

SAGE ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

Environmental • Biological • Habitat Restoration • Regulatory Compliance Services

July 6, 2010

Mr. Kevin Radecki, Executive Director
Industry Urban-Development Agency
15625 East Stafford Street
P.O. Box 3366
City of Industry, CA 91744-0366

Subject: Results of Focused Coastal California Gnatcatcher Surveys

Project: Expanded Alignment - SR-57/SR-60 Confluence Grand Avenue Interchange Improvement Project, City of Industry, Los Angeles County, California

Dear Mr. Radecki,

Sage Environmental Group was retained by Industry Urban-Development Agency to conduct focused presence/absence surveys for the coastal California gnatcatcher (*Poliophtila californica californica*; CAGN) in suitable coastal sage scrub (CSS) habitats (survey area) surrounding the proposed SR57/SR-60/Grand Avenue Interchange Improvement Project Site and the Diamond Bar Creek Improvement Project Site in the City of Industry and the City of Diamond Bar, Los Angeles County, California (project vicinity). This report summarizes the results of the 2010 CAGN surveys within the study area of the project vicinity.

Introduction

Site Location and Description

The study area is located approximately one mile northeast of the intersection of State Routes 60 and 57 in the City of Diamond Bar, Los Angeles County, California. For the purpose of this report, the project vicinity is generally defined to extend approximately 750 feet from the existing SR-60 right-of-way within the proposed improvement area alignment (Exhibit 1). The study area includes several remnant patches of coastal sage scrub on the slopes overlooking Diamond Bar Creek (Exhibit 1). The project vicinity is predominantly composed of disturbed areas and ruderal/non-native landscaping along the freeway frontage and golf course. A mixed riparian woodland, significant amounts of ruderal habitat, and remnant patches of CSS occur around most of the study area. The CSS is dominated by California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and also has California encelia (*Encelia californica*) and coast prickly pear (*Opuntia littoralis*) components. The elevation is approximately 580 feet above mean sea level (msl) at its lowest point and 630 feet above msl at its highest. The project vicinity is located on the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) San Dimas 7.5-minute topographic quadrangle in Sections 9 and 16 of T.2S, R.9W. Representative site photographs are included as Attachment B.

Coastal California Gnatcatcher

The coastal California gnatcatcher is a federally threatened species and a California species of concern. The historic range of this species extended from the coast and foothills of Ventura County south through Los Angeles, southwestern San Bernardino, western Riverside, Orange, and San Diego Counties of California into northwestern Baja California, Mexico. Populations have since become increasingly fragmented. This species is a permanent resident of Diegan, Riversidian, and Venturan sage scrub sub-

associations found from sea level to 2,500 feet in elevation. Within its range, it associates strongly with California sagebrush dominant habitats and also occurs in mixed scrub habitats with lesser percentages of sagebrush. Other shrub species important for this species include California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*), white sage (*Salvia apiana*), black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), and chaparral broom (*Baccharis sarothroides*). Chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*) habitats may also support breeding pairs, especially where CSS may occur nearby or form a component (Bontrager 1991).

The coastal California gnatcatcher is a small, secretive songbird with grayish coloration and faint white outer tail margins. Males of this species have a black cap during the breeding season. Factors in the decline of this species include overly frequent fire cycles, non-native plant invasions, brown-headed cowbird (*Molothrus ater*) nest parasitism, predation, and widespread habitat loss to urbanization and agriculture (Mock et al. 1990, Bontrager 1991). Rangeland habitat loss is estimated at 75 to 90% (Westman 1981), and the populations that remain are under increasing pressure from wildfires and development.

Survey Methodology

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)-permitted biologist Kris Alberts (TE-039640-2.1) conducted focused CAGN surveys according to USFWS guidelines (1997) to determine CAGN presence/absence within the survey area. Six surveys were conducted as shown below in Table 1. Surveys were not conducted during windy, rainy, or extremely hot conditions. Various routes were utilized in order to conduct an unbiased presence/absence survey of the project site, and MP3 vocalizations of CAGN were played for 5-15 second intervals over approximate 3-minute durations every 50-100 feet. Since the amount of suitable CSS was so low onsite (less than 5 acres), well under 80 acres of suitable habitat was systematically surveyed per day for CAGN presence. All wildlife and wildlife sign (including tracks, scat, carcasses, feathers, burrows, nests, excavations, and vocalizations) detected during CAGN surveys were recorded in fieldnotes. All sensitive species observed were also recorded.

Table 1 – CAGN Survey Dates and Weather Conditions

Date	Start/End Time	Start/End Time Temperature (F°)	Start/End Time Wind Speeds (mph)	Start/End Cloud Cover. Precipitation %
3.15.10	0830 - 1005	74 / 77	0-2 / 0-2	8%, 0%, / 8%, 0%
3.22.10	0815 - 0940	64 / 67	0-2 / 0-3	0% throughout
3.29.10	0832 -0930	64 / 67	0-1 / 0-1	50%, 0% / 80%, 0%
4.05.10	1040 - 1132	61 / 61	2-12 / 2-14	100%, 0% / 95%, 0%
4.13.10	0930 - 1024	60 / 62	1-4 / 1-4	0%, 0% / 25%, 0%
4.23.10	0740 - 0935	55 / 60	1-4 / 1-4	0% throughout

Results

Following the conclusion of the protocol surveys, no CAGN were found present during any survey, and it was determined that no CAGN territories were established within the study area (Figure 1). A species list of all wildlife detected in the project study area is included as Appendix A. Least Bell's vireo (LBVI) and yellow warbler were the only sensitive species encountered during this survey; those species will be discussed in a forthcoming report for protocol LBVI/southwestern willow flycatcher surveys conducted in Diamond Bar Creek and three riparian sections on Diamond Bar Golf Course.

Mr. Radecki
July 6, 2010
Page 3

Conclusion

California gnatcatchers have been observed infrequently on the survey area since 2007. Kris Alberts first observed a CAGN pair foraging onsite April 27, 2007. Mr. Alberts observed CAGN onsite on two more occasions in 2007, but never again documented a pair. In addition, one lone female CAGN was seen foraging onsite consistently from February to March 20, 2008. This female left the area shortly after March 20, 2008. CAGN have not been observed onsite since that date.

As long as the remnant CSS remains onsite, there will be potential for the site to contain CAGN. At the time of this report, enough suitable habitat remains to support breeding of the species.

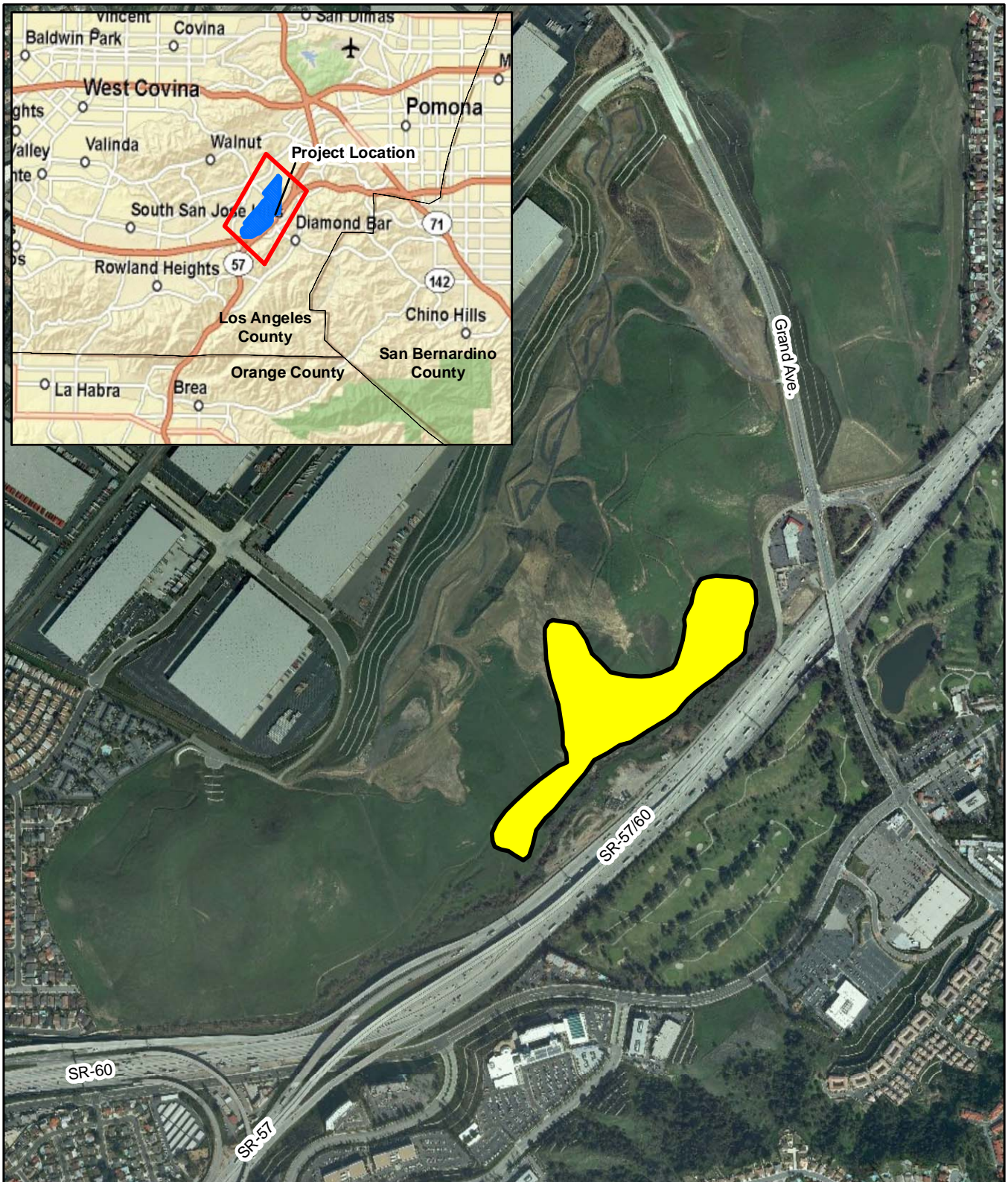
If you have any questions or concerns regarding this 2010 United States Fish and Wildlife Service protocol survey for coastal California gnatcatcher, please call me at 949.243.2282.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alissa Cope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Alissa Cope
Principal
Sage Environmental Group

Enclosures: Exhibit 1 – Diamond Bar Creek Gnatcatcher Survey Area Location Map
 Attachment A – List of Wildlife Species Observed
 Attachment B – Photo Page



Legend

 Gnatcatcher Survey Area



0 500 1,000 1,500
Feet

Exhibit 1
Diamond Bar Creek
Gnatcatcher Survey Area
Location Map

Appendix A: List of Wildlife Species Observed

Scientific Name	Common Name
CLASS AMPHIBIA	AMPHIBIANS
HYLIDAE	TREE FROGS
<i>Hyla regilla</i>	Pacific chorus frog
CLASS REPTILIA	REPTILES
PHRYNOSOMATIDAE	LIZARDS
<i>Sceloporus occidentalis</i>	western fence lizard
<i>Uta stansburiana</i>	side-blotched lizard
CLASS AVES	BIRDS
ARDEIDAE	HERONS, BITTERNS
<i>Ardea alba</i>	great egret
ANATIDAE	DUCKS, GEESE, SWANS
<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	mallard
LARIDAE	GULLS, TERNS
<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	ring-billed gull
CATHARTIDAE	VULTURES
<i>Cathartes aura</i>	turkey vulture
ACCIPITRIDAE	HAWKS, KITES, EAGLES
<i>Buteo lineatus</i>	red-shouldered hawk
<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	red-tailed hawk
FALCONIDAE	FALCONS
<i>Falco sparverius</i>	American kestrel
CHARADRIIDAE	PLOVERS, OYSTERCATCHER, STILTS
<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	killdeer
COLUMBIDAE	PIGEONS & DOVES
<i>Columba livia</i>	rock pigeon
<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	mourning dove
APODIDAE	SWIFTS
<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>	white-throated swift
TROCHILIDAE	HUMMINGBIRDS
<i>Calypte anna</i>	Anna's hummingbird
<i>Calypte costae</i>	Costa's hummingbird
<i>Selasphorus sasin</i>	Allen's hummingbird
PICIDAE	WOODPECKERS
<i>Colaptes auratus</i>	northern flicker
<i>Picoides nuttallii</i>	Nuttall's woodpecker
TYRANNIDAE	TYRANT FLYCATCHERS
<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Cassin's kingbird
<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	western kingbird
<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	ash-throated flycatcher
<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	black phoebe
VIREONIDAE	VIREOS
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	least Bell's vireo
CORVIDAE	JAYS & CROWS
<i>Aphelocoma californica</i>	western scrub-jay
<i>Corvus brachyrhynchos</i>	American crow
<i>Corvus corax</i>	common raven
HIRUNDINIDAE	SWALLOWS

Appendix A: List of Wildlife Species Observed

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	barn swallow
<i>Petrochelidon pyrrhonota</i>	cliff swallow
<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	northern rough-winged swallow
<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	tree swallow
AEGITHALIDAE	BUSHTITS
<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	bushtit
TROGLODYTIDAE	WRENS
<i>Thryomanes bewickii</i>	Bewick's wren
MIMIDAE	MOCKINGBIRDS, THRASHERS
<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	northern mockingbird
STURNIDAE	STARLINGS
<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	European starling
PARULIDAE	WOOD WARBLERS
<i>Vermivora celata</i>	orange-crowned warbler
<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	yellow warbler
<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	yellow-rumped warbler
<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Wilson's warbler
<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	common yellowthroat
ICTERIDAE	BLACKBIRDS
<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	red-winged blackbird
<i>Molothrus ater</i>	brown-headed cowbird
<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	hooded oriole
<i>Icterus bullockii</i>	Bullock's oriole
EMBERIZIDAE	NEW WORLD SPARROWS, TOWHEES
<i>Pipilo crissalis</i>	California towhee
<i>Pipilo maculatus</i>	spotted towhee
<i>Zonotrichia leucophrys</i>	white-crowned sparrow
<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	song sparrow
CARDINALIDAE	CARDINALS
<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	black-headed grosbeak
<i>Passerina caerulea</i>	blue grosbeak
FRINGILLIDAE	FINCHES
<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	lesser goldfinch
<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	house finch
PASSERIDAE	OLD WORLD SPARROWS
<i>Passer domesticus</i>	house sparrow
CLASS MAMMALIA	MAMMALS
LEPORIDAE	HARES & RABBITS
<i>Sylvilagus audubonii</i>	desert cottontail
SCIURIDAE	SQUIRRELS, CHIPMUNKS
<i>Spermophilus beecheyi</i>	California ground squirrel
GEOMYIDAE	POCKET GOPHERS
<i>Thomomys bottae</i>	Botta's pocket gopher
CANIDAE	COYOTES, WOLVES & FOXES

Appendix A: List of Wildlife Species Observed

Scientific Name	Common Name
<i>Canis latrans</i>	coyote
MEPHITIDAE	SKUNKS & WEASELS
<i>Mephitis mephitis</i>	striped skunk
PROCYONIDAE	RACCOONS, COATIS
<i>Procyon lotor</i>	raccoon
FELIDAE	CATS
<i>Lynx rufus</i>	bobcat
BOVIDAE	SHEEP, GOATS, CATTLE
<i>Bos taurus</i>	domestic cattle

Appendix B: Photo Page



These two photos depict the California sagebrush dominant coastal sage scrub at the Diamond Bar/City of Industry survey area on the slopes adjacent to Diamond Bar Creek on March 15, 2010.

