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# BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

# OF

# Coastlands Mutual Water Company
# (Coastlands Road)
# 48280 Highway One
# Big Sur, CA 93923

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Prepared For:

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Black Tail Engineering, LLC
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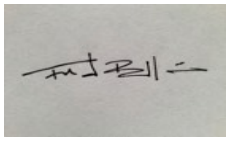


January 28, 2026

## I. INTRODUCTION

This 13-page report has been authorized by Mike Linder (project representative) on November 5, 2025.

This Biological Assessment has been prepared to evaluate potential impacts to biological resources that would be generated from a proposed road repair development project along the Coastlands Road in Big Sur. The report includes mapped native plant communities and identified sensitive biotic resources throughout the project areas and recommendations to reduce potential development impacts.

## II. SUMMARY

The road improvement project proposes to repair the damaged community Coastlands Road by installing two hilfiker retaining wall systems (130'L and 50'L) adjacent the eastern road edge with the project scheduled to be completed within a 2-1/2 week span. The project area transects natural habitat communities to the east of the road and mixed landscaped areas along the west side of the road. Along the eastern boundary mixed native Oak Woodland Forest and Redwood Forest are present along the canyon slope leading down to the Coastlands Canyon drainage. Excavation and hilfiker construction are sited along the road proper and extending several feet along the eastern edge of the existing road where ruderal herbaceous vegetation dominates. No direct construction impacts are proposed to native habitat or wildlife constituents, though portions of the project occur within 100-feet of Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (Redwood Forest) and the project site overlaps within the boundaries of California Red-Legged Frog critical habitat. When recommendations in this report are applied, potentially deleterious impacts to sensitive elements and habitats can be prevented or minimized to temporary, less than significant levels.

## III. METHODS

Field surveys conducted on November 12 and December 9, 2025 with the project contractor and permit coordinator, included walking the entire proposed road development area while surveying for special status plants and habitat, inventorying observed plant and animal species, and photographing existing vegetation zones. Weather conditions were clear and full access to the site allowed for careful site and resource observations. An engineering plan set was provided for review and comment (Ref. Grice Engineering, Improvement Plans-Road Repair, Sheet C-0 through C-5.1, October 6, 2025).

Local maps, consultations with personnel familiar with the project, and a personal familiarity with the local vegetation and historical road conditions from a 20-year history of consulting with various land owners along the Coastlands road were utilized during the preparation of this Biological Assessment. The California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB) maintained by the State of California Department of Fish and Wildlife (DFW), the Information for Planning and Consultation database (IPaC) maintained by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Inventory (online database), were consulted for the identification of known populations of Federal and State listed rare, threatened and endangered plant species on or in the vicinity of the Coastlands Road project site. Survey methods included utilizing The Jepson Manual (Hickman 1993), Invasive Plants of California's Wildlands (Bossard, Randall, and Hoshovsky 2000), A Manual of California Vegetation (Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf 1995), An Illustrated Field Key to the Flowering Plants of Monterey County (Matthews and Mitchell 2015), Big Sur Land Use Plan (Monterey County and certified by the CA Coastal Commission 1986), The Natural History of Big Sur (Henson and Usner 1993) and Coastal Implementation Plan, Part 3 (Monterey County – Regulations for Development in the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan 1988).

## IV. NATURAL COMMUNITIES

The Coastlands Road area consists of several overlapping diverse plant communities found within the sloped canyon walls west of Highway One. Upon entering the gated road from the highway, Coastal Sagebrush Scrub is found along the sun-exposed, drier, west and south-facing slopes on the upper section of the access road, with mixed Oak Woodland Forest and Redwood Forest as co-dominant forest habitats along the east facing slope adjacent the lower Coastlands Road edge. The two intermixed forest habitats lie within the eastern boundary of the road repair project site. Landscaped residential grounds flank the west side of the road along the project area. East of the lower road section, the Coastlands seasonal tributary flows southward and converges with Mule Canyon Creek and Graves Creek further south (+500-feet) below the southern extent of the Coastlands neighborhood.

The road repair project zone is predominately sited within the existing paved Coastlands Road at the lower end of the housing development and includes a strip of road easement (approximately 4' to 6' in width) containing predominately ruderal, exotic vegetation.

**Upper (130-LF) and lower (50-LF) sections of hilfiker road repair area.**

The road edges are regularly maintained with seasonal fuel management and tree limbing in order to comply with local fire clearance mandates. Native habitats adjacent the east side of the work zone include a mixed ecotone of Oak Woodland Forest and Redwood Forest. The Oak Woodland consists co-dominant coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), tan oak (*Notholithocarpus densiflorus*), and California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*) trees. Redwood Forest containing dominant coast redwoods (*Sequoia sempervirens)* occurs in clustered groupings near the road repair area, becoming increasingly dense along the canyon bottom approximately 200-feet east and south of the southern portion of the Coastlands Road. Coast redwoods and Redwood Forest habitat community are identified in the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (Ref. Policy 3.3) and also identified as a natural community "rare and worthy of consideration" by the CNDDB. No coast redwood trees are proposed for removal, though there are several coast

redwoods ranging from 8” DBH to 24” DBH, that are located in close proximity (within 4 to 6 feet) of the eastern limits of disturbance.

The collective shady understory, typical of this habitat type, includes (in order of prominence) a dense bramble of California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), Western sword fern (*Polystichum minimum*), hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum var. pubescens*), Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*),, Monterey sedge (*Carex harfordii*), snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*) and other less prominent species.

The fuel-managed road edge consists of mostly ruderal, exotic vegetation including veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*), Bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-carpe*), mixed exotic annual grasses and the native annual forb cleavers (*Galium aparine*).

**Road edge ruderal vegetation with tape measure showing the extent of the limits of grading that will be required for excavation to install the hilfiker system.**

No development construction impacts are proposed within native habitat areas, though erosion control and sediment control measures (silt fence and straw wattles) are specified to be installed along the eastern edge of the ruderal zone where vegetation transitions to native understory. Potential impacts may occur to native understory constituents at the interface area during manual trenching activities to install sediment control measures, though impacts are anticipated to be less than significant in scope.

No spring survey was conducted for this report due to the off-seasonal timing requested for the biological survey, though personal consultations along this road over a twenty-year span and

compiled database reveal that no listed spring elements occur within the proposed work zone. The nearest sensitive element (sea cliff buckwheat, *Eriogonum parvifolium*, host plant for the Federal-listed Smith's blue butterfly) occurs along the western and eastern road edges in the exposed sunny areas of the upper Coastlands Road (over 500-feet north and east from the project site).

The staging area for construction materials and excavated soil stockpile is located at the paved 'hair-pin turnout' located along the Coastlands Road approximately 2,000 feet north of the project area. The wide turnout traverses the Coastlands seasonal tributary where clusters of willow and sycamore are present upslope and downslope the culvert that spans the hair-pin turnout, indicating a shallow water table is present in the ravine. No soil disturbance is proposed in the paved staging area, though stockpiled soil materials will require a wattle ring and potential tarping to prevent sedimentation into the adjacent ravine.

## V. WILDLIFE

Several bird species were identified (see Observed Animal Species List), though the seasonal timing of the site survey was not completed during nesting season. Mature trees surrounding the work area may provide roosting and nesting habitat for a variety of raptor, resident or migratory bird species with potential forage and cover understory habitat throughout the canyon area. It is highly probable that a variety of mammals and nesting and migratory birds breed, forage, and find cover among the trees and undisturbed habitat of the along the east canyon and adjacent slopes.

Raptors and their nests are protected under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Code. Nesting seasons of migratory species are overlapping with breeding residents occurring in the Monterey Bay region typically occurring between February and August. Various species of raptors including red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), barn own (*Tyto alba*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) and others have a potential to nest within any of the large coast redwood trees present near the work area. In addition, avian species identified as species of concern by the CDWF or fully protected species including sharp-skinned hawk (*Accipiter striatus*) have the potential to occur near the subject area as suitable habitat exists within the surrounding tree canopy and scrub habitats.

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703) prohibits the taking, hunting, killing, selling, purchasing, etc. of migratory birds, parts of migratory birds, and their eggs and nests. As used in the act, the term "take" is defined as meaning, "to pursue, hunt, capture, collect, kill or attempt to pursue, unless the context otherwise requires." Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Wildlife Code also protects the nests and eggs of birds-of-prey (raptors) and essentially overlaps with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Development impacts

## VI. RARE, THREATENED, AND ENDANGERED SPECIES AND HABITATS

In addition to field observations, documented occurrence data from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (which supports the California Natural Diversity Data Base: CNNDB) and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (which supports the Information for Planning And Consultation: IPaC) within the project area and surrounding USGS quadrangles were consulted to evaluate the likelihood of special status species to occur within and immediately adjacent the work area. Special status natural communities, plants and animals include habitats and species that have been identified as being biologically rare or noteworthy and thus, deserving of special protection under federal, state or local laws and policies. Special-status species known to occur or determined to have a moderate or high potential to occur within or immediately adjacent the project sites are discussed below. All other species are assumed unlikely to occur or have a low potential to occur based on the lack of supporting habitat or other species-specific related reasons, and are therefore unlikely to be impacted by the project, and are not further included in this discussion. Relevant literature was also reviewed regarding the presence of special-status species in the area. Range maps, locality records and habitat associations were reviewed for all special-status wildlife species to assess their likelihood to inhabit the project site. Biotic spring survey or nesting surveys were not conducted due to the off-season time frame of observations conducted for this report.

State Listing is pursuant to Section 1904 (Native Plant Protection Act of 1977) and Section 2074.2 and 2075.5 (California Endangered Species Act of 1984) of the Fish and Wildlife Code, relating to listing Endangered, Threatened, and Rare species of plants and animals. Federal Listing is pursuant with the Federal Endangered Species Act of 1973. Special Status Species are those listed as *Endangered, Threatened,* or *Rare* or as candidates for listing by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and or California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW); or those listed as Rare Plant Rank 1B or 2B species by the California Native plant Society (CNPS). This designation also includes CDFW Species of Special Concern and Fully Protected species. Special Status Species are generally rare, restricted in distribution, declining throughout their range, or have a critical, vulnerable stage in their life cycle that warrants monitoring.

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) recognizes plants listed by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) as Rare Plant Rank 1B (plants rare, threatened or endangered in California as special status species. The CNPS website states that, “Plants with a California Rare Plant Rank of 1B are rare throughout their range with the majority of them endemic to California. Most of the plants that are ranked 1B have declined significantly over the last century. All of the plants constituting California Rare Plant Rank 1B meet the definitions of Sec. 1901, Chapter 10 (Native Plant Protection Act) or Secs. 2062 and 2067 (California Endangered Species Act) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife Code and are eligible for state listing. It is mandatory that they be fully considered during preparation of environmental documents relating to CEQA.” No listed species were observed during site surveys and none are expected to be present due to the lack of supporting habitat within the construction zone (paved road and ruderal vegetation road edge).

The Migratory Bird Treaty Act (16 USC 703) prohibits the taking, hunting, killing, selling, purchasing, etc. of migratory birds, parts of migratory birds, and their eggs and nests. As used in the act, the term “take” is defined as meaning, “to pursue, hunt, capture, collect, kill or attempt to pursue, unless the context otherwise requires.” Section 3503.5 of the California Fish and Wildlife Code also protects the nests and eggs of birds-of-prey (raptors) and essentially overlaps with the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. Raptors and their nests are protected under the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) Code. Nesting seasons of migratory species are overlapping with breeding residents occurring in the Monterey Bay region typically occurring between February and August. Various species of raptors including red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*), red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*), great horned owl (*Bubo virginianus*), barn own (*Tyto alba*), turkey vulture (*Cathartes aura*) and others have a moderate to high potential to nest within the adjacent forested areas present near the two development areas. In addition, avian species including bats and owls identified as species of concern by the CDWF or fully protected species have the potential to occur within or within 300-feet of the development area as suitable habitat exists within the surrounding forest communities and scrub habitats. No nesting survey was completed during the November/ December 2025 field work due to the off-timing for nesting season. There is potential suitable nesting habitat on site to support raptor, resident or migratory protected species and a nesting survey will be required if construction is scheduled to commence within the nesting period.

Several listed herptile species have a low potential to persist in the development area including the below listed special status species. Development impacts are restricted to the existing road and a 4’ - 6’ wide road edge dominant with seasonally-mowed, ruderal herbaceous vegetation. The lack of aquatic resources, breeding habitat, shelter/cover vegetation or woody ground debris make it unlikely that the below listed elements are likely to persist in the work area.

- California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) is a state CDFW Species of Special Concern and a federally listed Threatened species by the USFWS. The species is well documented as occurring on the Post Ranch pond site and the project site lies within the USFWS mapped critical habitat area, which the frogs may move through during dispersal activities.

- Coast range newt (*Taricha torosa torosa*) is considered a Species of Special Concern by the CDFW. This species breeds in March and April in still or slow moving water with eggs attached to submerged vegetation. When not breeding, they are found in a range of upland habitats, including dry woodland associates, living in moist conditions under woody debris or logs.

- Santa Lucia slender salamander (*Batrachoseps luciae*) is a CNDDB listed species with no legal or regulatory status but likely persists on site due to favorable habitat conditions. This species is common in moist conditions (under logs, woody debris, etc).

- Foothill yellow-legged frog (*Rana boylii pop. 6* - south coast distinct population segment) is a state and federally listed Endangered species. This medium sized frog is mostly active during daylight, is found in a wide range of habitats, though is closely associated with streams and is rarely observed far from the water's edge.

- Western spadefoot (*Spea hammondii*) is a species proposed for federal listing as a Threatened species. This small-bodied toad is primarily nocturnal and terrestrial only entering the water to breed. It is rarely seen as it spends the majority of its life buried underground near breeding ponds in earth-filled sandy or gravelly soil burrows and active for only a short period each year typically between October to May depending on rainfall.

Several bumblebee species are new candidate species for listing as an endangered species under the California Endangered Species Act (CESA). Western bumble bee (*Bombus occidentalis*), Crotch's bumble bee (*Bombus crotchii*), and obscure bumblebee (*Bombus caliginosus*) are all candidate species within the coast range and the species may occur in Big Sur, though very little is known regarding nesting and overwintering sites. As a candidate species, they receive the same legal protection afforded to endangered or threatened species (Fish & G. Code §§ 2074.2 & 2085). Bumble bees do not dig their own nests as they utilize pre-existing cavities (mostly underground in abandoned rodent holes) that provide insulation and protection from the elements. The shady conditions are less than ideal for nesting habitat as the bees prefer more sun-exposed terrain and the lack of quality forage habitat make it unlikely the species occur within the project area. The CDFW has no established monitoring protocols during overwintering periods other than avoidance. In the unlikely occurrence that an overwintering queen bumble bee is discovered or exposed during any excavation operations conducted in November through March (hibernating period), the project contractor shall immediately contact the project biologist. The project biologist is then required to contact (preferably within three days) CDFW Central Region (Region 4) staff (wildlifemgt@wildlife.ca.gov), USFWS, to assist in learning more about their habitat and behavior.

Redwood Forest habitat community is identified in the Big Sur Coast Land Use Plan as Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Area (Ref. Policy 3.3) and is also identified as a natural community "rare and worthy of consideration" by the CNDDB. No direct impacts are anticipated to tree resources, though the southern section of proposed hilfiker installation is located in close proximity (4-feet at the closest point) to two clusters of redwood trees east of the limits of disturbance along the road easement. Trunk protection measures are included in the below section to prevent impacts to redwood trunks. Potential root impacts are anticipated to be less than significant due to the historical impacts associated with the road development including trenching from utilities that has occurred along the road and road edge. The base of the redwoods at the sloped soil profile appears to be at a lower depth along the slope than what is proposed for road excavation (5-feet). It is unlikely that significant structural roots will be encountered while excavating, though there may likely be superficial feeder roots encountered in the compacted base of the road. Site inspections noted the soils upslope the bases of the redwood trees are composed of several feet of duff and fill material and lack significant roots which may indicate the anchoring and supporting root structures predate any fill material and are likely located below the proposed depth of excavation for the hilfiker. Nevertheless, root monitoring and prescriptions (if the project encounters significant root structures) are included in the below section to ensure potential redwood root impacts remain less than significant. All redwood trees (>6" DBH) within range of

excavation equipment will require protection measures in order to comply with LUP Policy 3.3.3.A.8 which mandates that “development shall be sited and designed to have minimum impacts on redwood trees from soil compaction and other disturbances to tree roots.”

## VII. IMPACT ASSESSMENT, MITIGATION MEASURES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

**Impact 1: Nesting Survey**

Nesting raptors and other protected avian species, including bats, have the potential to occur within or adjacent to the three project sites. If nesting birds protected by state and federal regulations are present during construction activities (including during periods of site preparation, demolition, vegetation management/removal) the proposed project could potentially result in direct mortality of individuals, disturbance of nests, nest abandonment, and loss of habitat that may result in loss of fertile eggs or nestlings. This is a potentially significant impact that can be reduced to a less-than- significant level with implementation of the mitigation measures recommended below.

**Mitigation 1:**

a. To avoid potential impacts to nesting raptors and other nesting avian species, construction activities can be timed to avoid the nesting season period from February 1 to September 1. Alternatively, if avoidance of the nesting period is not feasible, a qualified biologist shall be retained to conduct pre-construction surveys for nesting raptors and other protected avian species within 250 feet of proposed construction activities if construction occurs during the nesting period. Pre-construction surveys will be conducted no more than 7 days prior to the start of construction activities.
b. Bird species nesting is variable through the season with some breeding multiple times in a season. If there is more than a two-week delay of construction activities during the nesting season, additional surveys for nesting birds may be required to continue during construction to address new arrivals or secondary nesting. The necessity and timing of these continued surveys will be determined by the qualified biologist based on the proposed construction scheduling.
c. If an active bird nest of a native species is detected during the survey, then a plan for bird nest avoidance shall be prepared by the qualified biologist to determine and delineate an appropriately sized, temporary protective buffer area around each active nest, depending on the nesting bird species, existing site conditions, and type of proposed disturbance or construction activities. Protective buffer areas around an active bird nest ranges from 75-250 feet, determined at the discretion of the qualified biologist. To ensure that no inadvertent impacts to an active bird nest will occur, no disturbance and/or construction activities shall occur within the protective buffer area(s) until the juvenile birds have fledged, and there is no evidence of reliance upon the nest or parental care for survival or a second attempt at nesting, as determined by the qualified biologist.
d. Nesting reporting and potential follow up prescriptions to be submitted to the Monterey County Housing and Community Development – Project Planner for approval prior to issuance of grading permits.

**Impact 2: Coast Redwood Trees and Native Vegetation Protection**

Implementation of the proposed road development improvement plan is limited to the paved road area and a 4 to 6-foot ruderal-vegetated strip adjacent the east side of the road. Installation of the sediment and erosion control devices, replacement culvert outfall, and hilfiker drainage lines will involve limited (less than significant) impact to natural community understory vegetation. Development impacts are specified to be isolated to pre-existing disturbed locations (road bed and buffer strip) and limited to the improvements themselves, the project complies with with LUP ESHA Policy 3.3.2.4., “For developments approved within environmentally sensitive habitats, the removal of indigenous vegetation and land disturbance (grading, excavation, paving, etc.) associated with the development shall be limited to that needed for the structural improvements themselves. The guiding philosophy shall be to limit the area of disturbance, to maximize the maintenance of the natural topography of the site, and to favor structural designs which achieve these goals.” Additionally, no tree removal is proposed, though potential impacts to redwood trees (and to a

lessor degree understory habitat) could potentially occur from disturbance impacts to tree roots from road demolition, excavation, and hilfiker installation. One cluster of redwood trees (8" to 24" DBH) is found adjacent the eastern edge of the lower section of the hilfiker work zone (within 4'feet downslope from the limits of grading).

**Mitigation 2:**

a. Sediment and erosion control measures are integrated in the plan sheets to protect adjacent understory habitat from construction and sedimentation impacts (Ref. Erosion Control Plan, Grice Engineering, Sheet C-5.0) with required inspections by County Staff (Housing and Community Development planner/staff) prior to grading, during construction and prior to final inspection. In addition to the specified silt fence and straw wattles for sediment control and habitat protection, the cluster of redwoods closest to the southern end of the project (nearest the utility pole) will require trunk wrapping on the trees along the limits of grading. Prior to grading and road excavation activities, straw wattles or straw bales should be installed on the perimeter redwoods to prevent potential impacts from construction equipment. Documentation shall be submitted to the Project Planner at the County of Monterey Housing and Community Development or site verification by HCD Staff prior to issuance of grading permits.

**Redwood trees at lower hilfiker wall location (north view - L, south view - R).**

b. If redwood roots are encountered during road/soil excavation actions, the project biologist shall be immediately notified by the contractor to assess prescriptions to manage root avoidance or potential root pruning. Roots two inch in diameter or larger shall be preserved via excavation under or bridged over to keep these roots intact. Encountered lateral roots (<2") shall be flush-cut using sterilized equipment for all roots greater than one inch in diameter. Cut root wounds, more so than fractured or crushed roots, on coast redwoods are typically compartmentalized rapidly.

c. Stockpiled soil and disturbance graded areas can become infested with invasive exotic species and no exotic invasive species shall be allowed to become established or produce seed on disturbed soils generated from grading operations. All stockpiled soil generated during site excavation shall be kept free of exotic species and covered (tarping) or mulched if inclement weather shall threaten stored materials (Ref Civil Sheet C-0, ER-2.1) and the circumference of the pile shall be lined with a straw wattle to prevent sediment from migrating offsite. Civil Sheet C-5.1 specifies a silt fence around the stockpile perimeter, though the staging area is asphalt road so a wattle is recommended.

d. To reduce impacts to surrounding habitat communities, no overburden soil material may be deposited beyond the approved limits of disturbance or road edges.

e. All disturbed soils resulting from the hilfiker wall installation are recommended to be restored with the specified native grass seed mix on Civil Sheet C-0 (Ref. Erosion Control Planning, ER-3.1.). Any seeding that strays from the specified erosion control mix could negatively impact the extant adjacent habitat through competition, migration, or invasion. Native seeding shall be covered with sterile rice straw, local wood chip mulching, jute netting or other biologist-approved mulching material to prevent erosion of disturbed soils. Not adhering to the guidelines of this impact mitigation could result in adverse impacts to the environmentally sensitive Redwood Forest habitat community adjacent to the project area.

f. Prior to final inspection, the Owner/Applicant shall submit photos of the redwood tree cluster to HCD-Planning after construction to document that tree protection has been successful or if follow-up remediation or additional permits are required. Additionally, prior to final inspection, the Owner/Applicant shall submit proof, for review and approval, that all development has been implemented in accordance with the report the Biological Assessment to the HCD - Planning.

## VIII. LIST OF SPECIES ENCOUNTERED

(* indicates exotic species)

**Tree Species**

| | |
|---|---|
| Aesculus californica | California buckeye |
| Notholithocarpus densiflorus | tan oak |
| Quercus agrifolia | coast live oak |
| Sequoia sempervirens | coast redwood |
| Umbellularia californica | California bay |

**Shrub Species**

| | |
|---|---|
| Genista monspessulana * | French broom |
| Heteromeles arbutifolia | toyon |
| Rubus parfiflorus | thimbleberry |
| Rubus ursinus | California blackberry |
| Toxicodendron diversilobum | poison oak |

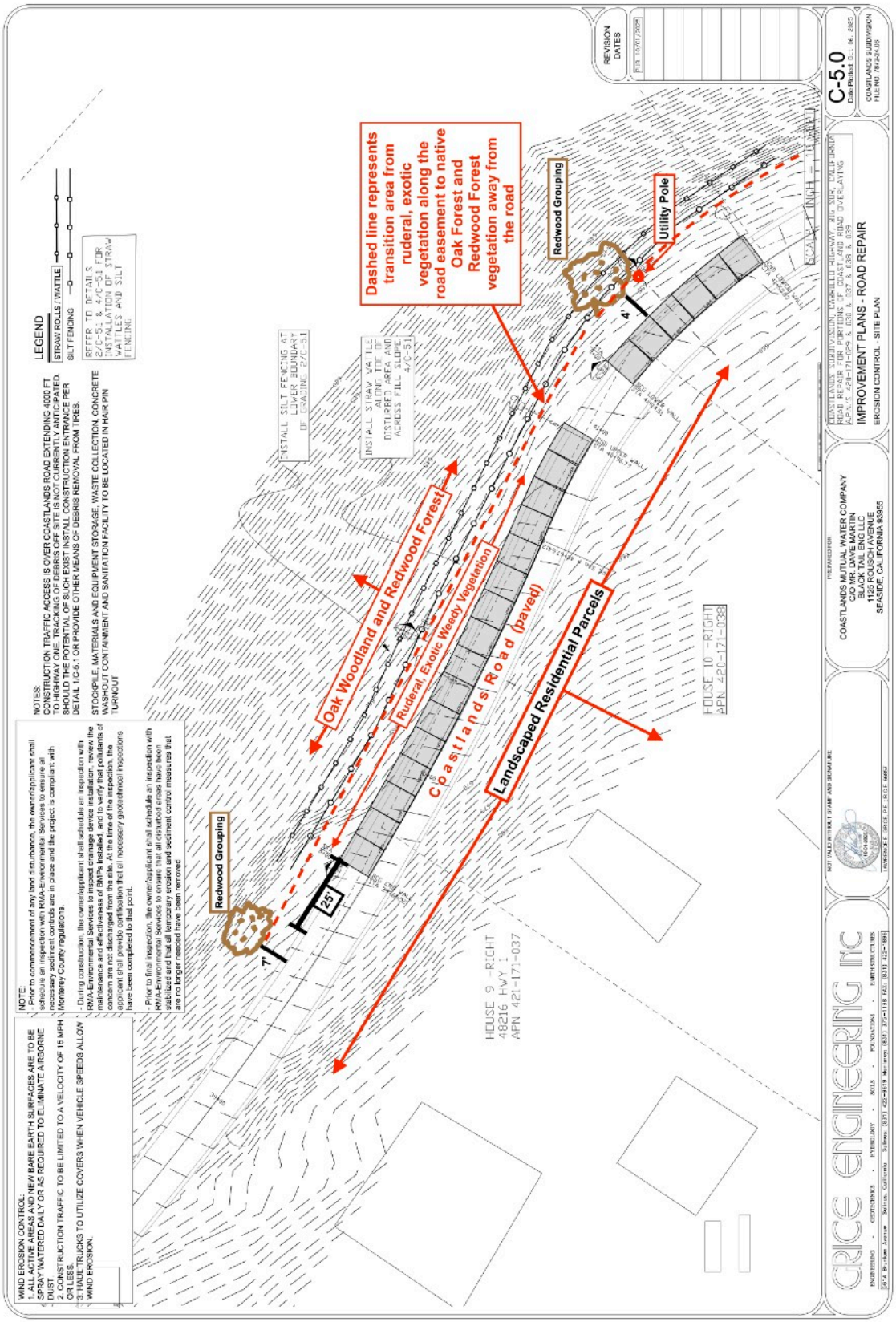
**Herbaceous/Forb Species**

| | |
|---|---|
| Achillea millefolium | yarrow |
| Ageratina adenophora * | sticky eupatorium |
| Agrostis pallens | bent grass |
| Aira caryophyllea * | silver hairgrass |
| Avena fatua * | wild oats |
| Briza maxima * | rattlesnake grass |
| Bromus carinatus | California brome |
| Bromus diandrus * | ripgut brome |
| Calystegia macrostegia ssp. cyclostegia | coast morning glory |
| Carex harfordii | Monterey sedge |
| Dryopteris arguta | coastal wood fern |
| Elymus glaucus | blue wildrye |
| Erharta erecta * | veldt grass |
| Fragaria vesca | woodland strawberry |
| Galium aparine | cleavers |
| Gastridium phleoides * | nit grass |
| Hedera helix * | English ivy |
| Iris douglasiana | Douglas iris |
| Oxalis oregana | redwood sorrel |
| Oxalis pes-carpe * | Bermuda buttercup |
| Polystichum munitum | Western sword fern |
| Pteridium aquilinum | Western bracken fern |
| Sanicula crassicaulis | gamleweed |
| Stachys bullata | California hedgenettle |
| Symphoricarpus mollis | creeping snowberry |
| Vinca major * | periwinkle |

**Wildlife Species**

| | |
|---|---|
| Cathartes aura | turkey vulture |
| Corvus brachyrhynchos | American crow |
| Cyanocitta stelleri | Steller’s jay |
| Junco hyemalis | dark-eyed junco |
| Laurus occidentalis | Western gull |
| Melanerpes formicivorus | acorn woodpecker |
| Melozone crissalis | California towhee |
| Sayornis nigricans | black phoebe |
| Tachycineta thalassina | violet-green swallow |
| Thomomys bottae | Botta’s pocket gopher |

## IX. COASTLANDS ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN and VEGETATION MAP



## X. PROJECT LOCATION

**FRED BALLERINI**
BIOLOGICAL AND HORTICULTURAL SERVICES

May 1, 2026

**To: Coastlands Mutual Water Company (Attn: Kirk Gaffil)**
**48280 Highway One, Big Sur, CA 93920**
**C/o Chris Gourlay, Project Consultant**

**RE: Raptor/Migratory Bird Nesting Survey and Spring Flowering Survey**
**Coastlands Road, Big Sur**

Dear Chris,

Per your request, this five-page report serves to document that a Raptor/Migratory Bird Nesting Survey and Special Status Spring Flowering Survey were conducted on April 23, 2026, along the Coastlands Road in the location of the proposed hilfiker road repair. Results of the nesting survey are considered informational and academic only as the proposed commencement date for the hilfiker repair project is scheduled at the end of nesting season in late August/early September 2026 and no nesting impacts are anticipated if construction is implemented outside the local nesting season as local species are generally fully fledged by early September.

**Nesting Survey**

Summary:
Forty-nine avian species, mostly passerines including resident and migratory, were tallied within the 2.5 hour survey period. Several listed species were recorded within the observation area (within and extending 250-feet beyond the project boundaries) including three USFWS-listed BCC species (Birds of Conservation Concern): wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*), oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), and olive sided flycatcher (C*ontopus cooperi*) and one CDFW-listed SSC (Species of Special Concern) including the yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*). A red-shouldered hawk (*Buteo lineatus*) was observed on a flyover moving eastward toward the upper Santa Lucia Mountain elevations. Several resident species were observed nest building and pairing (additional information below in *Findings*).

There were no confirmed nesting occurrences within the perimeter of the proposed work zone, and no confirmed observations of special status resident, migratory, or raptor species nesting or in phased breeding within the 250-foot observation area of the construction envelope.

Findings:
Survey preparation began with a review of existing biological online databases and an assessment of on-site habitat suitability. The birding site visit consisted of 2.5 hours of monitoring from 7:00AM to 9:30AM for the subject project area including areas within a 250 foot(+) proximity of the road repair construction envelope while observing potential tree, understory and ground nesting taxon. Species were documented and the area was meticulously monitored with systematic coverage of the site and surrounding areas. Access was unimpeded and weather conditions were sunny and clear with wind conditions peaked at 6 miles per hour. Visual sightings and audible song and call observations were used to identify the species diversity within and/or flyovers of the parcel. Bird behavioral observations also comprised of analyzing potential breeding ethology indicators; including the courtship phase such as singing, food offering, nudging/preening, or copulation, nest building phase such as nest building, material gathering, territorial displays, alarm calls and mate guarding, incubation phase and nestling phase. Tree canopy surveying for potential upper and canopy nesting

was conducted using high magnification binoculars. Birding surveys also included observations for locally significant birds as noted within the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) Information for Planning and Consultation database (IPaC) and the California Department of Fish and Game's California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) within the USGS Pfeiffer Point Quadrangle and adjacent quadrangles. Local bird nesting season falls within the months of early February and concluding at the beginning of September with peak nesting activity occurring between March and early July, and with resident breeders starting early and migratory breeders arriving later.

The forested Coastlands canyon provides ample and suitable nesting cover for a variety of species. The canyon east of the project area exhibits a vibrant ecosystem with species-rich and dense protective vegetation cover and significant forage opportunities due to the dimensional structure of vegetation that includes dense groundcover, sub-shrubs, shrubs, and multiple layers of tree canopy ranging from large toyon to mid-canopy coast live oaks to towering coast redwoods. The proximity of a perennial water source at the bottom of the canyon (approximately 250-feet from the project site) contributes to the support of a healthy corridor system teeming with bird activity.

Forty-nine (49) species were recorded within and surrounding (within 250') the project vicinity (ground plane, understory, midstory, canopy, and flyovers) including three USFWS-listed BCC species (Birds of Conservation Concern) including wrentit (*Chamaea fasciata*), oak titmouse (*Baeolophus inornatus*), and olive sided flycatcher (C*ontopus cooperi*) and one CDFW-listed SSC (Species of Special Concern) including the yellow warbler (*Setophaga petechia*). Species were observed foraging the mid and upper tree canopies, moving through the canyon corridor in transit, on flyovers or identified from birdcalls from adjacent parcels to the west. Migratory birds have begun entering the Monterey peninsula for the past month and a half and nesting season is at the early stages of development. Migratory passerines were observed moving up the ravine possibly in transit to other destinations as they arrive and move through the peninsula along the shelters and canyons of the coastline.

A pairing of year-round resident dark-eyed junco (*Junco hyemalis*) were observed gathering nesting material and nest building downslope the proposed work zone within 90' of the project area and a pairing of chestnut-backed chickadee (*Poecile rufescens*) were observed foraging in the tree canopy near the project site.

Proposed road construction noise will be partially mitigated by the ongoing years-long residential construction located at the terminal of Coastlands Road and landscape maintenance regimes on adjacent parcels where heavy truck equipment, gas powered blowers, mechanical mowers, and other mechanized equipment is in use during routine weekly landscape maintenance activities. Common resident urban-adapted species found throughout the area and migratory species observed within the canyon do not seem at risk of any adverse threshold shift from potential construction noise disruptions caused by the proposed two-week road repair.

During the site observations no evidence of active nesting for raptors or migratory species or protected local species was recorded within the project area or within the 'sphere of development/ construction influence' and none are anticipated to be impacted from the construction project as the project timeline is scheduled to occur at the end of the nesting season. If additional surveys are triggered due to the commencement of the construction timeframe overlapping with nesting season, then another nesting survey would be required within 14 days of the start of construction. If active nests are identified, the biologist shall provide clear, site-specific recommendations. These may include temporary buffers, adjusted work sequences, or monitoring during construction. The emphasis is always on proportionate measures that maintain compliance without unnecessary disruption.

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**Observation Log (April 23, 2026)**

| | |
|---|---|
| *Aphelocoma californica* | California scrub jay |
| *Baeolophus inornatus* | oak titmouse |
| *Bombycilla cedrorum* | cedar waxwing |
| *Buteo lineatus* | red-shouldered hawk |
| *Callipepla californica* | California quail |
| *Calypte anna* | Anna's humingbird |
| *Cardellina pusilla* | Wilson's warbler |
| *Cathartes aura* | turkey vulture |
| *Catharus ustulatus* | Swainson's thrush |
| *Catherpes mexicanus* | canyon wren |
| *Certhia americana* | brown creeper |
| *Chaetura vauxi* | Vaux's swift |
| *Chamaea fasciata* | wrentit |
| *Colaptes auratus* | Northern flicker |
| *Contopus cooperi* | olive-sided flycatcher |
| *Corvus corax* | common raven |
| *Corvus brachyrhynchos* | American crow |
| *Cyanocitta stelleri* | Steller's jay |
| *Empidonax difficilis* | Western flycatcher |
| *Glaucidium gnoma* | Northern pygmy owl |
| *Haemorhous mexicanus* | house finch |
| *Haemorhous purpureus* | purple finch |
| *Icterus cucullatus* | hooded oriole |
| *Junco hyemalis* | dark-eyed junco |
| *Leiothlypis celata* | orange-crowned warbler |
| *Melanerpes formicivorus* | acorn woodpecker |
| *Melospiza melodia* | song sparrow |
| *Melozone crissalis* | California towhee |
| *Passer domesticus* | House sparrow |
| *Passerina amoena* | Lazuli bunting |
| *Pipilo maculatus* | spotted towhee |
| *Pinicola enucleator* | pine grosbeak |
| *Poecile rufescens* | chestnut-backed chickadee |
| *Progne subis* | purple martin |
| *Psaltriparus minimus* | bushtit |
| *Sayornis nigricans* | black Phoebe |
| *Selasphorus rufus* | Rufous hummingbird |
| *Setophaga coronata* | yellow-rumped warbler |
| *Setophaga petechia* | yellow warbler |
| *Setophaga townsendi* | Townsend's warbler |

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| | |
|---|---|
| *Sitta canadensis* | red-breasted nuthatch |
| *Sitta pygmaea* | pygmy nuthatch |
| *Spinus pinus* | pine siskin |
| *Streptopelia decaocto* | Eurasian collard-dove |
| *Sturnus vulgaris* | European starling |
| *Thryomanes bewickii* | Bewick's wren |
| *Troglodytes pacificus* | Pacific wren |
| *Turdus migratorius* | American robin |
| *Zenaida macroura* | morning dove |

## Spring Flowering Survey

On April 23, 2026, a spring flowering survey was conducted along the road edge within the limits of the proposed road repair. Survey preparation began with a review of existing local, State and Federal biological online databases and an assessment of on-site habitat suitability. As noted in the Biological Assessment (Ballerini, January 28, 2026), the strip of area adjacent the road edge proposed for impacts during road repair construction is regularly maintained with fuel reduction mowing. During the April 23 site visit, the strip of land had been recently mowed and was barren with exposed soils. The limited vegetation along this strip is dominant with ruderal, weedy, exotic vegetation, common to disturbed soils including veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*), Bermuda buttercup (*Oxalis pes-carpe*), ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*) and English plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*). No special status species were observed and none are expected to persist as this strip of area is regularly managed with infill soil to maintain the berm along the road edge and with seasonal mowing to comply with local fuel management guidelines.


**Upper section of proposed hilfiker road repair (April 23, 2026).**

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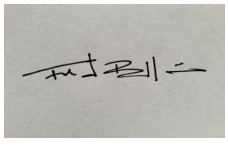
Downslope and outside the proposed road repair area, erosion control and sediment control devices (silt fence and straw wattles) are specified to be installed along the eastern edge (threshold) of the ruderal zone where vegetation transitions to native understory. This location was also surveyed for special status spring flowering elements as the vegetation transitions to native understory habitat containing California blackberry (*Rubus ursinus*), Western sword fern (*Polystichum minimum*), hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*), poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*), thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), bracken fern (*Pteridium aquilinum var. pubescens*), Douglas iris (*Iris douglasiana*), Monterey sedge (*Carex harfordii*), and snowberry (*Symphoricarpos mollis*). No special status spring flowering species were observed and none are expected to persist as this shady understory habitat type does not support the numerous special status elements listed by local, state and federal agencies for the regional area.


**Lower section of proposed hilfiker road repair (April 23, 2026).**

Please phone or contact me with any questions. Thank you.



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