

4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

This section of the EIR analyzes the potential environmental effects on biological resources from implementation of the proposed Granada Hills–Knollwood Community Plan and implementing ordinances and the proposed Sylmar Community Plan and implementing ordinances (proposed plans). Comments in response to the Notices of Preparation (NOP) were received on both proposed plans from the California Department of Fish & Game (CDFG).

Data for this section were taken from The City of Los Angeles General Plan, Citywide General Plan Framework, Los Angeles Municipal Code, California Department of Fish and Game, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and California Native Plant Society. Full reference-list entries for all cited materials are provided in Section 4.3.5 (References).

This section of the EIR provides a description of the existing biological resources within the Granada Hills–Knollwood and Sylmar Community Plan Areas (CPAs) and analyzes the potential physical environmental impacts related to biological resources associated with implementation of the proposed plans. The EIR evaluates the environmental impacts related to biological resources using information from a variety of sources, including the California Department of Fish and Game’s (CDFG) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), the California Native Plant Society’s (CNPS) Electronic Inventory, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s (USFWS) list of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species, as well a variety of other environmental resources. A regulatory framework is also provided in this section describing applicable agencies and regulations related to biological resources.

As set forth in CEQA Guidelines Section 15125(a), the following Environmental Setting discussion describes the physical environmental conditions in the CPAs at the time the environmental analysis commenced. It constitutes the baseline physical conditions by which the City of Los Angeles (City) would determine whether a biological resources impact is significant. Special emphasis is placed on environmental resources that are rare or unique to the CPAs and could be affected by the adoption and implementation of the proposed plans.

4.3.1 Environmental Setting

The following sections identify major plant and animal resources within the two CPAs. Sensitive biological resources include habitats or natural communities that are either unique, of relatively limited distribution in the region, or of particularly high value for wildlife; however, these habitats may or may not necessarily contain special-status species. Sensitive natural communities are usually identified in regional or local plans, policies, or regulations, or by the USFWS or CDFG. Additionally, sensitive biological resources include plant and wildlife species that are endangered or threatened and could be eligible for listing as rare, threatened, or endangered by federal and/or state resource agencies, as well as species that are identified as candidate, sensitive, or special-status in regional or local plans, regulations or policies, or by the USFWS or CDFG.

Information contained in the sections that follow is primarily based on review of available background information pertaining to the biological resources within the CPAs. This information was supplemented

by a one-day reconnaissance-level field survey of lands in the CPAs. The field survey was completed by the Principal Biologist, Shannon Lucas, from the EIR consultant, Christopher A. Joseph & Associates (CAJA) on August 28, 2008. Prior to conducting the field survey, the EIR consultant's biologist reviewed the CDFG CNDDDB,¹⁷ the CNPS Electronic Inventory,¹⁸ the USFWS list of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species,¹⁹ and a variety of other environmental resources including (but not limited to) the California Gap Analysis Project,²⁰ the California Wildlife Habitat Relationships (CWHR),²¹ the Sylmar Community Plan,²² Granada Hills–Knollwood Community Plan²³ and the Framework Element of the Los Angeles General Plan.²⁴ The date queries for CNPS and state and federal species lists were updated in January 2011.

■ Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA

Although the majority of Granada Hills–Knollwood is developed suburban land, significant areas remain as undeveloped or natural open spaces. Most of the open space is located in the northern portion of the CPA. Open space in this community includes land owned by County of Los Angeles and City of Los Angeles. While some of the open space land in Granada Hills–Knollwood is used for non-recreational purposes, much of the open space is recreational, including Bee Canyon, O'Melveny Park, Zelzah Park, Petit Park, and the Knollwood Golf Course. From a biological perspective, the undeveloped open spaces at the northern end of the CPA contain the most significant biological resources of the CPA. Although many special-status species have been documented to occur historically in this region, many occurrences are known to be extirpated due to habitat loss and fragmentation. Figure 4.3-1 (Natural Habitat Areas [Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA]) illustrates biological resource areas in the CPA.

¹⁷ California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Rarefind (CD-ROM) (Sacramento: CDFG Wildlife Habitat Data Analysis Branch, 2011).

¹⁸ California Native Plant Society, Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (online edition) (Sacramento: California Native Plant Society, 2011), <http://cnps.org/inventory>.

¹⁹ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, List of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species that Occur in or May Be Affected by Projects in the Canoga Park, Sunland, Oat Mountain, San Fernando, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles (Sacramento: Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 2011).
http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/spp_lists/QuadNameLookup_Search.cfm.

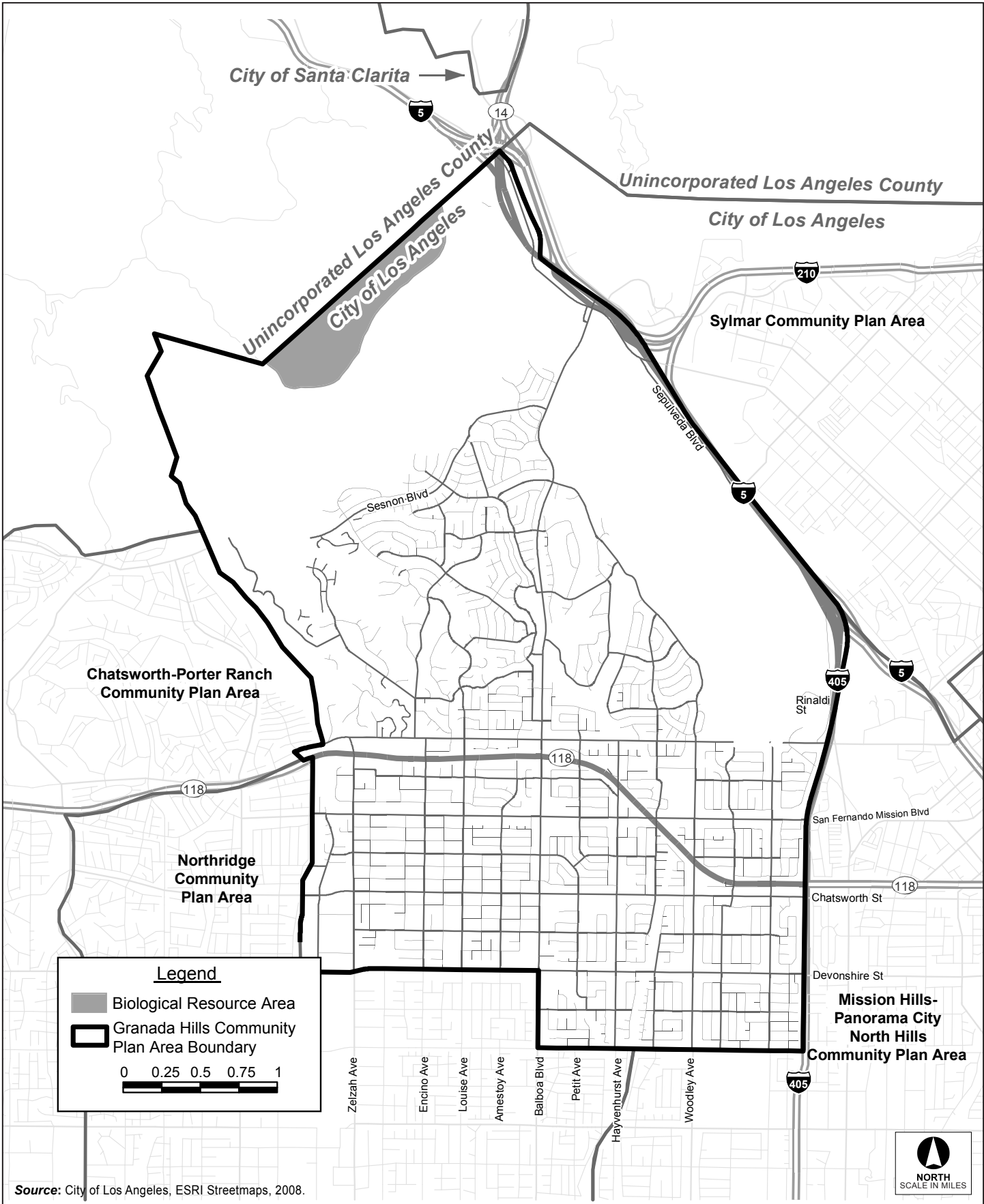
²⁰ F. W. Davis, D. M. Stoms, A. D. Hollander, K. A. Thomas, P. A. Stine, D. Odion, M. I. Borchert, J. H. Thorne, M. V. Gray, R. E. Walker, K. Warner, and J. Graae, *The California Gap Analysis Project—Final Report* (Santa Barbara: University of California, 1998), http://www.biogeog.ucsb.edu/projects/gap/gap_rep.html.

²¹ California Department of Fish and Game California Interagency Wildlife Task Group, CWHR version 8.1 personal computer program (Sacramento, CA, 2005).

²² Los Angeles City Planning Department, *Sylmar New Community Plan* (2009).

²³ Los Angeles City Planning Department, *Granada Hills–Knollwood New Community Plan* (2009).

²⁴ Los Angeles City Planning Department, *The Citywide General Plan Framework, An Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan*, Prepared by Envicom Corporation in association with: Anil Verma Associates, Barton Aschman Associates, Cordoba Corporation, Delon-Hampton Associates, DKS Associates, ESRI, McCutchen, Doyle, Brown & Enseren, Moore-Iacafano-Goltsman, The Natelson Company, Sedway Cooke Associates, Terry A. Hayes Associates, Tierra Concepts, and Wiltec (July 27, 1995).



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Figure 4.3-1
Natural Habitat Areas (Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA)

Habitat Types

As previously described in Chapter 3 (Project Description) of this EIR, the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA encompasses approximately 9,057 acres of land situated within the northern portion of the San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles. Historically, natural habitats occupying the lands within the CPA included habitats such as annual and perennial grasslands, chamise and chamise redshank chaparral, freshwater marshes, inland and coastal sage scrub, oak savannas and woodlands, riparian woodlands, seasonal wetlands, and seasonal and perennial streams, creeks, and rivers, walnut woodlands, and vernal pools. Over the last 200 years, land alteration from agricultural, water supply systems and urbanization has resulted in the loss or alteration of much of the natural habitat within the CPA. Nonnative annual grasses and weedy, ruderal vegetation have replaced the native grasslands; many of the natural streams have been channelized, filled, or re-routed into culverts; riparian and oak woodlands have been cleared for development; and most of the marshes have been drained, filled, and converted to industrial and urban uses.

Though the majority of the CPA currently encompasses residential, commercial, industrial, and other suburban development, valuable plant and animal habitat still exists. These habitats are located primarily in open space areas (broadly classified as publicly owned and privately owned land) beyond the existing limits of suburban development within the CPA (refer to Figure 4.3-1). The rugged steep-sided ridges and canyons of the open space areas within the Santa Susana Mountains and the foothills and lowlands in the nearby parklands, such as Bee Canyon Park and O'Melveny Park, in the northern and eastern portions of the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA, currently support these natural habitats. In addition, the Santa Susana Mountains Significant Ecological Area (SEA), within the Santa Susana Mountains in the northern portion of the CPA and the lowlands in the vicinity of the Los Angeles Reservoir (formerly the Van Norman Reservoir) in the northeastern portion of the CPA, currently support these natural habitats. Natural habitats that dominate much of these open space areas include annual grassland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak savanna, and woodland. Other habitats such as riparian woodland, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetlands also exist within the CPA. These habitats are generally described in more detail below.

Annual Grassland

Annual grassland habitat occupies lands throughout the open space areas within the CPA, occurring primarily as a distinct habitat, but also as understory to chaparral and coastal sage scrub, as well as to oak savanna and woodland, with little change in its herbaceous characteristics. Within the CPA, this habitat occurs in the open space areas of the Santa Susana Mountains, O'Melveny Park, Lakeside Debris Basin, and the Grapevine Site. Patches of annual grassland are also found within City parklands and on vacant and undeveloped lands within the limits of existing urban development. Annual grassland is primarily comprised of nonnative annual grass species interspersed with native and exotic forbs that thrive in areas surrounded by urban development, along roadsides, and similar disturbed areas. Common grass species include ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), and wild oat (*Avena* sp.). Associated nonnative forb species include those such as black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), and tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*). In addition to the nonnative species mentioned above, native species may form a small percentage of the herbaceous cover in the annual grassland habitat within the CPA, including such species as California buttercup (*Ranunculus*

californicus), lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), and wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). Species typically associated with chaparral, coastal sage scrub, walnut woodland, and oak savanna and woodland are also scattered throughout annual grasslands, particularly in the open spaces areas within the San Gabriel and Santa Susana Mountains in the northern portion of the CPA. Although this has not been confirmed by detailed field studies, annual grassland habitat within the CPA could also support seasonal wetlands.

Annual grasslands provide habitat for a number of wildlife species, from insects and spiders to large mammals. Wildlife species typically found in grasslands are those that have adapted to dry, windy conditions. These are grazing species, burrowing species, and their predators; insects and spiders are abundant. Some of these species forage in grasslands and retreat to protective cover of the surrounding habitats (e.g., chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak woodland) for shelter and nesting, while others disperse through this habitat. Wildlife species typically found in annual grasslands habitats include mammals, such as black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and birds, such as American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*). Reptiles are also frequently found with annual grassland habitat, such as gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*), western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), and western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*). In addition, grassland habitats that support seasonal wetlands provide habitat for amphibians, such as Pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*) and western toad (*Bufo boreas*).

Chaparral

Chaparral habitat occupies lands throughout the open space areas along ridgelines of the Santa Susana Mountains within the northern portion of the CPA, particularly on the north-facing slopes. This habitat maintains an intermediate position between more xeric grassland and scrub habitats and mesic woodland habitats. Chamise-redshank chaparral generally occupies the lands at the lower elevations and grades into mixed chaparral at the higher elevations. Shrub species commonly associated with chamise-dominated chaparral include species such as black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), sugar sumac (*Rhus ovata*), redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*), and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*).

Wildlife species found in chaparral habitats are predominantly those that have adapted to very hot and dry conditions, such as insects, spiders, and reptiles. Because of the hot, dry conditions, amphibians are uncommon, as they typically remain near water sources. There are many birds associated with chaparral habitats, but most are not restricted to chaparral and occur in other habitats. Most mammals are small, such as rodents, and are nocturnal to avoid the daytime heat. Wildlife species typically associated with chaparral habitats include mammals, such as bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani*), and dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*), and birds, such as California quail (*Callipepla californica*), California towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), and greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*). Reptiles that thrive in chaparral habitat include such species as coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), and southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*).

Coastal Sage Scrub

The coastal sage scrub habitat is found occupying lands throughout the northern open space areas in the Santa Susana Mountains within the CPA, although patches of this habitat are also found in the vicinity of

the Lakeside Debris Basin, Los Angeles Reservoir, and the Grapevine Site. Coastal sage scrub habitat is interspersed amongst the grassland, chaparral, and oak savanna and woodland habitats. This habitat type is characterized by the predominance of sub-shrubs, 1 to 5 feet in height with semi-woody stems growing from a woody base. Many of the species in this habitat display adaptations to prevailing climatic conditions, such as winter rainfall and summer drought, by being drought-deciduous, having grayish-foliage with heavy pubescence on stem and leaves, or similar adaptations to arid conditions. Typical coast sage scrub species within the CPA include such species as black sage, bush mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), California buckwheat, California sage (*Artemisia californica*), and a diverse assemblage of other shrubs, herbaceous plants, cacti, and succulents. Scattered oak (*Quercus* spp.), walnut (*Juglans californica*), and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.) trees are also present.

Similar to the wildlife species found in chaparral habitats, coastal scrub habitat hosts a variety of species that have adapted to hot and dry conditions. However, this habitat may also support amphibians such as California slender salamander (*Batrachoseps attenuatus*) and western toad in moist canyon areas. Typical mammals found in coastal sage scrub habitat include species such as California ground squirrel, coyote, and raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). Resident birds include such species as Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), and California towhee. Coastal sage scrub habitat also provides year-round hunting grounds for many birds of prey, such as Red-tailed hawk, great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), and turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*). Reptiles such as western fence lizard, side-blotched lizard, and western rattlesnake are typically found in this habitat.

Ruderal Vegetation

Ruderal vegetation within the CPA is characterized by sparsely vegetated areas that support plant species adapted to continued disturbance (e.g., mowing, discing, spraying, vehicular traffic) and are largely composed of weedy, nonnative annual species. Ruderal assemblages of species are found throughout the CPA, along the boundaries of developed areas and roadways, and on vacant and undeveloped parcels. Nonnative species typically observed within these disturbed areas include wild radish, mustard, iceplant, pampas grass, Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*). Due to the high level of habitat degradation, continued disturbance, and lack of native species cover, this habitat offers limited opportunities for common wildlife species to forage, nest, and seek cover.

Oak Savanna and Woodland

Oak savanna and woodland habitat occupies lands throughout the open space areas in the Santa Susana Mountains within the CPA, particularly on the north-facing slopes and in the canyons. Patches of oak savanna and woodland are also found within City parklands and on vacant and undeveloped lands within the limits of existing urban development. This habitat forms stands varying from open savannas with grassy understories to fairly dense woodlands with shrubby understories. Stands are dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), where as canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) is more common at the higher elevations. Associated understory species include shrubs such as mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). Also, understory species include grass and forb species similar to those found in the adjacent annual grassland habitat.

Oak habitats have the richest wildlife species abundance of any habitat in California, with over 330 species depending on them at some phase of their life cycle, including at least 120 species of mammals, 147 species of birds, and approximately 60 species of amphibians and reptiles.²⁵ These habitats are able to sustain such abundant wildlife primarily because they produce acorns, a high quality and frequently abundant food supply. Other important food resources found in oak habitats are the herbaceous plants that grow with the oaks and the abundance of small organisms that supply other wildlife food. These habitats also provide wildlife species with shade in the summer and shelter in the winter, and provide nesting and roosting sites. Wildlife species typically found in oak savanna and woodland habitats include mammals, such as California ground squirrel, mule deer, and western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*), birds such as acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), and western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), and amphibians and reptiles, such as California newt (*Taricha torosa*), California slender salamander, ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*), and southern alligator lizard.

Riparian Woodland

Riparian woodland habitat is generally associated with seasonal and perennial streams and creeks, and occasionally ponds and reservoirs. The composition of species in this habitat is highly variable and dependent on geographic location, elevation, substrate, and amount of water present. It is also found throughout the open space areas in the Santa Susana Mountains; within open space corridors south of Sesnon Boulevard, including (from west to east) Moonshine Canyon Park, Limekiln Canyon, and Aliso Canyon Park; and within debris basins and retention basins surrounding the Los Angeles Reservoir in the eastern portion of the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA. California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), coast live oak, Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), and several species of willow (*Salix* spp.) are common overstory species found in this habitat. Associated understory species include California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), and a variety of herbaceous species.

Riparian habitats are generally extremely productive and have diverse values for wildlife species. The availability of water, the diversity and abundance of plant life, and the complex vegetation structure provide a number of wildlife species with food and water, cover, and movement corridor, as well as breeding and nesting sites. Wildlife species typically found in riparian habitats include mammals, such as opossum (*Didelphis virginianus*), raccoon, and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and birds, such as black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), and various other migrant songbirds, such as warblers, vireos, and grosbeaks. Amphibians and reptiles likely to be found in this habitat include Pacific tree frog, western toad, and common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*).

Seasonal and Perennial Waters and Wetlands

As later described in Section 4.8 (Hydrology/Water Quality) of this EIR, several streams, creeks, and ponds or reservoirs are scattered throughout the open space areas within the CPA, but also in the existing limits of urban development (refer to Figure 4.3-2 [CNDDDB Resources (Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA)], below). These later streams, creeks, and ponds or reservoirs have mostly been

²⁵ G.A. Giusti, Douglas D. McCreary, and Richard B. Standiford, eds., *A Planner's Guide for Oak Woodlands*, 2nd ed. University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources publication 3491 (Oakland, California, 2005).

modified for flood control purposes. Most of the streams and creeks within the CPA originate at some elevated source (e.g., pond, reservoir, seasonal wetland) in the Santa Susana Mountains and flow downward to a higher order creek, stream, pond, or reservoir in the lower elevations of the CPA. These stream and creeks typically flow only immediately after rainfall events.

The ponds or reservoirs, including (but not limited to) the Los Angeles Reservoir and associated debris basins, within the CPA are both seasonal and perennial in nature and support a combination of habitats along the shorelines. The shoreline of the Los Angeles Reservoir and associated debris basins are devoid of vegetation, whereas, the shoreline of the ponds within the Lower Retention Basin in the vicinity of the Los Angeles Reservoir supports riparian woodland habitat. Annual grassland and oak savanna and woodland habitats, as well as the various other habitats present in the open space areas within the Santa Susana Mountains, border the ponds or reservoirs that occupy these lands.

Seasonal wetlands could be present in the various natural habitats within the CPA in the form of depressions, seeps, and swales. These features are typically dry during the summer, and support wetland-adapted plants, such as annual broad-leaf plants, rushes, and sedges.

The surface water of streams, creeks, and ponds or reservoirs is an essential source of drinking water for many wildlife species, and the open water of larger ponds or reservoirs provide resting and escape habitat for waterfowl. Carnivorous and insectivorous birds forage over the open water, and near-shore waters provide forage habitat for many other bird species, as well as mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Riparian habitat along the seasonal and perennial waters could also serve as movement corridors for many species of terrestrial wildlife, which move along the upper margins of these features.

California Walnut Woodland

Small stands of walnut woodland habitat intergrade with the chaparral, coastal sage scrub, and oak savanna and woodland habitats in the open spaces areas in the Santa Susana Mountains within the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA as described above, particularly west of O'Melveny Park. This habitat is generally characterized by an open tree canopy that is dominated by California black walnut (*Juglans californica*). Associated species include tree species, such as California sycamore, California bay (*Umbellularia californica*), and live oak, and shrub species, such as laurel sumac, sugar sumac, and toyon. Like the shrub species, herbaceous species associated with walnut woodland habitat are similar to those found in the adjacent habitats.

Given the stand sizes and the connectivity with the other natural habitats in the open space areas within the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA, many of the wildlife species using these habitats also forage, nest, roost, and disperse through the walnut woodland habitat.

Sensitive Biological Resources

As previously discussed, sensitive biological resources include those habitats or natural communities, plants and wildlife, and other sensitive resources that are governed under federal, state, and local laws and policies. The following section identifies which sensitive biological resources have the potential or are known to occur within the CPA. Sensitive biological resources are generally associated with the open space areas in the northern portion of the CPA.

Communities and Species of Concern

Sensitive plants and communities that could occur within the CPA are listed in Table 4.3-1 (Sensitive Plants and Communities with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA). Table 4.3-2 (Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA) lists sensitive wildlife that could occur within the CPA. The location of these sensitive biological resources is also shown in Figure 4.3-2 (CNDDDB Resources [Granada Hills–Knollwood]). These lists of sensitive species and communities were developed based on a search of the current database records (e.g., CNDDDB and CNPS Electronic Inventory records for the Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Canoga Park, Sunland, and Van Nuys U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 7.5-Minute Quadrangles) and review of the Framework Element of the Los Angeles General Plan and USFWS list of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species for the Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Canoga Park, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle maps.

Table 4.3-1 does not include species that are likely to have been extirpated (eliminated), or that are probably extinct, from the CPA, although these species are included on Figure 4.3-2. Examples of such species include Greata's aster (*Symphotrichum greatae*), San Fernando spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*), slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecabema leptoceras*), California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*), and Western yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*).

In addition to the sensitive habitats or communities listed by the CNDDDB, regulatory and resource agencies consider oak woodland and riparian habitats, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetland habitats sensitive. As previously discussed, these resources are recorded in or have the potential to occur within the CPA.

Wildlife Movement

The movement and migration of wildlife species has been substantially altered due to habitat fragmentation over the past century. This fragmentation has most commonly been caused by development, which can result in large patches of land becoming inaccessible and forming a virtual barrier between undeveloped areas, or resulting in additional roads which, although narrow, could result in barriers to smaller or less mobile wildlife species. Habitat fragmentation results in isolated islands of habitat, which affects wildlife behavior, foraging activity, reproductive patterns, immigration and emigration or dispersal capabilities, and survivability.

Wildlife corridors play an important role in countering habitat fragmentation. A wildlife corridor is a linear landscape element which serves as a linkage between historically connected habitats or landscapes that are otherwise separated²⁶ and is meant to provide avenues along which wildlife can travel, migrate, and meet mates; plants can propagate; genetic interchange can occur; populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters; and individuals can re-colonize habitats from which

²⁶ A. McEuen, *The Wildlife Corridor Controversy: A Review*, Endangered Species Update, Vol. 10, Nos. 11 and 12 (September/October 1993).

Table 4.3-1 Sensitive Plants and Communities with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA

Species/Communities	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CNDDDB	CNPS	
Plant Species					
<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i> Braunton's milk-vetch	FE	—	G2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Recent burns or disturbed areas in chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland. Usually found in sandstone soils with carbonate layers at elevations of 4 to 640 meters. (January–August)
<i>Berberis nevini</i> Nevin's barberry	FE	CE	G2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian scrub. Found in sandy or gravelly soils at elevations of 274 to 825 meters. (March–June)
<i>Calochortus clavatus</i> var. <i>gracilis</i> Slender mariposa lily	—	—	G4T1/S1.1	List 1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland. Found at elevations of 360 to 1,000 meters. (March–June)
<i>Calochortus plummerae</i> Plummer's mariposa lily	—	—	G3/S3.2	List 1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, and valley and foothill grassland. Found in granitic, rocky soils at elevations of 100 to 1,700 meters. (May–July)
<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>Australis</i> Southern tarplant	—	—	G4T2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Found along the margins of marshes and swamps, and in vernal mesic valley and foothill grasslands and vernal pools at elevations of 0 to 427 meters. (May–November)
<i>Chorizanthe parryi</i> var. <i>fernandina</i> San Fernando Valley spineflower	FC	CE	G2T1/S1.1	1B.1	Coastal scrub habitat in sandy soils at elevations of 3 to 1,035 meters, blooming period April–May. One CNDDDB occurrences in the CPA: Chatsworth Park (recorded 1901, mostly developed now). This plant was once believed to be extinct was rediscovered in 1999. All occurrences considered possibly extirpated by CNDDDB.
<i>Deinandra minthornii</i> Santa Susana tarplant	—	CR	G2/S2.2	List 1B.2	Chaparral and coastal scrub. Found in rocky soils at elevations of 280 to 760 meters. (July–November)
<i>Dodecahema leptoceras</i> Slender-horned spineflower	FE	CE	G1/S1.1	List 1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, and alluvial fan coastal scrub. Found in sandy soils at elevations of 200 to 760 meters. (April–June)
<i>Malacothamnus davidsonii</i> Davidson's bush-mallow	—	—	G1/S1.1	List 1B.2	Found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian woodland at elevations of 185 to 855 meters. (June–January)
<i>Orcuttia californica</i> California orcutt grass	FE	CE	G2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Found in vernal pools at elevations of 15 to 660 meters. (April–August)
<i>Symphyotrichum greatae</i> Greata's aster	—	—	G2/S2.3	List 1B.3	Found in broadleaved upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, and riparian woodland at elevations of 300 to 2,010 meters. (June–October)
Plant Communities					
California Walnut Woodland	—	—	G2/S2.1	—	Mapped in several locations north of Granada Hills in the Santa Susana Mountains, including (but not limited to) along Aliso, Bee, and Bull Canyons.
Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub	—	—	G1/S1.1	—	—

Table 4.3-1 Sensitive Plants and Communities with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA

Species/Communities	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CNDDDB	CNPS	
South Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	—	—	G4/S4	—	Mapped in two locations north of Granada Hills in the Santa Susana Mountains, including along Weldon and Bee Canyons.
Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest	—	—	G3/S3.2	—	—
Southern Mixed Riparian Forest	—	—	G2/S2.1	—	—
Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland	—	—	G4/S4	—	Mapped in 1978 within the Santa Susana Mountains along Aliso Canyon.
Southern Willow Scrub	—	—	G3/S2.1	—	—
Valley Oak Woodland	—	—	G3/S2.1	—	Mapped in 1978 north of Granada Hills in the Santa Susana Mountains, northeast of Oat Mountain.

SOURCES: California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Rarefind (CD-ROM—Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Canoga Park, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles), Wildlife Habitat Data Analysis Branch, (Sacramento: California, 2011); California Native Plant Society, Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (online edition, v7-08c [Oat Mountain, Canoga Park, San Fernando, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles]) (Sacramento, 2011), <http://cnps.org/inventory>; City of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework Draft Environmental Impact Report*, State Clearing House No.: 94071030 (January 19, 1995).

a. Status Codes

FESA: Federal Endangered Species Act of 1972 (as amended)

- FE = Federally listed as Endangered
- FT = Federally listed as Threatened
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CESA: California Endangered Species Act

- CE = State listed as Endangered
- CT = State listed as Threatened
- CR = State listed as Rare

CNDDDB: California Natural Diversity Database

G, T, S-rank

CNDDDB element rankings. The global rank (G-rank) is a reflection of the overall condition of an element throughout its global range, with G1 being the most rare and G5 being the least rare. Subspecies receive a T-rank attached to the G-rank. The state rank (S-rank) is a reflection of the overall condition of an element throughout California, sometimes with threat designation attached.

CNPS: California Native Plant Society

- List 1A = Plants presumed extinct in California
- List 1B = Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere
- List 2 = Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
- List 3 = Plants about which we need more information – a review list
- List 4 = Plants of limited distribution—a watch list

Threat Ranks

CNPS threat rank. These ranks are an extension added onto the CNPS List and designate the level of endangerment by a 1 to 3 ranking, with 1 being the most endangered and 3 being the least endangered.

Table 4.3-2 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA					
Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
Invertebrates					
<i>Danaus plexippus</i> Monarch butterfly	—	—	—	G5/S3	Winter roost sites extend along the coast from northern Mendocino to Baja California, Mexico. Roosts located in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress), with nectar and water sources nearby.
Fish					
<i>Catostomus santaanae</i> Santa Ana sucker	FT	—	CSC	G1/S1	Restricted to three geographically separate populations in three different stream systems in southern California: (1) the lower and middle Santa Ana River; (2) East, West, and North forks of the San Gabriel River; and (3) the lower Big Tujunga Creek. Found in shallow portions of occupied habitat, and preferred substrates are generally coarse and consist of gravel, rubble, and boulders with growths of algae.
<i>Gila orcuttii</i> Arroyo chub	—	—	CSC	G2/S2	Inhabits slow water stream sections with mud or sand bottoms in the Los Angeles Basin.
<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i> ssp. Santa Ana speckled dace	—	—	CSC	G5T1/S1	Found in the headwaters of the Santa Ana and San Gabriel rivers. May be extirpated from the Los Angeles river system. Requires permanent flowing streams with summer water temps of 17–20°Celsius. Usually inhabits shallow cobble and gravel riffles.
Amphibians					
<i>Anaxyrus californicus</i> Arroyo toad	FE	—	CSC	G2G3/S2S3	Found in semi-arid regions near washes or intermittent streams. Habitats used include valley-foothill and desert riparian, as well as a variety of more arid habitats including desert wash, palm oasis, and Joshua tree, mixed chaparral and sagebrush.
<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i> California red-legged frog	FT	—	CSC	G4T2T3/S2S3	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation. Requires 11–20 weeks of permanent water for larval development. Requires access to aestivation habitat.
<i>Rana muscosa</i> Sierra Madre yellow-legged frog	FE	—	CSC	G1/S1	Federal listing refers to populations in the San Gabriel, San Jacinto, and San Bernardino mountains only. Always encountered within a few feet of water tadpoles require 2–4 years to complete their aquatic development.
<i>Spea hammondi</i> Western spadefoot	—	—	CSC	G3/S3	Occurs primarily in grassland habitats, but can be found in valley-foothill hardwood woodlands. Vernal pools are essential for breeding and egg laying.

Table 4.3-2 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
Reptiles					
<i>Actinemys marmorata pallida</i> Southwestern pond turtle	—	—	CSC	G3G4T2T3Q/S2	Inhabits permanent or nearly permanent bodies of water in many habitat types; below 6,000 feet elevation. Require basking sites such as partially submerged logs, vegetation mats, or open mud banks. Need suitable nesting sites, food sources (e.g., plants, aquatic invertebrates, carrion), and few predators (e.g., raccoons, introduced fishes, bullfrogs).
<i>Aniella pulchra pulchra</i> Silvery legless lizard	—	—	CSC	G3G4T3T4Q/S3	Occurs in moist warm loose soil with plant cover. Moisture is essential. Occurs in sparsely vegetated areas of beach dunes, chaparral, pine-oak woodlands, desert scrub, sandy washes, and stream terraces with sycamore, cottonwoods, or oaks.
<i>Aspidoscelis hyperythra</i> Orange-throated whiptail	—	—	CSC	G5/S2	Inhabits low-elevation coastal scrub, chaparral, and valley-foothill hardwood habitats. Prefers washes and other sandy areas with patches of brush and rocks. Perennial plants necessary for its major food-termites.
<i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i> Coastal western whiptail	—	—	—	G5T3T4/S2S3	Found in deserts and semiarid areas with sparse vegetation and open areas. Also, found in woodland and riparian areas. Ground may be firm soil, sandy, or rocky.
<i>Diadophis punctatus modestus</i> San Bernardino ringneck snake	—	—	—	G5T2T3/S2?	Most common in open, relatively rocky areas. Often in somewhat moist microhabitats near intermittent streams. Avoids moving through open or barren areas by restricting movements to areas of surface litter or herbaceous vegetation.
<i>Lampropeltis zonata (pulchra)</i> California mountain kingsnake (San Diego population)					A habitat generalist, found in many habitats including coniferous forest, oak-pine woodlands, riparian woodland, chaparral, manzanita, and coastal sage scrub from near sea level to above 6,500 feet in elevation.
<i>Phrynosoma coronatum (blainvillii population)</i> Coast (San Diego) horned lizard	—	—	CSC	G4G5/S3S4	Inhabits coastal sage scrub and chaparral in arid and semi-arid climate conditions. Prefers friable, rocky, or shallow sandy soils.
<i>Salvadora hexalepis virgulata</i> Coast patch-nosed snake	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S2S3	Found in brushy or shrubby vegetation within coastal Southern California. Requires small mammal burrows for refuge and overwintering sites.
<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i> Two-striped garter snake	—	—	CSC	G3/S2	Found in coastal California from sea level to 7,000 feet elevation in the vicinity of Salinas to northwest Baja California. Highly aquatic, found in or near permanent fresh water. Often along streams with rocky beds and riparian habitat.
Birds					
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i> Cooper's hawk	—	—	WL (nesting)	G5/S3	Woodlands, chiefly of open, interrupted, or marginal type. Nest sites mainly in riparian growths of deciduous trees, as in canyons bottoms on river flood plains; also, live oaks.

Table 4.3-2 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA					
Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i> Tricolored blackbird	—	—	CSC (nesting colony)	G2G3/S2	Inhabits freshwater marshes of cattails, tule, bulrushes, and sedges. Nests in vegetation of marshes or thickets, sometimes nests on the ground. In migration and winter also in open cultivated lands and pastures.
<i>Amphispiza belli belli</i> Bell's sage Sparrow	—	—	WL (nesting)	G5T2T4/S2	Found in coastal sage scrub within south of range. Nests in chaparral dominated by fairly dense stands of chamise.
<i>Ardea herodias</i> Great blue heron	—	—	—	G5/S4 (rookery site)	Colonial nester in tall trees, cliff sides, and sequestered spots on marshes. Rookery sites in close proximity to foraging areas: marshes, lake margins, tide-flats, rivers and streams, wet meadows.
<i>Asio flammeus</i> Short-eared owl	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G5/S3	Require broad expanses of open land with low vegetation for nesting and foraging. Suitable habitats include such types as fresh and saltwater marshes, bogs, dunes, prairies, grassy plains, old fields, tundra, moorlands, river valleys, meadows, savannah, and open woodland. Roost by day on ground, on low open perch, under low shrub, or in conifer.
<i>Athene cunicularia</i> Burrowing owl	—	—	CSC (burrow sites and some wintering sites)	G4/S2	Found in open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. Subterranean nester, dependent upon burrowing mammals, most notably, the California ground squirrel.
<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis</i> Coastal cactus wren			CSC	G5T3Q/S3	Southern California coastal sage scrub. Require tall <i>Opuntia catus</i> for nesting and roosting.
<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i> Western yellow-billed cuckoo	FC (nesting)	CE (nesting)		G5T3Q/S1	Inhabits extensive deciduous riparian thickets or forest with dense, low-level or understory foliage, and which abut on slow-moving watercourses, backwaters, or seeps.
<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i> Yellow warbler	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G5T3/S2	Riparian plant associations. Prefers willows, cottonwoods, aspens, sycamores, and alders for foraging and nesting.
<i>Elanus leucurus</i> White-tailed kite	—	—	FP (nesting)	G5/S3	Found in savanna, open woodland, marshes, partially cleared lands and cultivated fields, mostly in lowland situations. Nests in trees, often near a marsh, usually 6 to 15 meters above the ground in branches near the top of a tree.
<i>Icteria virens</i> Yellow breasted chat	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G5/S3	Summer resident in thickets of willow and other brushy tangles near watercourses. Nests in low, dense riparian, consisting of willow, blackberry, wild grape. Forages and nests within 10 feet of ground.
<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> Logger-head shrike	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G4/S4	Prefers open country for hunting, with perches for scanning, and fairly dense shrubs and brush for nesting.
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> Black-crowned night heron	—	—	—	G5/S3 (rookery site)	Colonial nester, usually in trees, occasionally in tule patches. Rookery sites located adjacent to foraging areas: lake margins, mud-bordered bays, marshy spots.

Table 4.3-2 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDDB	
<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i> Double-crested cormorant	—	—	CSC (rookery site)	G5/S3	Lakes, ponds, rivers, lagoons, swamps, coastal bays, marine islands, and seacoasts; usually within sight of land. Nests on the ground or in trees in freshwater situations, and on coastal cliffs (usually high sloping areas with good visibility).
<i>Polioptila californica californica</i> Coastal California gnatcatcher	FT	—	CSC	G3T2/S2	Found in coastal sage scrub within arid washes and on mesas and slopes in elevations below 2,500 feet.
<i>Sterna antillarum browni</i> California least tern	FE (nesting colony)	FE (nesting colony)	FP	G4T2T3Q/S2S3	Nests along the coast from San Francisco Bay south to northern Baja California. Colonial breeder on bare or sparsely vegetated, flat substrates, including sand beaches, alkali flats, landfills, or paved areas.
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> Least Bell's vireo	FE (nesting)	CE (nesting)	—	G5T2/S2	Summer resident of Southern California in low riparian within vicinity of water or within dry river bottoms; below 2,000 ft. Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways, usually willow, baccharis, mesquite.
Mammals					
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i> Pallid bat	—	—	CSC	G5/S3	Arid deserts and grasslands, often near rocky outcrops and water. Usually roosts in rock crevice or building, less often in cave, tree hollow, mine, etc. Prefers narrow crevices in caves as hibernation sites.
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i> Townsend's big-eared bat	—	—	CSC	G4/S2S3	Throughout much of the known range, commonly occurs in mesic habitats characterized by coniferous and deciduous forest, but occupies a broad range of habitats. Prefers relatively cold places for hibernation, often near entrances and in well-ventilated areas. Does not use crevices or cracks; hangs from the ceiling, generally near the zone of total darkness. Uses caves, buildings, and tree cavities for night roosts.
<i>Euderma maculatum</i> Spotted bat	—	—	CSC	G4/S2S3	Inhabits a wide variety of habitats from arid deserts and grasslands through mixed conifer forests. Feeds over water and along washes. Feeds almost entirely on moths. Needs rock crevices in cliffs or caves for roosting.
<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> Western mastiff bat	—	—	CSC	G5T4/S3	Found in many open, semi-arid to arid habitats. Habitats used include conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, and grasslands. Roosts in crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels.
<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i> Silver-haired bat	—	—	—	G5/S3S4	Prefers forested (frequently coniferous) areas adjacent to lakes, ponds, and streams. During migration, sometimes occurs in xeric areas. Summer roosts and nursery sites are in tree foliage, cavities, or under loose bark, sometimes in buildings.
<i>Lepus californicus bennettii</i> San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S3	Inhabits coastal sage scrub habitats in Southern California.

Table 4.3-2 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of Granada Hills–Knollwood CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i> San Diego desert woodrat	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S3	Found in coastal scrub of southern California from San Diego County to San Luis Obispo County. Prefers moderate to dense canopies, and are particularly abundant in rock outcrops and rocky cliffs and slopes.
<i>Onychomys torridus</i> Ramona Southern grasshopper mouse	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S3?	Found in desert areas, especially scrub habitats with friable soils for digging. Prefers low to moderate shrub cover.
<i>Perognathus longimembris brevinasus</i> Los Angeles pocket mouse	—	—	CSC	G5T1T2/S1S2	Inhabits the lower elevation grassland and coastal sage communities in and around the Los Angeles Basin. Found in open ground with fine sandy soils, and may not dig extensive burrows (hiding under weeds and dead leaves instead).

SOURCES: California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Rarefind (CD-ROM—Oat Mountain, Canoga Park, San Fernando, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles), Wildlife Habitat Data Analysis Branch (Sacramento, 2011); City of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework Draft Environmental Impact Report*, State Clearing House No.: 94071030 (January 19, 1995); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, List of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species that Occur in or May be Affected by Projects in the Oat Mountain, Canoga Park, San Fernando, Sunland, an/or Van Nuys, USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle (Sacramento: Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 2011), http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/spp_lists/QuadNameLookup_Search.cfm

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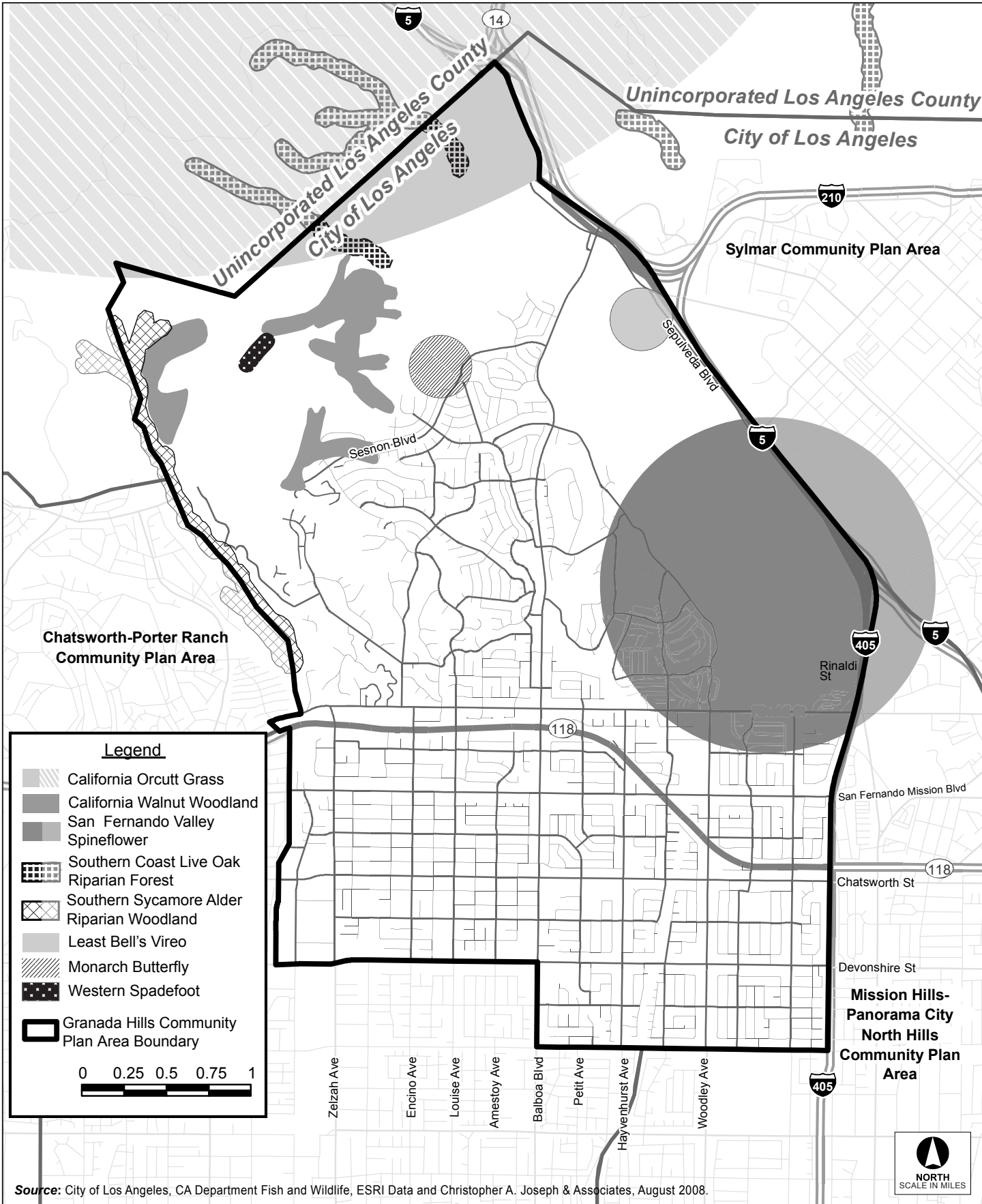
CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game

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- WL = Watch List

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Figure 4.3-2
CNDDB Resources (Granada Hills-Knollwood CPA)

populations have been locally extirpated.²⁷ Corridors can consist of a sequence of stepping-stones across the landscape (i.e., discontinuous areas of habitat such as isolated wetlands and roadside vegetation), continuous linear strips of vegetation and habitat (e.g., riparian strips and ridgelines), or they may be parts of larger habitat areas selected for its known or likely importance to local wildlife.

Although the majority of the Granada Hills–Knollwood currently encompasses residential, commercial, industrial and other suburban development, there is still some opportunity for wildlife to move between habitat areas. Such opportunities exist in the form of the remaining open space areas within the CPA. In particular, the open space areas occupying lands within the Santa Susana Mountains in the northern portion of the CPA are part of larger habitat areas that provide plants and wildlife with direct linkages to the surrounding geographical area, including (but not limited to) the Angeles National Forest. Vacant and undeveloped lands within the existing limits of suburban development throughout the CPA also provides opportunities for wildlife movement, although these habitat areas serve more as stepping stones linkages for animals (in particular birds and insects).

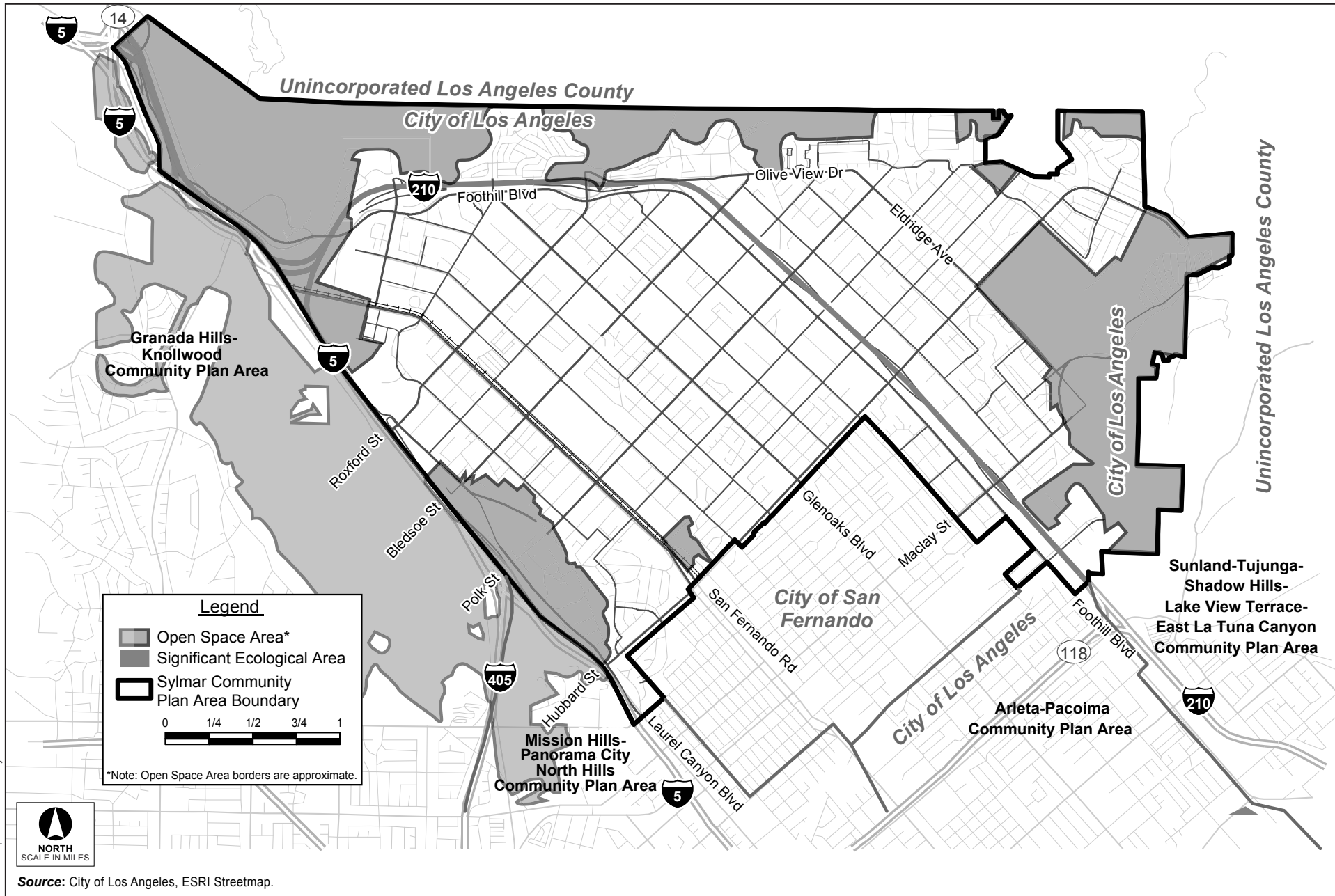
Santa Susana Mountains and Santa Susana Mountains Significant Ecological Area (SEA)

The Santa Susana Mountains form an open-space link between the San Gabriel Mountains (northeast) and the Simi Hills and Santa Monica Mountains (southwest). With the exception of a resource inventory and mapping prepared by Wiekel (1983) and bird lists for O'Melveny Park (Martin 1992), specific biological resource accounts of the Santa Susana Mountains are generally lacking. The range does support nonnative annual grassland, chaparral, oak woodland and savanna, riparian woodland, and big-cone spruce woodland (latter on the north slope only).

■ Sylmar CPA

The community of Sylmar has a total of seven parks, including four regional parks, two community parks, and two neighborhoods parks. Regional parkland includes El Cariso Regional Community Park, El Cariso Golf Course, Veterans Memorial Regional Park, and Wilson Canyon Park. With the exception of Wilson Canyon Park, all three parks are owned and operated by the RAP. Wilson Canyon Park is owned and operated by the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Although many special-status species have been documented to occur historically in this region, many occurrences are known to be extirpated due to habitat loss and fragmentation. Sylmar has an extensive urban forest that contributes to the preservation of the ecosystem by preserving stretches of urban forest along common wildlife migration corridors, such as floodplains, making the survival of various species in urban settings more likely. Figure 4.3-3 (Natural Habitat Areas [Sylmar]) illustrates biological resource areas in the CPA.

²⁷ P. Beir and S. Loe, In My Experience: A Checklist for Evaluating Impacts to Wildlife Movement Corridors, *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (winter) (1992), pp. 434–440.



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Figure 4.3-3
Natural Habitat Areas (Sylmar CPA)

Habitat Types

As previously described in Chapter 3 (Project Description) of this EIR, the Sylmar CPA encompasses approximately 6,824 acres situated within the northern portion of the San Fernando Valley in the City of Los Angeles. Historically, natural habitats occupying the lands within the CPA included habitats such as annual and perennial grasslands, chamise and chamise redshank chaparral, freshwater marshes, inland and coastal sage scrub, oak savannas and woodlands, riparian woodlands, seasonal wetlands, and seasonal and perennial streams, creeks, and rivers, walnut woodlands, and vernal pools. Over the last 200 years, land alteration from agricultural, water supply systems and urbanization has resulted in the loss or alteration of much of the natural habitat within the CPA. Many of these natural habitats have been replaced by urban development and vegetation that is almost completely nonnative comprising of both intentionally planted ornamental species and an array of nonnative species, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetlands have been modified for flood control purposes.

Though the majority of the CPA currently encompasses residential, commercial, industrial, and other suburban development, valuable plant and animal habitat still exists. These habitats are located primarily in open space areas (broadly classified as publicly owned and privately owned land) beyond the existing limits of suburban development within the CPA (refer to Figure 4.3-3). The rugged steep-sided ridges and canyons of the open space areas in the northern and eastern portions of the CPA within the San Gabriel Mountains and the foothills and lowlands in the nearby parklands, such as El Cariso Regional Park, currently support these natural habitats. Also, the open space areas within the Pacoima Wash in the eastern portion of the Sylmar CPA support these habitats. Natural habitats that dominate much of these open space areas include annual grassland, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak savanna, and woodland. Other habitats such as riparian woodland, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetlands also exist within the CPA. These habitats are generally described in more detail below.

Annual Grassland

Annual grassland habitat occupies lands throughout the open space areas within the CPA, occurring primarily as a distinct habitat, but also as understory to chaparral and coastal sage scrub, as well as to oak savanna and woodland, with little change in its herbaceous characteristics. Within the CPA, this habitat occurs in the open space areas of the San Gabriel Mountains and the Grapevine Site. Patches of annual grassland are also found along the Foothill Freeway (I-210) and the Pacoima Wash, as well as within City parklands and on vacant and undeveloped lands within the limits of existing urban development. Annual grassland is primarily comprised of nonnative annual grass species interspersed with native and exotic forbs that thrive in areas surrounded by urban development, along roadsides, and similar disturbed areas. Common grass species include ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), soft chess brome (*Bromus hordeaceus*), and wild oat (*Avena* sp.). Associated nonnative forb species include those such as black mustard (*Brassica nigra*), Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), prickly lettuce (*Lactuca serriola*), and tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*). In addition to the nonnative species mentioned above, native species may form a small percentage of the herbaceous cover in the annual grassland habitat within the CPA, including such species as California buttercup (*Ranunculus californicus*), lupine (*Lupinus bicolor*), and wild hyacinth (*Dichelostemma capitatum*). Species typically associated with chaparral, coastal sage scrub, walnut woodland, and oak savanna and woodland are also scattered throughout annual grasslands, particularly in the open spaces areas within the San Gabriel Mountains in the northern portion of the CPA. Although this has

not been confirmed by detailed field studies, annual grassland habitat within the CPA could also support seasonal wetlands.

Annual grasslands provide habitat for a number of wildlife species, from insects and spiders to large mammals. Wildlife species typically found in grasslands are those that have adapted to dry, windy conditions. These are grazing species, burrowing species, and their predators; insects and spiders are abundant. Some of these species forage in grasslands and retreat to protective cover of the surrounding habitats (e.g., chaparral, coastal sage scrub, oak woodland) for shelter and nesting, while others disperse through this habitat. Wildlife species typically found in annual grasslands habitats include mammals, such as black-tailed jackrabbit (*Lepus californicus*), California ground squirrel (*Spermophilus beecheyi*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), deer mouse (*Peromyscus maniculatus*), and mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), and birds, such as American Crow (*Corvus brachyrhynchos*), golden eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*), red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), and western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*). Reptiles are also frequently found with annual grassland habitat, such as gopher snake (*Pituophis catenifer*), western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), and western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*). In addition, grassland habitats that support seasonal wetlands provide habitat for amphibians, such as Pacific tree frog (*Pseudacris regilla*) and western toad (*Bufo boreas*).

Chaparral

Chaparral habitat occupies lands throughout the open space areas in the San Gabriel Mountains in the northern portion and in the Pacoima Wash within the eastern portion of the CPA, particularly on the north-facing slopes. This habitat maintains an intermediate position between more xeric grassland and scrub habitats and mesic woodland habitats. Chamise-redshank chaparral generally occupies the lands at the lower elevations and grades into mixed chaparral at the higher elevations. Shrub species commonly associated with chamise-dominated chaparral include species such as black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), laurel sumac (*Malosma laurina*), ceanothus (*Ceanothus* spp.), manzanita (*Arctostaphylos* spp.), sugar sumac (*Rhus ovata*), redberry (*Rhamnus crocea*), and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*).

Wildlife species found in chaparral habitats are predominantly those that have adapted to very hot and dry conditions, such as insects, spiders, and reptiles. Because of the hot, dry conditions, amphibians are uncommon, as they typically remain near water sources. There are many birds associated with chaparral habitats, but most are not restricted to chaparral and occur in other habitats. Most mammals are small, such as rodents, and are nocturnal to avoid the daytime heat. Wildlife species typically associated with chaparral habitats include mammals, such as bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani*), and dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*), and birds, such as California quail (*Callipepla californica*), California towhee (*Pipilo maculatus*), and greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*). Reptiles that thrive in chaparral habitat include such species as coast horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), and southern alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*).

Coastal Sage Scrub

The coastal sage scrub habitat is found occupying lands throughout the northern open space areas in the San Gabriel Mountains within the CPA, although patches of this habitat are also found in the vicinity of the Grapevine Site and the Pacoima Wash. Coastal sage scrub habitat is interspersed amongst the grassland, chaparral, and oak savanna and woodland habitats. This habitat type is characterized by the

predominance of sub-shrubs, 1 to 5 feet in height with semi-woody stems growing from a woody base. Many of the species in this habitat display adaptations to prevailing climatic conditions, such as winter rainfall and summer drought, by being drought-deciduous, having grayish-foliage with heavy pubescence on stem and leaves, or similar adaptations to arid conditions. Typical coast sage scrub species within the CPA include such species as black sage, bush mallow (*Malacothamnus fasciculatus*), California buckwheat, California sage (*Artemisia californica*), and a diverse assemblage of other shrubs, herbaceous plants, cacti, and succulents. Scattered oak (*Quercus* spp.), walnut (*Juglans californica*), and eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus* spp.) trees are also present.

Similar to the wildlife species found in chaparral habitats, coastal scrub habitat hosts a variety of species that have adapted to hot and dry conditions. However, this habitat may also support amphibians such as California slender salamander (*Batrachoseps attenuatus*) and western toad in moist canyon areas. Typical mammals found in coastal sage scrub habitat include species such as California ground squirrel, coyote, and raccoon (*Procyon lotor*). Resident birds include such species as Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), and California towhee. Coastal sage scrub habitat also provides year-round hunting grounds for many birds of prey, such as Red-tailed hawk, great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), and turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*). Reptiles such as western fence lizard, side-blotched lizard, and western rattlesnake are typically found in this habitat.

Ruderal Vegetation

Ruderal vegetation within the CPA is characterized by sparsely vegetated areas that support plant species adapted to continued disturbance (e.g., mowing, discing, spraying, vehicular traffic) and are largely composed of weedy, nonnative annual species. Ruderal assemblages of species are found throughout the CPA, along the boundaries of developed areas and roadways, and on vacant and undeveloped parcels. Nonnative species typically observed within these disturbed areas include wild radish, mustard, iceplant, pampas grass, Peruvian pepper tree (*Schinus molle*), oleander (*Nerium oleander*), Russian thistle (*Salsola kali*), and fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*). Due to the high level of habitat degradation, continued disturbance, and lack of native species cover, this habitat offers limited opportunities for common wildlife species to forage, nest, and seek cover.

Oak Savanna and Woodland

Oak savanna and woodland habitat occupies lands throughout the open space areas in the San Gabriel Mountains within the CPA, particularly on the north-facing slopes and in the canyons. This habitat also is found on lands throughout the open space areas in the Santa Susana Mountain within the CPA. Patches of oak savanna and woodland are also found in the vicinity of the Pacoima Wash, as well as within City parklands and on vacant and undeveloped lands within the limits of existing urban development. This habitat forms stands varying from open savannas with grassy understories to fairly dense woodlands with shrubby understories. Stands are dominated by coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and valley oak (*Quercus lobata*), where as canyon live oak (*Quercus chrysolepis*) is more common at the higher elevations. Associated understory species include shrubs such as mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus betuloides*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), and toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*). Also, understory species include grass and forb species similar to those found in the adjacent annual grassland habitat.

Oak habitats have the richest wildlife species abundance of any habitat in California, with over 330 species depending on them at some phase of their life cycle, including at least 120 species of mammals, 147 species of birds, and approximately 60 species of amphibians and reptiles.²⁸ These habitats are able to sustain such abundant wildlife primarily because they produce acorns, a high quality and frequently abundant food supply. Other important food resources found in oak habitats are the herbaceous plants that grow with the oaks and the abundance of small organisms that supply other wildlife food. These habitats also provide wildlife species with shade in the summer and shelter in the winter, and provide nesting and roosting sites. Wildlife species typically found in oak savanna and woodland habitats include mammals, such as California ground squirrel, mule deer, and western gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*), birds such as acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), Ash-throated flycatcher (*Myiarchus cinerascens*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), and western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), and amphibians and reptiles, such as California newt (*Taricha torosa*), California slender salamander, ringneck snake (*Diadophis punctatus*), and southern alligator lizard.

Riparian Woodland

Riparian woodland habitat is generally associated with seasonal and perennial streams and creeks, and occasionally ponds and reservoirs. The composition of species in this habitat is highly variable and dependent on geographic location, elevation, substrate, and amount of water present. Riparian woodland habitat can be found within the Sylmar CPA along many of the seasonal and perennial waters throughout the open space areas in the San Gabriel Mountains, and in the Lakeside Debris Basin, Grapevine Site, and Pacoima Wash. California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), coast live oak, Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), and several species of willow (*Salix* spp.) are common overstory species found in this habitat. Associated understory species include California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), and a variety of herbaceous species.

Riparian habitats are generally extremely productive and have diverse values for wildlife species. The availability of water, the diversity and abundance of plant life, and the complex vegetation structure provide a number of wildlife species with food and water, cover, and movement corridor, as well as breeding and nesting sites. Wildlife species typically found in riparian habitats include mammals, such as opossum (*Didelphis virginianus*), raccoon, and striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*), and birds, such as black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), red-winged blackbird (*Agelaius phoeniceus*), and various other migrant songbirds, such as warblers, vireos, and grosbeaks. Amphibians and reptiles likely to be found in this habitat include Pacific tree frog, western toad, and common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getula*).

Seasonal and Perennial Waters and Wetlands

As later described in Section 4.8 (Hydrology/Water Quality) of this EIR, several streams, creeks, and ponds or reservoirs are scattered throughout the open space areas within the CPAs, but also in the existing limits of urban development. These later streams, creeks, and ponds or reservoirs have mostly been modified for flood control purposes. Most of the streams and creeks within the CPA originate at some elevated source (e.g., pond, reservoir, seasonal wetland) either in the San Gabriel Mountains and

²⁸ G.A. Giusti, Douglas D. McCreary, and Richard B. Standiford, eds., *A Planner's Guide for Oak Woodlands*, 2nd ed. University of California Agricultural and Natural Resources publication 3491 (Oakland, California, 2005).

flow downward to a higher order creek, stream, pond, or reservoir in the lower elevations of the CPA. These stream and creeks typically flow only immediately after rainfall events.

Seasonal wetlands could be present in the various natural habitats within the CPA in the form of depressions, seeps, and swales. These features are typically dry during the summer, and support wetland-adapted plants, such as annual broad-leaf plants, rushes, and sedges.

The surface water of streams, creeks, and ponds or reservoirs is an essential source of drinking water for many wildlife species, and the open water of larger ponds or reservoirs provide resting and escape habitat for waterfowl. Carnivorous and insectivorous birds forage over the open water, and near-shore waters provide forage habitat for many other bird species, as well as mammals, amphibians and reptiles. Riparian habitat along the seasonal and perennial waters could also serve as movement corridors for many species of terrestrial wildlife, which move along the upper margins of these features.

Sensitive Biological Resources

As previously discussed, sensitive biological resources include those habitats or natural communities, plants and wildlife, and other sensitive resources that are governed under federal, state, and local laws and policies. The following section identifies which sensitive biological resources have the potential or are known to occur within the CPA. Sensitive biological resources are generally associated with the open space areas within the San Gabriel Mountains and the nearby parklands in the northern and eastern portions of the CPA, the Grapevine Site in the western portion of the CPA, and the Pacoima Wash in the eastern portion CPA.

Communities and Species of Concern

Sensitive plants and communities that could occur within the CPA are listed in Table 4.3-3 (Sensitive Plants and Communities with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA). Table 4.3-4 (Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA) lists sensitive wildlife that could occur within the CPA. The location of these sensitive biological resources is also shown in Figure 4.3-4 (CNDDDB Resources [Sylmar]). These lists of sensitive species and communities were developed based on a search of the current database records (e.g., CNDDDB and CNPS Electronic Inventory records for the Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Sunland, and Van Nuys U.S. Geological Survey [USGS] 7.5-Minute Quadrangles) and review of the Framework Element of the Los Angeles General Plan and USFWS list of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species for the Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle maps.

Table 4.3-3 and Table 4.3-4 do not include species that are likely to have been extirpated (eliminated), or that are probably extinct, from the CPA, although these species are included on Figure 4.3-4. Examples of such species include Greata's aster (*Symphotrichum greatae*), San Fernando spineflower (*Chorizanthe parryi* var. *fernandina*), slender-horned spineflower (*Dodecabama leptoceras*), California leaf-nosed bat (*Macrotus californicus*), and Western yellow-billed Cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*).

Table 4.3-3 Sensitive Plants and Communities with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species/Communities	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CNDDDB	CNPS	
Plant Species					
<i>Astragalus brauntonii</i> Braunton's milk-vetch	FE	—	G2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Recent burns or disturbed areas in chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland. Usually found in sandstone soils with carbonate layers at elevations of 4 to 640 meters. (January–August)
<i>Berberis nevini</i> Nevin's barberry	FE	CE	G2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian scrub. Found in sandy or gravelly soils at elevations of 274 to 825 meters. (March–June)
<i>Calochortus clavatus</i> var. <i>gracilis</i> Slender mariposa lily	—	—	G4T1/S1.1	List 1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland. Found at elevations of 360 to 1,000 meters. (March–June)
<i>Calochortus plummerae</i> Plummer's mariposa lily	—	—	G3/S3.2	List 1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, and valley and foothill grassland. Found in granitic, rocky soils at elevations of 100 to 1,700 meters. (May–July) One CNDDDB occurrence recorded in 1897 (updated 2002) near Newhall. This occurrence is mapped in the general vicinity of Newhall by the CNDDDB and extends into the northwest portion of the Sylmar CPA.
<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>Australis</i> Southern tarplant	—	—	G4T2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Found along the margins of marshes and swamps, and in vernal mesic valley and foothill grasslands and vernal pools at elevations of 0 to 427 meters. (May–November)
<i>Chorizanthe parryi</i> var. <i>fernandina</i> San Fernando Valley spineflower	FC	CE	G2T1/S1.1	List 1B.1	Coastal scrub habitat in sandy soils at elevations of 3 to 1,035 meters, blooming period April–May. Three CNDDDB occurrences in the Sylmar CPA (1) Little Tujunga Wash (recorded 1920); (2) Vicinity of San Fernando dam (recorded 1922); (3) Toluca now North Hollywood (recorded 1906). This plant was once believed to be extinct was rediscovered in 1999. All occurrences considered possibly extirpated by CNDDDB.
<i>Deinandra minthornii</i> Santa Susana tarplant	—	CR	G2/S2.2	List 1B.2	Chaparral and coastal scrub. Found in rocky soils at elevations of 280 to 760 meters. (July–November)
<i>DodecHEMA leptoceras</i> Slender-horned spineflower	FE	CE	G1/S1.1	List 1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, and alluvial fan coastal scrub. Found in sandy soils at elevations of 200 to 760 meters. (April–June) Two CNDDDB occurrences recorded in the CPA: (1) near Newhall (recorded 1893) and (2) near San Fernando in Pacoima Canyon Wash (recorded 1983). Both occurrences are considered possibly extirpated by CNDDDB.
<i>Malacothamnus davidsonii</i> Davidson's bush-mallow	—	—	G1/S1.1	List 1B.2	Found in chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, and riparian woodland at elevations of 185 to 855 meters. (June–January) Two CNDDDB occurrences recorded in the CPA: (1) north of Limekiln Canyon east of San Fernando (recorded 2002) and (2) north of Highway 210 north of San Fernando (recorded 1977).
<i>Orcuttia californica</i> California orcutt grass	FE	CE	G2/S2.1	List 1B.1	Found in vernal pools at elevations of 15 to 660 meters. (April–August) One CNDDDB occurrence recorded in Newhall; however, the date and location of the record is unknown (although presumed extant and updated in 2002). This occurrence is mapped in the general vicinity of Newhall by the CNDDDB and extends into the northwest portion of the CPA.

Table 4.3-3 Sensitive Plants and Communities with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species/Communities	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CNDDB	CNPS	
<i>Symphotrichum greatae</i> Greata's aster	—	—	G2/S2.3	List 1B.3	Found in broadleaved upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, lower montane coniferous forest, and riparian woodland at elevations of 300 to 2,010 meters. (June–October)
Plant Communities					
California Walnut Woodland	—	—	G2/S2.1	—	Mapped in several locations north of Granada Hills in the Santa Susana Mountains, including (but not limited to) along Aliso, Bee, and Bull Canyons.
Riversidean Alluvial Fan Sage Scrub	—	—	G1/S1.1	—	—
South Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	—	—	G4/S4	—	Mapped in two locations north of Granada Hills in the Santa Susana Mountains, including along Weldon and Bee Canyons.
Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest	—	—	G3/S3.2	—	—
Southern Mixed Riparian Forest	—	—	G2/S2.1	—	—
Southern Sycamore Alder Riparian Woodland	—	—	G4/S4	—	Mapped in 1978 within the Santa Susana Mountains along Aliso Canyon.
Southern Willow Scrub	—	—	G3/S2.1	—	—
Valley Oak Woodland	—	—	G3/S2.1	—	Mapped in 1978 north of Granada Hills in the Santa Susana Mountains, northeast of Oat Mountain.

SOURCES: California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Rarefind (CD-ROM—Oat Mountain, San Fernando, Canoga Park, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles), Wildlife Habitat Data Analysis Branch, (Sacramento: California, 2011); California Native Plant Society, Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (online edition, v7-08c [Oat Mountain, Canoga Park, San Fernando, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles]) (Sacramento, 2011), <http://cnps.org/inventory>; City of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework Draft Environmental Impact Report*, State Clearing House No.: 94071030 (January 19, 1995).

a. Status Codes

FESA: Federal Endangered Species Act of 1972 (as amended)

- FE = Federally listed as Endangered
- FT = Federally listed as Threatened
- FC = Federally designated as Candidate
- FD = Federally delisted (monitored for 5 years)

CNDDB: California Natural Diversity Database

G, T, S-rank
CNDDB element rankings. The global rank (G-rank) is a reflection of the overall condition of an element throughout its global range, with G1 being the most rare and G5 being the least rare. Subspecies receive a T-rank attached to the G-rank. The state rank (S-rank) is a reflection of the overall condition of an element throughout California, sometimes with threat designation attached.

CESA: California Endangered Species Act

- CE = State listed as Endangered
- CT = State listed as Threatened
- CR = State listed as Rare

CNPS: California Native Plant Society

- List 1A = Plants presumed extinct in California
- List 1B = Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere
- List 2 = Plants Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
- List 3 = Plants about which we need more information—a review list
- List 4 = Plants of limited distribution—a watch list

Threat Ranks

CNPS threat rank. These ranks are an extension added onto the CNPS List and designate the level of endangerment by a 1 to 3 ranking, with 1 being the most endangered and 3 being the least endangered.

Table 4.3-4 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
Invertebrates					
<i>Danaus plexippus</i> Monarch butterfly	—	—	—	G5/S3	Winter roost sites extend along the coast from northern Mendocino to Baja California, Mexico. Roosts located in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress), with nectar and water sources nearby.
Fish					
<i>Catostomus santaanae</i> Santa Ana sucker	FT	—	CSC	G1/S1	Restricted to three geographically separate populations in three different stream systems in southern California: (1) the lower and middle Santa Ana River; (2) East, West, and North forks of the San Gabriel River; and (3) the lower Big Tujunga Creek. Found in shallow portions of occupied habitat, and preferred substrates are generally coarse and consist of gravel, rubble, and boulders with growths of algae.
<i>Gila orcuttii</i> Arroyo chub	—	—	CSC	G2/S2	Inhabits slow water stream sections with mud or sand bottoms in the Los Angeles Basin.
<i>Rhinichthys osculus</i> ssp. Santa Ana speckled dace	—	—	CSC	G5T1/S1	Found in the headwaters of the Santa Ana and San Gabriel rivers. May be extirpated from the Los Angeles river system. Requires permanent flowing streams with summer water temps of 17–20°Celsius. Usually inhabits shallow cobble and gravel riffles.
Amphibians					
<i>Anaxyrus californicus</i> Arroyo toad	FE	—	CSC	G2G3/S2S3	Found in semi-arid regions near washes or intermittent streams. Habitats used include valley-foothill and desert riparian, as well as a variety of more arid habitats including desert wash, palm oasis, and Joshua tree, mixed chaparral and sagebrush.
<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i> California red-legged frog	FT	—	CSC	G4T2T3/S2S3	Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation. Requires 11–20 weeks of permanent water for larval development. Requires access to aestivation habitat.
<i>Rana muscosa</i> Sierra Madre yellow-legged frog	FE	—	CSC	G1/S1	Federal listing refers to populations in the San Gabriel, San Jacinto, and San Bernardino mountains only. Always encountered within a few feet of water tadpoles require 2–4 years to complete their aquatic development.
<i>Spea hammondi</i> Western spadefoot	—	—	CSC	G3/S3	Occurs primarily in grassland habitats, but can be found in valley-foothill hardwood woodlands. Vernal pools are essential for breeding and egg laying.
Reptiles					
<i>Actinemys marmorata pallida</i> Southwestern pond turtle	—	—	CSC	G3G4T2T3Q/S2	Inhabits permanent or nearly permanent bodies of water in many habitat types; below 6,000 feet elevation. Require basking sites such as partially submerged logs, vegetation mats, or open mud banks. Need suitable nesting sites, food sources (e.g., plants, aquatic invertebrates, carrion), and few predators (e.g., raccoons, introduced fishes, bullfrogs).

Table 4.3-4 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
<i>Aniella pulchra pulchra</i> Silvery legless lizard	—	—	CSC	G3G4T3T4Q/S3	Occurs in moist warm loose soil with plant cover. Moisture is essential. Occurs in sparsely vegetated areas of beach dunes, chaparral, pine-oak woodlands, desert scrub, sandy washes, and stream terraces with sycamore, cottonwoods, or oaks.
<i>Aspidoscelis hyperythra</i> Orange-throated whiptail	—	—	CSC	G5/S2	Inhabits low-elevation coastal scrub, chaparral, and valley-foothill hardwood habitats. Prefers washes and other sandy areas with patches of brush and rocks. Perennial plants necessary for its major food-termites.
<i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i> Coastal western whiptail	—	—	—	G5T3T4/S2S3	Found in deserts and semiarid areas with sparse vegetation and open areas. Also, found in woodland and riparian areas. Ground may be firm soil, sandy, or rocky.
<i>Diadophis punctatus modestus</i> San Bernardino ringneck snake	—	—	—	G5T2T3/S2?	Most common in open, relatively rocky areas. Often in somewhat moist microhabitats near intermittent streams. Avoids moving through open or barren areas by restricting movements to areas of surface litter or herbaceous vegetation.
<i>Lampropeltis zonata (pulchra)</i> California mountain kingsnake (San Diego population)					A habitat generalist, found in many habitats including coniferous forest, oak-pine woodlands, riparian woodland, chaparral, manzanita, and coastal sage scrub from near sea level to above 6,500 feet in elevation.
<i>Phrynosoma coronatum</i> (blainvillii population) Coast (San Diego) horned lizard	—	—	CSC	G4G5/S3S4	Inhabits coastal sage scrub and chaparral in arid and semi-arid climate conditions. Prefers friable, rocky, or shallow sandy soils.
<i>Salvadora hexalepis virgulata</i> Coast patch-nosed snake	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S2S3	Found in brushy or shrubby vegetation within coastal Southern California. Requires small mammal burrows for refuge and overwintering sites.
<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i> Two-striped garter snake	—	—	CSC	G3/S2	Found in coastal California from sea level to 7,000 feet elevation in the vicinity of Salinas to northwest Baja California. Highly aquatic, found in or near permanent fresh water. Often along streams with rocky beds and riparian habitat.
Birds					
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i> Cooper's hawk	—	—	WL (nesting)	G5/S3	Woodlands, chiefly of open, interrupted, or marginal type. Nest sites mainly in riparian growths of deciduous trees, as in canyons bottoms on river flood plains; also, live oaks.
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i> Tricolored blackbird	—	—	CSC (nesting colony)	G2G3/S2	Inhabits freshwater marshes of cattails, tule, bulrushes, and sedges. Nests in vegetation of marshes or thickets, sometimes nests on the ground. In migration and winter also in open cultivated lands and pastures.
<i>Amphispiza belli belli</i> Bell's sage Sparrow	—	—	WL (nesting)	G5T2T4/S2	Found in coastal sage scrub within south of range. Nests in chaparral dominated by fairly dense stands of chamise.

Table 4.3-4 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
<i>Ardea herodias</i> Great blue heron	—	—	—	G5/S4 (rookery site)	Colonial nester in tall trees, cliff sides, and sequestered spots on marshes. Rookery sites in close proximity to foraging areas: marshes, lake margins, tide-flats, rivers and streams, wet meadows.
<i>Asio flammeus</i> Short-eared owl	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G5/S3	Require broad expanses of open land with low vegetation for nesting and foraging. Suitable habitats include such types as fresh and saltwater marshes, bogs, dunes, prairies, grassy plains, old fields, tundra, moorlands, river valleys, meadows, savannah, and open woodland. Roost by day on ground, on low open perch, under low shrub, or in conifer.
<i>Athene cunicularia</i> Burrowing owl	—	—	CSC (burrow sites and some wintering sites)	G4/S2	Found in open, dry annual or perennial grasslands, deserts, and scrublands characterized by low-growing vegetation. Subterranean nester, dependent upon burrowing mammals, most notably, the California ground squirrel.
<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus sandiegensis</i> Coastal cactus wren			CSC	G5T3Q/S3	Southern California coastal sage scrub. Require tall <i>Opuntia catus</i> for nesting and roosting.
<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i> Western yellow-billed cuckoo	FC (nesting)	CE (nesting)		G5T3Q/S1	Inhabits extensive deciduous riparian thickets or forest with dense, low-level or understory foliage, and which about on slow-moving watercourses, backwaters, or seeps.
<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i> Yellow warbler	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G5T3/S2	Riparian plant associations. Prefers willows, cottonwoods, aspens, sycamores, and alders for foraging and nesting.
<i>Elanus leucurus</i> White-tailed kite	—	—	FP (nesting)	G5/S3	Found in savanna, open woodland, marshes, partially cleared lands and cultivated fields, mostly in lowland situations. Nests in trees, often near a marsh, usually 6 to 15 meters above the ground in branches near the top of a tree.
<i>Icteria virens</i> Yellow breasted chat	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G5/S3	Summer resident in thickets of willow and other brushy tangles near watercourses. Nests in low, dense riparian, consisting of willow, blackberry, wild grape. Forages and nests within 10 feet of ground.
<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> Logger-head shrike	—	—	CSC (nesting)	G4/S4	Prefers open country for hunting, with perches for scanning, and fairly dense shrubs and brush for nesting.
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i> Black-crowned night heron	—	—	—	G5/S3 (rookery site)	Colonial nester, usually in trees, occasionally in tule patches. Rookery sites located adjacent to foraging areas: lake margins, mud-bordered bays, marshy spots.
<i>Phalacrocorax auritus</i> Double-crested cormorant	—	—	CSC (rookery site)	G5/S3	Lakes, ponds, rivers, lagoons, swamps, coastal bays, marine islands, and seacoasts; usually within sight of land. Nests on the ground or in trees in freshwater situations, and on coastal cliffs (usually high sloping areas with good visibility).

Table 4.3-4 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
<i>Polioptila californica californica</i> Coastal California gnatcatcher	FT	—	CSC	G3T2/S2	Found in coastal sage scrub within arid washes and on mesas and slopes in elevations below 2,500 feet.
<i>Sterna antillarum brownii</i> California least tern	FE (nesting colony)	FE (nesting colony)	FP	G4T2T3Q/S2S3	Nests along the coast from San Francisco Bay south to northern Baja California. Colonial breeder on bare or sparsely vegetated, flat substrates, including sand beaches, alkali flats, landfills, or paved areas.
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> Least Bell's vireo	FE (nesting)	CE (nesting)	—	G5T2/S2	Summer resident of southern California in low riparian within vicinity of water or within dry river bottoms; below 2,000 ft. Nests placed along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways, usually willow, baccharis, mesquite.
Mammals					
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i> Pallid bat	—	—	CSC	G5/S3	Arid deserts and grasslands, often near rocky outcrops and water. Usually roosts in rock crevice or building, less often in cave, tree hollow, mine, etc. Prefers narrow crevices in caves as hibernation sites.
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i> Townsend's big-eared bat	—	—	CSC	G4/S2S3	Throughout much of the known range, commonly occurs in mesic habitats characterized by coniferous and deciduous forest, but occupies a broad range of habitats. Prefers relatively cold places for hibernation, often near entrances and in well-ventilated areas. Does not use crevices or cracks; hangs from the ceiling, generally near the zone of total darkness. Uses caves, buildings, and tree cavities for night roosts.
<i>Euderma maculatum</i> Spotted bat	—	—	CSC	G4/S2S3	Inhabits a wide variety of habitats from arid deserts and grasslands through mixed conifer forests. Feeds over water and along washes. Feeds almost entirely on moths. Needs rock crevices in cliffs or caves for roosting.
<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> Western mastiff bat	—	—	CSC	G5T4/S3	Found in many open, semi-arid to arid habitats. Habitats used include conifer and deciduous woodlands, coastal scrub, and grasslands. Roosts in crevices in cliff faces, high buildings, trees, and tunnels.
<i>Lasionycteris noctivagans</i> Silver-haired bat	—	—	—	G5/S3S4	Prefers forested (frequently coniferous) areas adjacent to lakes, ponds, and streams. During migration, sometimes occurs in xeric areas. Summer roosts and nursery sites are in tree foliage, cavities, or under loose bark, sometimes in buildings.
<i>Lepus californicus bennettii</i> San Diego black-tailed jackrabbit	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S3	Inhabits coastal sage scrub habitats in Southern California.
<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i> San Diego desert woodrat	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S3	Found in coastal scrub of Southern California from San Diego County to San Luis Obispo County. Prefers moderate to dense canopies, and are particularly abundant in rock outcrops and rocky cliffs and slopes.
<i>Onychomys torridus</i> Ramona Southern grasshopper mouse	—	—	CSC	G5T3/S3?	Found in desert areas, especially scrub habitats with friable soils for digging. Prefers low to moderate shrub cover.

Table 4.3-4 Sensitive Wildlife with Potential for Occurrence in the Vicinity of the Sylmar CPA

Species	Status ^a				Habitat Associations & Occurrence Information
	FESA	CESA	CDFG	CNDDB	
<i>Perognathus longimembris brevinasus</i> Los Angeles pocket mouse	—	—	CSC	G5T1T2/S1S2	Inhabits the lower elevation grassland and coastal sage communities in and around the Los Angeles Basin. Found in open ground with fine sandy soils, and may not dig extensive burrows (hiding under weeds and dead leaves instead).

SOURCES: California Department of Fish and Game, California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) Rarefind (CD-ROM—Oat Mountain, Canoga Park, San Fernando, Sunland, and Van Nuys USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangles), Wildlife Habitat Data Analysis Branch (Sacramento, 2011); City of Los Angeles, *Los Angeles Citywide General Plan Framework Draft Environmental Impact Report*, State Clearing House No.: 94071030 (January 19, 1995); U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, List of Federal Endangered and Threatened Species that Occur in or May be Affected by Projects in the Oat Mountain, Canoga Park, San Fernando, Sunland, an/or Van Nuys, USGS 7.5-Minute Quadrangle (Sacramento: Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Field Office, 2011), http://www.fws.gov/sacramento/es/spp_lists/QuadNameLookup_Search.cfm

a. Status Codes

FESA: Federal Endangered Species Act of 1972 (as amended)

- FE = Federally listed as Endangered
- FT = Federally listed as Threatened
- FC = Federally designated as Candidate
- FD = Federally delisted (monitored for 5 years)

CESA: California Endangered Species Act

- CE = State listed as Endangered
- CT = State listed as Threatened
- CR = State listed as Rare

CDFG: California Department of Fish and Game

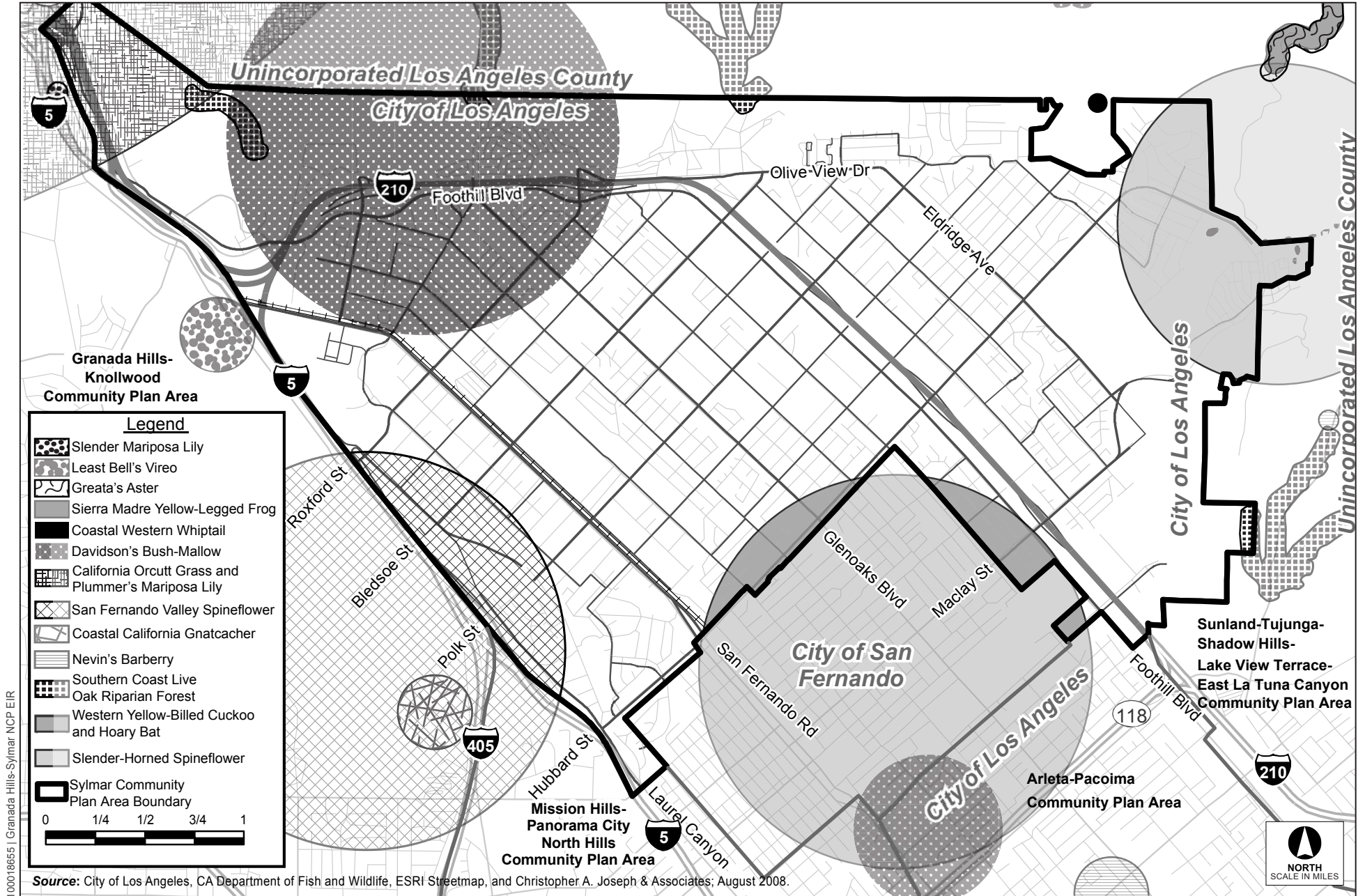
- CSC = Species of Special Concern
- FP = Fully Protected

WL = Watch List

CNDDDB: California Natural Diversity Database

G, T, S-rank

CNDDDB element rankings. The global rank (G-rank) is a reflection of the overall condition of an element throughout its global range, with G1 being the most rare and G5 being the least rare. Subspecies receive a T-rank attached to the G-rank. The state rank (S-rank) is a reflection of the overall condition of an element throughout California, sometimes with threat designation attached.



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Figure 4.3-4
CNDDDB Resources (Sylmar CPA)

In addition to the sensitive habitats or communities listed in Table 4.3-3 by the CNDDB, regulatory and resource agencies consider oak woodland and riparian habitats, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetland habitats sensitive. As previously discussed, these resources are recorded from or have the potential to occur within the CPA.

■ Wildlife Movement

The movement and migration of wildlife species has been substantially altered due to habitat fragmentation over the past century. This fragmentation has most commonly been caused by development, which can result in large patches of land becoming inaccessible and forming a virtual barrier between undeveloped areas, or resulting in additional roads which, although narrow, may result in barriers to smaller or less mobile wildlife species. Habitat fragmentation results in isolated islands of habitat, which affects wildlife behavior, foraging activity, reproductive patterns, immigration and emigration or dispersal capabilities, and survivability.

Wildlife corridors play an important role in countering habitat fragmentation. A wildlife corridor is a linear landscape element which serves as a linkage between historically connected habitats or landscapes that are otherwise separated²⁹ and is meant to provide avenues along which wildlife can travel, migrate, and meet mates; plants can propagate; genetic interchange can occur; populations can move in response to environmental changes and natural disasters; and individuals can re-colonize habitats from which populations have been locally extirpated.³⁰ Corridors can consist of a sequence of stepping-stones across the landscape (i.e., discontinuous areas of habitat such as isolated wetlands and roadside vegetation), continuous lineal strips of vegetation and habitat (e.g., riparian strips and ridgelines), or they may be parts of larger habitat areas selected for its known or likely importance to local wildlife.

Although the majority of the Sylmar CPA currently encompasses residential, commercial, industrial and other suburban development, there is still some opportunity for wildlife to move between habitat areas. Such opportunities exist in the form of the remaining open space areas within the CPA. In particular, the open space areas occupying lands within the San Gabriel Mountains in the northern and eastern portion of the CPA are part of larger habitat areas that provide plants and wildlife with direct linkages to the surrounding geographical area, including (but not limited to) the Angeles National Forest. Open space areas within the western portion of the Sylmar CPA (e., the Grapevine Site) also provide opportunities for wildlife movement, as well as the vacant and undeveloped lands within the existing limits of suburban development throughout the CPA, although these habitat areas serve more as stepping stones linkages for animals (in particular birds and insects).

²⁹ A. McEuen, *The Wildlife Corridor Controversy: A Review*, Endangered Species Update, Vol. 10, Nos. 11 and 12 (September/October 1993).

³⁰ P. Beir and S. Loe, In My Experience: A Checklist for Evaluating Impacts to Wildlife Movement Corridors, *Wildlife Society Bulletin*, Vol. 20, No. 4 (winter) (1992), pp. 434–440.

4.3.2 Regulatory Framework

■ Federal

Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA) of 1973, as amended, provides the regulatory framework for the protection of plant and animal species (and their associated critical habitats), which are formally listed, proposed for listing, or candidates for listing as endangered or threatened under the FESA. The FESA has the following four major components: provisions for listing species, requirements for consultation with the USFWS and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's National Marine Fisheries Service (NOAA Fisheries Service), prohibitions against "taking" (meaning harassing, harming, hunting, shooting, wounding, killing, trapping, capturing, or collecting, or attempting to engage in any such conduct) of listed species, and provisions for permits that allow incidental "take." The FESA also discusses recovery plans and the designation of critical habitat for listed species. Both the USFWS and the NOAA Fisheries Service share the responsibility for administration of the FESA. During the CEQA review process, each agency is given the opportunity to comment on the potential of the proposed project to affect plants and animals listed, proposed for listing, or candidate for listing.

Clean Water Act Sections 404 and 401

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) regulate the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) (33 USC 1344). Waters of the United States are defined in Title 33 CFR Part 328.3(a) and include a range of wet environments such as lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, or natural ponds. The lateral limits of jurisdiction in those waters may be divided into three categories—territorial seas, tidal waters, and nontidal waters—and is determined depending on which type of waters is present (Title 33 CFR Part 328.4(a), (b), (c)). Activities in waters of the United States regulated under Section 404 include fill for development, water resource projects (e.g., dams and levees), infrastructure developments (e.g., highways and airports), and mining projects. Section 404 of the CWA requires a federal license or permit before dredged or fill material may be discharged into waters of the United States, unless the activity is exempt from Section 404 regulation (e.g., certain farming and forestry activities).

Section 401 of the CWA (33 USC 1341) requires any applicant for a federal license or permit to conduct any activity that may result in a discharge of a pollutant into waters of the United States to obtain a certification from the state in which the discharge originates or would originate, or, if appropriate, from the interstate water pollution control agency having jurisdiction over the affected waters at the point where the discharge originates or would originate. The discharge would be required to comply with the applicable effluent limitations and water quality standards. A certification obtained for the construction of any facility must also pertain to the subsequent operation of the facility. The responsibility for the protection of water quality in California rests with the State Water Resources Control Board (State Water Board) and its nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (Water Boards).

Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act

The Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act (16 USC Sections 661–667e, March 10, 1994, as amended 1946, 1958, 1978, and 1995) requires that whenever waters or channel of a stream or other body of water are proposed or authorized to be modified by a public or private agency under a federal license or permit, the federal agency must first consult with the USFWS and/or NOAA Fisheries Service and with the head of the agency exercising administration over the wildlife resources of the state where construction would occur (in this case the CDFG), with a view to conservation of birds, fish, mammals and all other classes of wild animals and all types of aquatic and land vegetation upon which wildlife is dependent.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act

The Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) (16 USC 703 et seq.), Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 10, prohibits taking, killing, possessing, transporting, and importing of migratory birds, parts of migratory birds, and their eggs and nests, except when specifically authorized by the Department of the Interior. As used in the act, the term “take” is defined as meaning, “to pursue, hunt, capture, collect, kill or attempt to pursue, hunt, shoot, capture, collect or kill, unless the context otherwise requires.” With a few exceptions, most birds are considered migratory under the MBTA. Disturbances that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort or loss of habitat upon which these birds depend would be in violation of the MBTA.

■ State

California Endangered Species Act

The State of California enacted similar laws to the FESA, the California Native Plant Protection Act (NPPA) in 1977 and the California Endangered Species Act (CESA) in 1984. The CESA expanded upon the original NPPA and enhanced legal protection for plants, but the NPPA remains part of the California Fish and Game Code. To align with the FESA, CESA created the categories of “threatened” and “endangered” species. It converted all “rare” animals into the CESA as threatened species, but did not do so for rare plants. Thus, these laws provide the legal framework for protection of California-listed rare, threatened, and endangered plant and animal species. The CDFG implements NPPA and CESA, and its Wildlife and Habitat Data Analysis Branch maintains the CNDDDB, a computerized inventory of information on the general location and status of California’s rarest plants, animals, and natural communities. During the CEQA review process, the CDFG is given the opportunity to comment on the potential of the proposed plans to affect listed plants and animals.

Fully Protected Species and Species of Special Concern

The classification of “fully protected” was the CDFG’s initial effort to identify and provide additional protection to those animals that were rare or faced possible extinction. Lists were created for fish, amphibian and reptiles, birds, and mammals. Most of the species on these lists have subsequently been listed under CESA and/or FESA. The Fish and Game Code sections (fish at Section 5515, amphibian and reptiles at Section 5050, birds at Section 3511, and mammals at Section 4700) dealing with “fully protected” species states that these species “... may not be taken or possessed at any time and no provision of this code or any other law shall be construed to authorize the issuance of permits or licenses

to take any fully protected species,”³¹ although take may be authorized for necessary scientific research. This language makes the “fully protected” designation the strongest and most restrictive regarding the “take” of these species. In 2003, the code sections dealing with fully protected species were amended to allow the CDFG to authorize take resulting from recovery activities for state-listed species.

Species of special concern are broadly defined as animals not listed under the FESA or CESA, but which are nonetheless of concern to the CDFG because they are declining at a rate that could result in listing or historically occurred in low numbers and known threats to their persistence currently exist. This designation is intended to result in special consideration for these animals by the CDFG, land managers, consulting biologist, and others, and is intended to focus attention on the species to help avert the need for costly listing under FESA and CESA and cumbersome recovery efforts that might ultimately be required. This designation also is intended to stimulate collection of additional information on the biology, distribution, and status of poorly known at-risk species, and focus research and management attention on them. Although these species generally have no special legal status, they are given special consideration under the CEQA during project review.

California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3513

According to California Fish and Game Code Section 3503 it is unlawful to take, possess, or needlessly destroy the nest or eggs of any bird (except English sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) and European starlings (*Sturnus vulgaris*). Section 3503.5 specifically protects birds in the orders Falconiformes and Strigiformes (birds-of-prey). Section 3513 essentially overlaps with the MTBA, prohibiting the take or possession of any migratory nongame bird. Disturbance that causes nest abandonment and/or loss of reproductive effort is considered “take” by the CDFG.

Other Sensitive Plants – California Native Plant Society

The CNPS, a nonprofit plant conservation organization, publishes and maintains an Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California in both hard copy and electronic version (www.cnps.org/rareplants/inventory/6thedition.htm). The Inventory assigns plants to the following categories:

- 1A: Presumed extinct in California
- 1B: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere
- 2: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
- 3: Plants for which more information is needed—A review list
- 4: Plants of limited distribution—A watch list

Additional endangerment codes are assigned to each group as follows:

- x.1: Seriously endangered in California (over 80 percent of occurrences threatened/high degree of immediacy of threat)
- x.2: Fairly endangered in California (20 to 80 percent occurrences threatened)

³¹ California Department of Fish and Game Fish and Game Commission, *California Fish and Game Code* (January 1, 1998).

- x.3: Not very endangered in California (<20 percent of occurrences threatened or no current threats known)

Plants on Lists 1A, 1B, and 2 of the CNPS Inventory consist of plants that could qualify for listing, by CDFG, as well as other state agencies. Also, the CNPS recommends these plants be given special consideration under CEQA during project review. In addition, the CDFG and CNPS recommend, and local governments may require, consideration of plants on Lists 3 and 4 during project review.

Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act

Waters of the State are defined by the Porter-Cologne Act as “any surface water or groundwater, including saline waters, within the boundaries of the state.” The State Water Board protects all waters in its regulatory scope, but has special responsibility for isolated wetlands and headwaters. These waterbodies have high resource value, are vulnerable to filling, and may not be regulated by other programs, such as CWA Section 404. Waters of the State are regulated by the Water Boards under the State Water Quality Certification Program, which regulates discharges of dredged and fill material under CWA Section 401 and the Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. Projects that require a USACE permit, or fall under other federal jurisdiction, and have the potential to impact Waters of the State are required to comply with the terms of the Water Quality Certification Program. If a proposed project does not require a federal license or permit, but does involve activities that could result in a discharge of harmful substances to Waters of the State, the Water Boards have the option to regulate such activities under its state authority in the form of Waste Discharge Requirements or Certification of Waste Discharge Requirements.

California Fish and Game Code Section 1600

Streams, lakes, and riparian vegetation as habitat for fish and other wildlife species, are subject to jurisdiction by the CDFG under Sections 1600–1616 of the California Fish and Game Code. Any activity that would do one or more of the following: substantially obstruct or divert the natural flow of a river, stream, or lake; substantially change or use any material from the bed, channel, or bank of a river, stream, or lake; or deposit or dispose of debris, waste, or other material containing crumbled, flaked, or ground pavement where it can pass into a river, stream, or lake generally require a 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement. The term “stream,” which includes creeks and rivers, is defined in the California Code of Regulations (CCR) as follows: “a body of water that flows at least periodically or intermittently through a bed or channel having banks and supports fish or other aquatic life.” This includes watercourses having a surface or subsurface flow that supports or has supported riparian vegetation” (14 CCR 1.72). In addition, the term stream can include ephemeral streams, dry washes, watercourses with subsurface flows, canals, aqueducts, irrigation ditches, and other means of water conveyance if they support aquatic life, riparian vegetation, or stream-dependent terrestrial wildlife.³² Riparian is defined as “on or pertaining to, the banks of a stream”; therefore, riparian vegetation is defined as, “vegetation which occurs in and/or adjacent to a stream and is dependent on, and occurs because of, the stream

³² California Department of Fish and Game Environmental Services Division, *A Field Guide to Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements, Sections 1600–1607, California Fish and Game Code* (1994).

itself.”³³ Removal of riparian vegetation also requires a Section 1602 Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreement from the CDFG.

Sensitive Plant Communities

Sensitive plant communities are natural communities and habitats that are either unique, of relatively limited distribution in the region, or of particularly high wildlife value. However, these communities may or may not necessarily contain special-status species. Sensitive natural communities are usually identified in local or regional plans, policies or regulations, or by the CDFG (i.e., CNDDDB) or the USFWS. Impacts to sensitive natural communities and habitats must be considered and evaluated under the CEQA (CCR: Title 14, Div. 6, Chap. 3, Appendix G).

■ Local

City of Los Angeles General Plan

The City of Los Angeles General Plan (General Plan) addresses community development goals and policies relative to the distribution of land use, both public and private, and acts to protect large tracts of open space for habitat conservation, species protection, watershed maintenance, and other purposes. The General Plan integrates the citywide elements and community plans, and gives policy direction to the planning regulatory and implementation programs.

The General Plan Framework (Framework), a special element of the General Plan, adopted December 1996 and amended most recently in August 2001, is a more general, long-term, programmatic document, implemented by the various individual elements of the General Plan. Policies related to open space conservation and protecting the City’s natural resources including biological resources, such as sensitive species and habitats and wildlife movement corridors, are found in the Framework.

The state requires that conservation and open space elements are included in city and county general plans. City and County general plans need to address conservation, protection, development, utilization, and reclamation of natural resources. In addition they should address natural and other open space resources. Policies related to the protection and conservation of natural resources including biological resources are found in the Conservation Element of the City’s General Plan.

Conservation Element

The intent of the Conservation Element is for the conservation and preservation of natural resources, including (but not limited to) biological resources such as endangered species and habitats. The Conservation Element contains policies for avoidance and minimization of significant impacts to sensitive resources, protection and conservation of habitats, and the establishment of habitat restoration and enhancement programs.

Policies from the Conservation Element and Framework pertaining to biological resources are listed on Table 4.3-5 (General Plan Policies Relevant to Biological Resources).

³³ California Department of Fish and Game Environmental Services Division, *A Field Guide to Lake and Streambed Alteration Agreements, Sections 1600–1607, California Fish and Game Code* (1994).

Table 4.3-5 General Plan Policies Relevant to Biological Resources	
No.	Goal/Objective/Policy
FRAMEWORK ELEMENT	
Open Space and Conservation	
Goal 6A	An integrated citywide/regional public and private open space system that serves and is accessible by the City's population and is unthreatened by encroachment from other land uses.
Objective 6.1	Protect the City's natural settings from the encroachment of urban development, allowing for the development, use, management, and maintenance of each component of the City's natural resources to contribute to the sustainability of the region.
Policy 6.1.1	Consider appropriate methodologies to protect significant remaining open spaces for resource protection and mitigation of environmental hazards, such as flooding, in and on the periphery of the City, such as the use of tax incentives for landowners to preserve their lands, development rights exchanges in the local area, participation in land banking, public acquisition, land exchanges, and Williamson Act contracts.
Policy 6.1.2	Coordinate City operations and development policies for the protection and conservation of open space resources, by: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Encouraging City departments to take the lead in utilizing water re-use technology, including graywater and reclaimed water for public landscape maintenance purposes and such other purposes as may be feasible b. Preserving habitat linkages, where feasible, to provide wildlife corridors and to protect natural animal ranges c. Preserving natural viewsheds, whenever possible, in hillside and coastal areas
Policy 6.1.3	Reassess the environmental importance of the County of Los Angeles designated Significant Ecological Areas (SEAs) that occur within the City of Los Angeles and evaluate the appropriateness of the inclusion of other areas that may exhibit equivalent environmental value.
Policy 6.1.4	Conserve, and manage the undeveloped portions of the City's watersheds, where feasible, as open spaces which protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources.
Policy 6.1.5	Provide for an on-site evaluation of sites located outside of targeted growth areas, as specified in amendments to the community plans, for the identification of sensitive habitats, sensitive species, and an analysis of wildlife movement, with specific emphasis on the evaluation of areas identified on the Biological Resource Maps contained in the Framework Element's Technical Background Report and Environmental Impact Report.
Policy 6.1.6	Consider preservation of private land open space to the maximum extent feasible. In areas where open space values determine the character of the community, development should occur with special consideration of these characteristics.
Policy 6.1.7	Encourage an increase of open space where opportunities exist throughout the City to protect wild areas such as the Sepulveda Basin and Chatsworth Reservoir.
CONSERVATION ELEMENT	
Endangered Species	
Policy 1	Continue to require evaluation, avoidance, and minimization of potential significant impacts, as well as mitigation of unavoidable significant impacts on sensitive animal and plant species and their habitats and habitat corridors relative to land development activities.
Policy 2	Continue to administer city-owned and managed properties so as to protect and/or enhance the survival of sensitive plant and animal species to the greatest practical extent.
Policy 3	Continue to support legislation that encourages and facilitates protection of endangered, threatened, sensitive, and rare species and their habitats and habitat corridors.
Fisheries	
Policy 1	Continue to implement and to cooperate with lake fish stocking or enhancement programs.
Policy 2	Continue to consider and implement measures that will mitigate potential damage to and will encourage maintenance or restoration of fisheries.

Table 4.3-5 General Plan Policies Relevant to Biological Resources

No.	Goal/Objective/Policy
Habitats	
Policy 1	Continue to identify significant habitat areas, corridors, and buffers and to take measures to protect, enhance, and/or restore them.
Policy 2	Continue to protect, restore, and/or enhance habitat areas, linkages and corridor segments, to the greatest extent practical, within city-owned or -managed sites.
Policy 3	Continue to work cooperatively with other agencies and entities in protecting local habitats and endangered, threatened, sensitive, and rare species.
Policy 4	Continue to support legislation that encourages and facilitates protection of local native plant and animal habitats.

SOURCES: Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *The Citywide General Plan Framework: An Element of the City of Los Angeles General Plan* (adopted August 8, 2001), CPC 94-0354 GPF CF 95-2259 CF 01-1162, <http://cityplanning.lacity.org>; Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *General Plan of the City of Los Angeles, Conservation Element* (adopted September 26, 2001)

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code

The City of Los Angeles Protected Tree Ordinance No. 177,404 (effective April 23, 2006) defines “Protected Trees” as any of the following Southern California native tree species, which measures four inches or more in cumulative diameter, 4.5 feet above the ground level at the base of the tree (i.e., diameter at breast height [DBH]): any native species of oak (*Quercus* sp.), with the exception of scrub oak (*Quercus berberidifolius*), Southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica* var. *californica*), California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*), and western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). Any of these protected native tree species removed must be replaced at a minimum of two to one (2:1) ratio with a minimum of 48-inch box size (if available) tree and sufficient trees of that size to replace the crown of the removed tree. In addition, the Los Angeles City Planning Department considers any nonnative tree at least 12 inches in diameter a significant biological resource and every tree of this size and above removed must be replaced at a one-for-one (1:1) ratio with a minimum of 24-inch box size tree. Further, under City of Los Angeles draft standard mitigation measures, a bond must be posted to guarantee the survival of the newly planted trees to assure the existence of continuously living trees for a minimum of 3 years from the date the bond was posted or the trees were replaced, planted or relocated.

City of Los Angeles Tentative Map Requirements

The Tentative Tract Map filing guidelines issued by the DCP state that, in addition to protected trees (addressed above), other trees (generally nonnative) with a DBH of 12 inches or greater that are located within the proposed limits of disturbance be identified and mapped on a site plan, and that desirable “mature” trees be replaced at a 1:1 ratio.

Proposed Plan Policies

The proposed plans include several policies that are directly and indirectly related to biological resources and habitat conservation. These policies are listed below in Table 4.3-6 (Proposed Granada Hills–Knollwood Community Plan Policies) and Table 4.3-7 (Proposed Sylmar Community Plan Policies).

Table 4.3-6 Proposed Granada Hills–Knollwood Community Plan Policies	
<i>Policy No.</i>	<i>Policy</i>
Policy LU4.5	Mountain Viewshed Protection. Design development near ridgelines so as to avoid breaking the mountain silhouette of a significant ridgeline. Discourage building and grading on ridgelines to protect ridges and environmentally sensitive areas, and to prevent erosion associated with development and visual interruption of the ridge profile.
Policy CF6.1	Conservation. Preserve passive and visual open space that provides wildlife habitat and corridors, wetlands, watersheds, groundwater recharge areas, and other natural resource areas.
Policy CF6.2	Protection. Protect significant open space resources and environmentally sensitive areas from environmental hazards and incompatible land uses.
Policy CF6.3	Grading. Minimize the grading of natural terrain to permit development in hillside areas and the foothills correspond to densities designated by this Community Plan, the geological stability of the area, and compatibility with adjoining land uses.
Policy CF6.4	Natural Drainage. Minimize the alteration of natural drainage patterns, canyons, and water courses, except where improvements are necessary to protect life and property.
Policy CF6.6	Ecologically Sensitive Areas. Coordinate with the County of Los Angeles in identifying significant ecological areas featuring ecological or scenic resources that should be preserved and protected within State reserves, preserves, parks, or natural wildlife refuges.
Policy CF8.1	Urban Forest. Encourage the preservation of the existing tree population and include new trees in an effort to achieve optimum canopy cover to reduce and mitigate the heat island effect. Include on-site trees in new development projects, whenever possible.
Policy CF8.2	Tree Protection. Encourage and promote the retention of trees, particularly orange trees, where practical and appropriate, through education, outreach and incentives offered by the Bureau of Street Services.
Policy CF8.3	Tree Selection. Support policies of the Bureau of Street Services to reduce conflicts with existing infrastructure through proper tree selection and through the recognition of street trees as a vital component of the City's infrastructure.
Policy CF8.4	Native Plants. Encourage the use of plant communities native to Los Angeles which achieve native biodiversity and enhance existing wildlife habitats.
Policy CF8.5	Policy PF8.5. Shade Streets. Facilitate the planting and maintenance of street trees, which provide shade and give scale to residential and commercial streets in all neighborhoods in Granada Hills–Knollwood.
Policy CF8.6	Sustainable Design. Develop design standards that promote the sustainable development in public and private open space and street rights-of-way.
Policy CF8.7	Partnerships. Encourage community and private partnerships in urban forestry issues, minimizing maintenance costs. Collaborate with other City departments, neighborhood associations, business improvement districts and private developers to promote trees in parkways, landscaped medians, community gateways, and throughout.

Table 4.3-7 Proposed Sylmar Community Plan Policies	
<i>Policy No.</i>	<i>Policy</i>
Policy LU6.5	Mountain Viewshed Protection. Design development near ridgelines so that it does not break the mountain silhouette of a significant ridgeline. Discourage building and grading on ridgelines to protect ridges and environmentally sensitive areas, and to prevent erosion associated with development and visual interruption of the ridge profile.
Policy CF13.1	Urban Forest. Maintain and preserve the existing tree population while planting new trees in an effort to achieve optimum canopy cover to reduce and mitigate the heat island effect. Include on-site trees in new development projects, whenever possible.
Policy CF13.2	Tree Protection. Mitigate tree loss or damage caused by construction activities, improper pruning practices, and tree diseases and pests. Encourage and promote the retention of trees, where practical and appropriate, through education, outreach and incentives offered by the Bureau of Street Services.

Table 4.3-7 Proposed Sylmar Community Plan Policies

<i>Policy No.</i>	<i>Policy</i>
Policy CF13.3	Proper Tree Selection. Support policies of the Bureau of Street Services to reduce conflicts with existing infrastructure through proper tree selection and through the recognition of street trees as a vital component of the City's infrastructure.
Policy CF13.4	Native Plants. Encourage the use of plant communities native to Los Angeles which achieve native biodiversity and enhance existing wildlife habitats.
Policy CF13.5	Shade Streets. Facilitate the planting and maintenance of street trees, which provide shade and give scale to residential and commercial streets in all neighborhoods in Sylmar.
Policy CF13.6	Sustainable Design. Develop design standards that promote the sustainable development in public and private open space and street rights-of-way.
Policy CPF13.7	Partnerships. Develop community and private partnerships to facilitate the planting and maintenance of street trees and minimize maintenance costs. Work with other City departments, neighborhood associations, business improvement districts and private developers to promote trees in parkways, landscaped medians, community gateways, and throughout Sylmar.

Consistency Analysis

The proposed plans would allocate land for the range of uses that the CPAs will need through 2030, including land for housing, jobs, and recreation as well as improve the link between land use and transportation in a manner that is consistent with the City of Los Angeles Framework citywide growth strategy. The Framework is a long range, citywide, comprehensive growth strategy and a special element of the General Plan which plans for the future. Therefore, the Framework looks at the City as a whole and provides a citywide context within which community planning takes place. The Framework element neither overrides nor supersedes the Community Plans it guides the City's long-range growth and development policy, establishing citywide standards, goals, policies and objectives for citywide elements and community plans. Both of these document's purposes and long-range policy direction are similar with the City's Framework elements and policies in regards to open space and conservation. The Citywide elements provide long-range policy direction which takes into account citywide goals and needs which guide more detailed planning efforts including Specific Plans and Community and Neighborhood Plans.

The proposed plans contain goals, objectives, policies, and programs which the City would promote during the life span of the proposed plans. Open Space and Conservation goals of the Framework and Conservation Elements are intended to promote and enhance the conservation and protection of natural resources and open space of neighborhoods by upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm. The proposed plans would be consistent with the policies set forth in the Open Space and Conservation section of the City's Framework document. Therefore, the proposed plans would be consistent with applicable guidelines and regulations.

4.3.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation

■ Analytic Method

The criteria for determining significant impacts on biological resources were developed in accordance with CEQA Guidelines. CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a) states that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if “the project has 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, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.” An evaluation of whether an impact on biological resources would be significant must consider both the resource itself and how that resource fits into a regional or local context. Significant impacts would be those that would diminish, or result in the loss of, an important biological resource or those that would obviously conflict with local, state, or federal resource conservation plans, goals, or regulations. Impacts are sometimes locally adverse, but not significant, because they would result in an adverse alteration of existing conditions, but they would not substantially diminish or result in the permanent loss of an important resource on a population- or regionwide basis.

The Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide (2006) sets forth guidance for the determination of significance of biological resource impacts. This guidance is based on CEQA Guidelines Appendix G and provides specific criteria to be considered when making a significance determination. In some cases, the Thresholds Guide includes quantitative thresholds. For purposes of this analysis, Thresholds Guide criteria are used, supplemented by the thresholds identified in Appendix G, where appropriate.

Methodology

Special-status plant and wildlife species include those listed as endangered or threatened under the FESA or CESA, or are proposed or candidates for listing. In addition, wildlife species not listed under FESA or CESA may be considered special status if they are assigned a global or state sensitivity ranking by CDFG (1 through 3, with state rankings having an additional ranking of .1, .2, or .3). Special-status wildlife species also include migratory birds that are protected under the Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act, which prohibits killing any migratory bird or disturbing or destroying an active nest of a migratory bird; this list contains hundreds of birds, including many of which are considered common or even nuisance or nonnative species. Nesting birds are also protected under California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503, 3503.5, and 3512, which prohibit the take of active bird nests. Plant species that are not listed as endangered, threatened, candidate, or proposed species under FESA or CESA may be considered special status if they are assigned a rarity code by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). The CNPS lists five categories of rarity (Lists 1A, 1B, 2, 3, and 4). Under CEQA, impact analyses are mandatory for Lists 1 and 2 species, but not for all Lists 3 and 4 species as some do not meet the definitions of the Federal Native Plant Protection Act or the California Endangered Species Act; however, analysis of impacts to Lists 3 and 4 species is generally considered in most CEQA analyses and is recommended by the CNPS.³⁴

³⁴ California Native Plant Society, *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants of California* (sixth edition), Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee, David P. Tibor, Convening Editor (Sacramento: California Native Plant Society, 2001).

■ Thresholds of Significance

Implementation of the proposed plans may have a significant adverse impact on biological resources if they would:

- 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
- 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 Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means
- Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors such that chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species is adversely affect, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites
- Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance
- Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan
- Interfere with habitat such that normal species behaviors are disturbed (e.g., from the introduction of noise, light) to a degree that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species

■ Effects Not Found to Be Significant

The proposed Granada Hills–Knollwood and Sylmar Community Plans primarily propose changes to General Plan land use designations to create consistency between land use designations and existing development and would not result in the significant addition of infrastructure. The proposed plans would primarily result in minor infrastructure improvements, development of vacant and undeveloped lands surrounded by existing development, and redevelopment of areas currently developed. Most sensitive biological resources and areas of potential habitat for sensitive species (e.g., coastal sage scrub) are located in the portions of the CPAs that would not be impacted by projects under the proposed plans.

However, the proposed plans could result in an increase in residential density in urbanized portions of both CPAs due to proposed zone changes that would accommodate a projected increase in population to 2030. There would also be an increase in commercial and industrial uses with full implementation of the proposed plans compared to existing conditions. The intensification of land use within urbanized areas could increase recreational use of open space areas and result in indirect impacts to sensitive biological resources. Potential biological impacts resulting from such projects would be addressed on a project-by-project basis through environmental review and compliance with existing local policies, and federal and state environmental regulations. As part of this review process, projects must be designed to minimize

impacts to biological resources, such as increased noise, light, and the potential introduction of exotic plant species.

Some areas within the CPAs have the potential or are known to support sensitive plant and animal species and sensitive habitats that are protected under the Conservation Element and Framework Element of the General Plan. Projects resulting from the proposed plans and implementing ordinances could result in impacts to sensitive resources protected by local policies and ordinances. Specifically, development and infrastructure projects could result in the loss of protected trees within the CPAs, including any native species of oak (with the exception of scrub oak), Southern California black walnut, California bay laurel, and western sycamore.

All projects subject to discretionary approval would be required to undergo environmental review. This review would include evaluation of sensitive resources pursuant to General Plan policies protecting biological resources. All trees over 12-inch DBH are protected by City ordinance (whether native or nonnative) and under the City's standard mitigation measures (as of March 26, 2009), a bond must be posted to guarantee the survival of the newly planted trees to assure the existence of continuously living trees for a minimum of three years from the date the bond was posted or the trees were replaced, planted or relocated. For project sites containing trees, prior to the issuance of a grading permit or building permit, the project applicants would be required to submit a tree report (arborist's report) and landscape plan prepared by a Municipal Code-designated tree expert as prescribed by Ordinance No. 153,478, for approval by the City planning staff and the Urban Forestry Division of the Bureau of Street Services. The project applicants would be required to comply with mitigation set forth in required Conditions of Approval, which would ensure that the project would not conflict with the City's Protected Tree Ordinance. Protected native tree species would be replaced at a minimum two-to-one (2:1) ratio with a minimum of 48-inch box size tree (if available) sufficient to replace the removed tree's crown and all trees over 12-inch DBH (whether native or nonnative) would require a 1:1 replacement ratio with a minimum of 24-inch box size tree.

Therefore, projects subject to discretionary approval that could occur under the proposed plans would require environmental review and compliance with local policies and ordinances (such as the Conservation Element of the City's General Plan or the City's Protected Tree Ordinance). Implementation of the proposed plans would not conflict with any local policies, ordinances, or Habitat Conservation Plans protecting biological resources.

Future discretionary projects under the proposed plans would be required to be consistent with the Conservation Element and Framework encouraging the protection of sensitive habitats and species and the conservation and enhancement of hillsides, open space, canyons, and natural communities. In addition, all future discretionary projects would be required to comply with federal, state, and local regulatory permit terms and conditions, which would offset any impacts to biological resources. Therefore, because such projects would be in compliance with existing local policies and federal and state environmental laws and regulations, and terms and conditions of issued permits associated with implementation of the proposed plan, there is *no impact*.

There are no adopted Habitat Conservation Plans, Natural Community Conservation Plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans applicable to the Granada Hills–Knollwood and Sylmar CPAs. There is *no impact*.

The USACE regulates the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States, including wetlands, while CDFG and State Water Board regulate impacts to Waters of the State, including riparian habitat, streambeds, and wetlands. As previously discussed, potentially jurisdictional waters of the U.S. and wetlands could be located in the CPAs, particularly within the open space areas in the northern portions of each CPA. These open space areas would not undergo any changes in land use designation as a result of the proposed plans. Furthermore, the proposed plans are not expected to result in indirect adverse impacts potentially jurisdictional waters of the U.S. and wetlands resulting from development and infrastructure projects in the vicinity of conserved open space areas. However, development and infrastructure projects that could occur under the proposed plans have the potential to adversely impact federally and state-protected wetlands and waters that could be present on vacant and undeveloped lands within the targeted change areas. Furthermore, redevelopment and expansion of residential, commercial, and industrial uses within the CPAs could result in indirect impacts to existing potentially jurisdictional waters of the U.S and wetlands.

General Plan Framework Policy 6.1.4 calls for the conservation and management of undeveloped portions of the City’s watersheds to protect, conserve, and enhance natural resources. In addition, Framework Policy 6.1.5 provides for an on-site evaluation of sites located outside of targeted growth areas for the identification of sensitive habitats, which could include wetlands and waters of the U.S. or waters of the state. Other policies, while not specifically mentioning wetlands or jurisdictional areas, do call for the evaluation, avoidance, and protection of impacts to sensitive animal and plant species (Conservation Element Policies Endangered Species [Policies 1, 2, and 3] and Habitats [Policies 1, 2, 3, and 4]) that would also protect wetlands and waters of the U.S. or waters of the state.

In addition to the existing policies described above, environmental review would be required under CEQA for any project that could adversely impact an area that supports any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the USACE, CDFG, or State Water Board. If adverse impacts do occur, no net loss of wetland functions or values would generally be permitted by federal and state resource agencies. Projects resulting from the proposed plans would be required to avoid adverse impacts to waters and wetlands to the greatest extent possible. Prior to project development, a delineation of jurisdictional features (i.e., Waters of the U.S. and Waters of the State) would be required. This jurisdictional delineation study would be submitted to all applicable state and federal agencies for review, approval, and verification. In addition, project applicants would also be required to seek formal authorization (i.e., permits) for impacts to federally protected wetlands as defined by CWA Section 404 and Section 401 by the USACE and State Water Board, and streambeds or riparian habitat protected by CDFG Code 1602 (Lake and Streambed Alteration Program). Impact avoidance and minimization mitigation measures would be included as regulatory permit terms and conditions. In addition, compensatory mitigation for losses of jurisdictional waters, wetlands, or riparian habitat would be required. Such mitigation could include restoration of a wetland, creek, or riparian area in the project site vicinity, purchase of mitigation credits through an approved local mitigation bank, or payment of an in-lieu fee, and must be approved by federal and state agencies.

In addition, state and federal resource agencies would require that a mitigation plan be prepared that demonstrates that the proposed compensatory mitigation is equivalent or superior to existing jurisdictional features.

Because individual projects would undergo environmental review under CEQA and would be subject to the regulatory permitting process, including wetland mitigation, as required under federal and state regulations (i.e., CWA Section 404 and Section 401, CDFG 1602), this compliance would eliminate impacts related to protected wetlands and waters. There is *no impact*.

■ Less-Than-Significant Impacts

Impact 4.3-1 **Implementation of the proposed plans would not 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, and would not interfere with habitat such that normal species behaviors are disturbed to a degree that may diminish the chances for long-term survival of a sensitive species. This impact is *less-than-significant* impact.**

Granada Hills–Knollwood

Though the majority of the CPA currently includes residential, commercial, and other suburban development, valuable plant and animal habitat still exists. These habitats are located primarily in open space areas beyond the existing limits of urban development and include primarily chaparral and coastal sage scrub, although limited areas of annual grassland, oak savanna and woodland, riparian woodland, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetlands also exist. Such habitats have the potential to support sensitive plant and animal species, such as those listed in Table 4.3-1 and shown in Figure 4.3-1. In particular, the areas designated as Open Space near the Santa Susana Mountains in the northwest portion of the CPA (north of Sesnon Boulevard) could provide habitat for several special-status species, but these areas would remain designated as Open Space and there are no changes proposed by the CPA and implementing ordinances. Areas west of I-5 would be rezoned; however, the area west of I-5 is currently either a freeway or electrical substation and the only changes proposed for this area are for consistency with existing land uses on the site; no development is proposed for this area.

As previously discussed in Chapter 3 and shown in Figure 3-6 (Granada Hills–Knollwood Community Plan Recommendations by Subarea), the majority of the land use changes proposed by the proposed plans consist of General Plan Amendments to create consistency with Framework Land Use designations. Targeted change areas are located primarily along Chatsworth Street and at major commercial centers. No major changes in land use patterns would occur on lands within the open space areas beyond the existing limits of urban development.

The proposed plan could result in some development or infrastructure projects on vacant and undeveloped parcels within the existing limits of urban development. Such projects are not expected to result in adverse impacts, either directly or through habitat modifications, to sensitive plant and animal species listed in Table 4.3-1. However, construction activities associated with potential discretionary

projects in these areas could adversely impact nonstatus nesting birds, which are protected by the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code (refer to Regulatory Framework), by removal or destruction of an active nest (defined as a nest with eggs or young being attended by one or more adults) or direct mortality or injury of individual birds. However, as required by the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3513, construction activities from proposed discretionary projects would either be required to take place outside of the breeding bird season (which generally runs from March 1 through August 31 [as early as February 1 for raptors]) or the Applicant would be required to retain a qualified biologist to conduct weekly bird surveys to detect any protected birds in the habitat to be removed and any other such habitat within 300 feet of the construction work area (within 500 feet for raptors) as access to adjacent areas allows. The individual developers would submit the results of the protective measures described above to the City in order to document compliance with applicable federal and state laws pertaining to the protection of nesting birds.

Any discretionary projects under the proposed plan would be subject to environmental review under CEQA. As part of the environmental review process, surveys for sensitive plant or animal species as required by federal, state, and local regulations would be undertaken when suitable habitat for such species is present to minimize potential adverse impacts to these species. In addition, existing Framework and Conservation Element policies would also help minimize potential adverse impacts to sensitive species. Conservation Element policies related to Endangered Species (Policies 1, 2, and 3) and Habitats (Policies 3 and 4) call for the evaluation, avoidance, and protection of impacts to sensitive plant and animal species. Framework Policy 6.1.5 provides for an on-site evaluation of sites located outside of targeted growth areas for the identification of sensitive species, with specific emphasis on the evaluation of areas identified on the Biological Resource Maps contained in the Framework Element's Technical Background Report and Environmental Impact Report. In addition to the existing policies described, the proposed plans are geared toward the protection of natural resources by promoting the conservation of open space and the protection of hillsides (refer to Table 4.3-6).

In addition to the environmental review process, any discretionary projects proposed under the proposed plan that are undertaken in areas containing sensitive plant and animal species would be required to coordinate project design and implementation with federal and state agencies in order to minimize adverse effects to special-status species. Project permitting and approval would require compliance with FESA and CESA for any plant or animal species listed, or a candidate for listing as federal or state endangered or threatened. If a federal agency is involved with a proposed action or project that may adversely impact a federally listed species, the agency must consult with the USFWS under FESA Section 7(a)(2). For projects that do not require formal authorization, permitting, or funding from a federal agency but that may result in the "take" of listed species or candidate species, the project applicant would be required to apply to the USFWS for a Section 10(a) incidental take permit. Similarly, applicants for proposed projects that could have an adverse impact on any state-listed endangered, threatened, rare, or candidate species would be required to secure a permit from CDFG before the proposed project would proceed.

Therefore, compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and compliance with any terms and conditions within those permits, issued by the state or federal resource agencies, are designed to offset

impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species and their habitats would reduce adverse effects on sensitive species. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

Sylmar

Though the majority of the Sylmar CPA currently includes residential, commercial, and other suburban development, valuable plant and animal habitat still exists. These habitats are located primarily in open space areas beyond the existing limits of urban development and include primarily chaparral and coastal sage scrub, although limited areas of annual grassland, oak savanna and woodland, riparian woodland, and seasonal and perennial waters and wetlands also exist. Such habitats have the potential to support sensitive plant and animal species, such as those listed in Table 4.3-4 and shown in Figure 4.3-4. In particular, habitats within the open space areas in the San Gabriel Mountains and the foothills and lowlands, and the open space areas in the lowlands of the Lakeside Debris Basin and Grapevine Site in the western portion of the CPA and of the Pacoima Wash in the eastern portion of the CPA have the potential or are known to support sensitive species. Changes proposed to the area in the far western edge of the CPA are proposed to limit hillside development and would therefore protect resources in that area.

As previously discussed in Chapter 3 and shown in Figure 3-8 (Sylmar Community Plan Recommendations by Subarea), the majority of the land use changes proposed by the proposed plans consist of General Plan Amendments to create consistency with Framework Land Use designations. Targeted change areas are located primarily along Foothill Boulevard and San Fernando Road, with smaller change areas along Glenoaks Boulevard and in discrete pockets of the CPA. No major changes in land use patterns would occur on lands within the open space areas beyond the existing limits of urban development.

The proposed plan could result in some development or infrastructure projects on vacant and undeveloped parcels within the existing limits of urban development. Such projects are not expected to result in adverse impacts, either directly or through habitat modifications, to sensitive plant and animal species listed in Table 4.3-4. However, construction activities associated with potential discretionary projects in these areas could adversely impact nonstatus nesting birds, which are protected by the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code (refer to Regulatory Framework), by removal or destruction of an active nest (defined as a nest with eggs or young being attended by one or more adults) or direct mortality or injury of individual birds. However, as required by the MBTA and California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3513, construction activities from proposed discretionary projects would either be required to take place outside of the breeding bird season (which generally runs from March 1 through August 31 [as early as February 1 for raptors]) or the Applicant would be required to retain a qualified biologist to conduct weekly bird surveys to detect any protected birds in the habitat to be removed and any other such habitat within 300 feet of the construction work area (within 500 feet for raptors) as access to adjacent areas allows. The individual developers would submit the results of the protective measures described above to the City in order to document compliance with applicable federal and state laws pertaining to the protection of nesting birds.

Any discretionary projects proposed under the proposed plan would be subject to environmental review under CEQA. As part of the environmental review process, surveys for sensitive plant or animal species

as required by federal, state, and local regulations would be undertaken when suitable habitat for such species is present to minimize potential adverse impacts to these species. In addition, existing Framework and Conservation Element policies would also help minimize potential adverse impacts to sensitive species. Conservation Element policies related to Endangered Species (Policies 1, 2, and 3) and Habitats (Policies 3 and 4) call for the evaluation, avoidance, and protection of impacts to sensitive plant and animal species. Framework Policy 6.1.5 provides for an on-site evaluation of sites located outside of targeted growth areas for the identification of sensitive species, with specific emphasis on the evaluation of areas identified on the Biological Resource Maps contained in the Framework Element's Technical Background Report and Environmental Impact Report. In addition to the existing policies described, the proposed plans are geared toward the protection of natural resources by promoting the conservation of open space and the protection of hillsides (refer to Table 4.3-7).

In addition to the environmental review process, any discretionary projects proposed under the proposed plans that are undertaken in areas containing sensitive plant and animal species would be required to coordinate project design and implementation with federal and state agencies in order to minimize adverse effects to special-status species. Project permitting and approval would require compliance with FESA and CESA for any plant or animal species listed, or a candidate for listing as federal or state endangered or threatened. If a federal agency is involved with a proposed action or project that may adversely impact a federally listed species, the agency must consult with the USFWS under FESA Section 7(a)(2). For projects that do not require formal authorization, permitting, or funding from a federal agency but that may result in the "take" of listed species or candidate species, the project applicant would be required to apply to the USFWS for a Section 10(a) incidental take permit. Similarly, applicants for proposed projects that could have an adverse impact on any state-listed endangered, threatened, rare, or candidate species would be required to secure a permit from CDFG before the proposed project would proceed.

Therefore, compliance with federal, state, and local regulations and compliance with any terms and conditions within those permits, issued by the state or federal resource agencies, are designed to offset impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species and their habitats would reduce adverse effects on sensitive species. This impact is considered *less than significant*.

Impact 4.3-2 **Implementation of the proposed plans would not 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. This impact is *less than significant*.**

Granada Hills–Knollwood

Considerable residential, commercial, and other suburban development exists within the CPA, such that the remnant habitats on vacant and undeveloped lands within the CPA have become islands of habitat. Most wildlife movement is expected to occur in the open space areas occupying lands within the Santa Susana Mountains in the northern portion of the CPA, which provide important foraging, dispersal, migratory, and wildlife corridors for many common and sensitive species. This portion of the CPA would remain open space and no substantial changes in land use patterns are proposed as a result of the proposed plan.

Areas where development and infrastructure projects are likely to occur as a result of the proposed plan are concentrated in the southern portion of the CPA. These areas are currently developed with residential and commercial uses and are densely populated; therefore, this portion of the CPA would not act as a major wildlife corridor, movement pathway, or linkage between large habitat areas for terrestrial wildlife. Impacts to wildlife movement resulting from the proposed plan would be limited to small, fragmented areas that are isolated by urban development and would be expected to support common wildlife species that are adapted to urban areas. Open space areas within the northern portion of the CPA that function as significant movement corridors for native resident or migratory wildlife species would be preserved and would continue to serve similar biological functions under the proposed plan.

Additionally, environmental review would be required under CEQA for any project that could impact movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species. Compliance with federal and state regulations related to the protection of migratory fish and wildlife species or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites, as well as General Plan policies that protect wildlife habitat linkages and corridors (Conservation Element, Habitat Policies 1 and 2 and Framework, Policies 6.1.2 and 6.1.5), would reduce impacts to *less than significant*.

Sylmar

Considerable residential, commercial, and industrial development exists within the Sylmar CPA, such that the remnant habitats on vacant and undeveloped lands within the CPA have become islands of habitat. Most wildlife movement is expected to occur in the open space areas occupying lands within the San Gabriel Mountains in the northern and eastern portion of the CPA, which provide important foraging, dispersal, migratory, and wildlife corridors for many common and sensitive species. This portion of the CPA would remain open space and no substantial changes in land use patterns are proposed as a result of the proposed plan.

Areas where development and infrastructure projects are likely to occur as a result of the proposed plans are concentrated in the eastern, central, and southern portions of the CPA. These areas are currently developed with residential, commercial, and industrial uses and are densely populated; therefore, these portions of the CPA would not act as a major wildlife corridor, movement pathway, or linkage between large habitat areas for terrestrial wildlife. Impacts to wildlife movement resulting from the proposed plan would be limited to small, fragmented areas that are isolated by urban development and would be expected to support common wildlife species that are adapted to urban areas. Open space areas within the northern and eastern portions of the Sylmar CPA that function as significant movement corridors for native resident or migratory wildlife species would be preserved and would continue to serve similar biological functions under the proposed plan.

Additionally, environmental review would be required under CEQA for any project that could impact movement of native resident or migratory wildlife species. Compliance with federal and state regulations related to the protection of migratory fish and wildlife species or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites, as well as General Plan policies that protect wildlife habitat linkages and corridors (Conservation Element, Habitat Policies 1 and 2 and Framework, Policies 6.1.2 and 6.1.5), would reduce impacts to *less than significant*.

■ Significant and Unavoidable Impacts

There are no significant and unavoidable impacts with regard to biological resources.

■ Mitigation Measures

Development under the proposed plans would comply with all local, State, and federal regulations pertaining to the protection of sensitive or migratory species. In addition, all discretionary projects are subject to environmental review and standard mitigation measures are applied as part of the conditions of approval for the project.

■ Level of Significance After Mitigation

With implementation of the described conditions of approval, all impacts related to biological resources would be reduced to *less than significant*.

4.3.4 Cumulative Impacts

Unless otherwise identified below, the geographic context for the analysis of cumulative biological impacts includes the Southern California region, extending essentially from the Los Angeles Basin to the Santa Clarita and Antelope Valleys north, Simi Valley and Ventura County to the west, and San Bernardino County to the east. This geographic context is appropriate given the extent of the Santa Susana and San Gabriel Mountains that form the northern boundaries of the CPAs and connect to this broader geographic area. Cumulative impacts are only addressed for those thresholds that have a project-related impact, whether it is less than significant, potentially significant, or significant and unavoidable. If “no impact” occurs, no cumulative analysis is provided for that threshold.

Past development in this geographic context, as it has intensified, has continued to interfere with the movement of native resident wildlife species, as movement corridors have continued to shrink or be obstructed. This is a significant impact to these species. Future development in open areas in the counties of Los Angeles, Ventura, and San Bernardino could exacerbate this condition. The proposed plans would concentrate future development as infill in established urban areas and would not encroach upon any open space. These areas are currently developed with residential, industrial, and commercial uses and are densely populated; therefore, these portions of the CPAs do not act as a major wildlife corridors or native wildlife nursery sites, movement pathways, or linkages between large habitat areas for terrestrial wildlife. Impacts to wildlife movement resulting from the proposed plans would be limited to small, fragmented areas that are isolated by urban development and would be expected to support common wildlife species that are adapted to highly urbanized areas. The proposed plans would not make a cumulatively considerable contribution to interference with wildlife movement, and the cumulative impact is *less than significant*.

Over several decades in the region, past projects, mostly urbanization and development have caused the loss of native vegetation and tree removal, and the reduction of open space. As a result, there is less habitat available for nesting resident and migratory avian species and sensitive wildlife species. As development in the Southern California region continues, sensitive wildlife species native to the Region

and their habitat, including those species listed under state and federal ESAs and those individuals identified by state and federal resource agencies as Species of Concern, Fully Protected, or Sensitive, could be lost through conversion of existing open space to urban development. Although more mobile species might be able to survive these changes in their environment by moving to new areas, less mobile species could simply be locally extirpated. With continued conversion of natural habitat to human use, the availability and accessibility of remaining foraging and natural habitats in this ecosystem would dwindle and those remaining natural areas may not be able to support additional plant or animal populations above their current carrying capacities. Thus, the conversion of plant and wildlife habitat on a regional level as a result of cumulative development would result in a regional significant cumulative impact on special status species and their habitats, including nesting resident and migratory avian species.

With respect to nesting birds, the MBTA fully protects migratory avian species, including sensitive species, during the breeding season by the establishment of a federal prohibition. Unless otherwise permitted by regulations, it is unlawful to “pursue, hunt, take, capture, kill, attempt to take, capture or kill, possess, offer for sale, sell, offer to purchase, purchase, deliver for shipment, ship, cause to be shipped, deliver for transportation, transport, cause to be transported, carry, or cause to be carried by any means whatever, receive for shipment, transportation or carriage, or export, at any time, or in any manner, any migratory bird, included in the terms of this Convention ... for the protection of migratory birds ... or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird” (16 USC 703). Therefore, assuming that other development complies with the law established by the MBTA, cumulative impacts to nesting migratory birds, would be considered less than significant. Further, compliance by the project proponent or developer with the MBTA, which could include mitigation measures requiring surveys for nesting MBTA species and a restriction on construction activities if nests are found during the breeding season, would ensure that the proposed plans’ contribution to the cumulative impact would not be cumulatively considerable and would be considered *less than significant*.

The primary effects of the proposed plans, when considered with other projects in the Region (as defined above), would be the potential cumulative direct loss to nesting resident and migratory bird species. Specifically, present and probable future projects in the vicinity of the proposed plans are anticipated to permanently remove vegetation and/or tree resources that could affect nesting habitat for resident and migratory avian species, and/or local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources.

Development pursuant to the proposed plans could contribute to a loss of regional biodiversity through the incremental conversion of habitat for plant and wildlife to human use, and thus limit the availability and accessibility of remaining natural habitats to regional wildlife. However, terrestrial plant and wildlife habitat in the project site has been highly modified and, is of relatively low quality due to its level of disturbance and low species diversity due to the highly urbanized nature of the area.

Implementation of mitigation measures for specific discretionary projects would require surveys for nesting resident and migratory birds and restrictions on construction activities if nests are found during the breeding season, mitigation measures will provide mechanisms to identify any sensitive species potentially occurring, prior to ground disturbance and require mitigation that would reduce impacts to species through impact avoidance. Therefore, implementation of project-specific mitigation measures, in combination with compliance with state and federal ESAs and the Fish and Game Code of California

would reduce the proposed plans' cumulative contribution to resident and migratory bird species and sensitive species to *less-than-significant* levels.

4.3.5 References

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