

October 13, 2021

Ms. Tracy Zinn
T&B Planning, Inc.
3200 El Camino Real, Suite 100
Irvine, CA 92602

Subject: Fontana Gateway Industrial Center-Biological Resources

Dear Ms. Zinn,

This letter report describes the existing biological resources on the Fontana Gateway Industrial Center project site and evaluates the potential impacts to those resources that may occur as a result of development. This report is intended to provide the City of Fontana (City) and applicant with information necessary to assess impacts to biological resources under the California Environmental Quality Act.

PROJECT LOCATION

The project site is located at 13592 Slover Avenue in the City (Figures 1 and 2). An approximately 18.6-acre site was analyzed that encompasses the entire area of proposed re-development activities.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project would result in the re-development of the subject property with 2 warehouse distribution buildings. The project would include cargo loading areas, parking areas, landscaping, signage, and lighting.

METHODS

Literature Review

Prior to conducting the biological fieldwork, background research was conducted to obtain information on the existing biological conditions within the project vicinity. Background research included a review of current local, state, and federal regulations, historical and current aerial photographs, USGS topographic maps, U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) soil survey maps, the National Hydrography Dataset, and National Wetlands Inventory.

A review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) was performed to identify sensitive biological resources known from the proposed project vicinity. The CNDDDB, which is administered by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW), provides an inventory of vegetation communities, plant species, and wildlife species that are considered sensitive by state and federal resource agencies, academic institutions, and other conservation groups. Historical occurrences of sensitive species from the proposed project vicinity were used to determine species with a potential to occur within and adjacent to the proposed project area.

Vegetation Mapping

Biologist Brian Leatherman conducted a site visit on July 28, 2021 to identify and map existing biological resources. The site was walked; plant and animal species observed/detected were recorded; and representative site photographs were taken (Attachment A; Figure 3).

Sensitive Plants

The CNDDDB database search did not identify any sensitive plant species reported on site or within the project vicinity. Sensitive plants were searched for during the site visits; a focused sensitive plant survey was not considered necessary.

Burrowing Owl Habitat Assessment

During the field visit the site was evaluated for the potential to support the burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*; federal Bird of Conservation Concern and State Species of Special Concern) according to the survey methods in the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (California Department of Fish and Game 2012). The site was surveyed for burrowing owl habitat characteristics including potential burrows or perches, excavated soil, whitewash (excrement), castings (pellets), and/or feathers. Burrowing owls are known to occupy California ground squirrel (*Otospermophilus beecheyi*) burrows; therefore, particular attention was paid to any areas along fence lines, or other locations where squirrels were likely to occur.

Riparian/Riverine and Vernal Pool Resources

The National Hydrography Dataset and National Wetlands Inventory did not return results for any drainage features, vernal pools, or wetlands on site or in the site vicinity. During the site visit, the site was inspected for Riparian/Riverine and Vernal Pool Resources, as well as any features that have potential to be considered Waters of the U.S. (WUS) or Waters of the State (WS) under the jurisdiction of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) and/or CDFW, respectively.

RESULTS

Physical Description and Land Use

The site is flat (approximately 990 feet above mean sea level) and entirely developed with an existing, operational industrial facility. Site consists of steel frames, lifts, parking lots, industrial buildings, steel racks, gravel bins, and construction materials. Soil on site is mapped as Tujunga loamy sand (0-5 percent slopes) and Tujunga gravelly loamy sand (0-9 percent slopes); however, the actual site uses have likely altered the soil. There are no wildlife corridors or designated environmental preserve areas on or adjacent to the site. Additionally, there are no drainage features, ponding areas, or wetland/riparian resources within or adjacent to the site.

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

The site is entirely developed and does not support any vegetation communities (Figure 3). Developed land is not considered a sensitive biological resource.

Burrowing Owl Habitat Assessment

No burrowing owl sign/evidence was observed on the site. Additionally, no ground squirrels or burrows were observed on the site with the potential to support the burrowing owl. Finally, the site is surrounded by development and not adjacent to any known areas that support the burrowing owl. As such, the site is not considered suitable for the species, and a focused survey is not warranted.

Riparian/Riverine and Vernal Pool Resources

There are no riparian/riverine communities, vernal pools, or potential WUS or WS located on the site. The property is essentially flat and does not support any aquatic features necessary for the development of these resources.

Sensitive Plant Species

No sensitive plant species were observed on site, and none is anticipated to occur given the developed/disturbed condition of the site. Plant species observed on site are associated with landscaping and non-native ornamental trees on the project perimeter. The ornamental trees are eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* sp.) and Mexican fan palm (*Washingtonia robusta*).

Sensitive Animal Species

No sensitive animal species were observed or detected on site during the site visit, and none is anticipated to occur given its developed/disturbed nature. Animals observed were limited to common, non-sensitive bird species including Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), house finch (*Carpodacus mexicanus*), rock dove (*Columba livia*), raven (*Corvus corax*), Eurasian collared dove (*Streptopelia decaocto*), and Allen's hummingbird (*Selasphorus sasin*).

One federal endangered species, Delhi sands flower-loving fly (*Rhaphiomidas terminatus abdominalis*), was reported to the CNDDDB in the site vicinity. The Delhi sands flower-loving fly, however, occurs in association with Delhi sands soils, which are not present on site. This, along with the developed nature of the site make it unsuitable for this species and focused surveys are not warranted.

Nesting Birds

The federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (sections 3503 and 3513) provide for protection of birds during the avian nesting season. While there were no nests observed, birds could build nests in the ornamental trees on the property perimeter.

PROJECT IMPACTS

The entire site would be impacted to implement the project.

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover Types

The project would impact developed land, which is considered non-sensitive. Therefore, no significant impacts to vegetation communities and land cover types would occur.

Sensitive Plant Species

No sensitive plant species occur on site; therefore, no impacts to sensitive plant species would occur.

Sensitive Animal Species

The site has little to no potential to support sensitive animal species, including the burrowing owl and the Delhi sands flower-loving fly; therefore, no impacts to sensitive animal species would occur.

Nesting Birds

If project construction is to occur during the avian nesting season (February 15 – September 1), significant impacts to nesting birds could occur. Therefore, a pre-construction nesting bird survey should be conducted by a qualified biologist to ensure that no impacts to nesting birds occur.

The nesting bird survey should be completed within three days prior to the commencement of construction. If active nests are found, they should be avoided, and appropriate no-impact buffer zones should be established and maintained/monitored until after the young have fledged and are no longer dependent on the nest as determined by a qualified biologist.

Jurisdictional Areas (Corps, CDFW, and RWQCB)

No wetland, riparian, or drainage areas occur on site that would be considered jurisdictional by the regulatory agencies. Therefore, no impacts would occur to jurisdictional areas, and the project would not require Corps, CDFW, or RWQCB permits.

Wildlife Corridors


No local or regional wildlife corridors are present within or adjacent to the project site; therefore, no permanent or temporary impacts to wildlife movement would occur.

CONCLUSION

The project site is entirely developed and is surrounded by development. The project would not impact any sensitive vegetation community or land cover type. In addition, no sensitive plant or animal species are anticipated to occur on site based on the site's condition and historical records. The only potential impact would be to nesting birds should construction occur during the avian nesting season (February 15 – September 1). Implementation of the pre-construction nesting bird survey and maintaining/monitoring appropriate no-impact nest buffer zones would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level. As such, the project would not result in significant impacts to sensitive biological resources.

Please contact me if you have any questions regarding this letter report.

Sincerely,



Greg Mason
Senior Biologist

Reference:

California Department of Fish and Game. 2012. Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation. March 7.

Enclosures:

- Figure 1 – Regional Location
- Figure 2 – Project Location
- Figure 3 – Biological Resources
- Attachment A – Representative Photographs