

Biological Resources Report & Impact Assessment

Pacific Coast Homes - West Coyotes Hills Project

Centex and La Habra PLC portions) have resulted in the cumulative loss of coastal sage scrub and southern cactus scrub habitats supporting sensitive species including California gnatcatcher and cactus wren. The collective planning, along with other existing and anticipated land uses in the area such as the Regional Park, past mitigation by other projects, and existing WCH open space easements, should result in an open space configuration that will result in persistence of California gnatcatcher, cactus wren, and other CSS-dependent species in the project study area, thus reducing the effects of cumulative loss of habitat within the large open space block.

6.0 ANALYSIS OF SIGNIFICANCE PER CEQA THRESHOLDS

6.1 Explanation of Findings of Significance

The City of Fullerton has established impact significance criteria. These criteria were used to determine significance and are provided below. Impacts to plant and wildlife communities would be significant if any of the following result from project implementation:

- The project would result in a direct loss of individuals of a state or federal listed threatened or endangered species.
- The project would result in the loss of significant or important biological habitat for any sensitive, threatened, or endangered species of plant or animal.
- The project would have a substantial adverse effect on habitat essential for state or federal listed fish, wildlife or plants.

6.2 Vegetation Communities

For the purpose of analyzing the significance of impacts to vegetation communities, impacts resulting from grading for the development (including trail system and brush management) were considered as direct impacts.

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6.2.1 Coastal Sage Scrub, Coyote Brush Scrub, Southern Cactus Scrub, and Disturbed Phases

Implementation of the proposed project would result in direct impacts to 141.2 acres of coastal sage scrub, southern cactus scrub, coyote brush scrub, and disturbed phases of these habitats. These habitats support several sensitive species and impacts would normally be considered significant. However, the project as negotiated with the USFWS includes several measures intended to mitigate these impacts through creation, restoration, and enhancement of habitat, management of the habitat, and implementation of other measures. Please see the Biological Assessment (Dudek 2002) for details. Therefore, because these measures have been accepted by the USFWS and are incorporated into this project these impacts are not considered to be significant.

6.2.2 Mule Fat Scrub, Southern Willow Scrub, and Disturbed Phases

Implementation of the proposed project would result in direct and indirect impacts to these habitats. However these impacts have been addressed by Glenn Lukos Associates and are covered separately in the EIR.

6.2.3 Toyon-Sumac Chaparral and Disturbed Toyon-Sumac Chaparral

Toyon-sambucus chaparral is a native plant community, but one of very low floral diversity. The plant community, especially onsite, contains few plant species and does not support the number of sensitive bird species that southern cactus scrub and coastal sage scrub do. For these reasons proposed impacts to toyon-sumac chaparral (6.5 acres) and disturbed toyon-sumac chaparral (0.1 acre) are not considered significant.

6.2.4 Annual (non-native) Grassland

Annual (non-native) grassland is a non-native plant community with very low floral diversity. In larger patches, this community benefits raptors by providing foraging opportunities. However, on the WCH site, this habitat occurs in small patches and appears to be historically disturbed areas. Because this is not a sensitive habitat type and it does not

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occur in very large patches, impacts to 0.4 acre of this habitat are not considered to be significant.

6.2.5 Poison Oak Scrub

Poison oak scrub exhibits very low floral diversity and is dominated by a non-native plant (poison oak). The habitat does not support many sensitive species and therefore proposed impacts (1.2 acres), are not considered significant.

6.2.6 Ornamental Plantings

Ornamental plantings onsite are comprised of non-native trees and often an understory of low plant diversity. Although this habitat does provide nesting habitat for many raptors it is not considered to be regionally rare or sensitive by the resource agencies. Therefore proposed impacts to ornamental plantings habitat (0.9 acre) are not considered significant.

6.2.7 Disturbed Habitat

In general, disturbed habitat areas do not support plant or animal species and therefore, proposed impacts to this land cover type (71.4 acres) are not considered significant.

6.2.8 Developed Land

Developed land includes areas which contain structures or paved roads and do not support any biological resources. For this reason, proposed impacts to developed land (63.2 acres) are not considered significant.

6.2.9 Coastal Sage Scrub Revegetation

Implementation of this project would result in direct impacts to 3.3 acres of coastal sage scrub revegetation. These areas support various sensitive species including California gnatcatcher and impacts would normally be considered significant. However, the project as negotiated with the USFWS includes several measures intended to mitigate these impacts through creation, restoration, and enhancement of habitat, management of the habitat, and

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implementation of other measures. Please see the Biological Assessment (Dudek 2002) for details. Therefore, because these measures have been accepted by the USFWS and are incorporated into this project these impacts are not considered to be significant.

6.3 Sensitive Plants

No significant impacts are anticipated to any sensitive plant species.

6.4 Sensitive Animals

Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts of the proposed project on the California gnatcatcher and cactus wren population have been addresses through the Biological Assessment (Dudek 2003) and measures incorporated into the project description (see *Section 1.0, Introduction*). Specifically, the project includes avoidance and minimization actions, prevegetation, habitat restoration, habitat preservation, conservation easements, long-term management, and funding to ensure continued occupation of the site by California gnatcatcher, cactus wren, and other coastal sage scrub-dependant species at current population levels. Therefore, impacts to these species are not considered significant.

Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to coyotes and raptors are considered to be significant.

6.5 Habitat Linkages/Wildlife Corridors

No significant impacts are anticipated to habitat linkages or wildlife corridors.

6.6 Summary of Significant Direct and Indirect Impacts

The following impacts associated with implementation of the proposed development plan are considered significant:

- a) Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to raptors.
- b) Direct, indirect, and cumulative impacts to coyotes.