

## **4.5 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

This section identifies the botanical and wildlife species, natural communities and habitats, and environmental issues that will or may occur on the Oster Quarry Project Site (Project) and immediate area. The analysis in this section is supported by the biological/botanical assessment report prepared by LFR in 2009 (included in Appendix B) and a follow-up botanical assessment letter report prepared by Terra-Verde in 2011, which also reported any sensitive wildlife species encountered.

### **4.5.1 Existing Conditions**

#### **Regional Setting**

The Las Pilitas Planning Area includes about 65,500 acres, and is central within the rural planning areas that occupy the mountainous land between the flatter Salinas River valley to the west and the Shandon-Carrizo Planning Area to the east. The project site is near the western boundary of the Las Pilitas Planning Area, which at this location is formed by the Salinas River. The project vicinity is within a geographic transition that separates the flatter alluvial areas and lower hills to the west from the steeper hillsides to the east.

#### **Local Setting**

The site is located less than one half mile east of the Salinas River in San Luis Obispo County, California. Moreno Creek is south of the site on the opposite side of State SR 58; Moreno Creek connects to the Salinas River southwest of the site. The site is largely surrounded by undeveloped open space, with the exception of the Hanson Aggregate granite quarry located less than one half mile northwest of the site. In general, moderately steep to steep terrain dominates the site with slopes ranging from 15 to 75 percent.

#### **Biological Characterization of San Luis Obispo County**

The Project Site occurs in the biological transition zone between the moister communities of central and northern California and the more arid communities of southern California. North of this region, the Coast Ranges extend from San Luis Obispo to Alaska. At Point Conception to the south, the California coastline turns eastward, reflecting the east-west orientation of the Transverse Ranges, resulting in a major geologic and climatic transition zone, with cooler, windier, and moister conditions north of Point Conception, and drier and warmer conditions to the south (Ferren et al. 1984). The Project Site is located on the eastern side of the Coast Range and is therefore drier and temperatures are less strongly influenced by the moderating Pacific Ocean.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

**Habitat Types within San Luis Obispo County**

The distribution of plant associations on the site is determined by topography, soils and geology, hydrology, slope exposure, climate, and land use history. Four upland communities were identified on-site during the surveys conducted by LFR: Chaparral, Coast Live Oak Woodland/Forest, Foothill Woodland, Diablan Sage Scrub, and Annual Grassland/Ruderal (see Figure 4.5-1, “Plant Communities Identified in LFR Report”).

**4.5.2 San Luis Obispo County Plans and Policies**

Table 4.5-1 presents a preliminary review of Plans and Policies of the San Luis Obispo County General Plan, relative to this proposed surface mining operation, that are applicable to Biological Resource issues.

**4.5.3 Regulatory Setting**

Federal and State requirements applicable to biological resources are presented below in Table 4.5-2.

**Sensitive Plants**

A total of seven sensitive plants have been documented on-site or are presumed to be present within the project boundaries. During the LFR surveys, five sensitive plants were observed at the site, with a sixth species not observed, but with suitable habitat present (Yellow flowered eriastrum). A seventh species was not documented, but appears likely to be present based on California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB; CDFG 2012) records (Hardham’s suncups). Follow-up surveys on May 12 and July 1, 2011 by Terra-Verde did not identify any additional sensitive plants, but did confirm the presence of Yellow flowered eriastrum. All of the identified species are listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS 2012) and are considered to be species of local concern in San Luis Obispo County (Chesnut 2007; Dieter Wilken pers. comm.). Of the seven species, three are on List 1B.2 for plants that are rare and/or endangered in California or elsewhere, and in California, are fairly threatened; two are on List 1B.3 for plants that are rare and/or endangered in California or elsewhere although not very endangered in California; one is on List 4.2, plants of limited distributions that are fairly threatened in California; and one is on List 4.3, plants of limited distributions that are not very endangered in California. The sensitive herb or shrub species were not found in high numbers, but most occur in openings in the chaparral. As indicated below, it is assumed that other individuals of these species occur with similar frequency on the site but were not observed by LFR or Terra-Verde due to the dense chaparral cover.

Both public and private open space/reserves are located within the general area of the site and are detailed in the Table 4.5-3 below.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-1  
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Policy Statement</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Preliminary Determination</b>
Policy BR 1.1	<p>Protect Sensitive Biological Resources: Protect sensitive biological resources such as, wetlands, migratory species of the Pacific flyway, and wildlife movement corridors through:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Environmental review of proposed Development applications, including consideration of cumulative impacts;</li> <li>2. Participation in comprehensive habitat management programs with other local and resource agencies; and,</li> <li>3. Acquisition and management of open space lands that provide for permanent protection of important natural habitats.</li> </ol>	The County has prepared an EIR for the proposed project and a number of mitigation measures have been recommended to minimize impacts to sensitive biological resources.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 1.10	Identify and Protect Ecologically Sensitive Areas: Protect and enable management of ecologically sensitive areas to the maximum extent feasible.	The Applicant has provided studies that address ecologically sensitive areas within the project area. In addition, mitigation measures have been identified in the EIR to further reduce impacts.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 1.12	Development Impacts to Corridors: Ensure that important corridors for wildlife movement and dispersal are protected as a condition of discretionary permits. Provide linkages and corridors as needed to connect sensitive habitat areas such as woodlands, forests, and wetlands.	The proposed location and small footprint of the proposed project would not impact landscape-level wildlife movement corridors.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 1.15	Restrict Disturbance in Sensitive Habitat During Nesting Season: Avoid impacts to sensitive riparian corridors, wetlands, and coastal areas to protect bird-nesting activities.	Measures have been identified for the protection of raptors and other sensitive bird species during the nesting season. Mitigation for impacts to wetlands has been identified in the EIR to off-set impacts.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 2.1	Coordinate with Trustee Agencies: The County will consult with trustee and other relevant state and federal agencies during environmental review when special-status species, sensitive natural communities, marine resources, or wetlands may be affected.	All regulatory agencies with jurisdictional authority over the project have been, and will continue to be, provided with the opportunity to comment on the project throughout the environmental review process.	Potentially Consistent

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-1 (CONTINUED)  
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Policy Statement</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Preliminary Determination</b>
Policy BR 2.2	Promote Early Consultation with Other Agencies: Require applicants to consult with all agencies with review and/or permit authority for projects in areas supporting wetlands and special-status species at the earliest opportunity.	Since submittal of the project's Conditional Use Permit (CUP) application package, the County has encouraged the Applicant's early consultation with all regulatory agencies that have jurisdictional authority over the project.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 2.6	Development Impacts to Listed Species: Ensure that potential adverse impacts to threatened, rare, and endangered species from development are avoided or minimized through project siting and design. Ensure that proposed development avoids significant disturbance of sensitive natural plant communities that contain special-status plant species or provide critical habitat to special-status animal species. When avoidance is not feasible, require no net loss of sensitive natural plant communities and critical habitat areas.	The project preserves 69 acres of open space, to permanently protect sensitive species (Mitigation BIO-1).	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 2.9	Promote Use of Native Plant Species: Landscaping for proposed development will use a variety of native or compatible non-native, non-invasive plant species as part of project landscaping to improve wildlife habitat values.	Implementation of the project would include post-construction landscaping using native plant species.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 3.2	Protection of Native Trees in New Development: Require proposed discretionary development and land divisions to avoid damage to native trees (e.g., Monterey Pines, oaks) through setbacks, clustering or other appropriate measures. When avoidance is not feasible, require mitigation measures.	The project preserves 69 acres of open space, to permanently protect sensitive Oak woodland (Mitigation BIO-1), and the project has been designed to retain as many trees as possible.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 3.3	Maintain and improve oak woodland habitat to provide for slope stabilization, soil protection, species diversity, and wildlife habitat.	The project preserves 69 acres of open space, to permanently protect sensitive Oak woodland (Mitigation BIO-1).	Potentially Consistent

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-1 (CONTINUED)  
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<b>Source</b>	<b>Policy Statement</b>	<b>Discussion</b>	<b>Preliminary Determination</b>
Policy BR 4.1	Protect streams and riparian vegetation to preserve water quality and flood control functions and associated fish and wildlife habitat.	The project would affect stream and riparian habitat as part of the construction activities. The EIR has identified mitigation measures to compensate for impacts to the streams and riparian habitat. Also, other agency approvals/permits would be required, and the stipulations of these approvals would further protect stream and riparian habitat.	Potentially Inconsistent
Policy BR 4.2	Minimize the impacts of public and private development on streams and associated riparian vegetation due to construction, grading, resource extraction, and development near streams.		
Policy BR 4.5	Encourage Stream Preservation on Private Lands: Encourage private landowners to protect and preserve stream corridors in their natural state and to restore stream corridors that have been degraded.		
Policy BR 4.3	Alluvial Well Extractions: Require discretionary projects that depend on alluvial well extractions and stream diversion to monitor the long-term effects on surface streamflow and riparian vegetation. Identify and implement contingencies for maintaining streamflow (e.g., minimum bypass flows, alternate water sources, decreased pumping rates, groundwater discharge).	The anticipated water use associated with the proposed project and existing uses on the site is approximately 7 AFY. The lowest base flow in the Salinas River in the vicinity of the project site is approximately 800 AFY (see section 4.13 and Appendix F) therefore monitoring is not necessary.	Potentially Inconsistent
Policy BR 5.1	Protect Wetlands: Require development to avoid wetlands and provide upland buffers.	The EIR has considered the project's setting and potential impacts to wetlands and, as applicable, mitigation measures to reduce impacts to wetlands have been identified. The project would not result in the loss of wetland or the conversion of wetlands. A number of design features such as the use of containment berms for the pads would serve to protect wetlands.	Potentially Consistent
Policy BR 5.2	No Net Loss of Wetlands: Ensure that all public and private projects avoid impacts to wetlands if feasible. If avoidance is not feasible, ensure no net loss of wetlands, consistent with state and federal regulations and this Element.		
Policy BR 5.3	Wetland Conversion: Avoid the conversion of wetlands, including vernal pools, except where grazing may improve the health and function of those wetlands. Where grazing occurs in and around wetlands and vernal pools, encourage grazing management that improves the health and function of those wetlands.		

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-1 (CONTINUED)  
POLICY CONSISTENCY ANALYSIS – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Source	Policy Statement	Discussion	Preliminary Determination
Policy BR 5.4	Wetlands on Agricultural Lands: Support use of best management practices and proper range uses to minimize impacts to wetlands on agricultural lands.		

The CNDDDB and CNPS Electronic Inventory search indicate the presence of additional plant species not observed during the 2009 surveys, that have been reported in the Santa Margarita and adjacent quadrangles, or that may potentially occur in the habitat present at the site. The following plants were not observed by LFR or Terra-Verde at the site but are known to occur in the general region. These plants are discussed in greater detail in Table 4.5-4. Species include: Caper-leaved Tropicocarpum (*Tropicocarpum capparideum*), San Luis Obispo Owl’s clover (*Castilleja densiflora* subsp. *obispoensis*), Cambria Morning Glory (*Calystegia subacaulis* subsp. *episcopalis*), San Luis Obispo County Lupine (*Lupinus ludovicianus*), Michael’s Rein Orchid (*Piperia michaelii*), and Paso Robles Navarretia (*Navarretia jaredii*). All sensitive species observed at the site or which have been reported from the area using the CNDDDB and CNPS Electronic Inventory search are included in Table 4.5-4.

**Descriptions of Sensitive Plant Species**

The following descriptions identify the sensitive plant species observed within the surveyed portion of the site. Information on these plants was supplemented by CalFlora (2012). Locations for those species found by LFR and Terra-Verde are included in Figure 4.5-2, “Locations of Sensitive Species within Quarry Area.”

**Shining Navarretia (*Navarretia nigelliformis* subsp. *radians*)**. Shining navarretia is categorized as CNPS 1B.2, a plant of limited distribution that is fairly threatened in California. It is found in heavy soils in grasslands, woodlands, chaparral, and vernal pools in interior portions of central California from Merced County south to San Luis Obispo County. In San Luis Obispo County, shining navarretia occurs near the Salinas River from San Miguel to Templeton and Santa Margarita, east to Cholame. Shining navarretia is reportedly threatened by grazing, development, and competition from non-native plants. It is endemic to interior portions of central California from Merced County south to San Luis Obispo County (Fresno, Merced, San Benito, Monterey, and San Luis Obispo Counties).

Occasional individuals of shining navarretia were observed in the northwest portion of the site, both in openings in the chaparral and in roadways.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-2  
SUMMARY OF STATE AND FEDERAL  
REQUIREMENTS – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Administering Agency</b>	<b>Applicability</b>
<b>State</b>		
California Endangered Species Act of 1984, Fish and Game Code, §2050 through §2098	California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)	Protects California’s endangered and threatened plant and animal species.
Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR) §§670.2 and 670.5	CDFG	Lists plant and animals of California declared to be threatened or endangered.
Fish and Game Code Fully Protected Species §3511: Fully Protected Birds §4700: Fully Protected Mammals §5050: Fully Protected Reptiles and Amphibians §5515: Fully Protected Fishes	CDFG	Prohibits the taking of listed plants and animals that are Fully Protected in California.
Fish and Game Code, §1930, Significant Natural Areas	CDFG	Identifies and protects Significant Natural Areas of California.
Fish and Game Code, §1580, Designated Ecological Reserves	CDFG	Identifies Designated Ecological Reserves of California.
Fish and Game Code, §1600, Streambed Alteration Agreement	CDFG	Reviews projects for impacts on waterways, including impacts to vegetation and wildlife from sediment, diversions, and other disturbances.
Native Plant Protection Act of 1977, Fish and Game Code, §1900 <i>et seq.</i>	CDFG	Designates state rare and endangered plants and provides specific protection measures for identified populations.
CDFG Policies and Guidelines, Wetlands Resources Policy	CDFG	Provides for the protection, preservation, restoration, enhancement, and expansion of wetland habitats in California, including vernal pools.
Public Resources Code, §§25500 and 25527	CDFG, USFWS	Prohibits siting of facilities in certain areas of critical concern for biological resource, such as ecological preserves, refuges, etc.
Public Resources Code, §§21083.4	CDFG, and local government as appropriate	Conversion of Oak Woodlands.
Title 20 CCR §§1702 (q) and (v)	CDFG, USFWS	Protects “areas of critical concern” and “species of special concern” identified by local, state, or federal resource agencies within the project area, including the California Native Plant Society.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-2 (CONTINUED)  
SUMMARY OF STATE AND FEDERAL  
REQUIREMENTS – BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Administering Agency</b>	<b>Applicability</b>
Title 14 CCR Section 15000 <i>et seq.</i>	CDFG, USFWS	Describes the types and extent of information required to evaluate the effects of a proposed project on the biological resources of a project site.
<b>Federal</b>		
Endangered Species Act of 1973 and implementing regulations, Title 16 United States Code (USC) §1531 <i>et seq.</i> (16 USC 1531 <i>et seq.</i> ), Title 50 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §17.1 <i>et seq.</i> (50 CFR 17.1 <i>et seq.</i> )	U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and National Marine Fisheries Service	Designates and protects federally threatened and endangered plant and animals and their critical habitat.
Section 7 of Fish and Wildlife Coordinating Act, 16 USC 742 <i>et seq.</i> , 16 USC 1531 <i>et seq.</i> , and 50 CFR 17.	USFWS	Requires consultation if any project facilities could jeopardize the continued existence of an endangered species. Applicability depends on federal jurisdiction over some aspect of the project.
Section 10(a)(1)(A) of the ESA	USFWS	Requires a permit to “take” threatened or endangered species during lawful project activities. If there is no federal nexus for the project, a Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) may be required.
Section 404 of the Clean Water Act of 1977 (33 USC 1251 <i>et seq.</i> , 33 CFR §§ 320 and 323)	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)	Gives USACE authority to regulate discharge of dredge or fill material into Waters of the U.S. including wetlands.
Section 401 of the Clean Water Act of 1977	Regional Water Control Board	Requires applicant to conduct water quality impact analysis for the project when using 404 permits and for discharge to waterways.
Migratory Bird Treaty Act 16 USC §§703-711	USFWS	Prohibits the non-permitted “take” of native migratory birds, their nests, or eggs.

**La Panza Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus simulans*)**. La Panza lily is categorized as CNPS 1B.3, a plant of limited distribution in California. It is endemic to central San Luis Obispo County and usually is found in granitic sands in grassland, chaparral, woodland, and lower montane coniferous forest habitats, although it has been found growing on sandstone at Indian Knob, Carpenter Canyon, Canyon Number 1 (CNDDDB 2012), and immediately south of the project site. Its localized range extends from Tassajara Creek and the Atascadero region southwards to Trout Creek by the Huasna River. San Luis mariposa lily is threatened

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

**TABLE 4.5-3  
OPEN SPACES AND RESERVES WITH SENSITIVE  
PLANT RESOURCES NEAR PROJECT SITE**

<b>Open Space/Reserves</b>	<b>Distance from Site</b>	<b>Sensitive Plant Species</b>
Cuesta Ridge Botanical Area	6 miles southwest	<i>Sidalcea hickmanii</i> subsp. <i>anomala</i> , <i>Arctostaphylos obispoensis</i> , <i>Calochortus obispoensis</i> , <i>Chorizanthe breweri</i> , <i>Cirsium fontinale obispoense</i> , <i>Fritillaria viridea</i> , and <i>Mondardella palmeri</i>
Rinconada Mine Botanical Area	8 miles southeast	<i>Mondardella palmeri</i>
Wilson Corner Area and Shell Creek Area	12 miles east	Diverse native herbaceous plant species

by grazing, recreation, road construction, and mining. It is endemic to central San Luis Obispo County and a small portion of northern Santa Barbara County.

Isolated individuals of La Panza mariposa lily were observed by LFR in a three locations growing in openings in chaparral vegetation. This species is difficult to find and may be present elsewhere on-site.

**Straight-awned Spineflower (*Chorizanthe rectispina*)**. Straight-awned spineflower is categorized as CNPS 1B.3, a plant of limited distribution in California. It occurs in openings in coastal scrub, chaparral, and woodland vegetation in southern Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties; reports from Santa Barbara County are erroneous (Dieter Wilken, personal communication). It occurs on granite, sand, and shale substrates. It is threatened by grazing, development, competition with non-native species, and mining. It is endemic to southern Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties.

A few individuals of straight-awned spineflower were observed by LFR in two locations growing in openings in chaparral vegetation. This species is difficult to find and may be present elsewhere on-site.

**Brewer’s Red Maids (*Calandrinia breweri*)**. Brewer’s red maids are categorized as CNPS 4.2, a plant with a limited distribution that is fairly threatened in California. It is threatened by development, fire suppression, and grazing activities.

Occasional individuals of Brewer’s red maids were observed by LFR along the southern ridge road that bisects the central portion of the site. It may be present elsewhere as well. As a fire-following annual, there may be considerable seed in the seed bank throughout the site.

**Trumpet-throated Gilia (*Gilia tenuiflora* subsp. *amplifaucalis*)**. Trumpet-throated gilia is categorized as CNPS 4.3, a plant with a limited distribution that is not very endangered in

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Acanthomintha obovata</i> subsp. <i>cordata</i>	Heart-leaved thorn-mint	+/+4.2	Chaparral, woodlands, grassland; bloom Apr – July	Not observed, suitable habitat present.
<i>Acanthomintha obovata</i> subsp. <i>obovata</i>	San Benito thorn-mint	+/+4.2	Chaparral, grassland; often on serpentine; bloom Apr – July	Not observed, suitable habitat present, but no serpentine soils present.
<i>Agrostis hooveri</i>	Hoover's bent grass	+/+1B.2	Central maritime chaparral, woodlands, grasslands; bloom Apr – July	Not observed. Suitable woodlands and grasslands present. Endemic to Central Coast (Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties).
<i>Amsinckia douglasiana</i>	Douglas' fiddleneck	+/+4.2	Grassland, woodland; bloom Mar – May	Not observed, suitable habitat present.
<i>Androsace elongata</i> subsp. <i>acuta</i>	California androsace	+/+4.2	Coastal scrub, chaparral, woodlands; bloom Mar – June	Not observed, suitable habitat present.
<i>Arctostaphylos cruzensis</i>	Arroyo de la Cruz manzanita	+/+1B.1	Chaparral, coastal scrub, grassland, closed cone conifer forests, woodlands and forests; bloom Dec – Mar	Not observed; suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, or woodland habitat with sandy soils present, however, this species generally grows closer to coast north of Los Osos. Endemic to the Central Coast (San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties).
<i>A. hooveri</i>	Hoover's manzanita	+/+4.3	Chaparral, woodlands, closed-cone coniferous forests; bloom Apr – July	Not observed; suitable chaparral habitat present, but found primarily in Santa Lucia Range west of Salinas River. Endemic to Monterey and San Luis Obispo County.
<i>A. luciana</i>	Santa Lucia manzanita	+/+1B.2	Chaparral, woodlands; bloom Feb – Mar	Not observed; suitable habitat present; usually observed closer to Cuesta Grade, Lopez Canyon. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County. Observed at Santa Margarita Ranch.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>A. morroensis</i>	Morro manzanita	--/1B.2	Central maritime chaparral, scrub, woodlands with sandy soils; bloom Dec – Mar	Not observed; suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, or woodland habitat with sandy soils present, however, this species generally grows near Morro Bay. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>A. obispoensis</i>	San Luis Obispo manzanita	--/4.3	Chaparral, woodlands, closed-cone coniferous forests; bloom Feb – June	Not observed; suitable chaparral habitat present, but found primarily in Santa Lucia Range west of Salinas River. Endemic to Monterey and San Luis Obispo County.
<i>A. pechoensis</i>	Pecho manzanita	--/1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, closed cone conifer forests; bloom Nov – Mar	Not observed; suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, or woodland habitat present; known only from Pecho Hills area. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>A. pilosula</i>	Santa Margarita manzanita	--/1B.2	Chaparral, closed cone conifer forests, woodlands and forests; bloom Dec – Mar	Not observed; suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, or woodland habitat present; known from La Panza Range. Endemic to the Central Coast (San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties).
<i>Astragalus didymocarpus</i> var. <i>milesianus</i>	Mile's milk-vetch	--/1B.2	Coastal scrub, often on serpentine clay soils; bloom Dec – June	Not observed; suitable coastal scrub habitat with clay soils present. Endemic to Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties.
<b><i>Calandrinia breweri</i></b>	<b>Brewer's red maids</b>	<b>--/4.2</b>	<b>Coastal scrub and chaparral, often after fires and in openings</b>	<b>Present in openings in chaparral.</b>
<i>California (Erodium) macrophylla</i>	Round-leaved filaree	--/1B.1	Cismontane woodland, grassland in clay soils; bloom Mar – May	Not observed; suitable woodlands and grasslands present.
<i>Calochortus catalinae</i>	Catalina mariposa lily	--/4.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, grassland; bloom Feb – May	Not observed; suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, woodlands, and grasslands present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Calochortus obispoensis</i>	San Luis mariposa lily	+/1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, grasslands, often on serpentine soils; bloom May – July	Not observed; suitable chaparral, coastal scrub, and grasslands present. Known from southern Santa Lucia Range, San Luis Range, and Indian Knob. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>Calochortus palmeri</i> subsp. <i>palmeri</i>	Palmer's mariposa lily	+/1B.2	Chaparral, forests, meadows, seeps; bloom May – July	Not observed; suitable chaparral, meadows, and seeps present. Known from La Panza Range. Endemic to central California (San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara, Kern, Ventura, Los Angeles, San Bernardino, and Riverside Counties).
<i>Calochortus simulans</i>	La Panza mariposa lily, San Luis Obispo mariposa lily	+/1B.3	Chaparral, coastal scrub, woodlands, lower montane coniferous forests, often on granitic soils, sometimes serpentine soils; bloom Apr – May	<b>Present in openings in chaparral.</b>
<i>Calycadenia villosa</i>	Dwarf calycadenia	+/1B.1	Chaparral, cismontane woodlands, meadows and seeps, grassland in rocky, fine soils; bloom May – Oct	Not observed; suitable chaparral, woodland, and grassland habitat present. Reported from La Panza Range. Endemic to Central Coast (Santa Barbara, San Luis Obispo, and Monterey Counties).
<i>Calystegia subcaulis</i> subsp. <i>episcopalis</i>	Cambria morning-glory	+/1B.2	Chaparral, woodlands; bloom Apr – May	Not observed; suitable chaparral and woodland habitat present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>Camissonia hardhamiae</i>	Hardham's suncups (Hardham's evening-primrose)	+/1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland in sandy, decomposed carbonate soil, disturbed or burned areas; bloom Apr – May	<b>Not identified. Suitable chaparral and woodland habitat present. Reported from Calf Canyon and Highway 58. Endemic to Central Coast (Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties). Very likely on property.</b>

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Carex obispoensis</i>	San Luis Obispo sedge	--/1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, closed cone conifer forests, coastal prairie and grasslands; bloom Apr – June	Not observed; suitable scrub, chaparral, and woodland habitat present, but no serpentine soils observed. Endemic to San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties.
<i>Castilleja densiflora</i> subsp. <i>obispoensis</i>	San Luis Obispo owl's-clover	--/1B.2	Grassland, meadows, and seeps; bloom Apr	Not observed; suitable grassland habitat present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>Caulanthus coulteri</i> var. <i>lemmonii</i>	Lemmon's jewelflower	--/1B.2	Pinyon and juniper woodland, grassland; bloom Mar – May	Not observed; suitable grassland habitat present.
<i>Centromadia parryi</i> subsp. <i>congdonii</i>	Congdon's tarplant	--/1B.2	Grasslands and wetland fringes, often in alkaline soils; bloom June – Nov	Not observed; potential grassland and wetland fringe habitat present; known primarily in low areas west of San Luis Obispo.
<i>Chlorogalum pomeridianum</i> var. <i>minus</i>	Dwarf scaproot	--/1B.2	Chaparral in serpentine soils; bloom May – Aug	Not observed; often found on serpentine; suitable habitat present although serpentine soils are absent. Known only west of Salinas River.
<i>Chorizanthe breweri</i>	Brewer's spineflower	--/1B.3	Chaparral, coastal scrub, grassland, closed cone conifer forests, woodlands in serpentine soils; bloom May – Aug	Not observed; often found on serpentine; suitable habitat present although serpentine soils are absent. Known only west of Salinas River.
<b><i>Chorizanthe rectispina</i></b>	<b>Straight-awned spineflower</b>	<b>--/1B.3</b>	<b>Chaparral, coastal scrub, woodlands; bloom May – July</b>	<b>Present in openings in chaparral.</b>
<i>Cirsium fontinale</i> var. <i>obispoense</i>	San Luis Obispo fountain [Chorro Creek bog] thistle	FE/CE/1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, woodlands, grasslands in serpentine seeps and drainages; bloom Feb – July	Not observed; suitable serpentine substrate absent. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>Cirsium loncholepis</i>	La Graciosa thistle	FE/CT/1B.1	Cismontane woodland, coastal dunes, coastal scrub, marshes and swamps, grassland in mesic, sandy soils; bloom May – Aug	Not observed; suitable wet areas in coastal habitats absent. Endemic to San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Deinandra increscens</i> subsp. <i>foliosa</i>	Leafy tarplant	+/1B.2	Grassland; bloom June – Sept	Not observed; suitable grassland habitat present. Endemic to Central Coast (Santa Barbara and San Luis Obispo Counties).
<i>Delphinium paryi</i> subsp. <i>blochmaniae</i>	Dune larkspur	+/1B.2	Coastal dunes, coastal scrub, central maritime chaparral; bloom Apr – May	Not observed; sandy soils in coastal scrub and coastal dunes absent; central maritime chaparral absent. Endemic to Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo Counties.
<i>Dudleya abramsii</i> subsp. <i>bettinae</i>	San Luis Obispo serpentine dudleya	+/1B.2	Chaparral, coastal scrub, grasslands, often on serpentine soils in bare rocky places; bloom May – July	Not observed; suitable habitat present although serpentine soils absent. Found primarily near coast and known only west of Salinas River. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>D. abramsii</i> subsp. <i>murina</i>	San Luis Obispo dudleya	+/1B.3	Chaparral, woodlands, rocky places; bloom Apr – June	Not observed; suitable chaparral or woodland habitat present, serpentine substrate absent. Known only west of Salinas River. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>D. blochmaniae</i> subsp. <i>blochmaniae</i>	Blochman's dudleya	+/1B.1	Chaparral, coastal scrub, grasslands, often on clay or serpentine soils in bare rocky places; bloom Apr – June	Not observed; suitable habitat present. Known only west of Salinas River.
<b><i>Eriastrum luteum</i></b>	<b>Yellow flowered eriastrum</b>	<b>+/1B.2</b>	<b>Broadleaf upland forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland in sandy or gravelly soil; bloom May – June</b>	<b>Not observed; suitable habitat present (LFR). Observed on-site by Terra-Verde.</b>
<i>Eriogonum nudum</i> var. <i>indictum</i>	Protruding buckwheat	+/4.2	Scrub, chaparral, woodlands; bloom May – Dec	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>hooveri</i>	Hoover's button celery	+/1B.1	Vernal pools; bloom July	Not observed. Known from Laguna Lake near San Luis Obispo.
<i>Fritillaria agrestis</i>	Stinkbells	+/4.2	Grasslands, coastal scrub, chaparral, woodlands, wetlands; bloom Mar – June	Not observed; suitable habitat present.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Fritillaria ojaiensis</i>	Ojai fritillary	+/1B.2	Broadleaf upland forest in mesic soils, chaparral, lower montane coniferous forest in rocky soil; bloom Mar – May	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Fritillaria viridea</i>	San Benito fritillary	+/1B.2	Chaparral, serpentine soils; bloom Mar – May	Not observed; chaparral habitat with serpentine substrate absent. Endemic to Central Coast (San Luis Obispo, Monterey, Fresno, San Benito Counties).
<b><i>Gilia tenuiflora</i> subsp. <i>amplifaucalis</i></b>	<b>Trumpet-throated gilia, greater yellowthroat gilia, spreading slender-flowered gilia</b>	<b>+/4.3</b>	<b>Grasslands, coastal scrub, chaparral, woodlands; bloom Mar – Apr</b>	<b>Present in openings in chaparral.</b>
<i>Grindelia hirsutula</i> var. <i>maritima</i>	San Francisco gumplant	+/1B.2	Coastal bluff scrub, coastal scrub, grassland in sandy or serpentine soils; bloom Aug – Sept	Not observed; suitable habitat present, serpentine soils absent, known from near coast.
<i>Horkelia cuneata</i> subsp. <i>puberula</i>	Mesa horkelia	+/1B.1	Chaparral, coastal scrub, and woodlands, especially in sandy or gravelly soils; bloom Feb – Sept	Not observed; suitable coastal scrub, maritime chaparral, and woodland habitat present.
<i>Layia heterotricha</i>	Pale-yellow layia	+/1B.1	Cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, pinyon and juniper woodland, grassland in alkaline or clay soils; bloom Mar – June	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Layia jonesii</i>	Jones' layia	+/1B.2	Chaparral, grasslands in clay or serpentine soils; bloom Mar – May	Not observed; suitable clay soils present, known only west of Salinas River.
<i>Lupinus ludovicianus</i>	San Luis Obispo County lupine	SOC+/1B.2	Chaparral, woodlands, grasslands in sandy or sandstone-derived soils; bloom Apr – July	Not observed; suitable habitat present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Malacothamnus niveus</i>	San Luis Obispo County bush-mallow	+/4.3	Chaparral, coastal scrub, and woodlands, especially in sandy or rocky soils; bloom May – July	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Malacothamnus palmeri</i> var. <i>involutus</i>	Carmel Valley bush-mallow	+/1B.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub; bloom May – Oct	Not observed; suitable habitat present. Reported from Cuesta Pass area. Endemic to San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties.
<i>Malacothamnus palmeri</i> var. <i>palmeri</i>	Palmer's bush-mallow	+/1B.2	Chaparral in rocky soils; bloom May – July	Not observed; suitable habitat present. Known only from Santa Lucia Mountains and west of Salinas River. Endemic to San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties.
<i>Monardella palmeri</i>	Palmer's monardella	+/1B.2	Chaparral, woodlands in serpentine soils; bloom May – Sept	Not observed; suitable chaparral or woodland habitat present, serpentine substrate absent. Endemic to Central Coast (San Luis Obispo and Monterey Counties).
<i>Navarretia fossalis</i>	Moran's navarretia	FT+/1B.1	Chenopod scrub, marsh and swamps, shallow freshwater, playas, vernal pools; bloom Apr – June	Not observed; suitable habitat mostly absent, although wet areas are present. Not listed for San Luis Obispo County in CNDDB.
<i>Navarretia jaredii</i>	Paso Robles navarretia	+/4.3	Cismontane woodlands, meadow and seeps, grassland, vernal pools in clay or serpentine soil; bloom Apr – July	Not observed; suitable habitat present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<b><i>Navarretia nigelliformis</i> subsp. <i>radians</i></b>	<b>Shining navarretia</b>	<b>+/1B.2</b>	<b>Cismontane woodlands, grassland, vernal pools; bloom May – July</b>	<b>Present in openings in chaparral.</b>
<i>Piperia michaelii</i>	Michael's rein orchid	+/4.2	Coastal bluff scrub, closed cone coniferous forest, chaparral, cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest; bloom Apr – Aug	Not observed; suitable habitat present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS</b>	<b>Habitat/Bloom Period</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Plagiobothrys uncinatus</i>	Hooked popcorn-flower	+/1B.2	Chaparral in sandy soils, cismontane woodland, grassland; bloom Apr – May	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Pseudognaphalium (Gnaphalium) leucocephalum</i>	White rabbit-tobacco	+/2.2	Chaparral, cismontane woodlands, coastal scrub, riparian woodland with sandy/gravelly soils; bloom (July) Aug – Nov (Dec)	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Sanicula maritima</i>	Adobe sanicle	-/CR/1B.1	Chaparral, coastal prairie, grasslands, seeps in clay and serpentine soils; bloom Feb – May	Not observed; potential chaparral and wetland/seep habitat present on-site, but serpentine soils absent. Known only west of Salinas River.
<i>Senecio aphanactis</i>	Rayless ragwort	+/2.2	Coastal scrub, chaparral, woodlands; bloom July – Apr	Not observed; potential suitable habitat present.
<i>Sidalcea hickmanii</i> subsp. <i>anomala</i>	Cuesta Pass checkerbloom	-/CR/1B.2	Chaparral, closed cone conifer forests in serpentine soils; bloom May – June	Not observed; suitable habitat of chaparral present, but closed-cone coniferous forest on serpentine substrate absent. Known only from Cuesta Pass area. Endemic to San Luis Obispo County.
<i>Streptanthus albidus</i> subsp. <i>peramoenus</i>	Most beautiful jewel-flower	+/1B.2	Chaparral, woodlands, grasslands in serpentine soils; bloom Apr – June	Not observed; suitable serpentine substrate absent.
<i>Symphotrichum defoliatum</i>	San Bernardino aster	+/1B.2	Cismontane woodland, coastal scrub, lower montane coniferous forest, meadows and seeps, marshes and swamps, vernal mesic grassland near ditches/streams/springs; bloom July – Nov	Not observed; suitable habitat present.
<i>Trifolium depauperatum</i> var. <i>hydrophilum</i>	Saline clover	+/1B.2	Marshes, vernal pools, moist grasslands, often in alkaline soil; bloom Apr – June	Not observed; suitable habitat present.

**TABLE 4.5-4 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE PLANT SPECIES FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

Name	Common Name	USFWS/ CDFG/CNPS	Habitat/Bloom Period	Occurrence of Element on Project Site
<i>Tropidocarpum capparideum</i>	Caper-fruited tropidocarpum	-/-/1B.1	Grasslands, often in alkaline soils; bloom Mar – Apr	Not observed; suitable grassland habitat present. Reported from Santa Margarita Ranch.

<sup>1</sup> Species shown in **bold** were identified on the Project site.

FE = Federally Endangered.

SOC = Species of Concern.

CE = State-listed, Endangered.

CT = State-listed, Threatened.

CR = State-listed, Rare.

CNPS = California Native Plant Society.

1B = Plants that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.

4 = A watch list of plants of limited distribution.

0.1 = Seriously endangered in California.

0.2 = Fairly endangered in California.

0.3 = Not very endangered in California.

## **DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

California. It occurs in grasslands and woodlands in Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties. It is threatened by development, fire suppression, and grazing activities.

A few individuals of trumpet-throated gilia were observed by LFR in openings in chaparral vegetation on-site. This species is difficult to find and may be present elsewhere on-site.

**Yellow Flowered Eriastrum (*Eriastrum luteum*)**. Yellow flowered eriastrum is categorized as CNPS 1B.2, a plant of limited distribution that is fairly threatened in California. It is an annual herb found on sandy or gravelly soils and dry slopes in chaparral, foothill woodland, and mixed evergreen forest in interior portions of the central coast of California from Monterey County to San Luis Obispo County. In San Luis Obispo County, yellow flowered eriastrum occurs in the northern portion of the county from the southern end of Lake Nacimiento to Santa Margarita and Atascadero east to Santa Margarita. It is reportedly threatened by development, and competition from non-native plants. It is endemic to Monterey County and San Luis Obispo County.

Several individuals of yellow flowered eriastrum were observed in the northern portion of the site, both in openings in the chaparral and in roadways.

**Hardham's Suncups (*Camissonia hardhamiae*)**. Hardham's suncups is categorized as CNPS 1B.2, a plant of limited distribution that is fairly threatened in California. It is an annual herb found in chaparral and woodlands that is endemic to Monterey and San Luis Obispo Counties with fewer than twenty known occurrences. It has been reported from Calf Canyon and Highway 58, and within the Project property boundary. Hardham's suncups is an annual member of the evening-primrose family (Onagraceae). This species is very difficult to distinguish from common suncups (*Camissonia micrantha*), which occurs within the Project, since the primary distinguishing feature is the shape of the pollen grains (four to five angled in Hardham's evening primrose) and requires a high-powered microscope. Hardham's suncups is threatened by residential development, energy development, grazing, recreation, road construction, and mining.

No known pollen samples were collected during assessment surveys, therefore it is assumed that any common suncups found throughout the Project Site may be Hardham's suncups.

### **Common Wildlife Species**

Common wildlife species are native animals that are not legally protected or classified as sensitive or rare at a local, state, or federal level. The location, size, and relatively undisturbed habitats of the site support a diverse suite of common wildlife species. Species that were observed, have the potential to occur on-site, or in the immediate vicinity are listed by LFR (2009, in Appendix B). Additional information concerning wildlife species seen during the LFR surveys is also included in the LFR report (2009).

## **DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

### **Sensitive Wildlife**

The site provides suitable habitat for several sensitive wildlife species; all sensitive wildlife with potential to occur, their status and location at the Project can be found below in Table 4.5-5. Information provided from the LFR report was updated and modified, as necessary, to provide the most up to date and accurate information (CDFG 2011 and CDFG 2012).

Wildlife surveys were conducted at different times of day and on different days between April and July 2009. Surveys relied on direct observation, audible calls, and signs (e.g., tracks, burrows, scat, nests, etc.). Some of the sensitive species listed in the CNDDDB for the Santa Margarita and surrounding quadrangles are not discussed or only briefly discussed below due to the lack of species-specific habitat requirements present on the site. Species such as the steelhead trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideusi*) and western yellow-billed cuckoo (*Coccyzus americanus occidentalis*) are examples of species whose habitat requirements are not met by the existing conditions on the site although potentially suitable habitat for both of these species is found in the nearby Salinas River.

Native birds and their active nests are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA). This includes all of the native birds observed on the site and listed in Table 4.5-5 with the exception of the European starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) because this species is not native to North America. Numerous species of native birds are expected to be found on-site throughout the course of the year though only a subset of these species and a small fraction of the total number of individuals will breed on-site. Birds of prey are also protected under the California Fish and Game Code (Section 3503.5) regardless of the legal status of the species. Several species may utilize the site for foraging, migration, and as a potential breeding territory.

The site offers suitable foraging habitat and potential roosting locations for bat species known to occur in the region. In particular, rock outcroppings on the site may provide potential roosting locations for bats. Several sensitive bat species including the Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) and western red bat (*Lasiurus blossevillii*) were documented in the surrounding quadrangles.

The following descriptions identify sensitive wildlife species reported from the Santa Margarita Quadrangle or neighboring quadrangles that are known to occur or potentially occur on the site.

**Western Spadefoot (*Spea hammondi*) – CSC.** The western spadefoot (toad) prefers habitat where the soil is sandy or gravelly, and vegetation is short and open. Typically, habitat types include grasslands, pine-oak woodlands, open chaparral, and scrubland. LFR found no aquatic habitat on the site suitable for breeding by the western spadefoot. Upland habitat on the site is considered marginally suitable for this species. The western spadefoot was not observed during LFR surveys.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-5  
SENSITIVE WILDLIFE FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

Name	Common Name	USFWS/ CDFG	Occurrence of Element on Project Site
<b>Invertebrates</b>			
<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>	Vernal pool fairy shrimp	FT/CSC	Unlikely to occur on the Site/No suitable vernal pool habitat present
<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Monarch butterfly	—/—	Species may occur intermittently on the Site/no winter roost locations known to occur on the Site
<i>Lindneriella occidentalis</i>	California fairy shrimp	—/—	Unlikely to occur on the Site/No suitable vernal pool habitat present
<i>Polyphylla nubila</i>	Atascadero June beetle	—/—	Not likely to occur on the Site/No suitable dune habitat present
<i>Trimerotropis occulens</i>	Lompoc grasshopper	—/—	Status and habitat requirement information limited for this species
<b>Fish</b>			
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i>	Steelhead trout	FT/CSC	No tributaries to the Salinas River occur on the site that are suitable for this species
<b>Amphibians</b>			
<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	California tiger salamander	FE/CSC	No suitable breeding pools present and upland habitat is poor for this species/species not likely to occur on-site
<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i>	California red-legged frog	FT/CSC	No suitable aquatic habitat and upland habitat poor for this species/species not likely to occur on-site
<i>Spea hammondi</i>	Western spadefoot toad	—/CSC	No suitable breeding pools present and upland habitat poor for this species/species not likely to occur on-site
<i>Taricha torosa torosa</i>	Coast Range newt	—/CSC	Tributaries of the Salinas River through the site may provide potential habitat for this species
<b>Reptiles</b>			
<i>Anniella pulchra</i>	Silvery legless lizard	—/CSC	No suitable coastal scrub or other habitat containing loose sandy soils present for this species
<i>Clemmys marmorata pallida</i>	Southwestern pond turtle	—/CSC	Marginally suitable upland habitat present/no perennial aquatic habitat present for this species

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

**TABLE 4.5-5 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE WILDLIFE FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

Name	Common Name	USFWS/ CDFG	Occurrence of Element on Project Site
<i>Phrynosoma coronatum</i>	Coast horned lizard	-/CSC	Present. Suitable chaparral and oak woodland habitat present for this species
<b>Birds</b>			
<i>Gymnogyps californianus</i>	California condor	FE/CE	Suitable foraging habitat present on the site for this species
<i>Aquila chrysaetos</i>	Golden eagle	-/FP	Species likely to occur intermittently on the site while foraging/not likely to nest on the site
<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	White-tailed kite	-/FP	Habitat present on the site may provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for this species
<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	Western yellow-billed cuckoo	Candidate/ CE	Potential willow riparian habitat occurs near the site along the Salinas River. Species not expected to occur on the Site
<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Western burrowing owl	BCC/CSC	Limited grassland habitat present for this species
<i>Calypte costae</i>	Costa's hummingbird	BCC/-	Chaparral on the site may provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for this species
<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker	BCC/-	Oak woodlands on the site may provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for this species
<i>Progne subis</i>	Purple martin	-/CSC	This migratory species may occur intermittently on the Site while foraging/nests in tree hollows which are likely to occur on-site
<i>Baeolophus inornatus</i>	Oak titmouse	BCC/-	Present. Oak woodlands on the site provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for this species
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	Grasshopper sparrow	-/CSC	Limited grassland habitat present for this species
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i> (nesting colony)	Tricolored blackbird	BCC/CSC	No suitable marsh or other aquatic habitat on-site for this species
<i>Carduelis lawrencei</i> (nesting)	Lawrence's goldfinch	BCC/-	Present. Habitat present on the site may provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for this species
<b>Mammals</b>			
<i>Antroxous pallidus</i>	Pallid bat	-/CSC	Suitable habitat present

**TABLE 4.5-5 (CONTINUED)  
SENSITIVE WILDLIFE FOUND IN AND AROUND THE PROJECT SITE<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Common Name</b>	<b>USFWS/ CDFG</b>	<b>Occurrence of Element on Project Site</b>
<i>Bassariscus astutus</i>	Ringtail cat	-/FP	Suitable habitat present
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's big-eared bat	-/CSC	Suitable habitat present
<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	Western mastiff bat	-/CSC	Suitable habitat present
<i>Lasiurus blossevillii</i>	Western red bat	-/CSC	Suitable habitat present
<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	American badger	-/CSC	Suitable chaparral and oak woodland habitat present for this species
<i>Vulpes macrotis mutica</i>	San Joaquin kit fox	FE/CT	Limited grassland habitat on the site for this species

<sup>1</sup> Species shown in **bold** were identified on the Project site.

FE = Federally Endangered.

FT = Federally Threatened.

BCC = Federal Bird of Conservation Concern.

CE = State-listed, Endangered.

CT = State-listed, Threatened.

CSC = California Species of Concern.

FP = California Fully Protected.

## DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

---

There is no suitable aquatic breeding habitat on the site and upland habitat on the site is considered to be only marginally suitable for this species.

**Coast Range Newt (*Taricha torosa*) – CSC.** The Coast Range newt is a terrestrial newt that summers in moist habitats under woody debris, or in rock crevices and animal burrows, but can sometimes be seen wandering overland in moist habitat or conditions any time of the year. The coast range newts breeds in ponds, reservoirs, and sluggish pools in streams usually beginning with the first heavy rains of December. The coast range newt was not observed during LFR surveys.

The main drainage corridor through the project site provides marginal habitat for the coast range newt.

**Western Pond Turtle (*Emys marmorata*) – CSC.** The western pond turtle inhabits permanent or nearly permanent bodies of water in a variety of habitat types. Western pond turtles are closely associated with perennial water bodies such as ponds, lakes, and streams. The main drainage through the site is an ephemeral system that is essentially dry throughout most of the year. However, southwestern pond turtles are known to travel away from perennial water bodies to lay their eggs and to hibernate.

The ephemeral drainage on the site provides marginal to poor habitat for the southwestern pond turtle and the species could potentially utilize the drainage for dispersal purposes though it does not connect to suitable areas and only leads from the Salinas River up into the hills. Potential for the southwestern pond turtle to occur on the site is considered low. Outside the proposed mining boundary, a pond has been created at the existing residence immediately adjacent to the Salinas River. The pond may present suitable habitat though the conditions and management of the pond are unknown.

**Coast Horned Lizard (*Phrynosoma blainvillii*) – CSC.** The coast horned lizard is found in a variety of habitats including grassland, oak woodland, and maritime chaparral. The coast horned lizard requires loose sandy soils, preferably in the presence of low shrubs that provide shade and cover from predators. Coast horned lizards adults and juveniles were observed at the site on several occasions by LFR and by Terra-Verde.

The site offers excellent habitat for this species and likely supports a large population.

**Silvery Legless Lizard (*Anniella pulchra pulchra*) – CSC.** The silvery legless lizard is a pencil sized fossorial species reaching a length of approximately seven inches (18 centimeters) and spending much of its time in underground burrows. The silvery legless lizard was not observed during LFR surveys. Chaparral and oak woodland habitat on the site provides limited sandy soil in association with low shrub cover.

## DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

---

The site has moderate to poor habitat for the silvery legless lizard. Potential for the silvery legless lizard to occur on the site is considered low to moderate in the well-developed soils on the south side of the site facing Highway 58.

**Golden Eagle (*Aquila chrysaetos*) – BCC, FP Species.** The golden eagle is a fairly common raptor preferring open country of foothills and mountainsides. Nests are typically built in tall trees as well as on cliffs and power line towers. Golden eagles are commonly observed in San Luis Obispo County.

The site presents suitable foraging habitat for the golden eagle; the species is not expected to nest on the site. Potential for the golden eagle to occur at the site on a consistent basis is considered low to moderate.

**White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) – FP Species.** The white-tailed kite depends upon relatively undisturbed oak woodland, grassland, and/or coastal sage scrub habitat for successful breeding. White-tailed kite habitat often has a stretch of riparian corridor in which to nest (particularly cottonwoods, but including eucalyptus, willows, and live oaks), and adjacent open fields in which to hunt. Habitat existing on the site is considered of sub-optimal suitability to support the white-tailed kite. The white-tailed kite was not observed on the site during LFR surveys.

Conditions existing at the site are considered to be only marginally suitable for this species. Potential for the white-tailed kite to utilize the site on a consistent basis is considered low.

**Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia hypugaea*) – BCC, CSC.** The burrowing owl inhabits open country of grasslands, prairies, and fields. It often uses the burrows of ground squirrels and other small mammal species for shelter and nesting. The burrowing owl was not observed during LFR surveys or in the spring time surveys by Terra-Verde.

The often steep terrain and dense chaparral habitat on the site is not conducive to the western burrowing owl. The site has relatively poor habitat suitability for this species. Potential for the western burrowing owl to occur on the site is considered low.

**Costa's Hummingbird (*Calypte costae*) – BCC.** Costa's Hummingbird is a fairly common summer visitor to southern California. Costa's Hummingbird favors desert and semi-desert, arid brushy foothills and chaparral, in migration and winter also in adjacent mountains and in open meadows and gardens. The Costa's Hummingbird was not observed during LFR surveys or the Terra-Verde surveys.

The chaparral habitat on the site presents suitable foraging and nesting habitat for the Costa's Hummingbird. Potential for the Costa's Hummingbird to occur at the site on a consistent basis is considered moderate.

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

**Nuttall's Woodpecker (*Picoides nuttallii*) – BCC.** Commonly found in arid to mesic woodlands, preferring oak woodlands, although they also occur in riparian sites and chaparral in the most southern parts of the range. The Nuttall's woodpecker was not observed during LFR surveys or the Terra-Verde surveys.

The oak woodland habitat on the site presents suitable foraging and nesting habitat for the Nuttall's woodpecker. Potential for the Nuttall's woodpecker to occur at the site on a consistent basis is considered moderate to high.

**Purple Martin (*Progne subis*) – CSC.** The purple martin is the largest swallow in California, with a wingspan of approximately 18 inches, pointed wings and narrowly forked tail. Purple martins are known to nest within a few miles of the project site. The CNDDDB reports 10 plus nesting purple martins along Trout Creek west of Pozo Road on Santa Margarita Ranch property in 2003.

The area of the property that would be developed as a quarry lacks a developed riparian tree corridor and is generally considered sub-optimal for use by purple martins for nesting due to the lack of tree density and overall size compared to trees in neighboring locations along the Salinas River and Trout Creek at the southwestern corner of the Oster property and farther to the west, respectively. The quarry site and surrounding lands could provide foraging habitat for the purple martin.

**Oak Titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*) – BCC.** The oak titmouse inhabits oak or oak-pine woodlands of the Pacific slope of California. It is one of the most common and characteristic birds of the oak woodlands in California. The oak titmouse was observed during LFR surveys.

Oak woodlands on the site provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for this species.

**Grasshopper Sparrow (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – CSC.** The grasshopper sparrow prefers areas with significant grass cover and a few scattered shrubs for perching. They don't use habitats with dense shrub cover. During migration and winter, they will use many types of open fields. The grasshopper sparrow was not observed during LFR surveys or the Terra-Verde surveys.

The habitat on the site presents limited foraging and nesting opportunities for this species. Potential for the grasshopper sparrow to occur at the site on a consistent basis is considered low.

**Tricolored Blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) – BCC, CSC.** The tricolored blackbird is endemic to California. It is found in freshwater marshy areas, farm and other ponds, where cattails,

## DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

---

tules, and rushes are present. The tricolored blackbird was not observed during LFR surveys or the Terra-Verde surveys.

There is a small pond located adjacent to the site on the existing residence parcel (to the west) that could provide suitable habitat for the tricolored blackbird. Potential for the tricolored blackbird to occur on the site is considered low.

**Lawrence's Goldfinch (*Carduelis lawrencei*) – BCC.** The Lawrence's goldfinch inhabits arid woodlands. It breeds from Northern California to Baja California in the Coast Ranges and the foothills of the Sierra Nevada. The Lawrence's goldfinch was observed during LFR surveys.

Oak woodlands and riparian areas on the site provide suitable nesting opportunities for this species.

**American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*) – CSC.** The American badger is found in open grassland, coastal scrub, chaparral, and oak woodland. No evidence of American badgers, badger activity, dens or mounds were observed during the surveys by LFR. American badgers are known to occur in San Luis Obispo County.

The site has marginally suitable habitat for the American badger. Small mammals at the site provide potential foraging opportunities for the badger. Potential for the American badger to occur on the site is considered moderate to good.

**Ringtail Cat (*Bassariscus astutus*) – FP Species.** Ringtail cats range includes the majority of California. Due to its secretive nature, population and distribution figures are difficult to obtain. However, occurrence records indicate ringtails are widely distributed in California and are believed to be a common to uncommon resident. Ringtails are found in various riparian habitats and in brush stands of most forest and shrub habitats from sea level to approximately 8,800 feet. Its principal habitat requirements seem to be den sites among boulders or in hollows of trees with sufficient food in the form of rodents and other small animals. Ringtails are usually not found more than one-half mile from permanent water.

This non-migratory species is nocturnal and active year-round. Foraging on the ground, among rocks or in trees near water, their diet is primarily carnivorous, mainly rodents (woodrats and mice) and rabbits. Ringtails tend to be seasonal foragers; in summer and fall their diet consists of mostly of insects, while birds, mammals and carrion are eaten in the spring and winter. They are also known to eat reptiles, eggs, fruits and nuts. Mating season is in late winter and a litter of three or four young are born in May or June. Dens and nests are located in hollow trees, logs, snags, cavities in talus and other rocky areas, or abandoned burrows or woodrat nests.

## **DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

Due to the mix of habitats and proximity to the Salinas River, the site has suitable habitat for the ringtail cat. Small mammals, birds, and fruit at the site provide potential foraging opportunities for the ringtail. Potential for the ringtail to occur on the site is considered moderate to good.

**Monarch Butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) – CNDDDB Sensitive Species.** The monarch butterfly does not have federal or state listing status, but is included as a sensitive species in the CNDDDB. These butterflies frequent grasslands, prairies, meadows, and wetlands, but avoid dense forests. In the winter, monarchs cluster together in large numbers in eucalyptus, cypress, and Monterey pine trees, often on the edge of open areas.

The site lacks suitable stands of eucalyptus, Monterey pine or other appropriate trees with canopies that provide typical roost site conditions for wintering monarch butterflies. Potential for a monarch butterfly roost to occur on the site is considered very low.

### **Threatened and Endangered Species**

No state or federally listed threatened or endangered plants or wildlife were observed at the site during the 2009 LFR or 2011 Terra-Verde surveys. The CNDDDB does not document any records for threatened or endangered plants or wildlife within one-mile of the site.

### **Threatened and Endangered Plants**

The following species are State or federally listed plant species reported from the Santa Margarita Quadrangle or neighboring quadrangles.

There are two federally endangered and one federally threatened plant species found near the Project site. The federally endangered, state-listed endangered San Luis Obispo fountain (Chorro Creek bog) thistle was not observed at the site, suitable habitat which includes serpentine substrate is absent. The federally endangered, state-listed threatened La Graciosa thistle was not observed at the site, and suitable wet coastal habitat is absent. Moran's navarretia, a federally threatened species was not observed at the site, and suitable habitat is mostly absent (vernal pools, marsh, swamps, freshwater playas), although wet ephemeral drainages are present which have limited potential to support this species.

There are two state-listed rare species known to occur near the Project with potential to occur on-site. Cuesta Pass checkerbloom was not observed at the site, but suitable chaparral habitat is present, although this species is only known to occur in the Cuesta Pass area. Adobe sanicle was not observed at the site, but suitable chaparral, wetland/seep habitats are present on-site.

**Threatened and Endangered Wildlife**

The species accounts below (as presented in the LFR report contained in Appendix B) represent state or federally listed wildlife species reported from the Santa Margarita Quadrangle or neighboring quadrangles that are known to occur or potentially occur on the site.

**San Joaquin Kit Fox (*Vulpes macrotis mutica*) – FE, CT.** The San Joaquin kit fox is the smallest member of the canid family in North America. This species occupies grasslands and scrublands often in association with agricultural lands, oil fields, irrigated pastures, orchards, vineyards, and grazed lands. They can also be found in oak woodland, alkali sink scrubland, and alkali meadow communities.

The CNDDDB indicates sightings of the San Joaquin kit fox in the Templeton Quadrangle and surrounding quadrangles. However, the predominantly chaparral habitat on the site is not suitable for this species. Kit fox dens or other potentially suitable burrows were not observed on the site by LFR or by Terra-Verde. The Kit Fox Habitat Evaluation Form for San Luis Obispo, Monterey and San Benito Counties was not required for this site because the site is outside of recognized kit fox habitat mitigation areas in San Luis Obispo County. The probability of San Joaquin kit fox occurring even occasionally on the site is considered very low.

**California Condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*) – FE, CE.** The California condor is the largest raptor in California with a wingspan of up to nine feet. Condors occur primarily in foothills and mountains at low and medium elevations, particularly in areas with canyons and other rocky areas with suitable cliffs for nesting and roosting. They mainly forage over grasslands and can cover great distances during daily activities.

The California condor was not observed on or over the site during LFR surveys or the Terra-Verde surveys. Conditions existing at the site are considered to be only marginally suitable for this species. Potential for the condor to utilize the site on a consistent basis is considered very low.

**Steelhead Trout (*Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus*) – FT, CSC.** The south-central California Coast steelhead evolutionarily significant unit (ESU) occupies rivers from the Pajaro River, Santa Cruz County to Point Conception (Santa Barbara County) in the south. Steelhead are anadromous fish that require unpolluted, cool, unobstructed conditions in coastal rivers and streams to complete their life cycle. The nearby Salinas River provides potential habitat for steelhead trout. The drainage on the site is part of the Salinas River watershed but is not conducive to steelhead trout mainly due to its ephemeral nature and a lack of sufficient surface water connectivity to the Salinas River.

## **DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

The central drainage on the site is not a documented steelhead creek and is not included as part of the designated critical habitat for the south central California Coast steelhead (ESU). The ephemeral drainage in the location of the site rarely conveys surface water and does not provide suitable habitat for steelhead. Suitable habitat for steelhead does not exist within the area that would be disturbed by the project' mining operations. The nearest potential habitat for steelhead is along the Salinas River which crosses the southwest corner of the Oster property, approximately 2,000 feet southwest of the proposed quarry.

**California Red-legged Frog (*Rana draytonii*) – FT, CSC.** The California red-legged frog (CRLF) is a comparatively large frog, though not as big as the bullfrog, and measures up to 5.6 in. (13.1 cm) in length. The California red-legged frog's historical range extended from the vicinity of Point Reyes National Seashore, Marin County, California, coastally, and from the vicinity of Redding, Shasta County, California, inland, south to northwestern Baja California, Mexico (United States Fish and Wildlife Service [USFWS] 2000). The California red-legged frog reside in and around deep, cold, still or slow moving water of ponds, reservoirs, marshes, streams, and other typically permanent bodies of water, especially where cattails or other plants provide good cover (Stebbins 1985). Such habitat exists along portions of the Salinas River that crosses the southwest corner of the Oster property, and in the ranch pond and seasonal pools in Moreno Creek along the southern portion of the Oster property (assuming bullfrogs are not established at these locations). These areas are about 500 feet from the southern portion of the proposed quarry, and are separated from it by the house and ranch complex and SR 58. Within the quarry site itself only the Phase 2 main drainage, which flows westward into the Salinas River appears to have the potential to support CRLF. This drainage is about 1,600 feet from the nearest point of the Salinas River, and is separated from it by a ridgeline that rises approximately 300 feet above the river elevation. From the proposed quarry site, the main drainage flows approximately 1.5 miles westward to join the Salinas River inside the Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry property.

LFR investigated the main drainage through the quarry site on May 5, 2009. Part of the investigation was to assess the existing habitat suitability for CRLF. Two very small pools of water covering approximately one square foot and one half-inch in depth were found in the entire drainage during the survey. LFR determined that the characteristics of the drainage were insufficient to support CRLF mainly due to the lack of plunge pools and locations where surface water could collect in sufficient amounts to provide suitable depth and cover for CRLF. In the subsequent surveys by Terra-Verde, CRLF was also not found and the conditions in this main drainage on the quarry site were drier than reported during the LFR surveys. It should be noted that a formal USFWS protocol level survey for the CRLF has not been conducted. This procedure involved two steps: first a brief habitat assessment to determine the proximity of suitable habitat and the likelihood of presence, followed by more extensive surveys in habitat areas (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 2005). Because of the mobility of CRLF, the conclusions of a U.S. Fish and Wildlife protocol are good only for two years. Due to the relatively poor habitat potential of the main drainage within the proposed

## DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

---

quarry site, and the length of time between the initial LFR survey work and anticipated permitting and development of the project, not following the U.S. Fish and Wildlife protocol at the time of the initial survey was justified.

In summary, the California red-legged frog was not observed by LFR during routine wildlife surveys or by Terra-Verde in subsequent surveys. The central ephemeral drainage through the quarry site provides the only potential habitat in the area that will be disturbed by the project but does not provide sufficient plunge pools or other areas where water could collect in sufficient amounts and durations to provide suitable habitat for CRLF. Thus, the potential for CRLF to occur on the quarry site is low. The species is likely present along the Salinas River and Moreno Creek corridors, however, and it is capable of moving relatively large distances (over one mile) between suitable habitat areas.

**California Tiger Salamander (*Ambystoma californiense*) – FT, CT, CSC.** Information in this paragraph is adapted from the Federal Register: 65 FR 57242 (Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; final rule to List the Santa Barbara County distinct Population of the California Tiger Salamander as Endangered; Final rule) and from Western Reptiles and Amphibians (Stebbins 1985). The California tiger salamander inhabits grassland and open woodland areas, breeding in the still or slow-moving waters of vernal pools, reservoirs, and streams. Adults spend the majority of their time in burrows of ground squirrels and pocket gophers, emerging during the first significant rains of the wet season and possibly traveling as far as 1.2 miles (1.9 km) to reach breeding areas. There is one record in the CNDDDB for CTS found among the nine quadrangles queried for this report. The record is from 1939 and was reported occurring one mile north of San Luis Obispo. California tiger salamanders are considered extirpated from the location according to the CNDDDB. The upland habitat on the site (predominantly chaparral) is not considered conducive to CTS and there are no known CTS breeding ponds within 1.2 miles of the site (the distance recognized by USFWS as the maximum dispersal distance traveled by CTS away from a breeding site). Potential for CTS to occur on the site is very low.

### **4.5.4 Assessment Methodology**

A biological/botanical assessment was prepared (Sensitive Species and Habitat Survey for the Las Pilitas Rock Quarry, LFR, October 2009) which provides a detailed description of the site, the biological resources likely to be found in the project area, observations and surveys conducted to confirm the presence of any special status biological resources on the site, the possible impacts to these resources that could result from the proposed project and mitigation measures recommended to reduce impacts to less than significant levels. Additional botanical surveys of the project area were conducted by Terra-Verde on May 12 and July 1, 2011 and summarized the surveys in a letter report dated July 12, 2012.

## **DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

In the preparation of the EIR, the LFR biological/botanical assessment was peer reviewed by URS, an independent, third party, qualified biologist. The assessment was supplemented and updated with further industry research by URS as needed to provide a detailed biological impact assessment of the proposed project. The overall results of this impact assessment are presented in detail in LFR (2009), and summarized in Section 4.5.6, below.

The California Natural Diversity Database (CDFG 2012) was queried to determine all sensitive species within the Project Area. Figure 4.5-3, “CNDDDB Results within a 1 Mile Radius” shows all documented occurrences within the Project Area with a one-mile buffer to capture records that were near the site and ensure that potential occurrences of sensitive biological resources were included in evaluations of indirect impact. The one mile radius from the project site defines the cumulative study area for the biological resources.

Direct and indirect impacts were assessed for all biological resources. Direct impacts were defined as those impacts that would cause the removal of habitat or the demise of a plant or animal. Indirect impacts were defined as those impacts such as dust, noise and night lighting that would degrade a habitat or disturb plants or animals without causing mortality.

Due to the nature of the project almost all impacts associated with the project were considered permanent. Temporary impacts were defined as impacts to biological resources that were limited to less than 24 months in duration. For instance, if a laydown area was to be developed and then restored within 24 months, those impacts would be considered temporary. However, due to the nature of the on-going operations and the proximity of “reclaimed” lands associated with the proposed restoration plan, none of these restored areas would be fully functional habitat until the mining operations have been permanently concluded.

Impacts associated with operations were conservatively assumed to preclude any biological use of the Project site. For the duration of the mining operations, it was assumed that there would be no biological value associated with the Project Site. This conservative approach ensured that the impacts were not underestimated.

Significance criteria for biological resources was derived from general field surveys and focused botanical surveys, consultation with knowledgeable local biologists, the San Luis Obispo County Environmental Checklist, previous environmental impact assessments and from the CEQA Guidelines. Resources used for assessing project related impacts included aerial photographs, topographic maps, CNDDDB database, previous biological report findings, field survey results, scientific literature, and professionally accepted flora manuals and wildlife field guides.

#### **4.5.5 Significance Criteria**

With appropriate consideration of the significance criteria presented in Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, the County of San Luis Obispo has developed and adopted the following significance criteria to determine project effects for Biological Resources within San Luis Obispo County. Accordingly, the Las Pilitas Quarry project will have a significant impact if it will:

- a. Result in a loss of unique or special status species or their habitats; and/or
- b. Reduce the extent, diversity or quality of native or other important vegetation; and/or
- c. Impact wetland or riparian habitat; and/or
- d. Introduce barriers to movement of resident or migratory fish or wildlife species, or factors, which could hinder the normal activities of wildlife.

#### **4.5.6 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

The impacts to biological resources through the construction and operation of the proposed Quarry project are expected to affect the broad categories of: native habitats, sensitive habitats, and native plants and wildlife. Each of the four Significance Criteria presented in the County's Initial Study are described and analyzed in greater detail below, along with project effects and impacts, as well as proposed avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures.

The proposed surface mine will involve the grading of approximately 41 acres of presently undisturbed land within the project boundaries and the removal of all native vegetation on this acreage. Biological resources affected by these actions include: oak woodlands, vernal swales, rare plants and sensitive wildlife, and nesting birds. With permanent conservation of a larger area of land (69 acres) of equal or higher habitat value, combined with identified mitigation measures to avoid or minimize direct impacts to sensitive and other species, all impacts to biological resources would be reduced to a less than significant level. The impact analysis which follows is presented in the context of these resources.

#### **Effect on Rare Plants**

Development of the proposed quarry will remove approximately 41 acres of natural vegetation, most of which will be Chaparral vegetation with few sensitive plant species. No State or Federally threatened or endangered plant species are expected to be impacted by the development or operation of the proposed Project. Seven plant species considered sensitive or of local concern are known or expected to be within the disturbance area of the proposed project. These include: Shining Navarretia; La Panza Mariposa Lily; Straight-awned Spineflower; Brewer's Red Maids; Trumpet-throated Gilia; Yellow Flowered Eriastrum and Hardham's Suncups. Some of these individuals or populations will be physically removed

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

during construction and other individuals or populations will be adversely impacted by the operation of the mining activity. Populations of these species will also be preserved within the 69 acres of open space area designed within the project, which would include Chaparral habitat similar in quality to that removed by the project as well as other sensitive vegetation types. Because none of these species are listed as threatened or endangered by Federal or State agencies, the loss of some individuals caused by the project will be adequately mitigated by the preservation of suitable habitat and populations of these species in permanent open space.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<p><b>IMPACT BIO-1: Effect on rare plants.</b> The quarry project, through construction and/or ongoing quarry operations, will result in the loss of populations of seven plant species considered sensitive by the CNPS or of concern to San Luis Obispo County. This loss is considered a potential significant impact.</p>	<p><b>MM BIO-1: Effect on rare plants.</b> Prior to issuance of the Notice to Proceed for the quarry project, the applicant/quarry operator shall identify and permanently preserve 69 acres of habitat land on-site, consistent with the areas shown in Figure 4.5-1. To ensure this preservation, the applicant shall record an open space easement that protects the habitat in perpetuity. The open space easement shall be controlled by a qualified conservation organization approved by the County. Potential conservation organizations include but are not limited to: The Nature Conservancy, San Luis Obispo Land Conservancy, or Greenspace.</p>	<p>Less than significant</p>

**Effect on Wildlife Species**

No State or Federally threatened or endangered wildlife species are expected to be impacted by the development or operation of the proposed Project. Therefore, it will not be necessary to obtain any special take permits for any species from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Several animals considered California Species of Concern by the state Department of Fish and Wildlife are known or expected to be within the disturbance area of the proposed quarry. These include: Western spadefoot toad, silvery legless lizard, southwestern pond turtle, coast horned lizard, and American badger. In addition, three bird species considered Federal Birds of Conservation Concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are likely to be affected by the project. These are: Nuttall’s woodpecker, oak titmouse, and Lawrence’s goldfinch. Habitat for some of these species will be physically removed during construction and quarrying that will disturb 41 acres of Chaparral habitat and remove oak trees within the proposed quarry site. The loss of habitat and indirect effects related to night-lighting, noise, and increased activity are the primary indirect impacts to wildlife. Preservation within permanent open space of 69 acres of habitat similar to that which will be lost by the proposed project, including areas well-removed from quarry activities, will provide mitigation of these effects. Additional measures to reduce

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

effects to all bird species, including the sensitive ones listed above are discussed in BIO-4 below.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-2: Effect on Wildlife Species.</b> Habitat for several animals considered Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and Birds of Conservation Concern by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be directly removed or affected by the quarry project.	<b>MM BIO-2: Effect on Wildlife Species.</b> Mitigation BIO-1 serves as adequate mitigation for Impact BIO-2.	Less than significant

**Effect on Ringtail Cat**

Due to the mix of habitats and proximity to the Salinas River, the site has suitable habitat for the ringtail cat. This is a Fully Protected species under California law. Small mammals, birds and fruit at the site provide potential foraging opportunities for the ringtail cat, which may be present on the property year round. During the non-breeding season, the Ringtail Cat is mobile and can avoid vehicles and other equipment. The breeding season (March 1 through June 30) is the time when individuals would be most susceptible to harm. The clearing of vegetation and grading for the proposed quarry—particularly the removal of oak trees and vegetation along the main drainage of the quarry—could lead to disturbance of den sites and loss of individuals. This potential impact can be avoided through a combination of measures that preserve suitable habitat (MM BIO-1 above) within the property and additional steps to avoid harm to individuals.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-3: Effect on Ringtail Cat.</b> The quarry project, through construction and/or ongoing quarry operations, may adversely impact the ringtail cat, which is a California Fully Protected Species. Specifically, vegetation clearing during the ringtail cat breeding season (March 1 through June 30) has the potential to result in the mortality of ringtail cats, which would be a significant impact.	<b>MM BIO-3: Effect on Ringtail Cat.</b> If vegetation clearing will occur during the ringtail cat breeding season (March 1 through June 30), a qualified biologist will conduct focused searches for potential dens within areas that are proposed for clearing and grading. Any active dens will be protected with a suitable buffer based on location, and types of activity with the area as determined by the qualified biologist. Once the young have left the den or the breeding attempt has failed, as determined by a qualified biologist, normal vegetation clearing activities may resume.	Less than significant

**Effect on Birds**

Native birds are not likely to be directly impacted by the development of the quarry or operational activities, since they are mobile and can avoid vehicles and equipment. Their nests, however, are very vulnerable to disturbance and would be impacted by vegetation

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

clearing and grading during quarry activities. Native birds are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and California Department of Fish and Game Code Section 3513. Any avoidable loss of native bird nests would be considered a significant impact. This impact can be avoided or reduced through a combination of timing and the conduct of pre-construction surveys with restrictions on clearing and grading activities. Implementation of these measures will reduce the impact to a level below significance.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<p><b>IMPACT BIO-4: Effect on Birds.</b> The quarry project, through construction and/or ongoing quarry operations, may adversely impact native birds and their active nests, which are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act (MBTA), administered by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. Specifically, vegetation clearing during the bird breeding season (March 1 through June 30) has the potential to result in the mortality of eggs or nestlings of native birds.</p>	<p><b>MM BIO-4: Effect on Birds.</b> If vegetation clearing will occur during the bird breeding season (March 1 through June 30), a qualified biologist will conduct focused searches for nesting birds of the affected areas and adjacent areas within 200 feet of the affected areas, or to the property boundary if less than 200 feet and permission from the adjacent landowner cannot be obtained. All active native bird nests will be protected with a suitable buffer based on the species of bird, nest location, and types of activity with the area as determined by the qualified biologist. Once the young have fledged or the nest has failed, as determined by a qualified biologist, the nest will be removed and normal activities may resume.</p>	<p>Less than significant</p>

**Effect on Bats**

Several species of bats are found in the area and are considered Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. These include: Pallid bat, Townsend’s big-eared bat, Western mastiff bat, and Western red bat. Of these, the Pallid bat is the most likely, but the others could also be present. Suitable habitat for these species is within the proposed quarry area in the form of oak trees and rock outcroppings. The Quarry project, through construction and/or ongoing quarry operations, could adversely impact bats which may roost within exposed rock wall crevices or pockets. Surveys and avoidance measures can reduce the potential impacts to these species to a level below significance.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<p><b>IMPACT BIO-5: Effect on Bats.</b> The quarry project, through construction and/or ongoing quarry operations, may adversely impact the Pallid bat and its roost, or one of three other species all of which are California Species of Special Concern. Removal of trees or rocks with crevices or pockets where bats are roosting would be</p>	<p><b>MM BIO-5: Effect on Bats.</b> If bat roosts are identified within the quarry during active operations, a qualified biologist will work to displace the bats using passive techniques. If quarry operations are stopped for greater than 30 days, a qualified biologist will survey the quarry for bat roosts prior to restarting quarry operations. After three nights of</p>	<p>Less than significant</p>

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
considered a significant impact on these species.	relocation efforts or after the qualified biologist has determined that the area is clear of bats, quarry operations may resume.	

**Effect on California Red Legged Frog**

Based on the habitat review and survey results by LFR, and the lack of sightings by Tierra-Verde, it is unlikely that the project will directly impact CRLF habit through vegetation clearing, grading, and quarry activities. It is possible, however, that CRLF may move into the main drainage within the quarry site from nearby habitat along the Salinas River or Moreno Creek, particularly if rainfall is high. CRLF is listed as a federal threatened species, and is a Species of Special Concern with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Any loss of CRLF would be considered a significant impact. This impact can be avoided, however, through appropriate pre-construction surveys and conservation measures.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<p><b>IMPACT BIO-6: Effect on California Red Legged Frog (CRLF).</b> The project, through grading into the main drainage in Phase 2 of the quarry could impact creek or pond habitat used by CRLF – a species listed as threatened by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and as a Species of Special Concern by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Any impacts to CRLF would be considered significant.</p>	<p><b>MM BIO-6: Effect on California Red Legged Frog (CRLF).</b> Prior to authorization to proceed with Phase 2 of the quarry, or any preparatory work that would impact the main drainage located in the Phase 2 area, the quarry operator shall retain a qualified biologist to conduct a habitat assessment and/or protocol survey for CRLF in accordance with guidance published by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service current at the time. If CRLF is determined to be present, the quarry operator shall either modify the project design and implementation to avoid any take of the species, or obtain the appropriate permit or authorization from USFWS to allow any specified take of the species. Evidence of compliance with USFWS requirements shall be provided to the Department of Planning and Building prior to the issuance of a Notice to Proceed for Phase 2A of the quarry, or related clearing and grading work.</p>	Less than significant

**Effect on Oak Trees**

There are 50 oak trees within the boundaries of the proposed quarry with diameters in excess of 5 inches. Of these, approximately six oak trees near the entrance area would be preserved through project design and alignment of the proposed access road. The loss of the remaining 44 oak trees within the quarry site is considered a potentially significant impact. An additional number of oak trees will be preserved within the open space design of the project (see MM BIO-1). This proposed open space area will include Central Coast Live Oak

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

Woodland, Foothill Woodland, and Central Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest (described more in Impact BIO-9 below). A precise count of the number of trees that would be preserved within this area has not been done, but from a review of aerial photographs it is estimated that this area contains approximately 200 mature oak trees. The impact created by the loss of 44 oak trees within the proposed quarry will be mitigated by preservation of this relatively large number of additional trees within permanent open space. Such preservation of oak woodlands through the use of conservation easements is one of several acceptable oak woodlands mitigation alternatives measures identified by CEQA (PRC 21083.4(b)(1)). Other acceptable alternatives include planting and maintaining new oak trees, monetary contributions to the Oak Woodlands Conservation Fund, or other measures that may be developed by the County. For the proposed quarry project, however, the open space preservation which includes an area of undisturbed oak woodland is considered the most appropriate option.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-7: Effect on Oak Trees.</b> The Quarry project will have a potentially significant impact by the direct removal of 44 mature (i.e., greater than five inches in diameter at breast height) oak trees.	<b>MM BIO-7: Effect on Oak Trees.</b> Mitigation BIO-1 serves as adequate mitigation for Impact BIO-7, since the areas to be preserved in open space include approximately 200 mature oak trees in their associated habitats.	Less than significant

**Effect of Dust on Plants**

Dust tends to limit the amount of light which the vegetation is able to absorb, and can reduce the vegetation’s ability to uptake air. Dust caused by clearing and grading for the quarry project could impact nearby vegetation (both natural and agricultural vegetation) and cause a significant impact. This is a common effect associated with all major construction type projects, and is minimized through the application of dust control procedures. Typical procedures include paving all access drives and long-term use areas and using water as necessary on exposed earth surfaces or stockpiles to prevent visible dust plumes from leaving the project site. Implementation of fugitive dust control measures identified in MM AQ-1b will reduce potential impacts to a less than significant level.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-8: Effect of Dust on Plants.</b> The proposed quarry will generate dust which could impact the health and vigor of native vegetation.	<b>MM BIO-8: Effect of Dust on Plants.</b> Mitigation AQ-1b serves as adequate mitigation for Impact BIO-8.	Less than significant

**Effect on Vegetation and Habitat**

A total of 40.29 acres of vegetation and habitat is expected to be removed by the development of the proposed project. This area includes the outer perimeter of the quarry and

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

the access road from SR 58 and its graded slopes. This estimate of disturbance does not include improvement to the well on the Oster property and installation of water lines and a water tank to serve the project, since these will be mostly within existing ranch roads and disturbed areas. The final acreage tabulation may vary slightly as final grading and mining plans are prepared for the project. The majority of the quarry project site and area to be disturbed consists of Chaparral vegetation. The majority of the area to be preserved as open space is also Chaparral, but the proposed open space does include a higher proportion of oak woodland and other vegetation types considered sensitive by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. For this reason, even if there are minor variations in the final acreage tabulations for the project, the conclusion of this discussion is not expected to be affected. Of the 40.29 acres to be disturbed, 2.35 acres contains sensitive habitat. The area to be preserved as open space within the property consists of almost 69 acres, and includes 9.66 acres of sensitive habitat (which represents a 4 to 1 conservation to impact ration for sensitive habitat areas). Table 4.5-6 shows expected impacts to the various habitat types, along with the areas

**TABLE 4.5-6  
PROJECT-RELATED IMPACTS TO HABITATS,  
AND OPEN SPACE AREAS**

<b>Habitat Types</b>	<b>Impact Area (Acres)</b>	<b>Open Space Area (Acres)</b>
<b>Sensitive Habitats</b>		
Coast Live Oak Woodland	1.55	7.75
Foothill Woodland	0.0	0.63
Central Coast Live Oak Riparian Forest	0.55	0.83
Seasonally Flooded Vernal Swale	0.25	0.45
Subtotal Sensitive Habitats	2.35	9.66
<b>Non-sensitive Habitats</b>		
Chaparral	35.44	54.32
Diablan Sage Scrub	0.32	0.75
Diablan Sage Scrub (Disturbed Condition)	0.68	0.95
Annual Grassland	0.45	1.09
Roads and Cleared Vegetation	1.05	2.01
Other disturbed (paved road, residences)	0.04	0.00
Subtotal Non-sensitive Habitats	37.94	59.16
<b>Total all Habitats</b>	<b>40.29</b>	<b>68.82</b>

of similar habitat that would be preserved in open space as part of the project. The loss of natural vegetation is considered a potential significant impact, but it would be mitigated through preservation of a larger area containing a larger proportion of vegetation that

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

includes sensitive habitat. Therefore, impacts to vegetation including sensitive habitats, is a less than significant impact.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-9: Effects on Vegetation and Habitat.</b> The quarry project will result in a loss of <u>2.35</u> acres of sensitive habitat, within a total disturbance area of 40.29 acres. This habitat loss is considered a potential significant impact.	<b>MM BIO-9: Effects on Vegetation and Habitat.</b> Mitigation BIO-1 serves as adequate mitigation for Impact BIO-9. The area preserved as open space in Mitigation BIO-1 would include 9.66 acres of sensitive habitats within a total of 68.82 acres of permanent open space.	Less than significant

**Effect on Wetland or Riparian Habitat**

The impact to Seasonally Flooded Vernal Swale would occur with the development of the main portion of the proposed project (after Phase 1B). During 2009 habitat assessments, approximately 0.25 acre of a seasonal drainage was identified within the quarry boundary, and an area of 0.45 acre associated with the same drainage was mapped in the area proposed for conservation. The project design also includes three drainage detention basins, the largest of which would occupy about 0.75 acre and would discharge into this same drainage course. The final configuration of the project after reclamation would retain this basin feature connected to the preserved drainage, and the other two detention basins. The drainage appears to carry water following storm events and for a short period of time thereafter, but a formal delineation of the drainage has not been conducted due to the length of time necessary for the overall project approval process. For purposes of this analysis, it is assumed that the 0.25 acre drainage bottom identified as a seasonally flooded area will be considered a streambed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

The California Department of Fish and Wildlife will likely require Streambed Alteration Agreement associated with this grading and quarry activity in the drainage within the project. Since the project is designed to minimize loss of the drainage area and to preserve as much of its length as feasible, and can provide an additional larger area of wetland habitat in association with the detention basins, mitigation of the loss of the drainage habitat would be feasible. Therefore, the impact represented by the loss of 0.25 acre of potential streambed will be mitigated through preservation of habitat including 0.45 acre of similar streambed and its enhancement with additional wetland features in approximately 0.75 acre provided by the permanent detention basin. Depending on final design, the project is expected to provide a ratio of created:lost wetland habitat between 2:1 and 3:1.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-10: Effect on Wetland or Riparian Habitat.</b> The Quarry	<b>MM BIO-10: Effect on Wetland or Riparian Habitat.</b> The project design includes	Less than significant

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
project will adversely impact (remove) approximately 0.25 acre of Seasonally Flooded Vernal Swale, which may be wetland or riparian habitat.	preservation of approximately 0.45 acre of the drainage in question, plus the creation of a 0.75 acre detention basin adjacent to the preserved portion of the drainage, and other detention basins within the quarry site. Prior to County issuance of a Notice to Proceed to commence quarry activities, the quarry operator shall provide a copy of an approved California Department of Fish and Game Streambed Alteration Agreement or a written determination that such an agreement is not necessary.	

**Effect on Wildlife Movement**

On a local level, the Oster property provides continuous habitat along the Salinas River corridor for wildlife, and the quarry site within the property is part of the surrounding chaparral dominated hillsides. The primary drainage through the center of the quarry site functions as a localized movement corridor for wildlife species, as evidenced by small game trails observed along the drainage during the wildlife surveys. The dirt roads and fuel breaks are also used by mammals for movement, as evidenced by assorted scat observed during the 2009 LFR surveys.

On a regional landscape level, the development of the site would not impact movement of large mammals, migratory birds or other wildlife because large tracts of undeveloped land surround the proposed site on all sides. The rural residential uses bordering the Oster property to the southwest are very low density, and do not represent a major barrier to wildlife movement on a regional scale. The existing Hanson Quarry, located approximately a half-mile away on the west side of the Salinas River, has likely already habituated wildlife to mining activity or encouraged wildlife to move around the project vicinity. Therefore, locating these mining operations in proximity to one another and generally close to developed areas in the greater vicinity should reduce the regional landscape level impacts associated with mining activity. Development of a surface mine on the property has the potential to affect wildlife movement, but due to a combination of the project location (including the Salinas River corridor) and extent of open space proposed, along with the low potential for major development over the agricultural lands to the north and west, the potential effect is considered a less than significant impact.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-11: Effect on Wildlife Movement.</b> The Quarry project may potentially impact landscape level movement of large mammals, migratory birds or other wildlife.	<b>MM BIO-11: Effect on Wildlife Movement.</b> Since this effect is less than significant, no mitigation is required.	Less than significant

**DRAFT EIR OSTER/LAS PILITAS QUARRY  
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

---

**Cumulative Effects**

The project is about one-half mile distance from the existing Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry. Both quarries are within the EX1 (Extractive Resource) Combining Designation, as shown on Figure 3-1. In this region, the EX1 Combining Designation is placed over the La Panza Granitics, a large area that is classified as MRZ-2 by the California State Geological Survey (1989:9). Since this Combining Designation is specifically intended to protect mineral resources, it is reasonable to expect that future quarries will be approved and constructed in this area.

The loss of 40.29 acres of habitat from this region does not, by itself, constitute a cumulatively considerable biological impact, due to the quantity of surrounding habitat in the region surrounding the Project Site. The Project Applicant proposes the permanent preservation of 68.82 acres of undeveloped land on-site, as mitigation for the loss of Native Habitats. The on-going operations of Hanson Quarry within one-half mile of the proposed project do not require an increase in the amount of habitat being preserved within the Oster Quarry site.

Additionally, implementation of a phased reclamation plan upon completion of the quarry operations would restore and replace some of the habitat value and function that was lost during construction and operations of the facility. When the site ceases to be used as an active quarry, the area should have moderate value as a natural area.

In summary, a combination of factors will avoid cumulative significant biological impacts in this region. These include: a) the proposed incorporation of permanent open space within the Oster/Las Pilitas Quarry to mitigate biological impacts, b) the fact that impacts associated with expansion of the Hanson Santa Margarita Quarry will be subject to review and the implementation of mitigation measures, c) the fact that future quarries that may be proposed within the EX1 Combining Designation area will be subject to similar reviews and mitigation requirements, and d) the fact that most of the surrounding lands are in rural land use categories and have relatively steep slopes that will serve to limit the intensity of future development that could impact biological resources. For these reasons, cumulative effects on biological resources of this project in conjunction with foreseeable development are not expected to be significant.

Description of Impact	Mitigation Measure	Residual impact
<b>IMPACT BIO-12: Cumulative Effects Related to Biological Resources.</b> The loss of 40.29 acres of habitat from this project site may potentially constitute a cumulatively considerable biological impact in this region, in the context of surrounding habitat in the region surrounding the project site.	<b>MM BIO-12: Cumulative Effects Related to Biological Resources.</b> Since this effect is less than significant, no mitigation is required.	Less than significant