



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF PLANNING & BUILDING
TREVOR KEITH, DIRECTOR

Date: September 25, 2025
From: County of San Luis Obispo
Department of Planning & Building
976 Osos Street, Room 300, San Luis Obispo, CA 93408
To: Property Owners on "Los Osos Waitlist to Build"
Subject: Los Osos Allocation and Habitat Conservation Plan Update

Dear Property Owner:

The County of San Luis Obispo shares the urgency of Los Osos community members in getting homes built. The County worked with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to develop the Los Osos Habitat Conservation Plan (LOHCP), a balanced strategy to streamline the permitting process in Los Osos and to conserve and restore habitat for four (4) endangered or threatened species:

- Morro Bay kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys heermanni morroensis*)
- Morro shoulderband snail (*Helminthoglypta walkeriana*)
- Indian knob mountainbalm (*Eriodictyon altissimum*)
- Morro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos morroensis*)

The USFWS issued the County's federal Incidental Take Permit (ITP) in February 2024 (for a permit term of 25 years) and approved the LOHCP, which provides the following path:

1. The County would work with partner agencies and organizations, such as the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) and Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo, to accomplish habitat conservation and restoration measures;
2. The County would accrue mitigation credits (for incidental take coverage of the above species under the federal Endangered Species Act) that can be conferred to property owners and project applicants; and
3. Property owners and project applicants would agree to comply with the LOHCP and pay the mitigation fee to receive incidental take coverage of the above species from the County, as opposed to applying for a site-specific ITP through the USFWS.

In February 2025, the County sent a letter notifying property owners on the "Los Osos Waitlist to Build" that the County was working to accrue LOHCP mitigation credits for property owners to participate in the LOHCP and such mitigation credits were not anticipated to be available until Summer 2025 at the earliest.

In May 2025, the CA Fish and Game Commission determined Morro manzanita to be a candidate for listing as an endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act, which affords Morro manzanita the same legal protection as an endangered or threatened species. Since the County's ITP only provides federal coverage of Morro manzanita, the County would need an ITP from CDFW as well to provide the same coverage at the state level to Morro manzanita.

The County is working to harmonize coverage of Morro manzanita under the LOHCP by applying to CDFW to receive an ITP for State coverage, and as such, mitigation credits are not available at this time. As the County continues to work closely with CDFW, updates will be provided as they are available.

Additionally, on December 16, 2025, the County will conduct an annual review of the Growth Management Ordinance (GMO) allocation and consider a recommended Los Osos growth rate for 2026. Following the hearing, property owners on the "Los Osos Waitlist to Build" will be notified of the outcome, process, and any other related updates.

Further information about building permit submittal items related to the Retrofit-to-Build program, LOHCP mitigation credits, and previously issued letters to property owners can be found at: <https://www.slocounty.ca.gov/departments/planning-building/grid-items/communities-villages/los-osos>

Sincerely,

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