

1 **4.3 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

2 Assessments of biological resources and impacts associated with the currently permitted  
3 Tajiguas Landfill Project have been addressed in the prior Tajiguas Landfill Environmental  
4 Documents. A Biological Technical Report (AECOM, 2013) and sensitive plant survey (Padre,  
5 2013) (see Appendix D) was also prepared to analyze biological impacts specifically associated  
6 with construction and operation of the Resource Recovery Project facilities. The analyses of  
7 biological resources contained in these prior Environmental Documents and the Biological  
8 Technical Report were used to assist in the preparation of this Subsequent EIR for the  
9 Resource Recovery Project. In addition, the results of biological monitoring (Padre, 2012) of  
10 construction of the Tajiguas Landfill Phase 3A groundwater protection system (liner) in 2012  
11 were used in preparation of this impact analysis. A more detailed discussion of biological  
12 resources and project-related impacts is provided in the Biological Technical Report prepared  
13 for the project by AECOM (Appendix E).

14 **4.3.1 Setting**

15 4.3.1.1 Regional Overview

16 The southern Santa Barbara County coastal area has a Mediterranean-type  
17 climate with warm, dry summers and mild winters. Daily and seasonal  
18 temperature variations are relatively small, with average temperatures ranging  
19 from 40 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (°F) during the winter months and from 50 to  
20 75 °F during the summer months (Western Regional Climate Center [WRCC],  
21 2013). Rain occurs primarily during the winter and early spring months,  
22 averaging 16 to 29 inches per year, depending on elevation. Average  
23 precipitation during the winter ranges from 3 to 6.55 inches per month and  
24 average precipitation during the summer ranges from 0.3 to 0.75 inch per  
25 month, again depending on elevation (WRCC, 2013). Based on rainfall data  
26 since 1973 from the Tajiguas precipitation station (TAJ262) maintained by the  
27 Santa Barbara County Flood Control District, mean annual rainfall at the site is  
28 21.8 inches.

29 The south-facing slopes and foothills of the region are exposed to sunlight most  
30 of the day. Moderate temperatures are sustained by marine fog and the  
31 prevailing onshore sea breezes. The prevailing wind speed is generally 5 miles  
32 per hour, although wind speed and direction are primarily functions of the  
33 location and strength of frontal storm systems that periodically move through  
34 the area.

1 The Tajiguas Landfill is located in Santa Barbara County, approximately 26  
2 miles west of the City of Santa Barbara, California (Figure 3-1). The landfill is  
3 located within Range 31 West, Township 5 North, and Sections 28 and 33 of  
4 the U.S. Geological Survey 7.5' Tajiguas Quadrangle. The elevation of landfill  
5 ranges from approximately 300 to 750 feet above mean sea level and is  
6 situated on the south slope of the Santa Ynez Mountains, which are oriented in  
7 an east-west direction, parallel to the coastline. Los Padres National Forest  
8 lands abut the northern border of the landfill property, and U.S. Highway 101,  
9 the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, and the Pacific Ocean are located just south  
10 of the landfill property. The project site occurs within the existing County-  
11 owned and operated Tajiguas Landfill, a Class III non-hazardous municipal  
12 solid waste disposal facility (Figure 3-2).

13 The landfill is dominated by the deep north-south oriented coastal canyon of  
14 Cañada de la Pila. Pila Creek is an ephemeral stream that drains the 475-acre  
15 watershed southward to the Pacific Ocean. Historically, Pila Creek flowed east  
16 along an upper terrace and joined with Arroyo Quemado before flowing to the  
17 Pacific Ocean. Modifications resulting from the construction of the Union  
18 Pacific Railroad and U.S. Highway 101 diverted Pila Creek into culverts that  
19 flow directly south to the Pacific Ocean.

20 As part of the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration Project, two in-channel  
21 sedimentation basins were removed and a portion of Pila Creek and a portion  
22 of a tributary to Pila Creek upstream of the in-channel sedimentation basins  
23 were modified. These drainages were diverted into a concrete-lined trapezoidal  
24 channel that captures up-canyon surface water flows and carries them along  
25 the western perimeter of the reconfigured waste footprint. The size and  
26 gradient of the channel allows the channel to also capture some of the  
27 sediment from the undisturbed upper portion of the Pila Creek watershed. The  
28 concrete-lined channel discharges into the existing subsurface 48-inch storm  
29 drain south of the reconfigured waste footprint.

30 Portions of Pila Creek are dry for the majority of the year, but typically support  
31 continuous flows during and immediately following significant storm events.  
32 Storm events typically occur between the months of November and April.  
33 Groundwater seeps also provide a supplemental source of water to Pila Creek  
34 but only have observable surface flow or pooling during the rainy season.  
35 These seeps were covered with fill as a part of the Pila Creek drainage  
36 modifications and a seepage/groundwater collection system (Pila Creek in-  
37 channel sump pump) was installed.

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1 Historically, areas surrounding the landfill and many of the terraces along this  
2 section of the coast have been used for cattle grazing and agriculture for many  
3 decades. Currently, the lower reach of Cañada de la Pila within the landfill site  
4 and the adjacent floodplain has been disturbed by landfill activities (Figure 3-2).  
5 Much of the original topography within Cañada de la Pila has been altered to  
6 provide space and cover material for landfill operations and fuel breaks have  
7 been cut along slopes and ridgelines. Properties east and west of the landfill  
8 are used primarily for agriculture (i.e., avocado, citrus, and cherimoya  
9 orchards), grazing land, or are composed of natural vegetation communities. A  
10 small cluster of homes (the Arroyo Quemado Community) is located along the  
11 bluff south of the Union Pacific railroad tracks, southeast of the landfill. Cañada  
12 de la Huerta, the site of the former Shell Hercules Project, occurs immediately  
13 west of Cañada de la Pila and the landfill.

14 The proposed Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project facilities would largely be  
15 located within the permitted disturbance area associated with the Tajiguas  
16 Landfill. However, some of the ancillary facilities would be outside of the  
17 permitted disturbance footprint and may create new impacts to biological  
18 resources as discussed below.

#### 19 4.3.1.2 Regulatory Context

20 Several Federal, State, and local regulations have been established to protect  
21 and conserve biological resources. The descriptions below provide a brief  
22 overview of the regulations applicable to the resources that occur within or  
23 adjacent to the landfill site, and their respective requirements.

#### 24 **Federal Regulations and Standards**

25 Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA) (U.S.C Title 16, Chapter 35, Sections  
26 1531-1544). Enacted in 1973, the ESA provides for the conservation of  
27 threatened and endangered species and their habitat. The Act prohibits the  
28 “take” of threatened and endangered species except under certain  
29 circumstances and only with authorization from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife  
30 Service (USFWS) through a permit under Section 4(d), 7, or 10(a) of the Act.  
31 Under the ESA, “take” is defined as to harass, harm, pursue, hunt, shoot,  
32 wound, kill, trap, capture, or collect, or to attempt to engage in any such  
33 conduct. The ESA requires federal agencies to make a finding on all federal  
34 actions, including approval by an agency of a public or private action, as to the  
35 potential to jeopardize the continued existence of any listed species. As there  
36 is no Federal nexus for the project, Section 10 of the ESA applies, and a habitat  
37 conservation plan would be required for any potential take of listed species.

1 Migratory Bird Treaty Act (U.S.C Title 16, Chapter 7, Subchapter Sections 703-  
2 712). Congress passed the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA) in 1918 to  
3 prohibit the pursuit, hunt, kill, capture, possession, purchase, barter, or  
4 transport of native migratory birds, or any part, nest, or egg of any such bird  
5 unless allowed by another regulation adopted in accordance with the MBTA.  
6 The USFWS has jurisdiction over migratory birds. No permit is issued under  
7 the MBTA; however, landfill operations should be conducted to avoid take of  
8 migratory birds.

9 Federal Water Pollution Control Act (Clean Water Act), 1972 (U.S.C Title 33,  
10 Ch.26, SubCh. I-VI). The Federal Water Pollution Control Act was first passed  
11 by Congress in 1948. The Act was later amended and became known as the  
12 Clean Water Act (CWA). The CWA establishes the basic structure for  
13 regulating discharges of pollutants into the waters of the U.S. It gives the U.S.  
14 Environmental Protection Agency ( ) the authority to implement pollution control  
15 programs, including setting wastewater standards for industry and water quality  
16 standards for contaminants in surface waters. The CWA makes it unlawful for  
17 any person to discharge any pollutant from a point source into navigable  
18 waters, without a permit under its provisions. CWA Section 404 permits are  
19 issued by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) for dredge/fill activities  
20 within wetlands or non-wetland waters of the U.S. CWA Section 401  
21 certifications are issued by the RWQCB for activities requiring a federal permit  
22 or license which may result in discharge of pollutants into waters of the U.S.

### 23 **State Regulations and Standards**

24 California Fish and Game Code. The California Fish and Game Code,  
25 administered by the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (CDFW) regulates the  
26 taking or possession of birds, mammals, fish, amphibian, and reptiles, as well  
27 as natural resources such as wetlands and waters of the state. It includes  
28 Streambed Alteration Agreement regulations (Sections 1600-1616), as well as  
29 provisions for legal hunting and fishing, and tribal agreements for activities  
30 involving take of native wildlife.

31 California Endangered Species Act and California Native Plant Protection Act  
32 (California Fish and Game Code, Division 3, Chapter 1.5, Sections 2050-2115).  
33 This Act generally parallels the main provisions of the Federal ESA and is  
34 administered by the CDFW. California Endangered Species Act (CESA)  
35 prohibits take of any species that the California Fish and Game Commission  
36 determines to be a threatened or endangered species. CESA allows for take  
37 incidental to otherwise lawful development projects upon approval from the CDFW.  
38 Under the California Fish and Game Code, "take" is defined as to hunt, pursue,  
39 catch, capture, or kill, or attempt to hunt, pursue, catch, capture, or kill.

1 California also has identified wildlife species of special concern. These species  
2 are rare, restricted in geographic distribution, or declining throughout their  
3 geographic range. Having been so designated, sensitive species are also  
4 considered in resource planning and management. The rare designation  
5 applies to plants only and includes those plants that are not threatened or  
6 endangered, but that could become eligible due to decreasing numbers or  
7 further restrictions to habitat. Any project-related impacts to State-listed  
8 species may require an incidental take permit under CESA.

9 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act (California Water Code, Division 7,  
10 Sections 13000-14958). This Act provides for statewide coordination of water  
11 rights and water quality regulations. The Act established the California State  
12 Water Resources Control Board as the statewide authority and nine separate  
13 RWQCBs to oversee water quality on a day-to-day basis at the regional/local  
14 level. Proposed discharges of waste that would affect State waters would  
15 require filing a Report of Waste Discharge and the issuance of waste discharge  
16 requirements or waiver of the waste discharge requirements and potentially a  
17 National Pollution Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit from the  
18 RWQCB.

### 19 **Local Regulations and Standards**

20 Santa Barbara County Comprehensive Plan. The Santa Barbara County  
21 Comprehensive Plan includes three elements related to the protection of  
22 biological resources: Land Use Element, Conservation Element, and  
23 Environmental Resources Management Element. The Land Use Element  
24 includes policies to protect hillsides and watersheds; streams and creeks; and  
25 flood hazard areas. The Conservation Element discusses sensitive species  
26 and communities and provides recommendations for their management. The  
27 Environmental Resources Management Element summarizes and presents  
28 environmental factors, including biological resources that occur within the  
29 County, to be used in evaluating proposals for open space preservation. No  
30 permit is issued under these elements of the County's Comprehensive Plan;  
31 however, the proposed project would need to comply with the relevant policies  
32 and elements noted above.

33 Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual. The  
34 County's Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (County 1992,  
35 updated 2015 2008) provides impact assessment guidance and establishes  
36 criteria for determining the significance of potential biological impacts under  
37 CEQA. No permit is issued under the County's Environmental Thresholds and  
38 Guidelines Manual; however, the proposed project is evaluated with respect to  
39 these thresholds and guidelines in this Subsequent EIR.

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1                    Municipal Code and Ordinances. Article IX Chapter 35 of the Santa Barbara  
2 County Code considers deciduous oak trees (including valley oak and blue oak)  
3 at least 4 inches in diameter at breast height as protected trees. County  
4 Ordinance no. 4491 considers live oak trees (including coast live oak) at least 8  
5 inches in diameter at breast height as protected trees.

6                    Draft Gaviota Coast Plan. The Plan was developed by the County Planning  
7 and Development Department and released in February 2013 (revised in  
8 December 2013 as the Board of Supervisors Initiation Draft). The Tajiguas  
9 Landfill, including the project site is located within the planning area. The  
10 Gaviota Coast Plan would update the County Comprehensive Plan and Coastal  
11 Land Use Plan, and provide policy direction for land use issues. Planning  
12 Commission hearings were conducted from June through September 2013 to  
13 solicit public input. As of June 2014, the Gaviota Coast Plan has not been  
14 adopted.

15                    The Plan includes a resources stewardship chapter that describes biological  
16 resources along the Gaviota coast and sets forth policies to protect and, where  
17 possible, enhance those resources, proposes actions to achieve those policies,  
18 and outlines development standards. Biological resources addressed in the  
19 Resources Stewardship chapter include environmentally sensitive habitats,  
20 wetlands, wildlife corridors, riparian vegetation, natural stream channels, and  
21 other specific areas.

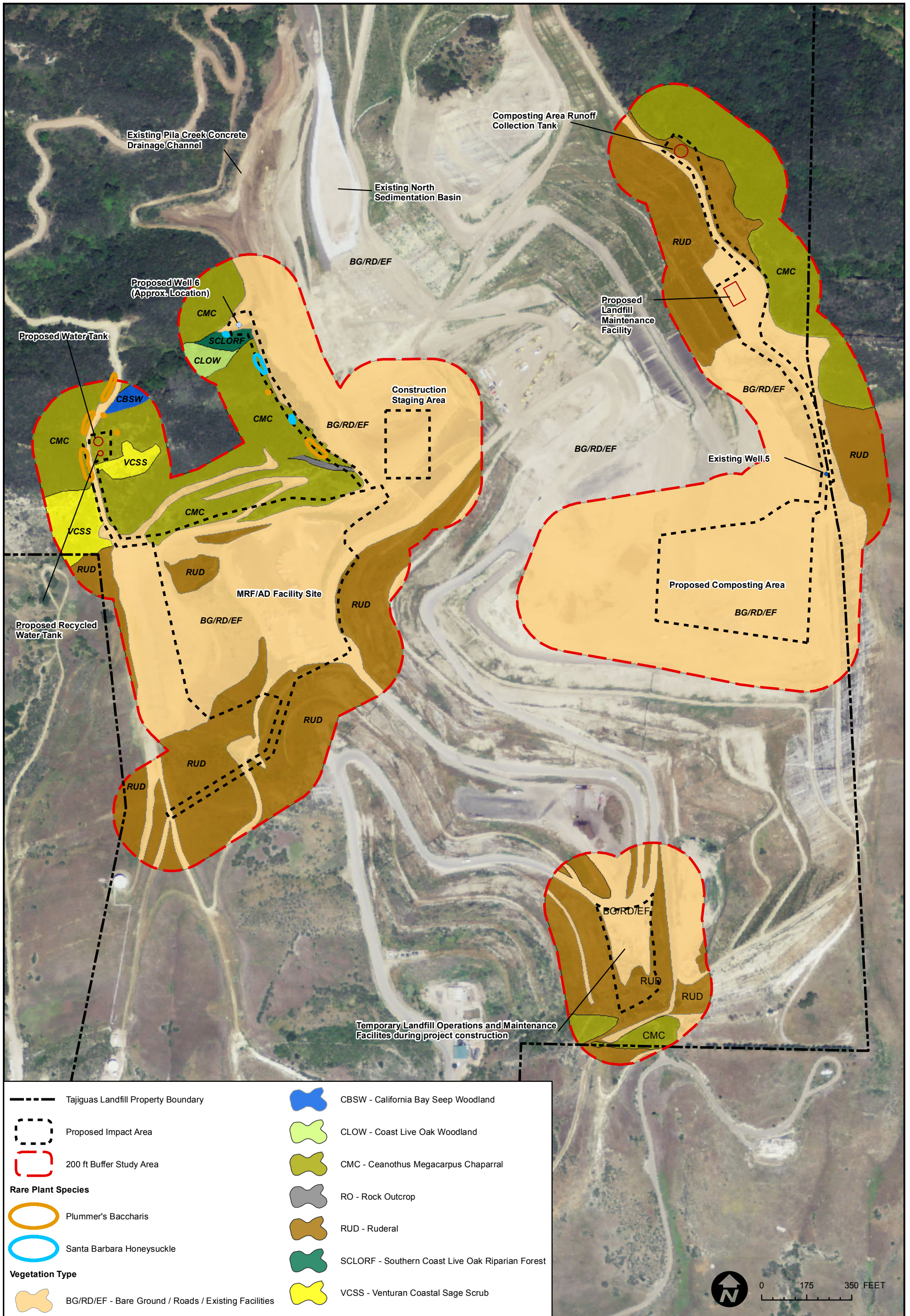
#### 22                    4.3.1.3 Site-Specific Setting

23                    This section is based on review of biological studies and environmental  
24 documents prepared for other projects in the area, the Biological Assessment  
25 (Hunt & Associates, 2001) prepared for 01-EIR-05 for the Tajiguas Landfill  
26 Expansion Project, the Biological Assessment/Biological Technical Report  
27 prepared for the Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch  
28 Restoration project, and the Biological Technical Report prepared for the  
29 proposed project (see Appendix E). For the purposes of this impact analysis, a  
30 Study Area has been identified, which consists of areas of proposed ground  
31 disturbance including a 200 foot buffer.

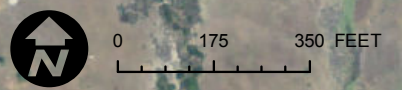
#### 32                    **Vegetation Communities and Flora**

33                    Historically, vegetation in the north-south oriented coastal canyon of Cañada de  
34 la Pila in which the landfill is situated consisted of dense riparian forest and  
35 woodland vegetation, steep canyon slopes with dense chaparral and sage  
36 scrub vegetation, and coastal terraces with sage scrub and grassland  
37 vegetation. Currently, the lower reach of Cañada de la Pila and the adjacent  
38 floodplain have been disturbed by landfill activities (see Figure 4.3-1). Much of  
39 the original topography within Cañada de la Pila has been altered as part of the  
40 Reconfiguration Project, to provide space and cover material for landfill  
41 operations and fuel breaks have been cut along slopes and ridgelines.





	Tajiguas Landfill Property Boundary		CBSW - California Bay Seep Woodland
	Proposed Impact Area		CLOW - Coast Live Oak Woodland
	200 ft Buffer Study Area		CMC - Ceanothus Megacarpus Chaparral
<b>Rare Plant Species</b>			
	Plummer's Baccharis		RO - Rock Outcrop
	Santa Barbara Honeysuckle		RUD - Ruderal
<b>Vegetation Type</b>			
	BG/RD/EF - Bare Ground / Roads / Existing Facilities		SCLORF - Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest
	VCSS - Venturan Coastal Sage Scrub		



VEGETATION COMMUNITIES AND RARE PLANT LOCATIONS IN THE STUDY AREA  
 FIGURE 4.3-1



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Back of Figure 4.3-1



1 The Study Area occurs almost entirely in previously disturbed areas of the  
 2 landfill with little to no native vegetation. In all, eight vegetation communities  
 3 and land cover types occur within the Study Area: California bay seep  
 4 woodland, *Ceanothus megacarpus* chaparral, coast live oak woodland,  
 5 southern coast live oak riparian forest, Venturan coastal sage scrub, bare  
 6 ground/roads/existing facilities, rock outcrop, and ruderal (see Table 4.3-1;  
 7 Figure 4.3-1). The distribution of vegetation communities is influenced by  
 8 parent soil type, slope, aspect, exposure, and land use history. The three  
 9 largest components of the proposed project (MRF, AD Facility, and composting  
 10 area) occur entirely within the bare ground/roads/existing facilities land cover  
 11 type associated with active landfill operations. Other proposed project  
 12 components, such as the water and wastewater tanks and mechanics building,  
 13 and associated utilities trenching, occur within or in close proximity to areas of  
 14 native vegetation.

15 **Table 4.3-1. Vegetation Communities within the Study Area and Direct Impact Area**

Vegetation Community/Land Cover Type	Study Area (Acres)	Direct Impact Area (Acres)
California bay seep woodland <sup>1</sup>	0.22	--
<i>Ceanothus megacarpus</i> chaparral	16.99	1.07
Coast live oak woodland <sup>1</sup>	0.39	--
Southern coast live oak riparian forest <sup>1</sup>	0.28	--
Venturan coastal sage scrub	1.62	--
Bare ground/roads/existing facilities	58.61	21.18
Rock outcrop	0.10	0.02
Ruderal	26.78	2.24
<b>Total</b>	<b>103.99</b>	<b>24.51</b>

<sup>1</sup>Sensitive vegetation community identified by Holland (1986) and/or County (2015, 2008)

16 Based on botanical surveys conducted by Padre Associates in spring 2013, a  
 17 total of 116 plant species were recorded within the Study Area, with 73 species  
 18 (63 percent) encountered considered native and the remaining 43 species (37  
 19 percent) considered non-native and/or naturalized into the area. Sensitive plant  
 20 species observed or potentially occurring in the Study Area are discussed in  
 21 Table 4.3-2.

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**Fauna**

The majority of the Study Area is of low to moderate value for wildlife species, due to the dominance of disturbed, ruderal, and developed lands. However, as presented in Table 4.3-1, other native vegetation communities do occur in the Study Area and provide habitat value for wildlife. Chaparral and coastal sage scrub communities can provide habitat for a variety of wildlife species for food and cover. Rock outcrops can provide valuable habitat for a variety of wildlife for cover, foraging, perching, nesting, and denning. Woodland communities can provide food, water, thermal cover, escape, nesting, and migration and dispersal corridors for an abundance of wildlife. Ruderal land and bare ground provides relatively little value to most wildlife species because these areas are devoid of vegetation or are vegetated with annual weedy plant species of limited food, water, and cover value. Sensitive wildlife species observed or potentially occurring in the proposed project site are discussed in the following sections.

Invertebrates. The distribution of invertebrates is generally defined by the presence of their larval food plants and suitable habitat and environmental conditions. Within the Study Area, chaparral, coastal sage scrub, woodland, rocky outcrops, and riparian forest all provide important habitat, water and dispersal corridors for many invertebrate species. Thirteen butterfly species have been observed in the vicinity of the landfill (ERA, 2008), including monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). Monarch butterfly roost sites are known from blue gum (*Eucalyptus globulus*) groves at the mouth of Arroyo Quemado (Meade, 1999). Although these roost sites are in the vicinity of the landfill, no roost sites have been observed and only small numbers of individual monarchs have been observed foraging within the landfill property.

Fish. Pila Creek does not provide adequate surface water duration or permanence to support native fish populations. However, prior to their removal in 2009, the in-channel sedimentation basins supported introduced non-native large-mouth bass. Due to the removal of these basins and conversion of a portion of Pila Creek to a concrete channel, fish habitat does not currently exist in Cañada de la Pila.

1            Amphibians. All amphibians require moisture for at least a portion of their life  
2            cycle, with many requiring a permanent water source for habitat and  
3            reproduction. Some terrestrial amphibian species have adapted to more arid  
4            conditions and are not completely dependent on a perennial or standing source  
5            of water. Three amphibian species were detected during surveys of the landfill  
6            reconfiguration area in 2007 and 2008, including two fairly common and  
7            widespread species, western toad (*Bufo boreas*) and Pacific treefrog (*Hyla*  
8            *regilla*), and one sensitive species, California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*).  
9            In addition, the Monterey salamander (*Ensatina eschscholtzi*) has been  
10           observed near the basins during a biological survey preceding basin  
11           maintenance.

12           The California red-legged frog is a federally listed threatened species and is  
13           discussed in greater detail in the following sections. Note that implementation  
14           of the approved Landfill Reconfiguration Project, including removal of the in-  
15           channel sedimentation basins, and management of the north (out-of-channel)  
16           sedimentation basin has removed virtually all amphibian breeding habitats from  
17           the landfill site.

18           Reptiles. Many reptile species are restricted to certain vegetation communities  
19           and soil types, although certain species will occur in a variety of habitats and  
20           environmental conditions. Many species occurring in open areas use rodent  
21           burrows and rocky outcroppings for foraging opportunities and for cover and  
22           protection from predators and extreme weather conditions. During surveys of  
23           the landfill reconfiguration area in 2007 and 2008, reptiles observed included  
24           such common species as side-blotch lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), western fence  
25           lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinatus*) and  
26           California whipsnake (*Masticophis lateralis lateralis*). Western pond turtle  
27           (*Emys marmorata*) was observed during monitoring of construction of the  
28           Reconfiguration Project.

29           Other reptile species observed during previous surveys adjacent to the Study  
30           Area include western skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*) and terrestrial garter snake  
31           (*Thamnophis elegans*) (Hunt & Associates 2001). Two-striped garter snake  
32           (*Thamnophis hammondi*) was observed in a sedimentation basin by Padre  
33           Associate's biologists as part of the sedimentation basin maintenance  
34           monitoring in 2006 and during a botanical survey in June 2008. The two-  
35           striped garter snake is considered a species of special concern by CDFW.  
36           Implementation of the Reconfiguration Project, including removal of the in-  
37           channel sedimentation basins, and management of the north (out-of-channel)  
38           sedimentation basin has removed virtually all prey (fish and amphibians) for  
39           two-striped garter snake from the landfill site.

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1            Birds. The diversity of bird species varies in a given area with respect to the  
2            diversity and quality of vegetation communities. Many of the native habitat  
3            communities in the Study Area vicinity are of high quality with minimal  
4            disturbances. Coastal sage scrub, woodland, riparian habitats, chaparral,  
5            freshwater marsh, and open water can all support a large number of bird  
6            species. Many raptor and passerine species will use the large trees associated  
7            with woodlands and riparian habitats for nesting activities and other bird  
8            species will use these areas for foraging, cover and dispersal opportunities.

9            During the surveys of the landfill reconfiguration area conducted in 2007 and  
10            2008, a total of 40 bird species were detected, which include year-round  
11            residents, winter or summer visitors, or fall/spring migrants. Common birds  
12            observed within the Study Area and the immediate vicinity included turkey  
13            vulture (*Cathartes aura*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), Anna's  
14            hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivum*),  
15            western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*) and Nuttall's woodpecker (*Picoides*  
16            *nuttalli*). Several special-status bird species have the potential to occur in the  
17            Study Area, and are discussed in Table 4.3-3.

18            Mammals. Vegetation communities (coastal sage scrub, chaparral, riparian  
19            and oak woodlands) surrounding the landfill provide high quality cover, foraging  
20            habitat, and denning sites for a variety of mammals. Relatively common  
21            species that have been observed, detected by sign, or are expected to occur  
22            within the vicinity of the landfill include desert cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*),  
23            Botta's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Felis*  
24            *rufus*), grey fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*),  
25            dusky-footed woodrat (*Neotoma fuscipes*), striped skunk (*Mephitis mephitis*),  
26            raccoon (*Procyon lotor*) and Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*). A number  
27            of bat species may use any portion of the landfill site as foraging habitat, and  
28            there is a potential for some bat species to roost within the rock outcrops in the  
29            Study Area. Several special-status mammal species have the potential to  
30            occur in the Study Area, and are discussed in Table 4.3-3.

### 31            **Sensitive Biological Resources**

32            Several sensitive vegetation communities, plant species, wildlife species, and  
33            wetland resources are known to occur or have the potential to occur within the  
34            Study Area, as identified and/or detected during biological studies and surveys  
35            that were conducted for the proposed project and the Reconfiguration Project.  
36            Local, state, and federal agencies regulate these sensitive biological resources  
37            and require an assessment of their presence or potential presence to be  
38            conducted in the Study Area prior to the approval of the proposed landfill  
39            reconfiguration.



1 The California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), administered by the  
2 CDFW, provides an inventory of plant and animal species as well as vegetation  
3 communities, which are considered sensitive by state and federal resource  
4 agencies, academic institutions, and conservation groups such as the California  
5 Native Plant Society (CNPS).

6 In general, the principal reason an individual taxon (species, subspecies, or  
7 variety) is considered sensitive is the documented or perceived decline or  
8 limitation of its population size or geographical extent and/or distribution  
9 resulting in most cases from habitat loss. In addition, wildlife movement  
10 corridors or linkages are considered sensitive by local, state, and federal  
11 resource and conservation agencies because these corridors allow wildlife to  
12 move between adjoining open space areas that are becoming increasingly  
13 isolated and fragmented due to the existing rugged terrain combined with  
14 expanding urbanization or changes in vegetation (Beier and Loe 1992).

15 The following sections present the sensitive vegetation communities, plant and  
16 wildlife species, and wildlife corridors that are either known to occur or  
17 potentially occur in the Study Area or the immediate vicinity. The potential for  
18 these resources to occur is based on field surveys, query of the CNDDDB,  
19 knowledge of the species distribution, and the known presence of suitable  
20 habitat and/or other requisite components. These sensitive biological  
21 resources are identified and discussed in the following sections.

22 Sensitive Vegetation Communities. Sensitive vegetation communities are  
23 vegetation assemblages, associations, or sub-associations that support or  
24 potentially support sensitive plant or wildlife species, have experienced  
25 cumulative losses within the region, have relatively limited distribution, or have  
26 particular value to wildlife. Typically, sensitive vegetation communities are  
27 considered sensitive whether or not they have been disturbed. Sensitive  
28 vegetation communities are regulated by various local, state, and federal  
29 resource agencies. The CNDDDB provides an inventory of vegetation  
30 communities that are considered sensitive by state and federal resource  
31 agencies, academic institutions, and conservation groups such as CNPS.

32 Determination of the level of sensitivity is based on the classification by  
33 resource agencies and Holland (1986). In addition, the County's Environmental  
34 Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (County 1992, updated ~~2015~~ 2008) and the  
35 County's Comprehensive Plan Conservation Element (1979, amended 2003)  
36 lists additional vegetation communities that are not typically considered  
37 sensitive by other resource agencies, such as coast live oak woodland and  
38 perennial grassland but are considered sensitive locally.

39 Three sensitive vegetation communities with a total area of approximately 0.89  
40 acres occur within the Study Area. However, these vegetation communities do  
41 not occur within the project impact area.

- California bay seep woodland: 0.22 acres;
- Coast live oak woodland: 0.39 acres; and
- Southern coast live oak riparian forest: 0.28 acres.

Sensitive Plants. For purposes of this analysis, plant species are considered sensitive if they are (1) listed or proposed for listing by state or federal agencies as threatened or endangered; (2) on List 1B (considered endangered throughout its range) or List 2 (considered endangered in California but more common elsewhere) of the CNPS *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California* (CNPS 2013); or (3) considered rare, endangered, or threatened by the State of California or other local conservation organizations or specialists.

The County of Santa Barbara Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (County 1992, updated 2015 2008) also considers native specimen trees to be important and impacts to these trees can be potentially significant. Native specimen trees are defined for biological assessment purposes as mature trees that are healthy and structurally sound and have grown into the natural stature particular to the species.

Table 4.3-2 discusses sensitive plant species that have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Study Area. This Table also includes species that are known historically from the region but are not expected to occur within the Study Area based on a lack of suitable habitat. No Federally or State-listed plant species are known from the Study Area. However, three plant species which are considered sensitive by the State, CNPS, or Santa Barbara County; Plummer's baccharis (*Baccharis plummerae* ssp. *plummerae*), Santa Barbara honeysuckle (*Lonicera subspicata* var. *subspicata*), and Hoffmann's nightshade (*Solanum xanti* var. *hoffmannii*), have been observed within or adjacent to the Study Area during rare plant surveys conducted for the project, or previous surveys conducted for the Reconfiguration Project (Padre Associates Inc., 2006; Hunt and Associates, 2001; ERA, 2008; Padre County, 2009b8). The location of sensitive plants within the Study Area is provided in Figure 4.3-1. Note that native trees do not occur within the project impact area.

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**Table 4.3-2. Sensitive Plant Species Known or Potentially Occurring within the Study Area**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Status at Study Area
<i>Antirrhinum nuttallianum</i>	Nuttall's snapdragon	Locally sensitive	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Aphanisma blitoides</i>	Aphanisma	CNPS List 1B	No known historical records in area, habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Arctostaphylos refugioensis</i>	Refugio manzanita	List 1B	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Aristida adscensionis</i>	Triple-awned grass	Locally sensitive	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Atriplex coulteri</i>	Coulter's saltbush	List 1B	No known historical records in area, habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Atriplex serenana</i> var. <i> davidsonii</i>	Davidson's saltscale	List 1B	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Baccharis plummerae</i> ssp. <i> plummerae</i>	Plummer's baccharis	List 4, locally sensitive	Approximately 18 plants found within the Study Area, with 8 within the project impact area. 40 plants were planted at Baron Ranch as mitigation for removal of up to 30 plants associated with the Landfill Reconfiguration Project
<i>Calandrinia breweri</i>	Brewer's calandrinia	List 4	Low quality habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	List 4	Approximately 25 plants found in the Study Area (west borrow area) in 2009, plants were removed as part of planned landfill expansion, bulbs and seed were collected and planted at Baron Ranch
<i>Calochortus fimbriatus</i>	Late-flowered mariposa lily	List 1B	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Calystegia collina</i> ssp. <i> venusta</i>	South Coast Range morning glory	List 4	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i> australis</i>	Southern tarplant	List 1B	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Cheilanthes cooperae</i>	Cooper's lip fern	Locally sensitive	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Cornus sericea</i> ssp. <i> occidentalis</i>	Creek dogwood	Locally sensitive	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent

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Table 4.3-2. Continued

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Status at Study Area
<i>Deinandra increscens</i> ssp. <i>villosa</i>	Gaviota tarplant	SE, FE, List 1B	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Dichondra occidentalis</i>	Western dichondra	List 4	Low quality habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Dudleya blochmaniae</i> ssp. <i>blochmaniae</i>	Blochman's dudleya	List 1B	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Erigeron sanctarum</i>	Saint's daisy	List 4	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Eriodictyon capitatum</i>	Lompoc yerba santa	FE, SR, List 1B	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Erysimum suffrutescens</i>	Suffrutescent wallflower	List 4	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Galium cliftonsmithii</i>	Santa Barbara bedstraw	List 4	Low quality habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Horkelia cuneata</i> ssp. <i>puberula</i>	Mesa horkelia	List 1B	Low quality habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Juglans californica</i> var. <i>californica</i>	Southern California black walnut	List 4	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Lasthenia conjugens</i>	Contra Costa goldfields	FE, List 1B	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Lepidium virginicum</i> var. <i>robinsonii</i>	Robinson's peppergrass	List 1B	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Lilium humboldtii</i> ssp. <i>ocellatum</i>	Ocellated Humboldt lily	List 4	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Lonicera subspicata</i> ssp. <i>subspicata</i>	Santa Barbara honeysuckle	List 1B, locally sensitive	Approximately 7 plants found within the project impact area. 40 plants were planted at Baron Ranch as mitigation for removal of 13 plants associated with the Reconfiguration Project
<i>Malacothrix saxatilis</i> var. <i>saxatilis</i>	Cliff aster	List 4, locally sensitive	<i>Malacothrix saxatilis</i> var. <i>tenuifolia</i> is common in the Study Area, var. <i>saxatilis</i> was not found during focused surveys, considered absent
<i>Mimulus aurantiacus</i> var. <i>lompocense</i> (= <i>Diplacus lompocense</i> )	Lompoc monkeyflower	Locally sensitive	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Polygala cornuta</i> var. <i>fishiae</i>	Fish's milkwort	List 4	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent

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**Table 4.3-2. Continued**

Scientific Name	Common Name	Status	Status at Study Area
<i>Quercus dumosa</i>	Nuttall's scrub oak	List 1B	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Ribes amarum</i> ssp. <i>hoffmannii</i>	Bitter gooseberry	List 3	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Sanicula hoffmannii</i>	Hoffmann's sanicle	List 4	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Scrophularia atrata</i>	Black-flowered figwort	List 1B	No known historical records in area, species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Senecio aphanactis</i>	Rayless ragwort	List 2	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Solanum xanti</i> var. <i>hoffmannii</i>	Hoffmann's nightshade	Locally sensitive	Not found within the Study Area. 190 plants were planted at Baron Ranch as mitigation for removal of 30 plants associated with the Reconfiguration Project
<i>Thelypteris puberula</i> var. <i>sonorensis</i>	Sonoran maiden fern	List 2	Reported from Arroyo Hondo, 0.5 miles to the west (CNDDDB, 2013), low quality habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Thermopsis macrophylla</i>	Santa Ynez false-lupine	SR, List 1B	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent
<i>Zygadenus fremontii</i> var. <i>inezianus</i>	Camas lily	Locally sensitive	Habitat present but species not found during 2013 botanical surveys of the Study Area, considered absent

Status Key

- FE: Federally-listed as Endangered
- List 1B: California Native Plant Society (CNPS), plants Rare, Threatened or Endangered in California and elsewhere
- List 2: CNPS, plants Rare, Threatened or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere
- List 3: CNPS, plants about which we need more information, a review list
- List 4: CNPS, plants of limited distribution, a watch list
- Locally sensitive: Sensitive Plants of Santa Barbara County (Wiskowski, 1988)
- SE: California-listed as Endangered
- SR: California-listed as Rare

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3

Sensitive Wildlife. For purposes of this Subsequent EIR, wildlife species are considered sensitive if they are (1) listed or proposed for listing as threatened or endangered by the under the Federal or California ESA; (2) designated as California fully protected by CDFW; (3) raptors (birds of prey) and active raptor nests protected by the California Fish and Game Code 3503.5; (4) designated as a California species of special concern by CDFW; and/or (5) designated as locally important species.

Table 4.3-3 summarizes all sensitive wildlife species that are known or have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the Study Area and the project impact area. Appendix E provides additional information concerning the sensitive wildlife species that have the potential to occur within the Study Area.

California red-legged frogs were historically observed on the Tajiguas landfill property utilizing two man-made in-channel sedimentation basins that were formerly present in the Pila Creek channel, a groundwater seep area in the creek, and the north sedimentation basin to the east of Pila Creek. The in-channel basins provided the only breeding habitat and were managed according to the 2003 USFWS Biological Opinion for the California Red-legged Frog Management Plan and Sedimentation Basin Work Plan. No other areas of Pila Creek were identified as providing breeding habitat (ERA, 2008a) due to the ephemeral/intermittent nature of creek flows and the lack of suitable pools.

**Table 4.3-3. Sensitive Wildlife Species Known to Occur or May Occur within the Project Impact Area**

Scientific Name	Status	Potential for Occurrence within Impact Area
<b>Invertebrates</b>		
<i>Danaus plexippus</i> Monarch butterfly	SA (roosts)	Single individuals observed in landfill area during surveys conducted for 01-EIR-05 (Hunt and Associates, 2001), but no suitable roosting habitat in Study Area
<b>Fish</b>		
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i> Southern steelhead	FE/CSC	Reported from Arroyo Hondo 0.6 miles to the west (Stoecker, et al., 2002), all fish habitat removed as part of Reconfiguration Project, considered absent
<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i> Tidewater goby	FE/CSC	Reported from mouth of Arroyo Quemado (CNDDDB, 2013), all fish habitat removed as part of Reconfiguration Project, considered absent
<i>Gila orcuttii</i> Arroyo chub	CSC	Reported from Refugio Creek 3.5 miles to the east (Ingamells, personal observation, 2007), all fish habitat removed as part of Reconfiguration Project, considered absent

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**Table 4.3-3. Continued**

Scientific Name	Status	Potential for Occurrence within Impact Area
<b>Amphibians and Reptiles</b>		
<i>Rana draytonii</i> California red-legged frog	FT/CSC	Present prior to the removal of the in-channel sedimentation basins in 2009 and relocation of the population to Baron Ranch, not seen at the Tajiguas Landfill property <del>since</del> <u>from</u> April 2012 <u>to</u> December 2014. <u>Since that time, one adult was observed on December 15, 2014 and one juvenile was observed on June 11, 2015, both in the channelized portion of upper Pila Creek</u>
<i>Taricha torosa torosa</i> Coast Range newt	CSC	Reported from Refugio Creek 3.5 miles to the east (Ingamells, personal observation, 2007), no suitable habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Anniella pulchra pulchra</i> Silvery legless lizard	CSC	Low quality habitat located near Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Emys marmorata</i> Western pond turtle	CSC	Reported from upper Pila Creek during implementation of the Reconfiguration Project, no suitable habitat within Study Area, considered absent
<i>Phrynosoma blainvillii</i> Coast horned lizard	CSC	Reported from Santa Ynez Peak 10 miles to the northeast (Hunt and Associates, 2001), low quality habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Salvadora hexalepis virgultea</i> Coast patch-nosed snake	CSC	Reported from Refugio Pass 5 miles to the northeast (Jennings & Hayes, 1994), low quality habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i> Two-striped garter snake	CSC	Found within and adjacent to the in-channel sedimentation basins, basins were removed in 2009, no suitable habitat within Study Area, considered absent
<b>Birds</b>		
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i> Cooper's hawk	WL (nesting)	Observed in landfill area during surveys conducted for 01-EIR-05 (Hunt and Associates, 2001), but not observed during subsequent field surveys of the landfill site, low quality habitat present, may occur within Study Area
<i>Accipiter striatus</i> Sharp-shinned hawk	WL (nesting)	Not observed during field surveys conducted for past SEIRs and basin maintenance, low quality habitat within Study Area, does not breed in the region, but may forage within Study Area
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> Golden eagle	WL/CFP (nesting & wintering)	Low quality habitat within Study Area, not reported in the region and not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Buteo regalis</i> Ferruginous hawk	WL (wintering)	Reported from El Capitan State Beach 6.5 miles to the east, suitable habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, does not breed in the region, but may forage within Study Area in winter

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**Table 4.3-3. Continued**

Scientific Name	Status	Potential for Occurrence within Impact Area
<i>Circus cyaneus</i> Northern harrier	CSC (nesting)	Reported from Santa Barbara Ranch 10 miles to the east (URS, 2006), suitable habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, but may forage within Study Area
<i>Elanus leucurus</i> White-tailed kite	CFP	Observed in landfill area during surveys conducted for 01-EIR-05 (Hunt and Associates, 2001), but not observed during subsequent field surveys of the landfill site, could occur within Study Area
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i> Osprey	WL (nesting)	Reported from Santa Barbara Ranch 10 miles to the east (URS, 2006), no suitable habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Falco columbarius</i> Merlin	WL (wintering)	Low quality habitat within Study Area, not reported in the region and not observed during field surveys, considered absent
<i>Falco mexicanus</i> Prairie falcon	WL (nesting)	Low quality habitat within Study Area, not reported in the region and not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i> American peregrine falcon	CFP	Reported from Santa Barbara Ranch 10 miles to the east (URS, 2006), no suitable habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> Loggerhead shrike	CSC	Observed in landfill area in September 2008, and during biological monitoring in 2012, suitable habitat present, could occur within Study Area
<i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i> California horned lark	WL	Observed in landfill area during surveys conducted for 01-EIR-05 (Hunt & Associates, 2001), no suitable habitat within Study Area, considered absent
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> Least Bell's vireo	FE/SE	Not reported in region, a habitat suitability assessment conducted in June 2008 by Jim Greaves determined this species is not anticipated to occur at the landfill site
<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i> Yellow warbler	CSC (nesting)	Observed during biological monitoring in 2012 of Phase 3A liner installation, likely a transient as suitable habitat is not present, considered absent from Study Area
<i>Icteria virens</i> Yellow-breasted chat	CSC (nesting)	Reported from Refugio Creek 3.5 miles to the east (Lehman, 1994), no suitable habitat present, considered absent
<i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i> Southern California rufous-crowned sparrow	WL	Observed during biological monitoring in 2012 of Phase 3A liner installation, suitable habitat present, could occur within Study Area
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i> Grasshopper sparrow	CSC	Reported from Santa Barbara Ranch 10 miles to the east (URS, 2006), no suitable habitat within Study Area, not observed during past field surveys of the landfill site, considered absent
<b>Mammals</b>		
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i> Pallid bat	CSC	Santa Barbara Natural History Museum specimen from Las Cruces 5.2 miles to the northwest, low quality roosting habitat (crevices) occurs within Study Area, could be present



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**Table 4.3-3. Continued**

Scientific Name	Status	Potential for Occurrence within Impact Area
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii pallescens</i> Townsend's big-eared bat	CSC	Santa Barbara Natural History Museum specimen from Monte Vista School 21.8 miles to the east, no roosting habitat within Study Area, considered absent
<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i> Western mastiff bat	CSC	Upper Honda Canyon 25 miles to the west-northwest (Pierson et al., 2002), low quality roosting habitat (crevices) occurs within Study Area, could be present
<i>Nyctinomops macrotis</i> Big free-tailed bat	CSC	One specimen reported from Santa Barbara (CNDDDB, 2013), generally very rare in California, low quality roosting habitat (crevices) occurs within Study Area, could be present
<i>Bassariscus astutus</i> Ringtail	CFP	Observed in landfill area during surveys conducted for 01-EIR-05 (Hunt and Associates, 2001), suitable habitat within Study Area, may be present
<i>Neotoma lepida intermedia</i> San Diego desert woodrat	CSC	Observed in landfill area during surveys conducted for 01-EIR-05 (Hunt and Associates, 2001), reported from Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way 1 mile to the southwest (CNDDDB, 2013), low quality habitat within Study Area, may be present
<i>Taxidea taxus</i> American badger	CSC	Reported from Arroyo Hondo watershed 1.1 miles to the west (CNDDDB, 2013), low quality habitat occurs in Study Area, could be present

Status Key: CFP: Fully protected under the California Fish and Game Code      FT: Federally-listed as Threatened  
 CSC: California Species of Special Concern      SE: California-listed as Endangered  
 WL: Watch List (CDFW)  
 FE: Federally-listed as Endangered

2                    Since 2009, monitoring of California red-legged frogs within the Pila Creek  
 3 drainage has been conducted as a part of the California Red-legged Frog  
 4 Management Plan, which was developed as part of the Tajiguas Landfill  
 5 Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project, and required to be  
 6 implemented as a condition of the 2009 Biological Opinion issued for the  
 7 Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration Project. The 2009 Biological Opinion  
 8 authorizes the collection and relocation of California red-legged frogs from Pila  
 9 Creek to USFWS-approved pools in Arroyo Quemado, on the Baron Ranch  
 10 where restoration activities continue to be implemented to enhance/expand  
 11 California red-legged frog habitat. These relocations occurred initially when the  
 12 in-channel sedimentation basins were pumped dry prior to excavation, and  
 13 when California red-legged frogs were encountered during biological surveys  
 14 conducted following rain events during construction activities associated with  
 15 the Reconfiguration Project.

16                    A summary of California red-legged frog surveys and relocations follows:

- 17                    • In 2009, 17 adult and approximately 1,114 larval and 1,689 metamorph  
 18 California red-legged frogs were captured and relocated to Arroyo  
 19 Quemado;

- 1                   • In 2010, 11 individual adults were captured at the landfill and relocated to  
2                   Arroyo Quemado, 6 of these had returned to the landfill from Arroyo  
3                   Quemado;
- 4                   • In 2011, 3 adults were captured at the landfill and relocated to Arroyo  
5                   Quemado; ~~and~~
- 6                   • From February through April 2012, 16 juveniles were found within a  
7                   small seep area within the Pila Creek channel and relocated to Arroyo  
8                   Quemado. These frogs were found prior to Phase 3A liner construction,  
9                   which included removal of the seep and conversion of a portion of Pila  
10                  Creek to a concrete channel. California red-legged frogs were not  
11                  observed during Phase 3A and 3B liner construction;
- 12                 • Ten focused CRLF surveys were conducted within the Tajiguas Landfill  
13                 Reconfiguration area during the 2012/2013 wet season, and none were  
14                 found;
- 15                 • Five focused CRLF surveys were conducted within the Tajiguas Landfill  
16                 Reconfiguration area during the 2013/2014 wet season, and none were  
17                 found; and
- 18                 • Twenty-two focused surveys for CRLF were conducted within the  
19                 Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration area during the 2014/2015 wet season,  
20                 and only two were found (one adult, one juvenile), and both were  
21                 relocated to Arroyo Quemado.

22                   Construction of the Reconfiguration Project resulted in the removal of the  
23                   existing sources of standing water on the landfill that may provide potential  
24                   habitat for the California red-legged frog. The two in-channel sedimentation  
25                   basins that provided suitable breeding habitat were removed from Pila Creek to  
26                   allow for the reconfiguration of the waste footprint. The groundwater seep was  
27                   removed, and the natural Pila Creek channel was modified and reconstructed  
28                   as a concrete-lined trapezoidal channel as part of the permitted Reconfiguration  
29                   Project.

30                   In addition, the north sedimentation basin (formerly the out-of-channel  
31                   sedimentation basin) was reconstructed and concrete-lined to facilitate  
32                   sediment removal and a free-draining skimmer system has been installed that  
33                   reduces the amount of time water is retained in the basin. Previously, the basin  
34                   ponded water until it was physically pumped. Since these changes have been  
35                   implemented, very few ~~no~~ California red-legged frogs have been observed  
36                   during biological surveys conducted at the landfill. However, the fact that  
37                   California red-legged frogs were found consistently for several years after all  
38                   breeding habitat was removed (in-channel sedimentation basins) indicates that  
39                   the landfill site may be located within a migration/dispersal corridor for this species.

40

1                   **Habitat Connectivity and Wildlife Corridors**

2                   Wildlife movement corridors or linkages are considered sensitive by local, state,  
3                   and federal resource and conservation agencies because these corridors allow  
4                   wildlife to move between adjoining open space areas offsetting the effects of  
5                   isolation as open space becomes increasingly fragmented from urbanization,  
6                   rugged terrain, or changes in vegetation (Beier and Loe 1992).

7                   Multiple studies have concluded that many wildlife species in developed and  
8                   fragmented areas would not likely persist over time because isolation through  
9                   fragmentation would prohibit the infusion of new individuals and genetic  
10                  information (MacArthur and Wilson 1967; Soule 1987; Harris and Gallagher  
11                  1989; Bennett 1990). However, wildlife corridors mitigate the effects of this  
12                  fragmentation by (1) allowing wildlife to move between remaining habitats,  
13                  thereby permitting depleted populations to be replenished and promoting  
14                  genetic exchange; (2) providing escape routes from fire, predators, and human  
15                  disturbances, thus reducing the risk of catastrophic stochastic events (such as  
16                  fire or disease) on population or local species extinction; and (3) serving as  
17                  travel routes for individual animals as they move within their home ranges in  
18                  search of food, water, mates, and other needs (Noss 1983; Farhig and Merriam  
19                  1985; Simberloff and Cox 1987; Harris and Gallagher 1989).

20                  Wildlife movement activities typically fall into one of three movement categories:  
21                  (1) dispersal (e.g., juvenile animals from natal areas, or individuals extending  
22                  range distributions); (2) seasonal migration; and (3) movements related to  
23                  home range activities (foraging for food or water, defending territories,  
24                  searching for mates, breeding areas, or cover).

25                  Large open space areas that have few or no man-made or naturally occurring  
26                  physical constraints to wildlife movement may not have wildlife corridors but  
27                  may still be large enough to maintain viable populations of species; provide  
28                  adequate food, water, and cover; and provide a variety of travel routes  
29                  (canyons, ridgelines, trails, riverbeds, and others) without the movement of  
30                  wildlife into other large open space areas. However, once an open space area  
31                  becomes constrained and/or fragmented as a result of urban encroachment,  
32                  the remaining linkage area that connects the larger open space areas can act  
33                  as a corridor as long as it provides adequate space, cover, food, and water and  
34                  does not contain obstacles or distractions (e.g., man-made noise, lighting) that  
35                  would generally hinder wildlife movement.

36                  The Study Area is generally comprised of steep graded hillsides, dirt and paved  
37                  roads, ruderal areas devoid of vegetation, and other development associated  
38                  with landfill operations. These developed and active portions of the Tajiguas  
39                  Landfill provide little value to resident and transitory wildlife.

40

1 The Study Area includes small portions of the ridgelines east and west of  
2 Cañada de la Pila (potable water tank/recycled water tank site, composting  
3 area runoff collection tank site), and could be used by wildlife moving through  
4 the area. However, these areas provide little cover and are adjacent to active  
5 portions of the landfill, which may limit movement to nighttime hours.

6 In contrast, the majority of the land east and west of the landfill (Arroyo Hondo,  
7 Arroyo Quemado) contains native riparian, woodland, and chaparral vegetation  
8 that provide a source of food, water, and cover for resident and transitory  
9 wildlife. These drainages and undeveloped ridgelines likely serve as travel  
10 routes for wildlife moving between the coast and the upper reaches of the  
11 Cañada de la Pila and the Santa Ynez Mountains north of the Study Area.  
12 Therefore, the value of the Study Area as a movement corridor for wildlife is  
13 considered low.

#### 14 **Wetlands and Jurisdictional Waters**

15 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In accordance with Section 404 of the CWA,  
16 the USACE has regulatory authority over the discharge of dredged or fill  
17 material into waters of the U.S. (including non-wetland waters of the U.S. and  
18 wetlands). Federal jurisdiction is dependent on a demonstrated nexus between  
19 the subject water feature and navigable waters or interstate commerce. The  
20 USACE and EPA define wetlands as "those areas that are inundated or  
21 saturated by surface or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to  
22 support, and that under normal circumstances do support, a prevalence of  
23 vegetation typically adapted to life in saturated soil conditions" (USACE 1987).

24 California Department of Fish and Wildlife. In accordance with Sections 1600  
25 to 1616 of the Fish and Game Code, the CDFW regulates activities that would  
26 divert or obstruct the natural flow or substantially change the bed, channel, or  
27 bank of any river, stream, or lake that supports fish or wildlife. The CDFW  
28 exerts jurisdiction over all waters of the State, such as streams and rivers  
29 (measured from bank to bank) and any riparian vegetation associated with the  
30 waters.

31 Regional Water Quality Control Board. The RWQCB is the primary agency  
32 responsible for protecting water quality in California. The RWQCB regulates  
33 discharges to surface waters under Section 401 of the CWA and the California  
34 Porter-Cologne Water Quality Control Act. The RWQCB's jurisdiction extends  
35 to all waters of the State and to all waters of the U.S. as considered  
36 jurisdictional by the USACE. The RWQCB also regulates isolated wetlands,  
37 e.g., vernal pools that are not regulated by the USACE.

38 County of Santa Barbara. The County has adopted the following wetland  
39 definition:

- 40 1. At least periodically, the land supports predominantly hydrophytes (i.e.  
41 plants adapted to moist areas),

- 1                   2. The substrate is predominantly undrained hydric soil, and  
2                   3. The substrate is non-soil and is saturated with water or covered by  
3                   shallow water at some time during the growing season of each year  
4                   (Cowardin et al., 1979; County 1992, updated 2015 2008).

5                   Presence within Study Area. The Study Area, which includes a 200 feet-wide  
6                   buffer around the proposed impact area, is comprised of active portions of the  
7                   landfill and adjacent areas, primarily ridgelines. The concrete-lined portion of  
8                   Pila Creek occurs within the study area, but no streams or other drainage  
9                   features occur within the project impact area. Based on a preliminary  
10                  inspection, jurisdictional waters (including wetlands) do not occur within the  
11                  project impact area. .

## 12 **4.3.2 Impact Analysis and Mitigation Measures**

### 13 4.3.2.1 Thresholds of Significance

14                  The criteria for determining significant impacts on biological resources were  
15                  developed in accordance with Section 15065(a) and Appendix G of the State  
16                  CEQA Guidelines and the Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds  
17                  and Guidelines Manual ~~Biological Resources Section~~ (Santa Barbara County  
18                  1992, updated 2015 2008).

#### 19 **CEQA Guidelines Section 15065(a)**

20                  A project may have a significant impact on the environment if the project has  
21                  the potential to (1) substantially degrade the quality of the environment, (2)  
22                  substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, (3) cause a fish or  
23                  wildlife population to drop below a self-sustaining level, (4) threaten to eliminate  
24                  a plant or animal community, and/or (5) reduce the number or restrict the range  
25                  of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.

26                  An evaluation of whether an impact on biological resources would be  
27                  substantial must consider both the resource itself and how that resource fits into  
28                  a regional or local context. A substantial impact is an impact that diminishes, or  
29                  results in the loss of, a sensitive biological resource or that significantly conflicts  
30                  with local, State, or Federal resource conservation plans, goals, and/or  
31                  regulations. Sometimes impacts can be locally adverse, but not significant. In  
32                  such a case, the impacts may result in an adverse alteration of a local biological  
33                  resource, but they may not substantially diminish or result in the permanent loss  
34                  of an important resource on a population- or region-wide basis.

1 **CEQA Guidelines Appendix G**

2 Implementation of the proposed project may have potentially significant adverse  
3 impacts on biological resources if it would result in any of the following:

- 4 • Have a substantial adverse impact, either directly or through habitat  
5 modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or  
6 special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations  
7 or by the CDFW or the USFWS;
- 8 • Have a substantial adverse impact on any riparian habitat or other  
9 sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies,  
10 or regulations or by the CDFW or the USFWS;
- 11 • Have a substantial adverse impact on State or federally protected  
12 wetlands as defined by USACE, CDFW, RWQCB, or California Coastal  
13 Commission, including but not limited to marsh, coastal, etc., through  
14 direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means;
- 15 • Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or  
16 migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or  
17 migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery  
18 sites;
- 19 • Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological  
20 resources such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance; and/or
- 21 • Conflict with the provisions of any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan  
22 (HCP), Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local,  
23 regional, or State HCP.

24 **Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual**  
25 **Biological Resources**

26 General Impacts. Disturbance to habitats or species may be significant, based  
27 on substantial evidence in the record (not public controversy or speculation), if  
28 they substantially impact significant resources in the following ways:

- 29 • Substantially reduce or eliminate species diversity or abundance;
- 30 • Substantially reduce or eliminate quantity or quality of nesting areas;
- 31 • Substantially limit reproductive capacity through losses of individuals or  
32 habitat;
- 33 • Substantially fragment, eliminate, or otherwise disrupt foraging areas  
34 and/or access to food sources;
- 35 • Substantially limit or fragment range and movement (geographic  
36 distribution or animals and/or seed dispersal routes); and/or

- 1                   • Substantially interfere with natural processes, such as fire or flooding,  
2                   upon which the habitat depends.

3                   Wetland Impact Assessment Guidelines. The following types of project-created  
4                   impacts may be considered significant:

- 5                   • Projects which result in a net loss of important wetland area or wetland  
6                   habitat value, either through direct or indirect impacts to wetland  
7                   vegetation, degradation of water quality, or would threaten the continuity  
8                   of wetland-dependent animal or plant species are considered to have a  
9                   potentially significant effect on the environment.
- 10                  • Projects which substantially interrupt wildlife access, use and dispersal in  
11                  wetland areas would typically be considered to have potentially  
12                  significant impacts.

13                  Riparian Impact Assessment Guidelines. The following types of project-related  
14                  impacts may be considered significant:

- 15                  • Direct removal of riparian vegetation.
- 16                  • Disruption of riparian wildlife habitat, particularly animal dispersal  
17                  corridors and or understory vegetation.
- 18                  • Intrusion within the upland edge of the riparian canopy (generally within  
19                  50 feet in urban areas, within 100 feet in rural areas, and within 200 feet  
20                  of major rivers listed in the previous section), leading to potential  
21                  disruption of animal migration, breeding, etc. through increased noise,  
22                  light and glare, and human or domestic animal intrusion.
- 23                  • Disruption of a substantial amount of adjacent upland vegetation where  
24                  such vegetation plays a critical role in supporting riparian-dependent  
25                  wildlife species (e. g., amphibians), or where such vegetation aids in  
26                  stabilizing steep slopes adjacent to the riparian corridor, which reduces  
27                  erosion and sedimentation potential.
- 28                  • Construction activity which disrupts critical time periods (nesting,  
29                  breeding) for fish and other wildlife species.

30                  Native Grassland Habitat Impact Assessment Guidelines

- 31                  • For purposes of resource evaluation in Santa Barbara County, a native  
32                  grassland is defined as an area where native grassland species  
33                  comprise 10 percent or more of the total relative cover.
- 34                  • Removal or severe disturbance to a patch or patches of native grasses  
35                  less than one-quarter acre, which is clearly isolated and is not a part of a  
36                  significant native grassland or an integral component of a larger  
37                  ecosystem, is usually considered insignificant.

1                    Impact Assessment Guidelines for Woodlands and Forest Habitat Areas.  
2                    Project-created impacts may be considered significant due to changes in  
3                    habitat value and species composition such as the following: (1) Habitat  
4                    fragmentation. (2) Removal of understory. (3) Alteration to drainage patterns.  
5                    (4) Disruption of the canopy (5) Removal of a significant number of trees that  
6                    would cause a break in the canopy or disruption in animal movement in and  
7                    through the woodland.

8                    Native Tree Impact Assessment. In general, the loss of 10 percent or more of  
9                    the trees of biological value on a project site is considered potentially  
10                    significant.

#### 11                    4.3.2.2 Approved Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project

12                    The following summarizes the impacts to biological resources identified in 01-  
13                    EIR-05 for the Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project (see Section 3.4.3).

- 14                    1. The Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project would ultimately disturb a total of  
15                    71 acres of vegetation communities, including 38 acres of mature chaparral,  
16                    5 acres of degraded coastal sage scrub, 4 acres of coast live oak woodland,  
17                    16 acres of non-native grassland and 7 acres of ruderal/landscaping  
18                    vegetation. The loss of these habitats was considered a significant and  
19                    unavoidable impact (Class I). Despite mitigation (BIO-7, requiring native  
20                    revegetation at a 3:1 ratio<sup>1</sup>) proposed to minimize this impact, residual  
21                    impacts were expected to remain significant.
- 22                    2. Excavation and construction activities associated the Tajiguas Landfill  
23                    Expansion Project were anticipated to result in disturbance from increased  
24                    human activity and lead to the establishment of invasive, nonnative  
25                    vegetation. This was considered a significant but mitigable impact (Class  
26                    II).
- 27                    3. Within the approved Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project footprint, impacts  
28                    to 100 to 150 mature coast live oak trees were anticipated. A tree  
29                    replacement program and protective measures during construction (BIO-3  
30                    and BIO-4 of 01-EIR-05) would potentially reduce the severity of this impact,  
31                    but residual impacts were expected to remain significant (Class I).
- 32                    4. Loss of occupied habitat for three sensitive plant species (Plummer's  
33                    baccharis, Hoffmann's nightshade and Santa Barbara honeysuckle) would  
34                    occur within the landfill expansion area. Although mitigation provided by 01-  
35                    EIR-05 (BIO-1) would minimize impacts to sensitive plants, residual impacts  
36                    were expected to remain significant (Class I).

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<sup>1</sup> The replacement ratio in this mitigation measure was modified from 1:1 to 3:1 during certification of 01-EIR-05 and the Board of Supervisors approval of the Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project.



- 1                   5. The Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project would lead to abandonment or  
2 avoidance of foraging and/or breeding habitat by several sensitive bird and  
3 mammal species that occur in adjacent foothill habitats, as a result of  
4 increased human presence/activities. Mitigation (BIO-9 in 01-EIR-05,  
5 minimize night lighting) was proposed to reduce this impact, but residual  
6 impacts were expected to remain significant (Class I).
  
- 7                   6. The Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project would result in the increased  
8 attraction of nuisance birds, such as various gull species and American  
9 crows. Artificially increased populations of these nuisance birds can exert  
10 additional pressure on other wildlife species through increased competition  
11 for limited habitat areas, such as wetlands and open water, and increased  
12 predatory pressure on a variety of species, such as songbirds and California  
13 red-legged frogs. This was considered a significant but mitigable impact  
14 (Class II); implementation of proposed mitigation measures (primarily NUI-2  
15 in 01-EIR-05, bird management) was expected to reduce this impact to  
16 below a level of significance.
  
- 17                  7. Nine sensitive wildlife species were known to occur within the Tajiguas  
18 Landfill Expansion Project area (three mammals, five birds and one  
19 amphibian), and 30 additional species were considered to have potential to  
20 occur. The project was expected to impact one federally listed species, the  
21 California red-legged frog. These impacts are associated with on-going  
22 maintenance activities within the sedimentation basins. A California Red-  
23 legged Frog Management Plan, as required by mitigation measure BIO-8 of  
24 01-EIR-05, has been developed to reduce these impacts and continues to  
25 be implemented; however, residual impacts were considered significant and  
26 unavoidable (Class I).
  
- 27                  8. Impacts from the Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project were expected to  
28 adversely affect mountain lion and ringtail through loss of habitat and  
29 increased human presence; these impacts were considered significant but  
30 mitigable (Class II); mitigation proposed (BIO-7, BIO-9 and BIO-10 in 01-  
31 EIR-05) for these species was expected to reduce the impacts to below a  
32 level of significance.
  
- 33                  9. The removal of suitable habitat for the San Diego woodrat, due to the more  
34 sedentary nature of this species, was expected to be a significant and  
35 unavoidable impact of the Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project. Though this  
36 would be partially offset by mitigation measures (BIO-5 in 01-EIR-05:  
37 surveys and relocation of woodrats), residual impacts were expected to  
38 remain significant (Class I).
  
- 39

1 10. Impacts to four sensitive bird species (California horned lark, loggerhead  
2 shrike, Cooper's hawk and white-tailed kite) known from the site would  
3 include removal of habitat used for foraging and, potentially, breeding. Due  
4 to the abundance of habitat remaining in the vicinity of the Tajiguas Landfill  
5 Expansion Project, and the lower sensitivity status of these species, the  
6 impacts would be considered significant but mitigable. The proposed  
7 revegetation during phased closure of the landfill would reduce impacts to  
8 the sensitive bird species to less than significant (Class II).

9 11. The Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project was considered to have potential  
10 indirect impacts to the tidewater goby, which has been found in the adjacent  
11 Arroyo Quemado and Arroyo Hondo. These impacts may occur as a result  
12 of increased sedimentation and predation by gulls. Potential impacts to the  
13 goby were considered significant but mitigable. Implementation of  
14 mitigation measures provided by 01-EIR-05 (BIO-6 and NUI-2) were  
15 expected to reduce potential impacts to less than significant levels (Class  
16 II).

17 12. The Tajiguas Landfill Expansion Project was projected to potentially remove  
18 food plants (e.g., milkweed) for the monarch butterfly. This was considered  
19 a potentially significant, but mitigable, impact. Implementation of mitigation  
20 measures provided by 01-EIR-05 (BIO-11) was expected to reduce potential  
21 impacts to monarchs to less than significant levels (Class II).

#### 22 4.3.2.3 Approved Tajiguas Landfill Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration 23 Project

24 The following summarizes the impacts to biological resources identified in  
25 08EIR-00000-00007 (see Section 4.4.2.3) for the Tajiguas Landfill  
26 Reconfiguration and Baron Ranch Restoration Project (Reconfiguration  
27 Project).

28 1. The Reconfiguration Project would result in the permanent loss of 4.1 acres  
29 of sensitive vegetation communities and 4.2 acres of other native vegetation  
30 communities and potentially indirectly reduce the quality of these habitats in  
31 adjacent areas. The loss of these habitats was considered a significant and  
32 unavoidable impact (Class I). Despite mitigation (MM BIO-1[a], Restoration  
33 Plan implementation; MM BIO-1[b], minimization of impacts to adjacent  
34 areas; and MM BIO-1[c], control of highly invasive plants), residual impacts  
35 were considered significant and unavoidable.

36 2. The Reconfiguration Project would result in the additional loss of individuals  
37 of three species of sensitive plants (Plummer's baccharis, Santa Barbara  
38 honeysuckle, and Hoffmann's nightshade). Although mitigation provided by  
39 MM BIO-1(a) would minimize impacts to sensitive plants, residual impacts  
40 were expected to remain significant (Class I).

41

- 1                    3. The Reconfiguration Project would result in the loss of specimen native  
2                    trees. Although mitigation provided by MM BIO-1(a) and MM BIO-1(b)  
3                    would minimize impacts to specimen native trees, residual impacts were  
4                    expected to remain significant (Class I).
- 5                    4. The filling of Pila Creek related to the Reconfiguration Project would result  
6                    in the loss of 0.30 acres of USACE-defined wetlands and 5.03 acres of  
7                    CDFW/RWQCB/County-defined wetlands. The implementation of MM BIO-  
8                    1(a) and MM BIO-1(b) of 08EIR-00000-00007 was expected to reduce  
9                    impacts to less than significant levels (Class II).
- 10                   5. The Reconfiguration Project would result in mortality and habitat loss for  
11                   common wildlife species. These impacts were considered adverse but less  
12                   than significant (Class III) because the proposed landfill reconfiguration was  
13                   not expected to reduce these wildlife populations below self-sustaining  
14                   levels. However, MM BIO-5(a) (replacement water source) and MM BIO-  
15                   5(b) (night lighting) were proposed to further address impacts to common  
16                   wildlife.
- 17                   6. The removal of the in-channel sedimentation basins and adjacent native  
18                   habitats related to the Reconfiguration Project would result in loss of  
19                   breeding and foraging habitat and potentially result in direct impacts to  
20                   individual threatened California red-legged frogs from Pila Creek. Despite  
21                   mitigation (MM BIO-6, California Red-legged Frog Management Plan  
22                   implementation), residual impacts were considered significant and  
23                   unavoidable (Class I).
- 24                   7. The Reconfiguration Project would result in habitat loss that would  
25                   adversely affect the San Diego desert woodrat. The incremental project  
26                   impact was determined to be a significant but mitigable impact (Class II),  
27                   through implementation of MM BIO-7 (San Diego desert woodrat  
28                   relocation). Consistent with the approved Landfill Expansion Project,  
29                   residual impacts were considered significant and unavoidable.
- 30                   8. The Reconfiguration Project would result in habitat loss that would  
31                   adversely affect American badger and ringtail. Removal of active dens  
32                   during the breeding period was determined to be a potentially significant  
33                   impact (Class II). This potential impact was mitigated with the  
34                   implementation of MM BIO-8 (American badger and ringtail surveys) and  
35                   residual impacts were determined to be less than significant.

36

- 1                   9. The Reconfiguration Project would adversely affect two-striped garter  
2 snake. The proposed filling of the in-channel basins would result in the loss  
3 of several individuals and affect the long-term persistence of the local  
4 population, which was considered a potentially significant impact (Class II).  
5 This impact was mitigated with the implementation of MM BIO-9 (two-  
6 striped garter snake relocation), which would reduce residual impacts to a  
7 less than significant level.
- 8                   10. The Reconfiguration Project would result in removal of the in-channel  
9 basins, which would eliminate potential habitat for the western pond turtle in  
10 Pila Creek. This was determined an adverse impact, but less than  
11 significant (Class III). Although mitigation was not required, MM BIO-10  
12 (western pond turtle relocation) was implemented to avoid potential impacts  
13 to the species.
- 14                   11. Habitat loss resulting from the Reconfiguration Project could significantly  
15 affect raptors including the white-tailed kite, Cooper's hawk, red-tailed hawk,  
16 and great horned owl, which was determined to be a Class II impact.  
17 Impacts were reduced to a less than significant level through the  
18 implementation of MM BIO-11 (avoidance of raptor breeding period).
- 19                   12. Habitat loss resulting from the Reconfiguration Project would adversely  
20 affect raptors including the sharp-shinned hawk, ferruginous hawk,  
21 Swainson's hawk, northern harrier, osprey, merlin, and American peregrine  
22 falcon. This impact was determined to be less than significant (Class III).
- 23                   13. Vegetation removal resulting from the Reconfiguration Project could  
24 significantly affect other sensitive birds and nesting migratory birds, which  
25 was considered to be a significant impact (Class II). This impact was  
26 reduced to a less than significant level through the implementation of MM  
27 BIO-13 (avoidance of migratory bird breeding period).
- 28                   14. The removal of trees and rock outcrops resulting from the Reconfiguration  
29 Project could eliminate habitat for sensitive bat species. The project would  
30 permanently eliminate habitat for bat maternity roosts and had the potential  
31 to result in direct mortality of individual bats. Any permanent or temporary  
32 impacts of occupied maternity roosts were determined to be a significant  
33 impact (Class II). This impact was reduced to a less than significant level  
34 through the implementation of MM BIO-14 (avoidance of bat maternity  
35 colonies).
- 36                   15. The filling of Pila Creek resulting from the Reconfiguration Project may  
37 adversely affect habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors. However, this  
38 impact was determined to be less than significant (Class III).

1           4.3.2.4 Proposed Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

2           The following impact analysis addresses each of the proposed project  
3           components including the MRF, AD Facility, composting area, energy facility,  
4           tanks, Well 6, water pipelines, power lines and landfill maintenance building.

5           **Impact TRRP BIO-1: Implementation of the proposed project would result**  
6           **in the permanent loss of approximately 3.33 acres of non-native and**  
7           **native vegetation communities within the project impact area which would**  
8           **be an adverse but less than significant biological impact – Class III**  
9           **Impact.**

10          Implementation of the proposed project would result in the permanent loss of  
11          approximately 3.33 acres of vegetation communities (see Table 4.3-1 and  
12          Figure 4.3-1). This loss includes 1.09 acres of native vegetation  
13          communities/cover types (*Ceanothus megacarpus* chaparral and rock outcrops)  
14          and 2.24 acres of ruderal areas dominated by non-native plant species.

15          Although Venturan coastal sage scrub and *Ceanothus megacarpus* chaparral  
16          are not considered sensitive by Holland (1986) or the County within inland  
17          areas (1992, updated 2015 ~~2008~~), impacts to these vegetation communities  
18          were considered significant and unavoidable in 01-EIR-05 for the Tajiguas  
19          Landfill Expansion Project. The level of significance was based on the size  
20          (approximately 71 acres) of the native habitat impacted, the loss of the buffer  
21          from landfill activities that these communities afforded wildlife, and the reduction  
22          in areas available for wildlife species particularly those that are habitat  
23          specialists or require a large home range. The proposed project would impact  
24          1.07 additional acres of *Ceanothus megacarpus* chaparral. Due to the small  
25          area of anticipated permanent loss of this common native vegetation  
26          community, permanent impacts are considered adverse but less than  
27          significant.

28          **Impact TRRP BIO-2: Construction activities may adversely affect sensitive**  
29          **vegetation located adjacent to the direct impact area – Class II Impact.**

30          Construction activities may cause indirect temporary impacts within 0.89 acres  
31          of sensitive vegetation communities (0.22 acre of California bay seep  
32          woodland, 0.39 acre of coast live oak woodland, and 0.28 acre of southern  
33          coast live oak riparian forest) identified within 200 feet of the direct impact area.  
34          These temporary impacts may include increased fugitive dust, introduction of  
35          invasive or weedy species, soil erosion, and run-off which could compromise  
36          plant respiration, photosynthesis, and growth.

1                   **Mitigation Measures:**

2                   **MM TRRP BIO-1: Construction Requirements.**

- 3                   • To prevent inadvertent damage to sensitive vegetation adjacent to work  
4                   areas, the construction disturbance area shall be clearly delineated on  
5                   the project construction plans and in the field by staking, fencing, or  
6                   equivalent methods. Field delineation shall occur prior to beginning  
7                   ground-disturbing activities or vegetation removal.
- 8                   • RRWMD shall monitor the project area and, where feasible, control  
9                   infestations of plants identified as highly invasive by the California  
10                  Invasive Plant Council. Invasive plants shall not be planted at project  
11                  facility sites for erosion control or other uses.
- 12                 • Throughout construction, exposed soil within active construction areas  
13                  shall be periodically wetted to prevent excessive fugitive dust from  
14                  drifting into adjacent areas.
- 15                 • In construction areas where excessive erosion may occur, soil shall be  
16                  stabilized through the use of appropriate measures such as silt fencing,  
17                  straw wattles, and/or hydroseeding.

18                 Plan Requirements and Timing: These measures shall be included in the  
19                 project's plans and specifications, and implemented during the entire  
20                 construction period for each proposed facility.

21                 Monitoring: RRWMD shall ensure these measures are fully implemented  
22                 during the construction period.

23                 Residual Impacts: Implementation of **MM TRRP BIO-1** would reduce biological  
24                 resources **Impact TRRP BIO-2** to a level of less than significant.

25                 **Impact TRRP BIO-3: Construction activities would result in an adverse but  
26                 less than significant direct loss of wildlife habitat and adverse but less  
27                 than significant impact to wildlife habitat located adjacent to the direct  
28                 impact area – Class III Impact.**

29                 The proposed project would result in the permanent loss of 3.33 acres of  
30                 habitat for common wildlife species during clearing and grubbing prior to  
31                 construction, primarily near the western and eastern ridges of Cañada de la  
32                 Pila. Common wildlife species (especially small mammals and reptiles with low  
33                 mobility) may be inadvertently killed or injured during construction activities,  
34                 though many birds and large mammals that have higher mobility are less likely  
35                 to be crushed during the construction of proposed facilities.

1 Project construction activities would result in indirect temporary impacts to  
2 wildlife habitat and common wildlife species, such as increased fugitive dust,  
3 elevated noise levels, and increased human activity within and adjacent to the  
4 Resource Recovery Project facility sites. However, storage of construction  
5 materials and staging of equipment would not affect wildlife or wildlife habitats  
6 because these types of project activities would be limited to existing disturbed  
7 landfill areas. Indirect construction-related impacts to common wildlife species  
8 are considered an adverse but less than significant impact because the project  
9 would affect only a small amount of native habitat, other undeveloped areas of  
10 the landfill property and neighboring properties are available for use by  
11 common wildlife species, and the project is not expected to reduce common  
12 wildlife populations below self-sustaining levels.

13 **Impact TRRP BIO-4: Construction activity may significantly affect nesting**  
14 **migratory birds and/or raptors – Class II Impact.**

15 Construction activities during the nesting season could directly impact active  
16 nests or cause abandonment or failure of nests, which would be inconsistent  
17 with the MBTA and Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Game Code.  
18 Nesting birds affected may include special-status species, such as Cooper's  
19 hawk and southern California rufous-crowned sparrow. It should be noted that  
20 construction activities would occur in areas already subject to significant noise  
21 and dust from existing landfill operations, and the species present are likely to  
22 be habituated to the existing noise environment.

23 ***Mitigation Measures:***

24 ***MM TRRP BIO-2: Breeding Bird Protection.***

- 25 • Clearing and grubbing of areas of native habitat or areas immediately  
26 adjacent to native habitat shall avoid the migratory bird and raptor  
27 breeding season (February 1 to August 15).
- 28 • If construction in these areas cannot be avoided during this period, a  
29 nest survey within the area of impact and a 200 foot buffer for passerines  
30 and any available raptor nesting areas within 500 feet shall be conducted  
31 by a qualified biologist no earlier than 14 days and no later than 5 days  
32 prior to any native habitat removal or ground disturbance to determine if  
33 any nests are present.
- 34 • If an active nest is discovered during the survey, a buffer of 200 feet for  
35 migratory birds or 500 feet for raptors (or as determined by the biologist  
36 based on a field assessment) would be established around the nest. No  
37 construction activity may occur within this buffer area until a biologist  
38 determines that the nest is abandoned or fledglings are adequately  
39 independent from the adults.

1            Plan Requirements and Timing: The survey shall be conducted by a qualified  
2 biologist and the measures shall be included in the project's plans and  
3 specifications, and implemented during the entire construction period for each  
4 proposed facility.

5            Monitoring: RRWMD shall ensure these measures are fully implemented  
6 during the construction period.

7            Residual Impacts: Implementation of **MM TRRP BIO-2** would reduce biological  
8 resources **Impact TRRP BIO-4** to a level of less than significant.

9            **Impact TRRP BIO-5: Project construction activities would result in a less**  
10 **than significant loss of special-status plant species – Class III Impact.**

11            As indicated in Table 4.3-2 and presented in Figure 4.3-1, approximately 15  
12 individuals of two sensitive plant species occur within the project impact area,  
13 eight Plummer's baccharis and seven Santa Barbara honeysuckle. Ten  
14 additional Plummer's baccharis are located near the water tanks site, but would  
15 be avoided. The eight Plummer's baccharis that would be removed are located  
16 along the pipeline/power line alignment to proposed Well no. 6. These  
17 individuals are part of a group of plants that are within the disturbance footprint  
18 of the Reconfiguration Project and were assumed to be removed as part of that  
19 project.

20            Although the plants have not yet been removed, impacts to these plants were  
21 mitigated through planting and maintenance of 30 plants at the Baron Ranch.  
22 The seven Santa Barbara honeysuckle plants to be removed have already  
23 been offset through planting 40 individuals at Baron Ranch as mitigation for  
24 loss of 13 plants as part of the Reconfiguration Project. Therefore, loss of  
25 these plants has already been mitigated and impacts would be less than  
26 significant.

27            **Impact TRRP BIO-6: Project construction activities would result in an**  
28 **adverse but less than significant loss of California red-legged frog upland**  
29 **dispersal habitat – Class III Impact.**

30            California red-legged frogs have been known to occur within the immediate  
31 vicinity of the project impact area (ERA 2008, Padre Associates, Inc. 2012),  
32 primarily within Pila Creek prior to its channelization and within the  
33 sedimentation basins prior to their removal. As part of the Reconfiguration  
34 Project and included in the USFWS Biological Opinion, California red-legged  
35 frogs were relocated from the landfill site to Arroyo Quemado east of the landfill.  
36 However, the authority to relocate frogs is granted by the Biological Opinion for  
37 the Reconfiguration Project and only permitted for specified reconfiguration  
38 activities and will expire when that project is completed.

39



1 Compensation for the loss of California red-legged frog habitat at the landfill as  
2 a result of the Reconfiguration Project has been provided through habitat  
3 restoration and enhancements at Baron Ranch and through the proposed  
4 protection in-perpetuity of approximately 30 acres of occupied habitat in the  
5 Arroyo Quemado watershed.

6 The in-channel sedimentation basins were removed, the north sedimentation  
7 basin (formerly the out-of-channel basin) was reconstructed and modified to  
8 minimize ponding of water, seeps within Pila Creek were removed, and Pila  
9 Creek was channelized as part of the Reconfiguration Project. These actions  
10 have resulted in the removal of breeding habitat, and permanent or semi-  
11 permanent water sources suitable for California red-legged frog. Upland habitat  
12 surrounding former habitat locations has also been substantially modified.  
13 California red-legged frogs have only rarely been observed at the Tajiguas  
14 Landfill during numerous focused surveys conducted since 2012. ~~not been~~  
15 ~~observed at the landfill during surveys conducted during the 2012/2013 rainy~~  
16 ~~season; the last observation of California red-legged frog occurred on April 19,~~  
17 ~~2012 (Padre Associates, Inc. 2012).~~

18 California red-legged frogs are present in Arroyo Quemado and Arroyo Hondo  
19 and the landfill site is within a potential dispersal corridor between these two  
20 known locations. The proposed project would permanently remove a small  
21 amount of upland native vegetation on the western ridge of Cañada de la Pila  
22 that California red-legged frogs may pass through during their movement from  
23 one habitat area to another. It is recognized that California red-legged frogs  
24 may travel through various habitat types when dispersing to and from breeding  
25 habitat without apparent regard to vegetation type or topography (Bulger et al.  
26 2003). Due to the lack of permanent or semi-permanent water near any of the  
27 proposed facility locations, the frogs would only be expected as transients.

28 The removal of this native vegetation would expand the area of exposed ground  
29 for frogs to cross during overland movement, increasing the chances of  
30 predation. However, impacts to the California red-legged frog would be  
31 considered less than significant considering the very low likelihood of the  
32 presence of a California red-legged frog within these upland areas and the  
33 small amount of proposed native vegetation removal.

34 **Impact TRRP BIO-7: Construction-related loss of habitat may result in an**  
35 **adverse but less than significant reduction in foraging opportunities for**  
36 **transient special-status birds - Class III Impact.**

37 Sharp-shinned hawk, ferruginous hawk, northern harrier, white-tailed kite and  
38 loggerhead shrike have been observed at the landfill site or vicinity and may  
39 forage within the project impact area. Impacts to these species are considered  
40 less than significant due to the small area of habitat removal as compared to  
41 their typical foraging area, and the lack of suitable nesting habitat at the landfill  
42 site.

1                   **Impact TRRP BIO-8: Project-related habitat loss could adversely affect**  
2                   **American Badger and Ringtail – Class II Impact.**

3                   **American Badger**

4                   Based on numerous field surveys conducted as part of preparation of 01-EIR-  
5                   05 and 08EIR-0000-00007, American badger has not been detected within the  
6                   landfill property. However, this species was evaluated to have a moderate to  
7                   high potential to occur based on known distribution of the species and suitable  
8                   habitat within the Study Area. The proposed project would result in the loss of  
9                   1.07 acres of foraging, breeding, and natal denning habitat such as open sage  
10                  scrub and chaparral.

11                  Because this species is mobile and can avoid construction activities, direct and  
12                  indirect impacts to this species are not anticipated unless clearing and grubbing  
13                  occurs during the natal denning period (March through August) when the  
14                  species is less mobile. Disturbance of occupied natal dens or direct mortality of  
15                  individual badgers during clearing, grubbing and construction would be  
16                  considered an adverse and significant impact.

17                  **Ringtail**

18                  The ringtail has not been directly detected within the project impact area;  
19                  however, the species was evaluated to have a high potential to occur based on  
20                  detection of this species within Cañada de la Pila (Hunt and Associates, 2001),  
21                  known distribution of the species, and suitable habitat within the Study Area.  
22                  The proposed project would result in the loss of 1.07 acres of foraging,  
23                  breeding, and natal denning habitat which may include rock recesses, tree  
24                  hollows, logs, snags, abandoned burrows, or woodrat nests. Because this  
25                  species is mobile and can avoid construction activities, direct and indirect  
26                  impacts to this species are not anticipated unless clearing and grubbing occurs  
27                  during the breeding and natal denning period (February through August) when  
28                  the species is less mobile. Disturbance of occupied natal dens or direct  
29                  mortality of individual ringtails during clearing, grubbing and construction would  
30                  be considered an adverse and significant impact.

31                  Mitigation Measure **MM TRRP BIO-3** provides for pre-construction surveys of  
32                  the impact area immediately prior to construction activities to maximize  
33                  detection and relocation of these animals.

34

1                   **Mitigation Measures:**

2                   **MM TRRP BIO-3: American Badger and Ringtail Surveys.** Prior to any  
3 ground disturbing construction activities within the badger or ringtail natal  
4 denning period (February to August), the area scheduled for clearing and  
5 grubbing shall be surveyed for American badger and ringtail. If a badger or  
6 ringtail den is observed a qualified biologist shall monitor the den to determine if  
7 it is an active or an abandoned den. If the biologist determines that the den is  
8 not active, the biologist shall dismantle the den immediately and the  
9 construction activity can be initiated. If the biologist determines that the den is  
10 an active natal den, the biologist shall mark the den and establish a buffer (300  
11 feet or as determined appropriate by the biologist based on field conditions)  
12 surrounding the active den. No ground disturbing work shall take place within  
13 this buffer. The biologist shall monitor the active den until the den is  
14 abandoned. Once abandoned, the den shall be filled/dismantled and  
15 construction activities can commence.

16                   Plan Requirements and Timing: These measures shall be included in the  
17 project's plans and specifications. Surveys shall be conducted by a qualified  
18 biologist familiar with American badger and ringtail prior to clearing of native  
19 vegetation, if the clearing occurs during the period from February to August.

20                   Monitoring: RRWMD shall monitor for compliance. The biologist shall submit a  
21 report to RRWMD regarding the result of the pre-disturbance surveys and the  
22 relocation efforts following destruction of the den.

23                   Residual Impacts: With avoidance of the breeding period or survey and  
24 avoidance of active breeding dens, impacts to American badgers and ringtails  
25 associated with the proposed project are unlikely to substantially affect the local  
26 populations and residual impacts would be less than significant.

27                   **Impact TRRP BIO-9: Project-related habitat loss could significantly impact**  
28 **the San Diego desert woodrat – Class II Impact.**

29 San Diego desert woodrat is known to occur in rock crevices in mature chaparral  
30 north of the approved landfill footprint (Hunt and Associates, 2001), and woodrat  
31 nests (unidentified species) have been previously identified within the area  
32 affected by landfill reconfiguration. San Diego desert woodrats could be  
33 affected by habitat removal and by direct mortality due to the limited mobility of  
34 this species. The proposed project would directly and permanently eliminate a  
35 small area (1.07 acres) of nesting and foraging habitat for this species during  
36 clearing, grubbing, and infrastructure construction. Habitat loss and/or direct  
37 mortality associated with construction of the proposed project would represent a  
38 significant but mitigable biological impact.

1                   **Mitigation Measures:**

2                   **MM TRRP BIO-4: San Diego Desert Woodrat Relocation.**

- 3                   • Prior to initial clearing and grubbing in areas of previously-undisturbed  
4                   native habitat, the area shall be surveyed for the San Diego desert  
5                   woodrat.
- 6                   • Prior to initiation of construction, any woodrat nests considered active  
7                   would be dismantled to entice occupants to leave the area and build new  
8                   nests outside of the project impact area. Dismantling is recommended  
9                   during the fall, following the breeding season to minimize the potential to  
10                  affect reproduction and/or cause increased mortality to the species.

11                  Plan Requirements and Timing: These measures shall be included in the  
12                  project's plans and specifications. Surveys and nest dismantling (if needed)  
13                  shall be conducted immediately prior to clearing of native vegetation.

14                  Monitoring: The biologist shall submit a report to RRWMD regarding the result  
15                  of the pre-disturbance surveys and of the relocation efforts following  
16                  dismantling of the nest.

17                  Residual Impacts: Impacts to San Diego desert woodrat associated with the  
18                  proposed project are unlikely to substantially affect the local population and  
19                  residual impacts would be less than significant.

20                  **Impact TRRP BIO-10: Project-related removal of trees and rock outcrops  
21                  may eliminate and/or disturb habitat for sensitive bat species – Class II  
22                  Impact.**

23                  Four bat species listed as CDFW species of special concern (pallid bat,  
24                  Townsend's big-eared bat, western mastiff bat, and big free-tailed bat) were  
25                  determined to have a moderate potential to roost and/or forage within the Study  
26                  Area (see Table 4.3-3). In general, habitat modifications resulting from  
27                  implementation of the Reconfiguration Project, particularly the reduction of  
28                  available surface water at the landfill, and the elimination of the riparian corridor  
29                  in the lower portion of the Pila Creek drainage have diminished the potential  
30                  that these bats would utilize the project impact area.

31                  The proposed project would result in the removal of 0.02 acres of rock outcrop  
32                  within the utility corridor to the proposed Well no. 6 site. The rock outcrop is  
33                  part of a rock cliff face that occurs along a ridge perpendicular to the  
34                  channelized portion of Pila Creek. Because the area of rock outcrop that would  
35                  be impacted is low to the ground and close to the active disturbance of the  
36                  landfill, it is unlikely that it would serve as a location for bat day roosting as day  
37                  roost sites are typically more cryptic and protected. Higher parts of the rock  
38                  outcrop or trees with cavities within the Study Area may be more suitable as bat  
39                  day roost locations. The rock outcrop may be used for night roosts, which are  
40                  resting areas between foraging flights.

1 While bats are not likely to roost in the project impact area and no known roosts  
2 are present within the Study Area, construction activities may result in  
3 temporary disturbance and/or permanent habitat loss. Substantial disturbance  
4 of maternal roosts would be considered an adverse and significant impact.

5 ***Mitigation Measures:***

6 ***MM TRRP BIO-5: Avoidance of Bat Maternity Colonies.***

- 7 • Removal of rock outcrops and construction of project-related facilities in  
8 the vicinity of potential bat habitat such as trees and rock outcrops shall  
9 avoid the peak breeding season (May 1 to August 15), unless a bat  
10 survey by a qualified biologist is completed to determine presence or  
11 absence of maternity colonies. Bat surveys shall be conducted no longer  
12 than a week prior to any construction in the vicinity of such habitat.
- 13 • If no maternity colonies are observed, construction can proceed without  
14 restriction.
- 15 • If active bat maternity colonies are discovered during the survey, a buffer  
16 of 500 feet shall be established around the bat maternity colonies. No  
17 construction activity may occur within this buffer area until a biologist  
18 determines that the young are independent of the adults.

19 Plan Requirements and Timing: These measures shall be included in the  
20 project's plans and specifications. Surveys shall be conducted prior to removal  
21 of rock outcrops or construction work adjacent to bat habitat, when construction  
22 work is planned for the peak bat breeding period.

23 Monitoring: RRWMD shall monitor compliance with the measure.

24 Residual Impacts. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce  
25 impacts to bat maternity colonies (**Impact TRRP BIO-10**), and residual impacts  
26 would be less than significant.

27 **Impact TRRP BIO-11: Operation of the proposed project may result in an**  
28 **adverse but less than significant impact to common wildlife species –**  
29 **Class III Impact.**

30 Habitat quality adjacent to project facilities would be reduced through the  
31 encroachment of landfill infrastructure (i.e., tanks and associated pipelines).  
32 Project-related operations would generate noise, dust, mobile equipment  
33 activity and odors, and may reduce the habitat value of adjacent areas to  
34 common wildlife species. However, the habitat area affected would be small (a  
35 few acres) and approximately 200 acres would remain available on the landfill  
36 property for use by these common species.

37

1 Operation of the project would result in indirect and permanent impacts to  
2 wildlife primarily due to the increase in the amount and duration of human  
3 activity at the landfill. The MRF and AD Facility would require additional  
4 personnel and operated 24 hours per day, seven days per week. Waste  
5 delivery would only occur during the existing landfill operating hours; however,  
6 MRF processing, operation of the AD Facility and energy facility, and off-site  
7 transport of recyclable materials would occur during the evening. Increased  
8 motor vehicle activity at night may also result in increased mortality to wildlife  
9 from vehicle collisions. Vehicles driving off-road and vehicles driving during  
10 rainy conditions may also increase the potential for wildlife road kill incidents at  
11 the landfill.

12 Increased human activity, lighting, and noise may result in more secretive  
13 species further avoiding areas of active operations within habitat areas  
14 surrounding project facilities, particularly at night. Conversely, the night lighting  
15 may attract additional insects that could be preyed upon by nocturnal species  
16 such as bats.

17 MSW and SSOW would be off-loaded and contained within the enclosed MRF  
18 and AD Facility, respectively, and, as such, would not provide an additional  
19 attractant to opportunistic nocturnal species such as the striped skunk (*Mephitis*  
20 *mephitis*), common raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), and Virginia opossum (*Didelphis*  
21 *virginiana*), which may prey on other sensitive wildlife, or diurnal opportunists  
22 such as gulls, though they are currently controlled under a falconry program.  
23 Overall, operational impacts to common wildlife are expected to be less than  
24 significant, due to the small area of wildlife habitat affected.

25 **Impact TRRP BIO-12: Operation of the proposed project may significantly**  
26 **impact transient California red-legged frogs – Class II Impact.**

27 As discussed in Section 4.3.1.3, removal of all breeding habitat was conducted  
28 as part of the Reconfiguration Project, and very few California red-legged frogs  
29 have ~~not~~ been observed at the landfill since April 2012. California red-legged  
30 frogs are present in Arroyo Quemado and Arroyo Hondo and the landfill is  
31 located between these two known locations, within dispersal distance. Due to  
32 the disturbed and relatively barren nature of the landfill site and lack of breeding  
33 habitat, California red-legged frogs are not expected to inhabit the landfill,  
34 including proposed facility sites. However, ~~there is a small potential that~~  
35 California red legged frogs may be present while making overland dispersal  
36 movements, which typically occur at night and/or during or following rain  
37 events.

1 Currently, nighttime activities do not occur at the landfill. With implementation  
2 of the project, nighttime activities would occur at the operations deck area in  
3 association with operation of the MRF and AD Facility, including use of the  
4 paved roads between the landfill entrance and the MRF/AD Facility site by  
5 employees and for transport of commodities from the MRF. California red-  
6 legged frogs have not been observed at the proposed MRF and AD Facility  
7 sites, or on paved roads between the landfill entrance and the operations deck  
8 during past nighttime surveys. However, when aquatic habitat was present in  
9 the back canyon area (prior to implementation of the Reconfiguration Project)  
10 frogs were infrequently observed on unpaved back canyon roads north of the  
11 operations deck.

12 The potential for California red-legged frogs to be present in the vicinity of  
13 project operations is considered low. However, if present, conflicts with  
14 equipment activity and motor vehicle use may occur (particularly at night) and  
15 direct impacts (crushing) to transient frogs would be potentially significant.

16 The proposed project would marginally increase storm water flow into Pila  
17 Creek and/or the existing north sedimentation basin during rain events due to  
18 additional run-off from project facility sites. However, these flows would only  
19 occur during storm events or immediately following storm events. Therefore,  
20 these flows are not expected to provide sufficient water to support breeding by  
21 California red-legged frog. In addition, the north sedimentation basin is  
22 equipped with a skimmer to maintain minimum water levels. Therefore, project-  
23 related storm water discharges are not anticipated to attract California red-  
24 legged frog to the landfill.

25 ***Mitigation Measures:***

26 ***MM TRRP BIO-6: Avoidance and Minimization Measures for California***  
27 ***Red-legged Frog and Sensitive Mammal Species.***

- 28 • Lighting used on the project facilities shall be of low intensity, low glare  
29 design and shall be hooded to direct the light downward and prevent  
30 spill-over onto adjacent undisturbed habitat areas.
- 31 • Use of artificial lighting shall be minimized and used on an as needed  
32 basis.
- 33 • To reduce hazards to wildlife that may ingest or become trapped by  
34 debris, portable fences shall continue to be used to limit the spread of  
35 litter on the working face of the landfill and around project facilities.
- 36 • Litter shall be collected on a regular basis (Litter Control Program, see  
37 Section 3.5.9.2).
- 38 • Vehicles travelling on the landfill shall observe posted speed limits at all  
39 times.

- 1 • Nighttime motor vehicle travel within the landfill shall be limited to  
2 established paved roads and parking areas.
- 3 • Nighttime vehicle access and operational activities shall be limited to  
4 paved areas surrounding and south of the MRF and AD Facility. Access  
5 to back canyon area of the landfill property shall be restricted to daylight  
6 hours, unless access is required by landfill personnel in response to an  
7 emergency.
- 8 • Worker environmental awareness training shall be provided to all  
9 personnel prior to project implementation, including information on  
10 potential sensitive biological resources at the landfill site.
- 11 • Prior to project implementation in previously undisturbed areas, the area  
12 scheduled for clearing shall be surveyed by a qualified biologist familiar  
13 with all of the sensitive species with the potential to occur at the landfill  
14 site. In the event that sensitive species are identified, a buffer around  
15 the individual shall be established and the individual shall be monitored  
16 until it leaves the construction area.
- 17 • Project-related construction in undisturbed areas and in the back canyon  
18 area (e.g., for installation of Well 6) shall be limited to daylight hours.
- 19 • A biologist shall monitor construction activities during initial ground  
20 disturbance in previously undisturbed native plant communities. The  
21 biologist shall have the authority to stop work and shall immediately  
22 contact the RRWMD if unintended effects to sensitive species occur.

23 Plan Requirements and Timing: These measures shall be included in the  
24 project's plans and specifications and in the contractual agreements with the  
25 project vendor. Surveys shall be conducted prior to or during construction, or  
26 during project operation, as indicated.

27 Monitoring: RRWMD shall monitor compliance with the measures.

28 Residual Impacts. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce  
29 impacts to California red-legged frog, and residual impacts would be less than  
30 significant.

31 **Impact TRRP BIO-13: Operation of the proposed project may significantly**  
32 **impact ringtail, San Diego desert woodrat and American badger – Class II**  
33 **Impact.**

34 As discussed above for California red-legged frog, the project would result  
35 increase daytime activity and introduce nighttime activity at the landfill site.  
36 Mortality of ringtail, San Diego desert woodrat and American badger may occur  
37 as a result of increased equipment and motor vehicle activity, especially at  
38 night. These impacts are considered potentially significant.

39



1                    **Mitigation Measures:**  
2                    Implementation of Mitigation Measure **MM TRRP BIO-6** would reduce the  
3                    potential for project-related mortality of these sensitive mammal species.

4                    Residual Impacts. Implementation of these mitigation measures would reduce  
5                    impacts to sensitive mammals to a level of less than significant.

6                    **Impact TRRP BIO-14: The project-related construction disturbance and**  
7                    **habitat loss may result in an adverse but less than significant impact on**  
8                    **habitat connectivity and wildlife corridors – Class III Impact.**

9                    The majority of the land within, north, and west of the Study Area provides  
10                    suitable habitat and cover, and may be used by wildlife moving between the  
11                    coastal foothills and the Santa Ynez Mountains north of the Study Area.  
12                    Wildlife movement along Cañada de la Pila is currently constrained by the  
13                    recently completed concrete channel and spillway, active portions of the landfill,  
14                    and culverts at the landfill access road, U.S. Highway 101, and the Union  
15                    Pacific Railroad.

16                    Proposed facility sites are located within or immediately adjacent to active  
17                    areas of the landfill, which is composed of steep graded hillsides, dirt and  
18                    paved roads, ruderal areas devoid of vegetation, and other outbuildings  
19                    associated with active landfill operations. These developed and active portions  
20                    of the Tajiguas Landfill provide little value to resident and transient wildlife.  
21                    Construction of the proposed project would incrementally encroach on potential  
22                    wildlife movement corridors, the coastal canyons of Arroyo Hondo to the west  
23                    and Arroyo Quemado and Baron Ranch to the east.

24                    Habitat restoration activities occurring at Baron Ranch as mitigation for impacts  
25                    from the Reconfiguration Project likely benefit wildlife movement by enhancing  
26                    the cover along and immediately adjacent to Arroyo Quemado, which provides  
27                    relatively unobstructed connectivity between the coastal foothills and the Santa  
28                    Ynez Mountains. Due to the distance and topographic separation between  
29                    project facility sites and these corridors (at least 1,800 feet), construction-  
30                    related habitat loss and disturbance would not significantly reduce the value of  
31                    Arroyo Hondo and Arroyo Quemado as potential wildlife movement corridors.

32                    **Impact TRRP BIO-15: Operation of the proposed project may result in an**  
33                    **adverse but less than significant impact on habitat connectivity and**  
34                    **wildlife corridors – Class III Impact.**

35

1 Operation of the proposed project would involve increased equipment and  
2 motor vehicle activity and night lighting, and introduce nighttime operations to  
3 the landfill site. As discussed above, proposed facility sites are located within  
4 developed and active portions of the Tajiguas Landfill and provide little value to  
5 resident and transient wildlife. However, project-related activities may  
6 incrementally encroach on potential wildlife movement corridors, such as the  
7 adjacent coastal canyons of Arroyo Hondo to the west and Arroyo Quemado  
8 and Baron Ranch to the east. Project-related impacts to these potential  
9 movement corridors are considered less than significant due to distance and  
10 topographic separation between project facility sites and these corridors (at  
11 least 1,800 feet).

12 **Relocated Landfill Facilities**

13 Operations facilities (primarily portable offices) may be temporarily relocated  
14 during the project construction period to an area north of the landfill top deck or  
15 to the southern portion of the landfill. Landfill equipment maintenance facilities  
16 would be relocated to the area north of the landfill top deck (see Figure 3-4).  
17 These facilities would be located within and adjacent to existing disturbed areas  
18 of the landfill property and activities in these areas would occur during daylight  
19 hours. Therefore, construction and use of these relocated facilities would not  
20 result in any additional impact to biological resources.

21 4.3.2.5 Proposed Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project with Optional Comingled  
22 Source Separated Recyclables (CSSR) Component

23 The optional CSSR element would add an additional 10,000 square feet to the  
24 MRF building. Additionally, the number of employees on the site would  
25 increase by 20 during the day and there would be additional deliveries of  
26 recyclable materials and transport of sorted materials off-site after processing.  
27 The additional 10,000 sf of building area would be on the operation deck within the  
28 same disturbance footprint associated with the project. Therefore, there would  
29 be no increase in habitat loss or construction-related disturbance. Because the  
30 additional building area would be within the proposed project disturbance area,  
31 additional impacts to biological resources due to the increases in noise, dust  
32 and equipment activity would be minimal. The additional 20 employees would  
33 increase vehicle traffic and human activity at the site, but would occur during  
34 the day when wildlife conflicts are less common. Overall, a small increase in  
35 operational impacts to wildlife would occur, but would not alter the significance  
36 level of these impacts as identified in Section 4.3.2.4 above.

37

1           4.3.2.6 Extension of Landfill Life Impacts

2                   **Impact TRRP BIO-16: Project-related extension of life of the Tajiguas**  
3                   **Landfill would extend biological impacts further in time – Class I Impact**  
4                   **(delay in the landfill cover revegetation and for continued abandonment**  
5                   **and avoidance of foraging and breeding habitat by sensitive wildlife),**  
6                   **Class II (indirect impacts to ringtail and mountain lion due to human**  
7                   **activity), and Class III (invasive plants, nuisance birds and common**  
8                   **wildlife).**

9                   As discussed in Section 3.4, the project-related increase in diversion of MSW  
10                   would result in extending the active life of the landfill by approximately 10 years  
11                   and delaying full closure and revegetation of the landfill. Although phased  
12                   closure activities including restoration of areas to native habitat would occur  
13                   during this time, landfill operational activities would continue to occur in areas  
14                   analyzed in the prior Environmental Documents. No new disturbance or direct  
15                   biological impacts (i.e., vegetation, habitat or sensitive plant species removal)  
16                   would occur due to the potential extension of the landfill life and operations.  
17                   However, indirect biological impacts associated with ongoing landfill operations  
18                   (noise, dust, equipment operations and human activity) including impacts to  
19                   habitat from introduction of invasive plants (Class II), abandonment or  
20                   avoidance of foraging and breeding habitat by sensitive birds and mammals  
21                   due to landfill operations and human activity (Class I), increased attraction of  
22                   nuisance birds (Class II) and impacts to mountain lion and ringtail due to  
23                   increased human presence (Class II) (see Section 4.3.2.2, Impacts 2, 5, 6, 8)  
24                   would be extended.

25                   In addition, disturbance and mortality to common wildlife species (Class III)  
26                   (see Section 4.3.2.3, Impact 5) would continue further in time as compared to  
27                   closure of landfill in approximately 2026 in the absence of the proposed project.  
28                   These indirect impacts would continue to be minimized through implementation  
29                   of mitigation measures (erosion control, nighttime lighting control, litter control,  
30                   creek setback) as discussed in Sections 4.3.2.2 and 4.3.2.3.

31           4.3.2.7 Decommissioning Impacts

32                   **Impact TRRP BIO-17: Decommissioning activities would result in indirect**  
33                   **impacts to adjacent native vegetation and wildlife habitat, and temporarily**  
34                   **affect California red-legged frog dispersal habitat – Class III Impact.**

1            Removal of project facilities (buildings, percolate tanks, bio-filters, buried  
2            pipelines, etc.) would occur within the project impact area as shown in Figure  
3            4.3-1. Therefore, no additional native vegetation or wildlife habitat would be  
4            removed. Indirect impacts to adjacent sensitive vegetation would be much less  
5            than identified for construction (see **Impact TRRP BIO-2**) because this  
6            vegetation is located near Well 6 and the recycled water and potable water  
7            tanks, and these project facilities would not be affected by decommissioning  
8            activities.

9            Decommissioning activities would temporarily affect potential California red-  
10           legged frog dispersal habitat, similar to construction activities as discussed  
11           under **Impact TRRP BIO-6**. However, this species is very rarely observed  
12           during biological monitoring conducted for all wet season construction work at  
13           the Landfill. Since the intensity and total activity associated with  
14           decommissioning would be less than construction, similar to **Impact TRRP**  
15           **BIO-6**, decommissioning impacts are considered less than significant.

#### 16           4.3.2.8 Cumulative Impacts of the Tajiguas Resource Recovery Project

17           The proposed project would incrementally contribute to cumulative impacts to  
18           biological resources when considered with other planned projects in the region  
19           (see Section 3.6).

20           **Impact TRRP BIO-CUM-1: Implementation of the project combined with**  
21           **other cumulative projects could result in significant impacts to transient**  
22           **California red-legged frogs – Class I Cumulative Impact; Project**  
23           **Contribution – Not Considerable with Mitigation (Class II).**

24           In addition to the proposed project, several other projects are located in areas  
25           supporting California red-legged frog, and may also adversely impact habitat for  
26           this species or movement of transient individuals, including:

- 27           • ~~Las Varas/Edwards Ranch: impacts to California red-legged frog may~~  
28           ~~include temporary habitat disturbance associated with bridge~~  
29           ~~construction at Gato Creek (less than 0.1 acres), and encroachment of~~  
30           ~~development along drainages;~~
- 31           • Paradiso del Mar: a proposed utilities crossing and trail construction at  
32           Eagle Canyon Creek would impact this species;
- 33           • Santa Barbara Ranch: impacts to California red-legged frog include  
34           temporary habitat disturbance associated with construction of a bridge  
35           over Tomate Canada Creek (less than 0.1 acres), and encroachment of  
36           development along drainages (URS, 2006);
- 37           • Refugio Road Bridges: impacts to California red-legged frog include  
38           temporary habitat disturbance and possibly construction-related mortality  
39           during bridge construction; and

- Baron Ranch Trail extension: transient California red-legged frogs in Arroyo Quemado may be adversely affected by trail construction; and
- Lower Baron Ranch Trail improvements: trail realignment and bridge construction may adversely affect California red-legged frogs in Arroyo Quemado.

It should be noted that mandated creek setbacks (typically 100 feet) for development projects in rural areas and project specific monitoring, mitigation measures required through the CEQA review process or the endangered species permit process would reduce help impacts from these cumulative projects. Due to past sightings of transient California red-legged frog at the landfill site and the project-related increase in equipment and motor vehicle activity, the project would incrementally contribute to potentially significant impacts to the California red-legged frog.

However, implementation of Mitigation Measure **MM TRRP BIO-6** would reduce the project-specific impacts and the project's contribution to the cumulative impact would not be considerable.

**Impact TRRP BIO-CUM-2: Implementation of the project combined with other cumulative projects could result in significant direct and indirect cumulative loss of native plant communities, sensitive habitats and sensitive plants – Class II Cumulative Impact; Project Contribution – Not Considerable with Mitigation (Class II).**

The proposed project would result in the permanent loss of 1.09 acres of native vegetation (*Ceanothus megacarpus* chaparral and rock outcrops), and indirect temporary impacts within 0.89 acres of sensitive vegetation communities (0.22 acre of California bay seep woodland, 0.39 acre of coast live oak woodland, and 0.28 acre of southern coast live oak riparian forest). In addition, approximately 15 individuals of two sensitive plant species would be removed (Plummer's baccharis and Santa Barbara honeysuckle). Several other projects may also adversely impact these resources through construction activities in native habitats, introduction of invasive species, and native vegetation removal as a result of fuel management activities, including:

- San Jose Creek Bikeway: loss of sensitive native riparian vegetation;
- El Capitan Canyon campground expansion: loss of coastal sage scrub and Santa Barbara honeysuckle;
- ~~Las Varas/Edwards Ranch: loss of native vegetation and wildlife habitats;~~
- Paradiso del Mar: loss of about 3 acres of native vegetation and wildlife habitats;

- 1                   • Santa Barbara Ranch: impacts to several special-status plant species,  
2                   potentially including Santa Barbara honeysuckle and Plummer's  
3                   baccharis, and loss of 146 acres of wildlife habitat (mostly annual  
4                   grassland);
- 5                   • Zacara Ranch Development: loss of native vegetation;
- 6                   • Baron Ranch Trail extension: loss of native vegetation, including  
7                   *Ceanothus megacarpus* chaparral;
- 8                   • Hollister Avenue Bridge Replacement: loss of native riparian vegetation:
- 9                   • Refugio Road Bridges: loss of native riparian vegetation; and
- 10                  • Development of single family dwellings along the Gaviota Coast which  
11                  may require localized vegetation removal and brush clearance to reduce  
12                  fire hazards.

13                  Given the biological sensitivity of the Gaviota Coast region, the cumulative  
14                  effect from the construction of these projects could be potentially significant.  
15                  Restoration/replacement of sensitive habitats and plants impacted by the  
16                  cumulative projects would likely be required as a part of their respective CEQA  
17                  analyses and the area and sensitivity of native vegetation that would be  
18                  removed by the proposed project is low.

19                  However, indirect impacts to sensitive vegetation and wildlife habitat may be  
20                  significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure **MM TRRP BIO-1** would  
21                  reduce the project-specific impacts and the project's contribution to the  
22                  cumulative impact would not be considerable and the overall impact would be  
23                  reduced to a level of less than significant (Class II).

24                  **Impact TRRP BIO-CUM-3: Implementation of the project combined with  
25                  other cumulative projects could result in a significant loss of foraging  
26                  habitat for special-status birds – Class II Cumulative Impact; Project  
27                  Contribution – Not Considerable (Class III).**

28                  Project-related habitat removal may adversely affect foraging opportunities for  
29                  sharp-shinned hawk, ferruginous hawk, northern harrier, white-tailed kite and  
30                  loggerhead shrike. Several other proposed or pending projects may also  
31                  adversely affect these species including:

- 32                   • San Jose Creek Bikeway: loss of riparian foraging habitat for special-  
33                   status birds;
- 34                   • El Capitan Canyon campground expansion: loss of potential foraging  
35                   habitat for special-status birds;
- 36                   • ~~Las Varas/Edwards Ranch: habitat loss and indirect impacts associated~~  
37                   ~~with development;~~
- 38                   • Paradiso del Mar: loss of about 30 acres of vegetation, mostly suitable  
39                   for foraging by special-status bird species;

- 1 • Santa Barbara Ranch: loss of 146 acres of grassland foraging habitat for  
2 sensitive raptors;
- 3 • Zacara Ranch Development: loss of native vegetation potentially suitable  
4 for special-status birds;
- 5 • Hollister Avenue Bridge Replacement: loss of native riparian vegetation  
6 potentially suitable for special-status birds;
- 7 • Refugio Road Bridges: loss of native riparian vegetation potentially  
8 suitable for special-status birds; and
- 9 • Baron Ranch Trail extension: loss of native vegetation potentially  
10 suitable for special-status birds.

11 Therefore, the cumulative impact would be potentially significant and would be  
12 subject to project specific mitigation measures implemented for each of the  
13 cumulative projects. Loss of foraging habitat associated with the Resource  
14 Recovery Project would be minimal, and the incremental contribution to the  
15 cumulative impact would not be considerable.

16 **Impact TRRP BIO-CUM-4: Implementation of the project combined with**  
17 **other cumulative projects could result in a significant impacts to**  
18 **American badger and ringtail – Class II Cumulative Impact; Project**  
19 **Contribution – Not Considerable with Mitigation (Class II).**

20 Project-related construction activities may result in disturbance of occupied  
21 natal dens and cause direct mortality of badgers and/or ringtails. In addition,  
22 project-related increases in activity at the landfill site (especially at night) may  
23 adversely impact these species. Several other projects may adversely impact  
24 these species through habitat loss or disturbance of occupied dens, including:

- 25 • San Jose Creek Bikeway: loss of riparian foraging habitat for ringtail;
- 26 • El Capitan Canyon campground expansion: removal of coastal sage  
27 scrub habitat suitable for badger;
- 28 • ~~Las Varas/Edwards Ranch: badger reported from Gato Canyon, loss of~~  
29 ~~suitable habitat and indirect impacts associated with development;~~
- 30 • Paradiso del Mar: loss of about 12 acres of suitable grassland habitat for  
31 badger;
- 32 • Santa Barbara Ranch: loss of 146 acres of grassland foraging habitat for  
33 badgers;
- 34 • Zacara Ranch Development: loss of native vegetation potentially suitable  
35 for badger and ringtail; and
- 36 • Baron Ranch Trail extension: loss of suitable chaparral habitat for badger  
37 and ringtail.

38

1                   Given the number of projects affecting habitat in the Gaviota Coast region, the  
2                   cumulative effect of these projects would be potentially significant. Avoidance  
3                   and habitat replacement measures for the cumulative projects would likely be  
4                   required as a part of their respective CEQA analyses. Implementation of  
5                   Mitigation Measures **MM TRRP BIO-3** and **MM TRRP BIO-6** would reduce the  
6                   project-specific impacts and the project's contribution to the cumulative impact  
7                   would not be considerable and the overall impact would be reduced to a level of  
8                   less than significant.

9                   **Impact TRRP BIO-CUM-5: Implementation of the project combined with**  
10                   **other cumulative projects could result in a permanent loss and significant**  
11                   **degradation of San Diego desert woodrat habitat – Class II Cumulative**  
12                   **Impact; Project Contribution – Not Considerable with Mitigation (Class II).**

13                   The proposed project would permanently remove a small area (1.07 acres) of  
14                   nesting and foraging habitat for this species during clearing, grubbing, and  
15                   infrastructure construction. In addition, project-related increases in activity at  
16                   the landfill site (especially at night) may adversely impact San Diego desert  
17                   woodrat. Several other projects may adversely impact habitat for this species,  
18                   including:

- 19                   • El Capitan Canyon campground expansion: removal of coastal sage  
20                   scrub habitat suitable for San Diego desert woodrat;
- 21                   • ~~Las Varas/Edwards Ranch: loss of suitable habitat and indirect impacts~~  
22                   ~~associated with development;~~
- 23                   • Paradiso del Mar: loss of about one acre of suitable coastal sage scrub  
24                   habitat;
- 25                   • Santa Barbara Ranch: loss of 0.32 acres of suitable coastal scrub  
26                   habitat; and
- 27                   • Baron Ranch Trail extension: loss of chaparral habitat suitable for San  
28                   Diego desert woodrat.

29                   Given the number of projects affecting habitat in the Gaviota Coast region, the  
30                   cumulative effects of these projects would be potentially significant.  
31                   Avoidance, relocation and habitat replacement measures for the cumulative  
32                   projects would likely be required as a part of their respective CEQA analyses.  
33                   Implementation of Mitigation Measures **MM TRRP BIO-4** and **MM TRRP BIO-6**  
34                   would reduce the project-specific impacts and the project's contribution to the  
35                   cumulative impact would not be considerable and the overall impact would be  
36                   reduced to a level of less than significant.



1                   **Impact TRRP BIO-CUM-6: Implementation of the project combined with**  
2                   **other cumulative projects could result in a significant loss and/or**  
3                   **disturbance of roosting habitat for sensitive bat species – Class II**  
4                   **Cumulative Impact; Project Contribution – Not Considerable with**  
5                   **Mitigation (Class II).**

6                   The project would result in the loss of 0.02 acres of rock outcrops suitable for  
7                   crevice-roosting bats, and construction-related disturbance of adjacent roosting  
8                   and foraging habitats. Several other projects may adversely impact these  
9                   species through habitat loss or disturbance of roosting habitat, including:

- 10                   • San Jose Creek Bikeway: no bats reported from the affected bridges, but  
11                   construction may disrupt bat foraging;
- 12                   • Hollister Avenue Improvements: project would affect the Atascadero  
13                   Creek bridge, which may support roosting bats;
- 14                   • ~~Las Varas/Edwards Ranch: habitat loss and development-related~~  
15                   ~~disturbance may disrupt bat foraging and roosting;~~
- 16                   • Santa Barbara Ranch: habitat loss and development-related disturbance  
17                   may disrupt bat foraging and roosting;
- 18                   • Hollister Avenue Bridge Replacement: disturbance of a potential night  
19                   roost for local bat populations;
- 20                   • Sandspit Road Bridge Replacement: disturbance of a potential night  
21                   roost for local bat populations; and
- 22                   • Baron Ranch Trail extension: may result in loss or disturbance of suitable  
23                   roosting habitat.

24                   The abundance and distribution of bats in the Gaviota Coast region is poorly  
25                   known, and the cumulative effects of these projects may be potentially  
26                   significant. Avoidance and habitat replacement measures for the cumulative  
27                   projects would likely be required as a part of their respective CEQA analyses.  
28                   Implementation of Mitigation Measure **MM TRRP BIO-5** would reduce the  
29                   project-specific impacts and the project's contribution to the cumulative impact  
30                   would not be considerable and the overall impact would be reduced to a level of  
31                   less than significant.