

MEMORANDUM

DATE: November 11, 2020

TO: City of Colton

FROM: Claudia Bauer, MS, LSA Biologist

SUBJECT: Biological Resources Technical Memorandum for the Dhillon Truck and Trailer Repair Project (Project Case No. DAP-001-654) in the City of Colton (LSA Project Number CLT1802.04)

It is LSA's understanding that the City of Colton (City) has requested a biological resources technical memorandum to support a decision to use the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) infill exemption (Guidelines §15332) for the planned Dhillon Truck and Trailer Repair Project (project). The project site is associated with Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs) 0276-121-09 and 0276-121-17, and located at 201 S. Mission Street in the City of Colton, San Bernardino County, California. The proposed project is for the development of a 5,000 square foot semi-truck repair shop and 55,451 square feet of semi-truck/trailer storage.

METHODS

A literature review was conducted to assist in determining the existence or potential occurrence of special-status plant and animal species within the project site and in the project vicinity. A records search of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's (CDFW) Natural Diversity Data Base application *Rarefind 5* online edition (CDFW, 2020) and California Native Plant Society's *Online Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (CNPS, v8-03) for the *San Bernardino South, California*, USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle and relevant neighboring quadrangles was conducted on November 5, 2020. Soil information was taken from electronic data provided by Soil Data Mart (Natural Resource Conservation Service [NRCS] 2020). Current and historical aerial photographs were also reviewed in Google Earth (Google Earth 2020) and HistoricAerials.com (NETROnline 2020).

The site assessment was conducted on November 7, 2020, by LSA Biologist Denise Woodard. Notes were made on general site conditions, the vegetation, potential jurisdictional waters, wildlife species observed, and the suitability of habitat for various special-status species. Plant and animal species observed during the field survey were recorded.

EXISTING SETTING

The project site is a vacant site bordered by industrial and commercial development, including Dewey Pest Control and Interstate 10 (I-10) to the north, Mt Vernon Avenue and E. Mission Street to the south, a commercial quarry and South Vernon Court to the east, and on/off ramps to west

bound I-10 to the west. Multiple Southern California Edison (SCE) high voltage transmission lines traverse the site from north to south. An SCE lattice steel transmission tower and two wooden transmission poles exist on the project site. The project site is flat with an elevation of approximately 960 feet above mean sea level. Soils within the project area are mapped by the NRCS as Tujunga gravelly loamy sand, 0 to 9 percent slopes (TvC). Soils observed on the site appeared relatively consistent with this designation, although highly disturbed due to current and past land uses practices of routine disking for weed abatement purposes.

RESULTS

Vegetation within the project site is not associated with any natural vegetation communities (Holland 1986). Rather, the project site is highly disturbed and largely unvegetated with only sparse ruderal vegetation present onsite. The dominant plant species observed was golden crownbeard (*Verbesina encelioides*). Other species observed include annual burweed (*Ambrosia acanthicarpa*), shortpod mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), castor bean (*Ricinus communis*), common sunflower (*Helianthus annuus*), and telegraph weed (*Heterotheca grandiflora*). A mature tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*) was noted near the center of the project site. The western honeybee (*Apis mellifera*) was the only animal species observed onsite.

A retaining wall supports the I-10 onramp adjacent to the project site's western boundary. Review of historical aerial imagery determined the retaining wall was constructed in support of the widening of the I-10 onramp from one lane to two lanes in 2013. A storm drain outlet with a diameter of approximately 18 inches exists in the retaining wall and a riprapped trapezoidal dirt swale is present along the base of the retaining wall, paralleling the project site's western boundary and portion of the project site's southern boundary. The retaining wall, storm drain, and riprapped swale are located outside of the project site boundary. Additionally, discharge from the storm drain does not enter the project site, as it appears any storm water conveyed by the storm drain is contained within the riprapped swale, where the majority percolates into the soils and the rest evaporates. Subsequently, no drainage features, ponded areas, or riparian habitat potentially subject to the regulatory authority of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA), the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) under Section 401 of the CWA, or the CDFW under Sections 1600 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code were found onsite. Moreover, the *San Bernardino South, California* USGS quadrangle does not depict any drainages or streams within the project site.

The project site does not contain suitable habitat for species protected by the federal Endangered Species Act, the California Endangered Species Act, or the Native Plant Protection Act. Additionally, the CDFW, USFWS, local agencies, and special-status groups, such as the CNPS, maintain lists of species that they consider to be in need of monitoring. Legal protection for these special-status species varies widely. No other special-status species are expected to occur within the project site due to lack of suitable habitat.

The project site does not lie within any federally designated critical habitat.

The project site is not located within the boundaries of an adopted natural community conservation plan, habitat conservation plan, or other adopted natural resource protection plan.

The project site has suitable habitat for nesting birds. During the bird breeding season (typically February 1 through August 31), transmission towers, transmission poles, and mature vegetation on and adjacent to the project site may be used by hawks, ravens, or other birds for nesting. Nesting bird species, with potential to occur, are protected by California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3800, and by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 USC 703–711). These laws regulate the take, possession, or destruction of the nest or eggs of any migratory bird or bird of prey.

Local wildlife movement will be temporarily disrupted during the vegetation removal and construction processes, but this effect would be localized and short term. Although the project will result in the incremental loss of potential foraging and nesting bird habitat, the project site is located in an area that has been regionally isolated by surrounding industrial/commercial development. As a result, the project site does not provide for regional wildlife movement or serve as a regional wildlife corridor. The project site does not contain nursery sites, such as bat colony roosting sites or colonial bird nesting areas.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To avoid potential effects to fully protected raptors, special-status bird species, and other nesting birds protected by the California Fish and Game Code, the following measure will be implemented:

- A nesting bird pre-construction survey will be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than three days prior to ground-disturbing activities. Should nesting birds be found, an exclusionary buffer will be established by the qualified biologist. The buffer may be up to 500 feet in diameter depending on the species of nesting bird found. This buffer will be clearly marked in the field by construction personnel under guidance of the qualified biologist and construction or clearing will not be conducted within this zone until the qualified biologist determines that the young have fledged or the nest is no longer active.