

SCREENING FORM FOR LOW-EFFECT HCP DETERMINATIONS

I. Project Information

A. Project name:

Valley Boulevard/Pepper Avenue Intersection Realignment and Improvement Project

B. Affected species:

Delhi Sands flower-loving fly (*Rhaphiomidas terminatus abdominalis*; DSF)

C. Project size:

16.8 acres

D. Brief project description including minimization and mitigation plans:

The project includes realignment and improvement of the Valley Boulevard and Pepper Avenue intersection in the City of Colton, San Bernardino County, California. Approximately 1.8 acres of low quality DSF habitat would be impacted by the project. Impacts to the DSF would be mitigated either through acquisition and conservation of a 2.04-acre parcel adjacent to the proposed project (Hospital Preserve Extension Alternative) or purchase of 5 acres of credit within the Vulcan Materials Inc. Colton Dunes Conservation Bank (Conservation Bank Alternative). If the Hospital Preserve Extension Alternative is chosen, copies of the final management plan and conservation easement will be on file at the Carlsbad Fish and Wildlife Office before the permit is issued. If the Conservation Bank Alternative is chosen, the County would provide proof of purchase of credits toward conservation of 5 acres at the Conservation Bank prior to any ground disturbing activities.

II. Does the HCP fit the low-effect criteria in the HCP Handbook?

A. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on federally listed, proposed, or candidate species and their habitats covered under the HCP prior to implementation of the mitigation plan? (Handbook pg. 1-8 and 1-9)

Yes. A maximum of 1.8-acres of DSF habitat would be impacted, and the habitat quality is considered low because there is a dense cover of non-native annuals over the area.

B. Are the effects of the HCP minor or negligible on other environmental values or resources (e.g. air quality, geology and soils, water quality and quantity, socio-economic, cultural resources, recreation, visual resources, etc.) prior to implementation of the mitigation plan? (Handbook pg. 1-8 and 1-9)

Yes. No important geological, cultural, recreational, visual or wetland resources exist on the project site. Air quality impacts during construction would be limited and localized, and additional measures to reduce construction-related air quality impacts will be implemented. Following project construction, air quality would be slightly improved by reduced vehicle idling time due to traffic improvements. Water quality impacts would be negligible. The project is consistent with existing land use designations. No additional socio-economic impacts were identified.

C. Would the impacts of this HCP, considered together with the impacts of other past, present and reasonably foreseeable similarly situated projects not result, over time, in cumulative effects to environmental values or resources which would be considered significant? (Handbook pg. 5-3).

Yes. Few DSF-occupied areas remain near major roads, and we anticipate that few future road construction projects will have substantial impacts to the DSF.

III. Do any of the exceptions to categorical exclusions apply to this HCP? (from 516 DM 2.3, Appendix 2)

Would implementation of the HCP:

A. Have significant adverse effects on public health or safety?

No. The affected area would be small, and the negligible and temporary impacts to air quality are not likely to result in impacts to public health or safety.

B. Have adverse effects on such unique geographic characteristics as historic or cultural resources, park, recreation or refuge lands, wilderness areas, wild or scenic rivers, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, prime farmlands, wetlands, floodplains, or ecologically significant or critical areas, including those listed on the Department's National Register of Natural Landmarks?

No. There are no cultural resources, registered Natural Landmarks, sole or principal drinking water aquifers, wilderness areas, prime farmlands, or wild scenic rivers within the project area or immediately adjacent to it; therefore, there would be no impacts to these resources.

C. Have highly controversial environmental effects?

No. The project would have negligible and non-controversial environmental impacts.

D. Have highly uncertain and potentially significant environmental effects or involve unique or unknown environmental risks?

No. The project site is within an area with a history of urban development, and the environmental impacts of the road alignment are predictable.

E. Establish a precedent for future action or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects?

No. The project would not establish a precedent for future actions or represent a decision in principle about future actions with potentially significant environmental effects. Future similar actions will be evaluated on their own merits.

F. Be directly related to other actions with individually insignificant but cumulatively significant environmental effects?

No. Although the proposed project is directly related to a freeway interchange project that may impact DSF, the freeway interchange project is the subject of an Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation that will address cumulative impacts to the DSF on a regional scale. The proposed project is not related to any other known actions.

G. Have adverse effects on properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places?

No. There are no properties listed or eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places at the project site.

H. Have adverse effects on listed or proposed species, or have adverse effects on designated Critical Habitat for these species?

No. Impacts to 1.8 acres of low quality DSF habitat in the vicinity of high quality DSF habitat represent a negligible loss. No critical habitat has been designated or proposed for the DSF; therefore, none will be affected.

I. Have adverse effects on wetlands, floodplains or be considered a water development project thus requiring compliance with either Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management), Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act?

No. The project will not impact floodplains or wetlands and thus will not require compliance with either Executive Order 11988 (Floodplain Management) or Executive Order 11990 (Protection of Wetlands), or the Fish and Wildlife Coordination Act.

J. Threaten to violate a Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment?

No. Implementation of the proposed project does not threaten to violate any

Federal, State, local or tribal law or requirement imposed for the protection of the environment. All other Federal and State regulations shall be adhered to.

IV. ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION STATEMENT

Based on the analysis above, the Valley/Pepper Realignment HCP qualifies as a "Low Effect" HCP as defined in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service *Habitat Conservation Planning Handbook*. Therefore, this action is categorically excluded from further NEPA documentation as provided by 516 DM 2, Appendix 1 and 516 DM 6, Appendix 1.

Other supporting documents (list): Habitat Conservation Plan

Concurrence:



(1) Field Supervisor

August 31, 2006

Date

(2) Geographic ARD

Date