



**Biological Survey Report
634 and 644 Blueridge Road
(APs 110-251-037 and 110-251-038)
Whitethorn, CA 95589
June 2024**

**Prepared by: Kristin Schmidt
Redwood Community Action Agency
Prepared for: Aurel Coza, Landowner**



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Introduction

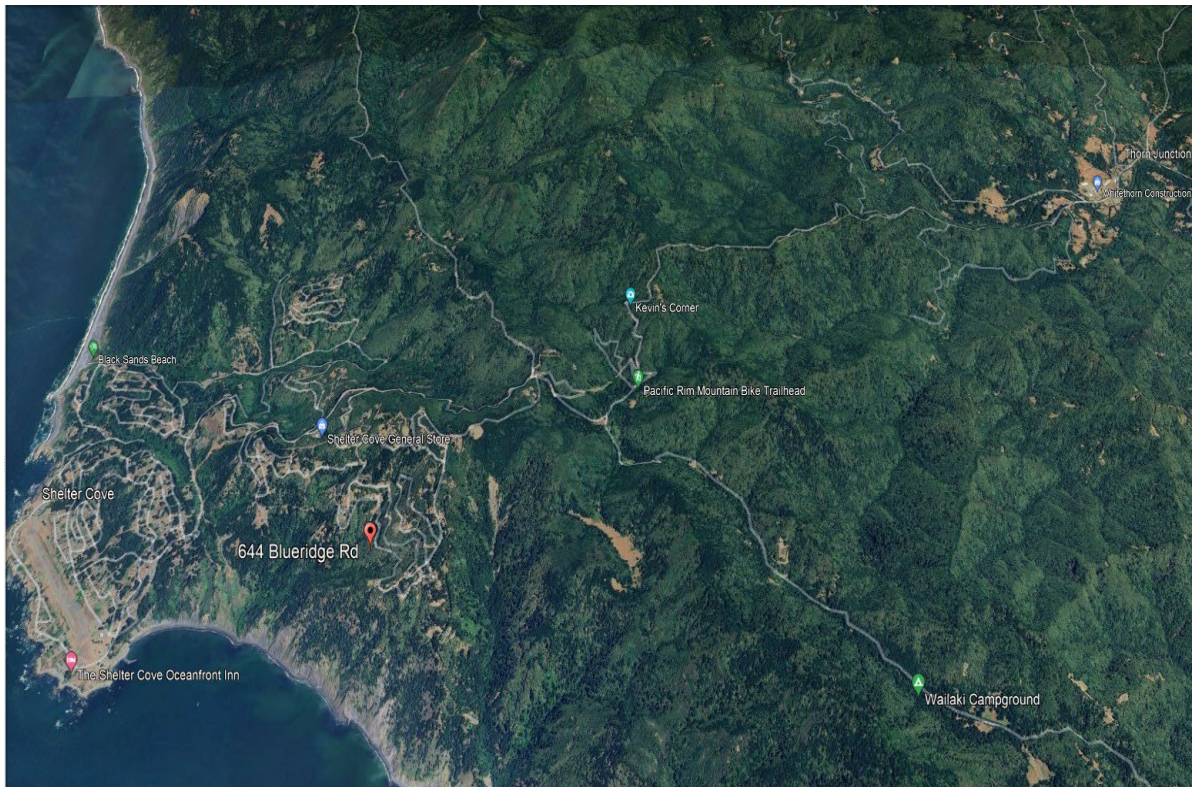
A biological survey was conducted on May 30, 2024, at 634 and 644 Blueridge Road, Whitethorn, California, on two adjacent parcels totaling 0.6 acre. The survey was conducted to fulfill a Humboldt County Planning Department requirement prior to a building permit issuance to the property owner. The purpose of the survey was to assess the extent of environmentally sensitive habitat and/or the potential for environmentally sensitive species to occur within the property boundaries and adjacent vicinity. A two-bedroom, two-bath single residence home of approximately 1500 ft² is planned on a footprint of 1200 ft². A septic system is also included in the project.

Survey Area

The adjacent parcels are on a forested slope in T5S, R1E, Sect 14, NW1/4 (7.5-minute USGS quadrangle Shelter Cove; Figures 1 and 2).



Figure 1. Shelter Cove USGS quadrangle (part). The property is in the northwest quarter of section 14 on Blueridge Road.



634 & 644 Blueridge Road
Shelter Cove, CA



Figure 2. Coza property above the city of Shelter Cove in southwest Humboldt County (top, Google Earth; bottom, ESRI Basemap and Humboldt County GIS Department map layer).

The parcels are between 1300-1400 feet elevation on a rather steep 35% slope facing west/southwest, bounded by Blueridge Road to the east, and bisected by portions of old

skid roads following slope contours. An skid road leading downslope from Blueridge Road to a gravel 'landing' will serve as the driveway to the future house site. The closed-canopy forest north and south of the landing is predominantly early to mid-mature tanoak/Douglas-fir forest (Figures 3 and 4).



Figure 3. AP 110-252-038 looking south from proposed building site. Trees to be removed with pink flagging.



Figure 4. AP 110-252-038 looking west from proposed building site.

Tree Removal

Nine trees were flagged for removal from the site prior to construction:

- one tanoak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*) cluster consisting of 2 trees approximately 10 inches diameter at breast height (dbh) at the south end of the property near the house site (Figure 3)
- one tanoak cluster with 3 trees approximately 12 inches dbh at the south end of the property near the house site (Figure 3)
- one tanoak cluster with 2 trees between 10-12 inches dbh near the center of the proposed sewer line north of the landing
- two Douglas-fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) trees, 4 and 10 inches dbh, near the proposed driveway/house site.

Additionally, a Douglas-fir approximately 2 feet in diameter may need to be removed due to its location within the home's wildfire defensive perimeter.

No streams or seeps occur on the property. A large gully approximately 300 feet south of the Coza property boundary, a headwater tributary of Dead Man's Gulch, may serve as an intermittent watercourse.

Survey Methods

Prior to conducting the field survey, a query of the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) was conducted that generated a list of special status species within the USGS Shelter Cove quadrangle as well as adjoining quads. Due to the small scope of the project, only the Shelter Cove quadrangle species list was used as a guide for the survey and included only those species whose CNDDDB data status was either "mapped" or "mapped and unprocessed". Species with "unprocessed" status, or those species not yet "quality controlled" by CNDDDB staff, were not considered. Thus, the query resulted in 17 special status species within the Shelter Cove quadrangle, 11 animals and 6 plants. No terrestrial community was named in the Shelter Cove list, however, the adjoining Ettersburg and Honeydew quads listed Upland Douglas Fir Forest as the terrestrial community (Appendix A, CNDDDB Species List).

The field survey was conducted from 10:45 a.m. to 1:15 p.m. The weather was clear, 67°F and sunny with a slight breeze. The forested slope within the two parcels was methodically traversed from top to bottom and again in reverse. All plants observed were recorded as well as any birds detected by sight or sound.

Survey Results

Nineteen species, 15 plants and 4 birds were detected during the survey (Appendix B).

A headwater swale with minimal vegetation trends northwest downslope beneath the tree canopy. Within the parcels overall, the shrub and herb layers were sparse, with bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and sticky monkey-flower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*) dominating these layers, along with sapling tanoak and Douglas-fir. No special status plant or animal species were observed within the project area. The habitat within the property was marginally suitable for Sonoma tree vole due to the few mature Douglas-fir trees, and unsuitable for the northern spotted owl. The site was dry (xeric), thus unsuitable for hydrophilic plant species, i.e., marsh pea (*Lathyrus palustris*). Habitat was either unsuitable or atypical for the remaining vascular plant species on the CNDDDB list, likely in part due to the disturbed nature of the site.

Passerines (songbirds) detected included Hutton's vireo, warbling vireo, black-throated gray warbler, and orange-crowned warbler. Warbling vireos were counter-singing, with one individual in the Douglas-fir that may be removed from the defensive perimeter. The area was too dry to support amphibian species of concern.

Management Recommendations

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act makes it unlawful to capture or kill migratory birds and applies to the removal of nests occupied by migratory birds during the breeding season. California Fish and Game Code Sections 3503 and 3503.5 (protection of birds' nests) and 3513 (taking Migratory Bird Treaty Act birds) also prohibit the destruction of any nest, egg, or nestling. In Northern California, the migratory bird nesting season is March 1 to August 31. Trees to be removed from the property, especially the large Douglas-fir in the defensive perimeter, should be removed outside the nesting season to avoid disruption of nesting activities. Vireos and warblers were persistent in the area during the survey.

Beyond the disturbed open area of the site, the forest is closed canopy with a sparse understory, lacking evidence of seeps, springs, and flowing water. The small diameter tanoaks and Douglas-firs marked for removal are on the edge of openings (driveway and landing) and their removal will not impact the quality of the forest habitat. If possible, the larger Douglas-fir that may be in the defensive wildfire perimeter should be maintained. There are no additional management recommendations regarding the development of this site.

Prepared by:

Kristin Schmidt, Senior Biologist, Redwood Community Action Agency

Qualifications:

Senior Biologist and Projects Coordinator, Redwood Community Action Agency, May 2022- present

Wildlife Biologist, National Park Service, June 2000-November 2019

Wildlife Biologist, US Forest Service, May 1990-June 2000

Kristin has over 30 years working in the field of wildlife biology, including habitat characterization and botanical surveys. Her experience includes:

- Watershed restoration project management
- Wetland delineation
- Sensitive plant surveys
- Wildlife surveys (e.g., northern spotted owl, Roosevelt elk, western snowy plover, forest carnivores, songbirds)
- Pacific fisher live-trapping and radio telemetry
- Small mammal live-trapping in known spotted owl territories
- Vegetation sampling in coast range forests in all age classes
- Federal Endangered Species Act section 7 consultation and biological assessments
- Written annual reporting

Education includes: MS in Environmental Biology from the University of Minnesota, Duluth and BA in Zoology from Humboldt State University (now Cal Poly Humboldt)

Appendix A. California Natural Diversity Database Species List for the USGS Shelter Cove USGS 7.5-minute Quadrangle.

Element_Type	Scientific_Name	Common_Name	Federal_Status	State_Status	CDFW_Status	CA_Rare_Plant_Rank	Quad_Name
Animals - Amphibians	<i>Rana boylei</i> pop. 1	foothill yellow-legged frog - north coast DPS	None	None	SSC	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Amphibians	<i>Rhyacotriton variegatus</i>	southern torrent salamander	None	None	SSC	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Amphibians	<i>Taricha rivularis</i>	red-bellied newt	None	None	SSC	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Birds	<i>Strix occidentalis caurina</i>	Northern Spotted Owl	Threatened	Threatened	-	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i> pop. 2	coho salmon - southern Oregon / northern California ESU	Threatened	Threatened	-	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus kisutch</i> pop. 4	coho salmon - central California coast ESU	Endangered	Endangered	-	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i> pop. 48	steelhead - northern California DPS summer-run	Threatened	Endangered	-	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss irideus</i> pop. 49	steelhead - northern California DPS winter-run	Threatened	None	-	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Fish	<i>Oncorhynchus tshawytscha</i> pop. 17	chinook salmon - California coastal ESU	Threatened	None	-	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Mammals	<i>Arborimus pomo</i>	Sonoma tree vole	None	None	SSC	-	SHELTER COVE
Animals - Reptiles	<i>Emys marmorata</i>	western pond turtle	Proposed Threatened	None	SSC	-	SHELTER COVE
Plants - Lichens	<i>Usnea longissima</i>	Methuselahs beard lichen	None	None	-	4.2	SHELTER COVE
Plants - Vascular	<i>Lasthenia californica</i> ssp. <i>macrantha</i>	perennial goldfields	None	None	-	1B.2	SHELTER COVE
Plants - Vascular	<i>Lathyrus palustris</i>	marsh pea	None	None	-	2B.2	SHELTER COVE
Plants - Vascular	<i>Clarkia amoena</i> ssp. <i>whitneyi</i>	Whitneys farewell-to-spring	None	None	-	1B.1	SHELTER COVE
Plants - Vascular	<i>Castilleja littoralis</i>	Oregon coast paintbrush	None	None	-	2B.2	SHELTER COVE
Plants - Vascular	<i>Gilia capitata</i> ssp. <i>pacifica</i>	Pacific gilia	None	None	-	1B.2	SHELTER COVE
Community - Terrestrial	Upland Douglas Fir Forest	Upland Douglas Fir Forest	None	None	-	-	ETTERSBURG
Community - Terrestrial	Upland Douglas Fir Forest	Upland Douglas Fir Forest	None	None	-	-	HONEYDEW

Codes:

SSC: Species of Special Concern

1B.1 and 1B.2: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere

SB2: Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere

Appendix B. Biological survey species list at 634 and 644 Blueridge Road, Whitethorn, California, APs 110-251-037 and-038.

<u>Species</u>	<u>Common Name</u>	<u>Native Species</u>
<i>Polystichum munitum</i>	sword fern	Yes
<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>	bracken fern	Yes
<i>Iris douglasiana</i>	Douglas iris	Yes
<i>Briza maxima</i>	big quaking grass	No
<i>Stachys rigida</i>	rough hedge nettle	Yes
<i>Diplacus aurantiacus</i>	sticky monkey flower	Yes
<i>Hypochaeris glabra</i>	smooth cat's-ear	No
<i>Lupinus sp.</i>	lupine	Unknown
<i>Lonicera hispidula</i>	pink honeysuckle	Yes
<i>Toxicodendron diversilobum</i>	poison oak	Yes
<i>Rubus ursinus</i>	California blackberry	Yes
<i>Vaccinium ovatum</i>	evergreen huckleberry	Yes
<i>Arbutus menziesii</i>	Pacific madrone	Yes
<i>Notholithocarpus densiflora</i>	tanoak	Yes
<i>Pseudotsuga menziesii</i>	Douglas-fir	Yes
<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	Hutton's vireo	Yes
<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	warbling vireo	Yes
<i>Setophaga nigrescens</i>	black-throated gray warbler	Yes
<i>Vermivora celata</i>	orange-crowned warbler	Yes