



Steven Weed
P.O. Box 1394
Menlo Park, California, 94026

April 15, 2019

RE: Supplemental Information for the Dunes at Half Moon Bay Biological Resources Evaluation (WRA 2018)

Dear Steve,

In 2018, WRA conducted a biological resource evaluation (BRE) for the proposed project called The Dunes at Half Moon Bay (Project) located in the City of Half Moon Bay (City), in San Mateo County. The BRE assessed the potential Project footprint (Project Area) and an approximately 300-foot buffer around these areas (Study Area). The term "Study Area" is used to describe both the Project Area as well as the buffer area and associated roads and trails adjacent to the proposed Project Area. The BRE was prepared prior to proposed project plans; this letter report is intended to be a supplement to the 2018 BRE and provide clarification and/or impact assessment and mitigation measures.

Site Description

Project Area and Study Area

The BRE (WRA 2018) includes a 300-foot buffer around the Project Area. The inclusion of this buffer was based on previous environmental review documents in 2000 that addressed portions of the site. During the California Coastal Commission review of the document, the CCC request that the buffer be extended to 300 feet in lieu of 200 feet for preliminary assessment of sensitive resources. The overall intent was to continue to take a comprehensive review of the vicinity of the Project Area.

Topographic Depression

Within the active agriculture field, a topographic depression of approximately 0.27 acre in size and supporting ponded water was found in the extreme southern corner of the active agricultural field in the Project Area (WRA 2018). The vegetation in this area was sparse; approximately 85% of this depression was bare ground. The minimal vegetation included hydrophytic vegetation and marginally met the wetland vegetation criterion outline in the *U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Wetlands Delineation Manual* ("Corps Manual"; Environmental Laboratory 1987) and the *Regional Supplement to the Corps of Engineers Wetland Delineation Manual: Arid West Region* ("Arid West Supplement"; Corps 2008). At the time of the initial delineation, it also met the wetland hydrology criterion but not the hydric soil criterion.

Because this feature marginally met two of three criteria during an above normal rainfall period, it was investigated further to determine its potential as a coastal wetland under CCC/LCP definitions, which would qualify it as a sensitive resource under CEQA. To confirm the

hydrologic conditions within this depressional feature, WRA performed additional hydrology monitoring from January through April, 2018. During four separate site investigations during this time, neither ponded water nor soil saturation was observed in the topographic depression. Overall, local geomorphic conditions and the presence of hydrophytic plants during the site visit suggests that during periods of rain or continued saturation, water collects in this area; however, hydrological conditions do not occur at sufficient duration and extent to form wetland conditions consistent with the three parameters required by the Corps and RWQCB to be considered a wetland. Thus, WRA concludes that this portion of the active field does not meet the criteria for wetland hydrology and is not subject to jurisdiction under any of the federal or state regulations discussed herein.

Riparian Habitat Area Clarification

In the southern portion of the Study Area, 0.96 acre of riparian habitat occurs in association with the perennial stream, Frenchmans Creek. In the northern portion of the Study Area, 0.11 acre of riparian habitat occurs in association with the intermittent stream, Pullman Ditch. The entire extent of riparian vegetation (including 30-foot and 50-foot ESHA buffers required by the City LCP) occurs off-site, within the 300-foot buffer area, and totals 1.07 acre.

California Wild Strawberry

The 1993 City of Half Moon Bay Local Coastal Land Use Plan (LUP) addresses California Wild Strawberry in Policy 3-36 and requires any development within 1/2-mile mitigate against the destruction of any strawberry in one of the following ways:

- Prevent any development, trampling, or other destructive activity which would destroy the plant, or
- After determining specifically if the plants involved are of particular value, successfully transplant them or have them successfully transplanted to some other suitable site. Determination of the importance of the plants can only be made by a professional doing work in strawberry breeding.

No California Wild Strawberry was observed within the Study Area during the site visits.

Wildlife Species and Mitigation Measures

Monarch Butterflies: Potential to Occur and Mapping

Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) is not a unique species as defined in the City of Half Moon Bay LUP nor is it a rare or endangered species. The term "rare" was a previous designation under California Endangered Species Act (CESA) along with "endangered;" but CESA has since been amended to change the "rare" designation to "threatened." The monarch is not designated as threatened or endangered under the CESA or Federal Endangered Species Act (FESA). Its status is under review by the USFWS for candidacy for protections under the FESA; however, a decision has not yet been made. Monarch is also not a species of special concern as defined by CDFW; therefore, it also does not meet the CCC definition of an ESHA. It was classified as a special-status invertebrate, separate from the special animals list; however, the special-status invertebrate list is no longer maintained and was last updated in 2006. Although winter roost sites are considered important and generally protected via CEQA

and CDFW review, monarch is not considered a rare, threatened, endangered, unique, or other status species.

The broader CCC definition of an ESHA that "any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments," could be extended to some monarch winter roost sites, but the inconsistent use of the Study Area does not warrant this designation as especially valuable. In addition, the roost location along Frenchman's Creek was not identified as a priority site in the publication produced for Xerces Society on the status of monarch wintering habitat in California (Pelton et al 2016). No locations in San Mateo County were classified in the top 50 priority list for conservation.

Figure 5: *Special-Status Wildlife Species Documented within 5 Miles of the Study Area* shows monarch butterfly Occurrence #5 which appears to be a large circle overlapping a portion of the Project Area. Despite this appearance, the occurrence is identified as predominantly south of Frenchman's Creek in the riparian corridor. The California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB; CDFW 2018) occurrences are the basis for BRE Figure 5. Per CNDDDB occurrence at this location, the data is accurate to 0.4 mile and is represented as a circular feature with a radius of 0.4 mile from the estimated observation location. The surveys generating this occurrence report were done in multiple years in the 1980s and 1990s (CNDDDB 2018). In some years several hundred monarchs were observed, but in other years zero were observed. The last three years for which there is documentation (1995, 1996, 1998), no monarchs were observed, although citizen science databases show there may be occasional winter activity (iNaturalist 2019).

The proposed Project includes a structure adjacent to the eucalyptus trees along the southern edge of the property. To avoid impacts to potential monarch winter roost sites, the developer shall implement one of the following measures:

1. If feasible, work within 100 feet of the eucalyptus trees along the southern property boundary shall not be initiated during the winter months (October 1st through March 15th), when monarchs could use the trees for roosting; or
2. If "1" above is not feasible, and construction activities are to commence between March 6th and September 30th, the following measures shall be implemented:
 - a) A pre-construction survey for roosting monarch butterflies shall be conducted within 7 days of the start of project activities occurring within the 100 foot area.
 - b) If monarch butterflies are detected roosting in the trees, then consultation with CDFW will be required to determine how and when to proceed with activities and if additional mitigation measures are required.
 - c) If monarch butterflies are not detected roosting in the trees, no further mitigation is required.

California Red-legged Frog

As stated in the BRE, California red-legged frog is species is unlikely to occur within the Study Area except during overland dispersal events on rainy nights. To prevent incidental take of this species, proposed Project construction activities should occur only during daylight hours.

Bats

Potential impacts to special-status bats may occur during vegetation removal, excavation, and general ground disturbing activities. These activities may potentially cause injury to or the death of special-status bat individuals.

Based on the proposed preliminary Project plans, tree removal may occur as a result of project activities. Two special-status bat species, western red bat and hoary bat, may utilize trees within Project Area for non-maternity roosting during the non-hibernation season. If the proposed Project plans include tree removal, felled trees must lay undisturbed overnight before further tree moving (i.e. hauling offsite, chipping, etc.) can proceed.

Special-status and common nesting birds

Special-status and non-special-status native birds are protected by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 (MBTA) and California Fish and Game Code (CFGC). Based on the proposed preliminary Project plans, potential impacts to these species and their habitats could occur during the removal of vegetation or during ground-disturbing activities. These activities could result in the direct removal or destruction of active nests or may create audible, vibratory, and/or visual disturbances that cause birds to abandon active nests.

In compliance with the MBTA and CFGC, a survey for active bird nests shall be conducted by a qualified biologist no more than 14 days prior to the start of proposed activities (vegetation removal, grading, or other ground-disturbing activities) during the nesting season (February 1 through August 15). The survey shall be conducted in a sufficient area around the work site to identify the location and status of any nests that could potentially be directly or indirectly affected by Project activities. Based on the results of the pre-construction breeding bird survey, a qualified biologist shall include the following measures:

- If active nests of protected species are found within Project impact areas or close enough to these areas to affect nesting success, a work exclusion zone shall be established around each nest by a qualified biologist. Established exclusion zones shall remain in place until all young in the nest have fledged or the nest otherwise becomes inactive. Appropriate exclusion zone sizes vary dependent upon bird species, nest location, existing visual buffers, ambient sound levels, and other factors; an exclusion zone radius may be as small as 25 feet (for common, disturbance-adapted species) or as large as 250 feet or more for raptors. Exclusion zone size may also be reduced from established levels if supported with nest monitoring by a qualified biologist indicating that work activities are not adversely impacting the nest.

San Francisco Tree Lupine

As identified in the BRE (WRA 2018), tree lupine (*Lupinus arboreus*) was documented within the Project Area and within the 300-foot buffer portion of the Study Area. This plant species is host to San Francisco tree lupine moth (*Grapholita edwardsiana*), a City Local Coastal Plan (LCP) Rare Species. The location of the tree lupine within the Project Area was adjacent to Highway 1 along the edge of the active agricultural field. Within the Study Area (but not within the Project Area), additional tree lupine were observed within the native coastal scrub habitat to the west of the Project Area.

The City LCP recommends large populations of tree lupine (more than 100 plants in a 1/10-acre area) within 1 mile of the coastline be protected. A total of one individual tree lupine was observed within the Project Area, and three to five individuals were observed within the 300-foot buffer. Due to the very small number of plants in the Project Area and buffer, these areas do not require protection under the City LCP. The majority of the tree lupine were observed in the coastal scrub habitat to the west of the Project Area and will not be impacted by the proposed Project. Based on the proposed preliminary Project plans, the impact of the single tree lupine within the Project Area would not be considered significant to the City and mitigation would not be necessary.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Leslie Lazarotti".

Leslie Lazarotti
Senior Associate Biologist