

BASELINE BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT and
EASEMENT DOCUMENTATION REPORT
VICTORINE RANCH PROPERTY

Monterey County, California



Image: Coastal Records Project

Prepared for:
California State Coastal Conservancy
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June 15, 2013

**BASELINE BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT REPORT
AND PROPERTY CONDITION CERTIFICATION**
(Victorine Ranch, Monterey County)

By executing this Certification, the undersigned accepts and acknowledges that the attached Baseline Biological Assessment has been prepared pursuant to the development of a Conservation Easement and that the conditions reported herein are an accurate representation of the biological and physical status of the property described, as of the date of the report.

THE CALIFORNIA STATE COASTAL CONSERVANCY
A California State Agency

By: _____
Name: _____
Title: _____
Date: _____

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PROPERTY PROFILE

DATE: June 15, 2013

PREPARED BY: Nicole Nedeff, Consulting Ecologist. nikki@ventanaview.net
11630 McCarthy Road, Carmel Valley, CA 93924. 831.659.4252

SITE NAME: Victorine Ranch, Monterey County

APN: 243-221-019, West Parcel, 25.28 acres
243-211-025, Middle Parcel, 11.4 acres
243-211-026, East Parcel, 63.3 acres

PHYSICAL ADDRESS: Abuts Highway 1, approximately 0.75 miles south of Malpas Creek

ACREAGE: Total acreage in property = 99.98 acres

USGS QUAD: Soberanes Point 7.5'. T17S, R1W, unsurveyed sections

OWNER: California State Coastal Conservancy, 1330 Broadway, Suite 1300, Oakland, CA 94612. Project Manager, Christopher Kroll, 510.286.4169

MONTEREY COUNTY PLANNING AREA: Big Sur

MONTEREY COUNTY ZONING and PRESENT LAND USE: WSC/40D (CZ) = Watershed and Scenic Conservation, with a maximum density of one lot per 40 acres and requiring design approval, within the Coastal Zone. The undeveloped Conservancy parcels are part of the Victorine Ranch subdivision in the Big Sur Land Use Plan Area. The parcels that comprise the State Coastal Conservancy property were previously a portion of a much larger, historic ranch that was used primarily as grazing land.

SITE LOCATION: The western margin of the Conservancy's Victorine property fronts Highway 1 approximately 0.75 miles south of Malpas Canyon. The property extends from the highway right-of-way across marine terraces and steep hillsides over the coast ridge to upper Malpas Canyon on the eastern boundary. The property is accessed from Highway 1 at a paved and gated private road, which serves as the entry to the Victorine Ranch subdivision. No legal access is available via Malpas Canyon. The subject property is bordered on the north by conserved Monterey County open space land, on the northwest by developed home sites, and on the south by Garrapata State Park. Slopes vary from nearly flat to extremely steep.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: The State Coastal Conservancy intends to market the subject property for sale and has developed a Conservation Easement to protect significant natural features and conserve potential future public access on the site. This report describes habitat and environmental conditions on the property and provides baseline environmental documentation for conservation and trail easement resources.

SITE VISITS: October 2010 through June 2013

HABITAT IN PRIMARY PROJECT AREA: Northern Coastal Scrub, Coastal Bluff Scrub, Coastal Prairie, Annual Grassland, Central Maritime Chaparral, Monterey Pine, Riparian, Wetland.

Malpaso Canyon supports Redwood Riparian habitat, however this portion of the property is outside the primary project area and not described in detail in the Baseline Biological Assessment.

SIGNIFICANT BIOLOGICAL ATTRIBUTES:

- √ Coastal Bluff Scrub
- √ Coastal Prairie
- √ Central Maritime Chaparral
- √ Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian
- √ Wetland
- √ Redwood Riparian (Malpaso Canyon)
- √ Seacliff buckwheat, *Eriogonum parvifolium*, host plant for Federally Endangered Smith's blue butterfly, *Euphilotes enoptes smithi*
- √ Potential habitat for the Federally Endangered Yadon's rein-orchid, *Piperia yadonii*
- √ California Rare Plant Rank* 1B plants observed:
 - Monterey pine, *Pinus radiata*
 - Hooker's manzanita, *Arctostaphylos hookeri*
 - Pine rose, *Rosa pinetorum*
- √ California Rare Plant Rank 4 plants observed:
 - Small-leaved lomatium, *Lomatium parvifolium*
 - Monterey Indian paintbrush, *Castilleja latifolia*
- √ Potential habitat for CNPS Rank 1B plants:
 - Seaside bird's beak, *Cordylanthus rigidus* ssp. *littoralis* (CA End.)
 - Compact cobwebby thistle, *Cirsium occidentale* var. *compactum*
 - Adobe sanicle, *Sanicula maritima* (CA Rare)
 - Hutchinson's larkspur, *Delphinium hutchinsoniae*
 - Jolon clarkia, *Clarkia jolonensis*
 - Pinnacles buckwheat, *Eriogonum nortonii*
 - Fragrant fritillary, *Fritillaria liliaceae*
 - California screw-moss, *Tortula californica*
- √ Foraging habitat for raptors observed: White-tailed Kite, Red-tailed Hawk, American Kestrel

* The California Rare Plant Ranking system developed by the California Native Plant Society is defined in Section 5.2.

California State Coastal Conservancy

Victorine Ranch

Baseline Biological Assessment

1. INTRODUCTION

The State Coastal Conservancy's (SCC) Victorine Ranch property is an undeveloped 99.98-acre remnant of an historic Central Coast rancho subdivided over the years into large residential lots. Located at the northwestern edge of the rugged Santa Lucia Range in Central California, the narrow SCC property is situated along the Big Sur coast near the Carmel Highlands approximately 0.75 miles south of Malpas Creek. The SCC land abuts Highway 1 on the west, Garrapata State Park on the south and conserved Monterey County open space lands on the north. The SCC property is adjacent to two private residential lots on the northwest side and also abuts private, undeveloped property on the northeast. The SCC land extends from coastal bluffs fronting Highway 1 across gentle marine terraces, then up over steep hill slopes and down into the middle reach of Malpas Canyon.

Vegetation on the SCC Victorine Ranch property occurs as a mosaic of coastal plant communities, some of which are considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas with protective policies under the Big Sur Local Coastal Program, Land Use Implementation Plan (please refer to Section 6 for a more detailed discussion of the Big Sur Land Use Plan). Coastal Bluff Scrub, Coastal Prairie, Central Maritime Chaparral, Riparian, Wetland, Redwood and Monterey Pine Forest natural communities are given special consideration in the Coastal Zone of California. These natural communities are considered rare and unique in the Big Sur region and generally these habitats support associated plants and wildlife species of concern. Although these special status habitats occur as a patchwork on the Victorine Ranch, much of the property is dominated by plant associations of Northern Coastal Scrub vegetation. Northern Coastal Scrub is a natural community not considered to be environmentally sensitive overall, yet it can also support sensitive plants and wildlife species.

The SCC purchased the Victorine property in 1987 with the overall programmatic goal of implementing a Transfer Development Credit Donor-Receiver Model Project (Williams 1995). Other coastal property was also acquired by the SCC at that time and conserved in the Big Sur Critical Viewshed.

1.1 Purpose of the Baseline Biological Assessment

The Victorine Ranch Baseline Biological Assessment has been prepared as background material to assist with the development of a Conservation Easement and monitoring protocol on the California State Coastal Conservancy's Victorine Ranch property. Physical and biological features are described and special status habitats, plants and animals are noted. The report describes the geographic setting, anthropogenic features and regulatory framework that characterize the property and factor in to the appropriate conservation of special areas that occur on the land.

The Baseline Biological Assessment is not a comprehensive survey of the entire State Coastal Conservancy Victorine Ranch property, but rather a reconnaissance level investigation designed to evaluate representative features and overall environmental conditions. The Baseline Biological Assessment provides sufficient information for the establishment of a Conservation

Easement designed to protect significant habitat areas and associated special status species. In accordance with Monterey County protocols, more detailed, systematic surveys will need to be completed by future property owners in advance of proposed development projects in order to determine the presence/absence of specific species potentially affected by anticipated improvements.

1.2 Purpose of Conservation Easement

The Conservation Easement established on the SCC Victorine Ranch parcels protects significant ecological, scenic and scientific values, including plant and animal resources, visual qualities and open space attributes of the property. The Conservation Easement focuses on conservation targets of local, state and federal concern which occur on the Victorine property.

The Conservation Easement Documentation Report (EDR) has been developed in tandem with the Baseline Biological Assessment and presents photographs and site-specific descriptions of significant environmental attributes at locations representative of the features conserved at the time the Conservation Easement was prepared. The EDR provides baseline information appropriate to monitor in order to guarantee the Conservation Easement goals and objectives are maintained in perpetuity.

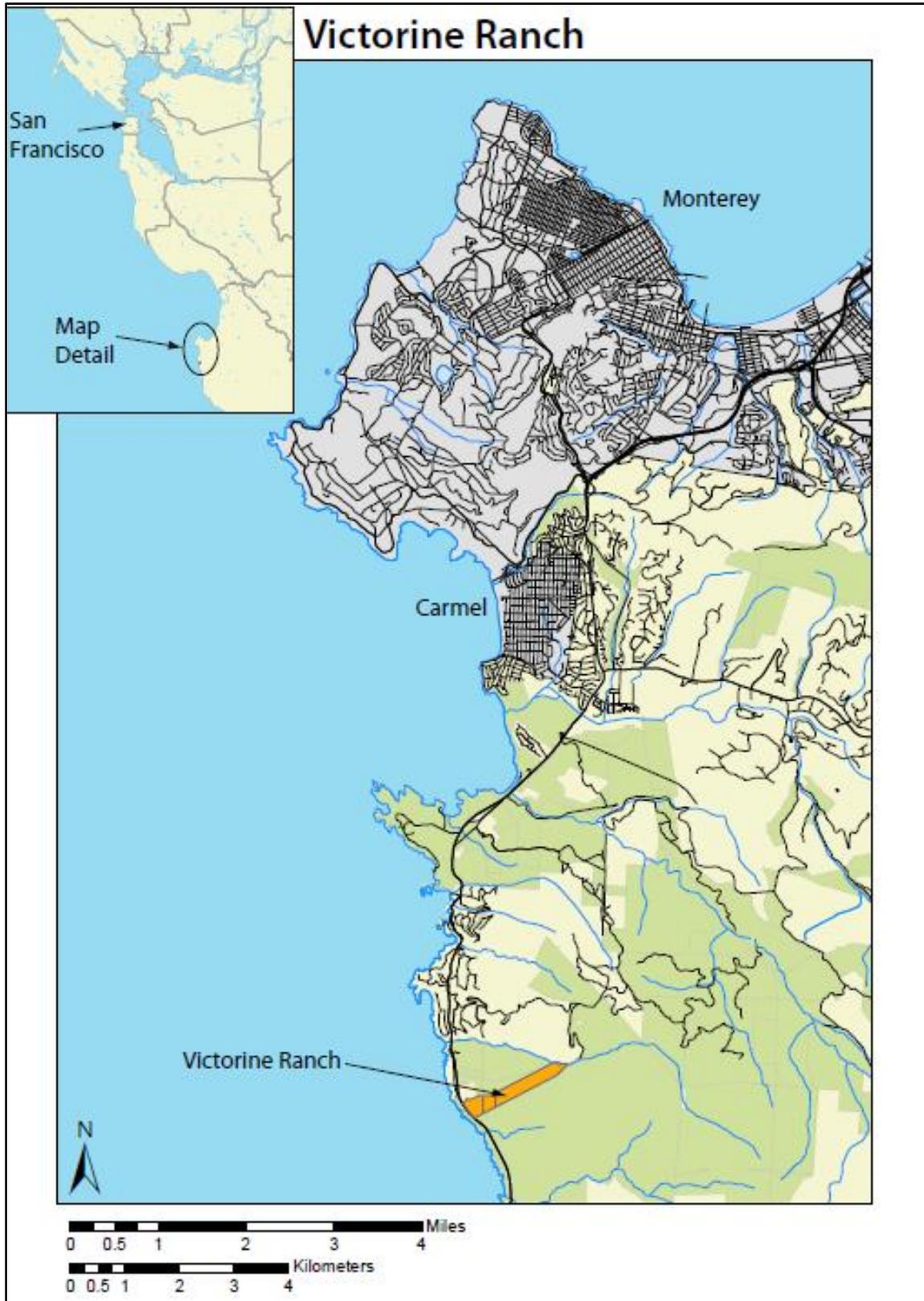


Figure 1 – Location map (source: State Coastal Conservancy).

Victorine Ranch



Figure 2 – Regional Context Map (source State Coastal Conservancy).

2. SURVEY METHODS

Local maps, literature references, Internet-based searches and consultations with knowledgeable individuals were used during the preparation of the Baseline Biological Assessment. In addition, reports, maps and site plans pertinent to the project were provided by the State Coastal Conservancy.

Field assessments focused on the following objectives:

- Identify and map natural communities
- Locate special status plants and wildlife species
- Note significant anthropogenic features

Botanical and habitat surveys were conducted between November 2010 and January 2011. Botanical surveys around and through natural communities were conducted on foot and boundaries of habitat areas were mapped using Global Positioning System (GPS) instrumentation operated by staff with Rasmussen Land Surveying, Inc. GPS was also used to geo-reference botanical and anthropogenic features on the site.

The 2010-2011 late fall/early winter botanical survey period was not optimal for the examination or identification of grasses, flowering annuals and perennial forbs, however general habitat conditions were readily observable. In addition to the formal habitat mapping and biological survey conducted in late 2010 and early 2011, the property was visited throughout the 2011 calendar year and supplemental botanical data were collected during spring and summer months of 2012. The rugged Malpaso Canyon is outside the primary project area and no field work was conducted from the highest ridgeline of the property downslope to Malpaso Creek. No access is available to upper Malpaso Canyon, which is gated by the Carmel Riviera Mutual Water Company.

To identify known element occurrences of special status habitats, plants and wildlife species, a records search was initiated with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB). A CNDDDB map and computer print-out for the vicinity of the subject property were prepared by Fish and Wildlife staff on November 29, 2010 and the "Full Condensed Report" and mylar overlay for the Soberanes Point USGS 7.5' quadrangle were consulted during on-site field surveys. CNDDDB mapping and database information display no specific records or element occurrences of sensitive or special status species on the subject parcels, however many element occurrences are documented in similar habitat areas in the general vicinity of the SCC property. In addition, a query of the California Native Plant Society web-based "Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plant Species" was consulted to identify occurrences of special status plants in the Northern Big Sur region.

During field surveys, several special status plants and animals were observed on the subject property and potential habitat was inspected that is appropriate for additional sensitive species of concern, including the federally endangered Smith's blue butterfly and the federally endangered

Yadon's rein-orchid. Several special status natural communities occur on the property and are noted as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas in the Monterey County Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan, Monterey County Local Coastal Program. Please refer to Section 5.2, Special Status Natural Communities, Plants and Animals for figures noting documented and potential occurrences of special status habitats and species.

Lists of species observed on the subject property are included in Appendix D and Appendix E.

Common names for plant and wildlife species observed on the property are noted with scientific names when they are first mentioned in the text, and thereafter only common names are used. Scientific nomenclature for plants described in this report follows protocols used in Baldwin, et al (2012).

3. PROPERTY DESCRIPTION and EXISITING CONDITIONS

3.1 Location and Geographic Setting

The SCC Victorine Ranch property is located along the scenic, largely undeveloped Big Sur coast approximately 7 air miles south of the city of Carmel-By-The-Sea in Monterey County. The property is situated along the coastline at the northwestern flank of the rugged Santa Lucia Range and includes coastal bluffs and marine terraces that reflect the young and tectonically active nature of the California coastal mountains. The SCC land is accessed off Highway 1 via a gated private entry approximately 0.25 mile south of the Highway 1 bridge over Malpas Creek. From the private gate, a narrow, paved road winds through the Victorine Ranch subdivision and past a number of relatively new homes. The driveway access onto the undeveloped SCC land is unpaved, however the roadway is graded and improved with a culvert for a small, unnamed drainage. Appendix A is an aerial image of the Victorine Ranch property prepared by Whitson Engineers for the State Coastal Conservancy, 2007.

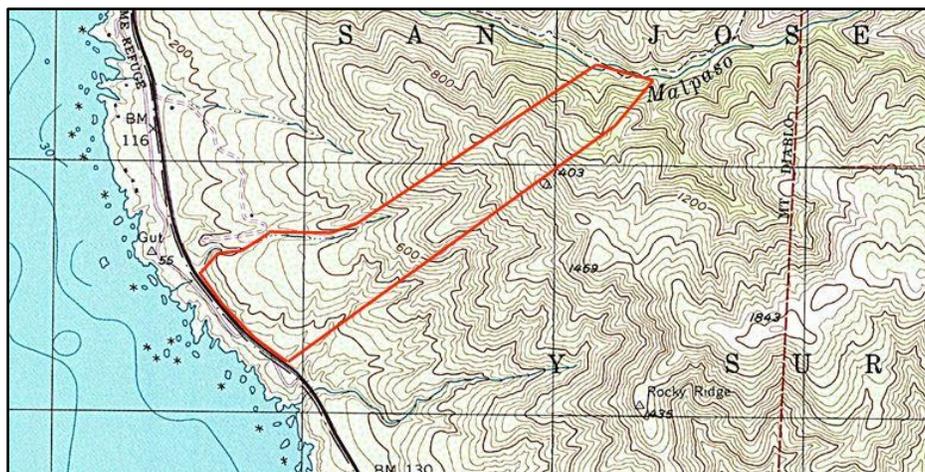


Figure 3 – Portion of the Soberanes Point USGS 7.5' topographic quadrangle, with approximate boundary for Victorine Ranch property.

The Central Coast of California experiences a Mediterranean type climate, with rainy, cool winters and warm, dry summers. In general, during the warmer months of the year, the coastal regions of Monterey County and low-lying inland areas are bathed in predictable, marine-driven advection fog that typically dissipates by mid-day. Occasionally, the marine layer persists for several days at a time and the area experiences heavy condensation and fog drip. The moderating influence of the marine layer creates environmental conditions that support habitats requiring more moisture than generally falls as precipitation during winter months. Central Maritime Chaparral, Monterey Pine Forest, Coastal Prairie and Redwood Forest communities are sustained in-part by the supplemental moisture and cool conditions provided by predictable coastal fogs.

From the edge of Highway 1, the westerly 25.28-acre parcel slopes up steeply approximately 120 feet from the roadside over sparsely vegetated coastal bluffs and granitic outcrops to a gently sloped marine terrace. The marine terrace is composed of unconsolidated Quaternary marine deposits over Mesozoic granitic bedrock, which support a habitat mosaic of Northern Coastal Scrub, Central Maritime Chaparral and Coastal Prairie-Grassland communities that intermingle across rolling terrain. The upper portion of the West Parcel reaches an elevation of approximately 360 feet. A number of Monterey pines are scattered across the lower slopes of the marine terrace and the only other tree cover occurs in shallow alluvial deposits where small thickets of arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) grow in the unnamed seasonal drainage. The existing improved driveway provides direct access to the West Parcel.

The Middle 11.4-acre and East 63.3-acre Parcels have no direct vehicular access, however a road easement has been surveyed to provide access to the westerly boundary of the Middle Parcel. The East Parcel extends in a northeasterly direction from the mid-slopes of the marine terrace across steep hillsides up to the top of the coastal ridge. The Middle and East Parcels are also composed of Quaternary marine deposits over Mesozoic granite, with prominent granitic outcrops towards the summit. The steep slopes of the East Parcel are bisected by a small, seasonal drainage that supports disconnected willow thickets along a narrow riparian corridor.

The Middle and East Parcels are predominantly vegetated with Northern Coastal Scrub, with large patches of Coastal Prairie, Annual Grassland and Central Maritime Chaparral. One small eroded depression that supports wetland features was observed at approximately 400-foot in elevation - this appears to be an old stock tank dating from times when the coastal slopes were still grazed by livestock. Coastal Prairie-Grasslands crown the summit of the East Parcel at elevations ranging between 1150 feet and 1375 feet and Northern Coastal Scrub occurs from the edge of the grassy summit down the steep southern flank of Malpas Canyon. The narrow and extremely rugged Malpas drainage is lined with redwood-dominated riparian habitat, which also extends for short distances upslope of the stream bottom along small, damp side canyons. Monterey Pine Forest habitat and Redwood Forest occasionally occur together in the Malpas drainage, which has its headwaters in Garrapata State Park and Palo Corona Regional Park.

According to the Geologic Feasibility Investigation prepared by Terratech in November 1988, the Victorine property is located directly south of a short northwest trending fault approximately 1.5-miles long. This unnamed fault is thought to be potentially active and marine terrace deposits covering the central portion of the SCC land possess a moderate to high ground-shaking

hazard. The Terratech report concludes that "the property is geologically suitable for the proposed development," (Terratech 1988, page 9). This information regarding the fault is not fully substantiated by a more recent geologic report prepared for road repairs along the access driveway (D & M Consulting Engineers 2003). The 2003 geotechnical report references the Geographic Information System data compiled by the County of Monterey, which does not map any faults in the immediate vicinity. It is possible that the 1988 report was referring to traces of the San Gregorio Fault system, which is located approximately two miles southwest of the Victorine property.

In November 1988, holes were drilled at ten potential building sites to conduct soil percolation tests and results indicated that soils drained extremely slowly (Terratech 1988). Old perforated pipes still occur on the property and are presumably at locations tested for suitability of septic features.

3.1.1 Soils: Soils, combined with variations in topography and the substantial range in elevation, create a number of microclimate conditions which influence plant species composition and structure in the natural vegetation communities on the Victorine Ranch property. In general, soils on the property are highly erosive and poorly drained (D & M Consulting Engineers 2003).

- The western portion of the property and all drainage areas are underlain by dissected Xerothents. These unconsolidated alluvial soils occur on steep bluffs and along streams and gullies that have steep gradients and narrow bottoms. Composed of various textures ranging from rocky to coarse sandy loam, Xerothents are easily eroded and tend to vary considerably in depth, permeability and water holding capacity.
- The central, moderately sloped portion of the Victorine Ranch is composed of Haire loam. These moderately well-drained upland soils extend from the rolling marine terraces up to the highest elevation on the property and are derived from granodiorite and arkosic sandstones (originating from granitic bedrock).
- Junipero-Sur complex soils occur from the ridgeline down to the bank of Malpas Creek. The Junipero and Sur soils are so intermingled that it was not feasible to map them separately in the Monterey County Soil Survey (USDA 1978, p.38). The extremely steep topography and vegetation underlain by Junipero-Sur soils are found in the mountainous Santa Lucia Range, where slopes range between 50 and 85 percent. Junipero soils are derived from granitic and schistose bedrock, while Sur series soils are formed in material underlain by schistose, gneissic or granitic bedrock, or by fractured sandstone or shale.

3.2 Land Use

The SCC property today is sandwiched between undeveloped, public, open space lands to the north and south, and private, residential development on the northwestern margin of the West Parcel. To the north, Monterey County Open Space lands have been conserved in perpetuity to protect the coastal viewshed. On the southwestern edge of the SCC property, Monterey County owns a small Open Space parcel. The remainder of the subject property is bordered on the south

by Garrapata State Park. The State Park wraps over the coastal ridge and along the boundary of SCC holdings in Malpas Canyon.

The historic Victorine Ranch was once an active cattle ranch with barns, corrals and houses. Little remains of the ranch complex today except for the crumbling blocks of the chimneys where a dairy barn and the main house once stood. These structures were near the entry to the rancho off Highway 1 and they burned to the ground in the mid-1940's (Norman 2004). The Victorine family was noted for its hospitality and drovers herding cattle from Big Sur to markets in Monterey would often stop at the ranch before the last push into town. On the SCC land, the trace of the Old Coast Trail is still visible along the bluffs above Highway 1, and the main vehicular access to the westerly SCC parcel utilizes a portion of this historic roadway. It is not known when the old rancho or the Conservancy's holding stopped being actively grazed.

No surface evidence of potentially significant cultural resources was observed during survey work for the Baseline Biological Assessment, although a battered and rusty horseshoe was collected along the fading trace of the Old Coast Trail. A Preliminary Cultural Resources Reconnaissance of the SCC property was conducted by archeological consultants in 1988 and no evidence of cultural resources was found on the site (Archaeological Consulting 1988).

3.3 Zoning

The Victorine property is located in an unincorporated area of Monterey County and within the Coastal Zone administered by the California Coastal Commission. The SCC land is comprised of three contiguous parcels that have been confirmed with Certificates of Compliance as legal lots of record.

The 99.98-acre property currently has legal descriptions for:

- APN 243-221-019, 25.28 acres. West Parcel. Extends from the Highway 1 right-of-way to the gently sloped coastal terrace east of the highway.
- APN 243-211-025, 11.4 acres. Middle Parcel. Positioned mid-slope on the marine terrace.
- APN 243-211-026, 63.3 acres. East Parcel. Extends from the eastern boundary of the Middle parcel, up over steep hillsides of the coastal ridge, and down to the edge of Malpas Creek.

The SCC property also may be used as a receiver site for two development credits from coastal viewshed property in the Kasler Point area. According to 1995 correspondence prepared by SCC staff, the Conservancy's overall programmatic goal for the Victorine Ranch project has been the implementation of the Transfer Development Credit Donor-Receiver Model Project (Williams 1995). CEQA review was completed in 1995 for this transfer and an Initial Study and Negative Declaration were prepared to analyze the impact of subdividing the Victorine property and adding two additional building sites to the SCC holdings. Coastal Conservancy staff ultimately did not pursue a subdivision and decided to sell the property "as is".

The property is currently zoned by Monterey County as WSC/40D(CZ) = Watershed and Scenic Conservation, with a maximum density of one lot per 40 acres, within the Coastal Zone. Proposed developments will require design approval and permitting through Monterey County. The SCC parcels are entirely within the Coastal Zone and are located in the Big Sur Land Use Plan Area. Building setbacks and design constraints for potential developments in this zoning designation are defined in the Monterey County Coastal Implementation Plan, Part 1, Title 20, Zoning Ordinance.

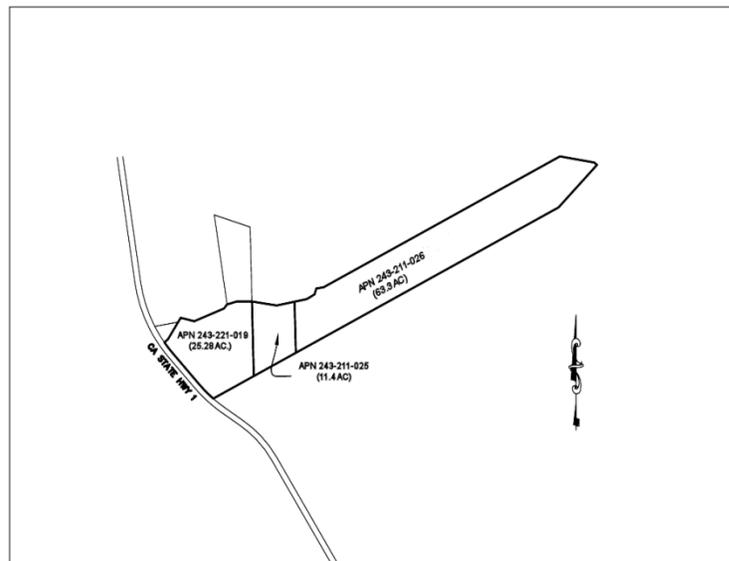


Figure 4 – Unofficial map of County Assessor's Parcels.

4. IMPROVEMENTS

Though undeveloped, the SCC Victorine Ranch has anthropogenic, or human-created elements that influence the land and how the property can be potentially developed. A primary access driveway services the West Parcel. The driveway access is one section of the historic Coastal Trail, which dates to the 1800's. Utility easements are situated along the Highway 1 right-of-way. Old fence posts on the SCC property and an abandoned stock pond (now a wetland) speak to the historic land use as livestock range. In recent decades, soil percolation tests were performed and faint road tracks and trails appear on aerial imagery available from GoogleEarth. There do not appear to be any electrical, phone or water services, nor are there any structures or remnants of historic structures on the Conservancy property.

The Conservancy property is accessed from Highway 1 via a gated, paved private road that crosses a number of private parcels before becoming an improved, dirt driveway. The dirt driveway servicing the SCC parcels crosses the adjoining private residential lot with an access easement (APN 243-221-027), as well as the southwestern corner of the adjacent Monterey

County open space land. At this point, the SCC driveway turns sharply, crosses over a culvert and proceeds several hundred feet to a small turn-around.



Figure 5 – Access driveway and culvert area over seasonal drainage. May 10, 2012.

An access route to serve the Middle SCC Parcel (APN 243-211-025) was surveyed by Rasmussen Land Surveying, Inc. in November 2011. A 20-foot wide corridor was mapped from the terminus of the driveway at the turn-around on the West Parcel (APN 243-221-019) to the western edge of the Middle Parcel (Appendix G). The route is not in the coastal viewshed visible from Highway 1 and avoids sensitive Central Maritime Chaparral habitat. The route is predominantly in Northern Coastal Scrub habitat, with a short reach in Coastal Prairie-Grasslands.

5. BIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

The vegetation found on the SCC Victorine Ranch is a patchwork mosaic of different habitat types that reflect edaphic (soil) differences, variations in terrain, fire frequency, land use and grazing history, and microclimate conditions. Each natural community in the vegetation mosaic on the Victorine Ranch potentially provides appropriate habitat and environmental conditions for special status plants and animals. The fall/winter biological reconnaissance survey featured in this biological assessment documents what was apparent, or can be inferred during the survey time, with supplemental botanical data collected during informal surveys in spring and summer over a two-year period. In several instances, plant species identification was performed using knowledge of the regional flora and "forensic" botany techniques that depend on general plant morphological characteristics and dry plant material to aid in making a taxonomic determination. Where a positive identification could not be made, the plant taxon was simply identified to genus, if possible.

The majority of the SCC Victorine Ranch property is vegetated with Northern Coastal Scrub and Coastal Prairie natural communities. Coastal Bluff Scrub, a floristically distinct association of Northern Coastal Scrub habitat, occurs in a few very small, disjunct patches along the steep hillside fronting the Highway 1 right-of-way. Significant occurrences of uncommon Central Maritime Chaparral are scattered throughout the property in isolated and botanically interesting islands of this rare habitat. Several widely scattered Monterey pine individuals (*Pinus radiata*) are found on the property and the only other tree cover along the Pacific slope is provided by small arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*) thickets found in discontinuous patches along the narrow, seasonal drainage that bisects the site.

The steep and dramatic eastern margin of the SCC property supports Redwood Riparian habitat along perennial Malpas Creek. In the lower portion of Malpas Canyon, Monterey pines form an interesting association with redwoods, which is a plant grouping not found in many other coastal canyons. No botanical or habitat assessment work was conducted in the Malpas drainage, as the canyon is extremely difficult to hike into from the coastal ridge on the Victorine property and more straight-forward access along the canyon bottom is prohibited by trespass issues. The Victorine property does not extend across Malpas Creek to the roadway situated on the northern side of the canyon, so it is doubtful whether legal access to this portion of the historic property was ever available. A map of habitat types is presented in Appendix B. Appendix C displays habitat areas mapped over aerial imagery. No habitat mapping or field survey work was conducted in the Malpas watershed.

Biological assessments have been prepared on the SCC Victorine Ranch property in the past, including a Biological Report (1988) and Addendum (1990) by Bruce Cowan; a Biological Assessment for road repairs by Denise Duffy and Associates (2003); and a Forester's Assessment for road repairs by Stephen Staub (2003).

5.1 Natural Communities

Several of the following natural community descriptions are included by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife in a numeric classification system. A star symbol (*) is used by the Department to designate a high priority ecosystem in the Fish and Wildlife's California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB). Numeric codes follow protocols in the CNDDDB 2003 and 2010 lists of natural communities prepared for the State of California by the Department of Fish and Wildlife, Natural Heritage Division.

5.1.1. Northern Coastal Scrub: This natural community is distinguished by woody shrubs that often have pungent leaves and intricate flowers. Northern Coastal Scrub habitat typically occurs along the coast, but can extend inland as far as the presence of regular marine influence. Northern Coastal Scrub occurs throughout the SCC property and extends from the margin of Highway 1 across the gentle terrain of the adjoining marine terrace all the way up and over the steep hill slopes of the East Parcel. The sparse appearance of this evergreen natural community

is characteristic of much of the SCC property on the exposed, south and west-facing hills along the Pacific slope, as well as over the top of the ridge down into steep Malpas Canyon.

Occasionally referred to as "soft chaparral" because of the flexible stems and foliage of the shrub cover, Northern Coastal Scrub on the Victorine property is mostly characterized by gray-green California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*). Typical co-dominant species with California sagebrush on the SCC property include poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), sticky monkey-flower (*Mimulus aurantiacus* var. *aurantiacus*), lizard-tail (*Eriophyllum staechadifolium*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), deerweed (*Acmispon glaber* var. *glaber*) and occasional western bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum* var. *pubescens*). Twining coast morning glory (*Calystegia macrostegia* ssp. *cyclostegia*) and wild cucumber (*Marah fabacea*) can often be seen draped over the shrub vegetation. Coffeeberry (*Frangula californica* ssp. *californica*), silver bush lupine (*Lupinus albifrons* var. *albifrons*), mock heather (*Ericameria ericoides*), coyotebrush (*Baccharis pilularis* ssp. *consanguinea*) and sawtooth goldenbush (*Hazardia squarrosa*) occur less frequently in the overall matrix of shrubs, however each of these species is dominant or co-dominant in particular areas.

Breaks in the shrub canopy and margins of disturbed areas support California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*), bird's-foot fern (*Pellaea mucronata*) and sparse native needlegrass (*Stipa pulchra* and *S. lepida*). Under the thick, closed canopy of generally short shrubs (4-foot average height), yerba buena (*Clinopodium douglasii*) and infrequent bunches of California oatgrass (*Danthonia californica*) occur along the exposed edges of the scrub community, particularly where shrubs are encroaching into grassland, or where there are more open habitat conditions. Several individual lemonadeberry plants (*Rhus integrifolia*) were observed within Northern Coastal Scrub on the SCC property and it is believed these shrubs, which are native to Southern California, have become naturalized from horticultural plantings in the Carmel Highlands area (Matthews 2006).

Seacliff (also called "dune") buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*), the host plant for the federally endangered Smith's blue butterfly (*Euphilotes enoptes smithi*) occurs in scattered, discontinuous patches throughout the Northern Coastal Scrub community on the Victorine Ranch. The presence of the small, blue butterfly can only be documented during the short flight period of adult butterflies between late June and early August. Individual seacliff buckwheat plants were observed sprinkled across the SCC property from the edge of the Coast Highway to the top of the grassy ridge overlooking Malpas Canyon. One notably large stand occurs along the shoulder of the access driveway near the culvert crossing of the seasonal stream.



Figure 6 – Northern Coastal Scrub habitat, West Parcel. June 26, 2012.



Figure 7 – Seacliff buckwheat stand along driveway access. November 24, 2010.

5.1.2. Coastal Bluff Scrub (DFW code *31.100.00): A distinctive floristic association of Northern Coastal Scrub occurs on the steep, rocky, wind-swept bluffs and road cuts overlooking the Highway 1 corridor. Characterized by some of the same shrubs as Northern Coastal Scrub, the Coastal Bluff Scrub association tends to have shorter stature, more succulent foliage and

additional salt-tolerant species not commonly found on adjacent uplands. Small, discontinuous patches of this habitat occur on the slope and road cut between the edge of Highway 1 and the topographic break at the edge of the marine terrace on the West Parcel. Coastal Bluff Scrub vegetation seems to colonize eroding, rocky slopes exposed to salt-laden winds where other plant types have difficulty becoming established.

In addition to California sagebrush, deerweed and sawtooth goldenbush, the handful of small patches of Coastal Bluff Scrub habitat on the SCC property support succulent sea lettuce (*Dudleya caespitosa*), Monterey Indian paintbrush (*Castilleja latifolia*), California beach aster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*) and seacliff buckwheat. Four over-mature stalks of the elegant rein-orchid (*Piperia elegans*) were found on the top of the coastal bluff and identified based on the compact nature of old flowers densely crowded on the dried racemes. Rock outcrops in this area also support mosses and lichens and several species of native, perennial bunchgrass (*Stipa pulchra*, *S. lepida*, *Danthonia californica*).

In addition to interesting Coastal Bluff Scrub patches above Highway 1, a high percentage of non-native species were also recorded on the slope above the roadway. This is likely because of the proximity of the traffic corridor and how the roadway acts as an avenue for the dispersal of exotic species. Ice plant (*Carpobrotus chilensis*), watsonia (*Watsonia* sp.) and jubata grass (*Cortaderia jubata*), among other non-native, undesirable plants, are well-established along the Highway 1 corridor.

Coastal Bluff Scrub is considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area by the California Coastal Commission and has been described as a California Department of Fish and Wildlife threatened plant community (California Coastal Commission Staff Report: Appeal, Revised Findings filed 2/18/2004. Laube and Engel Residence Appeal # A-3-MCO-04-012). It is further classified as a natural community "rare and worthy of consideration" by the CNDDDB (2003).



Figure 8 – Coastal Bluff Scrub above Highway 1. May 10, 2012.



Figure 9 – Looking down on the Highway 1 corridor. November 24, 2010.

5.1.3. Coastal Prairie (*Danthonia*/Oatgrass Prairie, DFW Code *41.050.00 and Purple Needlegrass *41.150.00): The SCC Victorine Ranch supports large tracts of high quality Coastal Prairie, an herbaceous natural community occasionally referred to as Coastal Terrace Prairie in the botanical literature. Several different grass species associations within the Coastal Prairie are considered by CNDDDB as "rare and worthy of consideration". The Victorine coastal grasslands are characterized by a high density of native, perennial bunchgrasses and although non-native annual grasses are found throughout, the marine terrace and adjoining hillsides on the Victorine Ranch have an extremely high concentration of native perennial bunchgrass species. Extensive native grassland areas also occur on the summit ridge of the East Parcel overlooking Malpas Canyon.

Patchy in nature, large areas of California oatgrass, needlegrass, and western ryegrass (*Elymus glaucus*) are readily discernible. Leafy bent-grass (*Agrostis pallens*) seems to occupy open areas in some of the more sloped terrain and tufted hairgrass (*Deschampsia cespitosa*) and mellica (*Melica* sp., probably *M. californica*) were observed. Koeler's grass (*Koeleria macrantha*) and San Francisco bluegrass (*Poa unilateralis*) were noted, as well as the tangled mats and decumbent culms of red fescue (*Festuca rubra*).

Although supporting large stands of floristically diverse, native perennial bunch grasses, the Coastal Prairie on the Victorine Ranch can not necessarily be classified as "healthy" native grassland. In the absence of fire and/or livestock grazing, the herbaceous cover of non-native annual grasses and thatch from native perennial grass species has cloaked large areas of the Coastal Prairie with dry residual matter. The thatch has accumulated over time and limits the germination and flowering of other native species, particularly flowering annuals and perennial

forbs and bulbs. In addition, due to the absence of disturbance from grazing and/or fire, much of the Coastal Prairie on the Victorine Ranch is being gradually invaded by pioneering shrub species in the transitional area between Northern Coastal Scrub and grassland. The ecotone between the two natural communities is now complicated by shrub recruitment into the former grassland habitat. The "dynamic equilibrium" of the grassland ecotone likely shifts back and forth over time if disturbance factors remain a part of the natural ecological cycle. Today, these transitional, woody plant community boundaries are indistinct zones of former herbaceous Coastal Prairie, which will continue to be reduced in areal extent as shrub cover increases along a continuum of habitat succession (Ford and Hayes, 2007).

The Coastal Prairie on the Victorine Ranch has numerous associated plant species that occur as co-dominants in various locations. Non-native rattlesnake grass (*Briza maxima*), wild oats (*Avena fatua* and *A. barbata*), English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), curly dock (*Rumex crispus*) and mustards (*Hirschfeldia incana*, *Brassica nigra*, *B. rapa*) are found over extensive areas, as are native goldenrod (*Solidago velutina* ssp. *californica*), silver bush lupine and Fremont's star lily (*Toxicoscordion fremontii*). A few small patches of Johnny jump-ups (*Viola pedunculata*) and clumps of Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*) are scattered across the marine terrace along with numerous coastal gum plants (*Grindelia stricta*).

Coastal Prairie habitat on the Victorine Ranch is mapped in Appendix B, Appendix C and Appendix H as Coastal Grassland because of the complicated patchwork the native-dominated grassland creates with areas supporting more non-native, annual species. Where Coastal Prairie habitat is infused with a large percentage of non-native annual species, the mixed grassland type is referred to as Coastal Prairie-Grassland in the text of this report.



Figure 10 – Coastal Prairie-Grassland. November 24, 2010.



Figure 11 - Coastal Prairie on East Parcel near ridge-top, looking north. November 30, 2010.

5.1.4. Annual Grassland: Although much of the marine terrace and hill slopes on the Victorine Ranch are mantled with Coastal Prairie that supports high concentrations of native perennial grasses, there are large areas of non-native annual grassland and weedy vegetation that suggest long periods of harsh disturbance, likely from the concentration of cattle. One roundish-shaped area in particular stands out as a haven for non-native, invasive species. Situated mid-way up the coastal slope on the East Parcel at an elevation of approximately 400 feet, the relatively flat grassy area is dominated by wild oats and fringed with poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) and dense stands of an unidentified thistle (observed when dead, probably Italian thistle *Carduus pycnocephalus*). The dominance of annual grasses is otherwise patchy throughout Coastal Prairie areas.



Figure 12 – Weed-dominated bench, East Parcel. December 2, 2010.

5.1.5. Central Maritime Chaparral (DFW code *37.308.02): Central Maritime Chaparral is considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area by the Coastal Commission and is also identified as a natural community "rare and worthy of consideration" by the CNDDDB. This interesting plant type is characterized by low, dense shrubs, many of which are endemic manzanita (*Arctostaphylos*) and ceanothus (*Ceanothus*) species that occur in narrowly restricted distributional ranges. Found in isolated patches along the immediate coastline, Maritime Chaparral occurs on extremely nutrient-poor soils in areas of persistent marine influence. The presence of numerous endemic plants and special status species makes Maritime Chaparral habitat a storehouse of ecological biodiversity.

Central Maritime Chaparral on the SCC Victorine Ranch is dominated by heavily deer-browsed chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), which gives the natural community a distinctive rounded and readily recognizable, sort of "mounded" appearance. Patches of this plant community are small and disjunct, and occur from the margin of the coastal bluff overlooking Highway 1 up to the steep slopes of the East Parcel. Several of the Maritime Chaparral patches on the SCC land are monocultures of chamise, however other patches contain shaggy-barked manzanita (*Arctostaphylos tomentosa* subsp. *tomentosa*), Carmel ceanothus (*Ceanothus thyrsiflorus* var. *griseus*), toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia*), pitcher sage (*Lepechinia calycina*), silk-tassel (*Garrya elliptica*) and occasional coyotebrush. The highly restricted Monterey ceanothus (*Ceanothus rigidus*), an indicator of Maritime Chaparral in the Monterey region, is found immediately adjacent to the northern boundary of the SCC property on the neighboring property (APN 243-221-027) and on adjoining Monterey County Open Space land. Although growing merely 30 feet from the SCC property boundary in an area with a relatively high density of plants, Monterey ceanothus was not observed in Maritime Chaparral on the SCC parcels.



Figure 13 – Deer-browsed chamise in Central Maritime Chaparral habitat, West Parcel. October 14, 2010.

Several special status plants were noted growing in and adjacent to Maritime Chaparral on the SCC property. Of special note is a small patch of Hooker's manzanita (*Arctostaphylos hookeri*), which is found adjacent to the entry driveway under the canopy of several Monterey pines. This small grouping of Hooker's manzanita seems to be the only occurrence of this Monterey endemic Maritime Chaparral indicator on the SCC property. It has been tentatively identified as the southern-most occurrence of this uncommon plant in the entire state (Vassey 2011).

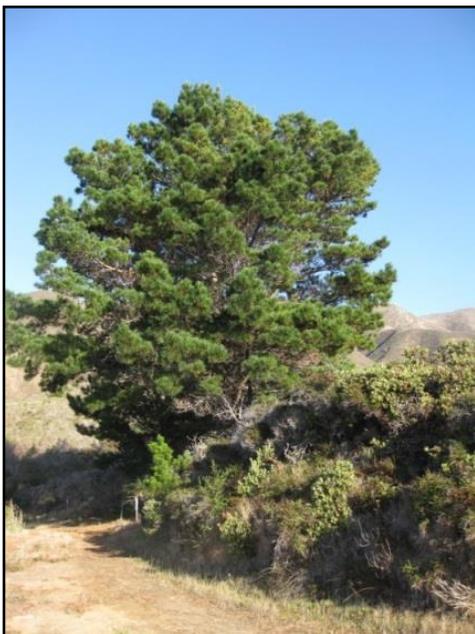


Figure 14 – Solitary occurrence of Hooker's manzanita under Monterey pine along access driveway, West Parcel. This is the southern-most location of this rare plant in the state. November 24, 2010.



Figure 15 – Close-up of Hooker's manzanita foliage.
November 24, 2010.



Figure 16 – Pine rose with persisting sepals, straight prickles,
5-7 leaflets, numerous pistils, and uncommonly pale flowers,
Middle Parcel. June 20, 2011.

The uncommon pine rose (*Rosa pinetorum*) was observed on the northern edge of the Middle Parcel in an open area adjacent to a stand of Maritime Chaparral. Both Hooker's manzanita and the pine rose, as well as the Monterey pine are listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as Rank 1B plants considered rare, threatened or endangered in California and elsewhere. Small-leaved lomatium (*Lomatium parvifolium*), a CNPS Rank 4 plant, is particularly abundant in the Maritime Chaparral understory on the lower slopes of the SCC East Parcel.

Several of the Central Maritime Chaparral stands located on the East Parcel support plants of a native rein-orchid in the *Piperia* genus. These orchids send out short, strap-shaped leaves in the winter months and produce a raceme with identifiable flowers in early summer. One of the local *Piperia* species, the Yadon's rein-orchid (*Piperia yadonii*) is found only growing in association with Central Maritime Chaparral or Monterey Pine Forest around Monterey Bay. This species is listed as federally endangered and populations are known from Maritime Chaparral stands north of Malpas Creek. Unfortunately, orchid species do not predictably send out leaves and flowers every year and a positive identification of the dry orchid racemes on the SCC East Parcel could not be verified.



Figure 17 – Ecotones between Central Maritime Chaparral, Northern Coastal Scrub and Coastal Prairie, West and Middle Parcels. January 28, 2011.

5.1.6. Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian (DFW Code *61.201.01): Riparian habitat is identified in the Big Sur Land Use Plan as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area and is also identified as a natural community "rare and worthy of consideration" by the CNDDDB. Found in discontinuous thickets along the seasonal drainage on the SCC property, the Arroyo Willow Riparian habitat is marked by clumps of shrubby arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), which generally grow where watertable levels remain high enough throughout the year to provide moisture in the root zone for these phreatophytic plants. The largest willow thicket occurs immediately upstream of the culvert under the driveway to the SCC West Parcel. Discontinuous and smaller thickets occur upstream, until the seasonal drainage becomes too small to support any tree cover at all. In many portions of the narrow drainage bottom, no distinctive riparian vegetation occurs and Northern Coastal Scrub species predominate.

Near the SCC driveway, the willow thicket shades an open understory of wood mint (*Stachys bullata*), coffeeberry, poison oak, mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*), Nuttall's locoweed (*Astragalus nuttallii* var. *nuttallii*) and white nightshade (*Solanum douglasii*). Douglas iris, several species of fern (*Dryopteris arguta*, *Pentagramma triangularis*, *Pellaea andromedaefolia*), and rushes (*Juncus patens*, *J. effusus*) also occur and a few individual plants of sticky monkey-flower and bee plant (*Scrophularia californica*) were observed. Although a reference in SCC correspondence (Grove 2000) refers to "yellow *Mimulus*-*equisetum*" (Common monkey-flower, *Mimulus guttatus* and *Equisetum* sp., horsetail) populations along the seasonal creek, neither of these plants were observed during field survey pursuant to this Assessment.



Figure 18 – Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian thicket upstream of driveway, West Parcel. January 28, 2011.

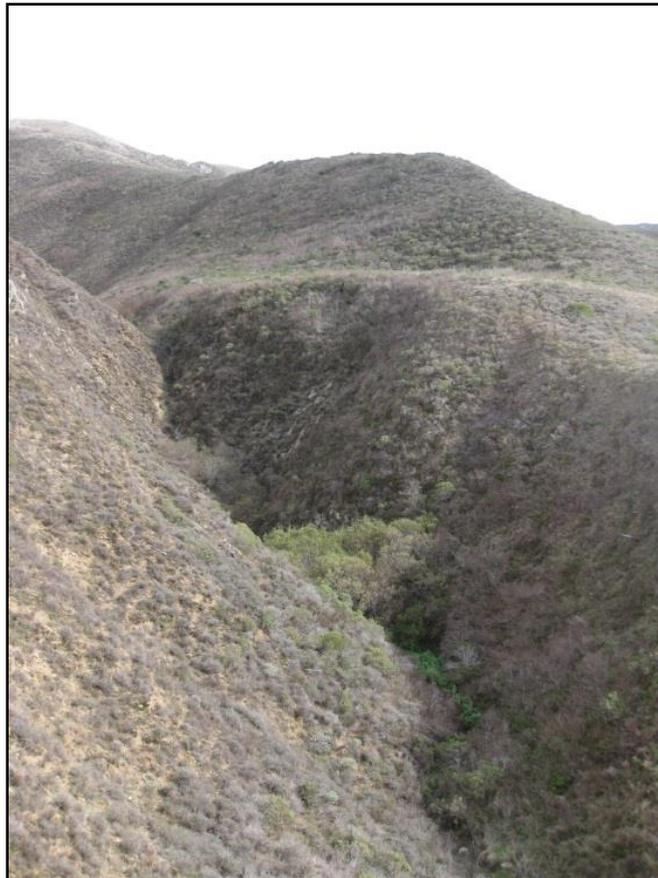


Figure 19 – Small thicket of willow growth along seasonal drainage, East Parcel. December 2, 2010.

5.1.7. Wetland: Wetland habitats are varied and complex on the Big Sur coast and are specifically called out in the Big Sur LUP as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas. Also regulated by the Army Corps of Engineers, Wetland habitats are defined by the presence of indicator species, evidence of saturated soils, and hydrological conditions that inundate the habitat area for certain periods of time.

Wetland conditions, with indicator species and seasonally damp soils, occur upstream of the road culvert, as well as on the SCC driveway at the margin of Central Maritime Chaparral habitat. The depth of coarse alluvium deposited at the head of the culvert does not permit the appropriate soil development and saturation necessary for extensive wetland habitat beyond the area immediately upstream of the pipe, however the flat driveway access supports numerous wetland species that have recruited since the road was improved.

Rushes (*Juncus patens*, *J. effusus*, *J. buffonius*, *J. occidentalis*, *J. phaeocephalus* and *J. xiphiodes*) occur on the wetter areas of the roadway, along with goldenrod and several sticky cinquefoil plants (*Potentilla glandulosa*), which prefer moist soils. Soil seepage along the road probably occurs where shallow soil layers (and perhaps aquatards or perched watertables) under adjacent Maritime Chaparral have been truncated by the roadcut. The flat roadway creates a long, narrow, linear area that does not drain adequately, thus creating saturated soil conditions during the rainy season. These conditions are seasonal and roadway soils become hardened and brick-like until sufficient precipitation occurs.



Figure 20 – Driveway wetland vegetation, West Parcel. May 10, 2012.

Spreading rush densely covers the shallow basin and outlet of a small depression found at approximately 400-feet in elevation on the western side of the SCC East Parcel. Most likely an old stock pond developed to collect water for grazing livestock, the depression has eroded and

filled with sediment creating a seasonally damp wetland feature. Fill material originally excavated to construct the pond was placed on the downstream edge of the depression and now is thickly vegetated with spreading rush. The wetland feature in the old stock pond is situated at the ecotone between Coastal Prairie-Grassland and Northern Coastal Scrub habitat.

5.1.8. Monterey Pine: A few scattered Monterey pine trees are found on the Victorine property and although it is possible these trees are planted or have recruited from other planted trees in the adjoining subdivision, native Monterey Pine Forest habitat (DFW code *87.110.00) extends through the nearby Carmel Highlands and across Malpas Creek only a short distance to the north. It is entirely possible that the pines found on the Victorine property are individual recruits at the southern-most extension of their natural range in this region. Monterey Pine Forest is generally considered Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area by the Coastal Commission and is also a natural community identified as "rare and worthy of consideration" by the CNDDDB. The California Native Plant Society lists Monterey pine as Rank 1B.

The pines are concentrated at the northern boundary of the SCC property along the driveway. A few individuals are scattered across the marine terrace and no pines were observed on the steeper hill slopes below the summit ridge. As described by Staub in his June 26, 2003 letter report "there is a real question as to whether the scattered groups of pines, some of which are clustered in locations that suggest they may have been planted, are of natural origin or even native genetic origin." He further notes that young trees are clearly naturalized seedlings. However, because Monterey pine typically recruits easily in disturbed soils, the presence of individual trees along the roadway may also be due to soil disturbances associated with road maintenance creating appropriate sites for natural germination.

In its native setting, Monterey Pine Forest habitat supports numerous special status plant species, for example, on the Monterey Peninsula where more than a dozen special plants are associated with pine forest associations. On the Victorine Ranch, the trees on site do not occur in a forest setting and are often solitary individuals surrounded by Northern Coastal Scrub, Coastal Prairie or Central Maritime Chaparral habitat. As such, these trees provide valuable cover for birds and other wildlife, and may imply a range extension of Monterey Pine Forest in response to changing environmental conditions (lack of fire and grazing, climate warming). Along the access driveway, individual Monterey pines provide shade and acidic leaf litter for patches of Central Maritime Chaparral, including the notable cluster of Hooker's manzanita.



Figure 21 – Scattered Monterey pine and Central Maritime Chaparral, West Parcel. May 10, 2012.

5.1.9. Malpaso Redwood Riparian: Redwood Riparian Forest (*Sequoia sempervirens*) is a phase of Redwood Forest habitat (DFW code *86.100.00) restricted to the perennial stream reaches of Malpaso Creek. The riparian phase of Redwood Forest occurs where the canyon bottom narrows and stream gradients increase in steepness. Shaded by a dense canopy, the Redwood Riparian community in Malpaso Canyon likely includes many species typically found in similar habitat areas along the Big Sur coast. The steep walls of Malpaso Canyon are vegetated with differing associations of Northern Coastal Scrub and the linear corridor of tall, uncut redwood is restricted to the incised canyon bottom and shady, damp side canyons.

Redwood, tanbark oak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*), big-leaved maple (*Acer macrophyllum*) and California bay (*Umbellularia californica*) usually provide the overstory above redwood sorrel and widely scattered shrubs in a Redwood Riparian setting. Vegetation lining the banks of Malpaso Creek likely is discontinuous and is either confined to areas above steep banks, or floodplain terraces immediately adjacent to the active channel in this narrow canyon. The shrub component of the Redwood Riparian Forest can include coffeeberry, thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), sticky monkey flower, canyon gooseberry (*Ribes menziesii*), Santa Lucia gooseberry (*R. sericeum*), creambush (*Holodiscus discolor*), elk clover (*Aralia californica*) and osoberry (*Oemleria cerasiformis*).

As previously noted, field assessment was not conducted in the Malpaso drainage due to inaccessibility and trespass issues.



Figure 22 – Looking down into Malpaso Canyon from ridge-top, East Parcel.



Figure 23 – View across East Parcel towards Garrapata State Park, November 24, 2010.

5.2. Special Status Plants, Animals and Natural Communities

Special status natural communities, plants and animals include habitats and species that have been defined as being biologically noteworthy and deserving of special protection under federal, state or local laws and guidelines.

The following table figure (Figure 24) notes the special status species that are either present, or may occur on the SCC Victorine Ranch property.

FIGURE 24

FEDERAL, STATE AND CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY STATUS FOR SIGNIFICANT
PLANTS AND WILDLIFE
IN THE VICINITY OF APN 243-221-019, 243-211-025 and 026

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Federal State</u> <u>CNPS</u>		<u>Habitat</u>	<u>Found/Not Found</u>
PLANTS					
<i>Arctostaphylos edmundsii</i>	Little Sur manzanita		1B.2	MC	NOT FOUND
<i>Arctostaphylos hookeri</i>	Hooker's manzanita		1B.2	MC	FOUND
<i>Castilleja latifolia</i>	Monterey Indian paintbrush		4.3	CBS, NCS	FOUND
<i>Ceanothus rigidus</i>	Monterey ceanothus		4.2	MC	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Cirsium occidentale</i> var. <i>compactum</i>	Compact cobwebby thistle		1B.2	NCS, CP	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Clarkia jolonensis</i>	Jolon clarkia		1B.2	NCS, CP, G	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Cordylanthus rigidus</i> ssp. <i>littoralis</i>	Seaside bird's beak	E	1B.1	C,MC,NCS,OW	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Delphinium hutchinsoniae</i>	Hutchinson's larkspur		1B.2	C,CP,NCS	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Delphinium umbraculorum</i>	Umbrella larkspur		1B.3	OW	NOT FOUND
<i>Eriogonum nortonii</i>	Pinnacles buckwheat		1B.3	C, G, MC	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Fritillaria liliacea</i>	Fragrant fritillary		1B.2	CP, RF	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Lomatium parvifolium</i>	small-leaved lomatium		4.2	MC, MPF	FOUND
<i>Malacothamnus palmeri</i> var. <i>lucianus</i>	Arroyo Seco bush mallow		1B.2	C, NCS	NOT FOUND
<i>Pedicularis dudleyi</i>	Dudley's lousewort	R	1B.2	RF	NOT FOUND
<i>Pinus radiata</i>	Monterey pine		1B.1	MPF	FOUND
<i>Piperia michaeli</i>	Michael's rein-orchid		4.2	MC, NCS	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Piperia yadonii</i>	Yadon's rein orchid	E	1B.1	MC, MPF	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Rosa pinetorum</i>	Pine rose		1B.2	MC, MPF	FOUND
<i>Sanicula maritima</i>	Adobe sanicle	R	1B.1	CP,NCS	NOT FOUND potential
<i>Sidalcea malachroides</i>	Maple-leaved checkerbloom		4.2	RF, MEF	NOT FOUND
<i>Tortula californica</i>	California screw moss		1B.2	G, NCS, sandy sites	NOT FOUND
ANIMALS					
Reptiles/Fish/Amphibians					
<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	California tiger salamander	T	T	ponds, grasslands	NOT FOUND
<i>Anniella pulchra pulchra</i>	California legless lizard		SC	sandy soil	NOT FOUND
<i>Emys marmorata</i>	Western pond turtle	SC	CP,SC	creeks, ponds	NOT FOUND
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i>	Steelhead	T	SC	creeks, rivers	NOT FOUND
<i>Phrynosoma coronatum frontale</i>	California horned lizard	SC	CP,SC	G,C,CS,MC	NOT FOUND

FIGURE 24 - continued

<u>Scientific Name</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Federal</u>	<u>State</u>	<u>CNPS</u>	<u>Habitat</u>	<u>Found/Not Found</u>
<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i>	California red-legged frog	T	FP,SC		ponds, creeks with pools	NOT FOUND
<i>Rana boylei</i>	Foothill yellow-legged frog	SC,FSS	CP,SC		creeks with pools creeks with	NOT FOUND
<i>Taricha torosa torosa</i>	Coast Range newt		SC		pools, ponds riparian	NOT FOUND
<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i>	Two-striped garter snake	FSS	SC			NOT FOUND
Mammals						
<i>Neotoma fuscipes luciana</i>	Monterey dusky-footed woodrat American	SC	SC*		CS,OW, riparian,MEF	FOUND
<i>Taxidea taxus</i>	badger		SC		G, CP	NOT FOUND
Birds						
<i>Cypseloides niger</i>	Black swift		SC		cliffs	NOT FOUND
<i>Falco mexicanus</i>	Prairie falcon		SC		G,OW,CP, CS, MC	NOT FOUND
<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	Peregrine falcon		E		cliffs,bridges	NOT FOUND
Invertebrates						
<i>Coelus globosus</i>	Globose dune beetle	SC			dunes	NOT FOUND
<i>Danus plexippus</i>	Monarch butterfly winter roost				euc.,pine, RW groves	NOT FOUND
<i>Euphilotes enoptes smithi</i>	Smith's blue butterfly	E			CS	POTENTIAL

Abbreviations for Status Codes:

E = Endangered

T = Threatened

R = Rare

SC = Species of Special Concern, * indicates potential status change

CP = Protected under California Code of Regulations

FP = Protected under California Fish and Wildlife Codes

FSS = Forest Service Sensitive Species

1B = Plants rare, threatened or endangered in CA and elsewhere

1B.1 = Seriously endangered in California

1B.2 = Fairly endangered in California

1B.3 = Not very endangered in California

4 = Plants of limited distribution in California - A Watch List

4.2 = Fairly Endangered in California

4.3 = Not very endangered in California

Habitat Abbreviations:

C = Chaparral

G = Foothill and Valley Grassland

OW = Oak Woodland

CP = Coastal Prairie

NCS = Northern Coastal Scrub

MC = Maritime Chaparral

MPF = Monterey Pine Forest

RW = Redwood Forest

MEF = Mixed Evergreen Forest

MCF = Mixed Coniferous Forest

MPF = Monterey Pine Forest

CBS = Coastal Bluff Scrub

6. REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

6.1 Special Status Plant and Animal Species

Species formally listed, or proposed for listing as endangered or threatened, or are candidates for such listing under either the federal Endangered Species Act or the California Endangered Species Act, are given legal protection by federal or state laws.

Although not protected by either the federal or state endangered species laws, the plants and animals listed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the federal Fish and Wildlife Service, Monterey County policies, and under the federal Migratory Bird Act as either Species of Special Concern or Fully Protected Species, are given protection against potential impacts and habitat loss by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). CEQA provides management consideration for special status species, as well as natural communities, even though these biological entities are not legally protected by either the federal or state endangered species laws. The Species of Special Concern are classified as those fish, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates that may face extirpation if current population trends continue. These species have no legal status, however the Department of Fish and Wildlife requires that they be analyzed during review of proposed development project impacts. Efforts must be incorporated into development proposals to conserve declining populations and avoid the need to list them as endangered or threatened in the future.

CEQA also recognizes plants listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as Rank 1B (plants rare, threatened or endangered in California) as special status species. The CNPS website states that, “Plants with a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B are rare throughout their range with the majority of them endemic to California. Most of the plants that are ranked 1B have declined significantly over the last century. California Rare Plant Rank 1B plants constitute the majority of taxa in the CNPS *Inventory*, with more than 1,000 plants assigned to this category of rarity. All of the plants constituting California Rare Plant Rank 1B meet the definitions of Sec. 1901, Chapter 10 (Native Plant Protection Act) or Secs. 2062 and 2067 (California Endangered Species Act) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Code, and are eligible for state listing. It is mandatory that they be fully considered during preparation of environmental documents relating to CEQA.”

6.2 Special Status Natural Communities

Habitat types considered uncommon or important for legally protected plants and animals are safeguarded under federal, state and local laws. Wetlands, riparian corridors, areas of high biological diversity, unusual or restricted vegetation types, and areas supporting legally protected species are considered special status habitats. These habitats are noted on the Department of Fish and Wildlife’s California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDDB) “Natural Communities List” (CNDDDB 2003 and 2010). These habitat types are also considered by the California Coastal Commission as potentially constituting Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) in the state Coastal Zone. In addition to federal and state regulations affecting wetlands, riparian corridors and special status communities, local jurisdictional ordinances and policies also identify specific natural areas or taxa as worthy of protection. In the case of Monterey

County for example, policies outlined in local zoning ordinances dictate that oak trees over 6-inches in diameter require special permits before removal – these permits generally have conditions that offset the removal of trees with requirements for planting and stewardship of commensurate habitat.

6.3 Summary

6.3.1. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat: The Victorine Ranch occurs in the Coastal Zone and Big Sur Planning Area of Monterey County and land use proposals are subject to provisions set forth by CEQA, the Coastal Act and the Monterey County General Plan. Under CEQA, all development proposals that have to potential to impact environmental features are subject to review. If development proposals have the potential to disturb special habitat areas or special status species, permitting through federal, state or local protocols is required.

Development policies and regulations specific to the Big Sur Land Use Area are outlined in the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan (LUP), Local Coastal Program (LCP), which was adopted by the Monterey County Board of Supervisors in November of 1985 and certified by the Coastal Commission in April 1986. The Monterey County Board of Supervisors adopted a revised General Plan on October 26, 2010 and each local planning area, including Big Sur, will soon embark on revisions and updates to the Land Use Plans and Implementation Plans currently in place.

The California Coastal Act provides that the Coastal Commission periodically review the implementation of Local Coastal Programs to determine whether the LCP's are effectively carrying out the goals and policies of the Coastal Act. The California Coastal Commission, in cooperation with Monterey County, conducted a periodic review of Monterey County's Local Coastal Program during 2002 and early 2003. The review was focused on implementation of the LCP and resource changes occurring in Monterey County's Coastal Zone since the Coastal Commission certified the LCP and the County began issuing coastal development permits.

In September 2004, the Coastal Commission prepared revised Findings regarding Monterey County's Local Coastal Program and new policies regarding the protection of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) were proposed. These Findings have not been formally adopted by the Commission, however they guide the agency's review of proposed development in the County's Coastal Zone.

The Coastal Act language pertaining to ESHA is very broad. It defines ESHA in Section 30107.5, which states that ESHA is:

Any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments.

Historically, the California Coastal Commission has considered these habitats potentially as ESHA:

- Coastal Bluff Scrub
- Central Maritime Chaparral
- Coastal Prairie
- Riparian - Arroyo Willow Riparian
- Wetland
- Redwood Forest - Riparian
- Monterey Pine
- Any habitat area supporting seacliff buckwheat and potential Smith's blue butterfly
- Any habitat area supporting a CNPS Rank 1B plant

Policies pertaining to Riparian habitat are detailed in chapter 3.3.3, page 20 of the 1985 LUP and Section 20.145.040.C.1 (Specific Development Standards, Terrestrial Plant, Riparian and Wildlife Habitats), in the 1988 Coastal Implementation Plan.

6.2. Critical Viewshed: Also described in the original 1985 Big Sur Area Land Use Plan are definitions and policies regarding the "Critical Viewshed" (Chapter 3.2 under Section 3.2.2.1), which states:

Critical viewshed: everything within sight of Highway 1 and major public viewing areas including turnouts, beaches and the following specific locations, Soberanes Point, Garrapata Beach, Abalone Cove Vista Point, Bixby Creek Turnout, Hurricane Point Overlook, upper Sycamore Canyon Road (Highway 1 to Pais Road), Pfeiffer Beach/Cooper Beach, and specific views from Old Coast Road as defined by policy 3.8.4.4.

Policy 3.2.3.B.1 further states, *The critical viewshed does not include areas visible only from the hiking trails shown on the Trails Plan (Figure 3).* Figure 3 of the Big Sur Area LUP depicts existing and proposed trails on public, as well as private lands.

Most of the subject property on the western coastal slope of the Victorine Ranch is within the Critical Viewshed, since the property is visible from Highway 1, Soberanes Point, Garrapata State Beach and the vista point at Abalone Cove. Care was taken during the placement of the vehicular access easement servicing the SCC middle parcel so that development of a future roadway along that alignment will remain outside of the Critical Viewshed.

6.3.3. Monterey County 30-percent Slope Constraints: Monterey County zoning ordinances specify that proposed development and vegetation removal be prohibited on steep slopes in excess of 30%. The SCC Victorine property includes significant land that falls in this category and therefore would not be developable without special waivers of the County's planning protocols. The map figure in Appendix F presents the slope areas greater than 30% on the SCC parcels.

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Maps of Coastal Zone in Monterey County:

http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/planning/docs/plans/CIP_Part6/Appendix%201.pdf

Big Sur Area LUP:

http://www.co.monterey.ca.us/planning/docs/plans/Big_Sur_LUP_complete.PDF

8. CONSERVATION EASEMENT DOCUMENTATION REPORT