

APPENDIX C: BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

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April 19, 2018

Ms. Candice Assadzadeh, Senior Planner
Community & Economic Development Department
Planning Division
3900 Main Street, Third Floor
Riverside, California 92522

Subject: Results of Biological Resources Assessment on California Baptist University Campus, City of Riverside, California (LSA Project No. CTR1501)

Dear Ms. Assadzadeh:

This report documents the results of a biological resources assessment for currently proposed development on the California Baptist University (CBU) campus. The assessment includes a habitat suitability survey for western burrowing owls (*Athene cunicularia*) and an evaluation of the need for authorization from any regulatory agency to work in the detention basin. The survey areas were in currently vacant lots on the campus south of Magnolia Avenue (Figure 1; all figures attached). All other survey areas are developed and therefore do not present viable habitat for the burrowing owl.

METHODS

A focused survey for western burrowing owl habitat suitability and burrow survey was conducted on September 7, 2017, from 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. by LSA biologist Maria Lum. The purpose of the survey was to document the presence or absence of the burrowing owl under the current land use and existing vegetative cover in the university commencement field. The project site is within the Western Riverside County Multiple Species Habitat Conservation Plan (MSHCP). Refer to Figure 2 for a map of the MSHCP Species Survey Areas. The survey was conducted by walking 100-foot transects in the vacant open field. The habitat assessment and focused survey for burrows was conducted in accordance with the 2012 California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) survey protocol.¹ Surveys were conducted during weather conducive to observing owls outside their burrows and to detecting burrowing owl sign. No rain had occurred within five days prior to the site visits. The temperature was 93 °F with clear skies and no wind.

Also as part of the environment review process, the detention basin adjacent to the main campus entrance on Magnolia Avenue was surveyed to determine if there was potential for resources of concern to the CDFW and to determine if there was a nexus for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) jurisdiction under Federal Clean Water Act Section 404.

¹ State of California Natural Resources Agency Department of Fish and Game. 2012. Staff Report on Burrowing Owl Mitigation, dated March 7, 2012.

RESULTS

Burrowing Owl

The entire CBU Campus, including the portions within the MSHCP Species Survey Area for burrowing owls, do not contain suitable habitat for the species. No burrowing owls were observed. There was no owl sign at any of these locations due to numerous trees, limited open areas within and adjacent to the campus, regularly mowed and manicured lawns, and high pedestrian and vehicle traffic nearby. Figure 3 provides photographs of the vegetative cover in the field and the detention basin along Magnolia Avenue.

Detention Basin

The detention basin constructed on the campus in 2003 was built in upland area to receive runoff from the newly constructed parking lot. The land was not previously part of a natural streambed or drainage area. This is a local storm water management facility and not regulated by CDFW or USACE. The basin is maintained as part of the campus landscaping and not as wildlife habitat.

A few large trees are growing in the open field and would require an arborist report if any proposed construction or development would require their removal. There is the iconic Christmas tree next to Magnolia Avenue, which is an ornamental pine (*Pinus* sp.). In the southeast corner of the commencement field is a California live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), which is being preserved by CBU, along with another majestic pine and a ginkgo (*Ginkgo biloba*) tree. Refer to site photographs for images of the possible heritage trees, which, if disturbed, would require an arborist survey pursuant to the City of Riverside Tree Preservation policy.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Nesting Birds – In compliance with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and to protect nesting birds, vegetation removal and initial ground disturbance shall occur outside of the nesting bird season.

Heritage Trees - In compliance with the City of Riverside Tree Preservation policy, an arborist report evaluating heritage trees within the Magnolia Lawn shall be prepared and reviewed by the City prior to removal of such trees. The report shall comply with the provisions of the tree preservation policy including whether or not the affected trees can be salvaged.

DISCUSSION

No additional burrowing owl surveys are necessary at this time. The MSHCP Burrowing Owl Survey Guidelines, Section 6.3.2, indicate a pre-construction burrowing owl survey will not be required due to the lack of habitat within the campus grounds. Notification and authorization from the CDFW and USACE is not required for any future alteration to the detention basin.

Note, MSHCP focused species surveys reports are submitted to the Regional Conservation Association (RCA) Biological Monitoring Program in order to track up-to-date Covered Species occurrences and habitat conditions within the Plan Area.

Sincerely,

LSA ASSOCIATES, INC.

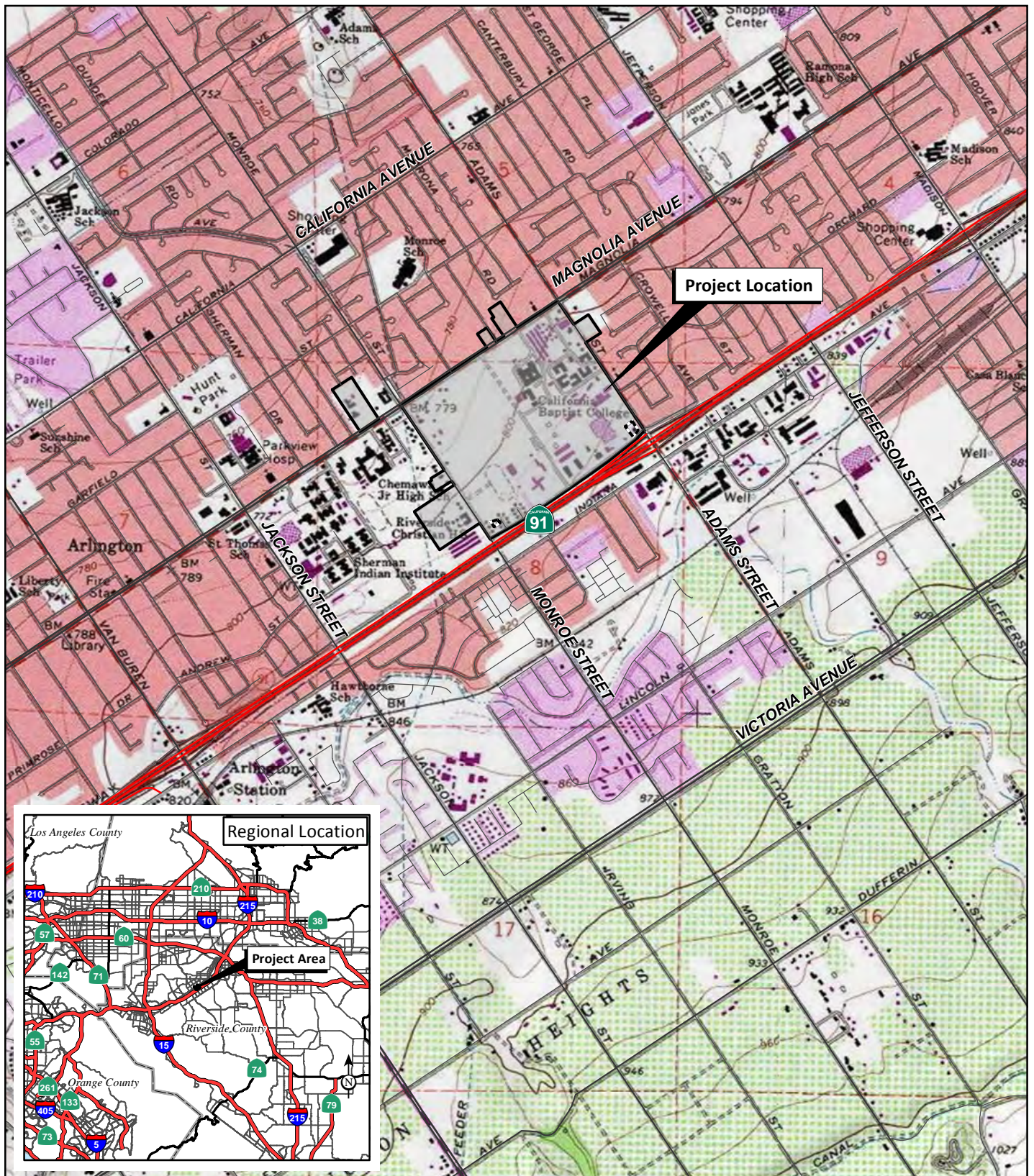


Maria A. Lum

Associate/Senior Biologist

Attachments: Figure 1: Regional and Project Location Map
Figure 2: MSHCP Survey Area
Figure 3: Site Photographs

cc. kriesz@biomonitoringrca.org



LSA

LEGEND

- CBUSP Planning Area
- Not A Part



0 1000 2000
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SOURCE: USGS 7.5' Quad: Riverside West (1980), CA; Riverside County, 2014

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FIGURE 1

California Baptist University
Biological Resources Assessment

Regional and Project Location



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LEGEND

- CBUSP Planning Area
- Not A Part
- Heritage Trees
- MSHCP Survey Area for Burrowing Owl



0 350 700
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SOURCE: Google, 2016.

FIGURE 2

*California Baptist University
Biological Resources Assessment*

MSHCP Survey Area



Stormwater detention basin receives runoff from parking lots.



The entire basin contains several infiltration drains.



The basin can flow into Magnolia storm drain system during large storm event.



The commencement field also drains into detention basin under campus main entrance.

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FIGURE 3

(Page 1 of 2)

California Baptist University
Biological Resources Assessment
Site Photos



The commencement field includes a native heritage California oak tree.



A large ornamental pine and ginkgo tree in northern end of commencement field.



The iconic CBU Christmas tree, an ornamental pine, is located in center of commencement field.



The commencement field is not suitable habitat for MSHCP species, western burrowing owl.

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