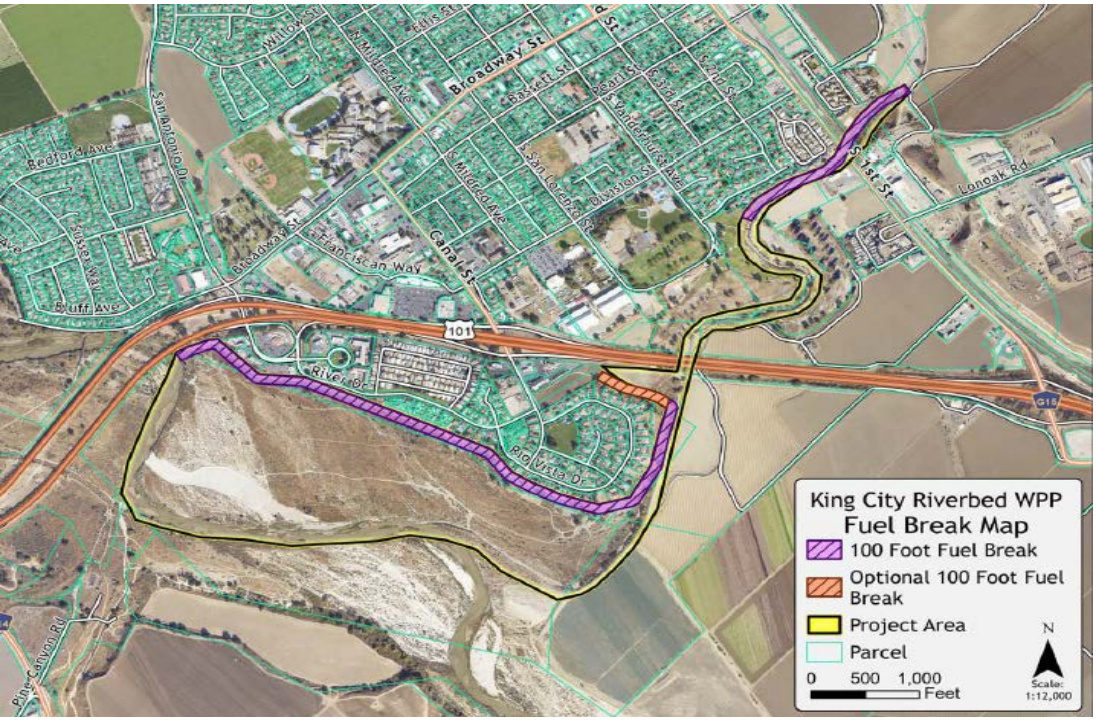
**Public Review**
**Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration**

# King City
# Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan

City of King

July 26, 2024




**Prepared by**

**EMC Planning Group**

PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

# KING CITY
# RIVERBED WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLAN
## CITY OF KING

PREPARED FOR

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July 26, 2024

# PROPOSED MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

## In Compliance with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Name | King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan |
| Lead Agency | City of King |
| Project Proponent | City of King (Community Development Department) |
| Project Location | Areas of Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek both within City of King and Unincorporated Monterey County as well as in California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) (State Highway 101) and Union Pacific Railroad right-of-way (portions of the following APNs: 245-081-031; 235-052-007; 235-052-008; 02-031-021; 026-031-011; 026-121-006; 026-461-022; 026-121-004; 235-051-010; 026-131-007; 026-221-002; 235-031-005; 235-031-006; 026-293-003; 235-021-009; 026-311-005; 235-021-016; 026-311-003) |
| Project Description | The King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan (RWPP) serves as a framework for a long-term fire resiliency and prioritizes hazard reduction projects along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek in or near the City of King, California. The plan achieves the two following goals: 1) provides guidance and strategies to increase the wildfire resilience of the community; and, 2) protects and enhances the wildlife habitat and ecological value of the project area. The plan was developed by Deer Creek Resources (DCR) with input from City of King staff, collaborating agencies, and the community. The RWPP uses aerial photography and field surveys to map vegetation, analyze potential wildfire hazards within the project area, and prioritize wildfire hazard mitigation projects. The primary implementation measure recommended by the RWPP is the creation of a fuel break on the edge of the Salinas Riverbed to protect homes and businesses and prevent a wildland fire from becoming an urban conflagration. A fuel break will starve an expanding fire of fuels while providing firefighters operational safety and access. While the remaining project recommendations will increase the fire safety and aesthetics of the project area and King City, the fuel break will provide the most protection. |
| Public Review Period | Begins – July 31, 2024<br>Ends – August 30, 2024 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Written Comments To | City of King Community Development Department<br>Attn: Doreen Liberto, Community Development Director<br>212 S. Vanderhurst Avenue<br>King City, CA 93930<br>E-mail: dliberto@kingcity.com |
| Proposed Findings | The City of King is the custodian of the documents and other material that constitute the record of proceedings upon which this decision is based.<br><br>The initial study indicates that the proposed project has the potential to result in significant adverse environmental impacts. However, the mitigation measures identified in the initial study would reduce the impacts to a less than significant level. There is no substantial evidence, in light of the whole record before the lead agency, City of King, that the project, with mitigation measures incorporated, may have a significant effect on the environment. See the following project-specific mitigation measures: |

## Mitigation Measures

### *Biological Resources*

BIO-1 The summer blooming period prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, a biologist qualified in botany shall conduct a focused survey for Davidson's bush mallow and umbrella larkspur in accordance with current California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Native Plant Society rare plant survey protocols (CDFW 2018 and CNPS 2001). Some special-status plant species are only identifiable during their blooming periods and surveys are only considered valid if they occur when blooms are visible. The survey shall occur during the peak blooming period for these species to determine their presence or absence. Based on the known blooming periods of the special-status plant species potentially present, two surveys would be necessary to adequately survey the project site: the first in May/June and the second in August/September. If possible, known reference populations of the target species in the project vicinity shall first be visited to verify that the species is observable, and the focused survey shall be conducted within two weeks of observing the reference population in full bloom.

The biologist shall prepare a brief report documenting the results of the surveys for submittal to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities. If the focused surveys conclude that special-status plant species are not present within the project site boundary, or if they are present but impacts can be

completely avoided, then no further mitigation would be required. Focused plant surveys are generally considered valid for two years. Surveys shall be repeated if disturbance activities are planned after two years.

If at any point special-status plant species are identified within the project site boundary and they would be affected by the proposed project, then appropriate mitigation shall be developed by the biologist and implemented prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities. Measures may include, but are not limited to:

a. A qualified biologist shall identify an on-site or off-site mitigation area suitable for restoration of habitat and seed transplantation for any special-status plant species.

b. Prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, a qualified biologist or native plant specialist shall perform seed collection from all special-status plants located within the impact areas and implement seed installation at the mitigation area at the optimal time. Additionally, topsoil from the special-status species occurrence area(s) shall be salvaged (where practical) for use in the mitigation area.

c. A maintenance and monitoring program shall be developed by a qualified biologist and established for a minimum of five years after mitigation area installation to verify that restoration activities have been successful. Maintenance activities may include, but not be limited to, watering during the plant establishment period, supplemental seed planting as needed, and removal of non-native plants. Monitoring shall include, at a minimum, quarterly monitoring reports for the first year and annual reports for the remaining four years. The performance standard for successful mitigation shall be a minimum 3:1 replacement ratio (i.e., three plants observed in mitigation area for each plant lost from the project site) achieved in at least one of the five years of monitoring.

The King City Community Development Department will be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure. Compliance with this measure shall be documented prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities by a letter report prepared by the biologist and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file.

BIO-2 Prior to implementation measures 1-4 that include ground disturbance or vegetation removal, a qualified biologist shall conduct a training session for all project personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of special-status species potentially occurring in the project vicinity, including, but not limited to, special-status plants (if present), Monterey hitch, California red-legged frog, Northern California legless lizard, southwestern pond turtle,

burrowing owl, American badger, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, San Joaquin kit fox, special-status bat species, and nesting birds and raptors. Their habitats, general measures that are being implemented to conserve species as they relate to the project, and the boundaries within which project activities will occur will be explained. Informational handouts with photographs clearly illustrating the species' appearances shall be used in the training session. As new phases or activities begin, all new project personnel shall undergo this mandatory environmental awareness training. The project contractor shall document evidence of completion of this training by a letter report prepared by the biologist and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities.

The qualified biologist will train biological monitors selected from the project crew by the project contractor (typically the project foreman). Before the start of work each day, the monitor will check for animals under any equipment such as vehicles. If a special-status species is observed within an active project area, the qualified biologist will be notified immediately and all work within 50 feet of the individual will be halted and all equipment turned off until the individual has left the area.

BIO-3 The following measures shall be implemented to protect Monterey hitch and aquatic habitats:

a. Implementation measures 1-4 that require ground disturbance activities within the active channels of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek shall be conducted from September to April each year, during periods of low flow (Salinas River) or no flow (San Lorenzo Creek), outside of the spawning period for Monterey hitch.

b. For the duration of the project, herbicides may be applied to vegetation within a 10-foot buffer zone along the edge of the active channel for non-native invasive vegetation treatment only. Only herbicides approved for use in aquatic environments shall be used.

c. For the duration of the project will use work measures including Best Management Practices (BMPs), time-of-year-restrictions, water pollution prevention, erosion control, and tree root protection to further minimize erosion and impacts to riparian and aquatic habitat. BMPs intended to reduce erosion of exposed soil into the bed and banks of the creek may include, but are not limited to, soil stabilization controls, watering for dust control, silt fencing, and fiber rolls. Standard erosion control and slope stabilization measures will be required for work performed in any area where erosion could lead to sedimentation of the creek. Plastic monofilament netting (erosion control matting), loosely woven netting, or similar material in any form shall not be used at the project site as wildlife

can become entangled and trapped in them. Materials utilizing fixed weaves (strands cannot move), polypropylene, polymer, or other synthetic materials shall not be used.

BIO-4 Ground disturbance and/or vegetation removal activities (implementation measures 1-4) are proposed within and immediately adjacent to California red-legged frog habitat. Project implementation may directly impact aquatic habitat and upland habitat. Prior to the start of disturbance activities, one or both of the following options will be implemented:

*Option 1. Protocol-Level Surveys for California Red-Legged Frog*

Protocol surveys will be conducted per the *Revised Guidance on Site Assessments and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog* (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2005) to determine if California red-legged frog is present at the project site. If surveys result in a negative finding, documentation will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for confirmation. If the negative finding is considered valid no further action is required.

If California red-legged frog is found, Incidental Take Authorization will be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, as detailed in Option 2, below.

*Option 2. Assume Presence of California Red-Legged Frog and Obtain Incidental Take Authorization*

If the presence of California red-legged frog is determined during protocol-level surveys or it is assumed that they are present on the project site, the King City Community Development Department shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a permit term for the duration of the project. The King City Community Development Department will ensure that all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation measures required in the permit to minimize the potential for "take" of California red-legged frog are implemented.

BIO-5 Prior to implementation measures 1-4 that include ground disturbance in areas with sandy soils (which includes a majority of the project area), the King City Community Development Department shall retain a qualified biologist to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts to legless lizards, depending on the proposed activity. Measures may include, but not be limited to:

a. Preconstruction Surveys. Within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance in potential habitat, preconstruction surveys shall be conducted. Methods include a "three-pass, high grading" methodology that requires raking of the soil to locate and remove as many California legless lizards as possible.

If legless lizards are found during the first pass, an overnight period of no soil disturbance must occur before the second pass. The same requirement will be implemented after the second pass if legless lizards are located. If no California legless lizards are found during the second pass, a third pass is not required.

b. Identification of Relocation Site(s). Prior to surveying and construction, one or more relocation sites shall be identified by a qualified biologist. All relocation sites shall be approved by the King City Community Development Department and shall consist of suitable habitat. Relocation sites shall be as close to the capture site as possible but far enough away to ensure the animal(s) is/are not harmed by construction of the project. Relocation shall occur on the same day as capture. California Department of Fish and Wildlife California Natural Diversity Database Native Species Field Survey Forms shall be submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for all special-status species observed.

c. Barrier fencing. If California legless lizards are observed, a barrier shall be installed to prevent movement of legless lizards back into the work are. All captured California legless lizards would be moved to the nearby relocation site(s) identified in (b).

d. Monitoring. A qualified biologist shall be onsite to monitor ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities and salvage and relocate any legless lizards encountered. The monitoring shall walk alongside equipment/crews in each new area of disturbance, and shall have authority to halt activities temporarily if necessary to capture and relocate legless lizards. Any legless lizards captured shall be relocated as soon as possible to the nearby relocation site(s) identified in (b).

BIO-6 The King City Community Development Department shall implement the following measures for the protection of western pond turtle:

a. Within 24 hours prior to vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities associated with implementation measures 1-4, the King City Community Development Department shall retain a biologist qualified to survey for southwestern pond turtle, including their eggs and nests, to conduct a preconstruction survey along aquatic features and an adjacent 300-feet buffer of riparian areas in and adjacent to the project site.

b. If southwestern pond turtle or their nests are observed during preconstruction surveys, a qualified biologist shall be on-site to monitor activities in suitable habitat. Southwestern pond turtles found within the project area shall be allowed to leave of their own volition or they shall be captured by a qualified biologist and relocated out of harm's way to the

nearest suitable habitat immediately upstream or downstream from the project area. Pond turtle relocation shall only be conducted after notifying the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

c. If southwestern pond turtle nests are identified in the work area during preconstruction surveys, a 300-foot no disturbance buffer shall be established between the nest and any areas of potential disturbance. Buffers shall be clearly marked with temporary fencing. Disturbance activities will not be allowed to commence in the exclusion area until hatchlings have emerged from the nest, or the nest is deemed inactive by a qualified biologist.

d. All construction-related trenches, holes, or pits shall be covered at the end of each workday to prevent entrapment of pond turtles.

The qualified biologist shall prepare a report documenting the results of the preconstruction survey(s) for submittal to the King City Community Development Department prior to ground disturbance.

BIO-7 To avoid loss of or harm to burrowing owl as a result of implementation measures 1-4, the following measures shall be implemented:

a. To avoid/minimize impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring within the project site, a biologist qualified in ornithology shall conduct surveys for burrowing owl prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal. The qualified biologist shall conduct a two-visit (i.e., morning and evening) presence/absence survey at areas of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the project site boundary no less than 14 days prior to the start of construction or ground disturbance activities. Surveys shall be conducted according to the methods for take avoidance described in the *Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines* (CBOC 1993) and the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012). If no burrowing owls are found, a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department and no further measures are required.

b. Because burrowing owls occupy habitat year-round, seasonal no-disturbance buffers, as outlined in the *Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines* (CBOC 1993) and the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012), shall be in place around occupied habitat prior to and during any ground disturbance activities. The following table includes buffer areas based on the time of year and level of disturbance (CDFG 2012), unless a qualified biologist approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife verifies through non-invasive measures that either:

1) birds have not begun egg laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival.

| Location | Time of Year | Level of Disturbance Buffers (meters) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Med | High |
| Nesting Sites | April 1 – Aug 15 | 200 m | 500 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Sites | Aug 16 – Oct 15 | 200 m | 200 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Sites | Oct 16 – Mar 31 | 50 m | 100 m | 500 m |

c. If burrowing owl is found and avoidance is not possible, burrow exclusion may be conducted by qualified biologists only during the non-breeding season, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty through non-invasive methods, such as surveillance. Occupied burrows shall be replaced with artificial burrows at a ratio of one collapsed burrow to one constructed artificial burrow (1:1). Evicted burrowing owls may attempt to colonize or re-colonize an area that would be impacted, thus ongoing surveillance during project activities shall be conducted at a rate sufficient to detect burrowing owls if they return.

d. If surveys locate occupied burrows in or near construction areas, consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall occur to interpret survey results and develop a project-specific avoidance and minimization approach. Once the absence of burrowing owl has been confirmed, a letter report shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department.

BIO-8 Prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, and not more than 14 days prior to the commencement of ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, a qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct surveys to identify any potential American badger burrows/dens. If the survey results are negative (i.e., no badger dens observed), a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities and no further mitigation is required.

If the results are positive (badger dens are observed), the qualified biologist shall determine if the dens are active by installing a game camera for three days and three nights to determine if the den is in use.

a. If the biologist determines that a den may be active, coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be undertaken to develop a suitable strategy to avoid impacts to American badger. The strategy may include the following: the biologist shall install a one-way door in the den opening and continue use of the game camera. Once the camera captures the individual exiting the one-way door, the den can be excavated with hand tools to prevent badgers from reusing them. If the biologist determines that the den is a maternity den, project activities shall be delayed during the maternity season (February to August), or until the badgers leave the den on their own accord or the biologist determines that the den is no longer in use.

b. If the game camera does not capture an individual entering/exiting the den, the den can be excavated with hand tools to prevent badgers from reusing them.

c. After dens have been excavated and the absence of American badger confirmed, a letter report shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal.

BIO-9 Prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests within thirty (30) days prior to the start of disturbance activities. If the survey results are negative (i.e., no woodrat nests observed), a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities and no further mitigation is required.

If the results are positive (woodrat nests are observed), all Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests shall be mapped and flagged for avoidance.

If Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests are found that cannot be avoided, each active nest shall be disturbed by the qualified biologist to the degree that Monterey dusky-footed woodrat leaves the nest and seeks refuge elsewhere. After the nests have been disturbed, the nest sticks shall be removed from the impact areas and placed outside of areas planned for impacts. Nests shall be dismantled during the non-breeding season (between October 1 and December 31), if possible. If a litter of young is found or suspected, nest material shall be replaced and the nest left alone for 2-3 weeks, after this time the nest will be rechecked to verify that young are capable of independent survival before proceeding with nest dismantling.

After nests have been dismantled and the absence of Monterey dusky-footed woodrat confirmed, a letter report shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal.

BIO-10 The *U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance* (USFWS 2011) shall be implemented prior to the initiation of any ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities associated with implementation measures 1-4 on the project site to avoid unintended take of individual San Joaquin kit foxes.

Pre-activity surveys for San Joaquin kit fox shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no less than 30 days prior to the beginning of project activities, including ground disturbance or vegetation removal, that may impact San Joaquin kit fox. The surveys shall include all work areas and a minimum 200-foot buffer of the project site. The pre-project implementation surveys shall identify kit fox habitat features on the project site, evaluate use by kit fox and, if possible, assess the potential impacts of the proposed activity. The status of all dens shall be determined and mapped.

If a natal/pupping den is discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project boundary, the project contractor shall consult with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish an appropriate avoidance buffer. The avoidance buffer shall be maintained until such time as the burrow is no longer active and/or an incidental take permit is determined to be required and is obtained.

In addition, the following measures shall be observed:

a. Project-related vehicles shall observe a 20-mph speed limit in all project areas. Night-time project activities shall be prohibited. Off-road traffic outside of the designated project area shall be prohibited.

b. To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during project implementation, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials, or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the procedures under number 11 of the Construction and Operational Requirements in the Standardized Recommendations must be followed.

c. Kit foxes are attracted to den-like structures such as pipes and may enter stored pipe becoming trapped or injured. If used, all pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater stored at the construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until the U.S. Fish and

Wildlife Service has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of the biologist, the pipe may be moved once to remove it from the path of construction activity, until the fox has escaped.

d. All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps shall be disposed of in closed containers and removed at least once a week from the project site.

e. No firearms shall be allowed on the project site during project implementation activities.

f. To prevent harassment, mortality of kit foxes or destruction of dens by dogs or cats, no pets shall be permitted on site during project implementation.

g. Use of rodenticides and herbicides on the project site during project implementation shall be restricted. This is necessary to prevent primary or secondary poisoning of kit foxes and the depletion of prey populations on which they depend. All uses of such compounds shall observe label and other restrictions mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other State and Federal legislation, as well as additional project related restrictions deemed necessary by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If rodent control must be conducted, zinc phosphide shall be used because of proven lower risk to kit fox.

h. In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape.

i. Any contractor, employee, or agency personnel who inadvertently kills or injures a San Joaquin kit fox shall immediately report the incident to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

BIO-11 If possible, project activities should be conducted between September 16 and January 14 to avoid impacts to nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through September 15). If implementation measures 1-4 are scheduled during the nesting season (February 15 to August 30 for small bird species such as passerines; January 15 to September 15 for owls; and February 15 to September 15 for other raptors), a qualified biologist shall conduct nesting bird surveys as follows:

a. Two surveys for active bird nests will occur within 14 days prior to start of ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, with the final survey conducted within 48 hours prior to project commencement. Appropriate minimum survey radii surrounding each work area are

typically 250 feet for passerines, 500 feet for smaller raptors, and 1,000 feet for larger raptors. Surveys will be conducted at the appropriate times of day to observe nesting activities. Locations off the site to which access is not available may be surveyed from within the site or from public areas. If no nesting birds are found, a letter report will be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, and no further measures are required.

b. If the qualified biologist documents active nests within the project site or in nearby surrounding areas, an appropriate buffer between each nest and active project activities shall be established. The buffer shall be clearly marked and maintained until the young have fledged and are foraging independently. Prior to project activities, the qualified biologist shall conduct baseline monitoring of each nest to characterize "normal" bird behavior and establish a buffer distance, which allows the birds to exhibit normal behavior. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nesting birds daily during project activities and increase the buffer if birds show signs of unusual or distressed behavior (e.g., defensive flights and vocalizations, standing up from a brooding position, and/or flying away from the nest). If buffer establishment is not possible, the qualified biologist or project foreman shall have the authority to cease all project work in the area until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. Once the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed, a letter report will be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, and no further measures are required.

BIO-12 Prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment for bats and potential roosting sites in trees to be removed and trees within 50 feet of the project area approximately 14 days prior to tree removal or disturbance activities. These surveys shall include a visual inspection of potential roosting features (bats need not be present) and a search for presence of guano within the project site, construction access routes, and 50 feet around these areas. Cavities, crevices, exfoliating bark, and bark fissures that could provide suitable potential nest or roost habitat for bats shall be surveyed. Assumptions can be made on what species is present due to observed visual characteristics along with habitat use, or the bats can be identified to the species level with the use of a bat echolocation detector such as an "Anabat" unit. Potential roosting features found during the survey shall be flagged or marked.

If no roosting sites or bats are found, a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department and no further mitigation is required. If bats or roosting sites are found, bats shall not be disturbed without specific notice to and consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The nursery season is typically considered May 1 through October 1. If bats are found roosting outside of the nursery season, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be consulted prior to any eviction or other action. If avoidance or postponement is not feasible, a Bat Eviction Plan will be submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for written approval prior to project implementation. A request to evict bats from a roost includes details for excluding bats from the roost site and monitoring to ensure that all bats have exited the roost prior to the start of activity and are unable to re-enter the roost until activity is completed. Any bat eviction shall be timed to avoid lactation and young-rearing. If bats are found roosting during the nursery season, they shall be monitored to determine if the roost site is a maternal roost. This could occur by either visual inspection of the roost bat pups, if possible, or by monitoring the roost after the adults leave for the night to listen for bat pups. Because bat pups cannot leave the roost until they are mature enough, eviction of a maternal roost cannot occur during the nursery season. Therefore, if a maternal roost is present, a 50-foot buffer zone (or different size if determined in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) shall be established around the roosting site within which no construction activities including tree removal or structure disturbance shall occur until after the nursery season. Once the absence of roosting bats has been confirmed, a letter report will be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department.

BIO-13 In advance of the start of implementation measures 1-4, a Riparian Revegetation and Monitoring Plan shall be prepared. The plan shall include clear goals and objectives, success criteria, specifics on restoration/creation/enhancement (e.g., plant palette, soils, irrigation design standards and requirements), specific monitoring periods and reporting guidelines, and a maintenance plan. Species from the California Invasive Plant Council's (Cal-IPC) Invasive Plant List (Cal-IPC 2024) shall be removed if present and not included in the planting palette. Appropriate performance standards may include, but are not limited to, an 80 percent survival rate of restoration tree and shrub plantings; absence of invasive plant species in restored areas; and self-sustaining conditions (i.e., plant viability without supplemental water) at the end of five years. If the restoration activities are not meeting success criteria, remedial measures shall be implemented and would typically include, but are not limited to, replanting, reseeding, grading adjustments, supplemental irrigation, access control, increased weed control, and extended maintenance and monitoring periods.

The Riparian Revegetation and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to the King City Community Development Department for review and approval as well as any other appropriate regulatory agencies during the permit application process, if needed.

BIO-14 In advance of the start of implementation measures 1-4, in areas where impacts to jurisdictional aquatic features cannot be avoided, the King City Community Development Department will retain a qualified biologist to determine the extent of potential wetlands and waterways regulated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). If the USACE claims jurisdiction, the City shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. The City and the qualified biologist shall coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification. The City and the qualified biologist shall also coordinate with the CDFW to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

BIO-15 Prior to the start of implementation measure 1-4 and any tree removal or trimming activities, the King City Community Development Department will hire an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)-certified arborist to conduct a tree survey and prepare an evaluation report with associated data and location map for all potentially affected trees on and immediately adjacent to the project site. The King City Community Development Department will follow the arborist's recommendations, such as planting replacement trees in appropriate on-site or off-site areas, preferably associated with the Salinas River or San Lorenzo Creek corridors, along with any required maintenance and monitoring.

### *Cultural Resources*

CR-1 Prior to construction, all personnel directly involved in project-related activities shall be provided archaeological and cultural sensitivity training. The training shall be conducted by a Native American Monitor or a qualified archaeologist that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for archaeology. The training shall take place at a day and time to be determined in conjunction with the project construction foreman, and prior to any scheduled project-related activities. The training will include the following: a discussion of applicable laws and penalties; samples or visual aids of artifacts that could be encountered in the project vicinity, including what those artifacts and resources may look like partially buried, or wholly buried and freshly exposed; and instructions to halt work in the vicinity of any potential cultural resource discovery, and notify the archaeological monitor as necessary. If a handout is provided by the archaeologist, the foreman will keep a copy of it in his or her vehicle as a reference. Having reference material in the vehicle does not replace contacting an archaeologist should resources be uncovered.

CR-2 In the event that archaeological resources are inadvertently discovered, work shall temporarily halt or divert work within 50 meters (165 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated. All potentially significant or unique archaeological deposits shall be evaluated to demonstrate whether the resource is eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historic Resources. If archaeological deposits are encountered, they will be evaluated and mitigated simultaneously in the timeliest manner practicable, allowing for recovery of materials and data by standard archaeological procedures. For prehistoric archaeological sites, this data recovery involves the hand-excavated recovery and non-destructive analysis of a small sample of the deposit. Historic resources shall also be sampled through hand excavation, though architectural features may require careful mechanical exposure and hand excavation.

Any previously undiscovered resources found during construction activities shall be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms and evaluated for significance by a qualified archaeologist. Significant and/or unique cultural resources consist, of but are not limited to, stone, bone, glass, ceramics, fossils, wood, or shell artifacts, or features including hearths, structural remains, or historic dumpsites. If the resource is determined significant, a qualified archaeologist shall prepare and implement a research design and archaeological data recovery plan that will capture those categories of data for which the site is significant in accordance with Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

If such resources or artifacts are determined to be of native tribal origin, any mitigation or recovery program shall include direction from tribal leadership that has previously consulted with King City for proper handling and treatment.

The archaeologist shall also perform appropriate technical analyses, prepare a comprehensive report complete with methods, results, and recommendations, and provide for the permanent curation of the recovered resources. The report shall be submitted to the Northwest Information Center and the State Historic Preservation Office, as required.

CR-3 California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e) contain the mandated procedures of conduct following the discovery of human remains. According to the provisions in CEQA, if human remains are encountered at the site, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall cease and necessary steps to ensure the integrity of the immediate area shall be taken. The Monterey County Coroner shall be notified immediately. The Coroner shall then determine whether the remains are Native American. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours, who would, in turn, notify the person the Native American Heritage Commission identifies as the Most Likely Descendant of any human remains. Further actions shall be

determined, in part, by the desires of the Most Likely Descendant. The Most Likely Descendant has 48 hours to make recommendations regarding the disposition of the remains following notification from the Native American Heritage Commission of the discovery. If the Most Likely Descendant does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the owner shall, with appropriate dignity, reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from further disturbance. Alternatively, if the owner does not accept the Most Likely Descendant's recommendations, the owner or the descendent may request mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission.

INITIAL STUDY

# KING CITY
# RIVERBED WILDFIRE PREVENTION PLAN
## CITY OF KING

PREPARED FOR

**City of King, Community Development Department**
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July 26, 2024

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## Appendices



## Figures



## Tables

# A. BACKGROUND

| | |
|---|---|
| Project Title | King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan |
| Lead Agency Contact Person and Phone Number | Doreen Liberto, AICP, MDR<br>Community Development Director<br>City of King<br>831-385-3281 |
| Date Prepared | July 2024 |
| Study Prepared by | EMC Planning Group Inc.<br>601 Abrego Street<br>Monterey, CA 93940 |
| Project Location | Areas of Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek both within City of King and Unincorporated Monterey County as well as in California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) (U.S. Highway 101) and Union Pacific Railroad rights-of-way (portions of the following APNs: 245-081-031; 235-052-007; 235-052-008; 02-031-021; 026-031-011; 026-121-006; 026-461-022; 026-121-004; 235-051-010; 026-131-007; 026-221-002; 235-031-005; 235-031-006; 026-293-003; 235-021-009; 026-311-005; 235-021-016; 026-311-003) |
| Project Sponsor Name and Address | City of King<br>Community Development Department<br>212 S. Vanderhurst Avenue<br>King City, CA 93930 |
| General Plan Designation | OS – Open Space, PD – Planned Development (King City General Plan); Farmlands 40 - 160 Ac Min (Monterey County General Plan) |
| Zoning | P-F – Primary Flood Plain District, S-F – Secondary Flood Plain District; R-1 – Single Family Residential, H-S – Highway Service District (King City Zoning);<br>F/40 – Farmlands/40 units per acre (Monterey County Zoning) |

## Setting

King City is a major population center in the Salinas Valley and is an important agricultural area. Framed by the Santa Lucia Range in the west and the Gabilán Range in the east, the land immediately surrounding King City is comprised of agricultural fields intersected by the Salinas River—the largest river system on California's central coast. The river flows northwesterly from its headwaters in eastern San Luis Obispo County, 175 miles through the Salinas Valley, and into Monterey Bay just north of the city of Marina. The river is an important wildlife corridor, provides irrigation for an immense agricultural industry, and is the main source for aquifer recharge in the valley.

The project area covers 179 acres in the Salinas River floodplain and San Lorenzo Creek, bordering the King City city limits on the south and east. The site contains no permanent structures, but approximately 70 permanent structures are on the immediate edge of the project area. Additionally, homeless encampments and debris exist intermittently throughout the project area particularly in the Salinas riverbed area fronting River Drive. The larger portion of the project site that covers the Salinas River floodplain is located within unincorporated Monterey County while the remaining portion of the project site, which runs along the San Lorenzo Creek on the eastern border of King City, is within city limits. The project site is surrounded by the following uses: commercial and residential uses to the north, the Salinas River and agricultural uses to the south, agricultural uses to the east, and the Salinas River and its floodplain to the west. U.S. Highway 101 wraps around the site to the north and crosses the project site at its intersection with San Lorenzo Creek.

The project site's general plan designations are as follows:

- OS – Open Space, PD – Planned Development (King City); and
- Farmlands 40 - 160 Ac Min (Monterey County).

The project site's zoning designations are as follows:

- P-F – Primary Flood Plain District (King City);
- S-F – Secondary Flood Plain District (King City);
- R-1 – Single Family Residential (King City);
- H-S – Highway Service District (King City); and
- F/40 – Farmlands/40 units per acre (Monterey County).

Figure 1, Regional Location Map, presents the location of the project area within the regional context of south Monterey County. Figure 2, Aerial Map, presents an aerial photo of the project area within the context of King City and the immediate surrounding area. This image also includes a 1,000-foot fuels modeling buffer around the project site, which is used for fuels and fire path modeling in the wildfire prevention plan discussed below. Figure 3, Site Photographs, provides a visual of portions of the project site from a pedestrian's viewpoint.

## Description of Project

The draft King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan (May 8, 2024) (hereinafter referred to as the "RWPP" or "plan" or "proposed project") serves as a framework for a long-term fire resiliency and prioritizes hazard reduction projects along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek in or near the City of King, California. The plan would achieve the two following goals:

1. Provides guidance and strategies to increase the wildfire resilience of the community; and
2. Protects and enhances the wildlife habitat and ecological value of the project area.

The plan was developed by Deer Creek Resources with input from City staff, collaborating agencies, and the community. The RWPP uses aerial photography and field surveys to map vegetation, analyze potential wildfire hazards within the project area, and prioritize wildfire hazard mitigation projects. For a complete copy of the Public Review Draft RWPP, please refer to Appendix A.

Table 1, Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Implementation Measures (Projects), summarizes the implementation measure recommendations found the RWPP, which are based on the conditions observed throughout the King City riverbed area and San Lorenzo Creek between November 2023 and January 2024 by Deer Creek Resources.

The primary implementation measure included in the RWPP is the creation of a fuel break on the edge of the Salinas Riverbed to protect homes and businesses and prevent a wildland fire from becoming a large fire affecting King City. A fuel break will starve an expanding fire of fuels while providing firefighters operational safety and access. While the remaining implementation measures will increase the fire safety and aesthetics of the project area and King City, the fuel break will provide the most protection. Additional details of the community fuel break vegetation management measure are discussed below.

### *Community Fuel Break*

To protect structures and prevent large fire from spreading through King City, this plan includes a strategic 100-foot fuel break be created and maintained along the edge of the Salinas riverbed and San Lorenzo Creek, illustrated below in Figure 4, Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Fuel Break Map. The fuel break would begin behind the KFC restaurant and U.S. Highway 101 and continue along River Drive and Rio Vista Drive, ending at 254 Rio Vista Drive. The parcels in this area are owned by the City and Fred Miranda, a private landowner. Deer Creek Resources staff have confirmed with Mr. Miranda that he will grant the City access for fuels reduction treatment on his property (Nate Daly, email message, April 15, 2024).

Extending the fuel break to 262 Rio Vista Dive was requested by a community member at a February 28, 2024 community meeting. Although current vegetation conditions did not warrant that extension, the RWPP does include this area within the project area. This fuel break would then start again at the north end of the golf course behind 221 Villa Drive, ending at the King City Migrant Center at 440 Jayne Street. These parcels are owned by the City and multiple private property owners. The creation of the fuel break would require coordination between multiple parties.

**Table 1 Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Implementation Measures (Projects)**

| Implementation Measure Number | Implementation Measure (Project) | Implementation Measure Description | Priority Level | Recommended Return Interval |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Community Fuel Break | Create and maintain a buffer along the populated edge of the Salinas Riverbed and San Lorenzo Creek. | Very High | Creation Followed by Semi-Annual Maintenance |
| 2 | Invasive Plant Management: Arundo | Manually remove existing Arundo in coordination with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County; monitor project area for new growth. | High | Annual Monitoring After Removal (if found) |
| 3 | Invasive Plant Management: Tamarisk | Manually remove existing tamarisk in coordination with the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County; monitor project area for new growth. | High | Annual Monitoring After Removal (if found) |
| 4 | Invasive Plant Management: Yellow Starthistle | Use prescribed fire to control yellow starthistle, reduce fuels and create a matrix of black, burned areas within the project area. | High | Seasonal; Three Consecutive Years for yellow starthistle |
| 5 | Defensible Space Education | Promote fire-safe guidelines in California PRC 4291; distribute mailers to property owners on the boundary of the project area. | High | 3-5 Years |
| 6 | Code Enforcement: Weed Abatement | Code Enforcement Officer indicates that there are no ongoing weed complaints adjacent to project area; continue to enforce when complaints are made. | Moderate | Ongoing |
| 7 | Code Enforcement: Motorized Vehicle Access | Residents report motorized vehicles in project area; restrict access through empty lots. | High | Ongoing |
| 8 | Housing | Pursue funding for temporary and long-term housing solutions; clean up shelter debris in project area. | High | Ongoing |

SOURCE: Deer Creek Resources 2024

The recommended fuel break would provide an easily accessible buffer in which fuel density is reduced. Fuel breaks provide quick access to firefighters where control activities can be conducted safely due to low fuel volumes. Vegetation would be thinned and trees (cottonwood and willows) would be pruned to remove ladder fuels. Brush, heavy ground fuels, and dead trees would be disposed of to create a park-like appearance. The fuel break does not need to be a bare strip in which all vegetation is removed to mineral soil (i.e., soils derived from minerals or rocks containing little organic matter) annually.

The recommended width of the fuel break is 100 feet, but that space does not exist throughout the entire recommended buffer area (e.g., in areas along San Lorenzo Creek); therefore, the width would be adjusted accordingly where necessary.

### Fuel Break Construction Methods

#### *Reduce Ladder Fuels Under Larger Trees*

Small trees and shrubs can spread fire from the surface into the crowns of the larger cottonwood trees and willows on the edge of the riverbed. To curb vertical fuel continuity, the plan includes a measure that the City concentrate thinning efforts on the understory to prevent fire from climbing into the gray pine canopy. Thinning understory vegetation will also allow leaves to drop to the ground, rather than suspend in lower vegetation where they can be highly flammable and create dangerous ladder fuel. Removed vegetation could either be hauled off or chipped into mulch and spread.

#### *Remove Downed, High-Water Debris*

Many downed limbs and miscellaneous dead material have washed up against the edge of the bank between the KFC and U.S. Highway 101 to the intersection of River Drive and the west entrance to Rio Plaza Mobile Home Estates. This debris is both a fuels concern and an impediment to emergency access to the riverbed area. Removed vegetation could either be hauled off or chipped into mulch and spread.

#### *Remove Dead Trees*

Several dead trees, many of which are fire damaged, lie in the 100-foot buffer. The plan indicates that these are hazards that should be downed and removed. However, healthy cottonwoods and willows should not be removed. Removed vegetation could either be hauled off or chipped into mulch and spread.

## *Long-Term Project Considerations*

### Beaver Reintroduction

This plan recommends the City further evaluate the reintroduction of American beavers (*Castor canadensis*) into the area and acquiring the riverbed property for open space development. The plan notes that neither recommendation can provide immediate fire mitigation like the fuel break, but are worth investigating for long-term benefits to restore the riverbed ecosystem and make it accessible for recreation.

The plan further notes that if the City is interested in pursuing further information about the roles beavers play in the function of riparian ecosystems, they can reach out to organizations like the San Luis Obispo County (SLO) Beaver Brigade, the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County, and partnering with Nature's Engineers, a Central Coast firm implementing beaver reintroduction projects and constructing 'beaver dam analogs'(BDAs). Such an undertaking would require additional planning effort involving an array of property owners upstream and downstream from the project area. Such long-term projects would also require additional study and environmental review though, based on available scientific literature, the introduction of beaver habitat has resulted in environmental benefits and improved wildfire resiliency (Fairfax and Whittle 2020; Wigglesworth 2024).

### *Tribal Cultural Burning*

In addition, the City is also in discussions with the Xolon Salinan Tribe to determine whether tribal cultural burning practices might be integrated into the final RWPP. Such discussions with the tribal representatives of the Xolon Salinan Tribe are ongoing and will be considered as an implementation measure and tribal cultural benefit. The City, in collaboration with the Xolon Tribe and its consultants, will determine whether the project area and the types of vegetation found in the project area are appropriate and feasible for implementation of tribal cultural burning practices, whether as a standalone measure or incorporated into an already identified implementation measure.

A report prepared in July 2023 by the Science Advisory Panel for the California Wildfire and Forest Resilience Task Force indicates that the Central Coast landscape is also heavily shaped by indigenous land stewardship. For example, centuries of cultural burning cultivated some oak woodlands and coastal prairies that we see today. That historical stewardship was disrupted by European settlement, but there are now increasing efforts to restore native ecosystems by incorporating Traditional Ecological Knowledge into land management (California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force 2023). Traditional Ecological Knowledge is further defined by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service as "the evolving knowledge acquired by indigenous and local peoples over hundreds or thousands of years through direct contact with the environment…[and is] an accumulating body of knowledge, practice, and belief, evolving by adaptive processes and handed down through generations by cultural transmission, about the relationship of living beings (human and non-human) with one another and with the environment" (USFWS 2011).

According to the Honorable Ron W. Goode, Tribal Chairman of the North Fork Mono Tribe, "cultural burns are a form of land management passed down by Indigenous tribes over thousands of years. It is called cultural burning not only because of its spiritual and cultural importance to Indigenous communities, but because the burns are designed to cultivate the biodiverse, sustainable growth that make landscapes more resilient." Goode also notes that are important differences in philosophy and execution between prescribed burns (which the RWPP already incorporates as part of Implementation Measure #4) and cultural burning. "Agencies tend to focus on acreage and fuel reduction, relying upon natural features or previous fires to control potential spread. Forestry technicians may prioritize large-scale pile burning, for example, then leave when it is done. Indigenous cultural burns focus on what needs to be burned to revitalize the land with the intent of returning to make use of it again" (Schelenz 2022).

## Other Public Agencies Whose Approval is Required

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Nationwide Permit)
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Incidental Take Authorization)
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife (Streambed Alteration Agreement)
- Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Quality Certification)
- Monterey Bay Air Resources District and CAL FIRE or other designated agency (i.e., South Monterey County Fire Protection District) with jurisdiction (Smoke Management Permit)

## Have California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area requested consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1? If so, is there a plan for consultation that includes, for example, the determination of significance of impacts to tribal cultural resources, procedures regarding confidentiality, etc.?

*Note: Conducting consultation early in the CEQA process allows tribal governments, lead agencies, and project proponents to discuss the level of environmental review, identify and address potential adverse impacts to tribal cultural resources, and reduce the potential for delay and conflict in the environmental review process. (See Public Resources Code section 21080.3.2.) Information may also be available from the California Native American Heritage Commission's Sacred Lands File per Public Resources Code section 5097.96 and the California Historical Resources Information System administered by the California Office of Historic Preservation. Please also note that Public Resources Code section 21082.3(c) contains provisions specific to confidentiality.*

Two California Native American tribes traditionally and culturally affiliated with the project area have been offered consultation pursuant to Public Resources Code section 21080.3.1. Both tribes did not respond to the consultation offer. See Section 18, Tribal Cultural Resources, for additional information. City staff is however, in discussions with the Xolon Salinan Tribe to determine whether tribal cultural burning practices might be integrated into the final RWPP. See the discussion in the project description above.

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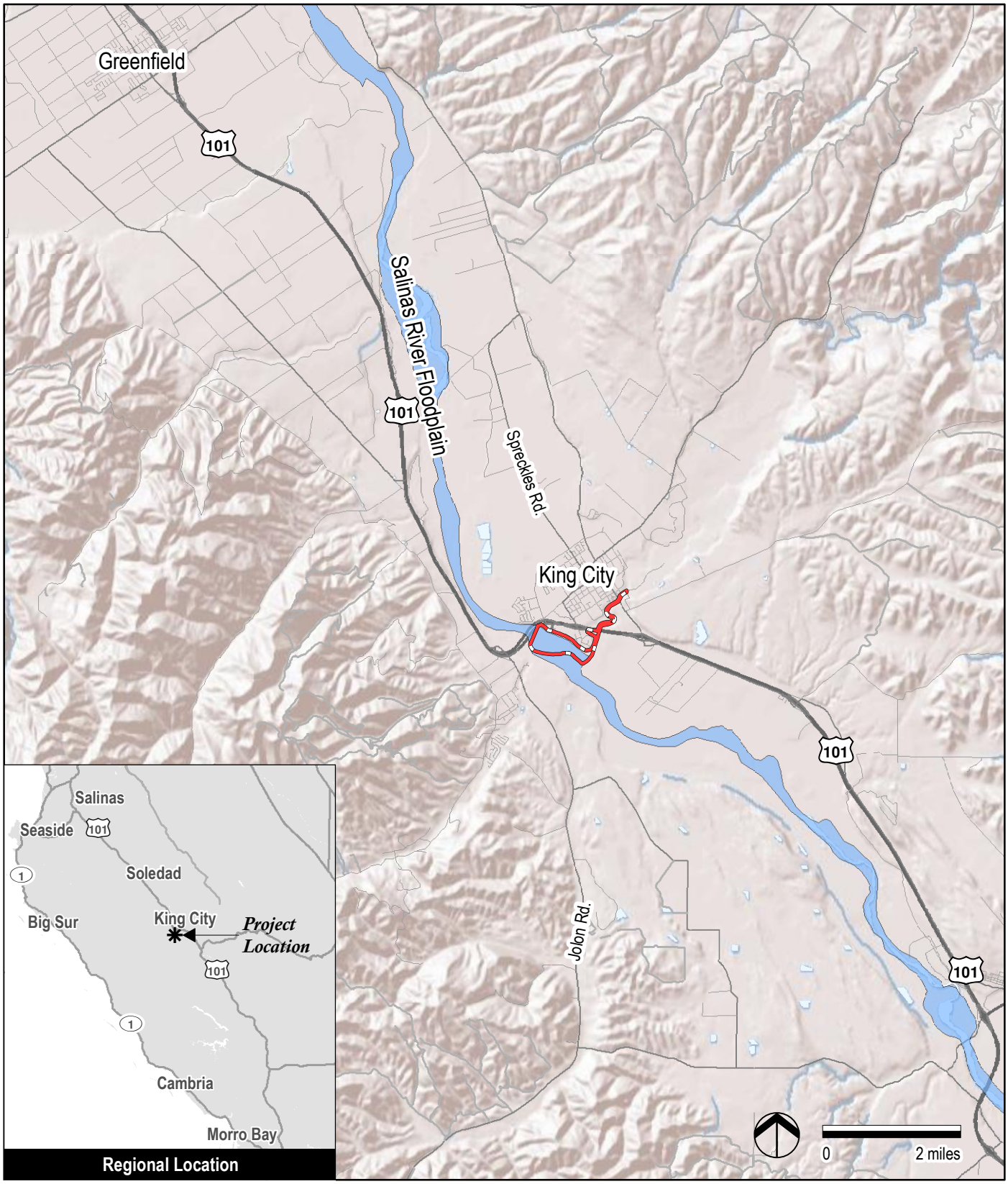


Source: ESRI 2024

Figure 1

# Regional Location Map

King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Initial Study

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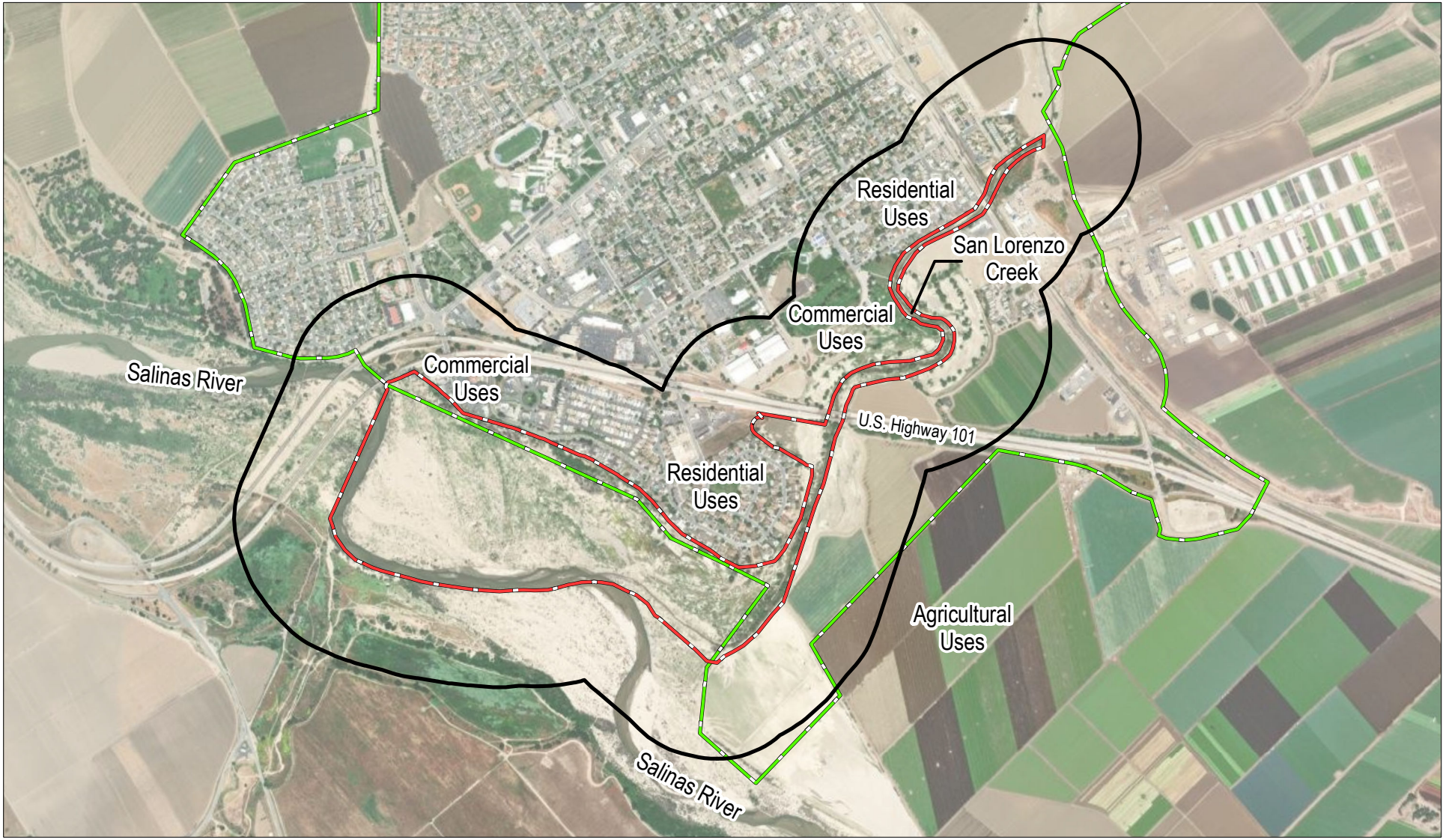


Source: ESRI 2024, EMC Planning Group 2024

Figure 2

# Aerial Map

King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Initial Study

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1 On U.S. Highway 101 facing southeast across the Salinas River floodplain.

2 Existing residences adjacent to the northern edge of the Salinas River floodplain.


Project Site

Source: Google Earth 2024
Photographs: EMC Planning Group 2024

3 On U.S. Highway 101 facing north along San Lorenzo Creek that runs under the highway.

4 On S First Street facing southwest at San Lorenzo Creek.

Figure 3
Site Photographs

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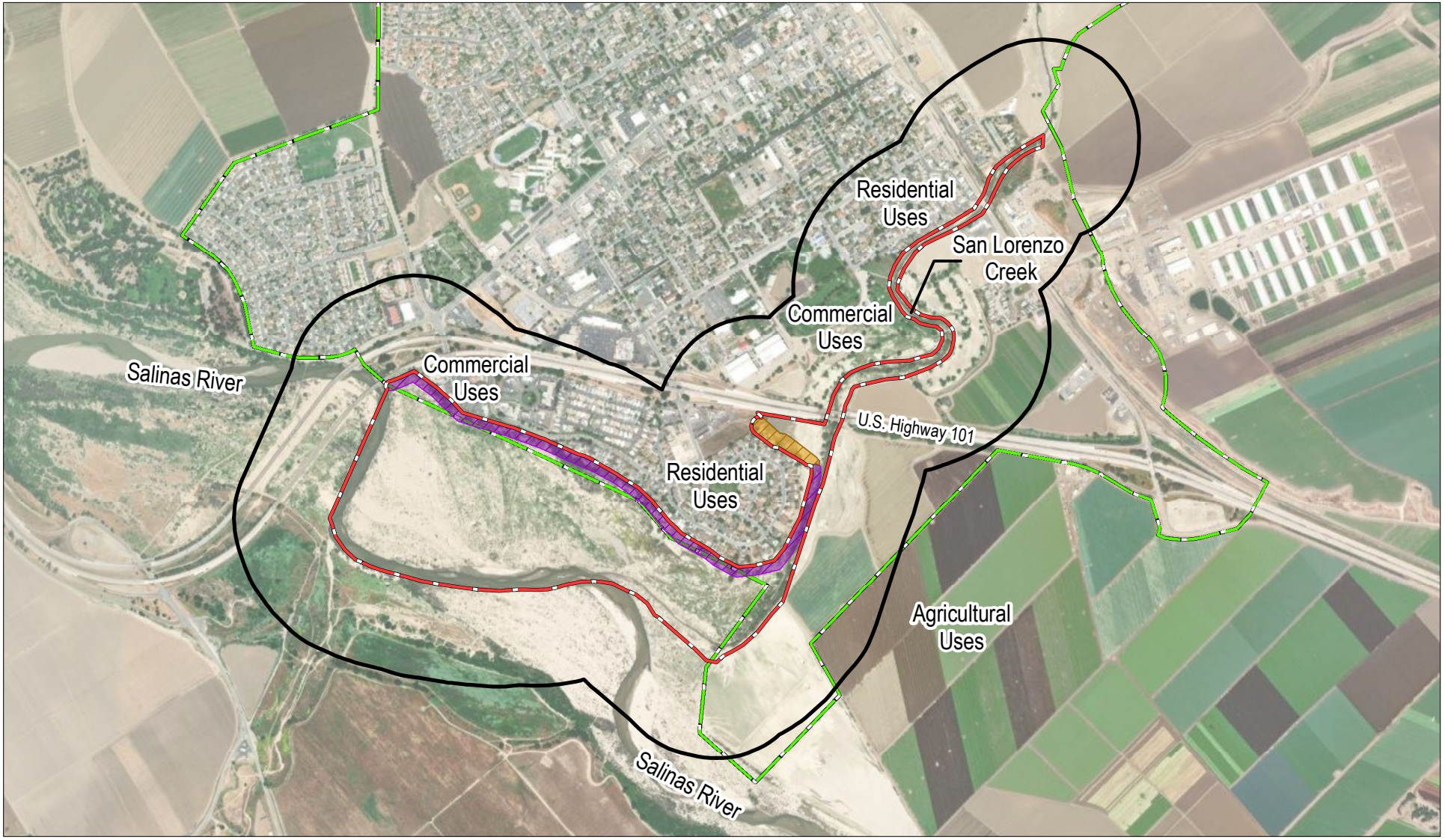


Source: ESRI 2024, EMC Planning Group 2024

Figure 4

# Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Fuel Break Map

King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Initial Study

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# B. Environmental Factors Potentially Affected

The environmental factors checked below would be potentially affected by this project, involving at least one impact that is a "Potentially Significant Impact" as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

- ☐ Aesthetics
- ☐ Agriculture and Forestry Resources
- ☐ Air Quality
- ☐ Biological Resources
- ☐ Cultural Resources
- ☐ Energy
- ☐ Geology/Soils
- ☐ Greenhouse Gas Emissions
- ☐ Hazards & Hazardous Materials
- ☐ Hydrology/Water Quality
- ☐ Land Use/Planning
- ☐ Mineral Resources
- ☐ Noise
- ☐ Population/Housing
- ☐ Public Services
- ☐ Recreation
- ☐ Transportation
- ☐ Tribal Cultural Resources
- ☐ Utilities/Service Systems
- ☐ Wildfire
- ☐ Mandatory Findings of Significance

# C. DETERMINATION

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

☐ I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☒ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because revisions in the project have been made by or agreed to by the project proponent. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect on the environment, and an ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required.

☐ I find that the proposed project MAY have a "potentially significant impact" or "potentially significant unless mitigated" impact on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets. An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.

☐ I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, because all potentially significant effects (1) have been analyzed adequately in an earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION pursuant to applicable standards, and (2) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR or NEGATIVE DECLARATION, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project, nothing further is required.

_____ _____

Doreen Liberto, AICP, MDR
Community Development Director

Date

# D. EVALUATION OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

1. A brief explanation is required for all answers except "No Impact" answers that are adequately supported by the information sources a lead agency cites in the parentheses following each question. A "No Impact" answer is adequately supported if the referenced information sources show that the impact simply does not apply to projects like the one involved (e.g., the project falls outside a fault rupture zone). A "No Impact" answer should be explained where it is based on project-specific factors, as well as general standards (e.g., the project would not expose sensitive receptors to pollutants, based on a project-specific screening analysis).
2. All answers must take account of the whole action involved, including off-site as well as onsite, cumulative as well as project-level, indirect as well as direct, and construction as well as operational impacts.
3. Once the lead agency has determined that a particular physical impact may occur, then the checklist answers must indicate whether the impact is potentially significant, less than significant with mitigation, or less than significant. "Potentially Significant Impact" is appropriate if there is substantial evidence that an effect may be significant. If there are one or more "Potentially Significant Impact" entries when the determination is made, an EIR is required.
4. "Negative Declaration: Less Than Significant With Mitigation Incorporated" applies where the incorporation of mitigation measures has reduced an effect from "Potentially Significant Impact" to a "Less Than Significant Impact." The lead agency must describe the mitigation measures, and briefly explain how they reduce the effect to a less than significant level.
5. Earlier analyses may be used where, pursuant to the tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, an effect has been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or negative declaration. Section 15063(c)(3)(D). In this case, a brief discussion should identify the following:
    a) Earlier Analyses Used. Identify and state where they are available for review.
    b) Impacts Adequately Addressed. Identify which effects from the above checklist were within the scope of and adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and state whether such effects were addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis.
    c) Mitigation Measures. For effects that are "Less than Significant with Mitigation Measures Incorporated," describe the mitigation measures which were incorporated or refined from the earlier document and the extent to which they address site-specific conditions for the project.
6. Lead agencies are encouraged to incorporate into the checklist references to information sources for potential impacts (e.g., general plans, zoning ordinances). Reference to a previously prepared or outside document should, where appropriate, include a reference to the page or pages where the statement is substantiated.
7. Supporting Information Sources: A source list should be attached, and other sources used or individuals contacted should be cited in the discussion.

8. This is only a suggested form, and lead agencies are free to use different formats; however, lead agencies should normally address the questions from this checklist that are relevant to a project's environmental effects in whatever format is selected.
9. The explanation of each issue should identify:
    a. the significance criteria or threshold, if any, used to evaluate each question; and
    b. the mitigation measure identified, if any, to reduce the impact to less than significance.

# 1. AESTHETICS

Except as provided in Public Resources Code Section 21099 (Modernization of Transportation Analysis for Transit-Oriented Infill Projects), would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Have a substantial adverse effect on a scenic vista? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Substantially damage scenic resources, including but not limited to trees, rock outcroppings, and historic buildings within a state scenic highway? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | In non-urbanized areas, substantially degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings? (Public views are those that are experienced from publicly accessible vantage points.) If the project is in an urbanized area, would the project conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. | Create a new source of substantial light or glare, which would adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. The *King City General Plan Consolidated Plan Document* ("General Plan") does not specifically identify scenic vistas, but mentions that most of southern Monterey County could be considered scenic due to its rural character and agricultural setting. The General Plan also states that the gently rolling hillsides, river, and row crops provide a pleasant visual background for the community. The distant mountain ranges (e.g., Santa Lucia Range) could also be considered a scenic visual backdrop for King City. Scenic vistas are not specifically identified within the *2010 Monterey County General Plan*; however, Goal OS-1 states, "retain the character and natural beauty of Monterey County be preserving, conserving, and maintaining unique physical features, natural resources, and agricultural operations." The *2007 Monterey County General Plan Draft Environmental Impact Report Volume 1 SCH#2007121001* mentions that Monterey County's visual character and aesthetic resources are linked to its geography and natural topography, vegetation, and cultural history of the region. Monterey County's scenic vistas of particular concern closest to King City are San Lucas (located approximately seven miles southeast of King City) and Pine Canyon (located approximately 1.4 miles southwest of King City). The Monterey County Parcel Report Web App identifies the Santa Lucia Mountain Range to the southwest as a highly sensitive visual resource and the Diablo Mountain Range to the northeast as a sensitive visual resource (Monterey County 2024).

The proposed project involves activities such as fuel hazard reduction and vegetation management activities, which may result in a beneficial impact on scenic vistas (e.g., removing dead trees and invasive plant species could provide views of the distant mountain ranges that were otherwise obstructed). Implementation of the proposed project and the recommended activities of the RWPP would not result in an adverse effect on scenic vistas.

b. There are no state designated scenic highways within or near King City; the nearest eligible highway is State Route 198 approximately eight miles southeast (California Department of Transportation 2024). Therefore, the project would not damage scenic resources within a state scenic highway.

c. The proposed project involves activities that reduce fire hazards in the project area. Implementation of fuel hazard reduction and vegetation management activities would result in visual changes such as the removal of dead trees, limbs, and shrubs, as well as the trimming of tree understory and removal of invasive species. These types of activities, as well as the plan implementation measures listed in Table 1 of this initial study, would not degrade the existing visual character or quality of public views of the site and its surroundings or conflict with applicable zoning and other regulations governing scenic quality.

d. The proposed project is a wildfire prevention plan whose purpose is to reduce fire hazards in the area; therefore, it does not involve the development of structures or anything that would create a new source of substantial light or glare. The project would not adversely affect day or nighttime views in the area.

# 2. AGRICULTURE AND FOREST RESOURCES

In determining whether impacts on agricultural resources are significant environmental effects and in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland, lead agencies may refer to the California Agricultural Land Evaluation and Site Assessment Model (1997) prepared by the California Department of Conservation as an optional model to use in assessing impacts on agriculture and farmland. In determining whether impacts to forest resources, including timberland, are significant environmental effects, lead agencies may refer to information compiled by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection regarding the state's inventory of forest land, including the Forest and Range Assessment Project and the Forest Legacy Assessment project; and forest carbon measurement methodology provided in Forest Protocols adopted by the California Air Resources Board. Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use, or a Williamson Act contract? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | Conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land (as defined in Public Resources Code section 12220(g)), timberland (as defined by Public Resources Code section 4526), or timberland zoned Timberland Production (as defined by Government Code section 51104(g))? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. | Result in the loss of forest land or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e. | Involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of Farmland to nonagricultural use or conversion of forest land to non-forest use? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. The larger portion of the project site (consisting of the Salinas River floodplain) is designated by the California Department of Conservation as "Grazing Land" while the remainder of the project site, which wraps around the eastern border of the city limits (consisting of the San Lorenzo Creek corridor), is designated as "Urban and Built-Up Land" (California Department of Conservation 2024). Additionally, the project site is not currently used for agricultural purposes. Therefore, the proposed project would not

convert Prime Farmland, Unique Farmland, or Farmland of Statewide Importance (Farmland), as shown on the maps prepared pursuant to the Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program of the California Resources Agency, to nonagricultural use.

b. The project site does not contain any Williamson Act land and, therefore, the project will not conflict with a Williamson Act contract (Department of Conservation 2023).

The larger portion of the project site (consisting of the Salinas River floodplain) is zoned by Monterey County as Farmlands/40 units per acre (F/40) while the remaining portions of the project site are zoned by King City as Primary Flood Plain District (P-F), Secondary Flood Plain District (S-F), Sigle Family Residential (R-1), and Highway Service District (H-S).

Although the larger portion of the project site is zoned for agricultural use, it is not currently used for agricultural purposes (EMC Planning Group, site visit, 2024) and has not been used for agricultural purposes since at least 1994 (Google Earth 2024). Additionally, implementation of the plan would not prohibit the land zoned for agricultural use to be put into agricultural use at some future date. Therefore, implementation of the project would not conflict with existing zoning for agricultural use.

c-d. The project site is comprised of the Salinas River floodplain and San Lorenzo Creek and does not involve any existing agricultural uses. Additionally, there are no forest lands or timberland zoned lands within King City. Therefore, the project would not conflict with existing zoning for, or cause rezoning of, forest land, timberland, or timberland zoned Timberland Production.

e. There are no forest lands within King City and, therefore, the project would not involve other changes in the existing environment that could result in the conversion of forest land to non-forest use.

Agricultural uses exist along the eastern border outside of the project site. These agricultural uses are within the project's 1,000-foot fuels modeling buffer (refer to the buffer shown on Figure 2, Aerial Map). The project does not involve the development of any structures or infrastructure that could result in the conversion of the adjacent farmland to nonagricultural use. Implementation of the project would result in, among other activities, periodic maintenance of fuel breaks and manual removal of invasive plant species. The project would not involve other changes in the existing environment which, due to their location or nature, could result in conversion of farmland to nonagricultural use.

# 3. AIR QUALITY

Where available, the significance criteria established by the applicable air quality management district or air pollution control district may be relied upon to make the following determinations. Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Conflict with or obstruct implementation of the applicable air quality plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Result in a cumulatively considerable net increase of any criteria pollutant for which the project region is nonattainment under an applicable federal or state ambient air quality standard? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c. | Expose sensitive receptors to substantial pollutant concentrations? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| d. | Result in other emissions, such as those leading to odors adversely affecting a substantial number of people? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

## Comments:

King City is within the North Central Coast Air Basin (air basin), which is under the jurisdiction of the Monterey Bay Air Resources District (air district or MBARD). This section is based primarily on guidance in the air district's *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines* (2008) (CEQA guidelines), and the air district's *2012 – 2015 Air Quality Management Plan* (2017) (air quality management plan).

a. A consistency determination is a process by which the lead agency demonstrates that the population associated with a proposed project is accommodated by the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments' regional growth forecasts. The regional growth forecasts for population and dwelling units are embedded in the emission inventory projections used in the air quality plan. Projects within the regional growth forecasts have been accommodated in the air quality plan and, therefore, are consistent with the air quality plan. The proposed project is not population generating and would not conflict with or obstruct implementation of the air quality management plan (MBUAPCD Air Quality Guidelines, p. 5-10).

b. The air district's threshold of significance for criteria air emissions are typically used as the basis for evaluating the relative impacts of land development projects. Land development projects commonly generate short-term emissions from construction activities, and long-term emissions from project operations. The air district threshold of significance for short-term construction emissions for land use projects is related to particulate dust emissions known as $PM_{10}$. Air district CEQA guidelines Table 5-2,

Construction Activity with Potentially Significant Impacts, identifies the level of construction activity that could result in significant temporary fugitive dust impacts if not mitigated. Construction activities associated with grading and excavation that disturb more than 2.2 acres per day and construction activities with minimal earthmoving that disturb more than 8.1 acres per day are assumed to generate more than 82 pounds of particulate matter per day, which would exceed the threshold of significance.

This information is provided to offer context, as the proposed project is not a land use development project. The information reflects the air district's interest in managing particulate dust from activities within the air basin. Therefore, the qualitative analysis here focuses on particulate dust. As described below, the project would not be a source of long-term, daily, weekly, or monthly continuous air emissions. Nevertheless, the proposed project involves activities that would be sources of short-term air emissions, analogous to short-term construction activities for land use projects, but significantly less intensive.

Creating a fuel break is the primary implementation strategy and the strategy that involves the most notable level of combustible fuel removal. It involves a one-time effort to reduce ladder fuels under larger trees, remove downed limbs and dead material, and remove a limited number of dead trees. Semi-annual maintenance of the established fire break would require a significantly reduced level of effort relative to the initial clearing activity. Limited use of handheld gas-powered equipment such as weed whackers and pole pruners, and wood chippers would be required for the initial clearing. Manual clearing of brush and other materials would also occur. A mower(s) would likely be used to support semi-annual fuel break maintenance.

Implementing the fuel break strategy does not require grading or excavations, activities which involve using heavy equipment that produces particulate emissions, nor does the project involve activities that would disturb bare mineral soil surfaces and generate dust or create exposed soil surfaces from which fugitive dust can be generated from wind erosion. These are the main sources of $PM_{10}$ during short-term "construction" activities with which the air district is concerned. Relative to these sources, particulate dust emissions from using hand-operated equipment and chippers would be minimal. Some level of dust would likely be generated from using mowers for semi-annual fuel break maintenance, but given the short duration of activity and the fact that the activity would not expose or disturb mineral soils, the volume of particulate generation would be limited. The RWPP does not specify the duration of the initial fuel break vegetation management activity, nor for semi-annual maintenance activities, nor does it specify the duration of use for vegetation removal equipment. Consequently, potential daily $PM_{10}$ emissions volumes during this activity have not been forecast for informational purposes.

Using limited prescribed fire to control yellow starthistle is the other RWPP implementation measure that could be a source of particulate matter emissions from organic fuel combustion. The RWPP only identifies the use of prescribed burning under very specific and controlled circumstances to thin out this specific invasive plant species that does occurs in large patches (though is not dominate) throughout the Salinas

riverbed area and more infrequently in the San Lorenzo Creek area. The RWPP notes that such a strategy would require a multi-year process and is not deemed a very high priority implementation measure. It is also noted that the City is currently in ongoing discussions with the Xolon Salinan Tribe to consider incorporating tribal cultural burning practices as a part of the RWPP. Such tribal cultural burning practices, if adopted as part of the final RWPP, would also be limited in nature and require careful monitoring and oversight by City, tribal, and fire service personnel. MBARD Rule 404, Particulate Matter, addresses particulate emission limits. It limits the amount of particulate matter that can be discharged by any source within the air basin. The rule exempts several types of activities, including fires set for the purpose of preventing a fire hazard. This indicates that particulate air emissions from the yellow starthistle control strategy or the incorporation of tribal cultural burning practices into the plan is not at issue for its overall particulate air emissions.

The management activities involving invasive plant management are not expected to be sources of $PM_{10}$ as removal activities would be conducted manually, without use of equipment that produces particulate emissions or results in ground clearing or significant disturbance.

Given the considerations above, the proposed project contribution to regional air quality impacts would be less than significant.

c. Portions of the project site are located adjacent to sensitive residential receptors. Diesel particulate emissions are the typical emissions of concern for potentially impacting public health during typical short-term "construction" activities. These emissions are toxic and can pose health risks to sensitive receptors that are exposed to high concentrations of this emission type. Associated sources of toxic diesel air contaminants commonly include heavy, diesel fueled construction equipment such as bulldozers, graders, excavators, idling or moving trucks, etc.

As described in checklist question "b" above, short-term RWPP implementation activities do not require using heavy-duty diesel-powered equipment that has potential to generate substantial toxic air emissions. Handheld landscape maintenance equipment such as weedwhackers and pole pruners, and other equipment types such as mowers and chippers are typically not diesel-powered. Therefore, the project would have a less than significant impact from exposing sensitive receptors to high concentrations of toxic air contaminants.

d. Representative sources of odors commonly assumed to have significant nuisance potential for a substantial number of people include landfills, wastewater treatment plants, animal feed lots, large-scale composting operations, etc. The proposed project does not have such potential. If goats are used as a vegetation management option, localized, temporary odors could be produced. This odor source would not rise to the level of being significant as it would be temporary, infrequent, and would not affect a substantial number of people. Potential odor impacts of the project would be less than significant.

# 4. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Have a substantial adverse effect, either directly or through habitat modifications, on any species identified as a candidate, sensitive, or special status species in local or regional plans, policies, regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. | Have a substantial adverse effect on any riparian habitat or other sensitive natural community identified in local or regional plans, policies, or regulations, or by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or US Fish and Wildlife Service? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. | Have a substantial adverse effect on state or federally protected wetlands (including, but not limited to, marsh, vernal pool, coastal, etc.), through direct removal, filing, hydrological interruption, or other means? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. | Interfere substantially with the movement of any native resident or migratory fish or wildlife species or with established native resident or migratory wildlife corridors, or impede the use of native wildlife nursery sites? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| e. | Conflict with any local policies or ordinances protecting biological resources, such as a tree preservation policy or ordinance? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| f. | Conflict with the provisions of an adopted Habitat Conservation Plan, Natural Community Conservation Plan, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

The following analysis evaluates the potential for protected biological resources to be impacted by the implementation of the proposed project. The analysis is based on a review of the proposed project description including the implementation plan, results of biological records research relevant to the project area, and reconnaissance-level biological field surveys of the project site. The reconnaissance-level surveys were conducted by EMC Planning Group senior biologist Patrick Furtado, M.S., on December 6, 2023, and February 14, 2024.

Information in this section is also derived from the following documents:

- *San Lorenzo Creek Restoration Plan for the Downtown Addition Project* (WRA 2013);
- *Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program Revised Final EIR* (MCWRA 2014); and
- *Salinas River Long-Term Management Plan* (MCWRA 2019).

Prior to conducting the field surveys, Mr. Furtado reviewed the plan, aerial photographs, natural resource database accounts, and other relevant scientific literature. This review included searching the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) *Endangered Species Database* (USFWS 2024a), California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) *California Natural Diversity Database* ("CNDDB", CDFW 2024a, CDFW 2024b), and California Native Plant Society (CNPS) *Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants* (CNPS 2024a) to identify special-status plants, wildlife, and habitats known to occur in the vicinity of the project site. A review of the USFWS *National Wetlands Inventory* (NWI) database was also conducted to identify potentially jurisdictional aquatic features (wetlands, drainages, and/or riparian areas) on or adjacent to the project site (USFWS 2024b).

The reconnaissance-level biological field surveys documented existing plant communities and wildlife habitats and evaluated the potential for special-status species to occur in the project area. Biological resources were documented in field notes, including species observed, dominant plant communities, significant wildlife habitat characteristics, and riparian and wetland habitat. Qualitative estimations of plant cover, structure, and spatial changes in species composition were used to determine plant communities and wildlife habitats. Habitat quality and disturbance levels were described. Plant species were identified in the field or collected for subsequent identification. Searches for reptiles and amphibians were performed by overturning and then replacing rocks and debris. Birds were identified by visual and/or auditory recognition and mammals were identified by diagnostic signs (including scat and tracks).

### *Existing Conditions*

The approximately 179-acre project site consists of undeveloped land within the Salinas River floodplain and San Lorenzo Creek on the southern and eastern edges of the city, and in unincorporated Monterey County. The land uses of the adjacent developed areas are residential, commercial, and agricultural.

The Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek support mature, but highly disturbed, riparian woodland habitat along their banks. The Salinas River also supports disturbed alluvial scrub habitat within its floodplain.

The western half of the project site is mapped on the Thompson Canyon U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) quadrangle map, while the eastern half is located on the San Lucas USGS quadrangle.

### *Soils*

The riverine soils at the project site are classified by the Natural Resources Conservation Service as Corducci and Typic Xerofluents consisting of fine to coarse sand. These are well-drained soils derived from mixed alluvium parent materials.

### *Aquatic Features*

The Salinas River flows northwesterly along the southern and western boundaries of the project site. San Lorenzo Creek is within the project site and flows in a southerly direction along the eastern edge of the project site before turning westward and joining the Salinas River. The Salinas River had a substantial flow of water at the time of the surveys but the San Lorenzo Creek was dry.

### *Plant and Wildlife Habitat*

Communities along the Salinas River include riparian woodland and alluvial scrub. San Lorenzo Creek supports a mix of riparian woodland and alluvial scrub. Habitats are shown on Figure 5, Habitat Map.

### *Salinas River Riparian Woodland*

Habitat found along the Salinas River, adjacent to developed areas in King City (south of Broadway Street, River Drive and Rio Vista Drive), includes both riparian woodland and floodplain alluvial scrub. A stretch of Fremont cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*) riparian woodland is found immediately below the gas stations and fast-food restaurants along the southern edge of the city. A park strip east of the adjacent McDonald's restaurant consists of manicured lawn.

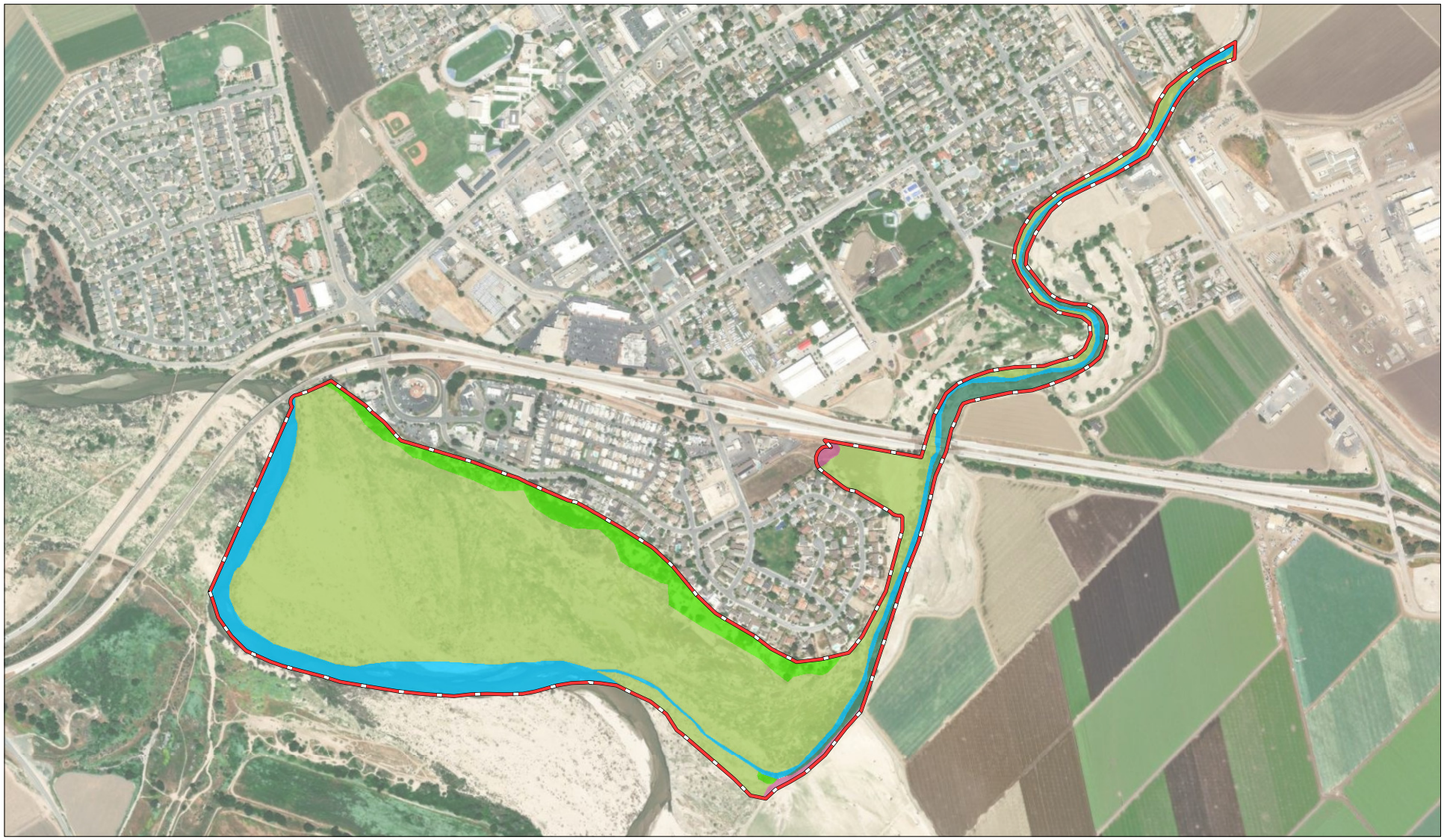
The riparian woodland habitat here has been severely degraded from wildfire, invasive plants, garbage dumping, homeless encampments, and vandalism to trees. Found within the burned cottonwoods, the native understory vegetation consists of mulefat (*Baccharis salicifolia*), wild rose (*Rosa californica*), umbrella sedge (*Cyperus eragrostis*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), elderberry (*Sambucus* sp.), and arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*).

Non-native plant species observed under and adjacent to the riparian woodland include tamarisk (*Tamarix ramosissima*), also known as saltcedar, milk thistle (*Silybum marianum*), mallow (*Malva parviflora*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), caper spurge (*Euphorbia lathyris*), starthistle (*Centaurea* sp.), mustard (*Brassica nigra* and *Hirschfeldia incana*), cockleburs (*Xanthium* spp.), horseweed (*Erigeron canadensis*), perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*), and tree tobacco (*Nicotiana glauca*).

### *San Lorenzo Creek Riparian Woodland*

The riparian woodland along San Lorenzo Creek is highly impacted by grading and sediment removal, and the invasion of aggressive non-native plant species including tamarisk, giant reed (*Arundo donax*), perennial pepperweed, and tree tobacco. Large amounts of garbage piles are found within both the riparian woodland and the adjacent floodplain.

Native vegetation observed along San Lorenzo Creek also includes mulefat, coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), arroyo willow, red willow (*Salix laevigata*), cottonwood (*Populus fremontii* and *P. trichocarpa*), and mistletoe (*Phoradendron californicum*), an important food source for many local bird species.




Source: ESRI 2024

Figure 5

# Habitat Map

King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Initial Study

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The floodplain next to San Lorenzo Creek, recently used as a golf course, has also been highly impacted through the deforestation of native riparian tree species such a cottonwood and willow. Raptors, in particular, rely on mature riparian trees for nesting and one red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) was observed during one of the surveys using a remnant cottonwood on the project site. However, despite the degraded habitat conditions, a diverse array of bird species was observed using the riparian and floodplain habitat along San Lorenzo Creek and the Salinas River including acorn woodpecker (*Melanerpes formicivorus*), white-breasted nuthatch (*Sitta carolinensis*), chestnut-backed chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*), hairy woodpecker (*Dryobates villosus*), California scrub-jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*), mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*), western kingbird (*Tyrannus verticalis*), northern flicker (*Colaptes auratus*), and black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*).

### *Salinas River Floodplain Alluvial Scrub*

The floodplain alluvial scrub on the project site is found between the riparian woodland and the Salinas River on sandy river sediments. Alluvial scrub consists mainly of flood-adapted drought-deciduous and evergreen woody shrubs. The native scrub vegetation observed along the Salinas River includes big saltbush (*Atriplex lentiformis*), mulefat, wild rose, coyotebrush, sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and creeping wild rye (*Elymus triticoides*). Deer and other animal tracks were abundant in this habitat.

Despite significant native vegetation on the river floodplain, in many areas non-native invasive species dominate. These include tamarisk, Russian thistle (*Salsola tragus*), cockleburs, giant reed, starthistle, and widespread, biennial white sweetclover (*Melilotus albus*).

Large flocks of white-crowned sparrow were observed moving through this habitat, along with mourning dove (*Zenaida macroura*), black phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*), and California thrasher (*Toxostoma redivivium*). Wildlife tracks were ubiquitous with black-tailed deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*), feral pig/boar (*Sus scrofa*), racoon (*Procyon lotor*), small rodents, and large birds such as herons and egrets. A great egret (*Ardea alba*) was observed hunting at the river's edge.

a. **Special-Status Species**. Special-status species are those listed as Endangered, Threatened, or Rare, or as candidates for listing by the USFWS and/or CDFW; as Species of Special Concern or Fully Protected species by the CDFW; or as Rare Plant Rank 1B or 2B species by CNPS. Appendix B, Special-Status Species in the Project Vicinity, presents tables with database search results, and lists special-status species documented within the project vicinity, their listing status and suitable habitat description, and their potential to occur on the project site. Figure 6, Special-Status Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity, presents a map of California Natural Diversity Database results.

   **Special-Status Plant Species**. No special-status plants were observed during the reconnaissance site assessment; however, surveys were conducted outside the peak blooming period for umbrella larkspur and did not comprehensively survey the entire plan area for Davidson's bushmallow. Based on the presence of suitable or marginally suitable habitats, the project site has the potential to support the following two special-status plants species:

**Davidson's bush-mallow.** Davidson's bush-mallow (*Malacothamnus davidsonii*) is primarily found in sandy washes of coastal scrub and riparian woodlands habitats. This CNBS 1B.2 plant is found in a tributary to the Salinas River 2.1 miles southwest of the project site (Occurrence No. 37, CNDDB 2024b). The blooming period for this species is generally from June to January. Riparian woodland and scrub habitats within the project boundary are considered potential habitat for this species.

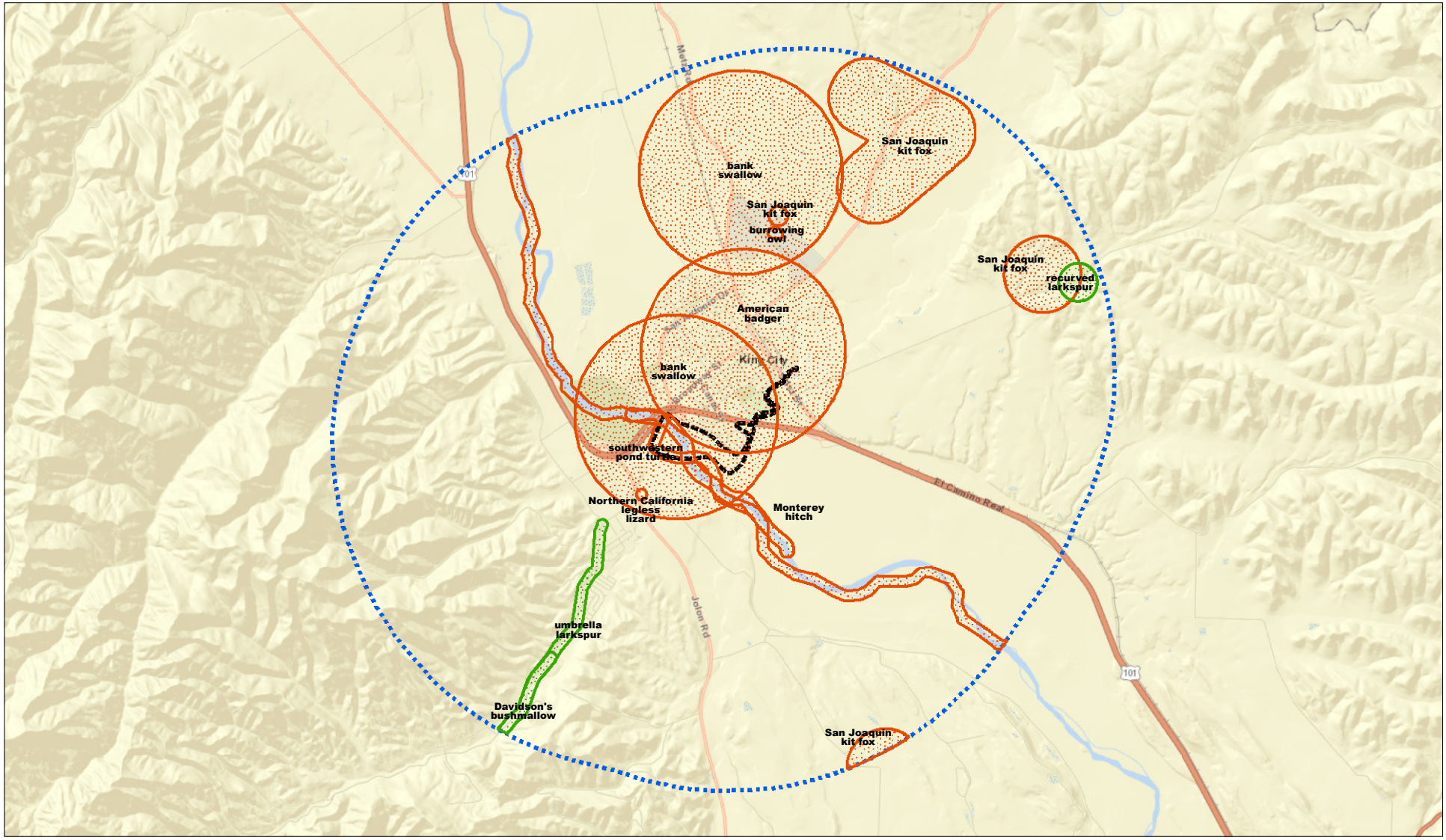
**Umbrella larkspur.** Umbrella larkspur (*Delphinium umbraculorum*) is a CNPS 1B.3 plant species found along stream banks and open woodlands in moist, well-drained soils. Umbrella larkspur was recorded 0.8 miles southwest of the project area along a tributary to the Salinas River (Occurrence No. 67, CNDDB 2024b). The blooming period for this species is generally from April to June. Riparian woodland and scrub habitats along the banks of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek are considered potential habitat for this species.

If present, loss or harm to special-status plant species is considered a significant adverse impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measure will reduce the potential impact to special-status plants to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-1 The summer blooming period prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, a biologist qualified in botany shall conduct a focused survey for Davidson's bush mallow and umbrella larkspur in accordance with current California Department of Fish and Wildlife and California Native Plant Society rare plant survey protocols (CDFW 2018 and CNPS 2001). Some special-status plant species are only identifiable during their blooming periods and surveys are only considered valid if they occur when blooms are visible. The survey shall occur during the peak blooming period for these species to determine their presence or absence. Based on the known blooming periods of the special-status plant species potentially present, two surveys would be necessary to adequately survey the project site: the first in May/June and the second in August/September. If possible, known reference populations of the target species in the project vicinity shall first be visited to verify that the species is observable, and the focused survey shall be conducted within two weeks of observing the reference population in full bloom.

The biologist shall prepare a brief report documenting the results of the surveys for submittal to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities. If the focused surveys conclude that special-status plant species are not present within the project site boundary, or if they are present but impacts can be completely avoided, then no further mitigation would be required. Focused plant surveys are generally considered valid for two years. Surveys shall be repeated if disturbance activities are planned after two years.




Source: ESRI 2024, CDFW CNDDB 2024

Figure 6

# Special-Status Species Within the Project Vicinity

King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Initial Study

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If at any point special-status plant species are identified within the project site boundary and they would be affected by the proposed project, then appropriate mitigation shall be developed by the biologist and implemented prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities. Measures may include, but are not limited to:

a. A qualified biologist shall identify an on-site or off-site mitigation area suitable for restoration of habitat and seed transplantation for any special-status plant species.

b. Prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, a qualified biologist or native plant specialist shall perform seed collection from all special-status plants located within the impact areas and implement seed installation at the mitigation area at the optimal time. Additionally, topsoil from the special-status species occurrence area(s) shall be salvaged (where practical) for use in the mitigation area.

c. A maintenance and monitoring program shall be developed by a qualified biologist and established for a minimum of five years after mitigation area installation to verify that restoration activities have been successful. Maintenance activities may include, but not be limited to, watering during the plant establishment period, supplemental seed planting as needed, and removal of non-native plants. Monitoring shall include, at a minimum, quarterly monitoring reports for the first year and annual reports for the remaining four years. The performance standard for successful mitigation shall be a minimum 3:1 replacement ratio (i.e., three plants observed in mitigation area for each plant lost from the project site) achieved in at least one of the five years of monitoring.

The King City Community Development Department will be responsible for implementation of this mitigation measure. Compliance with this measure shall be documented prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities by a letter report prepared by the biologist and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file.

**Special-Status Wildlife Species**. Special-status wildlife species with the potential to utilize the alluvial scrub and riparian woodland habitats found within the project boundary include Monterey hitch (*Lavinia exilicauda harengus*), California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*), Northern California legless lizard (*Anniella pulchra nigra*), western pond turtle (*Emys marmorata*), burrowing owl (*Athene cunicularia*), American badger (*Taxidea taxus*), San Joaquin kit fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*), protected bats, and nesting birds and raptors. These species are discussed in more detail below.

Implementation of the following general wildlife protection measure, in association with the species-specific mitigation measures identified below, will reduce potential, significant impacts to protected biological resources to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-2 Prior to implementation measures 1-4 that include ground disturbance or vegetation removal, a qualified biologist shall conduct a training session for all project personnel. At a minimum, the training shall include a description of special-status species potentially

occurring in the project vicinity, including, but not limited to, special-status plants (if present), Monterey hitch, California red-legged frog, Northern California legless lizard, southwestern pond turtle, burrowing owl, American badger, Monterey dusky-footed woodrat, San Joaquin kit fox, special-status bat species, and nesting birds and raptors. Their habitats, general measures that are being implemented to conserve species as they relate to the project, and the boundaries within which project activities will occur will be explained. Informational handouts with photographs clearly illustrating the species' appearances shall be used in the training session. As new phases or activities begin, all new project personnel shall undergo this mandatory environmental awareness training. The project contractor shall document evidence of completion of this training by a letter report prepared by the biologist and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities.

The qualified biologist will train biological monitors selected from the project crew by the project contractor (typically the project foreman). Before the start of work each day, the monitor will check for animals under any equipment such as vehicles. If a special-status species is observed within an active project area, the qualified biologist will be notified immediately and all work within 50 feet of the individual will be halted and all equipment turned off until the individual has left the area.

**Monterey Hitch.** Monterey hitch is listed as CDFW Species of Special Concern and is a small native fish known from the Pajaro River and Salinas River systems. Monterey hitch can occupy a wide variety of habitats, although they are most abundant in lowland areas with large pools or in small reservoirs. Preferred substrates include a mixture of sand and gravel with the presence of cover, such as fallen trees, overhanging bushes, etc. Spawning season is typically from May to August. When inundated, potential habitat includes project areas within the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek. Impacts to Monterey hitch could occur as a result of mechanical vegetation removal, application of herbicides, and sediment management, and are considered potentially significant.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to Monterey hitch to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-3 The following measures shall be implemented to protect Monterey hitch and aquatic habitats:

a. Implementation measures 1-4 that require ground disturbance activities within the active channels of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek shall be conducted from September to April each year, during periods of low flow (Salinas River) or no flow (San Lorenzo Creek), outside of the spawning period for Monterey hitch.

b. For the duration of the project, herbicides may be applied to vegetation within a 10-foot buffer zone along the edge of the active channel for non-native invasive vegetation treatment only. Only herbicides approved for use in aquatic environments shall be used.

c. For the duration of the project will use work measures including Best Management Practices (BMPs), time-of-year-restrictions, water pollution prevention, erosion control, and tree root protection to further minimize erosion and impacts to riparian and aquatic habitat. BMPs intended to reduce erosion of exposed soil into the bed and banks of the creek may include, but are not limited to, soil stabilization controls, watering for dust control, silt fencing, and fiber rolls. Standard erosion control and slope stabilization measures will be required for work performed in any area where erosion could lead to sedimentation of the creek. Plastic monofilament netting (erosion control matting), loosely woven netting, or similar material in any form shall not be used at the project site as wildlife can become entangled and trapped in them. Materials utilizing fixed weaves (strands cannot move), polypropylene, polymer, or other synthetic materials shall not be used.

**California Red-Legged Frog**. A federally-listed Threatened species and California Species of Special Concern, California red-legged frog occurs in lowlands and foothills primarily in perennial or ephemeral ponds, pools, and streams where water remains long enough (14-28 weeks) for breeding and metamorphosis of tadpoles. Specific breeding sites include streams, creeks, ponds, marshes, sag ponds, deep pools, backwater areas, dune ponds, lagoons, and estuaries. California red-legged frog may disperse from their aquatic breeding habitats to upland habitats during the dry season. They prefer upland habitats that provide moisture to prevent desiccation and protection from predators, including downed logs, woody vegetation, boulders, moist leaf litter, or other refugia during the dry season. In areas where upland habitats do not contain structure, they take refuge in burrows. However, if there is sufficient water at their breeding location, they may remain in aquatic habitats year-round instead of moving to adjacent uplands.

During wet seasons, frogs can move long distances between habitats, traversing upland areas or ephemeral drainages. Dispersal distances are typically less than 0.3 mile, with a few individuals moving 1.2-2.2 miles. Seeps and springs in open grasslands can function as foraging habitat or refugia for wandering frogs.

CNDDB records indicate that the closest known occurrence of California red-legged frog to the project site was recorded in 2008, within a deep pool along Vaqueros Creek, 11 miles northwest of the site (Occurrence No. 1002, CNDDB 2024a). Potential upland and breeding habitat may be present within the pools and riparian vegetation within Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek within the project boundary and within multiple freshwater ponds within 0.5 miles from the project site. Based on the suitable habitat at the project site, along with proximity to potential breeding and migratory habitat, there is potential for California red-legged frogs to exist within the project site. Impacts to California red-legged frog at any life stage are considered significant.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to California red-legged frog to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-4 Ground disturbance and/or vegetation removal activities (implementation measures 1-4) are proposed within and immediately adjacent to California red-legged frog habitat. Project implementation may directly impact aquatic habitat and upland habitat. Prior to the start of disturbance activities, one or both of the following options will be implemented:

Option 1. Protocol-Level Surveys for California Red-Legged Frog

Protocol surveys will be conducted per the *Revised Guidance on Site Assessments and Field Surveys for the California Red-legged Frog* (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2005) to determine if California red-legged frog is present at the project site. If surveys result in a negative finding, documentation will be submitted to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for confirmation. If the negative finding is considered valid no further action is required.

If California red-legged frog is found, Incidental Take Authorization will be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, as detailed in Option 2, below.

Option 2. Assume Presence of California Red-Legged Frog and Obtain Incidental Take Authorization

If the presence of California red-legged frog is determined during protocol-level surveys or it is assumed that they are present on the project site, the King City Community Development Department shall obtain an Incidental Take Permit from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service with a permit term for the duration of the project. The King City Community Development Department will ensure that all avoidance, minimization, and compensatory mitigation measures required in the permit to minimize the potential for "take" of California red-legged frog are implemented.

**Northern California Legless Lizard.** Northern California legless lizard is a California Species of Special Concern. This is a small, slender lizard with no legs that lives mostly underground, burrowing in loose, sandy soil. It forages in loose soil, sand, and leaf litter during the day. It does not bask in direct sunlight, but is sometimes found on the surface at dusk and at night. Treeless, open areas with sandy soils and sparse vegetation are present throughout habitats at the project site and provide suitable habitat for legless lizard. The nearest observation was recorded in 2018, approximately 0.55 miles south of the project site along a drainage within Pine Canyon (Occurrence No. 362, CNDDB 2024b).

If northern California legless lizard is present on or adjacent to the project site, vegetation removal activities could result in the loss or disturbance of individual animals. This would be a significant adverse environmental impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2

(above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to Northern California legless lizard to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measure*

BIO-5 Prior to implementation measures 1-4 that include ground disturbance in areas with sandy soils (which includes a majority of the project area), the King City Community Development Department shall retain a qualified biologist to determine measures to avoid or minimize impacts to legless lizards, depending on the proposed activity. Measures may include, but not be limited to:

a. Preconstruction Surveys. Within 24 hours prior to ground disturbance in potential habitat, preconstruction surveys shall be conducted. Methods include a "three-pass, high grading" methodology that requires raking of the soil to locate and remove as many California legless lizards as possible.

   If legless lizards are found during the first pass, an overnight period of no soil disturbance must occur before the second pass. The same requirement will be implemented after the second pass if legless lizards are located. If no California legless lizards are found during the second pass, a third pass is not required.

b. Identification of Relocation Site(s). Prior to surveying and construction, one or more relocation sites shall be identified by a qualified biologist. All relocation sites shall be approved by the King City Community Development Department and shall consist of suitable habitat. Relocation sites shall be as close to the capture site as possible but far enough away to ensure the animal(s) is/are not harmed by construction of the project. Relocation shall occur on the same day as capture. California Department of Fish and Wildlife California Natural Diversity Database Native Species Field Survey Forms shall be submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for all special-status species observed.

c. Barrier fencing. If California legless lizards are observed, a barrier shall be installed to prevent movement of legless lizards back into the work are. All captured California legless lizards would be moved to the nearby relocation site(s) identified in (b).

d. Monitoring. A qualified biologist shall be onsite to monitor ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities and salvage and relocate any legless lizards encountered. The monitoring shall walk alongside equipment/crews in each new area of disturbance, and shall have authority to halt activities temporarily if necessary to capture and relocate legless lizards. Any legless lizards captured shall be relocated as soon as possible to the nearby relocation site(s) identified in (b).

**Southwestern Pond Turtle.** Southwestern pond turtle is a California Species of Special Concern and is proposed for federal listing as threatened. It is uncommon to common in suitable aquatic habitat throughout California including freshwater marshes, stock ponds, lakes, rivers, and streams. This species is considered omnivorous. Aquatic plant material, including pond lilies, beetles and a variety of aquatic invertebrates as well as fishes, frogs,

and even carrion have been reported among their food. Pond turtles require basking sites such as partially submerged logs, rocks, mats of floating vegetation, or open mud banks. Turtles slip from basking sites to underwater retreats at the approach of humans or potential predators.

An occurrence of southwestern pond turtle was documented in 1988 along the Salinas River at the project site (Occurrence No. 254, CNDDB 2024b). Suitable aquatic and upland habitats are present within the project site. Impacts to southwestern pond turtle are potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to southwestern pond turtle to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measure*

BIO-6 The King City Community Development Department shall implement the following measures for the protection of western pond turtle:

a. Within 24 hours prior to vegetation removal or ground-disturbing activities associated with implementation measures 1-4, the King City Community Development Department shall retain a biologist qualified to survey for southwestern pond turtle, including their eggs and nests, to conduct a preconstruction survey along aquatic features and an adjacent 300-feet buffer of riparian areas in and adjacent to the project site.

b. If southwestern pond turtle or their nests are observed during preconstruction surveys, a qualified biologist shall be on-site to monitor activities in suitable habitat. Southwestern pond turtles found within the project area shall be allowed to leave of their own volition or they shall be captured by a qualified biologist and relocated out of harm's way to the nearest suitable habitat immediately upstream or downstream from the project area. Pond turtle relocation shall only be conducted after notifying the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

c. If southwestern pond turtle nests are identified in the work area during preconstruction surveys, a 300-foot no disturbance buffer shall be established between the nest and any areas of potential disturbance. Buffers shall be clearly marked with temporary fencing. Disturbance activities will not be allowed to commence in the exclusion area until hatchlings have emerged from the nest, or the nest is deemed inactive by a qualified biologist.

d. All construction-related trenches, holes, or pits shall be covered at the end of each workday to prevent entrapment of pond turtles.

The qualified biologist shall prepare a report documenting the results of the preconstruction survey(s) for submittal to the King City Community Development Department prior to ground disturbance.

**Burrowing Owl**. Burrowing owl is a California Species of Special Concern. Burrowing owls live and breed in burrows in the ground, especially in abandoned California ground squirrel burrows. Optimal habitat conditions include large open, dry and nearly level grasslands or prairies with short to moderate vegetation height and cover, areas of bare ground, and populations of burrowing mammals. This species was observed in 2002 approximately 1.8 miles north of the project area at the Mesa Del Rey Airport (Occurrence No. 436, CDFW 2024). Alluvial scrub and riparian understory habitats provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for burrowing owl. In agricultural environments (found adjacent to the project area), burrowing owls nest along roadsides and water conveyance structures (open canals, ditches, drains) surrounded by crops. If burrowing owl is present on or adjacent to the project site, ground disturbance and vegetation removal activities could result in the loss or disturbance of individual animals. This would be a significant adverse environmental impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to burrowing owl to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-7 To avoid loss of or harm to burrowing owl as a result of implementation measures 1-4, the following measures shall be implemented:

a. To avoid/minimize impacts to burrowing owls potentially occurring within the project site, a biologist qualified in ornithology shall conduct surveys for burrowing owl prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal. The qualified biologist shall conduct a two-visit (i.e., morning and evening) presence/absence survey at areas of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the project site boundary no less than 14 days prior to the start of construction or ground disturbance activities. Surveys shall be conducted according to the methods for take avoidance described in the Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines (CBOC 1993) and the Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation (CDFG 2012). If no burrowing owls are found, a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department and no further measures are required.

b. Because burrowing owls occupy habitat year-round, seasonal no-disturbance buffers, as outlined in the *Burrowing Owl Survey Protocol and Mitigation Guidelines* (CBOC 1993) and the *Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation* (CDFG 2012), shall be in place around occupied habitat prior to and during any ground disturbance activities. The following table includes buffer areas based on the time of year and level of disturbance (CDFG 2012), unless a qualified biologist approved by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife verifies through non-invasive measures that either: 1) birds have not begun egg laying and incubation; or 2) that juveniles from the occupied burrows are foraging independently and are capable of independent survival.

| Location | Time of Year | Level of Disturbance Buffers (meters) | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Low | Med | High |
| Nesting Sites | April 1 – Aug 15 | 200 m | 500 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Sites | Aug 16 – Oct 15 | 200 m | 200 m | 500 m |
| Nesting Sites | Oct 16 – Mar 31 | 50 m | 100 m | 500 m |

c. If burrowing owl is found and avoidance is not possible, burrow exclusion may be conducted by qualified biologists only during the non-breeding season, before breeding behavior is exhibited and after the burrow is confirmed empty through non-invasive methods, such as surveillance. Occupied burrows shall be replaced with artificial burrows at a ratio of one collapsed burrow to one constructed artificial burrow (1:1). Evicted burrowing owls may attempt to colonize or re-colonize an area that would be impacted, thus ongoing surveillance during project activities shall be conducted at a rate sufficient to detect burrowing owls if they return.

d. If surveys locate occupied burrows in or near construction areas, consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall occur to interpret survey results and develop a project-specific avoidance and minimization approach. Once the absence of burrowing owl has been confirmed, a letter report shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department.

**American Badger**. American badger is a CDFW Species of Special Concern. It is an uncommon, permanent resident found throughout most of the state, except in the northern North Coast area. This large member of the weasel family uses most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats with friable soils suitable for burrows. Prey species include fossorial rodents such as rats, mice, chipmunks, ground squirrels, and pocket gophers. Badger diet shifts seasonally depending on the availability of prey and may also include reptiles, insects, earthworms, eggs, birds, and carrion. Mixed oak woodland, coastal scrub, and grassland habitats provide cover, drier soils for burrowing, and prey resources for this species (CDFW 2024c).

The CNDDB includes one occurrence record for American badger within the project area (Occurrence No. 300, CNDDB 2024b). Suitable habitat is present within the friable soils and floodplain habitats of the project area. As such, American badger has the potential to occur on the project site. Therefore, project impacts on American badger are potentially significant.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to American badger to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measure*

BIO-8 Prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, and not more than 14 days prior to the commencement of ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, a qualified wildlife biologist shall conduct surveys to identify any potential American badger burrows/dens. If the survey results are negative (i.e., no badger dens observed), a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities and no further mitigation is required.

If the results are positive (badger dens are observed), the qualified biologist shall determine if the dens are active by installing a game camera for three days and three nights to determine if the den is in use.

a. If the biologist determines that a den may be active, coordination with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be undertaken to develop a suitable strategy to avoid impacts to American badger. The strategy may include the following: the biologist shall install a one-way door in the den opening and continue use of the game camera. Once the camera captures the individual exiting the one-way door, the den can be excavated with hand tools to prevent badgers from reusing them. If the biologist determines that the den is a maternity den, project activities shall be delayed during the maternity season (February to August), or until the badgers leave the den on their own accord or the biologist determines that the den is no longer in use.

b. If the game camera does not capture an individual entering/exiting the den, the den can be excavated with hand tools to prevent badgers from reusing them.

c. After dens have been excavated and the absence of American badger confirmed, a letter report shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal.

**Monterey Dusky-Footed Woodrat**. The Monterey dusky-footed woodrat is a California Species of Special Concern found in Monterey and San Luis Obispo counties. They are common to abundant in forest habitats of moderate canopy and moderate to dense understory. Monterey dusky-footed woodrat feeds mainly on woody plants, especially live oak, maple, coffeeberry, alder, and elderberry when available. They prefer moderate canopy cover in a variety of habitats. Houses are built of sticks and leaves at the base of, or in a tree, around a shrub, or at the base of a hill. Houses may measure eight feet in height and eight feet in diameter with nests located inside the stick house. They are mostly nocturnal but may reduce their activity on moonlit or rainy nights (CDFW 2008).

This species is often found in cool, shady habitat with dense cover and the stick houses can be used by many generations over several years. The abandoned homes of dusky-footed woodrat provide habitat for a number of other species such as deer mice, salamanders, frogs, lizards, and snakes. Predators of dusky-footed woodrat include owls, hawks, bobcats, and coyotes. The project site includes riparian trees and shrubs considered suitable habitat for this species.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to Monterey dusky-footed woodrat to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measures*

BIO-9 Prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, a qualified biologist shall conduct a survey for Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests within thirty (30) days prior to the start of disturbance activities. If the survey results are negative (i.e., no woodrat nests observed), a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities and no further mitigation is required.

If the results are positive (woodrat nests are observed), all Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests shall be mapped and flagged for avoidance.

If Monterey dusky-footed woodrat nests are found that cannot be avoided, each active nest shall be disturbed by the qualified biologist to the degree that Monterey dusky-footed woodrat leaves the nest and seeks refuge elsewhere. After the nests have been disturbed, the nest sticks shall be removed from the impact areas and placed outside of areas planned for impacts. Nests shall be dismantled during the non-breeding season (between October 1 and December 31), if possible. If a litter of young is found or suspected, nest material shall be replaced and the nest left alone for 2-3 weeks, after this time the nest will be rechecked to verify that young are capable of independent survival before proceeding with nest dismantling.

After nests have been dismantled and the absence of Monterey dusky-footed woodrat confirmed, a letter report shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, prior to ground disturbance or vegetation removal.

**San Joaquin Kit Fox**. The San Joaquin kit fox is a federally-listed endangered species and a state-listed threatened species. The present range of the San Joaquin kit fox extends from the southern end of the San Joaquin Valley, north to Tulare County, and along the interior Coast Range valleys and foothills to central Contra Costa County. San Joaquin kit foxes typically inhabit annual grasslands or grassy open spaces with scattered shrubby vegetation but can also be found in some agricultural habitats and urban areas. This species needs loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and they also need areas that provide a suitable prey base, including rabbits, mice, ground nesting birds, and California ground squirrels, as well as insects, reptiles, and carrion.

There are four documented occurrences of San Joaquin kit fox within between 1.5 and 2.8 miles from the project site (Occurrence Nos. 940, 1003, 1005, and 1008, CNDDB 2024b). Suitable habitat and suitable prey are found on and adjacent to the project site. As such, San Joaquin kit fox has the potential to occur on the project site.

Impacts to San Joaquin kit fox are considered potentially significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2 (above), which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the project site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce this potential, significant impact to San Joaquin kit fox to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measure*

BIO-10 The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Standardized Recommendations for Protection of the San Joaquin Kit Fox Prior to or During Ground Disturbance (USFWS 2011) shall be implemented prior to the initiation of any ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities associated with implementation measures 1-4 on the project site to avoid unintended take of individual San Joaquin kit foxes.

Pre-activity surveys for San Joaquin kit fox shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no less than 30 days prior to the beginning of project activities, including ground disturbance or vegetation removal, that may impact San Joaquin kit fox. The surveys shall include all work areas and a minimum 200-foot buffer of the project site. The pre-project implementation surveys shall identify kit fox habitat features on the project site, evaluate use by kit fox and, if possible, assess the potential impacts of the proposed activity. The status of all dens shall be determined and mapped.

If a natal/pupping den is discovered within the project area or within 200 feet of the project boundary, the project contractor shall consult with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to establish an appropriate avoidance buffer. The avoidance buffer shall be maintained until such time as the burrow is no longer active and/or an incidental take permit is determined to be required and is obtained.

In addition, the following measures shall be observed:

a. Project-related vehicles shall observe a 20-mph speed limit in all project areas. Night-time project activities shall be prohibited. Off-road traffic outside of the designated project area shall be prohibited.

b. To prevent inadvertent entrapment of kit foxes or other animals during project implementation, all excavated, steep-walled holes or trenches more than two feet deep shall be covered at the close of each working day by plywood or similar materials, or provided with one or more escape ramps constructed of earth fill or wooden planks. Before such holes or trenches are filled, they shall be thoroughly inspected for trapped animals. If at any time a trapped or injured kit fox is discovered, the procedures under number 11 of the Construction and Operational Requirements in the Standardized Recommendations must be followed.

c. Kit foxes are attracted to den-like structures such as pipes and may enter stored pipe becoming trapped or injured. If used, all pipes, culverts, or similar structures with a diameter of four inches or greater stored at the construction site for one or more overnight periods shall be thoroughly inspected for kit foxes before the pipe is subsequently buried, capped, or otherwise used or moved in any way. If a kit fox is discovered inside a pipe, that section of pipe shall not be moved until the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has been consulted. If necessary, and under the direct supervision of the biologist, the pipe may be moved once to remove it from the path of construction activity, until the fox has escaped.

d. All food-related trash items such as wrappers, cans, bottles, and food scraps shall be disposed of in closed containers and removed at least once a week from the project site.

e. No firearms shall be allowed on the project site during project implementation activities.

f. To prevent harassment, mortality of kit foxes or destruction of dens by dogs or cats, no pets shall be permitted on site during project implementation.

g. Use of rodenticides and herbicides on the project site during project implementation shall be restricted. This is necessary to prevent primary or secondary poisoning of kit foxes and the depletion of prey populations on which they depend. All uses of such compounds shall observe label and other restrictions mandated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, California Department of Food and Agriculture, and other State and Federal legislation, as well as additional project related restrictions deemed necessary by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. If rodent control must be conducted, zinc phosphide shall be used because of proven lower risk to kit fox.

h. In the case of trapped animals, escape ramps or structures shall be installed immediately to allow the animal(s) to escape.

i. Any contractor, employee, or agency personnel who inadvertently kills or injures a San Joaquin kit fox shall immediately report the incident to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

**Nesting Birds and Raptors**. Migratory and resident raptors and passerines and their nests are protected under the California Fish and Game Code, and the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In addition, golden and bald eagles receive protection under the Golden and Bald Eagle Protection Act. While the life histories of bird species vary, overlapping nesting seasons (approximately February to August, with peak activity April to July) and foraging similarities allow for their concurrent discussion.

CDFW Species of Special Concern and Fully Protected species of birds have the potential to occur within the project area. Suitable, but marginal, nesting areas for bank swallow (*Riparia riparia*) exist in the incised banks of the riparian woodlands around the project boundary. Bank swallows were documented along the Salinas River, including the project area, in 1981 (Occurrence No. 93, CDFW 2024b).

The home range of a population of federally and state-listed Endangered California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) occurs approximately 19 miles north and 20 miles west of the project area (with about 70 birds found between Big Sur and Pinnacles National Park in the coastal and interior Coast Ranges). No suitable California condor nesting habitat is present within the project area. While foraging habitat exists within the project parcel, given the distance from their home range, there is minimal potential that individual California condors migrate to the project site to forage.

Additionally, the Migratory Bird Treaty Act protects all nesting birds, regardless of status. Common migratory and resident songbirds that may nest within the survey area include, but are not limited to, killdeer (*Charadrius vociferus*), California quail (*Callipepla californica*), California towhee (*Melozone crissalis*), blue-gray gnatcatcher (*Polioptila caerulea*), bushtit (*Psaltriparus minimus*), white-crowned sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*), Bewick's wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*), Anna's hummingbird (*Calypte anna*), western scrub jay (*Aphelocoma californica*), ruby crowned kinglet (*Regulus calendula*), etc. Also, species of raptors such as red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), American kestrel (*Falco sparverius*), Cooper's hawk (*Accipiter cooperii*), and sharp-shinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) have the potential to nest within riparian trees, and to use the floodplain for foraging habitat.

The project site and surrounding area contain a variety of trees, shrubs, and open grassland areas suitable for nesting. Disturbance activities, including vegetation and tree removal, can impact nesting birds protected under the federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Fish and Game Code, should nesting birds be present during the activities. If protected bird species are nesting on or adjacent to the project site during the bird nesting season, then disturbance activities could result in the loss of fertile eggs, nestlings, or otherwise lead to the abandonment of nests.

Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2, which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the construction site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce the potential impact to nesting birds to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-11 If possible, project activities should be conducted between September 16 and January 14 to avoid impacts to nesting birds during the nesting season (January 15 through September 15). If implementation measures 1-4 are scheduled during the nesting season (February 15 to August 30 for small bird species such as passerines; January 15 to September 15 for owls; and February 15 to September 15 for other raptors), a qualified biologist shall conduct nesting bird surveys as follows:

a. Two surveys for active bird nests will occur within 14 days prior to start of ground disturbance or vegetation removal activities, with the final survey conducted within 48 hours prior to project commencement. Appropriate minimum survey radii surrounding each work area are typically 250 feet for passerines, 500 feet for smaller raptors, and 1,000 feet for larger raptors. Surveys will be conducted at the appropriate times of day

to observe nesting activities. Locations off the site to which access is not available may be surveyed from within the site or from public areas. If no nesting birds are found, a letter report will be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, and no further measures are required.

b. If the qualified biologist documents active nests within the project site or in nearby surrounding areas, an appropriate buffer between each nest and active project activities shall be established. The buffer shall be clearly marked and maintained until the young have fledged and are foraging independently. Prior to project activities, the qualified biologist shall conduct baseline monitoring of each nest to characterize "normal" bird behavior and establish a buffer distance, which allows the birds to exhibit normal behavior. The qualified biologist shall monitor the nesting birds daily during project activities and increase the buffer if birds show signs of unusual or distressed behavior (e.g., defensive flights and vocalizations, standing up from a brooding position, and/or flying away from the nest). If buffer establishment is not possible, the qualified biologist or project foreman shall have the authority to cease all project work in the area until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer active. Once the absence of nesting birds has been confirmed, a letter report will be prepared by the biologist and submitted to the King City Community Development Department, where it will be kept on file, and no further measures are required.

**Special-Status Bats**. Of the 25 native bat species in California, 17 receive some level of state or federal protection. Trees and/or buildings or structures on or adjacent to the project site could provide roosting habitat for state-listed species of special concern Townsend's big-eared bat. Townsend's big-eared bat prefers caves, mines, tunnels, buildings, or other human-made structures for roosting. Although there are no observations of special-status bat species recorded within three miles of the site, potential habitat is present.

Ground disturbance and vegetation/tree removal activities at the project site could result in the disturbance of roost and natal sites occupied by special-status bats on or adjacent to the project site, if present. Loss or harm to special-status bats is considered a significant adverse impact. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-2, which requires a training session on special-status species potentially present on the construction site for all personnel, and the following mitigation measure, will reduce the potential impact to protected bat species to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

BIO-12 Prior to the start of implementation measures 1-4, a qualified biologist shall conduct a habitat assessment for bats and potential roosting sites in trees to be removed and trees within 50 feet of the project area approximately 14 days prior to tree removal or disturbance activities. These surveys shall include a visual inspection of potential roosting features (bats need not be present) and a search for presence of guano within the project site, construction access routes, and 50 feet around these areas. Cavities, crevices, exfoliating bark, and bark

fissures that could provide suitable potential nest or roost habitat for bats shall be surveyed. Assumptions can be made on what species is present due to observed visual characteristics along with habitat use, or the bats can be identified to the species level with the use of a bat echolocation detector such as an "Anabat" unit. Potential roosting features found during the survey shall be flagged or marked.

If no roosting sites or bats are found, a letter report confirming absence shall be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department and no further mitigation is required. If bats or roosting sites are found, bats shall not be disturbed without specific notice to and consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The nursery season is typically considered May 1 through October 1. If bats are found roosting outside of the nursery season, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife shall be consulted prior to any eviction or other action. If avoidance or postponement is not feasible, a Bat Eviction Plan will be submitted to the California Department of Fish and Wildlife for written approval prior to project implementation. A request to evict bats from a roost includes details for excluding bats from the roost site and monitoring to ensure that all bats have exited the roost prior to the start of activity and are unable to re-enter the roost until activity is completed. Any bat eviction shall be timed to avoid lactation and young-rearing. If bats are found roosting during the nursery season, they shall be monitored to determine if the roost site is a maternal roost. This could occur by either visual inspection of the roost bat pups, if possible, or by monitoring the roost after the adults leave for the night to listen for bat pups. Because bat pups cannot leave the roost until they are mature enough, eviction of a maternal roost cannot occur during the nursery season. Therefore, if a maternal roost is present, a 50-foot buffer zone (or different size if determined in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife) shall be established around the roosting site within which no construction activities including tree removal or structure disturbance shall occur until after the nursery season. Once the absence of roosting bats has been confirmed, a letter report will be prepared and submitted to the King City Community Development Department.

b. **Riparian Habitat or Sensitive Natural Communities**. Special-status natural communities are those that are considered rare in the region, support special-status plant or wildlife species, or receive regulatory protection (i.e., wetlands under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act and/or Section 1600 of the California Fish and Game Code). In addition, the CDFW has designated a number of natural communities as rare; these communities are given the highest inventory priority and are tracked in the CNDDB (CDFW 2024d). In the project vicinity, CDFW sensitive natural communities include black cottonwood woodlands.

   The black cottonwood woodland on the project site along the southern boundary of the city and along the San Lorenzo Creek is considered a sensitive natural community (black cottonwood woodlands - S3) (CNPS 2024b). The state rank S3 is assigned to natural communities in the state that are vulnerable due to restricted range, relatively few populations, recent and widespread declines, or other factors making it vulnerable to extirpation from the state. The proposed project will involve the removal of

approximately nine acres of dead and damaged riparian trees and vegetation within the proposed fuel break. Impacts to sensitive natural communities are considered potentially significant. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce potential impacts to sensitive natural communities to a less-than-significant level.

The project's King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan recommends the City further evaluate the potential reintroduction of American beavers (*Castor canadensis*) within or adjacent to the project area to provide wildfire resiliency. Research has shown how large, wet, floodplain complexes maintained by American beavers create natural wildfire fuel breaks that remain green even in high severity fires (Fairfax and Whittle 2020). The reintroduction of American beaver to the project site would not have any adverse impact to the riparian habitat but rather help to restore and improve this sensitive natural community.

*Mitigation Measure*

BIO-13 In advance of the start of implementation measures 1-4, a Riparian Revegetation and Monitoring Plan shall be prepared. The plan shall include clear goals and objectives, success criteria, specifics on restoration/creation/enhancement (e.g., plant palette, soils, irrigation design standards and requirements), specific monitoring periods and reporting guidelines, and a maintenance plan. Species from the California Invasive Plant Council's (Cal-IPC) Invasive Plant List (Cal-IPC 2024) shall be removed if present and not included in the planting palette. Appropriate performance standards may include, but are not limited to, an 80 percent survival rate of restoration tree and shrub plantings; absence of invasive plant species in restored areas; and self-sustaining conditions (i.e., plant viability without supplemental water) at the end of five years. If the restoration activities are not meeting success criteria, remedial measures shall be implemented and would typically include, but are not limited to, replanting, reseeding, grading adjustments, supplemental irrigation, access control, increased weed control, and extended maintenance and monitoring periods.

The Riparian Revegetation and Monitoring Plan shall be submitted to the King City Community Development Department for review and approval as well as any other appropriate regulatory agencies during the permit application process, if needed.

c. **Wetlands and Waters of the U.S.** Wetlands and riparian habitats are considered jurisdictional by several regulatory agencies including the USACE, CDFW, and RWQCB. Potentially jurisdictional wetlands and waters located within the project site include the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek. These features are discussed below are shown on Figure 5, National Wetland Inventory and Habitat Map.

The project site encompasses sections of the San Lorenzo Creek and the Salinas River. The San Lorenzo Creek and Salinas River floodplain is described as Freshwater forested/shrub wetlands PSSA (Palustrine (P), nontidal wetlands dominated by woody vegetation less than 6 m tall (SS), that is temporarily flooded (A)) by the USFWS. The riverine habitat running through the both the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek is classified as a R4SBC system (an intermittent stream that is seasonally flooded) (USFWS 2024b).

The extent of project impacts to each potentially jurisdictional wetland feature (including Waters of the U.S. and State) has not yet been determined, but it is assumed that impacts such as invasive species removal will ultimately be beneficial for potentially jurisdictional wetland features. However, modifications to riparian vegetation and disturbance to areas within the top of bank and ordinary high water mark will likely necessitate permits from USACE, CDFW, and RWQCB. Impacts to jurisdictional aquatic features as a result of this project are considered significant. Implementation of Mitigation Measure BIO-13, which requires implementation of a Riparian Revegetation and Monitoring Plan, and the following mitigation measure would reduce potential, significant impacts to jurisdictional aquatic habitats to less-than-significant.

*Mitigation Measures*

BIO-14 In advance of the start of implementation measures 1-4, in areas where impacts to jurisdictional aquatic features cannot be avoided, the King City Community Development Department will retain a qualified biologist to determine the extent of potential wetlands and waterways regulated by the United States Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB), and California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW). If the USACE claims jurisdiction, the City shall retain a qualified biologist to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 404 Nationwide Permit. The City and the qualified biologist shall coordinate with the RWQCB to obtain a Clean Water Act Section 401 Water Quality Certification. The City and the qualified biologist shall also coordinate with the CDFW to obtain a Streambed Alteration Agreement.

d. **Wildlife Movement**. Ensuring wildlife movement through a landscape, to enable the acquisition of resources for feeding, cover, and reproduction, has been recognized as critical for the survival of animal populations. Habitat "connectivity" is the ability of an individual or population to move between habitat patches that provide these resources (Hilty et al. 2019).

A species can undertake several types of movement events, which generally take place at different spatial and temporal scales at various life history stages. Daily movement can occur in the procurement of food and water, shelter, or other resource requirements. Seasonal movement, or "migration," generally occurs at a much larger spatial scale. Long distance juvenile dispersal or other colonization events might take place once in an individual's life, occurring only after a lapse of several generations. These various types of movement, along with species-specific differences, lead to numerous ways in which to measure a landscape's connectivity in terms of habitat needs.

The California Essential Habitat Connectivity Project provides a statewide wildlife habitat connectivity map using the Biogeographic Information and Observation System (CDFW 2024e). This system was queried to determine the presence or absence of wildlife corridors on the project site. The Salinas River at the intersection of the San Lorenzo Creek is considered essential habitat which connects wildlife from the Diablo Range to the Coast Range Mountains.

The proposed project includes measures that will be implemented to reduce the likelihood of fire spreading in the riverbed project area, including creating and

maintaining a buffer along the populated edge of the Salinas Riverbed and San Lorenzo Creek, and removal of invasive Arundo, tamarisk, and yellow starthistle. Activities associated with these measures will cause a temporary impact to wildlife corridors, however implementation of long-term goals of the project in combination with the Riparian Revegetation and Monitoring Plan (BIO-13) are anticipated to enhance biological communities present. Impacts to wildlife corridors are therefore considered beneficial and less than significant.

e. **Local Biological Resource Policies/Ordinances**.

Portions of the project are located within the King City city limits and portions within unincorporated Monterey County. The following ordinances apply to the proposed project in both jurisdictions (see Figure 2, Aerial Map to view the city limit line within the project boundary).

**Monterey County General Plan.** The *2010 Monterey County General Plan* Conservation and Open Space (OS) element contains the following goal and policies associated with biological resources that are applicable to the proposed project:

> **Goal OS-5**. Conserve listed species, critical habitat, habitat and species protected in area plans; avoid, minimize and mitigate significant impacts to biological resources.
>
> **Policy OS-5.4**. Development shall avoid, minimize, and mitigate impacts to listed species and critical habitat to the extent feasible.
>
> **Policy OS-5.16**. A biological study shall be required for any development project requiring a discretionary permit and having the potential to 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, or substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species.
>
> **Policy OS-5.25**. Occupied nests of statutorily protected migratory birds and raptors shall not be disturbed during the breeding season (generally February 1 to September 15).

**Monterey County Code of Ordinances**

> ***Title 16,*** **Section 16.60.040** –The Monterey County Code of Ordinances restricts the removal of mature trees countywide. No person may conduct any tree cutting or removal without first obtaining a Tree Removal permit from the Monterey County Director of Planning.
>
> The Monterey County Director of Planning may approve the removal of no more than three protected trees per lot in a one-year period. The following information shall be submitted to the Director of Planning prior to consideration of such removal:

1. Applicants or authorized representatives name, address and telephone number;
2. The description of the site(s) involved, including the street address, if any, and the assessor's parcel number;
3. A site plan sufficient to identify and locate the trees to be removed, other trees, buildings, proposed buildings, and other improvements;
4. The purpose for the tree removal;
5. A description of the species, diameter two feet above ground level, estimated height, and general health of the trees to be removed;
6. A description of the method to be used in removing the tree(s);
7. A statement showing how trees not proposed for removal are to be protected during removal or construction;
8. Proposed visual impact mitigation measures the applicant intends to take (if appropriate). Size, location and species of replacement trees, if any, shall be indicated on the site plan; and
9. Such further information as may be required by the Director of Planning, including but not limited to the opinion of a registered professional forester, tree surgeon, or other qualified expert to enable the determination of matter required under these regulations.

**King City General Plan.** The *King City General Plan* Conservation and Open Space (OS) element contains the following goal and policies associated with biological resources that are applicable to the proposed project:

> **Policy 2.1.1:** The City shall assure that environmentally-sensitive lands which are unique, limited, and fragile natural areas, are protected and preserved wherever possible.
>
> **Program 2.1.1.1:** The city shall work with Monterey County, the State Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Forest Service, and other agencies to identify environmentally-sensitive habitat areas; and shall promote the conservation of these habitat areas in conjunction with private landowners, other public agencies, and non-profit organizations.
>
> **Policy 2.2.1:** The City shall strive to preserve and restore wherever possible the riparian habitat of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek, within its Planning Area.
>
> **Program 2.2.1.1:** The City shall require biological investigations of any proposed development that could significantly impact the riparian habitat of the Salinas River or of San Lorenzo Creek. Such investigations shall assess the significance of natural habitat within the project site, and the degree of any adverse impacts of the proposed project upon the habitat. The City shall require that significant adverse impacts be fully mitigated wherever possible.

**King City Municipal Code**

> **Section 13.10.100, Removal of Trees—**New developments. When the removal of a tree or trees is proposed in connection with the improvement or development of property by subdivision, building permit, or other entitlement, the applicant shall file with the public works director, and include in the application for such permit or entitlement, a plot plan showing the location and type of tree or trees to be removed and a brief statement of the reason for removal, as well as any other information that may be pertinent. On receipt of such plot plan and statement, the public works director will make an inspection of the site to determine the health, value, ease of relocation, and susceptibility to damage of the tree or trees proposed to be removed and thereafter will file with the city official or city body having jurisdiction of such application (e.g., the planning commission or city council) a report of his findings and recommendations concerning the proposal. If the official or city body having jurisdiction approves the application, a permit for tree removal shall be issued at the same time as other permits or entitlements for the project.

**Protected Trees.** The proposed project includes removal of riparian trees along the fuel breaks. Direct impacts as a result of the proposed project would occur through tree removal and indirect impacts could potentially jeopardize tree health through damage to roots and paving under tree driplines, resulting in the potential need to remove the trees. Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this potential, significant impact to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measure*

BIO-15 Prior to the start of implementation measure 1-4 and any tree removal or trimming activities, the King City Community Development Department will hire an International Society of Arboriculture (ISA)-certified arborist to conduct a tree survey and prepare an evaluation report with associated data and location map for all potentially affected trees on and immediately adjacent to the project site. The King City Community Development Department will follow the arborist's recommendations, such as planting replacement trees in appropriate on-site or off-site areas, preferably associated with the Salinas River or San Lorenzo Creek corridors, along with any required maintenance and monitoring.

f. **Conservation Plans**. There are no critical habitat boundaries, habitat conservation plans, natural community conservation plans, or other approved local, regional, or state habitat conservation plans applicable to the proposed project site (CDFW 2024b).

# 5. CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a *historical resource* pursuant to section 15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. | Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a *unique archaeological resource* pursuant to section 15064.5? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. | Disturb any human remains, including those interred outside of dedicated cemeteries? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |

The Northwest Information Center (NWIC) was contacted to determine if there were any known cultural resources within the project vicinity. The NWIC returned with reply letter 23-0535 indicating that two resources were found:

- P-27-002322, which is a portion of El Camino Real, U.S. Highway 101.
- P-27-002613, which is a historic building described as a multi-family property and hotel/motel.

## Comments:

a/b. **Historic Structures.** The results of the archival search states that two historic structural resource is located in the project vicinity (P-27-002613 and P-27-0023222). However, these resources will not be impacted from implementation of the proposed project because the historic building and portion of U.S. Highway 101 is located off-site. The historic structure is approximately 150 meters (492 feet) from the San Lorenzo Creek on the southeast side of King City and the portion of U.S. Highway 101, while crossing over the San Lorenzo Creek area via an overpass bridge, would not be affected by project activities.

**Archaeological Resources.** An archaeological pedestrian survey of the project area was completed on December 6, 2023 by EMC Planning Group Registered Professional Archaeologist, Vanessa Potter, MA. Ms. Potter conducted a survey of three areas to determine if there were surface traces of historic or prehistoric materials in the project area. The first survey area began off of River Drive and accessed a portion of the Salinas River floodplain. The second survey area began near 1st Street and accessed a portion of the San Lorenzo Creek. The third survey explored the flooded portion of the golf course located near South Golf Drive and Villa Drive. Agricultural fields are located to the north of the golf course and the Creek to the east. This survey represents a sample of the project area.

The archaeological pedestrian survey results were negative. There was no surface evidence of cultural resources such as ground stone, shell, or lithics. There was no surface evidence of historic or unique archaeological resources. The portion of the Salinas River floodplain that was surveyed showed evidence of human use. There were churned up soils, trash, a flipped car, and dried squash vines. The floodplain was dry at the time of the survey. The banks of the San Lorenzo Creek were observed for any accumulated cultural materials post flooding. Many discarded tires were noted at this section of the creek. The creek was dry at the time of the survey.

However, unknown buried prehistoric, historic or unique archaeological resources could be present at any portions of the Salinas River and the San Lorenzo Creek. While unlikely, the recommended implementation strategies have the potential to uncover or disturb unknown cultural resources, causing a substantial change in the significance of the resource. This would be considered a significant impact. The following mitigation measures would reduce this potential significant impact to a less-than-significant level.

### *Mitigation Measure*

CR-1 Prior to construction, all personnel directly involved in project-related activities shall be provided archaeological and cultural sensitivity training. The training shall be conducted by a Native American Monitor or a qualified archaeologist that meet the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for archaeology. The training shall take place at a day and time to be determined in conjunction with the project construction foreman, and prior to any scheduled project-related activities. The training will include the following: a discussion of applicable laws and penalties; samples or visual aids of artifacts that could be encountered in the project vicinity, including what those artifacts and resources may look like partially buried, or wholly buried and freshly exposed; and instructions to halt work in the vicinity of any potential cultural resource discovery, and notify the archaeological monitor as necessary. If a handout is provided by the archaeologist, the foreman will keep a copy of it in his or her vehicle as a reference. Having reference material in the vehicle does not replace contacting an archaeologist should resources be uncovered.

CR-2 In the event that archaeological resources are inadvertently discovered, work shall temporarily halt or divert work within 50 meters (165 feet) of the find until it can be evaluated. All potentially significant or unique archaeological deposits shall be evaluated to demonstrate whether the resource is eligible for inclusion on the California Register of Historic Resources. If archaeological deposits are encountered, they will be evaluated and mitigated simultaneously in the timeliest manner practicable, allowing for recovery of materials and data by standard archaeological procedures. For prehistoric archaeological sites, this data recovery involves the hand-excavated recovery and non-destructive analysis of a small sample of the deposit. Historic resources shall also be sampled through hand excavation, though architectural features may require careful mechanical exposure and hand excavation.

Any previously undiscovered resources found during construction activities shall be recorded on appropriate California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) forms and evaluated for significance by a qualified archaeologist. Significant and/or unique cultural resources consist, of but are not limited to, stone, bone, glass, ceramics, fossils, wood, or shell artifacts, or features including hearths, structural remains, or historic dumpsites. If the resource is determined significant, a qualified archaeologist shall prepare and implement a research design and archaeological data recovery plan that will capture those categories of data for which the site is significant in accordance with Section 15064.5 of the CEQA Guidelines.

If such resources or artifacts are determined to be of native tribal origin, any mitigation or recovery program shall include direction from tribal leadership that has previously consulted with King City for proper handling and treatment.

The archaeologist shall also perform appropriate technical analyses, prepare a comprehensive report complete with methods, results, and recommendations, and provide for the permanent curation of the recovered resources. The report shall be submitted to the Northwest Information Center and the State Historic Preservation Office, as required.

c. Although there was no surface evidence of human skeletal remains during the archaeological pedestrian survey, there remains the possibility that the project's implementation measures could damage or destroy previously undiscovered Native American human remains. Disturbance of Native American human remains is considered a significant impact. Implementation of the following mitigation measures would reduce this potential impact to a less-than-significant level.

*Mitigation Measure*

CR-3 California Health and Safety Code Section 7050.5 and the CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(e) contain the mandated procedures of conduct following the discovery of human remains. According to the provisions in CEQA, if human remains are encountered at the site, all work in the immediate vicinity of the discovery shall cease and necessary steps to ensure the integrity of the immediate area shall be taken. The Monterey County Coroner shall be notified immediately. The Coroner shall then determine whether the remains are Native American. If the Coroner determines the remains are Native American, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission within 24 hours, who would, in turn, notify the person the Native American Heritage Commission identifies as the Most Likely Descendant of any human remains. Further actions shall be determined, in part, by the desires of the Most Likely Descendant. The Most Likely Descendant has 48 hours to make recommendations regarding the disposition of the remains following notification from the Native American Heritage Commission of the discovery. If the Most Likely Descendant does not make recommendations within 48 hours, the owner shall, with appropriate dignity, reinter the remains in an area of the property secure from further disturbance. Alternatively, if the owner does not accept the Most Likely Descendant's recommendations, the owner or the descendent may request mediation by the Native American Heritage Commission.

# 6. ENERGY

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Result in a potentially significant environmental impact due to wasteful, inefficient, or unnecessary consumption of energy resources, during project construction or operation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b. | Conflict with or obstruct a state or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. Energy impacts generally pertain to excessive use of fossil-fuel generated energy typically in the form of electricity and natural gas, and/or excessive demand for transportation fuel. The proposed project would create an inconsequential increase in energy demand, primarily in the form of fuel use in equipment used for short-term vegetation management activities. The project would have a less than significant impact from wasteful, inefficient or unnecessary energy consumption.

b. The project would be an inconsequential source of energy demand to which no State or local regulations for renewable energy, energy efficiency or energy conservation apply. Therefore, the proposed project would have no impact from conflict with or obstructing a State or local plan for renewable energy or energy efficiency.

# 7. GEOLOGY AND SOILS

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving: | | | | |
| | (1) Rupture of a known earthquake fault, as delineated on the most recent Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zoning Map issued by the State Geologist for the area or based on other substantial evidence of a known fault? Refer to Division of Mines and Geology Special Publication 42? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| | (2) Strong seismic ground shaking? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| | (3) Seismic-related ground failure, including liquefaction? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| | (4) Landslides? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | Be located on a geologic unit or soil that is unstable, or that would become unstable as a result of the project, and potentially result in on- or off-site landslide, lateral spreading, subsidence, liquefaction, or collapse? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. | Be located on expansive soil, creating substantial direct or indirect risks to life or property? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e. | Have soils incapable of adequately supporting the use of septic tanks or alternative wastewater disposal systems where sewers are not available for the disposal of wastewater? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f. | Directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. **Fault Rupture**. The nearest known earthquake fault to the project site is the San Andreas Fault Zone, which is located approximately 14.5 miles northeast of the site (California Department of Conservation 2024). Based on the location of the nearest earthquake fault

and the nature of the proposed project, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving rupture of a known earthquake fault.

**Seismic Ground Shaking**. The San Andreas Fault is located approximately 14.5 miles northeast of the project site, which is a distance that, if an earthquake were to occur, could result in seismic ground shaking on the site. However, based on the nature of the proposed project, the project would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving seismic ground shaking.

**Liquefaction**. The project site is located within a high and moderate liquefaction susceptibility area (Monterey County 2024b). However, the proposed project does not involve the construction of buildings, roads, or any type of infrastructure that could be damaged and result in potential substantial adverse effects including the risk of loss, injury, or death. The proposed project involves activities that support fire protection and suppression, which would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving liquefaction.

**Landslides**. The project site is located within a low landslide susceptibility area (Monterey County 2024b). Additionally, the proposed project does not involve the construction of buildings, roads, or any type of infrastructure that could be damaged and result in potential substantial adverse effects including the risk of loss, injury, or death. The proposed project involves activities that support fire protection and suppression, which would not directly or indirectly cause potential substantial adverse effects, including the risk of loss, injury, or death involving landslides.

b. The project site involves low to moderate erosion hazards (Monterey County 2024b). However, according to the RWPP, the recommended fuel break does not need to be a bare strip in which all vegetation is removed to mineral soil (i.e., soils derived from minerals or rocks containing little organic matter) annually. Therefore, the activities involved with the proposed project would not require grading and instead would involve hand labor consisting of minor pruning, weed-pulling, herbicide application, and trimming. Because there is no grading or excavation involved, it is unlikely that the proposed project would not result in substantial soil erosion or the loss of topsoil.

c. The site has low susceptibility to landslide hazards and due to the nature of the proposed project, the project would not be located on soil that would become unstable and result in on- or off-site landslides. Additionally, the nature of the project as a wildfire prevention plan would not result in lateral spreading, subsidence, or collapse of the site soils.

The project site is located within a high and moderate liquefaction susceptibility area (Monterey County 2024b). However, the activities associated with the proposed project would not result in the soil becoming unstable and potentially resulting in liquefaction.

d/e. The project does not include construction and would not increase risks of property damage from construction on expansive soils, or the use of septic systems. Therefore, no impacts related to construction and the use of septic systems would occur.

f. There are no identified paleontological resources or unique geological features within or immediately surrounding King City or the greater Salinas Valley (Monterey County 2008, Figure 4.10.1). Paleontological resources or geologic features are largely located in mountainous areas of Monterey County and not in low-lying coastal or interior valley areas. The proposed project would involve minimal ground disturbance activities beyond vegetation management activities associated with the RWPP. Therefore, no impacts associated with unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature would occur.

# 8. GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Generate greenhouse gas emissions, either directly or indirectly, that may have a significant impact on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b. | Conflict with an applicable plan, policy or regulation adopted for the purpose of reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. Analogous to the discussion of air quality impacts in Section 3.0, Air Quality, checklist question "b," the RWPP strategies with potential to generate air emissions, including greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, are primarily limited to establishing and maintaining a community fuel break through mechanical means, removing invasive species, and managing the invasive yellow starthistle through prescribed burns. The fuel break strategy implementation activities, including using handheld gas-powered tools such as weed whackers and pole pruners, as well as mowers and wood chippers, are considered analogous to construction activities given that they are short-term in nature and would not be continuous sources of air emissions on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis.

The air district has not adopted guidance for assessing the impacts of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from land use projects or from non-land use projects that would provide direction for evaluating the impacts of the proposed project. However, the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, the adjacent air district to the north, has adopted guidance that addresses construction and operational GHG emissions from land use project as part of its *CEQA Air Quality Guidelines*. This guidance is informative for its reference to the fuel break strategy. The Bay Area Air Quality Management District does not consider GHG emissions from construction activities to be a substantial source of GHGs relative to those from long term operations of land use projects. Consequently, a threshold of significance is not established for them.

Like criteria air emissions, the primary sources of GHG emissions from short-term construction activities are typically from heavy duty construction equipment and heavy duty on-road transportation sources like heavy-duty trucks. Fuel break activities would include using handheld gas-powered equipment, and wood chippers for one-time fuel break creation, and mowers for semi-annual maintenance. The equipment would be an inconsequential source of GHG emissions relative to typically more intensive construction activities for land use development projects, which the Bay Area Air Quality Management District has determined do not generate a substantial volume of GHG emissions.

By its very nature, the yellow starthistle prescribed burn implementation activity is not analogous to a short-term construction activity, other than for its short-term, limited nature. This activity would include three individual prescribed burn events over three consecutive years within the area. The GHG dynamics of prescribed burns can be quite variable and dynamic. Generally, independent of other air emissions, fire consumes biomass and releases carbon dioxide compounds from organic matter. Longer-term emissions are generated when burned vegetation decomposes, while some carbon is returned to the soil. However, GHG emissions in the form of carbon dioxide released during prescribed burns would otherwise be a natural part of the carbon cycle and not typically considered separate or additive, as they are not included in GHG emissions inventories. Here, the "carbon cycle" generally refers to the natural process whereby plants naturally die, with their carbon content released through decomposition. In this context, the prescribed burn activity would not be a source of substantial GHG emissions.

Given the information above, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact from generating GHG emissions.

b. There are no GHG reduction plans, policies or regulations that are applicable to the type of project proposed or the associated project implementation activities. The proposed project would have no impact from conflict with an applicable GHG reduction plan.

# 9. HAZARDS AND HAZARDOUS MATERIALS

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| c. | Emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances, or waste within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. | Be located on a site which is included on a list of hazardous materials sites compiled pursuant to Government Code section 65962.5 and, as a result, create a significant hazard to the public or the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e. | For a project located within an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or a public-use airport, result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| f. | Impair implementation of or physically interfere with an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| g. | Expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a/b. As a wildfire prevention plan, the proposed project does not involve activities that would result in the routine transport, use, or disposal of hazardous materials. See the discussion regarding herbicides in below. Therefore, the project would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

As a wildfire prevention plan, the proposed project includes activities that would reduce wildfire hazard risk. Some of these recommendations include the use of herbicides (e.g., invasive vegetation management for Arundo and Tamarisk) and some may result in temporary hazardous emissions due to fuel management and treatment (i.e., prescribed

burns or broadcast burns). However, the use of herbicides for the invasive vegetation management is not only a widely-used treatment method, but has already been an ongoing treatment method at the project site by the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County. Therefore, the proposed project would not be introducing this as a new treatment method in the area. Additionally, the hazardous emissions due to some of the fuel management and treatment methods would be temporary and occur one to two times each year, at most, which would not result in a significant hazard to the public (refer to Section 3.0, Air Quality, for a more detailed discussion on this topic).

The proposed project, therefore, would not create a significant hazard to the public or the environment through reasonably foreseeable upset and accident conditions involving the release of hazardous materials into the environment.

c. The project site is not located within one-quarter mile of an existing or proposed school. The nearest schools to the project site are King City High School (approximately 0.5 miles north) and King City Arts Charter San Lorenzo School (approximately 0.3 miles northwest) (Google Earth 2024). Additionally, as discussed in a/b above, the project would not emit hazardous emissions or handle hazardous or acutely hazardous materials, substances.

d. The following lists were reviewed:

- Hazardous Materials Waste and Substances Sites from the Department of Toxic Substances Control EnviroStor Database (Department of Toxic Substances Control 2024);
- Leaking Underground Storage Tank Sites from the State Water Board's GeoTracker Database (State Water Resources Board 2024);
- Solid Waste Disposal Sites Identified by Water Board with Waste Constituents Above Hazardous Waste Levels Outside the Waste Management Unit (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024a);
- "Active" Cease and Desist Order and Cleanup and Abatement Orders from Water Board (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024b); and
- List of hazardous waste facilities subject to corrective action pursuant to Section 25187.5 of the Health and Safety Code, identified by the Department of Toxic Substances Control (California Environmental Protection Agency 2024c).

The project site is not located on any of these lists, with exception to the State Water Resources Board's GeoTracker Database. There is one leaking underground storage tank, whose case closed back in 1992, that is located within the project site. There are another three leaking underground storage tanks whose cases are completed and closed within the 1,000-foot fuels modeling buffer shown around the project site in Figure 2, Aerial Map. Because this case is not within the project site boundary where the implementation of fire safety activities would occur, the project would not result in the creation of a significant hazard to the public or the environment.

e. The proposed project is located within two miles of the Mesa Del Rey Airport, which is located at the north end of King City. However, the project does not involve any residential or commercial uses and, therefore, implementation of the project would not result in a safety hazard or excessive noise for people residing or working in the project area in relation to its proximity to the Mesa Del Rey Airport.

f. The eastern part of the project site crosses U.S. Highway 101. Although U.S. Highway 101 is not officially identified as an emergency evacuation route in the *Monterey County Emergency Operations Plan* (November 2020) or in the *Monterey County Emergency Operations Plan, Annex - Evacuation and Transportation* (April 2022), it is one of two primary routes connecting King City to both northern and southern Monterey County. At this location, U.S. Highway 101 is elevated from the San Lorenzo Creek below. Therefore, the project's fire hazard reduction activities would occur beneath U.S. Highway 101 at this location and would not interfere or impair its use as an emergency evacuation route.

g. The proposed project is a wildfire prevention plan whose sole purpose is to support a long-term fire resiliency and prioritize hazard reduction projects along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek in or near King City. The primary implementation measure in the RWPP is the creation of a fuel break on the edge of the Salinas Riverbed to protect homes and businesses and prevent a wildland fire from becoming an extensive, destructive fire. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures, either directly or indirectly, to a significant risk of loss, injury or death involving wildland fires.

# 10. HYDROLOGY AND WATER QUALITY

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Violate any water quality standards or waste discharge requirements or otherwise substantially degrade surface or ground water quality? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b. Substantially decrease groundwater supplies or interfere substantially with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. Substantially alter the existing drainage pattern of the site or area, including through the alteration of the course of a stream or river or through the addition of impervious surfaces, in a manner which would: | | | | |
| (1) Result in substantial erosion or siltation on- or off-site; | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| (2) Substantially increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site; | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| (3) Create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide substantial additional sources of polluted runoff; or | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| (4) Impede or redirect flood flows? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. In flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones, risk release of pollutants due to project inundation? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e. Conflict with or obstruct implementation of a water quality control plan or sustainable groundwater management plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. **Construction Water Quality Impacts**. Due to the nature of the proposed project, typical construction activities are not anticipated. The project's "construction" involves hand labor consisting of minor pruning, weed-pulling, herbicide application, and trimming as well as the use of some mechanical equipment. These activities could result in the degradation of surface water quality in the Salinas River and/or the San Lorenzo Creek by way of spills from gas-powered mechanical equipment, trimmed vegetation that is not hauled away, and burned vegetation.

The State Water Resources Control Board has implemented a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Program to control and enforce storm water pollutant discharge reduction per the Clean Water Act. The Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board issues and enforces the NPDES permits for discharges to water bodies in Monterey County. According to City Municipal Code Section 17.56.100, the City Engineer shall review the project to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board.

City Municipal Code Section 13.09.160 states that all construction sites shall install, implement, and maintain best management practices, which shall be implemented and maintained year-round and include measures associated with run-on and runoff control and good site management. Additionally, this code section states that all construction sites shall be inspected by the City to verify that best management practices are installed, maintained, and effective.

Required compliance with the NPDES requirements and City Municipal Code would ensure that applicable water quality standards are met and that water quality impacts from construction activities will be less than significant.

**Operational Water Quality Impacts**. The project is a wildfire prevention plan with fire resiliency activities occurring periodically, at varying times, throughout the year. These activities include, but are not limited to, fuel reduction, which would result in the removal of vegetation in the area to reduce fuel for wildfires. This could aid in the increase of runoff and pollution of waters from trimmed vegetation that was not hauled away or previously burned debris that makes its way into the Salinas River and/or San Lorenzo Creek.

The City is a small municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4) and, therefore, projects within the City shall meet the standards established by the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board. According to City Municipal Code Section 17.56.100, the City Engineer shall review the project to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, which include low impact development measures such as limiting any type of disturbance of creeks and natural drainage features.

Adherence to the requirements of the Central Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board would ensure that impacts associated with post-construction water quality would be less than significant.

b. The proposed project as a wildfire protection plan does not involve any uses that would require the demand of groundwater. Therefore, the project would not decrease groundwater supplies or interfere with groundwater recharge such that the project may impede sustainable groundwater management of the basin.

c. **Erosion**. Refer to the discussion in Section 7.0, Geology and Soils, checklist question "b."

**Flooding**. The proposed project as a wildfire protection plan involves activities such as fuel management to support fire resiliency in the area. The project site does not contain any impervious features nor does the project introduce new impervious features, which could increase the rate or amount of stormwater runoff and could result in the potential for flooding on- or off-site. Therefore, the project would not increase the rate or amount of surface runoff in a manner which would result in flooding on- or off-site

**Runoff**. As stated above, the project would not create new impervious features on the project site, which could result in higher peak discharges that may potentially exceed the capacity of existing or planned stormwater drainage systems. Therefore, implementation of the project and its fire resiliency activities would not create or contribute runoff water that would exceed the capacity of existing or planned storm water drainage systems or provide additional sources of polluted runoff.

**Flood Flows**. The project does not involve any structures that could impede or redirect flood flows. Therefore, no impact would occur.

d. According to the Flood Emergency Management Agency, the project site is not located within flood hazard, tsunami, or seiche zones and, therefore, would not risk release of pollutants due to project inundation.

e. The project would not result in any demand on groundwater resources and, therefore, would not conflict with or obstruct a sustainable groundwater management plan.

# 11. LAND USE AND PLANNING

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Physically divide an established community? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Cause any significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. Implementation of the project would occur within the river and stream beds and therefore, would not physically divide an established community.

b. The various environmental topics in this initial study address applicable land use plans, policies, and regulations adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect. This initial study shows that for those environmental topics (e.g., air quality, biological resources, greenhouse gas emissions, etc.), there are either no impacts, less than significant impacts, or significant impacts that can be mitigated to a less-than-significant level. Therefore, the project would not create any significant environmental impact due to a conflict with any land use plan, policy, or regulation adopted for the purpose of avoiding or mitigating an environmental effect.

# 12. MINERAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Result in loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a/b. According to the U.S. Geological Survey's Mineral Resources Online Spatial Data Interactive Map, there are no mineral resources within or adjacent to the project area (U.S. Geological Survey 2024). Further, the King City General Plan Conservation, Open Space, and Safety Elements indicates that there are no known mineral resources within the City's planning area (p. 8). Therefore, the project would not result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of value to the region and the residents of the state nor would the project result in the loss of availability of a locally important mineral resource recovery site delineated in a local general plan, specific plan, or other land-use plan.

# 13. NOISE

Would the project result in:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Generation of a substantial temporary or permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of standards established in the local general plan or noise ordinance, or in applicable standards of other agencies? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |
| b. | Generation of excessive ground-borne vibration or ground borne noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | For a project located within the vicinity of a private airstrip or an airport land-use plan or, where such a plan has not been adopted, within two miles of a public airport or public-use airport, expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. Due to the nature of the proposed project, there would be no permanent increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project.

During the initial and maintenance treatments, noise-generating equipment may be used (e.g., chainsaw, backpack or hand blower, push mower, etc.). As discussed throughout this initial study, the larger portion of the project site is located south of the city limits and within unincorporated Monterey County while the eastern portion of the project site is within King City. Therefore, noise control regulations from both King City and Monterey County apply to the project.

City Municipal Code Section 7.25.050 states that it is unlawful for any person to use or operate any sound amplifying equipment outdoors from 10:00 PM to 9:00 AM. However, an exemption is made (Section 7.25.070.F) for noise associated with construction, repair, remodeling, demolition, paving or grading of any real property, provided that the activities take place only between the hours of 7:00 AM and 7:00 PM.

Monterey County Municipal Code Section 10.60.030 states that at any time of day, it is prohibited to operate any machine or device which produces a noise level that exceeds eighty-five (85) dBA measured fifty (50) feet therefrom. Monterey County Municipal Code Section 10.60.040 prohibits any loud and unreasonable sound any day of the week from 9:00 PM to 7:00 AM.

All activities recommended as part of the RWPP will be required to occur during the time period mentioned in the above regulations by both the City and Monterey County. Additionally, the recommended activities would be dispersed throughout the project site and, therefore, noise increases at any one sensitive receptor would be limited. The use of equipment that may cause increases in ambient noise levels would be temporary and sporadic. It is for these reasons, in addition to the project's required compliance with the City and Monterey County Municipal Codes, that the project would not generate a substantial temporary increase in ambient noise levels in the vicinity of the project in excess of local standards.

b. Implementation of the activities provided in the plan would not result in the long-term operation of any source of ground vibration, such as pile driving, drilling, boring, or rock blasting. Thus, implementation of the project would not result in the exposure of sensitive receptors to levels of excessive vibration or groundborne noise levels.

c. The proposed project is located within two miles of the Mesa Del Rey Airport, which is located at the north end of King City. The *Master Plan – Mesa Del Rey Airport* does not include an airport noise contour map; however, the project does not involve any residential or commercial uses and, therefore, implementation of the project would not expose people residing or working in the project area to excessive noise levels.

# 14. POPULATION AND HOUSING

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Induce substantial unplanned population growth in an area, either directly (e.g., by proposing new homes and businesses) or indirectly (e.g., through extension of roads or other infrastructure)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. The proposed project does not involve residential uses and, therefore, would not increase the population. The proposed project would not induce unplanned population growth in an area, either directly or indirectly.

b. There are no permanent structures on the project site. However, homeless encampments and debris exist intermittently throughout the project area particularly in the Salinas riverbed area fronting River Drive. The City, in conjunction, with local community groups, have been working over the last several years to move homeless individuals out of the riverbed area particularly given recent fires that have been ignited due to homeless encampments. Therefore, the project would not displace substantial numbers of existing people or housing, necessitating the construction of replacement housing elsewhere.

# 15. PUBLIC SERVICES

Would the project result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service ratios, response times, or other performance objectives for any of the following public services:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Fire protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. Police protection? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. Schools? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. Parks? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e. Other public facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a-e. Fire protection services for King City are provided by the City's Fire Department, with mutual aid agreements with other fire agencies in Monterey County, as needed. Table 1, Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan Implementation Measures (Projects), provided in Section A, Background, of this initial study provides the implementation measures to reduce the likelihood of fire spreading in the project area. Because the City and surrounding area are within local fire responsibility areas, the City's Fire Department will be responsible for implementing some of the recommendations including, but not limited to, community fuel breaks. However, maintenance of the community fuel breaks will only occur semi-annually, which would not result in the need for new or physically altered City fire facilities in order to maintain acceptable performance objectives.

Weed abatement and motorized vehicle access are two code enforcement implementation measures also listed within Table 1. These projects would be performed by the City's Code Enforcement Officer, which is a position within the City's Police Department. These two project recommendations would be maintained on an ongoing basis. Based on the nature of these recommended projects, the City's Police Department would not result in the need for new or physically altered police facilities in order to maintain acceptable performance objectives. The larger portion of the project site is south of the city limits and within Monterey County. However, the police protection needs of the Monterey County Sheriff's Office would not be necessary due to the nature of the proposed project and proximity to the city limits.

The proposed project does not involve residential uses and, therefore, would have no adverse environmental impact on schools or parks.

Therefore, implementation of the proposed project as a wildfire prevention plan would not result in physical impacts associated with the provision of or need for new or physically altered fire protection, police protection, schools, parks, or other public facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain performance objectives.

# 16. RECREATION

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Does the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. The project does not involve the increase in population, and therefore, would not increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities.

b. The project does not include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

# 17. TRANSPORTATION

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | Substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature (e.g., sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g., farm equipment)? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. | Result in inadequate emergency access? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a-d. The project involves the implementation of long-term fire resiliency methods and prioritizing hazard reduction projects along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek, in or near King City. The project does not consist of any development or infrastructure that would involve transportation-related uses. Vehicles would be present on the site only during the annual or semi-annual maintenance activities, which would be temporary and not result in any transportation-related impacts. Therefore, the project would not conflict with a program, plan, ordinance, or policy addressing the circulation system, including transit, roadway, bicycle and pedestrian facilities; the project would not conflict or be inconsistent with CEQA guidelines section 15064.3, subdivision (b); the project would not substantially increase hazards due to a geometric design feature or incompatible uses; and the project would have no impacts associate with emergency access.

# 18. TRIBAL CULTURAL RESOURCES

Would the project:

| | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. Cause a substantial adverse change in the significance of a tribal cultural resource, defined in Public Resources Code section 21074 as either a site, feature, place, or cultural landscape that is geographically defined in terms of the size and scope of the landscape, sacred place, or object with cultural value to a California Native American tribe, and that is: | | | | |
| (1) Listed or eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources, or in a local register of historical resources as defined in Public Resources code section 5020.1(k), or | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| (2) A resource determined by the lead agency, in its discretion and supported by substantial evidence, to be significant pursuant to criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resources Code Section 5024.1. In applying the criteria set forth in subdivision (c) of Public Resource Code Section 5024.1, the lead agency shall consider the significance of the resource to a California Native American tribe. | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a. On October 16, 2023, the City sent an offer of consultation letter to the tribal representatives of the Xolon Salinan Tribe and the Salinan Tribe of San Luis Obispo, Monterey, San Benito. These two tribes had previously requested consultation with the City pursuant to Assembly Bill (AB) 52. No responses to the AB 52 consultation offer letters were received. City staff is however, in discussions with the Xolon Salinan Tribe to determine whether tribal cultural burning practices might be integrated into the final RWPP. See the discussion in the project description above.

# 19. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS

Would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Have sufficient water supplies available to serve the project and reasonably foreseeable future development during normal, single-dry and multiple- dry years? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | Result in a determination by the wastewater treatment provider, which serves or may serve the project that it has inadequate capacity to serve the project's projected demand in addition to the provider's existing commitments? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| d. | Generate solid waste in excess of State or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| e. | Comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

a-c. The project involves the implementation of long-term fire resiliency methods and prioritizing hazard reduction projects along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek, in or near King City. The project does not involve any development that would require utilities and service systems. Therefore, the project would not require or result in the relocation or construction of new or expanded water, wastewater treatment, storm water drainage, electric power, natural gas, or telecommunications facilities, the construction or relocation of which could cause significant environmental effects. Because the project would not require the need for water or wastewater treatment, it would have no impact on water supplies or on wastewater treatment providers and their ability to serve wastewater needs.

d/e. Implementation of the proposed project may require the removal of brush and leaf litter to off-site areas such as landfills. However, some of the cut material may be chipped and spread throughout the project site. All material not disposed of on-site would be taken to the Johnson Canyon Sanitary Landfill located at 31400 Johnson Canyon Road east of Gonzales for treatment and reuse as compost. The project would result in more material for disposal off-site, if any, during the creation of the community fuel break and first removal of invasive species. Maintenance of both the fuel breaks and the invasive species growth in the future would not result in as much material, which is why the return interval for these two recommended activities is semi-annual and annual, respectively (refer back to Table 1 in Section A). It is for this reason that the project would not generate solid waste in excess of state or local standards, or in excess of the capacity of local infrastructure, or otherwise impair the attainment of solid waste reduction goals, and the project would be required to comply with federal, state, and local management and reduction statutes and regulations related to solid waste.

# 20. WILDFIRE

If located in or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones, would the project:

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| b. | Due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors, exacerbate wildfire risks, and thereby expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |
| c. | Require the installation or maintenance of associated infrastructure (such as roads, fuel breaks, emergency water sources, power lines or other utilities) that may exacerbate fire risk or that may result in temporary or ongoing impacts to the environment? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| d. | Expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes? | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ |

## Comments:

The project site is not located within or near state responsibility areas or lands classified as very high fire hazard severity zones (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection 2024). However, due to the nature and purpose of the proposed project, as well as concerns from the public, the checklist questions in this section will be discussed.

The project area covers 179 acres in the Salinas River floodplain and San Lorenzo Creek, bordering the King City city limits on the south and east. The site contains no permanent structures, but approximately 70 structures are on the immediate edge of the project area on the northside of the Salinas River floodplain. The site contains highly disturbed, riparian woodland habitat along the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek banks. The Salinas River floodplain also contains disturbed alluvial scrub habitat. Trees exist along the north edges of the site that border the city limits as well as both sides of the San Lorenzo Creek. There are power lines or other utilities on the project site and the site itself is relatively flat with a gentle slope from north to south at the northern border of the site (i.e., near residences at southern city limit). According to the Monterey County Parcel Report Web App, slopes greater than 25 percent are generally located along the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek banks (Monterey County 2024).

a. Refer back to Section 9.0, Hazards and Hazardous Materials, checklist question "f." Implementation of the recommended fire resilience activities do not involve any components that could substantially impair an adopted emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan.

b. The site is generally flat with the only areas containing slopes greater than 25 percent being those adjacent to the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek banks (Monterey County 2024). The project also does not involve project occupants. The purpose of the proposed project is to reduce wildfire hazards in the area and involves no components that could exacerbate wildfire risks. Therefore, the project would not exacerbate wildfire risks due to slope, prevailing winds, and other factors and, therefore, would not expose project occupants to pollutant concentrations from a wildfire or the uncontrolled spread of wildfire.

c. The proposed project involves the installation and maintenance of fuel breaks. Any environmental impacts associated with the installation and maintenance of fuel breaks are discussed throughout this initial study and would be reduced to less than significant level through the mitigations and/or uniformly applied regulations identified herein.

d. The project site is relatively flat and does not involve steep slopes; the project site is located within a low landslide susceptibility area (Monterey County 2024). Additionally, the project does not involve activities that would change existing drainage on the site. The objective of the proposed project is to protect the adjacent residences and structures from fire hazards. Therefore, the project would not expose people or structures to significant risks, including downslope or downstream flooding or landslides, as a result of runoff, post-fire slope instability, or drainage changes.

# 21. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE

| | | Potentially Significant Impact | Less-than-Significant Impact with Mitigation Measures Incorporated | Less-Than-Significant Impact | No Impact |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| a. | Does the project have 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; substantially reduce the number or restrict the range of an endangered, rare, or threatened species; or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory? | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| b. | Does the project have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? ("Cumulatively considerable" means that the incremental effects of a project are considerable when viewed in connection with the effects of past projects, the effects of other current projects, and the effects of probable future projects) | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ | ☐ |
| c. | Does the project have environmental effects, which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly? | ☐ | ☐ | ☒ | ☐ |

## Comments:

a. As discussed in Section 4.0, Biological Resources, the proposed project has the potential to have a substantial adverse effect through plant and wildlife habitat modifications. Implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-15 would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

As discussed in Section 5.0, Cultural Resources, the project site is not known to contain any significant historic resources, unique archaeological resources, or Native American human remains. However, it is possible that these resources could be accidentally uncovered during implementing wildfire prevention-related measures associated with the project. In the event this should occur, Mitigation Measures CR-1, CR-2 and CR-3 would reduce potential impacts to a less-than-significant level.

b. The proposed project has the potential to result in cumulatively considerable impacts in the areas of biological resources (potential disturbance to existing plant and wildlife habitats). However, with the implementation of Mitigation Measures BIO-1 through BIO-15, impacts of the proposed project would not be cumulatively considerable.

c. As discussed in Section 3.0, Air Quality, the proposed project has the potential to result in adverse environmental effects that could cause substantial adverse effects on human beings as a result vegetation management activities to create the proposed fuel break and the potential of utilizing limited prescribed fire to control yellow starthistle, which could be a source of particulate matter emissions from organic fuel combustion. As noted in Section 3.0, MBARD Rule 404, Particulate Matter, addresses particulate emission limits. It limits the amount of particulate matter that can be discharged by any source within the air basin. The rule exempts several types of activities, including fires set for the purpose of preventing a fire hazard. This indicates that particulate air emissions from the yellow starthistle control strategy is not at issue for its particulate air emissions and therefore, would not cause substantial adverse health effects.

In addition, while portions of the project site are located adjacent to sensitive residential receptors, short-term RWPP implementation activities do not require using heavy-duty diesel-powered equipment that has potential to generate substantial toxic air emissions. Handheld landscape maintenance equipment such as weedwhackers and pole pruners, and other equipment types such as mowers and chippers are typically not diesel-powered. Therefore, the project would have a less-than-significant impact from exposing sensitive receptors to high concentrations of toxic air contaminants.

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Public Review Draft
King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan
(dated May 8, 2024)

# A

APPENDIX

Public Review Draft

# King City
# Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan

City of King

May 8, 2024



Prepared by
Deer Creek Resources

# Table of Contents

# Figures & Tables

## DISCLAIMER

This document analyzes wildfire hazard along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek in King City, California and makes recommendations on reducing potential wildfire-caused losses within the community.

Within this document, areas were prioritized for hazard reduction based upon several factors including potential wildfire behavior, density of structures, proximity to wildland vegetation, and prevailing fire-season weather and winds. The fact that an area may be mapped as lower priority in this document does NOT mean that that area is safe from wildfires. Rather, it means that there were other areas where targeted wildfire hazard reduction projects might benefit a greater number of residents.

Under typical summer wildfire burning conditions, any area with tall dead grass or un-mowed weeds has the potential to support rapid rates of wildfire spread and high intensity burning. Areas adjacent to homes or high-value ecological assets are the highest priorities for annual weed abatement and fire hazard mitigation.

Wildfire behavior is the product of numerous factors, some of which are weather-dependent and difficult or impossible to quantify. The recommendations in this assessment are based upon field surveys, aerial photography, technical analysis, and the professional experience of the authors. Errors may exist in this analysis and could include improper recording of field data due to GPS accuracy or surveyor error, computational errors, data entry mistakes, and any other conceivable cause. This data comprises a simplification of the physical environment intended to allow the authors to make general recommendations about reducing potential fire behavior at the community scale.

While this data is useful in assessing relative risk between the micro-climates and vegetation-types present in the King City riverbed project area, site-specific changes in fuel hazard and wildfire risk (such as annual mowing, grazing, and weed clearance, the growth of flammable ornamental plants and native vegetation, and other changes in the physical environment) will quickly render this data inaccurate.

**THIS DATA DESCRIBES VEGETATION AND WILDFIRE HAZARD CONDITIONS ALONG PORTIONS OF THE SALINAS RIVER AND SAN LORENZO CREEK IN KING CITY DURING FALL 2023 AND WINTER 2024. ANY FUTURE USE OF THIS DATA FOR OTHER PLANNING, CODE ENFORCEMENT, OR HAZARD MITIGATION WORK IS NOT RECOMMENDED WITHOUT FIRST CHECKING PHYSICAL CONDITIONS ON THE GROUND.**

## Executive Summary

King City is at risk from potentially catastrophic wildfire, as designated by CAL FIRE's 2019 Communities at Risk List. This project evaluates wildland fire hazards associated with vegetation in the Salinas River floodplain and San Lorenzo Creek, directly adjacent to the City, and recommends mitigation actions which could reduce wildfire threats.

For the majority of the project site, the fertility of the soils, availability of shallow groundwater, frequency of major flood disturbances, abundance of noxious weeds, and absentee landownership all work together to create vegetation conditions which are extremely difficult or impractical to manage. Wildfire hazard reduction work should focus on actions needed to reduce vegetation in the first 100 feet out from structures adjacent to the wildland areas. This report also makes recommendations on potential education and code enforcement-related improvements, as well as long-term project considerations.

## Project Goal

This Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan (RWPP) serves as a framework for a long-term fire resiliency and prioritizes hazard reduction projects along portions of the Salinas River and San Lorenzo Creek in King City, California.

The plan achieves the two following goals:

1. Provides guidance and strategies to increase the wildfire resilience of the community
2. Protects and enhances the wildlife habitat and ecological value of the project area.

The plan was developed by Deer Creek Resources (DCR) with input from the City, collaborating agencies, and the community. The RWPP uses aerial photography and field surveys to map vegetation, analyze potential wildfire hazards within the project area, and prioritize wildfire hazard mitigation projects.

## Project Area Description

The project area covers 179 acres in the Salinas River floodplain and San Lorenzo Creek. This land contains no permanent structures, but borders the southern and western city limits which contain residential, commercial, and agricultural parcels. Approximately 70 structures are on the immediate edge of the project area.

King City is a major population center in the Salinas Valley, an important agricultural area. Framed by the Santa Lucia Range in the west and the Gabilán Range in the east, the land immediately surrounding King City is comprised of agricultural fields intersected by the Salinas River—the largest river system on California's Central Coast. The river flows northwesterly from its headwaters in eastern San Luis Obispo County, 175 miles through the Salinas Valley, and into Monterey Bay north of the city of Marina. The river is an important wildlife corridor, provides irrigation for an immense agricultural industry, and is the main source for aquifer recharge in the valley.

The Salinas River appears as little more than a creek for much of the year, but runs underground for long stretches, supplying the Paso Robles Groundwater Basin, the largest natural aquifer west of the Rockies. The Salinas Valley's mild climate and rich soil support approximately 200,000 acres of irrigated agriculture. The region produces most of the United States' lettuce, broccoli, artichokes, strawberries, and cauliflower. Agriculture is a $4.5 billion industry in Monterey County.

After 150 years of agricultural expansion, the Salinas River's riparian corridor has been significantly narrowed, and levees and channelization have reduced the river's ability to access its floodplain. During wet winters, the seemingly benign river can wreak havoc on communities and farmlands, as experienced in 2023 during a series of atmospheric river storms. Other recent farm land flooding occurred in 1995 and 2015, driven by El Niño events.

For much of the project site, the fertility of the soils, availability of shallow groundwater, frequency of major flood disturbances, abundance of noxious weeds, and absentee landownership all work together to create vegetation conditions which are extremely difficult to manage. This project focuses on actions needed to reduce wildland vegetation in the first 100 feet out from structures adjacent to the wildland areas.

To analyze how fire could move into or the urban area using wildfire spread modeling software to present a "worst-case scenario" analysis, the 179-acre riverbed and creek area was expanded to include a 1000-foot buffer surrounding the project area. A project area map is on the following page.

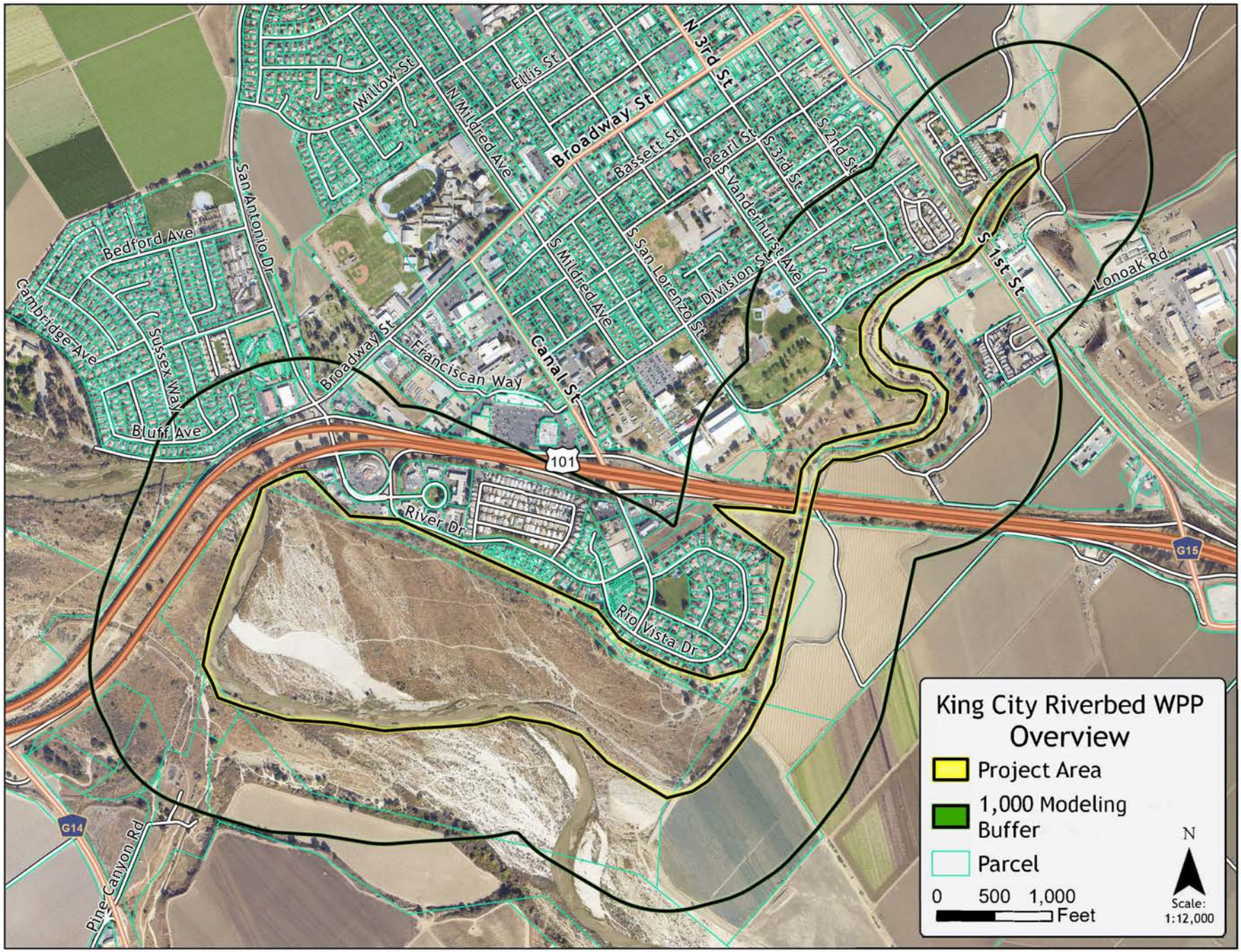


*Figure 1: King City Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan project area and 1000' buffer used for fuels and fire path modeling..*

## Existing Conditions

### Salinas Riverbed & San Lorenzo Creek Vegetation

As evidenced by the following aerial photographs, the vegetation in the Salinas Riverbed area is incredibly dynamic. Due to regular flooding, prolific seed production from existing vegetation, and extremely fertile soil, plant communities shift across the landscape from year to year. Riparian ecosystems are linear and easily disturbed, creating ample vectors for upstream seed transmission.

While the vegetation matrix may change from year to year, or even season to season, most of the riverbed is covered with continuous weeds. These weeds form a continuous stretch of fuels that grow fast in the spring and early summer, and then dry out. From June through November, the riverbed's vegetation supports rapid fire spread.

The following aerial photographs show the project area in September 2018, June 2020, February 2021, May and June 2022 and November 23. Note the ever-changing vegetation patterns due to fire, flood, and seed distribution.

*Figure 2: Riverbed area on September 7, 2018.*
*Source: Google*

*Figure 3: Riverbed area on June 16, 2020.*
*Source: National Agriculture Imagery Program*

*Figure 4: Riverbed area on February 26, 2021.*
*Source: Google*

*Figure 5: Riverbed area on May 13, 2022.*
*Source: National Agriculture Imagery Program*

*Figure 6: Riverbed area on June 21, 2022 (post-King Fire).*
*Source: Google*

*Figure 7: Riverbed area on November 11, 2023.*
*Source: Resource Conservation District of Monterey County*

## Wildland Fire Related Issues in Project Area

### Wildland Fire Management, Response & Mitigation Agencies

**King City Fire Department**
The King City Fire Department (KCFD) has served the city for over 90 years. The department's full-time employees include a Fire Chief, Fire Marshal, and Administrative Assistant, backed by approximately 30 volunteer firefighters. Volunteers who train several times per month to learn and hone professional emergency response skills. KCFD provides emergency medical services, fire protection, weed abatement, disaster preparedness, and fire prevention. The department manages an annual citywide weed abatement program with inspections throughout the City. Weed abatement violation notices are issued and enforced.

King City Fire Department Apparatus:

- Three Type 1 Engines
- One Aerial
- One Type 5 Engine
- One Utility Unit

**CAL FIRE**
CAL FIRE is responsible for fire protection of Monterey County's State Responsibility Areas (SRAs). The San Benito-Monterey Unit (BEU) of CAL FIRE includes 2.1 million acres of SRA, one of the state's largest state responsibility jurisdictions. The San Benito-Monterey Unit is operationally divided into seven battalions offering a wide variety of programs which includes: Fire Prevention, Resource Management, Law Enforcement, Air Attack, Helitack, Conservation Camp, Emergency Command Center (communications), and Cooperative Fire Protection (CAL FIRE 2022).

**U.S. Forest Service**
The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) Monterey Ranger District has jurisdiction in the Los Padres National Forest to the west of King City. USFS provides wildland fire suppression across national forest lands within Monterey County and participates in mutual aid.

**Mutual Aid**
KCFD and surrounding agencies participate in mutual aid and automatic aid agreements. Automatic aid is a contractual agreement between agencies or fire districts, and aid is dispatched to all first alarms. Mutual aid agreements differ from automatic aid in that outside assistance typically is provided when the agreement is activated, and aid is requested by the primary responding agency. Fire agencies in Monterey County participate in a countywide mutual aid agreement.

**King City Vegetation Maintenance**
King City's Public Works Department is responsible for vegetation management on city property. The department currently possesses chainsaws, pole saws, and weed whackers necessary for creating and maintaining the recommended fuel break. While the city has two Exmark zero-turn mowers, Exmark recommends against using these on slopes greater than 15 degrees (26.8% grade). Equipment that can handle levee slopes and brush will need to be acquired to maintain a fuel break.

**Resource Conservation District of Monterey County**
The RCDMC is an invaluable partner in vegetation management for the riverbed area. The agency works with landowners, cities, and other stakeholders throughout the Salinas Valley on a variety of land management activities. From a fire perspective, the RCDMC's vegetation management actions are critical for the riverbed area. King City should seek further partnership with the RCD to target invasive species through mechanical removal, grazing, and prescribed fire, combined with revegetation of native species.

## Wildland Fire History

In the past five years, three fires have ignited and spread through the project area:

*Table 1: Project Area Wildland Fire History*

| Year | Name | Incident Number | Cause |
|---|---|---|---|
| **2020** | Circle Fire | BEU-00004978 | Playing with fire |
| **2021** | Jolon Fire | BEU-00004312 | Equipment use |
| **2022** | King Fire | BEU-00002925 | Arson causing one death; case is ongoing |

*Source: CAL FIRE*

The King Fire started on May 25, 2022, behind the KFC on Broadway Circle. The fire prompted evacuations and spread to 90 acres before forward progress was stopped on May 27. One person was found dead from the fire, according to the Monterey County Sheriff's Office. Some of the people living in the riverbed were temporarily sheltered at the Salinas Valley Fairgrounds following the fire. CAL FIRE has indicated that the cause of the fire was arson and that the investigation is ongoing at the time of the RWPP's publication.

The fatality underscores the necessity of fire mitigation efforts in the riverbed area. It also points to the need for affordable housing in the area.

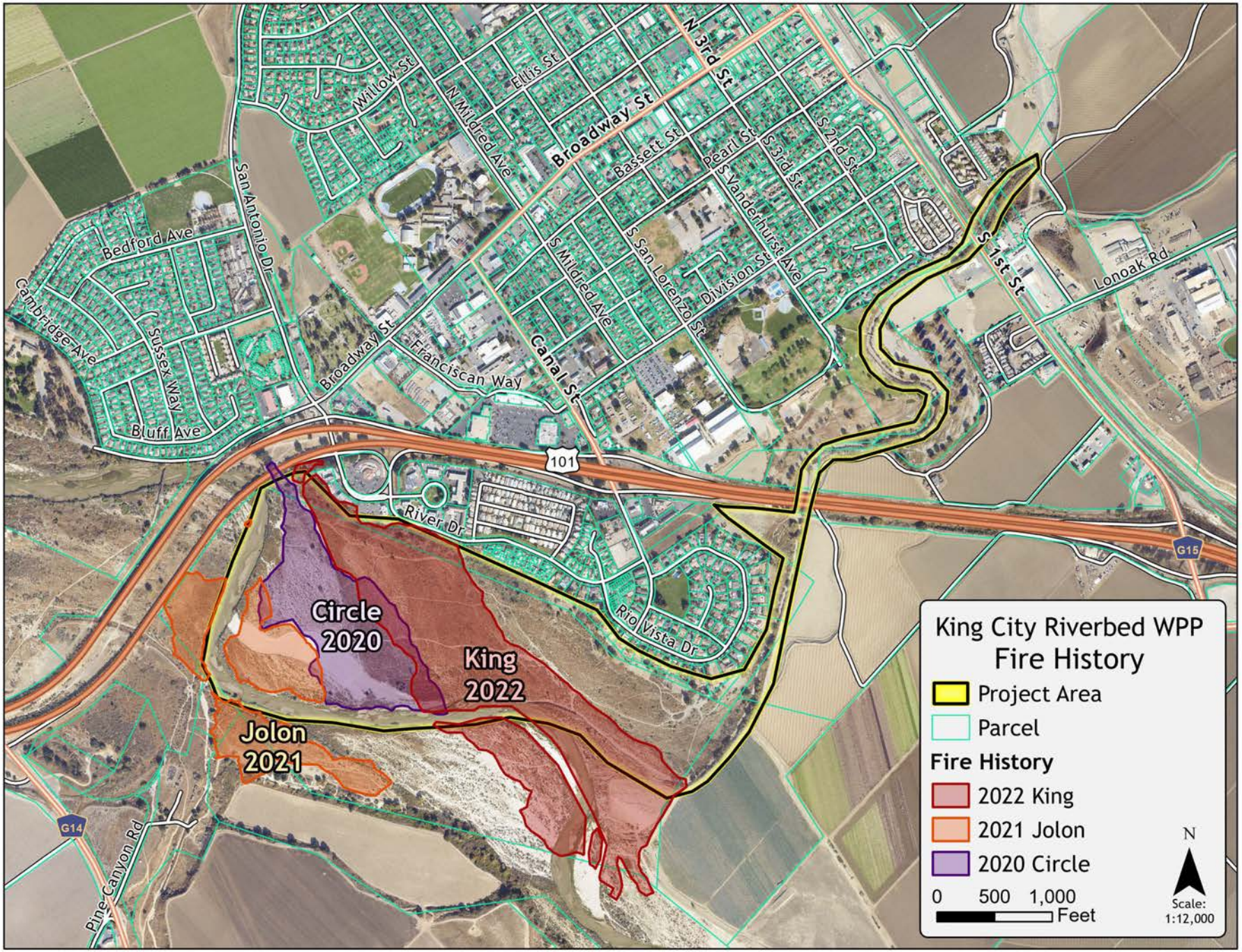


*Figure 8: Fire history in project area.*

## Encampments

There is a recent history of people living within the riverbed. Multiple individuals and some families had constructed shelters, notably under the 101 overpass and south of the restaurants near the King City/Broadway southbound off ramp, plus some along the river itself. Some of these structures can be seen in the vegetation Existing Conditions images above (Figures 3-5).

Fire ignitions are a concern in encampments, primarily from escaped cooking and warming fires, accidental ignitions, and arson. Statewide, there is a correlation between the increase of wildfire ignitions and the increase in homelessness over the past five years, although no studies have been published to confirm direct cause.

In California, the number of people without a stable place to call home increased to 181,399 in 2023, a jump of 7,599 since 2022 and an increase of 22,500 since the pre-Covid count in 2019. Homelessness experts primarily attribute the rise to a drop in earnings during the COVID-19 pandemic among people who were already struggling to maintain an income and afford housing. In Monterey County, there were approximately 2,047 people experiencing homelessness according to the 2022 Homeless Point-in-Time Count (PIT).

To represent the scale of the problem, The California Homeless Housing Needs Assessment estimates that it will cost $8.1 billion per year over 12 years to solve statewide homelessness, approximately 3% of California's budget. In 2022, King City was awarded $12.4 million toward the purchase of a hotel through the state's Project Homekey program. In January 2024, the California Attorney General Rob Bonta filed a lawsuit against the developer of the motel conversion, a setback that caused the city to house people in an alternative location until June.

*Figure 9: Abandoned shelter in riverbed.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

At the time of DCR's January 2024 field survey, there was no direct evidence of anyone living within the riverbed area and city staff has confirmed that any people living in encampments had been provided temporary shelter. There were several former encampment sites with scattered debris that should be targeted for cleanup, including the shelter pictured above (Figure 9). Outside the riverbed, there may have been a couple of encampments west of the river and under the 101 overpasses. DCR's survey team was unable to enter that area to confirm whether they were occupied. City staff has confirmed that trespassing on private property is now being enforced by law enforcement agencies.

## Secondary Channel

In collaboration with several other agencies, the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC) manages the Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program (SMP) to minimize the risk of flooding throughout the river corridor. Secondary channels have been created throughout the length of the river. They are designed to connect with the main stem of the river at both ends at a higher elevation to convey high flows during and after large storms.

The creation of these secondary channels also involves clearing vegetation, often large stands of arundo, which benefits fire mitigation by reducing fuel loading.

In the riverbed project area, section 1.26 of the SMP creates a channel that alleviates flooding on farmlands and takes the pressure off the levee at the edge of the riverbed. This secondary channel also serves as a fuel break, which would isolate any fires started between the river and the channel.

Sediment is removed annually on Section 1.37 of San Lorenzo Creek to improve flow conveyance. There is no vegetation removal or other vegetation maintenance performed in this section.

More information on the SMP can be found here: [https://RCDMCmonterey.org/salinas-river-stream-maintenance-program](https://RCDMCmonterey.org/salinas-river-stream-maintenance-program)


*Figure 10: River (1.26) and creek (1.37) sections maintained under the RCDMC's Salinas River Stream Maintenance Program. Source: Resource Conservation District of Monterey County*

## Project Recommendations

The projects listed in this section illustrate recommendations that can be implemented to reduce the likelihood of fire spreading in the riverbed project area. The overarching goal of the vegetation management project recommendations is to reduce ladder fuels, create strategic fuel breaks, and raise the overall crown base height (CBH), while preserving the ecological benefits of the conservation easements. Photos accompany each project and illustrate the various fuel hazards found throughout the project area. While some photos are representative of conditions throughout the development, others describe specific areas.

In addition to the vegetation management recommendations, the plan also recommends education on defensible space, code enforcement, and the continued coordination with state agencies to address King City's housing concerns.

The following table (Table 2) summarizes the project recommendations and more descriptive sections follow. These recommendations are based on the conditions observed throughout the King City riverbed area and San Lorenzo Creek between November 2023 and January 2024.

The primary project recommended by this is the creation of a fuel break on the edge of the Salinas Riverbed to protect homes and businesses and prevent a wildland fire from becoming an urban conflagration. A fuel break will starve an expanding fire of fuels while providing firefighters operational safety and access. While the remaining project recommendations will increase the fire safety and aesthetics of the project area and King City, the fuel break will provide the most protection.

*Table 2: Project Recommendations*

| Project Number | Project Type | Project Description | Priority | Return Interval |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | Community Fuel Break | Create and maintain a buffer along the populated edge of the Salinas Riverbed and San Lorenzo Creek. | Very High | Creation Followed by Semi-Annual Maintenance |
| 2 | Invasive Plant Management: Arundo | Manually remove existing arundo in coordination with the RCDMC; monitor project area for new growth. | High | Annual Monitoring After Removal |
| 3 | Invasive Plant Management: Tamarisk | Manually remove existing tamarisk in coordination with the RCDMC; monitor project area for new growth. | High | Annual Monitoring After Removal |
| 4 | Invasive Plant Management: Yellow Starthistle (YST) | Use prescribed fire to control YST, reduce fuels and create a matrix of black within the project area. | High | Seasonal; Three Consecutive Years for YST |
| 5 | Defensible Space Education | Promote fire-safe guidelines in California PRC 4291; distribute mailers to property owners on the boundary of the project area. | High | 3-5 Years |
| 6 | Code Enforcement: Weed Abatement | Code Enforcement Officer indicates that there are no ongoing weed complaints adjacent to project area; continue to enforce when complaints are made. | Moderate | Ongoing |
| 7 | Code Enforcement: Motorized Vehicle Access | Residents report motorized vehicles in project area; recommend restricting access through empty lots. | High | Ongoing |
| 8 | Housing | Pursue funding for temporary and long-term housing solutions; clean up shelter debris in project area. | High | Ongoing |

## Community Fuel Break

To protect structures and prevent an urban conflagration from spreading through King City, this plan recommends a strategic 100-foot fuel break be created and maintained along the edge of the Salinas riverbed and San Lorenzo Creek, illustrated below in Figure 11. This would begin behind the KFC and Highway 101 and continue along River Drive and Rio Vista Drive, ending at 254 Rio Vista Dr. The parcels in this area are owned by the City and Fred Miranda. Miranda has granted permission for fuels reduction treatment on his property.

Extending the fuel break to 262 Rio Vista Dr. was requested by a community member at the February 28, 2024 meeting. Although current vegetation conditions did not warrant that extension, the city should consider the option.

This fuel break would then start again at the north end of the golf course behind 221 Villa Dr., ending at the King City Migrant Center at 440 Jayne St. These parcels are owned by the City and multiple private property owners. The creation of the fuel break would require coordination between multiple parties.

The recommended fuel break would provide an easily accessible buffer in which fuel density is reduced. Fuel breaks provide quick access to firefighters where control activities can be conducted safely due to low fuel volumes. Vegetation would be thinned and trees (cottonwood and willows) would be pruned to remove ladder fuels. Brush, heavy ground fuels, and dead trees would be disposed of to create a park-like appearance. The fuel break does not need to be a bare strip in which all vegetation is removed to mineral soil annually.

Please note that 100 feet is the recommended width, but that space does not exist throughout the entire recommended buffer area such as in areas along San Lorenzo Creek, and thus the width would be adjusted accordingly where necessary.

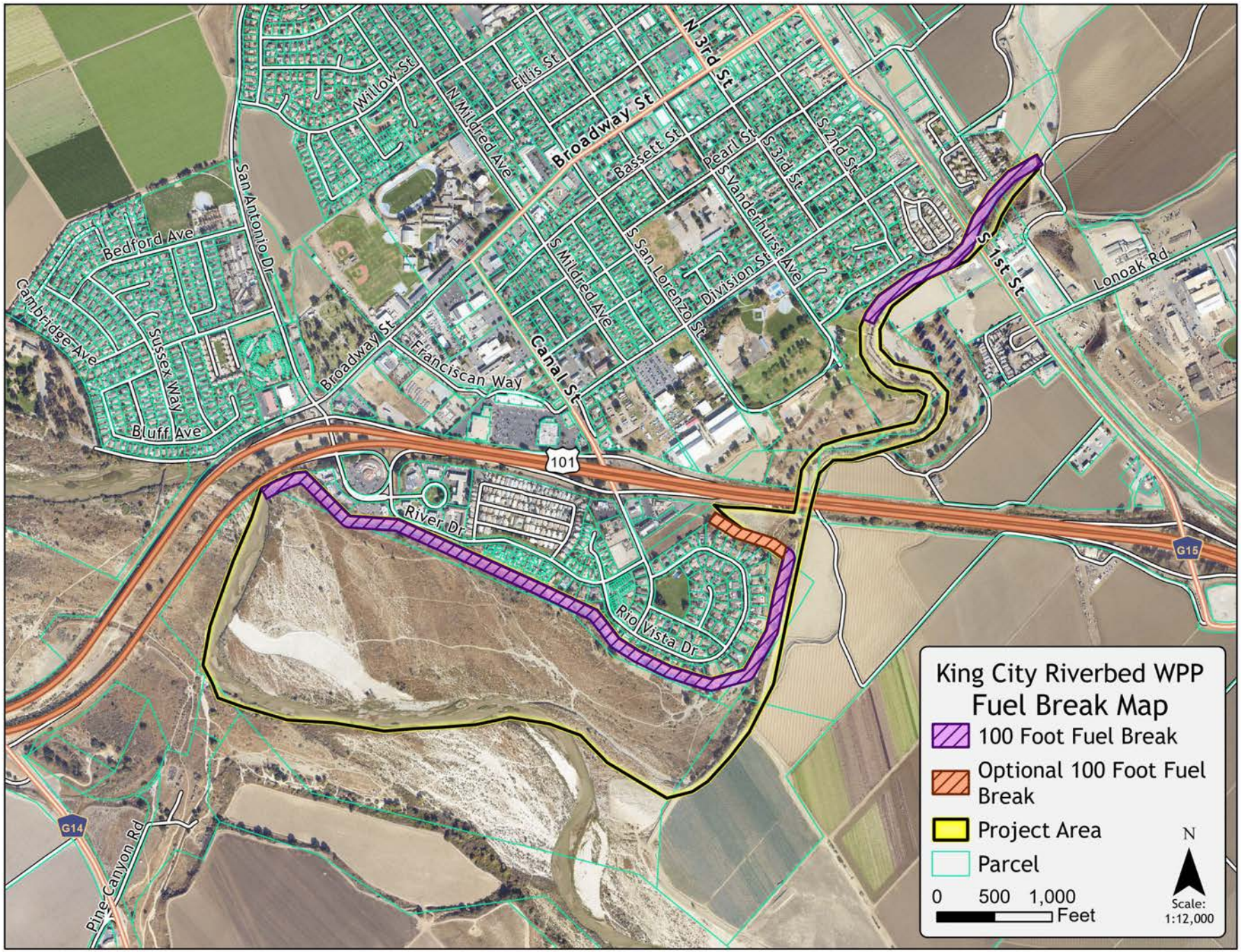


*Figure 11: Recommended 100' fuel break.*

The following methods would be used to construct this 100-foot fuel break:

**Reduce Ladder Fuels Under Larger Trees**
Small trees and shrubs can spread fire from the surface into the crowns of the larger cottonwood trees and willows on the edge of the riverbed. To curb vertical fuel continuity, concentrate thinning efforts on the understory to prevent fire from climbing into the gray pine canopy. Thinning understory vegetation will also allow leaves to drop to the ground, rather than suspend in lower vegetation where they can be highly flammable and create dangerous ladder fuel. Removed vegetation could either be hauled off or chipped into mulch and spread.

***Priority:*** *High*
***Method:*** *Hand pruning and chipping understory fuel*
***Frequency:*** *Three to five years*
***Access:*** *Easy. Most large trees are on the edge of the riverbed area near roadway access.*

*Figure 12: Brush and thin trees within 100-foot buffer should be removed through pruning, chipping, and mowing. Mature willows and cottonwoods should be protected.*

**Remove Downed, High-Water Debris**

Many downed limbs and miscellaneous dead material have washed up against the edge of the bank between the KFC and Highway 101 to the intersection of River Drive and the west entrance to Rio Plaza Mobile Home Estates. This debris is both a fuels concern and an impediment to emergency access to the riverbed area. Removed vegetation could either be hauled off or chipped into mulch and spread.

***Priority:*** *High*
***Method:*** *Removal or chipping*
***Frequency:*** *After high-water years that move debris*
***Access:*** *Easy. Most debris washes up against the edge of the riverbed during the winter and can be easily removed.*

*Figure 13: Piles of debris along bank should be removed or chipped.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

*Figure 14: Flashy ladder fuels along bank should be mowed and removed.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

**Remove Dead Trees**

Several dead trees, many of which are fire damaged, lie in the 100-foot buffer. These are hazards that should be downed and removed. Healthy cottonwoods and willows should not be removed. Removed vegetation could either be hauled off or chipped into mulch and spread.

***Priority:*** *High*
***Method:*** *Removal and chipping of smaller material*
***Frequency:*** *One-time with monitoring*
***Access:*** *Easy.*

*Figure 15: Fire-scarred dead trees within 100-foot fuel break.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

**Coordination With Property Owners**
The recommended fuel break extends beyond the city limits in many areas. The city should coordinate with individual property owners and the primary property owner of the project area, Fred Miranda. Miranda has granted permission to the city and homeowners to mow and remove vegetation on his property to improve fire safety.

**Fuel Break Maintenance**
Once the 100-foot fuel break has been created, it will require regular maintenance due to the speed at which vegetation grows in the riverbed. High-water years will wash up debris that should be removed each spring. Water that reaches the levee may also replenish the soil's seed bank, a potential upstream vector for invasive plants. Because thicker brush has been removed during the creation of the buffer, the primary recommended methods for maintenance will be mowing, pruning, and grazing.

**Mowing & Pruning**
Once large brush and small trees have been manually removed, it should be regularly mowed. Mowing should occur after spring growth, with regular monitoring throughout the year. Wet years will require additional returns.

This plan recommends that the city acquire mowing equipment capable of handling thick brush and steep slopes to maintain the fuel break. While there are newer, remote-controlled mowers available on the market, many are in venture capital mode and have not been proven to be maintainable, so this plan recommends choosing equipment with a proven record that can be serviced by existing city staff.

As crews mow the fuel break, they should be accompanied by workers on foot to prune larger trees and brushes, and to watch mowing equipment for sparks that may cause an ignition. All mowers should be equipped with fire suppression equipment.

**Grazing**

Of the grazing animals used for fuels reduction, goats are the best suited for maintaining the 100-foot fuel break buffer. Goats have no problem with steep slopes and they are more effective at removing the small woody materials that make up much of the brush and shrubs in the riverbed area. This plan recommends consultation with a grazing company to develop a strategy to maintain the fuel break. This would consist of a single, annual grazing entry in late spring, but return entries may be necessary in wet years.

Potential companies within service range of King City include:

- Fire Grazers, Inc.
- The Goat Girls
- Living Systems
- Green Goat Landscapers, LLC

*Figure 16: Annual goat grazing would remove tall weeds and flashy fuels within 100-foot fuel break.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

## Invasive Vegetation Management

Vegetation management plays a key role in reducing the potential for damaging and destructive wildfires through removing, rearranging, and maintaining the spatial distribution of fuels. Objectives of vegetation management include:

- Reduce wildfire hazard to mitigate risks to life and property
- Reduce the likelihood of ignitions
- Reduce extreme fire behavior to enhance community and firefighter safety
- Minimize impacts to natural resources

As noted earlier in the RWPP, the project area contains shifting and dynamic vegetation landscape due to its location in the floodplain of a major river. King City's efforts in vegetation management should be focused on areas directly adjacent to structures, or on areas where there is synergies with ongoing noxious weed eradication efforts with the RCDMC. For larger-scale noxious weed reduction projects, this RWPP recommends targeting three species to develop fire resiliency most effectively: arundo, tamarisk, and yellow starthistle.

**Arundo**

*Arundo donax* (arundo) is a perennial cane that can grow to 30-feet tall, among the fastest growing terrestrial plants. It has invaded central California River valleys in San Luis Obispo and Monterey counties. The non-native plant can form dense stands, displacing native vegetation and degrading wildlife habitat—arundo is not a food source nor does it provide nesting habitat. Arundo damages California's riparian ecosystems by outcompeting native species, such as willows, for water, and its stems and leaves contain a variety of harmful chemicals that deter wildlife from feeding. (Bell)

Another problem with arundo is its hard, plate-shaped root masses. Like chunks of pavement, these root masses can stabilize banks, but can lead to massive bank failure when they are undermined during a high-water event. Root masses can be many feet across and weigh hundreds of pounds. Although not common, large arundo root masses have come loose from banks during storms elsewhere in California and have damaged downstream infrastructure like bridges.

Stands of arundo increase the fuel load in a riparian habitat and produce a biomass containing large amounts of energy. Arundo will burn when green and grows increasingly flammable during hotter, drier periods (June to October). Large stands of it can increase the probability, intensity, and spread of wildfire. (Coffman) Post-fire, arundo rhizomes resprout quickly and typically outgrow native plants. Overtime, this can result in arundo domination along riparian corridors.

Arundo has invaded California's river valleys throughout the state and in 2011, the California Invasive Plant Council determined that the Salinas River watershed had the second largest infestation in the state. The RCDMC has performed extensive work to eradicate arundo throughout the valley, treating 866 acres, plus an additional 100 acres through the Stream Maintenance Program described below. The RCDMC has also worked to remove arundo upstream in San Luis Obispo county to prevent reseeding downstream. Ideally, removed arundo would be replaced with native willow or cottonwood.

*Figure 17: Small arundo stand growing near the Salinas River.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

At the time of field surveys for this plan, large stands of arundo have been removed from the project area, but individual plants and small stands remain. The RWPP recommends that the RCDMC continue its removal project throughout the Salinas River and that King City develop a treatment plan to target and remove plants within city limits, particularly in the golf course area. Arundo in the golf course area is primarily growing on the banks of the creek (Figure 18), which may make use of heavy mowing equipment difficult to use due to the slope. Hand removal followed by herbicide treatment may be required here.

*Figure 18: Large arundo stand growing on the slope of the creek in the golf course.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

The RCDMC uses the following widely implemented method to remove arundo: “Treatment of large arundo stands on the Salinas River typically begins with mowing in the fall, which reduces standing biomass and causes a flush of regrowth from the underground rhizomes in the spring. Arundo resprouts are then sprayed with herbicides the following summer-fall, and in each subsequent year until no sprouts remain. Smaller, scattered stands are treated with herbicide without prior biomass reduction. Herbicides used consist of wildlife-friendly formulations containing glyphosate or a glyphosate/imazapyr mix approved for use near water." (RCDMC)

Arundo in the project area was mapped during DCR’s field survey in January 2024, and included on the map below (Figure 19).

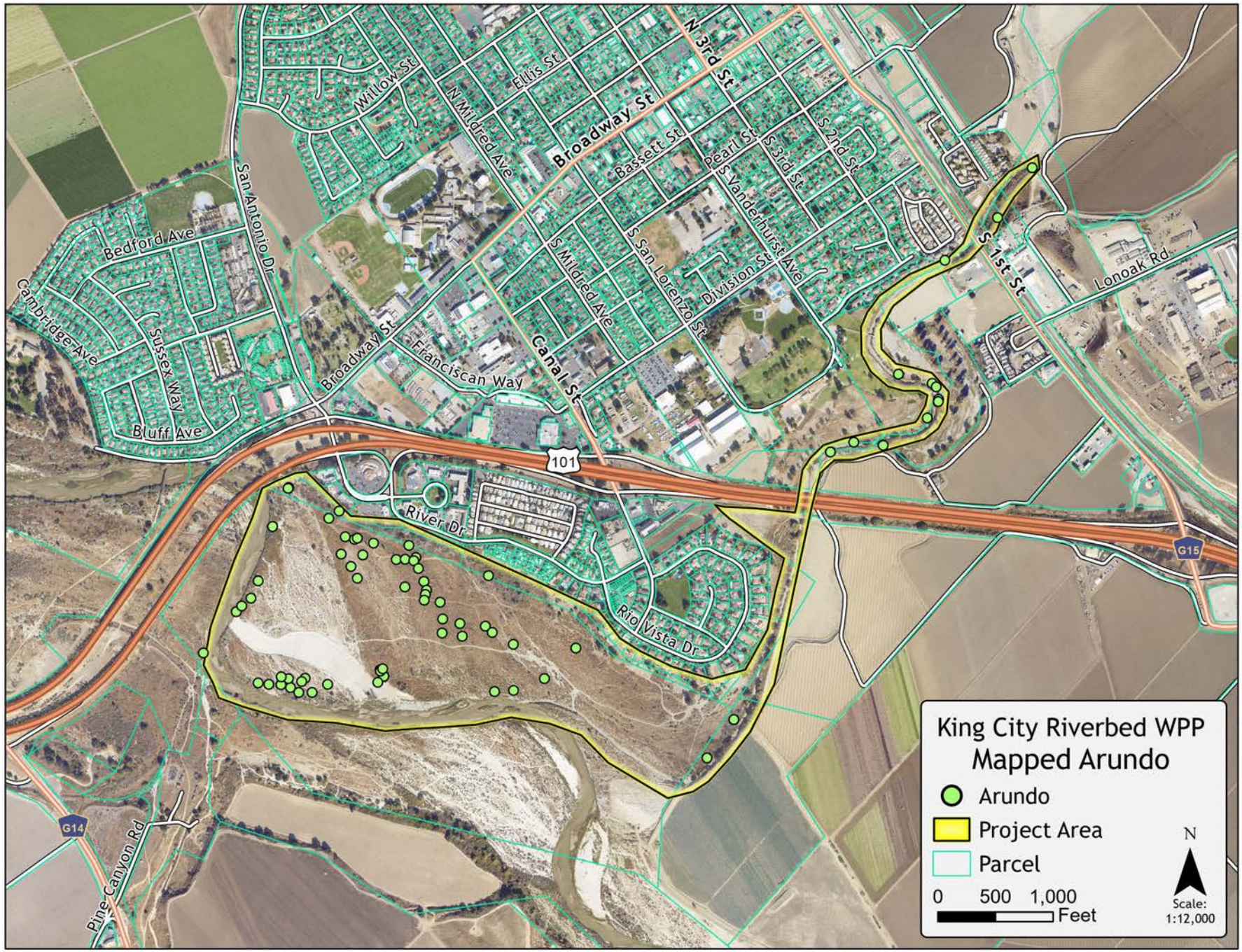


*Figure 19: Mapped arundo distribution as of January 2024.*

**Tamarisk**

*Tamarix ramosissima* (tamarisk) is another invasive species that presents increased fire susceptibility in riparian areas. If allowed to grow, this dense shrub can grow up to a 30-foot root depth, roughly twice the depth of cottonwood roots, allowing cottonwood displacement. Like arundo, tamarisk invades riparian systems and responds positively to flooding, which facilitates further seed spread and establishment. The plant forms dense stands and invaded areas may become completely tamarisk dominated with few other plant species present. Tamarisk is flammable even when healthy and green and able to quickly recover and dominate a recently burned area.

DCR field surveys found both individual trees and stands of tamarisk. Tamarisk dominated areas are concentrated in the San Lorenzo Creek corridor along the golf course. Like arundo removal, this RWPP recommends that these stands of tamarisk and individual plants be removed through a combination of digging and targeted herbicide. Tamarisk on the creekbank slope may not be possible to remove with a mower and may require hand digging, followed by herbicide treatment. This species is also being targeted by the RCDMC in the Salinas Riverbed and developing a collaborative removal effort to remove tamarisk in the creek is recommended.

*Figure 20: Tamarisk on San Lorenzo Creek at the golf course.*

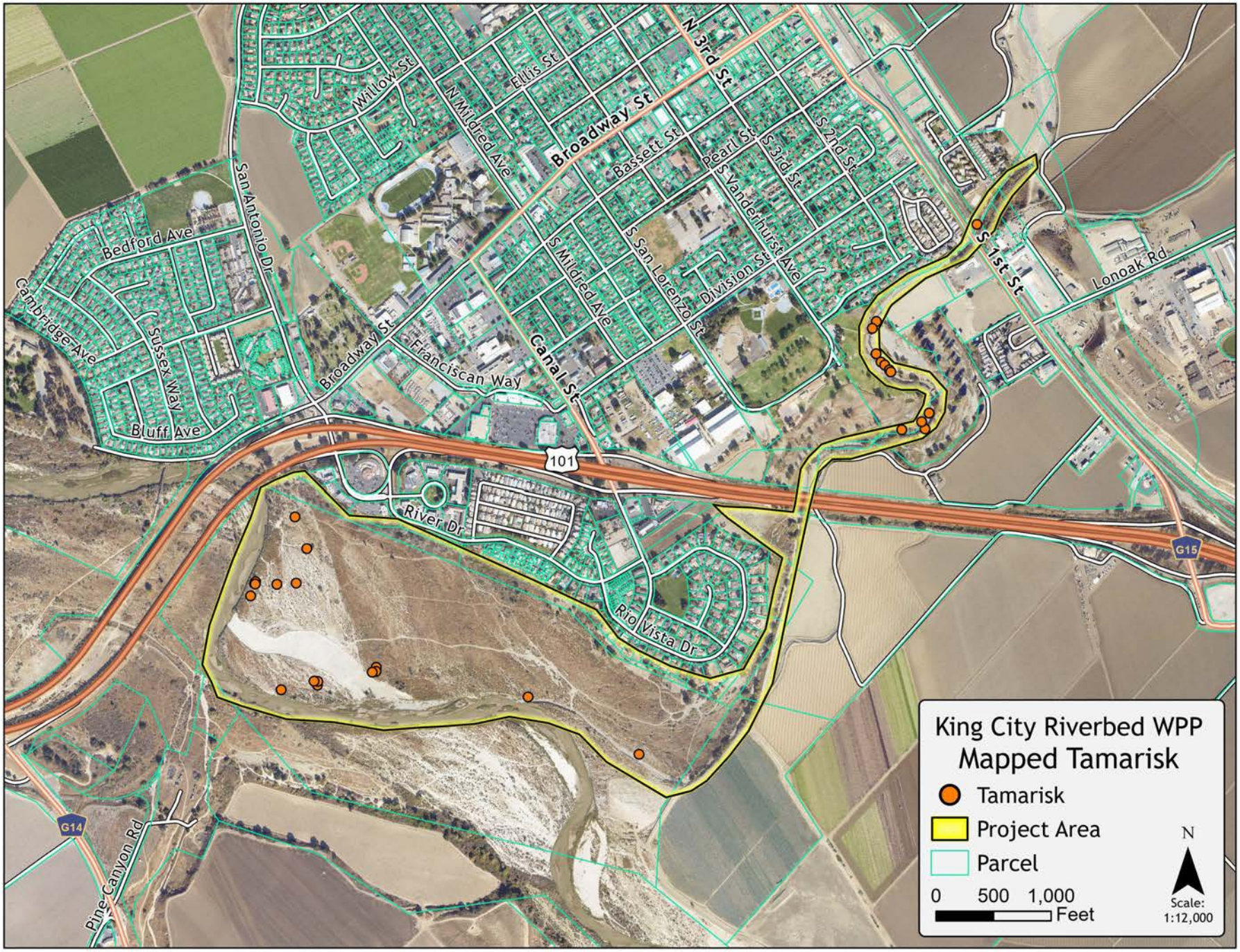


*Figure 21: Mapped tamarisk distribution as of January 2024.*

**Yellow Starthistle**

Extensive areas of invasive yellow starthistle (YST) occur within the riverbed area. Areas dominated by YST have higher fuel loadings than areas of only grass, as the thatch from thistle growth persists for over a year. After yellow starthistle is cured in mid-late summer, areas of continuous YST can burn with great intensity, especially on windy days. Fire hazard drops in YST after fall rains, but heavy areas of YST thatch dry out quickly and can burn vigorously into the winter. San Lorenzo Creek contains smaller patches of YST with less continuity.

Any efforts at starthistle control involve a multi-year process, and outside of the first 100 feet from structures, large-scale efforts to control YST should only be undertaken if long-term support for maintaining such an effort seems likely.

Prescribed fire can be an effective tool for reducing the dominance of YST across large acreages. This topic is covered in greater detail in Appendix E.

*Figure 22: Yellow starthistle in mixed vegetation.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

## Defensible Space Education

The highest-priority for property owners near the project area is to reduce fuels near structures and maintain low-flammability conditions within their parcels. Defensible space is beneficial in many ways. It prevents fire from advancing and endangering homes and lives. It improves property value while reducing the risk of loss. It provides a healthier environment for trees and shrubs by minimizing the impacts of competition, insects, and disease. Most importantly, defensible space allows firefighters to defend homes safely and effectively.

Follow-up treatments are crucial to maintaining fire-resilient conditions and it is important to note that this work is never "finished." Grass and other annual plants can carry fire quickly across areas that are otherwise well-maintained. Some vegetation requires more frequent re-entry intervals to stay healthy compared to others.

Although King City is not located in a State Responsibility Area (SRA) and property owners are not legally bound to comply with Public Resource Code 4291, this plan recommends that the City promote 4291's defensible space guidelines and send educational mailers to residents who live on the boundary of the project area. Those guidelines are summarized here and more information is provided in Appendix F:

> *Maintain defensible space of 100 feet from each side and from the front and rear of the structure, but not beyond the property line. The amount of fuel modification necessary shall consider the flammability of the structure as affected by building material, building standards, location, and type of vegetation.*
>
> *Fuels shall be maintained in a condition so that a wildfire burning under average weather conditions would be unlikely to ignite the structure. Trees and shrubs should be pruned to a crown base height of eight feet and maintained to effectively manage fuels and not form a means of rapidly transmitting fire from other nearby vegetation to a structure or from a structure to other nearby vegetation. The intensity of fuels management may vary within the 100-foot perimeter of the structure, the most intense being within the first 30 feet around the structure. Where possible, the first two feet out from a structure should be bare dirt, gravel, concrete, or lawn, and free of wood chips or mulch. Maintain any tree, shrub, or other plant adjacent to or overhanging a building free of dead or dying wood. Maintain the roof of a structure free of leaves, needles, or other vegetative materials. (California Public Resource Code Sec 4291)*

## Code Enforcement

Weed control on private property is handled through the King City Police Department's Code Enforcement Services division. All code enforcement cases, including weed abatement, are complaint based. Upon receiving a weed abatement complaint and confirming its validity, the city's code enforcement officer will notify the property owner or residents of the violation. A 30-day notice of violation is mailed if there is no sign of improvement or compliance, followed by a 14-day notice. If no improvements have been made to correct the violation after those final 14 days, an administrative citation is issued.

The current Code Enforcement Office has been in the position since September 2023, and reports no complaints for the Salinas Riverbed, San Lorenzo Creek, or surrounding areas, noting that the bulk of the riverbed falls under the Monterey County Sheriff's jurisdiction. Historical code enforcement statistics were not available.

Concerned residents should continue to follow code enforcement guidelines to report rampant weed growth in privately owned areas of concern bordering the riverbed and creek.

During the February 28, 2024 community meeting, several attendees expressed their concerns about people riding motorcycles, ATVs, and other motorized vehicles through the riverbed area, which is easily accessible through the empty lot at 228 Rio Vista Drive and moderately accessible through the lot at 236 Rio Vista Drive. In areas of tall, dried vegetation, heat from the exhaust system on an ATV or motorcycle can cause an ignition, as can motorized vehicles without a spark arrestor. Ticketing those who ride in the riverbed area would lower the area's fire risk.

The plan also recommends that the City coordinate with the two property owners to restrict access through these open lots shown in Figures 23 and 24.

*Figure 23: Access at 228 Rio Vista Dr.*
*Source: Google Street View, August 2023*

*Figure 24: Access at 236 Rio Vista Dr.*
*Source: Google Street View, August 2023*

### Housing

Ignitions in the project area can be reduced by housing people living within the project area. While this plan cannot address the state's, county's, and city's homelessness issues, it does recommend that the city further pursue funding to provide temporary and long-term housing solutions and prohibit camping within the project area.

Abandoned encampment sites should be targeted for cleanup. Building materials that have been left in the riverbed provide fuels for any spreading fire and the abundance of plastic and hazardous debris should not be left to burn or otherwise contaminate the riverbed. The example in Figure 9 is the most significant found in January 2024 and would take considerable effort to disassemble and excavate from the ground.

## Long-Term Project Considerations

This plan recommends the City further evaluate the reintroduction of beavers into the area and acquiring the riverbed property for development. Neither recommendation can provide immediate fire mitigation like the fuel break, but are worth investigating for long-term benefits to restore the riverbed ecosystem and make it accessible for recreation.

*Table 3: Long-Term Project Considerations*

| Project Number | Project Type | Project Description | Priority | Estimated Timeline |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 9 | Beaver Reintroduction | Collaborate with RCDMC to engage the SLO Beaver Brigade and determine project feasibility. | Moderate | 10 Years |
| 10 | Open Space Development | Explore the city's capability and community desire to purchase the riverbed land for long-term open space development. | Moderate | 5-10 Years |

### Beaver Reintroduction

Reintroduction of beavers into riparian areas is a topic of discussion in many parts of the American West. The North American beaver is an ecosystem engineer with a well-documented impact on restoring wetlands and boosting drought protection. Studies in mountain meadows in Colorado have found that major wildfires have slowed or stopped upon reaching areas flooded by beaver dams. However, this does not necessarily mean that reintroducing beavers into an irrigated floodplain will reduce wildfire hazards. The Salinas Valley is a vastly different ecosystem from a mountain meadow and has been heavily altered by the agriculture industry.

Management of vegetation in the floodway of the Salinas River is a necessarily big-picture undertaking. Regular flooding deposits weeds, debris and garbage, soil, and large wood across the

project area, and upstream actions like levee construction, reservoir releases, and riparian restoration have downstream impacts. No large-scale land management can succeed within the floodway unless it is designed in a way that considers the watershed-scale perspective.

Beaver reintroduction in a heavy agricultural area would require additional study, but beavers do live in wetlands with poor water quality and improve their own ecosystems. Their dams filter water and the wetlands they create will naturally process excess nitrogen common in agricultural runoff. Long considered a nuisance to farmers, the CDFW offers beaver coexistence methods to protect infrastructure and assets.

In 2023, beaver relocation became legal in California and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife created a team of six people to start a pilot program. Working with the Maidu Summit Consortium, CDFW released a family of seven beavers into Plumas County in December 2023.

If King City is interested in pursuing further information about the roles beavers play in the function of riparian ecosystems, they can reach out to organizations like the SLO Beaver Brigade, the Monterey RCDMC, and partnering with Nature's Engineers, a Central Coast firm implementing beaver reintroduction projects and constructing 'beaver dam analogs'(BDAs). Such an undertaking would require additional planning effort involving an array of property owners upstream and downstream from the project area.

### Open Space Development

King City staff have identified acquiring land within the riverbed to establish an open space reserve and/or trail system as a potential future option. While both options may reduce the threat of wildfire due to active management of the land and reestablishing native plants, inviting more human activity into the area may also increase the possibility of ignitions.

One previous effort that may benefit King City in determining how to establish a park or open space would be Albuquerque's Bosque Action Plan used to transform the city's degraded forestland along the Rio Grande into a nature preserve and recreation area. Where it cuts through Albuquerque, the Rio Grande floods frequently, harbors a variety of wildlife, and is a haven for towering cottonwoods. Following their example, King City may also be able to develop a similar plan that allows for native wildlife to flourish, provides recreational opportunities, and continues to protect the city from flooding.

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## Appendix A: Abbreviations & Acronyms

| | |
|---|---|
| CAL FIRE | California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection |
| BEU | San Benito-Monterey Unit of CAL FIRE |
| DCR | Deer Creek Resources |
| KCFD | King City Fire Department |
| LRA | Local Responsibility Area |
| RWPP | Riverbed Wildfire Prevention Plan |
| SRA | State Responsibility Area |
| USFS | United States Forest Service |
| WUI | Wildland Urban Interface |
| YST | Yellow Starthistle |

## Appendix B: Glossary

**Access Roads/Routes:** Roads that allow entrance into and out of a property. Routes available for fire trucks and equipment to approach and defend areas or structures, including roadways or driveways.

**Assets at Risk:** Those things that are important to quality of life that can be threatened with destruction or loss from wildfire. These include homes, businesses, infrastructure, cultural sites, wildlife habitat, natural resources, air quality, recreational facilities and areas, historical structures, and any other important attribute that individual communities rely on for their well-being.

**Automatic or Mutual Aid Agreement:** An agreement between two or more agencies whereby such agencies are automatically dispatched simultaneously to predetermined types of emergencies in predetermined areas.

**Black:** An area that has burned.

**Broadcast Burning:** A controlled burn, where the fire is intentionally ignited and allowed to proceed over a designated area within well-defined boundaries for the reduction of fuel hazard, as a resource management treatment, or both.

**Brush:** A collective term that refers to stands of vegetation dominated by shrubby, woody plants, or low-growing trees.

**Brushing:** Clearing or "cleaning up" brushy vegetation in an area.

**Buffer:** An area of reduced vegetation that creates a barrier separating wildlands from vulnerable residential or business developments; this barrier is like a greenbelt in that it is usually used for another purpose, such as agriculture, recreation, parks, or golf courses.

**Burn:** (1) An area burned over by wildland fire. (2) A reference to a working fire. (3) To be on fire. (4) To consume fuel during rapid combustion. (5) A fire in progress or under investigation.

**Burning Conditions:** The state of the combined factors of the environment—such as winds, temperature, fuel moistures, and humidity—that affect fire behavior in a specified fuel type.

**Canopy:** The top layer of a forest, tree, or low-growing stand of shrubs, which is formed by leaves, needles, and branches creating a continuous cover.

**Canopy Density:** A term used to describe the amount of vegetative cover in the top layer of a forest; among other things, the canopy density influences the amount of light penetration, understory composition, surface reflectance, and rainfall interception in a forest landscape.

**Catastrophic Fire:** Wildland or wildland-urban interface fire with a fast-moving front, extending over a large area (300+ acres) or highly destructive to lives, property, or natural resources.

**Collaborative:** An open, inclusive process that assumes all participants have valuable knowledge and opinions and all their comments are heard and considered; collaboration does not mean consensus or ownership.

**Combustible:** Any material that, in the form in which it is used and under the conditions anticipated, will ignite and burn.

**Combustion:** The rapid oxidation of fuel in which heat and usually flame are produced. Combustion can be divided into four phases: pre-ignition, flaming, smoldering, and glowing.

**Community:** A body of people living in one place or district and considered a whole; a neighborhood, subdivision, small town, village, or township with boundaries defined by the residents or by regulatory jurisdiction.

**Cover:** Any plants or organic matter that hold soil in place or grow over and create shade that provides wildlife with an area to reproduce and find protection from predators and weather.

**Crown Density:** A measurement of the thickness or density of the foliage of the treetops (crown) in a stand.

**Crown Fire (Crowning):** A fire that spreads through the top of the vegetative canopy; characteristic of hot fires and dry conditions. Crown fires become independent from the surface fire and are more complex to control than surface fires.

**Defensible Space:** An area, either natural or constructed, where material capable of causing a fire to spread has been treated, cleared, reduced, or changed to provide a barrier between an advancing wildland fire and the loss to life, property, or resources. In practice, defensible space is defined as an area with a minimum of 100 feet around a structure that is cleared of flammable brush or vegetation. Distance from the structure and the degree of fuels treatment vary with vegetation type, slope, density, and other factors.

**Embers:** Burning (or glowing) particles of vegetation from tree branches, parts of shrubs or chaparral, or other combustible materials that ignite and burn during a wildfire and are carried in wind currents to locations in front of the wildfire (also known as firebrands).

**Evacuation:** An organized, phased, and supervised withdrawal, dispersal, or removal of citizens from dangerous or potentially dangerous areas, and their reception and care in safe areas.

**Evacuation Route:** A path or road that has been preplanned for getting out of harm's way in a fire situation. The route should be well understood in advance of crisis by all participants. If there is any unclear direction, the path should be marked.

**Exposure:** (1) Property that may be endangered by a fire burning in another home or by a wildfire; (2) Direction in which a slope faces, usually with respect to cardinal directions; (3) The general surroundings of a site with special reference to its openness to winds.

**Fire:** Rapid oxidation, usually with the evolution of heat and light. Requires interaction of heat, fuel, and oxygen.

**Fire Behavior:** The way a fire reacts to the influences of fuel, weather, and topography. Common terms used to describe behavior include smoldering, creeping, running, spotting, torching, and crowning.

**Fire Hazard:** A fuel complex, defined by volume, type, condition, arrangement, and location, which determines the degree of ease of ignition and of resistance to control.

**Fire Hazard Mitigation:** Various methods by which existing fire hazards can be reduced in a certain area, such as fuel breaks, non-combustible roofing, spark arrestors, etc.

**Fire Hazard Severity Zone (FHSZ):** Any geographical area designated pursuant to California Public Resource Code Section 4201 to contain the type and condition of vegetation, topography, weather, and structure density to increase the possibility of conflagration fires. Areas are zoned as Very High, High, or Moderate by evaluating applicable risks and hazard.

**Fire History:** The known frequency and intensity of fires that have occurred in each area over a period.

**Fire Intensity:** Amount of heat released by a fire in an area in any given period. Fire intensity is usually related to the flame length of a fire.

**Fire/Wildfire Management:** Activities required for the protection of burnable wildland assets from fire, or the use of prescribed fire to meet land management objectives.

**Fire Planning:** Systematic technological and administrative management process of design, organization, facilities, and procedures, including fire use, to protect wildland from fire.

**Fire Prevention:** Activities such as public education, community outreach, law enforcement, and reduction of fuel hazards, intended to reduce wildland fire and the risks it poses to life and property.

**Fire Resilient/Resiliency:** The ability of an ecosystem to maintain its native biodiversity, ecological integrity, and natural recovery processes following a wildfire disturbance.

**Fire Risk:** The combination of vegetation, topography, weather, ignition sources, and fire history that leads to fire or ignition potential and danger in each area.

**Fire Safe:** For the purposes of this plan, this term is defined as: Action(s) that moderate the severity of a fire hazard to a level of "acceptable risk," as discussed in the Safety Element of the County General Plan. In a broader context, this term describes the state of lessened severity or action(s) that moderate the severity of a fire hazard or risk, while protecting structures and surrounding property from fire, whether fire is inside the structure or is threatening the structure from exterior sources.

**Fire Safe Council:** Public and private organizations that comprise a council intended to minimize the potential for wildfire damage to communities and homeowners, while also protecting the health of natural resources. Goals are achieved by distributing fire prevention materials, organizing fire safety programs, implementing fuel-reduction projects, and more. Visit *www.firesafecouncil.org*.

**Fire Severity:** Degree to which a site has been altered or disrupted by fire; loosely, a product of fire intensity and residence time.

**Fire Spread:** The movement of fire from one place to another.

**Fire Suppression:** All the work and activities connected with control and fire-extinguishing operations, beginning with discovery and continuing until the fire is completely extinguished.

**Fire Weather:** Weather conditions that influence fire ignition, behavior, and suppression, such as high temperatures, low precipitation/humidity, and high winds.

**Firewise/Firewise Communities/USA Recognition Program:** (1) A national, multi-agency effort designed to reach beyond the fire service by involving homeowners, community leaders, planners, developers, and others in the effort to protect people, property, and natural resources from the risk of wildland fire before a fire starts. (2) Firewise offers a series of practical steps that individuals and communities can take to minimize wildfire risks to people, property, and natural resources. It emphasizes community responsibility for planning in the design of a safe community as well as effective emergency response, and individual responsibility for safer home evacuation and design, landscaping, and maintenance.

**Fuel(s):** Combustible structures and vegetative materials. Includes dead plants, parts of living plants, duff, and other accumulations of flammable vegetation, such as grass, leaves, ground litter, shrubs, and trees that feed a fire. *See Surface Fuels.*

**Fuel Break:** A natural or constructed barrier used to stop or check fires that may occur, or to provide a control line from which to work.

**Fuel Description:** Designation of fuel materials into categories based on size and drying times. Fuel descriptions in use are described below:

| Description | Material | Diameter |
|---|---|---|
| Fine | Needles, leaves, etc. | |
| 1 Hour | Woody material, generally drying out within 1 hour. | <1/4" |
| 10 Hour | Woody material, generally drying out within 10 hours. | 1/4"-1" |
| 100 Hour | Woody material, generally drying out within 4 days. | 1-3" |
| 1000 Hour | Woody material, generally drying out within 40 days. | 3"+ |
| Downed | Fuel on the ground. | |
| Heavy | Large logs and snags. | |

**Fuel Ladder:** A ladder of vegetation from the ground into the canopy (or upper branches) of the trees that allows fire to climb upward.

**Fuel Load:** The amount of available and potentially combustible material, usually expressed as tons/acre.

**Fuel Management:** Act or practice of controlling flammability and reducing resistance to control of wildland fuels through mechanical, chemical, biological, or manual means, or by fire in support of land management objectives.

**Fuel Treatment:** Manipulation or removal of fuels to reduce likelihood of ignition or lessen potential damage and resistance to control (e.g., lopping, chipping, crushing, piling, and burning). Also known as *Fuel Treatment.*

**Geographic Information Systems (GIS):** A technology used for digitally viewing, storing, analyzing, and manipulating geographical information. Layers of information can create a better understanding of how data is interrelated. Useful for landscape-level planning.

**Hardened Homes:** Improving a building's resistance to fire, such as updating a roof with noncombustible roofing material; the goal is to increase the structure’s ability to survive a fire.

**Hazard:** Any real or potential condition that can cause injury, illness, or death of personnel, or damage to or loss of equipment or property.

**Healthy Forests Restoration Act:** A portion of the 2003 Healthy Forests Initiative intended to reduce hazardous fuels on public and private lands. Establishes Community Wildfire Protection Plans and sets standards for those plans.

**Home Ignition Zone:** The home and area out to approximately 100 feet, where local conditions affect the potential ignitability of a home during a wildfire.

**Ignitability:** The susceptibility to catch on fire.

**Ignition:** The event of combustion initiation that creates fire.

**Incident:** A human-caused or natural occurrence, such as wildland fire, that requires emergency service action to prevent or reduce the loss of life or damage to property or natural resources. Incident Management Teams also handle other non-fire emergency responses, including tornadoes, floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, and other disasters or large events.

**Ingress-Egress:** Roads and other avenues to enter and leave a property. Also refers to the act or right to come in or go through, as in entering a property (ingress), and the act or right to depart or go out, as in exiting a property (egress).

**Jackpot:** Heavy fuel concentrations that can flare up in a fire.

**Ladder Fuels:** Fuels that provide vertical continuity between strata and allow fire to carry from surface fuels into the crowns of trees or shrubs with relative ease. They help initiate and assure the continuation of crowning.

**Landscape:** The visible features of an area of land, including topography, water bodies, vegetation, human elements, such as land uses and structures, and transitory elements such as lighting and weather conditions.

**Large Fire:** 1) CAL FIRE defines a fire burning more than 300 acres as a large fire. 2) A fire burning with a size and intensity such that its behavior is determined by interaction between its own convection column and weather conditions above the surface.

**Limbing/Limb Up:** Removing selected branches of a standing or fallen tree or shrub.

**Manual Treatment/Fuel Reduction:** Methods of modifying wildfire fuel complexes without the use of machinery; such treatments may include chainsaws, fire-use applications, chemical treatments, and grazing.

**Mastication:** The process of “chewing up” or grinding vegetative fuels with machinery to reduce their hazard as a fuel source.

**Mitigation:** Those activities implemented prior to, during, or after an incident which are designed to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property that lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident. Mitigation measures can include efforts to educate governments, businesses, and the public on measures they can take to reduce loss and injury and are often informed by lessons learned from prior incidents.

**Mutual Aid Agreement:** A reciprocal aid agreement between two or more agencies that defines what resources each will provide to the other in response to certain predetermined types of emergencies. Mutual aid response is provided upon request.

**Pile Burning:** A method used to reduce fuel wherein vegetation is cut, stacked, and then burned.

**Preparedness:** (1) Activities that lead to a safe, efficient, and cost-effective fire management program in support of land and resource management objectives through appropriate planning and coordination. (2) Mental readiness to recognize changes in fire danger and act promptly when action is appropriate. (3) The range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities necessary to build, sustain, and improve the capability to protect against, respond to, and recover from wildfire.

**Prescribed Fire (Controlled Burning):** A fire that burns within a range of predetermined conditions (such as fuel moisture content, weather conditions, etc.) that will keep it controllable, at desired intensity, and able to achieve its stated objectives. A written, approved burn plan must exist, and environmental requirements (where applicable) must be met, prior to ignition.

**Prevention:** Activities directed at reducing the incidence of fires, including public education, law enforcement, personal contact, and reduction of fuel hazards.

**Pruning:** The act of cutting back the unwanted portions of a plant or cutting for the purpose of enhancing growth.

**Relative Humidity:** A measure of moisture in the air. If the humidity is 100%, the air is completely saturated with moisture. If the humidity is less than 20%, the air is very dry. When the air is dry, it absorbs moisture from the fuels in the forest, making them more flammable.

**Response:** (1) Movement of an individual firefighting resource from its assigned standby location to another location, or to an incident in reaction to dispatch orders, or to a reported alarm. (2) Activities that address the short-term, direct effect of an incident, including immediate actions to save lives, protect property, and meet basic human needs. Also includes the execution of emergency operations plans as well as mitigation activities designed to limit the loss of life, personal injury, property damage, and other unfavorable outcomes.

**Response Time:** For the purposes of the CWPP, response time is the time that elapses between the moment a 911 call is placed to the emergency dispatch center and the time that a first responder arrives on scene. Response time includes dispatch time, turnout time (the time it takes firefighters to travel to the fire station, don their gear, and prepare the apparatus), and travel time.

**Risk:** (1) The chance of a fire starting as determined by the presence and activity of causative agents; (2) A chance of suffering harm or loss; (3) A number related to the potential of firebrands to which a given area will be exposed during a rating day.

**Signage:** Address markers, road postings, and street signs that designate the location of residences and help orient people within a community or area. Highly visible signage is important for helping emergency responders quickly locate incident sites.

**Slope:** Upward or downward incline or slant, usually calculated as a percentage. One percent of slope means a rise or fall of one foot of elevation within 100 feet. A 45 percent slope would equal 45 feet of rise in 100 feet.

**Snag:** A standing dead tree that has usually lost most of its branches. Snags offer essential food and cover for a host of wildlife species.

**Spot Fire:** A fire ignited outside the perimeter of the main fire by flying sparks or embers.

**Structure:** Any building or structure used for support or shelter of any use or occupancy.

**Suppression:** All the work of extinguishing or containing a fire, beginning with its discovery.

**Thinning:** The act of removing a percentage of vegetation to encourage an open space and healthy growth for the remaining vegetation.

**Torch/Torching:** A rapid and intense burning of a single or small group of trees/shrubs, causing the upward movement of fire; also known as crown fire initiation or flare-up.

**Underburn:** A prescribed fire method where burning is conducted in the understory so that the fire consumes surface fuels but not trees or shrubs. Also known as understory burning.

**Understory:** Generally herbaceous or shrubby vegetation that makes up the plant layer under the tree canopy layer.

**Wildfire:** An unplanned, unwanted wildland fire including unauthorized human-caused fires, escaped wildland fire use events, escaped prescribed fire projects, and all other wildland fires where the objective is to put the fire out.

**Wildlands:** Areas in which development is essentially nonexistent, except for roads, railroads, power lines, and similar transportation facilities. Structures, if any, are widely scattered. Can also include large cattle ranches and forests managed for timber production.

**Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI)**: The zone where structures and other human developments meet, or intermingle with, undeveloped wildlands.

## Appendix C: Community Meeting Notes

A community meeting was held on February 28, 2024. EMC mailed approximately 700 invitations to residents and it was promoted through local media. Approximately 25 residents attended the meeting, along with city representatives, EMC, and Deer Creek Resources.

Comments from community members:

- Track on Riverbed near where Townhomes end & houses start where “small” motorcycles are “raced” around in a large circle.
- Please check on the stats of the “causes” of the fires in the river
- Remove deadfall along the road leading to San Lorenzo Park.
- Ladder fuel removal on dead trees on the east side of Salinas River next to San Lorenzo Park
- The area next to McDonald’s, KFC is the most dangerous for the city business district
- Trailer Park at 101 River Drive (Rio Vista Mobile Home Estates) is low-income property. A fire in this facility would be a disaster so clearing across the street is important.
- Continue clearing San Lorenzo Creek sediment.
- Use Army Corps of Engineers at Fort Hunter Ligget to bring in crews & equipment to help with clearing like they used to do in the 1940s, 50s & 60s.
- Extend the fuel break to 262 Rio Vista Drive.
- Pay Fred Miranda the $ we would spend on permits & committees to do the work himself. Save $ all the way around!
- Plan should be expanded to include area near San Lorenzo Park (due in part to north wind).
- Residents were concerned about flooding.
- Wildlife issues, including vectors for invasive plants.
- Trash, junk, and debris in the riverbed.
- Concerns with permit process and environmental review.
- How can public funds be used on private lands to clean the area?
- The RWPP is a gateway to get money to do continued work on the Riverbed.
- There should be fines for people who are not maintaining their property.
- There should be more code enforcement.
- Need crime prevention measures.
- Need to remove heavy fuels.

DCR also brought paper maps and encouraged attendees to use pens to draw out their fire concerns. Mapped, written, and verbal collected comments were taken into consideration for the RWPP development.

*Figure 25: Community members at the February 28, 2024 community meeting.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*


*Figure 26: Discussing the benefits of a fuel break at the February 28, 2024 community meeting.*
*Image © 2024 Deer Creek Resources*

## Appendix D: Wildland Vegetation Treatment Types

The following treatment types can be used to manage wildland vegetation to reduce wildfire hazards.

**Community Fuel Breaks**

Strategic areas of fuels reduction near structures to reduce fire intensity near residential and commercial areas. Fuel breaks not only lower the likelihood of fire starveling through an area, they provide conditions favorable for fire suppression.

**Ladder Fuels Reduction**

Removal or reduction of fuels that provide vertical continuity allowing fire to carry from surface fuels into the crowns of trees or shrubs with relative ease

**Hand Thinning and Chipping**

Hand thinning and chipping is typically performed by a crew using chainsaws and pole saws to thin and clear un-wanted vegetation. Hand thinning is used to cut smaller trees in environmentally sensitive areas where machines may have a significant environmental impact. Hand-thinning is generally limited to younger trees and large branches, as material must be cut into sizes that can be moved by workers without using equipment. Hand thinning may require more frequent treatments to maintain acceptable fuel loads.

**Chipping**

Chipping will likely be the preferred method of handling woody material removed within the riverbed. Chipping redistributes forest vegetation that is cut during thinning. Chips can be scattered throughout the project area. Chipped material can also be removed from the project area and disposed of off-site.

**Targeted Herbivory/Grazing**

Grazing uses goats, sheep, horses, or cows to reduce the small fuels such as grass and small brush. A popular nature-based solution that has been used throughout California, grazing programs have proven to be effective in treating overgrown vegetation elsewhere on the Salinas River. Grazing can also assist with control of invasive species.

Upstream in Paso Robles, a goat grazing program was initiated in 2020, in response to fire ignitions within the riverbed. Paso Robles treats 80-100 acres annually, which equates to approximately 50 days of grazing. Their target area was treated mechanically prior to grazing to reduce heavy fuel loads, standing dead trees, and downed woody materials. This pre-grazing work was primarily performed with chainsaws, pole sales, and tracked chippers. Paso Robles' annual grazing cost was approximately $50,000-$60,000 per year, plus $15,000 for nesting bird surveys prior to grazing.

It is important to note that grazing animals have little effect on stands of arundo, which should be mechanically removed.

**Mechanical Thinning or Mowing (Including Mastication)**
Mechanical thinning or mowing uses tractor-mounted cutters or mowing heads to snip, cut, or grind vegetation in place. It can achieve similar effects to chipping. Heavy equipment can cause adverse soil effects such as rutting and the machinery can spread invasive weeds such as yellow starthistle.

**Pile Burning**
Please note that burning piles is not permitted within King City and burn permits are not issued by the city. The information listed below pertains to potentially burning vegetation piles within the riverbed area, under the supervision of CAL FIRE or a state-certified burn boss.

Pile burning can be a cost-effective method for disposing of cut vegetation. Pile burning is considered to be a type of prescribed fire, and provides an alternative to chipping thinned vegetation, especially in places where chipper access is not available. Piles are created in the spring or summer, covered, and allowed to cure for several months, and then burned after sufficient rain has fallen to thoroughly wet the surrounding area. Piles create less smoke if they are built without too many larger logs in them, and they are also easier to mop up and extinguish if they are made of smaller branches. Also, piles built only of leaves and pine needles tend to smolder and smoke. These materials should be fed (dry) onto a hot-burning fire, or set aside to compost.

Once the piles burn down, they need to be monitored until they are cold. Depending on the size of the pile, this can last for many days or even weeks. Ideally, winter rains and snow do the heavy work of mopping up after the burn. Burning piles in the late spring can be risky, as embers can remain buried in large piles for months, and winds can blow hot embers into the surrounding vegetation after it dries out for the season. DCR/Firestorm can provide contract pile-burning services.

Tips for pile burning:

- When creating piles, they should be covered to keep the material dry. Remove plastic prior to ignition.
- Scrape a clearance of at least 6 feet to bare soil around any burn piles.
- If burning when there is a chance the fire might escape into adjacent dry vegetation, tools and water should be available. If burning in moist conditions, water is not always needed.
- Burn only clean, dry vegetative waste such as branches. It is best to burn the dry debris immediately after raking, rather than creating uncovered piles that sit for a long time getting wet and holding moisture.
- Never leave the burn pile unattended—extinguish it if you need to leave.
- Avoid burning on windy days. The wind can spread embers.
- In general, piles should be no larger than four feet in diameter and four feet high. Large pile sizes are possible, especially if qualified personnel burn them.
- Break larger piles down, and add branches to the pile as it burns.
- Throw partially burned chunks into the pile and turn over the pile several times while burning to improve consumption and completely consume all material. This is called ‘chunking the pile.’

- Mopping up is the most important part of the whole exercise. Burn piles can generate massive heat and remain hot for weeks. Monitor piles regularly even after you think that they are completely out.

**Broadcast Burning**

Broadcast burning describes prescribed fires ignited in areas with little or no forest canopy present. Broadcast burning is often used for habitat restoration and fuels reduction purposes, and would be the best method for treating invasive yellow starthistle in the riverbed area as described in the Prescribed Fire section below.

## Appendix E: Prescribed Fire

There are potential opportunities to use fire to improve the function, safety, aesthetics, and resiliency of the riverbed project area. Application of prescribed fire (including pile burning) in riparian areas could be a helpful and cost-effective tool for reducing invasive yellow starthistle and increasing fire safety. Prescribed burning reduces the loading of fine fuels, duff, large woody fuels, rotten material, shrubs, and other live surface fuels, and may be useful in reducing long-term accumulations of larger dead and down material. Any application of prescribed fire should be targeted to also help achieve non-fire-related resource management objectives, for example reducing invasive plants.

There are opportunities to use prescribed fire to reduce yellow starthistle in the riverbed area. Starthistle burning is generally seen as a three-year commitment, and successive burns are necessary to kill seeds in the soil. Burns should take place in mid-summer because grass under YST needs to be fully cured before burning occurs.

While the riverbed is not dominated by YST, there are large patches that can be treated with repeated entries of prescribed fire, which lower the threat of late-summer and fall wildfires, and provide training opportunities to local fire departments and prescribed burning organizations. Burning when flowers first appear (January-May) can eliminate YST in the seedling, rosette, and early bolting stages, although burning during this window can be difficult due to insufficient dry fuel available to carry the intense fire necessary for YST control. The preferred burning window is during the early flower stage, typically between late June and July. This prescription must be continued for at least three consecutive years in infested areas to reduce the seed bank. Burning patches of yellow starthistle creates a matrix of black, burned areas, which can help control wildfire spread.

While prescribed fires temporarily affect air quality, a 2022 report indicates that the air quality and health impacts of prescribed fire smoke are limited. Prescribed fires are implemented under conditions to limit harmful smoke exposure and are conducted when meteorological conditions are favorable, atmospheric conditions support smoke dispersion, and wind patterns allow smoke to move away from populated areas.

Prescribed fire’s utility in the management of invasive vegetation is well-documented. The conceptual burn units identified in the maps for this document were designed to meet multiple objectives. If King City is interested in advancing these types of projects, contracting with a California State Fire Marshal-certified burn boss to develop detailed prescriptions and burn objectives (using the State’s burn plan template) would be the next step.

The California State Fire Marshall is now certifying Professional Prescribed Fire Burn Bosses (CA-RX). California state legislation (SB-332 and SB-926) provides liability protections and a claims fund to protect burners/landowners in case of escaped burns.

## Appendix F: Defensible Space Zone Education for Homeowners

The intensity of wildfire fuel management varies within the 100-foot perimeter of the home, with more intense fuels' reduction occurring closer to your home. Zones 1 and 2 previously made up the 100 feet of defensible space required by law. Assembly Bill 3074, passed into law in 2020, now requires a third zone for defensible space, as of January 1, 2023. Zone 0 is the new ember-resistant zone within 0 to 5 feet. Start at the home and work your way out to 100 feet or to your property line, whichever is closer.

These zones are a "rule of thumb" designed to help property owners and exceptions are made when appropriate or where property lines do not allow.

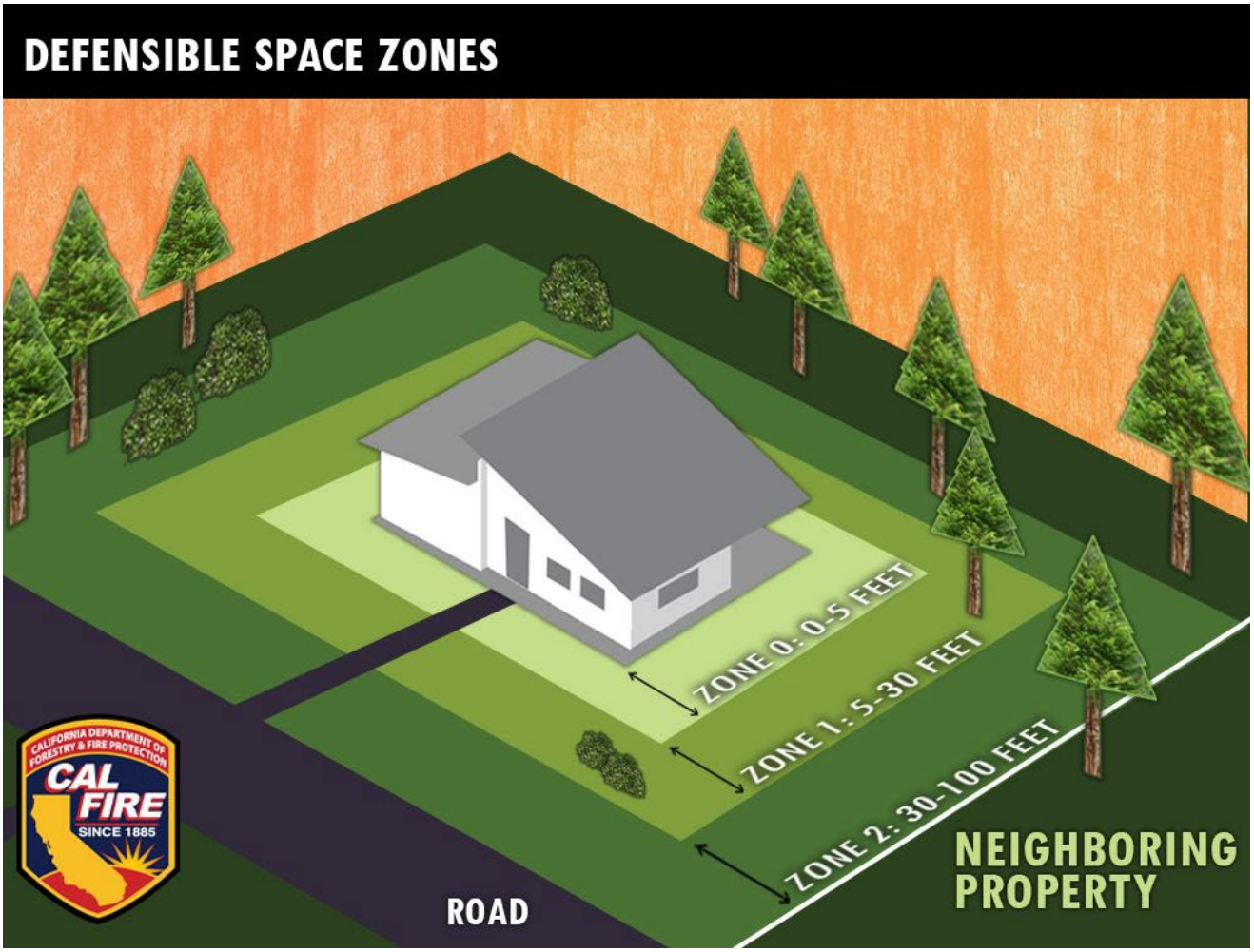


*Figure 27: CAL FIRE Defensible Zones*
*Image © 2023 CAL FIRE*

**Zone 0: Ember Resistant Zone**
Zone 0 extends 5 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc.

Science has proven it to be the most important of all the defensible space zones. This zone includes the area under and around all attached decks and requires the most stringent wildfire fuel reduction. The ember-resistant zone is designed to keep fire or embers from igniting materials that can spread the fire to your home. The following provides guidance for this zone, which may change based on the regulation developed by the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection.

- Use hardscape like gravel, pavers, concrete, and other noncombustible mulch materials. No combustible bark or mulch
- Remove all dead and dying weeds, grass, plants, shrubs, trees, branches, and vegetative debris (leaves, needles, cones, bark, etc.); Check your roofs, gutters, decks, porches, stairways, etc.
- Remove all branches within 10 feet of any chimney or stovepipe outlet
- Limit plants in this area to low growing, nonwoody, properly maintained plants
- Limit combustible items (outdoor furniture, planters, etc.) on top of decks
- Relocate firewood and lumber to Zone 2
- Replace combustible fencing, gates, and arbors attach to the home with noncombustible alternatives
- Consider relocating garbage and recycling containers outside this zone
- Consider relocating boats, RVs, vehicles, and other combustible items outside this zone

**Zone 1: Lean, Clean and Green Zone**
Zone 1 extends 30 feet from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Remove all dead plants, grass, and weeds (vegetation).
- Remove dead or dry leaves and pine needles from your yard, roof, and rain gutters.
- Remove branches that hang over your roof and keep dead branches 10 feet away from your chimney.
- Trim trees regularly to keep branches a minimum of 10 feet from other trees.
- Relocate wood piles to Zone 2.
- Remove or prune flammable plants and shrubs near windows.
- Remove vegetation and items that could catch fire from around and under decks, balconies, and stairs.
- Create a separation between trees, shrubs and items that could catch fire, such as patio furniture, wood piles, swing sets, etc.

**** During times of drought when green landscaping cannot be achieved due to water restrictions be sure to remove all dead or dying material from Zone 1.***

**Zone 2: Reduce Fuel Zone**
Zone 2 extends from 30 feet to 100 feet out from buildings, structures, decks, etc. or to your property line, whichever is closer.

- Cut or mow annual grass down to a maximum height of 4 inches.
- Create horizontal space between shrubs and trees.
- Create vertical space between grass, shrubs, and trees.
- Remove fallen leaves, needles, twigs, bark, cones, and small branches. However, they may be permitted to a depth of 3 inches.
- All exposed wood piles must have a minimum of 10 feet of clearance, down to bare mineral soil, in all directions.

**Defensible Space Self-Inspection Checklist**

- Make street address visible from the street in both directions, contrast with the background, reflective, and a minimum of 4 inches in height in accordance with Monterey County Code Q104.2
- Annual grasses and weeds need to be mowed to 4 inches or less **100 feet** from house or to property line
- Remove pine needles, thin brush, and other flammable vegetation **100 feet** from house or to property line
- Maintain the roof of any structure free of pine needles, leaves, or any other dead/dying debris
- Cut grasses, thin brush, and other flammable vegetation to **100 feet** from house or to property line
- Clear debris – slash and needle piles, construction debris and flammable storage from around structure
- Clear vegetation to mineral soil around firewood storage piles
- Remove brush, limbs, grass, needles, and debris ten feet in all directions from around propane tank
- Limb trees up a minimum of 6 feet from the ground
- Remove dead tree limbs adjacent to or overhanging any structure or decks
- Remove all portions of trees within ten feet from chimneys and/or stovepipe outlets
- Remove all dead and dying trees from the property
- Install a 1/8-inch mesh screen spark arrester on chimneys, stovepipes, and appliances that burn solid fuels
- Maintain defensible space a minimum of 10 feet from the shoulder of the roadway
- Remove any hazardous vegetation constituting an extreme fire hazard, as determined by the code official

**Defensible Space Landscaping:**
University of California, Agriculture and Natural Resources, is an excellent resource for defensible space landscaping: *Reducing the Vulnerability of Building to Wildfire: Vegetation and Landscaping Guidance*: https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8695.pdf

**California Assembly Bill 38, Inspections and Real Estate Transactions**
Passed in 2019, California Assembly Bill 38 (AB 38) established a five-year pilot program requiring California's Office of Emergency Services and CAL FIRE to work together to utilize a broad range of potential funding, including federal funds, to proactively support at-risk communities through a statewide fire retrofit program. The goal is to help communities and owners of homes built prior to updated building codes in 2008 harden their homes and make them more likely to survive future fires.

The bill requires the State Fire Marshal, in consultation with state officials, to identify building retrofits and structure hardening measures, and the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection to identify defensible space, vegetation management and fuel modification activities eligible for financial assistance under the program.

AB 38 is designed to help educate home buyers in fire prone areas by requiring property sellers in those areas to inform buyers that the property follows established wildfire protection measures, including fire hardening improvements on the property and a disclosure notice to also include the State Fire Marshal's list of low-cost retrofits.

More information on AB 38 can be found at
https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/b2fc79e82aec4ecab4250987db7312cb.

## Appendix G: Additional Resources

ALERT California: alertca.live/

AlertMontereyCounty: www.co.monterey.ca.us/government/departments-a-h/emergency-communications-911/old-site/citizen-awareness/alert-monterey-county

CAL FIRE Defensible Space Zones: www.fire.ca.gov/programs/communications/defensible-space-prc-4291

CAL OES Retrofit Rebate Program: www.caloes.ca.gov/office-of-the-director/operations/recovery-directorate/hazard-mitigation/california-wildfire-mitigation-program

California Climate Investments: www.caclimateinvestments.ca.gov/

California Fire Hazard Severity Zone Maps: egis.fire.ca.gov/FHSZ/

California Public Resources Code 4291: leginfo.legislature.ca.gov/faces/codes_displaySection.xhtml?sectionNum=4291.&lawCode=PRC

California Wildfire & Forest Resilience Task Force: https://wildfiretaskforce.org/

Fire Safe Council for Monterey: www.firesafemonterey.org/defensible-space.html

Firewise USA: firewise.org

Healthy Forest Restoration Act (HFRA) of 2003: www.congress.gov/bill/108th-congress/house-bill/1904

Housing arrangement and vegetation factors associated with single-family home survival in the 2018 Camp Fire, California: fireecology.springeropen.com/track/pdf/10.1186/s42408-021-00117-0.pdf

National Fire Protection Association: www.nfpa.org

Office of the State Fire Marshal: osfm.fire.ca.gov

Ready, Set, Go! Program: www.readyforwildfire.org/prepare-for-wildfire/ready-set-go

Reducing the Vulnerability of Building to Wildfire: Vegetation and Landscaping Guidance: anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8695.pdf

Wildfire Home Retrofit Guide: ucanr.edu/HomeRetrofitGuide

## Appendix H: Grant Funding Programs

County Coordinators Grant

California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection

California Healthy Soils Program

California Wildfire Mitigation Program

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants:

- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
- Hazard Mitigation Grant Program Post-Fire Grant
- Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities Grants

Monterey County Fire Relief Fund Grants

State Fire Assistance Grants

USDA Community Wildfire Defense Grants

# Appendix I: Preparer & Methods

**Statement of Qualifications**
Established in 2011, Deer Creek Resources (DCR) is the resource management division of Firestorm Wildland Fire Suppression, Inc. Firestorm has been in the wildland fire and forestry business since 1996 and is California's largest wildland firefighting contractor with over 250 federally-qualified wildland firefighters.

In addition to wildland firefighting, Firestorm/DCR is a leader in wildland fire hazard mitigation, prescribed fire, and forestry services. We have completed forestry projects on over 30,000 acres, including thinning, piling, mastication, fuel break construction, ecological restoration, post-fire erosion control, and trail maintenance. We have successfully implemented ecological burning on over 225,000 acres on forests and rangelands throughout the United States.

DCR uses mapping, innovative wildfire analytics, and applied science to help communities and landowners prepare for wildfire, manage watersheds and wildlands, and increase the transparency of land management decision making. We use our expert knowledge of wildfire behavior and land management to develop tangible wildfire hazard mitigation projects that affect real changes on the ground.

Our pre-fire plans improve public safety and benefit the landscape by:

- Identifying places where a wildfire might trap and kill people or destroy property
- Establishing priorities for fuel reduction and habitat restoration
- Integrating wildfire management with other land management objectives
- Reducing the risk of natural resource damage from severe fire and fire suppression activities
- Improving fire suppression effectiveness, as well as firefighter safety
- Preventing infrastructure losses/property damage during wildfire incidents

We use the following tools to assess fire hazard across landscapes:

- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Cartography/mapmaking
- Satellite imagery, aerial photography, and LiDAR
- Fixed-wing aerial imagery, orthophotography and UAV piloting
- Ground-based fuel mapping and surveys
- Numeric wildfire behavior models
- Qualitative data via interviews with knowledgeable locals
- Application of peer-reviewed science

DCR's wildfire mitigation experts have helped to develop wildfire pre-plans in the Lassen Foothills, Klamath Mountains, Lake Tahoe Basin, Central Coast, Klamath Mountains, and for Plumas, El

Dorado, Amador, Monterey, Nevada, and Yuba Counties. Our staff developed a major hazardous fuels reduction project for University of California's Lick Observatory on Mount Hamilton, in Santa Clara County, and also developed the Plumas County Hazardous Fuel Assessment & Strategy. We recently completed a community wildfire protection plans (CWPP) for the Olympic Valley and are currently developing CWPPs for the American River Parkway in Sacramento and for the City of Redding.

DCR has provided professional GIS mapping services for major planning efforts including the South Lassen Watersheds Project, the Northern Sacramento Valley Integrated Regional Water Management Plan (NSV-IRWM) and Upper Feather River IRWM projects. Among other things, we have performed vegetation mapping of coastal wetlands for public agencies, developed field mapping applications for petroleum pipeline right-of-way inspectors, built map-based asset catalogs for major winery properties, and used aerial LiDAR data to conduct a timber inventory across 65,000 acres. We can also perform UAV and fixed-wing aerial surveys to create orthomosaic images of landscapes, from five acres to 50,000.

Our pre-fire plans improve public safety and benefit the landscape by integrating wildfire management with other land management objectives to reduce the risk of natural resource damage from severe fire or fire suppression activities and preventing infrastructure and property losses.

We have experience with all aspects of wildland fire management and mitigation throughout California. DCR's mapping crews have provided GIS support to CAL FIRE and the USDA Forest Service on several of the most destructive urban-interface fires in California's history.

Firestorm has implemented wildfire hazard mitigation vegetation management projects resulting in tens of thousands of acres being treated. We understand the workflow of wildfire mitigation, from project conception to implementation, and emphasize follow-up and regular maintenance to maintain favorable conditions.

**RWPP Data Collection Methods**

Deer Creek Resources attended a group site visit with staff from EMC Planning Group and King City on December 6, 2023 and conducted an in-depth field survey on January 24 and 25, 2024. During the December visit, the group visited the project area and discussed preliminary vetting of potential fuels projects. In January, two DCR field surveyors walked the entirety of the riverbed and creek sections of the project area, noting wildfire hazards and considering wildland fire fuels reduction projects that would contribute to the overall wildfire resilience of the city.

Notes, geographic coordinates, and photos from the two-day survey are included in the accompanying shapefile, which can be opened in ArcGIS or other mapping applications.

DCR obtained aerial images and LiDAR of the project area from the Resource Conservation District of Monterey County (RCDMC). These flights took place between November 11-13, 2023. Aerial images were combined to create an orthomosaic (photo base map), which was used to map fuels and

model likely fire behavior. DCR’s fire modeling was presented to the city on February 26, 2023. Aerial images from the flight are used on all accompanying maps.

A community meeting was held on February 28, 2024, to collect input from King City residents. Comments and notes from the meeting are included in Appendix C.

# Special-Status Species in the Project Vicinity

B

APPENDIX

## Appendix A Special-Status Wildlife Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity

| Species | Status (Federal/State) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| American badger *(Taxidea taxus)* | --/SSC | Most abundant in drier, open stages of most shrub, forest, and herbaceous habitats. Need sufficient food and open, uncultivated ground with friable soils to dig burrows. Prey on burrowing rodents. | Possible. Suitable open uncultivated ground with friable soil within the project area. |
| Arroyo toad *(Bufo californicus)* | FE/SSC | Semi-arid regions near washes or intermittent streams, including valley-foothill and desert riparian, desert wash, etc. Rivers with sandy banks, willows, cottonwoods, and sycamores, loose, gravelly areas of streams in drier parts of range. | Unlikely. Although marginal habitat exists within the project area, the closest known observation is 16 miles west outside of the Salinas River Watershed. |
| Bank swallow *(Riparia riparia)* | --/ST | Highly colonial species that nests in alluvial soils along rivers, streams, lakes, and ocean coasts. Nesting colonies only occur in vertical banks or bluffs of friable soils at least one meter tall, suitable for burrowing with some predator deterrence values. Breeding colony present in Salinas River. | Low probability. Marginal habitat present. Last observation of nesting colony in 1987. |
| Blunt-nosed leopard lizard *(Gambelia silus)* | FE/SE | Resident of sparsely vegetated alkali and desert scrub habitats, in areas of low topographic relief. Seeks cover in mammal burrows, under shrubs or structures such as fence posts. | Unlikely. Outside of known geographic range. |
| Buena Vista Lake Ornate Shrew *(Sorex ornatus relictus)* | FE/-- | Resident of moist habitat surrounding wetlands of the Kern, Buena Vista, Goos, and Tulare lakes on the San Joaquin Valley floor. | Unlikely. Outside of known geographic range. |
| Burrowing owl *(Athene cunicularia)* | --/SSC | Open, dry, annual or perennial grasslands, desert, or scrubland, with available small mammal burrows. | Low probability. Marginal open burrowing habitat with prey available within the project area. |
| California Clapper Rail *(Rallus longirostris obsoletus)* | FE/-- | Resides exclusively in tidal and brackish marshes with intact marsh vegetation providing, invertebrate food, tidal channels, and suitable nesting and cover during extreme tides. | Unlikely. Suitable tidal and brackish marsh not present. |
| California condor *(Gymnogyps californianus)* | FE/SE | Requires vast expanses of open savannah, grasslands, and foothill chaparral in mountain ranges of moderate altitude. Deep canyons containing clefts in the rocky walls provide nesting sites. Forages up to 100 miles from roost/nest. | Unlikely. No suitable nesting habitat within project area. Possible flyovers. |
| California least tern *(Sternula antillarum browni)* | FE/SE | Nests along the coast from San Francisco Bay south to northern Baja California. Colonial breeder on bare or sparsely vegetated, flat substrates (sand beaches, alkali flats, landfills, or paved areas). | Unlikely. Not along coast. |
| California red-legged frog *(Rana draytonii)* | FT/SSC | Rivers, creeks, and stock ponds with pools and overhanging vegetation. Requires dense, shrubby or emergent riparian vegetation, and prefers short riffles and pools with slow-moving, well-oxygenated water. Needs upland habitat to aestivate (remain dormant during dry months) in small mammal burrows, cracks in the soil, or moist leaf litter. | Low probability, Suitable breeding habitat present in adjacent ponds. Marginal upland habitat present. Closest known occurrence 10 miles away. |
| California tiger salamander *(Ambystoma californiense)* | FT/ST | Grasslands and oak woodlands near seasonal pools and stock ponds in central and coastal California. Needs upland habitat to aestivate (remain dormant during dry months) in small mammal burrows, cracks in the soil, or | Unlikely. Closest known occurrence 10 miles away. |

| Species | Status (Federal/State) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | moist leaf litter. Requires seasonal water sources that persist into late March for breeding habitat. | |
| Coast horned lizard *(Phrynosoma blainvillii)* | --/SSC | Arid grassland and scrubland habitats; prefers lowlands along sandy washes with scattered low bushes. Requires open areas for sunning, bushes for cover, patches of loose soil for burrowing, and abundant supply of ants and other insects for feeding. | Unlikely. Suitable grassland and scrubland not present. |
| Cooper's hawk *(Accipter cooperii)* | --/WL | Oak or riparian woodlands. | Possible. Marginal woodlands present within the project area. |
| Foothill yellow-legged frog *(Rana boylii)* | --/SSC | Partly shaded, shallow streams and riffles with rocky substrate in a variety of habitats. Requires at least some cobble-sized substrate for egg-laying and 15 weeks of available water to attain metamorphosis. | Unlikely. Suitable shaded streams with cobble substrate not present. |
| Giant kangaroo rat *(Dipodomys ingens)* | FE/SE | Annual grasslands on the western side of the San Joaquin Valley, marginal habitat in alkali scrub. Needs level terrain and sandy loam soils for burrowing. | Unlikely. Annual grassland and alkali scrub habitat not present. |
| Golden eagle *(Aquila chrysaetos)* | --/SFP | Rolling foothill mountain areas, sage-juniper flats, and desert. Cliff-walled canyons provide nesting habitat in most parts of range. Also uses large trees in open areas. | Unlikely. Suitable nesting habitat not present. Possible flyover. |
| Least Bell's vireo *(Vireo bellii pusillus)* | FE/SE | Summer resident of southern and central California in riparian habitats below 2,000 feet in elevation. Often nests in large shrubs, along margins of bushes or on twigs projecting into pathways. | Low probability. Not known from project vicinity, however suitable riparian habitat with shrub vegetation present throughout the project site. |
| Marbled murrelet *(Brachyramphus marmoratus)* | FT/SE | Feeds near shore, and nests up to six miles inland from coast from Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz in old-growth redwood forests, often in Douglas fir trees. | Unlikely. Suitable old-growth redwood forests not present. |
| Monarch butterfly *(Danaus plexippus)* | FC/-- | Winter roost sites. Wind protected tree groves (Eucalyptus, Monterey pine, cypress) with nectar and water sources nearby. | Unlikely. Suitable winter roosting trees not present. Possible site utilization during migration. |
| Monterey dusky-footed woodrat *(Neotoma fuscipes luciana)* | --/SSC | Forest habitats of moderate canopy and moderate to dense understory. Also in chaparral habitats. Nests constructed of grass, leaves, sticks, feathers, etc. Population may be limited by availability of nest materials. | Possible. Marginal habitat present within project area. |
| Monterey hitch *(Lavinia exilicauda harengus)* | --/SSC | Inhabits slow warm water, including lakes and quiet stretches of rivers. Sometimes found in cool and clear low-gradient streams, hiding among aquatic vegetation in sandy runs or pools. | Possible. Suitable riverine habitat present. Known occurrence throughout the site. |
| Northern California legless lizard *(Anniella pulchra)* | --/SSC | Sandy or loose loamy soils under sparse vegetation, moist soils. Anniella pulchra is traditionally split into two subspecies: *A. pulchra pulchra* (silvery legless lizard) and *A. pulchra nigra* (black legless lizard), but these subspecies are typically no longer recognized. | Possible. Suitable sandy soils under sparce vegetation present throughout the project area. |

| Species | Status (Federal/State) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| Pallid bat *(Antrozous pallidus)* | --/SSC | Deserts, grasslands, scrublands, woodlands, and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting. Roosts must protect bats from high temperatures. | Unlikely. Suitable rocky areas for roosting not present. |
| Pinnacles optioservus riffle beetle *(Optioservus canus)* | --/-- | Aquatic, found on rocks and in gravel of riffles in cool, swift, clear streams. | Unlikely. No gravel or rocks in stream or river bottom. |
| Salinas pocket mouse *(Perognathus inornatus psammophilus)* | --/SSC | Annual grassland and desert shrub communities in the Salinas Valley. Prefers fine-textured, sandy, friable soils. Burrows for cover and nesting. | Unlikely. Suitable grassland and desert shrub communities not present. |
| San Francisco garter snake *(Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia)* | FE/SE, SFP | Typically found in the vicinity of freshwater marshes, ponds and slow-moving streams in San Mateo County and extreme northern Santa Cruz County. Prefers dense cover and water depths of at least one foot. Upland areas near water are also very important. | Unlikely. Outside of known geographic range. |
| San Joaquin coachwhip *(Masticophis flagellum ruddocki)* | --/SSC | Open, dry habitats with little or no tree cover. Found in valley grassland and saltbush scrub in the San Joaquin Valley. Requires mammal burrows for refuge and oviposition sites. | Unlikely. Suitable grassland and saltbush scrub habitat non present. |
| San Joaquin kit fox *(Vulpes macrotis mutica)* | FE/ST | Annual grasslands or grassy open stages with scattered shrubby vegetation. Needs loose-textured sandy soils for burrowing, and suitable prey base. | Probable. San Joaquin kit fox uses the Salinas River corridor as habitat. |
| Santa Cruz long-toed salamander *(Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum)* | FE/SE, SFP | Wet meadows near sea level in a few restricted locales in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. Aquatic larvae prefer shallow (<12 inches) water; use clumps of vegetation or debris for cover. Adults use mammal burrows. | Unlikely. Outside of geographic range. |
| Smith's blue butterfly *(Euphilotes enoptes smithi)* | FE/-- | Coastal dunes and coastal sage scrub plant communities. Host plants include *Eriogonum latifolium* and *E. parvifolium* for larval and adult stages. | Unlikely. Suitable host plant not present. |
| Southern coastal roach *(Hesperoleucus venustus subditus)* | --/SSC | Found in the drainages of Tomales Bay and northern San Francisco Bay in the north, and drainages of Monterey Bay in the south. | Unlikely. Outside of known geographical range. |
| Steelhead *(Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus)* | FT/-- | Coastal stream with clean spawning gravel. Requires cool water and pools. Needs migratory access between natal stream and ocean. | Unlikely. Not found within the Salinas River. |
| Tidewater goby *(Eucyclogobius newberryi)* | FE/SSC | Brackish water habitats, found in shallow lagoons and lower stream reaches, still but not stagnant water with high oxygen levels. | Unlikely. Not found within upper reach of Salinas River. |
| Townsend's big-eared bat *(Corynorhinus townsendii)* | --/SCT | Inhabits a wide variety of habitats. Most common in mesic sites. Roosts in the open, hanging from walls and ceilings. Roosting sites limiting. Extremely sensitive to human disturbance. | Possible. Marginal suitable habitat present. |
| Tricolored blackbird *(Agelaius tricolor)* | --/SE | Areas adjacent to open water with protected nesting substrate, which typically consists of dense, emergent freshwater marsh vegetation. | Unlikely. Utilized ponds and wetlands more frequently than river habitats. |
| Vernal pool fairy shrimp *(Branchinecta lynchi)* | FT/-- | Endemic to the grasslands of the Central Valley, Central Coast Mtns., and South Coast Mtns. in astatic rain-filled pools. Inhabits small, clear-water sandstone depression pools and grass swale, earth slump, or basalt-flow depression pools. | Unlikely. No suitable vernal pool habitat present. |

| Species | Status (Federal/State) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| Western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*) | --/CE | Meadows and grasslands with flowering plants; can also be found in natural areas within urban environments. | Unlikely. Suitable meadows or grasslands with flowering plants not present. |
| Western pond turtle *(Emys marmorata)* | FC/SSC | Ponds, marshes, rivers, streams, and irrigation ditches with aquatic vegetation. Needs basking sites (such as rocks or partially submerged logs) and suitable upland habitat for egg-laying (sandy banks or grassy open fields). | Possible. Suitable habitat present within the project area. |
| Western snowy plover *(Charadrius alexandrinus nivosus)* | FT/SSC | Sandy beaches, salt pond levees, shores of large alkali lakes; sandy, gravelly, or friable soils for nesting. | Unlikely. No suitable beaches or lakes present. |
| Western spadefoot *(Spea hammondii)* | --/SSC | Occurs primarily in grassland habitats, but can be found in valley-foothill hardwood woodlands, breeds in winter and spring (January - May) in quiet streams and temporary pools. | Unlikely. Suitable habitat not present within the project area. |
| Western yellow-billed cuckoo *(Coccyzus americanus)* | FC/SE | Riparian forest nester, along the broad, lower flood-bottoms of larger river systems. Nests in riparian jungles of willow, often mixed with cottonwoods, with lower story of blackberry, nettles, or wild grape. | Unlikely. Suitable riparian forest not present within the project area. |

SOURCE: CDFW 2023

NOTE: Status Codes:

Federal (USFWS)

FE: Listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FT: Listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FSC: Species of Special Concern.

FD: Delisted under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

State (CDFW)

SE: Listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

ST: Listed as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act.

SR: Listed as Rare under the California Endangered Species Act.

SC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

SSC: Species of Special Concern.

SFP: Fully Protected species under the California Fish and Game Code.

SD: Delisted under the California Endangered Species Act.

## Appendix A Special-Status Plant Species with Potential to Occur in the Project Vicinity

| Species | Status (Federal/State/ CNPS) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| Butterworth's buckwheat *(Eriogonum butterworthianum)* | --/Rare/1B.3 | Chaparral, valley and foothill grassland. Dry sandstone outcrops and crevices; elevation 335-715m. | Unlikely, Suitable valley and foothill grassland not present. |
| Carmel Valley bush-mallow *(Malacothamnus palmeri* var. *involucratus)* | --/--/1B.2 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub; elevation 30-1100m. Blooming Period: May - October | Unlikely. Suitable chaparral, cismontane woodland, and coastal scrub not present. |
| Beach layia *(Layia carnosa)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Coastal dunes, hugely reduced in range along California's north coast dunes, on sparsely vegetated semi-stabilized dunes, usually behind foredunes; elevation 0-75m. Blooming Period: March - July | Unlikely, Suitable coastal dunes not present. |
| Coastal dunes milkvetch *(Astragalus tener* var. *titi)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Coastal bluff scrub, coastal dunes. Known only froma few extant occurrences, mostly historical in Southern California. Moist sandy depressions of bluffs or dunes along and near the Pacific Ocean, one site on a clay terrace; elevation 1-50m. Blooming Period: March - May | Unlikely. Suitable coastal bluff scrub and dunes not present. |
| Cone Peak Bedstraw *(Galium californicum ssp. luciense*) | --/--/1B.3 | Broadleafed upland forest, lower montane coniferous forest, cismontane woodland, chaparral. In forest duff or gravelly talus of pine and oak forest, in partial shade. 400-1465 m. | Unlikely. Suitable habitat and substrates not present. |
| Contra Costa goldfields *(Lasthenia conjugens)* | FE/--/1B.1 | Wet areas in cismontane woodland, playas (alkaline), valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools; elevation 0-470m. Blooming Period: March - June | Unlikely. Suitable verna pool habitat not present. |
| Davidson's bush-mallow *(Malacothamnus davidsonii)* | --/--/1B.2 | Coastal scrub, riparian woodland, chaparral, sandy washes; elevation 180-855m. Blooming Period: June - January | Moderate potential to occur. Suitable riparian woodland and scrub habitat present. |
| Dwarf calycadenia *(Calycadenia villosa)* | --/--/1B.1 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, meadows and seeps. Open, dry meadows, hillsides, gravelly outwashes; elevation 215-1275m. Blooming Period: May - October | Unlikely. Suitable open dry meadow habitat not present. |
| Hardham's evening primrose *(Camissonia hardhamiae)* | --/--/1B.2 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland, decomposed carbonate; elevation 330-500m. Blooming Period: April - May | Unlikely. Suitable habitat and substrates not present. |
| Hickman's checkerbloom *(Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *hickmanii)* | --/--/1B.3 | Chaparral; elevation 335-1200m. Blooming Period: May - July | Unlikely. Suitable chaparral habitat not present. |
| Hickman's cinquefoil *(Potentilla hickmanii)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Coastal bluff scrub, closed-cone coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, small streams in open or forested areas along the coast; elevation 5-125m. Blooming Period: April - August | Unlikely. Suitable coastal bluff scrub and dunes not present. |
| Hooked popcorn flower *(Plagiobothrys uncinatus)* | --/--/1B.2 | Chaparral (sandy), cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland; elevation 300-730m. Blooming Period: April - May | Unlikely. Suitable sandy chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland not present |

| Species | Status (Federal/State/ CNPS) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| Indian Valley bush-mallow *(Malacothamnus aboriginum)* | --/--/1B.2 | Chaparral and cismontane woodland; rocky, often burned areas. Prefers granitic outcrops and sandy bare soil; elevation 150-1700m. Blooming Period: April - October | Unlikely. Suitable habitat not present. |
| Indian Valley spineflower *(Aristocapsa insignis)* | --/--/1B.3 | Cismontane woodland. Sandy substrates. 180-1070 m. | Unlikely. Suitable woodland habitat not present. |
| Jolon clarkia *(Clarkia jolonensis)* | --/--/1B.2 | Cismontane woodland, chaparral, coastal scrub; elevation 20-660m. Blooming Period: April - June | Unlikely, Suitable cismontane woodland, chaparral, coastal scrub not present. |
| Lemmon's jewel-flower *(Caulanthus coulteri* var. *lemmonii)* | --/--/1B.2 | Pinyon-juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland; elevation 80-1220m. Blooming Period: March - May | Unlikely. Suitable woodland or grassland habitat not present. |
| Marsh sandwort *(Arenaria paludicola)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Sandy openings in freshwater or brackish marshes and swamps; elevation 3-170m. Blooming Period: May - August | Unlikely. Suitable marsh habitat not present. |
| Menzies's wallflower *(Erysimum menziesii* ssp. *menziesii)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Coastal dunes. Known only from Mendocino and Monterey Counties, localized on dunes and coastal strand; elevation 0-35m. Blooming Period: March - June | Unlikely. Suitable dune and coastal strand habitat not present. |
| Monterey clover *(Trifolium trichocalyx)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Closed-cone coniferous forest, endemic to Monterey County. Poorly drained, low nutrient soil underlain with hardpan soils, also openings and burned areas; elevation 120-205. Blooming Period: April - June | Unlikely. Suitable closed cone habitat not present. |
| Monterey gilia *(Gilia tenuiflora* ssp. *arenaria)* | FE/ST/1B.2 | Maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, sandy openings; elevation 0-45m. Blooming Period: April - June | Unlikely. Suitable chaparral, dunes, scrub habitat not present. |
| Monterey spineflower *(Chorizanthe pungens* var. *pungens)* | FT/--/1B.2 | Sandy openings in maritime chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland; elevation 3-450m. Blooming Period: April - June | Unlikely. Suitable chaparral and dune habitat not present. |
| Pale-yellow layia *(Layia heterotricha)* | --/--/1B.1 | Cismontane woodland, pinyon and juniper woodland, valley and foothill grassland / alkaline or clay; elevation 300-1600m. Blooming Period: March - June | Unlikely. Suitable woodland habitat not present. |
| Purple amole *(Chlorogalum purpureum* var. *purpureum)* | FT/--/1B.1 | Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Often in grassy areas with blue oaks in foothill woodland; elevation 300-330m. Blooming Period: May - June | Unlikely. Suitable woodland or grassland habitat not present. |
| Salt marsh bird's-beak *(Cordylanthus maritimus* ssp. *maritimus)* | FE/SE/1B | Coastal dunes, marshes and swamps (coastal salt); elevation 0-30m. Blooming Period: May - October | Unlikely. Suitable dune or marsh habitat not present. |
| San Antonio collinsia *(Collinsia antonina)* | --/--/1B.2 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland, shale substrates; elevation 365m. Blooming Period: March - May | Unlikely. Suitable woodland habitat not present. |
| San Benito pentachaeta *(Pentachaeta exilis* ssp. *aeolica)* | --/--/1B.2 | Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Grassy areas; elevation 635-855m. Blooming Period: April - May | Unlikely. Suitable woodland or grassland habitat not present. |

| Species | Status (Federal/State/ CNPS) | Suitable Habitat Description | Potential to Occur on Project Site |
|---|---|---|---|
| San Francisco collinsia *(Collinsia multicolor)* | --/--/1B.2 | Serpentine sites in closed cone coniferous forest and coastal scrub. Prefers decomposed shale (mudstone) mixed with humus; elevation 30-250m. Blooming Period: March - May | Unlikely. Suitable closed cone habitat not present. |
| Santa Cruz tarplant *(Holocarpha macradenia)* | FT/SE/1B.1 | Coastal prairie, coastal scrub, and valley and foothill grassland; often on clay or sandy soils; elevation 10-220m. Blooming Period: June - October | Unlikely. Suitable prairie, scrub, or grassland habitat not present. |
| Santa Lucia purple amole *(Hooveria purpurea var. purpurea)* | FT/--/1B.1 | Chaparral, cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland. Often in open grasslands, sometimes within scattered oak woodlands and open areas in shrublands. Gravelly clay soils. 240-390 m. | Unlikely. Suitable habitat not present. |
| Shining navarretia *(Navarretia nigelliformis* ssp. *radians)* | --/--/1B.2 | Cismontane woodland, valley and foothill grassland, and vernal pools; elevation 200-1000m. Blooming Period: May - July | Unlikely. Suitable woodland, grassland or vernal pool habitat not present. |
| Tidestrom's lupine *(Lupinus tidestromii)* | FE/SE/1B.1 | Partially stabilized dunes, immediately near the ocean; elevation 0-3m. Blooming Period: April - June | Unlikely. Suitable dune habitat not present. |
| Umbrella larkspur *(Delphinium umbraculorum)* | --/--/1B.2 | Cismontane woodland, mesic sites; elevation 400-1600m. Blooming Period: April - June | Low probability. Moderate habitat present. Known population within project vicinity. |
| Yadon's rein orchid *(Piperia yadonii)* | FE/--/1B.1 | Sandy sites in coastal bluff scrub, closed cone coniferous forest, maritime chaparral; elevation 10-510m. Blooming Period: May - August | Unlikely. Suitable costal bluff habitat not present. |
| Yellow flowered eriatrum *(Eriastrum luteum)* | --/--/1B.2 | Broadleafed upland forest, cismontane woodland, chaparral. On bare sandy decomposed granite slopes. 240-580 m. | Unlikely. Suitable habitat not present. |

SOURCE: CDFW CNDDB 2023, CNPS 2023

NOTE: Status Codes:

Federal (USFWS)

FE: Listed as Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FT: Listed as Threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

FSC: Species of Special Concern.

FD: Delisted under the Federal Endangered Species Act.

State (CDFW)

SE: Listed as Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

ST: Listed as Threatened under the California Endangered Species Act.

SR: Listed as Rare under the California Endangered Species Act.

SC: A Candidate for listing as Threatened or Endangered under the California Endangered Species Act.

SSC: Species of Special Concern.

SFP: Fully Protected species under the California Fish and Game Code.
SD: Delisted under the California Endangered Species Act.

CNPS Rare Plant Ranks and Threat Code Extensions
1B: Plants that are considered Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California and elsewhere.
2B: Plants that are considered Rare, Threatened, or Endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.
.1: Seriously endangered in California (over 80% of occurrences threatened/high degree and immediacy of threat).
.2: Fairly endangered in California (20-80% occurrences threatened).
.3: Not very endangered in California (<20% of occurrences threatened or no current threats known).