



MEMORANDUM

TO: Tiffany Chao

FROM: Shawn Lockwood; Navroop Jassal

SUBJECT: Biological Site Assessment Rancho Cañada de Pala Preserve Long-term Management Plan Implementation

DATE: 4-30-19

Background and Project Description

The Rancho Cañada de Pala Preserve (hereinafter “Preserve”) was purchased by the Santa Clara Valley Water District in part to provide mitigation in perpetuity for impacts associated with the 2002 Stream Maintenance Program. It is located toward the upstream end of the Upper Penitencia Creek Watershed approximately nine miles northeast of downtown San José in unincorporated Santa Clara County on Assessor’s Parcel Numbers (APNs) 042-07-019, 042-07-020, 042-07-021, 042-07-022, 042-07-023, 042-07-024, 042-07-025, 042-07-026, 042-07-027, 042-07-028, 042-08-001, 042-20-010, and 627-22-011. The Preserve is approximately 1,758 acres, is divided into three areas (Areas 1, 2, and 3) and is managed per two long-term management plans (one for Areas 1 and 2 and a second for Area 3). The project consists of periodic, as-needed landscape, roadway, and grazing infrastructure maintenance within Areas 1, 2, and 3 of the Preserve. The purpose of the long-term management plans is to ensure the Preserve is maintained, monitored, and managed in a manner that preserves all its conservation values. The project activities would include landscape maintenance, fence and gate repair, trough improvements, and monitoring activities.

Landscape maintenance activities would consist of grazing management prescriptions and non-native invasive plant species management. All landscape maintenance work would be conducted using mowers or hand tools such as pruners, pole saws, gas powered weed eaters and blowers.

Infrastructure maintenance activities would consist of minor improvements and repairs to existing fences, gates, roadways, and troughs. Routine road maintenance would minimize erosion and sedimentation issues. All infrastructure maintenance activities would be conducted using manual labor, small power tools, and small construction equipment.

The proposed project activities would involve minor ground disturbance. Best management practices would be incorporated into the project, including pre-activity surveys for avoidance of nesting birds and special-status species. Proposed working hours would be 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Biological Resources

Conservation Values

The main purpose of the Preserve’s Long-term Management Plans is to ensure that the Preserve is monitored, maintained, and managed in a manner that preserves its conservation values and

is consistent with the Conservation Easements on Areas 1 and 3. The conservation values of the Rancho Canada de Pala Preserve are as follows:

- Over 29 miles of seasonal and intermittent streams, as well as 10 ponds (four seasonal and six perennial)
- A mosaic of open rangeland and varied vegetation types (i.e., blue and valley oak woodland, California annual grassland, foothill pine/oak woodland, mixed oak forest, mixed riparian forest, northern mixed/chamise chaparral, and valley oak savanna) that provide habitat for a wide variety of birds, mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and invertebrates
- Potential breeding and upland dispersal habitat for the federally threatened California red-legged frog (CRLF; *Rana draytonii*), also a state species of special concern; potential breeding and upland dispersal habitat for the state and federally threatened CTS; potential breeding and foraging habitat for the western pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*), foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylei*), and American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), state species of special concern.
- Ecological connectivity to the surrounding open space and watershed land network

Sensitive Species

A number of special-status wildlife species could potentially occur within the Preserve, based on the presence of suitable habitat and/or documented occurrences nearby. Table 1 provides a comprehensive list of all special-status plant and wildlife species that may occur.

Table 1. Potential Sensitive Species¹

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status ²	State Status ²	Other Status ²
AMPHIBIANS				
California tiger salamander	<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	Threatened	Threatened	
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	Threatened	SSC	
Foothill yellow-legged frog	<i>Rana boylei</i>	None	SSC	
REPTILES				
Western pond turtle	<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>	None	SSC	
BIRDS				
Cooper's hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	None	WL	IUCN:LC
Sharp-shinned hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	None	WL	
Golden eagle	<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	BCC	FP	IUCN:LC
Ferruginous hawk	<i>Buteo regalis</i>	BCC	WL	IUCN:LC
Northern harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	None	SSC	IUCN:LC
White-tailed kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	None	FP	IUCN:LC
Bald eagle	<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	BCC	Endangered, FP	IUCN:LC
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	None	WL	IUCN:LC

Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal Status ²	State Status ²	Other Status ²
Merlin	<i>Falco columbarius</i>	None	WL	IUCN:LC
Prairie falcon	<i>Falco mexicanus</i>		WL	IUCN:LC
American peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	BCC	FP	
Vaux's swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	None	SSC	IUCN:LC
Nuttall's woodpecker	<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	BCC	None	IUCN:LC
American dipper	<i>Cinclus mexicanus</i>	None	None	IUCN:LC
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	BCC	SSC	IUCN:LC
Yellow-billed magpie	<i>Pica nuttalli</i>	BCC	None	IUCN:LC
Oak titmouse	<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	BCC	None	IUCN:LC
Grasshopper sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	None	SSC	IUCN:LC
MAMMALS				
Pallid bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	None	SSC	IUCN:LC
Yuma myotis	<i>Myotis yumanensis</i>	None	None	IUCN:LC
American badger	<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	None	SSC	IUCN:LC
Ringtail	<i>Bassariscus astutus</i>	None	FP	IUCN:LC
PLANTS				
Arcuate bush mallow	<i>Malacothamnus arcuatus</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.2
Bent-flowered fiddleneck	<i>Amsinckia lunaris</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.2
Chaparral harebell	<i>Campanula exigua</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.2
Fragrant fritillary	<i>Fritillaria liliacea</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.2
Most-beautiful jewelflower	<i>Streptanthus albidus</i> ssp. <i>peramoenus</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.2
Mount Day rockcress	<i>Boechera rubicundula</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.1
Santa Clara red ribbons	<i>Clarkia concinna</i> ssp. <i>automixa</i>	None	None	CRPR 4.3
Santa Clara thorn mint	<i>Acanthomintha lanceolata</i>	None	None	CRPR 4.2
Santa Cruz mountain pussy paws	<i>Calyptridium parryi</i> var. <i>hesseae</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.1
Serpentine leptosiphon	<i>Leptosiphon ambiguus</i>	None	None	CRPR 4.2
Showy madia	<i>Madia radiata</i>	None	None	CRPR 1B.1

¹ Bold indicates species observed within Preserve

² Status codes –

BCC = USFWS Birds of Conservation Concern;

SSC = California Species of Special Concern;

FP = Fully Protected;

WL= Watch List;

IUCN:LC = The World Conservation Union- Least Concern Species;

CRPR:

Rank 1A = Plants considered extinct.

Rank 1B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.

Rank 2A = Plants considered extinct in California and elsewhere.

Rank 2B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California but more common elsewhere.

Rank 3 = Plants about which more information is needed - review list.

Rank 4 = Plants of limited distribution - watch list.

These rankings are further described by the following threat code extensions:

1: seriously endangered in California.

2: fairly endangered in California.

3: not very endangered in California

Critical Habitat

The Preserve intersects with critical habitat of two federally listed species, CTS and CRLF. A majority of the Preserve is enclosed within the CTS Critical Habitat Poverty Ridge Unit (East Bay Region – Unit #5). The western half of the Preserve is within the CRLF Critical Habitat STC-1 Unit.

Conclusion

The routine land management tasks associated with the long-term management of the Rancho Canada de Preserve are expected to further the protection and management of high-quality habitats within the Preserve. Thus, the overall effect of the Project on the Preserve's species and habitats is beneficial and project activities are not expected to adversely affect biological resources.