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FRED BALLERINI
BIOLOGICAL AND HORTICULTURAL SERVICES

January 3, 2024

To: Hya Honorato, Planner
County of Monterey
Housing and Community Development Planning Department
1441 Schilling Place, South 2nd Floor
Salinas, CA 93901-4527

RE: **Restoration Plan**
PLN230231
APN 418-121-021-000
39340 Coast Road Big Sur, CA

Dear Hya Honorato,

Per the request of Tricia Larsen (project applicant), please find the attached 6-page Restoration Plan for the subject parcel related to an Administrative Citation and Notice of Intent to Record a Notice of Violation (Ref. Case No: 23CE00225, May 9, 2023). The attached Restoration Plan (with tree planting mitigation and 3-year monitoring) is a requirement to satisfy and clear the violation.

The attached Restoration Plan is developed to provide management protocols to restore the disturbed area (approximately 2,500 SF) to native understory, eradicate invasive species, and replant 3 (three) coast redwood trees as mitigation for the unpermitted removal of one dead 47" black cottonwood tree (*Populus trichocarpa*) and one dead 9" coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) tree. Phone discussions with County Planner Hya Honorato on November 22, 2023 established that the tree planting mitigation (3 trees) includes two coast redwoods to replace the removal of the black cottonwood and one coast redwood to replace a dead coast redwood that was removed from the parcel. Three-year biological monitoring and reporting submittals are required and incorporated into the Restoration Plan to track the establishment of native vegetation, ensure eradication of invasive species, and observe the successful establishment of three planted coast redwood trees.

Please phone or email if you have any questions or comments.

Sincerely,

Fred Ballerini
Consulting Biologist

RESTORATION PLAN
PLN230231, APN 418-121-021-000

The 0.6 acre undeveloped residential parcel (APN 418-121-021-000) lies within the lower Bixby Creek drainage corridor where the general vegetation of the area is a dominant Central Coast Arroyo Willow Riparian natural plant community found throughout the lower Bixby Creek Canyon.



Subject parcel plot map and aerial.

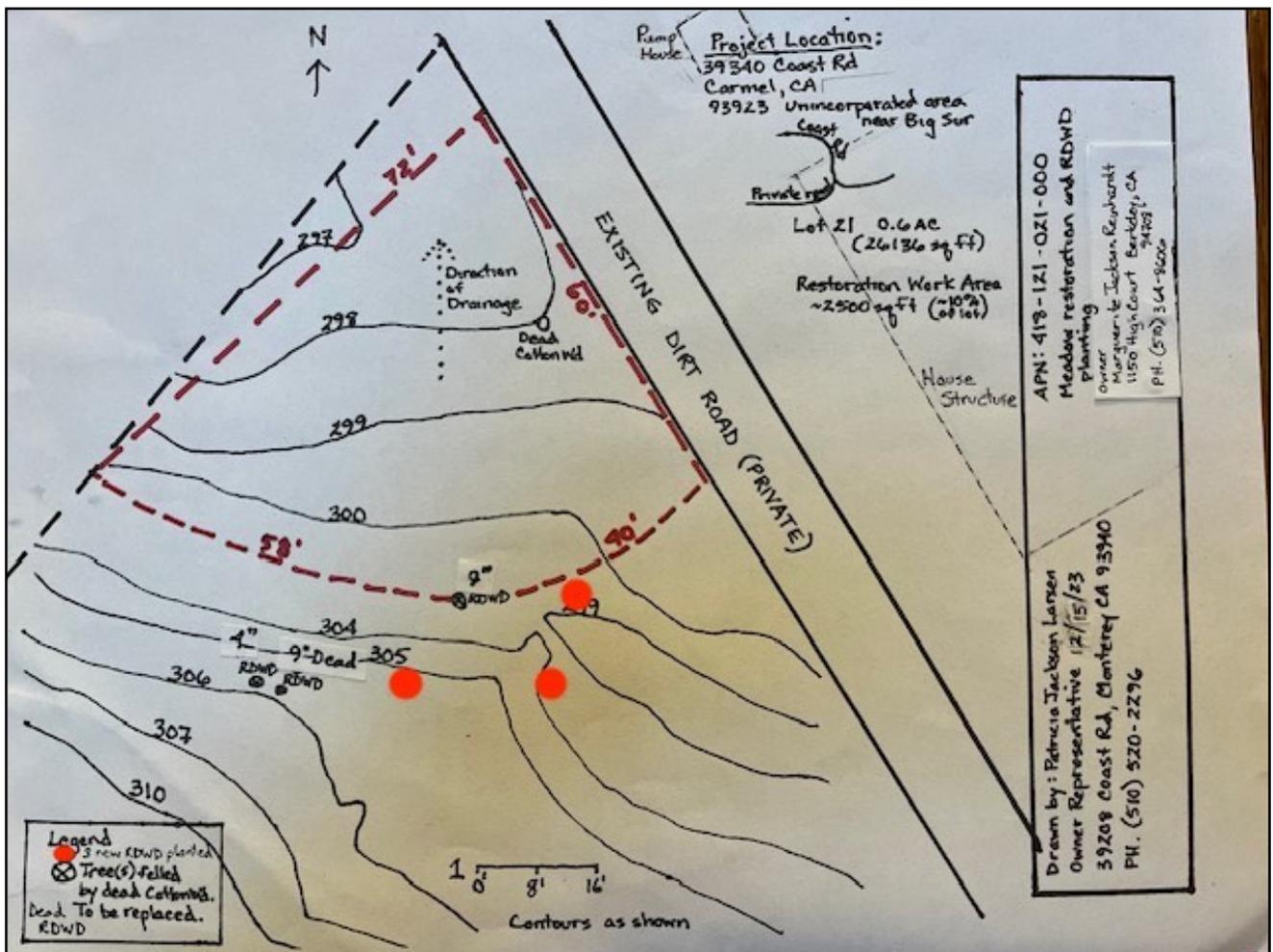
The fundamental goal of this Restoration Plan is to establish site appropriate native vegetation along a pre-disturbed 2,500 SF area, control invasive species, and replant three (3) coast redwood trees (*Sequoia sempervirens*) to satisfy a County code violation subjected to the parcel (Ref. Administrative Citation and Notice of Intent to Record a Notice of Violation, Case No: 23CE00225, May 9, 2023). Fuel management objectives shall also be considered as several residential structures are located within 100 feet of the Restoration Area.

The following action items are proposed to correct the County Violation:

1. No further removal of native trees (coast redwoods) or other live native vegetation is proposed.
2. Allow natural recruitment and growth of native understory and shrub species to proceed.
3. Aggressively control non-native, invasive weed species under the direction of a Qualified Biologist. Target species for controls include, but not limited to the following undesirable species: cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*) which previously dominated the site and is pervasive throughout the Bixby Canyon, sticky eupatorium (*Ageratina adenophora*), sweet alyssum (*Lobularia maritima*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), wild radish (*Raphanus sativus*), nasturtium (*Tropaeolum majus*), burr clover (*Medicago polymorpha*), and French broom (*Genista monspessulana*).
4. Replant three (3) coast redwood trees sourced from the Bixby Canyon to maintain genetic integrity of the indigenous grove.
5. Qualified Biologist shall monitor weed eradication efforts on a biannual basis, monitor native plant recruitment, monitor the health and success of the three coast redwood mitigation tree plantings and provide biannual invasive species control recommendations to the applicant.
6. On a yearly basis for a 3-year period beginning in the Winter (January 2024), engage a Qualified Biologist to report on weed control efforts, native plant recruitment, and status of the three (3) mitigation coast redwood trees. Document results for the applicant and submit annual reporting documents with photographic evidence to the County of Monterey Housing and Community Development Department, Project Planner.



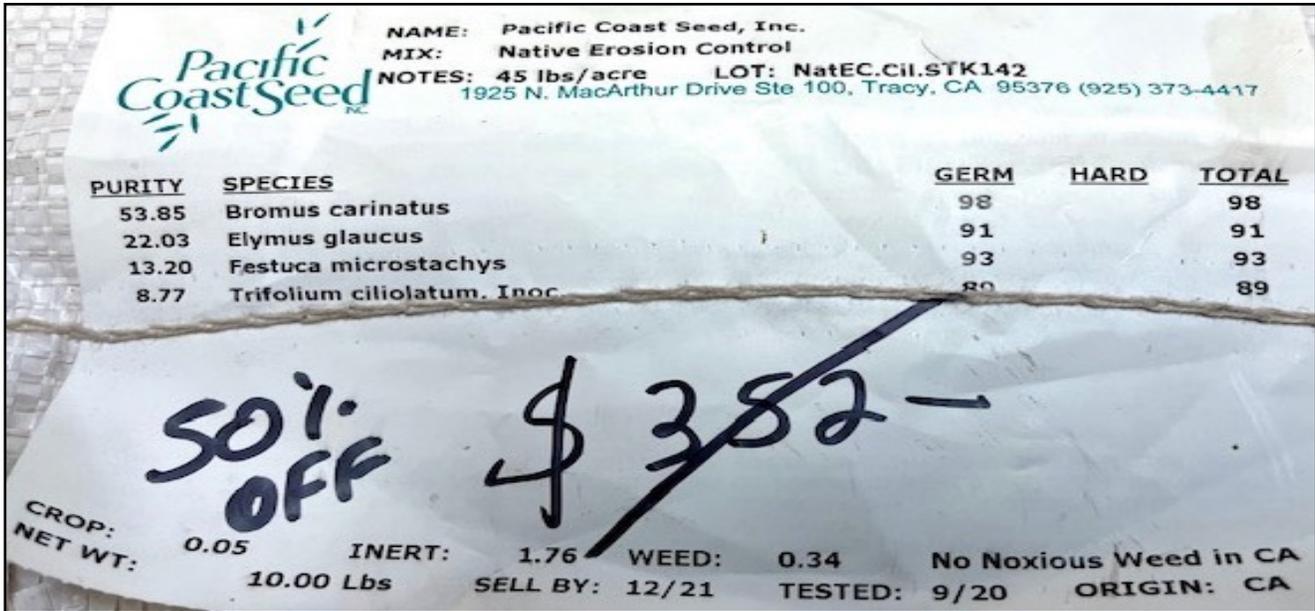
Restoration area (2,500 SF) prior to tree replanting (October 2, 2023).



Project site map showing restoration area (dashed line) and 3 mitigation coast redwood trees (red dots).

Restoration Implementation and Monitoring Schedule

1. Submit restoration application materials to County Code Enforcement staff and obtain appropriate permits.
2. Broadcast site appropriate perennial and annual cover-crop of native grass and forb seed to stabilize disturbed soils and allow for natural recruitment of native forb, sub-shrub and shrub species. This task was completed by the applicant in the Fall 2023 season prior to the arrival of seasonal rains. The native seed mix (see photo of seed mix label below) was applied by hand and temporary irrigation (garden hose with a sprinkler head) was utilized to augment germination.



3. Install three coast redwood trees along the border of the Restoration Area where the meadow transitions to the coast redwood grove, near the locations of the three previous redwoods that were impacted from the falling cottonwood limbs. This task was completed by the applicant on Monday, January 1, 2024 in consultation with the project biologist. The three coast redwood trees were sourced as indigenous, naturally-occurring seedlings from a neighboring Bixby Canyon property and potted up into 1-gallon containers. The rooted tree saplings were field-sited in the areas as noted on the attached site map (delineated by red dots) and planted in gopher baskets to prevent root predation by resident pocket gophers. The saplings were irrigated upon planting and water wells established around the plantings. A two-foot diameter was weeded around each water well.



Three local genetic stock coast redwoods.



Gopher basket materials.



Three mitigation coast redwood trees prior to installation (January 1, 2023).



Three mitigation coast redwood trees installed (January 1, 2023).

- Each tree water well (2' diameter) shall be mulched with a 2" thick organic mulching which can be sourced from the duff layer in the adjacent redwood grove. Mulching shall be maintained throughout the 3-year tree establishment period. The mulching will suppress weed development around the tree wells and assist in conserving and extending available soil moisture and moderate topsoil temperatures. The mulched water wells will also act as a visual marker or barrier to limit any damage from maintenance or weed control efforts. Water wells shall be maintained in a weed-free condition to minimize competition from non-desirable plant species. Mulching shall not extend beyond the limits of the tree water wells as native plant recruitment will be encouraged and fostered for the remainder of the Restoration Area and native seed germination is enhanced partially by high light levels. This task has been implemented by the applicant on January 2, 2023.



Three coast redwood mitigation trees installed with water wells and mulching application (January 2, 2023)

- No insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, or processed chemical fertilizers shall be applied within the Restoration Area.
- No permanent irrigation system shall be installed. Supplemental hand irrigation to the 3 mitigation trees may be used solely for the establishment of the trees. The goal of supplemental irrigation, is to obtain growth with the least amount of irrigation. Frequent irrigation encourages weed invasion and leaches nutrients from the soil. The planted trees could be irrigated as long as necessary to establish the root systems in the native soils, usually through one or two summers. The irrigation methods employed will attempt to mimic wet rainfall years by incorporating evenly spaced, infrequent, deep applications of water to establish deep rooting systems. Supplemental irrigation during the summer dry season will occur as frequently as required. The critical period for irrigation is during the first winter and early spring following planting. During this time, roots are not well established, and an unseasonable drought can cause high mortality. The trees must survive and grow for at least one full growing season (during the 3rd monitoring year) without supplemental water for the Restoration Plan final success criteria to have been met.
- If any of the three mitigation trees perishes during the 3-year monitoring period, the subject tree will be replaced at a 1:1 ratio and the replacement tree will be monitored for a 3-year period.
- Aggressive invasive weed species eradication will minimize competition that could prevent the establishment of native species. The applicant and any maintenance personnel will be trained by the Qualified Biologist to distinguish invasive species from native restoration species to ensure only weed species are removed during maintenance. Invasive weed species shall be manually removed before they can attain a height of three inches (6") at intervals during the growing season of not more than 30 days for the first two years of the 3-year monitoring program. All portions of the plant will be removed, including the roots (which is vital for the eradication of several species including the highly invasive Cape Ivy). The Qualified Biologist shall direct the applicant regarding the selection of target weed species, their location, and the timing of weed control operations to

ensure that naturally pioneering native plants are avoided to the extent possible. Manually-pulled weeds containing flowering parts or seed heads shall be bagged and zip-locked upon removal to prevent any seeds from dispersing on site. Exotic species removal shall be done at least monthly for the first two years, and at least monthly during the rainy season (January through April) and quarterly from May through December for year three. As weeds become apparent, they should be immediately removed by hand. Invasive species debris shall be removed from the Restoration Area the same day as weed removal and responsibly disposed in a green waste facility or burned during appropriate burn days.

9. Three-year biological monitoring will assess the attainment of the three-year success criteria and identify the need to implement contingency measures in the event of failure to meet the performance standards. The first year monitoring will include quarterly monitoring and a first quarter, second quarter and first year report. The second and third year monitoring will include biannual monitoring and biannual reporting submittals for each year.
10. Performance standards include the successful establishment of the three mitigation coast redwood trees (successfully thriving and in good health without the aid of supplemental water during the third growing year) and eradication of all invasive weed species within the Restoration Area during the three year monitoring period. No quantitative metrics are suggested to measure the relative success of natural recruitment of native vegetation, rather a qualitative assessment of native plant vigor (relative increase in overall cover and density) and overall habitat function should be conducted and comparison made between current conditions (January 2024) and conditions as they appear during each subsequent biannual monitoring assessment.
11. Qualitative monitoring of native plant recruitment and invasive plant encroachment shall be conducted during each quarterly monitoring visit of the first year and biannual monitoring for year two and year three: during the active growing season in late Spring and during late Fall. Monitoring records will be kept of potential tree mortality and other potential site problems, such as weed infestations, new weed species pioneers, soil loss, herbivory of native pioneering plants, gopher or insect infestations, or other issues that may compromise the Restoration Area. Remedial measures undertaken will be referenced with photo documentation in the respective quarterly and biannual reporting submittals to the County of Monterey HCD-Planning.
12. The parcel lies within the Critical Habitat Range of federally listed threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana draytonii*) and federally endangered foothill yellow legged frog (*Rana boylei*). Additionally, coast range newt (*Taricha torosa*) is a California Department of Fish and Wildlife listed Species of Special Concern and likely occurs on the parcel. Any ground disturbance actions could potentially impact the upland habitat areas of these species. If any actions are proposed that may cause soil disturbance (grading or stump grinding), then the subject actions would require a biological monitoring survey and subsequent protection or avoidance protocols prior to disturbance. No visual amphibian sightings were noted during the October 2023 site visit but they are presumed to be present on site due to the suitable habitat conditions along the creek corridor.
13. If the black cottonwood stump is proposed to be cut down, it is recommended to remove the stump as soon as feasible before wildlife species begin to take up residence and conduct the removal during non-nesting season for birds (September 30 - February 1). The stump should be cut to just above ground level or above. Stump grinding is not recommended due to ground disturbance impacts to potential red legged frog critical habitat on the parcel.

- END -

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