## 6. Notice of Determination

**TO:** Office of Planning and Research

1400 Tenth St
Sacramento CA 95814
Mail address:
PO Box 3044
Sacramento CA 95812-3044

Clerk of the Board
County of Santa Barbara
105 E Anapamu Rm 407
Santa Barbara CA 93101

**FROM:** Lead Agency:
Agricultural Commissioner's Office
County of Santa Barbara
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara CA 93110

**SUBJECT:** ***Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code***

**Project Title:** Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project

**Project Location:** The project sites are along the main stem of the Santa Ynez River in Santa Barbara County

**Project Description:** The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office proposes to apply herbicides to control the specific target weeds, *Arundo donax* and *Tamarix ramosissima*, along the riparian corridor of the Santa Ynez River. The invasion of tamarisk and arundo increases the risk of damage to homes and infrastructure from flood and fire and is contributing to the decline of Santa Ynez River riparian habitat – a critical habitat relied upon by many wildlife species. This is a beneficial habitat restoration project that has potentially less than significant impacts, when mitigations are implemented, on aesthetics, biological resources, hazards, water quality, and noise.

This is to advise that the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, a responsible agency, has passed and adopted the above-described project on _____ by a _____ vote of all members present and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project:

1. The project will not have a significant impact on the environment.
2. A Mitigated Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation report or monitoring plan was adopted for this project
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations was not adopted for this project.
6. Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
7. The project required discretionary approval from a state agency.

This is to certify that the final Mitigated Negative Declaration with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at the
Agricultural Commissioner's Office; 263 Camino del Remedio; Santa Barbara CA 93110

_____ Title: _____ Date: _____
Signature (Lead Agency)

# Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project

*Tamarix ramosissima* and *Arundo donax* Removal
on the Santa Ynez River, County of Santa Barbara, California

County of Santa Barbara
Agricultural Commissioner's Office
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara CA 93110

**May 22, 2012**

# Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project

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# 1. Introduction

The Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office (SBACO) originally proposes to eradicate the noxious weeds, *Tamarix ramosissima* (tamarisk) and *Arundo donax* (arundo), from the Santa Ynez River riparian corridor. Tamarisk and arundo are noxious weeds as defined by Food and Agricultural Code (FAC) § 5004 and listed in Title 3 California Code of Regulations (CCR) § 4500. FAC § 403 directs the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA) and by extension the California agricultural commissioners to prevent the spread of noxious weeds. By policy, the CDFA has designated tamarisk and arundo as pests of known economic or environmental detriment, and of limited distribution. This is known as a "B" level rating. At the discretion of the individual county agricultural commissioner B-rated pests are subject to eradication, containment, suppression, control, or other holding action.

The SBACO is the lead agency for the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project (SYRTAP). This project was requested by the Cachuma Conservation Release Board (CCRB) and the Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District (SYRWCD). It is in the interest of the SBACO, CCRB and the SYRWCD to eradicate these invasive species. Specifically, the project's objectives are to:

- prevent potential increased flood and fire risk;
- conserve native plant and wildlife habitat and biodiversity;
- prevent potential loss and degradation of the quality of potable water supply from the river, lakes and underground sources; and
- prevent an increase in potential weed management costs and herbicide use

Tamarisk and arundo infestations threaten to increase the risk of infrastructure and environmental damage from floods and fire; increase soil salinity thus detrimentally affecting water quality; decrease water availability during periods of drought; decrease native plant diversity and decrease aquatic and terrestrial wildlife biodiversity.

# 2. Project Description

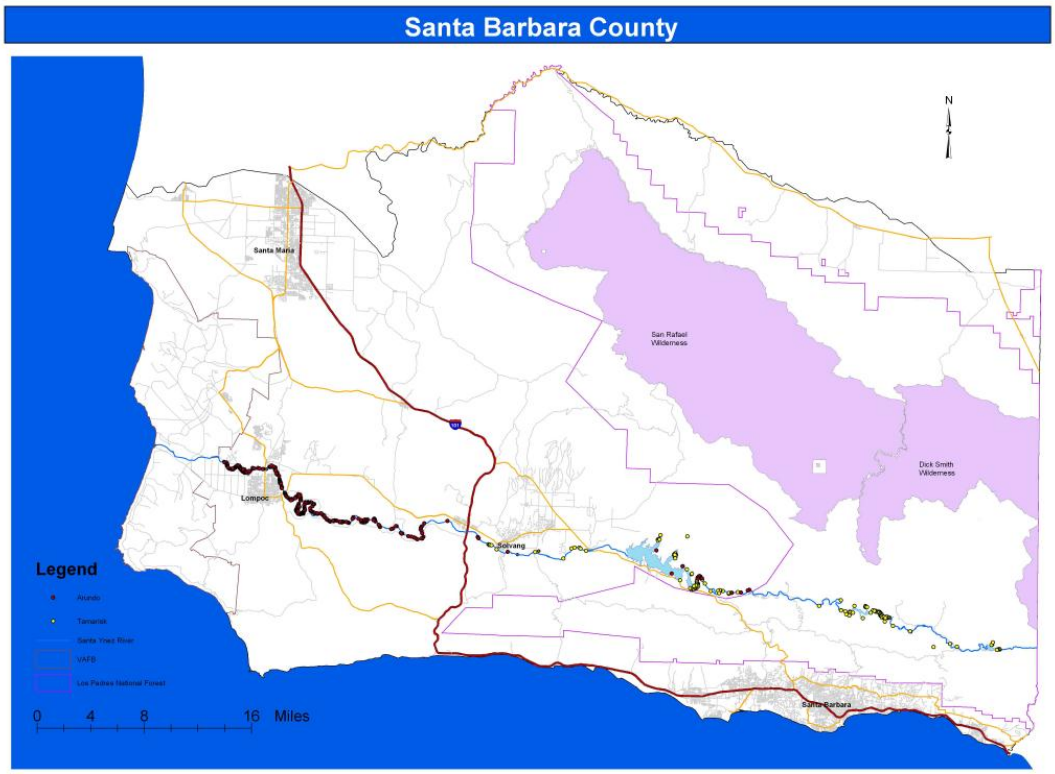
## 2.1 Project Location

At 90 miles long, the Santa Ynez River is one of the longest rivers on the Central Coast of California, yet is contained entirely within the County of Santa Barbara, California. The river begins in, and traverses through approximately 25 miles of the Los Padres National Forest, an area popular for recreation and an important resource for native plant and animal habitat and crosses within or adjacent to the Community of Santa Ynez, City of Solvang, City of Buellton, and City of Lompoc. The properties affected by the proposed project are listed, by Santa Barbara County Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs), in Appendix B, but are generally between Gibraltar Reservoir and the eastern border of Vandenberg Air Force Base.

Three reservoirs on the river, Jameson Lake, Gibraltar Reservoir, and Cachuma Lake, store and provide the majority of the drinking and agricultural water for many of the county's cities and farms. The river also comprises the Cachuma Lake Recreation Area, a local county park, popular with boaters and campers. (Figure 1 and Appendix A, Figures 1 and 2a-c.)

The Santa Ynez River is home to several federally protected, state protected and locally sensitive plant and animal species as well as sensitive terrestrial and aquatic natural communities.

Figure 1 – Project location




## 2.2 Project Description

This Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project (SYRTAP) is a targeted weed eradication project, where the goal is to permanently eliminate the target plants from the project's target sites. While all methods to achieve the goal have been considered, only those methods that have a lasting effect while maintaining environmental quality and human health and safety will be utilized. Thus certain weed management techniques, like grazing, mowing, biological control, fire, etc., that reduce weed impacts but do not by themselves eradicate weed populations will not be utilized. Weed management techniques, like removal with heavy equipment (i.e. backhoes), that have significant environmental, infrastructure, or human health impacts that cannot be mitigated with the funding available will not be utilized.

For this project, herbicides are the most effective method of eradicating weeds that will not adversely impact environmental, wildlife, scenic, and cultural resources, or human health. Herbicides, application technique and timing can be modified to alter the degree and duration of

impact, and the risk of non-target impact on native plants, wildlife, infrastructure and human health.

Method and herbicide selection will be determined by the qualified applicator, and influenced by environmental concerns, aesthetics, proximity to infrastructure (e.g. utility lines) and sensitive receptors (e.g. residences, schools and churches), airspace and livestock conflicts, and property operator preferences. Local conditions and precautions needed to reduce potential effects to sensitive species, human health and water quality and other concerns can be evaluated before, during and following the implementation of target weed control measures. Only treatment methods that provide a long-term net benefit to the habitat will be considered for use by the proposed project. Rejection of a proposed technique or herbicide selection, essentially a refusal to participate, may jeopardize the achievement of the project's goal.

Section 3.2.3 Control Methods contains a detailed description of the herbicides and techniques proposed for use as well as the methods considered and preferred.

The SBACO proposes to remove *Tamarix ramosissima* and *Arundo donax* from the bed, banks, and immediate overbanks along the 90-mile length of the Santa Ynez River (Appendix A, Figures 1, 2a-c).

Arundo is well adapted to the high disturbance dynamics of riparian systems. Flood events break up plant clumps and deposit propagative materials (rhizomes and stem nodes) downstream. Errant arundo stalks and clumps dislodged during flood flows can pile up on river bends, get caught on rip-rap or revetments, behind bridge footings, on street drains, and on fencing and create flooding problems. Arundo tends to form large continuous clonal root masses that exclude native vegetation. Arundo is highly flammable but adapted to fire. Its roots regrow foliage quickly after a fire, before the native vegetation can respond, thus driving riparian habitat to pure stands of arundo that also displace native wildlife.

Tamarisk has the potential to infest 70% - 90% of the vegetative cover, forming dense stands, substantially displacing native vegetation, such as cottonwood, willow and mesquite and reducing the value of critically important wetland complex. Tamarisk has been blamed for increasing flooding by forming a partial barrier to flood flow, which can cause floodwater to disperse and inundate areas that otherwise would not be flooded. Tamarisk is known to increase the deposition of salts on the soil surface which may affect water quality and further inhibit the germination of nearby native plants. Tamarisk infestation also enhances and is enhanced by fires.

Both arundo and tamarisk are preferentially riparian plants that are suspected of using more water than native vegetation. The control of arundo and tamarisk can make more water available to native vegetation, wildlife, and livestock in a region. Land managers cite cases where springs have dried up following invasion by arundo and tamarisk, with springs flowing again after removal. The presence of tamarisk in a habitat has been shown to dry up a habitat increasing the proportion of xerophytic plants in the habitat.

Both arundo and tamarisk are recognized by resource managers throughout California as highly invasive noxious weed species with negative effects on infrastructure and a range of environmental resources, including fisheries, wildlife habitat, water quality and water quantity. In several river systems, arundo and tamarisk have expanded from isolated clumps in the channel to a near monoculture within a ten-year time frame. The critical state of riparian plant communities in California has provided the drive for several removal programs in other areas of the state. Southern California agencies are spending millions of dollars to control arundo due to its influence on water supply, flood risks, fire danger, and impacts to native riparian habitats.

# 3. Project Components and Methods

## 3.1 Project Components

Following are the primary objectives of the proposed project:

1. Survey and map infestations of tamarisk and arundo on the Santa Ynez River, and identify owners of infested sites.
2. Educate landowners, public agencies and the community about tamarisk and arundo's detrimental impacts on riparian ecosystems, biodiversity, and infrastructure.
3. Treat all infestations of tamarisk and arundo[1]
4. Monitor treatment efficacy and retreat as necessary. Treat newly discovered infestations

### 3.1.1 Survey and Map Infestations

In September of 2008, Native Range, Inc. surveyed the Santa Ynez River riparian corridor via helicopter, from the eastern boundary of Vandenberg Air Force Base to the Ventura/Santa Barbara County line, for infestations of tamarisk and arundo. Infestation locations were recorded with a Trimble geographic positioning system (GPS) device and mapped on the SBACO's geographic information system (GIS). The results of the survey are displayed in Table 1 and the infestation locations are displayed in Appendix A, Figures 1, 2a-c. The survey report is posted on the SBACO's website at http://www.countyofsb.org/agcomm/wma.aspx?id=26498.

This survey was deemed, on August 28, 2008, as categorically exempt from CEQA analysis per 14 CCR § 15306, Information Collection.

Survey results (Table 1) indicate that the current distribution of tamarisk and arundo within the river is patchy. Overall, the combined percent cover of tamarisk and arundo relative to other vegetation is less than 0.1% of the total surveyed area (≈ 58,000 acres). The gross area occupied by the tamarisk is 15.6 acres and arundo is 21.4 acres. The net acreage is 6.4 acres and 6.4 acres, respectively. The gross area of all non-native plants surveyed in Santa Ynez River is 47.23 acres of which 13.24 acres are occupied by the project's target weeds and non-native invasive plants including tree of heaven (*Ailanthus altissima*), pampasgrass (*Cortaderia spp.*) and Spanish broom (*Spartium junceum*).

[1] As of July 1, 2011, funding is only available for the treatment of arundo. The current project will only be treating for arundo. This MND is including tamarisk in preparation of potential funding at a later time.

Table 1 – Non-Native Plant Species Population Data, Santa Ynez River Survey Results

| Species | # of Populations | Gross Area* | Minimum Population* | Maximum Population* | Median Population* | Population Mode* | Net Area* |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ***Tamarix ramosissima*** | 173 | 678,137 $ft^2$ (15.57 A) | 1 $ft^2$ | 78,560 $ft^2$ | 225 $ft^2$ | 25 $ft^2$ | 279,751 $ft^2$ (6.42 A) |
| ***Arundo donax*** | 339 | 930,333 $ft^2$ (21.36 A) | 1 $ft^2$ | 250,000 $ft^2$ | 100 $ft^2$ | 100 $ft^2$ | 277,499 $ft^2$ (6.37 A) |
| *Ailanthus altissima* | 4 | 3,100 $ft^2$ | 100 $ft^2$ | 2,500 $ft^2$ | 250 $ft^2$ | 100 $ft^2$ | 2,701 $ft^2$ |
| *Cortaderia spp.* | 16 | 6,666 $ft^2$ | 1 $ft^2$ | 4,000 $ft^2$ | 25 $ft^2$ | 25 $ft^2$ | 1,194 $ft^2$ |
| *Spartium junceum* | 22 | 438,887 $ft^2$ | 4 $ft^2$ | 250,000 $ft^2$ | 613 $ft^2$ | 4 $ft^2$ | 15,516 $ft^2$ |
| **Total** | **554** | **2,057,123** $ft^2$ | **n/a** | **n/a** | **n/a** | **n/a** | **576,661** $ft^2$ |

Source: Native Range, Inc. 2008.

Columns explained:

- Total number of populations for each species. Defined as a population of individual clumps or plants separated by a distance of at least 100 ft.
- Gross area = total area infested, including weeds and non-weeds.
- Minimum population = The smallest gross population size recorded.
- Maximum population = The largest gross population size recorded.
- Median population = The average gross population size.
- Population mode = The most frequently recorded gross population size.
- Net area = The area occupied only by non-native invasive plants.

### 3.1.2 Public Outreach Related to the Project

Effective eradication of the target weeds will require landowner cooperation. An outreach and education program is proposed to teach landowners about the importance of tamarisk and arundo removal. SBACO proposes to contact landowners through a mailed leaflet and public meetings.

An informational handout about the environmental problems associated with tamarisk and arundo will be developed, and will include discussions of the extent of the invasion and the effects on biological diversity, fire danger, flood risk and water quality/quantity and methods of tamarisk and arundo removal. This leaflet will be distributed to landowners of infested properties and to neighbors of infested properties.

A website is available to inform and update the public about the project. The website's address is http://www.countyofsb.org/agcomm/wma.aspx?id=26498.

### 3.1.3 Treat target weeds

Landowners will be advised of the project's schedule and provided with an opportunity to appeal the project action. Each landowner will be provided with a map of the property with the original target weed GPS detections identified and specific details of the treatment protocol.

Table 2 – Proposed project schedule:

| Task | Schedule |
|---|---|
| Survey and map target weed locations | Completed September 2008 |
| Landowner outreach – public education | January 2009 - ongoing |
| File MND and comment period | May 2012 |
| Respond to comments and submit final MND | June 2012 |
| Primary (1st year) arundo treatment | September 2012 |
| Follow-up arundo treatment | Annually Oct & Nov 2013-2016 |
| Project monitoring | Ongoing |
| Tamarisk treatment | Pending grant funding |

The treatment methods, treatment alternatives and methods of access are explained in detail in the following section, 3.2 Project Methods.

## 3.2 Project Methods

### 3.2.1 Access

The project sites are located along the length of the Santa Ynez River watershed and will be accessed by helicopter, and by light to medium duty trucks over public right-of-way and private roads. The primary approach will be to transport applicator personnel to project sites by helicopter. Aerial access is proposed because of the efficiency of helicopter access and the rural locations of project sites.

The secondary access approach will be to drive personnel and equipment to locations via existing public and private roads. Ground access methods will be utilized where potential airspace or livestock conflicts cannot be accommodated. It is anticipated that approximately five to fifteen percent of the 541 invasive plant sites (total tamarisk and arundo detections) will need to be ground accessed. No site grading or new access roads are proposed.

The primary site access approach will be aerially by helicopter. Most helicopter trips will originate from and refuel at the Lompoc Airport located on the western end of the project area. Secondarily, the Santa Ynez Airport may be used as an alternative fuel location. A third fueling option would be refueling the helicopter in the field from a fuel truck. Field fueling locations will be arranged with the land owners in the access acquisition process. Fueling operations shall be conducted in accordance with agency fueling directives, and all applicable local, state, and federal regulations. All field fueling operations will require preparation of a Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasure (SPCC) Plan to be prepared by the SBACO.

Project staff will minimize potential noise, wind wash, and vibration impacts caused by the helicopter or trucks accessing parcels.

A Schweizer 333 helicopter is selected to optimally access the remote locations – see Appendix A, Figure 3. The pilot will be accompanied by a qualified applicator familiar with local aerial access constraints (e.g. sensitive receptors, power lines and airport operations). The helicopter will either hover or land depending on the site conditions. If landing is necessary to perform project activities, preferred areas will include the dry riverbed or unoccupied land. The

minimum area required for landing a Schweizer 333 helicopter is approximately 40 X 30 square feet. A Schweizer 333 helicopter can hover and not place its skids on the ground surface, to load and unload personnel. Depending on the site constraints, applicators can be unloaded and reloaded from the hovering helicopter in less than one minute. The helicopter may be used to assist ground crews to locate target plants by hovering directly over each infestation site. The helicopter is not expected to remain in a single location for more than five minutes. The Schweizer 333 helicopter is represented as having the lowest noise signature of any conventional tail rotor turbine helicopter. A Pilot's Flight Manual provided by Sikorsky Aerospace Services indicates that at maximum gross weight the helicopter produces 79.4 dBA SEL of noise.

Depending on geography and ground cover, multiple infestations and parcels may be accessed from a single applicator drop. For this reason, the total number of helicopter drops and pickups can only be estimated at this time. It is anticipated that approximately eighty to ninety-five percent of the sites will be accessed aerially. Many of the sites are clusters that can be accessed in a single helicopter load or offload event. Additionally, multiple sites will be accessed for each helicopter trip departing from the local airports.

The secondary approach will be access on foot following field crew transport by light to medium-duty trucks on existing public and private roads. Access on private roads shall be coordinated in advance with the property operator. It is estimated that approximately five to twenty percent of the target plant sites may need to be accessed by ground. The field crew will use existing hiking, animal and livestock trails, natural drainages, and the dry riverbed banks to travel from the roadway to the individual infestation sites.

No ground disturbance is proposed. Native vegetation may be minimally pruned, where needed, to avoid non-target herbicide application. In areas where sensitive plants and wildlife occur in the project area, measures will be taken to avoid or minimize potential effects. See Biological Resources Section 2.5.

### 3.2.2 Project Activity

The project's personnel, supervised by a qualified applicator, will use handheld application equipment, (See Section 3.2.3 Control Methods). The treatment of tamarisk is estimated to have a duration of six weeks (or 30 working days) while arundo treatment is estimated to have a total duration of five weeks (or 25 work days) both during the initial year. Project field work would occur during normal business hours Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. The initial herbicide applications would be completed by two to three crews of three workers. As one crew is working, another crew can be shuttled to the next project site. No heavy equipment or heavy mechanical removal equipment is proposed and no sub-surface disturbances would occur. Ongoing maintenance or re-treatment of target invasive plants is planned for four additional years. The proposed project's treatment sessions will occur annually for a total of five years.

All proposed project activities will comply with the following best management practices (BMPs):

- Follow applicable rules and regulations and permit conditions.
- Minimize noise.
- Work between 8:00 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday
- Minimize cutting or trampling of native plants.
- Use portable toilet or nearby public facilities when allowed.
- Do not fuel chainsaws within 100 feet of the active river channel, preferably outside of the stream bed and banks.
- Do not mix herbicide solutions within 100 feet of the active river channel, preferably outside of the stream bed and banks.
- Quickly contain and clean up all fuel and herbicide spills.
- Avoid trees and bushes marked with yellow double flagging that indicate sensitive resources.
- Avoid cutting arundo into sharp points – cut flat.
- Do not apply herbicides by foliar treatment if wind speeds exceed 10 mph.
- Do not apply herbicides if rain is forecast within 12 hours.
- Do not apply herbicides if vegetation is wet with water from rain or dew.
- All herbicides must be appropriate for the target sites, and approved for aquatic use, despite that herbicides will not be applied to water.
- Herbicide application mixture must contain aquatic approved dyes to indicate treated sites.
- Signs must be placed if herbicide application is within 25 feet of a public recreation site, while application is occurring and restricted entry interval is in effect.
- Do not allow herbicide drift to non-target sites. Use tarps if needed.
- Herbicide applications must be supervised by a licensed or certified qualified applicator

Supervision and verification of the implementation of these BMPs shall be documented annually by the SBACO Project Manager.

### 3.2.3 Control Methods

Following are descriptions of the herbicides and techniques proposed for use. The methods are presented in order of preference for the proposed project. All herbicide directions and applicable laws will be followed.

Treatment methods 1 through 3 will be conducted by ground personnel using handheld equipment. The helicopter will be used only to transport personnel and equipment to treatment sites and to assist with locating treatment sites.

**1. Standing foliar treatment.** Arundo and tamarisk can be foliarly sprayed with diluted glyphosate or imazapyr with no preparation of the target weeds, other than disentanglement from native vegetation. This method will be used only where there will not be off-target impacts from herbicide drift.

**2a. Snapped stem foliar treatment.** Arundo can be prepared for foliar treatment with diluted glyphosate or imazapyr by bending arundo canes to the ground in layers. Each layer will be sprayed in sequence until the entire arundo patch is sprayed. This method is appropriate to avoid off-target drift.

**2b. Drill and fill treatment.** Tamarisk can be treated by drilling a series of holes in the trunks of a tamarisk tree or bush and glyphosate, triclopyr, or imazapyr is applied to the holes. This method is appropriate to avoid off-target drift.

**3. Cut stump treatment.** Arundo culms or tamarisk are cut to within less than one foot of the ground, and 50% to 100% concentration of glyphosate or imazapyr, (or triclopyr for tamarisk), is applied directly to the cut stump within five minutes of cutting. This method is appropriate to avoid off-target drift, however, biomass removal can greatly increase the cost of treatment.

### 3.2.4 Biomass Disposal

Tamarisk and arundo biomass, limbs, canes and leaves would primarily be left in place to naturally biodegrade; secondarily biomass would be moved outside of the river floodway outside of the high-water-mark within the originating parcel; and as a third option biomass would be removed entirely from originating parcel by truck for offsite re-use applications or disposal. The proposed project assumes the primary two biomass disposal options will account for over ninety-five percent (95%) of the infestation sites. Arundo would require initial monitoring for stem node growth during the first season after cutting to ensure that it does not re-sprout.

Under the proposed project, approximately five percent (5%) of the biomass may require truck relocation for composting. Trucking of plant material on public right-of-way is anticipated to be limited in volume of material, number of vehicle trips and length of each vehicle trip. The SBACO will identify potential biomass receiving sites in the project area during the public outreach and project coordination phases. In the event biomass re-use is not accommodated in the Santa Ynez Valley materials will be trucked to local landfill sites for disposal.

### 3.2.5 Monitoring and Maintenance

As stated in Table 2 - Proposed Project Schedule, year one treatment would be followed by annual monitoring and re-treatment for four additional years. Following the proposed project's initial treatment in year one, herbicide re-treatments would be undertaken in all areas where tamarisk and arundo re-emerges.

## 3.3 Project Proponent and Availability of Documents

### 3.3.1 Project Proponents

Agricultural Commissioner's Office
County of Santa Barbara
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara CA 93110
agcommissioner.com/wma

**Project Manager (PM)**
David Chang, Agricultural Program Specialist
dchang@co.santa-barbara.ca.us
(805) 81 -5 00

### 3.3.2 Availability of Documents

Copies of the proposed project's Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study are on file and available for review at the following locations and on the internet at: www.agcommissioner.com/wma.aspx?id=26498:

Agricultural Commissioner's Office
263 Camino del Remedio, Santa Barbara CA 93110
(805) 81 -5 00

Buellton Public Library
140 West Hwy 246, Buellton CA 93427
(805) 688-3115

Agricultural Commissioner's Office
624 W Foster Rd, Santa Maria CA 93455
(805) 934-6200

Agricultural Commissioner's Office
1745 Mission Dr, Solvang CA 93463
(805) 686-5064

Planning & Development
County of Santa Barbara
123 E. Anapamu, Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 568-2000

Lompoc Public Library
501 East North Ave, Lompoc CA 93436
(805) 736-3477

Agricultural Commissioner's Office
121 North G St, Lompoc CA 93436
(805) 737-7733

## 4. Environmental Determination

### 4.1 Statement of Impact

This Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study has been prepared to: (1) identify potential effects on the environment due to implementation of the proposed project; and, (2) evaluate the significance of these effects. Based upon the analysis contained in the Initial Study, the proposed project would have less than significant impacts or no impacts related to the following:

- Agricultural Resources
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Geology and Soils
- Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- Land Use
- Mineral Resources
- Population and Housing
- Public Services
- Recreation
- Transportation and Traffic
- Utilities and Service Systems

However, the environmental analysis presented in the Initial Study concludes that the proposed project could have potentially significant adverse impacts associated with five issue areas unless mitigation measures are applied that can effectively reduce or avoid these impacts. These issue areas include:

- Aesthetics
- Biological Resources
- Hazards and Hazardous Materials
- Hydrology and Water Quality
- Noise

Measures have been formulated that, with full implementation, would effectively mitigate all of the potentially significant adverse environmental impacts associated with the proposed project to a level of less than significant.

Based upon the impact analysis contained the proposed project's Initial Study and the mandatory findings of significance contained therein (Initial Study), this Mitigated Negative Declaration documents the SBACO's finding that there are no significantly adverse unavoidable impacts associated with the proposed project, and that preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) is not required.

SBACO's primary approach to implementation of the proposed project shall be avoidance of impacts. SBACO shall incorporate mitigations into the proposed project's design and pre-construction plans to avoid or reduce possible environmental impacts to less than significant levels. SBACO's commitments include avoiding sensitive habitats (via timing of treatment or establishing a buffer zone around nest areas), removing tamarisk and arundo by direct application of herbicides, training crews how to apply herbicide properly, and in appropriate conditions.

## 4.2 Cumulative Impacts

The cumulative environmental impacts of the proposed project would be negligible or less than significant after implementation of recommended mitigation measures.

## 4.3 Mitigation Measures

Implementation of the following mitigation measures would either avoid potentially significant impacts identified in the proposed project's Initial Study, or reduce them to a less than significant impact.

Click on mitigation measure code to view Table 3 - Mitigation Monitoring Implementation Plan.

### 4.3.1 Aesthetics Mitigation Measures

AES-1 SBACO shall limit project areas to patches of non-native tamarisk and arundo and avoid all native riparian plant species. SBACO shall maintain neat and orderly project sites.

### 4.3.2 Biological Resources Mitigation Measures

BIO-1 Special Status Species: The County shall avoid impacts to special status plant species by implementing a worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) for special status species, with supervision and verification of the implementation of these measures by an agency-approved Environmental Monitor.

BIO-2 Worker Environmental Awareness Program: A Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all field crews. All field crews, sub-contractors, and staff shall participate in WEAP training prior to starting work on the project. The program will consist of a briefing on environmental issues relative to the proposed project. Training of crews will be conducted by the designated Biologist, Environmental Monitor, or Project Manager. The training program will include an overview of the legal status, biology, distribution, habitat needs, and permits and compliance requirements for each special status species that may occur in the project area. The presentation will also include a discussion of the legal protection for endangered species under the U.S. and California Endangered Species Acts (FESA and CESA). A fact sheet conveying this information will be distributed to all personnel who enter the project site. Upon completion of the orientation, employees will sign a form stating that they attended the program and understand all mitigation measures.

BIO-3 Comply with Permit Requirements: All permits and authorizations required by federal, state, regional and local jurisdictions shall supersede mitigation measures found herein. Throughout the life of the project, additional species may be listed or designated as special status, and the SBACO shall comply with any new requirements of the USFWS, NMFS, or CDFG for such species.

BIO-4 Nests of Species of Concern. If active nests of species of concern are found, a minimum 200-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around the active nest(s). The size of individual buffers can be adjusted, following a site evaluation by a qualified biologist, which shall depend upon the presence of topographical features that obstruct the line of sight from the project activities to the nest and the observed sensitivity of the species of concern. Site evaluations and buffer adjustments shall be made in consultation with local CDFG representatives. The portion of the project that is within the designated buffer shall be identified in the field by staking and flagging.

BIO-5 Nesting Native Birds: In the unlikely event that active nests of native birds are found within stands of tamarisk or giant reed during hand removal, all project activities at that location shall cease and a minimum of a 50-feet buffer zone shall be flagged around the nest site. No tamarisk or arundo removal or any other work shall occur within the flagged nest zone until the young have fledged, are no longer being fed by the parents, or have left the nest and will no longer be impacted by the project.

### 4.3.3 Hazards and Hazardous Materials Mitigation Measures

HAZ-1 All herbicide applications will be supervised by a qualified applicator certified or licensed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation to ensure that specific safety measures, including containment and clean-up plans in the event of an accidental spill or leak of the herbicide, are followed. All workers involved with herbicide application shall receive training in herbicide application from the qualified applicator.

HAZ-2 Herbicide applications shall comply with applicable laws and regulations from the California Food and Agricultural Code and California Code of Regulations pertaining to pesticide use, including but not limited to:

- All workers involved with herbicide application shall wear and maintain appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (work clothing, chemical resistant gloves, etc.)
- Clean water, soap, single use towels and an extra set of work clothing shall be available at the herbicide mix and load site.
- Herbicide brands shall be appropriately registered for the use site.
- Herbicides shall be applied in accordance with the registered label.
- Provide the property operator with a herbicide application schedule, identity of the herbicide to be applied, and precautions to be observed.
- The qualified applicator shall evaluate the equipment, weather, treatment site and surrounding property to determine the likelihood of harm or damage.
- Applications shall not be made if there is a reasonable possibility of contamination of persons not involved in the application, of damage to nontarget crops, animals, or other public or private property, or of the creation of a health hazard.

HAZ-3 Additional restrictions are placed upon the project to ensure safety above and beyond that required by the regulations. These additional restrictions are stated previously in the best management practices. The following restrictions are elaborated upon and repeated for emphasis:

- Foliar herbicide applications shall not occur if wind speeds exceed ten miles per hour. The qualified applicator shall carry a wind measuring device within a reasonable distance of the current application.
- Signs that indicate that a herbicide application is occurring must be placed at points of pedestrian access if the herbicide application is within 25 feet of a public recreation site, while the application is occurring and restricted entry interval is in effect.

HAZ-4 Herbicides used in the project will have the lowest, category three, caution, toxicity rating.

HAZ-5 Spill prevention and clean-up procedures shall be observed to minimize contamination of the environment. Spill prevention procedures include:

- Use a secondary containment method to prevent contamination of the herbicide mix site. Secondary containment methods include tarps, plastic trays.
- Fuel spills and herbicide spills of 1 gallon or more shall be reported to the Project Manager. Spill sites shall be recorded with a GPS device. Designated spill sites will be cleaned up, including the removal and proper disposal of contaminated soil as feasible.

### 4.3.6 Hydrology and Water Quality Mitigation Measures

WQ-1 All herbicides and adjuvants used in the project will be allowed for direct application to water, despite that direct applications to water will not be made by this project.

WQ-2 Target weeds that are located in water during the construction phase of the project will not be treated.

### 4.3.7 Noise Mitigation Measures

NOI-1 As directed by any local jurisdiction, SBACO shall implement appropriate noise mitigation measures to comply with the applicable local noise ordinance including, but not limited to shutting off idling equipment, rescheduling project activities, increasing the distance between or avoiding impacted resources, or notifying residents in advance of project work.

NOI-2 The use of equipment and machinery shall comply with all applicable local noise ordinances and policies. At a minimum, use of equipment and machinery in tamarisk and arundo removal shall be limited to weekdays (Monday to Friday) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. within 500 feet of sensitive receptors.

NOI-3 Helicopters shall not be used within 1,600 feet of sensitive receptors including schools, residential, commercial, lodging, hospitals, or care facilities.

## 4.4 Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting

Section 15074(d) of the State Guidelines for the Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act (State CEQA Guidelines) and Section 21081.6 of the Public Resources Code, require the lead agency of an environmental review document to adopt a Mitigation Monitoring Program to ensure that all mitigation measures are complied with during implementation of a proposed project. Consistent with these requirements, the following Table 3 identifies the timing, monitoring methods, responsibility and compliance verification method for all mitigation measures identified in this Mitigated Negative Declaration.

**Table 3** - Project Mitigation Measures Monitoring Program – Implementation Plan. (Click on mitigation measure code to see full text of mitigation measure.)

| Mitigation Measure | Implementation | Monitoring | Agency | Documentation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AES-1 Treat target weeds only | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| BIO-1 WEAP | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| BIO-2 WEAP training | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| BIO-3 Comply with permits | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| BIO-4 Buffer zones outside of target sites | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| BIO-5 Buffer zones within target sites | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |

| Mitigation Measure | Implementation | Monitoring | Agency | Documentation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| HAZ-1 Certified applicator supervision | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| HAZ-2 Comply with herbicide application rules | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| HAZ-3 Comply with project policy | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| HAZ-4 Use low toxicity materials | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| HAZ-5 Spill prevention | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| WQ-1 Use aquatic registered materials | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| WQ-2 No treatment of target weeds in water | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| NOI-1 Noise impact avoidance by logistics | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |

| Mitigation Measure | Implementation | Monitoring | Agency | Documentation |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| NOI-2 Noise impact avoidance by schedule | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |
| NOI-3 Noise impact avoidance by distance | SBACO and NRI to implement as project policy – developed prior to project implementation. | Project Manager (PM) and Qualified Applicator (QA) to train staff prior to project start and monitor staff during project. Non-compliances will be handled according to an enforcement response plan. | SBACO and NRI | Training and compliance will be documented as part of the WEAP. |

# Initial Study
# for the
# Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project

*Tamarix ramosissima* and *Arundo donax* Removal and Riparian Habitat Restoration on the Santa Ynez River, Santa Barbara County, California

County of Santa Barbara
Agricultural Commissioner's Office
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara CA 93110

December 2010

# 5. Initial Study and Environmental Checklist

## 5.1 Introduction

This Initial Study (IS) has been prepared to evaluate the potential physical environmental consequences of the proposal by the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project (SYRTAP). The objective of SYRTAP is to remove two target invasive plant species, *Tamarix ramosissima*, (tamarisk) and *Arundo donax*, (arundo), from the bed and banks of the Santa Ynez River. The invasion of tamarisk and arundo is contributing to the decline of Santa Ynez River riparian habitat and increasing the risk of infrastructure damage from fire and flood. The project proposes several methods of herbicide application to eradicate these invasive plant species, described in Section 3.2.3 Control Methods. For the purpose of the project's review under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office (SBACO) is acting as the Lead Agency.

Potential environmental impacts have been identified for each environmental issue area based on the project activities for tamarisk and arundo removal within the Santa Ynez River riparian corridor. SBACO has included maps, and other relevant information as identified in Section 2 Project Description.

Mitigation measures that address impacts are identified in this document. This associated Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) concludes that, given the construction approach, design elements, and the mitigation measures included in this document, no significant effect on the environment would occur.

**Project Title**
Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project

**Lead Agency Name and Address**
County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara CA 93110

**Legal Authority**
CEQA requires state, regional, and local agencies to prepare an environmental review document for any discretionary action that may have the potential to significantly affect the quality of the environment. Under CEQA, a Lead Agency is the governmental agency that has the principal responsibility for carrying out or approving a proposed project, and therefore, the principal responsibility for preparing, or causing the preparation of, CEQA-related documents. The proposed project area is located within the Santa Ynez River Watershed. The County Agricultural Commissioner's Office (SBACO) weed management program exists to assist landowners and residents in improving land stewardship through weed management, soil and water conservation, and other actions. The office has jurisdiction in the County of Santa Barbara which includes the entire Santa Ynez River Watershed. Consequently, for the purposes of CEQA, the SBACO is acting as the Lead Agency.

**Initial Study Contact Person**
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## 5.2 Project Location and Assessor's Parcel Number(s)

At a regional scale, the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project (herein referred to as the "proposed project" or "project") is located within the Santa Ynez Valley of Santa Barbara County, California. Properties that are affected by the proposed project are listed in Appendix B as Santa Barbara County Assessor's Parcel Numbers (APNs).. Generally, the project area lies between Gibraltar Reservoir and the eastern border of Vandenberg Air Force Base.

For additional discussion of the proposed project's regional setting and location see Section 2 Project Description of the Mitigated Negative Declaration.

## 5.3 Surrounding Land Uses and Setting

At a regional scale, the proposed project area is located within the Santa Ynez Valley watershed, which is approximately 3.6 miles north of the City of Santa Barbara at the eastern end, and within or adjacent to the Community of Santa Ynez, City of Solvang, City of Buellton, and City of Lompoc. The project area is within the riparian corridor of the Santa Ynez River. The Santa Ynez River runs east to west for 90 miles entirely within Santa Barbara County. The County's General Plan is administered by the County of Santa Barbara's Planning and Development Department, Office of Long Range Planning. The Santa Ynez River bisects areas within the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, City of Lompoc, City of Buellton, City of Santa Ynez, Lompoc Penitentiary and Los Padres National Forest. Within these various jurisdictions the project area includes a mixture of land use designations including: recreation/open space; no jurisdiction (military, cities, and forest service); Agriculture I; Agriculture II; Agricultural commercial 40+ acres; General Industry; and other Open Lands.

The project area extends from east to west along the Santa Ynez River corridor. The river originates on the eastern end within the remote Los Padres National Forest where it meanders through a large part of its course, naturally in mountainous remote terrain. The river travels through steep canyons, around rolling hills, and across moderately managed rangeland. Three man-made reservoirs on the river, Jameson Lake, Gibraltar Reservoir, and Cachuma Lake, store and provide the majority of the drinking and agricultural water for many of the county's cities and farms. Cachuma Lake Recreation Area is also a local county park, popular with boaters and campers.

The Santa Ynez Valley is characterized by rolling hills, with a scenic view from the Highway 154, a state designated scenic highway. The Santa Ynez Valley has historically been a major cattle grazing region. The Santa Ynez Valley is semi-rural with more urban development concentrated in the unincorporated communities of Los Olivos, Ballard, Santa Ynez, and the cities of Solvang and Buellton, and on the Chumash Reservation. Other project area uses are agricultural operations such as horse ranches, vegetable farms, orchards and commercial vineyards. The area's development pattern includes inter-rural uses such as agricultural, recreational, and ranchette-style residential use with parcel sizes ranging generally from 5 to 40 acres. The surrounding rural area contains larger parcels ranging from 40 to several hundred acres, and is characterized by less development and larger scale agricultural uses (County of Santa Barbara, 2009). The western portion of the project area is located within the City of Lompoc and Lompoc Federal Penitentiary. The project does not extend into the portion of the Santa Ynez River corridor that lies within the Vandenberg Air Force Base (VAFB) because of its military status. VAFB conducts its own environmental projects and has an on-going *Arundo donax* program within its boundaries. The project will complement VAFB's environmental habitat conservation programs.

## 5.4 Other Agencies Whose Approval may be Required

The proposed project would cross multiple jurisdictions and would potentially require consultation, approval, and/or permits from various federal, state, and local agencies. The following are regulations that would likely apply to the proposed project:

California Department of Fish and Game. Section 1602 et seq. of the California Fish and Game Code requires notification to the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) for any project that would create a substantial change to the bed, channel, or bank of any river, stream, or lake, or the use of material from a streambed, river channel or lake. Upon notification, the CDFG determines if a substantially adverse effect to fish or wildlife species may occur. If the CDFG determines a substantial affect may occur, application for and issuance of a Section 1602 permit is required. The issued permit may include conditions of approval that mitigate potential impacts to fish and wildlife species and habitat. The proposed project would require a Section 1602 permit for its implementation.

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **I. AESTHETICS** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c) Substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) Create a new source of substantial light or glare which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **II. AGRICULTURE RESOURCES:** In determining whether impacts to agricultural resources are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Dept. of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| c) Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland, to non-agricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **III. AIR QUALITY** -- Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **IV. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or US Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| f) Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **V. CULTURAL RESOURCES** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in '15064.5? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of an archaeological resource pursuant to '15064.5? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **VI. GEOLOGY AND SOILS** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| i) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| ii) Strong seismic ground shaking? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| iii) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| iv) Landslides? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction or collapse? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code (1994), creating substantial risks to life or property? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative waste water disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of waste water? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **VII. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS** Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases. | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| **VIII. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS** Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g) Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| h) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **IX. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b) Substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (e.g., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level which would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| c) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner which would result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| e) Create or contribute runoff water which would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Otherwise substantially degrade water quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g) Place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| h) Place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures which would impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| i) Expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| j) Inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **X. LAND USE AND PLANNING** - Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **XI. MINERAL RESOURCES** - Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Result in the loss of availability of a locally-important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan or other land use plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **XII. NOISE** - Would the project result in: | | | | |
| a) Exposure of persons to or generation of noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Exposure of persons to or generation of excessive ground borne vibration or ground borne noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) A substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) A substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| e) For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **XIII. POPULATION AND HOUSING** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| c) Displace substantial numbers of people, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **XIV. PUBLIC SERVICES** | | | | |
| a) Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times or other performance objectives for any of the public services: | | | | |
| i. Fire protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| ii. Police protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| iii. Schools? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| iv. Parks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| v. Other public facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **XV. RECREATION --** | | | | |
| a) Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b) Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **XVI. TRANSPORTATION/TRAFFIC** -- Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Cause an increase in traffic which is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume to capacity ratio on roads, or congestion at intersections)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Exceed, either individually or cumulatively, a level of service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d) Substantially increase hazards due to a design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Result in inadequate parking capacity? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g) Conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| **XVII. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS B** Would the project: | | | | |
| a) Exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| b) Require or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c) Require or result in the construction of new storm water drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d) Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project from existing entitlements and resources, or are new or expanded entitlements needed? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e) Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider which serves or may serve the project that it has adequate capacity to serve the projects projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f) Be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the project's solid waste disposal needs? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| g) Comply with federal, state, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

| **5.5 Environmental Checklist** | **Potentially Significant Impact** | **Less Than Significant with Mitigation Incorporation** | **Less Than Significant Impact** | **No Impact** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **XVIII. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE --** | | | | |
| a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## 5.6 Environmental Setting, Impacts, and Mitigation Measures

The Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration (IS/MND) included analysis of environmental issue areas and mandatory findings of significance listed below by section number. These issue areas incorporate the topics presented in the State CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Environmental Checklist.

### 5.6.1 Aesthetics

The County of Santa Barbara's Comprehensive Plan and Regional Plan (Santa Ynez Community Plan) aesthetic resources policies include: 1) Review of on and off premises signs and other advertising; 2) Review of all discretionary development proposals, re-zonings and use permits; 3) Discouragement of commercial strip development and urban sprawl; 4) Location of transmission lines along established transmission line corridors; and 5) Adequate landscaping of all new residential subdivisions, commercial and industrial uses.

Scenic Vistas
The visual character of the project area is semi-rural and rural with natural landscapes offering scenic vistas of large expanses of undeveloped land with valleys, rolling hills, agricultural production, and mountain peaks as the back-drop. Area scenic natural features include the Santa Ynez River, and numerous streams and creeks and their tributaries as they traverse the valley region (County of Santa Barbara, 2009). The proposed project identifies the removal of non-native invasive vegetation along the 90 mile-long Santa Ynez River corridor by means of herbicide. An aerial survey of the entire river conducted in September of 2008 estimated the cumulative gross acreage cover of Tamarisk and Arundo at 31 acres, and the cumulative net acreage at 14 acres, see Table 1 in the project description. The SBACO's 2008 survey indicated that the median invasive plant populations range from 25 to 613 square feet in size, which represent relatively small patches of infestation.

Scenic Highways
State Route 154 is a State Scenic Highway which parallels approximately nine miles of the project area due south of Lake Cachuma. A majority of the target invasive plants are located along the northern shore line of the lake and would be visible from approximately a mile distance from the highway.

**Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCOPORATED. The invasive plant removal activities associated with the proposed project would not have an adverse effect on a scenic vista for the following reasons:

Project sites are remote and would be limited to relatively small patches of tamarisk and arundo. Project activities would be performed mainly by direct application of herbicide from helicopter or hand application, limiting the duration and amount of equipment used for the proposed project. Existing riparian vegetation would partially or completely shield most project activities.

Project activities would move linearly on a daily basis, therefore ensuring that no particular area or view would be impacted for an extended period of time.

Similar temporary project activities are common in agricultural areas or along roadways and are compatible with the rural and urban visual landscape.

For sites where project activities would be located in a scenic vista, the potential project impacts would represent a short-term, temporary and minor aesthetic impact to the scenic vista. Once native plant revegetation has taken place, the scenic vistas would be enhanced. Therefore, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures AES-1, potential impacts would be reduced to less than significant.

**AES-1** SBACO shall limit project areas to patches of non-native tamarisk and arundo and avoid all native riparian plant species. SBACO shall maintain neat and orderly project sites.

**Would the project substantially damage scenic resources, including, but not limited to, trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a State scenic highway?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. One officially designated "State Scenic Highway" is located within the project area. A nine mile portion of State Highway 154 provides views of the project area parallel to Lake Cachuma. The only vegetation disturbed as part of the project activities would be tamarisk and arundo as described in Mitigation Measure AES-1. All trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings would be avoided.

**Would the project degrade the existing visual character or quality of the site and its surroundings?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. As described in the project description, project activities would be temporary and areas where tamarisk and arundo are removed would be, other plants including native plants will replace the arundo and tamarisk eventually.

This would create an enhanced visual character or quality of the proposed site and its surroundings. Individual plant infestation site are relatively small and remotely located within existing vegetated areas. Treated plant material will in most cases be left in place to degrade on site and foster native plant vegetation. Individual site degradation or a change in the character or quality would be temporary and short-term resulting in a less than significant impact.

### 5.6.2 Agricultural Resources

Santa Barbara County and the Santa Ynez Valley historical uses included grazing and horse ranches. In more recent years this region of the county has become a producer of wine grapes and premium wines in central California. Other natural agricultural products include fruit, nuts, and high quality dairy products. The proposed project would not take away from prime farmland because wildlife habitat and open space are protected under agricultural resources and the proposed project would enhance wildlife habitat. According to the California Land Conservation Act of 1965 (Williamson Act), the law pertains to both agriculture and wildlife habitat. The

County's Comprehensive Plan Land Use Element established the following agricultural goal for the Santa Ynez Valley Area "[a]griculture should be preserved as one of the primary economic bases of the Valley". The Element also prioritizes agricultural in the Lompoc Area "[p]rime agricultural lands should be preserved, and expansion of agricultural lands use, particularly orchards and grazing, should be encouraged".

There will be no impact to agricultural resources. This project enhances the use of agricultural resources, does not convert prime farmland to non-agricultural uses, does not conflict existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract?

### 5.6.3 Air Quality

This section presents a discussion of the regional air quality within the County of Santa Barbara. Air quality in the county is influenced by the magnitude and distribution of air emission sources, together with topographic and meteorological factors, including wind speed and direction, temperature, solar radiation, and rainfall.

Criteria Pollutants

Criteria air pollutants are those contaminants for which State and Federal ambient air quality standards have been established for the protection of public health and welfare. Criteria pollutants include: ozone (O3) carbon monoxide (CO), oxides of nitrogen (NOX), sulfur dioxide (SO2), particulate matter with a diameter of 10 microns or less (PM10) and particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 microns or less (PM2.5).
Significance thresholds for air emissions are derived from the State CEQA Guidelines, and the County Thresholds and Guidelines Manual, Air Quality Thresholds (2006).

**Santa Barbara County Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual: Air Quality Thresholds.** A significant adverse air quality impact may occur when a project, individually or cumulatively, triggers any one of the following:

- Interferes with progress toward the attainment of the ozone standard by releasing emissions which equal or exceed the established long-term quantitative thresholds for $NO_X$ and ROC;
- Equals or exceeds the state or federal ambient air quality standards for any criteria pollutant (as determined by modeling);
- Emit (from all sources, except registered portable equipment) greater than the daily trigger for offsets in the SBCAPCD New Source Review Rule (55 pounds per day $NO_X$ or ROC);
- Emit greater than 25 pounds per day of $NO_X$ or ROC (motor vehicle trips only);
- Cause or contribute to a violation of a State or Federal air quality standard;
- Exceed the SBCAPCD health risk public notification thresholds (10 excess cancer cases per million, hazard index of greater than 1.0); and
- Inconsistent with adopted State and Federal Air Quality Plans (Clean Air Plan, 2007).

Because of the project's short-term duration, mobile nature of emission sources, no digging proposed, and the phased project schedule, the project is not expected to exceed air quality standards will have no impact on air quality.

**Would the project conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable Air Quality Attainment Plan?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed Project area is within the Santa Barbara County 2007 Clean Air Plan (CAP). The CAP addresses ozone and Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs). Project activities would result in some emissions from commuter work trips, site access by vehicle and aerially with a helicopter. Emissions would not be expected to impede attainment or maintenance of any ambient air quality standards of the South Coast Air Quality Management District. Implementation of the proposed project would result in short-term temporary exhaust emissions and fugitive dust generated by motor vehicles (for both the transport of the workforce needed for implementation of the project and helicopter trips to remote project sites). As addressed in the project description, initial treatment activities would be completed over an estimated 5 to 6 weeks or (25 to 30 working days) by truck and helicopter. The initial treatment methods (year one) would involve equipment such as hand-held herbicide applicators, loppers, ladders, to treat the tamarisk and arundo by a crew of three workers. The re-treatment phase (years two through five) would be primarily be accomplished by a Certified Applicator from a helicopter with field support from a fuel truck. Normal working hours would be Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. No heavy earth moving equipment or mechanical removal equipment is proposed and no sub-surface disturbances would occur.

**Would the project violate any air quality standard or contribute substantially to an existing or projected air quality violation?**

NO IMPACT. Project related vehicle trip emissions would not be expected to impede attainment or maintenance of any ambient air quality standards of the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

**Would the project result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is non-attainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard (including releasing emissions which exceed quantitative thresholds for ozone precursors)?**

NO IMPACT. Project related vehicle trip emissions would not be expected to impede attainment or maintenance of any ambient air quality standards of the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

**Would the project expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations?**

NO IMPACT. Project related vehicle trip emissions would not be expected to impede attainment or maintenance of any ambient air quality standards of the South Coast Air Quality Management District.

**Would the project create objectionable odors affecting a substantial number of people?**

NO IMPACT. The project would not include the types of emission sources or activities that are normally associated with odor impacts. Additionally the propose project's treatment area are

remote with space residential populations. No impact would occur.

### 5.6.4 Biological Resources

This section describes the biological resources that occur within the project area. It includes a description of common communities of plants and wildlife, special-species, and other sensitive biological resources, an assessment of the proposed project's potential impacts to these resources and mitigation measures recommended to offset potential adverse impacts to these resources.

Information used in preparing this section was derived from data sources such as The California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) California Natural Diversity Data Base (CDFG 2010), Santa Barbara County Locally Rare Plants (SBBG 2007) and Initial Study for Upper San Antonio Creek Watershed Giant Reed Removal Project (Aspen 2009).

Regulatory Setting

The following is a summary of the regulatory context under which biological resources are managed at the federal, state, and local level. Agencies with responsibility for protection of biological resources within the plan area include:

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Marine Fisheries Service (federally listed species and migratory birds)
- California Department Fish and Game (waters of the State, state listed and fully protected species, and other sensitive plants and wildlife)
- Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board (waters of the State)
- U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (wetlands and other waters of the U.S.)

Regional Setting

The Santa Ynez River flows from east to west through the Santa Ynez Valley and empties into the Pacific Ocean at Surf, near the City of Lompoc. River flows are regulated by the reservoirs, portions of the river are usually dry in the summer, although releases to maintain fish habitat may be required within particular time periods. Some pools may contain year-round water due to subsurface flow (County of Santa Barbara 2009). Correspondingly, plant and animal communities within the project area are riparian.

Riparian Habitat

Riparian habitats preserve water quality by filtering sediment and some pollutants from runoff before it enters streams. These areas also protect stream banks from erosion and shade water, keeping it cool. The river performs important hydrologic functions including transport of nutrients and sediment to wetlands and estuaries, flood flow conveyance, surface and subsurface water storage, groundwater recharge, and nutrient removal through plant uptake. (County of Santa Barbara 2009).

Special Status Plant Communities.

Five plant communities of special concern were identified by the CNDDB as potentially occurring within the project area including, Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest, Southern California Steelhead Stream; Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest; Southern

Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest; and Southern Willow Scrub (CDFG 2010b). Southern California Steelhead Stream is listed as a special status habitat because while it is not a plant community type, it supports a federally endangered species. The plant communities follow the community designations provided by Holland (1986), as detailed below.

*Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest* is a dense riparian forest of arroyo willows growing to tree-like shrub stature. Red willow, white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) and California wax myrtle (*Myrica californica*) may also be present. Suitable habitat is rare along the Santa Ynez River. According to CNDDB, this plant community is only found in one (Surf) out of the fourteen quads that the Santa Ynez River flows through.

*Southern Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest* occurs in the drier areas along streams in comparison to Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian Forest. Dominant species are coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), pink honeysuckle (*Lonicera hispidula*), wild cucumber (*Marah macrocarpus*), California wild rose (*Rosa californica*), California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), and Mexican elderberry (*Sambucus mexicana*). Suitable habitat occurs in a few sections along the Santa Ynez River. According to CNDDB, this plant community is only found in two (Santa Ynez and Solvang) out of the fourteen quads that the Santa Ynez River flows through (See Appendix A Figure 4 CNDDB Map).

*Southern Cottonwood Willow Riparian Forest* is open, broadleaved, and winter deciduous. It is dominated by Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), black cottonwood (*P. trichocarpa*), and several species of willows and herbs in the understory. Suitable habitat occurs along multiple sections of the Santa Ynez River.

*Southern Willow Scrub* is a scrubby thicket dominated by several species of willow and scattered cottonwoods and sycamores. Suitable habitat occurs along multiple sections of the Santa Ynez River.

Riparian communities are important for many wildlife species since the abundance of moisture and associated vegetation provide structure, materials, and food sources for nesting and roosting animals. Many species forage within the understory and use riparian habitat as cover and as a corridor for movement along the edges of open areas. The river's aquatic and riparian habitat is utilized by a large number of wildlife species, including special status species, and it is a major wildlife corridor for dispersal and migration. All of the aforementioned riparian habitat types are considered sensitive by the County of Santa Barbara and are protected under California Fish and Game Code. In addition, plant communities of special concern listed by the CNDDB are not given the same protected status, as are plant and animal species of special concern. Also, because these are unique natural communities, they have the potential to contain endangered, threatened or rare species.

Endangered, Threatened or Rare Species

Special-status species in the proposed project area include flora, fauna, and vegetation communities that are listed as threatened or endangered, candidate species, or species of special concern under the California or federal Endangered Species Act, species that are listed as fully

protected by the CDFG, and plants considered by the CNPS to be rare, threatened, or endangered in California and beyond (CNDDB, 2010).

URS developed a target list of special status plant and animal species that could potentially occur in the project area based upon a review of the CNDDB records along the Santa Ynez River, previous studies from the vicinity, and our knowledge of the area. See Table 4 below. Each of these species was assessed for its potential to occur within the project area per the following criteria:

*High:* Both a recent recorded occurrence (within 10 years) exists for the species within the proposed project area or its immediate vicinity (approximately five miles) and the environmental conditions (including soil type) associated with species presence occur within the proposed project area.

*Moderate:* A historical record (within 25 years) exists for the species within and adjacent to the proposed project area (approximately five miles) and the environmental conditions (including soil type) associated with species presence occur within the proposed project area.

*Low:* No records for the species occur within the proposed project area or its immediate vicinity (approximately five miles) and/or the environmental conditions (including soil type and elevation factors) associated with species presence are marginal within the proposed project area.

*Not likely to Occur:* The species was not observed during reconnaissance surveys conducted at an appropriate time for its identification and the species is restricted to environmental conditions (including habitat, soil, and elevation factors) that do not occur within the proposed project area.

**Table 4**. Special Status Species Identified with Potential to Occur in Project Area (1,000 foot buffer)

| Common Name<br>Scientific Name | Status | Habitat Associations and Blooming Period | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Plants** | | | |
| black-flowered figwort<br>*Scrophularia atrata* | 1B.2 | Coniferous forest, chaparral, coastal scrub, coastal dunes, riparian scrub from 10 to 500 meters elevation; blooms April through July. | Moderate. Limited habitat occurs within the proposed project area in the Lompoc (1954) and Lompoc Hills (1987) quads. |
| late-flowered mariposa-lily<br>*Calochortus weedii* var. *vestus* | 1B.2 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland and riparian woodland often serpentinite; elevation from 275 - 1905 meters; blooms June to August. | Not likely to occur. Limited habitat occurs within the proposed project area and last documented in the San Marcos Pass quad (1930) |
| Santa Ynez groundstar<br>*Ancistrocarphus keilii* | 1B.1 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland (sandy);<br>elevation from 40 to 130 meters; blooms March to April. | Not likely to occur. Limited suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area and last documented within the Los Alamos quad (1929). |

| Common Name<br>Scientific Name | Status | Habitat Associations and Blooming Period | Potential for Occurrence |
|---|---|---|---|
| seaside bird's-beak<br>*Cordylanthus rigidus* ssp. *littoralis* | SE, 1B.1 | Chaparral, coastal dunes and scrub, cismontane woodland; elevation from 0 to 425 meters; blooms May to October. | Moderate. Limited habitat occurs within the proposed project area within the Santa Rosa Hills (1966) and Lompoc Hills (1962) quads. |
| umbrella larkspur<br>*Delphinium umbraculorum* | 1B.3 | Cismontane woodland; elevation from 400 to 1600 meters; blooms April to June. | Moderate. Limited suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within the Little Pine Mtn. quad (1962). |
| **Insects** | | | |
| monarch butterfly<br>*Danaus plexippus* | SSA | Roosts in wind-protected tree groves (eucalyptus, cypress, etc.) with nectar and water sources nearby. | Moderate. Limited habitat occurs within the proposed project area. Surf Quad (4 occurrences, 1990), Carpinteria Quad (2 occurrences, 1996) and White Ledge Peak (1 occurrence, 1996) |
| **Fish** | | | |
| southern steelhead - southern California DPS<br>*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus* | FE, CSC | Cool, clear, fast-flowing permanent streams and rivers where there are more riffles than pools. | High. Suitable habitat exists in proposed project area. Species documented in Santa Ynez River and there is a documented occurrence in the Santa Rosa Hills quad (1993) (nonspecific area). |
| **Reptiles & Amphibians** | | | |
| arroyo toad<br>*Anaxyrus californicus* | FE, CSC | Semi-arid regions near washes or intermittent streams; rivers with sandy banks, willows, cottonwoods, and sycamores; loose, gravelly areas of streams. | Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within the Hildreth Peak Quad (1992). |
| California red-legged frog<br>*Rana draytonii* | FT, CSC | Lowlands and foothills in or near permanent sources of deep water with dense, shrubby, or emergent riparian vegetation. | High. Suitable breeding habitat occurs within the proposed project area in the River and three perennial water bodies. Additionally, suitable foraging habitat occurs along the river and neighboring creeks. Species may disperse into or through the proposed project area and within the Lompoc (2000) quads. |
| foothill yellow-legged frog<br>*Rana boylii* | CSC | Perennial streams, and is rarely observed beyond the riparian zone. | Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within Carpinteria (1966) and San Marcos Pass Quads (1993) |
| western pond turtle<br>*Emys marmorata* | CSC | Permanent or nearly permanent bodies of water in various habitat types; requires suitable basking sites, such as partially submerged logs, vegetation mats, or open mud banks. | Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within Lake Cachuma Quad (1986 and 1988) and Lompoc (2008) quads. |

| Common Name<br>Scientific Name | Status | Habitat Associations | Potential for Occurence |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Birds** | | | |
| Least Bell's Vireo<br>*Vireo bellii pusillus* | FE, SE | During breeding season, inhabits dense, low-elevation, willow dominated riparian habitats with lush understory vegetation in immediate vicinity of watercourses; forage in riparian and adjacent upland habitats. | High. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area in San Marcos Pass (2 occurrences) and Little Pine Mtn. quads. Although urbanization and development have reduced natural habitat quality, species is well-documented within Santa Ynez River and known to utilize marginal habitats. |
| Southwestern Willow Flycatcher<br>*Empidonax traillii extimus* | FE, SE | Obligate riparian species that breeds along rivers, streams, wetlands, and other aquatic associated habitats such as extensive riparian woodlands with water-filled creeks, or channels and scattered overgrown clearings. | Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within the Little Pine Mtn. (1990) and Solvang (1995) quads. |
| **Mammals** | | | |
| pallid bat<br>*Antrozous pallidus* | CSC | Rocky canyons, open farmland, scattered desert scrub, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, mixed conifer forests; roost in rock crevices, mines, caves, tree hollows, buildings, bridges. | Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within the Lompoc (1997) quad. |
| Yuma myotis<br>*Myotis yumanensis* | SSA | Roosts within expansion joints bridges over Creeks | Moderate. Suitable habitat occurs within the proposed project area within the Lompoc (1997) quad. |

**Table 4 - Legend**

Source: CNDDB Sept. Oct. 2010.

Notes:

FT = Listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)
FE = Listed as endangered by the USFWS
FC = Federal candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered (USFWS)
CE = Listed as endangered by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)
CSC = California Species of Special Concern (CDFG)
SSA = State Special Animal (CDFG)
FP = Fully Protected (CDFG)
CNPS 1B – Rare or endangered in California and elsewhere
0.1 = Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened / high degree and immediacy of threat)
0.2 = Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened)
0.3 = Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened or no current threats known)

Special Status Plant Species. The review identified five special status plant species that are either unlikely to occur or have a moderate potential to occur in the project area based upon the presence of suitable habitat and species' distributions (Table 4). One of these species, the seaside bird's-beak is listed as state threatened. Each of the other species is included on the California Native Plant Society's list of rare plants.

Special Status Wildlife Species. The review identified nine special status animal species that have a moderate to high potential to occur in the project area based upon the presence of suitable habitat and species' distributions (Table 2.5-1).

Herbicides. Many noxious weed control programs rely heavily or solely on herbicide applications, as these methods often provide the most efficient and cost-effective opportunities for eradication, especially when large populations of weeds are targeted for removal. However, herbicides may harm or kill native vegetation occurring in close proximity to, or downstream of, the targeted weeds due to drift or direct accidental applications.

There are several exposure scenarios possible for herbicides and wildlife. These include: direct spray and overspray; indirect contact through grooming or contact with affected vegetation; and, ingestion of contaminated media, including vegetation, prey species, and water. Herbicides may also negatively impact water quality where egg strings or juveniles are present.

While the overall benefits of herbicide use are generally straightforward, herbicide use may have detrimental effects on ecosystem values and functions as well. As such, it is generally desirable to select a herbicide that has low toxicity and will not move from its target, leach into groundwater (low water solubility), or remain in the environment for a long period of time (low persistence). Furthermore, the application method selected depends on the type of control needed, the type of vegetation targeted for removal, and a given site's conditions and location. Not all herbicides or application methods are equally appropriate, effective, or safe, given different site conditions and weed species.

For the above reasons, under the proposed project only herbicides specifically approved and labeled for use near and in open water will be used, and their application would be completed under very specific conditions. All on-site herbicide applications would be completed or supervised by personnel holding either a Qualified Applicator License or a Qualified Applicator Certificate from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation. The on-site supervisor would additionally ensure that: all safety measures and manufacturer specifications are followed; protocols are implemented to avoid herbicide drift into adjacent areas implemented; and, the specifications and Best Management Practices (BMPs) are followed

Work shall not be conducted within the breeding, nesting, and fledging season for most migratory birds (March 1 to September 15), without prior surveys resulting in a negative finding.

Equipment refueling and herbicide mixing and storage shall occur in designated staging areas at least 100 feet from riparian and wetland habitats.

Aquatic application of herbicide is strictly prohibited. The contractor shall not allow herbicide to contact surface waters or native vegetation extending over surface waters.

Evaluating the significance of potential project-related impacts to biological resources depends on characterizing existing conditions of the proposed project area and determining the direct and indirect effects to target species and their habitats. An impact that results in the long-term loss or degradation of sensitive habitat, or that adversely affects the population of a special-status species is considered significant.

The level of significance of project-related impacts to biological resources is based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, which states that a proposed project would have a significant impact on the environment if it exceeds one or more of the following thresholds:

- Conflicts with adopted environmental plans and goals of the community where it is located;
- Substantially affects a rare or endangered species of animal, plant, or the habitat of a species;
- Interferes substantially with the movement of any resident or migratory fish or wildlife species;
- Substantially diminishes habitat for fish, wildlife, or plants;
- Substantially affects federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption or other means.

Impacts are classified as unavoidable and significant, less than significant with mitigation incorporated, less than significant, or no impact, depending on the size, type, and timing of the impact and the biological resources involved. Disturbance of habitats and/or species is considered significant if it affects biological resources in the following ways:

- Substantially reduces or eliminates species diversity or abundance;
- Substantially reduces or eliminates quantity or quality of nesting areas;
- Substantially limits reproductive capacity through loss of individuals or habitat;
- Substantially fragments, eliminates, or otherwise disrupts foraging areas and/or access to food sources;
- Substantially limits or fragments the geographic range or dispersal routes of species;
- Substantially interferes with natural processes, such as fire or flooding, upon which the habitat depends.

The mitigation measures presented in this section are intended to reduce potential adverse effects on biological resources (e.g., special-status species, wetlands, riparian habitat) to less than significant levels.

Vegetation and Special-Status Plants. Many aquatic and semi-aquatic species rely on riparian vegetation to provide necessary foraging and nesting habitat. The introduction of noxious and invasive weeds species in these areas is a special concern for native plant communities and is recognized by resource agencies and ecologists as a threat to native vegetation communities and wildlife. Noxious and invasive weeds, particularly tamarisk and arundo, pose a threat to the natural processes of plant community succession, fire frequency, biological diversity and species

composition. Noxious and invasive weeds can also affect the persistence of some populations of special status species by replacing the foraging base, altering habitat structure, or excluding a species by vegetative growth.

As described in the Project Description, no heavy equipment would be required and no sub-surface disturbances would occur. Due to the nature of the proposed project, specifically the removal of invasive non-native plant species, significant adverse impacts to native vegetation and special-status plant species would not be expected to occur. In some cases, however, there is a potential for overspray from the proposed herbicide onto native vegetation, including special status plant species. No spraying would be undertaken during high wind events and standard requirements would be incorporated into the proposed project. In some instances there may also be the potential for native vegetation that is located within or adjacent to a stand of arundo or tamarisk to be inadvertently subject to damage or mortality due to work crew activities. However, such damage would be expected to be very limited and short-term in nature. In the absence of competition from invasive species, native plants would be expected to recolonize the tamarisk and arundo removal areas, thereby restoring and enhancing native vegetation communities and sensitive plant habitat along the Santa Ynez River. As such, short-term impacts during the proposed project's implementation phase would be less than significant and its long-term impacts would be beneficial.

Special-Status Wildlife Species

California red-legged frog. California red-legged frogs have a high potential to occur in the proposed project area. While this species is typically highly aquatic, California red-legged frogs have been documented to make overland movements. Because much of the adjacent upland habitat in the proposed project area has been converted to agricultural, semi-rural, semi-urban and urban uses, this species may be more restricted to the River corridor. Also, if deep pools form after storms California red-legged frogs may be present directly adjacent to proposed removal areas. If California red-legged frogs are present during removal activities, either in the targeted river or upland areas, impacts to this species may include direct mortality if they are crushed by project-related workers. This species, which is small, inconspicuous and typically slow-moving, may also be subject to mortality from project-related vehicles (i.e. road kill) because they disperse across uplands between water sources. Potential direct impacts could additionally occur from accidental herbicide spills. For those stands of arundo and tamarisk that are cut, the plant's rhizome would be left in place, which would maintain soil stability. However, in the event that project-related sediment transport from upslope areas to water supporting this species occurs, indirect impacts could result because the degradation of water quality, through increased sedimentation, can smother egg masses and juveniles or result in decreased water oxygen levels.

To avoid potential adverse impacts the proposed project would implement the following requirements: (1) avoid all standing and flowing water; (2) prohibit herbicide applications prior to, during a rain event and, (3) remove vegetation with hand held equipment. However, as outlined above, direct and indirect impacts to this special-status wildlife species may still occur, particularly during the proposed project's initial arundo and tamarisk removal phase. Implementation of Mitigation Measures below, would reduce these impacts to less than significant.

Southern Steelhead. As noted previously, Santa Ynez River is known to support southern steelhead and this species is expected to travel through the proposed project area during winter flows in search of spawning habitat. If this species is present during tamarisk and arundo removal activities, direct impacts could include mortality due to crushing or accidental herbicide spills. However, direct effects to southern steelhead would not likely to occur from vegetation removal activities. This species only occurs during specific times of the year and proposed project activities would not be allowed in areas of ponded or flowing water. Sediment transport from upslope areas to water supporting this species is also not expected to result in direct or indirect effects as the arundo rhizome would be left in place, which would maintain soil stability. With implementation of the SBACO's and BMP Mitigation Measures, potential impacts to southern steelhead during the proposed project's implementation phase would be less than significant.

Tamarisk and arundo removal would ultimately restore southern steelhead spawning habitat by improving water quality and potentially increasing water supply. Although direct and indirect impacts may occur in the short term from project-related activities, such as the removal of shade in some areas, implementation of the proposed project would result in long-term beneficial impacts to this species.

Least Bell's Vireo. Least Bell's Vireo is documented in riparian habitat associated with the Santa Ynez River. As such, this species may occur in mulefat scrub and willow riparian habitat in the proposed project area. Project-related traffic (aerial), the hand-held equipment needed to cut tamarisk and arundo in areas that are used by nesting birds, or near water sources, can disrupt breeding, foraging, and movement. These disturbances would result in nest, roost, or territory abandonment and subsequent reproductive failure if they were to occur during the breeding season (March 1st through September 15th). However, no project-related activities would occur prior to September 15th. As such, impacts to least Bell's vireo and other breeding birds would be avoided.

The proposed project would restore native riparian habitat by eradicating highly-competitive invasive plant species. The removal of tamarisk and arundo both highly invasive non-native plants from the upper Santa Ynez River watershed would provide for the recruitment of native plants and would result in long-term beneficial impacts to least Bell's vireo and other migratory birds.

Other Special-Status Wildlife Species. Six other special-status species have a moderate to high potential to occur in the proposed project area, including monarch butterfly, western pond turtle, foothill yellow-legged frog, pallid bat and Yuma Myotis. However, with implementation of mitigation measures, impacts to these species would be reduced to a less than significant level.

Monarch butterfly, a State Special Animal, is known to utilize wind protected windrows of eucalyptus trees along the coast of California with wintering populations documented in both Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. In addition, this species is commonly observed in the Ojai Valley and may occur in portions of the proposed project area. Impacts to wintering colonies, if present, would not be expected to occur. This species is not expected to occur in large numbers

and milkweed, its primary host plant, would not be targeted for eradication. In addition, it is anticipated that the cut stump and drill and fill treatments would be used for approximately thirty-five percent (35%) or more of the initial tamarisk and arundo removal. Using this treatment would avoid potential effects to wintering monarchs, if present. Although a foliar application would be used for approximately sixty-five percent (65%) or less of vegetation targeted for removal, this type of application would not occur during periods of high wind. Additionally, the removal of exotic plants would increase the potential for native plants to colonize in the project area, thereby resulting in beneficial impacts. Project effect on this species would be less than significant.

Impacts to southwestern pond turtle and foothill yellow-legged frog would be similar to California red- legged frog, including direct mortality and indirect temporary impacts from reduced water quality or mechanical crushing from vegetation clearing or human trampling. The preferred habitat for these turtles includes ponds or slow-moving water with numerous basking sites (logs, rocks, etc.), food sources (plants, aquatic invertebrates, and carrion), and few predators (raccoons, introduced fishes, and bullfrogs).

Riparian birds and raptors could be subject to project disturbances in the same way as Least Bell's vireo. Arundo removal activities, including the chipping of dead vegetation and the use of haul trucks would create temporary impacts from noise, dust, and increased human presence These disturbances may temporarily alter foraging and breeding behavior of wildlife. Noise levels above 75 dBA are known to produce adverse physiological effects on wildlife (Fletcher, 1971). As detailed in the Noise discussion, the noise from haul trucks, hand-held equipment such as chainsaws and power brush cutters, and chipping equipment would exceed 75 dBA from at least 50 feet from project-related areas. However, it is important to note that human activity (and associated noise) is common within the proposed project area, and with implementation of Mitigation Measures NOI-1 through NOI-4. Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-5, above, the SBWPD's measure to avoid nesting birds during the breeding season by establishing buffers (if necessary), and the planned project schedule, potential impacts would be less than significant. Following completion of the project, native habitat of the proposed project area would be restored and enhanced, thereby resulting in a long-term beneficial impact to special-status wildlife.

**Would the project have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special-status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. a) No direct ground disturbing activities are planned to occur as a part of the proposed project. Herbicide treatments could result in direct impacts to special status plant species that may occur within and adjacent to the project sites and would be considered potentially significant. Implementation of a Mitigation Measure BIO-1 requiring supervision by a designated environmental monitor would reduce this impact to less than significant.

Temporary loss of habitat within the project area could result from tamarisk and arundo removal activities. Project activities including herbicide application could directly or indirectly remove habitat. This temporarily affected habitat, however, would be restored to a more productive native habitat type, providing a net benefit to wildlife, and is therefore considered a potentially adverse impact that can be mitigated to a level of less than significant.

The primary mitigation measures to reduce potential impacts to wildlife habitat are: implementation of a Workers Environmental Awareness Plan (Mitigation Measure BIO-2, see below), compliance with State and federal laws protecting special status species (Mitigation Measure BIO-3, see below), and an herbicide treatment plan that would protect wetlands and associated sensitive vegetation (Mitigation Measure BIO-5). Implementation of these measures would reduce potentially significant wildlife habitat impacts to less than significant levels.

The use of hand tools rather than heavy equipment minimizes the potential to impact wildlife since most species can escape to adjacent areas. Therefore, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on wildlife with the incorporation of the following Mitigation Measures BIO-1, BIO-2, BIO-3 and BIO-4.

**BIO-1** Special Status Species: The County shall avoid impacts to special status plant species by: Implementing a worker environmental awareness program (WEAP) with regard to special status species with supervision and verification of the implementation of these measures by an agency-approved Environmental Monitor

**BIO-2** Worker Environmental Awareness Program: A Worker Environmental Awareness Program (WEAP) training for all field crews. All field crews, sub-contractors, and new staff shall participate in WEAP training prior to starting work on the project. The program will consist of a briefing on environmental issues relative to the proposed project. Training of crews will be conducted by the designated Biologist or Environmental Monitor or Project Manager. The training program will include an overview of the legal status, biology, distribution, habitat needs, and permits and compliance requirements for each special status species that may occur in the project area. The presentation will also include a discussion of the legal protection for endangered species under the U.S. and State Endangered Species Acts (FESA and CESA). A fact sheet conveying this information will be distributed to all personnel who enter the project site. Upon completion of the orientation, employees will sign a form stating that they attended the program and understand all mitigation measures.

**BIO-3** Comply with Permit Requirements: All permits and authorizations required by federal, state, regional and local jurisdictions shall supersede mitigation measures found herein. Throughout the life of the project, additional species may be listed or designated as special status, and the SBACO shall comply with any new requirements of the USFWS, NMFS, or CDFG for such species.

**Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. Impacts to riparian habitat and wetlands may occur during arundo and tamarisk removal resulting in a temporary loss of sensitive vegetation. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-4, would reduce the impact to riparian vegetation and wetlands to less than significant.

**Would the project have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but no limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling hydrological interruption, or other means?**

NO IMPACT. No mechanical removal of root/rhizome material or grading is proposed, therefore there will be no impact.

**Would the project interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites?**

NO IMPACT. No mechanical removal of root/rhizome material or grading is proposed, therefore impacts would be less than significant.

**Would the project conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance?**

NO IMPACT. Native trees will not be removed by this project.

**Would the project conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Plan, or other approved local, regional, or State habitat conservation plan?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project is in collaboration with the local Resource Conservation Districts in partnership with La Purisima Audubon Society, Santa Ynez River Water Conservation District and Los Padres National Forest and is not in conflict with any adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Plan, or other approved local, regional or State habitat conservation plan.

Additional Biological Resources Mitigation Measures:

**BIO-4** Nests of Species of Concern. If active nests of species of concern are found, a minimum 200-foot no-disturbance buffer shall be established around the active nest(s). The size of individual buffers can be adjusted, following a site evaluation by a qualified raptor biologist, which shall depend upon the presence of topographical features that obstruct the line of sight from the project activities to the nest and the observed sensitivity of the birds. Site evaluations and buffer adjustments shall be made in consultation with the local CDFG representatives. The portion of the project that is within the designated buffer shall be identified in the field by staking and flagging.

**BIO-5** Nesting Native Birds: In the unlikely event that active nests of native birds are found within stands of tamarisk and giant reed during hand removal, all project activities at that location shall cease and a minimum of a 50-feet buffer zone shall be flagged around the nest site. No tamarisk or arundo removal or any other work shall occur within the flagged nest zone until the young have fledged, are no longer being fed by the parents, or have left the nest and will no longer be impacted by the project.

Cumulative Impacts. The proposed project's impacts to special-status species would be temporary in nature and can be mitigated to a level of less than significant through implementation of the mitigation measures provided in this Initial Study and the specifications and BMPs provided. Ultimately, the eradication of invasive non-native plant species in the proposed project area would have a beneficial impact on both common and special-status plants and wildlife species. As such, the proposed project's incremental contribution to impacts associated with special-status species would not be cumulatively considerable. Cumulative impacts would be less than significant or none.

### 5.6.5 Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Environmental Setting

The Santa Ynez and Lompoc Valleys both are known for numerous archeologically sensitive prehistoric cultural resources documenting Native American occupation over thousands of years. Historic resources are also known to occur in the Santa Ynez River Valley. .

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a historical resource as defined in 15064.5?**

NO IMPACT. No hand or mechanical excavation is proposed based on the individual plant sizes observed and invasive plant remote infestation sites. No ground-disturbing treatment methods are proposed based on the best available site information.

**Would the project cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a unique archaeological resource pursuant to 15064.5?**

NO IMPACT. No effects could occur to unknown archaeological (prehistoric and historic) deposits from as no ground-disturbing activities are proposed. The proposed project encompasses areas known to have high potential for cultural resources and other features associated with prehistoric occupation and historic settlement. No disturbance for archeological resources would occur; therefore there are no impacts.

**Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?**

NO IMPACT. No ground-disturbing activities with hand tools or mechanized equipment are proposed. No impact would occur.

**Would the project disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of formal cemeteries?**

NO IMPACT. Possible substantial effects may occur to human burials from ground-disturbing activities. Treatment methods including ground-disturbing activities with hand tools or mechanized equipment are not proposed. No disturbance for human remains would occur; therefore there are no impacts.

### 5.6.6 Geology and Soils

Information used in preparing this section is derived from the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan EIR Seismic, Soil, and Landslide Hazards Section, which included numerous sources of data and research (Santa Barbara County 2009).

Environmental Setting

The Santa Ynez Fault forms the base of the uplifted Santa Ynez Mountains and extends from Ventura County across the entire width of Santa Barbara County. The Santa Ynez Mountains form the watershed of the Santa Ynez River. The Santa Ynez Fault is classified as active with evidence of movement in recent geologic time (i.e. the last 11,000 years). A branch of this fault, the Santa Ynez River Fault, has been identified along the trend of the Santa Ynez River. A thick section of generally unconsolidated alluvial deposits has accumulated in the structural depression that constitutes the Santa Ynez Valley. The valley is surrounded by the Santa Ynez Mountains and southernmost extensions of the Coastal Ranges. The valley itself is comprised of low hills and is crossed northeast to southwest by drainages exiting the hills and draining to the Santa Ynez River.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

This impact assessment uses a qualitative analysis to address geologic hazards, primary and secondary effects of earthquakes, and soil resources. Since no structures would be constructed for this project, worker and public safety in regards to geologic hazards would not occur.

**Would the project expose people or structures to potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault, strong seismic ground shaking, seismic-related ground failure (including liquefaction), or landslides?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not involve the construction of any habitable structures or other features that would be exposed to ground shaking. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would remove various quantities of tamarisk and arundo throughout the Santa Ynez River watershed and could result in some temporary soil instability. The individual patches of non-native plants are relatively small, see Table 2 found in the project description. Various treatment methods of invasive plant removal will be available to the Certified Applicator as described in the project description. In the event the invasive plants are

located on a cliff the removal will be halted at the determination of the certified applicator. No direct ground-disturbing methods are proposed. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project be located on strata or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse?**

NO IMPACT. As stated above, the proposed project would treat tamarisk and arundo located throughout the Santa Ynez River watershed and may indirectly result in some soil instability in steeply sloped area following treatment. No ground-disturbing treatment approaches would be required. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project be located on expansive soil, as defined in Table 18-1-B of the Uniform Building Code, creating substantial risks to life or property?**

NO IMPACT. No structures will be constructed for the proposed project. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater?**

NO IMPACT. No septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems will be installed as part of the proposed project. No impacts would occur.

### 5.6.7 Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Environmental Setting

Following Executive Order S-3-05 in June 2005, which declared California's particular vulnerability to climate change, the California Global Warming Solutions Act (AB-32) requires that the State cap greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions at 1990 levels by the year 2020. In passing the bill, the California Legislature found that global climate change "poses a serious threat to the economic well-being, public health, natural resources, and the environment of California. The potential adverse impacts of global warming include the exacerbation of air quality problems, a reduction in the quality and supply of water to the state from the Sierra snowpack, a rise in sea levels resulting in the displacement of thousands of coastal businesses and residences, damage to marine ecosystems and the natural environment, and an increase in the incidences of infectious diseases, asthma, and other human health-related problems" (California Health & Safety Code, Division 25.5, Part 1).

Greenhouse gases (GHGs) are defined as any gas that absorbs infrared radiation in the atmosphere. Greenhouse gases include, but are not limited to, water vapor, carbon dioxide ($CO_2$), methane ($CH_4$), and nitrous oxide ($N_2O$). These greenhouse gases lead to the trapping and buildup of heat in the atmosphere near the earth's surface, commonly known as the Greenhouse Effect. There is increasing evidence that the Greenhouse Effect is leading to global climate change. The primary source of GHG in the United States is energy-use related activities, which

include fuel combustion, as well as energy production, transmission, storage and distribution. These energy related activities generated 85 percent of the total U.S. emissions on a carbon equivalent basis in 1998 and 86 percent in 2004. Fossil fuel combustion represents the vast majority of the energy related GHG emissions, with $CO_2$ being the primary GHG. Both the legislation and California Climate Action Team (CCAT) currently estimate that the solid waste industry, particularly landfills, is a significant source of the total net GHG emissions in California and should be a major focus of any efforts to reduce GHG emissions.

In June 2008, CARB developed a Draft Scoping Plan for Climate Change, pursuant to AB-32. This Draft Scoping Plan proposes a comprehensive set of actions designed to reduce overall carbon emissions in California, improve our environment, reduce our dependence on oil, diversify our energy sources, save energy, and enhance public health while creating new jobs and enhancing the growth in California's economy.

Senate Bill 97, enacted in 2007, amends the CEQA statute to clearly establish that greenhouse gas emissions and the effects of GHG emissions are appropriate for CEQA analysis. It directs the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) to develop guidelines addressing the analysis and mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions by July 1, 2009 and for the California Resources Agency to certify and adopt the CEQA Guidelines by January 1, 2010.

On March 17, 2009, the Santa Barbara County Board of Supervisors adopted the Santa Barbara County Climate Change Guiding Principles to guide the development of the Climate Action Strategy, and to position Santa Barbara County for related state and federal funding opportunities.

State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) promulgated new regulations on March 18, 2010 amending the CEQA Guidelines to address evaluation of green house gas (GHG) emissions in CEQA documents. Although the new regulations do not require lead agencies to adopt significance thresholds with respect to GHG emissions, they do require lead agencies to determine the significance of such emissions based data (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.4). The County of Santa Barbara prepared the Interim GHG Guidance Document memorandum on June 16, 2010 which provides interim guidance on evaluating GHG emissions in CEQA documents for projects in the County. The County is developing an inventory of current GHG emissions and a Climate Action Strategy and Climate Action Plan. Until County-specific data becomes available and significance thresholds applicable to GHG emissions are developed and formally adopted, the memorandum provides guiding steps for evaluating GHG emissions for all CEQA documents circulated after March 18, 2010.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

A project would result in a significant impact on air quality if it generates greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that would have a significant impact on the environment; or, conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases TOC

Consistent with the criteria presented above, the State CEQA Guidelines do not specifically identify a numeric threshold of significance for GHG impacts. However, the Guidelines (Section

150 4.4( b)(2)) direct the lead agency to consider whether a project's emissions exceed a standard of significance that the lead agency determines applies to the project.

On October 24, 2008, at the request of OPR, CARB released a Preliminary Draft Staff Proposal (CARB 2008) containing recommendations regarding the appropriate significance criteria to use when evaluating GHG emissions and global climate change impacts under CEQA. In that document, CARB proposed tiered significance criteria for two types of projects: 1) industrial; and 2) commercial/residential. For industrial projects that are not exempt from CEQA under existing statutory or categorical exemptions, GHG impacts are presumed to be less than significant if the project meets CARB performance standards for transportation and construction-related emissions and the project, with mitigation, will emit no more than approximately 7,000 metric tons (MT) of $CO_2$ equivalent per year ($CO_2e$/yr) for operational emissions (excluding transportation) including the following sources: Combustion-related components/equipment; Process losses; Purchased electricity; or Water usage and wastewater discharge. Thus, any GHG emissions exceeding 7,000 metric tons of $CO_2e$/yr would be considered to constitute a significant impact on the environment.

**Would the project generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project would result in generation of direct emissions applicator team site access by truck and helicopter and indirect emissions from fuel. No commercial or residential electrical or natural gas generation emissions would result for the proposed project directly or indirectly, so no new facilities are proposed. The proposed project would add short-term temporary vehicle (aerial and roadway) traffic trips as described in the project description. The proposed project's contribution to California's GHG emissions would be minute and substantially below the threshold of significance. Therefore GHG direct and indirect impacts would be less than significant.

**Would the project conflict with an applicable plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project would strategically remove non-native invasive plants in remote locations accessed by truck and helicopter, access activities would incrementally increase GHG emissions. However, the magnitude of this increase in GHG emissions would be slight. Emissions thresholds of state and regional plans would not be exceeded. Thus, the proposed project's impacts relative to this criterion would be less than significant.

### 5.6.8 Hazards and Hazardous Materials

Setting and Introduction

The primary concerns for the proposed project, in regards to hazardous materials, are worker safety and public safety. Exposure to hazardous materials could be possible through handling of hazardous materials or accidental spill during construction activities.

Implementation of the proposed project would involve the use of some herbicide treatment methods, using a glyphosate-based herbicide, see Table 2. For the risks associated with glyphosate-based herbicides to people, a dose of 2 milligrams per kilogram per day (mg/kg/day) has been determined by the U.S. EPA to be the chronic reference dose (RfD) for glyphosate (U.S. Forest Service, 2002). The RfD means that a person could receive a dose of 2 mg/kg/day throughout every day of his or her life without an adverse health effect. Short-term or acute exposures above the chronic RfD can occur without any known adverse health effect. The estimated lethal dose of glyphosate in humans is 445 mg/kg/day (U.S. Forest Service, 2002). Thus, a 150-pound (73 kilogram) person would need to be exposed to 32,485 mg of glyphosate in a single day to achieve a lethal dose.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The proposed project would not require long-term storage, treatment, disposal, or transport of significant quantities of hazardous material; however, small quantities of hazardous materials would be stored, used, and handled during implementation of the project. Implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-1 through HAZ-5 would reduce potentially significant impacts from hazardous materials to less than significant levels.

**HAZ-1** All herbicide applications would be completed or supervised by a qualified applicator certified or licensed by the Department of Pesticide Regulation to ensure that specific safety measures, including containment and clean-up plans in the event of an accidental spill or leak of the herbicide are followed. All workers involved with herbicide application shall receive training in herbicide application from the qualified applicator.

**HAZ-2** Herbicide applications shall comply with applicable laws and regulations from the California Food and Agricultural Code and California Code of Regulations pertaining to pesticide use, including but not limited to:

- All workers involved with herbicide application shall wear and maintain appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE) (work clothing, chemical resistant gloves, etc.)
- Clean water, soap, single use towels and an extra set of work clothing shall be available at the herbicide mix and load site.
- Herbicide brands shall be appropriately registered for the use site.
- Herbicides shall be applied in accordance with the registered label.
- Notify the property operator prior to application of the date of the scheduled application, identity of the herbicide to be applied, and precautions to be observed.
- The qualified applicator shall evaluate the equipment, weather, treatment site and surrounding property to determine the likelihood of harm or damage.
- Applications shall not be made if there is a reasonable possibility of contamination of persons not involved in the application, of damage to nontarget crops, animals, or other public or private property, or of the creation of a health hazard.

**HAZ-3** Additional restrictions are placed upon the project to ensure safety above and beyond that required by the regulations. These additional restrictions are stated previously in the best management practices. The following restrictions are elaborated upon and repeated for emphasis:

- Foliar herbicide applications shall not occur if wind speeds exceed seven miles per hour. The qualified applicator shall carry a wind measuring device within a reasonable distance of the current application.
- Signs that indicate that a herbicide application is occurring must be placed at points of pedestrian access if the herbicide application is within 25 ft of a public recreation site, while the application is occurring and restricted entry interval is in effect.

**HAZ-4** Herbicides used in the project will have the lowest, category three, caution, toxicity rating.

**HAZ-5** Spill prevention and clean-up procedures shall be observed to minimize contamination of the environment. Spill prevention procedures include:

- Use a secondary containment method to prevent contamination of the herbicide mix site. Secondary containment methods include tarps, plastic trays.
- Fuel spills and herbicide spills of 1 gallon or more shall be reported to the Project Manager. Spill sites shall be recorded with a GPS device. Designated spill sites will be cleaned up, including the removal and proper disposal of contaminated soil as feasible.
- Service containers of fuel or concentrate herbicide shall not be larger than four gallons.

**Would the project create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. Procedures of proper handling and disposal of hazardous waste are established by federal, State, and local regulations. SBACO will train project personnel in the handling of such materials prior to the start of project activities.

**Would the project emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school?**

NO IMPACT. Schools are not located within one-quarter mile of the project.

**Would the project be located on a site that is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code Section 65962.5 and, as a result, would it create a significant hazard to the public or the environment?**

NO IMPACT. There would be limited potential for exposure of known underground hazardous materials no ground disturbance is proposed. No impact would occur.

**For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area?**

NO IMPACT. There would be no resultant structures that would impair airport operations or endanger other land uses. No impact would occur.

**For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project result in a safety hazard for people residing or working in the project area.**

NO IMPACT. As discussed above, the proposed project would not result in a safety hazard for people working or residing in the surrounding area. No equipment or construction materials would be left accessible to the public once construction activities cease for the day. No impact would occur.

**Would the project impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?**

NO IMPACT. All work would be done off of public right-of-ways (ROW) and therefore would not impede an emergency response plan. No impact would occur.

**Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving wildland fires, including where wildlands are adjacent to urbanized areas or where residences are intermixed with wildlands?**

NO IMPACT. The project site is within a moderate to high fire hazard areas; however, removal of the tamarisk and arundo would decrease the existing fuel load level in the area. This reduced risk with respect to fire hazard would result in a beneficial impact. No impact is expected.

### 5.6.9 Hydrology and Water Quality

Environmental Setting

The Santa Ynez River watershed is an important water resource for Santa Barbara County. It is a primary source of drinking water for Santa Barbara County residents, and supplies agriculture with necessary water for irrigation, provides fish spawning habitat for three federally listed species, and supports riparian habitats which therefore support many species of plants and animals - some of which are endemic to the area. Therefore, federal, State, and local governments, as well as citizen groups, believe it is important to protect our water resources. The proposed project intends to enhance the riparian zone along the Santa Ynez River watershed, which would in turn, benefit hydrology and water quality.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. No ground disturbing activities are proposed. Herbicides will be used adjacent to water resources, but with the implementation of WQ-1 and WQ2, impacts will be reduced to less than significant.

WQ-1 All herbicides and adjuvants used in the project will be allowed for direct application to water, despite that direct applications to water will not be made by this project.

WQ-2 Target weeds that are located in water during the construction phase of the project will not be treated.

Accidental Release of Hazardous Materials. Hazardous materials associated with the proposed project construction would include substances such as gasoline and diesel fuels, engine oil, hydraulic fluids, and herbicide. Accidental spills of these substances could contaminate drainages, soils, wetlands, and other environmentally sensitive areas. Although the potential for such a spill and release would be low, it nonetheless would represent a potentially significant impact. However, with the incorporation of Mitigation Measure HAZ-5, this impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

**Would the project substantially deplete groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that there would be a net deficit in aquifer volume or a lowering of the local groundwater table level (i.e., the production rate of pre-existing nearby wells would drop to a level that would not support existing land uses or planned uses for which permits have been granted)?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project does not involve the use of groundwater for any project activities, therefore there would be no impact on the depletion of groundwater resources. Arundo and tamarisk have been shown to use excessive amounts of water, therefore, the removal of arundo and tamarisk will be beneficial to groundwater supplies.

**Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river, in a manner that would result in substantial erosion or siltation on-site or off-site?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project could potentially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site. However, the primary treatments methods are foliar, cut-stump, and injection, which do not disturb the soil. Plants roots would be left in place, which would keep the soil stable and off-site soil movement is less than significant. Roots and dead plant material would gradually degrade with concurrent gradual impact on drainage. The effect on drainage would be the removal of impediments to flood flow, which is beneficial to reducing flood risk.

**Would the project substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner that would result in flooding on-site or off-site?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project could potentially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site. However, the primary treatments methods are foliar, cut-stump, and injection, which do not disturb the soil. Plants roots would be left in place, which would keep the soil stable and off-site soil movement is less than significant. Roots and dead plant material would gradually degrade with concurrent gradual impact on drainage. The effect on drainage would be the removal of impediments to flood flow, which is beneficial to reducing flood risk.

**Would the project create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not utilize existing or planned storm water drainage systems. Runoff would drain as sheet flow and be allowed either to percolate or to flow into temporary storm water management structures. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**Would the project otherwise substantially degrade water quality?**

NO IMPACT. Herbicides will not be applied to water.

**Would the project place housing within a 100-year flood hazard area, as mapped on a federal Flood Hazard Boundary or Flood Insurance Rate Map or other flood hazard delineation map?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not include the construction or placement of housing within a 100-year floodplain. No impact would occur.

**Would the project place within a 100-year flood hazard area structures that would impede or redirect flood flows?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not include structures that would impede or redirect flood flows. No impact would occur.

**Would the project expose people or structures to a significant risk or loss, injury, or death involving flooding, including flooding as a result of the failure of a levee or dam?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not cause or contribute to the failure of a dam or levee. As the project does not include structures that would house or accommodate people, it would not expose people or structures to a significant risk of loss, injury, or death involving flooding.

**Would the project contribute to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not contribute to inundation by seiche, tsunami, or mudflow. No impact would occur.

## 5.6.10 Land Use

Environmental Setting

The County of Santa Barbara has an adopted Comprehensive Plan and a Community Plan for the Santa Ynez Valley, that specify land use designations throughout the County. Land uses throughout the entire proposed project area vary substantially, ranging from agricultural to residential to commercial. Several non-residential and agricultural uses occur in the proposed project area (within approximately 0.5 miles) was well as:

Educational Facilities: Los Robles High School County of Santa Barbara, San Marcos School, Alan Hancock College (within the City of Solvang), Jonata Middle School (City of Buellton), Oak Valley Elementary School (City of Buellton), Rinconada School, Leonora Fillmore Elementary School (City of Lompoc), and Hapgood Elementary School (City of Lompoc),

Recreational Areas: More than five Los Padres National Forest Campgrounds, Cachuma Lake Nature Center, Alisal (South of Santa Ynez on the river), Hans Christen Anderson Park (City of Solvang), River Park (City of Lompoc),

County of Santa Barbara Fire Stations: Station 32

Agricultural Commercial Uses: Sunstone Vineyards and Winery (south of Santa Ynez), Mosby Winery and Vineyard (south of Buellton), Terravant Wine (City of Buellton), Alma Rose Winery Tasting Room, LaFond Winery and Vineyards, Stanford Winery and Vineyards, Santa Ynez Winery

Other Commercial: Lompoc Airport, and Sky Dive Santa Barbara (City of Lompoc)

Other: US Penitentiary Lompoc (north of Lompoc)

Initially a majority of tamarisk and arundo removal will be performed by hand application of herbicides see Table 2 for detailed discussion. The aerial site access activities will be planned avoiding the sensitive receptor listed above and identified by landowners as part of Licensing Agreement. No ground disturbance or excavation activities are proposed.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project physically divide an established community?**

NO IMPACT. Community character refers to the distinctive physical quality, attributes, or features of a community that sets it apart from other communities or areas. Thresholds for land use are not established in the County's Environmental Thresholds and Guidelines Manual (County of Santa Barbara, 2003).

As described in the Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan, the predominant land use designation of the project area is agriculture at 43,441 acres, followed by residential at 1,580 acres, commercial at 110 acres, and very limited industrial at 51 acres. Agriculture is a strong

component of community identity and a major contributor to the Santa Ynez Valley's economy (County of Santa Barbara, 2009). Portions of Santa Ynez River watershed is designated as Sensitive Biological Areas (County of Santa Barbara, 2009).

The proposed project would not require the construction or removal of structures, nor would it involve any grading, excavation, or other soil removal activities that may affect the community character of the project area. As such, project activities would not conflict with land use or zoning designations. Temporary impacts to community residents may result from noise during the tamarisk and arundo treatment phases. However, proposed project activities would be temporary, and would not permanently affect the character of the surrounding communities. The proposed project would be consistent with zoning and General Plan land use designations within the project area. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact on community character.

**Would the project conflict with any applicable land use plan, policy, or regulation of an agency with jurisdiction over the project (including, but not limited to, the general plan, specific plan, local coastal program, or zoning ordinance) adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project has been supported by federal, State and local agencies as being necessary to eliminate the invasive non-native arundo and tamarisk and restore riparian habitat along the Santa Ynez River watershed. The proposed project does not conflict with any land use plans, policies, or regulations of agencies with jurisdiction over the project. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**Would the project conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plan or natural community conservation plan?**

NO IMPACT. Since the proposed project is utilizing the principles of local habitat conservation plans, the project is not expected to conflict with any applicable habitat conservation plans or natural community conservation plans. No impact would occur.

### 5.6.11 Mineral Resources

Environmental Setting

Santa Barbara County has a long history of mineral resources extraction. Sand and gravel extraction is situated in the Santa Ynez River flood plain west of Solvang based on the County of Santa Barbara's Conservation Element (County of Santa Barbara, 2010:161). No petroleum or metals mineral extracting activities are listed within the Santa Ynez River watershed.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource classified MRZ-2 by the State Geologist that would be of value to the region and the residents of the State?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project does not include construction of structures or hardscapes. The proposed project would remove tamarisk and arundo, potentially allowing access to aggregate resources. The proposed project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource classified MRZ-2 by the State Geologist. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated on a local general plan, specific plan, or other land use plan?**

NO IMPACT. As stated above, the proposed project would not include construction of structures or hardscapes. Therefore, there would be no loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in the adopted Conservation Element and Santa Ynez Valley Community Plan. No impact would occur.

### 5.6.12 Noise

Generally, federal and State agencies regulate mobile noise sources, by establishing and enforcing noise standards on vehicle manufacturers. Local agencies generally regulate stationary noise sources and construction activities in order to protect neighboring land uses and the general public's health and welfare. Noise-related policies are usually adopted in the local government's general plan and usually regulate construction noise levels and time of operations. Noise is defined as any unwanted sound (County of Santa Barbara, 2003). Because the effects of noise accumulate over time, it is necessary to address both the magnitude, frequency and duration of sound. As such, the thresholds of significance for noise take both of these elements into account.

A brief background on the fundamentals of environmental acoustics is helpful in understanding how humans perceive various sound levels. Although extremely loud noises can cause temporary or permanent damage, the primary environmental impact of noise is annoyance. The objectionable characteristic of noise often refers to its loudness. Loudness represents the intensity of the sound wave, or the amplitude of the sound wave height measured in decibels (dB). Decibels are calculated on a logarithmic scale; thus, a 10 dB increase represents a 10-fold increase in acoustic energy or intensity, while a 20 dB increase represents a 100- fold increase in intensity. Decibels are the preferred measurement of environmental sound because of the direct relationship between a sound's intensity and the subjective "noisiness" of it. The A-weighted decibel system (dBA) is a convenient sound measurement technique that weights selected frequencies based on how well humans can perceive them. Table 5 provides typical ranges of common sounds heard in the environment.

**Table 5**. Representative Outdoor and Indoor Noise Levels

| At a Given Distance from Noise Source | A-Weighted Sound Level in Decibels (Units of dBA) | Noise Environments | Subjective Impression |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 140 | | |
| Civil Defense Siren (100') | 130 | | |
| | 120 | | Pain Threshold |
| Jet Takeoff (200') | 110 | Rock Music Concert | |
| | 100 | | Very Loud |
| Diesel Pile Driver (100') | 90 | Boiler Room<br>Printing Press Plant | |
| | 80 | | |
| Freight Cars (50')<br>Pneumatic Drill (50')<br>Freeway (100') | 70 | In Kitchen With Garbage Disposal Running | Moderately Loud |
| Vacuum Cleaner (10') | 60 | Data Processing Center | |
| | 50 | Department Store | |
| Light Traffic (100') | 40 | Private Business Office | Quiet |
| Large Transformer (200') | 30 | Quiet Bedroom | |
| | 20 | Recording Studio | |
| Soft Whisper (5') | 10 | | Threshold of Hearing |
| | 0 | | |

Source: Illingworth & Rodkin, Inc., 2002

The range of human hearing spans from the minimal threshold of hearing (approximately 3 dBA) to that level of noise that is past the threshold of pain (approximately 120 dBA). In general, human sound perception is such that a change in sound level of three (3) dB is just noticeable, while a change of 5 dB is clearly noticeable. A change of 10 dB is perceived as a doubling (or halving) of sound level. Noise levels are generally considered low when they are below 45 dBA, moderate in the 45 to 60 dBA range, and high above 60 dBA. Noise levels greater than 85 dBA can cause temporary or permanent hearing loss if exposure is sustained. Examples of low

daytime noise levels are those observed in isolated natural settings (e.g., undeveloped, open space areas) (20 dBA), and quiet suburban residential streets (43 dBA). Examples of moderate level noise environments are urban residential or semi commercial areas (55 dBA) and commercial locations (60 dBA). Although people often accept the higher levels associated with very noisy urban residential and residential-commercial zones (63 dBA), as well as industrial areas (65 to 70 dBA), the levels are nevertheless considered adverse (USEPA, 1971).

Ambient environmental noise levels can be characterized by several different descriptors. Energy Equivalent or Energy Average Level (Leq) describes the average or mean noise level over a specified period of time. Leq provides a useful measure of the impact of fluctuating noise levels on sensitive receptors over a period of time. Other descriptors of noise incorporate a weighting system that accounts for human's susceptibility to noise irritations at night. Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) is a measure of cumulative noise exposure over a 24-hour period, with a five (5) dB penalty added to evening hours (7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.) and a 10 dB penalty added to night hours (10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m.). Day/Night Average Noise Level (Ldn) is essentially the same as CNEL, with the exception that the evening penalty is dropped.

Environmental Setting

The ambient noise levels near the proposed project treatment sites varies depending on the land uses. Vehicular traffic and commercial agricultural activities are the predominant sources of noise throughout the project area. Aircraft traffic over the Valley from the Lompoc Airport, and smaller private airstrips, also contributes to the existing noise exposure. The ambient noise level at a particular location depends upon proximity to major or minor noise sources. Existing condition noise levels were not documented to establish the project areas baseline condition. A majority of the sites are unpopulated remote locations.

The following summarizes County of Santa Barbara Noise Thresholds of significance assist in the determination of significant noise impacts (2003):

**a.** Development that would generate noise levels exceeding 65 dB(A) CNEL and could affect sensitive receptors.
**b.** Outdoor living areas subject to noise levels on excess of 65 dB(A) CNEL ambient noise, and interior noise level excess on 45 dB(A).
**c.** Ambient noise levels affecting sensitive receptors above 65 dB(A) CNEL or more.
**d.** Noise from construction within 1,600 feet of sensitive receptors, including schools, residential, commercial, lodging, hospitals, or care facilities.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project expose persons to or generate noise levels in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or applicable standards of other agencies?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. The project would primarily involve temporary noise sources associated with ground-based and aerial application activities.

Ground-based application of herbicide by crews on foot, from trucks or other land-based vehicles to eradicate non-native tamarisk and arundo plant infestations. Typically, from one to two trucks would be expected. Noise resulting from crews and access vehicles, could disturb adjacent residents located within approximately 500 feet of the crew activities. Because of the short duration, one day per year over a five-year period the noise exposure, the noise impact would be less than significant with mitigation.

A Schweizer Model 333 helicopter will be used to transport project staff to most treatment sites. Helicopter noise is common in the valley regions. If helicopters are maintained at a distance of at least 1,600 feet from residences, helicopter noise would not cause a substantial increase in noise levels or cause a significant disturbance because of the short duration expected to be necessary at any particular treatment site. Per FAA's 197 National Aviation Noise Abatement Policy guideline, helicopters are advised to not operate within approximately 1,500 feet of residences, however if operations are closer than this distance, significant helicopter noise impacts may occur.

The helicopter is not expected to remain in a single location for more than five minutes. The Schweizer 333 helicopter is represented as having the lowest noise signature of any conventional tail rotor turbine helicopter. A Pilot's Flight Manual provided by Sikorsky Aerospace Services indicates that at maximum gross weight the helicopter produces 79.4 dBA SEL of noise.

Because removal of tamarisk and arundo is expected to move quickly, construction noise at any one location would typically be audible for only one day or part of one day. Implementation of the following Mitigation Measures NOI-1 through NOI-3 would reduce the impacts to less than significant.

**NOI-1** As directed by any local jurisdiction, SBACO shall implement appropriate noise mitigation measures to comply with the applicable local noise ordinance including, but not limited to, shutting off idling equipment, rescheduling project activities, increasing the distance or avoiding impacted resources, or notifying residents in advance of project work.

**NOI-2** The use of equipment and machinery shall comply with all applicable local noise ordinances and policies. At a minimum, use of equipment and machinery in tamarisk and arundo removal shall be limited to weekdays (Monday to Friday) between the hours of 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. within 500 feet of sensitive receptors.

**NOI-3** Helicopters shall not be used within 1,600 feet of sensitive receptors, including schools, residential, commercial, lodging, hospitals, or care facilities.

**Would the project expose persons to or generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not expose persons to or generate excessive groundborne vibration or groundborne noise levels. No impact would occur.

Would the project result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would only require short-term maintenance of the native plants by manual hand-labor application and helicopter spray ball application these would not result in a substantial permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project. No impact would occur.

**Would the project result in a substantial temporary or periodic increase in ambient noise levels in the project vicinity above levels existing without the project?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. Project activities would result in a temporary increase in noise. With Mitigation Measures NOI-1 through NOI-3, (above), the temporary impact would be reduced to a less than significant level.

**For a project located within an airport land use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted within 2 miles of a public airport or public use airport, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excess noise levels?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. The portions of the proposed project are located within the Lompoc Airport one of several general aviation airports in the Santa Barbara County Airport Land Use Plan (County of Santa Barbara 1993: 66). The Santa Ynez Valley Airport is a utility airport which serves primarily light aircraft. This airport's noise map contour extend south toward the watershed paralleling the river corridor (County of Santa Barbara 1993: 74). The proposed project would require short-term aerial helicopter access for approximately one day per annual treatment event. Ground and aerial application crews would have limited potential exposure to airport noise at individual treatment sites located within these airports noise contour boundaries. Aerial application crews would be exposed to both helicopter and airport noise when departing and arriving at the Lompoc airport. These noise events would be short in duration. Impact is less than significant.

**For a project within the vicinity of a private airstrip, would the project expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project is not located within the vicinity of a private airstrip. No impact would occur.

### 5.6.13 Population and Housing

Environmental Setting

The proposed project passes through many different types of land uses, one of them being residential. SBACO proposes to work with landowners in the effort to remove tamarisk and arundo from the Santa Ynez River watershed.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project induce substantial population growth in an area, either directly (for example, by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (for example, through extension of roads or other infrastructure)?**

NO IMPACT. No houses, roads or other infrastructure will be constructed as a part of the proposed project. The proposed project would neither remove existing housing, nor prevent the future construction of homes in the project area. While the proposed project would require approximately a dozen workers for initial removal activities, and annual re-treatment activities, this small workforce would be anticipated to come from Santa Barbara and Ventura Counties. Consequently, the workforce needed would be expected to be available within a reasonable commuting distance of the proposed project area, and thus would not result in a demand for additional housing. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project displace substantial numbers of existing housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

NO IMPACT. No housing would be displaced directly or indirectly by the proposed project. Project treatment methods would result in short-term access to undeveloped sites within the river's watershed. The invasive plant sites do not contain existing housing units, and would not result in the displacement of housing. All residential and commercial occupants will be notified by the SBACO prior to any site access. No impact would occur.

**Would the project displace substantial numbers of people necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not result in or include the construction or demolition of structures that could house people. Therefore, people would not be displaced and replacement housing would not be necessary as a result of the proposed project. No impacts would occur.

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### 5.6.14 Public Services

Environmental Setting

As described the project description, the proposed project includes the removal of tamarisk and arundo along the entire length of the Santa Ynez River riparian corridor. The project area is entirely located within the County of Santa Barbara and spans several incorporated and unincorporated communities, the Los Padres National Forest and US Penitentiary Lompoc. The proposed project would not create additional public service needs.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered governmental facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant**

**environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the public services:**

(i) Fire protection?
LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. Fire protection services could potentially be required at a project site in the event of an accident. The likelihood of an accident requiring such a response would be low. The service capacities of county and/or city fire departments in which potential accidents could occur would not be affected. Since the potential for a project related accident is low and the respective fire departments are prepared to respond to accidents across their jurisdictions, this would represent a less than significant impact.

(ii) Police Protection?
LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project would not have a significant long-term impact on public services. Any potential short-term project impacts to emergency service providers would be less than significant.

(iii) Schools?
NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not create an increase in population or in-migration. Therefore, the proposed project would not cause an increased demand on existing schools and no new schools would be required because of the project. No impact would occur.

(iv) Parks?
NO IMPACT. Portions of the proposed project will be in national and regional parks. However, no population growth or immigration would occur because of the project. Therefore, no new services would be required in the parks because of the project. For a discussion of the short-term recreational impacts see the recreation section below. No impact would occur.

(v) Other Public Facilities?
NO IMPACT. No population growth or in-migration would occur because of the project. Therefore, no new public services would be required. No impact would occur.

### 5.6.15 Recreation

Environmental Setting
The project area encompasses several recreational lands. The proposed project would be located within or adjacent to the following regional parks and facilities:

Los Padres National Forest: The Los Padres National Forest encompasses almost two million acres in the coastal lands of central California from the Big Sur Coast in Monterey County to the western edge of Los Angeles County. Within the project area there are three designated recreation areas: Figueroa Mountain, Sage Hill and Santa Ynez (USDA 2010).

Cachuma Lake Park/Recreation Area: The Cachuma Lake Park/Recreation Area is a Santa Barbara County public recreation area offering overnight camping. The park is located off Highway 154 at Cachuma Lake is midway between the City of Santa Barbara and the City of

Solvang. Park use include camping, hiking, fishing and wildlife viewing (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Santa Ynez Park: The park is located on Numancia Street near Highway 246 in the southwestern portion of the Santa Ynez business district.. Park uses include ball fields, BBQ grills, various picnic area, horseshoes, and playground closing at sunset (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Santa Rosa Park: The Santa Rosa Park is a Santa Barbara County public recreation area located midway between Lompoc and Buellton, this small multi-level park is rich with live oak, native ferns and wildflowers. Picnic areas, horseshoes, playground and volleyball court round out its amenities. Park uses include BBQ grills, various picnic areas, and horseshoes. This park is open from 8:00 AM till sunset (County of Santa Barbara 2010).

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?**

NO IMPACT. Population growth in an area is generally the reason for increased use of recreational facilities. As described in Section 2.13 (Population and Housing), the proposed project would not cause a population increase or immigration. No impact would occur.

**Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project does not include the construction or expansion of recreational facilities. Therefore, no impact would occur.

**Would the project result in permanent and/or temporary impacts, such as possible disruption of recreational activities, affecting the recreational value of existing facilities?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT WITH MITIGATION INCORPORATED. Most project activities will be located in areas that do not see significant user impact, as these areas are often heavily vegetated and user access is limited. However, as described in Section 2.8, construction activities and the application of herbicide would limit access temporarily to some recreational areas. However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures HAZ-3, placement of signs when the project occurs within 25 ft of a public recreation site, the impact would be less than significant.

### 5.6.16 Transportation and Traffic

Environmental Setting

This section contains an analysis of the traffic and circulation impacts associated with the proposed Project. Caltrans is responsible for managing and maintaining State and Interstate

highways. The County of Santa Barbara and local jurisdictions are responsible for all other roads within their boundaries.

The proposed project would not encroach into any public right-of-ways (ROW). Project crews would utilize public roads to travel to and from the project sites. There is no operational component to the proposed project; therefore, for the purposes of this analysis, the proposed project has been evaluated within the context of generating traffic-related impacts during: (1) initial tamarisk and arundo herbicide treatments ("initial phase"); and (2) herbicide retreatment activities ("re-treatment phase").

Initial-treatment Phase (Year one). Traffic associated with the proposed project's initial phase would consist of trucks needed to transport equipment and materials to and from the mapped infestation sites along the river corridor to targeted tamarisk and arundo herbicide application. No removal, haul or transport cut plant material is proposed to any single processing site. In the event plant materials are located within the rivers floodway. Plant materials would be stockpiled onsite as described in the Project Description. Roadways surrounding the proposed project area that would likely be traveled during the project's initial phase include:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Highway 154 | State Route 246 (Mission Drive); | Alisal Road |
| Santa Rosa Road; | Mail Road | Sweeney Road. |

Re-treatment Phase (Years two through five). Following the proposed project's initial treatment in year one, herbicide re-treatments would be undertaken in all areas where tamarisk and arundo re-emerges. Depending on site-specific conditions, the re-treatments could occur annually for up to five years. Areas where conditions restrict helicopter access will be re-treated using truck for the balance of the sites, handheld herbicide applicator equipment and tools.

**Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

The County's thresholds of significance for traffic impacts were used to assess the proposed Projects potential to generate both project-specific and cumulative traffic impacts. These thresholds are listed below. A significant traffic impact occurs when:

The addition of project traffic to an intersection increases the volume to capacity (V/C) ratio by the following value in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Significant Changes in Levels of Service

| Intersection Level of Service (Including Project) | Increase in V/C or Trips Greater Than |
|---|---|
| LOS A | 0.20 |
| LOS B | 0.15 |
| LOS C | 0.10 |
| LOS D | 15 Trips |
| LOS E | 10Trips |
| LOS F | 5 Trips |

B. A project's access to a major road or arterial road would require a new road that would create an unsafe situation, a new traffic signal, or major revisions to an existing traffic signal.

C. A project adds traffic to a roadway that has design features (e.g., narrow width, road-side ditches, sharp curves, poor sight distance, inadequate pavement structure) or receives use e.g., farm equipment, horseback riding, etc.) that would become a potential safety problem with the addition of project traffic.

D. A project's traffic would utilize a substantial portion of an intersection's capacity where the intersection is currently operating at acceptable levels of service (LOS A-C), but with cumulative traffic would degrade to or approach LOS D (V/C 0.81) or lower. A substantial impact is defined as a minimum change of 0.03 for an intersection that would operate from 0.80 to 0.85, a change of 0.02 for an intersection that would operate from 0.86 to 0.90 and a change of 0.01 for an intersection that would operate greater than 0.90.

**Would the project cause an increase in traffic that is substantial in relation to the existing traffic load and capacity of the street system (i.e., result in a substantial increase in either the number of vehicle trips, the volume-to-capacity ratio on the roads, or congestion at intersections)?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project would require crews to be transported to and from project locations in year one. Subsequent re-treatment years would rely heavily on a helicopter treatment method and limited trucking for fuel and access to environmentally constrained sites. Crew would carpool to the project locations and would not be utilizing more than three vehicles at a time throughout the project area. Therefore, the impact would be less than significant.

**Would the project cause, either individually or cumulatively, a level-of-service standard established by the county congestion management agency for designated roads or highways to be exceeded?**

NO IMPACT. No significant change in the existing LOS would occur with the short-term temporary increase of one or two vehicles per weekday for a period of five to six weeks per year. No physical change would be necessary to support the proposed projects truck trips.

**Would the project result in a change in air traffic patterns, including either an increase in traffic levels or a change in location that results in substantial safety risks?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project would involve helicopter air traffic within the Lompoc and Santa Ynez Valleys originating primarily from the Lompoc Airport and secondarily from the Santa Ynez Airport. As described in the project description the treatment methods would rely heavily upon helicopter site access due to the remote location and distance between invasive plant populations. Aerial access would occur over a short-term period of five to six weeks for a period of up to five years. The aerial transport activities of the proposed

project will comply with all applicable Federal, State and local air traffic control measures; therefore air traffic impacts would be less than significant.

**Would the project substantially increase hazards because of a design feature or incompatible uses?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not be located on any public right-of-ways (ROW). No impact would occur.

**Would the project result in inadequate emergency access?**

NO IMPACT. As stated above, the proposed project would not be located on any public ROW and would not impede emergency access to a location. No impact would occur.

**Would the project result in inadequate parking capacity?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not interfere with public or private parking areas. No impact would occur.

**Would the project conflict with adopted policies, plans, or programs supporting alternative transportation (e.g., bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not be located on any public ROW. No impact would occur.

---

### 5.6.17 Utilities and Service Systems

Environmental Setting

The proposed project would not involve the use of electricity or natural gas. All site work would be conducted using hand labor and fuel-powered equipment. Also, the proposed project would not involve the establishment of, or require telecommunication communication lines.

Environmental Impacts and Mitigation Measures

**Would the project exceed wastewater treatment requirements of the applicable Regional Water Quality Control Board?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not generate wastewater. Therefore, the wastewater treatment requirements of the RWQCBs would not be exceeded. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project require, or result in the construction of new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not generate wastewater. The proposed project would not require, or result in the construction of, new water or wastewater treatment facilities or expansion of existing facilities. No impact would occur.

**Would the project require, or result in the construction of, new stormwater drainage facilities or expansion of existing facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental effects?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not create new impermeable surfaces that would substantially increase drainage runoff beyond current conditions. Accordingly, the proposed project would not require or result in the construction or expansion of stormwater drainage facilities. No impact would occur.

**Would the project have sufficient water supplies available to serve the proposed project from existing entitlements and resources, or would new or expanded entitlements be needed?**

NO IMPACT. The project only requires water needed to mix herbicides, which is readily available from existing resources. No new entitlements are needed.

**Would the project result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider that serves or may serve the proposed project that it has adequate capacity to serve the proposed project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments?**

NO IMPACT. The proposed project would not involve the construction or modification of any structures; as such, it would not require an onsite sewage disposal system. No impacts would occur.

**Would the project be served by a landfill with sufficient permitted capacity to accommodate the proposed project's solid waste disposal needs?**

LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT IMPACT. The proposed project may generate some solid waste biomass. As stated in the Project Description, primarily plant cutting will remain in place for onsite composting, the secondary measure would be to move cuttings outside of the rivers floodway while the third option would be to remove cuttings from the parcel by truck. The third option would only elected in cases where the biomass cannot be removed from the river's floodway caused by the environmental constraints of the parcel. Biomass removed from the site would likely represent less than five percent of the treated plant mass. In total the treated plant mass is estimated to not exceed the County of Santa Barbara's Thresholds and Guidelines Manual waste stream threshold of 196 ton per year. (County of Santa Barbara, 2003: 160). As a result, removed cuttings would not exceed the solid waste threshold.

**Would the project comply with federal, State, and local statutes and regulations related to solid waste?**

IMPACT LESS THAN SIGNIFICANT. As stated above, the proposed project may generate solid waste that could not be recycled on site. All solid waste generated by the proposed project would be recyclable. As stated above and in the project description three options for the cuttings have been established for waste stream management.

### 5.6.18 Mandatory Findings of Significance

The CEQA Environmental Checklist presents the following three issues for which a finding of a significant impact would result in requiring preparation of an Environmental Impact Report:

(a) Does the project have the potential to degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?

(b) Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulative considerable? ("Cumulative considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects)?

(c) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?

As documented in Section 5.5 (Environmental Checklist), the IS/MND concluded that, with implementation of the mitigation measures included herein, impacts in each of the three categories would be less than significant.

## 6. Notice of Determination

**TO:** Office of Planning and Research

1400 Tenth St
Sacramento CA 95814
Mail address:
PO Box 3044
Sacramento CA 95812-3044

County Clerk-Recorder
County of Santa Barbara
1100 Anacapa St
Santa Barbara CA 93101

**FROM:** Lead Agency:
Agricultural Commissioner's Office
County of Santa Barbara
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara County

David Chang
(805) 681-5600

**SUBJECT:** ***Filing of Notice of Determination in compliance with Section 21108 or 21152 of the Public Resources Code***

**Project Title:** Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project

**Project Location:** The project sites are along the main stem of the Santa Ynez River in Santa Barbara County

**Project Description:** The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office proposes to apply herbicides to control the specific target weeds, *Arundo donax* and *Tamarix ramosissima*, along the riparian corridor of the Santa Ynez River. The invasion of tamarisk and arundo increases the risk of damage to homes and infrastructure from flood and fire and is contributing to the decline of Santa Ynez River riparian habitat – a critical habitat relied upon by many wildlife species. This is a beneficial habitat restoration project that has potentially less than significant impacts, when mitigations are implemented, on aesthetics, biological resources, hazards, water quality, and noise.

This is to advise that the County of Santa Barbara Board of Supervisors, a responsible agency, has passed and adopted the above-described project on _____ by a _____ vote of all members present and has made the following determinations regarding the above-described project:

1. The project will not have a significant impact on the environment.
2. A Negative Declaration was prepared for this project pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
3. Mitigation measures were made a condition of the approval of the project.
4. A mitigation report or monitoring plan was adopted for this project
5. A statement of Overriding Considerations was not adopted for this project.
6. Findings were made pursuant to the provisions of CEQA.
7. The project required discretionary approval from a state agency.

This is to certify that the final Negative Declaration with comments and responses and record of project approval is available to the General Public at the Agricultural Commissioner's Office at
263 Camino del Remedio, Santa Barbara CA 93110,
624 W Foster Rd Ste E, Santa Maria CA 93455

_____ Title: Agricultural Program Specialist Date: _____
Signature (Lead Agency)

## 7. References

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## 8. Report Preparation And Glossary

This Mitigated Negative Declaration and Initial Study for the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project was written by:

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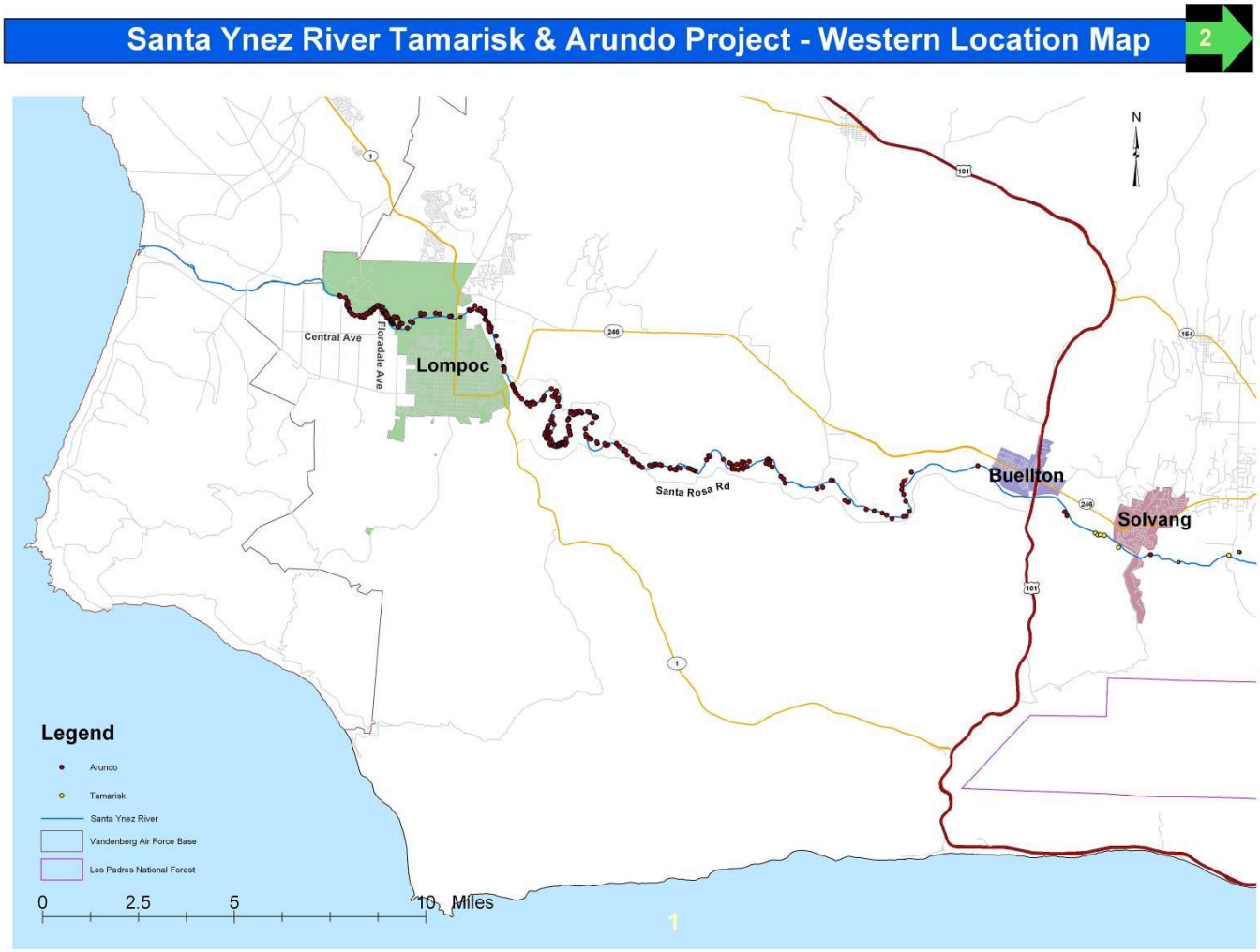
Table 7. Glossary of Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| ACOE | U.S. Army Corps of Engineers |
| AQMP | Air Quality Management Plan |
| APCD | Air Pollution Control District |
| BACM | Best Available Control Measures |
| BAMP | Best Available Management Practices |
| BMP | Best Management Practice |
| Cal-OSHA | California Occupational Safety and Health Administration |
| SBACO | County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office |
| SBCFD | Santa Barbara County Fire Department |
| CCR | California Code of Regulations |
| CEQA | California Environmental Quality Act |
| CESA | California Endangered Species Act |
| CNDDB | California Natural Diversity Database |
| CNPS | California Native Plant Society |
| DFG | California Department of Fish and Game |
| DNL | Day-Night Average Noise Level |
| EPA | U.S. Environmental Protection Agency |
| ESA | Federal Endangered Species Act |
| FAC | California Food and Agricultural Code |
| IS/MND | Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration |
| MMRP | Mitigation, Monitoring, and Reporting Plan |
| MND | Mitigated Negative Declaration |
| LPNF | Los Padres National Forest |
| NOI | Notice of Intent |
| NOx | Nitrogen Oxides |
| NRI | Native Range, Inc. |
| ROW | Right-of-way |
| RWQCB | Regional Water Quality Control Board |
| SHPO | State Office of Historic Preservation |
| USDA | U.S. Department of Agriculture |
| USFWS | U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service |
| VAFB | Vandenberg Air Force Base |
| WEAP | Worker Environmental Awareness Program |

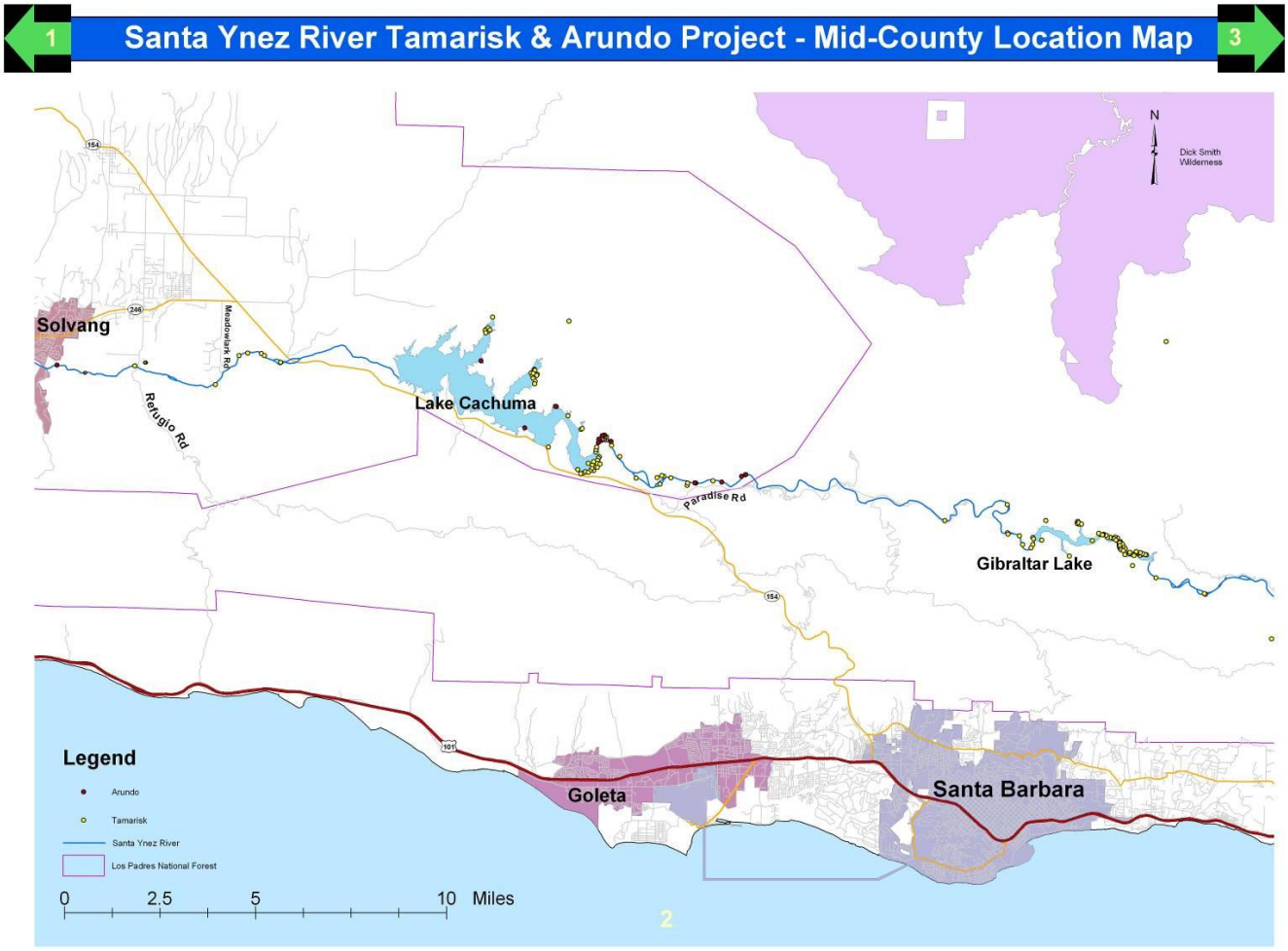
## Appendix A. Project Location Map

### Figure 1
### Project Location Map

## Figure 2a:
## Project Detail Map West End



## Figure 2b:
## Project Detail Map Center



## Figure 2c:
## Project Detail Map East End

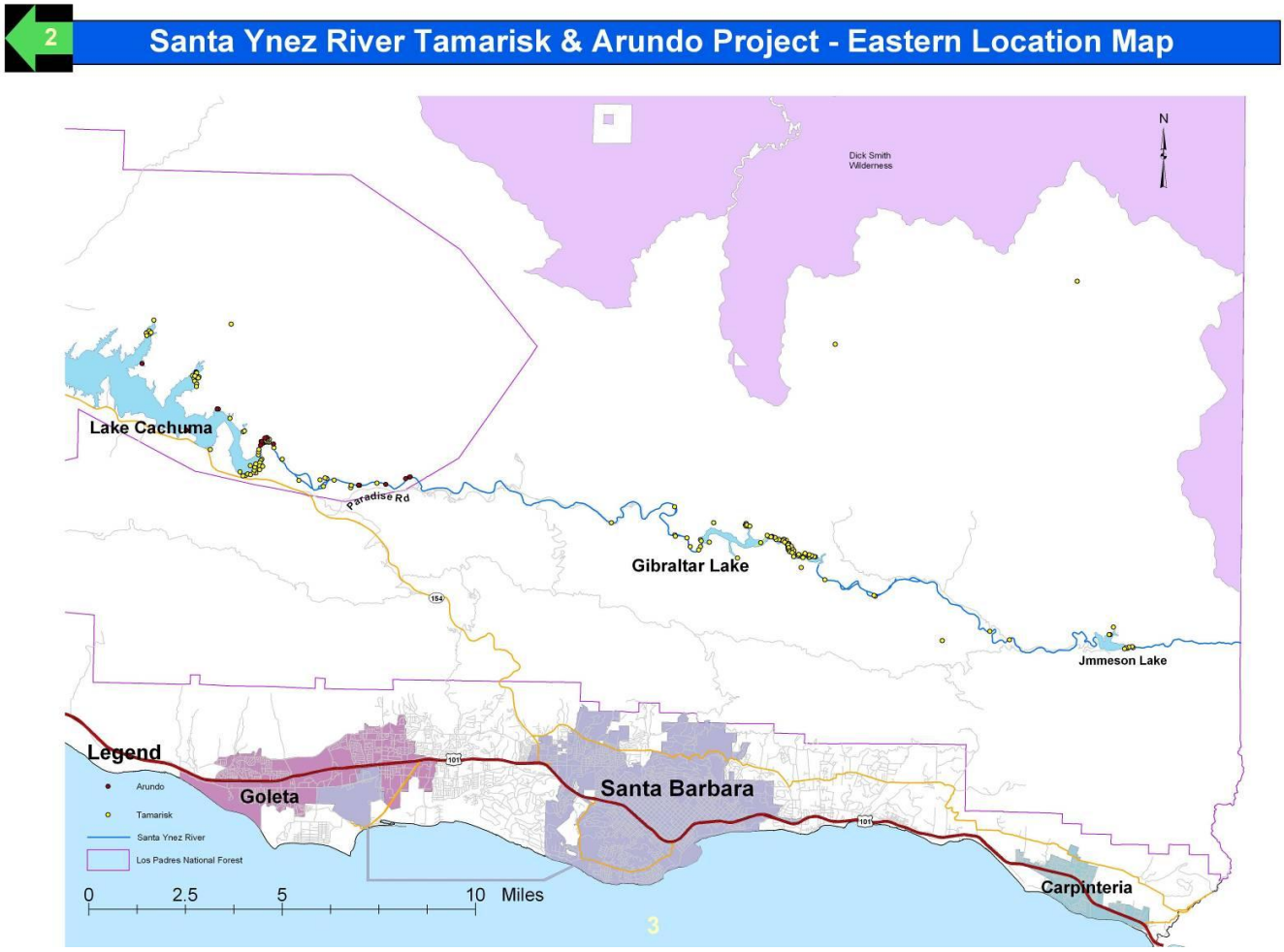


**Figure 3**
Schweizer 333 helicopter (total crew capacity = pilot plus two passengers)

## Appendix B. Assessor Parcels List

Parcels where *Arundo donax* has been detected

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 083-060-009 | 083-170-007 | 099-141-026 |
| 083-060-015 | 083-170-015 | 099-150-008 |
| 083-060-020 | 083-180-027 | 099-150-014 |
| 083-070-010 | 093-040-001 | 099-150-015 |
| 083-070-016 | 093-040-003 | 099-150-016 |
| 083-070-018 | 093-040-004 | 099-150-028 |
| 083-130-017 | 093-040-005 | 099-150-046 |
| 083-130-019 | 093-040-006 | 099-200-038 |
| 083-140-009 | 093-040-007 | 099-200-060 |
| 083-140-012 | 093-040-008 | 099-200-061 |
| 083-140-013 | 093-040-027 | 099-200-069 |
| 083-140-018 | 093-051-002 | 099-200-080 |
| 083-150-010 | 093-051-005 | 099-210-067 |
| 083-150-011 | 095-040-003 | 099-230-011 |
| 083-150-012 | 095-040-004 | 099-230-025 |
| 083-150-013 | 095-040-011 | 099-230-032 |
| 083-160-003 | 097-270-019 | 099-410-013 |
| 083-160-009 | 097-270-029 | 137-270-032 |
| 083-160-014 | 097-270-039 | 137-290-001 |
| 083-160-021 | 097-270-040 | 145-160-073 |
| 083-160-023 | 097-270-055 | 145-170-034 |
| 083-160-028 | 099-141-003 | |
| 083-170-005 | 099-141-006 | |

Parcels where *Tamarix ramosissima* has been detected

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 137-270-013 | 145-170-034 | 151-190-015 |
| 137-270-025 | 151-120-019 | 153-030-004 |
| 137-270-032 | 151-130-003 | 153-030-009 |
| 141-240-026 | 151-160-002 | 153-030-011 |
| 141-290-030 | 151-160-013 | 153-030-012 |
| 141-290-043 | 151-160-014 | 153-030-013 |
| 141-290-058 | 151-160-015 | 153-030-014 |
| 141-280-024 | 151-180-004 | 153-030-016 |
| 145-160-073 | 151-180-007 | 153-030-024 |
| 145-130-034 | 151-180-009 | |
| 145-160-039 | 151-190-005 | |
| 145-160-088 | 151-190-012 | |

## Appendix C. California Natural Diversity Database Map

… is available at
https://www.countyofsb.org/uploadedFiles/agcomm/WMA/CNDDB_09-2010.pdf

## Appendix D. Response to Comments

The County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office (SBACO) received three written comments and one oral inquiry during the public review period (May 22, 2012 through June 21, 2012) for the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project's Draft Mitigated Negative Declaration. This Appendix D presents the responses to the comments.

Table D-1 lists and summarizes the comments and responses. Copies of the comments as received or summarized as in the case of the oral inquiry, are listed in Table D-2.

**Table D-1. Comments and Responses**

| **Comment Received** |
|---|
| **From:** *Freddie Romero, Cultural Preservation Consultant, representing the SYBCI Elders Council, on May 29, 2012 via email* |
| **Comment 1** – This product [herbicide(s) proposed for use] does not distinguish between plant species and can have a negative effect on surrounding plants, resulting in the elimination of them as well.<br><br>**Response** – The project is a targeted treatment of two non-native plant species, *Arundo donax* and *Tamarix ramosissima*, for the conservation of native plant and wildlife habitat. The project will be applying herbicides directly to the target plants. There will not be direct application of herbicides to non-target species.<br><br>As part of a Worker Environmental Awareness Program and the project's best management practices applicators will be directed to apply herbicides only on the target weeds and to only apply in conditions that do not jeopardize human and environmental safety. Non-target avoidance strategies include applying only during appropriate wind and rain conditions, disentangling and separating target plants from native plants and, when needed, minimally pruning and/or covering native plants with tarps.<br><br>The control of the target non-native plants will be beneficial to in-stream and riparian habitat and will facilitate the re-colonization by surrounding plants.. |
| **Comment 2** – According to the Forest Stewardship Council, some of the toxicity endpoints found in Imazapyr, are considered unacceptable and that this product may be prohibited in sustainable forest operations.<br><br>**Response** – All herbicides used in the project will be applied according to regulations found in the California Food and Agriculture Code and California Code of Regulations and directly supervised by certified applicators.<br><br>The unacceptable toxicity endpoints referred to are not indicators of toxicity per se. The referenced endpoints, $K_{OC}$ and half-life, are rather, measures of soil adsorption and environmental persistence. Imazapyr's $LD_{50}$ toxicity is over 5,000 mg/kg which places it in toxicity class III, slightly toxic, and is not a toxicity endpoint of concern according to the referenced document. |

The Forest Stewardship Council is a non-profit, non-governmental organization, based in Germany, that certifies forest contractors for adherence to a set of non-regulatory sustainable forest practices. Any prohibitions on the use of imazapyr apparently are to satisfy certification requirements for sustainable practices by the Forest Stewardship Council. The Los Padres National Forest is not certified by the Forest Stewardship Council. Landowners that may be FSC certified can discuss certification directly with the project.

**Comment 3** – […other factors to consider] Such as the impact from product residuals left behind in the ground. According to the Forest Stewardship Council, this product [imazapyr] has a half-life of 69-125 day, while the EPA puts that half-life at an even longer duration, 17 months. This leaves the concern of runoff, since this program is going to take place in sensitive watersheds.

Should this product [imazapyr] remain in the ground for as long as predicted, the possibilities of it getting into these waterways and moving downstream has a high probability, thus possibly affecting other plants, trees and botanicals that would otherwise be considered beneficial to these streams.

**Response** - All herbicides used in the project will be applied according to regulations found in the California Food and Agriculture Code and California Code of Regulations and directly supervised by certified applicators.

This project will not be applying herbicide to plants standing in water. As an additional safety factor, the project will be using primarily Aquamaster® brand glyphosate herbicide and optionally Habitat® brand imazapyr herbicide. Both of these herbicide brands have been registered for use by the USEPA and the California Department of Pesticide Regulation for application to plants in creeks and wetlands.

Herbicides will be applied to the foliage, trunk, or cut stem surface of the target plants, only. The target plants are expected to absorb the majority of the herbicide. Non-target plants will not be affected.

Applications will not be made during rain events or when rain is forecast.

The goal of this project is to prevent the establishment and expansion of target non-native invasive weeds. These weeds reduce biodiversity and lower native plant and wildlife habitat quality. The control of invasive weeds is beneficial to in-stream and riparian habitat.

**Comment 4** - Other concerns issues with the use of this product, is the possibility of impact to natural resources that are used by indigenous people for medicines, foods, and basketry. Use by traditional peoples can result in the digestion of such chemicals. According to studies, there has been almost no serious affect to humans, but there is always that concern.

**Response** – The project is notifying all landowners in the treatment area that herbicide applications will occur. The project's website, www.syrtap.com, is a specific resource with

| |
|---|
| treatment schedules, updates, and background information.<br><br>Most of the project is occurring on private land. Access by people will be controlled in sites where the public has access, while regulatory re-entry restrictions are in place. |
| **Comment 5** – With exposure to water, could result in the loss of natural riparian areas, which is beneficial to the environment, animals, and humans.<br><br>**Response** – The project's goal is to reduce the detrimental impact of invasive plants on the environment, animals, and humans. |
| **Comment 6** - Have other alternatives have been considered, if so, why were they not used?<br><br>**Response** – Alternative methods to achieve the project's goals were considered. Only those methods that have a lasting benefit, while maintaining environmental quality and human health and safety will be utilized. Alternative weed management techniques, like grazing, mowing, biological control, fire, etc., that reduce weed impacts but do not by themselves eradicate weed populations will not be utilized. Weed control with heavy equipment, while effective, has significant environmental and infrastructure impacts and will not be used. |
| **Comment 7** - When will this be applied? What time of year and when will this be completed?<br><br>**Response** – The Phase I initial treatment of arundo is scheduled to occur on the weekdays (M-F) of October 15, 2012 through November 2, 2012. The contingency schedule extends the project through November 2012, if needed. |
| **Comment 8** – What are the possibilities of humans or animals coming in contact with chemicals after treatment have taken place? Will measure be taken to notify the public that this has taken place, such as warning signs?<br><br>**Response** - Most of the project is occurring on private land. Landowners of infested sites will be provided a Notice of Treatment and a map of the infestation on their property. Access by people will be controlled in sites where the public has access, while regulatory re-entry restrictions are in place. Signs will be placed at points of pedestrian access if the herbicide application is within 25 feet of a public recreation site, while the application is occurring and the restricted entry interval is in effect. There are no restrictions for livestock required by regulation or by the herbicide labeling. |

**Comment 9** - What measures will be taken to protect and prevent this chemical from coming in contact with the creeks and rivers?

**Response** – Direct applications to target plants in water will not be made. In instances where plants are growing on creek banks, and the risk of drift from foliar backpack spraying makes contact with water a possibility, plants will be treated by the cut-stump method. The cut-stump method involves cutting the weeds and applying herbicide directly to the cut-stump surface with a low pressure hand sprayer.

**Comment 10** - Will a surfactant be used with this chemical? Reason for this, is that certain surfactants can result in a negative impact as well.

**Response –** All herbicides, including adjuvants, used in the project will be applied according to regulations found in the California Food and Agriculture Code and California Code of Regulations and directly supervised by certified applicators.

Any surfactants or adjuvants that may be used will be appropriate for use in and around water, as an additional precaution.

| **Comment Received** |
| --- |
| **From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, on in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* |
| **Comment -** [The] letter include[d] state and federal statutes relating to Native American historic properties of religious and cultural significance to America Indian Tribes and interested Native American individuals as 'consulting parties' under both state and federal law.<br><br>[The letter indicates that], the lead agency is required to assess whether the project will have an adverse impact on these resources within the area of potential effect, and if so, to mitigate that effect.<br><br>[The NAHC] strongly urge[s] that [the project] make[s] contact with the list of Native American Contacts on the attached list of Native American contacts, to see if [the] proposed project might impact Native American cultural resources to obtain their recommendations concerning the proposed project.<br><br>**Response** – The project's Initial Study **Section 5.6.5 Cultural and Paleontological Resources** determined that will be no impact to cultural and paleontological resources as a result of the project. The project is avoiding impacts by not implementing the use of hand or mechanical excavation devices. Digging will not be used in the project. Refer to Section 5.6.5 for more information. |

| **Comment Received** |
| --- |
| **From:**. *Sheila Soderberg, representing the San Luis Obispo office of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, in a telephone conversation on June 8, 2012.* |
| **Comment** – Ms. Soderberg inquired about whether the project is obtaining a National Pollution Discharge Elimination System permit.<br><br>**Response** – The project will not be applying for an NPDES permit. The project is not applying herbicides to plants in water, or applying herbicides to water. Thus the requirement for an NPDES permit does not apply. |

| **Comment Received** |
| --- |
| **From:** *Chris Shaeffer, Development Review, representing the California Department of Transportation District 5, in a letter dated June 13, 2012* |
| **Comment 1** – Caltrans recommends that the method and herbicide selection be made, and documented, by a licensed Pest Control Advisor, not an applicator.<br><br>**Response** – The project is using the expertise of the project manager, David Chang, who is a licensed agricultural biologist as well as a certified qualified applicator and is a staff employee of the County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office.<br><br>The California Food and Agriculture Code §12001 exempts county agricultural department officials from obtaining an agricultural pest control adviser license when making written specific agricultural use recommendations on a specific parcel. |
| **Comment 2** – Caltrans recommends that the secondary biomass removal option be the preferred and implemented option.<br><br>**Response** – Removing all biomass is an expense beyond the project's budget, could result in additional impacts and would decrease herbicide efficacy. Foliar and bend and spray foliar treatments have been found by applicators that specialize in arundo control to be much more effective than cut-stump treatments.<br><br>Treated arundo and tamarisk will degrade and drop their leaves, reducing the roughness and flow resistance. Additionally, leaving treated plants intact, will offer some erosion protection while they degrade. The risks of flood and fire are present regardless of whether the plants are alive or dead. |

**Comment 3** – [… is essentially noting a discrepancy, and advises reconciliation of the discrepancy, in the MND for bird protection strategies. The MND states that the project will avoid impact by operating outside of the bird nesting season, but also mitigates impacts with buffers that will be implemented or by stopping work if bird nests are found around or in project sites. The concern is that the mitigation suggests that the project will occur during nesting season.]

**Response** – The project's current schedule is to operate on weekdays between October 15, 2012 through November 2, 2012. A contingency schedule continues the project's operation through November 2012. The schedule places the project's operation outside of the recognized nesting season of species of concern and storm season.

The project is permitted by a 1600 Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement issued by the California Department of Fish and Game. The LSAA permit itself conditions that the project shall operate outside of the nesting season of species of concern, and requires monitoring and buffers for active nests that may be discovered during the project.

**Comment 4** – Does the project proponent anticipate any consultation with USFWS, NMFS, and DFG.

**Response** – The project is operating under a California Department of Fish & Game issued 1600 Lake or Streambed Alteration Agreement.

The project is funded by the CDFG's Fisheries Restoration Grant Program, by CDFG mitigation funds, by the USFWS' Coastal Impact Assistance Program and by the County of Santa Barbara's Proposition 50 funded, State Water Resources Control Board administered, Integrated Regional Water Management Program.

**Comment 5** – [Caltrans notes that a Caltrans encroachment permit may be required when the project is operating within Caltrans' right-of-way, including anticipated work on or along a State highway or around and under associated bridges. The permit would require stipulation to issues 1 and 2.]

**Response** – The project will apply for encroachment permits as applicable.

**Comment 6** – [Caltrans notes that California Red-Legged Frog Environmentally Sensitive Areas exist in the vicinity of the project. Caltrans notes that all glyphosate and triclopyr applications must be by backpack and strictly targeting invasive species when working in CRLF critical habitat areas.]

**Response** – All herbicide applications will be made by handheld equipment and only to targeted noxious, invasive weeds, as required by the United States District Court's, Northern District of California, Stipulated Injunction and Order Case No. C-02-1580-JSW for the protection of California Red-Legged Frogs.

Table D-2 – Copies of submitted comments

**From:** *Freddie Romero, Cultural Preservation Consultant, representing the SYBCI Elders Council, on May 29, 2012 via email*

From: Freddie Romero <freddyromero1959@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, May 29, 2012 4:38 PM
To: Chang, David
Subject: Tamarisk & arundo project

Mr. Chang,

I'm recieved a copy of the DMND today from a meeting that looks like it took place on the 22 of May.

I was wondering where the county ag commission is at with this project? I recently had the opportunity to comment on a simular project that the USFS is doing and would like to include some of our Elders Council's concerns for your review.

Some of the Elders concerns are as follows;

This product does not distinguish between plant species and can have a negative effect on surrounding plants, resulting in the elimination of them as well.

According to the Forest Stewardship Council, some of the toxicity endpoints found in Imazapyr, are considered unacceptable and that this product may be prohibited in sustainable forest operations.

(Note: While this may not be considered a sustainable forest operation, there are other factors to consider. Such as the impact from product residuals left behind in the ground. According to the Forest Stewardship Council, this product has a ½ life of 69-125 days, while the EPA puts that ½ life at an even longer duration, 17mnths. This leaves the concern of runoff, since this program is going to take place in sensitive watersheds.)

Should this product remain in the ground for as long as predicted, the possibilities of it getting into these waterways and moving downstream has a high probability, thus possibly affecting other plants, trees and botanicals that would otherwise be considered beneficial to these streams.

Other concerns issues with the use of this product, is the possibility of impact to natural resources that are used by indigenous people for medicines, foods, and basketry. Use by traditional peoples can result in the digestion of such chemicals. According to studies, there has been almost no serious affect to humans, but there is always that concern.

With exposure to water, could result in the loss of natural riparian areas, which is

beneficial to the environment, animals, and humans.

Have other alternatives have been considered, if so, why were they not used?

When will this be applied? What time of year and when will this be completed?

What are the possibilities of humans or animals coming in contact with chemicals after treatment have taken place? Will measure be taken to notify the public that this has taken place, such as warning signs?

What measures will be taken to protect and prevent this chemical from coming in contact with the creeks and rivers?

Will a surfactant be used with this chemical? Reason for this, is that certain surfactants can result in a negative impact as well.

If you could get back to me, it would be most appreciated.

Freddie Romero
Cultural Preservation Consultant
SYBCI Elders Council
805-688-7997 X37

| **From:**. *Sheila Soderberg, representing the San Luis Obispo office of the Regional Water Quality Control Board, in a telephone conversation on June 8, 2012.* |
| --- |
| An oral inquiry was received from Ms. Soderberg (805-549-3592). The comment regarded the applicability of National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System regulations to the project. |

**From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* (pg 1 of 6)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA — Edmund G. Brown, Jr., Governor

**NATIVE AMERICAN HERITAGE COMMISSION**
915 CAPITOL MALL, ROOM 364
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814
(916) 653-6251
Fax (916) 657-5390
Web Site www.nahc.ca.gov
ds_nahc@pacbell.net

June 5, 2012

Mr. David Chang
**County of Santa Barbara Agricultural Commissioner's Office**
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

Re: SCH#2012051076; CEQA Notice of Completion; proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the **"Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project;"** located on 37-acres on the Santa Ynez River; Santa Barbara County, California.

Dear Mr. Chang:

The Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC), the State of California 'Trustee Agency' for the protection and preservation of Native American cultural resources pursuant to California Public Resources Code §21070 and affirmed by the Third Appellate Court in the case of EPIC v. Johnson (1985: 170 Cal App. 3rd 604).

This letter includes state and federal statutes relating to Native American historic properties of religious and cultural significance to American Indian tribes and interested Native American individuals as 'consulting parties' under both state and federal law. State law also addresses the freedom of Native American Religious Expression in Public Resources Code §5097.9.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA – CA Public Resources Code 21000-21177, amendments effective 3/18/2010) requires that any project that causes a substantial adverse change in the significance of an historical resource, that includes archaeological resources, is a 'significant effect' requiring the preparation of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) per the CEQA Guidelines defines a significant impact on the environment as 'a substantial, or potentially substantial, adverse change in any of physical conditions within an area affected by the proposed project, including ...objects of historic or aesthetic significance." In order to comply with this provision, the lead agency is required to assess whether the project will have an adverse impact on these resources within the 'area of potential effect (APE), and if so, to mitigate that effect. The NAHC did not conduct a Sacred Lands File (SLF) search within the 'area of potential effect (APE} due to the absence of the USGS Coordinates.

The NAHC "Sacred Sites,' as defined by the Native American Heritage Commission and the California Legislature in California Public Resources Code §§5097.94(a) and 5097.96. Items in the NAHC Sacred Lands Inventory are confidential and exempt from the Public Records Act pursuant to California Government Code §6254 (r ).

Early consultation with Native American tribes in your area is the best way to avoid unanticipated discoveries of cultural resources or burial sites once a project is underway. Culturally affiliated tribes and individuals may have knowledge of the religious and cultural significance of the historic properties in the project area (e.g. APE). We strongly urge that you make contact with the list of Native American Contacts on the attached list of Native American

**From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* (pg 2 of 6)

contacts, to see if your proposed project might impact Native American cultural resources and to obtain their recommendations concerning the proposed project. Pursuant to CA Public Resources Code § 5097.95, the NAHC requests cooperation from other public agencies in order that the Native American consulting parties be provided pertinent project information. Consultation with Native American communities is also a matter of environmental justice as defined by California Government Code §65040.12(e). Pursuant to CA Public Resources Code §5097.95, the NAHC requests that pertinent project information be provided consulting tribal parties. The NAHC recommends *avoidance* as defined by CEQA Guidelines §15370(a) to pursuing a project that would damage or destroy Native American cultural resources and Section 2183.2 that requires documentation, data recovery of cultural resources.

Furthermore, the NAHC if the proposed project is under the jurisdiction of the statutes and regulations of the National Environmental Policy Act (e.g. NEPA; 42 U.S.C. 4321-43351). Consultation with tribes and interested Native American consulting parties, on the NAHC list, should be conducted in compliance with the requirements of federal NEPA and Section 106 and 4(f) of federal NHPA (16 U.S.C. 470 *et seq*), 36 CFR Part 800.3 (f) (2) & .5, the President's Council on Environmental Quality (CSQ, 42 U.S.C 4371 *et seq.* and NAGPRA (25 U.S.C. 3001-3013) as appropriate. The 1992 *Secretary of the Interiors Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties* were revised so that they could be applied to all historic resource types included in the National Register of Historic Places and including cultural landscapes. Also, federal Executive Orders Nos. 11593 (preservation of cultural environment), 13175 (coordination & consultation) and 13007 (Sacred Sites) are helpful, supportive guides for Section 106 consultation. The aforementioned Secretary of the Interior's *Standards* include recommendations for all 'lead agencies' to consider the historic context of proposed projects and to "research" the cultural landscape that might include the 'area of potential effect.'

Confidentiality of "historic properties of religious and cultural significance" should also be considered as protected by California Government Code §6254( r) and may also be protected under Section 304 of he NHPA or at the Secretary of the Interior discretion if not eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Secretary may also be advised by the federal Indian Religious Freedom Act (cf. 42 U.S.C., 1996) in issuing a decision on whether or not to disclose items of religious and/or cultural significance identified in or near the APEs and possibility threatened by proposed project activity.

Furthermore, Public Resources Code Section 5097.98, California Government Code §27491 and Health & Safety Code Section 7050.5 provide for provisions for inadvertent discovery of human remains mandate the processes to be followed in the event of a discovery of human remains in a project location other than a 'dedicated cemetery'.

To be effective, consultation on specific projects must be the result of an ongoing relationship between Native American tribes and lead agencies, project proponents and their contractors, in the opinion of the NAHC. Regarding tribal consultation, a relationship built around regular meetings and informal involvement with local tribes will lead to more qualitative consultation tribal input on specific projects.

Finally, when Native American cultural sites and/or Native American burial sites are prevalent within the project site, the NAHC recommends 'avoidance' of the site as referenced by CEQA Guidelines Section 15370(a).

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**From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* (pg 3 of 6)

If you have any questions about this response to your request, please do not hesitate to contact me at (916) 653-6251.

Sincerely,

Dave Singleton
Program Analyst

Cc: State Clearinghouse

Attachment: Native American Contact List

3

**From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* (pg 4 of 6)

**Native American Contacts**
Santa Barbara County
June 5, 2012

Ernestine DeSoto
1311 Salinas Place # 5
Santa Barbara CA 93101
805-636-3963
Chumash

Patrick Tumamait
992 El Camino Corto
Ojai , CA 93023
(805) 640-0481
(805) 216-1253 Cell
Chumash

Beverly Salazar Folkes
1931 Shadybrook Drive
Thousand Oaks, CA 91362
folkes@msn.com
805 492-7255
(805) 558-1154 - cell
Chumash
Tataviam
Ferrnandeño

San Luis Obispo County Chumash Council
Chief Mark Steven Vigil
1030 Ritchie Road
Grover Beach CA 93433
(805) 481-2461
(805) 474-4729 - Fax
Chumash

Santa Ynez Band of Mission Indians
Vincent Armenta, Chairperson
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Santa Ynez , CA 93460
varmenta@santaynezchumash.
(805) 688-7997
(805) 686-9578 Fax
Chumash

John Ruiz
1826 Stanwood Drive
Santa Barbara CA 93103
(805) 965-8983
Chumash

Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians
Julie Lynn Tumamait-Stennslie, Chairwoman
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(805) 646-6214
Chumash

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Thousand Oaks, CA 91320
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(805) 375-7229
Chumash

**This list is current only as of the date of this document.**

**Distribution of this list does not relieve any person of the statutory responsibility as defined in Section 7050.5 of the Health and Safety Code, Section 5097.94 of the Public Resources Code and Section 5097.98 of the Public Resources Code.**

**This list is applicable for contacting local Native Americans with regard to cultural resources for the proposed SCH#2012051076; CEQA Notice of Completion; proposed Mitigated Negative Declaration for the Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project; located in the Santa Ynez River Watershed; Santa Barbara County, California.**

**From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* (pg 5 of 6)

**Native American Contacts**
Santa Barbara County
June 5, 2012

Stephen William Miller
189 Cartagena
Camarillo , CA 93010
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Chumash

Charles S. Parra
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Oxnard , CA 93031
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(805) 488-0481 (Home)
Chumash

Santa Ynez Tribal Elders Council
Adelina Alva-Padilla, Chair Woman
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Chumash

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Chumash
Fernandeño
Tataviam
Shoshone Paiute
Yaqui

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805-649-2743 (Home)
Chumash

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805-964-3447
Chumash

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Chumash

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**From:** *Dave Singleton, Program Analyst, representing the Native American Heritage Commission, in a letter dated June 5, 2012.* (pg 6 of 6)

**Native American Contacts**
Santa Barbara County
June 5, 2012

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Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians
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Santa Ynez Tribal Elders Council
Freddie Romero, Cultural Preservation Conslnt
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805-688-7997, Ext 37

Aylisha Diane Marie Garcia Napoleone
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Barbareno/Ventureno Band of Mission Indians
Kathleen Pappo
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Rancho Pales Verdes CA 90275
310-831-5295

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**From:** *Chris Shaeffer, Development Review, representing the California Department of Transportation District 5, in a letter dated June 13, 2012* (Page 1 of 2)

STATE OF CALIFORNIA—BUSINESS, TRANSPORTATION AND HOUSING AGENCY EDMUND G. BROWN Jr., Governor

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION**
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June 13, 2012

David Chang
Santa Barbara County Agricultural Commissioner's Office
263 Camino del Remedio
Santa Barbara, CA 93110

SB-var-var
SCH 2012051076

Subject: Santa Ynez River Tamarisk and Arundo Project Mitigated Negative Declaration

Dear Mr. Chang:

Thank you for the opportunity to review and comment upon the subject project. The project limits include many locations which fall within Caltrans' rights-of-way, typically in and around bridge areas and associated ground space. Caltrans is supportive of efforts to eradicate or remove invasive species, particularly those which can and do provide watercourse obstruction. Caltrans provides the following comments/observations:

**1. Page 7, first sentence**: "Method and herbicide selection will be determined by the qualified applicator…" Caltrans recommends that the method and herbicide selection be made, and documented, by a licensed Pest Control Advisor (PCA), not an applicator.

**2. Page 13, paragraph 3.2.4** states: "Tamarisk and arundo biomass, limbs, canes and leaves would primarily be left in place to naturally biodegrade; secondarily biomass would be moved outside of the river floodway outside of the high-water-mark within the originating parcel". One of the purposes for this project is avoidance of watercourse obstruction and avoidance of potential bridge damage. Moving the material outside of the floodway and high water mark appears to be the best method to accomplish that purpose. Caltrans recommends that the secondary biomass removal option be the preferred and implemented option.

**3. Pages 54, 55:** Least Bell's Vireo, riparian birds, and raptors – nesting / breeding. The discussion concerning Least Bell's Vireo states that no work will occur prior to September 15, which is the end of the breeding season. Therefore, impacts are avoided. However, the discussion concerning riparian birds and raptors suggests that work could occur during nesting season, therefore buffers may be required. Dates are not provided. These two paragraphs should be reconciled. If buffers are established because nesting activities are continuing when work begins, the project may be required to consult with US Fish & Wildlife Service and Department of Fish & Game for Least Bell's Vireo.

Does the project proponent anticipate any consultation with USFWS (California red-legged frogs and Least Bell's vireo), NMFS (steelhead), and DFG (Least Bell's vireo)? That would inform paragraph 5.4.

**From:** *Chris Shaeffer, Development Review, representing the California Department of Transportation District 5, in a letter dated June 13, 2012* (Page 2 of 2)



**4. Caltrans Encroachment Permit requirement.** Consistent with other instances in which chemical application is made within Caltrans' right-of-way, the following submittals will be required:

a. A Caltrans encroachment permit for anticipated work on or along a State highway or around and under associated bridges.
b. Labels for the products used within the right-of-way.
c. A chemical spill handling plan.
d. A plan showing the limits of the herbicide treatment
e. MSDS for the products which will be used.
f. Contact information for project managers, contractors, and the on-site supervisor.

In addition, the permit would stipulate the recommendations in items 1 and 2 above, and require clarity to item 3.

**5. California Red-Legged Frog habitat.** There are California Red-Legged Frog ESA areas along Caltrans' highways in the general vicinity of the Santa Ynez River project area. We can provide you with the locations that we are aware of. All Glyphosate and Triclopyr application must be by backpack and strictly targeting invasive species when working in CRLF critical habitat areas.

This is a beneficial project and Caltrans supports it. If you have questions concerning this correspondence, please contact me at (805) 549-3632. For questions specifically concerning encroachment permits, contact the District Permit Engineer Steve Senet at (805) 549-3206. Kris Griffin is the District Landscape Specialist. She is the principal adviser for all work of this nature within Caltrans right-of-way. She can be contacted at (805) 549-3124.

Sincerely,

Chris Shaeffer
Development Review
Caltrans District 5

Cc: L. Newland
K. Griffin
N. Siepel
S. Senet