



## **5.6 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

This section describes the regulatory setting and existing biological resource conditions in Cambria, analyzes potential project-related impacts to these resources (including sensitive species), and recommends mitigation measures to avoid or lessen the significance of impacts that are identified. This section describes the biological character of Cambria in terms of vegetation, flora, wildlife, and wildlife habitats and analyzes the biological significance of the Project area in view of Federal, State and County laws and policies.

### **EXISTING CONDITIONS**

Existing conditions regarding biological resources were identified through the review and compilation of existing information included in the following documents:

- ◆ *Cambria Forest Management Plan*, April 2002;
- ◆ *Cambria and San Simeon Acres Community Plans of the North Coast Area Plan Draft EIR*, May 18, 2005;
- ◆ *Cambria and San Simeon Acres Community Plans of the North Coast Area Plan Final EIR*, October 6, 2005;
- ◆ *North Coast Area Plan Cambria and San Simeon Acres Portions Updated* (November 6, 2007); and
- ◆ *Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance*.

### **REGULATORY SETTING**

Federal, State, and local policies related to biological resources in Cambria are discussed below.

#### **Clean Water Act of 1977**

Regulatory protection for water resources throughout the United States is under the jurisdiction of the Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE). Section 404 of the Clean Water Act prohibits the discharge of dredged or fill material into waters of the United States without formal consent from the AOE. Delineation of wetlands and other waters of the United States is required to determine acreage affected by dredge spoil or fill disposal. Impacts to biological resources are assessed as part of the permit process by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). Policies relating to the loss of wetlands generally stress the need to compensate for wetland acreage losses by creating wetlands from non-wetland habitat on at least an acre-for-acre basis.

#### **Section 7 or Section 10 of the United States Endangered Species Act**

The United States Endangered Species Act provides legislation to protect Federally-listed plant and animal species. It provides legal protection, requires definition of critical habitat, and development of recovery plans for plant and animal species in danger of extinction. Threats to critical habitat areas can be addressed by acquisition, development reviews or establishment of



mitigation and enhancement measures. Impacts to listed species resulting from the implementation of a project would require the responsible agency to consult the USFWS. Formal consultations must take place with the USFWS pursuant to Section 10 of the Endangered Species Act, with the USFWS then making a determination as to the extent of impact to a particular species. If the USFWS determines that impacts to a species would likely occur, alternatives and measures to avoid or reduce impacts must be identified.

### **CRITICAL HABITAT FOR THE TIDEWATER GOBY**

As indicated in Federal Register Volume 71, No. 228 (November 28, 2006), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), proposes to revise currently designated critical habitat for the tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) under the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended. The USFWS originally designated critical habitat for the tidewater goby on November 20, 2000. Currently, the USFWS proposes to revise the critical habitat for the tidewater goby to a total of approximately 10,003 acres. This is an increase of approximately 8,422 acres (AC) from the currently designated critical habitat. In the previous rule, critical habitat was only designated in Orange and San Diego Counties. The proposed revised critical habitat is located in Del Norte, Humboldt, Mendocino, Sonoma, Marin, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Monterey, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Ventura, and Los Angeles Counties, California.

The USFWS is proposing 44 units, distributed along a large portion of the coast of California, as critical habitat for the tidewater goby. Table 2 of Federal Register Volume 71, No. 228, *Critical Habitat Units Proposed For the Tidewater Goby and Known Threats Requiring Special Management Per Unit*, provides the approximate area, by unit and landownership, proposed for revised designation of critical habitat for the tidewater goby. As indicated in Table 2, there are seven revised critical habitat units proposed within San Luis Obispo County: SLO-1 through SLO-7. Of these seven units, only SLO-4 (San Simeon Creek) is within the Project study area. SLO-4 is described as follows:

*SLO-4, San Simeon Creek (16 ac (7 ha)). This unit is located approximately 3.3 miles (5.3 kilometers) northwest of the town of Cambria. On an intermittent basis, SLO-4 possesses a sandbar across the mouth of the lagoon or estuary during the late spring, summer and fall that closes or partially closes the lagoon or estuary and thereby provides relatively stable conditions (PCE 4) [primary constituent elements]. PCEs 1, 2 and 3<sup>1</sup> occur throughout the unit, although their precise location during any particular time period may change in response to seasonal fluctuations in precipitation and tidal inundation. This unit consists entirely of State lands that are part of San Simeon State Park. SLO-4 was occupied at the time of listing and is currently occupied. SLO-4 is located 3.8 miles (6.1 kilometers) south of Little Pico Creek (SLO-3). The unit is separated from the nearest extant population to the south, in Santa Rosa Creek (not proposed), by 2.6 miles (4.2 kilometers). SLO-4 was occupied at the time of listing, is currently occupied, and is likely a source population for this region. This unit will reduce the chance of losing the tidewater goby along this portion of the coast and help facilitate*

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<sup>1</sup> It has been determined that the PCEs for the tidewater goby are: (1) Persistent, shallow, still-to-slow-moving, aquatic habitat most commonly ranging in salinity from less than 0.5 ppt to about 10–12 ppt, which provides adequate space for normal behavior and individual and population growth; (2) Substrates (e.g., sand, silt, mud) suitable for the construction of burrows for reproduction; (3) Submerged and emergent aquatic vegetation, such as *Potamogeton pectinatus* and *Ruppia maritima*, that provides protection from predators; and (4) Presence of a sandbar(s) across the mouth of a lagoon or estuary during the late spring, summer, and fall that closes or partially closes the lagoon or estuary, thereby providing relatively stable water levels and salinity.



colonization of currently unoccupied locations. Known threats in this unit that may require special management considerations or protection of the PCEs are described in Table 2.

### **State of California Endangered Species Act**

The State of California Endangered Species Act mandates that in instances where impacts to a State-listed endangered species would occur, the lead or responsible agency must contact the California Department of Fish and Game and enter into formal consultation. Impacts to the State-listed species would be evaluated and identification of mitigation measures would likely be required.

### **California Department of Fish and Game Code Chapter 6**

This code governs State-designated wetlands, including riparian and stream habitat, and mandates that mitigation be implemented to replace wetland extent and value lost to development. A Section 1603 (Fish and Game Code) Agreement is required for any alteration to a stream or lake, as well as to their associated riparian habitats, for purposes of development in California.

### **State Regional Water Quality Control Board – Basin Plan**

The Regional Water Quality Control Board Basin Plan provides management guidelines for maintaining water quality and associated beneficial uses of streams and rivers within the central coast region of California. General water quality objectives are set forth to facilitate the maintenance of optimum habitat for various aquatic species.

### **County of San Luis Obispo – Land Use Element and Local Coastal Plan**

The Land Use Element of the *San Luis Obispo County General Plan* and the Coastal Plan Policies provide North Coast Area standards and policies for the Cambria area. The Coastal Plan Policies document contains over 40 policies to limit the impacts of development to Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHAs). The *General Plan* mandates standards for development and identification of measures to avoid or minimize potential impacts to associated biological resources.

### **North Coast Area Plan (NCAP)**

#### **COMBINING DESIGNATION OVERLAYS**

Combining Designations (CD) are special overlay land use categories applied in areas of the County with potentially hazardous conditions or significant natural resources. In these areas, more detailed project review is needed to avoid or minimize adverse environmental impacts, or effects of hazardous conditions on proposed projects. The following CDs relative to biological resources have been applied in Cambria:

- CD-2 Arroyo de la Cruz, San Carpoforo, Pico, San Simeon, Santa Rosa, Perry, and Arroyo Del Padre Juan Creeks (FH). These are identified areas of potential flood hazards; development and fill in the creeks should be avoided. Maintenance of



the creek habitats is essential to protect many coastal resources. These creeks support a number of declining species, such as the Tidewater Goby, Striped Garter Snake, Western Pond Turtle, Red-legged Frog, and Steelhead Trout.

- CD-3 North Coast Shoreline (SRA). The entire shoreline is a valuable scenic and natural resource which must be protected from excessive and unsightly development. Most of the coastline consists of low marine terraces with accessible beaches and coves, interspersed with rocky shorelines and steep bluffs. Offshore are rocks, reefs, and kelp beds. The Monterey Bay Marine Sanctuary provides protection for the rich offshore marine habitat, and extends from 35 degrees 33 minutes North latitude (a point on the West Ranch in Cambria, approximately 1600 feet south of SeaClift Estates) northward through Monterey County. The rugged Sierra Nevada, San Simeon and Piedra Blancas points are of significant visual and environmental importance. The entire North Coast also sustains important marine habitats, and provides for a variety of passive recreation uses. North of San Carpoforo Creek, steep-sloped mountains rise abruptly from the ocean, limiting public use to the scenic views from Highway One.
- CD-4 Monterey Pine Forests (SRA)(TH). While widely grown in the Southern Hemisphere as a commercial timber, Monterey pine forest occurs in only three areas of its native California. The southernmost stand in California is the 2,500 acres surrounding Cambria, with another isolated 500 acres at Pico Creek. These stands are extremely important as a “gene pool,” due to genetic variations found there that protect some trees from pine pitch canker, a disease that is causing rapid loss of Monterey pine trees. Relatively undisturbed stands occur on the Cambria fringe area and in isolated pockets to the north. Monterey pine forests cover most of the Cambria Urban Area. The larger remaining stands in undeveloped areas should be retained intact as much as possible, by designing cluster development at very low densities in open areas or areas of sparse tree cover. Preservation of finer specimen stands is recommended through the use of open space easements, avoidance by development, and direct purchase. The introduction of hybrid species of pines is discouraged in the forest.
- CD-5 North Coast Creeks (SRA)(ESHA). Portions of Santa Rosa, San Simeon, Pico, and Little Pico, Arroyo de la Cruz, Arroyo del Padre Juan, and San Carpoforo Creeks are anadromous fish streams which should be protected from impediments to steelhead migration and spawning. Adjacent riparian and wetland areas provide important wildlife habitat. Ground water and surface waters are linked, and maintenance of the creek habitats is essential to protect many coastal resources. These creeks support a number of declining species, such as the Tidewater Goby, Striped Garter Snake, Western Pond Turtle, Red-legged Frog, and Steelhead Trout.
- CD-10 San Simeon Creek Lagoon (SRA). This estuary is located within San Simeon State Beach, and is composed of several biotic communities including salt and freshwater marshes, grasslands, Monterey pine forest, as well as estuarine habitat. The creek supports steelhead trout and other fish species. The area is a major waterfowl feeding and nesting site. Close to 190 bird species have been reported at the lagoon and in adjacent areas.



- CD-11 San Simeon Point (SRA). This picturesque setting includes Monterey pines, cypress trees, tilted rock formations, and excellent views of the bay and ocean shoreline. While not biologically unique, the combined sensitivity of vegetation and viewshed make an SRA designation appropriate. Nonetheless, proposed development could be sited so as not to damage either the vegetation or viewshed through appropriate mitigation measures.

## PLANNING AREA STANDARDS

The NCAP contains special “standards” for the North Coast Planning Area that are mandatory requirements for development, designed to handle identified problems in a particular rural area, or to respond to concerns in an individual community. The criteria for application of the Planning Area standards are discussed in detail in Section 5.1 (Land Use and Planning). The NCAP standards are presented below according to the location in the planning area where they apply (i.e., Cambria Urban or Rural). The NCAP standards<sup>2</sup> regarding biological resources that are relevant to the proposed Project are:

### Cambria Urban Area

#### *Combining Designations (CD):*

- CD-1 Monterey Pine Forest Habitat (SRA) (TH) - Purpose. The purpose of these standards is to minimize tree removal and avoid impacts to the sensitive Monterey pine forest habitat. Applications for development within this SRA may require the preparation of a biological report, depending on the result of a mandatory site review. In the event that the site review indicates that the site may contain environmentally sensitive habitat areas as defined in Coastal Act Section 30107.5, a biological report that includes information identified in Section 23.07.170 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, as well as any additional information needed to address the development standards below, shall be required. The determination of the need for a biology report shall consider factors including but not limited to the size and connectivity of the forest area, potential presence of special status plant or animal species, and the health and condition of the forest area.
- CD-3 Santa Rosa Creek (FH). The following standards affect all land use categories in and adjacent to Santa Rosa Creek, as shown on Figure 7-4.
- A. Biological Viability. Proposed development, including grading, and water well extractions, shall maintain the ecological viability of Santa Rosa Creek (as determined by the County in consultation with the appropriate State or federal agency), including the riparian corridor, stream channel, wetlands, and accompanying marine habitat.
  - B. Channelization or Filling in Floodways. Channelization or fill in the undeveloped floodway (active channel) and floodway fringe (flood plain) of Santa Rosa Creek shall be prohibited unless such development is consistent

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<sup>2</sup> It is noted that the sub-sections of the NCAP Standards that are not relevant to this issue area have been presented in summary form; refer to the 2007 NCAP for the text in its entirety.



with Coastal Act Section 30236 and other applicable provisions of the LCP (see Figure 7-4).

C. Creek Setbacks and Habitat Protection. All new development shall be set back a minimum of 100 feet from the upland edge of riparian vegetation. Setbacks of less than 100 feet are allowed in accordance with Section 23.07.174d.2 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance. Recreational trails shall be sited outside of areas with riparian vegetation.

D. Public Access. All new development....

*Community Wide (CW):*

CW-1 Marine Habitat Protection - Projects with Point-Source Discharges. The richness, sensitivity, and unspoiled character of the marine in the Cambria demand particularly rigorous measures to protect, maintain, enhance, and restore these special resources. Accordingly, no surface point-source discharges into the marine environment are allowed, except as follows:

Exceptions:

A. Cambria Community Services District. Discharges by the Cambria Community Services District (CCSD) that have been properly permitted, when permits are required, by the County, the California Coastal Commission (CCC), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), State Lands Commission (SLC), Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). Any discharge of brine<sup>3</sup> from desalination facilities directly into the marine environment shall be prohibited unless the following criteria have been satisfied:

1. The brine<sup>4</sup> discharge receives all legally required approvals from the agencies listed above.
2. The discharge point is located south of San Simeon Point, and where it will not adversely impact any kelp bed or intertidal habitat.
3. The discharge point is designed to maximize rapid mixing of the brine<sup>5</sup> with ambient seawater in order to minimize hypersaline concentrations.
4. Other locations or types of discharges (e.g., subsurface discharges, co-locating new discharges with existing discharges) are infeasible or more environmentally damaging.
5. The discharge sustains the biological productivity of coastal waters and maintains healthy populations of all species of marine organisms.

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<sup>3</sup> Although, "brine" is referenced in the NCAP, this term can be associated with oil industry operations. To distinguish the future desalination facility from such association, the document uses "seawater concentrate return."

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.



6. The adverse effects of discharges are minimized and mitigated.
- E. Water Quality Enhancement. Discharges to streams, for the purpose of hydrologic replenishment and/or stream water quality enhancement, that are consistent with LCP requirements, and provided that:
1. Discharge is consistent with NMFS, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS), EPA, RWQCB, and CDFG Regulations.
  2. The discharged waters will be of appropriate temperature and quality so as not to disrupt the steelhead runs, nor the in-stream habitat for any other sensitive species including, but not limited to, the red-legged frog and tidewater goby nor will impact adjacent agriculture.

CW-4 Limitation on Development.

- A. Water Service in Cambria. Until such time as may be otherwise authorized through a coastal development permit approving a major public works project involving new potable water sources for Cambria, new development not using CCSD connections or water service commitments existing as of November 15, 2001 (including those recognized as "pipeline projects" by the CCC on December 12, 2002 in Coastal Development Permits A-3-SLO-02-050 and A-3-SLO-02-073), shall assure no adverse impacts to Santa Rosa and San Simeon Creeks;
- B. Water Conservation Requirements. Unless.....
- C. Supplemental Water Supply Standards. Any major public works water supply project to support new development within the CCSD service area shall be subject to the following approval standards and findings:
1. Maximum Capacity. The.....
  2. Creek Withdrawals. The project shall assure that CCSD water withdrawals from Santa Rosa and San Simeon Creeks will be sufficiently limited to protect: (1) adequate instream flows necessary to support sensitive species and other riparian/wetland habitats within the reach of the streams affected by CCSD pumping; (2) underlying groundwater aquifers; and (3) agricultural resources.
  3. Priority Uses. The.....
- D. Desalination Standards. Desalination facilities must:
1. Be public;
  2. Avoid or fully mitigate any adverse environmental impacts to coastal resources;



3. Be consistent with all LCP and Coastal Act policies, including those for concentrating development, supporting priority coastal uses, and protecting significant scenic and habitat resources;
4. Be designed and sized based upon.....
5. Use, where feasible, sub-surface feedwater intakes (e.g., beach wells) instead of open pipelines from the ocean, where they will not cause significant adverse impacts to either beach topography or potable groundwater supplies;
6. Use technologies and processes that eliminate or minimize the discharges of hazardous constituents into the ocean and ensure that the least environmentally damaging options for feedwater treatment and cleaning of plant components are selected. Opportunities for combining brine discharges with other discharges (e.g., from a sewage treatment facility or power plant) should be considered and the least environmentally damaging alternative pursued. Applicants should provide information necessary to determine the potential impacts to marine resources from the proposed intake and discharge. Obtaining this information may require new or updated engineering, modeling and biological studies, or in some cases may be obtained from pre-operational monitoring, monitoring results from other desalination facilities, and pilot studies conducted before building a full-scale facility; .....
7. Be designed and limited to assure that.....

CW-10 Site Review. Based on the results of a site review, all projects determined to have the potential to adversely impact a sensitive resource shall require a biologic assessment report prepared in accordance with Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.07.170.

CW-12 Landscaping. All areas of the site disturbed by project construction shall be revegetated with native, drought and fire resistant species that are compatible with the habitat values of the surrounding forest.

- A. All landscaping and construction practices shall work to maintain and regenerate habitat values. Plant materials shall be used to mimic or enhance naturally occurring vegetation. Materials shall be propagated from appropriate native stock to ensure that the gene pool is not diluted for endemic species. This is particularly true for Monterey Pines and riparian plantings.
- B. Prohibited Plant Materials. Non-native, invasive, fire prone, and water intensive (e.g., turf grass) landscaping shall be prohibited on the entire site. A list of prohibited plants, such as Pampas grass and Scotch broom, is available from the Department of Planning and Building. Use of plants listed in the California Invasive Plant Council (Cal IPC) Invasive Plant Inventory is prohibited.





### Rural Area Standards

#### *Combining Designations (CD):*

- CD-10 Site Planning - Development Plan Projects. Projects requiring Development Plan approval are to concentrate proposed uses in the least sensitive portions of properties. Native vegetation is to be retained as much as possible.
- CD-11 Site Design. Development and recreational uses, especially on bluff top, shall be designed and situated to minimize adverse impacts on marine resources. Access shall be permitted when compatible with protection of marine resources.
- CD-13 Clustering. Clustering shall be required for new subdivisions or large scale development projects within forested areas. Where feasible, new development shall be restricted to slopes less than 20%.
- CD-14 Tree Preservation. Where development requires removal of Monterey pines greater than six inches in diameter, replacement of native stock will be required.

### **County of San Luis Obispo – Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance**

The Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance (CZLUO) policies include limitations on development within and near wetlands, streams and associated riparian areas, terrestrial and marine habitats, Sensitive Resource Areas, and environmentally sensitive habitats. The CZLUO also identifies general setbacks for wetland and riparian habitat, as well as minimum site design and development standards in the vicinity of various sensitive habitat areas. The following section of the CZLUO is applicable to the proposed Project in regards to biological resources.

#### **3.07.170 Environmentally Sensitive Habitats.**

*The provisions of this section apply to development proposed within or adjacent to (within one hundred feet of the boundary of) an environmentally sensitive habitat as defined by Chapter 23.11 of this title, and as mapped by the land use element combining designation maps.*

- (1) *Application Content. A land use permit application for a project on a site located within or adjacent to an environmentally sensitive habitat shall also include a report by a biologist approved by the environmental coordinator that:*
- (A) *Evaluates the impact the development may have on the habitat, and whether the development will be consistent with the biological continuance of the habitat. The report shall identify the maximum feasible mitigation measures to protect the resource and a program for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the mitigation measures;*
  - (B) *Recommends conditions of approval for the restoration of damaged habitats, where feasible;*
  - (C) *Evaluates development proposed adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitats to identify significant negative impacts from noise, sediment and*



*other potential disturbances that may become evident during project review;*

*(D) Verifies that applicable setbacks from the habitat area required by Sections 23.07.170 to 23.07.178 are adequate to protect the habitat or recommends greater, more appropriate setbacks.*

*(2) Required Findings. Approval of a land use permit for a project within or adjacent to an environmentally sensitive habitat shall not occur unless the applicable review body first finds that:*

*(A) There will be no significant negative impact on the identified sensitive habitat and the proposed use will be consistent with the biological continuance of the habitat;*

*(B) The proposed use will not significantly disrupt the habitat.*

*(3) Land Divisions. No division of a parcel containing an environmentally sensitive habitat shall be permitted unless all proposed building sites are located entirely outside of the applicable minimum setback required by Sections 23.07.172 through 23.07.178. Such building sites shall be designated on the recorded subdivision map.*

*(4) Development Standards for Environmentally Sensitive Habitats.*

*(A) New development within or adjacent to the habitat shall not significantly disrupt the resource.*

*(B) New development within the habitat shall be limited to those uses that are dependent upon the resource.*

*(C) Where feasible, damaged habitats shall be restored as condition of development approval.*

*(D) Development shall be consistent with the biological continuance of the habitat.*

*(E) Grading adjacent to environmentally sensitive habitats shall conform the provisions of Section 23.05.034 (3).*

### **23.07.172 Wetlands.**

*Development proposed within or adjacent to (within one hundred feet of the upland extent of) a wetland area shown on the environmentally sensitive habitat maps shall satisfy the requirements of this section to enable issuance of a land use or construction permit. These provisions are intended to maintain the natural ecological functioning and productivity of wetlands and estuaries and where feasible, to support restoration of degraded wetlands.*

*(1) Location of Development. Development shall be located as far away from the wetland as feasible; provided, that other habitat values on the site are not thereby more adversely affected.*



- (2) *Principal Permitted Uses in Wetlands. Hunting, fishing, wildlife management, education, and research projects.*
- (3) *Department of Fish and Game Review. The State Department of Fish and Game shall review all applications for development in or adjacent to coastal wetlands and recommend appropriate mitigation measures where needed which should be incorporated in the project design.*
- (4) *Wetland Setbacks. New development shall be located a minimum of one hundred feet from the upland extent of all wetlands, except as provided by subsection (4)(B) of this section. If the biological report required by Section 23.07.170 determines that such setback will provide an insufficient buffer from the wetland area, and the applicable approval body cannot make the finding required by subsection (b) of this section, then a greater setback may be required.*
  - (A) *Permitted Uses Within Wetland Setbacks. Within the required setback buffer, permitted uses are limited to passive recreation, educational, existing nonstructural agricultural development in accordance with best management practices, utility lines, pipelines, drainage and flood control of facilities, bridges and road approaches to bridges to cross a stream and roads when it can be demonstrated that:*
    - (i) *Alternative routes are infeasible or more environmentally damaging;*
    - (ii) *Adverse environmental effects are mitigated to the maximum extent feasible.*
  - (B) *Wetland Setback Adjustment. The minimum wetland setback may be adjusted through minor use permit approval, but in no case shall be less than twenty-five feet; provided, that the following findings can be made:*
    - (i) *The site would be physically unusable for the principal permitted use unless the setback is reduced;*
    - (ii) *The reduction is the minimum that would enable a principal permitted use to be established on the site after all practical design modifications have been considered;*
    - (iii) *That the adjustment would not allow the proposed development to locate closer to the wetland than allowed by using the stringline setback method pursuant to Section 23.04.118(1) of this title.*
  - (C) *Requirements for Wetland Setback Adjustment. Setbacks established that are less than one hundred feet consistent with this section shall include mitigation measures to ensure wetland protection. Where applicable, they shall include landscaping, screening with native vegetation and drainage controls. The adjustment shall not be approved until the approval body considers the following:*



- (i) *Site soil types and their susceptibility to erosion;*
- (ii) *A review of the topographic features of the site to determine if the project design and site location has taken full advantage of natural terrain features to minimize impacts on the wetland;*
- (iii) *The biologists report required by Section 23.07.170 shall evaluate the setback reduction request and identify the types and amount of vegetation on the site and its value as wildlife habitat in maintaining the functional capacity of the wetland;*
- (iv) *Type and intensity of proposed development;*
- (v) *Lot size and configuration and location of existing development.*

(5) *Site Development Standards.*

- (A) *Diking, Dredging or Filling of Wetlands. Diking, dredging or filling activities in wetland areas under county jurisdiction shall be allowed only to the extent that they are consistent with Environmentally Sensitive Habitats Policy 11 of the local coastal plan and shall not be conducted without the property owner first securing approval of all permits required by this title.*
- (B) *Vehicle Traffic. Vehicle traffic from public roads shall be prevented from entering wetlands by vehicular barriers, except where a coastal accessway is constructed and designated parking and travel lanes are provided consistent with this title. The type of barrier and its proposed location shall be identified in the materials accompanying an application for a land use permit and must be approved by the planning director before permit issuance to insure that it will not restrict local and state agencies or the property owner from completing the options necessary to accomplish a permitted use within the wetland.*
- (C) *Open Space Easement Required. A land use or construction permit for a structure larger than one thousand square feet in floor area shall not be approved on a parcel of one acre or larger that contains a wetland, unless the property owner first grants the county or an approved land trust an open space easement or fee title dedication of all portions of the site not proposed for development, as well as the entire wetland.*

## **Cambria Forest Management Plan**

The *Cambria Forest Management Plan* (2002) is intended to serve the community of Cambria and its environs and provides an integrated framework of techniques for the management of mixed native Monterey pine and coast live oak forest in the Cambria community and surrounding area. It creates a program dedicated to the conservation of the forested area, offering the flexibility to respond to changes in forest structure, funding, and management priorities over time.



The Monterey pine forest occurs in only three areas of its native California. The southernmost stand in California is the 2,500 acres surrounding Cambria, with another isolated 500 acres at Pico Creek. The genetic attributes of the native stand are in peril. The pine pitch canker (*Fusarium subglutinans f. sp. Pini*) caused by a non-native fungus, is lethal to pines, especially Monterey and Bishop pines (*Pinus muricata*), and will eventually kill the trees if allowed to progress. Currently, the disease is found in all three native Monterey pine stands in the State, and has the potential to worsen and spread to other native pines. The *Cambria Forest Management Plan* addresses this infection with strategies for forest management. According to the Management Plan, the Monterey pine was petitioned in 2000 for listing as a threatened species.

Although the *Cambria Forest Management Plan* emphasizes management for Monterey pine success, it also addresses other species, such as coast live oak, that co-occur and interact with Monterey pines, in order to ensure an ecosystem-based management approach. Following are the primary goals and objectives of the *Cambria Forest Management Plan*.

**Goal 1. Improve forest health and maintain biological diversity, consistent with the Forest Management Plan and applicable laws, policies, and regulations.**

- ◆ Maintain a mix of forest ages.
- ◆ Maintain/enhance habitat for native plants and animals in the forest.
- ◆ Control invasive nonnative plant species in the forested areas.

**Goal 2. Reduce hazards to life and property, consistent with the Forest Management Plan.**

- ◆ Measure and control fire-hazard materials throughout the forest.
- ◆ Establish and maintain fire-management guidelines.
- ◆ Develop criteria for identifying hazardous trees and implement a trimming/removal program.

**Goal 3. Maintain and enhance aesthetic values of the forest, consistent with the Forest Management Plan.**

- ◆ Maintain native-forest aesthetic values within residential neighborhoods; ensure that criteria for tree removal and replacement support maintenance of these values.

## **EXISTING SETTING**

This section describes the biological resources in the Cambria area that also occur in Cambria, including plant communities, wildlife, and the identification of sensitive species and important biological resource areas.

### **Plant Communities**

The Cambria area supports a variety of major plant communities, including Monterey pine forest, Monterey cypress woodland, coast live oak woodland, non-native grassland, riparian,



freshwater marsh, estuary, coastal salt marsh, wetlands, coastal strand, coastal or dune scrub, pioneering scrub, and central maritime chaparral.

### **MONTEREY PINE FOREST**

Monterey pine forest communities occur in the vicinity of Cambria. The dominant pine occurring in this community is the endemic Monterey Pine (*Pinus radiata* var. *macrocarpa*). Of the three remaining naturally occurring Monterey pine forests, the population in the vicinity of Cambria has been considered to be a separate variety due to physical differences such as cone and seed size.

The Mediterranean climate and deep, well-drained soils present in the Cambria area favor the growth of Monterey pines. Coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) is commonly associated with the Monterey Pine and is found often as an understory tree. Other understory species occurring in scattered numbers throughout the forest community include toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*) and madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*). Other low-growing understory species include wild blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) and miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*). However, various species of grass occur most frequently as the understory in the pine forest community.

Although this forest is fragmented in some areas due to development and clearing for grazing, stands of Monterey pine along with the understory provide extremely valuable habitat for wildlife. Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) often utilize portions of Monterey pine forest in the North Coast Area for winter roosting. Many other species of wildlife are dependent upon cover provided by the Monterey pine forest for protection from predators and extreme weather conditions, and often utilize the understory plant species as forage. In addition, several "birds of prey" species often utilize larger Monterey pines for roosting and nesting. Black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*) are also known to utilize the Monterey pine forest and adjoining coast live oak woodland for cover and foraging purposes.

### **COAST LIVE OAK WOODLAND**

Coast live oak woodland communities are restricted to coastal areas from Sonoma County south into Baja California. Typical understory plant species occurring in areas where coast live oaks form dense canopies include, wild blackberry, toyon, poison oak, bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*), miner's lettuce and coffeeberry (*Rhamnus californica*). In drier areas, where oaks are scattered, coast live oak woodland often integrates into other plant communities, such as chaparral and grassland, and the understory becomes highly variable.

### **RIPARIAN**

Riparian woodland communities are characterized as sparse to dense corridors of vegetation occurring adjacent to streams and rivers or in areas of high ground water. These communities are extensive in the Cambria area and occur as corridors bordering all coastal streams, including the Pico and Santa Rosa Creeks. Common overstory species occurring along the lower stream reaches within the North Coast Area include arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), white alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*), black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*) and sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*). Understory species composition within these areas vary and may include poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), stinging nettle (*Urtica holosericea*) and wild blackberry. Typical overstory species occurring in the upper reaches of coastal streams within the North Coast Area



include California bay laurel, elderberry (*Sambucus spp.*), big-leafed maple (*Acer macrophyllum*), black cottonwood, dogwood (*Cornus spp.*), and coast live oak. Various species of shrubs and herbs occurring within these areas may include tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*), gooseberry (*Ribes sp.*), wild rose (*Rosa californica*), and black nightshade (*Solanum douglasii*).

The structure of the riparian plant community, in addition to the high species diversity, provides important foraging, nesting, and cover opportunities for many species of terrestrial wildlife. Many migratory bird species are dependent upon a well-developed riparian corridor for habitat during overwintering. Vegetation of the riparian community contributes to aquatic habitat for species existing in the adjoining stream. Overhanging branches and submerged roots contribute to existing habitat within streams located in the North Coast Area. Within the North Coast Area, numerous sensitive animal taxa including the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*), California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*), and steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*) utilize riparian and instream habitat.

### **FRESHWATER MARSH**

Freshwater marsh communities occur in slow moving, shallow, freshwater streams and lakes and are typified by areas containing nutrient rich mineral soil consistently saturated throughout the growing season. Typical plant species occurring as part of these communities in the North Coast Area include sedges (*Carex spp.*), rushes (*Juncus spp.*) bulrushes (*Scirpus spp.*), cattails (*Typha spp.*), arrowleaves (*Sagittaria spp.*), bur-reeds (*Sparganium spp.*), watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*), and docks (*Rumex spp.*).

### **ESTUARY**

Estuarine communities occur where freshwater from streams mixes with water from the marine environment in a protected embayment. Eel grass (*Zostera marina*) is a common aquatic flowering plant species that occurs in estuarine environments and is adapted to constant inundation. This species may occur in limited areas within the North Coast Area. Algal species that may occur as part of estuarine communities in the North Coast Area, include *Ulva sp.* and *Cladophora sp.*

### **COASTAL SALT MARSH**

Coastal salt marsh communities typically occur adjacent to the shallow waters occupied by the estuarine environment and function as an interface between the marine and terrestrial environments. Coastal saltmarsh communities occur at the mouths of coastal streams such as the Santa Rosa and Pico Creeks. Common coastal saltmarsh plant species occurring within the North Coast Area include saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), pickleweeds (*Salicornia spp.*) fleshy jaumea (*Jaumea carnosa*), giant rush (*Juncus spp.*), and coastal silverweed (*Potentilla egedii*).

### **WETLANDS**

Wetlands such as freshwater marshes, estuaries, and coastal saltmarshes are discussed above. Other types of wetlands found in the area include vernal pools and stream channels. Both are considered sensitive and declining by several regulatory agencies including the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the USFWS. Rising spring temperatures usually evaporate the pools by late May. Characteristic plants of San Luis Obispo County



associated with vernal pools include downingia (*Downingia cuspidata*), coyote thistle (*Eryngium vaseyi*), spike-primrose (*Boisduvalia glabella*), hairgrass (*Deschampsia danthoniodes*), waterstarwort (*Callitriche marginata*), and American pillwort (*Pilularia americana*). These sensitive habitats and species may occur within the North Coast Area.

## COASTAL OR DUNE SCRUB

Coastal scrub or dune scrub communities are found along the California coast south of the San Francisco Bay area. Most often, these communities occur in pockets in the outer and inner southern coast ranges and in scattered areas along the immediate coast. Plants occurring in coastal scrub communities are characterized as being aromatic, low growing, and drought tolerant. Common plant species include California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), monkeyflower (*Mimulus spp.*), poison oak, California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), and black sage (*Salvia mellifera*). Understory within coastal scrub communities is generally sparse and generally includes forbs such as plantain (*Plantago sp.*) and yarrow (*Achillea sp.*).

Northern coastal bluff scrub communities often integrate with coastal scrub communities. These communities are generally established on poorly developed or rocky soils, and are limited in distribution throughout the North Coast Area. Vegetation in these areas are exposed to nearly constant winds with a high salt content. Common northern coastal bluff scrub plant species occurring in the North Coast Area include seaside daisy (*Erigeron glaucus*), sea pink (*Armeria maritima*), haplopappus (*Haplopappus spp.*), coastal golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum staechadifolium*), and beach buckwheat (*Eriogonum latifolium*).

Within the coastal scrub areas are areas of pioneering scrub areas, which are transitional areas where emerging coastal scrub species are taking hold in unvegetated areas and will progress to dune scrub, and then to chaparral.

## RUDERAL VEGETATION

Ruderal (disturbed habitat) vegetation has been significantly disturbed by agriculture, construction, or other land-clearing activities. Characteristic uncultivated species recorded in disturbed habitats include nonnative weedy species such as mustard (*Brassica spp.*), wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*), Russian thistle (*Salsola iberica*), wild oat (*Avena fatua*), soft chess (*Bromus tectorum*), red brome (*Bromus rubens*), ripgut grass (*Bromus diandrus*), sweet fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), and red stem filaree (*Erodium cicutarium*). The only native species common in ruderal habitats of the North Coast Area is coyote brush.

## Wildlife

A variety of habitat types important to wildlife occur within the Cambria area. Each plant community supports assemblages of animal species. However, some plant communities are more critical than others for providing important habitat features.

## FISH

Common resident fish species inhabiting streams within the Cambria area include the three-spine stickleback (*Gasterosteus aculeatus*), mosquitofish (*Gambusia affinis*), speckled dace





(*Rhinichthys osculus*), and prickly sculpin (*Cottus asper*). Rainbow trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss*) may also be present in the upper reaches of perennial streams in the Cambria area. Migratory steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdneri*) occur seasonally in coastal streams, including the Santa Rosa Creek. In addition, marine species such as the tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*) and staghorn sculpin (*Leptocottus armatus*) will often enter coastal lagoons to feed and/or reproduce during the winter and spring when sand bars at the mouths of the streams have been breached.

## AMPHIBIANS

Various amphibian species utilize the coastal streams and adjoining riparian corridors within the Cambria area. Amphibian species include but are not limited to Pacific treefrog (*Hyla regilla*), the California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*), Western toad (*Bufo boreas*), bullfrog (*Rana catesbiana*), ensatina (*Ensatina eschscholtzii*), and California tiger salamander (*Ambystoma tigrinum*). Some of these amphibians occurring within the study area will utilize protected upland areas where sufficient moisture is present.

## REPTILES

Reptiles occur in nearly all habitats within the Cambria area. Species which could be expected to be present include, but are not limited to, western skink (*Eumeces skiltonianus*), alligator lizard (*Elgaria multicarinata*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), gopher snake (*Pituophis melanoleucus*), common kingsnake (*Lampropeltis getulus*), California horned lizard (*Phrynosoma coronatum frontale*), common garter snake (*Thamnophis sirtalis*), striped garter snake (*Thamnophis couchii*), California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra*), Western rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), and southwestern pond turtle (*Clemmys marmorata pallida*).

## MAMMALS

The assorted habitats of the Cambria area support a variety of mammals including Virginia opossum (*Didelphis virginiana*), black-tailed jack rabbit (*Lepus californica*), Audubon's cottontail (*Sylvilagus audubonii*), Bottae's pocket gopher (*Thomomys bottae*), gray squirrel (*Sciurus griseus*), California ground squirrel (*Citellus beecheyi*), coyote (*Canis latrans*), raccoon (*Procyon lotor*), gray fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), striped and western spotted skunk (*Mephitis, Spilogale putorius*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), long-tailed weasel (*Mustela frenata*), ringtail (*Bassaricus astutus*), and several species of rodents and bats. Marine mammals, such as the California sea otter (*Enhydra lutris nereis*), California sea lion (*Zalophus californianus*), harbor seal (*Phoca vitulina*), and more recently, the Northern Elephant Seal (*Mirounga angustirostris*), utilize the nearshore marine environment for feeding and haul-out along rocky shore areas to rest.

## BIRDS

Birds are found in every habitat throughout the Cambria area. Common species, which utilize open grassland areas and fields, include red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), Red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), black-shouldered kite (*Elanus caeruleus*), western meadowlark (*Sturnella neglecta*), Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*), and western bluebird (*Sialia mexicana*). Riparian habitats support Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), scrub jay (*Aphelocoma coerulescens*), bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*), black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), belted kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*), black-crowned night heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), and white-



breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*). Woodlands and coastal scrub areas provide resources for California quail (*Callipepla californica*), acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), brown towhee (*Pipilo fuscus*), and dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*). Wading birds such as the snowy and great egret (*Egretta thula*, *Casmerodius albus*), and great blue heron (*Ardea herodias*), frequent and utilize coastal saltmarsh and freshwater marsh habitats for feeding. Shorebirds, including snowy plovers (*Charadrius alexandrinus*), avocets (*Recurvirostra avosetta*), sandpipers (*Calidris minutilla*), and marbled godwits (*Limosa fedoa*), utilize open sandy beach areas and estuarine habitats in the North Coast Area. The western snowy plover (*Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus*) is listed as a CDFG “species of special concern” and Federally as a threatened species. This subspecies has been documented as utilizing sandy beach areas within the Cambria area for breeding and nesting. Telephone poles and tall trees, such as Monterey pines, provide roosting and hunting perches for raptors including red-tailed hawks. Windrow trees, such as eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus cinerea*), often provide suitable nesting sites for birds of prey such as great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*) and barn owl (*Tyto alba*), and for great blue herons and great egrets.

## INSECTS

Insects occur in all habitats within the Cambria area. They are considered valuable food sources for a variety of wildlife and often function as indicators as to the overall health of various habitats, particularly of aquatic habitats. The variety of insect species occurring within the Cambria area is extensive and representatives from all insect orders are expected to occur within the area. The monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is one of the most noticeable insect species found within the area, since it nests in large concentrations in the Monterey pine forest in the Cambria area during the winter.

## Sensitive Species, Habitats, and Resource Areas

Several sensitive plant and wildlife species and habitats have been recently or historically known to occur in the North Coast Area. The term “sensitive species” includes plants and wildlife that are officially listed by a regulatory organization or agency as well as those considered to be of local concern or interest by recognized monitoring agencies such as California Native Plant Society (CNPS), CDFG, Audubon Society, or USFWS.

The California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) provides lists of sensitive plants, animals, and habitat areas throughout the State. The CNDDDB is a computerized inventory that gives general occurrence information; it does not provide exact locations of occurrences. Sensitive plant species are listed in Table 5.6-1 (Sensitive Plant Taxa) and sensitive animal species are listed in Table 5.6-2 (Sensitive Wildlife Taxa), while sensitive habitat areas defined by CNDDDB are presented in the text below.

In addition to the CNDDDB sensitive species list, additional species considered sensitive have been documented as occurring in the vicinity of the North Coast Area through previous field surveys or are believed to occur in the area due to the presence of appropriate habitat. According to the 2005 Community Plans Draft EIR, this information is based on literature searches and interviews with knowledgeable people regarding the biological resources of the Cambria area. Field work has not been conducted to confirm the presence of these or other sensitive species. It is important to note that additional, previously unidentified species or habitats could also occur within the North Coast Area. Site-specific surveys for these species would be necessary to confirm their presence within a specific area proposed for development.



**Table 5.6-1  
Sensitive Plant Taxa**

Species Common Name	Status		
	California <sup>1</sup>	Federal <sup>1</sup>	CNPS <sup>2</sup>
<i>Arctostaphylos cruzensis</i> Arroyo De la Cruz Manzanita	—	F2	B
<i>Arctostaphylos hookeri hearstiorum</i> Hearst's Manzanita	SE	F2	1B
<i>Arctostaphylos montereyensis</i> Monterey Manzanita	—	F2	1B
<i>Arctostaphylos silvicola</i> Bonnie Doon Manzanita	—	F2	—
<i>Allium hickmanii</i> Hickman's Onion	—	F1	1B
<i>Bloomeria humilis</i> Dwarf Goldenstar	SR	F2	1B
<i>Calochortus clavatus recurvifolius</i> Arroyo De La Cruz Mariposa Lily	—	F2	1B
<i>Carex obispoensis</i> San Luis Obispo Sedge	—	F3C	1B
<i>Ceanothus hearstiorum</i> Hearst's Ceanothus	SR	F2	1B
<i>Ceanothus maritimus</i> Maritime Ceanothus	SR	F2	1B
<i>Chorizanthe pungens</i> Monterey Spineflower	—	FPE	1B
<i>Cirsium occidentale var. compactum</i> Compact Cobweb Thistle	—	F2	1B
<i>Cirsium fontinale var. obispoense</i> Chorro Creek Bog Thistle	SE	FPE	1B
<i>Dudleya abramsii bettinae</i> San Luis Serpentine Dudleya	—	F3C	1B
<i>Dudleya blochmaniae ssp. blochmaniae</i> Blochman's Dudleya	—	F2	1B
<i>Galium hardhamiae</i> Hardham's Bedstraw	—	F2	1B
<i>Layia jonesii</i> Jone's Layia	—	F2	1B
<i>Pedicularis dudleyi</i> Dudley's Lousewort	SR	F3C	1B

F1 = Candidate for Federal Listing, Category 1. This term has been replaced by the term "candidate species" which uses the same definition.  
F2 = Candidate for Federal Listing, Category 2. Species may warrant listing as threatened or endangered, but sufficient biological information to support a proposal rule is lacking. This term is no longer in use.  
FPE = Proposed for Federal Listing as endangered.  
F3C = Withdrawn from candidacy for Federal Listing. Species too abundant, widespread, and/or without sufficient threats to warrant listing.  
SR = Listed by the State of California as rare.  
SE = Listed by the State of California as endangered.  
1B = Plants rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.

Sources:  
1 California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB), October 1993.  
2 California Native Plant Society, (Sept. 1988), Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California. Special Publication No. 1, Fourth Edition.



**Table 5.6-2  
Sensitive Wildlife Taxa**

Species Common Name	Status		
	California	Federal	CNPS
<i>Falco mexicanus</i> Prairie falcon	CSC	—	—
<i>Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus</i> Western snowy plover	CSC	—	BL
<i>Fratercula cirrhata</i> Tufted puffin	CSC	—	—
<i>Cypseloides niger</i> Black swift	CSC	—	—
<i>Elanus caeruleus</i> Black-shouldered kite	CSC	—	—
<i>Accipiter striatus</i> Sharp-shinned hawk	*	—	BL
<i>Accipiter cooperi</i> Coopers hawk	CSC	—	BL
<i>Circus cyaneus</i> Northern harrier	CSC	—	BL
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> Golden eagle	CSC	—	—
<i>Buteo lineatus</i> Red-shouldered hawk	—	—	BL
<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i> Western yellow billed cuckoo	SE	—	—
<i>Speotyto cunicularia</i> Burrowing owl	CSC	—	—
<i>Buteo swainsoni</i> Ferruginous hawk	CSC	F2	—
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i> Bald Eagle	SE	FT	—
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i> American peregrine falcon	SE	FE	—
<i>Pelecanus occidentalis californicus</i> California brown pelican	SE	FE	—
<i>Progne subis</i> Purple martin	CSC	—	—
<i>Dendroica petechia brewsteri</i> Yellow warbler	CSC	—	—
<i>Icteria virens</i> Yellow breasted chat	CSC	—	—
<i>Taxidea taxus</i> American badger	CSC	—	—
<i>Enhydra lutris nereis</i> California sea otter	—	FT	—
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i> Pallid bat	CSC	—	—
<i>Plecotus townsendii townsendii</i> Townsend's Western big-eared bat	CSC	F2	—



**Table 5.6-2 [continued]  
Sensitive Wildlife Taxa**

Species Common Name	Status		
	California	Federal	CNPS
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss gairdneri</i> Steelhead trout	CSC	FSS	—
<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i> Tidewater goby	CSC	FE	—
<i>Clemmys marmorata pallida</i> Southwestern pond turtle	CSC	F1	—
<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i> California red-legged frog	CSC	FPE	—
<i>Phrynosoma coronatum frontale</i> California horned lizard	CSC	—	—
<i>Anniella pulchra pulchra</i> Silvery legless lizard	CSC	—	—
<i>Ambystoma tigrinum</i> Tiger salamander	CSC	F2	—
<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i> Two-striped garter snake	*	F2	—
<i>Danaus plexippus</i> Monarch butterfly	*	—	—
<p>F1 = Category 1: Candidate for Federal listing, Category 1. This term has been replaced by the term "candidate species" which uses the same definition.</p> <p>F2 = Category 2: Species may warrant listing as threatened or endangered, but sufficient biological information to support a proposal rule is lacking. This term is no longer in use.</p> <p>FE = Listed as Endangered by the Federal Government.</p> <p>FT = Listed as Threatened by the Federal Government.</p> <p>FPE = Proposed for Federal listing as Endangered.</p> <p>FSS = Listed as a Federal sensitive species.</p> <p>CSC = California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern.</p> <p>CCA = Candidate for State of California threatened or endangered.</p> <p>SE = Listed as Endangered in the State of California.</p> <p>ST = Listed as Threatened in the State of California.</p> <p>BL = Blue List; Avian Species of Concern Identified in American Birds Magazine (from 1971 to 1986)</p> <p>* = Species which are biologically rare, restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, or are closely associated with a habitat that is declining in California.</p>			
<p>Sources:</p> <p>1 California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB), July 1993.</p> <p>2 California Department of Fish and Game (December 1992), Special Animals. Tate, J. (1986), The Blue List for 1986. American Birds 40(2):227-235.</p>			

## SENSITIVE HABITAT AREAS

There are four sensitive habitat areas in the North Coast Area identified by the CNDDDB. Their descriptions are included above, in the discussion of existing plant communities. These areas are:

- ◆ Monterey Pine Forest;
- ◆ Non-Native Grassland;
- ◆ Riparian Habitat; and
- ◆ Wetlands.



## CRITICAL HABITAT AREAS

As previously noted, the USFWS proposes to revise currently designated critical habitat for the tidewater goby (*Eucyclogobius newberryi*). Of seven revised critical habitat units proposed within San Luis Obispo County, only SLO-4 (San Simeon Creek) is within the Project study area. SLO-4 is located approximately 3.3 miles northwest of Cambria and consists entirely of State lands that are part of San Simeon State Park.

## OTHER FINDINGS

The 1994 *Cambria Desalination Facility Final Environmental Impact Report* (EIR) and Subsequent Addendum Supplemental EIR identified the potential for the American badger, southwestern pond turtle, red-legged frog, and Cooper's hawk to be located at the seawater desalination plant site. In addition, the EIR identified the potential for the cobwebby thistle to be located west of Highway 1, along a potential alignment of future transmission pipelines.

According to the August 2005 *Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration Geotechnical/Hydrogeologic Investigation Activities for the Pending Desalination Project*, the following generalized vegetative communities and/or habitat types are present on the study area.<sup>6</sup>

### Onshore Environment

- ◆ Riparian Scrub;
- ◆ Freshwater Marsh;
- ◆ Seasonal Wetland;
- ◆ Coyote Brush Scrub;
- ◆ Ornamental;
- ◆ Ruderal;
- ◆ Coastal Bluff Scrub;
- ◆ Coastal Foredune;
- ◆ Coastal Salt Marsh; and
- ◆ Beach/Coastal Strand.

### Offshore Environment

- ◆ Intertidal Zone; and
- ◆ Subtidal Zone.

The Initial Study further noted that a number of special-status species are known to occur within the boundaries of the Project site including, but not limited to western snowy plover, California red-legged frog, south-central steelhead, tidewater goby, two-striped garter snake, southwestern pond turtle, marine mammals, and various migratory birds and raptors.

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<sup>6</sup> It is noted that the area studied as part of the August 2005 IS/MND involved data collection study areas that may not be impacted by the proposed desalination facility. Thus, the area that may ultimately be disturbed by the proposed desalination project may be significantly smaller than the area studied as part of the August 2005 IS/MDN.



## **Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary**

The Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS) is a Federally protected marine area offshore of California's central coast. Stretching from Marin to Cambria, the MBNMS encompasses a shoreline length of 276 miles and 5,322 square miles of ocean. The Sanctuary extends from 35 degrees 33 minutes North latitude (a point on the West Ranch in Cambria) to approximately 1,600 feet south of Sea Cliff Estates) northward through Monterey. Supporting one of the world's most diverse marine ecosystems, it is home to numerous mammals, seabirds, fishes, invertebrates, and plants in a remarkably productive coastal environment. The MBNMS was established for the purpose of resource protection, research, education, and public use of this national treasure.

## **Wildlife Networks (Migration Corridors)**

"Migration corridors" are connections between habitat patches that allow for physical and genetic exchange between animal populations. These connections may be local, such as between foraging, nesting, or denning areas, or regional in nature. As undisturbed habitats become surrounded by urban development, they become isolated from neighboring areas. Migration corridors provide critical linkages between islands of open space, isolated foraging and breeding habitats, and other important wildlife use areas. Loss of such corridors limits the diversity of gene pools within the isolated populations potentially leading to inbreeding and lack of genetic variability. Drainage courses and adjacent upland habitats typically function as migration corridors providing water and cover for animals.

## **SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA**

Both direct and indirect impacts on biological resources have been evaluated. Direct impacts are those that affect habitats due to grading and construction. Indirect impacts are those that would be related to disturbance from construction activities (e.g., noise, dust) and use of the project site.

According to Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines* (Initial Study Checklist), a project would typically have a significant impact on biological resources if it would:

- ◆ Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Game and Wildlife Service.
- ◆ 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 U.S. Fish and Game and Wildlife Service.
- ◆ Have a substantial adverse effect on federally protected wetlands as defined by Section 404 of the Clean Water Act (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.) through direct removal, filling, hydrological interruption, or other means.
- ◆ Interfere substantially with the movement of any native or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites.



- ◆ Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance.
- ◆ Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan.

Section 15065(a), *Mandatory Findings of Significance*, of the CEQA Guidelines states that a project may have a significant effect on the environment if "...the project has the potential to substantially degrade the quality of the environment, substantially reduce the habitat of a fish or wildlife species, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare or threatened species..."

An evaluation of whether an impact on biological resources would be substantial must consider both the resource itself and how that resource fits into a regional or local context. Substantial impacts would be those that would diminish, or result in the loss of, an important biological resource or those that would obviously conflict with local, State or Federal resource conservation plans, goals, or regulations. Impacts are sometimes locally adverse but not significant because, although they would result in an adverse alteration of existing conditions, they would not substantially diminish or result in the permanent loss of an important resource on a population -or region-wide basis.

## **IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

### **SHORT-TERM CONSTRUCTION**

- ❖ **CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED WATER MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS COULD IMPACT SENSITIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES. ANALYSIS HAS CONCLUDED THAT IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED FOLLOWING COMPLIANCE WITH SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY CODE AND NORTH COAST AREA PLAN STANDARDS, AND STATE AND FEDERAL REGULATORY REQUIRMENTS, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MITIGATION.**

### **Impact Analysis:**

#### **Potable and Recycled Water Distribution Systems**

Wildlife would be disturbed in the vicinity of construction activities. Noise generated by construction equipment, including trucks, graders, bulldozers, concrete mixers, and portable generators can reach high levels. Noise levels over 60 dBA are typically considered an impact to nesting birds. The peak noise level for most of the equipment normally used during construction is typically 70 to 95 dBA at a distance of 50 feet. Construction noise generally has a drop off rate of 6 dBA per doubling of distance. Therefore, at 100 feet, the peak construction noise is approximately 64 to 89 dBA. At 200 feet, the peak construction noise is approximately 58 to 83 dBA. At this preliminary stage, the exact type and number of equipment to be used for implementation of the proposed improvements is not known.

It is anticipated that most of the pipeline alignments would coincide with existing roadways, which would not pose any threat to the biotic resources of the areas beyond the impacted





roadways themselves. In construction areas that do not follow roadways, pipeline installations would require excavation, grading, and removal of vegetation along that segment of the alignment. In addition, the temporary removal of the natural and existing vegetation would lead to a correlating reduction of the wildlife species that depend upon this vegetation for food and shelter. It is anticipated that some animal species would move into the undeveloped locations near the construction areas. Wildlife species forced to move into alternative habitats would be vulnerable to mortality and probable unsuccessful competition for food and living space. Species of lower mobility (i.e., reptiles and burrowing mammals) and those refusing to migrate would be eliminated by site development. However, because these are common and adaptable species not in jeopardy of extinction, these impacts are considered less than significant.

Overall, construction-related impacts regarding habitat loss and sensitive species are considered potentially significant. It is noted that specific impacts to sensitive species would be dependent upon the final improvement plans for the potable and recycled water system facilities. Through the County's development review process, future improvements would be evaluated to determine the appropriate permits for authorizing their use and the conditions for their establishment and operation. Future improvements would be subject to compliance with the relevant NCAP Standards, which would lessen potential impacts upon biological resources. In addition, mitigation measures have been recommended to protect sensitive plant and wildlife species during construction activities, further reducing impacts. Further review may be necessary on a project-by-project basis to evaluate site-specific construction-related impacts.

### **Water Demand Management**

This Project component involves improvements to the current conservation program and regulations, which would not generate construction-related activity. No impact would occur in this regard.

### **Seawater Desalination**

Short-term construction-related impacts to sensitive plant, wildlife, and marine species are anticipated to be potentially significant. Future improvements would be subject to compliance with State and Federal regulatory policies and requirements, as well as relevant NCAP Standards. In addition, mitigation measures have been recommended to conduct surveys for sensitive wildlife and marine species. A future project-specific EIR/EIS would need to further determine the potential short-term construction-related impacts to biological resources after more details become known regarding the desalination facility. Additionally, the EIR/EIS would analyze alternative desalination facility sites.

### **Mitigation Measures:**

- BIO-1 If construction activities occur during the breeding season for migratory birds (typically considered to be March 15 through August 15), then a nesting bird survey shall be conducted prior to construction.
  
- BIO-2 Although physical disturbance of nesting areas of Special Status Species is not anticipated during nesting seasons, if construction during the nesting season cannot be avoided and special status species are found to occur within 500 feet of the construction boundary, sound barriers shall be required to reduce noise levels



generated during construction to acceptable levels (less than 60 dBA). Monitoring of noise levels during Project construction shall be required.

- BIO-3 The conceptual pipeline layouts shall be refined to further avoid potential impacts to the wildlife corridors by limiting their installation to previously disturbed and existing paved street areas, wherever feasible. The piping layouts shall also incorporate trenchless construction technology to further limit potential impacts to corridors, wherever feasible.
- BIO-4 Any graded areas within or immediately adjacent to riparian areas shall be landscaped, as soon after construction as feasible, with appropriate native species. Grading and construction activities shall be carried out in such a manner that sediments and debris do not enter the local creeks.
- BIO-5 Compliance with the following North Coast Area Plan Standards shall be required:

***Cambria Urban Area***

Public Service Program:

Program 11 (Water Master Plan for Cambria)

Combining Designations (CD):

CD-1 (Monterey Pine Forest Habitat (SRA) (TH) – Purpose)

CD-3 (Santa Rosa Creek (FH))

Community Wide (CW):

CW-1 (Marine Habitat Protection - Projects with Point-Source Discharges)

CW-4 (Limitation on Development)

CW-10 (Site Review)

CW-12 (Landscaping)

Category Specific (CS):

The CS Standards that are specific to each land use category; refer to Chapter 7 (Planning Area Standards) of the NCAP.

***Rural Area***

Combining Designations (CD):

CD-10 (SRA) (Site Planning - Development Plan Projects)

CD-11 (SRA) (Site Design)

CD-13 (Monterey Pine Forest SRA) Clustering)

CD-14 (Monterey Pine Forest SRA) Tree Preservation)

Category Specific (CS):

The CS Standards that are specific to each land use category; refer to Chapter 7 (Planning Area Standards) of the NCAP.

- BIO-6 Prior to construction, a biologist shall determine whether the American badger is present on the seawater desalination plant construction site. If an active burrow is found within the construction zone, in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game, the burrow shall be excavated by hand during grading activities to ensure that no American badgers are buried or otherwise harmed by construction



- equipment. If an American badger is found, it shall be allowed to escape to other tunnels it is likely to have outside the disturbance area.
- BIO-7 Prior to construction, a qualified wildlife biologist shall search the seawater desalination plant site and construction area for red-legged frogs and southwestern pond turtles to confirm that no individuals of these species occur on the site. If any individuals of these species are found, they shall be relocated to nearby habitat.
- BIO-8 If compact cobwebby thistle is removed as a result of the proposed Project, the species shall be reestablished, in accordance with standard mitigation measures to be determined by a qualified botanist, in coordination with the CCSD and San Luis Obispo County, which is to include revegetation sites and ratios.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

### **SENSITIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES**

- ❖ **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED WATER MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS COULD IMPACT SENSITIVE PLANT AND WILDLIFE SPECIES. ANALYSIS HAS CONCLUDED THAT IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED FOLLOWING COMPLIANCE WITH SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY, STATE, AND FEDERAL REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MITIGATION.**

**Impact Analysis:** The analysis presented below describes potential impacts to listed and special status plant and wildlife species potentially occurring in the Project area; refer to Tables 5.6-1 and 5.6-2.

#### **Potable and Recycled Water Distribution Systems**

The Cambria area supports a variety of major plant communities, including Monterey pine forest, Monterey cypress woodland, coast live oak woodland, non-native grassland, riparian, freshwater marsh, estuary, coastal salt marsh, wetlands, coastal strand, coastal or dune scrub, pioneering scrub, and central maritime chaparral. Also, a variety of habitat types important to wildlife occur within the Cambria area. The habitat types support sensitive fish, amphibians, reptiles, mammals, birds, and insect species.

It is not anticipated that implementation of the proposed Project components at existing water facilities (e.g., the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP), reservoir sites, pump stations, etc.) would significantly impact sensitive plant and wildlife species, since operational activities would be contained within existing developed/disturbed sites. In addition, proposed pipelines would be underground and therefore would not result in any impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species.

CCSD operates an extended aeration WWTP. Currently, the treated wastewater effluent is percolated into the ground between the San Simeon well field and the Pacific Ocean to provide a “mound” of fresh water that slows the San Simeon Creek aquifer flow into the sea. The CCSD wastewater department estimates that approximately 250,000 gallons per day (gpd) is required for percolation into the ground between the well field and ocean to maintain its hydraulic mound operation. This would leave approximately 450,000 gpd available for irrigation and/or seasonal storage of recycled water. However, it is not known how much of the approximately 450,000



gpd provides flow into the nearby lagoon and riparian areas. A no net increase approach was developed within the water analysis to determine how much of the future recycled water use was existing versus new demands. It is anticipated that existing demands would simply shift the use of water from the upstream potable well field to the downstream mound. Existing demands converted from potable to non-potable recycled water are expected to have a no net increase in the volume of water being diverted from the aquifer system because of the uncertainty regarding flows, and in the event an increased diversion were to occur from the aquifer, mitigation is recommended (i.e., compliance with NCAP Program 11 (Water Master Plan for Cambria)), which requires subsequent study to determine the potential impacts to nearby lagoon and riparian areas. Refer also to the *Sensitive Habitats and Resource Areas* discussion below.

Implementation of the proposed improvements would be subject to compliance with the relevant NCAP Standards, which would reduce potential impacts upon biological resources. Following compliance with the recommended mitigation and the NCAP Standards, impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species would be reduced. Further review may be necessary on a project-by-project basis to evaluate site-specific impacts to sensitive species.

### **Water Demand Management**

This Project component involves improvements to the current conservation program and regulations, which would not result in operational activities impacting sensitive plant or wildlife species.

### **Seawater Desalination**

Sensitive Plant and Wildlife Species. Once constructed, it is not anticipated that operation of the seawater desalination plant would result in significant impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species, since operational activities would be contained within the new desalination facility. In addition, proposed pipelines would be underground and therefore are not anticipated to result in significant impacts to sensitive plant and wildlife species. Seawater desalination, as proposed, would also result in beneficial impacts. It would allow CCSD to provide a better quality of water to its customers and has the potential to significantly reduce the use of individual water softeners, which would greatly reduce the salt loadings at the WWTP. Because the aquifer system is shared among environmental, municipal, and agricultural interests, the seawater desalination project would also provide an additional level of protection to the riparian habitat during extended drought periods. A future project-specific EIR/EIS would need to further determine the potential impacts to sensitive species after more details become known regarding the desalination facility. Refer to the *Marine Environment* section below for a discussion of potential impacts from the seawater intake and seawater concentrate return.

Marine Environment. The two main elements of desalination facilities that may cause impacts to marine life and water quality are the seawater intake system and the seawater concentrate return system. Marine resources in the vicinity of a desalination plant could be impacted by the process of feedwater intake, concentrate return method used, and constituents present in the concentrate return. Intake of water directly from the ocean could result in loss of marine species as a result of impingement and entrainment. Impingement is when species collide with screens at the intake; entrainment occurs when species are taken into the plant with the feedwater and killed during plant processes. The seawater concentrate return from the desalination plant would be conveyed in a separate pipeline back to a subterranean discharge system for return into the groundwater and seawater near the ocean interface. The conditions that influence the



constituents present in the concentrate return involve the total volume of concentrate being released, the constituents of the concentrate return, and the amount of dilution prior to release.

While both the seawater intake system and the seawater concentrate return system could potentially cause significant adverse impact, both can be designed and operated to minimize or completely avoid those impacts. A future project-specific EIR/EIS would need to further determine the potential impacts to the marine environment after more details become known regarding the desalination facility. The review of the proposed seawater desalination facilities would require a determination of appropriate environmental baseline and evaluation of alternatives in order to determine mitigation that avoids or reduces the adverse effects to the marine community and water quality.

The specific impacts to sensitive species would be dependent upon the final improvement plans for the seawater desalination facility. Additionally, the EIR/EIS would analyze alternative desalination facility sites. Various alternatives would be developed following the gathering of subterranean data. Each alternative would assess potential impacts to sensitive species, as part of a project-specific environmental clearance process on the desalination project. Through the Project's development review process conducted by the County, State, and Federal agencies, future improvements would be evaluated to determine the appropriate permits for authorizing their use and the conditions for their establishment and operation. Future improvements would be subject to compliance with County, State, and Federal regulatory policies and requirements. Implementation of the proposed improvements would be subject to compliance with NCAP Standards CW-1, which addresses marine habitats and CW-4, which provides desalination standards, as well as any related State and Federal requirements.

### **Mitigation Measures:**

BIO-9 Compliance with provisions of Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.07.170 (Environmentally Sensitive Habitats) is required. Such provisions apply to development proposed within or adjacent to (within 100 feet of the boundary of) an environmentally sensitive habitat as defined by Chapter 23.11 of the coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance, and as mapped by the Land Use Element Combining Designation Maps.

Refer also to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-8.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

### **SENSITIVE HABITATS AND RESOURCE AREAS**

❖ **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED WATER MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS COULD ADVERSLY IMPACT A RIPARIAN HABITAT OR OTHER SENSITIVE NATURAL COMMUNITY. ANALYSIS HAS CONCLUDED THAT IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE NORTH COAST AREA PLAN AND COASTAL ZONE LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS.**



## Impact Analysis:

### Potable and Recycled Water Distribution Systems

There are four sensitive habitat areas in Cambria, as identified by the CNDDDB. Their descriptions are included in the discussion of existing *Plant Communities* discussion above. These areas are:

- ◆ Monterey Pine Forest;
- ◆ Non-Native Grassland;
- ◆ Riparian Habitat; and
- ◆ Wetlands.

The following resources are SRAs in Cambria.

- ◆ Arroyo de la Cruz, San Carpofo, Pico, San Simeon, Santa Rosa, and Perry Creeks (FH);
- ◆ North Coast Shoreline (SRA);
- ◆ Monterey Pine Forests (SRA) (TH); and
- ◆ North Coast Creeks (SRA) (ESHA).

It is not anticipated that implementation of the proposed Project components at existing water facilities (e.g., the WWTP, reservoir sites, pump stations, etc.) would significantly impact sensitive habitats and/or SRAs, since operational activities would be contained within existing disturbed/developed sites. In addition, proposed pipelines would be underground and would not result in any impacts to sensitive habitats and/or SRAs within the Project area.

A portion of the treated wastewater plant effluent was assumed necessary to support critical habitat within the downstream lagoon area. Although not a natural source of water, precedents have also been set elsewhere within the State that limits the diversion of treated effluent from streams where an artificially created habitat supports endangered species. Due to similar potential habitat concerns, two categories of potential recycled water users were developed: (1) existing sites where potable water use would simply be converted to recycled water and have no net impact on the balance of water within the San Simeon watershed; and (2) future recycled water demand sites that could increase water withdrawn from the San Simeon watershed. Also, it is noted that the future use of seawater desalination to augment the potable water system would add approximately 75 percent of the desalinated seawater produced to the percolation pond area at the base of San Simeon Creek.<sup>7</sup> Thus, the future use of seawater desalination may further augment water that may be potentially entering the downstream lagoon area.

Potential habitat concerns may be further addressed by seasonal off-stream storage of recycled water and innovative water conservation measures. Seasonal storage of recycled water would involve storing recycled water during the wet season for dry season use. Innovative water conservation measures being considered include a sub-surface irrigation method similar to hydroponics technology, as well as harvesting and storing local storm water runoff at future project sites. Subsequent study of the habitat issues and related geohydrology is required to

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<sup>7</sup> The estimate of approximately 75 percent of desalinated seawater is based on review of 2005 water production and influent wastewater flows during the months of June through September.



further validate the volume of recycled water available during the summer irrigation season and determine the potential impacts to nearby lagoon and riparian areas.

The specific impacts to sensitive habitats and/or SRAs would be dependent upon the final improvement plans for the proposed potable and recycled water facilities. Through the County's development review process, future improvements would be evaluated to determine the appropriate permits for authorizing their use and the conditions for their establishment and operation. Consistency with CZLUO Section 23.07.170 (Environmentally Sensitive Habitats), which protects environmentally sensitive habitats, would be required. Future improvements would be subject to compliance with the relevant NCAP Standards, which lesson potential impacts to sensitive habitats and/or SRA's. Also, future improvements would be subject to review and compliance with State and Federal regulatory policies and requirements. Further review may be necessary on a project-by-project basis to evaluate site-specific impacts to sensitive habitats and resource areas. With the County's discretionary review of future improvements through the established procedures, and compliance with NCAP Standards, potential impacts to sensitive habitats and/or SRAs would be reduced.

### **Water Demand Management**

This Project component involves improvements to the current conservation program and regulations, which would not impact sensitive habitats and/or SRAs. No impact would occur in this regard.

### **Seawater Desalination**

Should alternatives analyzed as part of the desalination project-level EIR/EIS call for offshore components (e.g., the proposed subterranean intake and seawater concentrate return systems and pipelines), they would be located within the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary (MBNMS). The MBNMS is updating its Management Plan and will consider including recommendations about how desalination facilities should be sited or operated within MBNMS boundaries. The recommendations were developed by a desalination workgroup representing a number of interest and stakeholders in the Monterey Bay area, and will be evaluated by both the Sanctuary Advisory Group and the public. The workgroup's recommendations include the following:

- ◆ Develop a regional planning program for desalination;
- ◆ Develop facility siting guidelines, including identifying preferred conditions and habitats, areas that should be avoided, etc.;
- ◆ Define standards for entrainment and impingement caused by desalination facilities and limits for brine discharges to Sanctuary waters;
- ◆ Determine which water quality models are suitable for determining discharge plumes for desalination outfalls;
- ◆ Identify the minimum required information for permit applications;
- ◆ Develop a regional monitoring program to determine cumulative impacts of multiple desalination facilities;



- ◆ Develop an education and outreach program for desalination issues; and
- ◆ Track and evaluate emerging desalination activity and technology utilized at facilities outside the Sanctuary.

The specific impacts to sensitive habitats and/or SRAs from the desalination facility would be dependent upon the final improvement plans. Through the County's development review process, future improvements would be evaluated to determine the appropriate permits for authorizing their use and the conditions for their establishment and operation. Consistency with CZLUO Section 23.07.170, which protects environmentally sensitive habitats, and relevant NCAP Standards, would be required. Also, future improvements would be subject to review and compliance with State and Federal regulatory policies and requirements. A future project-specific EIR/EIS would need to further determine the potential impacts to sensitive habitats and resource areas after more details become known regarding the desalination facility. Where feasible, recommendations from the Sanctuary's Management Plan would be considered. Additionally, the EIR/EIS would analyze alternative desalination facility sites.

**Mitigation Measures:** Refer to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-9.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

## **JURISDICTIONAL WATERS OR RESOURCES**

- ❖ **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED WATER MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS COULD IMPACT WETLANDS OR OTHER JURISDICTIONAL WATERS OF THE U.S. ANALYSIS HAS CONCLUDED THAT IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.**

### **Impact Analysis:**

#### **Potable and Recycled Water Distribution Systems**

The Jurisdictional Waters of the U.S. that occur in the Cambria area include portions of the San Simeon Creek, Van Gordon Creek, Perry Creek, Santa Rosa Creek, Steiner Creek, associated intermittent drainages, wetlands, and the Pacific Ocean. Jurisdictional waters could potentially be impacted with implementation of the proposed potable and recycled water facilities. This potential impact is considered significant, unless mitigated.

The Corps must authorize construction activities expected to adversely affect these features. If construction activities result in fill, Section 401 Water Quality Certification would be needed from the Regional Water Quality Control Board. If construction activities were expected to alter, or otherwise adversely affect any natural stream courses (i.e., San Simeon and Van Gordon Creeks, associated intermittent drainages, wetlands, and the Pacific Ocean) a Streambed Alteration Agreement would be required from the CDFG. Also, future WMP improvements would be subject to compliance with CZLUO Section 23.07.172 (Wetlands) regarding development adjacent to wetlands, NCAP Standard CD-3 regarding development adjacent to Santa Rosa Creek, NCAP Standard CW-1 regarding projects with point-source discharges (marine habitat protection). Compliance with Code requirements, NCAP Standards, and recommended mitigation would reduce potential impacts to jurisdictional waters. Further review





may be necessary on a project-by-project basis to evaluate site-specific impacts to jurisdictional waters/resources.

### **Water Demand Management**

This Project component involves improvements to the current conservation program and regulations, which would not impact jurisdictional waters or resources. No impact would occur in this regard.

### **Seawater Desalination**

While Project-specific information is unknown at this time, the conceptual location of the seawater desalination plant within the San Simeon watershed includes pipelines that traverse San Simeon Creek and/or Van Gordon Creek. Potential impacts to the jurisdictional waters would be significant unless mitigated. Compliance with the regulatory process (i.e., CDFG Agreement and 401 Certification) would be required. Also, future improvements would be subject to compliance with CZLUO Section 23.07.172 (Wetlands), regarding development adjacent to wetlands, and relevant NCAP Standards. A future project-specific EIR/EIS would need to further determine the potential impacts to jurisdictional waters/resources after more details become known regarding the desalination facility. Additionally, the EIR/EIS would analyze alternative desalination facility sites.

### **Mitigation Measures:**

- BIO-10 Water Master Plan improvements shall incorporate compensatory mitigation for the loss of wetland or riparian function and values in compliance with the applicable regulatory programs, if necessary. Mitigation shall take one or more of the following forms: (1) avoidance or minimization of impacts; (2) compensation in the form of habitat creation; or (3) compensation through participation in a mitigation bank. The first type of mitigation (avoidance or minimization of impacts) is preferred by the agencies and shall be investigated to the maximum extent possible. For any future WMP projects that impact riparian vegetation, it is preferred by the agencies that compensation through the creation of habitat be performed on-site and in kind (i.e., riparian woodland for riparian woodland; sandy bottom for sandy bottom). At the minimum, mitigation for jurisdictional impacts shall be at a 1:1 ratio; however, the exact requirements of any special permit conditions established for future projects shall be dictated by regulatory agencies, primarily the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or the California Department of Fish and Game, following review of the formally submitted project application.
- BIO-11 Compliance with Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance Section 23.07.172 (Wetlands) is required. Development proposed within or adjacent to (within one hundred feet of the upland extent of) a wetland area shown on the environmentally sensitive habitat maps shall satisfy the requirements of Section 23.07.172 to enable issuance of a land use or construction permit.

Refer also Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-9.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.



## **WILDLIFE CORRIDORS**

- ❖ **IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED WATER MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS COULD INTERFERE WITH ESTABLISHED WILDLIFE CORRIDORS. ANALYSIS HAS CONCLUDED THAT IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION OF MITIGATION MEASURES AND COMPLIANCE WITH SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.**

### **Impact Analysis:**

#### **Potable and Recycled Water Distribution Systems**

The San Simeon Creek, Van Gordon Creek, Perry Creek, Santa Rosa Creek, and Steiner Creek corridors are the likely areas for wildlife movement in the Cambria area. It is not anticipated that implementation of the proposed Project components at existing water facilities (e.g., WWTP, reservoir sites, pump stations, etc.) would significantly impact wildlife networks, since operational activities would be contained within existing developed sites. However, new pipelines may result in corridor crossings or encroachments. Because the creek corridors represent potential migration routes, their disturbance would be considered a significant impact unless mitigated. The potable and recycled water facilities impacting these corridors would be subject to compliance with mitigation measures that would ensure corridor integrity. More specifically, mitigation measures may include sizing of bridge crossings to permit travel through crossings or avoidance of encroachment into the creek bed. Mitigation is recommended requiring that the conceptual pipeline layouts illustrated on Exhibit 3-3 (Recycled Water Distribution System) and Exhibit 3-4 (Potable Water Distribution System) be refined to further avoid potential impacts to the wildlife corridors by limiting their installation to previously disturbed and existing paved street areas, wherever feasible. The piping layouts would also incorporate trenchless construction technology to further limit potential impacts to corridors, wherever feasible. Also, future improvements would be subject to compliance with NCAP Standard CD-3 regarding development adjacent to Santa Rosa Creek, which would further reduce potential impacts to wildlife networks. Further review may be necessary on a project-by-project basis to evaluate site-specific impacts to wildlife corridors.

Water Demand Management. This Project component involves improvements to the current conservation program and regulations, which would not interfere with wildlife networks. No impact would occur in this regard.

Seawater Desalination. Based on the conceptual alignments illustrated on Exhibit 3-2, the seawater intake and seawater concentrate return pipelines could cross Van Gordon Creek and San Simeon Creek. These corridors represent potential migration routes and their disturbance would be considered a significant impact unless mitigated. Mitigation is recommended requiring that the conceptual pipeline layouts illustrated on Exhibit 3-2 (Preliminary Seawater Desalination Facilities) be refined to further avoid potential impacting creek corridors by limiting their installation to previously disturbed/existing paved street areas, and use of trenchless construction techniques, where feasible. Seawater desalination facilities impacting migration corridors would be subject to compliance with mitigation measures that would ensure corridor integrity. Additionally, compliance with relevant NCAP Standards would be required. A future project-specific EIR/EIS would need to further determine the potential impacts to wildlife corridors after more details become known regarding the desalination facility. Additionally, the EIR/EIS would analyze alternative desalination facility sites.



### **Mitigation Measures:**

BIO-12 The conceptual pipeline layouts illustrated on Exhibit 3-2 (Preliminary Seawater Desalination Facilities) shall be refined to further avoid potential impacts by limiting their installation to previously disturbed and existing paved street areas, wherever feasible. The piping layouts shall also incorporate trenchless construction technology to further limit potential impacts to the wildlife corridors, wherever feasible.

Refer also to Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-11.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

### **CAMBRIA FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN**

❖ IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROPOSED WATER MASTER PLAN IMPROVEMENTS COULD CONFLICT WITH THE PROVISIONS OF THE CAMBRIA FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN. ANALYSIS HAS CONCLUDED THAT IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED WITH IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH THE NORTH COAST AREA PLAN AND COASTAL ZONE LAND USE ORDINANCE STANDARDS.

### **Impact Analysis:**

#### **Potable and Recycled Water Distribution Systems**

As concluded in the *Sensitive Habitats and Resource Area* discussion above, it is not anticipated that implementation of the proposed Project components at existing water facilities (e.g., the WWTP, reservoir sites, pump stations, etc.) would conflict with the *Cambria Forest Management Plan*, since operational activities would be contained within existing developed sites. Specific impacts to native Monterey pine and coast live oak forest would be dependent upon the final improvement plans for potable and recycled water facilities. Through the County's development review process, future improvements would be evaluated to determine the appropriate permits for authorizing their use and the conditions for their establishment and operation. Future improvements would be subject to compliance with NCAP Standards CD-1, CD-13, and CD-14 regarding development in the Monterey Pine Forest. Compliance with CZLUO Section 23.07.170, which require mitigation for impacts to Monterey Pines, oaks, and forest habitat would be required. Also, future improvements would be subject to review and compliance with State and Federal regulatory policies and requirements. With the County's discretionary review of future improvements through the established procedures, and compliance with NCAP Standards and CZLUO policies, the proposed Project would be consistent with the *Cambria Forest Management Plan*.

Water Demand Management. This Project component involves improvements to the current conservation program and regulations, which would not conflict with the *Cambria Forest Management Plan*. No impact would occur in this regard.

Seawater Desalination. As illustrated on Figure 2-1 of the *Cambria Forest Management Plan*, the seawater desalination plant would not impact areas containing Monterey Pine Forest or



Monterey Pine Canopy. Thus, the seawater desalination facilities would be consistent with the *Cambria Forest Management Plan* and no impacts would occur in this regard.

**Mitigation Measures:** Refer to Mitigation Measure BIO-1 through BIO-12.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated.

## **CUMULATIVE IMPACTS**

❖ THE WATER MASTER PLAN PROJECT, COMBINED WITH FUTURE DEVELOPMENT IN THE NORTH COAST AREA, COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE AREA'S BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. FOLLOWING IMPLEMENTATION OF THE RECOMMENDED MITIGATION AND COMPLIANCE WITH FEDERAL, STATE, AND SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS, ON A PROJECT-BY-PROJECT BASIS, IMPACTS WOULD BE REDUCED.

**Impact Analysis:** When viewing the proposed Water Master Plan in conjunction with future development projects in the North Coast Area, the loss of sensitive species/habitats and interference with migration corridors could be concluded as significant cumulative effects. However, cumulative impacts to sensitive species/habitats and migration corridors are currently being mitigated on a project-by-project basis and in accordance with Federal, State, and County requirements. Following compliance with the regulatory requirements, recommended mitigation, and NCAP Standards, on a project-by-project basis, impacts would be reduced to less than significant levels. It is further noted that the 2005 NCAP Update EIR concluded that implementation of the Community Plans Update would not result in any significant impacts to biological resources.<sup>8</sup>

**Mitigation Measures:** No mitigation measures are recommended beyond compliance with the Federal, State, and County regulatory requirements on a project-by-project basis.

**Level of Significance:** Less Than Significant Impact.

## **LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION**

Analysis has concluded that following implementation of the recommended mitigation measures requiring compliance with North Coast Area Plan Standards, Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance policies, and State and Federal regulatory policies and requirements, impacts to biological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level.

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<sup>8</sup> Design, Community & Environment, *Cambria and San Simeon Acres Community Plans of the North Coast Area Plan Draft EIR*, May 18, 2005, Page 4.4-33.