



A Tradition of Stewardship
A Commitment to Service

Planning, Building & Environmental Services

1195 Third Street, Suite 210
Napa, CA 94559
www.countyofnapa.org

David Morrison
Director

Attachment B

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES RECONNAISSANCE SURVEYS

The following guidelines for preparing Biological Resources Reconnaissance Surveys are intended to help applicants and/or their representatives determine (a) **who** should be considered qualified to conduct such studies, (b) **how** the fieldwork should be conducted, and (c) **what** information should be contained in the survey report. **Napa County will not accept reconnaissance surveys that are not conducted according to these guidelines.**

BACKGROUND: Biological resource reconnaissance surveys are conducted in order to identify the habitat types present on and adjacent to a site, delineate wildlife movement corridors within and across the subject property, and determine what additional protocol-level wildlife and botanical surveys, if any, are needed to determine the presence of special-status animals and plants and the effects of a proposed project on biological resources.

PERSONS QUALIFIED TO PREPARE: The consultant team used must possess the following qualifications:

- a. experience in conducting wildlife and floristic field surveys;
- b. knowledge of terrestrial and aquatic wildlife, plant taxonomy, and plant community ecology;
- c. familiarity with the plants and wildlife of the area, including all special-status plant and animal species that may be found there;
- d. familiarity with the various habitats within which these special-status plants and animals are likely to be found;
- e. familiarity with the appropriate state and federal statutes and procedures related to animal and plant surveys and collection; **AND**
- f. experience in analyzing the impacts of development on native plants and wildlife.

FIELD SURVEY PROTOCOL: Field surveys must be conducted in a manner that will locate the habitats of any special-status plant or animal species that may be present. Specifically, a biological reconnaissance shall be

- a. *Conducted in the field.*
- b. *Floristic in nature.* Every plant observed shall be identified to the extent necessary to determine its rarity and listing status. In order to properly characterize the site and document the completeness

of the survey, a complete list of plants observed on the site should be included in every botanical survey report.

- c. **Conducted in a manner that is consistent with conservation ethics.** Collections (voucher specimens) of rare, threatened, or endangered species, or suspected rare, threatened, or endangered species should be made only when such actions would not jeopardize the continued existence of the population and in accordance with applicable state and federal permit requirements. A collection permit from the Habitat Conservation Planning Branch of the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) is required for collection of state-listed plant species. Voucher specimens should be deposited at recognized public herbaria for future reference. Photography should be used to document plant identification and habitats whenever possible, but especially when the population cannot withstand collection of voucher specimens.
- d. **Conducted using systematic field techniques in all habitats of the site** to ensure a thorough coverage of potential impact areas.
- e. **Well documented.** When a rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal, and/or other special-status plant or animal, or rare plant community is located on or adjacent to the project area, a California Native Species (or Community) Field Survey Form or equivalent written form, accompanied by a copy of the appropriate portion of a 7.5 minute topographic map with the occurrence mapped, shall be completed and submitted to the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Locations may be best documented using global positioning systems (GPS), transposed to an aerial map, and presented in hard copy and digital forms.

REPORT CONTENTS: Biological Resource Reconnaissance Survey reports submitted to Napa County shall at a minimum contain the following information:

- a. **Project description**, including a detailed map of the project location and study area;
- b. A written description of the **biological setting** of the site and the Biological Resources Evaluation Area (an area that includes all lands within 1 mile of the boundaries of the parcel(s) involved plus the entire Napa County defined drainage within which the subject parcel(s) lies upstream of the project site) utilizing a standard community classification scheme such as *A Manual of California Vegetation* (Sawyer et al. 2009) for identifying natural communities from species data. The description should be complete in a regional context with proportionality based both within the given drainage and relative to other areas within the County. A discussion of the natural community(ies) that encompasses the project area shall be included as shall the larger regional habitat of which this community is just one part. Any habitats that do not fit into the classification scheme or are unique to the area must be noted. A vegetation map showing the vegetation (including wetland) types found on and around the project area and in the Biological Resources Evaluation Area shall be provided;
- c. Detailed description of **survey methodology** utilized including a map clearly showing the boundaries of the area surveyed and survey routes. Dates of field survey, total person-hours spent thereon, and the name of the field investigator(s) shall be indicated;
- d. **Results** including detailed maps showing the likely location of the wildlife corridors present in relation to the proposed activities, any raptor nests, wildlife dens or burrows observed, any unique species discovered to be exclusive, rare, or not typical to this part of the County, any unique or limited habitats found within the vicinity, unique plants with limited populations such as redwood

trees, and the expected distributions of each special-status plant found or likely to be present. A table compiled from the standard sources (ie, CNDDDB, California Native Plant Society, local floras, etc and the preparer's knowledge of the area and the special-status species likely present shall be developed. The table shall include (1) a list of all the special-status animals and plants that are known to occur or may utilize or be found in or around the project area, (2) a list of the habitat(s) each utilizes or are found in, (3) an indication as to whether or not this(ese) habitat type(s) is(are) present, (4) a statement as to whether or not the species involved was observed; (5) a conclusion as to whether or not the animal/plant is likely to be present or utilize the site and (6) a justification for any negative occurrence conclusions reached;

- e. ***An assessment of potential impacts***, including a map clearly showing the distribution of each special-status animal or plant species found in relation to proposed activities. For each special-status animal and plant species that is likely to utilize the site/be present, the likely effect of the proposed project shall be indicated along with a determination of the significance of said effect on an individual project and, more importantly, cumulative basis. The expected cumulative effect on wildlife populations in general shall also be indicated. In evaluating the effects on wildlife, the biological consequences associated with habitat fragmentation including species exclusion, isolation, extinction edge effects and changes in species composition shall be discussed;
- f. ***Discussion of the significance*** of special-status animal and plant populations in the project area considering nearby populations and total species distribution. Factors such as threats to known populations, whether or not the discovered species distribution is endemic to Napa County, and if it is a disjunct or relic distribution shall be discussed;
- g. ***Recommended additional focused species-specific surveys*** needed to determine the presences and/or the impacts to those special-status plant and animal species that are likely to be effected by the proposed project;
- h. ***Recommended mitigation measures*** to avoid, minimize, or offset potential project-related impacts to special-status plant and animal species, as well as buffers or avoidance areas to watercourse, wetlands and other aquatic resources necessary to mitigate adverse impacts and comply with applicable local, state and federal regulatory requirements.
- i. ***A list of all plants and animals observed*** on and within 500 feet of the project site. Plants should be identified to the taxonomic level necessary to determine whether or not they are of special-status;
- j. ***Description of floristic reference site(s) visited*** and phenological development of special-status plant(s);
- k. Copies of all ***California Native Species Field Survey Forms or Natural Community Field Survey Forms***; AND
- l. ***References*** cited, persons contacted, herbaria visited, and the location of voucher specimens.