

June 2022



TransTerra Consulting

INTEGRATED ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

To:

Joel Geck-Moeller
PO Box 688
Loleta, CA 95551

CC:

Cade McNamara
Planning and Building Department
3015 H Street
Eureka, CA 95501

Prepared By:

TransTerra Consulting
PO Box 1086
Arcata, CA 95518

Re: Sensitive fauna assessment for 12 Hawks Hill Road (APN# 308-231-002)

The following memorandum discusses an assessment for sensitive fauna potentially present or affected by proposed development on parcel 308-231-002. Transterra Consulting prepared a botanical assessment with two field visits in 2022. However, we are addressing fauna as requested in this document. Protocol level surveys have not been conducted for this species and the assessment relies on observations of habitat and recorded species near the site.

The Project Area includes areas that will be directly disturbed as a result of the project including vegetation clearing and building. The Project Area is within Assessor Parcel Number is (APN) 308-231-002 and is located at 12 Hawks Hill Road, Loleta, CA. A Coastal Development Permit (CDP) has been applied for to approve the construction of a new approximately 2,024 SF two-story residence, 456 SF uncovered deck, 40 SF entry deck, gravel driveway with paved apron, a detached two-car garage constructed on an existing 25x25-foot concrete slab, and retroactive permitting of an existing well. The CDP will also authorize brush clearing for the home site and north of the residence for the planting of fruit trees, logan berries, and a residential garden area. The parcel is currently developed with a well and on-site wastewater treatment system. The Humboldt County Planning Commission will consider an approval of the Coastal Development Permit per §15303 of the State CEQA Guidelines.

The Project Area is located in Humboldt County, in the Loleta area, on the East and West side of Hawks Hill Road, at the intersection of Table Bluff Road and Hawks Hill Road. Present General Plan Land Use Designation: Agriculture Exclusive/Agriculture Grazing-160 acres (AE/AG-(160)). Eel River Area Plan, 2017 General Plan. Density: 160 acres per unit, Slope Stability: Low Instability (1). Present Zoning: Agriculture Exclusive (AE-160) / Archaeological Resource Area Outside Shelter Cove (A). (Figure 1)

The County has issued two Stop Work Orders (SWOs) under Code Enforcement cases CE21 -0987 in December of 2021 and CE22-1518 in March of 2022. These Code Enforcement cases have been resolved with the application for a CDP filed in March of 2022. The SWOs were in response to major vegetation removal in the amount of approximately 12,000 square feet. The vegetation removal occurred prior to the field visits and botanical assessment.



Figure 1. Aerial image of the Project Area and existing infrastructure

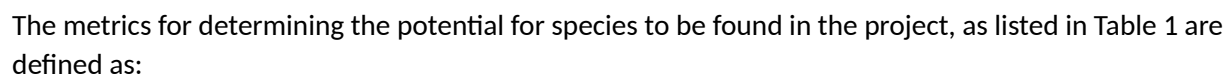
The area covered by the field assessment was determined by the project description provided by the client, in addition to observations for any possible adjacent areas of direct, indirect, or cumulative

effects, as discussed below. The reconnaissance survey includes an assessment of the various habitats present in the Project Area, any sensitive habitat types, habitats associated with rare plant species, an inventory of plant species, and an inventory of migratory bird species, specifically via nests. All observations of habitats, including evidence for pertinent floral areas, are recorded on-site. The field assessment for this project was conducted on May 19, 2022, and June 20, 2022, by TransTerra Associate Biologists Nate Johle and Kale McNeill.

The Biological Assessment area (BAA) includes areas around the project site that could be indirectly affected by development in the Project Area. The BAA is located in the North Coast Ranges Subregion of the Northwestern California Region of the California Floristic Province (Jepson Flora Project, 2020). The climate classification for this area is Warm Temperate (Köppen, 1936), with moderate to warm temperatures on average and most precipitation occurring during winter months.

The property is situated in the Coastal Zone to the northeast of the town of Loleta on a coastal terrace. (Humboldt County, 2020). Elevations on the property are approximately 165 to 220 feet above sea level. The BAA is primarily flat; slopes range between approximately 0 to 10 percent slopes within the general area of the proposed residence.

The following analysis of biological resources is based on field observations and 9-quadrant database searches for historical or existing occurrences of special status animal species. Table 1 includes a list of all species recorded in the area from the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB), their preferred habitat, and potential to be found in the BAA and Project Area. Figure 3 shows historic CNDDB occurrences within a 1-mile and 5-mile radius. It is important to note that CNDDB occurrences are often estimated based on vague descriptions or very old observations that have not been confirmed and do not represent accurate extant communities or habitats. The information is for estimation and guidance purposes. Many of the recorded observations date back before the 1960s and are estimated using written notes from biologists or other interested parties.



- None: there is no appropriate habitat for the species in the Project Area or BAA.
- Low: there are no previous records of occurrence in the 9-quad area, and minimal or marginal suitable habitat in the Project Area or BAA.
- Moderate: there are some previously recorded occurrences in the 9-quad area, and there is appropriate habitat in the Project Area or BAA.
- High: there are numerous previously recorded observations in the 9-quad area, including observations near the Project Area or BAA, and the Project Area or BAA includes highly available and appropriate habitat.
- Present: species were observed during the on-site field assessment.

The table below summarizes species that were determined to have high to moderate potential to occur in the BAA or Project Area.

Though the Project Area and surrounding BAA do contain habitat for some special status species, the small fragmented nature of the parcel as well as nearby development and previous disturbance have degraded habitat. Numerous common species of wildlife, including migratory birds (which are protected under the Migratory Bird Act), amphibians, mammals and insects, likely utilize the parcel; however, sensitive species and habitats were not observed during the two field visits conducted in 2022, and both staff members are familiar with wildlife and fish species of the area. The likelihood of direct impacts to any sensitive species cannot be ruled out as protocol level surveys were not conducted. However, the likelihood is low due to habitat quality and fragmentation. Any development and vegetation removal or changes to pervious surface has the potential to indirectly impact both common and sensitive species and cumulative effects are possible. A complete analysis of all indirect or cumulative impacts to fauna is outside of the scope of this memorandum. However, the scale of the project and available habitat in the area indicate effects would not reach threshold levels of significance. The applicants plan to leave the majority of the parcel intact and only develop a small portion of it, as well as follow Best Management Practices (BMPs) imposed by various agencies, including Humboldt County and the California Coastal Commission, thereby reducing any indirect or cumulative impacts resulting from proposed development.

Please contact me with any comments or concerns regarding this report or future work required for your project. I can be reached at tami@trans-terra.com or (707) 845-7483.

Table 1.) CNDDDB occurrences in the 9-quad area

Abbreviations for ESA (federal Endangered Species Act) and CESA (California Endangered Species Act) status:						Abbreviations for CDFW status:			
E	Endangered	CT	Candidate Threatened	P	Proposed	FP	Fully Protected	N	Not listed
CE	Candidate endangered	D	Delisted			SSC	Species of Special Concern		
T	Threatened	N	Not listed			WL	Watchlist		

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	Cooper's hawk	N	N	WL	Woodland, chiefly of open, interrupted or marginal type.	Nest sites mainly in riparian growths of deciduous trees, as in canyon bottoms on river flood-plains; also, live oaks.	High- Open fields and forested Gulches present	Low- Foraging area only. No appropriate nest trees
<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	sharp-shinned hawk	N	N	WL	Ponderosa pine, black oak, riparian deciduous, mixed conifer, and Jeffrey pine habitats. Prefers riparian areas.	North-facing slopes with plucking perches are critical requirements. Nests usually within 275 ft of water.	High- Open fields and forested Gulches present	Low- Foraging area only. No appropriate nest trees
<i>Acipenser medirostris</i>	green sturgeon	N	N	SSC	These are the most marine species of sturgeon. Abundance increases northward of Point Conception. Spawns in the Sacramento, Klamath, and	Spawns at temps between 8-14 C. Preferred spawning substrate is large cobble but can range from clean sand to bedrock.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
					Trinity Rivers.			
<i>Agelaius tricolor</i>	tricolored blackbird	N	T	SSC	Highly colonial species, most numerous in Central Valley and vicinity. Largely endemic to California.	Requires open water, protected nesting substrate, and foraging area with insect prey within a few km of the colony.	High- Open fields and forested Gulches present	Low-Foraging area only
<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	grasshopper sparrow	N	N	SSC	Dense grasslands on rolling hills, lowland plains, in valleys and on hillsides on lower mountain slopes.	Favors native grasslands with a mix of grasses, forbs and scattered shrubs. Loosely colonial when nesting.	Low- Marginal habitat present; low number of occurrences recorded within 9-quadrant search	See BAA
<i>Anodonta californiensis</i>	California floater	N	N	N	Freshwater lakes and slow-moving streams and rivers. Taxonomy under review by specialists.	Generally in shallow water.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	pallid bat	N	N	SSC	Deserts, grasslands, shrublands, woodlands and forests. Most common in open, dry habitats with rocky areas for roosting.	Roosts must protect bats from high temperatures. Very sensitive to disturbance of roosting sites.	Moderate- Coastal forest and grasslands present	See BAA. Habitat value low due to disturbance
<i>Aplodontia rufa humboldtiana</i>	Humboldt mountain beaver	N	N	N	Coast Range in southwestern Del Norte County and northwestern Humboldt County.	Variety of coastal habitats, including coastal scrub, riparian forests, typically with open canopy and thickly vegetated understory.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Arborimus pomus</i>	Sonoma tree vole	N	N	SSC	North coast fog belt from Oregon border to Sonoma County. In Douglas-fir, redwood and montane	Feeds almost exclusively on Douglas-fir needles. Will occasionally take needles of grand fir, hemlock or spruce.	Moderate- Potential within unnamed Gulch	None- No habitat present

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
					hardwood-conifer forests.			
<i>Ardea alba</i>	great egret	N	N	N	Colonial nester in large trees.	Rookery sites located near marshes, tide-flats, irrigated pastures, and margins of rivers and lakes.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Ardea herodias</i>	great blue heron	N	N	N	Colonial nester in tall trees, cliffsides, and sequestered spots on marshes.	Rookery sites in close proximity to foraging areas: marshes, lake margins, tide-flats, rivers and streams, wet meadows.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Ascaphus truei</i>	Pacific tailed frog	N	N	SSC	Occurs in montane hardwood-conifer, redwood, Douglas-fir and ponderosa pine habitats.	Restricted to perennial montane streams. Tadpoles require water below 15 degrees C.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Bombus caliginosus</i>	obscure bumble bee	N	N	N	Coastal areas from Santa Barbara County to north to Washington state.	Food plant genera include Baccharis, Cirsium, Lupinus, Lotus, Grindelia and Phacelia.	Moderate-appropriate plant food genera present within broad species range	See BAA. Habitat value low due to disturbance
<i>Bombus occidentalis</i>	western bumble bee	N	N	N	Once common and widespread, species has declined precipitously from central CA to southern B.C., perhaps from disease.		Moderate-appropriate plant food genera present within broad species range	See BAA. Habitat value low due to disturbance
<i>Brachyramphus marmoratus</i>	marbled murrelet	T	E	N	Feeds near-shore; nests inland along coast from Eureka to Oregon border and from Half Moon Bay to Santa Cruz.	Nests in old-growth redwood-dominated forests, up to six miles inland, often in Douglas-fir.	Moderate- potential within unnamed Gulch	None- No habitat present
<i>Charadrius montanus</i>	mountain plover	N	N	SSC	Short grasslands, freshly plowed	Short vegetation, bare ground, and flat	High- Open fields present	Low- Foraging area only

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
					fields, newly sprouting grain fields, and sometimes sod farms.	topography. Prefers grazed areas and areas with burrowing rodents.		
<i>Charadrius nivosus nivosus</i>	western snowy plover	T	N	SSC	Sandy beaches, salt pond levees and shores of large alkali lakes.	Needs sandy, gravelly or friable soils for nesting.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Cicindela hirticollis gravida</i>	sandy beach tiger beetle	N	N	N	Inhabits areas adjacent to non-brackish water along the coast of California from San Francisco Bay to northern Mexico.	Clean, dry, light-colored sand in the upper zone. Subterranean larvae prefer moist sand not affected by wave action.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Circus hudsonius</i>	northern harrier	N	N	SSC	Coastal salt and freshwater marsh. Nest and forage in grasslands, from salt grass in desert sink to mountain cienagas.	Nests on ground in shrubby vegetation, usually at marsh edge; nest built of a large mound of sticks in wet areas.	High- Open fields present; coastal wetlands to the south of the property parcel	Low- Foraging area only. No appropriate nest trees
<i>Coccyzus americanus occidentalis</i>	western yellow-billed cuckoo	T	E	N	Riparian forest nester, along the broad, lower flood-bottoms of larger river systems.	Nests in riparian jungles of willow, often mixed with cottonwoods, with lower story of blackberry, nettles, or wild grape.	Moderate- potential within unnamed Gulch	None- No habitat present
<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Townsend's big-eared bat	N	N	SSC	Throughout California in a wide variety of habitats. Most common in mesic sites.	Roosts in the open, hanging from walls and ceilings. Roosting sites limiting. Extremely sensitive to human disturbance.	Moderate- forested habitat with openings	None- No habitat present
<i>Coturnicops noveboracensis</i>	yellow rail	N	N	SSC	Summer resident in eastern Sierra Nevada in Mono County.	Freshwater marshlands.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Egretta thula</i>	snowy egret	N	N	N	Colonial nester, with nest sites situated in	Rookery sites situated close to foraging areas: marshes, tidal-flats,	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
					protected beds of dense tules.	streams, wet meadows, and borders of lakes.		
<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	white-tailed kite	N	N	FP	Rolling foothills and valley margins with scattered oaks and river bottomlands or marshes next to deciduous woodland.	Open grasslands, meadows, or marshes for foraging close to isolated, dense-topped trees for nesting and perching.	High- Open fields and forested Gulches present	Low- Foraging area only. No appropriate nest trees
<i>Emys marmorata</i>	western pond turtle	N	N	SSC	A thoroughly aquatic turtle of ponds, marshes, rivers, streams and irrigation ditches, usually with aquatic vegetation, below 6000 ft elevation.	Needs basking sites and suitable (sandy banks or grassy open fields) upland habitat up to 0.5 km from water for egg-laying.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Entosphenus tridentatus</i>	Pacific lamprey	N	N	SSC	Found in Pacific Coast streams north of San Luis Obispo County, however regular runs in Santa Clara River. Size of runs is declining.	Swift-current gravel-bottomed areas for spawning with water temps between 12-18 C. Ammocoetes need soft sand or mud.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Erethizon dorsatum</i>	North American porcupine	N	N	N	Forested habitats in the Sierra Nevada, Cascade, and Coast ranges, with scattered observations from forested areas in the Transverse Ranges.	Wide variety of coniferous and mixed woodland habitat.	Moderate- coastal forest is mid- seral but not large in area	None- No habitat present
<i>Eucyclogobius newberryi</i>	tidewater goby	E	N	N	Brackish water habitats along the California coast from Agua Hedionda Lagoon, San Diego County to the mouth of the	Found in shallow lagoons and lower stream reaches, they need fairly still but not stagnant water and high oxygen levels.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
					Smith River.			
<i>Haliaeetus leucocephalus</i>	bald eagle	D	E	FP	Ocean shore, lake margins, and rivers for both nesting and wintering. Most nests within 1 mile of water.	Nests in large, old-growth, or dominant live tree with open branches, especially ponderosa pine. Roosts communally in winter.	High- Open fields and forested Gulches present	Low- Foraging area only. No appropriate nest trees
<i>Lampetra richardsoni</i>	western brook lamprey	N	N	SSC			None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Lasiurus cinereus</i>	hoary bat	N	N	N	Prefers open habitats or habitat mosaics, with access to trees for cover and open areas or habitat edges for feeding.	Roosts in dense foliage of medium to large trees. Feeds primarily on moths. Requires water.	Moderate- potential within unnamed Gulch	None- No habitat present
<i>Margaritifera falcata</i>	western pearlshell	N	N	N	Aquatic.	Prefers lower velocity waters.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Martes caurina humboldtensis</i>	Humboldt marten	T	E	SSC	Occurs only in the coastal redwood zone from the Oregon border south to Sonoma County.	Associated with late-successional coniferous forests, prefer forests with low, overhead cover.	Low- unnamed Gulch may be used as a throughway	None- No habitat present
<i>Myotis evotis</i>	long-eared myotis	N	N	N	Found in all brush, woodland and forest habitats from sea level to about 9000 ft. Prefers coniferous woodlands and forests.	Nursery colonies in buildings, crevices, spaces under bark, and snags. Caves used primarily as night roosts.	Moderate- forested habitat with openings	None- No habitat present
<i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	double-crested cormorant	N	N	WL	Colonial nester on coastal cliffs, offshore islands, and along lake margins in the interior of the state.	Nests along coast on sequestered islets, usually on ground with sloping surface, or in tall trees along lake margins.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	black-crowned	N	N	N	Colonial nester, usually in trees,	Rookery sites located adjacent to foraging	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
	night heron				occasionally in tule patches.	areas: lake margins, mud-bordered bays, marshy spots.		
<i>Oncorhynchus clarkii clarkii</i>	coast cutthroat trout	N	N	SSC	Small coastal streams from the Eel River to the Oregon border.	Small, low gradient coastal streams and estuaries. Needs shaded streams with water temperatures <18C, and small gravel for spawning.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch pop. 2</i>	coho salmon - southern Oregon / northern California ESU	T	T	N	Federal listing refers to populations between Cape Blanco, Oregon and Punta Gorda, Humboldt County, California.	State listing refers to populations between the Oregon border and Punta Gorda, California.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus pop. 16</i>	steelhead - northern California DPS	T	N	N	Coastal basins from Redwood Creek south to the Gualala River, inclusive. Does not include summer-run steelhead.		None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	osprey	N	N	WL	Ocean shore, bays, freshwater lakes, and larger streams.	Large nests built in tree-tops within 15 miles of a good fish-producing body of water.	High- Open fields and forested Gulches present	Low- Foraging area only. No appropriate nest trees
<i>Pekania pennanti</i>	Fisher	N	N	SSC	Intermediate to large-tree stages of coniferous forests and deciduous-riparian areas with high percent canopy closure.	Uses cavities, snags, logs and rocky areas for cover and denning. Needs large areas of mature, dense forest.	Moderate- coastal forest is mid- seral but not large in area	None- No habitat present
<i>Rallus obsoletus obsoletus</i>	California Ridgway's rail	E	E	FP	Salt water and brackish marshes traversed by tidal sloughs in the vicinity of San Francisco Bay.	Associated with abundant growths of pickleweed but feeds away from cover on invertebrates from mud-bottomed sloughs.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
<i>Rana aurora</i>	northern red-legged frog	N	N	SSC	Humid forests, woodlands, grasslands, and streambanks in northwestern California, usually near dense riparian cover.	Generally near permanent water, but can be found far from water, in damp woods and meadows, during non-breeding season.	Low- some potential in unnamed Gulch during non-breeding season	None- No habitat present
<i>Rana boylei</i>	foothill yellow-legged frog	N	E	SSC	Partly-shaded, shallow streams and riffles with a rocky substrate in a variety of habitats.	Needs at least some cobble-sized substrate for egg-laying. Needs at least 15 weeks to attain metamorphosis.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Rhyacotriton variegatus</i>	southern torrent salamander	N	N	SSC	Coastal redwood, Douglas-fir, mixed conifer, montane riparian, and montane hardwood-conifer habitats. Old growth forest.	Cold, well-shaded, permanent streams and seepages, or within splash zone or on moss-covered rocks within trickling water.	Low- some potential in unnamed Gulch during non-breeding season	None- No habitat present
<i>Riparia riparia</i>	bank swallow	N	T	N	Colonial nester; nests primarily in riparian and other lowland habitats west of the desert.	Requires vertical banks/cliffs with fine-textured/sandy soils near streams, rivers, lakes, ocean to dig nesting hole.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Scaphinotus behrensi</i>	Behrens' snail-eating beetle	N	N	N	Found in extreme NW CA along the coast.		Low- marginal habitat present; low number of occurrences recorded within 9-quad search	See BAA
<i>Spirinchus thaleichthys</i>	longfin smelt	C	T	N	Euryhaline, nektonic and anadromous. Found in open waters of estuaries, mostly in middle or bottom of water column.	Prefer salinities of 15-30 ppt but can be found in completely freshwater to almost pure seawater.	None- No habitat present	None- No habitat present
<i>Thaleichthys</i>	eulachon	T	N	N	Found in Klamath	Spawn in lower reaches of	None- No habitat	None- No habitat

Scientific Name	Common Name	ESA status	CESA status	CDFW status	General Habitat	Microhabitat	Potential to occur in BAA	Potential to occur in Project Area
<i>pacificus</i>					River, Mad River, Redwood Creek, and in small numbers in Smith River and Humboldt Bay tributaries.	coastal rivers with moderate water velocities and bottom of pea-sized gravel, sand, and woody debris.	present	present

