

PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCE IMPACT MONITORING PROGRAM FOR THE COLUMBIA HEIGHTS APARTMENTS PROJECT

**PAR200034; BGR _____
RIVERSIDE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA**

APN 438-220-002

Prepared for:

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Submitted to:

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February 3, 2022

Paleontological Database Information

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Report Date: February 3, 2022

Report Title: Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program for the Columbia Heights Apartments Project, Riverside County, California (PAR200034, BGR_____)

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USGS Quadrangle: Section 13, Township 5 South, Range 1 West, San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian, USGS *Hemet, California* (7.5 minute) topographic quadrangle.

Assessor's Parcel Number: 438-220-002

Study Area: 2.4 acres

Key Words: Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits; Hemet; Riverside County; vertebrate fossils.

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I. INTRODUCTION AND LOCATION

This Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program (PRIMP) report has been completed for the Columbia Heights Apartments Project (PAR200034; BGR_____), which is located at 25914 Columbia Street, northeast of the intersection of Columbia Street and Acacia East Avenue in the community of East Hemet, in unincorporated Riverside County, California (Figures 1 and 2). The project is situated just outside the city limits of Hemet within the northwest one-fourth of Section 12, Township 5 South, Range 1 West, of the San Bernardino Baseline and Meridian, on the U. S. Geological Survey 7.5-minute *Hemet, California* topographic quadrangle map (Figure 2). The project consists of one parcel totaling 2.4 acres (Assessor's Parcel Number 438-220-002). The project applicant plans to develop the property as a 40-unit apartment complex consisting of four buildings.

As the lead agency, the County of Riverside has required the submittal of a PRIMP as part of a Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program (MMRP) for the project. Implementation of this PRIMP addresses the treatment of scientifically significant fossil remains that might be uncovered by earthmoving activities at previously unknown fossil sites within the project. Without the PRIMP, fossil remains and associated specimen and corresponding geologic data would be lost to excavation activities and unauthorized fossil collecting. The guidelines proposed in this PRIMP are consistent with the intent and provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), the environmental guidelines of the County of Riverside, and the procedures outlined by the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2010). This PRIMP will: identify any documented, nearby fossil localities; summarize the geology underlying the site and assess the potential to contain paleontological resources; evaluate the potential of project activities to negatively impact fossil resources that might exist at the project; and provide guidelines for mitigation of potential impacts. The proposed guidelines should be implemented for any mass grading and excavation-related activities, including utility and storm drain trenching, during construction within the project.

II. REGULATORY SETTING

CEQA, which is patterned after the National Environmental Policy Act, is the overriding environmental regulation that sets the requirement for protecting California's paleontological resources. CEQA mandates that governing permitting agencies (lead agencies) set their own guidelines for the protection of nonrenewable paleontological resources under their jurisdiction.

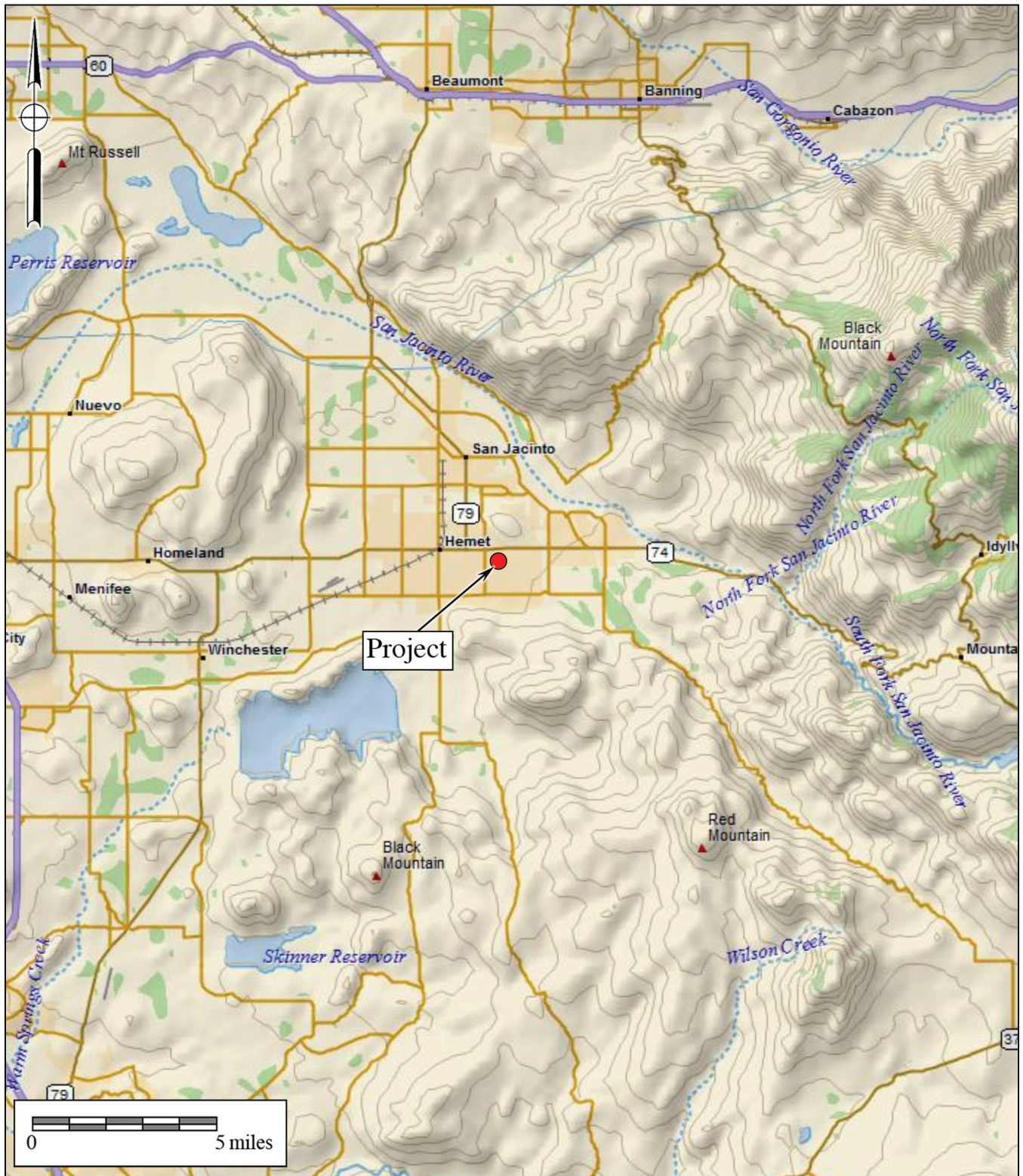


Figure 1
General Location Map
 The Columbia Heights Apartments Project

DeLorme (1:250,000)



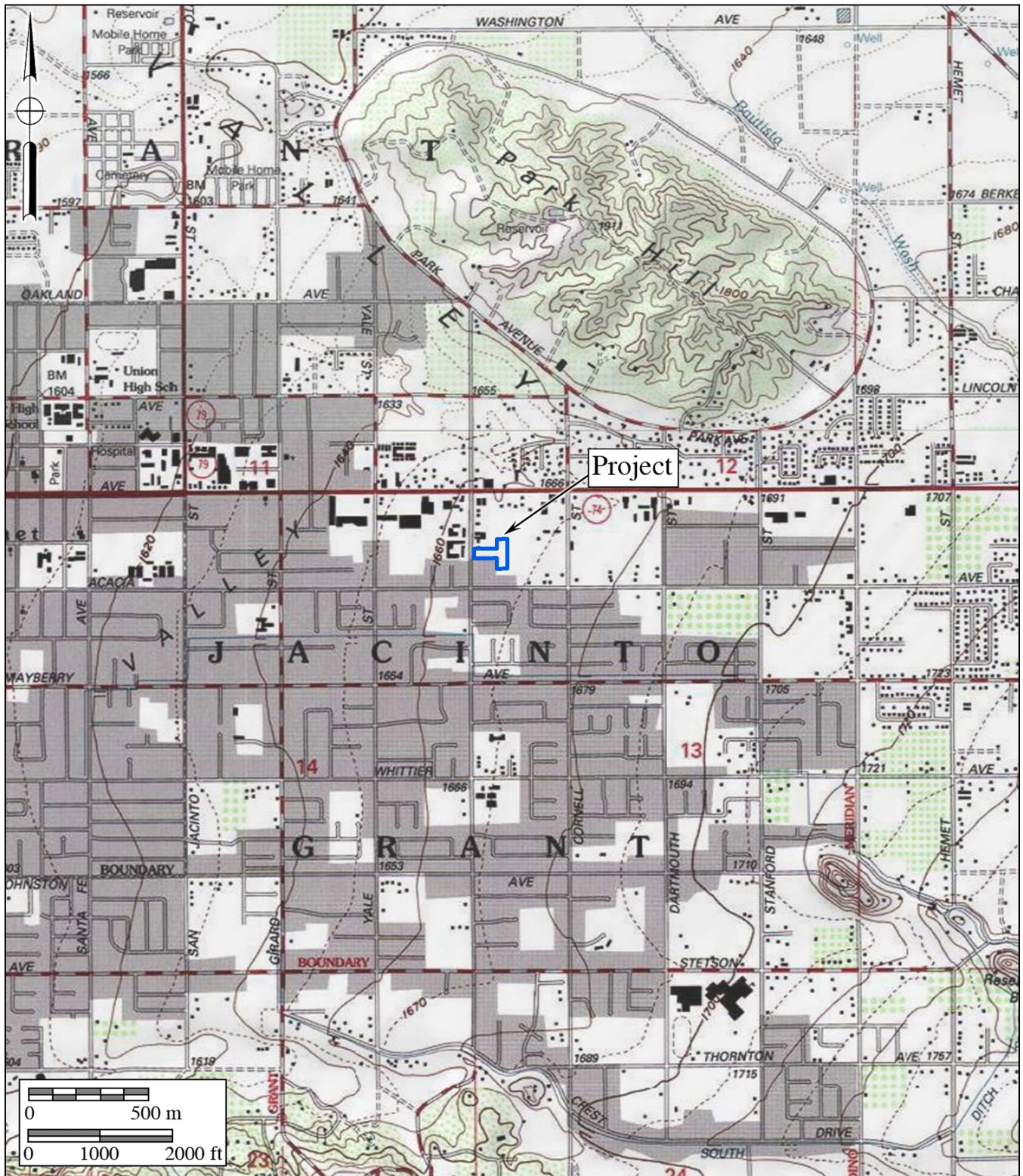


Figure 2

Project Location Map

The Columbia Heights Apartments Project

USGS Hemet and San Jacinto Quadrangles (7.5-minute series)



State of California

Under “Guidelines for Implementation of the California Environmental Quality Act,” as amended in December 2018 (California Code of Regulations [CCR] Title 14, Division 6, Chapter 3, Sections 15000 et seq.), procedures define the types of activities, persons, and public agencies required to comply with CEQA. Section 15063 of the CCR provides a process by which a lead agency may review a project’s potential impact to the environment, whether the impacts are significant, and provide recommendations, if necessary.

In CEQA’s Environmental Checklist Form, one of the questions to answer is, “Would the project directly or indirectly destroy a unique paleontological resource or site or unique geologic feature?” (Appendix G, Section VII, Part f). This is to ensure compliance with California Public Resources Code Section 5097.5, the law that protects nonrenewable resources including fossils:

- a) A person shall not knowingly and willfully excavate upon, or remove, destroy, injure, or deface, any historic or prehistoric ruins, burial grounds, archaeological or vertebrate paleontological site, including fossilized footprints, inscriptions made by human agency, rock art, or any other archaeological, paleontological or historical feature, situated on public lands, except with the express permission of the public agency having jurisdiction over such lands.
- b) As used in this section, “public lands” means lands owned by, or under the jurisdiction of, the state, or any city, county, district, authority, or public corporation, or any agency thereof.
- c) A violation of this section is a misdemeanor.

County of Riverside Guidelines

For Riverside County, policies concerning paleontological resources are addressed under the 2015 Multipurpose Open Space Element of the Riverside County General Plan, and are as follows:

- OS 19.6 Whenever existing information indicates that a site proposed for development has high paleontological sensitivity as shown on Figure OS-8, a paleontological resource impact mitigation program (PRIMP) shall be filed with the County Geologist prior to site grading. The PRIMP shall specify the steps to be taken to mitigate impacts to paleontological resources.
- OS 19.7 Whenever existing information indicates that a site proposed for development has low paleontological sensitivity as shown on Figure OS-8, no direct mitigation is required unless a fossil is encountered during site development. Should a fossil be encountered, the County

Geologist shall be notified and a paleontologist shall be retained by the project proponent. The paleontologist shall document the extent and potential significance of the paleontological resources on the site and establish appropriate mitigation measures for further site development.

OS 19.8 Whenever existing information indicates that a site proposed for development has undetermined paleontological sensitivity as shown on Figure OS-8, a report shall be filed with the County Geologist documenting the extent and potential significance of the paleontological resources on site and identifying mitigation measures for the fossil and for impacts to significant paleontological resources prior to approval of that department.

OS 19.9 Whenever paleontological resources are found, the County Geologist shall direct them to a facility within Riverside County for their curation, including the Western Science Center in the City of Hemet. (County of Riverside 2015a)

A comprehensive review of paleontological resources, including regulatory background, permitting conditions, significance thresholds, and procedures for the treatment of discovered resources, can be found in the County's Draft Environmental Impact Report (County of Riverside 2015b).

Project Specific

For the project, the Riverside County Planning Department has requested that a PRIMP be submitted and approved before a grading permit is issued, according to their project Planning Case Progress Report dated October 1, 2020 (PAR200034). The request is based on the property's designation by the County as having a high potential to yield paleontological resources (County of Riverside Land Information System 2021; see Section IV). In preparation for the PRIMP, the County requires the following for the project:

1. The applicant shall retain a qualified paleontologist approved by the County to create and implement a project-specific plan for monitoring site grading/earthmoving activities (project paleontologist).
2. The project paleontologist retained shall review the approved development plan and grading plan and conduct any pre-construction work necessary to render appropriate monitoring and mitigation requirements as appropriate. These requirements shall be documented by the project paleontologist in a Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program (PRIMP). This PRIMP shall be submitted to the County Geologist for approval prior to issuance of a

Grading Permit. Information to be contained in the PRIMP, at a minimum and in addition to other industry standards and Society of Vertebrate Paleontology standards, are as follows: [The required PRIMP guidelines, as stated in the County's request, are outlined in Section V of this report.].

III. GEOLOGY

Regionally, the project lies near the eastern edge of the Perris block of the Peninsular Ranges batholith (Morton and Matti 2005). The active San Jacinto fault zone lies one to two miles east of the project. Based on geologic mapping by Lancaster et al. (2012), the project is located on Holocene to late Pleistocene-aged young alluvial fan deposits, consisting mostly of unconsolidated, undissected boulders, cobbles, gravel, sand and silt (areas labeled "Qyf" in Figure 3). Morton and Matti (2005) refer to these deposits as the Holocene and late Pleistocene-aged young alluvial fan deposits of Bautista Canyon, Unit 1, predominately characterized as gravel, sand, and silt.

IV. PALEONTOLOGICAL RESOURCES

Definition

Paleontological resources are the remains of prehistoric life that have been preserved in geologic strata. These remains are called fossils and include bones, shells, teeth, and plant remains (including their impressions, casts, and molds) in the sedimentary matrix, as well as trace fossils such as footprints and burrows. Fossils are considered older than 5,000 years of age (Society of Vertebrate Paleontology 2010) but may include younger remains (subfossils) when viewed in the context of local extinction of the organism or habitat, for example. Fossils are considered a non-renewable resource under state and county guidelines (Section II of this report).

Paleontology

Older, middle to early Pleistocene-aged very old alluvial fan deposits likely underlie the younger alluvial fan deposits at the surface, at an unknown depth. These Pleistocene deposits are exposed about one mile south of the project (area in colored olive labeled "Qvof" in Figure 3) and are known to yield the fossilized bones of Pleistocene mammals, such as extinct bison, camels, and giant ground sloths in western Riverside County (Jefferson 1991). The closest known fossils from alluvial deposits similar to the project are located just south of the Hemet-Ryan Airport, consisting of the bones of an extinct horse and other unidentified large mammal remains (Kennedy 2006). These fossils are housed at the Western Science Center (WSC) in Hemet.

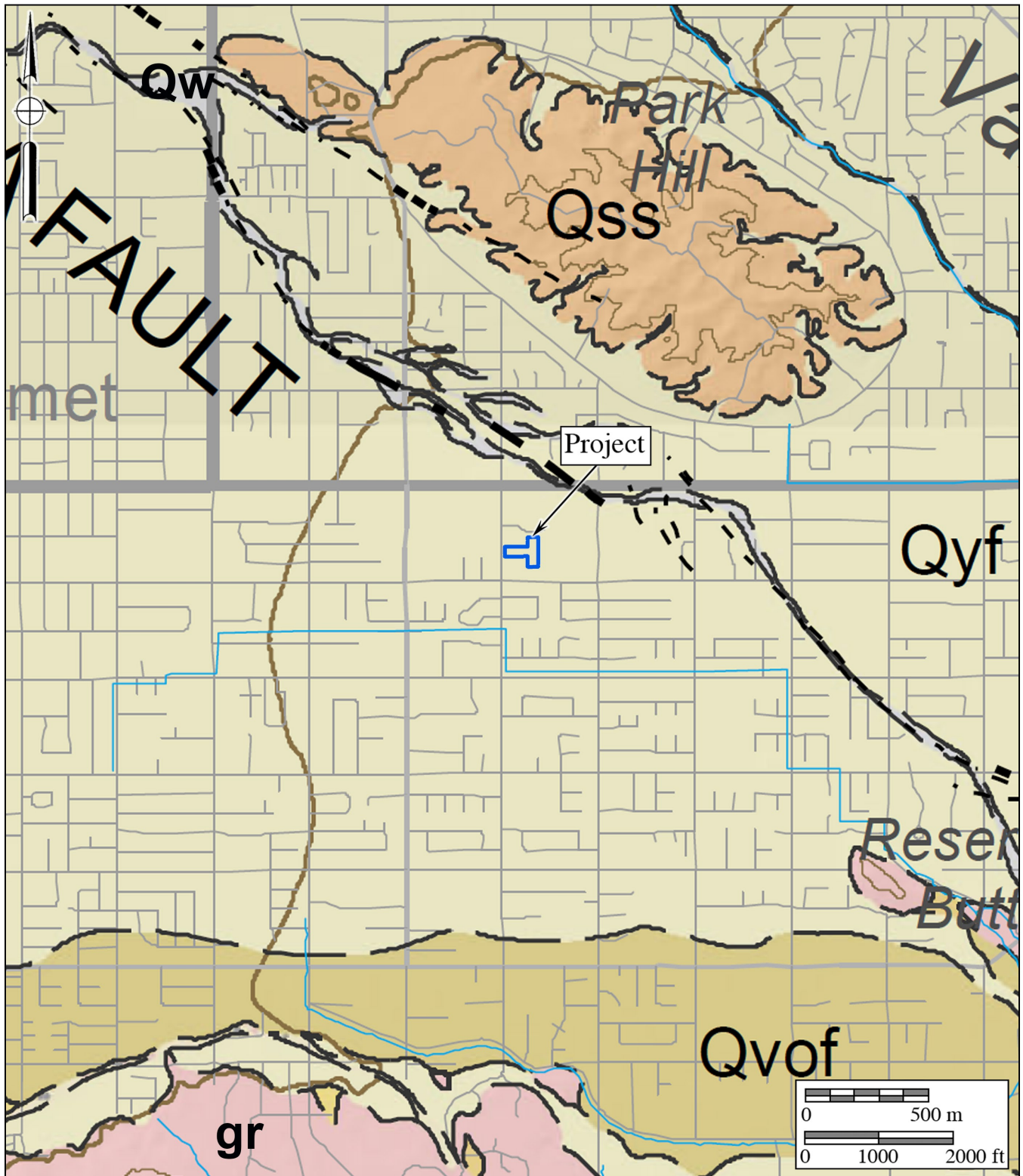


Figure 3
Geologic Map

The Columbia Heights Apartments Project

Geology after Lancaster et al. (2012)



Professional Standards

The Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2010) has drafted guidelines that include four categories of paleontological sensitivity for geologic units (formations) that might be impacted by a proposed project, as listed below:

- High Potential: Rock units from which vertebrate or significant invertebrate, plant, or trace fossils have been recovered.
- Undetermined Potential: Rock units for which little information is available concerning their paleontological content, geologic age, and depositional environment, and that further study is needed to determine the potential of the rock unit.
- Low Potential: Rock units that are poorly represented by fossil specimens in institutional collections or based on a general scientific consensus that only preserve fossils in rare circumstances.
- No Potential: Rock units that have no potential to contain significant paleontological resources, such as high-grade metamorphic rocks and plutonic igneous rocks.

Using these criteria, based on the fossil record of the geologic formation at the project, and the distribution of nearby fossil localities, the project may be considered to have an undetermined potential to yield significant paleontological resources. The underlying Pleistocene very old alluvial deposits may be considered to have a high potential to yield significant paleontological resources.

Riverside County Sensitivity

The Riverside County Land Information System ranks the alluvial deposits at the subject property as having a “High (High B)” paleontological sensitivity. A “High B” ranking indicates that fossils may be encountered at or below four feet deep and may be impacted during excavation by construction activities (County of Riverside 2015b; County of Riverside Land Information System 2021).

V. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Research has revealed the presence of Holocene to late Pleistocene-aged young alluvial fan deposits mapped at the project. The depth of the age transition from Holocene to late Pleistocene within these deposits is unknown. Pleistocene very old alluvial fan deposits likely underlie the young alluvial fan deposits at an unknown depth. In western Riverside County, Pleistocene alluvial fan deposits are known to yield terrestrial vertebrate fossils. Paleontological monitoring is recommended, beginning at a depth of four feet, in accordance with the County’s assignment of a High B paleontological potential for the parcel. Monitoring of artificial fill or disturbed soils is not warranted.

Paleontological Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Program

The following mitigation and reporting guidelines are from the project's Planning Case Progress Report (PAR200034). The specific guidelines are consistent with the provisions of CEQA, the County of Riverside, and the guidelines of the Society of Vertebrate Paleontology (2010) for any mass grading and excavation-related activities, including utility trenching, during construction within the project. Paleontological monitoring may be reduced on the observations and recommendations of the professional-level project paleontologist. When implemented, the following guidelines and procedures will reduce potential impacts to paleontological resources to a level below significant:

1. A corresponding and active County Grading Permit (BGR) Number must be included in the title of the report. PRIMP reports submitted without a BGR number in the title will not be reviewed: A BGR number is stated on the cover page and within the report.
2. PRIMP must be accompanied by the final grading plan for the subject project: The applicant will furnish the final grading plan.
3. Description of the proposed site and planned grading operations: See Section I of this report.
4. Description of the level of monitoring required for all earth-moving activities in the project area: All mass grading, excavation, drilling, and trenching activities within undisturbed alluvial fan deposits at the project, starting at a depth of four feet, are to be monitored full-time for paleontological resources. Prior to initiation of any grading, drilling, and/or excavation activities, a preconstruction meeting will be held and attended by the paleontologist of record, representatives of the grading contractor and subcontractors, the project owner or developer, and a representative of the lead agency. The nature of potential paleontological resources shall be discussed, as well as the protocol that is to be implemented following discovery of any fossiliferous materials. Monitoring of any potential artificial fill or disturbed soils is not required.
5. Identification and qualifications of the qualified paleontological monitor to be employed for grading operations monitoring: A Riverside County-approved paleontologist, or personnel managed at the direction of a Riverside County-approved paleontologist, shall monitor earth disturbance activities for potential paleontological resources.
6. Identification of personnel with authority and responsibility to temporarily halt or divert grading equipment to allow for the recovery of large specimens: In the field, the paleontological monitors have the authority and responsibility to halt or divert grading operations.
7. Direction for any fossil discoveries to be immediately reported to the property owner, who in turn, will immediately notify the County of Riverside of the discovery: The paleontological principal investigator shall notify the County of Riverside of any

fossil discoveries by email and/or phone call.

8. Means and methods to be employed by the paleontological monitor to quickly salvage fossils as they are unearthed to avoid construction delays: Paleontological salvage during trenching activities is typically from the trench spoils and does not delay the trenching activity. Fossils encountered during earth-disturbing activities will be collected and placed in cardboard flats or plastic buckets and identified by field number, collector, and date collected. On mass grading projects, any discovered fossil site is protected by flagging to prevent it from being overrun by earthmovers (scrapers) before salvage begins. All grading activities within 50 feet of the discovery site should be suspended until fossil recovery has been completed. Fossils are collected in a similar manner, with notes and photographs being taken before removing fossils. If the site involves a large terrestrial vertebrate, for example, large bone(s) or a mammoth tusk, that is/are too large to be easily removed by a single monitor, a field crew will be sent to the site to excavate around the find, encase the discovery within a plaster jacket, and remove it after the plaster has set. For large fossils, use of the contractor's construction equipment is solicited to remove the jacket to a safe location. It sometimes happens that fossils are found by construction workers when a paleontological monitor is not on-site or is occupied elsewhere on a grading project. In such cases, all work should be halted within 50 feet of the discovery location until it can be properly evaluated by the paleontological monitor or professional paleontologist.
9. Sampling of sediments that are likely to contain the remains of small fossil invertebrates and vertebrates: Sediments containing small invertebrate and/or vertebrate fossils are considered just as important as larger fossils and will always be collected (see below). When vertebrate fossil remains are recovered, additional sediment samples will be taken from the same location to process for micro-vertebrate specimens.
10. Procedures and protocol for collecting and processing samples and specimens: Isolated fossils will be collected by hand, wrapped in paper, and placed in temporary collecting flats or five-gallon buckets. Notes will be taken on the map location and stratigraphy of the site, and the site will be photographed before it is vacated and the fossils are removed to a safe place. Particularly small invertebrate fossils typically represent multiple specimens of a limited number of organisms, and a scientifically suitable sample can be obtained by one to several five-gallon buckets of fossiliferous sediment. If it is possible to dry-screen the sediment in the field, a concentrated sample may consist of one or two buckets of material. For micro-vertebrate fossils, the standard test is usually the observed presence of small pieces of bone within the sediments. If bone is present, multiple five-gallon buckets of sediment can be collected and returned to a separate facility to wet-screen the sediment. If, after five buckets have been wet-screened and have failed to yield any micro-vertebrate or other

fossil material under microscopic examination, then this process can be terminated. In the laboratory, any recovered fossils are cleaned of extraneous matrix, any breaks are repaired, and the specimen, if necessary, is stabilized by soaking in an archivally approved acrylic hardener (e.g., a solution of acetone and Paraloid B-72).

11. Fossil identification and curation procedures to be employed: Fossils will be identified by an adjunct invertebrate or vertebrate paleontology specialist, depending on the group of fossils needing identification (e.g., mollusks, reptiles, birds, mammals, or fish). Standard museum curation steps will be utilized by, or under the direct supervision of, the principal investigator, who has nine years of paleontological curatorial experience. Curation steps include cleaning, preparing, sorting, identifying, painting, numbering, and labeling all specimens before submittal to the receiving institution.
12. Identification of the permanent repository to receive any recovered fossil material: Pursuant to the County “SABER Policy”, paleontological fossils found in the County should, by preference, be directed to the WSC in the City of Hemet. A written agreement between the property owner/developer and the repository must be in place prior to site grading.
13. All pertinent exhibits, maps, and references: See text and figures of this PRIMP.
14. Procedures for reporting findings: A final written report will be produced by the project paleontologist and submitted to the County of Riverside geologist at the conclusion of grading activities for the project. The report will include sections on general background information, previous studies (both geologic and paleontologic), results of findings and analysis, discussion of all recovered fossils, a fossil list identified to the lowest taxonomic level possible, a list of references cited, index and locality maps, and graphics to show the locations of all fossil localities. A letter documenting the receipt and acceptance of the fossil collections by the receiving institution must be included in the final report, a copy of which is to be archived with the fossil collection. If fossils are not recovered during the project, the final report will be in a shortened letter format.
15. Identification and acknowledgement of the developer for the content of the PRIMP, as well as acceptance of financial responsibility for monitoring, reporting, and curation fees: The property owner and/or applicant on whose land the paleontological fossils are discovered shall provide appropriate funding for monitoring, reporting, delivery and curating the fossils at the institution where the fossils will be placed and will provide confirmation to the County that such funding has been paid to the institution.
16. All reports shall be signed by the project paleontologist and all other professionals responsible for the report’s content (e.g., Professional Geologist), as appropriate: One signed digital copy of the report(s) shall be submitted by email to the County Geologist (dwalsh@rivco.org) along with a copy of this condition and the grading plan for appropriate case processing and tracking. These documents should not be

submitted to the project Planner, Plan Check staff, Land Use Counter, or any other County office. In addition, the applicant shall submit proof of hiring (e.g., copy of executed contract, retainer agreement, etc.) a project paleontologist for the in-grading implementation of the PRIMP.

VI. CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that the statements furnished above and in the attached exhibits present the data and information required for this paleontological report, and that the facts, statements, and information presented are true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief, and have been compiled in accordance with CEQA criteria.

February 3, 2022

Todd A. Wirths
Senior Paleontologist
California Professional Geologist No. 7588

Date

VII. REFERENCES CITED

County of Riverside. 2015a. County of Riverside general plan, Chapter 5: Multipurpose Open Space Element. Electronic document, https://planning.rctlma.org/Portals/14/genplan/general_Plan_2017/elements/OCT17/Ch05_MOSE_120815.pdf?ver=2017-10-11-102103-833.

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Society of Vertebrate Paleontology. 2010. Standard Procedures for the Assessment and Mitigation of Adverse Impacts to Paleontological Resources; by the SVP Impact Mitigation Guidelines Revision Committee: http://vertpaleo.org/Membership/Member-Ethics/SVP_Impact_Mitigation_Guidelines.aspx.

APPENDIX A

Qualifications of Key Personnel

Todd A. Wirths, MS, PG No. 7588

Senior Paleontologist

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Education

Master of Science, Geological Sciences, San Diego State University, California 1995

Bachelor of Arts, Earth Sciences, University of California, Santa Cruz 1992

Professional Certifications

California Professional Geologist #7588, 2003

Riverside County Approved Paleontologist

San Diego County Qualified Paleontologist

Orange County Certified Paleontologist

OSHA HAZWOPER 40-hour trained; current 8-hour annual refresher

Professional Memberships

Board member, San Diego Geological Society

San Diego Association of Geologists; past President (2012) and Vice President (2011)

South Coast Geological Society

Southern California Paleontological Society

Experience

Mr. Wirths has more than a dozen years of professional experience as a senior-level paleontologist throughout southern California. He is also a certified California Professional Geologist. At BFSa, Mr. Wirths conducts on-site paleontological monitoring, trains and supervises junior staff, and performs all research and reporting duties for locations throughout Los Angeles, Ventura, San Bernardino, Riverside, Orange, San Diego, and Imperial Counties. Mr. Wirths was formerly a senior project manager conducting environmental investigations and remediation projects for petroleum hydrocarbon-impacted sites across southern California.

Selected Recent Reports

2019 *Paleontological Assessment for the 10575 Foothill Boulevard Project, City of Rancho Cucamonga, San Bernardino County, California.* Prepared for T&B Planning, Inc. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.

2019 *Paleontological Assessment for the MorningStar Marguerite Project, Mission Viejo, Orange County, California.* Prepared for T&B Planning. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.

- 2019 *Paleontological Monitoring Report for the Nimitz Crossing Project, City of San Diego.* Prepared for Voltaire 24, LP. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2019 *Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program (PRIMP) for the Jack Rabbit Trail Logistics Center Project, City of Beaumont, Riverside County, California.* Prepared for JRT BP 1, LLC. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Monitoring Report for the Oceanside Beachfront Resort Project, Oceanside, San California.* Prepared for S.D. Malkin Properties. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program for the Nakase Project, Lake Forest, Orange County, San California.* Prepared for Glenn Lukos Associates, Inc. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program for the Sunset Crossroads Project, Banning, Riverside County.* Prepared for NP Banning Industrial, LLC. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Assessment for the Ortega Plaza Project, Lake Elsinore, Riverside County.* Prepared for Empire Design Group. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Resource Record Search Update for the Green River Ranch III Project, Green River Ranch Specific Plan SP00-001, City of Corona, California.* Prepared for Western Realco. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Assessment for the Cypress/Slover Industrial Center Project, City of Fontana, San Bernardino County, California.* Prepared for T&B Planning, Inc. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2020 *Paleontological Monitoring Report for the Imperial Landfill Expansion Project (Phase VI, Segment C-2), Imperial County, California.* Prepared for Republic Services, Inc. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2021 *Paleontological Assessment for the Manitou Court Logistics Center Project, City of Jurupa Valley, Riverside County, California.* Prepared for Link Industrial. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2021 *Paleontological Resource Impact Mitigation Program for the Del Oro (Tract 36852) Project, Menifee, Riverside County.* Prepared for D.R. Horton. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2021 *Paleontological Assessment for the Alessandro Corporate Center Project (Planning Case PR-2020-000519), City of Riverside, Riverside County, California.* Prepared for OZI Alessandro, LLC. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.
- 2021 *Paleontological Monitoring Report for the Boardwalk Project, La Jolla, City of San Diego.* Prepared for Project Management Advisors, Inc. Report on file at Brian F. Smith and Associates, Inc., Poway, California.