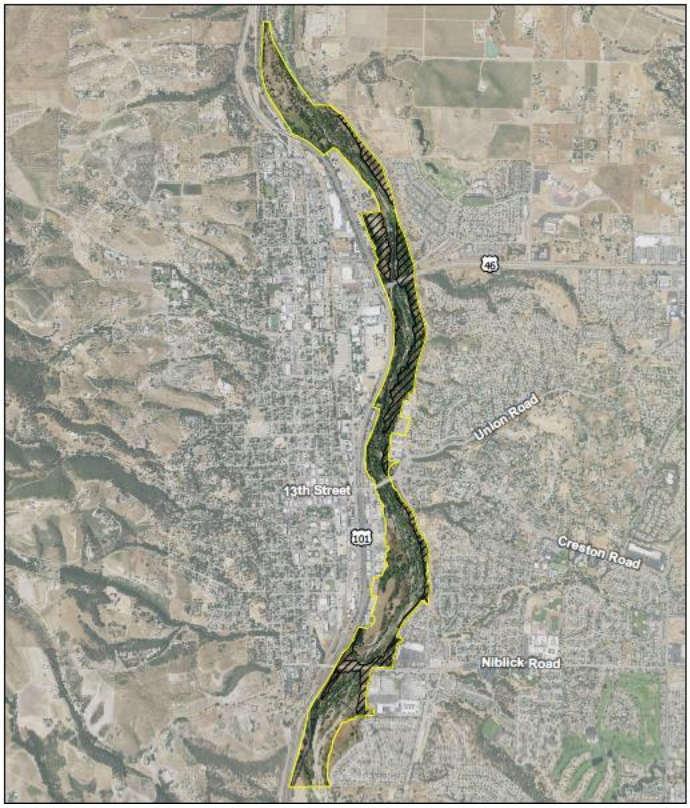
EXPANDED INITIAL STUDY/
MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

For
City of Paso Robles
Salinas River Vegetation Management Program



Prepared for

City of Paso Robles Fire Department
900 Park Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

Prepared by

Kovesdi Consulting
3940-7 Broad Street, #139
San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
(805) 471-2948

This page intentionally left blank

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FIGURES

TABLES

APPENDICES

REFERENCES

A. City of Paso Robles General Plan Elements
   1. Circulation Element (2019)
   2. Conservation Element (2003)
   3. Housing Element (2014)
   4. Land Use Element (2014)
   5. Noise Element (2003)
   6. Parks and Recreation Element (2003)
   7. Open Space Element (2003)
   8. Safety Element (2014)

B. City of Paso Robles Community Wildfire Protection Plan, 2019

C. City of Paso Robles Fire Department Salinas Riverbed Emergency Plan, 2020

D. City of Paso Robles Local Hazard Mitigation Plan, February 2019

E. Paso Robles Fire Department "Desired Conditions for Fuel Beds within the Salinas River Fuels Reduction Project", 2020

F. City of Paso Robles "Salinas Riverbed Hazardous Fuels Reduction" Council Agenda Report, July 15, 2020

G. Paso Robles Subbasin Groundwater Sustainability Plan, November 2019

H. Paso Basin Cooperative Committee Paso Robles Subbasin First Annual Report (2017-2019), November 2020

I. Cultural Resource Management Services "Results Of A Record Search Conducted At The Central Coast Information Center, University Of California, Santa Barbara For The City Of El Paso Robles, Salinas River Corridor Wildfire Prevention Plan" Sacred Files Search, Native American Heritage Commission, Sacramento, Results, And Native American Early Participation Notice, January 2021

J. San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District Greenhouse Gas Threshold and Supporting Evidence, March 2012

K. San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District Rule 501, 12/2/2009 Revision

L. San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District Rule 502, 7/27/2005 Revision

M. California Regional Water Quality Control Board Draft Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R3-2021-0012

N. San Luis Obispo Council of Governments Salinas River Trail Master Plan, 2014

O. California Air Resources Board Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Contemporary Wildfire, Prescribed Fire, and Forest Management Activities, Public Comment Draft, December 2020

P. California Air Resources Board Title 17 – Smoke Management Guidelines for Agricultural and Prescribed Burning, 2005

Q. California Department of Conservation – Geological Survey Special Report 215, December 2011

1.0 PROJECT INFORMATION AND DESCRIPTIONS

1.1 PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Project Title**:

   City of Paso Robles Salinas River Vegetation Management Program

2. **Lead Agency Name and Address**:

   City of Paso Robles
   Community Development Department
   1000 Spring Street
   Paso Robles, CA 93446

3. **Contact Person and Phone Number**:

   Warren Frace
   Wfrace@prcity.com
   (805) 237-3970

4. **Project Location**:

   Various locations within Salinas River Corridor, East of State Highway 101, between the City of Paso Robles' northern and southern incorporated boundaries (Figures 1.1-1 and 1.1-2). Complete APN list is attached as Appendix A.

5. **Project Sponsor/Applicant Name and Address**:

   City of Paso Robles Fire Department
   900 Park Street
   Paso Robles, CA 93446
   Contact: Jonathan Stornetta, Fire Chief
   Jstornetta@prcity.com
   (805) 227-7560

6. **General Plan Designation**:

   The proposed program area contains primarily land designated as Parks and Open Space, but also contains land designated as Public Facilities, Business Park, Residential Single Family, Residential Multiple Family, Community Commercial, Regional Commercial, Commercial Service, and Industrial (Figure 1.1-3).

7. **Zoning**:

   The proposed program area contains land zoned Open Space, Parks and Open Space, Riverside Corridor, Public Facilities, Planned Industrial, Industrial, Residential Single Family, and Commercial/Light Industrial, all within the Salinas River Overlay zone (Figure 1.1-4).

8. **Surrounding Land Uses**:

Land uses surrounding the Salinas River corridor Project area are primarily open space, with residential, commercial, industrial. and recreational facilities.

9. **Other Public Agency Approval Required**:

- California Regional Water Quality Control Board Waste Discharge Requirements Order
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement

Figure 1.1-1 Vicinity Map

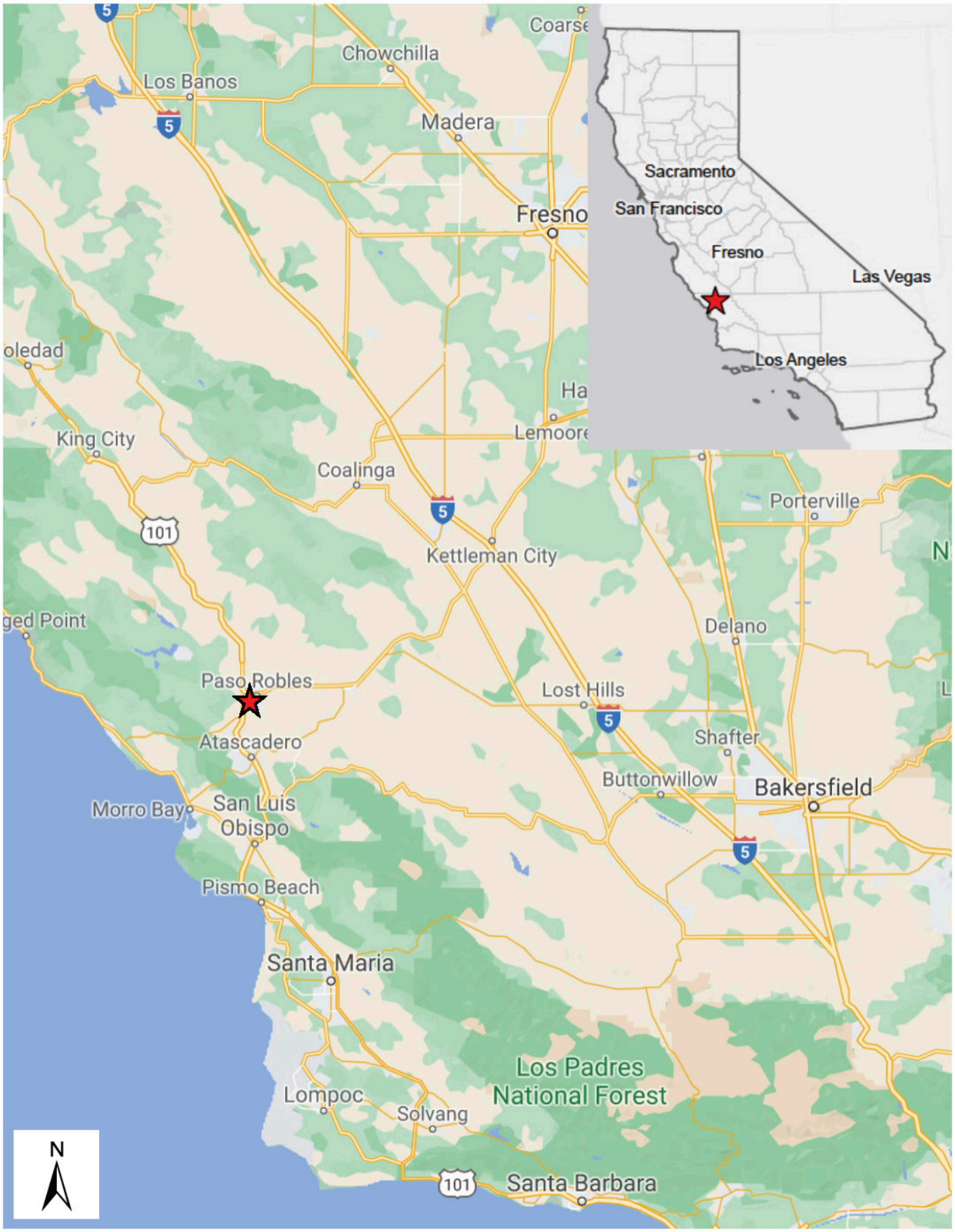
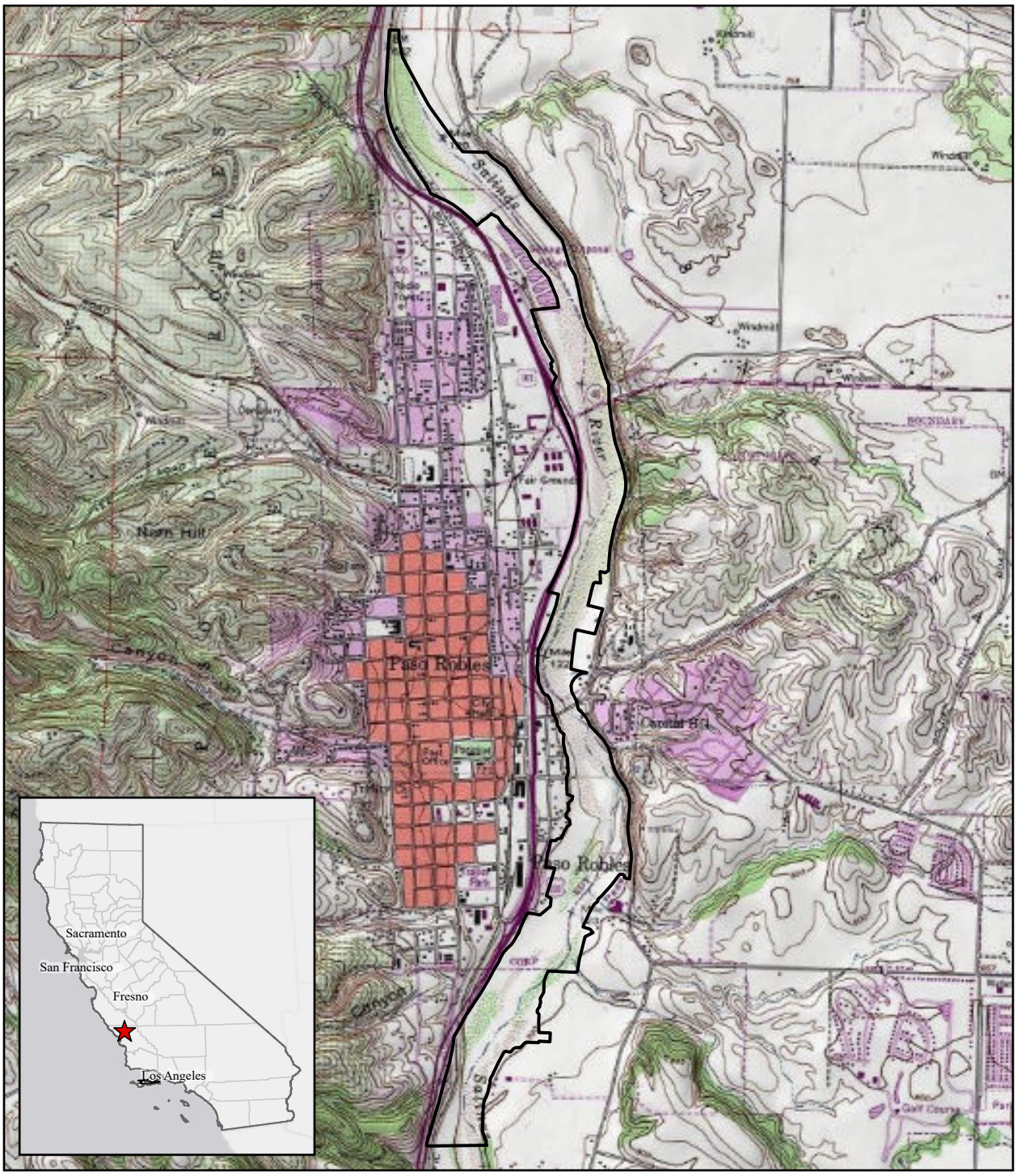


Figure 1.1-2 Project Location and Area



Legend

Action Area (418 acres)

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

USGS Quadrangle: Paso Robles and Templeton

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 08, 2021 03:10 PM by SAF

Figure 1.1-3 City of Paso Robles General Plan Designations

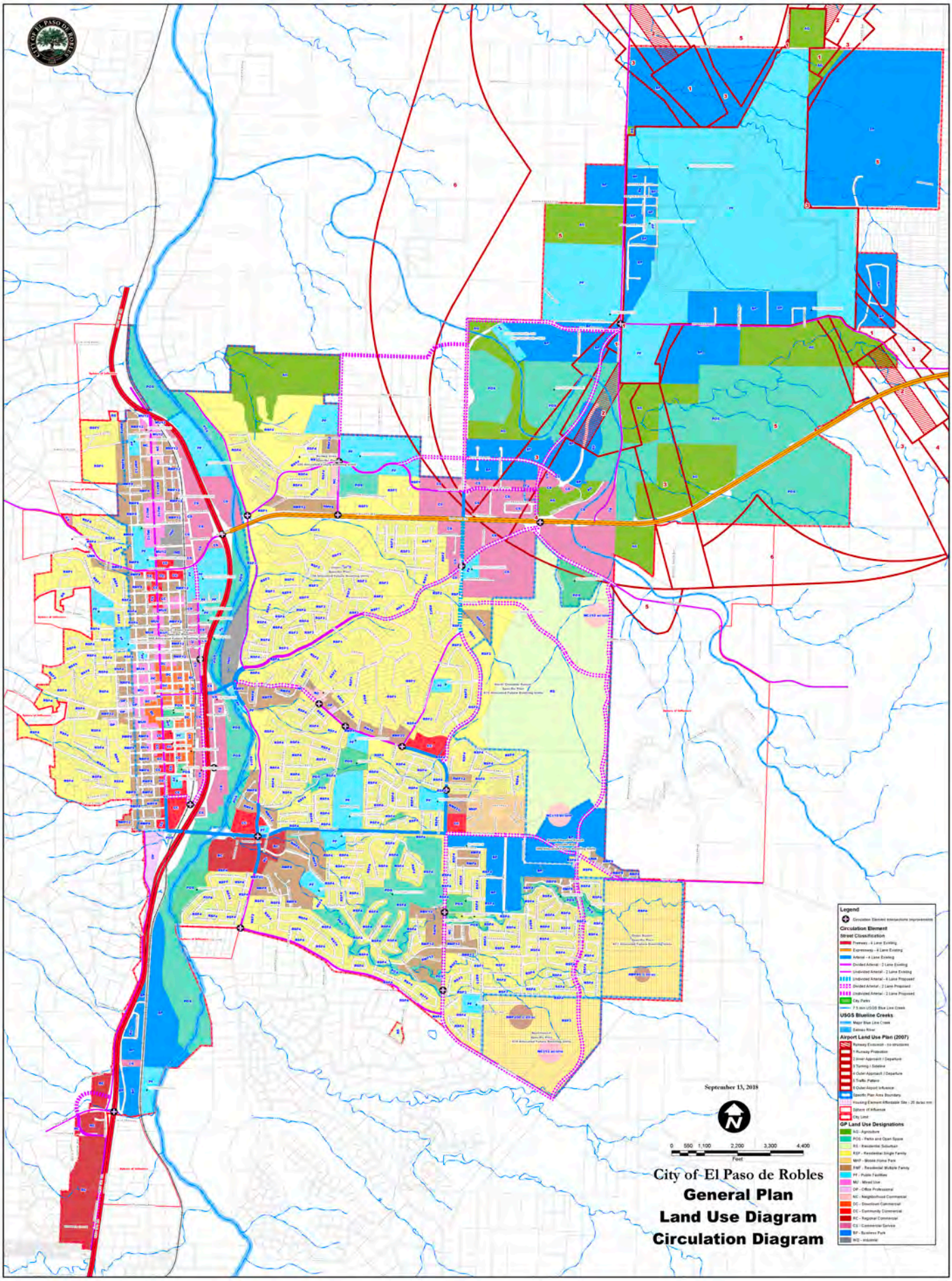
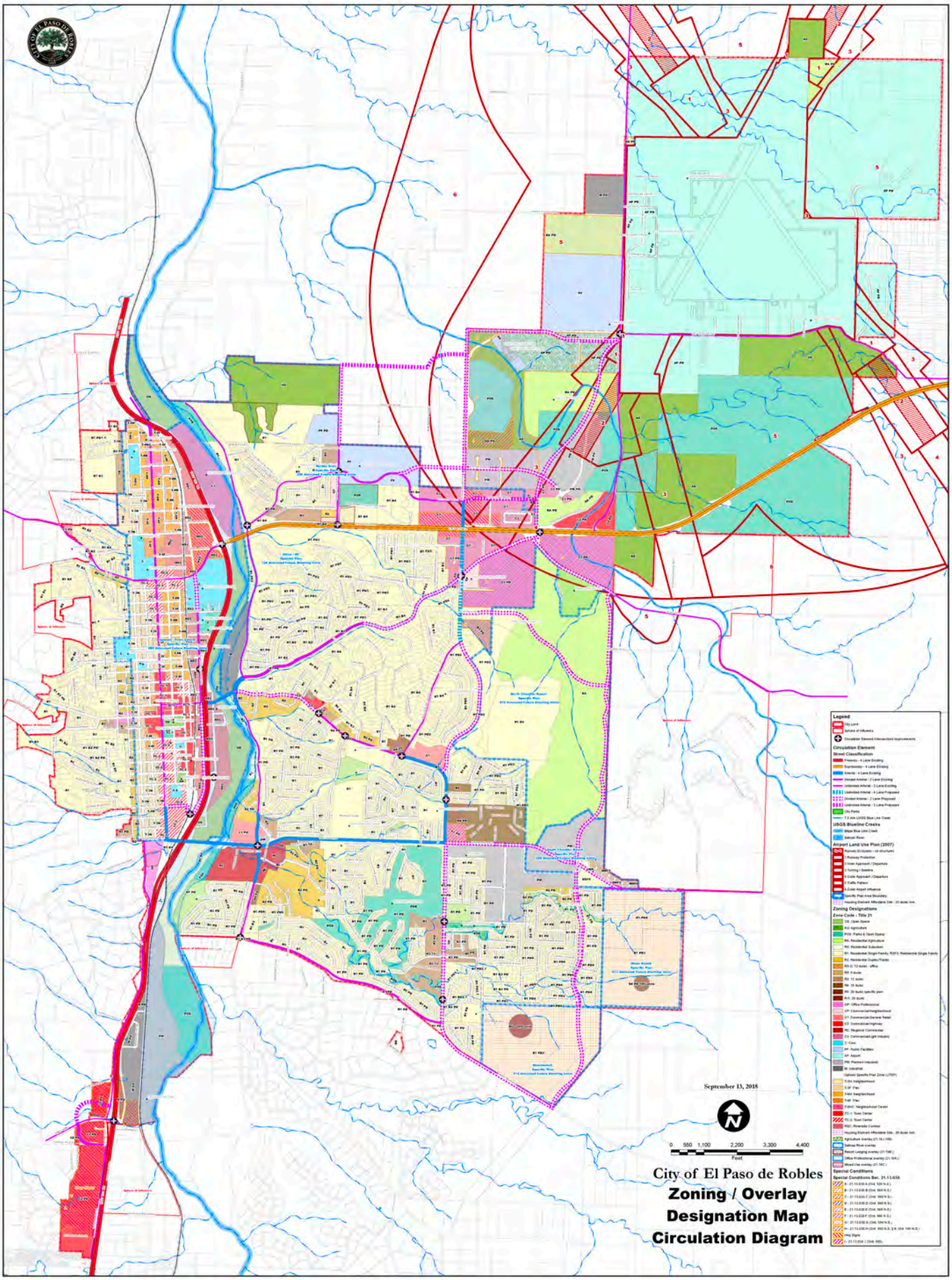


Figure 1.1-4 City of Paso Robles Zoning Map



1.2 PROGRAM SYNOPSIS

The City of Paso Robles (Public Works Department and Fire Department) plans to conduct hazardous fuel reduction within the Salinas River corridor through a program of riparian and emergent vegetation management in order to increase fire safety, in accordance with the City's adopted Community Wildfire Protection Plan.

The proposed Project is a vegetation management program for the purposes of fire fuel reduction. Fuels will be reduced using a variety of methods, including the following:

- Grazing by domestic goats or sheep will be used, primarily in grassland areas to reduce herbaceous and weedy vegetation. Grazing will be concentrated for short periods (e.g., 2 to 3 days each area) using temporary electric fences powered by solar panels or similar temporary fencing. Livestock will only be used within City limits.
- Hand tools or mechanized tools will be used to trim and/or thin brushy vegetation and reduce ladder fuels. Hand crews with chainsaws and tracked chippers will be used to reduce ladder fuels under tree canopies to maintain established shaded fuel breaks and clean up pockets of dead and down woody material. Mowing of annual grasses will be completed using skid-steers with mowing decks or small excavators with mowing attachments. Brushy vegetation may be thinned using pruners, loppers, and/or string trimmers. Mastication treatments may utilize skid-steers and Fecon tracked carriers with mulching heads and excavators with masticator heads. Mastication will be conducted in any given fuel reduction area as needed every 3 to 5 years. A range of equipment options are required due to terrain fluctuation and the need to limit soil disturbance. If other equipment is developed that is more efficient, cost effective, or is better suited for limiting disturbance, it may be utilized.
- Low-intensity prescribed burns may be used to reduce vegetation under certain circumstances. Pile burning consists of hand crews with chainsaws cutting vegetation and stacking it into piles to be burned later, when conditions are favorable. Pile burning is effective in treating larger brush fuel models and cleaning up accumulations of larger dead and downed woody material. Controlled burns will be conducted according to the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (NWCG 2017) and the Wildland Fire Suppression Tactics Reference Guide (NWCG 1996).

1.2.1 Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP)

The CWPP provides a citywide strategic planning framework for hazardous fuel assessment and reduction within the City of Paso Robles so that structures and assets are provided additional protection, reducing the potential of ignitions. The goals of the CWPP include: improving the availability and use of information regarding hazard and risk assessment; providing guidance for land use planning efforts; promoting a shared vision among communities and multiple fire jurisdictions; establishing fire resistance in communities; prioritizing protection of communities and other high-priority watersheds; promoting collaboration between government agencies and a broad representation of stakeholders; improving fire suppression and prevention capabilities; promoting post-fire recovery efforts; and maintaining accountability through performance based monitoring.

1.2.2 Fuel Reduction

Fuels will be reduced using a variety of methods. The primary method will be vegetation removal using hand or mechanized tools to create a shaded fuel break where brush, grasses and downed trees are removed. All standing, healthy, and mature trees will remain, with trees limbed up to fifteen feet to remove ladder fuels. This is the preferred method for hazardous fuel reduction projects, as it maintains vegetation in a park-like setting, while removing a fire's ability to travel into tree canopies, which creates longer range spotting and/or ember cast. Other vegetation management methods will include the grazing by small livestock (goats and sheep), and use of limited prescribed burns, particularly on islands in the Salinas River. It is the City's intent to avoid the use of heavy equipment and focus on grazing, hand crews and the use of smaller equipment to complete fuel reduction within the Project area. See the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan (Appendix B) for further information on fuel reduction methodology.

1.3 PRIMARY PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

The primary purpose of this program is to maintain vegetation in the Salinas River corridor in order to reduce fire hazard. These efforts are designed to minimize wildfire risk to watersheds, public and private property, critical infrastructure, firefighters, and the public.

Reducing riparian vegetation in and around the Salinas River will decrease fuel loads and reduce the risk of fires starting in the riverbed and spreading to nearby homes, businesses, and transportation routes. A large homeless population inhabits the riverbed and is a common source of ignition. Fires begin within encampments or on islands in the river, and then may spread rapidly in hot, dry, or windy conditions. Vegetation reduction as fuel reduction will mediate the risk of fire.

1.4 LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

1.4.1 Location and Fire Services

Paso Robles is situated on the Central Coast of California, approximately halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles (Figure 1.1-1). The City is located in northern San Luis Obispo County, and is bordered on all sides by the unincorporated areas of the County. Paso Robles encompasses 12,740 acres and supports a population of approximately 32,000 residents. Fire protection in the City is provided by the Paso Robles Department Fire Department, which has Automatic Aid Agreements with the San Luis Obispo County Fire Department, Templeton Fire and Emergency Services, and Atascadero Fire and Emergency Services. Mutual Aid is also provided within the operational area by Cal Fire and seventeen local fire departments and districts.

1.4.2 Fire Environment

The fire environment is defined as the surrounding conditions, influences, and modifying forces that determine fire behavior. Fire activity increases with heavy fuels, during hot, dry weather with strong winds blowing up slopes. The four components that affect fire behavior are fuels, weather, topography, and human behavior. Vegetation (or fuel) plays a major role in fire behavior and

shaping fire hazard potential. The City of Paso Robles Salinas River Vegetation Management Program is designed to manage vegetative fuels, in order to reduce the threat of destructive fire.

Another significant contributing factor to fire risk is human activity within the Salinas River corridor. Within the corridor there are localized areas of high human disturbance, due primarily to unhoused people and their camps. People in the camps cut and clear vegetation, including saplings and limbs from large trees, create paths, and deposit piles of trash. A total of 27 encampments and 26 trash piles or dumps were counted in the Salinas River corridor within City limits during a survey in December 2020 (Figure 1.4-3)

Frequent small fires occur in the riverbed due to campfires in the encampments. These campfires are a significant source of ignition. In 2020, 129 fires occurred within the Salinas River corridor, including two fires in June that burned 3 and 11.5 acres, destroyed two homes and damaged 9 others. (Appendix C - City of Paso Robles Fire Department Salinas Riverbed Emergency Plan, 2020). These fires pose a significant risk to the immediate inhabitants, critical infrastructure, as well as residential, commercial, industrial and public neighbors.

1.4.3 Wildland-Urban Interface

Areas where urban development (like commercial or residential uses) abut non-maintained wildland fuels are defined as the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Wildland-Urban Interface areas are those within the vicinity of wildland vegetation, typically with housing densities exceeding one house per 40 acres. The California Fire Alliance defined “vicinity” as all areas within 1.5 miles of wildland vegetation, the anticipated distance that firebrands can be carried from a wildland fire to the roof of a house. The wildland fire risk associated with WUI areas includes propagation of fire throughout WUI communities via house-to-house fire spread, landscaping-to-house fire spread, or ember intrusion. Even relatively small WUI fires in densely developed areas can be very damaging.

1.4.4 Wildland-Urban Interface in the City of Paso Robles

The Salinas River corridor occupies approximately 418 acres along approximately 30,000 linear feet within City limits. Existing urban commercial and residential developments are located within approximately one mile east and two miles west of the river. Downtown Paso Robles, and Highway 101 are located West of the Salinas River corridor, while areas East of the river are dominated by residential development. Three major routes of transportation cross the riverbed within the City’s jurisdiction: the Niblick Bridge, 13th Street Bridge and State Highway 46 Bridge. Past fires in proximity to these transportation routes have caused significant impacts. Vegetation in drainages within the City limits, particularly within the Salinas River corridor, has become dense and overgrown in many areas. This vegetation provides fuel for wildfires, and can increase the risk, intensity, and speed of spread of fires.

1.4.5 Fuel Reduction Area

Fuel reduction vegetation management activities will be conducted in multiple locations within the Salinas River corridor. The potential fuel reduction vegetation management area is

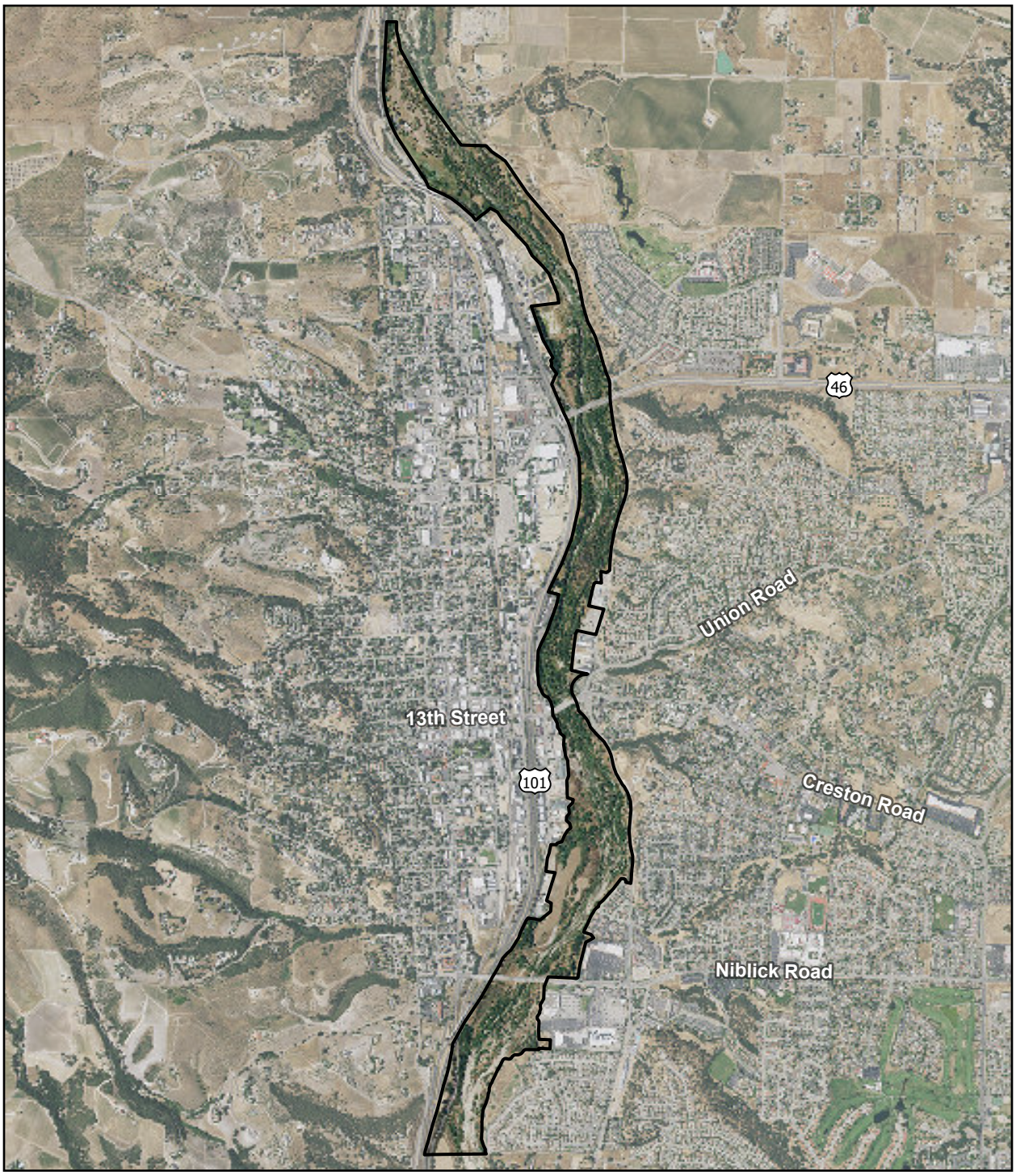
approximately 418 acres and includes most of the Salinas River corridor within the City of Paso Robles (Figure 1.4-1). This area extends approximately 22,100 linear feet (4.2 miles), from the southern end of Larry Moore Park at the South end of Riverbank Lane up to approximately 1.4 miles North of the State Highway 46 bridge.

While vegetation management activities may occur anywhere within this area, fuel reduction will be primarily concentrated along the East and West sides of the corridor, under and around road bridges, and in areas where emergency fuel reduction treatment occurred in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 1.4-2). These areas are outside the low-flow and active channel (refer HYD-30 in Section 3.10 for definitions), and closest to the urban-wildland interface at the edges of the riparian corridor and include firebreaks that were established across the river connecting the east and west sides. These cross sections allow access points to check a fire from spreading throughout the riparian zone. See Appendix A for a complete list of Assessor's Parcel Numbers for properties within the potential fuel reduction area.

1.4.6 Surrounding Land Uses

Residential and commercial development land uses West of the Salinas River; commercial, industrial and very limited agricultural uses on the East side; bordered on both sides with City and County roadways, and to the West by Highway 101. Highway 46 East bisects the norther portion of the Program area and is a major thoroughfare between Interstate 5, U.S. Highway 101, and State Route 99.

Figure 1.4-1 Program Aerial Photograph



Legend

Action Area (418 acres)

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

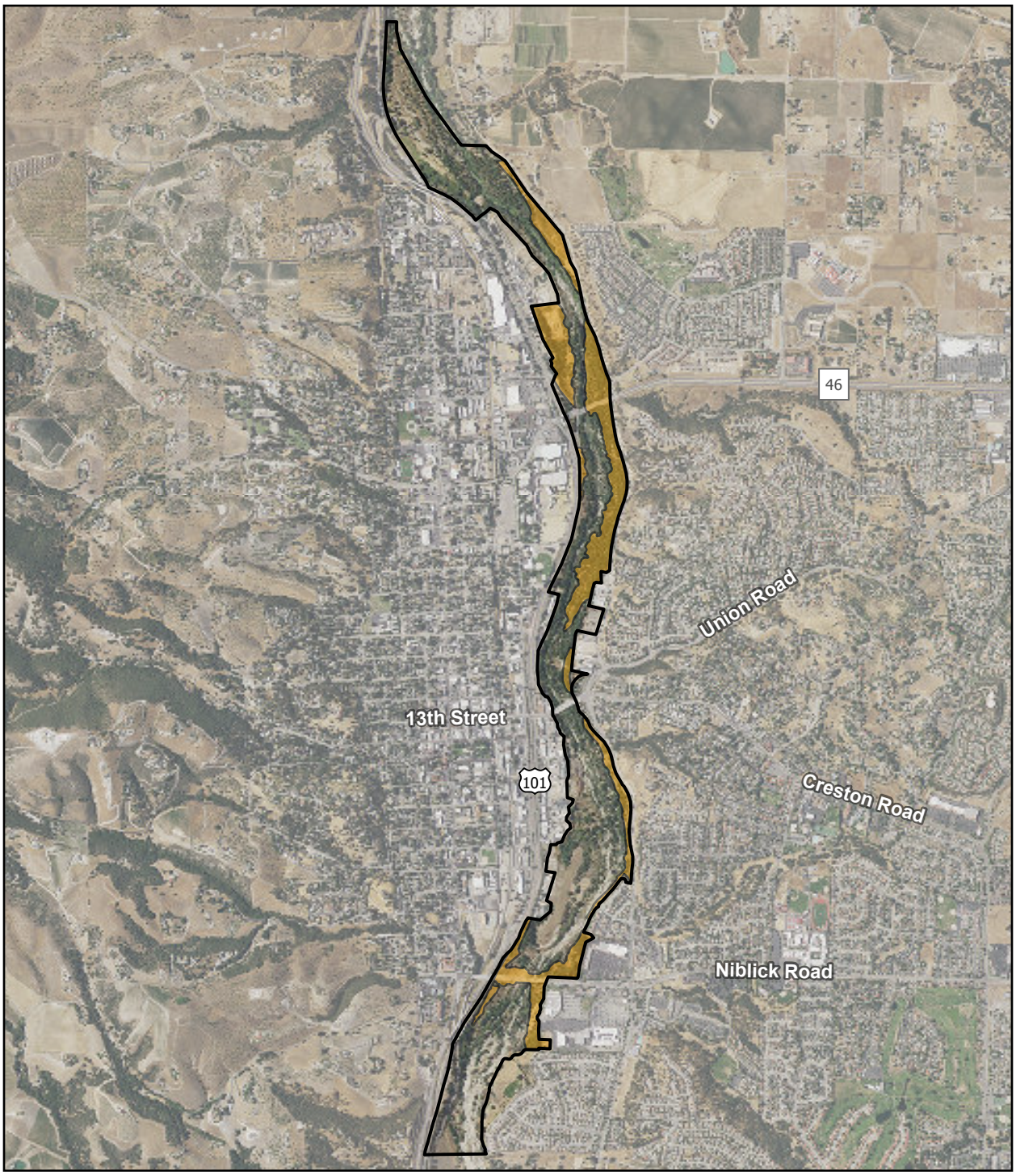
City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 08, 2021 03:48 PM by KRN

Figure 1.4-2 2019-2020 Vegetation Management Areas



Legend

Action Area (418 ac)

2019- 2020 Vegetation Management Areas

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

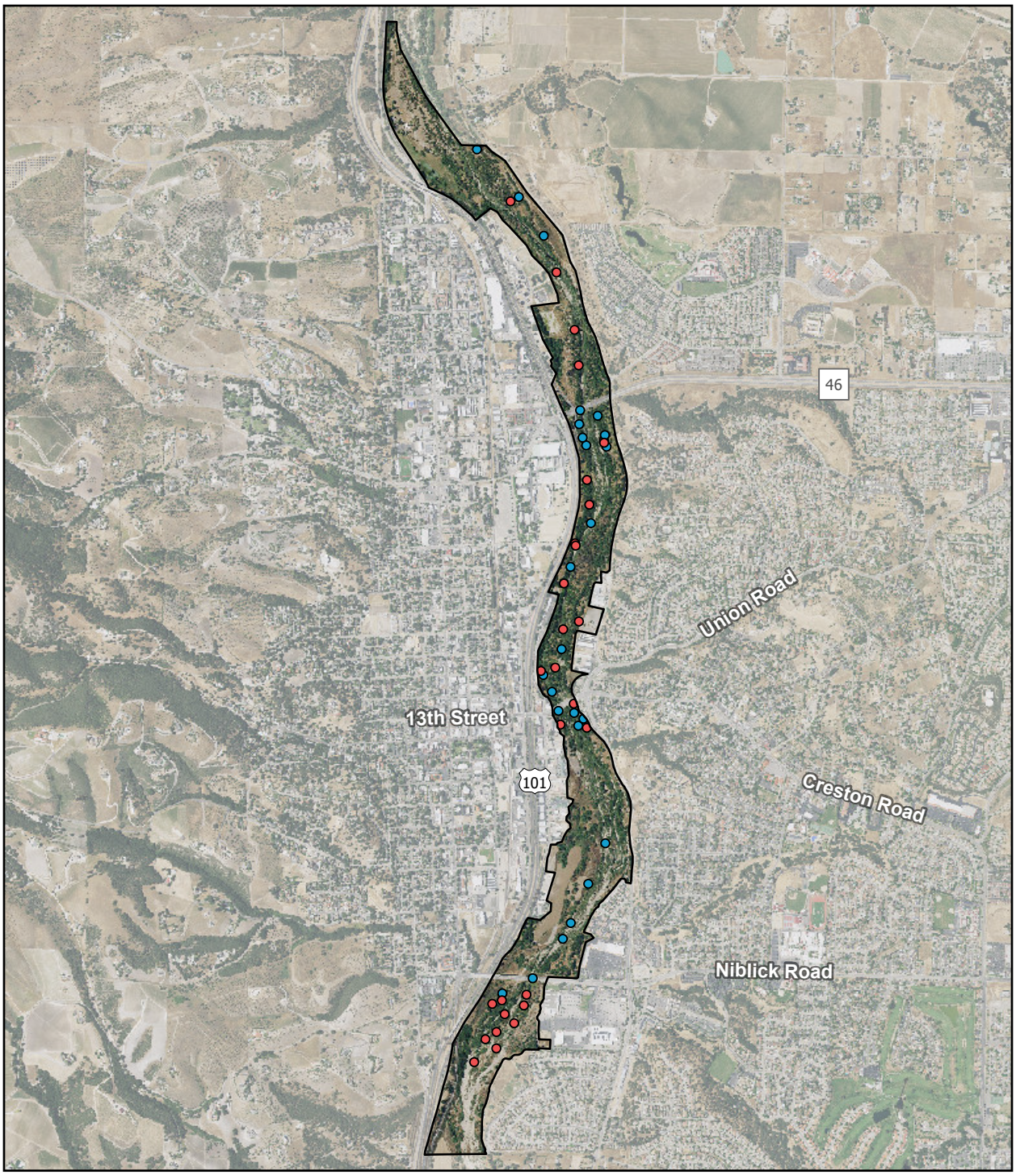
City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 08, 2021 04:36 PM by KRN

Figure 1.4-3 Locations of Unhoused Encampments



Legend

Action Area (418 ac)

Camp

Trash

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:45 PM by KRN

1.5 PROGRAM CRITERIA

Fuel reduction areas have been determined primarily based upon location of previous ignitions within the riverbed, as well as the direction of fire spread under various weather conditions. Fire is influenced primarily by terrain and wind. Typical wind direction in Paso Robles is from the northwest or southwest; these winds push fires in the riverbed to the East, where, responding to terrain, they run up drainages toward the community. The population and homes at the greatest risk of a fire escaping the Salinas Riverbed are to the East of the river. Any fire that escaped the river has a significant Wildland Urban Interface (WUI) component. The wildland fire risk associated with WUI areas includes propagation of fire throughout WUI communities via house-to-house fire spread, landscaping-to-house fire spread, or ember intrusion. Additionally, a large homeless population inhabits the riverbed which is a common source of ignitions.

Therefore, the fuel reduction area is primarily located along the eastern side of the Salinas River, in order to protect neighborhoods East of North and South River Roads. However, on any given day the wind may come from any direction, so the City must be prepared for all conditions. The fuel reduction area also includes some areas on the West side of the Salinas River, particularly where vegetation on the edge of the river corridor is adjacent to residential or commercial area.

The fuels within the Salinas River are a mix of fuel models, which are used to calculate fuel loading. Fuel models are classified according to the standards described in the USFS technical report "Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models" (Scott and Burgan, 2005). Fuel models are selected based upon the following vegetation characteristics: fire-carrying fuel type (grass, shrub, timber litter, etc.), moisture of extinction (i.e., fuel moisture content at which fire will not spread), depth, compactness, and size of fuel, and relative amount of live vs. dead vegetation. Within the proposed fuel reduction vegetation management area, fuel model GS2 and GR4 make up approximately 70-80% of the fuel bed, while a mixture of SH5 and SH8 make up the remaining 20-30%. Additionally, there is an abundance of dead and downed woody material throughout the river corridor. These areas of fuel loading are extremely resistant to fire suppression efforts. See Table AQ-1 in Section 3.3.

In any given year, vegetation management to reduce fuels will occur in all areas within the proposed fuel reduction area where light, flashy fuels, such as non-native grasses are taller than four feet. This is in compliance with the City's Hazardous Fuel Reduction Ordinance (1068 approved February 5, 2019). Annual fuel reduction will be prioritized in the footprint of the 2019 and 2020 emergency fuel reduction area, which was primarily a shaded firebreak along the eastern edge of the river corridor (Figure 1.4-2). Annual vegetation management will also be prioritized in a 100-200-foot range along the West and East edges of the river, as well as sections that connect across the river. Currently, there are five locations where firebreaks have been established across the river, connecting East and West sides. A need for additional crossings has been identified, one North of the 13th Street bridge and two between Niblick and 13th Street. These cross sections allow access points to check a fire from spreading throughout the riparian zone. Maintaining a firebreak along the edges of the river will lower the chances of an ignition becoming established within the riparian zone and lowers the intensity of a fire as it transitions into the managed area. Firebreaks also allow firefighters a safe area to engage the fire and contain it within the riverbed.

1.6 PROGRAM SCHEDULE

Vegetation management activities for the purpose of fuel reduction within the Salinas River corridor will take place annually, particularly in areas dominated by light, flashy fuels (grasses and forbs). Specifically:

- Trimming brush, grasses and limbing trees March 15 to October 15, between 7AM and 7PM;
- Grazing April 15 to October 15, with domestic goats or sheep deployed to graze grasses and weedy vegetation for short periods (several days per site);
- Pile Burning outside of fire season, with notification to Cal Fire and the San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control Board, between 7AM and 7PM.

1.7 OPERATION PROGRAM DETAILS

1.7.1 Equipment for Trimming/Mowing

Hand crews with weed whackers, mowers, chainsaws and tracked chippers will be used to reduce ladder fuels under tree canopies to maintain established, shaded fuel breaks and clean up pockets of dead and downed woody material, where terrain limits access for equipment. Trees may be limbed up to 15 feet in order to further decrease frequency and severity of fires near populated areas. Mowing of annual grasses will be completed using skid-steers with mowing decks or small excavators with mowing attachments. Brushy vegetation may be thinned using pruners, loppers and/or string trimmers. Mastication treatments may utilize skid-steers and Fecon tracked carriers with mulching heads and excavators with masticator heads. Mastication will be conducted in any given fuel reduction area as needed every three to five years. A range of equipment options are required due to terrain fluctuation and the need to limit soil disturbance. Other equipment that is more efficient, cost effective, or is better suited for limiting disturbance may be utilized.

1.7.2 Grazing

Domestic goats and/or sheep may be used to remove low-growing vegetation to reduce fuel loads within the Salinas River corridor. Grazing animals will be fenced utilizing temporary fencing. Under some circumstances, grazing can reduce fire fuels more effectively than mechanical methods (Sharrow 2006). Un-grazed grassland creates high levels of fine fire fuels which may pose high fire risk. Grazing impacts existing surface fuels by removing vegetation without affecting plant roots. In order to ensure a successful fuel management program, a grazing routine should be applied every one to two years in order to exhaust the root stock. Livestock used for vegetation management will be introduced onto riverbed property only after being quarantined outside the City properties for a minimum of 72 hours and fed or grazed on commercially produced bulk feed or agricultural crops so as not to further introduce non-native species. Animals will be healthy, well-nourished, and free of internal and external parasites. Grazing will not expose base soil excessively in grassland areas and will not be conducted when precipitation is occurring or when soils are wet or saturated or subject to compaction.

1.7.3 Low-Intensity Prescribed Burning

Prescribed burning has been recognized by western land managers as an appropriate and very effective method of fuel reduction. Landscape-scale broadcast burns have been employed historically by Native American cultures as a technique for vegetation management. This fast and inexpensive treatment may be used repeatedly with consistent results. Vegetation types growing in the Mediterranean climate of the Central Coast tend to respond positively to periodic fire.

The City will be working with the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District and the Upper Salinas-Las Tablas Resources Conservation District (RCD) to utilize low-intensity prescribed burning in optimal conditions. Resources at Cal Fire and the Cal Poly Wildland Urban Interface Institute (WUI) may also be consulted. The program will utilize the pile burning method for prescribed burns.

Pile burning consists of hand crews with chainsaws cutting vegetation and stacking it into loose piles to be burned later, or when conditions are favorable. Pile burning is effective in treating larger brush fuel models and cleaning up accumulations of larger dead and downed woody material. Pile burning will be a tertiary means of reducing fire fuel loads, with up to approximately 0.5 to 5 acres burned in a day, and 1-5 tons of fuel per acre, for a maximum daily burn of 25 tons. Burns will occur during daytime hours, when atmospheric conditions enhance smoke dispersal. City of Paso Robles Fire Department staff will contact the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District, as well as the City Public Works and Community Development Departments prior to burning, and will monitor smoke dispersal.

All prescribed burns will be conducted according to the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning Implementation Procedures Guide (NWCG 2017) and the Wildland Fire Suppression Tactics Reference Guide (NWCG 1996).

1.8 PROGRAM ENTITLEMENTS

<u>Other Public Agency Approval Required:</u>

- California Regional Water Quality Control Board Waste Discharge Requirements Order
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement

This page intentionally left blank

2.0 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS AND DETERMINATION

2.1 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" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

	Aesthetics		Greenhouse Gas Emissions		Public Services
	Agriculture & Forestry Resources		Hazards & Hazardous Materials		Recreation
X	Air Quality	X	Hydrology / Water Quality		Transportation & Traffic
X	Biological Resources		Land Use / Planning	X	Tribal Resources
X	Cultural Resources		Mineral Resources		Utilities & Service Systems
	Energy	X	Noise		Mandatory Findings of Significance
	Geology & Soils		Population & Housing		

FISH AND GAME FEES

	There is no evidence before the Department that the project will have any potential adverse effects on fish and wildlife resources or the habitat upon which the wildlife depends. As such, the project qualifies for a no effect determination from Fish and Game.
X	The project has potential to impact fish and wildlife resources and shall be subject to the payment of Fish and Game fees pursuant to Section 711.4 of the California Fish and Game Code. This initial study has been circulated to the California Department of Fish and Game for review and comment.

STATE CLEARINGHOUSE

X	This environmental document must be submitted to the State Clearinghouse for review by one or more State agencies (e.g., Cal Trans, California Department of Fish and Game, Department of Housing and Community Development). The public review period shall not be less than 30 days (CEQA Guidelines 15073(a)).

2.2 BASIS FOR 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 analysis in each section. 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. The explanation of each issue should identify the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question.

3. "Potentially Significant Impact' is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect is significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.

4. "Potentially Significant Unless 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 Section 17, "Earlier Analysis," may be cross-referenced).

5. Earlier analysis 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) of the California Code of Regulations. Earlier analyses are discussed in Section 17 at the end of the checklist.

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. 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 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

2.3 ENVIRONMENTAL DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	
I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, the project will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made, or the mitigation measures described on an attached sheet(s) have been added and agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	X
I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.	
I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant" impact(s) or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact(s) 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	
I find that the proposed project will not have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects have been analyzed adequately in an earlier NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, nothing further is required.	

3/10/21

Warren Frace, Community Development Director — Date

Signature — Date

This page intentionally left blank

3.0 CEQA ENVIRONMENTAL CHECKLIST

3.1 AESTHETICS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?				X
b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, open space, and historic buildings within a local or state scenic highway?			X	
c) In nonurbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality?				X
d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area?				X

Setting

The Salinas River and East side creeks/riparian corridors are identified as scenic natural landmarks/open space viewsheds in the City of Paso Robles' General Plan Conservation Element (2014). Additionally, that Element identifies Spring Street and the Union Pacific Railroad as visual corridors from the North to the South City boundaries (Figure 3.1-1). The Paso Robles Municipal Code defines a viewshed as "the geographical area typically visible from a location beyond a project site. The viewshed includes all surrounding points that are in line of sight with that location and excludes points that are beyond the horizon or obstructed by terrain and other features (e.g., buildings, trees)."

The City of Paso Robles has an adopted Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance (2002), which governs the maintenance, trimming and removal of oak trees by private property owners, tree maintenance services and arborists. While the Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance may not apply to vegetation management for fuel reduction conducted by the City Fire Department, no oak trees are planned to be removed through implementation of the proposed program.

Although views along both banks of the Salinas River are largely blocked by existing commercial, residential and industrial development within the City's well-defined, compact urban form, the Salinas River corridor is visible from points on Highways 46 and 101, North and South River Road,

Niblick Road, 13th Street and 24th Street. Both Highway 46 and Highway 101 are eligible for state designation as scenic highways (CA Department of Transportation, 2019).

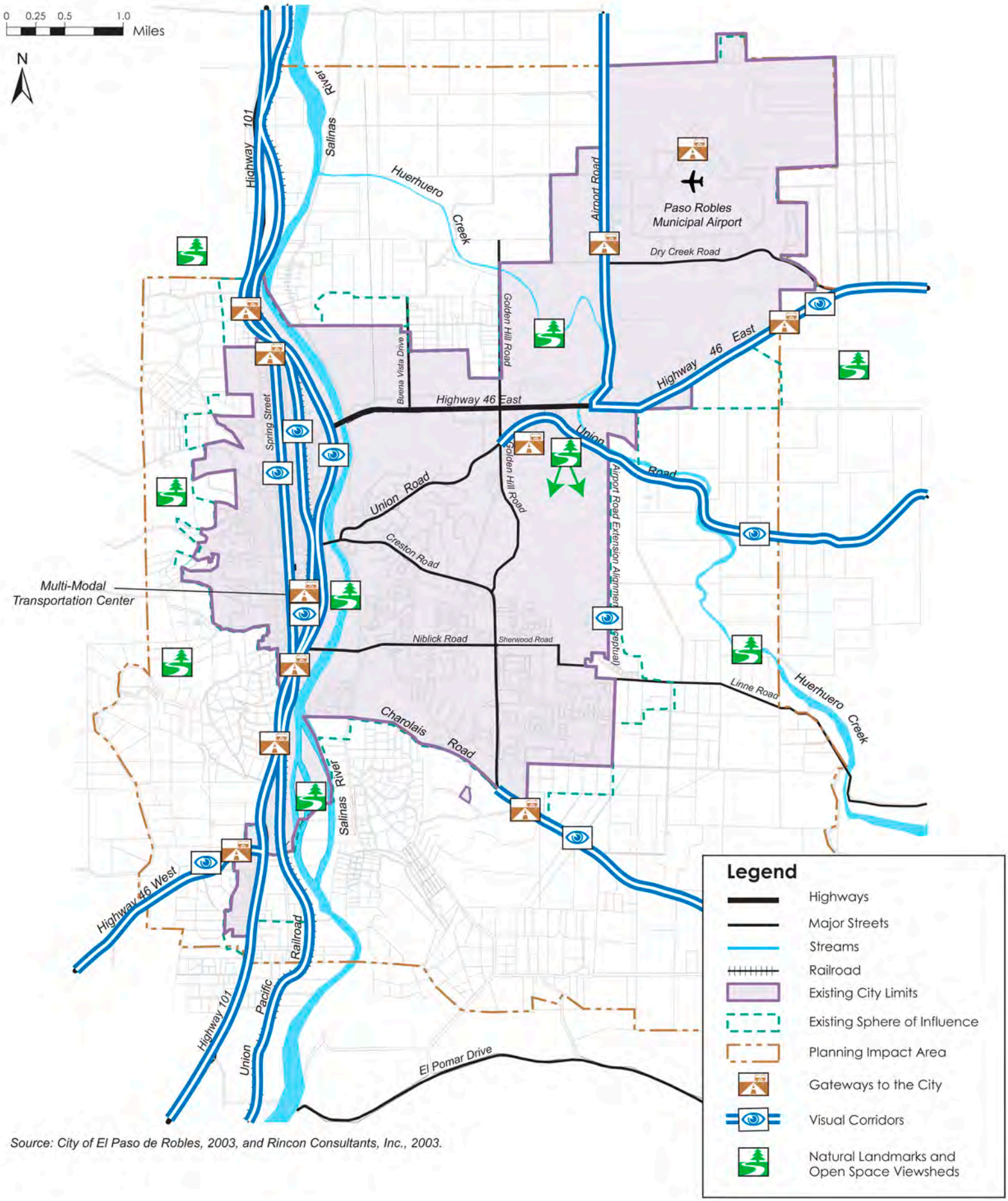
Evaluation

The proposed Project is a vegetation management program for the purposes of fire fuel reduction. No development is proposed with this vegetation management program. All proposed vegetation management activities will occur within the Salinas River corridor, within the urban area of the City of Paso Robles, during daylight hours. The riparian corridor is surrounded by urban uses, including commercial, residential, industrial and public uses. Some project locations will be adjacent to and visible from public views, specifically surrounding public parks and roadways.

All standing, healthy, and mature trees will remain, with trees limbed up to fifteen feet to remove ladder fuels. Flashy fuels, such as non-native grasses, will be mowed and/or grazed, and brushy vegetation will be trimmed, grazed or burned. These activities will temporarily alter some public views, including public roadways and the railway, creating a more park-like setting within portions of the Salinas corridor. This is not considered an adverse impact. No permanent impacts to aesthetic/visual resources will occur with the Project.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact.

Figure 3.1-1 General Plan Visual Resources



Source: City of El Paso de Robles, 2003, and Rincon Consultants, Inc., 2003.

3.2 AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use?				X
b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use or a Williamson Act contract?				X
c) Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined in Public Resources Code Section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined in Government Code Section 51104 (g))?				X
d) Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use?				X
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?				X

Setting

The California Department of Conservation Division of Land Resource Protection implements the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring (FMMP) program, which recognizes the suitability of land for agricultural production through an evaluation of physical and chemical characteristics of the soil. The FMMP program designates Important Farmland, including Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. Limited areas of Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance are identified within the Salinas River in the City's Open Space Element (2003).

The City of Paso Robles, maintaining a compact, urban form, contains limited areas zoned for agriculture, most of which are located outside of the Project area in Salinas River corridor. Approximately 11% of the Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project area is currently utilized for agricultural production. These areas are disturbed frequently as part of ongoing agricultural activities, and therefore do not support fire fuels that require additional vegetation management. No Williamson Act contracted lands occur within the Project area.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of vegetation management for fuel reduction, located within the Salinas River corridor in the urban area of the City of Paso Robles. No grading, ground-disturbance, or development is proposed with the Project. No activities are proposed on properties used for agricultural purposes, or which contain Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, and Farmland of Statewide Importance. The proposed Project would not conflict with any existing zoning for agricultural uses and would not conflict with any Williamson Act contracts. The proposed Project involves no changes to the existing environment that could result in the conversion of Farmland to non-agricultural uses.

The proposed Project is within an urbanized portion of Paso Robles. No land in the vicinity of the Project area is designated as forest resources or zoned as forest land or timberland. Therefore, the Project will not conflict with these uses or result in any loss or conversion of forest land or timberland.

Conclusion: No impact.

3.3 AIR QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan?				X
b) 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?				X
c) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?			X	
d) Result in other emissions (such as those leading to odors) adversely affecting a substantial number of people?		X		

Setting

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program will occur within the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD). The SLO County APCD is responsible for establishing and enforcing local, state, and federal air quality regulations, and has adopted both a Strategic Action Plan and a Clean Air Plan (CAP) for jurisdictions within San Luis Obispo County, which outline strategies to reduce air pollution emissions in the region. The 2001 Clean Air Plan (CAP) for San Luis Obispo County details APCD's strategies to reduce ozone precursor emissions from a wide variety of stationary and mobile sources, and includes transportation control measures related to a campus trip reduction project, local transit system improvements, commute options, bicycling enhancements, and other trip reduction programs.

The CAP describes the air quality setting for the County in detail, including the local climate and meteorology, current and projected air quality, and the regulatory framework for the management of air quality. Additionally, the SLO County APCD adopted a Particulate Matter Report and associated control measures in 2005, in order to reduce public exposure to particulate matter. The SLO County APCD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook (2017) allows practitioners to evaluate project specific impacts and help determine if air quality mitigation measures are needed, or if potentially significant project-specific or cumulative impacts could result. If a proposed project is consistent with the land use, transportation control measures, and strategies outlined in the Clean Air Plan, then the Project is considered consistent with the Clean Air Plan.

The SLO County APCD is part of the South Central Coast Air Basin (SCCAB), which includes San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura counties. San Luis Obispo County covers approximately 3,300 square miles within the SCCAB and is divided into three general regions: (1) coastal plateau, (2) upper Salinas River Valley, and (3) East County plain. The proposed Project will occur in the

upper Salinas River Valley portion of the Air Basin. Ambient air quality standards for ozone (O_3), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM_{10}), particulate matter less than 2.5 microns in diameter ($PM_{2.5}$), and lead are set by both the California Air Resources Board (CARB) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. (State regulations are generally more restrictive than federal standards for most pollutants.) The SLO County APCD is currently under State nonattainment status for ozone and PM10 standards. The SLO County air basin is classified as nonattainment for the federal ozone 8-hour standard, as well as the State 1-hour and 8-hour ozone standard, and 24-hour and annual PM_{10} standard (eastern San Luis Obispo County only).

"Prescribed Burning" is defined by the APCD as the planned application of fire to vegetation on lands selected in advance of such application, and means any fire ignited by management actions to meet specific objectives. The term "prescribed burn" includes Forest Management, Range Improvement, Wildland Vegetation Management, Wildland/Urban Interface and all other managed wildland fires. Adopted San Luis Obispo County APCD Rule 501(2009) specifies that prescribed burning utilized by public agencies is exempt from permitting under certain conditions:

"The following are exempt from Section D, General Requirements:

a. *A fire set by or permitted by a public officer, if such fire has been authorized in writing by the Air Pollution Control Officer (APCO) and is in the performance of the official duty of such public officer, and such fire, in the opinion of such public officer, is necessary for any of the following:*
    1) *The prevention of a fire hazard which cannot be abated by any other reasonable means.*
    2) *The instruction of public employees in the methods of fighting fires.*
    3) *Disease or pest prevention, where there is an immediate need for and no reasonable alternative to burning."*

Adopted San Luis Obispo County APCD Rule 502 and CARB Title 17 – Smoke Management Guidelines for Agricultural and Prescribed Burning (2005) set special requirements for prescribed burning in Wildland-Urban Interface areas. Those documents also identify the conditions under which a permissive-burn day will be declared. These regulations require the submittal of smoke management plans for all burns greater than 10 acres in size, or estimated to produce more than one ton of particulate matter. If smoke may impact smoke sensitive sites, plans must include appropriate monitoring. Sensitive receptors are people or other organisms that may have a significantly increased sensitivity or exposure to air pollution by virtue of their age and health (e.g., schools, day care centers, hospitals, nursing homes), regulatory status (e.g., federal or state listing as a sensitive or endangered species), or proximity to the source. Rule 502 defines "smoke sensitive sites" as schools, day care centers, parks, hospitals, nursing homes and other public or private health care facilities.

Additionally, the City of Paso Robles General Plan Conservation Element (2014) includes strategies, goals, and policies to preserve air quality, including programs to reduce the number of vehicle miles traveled (VMT), especially by single occupant vehicles, and requirements for construction activities to minimize air pollution.

Evaluation

Impacts to Sensitive Receptors. The Project will occur within 1,000 feet of residences on surrounding properties. Vegetation management will be largely accomplished with hand tools and grazing and will not necessitate earth-moving equipment or any grading. Additionally, prescribed burning will be utilized as a tertiary method of fire fuel reduction, with prescribed burns of no more than 5 acres and a maximum of 25 tons of fuel. Burns will occur during daytime hours, when atmospheric conditions enhance smoke dispersal. The vegetation management related emissions from this Project are expected to be well below U.S. EPA, CARB, or SLO APCD thresholds triggering mitigations. However, prescribed burning may occur in proximity to sensitive receptors or smoke sensitive sites. Therefore, mitigation measures are included to protect sensitive receptors and sites from air quality impacts from the prescribed burning component of the program.

TABLE AQ-1. FUEL MODELS

Fuel Model	Description	Fire spread	Tons/Ac.
GR1	Short grass, either naturally or by grazing, and may be sparse or discontinuous.	Spread rate is low, flame length low	0.40
GR4	Nearly pure grass and/or forb; moderately coarse continuous grass, average depth about 2 feet.	Spread rate very high, flame length high	2.15
GS1	Mixture of grass and shrubs combined. Shrubs are about 1 foot high; grass load is low.	Spread rate is moderate, flame length low	1.35
GS2	Mixture of grass and shrub, up to 50 percent shrub coverage; shrubs are 1-3 feet high, moderate grass load.	Spread rate high, flame length moderate	2.1
SH5	Shrub cover at least 50 percent, grass sparse to nonexistent; heavy shrub load, depth 4 to 6 feet.	Spread rate very high, flame length very high	6.5
SH8	Shrub cover at least 50 percent, grass sparse to nonexistent; dense shrubs, little to no herb fuel, depth about 3 feet.	Spread rate high; flame length high.	6.4

AQ-1 Prior to prescribed burning of vegetation, the San Luis Obispo Air Pollution Control District shall be contacted in order to obtain a burn permit. Burn authorization requests to the District for planned wildland, prescribed and range improvement burning shall be made by phone, fax, e-mail, or in person no later than 48 hours prior to the planned ignition.

AQ-2 All permits issued for prescribed burning by the APCD or designated agencies must contain the following words or words of similar import: "This permit is valid only on those days during which burning, including prescribed burning, is not prohibited by the State Air Resources Board or by the District pursuant to Section 41855 of the Health and Safety Code, and when burning the lands identified herein has been approved by the District".

AQ-3 Submittal of a smoke management plan shall occur 14 days in advance of the burn. District approval of the smoke management plan shall be obtained at least 72 hours prior

to the burn. Smoke management plans shall contain, at a minimum, the following information:

i. Location, types, and amounts of material to be burned;
ii. Expected date of the fire from ignition to extinction;
iii. Identification of responsible personnel, including telephone contacts; and
iv. Procedures for reporting of public smoke complaints and for public notification and education, including appropriate signage at burn sites.

AQ-4 Vegetation to be burned shall be in a condition that will minimize the smoke emitted during combustion when feasible, considering fire safety and other factors. The material shall be burned in place or stacked loosely, dried and be free of dirt and surface moisture when possible. Piled material shall be prepared so that it will burn with a minimum of smoke.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact with mitigations incorporated.

3.4 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or indirectly 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 Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
b) Have a substantial adverse effect, on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?		X		
c) Have a substantial adverse effect on state or Federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marshes, vernal pools, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?		X		
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 wildlife nursery sites?		X		
e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as tree preservation policy or ordinance?		X		
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?			X	

<u>Setting</u>

Standards for environmental protection and restoration, in the form of laws and regulations, are created within three different organizational levels of government: Federal, State, and Local. The U.S. Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) administer the Navigable Waters Protection Rule, which regulates activities within jurisdictional waters. The federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) provides the legal framework for the listing and protection of species (and their habitats) identified as being

endangered or threatened with extinction. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) maintains a special-status species list, along with regulations governing activities within and around potential habitats for those species. The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty protects migratory, non-game bird species that are native to the United States and its territories.

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), similar to FESA, contains a process for listing of species and regulating potential impacts to listed species. The California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) contains a legal framework to protect biological resources, including animals, plants, and habitats in California. The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) also maintain lists of special-status species and their habitats. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) identifies the environmental review process for all Projects, defined as actions taken by public or private entities requiring discretionary (non-ministerial) permitting. CEQA requires an assessment of existing "baseline" conditions, potential impacts on biological resources by the proposed Project, and appropriate avoidance and mitigation measures to prevent significant impacts to biological resources.

The City of Paso Robles has an adopted Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance (2002), which governs the maintenance, trimming and removal of oak trees by private property owners, tree maintenance services and arborists. While the Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance may not apply to vegetation management for fuel reduction conducted by the City Fire Department, no oak trees are planned to be removed through implementation of the proposed program.

Evaluation

Based on an analysis of known ecological requirements for the special status plant species reported from the region, and the habitat conditions that were observed in the Project area, it was determined that five special status plant species have some potential to occur within the Project area. One special status plant species has a moderate potential to occur (Hardham's evening-primrose) and four species have a low potential to occur (elegant wild buckwheat, Santa Lucia dwarf rush, Davidson's bush mallow, and large-flowered nemacladus).

Additionally, based on an analysis of known ecological requirements for the special-status wildlife species reported or known from the region, and the habitat conditions that were observed in the area of the proposed Project, it was determined that 14 special status animal species have some potential to occur within the proposed vegetation management area. Six special status species were detected in the Project area (Western pond turtle, oak titmouse, bald eagle, osprey, yellow warbler, and Lawrence's goldfinch). Four species have a high potential to occur (Northern California legless lizard, pallid bat, hoary bat, and steelhead). Three species have a moderate potential to occur (great blue heron, Monterey dusky-footed wood rat, and coast horned lizard), and one species has a low potential to occur in the Project area (Least Bell's vireo). See the Biological Report in Appendix D for further information on potentially occurring sensitive species.

The Project entails vegetation management for the purpose of fire fuel reduction. As discussed in Section 1.4, vegetation management will be focused in areas on the east and west sides of the riparian corridor and in firebreaks crossing east-west across the corridor under road bridges, primarily in and

around areas where maintenance occurred in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 1.4-2). Vegetation maintenance will avoid as much as possible potentially sensitive habitat including the wetted channel, riparian vegetation associated with wetted channels, wetlands, and surface water.

There are eight types of habitats present within the 418-acre Action Area: mature riparian, agricultural, annual grassland, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, developed, and marsh purslane wetland (Figure 3.4-1). Vegetation maintenance is likely to occur in mature riparian, annual grassland, and oak woodland habitats. Vegetation maintenance activities are unlikely to occur in agricultural, riverwash, wetted channel, developed, and marsh purslane wetland habitats. However, the Salinas River is a dynamic system, and as the course of the river changes from year to year, vegetation maintenance in these areas may occasionally be necessary.

The proposed Project has potential to affect other sensitive biological resources, including nesting birds, special status mammals, reptiles, and fish, and special status plants. Mitigation measures are recommended to reduce potential impacts to sensitive biological resources. This section provides mitigation recommendations (BIO) designed to reduce impacts to biological resources onsite, as summarized by Table BIO-1.

TABLE BIO-1. IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS SUMMARY

Biological Resource	Level of Significance	Recommended Mitigation Measures
Wetted channel and marsh purslane wetland	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-1
Mature riparian	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-2 through BIO-5
Agricultural	Less than Significant	N/A
Annual grassland	Less than Significant	N/A
Riverwash	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-2 through BIO-5
Oak woodland	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-2 through BIO-5
Developed	Less than Significant	N/A
Special Status Plants	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-6
Nesting Birds	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-7
Special Status Animals	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-8 through BIO-15

Biological Resource	Level of Significance	Recommended Mitigation Measures
Habitat Connectivity	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-1 through BIO-5

There are eight types of habitats present within the Action Area: mature riparian, agricultural, annual grassland, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, developed, and marsh purslane wetland. The proposed Project could temporarily affect all of those habitat types via vegetation trimming. Mitigation is not required for impacts to agricultural, annual grassland, and developed habitats that do not support special status species. Temporary impacts in the form of vegetation trimming could potentially occur to mature riparian, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, and marsh purslane wetland, which would require mitigation. Temporary impacts to low-growing and/or herbaceous vegetation outside the low-flow channel will not be mitigated. This includes predominantly non-native annual grasses and weedy forbs which comprise light flashy fuels, and which are most likely to be mowed or grazed. Additionally, treatment of vegetation in upland areas above the floodplain will not be mitigated. The treatment of weedy/herbaceous vegetation and upland vegetation will not adversely affect sensitive species, beneficial uses, or water quality, and therefore do not merit mitigation. Refer to HYD-30 in Section 3.10 for definitions of low-flow channel, active channel, and floodplain.

3.4.1 Wetted Channel and Marsh Purslane Wetland

Temporary impacts in the form of vegetation trimming could possibly occur in the wetted channel or marsh purslane wetland, although vegetation management activities will avoid these habitats whenever feasible. The following mitigation measure is recommended to reduce potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on native vegetation within the wetted channel and marsh purslane wetland.

BIO - 1 Impacts due to trimmed native vegetation within the wetted channel and marsh purslane wetland (i.e., in the low-flow channel) shall be mitigated through on-site riparian habitat restoration at a 1:1 ratio. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent.

3.4.2 Mature Riparian, Riverwash, and Oak Woodland

Temporary impacts in the form of trimming of shrubs and/or trees could occur within mature riparian, riverwash, and oak woodland habitat. The following mitigation measures are recommended to reduce potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on these habitats.

BIO - 2 Impacts due to trimmed native vegetation within the low-flow channel shall be mitigated through on-site habitat restoration at a 1:1 ratio. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent.

BIO - 3 Impacts to tree and shrubs (as measured by area of canopy trimmed) within the active channel of the Salinas River shall be mitigated through habitat restoration, and/or the

removal of non-native vegetation (i.e., tree of heaven or giant reed) and/or the removal of trash at a 1:1 ratio. Mitigation sites will be located on City property and/or properties protected from development in perpetuity, and will be located along the Salinas River, its floodplain, and/or its tributaries. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent. Removed non-native trees and giant reed must show no sign of resprouting three years after removal. Trash removal would occur in and around encampments of unhoused people, preferentially in the active channel.

BIO - 4 Impacts to tree and shrubs (as measured by area of canopy trimmed) within the floodplain of the Salinas River shall be mitigated through habitat restoration, and/or the removal of non-native vegetation (i.e., tree of heaven or giant reed) and/or the removal of trash at a 0.5:1 ratio. Mitigation sites will be located on City property and/or properties protected from development in perpetuity, and will be located along the Salinas River, its floodplain, and/or its tributaries. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent. Removed non-native trees and giant reed must show no sign of resprouting three years after removal. Trash removal would occur in and around encampments of unhoused people.

BIO - 5 The removal of any native trees or shrubs 4 inches or greater in diameter at breast height (dbh) shall be mitigated by replacing those trees and shrubs in kind at a 3:1 ratio (trees planted to trees removed) and a revegetation plan will be prepared and submitted to agencies (RWQCB, CDFW) for approval. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent.

3.4.3 Potential Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters

Potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waters occur in the Action Area. Only temporary impacts in the form of vegetation trimming would occur within these areas; no ground disturbance, fill, or permanent impacts would occur. Temporary impacts to vegetation within jurisdictional wetlands and waters would be reduced and mitigated by implementing measures BIO-1 though BIO-5 above.

A formal wetland delineation will be necessary if future project activities are proposed that may result in the fill of aquatic features. Wetland delineations should be conducted according to state and federal standards to determine the extent of Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 wetlands and waters under jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Section 401 waters and wetlands under jurisdiction of the State Water Resource Control Board.

3.4.4 Oak Trees

Temporary impacts to oak trees may occur via vegetation trimming. Temporary impacts to oaks would be mitigated via implementation of BIO-2 through BIO-4 above. Removal of oak trees is not planned, but could potentially occur depending on fuel management requirements. Trimming or removal of oak trees is regulated by the City of Paso Robles oak tree preservation ordinance (El Paso de Robles Municipal Code 10.01.010) that specifies standards and mitigation.

3.4.5 Special Status Plants

Special status plants were not detected within the Action Area, but potential habitat exists for five special status plant species, and botanical surveys were conducted outside the bloom period for all potential species except elegant buckwheat. Temporary impacts to special status plants could occur via vegetation management activities including mowing or grazing. The following mitigation measure is recommended to avoid potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on special status plants:

BIO - 6 Prior to vegetation management activities, sensitive plant surveys shall be conducted within proposed work areas that contain potential habitat for sensitive plants. If surveys do not locate sensitive plants, Project activities may be conducted. If sensitive plants are located, the location of the plants shall be mapped and flagged in the field, and no vegetation trimming shall occur within an 25 foot radius of the plant(s). If grazing is proposed in the location of the sensitive plant(s), browse cages or other grazing exclosures shall be erected around the plant(s) to protect it from grazing.

3.4.6 Nesting Birds

Impacts to or take of nesting birds could occur if vegetation management is conducted during nesting season (March 1 through August 31). To reduce potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on nesting birds, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 7 Within one week of vegetation management activities, if work occurs between March 1 and August 31, nesting bird surveys shall be conducted. If surveys do not locate nesting birds, Project activities may be conducted. If nesting birds are located, no Project activities shall occur within 250 feet of non-raptor nests or 500 feet of raptor nests until chicks are fledged. A pre-activity survey report shall be submitted to the lead agency immediately upon completion of the survey. The report shall detail appropriate fencing or flagging of the buffer zone and make recommendations on additional monitoring requirements. A map of the Project site and nest locations shall be included with the report. The Project biologist conducting the nesting survey shall have the authority to reduce the recommended buffer depending upon site conditions.

3.4.7 Special Status Birds

Several species of special status birds could occur within the Action Area (great-blue heron, oak titmouse, bald eagle, yellow warbler, Lawrence's goldfinch, osprey, and least Bell's vireo). If these species nest within the Action Area, impacts could occur if vegetation management is conducted during nesting season (March 1 through August 31). In addition to implementing BIO-7 above, to further reduce and minimize potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on nesting special status birds, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 8 Occupied nests of special status non-raptor bird species that are within 250 feet of Project work areas or nests of special status raptor species within 500 feet of work areas shall be monitored at least weekly through the nesting season to document nest success and check for Project compliance with buffer zones. Once nests are deemed inactive and/or chicks

have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest, work may commence in these areas. Nest monitoring shall no longer be necessary once Project activities are completed within the vicinity of the nest.

To avoid impacts to the federally listed least Bell's vireo, the following mitigation measure is recommended:

BIO - 9 Project maintenance activities within suitable least Bell's vireo (LBV) habitat along the Salinas River shall not be conducted from April 1 through August 31 unless a survey for nesting LBV is completed by a qualified biologist. If a survey is required, suitable LBV habitat shall be surveyed according to the following guidelines, taken from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2001) survey guidelines:

- Surveys shall be conducted between dawn and 11:00 am and shall not be conducted during inclement weather.
- Surveyors should not survey more than 3 linear kilometers or more than 50 hectares of LBV habitat on any given survey day.
- All LBV detections shall be recorded and mapped, and data pertaining to vireo breeding status and distribution shall be noted and recorded.
- The numbers and locations of all brown-headed cowbirds detected within LBV territories shall be recorded and reported.
- Survey results shall be provided to CDFW prior to commencing any Project-related activities in the Salinas River. Any and all LBV detections shall be reported to USFWS as soon as possible.

If no LBV are found after the initial survey, no further action is required. If LBV are observed within the proposed work area, the following steps shall be taken:

- If LBV are detected but nesting is not confirmed, Project-related activities in potential LBV habitat shall be monitored by a qualified biologist. If a LBV is observed within the work area, Project activities shall halt, and no further work shall occur within that area.
- Further LBV surveys shall be conducted within suitable habitat according to the timing described in the USFWS protocol.
- If any LBV nesting activity is found, nests and nest trees shall be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and protected with a minimum 500-foot ESA buffer during any Project-related activities. Project activities shall not commence within the ESA buffer until the young have fledged and are no longer reliant on the nest site or parental care, as determined by a qualified biologist and confirmed in writing by CDFW.

3.4.8 Special Status Reptiles

There is potential for rare reptiles to occur within the Action Area, including Northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, and Western pond turtle. Species specific mitigation measures are discussed below.

Legless Lizards

Northern California legless lizards may be present within the Action Area. No ground-disturbing activities are proposed as part of vegetation maintenance activities, but legless lizards could be harmed by being run over by motorized equipment or impacted by prescribed burns. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to legless lizards due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 10 A focused pre-activity survey for legless lizards shall be conducted where potentially impactful Project activities (use of motorized equipment, prescribed burn) will be conducted in potentially suitable habitat, as determined by the Project biologist. The preconstruction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with legless lizard ecology and survey methods, and with approval from CDFW to relocate legless lizards out of harm's way. The scope of the survey shall be determined by a qualified biologist and shall be sufficient to determine presence or absence in the work areas. Loose substrate in which lizards could bury themselves shall be gently raked with a hand tool to a depth of 2 inches to locate any lizards that could be under the surface. If the focused survey results are negative, no further action shall be required. If legless lizards are found to be present in the proposed work areas, they shall be captured by hand by the Project biologist and relocated to an appropriate location at least 100 feet upstream or downstream and outside the work areas. A letter report shall be submitted to CDFW within 30 days of legless lizard relocation, or as directed by CDFW.

Coast Horned Lizard

Coast horned lizards may be present within the Action Area in sandy washes. They could be harmed by being run over by motorized equipment, or impacted by prescribed burns. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to horned lizards due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 11 A pre-activity survey for coast horned lizard shall be conducted where potentially impactful Project activities (use of motorized equipment, prescribed burn) will be conducted in potentially suitable habitat, as determined by the Project biologist. Surveys shall take place immediately prior to Project activities. The survey should be conducted on foot by a qualified biologist with approval from CDFW to relocate horned lizards out of harm's way. If the survey results are negative, no further action shall be required. If horned lizards are found to be present in the work areas, they shall be captured by hand by the Project biologist and relocated to an appropriate location well outside the Project areas. A letter report shall be submitted to CDFW within 30 days of horned lizard relocation, or as directed by CDFW.

Western Pond Turtle

Western pond turtles are known to occur within the Action Area in areas of perennial water, including the Salinas River and ponds. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to pond turtles due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 12 A pre-activity survey shall be conducted within 48 hours prior to starting work within 100 feet of habitats likely to support western pond turtle such as ponds, wetlands with standing water, or wetted channels, as determined by the Project biologist. The survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist approved by CDFW to relocate pond turtles should they occur. If the survey results are negative, no further action shall be required. If pond turtles are located during the pre-activity survey, they shall be captured by hand by the Project biologist and relocated to suitable habitat upstream or downstream of the work area. A letter report shall be submitted to CDFW within 30 days of pond turtle relocation, or as directed by CDFW.

3.4.9 Special Status Mammals

There is potential for special status mammals to occur within the Action Area, including pallid bat, hoary bat, and Monterey dusky-footed woodrat. Potential impacts and mitigation measures are discussed below.

Special Status Bats
Pallid bats may occur in the Action Area under bridges and in hollows of large trees. Hoary bats have potential to roost in the foliage or hollows of medium to large trees within the Action Area in mature riparian and oak woodland habitats, including cottonwoods, red willows, and oaks. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to bats due to proposed Project activities, the following measure is recommended:

BIO - 13 Within two weeks of vegetation management activities, a pre-activity survey for roosting bats shall be conducted within proposed work areas containing potential roosting habitat. If surveys do not locate roosting bats, Project activities may be conducted. If bat roosting is found, roosts shall be protected with a flagged 25-foot no-disturbance buffer. The Project biologist conducting the nesting survey shall have the authority to reduce the recommended buffer depending upon site conditions.

Woodrats
Monterey dusky-footed woodrats may be present within the Action Area in forested areas with dense understory. Project activities such as brush-thinning have the potential to impact woodrat nests. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to woodrats due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 14 A pre-activity survey shall be conducted within proposed work areas to locate woodrat nests. The survey shall be conducted within 30 days of starting any vegetation removal. If a woodrat nest is located in a proposed work area, the Project biologist may dismantle the nest using hand tools in such a manner as to allow any inhabitants to escape into adjacent open space areas. Alternatively, if the nest is in a location where it may be safely left in place without increasing fire risk, protective fencing may be installed under the direction of a Project biologist in a manner sufficient to protect the nest from vegetation maintenance equipment.

3.4.10 Steelhead

Steelhead are known to occur within the Salinas River within the Action Area. Temporary impacts to steelhead habitat may occur via loss of shade over the channel due to vegetation trimming. These impacts will be mitigated via implementation of BIO-1 through BIO-3 above. In addition to implementing those mitigation measures, to further reduce and minimize potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on steelhead, the following measure is recommended.

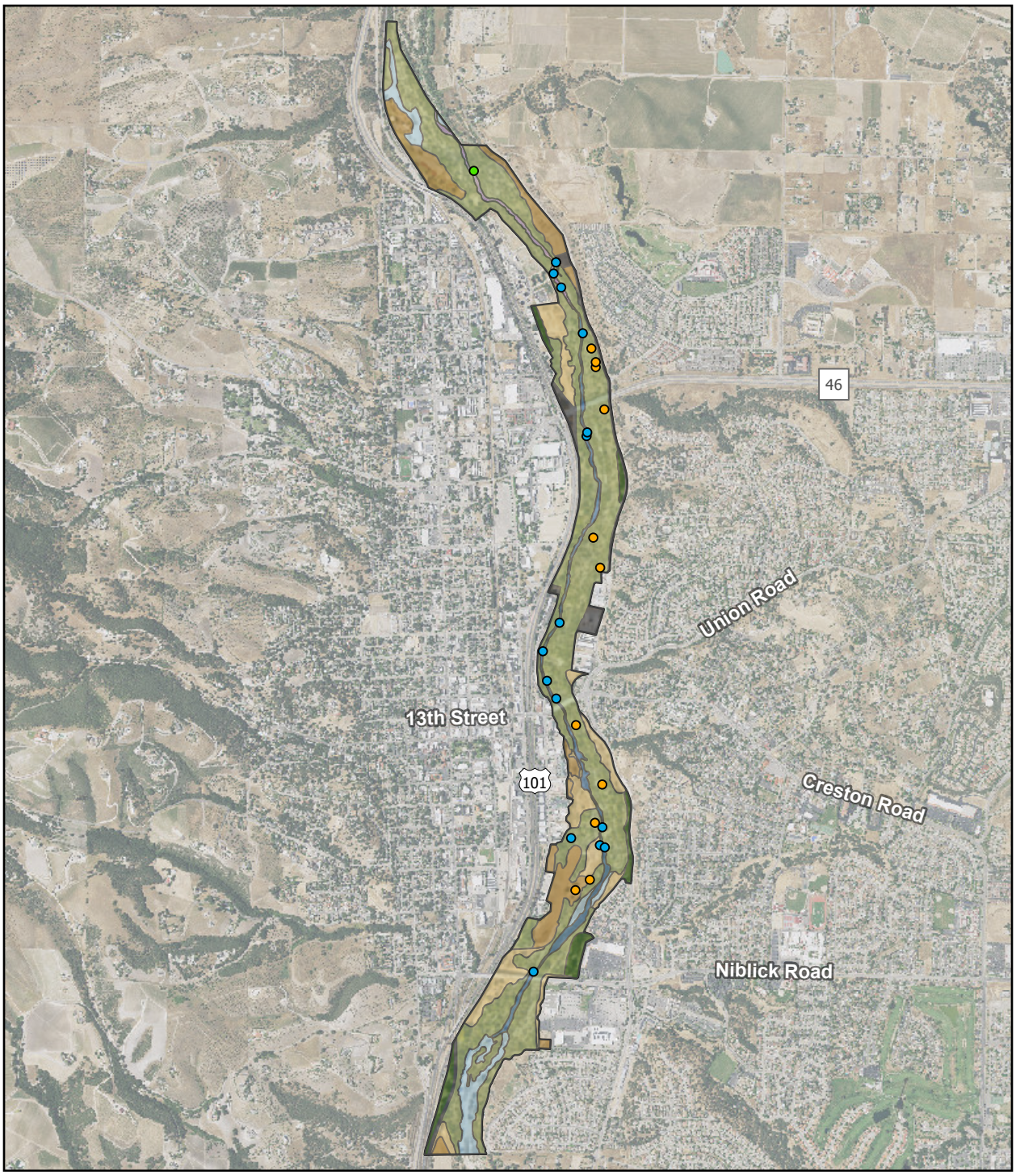
BIO - 15 Project activities shall only be completed when work areas are naturally dry. No Project activities will occur within the wetted channel. No sediment removal shall occur in the Salinas River, and vegetation trimming or removal shall not result in the creation of pits on the riverbed or bank.

3.4.11 Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Movement

Temporary impacts to habitat connectivity and wildlife movement within the Action Area could occur due to vegetation maintenance activities. Temporary impacts to habitat connectivity and wildlife movement would be mitigated via implementation of BIO-1 through BIO-5 above.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact with mitigations incorporated.

Figure 3.4-1 Biological Resources



Legend

- Action Area (418 ac)
- Annual Grassland
- Agricultural Wetted
- Channel
- River Wash
- Marsh Purslane Wetland
- Mature Riparian
- Oak Woodland
- Developed
- Stick Nest
- Beaver Dam
- Pools / Ponds

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles - Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:50 PM by KRN

3.5 CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historic resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?				X
b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to Section 15064.5?		X		
c) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?		X		

Setting

An historic, architectural, archaeological, or cultural resource under CEQA is considered "historically significant" if it is eligible for designation as a California Historical Landmark or a California Point of Historic Interest or is eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR). Although they are related, each designation has slightly different criteria. The four criteria for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources are as follows:

1. Associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history or the cultural heritage of California or the United States.
2. Associated with the lives of persons important to local, California or national history.
3. Embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region or method of construction or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values.
4. Has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California or the nation.

Resources listed in National Register of historic places or as California Historical Landmarks or Points of Historical Interest are also listed in the California Register.

If an archaeological site is not considered a significant resource under the criteria of the California Register of Historical Resources, it may still meet the definition of a "unique archaeological resource" under CEQA, and should be treated as significant. A unique archaeological resource is defined as an archaeological artifact, object, or site about which it can be clearly demonstrated that there is a high probability that it meets any of the following criteria:

1. Contains information needed to answer important scientific research questions, with a demonstrable public interest in that information.
2. Has a special and particular quality such as being the oldest or best available example of its type.

3. Is directly associated with a scientifically recognized important prehistoric or historic event or person.

Archaeological resources that do not meet any of the criteria of the CRHR, nor qualify as a "unique archaeological resource" under CEQA, are viewed as not significant. Under CEQA, "A non-unique archaeological resource need be given no further consideration, other than the simple recording of its existence by the lead agency if it so elects."

The City of Paso Robles Historic Preservation Ordinance states that a building, structure, object or site may be designated as a Historic Landmark if it possesses sufficient character-defining features, integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling or association and meets at least of the following criteria:

- It reflects special elements of the City's historical, archeological, cultural, social, economic, aesthetic, engineering or architectural development;
- It is identified with persons or events significant in local, state or national history;
- It embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction, or it is a valuable example of the use of indigenous materials or craftsmanship; or whether the building or structure represents an established and familiar visual feature of a neighborhood or community of the city; or
- It has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the history or prehistory of Paso Robles, California or the nation.

Additionally, the City of Paso Robles Conservation Element (2003) contains goals, policies and action items to ensure the preservation and protection of cultural and archaeological resources:

GOAL C-6: Cultural Resources. Strive to preserve/protect important historic and archeological resources.

<u>POLICY C-6B</u>: Archaeological Resources: Strive to preserve/protect "unique archaeological resources" as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Action Item 1. Require the preparation of archaeological studies and/or preliminary evaluation reports for new developments that are subject to CEQA and the site could potentially contain a "unique archaeological resource." Incorporate mitigation measures identified by such studies into the development.

<u>Regional Setting</u>

Archaeological evidence demonstrates that Native Americans have occupied the Central Coast of California for at least 10,000 years. Central Coast prehistory is divided into seven periods (Jones et al. 1994; Jones and Waugh 1995). Fluted points recovered from Santa Margarita and Nipomo suggest that humans used the San Luis Obispo County interior as early as the terminal Pleistocene/early Holocene era (13,500 to 10,000 BP) during the early portion of the Paleoindian/Paleocoastal period (Mills et al. 2005). Arguably the oldest known settlement in San

Luis Obispo County, CA-SLO-1797 (the Cross Creek Site) located in the area of Lopez Lake, was first occupied around 10,000 years ago (Fitzgerald 2000).

The Project site is located in an area historically occupied by the Salinan and Chumash peoples (Kroeber 1953). The routes currently followed by State Route (SR) 41 and SR 46 were originally major aboriginal roads used for travel and trade for thousands of years, with resulting intermarriage between the Salinan and Yokuts people from the east (Davis 1961). Traditional hunter-gatherers, the Salinans developed complex societies adapted to changing environmental and social conditions of the area. Land use and settlement patterns interpreted from archaeological evidence suggest that people of northeastern San Luis Obispo County lived in mobile bands more similar to ethnographic Great Basin cultures, in contrast to semi-sedentary inhabitants of well-watered areas west of the Salinas River (Milliken and Johnson 2002; Morro Group 2006).

The Chumash occupied the region from San Luis Obispo County to Malibu Canyon on the coast, and inland as far as the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley, and the four northern Channel Islands (Grant 1978). The Chumash are subdivided into factions based on six distinct dialects: Barbareño, Ventureño, Purisimeño, Ynezeño, Obispeño, and Island. The Obispeño were the northernmost Chumash group, occupying much of San Luis Obispo County, including the Paso Robles area (Gibson 1983). The name Obispeño is derived from the mission with local jurisdiction, San Luis Obispo de Tolosa.

Chumash populations were decimated by the effects of European colonization and missionization (Johnson 1987). Traditional lifeways largely gave way to laborer jobs on ranches and farms in the Mexican and early American periods. Today, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is the only federally recognized Chumash tribe, though many people of Chumash descent continue to live throughout their traditional territory.

The City of Paso Robles was formally incorporated in 1889. The City's early development is closely associated with its connection to the missions and location along El Camino Real, the artesian hot springs, tourism, ranching, and agricultural activity (El Paso de Robles Historical Society 2020). Later development was driven by the completion of U.S. Highway 101 (U.S. 101) and the establishment of the nearby military base at Camp Roberts. Paso Robles' architectural heritage includes resources from several periods of the city's development.

Tribal Consultation. In July 2015, the legislature added new requirements to the CEQA process regarding tribal cultural resources pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, 2014). By including tribal consultation and evaluation of cultural resources early in the CEQA process, the legislature intended to ensure that local and Tribal governments, public agencies, and project proponents would have information available, early in the project planning process, to identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources. By taking this proactive approach, the legislature also intended to reduce the potential for delay and conflicts in the environmental review process.

The Public Resources Code now establishes that "[a] project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." (Pub. Resources Code, § 21084.2.) To help determine

whether a project may have such an effect, the Public Resources Code requires a lead agency to consult with any California Native American tribe that requests consultation and is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project. That consultation must take place prior to the determination of whether a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report is required for a project. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21080.3.1.) If a lead agency determines that a project may cause a substantial adverse change to tribal cultural resources, the lead agency must consider measures to mitigate that impact. Public Resources Code §20184.3 (b)(2).

Evaluation

The vegetation management activities included in the Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project will occur in an area historically occupied by the Salinan and Chumash peoples. No historic structures are present within the Project area. Tribal representatives of the Chumash, Salinan, Yokut and Southern Valley Yokut tribes were consulted as part of the cultural resource impact analysis, and a Phase I Inventory Survey was completed by the California Native American Heritage Commission (December 14, 2020). Based upon a careful review of the results of a Cultural Resource Record Search conducted at the Central Coast Information Center (CCIC) at the University of Santa Barbara (January 8, 2021), two sites are located within the Salinas River Vegetation Management Program area. No ground disturbing activities are included in the vegetation management program, therefore, no adverse effects upon any recorded archaeological sites are anticipated.

Because the Project includes no grading or ground-disturbing activities, the possibility of encountering archaeological resources during vegetation management is unlikely. However, previously unknown prehistoric archaeological deposits could be encountered in the Project area. Therefore, mitigation measures are included to ensure protection of cultural resources that may be found during vegetation management activities:

CR – 1. The field archaeologist will conduct awareness training for the field crew and supervisors. This will include a description of the types of artifacts that may .be encountered and a discussion of why these are of importance to the Native American community, as well as for an understanding of our local history. Pertinent laws and regulations protecting archaeological sites will be briefly reviewed and any archaeologists monitoring methods will be explained.

CR – 2. In the event that archaeological resources are exposed during vegetation abatement activities, all work shall be halted within 50 feet of the archaeological discovery until a qualified archaeologist can visit the site of discovery and assess the significance of the resource. If the resources are found to be significant, they must be avoided during all future abatement work.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

3.6 ENERGY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources during project construction or operation?				X
b) Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency?				X

Setting

Energy policy is governed by federal, state, and local policies. The U.S. Energy Policy Act of 2005 intends to reduce reliance on non-renewable energy resources and provide incentives to reduce current demand on these resources. For example, under this Act, consumers and businesses can obtain federal tax credits for purchasing fuel-efficient appliances and products (including hybrid vehicles), building energy-efficient buildings, and improving the energy efficiency of commercial buildings. Additionally, existing federal laws governing fuel efficiency standards for on-road motor vehicles are continuously evolving.

In 2002, the California Legislature passed Senate Bill 1389, which required the California Energy Commission (CEC) to develop an integrated energy plan every two years for electricity, natural gas, and transportation fuels. The plan calls for the State to assist in the transformation of the transportation system to improve air quality, reduce congestion, and increase the efficient use of fuel supplies with the least environmental and energy costs. The CEC recently adopted the 2017 Integrated Energy Policy Report, which provides the results of the CEC's assessments of a variety of energy issues facing California related to climate, energy, air quality, and other environmental goals. The 2017 Integrated Energy Policy Report covers a broad range of topics, including resource planning, distributed energy resources, energy efficiency, transportation electrification, barriers faced by disadvantaged communities, demand response, transmission and landscape-scale planning, renewable and natural gas, and climate adaptation and resiliency.

The City of Paso Robles General Plan Conservation Element includes one goal related to energy conservation: "Goal C-7: Energy Conservation, Encourage the conservation of energy resources". To achieve this goal, Policy C-7A states, "Investigate and implement as feasible, energy conservation measures." Additionally, the City of Paso Robles' Climate Action Plan Measure E-5: Energy Efficient Public Realm Lighting Requirements states "require the use of high efficiency lights in parking lots, streets, and other public areas."

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of vegetation management for fuel reduction, located within the Salinas River corridor in the urban area of the City of Paso Robles. No development is proposed with the Project. Energy use associated with Project activities will be minimal. Hand and mechanized tools, along with routine Fire Department vehicle trips to and from the Project area will not result in a potentially significant adverse impact on energy use, nor will the Project conflict with or obstruct any state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

Conclusion: No impact.

3.7 GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including risk of loss, injury or death involving:				X
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.				X
ii. Strong seismic ground shaking?				X
iii. Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction?				X
iv. Landslides?				X
b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?				X
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 landslides, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?				X
d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property?				X
e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?				X
f) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?				X

Setting

The City of Paso Robles is located within a seismically active geological region. A number of geologic faults, including the Sur-Nacimiento, Rinconada, and San Andreas fault zones run generally northwest through the area. Regional faults are identified in the City's General Plan Safety Element (2014), as well as the County of San Luis Obispo's General Plan Safety Element (2014). Soil types vary throughout the City. Portions of the City of Paso Robles are susceptible to seismic ground shaking, ground failure, liquefaction, and landslides.

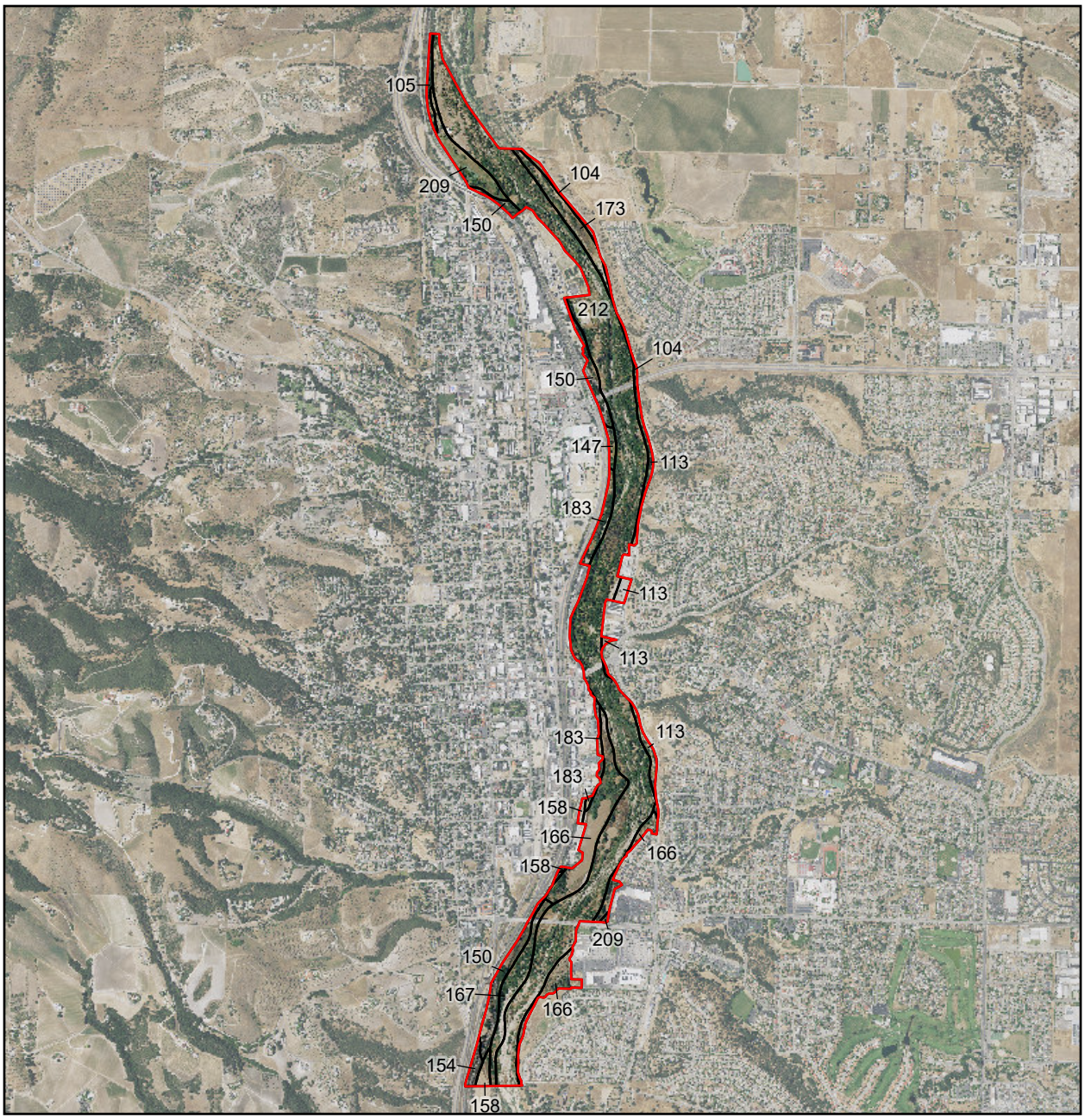
Two mapped geologic formations constitute the primary formations in the Project area: the Quaternary Alluvium bordering streams and rivers, and the Plio-Pleistocene Paso Robles Formation. The Alluvium is typically no more than 100 feet thick and comprises coarse sand and gravel with some fine-grained deposits. The Alluvium is generally coarser than the Paso Robles Formation, with higher permeability. The Paso Robles Formation constitutes the major geologic formation, with depths up to 3,000 feet thick in some places. This formation comprises relatively thin, often discontinuous sand and gravel layers interbedded with thicker layers of silt and clay. The formation is typically unconsolidated and generally poorly sorted. The sand and gravel beds in the Paso Robles Formation have lower permeability compared to the overlying Alluvium. Underlying and surrounding these formations are various geologic formations including Tertiary-age or older consolidated sedimentary beds, Cretaceous-age metamorphic rocks, and granitic rock.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No ground disturbing activities or structural development are included in the vegetation management program. Therefore, the Project will result in no soil loss, erosion, or destruction of any paleontological or geologic features. Soils in the Project area consist of sandy, shaley, and gravelly loams, clay and loamy sands and complex soils. Although the alluvial soils of the Salinas River corridor are susceptible to ground shaking and liquefaction during seismic events (City of Paso Robles Safety Element 2014), no impacts to resources would occur during such events, as no structural elements, including any buildings, flatwork, water or wastewater tanks, utility lines, or any other improvements are proposed with the Project.

Conclusion: No impact.

Figure 3.7-1 USDA Soil Survey



Soil Type	Study Area
100 - Arbuckle fine sandy loam, 0 to 2% slopes	<1%
104 - Arbuckle-Positas complex, 30 to 50% slopes	1%
105 - Arbuckle-Positas complex, 50 to 75% slopes	<1%
113 - Balcom-Calleguas complex, 50 to 75% slopes	3%
147 - Hanford and Greenfield soils, 0 to 2% slopes	<1%
150 - Hanford and Greenfield gravelly sandy loams, 2 to 9%	6%
152 - Linne-Calodo complex, 9 to 30% slopes	<1%
154 - Linne-Calodo complex, 50 to 75% slopes	<1%
158 - Lockwood shaly loam, 2 to 9% slopes	1%
166 - Metz loamy sand, 0 to 5% slopes	11%
167 - Metz-Tujunga complex, occasionally flooded, 0 to 5%	4%
173 - Mocho clay loam, 0 to 2% slopes	3%
183 - Pico fine sandy loam, 0 to 2% slopes	3%
209 - Still clay loam, 2 to 9% slopes	3%
212 - Xerofluvents-Riverwash association	63%

Legend

Action Area (418 ac)

NRCS Soils

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63412°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Source: USDA NRCS Soil Survey

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:46 PM by SAF

3.8 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?			X	
b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases.			X	

Setting

Gases that absorb and re-emit infrared radiation in the atmosphere are called greenhouse gases (GHG). The gases widely seen as the principal contributors to human-induced climate change include carbon dioxide (CO_2), methane (CH_4), nitrous oxides (N_2O), fluorinated gases such as hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) and perfluorocarbons (PFCs), and sulfur hexafluoride (SF_6). Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions are naturally emitted into the atmosphere, but are also produced by human activity, and result in an increase in the earth's average surface temperature. The rise in global temperature is associated with long-term changes in precipitation, temperature, wind patterns, and other elements of the earth's climate system. These changes attributed to GHG emissions, particularly those emissions that result from the human production and use of fossil fuels.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in Massachusetts v. Environmental Protection Agency (2007) that CO_2 and other GHGs are pollutants under the federal Clean Air Act, which the USEPA must regulate if it determines they pose a danger to public health or welfare. In 2009, the USEPA issued a proposed finding that GHGs contribute to air pollution that may endanger public health or welfare. The finding stated that high atmospheric levels of GHGs "are the unambiguous result of human emissions, and are very likely the cause of the observed increase in average temperatures and other climatic changes." The USEPA further found that "atmospheric concentrations of greenhouse gases endanger public health and welfare within the meaning of Section 202 of the Clean Air Act." The final findings were published in the Federal Register on December 15, 2009.

The passage of AB32, the California Global Warming Solutions Act (2006), recognized the need to reduce GHG emissions and set the greenhouse gas emissions reduction goal for the State of California into law. The law required that by 2020, State emissions must be reduced to 1990 levels. This was to be accomplished by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from significant sources via regulation, market mechanisms, and other actions. Subsequent legislation (e.g., SB97-Greenhouse Gas Emissions bill) directed the California Air Resources Board (CARB) to develop statewide thresholds. In 2008, CARB approved a *Climate Change Scoping Plan* as required by AB 32, which proposes a "comprehensive set of actions designed to reduce overall carbon GHG emissions in California, improve our environment, reduce our dependence on oil, diversify our energy sources, save energy, create new jobs, and enhance public health." Additional legislation, such as Senate Bill 375 (the Sustainable Communities and Climate Protection Act of 2008) has continued to develop a

regulatory framework for addressing Greenhouse Gas Emissions. In 2018, the governor issued Executive Order (EO) B-55-18, which established a new statewide goal of achieving carbon neutrality by 2045 and maintaining net negative emissions thereafter. This goal is in addition to the existing statewide GHG reduction targets established by SB 375, SB 32, SB 1383, and SB 100.

In 2020, CARB released a Public Comment Draft of its "Greenhouse Gas Emissions of Contemporary Wildfire, Prescribed Fire, and Forest Management Activities" report, presenting state-wide retrospective estimates of GHG emissions associated with wildfires and prescribed burning activities for the years 2000-2019. This report was required by Senate Bill 901 (2018), which state "The state board, in consultation with the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, shall develop the following: (c) On or before December 31, 2020, and every five years thereafter, a report that assesses greenhouse gas emissions associated with wildfire and forest management activities." The CARB report calculated that prescribed fires, used to reduce the risk of wildfire, resulted in burned acreage and GHG emissions that were two orders of magnitude lower than wildfires (CARB 2020). The average annual CO_2 emissions caused by wildfires over the period 2000-2019 was approximately 14 million metric tons (MMT), versus 0.7 MMT for prescribed burns.

In 2012, the San Luis Obispo County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) approved thresholds for GHG emission impacts, and these thresholds have been incorporated the APCD's CEQA Air Quality Handbook. APCD determined that a tiered process for residential and commercial land use projects was the most appropriate and effective approach for assessing the GHG emission impacts. The tiered approach includes three methods, any of which can be used for any given project:

1. Qualitative GHG Reduction Strategies (e.g., Climate Action Plans): A qualitative threshold that is consistent with AB 32 Scoping Plan measures and goals; or,
2. Bright-Line Threshold: Numerical value to determine the significance of a project's annual GHG emissions; or,
3. Efficiency-Based Threshold: Assesses the GHG impacts of a project on an emissions per capita basis.

While prescribed burning for fire fuel reduction is not regulated under the APCD GHG thresholds (since a major goal and objective of those projects is to reduce wildfire generated emissions), an orienting discussion of APCD GHG thresholds for other types of projects is helpful. For most projects, the Bright-Line Threshold of 1,150 Metric Tons CO_2/year (MT CO_2/year) will be the most applicable threshold. In addition to the residential/commercial threshold options proposed above, a bright-line numerical value threshold of 10,000 MT CO_2/year. was adopted for stationary source (industrial) projects.

It should be noted that projects that generate less than the above-mentioned thresholds will also participate in emission reductions because air emissions, including GHGs, are under the purview of the California Air Resources Board (and other regulatory agencies) and will be "regulated" either by CARB, the Federal Government, or other entities. For example, new vehicles will be subject to increased fuel economy standards and emission reductions, large and small appliances will be subject to more strict emissions standards, and energy delivered to consumers will increasingly come from renewable sources. Other programs that are intended to reduce the overall GHG emissions

include Low Carbon Fuel Standards, Renewable Portfolio standards and the Clean Car standards. As a result, even the emissions that result from projects that produce fewer emissions than the threshold will be subject to emission reductions.

In 2013, the City of Paso Robles adopted its Climate Action Plan for reducing GHG emissions. The Climate Action Plan is a strategic document, prepared pursuant to AB 32. The Climate Action Plan outlines the City's approach to achieving its GHG reduction target of 15 percent below 2005 levels by 2020. The city's Climate Action Plan allows the city to streamline the CEQA review process of certain development projects.
Under CEQA, an individual project's GHG emissions will generally not result in direct significant impacts. This is because the climate change issue is global in nature. However, an individual project could be found to contribute to a potentially significant cumulative impact. Projects that have GHG emissions above the noted thresholds may be considered cumulatively considerable and require mitigation.

Evaluation

Using the GHG threshold information described above, the proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project is expected to generate less than the Bright-Line Threshold of 1,150 metric tons of GHG emissions. Therefore, the Project's potential direct and cumulative GHG emissions are found to be less than significant and less than a cumulatively considerable contribution to GHG emissions. Section 15064(h)(2) of the CEQA Guidelines provide guidance on how to evaluate cumulative impacts. If it is shown that an incremental contribution to a cumulative impact, such as global climate change, is not 'cumulatively considerable', no mitigation is required. Because this Project's emissions fall under the threshold, no mitigation is required. Additionally, the Project will reduce fire fuels, such as woody shrubs and non-native grasses, that contribute significantly to wildfires. Because the limited prescribed burning included with the program is designed to further reduce the risk of uncontrolled wildfire in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI), the Project is anticipated to have a positive impact on the City's overall GHG emissions.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact.

3.9 HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?				X
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?				X
c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?				X
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?				X
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 or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area?				X
f) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
g) Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires?				X

<u>Setting</u>

Hazardous materials include chemicals that could potentially cause harm during an accidental release and are defined as being toxic, corrosive, flammable, reactive, an irritant, or a strong sensitizer. Hazardous substances include all chemicals regulated under the U.S. Department of Transportation's "hazardous materials" regulations and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's "hazardous waste" regulations, including the Federal Toxic Substances Control Act (1976).

Hazardous wastes require special handling and disposal because of their potential to damage public health and the environment. The severity of any such exposure is dependent upon the type, amount, and characteristics of the hazardous material involved; the time, location, and nature of the event; and the sensitivity of the individual or environment affected. The CAEPA's Department of Toxic Substances Control regulates hazardous waste handling in California, along with the California Division of Occupational Safety and Health Administration (CAL-OSHA). The CA Department of Water Resources Regional Water Control Board regulates water quality (see next section).

The City of Paso Robles General Plan Safety Element (SE) and associated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) address hazards posing risks to City infrastructure and residents, including dam failure inundation, drought, earthquake, expansive soils, extreme heat, flood, freeze/extreme cold, hazardous materials, land subsistence, landslide, and wildfire. The City of Paso Robles Fire Department issues and monitors Hazardous Waste Generator Permits. Several policies in the Safety Element pertain directly to hazards:

GOAL S-1: Minimize exposure to natural and manmade hazards.

POLICY S-1B: Disaster Response. Review/Update the community-wide Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Plan on a periodic basis.

Action Item 4. Coordinate with emergency services to evaluate the potential vulnerability of wildfire hazards including accumulation of fuels (such as brush, etc.), and implement measures consistent with the Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to reduce the risk from fire hazards.

POLICY S-1C: Hazardous Exposure Minimization. Minimize hazards to people and property caused by fire, crime, and related services.

Action Item 2. Emergency Services Standards. Maintain a ratio of 0.8 to 1.3 Firefighters per 1,000 population.
Action Item 3. As part of the environmental review of new Specific Plans, require preparation of fire station analysis identifying staffing requirements, station location, and response times.

POLICY S-1E: Hazardous Materials. The City shall comply with Government code requirements regarding the use, storage, and transportation of hazardous materials.

Action Item 1. The City shall continue to require applicant declarations pursuant to Government code section 65.820.2.
Action Item 2. The City shall provide required notices to the County Environmental Health Department.
Action Item 3. Continue implementation of existing programs; add new ones as required.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project does not contain any sites that are included on the "Cortese List" of hazardous material sites (CA Government Code Section 65962.5), and has no potential to expose the public to hazardous materials. The Project will not

involve the use, transportation, disposal, or emission of hazardous materials. The proposed Project is not located within the Paso Robles Airport Influence Area, or near a private airstrip. The Project will not impair emergency response or evacuation. In fact, the intent of the program is to facilitate emergency response and evacuation within the Salinas River corridor.

The Project is located in an area of historic fire risk. Areas where urban development (like commercial or residential uses) abut non-maintained wildland fuels are defined as the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Wildland-Urban Interface areas are those within the vicinity of wildland vegetation, typically with housing densities exceeding one house per 40 acres. The California Fire Alliance defined "vicinity" as all areas within 1.5 miles of wildland vegetation, the anticipated distance that firebrands can be carried from a wildland fire to the roof of a house. The wildland fire risk associated with WUI areas includes propagation of fire throughout WUI communities via house-to-house fire spread, landscaping-to-house fire spread, or ember intrusion. Even relatively small WUI fires in densely developed areas can be very damaging.

Existing urban commercial, industrial, and residential developments are located within approximately one mile east and two miles west of the river. Downtown Paso Robles, and Highway 101 are located West of the Salinas River corridor, while areas East of the river are dominated by residential development. Three major routes of transportation cross the riverbed within the City's jurisdiction: the Niblick Bridge, 13th Street Bridge and Highway 46 Bridge. Past fires in proximity to these transportation routes have caused significant impacts. Vegetation in drainages within the City limits, particularly within the Salinas River corridor, has become dense and overgrown in many areas. This vegetation provides fuel for wildfires, and can increase the risk, intensity, and speed of spread of fires.

The primary purpose of the proposed Project is to maintain vegetation in the Salinas River corridor in order to reduce fire hazard. The Salinas River Vegetation Management Program is designed to minimize hazards related to wildfire risk to watersheds, public and private property, critical infrastructure, firefighters, and the public.

Conclusion: No Impact.

3.10 HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or groundwater quality?		X		
b) Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin?				X
c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would:				
i. Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or offsite;		X		
ii. Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or offsite;				X
iii. 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; or				X
iv. Impede or redirect flood flows?				X
d) In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation?		X		
e) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan?				X

Setting

Federal, state, and local agencies regulate surface and groundwater resources. Water quality regulations are designed to limit the discharge of pollutants into the environment, maintain surface water and groundwater quality, protect fish and wildlife and their habitats, and protect beneficial uses. Beneficial uses include public water supply, fish and wildlife, recreation, agricultural and industrial use.

Surface Water Resources: The Federal Clean Water Act (CWA, 1972) establishes the framework for regulating discharges of pollutants into waters of the United States, thereby regulating quality

standards for surface waters. The purpose of the CWA is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of all "waters of the U.S.", defined, as of June 2020 as a) seas and traditional navigable waters; b) perennial and intermittent tributaries that contribute surface water flow to such waters; c) certain lakes, ponds, and impoundments of jurisdictional waters; and d) wetlands adjacent to other jurisdictional waters.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) authorizes and regulates various types of development projects taking place in waters of the U.S. Under Section 404 of the CWA, USACE has the authority to issue general permits for actions that have minimal individual and cumulative adverse environmental effects on jurisdictional waters, and individual permits for activities that may have more significant environmental effects. A nationwide permit is a general permit that authorizes activities across the country and regulate a wide range of activities, including residential developments, utility lines, road crossings, mining activities, wetland and stream restoration activities, and commercial shellfish aquaculture activities.

The California Department of Water Resources Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulates impacts to water quality in federal waters of the U.S. under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, as well as isolated (non-federal jurisdictional) waters regulated under the state Porter Cologne Act (1969). "Waters of the State" are defined as any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state. Pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, discharge of fill material into waters of the State not subject to the jurisdiction of the USACE may require authorization pursuant to the Porter Cologne Act through application for waste discharge requirements or through waiver of waste discharge requirements. The California State Water Resources Control Board regulates potential discharges associated with construction activities, such as ground clearing, grading, stockpiling and excavation through the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES).

Groundwater Resources: The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regulates groundwater quality primarily through the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA, 1996) and the National Primary Drinking Water Regulations (NPDWR). Under these regulations, the USEPA sets standards for drinking water quality and monitors the states, localities and water suppliers who implement those standards.

In 2014, California enacted the Sustainable Groundwater Management Act (SGMA), which established a statewide program to promote sustainable management of groundwater resources by local agencies. SGMA also established a process and timelines for local agencies to achieve sustainable groundwater management in basins designated as medium or high priority by the State Department of Water Resources (DWR). Through the SGMA process, local groundwater basins are mapped and evaluated for sustainable yield. Programs are then designed, implemented, and monitored to manage groundwater resources sustainably.

The Paso Robles Subbasin lies in the northern portion of San Luis Obispo County. The Subbasin is the southernmost portion of the Salinas Valley Groundwater Basin. As originally defined by DWR (2003), the Subbasin was in both San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. The 2019 DWR basin boundary modification process resulted in a revision of the northern boundary of the Paso Robles

Subbasin to be coincident with the San Luis Obispo/Monterey county line, thereby placing the Subbasin entirely within San Luis Obispo County.

The Subbasin as defined in this GSP encompasses an area of approximately 436,240 acres, or 681 square miles. The majority of the Subbasin comprises gentle flatlands near the Salinas River Valley, ranging in elevation from approximately 450 to 2,400 feet (ft) above mean sea level (AMSL). The Subbasin is a structural trough trending to the northwest filled with terrestrially derived sediments sourced from the surrounding mountains, and is surrounded by relatively impermeable geologic formations, sediments with poor water quality, and structural faults. The Subbasin is drained by the Salinas River and its tributaries, including the Estrella River, Huer Huero Creek, and San Juan Creek. Communities in the Subbasin include the City of Paso Robles and the communities of Cholame, San Miguel, Creston, Whitley Gardens and Shandon.

The top of the Subbasin is defined by land surface. The bottom of the Subbasin is defined by the base of the Paso Robles Formation. Sediments below the base of the Paso Robles Formation are typically much less permeable than the overlying sediments. Although the bedrock sediments often produce usable quantities of groundwater, the water is generally of poor quality, so they are not considered part of the Subbasin. As described in the Groundwater Sustainability Plan (PRSGSP, 2020), the lateral boundaries of the Subbasin include the following:

- The western boundary is defined by the contact between the sediments in the Subbasin and the sediments of the Santa Lucia Range. A portion of the western boundary is defined by the Rinconada fault system which separates the Paso Robles Subbasin from the Atascadero Area Subbasin.
- The eastern boundary of the Subbasin is defined by the contact between the sediments in the Subbasin and the sediments of the Temblor Range. The San Andreas Fault generally forms the eastern Subbasin boundary.
- The southern boundary of the Subbasin is defined by the contact between the sediments in the Subbasin and the sediments of the La Panza Range. To the southeast, a watershed and groundwater divide separates the Subbasin from the adjacent Carrizo Plain Basin; sedimentary layers are likely continuous across this divide.
- The northern boundary of the Subbasin is defined by the San Luis Obispo/Monterey county line.

Two principal aquifers exist in the Subbasin, including the Alluvial Aquifer and the Paso Robles Formation Aquifer. The Alluvial Aquifer is the youngest aquifer. It is unconfined and consists of predominantly coarse- grained sediments (sand and gravel) deposited along Huer Huero Creek, the Estrella River, and the Salinas River. The Alluvial Aquifer varies in thickness but may be up to 100 feet thick along the channels. Much of the Alluvial Aquifer is characterized by relatively high transmissivity that may exceed 100,000 gallons per day, per foot (gpd/ft). Wells screened in the Alluvial Aquifer can be very productive, and may yield over 1,000 gallons per minute (gpm).

The primary components of recharge to the Subbasin aquifers are percolation of precipitation and infiltration of surface water from rivers and streams. Natural discharge from the Subbasin aquifers occurs through springs and seeps, evapotranspiration, and discharge to surface water bodies. The

most significant component of discharge is pumping of groundwater from wells. Annual precipitation is recorded at the Paso Robles weather station (National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration [NOAA] station 46730). The long-term average annual precipitation for the period 1925 through 2019 is 14.6 inches per water year, as recorded at the Paso Robles weather station.

Groundwater elevations in some portions of the Subbasin have been declining for many years, while groundwater elevations in other areas of the Subbasin have remained relatively stable. Historical and current groundwater budgets indicate a persistent groundwater storage decline in the Subbasin in the Paso Robles Formation Aquifer. Similarly, the future groundwater budget suggests continued groundwater storage decline if current water use practices continue. (PRSGSP 2020). The Paso Robles Groundwater Basin has been designated as a high priority basin by the Department of Water Resources.

Evaluation

The Project area includes the Salinas River channel and floodplain as well as unnamed ephemeral drainages and blue line streams that drain the Project area and flow to the Salinas River. Beneficial uses of surface waters of the Salinas River are identified by the DWR as municipal, domestic, agricultural, and industrial process supply; groundwater recharge; contact and non-contact water recreation; wildlife habitat; cold and warm freshwater habitat; migration, spawning, reproduction, and/or early development of aquatic organisms, rare, threatened, or endangered species; and commercial and sport fishing.

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No ground disturbing activities, grading or structural development are included in the vegetation management program, and the Project will not utilize groundwater, introduce impervious surfaces, change drainage patterns or redirect storm flows.

Vegetation management for fire fuel load reduction may result in direct, recurring, temporary impacts to the Salinas River channel and floodplain over an area of approximately 140 acres and 20,026 linear feet. As a result of vegetation management, large woody debris, downed vegetation, and masticated material may be discharged to waters of the state, with the potential to impact water quality and beneficial uses. In addition, vegetation management activities can reduce canopy cover, leading to erosion and sediment discharge, as well as an increase of temperature in waters of the state. Mechanized equipment used for vegetation management and sediment removal can also result in erosion and a discharge of sediment and petroleum products into waters of the state. Livestock used for herbivory treatment can result in discharge of bacteria and introduction of invasive species.

Project activities included in vegetation management can result in partial or complete loss of waters' beneficial uses at those locations, including temporal loss. To reconcile such losses with the "Antidegradation" requirements of State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16, the California Department of Water Resources Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) requires the implementation of a mitigation plan to ensure that Project impacts to beneficial uses are mitigated through avoidance and minimization, and that unavoidable loss of beneficial uses is offset with

appropriate compensatory mitigation (RWQCB Waste Discharge Requirements Order No. R3-2021-0012).

The Waste Discharge Requirements Order (WDR) specifies:
"waste discharge requirements that are necessary to adequately address effects on, and threats to, water quality standards resulting from discharges of waste to waters of the state; to be consistent with antidegradation provisions of State Water Board Resolution No. 68-16; and to accommodate and require appropriate changes during implementation of the Project. ***Through adherence to the waste discharge requirements, the Project, as described in this Order, will not result in violation of state water quality standards****."*

The Waste Discharge Requirements Order (WDR) defines restoration as a combination of rehabilitation and enhancement. Rehabilitation is defined as manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of a site with the goal of repairing natural/historic functions to a degraded aquatic resource, resulting in a gain in aquatic resource function, but not in a gain in aquatic resource area. Enhancement is defined as manipulation of the physical, chemical, or biological characteristics of an aquatic resource to heighten, intensify, or improve a specific aquatic resource function(s), resulting in the improvement of selected aquatic resource function, but not a gain in aquatic resource area.

The (WDR) requires Compensatory Mitigation as included in the revised *Annual Drainage Maintenance Report of Waste Discharge Supplemental Information Report* (January 2021), and the *Mitigation Receiver Sites* selection guidelines (January 8, 2020). Both documents together are referred to as the WDR Mitigation Plan. The WDR Mitigation Plan will adequately compensate for impacts to beneficial uses of waters of the state associated with the Project activities. The Project is required to mitigate for impacts only once for impacts occurring until 2025. Repeat maintenance activities that occur within the footprint of previous maintenance activities of the same type do not require additional mitigation, provided that mitigation was provided for the initial impact.

WDR Findings
Section 13260(a) of the California Water Code requires that any person discharging waste or proposing to discharge waste within any region, other than to a community sewer system, which could affect the quality of the waters of the state1, file a Report of Waste Discharge. The discharge of cut vegetation and disturbed sediment resulting from Project activities constitutes a discharge of waste that could affect the quality of waters of the state.
California Water Code section 13263(a) requires that WDRs be prescribed as to the nature of any proposed discharge, existing discharge, or material change in an existing discharge. Such WDRs must implement any relevant water quality control plans, taking into consideration beneficial uses to be protected, the water quality objectives reasonably required for those purposes, other waste discharges, the need to prevent nuisance, and the provisions of section 13241 of the California Water Code.

The following Waste Discharge Requirements, Provisions, and Mitigations are incorporated into the Mitigated Negative Declaration and shall be required mitigations of the Project:

WDR Requirements, per Order R3-2021-0012:

HYD-1. The discharge of waste shall not create a condition of pollution, contamination, or nuisance, as defined by section 13050 of the California Water Code.

HYD-2. The discharge shall not directly or indirectly destabilize a channel or bed of a receiving water.

HYD-3. The discharge, as mitigated, shall not cause significant adverse environmental impacts.

HYD-4. The discharge shall not cause in combination with other discharges a significant cumulative adverse effect on water quality or beneficial uses of the waters of the state including, but not limited to, wetlands, riparian areas, and headwaters.

HYD-5. Discharges to surface waters of wastes or pollutants that are not otherwise regulated by separate National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) requirements or waste discharge requirements are prohibited.

HYD-6. The discharge of waste classified as "hazardous" or "designated" as defined in Title 22, section 66261 of the CCR, or California Water Code section 13173, is prohibited.

HYD-7. The discharge of sand, silt, clay, or other earthen materials from any activity in quantities that cause deleterious bottom deposits, turbidity, or discoloration in waters of the state or that unreasonably affect, or threaten to affect, beneficial uses of such waters is prohibited.

HYD-8. The dumping, deposition, or discharge of waste directly into waters of the state, or adjacent to such waters in any manner which may permit it being transported into the waters, is prohibited unless authorized by this Order.

WDR Provisions, per Order R3-2021-0012:

HYD-9. The Discharger must comply with all conditions of this Order. Violations may result in enforcement actions, including Central Coast Water Board orders or court orders requiring corrective action or imposing civil monetary liability, or in modification or revocation of these waste discharge requirements by the Central Coast Water Board. (California Water Code sections 13261, 13263, 13265, 13267, 13268, 13300, 13301, 13304, 13330, 13340, 13350, and 23 CCR section 3867). The conditions within this Order supersede conflicting provisions within applicant submittals.

HYD-10. The Discharger must comply with the Basin Plan provisions, including maintaining the protection of beneficial uses and complying with any prohibitions and water quality objectives

governing the discharge. In the event of a conflict between the provisions of this Order and the Basin Plan, the more stringent provisions prevail.

HYD-11. The Discharger shall not commence the proposed maintenance activity until written approval of the Annual Work Plan, submitted by March 15 of each year according to the Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2021-0012, included in this Order, has been obtained from Central Coast Water Board staff. The Discharger shall implement maintenance activities in accordance with the approved Annual Work Plan for each year.

HYD-12. Prior to maintenance activities, the Discharger shall perform the following based on the pre-activity survey conducted in accordance with the ROWD and the Visual Monitoring section of the Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2021-0012, included in this Order:

a. Clearly identify and delineate, by flagging or staking, the boundaries of each maintenance area and points of connection to the channel;
b. Clearly identify and delineate, by flagging or staking, sensitive resources to be avoided, including at a minimum the low-flow channel, riparian vegetation associated with flow channels, wetlands, and surface water;
c. Clearly identify and delineate, by flagging or staking, the boundaries of invasive species removal areas;
d. Evaluate the proposed alignment of each maintenance area compared to field conditions, and adjust the alignment of the maintenance area where maintenance impacts could be reduced without reducing flood control or fire fuel reduction benefits;
e. Identify what treatment/maintenance type will be used for all maintenance areas to achieve the desired flood control and fire fuels reduction conditions, based on visual assessments described in the Fire and Fuel sections below.

HYD-13. During maintenance activities within waters of the state, adequate erosion and sediment control measures (e.g., revegetation, fiber rolls, erosion control blankets, hydromulching, compost, straw with tackifiers) must be kept on site and immediately available for installation. If the National Weather Service predicts a 25% or more chance of at least 0.1 inches of rain within 24 hours (Predicted Rain Event), all maintenance activities within waters of the state must cease and the site manager must install effective erosion and sediment control measures. The Discharger shall install effective erosion control, sediment control, and other protective measures no later than the day prior to the Predicted Rain Event, and prior to the start of any rainfall. Erosion and sediment control measures and other construction BMPs shall be implemented and maintained in accordance with all specifications governing their proper design, installation, operation, and maintenance. Project activities below top of creek banks or in other waters of the state may resume after the rain has ceased, the National Weather Service predicts clear weather for at least 24 hours, and site conditions are dry enough to continue work without discharge of sediment or other pollutants from the Project site.

HYD-14. The Discharger shall not conduct routine flood control and fire fuel load reduction in waters of the state from October 15 through April 14 each year unless prior written approval has been obtained from Central Coast Water Board staff. A Wet Weather Preparedness Plan shall be submitted in the Annual Work Plan (as described in the Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2021-0012, included in this Order). Requests to conduct management activities outside

the work window in any year shall be submitted to Central Coast Water Board staff at least 21 days prior to the planned work date.

HYD-15. The Discharger must confine all recovered and collected trash and debris in appropriate enclosed bins and dispose of the trash and debris at an approved site at least weekly.

HYD-16. Any proposed discharge/maintenance activity that may alter flow patterns and/or change the approved impact footprint is prohibited without Central Coast Water Board staff approval. Not later than thirty (30) days prior to the beginning of any proposed change, the Discharger must submit, for approval by Central Coast Water Board staff, detailed plans and specifications showing the proposed change in relationship to the approved Project.

HYD-17. The City of Paso Robles shall use existing roads, trails, and access ramps to access maintenance areas to the maximum extent practicable. Access routes shall minimize crossings of dry channels to the maximum extent practicable. Where existing ingress and egress points are not sufficient, the City of Paso Robles shall identify specific locations for crossing dry channels prior to commencing work.

a. Equipment shall not be driven through any wetted channel.

b. Care shall be exercised if any heavy equipment needs to cross dry, high-flow channels to ensure that no sediment is pushed into the channel from turning or from moving up or down banks. If sediment is pushed into the channel, within 48 hours it shall be removed, the bank returned to its original contours, and effective erosion control best management practices installed.

c. No heavy tracked equipment shall be used in the drainage channels, Salinas River channel and floodplain, or detention basins. Only handheld equipment such as chainsaws, string trimmers, mowers, or similar equipment shall be used in drainages or detention basins. A backhoe or excavator positioned outside the top of bank may be used to reach into the drainage or basin to remove sediment or material too heavy to be removed by hand. A small excavator may be used for fire fuel load reduction in the Salinas River channel and floodplain.

HYD-18. All vehicles and equipment used on site shall be well maintained and checked daily for fuel, oil, and hydraulic fluid leaks or other problems that could result in spills of toxic materials.

HYD-19. Fueling, lubrication, maintenance, operation, and storage of vehicles and equipment may not result in a discharge or a threatened discharge to water bodies. At no time may the Discharger use vehicles or equipment that leak any substance that might impact water quality. Staging and storage areas for vehicles and equipment must be located 50 feet from the tops of channels and over drip pans. Temporary storage and refueling shall be confined to paved or well-compacted permanent roads and/or parking areas.

HYD-20. The Discharger must, at all times, maintain appropriate types and sufficient quantities of materials onsite to contain any spill or inadvertent release of materials that may cause a condition of pollution or nuisance if the materials reach waters of the state.

HYD-21. All construction-related equipment, materials, and any temporary best management practices no longer needed must be removed and cleaned from the site upon completion of maintenance each year, and at the conclusion of the Project.

HYD-22. Large woody debris, downed vegetation, and masticated material removed from maintenance areas shall be transported outside of the greater channel, and shall be placed in locations outside of waters of the state and in locations where material cannot flow into waters of the state, except as authorized below.

a. Large woody debris and downed vegetation may be temporarily stockpiled within the greater channel, provided that stockpiles (i) shall be placed only in already-disturbed areas; (ii) shall not be placed on native riparian vegetation; and (iii) shall be removed from the greater channel by October 1 of each year unless prior written approval is received from Central Coast Water Board staff.

b. Masticated material discharged within the Salinas River channel and floodplain shall not be placed in locations where it will cause flow obstruction and shall not be discharged in flow channels.

c. Central Coast Water Board staff will consider approval of permanent placement of large woody debris within the greater channel on a case-by-case basis upon written request from the City of Paso Robles.

HYD-23. Areas in the Primary Fire Break will be visually assessed and compared to the Natural Fuels Photo Series and Standard Fire Behavior Fuel Models: A Comprehensive Set for Use with Rothermel's Surface Fire Spread Model to identify and flag areas that require treatment. Fire fuel load reduction shall be conducted annually following the methods in the ROWD (Exhibit 4, *Desired Conditions for Fuel Beds within the Salinas River Fuels Reduction Project*) and described below, using the fuel model types in Table 1:

a. Grass fuel type: reduce fuels loading to no less than 0.4 tons per acre (from GR4 to GR1)
b. Grass-shrub fuel type: reduce fuels loading to no less than 1.35 tons per acre (from GS2 to GS1)
c. Shrub fuel type SH5 (typical of interior islands and areas without tree canopy cover): reduce fuels loading to no less than 3 tons per acre
d. Shrub fuel type SH8 (typical of areas with tree canopy cover and dense understories): reduce fuels loading no less than 2 tons per acre, focusing on ladder fuels.

TABLE HYD-1 FUEL MODEL TYPES

Fuel Model	Description	Fire spread	Tons/Ac.
GR1	Short grass, either naturally or by grazing, and may be sparse or discontinuous.	Spread rate is low, flame length low	0.40
GR4	Nearly pure grass and/or forb; moderately coarse continuous grass, average depth about 2 feet.	Spread rate very high, flame length high	2.15
GS1	Mixture of grass and shrubs combined. Shrubs are about 1 foot high; grass load is low.	Spread rate is moderate, flame length low	1.35
GS2	Mixture of grass and shrub, up to 50 percent shrub coverage; shrubs are 1-3 feet high,	Spread rate high, flame length moderate	2.1

Fuel Model	Description	Fire spread	Tons/Ac.
	moderate grass load.		
SH5	Shrub cover at least 50 percent, grass sparse to nonexistent; heavy shrub load, depth 4 to 6 feet.	Spread rate very high, flame length very high	6.5
SH8	Shrub cover at least 50 percent, grass sparse to nonexistent; dense shrubs, little to no herb fuel, depth about 3 feet.	Spread rate high; flame length high.	6.4

HYD-24. Fire fuel load reduction within the Fire-Break Management Area is not permitted without Central Coast Water Board staff review and approval of the Annual Work Plan (as described in the Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2021-0012, included in this Order).

HYD-25. Native trees and shrubs measuring 4 inches diameter at breast height shall be avoided to preserve canopy cover to the maximum extent possible.

HYD-26. Controlled burns shall be conducted according to the following best management practices:

a. Burn piles will be established, where necessary, on compacted road or parking lots where no vegetation is present. If burn piles are created in other areas, they (i) shall be established in open areas (with no trees), or be sized appropriately as to not negatively impact tree canopy; (ii) shall be placed only in already-disturbed areas; and (iii) shall not be placed in areas of native vegetation.

b. Burn piles will not exceed 20 feet in length, width, or diameter.

c. All pile-burn scars will have native duff, or organic mulch and seed raked into the scar to a minimum 85% coverage as soon as the burn is completely extinguished.

d. Trash and debris (other than cut or masticated vegetation) will be removed each year in advance of burning.

HYD-27. All staff and associated contractors that plan to work within waters of the state must attend annual pre-work training, prior to commencement of their activities, on the conditions of this Order and how to perform their activities in compliance with those conditions. Trainings shall be conducted by a qualified biologist and documented through the use of a sign in sheet.

HYD-28. Livestock used for vegetation management shall be introduced onto riverbed property only after being quarantined outside the City properties for a minimum of 72 hours and fed or grazed on commercially produced bulk feed or agricultural crops so as not to further introduce non-native species. Animals shall be healthy, well-nourished, and free of internal and external parasites. Grazing shall not expose base soil excessively in grassland areas and shall not be conducted when precipitation is occurring or when soils are wet or saturated and subject to compaction.

<u>WDR Mitigations, per Order R3-2021-0012</u>:

HYD-29. The Discharger must implement the Mitigation Plan described in Section 5: Compensatory Mitigation, in the revised *Annual Drainage Maintenance Report of Waste Discharge Supplemental Information Report* dated January 2021, and the *Mitigation Receiver Sites* selection guidelines submitted January 8, 2020 (Exhibits10 and 8, respectively). Both documents together are referred to as the Mitigation Plan. Mitigation maintenance shall occur a minimum of once per year during the monitoring and maintenance period until all success criteria are achieved.

HYD-30. The following definitions shall apply to the vegetation and habitat types impacted by management activities:

a. Grassy or herbaceous riparian: predominantly wild oats and annual brome grasses, forbs, and herb species.
b. Low-flow channel: the principal trunk of a river or stream, also known as the main-stem channel.
c. Active channel: consists of a primary (low-flow or main-stem channel) and one or more secondary channels of varying sizes. The active channel area includes high flow channels and vegetated islands that are exposed at a normal high water stage within the braided high flow channels.
d. Floodplain: a strip of relatively flat land bordering a stream channel that is inundated at times of high water. For the Paso Robles stretch of the Salinas River, areas beyond the active channel and associated riparian edge are floodplain.

HYD-31. Mitigation shall be achieved by a combination of removal of non-native vegetation, removal of trash, and habitat rehabilitation and enhancement. Removal of trash must occur from within the active channel to count towards mitigation and may only comprise a maximum of 10 percent of the required mitigation area. Mitigation shall achieve success criteria described in the Mitigation Plan by the fifth year following mitigation installation. If mitigation measures do not meet their interim or final success criteria, the discharger shall implement remedial measures until such time the interim or final success criteria are met.

HYD-32. Mitigation shall be implemented according to the following ratios:

a. The minimum required rehabilitation to impact ratio for the impacts categorized as trimming of riparian vegetation within the low-flow channels is 1:1. The minimum required rehabilitation and enhancement to impact ratio for the impacts categorized as trimming of tree and shrub canopy within the active channel is 1:1. Mitigation for both of these types of impacts is not permitted to be implemented in areas that will be subject to future fire fuel load reduction activities.
b. For rehabilitation or enhancement implemented in areas that will not be subject to future fire fuel load reduction activities, the minimum required rehabilitation or enhancement to impact ratio for the impacts categorized as trimming of tree and shrub canopy within the floodplain is 0.5:1.
c. For rehabilitation or enhancement implemented within the Salinas River channel where future fire fuel load reduction is managed by grazing, minimum required rehabilitation

or enhancement to impact ratio for the impacts categorized as trimming of tree and shrub canopy within the floodplain is 0.5:1.

d. For rehabilitation or enhancement implemented within the Salinas River channel where future fire fuel load reduction will be managed by mechanical means, minimum required rehabilitation or enhancement to impact ratio for the impacts categorized as trimming of tree and shrub canopy within the floodplain is 1:1.

e. The City shall mitigate for the removal of native trees or shrubs four inches or greater in diameter at breast height by replacing in kind at a 3:1 ratio.

f. No mitigation is required for impacted waters categorized as grassy or herbaceous riparian habitat.

g. No mitigation is required for area of invasive plants removed.

HYD-33. In the Annual Report submitted prior to implementation of mitigation (no later than December 31, 2023), the Discharger shall identify final selected mitigation sites and provide an amended mitigation proposal for Central Coast Water Board staff review and approval. The Discharger shall implement the approved mitigation proposal.

HYD-34. The Discharger must complete installation of mitigation no later than December 31, 2024. Delays in implementing mitigation require an increase in mitigation area by 0.01 acre per 0.1 acre of impact for each month of delay.

HYD-35. If at any time during the implementation and establishment of planted or graded mitigation area(s), and prior to verification of meeting success criteria, a catastrophic natural event (e.g., fire, flood) occurs and impacts the mitigation area, the Discharger is responsible for repair and replanting of the damaged area(s).

HYD-36. Mitigation sites located outside the Salinas River channel and floodplain shall be located on City property and/or properties protected from development in perpetuity. The conservation easement or other appropriate legal limitation must prohibit, without exception, all residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and transportation development, vegetation maintenance, and any other infrastructure development that would not maintain or enhance the habitat functions and values of the mitigation site. Other infrastructure development to be prohibited includes, but is not limited to, additional utility lines, paved maintenance roads, and areas of maintained landscaping for recreation.

HYD-37. Mitigation sites located within the Salinas River channel and floodplain shall be located on City property and/or properties protected from development in perpetuity. The conservation easement or other appropriate legal limitation must prohibit, without exception, all residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and transportation development, and any other infrastructure development that would not maintain or enhance the habitat functions and values of the mitigation site. Other infrastructure development to be prohibited includes, but is not limited to, additional utility lines, paved maintenance roads, and areas of maintained landscaping for recreation. Vegetation maintenance shall not be permitted to be conducted in a manner that will prevent the site from meeting mitigation success criteria. The City of Paso Robles Fire Department shall be consulted on locations and species to ensure that habitat

rehabilitation and enhancement does not contribute to fire risk and will not need to be removed in the future.

HYD-38. No plant species on the most recent California Invasive Plant Council (Cal-IPC) List, "Exotic Pest Plants of Greatest Ecological Concern in California2" may be planted in mitigation areas, waters of the state, vegetated stormwater BMP areas, or other areas used to convey urban runoff and stormwater.

HYD-39. The Discharger must take all reasonable steps to minimize or correct any adverse impact on the environment resulting from noncompliance with this Order, including such accelerated or additional monitoring as may be necessary to determine the nature and impact of the noncompliance.

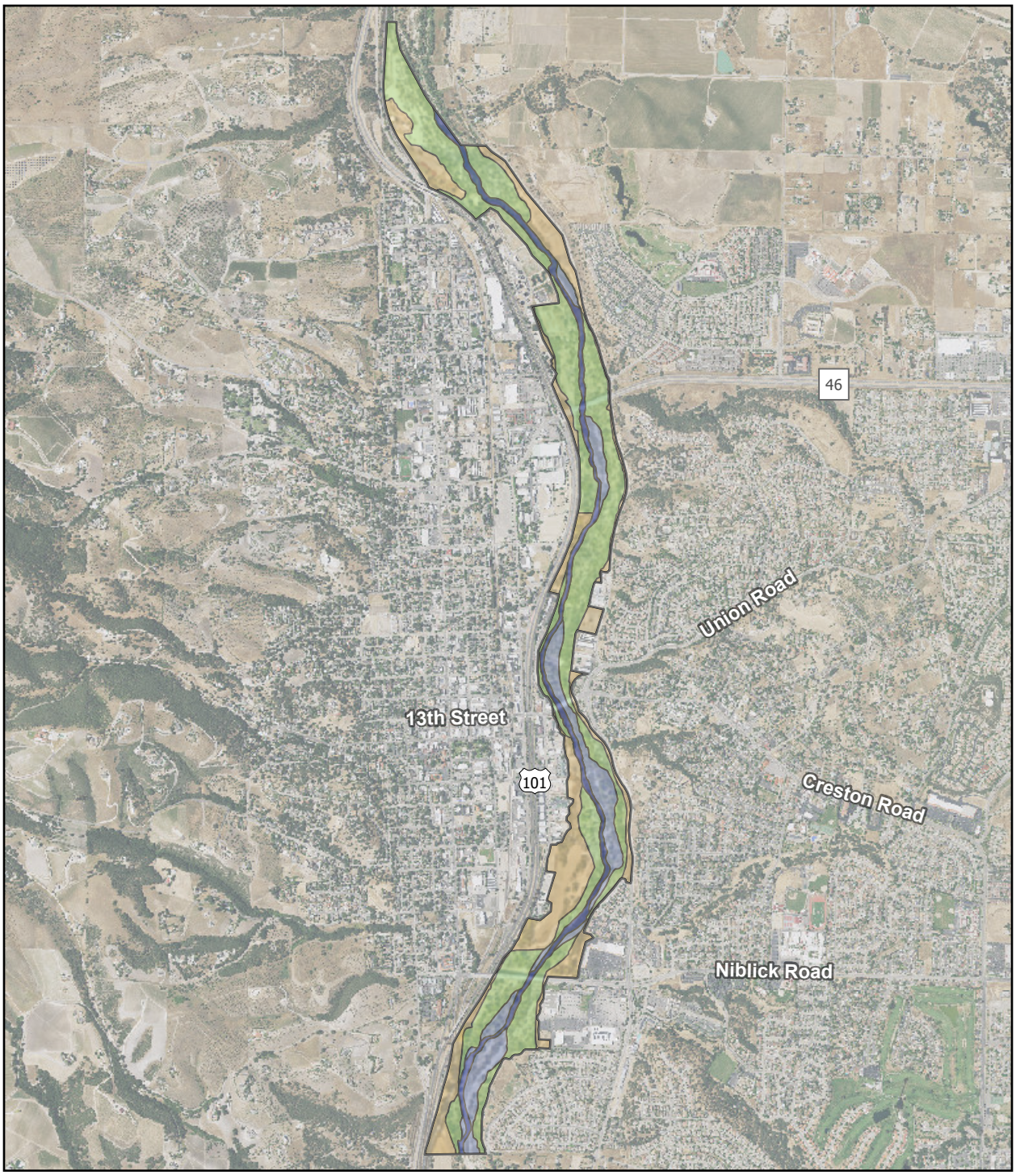
WDR Monitoring, per Order R3-2021-0012:

HYD-40. The Discharger shall comply with Monitoring and Reporting Program No. R3-2021-0012 (included as part of this Order), as ordered by the Executive Officer.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

2 The Cal-IPC list may be found on-line at http://www.cal-ipc.org/.

Figure 3.10-1 Surface Waters



Legend

- Action Area (418 ac)
- Upland
- Active Floodplain
- Active Channel
- Low-Flow Channel

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:48 PM by KRN

3.11 LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Physically divide an established community?				X
b) Cause a significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?				X

Setting

The City of Paso Robles' General Plan is the City's fundamental land use policy document guiding land use and development decisions through the year 2025. The General Plan contains eight elements: Land Use (2014), Circulation (2011), Housing, (2014), Open Space (2003), Conservation (2003), Parks and Recreation (2003), Noise (2003), and Safety (2014). The physical changes envisioned by the General Plan are described primarily in the Land Use and Circulation Elements. The Housing, Open Space and Conservation, Parks and Recreation, Noise, and Safety Elements do not involve physical changes to the City, except to the extent that the policies of these elements are carried forward through the Land Use Element. The Land Use Element includes General Plan and Overlay designations for all properties in the City (Figure 1.1-3). Several General Plan Land Use Element (LU) and Safety Element (S) goals, policies and designations pertain to the proposed project:

Land Use Element Goals & Policies

GOAL LU-2: Image/Identity. Maintain/enhance the City's image/ identity.

POLICY LU-2K: Support environmental responsibility. Manage the natural landscape to preserve the natural beauty and rural identity of the community, which enhances ecological functions and maintains environmental and public health.

GOAL LU-4: Public Services and Facilities. Maintain/improve the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

POLICY LU-4A: Service Levels. Strive to ensure that City services and facilities are maintained at current levels and/or adopted standards, and are funded as revenues become available. These standards are summarized as follows:
Emergency Services – Strive to achieve a 4-minute response to 90% of the calls for service. Maintain a ratio of 0.8 to 1.3 Firefighters per 1,000 population. Public facilities to be designed to meet the current and planned land uses, provisions to be made for continued operation, maintenance, and upgrades as necessary.

Land Use Overlay Designations

Flood Hazard (FH)
Purpose: This overlay category is established to promote the public health, safety, and general welfare, and to minimize public and private losses due to flood conditions in specific areas. The overlay areas are established over all lands identified by the most up to date Flood Insurance Rate and Flood Boundary and Floodway Maps (Currently the most up to date map is dated December 16, 1981, prepared by the Federal Emergency Management Agency [FEMA]).

Salinas River (SR)
Purpose: This overlay category is established to ensure that development along the Salinas River corridor addresses conservation, access, and recreational opportunities. Development within this overlay is subject to special review for standards related to conservation, access and recreational opportunities along the Salinas River corridor. A Salinas Corridor Plan will be developed as a separate program.

Additionally, the City's adopted Zoning Ordinance promotes the orderly growth of the city in order to protect the public health, safety, comfort, and general welfare. The Zoning Ordinance defines 25 zoning districts and overlays in the city, each of which establishes the general use, density, and type of development allowed in that area (Figure 1.1-4) All buildings, land use, or any type of physical development must comply with the regulations for each zoning district.

The City of Paso Robles General Plan Safety Element (SE) and associated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) address hazards posing risks to City infrastructure and residents, including dam failure inundation, drought, earthquake, expansive soils, extreme heat, flood, freeze/extreme cold, hazardous materials, land subsistence, landslide, and wildfire.

Safety Element Goals & Policies

GOAL S-1: Minimize exposure to natural and manmade hazards.

POLICY S-1B: Disaster Response. Review/Update the community-wide Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Plan on a periodic basis.

Action Item 4. Coordinate with emergency services to evaluate the potential vulnerability of wildfire hazards including accumulation of fuels (such as brush, etc.), and implement measures consistent with the Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to reduce the risk from fire hazards.

POLICY S-1C: Hazardous Exposure Minimization. Minimize hazards to people and property caused by fire, crime, and related services.

Action Item 2. Emergency Services Standards. Maintain a ratio of 0.8 to 1.3 Firefighters per 1,000 population.

Action Item 3. As part of the environmental review of new Specific Plans, require preparation of fire station analysis identifying staffing requirements, station location, and response times.

From Safety Element Section 2.4 - Fire Hazard:

"The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE) maps areas of significant fire hazards in the state. These areas are identified based on weather, topography, fuels, and other factors. Fire hazards are greatest in areas with steep slopes, volatile vegetation, and windy conditions…. After careful review of existing San Luis Obispo County Fire Hazard Severity Zone Mapping, as supplied by CAL FIRE, the City has determined neither state responsibility areas nor very high fire hazard severity zones exist within incorporated areas as required by SB 1241."

CAL FIRE's Fire Severity Zone Maps highlight 6.40 square miles (33.0 percent) of City limits located within the high fire hazard severity areas, which include approximately 8,660 people, 3,383 residential structures, and 16 critical facilities, while an additional 3.59 square miles (18.5 percent) of the City limits is located within moderate fire hazard severity area, and includes approximately 4,475 people, 1,754 residential buildings, and 22 critical facilities. A list of the general locations and distribution of existing uses of land in high fire hazard severity zones and in state responsibility areas, including structures, roads, utilities, and essential public facilities can be found in the City's LHMP, Section 5, Table 5-11.

The Safety Element also contains several figures and exhibits which depict the location and nature of potential hazards relative to important community features. (See Figures 3.11-1 and 3.11-2, below.) Figure 3.11-2 shows fire hazard severity zones for the City. The City of Paso Robles is responsible for fire protection and management within the City boundaries. The LHMP outlines agencies and technical resources available for emergency services in the event of a natural or manmade disaster.

The City's Conservation Element includes goals, policies and action items to protect biological resources, such as oak trees and sensitive habitats (Section 3.4), and cultural, tribal and archaeological resources (Sections 3.5 and 3.18), as well as aesthetic resources, such as visual corridors (Section 3.1).

<u>Evaluation</u>

The proposed Project is a vegetation management program for the purposes of fire fuel reduction. No development of any kind is proposed with this vegetation management program. All proposed vegetation management activities will occur within the Salinas River corridor, within the urban area of the City of Paso Robles.

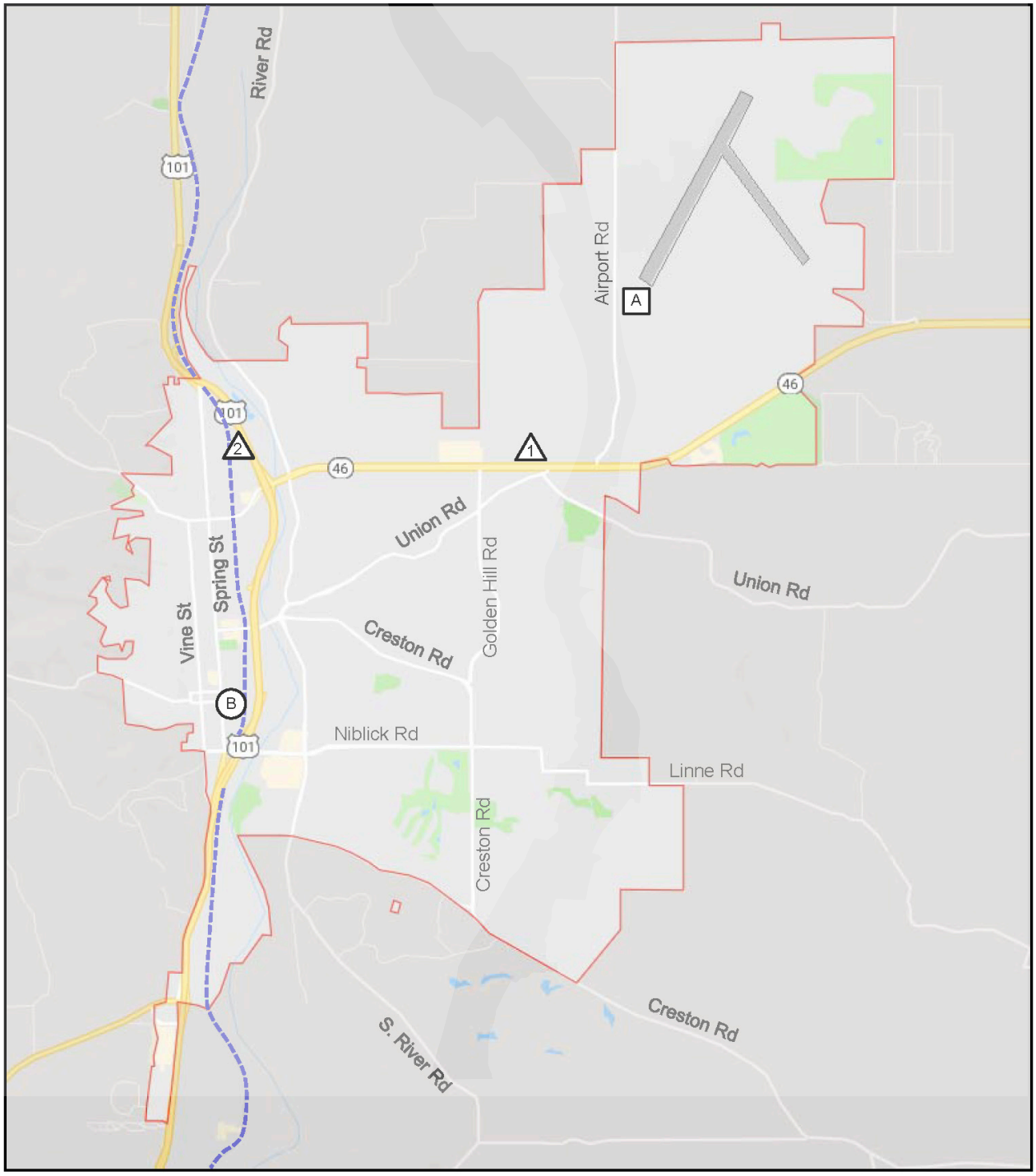
The Salinas River physically separates the East side of Paso Robles from the West side. A number of existing vehicular, bicycle and pedestrian bridges span the riparian zone, connecting the two sides of the City. The riparian corridor is surrounded by urban uses, including commercial, residential, industrial and public uses. The intent of the Salinas River Vegetation Management Plan is to reduce

the risk of wildfire for all established and future uses within the City by reducing vegetative fire fuel loads within the riparian corridor. The propose Project will not modify any land uses, and will not conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

Conclusion: No impact.

Figure 3.11-1 Circulation Element Master Plan Map

Appendix A-1
Paso Robles City Limits, Main Transportation Noise Sources & Noise Measurement Sites



: Airport

: Railroad

: Highways

: City Limit Boundary

Noise Monitoring Sites

: Railroad

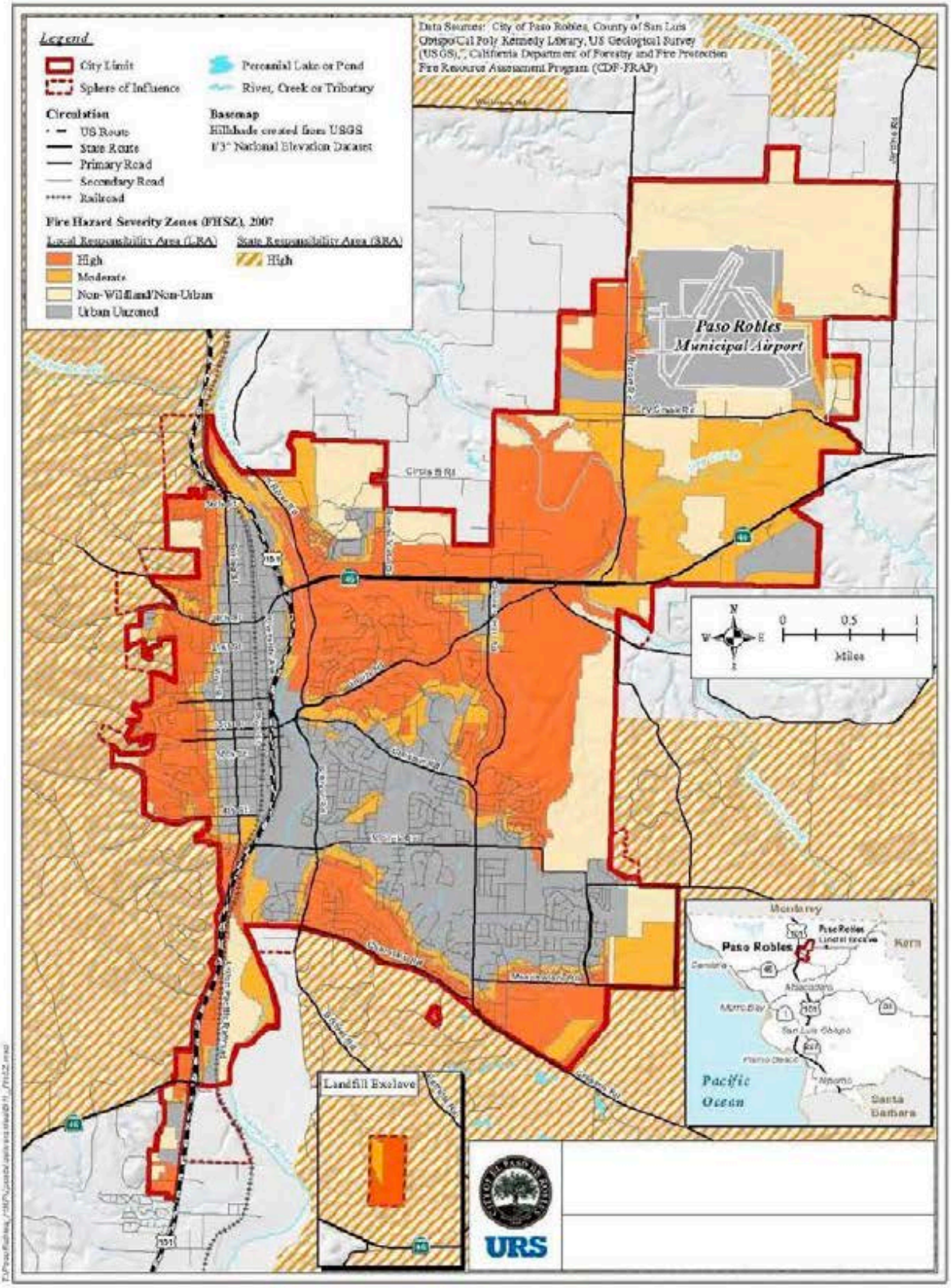
: Highways

: Aircraft

Scale (miles)

0 0.5 1

Figure 3.11-2 Fire Severity Zones and State Responsibility Areas



Fire Severity Zones, Local & State Responsibility Areas Figure S-8

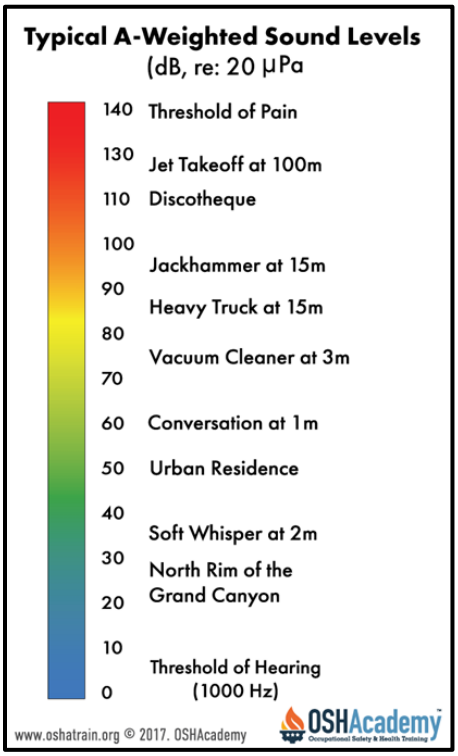
City of El Paso de Robles

3.12 NOISE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Generation of "unacceptable" noise levels in the vicinity of the project as defined by the Paso Robles General Plan Noise Element, or general noise levels in excess of standards established in the Noise Ordinance?		X		
b) Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground-borne noise levels?				X
c) For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip, 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?				X

Setting

The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines for the acceptability of residential land use are set forth in the Code of Federal Regulations Title 24, Part 51, "Environmental Criteria and Standards." These guidelines suggest noise exposure of 65 dBA CNEL/Ldn, or less, is acceptable and between 65 and 75 dBA CNEL/Ldn noise exposure is considered normally acceptable, provided appropriate sound-reduction measures are provided. Above 75 dBA CNEL/Ldn noise exposure is generally considered unacceptable. The guidelines also identify the recommended interior noise levels of 45 dBA CNEL/Ldn. These guidelines apply only to new construction supported by HUD grants.



The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) also offers guidelines for community noise exposure in the publication "Information on the Levels of Environmental Noise Requisite to Protect Public Health and Welfare with an Adequate Margin of Safety". These guidelines consider occupational noise exposure as well as noise exposure in the home. This document recognizes an exterior noise level of 55 dBA Ldn as a goal to protect the public from hearing loss, activity interference, sleep disturbance and annoyance. The EPA

notes, however, that this level is not a regulatory goal, but rather a level defined by a negotiated scientific consensus, without concern for economic and technological feasibility or the needs and desires of any particular community. The EPA and other Federal agencies have suggested land use compatibility guidelines that indicate that residential noise exposures of 55 to 65 dBA Ldn are acceptable. The State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) Noise Element Guidelines include recommended exterior and interior noise level standards for local jurisdictions to identify and prevent the creation of incompatible land uses due to noise. The OPR guidelines contain a land use compatibility table which describes the compatibility of different land uses with a range of environmental noise levels in terms of Ldn. A noise environment of 60 dBA Ldn or less is considered to be normally acceptable for residential uses according to those guidelines.

The City of Paso Robles General Plan Noise Element (2003) regulates ambient sound levels within the City limits. The ambient noise environment in the City of Paso Robles is defined by many noise sources. The most prevalent source of near continuous noise in the City is traffic on Highways 46 and 101, as well as major surface streets. Intermittent noise sources which periodically affect the local noise environment consist primarily of aircraft operations associated with the Paso Robles Municipal Airport, railroad operations on the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) tracks, and concert activities at venues such as Vina Robles Amphitheater, the Mid-State Fairgrounds, and City Park. Commercial and industrial activities also affect the noise environment within the City of Paso Robles, but to a much more localized extent, as do activities at parks and schools. Noise sources associated with construction and property maintenance also contributed to the noise environment, typically on an intermittent and fairly temporary basis. Activities involved in typical construction would generate maximum noise levels, ranging from 55 to 90 dB at a distance of 50 feet.

The City of Paso Robles supports many active agricultural uses (primarily vineyards) both within the City and in the immediately surrounding areas. As a result, agricultural-related equipment and processes contribute to the existing ambient noise environment in the General Plan Area. Due to the wide array of equipment types and conditions under which that equipment is used in the agriculture industry, noise generated by agricultural processes can vary substantially. Maximum noise levels generated by farm-related tractors typically range from 77 to 85 dB at a distance of 50 feet from the tractor, depending on the horsepower of the tractor and the operating conditions. Due to the seasonal nature of the agricultural industry, there are often extended periods of time when no noise is generated on properties which are actively being farmed, followed by short-term periods of intensive mechanical equipment usage and corresponding noise generation. These uses generate short-term periods of elevated noise and possess the potential to generate adverse public reaction during intensive farm-related activities.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. Noise associated with hand-trimming, grazing and prescribed burning will be less than significant, even immediately adjacent to the activity location. Mechanical equipment utilized for vegetation management activities will be most similar to temporary agricultural or construction noise, with associated typical sound levels between 55 and 90 dB at a distance of 50 feet. As with agricultural activities, mechanized vegetation management activities may generate short-term periods of elevated noise, potentially generating adverse public.

Therefore, mitigation measures are included to ensure less than significant noise impacts during vegetation management activities:

NOI-1 During all vegetation management activities, the proposed Project shall comply with the City of Paso Robles Municipal Code, Section 9.07.030(j)(h), by ensuring that vegetation management activities plainly audible at 50 feet do not occur outside the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

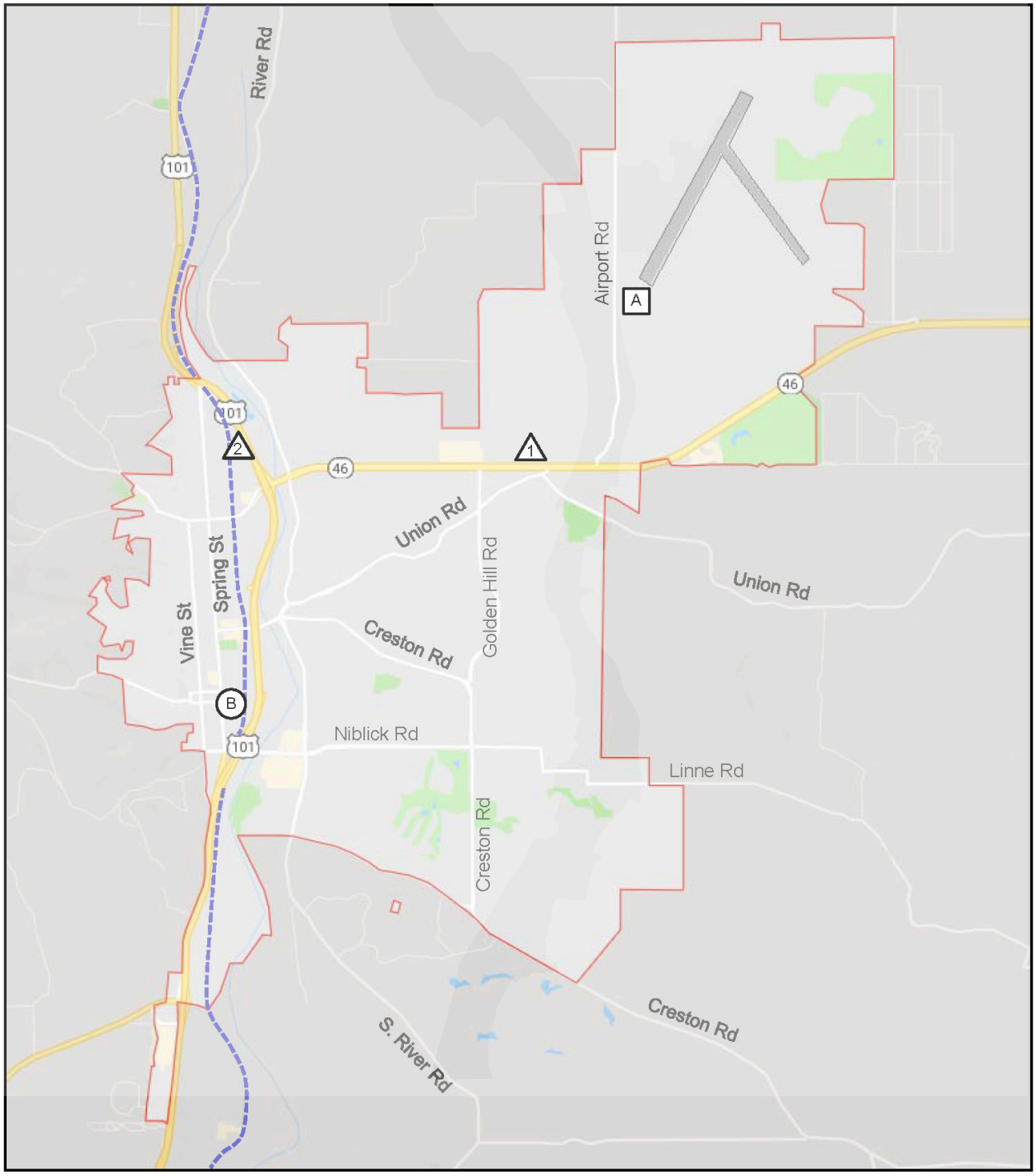
NOI-2 During all vegetation management activities, the City shall ensure that following measures are implemented to reduce noise levels at nearby sensitive receptors:

a. Equipment shall be equipped with intake and exhaust mufflers that are in good condition and appropriate for equipment.
b. Stationary noise-generating equipment shall be located as far as possible from sensitive receptors.
c. "Quiet" air compressors and other stationary noise sources shall be utilized where technology exists.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

Figure 3.12-1 Noise Sources and Measurement Sites

Appendix A-1
Paso Robles City Limits, Main Transportation Noise Sources & Noise Measurement Sites



: Airport

: Railroad

: Highways

: City Limit Boundary

Noise Monitoring Sites

: Railroad

: Highways

: Aircraft

Scale (miles)

0 0.5 1

3.13 MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
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?				X
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?				X

Setting

Mineral resources in California are governed primarily by the Surface Mining and Reclamation Act of 1975 (SMARA, Public Resources Code Sections 2710–2719). This legislation was enacted in response to land use conflicts between urban growth and essential mineral production. SMARA provides for analysis of an area's mineral resources using the Mineral Resource Zone (MRZ) classification system, which identifies the known or inferred presence and significance of a given mineral resource. MRZ classifications are based on available geologic information, including geologic mapping and other information based on surface exposures, drilling records, and mine data. The classifications also consider socioeconomic factors such as market conditions and development patterns. The MRZ classifications are defined as follows:

MRZ-1: Areas where adequate information indicates that no significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that little likelihood exists for their presence.
MRZ-2: Areas where adequate information indicates that significant mineral deposits are present, or where it is judged that a high likelihood exists for their presence.
MRZ-3: Areas containing mineral deposits, the significance of which cannot be evaluated from available data.
MRZ-4: Areas where available information is inadequate for assignment into any other MRZ.

Although the State of California is responsible for identifying areas containing mineral resources, local jurisdictions are responsible for SMARA implementation and enforcement by providing annual mining inspection reports and coordinating with the California Geological Survey.

Evaluation

The proposed Project is a vegetation management program for the purposes of fire fuel reduction. No grading, ground disturbance, or development of any kind is proposed with this vegetation management program. All proposed vegetation management activities will occur within the Salinas River corridor, within the urban area of the City of Paso Robles.

Based upon review of the California Geological Survey Updated Mineral Land Classification Map for Concrete-Grade Aggregates in the San Luis Obispo-Santa Barbara Production-Consumption Region (California-North Half Special Report 215, Plate 1A, 2011) the Project area is not within an MRZ-1 or MRZ-2 classification area. The proposed Project is not located in a State or locally designated area where an important mineral resource recovery site is identified, nor would the Project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource. No impact on mineral resources would occur with implementation of the proposed Project.

Conclusion: No impact.

3.14 POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (for example by proposing new homes or businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?				X
b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing or people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?				X

Setting

Residential development and density in the City of Paso Robles is determined by the City's General Plan Elements. (See discussion under Section 11 – Land Use and Planning.)

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No structural development, including any buildings, flatwork, transportation or utility infrastructure, or any other improvements are proposed with the vegetation management program. The Program is intended to reduce fire risk to existing residential and other uses by reducing hazardous fire fuel vegetation. The proposed Project will therefore not induce population growth or displace existing housing.

Conclusion: No Impact.

3.15 PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision, or need, of new or physically altered government 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:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Fire protection?				X
b) Police protection?				X
c) Schools?				X
d) Parks?				X
e) Other public facilities?				X

Setting

Fire Protection: The City of Paso Robles Fire Department (PRFD) provides fire protection services to the City of Paso Robles. The Fire Department has automatic and mutual aid contractual agreements with the CAL FIRE and the surrounding municipal departments for emergency response to nearby areas outside the city. The City's General Plan Land Use Element (2014) calls for a ratio of 0.8 to 1.3 firefighters per 1,000 residents.

Police Protection: Police protection in the City of Paso Robles is provided by the Paso Robles Police Department (PRPD). The PRPD service area consists of just under 20 square miles with a service population of approximately 32,000. The police station and Emergency Services are co-located at 900 Park Street, in downtown of Paso Robles.

Public Schools: Paso Robles Joint Unified School District (PRJUSD) provides public school facilities and services to the City of Paso Robles and nearby unincorporated areas. PRJUSD provides public education to over 6,900 students at 11 school sites, including six elementary schools, two middle schools, one comprehensive high school, and one alternative high school.

Parks and Recreation Facilities: The City of Paso Robles includes 13 parks: one regional park, a community park, three district parks, five neighborhood parks, and three mini parks, as well as four recreation centers. These facilities total approximately 105 acres of parkland in the city. The city owns and/or manages a total of approximately 1,630 acres combined of parks and open space within and adjacent to the city (General Plan Land Use Element, 2014).

Library and Other Facilities: In addition to the public services listed above, Paso Robles also enjoys a City Library, which provides reading materials, computer terminals, and an after-school study center for students, as well as community programs and events throughout the year.

GOAL LU-4: Public Services and Facilities. Maintain/improve the quality of life enjoyed by residents.

POLICY LU-4A: Service Levels. Strive to ensure that City services and facilities are maintained at current levels and/or adopted standards, and are funded as revenues become available. These standards are summarized as follows:
PRFD – Strive to achieve a 4-minute response to 90% of the calls for service. Maintain a ratio of 0.8 to 1.3 Firefighters per 1,000 population. Public facilities to be designed to meet the current and planned land uses, provisions to be made for continued operation, maintenance, and upgrades as necessary.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No structural development, including any buildings, flatwork, transportation or utility infrastructure, or any other improvements are proposed with the vegetation management program. The Project does not include any components that will increase residential or commercial density or occupancy within the City that would require additional Public Services resources. The Program is intended to reduce fire risk to existing residential, commercial, public and other uses by reducing hazardous fire fuel vegetation. The Project will have no impact on public services.

Conclusion: No Impact.

3.16 TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Conflict with program, plan, ordinance or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities?				X
b) Be in conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.3, subdivision (b)?				X
c) Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)?				X
d) Result in inadequate emergency access?				X

Setting

The roadway network through and around the City of Paso Robles is comprised of Highways 101 and 46, as well as a network of local and regional arterial, collector and local roads connecting points within the City, as well as locations throughout the Central Coast and the state. Roadways with bridges crossing the Salinas River within the City include 24th Street/Highway 46, 13th Street, and Niblick Road. Additionally, Paso Robles Street on the West, and North and South River Road on the East are located on either side of the Salinas River riparian corridor. Highway 101 is located immediately West of the river corridor at both the North and South ends of the City. The Union Pacific Railroad line runs North-South through the City, with an intermodal Transportation Center located downtown at Pine and 8th Streets.

The City of Paso Robles Circulation Element (2019) contains goals, policies and action items to support development of an efficient, multi-modal transportation system within the City.

GOAL CE-1: Establish a safe, balanced, efficient, and multimodal circulation system, focusing on the mobility of people, and preserving the City's small-town character and quality of life.

POLICY CE-1A: Circulation Master Plan. Revise/update the City's Circulation Master Plan to address the mobility needs of all users of the streets, roads and highways including motorists, movers of commercial goods, seniors, children, pedestrians, disabled persons, users of public transportation, and bicyclists as follows:

b) Provide adequate access for emergency vehicles and evacuation;

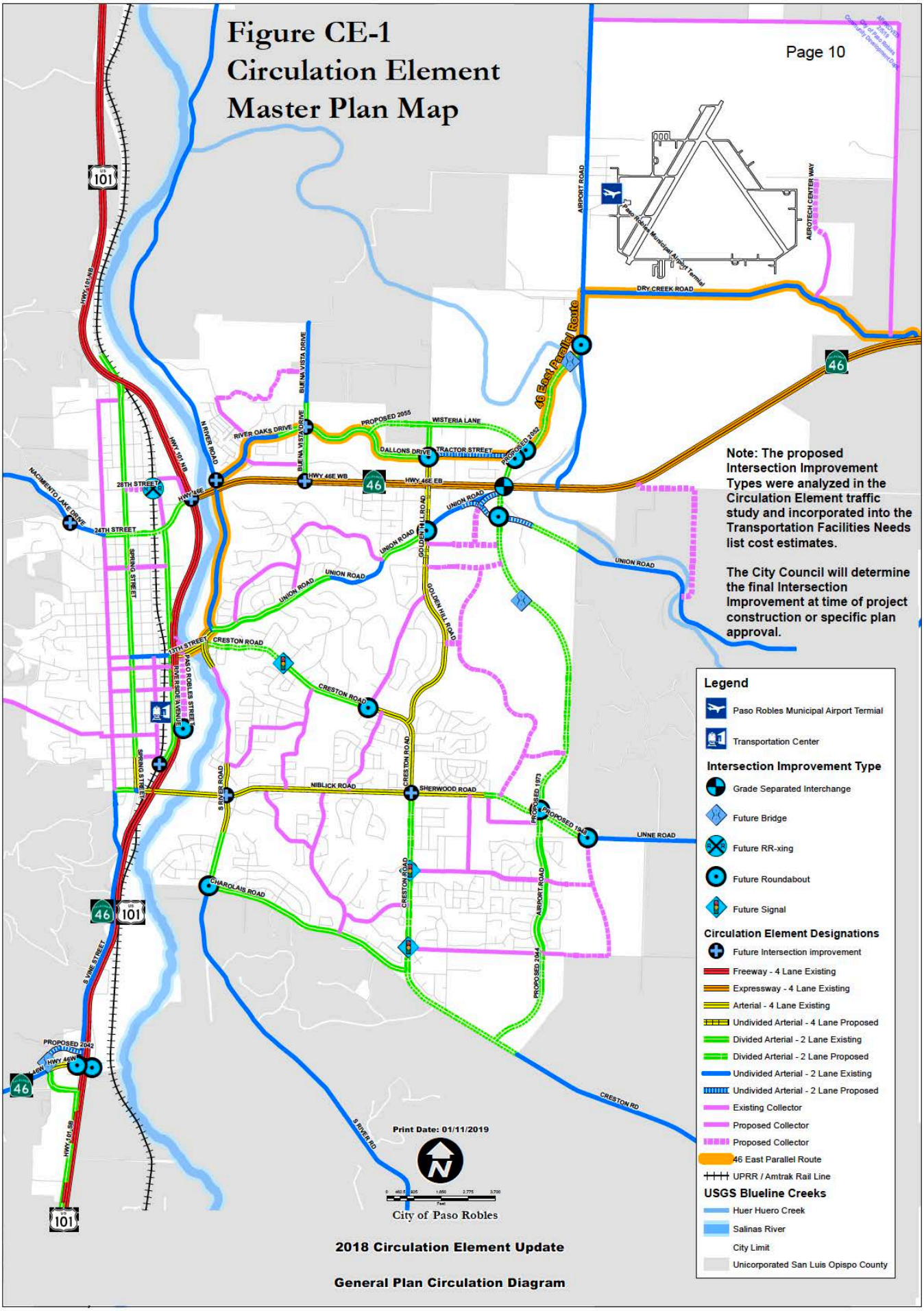
d) Establish safe pedestrian and bicycle paths for children and their parents to schools and other major destinations such as Downtown, retail, and job centers;

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No development, including transportation infrastructure, or any other improvements are proposed with the vegetation management program. The Program is intended to reduce fire risk to existing land uses and transportation infrastructure, including all components of the City's existing circulation system, (transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities) by reducing hazardous fire fuel vegetation and maintaining emergency access. The proposed Project will therefore not adversely impact transportation resources.

Conclusion: No Impact.

Figure 3.16-1 Circulation Element Master Plan Map



3.17 RECREATION

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?				X
b) Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?				X

Setting

The City of Paso Robles Parks and Recreation Element includes goals, policies and action items to promote the use and development of public parks and recreation facilities. The City recognizes the Salinas River corridor as a valuable recreational resource.

GOAL PR-1: Optimize the use and development of parks and recreation facilities to serve the existing and projected population.

POLICY PR-1B: Master Plan. Develop a Master Park, Recreational Facility, & Trails Plan addressing Citywide needs and financing for development, maintenance, and operation through the year 2025.

Action Item 4. Create and adopt a Salinas River Corridor Plan to address such issues as recreation, conservation, use, public access, and educational outreach. The plan would apply to the Salinas River Overlay area shown on the General Plan Land Use Map indicated in the General Plan Land Use Element.

- Cooperate with neighboring public agencies to establish the DeAnza Trail along the Salinas River as a link in a regional trail system.
- Cooperate with organizations and volunteers dedicated to the preservation of natural areas within the corridor.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG), in partnership with the County of San Luis Obispo and funded by the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) has developed the Salinas River Trail (SRT) Master Plan (2014) in order to define feasible short and long-term alignments for a regional trail through the North County, from Santa Margarita to San Miguel, along a 35-mile section of the Salinas River corridor. The SRT is envisioned to be a continuous interconnected public trail system, designed to foster appreciation and stewardship of scenic and natural resources through hiking, biking and horseback riding, provide a non-motorized

transportation link between the area's municipalities and enhance local economic development through tourism. The project is envisioned as part of the Juan Bautista de Anza Historic Trail.

In 1775, the Viceroy of New Spain authorized Juan Bautista de Anza to command an expedition to occupy and settle the port of San Francisco. His route through the Salinas River Valley became the El Camino Real, the principal overland route used by Spanish explorers, missionaries and early Mexican settlers and the critical emigration and supply route from Sonora to the missions and settlements of Alta California. Congress authorized the Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail in 1990. The 1,200 mile trail, which is part of the National Parks System, is one of only a few long-distance National Historic Trails. As originally planned, it would run from Nogales, Arizona, to San Francisco, California, following as closely as possible the historic route taken by Anza. However, since the expedition started in Culiacan, Sinaloa, Mexico, plans are under way to include the 600 miles of the route that lie within Mexico to make it the world's first International Historic Trail.

This National Historic Trail corridor travels northward through San Luis Obispo County, along Highway 101 to Santa Margarita, then follows the Salinas River to Paso Robles. While there are no specific funding sources allocated for Anza Trail projects, the National Parks Service does certify trail sections that meet the Anza Trail requirements and has a cost sharing program that provides a 50-percent match of up to $30,000 per project. Certified Anza Trail sections can also use the Anza Trail emblem on distance markers and interpretive signs. Parts of the existing trail system within Atascadero have such signage.

The vision statement for the Salinas River Trail (SRT) Master Plan states:

> *"The future Salinas River Trail will provide North County with access and views to river valley natural open space. The trail will be designed for both transportation and recreation, will be safe for pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians alike, and will be respectful of the environment and private property. The trail's connectivity and accessibility, along with its well-maintained amenities, will be a draw for both residents and tourists that will provide economic benefits and an educational link to the Salinas River's habitat, history and culture".*

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction within the Salinas River corridor. No structural development, including any buildings, flatwork, transportation or utility infrastructure, or any other improvements, including park or recreational facilities, are proposed with the vegetation management program. The Project does not include any grading or ground-disturbance activities. The Program is intended to reduce fire risk to existing residential, commercial, public, parks, and other uses by reducing hazardous fire fuel vegetation. The Project will have no impact on exiting or planned recreational facilities.

Conclusion: No Impact.

3.18 TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code Section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe that is:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources Code Section 5020.1(k)?				X
b) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe.		X		

Setting

Archaeological evidence demonstrates that Native Americans have occupied the Central Coast of California for at least 10,000 years. Central Coast prehistory is divided into seven periods (Jones et al. 1994; Jones and Waugh 1995). Fluted points recovered from Santa Margarita and Nipomo suggest that humans used the San Luis Obispo County interior as early as the terminal Pleistocene/early Holocene era (13,500 to 10,000 BP) during the early portion of the Paleoindian/Paleocoastal period (Mills et al. 2005). Arguably the oldest known settlement in San Luis Obispo County, CA-SLO-1797 (the Cross Creek Site) located in the area of Lopez Lake, was first occupied around 10,000 years ago (Fitzgerald 2000).

The Project site is located in an area historically occupied by the Salinan and Chumash peoples (Kroeber 1953). The routes currently followed by State Route (SR) 41 and SR 46 were originally major aboriginal roads used for travel and trade for thousands of years, with resulting intermarriage between the Salinan and Yokuts people from the east (Davis 1961). Traditional hunter-gatherers, the Salinans developed complex societies adapted to changing environmental and social conditions of the area. Land use and settlement patterns interpreted from archaeological evidence suggest that people of northeastern San Luis Obispo County lived in mobile bands more similar to ethnographic Great Basin cultures, in contrast to semi-sedentary inhabitants of well-watered areas west of the Salinas River (Milliken and Johnson 2002; Morro Group 2006).

The Chumash occupied the region from San Luis Obispo County to Malibu Canyon on the coast, and inland as far as the western edge of the San Joaquin Valley, and the four northern Channel Islands (Grant 1978). The Chumash are subdivided into factions based on six distinct dialects: Barbareño, Ventureño, Purisimeño, Ynezeño, Obispeño, and Island. The Obispeño were the northernmost Chumash group, occupying much of San Luis Obispo County, including the Paso Robles area (Gibson 1983). The name Obispeño is derived from the mission with local jurisdiction, San Luis Obispo de Tolosa.

Chumash populations were decimated by the effects of European colonization and missionization (Johnson 1987). Traditional lifeways largely gave way to laborer jobs on ranches and farms in the Mexican and early American periods. Today, the Santa Ynez Band of Chumash Indians is the only federally recognized Chumash tribe, though many people of Chumash descent continue to live throughout their traditional territory.

Tribal Consultation. In July 2015, the legislature added new requirements to the CEQA process regarding tribal cultural resources pursuant to Assembly Bill 52 (Gatto, 2014). By including tribal consultation and evaluation of cultural resources early in the CEQA process, the legislature intended to ensure that local and Tribal governments, public agencies, and project proponents would have information available, early in the project planning process, to identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources. By taking this proactive approach, the legislature also intended to reduce the potential for delay and conflicts in the environmental review process.

The Public Resources Code now establishes that "[a] project with an effect that may cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource is a project that may have a significant effect on the environment." (Pub. Resources Code, § 21084.2.) To help determine whether a project may have such an effect, the Public Resources Code requires a lead agency to consult with any California Native American tribe that requests consultation and is traditionally and culturally affiliated with the geographic area of a proposed project. That consultation must take place prior to the determination of whether a negative declaration, mitigated negative declaration, or environmental impact report is required for a project. (Pub. Resources Code, § 21080.3.1.) If a lead agency determines that a project may cause a substantial adverse change to tribal cultural resources, the lead agency must consider measures to mitigate that impact. Public Resources Code §20184.3 (b)(2).

The City of Paso Robles Conservation Element contains goals, policies and action items to ensure the preservation and protection of cultural and archaeological resources.

GOAL C-6: Cultural Resources. Strive to preserve/protect important historic and archeological resources.

POLICY C-6B: Archaeological Resources: Strive to preserve/protect "unique archaeological resources" as defined by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

Action Item 1. Require the preparation of archaeological studies and/or preliminary evaluation reports for new developments that are subject to CEQA and the site could

potentially contain a "unique archaeological resource." Incorporate mitigation measures identified by such studies into the development.

Evaluation

The vegetation management activities included in the Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project will occur in an area historically occupied by the Salinan and Chumash peoples. No historic structures are present within the Project area. Tribal representatives of the Chumash, Salinan, Yokut and Southern Valley Yokut tribes were consulted as part of the cultural resource impact analysis, and a Phase I Inventory Survey was completed by the California Native American Heritage Commission (December 14, 2020). Based upon a careful review of the results of a Cultural Resource Record Search conducted at the Central Coast Information Center (CCIC) at the University of Santa Barbara (January 8, 2021), two sites are located within the Salinas River Vegetation Management Program area. No ground disturbing activities are included in the vegetation management program, therefore, no adverse effects upon any recorded archaeological or tribal cultural sites are anticipated.

Because the Project includes no grading or ground-disturbing activities, the possibility of encountering tribal cultural resources during vegetation management is unlikely. However, previously unknown prehistoric archaeological deposits could be encountered in the Project area. Therefore, mitigation measures are included to ensure protection of cultural resources that may be found during vegetation management activities:

TR – 1 The field archaeologist will conduct awareness training for the field crew and supervisors. This will include a description of the types of tribal artifacts that may be encountered and a discussion of why these are of importance to the Native American community, as well as for an understanding of our local history. Pertinent laws and regulations protecting archaeological and tribal cultural sites will be briefly reviewed and any archaeologists monitoring methods will be explained.

TR – 2 In the event that tribal cultural resources are exposed during vegetation abatement activities, all work shall be halted within 50 feet of the archaeological discovery until a qualified archaeologist can visit the site of discovery and assess the significance of the resource. If the resources are found to be significant, they must be avoided during all future abatement work.

Conclusion: Less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated.

3.19 UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, or storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects?				X
b) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, dry and multiple dry years?				X
c) 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?				X
d) Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals?				X
e) Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste?				X

Setting

The City of Paso Robles Water Division provides potable water to residential and non-residential service connections in the City of Paso Robles. The city's water service area is generally coterminous with the city's incorporated boundaries. The Water Division is responsible for water supply, treatment, distribution, and resource planning. The Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, the Salinas River, and Lake Nacimiento supply municipal water in the City of Paso Robles. The city is currently designing and reviewing a recycled water distribution system that will serve irrigation demands in the city and allow regional recycled water use. (See Section 3.10. Hydrology and Water Quality, for surface and groundwater regulatory setting.)

The City of Paso Robles owns and operates the Waste Water Treatment Plant (WWTP) and sewer collection infrastructure, which serves a population of approximately 32,000 people. Service is provided by a system of sewer mains that connect to the WWTP located at the north end of the city,

near the Salinas River. The City Public Works Department also maintains storm drainage facilities in the city to accommodate stormwater runoff. These lines empty into storm drains or natural drainage courses.

Solid waste services for the City of Paso Robles are provided by contract with private service providers. Paso Robles Waste Disposal provides solid waste collection service to the city and Pacific Waste Services operates the city-owned Paso Robles Landfill. Electrical service within the City of Paso Robles is provided by Pacific Gas and Electric Company. Natural gas is supplied by Southern California Gas Company. Telephone service within the City is provided by a number of private carriers, including AT&T, Spectrum, Verizon and Frontier, who also offer internet service to the community.

The General Plan Conservation Element includes goals, policies, and action items for the provision and maintenance of public utilities, facilities and services in the city, including water, wastewater, storm water, and solid waste. Regulations governing solid waste include the California Integrated Waste Management Act (1989), the California Solid Waste Reuse and Recycling Act of 1991, The California Beverage Container Recycling and Litter Reduction Act (2019), and the California Recycling Market Development Act.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No development or physical improvements are proposed with the vegetation management program. The Program is intended to reduce fire risk to existing land uses and associated utility infrastructure, including components of the City's water, wastewater, storm water, solid waste and wire utility facilities by reducing hazardous fire fuel vegetation and maintaining emergency access. The proposed Project will therefore not adversely impact utility or service system resources.

Conclusion: No impact.

3.20 WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project::	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?				X
b) Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project applicants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of a wildfire?				X
c) Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines, or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment?				X

Setting

The City of Paso Robles General Plan Safety Element (SE) and associated Local Hazard Mitigation Plan (LHMP) address hazards posing risks to City infrastructure and residents, including dam failure inundation, drought, earthquake, expansive soils, extreme heat, flood, freeze/extreme cold, hazardous materials, land subsistence, landslide, and wildfire.

The City, in collaboration with the San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council, has developed a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP, July 2019), which addresses fire protection planning efforts occurring in the City, in order to minimize wildfire risk to watershed lands, private and public assets, firefighters, and the public. The CWPP identifies and prioritizes pre-fire and post-fire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss risk within the City of Paso Robles, and recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the Plan. The CWPP describes the City's physical and social characteristics, as well as wildfire history; identifies and evaluates landscape-scale fire hazard variables; utilizes priority landscape datasets for evaluating wildfire risk; identifies strategic measures for reducing structural ignitability, increasing public education and outreach; and identifies strategic fuel reduction goals and techniques for minimizing wildfire risk.

The CWPP provides a citywide strategic planning framework for hazardous fuel assessment and reduction within the City of Paso Robles so that structures and assets are provided additional protection, reducing the potential of ignitions. With consistent goals of improving fire prevention and suppression efforts, reducing hazardous fuels, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, and promoting community assistance. The goals of the CWPP include: improving the availability and use of information regarding hazard and risk assessment; providing guidance for land use planning efforts; promoting a shared vision among communities and multiple fire jurisdictions; establishing fire

resistance in communities; prioritizing protection of communities and high-priority watersheds; promoting collaboration between government agencies and a broad representation of stakeholders; improving fire suppression and prevention capabilities; promoting post-fire recovery efforts; and maintaining accountability through performance based monitoring. The CWPP serves as the foundational document to reduce the Community Wildfire Risk in Paso Robles.

The CWPP prioritizes protection of the community, natural resources, and the lives of the public and firefighters. This priority is shared among state and local government, and community stakeholders. Collaboration, establishing goals, priority setting, and accountability provide the framework for the guiding tactical principles of the CWPP, which include:

- Increasing the safety to residents and firefighters during wildland fires
- Reducing the costs and losses associated with wildland fires
- Supporting implementation of WUI building standards through coordination and cooperation with the City of Paso Robles Community Development Department
- Supporting the implementation and maintenance of defensible space around structures
- Supporting project work and planning efforts that encourage the development and/or maintenance of safe ingress and egress routes for emergency incidents
- Promoting cooperation between fire agencies in the County to minimize wildland fire damage through strategic fuel treatment, land use, and public outreach projects
- Utilizing fire prevention efforts to reduce ignitions within the City
- Conducting post-incident analysis to evaluate success in achieving the 95% threshold of keeping fires less than 10 acres in size
- Promoting public education efforts about wildland fire through the support of the San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council (SLO FSC).

Additionally, several policies in the General Plan Safety Element pertain directly to wildfire:

GOAL S-1: Minimize exposure to natural and manmade hazards.

POLICY S-1B: Disaster Response. Review/Update the community-wide Multi-Hazard Emergency Response Plan on a periodic basis.

Action Item 4. Coordinate with PRFD to evaluate the potential vulnerability of wildfire hazards including accumulation of fuels (such as brush, etc.), and implement measures consistent with the Draft Local Hazard Mitigation Plan to reduce the risk from fire hazards.

POLICY S-1C: Hazardous Exposure Minimization. Minimize hazards to people and property caused by fire, crime, and related services.

Evaluation

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project is an integral component of the City's Community Wildfire Protection Plan. The Project is located in an area of historic fire risk. Areas where urban development (like commercial or residential uses) abut non-maintained wildland fuels are defined as the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI). Wildland-Urban Interface areas are those

within the vicinity of wildland vegetation, typically with housing densities exceeding one house per 40 acres. The California Fire Alliance defined "vicinity" as all areas within 1.5 miles of wildland vegetation, the anticipated distance that firebrands can be carried from a wildland fire to the roof of a house. The wildland fire risk associated with WUI areas includes propagation of fire throughout WUI communities via house-to-house fire spread, landscaping-to-house fire spread, or ember intrusion. Even relatively small WUI fires in densely developed areas can be very damaging.

Existing urban commercial, industrial, and residential developments are located within approximately one mile east and two miles west of the river. Downtown Paso Robles and Highway 101 are located West of the Salinas River corridor, while areas East of the river are dominated by residential development. Three major routes of transportation cross the Salinas River within the City's jurisdiction: the Niblick Bridge, 13th Street Bridge and Highway 46 Bridge. Past fires in proximity to these transportation routes have caused significant impacts. Vegetation in drainages within the City limits, particularly within the Salinas River corridor, has become dense and overgrown in many areas. This vegetation provides fuel for wildfires, and can increase the risk, intensity, and speed of spread of fires.

The primary purpose of the Salinas River Vegetation Management Program is to maintain vegetation in the Salinas River corridor in order to reduce fire hazard. The Salinas River Vegetation Management Program is designed to minimize and mitigate hazards related to wildfire risk to watersheds, public and private property, critical infrastructure, firefighters, and the public.

Conclusion: No impact.

3.21 MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

Would the project:	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
a) Does the project have the potential to substantially 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?				X
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.)				X
c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?				X

The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project consists of trimming, grazing and burning vegetation for fire reduction. No development or physical improvements are proposed with the vegetation management program. The Program is intended to reduce fire risk to existing land uses by reducing hazardous fire fuel vegetation and maintaining emergency access. As described in this Expanded Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, implementation of the proposed Project would have the potential to adversely impact air quality, wetland, riparian, oak woodland and other habitats, biological resources including Special Status plants and nesting and Special Status birds, Special Status reptiles, Special Status mammals, and steelhead, previously undiscovered cultural/tribal resources and/or human remains, hydrological resources, and noise. With implementation of the mitigation measures prescribed in this Expanded Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration, including AQ-1-4, BIO-1-15, CR-1-2, TR-1-2, HYD-1-40, NOI-1-2, as well as compliance with City of Paso Robles requirements, and application of standard practices, implementation of the proposed Project would not: (1) degrade the quality of the environment; (2) substantially reduce the habitat of fish or wildlife species; (3) cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels; (4) threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community; (5) reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal; or (6) eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory. Project impacts would be less than significant with incorporation of all mitigation measures.

Section 15065(a)(3) of the CEQA Guidelines states that a project's cumulative impacts are the possible environmental effects that may be cumulatively considerable when considered with other reasonably foreseeable projects. Section 15355 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a cumulative impact as an impact which is created as a result of the combination of the project evaluated in the CEQA document together with other projects causing related impacts. The proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project will not result in cumulatively considerable environmental effects, since the program is designed specifically to protect environmental resources. The vegetation management activities implemented with the project will allow reasonably foreseeable projects in the City to proceed with a reduced fire risk.

The primary purpose of the proposed Salinas River Vegetation Management Program Project is to protect human beings and their community.

APPENDICES

- **Appendix A. Program Area Assessor's Parcel Numbers List**
- **Appendix B. City of Paso Robles Community Wildfire Protection Plan, July 2019**
- **Appendix C. City of Paso Robles Fire Department – 2020 Salinas Riverbed Emergency Plan**
- **Appendix D. Althouse and Meade Biological Report, March 2021**

APPENDIX A. PROGRAM AREA ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS LIST

APPENDIX A. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS

008-021-006	008-297-006	009-171-004	009-302-001	009-813-004	025-501-004
008-021-008	009-052-001	009-171-005	009-302-001	009-813-008	025-501-006
008-022-001	009-054-002	009-213-004	009-511-001	009-814-008	025-501-007
008-022-002	009-054-003	009-213-005	009-511-002	009-814-011	025-501-008
008-051-002	009-054-006	009-213-009	009-511-016	009-814-013	025-501-009
008-051-004	009-113-008	009-213-010	009-511-029	018-011-025	025-501-010
008-051-026	009-113-009	009-214-002	009-513-051	020-241-056	025-501-011
008-142-007	009-113-010	009-271-002	009-515-001	020-311-033	025-501-012
008-191-013	009-114-009	009-272-010	009-515-023	025-390-003	025-501-014
008-252-013	009-115-001	009-272-011	009-761-001	025-392-003	025-501-015
008-261-002	009-116-008	009-272-014	009-761-044	025-392-005	025-501-016
008-261-006	009-117-001	009-301-001	009-775-040	025-392-012	025-501-017
008-262-006	009-161-020	009-301-002	009-811-003	025-501-001	025-541-001
008-297-003	009-161-021	009-301-003	009-811-004	025-501-002	
008-297-005	009-161-026	009-301-005	009-813-003	025-501-003	

APPENDIX B. CITY OF PASO ROBLES COMMUNITY WILDFIRE PROTECTION PLAN, JULY 2019

Community Wildfire Protection Plan

City of Paso Robles

July 2019

TABLE OF CONTENTS

This page intentionally left blank

ACKNOWELDGEMENTS

This Community Wildfire Protection Plan is a guide to provide a community that is prepared and resilient to the impacts of wildland urban interface fires in the City of Paso Robles.

Thank you to the San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council for their assistance in providing the information and data to support this document.

City of Paso Robles Department of Emergency Services

MISSION STATEMENT

We are dedicated to protecting your quality of life through exceptional public service and interactive community engagement.

"OUR MISSION IS YOU"

CORE VALUES

- We recognize the value in each member of our community and organization.
- The foundation of our organization will be reflected through our actions, appearance and attitude.
- We will have the courage and humility to hold ourselves and others accountable.

July 2019

SIGNATURE PAGE

Community Wildfire Protection Plan for City of Paso Robles:

This Plan:

- Was collaboratively developed. Interested parties, State, City, and County agencies within the County have been consulted and are listed in Section II – Collaboration.
- Identifies and prioritizes pre fire and post fire management strategies and tactics meant to reduce the loss of values at risk within the City of Paso Robles.
- Is intended for use as a planning and assessment tool only. It is the responsibility of those implementing the projects to ensure that all environmental compliance and permitting processes are met as necessary.
- Recommends measures to reduce the ignitability of structures throughout the area addressed by the Plan.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act requires that the applicable local government, local fire department, and State agency responsible for forest management agree to the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP).

The undersigned have reviewed the CWPP for the City of Paso Robles.

_____ _____

Jonathan Stornetta, **Fire Chief**
Paso Robles Department of Emergency Services **Date**

_____ _____

Thomas Frutchey, City Manager
City of Paso Robles **Date**

_____ _____

Steven W. Martin, Mayor
City of Paso Robles **Date**

_____ _____

Scotty Jalbert, Unit Chief **Date**
Cal Fire / SLO County Fire

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This City of Paso Robles Strategic Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) is developed to collaboratively address fire protection planning efforts occurring in the City, in order to minimize wildfire risk to our watershed lands, assets, firefighters, and the public. It is developed to work cohesively with the San Luis Obispo County Community Wildfire Protection Plan. This CWPP: presents the City's physical and social characteristics, and wildfire history; identifies and evaluates landscape-scale fire hazard variables; utilizes priority landscape datasets for evaluating wildfire risk; identifies strategic measures for reducing structural ignitability, public education, and outreach; and identifies strategic fuel reduction goals and techniques for minimizing wildfire risk. This CWPP is a living document managed and updated routinely by the City of Paso Robles Department of Emergency Services with stakeholder input and involvement.

The CWPP provides a citywide strategic planning framework for hazardous fuel assessment and reduction within the City of Paso Robles so that structures and assets are provided additional protection, reducing the potential of ignitions. With consistent goals of improving fire prevention and suppression efforts, reducing hazardous fuels, restoring fire-adapted ecosystems, and promoting community assistance. The goals of this CWPP include: improving the availability and use of information regarding hazard and risk assessment; providing guidance for land use planning efforts; promoting a shared vision among communities and multiple fire jurisdictions; establishing fire resistance in communities; prioritizing protection of communities and other high-priority watersheds; promoting collaboration between government agencies and a broad representation of stakeholders; improving fire suppression and prevention capabilities; promoting post-fire recovery efforts; and maintaining accountability through performance based monitoring. This CWPP will serve as the foundation document to interface local projects to reduce the Community Wildfire Risk.

The development strategies of this CWPP are to create a City that is more resistant and resilient to the damaging effects of catastrophic wildfire, while recognizing fire's beneficial aspects.

This CWPP utilizes the following strategies to accomplish its goals:

- Collaborate with stakeholders and allied agencies
- Conduct and refine risk assessments for wildland urban interface (WUI) areas
- Integrate wildfire community pre-attack plans
- Foster community involvement in pre-fire planning efforts
- Develop community outreach and education goals
- Monitor the effectiveness of programs, projects and initial attack success.

This CWPP has been developed with the purpose of meeting the goals set in the San Luis Obispo Community Wildfire Protection Plan while integrating the goals and objectives established in the Paso Robles Strategic and Tactical Policy Matrix. This CWPP prioritizes protection of the community, natural resources, and the lives of the public and firefighters. This priority is shared among state and local government, and other community stakeholders. Collaboration, establishing goals, priority setting, and accountability provide the framework for the guiding tactical principles of this CWPP, which include:

- Increasing the safety to residents and firefighters during wildland fires
- Reducing the costs and losses associated with wildland fires
- Supporting implementation of WUI building standards through coordination and cooperation with the City of Paso Robles Community Development Department
- Supporting the implementation and maintenance of defensible space around structures
- Supporting project work and planning efforts that encourage the development and/or maintenance of safe ingress and egress routes for emergency incidents
- Promoting cooperation between fire agencies in the County to minimize wildland fire damage through strategic fuel treatment, land use, and public outreach projects
- Utilizing fire prevention efforts to reduce ignitions within the City

- Conducting post-incident analysis to evaluate success in achieving the 95% threshold of keeping fires less than 10 acres in size
- Promoting public education efforts about wildland fire through the support of the San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council (SLO FSC).

This Plan provides planning information at a City-wide scale and recognizes the variation in fuels, weather, topography, and community/agency priorities present in the City. It is intended to be a dynamic planning tool for promoting wildfire protection efforts in the City. Additionally, this Plan is not intended to satisfy the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) or regulatory permitting requirements, and any recommended projects or actions contained herein shall be subject to the appropriate permitting and environmental review.

SECTION I: UNIT OVERVIEW

This CWPP Plan covers the City of Paso Robles, California. This section presents more detailed information about Paso Robles, specifically, a description of factors affecting wildfire risk within the City.

LOCATION

Paso Robles is situated on the Central Coast of California, approximately halfway between San Francisco and Los Angeles. Paso Robles is bordered by the unincorporated areas of San Luis Obispo County, and the Templeton CSD to the south. Paso Robles encompasses 12,740 acres and supports a population of approximately 32,000. Large population increases are common in the late spring and summer months from tourism. Fire protection in the City is provided by the Paso Robles Department of Emergency Services, which has Automatic Aid Agreements with including the San Luis Obispo County Fire Department, Templeton Fire and Emergency Services, and Atascadero Fire and Emergency Services. Mutual Aid is also provided within the operational area from Cal Fire and 17 local fire departments/districts.

LAND OWNERSHIP

Approximately 78.1 percent (8,639 acres) of the City's total land area is developed as residential, commercial, mixed use, industrial land, and public facilities uses.
The remaining land is made up of 2,448 acres (7.3 percent) agriculture and 14.5 percent parks and open space.

Table 1-1. 2003 General Plan Land Use Element (2012 Revision), Development Potential

Land Use Category	Acreage	Percent
Residential	5,228	41.2
Commercial	1,271	10.0
Business Park/Industrial	1,721	13.5
Other / Public Facilities	1,947	15.3
Agriculture / Open Space	2,572	20.0
Total	**12,739**	**100**

POPULATION AND HOUSING

The estimated 2019 population of Paso Robles is 32,000, a 9 percent increase since the 2010 U.S. Census. San Luis Obispo County has 7 incorporated cities with Paso Robles being the second largest and fastest growing city in the County.

The distribution of the population in Paso Robles creates several different conditions, each of which is unique to pre-fire planning. Urban areas are predominantly built-up environments with little or no exposure to wildland vegetation (fuels). The area where urban development abuts non-maintained wildland fuels is known as the wildland-urban interface (WUI). Rural areas, as defined in the NWCG Glossary of Wildland Fire Terminology are "Any area wherein residences and other developments are scattered and intermingled with forest, range, or farm land and native vegetation or cultivated crops and open space", More recently, "wildland-urban intermix" is a term being used to describe WUI areas where the density of housing units and structures is relatively low and the space between consists of wildland fuels capable of propagating fire. While often used interchangeably when discussing WUI issues, the difference between the terms "interface" and "intermix" is that the boundary between rural and urban areas is typically much more distinct when referred to as an "interface". The "interface" boundary is relatively easy to decipher and map, whereas the "intermix" boundary can be several miles wide and is often difficult to map precisely.

Historical population		
Census	Pop.	%±
1890	827	—
1900	1,224	48.0%
1910	1,441	17.7%
1920	1,919	33.2%
1930	2,573	34.1%
1940	3,045	18.3%
1950	4,835	58.8%
1960	6,677	38.1%
1970	7,168	7.4%
1980	9,163	27.8%
1990	18,583	102.8%
2000	24,297	30.7%
2010	29,793	22.6%
Est. 2017	31,918 [9]	7.1%

U.S. Decennial Census[29]

Wildland-Urban Interface areas are those within the "vicinity" of wildland vegetation, typically with housing density exceeding 1 house per 40 acres, but with vegetation covering more than 50% of the parcel. In addition, WUI areas must be within 1.5 miles of an area that has vegetative cover exceeding 75% to ensure that small urban parks are not classified as WUI. The California Fire Alliance (2001) defined "vicinity" as all areas within 1.5 miles (2.4 km) of wildland vegetation, the anticipated distance that firebrands can be carried from a wildland fire to the roof of a house.

The Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA) defines the term "Wildland-Urban Interface" to mean:

- An area within or adjacent to an at-risk community that is identified in recommendations to the Secretary in a community wildfire protection plan; or in the case of any area for which a community wildfire protection plan is not in effect:
    - An area extending ½-mile from the boundary of an at-risk community;
    - An area within 1½ miles of the boundary of an at-risk community, including any land that:
        - Has a sustained steep slope that creates the potential for wildfire behavior endangering the at-risk community; and
        - Has a geographic feature that aids in creating an effective fire break, such as a road or ridge top; or
        - Is in condition class 3, as documented by the Secretary in the project-specific environmental analysis; and
        - An area that is adjacent to an evacuation route for an at-risk community that the Secretary determines, in cooperation with the at-risk community, requires hazardous fuel reduction to provide safer evacuation from the at-risk community.

The wildland fire risk associated with WUI areas includes propagation of fire throughout WUI communities via house-to-house fire spread, landscaping-to-house fire spread, or ember intrusion. Advantages and disadvantages associated with WUI areas include:

WUI Advantages:

- WUI areas often have community water supply systems
- Many homes can be accessed by a single road
- Emergency equipment can protect multiple assets at once
- Houses usually only exposed to flammable fuels on one side

Figure 1: Wildland Urban Interface

WUI Disadvantages:

- High housing density; house-to-house fire spread is likely
- Roads can become congested during emergencies
- Firebrands and spotting into ornamental vegetation

Wildland-Urban Intermix

Wildland-Urban Intermix areas are those where housing and vegetation intermingle. In the Intermix, wildland vegetation is continuous and greater than 50% of the land area is vegetated with combustible fuels. The wildland fire risk associated with Intermix areas includes vegetation-to-house fire spread or ember intrusion. Advantages and disadvantages associated with Intermix areas include:

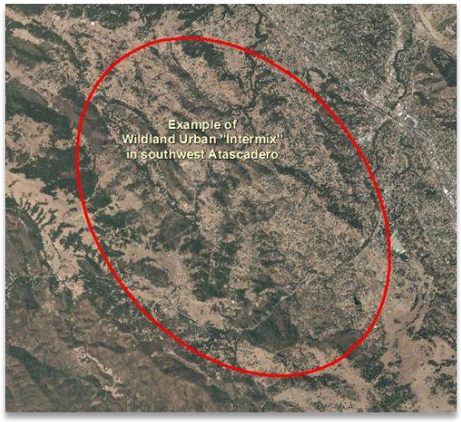


Figure 2: Wildland Urban Intermix

Intermix Advantages:

- Low housing density
- Less likely to have house to house fire spread

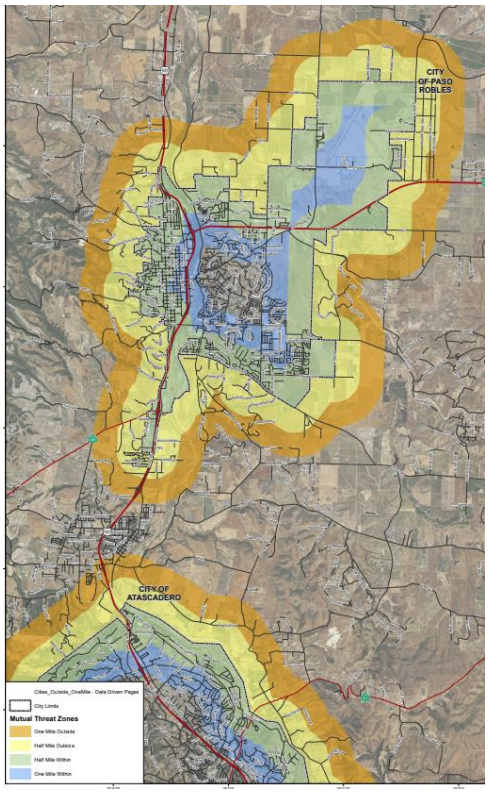
Intermix Disadvantages:

- Increased risk to firefighters
- Emergency equipment can protect only single assets
- Emergency equipment response times can be delayed due to:
    - Rural Roads (single lane, windy, heavy fuel loading)
    - Long Driveways
- Roads can become congested during emergencies
- Diversity in water supply systems
- Houses are surrounded by vegetation

Intermix areas identified within San Luis Obispo County include most rural areas of the county with the Adelaide and Lake Nacimiento areas having the most influence on fire spread into the City of Paso Robles. These areas create Mutual Threat Zones as illustrated in the map listed below.

Population Flux

Another important factor in evaluating the population in the City of Paso Robles is the temporal shift in population density. This has implications for firefighters and fire risk reduction planning. Population fluctuations at various scales include an influx of tourists during spring and summer months due to large events such as the Paso Robles Wine Festival and California Mid State Fair. Increased populations result in increased human presence in wildland areas during the late spring and summer months for recreation purposes. In addition to the wine tourism, Lake Nacimiento and Lake San Antonio draw thousands of visitors each year. Consideration of these temporal effects is important for planning strategic fuel treatment projects intended to protect communities and infrastructure, allocating emergency response personnel and reducing potential ignition sources.



FIRE ENVIRONMENT

The fire environment is defined as the "surrounding conditions, influences, and modifying forces that determine fire behavior." The four components that affect fire behavior are fuels, weather, topography, and human behavior. Understanding the relationship between these factors and their influence on fire behavior must be considered to plan the most effective strategies for reducing the threat of unwanted fire.

Of the factors listed above, fuels (vegetation, buildings, etc.) are the component that is targeted most often since this factor is the most easily affected. For example, vegetation can be removed or manipulated in ways that will dramatically reduce the fire risk. Homes can be "hardened", i.e. built with non-combustible or fire-resistant materials as defined in the California Wildland-Urban Interface Code (W.U.I.) Chapter 7A. Hardened homes with adequate defensible space and proper property hygiene, enforced by the Hazardous Fuels Reduction Program have the best chance of survival in a wildland fire.

While the weather cannot be controlled, it is important to understand what types of weather can occur that increase the fire hazard and what options there are for reducing this hazard. An example of this is limiting certain activities including open burning, equipment use, welding, or mowing when weather conditions are hot and dry.

As with the weather and topography, the terrain cannot be significantly altered to reduce the fire hazard. Terrain, however, has a strong influence within the fire environment and should be carefully assessed when designing fire hazard reduction treatments. Aspect has a strong bearing on the type of vegetation present and the temperature and moisture regime of the soil and vegetation. Slope steepness (gradient) is important since fire behavior usually increases with steepness. Slope position (ridge, valley, saddle, draw, etc.) should be considered when planning fire prevention measures. For example, additional defensible space may be warranted where slopes are steep and if positioned on a warm southerly aspect and/or within a "chimney" (draw, saddle).

"Full alignment" is a term used to describe the fire environment when all the conditions are conducive for increased fire activity. This occurs when fires burn in heavy fuels, during hot, dry weather with strong winds blowing up steep slopes and draws. Highest priority for fire prevention measures should be focused on areas where these types of conditions are known to occur or are considered likely. Additional discussion on fuels, weather, and topography are below.

VEGETATION / FUELS

Due to the County's varied climate and geography, there is a diverse population of plants. In fact, the Central Coast Bioregion is considered one of the most biologically diverse areas in North America and many species are found nowhere else in the world. Plants are categorized as native (naturally-occurring prior to European settlement, (endemic) or non-native (introduced) which have been transported into San Luis Obispo County from other regions or ecosystems. All plants and vegetation types have a range of environmental conditions within which they can grow known as "limits of tolerance". For plants, the limiting factors that determine the range of a species or plant community are precipitation, temperature, solar radiation, soil structure, elevation, and disturbance regime.

The California Wildlife Habitat Relationships System (CWHR) provides a classification system of existing vegetation types important to wildlife. The CWHR system was developed to recognize and categorize major vegetation types in California at a scale sufficient to predict wildlife-habitat relationships. Table 3 presents the vegetation types identified for San Luis Obispo County and includes acreages and percentage cover for the County.

Vegetation (or fuel) plays a major role in fire behavior and shaping fire hazard potential. Vegetation distribution throughout the County varies by location and topography, with dramatic differences observed between the eastern, agricultural and ranching portions of the County, and the more mountainous central and southern regions. Current land cover distribution within the County is characterized by 32 different vegetation types (Table 3) which have been classified into 14 different fuel models as presented in Table 4. The most abundant vegetative cover within San Luis Obispo County is herbaceous (46.9%), or annual grassland, distributed primarily in the inland valley and plain areas east of the La Panza, Garcia, and Santa Lucia Ranges. While this fuel type can burn quickly under strong, dry wind patterns, it does not produce the high heat intensity and high flame lengths associated with scrub, chaparral, and forest fuel types. Other significant vegetative cover types include: light brush (16.5%), pine/grass (12.1%), and hardwood/conifer litter (8.3%). These vegetation types are primarily associated with the steeper, upland areas in the La Panza, Garcia, and Santa Lucia Ranges throughout the central portion of the County. Fire behavior in brush fuel types produces higher flame lengths than that in grassland, although spread rates are typically slower. Fire behavior in forests is variable, depending on surface fuel conditions and the presence of ladder fuels.

Table 3. Vegetation Types in San Luis Obispo County

Vegetation Type*	Approximate Acreage	Percentage
Agriculture	120,908	5.69%
Alkali Desert Scrub	32,415	1.53%
Annual Grassland	991,331	46.66%
Barren	6,160	0.29%
Blue Oak Woodland	185,966	8.75%
Blue Oak-Foothill Pine	36,302	1.71%
Chamise-Redshank Chaparral	130,021	6.12%
Closed-Cone Pine-Cypress	3,121	0.15%
Coastal Oak Woodland	188,229	8.86%
Coastal Scrub	88,528	4.17%
Desert Scrub	670	0.03%
Desert Succulent Shrub	245	0.01%
Desert Wash	469	0.02%
Eucalyptus	10	0.00%
Freshwater Emergent Wetland	25	0.00%
Juniper	5,538	0.26%
Lacustrine	59	0.00%
Mixed Chaparral	158,147	7.44%
Montane Hardwood	28,521	1.34%
Montane Hardwood-Conifer	12,528	0.59%
Montane Riparian	252	0.01%
Pinyon-Juniper	5	0.00%
Ponderosa Pine	684	0.03%
Sagebrush	4,747	0.22%
Saline Emergent Wetland	294	0.01%
Unknown Conifer Type	1,240	0.06%
Unknown Shrub Type	44,753	2.11%
Urban	53,659	2.53%
Valley Foothill Riparian	3,264	0.15%
Valley Oak Woodland	11,120	0.52%
Water	15,170	0.71%
Wet Meadow	17	0.00%

*Source: FRAP

Variations in vegetative cover type and species composition have a direct effect on fire behavior. Some vegetation types and their associated plant species have increased flammability based on plant physiology (resin content), biological function (flowering, retention of dead plant material), physical structure (leaf size, branching patterns), and overall fuel loading. For example, the native shrub species that compose chaparral vegetation types present a high potential hazard based on such criteria.

As described, vegetation plays a significant role in fire behavior. A critical factor to consider is the dynamic nature of vegetation types. Fire presence and absence at varying cycles or regimes affects vegetation type succession. Succession of vegetation types, most notably the gradual conversion of shrublands to grasslands with high fire frequency and grasslands to shrub lands with fire exclusion, is highly dependent on fire regime. Biomass and associated fuel loading will increase over time, if disturbance or fuel reduction efforts are not implemented.

Wildfire disturbances can also have dramatic impacts on plants and plant composition. Heat shock, accumulation of post-fire charred wood, and change in photoperiods due to removal of shrub canopies may all stimulate seed germination. The post-fire response for most species is vegetative reproduction and stimulation of flowering and fruiting. The combustion of above ground biomass alters seedbeds and temporarily eliminates competition for moisture, nutrients, heat, and light. Species that can rapidly take advantage of the available resources will flourish. It is possible to alter successional pathways for different vegetation types through manual alteration. This concept is a key component in the overall establishment and maintenance of fuel reduction projects.

Table 4: Fuel Model Types in San Luis Obispo County

Fuel Model Number*	Description	Approximate Acreage	Percent Cover
1	Grass	997,984	46.98%
2	Pine/Grass	256,610	12.08%
4	Tall Chaparral	88,290	4.16%
5	Light Brush	349,780	16.46%
6	Intermediate Brush	3,103	0.15%
8	Hardwood/Conifer Litter	176,008	8.29%
9	Medium Conifer	242	0.01%
10	Heavy Conifer Litter w/ Understory	9,630	0.45%
12	Medium Slash	228	0.01%
15	Desert	545	0.03%
28	Urban	19,687	0.93%
97	Agriculture	220,097	10.36%
98	Water	1,726	0.08%
99	Barren	458	0.02%

*Source: FRAP

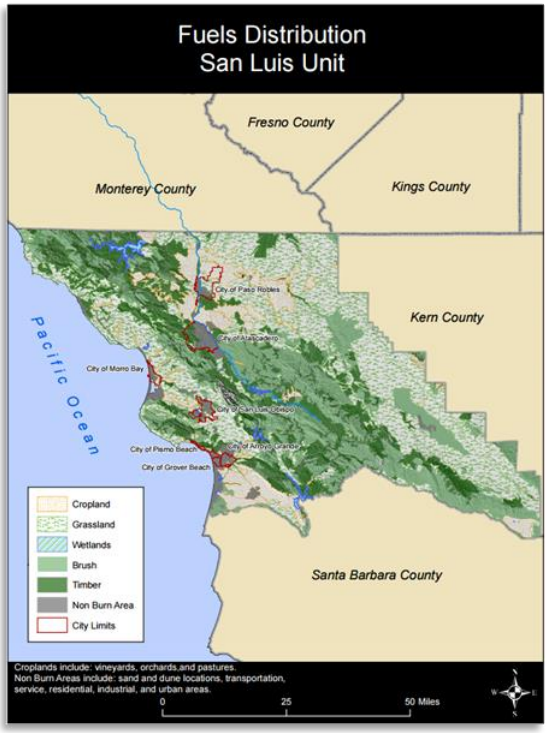


Figure 3: Fuels Distribution

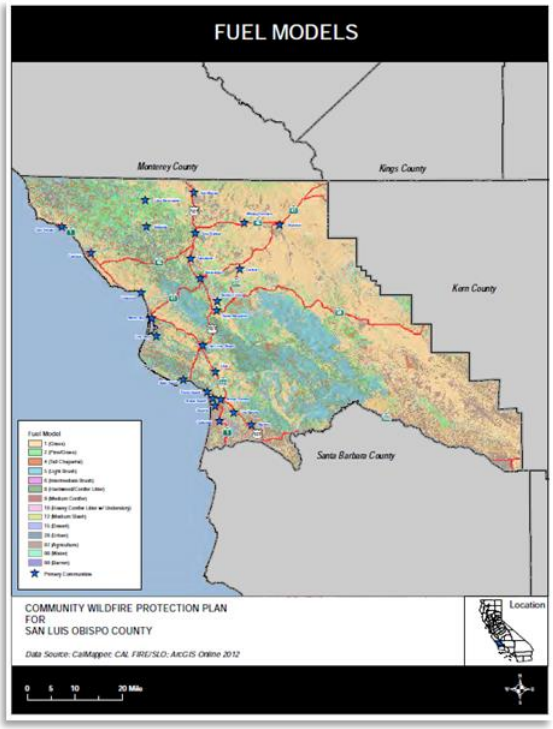


Figure 4: Fuel Model

TREE MORTALITY

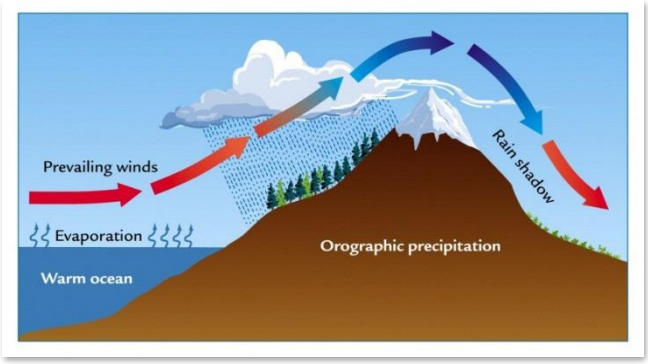
Sudden Oak Death

The moist climate in the Central Coast Region supports the Sudden Oak Death *(SOD)* pathogen. Sudden Oak Death is currently found at the Monterey/San Luis Obispo County border, though the potential for spread into San Luis Obispo County is high. The *SOD Map* is a useful application that produces a Google Earth.kmz file for viewing SOD locations and sample sites. SOD has the potential to kill a significant number of coast live oak, California black oaks, Shreve oaks, canyon live oaks and tanoaks in the County. This poses a potentially significant increase in the fire hazard within infected areas due to the increase in the amount of dead fuel available. The loss of tree canopy will increase ground fuels by regenerating shrub species, which in turn increases the fire hazard. Aerial monitoring, stream side monitoring and ground checking dying oak trees are conducted annually by agencies and universities to monitor the spread of the disease. Research is being conducted to determine potential abatement methods.

The short-term and long-term implication of these forest diseases and other insect infestations in relation to fire prevention and protection is the relatively rapid mortality that occurs, resulting in increased dead fuel loads. The recently dead standing fuels contribute to increased wildfire incidence and severity. This will require treatment and/or removal, especially within WUI areas. Furthermore, care must be taken to avoid transportation of infested material or spreading these diseases by using or transporting infected tools, chips, and trimmings/plant material into non-infected regions.

WEATHER

Paso Robles is characterized by a Mediterranean climate with most annual rainfall occurring during the winter and early spring. However, the primary climate is defined by long, hot, dry summers and brief, cool sometimes rainy winters. The city receives an annual rainfall of about 14.71 inches per year. Paso robles often receives less than 10 inches of rain per year and typically, no rain falls from May through September. Summers in Paso Robles tend to be very hot, with daily temperatures frequently exceeding 100 degrees from late June mid-September. It is not uncommon to experience a heat wave exceeding 110 degrees for several days. Summers in Paso Robles experience an unusually large daytime-nighttime temperature swing. There may be profound temperature differences between the daytime and nighttime temperatures, as much as 50 degrees.



Terrain contributes significantly to the weather in Paso Robles. Paso Robles is positioned on the Eastern side of the Santa Lucia Mountain Range and the Southern end of the Salinas River Valley. The Santa Lucia Range intercepts a large portion of the rain bearing clouds moving eastward from the Pacific Ocean. These ranges also separate the cooler, moister marine-influenced areas from the arid inland area during much of the summer. The entire area east of the range can be described as arid, with Paso Robles often receiving less than 10 inches of rain annually. Another locally important characteristic affecting weather is the frequency of summer fog. Fog conditions augment rainfall and provide moisture for plant growth affecting live and dead fuel moistures. However, the summer fog

typically burns off by 10:00 a.m.

San Luis Obispo County is broken into two weather zones, Coastal and Inland. Paso Robles is located in the Inland Zone. Using weather factors such as wind, humidity, and temperature, the two zones are ranked by their frequency of severe fire weather. These areas are ranked as moderate (severe fire weather occurring fewer than 26 days per year), high (severe fire weather occurring between 26 and 46 days per year), and very high (severe fire weather occurring more than 46 days per year). Some areas ranked as 'very high' can experience severe fire weather up to 88 days per year. Although weather conditions can reduce the number of days that a devastating fire can occur, all areas of the County regularly are subject to days or "windows" when severe burning conditions exist.

The California National Fuel Moisture Database (NFMD) is a web-based query system that enables users to view sampled and measured live and dead-fuel moisture information. The database is routinely updated by fuels specialists who monitor, sample, and calculate live fuel moisture data.

Remote Automated Weather Stations

A system of Remote Automated Weather Stations (RAWS) is used to acquire site specific weather data. The RAWS are self-contained weather stations which sample weather on a periodic basis and then transfer this information via satellite to a federal server. This weather data can then be used for emergency responses and project planning. There are currently six stations located within San Luis Obispo County. Four of these stations are owned and maintained by CAL FIRE and two are owned and maintained by the U.S. Forest Service. These stations have been placed to measure weather in certain areas in the County. The Las Tablas RAWS reporting station is the most proximate to the City of Paso Robles. Station information and real-time weather data such as the current weather summary for the Los Angeles/Oxnard CWA is available from MesoWest.

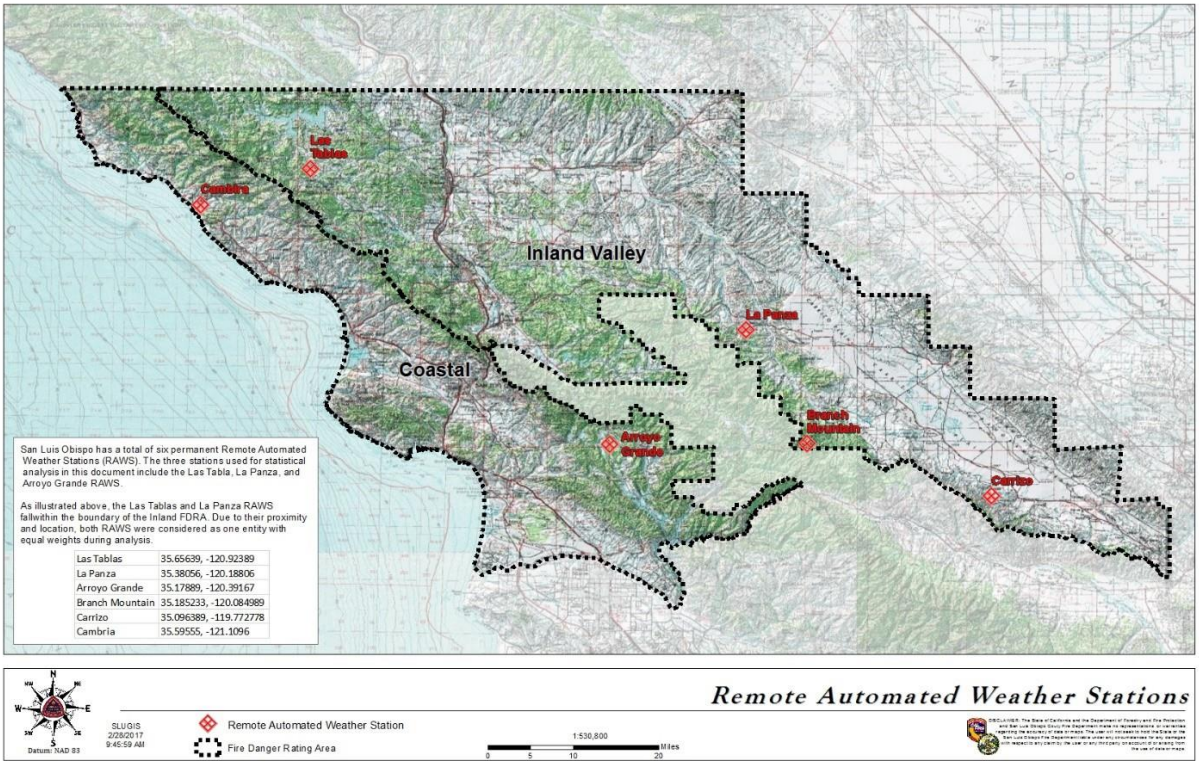


Figure 5: RAWS

TOPOGRAPHY

Topography is essentially the lay of the land and is commonly characterized by measurements of slope, elevation, and aspect. The topography (Figure 6) of Paso Robles is variable and greatly affected by the Santa Lucia Coastal Range. The topography of the area consists of gentle rolling hills on the eastern half of the city, and foothill peaks which rise in elevation to the west. Much of these areas to the west are blanketed in the California chaparral environment. Paso Robles sits on the eastern foothills of the Santa Lucia Coastal Mountain Range, which lies directly to the West of the city, and runs in North-South direction. The city is located at the southern end of the Salinas River Valley, which is centered between the Temblor Range to the east and the Santa Lucia Range to the West.

Elevation affects temperature, humidity, wind speed, and the growing season of vegetation. Aspect affects the amount of solar radiation absorbed by plants. Southern aspects normally receive maximum solar radiation while northern aspects receive the least. Soil and plant moisture contents are the primary factor influenced by solar radiation. As southern aspects receive the most solar radiation, plants on south facing slopes tend to be more drought tolerant than those adapted to northern aspects. Slope is the steepness of the land, calculated as the product of the change in elevation (rise) divided by the horizontal distance covered (run). Slope is typically presented in units of percent or degrees. Steeper slopes can have a significant effect on fire behavior, as a fire moving uphill can preheat and dry vegetation uphill from it and accelerate the rate of fire spread. The topographic conditions can have considerable effect on wildland fire behavior, as well as on the ability of firefighters to suppress those fires. Steep slopes and canyon alignments are conducive to channeling, deflecting, concentrating, or dispersing winds. This creates extremely erratic wildfire conditions, especially during wind-driven fire events.

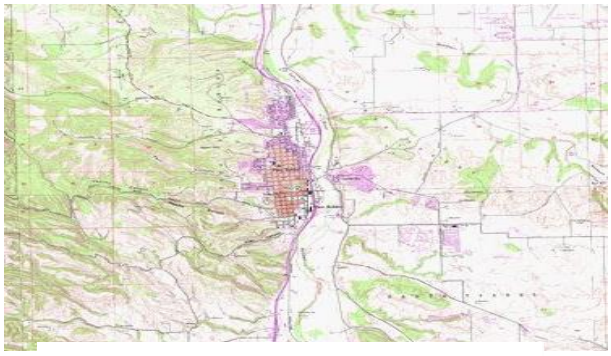


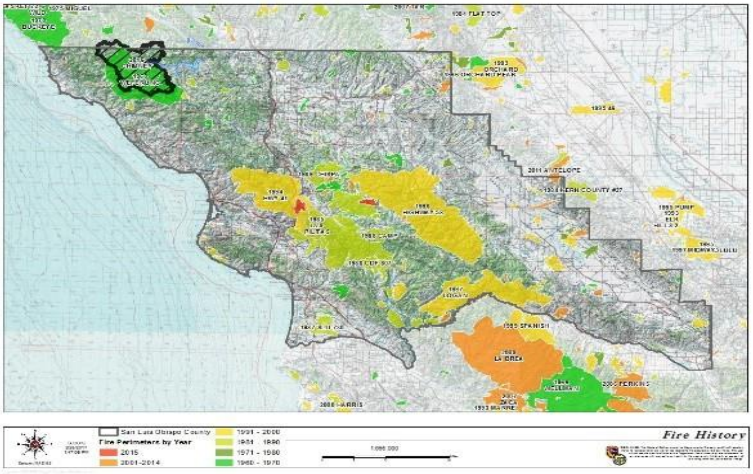
Figure 6: Topography Example

FIRE HISTORY

Fire history is an important component in understanding fire frequency, fire type, significant ignition sources, and vulnerable areas/communities. The topography, vegetation, and climatic conditions associated with San Luis Obispo County combine to create a unique situation capable of supporting wildfires. Many large, damaging wildfires have occurred in the County, notably the Chimney Fire (2016), the Weferling Fire (1960), the Las Pilitas Fire (1985), the Chispa Fire (1989), the Highway 41 (1994), the Highway 58 Fire (1996), and the Logan Fire (1997). The fires burned approximately 400,000 acres, destroyed numerous structures, and cost millions of dollars to suppress. The fire with the most recent significant impact on the County was the Chimney Fire west of the City of Paso Robles. The Chimney Fire destroyed 49 residences and 21 other structures. While these large fires can create significant damages due to their size, even smaller WUI fires in densely developed areas can be very damaging. Based on historical fire perimeter data, repeated burning is observed within the County primarily in the Santa Lucia Range. Land ownership (federal) and fuel type (chaparral) appear to be significant factors affecting the geographic distribution of fires in San Luis Obispo County. Grass- dominated lands in the eastern portion of the County exhibit small, well dispersed burn

perimeters, while the heavier chaparral fuels in the central-southern portion of the County (Santa Lucia Range) exhibit a repeated burn pattern, larger fire perimeters, and a more concentrated distribution of fire perimeters. The average interval between wildfires greater than 20,000 acres within San Luis Obispo County is 7.3 years.

Large Fire History in San Luis Obispo County



IGNITION HISTORY

SRA Ignition data for San Luis Obispo County were analyzed for a 5-year period (2013-2017) to evaluate ignition trends and problems within the County. This dataset includes 781 ignitions and includes an identification of fire cause. Table 6 and Figure 8 present the ignition history for San Luis Obispo County between 2013 and 2017, classified by fire cause.

Ignition Cause*	Number	Percentage
Arson	31	4%
Campfire	35	4%
Debris Burning	46	6%
Powerline/Vehicle/Equipment Use	319	41%
Lightning	10	1%
Playing w/ Fire	7	1%
Unknown/Undetermined	326	42%
Smoking	9	1%

Table 6: SRA Ignition History for San Luis Obispo County (2013-2017)

The 5-year ignition history for San Luis Obispo County identifies trends in ignition type, with most ignition causes classified as Miscellaneous or Undetermined. Vehicle, Equipment Use, and Electrical also emerge as significant ignition sources in the County. Spatial analysis of ignition locations reveals a direct correlation between ignitions and roads/transportation corridors. Specifically, of the 781 ignition points containing a latitude and longitude included in the dataset, approximately 48% are located within 20 feet of any road. Of these 48%, nearly 29% occur within 20 feet of Highways in the county.

A high density of ignitions is also observable within and adjacent to urban areas, with notable concentrations observed near the communities of Cambria, Lake Nacimiento, Paso Robles, Templeton, Atascadero, Los Osos, San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande, and in the Nipomo area. This concentration of ignitions in urban areas and along transportation corridors emphasizes the importance of public education and fire prevention activities, including road-side fuel treatments and strategic management of flashy fuels (e.g. grasses) in WUI and Wildland Urban Intermix areas.

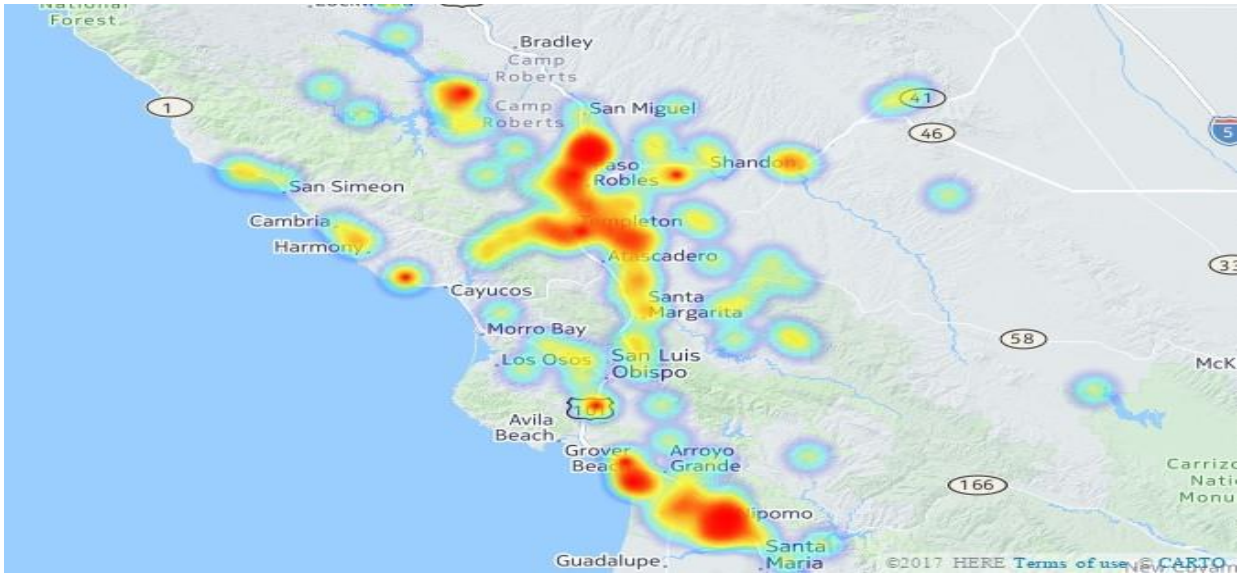


Figure 8: Ignition Density

PREPAREDNESS AND FIREFIGHTING CAPABILITIES

Fire agencies in San Luis Obispo County put tremendous effort into maintaining the highest preparedness level possible. This is a priority for each agency and program. Each agency works with the intent to accomplish the mission of public protection and a fire safe community. The fire administration and fire prevention divisions are fulltime functions that assist fire operations division before, during and after an emergency event takes place. Additionally, San Luis Obispo county agencies present annual preparation events to assist in maintaining the goal of keeping wildland fires at 10 acres or less. Below is a brief outline of the preparation efforts of each division within the San Luis Obispo county fire agencies.

Fire Administration Division

Among the many tasks that revolve around managing policies, budgets and logistics, administrative staff also determines and implements staffing levels to achieve the agency's mission. Additionally, administrative staff prepare and maintain cooperative fire service agreements and resource response plans, like the Central Coast Operating Plan (CCOP). These plans provide operations the preparedness and depth necessary for mission success.

Fire Operations Division

The operations division provides a professional level of service related to fire control and suppression, rescue, advanced life support/emergency medical assistance, and the mitigation of hazardous materials incidents. In the event of major disasters, they are trained and equipped to handle a countywide incident, including wildland and structural fires, earthquakes, tsunami, riots, hazardous material incidents, nuclear events, and other major emergencies. In addition to responding to emergency, training, fleet management, and dispatch function serve a critical role to our efficiency and preparedness to respond.

Fire Prevention Bureau

Prevention staff spends much of their time supporting field mission preparedness and preventing fires. It is divided into four areas; fire prevention & education; planning & engineering; pre-fire planning, and resource management. Each function may be full or part time staffed (depending on the agency's resources) and collectively work to support the efforts of operations. Prevention preparation activities include: defensible space inspections, emergency evacuation planning, fire prevention education, incident intelligence and mapping, implementation of the State Fire Plan, and fire-related activities such as arson investigation. Other common projects include fire break construction and fire fuel reduction activities that lessen the risk of wildfire to communities and evacuation routes.

Firefighting Capabilities

The fire service in San Luis Obispo (SLO) County is comprised of a cohesive and cooperative group of 17 agencies. Services are provided by a combination of city, special district, county, state, federal, and private agencies that operate 48 fire stations. These fire agencies have also developed an automatic mutual aid program that provides for the closest fire engine to respond to a new emergency regardless of the jurisdiction. This cooperative fire protection system gives each agency a depth and weight of response to be successful in mitigating both large scale and simultaneous emergency events within the County.

SECTION II: COLLABORATION

COMMUNITY / AGENCIES / FIRE SAFE COUNCILS / FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

As a key component of the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003, a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) serves as a mechanism for identification of areas presenting high fire risk as well as identification of fire hazards and potential projects intended to mitigate such risk. This Plan integrates the community-focused approach of the CWPP process and is intended to provide the community a forum for identifying assets and communities at risk from wildfire, which may include people, property, natural resources, cultural values, economic interests, and infrastructure. The identification of these assets or communities by the community strongly influences the potential wildfire hazard mitigation projects identified in this Plan. The organization and title of representatives involved in the development of this Plan are indicated below.

Plan Development Team:

Organization	Title
CAL FIRE / San Luis Obispo County Fire	Chief
Cambria CSD Fire Department	Fire Chief
City of Atascadero Fire Department	Fire Chief
City of Morro Bay Fire Department	Fire Chief
City of Paso Robles Fire Department	Fire Chief
City of San Luis Obispo Fire Department	Fire Chief
Five Cities Fire Authority	Fire Chief
Los Padres National Forest	Forest Supervisor
San Luis Obispo County Community Fire Safe Council	President
San Luis Obispo County Fire Chiefs Association	President

COMMUNITY / AGENCIES / FIRE SAFE COUNCILS / FIREWISE COMMUNITIES

The location and size of San Luis Obispo County dictate that local fire resources must be used effectively since these resources are limited, and additional resources could be several hours away. The diversity of available resources and fire-related problems mandate the cooperative use of fire service resources. Cooperative assistance is provided on reciprocal contributions and may be provided in two forms:

- Automatic Aid: a predetermined immediate joint response as a means to provide effective fire protection
- Mutual Aid: responses to supplement the resources of any fire agency during a period of actual or potential need, including move-up and cover assignments.

Mutual Aid is dependent on recognition that equipment and resources are expected to be provided only when dispatch of the resources will not unduly jeopardize local capabilities.

This San Luis Obispo County Fire Services Mutual Aid Plan intends to provide the following:

- Upon demand, provide the cost-effective use of the emergency resources of all jurisdictions
- Achieve a balance over the long run between providing and receiving entities
- Eliminate complex financial and legal agreements
- Address all mutual aid responses and station coverage assignments required of the fire service, including but not limited to the following:
    - Fire
    - Rescue
    - Hazardous Materials
    - Earthquake
    - Natural and Human-caused Disasters
    - EMS/Mass Casualty Incidents

The following fire departments, districts, and agencies currently engage in Automatic/Mutual Aid agreements in San Luis Obispo County:

- Atascadero Fire Department
- Atascadero State Hospital Fire Department
- Avila Beach Fire Department
- CAL FIRE San Luis Obispo
- Camp Roberts Fire Department
- CAL FIRE-San Benito-Monterey
- Cambria Fire Protection District
- California Men's Colony
- CAL FIRE Fresno-Kings
- Five Cities Fire Authority
- Guadalupe Fire Protection District
- Hearst Castle Fire Department
- Morro Bay Fire Department
- Paso Robles Fire Department
- Pismo Beach Fire Department
- Santa Barbara County Fire Department
- South Bay Fire Protection District
- San Luis Obispo County Fire
- San Luis Obispo City Fire Department
- San Miguel Fire Protection District
- Santa Maria Fire Protection District
- Santa Margarita Fire Protection District
- Templeton Fire Protection District
- U.S. Forest Service (Los Padres National Forest)

In addition to the Automatic/Mutual Aid agreements identified above, dispatch agreements also exist between CAL FIRE/SLO, Cambria Community Services District, the Santa Margarita Fire Protection District, the San Miguel Community Services District, the Templeton Community Services District, the City of Morro Bay, the Five Cities Fire Authority, and the CNG-Camp Roberts.

The California Master Cooperative Wildland Fire Management and Stafford Act Response Agreement (CFMA) requires an Annual Operating Plan to coordinate wildfire response efforts between State and Federal Agencies. For San Luis Obispo County, the Central Coast Operating Plan (CCOP) represents an agreement between CAL FIRE, BLM, USFS, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and provides the participating agencies with the guidelines and information necessary to properly execute the terms of the Agreement. The CCOP identifies fire protection elements, special management considerations, fire protection organization, maps, operational procedures, fire prevention activities, general procedures, and a list of relevant agency contacts.

SECTION III: VALUES

VALUES

CAL FIRE's Fire and Resource Assessment Program (FRAP) prepared the document titled California's Forest and Rangelands: 2015 Assessment. This document satisfies the 2008 Federal Farm Bill provision that each state assesses forest resources, which is intended to identify key issues facing each state and requires the delineation of spatial areas called Priority Landscapes. Priority Landscapes are intended to focus investments and other programs to address issues identified in the assessment. Priority Landscape datasets related to fire include an evaluation of fire risk as related to community water, ecosystem health, forest economics, human infrastructure, range economics, recreation and open space and wildlife.

The fire/human infrastructure Priority Landscape developed by FRAP represents the convergence of areas with high wildfire threat and human infrastructure assets. Included in this assessment are communities and assets. Community areas include incorporated city boundaries and Census Designated Places for unincorporated communities while assets include residential and commercial structures, major roads, and transmission lines. Wildfire threat is the result of an analysis of fire frequency (likelihood of a given area burning) and potential fire behavior (fire hazard). For purposes of illustration, below are three examples, Fire Threat to Ecosystem Health, Rangeland Fire Threat and Post Fire Erosion Threat to Community Water.

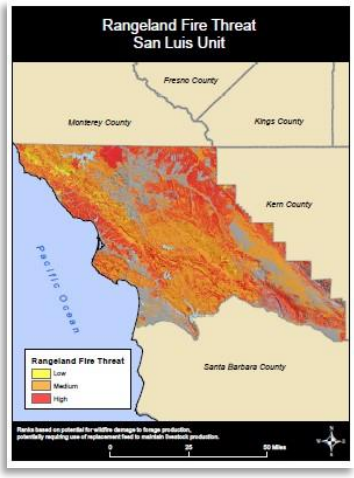


Figure 9: Rangeland Fire Threat

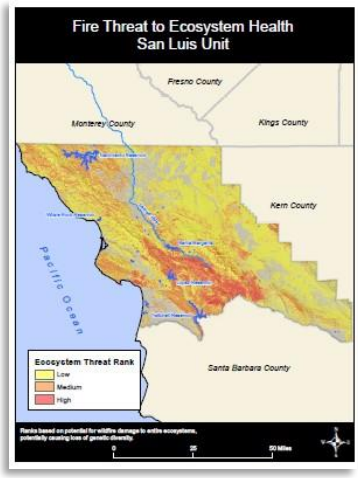


Figure 10: Ecosystem Threat

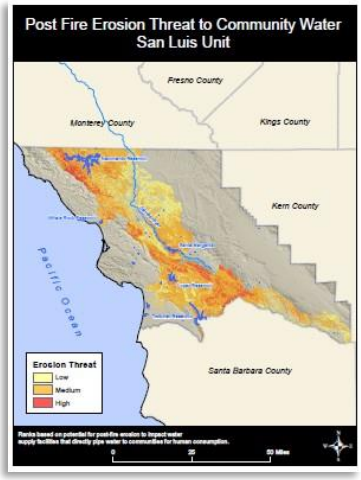


Figure 11: Post Fire Erosion Threat

Another dominant factor affecting wildfire risk is the prevailing wind pattern in San Luis Obispo County. Specifically, on-shore winds from the northwest routinely pick up in the late morning hours increasing the risk of pushing a fire in a southeast direction if not extinguished by late-morning (approximately 10 am). This condition is observable in the shape of large fire burn perimeters in San Luis Obispo County. For example, prevailing winds contributed significantly to the extent of the 1994 Highway 41 Fire, which originated along the Highway 41 West corridor between Morro Bay and Atascadero and burned southwest toward the City of San Luis Obispo and northeast toward the City of Atascadero.

While no large fires are included in the fire history dataset for the City of Paso Robles. The potential for a significant WUI fire is considered high. For example, a fire originating in Fern Canyon could be pushed east into the city due to heavy fuels, prevailing wind patterns and steep terrain.

FIRE RISK vs. FIRE HAZARD

The concept of fire risk vs. fire hazard can be confusing and these terms are often used interchangeably. The purpose of this Plan is to assist fire agencies with development of collaborative methods of reducing the fire 'risk' within their jurisdictions by using strategies and tactics that will reduce or eliminate one or more fire 'hazards'. Examples of fire hazards include dense stands of decadent brush, faulty wiring, broken vehicle exhaust systems and homes that are not built in accordance with fire code requirements. The fire risk (vulnerability) of a given area constantly rises and falls depending on conditions within the fire environment. Successful implementation of this Plan will result in the meaningful reduction of the fire risk in strategic portions of the City through identification and abatement of important fire hazards.

PRIORITY COMMUNITIES

Communities at Risk (CAR) from potential wildfire were identified at the federal level in the 2001 National Fire Plan (66 Fed. Reg. 753, January 4, 2001), which included only communities that were near federal lands. Recognizing that wildfire risk was not limited to areas near federal lands, CAL FIRE developed a more inclusive list of communities at risk for the State of California, which is managed by the California Fire Alliance. The communities identified in the San Luis Obispo County CWPP were derived from the Geographic Names Information System (GNIS) database and evaluated to ensure that all Communities at Risk were accounted for. The GNIS database of communities in the County was then consolidated to represent major communities in the County and historical places were excluded.

To evaluate Priority Communities in the State, FRAP analyzed the fire/human infrastructure Priority Landscape dataset in combination with communities that include at least 500 people or 1,000 acres. Communities ranked as medium or high Priority Landscapes (for fire/human infrastructure) constitute Priority Communities. The intent of the Priority Community identification is to provide a way of identifying possible communities for outreach and further strategy development. The Priority Communities dataset was utilized as a starting point for identifying and prioritizing communities in San Luis Obispo County where efforts can be focused to reduce wildfire threat. This dataset was refined based on input from community stakeholders and based on an assessment of fire history, ignition history, land ownership, vegetation/fuel, or terrain.

Priority Communities for San Luis Obispo County are identified in Table 7. Priority Communities are those in which pre-fire management activities, including hazardous fuel reduction and public education, should be focused. This list of communities is based on available fire hazard planning data from FRAP and augmented with a County-scale analysis of fire hazard variables. This information should be routinely evaluated and updated, as needed.

Table 7: Priority Communities in San Luis Obispo County

Community*	Planning Area
Adelaida	SLU-1.3
Arroyo Grande	SLU-1.2
Atascadero	SLU-1.4
Avila Beach	SLU-1.6
Baywood Park-Los Osos	SLU-1.1
Cambria	SLU-1.1, CMB-1
Cayucos	SLU-1.1
Lake Nacimiento	SLU-1.3
Nipomo	SLU-1.2
Paso Robles	SLU-1.3, PRF-1
Pismo Beach	SLU-1.6
San Luis Obispo	SLU-1.1, SLO-1
San Miguel	SLU-1.5, SMG-1
Santa Margarita	SLU-1.4, SMV-1
Templeton	SLU-1.3, TEM-1

*Source: FRAP

PLANNING AREAS

For the purposes of this Plan, San Luis Obispo County has been divided into multiple Planning Areas to facilitate localized pre-fire planning efforts. The following provides a brief description of each Planning Area affecting the City of Paso Robles.

Paso Robles Planning Area (PRF-1)
The Paso Robles Planning Area encompasses the City of Paso Robles and is approximately 12,600 acres in size. The Paso Robles Fire Department is the Fire Authority Having Jurisdiction (FAHJ) for this Planning Area. The City of Paso Robles is a Priority Community designated in this Plan. No fires included in the historical database (FRAP) have burned within the City, although several smaller fires have burned in the immediate surroundings.

SLU Planning Area 3 (CAL FIRE – Battalion 3; SLU-1.3)
SLU Planning Area 3 encompasses approximately 220,357 acres and is situated along the northern edge of the County generally from the Highway 101 corridor in the east to the ridge of the Santa Lucia Range in the west. Its southern boundary extends roughly northeastward from the City of Atascadero, but excludes the Santa Lucia Range. Planning Area 3 includes the Priority Communities of Adelaida, Lake Nacimiento, west Paso Robles and Templeton. Large fire history in the Planning Area includes the 1960 Weferling Fire and 2016 Chimney Fire in the far north western portion of the Planning Area.

SLU Planning Area 5 (CAL FIRE – Battalion 5; SLU-1.5)
SLU Planning Area 5 encompasses approximately 415,826 acres and is the Northeast section of the county which is situated along the upper eastern edge boundary with Kern County through the Bitterwater Valley/Temblor Mountain range (San Andreas Fault line), Northeast boundary with Fresno County and the North boundary with Monterey County. The Western edge of the planning area includes: Camp Roberts, San Miguel, eastern Paso Robles, and eastern Atascadero. The Southern boundary runs along the Rocky Canyon truck trail and heads east just north of Hwy 58 until it reaches the Kern County line again at the Bitterwater Valley Road intersection. Planning Area 5 includes the Priority Communities of Creston, Shandon and Whitley Gardens. There is no extended attack/large fire history in the Planning Area because of the mostly grassland fuel type.

CRITICAL INFRASTRUCTURE/CULTURAL/BIOTIC ASSETS

For the purposes of this Plan, critical infrastructure/cultural/biotic assets are those values that may be at risk from wildfire. Assets in Paso Robles include among others power transmission facilities, emergency communication facilities, transportation infrastructure, tourist and recreation areas. Table 8 presents the assets in the Paso Robles Planning Area.

Table 8: Assets in the Paso Robles Planning Area

Asset
Trains/Rail System
Transportation Corridors (Highways 101, and 46)
Communication Sites/Systems
PG&E High Tension Power Lines
State Water Project
Electrical and Communication Transmission and Distribution Lines
Power Substations
Cultural and Historical Icons
Schools and Public Facilities
Gas Lines
Critical Watersheds
Airport

This Page intentionally left blank

SECTION IV: TACTICAL POLICY MATRICES

EDUCATION

The goal of the Education section is to prepare response organizations, communities, the public, and policy makers regarding appropriate community actions and interactions to reduce the unwanted impacts of fires in the wildland urban interface

Tactical Policy	Benefits of the Project to the Community	Category	Timeline	ID
SLO County Strategic Goal ED1: Educate citizens of how to achieve contemporary WUI (wildland-urban interface) code compliance in retrofits/cost: benefit ratio.				
Educate citizens of how to achieve contemporary WUI (wildland-urban interface) code compliance in retrofits/cost: benefit ratio	• Gives Residents detailed and locally specific tools that they can use to improve preparedness. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Reduces potentially wasteful spending.	Education	2 years	ED1.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal ED2: Organize a community group made up of residents and agency personnel to develop materials and communicate relevant defensible space messages.				
Promote and encourage reverse 911 registrations.	• Cost-effective • Provides early notifications and emergency updates in the area. • Allows for more efficient and expeditious evacuations. • Reduces risk of loss of life to residents and first responders.	Education	2 years	ED2.1PR
Provide press releases, newsletter articles and utilize social media to provide fire safety, defensible space, and emergency preparedness information.	• Introduces new avenues for communicating crucial information with residents. • Cost-effective. • Provides residents locally specific tools to improve overall emergency preparedness	Education	Annually	ED2.2PR
Develop and update Emergency Preparedness websites.	• Gives residents detailed and locally specific tools that they can use to improve preparedness. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community.	Education	1 year	ED2.3PR
SLO County Strategic Goal ED10: Increase signage/replace or augment existing signage.				
Increase signage in the community to warn of fire danger	• Informs residents, commuters and tourists of extreme fire danger to reduce accidental ignitions and encourage pre-planning. • Promotes defensible space and hazardous fuel reduction.	Education	2 years	ED10.1PR

FUEL

The goal of the Fuel section is to mitigate the unwanted impacts of wildfires on communities through proper vegetation management techniques that reduce hazardous fuels and the resulting wildfire intensity.

Tactical Policy	Benefits of the Project to the Community	Category	Timeline	ID
SLO County Strategic Goal FL1: County bike and trail system -incorporate trails into fire defense system.				
Develop and maintain walking/bike paths accessible by fire equipment along the Salinas River Bed and areas of open space/ parks.	• Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Increases emergency access allowing for faster response times. • Improves public access to recreational and outdoor activities.	Fuel	5 years	FL1.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal FL2: Encourage continued grazing in parks and open space for grass/light fuel maintenance.				
Develop grazing program for river bed and open space	• Reduces fire risk in areas where grazing occurs at a minimal cost to the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Provides for improved emergency access • Reduces hazardous fuel loading.	Fuel	3 years	FL2.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal FL3: Encourage use of prescribed fires where ecologically sound and feasible.				
Collaborate with Cal Fire to develop fuel breaks where ecologically sound and feasible in mutual threat zones	• Reduces fire risk in the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Reduces potentially wasteful spending.	Fuel	2 years	FL3.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal FL12: Create Sustainable programs for creating Defensible Space at the parcel Level.				
Continue to enforce the Hazardous Fuel Reduction (Weed Abatement) Program	• Reduces fire risk in the community. • Reduces ignition potential in receptive fuel beds. • Improves Defensible Space. • Reduces fuel loading in open space and vacant lots.	Fuel	Annually	FL12.1PR
Create and maintain defensible space for critical infrastructure	• Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Reduces fire risk in the community. • Provides for a point of incident stabilization (perimeter control).	Fuel	2 years	FL12.2PR

PLANNING

The goal of the Planning section is to mitigate the unwanted impacts of wildfires on communities through community planning (including new resilient community design, retrofitting existing communities, and community recovery from the impact of fire), response planning, evacuation planning, and preparedness planning for responders, communities, and individuals and animals and livestock.

Tactical Policy	Benefits of the Project to the Community	Category	Timeline	ID
SLO County Strategic Goal PLN1: Make CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) format compliant with Local Hazard Mitigation Plans (LHMPs) at County, District and City levels.				
Make CWPP (Community Wildfire Protection Plan) format compliant with Local Hazard Mitigation Plan	• Creates universal understanding of current hazard conditions in the community. • Improves hazard mitigation and planning • Creates a uniform document for emergency response agencies. • Cost-effective. • Provides access to hazard reduction grant funding.	Planning	Every 5 years	PLN1.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal PLN2: Make CWPP format compliant with General Plan Safety Element updates by county and city.				
Make CWPP compliant with w/General Plan Safety Element updates	• Creates a uniform document that all emergency response agencies understand and work with. • Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities.	Planning	1 year	PLN2.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal PLN4: CWPP serve as Wildfire component of LHMP and General Plan-element amendments.				
CWPP serves as Wildfire component of LHMP and General Plan - element amendments	• Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities. • Reduces workload. • Saves time for City staff. • Cost-effective. • Allows for new grant funding opportunities.	Planning	1 year	PLN4.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal PLN5: Utilize Mello-Roos CFD (Community Facilities Districts) for new subdivision for sustainable hazardous fuel maintenance.				
Utilize Mello-Roos CFD (Community Facilities Districts) for new subdivision for sustainable hazardous fuel maintenance	• Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Reduces workload.	Planning	2 years	PLN5.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal PLN8: Utilize a countywide standard and method for continued data gathering and risk analysis.				

Ongoing data collection and risk analysis	• Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities. • Identifies areas where additional hazardous fuels reduction is needed. • Identifies areas where augmented response and resource allocation is needed.	Planning	1 year	PLN8.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal PLN9: Where road system antiquated and does not provide for proper evacuation or two-way flow, require removal of obstructions or upgrade to minimum 2 lanes road system over time.				
Identify upgrades to road system, where road system does not provide for proper evacuation	• Increases emergency access. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities.	Planning	Annually	PLN9.1PR

RESPONSE

The goal of the Response section is to mitigate the unwanted impacts of wildfires on life, property and resources by having an efficient and effective response that includes properly trained personnel, appropriate equipment, and a community prepared to take appropriate action or evacuation.

Tactical Policy	Benefits of the Project to the Community	Category	Timeline	ID
SLO County Strategic Goal RSP1: Define Safe Refuge Areas and establish maintenance program in WUI areas where fire behavior and evacuation timing is problematic.				
Conduct Fire Department Wildland and Emergency Preparedness (EOC) training	• Provides for highly trained and skilled emergency responders. • Provides specialized disaster operations (EOC) training and preparedness. • Meets and complies with national and statewide training standards.	Response	Annually	RSP1.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal RSP2: Identify carless population/evacuation assistance needed locations.				
Develop carless population evacuation and relocation plans	• Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities. • Mitigates risk to careless population.	Response	2 year	RSP2.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal RSP5: Develop WUI preplans and accompanying Evac plans for all WUI areas in SLO County using standardized format.				
Adopt and implement evacuation modeling and community evacuation maps and zones	• Increases emergency access. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities.	Response	2 years	RSP5.1PR

Enhance emergency dispatch center technology and capabilities	• Provides for upgrade to the existing dispatch center to meet increasing calls for service • Provides closest resource AVL capabilities • Improves ability to handle large scale emergency response and recovery efforts • Provides closest resource AVL capabilities • Improves local response agreements and mutual aid response capabilities	Response	3 years	RSP5.2PR
Implement a Community Response CERT Team and Seasonal Firefighter program	• Provides additional trained staff for response and support functions (CERT Program) • Increases daily staffing during fire season (Seasonal Firefighter Program) • Improves opportunity for community-based emergency responders	Response	2 years	RSP5.3PR

IGNITION RESISTANCE

The goal of the Ignition Resistance section is to eliminate or mitigate structural ignitions from radiant heat, flame contact, or embers from wildland urban interface fires.

Tactical Policy	Benefits of the Project to the Community	Category	Timeline	ID
SLO County Strategic Goal IGRS2: Identify all WUI areas (including FHSZ [Fire Hazard Severity Zone] VH, H, and M in LRA and SRA); standardize regulations/standards/codes in all WUI areas.				
Adopt WUI Building Code standards for all new residential development	• Reduces fire risk in the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community.	Ignition Resistance	2 year	IGRS2.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal IGRS3: Encourage/require retrofit to achieve contemporary WUI codes when remodeling beyond X %.				
Adopt contemporary WUI codes when remodeling or increasing square footage beyond X %	• Cost-effective. • Reduces fire risk in the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community.	Ignition Resistance	2 years	IGRS3.1PR
SLO County Strategic Goal IGRS4: Adopt common defensible space standards throughout the county.				
Incorporate fire modeling into new residential development planning process	• Reduces fire risk in the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Identifies defensible space requirements	Ignition Resistance	Annually	IGRS4.1PR

Include hazardous fuel mitigation and maintenance requirements for new CFD's	• Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities. • Enhances defensible space • Reduces Hazardous fuels	Ignition Resistance	2 years	IGRS4.2PR
Adopt local power line clearance ordinance	• Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities. • Reduces fire risk in the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community. • Reduces ignition potential	Ignition Resistance	2 years	IGRS4.3PR
SLO County Strategic Goal IGRS5: Adopt landscape standards for allowed/dis-allowed plant landscape materials.				
Adopt landscape standards for fire resistive plant landscape materials	• Improves hazard mitigation and planning capabilities. • Reduces fire risk in the community. • Mitigates against potential fire impact in the community.	Ignition Resistance	3 years	IGRS5.1PR

Project Funding

Funding provided by grants from California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and the Cooperative Fire Program of the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Pacific Southwest Region, through the San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council and California Fire Safe Council.

The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the authors and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of California Fire Safe Council, the U.S Forest Service or the U.S. Government.

Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by Paso Robles Department of Emergency Services, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, San Luis Obispo County Fire Safe Council, California Fire Safe Council, the U.S. Forest Service, or the U.S. Government.

In accordance with Federal law and U.S. Department of Agriculture policy, the City of Paso Robles is prohibited from discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age, or disability. To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call (202) 720- 5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

References

Historical Population Data Source 29 (n.d.) Retrieved From
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paso_Robles,_California

FRAP Source (n.d.) *Cal Fire – Fire and Resource Assessment Program* Retrieved From
https://frap.fire.ca.gov/

APPENDIX C. CITY OF PASO ROBLES FIRE DEPARTMENT – 2020 SALINAS RIVERBED EMERGENCY PLAN

City of El Paso de Robles
Department of Emergency Services

June 26, 2020

Matthew Keeling, Executive Officer
Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board
Matt.Keeling@waterboards.ca.gov

Mr. Keeling,

The accumulation of hazardous fuels and overgrowth in the Salinas Riverbed continues to be an extreme fire risk to the community of Paso Robles. In 2019, 95 fires occurred within the Salinas Riverbed, including a fire on June 10, that burned 3 acres and a fire on June 29 that burned 11.5 acres.

As of June 24, 2020, there have been three fires larger than 1 acre within the river. So far this year there has been a total of 45 fires with the largest occurring on June 22. The River Fire which occurred on June 22, transitioned out of the riverbed and into the community. The fire destroyed two homes and damaged nine others. Additionally, there is a significant risk that future fires will damage critical infrastructure (roads and bridges) and continue to put our community at significant risk if this problem is not addressed immediately.

To minimizes the threat of fires originating from the Salinas Riverbed and impacting the community and citizens of Paso Robles, we are recommending the following steps:

- Reduce light flashy fuels to a height of 4" within the proposed firebreak utilizing weed-whips and mowers where terrain allows.
- Break up the continuity of brush within the firebreak utilizing hand crews with saws and light weight mowers where terrain and access allows.
- Expand the area of the shaded fuel break, within the firebreak, utilizing hand crews with chainsaws, light tracked equipment and masticators. Work will not be conducted in high flow channels, even if dry, and no machinery will cross wetted channels.
- Reduce ladder fuels under the canopies, all while retaining native trees with a breast height diameter of 4 inches and greater. Limb up trees to a height of 6 to 8 feet and remove woody vegetation up to 8" DBH.
- Remove any dead, diseased or dying trees.
- Remove trash within the treated areas.

This emergency work will expand the firebreak from 2019 and clean up the accumulation of hazardous fuels and trash within the Salinas River Corridor. Althouse and Meade has been retained to conduct biological surveys prior to treatment and to identify avoidance areas. These actions ensure compliance with existing permits. We will continue our partnership with the Upper Salinas-

900 Park Street • Paso Robles, CA 93446-2541 • (805) 227-7560 • Fax (805) 237-4138
E-mail: fire_hq@prcity.com

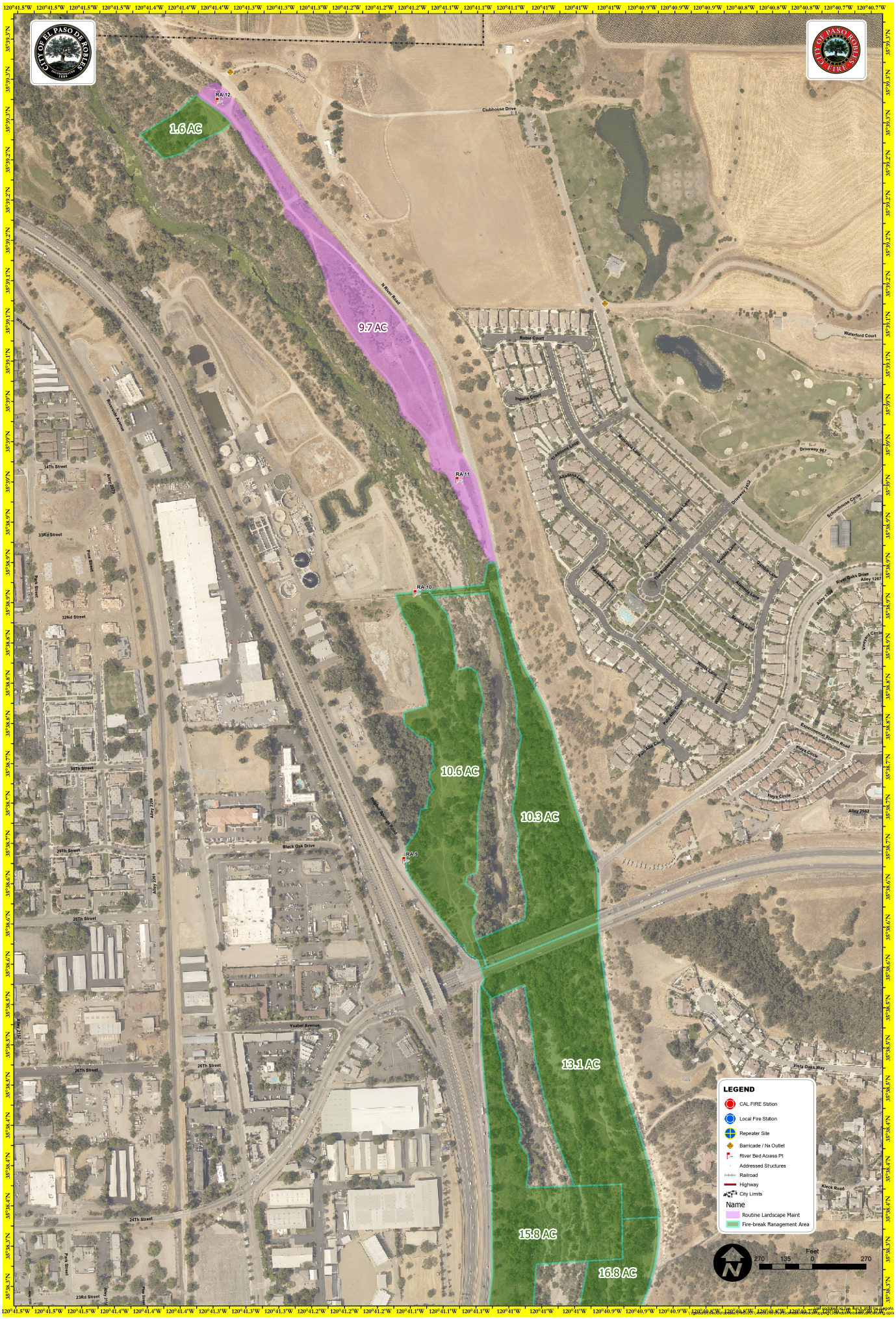
Las Tablas Resource Conservation District to better manage the riverbed and enhance restoration efforts in the future. Future work will include Beaver Dam Analogs, low intensity burns and monitoring.

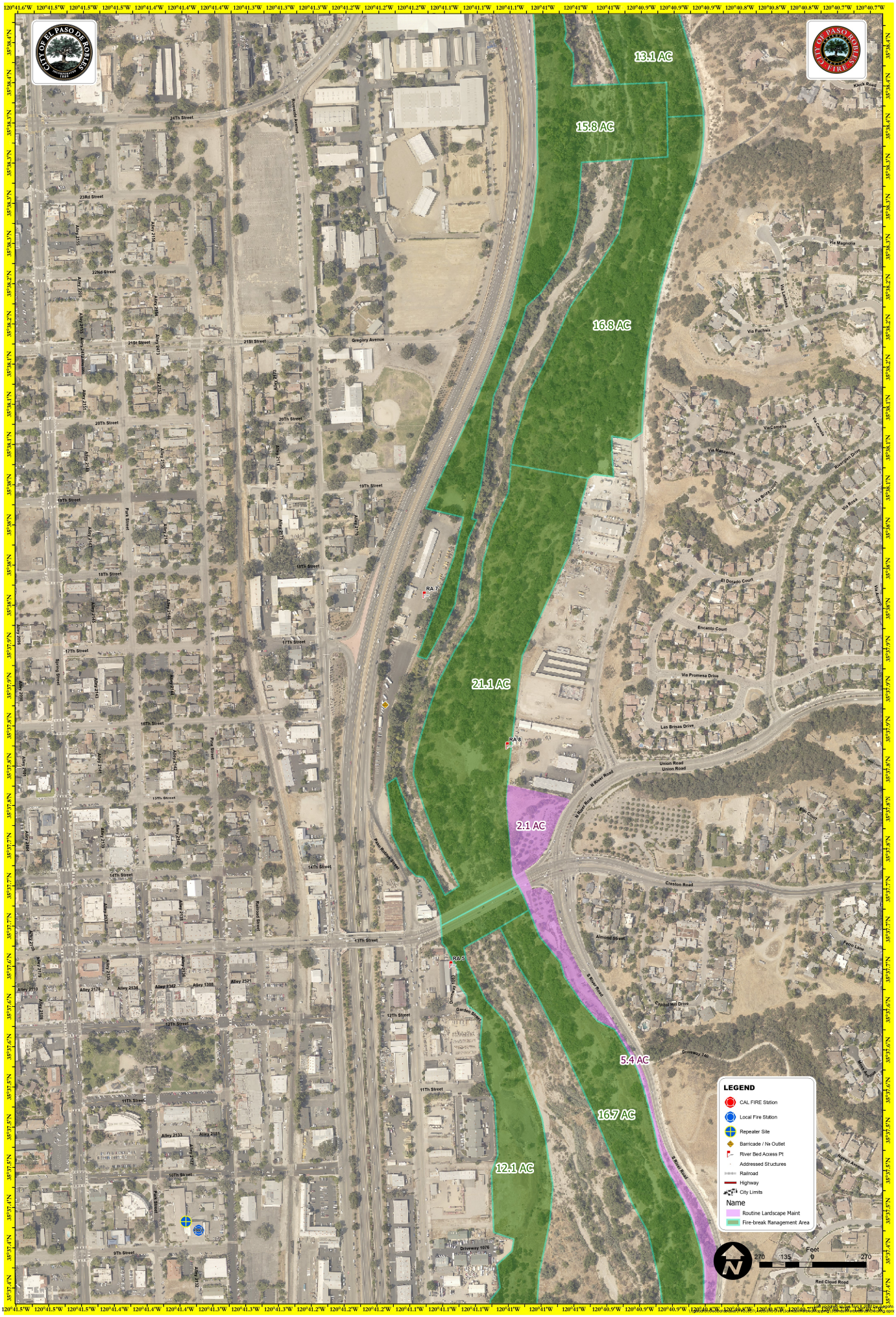
Thank you for understanding the importance of our immediate action and working with us through the process.

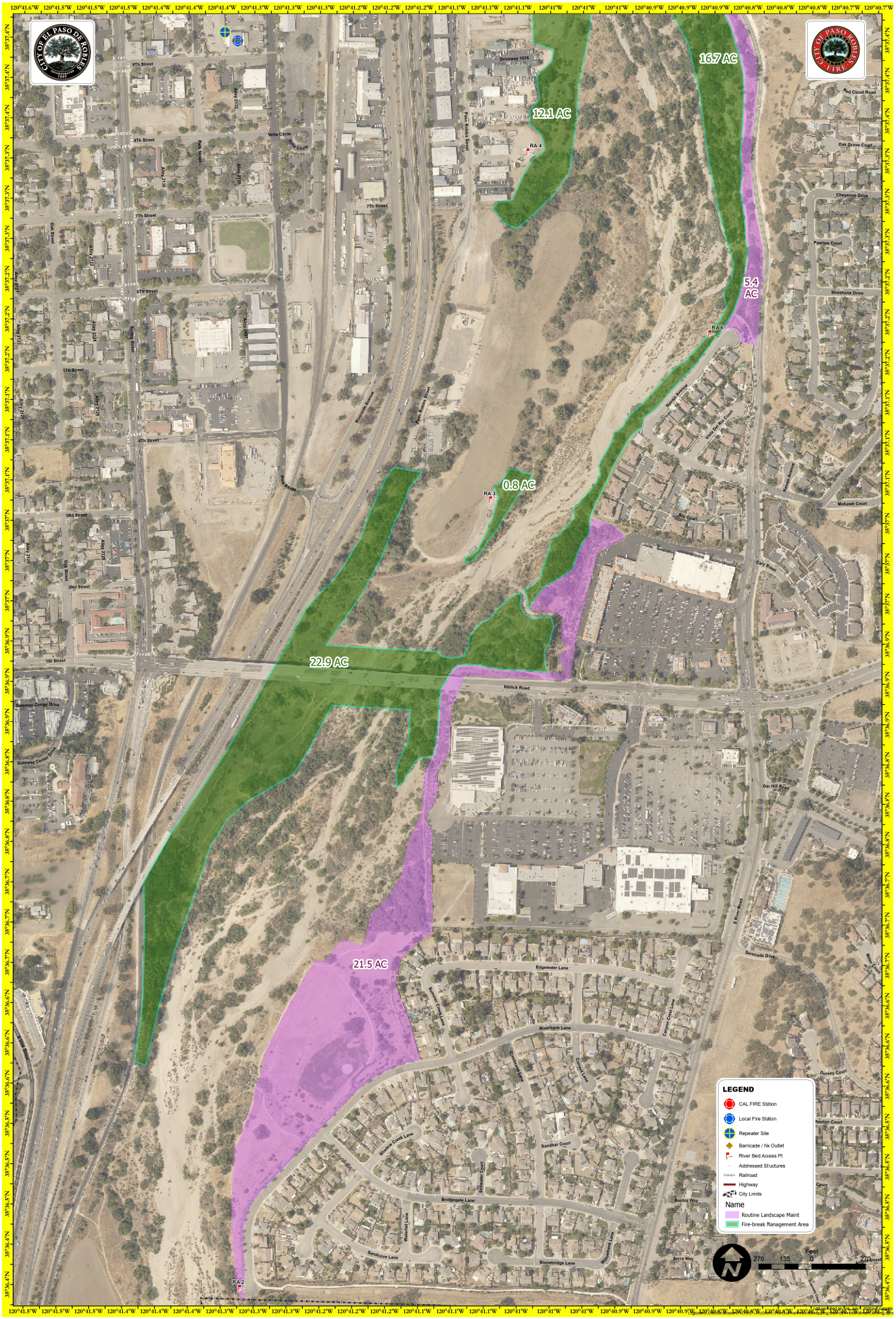
Respectfully,

Jonathan Stornetta
Fire Chief

900 Park Street • Paso Robles, CA 93446-2541 • (805) 227-7560 • Fax (805) 237-4138
E-mail: fire_hq@prcity.com


1.6 AC
9.7 AC
10.6 AC
10.3 AC
13.1 AC
15.8 AC
16.8 AC
RA 12
RA 11
RA 10
RA 9
Clubhouse Drive
Robie Court
Inglis Court
Waterford Court
Driveway 987
Schoolhouse Circle
River Oaks Drive
Alley 1287
Experimental Station Road
Haya Circle
Alley 2952
Vista Oaks Way
Kleck Road
Black Oak Drive
Ysabel Avenue
Alley 2962
Alley 2961
Alley 2963
Alley 2964
Alley 2965
34th Street
33Rd Street
32nd Street
30th Street
29th Street
28th Street
26th Street
24th Street
23Rd Street
Park Street
Riverside Avenue
Salinas River Road
LEGEND
CAL FIRE Station
Local Fire Station
Repeater Site
Barricade / No Outlet
River Bed Access Pt
Addressed Structures
Railroad
Highway
City Limits
Name
Routine Landscape Maint
Fire-break Management Area
Feet
270 135 0 270


13.1 AC
15.8 AC
16.8 AC
21.1 AC
2.1 AC
5.4 AC
16.7 AC
12.1 AC
LEGEND
CAL FIRE Station
Local Fire Station
Repeater Site
Barricade / No Outlet
River Bed Access Pt
Addressed Structures
Railroad
Highway
City Limits
Name
Routine Landscape Maint
Fire-break Management Area
Feet
270 135 0 270
24th Street
23rd Street
22nd Street
21st Street
20th Street
19th Street
18th Street
17th Street
16th Street
15th Street
14th Street
13th Street
12th Street
11th Street
10th Street
9th Street
Riverside Avenue
Gregory Avenue
Park Street
Spring Street
Pine Street
Railroad Street
Peach Avenue
Via Magnolia
Via Fuchsia
Via Camelia
Via Manzanita
Via Brisas Court
Via Rosa
El Dorado Court
Encanto Court
Via Promesa Drive
Las Brisas Drive
Union Road
N River Road
S River Road
Creston Road
Almond Street
Capitol Hill Drive
Ferro Lane
Knock Road
Red Cloud Road
RA 7
RA 9
RA 5



16.7 AC
12.1 AC
5.4 AC
0.8 AC
22.9 AC
21.5 AC
RA 2
RA 3
RA 4
RA 6
9th Street
8th Street
7th Street
6th Street
5th Street
4th Street
3Rd Street
2Nd Street
1St Street
Niblick Road
Riverside Avenue
Paso Robles Street
Pine Street
Spring Street
Oak Street
Park Street
Vine Street
Veiia Circle
Driveway 1076
Red Cloud Road
Oak Grove Court
Cheyenne Drive
Pawnee Court
Shoshone Drive
Navajo Avenue
Vista Del Rio Court
Navajo Avenue
Mohawk Court
Rio Court
Cary Street
Oak Hill Road
Gateway Center Drive
S River Road
Serenade Drive
Edgewater Lane
Riverbank Lane
Summit Creek Lane
Canyon Creek Lane
Crestwind Lane
Current Lane
Shadow Creek Lane
Sandbar Court
Stillwater Court
Bridgegate Lane
Waterfall Lane
Sandcove Lane
Stonebridge Lane
Willowbank Lane
Sophia Way
Serra Way
Dorsey Court
Kenton Court
Angus Street
Guernsey Court
LEGEND
CAL FIRE Station
Local Fire Station
Repeater Site
Barricade / No Outlet
River Bed Access Pt
Addressed Structures
Railroad
Highway
City Limits
Name
Routine Landscape Maint
Fire-break Management Area
N
Feet
270
135
0
270
Last updated on Tue, Jun 9, 2020 by JLegato.
\\gisdata\GeoDataBases\PROJECT\ArcGISPro\Fire\SalinasRiverbedMapping\SalinasRiverbedBrushClearing.aprx

APPENDIX D. ALTHOUSE AND MEADE BIOLOGICAL REPORT, MARCH 2021

Biological Report

for

City of Paso Robles
Vegetation Management Program

Salinas River Corridor

Prepared for

City of Paso Robles
Fire and Emergency Services
c/o Jonathan Stornetta, Fire Chief
900 Park Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446

by

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
1602 Spring Street
Paso Robles, CA 93446
(805) 237-9626

March 2021

853.14

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

List of Appendices

Cover Page: Aerial view southeast between South River Road and the Salinas River. August 24, 2020.

SYNOPSIS

- This report describes the study of biological resources at a 418-acre site (Action Area) in Paso Robles, California. The Action Area includes 88 Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN), and includes parcels owned by the City of Paso Robles and privately owned.
- The proposed City of Paso Robles Vegetation Management Program (Project) entails vegetation management for the purpose of fire fuel reduction. Fuels would be reduced via livestock grazing, use of hand and/or motorized tools, and prescribed burning.
- Habitat types identified and mapped within the Action Area are mature riparian, agricultural, annual grassland, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, developed, and marsh purslane wetland.
- Botanical surveys identified 42 species of vascular plants in the Action Area. There are five special status plants with potential to occur in the Action Area. No special status or state or federally listed plants were observed in the Action Area.
- Wildlife surveys detected 74 animal species in the Action Area. There are 14 special status animals with potential to occur in the Action Area. Six special status animals were observed in the Action Area, but no state or federally listed animal species were observed.
- Biological resources that could be impacted by the Project include: all habitats found in the Action Area including mature riparian and oak woodland, nesting birds, sensitive plants, special status mammals, special status reptiles, and steelhead. Avoidance, minimization, and mitigation recommendations are provided to reduce potential impacts to sensitive biological resources to less than significant. Potential impacts to native habitats would be mitigated via habitat restoration, invasive species removal, and trash removal, while impacts to sensitive plants and animals would be avoided via pre-activity surveys and protective no-work buffers.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

This Biological Report provides information regarding biological resources associated with the City of Paso Robles Vegetation Management Program (Project), a 418-acre Action Area along the Salinas River corridor in the City of Paso Robles, California. Results include a habitat assessment, botanical and wildlife inventory, a discussion of special status species that have potential to occur within the Action Area, and an analysis of potential impacts to biological resources from the proposed vegetation management program (Project). Mitigation recommendations for proposed impacts to biological resources are also provided.

1.2 Project Location

The Action Area is throughout the City of Paso Robles along the Salinas River corridor, east of State Highway 101, between the City's northern limits and Charlois Road to the south. The Action Area is located on portions of City and privately-owned property, equivalent to 418 acres. Approximate coordinates for the center of the Action Area are 35.6285810°N, 120.6845451°W (WGS84) in the Paso Robles and Templeton United States Geological Survey (USGS) 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles (Figure 1). The Action Area is comprised 88 of Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APN), which are listed in Appendix A.

1.3 Local and Regional Context

The Action Area is located in northern San Luis Obispo County, in a region dominated primarily by agriculture. The Salinas River originates in the Garcia Mountains near Santa Margarita and flows north through the City of Paso Robles on its way to the Pacific Ocean. Within Paso Robles, urban and residential development is located primarily within one mile east and two miles west of the river. West of the city are the foothills of the Santa Lucia Mountains, and to the east of the city the land use is dominated by agriculture, including viticulture, and ranching.

The Action Area is the Salinas River corridor within the City of Paso Robles in San Luis Obispo County, California. It extends approximately 22,100 feet from the southern end of Larry Moore Park at the south end of Riverbank Lane up to approximately 1.4 miles north of the Highway 46 bridge. The majority of the Salinas River floodplain within city limits is within the Action Area. To the west of the Action Area lies the densest development, including downtown Paso Robles, and Highway 101 which parallels the river. To the east lies primarily residential neighborhoods.

Elevations within the site are flat within the riverbed, and moderately to steeply sloping along the banks, ranging from 657 to 781 feet above mean sea level (Figure 2).

1.4 Project Description

The proposed project is a vegetation management program for the purposes of fire fuel reduction. While maintenance activities could occur anywhere within the Action Area, vegetation maintenance will be primarily concentrated in areas where emergency fuel treatment occurred in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 3), in areas along the east and west sides of the corridor, and under and around road bridges. These are areas outside the low-flow and active channel, and closest to the

urban-wildlands interface at the edges of the riparian corridor. Vegetation management will be focused along the eastern side of the Salinas River in order to protect the neighborhoods east of North and South River Roads, and in areas on the west side of the Salinas River where vegetation on the west edge of the river corridor is adjacent to commercial or residential areas.

In any given year, vegetation maintenance to reduce fuels will occur in all areas within the proposed fuel treatment area where light flashy fuels such as non-native grasses are taller than 4", in compliance with the City's Hazardous Fuel Reduction Ordinance (1068 approved February 5, 2019). Annual fuel reduction will be prioritized in the footprint of the 2019 and 2020 emergency fuel reduction area (Figure 3), which includes firebreaks that were established across the river connecting the east and west sides. These cross sections allow access points to check a fire from spreading throughout the riparian zone.

Vegetation maintenance will avoid as much as possible potentially sensitive habitat including the wetted channel, riparian vegetation associated with wetted channels, wetlands, and surface water (see Section 4 for further discussion of avoidance of sensitive habitats).

Fuels would be reduced using a variety of methods, including the following:

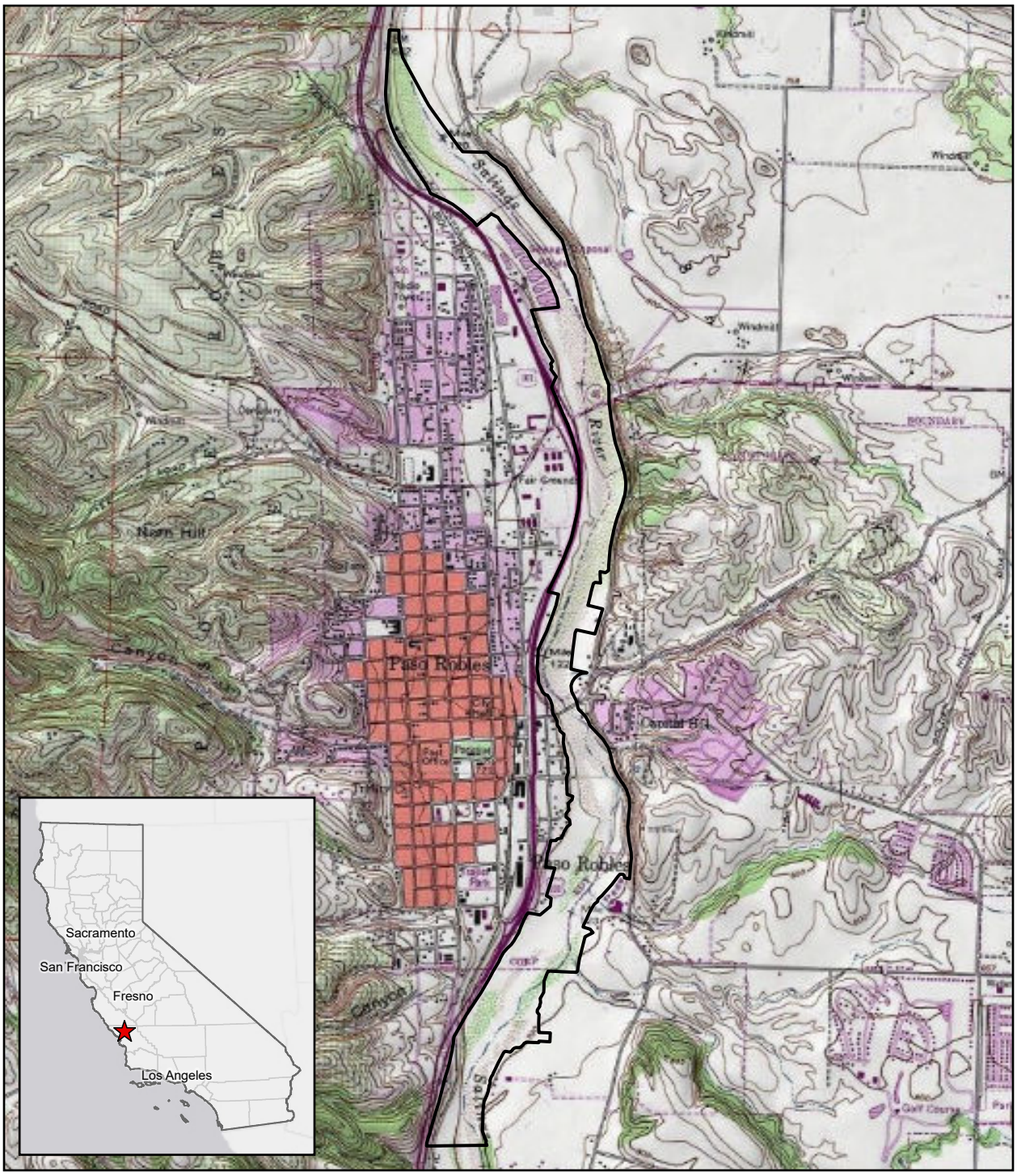
- Grazing by domestic goats or sheep would be used primarily in grassland areas to reduce herbaceous and weedy vegetation. Grazing would be concentrated for short periods (e.g. 2 to 3 days each area) using temporary electric fences powered by solar panels or similar temporary fencing. Livestock would only be used within City limits.
- Hand tools or mechanized tools would be used to trim and/or thin brushy vegetation and reduce ladder fuels. Hand crews with chainsaws and tracked chippers will be used to reduce ladder fuels under tree canopies to maintain established shaded fuel breaks and clean up pockets of dead and down woody material, where terrain limits access for equipment. Mowing of annual grasses would be completed using skid-steers with mowing decks or small excavators with mowing attachments. Brushy vegetation may be thinned using pruners, loppers, and/or string trimmers. Mastication treatments may utilize skid-steers and Fecon tracked carriers with mulching heads and excavators with masticator heads. Mastication would be conducted in any given fuel reduction area as needed every 3 to 5 years. A range of equipment options are required due to terrain fluctuation and the need to limit soil disturbance. If other equipment is developed that is more efficient, cost effective, or is better suited for limiting disturbance, it may be utilized.
- Low-intensity prescribed burns may be used to reduce vegetation under certain circumstances. Pile burning consists of hand crews with chainsaws cutting vegetation and stacking it into piles to be burned later or when conditions are favorable. Pile burning is effective in treating larger brush fuel models and cleaning up accumulations of larger dead and downed woody material. Controlled burns would be conducted according to the Interagency Prescribed Fire Planning and Implementation Procedures Guide (NWCG 2017) and the Wildland Fire Suppression Tactics Reference Guide (NWCG 1996).

Contact information for the lead agency and biological consultant are provided in Table 1.

TABLE 1. RESPONSIBLE PARTIES

Lead Agency	Biological Consultant
City of Paso Robles Fire and Emergency Services Jonathan Stornetta, Fire Chief 900 Park Street Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805) 227-7241	Althouse and Meade, Inc. Daniel E. Meade, Ph.D. Principal Scientist 1602 Spring Street Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805) 237-9626

Figure 1. United States Geological Survey Topographic Map



Legend

Action Area (418 acres)

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

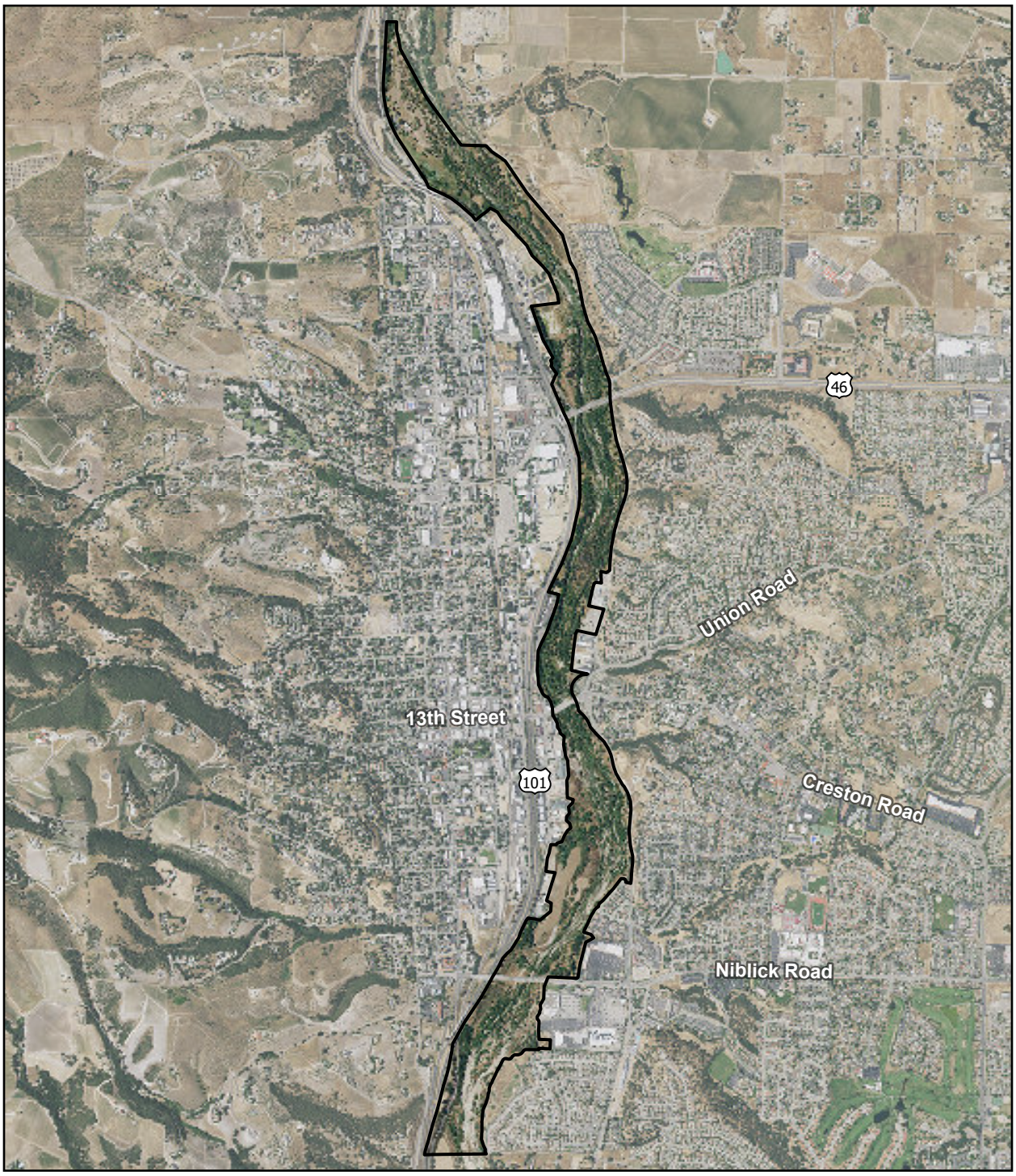
City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

USGS Quadrangle: Paso Robles and Templeton

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 08, 2021 03:10 PM by SAF

Figure 2. Aerial Photograph



Legend

Action Area (418 acres)

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

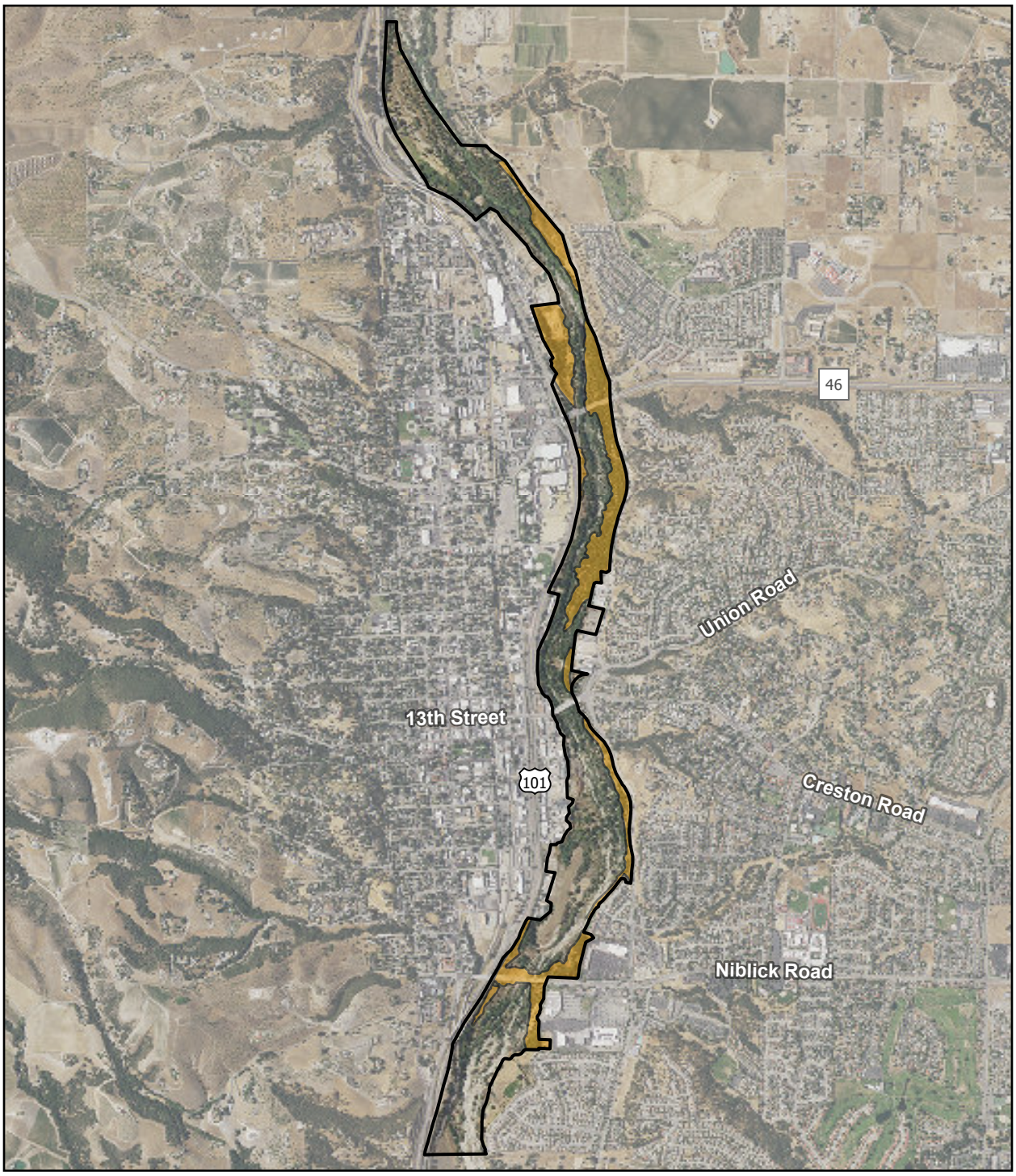
City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 08, 2021 03:48 PM by KRN

Figure 3. 2019 - 2020 Vegetation Management Areas



Legend

Action Area (418 ac)

2019- 2020 Vegetation Management Areas

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 08, 2021 04:36 PM by KRN

1.5 Regulatory Framework

Standards for environmental protection and restoration, in the form of laws and regulations, are created within three different organizational levels of government: Federal, State, and Local. Entities exist within each level to create and enforce regulations that help ensure protection of specific and pertinent regional issues threatening ecosystems and environments. The following regulations are applicable to the proposed Project.

1.5.1 Federal Law and Regulations

Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act (CWA) establishes the basic structure for regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the United States and regulating quality standards for surface waters. The purpose of the CWA is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of all waters of the U.S. Permitting is required for filling waters of the U.S. (including wetlands). Permits may be issued on an individual basis or may be covered under approved nationwide permits.

Navigable Waters Protection Rule (Final Rule). On April 21, 2020, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of the Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) published the Navigable Waters Protection Rule in the *Federal Register* to finalize a revised definition of "waters of the United States" under the CWA (USACE 2020). The agencies have streamlined the definition so that it includes four simple categories of jurisdictional waters, provides clear exclusions for many water features, and defines terms in the regulatory text. The Navigable Waters Protection Rule regulates the nation's navigable waters and the core tributary systems that provide perennial or intermittent flow into them. Ephemeral streams do not qualify as core, connective tributary systems under the Final Rule, and therefore aquatic features connected only by ephemeral streams to navigable waters are no longer under Federal jurisdiction by default. Stream definitions are not based on quantitative measurements, such as volume, due to the nature of variance within stream systems each year and precipitation received. The following stream system definitions were agreed upon as part of the Final Rule to best define jurisdiction of "waters of the U.S.":

Ephemeral. The term *ephemeral* means surface water flowing or pooling only in direct response to precipitation (*e.g.,* rain or snow fall).

Intermittent. The term *intermittent* means surface water flowing continuously during certain times of the year and more than in direct response to precipitation (*e.g.,* seasonally when the groundwater table is elevated or when snowpack melts).

Perennial. The term *perennial* means surface water flowing continuously year-round.

Wetlands. The term *wetlands* means areas that are inundated or saturated by surface or ground water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions. Wetlands generally include swamps, marshes, bogs, and similar areas.

Endangered Species Act. The federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) provides the legal framework for the listing and protection of species (and their habitats) identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction. "Critical Habitat" is a term within the FESA designed to guide actions by federal agencies and is defined as "an area occupied by a species listed as threatened or endangered within which are found physical or geographical features essential to

the conservation of the species, or an area not currently occupied by the species which is itself essential to the conservation of the species." Actions that jeopardize endangered or threatened species and/or critical habitat are considered a 'take' under the FESA. "Take" under federal definition means to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such conduct.

Projects that would result in "take" of any federally listed threatened or endangered species, or critical habitats, are required to obtain permits from the USFWS through either Section 7 (interagency consultation with a federal nexus) or Section 10 (Habitat Conservation Plan) of FESA, depending on the involvement by the federal government in permitting and/or funding of the project. Through Section 10, it is required to prepare a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) to be approved by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which results in the issuance of an Incidental Take Permit (ITP). Through Section 7, which can only occur when a separate federal nexus in a project exists (prompting interagency consultation), a consultation by the various federal agencies involved can take place to determine appropriate actions to mitigate negative effects on endangered and threatened species and their habitat.

Migratory Bird Treaty Act. All migratory, non-game bird species that are native to the U.S. or its territories are protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) of 1918 (50 C.F.R. Section 10.13), as amended under the Migratory Bird Treaty Reform Act of 2004. The MBTA makes it illegal to purposefully take (pursue, hunt, shoot, wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect) any migratory bird, or the parts, nests, or eggs of such a bird, except under the terms of a valid Federal permit. Migratory non-game native bird species are protected by international treaty under the federal MBTA.

1.5.2 State Law and Regulations

California Endangered Species Act. The California Endangered Species Act (CESA), similar to FESA, contains a process for listing of species and regulating potential impacts to listed species. State threatened and endangered species include both plants and wildlife, but do not include invertebrates. The designation "rare species" applies only to California native plants. State threatened and endangered plant species are regulated largely under the Native Plant Preservation Act in conjunction with the CESA. State threatened and endangered animal species are legally protected against "take." The CESA authorizes the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) to enter into a memorandum of agreement for take of listed species to issue an incidental take permit for a state-listed threatened and endangered species only if specific criteria are met. Section 2080 of the CESA prohibits the take of species listed as threatened or endangered pursuant to the Act. Section 2081 allows CDFW to authorize take prohibited under Section 2080 provided that: 1) the taking is incidental to an otherwise lawful activity; 2) the taking will be minimized and fully mitigated; 3) the applicant ensures adequate funding for minimization and mitigation; and 4) the authorization will not jeopardize the continued existence of the listed species.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA defines a "project" as any action undertaken from public or private entity that requires discretionary governmental review (a non-ministerial permittable action). All "projects" are required to undergo some level of environmental review pursuant to CEQA, unless an exemption applies. CEQA's environmental review process includes an assessment of existing resources, broken up by categories (i.e., air quality, aesthetics, etc.), a catalog of potential impacts to those resources

caused by the proposed project, and a quantifiable result determining the level of significance an impact would generate. The goal of environmental review under CEQA is to avoid or mitigate impacts that would lead to a "significant effect" on a given resource; section 15382 of the CEQA Guidelines defines a "significant effect" as

> *a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of the physical conditions within the area affected by the project including land, air, water, minerals, flora, fauna, ambient noise, and objects of historic or aesthetic significance. An economic or social change by itself shall not be considered a significant effect on the environment, but may be considered in determining whether the physical change is significant.*

Public agencies are required to implement CEQA and execute jurisdiction to determine when applicable activities are or are not subject to CEQA. A public agency with the most prominent nexus and jurisdiction to a project is called the lead agency. The lead agencies determine the scope of what is considered an impact and what constitutes a "significant effect". "Biological resources" is one of the varying categories considered during environmental review through CEQA. A lead agency can require a biological assessment to be prepared to report on existing biological resources and recommended mitigation measures that will reduce or lessen potential negative impacts to those biological resources. The questions listed in CEQA's Appendix G: Biological Resources section, which are used to guide assessment of impacts to biological resources are as follows:

- *Does the project 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?*
- *Does the project 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 US Fish and Wildlife Service?*
- *Does the project have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means?*
- *Does the project 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?*
- *Does the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?*
- *Does the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan?*

The lead agency has the final determination over whether a project is or is not permissible, based upon the environmental review, completed requirements and environmental documentation, and their judgement that the project will not have a significant effect on the environment, or that all significant effects have been mitigated for.

California Fish and Game Code (CFGC). The California Fish and Game Code (CFGC) is one of the 29 legal codes that form the general statutory law of California. A myriad of statutes regarding fish and game are specified in the CFGC; the following codes are specifically relevant to the proposed Project:

California Native Plant Protection Act. Sections 1900-1913 of the California Fish and Game Code contain the regulations of the Native Plant Protection Act of 1977. The intent of this act

is to help conserve and protect rare and endangered plants in the state. The act allowed the CFGC to designate plants as rare or endangered.

Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement. Section 1602 of the CFGC requires any person, state, or local governmental agency to provide advance written notification to CDFW prior to initiating any activity that would: 1) divert or obstruct the natural flow of, or substantially change or remove material from the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake; or 2) result in the disposal or deposition of debris, waste, or other material into any river, stream, or lake. The state definition of "lakes, rivers, and streams" includes all rivers or streams that flow at least periodically or permanently through a well-defined bed or channel with banks that support fish or other aquatic life, and watercourses with surface or subsurface flows that support or have supported riparian vegetation.

Nesting Birds. Sections 3503, 3503.5 and 3513 of CFGC states that 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," and "unlawful to take, possess, or destroy any birds of prey or to take, possess, or destroy the nest or eggs of any such bird" unless authorized.

Regional Water Quality Control Board. The Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulates impacts to water quality in federal waters of the U.S. under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, but they also regulate any isolated waters that are impacted under the state Porter Cologne Act utilizing a Waste Discharge Requirement. Pursuant to Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, discharge of fill material into waters of the State not subject to the jurisdiction of the USACE may require authorization pursuant to the Porter Cologne Act through application for waste discharge requirements or through waiver of waste discharge requirements.

1.5.3 Local Policies and Regulations

Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP). The CWPP provides a citywide strategic planning framework for hazardous fuel assessment and reduction within the City of Paso Robles so that structures and assets are provided additional protection, reducing the potential of ignitions. The goals of the CWPP include: improving the availability and use of information regarding hazard and risk assessment; providing guidance for land use planning efforts; promoting a shared vision among communities and multiple fire jurisdictions; establishing fire resistance in communities; prioritizing protection of communities and other high-priority watersheds; promoting collaboration between government agencies and a broad representation of stakeholders; improving fire suppression and prevention capabilities; promoting post-fire recovery efforts; and maintaining accountability through performance based monitoring.

Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance. Pursuant to the City's Oak Tree Preservation Ordinance (Section 10.01 of the City's Municipal Code) oak tree protection measures are for trees measured at six inches or greater in diameter at 4.5 feet above ground level (dbh). Any oak tree slated for removal requires a permit with a director's approval for clearly dead or diseased trees beyond correction, as evaluated by an arborist. Removal of healthy trees require city council approval, in the context that there are no reasonable alternatives to avoid impacting oak tree(s). Oak trees marked for removal require mitigation at 25 percent of the total dbh, or an impact to mitigation ratio of 1-inch to 0.25-inch dbh.

Trees not marked for removal or completely avoided are assessed according to their Critical Root Zone (CRZ). The City of Paso Robles defines the CRZ as the area circumscribed around the tree's trunk using a radius of one foot per one-inch dbh. Although not specified in the ordinance, mitigation of CRZ impacts are often assessed according to the percent of CRZ impact, i.e. less than 50 percent or greater than 50 percent.

1.6 Special Status Species and Sensitive Habitat Regulations

For purposes of this Biological Report, special status species are those plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as threatened or endangered by the USFWS under the FESA; those listed or proposed for listing as rare, threatened, or endangered by the CDFW under the CESA; animals designated as "Species of Special Concern," "Fully Protected," or "Watch List" by the CDFW; and plants with a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) of 1, 2, 3, or 4. In the following sections, further details are provided to highlight the different guidelines and qualifications that are used to help identify special status species in this report. In Sections 3.5 and 3.6, the various qualifications are listed in the special status species tables (Table 4 and Table 5) for each species with potential to occur in the project area.

1.6.1 California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB)

"Special Plants" and "Special Animals" are broad terms used to refer to all the plant and animal taxa inventoried by the CNDDB, regardless of their legal or protection status (CDFW 2020 and 2019a). The Special Plants list includes vascular plants, high priority bryophytes (mosses, liverworts, and hornworts), and lichens. The Special Animals list is also referred to by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as the list of "species at risk" or "special status species."

According to the CNDDB, Special Plants and Animals lists include: taxa that are officially listed or proposed for listing by California or the Federal Government as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare; taxa which meet the criteria for listing, as described in Section 15380 of CEQA Guidelines; taxa deemed biologically rare, restricted in range, declining in abundance, or otherwise vulnerable; population(s) in California that may be marginal to the taxon's entire range but are threatened with extirpation in California; and/or taxa closely associated with a habitat that is declining in California at a significant rate. Separately, the Special Plants List includes taxa listed in the California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California, as well as taxa determined to be Sensitive Species by the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, or U.S. Forest Service. The Special Animals List distinctively includes taxa considered by the CDFW to be a Species of Special Concern (SSC) and taxa designated as a special status, sensitive, or declining species by other state or federal agencies.

1.6.2 Federal and State Endangered Species Listings

The Federal and California Endangered Species Acts are the regulatory documents that govern the listing and protection of species, and their habitats, identified as being endangered or threatened with extinction. Possible listing status under both Federal and California ESA includes Endangered and Threatened (FE, FT, CE, or CT). Species in the process of being listed are given the status of either Proposed Federally Endangered/Threatened, Candidate for California Endangered/Threatened (PE, PT, CCE, or CCT). The CESA has one additional status: Rare (CR).

1.6.3 Global and State Ranks

Global and State Ranks reflect an assessment of the condition of the species or habitats across its entire range. Basic ranks assign a numerical value from 1 to 5, respectively for species with highest risk to most secure. Other ranking variations include rank ranges, rank qualifiers, and infraspecific taxon ranks. All Heritage Programs, such as the CNDDB use the same ranking methodology, originally developed by The Nature Conservancy and now maintained and recently revised by NatureServe. Procedurally, state programs such as the CNDDB develop the State ranks. The Global ranks are determined collaboratively among the Heritage Programs for the states/provinces containing the species. Rank definitions, where G represents Global and S represents State, are as follows:

- **G1/S1:** Critically imperiled globally/in state because of extreme rarity (5 or fewer populations).
- **G2/S2:** Imperiled globally/in state because of rarity (6 to 20 populations).
- **G3/S3:** Vulnerable; rare and local throughout range or in a special habitat or narrowly endemic (on the order of 21 to 100 populations).
- **G4/S4:** Apparently secure globally/in state; uncommon but not rare (of no immediate conservation concern).
- **G5/S5:** Secure; common, widespread, and abundant.
- **G#G#/S#S#:** Rank range - numerical range indicating uncertainty in the status of a species, (e.g., G2G3 more certain than G3, but less certain that G2).
- **G/S#?:** Inexact numeric rank
- **Q:** Questionable taxonomy - Taxonomic distinctiveness of this entity is questionable.
- **T#:** Infraspecific taxa (subspecies or varieties) – indicating an infraspecific taxon that has a lower numerical ranking (rarer) than the given global rank of species.

1.6.4 California Rare Plant Ranks

Plant species are considered rare when their distribution is confined to localized areas, their habitat is threatened, they are declining in abundance, or they are threatened in a portion of their range. The California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) categories range from species with a low threat (4) to species that are presumed extinct (1A). All but a few species are endemic to California. All of them are judged to be vulnerable under present circumstances, or to have a high potential for becoming vulnerable. Threat ranks are assigned as decimal values to a CRPR to further define the level of threat to a given species. The rare plant ranks and threat levels are defined below.

- **1A:** Plants presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere.
- **1B:** Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.
- **2A:** Plants presumed extirpated in California, but common elsewhere
- **2B:** Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
- **4:** Plants of limited distribution - a watch list

- **0.1:** Seriously threatened in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat)
- **0.2:** Moderately threatened in California (20-80% occurrences threatened/moderate degree and immediacy of threat)
- **0.3:** Not very threatened in California (less than 20% of occurrences threatened/low degree and immediacy of threat or no current threats known)

1.6.5 California Department of Fish and Wildlife Animal Rank

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) assigns one of three ranks to Special Animals: Watch List (WL), Species of Special Concern (SSC), or Fully Protected (FP). Unranked species are referred to by the term Special Animal (SA).

Animals listed as Watch List (WL) are taxa that were previously designated as SSC, but no longer merit that status, or taxa that which do not yet meet SSC criteria, but for which there is concern and a need for additional information to clarify status.

Animals listed as California Species of Special Concern (SSC) may or may not be listed under California or federal Endangered Species Acts. They are considered rare or declining in abundance in California. The Special Concern designation is intended to provide the CDFW biologists, land planners, and managers with lists of species that require special consideration during the planning process to avert continued population declines and potential costly listing under federal and state endangered species laws. For many species of birds, the primary emphasis is on the breeding population in California. For some species that do not breed in California but winter here, emphasis is on wintering range. The SSC designation thus may include a comment regarding the specific protection provided such as nesting or wintering.

Animals listed as Fully Protected (FP) are those species considered by CDFW as rare or faced with possible extinction. Most, but not all, have subsequently been listed under the CESA or FESA. Fully Protected species may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of the California Fish and Game code authorizes the issuance of permits or licenses to take any Fully Protected species.

1.6.6 Sensitive Habitats

Sensitive Natural Community is a state-wide designation given by CDFW to specific vegetation associations of ecological importance. Sensitive Natural Communities rarity and ranking involves the knowledge of range and distribution of a given type of vegetation, and the proportion of occurrences that are of good ecological integrity (CDFW 2019a). Evaluation is conducted at both the Global (G) and State (S) levels, resulting in a rank ranging from 1 for very rare and threatened to 5 for demonstrably secure. Natural Communities with ranks of S1-S3 are considered Sensitive Natural Communities in California and may need to be addressed in the environmental review processes of CEQA and its equivalents.

2 METHODS

2.1 Literature Review

Preliminary research includes review of relevant plans, policies, and biological information to determine what biological resources may occur near or in the Action Area. Research included:

- Review of agency plans pertaining to sensitive and special-status species;
- Queries of special-status species occurrence records and databases;
- Review of literature on sensitive species and biological resources in the project area and region

Althouse and Meade conducted a data search from the CNDDB and the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) On-line Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California on October 6, 2020 (CDFW 2020, CNPS 2020). Other database searches included online herbarium specimen records for locality data within Paso Robles, California, as maintained by the Consortium of California Herbaria (CCH 2020). The data search area included the Paso Robles and Templeton USGS 7.5-minute quadrangle and the seven surrounding quadrangles (Bradley, San Miguel, Ranchito Canyon, Adelaida, Estrella, York Mountain, and Creston). Data was compiled for sensitive plant and wildlife species and reviewed according to each species potential to occur at the Action Area. The compiled list of CNDDB, CNPS, and CCH records are provided in Appendix B and Appendix C.

Special status species lists produced by database and literature searches were cross-referenced and analyzed according to the described habitat types in the Action Area in order to identify all potential special status species that could occur in or near the Action Area. Each special status species that could occur in or near the Action Area is individually discussed in Sections 3.5.2 and 3.6.2. After review of the literature, and completing site visits, the following criteria were used to determine the potential for special-status species to occur within the Action Area:

- **Present:** The species was observed in the Action Area during field surveys.
- **High Potential:** Highly suitable habitat and CNDDB or CNPS occurrence records indicate the species is likely to occur in the Action Area or the immediate vicinity. Individuals may not have been observed during field surveys; however, the species likely occurs in or immediately adjacent to the Action Area and (for wildlife) could move into the Action Area in the future.
- **Moderate Potential:** Moderately suitable habitat is present in the Action Area and CNDDB occurrences or surveys have recorded the species in the vicinity of the Action Area. Individuals were not observed during field surveys, but the species could be present, at least seasonally or as a transient.
- **Low Potential:** Marginally suitable habitat is present in the Action Area, and there are no occurrence records or other historical (i.e., 50 years or older) records in the vicinity of the Action Area. Individuals were not observed during surveys and are not expected to be present.
- **No Potential:** Suitable habitat for the species is not present in the Action Area, and/or the species is not known to occur in the region.

2.2 Soils

A soil report was created by importing the Action Area as an Area of Interest (AOI) into the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGRO) via their online portal. The resulting soil report was reviewed, and a map was created using the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) NRCS Soil Survey GIS data (USDA 2020). Soils data is summarized in Section 3.2.

2.3 Surveys

The Action Area includes all areas that could potentially be impacted by the proposed Project, including vegetation management areas, staging areas, and access areas. It includes the extent of the Salinas River corridor through the City of Paso Robles.

The Action Area was surveyed for biological resources in 2019 and 2020 by Althouse and Meade, Inc. biologists. See Table 2 for survey dates, personnel, and activities. Surveys were conducted on foot to map habitats, to identify and describe potential habitat for special status animals, and to collect photographic documentation of the project areas. Each habitat type was field inspected and described by species composition (Section 3.3). All plant and animal species observed in the Action Area were identified and documented (Sections 3.5.3 and 3.6.3).

TABLE 2. BIOLOGICAL SURVEYS

Survey Date	Biologist(s)	Weather Observations	Activities
8/2/19	Will Knowlton, Kristen Anderson	65-85 degrees F, clear, wind 0-5 mph	Pre-activity survey for sensitive wildlife and nesting birds
8/5/19	Will Knowlton, Bret Robinson	65-90 degrees F, clear, no wind	Pre-activity survey for sensitive wildlife and nesting birds
6/18/20	Justin Purnell, Emily Lund	50-80 degrees F, clear, wind 0-5 mph	Pre-activity survey for sensitive wildlife and nesting birds
7/1/20	Justin Purnell, Emily Lund	50-65 degrees F, clear, wind 0-10 mph	Pre-activity survey for sensitive wildlife and nesting birds
7/8/20	Will Knowlton, Bret Robinson	60-80 degrees F, clear, wind 0-5 mph	Pre-activity survey for sensitive wildlife and nesting birds
7/14/20	Will Knowlton, Bret Robinson	60-80 degrees F, clear, wind 0-5 mph	Pre-activity survey for sensitive wildlife and nesting birds
11/19/20	Kyle Nessen	45-65 degrees F, partly cloudy, wind 0-5 mph	Biological survey Habitat mapping
12/9/20	Will Knowlton, Bret Robinson	30-65 degrees F, partly cloudy, wind 0-5 mph	Biological survey Resource mapping

2.3.1 Habitat Types

On November 19, 2020 Althouse and Meade Biologist Kyle Nessen conducted a pedestrian survey within the Action Area in order to map and describe habitat and vegetation types. The entire Action Area was also photographed via drone (see Section 2.4) and the high-resolution aerial imagery was used to aid in mapping of habitat types. A few representative areas within each habitat type were

surveyed in order to describe general conditions and dominant species, compile species lists, and evaluate potential habitat for special status species. Habitats are described in Section 3.3. See Appendix D for a complete list of all plant species detected within the Study Area.

2.3.2 Botanical

A botanical survey was conducted on November 19, 2020. The survey was done on foot, and while the entire Action Area was not surveyed, focused survey efforts were conducted in potentially sensitive habitats and in habitats suitable for special status species. All plant species observed were identified and recorded by a qualified botanist. Meandering transects within focused survey areas were utilized to map boundaries of different vegetation types, describe general conditions and dominant species, compile species lists, and evaluate potential habitat for special status species. Identification of botanical resources included field observations and laboratory analysis of collected material. Botanical nomenclature used in this document follows the Jepson Manual, Second Edition (Baldwin et al. 2012). Results of the botanical surveys are summarized in Section 3.5.3. See Appendix D for a complete list of all plant species detected within the Study Area.

2.3.3 Wildlife

In August 2019 and June and July 2020, Althouse and Meade biologists conducted pre-activity surveys for nesting birds and sensitive wildlife species in localized areas within with the Action Area in advance of emergency fuel reduction vegetation management. The entire emergency work area was surveyed on foot, with a focus on identifying birds and other wildlife.

In December 2020, Althouse and Meade biologists conducted a walking survey of the Action Area in order to compile species lists, search for sign (e.g. wood rat mounds, beaver chew marks, etc.), and locate habitat appropriate for special status species. Focused survey efforts were conducted in habitats suitable for special status species.

Identification of wildlife resources were made by direct observations or by visual signs of animal presence such as burrows/dens, vocalization, tracks, and/or scat. Birds were identified by sight, using 10-power binoculars, or by vocalizations. Reptiles and amphibians were identified by sight, often using binoculars; traps were not used. Mammals recorded in the Action Area were identified by sight, burrow/dens, scat, and tracks. Wildlife surveys were appropriately timed to identify all special status animal species known from the region (refer to Table 5) that have potential to occur in the Action Area. Wildlife nomenclature for birds is in accordance with the American Ornithological Society Checklist (Chesser et al. 2019) and Revised Checklist of North American Mammals North of Mexico (Baker et al. 2003). Results of the wildlife surveys are summarized in Sections 3.6.3. See Appendix E for a complete list of all wildlife species detected within the Study Area.

2.4 Maps

Biological resource data was collected in the field by staff biologists operating an Apple tablet or phone equipped with Garmin GPS receivers and a third-party mapping application. Once collected in the field, biological resource data was imported into Esri ArcGIS software program and overlaid onto airborne digital photographs of the Action Area which were acquired on November 2, 2020 by Part 107 certified pilot Kyle Nessen. A georeferenced composite image of the Action Area was

generated from the acquired aerial images for baseline review, image analysis, and habitat mapping. All flight operations were conducted within visual line of sight and below a maximum altitude of 200 feet above-ground level. The Action Area occurs within Class E2 airspace and flight operations were conducted with prior LAANC authorization and permission from the property owner.

Soil data was overlaid on a 2020 National Agriculture Imagery Program (NAIP) aerial of San Luis Obispo County (NAIP 2020).

3 RESULTS

3.1 Existing Conditions

3.1.1 Environmental Setting

The Action Area is comprised of the Salinas River corridor within the City of Paso Robles in San Luis Obispo County, California. It extends approximately 22,100 feet from the southern end of Larry Moore Park at the south end of Riverbank Lane up to approximately 1.4 miles north of the Highway 46 bridge. The majority of the Salinas River floodplain within city limits is within the Action Area.

The portion of the Salinas River which flows through Paso Robles is characterized by several stretches of braided channel, where smaller channels are divided by vegetated islands. The active floodplain, which includes the low flow-channel, active channels, and the relatively level areas that are periodically flooded, ranges from approximately 500 to 1000 feet wide. The river flows perennially, though in summer, surface water often dries up and the river flows underground, leaving large stretches of dry riverbed.

Riparian vegetation, including riparian scrub and riparian forest, dominates the flow channels and floodplain, while upland areas on the banks of the river are a mix of oak woodland and riparian forest. In the northern part of the Action Area, the river channel is narrow, with more pools of ponded water and wetland habitat present. In the southern half of the Action Area, the river channel is broad and sandy, with braided channels divided by islands of riparian vegetation. A small hot springs area is present on the west side of the river approximately halfway between the 13th Street bridge and the Niblick Road bridge where sulfurous hot water flows into a pond. Approximately 500 feet to the east of the sulfur pond is a large pond (approximately 800 feet long from north to south as of site surveys in December 2020) which typically holds water year-round (Photo 1).

Three major road bridges cross the Salinas River within the Action Area: Highway 46, 13th Street, and Niblick Road. There is an approximately 10 acre patch of farmland in the upland area on the west side of the river between 13th Street and Niblick Road.

3.1.2 Human Disturbance

Within the Salinas River corridor there are localized areas of high human disturbance, due primarily to unhoused people and their camps. People in the camps cut and clear vegetation, including saplings and limbs from large trees, create paths, and deposit piles of trash (Photo 2). A total of 27 encampments and 26 trash piles or dumps were counted within the Action Area during the December 2020 survey. Of these camps and trash piles, 85% are located in mature riparian habitat (refer to Section 3.3). The majority (55%) of camps and trash piles are located in the floodplain (refer to Section 3.4). See Figure 4 for location of encampments and trash piles within the Action Area. Frequent small fires occur in the riverbed due to campfires in the encampments. These campfires are a significant source of ignition, and several acres of habitat in the riverbed are burned annually in wildfires.

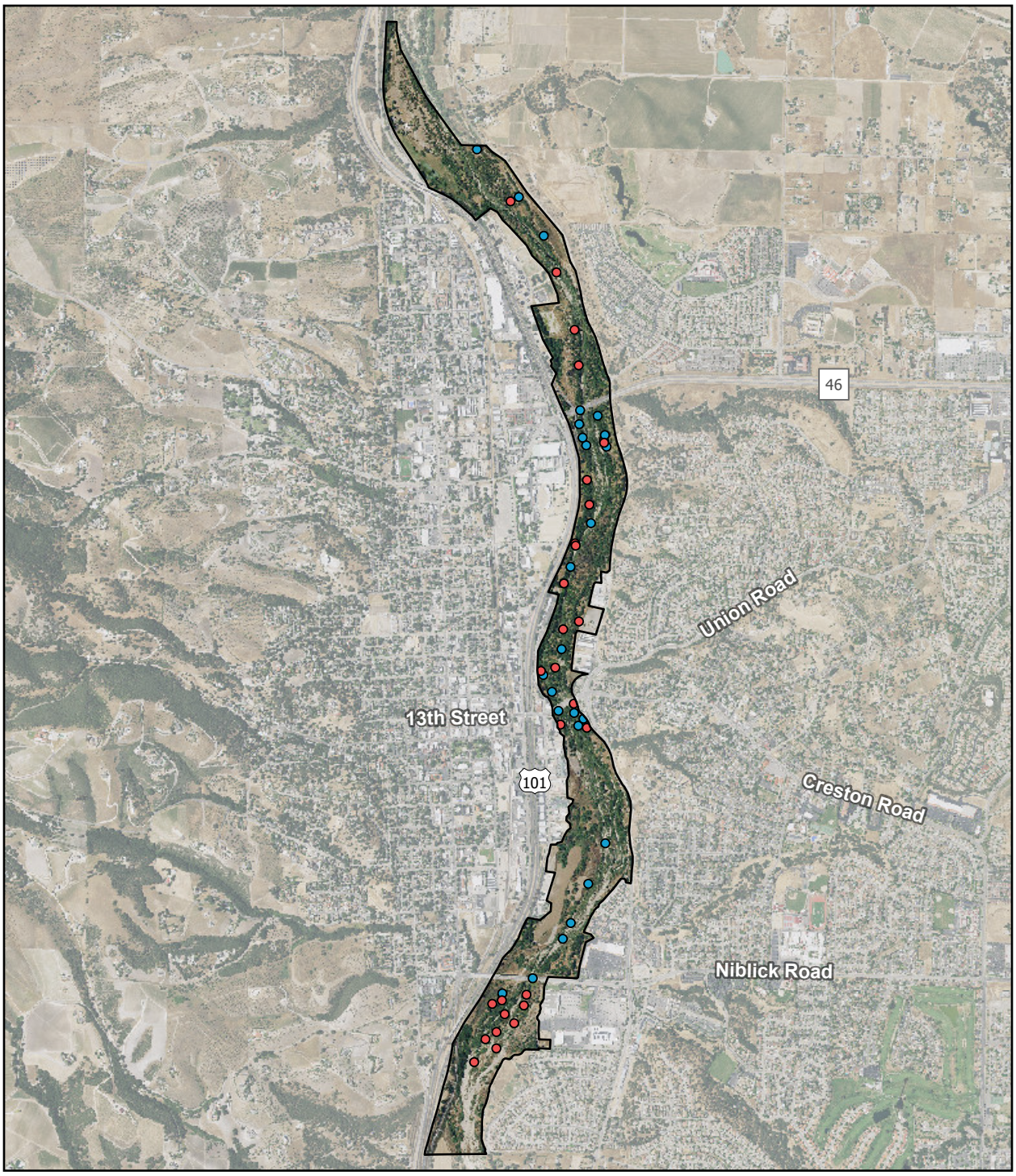
Photo 1. Large pond which holds water year round, which often contains Western pond turtles. Photo taken December 9, 2020.

Photo 2. Trash dump in mature riparian habitat. Photo taken December 9, 2020.

3.2 Soils

Fifteen soil map units are represented within the Action Area: Arbuckle fine sandy loam, 0 to 2% slopes; Arbuckle-Positas complex, 30 to 50% slopes and 50 to 75% slopes; Balcom-Calleguas complex, 50 to 75% slopes; Hanford and Greenfield soils, 0 to 2% slopes; Hanford and Greenfield gravelly sandy loams, 2 to 9%; Linne-Calodo complex, 9 to 30% slopes and 50 to 75% slopes; Lockwood shaly loam, 2 to 9% slopes; Metz loamy sand, 0 to 5% slopes; Metz-Tujunga complex, occasionally flooded, 0 to 5%; Mocho clay loam, 0 to 2% slopes; Pico fine sandy loam, 0 to 2% slopes; Still clay loam, 2 to 9% slopes; Xerofluvents-Riverwash association (USDA 2020) (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Locations of Unhoused Encampments



Legend

Action Area (418 ac)

Camp

Trash

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

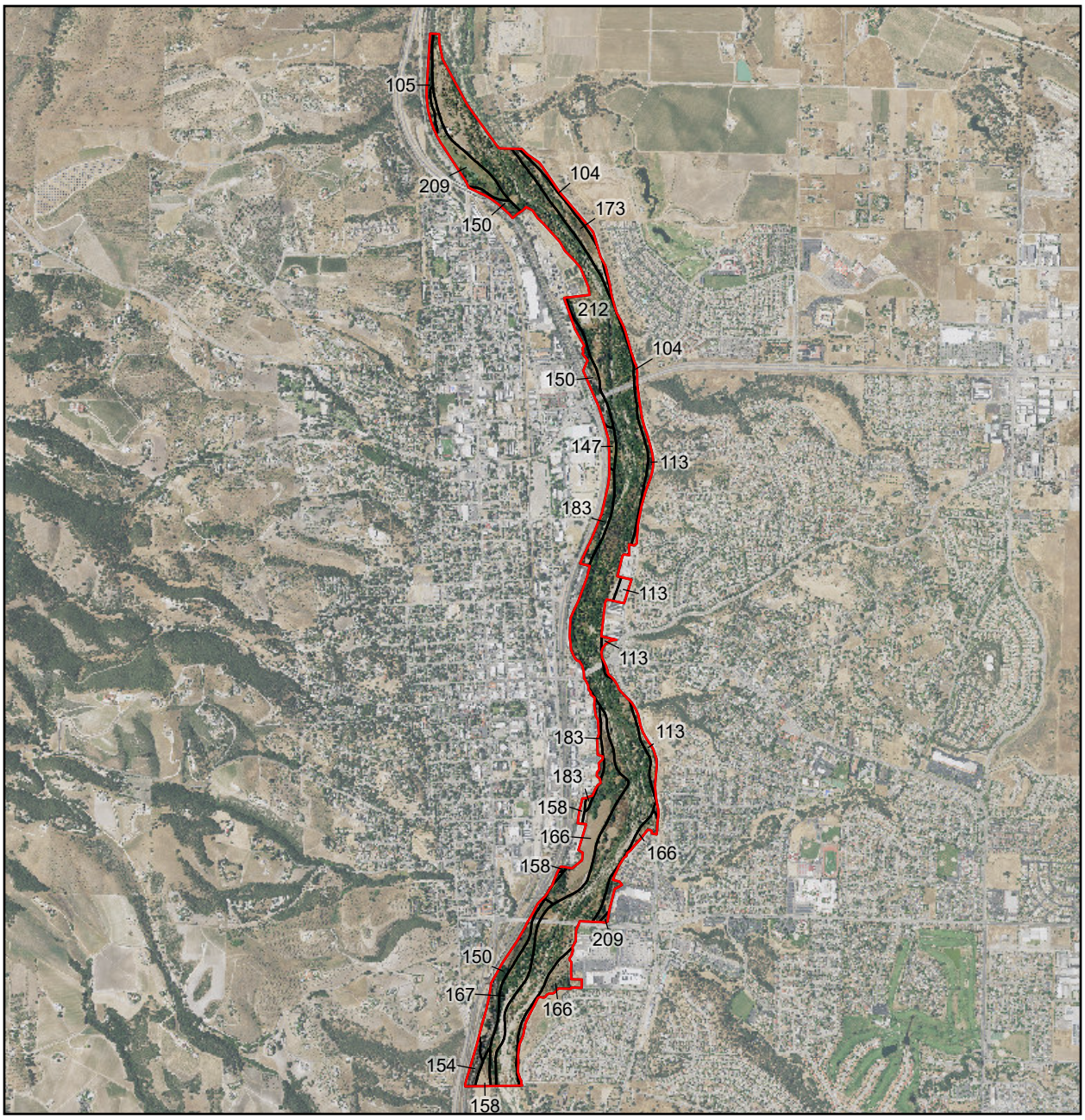
City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:45 PM by KRN

Figure 5. USDA Soil Survey



Soil Type	Study Area
100 - Arbuckle fine sandy loam, 0 to 2% slopes	<1%
104 - Arbuckle-Positas complex, 30 to 50% slopes	1%
105 - Arbuckle-Positas complex, 50 to 75% slopes	<1%
113 - Balcom-Calleguas complex, 50 to 75% slopes	3%
147 - Hanford and Greenfield soils, 0 to 2% slopes	<1%
150 - Hanford and Greenfield gravelly sandy loams, 2 to 9%	6%
152 - Linne-Calodo complex, 9 to 30% slopes	<1%
154 - Linne-Calodo complex, 50 to 75% slopes	<1%
158 - Lockwood shaly loam, 2 to 9% slopes	1%
166 - Metz loamy sand, 0 to 5% slopes	11%
167 - Metz-Tujunga complex, occasionally flooded, 0 to 5%	4%
173 - Mocho clay loam, 0 to 2% slopes	3%
183 - Pico fine sandy loam, 0 to 2% slopes	3%
209 - Still clay loam, 2 to 9% slopes	3%
212 - Xerofluvents-Riverwash association	63%

Legend

Action Area (418 ac)

NRCS Soils

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63412°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Source: USDA NRCS Soil Survey

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:46 PM by SAF

3.3 Habitat Types

Table 3 lists eight habitat types described and mapped within the Action Area (Figure 6). Most of the Action Area, approximately 251.7 acres, is mapped as Mature Riparian habitat. The remaining area consists of various habitats listed in Table 3.

TABLE 3. HABITAT TYPES

Habitat Type	Approximate Area (Acres)
Mature Riparian	251.7
Agricultural	45.7
Annual Grassland	43.2
River Wash	24.8
Wetted Channel	17.6
Oak Woodland	15.8
Developed	13.6
Marsh Purslane Wetland	5.9
TOTAL	**418.3**

3.3.1 Mature Riparian

Mature Riparian habitat occurs where overstory species are dominated by river-dwelling trees, such as Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and red willow (*Salix laevigata*). Midstory shrubs, such as sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*) and mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) may occur under emergent trees or stand alone as the dominant vegetation. Nonnative species such as white sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*) and annual grasses occur in the understory and in the margins where established shrubs do not grow. Mature Riparian habitat typically occurs where frequent disturbance, either through human activity or strong water flow, is uncommon. Much of the Study Area is suitable for Mature Riparian habitat and it and accounts for approximately 60% of the mapped habitat. See Photo 3. The majority of unhoused encampments and trash piles (85%) located during surveys were located in mature riparian habitat, indicating that this habitat is disproportionately affected by activities of unhoused people living in the riverbed (Figure 4).

Photo 3. Mature Riparian habitat with well developed overstory of cottonwoods and understory of mulefat. View north, November 19, 2020.

3.3.2 Agricultural

Agricultural habitat is actively managed land where vegetation is routinely removed through mowing or disking. The few plants that do occur in this habitat, such as Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*) and Canada horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*), are invasive in nature and are most common along the margins where management is less frequent (see Photo 4). Few native species are found within this habitat, such as scattered remnant trees, and no sensitive species are expected to occur within Agricultural habitat. Approximately 11% of the Action Area is Agricultural habitat, predominately occurring in upland areas on private land or in areas relevant to project activtives. Because of frequent disturbance, low native diversity, and no potential for sensitive species, Agriculural habitat has low ecological function and vegetation maintenance is not considered impacts.

Photo 4. Agricultural habitat with scattered horseweed in the field and Russian thistle along the margin. Mature Riparian habitat in the background. View south, November 23, 2020.

3.3.3 Annual Grassland

Annual Grassland is a semi-natural habitat type that has an open canopy and a mixture of invasive plant species and disturbance loving natives. Mediterranean grasses, such as red brome (*Bromus rubens*), and ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), along with non-native forbs, such as perennial mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*), make up the herbaceous layer. Shrubby species, particularly coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), primarily make up the overstory canopy when present, with few to no native trees occurring within this habitat type. Sensitive species are not expected to occur to within Annual Grassland habitat. Approximately 10% of the Action Area is Annual Grassland, and it is typically found on urban margins, such as along trail edges or within unhoused encampments or facility clearings, and is therefore subject to frequent human disturbance (see Photo 5).

Photo 5. Annual grassland habitat with invasive grass species and scattered emergent coyote brush. View south, November 19, 2020.

3.3.4 Riverwash

Riverwash habitat occurs in areas that are frequently flooded with soils consisting of deep alluvial materials such as sand and gravel. Vegetation cover is generally sparse, with large expanses being completely devegetated (see Photo 6). Small inclusions of vegetation occur on raised sand bars where flooding is less frequent, and species such as sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*) and mule fat (*Baccharis salicifolia*) are found intruding into Riverwash areas along the boundaries of Mature Riparian habitat. Approximately 6% of the Action Area is Riverwash habitat, primarily found in the south. No special status species are expected to occur in Riverwash habitat.

Photo 6. Riverwash habitat largely devegetated except for plants along the margin. View south, November 19, 2020.

3.3.5 Wetted Channel

Wetted Channel is found in the lowest sections of the Action Area and is most likely to support wetland communities. Similar to Riverwash habitat, soils consist of deep alluvial materials and persistent vegetation is generally absent except at the margins. Wetland associated forbs, such as annual beard grass (*Polypogon monspeliensis*) can be found growing where the soil is wet, and species such as southern cattail can be found in standing water (*Typha domingensis*). Species typically associated with Mature Riparian, such as cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) and red willow (*Salix laevigata*) also occur along the margins (see Photo 7).

Photo 7. Wetted Channel with standing water. Mature Riparian habitat in background. View south, December 22, 2020.

3.3.6 Oak Woodland

Oak Woodland within the Action Area is a natural habitat type where the predominant overstory species is valley oak (*Quercus lobata*). Generally restricted to the upland edges of the Action Area, Oak Woodland occurs as thin remanat islands between Mature Riparian habitat and urban development (see Photo 8). Because of this interface, the understory is often invaded with nonnative grasses, such as ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*) and wild oats (*Avena barbata*), and does not share the same native diversity of species found in larger, more intact stands of valley oak. Special status species commonly associated with oak woodland habitat are not expected to occur because of the small, fragmented stands present within the Action Area.

Photo 8. Oak Woodland habitat after vegetation maintenance along River Rd. View northeast, November 19, 2020.

3.3.7 Developed

Developed areas are an anthropogenic habitat type where human improvements have predominately excluded native species and vegetation in general. Roads, freeways, parking lots, and laydown yards are all examples of Developed habitat (see Photo 9). The few species that do occur are invasive, such as yellow star thistle (*Centaurea solstitialis*) and horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*), or ornamental (*Eucalyptus nicholii*). Developed habitat occupies approximately 3% of the Action Area and is restricted to the edges where anthropongenic improvements border the Salinas River. Special status species are not expected to occur within Developed habitat.

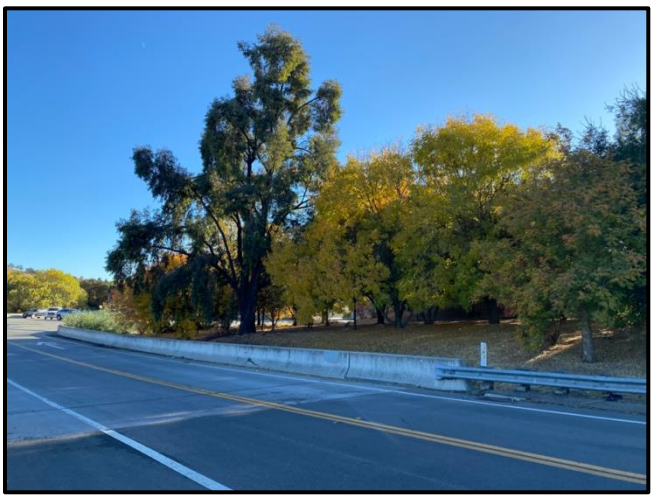


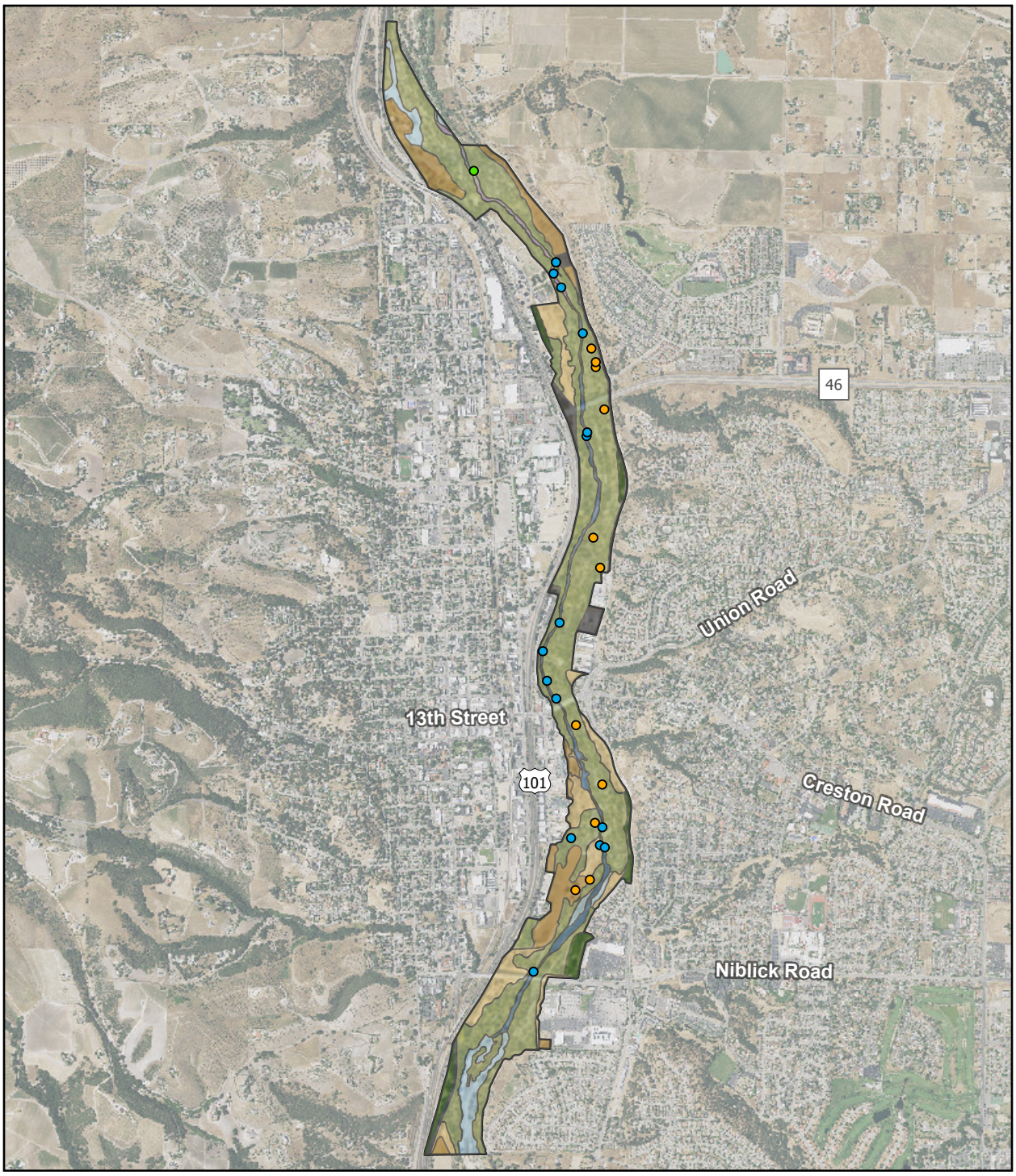
Photo 9. Developed habitat with road improvements and ornamental trees, looking southwest, November 19, 2020.

3.3.8 Marsh Purslane Wetland

Marsh Purslane is a semi natural habitat that occurs in standing water at the northern extent of the Action Area. The habitat is separated from other wetland habitats by the pervasive presence of marsh purslane (*Ludwigia peploides*). This invasive weed can cover nearly all waterways where it occurs (see Photo 10). Other native species, such as red willow (*Salix laevigata*) or southern cattail (*Typha domingensis*) can occur along the margins or in few numbers within the wetland habitat. No special status plant species are expected to occur within Marsh Purslane Wetland.

Photo 10. Marsh purslane dominating the vegetation in standing water along the Action Area's northern reach, view north, November 19, 2020.

Figure 6. Biological Resources



Legend

- Action Area (418 ac)
- Annual Grassland
- Agricultural
- Wetted Channel
- River Wash
- Marsh Purslane Wetland
- Mature Riparian
- Oak Woodland
- Developed
- Stick Nest
- Beaver Dam
- Pools / Ponds

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles - Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:50 PM by KRN

3.4 Potential Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters

Potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waters are present in the Action Area. The Salinas River is a perennial river which flows from its headwaters in the Garcia Mountains in Santa Margarita—approximately 20 miles south of Paso Robles—all the way to the Pacific Ocean, where the mouth of the river empties into the ocean north of Marina in Monterey County. Within the corridor of the Salinas River in the Action Area there are ponds and areas of ponded water which have wetland vegetation.

A formal wetland delineation was not conducted, as no ground-disturbing activities of any kind are proposed to wetlands or Waters of the State. A formal wetland delineation would be necessary if future project activities are proposed that may result in the fill of aquatic features. Wetland delineations should be conducted according to state and federal standards to determine the extent of Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 wetlands and waters under jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Section 401 waters and wetlands under jurisdiction of the State Water Resource Control Board.

Though a formal wetland delineation was not conducted, using lidar data, land within the Action Area was mapped as one of four categories: low-flow channel, active channel, floodplain, and upland (Figure 7). The low-flow channel is the lowest elevation channel within the braided stream, and underlays marsh purslane wetland and wetted channel habitats. The active channel consists of primary and secondary channels and vegetated islands, as well as the active floodplain; for this project, the active channel encompasses the river's bankfull width within its braided stream condition. Floodplain areas are beyond the active channel and are inundated at times of high water. Upland areas are higher elevation areas, outside the floodplain.

Jurisdictional features identified in the Salinas River reach within the City of Paso Robles include:

- **Low-flow channel**: the principal trunk of a river or stream, also known as the main-stem channel.
- **Active channel:** consists of a primary (low-flow or main-stem channel) and one or more secondary channels of varying sizes. The active channel area includes high flow channels and vegetated islands that are exposed at a normal high water stage within the braided high flow channels.
- **Floodplain:** a strip of relatively flat land bordering a stream channel that is inundated at times of high water. For the Paso Robles stretch of the Salinas River, areas beyond the active channel and associated riparian edge are floodplain.

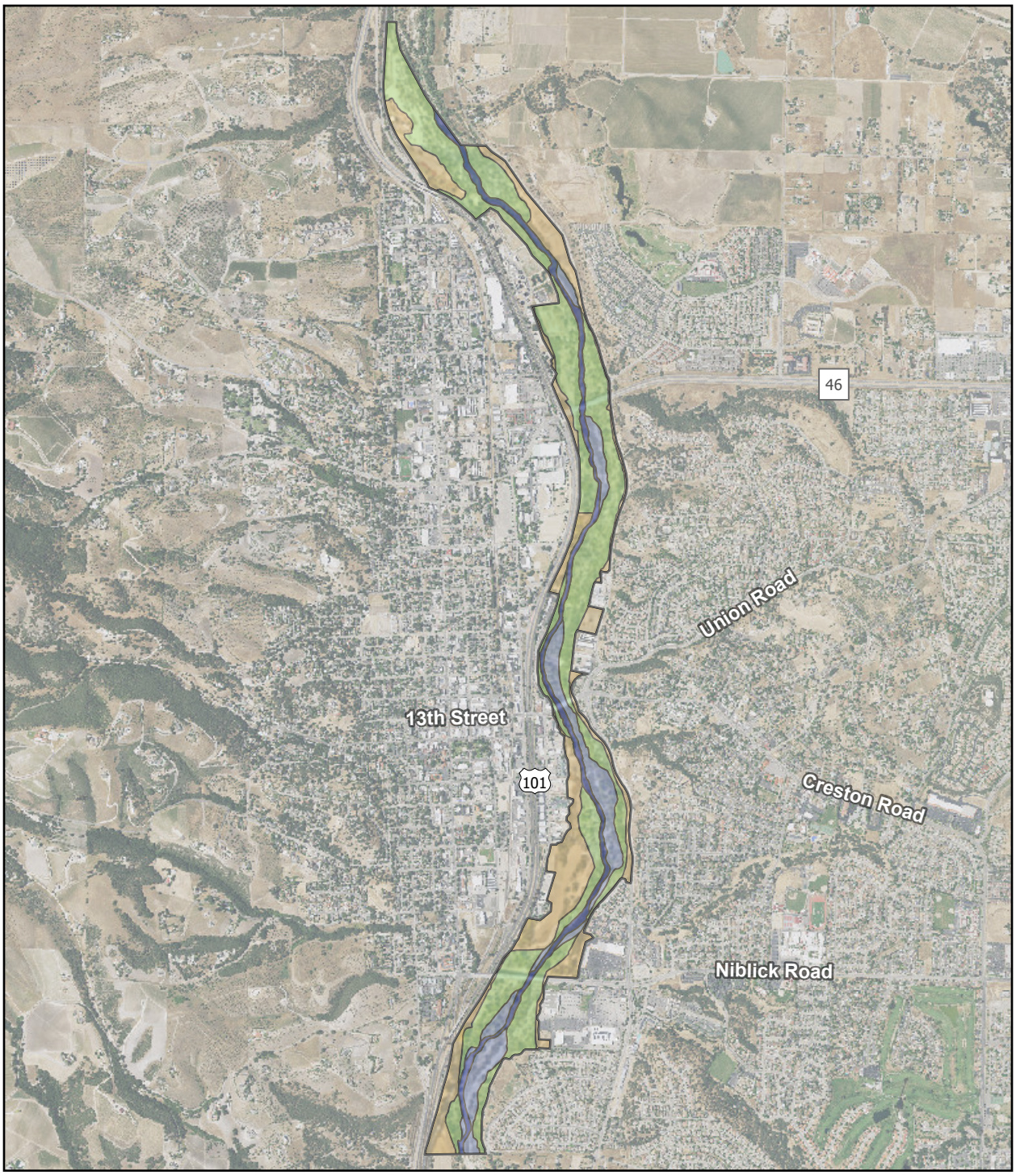
3.5 Botanical Resources

Research on special status plant occurrences conducted within the designated search area (see Methods) determined 43 special status plant species are known to occur in the region (Appendix B). Figure 8 and Figure 10 depict the current GIS data for special status plants mapped near the Action Area by the CNDDB and USFWS Critical Habitat.

3.5.1 Potential Special Status Plant Species

Table 4 lists five special status plant species for which appropriate soil and habitat conditions exist, and therefore could potentially occur in the Action Area. Federal and California State status, Global and State rank, CRPR, typical blooming periods, and habitat preference for each species are provided (CNPS 2020; CDFW 2020a). Potential for occurrence on site and effect of proposed activity is assessed and provided. Species are listed alphabetically by scientific name.

Figure 7. Jurisdictional Areas



Legend

- Action Area (418 ac)
- Upland
- Active Floodplain
- Active Channel
- Low-Flow Channel

N

0 0.5 1 Mile

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68805°W 35.63413°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

Imagery Source: USDA NAIP, 05/21/2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:48 PM by KRN

TABLE 4. SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS WITH POTENTIAL TO OCCUR

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
1.	**Hardham's Evening-Primrose**	*Camissoniopsis hardhamiae*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Mar-May	Sandy soil, limestone, disturbed oak woodland	**Moderate**. Documented in river floodplain near Camp Roberts.
2.	**Elegant Wild Buckwheat**	*Eriogonum elegans*	-/- G4G5/S4S5 4.3	May-Nov	Sandy to gravelly flats and slopes, mixed grassland communities, oak and pine woodland	**Low.** Potentially suitable habitat occurs within Action Area. However, many local records are misidentified.
3.	**Santa Lucia Dwarf Rush**	*Juncus luciensis*	-/- G3/S3 1B.2	Apr-Jul	Wet, sandy soils of seeps, meadows, vernal pools, streams, roadsides	**Low**. Potentially suitable habitat is present within Action Area.
4.	**Davidson's Bush-Mallow**	*Malacothamnus davidsonii*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Jun-Jan	Slopes, washes	**Low.** Potentially suitable habitat is present within Study Area.
5.	**Large-Flowered Nemacladus**	*Nemacladus secundiflorus var. secundiflorus*	-/- G3T3?/S3? 4.3	Apr-Jun	Dry, gravelly slopes, often in creek sediments	**Low.** Suitable habitat may be present with Action Area

See Section 1.6 for status and rank definitions.

3.5.2 Special Status Plants Discussion

Based on an analysis of known ecological requirements for the special status plant species reported from the region (Appendix B), and the habitat conditions that were observed in the Action Area, it was determined that five special status plant species have some potential to occur within the Action Area. One special status plant species has a moderate potential to occur (Hardham's evening-primrose) and four species have a low potential to occur (elegant wild buckwheat, Santa Lucia dwarf rush, Davidson's bush mallow, and large-flowered nemacladus).

These species are discussed below and includes species habitat, range restrictions, known occurrences, and survey results.

A. Hardham's Evening Primrose (*Camissoniopsis hardhamiae*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species that is endemic to Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. It is known to occur on sandy, decomposed carbonate soils in chaparral and cismontane woodland habitats between 140 and 945 meters elevation. It is an annual herb that typically blooms between March and May and is associated with disturbance and burned areas. The closest known record is approximately 12.4 miles north of the Study Area (CNDDB #14). The soil in the Study Area is suitable for this species in sandy areas outside the river wash and other frequently disturbed habitats. Hardham's evening primrose was not detected in the Study Area during the winter 2020 survey.

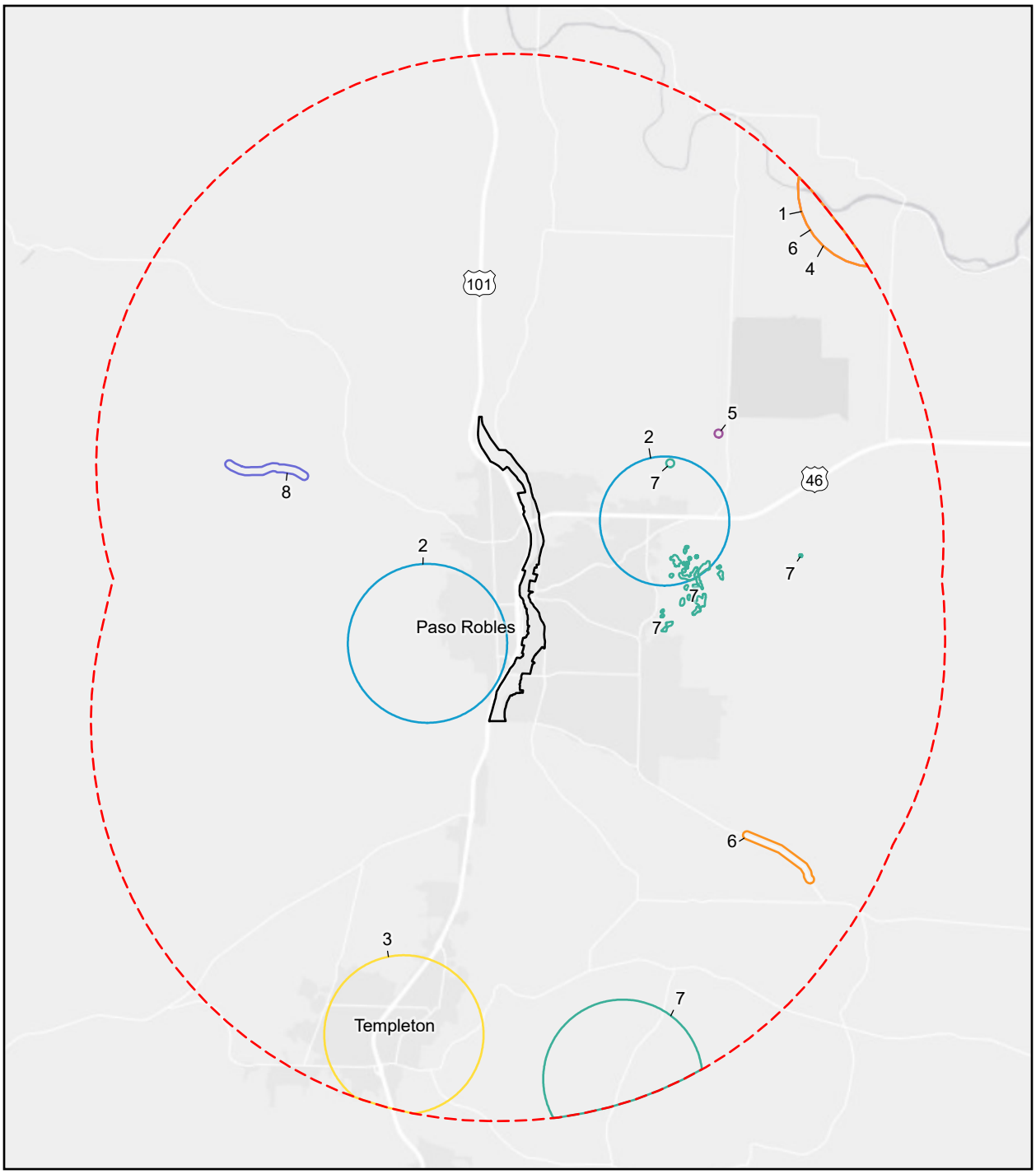
B. Elegant Wild Buckwheat (*Eriogonum elegans*) is a CRPR 4.3 species endemic to the central coast of California. It is known to occur on sandy or gravelly soil in cismontane woodlands, grasslands; and washes between 200 and 1,525 meters elevation. It is an annual herb that typically blooms between May and November. The closest known record is approximately 10.3 miles northwest of the Study Area (SBBG 179103). The habitat in the Action Area is suitable for this species where sandy soils occur. However, many records have been misidentified as *Eriogonum baileyi* var.*baileyi*, and elegant buckwheat may not occur within the vicinity (Keil 2019). Elegant buckwheat was not detected in the Study Area during the winter 2020 survey.

C. Santa Lucia Dwarf Rush (*Juncus luciensis*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species endemic to coastal California. It is known to occur in meadows, seeps, vernal pools, chaparral, Great Basin scrub and lower montane coniferous forest between 300 and 2,040 meters elevation. It is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and July. The closest known record is approximately 3.8 miles southeast of the Study Area (CNDDB #8). The habitat in the Study Area is suitable for this species where seasonally moist places occur. Santa Lucia Dwarf Rush was not detected in the Study Area during the winter 2020 survey.

D. Davidson's Bush Mallow (*Malacothamnus davidsonii*) is a CRPR 1B.2 species that occurs from San Mateo County south to Los Angeles County and is endemic to California. It is known to occur in chaparral, coastal scrub, cismontane woodland, and riparian woodland habitats along slopes or washes. It is a perennial deciduous shrub that typically blooms between June and January. The closest known record is approximately 13.5 miles northwest of the Study Area (CNDDB #24). The habitat in the Study Area is suitable for this species, particularly in riparian washes. Davidson's bush mallow was not detected in the Study Area during the winter 2020 survey.

E. **Large-Flowered Nemacladus** (*Nemacladus secundiflorus* var. *secundiflorus*) is a CRPR 4.3 variety endemic to central California. It is known to occur on dry, gravelly slopes at elevations between 200 and 2,000 meters elevation. It is an annual herb that typically blooms between April and June. The closest known record is approximately 10.1 miles north of the Study Area (SBBG 107825). The soil in the Study Area is suitable for this species where alluvial materials occur. Large flowered nemacladus was not detected in the Study Area during the winter 2020 survey.

Figure 8. California Natural Diversity Database Plant Records



Label	Common Name
1	Jared's pepper-grass
2	Lemmon's jewelflower
3	Mesa horkelia
4	Oval-leaved snapdragon
5	San Luis Obispo owl's-clover
6	Santa Lucia dwarf rush
7	Shining navarretia
8	Woodland woollythreads

Legend

5-Mile Buffer

Action Area (418 acres)

N

0 1 2 Miles

City of Paso Robles - Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68652°W 35.63082°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

CNDDB GIS Data Last Updated: November 2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:48 PM by SAF

3.5.3 Botanical Survey Results

Botanical surveys conducted on November 19, 2020 identified 42 species, subspecies, and varieties of vascular plant taxa in the Action Area (Appendix D) The list includes 22 species native to California and 20 introduced (naturalized or planted) species. Native plant species account for approximately 52 percent of the Action Area flora; introduced species account for approximately 48 percent. Special status species were not detected within the Action Area.

3.6 Wildlife Resources

Research on special status animal occurrences conducted within the designated search area (see Methods) determined 35 special status animal species are known to occur in the region (Appendix C). Figure 9 and Figure 10 depict the current GIS data for special status species mapped near the Action Area by the CNDDB and USFWS Critical Habitat.

3.6.1 Potential Special Status Animal Species

Table 5 lists 14 special status animal species for which appropriate habitat conditions exist, and therefore could potentially occur in the Action Area. Federal and California State status, Global and State rank, and CDFW listing status for each species are given. Habitat (from CNDDB) preference, potential for occurrence on site, detection of the species within the Action Area, and effect of proposed activity are also provided. Species are listed alphabetically by scientific name.

TABLE 5. SPECIAL STATUS ANIMALS WITH POTENTIAL TO OCCUR

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
1.	**Northern California Legless Lizard**	*Anniella pulchra*	-/- G3/S3 SSC	Sandy or loose loamy soils under coastal scrub or oak trees. Soil moisture essential.	**High**. Suitable sandy soil under oaks is present in upland areas within the Action Area.
2.	**Pallid Bat**	*Antrozous pallidus*	-/- G5/S3 SSC	Rock crevices, caves, tree hollows, mines, old buildings, and bridges.	**High**. Suitable trees with hollows and multiple potentially suitable bridges are present throughout the Action Area.
3.	**Great Blue Heron**	*Ardea herodias*	-/- G5/S4 SA	Rookeries located in tall trees near foraging areas.	**Moderate**. Suitable nesting habitat is present and rookeries are found elsewhere on the Salinas River, but there is a high level of human disturbance within the Action Area.
4.	**Oak Titmouse***	*Baeolophus inornatus*	-/- G4/S4 SA	Nests in cavities in oak woodland habitat. Non-migratory.	**Present**. This species was observed in the Action Area. Suitable nesting habitat in oak woodland and riparian habitat is present within the Action Area.
5.	**Western Pond Turtle**	*Emys marmorata*	-/- G3G4/S3 SSC	Permanent or semi-permanent streams, ponds, lakes.	**Present**. This species was observed in the Salinas River during site surveys.
6.	**Bald Eagle**	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	FD/CE G5/S3 FP	Nests within 1 mile of water in tall live tree with open branches.	**Present**. This species was observed foraging during site surveys. Suitable foraging habitat and potentially suitable nesting habitat are present within the Action Area, though there are no bald eagle nests within more than 5 miles of the Action Area.
7.	**Hoary Bat**	*Lasiurus cinereus*	-/- G5/S4 SA	Forages in open habitats or habitat mosaics with trees. Roosts in dense foliage of medium to large trees. Feeds on moths. Requires water.	**High**. There is highly suitable roosting and foraging habitat within the Action Area.

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
8.	**Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat**	*Neotoma macrotis luciana*	-/- G5T3/S3 SSC	Variety of habitats with moderate to dense understory vegetation	**Moderate**. Potentially suitable habitat is present within the Action Area in areas with a dense canopy and dense understory vegetation.
9.	**Steelhead - South-Central California Coast DPS**	*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 9*	FT/- G5T2Q/S2 SA	Federal listing refers to runs in coastal basins from the Pajaro River south to, but not including, the Santa Maria River.	**High**. Steelhead are known to be present in the Salinas River.
10.	**Osprey***	*Pandion haliaetus*	-/- G5/S4 WL	Large nests built in tree-tops within 15 miles of a good fish-producing body of water.	**Present**. This species was observed foraging over the Salinas River. Potential nesting habitat is present in large trees along the river within the Action Area, though the Action Area is outside the known nesting range for this species.
11.	**Coast Horned Lizard**	*Phrynosoma blainvillii*	-/- G3G4/S3S4 SSC	Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes.	**Moderate**. Potentially suitable habitat is present in sandy washes within the Salinas River channel.
12.	**Yellow Warbler**	*Setophaga petechia*	-/- G5/S3S4 SSC	Frequently found nesting and foraging in willow shrubs and thickets, and in other riparian plants including cottonwoods, sycamores, ash, and alders.	**Present**. This species was observed during site surveys. Suitable nesting habitat is present in riparian habitat in the Action Area.
13.	**Lawrence's Goldfinch***	*Spinus lawrencei*	-/- G3G4/S3S4 SA	Closely associated with oaks.	**Present**. This species was observed in the Action Area during site surveys. Suitable nesting habitat is present in riparian forest and oak woodland within the Action Area.

	Common Name	Scientific Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
14.	**Least Bell's Vireo**	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	FE/CE G5T2/S2 SA	Riparian habitat, near water or dry streambed, <2000 ft. Nests in willows, mesquite, Baccharis.	**Low**. Suitable riparian habitat is present within the Action Area, but the abundance of brown-headed cowbirds and the distance from the closest known extant breeding population in Ventura County means this species is unlikely to occur.

*Not listed in the CNDDB for the search area, but species was detected.
See Section 1.6 for status and rank definitions.

3.6.2 Special Status Animals Discussion

Based on an analysis of known ecological requirements for the special-status wildlife species reported or known from the region (Appendix C), and the habitat conditions that were observed in the Action Area, it was determined that 14 special status animal species have some potential to occur within the Action Area (Table 5). Six special status species were detected in the Action Area (Western pond turtle, oak titmouse, bald eagle, osprey, yellow warbler, and Lawrence's goldfinch). Four species have a high potential to occur (Northern California legless lizard, pallid bat, hoary bat, and steelhead). Three species have a moderate potential to occur (great blue heron, Monterey dusky-footed wood rat, and coast horned lizard), and one species has a low potential to occur in the Action Area (least Bell's vireo). A total of 14 species are discussed below, including description of habitat, range restrictions, known occurrences, and survey results for the Action Area.

1. **Northern California legless lizard** (*Anniella pulchra*) is a California Species of Special Concern that occurs from Contra Costa to Santa Barbara County. It has a Global Rank of G3 and a State Rank of S3, both of which indicate that this species is considered Vulnerable. This species includes the subspecies formerly treated as *A. pulchra nigra* and *A. pulchra pulchra* which was shown to be an invalid designation (Pearse and Pogson 2000). Northern California legless lizard inhabits friable soils in a variety of habitats from coastal dunes to oak woodlands and chaparral. Adapted to subterranean life, the legless lizard thrives near native coastal shrubs that produce an abundance of leaf litter and have strong roots systems (Kuhnz et al. 2005). Areas of exotic vegetation and open grassland do not provide suitable habitat for the silvery legless lizard since these plant communities support smaller populations of insect prey and offer little protection from higher ground temperatures and soil desiccation (Slobodchikoff and Doyen 1977; Jennings and Hayes 1994). The closest reported occurrence of the northern California legless lizard is located within the Action Area, "in the vicinity of the Salinas River" approximately one mile south of the 13th Street bridge (CNDDB #155). Legless lizards were collected from this location in the 1960s. Northern California legless lizard has high potential to occur in the Action Area in upland areas of oak woodland and in the floodplain in areas where native shrubs are present. No northern California legless lizards were observed in the Study Area during the 2019 or 2020 surveys.

2. **Pallid bat** (*Antrozous pallidus*) is a California Species of Special Concern. The pallid bat is a large long-eared bat that occurs throughout the state and occupies a wide variety of habitats. Although most common in open, dry areas ideal for foraging with rocky outcrops for roosting, pallid bats are also found regularly in oak and pine woodlands where they roost in caves, mines, rock crevices, hollow trees and buildings (Nowak et al. 1994). Bridges are also frequently used by pallid bats, often as night roosts between foraging periods (Pierson et al. 1996) . The closest reported occurrence of the pallid bat is approximately 8.5 miles north of the Action Area (CNDDB #104) where they were detected roosting under the River Road bridge which crosses the Salinas River east of San Miguel. Due to the presence of potentially suitable mature trees with hollows and multiple road bridges crossing the Salinas River, pallid bat has high potential to occur within the Action Area. No pallid bats were observed within the Action Area during the 2019 or 2020 surveys, although specialized bat surveys were not conducted.

3. **Great blue heron** (*Ardea herodias*) is a CDFW Special Animal and a colonial nesting waterbird whose nesting colonies are tracked by the CNDDB. Adaptable and widespread, the great blue heron is found in a wide variety of habitats including brackish and freshwater marshes, estuaries, swamps, riparian forests, and wetlands. They nest colonially in tall trees, cliffsides, and sequestered spots on marshes. Rookery sites are typically in proximity to foraging areas such as marshes, lake margins, tide-flats, rivers and streams, and wet meadows. The closest reported occurrence of a great blue heron rookery is approximately 15 miles north of the Action Area (CNDDB #57) in a stand of sycamores and cottonwoods along the Salinas River at Camp Roberts. While there is suitable nesting habitat present in mature riparian forest in the Action Area and known rookeries elsewhere on the Salinas River, the high level of human disturbance within the Action Area means there is only moderate potential for a rookery to occur. No great blue herons or heron rookeries were observed during surveys in 2019 and 2020.
4. **Oak titmouse** (*Baeolophus inornatus*) is a Special Animal with nesting occurrences tracked by the CNDDB. The species is found year-round in suitable habitats (oak woodland, mixed oak-pine woodland, or juniper woodland) from northern California through northern Baja California, Mexico. They feed on insects, nuts and seeds and nest within tree cavities. Oak titmouse was observed within the Action Area during 2019 and 2020 surveys, and is a likely nester in oak woodland and riparian forest.
5. **Western pond turtle** (*Emys marmorata* [*Actinemys marmorata*]) is a California Species of Special Concern that has a widespread distribution in north and south California west of the Sierra-Cascade crest (Jennings and Hayes 1994; CDFW 2014). The western pond turtle requires permanent to semi-permanent and slack or slow-moving water type habitat, including ponds, rivers, streams, reservoirs and wetlands found in grasslands, open forests and woodlands. Suitable water habitat will have plenty of basking and cover sites such as logs, reeds, rocks and muddy banks. The western pond turtle also requires suitable upland habitat for nests, migration, overwintering and aestivation (Pilliod et al. 2013; CDFW 2020a). Nests are laid on dry and unshaded south-facing slopes that are < 25º and of high clay or silt fraction. Females lay eggs from April to August, depending on the latitude, and will travel as far as 400 meters from the water to find a suitable nesting spot. Hatchling turtles leave the nest the following spring and spend their time in shallow highly vegetated waters. The western pond turtle is omnivorous and has a diet that consists mostly of aquatic invertebrates, vegetation, small fish and duck carrion (Jennings and Hayes 1994; Reese and Welsh 1997; CDFW 2014). Western pond turtles were observed in multiple locations in the Salinas River within the Action Area during site surveys in December 2020.
6. **Bald eagle** (*Haliaetus leucocephalus*) is a state listed endangered species and a regular winter resident on Nacimiento and San Antonio Lakes. It requires ocean shores, lakes or rivers and usually nests in large trees with open branches within 1 mile of water. It often nests in the largest tree in a stand, building a large stick platform nest between 50 to 200 feet above ground (CDFW 2014). Bald eagles forage from a perch or in flight, and most frequently prey on fish. They also scavenge dead fish, birds, and mammals. Bald eagles are known to be sensitive to human disturbance, and have abandoned nests due to human activity (Thelander 1973). The nearest recorded bald eagle nest is approximately 11 miles north on the Nacimiento River at Camp Roberts (CNDDB #253). There is suitable foraging habitat for bald eagles within the Action Area. While there is potentially suitable nesting habitat in large mature trees in the

riparian corridor, nesting within the Action Area is unlikely due to the high degree of human disturbance. A bald eagle was observed foraging along the Salinas River during surveys in December 2020.

7. **Hoary bat** (*Lasiurus cinereus*) is a Special Animal tracked by CDFW. It is widely distributed throughout most of California, though it is uncommon in southeastern deserts. Roosting habitat is primarily woodlands and forests, and it forages for moths in open areas and along habitat edges (CDFW 2014). Hoary bats roost mainly in dense foliage of medium to large deciduous or coniferous trees, near the ends of branches, typically in trees at the edge of a clearing. Roosting has also been documented in caves, under rock ledges, and in tree hollows (Bolster 2005). The closest reported occurrence of hoary bat is located approximately 12 miles northwest from the Action Area (CNDDB #111) at Nacimiento Ranch. Suitable roosting habitat is present in riparian forest and oak woodlands within the Action Area, and this species has high potential to occur. No hoary bats were observed within the Action Area during the 2019 or 2020 surveys, although specialized bat surveys were not conducted.

8. **Monterey dusky-footed woodrat** (*Neotoma macrotis luciana*) is a California Species of Special Concern. Its range extends from the Santa Lucia Mountains in Monterey Bay to Morro Bay and northwestern San Luis Obispo County (Wilson and Ruff 1999; CNDDB 2020a). This species is threatened by habitat loss due to coastal development, however, a significant portion of its range is protected by the Los Padres National Forest, and the species seems to respond favorably to restoration of riparian habitats (NatureServe 2018). Monterey dusky-footed woodrat occurs in broadleaved upland forest and chaparral with moderate canopy and moderate to dense understory. It constructs nests using grass, leaves, sticks, feathers, etc. The availability of nest materials may be a limiting factor for population growth. The closest reported occurrence is located approximately 8 miles northwest of the Action Area (CNDDB #1) in chaparral habitat at Camp Roberts. There are small patches of potentially suitable forest with suitably dense understory within the Action Area, but the distance from known occurrences means this species has moderate potential to occur. Monterey dusky-footed woodrat was not observed in the Action Area in 2019 or 2020 surveys. A woodrat midden was located in riparian habitat in the Action Area during surveys in August 2019, but the species of woodrat was not identified.

9. **Steelhead (South/Central California Coast DPS)** (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) is the anadromous form of rainbow trout. Adults spawn in freshwater, while juveniles remain in freshwater before migrating to the ocean to grow and become sexually mature prior to returning as adults to spawn in freshwater. Steelhead generally require cool, fast-flowing streams with rock and cobble substrate for spawning and rearing. Steelhead in the South/Central California Coast Distinct Population Segment (SCCCDPS) include naturally-spawned *O. mykiss* occurring downstream from natural and manmade barriers from the Pajaro River, south to but not including the Santa Maria River. A Distinct Population Segment (DPS) is a group of steelhead that is genetically distinct from other California steelhead populations. Steelhead are known to occur in coastal streams and rivers in San Luis Obispo County, including but not limited to Arroyo Grande Creek, Pismo Creek, San Luis Obispo Creek, Chorro Creek, San Simeon Creek, and other coastal streams. Steelhead are known to occur in the Salinas River and its tributaries from Monterey south to the vicinity of Santa Margarita. The Salinas River and coastal streams in San Luis Obispo County are critical habitat for migrating steelhead (Figure 10) (USFWS 2020). The Action Area includes the Salinas River,

and though steelhead were not observed during site surveys in 2019 or 2020, they are assumed to be present in the river.

10. **Osprey** (*Pandion haliaetus*) is a CDFW Watch List species (for nesting occurrences only) that occurs throughout California. It was formerly a widespread breeder, but declined due to DDT contamination. It now breeds primarily in northern California, north of Marin County, though nesting has been re-established in Southern California in Orange and San Diego Counties. Ospreys are migratory, spending winters in Central and South America and returning to breed in California in early spring. They prey primarily on fish and require clear, open water for foraging. They use large trees, snags, and dead-topped trees for cover and nesting (CDFW 2014). No occurrences of nesting ospreys are documented in the CNDDB in Monterey, San Luis Obispo, or Santa Barbara Counties, but ospreys are regularly seen foraging throughout San Luis Obispo County, especially on the coast and at inland lakes (eBird 2020). While ospreys are not known to nest in SLO County, there is suitable foraging habitat within the Action Area for them along the Salinas River and potential nesting habitat in mature riparian and oak trees. An osprey was sighted foraging over the Salinas during the December 2020 site survey.

11. **Coast horned lizard (or Blainville's horned lizard)** (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) is a California Species of Special Concern. The coast horned lizard is distributed from northern Baja California through Northern California occurring in open areas of valley foothill hardwood, conifer, riparian, pine-cypress, juniper and annual grassland habitats (Laudenslayer 2007). The horned lizard needs friable sandy soil with rocks and logs essential for burrows and reproduction (Laudenslayer 2007; Gerson 2011). Appropriate habitat for the horned lizard must include an abundance of the native harvester ant (*Pogonomyrmex* and *Messor*). The non-native Argentine ant (*Linepithema humile*) is detrimental to horned lizard food resources as it is out competing the native harvester ant, and the lizard will not eat the Argentine ant (CNDDB 2020a; Gerson 2011). The closest reported occurrence of the coast horned lizard is located approximately 9 miles north of the Action Area (CNDDB #727) in sandy soil dominated by sandbar willow at the edge of the Salinas River floodplain. Suitable sandy soils and vegetation are present in the Action Area, but due to the distance of the nearest known occurrence, this species has only moderate potential to occur. Coast horned lizard was not observed in the Action Area during surveys in 2019 or 2020.

12. **Yellow warbler** (*Setophaga petechia*) is a California Species of Special Concern (nesting locations only). Yellow warbler winters in Central and South America and migrates to North America during the spring/summer breeding period. Their warm-weather breeding range is generally restricted to Central and Southern California. Yellow warbler frequents riparian habitats where it nests in sycamores, cottonwoods, willows, alders, ash and other riparian trees. This species was observed within the Action Area during 2019 and 2020 surveys, and is a likely nester in mature riparian habitat.

13. **Lawrence's goldfinch** (*Spinus lawrencei*) is a Special Animal tracked by the CNDDB that nests in oak habitats in the mountain areas of northern and eastern San Luis Obispo County, and elsewhere in California. Flocks of Lawrence's goldfinches tend to be highly mobile, moving to seasonal food sources. Lawrence's goldfinch was observed within the Action Area during 2019 and 2020 surveys and is a likely nester in oak woodland and possibly in mature riparian forest.

14. **Least Bell's Vireo (***Vireo bellii pusillus;* LBV) is one of four subspecies of Bell's vireo (*Vireo bellii*) and is both state and federally listed as endangered. The least Bell's vireo winters in Baja California, Mexico and migrates to California during the breeding season (generally March to September), where it is found in scattered populations in Southern California. They are a small, olive colored bird whose habitat consists of low, dense riparian growth near dry and intermittent streams (USFWS 1994). Preferred nesting habitat is on low branches of willows (*Salix* spp.), mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), and mesquite bushes (*Prosopis* spp.) where insects can be found for feeding (Brown 1993). Range wide decline has occurred due to habitat loss, and brood parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds (*Molothrus ater*) throughout range of California (USFWS 1994). There has been no confirmed breeding by LBV in San Luis Obispo County since at least the 1970s (USFWS 2006). The closest and most recent sighting of LBV in the vicinity of the Action Area was approximately one mile north (CNDDB #323) in riparian habitat along the Salinas River in the summer of 2005. A singing male was observed from May through June 2005 and a pair of vireos was observed in July 2005, but no nest was found and breeding was not confirmed. The most recent confirmed sighting of LBV in San Luis Obispo County was of a color-banded bird from Camp Pendleton in September 2009 in Los Osos, approximately 22 miles south of the Action Area (eBird 2020). The nearest extant viable breeding population of LBV is on the Santa Clara River in Ventura County, approximately 125 miles south of the Action Area. There is potentially suitable habitat for LBV within the Action Area in areas of dense willow and mulefat, primarily within the densest riparian habitat adjacent to the wetted channel. However, due to the distance from the nearest breeding population and the high levels of human disturbance surrounding the Action Area, LBV are unlikely to occur. LBV were not observed in the Action Area during 2019 or 2020 surveys.

Three species (vernal pool fairy shrimp, California red-legged frog, and San Joaquin kit fox), which are listed under the FESA and occur within the vicinity of the Action Area, have no potential to occur within the Action Area but warrant further discussion.

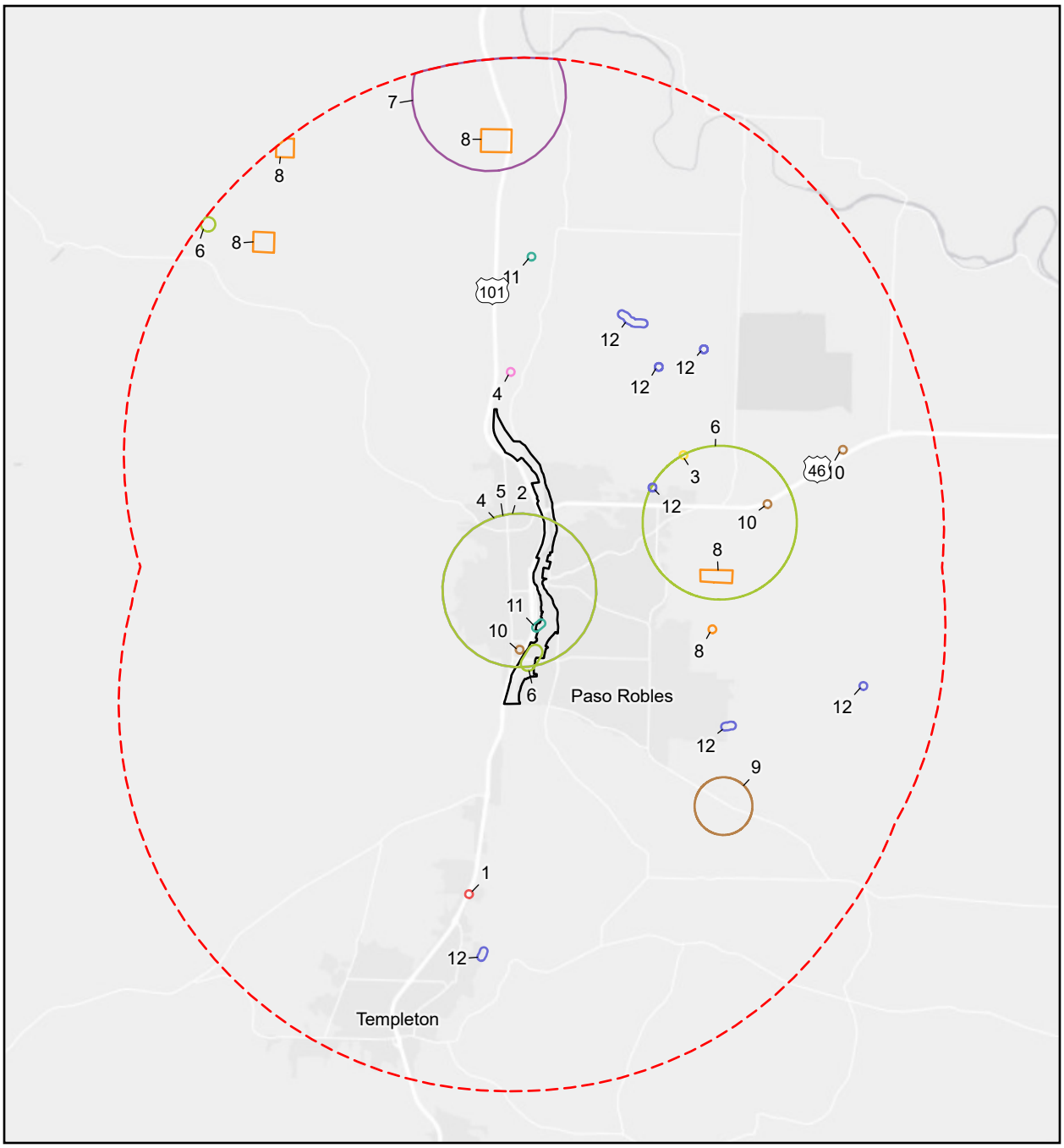
1. **Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp** (*Branchinecta lynchi;* VPFS) is a small freshwater crustacean that is federally listed as threatened and occurs in the Central Valley of California from Shasta County to Tulare County and the central and southern Coast Ranges from northern Solano County to Ventura County, California (USFWS 2003). This shrimp is found in grasslands in cool, clear-water sandstone-depression, grassed swale, earth slump and basalt-flow depression pools with a higher occurrence in Redding, Corning and Red Bluff soils (Helm 1998; CDFW 2020a). Critical habitat for VPFS is located over 2 miles away from the Action Area to the north, northeast, and east (USFWS 2020). There are no vernal pools or other suitable habitat for VPFS within the Action Area and there is no potential for this species to occur.

2. **California red-legged frog** (*Rana draytonii*; CRLF) is a federally listed threatened species and a California Species of Special Concern. It occurs in California in the Coast Range, Sierras, the Transverse Range and south below 1,200 meters elevation (CDFW 2014, Sousa 2008). The main habitat types for the CRLF are deep, still or slow-moving sources of water in lowlands and foothills with shrubby, riparian, or vegetative shorelines for cover (CDFW 2014, Jennings and Hayes 1994). The most suitable vegetation types for cover are cattails (*Typha sp.*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) and bulrushes (*Scirpus sp.*) (Jennings and Hayes 1994). Along with its aquatic habitat, the CRLF also utilizes upland habitat for seeking food,

shelter and as migration corridors between breeding and non-breeding sites. Bulger et al. (2003) found that during dry summer months, CRLF were nearly always within 5 meters of a pond; however during summer rain events and early winter rains, frogs moved up to 130 meters from their ponds, and some frogs even traveled up to 2800 meters to migrate to a different pond. When out of the water the CRLF will shelter under natural or manmade debris and burrow into moist leaf litter or small animal burrows (USFWS 2010). The breeding season for the CRLF is from January to July with a peak in February (CDFW 2014). One major cause of CRLF population decline is the introduction of the bullfrog (*Rana catesbeiana*) which can consume and exhaust CRLF resources (Sousa 2008). There is no suitable habitat for CRLF within the Salinas River itself as the river is too fast-moving when it is flowing, and bullfrogs are abundant within the river. CRLF occur in the tributaries to the river, but not within the river itself. There is no potential for CRLF to occur within the Action Area.

3. **San Joaquin Kit Fox** (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*; SJKF) is federally listed as endangered and state listed as threatened. The SJKF is one of two subspecies of the kit fox, *Vulpes macrotis*, which is the smallest canid species in North America. It is endemic to the San Joaquin Valley and a few adjacent valleys in the central region of California (Cypher et al. 2013). The SJKF is primarily nocturnal and typically occurs in annual grassland or mixed shrub/grassland habitats throughout low, rolling hills and in valleys. They need loose sandy soils in order to dig their burrows and a prey population of black-tailed jackrabbits, rodents, desert cottontails, insects, some birds, reptiles and vegetation (CDFW 2014, CNDDB 2020a). The most suitable habitat for SJKF has low precipitation, sparse vegetation coverage with high densities of kangaroo rats (*Dipodomys spp.*). For the SJKF to succeed in an area it needs large expanses of non-fragmented suitable habitat. This type of habitat is decreasing rapidly by conversion into agricultural land or degraded by urban development (Cypher et al. 2013). There is no suitable habitat within the Action Area for SJKF. There is no potential for SJKF to occur within the Action Area.

Figure 9. California Natural Diversity Database Animal Records



Label	Common Name
1	American badger
2	Atascadero June beetle
3	Golden eagle
4	Least Bell's vireo
5	Lompoc grasshopper
6	Northern California legless lizard
7	Salinas pocket mouse
8	San Joaquin kit fox
9	Tricolored blackbird
10	Vernal pool fairy shrimp
11	Western pond turtle
12	Western spadefoot

Legend

5-Mile Buffer

Action Area (418 acres)

N

0 1 2 Miles

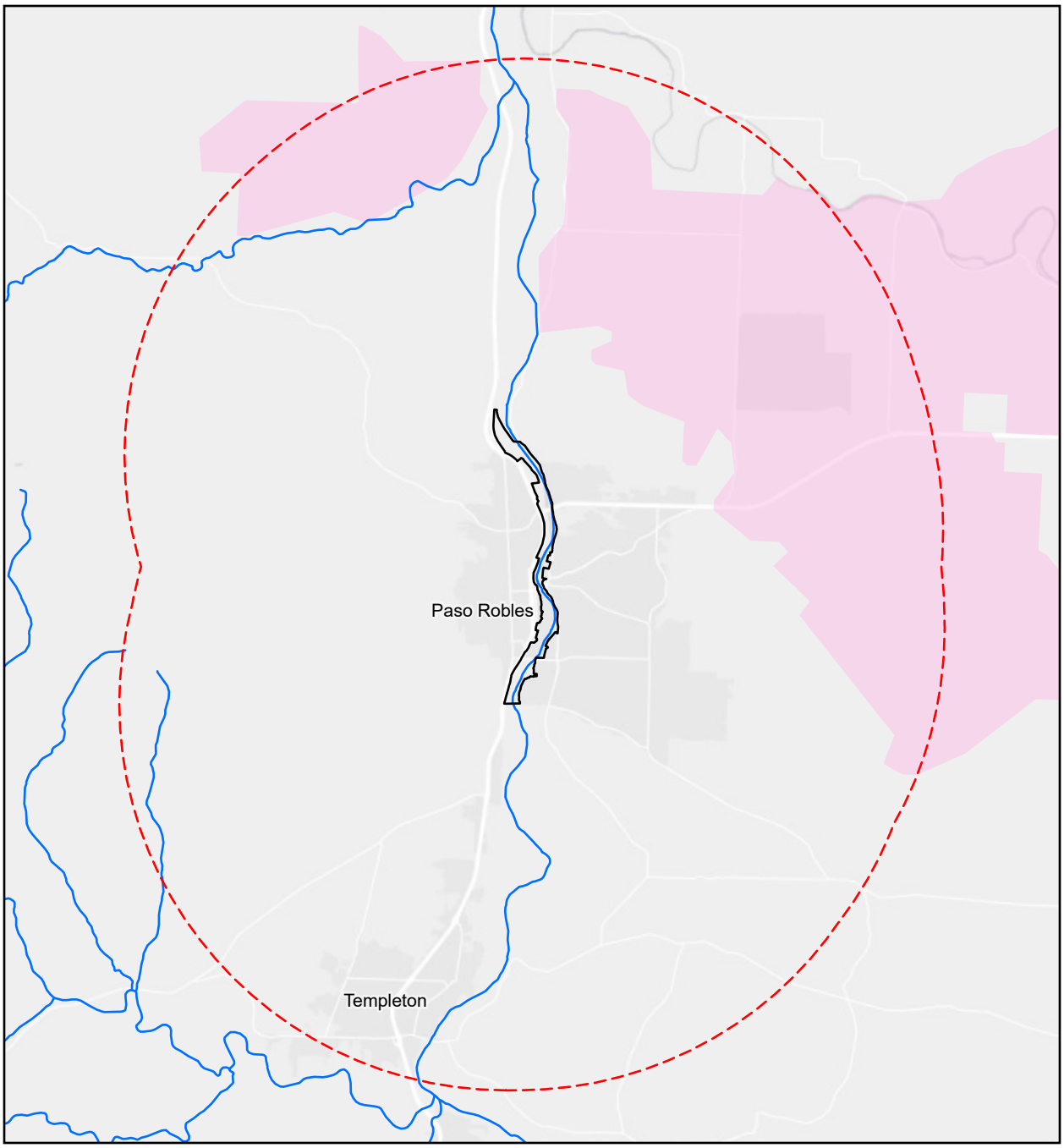
City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68652°W 35.63082°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

CNDDB GIS Data Last Updated: November 2020

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:49 PM by SAF

Figure 10. USFWS and NMFS Critical Habitat



Legend

Action Area (418 acres)

5-Mile Buffer

USFWS Critical Habitat

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp

NMFS Critical Habitat

Steelhead Trout

N

0 1 2 Miles

City of Paso Robles -
Salinas River Vegetation Management
Map Center: 120.68652°W 35.63082°N
Paso Robles, San Luis Obispo County

USFWS/NMFS Critical Habitat Data Last Updated: August 14, 2019

ALTHOUSE AND MEADE, INC.
BIOLOGICAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Map Updated:
January 15, 2021 05:49 PM by SAF

3.6.3 Wildlife Survey Results

A total of 74 wildlife taxa were observed within the Action Area during the 2019 and 2020 surveys; one amphibian, 2 reptiles, 63 birds, and 8 mammals (Appendix E). Six special status species (Western pond turtle, oak titmouse, bald eagle, osprey, yellow warbler, and Lawrence's goldfinch) were observed in the Action Area during surveys.

A wide variety of native birds and mammals were observed in riparian habitat throughout the Action Area. Raptors such as red-tailed hawk, bald eagle, and osprey, the latter of which was observed carrying a large fish, were observed foraging over the Salinas River. Oak woodland supported a variety of birds and wildlife including acorn woodpecker, oak titmouse, Lawrence's goldfinch, white-breasted nuthatch and western gray squirrel. Beaver dams were observed in the central and northern part of the Action Area, including in the large pond east of the hot spring, and beaver sign including a skull was observed in riparian habitat. Western pond turtles were observed in the Salinas River in the central and northern part of the Action Area. Black-tailed jackrabbits and brush rabbit were observed in riparian habitat.

3.6.4 Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Movement

Wildlife corridors and habitat connectivity are important for the movement of wildlife between different populations and habitats.

Wildlife movement corridors are defined as areas that connect suitable wildlife habitat areas in a region otherwise fragmented by rugged terrain, changes in vegetation, or human disturbance. Natural features such as canyon drainages, ridgelines, or areas with vegetation cover provide corridors for wildlife travel. Wildlife movement corridors are important because they provide access to mates, food, and water; allow the dispersal of individuals away from high population density areas; and facilitate the exchange of genetic traits between populations (Beier and Loe 1992). Wildlife movement corridors are considered sensitive by resource and conservation agencies.

The Salinas River is a central wildlife corridor through the City of Paso Robles, and provides important cover within riparian habitat for birds and animals to move freely up and down the river. The Salinas River functions as a significant regional wildlife corridor.

4 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ANALYSIS AND MITIGATION

The Project entails vegetation management for the purpose of fire fuel reduction. As discussed in Section 1.4, vegetation management will be focused in areas on the east and west sides of the riparian corridor and in firebreaks crossing east-west across the corridor under road bridges, primarily in and around areas where maintenance occurred in 2019 and 2020 (Figure 3). Vegetation maintenance will avoid as much as possible potentially sensitive habitat including the wetted channel, riparian vegetation associated with wetted channels, wetlands, and surface water.

There are eight types of habitats present within the 418-acre Action Area: mature riparian, agricultural, annual grassland, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, developed, and marsh purslane wetland. Vegetation maintenance is likely to occur in mature riparian, annual grassland, and oak woodland habitats. Vegetation maintenance activities are unlikely to occur in agricultural, riverwash, wetted channel, developed, and marsh purslane wetland habitats. However, the Salinas River is a dynamic system, and as the course of the river changes from year to year, vegetation maintenance in these areas may occasionally be necessary.

The proposed Project has potential to affect other sensitive biological resources, including nesting birds, special status mammals, reptiles, and fish, and special status plants. Mitigation measures are recommended to reduce potential impacts to sensitive biological resources. This section provides mitigation recommendations (BIO) designed to reduce impacts to biological resources onsite, as summarized by Table 6.

TABLE 6. IMPACTS AND MITIGATIONS SUMMARY

Biological Resource	Level of Significance	Recommended Mitigation Measures
Wetted channel and marsh purslane wetland	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-1
Mature riparian	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-2 through BIO-5
Agriculutural	Less than Significant	N/A
Annual grassland	Less than Significant	N/A
Riverwash	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-2 through BIO-5
Oak woodland	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-2 through BIO-5
Developed	Less than Significant	N/A
Special Status Plants	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-6
Nesting Birds	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-7
Special Status Animals	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-8 through BIO-15
Habitat Connectivity	Less than Significant with Mitigation Incorporated	BIO-1 through BIO-5

4.1 Habitats

There are eight types of habitats present within the Action Area: mature riparian, agricultural, annual grassland, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, developed, and marsh purslane wetland. The proposed Project could temporarily affect all of those habitat types via vegetation trimming. Mitigation is not required for impacts to agricultural, annual grassland, and developed habitats that do not support special status species. Temporary impacts in the form of vegetation trimming could potentially occur to mature riparian, riverwash, wetted channel, oak woodland, and marsh purslane wetland, which would require mitigation. Temporary impacts to low-growing and/or herbaceous vegetation outside the low-flow channel will not be mitigated. This includes predominantly non-native annual grasses and weedy forbs which comprise light flashy fuels, and which are most likely to be mowed or grazed. Additionally, treatment of vegetation in upland areas above the floodplain will not be mitigated. The treatment of weedy/herbaceous vegetation and upland vegetation will not adversely affect sensitive species, beneficial uses, or water quality, and therefore do not merit mitigation.

4.1.1 Wetted Channel and Marsh Purslane Wetland

Temporary impacts in the form of vegetation trimming could possibly occur in the wetted channel or marsh purslane wetland, although vegetation management activities will avoid these habitats whenever feasible. The following mitigation measure is recommended to reduce potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on native vegetation within the wetted channel and marsh purslane wetland.

BIO - 1 Impacts due to trimmed native vegetation within the wetted channel and marsh purslane wetland (i.e., in the low-flow channel; see Section 3.4) shall be mitigated through on-site riparian habitat restoration at a 1:1 ratio. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent.

4.1.2 Mature Riparian, Riverwash, and Oak Woodland

Temporary impacts in the form of trimming of shrubs and/or trees could occur within mature riparian, riverwash, and oak woodland habitat. The following mitigation measures are recommended to reduce potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on these habitats.

BIO - 2 Impacts due to trimmed native vegetation within the low-flow channel (see Section 3.4) shall be mitigated through on-site habitat restoration at a 1:1 ratio. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent.

BIO - 3 Impacts to tree and shrubs (as measured by area of canopy trimmed) within the active channel of the Salinas River (see Section 3.4) shall be mitigated through habitat restoration, and/or the removal of non-native vegetation (i.e., tree of heaven or giant reed) and/or the removal of trash at a 1:1 ratio. Mitigation sites will be located on City property and/or properties protected from development in perpetuity, and will be located along the Salinas River, its floodplain, and/or its tributaries. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent. Removed non-native trees and giant reed must

show no sign of resprouting three years after removal. Trash removal would occur in and around encampments of unhoused people, preferentially in the active channel.

BIO - 4 Impacts to tree and shrubs (as measured by area of canopy trimmed) within the floodplain of the Salinas River (see Section 3.4) shall be mitigated through habitat restoration, and/or the removal of non-native vegetation (i.e., tree of heaven or giant reed) and/or the removal of trash at a 0.5:1 ratio. Mitigation sites will be located on City property and/or properties protected from development in perpetuity, and will be located along the Salinas River, its floodplain, and/or its tributaries. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent. Removed non-native trees and giant reed must show no sign of resprouting three years after removal. Trash removal would occur in and around encampments of unhoused people.

BIO - 5 The removal of any native trees or shrubs 4 inches or greater in diameter at breast height (dbh) shall be mitigated by replacing those trees and shrubs in kind at a 3:1 ratio (trees planted to trees removed) and a revegetation plan will be prepared and submitted to agencies (RWQCB, CDFW) for approval. All replacement plants will be monitored and maintained for a minimum of five years to ensure a minimum survival rate of 70 percent.

4.2 Potential Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters

Potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waters occur in the Action Area. Only temporary impacts in the form of vegetation trimming would occur within these areas; no ground disturbance, fill, or permanent impacts would occur. Temporary impacts to vegetation within jurisdictional wetlands and waters would be reduced and mitigated by implementing measures BIO-1 though BIO-5 above.

A formal wetland delineation will be necessary if future Project activities are proposed that may result in the fill of aquatic features. Wetland delineations should be conducted according to state and federal standards to determine the extent of Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 404 wetlands and waters under jurisdiction of the United States Army Corps of Engineers and Section 401 waters and wetlands under jurisdiction of the State Water Resource Control Board.

4.3 Botanical Resources

4.3.1 Oak Trees

Temporary impacts to oak trees may occur via vegetation trimming. Temporary impacts to oaks would be mitigated via implementation of BIO-2 through BIO-4 above. Removal of oak trees is not planned, but could potentially occur depending on fuel management requirements. Trimming or removal of oak trees is regulated by the City of Paso Robles oak tree preservation ordinance (El Paso de Robles Municipal Code 10.01.010) that specifies standards and mitigation.

4.3.2 Special Status Plants

Special status plants were not detected within the Action Area, but potential habitat exists for five special status plant species, and botanical surveys were conducted outside the bloom period for all

potential species except elegant buckwheat. Temporary impacts to special status plants could occur via vegetation management activities including mowing or grazing. The following mitigation measure is recommended to avoid potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on special status plants:

BIO - 6 Prior to vegetation management activities, sensitive plant surveys shall be conducted within proposed work areas that contain potential habitat for sensitive plants. If surveys do not locate sensitive plants, project activities may be conducted. If sensitive plants are located, the location of the plants shall be mapped and flagged in the field, and no vegetation trimming shall occur within an 25 foot radius of the plant(s). If grazing is proposed in the location of the sensitive plant(s), browse cages or other grazing exclosures shall be erected around the plant(s) to protect it from grazing.

4.4 Wildlife Resources

4.4.1 Nesting Birds

Impacts to or take of nesting birds could occur if vegetation management is conducted during nesting season (March 1 through August 31). To reduce potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on nesting birds, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 7 Within one week of vegetation management activities, if work occurs between March 1 and August 31, nesting bird surveys shall be conducted. If surveys do not locate nesting birds, project activities may be conducted. If nesting birds are located, no project activities shall occur within 250 feet of non-raptor nests or 500 feet of raptor nests until chicks are fledged. A pre-activity survey report shall be submitted to the lead agency immediately upon completion of the survey. The report shall detail appropriate fencing or flagging of the buffer zone and make recommendations on additional monitoring requirements. A map of the Project site and nest locations shall be included with the report. The Project biologist conducting the nesting survey shall have the authority to reduce the recommended buffer depending upon site conditions.

4.4.2 Special Status Birds

Several species of special status birds could occur within the Action Area (great-blue heron, oak titmouse, bald eagle, yellow warbler, Lawrence's goldfinch, osprey, and least Bell's vireo). If these species nest within the Action Area, impacts could occur if vegetation management is conducted during nesting season (March 1 through August 31). In addition to implementing BIO-7 above, to further reduce and minimize potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on nesting special status birds, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 8 Occupied nests of special status non-raptor bird species that are within 250 feet of project work areas or nests of special status raptor species within 500 feet of work areas shall be monitored at least weekly through the nesting season to document nest success and check for project compliance with buffer zones. Once nests are deemed inactive and/or chicks have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest, work may commence in these areas. Nest monitoring shall no longer be necessary once project activities are completed within the vicinity of the nest.

To avoid impacts to the federally-listed least Bell's vireo, the following mitigation measure is recommended:

BIO - 9 Project maintenance activities within suitable least Bell's vireo (LBV) habitat along the Salinas River shall not be conducted from April 1 through August 31 unless a survey for nesting LBV is completed by a qualified biologist. If a survey is required, suitable LBV habitat shall be surveyed according to the following guidelines, taken from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2001) survey guidelines:

- Surveys shall be conducted between dawn and 11:00 am and shall not be conducted during inclement weather.
- Surveyors should not survey more than 3 linear kilometers or more than 50 hectares of LBV habitat on any given survey day.
- All LBV detections shall be recorded and mapped, and data pertaining to vireo breeding status and distribution shall be noted and recorded.
- The numbers and locations of all brown-headed cowbirds detected within LBV territories shall be recorded and reported.
- Survey results shall be provided to CDFW prior to commencing any Project-related activities in the Salinas River. Any and all LBV detections shall be reported to USFWS as soon as possible.

If no LBV are found after the initial survey, no further action is required. If LBV are observed within the proposed work area, the following steps shall be taken:

- If LBV are detected but nesting is not confirmed, project-related activities in potential LBV habitat shall be monitored by a qualified biologist. If a LBV is observed within the work area, project activities shall halt and no further work shall occur within that area.
- Further LBV surveys shall be conducted within suitable habitat according to the timing described in the USFWS protocol.
- If any LBV nesting activity is found, nests and nest trees shall be designated an Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) and protected with a minimum 500-foot ESA buffer during any Project-related activities. Project activities shall not commence within the ESA buffer until the young have fledged and are no longer reliant on the nest site or parental care, as determined by a qualified biologist and confirmed in writing by CDFW.

4.4.3 Special Status Reptiles

There is potential for rare reptiles to occur within the Action Area, including Northern California legless lizard, coast horned lizard, and Western pond turtle. Species specific mitigation measures are discussed below.

4.4.3.1 Legless Lizards

Northern California legless lizards may be present within the Action Area. No ground-disturbing activities are proposed as part of vegetation maintenance activities, but legless lizards could be harmed by being run over by motorized equipment or impacted by prescribed burns. To avoid and

minimize potential impacts to legless lizards due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 10 A focused pre-activity survey for legless lizards shall be conducted where potentially impactful project activities (use of motorized equipment, prescribed burn) will be conducted in potentially suitable habitat, as determined by the project biologist. The preconstruction survey shall be conducted by a qualified biologist familiar with legless lizard ecology and survey methods, and with approval from CDFW to relocate legless lizards out of harm's way. The scope of the survey shall be determined by a qualified biologist and shall be sufficient to determine presence or absence in the work areas. Loose substrate in which lizards could bury themselves shall be gently raked with a hand tool to a depth of 2 inches to locate any lizards that could be under the surface. If the focused survey results are negative, no further action shall be required. If legless lizards are found to be present in the proposed work areas, they shall be captured by hand by the project biologist and relocated to an appropriate location at least 100 feet upstream or downstream and outside the work areas. A letter report shall be submitted to CDFW within 30 days of legless lizard relocation, or as directed by CDFW.

4.4.3.2 Coast Horned Lizard

Coast horned lizards may be present within the Action Area in sandy washes. They could be harmed by being run over by motorized equipment, or impacted by prescribed burns. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to horned lizards due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 11 A pre-activity survey for coast horned lizard shall be conducted where potentially impactful project activities (use of motorized equipment, prescribed burn) will be conducted in potentially suitable habitat, as determined by the project biologist. Surveys shall take place immediately prior to project activities. The survey should be conducted on foot by a qualified biologist with approval from CDFW to relocate horned lizards out of harm's way. If the survey results are negative, no further action shall be required. If horned lizards are found to be present in the work areas, they shall be captured by hand by the project biologist and relocated to an appropriate location well outside the project areas. A letter report shall be submitted to CDFW within 30 days of horned lizard relocation, or as directed by CDFW.

4.4.3.3 Western Pond Turtle

Western pond tutles are known to occur within the Action Area in areas of perennial water, including the Salinas River and ponds. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to pond turtles due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 12 A pre-activity survey shall be conducted within 48 hours prior to starting work within 100 feet of habitats likely to support western pond turtle such as ponds, wetlands with standing water, or wetted channels, as determined by the project biologist. The survey would be conducted by a qualified biologist approved by CDFW to relocate pond turtles should they occur. If the survey results are negative, no further action shall be required. If pond turtles are located during the pre-activity survey, they shall be captured by hand by the project biologist and relocated to suitable habitat upstream or

downstream of the work area. A letter report shall be submitted to CDFW within 30 days of pond turtle relocation, or as directed by CDFW.

4.4.4 Special Status Mammals

There is potential for special status mammals to occur within the Action Area, including pallid bat, hoary bat, and Monterey dusky-footed woodrat. Potential impacts and mitigation measures are discussed below.

4.4.4.1 Special Status Bats

Pallid bats may occur in the Action Area under bridges and in hollows of large trees. Hoary bats have potential to roost in the foliage or hollows of medium to large trees within the Action Area in mature riparian and oak woodland habitats, including cottonwoods, red willows, and oaks. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to bats due to proposed Project activities, the following measure is recommended:

BIO - 13 Within two weeks of vegetation management activities, a pre-activity survey for roosting bats shall be conducted within proposed work areas containing potential roosting habitat. If surveys do not locate roosting bats, project activities may be conducted. If bat roosting is found, roosts shall be protected with a flagged 25-foot no-disturbance buffer. The Project biologist conducting the nesting survey shall have the authority to reduce the recommended buffer depending upon site conditions.

4.4.4.2 Woodrats

Monterey dusky-footed woodrats may be present within the Action Area in forested areas with dense understory. Project activities such as brush-thinning have the potential to impact woodrat nests. To avoid and minimize potential impacts to woodrats due to proposed Project activities, the following mitigation measure is recommended.

BIO - 14 A pre-activity survey shall be conducted within proposed work areas to locate woodrat nests. The survey shall be conducted within 30 days of starting any vegetation removal. If a woodrat nest is located in a proposed work area, the project biologist may dismantle the nest using hand tools in such a manner as to allow any inhabitants to escape into adjacent open space areas. Alternatively, if the nest is in a location where it may be safely left in place without increasing fire risk, protective fencing may be installed under the direction of a project biologist in a manner sufficient to protect the nest from vegetation maintenance equipment.

4.4.5 Steelhead

Steelhead are known to occur within the Salinas River within the Action Area. Temporary impacts to steelhead habitat may occur via loss of shade over the channel due to vegetation trimming. These impacts will be mitigated via implementation of BIO-1 through BIO-3 (see Section 4.1). In addition to implementing those mitigation measures, to further reduce and minimize potential adverse effects of the proposed Project on steelhead, the following measure is recommended.

BIO - 15 Project activities shall only be completed when work areas are naturally dry. No Project activities will occur within the wetted channel. No sediment removal shall occur

in the Salinas River, and vegetation trimming or removal shall not result in the creation of pits on the river bed or bank.

4.4.6 Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Movement

Temporary impacts to habitat connectivity and wildlife movement within the Action Area could occur due to vegetation maintenance activities. Temporary impacts to habitat connectivity and wildlife movement would be mitigated via implementation of BIO-1 through BIO-5 above.

5 REFERENCES

Baker, R.J., L.C. Bradley, R.D. Bradley, J.W. Dragoo, M.D. Engstrom, R.S. Hoffmann, C.A. Jones, F. Reid, D.W. Rice, and C. Jones. 2003. Revised Checklist of North American Mammals North of Mexico. Museum of Texas Tech University, "Occasional Papers", Number 229. December 1, 2003. Accessed online at: http://www.pugetsound.edu/files/resources/4311_OP229.pdf.

Baldwin BG, Goldman DH, Keil DJ, Patterson R, Rosatti TJ, Dieter H. Wilken DH, editors. 2012. The Jepson manual: vascular plants of California. 2nd ed. Berkeley (CA): UC Press.

Beier, P. and Loe, S. 1992. A Checklist for Evaluating Impacts to Wildlife Movement Corridors. Wildlife Society Bulletin. 20: 434-440.

Bolster BC. 2005. Lasiurus cinereus, hoary bat. In: Western Bat Working Group, developed for 1998 Reno Biennial Meeting, updated at the 2005 Portland Biennial Meeting.

Brown BT. 1993. Bell's vireo (Vireo bellii). Poole A, Stettenheim P, Gill F, editors. The Birds of North America Online. doi:10.2173/bna.35. [accessed 2020 December 18]. https://birdsna.org/Species-Account/bna/species/belvir/introduction.

Bulger JB, Scott Jr NJ, Seymour RB. 2003. Terrestrial activity and conservation of adult California red-legged frogs Rana aurora draytonii in coastal forests and grasslands. Biological conservation. 110(1):85–95.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Interagency Wildlife Task Group. 2014. CWHR version 9.0 personal computer program. Sacramento, CA.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2020a. California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) - Commercial. [accessed 2020 November 9].

[CDFW] 2020b. BIOS. California Natural Diversity Database. Version 5.89.14c.

[CDFW] 2020c. California Sensitive Natural Community List [Internet]. Sacramento (CA): California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Available from https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=153609&inline. Accessed June 2020.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Diversity Database. 2020d. Special vascular plants, bryophytes, and lichens list, periodic publication [Internet]. Sacramento (CA): California Department of Fish and Wildlife. February 2020. Available from http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/list.html.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Natural Diversity Database. 2020e. Special animals list, periodic publication [Internet]. Sacramento (CA): California Department of Fish and Wildlife. July 2020. Available from http://www.dfg.ca.gov/wildlife/nongame/list.html

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Diversity Database. 2019b. California Natural Community List [Internet]. Sacramento (CA): California Department of Fish and Wildlife. November 8, 2019. Available from https://wildlife.ca.gov/Data/VegCAMP/Natural-Communities.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2018a. Guidelines for assessing the effects of proposed projects on rare, threatened, and endangered plants and natural communities. 2nd ed. Revised May 8, 2000.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife. 2018b. Protocols for surveying and evaluating impacts to special status native plant populations and natural communities. California Department of Fish and Wildlife. March 20, 2018. Available from: https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=18959&inline.

[CDFW] California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Interagency Wildlife Task Group. 2014. CWHR version 9.0 personal computer program. Sacramento, CA.[CNPS] California Native Plant Society, Rare Plant Program. 2020. Inventory of rare and endangered plants of California. Sacramento (CA): California Native Plant Society; [online edition, v8-03 0.39]. Available from http://www.rareplants.cnps.org. Accessed 2020 November 9.

[CNPS] California Native Plant Society. 2001. CNPS botanical survey guidelines [Internet]. Sacramento (CA): California Native Plant Society. Revised June 2, 2001. Available from https://www.cnps.org/plant-science/field-protocols-guidelines.

[Cal-IPC] California Invasive Plant Council. 2017. The Cal-IPC Inventory 2017 Update. Accessed online: https://www.cal-ipc.org/plants/inventory/.

Chesser, R.T., K.J. Burns, C. Cicero, J.L. Dunn, A.W. Kratter, I.J. Lovette, P.C. Rasmussen, J.V. Remsen, Jr., D.F. Stotz, and K. Winker. 2019. Check-list of North American Birds (online). American Ornithological Society. http://checklist.americanornithology.org/taxa.

City of Paso Robles. 2019. Community Wildfire Protection Plan. City of Paso Robles. July 2019. Available from: https://www.prcity.com/DocumentCenter/View/27847/Final-Version-CWPP.

City of Paso Robles. 2002. Municipal Code, Chapter 10.01 – Oak Tree Preservation. Ordinance 835 N.S. (part), 2002.

[CCH] Consortium of California Herbaria [Internet] 2020. Berkeley (CA): Regents of the University of California; [accessed November 9, 2020]. Available from http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium/.

Cypher BL, Phillips SE, Kelly PA. 2013. Quantity and distribution of suitable habitat for endangered San Joaquin kit foxes: conservation implications. Canid Biology and Conservation. 16:25–31.

eBird. 2020. eBird: An online database of bird distribution and abundance [web application]. eBird, Cornell Lab of Ornithology, Ithaca, New York. Available: http://www.ebird.org. (Accessed: December 21, 2020).

Gerson MM. 2011. Population status and habitat affinities of the Blainville's horned lizard (Phrynosoma blainvillii) at a site in the Northern San Joaquin Valley, California. Herpetological Conservation and Biology. 6(2):228–236.

Helm BP. 1998. Biogeography of eight large branchiopods endemic to California. Sacramento, CA: Ecology, conservation, and management of vernal pool ecosystems. California Native Plant Society.

Hickman JC, editor. 1993. The Jepson manual: higher plants of California. Berkeley (CA): UC Press 1374 p.

Jennings MR, Hayes MP. 1994. Amphibian and reptile species of special concern in California. California Department of Fish and Game, Inland Fisheries Division Rancho Cordova.

Jepson Flora Project (eds.). 2019. Jepson eFlora. [accessed November 18, 2019]. http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/eflora/.

Kuhnz LA, Burton RK, Slattery PN, Oakden JM. 2005. Microhabitats and population densities of California legless lizards, with comments on effectiveness of various techniques for estimating numbers of fossorial reptiles. Journal of herpetology.:395–402.

Laudenslayer WF. 2007. Species notes for coast horned lizard (Phrynosoma coronatum): California wildlife habitat relationships (CWHR) system level II model prototype. California Department of Fish and Game, California Interagency Wildlife Task Group.

NatureServe. 2021. NatureServe Explorer [web application] search of Neotoma macrotis luciana. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia. Available https://explorer.natureserve.org/. (Accessed: December 18, 2020).

Nowak RM, Walker EP, Kunz TH, Pierson ED. 1994. Walker's bats of the world. Baltimore, MD: JHU Press.

Pearse DE, Pogson GH. 2000. Parallel evolution of the melanic form of the California legless lizard, Anniella pulchra, inferred from mitochondrial DNA sequence variation. Evolution. 54(3):1041–1046.

Pierson ED, Rainey WE, Miller RM. 1996. Night roost sampling: a window on the forest bat community in northern California. In: Bats and forests symposium. Victoria, British Columbia: (Barclay R. M. R. Brigham R. M., eds.). Research Branch, Ministry of Forests, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. p. 151–163.

Pilliod DS, Welty JL, Stafford R. 2013. Terrestrial movement patterns of western pond turtles (Actinemys marmorata) in central California. Herpetological Conservation and Biology. 8(1):207–221

Reese DA, Welsh HH. 1997. Use of terrestrial habitat by western pond turtles (Clemmys marmorata): implications for management. In: Pages 352-357 in Proceedings: Conservation, Restoration, and Management of Turtles and Tortoises. An International Conference. New York Turtle and Tortoise Society.

Sawyer J, Keeler-Wolf T, Evens J. 2009. A manual of California vegetation. 2nd ed. Sacramento (CA): California Native Plant Society Press 1300p.

Shuford WD, Gardali T, editors. 2008. California bird species of special concern 2006: A ranked assessment of species, subspecies, and distinct populations of birds of immediate conservation concern in California. Camarillo and Sacramento (CA): Western Field Ornithologists and California Department of Fish and Game 65 p.

Slobodchikoff CN, Doyen JT. 1977. Effects of Ammophila arenaria on sand dune arthropod communities. Ecology. 58(5):1171–1175. doi:10.2307/1936939. [accessed 2018 Aug 8]. https://esajournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.2307/1936939.

Sousa CL. 2008. Monitoring of the California red-legged frog, Rana aurora draytonii, within properties of the Los Baños Wildlife Area Complex. California Department of Fish and Game.

Thelander, C. G. 1973. Bald eagle reproduction in California, 1972-1973. Calif. Dept. Fish and Game, Sacramento. Wildl. Manage. Branch Admin. Rep. 73-5. 17pp.

[USACE] Department of the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Defense, and Environmental Protection Agency (US). 2020. The Navigable Waters Protection Rule: Definition of "Waters of the United States". Federal Register (US); [cited 2020 Apr 21]. Available from https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2020/04/21/2020-02500/the-navigable-waters-protection-rule-definition-of-waters-of-the-united-states.

[USDA] Soil Survey Staff, Natural Resources Conservation Service. United States Department of Agriculture. 2020. Web Soil Survey. Available from http://websoilsurvey.nrcs.usda.gov/. Accessed October 30, 2020.

[USDA] United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS). 2019. Soil Survey Area of San Luis Obispo County, California, Paso Robles Area. Survey Area Data, Version 14. May 29, 2020.

[USDA] National Agriculture Imagery Program. 2020. Aerial photomosaic of San Luis Obispo County [Internet]. Washington (DC): United States Department of Agriculture (USDA); Available from https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/aerial-photography/index.

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2020. USFWS Threatened & Endangered Species Active Critical Habitat Report. Available online at https://ecos.fws.gov/ecp/report/table/critical-habitat.html. Accessed November 10, 2020.

[USFWS] US Fish and Wildlife Service. 2010. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; revised designation of critical habitat for the California red-legged frog. Sacramento, CA: Federal Register 50 CFR Part 17. [accessed 2020 December 18]. https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2010-03-17/pdf/2010-4656.pdf#page=2

[USFWS] US Fish and Wildlife Service. 2006. Least Bell's Vireo (*Vireo bellii pusillus*) 5-Year Review. Carlsbad, California.

[USFWS] US Fish and Wildlife Service. 2003. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; final designation of critical habitat for four vernal pool crustaceans and eleven vernal pool plants in California and southern Oregon: final rule. Federal Register. 68(151):46683–46867.

[USFWS] U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. 2000. Guidelines for conducting and reporting botanical inventories for federally listed, proposed, and candidate plants. Washington (DC): U.S. Fish and Wildlife. January 2000. Available from: https://www.fws.gov/ventura/docs/species/protocols/botanicalinventories.pdf.

[USFWS] US Fish and Wildlife Service. 1994. Endangered and threatened wildlife and plants; Designation of critical habitat for the least Bell's vireo. Federal Register. 59(22).

Wilson DE, Ruff S. 1999. The smithsonian book of North America mammals. Washington, DC: Smithosonian Institution Press.

6 APPENDICES

- **Appendix A. Assessor's Parcel Numbers**
- **Appendix B. Special Status Plants Reported from the Region**
- **Appendix C. Special Status Animals Reported from the Region**
- **Appendix D. Vascular Plant List**
- **Appendix E. Wildlife List**

APPENDIX A. ASSESSOR'S PARCEL NUMBERS

008-021-006	008-297-006	009-171-004	009-302-001	009-813-004	025-501-004
008-021-008	009-052-001	009-171-005	009-302-001	009-813-008	025-501-006
008-022-001	009-054-002	009-213-004	009-511-001	009-814-008	025-501-007
008-022-002	009-054-003	009-213-005	009-511-002	009-814-011	025-501-008
008-051-002	009-054-006	009-213-009	009-511-016	009-814-013	025-501-009
008-051-004	009-113-008	009-213-010	009-511-029	018-011-025	025-501-010
008-051-026	009-113-009	009-214-002	009-513-051	020-241-056	025-501-011
008-142-007	009-113-010	009-271-002	009-515-001	020-311-033	025-501-012
008-191-013	009-114-009	009-272-010	009-515-023	025-390-003	025-501-014
008-252-013	009-115-001	009-272-011	009-761-001	025-392-003	025-501-015
008-261-002	009-116-008	009-272-014	009-761-044	025-392-005	025-501-016
008-261-006	009-117-001	009-301-001	009-775-040	025-392-012	025-501-017
008-262-006	009-161-020	009-301-002	009-811-003	025-501-001	025-541-001
008-297-003	009-161-021	009-301-003	009-811-004	025-501-002	
008-297-005	009-161-026	009-301-005	009-813-003	025-501-003	

APPENDIX B. SPECIAL STATUS PLANTS REPORTED FROM THE REGION

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
1.	**Bristlecone Fir**	*Abies bracteata*	-/- G2G3/S2S3 1B.3		Steep, rocky, fire-resistant slopes, generally in canyon-live-oak phase of mixed-evergreen forest	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
2.	**Hoover's Bent Grass**	*Agrostis hooveri*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Apr-Jul	Dry sandy soils, open chaparral, oak woodland. <600 m.	None. Not known to occur in eastern San Luis Obispo County
3.	**Douglas' Fiddleneck**	*Amsinckia douglasiana*	-/- G4/S4 4.2	Mar-May	Valley and foothill grassland. Dry habitats with unstable shaly sedimentary slopes. 150-1600 m.	None. Suitable soils not present within Action Area.
4.	**Oval-Leaved Snapdragon**	*Antirrhinum ovatum*	-/- G3/S3 4.2	May-Nov	Heavy, adobe-clay soils on gentle, open slopes, also disturbed areas	None. Suitable soils not present within Action Area.
5.	**Hoover's Manzanita**	*Arctostaphylos hooveri*	-/- G3/S3 4.3	Feb-Jun	Rocky slopes, upland chaparral, open ponderosa-pine forest near coast	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
6.	**Bishop Manzanita**	*Arctostaphylos obispoensis*	-/- G3/S3 4.3	Feb-Jun	Chaparral, open closed-cone forest near coast. Rocky, generally serpentine soils.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
7.	**Indian Valley Spineflower**	*Aristocapsa insignis*	-/- G1/S1 1B.2	May-Sep	Sandy soil in pine-oak or juniper woodlands.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
8.	**Salinas Milk-Vetch**	*Astragalus macrodon*	-/- G4/S4 4.3	Apr-Jul	Eroded pale shales or sandstone, serpentine alluvium	None. Suitable soil not present within Action Area.
9.	**La Panza Mariposa Lily**	*Calochortus simulans*	-/- G2/S2 1B.3	Apr-Jun	Valley and foothill grassland, coniferous woodland, chaparral. Decomposed granitic sand, sometimes serpentine.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
10.	**Dwarf Calycadenia**	*Calycadenia villosa*	-/- G3/S3 1B.1	May-Oct	Dry, rocky hills, ridges, grassland, openings in foothill woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
11.	**Hardham's Evening-Primrose**	*Camissoniopsis hardhamiae*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Mar-May	Sandy soil, limestone, disturbed oak woodland	**Moderate**. Documented in river floodplain near Camp Roberts.
12.	**San Luis Obispo Owl's-Clover**	*Castilleja densiflora var. obispoensis*	-/- G5T2/S2 1B.2	Mar-May	Coastal grassland. Often serpentine soil. <400 m.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
13.	**Lemmon's Jewelflower**	*Caulanthus lemmonii*	-/- G3/S3 1B.2	Feb-May	Grassland, chaparral, scrub	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
14.	**Lompoc Ceanothus**	*Ceanothus cuneatus var. fascicularis*	-/- G5T4/S4 4.2	Feb-Apr	Coastal chaparral. Sandy substrates. <275 m.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
15.	**Santa Lucia Purple Amole**	*Chlorogalum purpureum var. purpureum*	FT/- G2T2/S2 1B.1	Apr-Jun	Open woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
16.	**Douglas' Spineflower**	*Chorizanthe douglasii*	-/- G4/S4 4.3	Apr-Jul	Sandy soils, usually in areas of sandstone or granite	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
17.	**Palmer's Spineflower**	*Chorizanthe palmeri*	-/- G4/S4 4.2	Apr-Aug	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, grassland. Clay soils, generally in areas of serpentine or partially serpentinized igneous rock. 60-700 m.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
18.	**Straight-Awned Spineflower**	*Chorizanthe rectispina*	-/- G2/S2 1B.3	Apr-Jul	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub. In sand or disintegrating shale, often on granite. 200-600 m.	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
19.	**Monkey-Flower Savory**	*Clinopodium mimuloides*	-/- G3/S3 4.2	Jun-Oct	Moist places, streambanks, chaparral, woodland	None. Only known to occur rarely in Santa Lucia Range creeks.
20.	**Small-Flowered Morning-Glory**	*Convolvulus simulans*	-/- G4/S4 4.2	Mar-Jul	Clay substrates, occasionally serpentine, annual grassland, coastal-sage scrub, chaparral	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
21.	**Eastwood's Larkspur**	*Delphinium parryi ssp. eastwoodiae*	-/- G4T2/S2 1B.2	Feb-Mar	Uncommon. Coastal chaparral, grassland, on serpentine	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
22.	**Umbrella Larkspur**	*Delphinium umbraculorum*	-/- G3/S3 1B.3	Apr-Jun	Moist oak forest	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
23.	**Yellow-Flowered Eriastrum**	*Eriastrum luteum*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	May-Jun	Drying slopes	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
24.	**Elegant Wild Buckwheat**	*Eriogonum elegans*	-/- G4G5/S4S5 4.3	May-Nov	Sandy to gravelly flats and slopes, mixed grassland communities, oak and pine woodland	**Low.** Potentially suitable habitat occurs within Action Area. However, many local records are misidentified.
25.	**Jepson's Woolly Sunflower**	*Eriophyllum jepsonii*	-/- G3/S3 4.3	Apr-Jun	Dry oak woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
26.	**San Benito Poppy**	*Eschscholzia hypecoides*	-/- G4/S4 4.3	Mar-Jun	Grassy areas in woodland, chaparral	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
27.	**Hogwallow Starfish**	*Hesperevax caulescens*	-/- G3/S3 4.2	Mar-Jun	Declining. Drying shrink-swell clay of vernal pools, flats, steep slopes (sometimes serpentine)	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
28.	**Mesa Horkelia**	*Horkelia cuneata var. puberula*	-/- G4T1/S1 1B.1	Feb-Sep	Dry, sandy, coastal chaparral and oak woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
29.	**Kellogg's Horkelia**	*Horkelia cuneata var. sericea*	-/- G4T1?/S1? 1B.1	Apr-Sep	Old dunes, coastal sandhills	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
30.	**Santa Lucia Dwarf Rush**	*Juncus luciensis*	-/- G3/S3 1B.2	Apr-Jul	Wet, sandy soils of seeps, meadows, vernal pools, streams, roadsides	**Low**. Potentially suitable habitat is present within Action Area
31.	**Jared's Pepper-Grass**	*Lepidium jaredii ssp. jaredii*	-/- G2G3T1T2/S1S2 1B.2	Mar-May	Valley and foothill grassland (alkaline, adobe)	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
32.	**Davidson's Bush-Mallow**	*Malacothamnus davidsonii*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Jun-Jan	Slopes, washes	**Low.** Potentially suitable habitat is present within Study Area.
33.	**Jones' Bush-Mallow**	*Malacothamnus jonesii*	-/- G4/S4 4.3	Mar-Oct	Open chaparral in foothill woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
34.	**Carmel Valley Malacothrix**	*Malacothrix saxatilis var. arachnoidea*	-/- G5T2/S2 1B.2	Mar-Dec	Rocky, open banks, shale outcrops, cliff faces, coastal scrub, chaparral	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
35.	**Oregon Meconella**	*Meconella oregana*	-/- G2G3/S2 1B.1	Mar-Apr	Shaded canyons	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
36.	**Woodland Woolythreads**	*Monolopia gracilens*	-/- G3/S3 1B.2	Feb-Jul	Serpentine grassland, open chaparral, oak woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
37.	**Spreading Navarretia**	*Navarretia fossalis*	FT/- G2/S2 1B.1	Apr-Jun	Vernal pools, ditches	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
38.	**Shining Navarretia**	*Navarretia nigelliformis ssp. radians*	-/- G4T2/S2 1B.2	Mar-Jul	Grassland and cismontane woodland. Often on clay and alkaline sites, sometimes vernal pools. 65-1,000 m.	None. Suitable soils not present within Action Area.
39.	**Prostrate Vernal Pool Navarretia**	*Navarretia prostrata*	-/- G2/S2 1B.1	Apr-Jul	Alkaline vernal pools	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
40.	**Large-Flowered Nemacladus**	*Nemacladus secundiflorus var. secundiflorus*	-/- G3T3?/S3? 4.3	Apr-Jun	Dry, gravelly slopes, often in creek sediments	**Low.** Suitable habitat may be present with Action Area.
41.	**Hooked Popcornflower**	*Plagiobothrys uncinatus*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Apr-May	Chaparral, canyon sides, rocky outcrops, +- fire follower	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.
42.	**San Gabriel Ragwort**	*Senecio astephanus*	-/- G3/S3 4.3	May-Jul	Steep rocky slopes in chaparral/coastal-sage scrub and oak woodland	None. Suitable habitat not present within Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CA Rare Plant Rank	Blooming Period	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
43.	**Santa Cruz Microseris**	*Stebbinsoseris decipiens*	-/- G2/S2 1B.2	Apr-May	Open, sandy, shaly, or serpentine sites, coastal	None. Not known to San Luis Obispo County

For status and rank definitions, see Section 1.6.

APPENDIX C. SPECIAL STATUS ANIMALS REPORTED FROM THE REGION

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
1.	**Tricolored Blackbird**	*Agelaius tricolor*	-/CT G2G3/S1S2 SSC	Requires open water, protected nesting substrate, & foraging area with insect prey near nesting colony.	None. Sufficiently sized open ponded water features with protected nesting substrate such as cattails are not present within the Action Area.
2.	**Northern California Legless Lizard**	*Anniella pulchra*	-/- G3/S3 SSC	Sandy or loose loamy soils under coastal scrub or oak trees. Soil moisture essential.	**High**. Suitable sandy soil under oaks is present in upland areas within the Action Area.
3.	**Pallid Bat**	*Antrozous pallidus*	-/- G5/S3 SSC	Rock crevices, caves, tree hollows, mines, old buildings, and bridges.	**High**. Suitable trees with hollows and multiple potentially suitable bridges are present throughout the Action Area.
4.	**Golden Eagle**	*Aquila chrysaetos*	-/- G5/S3 FP	Nests in large, prominent trees in valley and foothill woodland. Requires adjacent food source.	None. Suitable nesting and foraging habitat are not found in the Action Area.
5.	**Great Blue Heron**	*Ardea herodias*	-/- G5/S4 SA	Rookeries located in tall trees near foraging areas.	**Moderate**. Suitable nesting habitat is present and rookeries are found elsewhere on the Salinas River, but there is a high level of human disturbance within the Action Area.
6.	**Burrowing Owl**	*Athene cunicularia*	-/- G4/S3 SSC	Burrows in squirrel holes in open habitats with low vegetation.	None. Suitable grassland habitat with squirrel burrows is not present within the Action Area.
7.	**Oak Titmouse***	*Baeolophus inornatus*	-/- G4/S4 SA	Nests in cavities in oak woodland habitat. Non-migratory.	**Present**. This species was observed in the Action Area. Suitable nesting habitat in oak woodland and riparian habitat is present within the Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
8.	**Lesser Slender Salamander**	*Batrachoseps minor*	-/- G1/S1 SSC	Inhabits moist locations in forests of mixed oak, tanbark oak, sycamore and laurel above 400 meters (1,300 feet).	None. Suitable forest habitat is not present within the Action Area.
9.	**Crotch Bumble Bee**	*Bombus crotchii*	-/CCE G3G4/S1S2 SA	Open grassland and scrub habitats with abundant native nectar sources.	None. Suitable scrub and grassland habitats are not present within the Action Area.
10.	**Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp**	*Branchinecta lynchi*	FT/- G3/S3 SA	Clear water sandstone depression pools, grassed swale, earth slump, or basalt flow depression pools.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
11.	**Ferruginous Hawk**	*Buteo regalis*	-/- G4/S3S4 WL	Winters locally in open grassland or savannah habitats. More common in interior SLO County than coast.	None. Suitably large open grasslands are not present within the Action Area.
12.	**Townsend's Big-Eared Bat**	*Corynorhinus townsendii*	-/- G3G4/S2 SSC	Caves, buildings, and mine tunnels. Cave-like attics as day roosts. On coast roosts are normally within 100 meters of creeks.	None. Suitable roosting habitat is not present within the Action Area.
13.	**Western Pond Turtle**	*Emys marmorata*	-/- G3G4/S3 SSC	Permanent or semi-permanent streams, ponds, lakes.	**Present**. This species was observed in the Salinas River during site surveys.
14.	**California Horned Lark**	*Eremophila alpestris actia*	-/- G5T4Q/S4 WL	Nests on the ground in open habitats. More common in the interior.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
15.	**Prairie Falcon**	*Falco mexicanus*	-/- G5/S4 WL	Inhabits dry, open terrain. Nests on cliffs near open areas for hunting.	None. Suitable nesting and foraging habitat are not present within the Action Area.

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
16. **Bald Eagle**	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	FD/CE G5/S3 FP	Nests within 1 mile of water in tall live tree with open branches.	**Present**. This species was observed foraging during site surveys. Suitable foraging habitat and potentially suitable nesting habitat are present within the Action Area, though there are no bald eagle nests within more than 5 miles of the Action Area.
17. **Hoary Bat**	*Lasiurus cinereus*	-/- G5/S4 SA	Forages in open habitats or habitat mosaics with trees. Roosts in dense foliage of medium to large trees. Feeds on moths. Requires water.	**High**. There is highly suitable roosting and foraging habitat within the Action Area.
18. **San Joaquin Coachwhip**	*Masticophis flagellum ruddocki*	-/- G5T2T3/S2? SSC	Open, dry, treeless areas, including grasslands and saltbush scrub; takes refuge in burrows and under shaded vegetation	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
19. **Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat**	*Neotoma macrotis luciana*	-/- G5T3/S3 SSC	Variety of habitats with moderate to dense understory vegetation	**Moderate**. Potentially suitable habitat is present within the Action Area in areas with a dense canopy and dense understory vegetation.
20. **Steelhead - South-Central California Coast DPS**	*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 9*	FT/- G5T2Q/S2 SA	Federal listing refers to runs in coastal basins from the Pajaro River south to, but not including, the Santa Maria River.	**High**. Steelhead are known to be present in the Salinas River.
21. **Osprey***	*Pandion haliaetus*	-/- G5/S4 WL	Large nests built in tree-tops within 15 miles of a good fish-producing body of water.	**Present**. This species was observed foraging over the Salinas River. Potential nesting habitat is present in large trees along the river within the Action Area, though the Action Area is outside the known nesting range for this species.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
22.	**Salinas Pocket Mouse**	*Perognathus inornatus psammophilus*	-/- G4T2?/S1 SSC	Annual grassland and desert shrub in Salinas Valley, with friable soils	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
23.	**Coast Horned Lizard**	*Phrynosoma blainvillii*	-/- G3G4/S3S4 SSC	Frequents a wide variety of habitats, most common in lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes.	**Moderate**. Potentially suitable habitat is present in sandy washes within the Salians River channel.
24.	**Atascadero June Beetle**	*Polyphylla nubila*	-/- G1/S1 SA	Known only from sand dunes in Atascadero and San Luis Obispo, San Luis Obispo County.	None. Suitable dune habitat is not present within the Action Area.
25.	**Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog**	*Rana boylii*	-/CCT G3/S3 SSC	Partly shaded, shallow streams and riffles with rocky substrate. Min. 15 weeks for larval development.	None. The Action Area is outside the current range of this species.
26.	**California Red-Legged Frog**	*Rana draytonii*	FT/- G2G3/S2S3 SSC	Lowlands and foothills in or near sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation. Requires 11-20 weeks for larval development.	None. The Salinas River does not provide suitable habitat for this species.
27.	**Yellow Warbler**	*Setophaga petechia*	-/- G5/S3S4 SSC	Frequently found nesting and foraging in willow shrubs and thickets, and in other riparian plants including cottonwoods, sycamores, ash, and alders.	**Present**. This species was observed during site surveys. Suitable nesting habitat is present in riparian habitat in the Action Area.
28.	**Western Spadefoot**	*Spea hammondii*	-/- G3/S3 SSC	Grassland and woodland habitats with vernal pools for breeding. Most of year spent underground.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
29.	**Lawrence's Goldfinch***	*Spinus lawrencei*	-/- G3G4/S3S4 SA	Closely associated with oaks.	**Present**. This species was observed in the Action Area during site surveys. Suitable nesting habitat is present in riparian forest and oak woodland within the Action Area.

	Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal/State Status Global/State Rank CDFW Status	Habitat Preference	Potential to Occur
30.	**California Spotted Owl**	*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*	-/- G3G4T2T3/S3 SSC	Most often found in deep-shaded canyons, on north-facing slopes, and within 300 meters of water.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
31.	**Coast Range Newt**	*Taricha torosa*	-/- G4/S4 SSC	Lives in terrestrial habitats & will migrate over 1 km to breed in ponds, reservoirs & slow moving streams.	None. The Salinas River does not provide suitable habitat for this species.
32.	**American Badger**	*Taxidea taxus*	-/- G5/S3 SSC	Needs friable soils in open ground with abundant food source such as California ground squirrels.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.
33.	**Lompoc Grasshopper**	*Trimerotropis occulens*	-/- G1G2/S1S2 SA	Rocky/gravelly substrates in mixed coastal scrub, grassland, and Bishop pine forest in western Santa Barbara County.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area, and the Action Area is outside the range of this species.
34.	**Least Bell's Vireo**	*Vireo bellii pusillus*	FE/CE G5T2/S2 SA	Riparian habitat, near water or dry streambed, <2000 ft. Nests in willows, mesquite, Baccharis.	**Low**. Suitable riparian habitat is present within the Action Area, but the abundance of brown-headed cowbirds and the distance from the closest known extant breeding population in Ventura County means this species is unlikely to occur.
35.	**San Joaquin Kit Fox**	*Vulpes macrotis mutica*	FE/CT G4T2/S2 SA	Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Needs loose textured sandy soil and prey base.	None. Suitable habitat is not present within the Action Area.

For status and rank definitions, see Section 1.6.

APPENDIX D. VASCULAR PLANT LIST

Scientific Name	Common Name	Cal-IPCI Status	Origin
Ferns - 1 Species			
Azolla filiculoides	Mosquito fern	--	Native
Trees - 10 Species			
Acer negundo	Box-elder	--	Native
Ailanthus altissima	Tree of heaven	Moderate	Introduced
Eucalyptus nicholii	Narrow-leaved peppermint	--	Introduced
Juglans hindsii	Northern California black walnut	--	Native
Platanus racemosa	Western sycamore	--	Native
Populus fremontii	Fremont cottonwood	--	Native
Quercus agrifolia	Coast live oak	--	Native
Quercus lobata	Valley oak	--	Native
Salix exigua	Narrow-leaved willow	--	Native
Salix laevigata	Red willow	--	Native
Shrubs - 7 Species			
Baccharis pilularis	Coyote brush	--	Native
Forestiera pubescens	Desert olive	--	Native
Nicotiana glauca	Tree tobacco	Moderate	Introduced
Rosa californica	California rose	--	Native
Salvia mellifera	Black sage	--	Native
Sambucus nigra subsp. *caerulea*	Blue elderberry	--	Native
Toxicodendron diversilobum	Poison oak	--	Native
Grasses - 6 Species			
Arundo donax	Giant reed	High	Introduced
Avena barbata	Slender wild oat	Moderate	Introduced

Scientific Name	Common Name	Cal-IPCI Status	Origin
Bromus hordeaceus	Soft chess brome	Limited	Introduced
Bromus madritensis subsp. *rubens*	Red top brome	High	Introduced
Polypogon monspeliensis	Annual beardgrass	Limited	Introduced
Stipa miliacea var. *miliacea*	Smilo grass	Limited	Introduced
Forbs - 18 Species			
Artemisia douglasiana	Mugwort	--	Native
Carduus pycnocephalus subsp. *pycnocephalus*	Italian thistle	--	Introduced
Centaurea melitensis	Tocolote	Moderate	Introduced
Centaurea solstitialis	Yellow star thistle	High	Introduced
Cirsium vulgare	Bull thistle	Moderate	Introduced
Conium maculatum	Poison hemlock	Moderate	Introduced
Cyperus difformis	Variable flatsedge	--	Introduced
Heliotropium curassavicum var. *oculatum*	Seaside heliotrope	--	Native
Heterotheca grandiflora	Telegraph weed	--	Native
Hirschfeldia incana	Wild mustard	Moderate	Introduced
Lactuca serriola	Prickly lettuce	--	Introduced
Lemna minor	Duckweed	--	Native
Ludwigia peploides	Marsh purslane	High	Native
Melilotus alba	White sweet clover	--	Introduced
Rumex pulcher	Fiddle dock	--	Introduced
Silybum marianum	Milk thistle	Limited	Introduced
Typha domingensis	Cattail	--	Native
Xanthium strumarium	Cocklebur	--	Native

APPENDIX E. WILDLIFE LIST

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Habitat Type
Amphibians – 1 Species			
American Bullfrog	*Lithobates catesbeianus*	None	Perennial streams, ponds
Reptiles – 2 Species			
Western Pond Turtle	*Emys [=Actinemys] marmorata*	SSC	Lakes, ponds, streams
Coast Range Fence Lizard	*Sceloporus occidentalis bocourtii*	None	Wide range; variety of habitats
Birds – 63 Species			
White-throated Swift	*Aeronautes saxatilis*	None	Nests in cliffs
Red-winged Blackbird	*Agelaius phoeniceus*	None	Marshes, fields
Mallard	*Anas platyrhynchos*	None	Lakes, ponds, streams
California Scrub-jay	*Aphelocoma californica*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Black-chinned Hummingbird	*Archilochus alexandri*	None	Lowland riparian, oak woodland
Oak Titmouse	*Baeolophus inornatus*	Special Animal (nesting)	Oak woodland
Cedar Waxwing	*Bombycella cedrorum*	None	Wooded habitat with berry bushes; urban
Red-tailed Hawk	*Buteo jamaicensis*	None	Open, semi-open country
Red-shouldered Hawk	*Buteo lineatus*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Green Heron	*Butorides virescens*	None	Marshes, riparian, ponds
California Quail	*Callipepla californica*	None	Shrubby habitats
Anna's Hummingbird	*Calypte anna*	None	Many habitats
Turkey Vulture	*Cathartes aura*	None	Open country
Hermit Thrush	*Catharus guttatus*	None	Woodland and brush
Northern Flicker	*Colaptes auratus*	None	Woodlands
Rock Pigeon	*Columba livia*	None	Urban areas
American Crow	*Corvus brachyrhynchos*	None	Many habitats, esp. urban
Common Raven	*Corvus corax*	None	Variety of habitats
Pacific-slope Flycatcher	*Empidonax difficilis*	None	Riparian, oak woodlands
Brewer's Blackbird	*Euphagus cyanocephalus*	None	Open habitats
American Coot	*Fulica americana*	None	Aquatic habitats
Common Yellowthroat	*Geothlypis trichas*	None	Marshes, streamsides
House Finch	*Haemorhous mexicanus*	None	Riparian, grasslands, chaparral, woodlands, urban
Purple Finch	*Haemorhous purpureus*	None	Riparian and woodlands
Bald Eagle	*Haliaeetus leucocephalus*	SE, FP	Forested areas near water

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Habitat Type
Dark-eyed Junco	*Junco hyemalis*	None	Oak woodland
Acorn Woodpecker	*Melanerpes formicivorus*	None	Oak woodland, urban areas with oaks
Song Sparrow	*Melospiza melodia*	None	Oak, riparian woodland
California Towhee	*Melozone crissalis*	None	Chaparral scrub, shrubby urban areas
Northern Mockingbird	*Mimus polyglottos*	None	Riparian, chaparral, woodlands, urban
Brown-headed Cowbird	*Molothrus ater*	None	Grasslands, ranches
Ash-throated Flycatcher	*Myiarchus cinerascens*	None	Open, arid habitats
Orange-crowned warbler	*Oreothlypis celata*	None	Oak and riparian woodlands
Osprey	*Pandion haliaetus*	Special Animal (nesting)	Aquatic areas
Fox Sparrow	*Passerella iliaca*	None	Woodland, chaparral
Savannah Sparrow	*Passerculus sandwichensis*	None	Open habitats, marshes, grasslands
Cliff Swallow	*Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*	None	Urban; open areas near water
Phainopepla	*Phainopepla nitens*	None	Oak, riparian, scrub
Black-headed Grosbeak	*Pheucticus melanocephalus*	None	Woodlands
Nuttall's Woodpecker	*Picoides nuttallii*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Downy Woodpecker	*Picoides pubescens*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Hairy Woodpecker	*Picoides villosus*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Spotted Towhee	*Pipilo maculatus*	None	Dense brushy areas
Bushtit	*Psaltriparus minimus*	None	Woodlands, chaparral
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	*Regulus calendula*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Black Phoebe	*Sayornis nigricans*	None	Near water in natural and urban settings
Yellow-rumped Warbler	*Setophaga coronata*	None	Coniferous and mixed woodland (breeding); shrubby areas and parks (winter)
Yellow Warbler	*Setophaga petechia*	SSC (nesting)	Riparian woodlands
Western Bluebird	*Sialia mexicana*	None	Woodland near open areas
White-breasted Nuthatch	*Sitta carolinensis*	None	Oak savannah, woodland
Lawrence's Goldfinch	*Spinus lawrencei*	Special Animal (nesting)	Oak woodlands, savanna
Pine Siskin	*Spinus pinus*	None	Open conifer, mixed. or suburban forests
Lesser Goldfinch	*Spinus psaltria*	None	Riparian, oak woodlands
Eurasian Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*	None	Urban and rural areas

Common Name	Scientific Name	Special Status	Habitat Type
European Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	None	Agricultural, livestock areas
Tree Swallow	*Tachycineta bicolor*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands, open areas near water
Bewick's Wren	*Thryomanes bewickii*	None	Riparian woodland, scrub
California Thrasher	*Toxostoma redivivum*	None	Chaparral, coastal scrub
House Wren	*Troglodytes aedon*	None	Shrubby areas
Warbling Vireo	*Vireo gilvus*	None	Oak, riparian woodlands
Mourning Dove	*Zenaida macroura*	None	Open and semi-open habitats
Golden-crowned Sparrow	*Zonotrichia atricapilla*	None	Dense woodlands, brushy areas
White-crowned Sparrow	*Zonotrichia leucophrys*	None	Open or shrubby habitats, meadows, forest edges
Mammals – 8 Species			
Beaver	*Castor canadensis*	None	Streams, rivers, creeks
Feral Cat	*Felis catus*	None	Varied
Black-tailed Jackrabbit	*Lepus californicus*	None	Grassland, chaparral, and seral stage forests
Mule [Black-tailed] Deer	*Odocoileus hemionus*	None	Many habitats
Western Gray Squirrel	*Sciurus griseus*	None	Oak, conifer woodlands
Brush Rabbit	*Sylvilagus bachmani*	None	Brushy habitats
Botta's pocket gopher	*Thomomys bottae*	None	Variety of habitats
Raccoon	*Procyon lotor*	None	Streams, lakes, rock cliffs, dens in trees