Quercus john-tuckeri*	Yes	–/NL
sandbar willow	*Salix exigua*	Yes	–/FACW
chia sage	*Salvia columbariae*	Yes	–/NL

Nomenclature follows The Jepson Online Interchange for California Floristics http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/interchange/

Cal-IPC. 2025. California Invasive Plant List A to Z. Plants A to Z – California Invasive Plant Council (cal-ipc.org)

United States Army Corps of Engineers 2025. National Wetland Plant List: Arid West, version 3.5 http://wetland-plants.usace.army.mil/

OBL- Obligate. Occur almost always under natural conditions in wetlands (99% occurrence in wetlands)

FACW- Facultative Wetland. Usually occur in wetlands but occasionally found in non-wetlands (67-99% occurrence in wetlands).

FAC- Facultative. Equally likely to occur in wetlands and non-wetlands (34-66% occurrence in wetlands).

FACU- Facultative. Usually occur in non-wetlands but occasionally found in wetlands (1-33% occurrence in wetlands).

UPL- Upland. Occur in wetlands in another region, but occur almost always under natural conditions in non-wetlands in the region specified (1% occurrence in wetlands).

NL- Not Listed. Typically considered analogous to UPL indicator rating.

Appendix F – Photograph Documentation

Photograph 1. View of the Cuyama River road washout on Lockwood Valley Road at MP 1.75, facing west (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 2. View of the boundary between developed/disturbed and river wash land cover types at the MP 1.75 BSA, facing west (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 3. View of top of bank of the Cuyama River at the MP 1.75 project site, facing east (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 4. View of OWHM and top of bank of the Cuyama River at the MP 1.75 project site, facing west (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 5. View of the big sagebrush scrub vegetation community in the BSA at MP 1.75, facing northeast (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 6. View of riverwash in the BSA at MP 1.75 facing south (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 7. View of Unnamed Drainage 1 at the MP 12.69 BSA, facing south (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 8. Upstream view of Unnamed Drainage 1 in the MP 12.69 BSA surrounded by singleleaf pinyon pine woodland, facing north (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 9. View of Unnamed Drainage 2 joining Unnamed Drainage 1 in the MP 12.69 project site, facing southeast (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 10. View of Unnamed Drainage 2 in the eastern most portion of the BSA at MP 12.69, running adjacent to Lockwood Valley Road, facing west (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 11. View of CMP blowout in the southern portion of Unnamed Drainage 1 at MP 12.69, facing south (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 12. View of CMP blowout in the southern portion of Unnamed Drainage 1 at MP 12.69, facing north (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 13. View of CMP blowout in the southern portion of Unnamed Drainage 1 at MP 12.69, facing southeast (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 14. Upstream view of Unnamed Drainage 3 at MP 12.69, facing east (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 15. View of Unnamed Drainage 1 flowing into Unnamed Drainage 3 in the BSA at MP 12.69, facing north (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 16. Downstream view of Unnamed Drainage 3 in the southern portion of the BSA at MP 12.69, facing west (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 17. Upstream view of Unnamed Drainage 3 in the southern portion of the BSA at MP 12.69, facing east (April 23, 2025).

Photograph 18. View of singleleaf pinyon pine woodland in the BSA at MP 12.69, facing east (April 23, 2025).