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BIOLOGICAL MEMORANDUM

TO:	Trent Sanson DeNova Homes, Inc. 1500 Willow Pass Ct Concord, CA 94520
FROM:	Cedrick Villaseñor, Senior Biologist Montrose Environmental Solutions 1801 7th Street Suite 100 Sacramento, CA 95811
SUBJECT:	Pre-construction Survey Results - DeNova Homes Sonoma Highway Housing Project
DATE:	5/17/2023

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this memorandum is to document the results of the pre-construction survey conducted for the DeNova Homes Sonoma Highway Housing Project, located at 19320 Sonoma Highway, Sonoma, California. The Proposed Project is a 2.15 acre property (Project Site) (APN's 127-202-006 and -007).

The pre-construction survey was conducted by Montrose biologist Cedrick Villaseñor on May 11, 2023, for presence of pallid bat (*Antrozous pallidus*) or suitable roosting habitat, foraging western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*), presence of congested-headed hayfield tarplant (*Hemizonia congesta* ssp. *congesta*), and nesting birds including passerines and raptors. The project site includes one house building structure that is proposed for demolition, native and non-native trees and shrubs that are proposed for removal, and ruderal grassland habitat proposed for grading.

Results of the survey and recommendations to avoid potential impacts associated with the project to the aformerntioned sensitive biological resources are presented below.

METHODOLOGY

Focused Botanical Survey

Pedestrian survey activity consisted of transects approximately 30 feet apart was conducted during the blooming period of the congested-headed hayfield tarplant (*H. congesta* ssp*. congesta*). This is a special-status plant species with the potential to occur within the Project Site. The congested-headed hayfield tarplant is in bloom and identifiable between April and November. At the time of the survey, the ruderal grassland had been recently mowed as weed abatement practice for fire prevention and life-safety for the neighbors. However, mowing clippings were left in place and were still fresh and identifiable. Although the ruderal grassland does contain marginally suitable habitat for the congested-headed hayfield tarplant, none were observed. No other *Hemezonia sp.* of tarplant or other genera of tarplant were observed during the survey.

Bat Roosting Habitat Survey

Daytime survey for bat habitat within the Project Site was conducted by identifying any suitable bat habitat and roosts, including cavities and crevices within the abandoned buildings and trees scheduled for removal. All potential cavities and crevices within the existing buildings were surveyed and inspected for roosting bats and bat signs, including guano (*i.e.,* accumulated excrement and remains). Presence or sign of bat roosting were not observed during the survey. All trees surveyed did not contain suitable roosting habitat for pallid bats (*A. pallidus*). Although the abandoned home building does contain marginal night time roosting habitat for bats, there was no sign that bats have currently or previously used the abandoned home building for day time roosting.

Western Bumble Bee Survey

Western bumble bees (*B. occidentalis*) are known to forage in urbanized open grassy areas. The ruderal grassland habitat associated with parcel APN 127-202-006 contains a mixture of native and non-native grasses and forbes. Due to that the ruderal grassland habitat was mowed for fire prevention, the Project Site no longer contains suitable foraging habitat for western bumble bees. Western bumble bees are known to nest underground, occasionally in abandoned rodent burrows or other cavities. No active nests or rodent burrows suitable for nesting were observed during the survey.

Nesting Bird Survey

A nesting bird survey was conducted on and within 500 feet of the Project Site. Survey efforts consisted of identifying active bird and raptor nests protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act that could potentially be affected by the proposed project. Survey techniques consisted of walking transects and using 8x40 magnification binoculars to identify potentially active nests. Methodology to determine potentially active nests sites included visual identification of nests of newer material, nest activity, and presence of nesting behaviors such as nest building, entering into tree cavities, feeding young, and defending the immediate area.

One active northern mockingbird (*Mimus polyglottos*) nest was detected and documented. The nest is located in a young coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) tree that is approximately 15 feet tall and is located in the center of parcel APN 127-202-006 (**Figure 1**). An adult mockingbird was observed removing a fecal sac from the nest in the tree. Additional food delivery trips were observed. Chicks were detected audibly but age was not determined to not disturb the nest. The nestling period for northern mockingbird chicks is known to range between 12 and 13 days. Once fully developed the nestlings will fledge and although mobile, they will remain dependent on adults for several days and may remain in the nesting tree.

Figure 1

RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No special-status plant species were observed during the pre-construction surveys conducted on May 11, 2023. Based on results of the current conditions of the ruderal grassland during the surveys, it is not anticipated that western bumble bee is likely to occur. The Project Site does not contain actively roosting bats. No evidence of bat roosts or maternity sites was observed during the habitat assessment.

The northern mockingbird nest may remain active for up to 12-13 days before chicks fledge. However the fledglings may remain in the nest tree for several days after fledgling. Therefore, a 50-foot buffer is recommended to be established around the nesting tree to prevent abandonment of the active nest identified during the survey. The buffer should be maintained until the young have fledged and have left the nesting tree. Construction activities including equipment parking or material staging areas should not occur within the 50-foot buffer. If project activies begin more than 14 days after this survey, additional preconstruction nesting bird surveys will be required.