



June 30, 2012

Martha Blake, Environmental Planner
City of San Diego Development Services Center
City of San Diego
1222 First Avenue, MS 501
San Diego, CA 92101

RE: Project No. 10046, SCH No. 2004061029, “Castlerock” at East Elliot

Dear Ms. Blake,

California Chaparral Institute and Preserve Wild Santee respectfully submit the following comments.

Our letter of March 14, 2011 requested inclusion of an alternative within the DEIR that conserves 80% of the project site, reduces the number of units and the amount of infrastructure that must be maintained over the long-term and **confines development to the most southeast portion of the site**. This alternative could avoid impacts upon fire services/public safety, avoid vernal pools and all other expected adverse impact categories. Why hasn't the alternative been included?

Our letter of March 14, 2011 requested inclusion of an alternative within the DEIR that avoids all listed species on site. Species such as the California gnatcatcher, Quino checkerspot butterfly, Hermes copper butterfly and San Diego fairy shrimp among others are expected to still be utilizing the site. Why hasn't the alternative been included?

Our letter of March 27, 2011 requested inclusion of a 100% site conservation alternative (different from a no project alternative) that identifies and discusses public funding sources (regional, state and federal) for the type of habitats on site. Why hasn't the alternative been included?

Our letter of March 14, 2011 requested inclusion of an alternative within the DEIR that avoids all vernal pools on site (reference the blue squares on the Google Earth aerial image provided below).





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Our letter of March 27, 2011 requested avoidance of vernal pools and streams in the following locations. Which of these locations have been avoided and what is the size of the buffer for each avoided pool? The buffers appear to be inadequate leaving the pools vulnerable to significant adverse edge effects from new development. Which of the following pools contain the endangered San Diego Fairy Shrimp?

Vernal Pools:



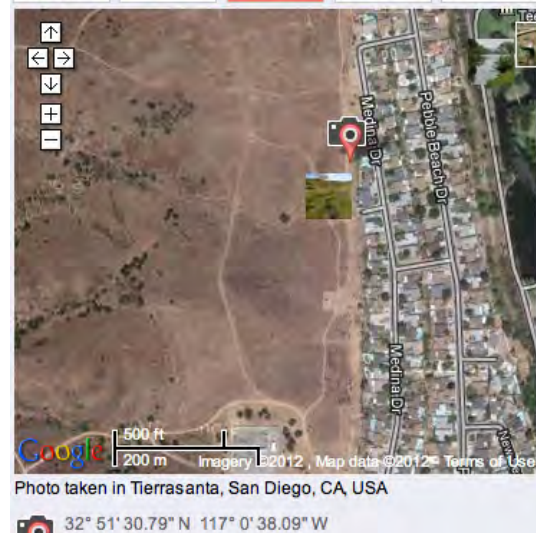
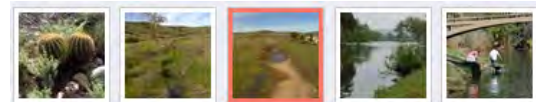
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Longitude: 117° 0' 38.87" W

Vernal Pool 28



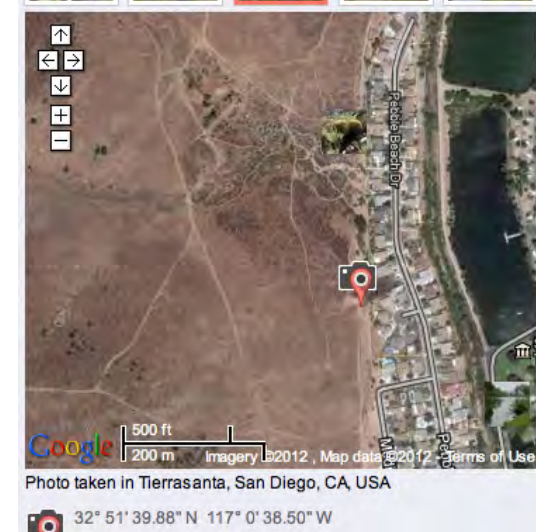
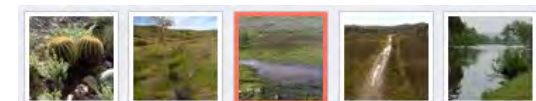


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Latitude: 32° 51' 30.79" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 38.09" W

Vernal Pool 37



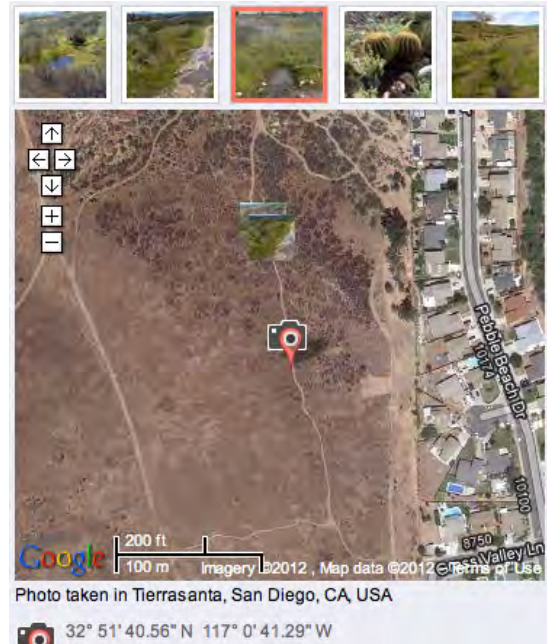
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Longitude: 117° 0' 38.5" W

Vernal Pool 47

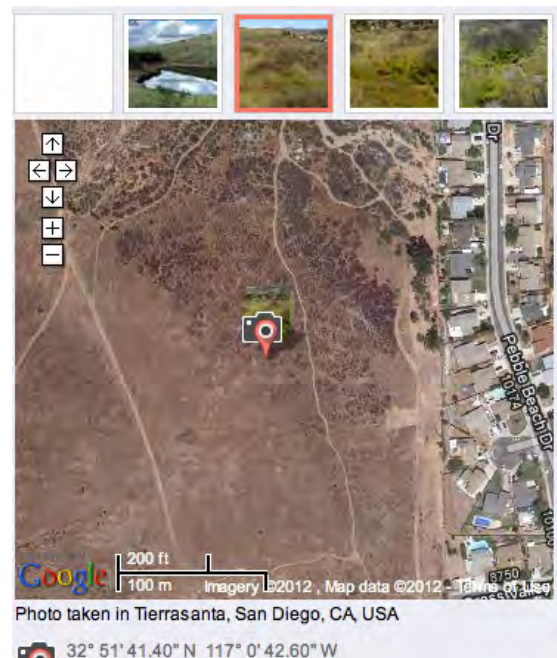




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Latitude: 32° 51' 40.56" N Vernal Pool 416
Longitude: 117° 0' 41.29" W

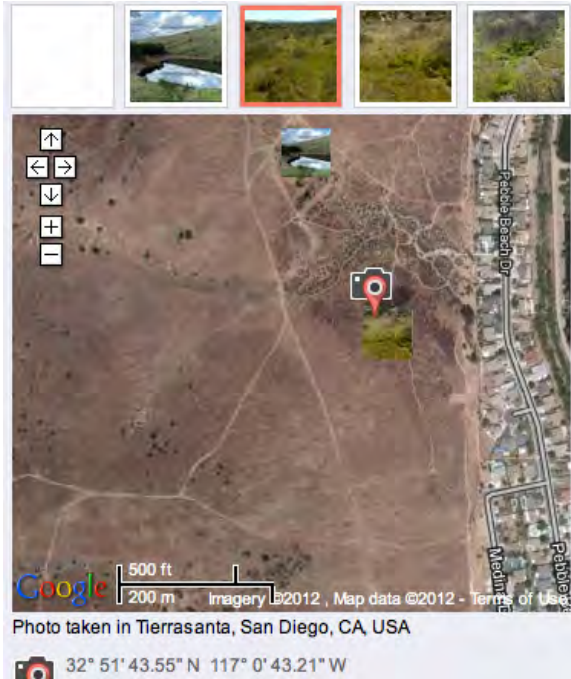


Latitude: 32° 51' 41.4" N Vernal Pool 448
Longitude: 117° 0' 42.6" W



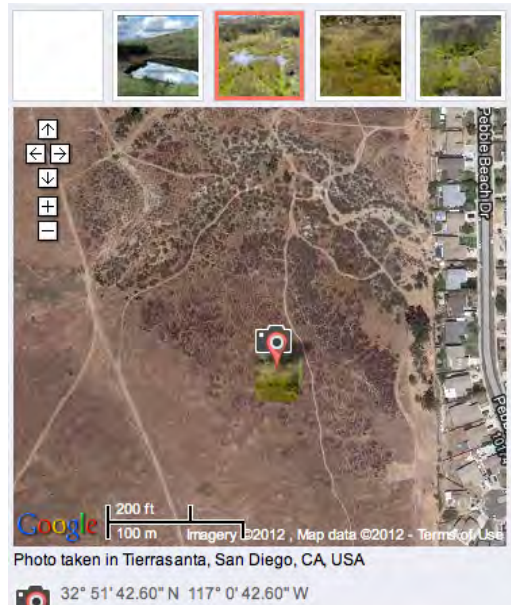


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Latitude: 32° 51' 41.95" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 42.44" W

Vernal Pool 444



Latitude: 32° 51' 42.6" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 42.6" W

Vernal Pool 440



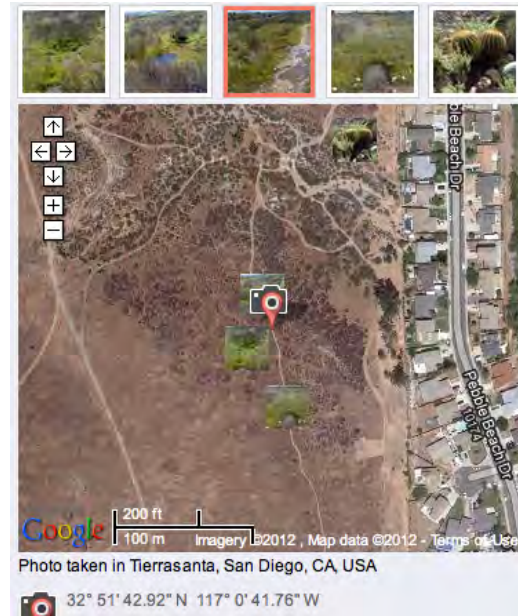


Preserve Wild Santee



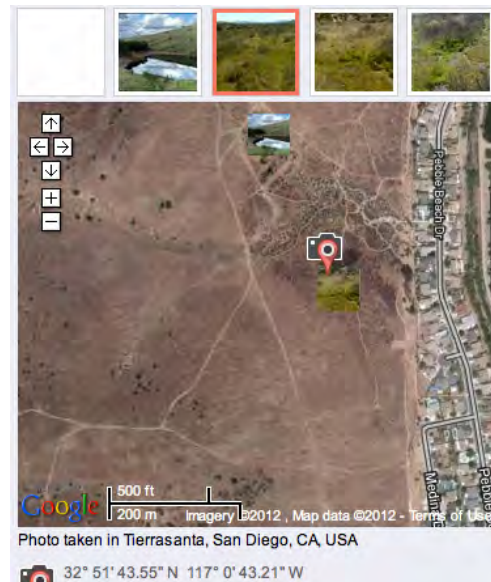
Latitude: 32° 51' 42.92" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 41.76" W

Vernal Pool 431



Latitude: 32° 51' 43.55" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 43.21" W

Vernal Pool 457



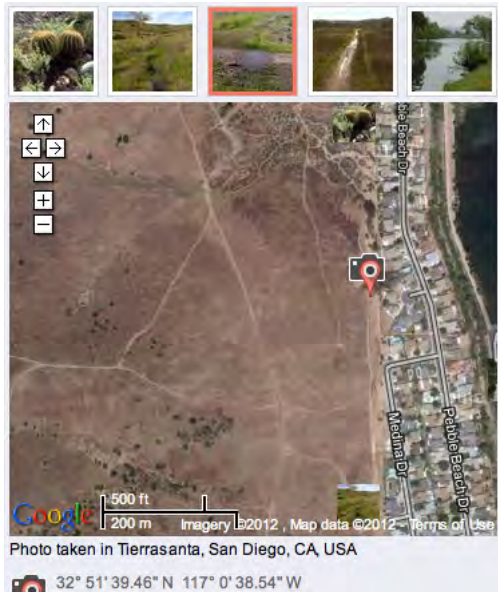


Preserve Wild Santee



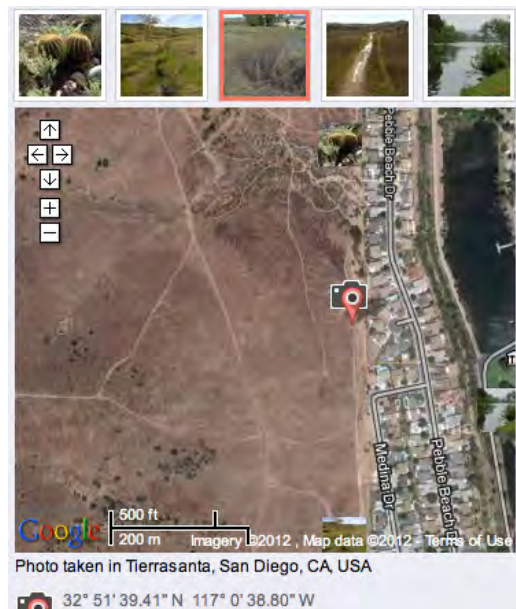
Latitude: 32° 51' 39.46" N
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Vernal Pool 45



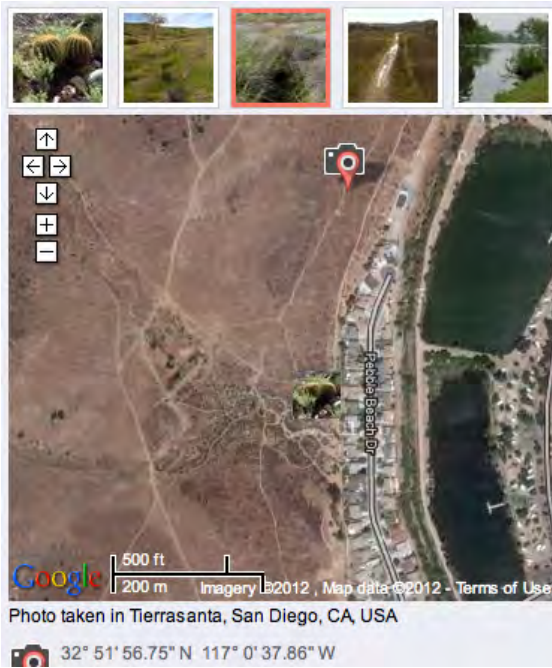
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Longitude: 117° 0' 38.80" W

Vernal Pool 46



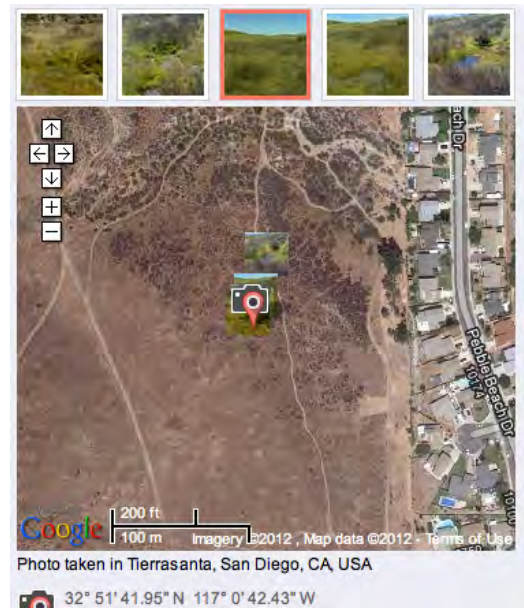


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Latitude: 32° 51' 56.75" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 37.86" W

Vernal Pool 94



Latitude: 32° 51' 41.95" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 42.43" W

Vernal Pool 445

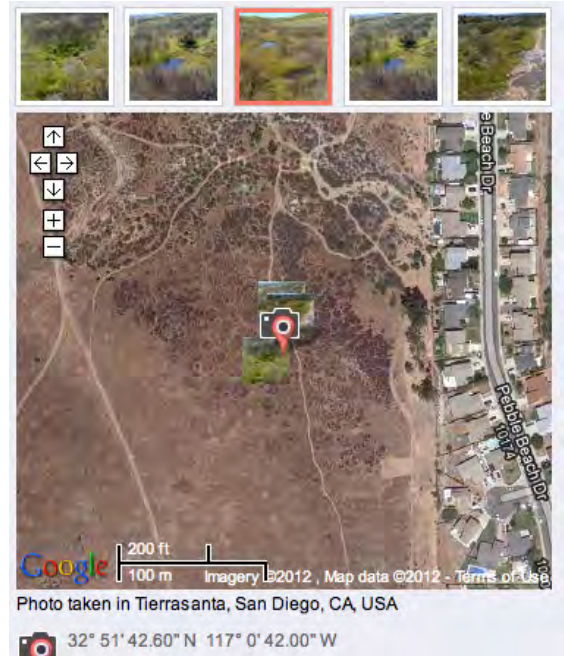




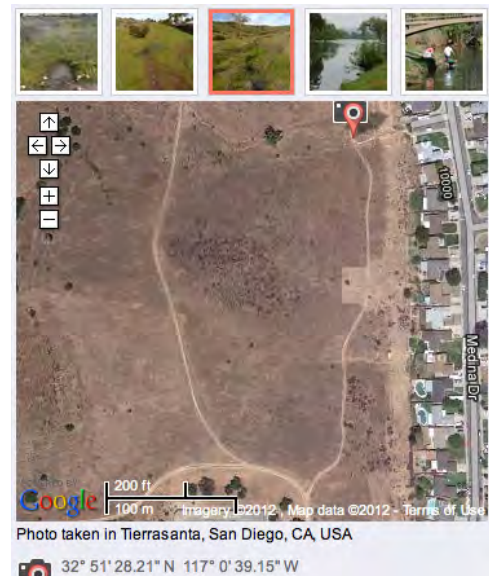
Preserve Wild Santee



Latitude: 32° 51' 42.60" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 42.00" W
Creeks:



Latitude: 32° 51' 28.21" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 39.15" W
Creek 33

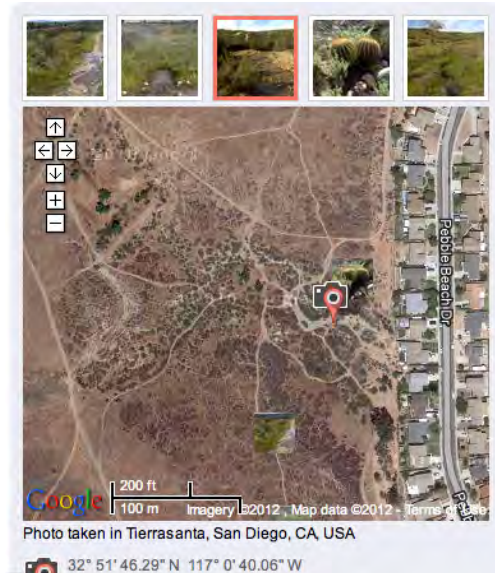




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Latitude: 32° 51' 46.29" N
Longitude: 117° 0' 40.06" W
Quail Canyon Creek



Creeks need to be avoided and 100 feet minimum buffers established. All development should be consolidated south of "Creek 33."

MHPA Boundary Line Adjustments:

What findings support the proposed MHPA boundary line adjustments? We concur that Quail Canyon Creek and the vernal pools area immediately south must be avoided, however the Quail Canyon Creek area immediately north that is proposed for subtraction is extremely valuable and must be avoided as well. The justifications for adjustments on the southern portion of the site are also unclear. Please analyze and disclose the locations of a resources proposed for addition and subtraction by each unit. To avoid significant adverse impacts to biological resources the development footprint should be consolidated in the southeastern portion of the site well below creeks and vernal pools.





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FIGURE 4a

Location of MHPA Boundary Line Adjustment
Annexation Alternative

RECON

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Vernal pools and impacted creeks are represented by the **added** red lines (creeks) and circles (vernal pools). **All of these should be avoided.**

Alternative Maps:

The DEIR lacks clear maps of alternatives with project proposals that overlay aerial photos. Without providing these maps and including impacted resources on the aerials the DEIR is inadequate because comparisons of impacts are difficult or not possible for reviewers. Please provide project alternative aerial maps that include the subdivision footprint and locations of biological resources.





Pardee's Outstanding Obligation:

On October 31, 2002 the Court approved a stipulated settlement for illegal grading portions of the project site.¹ Pardee agreed to the following term among others:

G. Land Dedication

Pardee will dedicate 1.22 acres of open space land within East Elliot Preserve and within the MHPA to the City for preservation.²

Despite numerous requests since 2002, documentation of the required land dedication has never been provided. Has this land been dedicated and recorded with the County? If so please provide the documentation. If the land has not been dedicated, it is completely inappropriate for a project to be processed until the Court settlement has been executed and now with an additional ten years interest due.

Stowe Trail:

The Stowe Trail is an issue in many of the scoping letters, yet not a word acknowledges it in the DEIR. The project adversely impacts a scenic corridor with an officially recognized historic trail designation. What are the state and federal requirements regarding potential impacts to historic trails and what are the mitigation requirements for impacts? The Stowe Trail was designated as a "Millennium Trail" in 2001. The DEIR is inadequate without addressing the issue of impacts to the Stowe Trail.

Visual Impacts:

The DEIR does not adequately disclose the visual impacts of cut and fill slopes. The simulations are distant. There should be views from prominent locations within one-half mile of the project site. The project should be designed without large manufactured cut and fill slopes. The development should be removed from steep slopes to reduce visual impacts, vulnerability to wildfire, sliding and higher velocity of runoff.

Public Safety:

The subdivision proposes to locate over 400 families in an area already negatively impacted by landfill gas, odor and particulate emissions. The DEIR completely ignores this issue. What is the specific quantity and content of baseline emissions and how are those emissions expected to increase considering the current application for a quadrupling of daily tonnage and twenty-four hour operations by Sycamore Landfill? What are the human health impacts of the emissions by content and quantity over time? Are the houses proposed to have air filtration systems or any other measures to mitigate the poor air and declining air quality risks?

¹ The people of the State of California and the City of San Diego, a municipal corporation, Plaintiffs v. Pardee Homes, a California corporation; Geocon Incorporated, Defendants, No. GIC799111

² Stipulated Settlement, p. 13.





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Fire Safety:

The Fire Protection Plan fails to consider site-specific location and steepness of slopes relative to potential Santa Ana wind-driven fire heads. The FPP is little more than a generic fuel modification zone template. Without addressing the following issues, a significant adverse impact to public safety remains. The plan should assess and address the most vulnerable biophysical locations of the site and disclose how the project footprint has been adjusted to avoid those areas. Or the FPP should explain where the footprint has not been adjusted to avoid the most vulnerable locations and what special measures have been applied to those areas and why. What areas of the site are expected to have a higher probability of receiving higher intensities of ember exposure? Have structures oriented garage doors to the opposite side? Have window and sliding doors been eliminated or minimized on the northeast side sides of structures? Has the distance between structures in the higher intensity locations been increased to a minimum of one hundred feet to minimize the risk of cluster burns? What is the dimension of vent size and have vents on the northeast exposure of the structures been eliminated? The FPP should explain the orientation and location of the traffic circulation system relative to expected Santa Ana wind-driven fire heads, the direction traffic must travel for evacuation and under what circumstances families are expected to evacuate or seek shelter within their homes. Evacuation plans and/or shelter-in-place plans should be prepared for any homes proposed for location within a state classified “very high fire hazard severity zone.” The configuration of the existing wildland-urban-interface (WUI) allowed this flank of the Cedar fire to be suppressed primarily without fire resources/defend itself in 2003. The FPP should consider the cumulative impact of the changing WUI relative to fire resources for the entire Cedar Fire corridor and consider that the fire head could arrive from a more north to northeast direction in future firestorm scenarios. What mitigation is proposed for increasing the total length of the WUI that requires fire resources? After considering these issues, the configuration of the subdivision and the structures and traffic circulation system within it should be modified. Otherwise a significant adverse impact to public safety remains.

Traffic:

Significant adverse traffic impacts should be reduced by lowering the number of housing units. The cumulative impacts of potentially expanding landfill operations should be considered.

GHGs:

Greenhouse gases should be reduced by requiring roof-top solar on all structures and over any public parking lots. The overall size of the project should be reduced. Without these measures a significant cumulative adverse impact to climate change by GHGs remains.

Quail Canyon Creek Flood Risks:

Quail Canyon Creek provides significant volumes of water to Sycamore Creek during storm events. The PDMWD sewage treatment plant within the Sycamore Creek floodplain experiences floods and





discharges of raw sewage into the San Diego River under current conditions. Sink-holes have been experienced on Pebble Beach Drive. What measures are being incorporated to reduce the volume and velocity of runoff from newly developed areas? The loss of natural vegetation and infiltration surfaces will exacerbate an already problematic area, therefore the subdivision represents a significant adverse impact increasing flood risk and the probability of failing public infrastructure.

Sliding Risk:

Where are the historic landslides and where are the soils and slopes that are most likely to fail under saturated conditions if graded?

Once all of the issues and modifications to the project as requested in this letter have been made and addressed, the annexation scenario for a much reduced and consolidated project would be appropriate.

Thank you for considering these comments,

Van K. Collinsworth, M.A.
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Resource Analyst/Executive Director
Preserve Wild Santee
Coordinator, California Chaparral Institute Vernal Pool Conservation Program

