



July 31, 2014
(20744)

Jemellee Cruz
Los Angeles County Flood Control District
900 South Fremont Avenue
Alhambra, CA 91803
jcruz@dpw.lacounty.gov

SUBJECT: RESULTS FROM THE NATIVE TREE ASSESSMENT FOR THE RUSTIC CANYON REACH MAINTENANCE, LOS ANGELES COUNTY

Dear Ms. Cruz,

This Native Tree Assessment has been prepared for the County of Los Angeles Flood Control District (LACFCD) to support the Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) Waste Discharge Requirements (WDR) for the proposed actions relating to the Rustic Canyon (Reach 118 Rustic) Maintenance Project (Project). Information contained in this document is in accordance with accepted scientific and technical standards consistent with the requirements of United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

Chambers Group, Inc. (Chambers Group) was retained by LACFCD to conduct a native tree assessment based on the literature review and reconnaissance-level survey results for the proposed Project. During the assessment, biologists identified, measured, and flagged any and all native trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of four inches or more within the Reach (from sidewall to sidewall) to determine the number of native trees to be avoided during non-native tree and shrub removal from within the channel.

PROJECT LOCATION AND BACKGROUND

The Reach 118 Rustic is located in the County of Los Angeles and runs along a residential area, south of Sunset Blvd in the City of Pacific Palisades. The Reach 118 Rustic flows southwest into the Pacific Ocean at Will Rogers State Beach. The Project site begins at the intersection of Sunset Blvd and the channel, flows by private residences, and ends at East Rustic Road. Reach 118 Rustic is located in the United States Geological Survey (USGS) *Topanga* 7.5-minute topographic quadrangles. Elevation in the survey area averages 200 feet above mean sea level (amsl).

The Project site is approximately 0.60 river miles total in length (Attachment 1). The Project area is located in a suburban area surrounded by private residences. Habitat in the Project area is composed primarily of both non-native and native riparian vegetation.

LACFCD intends to clear vegetation that has grown within the 0.60 stretch of Rustic Canyon Reach using weed eaters, hedge trimmers, chain saws, hoes, pitch forks, tarps, loppers, and machetes.

METHODS

The trunk circumference of the trees was measured at approximately 4.5 feet and 1.5 feet above the natural grade (breast height). The locations of native trees were recorded using a hand held sub-meter global positioning system (GPS) unit (Attachment 2). Native trees with a DBH greater than four inches were flagged using yellow flagging tape for avoidance. Native trees with a DBH less than four inches were not recorded using GPS but were recorded on field sheets.

RESULTS

The assessment identified a total of 23 native trees with a DBH of four inches or more within the Project boundary (Attachment 2). One western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), two Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), five red willow (*Salix laevigata*), and 15 arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) were observed within the Project boundary. Complete details are found in the table below.

Tree ID	Species Name	Location		DBH (in)	Number of Trunks
		Easting	Northing		
1	western sycamore	360317	3767972	4	1
2	arroyo willow	360317	3767972	8	2
3	arroyo willow	360313	3767970	7	2
4	red willow	360315	3767967	16	2
5	arroyo willow	360306	3767960	5	2
6	arroyo willow	360304	3767957	7	2
7	red willow	360303	3767954	7	1
8	red willow	360291	3767932	7	2
10	arroyo willow	360288	3767925	7	2
11	red willow	360281	3767915	4	1
12	arroyo willow	360275	3767901	9	5
13	arroyo willow	360273	3767900	4	3
14	arroyo willow	360272	3767900	4	3
15	arroyo willow	360273	3767900	12	8
18	red willow	359995	3767390	6	2
19	arroyo willow	359998	3767387	9	3
20	arroyo willow	359997	3767386	10	3
21	arroyo willow	359984	3767360	5	2
22	arroyo willow	359985	3767359	17	6
23	arroyo willow	359982	3767360	8	4
24	arroyo willow	359982	3767355	14	7
29	Fremont cottonwood	359947	3767258	4	1
30	Fremont cottonwood	359944	3767252	3	1

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The assessment concluded that 23 native trees were found within the 0.60 mile Rustic Canyon Reach Project boundary. The majority of the native trees were located at the confluence where Rustic Canyon Reach and Rivas Canyon Reach meet and the channels widen. All of the native trees were marked with yellow flagging on multiple parts of the individuals to clearly indicate avoidance measures to be taken. In addition, the assessment found a total of 15 arroyo willow, three red willow, 11 Fremont cottonwood, 23 western sycamore, and one velvet ash (*Fraxinus velutina*) had a DBH less than four inches and therefore may be removed during vegetation clearing depending on agency requirements. The assessment also noted and recorded any trees causing structural damage to the sidewalls of the Reach and noted whether or not these trees were outside the Project boundary. Further details are noted in the table below.

ID	Issue	Easting	Northing	Description
9	Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	360290	3767934	Large willow tree from adjacent property growing horizontally onto side wall
16	arroyo willow	360030	3767518	Large arroyo willow from adjacent property growing onto side wall
17	Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	360330	3767987	Large willow tree from adjacent property growing onto side wall
25	arroyo willow	359977	3767330	Arroyo willow overhanging onto side wall causing structure damage
26	Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	359968	3767315	Large willow tree from adjacent property growing onto side wall
27	arroyo willow	359955	3767283	Arroyo willow growing through side wall causing structure damage
28	Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	359957	3767269	Large willow tree from adjacent property growing onto side wall
31	Willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.)	359936	3767246	Large willow tree from adjacent property growing onto side wall

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions regarding the Native Tree Assessment. I can be reached at (213) 623-1859, extension 7504.

Sincerely,
CHAMBERS GROUP, INC.

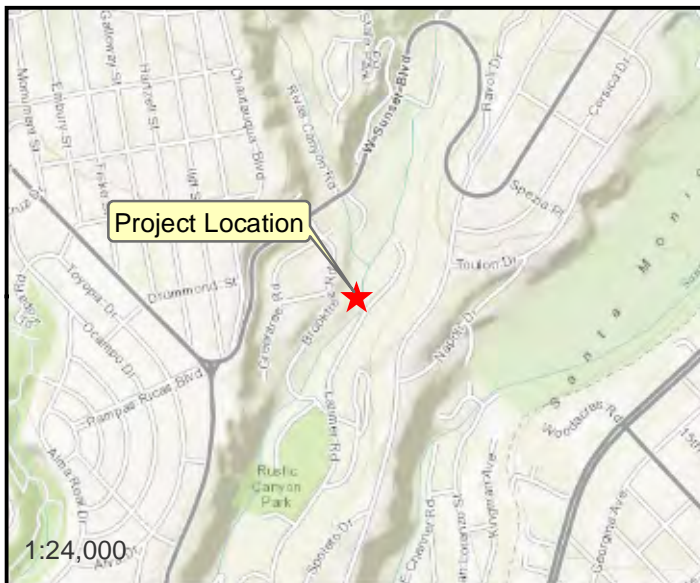


Rebecca Alvidrez
Biologist

Attachment 1 – Site Location Map

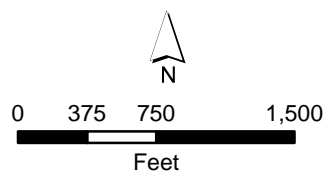
Attachment 2 – Tree Assessment Location Map

Attachment 3 – Site Photographs



Legend

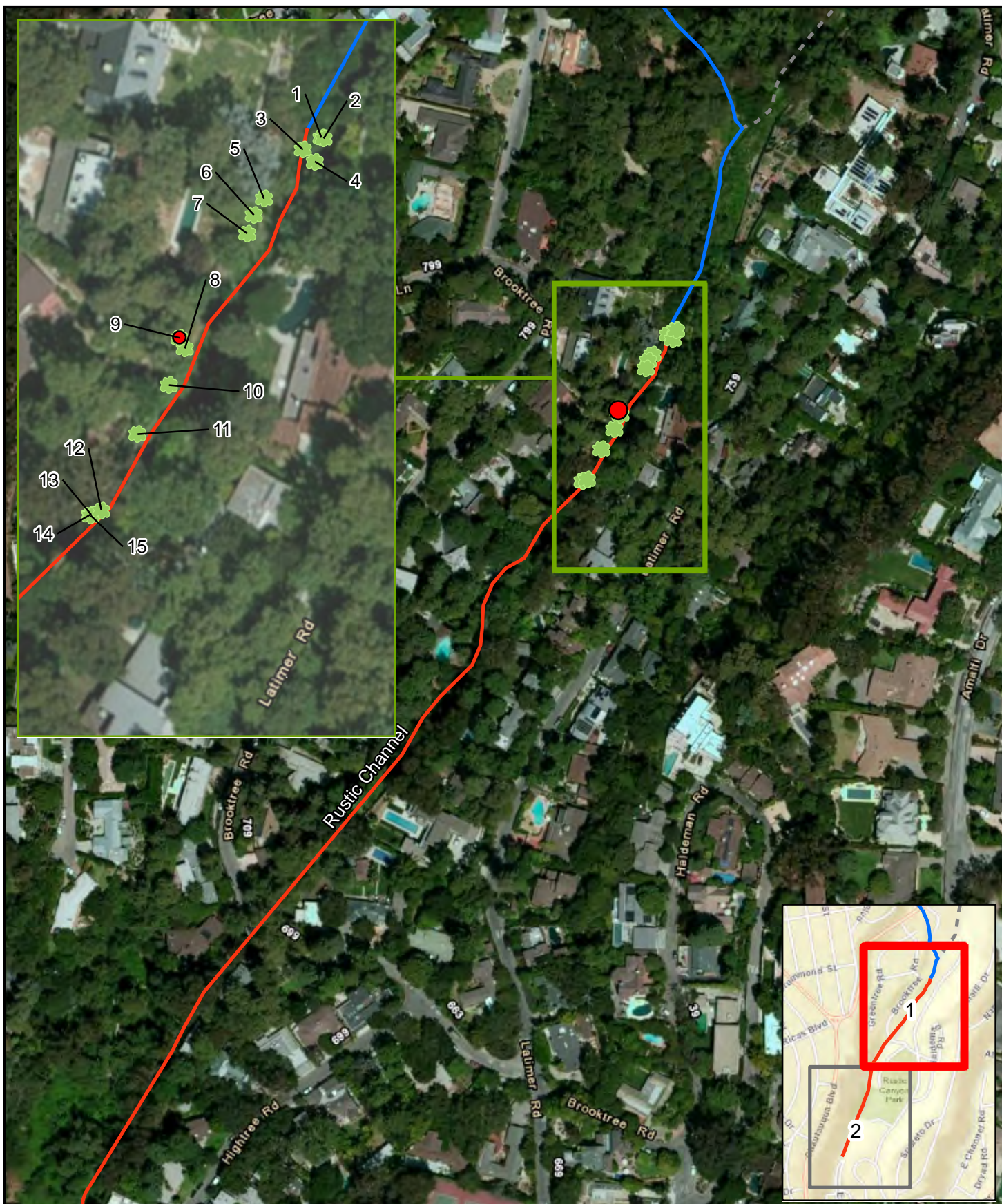
Project Location



Attachment 1 Rustic Canyon Reach Project Location and Vicinity Map

Name: 20744 TS Rustic Attach 1 Location Map.Mxd
Print Date: 7/21/2014, Author: msimmons





Legend

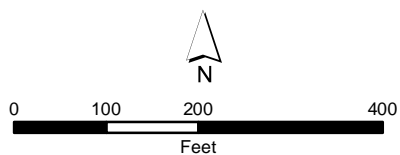
- Rivas Channel
- Rustic Channel
- Privately Owned and Not to Be Maintained by LACFCD

Structural Status

- Damage Observed

Tree Survey Results

- Tree Location



Attachment 2

Rustic Creek Reach

Tree Survey Results

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Legend

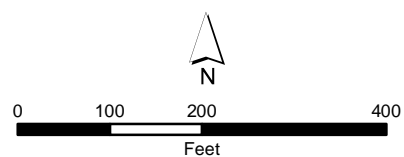
— Rustic Channel

Structural Status

● Damage Observed

Tree Survey Results

● Tree Location



Attachment 2 Rustic Creek Reach Tree Survey Results

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ATTACHMENT 3: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Photo 1. Photo showing removed wooden side wall on the east side of the channel, causing loose sediment to enter the channel. Photo facing south.



Photo 2. Near the upstream limit of Rustic Canyon Reach. Photo showing a section of riparian forest within the Project site. This area can provide potential habitat for nesting birds and sensitive species. Photo facing north.



Photo 3. Photo showing a segment of the channel where the east side wall is degrading. Photo facing south.



Photo 4. The southern end of Rustic Reach. Area is composed of sparse herbaceous vegetation. Photo facing north.



Photo 5. Southern end of the Project site. Wide section of the channel, lined with concrete. Photo showing a fallen tree across the channel. Photo facing north.



Photo 6. Dense non-native vegetation and ornamental vines along the walls, located south of Rustic Creek Lane. Photo facing south.



Photo 14. Photo showing vegetation within the channel and thick non-native vegetation along the sidewalls, located south of Rustic Creek Lane. Photo facing north.