

# Memorandum

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**Date:** January 11, 2024

**To:** Kendalyn White, County of San Diego LUE Planner/Biology Specialist  
Ashley Smith, County of San Diego Chief of Project Planning

**cc:** Jim Conrad, Ocean Breeze Ranch LLC  
Greg Shields, PDC/Bowman

**From:** Stacy Nigro, Principal Biologist, HELIX

**Subject:** Ocean Breeze Ranch – Biological Resources Updated Impacts and Mitigation Summary  
– PDS2016-MUP-16-012

**HELIX Project:** 3371.00001.001

## Message:

### Introduction

This memo summarizes minor changes to the habitat impacts and mitigation acreages originally approved in the 2019 Biological Resources Technical Report (BRTR) for the Ocean Breeze Ranch project and corresponding CEQA 15183 Exemption project approvals. This update is based on recent refinements to the impact footprint associated with preparation of final grading plans.

In addition to incorporating minor revisions to impacts and mitigation acreages for sensitive vegetation communities, this memo also summarizes temporary borrow site impacts to agriculture/row crops within the rear portions of Residential Lots 391-395 and HOA Lot GG. These impacts to disturbed lands do not require mitigation.

This memo includes associated minor updates to the following five figures in the BRTR: Figure 5, *Site Plan*; Figure 13, *Vegetation and Sensitive Resources/Impacts*; Figure 14a, *Proposed Biological Open Space*; Figure 14b, *Proposed Biological Open Space/Existing Vegetation Communities*; and Figure 20, *Biological Open Space and Conceptual Restoration/Enhancement Areas*.

## Impacts Summary

Of the vegetation communities that require mitigation, only three have changes in the impact acreages as compared to the 2019 BRTR: Diegan coastal sage scrub, non-native grassland, and extensive agriculture (pasture).

Diegan coastal sage scrub impacts increased by 0.3 acre to 32.8 acres; non-native grassland impacts decreased by 0.4 acre to 37.2 acres, and pasture impacts increased by 0.3 acre to 58.8 acres. Total project impacts to riparian habitat or other sensitive natural communities have decreased 0.1 acre to a total of 72.0 acres, from the original 72.1 acres. While pasture is not considered a sensitive vegetation community, impacts to pasture on the project site require mitigation because it functions as potential raptor foraging habitat. Figure 13, *Vegetation and Sensitive Resources/Impacts – September 2023 Updates*, reflects the corresponding minor updates to the site plan.

Based on 2023 refinements to the grading plan, total combined on- and off-site impacts to vegetation communities that require mitigation for impacts include 0.01 acre of southern willow scrub, 0.17 acre of mule fat scrub, less than 0.01 acre tamarisk scrub, 0.4 acre of coast live oak woodland, 32.8 acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub (including disturbed), 1.4 acres of flat-topped buckwheat scrub, 37.2 acres of non-native grassland, and 29.4 acres of pasture. A comparison of 2019 impacts to 2023 impacts is provided below in Table 1, *2019 Approved and 2023 Updated Impacts and Mitigation Comparison*.

**Table 1**  
**2019 APPROVED AND 2023 UPDATED IMPACTS AND MITIGATION COMPARISON<sup>1,2</sup>**

Vegetation Community	Impacts <sup>3</sup>		Change in Impacts <sup>4</sup>	Mitigation <sup>3</sup>		Change in Mitigation Required <sup>4</sup>
	2019	2023		2019	2023	
<b><i>Sensitive Vegetation Community</i></b>						
Southern Willow Scrub (63320)	0.01	0.01	0	0.03	0.03	0
Mule Fat Scrub (63310)	0.17	0.17	0	0.51	0.51	0
Tamarisk Scrub (63810)	< 0.01	< 0.01	0	0.03	0.03	0
Coast Live Oak Woodland (71160) <sup>5</sup>	0.4	0.4	0	7.8	7.8	0
Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub (32500)	32.5	32.8	0.3	97.5	98.4	0.9
Flat-topped Buckwheat Scrub (32800)	1.4	1.4	0	4.2	4.2	0
Non-native Grassland (42200)	37.6	37.2	(0.4)	18.8	18.6	(0.2)
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>72.1</b>	<b>72.0</b>	<b>(0.1)</b>	<b>128.87</b>	<b>129.57</b>	<b>0.7</b>
<b><i>Non-sensitive Vegetation Community</i></b>						
Extensive Agriculture / Pasture (18310) <sup>6</sup>	58.5	58.8	0.3	29.3	29.4	0.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>130.6</b>	<b>130.8</b>	<b>0.2</b>	<b>158.17</b>	<b>158.97</b>	<b>0.8</b>

<sup>1</sup>Areas are presented in acre(s) rounded to the nearest 0.1 for uplands and to the nearest 0.01 acre for wetlands.

<sup>2</sup>This table only includes project impacts to vegetation communities requiring mitigation.

<sup>3</sup>The 2019 columns refer to acreages in the County-approved August 2019 Biological Resources Technical Report. The 2023 columns are the revised acreages based on the final grading plan.

<sup>4</sup>Decreases in impacts/mitigation are shown in parentheses.

<sup>5</sup>Direct impacts to oak woodland totals 0.4 acre. An additional 2.2 acres of oak root zone also would be impacted, composed of 0.2 acre of Diegan coastal sage scrub, 0.9 acre of non-native grassland, 0.1 acre of pasture, 0.4 acre of disturbed habitat, and 0.6 acre of developed land. These impact acreages are incorporated into the respective vegetation communities in this table. Impacts to oak root zone are mitigated at 3:1 with oak woodland.

<sup>6</sup>Although not considered a sensitive habitat, impacts to pasture require mitigation for raptor foraging.

## Mitigation Summary

Minor revisions to the site plan have resulted in a 0.5-acre decrease in the size of the on-site biological open space, from 832.7 acres to 832.2 acres (Figure 14a, *Proposed Biological Open Space/September 2023 Updates*; Figure 14b, *Proposed Biological Open Space/Existing Vegetation Communities - September 2023 Updates*; and Figure 20, *Biological Open Space and Conceptual Restoration/Enhancement Areas – September 2023 Updates*). However, the project's proposed preservation of upland habitats within on-site biological open space still covers the mitigation needed for the 0.3 acre increases in impacts to both Diegan coastal sage scrub and pasture, as the biological open space contains habitat areas in excess of what is needed for mitigation. The net increase in required mitigation is 0.8 acre within an 832.2-acre area of biological open space, of which only 158.97 acres are needed to meet habitat mitigation requirements. Thus, the mitigation still covers all impacts.

## Mitigation Measure Updates

Minor updates to the acreages listed in the corresponding mitigation measures are shown below in tracked changes:

**BIO-1a** Mitigation for impacts to 34.2 ~~33.9~~ acres of coastal California gnatcatcher habitat (32.8 ~~32.5~~ acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub and 1.4 acres of flat-topped buckwheat scrub) shall occur at a 3:1 ratio through the on-site preservation of 102.6 ~~101.7~~ acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub within a biological open space easement.<sup>1</sup>

**BIO-4a** Mitigation for impacts to 37.2 ~~37.6~~ acres of non-native grassland shall occur at a 0.5:1 ratio through the on-site preservation of 18.6 ~~18.8~~ acres of non-native grassland within a biological open space easement. The mitigation shall be provided prior to the issuance of a grading permit.

**BIO-4b** Mitigation for impacts to 58.8 ~~58.5~~ acres of pasture shall occur at a 0.5:1 ratio through the on-site preservation of 29.4 ~~29.3~~ acres of grassland habitat and/or other like-functioning habitat (e.g., fallow orchard) within a biological open space easement. The mitigation shall be provided prior to the issuance of a grading permit.

**BIO-6c** Mitigation for 32.8 ~~32.5~~ acres of impacts to Diegan coastal sage scrub and 1.4 acres of impacts to flat-topped buckwheat scrub shall occur at a 3:1 ratio through the on-site preservation of 102.6 ~~101.7~~ acres of Diegan coastal sage scrub within a biological open space easement. The mitigation shall be provided prior to the issuance of a grading permit.

**BIO-6d** Mitigation for 37.2 ~~37.6~~ acres of impacts to non-native grassland shall occur through implementation of BIO-4a, above. The mitigation shall be provided prior to the issuance of a grading permit.

## Temporary Borrow Site

The 2019 BRTR identified a 22.7-acre area of former row crops in the rear portions of six lots (Residential Lots 391-395 and HOA Lot GG) within the northern portion of Planning Area 3 as a limited

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<sup>1</sup> Only the first paragraph of this mitigation measure is included herein, as it is the only part with changes.

use easement (LUE) area, which would identify the 22.7-acre area as non-buildable space and allow for implementation of equestrian uses (e.g., conversion to pasture). This area was intensively cultivated with tomatoes and other farm crops for many years, until the use was abandoned, and the areas left fallow in recent years. This 22.7-acre area is not part of the existing equestrian pastures in the adjacent equestrian facility, which will be placed in a separate LUE.

The 22.7-acre LUE area occurs on a gradually rising north-facing slope. Soil will be removed from this area as part of the need to balance the site for the residential development, resulting in an overall flatter gradient across the area than the current sloped condition. The excavation will occur from 0-feet to a maximum depth of 18.1 feet with an average cut of 4.3-feet across the lots, with the depth of soil removal increasing as the slope becomes steeper, such that the resulting ground surface is more level across the LUE area. The proposed excavation of soil will not result in large pits or holes in the ground surface, rather, it will create a smooth ground surface at a more level gradient than current conditions. As such, the recontoured LUE will not impede wildlife movement. Additionally, the post-excavation topography is more conducive to conversion to equestrian pasture due to its flatter ground surface and will more closely resemble the topography of nearby existing equestrian pastures in the adjacent equestrian facility.

Following soil removal and recontouring of the ground surface to a more level condition, the disturbed areas will be hydroseeded in accordance with County requirements, which may include an erosion control seed mix suitable for use as unimproved pasture or an improved pasture-focused seed mix. Converting the LUE to pasture, either unimproved or improved, will enhance foraging opportunities for wildlife, particularly birds, as many avian species are known to forage in and over the equestrian pastures in the adjacent equestrian facility.

The use of the 22.7-acre LUE area in Planning Area 3 as a temporary borrow site will not result in impacts to sensitive vegetation communities or sensitive species, and the use will remain consistent with the 2019 BRTR, with the 22.7-acre area remaining as non-buildable space within a limited use easement that allows for conversion to pasture.

Please let me know if you have any questions or if there is any additional information needed.

Sincerely,



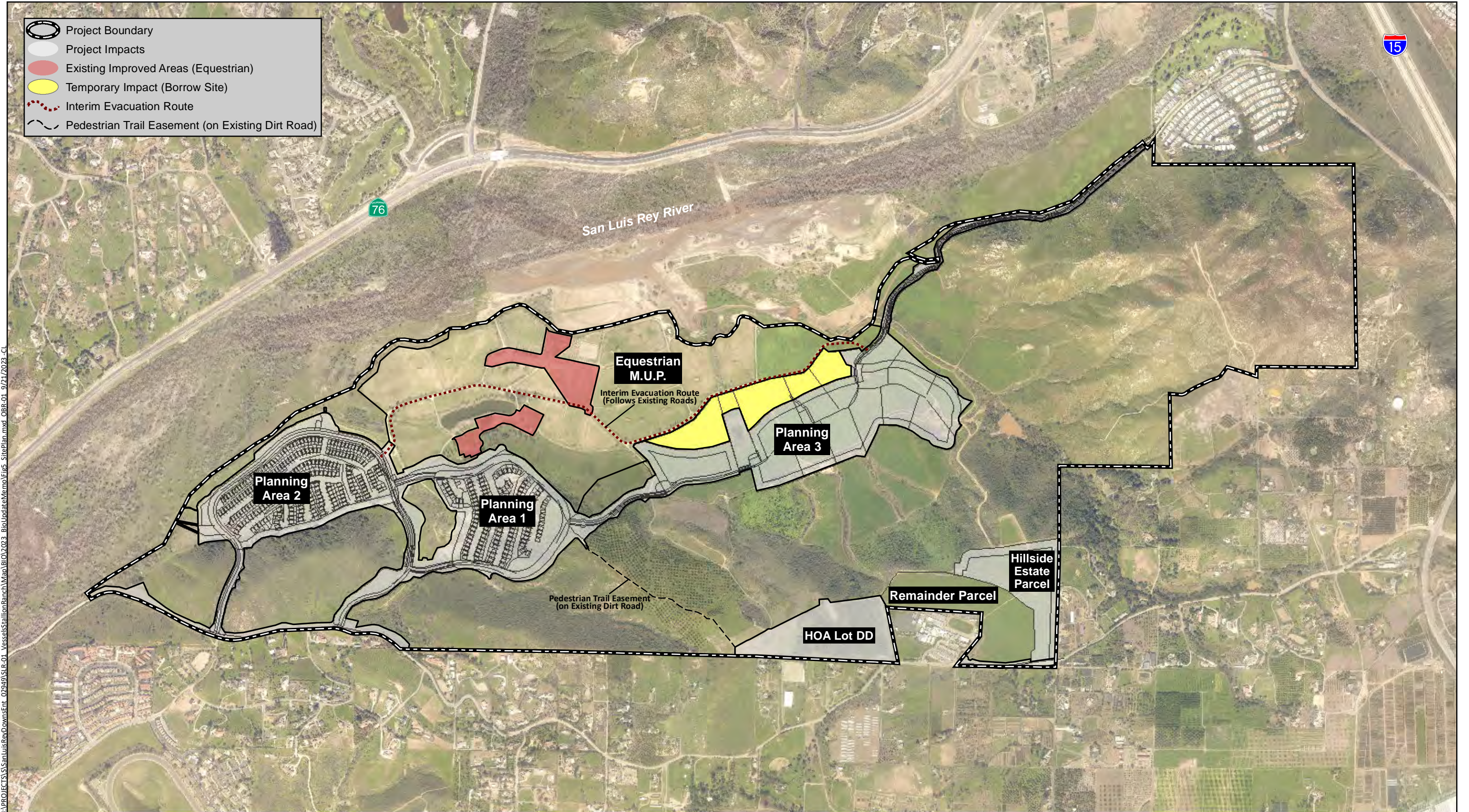
Stacy Nigro  
Principal Biologist

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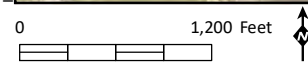
- Figure 5 Site Plan – September 2023 Updates
- Figure 13 Vegetation and Sensitive Resources/Impacts – September 2023 Updates
- Figure 14a Proposed Biological Open Space/September 2023 Updates
- Figure 14b Proposed Biological Open Space/Existing Vegetation Communities - September 2023 Updates

Figure 20 Biological Open Space and Conceptual Restoration/Enhancement Areas – September 2023 Updates





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Source: Aerial (SanGIS, 2017).

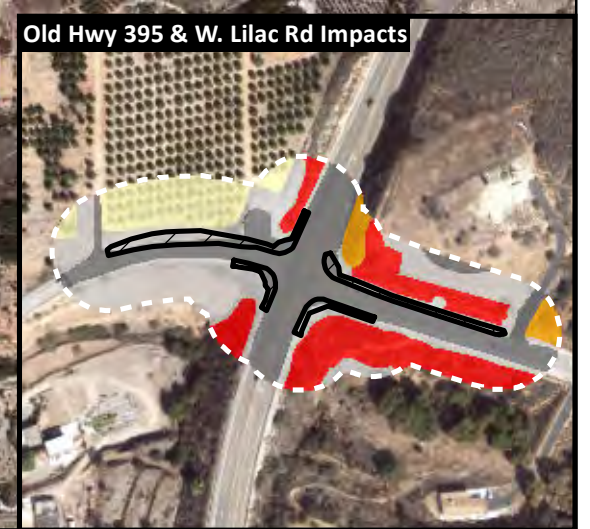
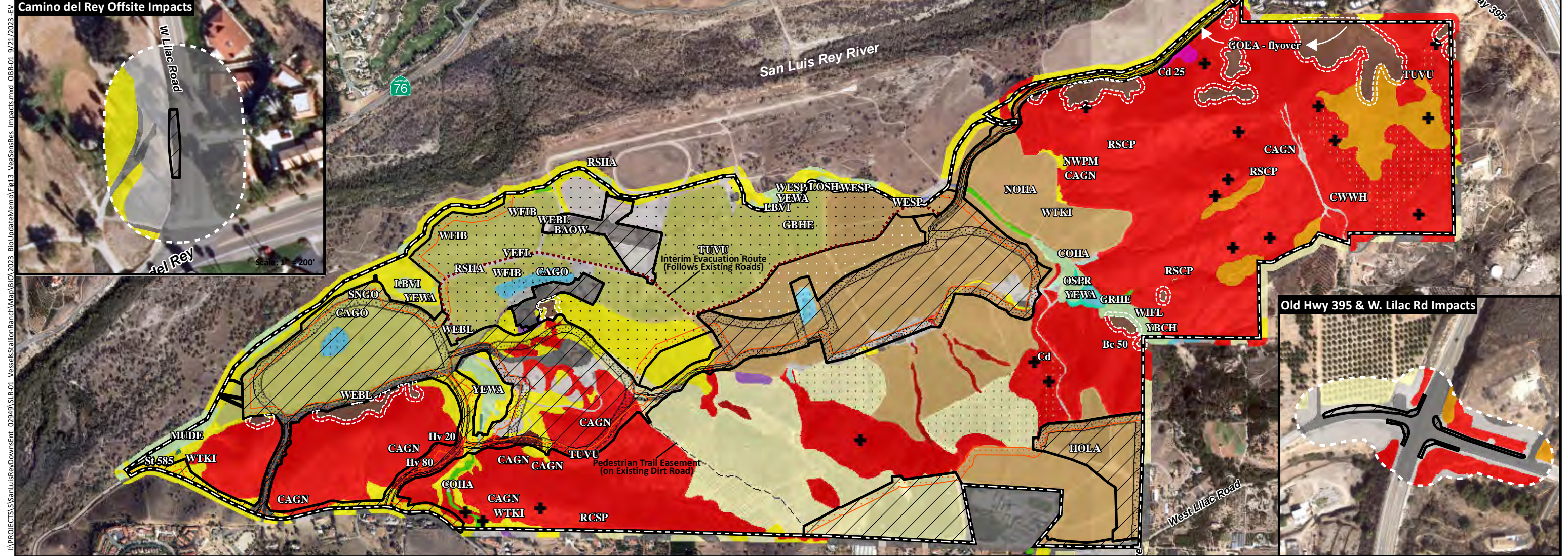


	Project Boundary		Coast Live Oak Woodland (71160)*	<b>Other</b>		Rock Outcrop
	Equestrian MUP		Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub (32500)*	<b>Animals</b>		Barn Owl ( <i>Tyto alba</i> )
	Impact		Diegan Coastal Sage Scrub - Disturbed (32500)*	<b>CAGN</b>		Coastal California Gnatcatcher ( <i>Poliopitila californica californica</i> )
	Temporary Impact (Borrow Site)		Coastal Sage-Chaparral Scrub (37G00)*	<b>CAGO</b>		Canada Goose ( <i>Branta canadensis</i> )
	Fuel Modification Zone		Flat-topped Buckwheat Scrub (32800)*	<b>COWH</b>		Coastal Western Whiptail ( <i>Aspidoscelis tigris stejnegeri</i> )
	Limited Building Zone		Southern Mixed Chaparral (37120)*	<b>COHA</b>		Cooper's Hawk ( <i>Accipiter cooperii</i> )
	Interim Evacuation Route (Follows Existing Roads)		Non-native Grassland (42200)*	<b>COHA</b>		Golden Eagle ( <i>Aquila chrysaetos</i> )
	Pedestrian Trail Easement (on Existing Dirt Road)		Pasture (18310)	<b>GRHE</b>		Green Heron ( <i>Butorides virescens</i> )
	50-ft Oak Root Protection Zone		Row Crops (18320)*	<b>HOLA</b>		California Horned Lark ( <i>Eremophila alpestris actia</i> )
<b>Vegetation Communities/Land Use Types**</b>			Orchard (18100)*	<b>LBVI</b>		Least Bell's Vireo ( <i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i> )
	Southern Cottonwood-willow Riparian Forest (61330)*		Fallow Orchard (18100)*	<b>LOSH</b>		Loggerhead Shrike ( <i>Lanius ludovicianus</i> )
	Southern Willow Scrub (63320)*		Open Water/AG Pond (64100)	<b>MUDE</b>		Mule Deer ( <i>Odocoileus hemionus</i> )
	Mule Fat Scrub (63310)*		Eucalyptus Woodland (11000)	<b>NOHA</b>		Northern Harrier ( <i>Circus cyaneus</i> )
	Freshwater Marsh (52400)		Non-native Vegetation (79100)*	<b>NWPM</b>		Northwestern San Diego Pocket Mouse ( <i>Chaetodipus fallax fallax</i> )
	Herbaceous Wetland (52510)*		Disturbed Habitat (11300)	<b>OSPR</b>		Osprey ( <i>Pandion haliaetus</i> )
	Open Water/Freshwater Pond (64140)		Urban/Developed (12000)	<b>RCSP</b>		Southern California Rufous-crowned Sparrow ( <i>Aimophila ruficeps canescens</i> )
	Tamarisk Scrub (63810)*			<b>RSHA</b>		Red-Shouldered Hawk ( <i>Buteo lineatus</i> )

\*All or most of this vegetation community burned during the December 2017 Lilac Fire.

\*\* Numeric codes following the community/habitat type names are from the County's Biological Resources Guidelines (County 2010) and are based on the "Preliminary Descriptions of the Terrestrial Natural Communities of California" (Holland 1996, Oberbauer 2008).

<b>Plants</b>	<b>Bc</b>	Brewer's Calandrinia ( <i>Calandrinia breweri</i> )
	<b>Cd</b>	Delicate Clarkia ( <i>Clarkia delicata</i> )
	<b>Hv</b>	Graceful Tarplant ( <i>Holocarpha virgata</i> ssp. <i>elongata</i> )
	<b>St</b>	Smooth Tarplant ( <i>Centromadia pungens</i> ssp. <i>laevis</i> )

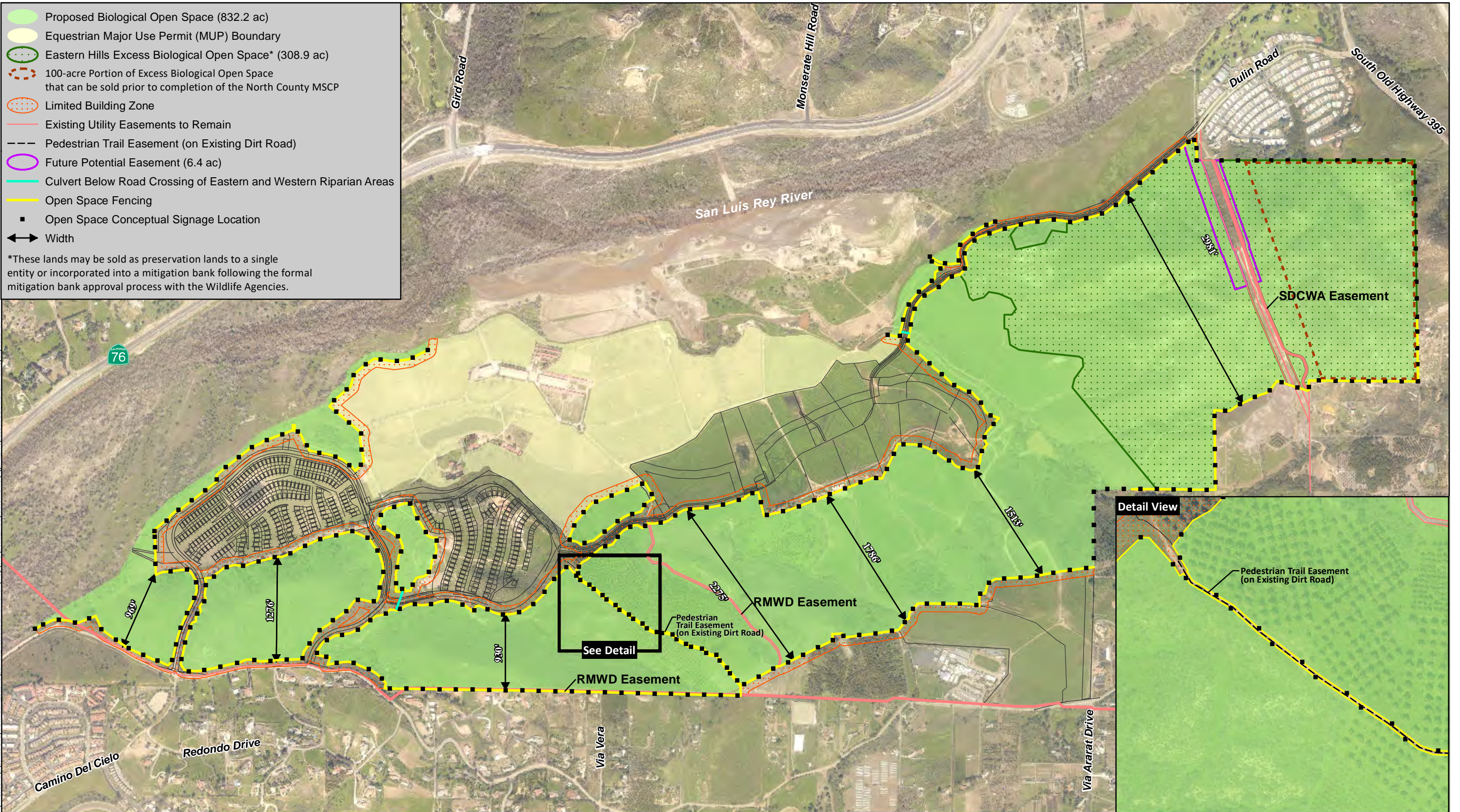


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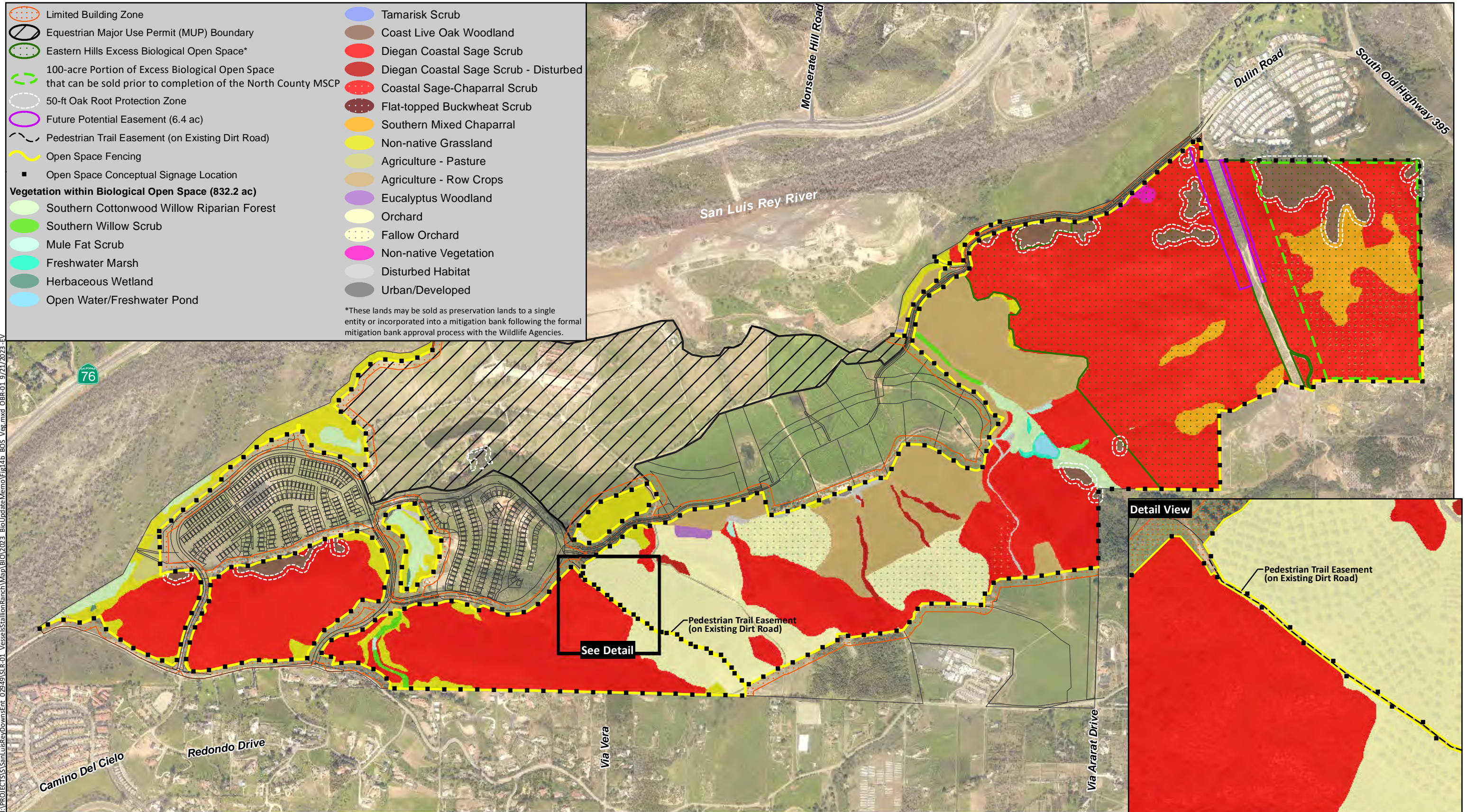
Vegetation and Sensitive Resources/Impacts September 2023 Updates





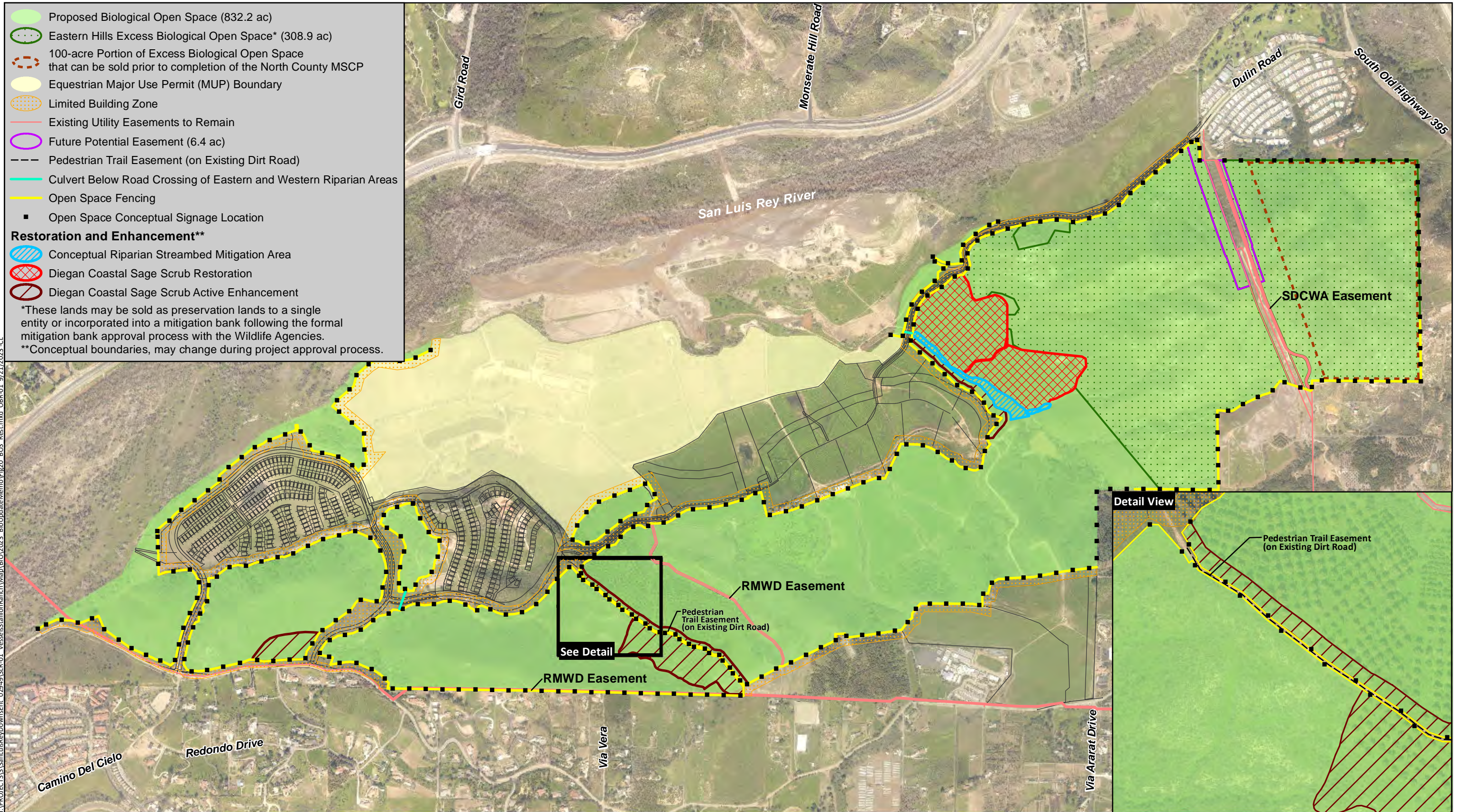
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