

# Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area

## Mitigated Negative Declaration Initial Study



State of California  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division  
Hollister Hills District  
January 2012

## Mitigated Negative Declaration

**PROJECT:** Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project

**PROJECT SPONSOR:** California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division, Hollister Hills District

**LEAD AGENCY:** DPR, OHMVR Division

**AVAILABILITY OF DOCUMENTS:** The Initial Study (IS) for this Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) is available for review at:

- Hollister Hills SVRA  
7800 Cienega Rd.  
Hollister, CA. 95023  
Contact: Matthew Allen, District Services Manager  
Phone: (831) 636-2016  
Email – msallen@parks.ca.gov  
Wesley Gray, Environmental Scientist  
Phone: (831) 636-2064  
Email – wesgray@parks.ca.gov
- DPR, OHMVR Division  
1725 23rd Street, Suite 200  
Sacramento, CA 95816  
Contact – Ryan Miller  
Phone – (916) 445-9152  
Email –rdmiller@parks.ca.gov

### PROJECT LOCATION

The proposed project is located in Hollister Hills SVRA, a 6,610 acre off-highway vehicle park located in San Benito County, California, about eight miles south of the City of Hollister. The park entrance is on Cienega Road about 15 miles east of U.S. Highway 101.

### PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The proposed project would create hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails (48” wide), two staging areas, and a hike-in day use area in the non-motorized buffer areas of the Renz (West) Ranch and Hudner (East) Ranch properties within Hollister Hills SVRA. Motorized recreation would not be allowed. The primary staging area proposed near the Lower Barn area of the Renz Ranch would be gravel Class II road base and include parking for up to 40 vehicles, a CXT pre-cast vault toilet building, trash receptacles, picnic tables, and two ramadas. The second staging area located on the east side of Cienega Road northeast of Cienega gate would also be gravel Class II road base and include parking for 15 vehicles and trash receptacles. The hike-in day use area would be installed in an area known as the “Pepper Tree” area and would consist of picnic tables and trash receptacles. The trails, staging area, and picnic area would be constructed and maintained through training opportunities and volunteer efforts.

## FINDINGS

The OHMVR Division, having reviewed the IS for the proposed project, finds that:

1. The proposed project is consistent with the recreational uses identified in the Hollister Hills Final General Development Plan Amendment (GDPA) as possible uses within the Buffer Zones and Buffer Areas.
3. With the incorporation of the mitigation measure listed below to protect biological resources, cultural resources, water quality, and topsoil, no environmental effects related to the project activities would exceed stated CEQA-related significance criteria.
4. A MND will be filed as the appropriate CEQA document of the project.

## MITIGATION MEASURES

**Mitigation Measure BIO-1:** Prior to initiation of trail construction, botanical surveys shall be conducted for the seven special-status plants with the potential to occur in the project area: Gairdner's yampah (*Perideridia gairdneri* ssp. *gairdneri*); Indian Valley bush mallow (*Malacothamnus aboriginum*); Michael's rein orchid (*Piperia michaelii*), San Antonio Hills monardella (*Monardella antonina* ssp. *antonina*), San Joaquin saltbush (*Atriplex joaquiniana*), South Coast Range morning-glory (*Calystegia collina* ssp. *venusta*), and Pinnacles buckwheat (*Eriogonum nortonii*). The surveys shall be conducted during the blooming period for these species. The blooming period for all seven special-status plant species overlaps in June; thus, June would be the optimal time to conduct the survey. If any special status plant species are threatened by construction activities then the trail shall be re-routed to avoid impacts to the species.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-2:** To avoid impacts to California tiger salamanders the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. Before trail construction starts on the project, a park staff biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California tiger salamander, including its lifecycle and basic habitat. The training shall also include all the general measures that are being implemented to avoid adverse effects to the species from the project.
2. A qualified biological monitor shall be on-site to monitor construction and prevent take of California tiger salamander. The park staff biologist shall ensure that the monitor receives training and can reasonably perform the job. The monitor and the biologist shall have the authority to stop work to avoid take of the species.
3. All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from any riparian habitat or water body. Prior to the onset of work, the OHMVR Division shall ensure that a plan is in place to allow a prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.
4. The number of access routes and the total area of the activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goal. Routes shall be clearly demarcated, and these areas shall be outside of riparian and wetland areas.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-3:** All project features shall maintain a minimum distance of 50 feet from all wetlands and vernal pools.

**Mitigation Measure BIO-4:** Any project construction done between February 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup> shall include pre-construction surveys for nesting birds. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of construction activities or tree or shrub removal. If an active nest is found in or close enough to the construction area to be disturbed by these activities, the ornithologist, shall, in consultation with the CDFG, designate a construction-

free buffer zone (typically 250 feet for raptors and 50 feet for other birds) around the nest until the nest is no longer active.

**Mitigation Measure CUL-1:** To avoid impacts to CA-SBN-186/H, the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. Trails shall be rerouted to ensure a minimum 30 meter buffer around Loci C and E of CA-SBN-186/H.
2. Native American monitors shall be present during all construction activities within the vicinity of CA-SBN-186/H.
3. All site location and related information in Long 2010 shall remain confidential and shall only be distributed to appropriate project personnel as needed to implement this mitigation, consistent with PRC Sections 5097 et seq. and Section 800.11 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
4. Archaeological monitoring of all construction activities within the vicinity of CA-SBN-186/H shall be required and conducted by OHMVR Division archaeologists and Native American monitors.
5. Hollister Hills SVRA project managers shall contact OHMVR Division archaeologists two weeks before construction starts in the vicinity of CA-SBN-186/H and identify the extent of the project area. Division archaeologists shall flag areas for avoidance within CA-SBN-186/H prior to the start of any ground disturbing activities in that area.
6. Stewards from the California Archaeological Site Steward Program shall monitor CA-SBN-186/H to provide condition assessment that shall help project managers evaluate project mitigations.

**Mitigation Measure CUL-2:** Upon discovery of possible buried prehistoric or historic cultural materials (including potential Native American skeletal remains), work within 25 feet of the find shall be halted and the Hollister Hills District shall be notified. The Hollister Hills District shall retain a qualified archaeologist to review and evaluate the find. Construction work shall not begin again in the immediate vicinity of the find until the archaeological or cultural resources consultant has been allowed to examine the cultural materials, assess their significance, and offer proposals for any additional exploratory measures deemed necessary for the further evaluation of, and/or mitigation of adverse impacts to, any potential historical resources or unique archaeological resources that have been exposed.

If the discovery is determined to be a unique archaeological or historical resource, and if avoidance of the resource is not possible, the archaeologist shall inform the Hollister Hills District of the necessary plans for treatment of the find(s) and mitigation of impacts. The treatment plan shall be designed to result in the extraction of sufficient non-redundant archaeological data to address important regional research considerations. The Hollister Hills District shall ensure the treatment program is completed. The work shall be performed by the archaeologist, and shall result in a detailed technical report that shall be filed with the California Historical Resources Information System. Construction in the immediate vicinity of the find shall not recommence until treatment has been completed.

**Mitigation Measure CUL-3:** If human remains are encountered during project activities, work within 25 feet of the discovery shall be redirected and the County Coroner notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist shall be contacted to assess the situation. Project personnel shall not collect or move any human remains or associated materials. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification. The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify a Native American Most Likely Descendent to inspect the site and provide recommendations for the proper treatment of the remains and associated grave goods.

**Mitigation Measure GEO-1:** To avoid impacts to topsoil, the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. Excavation of substantial amounts of soil shall not be planned to occur during the season with highest rainfall, generally November through March.
2. Temporary BMPs shall be implemented near drainage crossing until areas have reached final stabilization.
3. Excavated soil shall be used as backfill for trail structures or cast aside at a location outside of the influence of the drainage where the soil would not enter the water course.
4. Permanent BMPs in the trail layout, such as out sloping and rolling dips shall aid in drainage and soil retention.

**Mitigation Measure HYDRO-1** To avoid impacts to water quality, the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. The construction staging areas shall be located a minimum of 20 feet or further where feasible from Bird Creek. The Construction staging areas shall be clearly delineated. Appropriate BMPs shall be implemented to prevent release of stockpiled soil and construction material from entering any water system.
2. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and associated erosion control plan shall include BMPs to control storm water runoff and erosion. The SWPPP shall identify all pollutant and sediment sources that may affect storm water discharges from the construction site, including staging areas, and identify and implement BMPs to reduce or eliminate these pollutants and sediments during construction and post construction.

## **BASIS OF FINDINGS**

Based on the environmental analysis provided in this document, the proposed Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project would result in less-than-significant impacts or no impacts for the following issues: aesthetics, agriculture and forestry, air quality, greenhouse gas emissions, land use/planning, mineral resources, noise, population/housing, public services, recreation, transportation/traffic, and utilities/services systems. With implementation of mitigation measures, the proposed project would result in less-than-significant impacts for the following issues: biological resources, cultural resources, geology/soils, hazards/hazardous materials, hydrology/water quality.

In addition, substantial adverse effects on humans, either direct or indirect, would not occur. The project would not affect any important examples of the major periods of California prehistory or history. Nor would the project substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal. The project does not have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable.

In accordance with Section 15064(f) of the CEQA Guidelines, a MND shall be prepared if the proposed project would not have a significant effect on the environment after the inclusion of mitigation measures. Based on the available information and the environmental analysis presented in this document, there is no substantial evidence that, after incorporation of the mitigation measures, the proposed project would have a significant effect on the environment. It is proposed that a MND be adopted for this project, in accordance with CEQA Guidelines.

Pursuant to Section 21082.1 of CEQA, the OHMVR Division has independently reviewed and analyzed the MND for the proposed project and finds these documents reflect the independent judgment of the OHMVR Division.

A copy of the IS is attached. Questions or comments regarding this MND should be submitted in writing to:

Wesley Gray  
Hollister Hills SVRA  
7800 Cienega Road  
Hollister, CA. 95023  
831-636-2064  
wesgray@parks.ca.gov

**HOLLISTER HILLS SVRA  
NON-MOTORIZED BUFFER TRAILS PROJECT  
INITIAL STUDY**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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### 1.1 INTRODUCTION AND REGULATORY GUIDANCE

This Initial Study (IS) has been prepared by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR), Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMVR) Division to evaluate the potential environmental effects of the proposed Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project (project) at Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA) in San Benito County, California.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA; PRC § 21000 et seq.) and the CEQA Guidelines (14 CCR §15000 et seq.) establish the OHMVR Division as the lead agency. The lead agency is defined in CEQA Guidelines Section 15367 as “the public agency which has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a project.” The lead agency decides whether an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) or Negative Declaration (ND) is required for the project and is responsible for preparing the appropriate environmental review document.

According to CEQA Guidelines Section 15070, a public agency shall prepare a proposed ND or a Mitigated ND (MND) when:

1. The IS shows that there is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project may have a significant effect on the environment, or
2. The IS identifies potentially significant effects, but:
  - Revisions in the project plans made before a proposed Mitigated ND and IS are released for public review would avoid the effects or mitigate the effects to a point where clearly no significant effects would occur, and
  - There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the agency, that the project as revised may have a significant effect on the environment.

Pursuant to Section 15070, the OHMVR Division has determined a MND is the appropriate environmental review document for the Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project. This document has been prepared by the OHMVR Division of DPR in accordance with CEQA and the CEQA Guidelines.

### 1.2 PROJECT BACKGROUND

The existing Hollister Hills SVRA became a unit of the State Park System in October 1975. In September 1976, the California State Park and Recreation Commission classified the unit as a SVRA, and the Hollister Hills General Development Plan was approved in August 1978. The original park was divided into the Upper Ranch (870 acres) and Lower Ranch (2,480 acres) areas. In 1989 the park acquired the Renz (West) Ranch (1,690 acres), and in 1993 the park acquired the Hudner (East) Ranch (1,570 acres). The Hollister Hills General Development Plan (GDPA) was amended in 2001 to include the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch acquisition parcels in the state park general plan document and guide future developed uses of the property.

Approval of the GDPA was a public process that involved a draft GDPA in 1996 and a revised draft GDPA in 1999. The 2001 final GDPA reflected community interest in expanded non-motorized recreation opportunity in the county by identifying mountain biking, running, hiking, and horseback riding as possible uses within non-motorized buffer areas – areas established on the park property where off-highway vehicle (OHV) use is prohibited in order to minimize OHV noise on adjacent properties. The proposed development of non-motorized recreational trails within park buffer areas represents a continuation of OHMVR Division’s GDPA efforts to serve the local non-motorized community.

### **1.3 REQUIRED PERMITS AND APPROVALS**

As a state park, county and city agencies do not have jurisdiction over the proposed project. No approvals from the OHMVR Commission or other regulatory agencies are required for project activities, and no permits would be required.

## 2.0 PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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### 2.1 PROJECT LOCATION AND SITE DESCRIPTION

Hollister Hills SVRA is located in San Benito County, California, roughly eight miles south of the City of Hollister (Figure 1. Regional Location). The park entrance is on Cienega Road, which is a rural county road located about 15 miles east of U.S. 101. Hollister Hills SVRA is a 6,610-acre OHV park (Figure 2. Hollister Hills SVRA). The proposed project site is located within the non-motorized buffer zones established for the Hollister Hills SVRA on the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch properties.

Historically the project area has been used for cattle grazing. This continues to be the primary use of the project area through a concession contract. Livestock grazing is currently used as a holistic program designed to enhance and restore native grasses and oak woodland habitat. Several temporary fences exist to divide the property into different paddocks for rotational grazing purposes. The cattle fencing consists of a single aluminum electric wire that can be readily moved.

Vegetation within the project site consists mainly of grassland with a few woodland communities of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*). Along Bird Creek there is a typical riparian forest of cottonwoods (*Populus* sp.), willows (*Salix* spp.), and sycamores (*Platanus* sp.). Adjacent to the project site, six special-status plant species are known to exist and three locations have been identified as potential breeding habitat for the federally listed California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*; see Section 3.4 Biological Resources).

### 2.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

San Benito County has little accessible public land for recreation, and this project would provide opportunities for hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding to thousands of local residents that currently must travel much farther for access to similar activities.

In proposing the Hollister Hills SVRA Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project, it is the objective of the Hollister Hills District to:

- Provide mountain bike trails to visitors
- Provide additional hiking opportunities for visitors
- Provide horseback riding opportunities for visitors
- Build a sustainable trail system for outdoor recreation
- Promote healthy active lifestyles

### 2.3 PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS

#### 2.3.1 Non-Motorized Trails

The proposed project would create hiking, mountain biking, and equestrian trails in the non-motorized buffer areas within the Hollister Hills SVRA. No motorized recreation would be allowed.

Project trails would be constructed on both the northern portions of the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch properties along Cienega Road (Figure 3. Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project). The proposed new trails on both properties would be multi-use and 48” wide. The trail alignment would follow land contours (curvilinear alignment) and would generally not exceed 10 percent overall gradient where feasible. The trails would be constructed with small equipment such as mini-excavators and trail dozers. On steeper side slopes, trails would be cut in by crews using hand tools.

The new trails would be designated as day use only for non-motorized recreational users. The trail users would be required to stay on designated trails and to follow all parkwide rules as well as any posted rules specific to the proposed trail system. Any special event such as mountain bike or cross country races on the proposed new trails would be required to obtain a special events permit. If the special event would require modifying the posted rules or limits to parking, then additional CEQA review would be required. This document is only intended to assess the impacts associated with regular day use.

The proposed project would be constructed and maintained through training opportunities and volunteer efforts. Appropriate best management practices (BMPs) would be selected from the OHV BMP Manual for Erosion and Sediment Control (Salix and Geosyntec 2007) and utilized as necessary during trail construction. All trails would be designed to minimize the concentration of water and maintain hydrological invisibility per the 2008 Soil Conservation Standard and Guidelines (CDPR 2008). The primary design methods used for controlling trail drainage and erosion would be out-sloping, break-in-grades (Figure 4. Trail Cross Section), and rolling dips (Figure 5. Trail Rolling Dip and Water Bar ).

A small practice mountain bike trail called a pump track would be located adjacent to the lower staging area. A pump track is a small mountain bike trail system that is commonly built in backyards. Pump tracks can be built on level ground in areas as small as 10 by 30 feet. The proposed pump track would be 30 by 90 feet. The pump track would offer steeply banked turns and small roller jumps that riders could use to generate speed by “pumping” their bike with their arms and legs rather than pedaling. These types of practice tracks help mountain bike riders improve their bike handling skills and can be used by beginner to expert riders before or after riding the trails.

### **2.3.2 Staging Areas and Day Use Area**

Two parking areas would be constructed to provide staging areas and access to the non-motorized trails (Figure 3). The primary staging area, approximately 3.5 acres in size, would be located across the drainage from the Lower Barn area of the Renz property. The staging area would be gravel Class II road base and would include parking for up to 40 vehicles, a CXT pre-cast vault toilet building, trash receptacles, picnic tables, and two shade structures. The vault toilet would be installed below ground level and would match the perimeter of the pre-cast building, and thus would provide a stable footing to support the full weight of the building. The vault dimensions below grade would be 6’6” x 14’7.5” x 4’4”. The dimensions for the building would be 6’6” x 14’7.5”.

A second staging area would be located on the east side of Cienega Road northeast of Cienega gate. This staging area would also be gravel Class II road base and would include parking for 15 vehicles and trash receptacles.

New vehicle trips generated by the proposed project would occur only during the day as the new trails would not be lit or open for nighttime use. It is estimated the proposed project would generate approximately 15 new weekday and 50 new weekend vehicle trips. The expected use of the area was estimated by looking at comparable facilities in the nearby Santa Clara County Park system that has very similar multi-use trails. The parking was identified in the previous EIR as a maximum of 100 spaces. The 55 proposed spaces are largely limited by the area’s geography, and park staff estimates they would be adequate for the demand. The parking areas would be fenced in to keep people from driving outside the staging areas but would also provide large turn around areas for horse trailers.

A hike-in day use area would be installed in an area known as the “Pepper Tree” area, which would consist of picnic tables and trash receptacles. The Pepper Tree area is located about a third of a mile south from the main parking area.

### **2.3.3 Project Grazing Fencing and Signage**

Additional temporary and permanent fencing may be installed where people or cattle might damage special habitat or trail and drainage infrastructures. The cattle are typically present from winter through spring, so during those grazing seasons grazing gates would be kept close. People would not be restricted from traveling through areas with cattle but gates would need to be left the way they were found. The project would include signs in the main parking areas that map where cattle currently are and inform the public how to be respectful of the cattle grazing program.

### 3.0 ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

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**PROJECT INFORMATION:**

1. **Project title:** Non-Motorized Buffer Trails
2. **Lead agency name and address:**  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Hollister Hills District  
7800 Cienega Rd.  
Hollister, CA. 95023
3. **Contact person and phone number:**  
Matthew Allen, District Services Manager  
831-636-2016  
Wes Gray, Environmental Scientist  
831-636-2064
4. **Project location:**  
Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area
5. **Project sponsor's name and address: (See #2 & #3)**  
California Department of Parks and Recreation  
Hollister Hills District  
7800 Cienega Rd.  
Hollister, CA. 95023
6. **General Plan Designation:**  
Existing Regional Parks
7. **Zoning:**  
Agricultural Ranchlands (AR)

**ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:**

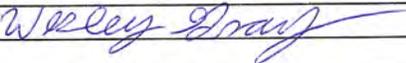
The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" if mitigation measures are not implemented as indicated by the checklist on the following pages. Note that measures contained in this chapter would avoid or minimize all impacts to less-than-significant levels.

|                                     |                          |                                     |                                    |                                     |                                    |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Aesthetics               | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Agriculture and Forestry Resources | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Air Quality                        |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Biological Resources     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Cultural Resources                 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Geology/Soils                      |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Greenhouse Gas Emissions | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Hazards and Hazardous Materials    | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Hydrology/Water Quality            |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Land Use/Planning        | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Mineral Resources                  | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Noise                              |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Population/Housing       | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Public Services                    | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Recreation                         |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | Transportation/Traffic   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Utilities/Service Systems          | <input type="checkbox"/>            | Mandatory Findings of Significance |

**DETERMINATION:**

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

|                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.  |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.   |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect 1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and 2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed. |
| <input type="checkbox"/>            | I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (a) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (b) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required                                    |

|   |                                       |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| <b>Signature:</b>  | <b>Date:</b> 1/13/2012                |
| <b>Printed Name:</b> Wesley Gray  | <b>Title:</b> Environmental Scientist |

**EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS:**

- 1) A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
- 2) All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as on-site, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
- 3) Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
- 4) "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level (mitigation measures from "Earlier Analyses," as described in (5) below, may be cross-referenced).
- 5) Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
  - a) Earlier Analysis Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
  - b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
  - c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
- 6) Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
- 7) Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.
- 8) This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.

- 9) The explanation of each issue should identify:
- a) the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
  - b) the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance

#### Response Column Heading Definitions

**A. Potentially Significant Impact** is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more “Potentially Significant Impact” entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

**B. Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated** applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from “Potentially Significant Impact” to a “Less Than Significant Impact.” The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less-than-significant level (mitigation measures from earlier analyses may be cross-referenced).

**E. Less Than Significant Impact** applies where the project creates no significant impacts, only Less-than-Significant impacts.

**F. No Impact** applies where a project does not create an impact in that category. “No Impact” answers do not require an explanation if they are adequately supported by the information sources cited by the lead agency which show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A “No Impact” answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors as well as general standards (e.g., the project will not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project specific screening analysis).

**3.1 AESTHETICS**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.1.1 Environmental Setting**

Hollister Hills SVRA is located six miles southwest of Hollister. Access to the site is from Cienega Road. Major routes in the project vicinity include U.S. 101, State Route 156, and State Route 25. None of these routes are designated as a state scenic highway.

Hollister Hills SVRA is located in the Gabilan Mountains on the southeast end of the San Juan Valley (Figure 2). Site elevations range from 660 feet mean sea level to 2,425 feet. Fremont Peak is located three miles to the west. Mt. Harlan is to the south. The project site is located in the lower elevation areas along the northern boundaries of the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch of the SVRA near Cienega Road (Figure 2 and Figure 3). The project area is not visible from offsite locations. Designated land uses in the area are predominantly agriculture and rangeland.

The buffer zones of the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch properties include grassland, chaparral, riparian, and a few woodland communities consisting of coast live oak and blue oak. Along Bird Creek, there is a typical riparian forest of cottonwoods, willows, and sycamores. The terrain varies considerably from low drainages, gentle to steep hillsides, and gently rolling hilltop ridges. The Renz Ranch property is bordered to the north by a low density housing development, Hidden Valley, and private owners to the northwest. The southern section of the Renz property is surrounded by motorized OHV trails. The Hudner Ranch property is bordered by private owners to the east and mostly Hollister Hills to the west. The Cienega Road corridor provides a naturalistic gateway to the Hollister Hills SVRA away from the developed agricultural and urban lands in and around the town of Hollister.

**3.1.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.1.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions

- a) The trails and staging areas are designed to be as invisible as possible. No trails or public uses are planned on the north facing slope of the Renz Ranch looking down into the Hidden Valley subdivision. The trails would follow existing contours, trail width would be minimized, and trails would be largely concealed by vegetation. The trails would be visible from parts of Cienega Road, but the trails would not detract from the scenery in a significant way.
- b) The project would not be visible from a scenic highway. There would be no impacts to an existing scenic highway as a result of this project.
- c) The proposed project would not substantially change the existing visual character and quality of the site or its surroundings. The proposed project is in an existing open space area designed for recreational use. There are existing OHV trails in nearby areas of the Hollister Hills SVRA. The proposed new trails would follow natural contours and would be designed to fit into the natural scenery. Trails width would be minimized to lessen the visual impact to visitors and neighbors. During and immediately following construction, the soil and vegetation disturbance within this natural setting would be more visible. With time, vegetation would return along disturbed slopes, and the effect on the visual quality of the site would be less prominent. Therefore, the effects on visual quality would be less than significant.
- d) The proposed project would not include any lighting and would not impact any night time views of the area.

**3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact                           |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project*:  |                                |                                       |                              |                                     |
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

\*In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state’s inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment Project; and the forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board.

**3.2.1 Environmental Setting**

The project area consists of open rangeland dominated by annual grassland but also includes areas with blue oak woodland, chaparral, and riparian habitat. The area is grazed under contract for the purposes of conservation. The property has been grazed continually for the past 15 years under a holistic grazing plan. The neighboring properties are private rangeland and a low density housing development.

**3.2.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### **3.2.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a) The entire project area is designated as land suited for grazing as per the California Department of Conservation 2008 San Benito County Important Farmland Map. There is no Prime or Unique Farmland associated with the project area; therefore, the proposed project would have no impacts to Farmland.

b) The project is zoned as Agricultural Rangeland (AR). The project area would continue to be grazed during and after project construction. The project site is not currently under a Williamson Act contract. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract.

c & d) The project site is not zoned as forest land or timberland and does not contain forest or timber. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with zoning for forest land or timber land, and would not result in the loss of forest land or the conversion forest land to a non-forest use.

e) The proposed project would not involve any other changes that would convert farmland to a non-agricultural use or forest land to a non-forest use.

**3.3 AIR QUALITY**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                          |
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non- attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**3.3.1 Regulatory Setting**

In California, air quality is governed by the California Air Resources Board (CARB). The state is geographically divided into air basins defined by geographic features such as valleys and mountains. Air quality within these basins is managed by different air districts, which are called Air Quality Management Districts or Air Pollution Control Districts (APCD). These agencies are county or regional governing authorities that have primary responsibility for monitoring and enforcing state and federal air quality standards. Each air district sets its own regulations for air pollutant emissions in order to achieve compliance with federal and state ambient air quality standards.

The proposed project is located in the North Central Coast Air Basin (NCCAB) which contains only one district, the Monterey Bay Unified APCD (MBUAPCD or District). The MBUAPCD is responsible for maintaining air quality and regulating emissions of criteria and toxic air pollutants within the NCCAB. The MBUAPCD carries out this responsibility by preparing, adopting, and implementing plans, regulations, and rules that are designed to achieve attainment of state and national air quality standards.

The NCCAB is a nonattainment area for the State Ambient Air Quality Standards for both ozone and inhalable particulate matter (PM10). The 1991 Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) for the Monterey Bay Area was the first plan prepared in response to the California Clean Air Act of 1988 that established specific planning requirements to meet the ozone standard. The Act requires

that the AQMP be updated every three years. In August 2008 the MBUAPCD adopted the 2008 Air Quality Management Plan for the Monterey Bay Region (MBUAPCD 2008a). The AQMP addresses only attainment of the state ozone standard. Attainment of the state PM10 standard is addressed in the District’s plan “Senate Bill 656 Implementation Plan,” which was adopted in December 2005. Maintenance of the national eight-hour standard for ozone is addressed in the District’s “Federal Maintenance Plan for the Monterey Bay Region,” which was adopted in March 2007 (MBUAPCD 2008a).

The District’s CEQA Air Quality Guidelines (2008b) establish construction and operational thresholds of significance for air quality emissions. The significance threshold for construction activities (e.g., excavation, grading, on-site vehicles) is the direct generation of 82 pounds per day or more of PM10. However, if modeling demonstrates that direct emissions under individual or cumulative conditions would not cause the exceedance of the state PM10 AAQS [50 micrograms per cubic meter (:g/m3)] at existing sensitive receptors as averaged over 24 hours, the impact would not be considered significant regardless of the quantity of PM10 generated. Under this threshold, a project is likely to result in a significant air quality impact if it would disturb 8.1 acres a day with minimal earthmoving, or 2.2 acres per day with earthmoving (grading, excavation). The 2.2 acres per day threshold would apply to the proposed project because it includes earthmoving. Thresholds of significance for operational impacts are listed in Table 1 below.

**Table 1. Thresholds of Significance for Criteria Pollutants of Concern, Operational Impacts**

| Pollutant Source  | Threshold of Significance  |
|---|--|
| Volatile organic compounds (VOC)  | 137 lbs/day (direct + indirect)  |
| Nitrogen dioxide (NOx as NO2)   | 137 lbs/day (direct + indirect)  |
| Particulate matter (PM10)   | 82 lbs/day (onsite)*   |
| Carbon monoxide (CO)  | LOS at intersection/road segment degrades from D or better to E or F or V/C ratio at intersection/road segment at LOS E or F increases by 0.05 or more or delay at intersection at LOS E or F increases by 10 seconds or more or reserve capacity at unsignalized intersection at LOS E or F decreases by 50 or more** |
|   | 550 lbs/day (direct)**   |
| Sulfur Dioxide (SOx as SO2)   | 150 lbs/day (direct)*  |
| <p>Note: Projects that emit other criteria pollutant emissions would have a significant impact if emissions would cause or substantially contribute to the violation of state or national AAQS. Criteria pollutant emissions could also have a significant impact if they would alter air movement, moisture, temperature, climate, or create objectionable odors in substantial concentrations. When estimating project emissions, local or project-specific conditions should be considered.</p> <p>* The District’s 82 lb/day operational phase threshold of significance applies only to onsite emissions and project-related exceedances along unpaved roads. These impacts are generally less than significant. On large development projects, almost all travel is on paved roads (0% unpaved), and entrained road dust from vehicular travel can exceed the significance threshold. Please contact the Air District to discuss estimating emissions from vehicular travel on paved roads. District approved dispersion modeling can be used to refute (or validate) a determination of significance if modeling shows that emissions would not cause or substantially contribute to an exceedance of state and national AAQS</p> <p>** Modeling should be undertaken to determine if the project would cause or substantially contribute (550 lb/day) to exceedance of CO AAQS. If not, the project would not have a significant impact</p> |  |

Source: MBUAPCD 2008b

### 3.3.2 Environmental Setting

Air quality is a function of pollutant emissions and topographic and meteorological influences. The physical features and atmospheric conditions of a landscape interact to affect the movement and dispersion of pollutants and determine its air quality.

The project area, at the northern end of the San Benito Valley, experiences west winds nearly one-third of the time. The prevailing air flow during the summer months probably originates in the Monterey Bay area and enters the northern end of the San Benito Valley through the air gap through the Gabilan Range occupied by the Pajaro River. In addition, a northwesterly air flow frequently transports pollutants into the San Benito Valley from the Santa Clara Valley (MBUAPCD 2008b).

The primary existing source of air quality emissions in the project area is from OHVs using the Hollister Hills SVRA. Other emissions sources are from vehicles using Cienega Road and other local roads, as well as from regional highways including State Route 25, State Route 156, and U.S. 101.

Hollister Hills SVRA has setup a partnership with the District to monitor air quality in the park and watch for any exceedance. The monitoring is done at three separate locations within the park's boundary. The monitors are connected to servers through a satellite connection and notify park staff if levels exceed an established threshold almost instantly. The most recent site monitoring data was collected from May to November 2008 and shows PM10 levels in the park consistently below 35 micrograms per cubic meter (CDPR and MBUAPCD 2009). These existing baseline PM10 levels are well below the state AAQS of 50 micrograms per cubic meter.

Sensitive receptors in the project area include existing users of Hollister Hills SVRA and nearby residential properties such as the Hidden Valley development to the north of the Renz property.

### 3.3.3 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above and the MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines (2008b) constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.3.4 Discussion of Checklist Items

a) According to the MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines (2008b), a project would not conflict with an air quality plan if it would not emit 137 lbs or more per day of VOC or NO<sub>x</sub>, and if it is consistent with the *2008 AQMP for the Monterey Bay Region*. The proposed project would not exceed emission thresholds for VOC or NO<sub>x</sub> (see response b below) and is consistent with the AQMP. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with or obstruct a local air quality plan.

b) Construction emissions generated by the proposed project would consist of exhaust from construction equipment and vehicles accessing and grading the project site. In addition, site clearing and grading activities have a high potential to generate dust whenever soil moisture is low and particularly when the wind is blowing. As stated above, a project that involves earth moving is considered to be under the 82 lbs per day threshold of significance for PM10 if it involves less than 2.2 acres of earth moving per day. The proposed project would involve less than 2.2 acres of earth moving per day; therefore, the project would not exceed thresholds of significance for construction emissions. In addition, the proposed project would implement the following BMPs contained in the MBUAPCD CEQA Guidelines (2008b) for control of construction dust:

- Plant vegetative ground cover in disturbed areas as soon as possible.
- Post a publicly visible sign which specifies the telephone number and person to contact regarding dust complaints. This person shall respond to complaints and take corrective

- action within 48 hours. The phone number of the Monterey Bay Unified Air Pollution Control District shall be visible to ensure compliance with Rule 402 (Nuisance).
- Limit the area under construction at any one time.

Operational emissions generated by the proposed project would be limited to emissions from vehicles accessing the proposed staging areas. The proposed project would not include any stationary emission sources. The proposed trails are exclusively for non-motorized use; therefore, use of the proposed trails would not generate emissions. New vehicle trips generated by the proposed project would occur only during the day as the new trails would not be lit or open for nighttime use. The proposed project would generate approximately 15 new weekday and 50 new weekend vehicle trips. These new vehicle trips would result in a small increase in regional air quality emissions; however, any increases in emissions would be well below thresholds of significance for criteria pollutants listed in Table 1. The project may also decrease overall trip mileage by providing closer recreation opportunities for local residents who currently must travel much farther for access to similar activities.

- c) The proposed project would not result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of ozone or PM10, criteria pollutants for which the project region is non-attainment. As stated in response b), project emissions would be well below thresholds of significance for both the construction and operation phases, and BMPs would be implemented to minimize construction dust.
- d) The proposed project would not expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollution concentrations because project emissions would be well below thresholds of significance for both the construction and operation phases, and BMPs would be implemented to minimize construction dust. In addition, air quality would continue to be monitored in the Hollister Hills SVRA, and action to protect the public would be taken if pollutant levels ever became unsafe.
- e) Short-term odors resulting from project construction would be dissipated by vegetation and trees between the construction sites and surrounding sensitive receptor locations. The proposed project would not create long-term objectionable odors that would affect a substantial number of people. Livestock is already present in the project area, and the addition of the equestrian use would not significantly alter the existing odors of the area.

**3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:   |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) 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 California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.4.1 Regulatory Setting**

In addition to CEQA, other federal and state laws apply to the biological resources identified in this report. Each of these laws is identified and discussed below.

**Federal Endangered Species Act**

The federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) of 1973 (16 USC §§ 1531 et seq.) protects fish and wildlife species that are listed as threatened or endangered, and their habitats. “Endangered” refers to species, subspecies, or distinct population segments that are in danger of extinction in all

or a significant portion of their range. “Threatened” refers to species, subspecies, or distinct population segments that are considered likely to become endangered in the future.

Under the ESA, the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Commerce have the authority to list species as threatened or endangered. The ESA is enforced by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). NMFS’s jurisdiction under ESA is limited to the protection of marine mammals, marine fishes, and anadromous fishes; all other species are subject to USFWS jurisdiction. The USFWS also publishes a list of candidate species. Species on this list receive “special attention” from federal agencies during environmental review, although they are not protected otherwise under the ESA. The candidate species are those for which the USFWS has sufficient biological information to support a proposal to list as endangered or threatened.

Section 7 of the ESA requires federal agencies, in consultation with and with the assistance of, the Secretary of the Interior or the Secretary of Commerce, as appropriate, to ensure that actions they authorize, fund, or carry out are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence of threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or adverse modifications of critical habitat for these species. Critical habitat is defined as specific geographic areas, whether occupied by listed species or not, that are determined to be essential for the conservation and management of listed species, and that have been formally described in the Federal Register.

Federal ESA Section 9 protects federally listed endangered and threatened wildlife species from unlawful take (16 U.S.C. § 1538 (a)(1)). “Take” is defined to mean “harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct” (16 U.S.C. § 1532 (19)). “Harm” is defined as an act that “actually kills or injures wildlife. Such act may include significant habitat modification or degradation where it actually kills or injures wildlife by significantly impairing essential behavioral patterns, including breeding, feeding or sheltering” (50 CFR 17.3). The ESA also prohibits removing, digging up, cutting, or maliciously damaging or destroying federally listed plants on federal land.

Section 10 of the ESA provides a means whereby a nonfederal action with a potential to result in the take of a listed species could be allowed under an incidental take permit. An incidental take permit is required when non-federal activities would potentially result in the take of a threatened or endangered species.

The USFWS no longer maintains a species of concern list; however, in compliance with the Fish and Wildlife Conservation Act (1980, as amended), the USFWS has identified “species, subspecies, and populations of all migratory nongame birds that, without additional conservation actions, are likely to become candidates for listing under the Endangered Species Act of 1973.” Birds of Conservation Concern 2002 is a compilation of information about bird species of concern that identifies which species are of concern in each region of the country. The OSV Program Project Area is within Bird Conservation Regions 15 (Sierra Nevada) and 9 (Great Basin). NMFS does maintain a species of concern list. For NMFS, species of concern are those species that it has some concerns about, but for which insufficient information is available to indicate a need to list the species under the ESA. Thus, “species of concern” are not regulated by the ESA, and take of a species of concern is not prohibited by the ESA and does not require a take permit.

### **The Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA)**

Under the MBTA, it is unlawful to “pursue, hunt, take, capture or kill; attempt to take, capture or kill; possess, offer to or sell, barter, purchase, deliver or cause to be shipped, exported, imported, transported, carried or received any migratory bird, part, nest, egg or product, manufactured or not.” In short, under the MBTA it is illegal to disturb a nest that is in active use, since this could result in killing a bird or destroying an egg. The USFWS oversees implementation of the MBTA.

**The Clean Water Act of 1972 (Section 404)**

The United States does not have a federal, comprehensive law protecting wetlands. However, through the regulation of activities in “waters of the United States,” the Clean Water Act of 1972 is the main federal law used to protect wetlands. Section 404 of the Clean Water Act regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into “waters of the United States,” which includes traditional navigable waters, interstate waters, certain tributaries of any of these waters, and wetlands that meet these criteria or that are adjacent to any of these waters. Enforcement authority for Section 404 was given to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), which it accomplishes under its regulatory branch.

The USACE also regulates activities in waters of the United States under the federal Rivers and Harbors Act. Section 10 of the Rivers and Harbors Act requires permits for any work or structures in navigable waters of the United States, including wetlands within or adjacent to these waters. Both dredging and filling are regulated activities under the Act. Navigable waters are defined as those waters that are subject to the ebb and flow of the tide, or that are presently, have been, or may be used for transport of interstate or foreign commerce.

**California Endangered Species Act**

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), which is administered by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG), protects wildlife and plants listed as “threatened” or “endangered” by the California Fish and Game Commission, as well as species identified as candidates for listing. CESA restricts all persons from taking listed species except under certain circumstances. The state definition of take is similar to the federal definition, except that CESA does not prohibit indirect harm to listed species by way of habitat modification. Under CESA, an action must have a direct, demonstrable detrimental effect on individuals of the species. Under Sections 2080 and 2081 of the California Fish and Game Code, CDFG may authorize take of listed species, with strict limits for species that are designated as fully protected. Various Fish and Game Code sections identify fully protected species.

CDFG maintains lists of animal species of special concern (CSSC) that serve as “watch lists.” A CSSC is not subject to the take prohibitions of the CESA. The CSSC are species that are declining at a rate that could result in listing under the ESA or CESA and/or have historically occurred in low numbers, and known threats to their persistence currently exist. This designation is intended to result in special consideration for these animals and is intended to focus attention on the species to help avert the need for costly listing under federal and state endangered species laws. This designation also is intended to stimulate collection of additional information on the biology, distribution, and status of poorly known at-risk species, and focus research and management attention on them (CDFG 2003).

State agencies should not approve projects as proposed which would jeopardize the continued existence of any endangered species or threatened species or result in the destruction or adverse modification of habitat essential to the continued existence of those species, if there are reasonable and prudent alternatives available consistent with conserving the species or its habitat that would prevent jeopardy (Fish and Game Code § 2053).

**California Fish and Game Code**

The California Fish and Game Code protects a variety of species, separate from the protection afforded under the CESA. The following specific statutes afford some limits on take of named species: Section 3503 (nests or eggs), 3503.5 (raptors and their nests and eggs), 3505 (egrets, osprey, and other specified birds), 3508 (game birds), 3511 (fully protected birds), 4700 (fully protected mammals), 4800 et seq. (mountain lions), 5050 (fully protected reptiles and amphibians), and 5515 (fully protected fish).

Section 3503 simply states, “it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird, except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation made pursuant thereto.”

The exceptions generally apply to species that are causing economic hardship to an industry. Section 3503.5 states that it is "unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds in the order Falconiformes or Strigiformes (birds of prey) or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird except as otherwise provided by this code or any regulation adopted." Section 3505 prohibits taking, selling, or purchasing egrets, osprey, and other named species or any part of such birds.

The mountain lion is a "specially protected" species under Sections 4800 et seq. of the Fish and Game Code. It is unlawful to take mountain lion except in instances and methods allowed in the Fish and Game Code.

Certain species are also fully protected. This classification was the state's initial effort in the 1960's to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, amphibians and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most fully protected species have also been listed as threatened or endangered species under the more recent endangered species laws and regulations. Fully protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time, and no licenses or permits may be issued for their take except for collecting these species for necessary scientific research or for habitat restoration that would promote their survival.

### **California Native Plant Protection Act**

The California Native Plant Protection Act (CNPPA) of 1977 preserves, protects, and enhances endangered and rare plants in California by specifically prohibiting the importation, take, possession, or sale of any native plant designated by the California Fish and Game Commission as rare or endangered, except under specific circumstances identified in the Act. Various activities are exempt from the CNPPA, although take as a result of these activities may require other authorization from CDFG under the California Fish and Game Code.

### **Fish and Game Code Section 1602**

Section 1602 requires an entity to notify CDFG of any proposed activity that may substantially divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of, any river, stream, or lake, or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing pavement where it may pass into any stream, river, or lake. CDFG uses the USFWS definition of wetlands when regulating these activities.

## **3.4.2 Environmental Setting**

### **Vegetation and Wildlife**

The project area exists within the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch at Hollister Hills SVRA. These areas consist of mainly annual grassland habitats (Figure 6. Vegetation Map). There is also oak woodland and Diablan sage scrub in the project area. Adjacent to Bird Creek there is a typical riparian corridor of sycamores, willows, and oak species.

The grasslands in this area are dominated by annual grass species with a few small patches of native perennials. The majority of the project area is grazed holistically by a contractor. Holistic grazing consists of a high stock density, quick rotation, and long periods of rest. The typical grazing season is December through May. The grasslands also have annual non-native weeds such as yellow star-thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*), milk thistle (*Silybum adans*), and black mustard (*Brassica nigra*).

The oak woodland in this area consists primarily of coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), blue oak (*Quercus douglasii*), and valley oak (*Quercus lobata*). The north facing slopes more commonly have the coast live oak and valley oak species, while the southern slopes and open grassland areas have more blue oak. The understory of the oak woodlands commonly has poison oak

(*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), and California gooseberries (*Ribes californicum*).

There are dozens of seasonal water sources in the project area such as vernal pools, seeps, springs, and cattle ponds, some of which are home to the federal threatened California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*). Other amphibians such as the California newt, Pacific chorus frog, and western toad all rely on these seasonal water sources for breeding. These are also important hunting grounds for garter snakes, skunks, raccoons, and bats.

### Special-Status Species

Special-status species are those plants and animals that are legally protected or otherwise recognized as vulnerable to habitat loss or population decline by federal, state, or local resource conservation agencies and organizations. In this analysis, special-status species include:

- Species that are state and/or federally listed threatened or endangered or proposed for such listing
- Species considered as candidates for listing as threatened or endangered or proposed for such listing
- CDFG CSSC species
- Fully protected species per California Fish and Game Code
- Plants considered by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and CDFG to be rare, threatened, or endangered [California rare plant ranked, (CRPR); e.g. CRPR 1B]

Jones and Stokes Associates conducted a biological review of the Renz and Hudner Ranches in 1993 and published their findings in *Biota of Hollister Hills SVRA, Acquisition Areas*. In November, 1999 the *Hollister Hills SVRA Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Hudner and Renz Acquisitions Draft Revised General Development Plan Amendment* was prepared, including tables for special-status plants and animals with the potential to occur in the acquisition properties. A CNDDDB search was conducted in January 2012, and DPR staff biologists conducted surveys in 2010 for special-status plants, California red-legged frogs, and California tiger salamanders (Figure 7. Special-Status Plant Occurrences and Figure 8. Special-Status Wildlife Occurrences). The special-status species table was updated based on the recent CNDDDB search and surveys for this project and is included in Appendix A. Many of the special-status species in the table are unlikely to occur in the project area due to a lack of suitable habitat or distance from known occurrences. Special-status species with the potential to occur in the project area are described below.

**Special-status Plants.** No federal- or state-listed plants were found in the project area, but six CNPS List plants were found, including Gairdner's yampah (*Perideridia gairdneri* ssp. *gairdneri*), Indian Valley bush mallow (*Malacothamnus aboriginum*), Michael's rein orchid (*Piperia michaelii*), San Antonio Hills monardella (*Monardella antonina* ssp. *antonina*), San Joaquin saltbush (*Atriplex joaquiniana*), and South Coast Range morning-glory (*Calystegia collina* ssp. *venusta*). These species are shown on Figure 7 and described below. In addition, there is a moderate potential for Pinnacles buckwheat (*Eriogonum nortonii*) to occur on the site.

*Gairdner's yampah.* This CNPS List 4 species is a perennial herb endemic to California that blooms June through October. It is found in broad-leaved upland forest, chaparral, coastal prairie, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pool habitats in vernal mesic sites. It grows from 0 to 600 meters elevation. It is threatened by agriculture, grazing, non-native plants, habitat alteration, and urbanization, particularly in the southern portion of its range (CNPS 2012). It is known from 11 occurrences in the project area, based on multiple botanical surveys over several years.

*Indian Valley bush mallow.* This CNPS List 1B species is a perennial deciduous herb endemic to California that blooms April through October. It occurs in chaparral and cismontane woodland habitats on rocky granitic soils, often in burned areas. It grows from 150 to 1,700 meters. It is threatened by grazing, vehicles, and road maintenance (CNPS 2012). It is known from four occurrences in the project area, based on multiple botanical surveys over several years.

*Michael's rein orchid.* This CNPS List 4 species is a perennial herb endemic to California that blooms April through August. It occurs in coastal bluff scrub, closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and lower montane coniferous forest habitats from 3 to 915 meters. It is possibly threatened by road widening (CNPS 2012). It is known from one occurrence in the project area, based on multiple botanical surveys over several years.

*San Antonio Hills monardella.* This CNPS List 3 species is a perennial rhizomatous herb and a California endemic that blooms June through August. It occurs in chaparral and cismontane woodland habitats from 500 to 1000 meters elevation. It is threatened by road maintenance, pipeline construction, and feral pigs (CNPS 2012). It is known from two occurrences in the project area, based on multiple botanical surveys over several years.

*San Joaquin saltbrush.* This CNPS List 1B species is an annual herb endemic to California that blooms April through October. It is found in chenopod scrub, meadows and seeps, playas, and valley and foothill grassland in alkaline soils from 1 to 835 meters elevation. It is threatened by grazing, agriculture, and development (CNPS 2012). It is known from one occurrence in the project area, based on multiple botanical surveys over several years.

*South Coast Range morning glory.* This CNPS List 4 species is a perennial rhizomatous herb endemic to California that blooms April through June. It occurs in chaparral, cismontane woodland and valley and foothill grassland in serpentine or sedimentary soils from 425 to 1,490 meters elevation. It can be relatively abundant and tolerant of disturbance (CNPS 2012). It is known from one occurrence in the project area, based on multiple botanical surveys over several years.

*Pinnacles buckwheat.* This CNPS List 1B species is an annual herb endemic to California that blooms May through September. It occurs in chaparral and valley and foothill grassland habitats in sandy soils, often in burned areas. It grows from 300 to 975 meters. It occurs in Hollister Hills SVRA south of the San Andreas Fault, and suitable habitat exists in the project area.

**Special-status Reptiles and Amphibians.** California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) are known to occur in the project area (Figure 8). In addition, Coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvilli*) has a high potential to occur in the project area based on suitable habitat and nearby occurrences. These species are described below.

*Coast horned lizard.* Coast horned lizard (CSSC) is found along the Pacific coast from the Baja California border west of the deserts and the Sierra Nevada, north to the Bay Area, inland as far north as Shasta Reservoir, and south into Baja California. It also ranges up onto the Kern Plateau east of the crest of the Sierra Nevada. The range has been fragmented due to land alteration. Coast horned lizard inhabits open areas of sandy soil and low vegetation in valleys, foothills, and semiarid mountains from sea level to 2,438 meters (8,000 feet) in elevation. Coast horned lizard is found in grasslands, coniferous forests, woodlands, and chaparral, with open areas and patches of loose soil. The species is often found in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered shrubs and along dirt roads, and frequently near ant hills (California Herps 2012). It has been observed in Hollister Hills SVRA, and suitable habitat exists in the project area.

*California red-legged frog.* This species is federally-listed as threatened and a CSSC. The California red-legged frog occurs in permanent and semi-permanent water bodies in the Coast Ranges of California from Sonoma County to northern Baja California and east into the central

Sierra Nevada. California red-legged frog has been eliminated from the majority of the southern Sierra and the Central Valley. The California red-legged frog is found in marshes, streams, lakes, reservoirs, ponds, and other, usually permanent, sources of water. They prefer habitats with steep-cut and over-hanging banks and dense vegetation, such as willows and rushes. Intermittent streams and natural and artificial ponds also provide suitable habitat. California red-legged frog can disperse long distances (i.e., over one mile) during the non-breeding season (LSA Associates, Inc. 1999). Suitable aquatic and upland habitat for California red-legged frog is present, and it is known from three locations south of the proposed new trails (Figure 8).

*California tiger salamander.* This species is federally- and state-listed as threatened and a CSSC. California tiger salamander occurs in central California from the central Sacramento Valley to the central San Joaquin Valley and surrounding foothills of both the Coast Range and the Sierra Nevada. It is also found in the San Francisco and Monterey Bay regions, and in valleys and foothills of San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. California tiger salamander breeds in temporary rain pools, such as vernal pools, and seasonal ponds in grasslands and open woodlands. Adults are terrestrial and spend most of the year underground in small mammal burrows and other underground retreats, emerging only for brief periods to breed. Mass movements to breeding sites take place during winter rains, mainly from December to February. California tiger salamanders are routinely found as far as 0.5 mile from a breeding pond, but they tend to stay close to the pond as long as there are burrows present (LSA Associates, Inc. 1999). Suitable aquatic and upland habitat for California tiger salamander is present, and it is known from six locations in the project area (Figure 8). California tiger salamander breeds in stock ponds and sediment ponds in the project area.

**Special-status Birds.** Golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), loggerhead shrike (*Lanius ludovicianus*), Northern harrier (*Circus cyaneus*), and white-tailed kite (*Elanus leucurus*) are known to occur in the project area. In addition, American peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrines anatum*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), yellow-breasted chat (*Icteria virens*), and yellow warbler (*Dendroica petechia brewsteri*) have a moderate potential to occur in the project area.

*American peregrine falcon.* This species is a California Fully Protected Species. It occurs throughout the continental United States and in Alaska. Peregrine falcon requires steep vertical cliffs to nest. Peregrine falcon will also nest on the tops of city buildings and bridges. Almost any habitat type with the exception of southeastern deserts provides suitable foraging habitat for this species. Peregrine falcon feeds on birds caught in flight (LSA Associates, Inc. 1999). Peregrine falcon has been observed on the Renz Ranch in 1988, and suitable foraging habitat exists in the project area.

*Burrowing owl.* Burrowing owl (CSSC) is broadly distributed in western North America and also occurs in Florida, Central and South America, Hispaniola, Cuba, the northern Lesser Antilles, and the Bahamas. This species is sometimes migratory and sometimes present year round; California has both year round and migrant populations. Suitable habitat for burrowing owl consists of grassland with short vegetation and only sparse shrubs and taller vegetation. Small mammal burrows are required for nesting and refuge (Shuford and Gardali 2008). Ground squirrel burrows are the most commonly used. This species was observed in the Hollister Hills SVRA in 1987, and suitable nesting habitat exists in the project area.

*Golden eagle.* This species is a California Fully Protected Species and is also protected by the Bald Eagle Protection Act. It is found throughout the United States except for the southern states east of Texas and Hawaii, and throughout Canada except the arctic. Populations in the Midwest and eastern United States are wintering non-breeding populations, and populations in Canada and Alaska are summer resident breeding populations. Golden eagle occurs year round in the western United States, including in California. Golden eagle favors partially or completely open country, especially around mountains, hills, and cliffs. It uses a variety of habitats ranging from arctic to desert, including tundra, shrublands, grasslands, coniferous forests, farmland, and areas along

rivers and streams. Golden eagle nests on cliffs and steep escarpments in grassland, chaparral, shrubland, forest, and other vegetated areas. Primary prey items include rabbits, hares, ground squirrels, prairie dogs, and marmots (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2011). Golden eagle is known to forage in the project area, and may nest in more remote areas of Hollister Hills SVRA.

*Loggerhead shrike.* Loggerhead shrike (CSSC) breeds in Canada in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba; widely throughout the United States except in portions of the northeast and higher elevations throughout; and in much of western Mexico. It winters throughout much of the United States, in portions of southern Canada, and throughout much of Mexico. In California, it breeds mainly in shrublands or open woodlands with a fair amount of grass cover and areas of bare ground. Loggerhead shrike requires tall shrubs or trees for hunting perches, territorial advertisements and pair maintenance; open areas of short grasses, forbs or bare ground for hunting; and large shrubs or trees for nest placement. It also needs impaling sites for prey manipulation or storage, which can include sharp, thorny or multi-stemmed plants and barb-wire fences. Loggerhead shrike eats arthropods (especially grasshoppers, crickets, beetles, and caterpillars), reptiles, amphibians, small rodents, and birds (Shuford and Gardali 2008). This species is present in the project area.

*Northern harrier.* Northern harrier (CSSC) breeds in North America from northern Alaska and Canada south to mid- and lower latitudes of the United States and northern Baja California. Populations in Alaska, most of Canada, and much of the midwestern and northeastern United States are migratory and winter from southern Canada to Central America. In California, Northern harrier breeds and forages in freshwater marshes, brackish and saltwater marshes, wet meadows, weedy borders of lakes, rivers, and streams, annual and perennial grasslands (including those with vernal pools), weed fields, ungrazed or lightly grazed pastures, some croplands (especially alfalfa, grain, sugar beets, tomatoes, and melons), sagebrush flats, and desert sinks. Harriers nest on the ground, mostly within patches of dense, often tall, vegetation in undisturbed areas. Common prey are voles, rabbits, smaller birds, and lizards (Shuford and Gardali 2008). This species has been observed foraging in the project area and marginal nesting habitat exists in the grasslands.

*White-tailed kite.* This species is a California Fully Protected Species. It occurs year round along the Pacific coast of the United States, in Mexico and in parts of South America. It is commonly found in savanna, open woodlands, marshes, desert grassland, partially cleared lands, and cultivated fields. It generally avoids areas with extensive winter freezes, but rainfall and humidity vary greatly throughout this bird's range. White-tailed kite typically nests in the upper third of trees that may be 10–160 feet tall. These can be open-country trees growing in isolation, or at the edge of or within a forest. Nests have been reported in more than 20 tree species. White-tailed kite hunts over lightly grazed or ungrazed fields where there may be larger prey populations than in more heavily grazed areas. Diet consists mainly of small mammals, as well as some birds, lizards and insects (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2011). This species is known to nest and forage in the project area.

*Yellow-breasted chat.* This species is a CSSC. There are two subspecies, *I.v. auricollis* nests in western and *I. v. virens* nests in eastern North America. *I. v. auricollis* breeds from southern British Columbia east to southern Saskatchewan and North Dakota, south to south-central Baja California, west Texas, and southern Tamaulipas; it winters from southern Baja California and south Texas to western Mexico through central Guatemala. Nesting yellow-breasted chats occupy early successional riparian habitats with a well-developed shrub layer and an open canopy. Nesting habitat is usually restricted to the narrow border of streams, creeks, sloughs, and rivers and seldom forms extensive tracts. Blackberry, wild grape, willow, and other plants that form dense thickets and tangles are frequently used for nesting. Taller trees such as cottonwood and alder are needed for song perches. Diet consists primarily of insects and spiders; wild fruits and berries are also eaten (Shuford and Gardali 2008). This species was observed in Hollister Hills

SVRA in 1988 in riparian corridors, and suitable habitat exists in the project area along Bird Creek.

*Yellow warbler*. This species is a CSSC. Three subspecies exist: *aestiva* breeds in continental North America, *petechia* breeds in extreme southern Florida and the Caribbean, and *erithachorides* breeds in coastal Mexico to northern South America. The *aestiva* group winters mainly from northern Mexico to central South America. Yellow warblers generally occupy riparian vegetation in close proximity to water along streams and in wet meadows. Throughout, they are found in willows and cottonwoods, and in California they are found in numerous other species of riparian shrubs or trees, varying by biogeographic region. Diet consists primarily of insects and spiders (Shuford and Gardali 2008). This species was observed in Hollister Hills SVRA in 1988 in riparian corridors, and suitable habitat exists in the project area along Bird Creek.

### 3.4.3 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.4.4 Discussion of Checklist Items

a) This project would avoid the known locations of the special-status plant species discussed above by appropriate trail locations; no trail is proposed within 50 feet of a known population (Figure 7). It is possible that populations not yet identified could occur within or near proposed trails. Trail construction through such occurrences could be a significant impact. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 would prevent impacts to any unknown occurrences of special-status plants near the trails. The staging area locations are not near any known or potential special-status plant species occurrences.

There are three locations in the project area that have been previously identified as breeding habitat for the threatened California tiger salamander (Figure 8). The project would not build within a 100 feet of any known breeding location. The breeding area would be avoided by appropriate trail location and the use of buffers. In addition to trail location, cedar split rail fencing as well as interpretive signage may be used to exclude public entry to these potential breeding ponds. The project area has been surveyed for breeding habitat and would continue to be monitored during and after the project and appropriate measures taken to protect the species if new breeding habitat were found. To reduce potential impacts to California tiger salamander to a less-than-significant level, the OHMVR Division would implement Mitigation Measure BIO-2. California red-legged frog occurs to the south of the project area in Bird Creek, but is not expected to be impacted by the project. Given that the project is for non-motorized recreation trails, the species' listing status, and its broad although fragmented range, impacts to Coast horned lizard from construction and operation would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4, listed below under the discussion of significance criterion (d), would address impacts to special-status bird species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-1: Prior to initiation of trail construction, botanical surveys shall be conducted for the seven special-status plants with the potential to occur in the project area: Gairdner's yampah, Indian Valley bush mallow, Michael's rein orchid, San Antonio Hills monardella, San Joaquin saltbush, South Coast Range morning-glory, and Pinnacles buckwheat. The surveys shall be conducted during the blooming period for these species. The blooming period for all seven special-status plant species overlaps in June; thus, June would be the optimal time to conduct the survey. If any special-status plant species are threatened by construction activities then the trail shall be re-routed to avoid impacts to the species.

Mitigation Measure BIO-2: To avoid impacts to California tiger salamanders the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. Before trail construction starts on the project, a park staff biologist shall conduct a training session for all construction personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of the California tiger salamander, including its lifecycle and basic habitat. The training shall also include all the general measures that are being implemented to avoid adverse effects to the species from the project.
2. A qualified biological monitor shall be on-site to monitor construction and prevent take of California tiger salamander. The park staff biologist shall ensure that the monitor receives training and can reasonably perform the job. The monitor and the biologist shall have the authority to stop work to avoid take of the species.
3. All refueling, maintenance, and staging of equipment and vehicles shall occur at least 60 feet from any riparian habitat or water body. Prior to the onset of work, the OHMVR Division shall ensure that a plan is in place to allow a prompt and effective response to any accidental spills. All workers shall be informed of the importance of preventing spills and the appropriate measures to take should a spill occur.
4. The number of access routes and the total area of the activity shall be limited to the minimum necessary to achieve the project goal. Routes shall be clearly demarcated, and these areas shall be outside of riparian and wetland areas.

b) The project would have a less-than-significant impact on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by CDFG or USFWS. An area along Bird Creek has been identified as a Resource Protection Zone (Figure 10) with the intent to protect archeological resources and the riparian environment. No new trails would be established within this zone, nor would the staging areas be located in this zone. An existing trail is used for the crossover of Bird Creek on an existing culvert bridge. No new ground disturbance within the riparian zone would occur. All construction in the vicinity of the creek would be done with Mini Dozers (SWECOS) or hand tools. All equipment and fuel required for project construction would be stored and refueled away from Bird Creek and other water sources.

c) In various locations throughout the project area, there are occasional vernal pools (Figure 8) that are utilized by cattle during the contracted grazing season (January through March). These pools contain water during the rainy season, and are dry during the summer. Mitigation Measure BIO-3 would prevent impacts to existing any existing vernal pools or other wetlands.

Mitigation Measure BIO-3: All project features shall maintain a minimum distance of 50 feet from all wetlands and vernal pools.

d) This project would have a less-than-significant impact on wildlife movement and wildlife nursery sites. The split rail fencing used shall not impede wildlife, and any non-passable fencing would have access corridors every few hundred feet. No known nursery sites have been identified within the project areas impact zones. Project construction during the nesting season could cause nest abandonment, which could be a significant effect. Mitigation Measure BIO-4 would reduce this potential impact to nesting birds to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure BIO-4: Any project construction done between February 1<sup>st</sup> – August 31<sup>st</sup> shall include pre-construction surveys for nesting birds. Pre-construction surveys shall be conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of construction activities or tree or shrub removal. If an active nest is found in or close enough to the construction area to be disturbed by these activities, the ornithologist, shall, in consultation with the CDFG, designate a construction-free buffer zone (typically 250 feet for raptors and 50 feet for other birds) around the nest until the nest is no longer active.

e) There are no local biological protection policies that are applicable to this project.

f) The proposed project would not conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other applicable habitat

conservation plan. There is no adopted habitat or natural community conservation plan that applies to the project area.

**3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                              |                                     |
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in §15064.5?    | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to §15064.5? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?       | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?                          | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**3.5.1 Regulatory Setting**

Cultural resources include prehistoric and historic archaeological sites, districts, and objects; standing historic structures, buildings, districts, and objects; and locations of important historic events or sites of traditional and/or cultural importance to various groups. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 defines historical resources, outlines the criteria for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), defines what constitutes a substantial adverse effect for historical resources, describes the relationship between historical and archaeological resources, and provides the procedures to follow if Native American or other human remains are discovered. A project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5 (b)). A substantial adverse change means physical demolition, destruction, relocation, or alteration of the resource or its immediate surroundings such that the significance of the historical resource would be materially impaired. CEQA Guidelines Section 15126.4 (b) outlines adequate mitigation for impacts to historical resources.

The CRHR (PRC § 5024.1) is a listing of those properties that are to be protected from substantial adverse change, and it includes properties that are listed, or have been formally determined to be eligible for listing in, the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP), State Historical Landmarks, and eligible Points of Historical Interest. CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5 (a) gives the criteria for listing in the CRHR and provides that any resource listed in, or eligible for listing in, the CRHR is presumed to be historically or culturally significant. Resources listed in a local historic register or deemed significant in a historical resource survey (as provided under PRC Section 5024.1 (g)) are also presumed historically or culturally significant unless the preponderance of evidence demonstrates they are not. A resource that is not listed in or determined to be eligible for listing in the CRHR, not included in a local register or historic resources, or not deemed significant in a historical resource survey may nonetheless be historically significant (CEQA Guidelines § 15064.5 (a)(4)). This provision is intended to give the lead agency discretion to determine that a resource of historical significance exists where

none had been identified before and to apply the requirements of Section 15064.5 to properties that have not previously been formally recognized as historical.

Where a project will impact an archaeological site, the lead agency must first determine whether the site is a historical resource as defined in Section 15064.5 (a). If the archaeological site is a historical resource, then the requirements described above that apply to historical resources apply to the archaeological site (PRC § 21084.1). If the archaeological site does not meet the criteria of Section 15064.5 (a) but is considered a unique historical resource according to PRC Section 21083.2, then the site must be treated in accordance with PRC Sections 21083.2, including mitigation of adverse effects. PRC Sections 21083.2 and 21084.1 operate independently to ensure that potential effects on archaeological resources are considered as part of a project's environmental analysis. Either of these benchmarks may indicate that a project may have a potential adverse effect on archaeological resources.

In addition to these CEQA requirements, PRC Section 5024 requires every state agency to formulate policies to preserve and maintain, when prudent and feasible, state-owned historical resources that are (1) listed in or eligible for inclusion in the NRHP, or (2) registered or eligible for registration as a state Historical Landmark according to Section 5021. DPR has had an active and on-going historic preservation program with the State Office of Historic Preservation since July 1990. State agencies are required to submit inventory updates to the State Historic Preservation Officer.

Finally, both the California State Parks and OHMVR Division Mission Statements along with PRC Section 5079 provide that it is the duty of the state agency to protect, preserve, and interpret cultural resources in order to encourage stewardship of those resources.

### **3.5.2 Environmental Setting**

A record search for Hollister Hills SVRA was conducted at the Northwest Information Center (Sonoma State University) of the California Historical Resources Information System on March 3, 2010, by Kelly Long and Alicia Perez, Associate State Archaeologists. The record search along with archival research at OHMVR Division Headquarters identified 12 previously recorded prehistoric archaeological sites, 56 historic-era resources, and one multi-component site within Hollister Hills SVRA.

The project area was surveyed during the updated cultural resources inventory from July 2009 through August 2010 (Long 2010). During these surveys, Perez and Long, with the assistance of other OHMVR Division archeologists and staff, conducted a complete reconnaissance pedestrian survey of the Hollister Hills SVRA property. Additionally, Native American consultation with Ann Marie Sayers of the Mutsun Band of Costanoan Indians took place in September 2011. The project has also been reviewed by Dan Osanna, State Historian III for concurrence that the project would not affect historic-era resources.

The project area contains two historical sites (P-35-000198, P-35-000263) and one multi-component site (CA-SBN-186/H; Long 2010). These cultural resources are potentially eligible for listing in the CRHR; it is unknown at this time if they are eligible for listing in the NRHP.

The Renz Barn Complex (P-35-000198) is a historical ranching complex with a hay barn, tack shed, and several corrals connected with fences as the primary cultural constituents. The hay barn stands on a concrete foundation and has redwood sills. All lumber is full dimensional (finished/planed) redwood. Approximately 20% of the nails are square cut, and wire cut nails make up the remaining portion. The roof was replaced in the 1980s with corrugated metal roofing. The corrals have been rebuilt using a combination of split redwood posts and railing as well as telephone poles, railroad ties, and nominal Douglas fir. The corrals are currently used as part of a grazing lease and are in need of repair.

Historic site, P-35-000263, was originally recorded as Historic Site 3 by D. Chavez and J. Hupman in 1995 as the remains of structures including a house/cabin, barn, corrals, and outbuildings constructed in the 1890s. No structures remained in 1995, but a fair amount of debris was present. Pepper trees and a trash dump of miscellaneous fencing and debris were recorded. A metal-lined water flume was the only feature remaining on the site in 1995. During the 2010 recording, no structural debris remained. The water flume was also missing. However, there are 13 pepper trees standing in a line along the eastern edge of the site boundary, and a trash dump of old fencing is still present. Cattle still graze in the area, and this spot is likely a popular gathering area for cattle because of the shade provided by the pepper trees and their close location to a stock pond.

CA-SBN-186/H is a prehistoric village site originally recorded by Cartier in 1989 and includes a complex of five sites (now loci) along upper Bird Creek. This multi-component site comprises the five developed prehistoric middens and the remains of a historic homestead. The majority of the site, with the exception of Locus C, is on the north side of Upper Bird Creek in a small drainage valley with steep ridges and slopes to the north. The site is largely in open grassland with areas closer to Upper Bird Creek covered in riparian vegetation. Sparse oak trees are scattered across the site near Upper Bird Creek. The five loci are described below to the extent they were observed in 2010:

- Locus A could not be relocated during the 2010 site record update.
- Locus B could not be relocated during the 2010 site record update nor was the fallen oak tree. Locus B is in the middle of a watering area for cattle where there is a water trough. No evidence of Locus B could be found near the water trough.
- Locus C was relocated and found to be more extensive than originally recorded. Locus C is separated from Locus E by Upper Bird Creek.
- Locus D was relocated and the boundaries have been extended to the north and south.
- Locus E was successfully relocated.

It is likely the archaeological deposit present at CA-SBN-186/H is intact. Cattle graze the area seasonally, which is disturbing the site, but beyond that no other impact could be ascertained; no agriculture has ever taken place on the site. This is quite possibly the most important prehistoric resource within the park unit. The State Archaeologist recommends testing as well, especially in the areas where surface materials were documented in 1994 but could not be relocated during the 2010 inventory (Long 2010). If these sites prove to have integrity, they could be nominated to the CRHR, possibly as a district, and may also be eligible for inclusion on either the NRHP. The significance of the resource cannot be fully assessed without a proper test excavation. Of the five loci, the eastern-most loci, C and E, are the most significant in terms of potential depth and cultural material. The State Archaeologist recommends protection of the resource until it can be further evaluated (Long 2010).

The historic component of CA-SBN-186/H, first recorded as Historic Site 5 by Cartier in 1989, is now included in the boundary for CA-SBN-186/H. During the 1989 recording, the historic feature included a scatter of square and round nails. A structure was recorded on both the 1921 and 1941 topographic maps; however, it was gone by 1955. Currently, the vegetation coverage limits ground surface visibility; no artifacts were discovered during the 2010 update (Long 2010). Three grafted walnut trees and a fig tree were identified at this site suggesting a historic residence once existed. The site is bisected by the 4x4 dirt road with two of the grafted walnut trees on the south side near the eastern boundary of the site. A third walnut tree, in the western end of the site, is on the north side of the road past the fence near Upper Bird Creek. A large fig tree is on the north side of the 4x4 road near the two walnut trees towards the eastern edge of the site.

### 3.5.3 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.5.4 Discussion of Checklist Items

a & b) The project could potentially impact CA-SBN-186/H, a significant historical resource. Loci C and E are the most important prehistoric deposits within the site. As the proposed project is currently designed, trails would cross Loci C and E. Even though the trails are low impact, the introduction of visitors into the site would promote looting and possible destruction of the cultural resource. This damage would be a significant impact. Mitigation Measure CUL-1, described below, would prevent impacts to CA-SBN-186/H.<sup>1</sup>

P-35-000198 would not be significantly impacted by the project because the area is to be used as a staging (parking) area (Figure 3), and none of the historic structures would be used or demolished for development of the staging area or by its use.

P-35-00263 is in the vicinity of the planned Pepper Tree day use picnic area (Figure 3), but neither development nor operation of the picnic area would adversely affect the historical value of the site as there are no plans to cut down the pepper trees. The impacts would be less than significant.

No known historical or archaeological resources would be significantly affected by development or operation of the staging or day use areas. However, unknown cultural resources could be uncovered during construction. Mitigation Measure CUL-2 would prevent significant impacts to undiscovered cultural resources.

Mitigation Measure CUL-1: To avoid impacts to CA-SBN-186/H, the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. Trails shall be rerouted to ensure a minimum 30 meter buffer around Loci C and E of CA-SBN-186/H.
2. Native American monitors shall be present during all construction activities within the vicinity of CA-SBN-186/H.
3. All site location and related information in Long 2010 shall remain confidential and shall only be distributed to appropriate project personnel as needed to implement this mitigation, consistent with PRC Sections 5097 et seq. and Section 800.11 of the National Historic Preservation Act.
4. Archaeological monitoring of all construction activities within the vicinity of CA-SBN-186/H shall be required and conducted by OHMVR Division archaeologists and Native American monitors.
5. Hollister Hills SVRA project managers shall contact OHMVR Division archaeologists two weeks before construction starts in the vicinity of CA-SBN-186/H and identify the extent of the project area. Division archaeologists shall flag areas for avoidance within CA-SBN-186/H prior to the start of any ground disturbing activities in that area.
6. Stewards from the California Archaeological Site Steward Program shall monitor CA-SBN-186/H to provide condition assessment that shall help project managers evaluate project mitigations.

Mitigation Measure CUL-2: Upon discovery of possible buried prehistoric or historic cultural materials (including potential Native American skeletal remains), work within 25 feet of the find shall be halted and the Hollister Hills District shall be notified. The Hollister Hills District shall retain a qualified archaeologist to review and evaluate the find. Construction work shall not begin again in the immediate vicinity of the find until the archaeological or cultural resources consultant

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<sup>1</sup> Note: The exact location of archaeological resources and sites is not subject to public disclosure where necessary to prevent harm and unauthorized disturbance of such resources and sites, consistent with PRC Sections 5097 et seq. and Section 800.11 of the National Historic Preservation Act. The location of this site is thus not included in this IS.

has been allowed to examine the cultural materials, assess their significance, and offer proposals for any additional exploratory measures deemed necessary for the further evaluation of, and/or mitigation of adverse impacts to, any potential historical resources or unique archaeological resources that have been exposed.

If the discovery is determined to be a unique archaeological or historical resource, and if avoidance of the resource is not possible, the archaeologist shall inform the Hollister Hills District of the necessary plans for treatment of the find(s) and mitigation of impacts. The treatment plan shall be designed to result in the extraction of sufficient non-redundant archaeological data to address important regional research considerations. The Hollister Hills District shall ensure the treatment program is completed. The work shall be performed by the archaeologist, and shall result in a detailed technical report that shall be filed with the California Historical Resources Information System. Construction in the immediate vicinity of the find shall not recommence until treatment has been completed.

c) There are no unique paleontological or geologic features in the project area. No impacts would occur.

d) No recorded human remains have been identified within the project site. However, such subsurface remains may exist in the project area and be disturbed during project construction, which would be a significant impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure CUL-3, described below, would ensure that potential impacts to human remains would be reduced to a less-than-significant level.

Mitigation Measure CUL-3: If human remains are encountered during project activities, work within 25 feet of the discovery shall be redirected and the County Coroner notified immediately. At the same time, an archaeologist shall be contacted to assess the situation. Project personnel shall not collect or move any human remains or associated materials. If the human remains are of Native American origin, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours of this identification. The Native American Heritage Commission shall identify a Native American Most Likely Descendent to inspect the site and provide recommendations for the proper treatment of the remains and associated grave goods.

**3.6 GEOLOGY AND SOILS**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:   |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving:   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| iv) Landslides?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.6.1 Environmental Setting**

The project area is in the Gabilan Range, which is part of the Diablo Range, located in the northern California Coast Range province. The deeply alleviated Salinas and San Juan-San Benito River Valleys form its west and east limits, respectively. Over much of its length the Gabilan Range is bordered on the east by the San Andreas Fault zone. Rising abruptly from local base level at an elevation of 200 feet, the range has elevations exceeding 3,700 feet. The surface has been deeply dissected along the sides of the range and along the north-west trending faults; however, portions of a late Tertiary or Quaternary mature erosional surface produce some gently rolling land along the crest.

The soils in the project area are made up of various clay and loamy soils often referred to as adobe. The two primary soil classifications are San Benito Clay Loam and Diablo Clay. A soils map of the project area is presented in Figure 9. Soils Map.

### 3.6.2 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.6.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions

a) The project site is located within an area that could be subjected to strong seismic ground shaking. The proposed trail project, however, would not add a structure that would substantially increase the risk of loss nor would the project substantially increase the exposure of the public to injury or death should a seismic event occur. Thus, the exposure to seismic shaking would be less than significant. The project area has not been identified as an area at risk for liquefaction. No known major landslides have been identified or mapped along the trail alignment.

b) The project could create erosion and loss of topsoil during construction activities. Many of the trails would be built on slopes, so the trail would need to be cut in with four foot dozers (SWECO) or hand crews. This construction would create temporary conditions that have erosional hazards. To minimize these risks the trail construction would include planned trail design and both temporary and permanent BMPs. A Storm Waste Water Prevention Plan would be prepared for this project and would include measures to prevent soil loss and monitor success. No unstable soil conditions would exist upon project completion. The project would follow all BMPs and guidelines established in the 2008 Soil Conservation Standard and Guidelines (DPR 2008). Some of these trail design BMPs include but are not limited to: rolling dips, water bars and climbing turns. Implementation of Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would reduce impacts related to soil erosion and loss of topsoil to a less-than-significant level.

#### Mitigation Measure GEO-1

1. Excavation of substantial amounts of soil shall not be planned to occur during the season with highest rainfall, generally November through March.
2. Temporary BMPs shall be implemented near drainage crossing until areas have reached final stabilization.
3. Excavated soil shall be used as backfill for trail structures or cast aside at a location outside of the influence of the drainage where the soil would not enter the water course.
4. Permanent BMPs in the trail layout, such as out sloping and rolling dips shall aid in drainage and soil retention.

c) The soils in the project area have been mapped by the National Resource Conservation Science (NRCS), and the areas of highest landslide risk have been identified. One 10-acre area has been identified as high landslide risk, but none of the project trails enter this zone. No significant impacts due to landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse would occur.

d) The project does not include construction of a structure on expansive soils that would create substantial risk to life or property. No impact related to expansive soils would occur as a result of this project.

e) The CXT vault toilet would be placed in soils that are adequately suited for the structure. The park has many existing CXT toilets and no soil conditions present at the project location would pose any problems. The CXT is a closed system and would not be connected to any septic or sewer system.

### 3.7 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:   |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?      | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

#### 3.7.1 Regulatory Setting

Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and affect regulation of the Earth’s temperature are known as greenhouse gases (GHG). Common GHG include carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>), methane (CH<sub>4</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O), hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF<sub>6</sub>).

GHG emissions from human activities contribute to overall GHG concentrations in the atmosphere, and climate scientists have become increasingly concerned about the effects of these emissions on global climate change. Human (anthropogenic) production of GHGs has increased steadily since pre-industrial times and atmospheric CO<sub>2</sub> concentrations have increased from a pre-industrial value of 280 ppm to 387 ppm in 2010 (NOAA 2010). The United Nations’ International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) fourth assessment report (AR4) concluded that recent regional climate changes, particularly temperature increases, are affecting many natural systems including water, ecosystems, food, coasts, and health (IPCC 2007). The AR4 concluded that most of the observed increase in global average temperature since the mid-20th century is very likely due to the observed increase in anthropogenic GHG concentrations (IPCC 2007a).

GHGs can remain in the atmosphere long after they are emitted. The potential for a GHG to absorb and trap heat in the atmosphere is considered its global warming potential (GWP). The reference gas for measuring GWP is CO<sub>2</sub>, which has a GWP of one. By comparison, CH<sub>4</sub> has a GWP of 21, which means that one molecule of CH<sub>4</sub> has 21 times the effect on global warming as one molecule of CO<sub>2</sub>. Multiplying the estimated emissions for non-CO<sub>2</sub> GHGs by their GWP determines their carbon dioxide equivalent (CO<sub>2</sub>e), which enables a project’s combined global warming potential to be expressed in terms of mass CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Table 2 below presents the GWPs of common GHGs.

In 2006, the California State Legislature adopted the California *Global Warming Solutions Act of 2006*, Assembly Bill (AB) 32, which required the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to: 1) determine 1990 statewide GHG emissions, 2) approve a 2020 statewide GHG limit that is equal to the 1990 emissions level, 3) adopt a mandatory GHG reporting rule for significant GHG emission sources, 4) adopt a Scoping Plan to achieve the 2020 statewide GHG emissions limit, and 5) adopt regulations to achieve the maximum technologically feasible and cost-effective reductions.

In 2007, CARB approved a statewide 1990 emissions level and corresponding 2020 GHG emissions limit of 427 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalents (MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e) (CARB 2007). In 2008, CARB published its *Climate Change Scoping Plan*, which projects, absent regulation or under a “business as usual” scenario, 2020 statewide GHG emissions levels of 596 million MTCO<sub>2</sub>e and identifies the numerous measures (i.e., mandatory rules and regulations and

voluntary measures) that will achieve at least 169 MMTCO<sub>2</sub>e of reductions and reduce statewide GHG emissions to 1990 levels by 2020 (ARB 2008). Also in 2007, CARB adopted its Regulation for the Mandatory Reporting of Greenhouse Gas Emissions (Title 17, CCR, Section 95100 – 95133 (17 CCR §95100 – 95133)), which requires facilities that emit greater than or equal to 25,000 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> annually to report their GHG emissions to CARB.

**Table 2. GHG Global Warming Potentials**

| Compound                               | Global Warming Potential (GWP)<br>Relative to CO <sub>2</sub> |
|--|---|
| Carbon Dioxide (CO <sub>2</sub> )      | 1   |
| Methane (CH <sub>4</sub> )             | 21  |
| Nitrous Oxide (N <sub>2</sub> O)       | 310   |
| Hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs)              | --  |
| HFC-23                                 | 11,700  |
| HFC-134a                               | 1,300   |
| HFC-152a                               | 140   |
| HCFC-22                                | 1,700   |
| Sulfur Hexafluoride (SF <sub>6</sub> ) | 23,900  |

*Source: CARB 2009.*

MBUAPCD does not have specific adopted regulations governing climate change; however, the thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants identified in the 2008 CEQA Guidelines (MBUAPCD 2008b) would also serve to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

### 3.7.2 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.7.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions

a) The proposed project would produce GHG emissions during construction from construction equipment- and vehicle trip-related fuel combustion. The proposed project would emit approximately 16,000 tons of carbon dioxide per month of construction (Urbemis 2007). During construction, truck idling time would be limited to five minutes, consistent with CARB regulations. The proposed project would result in a small increase in the number of vehicles accessing the site both during and following construction. As noted previously, the project may decrease overall trip mileage by providing closer recreation opportunities for local residents who currently must travel much farther for access to similar activities. The proposed project would not include any stationary sources of greenhouse gas emissions, and the new trails would be for non-motorized activities that do not generate greenhouse gases. Construction and operation emissions would not exceed thresholds of significance for criteria air pollutants established by the MBUAPCD 2008 CEQA Guidelines (see response b in Section 3.3 Air Quality). Therefore, this impact is less than significant.

b) The proposed trail project does not conflict with any plans, policies or regulations adopted for the purpose of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The proposed project does not conflict with greenhouse gas emission reduction plans, policies, or regulations.

**3.8 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:   |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?                                   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

**3.8.1 Environmental Setting**

The project area is located within Hollister Hills SVRA. There has been grazing activity on the property for the past 15 years done under contract for the state. Neither the current nor historic land uses of the project site involve use of hazardous materials. There are three park residences located at the lower barn just off Cienega Rd at the park boundary (Figure 3). The neighboring

properties are all privately owned ranches or low density housing. According to the State Water Resources Control Board (SWRCB) Geotracker website, there are no listed hazardous materials sites in the vicinity of the project site (SWRCB 2011).

### **3.8.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### **3.8.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

- a) The proposed project is a non-motorized trails project and would not include the routine transport or disposal of hazardous materials. Construction and maintenance of the project would require mechanized tools that would use fuel and oils to operate. These materials would be transported and used in small amounts in accordance with all applicable regulations.
- b) There is the possibility that a refueling accident could lead to the release of hazardous materials into the environment. Standard OHMVR Division practices require monthly vehicle inspections to be done to look for malfunctions and leaks. This would prevent faulty equipment from being used in the field and would minimize the risk of an accidental spill of fuels. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requires a clean-up plan to be implemented in the event of an accidental spill, and would reduce any impacts related to accidental release of hazardous materials to a less-than-significant level.
- c) No schools are located within one-quarter mile of project area.
- d) The project site is not included on any list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5.
- e) The project is not located within two miles of a public airport.
- f) The project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip
- g) The project would not affect any emergency evacuation routes or plans. No road closures or traffic delays would result from the proposed project that could delay evacuation.
- h) In the construction phase of the project, equipment has the potential to be the source of a fire ignition. The majority of the project areas are all grazed, which significantly reduces dry fuel loads and fire danger.

**3.9 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |

### 3.9.1 Environmental Setting

Hollister Hills SVRA is in the Central California Coastal Hydrologic unit as designated by the Regional Water Quality Control Board and is broken up into three different watersheds, including Left Fork Bird Creek, Upper Bird Creek, and NE Hollister Hills. NE Hollister Hills drains directly into the San Benito River while the other two drain into Bird Creek, which eventually leads into the San Benito River. Bird Creek (Figure 3) is the primary drainage for the park and flows north-east out of the park and into the San Benito River, which leads to the Pajaro and then into the Pacific Ocean. Bird creek has water for most of the year but dries up in some areas in the fall. There are also several springs within the park that feed ponds that hold water year round.

### 3.9.2 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.9.3 Discussion of Checklist Items

a) Construction of the proposed project would cause disturbances to the ground surface from earthwork, including excavation, grading, and removal of vegetation. These activities could potentially increase the amount of sediment in site runoff that flow into Bird Creek. Increased sediment could negatively impact water quality and aquatic life downstream of the project site. Mitigation Measure GEO-1 would minimize erosion and sedimentation.

Construction of the proposed project would include the use of oils and fuels for construction equipment and vehicles that are potentially harmful to aquatic resources and water quality. Accidents or improper use of these materials could release contaminants into the environment. Mitigation Measure BIO-1 includes a spill cleanup plan to prevent impacts related to accidental release of hazardous materials. Implementation of Mitigation Measure HYDRO-1, described below, would further prevent impacts to water quality during construction.

The proposed project is for non-motorized trail use, and the project would not increase impervious surface area or include the routine use of hazardous materials. The trails would be designed to minimize erosion, and erosion and sedimentation control would be ongoing as part of project maintenance. Therefore, long term impacts to water quality would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measure HYDRO-1 To avoid impacts to water quality, the OHMVR Division shall implement the following:

1. The construction staging areas shall be located a minimum of 20 feet or further where feasible from Bird Creek. The construction staging areas shall be clearly delineated. Appropriate BMPs shall be implemented to prevent release of stockpiled soil and construction material from entering any water system.
2. A Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP) and associated erosion control plan shall include BMPs to control storm water runoff and erosion. The SWPPP shall identify all pollutant and sediment sources that may affect storm water discharges from the construction site, including staging areas, and identify and implement BMPs to reduce or eliminate these pollutants and sediments during construction and post construction.

b) The proposed project would not have a significant impact on groundwater supplies. The infrastructure to obtain groundwater is already in place and the additional use of water from this project is minimal. The proposed project would not increase impervious surface area and thus would not interfere with groundwater recharge.

c & d) This proposed project would not alter the course of Bird Creek or any other creek. As stated above, trails would be designed to minimize erosion, and erosion and sedimentation control would be ongoing as part of project maintenance. In addition, the proposed project would not

increase the impervious surface area. Thus, the proposed project would not cause substantial erosion or siltation, or increase surface runoff in manner that results in flooding, on- or off-site.

e) The proposed project would not increase impervious surface area; thus the amount of runoff water would be similar to existing conditions after project completion. Therefore, the proposed project would not create or contribute to runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems. The proposed project is for non-motorized trail use, and the project would not create substantial additional sources of polluted runoff

f) The proposed project has the potential to degrade surface water quality if the construction staging areas are not located in appropriate areas and BMPs to control soil erosion and runoff or accidental release of fuels are not in place during construction. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1, GEO-1 and HYDRO-1 would reduce the potential impacts to surface water quality to less than significant.

g) The project involves the construction of trails and parking areas and does not include any housing. No impact to housing would occur from the proposed project.

h) This project would place no structure within a 100 year flood zone and would not impede or redirect any flood flows. No impacts related to flood hazards would occur from the proposed project.

i) The proposed project would not place anyone in danger from flood waters. There are no new levees or dams included in the project that could increase flood risk.

j) The project site is distant from the ocean and other large water bodies and is not at risk of inundation by a seiche or tsunami. Minor landslides could occur but the trails have been routed to avoid areas with higher slope instability and soil movement. The exposure of people or structures to potential landslides would be less than significant.

**3.10 LAND USE AND PLANNING**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Physically divide an established community?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.10.1 Regulatory Setting**

**Hollister Hills SVRA Final General Development Plan Amendment**

The Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch sections of the SVRA are under the jurisdiction of the OHMVR Division, Hollister Hills District. The primary planning document applicable to the proposed project is the GDPA (LSA Associates, Inc. et. al. 2001b), as well as the Final EIR (LSA Associates Inc. et. al. 2001a). The purpose of the GDPA is to provide guidelines for the long-term management and development of the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch acquisitions.

Specific GDPA policies that are applicable to the proposed project include the following:

- Manage recreation activities to reduce potential problems related to landslides and erosion.
- Manage recreation activities to reduce fugitive dust and comply with all pertinent requirements of the MBUAPCD.
- Plan recreation facilities to minimize degradation of the aquatic environment.
- Insure groundwater quality new facilities development.
- Plan project development to avoid areas of periodic flooding.
- Incorporate the potential for seismic activity in designing any new facilities in the Hudner and Renz Acquisitions.
- Plan and construct recreation facilities at trails to avoid excessive soil loss.
- Acknowledge soil constraints in identifying and utilizing the most appropriate onsite sewage disposal methods and technology.
- Plan and develop acquisition areas to protect special-status species.
- Develop acquisition areas to protect special-status animal species.
- Develop acquisition areas to protect active raptor nests.
- Protect designated cultural resource areas.
- Provide the fullest public use of the outdoor recreational opportunities contiguous to the Hollister Hills SVRA.
- Respect natural and cultural resources.
- Incorporate local concern.

- Manage SVRA resources and activities to minimize traffic impacts.

**San Benito County General Plan**

The San Benito County General Plan land use designation for the proposed project is Parks, and the San Benito County zoning designation for the project site is Agricultural Rangeland (AR). These designations apply to land within San Benito County that is currently used as a federal, state, or county park. The intent of the AR district is to provide for areas within the county to be used for agricultural rangeland purposes as set forth in the County General Plan. Non-motorized recreational trails are permitted as a conditional use in the AR zoning district within the County.

The land uses allowed in the Hollister Hills SVRA are dictated by the state adopted general plan (GDPA described above) and not by the San Benito County General Plan. However, the Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project is consistent with County policy (Open Space Element policy #55) which encourages the County to pursue a comprehensive space system of open space land uses and recreational facilities to provide for the low intensity trails, picnicking, informal sports, park benches, and active recreational needs of the county population.

**3.10.2 Environmental Setting**

The proposed project trails and staging areas are located within the portion of Hollister Hills SVRA identified as Legislated Buffer Zones and Buffer Areas in the GDPA (Figure 10. GDPA Land Use Map). The project site is primarily used for cattle grazing. Surrounding land uses include OHV recreation, open space, and low density residential development. Bird Creek passes through a portion of this area and is designated by the GDPA as a Resource Management Zone (Figure 10).

**3.10.3 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

**3.10.4 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a) The proposed non-motorized trails project is located within Hollister Hills SVRA in an undeveloped area. No impact to an established community would occur as a result of this project.

b) The GDPA establishes buffer areas to prevent noise from disturbing neighboring residential properties, and all of the proposed new trails would be located within these buffer areas. Although the GDPA does not specifically mention the proposed project, mountain biking, running, hiking and horseback riding are mentioned as possible future uses of the buffer areas. Thus, the proposed project is consistent with the overall intent of the GDPA Land Use Plan.

The proposed project is consistent with all of the above policies with incorporation of mitigation measures contained in this document.

In addition, the proposed project would comply with the mitigation measures contained in the GDPA Final EIR (LSA Associates Inc. et. al. 2001a), as shown in Table 3 below.

**Table 3. Project Compliance with Hollister Hills SVRA GDPA Mitigation Requirements**

| GDPA Mitigation Measure  | Project in Compliance?  |
|--|---|
| C1.1. Following major seismic activity, a reconnaissance of all off-road vehicle trails will be conducted as soon as possible to determine the extent of the damage. | Yes. The proposed trails would be inspected following major seismic activity. |

|  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>C1.2.</b> Once the extent of the damage has been assessed, a trail maintenance, repair, and restoration program will be implemented. Any existing programs of maintenance will also be supplemented to address damage from fault rupture.</p>  | <p><b>Yes.</b> If the proposed trails are damaged from major seismic activity, they would be maintained, repaired, or restored as needed.</p>  |
| <p><b>C3.1.</b> Areas where the off-road vehicle trails cross recent and older landslides will be periodically evaluated for landscaped movement, with increased monitoring in the spring, especially after a wet winter. In addition, the trails crossing both recent and older landslides will be examined after any notable seismic activity within the park.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> If the proposed trails cross areas of recent or older landslides, they would be periodically evaluated for landscape movement, particular after wet weather or notable seismic activity.</p>  |
| <p><b>C3.2.</b> When failures occur, they will be evaluated and repaired, and vegetation restored, as necessary, to insure the safety of individuals using the trails.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> If any landslides occur on the proposed new trails, they would be evaluated and repaired, and vegetation restored, as necessary for safety.</p>   |
| <p><b>E1.1.</b> Trails and other facilities will be located away from areas containing perennial grasslands and wildflower fields, where feasible. The sensitive plant communities are those at trail segments T-4, T-6, T-11, T-13-15, and T-18-T-34. These segments will be adjusted to avoid impacts to sensitive plant resources, where feasible, by the establishment of protective setbacks with a minimum of 25 feet.</p> | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed trails would be located away from perennial grasslands and wildflower fields to the extent feasible. Special-status plant species would be avoided by appropriate trail location. Surveys within the trail construction area would occur before, during, and after construction of the trails, and consideration would be taken if species of special-status plants are threatened by construction activities. Trails may be rerouted to avoid special-status species and their habitat if they are found to be potentially affected within the project area. Staging areas would be outside of critical habitat for special-status species, and surveys would be conducted before, during, and after trail and staging area construction to maintain any possible contact with special-status species and their habitats.</p> |
| <p><b>E1.2.</b> Where complete avoidance is not feasible, pre-construction surveys will be conducted in the appropriate season to flag limits of these areas. Route selection that minimizes the area impacted will be undertaken.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> See response to E1.1. above.</p>  |
| <p><b>E1.3.</b> The SVRA staff will implement an ongoing and aggressive weed abatement program to prevent the spread of exotic weeds along established trails.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would take active measures during construction to avoid the spread of weeds, such as construction equipment and boot cleaning. The proposed new trails would not interfere with the existing weed abatement program.</p>   |

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>E2.1.</b> The SVRA will comply with all regulatory requirements for fill of wetlands and waters on the project site. The requirements may include, but not be limited to, USACE permitting requirements (nationwide and individual permits) for fill in wetlands and waters under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, applicable consultation with the USFWS, 1601 streambed alteration agreement with the CDFG, and water quality certification by the RWQCB. As applicable to the permitting requirements and in cooperation with the regulatory agencies, the OHMVR Division will develop a riparian habitat functions and values affected as part of the project.</p> | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not impact wetlands or vernal pools. The proposed new trails would avoid streams and riparian habitat except for one crossing of Bird’s Creek on an existing culvert bridge. All equipment and fuel would be stored and refueled away from Bird Creek and other water sources. No regulatory permits related to wetlands or other waters would be required for the proposed new trails.</p> |
| <p><b>E2.2.</b> Creek crossings will be constructed during the dry season when water is not present.</p>  | <p><b>Yes.</b> No new creek crossings would be constructed as part of the proposed project. One of the new trails would use an existing culvert Bridge over Bird Creek.</p>   |
| <p><b>E2.3.</b> No construction will occur within 100 feet of any watercourse other than the proposed Bird Creek Staging Area and the one connector trail that crosses Bird Creek. The staging area and trail improvements within 100 feet of Bird Creek will comply with soil conservation guidelines discussed in the GDPA.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not include construction within 100 feet of any watercourse other than the connector trail over Bird’s Creek mentioned in E.2.3. This connector trail would comply with soil conservation guidelines discussed in the Draft GDPA.</p>   |
| <p><b>E2.4.</b> The 18 sections of trails, numbers T-1 through T-35 through T-39 on Figure 23, that parallel drainage features, will be aligned to avoid placing trails within or along the top of the bank of the drainages.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> None of the proposed new trails would be placed within or along the top of the bank of drainages.</p>  |
| <p><b>E3.1.</b> Trails and other facilities will be located to minimize oak tree removal. Trail construction will be located beyond the drip line of trees with a two-foot or greater diameter at breast height (dbh). The size of cuts adjacent to tree trunks will be minimized where the likelihood of cutting a major root is greatest.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not remove any oak trees. All trails would be located outside the drip line of trees with a two-foot or greater dbh. The size of cuts adjacent to tree trunks would be minimized where the likelihood of cutting a major root is greatest.</p>  |
| <p><b>E3.2.</b> Valley oak trees removed for the construction of trails and other facilities will be replaced at a 3:1 ratio. Removal could be necessary in, and near sedimentation basins, and on steep slopes. Valley oak plantings will occur in areas previously disturbed by cattle grazing, such as near sediment basin 33 on the Renz Ranch or basin 14 on the Hudner Ranch (Figure 26).</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not remove any valley oaks.</p>   |
| <p><b>E3.3.</b> The removal of blue and coast live oaks for construction of trails and other facilities will be minimized to the extent practicable. Trees that are removed will be replaced at a ratio of 3:1, which is consistent with commonly accepted regulatory practices.</p>  | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not remove any oak trees.</p>   |
| <p><b>E4.1.</b> The trail passing adjacent to the known populations of Gairdner’s yampah (segments T-14 and T-15 shown on Figure 23) will be re-routed to assure an appropriate protective setback with a minimum of 25 feet from the plants and the edge of the disturbed area. A mitigation and monitoring plan will be developed that provides for the long term survival of populations of Gairdner’s yampah on the site.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would avoid impacts to Gairdner’s yampah and other special-status plants (see response to E1.1).</p>  |
| <p><b>E4.2.</b> The weed abatement program described in mitigation measure E1.3 is also applicable.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> See response to E1.3.</p>  |

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|--|--|
| <p><b>E5.1.</b> Trail segment T-16 will be rerouted to assure an appropriate protective setback with a minimum of 25 feet from the edge of the stand of Indian Valley bush mallow to the edge of the stand of Indian Valley bush mallow to the edge of the disturbed area.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would avoid impacts to Indian Valley bush mallow and other special-status plants (see response to E1.1).</p>   |
| <p><b>E5.2.</b> Trail segment T-17 will use the alignment of the existing dirt road that was graded through this area. No further widening of vegetation removal will occur along this segment of the trail.</p>   | <p><b>N/A.</b> This mitigation measure is not directly relevant to the proposed project.</p>   |
| <p><b>E5.3.</b> A mitigation and monitoring plan will be developed that provides for the long term survival of Indian bush mallow. The weed abatement program described in mitigation measure E1.3 is also applicable.</p>   | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not conflict with the mitigation and monitoring plan for the long term survival Indian Valley bush mallow or with the weed abatement program.</p>  |
| <p><b>E6.1.</b> Mitigation measures E2.1 through E2.4 also apply.</p>  | <p><b>N/A.</b> This mitigation measure is not directly relevant to the proposed project.</p>   |
| <p><b>E6.2.</b> For new sedimentation ponds, removal of accumulated sediment deposits will be restricted to the late-summer period when the basins are both completely dry and devoid of any hydrophytic vegetation (i.e., plants growing in water or requiring very wet soils) to avoid possible effects upon tiger salamanders or red-legged frogs that may have colonized the ponds as breeding sites. In the event that water and/or hydrophytic plants are present and prior to dredging, mandatory consultation will be conducted with the USFWS and the CDFG. As required from the consultation, a qualified biologist will be in attendance to monitor dredging activities.</p>  | <p><b>Yes.</b> The proposed project would not include any new sedimentation ponds or dredging.</p>   |
| <p><b>E7.1.</b> Pre-construction surveys for active raptor nests will be conducted by a qualified wildlife biologist familiar with raptors that nest within the project area. These surveys will be conducted along all trail alignments where trees are present. Occupied raptor nests found during the pre-construction surveys will be addressed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Golden eagle, white-tailed kite, Cooper’s hawk, sharp-shinned hawk. Trail segments will be re-routed to provide a minimum of a 500-foot buffer around golden eagle nests and a minimum of 250 feet around the nests of other raptor species which is consistent with current regulatory recommendations. The appropriate buffer setback around the nest would be verified in consultation with the relevant regulatory agencies.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Yes.</b> Pre-construction surveys for active raptor nests would be conducted by a qualified wildlife biologist along all trail alignments where trees are present prior to initiation of project construction. If any active raptor nests were found, buffer areas around the nests would be established consistent with this measure and current regulatory requirements.</p> |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>E8.1.</b> Pre-construction surveys of all trail alignments in grassland and oak savannah habitat will be conducted to search for kit fox and burrowing owl dens. If potential dens are located along a trail, the trail will be realigned to allow a 50-foot buffer around the den. If realignment is not feasible, the den will be monitored for three consecutive days. If no kit fox or burrowing owl activity is detected the den will be excavated by use of hand tools. When the den is fully excavated, the hole will be backfilled and the dirt compacted in the hole. Den excavation techniques are more fully described in the <i>San Joaquin Kit Fox Survey Protocol for the Northern Range</i> (USFWS, June 1999) and <i>Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines</i> (dated October 17, 1995). These protocol will be reviewed, in consultation with the USFWS and the CDFG, prior to any den excavation. As required, a Section 10a permit from the USFWS and a 2091 agreement with CDFG will be obtained for den excavation.</p> | <p>Yes. Prior to initiation of project construction, pre-construction surveys for San Joaquin kit fox and burrowing owl would be conducted of all trail alignments in grassland and oak savannah habitat. If potential dens are located along a trail, the trail would be realigned to allow a 50-foot buffer around the den if feasible. If realignment is not feasible, the den would be monitored for three days and if no kit fox or burrowing owl is detected, excavated consistent with Mitigation Measure E8.1. Note that kit fox is not known or expected to occur within the project site.</p> |
| <p><b>E8.2.</b> If active kit fox or burrowing owl den is located, the trail will be realigned to avoid the den. Realigned trails will maintain a minimum distance of 100 feet from active kit fox dens. If a natal/pupping den is found, the USFWS would be contacted consistent with that agencies protocol. A 250-foot setback should be maintained from active burrowing owl dens.</p>   | <p>Yes. If an active kit fox or burrowing owl den is located, the trail would be realigned to avoid the den at distances consistent with Mitigation Measure E8.2.</p>   |
| <p><b>E9.1.</b> For any fences installed as part of the project, openings could be provided every 100 feet to facilitate incidental movement of deer and other large animals.</p>  | <p>Yes. Any Fences built as part of this project would include openings every 100 feet.</p>   |
| <p><b>E12.1.</b> Prior to any activities that would increase disturbances to the barn, a qualified biologist familiar with bats will conduct a survey to determine if bats are roosting in the barn. If special-status bats are found, a biologist familiar with relocating bats will be consulted regarding the best methods to protect the barn as a continuing roosting area or to remove bats or discourage the use of the barn by bats. Measures could include, but not be limited to, protecting the barn by establishing a setback and installing fencing. In the event that bat removal is recommended, sections of the walls and roof will be taken out, which would discourage bats from continuing to roost in the barn. If a maternity colony or special-status bats is found, the barn will not be disturbed until the young have dispersed.</p>  | <p>Yes. The proposed project would not disturb the barn.</p>  |
| <p><b>H2.1.</b> Fugitive dust emissions will be minimized by the application of water or non-toxic soil stabilizers to all unpaved parking areas, unpaved staging areas, and main trail access roads accessible to necessary application equipment (45-85 percent emission reduction efficiency).</p>  | <p>Yes. The proposed project would apply water or non-toxic soil stabilizers to all unpaved parking areas, unpaved staging areas, and main trail access roads.</p>  |
| <p><b>H2.2.</b> Organized events will be principally scheduled during time periods when soil moisture conditions will minimize fugitive dust emissions.</p>  | <p>Yes. No organized events associated with the proposed new trails are currently proposed. Any future organized events would comply with this measure.</p>   |
| <p><b>H4.1</b> The State Department of Parks and Recreation will request the MBUAPCD to accommodate ROG and NOx emissions from the proposed project in the 2000 AQMP.</p>  | <p>Yes. The proposed project would not conflict with the 2000 AQMP.</p>   |

Source: LSA Associates, Inc. et. al. 2001a.

c) There are no habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans applicable to the project area.

**3.11 MINERAL RESOURCES**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                              |                                     |
| a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state?                                | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.11.1 Environmental Setting**

No mineral resources of value to the region or state have been identified within the project site. Neither the San Benito County Plan nor the GDPA identifies locally important mineral resources within the buffer zones of the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch in Hollister Hills SVRA.

**3.11.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

**3.11.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a) No known mineral resources of regional or state importance have been identified within the project site. No impact to known mineral resources would occur.

b) The project site has not been classified as a locally important mineral recovery site in the San Benito County General Plan. Mineral resource extraction is not identified as permitted use in the GDPA. No impact to locally important mineral resource recovery sites would occur.

**3.12 NOISE**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project result in:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.12.1 Regulatory Setting**

**State of California**

Hollister Hills SVRA is operated as a state park for motor vehicle recreation. Planning and environmental studies have been performed to identify suitable noise standards, buffer areas, and mitigation measures for noise levels affecting neighbor of the SVRA. As a result, the GDPA designates buffer zones along the northern edge of the Renz (West) Ranch and Hudner (East) Ranch to protect adjoining properties from OHV noise (Figure 10).

According to the GDPA, noise from OHV activity is considered excessive if it exceeds the following standards for any one-hour period when measured at a residential land use located in proximity to the SVRA Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch acquisitions:

- 40 dB (A) for more than 30 minutes, L50, or
- 45 dB (A) for more than 15 minutes, L25, or
- 50 dB (A) for more than 5 minutes, L8.3, or
- 55 dB (A) for more than 1 minute, L1.7, or

60 dB (A) for any period of time, Lmax.

OHVs using the SVRA are regulated by California Vehicle Code (CVC) Section 27200. For motorcycles after 1985, CVC Section 27202 sets the noise limit at 80dBA. Hollister Hills SVRA enforces all CVC laws.

### **San Benito County**

The land uses allowed in the Hollister Hills SVRA are dictated by the state-adopted general plan and are not subject to San Benito County noise policies or ordinance.

According to the County General Plan, the maximum acceptable Community Noise Exposure CNEL (dB) level for outdoor recreation areas is 65 dB for playgrounds and parks and 70 dB for other uses such as golf courses, riding stables, water recreation, and cemeteries.

#### **3.12.2 Environmental Setting**

Noise is generally defined as unwanted sound. Sound levels are usually measured and reported in decibels (dB), a unit that describes the amplitude, or extent, of the air pressure changes which produce sound. The major noise source in Hollister Hills SVRA vicinity is the intermittent use of off-highway motor vehicles throughout the park and traffic on Cienega Road. Much of the land surrounding the project site is open foothills, which do not generate significant noise levels.

Ambient noise levels at properties adjacent to Hollister Hills SVRA is generated by birds, grazing cattle, wind, arterial traffic, residential activity, aircraft flyover, among other things. The existing ambient noise levels at adjacent residential locations are low. At Hidden Valley Estates, a low density housing development bordering Renz Ranch to the north (Figure 3), the current hourly ambient noise level is as low as 31 dBA.

Buffer zones, defined as undeveloped land between a noise source and a noise receptor, are used at Hollister Hills SVRA to create distance between OHV activity and adjacent properties to reduce the effect of OHV noise on the SVRA's neighbors. Permanent legislated buffer zones have been established on the northwestern boundary of the Renz Ranch to minimize noise levels at the Hidden Valley Estates subdivision (Figure 10). Additional buffer areas were added to the Hudner Ranch during the GDPA planning process for the GDPA (Figure 10). The proposed project trails would be located within these buffer zones.

#### **3.12.3 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

#### **3.12.4 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a) The proposed project is construction of recreational trails for non-motorized use in the SVRA buffer zones. Non-motorized recreation use of the trails would not result in substantial noise increase above existing low ambient noise levels in the SVRA buffer zones and is an acceptable use in the buffer zones as identified by the GDPA. The project would not increase ambient noise levels in excess of noise standards established at the SVRA by the GDPA over the long term.

Construction activities would cause a temporary increase in noise over the short-term. Project construction would require the use of motorized equipment within the buffer zones of the Renz Ranch and Hudner Ranch. The equipment would be limited to a trail dozer, mini excavator, and hand tools. Construction activities would generally be limited to daylight hours, between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Construction noise may result in a disturbance to other park users within Hollister Hills SVRA as well as nearby residences during periods of equipment use. Park use is generally lower during the weekdays and construction noise is highly localized to the proposed trail site. Visitor exposure to noise would be intermittent and of short-duration occurring only when visitors are passing through the immediate area of construction activity. The

nearest housing development is a minimum distance of one-half mile to the trails and is unlikely to be disturbed by project construction noise. The exposure of park visitors and residences to noise impacts would be less than significant.

b) There are no existing or proposed sources of ground vibration, such as may occur from railroad lines or blasting activity at the project site.

c) Trail use may result in a slight increase in ambient noise levels due to the diversity of the users frequenting the trails. There could be an increase in the ambient noise level of the staging areas from vehicles, users, and animals that could impact other park users as well as nearby residences. However, the increase in noise would not be substantial and would be less than existing noise levels in the project area from OHV use. The trail system and its staging areas would be closed to the public from sunset to sunrise in an effort to reduce nighttime noise levels to the surrounding neighbors. Therefore, this impact is considered to be less than significant.

d) Construction of the proposed project would result in a temporary increase in noise levels in the project area. However, as stated above, construction activities would be limited to weekday day time hours, and construction equipment would be limited to a trail dozer, mini-excavator and hand tools. Therefore, the temporary increase in noise levels would not be substantial and is considered to be less than significant.

e) The project site is not within an airport land use plan or within two miles of a public use airport and would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise.

f) The proposed project is not within the vicinity of a private airstrip and would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise.

**3.13 POPULATION AND HOUSING**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                              |                                     |
| a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>     | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.13.1 Environmental Setting**

The project is located within the buffer areas of Hollister Hills SVRA. The project land is mostly undeveloped except for cattle grazing infrastructure. There are existing park housing units within the project area and existing low density residential developments surrounding the park.

**3.13.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

**3.13.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

- a) Although the proposed project would expand recreational opportunities in the Hollister Hills SVRA buffer areas to non-motorized trail users, users of the new trails are expected to be mostly members of the existing population living or working in the project area. The proposed project would not provide any new houses, schools, businesses, roads, or utilities and is not expected to attract new people to live or work in the area. Therefore, while the proposed project could cause an increase in the number of people using the Hollister Hills SVRA, it would not cause a substantial increase in population in the project area.
- b) The proposed project would not displace any housing or necessitate the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.
- c) The project would not displace any people or require construction of replacement housing.

**3.14 PUBLIC SERVICES**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| 1) Fire protection?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 2) Police protection?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 3) Schools?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4) Parks?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| 5) Other public facilities?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.14.1 Environmental Setting**

State Park Rangers are the primary providers of emergency and law enforcement services within Hollister Hills SVRA. Fire protection services are provided by CAL Fire; the closest CAL Fire Station is located in the town of Hollister on Fairview Road. Additional law enforcement and medical services are provided by San Benito County Sheriffs and EMTs.

**3.14.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

**3.14.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a1&2) The proposed project would increase the number of trail users in Hollister Hills SVRA to include hikers, runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians. This increase in trail use would cause a slight increase in demand for fire and police protection in the event of a fire, medical emergency, or crime. Fire danger in the Hollister Hills SVRA is minimized by reduction of fuel loads through grazing. In addition, Hollister Hills SVRA maintains relatively high staff levels compared to other parks. State Park Rangers and CAL Fire have the existing capacity to accommodate this minor increase in demand without affecting service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives. Therefore, impacts to fire and police protection would be less than significant.

a3) The proposed project is not expected to cause population growth or result in an increase in school enrolment.

a4) The proposed project would expand park recreational opportunities in the area. There are currently very few easily accessible hiking, mountain bike, and equestrian trails available in San

Benito County. This project would have a positive impact on the availability to outdoor recreation in the project area.

a5) The proposed project would not impact any other public facilities.

**3.15 RECREATION**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?                        | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>   | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**3.15.1 Environmental Setting**

Hollister Hills SVRA is a 6,610-acre OHV vehicle park operated by the OHMVR Division. The park offers sustainable off road recreation to over 250,000 visitors a year. The park operates 4 different off road ranches with different use types. The Lower and Renz (West) Ranch offer trails and tracks for dirt bikes and ATVs. Then there is the Upper Ranch that provides off road trails and obstacle courses for 4x4 vehicles. Lastly there is the Hunder (West) Ranch which is open to 4x4 use by special permission only. The park currently offers a small trail system in the nature area of the park where non-motorized uses of hiking and mountain biking are allowed.

**3.15.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

**3.15.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a) This project would increase the use of the Hollister Hills SVRA but not by a significant amount. The OHV section of the park gets over two hundred thousand visitors a year already and this expansion would likely only increase attendance by a few hundred a month. In addition, the new users would be concentrated on the new non-motorized use trails; thus the project would not cause in an increase in use of existing off-road vehicle trails within the Hollister Hills SVRA. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause the physical deterioration of facilities in the Hollister Hills SVRA.

b) The proposed project does include the construction and expansion of recreational facilities, which could have an adverse physical effect on the environment. With implementation of the Hollister Hills SVRA established BMPs and the mitigation measures contained in this document, all impacts would be less than significant.

**3.16 TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system, taking into account all modes of transportation including mass transit and non-motorized travel and relevant components of the circulation system, including but not limited to intersections, streets, highways and freeways, pedestrian and bicycle paths, and mass transit? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Conflict with an applicable congestion management program, including, but not limited to level of service standards and travel demand measures, or other standards established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| e) Result in inadequate emergency access?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| f) Conflict with adopted policies, plans or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities, or otherwise decrease the performance or safety of such facilities?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.16.1 Environmental Setting**

Access to Hollister Hills SVRA is currently provided via State Routes 25 and 156. State Route 25 is a two-lane highway that extends from U.S. 101 in the north to Pinnacles National monument in south San Benito County. State Route 156 is an east-west highway between State Route 1 along the coast, and State Route 152, that connects Santa Clara and San Joaquin Valleys. The two lane State Route 156 bypass allows for traffic to travel north-south, without passing through downtown Hollister. Local access in the vicinity of the SVRA is provided via Union Road (a two lane east-west collector that extends through rolling terrain between State Route 156 and State Route 25), San Benito Street, and Cienega Road (an unimproved two lane road that provides

direct access to the SVRA). There is no public transit to the park. Cienega Road is often used by bicyclists but there is no dedicated bike line.

### 3.16.2 Significance Criteria

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.16.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions

a & b) The proposed project would result in approximately 15 new weekday and 50 new weekend vehicle trips. Visitor trips would be dispersed throughout the day and would not occur at levels which could adversely impact level of service operating standards on the local road network. The increased visitation to Hollister Hills SVRA resulting from the proposed trails project would not substantially add to daily traffic volumes of local county or city roads and therefore would not conflict with any county or city congestion management program. Visitation and use of the non-motorized trails and staging areas would be limited based on the availability of parking at each staging area and parking would not be available on the county access road. The small number of users generated from this project would not significantly increase the park's daily use levels.

There would be a small increase in traffic during construction of the trails and staging areas. The additional vehicle trips required for the trail crew, contractors, and delivery of materials would not substantially increase congestion or lower levels of service during the temporary construction period. Therefore, traffic increases during construction would not conflict with an applicable plan, ordinance or policy establishing measures of effectiveness for the performance of the circulation system during construction.

c) The proposed project is not near a private or public airport and would not affect air traffic patterns.

d) The proposed project would include an entrance road to the staging areas and parking facilities in order to reduce traffic delays on Cienega Road. The entrance roads to each staging area would ensure proper line of sight guidelines of a minimum of 250 feet in either direction. Entrance roads would be cleared and unobstructed such that vehicles approaching on Cienega Road could see them as they approach. Therefore, the proposed project would not increase hazards due to a design feature or incompatible uses.

e) The proposed project would provide sufficient turnaround radius for emergency vehicles at the new staging areas. The proposed project would also aid emergency access with additional road pullouts and trails. The project would not increase traffic congestion that could delay emergency vehicles. Therefore, the proposed project would not result in inadequate emergency access.

f) The proposed project would provide new recreational opportunities to non-motorized trail users including hikers, runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians. In addition, the proposed project would not interfere with existing pedestrian, bicyclist, and public transit facilities. Therefore, the proposed project would not conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs regarding public transit, bicycle, or pedestrian facilities or decrease the performance of such facilities.

**3.17 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS**

|   | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                           |
|---|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Would the project:  |                                |                                       |                                     |                                     |
| a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?                            | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?                                     | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/>            |
| g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input type="checkbox"/>            | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**3.17.1 Environmental Setting**

The Hollister Hills SVRA is served by an internal well-fed water system. This project would use the park's existing water system, which and would not need to be expanded as a result of this project. No sewage or storm drain system exists within the park. Trash facilities in the park are serviced by park staff and hauled away to local landfills in compliance with all regulations.

**3.17.2 Significance Criteria**

The impact questions above constitute the significance criteria for this environmental topic.

### 3.17.3 Discussion of Checklist Questions

- a) The proposed project would not require wastewater treatment. The precast CXT toilets would not be connected to a sewer system; they would be pumped out as needed. Therefore, the proposed project would not exceed wastewater treatment requirements.
- b) The proposed project would not provide potable water or generate wastewater. Therefore, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater facilities or the expansion of existing facilities.
- c) The proposed project would not result in an increase in impervious surface area, and therefore would not increase the amount of stormwater runoff in the project area. Stormwater runoff from the project site would continue to percolate into the ground or drain into Bird Creek after project completion, as under existing conditions. No storm water drainage facilities would be constructed or expanded to accommodate the proposed project.
- d) The proposed project would not provide potable water or otherwise increase demand for water supplies.
- e) See response a) above.
- f) A small amount of construction waste would be generated over the short-term, and a small increase in waste from new users of the non-motorized trails would be generated over the long term. Trash receptacles would be provided at staging areas. The increase in solid waste generation would not be substantial and would not exceed the capacity of the existing landfill that serves the project site.
- g) The project would comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

**3.18 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

|  | Potentially Significant Impact | Less Than Significant with Mitigation | Less Than Significant Impact        | No Impact                |
|--|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?   | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?  | <input type="checkbox"/>       | <input type="checkbox"/>              | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

**3.18.1 Discussion of Checklist Questions**

a) The project was evaluated for the potential effects on the quality of the environment: fish, wildlife, plant communities, and historic resources. As discussed in the individual sections, this project is located in areas that contain sensitive and rare species. Full implementation of BMPs and mitigation measures contained in this document would ensure that potential impacts to natural resources would be less than significant. This project is consistent with the GDPA and associated EIR (see Section 3.10, Land Use and Planning).

b) The proposed project would not have any impacts that are individually limited and cumulatively considerable. All potential impacts are either less than significant, or less than significant with incorporation of the mitigation measures contained in this document.

c) No potentially significant environmental effects have been identified that would have direct or indirect adverse effects on human beings.

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## **5.0 REPORT PREPARATION**

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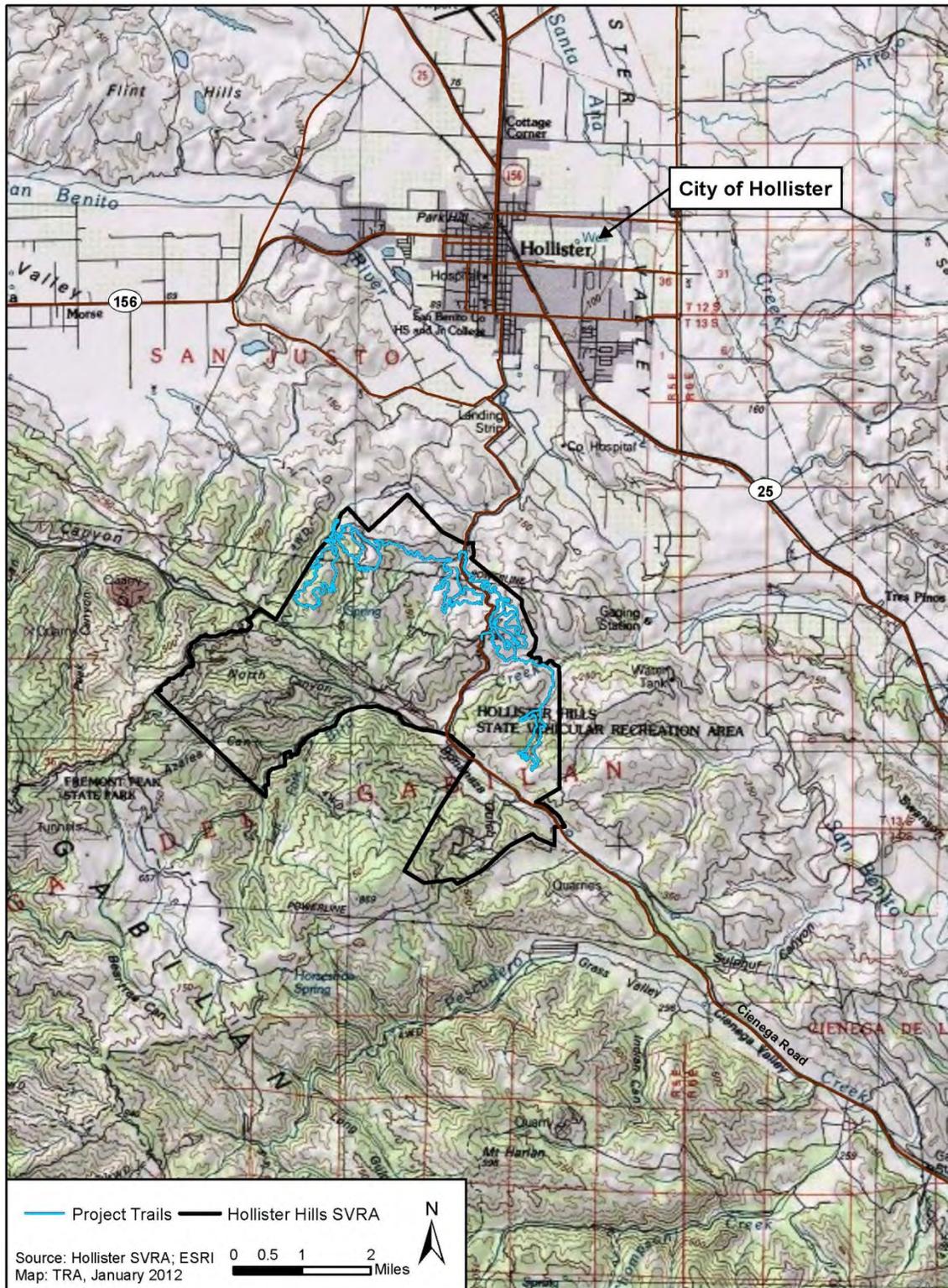
This Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared by Staff at the DPR, Hollister Hills District & OHMVR Division (listed below) with the assistance of TRA Environmental Sciences, Inc., Menlo Park, CA.

Wesley Gray, Environmental Scientist  
Jennifer Grady, Environmental Services Intern  
Kelly Bougher, Environmental Services Intern  
Matthew Allen, District Services Manager  
Kelly Long, Associate State Archaeologist  
Dan Dungy, Retired Annuitant

Figure 1. Regional Location



Figure 2. Hollister Hills SVRA



**Figure 3. Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project**

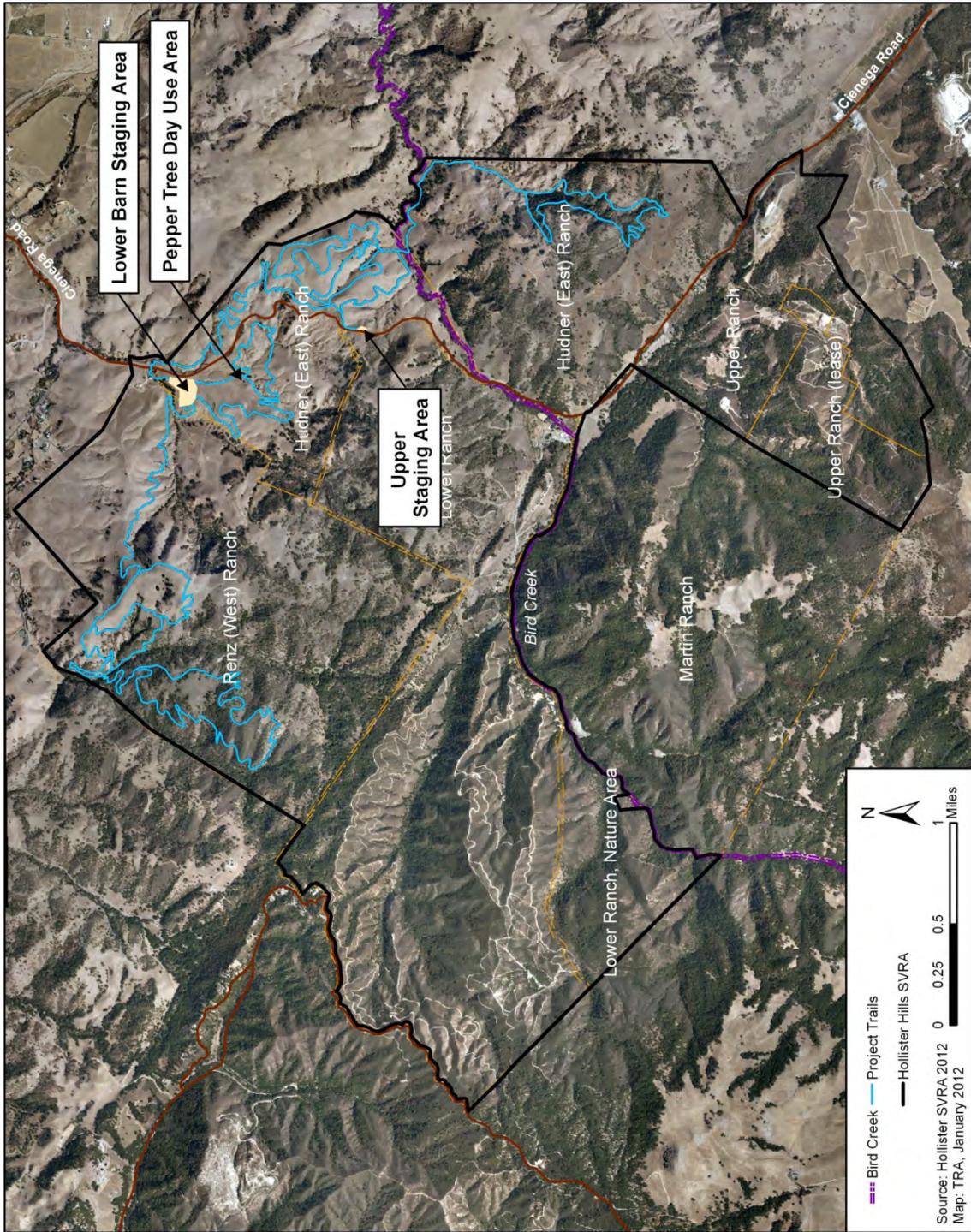


Figure 4. Trail Cross Section

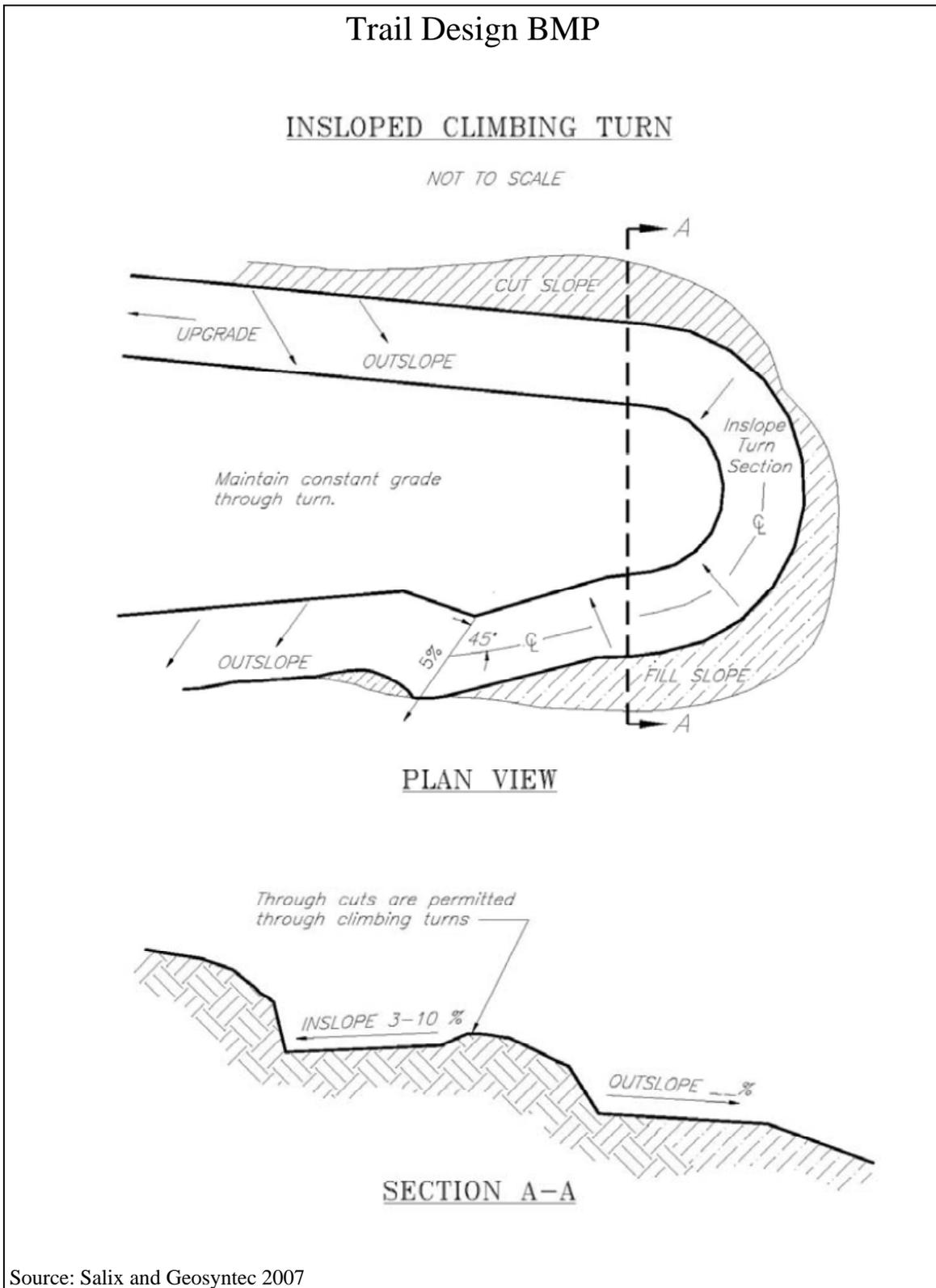
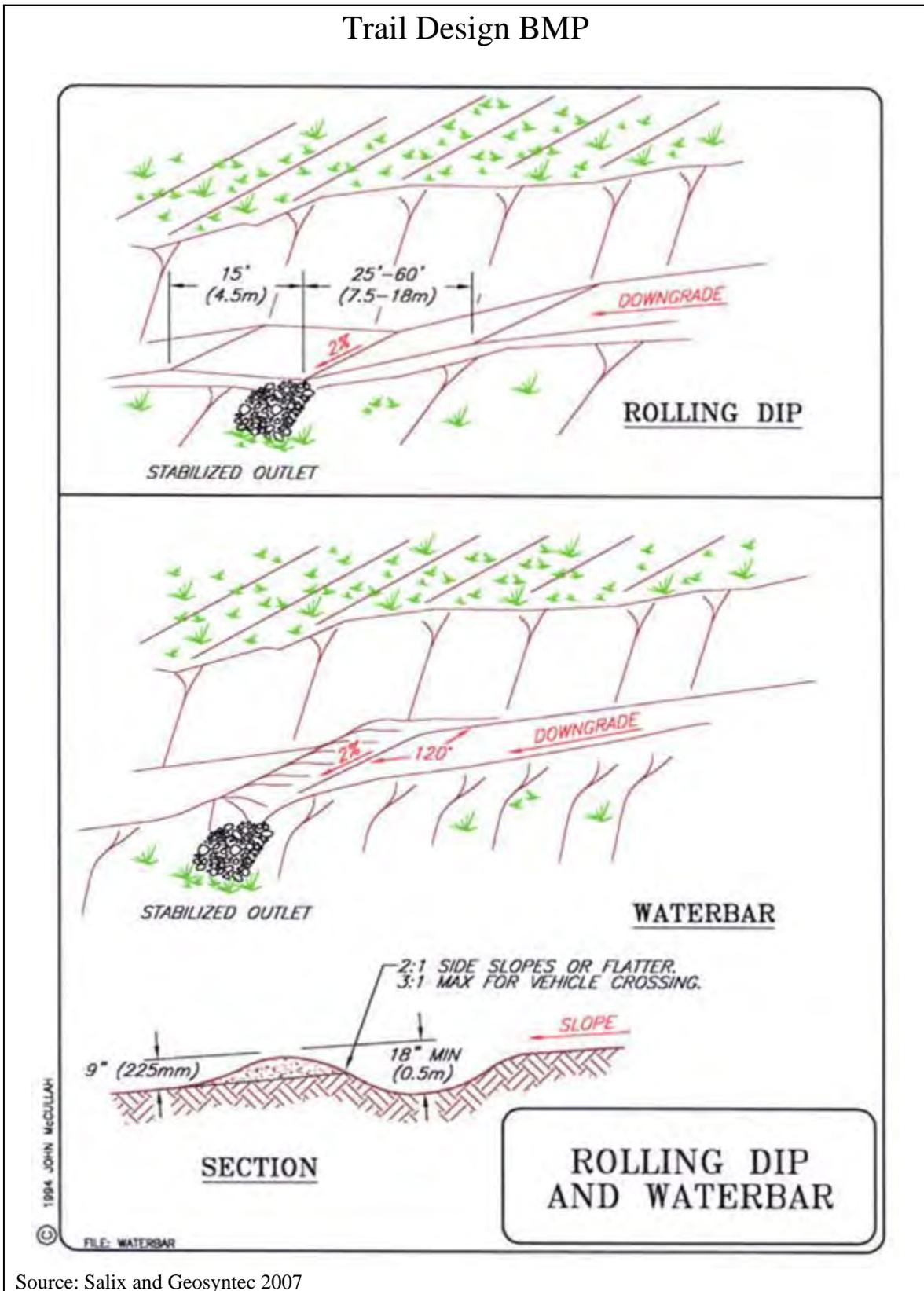


Figure 5. Trail Rolling Dip and Water Bar



Source: Salix and Geosyntec 2007

**Figure 6. Vegetation Map**

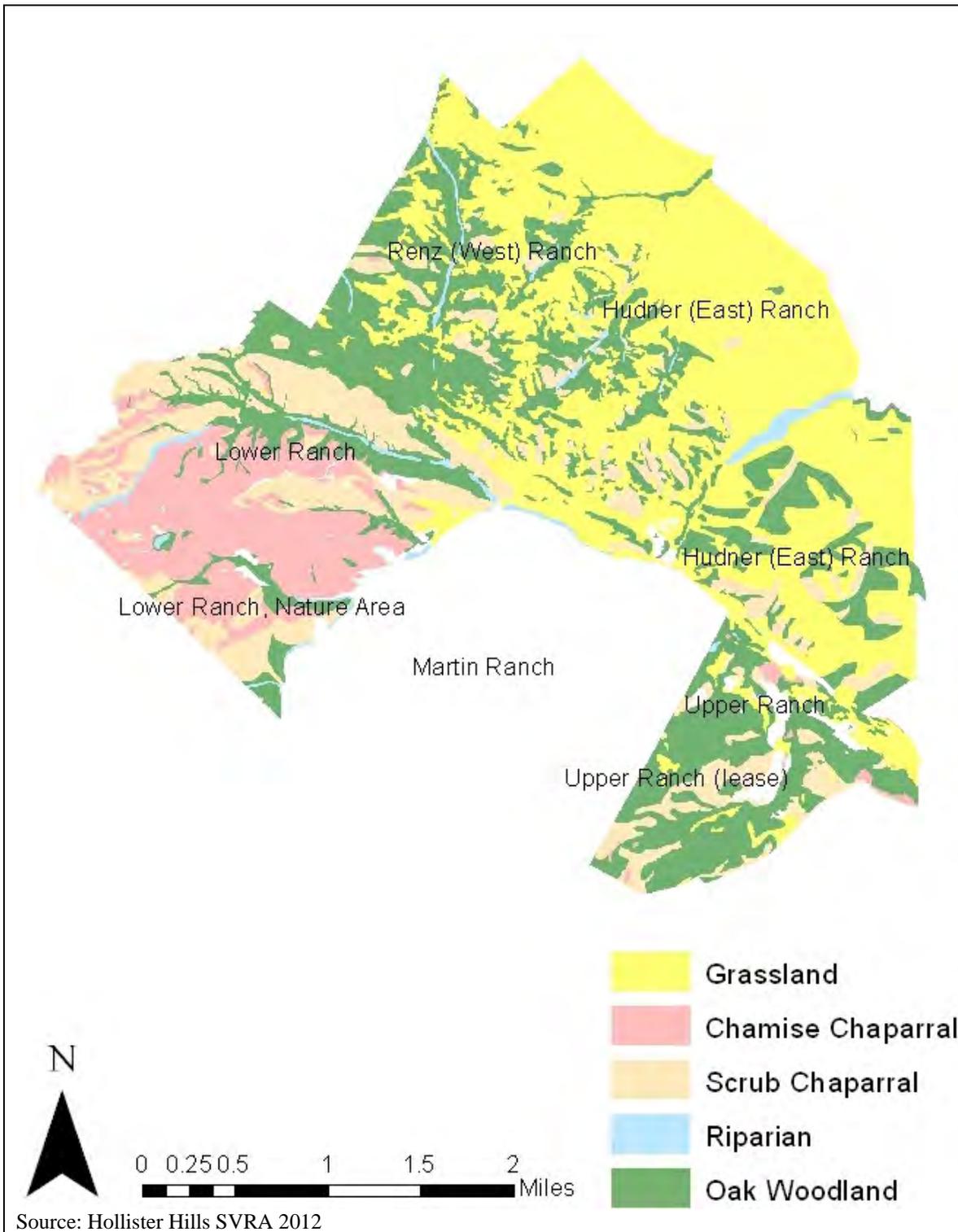
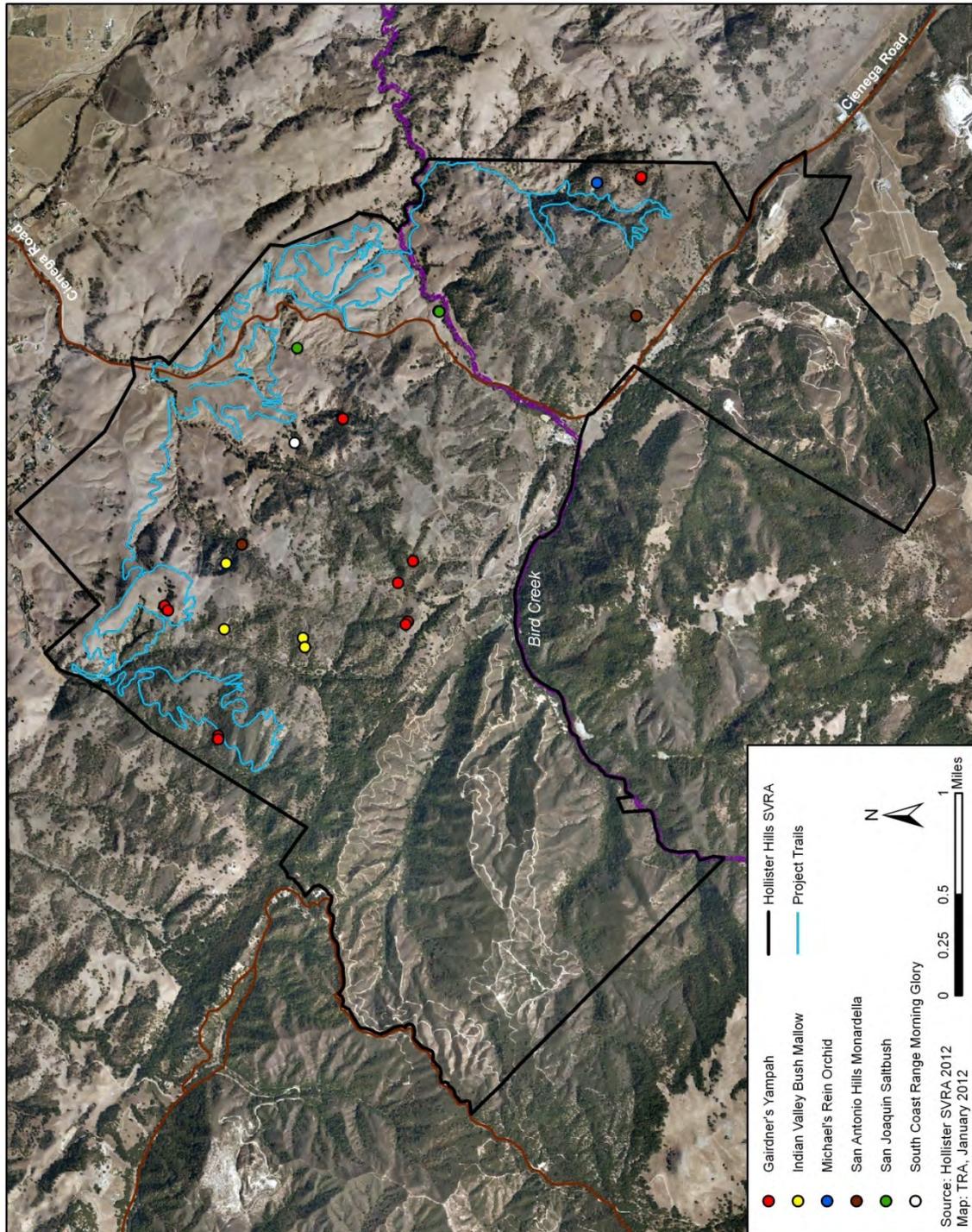
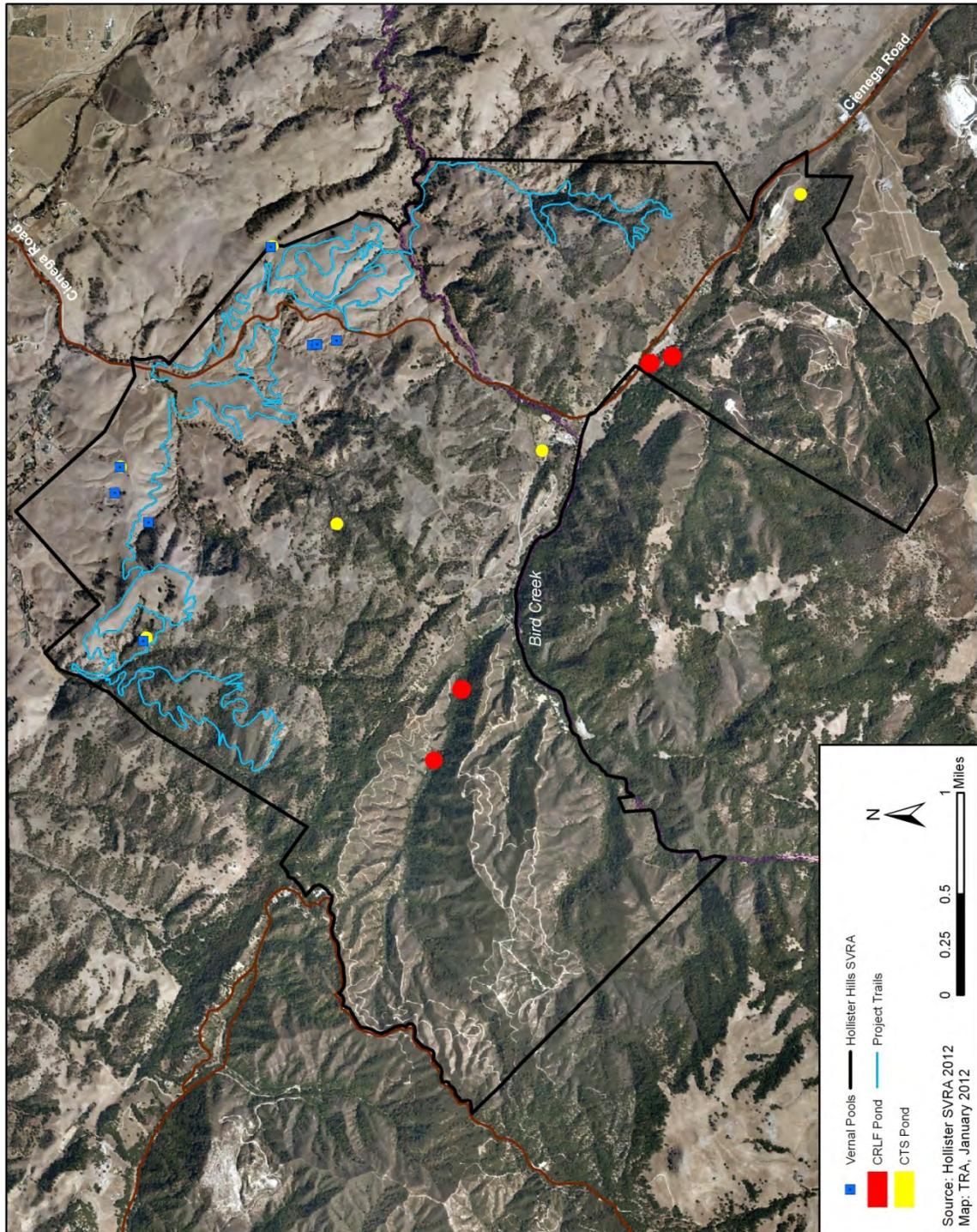


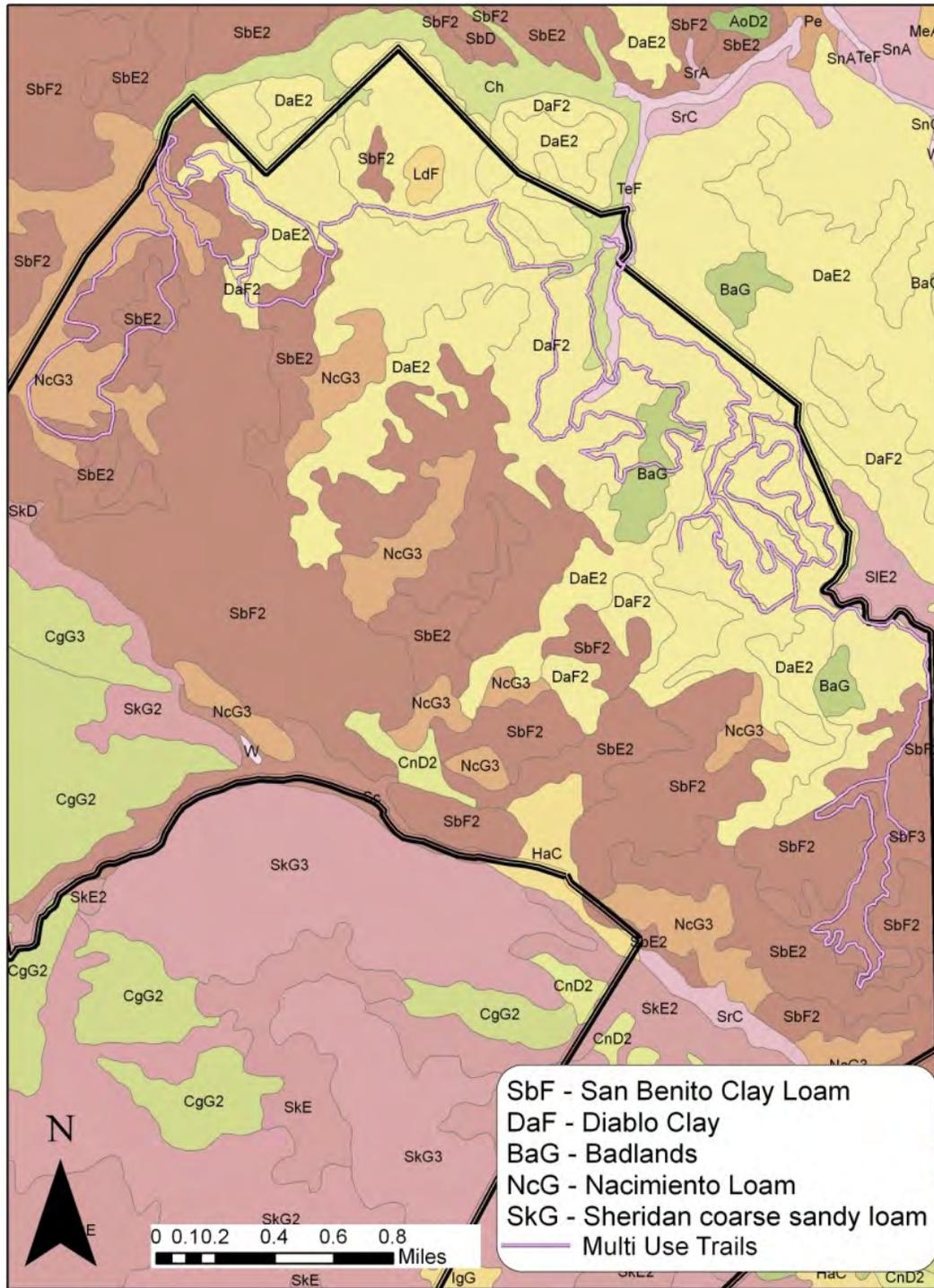
Figure 7. Special-Status Plant Occurrences



**Figure 8. Special-Status Wildlife Occurrences**



**Figure 9. Soils Map**



Source: Hollister Hills SVRA 2012

**Figure 10. GDPA Land Use Map**



**Figure 11. Photos of Hollister Hills SVRA, Pepper Tree Area**



**Photo 1. Overview of Pepper Tree Area**



**Photo 2. Pepper Tree Area**

**Figure 12. Photos of Hollister Hills SVRA, Hudner (East) Ranch**



**Photo 1. Goat and sheep grazing on property**



**Photo 2. View of Project Area from east side of Hudner Ranch**

**Hollister Hills SVRA  
Non-Motorized Buffer Trails Project IS/MND**

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**APPENDIX A**

**SPECIAL-STATUS SPECIES LIST  
TRA Environmental Sciences, Inc.**

## Appendix A. Special-status Species with the Potential to Occur in the Project Area

| Species Name  | Status                             | General Habitat Description  | Potential for Species to Occur/Rationale  |
|---|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Plants</b>   |                                    |  |   |
| alkali milk-vetch<br>( <i>Astragalus tener</i> )                                    | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Vernal pools, seasonal wetlands (alkaline), grassland; blooms March-June.  | Low Potential. Suitable habitat present, but species not observed in surveys.   |
| Coast Range morning-glory<br>( <i>Calystegia collina</i> ssp. <i>venusta</i> )      | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 4  | Open grassy areas often in serpentine soil; blooms May-June.   | Species Present. Species observed in project area, suitable habitat present.  |
| Gairdner's yampah<br>( <i>Perideridia gairdneri</i> ssp. <i>gairdneri</i> )         | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 4  | Seasonal wetlands, heavy clay soils; blooms June-October.  | Species Present. Species observed in project area, suitable habitat present.  |
| hairless popcorn flower<br>( <i>Plagiobothrys glaber</i> )                          | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1A | Wet alkaline soils in valleys and coastal marshes; blooms April-May.   | Low Potential. Species not observed in project vicinity, closest known occurrence at Hollister Airport.                                   |
| Hoover's button celery<br>( <i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>hooveri</i> )       | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 4  | Vernal pools, lagunas; blooms in July.   | Low Potential. Species not observed and habitat rare.   |
| Indian Valley bush mallow<br>( <i>Malacothamnus aboriginum</i> )                    | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Rocky slopes in cismontane woodland; blooms April-October.   | Species Present. Species observed in project area, suitable habitat present.  |
| Michael's rein orchid<br>( <i>Piperia michaelii</i> )                               | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 4  | Coastal bluff scrub, closed-cone coniferous forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest; blooms April-August. | Species Present. Species observed in project area, suitable habitat present.  |
| Pinnacles buckwheat<br>( <i>Eriogonum nortonii</i> )                                | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Chaparral and valley foothill grassland in granitic sand; blooms May-June.   | Moderate Potential. Occurs in Hollister Hills SVRA south of San Andreas Fault; not observed in the project area.                          |
| round-leaved filaree<br>( <i>California macrophylla</i> )                           | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, on clay soils; blooms March-May.   | Low Potential. Suitable habitat present but species not known from project vicinity; closest known occurrence is the San Justo Reservoir. |
| saline clover<br>( <i>Trifolium hydrophilum</i> )                                   | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Marshes and swamps, valley and foothill grassland, vernal pools. Mesic, alkaline sites; blooms April-June.   | Low Potential. Not observed in project vicinity and closest recorded occurrence in Hollister is from 1897.                                |
| San Antonio hills monardella<br>( <i>Monardella antonina</i> ssp. <i>antonina</i> ) | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 3  | Chaparral, cismontane woodland; blooms June-August.  | Species Present. Species observed in project area, suitable habitat present.  |
| San Benito spineflower<br>( <i>Chorizanthe biloba</i> var. <i>immemora</i> )        | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Chaparral woodland; blooms May-September.  | Low Potential. Suitable habitat present, but species not observed in project vicinity.  |
| San Joaquin spearscale<br>( <i>Atriplex joaquiniana</i> )                           | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CNPS: 1B | Alkaline soils of valley and foothill grasslands; blooms April-September.  | Species Present. Species observed in project area, suitable habitat present.  |

| Species Name   | Status                               | General Habitat Description  | Potential for Species to Occur/Rationale   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>Invertebrates</b>   |                                      |  |  |
| vernal pool fairy shrimp<br>( <i>Branchinecta lynchi</i> )         | U.S.: FT<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: None   | Endemic to 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. | Low Potential. Report of unidentified fairy shrimp in one stock pond on Renz Ranch, but species is not known from project area.  |
| <b>Amphibians/reptiles</b>   |                                      |  |  |
| Coast horned lizard<br>( <i>Phrynosoma coronatum frontale</i> )    | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Areas with an exposed gravelly-sandy substrate containing scattered shrubs, clearings in riparian woodlands, dry uniform chamise chaparral, annual grassland with scattered perennial seepweed ( <i>Suaeda fruticosa</i> ), and saltbush.          | High Potential. Observed at Hollister Hills SVRA. Suitable habitat in chaparral in the project area.   |
| California red-legged frog<br>( <i>Rana draytonii</i> )            | U.S.: FT<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC   | 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.  | Species Present. This species is known to be present in aquatic habitats in the project area.  |
| California tiger salamander<br>( <i>Ambystoma californiense</i> )  | U.S.: FT<br>CA: ST<br>CDFG: CSSC     | Need underground refuges, especially ground squirrel burrows and vernal pools or other seasonal water sources for breeding.  | Species Present. Breeds in several sediment basins and stock ponds in the project vicinity. Grassland, oak/savannah provides suitable upland habitat.  |
| San Joaquin whipsnake<br>( <i>Masticophis flagellum ruddocki</i> ) | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Open, dry habitat with little or no tree cover. Found in valley grassland and saltbrush scrub in the San Joaquin Valley. Needs animal burrows for refuge and oviposition sites.  | Low Potential. Suitable habitat present but species not known from project vicinity; the closest known occurrence is in the San Benito River bed, approximately 3 miles northwest of the project site. |
| western pond turtle ( <i>Emys marmorata</i> )                      | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation. Need basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0.5 km from water for egg laying. | Low Potential. Suitable habitat in sediment and stock ponds in project site, but there are no records of its occurrence at or near the project site.   |
| western spadefoot ( <i>Spea hammondi</i> )                         | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Occurs primarily in grassland habitats, but can be found in valley foothill hardwood woodlands. Vernal pools are essential for breeding and egg laying.  | Low Potential. Stockponds suitable breeding habitat, but species is not known from project vicinity.   |
| <b>Birds</b>   |                                      |  |  |

| Species Name   | Status                               | General Habitat Description  | Potential for Species to Occur/Rationale   |
|--|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| American peregrine falcon ( <i>Falco peregrines anatum</i> ) | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CFP  | Near wetlands, lakes, rivers or other water; on cliffs, banks, dunes, mounds and human-made structures. Nest consists of a scrape or a depression on a ledge in an open site.  | Moderate Potential. Observed over Renz property in 1988. Suitable foraging habitat in project area.                    |
| burrowing owl ( <i>Athene cucularia</i> )                    | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts and scrublands characterized by low growing vegetation. Subterranean nester, dependent on burrowing animals, most notably the California ground squirrel.                                | Moderate Potential. Observed in Hollister Hills SVRA in 1987. Suitable nesting habitat in grasslands.                  |
| golden eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )                    | U.S.: BEPA<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CFP  | Rolling foothills, mountain areas, sage-juniper flats and deserts. Cliff-walled canyons provide nesting habitat in most parts of range; also, large trees in open areas.   | Species Present. Forages in the project area. Potential for nesting in the more remote areas.                          |
| loggerhead shrike ( <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> )             | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Broken woodlands, savannah, pinyon-juniper, Joshua tree, riparian woodlands, desert oases, scrub and washes. Prefers open country for hunting, with perches for scanning, and fairly dense shrubs and brush for nesting.                   | Species Present. Occurs in project area.   |
| Northern harrier ( <i>Circus cyaneus</i> )                   | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Coastal salt and freshwater marsh. Nests and forages in grasslands, from salt grass in desert sink to mountain cienagas. Nests on ground in shrubby vegetation, usually at marsh edge; nest built of a large mound of sticks in wet areas. | Species Present. Observed foraging in project area. Marginal nesting habitat in grasslands.                            |
| tri-colored blackbird ( <i>Agelaius tricolor</i> )           | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Highly colonial species, most numerous in the Central Valley and vicinity, largely endemic to California. Requires open water, protected nesting substrate, and foraging area with insect prey within a few kilometers of the colony.      | Low Potential. Adults observed in Hollister Hills SVRA in 1987. No nesting habitat available.                          |
| white-tailed kite ( <i>Elanus leucurus</i> )                 | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CFP  | Rolling foothills and valley margins with scattered oaks and river bottomlands or marshes next to deciduous woodland. Open grasslands, meadows or marshes for foraging close to isolated, dense-topped trees for nesting and perching.     | Species Present. Observed nesting in project area. Suitable nesting habitat present.                                   |
| yellow-breasted chat ( <i>Icteria virens</i> )               | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Summer resident, inhabits riparian thickets of willows and other brushy tangles near watercourses. Nests in low, dense riparian, consisting of willow, blackberry,   | Moderate Potential. Observed in riparian corridors on Hollister Hills SVRA in 1988. Possible nesting habitat in larger |

| Species Name   | Status                               | General Habitat Description   | Potential for Species to Occur/Rationale  |
|--|--------------------------------------|---|---|
|  |                                      | wild grape; forages and nests within 10 feet of the ground.   | stands of riparian forest in Bird Creek.  |
| yellow warbler<br>( <i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i> )        | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Riparian plant association, prefers willows, cottonwoods, aspens, sycamores and alders for nesting and foraging. Also nests in montane shrubbery in open conifer forests.   | Moderate Potential. Observed in riparian corridors on Hollister Hills SVRA in 1988. Possible nesting habitat in larger stands of riparian forest in Bird Creek. |
| <b>Mammals</b>   |                                      |   |   |
| American badger<br>( <i>Taxidea taxus</i> )                      | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | 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.       | Low Potential. Suitable habitat present but this species is not known to occur in the project area.   |
| California mastiff bat<br>( <i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> ) | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Many open semi-arid to arid habitats, including conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, grasslands, chaparral, etc. Roosts in crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees and tunnels.                         | Low Potential. Suitable roosting habitat exists in the project area, but there are no records of this species in the project vicinity.                          |
| pallid bat ( <i>Antrozous pallidus</i> )                         | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Deserts, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting.  | Low Potential. Suitable roosting habitat exists in the project site, but this species has not been observed in the project vicinity.                            |
| western red bat ( <i>Lasiurus blossevilli</i> )                  | U.S.: None<br>CA: None<br>CDFG: CSSC | Roosts primarily in trees 2-40 feet above ground, from sea level up through mixed conifer forests. Prefers habitat edges and mosaics with trees that are protected from above and open below with open areas for foraging | Low Potential. Suitable habitat is present and the closest known occurrence is in the vicinity of Hollister.  |
| San Joaquin kit fox<br>( <i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i> )         | U.S.: FE<br>CA: ST<br>CDFG: None     | Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Need loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and suitable prey base.   | Low Potential. Observed approximately 3 miles to the northwest in 1992. Grassland-savannah provides potential habitat.  |

*Federal Status (U.S.):* Federal Endangered (FE); Federal Threatened (FT), Bald Eagle Protection Act (BEPA)

*State Status (CA):* State Endangered (SE); State Threatened (ST)

*California Native Plant Society Status (CNPS):* Plants Presumed Extinct in California (1A); Plants Rare, Threatened and Endangered in California and Elsewhere (1B); Plants Rare, Threatened and Endangered in California, but More Common Elsewhere (2); Plants for Which More Information is Needed (3); Plants of Limited Distribution (4)

*California Department of Fish and Game Status (CDFG):* California Fully Protected Species (CFP), California Species of Special Concern (CSSC)

*Sources:* California Natural Diversity Database, 2011; California Native Plant Society Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants, 2011; Hollister Hills SVRA Draft Environmental Impact Report for the Hudner and Renz Acquisitions Draft Revised General Development Plan Amendment, 1999; botanical surveys, 2010.