

More Mesa Handbook



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Prepared by:
amec
for the More Mesa
Preservation Coalition

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Acknowledgements

This report compiles, summarizes and builds upon the work of a number of individuals and organizations. Without the extensive wildlife survey work and previous studies performed by professional biologists, preparation of this report would not have been possible. In particular, several individuals have contributed substantial information upon which this report is based. These includes hundreds of field surveys of More Mesa, field notes from professional biologists and personal contacts with, and input from, these biologists. In particular, AMEC would like to acknowledge the contributions of:

- Zev Labinger - Mr. Labinger, a professional field biologist, was hired by Santa Barbara County to prepare a comprehensive birding survey and report for More Mesa in winter 1995-1996. This survey included 12 full days of fieldwork over a 3 month period.
- Morgan Ball - Mr. Ball coordinated a team of volunteers in the late 1990s (early 2000s) that compiled hundreds of white-tailed kite surveys throughout the Goleta Valley, including over 200 which addressed More Mesa. Data sheets compiled by Mr. Ball's team as well as summaries prepared by Mr. Ball form a key component of the wildlife data presented in this report.
- John Storrer - Mr. Storrer, a professional biologist, shared extensive field notes for South Coast wildlife observations compiled over a several year period. Mr. Storrer also shared observations and thoughts on the relative importance of More Mesa for wildlife in a regional context. Mr. Storrer has prepared several biological resource reports for the South Coast Region, including a Biological Assessment and Management Plan for 35 acres of County land on More Mesa. He has also conducted wildlife surveys and prepared restoration and resource management plans for Lower Atascadero Creek. Data from these reports are also incorporated into this study.
- Mark Holmgren - Mr. Holmgren, a professional biologist employed by the University of California at Santa Barbara, shared field notes and observations, including data compiled on white-tailed kite roosting, nesting and foraging activities extending back well over a decade. Mr. Holmgren provided data on both historic and up-to-date wildlife observations as well as feedback on the relative importance of More Mesa to different wildlife species.
- Wayne Ferren - Mr. Ferren directed the preparation of the original 1982 study of More Mesa's biological resources which formed a key component of the discussion in this report and provided input and guidance on the preparation of this handbook.
- Photographs and selected map data were provided courtesy of Kimus Brady, Mark Bright, William B. Dewy, Douglas Herr, Melissa Kelly, Donley Olson, and Lynn Watson.

In addition to these individuals, this report draws upon data from dozens of local and national sources, particularly Environmental Impact Reports and studies for other large open space areas along the South Coast. This data was key to addressing the relative importance of More Mesa to wildlife, as well as providing background information on various species and habitats. A complete list of references and contacts used to compile this report is provided at the end of this report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Introduction

The goal of *The More Mesa Handbook* is to provide a single objective and accessible source for information regarding More Mesa, its important resources and their relationship to adopted local plans and policies. This report is intended for use by the general public, agency staff and decision-makers, public interest groups, and potential developers. *The More Mesa Handbook* summarizes known ecological, recreational, aesthetic, and other resource data for More Mesa in a manner intended to be accessible to the general public. In order to facilitate understanding of More Mesa's key resources, this handbook also provides a brief history of More Mesa and an overview of past development projects and proposals. In addition, the handbook provides details on existing adopted site specific, and general, County and State planning documents, policies, and regulations that apply to More Mesa. Finally, this report provides an analysis of management issues and general management recommendations based upon guidance provided in existing adopted State and County plans and regulations.

The More Mesa Handbook is an informational document that conveys data from many different sources; it is not a scientific study. This report does not include new research or fieldwork, but is based on existing agency plans and public data, and compiles and presents data from accepted and publicly available data sources (e.g., University of California). In particular, it relies on adopted Santa Barbara County and other agency plans, files, records, environmental documents, photographs, and associated studies sponsored by public agencies.

The team who prepared this document gathered, reviewed, compiled and synthesized extensive existing available data from a wide variety of sources, including field notes from professional biologists, wildlife observation data sheets, wildlife publications, etc. In particular, this report reviews and presents wildlife data that in some instances spans a decade or more of observations. While professional biologists were consulted on some of this data and the relative importance of More Mesa's biological resources, the observations and conclusions contained in this report represent the independent professional judgment of the report's authors.

This handbook is a public educational resource which is intended to be as complete as possible. AMEC Earth and Environmental made great effort to provide up-to-date, accurate and complete information. However, it was not possible to independently validate all of the source material referenced in this report. Further, information contained in this report does not constitute legal advice, but the authors' best professional attempt to collect and present data and policy guidance from various reports, studies, formal and informal biological surveys and field notes and adopted agency plans.



1 – INTRODUCTION



More Mesa's broad grasslands are interspersed with oak and riparian woodlands which substantially increases the biological diversity and habitat value of this area.



Cooper's hawks are known to nest in the woodlands along Atascadero Creek and forage on More Mesa.



More Mesa's wildflowers, such as the large meadow of western goldenrod, support many species of butterflies, such as this bramble hairstreak, throughout the year.

About More Mesa

More Mesa is located in Santa Barbara County on the south-central coast of California. The 330-acre ocean front site lies within an unincorporated area of the Goleta Valley between the cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara, approximately 2 miles east of the University of California at Santa Barbara (Figure 2-1). More Mesa has long been recognized as one of the last and most significant undeveloped coastal open spaces on the South Coast of Santa Barbara County (County of Santa Barbara [SB County] 1993; 1982; 2002b). More Mesa is surrounded on three sides by existing residential neighborhoods: More Mesa Shores to the west; South Walnut, Mockingbird Lane, and Vieja Drive to the north, and the community of Hope Ranch to the east.

The More Mesa study area consists of a broad, level coastal terrace bisected by a series of northward draining canyons and low-lying land within the floodplain of Atascadero Creek along the site's northern end (Figure 2-2). At the mesa's southern end, steep ocean bluffs rise 80 to 100 feet up to the terrace from the wide sandy beach which fronts the ocean bluffs. Terrace vegetation is primarily an expanse of gently sloping grassland, intermixed with areas of coastal scrub and occasional seasonal ponds and wetlands. Although vegetation over much of the mesa is generally open, the site's canyons and the floodplain of Atascadero Creek are dominated by dense woodlands of coast live oak, willows, and cottonwoods. As discussed later in this handbook, the variety and quality of habitats which occur within the study area support a surprising diversity of wildlife species, particularly protected and sensitive raptor species (birds of prey). As such, these habitats are recognized by the State and County as environmentally sensitive areas worthy of protection (SB County 1993; 2002b). This variety of natural resources, combined with outstanding scenic qualities, draws many recreational users to More Mesa and its undeveloped beach. As a result, although a large majority of the 330-acre study area is private land, it is traversed by numerous informal trails, providing recreation opportunities for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.



More Mesa's broad grasslands are bordered by Hope Ranch to the east and Goleta to the north; UCSB and Campus Point lie to the west.

As discussed later in this handbook, the variety and quality of habitats which occur within the study area support a surprising diversity of wildlife species, particularly protected and sensitive raptor species (birds of prey). As such, these habitats are recognized by the State and County as environmentally sensitive areas worthy of protection (SB County 1993; 2002b). This variety of natural resources, combined with outstanding scenic qualities, draws many recreational users to More Mesa and its undeveloped beach. As a result, although a large majority of the 330-acre study area is private land, it is traversed by numerous informal trails, providing recreation opportunities for hikers, bikers, and equestrians.

Surrounding Neighborhoods - The community of Hope Ranch which borders More Mesa to the east (Figure 2-3), is comprised of large residential estate lots generally ranging from 1 to 3 acres in size which also often support equestrian uses. Areas of Hope Ranch immediately adjacent to More Mesa also contain a number of even larger parcels with many mature coast live oak and other trees, which contribute to the open and undeveloped character of the area. Access to More Mesa from this community is via an existing private trail off Via Roblata. County policy emphasizes protection of Hope Ranch's semi-rural ambience (SB County 1993).

To the northeast, More Mesa is bordered by the mixed residential neighborhoods along Vieja Drive and Mockingbird Lane. Vieja Drive supports older single-family homes on lots of generally $\frac{1}{2}$ to 1 acre. Mockingbird Lane supports newer planned development neighborhoods of smaller lots including Vista La Cumbre, Diamond Crest, and Las Brisas (discussed later on page 8). These neighborhoods include the three primary trails and roads used by the public to access More Mesa (see Section 3, *Recreation*). Development of the newer neighborhoods along Mockingbird Lane has sometimes been controversial, with public concern expressed over possible impacts to More Mesa (SB County 2002b; 2004b).



Figure 2-2. More Mesa – Physical Features

Note: Blue and white lines outline general boundaries of major physical features.

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The majority of the northern edge of the More Mesa study area is defined by Atascadero Creek and the adjacent Obern Trail: a popular bike path and walking trail. Immediately north of the creek and bike trail is the 1970s-era South Walnut neighborhood, which consists primarily of single-family homes on 7,000-square foot lots and a large townhome community. More Mesa is generally inaccessible from this neighborhood due to the steep banks, flowing or standing water and mud of Atascadero Creek. It should be noted, however, that enterprising residents annually install an ad hoc plank walkway across the creek to provide limited access during low water conditions through summer and fall. West of South Walnut lies Maria Ygnacia Creek and approximately 900 acres of agricultural land cultivated in open field crops, orchard and greenhouses. This region and Maria Ygnacia Creek provide an important link between More Mesa and other area open spaces and the foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north (SB County 1993; 2002b).

The More Mesa Shores neighborhood is located to the west of the study area and consists of single-family homes on lots ranging from $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ acre in size and some agricultural uses, primarily nurseries and greenhouses. This neighborhood supports three northward draining canyons that are oak- and willow-lined, similar to those found on More Mesa. Access to More Mesa from this neighborhood exists off the northern end of Orchid Drive/Shoreline Drive, a private road, while public access is available via a dirt road off the southern end of South Patterson Avenue.

Land Ownership - The study area includes all of the major areas of open land south of Atascadero Creek in the vicinity which consists of approximately 330 acres of land under four different ownerships (Figure 2-3). Over 80% of the site (275 acres) belongs to three individual private owners, with the remaining parcels owned by Santa Barbara County (54 acres). The study area includes fourteen parcels (Table 2-1), with the majority of private land zoned for Planned Residential Development (PRD) and the County-owned land effectively managed as open space. The County purchased 35 acres on the mesa from private owners in 1991 for \$800,000 and acquired additional land along Atascadero Creek in the mid- to late-1990s. Private ownership on More Mesa is divided between Sun Mesa, Inc. which holds the largest area of 264.5 acres and owners of two smaller properties (Table 2-1).

Table 2-1. Land Ownership on More Mesa

Owner	Parcel (APN)	Total Acreage	Land Use and Zoning	Notes
Sun Mesa, Inc	065-320-001 065-320-002 065-320-007 065-320-008 065-320-009 065-320-010	264.5	Land Use: PRD Zone: PRD-70	Majority of level mesa and canyon system.
Edward and Judith Kunda	065-280-001	6	Land Use: 1 acre or more/unit Zone: DR-1	NW corner; next to More Mesa Shores.
Wesley and Eileen Gray	065-240-015	4.5	Land Use: 2 acre or more/unit Zone: DR-0.5	Canyon bottom next to Atascadero Creek.
Santa Barbara County*	065-230-007 065-320-004 065-320-011 065-505-021 065-525-001 065-540-047	54.25	Land Use: Agriculture (A-1-10); Open Lands; 0.5 acres or more/unit Zone: Agriculture (Ag-1-10); Res-40; DR-2	Hilltop, canyons, and floodplain on north end.

*The different zones on county owned land reflect anticipated uses in 1993 for a park (35 acres), private agriculture 19 ± acres) and old road right-of-way (1 ± acres). Some of these zones may now be obsolete.

Source: SB County 2006.

History of More Mesa

Due to the abundant natural resources of the Santa Ynez Mountains and Pacific coastline, the Goleta Valley historically supported relatively large Native American populations, and has been inhabited for at least 6,000 years (SB County 1992a). In the 1500s, one of the largest human settlements in Alta and Baja California was on the shores of the Goleta Slough, 1 mile west of More Mesa. However, More Mesa appears to have been used primarily for gathering and fishing, with only limited archaeological resources discovered on the mesa. These include a large flake chopper, shell and stone fragments, etc. (SB County 1992a). With the severe decline of Chumash populations, after the arrival of Spanish missionaries in the late 1700s, the mesa appears to have been used for grazing.

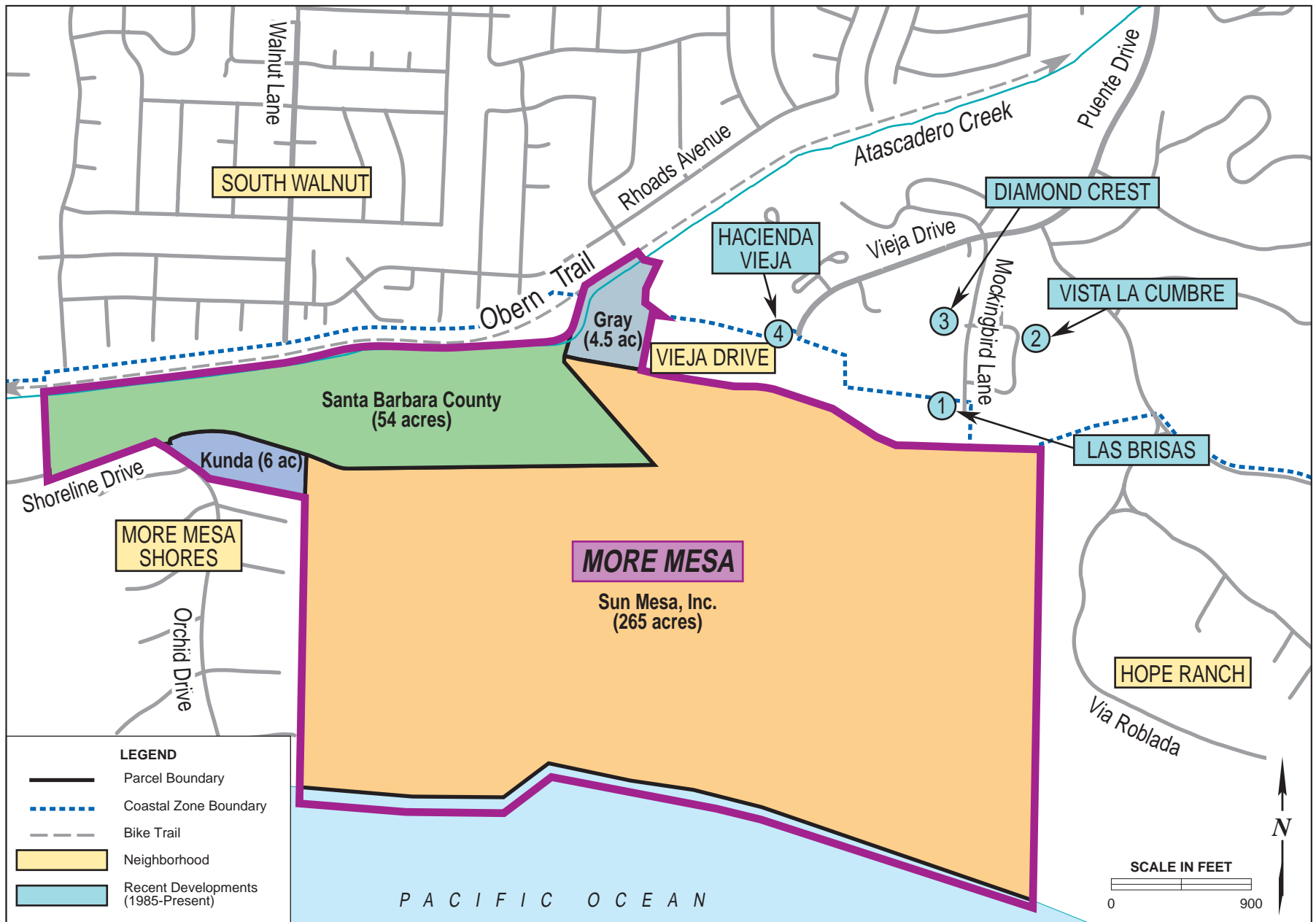
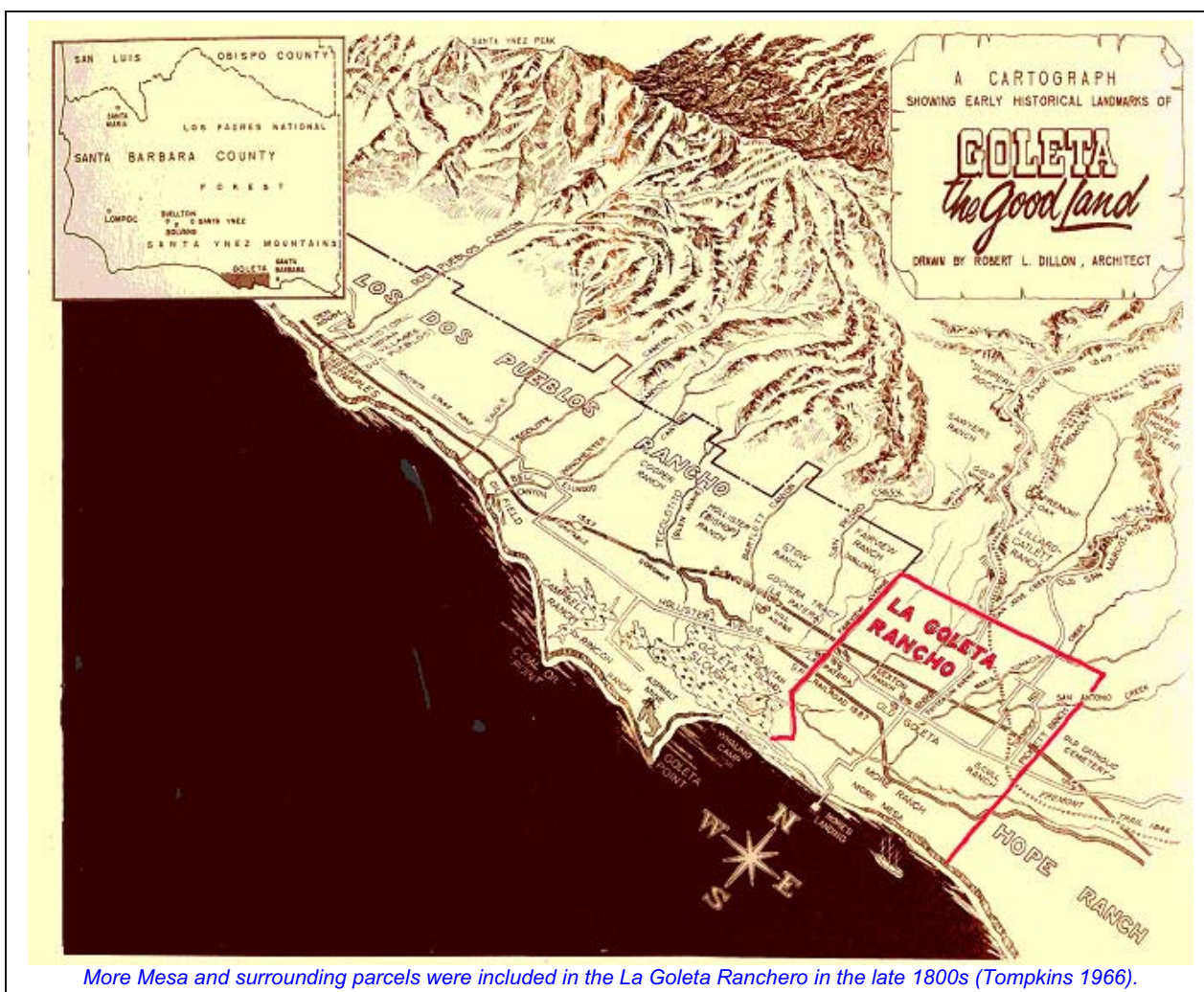


Figure 2-3. More Mesa – Neighborhoods



More Mesa and surrounding parcels were included in the La Goleta Ranchero in the late 1800s (Tompkins 1966).

In 1846, More Mesa was deeded to Daniel A. Hill by the Mexican government and was used for cattle ranching. In 1864, Hill sold 1,000 acres that included More Mesa for \$5,000 to T. Wallace More. More's 1,000-acre Goleta Ranch included orchards, as well as areas for grazing cattle and raising crops like lima beans, tomatoes, and grain. Asphalt was mined near More Mesa and this, in addition to other ranch products, was shipped from More's private pier on the west end of More Mesa.

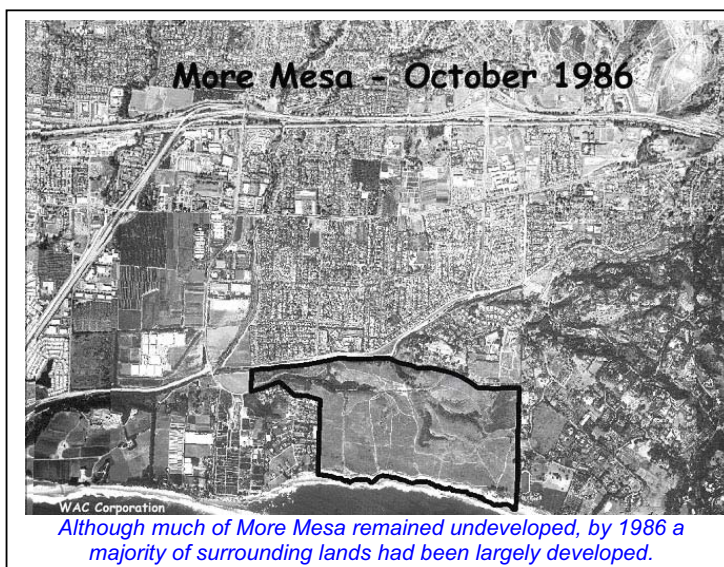
In 1886, a railroad was extended through the More Mesa property, but was abandoned by 1899 (SB County 1992a). In 1928, Mobil leased part of More Mesa to explore for oil, but developed only natural gas wells on what is now the Gas Company site on west More Mesa. Grazing and limited agriculture (e.g., grains, lima beans) remained the primary use of More Mesa until the 1950s.



In 1929, most of Goleta and all of More Mesa remained undeveloped.

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In 1965, the 600-unit Buena Vida development was proposed for More Mesa. However, the developer withdrew the proposal due to public opposition and his inability to acquire the parcel. In 1972, the mesa was proposed for development as the 600-unit “Tyrolian Village” project. However, in 1972 the California Supreme Court found that major development projects must prepare an Environmental Impact report (EIR) prior to approval (Friends of Mammoth 1972). In response, the County enacted a building moratorium and commissioned its first EIR on this More Mesa project. The developer completed the EIR and More Mesa was rezoned and approved for building; however, legal issues arose and the project was put on hold. In 1973, the County denied the rezone application, effectively terminating the project. In the late 1970s approximately 265 acres of More Mesa were purchased by Columbia University which owned the land until 1984 when the property was sold to its current owner, Sun Mesa Inc.



Although much of More Mesa remains undeveloped, surrounding areas have been gradually developed over the last 40 years. The South Walnut neighborhood north of More Mesa and Atascadero Creek was built in the 1960s and 1970s. The northeast corner of More Mesa was developed as Vista La Cumbre and Diamond Crest in the late 1980s. Development of this area continued with construction of the Las Brisas (2005) and Hacienda Vieja (2007). From the 1970s through the 1990s, gradual infill also continued in Hope Ranch to the east and More Mesa Shores to the west.

Land Use at More Mesa

More Mesa has been a focus of County planning efforts for over 28 years and is known to support wildlife, habitats, and recreational activities that are recognized as significant resources by the State (SB County 1982)¹. More Mesa was first recognized as a site of significant planning and environmental concern by the County and State in the County's 1982 Local Coastal Plan (LCP), which specifically identified the site as supporting important biological, visual and recreational resources. Although a countywide document, the 1982 LCP included site specific analysis of planning and environmental issues at More Mesa, as well as specific resource protection policies to ensure that any development respected the site's critical resources. In particular, the 1982 LCP required the preparation of a biological study, the 1982 *An Evaluation of Biological Resources at More Mesa* (Biological Evaluation) to thoroughly review the site's sensitive wildlife and habitat resources and to guide the location and amount of future development that could be supported on the site (refer to Section 3)². That study was accepted by the County in the late 1980s, when the County Board of Supervisors formally recognized approximately 260 acres of More Mesa as environmentally sensitive habitat worthy of protection. In the 1993 Goleta Community Plan (GCP), the County “downzoned” More Mesa, with allowable development being reduced from a maximum of approximately 312 residential units on parcels under three key ownerships (Sun Mesa, Kunda and SB County) to 76 units³. The GCP included a new Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH) map and standards which restrict new development to approximately 40 acres adjacent to Hope Ranch on the mesa's east end and 3.8 acres north of More Mesa Shores on the west end (Figures 2-3 and 2-4). The relationship between these adopted County Plans and land use and development potential on More Mesa is summarized in the following pages.

¹ The County has multiple adopted countywide plans and policies contained under the umbrella of the County's 1980 Comprehensive Plan, some of which could apply to More Mesa. This report discusses only those adopted plans that are most relevant to issues surrounding resource protection and development potential on More Mesa.

² The UCSB study was finalized in 1982; however, research and fieldwork extended from approximately 1981 to 1982 (Ferren 2008).

³ In the early 1990s, prior to adoption of the GCP, the County acquired 35 acres on the northern end of More Mesa, with subsequent acquisitions of two parcels along Atascadero Creek totaling approximately 19 acres, bringing County holdings to the current 54 acres. These County owned parcels are all effectively managed as open space.

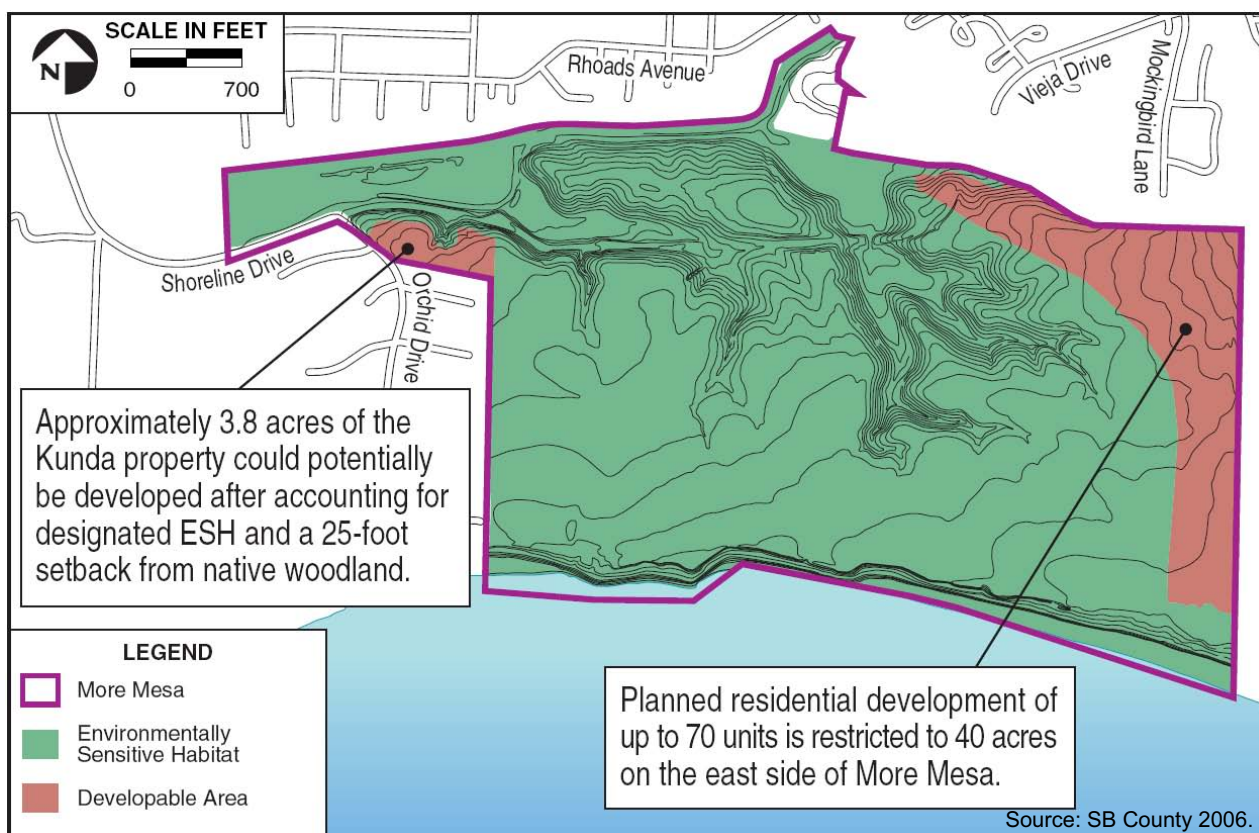
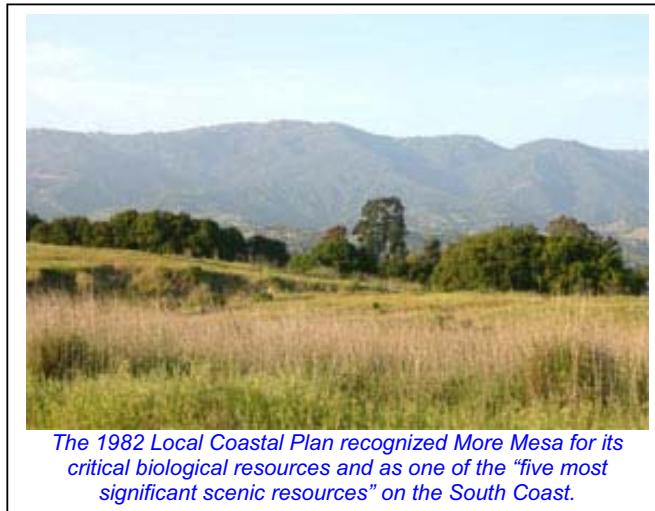


Figure 2-4. Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Overlay, More Mesa

Local Coastal Plan - The County's 1982 LCP included a detailed description of More Mesa and critical resources present on the site, such as oak woodlands, wetlands and significant nesting, roosting, and foraging habitat for the white-tailed kite. The 1982 LCP identified More Mesa as one of the "five most significant scenic resources" and "one of the few remaining large ocean front parcels in the urbanized South Coast area that have not been developed". The 1982 LCP also included site specific development standards for More Mesa, including provisions that "all development on the site, including structures and roads, shall be sited and designed to avoid areas used for nesting and roosting by the white-tailed kites" and that "in order to preserve open space and protect views to the foothills, structures shall be clustered to the maximum extent possible on the northern portion of the property excluding all environmentally sensitive habitat areas." The preparation of an overall specific plan for 300 acres of More Mesa, to ensure comprehensive resource protection, was also required due to More Mesa's zoning as a Planned Residential Development (PRD). The More Mesa discussion and development standards were replaced by more detailed development standards in the 1993 GCP (see discussion below); however, all general LCP policies are still in effect and the LCP continues to identify More Mesa as significant for the white-tailed kite and provision of public recreation. In particular, existing LCP policies guide public access, view preservation and protection of ESH areas, including white-tailed kite habitat on More Mesa as outlined below:

- **Policy 2-11:** "All development, including agricultural development, adjacent to areas designated on the land use plan or resource maps as environmentally sensitive habitat areas, shall be regulated to avoid adverse impacts on habitat resources."



2 - ABOUT MORE MESA

- **Policy 9-28:** *“Any development around the nest and roosting area shall be set back sufficiently far as to minimize impacts on the habitat area.”*
- **Policy 9-29:** *“In addition to preserving the ravine plant communities on More Mesa for nesting and roosting sites, the maximum feasible area shall be retained in grassland to provide feeding area for the kites.”*

Goleta Community Plan - The GCP was adopted to address a surge in development during the late 1980s in the unincorporated community of Goleta and to provide more community specific guidance and policies than were included in the County's overall Comprehensive Plan. The GCP guides the general type and location of land uses, specifically tailored for unincorporated Goleta, including those areas within the coastal zone. All development within the unincorporated Goleta area must comply with the policies set forth in the GCP. The GCP identifies More Mesa as a unique, large, biologically diverse, scenic coastal open space of regional significance with substantial existing public use. The GCP further designates the area of More Mesa currently owned by Sun Mesa, Inc. as Planned Residential Development for up to 70 units (PRD-70). To help protect More Mesa's important biological resources, the GCP requires that these 70-units be confined to 40 acres on the mesa's eastern side, while designating approximately 264 acres of More Mesa as ESH. The purpose of the PRD designation is to protect sensitive resources, views, etc., and to ensure that development is clustered to the maximum extent feasible. Key GCP Development Standards (DevStd) include⁴:

- **DevStd 1.1:** A Specific Plan is required to provide comprehensive planning for site design and resource protection.
- **DevStd 1.2:** The property owner may request that development be increased only after approval of a new comprehensive study of the site's biological resources.⁵
- **DevStd 1.3:** Development must include a comprehensive habitat protection-management plan.
- **DevStd 1.4:** A minimum of 20% of the site must be dedicated for public use, including the bluff top.

California Coastal Act: In 1972, California voters enacted Proposition 20, the California Coastal Zone Conservation Act, which the State legislature implemented through the adoption of the State Coastal Act in 1976. The Coastal Act enshrines the will of the people of the State of California and the state legislature regarding protection of significant coastal resources and provision of public access to and along the coast. The Coastal Act provides the legislative underpinning for the County's adopted LCP and contains multiple key statutes to guide development including:

- Section 30240: Environmentally Sensitive Habitats; adjacent developments:
 - a) *ESH areas shall be protected against any significant disruption of habitat values, and only uses dependent on those values shall be allowed within those areas;*
 - b) *Development in areas adjacent to ESH areas... areas shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas, and shall be compatible with the continuance of those habitat...areas.*
- Section 30252: The location and amount of new development should maintain and enhance public access to the coast.
- Section 30251: The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance.

⁴ The Kunda property, Gray property, and approximately 20 acres along Atascadero Creek, owned by the County, did not receive site specific policy guidance in the GCP.

⁵ The current land owner is conducting a study of the sites biological resources that is expected to be completed in 2009.

Habitats and Biological Resources at More Mesa

The varied physical features present at More Mesa, including Atascadero Creek, several deep north and westward draining ravines and the broad coastal terrace support surprisingly diverse habitat types. The spring fed riparian and wetland habitats in the ravines, combined with the terrace grasslands and oak woodlands above Atascadero Creek provide extensive ecologically valuable ecotones (i.e., edge habitats) and interact to increase More Mesa's habitat value by providing cover and diverse wildlife foraging areas. More Mesa's five general habitat types in order of dominance include grasslands, riparian woodlands, wetlands, oak woodlands, and coastal bluff scrub (Figure 3-1; Table 3-1).



Figure 3-1. Habitat Diversity and Physical Features at More Mesa

Broad coastal terrace grasslands combine with spring fed ravines and Atascadero Creek to increase More Mesa's habitat diversity. (Note: Blue and white lines outline major physical features.)

The species composition and general characteristics of each of these habitats varies substantially depending on slope, location, soils, etc.; this variation further increases habitat diversity and wildlife utilization. In addition, More Mesa's connection with outlying habitats via the regional drainage system allows for some wildlife movement between the site and larger open areas. The occurrence of several sensitive and declining species further underscores the critical nature of this site in a regional context (Land Trust for SB County 1992a).

Relationship to Regional Ecosystems

The grasslands, wetlands, and woodlands that comprise the More Mesa ecosystem are collectively identified as one of four key Goleta Valley regional ecosystems which are linked to other regional systems via wildlife corridors along the Atascadero and Maria Ygnacia Creeks (Land Trust for SB County 1992a; SB County 1994). More Mesa is also cited as being a key upland component of the greater Goleta Slough ecosystem due to the ecological interchange and wildlife movement along Atascadero Creek between More Mesa and the Goleta Slough (City of Santa Barbara 1997). This interaction is illustrated by the periodic use of More Mesa by itinerant larger predators such as coyotes and bobcats that enter the mesa via wildlife corridors such as Atascadero Creek (Storror 2008). The interaction of large expanses of grasslands at More Mesa with perennial sources of freshwater (e.g., springs, Atascadero Creek), native woodlands, and freshwater wetlands (see Figure 3-2) is unusually diverse when compared to other South Coast urban open spaces such as the Ellwood Mesa, Carpinteria Bluffs, or Douglas Family Preserve.

Table 3-1. More Mesa Habitats and Biological Resources Overview

Habitat Type (total size)	General Location and Characteristics	Key Ecological Features	Percentage of Total Area at More Mesa* (336.5 acres)
Grassland (215.2 acres)	Located throughout level mesa, some canyon slopes; primarily non-native grasses. Wide variation in species cover.	Critical ecosystem role supporting high density small mammal population; prey base for sensitive raptors such as the white-tailed kite and northern harrier, and mammals such as the weasel, and occasional coyote or larger predators. Intermixes with vernal pool and wetland areas.	64%
Riparian and Eucalyptus Woodlands (48.9 acres)	Atascadero Creek—adjacent floodplain; canyons/ravines; scattered eucalyptus groves/windrows. Includes mature forests and shrub-like trees.	Multi-dimensional habitat which supports high wildlife diversity; Provides refuge and cover within grasslands facilitating wildlife interaction. Used by sensitive wildlife (i.e., coopers hawk, migratory songbirds). Canyons and ravines linked to Atascadero Creek and larger regional ecosystems allowing wildlife migration.	14.5%
Wetlands (26.3 acres)	Atascadero Creek—adjacent marshes; canyon/ravine bottoms; vernal pools. Includes meadow and open water areas.	Unusual perennial reach of Atascadero Creek is a reliable wildlife water source. A Western goldenrod-dominated marsh is unique in the County. Unusual northward draining ravines support mix of fresh- and saline-water wetland types rare in South Coast urban area. Vernal pools support regionally rare habitat, restricted plant and animal species.	7.8%
Coastal Bluff Scrub (15.1 acres)	Confined to edge of mesa and bluff face. Varies from areas of coastal bluff to dune and coastal sage scrub.	Includes almost 8 acres of vegetation characteristic of declining coastal dune scrub (e.g., beach primrose); increases More Mesa's habitat and wildlife diversity.	4.5%
Oak Woodlands (10.1 acres)	North and east facing slopes; above Atascadero Creek and canyons. Forests with dense understory and more open areas.	Important wildlife nesting and roosting habitat, particularly for sensitive raptors (e.g., white-tailed kite). Acorns, berries, and insects serve as important food sources for a number of wildlife species including birds, small mammals, and deer.	3%

*Includes approximately 21 acres of beach and a previously-disturbed residential site that are not discussed in this section (see Figure 3-2).

Sources: UCSB 1982; City of Santa Barbara 1997; and Land Trust for SB County 1992a; SB County 1994, 1997a, and 2004a.



Use of More Mesa by larger predators such as coyote and bobcat is indicative of its connectivity with to surrounding open space via Atascadero Creek.

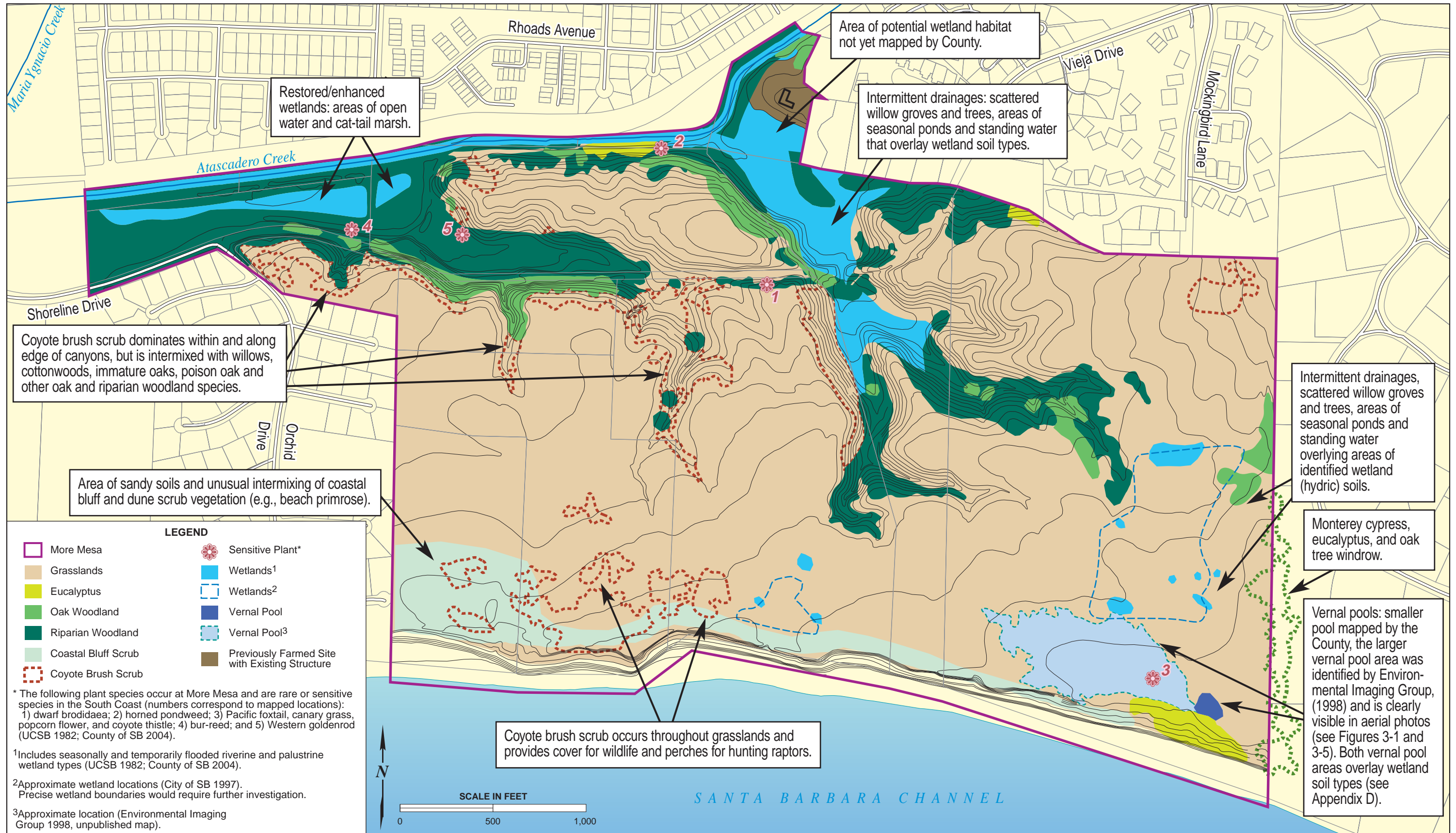


Figure 3-2. More Mesa – Habitats and Sensitive Plant Resources

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Environmentally Sensitive Habitats at More Mesa

The California Coastal Act defines ESH as “any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities and developments.” Examples of ESH include wetlands, native riparian and oak woodlands and habitats that support special status species of plants and wildlife such as the grasslands on More Mesa.

Approximately 280 acres of the greater More Mesa area (about 80%) is designated as ESH in the County's LCP/GCP. ESH areas are generally identified as habitats that are rare or declining and/or which support a high diversity, abundance, or rare wildlife. Many of the habitat types present in the study area are specifically identified as ESH under the County's certified 1982 LCP (SB County 1982). Generally, oak woodlands and wetlands – including vernal pools and riparian woodlands – are designated as ESH throughout the County. Non-native eucalyptus trees are typically identified as ESH only where they are known to support specialized wildlife such as the monarch butterfly (SB County 1982). More Mesa's non-native grasslands are designated as ESH due to their role in providing critical foraging habitat for several raptor species. Sensitive raptors found within the study area include a high density of white-tailed kites, including historic roosts and active nests, as well as the northern harrier, short-eared owl, and the burrowing owl (UCSB 1982; SB County 1982). Soils present on the eastern portion of More Mesa adjacent to Hope Ranch include Concepcion fine loamy sand, Diablo clay and Baywood fine loamy sand. Both Diablo clay and Baywood fine loamy sand are identified by the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) as wetland soils in the state of California (NRCS 2008). These wetland soil types are limited to the southeastern 15 acres of the developable area on the east side of the mesa noted for its vernal pools and vernal ponds¹. In addition, Baywood soils extend to potential vernal pool noted by Environmental Imaging Group (1998) (see Appendix D). Concepcion fine sandy loam is also located in the developable portions of the Kunda property on the west end of the mesa; however, this soil type is not recognized as a wetland soil in California (USACE 2008). It should be noted that none of these areas have been formally mapped or identified as wetlands, and appear to be dominated by non-native species.

Habitat Mapping and Data Sources

The habitat mapping and discussion in this report is based on information and maps provided in a number of previous studies (UCSB 1982; City of Santa Barbara 1997; Environmental Imaging Group 1998; SB County 2004a). No new biological resource field work or original habitat mapping has been performed for this study. Instead, this study synthesizes data from multiple previously published and unpublished agency plans, maps, reports, studies, and field surveys which address the resources found on More Mesa (see Appendix A). In addition, while past scientific and agency studies tend to subdivide study area habitats into multiple subunits (e.g., four or five types of wetlands), this handbook groups these habitats together to facilitate general public understanding of these issues and present the available data in a simplified manner.

What makes a habitat unique?

Physical features, such as changes in topography, soil types, sun exposure, and moisture conditions allow for distinct vegetation communities to establish. Different plant communities, in turn, affect the types of wildlife present in each area. The combination of physical features, vegetation, and wildlife creates distinct habitat areas. An array of varied habitats, such as those found on More Mesa, can increase both wildlife abundance and diversity.

¹ Vernal pools and vernal ponds are both seasonal pools that fill with winter rain water, drying gradually through spring and early summer. A key distinguishing feature is that vernal pools support a variety of regionally restricted to rare plants while these may be absent from vernal ponds. More Mesa's vernal pools support at least one relatively unique plant species, a coyote thistle, apparently not found in either Isla Vista or Ellwood vernal pools (Ferren 2008).

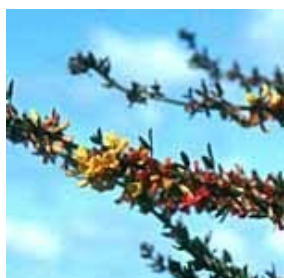
Coastal Bluff Scrub

Characteristics - Coastal bluff scrub generally occurs in areas exposed to frequent winds with high salt and moisture content. On More Mesa, coastal bluff scrub occupies approximately 15.1 acres, or 4.5% of the mesa near the edge of the coastal terrace (see Figures 3-1 and 3-2). Coastal bluff scrub is generally confined to the bluff face and a narrow band along the bluff top, except for a large 8-acre expanse on the mesa's southwest bluff top.

Coastal bluff scrub at More Mesa intermixes with adjacent habitats including grasslands, vernal pools, and eucalyptus woodlands. The character and species composition of coastal bluff scrub varies significantly depending on location along the mesa's coastal bluff. For example, bluff scrub on the eastern bluff face and edge is dominated by coastal sagebrush and California bush sunflower. This differs from the more diverse scrub habitat located on the western bluff top, which is dominated by coyote brush but also includes coastal dune scrub vegetation such as croton, and beach primrose on a series of low, sandy mounds.



Coastal bluff scrub occurs along More Mesa's bluffs and includes almost 8 acres of coastal dune scrub type vegetation on More Mesa's sandy southwest corner.



Deerweed (left) is abundant in coastal bluff scrub which intermixes with dune scrub vegetation such as the beach primrose (right) on sandy soils on the southwest bluff top.

The most abundant plants found within the coastal bluff scrub habitat are coyote brush, deerweed, Australian salt bush, California bush sunflower, seacliff buckwheat and California sage; cliff aster, a locally sensitive species, may also occur on the bluff face (UCSB 1982; AMEC 2008). More Mesa's coastal bluff scrub includes substantial areas that are dominated by species from the declining coastal dune scrub community on the sandy soils of the western bluff top, and more limited areas dominated by coastal sage scrub species. Notable species from the dune scrub community include croton, beach primrose, deerweed, and phacelia (UCSB 1982).

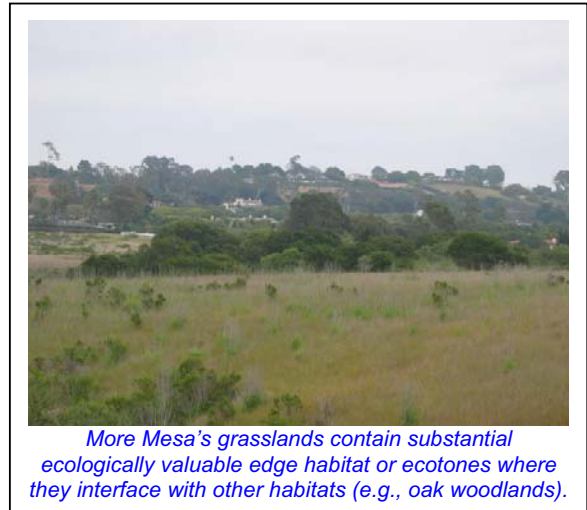
Coastal bluff and dune scrub have been identified by the State and County as ESHs; coastal dune scrub in particular is a rare and declining habitat due to the increased loss of coastal dunes to development (SB County 1995a; 1982).

Wildlife - Common wildlife species identified in More Mesa's coastal bluff-dune scrub habitats include the brush rabbit, California ground squirrel, western meadowlark, and savannah sparrow (UCSB 1982). Larger shrubs in this habitat provide perches for hunting raptors such as the white-tailed kite and kestrel, as well as for the declining loggerhead shrike. This habitat also supports raptor prey species such as the California vole and California ground squirrel (Waian and Stendall 1970; Waian 1973; UCSB 1982; SB County 2004b). Coastal dune scrub habitat is known to support several sensitive wildlife species such as the globose dune beetle, silvery legless lizard, California thrasher and California horned lizard. No records exist so it is uncertain if globose dune beetles can occur in habitats well-removed from the surf zone such as on More Mesa. However, the silvery legless lizard, the California thrasher, and the California horned lizard have all been identified on More Mesa (City of Goleta 2004; AMEC 2008). Burrowing owls have been observed in this habitat in both dune scrub in the southwest and the central bluff face (UCSB 1982; SB County 1997a).

Total Acres (Acres of ESH)	Notable Species	Key Habitat Function	Management Issues
15.1 (15.1)	Deerweed, coyote brush, beach primrose, burrowing owl, silvery legless lizard	Slope stabilization, cover for wildlife, burrows for wildlife, varied habitat types	Invasive vegetation - ice plant, pampas grass; disturbance by parallel trails

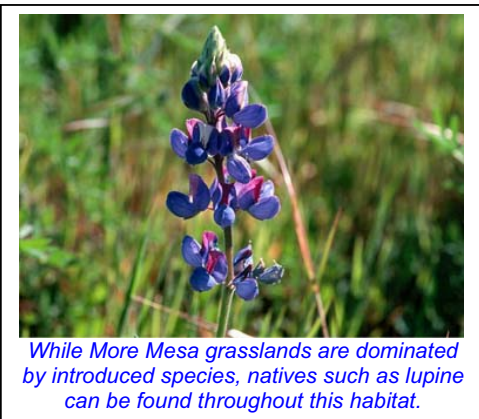
Grassland Habitat

Characteristics - Grassland is the dominant habitat on More Mesa. Grassland occupies approximately 215 acres (64% of the study area) and extends across the gently sloping marine terrace above Atascadero Creek on the north side to the coastal bluffs (see Figure 3-1). This broad expanse of grassland is broken into multiple distinct sub-areas (e.g., County property, east and west mesa) by the mesa's canyon and ravine system and other features (UCSB 1982). The character and species composition of grasslands within these sub-areas varies significantly based on soil type, slope, and drainage, etc. For example, on sandy soils in the mesa's southwest corner, grassland intermixes with coastal bluff scrub and exhibits a higher proportion of native herbs and shrubs (e.g., California poppy, coyote brush) than elsewhere on the mesa. Further, in the wetter southeastern quarter of the mesa, grassland intermixes with vernal pools/wetlands and supports more wetland oriented species.



As with most grassland along the South Coast, non-native species dominate More Mesa's grasslands. Species such as wild oat, ripgut grass, Italian rye grass, and Harding grass dominate these grasslands along with other invasive non-native species such as sweet fennel and wild radish. However, native plant species are spread throughout as well; particularly coyote brush, which covers large areas (see Figure 3-1), along with scattered native wild flowers such as lupine, owl's clover, blue eyed grass, and California poppy. One uncommon plant of local concern is the dwarf brodiaea, which has been observed in the old railroad cut (UCSB 1982).

Although dominated by non-native grasses, native grassland communities are present at More Mesa on the County property and in more limited stands scattered about the mesa. The County property supports large stands of native perennial grass species, including California brome and California barley (UCSB 1982; Ferren 2008). The Sun Mesa property supports two native bunchgrass locations: purple needlegrass on the east facing slope central valley and California brome on the central mesa (Ferren 2008).



Wildlife - More Mesa's grasslands are noted for their importance to sensitive raptors such as white-tailed kites, northern harriers and several species of owl. These grasslands are known to support very high densities of raptor prey species such as California vole, house mouse, and harvest mouse which, in turn, supported an unusually high historic population of roosting kites, and continues to be one of the successful areas of active kite roosts along the South Coast (Waian and Stendall 1970; Waian 1976; AMEC 2008). The declining loggerhead shrike and common grassland birds such as western meadowlarks and savannah sparrows also utilize More Mesa's grasslands, along with at least 10 species of foraging raptors (see Appendix A). Additional common wildlife species within these grasslands include gopher snake and California kingsnake along with foraging by species such as ornate shrew, long-tailed weasel, and

grey and red foxes. Approximately 176 acres or 81% of More Mesa's grasslands are designated as ESH (Figure 2-4), primarily due to this habitat's heavy use by foraging sensitive raptors, particularly the white-tailed kite. These grassland prey are known to historically support high densities of white-tailed kites, loggerhead shrikes, northern harriers, and short-eared and burrowing owls (UCSB 1982; SB County 1995a; SB County 1997a; Ball et al. 2005).

Total Acres (Acres of ESH)	Notable Species	Key Habitat Function	Management Issues
215.2 (176)	California brome; California barley; coyote brush; purple needlegrass; white tailed kite; northern harrier; short-eared and burrowing owls	Foraging area for high density of sensitive raptor species	Non-native/invasive vegetation, particularly Harding grass, sweet fennel, wild radish

Oak Woodlands Habitat

Characteristics - More Mesa's oak woodlands are concentrated on north facing slopes and within canyons and ravines adjacent to West Canyon and Central Valley wetlands, above Atascadero Creek, and in the east fork of the Central Valley (see Figures 3-1 and 3-2). Overall, oak woodlands occupy approximately 10 acres (3% of the study area) of More Mesa and provide a multi-dimensional habitat for plants and wildlife which complements adjacent open grassland habitats. In addition, this habitat's dense canopy of mature coast live oak trees supports an understory of often shade-dependent woody and herbaceous plants. Depending on location, slope aspect, and history, the character and species composition of oak woodlands within these sub-areas can vary widely. For example, portions of the oak woodland along the northern edge of the County property intermixes with invasive eucalyptus trees and supports an open grassy understory (UCSB 1982); other woodlands support a dense understory of vines and shrubs (see photo below).



Oak woodlands at More Mesa are concentrated on the slopes above Atascadero Creek and in the canyons and ravines, often intermixing with riparian woodlands.



Coast live oak woodlands at More Mesa provide shady habitats for wildlife and understory vegetation.

The dominant species in this habitat is the coast live oak which comprises a majority of the canopy cover in oak woodlands. Other tree and larger shrub species, such as California black walnut, elderberry, toyon, coffeeberry, and blue gum also account for canopy cover in oak woodlands. The understory of this habitat is typically comprised of woody and herbaceous species including poison oak, poison hemlock, California blackberry, nettle, California wild rose, and shade-dependent native wildflowers such as the fiesta flower (UCSB 1982).

Wildlife - Oak woodlands are recognized as critical wildlife habitats that provide diverse resources for wildlife including food and food storage sites, shade, cover, perching, roosting, and nesting opportunities (SB County 1995a). Acorns from coast live oaks and berries from elderberry, coffeeberry, and blackberry provide important food sources for wildlife including birds, small mammals, and deer. At least 331 vertebrate species are known to use oak woodlands in California at some point during their life cycle (SB County 1997b). More Mesa's oak woodlands are known to support shade dependent wildlife such as the slender salamander, as well as a high density of bird species including oak titmouse, and five species of woodpeckers (UCSB 1982; SB County 1997a; Storrer 2008). These woodlands also provide cover and shelter for larger mammals such as weasels, shrews, foxes and even itinerant larger predators such as coyotes and bobcats. Sensitive raptor species such as resident or migratory Cooper's and Swainson's hawks, and barn owls have been identified in the mesa's oak woodlands (SB County 1997a).

Oak woodlands are generally considered as ESH by the State and County due to this habitat's important ecological role in supporting wildlife and due to the decline in the State's oak woodlands (SB County 1995a; 1993). Oak woodlands in the Central Valley have supported a historic white-tailed kite roost site and at least three oak trees have been documented as frequently utilized kite nest trees (SB County 1993; see also *Wildlife at More Mesa* Section). Almost all 10.1 acres of More Mesa's oak woodlands have been designated as ESH (Figure 2-4).

Total Acres (Acres of ESH)	Notable Species	Habitat Function-Key Wildlife	Management Issues
10.1 acres (9.2)	Coast live oak, California walnut, elderberry; woodpecker species, arboreal salamander, shrews, barn owls	Wildlife food and cover; nest- perch sites for sensitive raptors-white tailed kite, coopers hawk	Invasive species; nasturtium, eucalyptus, fennel

Riparian and Eucalyptus Woodlands

Characteristics - More Mesa supports extensive riparian (i.e., streamside), and limited eucalyptus woodlands that cover a total of approximately 48.9 acres (or 14.5%) of the study area. Although eucalyptus woodlands are a tiny component of the study area, they have been grouped with riparian woodlands for simplicity. Existing riparian woodlands range from mature groves of large cottonwood trees to smaller, sometimes shrub-like willow trees. These woodlands are located along Atascadero Creek and the intermittent canyon/ravine drainages within the Central Valley and West Canyon (see Figures 3-1 and 3-2). Eucalyptus woodlands occur on the coastal bluff and along the border of Hope Ranch, and Atascadero Creek. Riparian woodlands are characterized by an overstory of trees, often with a dense understory of shrubs, vines, and herbs. Eucalyptus woodlands typically lack an understory layer and intermix with oak and riparian woodlands along Atascadero Creek (UCSB 1982; SB County 1993).



More Mesa's riparian woodlands, such as those found in the Central Valley, support flowing or standing water much of the year.

More Mesa supports the largest coastal riparian woodlands in the Goleta Valley, with an unusual stand of mature cottonwoods which reach up to 40 feet in height (Holmgren 2008; AMEC 2008). Riparian woodlands at More Mesa are dominated by arroyo willow, which can reach 30 feet in height and, depending on location, frequently include trees such as coast live oak, red willow, cottonwood and occasionally black walnut and box elder. Notable riparian understory species include narrow-leaved willow and juvenile red willow, juvenile cottonwoods, stinging nettle, elderberry, mugwort, and poison oak (UCSB 1982). Most of these 47.7 acres of riparian woodlands are designated as ESH by the County due to high habitat and wildlife value and the loss to development over time (SB County 1982; 2006); some of these habitats (e.g., willows woodlands) can also be classified as forested wetlands (Ferren 2008). A small area (4 acres) of riparian woodland has not been designated as ESH; it may have been mapped after the County designation of ESH in 1993.

Non-native eucalyptus trees were planted in the County in the late 1800s to early 1900s as a timber resource (SB County 1995a). The origin of eucalyptus woodlands and windrows at More Mesa is unknown. Eucalyptus species composition varies by location, but includes blue gum, red or pink iron bark, and lemon-scented gum. The bluff top grove consists primarily of blue gum; other locations have several species, and the Atascadero Creek grove intermixes with oak and riparian woodlands. Most eucalyptus groves lack a developed understory due to the toxicity of their leaves and a dense litter of fallen leaves and branches that inhibit vegetation growth (UCSB 1982; SB County 1995a). The windrow located on the eastern edge of the mesa is composed of Monterey cypress trees mixed with eucalyptus species (AMEC 2008).



Eucalyptus trees at More Mesa occur in small groves and windrow and provide potential nest, roost, and perch sites for raptors.

Wildlife - Riparian woodlands are important biological systems that provide essential habitat for a wide variety of species and act as wildlife migration corridors. Eucalyptus woodlands are utilized by a variety of migratory and resident birds including nesting and perching raptors, turkey vultures, and Bullocks orioles (SB County 1995a; 1997b). Atascadero Creek has been identified as an important wildlife corridor which links More Mesa to other regional ecosystems (SB County 1994; 1997a). These riparian woodlands are used by the white-tailed kite for roosting and by the Cooper's hawk for cover and perching (SB County 1997a; see *Wildlife at More Mesa* Section). More Mesa's riparian woodlands are known to support a wide variety of wildlife including Anna's hummingbird, acorn woodpecker, western toad, Pacific tree frog and resident

and migratory songbirds such as flycatchers, wrens, warblers, and vireos (UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a; SB County 1997a).

Total Acres (Acres of ESH)	Notable Species	Key Habitat Function	Management Issues
Riparian: 47.7 acres (43.7) Eucalyptus: 1.15 acres (0.9)	Arroyo willow, black cottonwood, box elder, eucalyptus	Water, cover and food for resident and migratory wildlife, particularly songbirds; raptor nesting, roosting, and perching	Invasive plants: periwinkle, German ivy; BMX bike damage

Wetland Habitat

Characteristics - More Mesa contains a variety of wetlands that support a diverse range of plant and wildlife species and provide water for wildlife in an otherwise dry climate. The site's largest wetlands are located along Atascadero Creek and within the West Canyon and Central Valley. In addition, isolated wetlands and vernal pools are located near the edge of the coastal bluff and within the southeast corner of the mesa (see Figure 3-2). Wetlands, including vernal pools, occupy approximately 26 acres, or approximately 8% of More Mesa. However, the nature and extent of some of these wetlands is unclear. Various sources depict substantially different boundaries for vernal pools and seasonal wetlands, and no formal wetland delineations have been performed for these habitats (see Figure 3-2).



The mesa's large saline meadow wetlands provide unusual high value habitat in the Central Valley.



Several vernal pools/ponds have been identified in the southeast corner of More Mesa.

More Mesa's diverse wetlands include persistently flooded marshes and open water, saline meadows, ponds, and seasonal vernal pools and forested wetlands. Atascadero Creek contains flowing or standing water in most years, with in-channel vegetation including saline saltbush, knotweed, brass-buttons, and regionally-rare horned pondweed (UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a). Atascadero Creek's wetlands are bordered by riparian woodland along the creek's south (More Mesa) bank which merges with marsh and pond wetlands in the adjacent floodplain in the West Canyon. These wetlands are dominated by dense stands of cattails, tule and bulrush, open water areas and also support regionally rare plants such as western goldenrod and bur-reed. The West Canyon's western

goldenrod-dominated marsh is unique within the County (UCSB 1982; see Figure 3-2).

Vernal pools and ponds overlying clay soils on the southeast mesa form as winter rains fill topographic depressions where underlying impermeable soil layers inhibit subsurface water percolation. These pools dry out during the spring and summer. Vernal pool species are adapted to these alternating wet and dry conditions and include common plants such as spike rush, and regionally rare plants such as coyote thistle, Pacific foxtail, popcorn flower, and canary grass. These plants are generally concentrated near the center of a pool, declining in abundance toward the pools edge (UCSB 1982; City of Goleta 2004; SB County 2004a). Vernal ponds, which may lack vernal pool plants, also form in the southeastern area of More Mesa, including a potential large vernal pond or pool southwest of the designated vernal pool (Figure 3-2). The vegetation of these wetlands is not well-documented, but includes mature willow groves associated with drainage from Hope Ranch. All of More Mesa's wetlands are mapped as ESH except for portions of the seasonal ponds or drainages located on east edge of More Mesa (SB County 2006; see Figure 2-4).

Wildlife - More Mesa's extensive wetlands support a variety of wetland dependent wildlife and provide water, food and cover for species dependent on other habitats. Common wildlife known to use these wetlands include great blue heron, egrets, water fowl (e.g., mallard, cinnamon teal), western toad, and Pacific tree frog (SB County 1994, 1997a, 2001). Known sensitive species that utilize these wetlands include western pond turtle and potentially yellow warbler, two-striped garter snake, and occasional transient southern steelhead (confined to Atascadero Creek). Although appropriate habitat exists, it is unknown if the mesa's vernal pools support threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp, known to occur in vernal pools near Dos Pueblos Canyon (4 miles to the west) and in Carpinteria 10 miles to the south (City of Goleta 2004; AMEC 2008). Regionally restricted clam shrimp occur in the vernal pool on More Mesa's southeast corner. This species is not known to occur in either the Ellwood Mesa or Isla Vista vernal pools.

Total Acres (Acres of ESH)	Notable Species	Key Habitat Function	Management Issues
26.3 acres (25.9)	Western goldenrod, coyote thistle, western pond turtle, clam shrimp; potentially vernal pool fairy shrimp	Habitat for sensitive and regionally rare plant species, water fowl, declining reptiles and migratory birds	Invasive species: Harding grass, bull frogs; damage from trails

Wildlife Resources at More Mesa

More Mesa's extensive grasslands, combined with diverse woodland and wetland habitats, support a wide range of wildlife, especially birds, including sensitive raptors and other grassland dependent species. Because of the variety and quality of the environment, More Mesa is recognized by the State and County as a regionally significant wildlife habitat for several sensitive bird species (UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a; SB County 1993). More Mesa's varied habitats also support a range of mammal, reptile, and amphibian species, including rare or declining species such as the silvery legless lizard and western pond turtle. Wildlife resources are discussed below, with an emphasis on sensitive species known, or likely to be present, on More Mesa.

Wildlife Information and Surveys – More Mesa has been focus of a large number of site specific and regional wildlife studies dating back to 1965. These studies include a detailed evaluation of the site's



Many bird species, such as this great blue heron feed on More Mesa.

overall biological resources completed by a team of biologists, a focused survey of the birds of More Mesa, academic papers (including a PhD dissertation), unpublished field notes from experienced biologists, and approximately 400 recorded wildlife observations by recreational and expert birders alike as part of a regional survey of the white-tailed kite (see Appendix A). These available wildlife data vary from meticulously recorded transects walked by several biologists as part of a formal study, to observations of birds recorded during a birder's evening walk. In addition, these surveys vary by number performed annually, the time of day and the season. The most comprehensive survey is 25 years old. While most surveys focus on birds, particularly the white-tailed kite, the majority include observations of other bird species and the occasional incidental wildlife observation. Thus, while available wildlife data for More Mesa is substantial, readers of this report should be aware of these variations in survey focus, level of detail, and timing.

The most thorough wildlife study of More Mesa is documented in *A Biological Evaluation of More Mesa* (UCSB 1982), which included comprehensive surveys of birds, mammals, reptiles and amphibians as well as plants. Additional detailed unpublished bird surveys were performed in the winter of 1995-1996 as part of a study funded by the property owner and overseen by the County (SB County 1997a). Finally, a major source of data includes approximately 400 recorded wildlife observations at More Mesa conducted largely as part of an overall study of white-tailed kite populations on the South Coast (Ball et al. 2005, see Appendix A).

Birds – At least 178 species of birds have been documented using More Mesa, including sensitive raptors, marine birds, and migratory and resident songbirds (UCSB 1982). As discussed previously, the woodland and wetland habitats present on the mesa support a diverse assemblage of both common and rare migratory and resident bird species. This combination of often declining habitat types is relatively unique on the South Coast and thus has the potential to support unusually diverse bird populations. While these habitats are important to birds, More Mesa's large, unbroken expanse of grassland is

potentially even more regionally significant to both common and declining bird species. These grasslands provide high quality foraging habitat for both sensitive resident raptors such as white-tailed kite and Cooper's hawk, as well as winter visitors such as northern harrier, short-eared owl, and burrowing owl. As noted in the discussion of white-tailed kites below, More Mesa is the most significant known habitat for kites on the South Coast and is regionally important to other sensitive raptor species. Additional notable grassland-dependent bird

Common Grassland Birds of More Mesa

- Western meadowlark
- American kestrel
- Turkey vulture
- Horned lark
- House finch
- Cliff swallow
- Savannah sparrow
- Barn swallow
- Mourning dove



Common grassland bird species at More Mesa include the western meadowlark.

3 - MORE MESA'S RESOURCES

species include the declining or locally uncommon grasshopper sparrow and blue grosbeak, as well as more common birds such as the western meadowlark.

Mammals – At least 23 species of mammals have been documented using More Mesa. Species range from small rodents such as shrews, mice, and voles to weasels, and surprisingly, to larger predators such as coyotes and bobcats, which have been documented in both 2007 and 2008 (UCSB 1982; Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008). Although More Mesa supports a relatively diverse assemblage of mammal species for a site within an urban area, its most significant regional ecological role may be supporting robust populations of smaller rodents such as the California vole and the house mouse which serve as a prey base for sensitive raptors. The site is also notable for its relatively high level of ecological connectivity to other regional habitat systems via wildlife corridors along Atascadero and Maria Ygnacia Creeks and the lightly developed areas of Hope Ranch. This connectivity allows for larger mammals such as coyotes to move between More Mesa and other habitats.

Common Mammals of More Mesa

- California vole
- Ornate shrew
- House mouse
- California ground squirrel
- Brush rabbit
- Raccoon
- Long-tailed weasel
- Skunk
- Dusky-footed woodrat
- Red and gray foxes

Common Reptiles and Amphibians of More Mesa

- Western kingsnake
- Gopher snake
- Pacific tree frog
- Slender salamander
- Western fence lizard
- Western toad

Reptiles and Amphibians – More Mesa is thought to support at least 22 species of reptiles and amphibians (UCSB 1982). Reptiles occur throughout all habitats and include common species such as western fence lizard, western kingsnake and slender salamander, as well as sensitive species such as the southwestern pond turtle. The silvery legless lizard and the western horned lizard are known to occur on More Mesa. Amphibian species are concentrated within wetland and riparian areas and include the western toad, arboreal salamander, and Pacific tree frog, which are known to use habitats across More Mesa (UCSB 1982).

Fish and Invertebrates – Fish and invertebrate species of More Mesa are not well documented. Fish species are confined primarily to Atascadero Creek and potentially the open water wetland in the West Canyon. The mosquito fish, a common introduced fish species, as well as sensitive species such as the tidewater goby and southern California coast steelhead may potentially occur in Atascadero Creek. While observations of the monarch butterfly have been recorded at More Mesa, other common invertebrates include a variety of butterflies such as the California sister and checkerspot butterflies. Rare and sensitive invertebrate species have not been studied at More Mesa, but have the potential to include the vernal pool fairy shrimp in east mesa vernal pools and the globose dune beetle in dune/bluff scrub habitat; however, neither of these rare species has been documented. The large vernal pool in the southeast corner of More Mesa, however, does support a population of clam shrimp. This species is regarded as regionally rare and of potential interest as a habitat restricted and possibly declining species (Ferren 2008).

Common Fish and Invertebrates of More Mesa

- Mosquito fish
- Monarch butterfly
- Honey bee
- California sister butterfly
- Checkerspot butterfly

Sensitive Wildlife Species – Sensitive species generally include those with severely restricted ranges or populations. This designation can also apply to formerly common species that are experiencing severe population decline. As defined for this report, sensitive species include those formally identified by state and federal agencies as being of concern, threatened or endangered, as well as those identified by recognized conservation organizations (e.g., National Audubon Society). We have included the later because early recognition by conservation organizations often precedes formal recognition by state or federal agencies. Further, as formal government agency recognition of species sensitivity may take a decade or more, early conservation organization or agency identification of a species as sensitive (e.g., species of concern lists) can be an important factor in protecting species which are subject to severe population declines. All of these designations are typically considered in local, state and federal decision-making.

Approximately 25 sensitive wildlife species are known to occur at More Mesa (see Table 3-2). Of particular interest are five sensitive raptor species: the white-tailed kite, burrowing owl, short-eared owl, northern harrier, and Coopers hawk. These five sensitive species are described in detail below, with a

more detailed discussion of the white-tailed kite, a California Fish and Game Fully Protected raptor central to designation of much of More Mesa as ESH (SB County 1982; CDFG 2008). Brief discussions of other notable sensitive species known to occur on More Mesa are also included below. Other sensitive bird species, particularly marine species such as the brown pelican, are known to or possibly frequent More Mesa, but are not discussed in this report, either because they are marine dependent or because no observations or other data is available on their occurrence.

What are Sensitive Species?

Sensitive species are those which have been identified as being endangered, threatened, or of concern by one or more recognized conservation organizations or a local, state, or federal agency.

- Federal: *Species identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS)*
 - Endangered – in danger of extinction through all or a significant portion of its range.
 - Threatened – likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future.
- State: *Species identified by the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG)*
 - Endangered – danger of extinction through all or a significant portion of range in California.
 - Threatened – likely to become endangered in the foreseeable future in California.
 - Species of Concern – declining population levels, limited ranges, and/or continued threats that have made them vulnerable to extinction.
 - Fully Protected – is not currently facing extinction, but is such small numbers throughout range that it may become endangered if its present environment worsens.
 - Special Animal – species that have been listed by the USFWS, CDFG, or other organizations such as the National Audubon Society, American Bird Conservancy, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.
- Local Concern: Includes animals identified in adopted County Plans or other documents as of local concern due to restricted distribution, declining population, or other factors.
- Federal Migratory Bird Treaty Act – provides protection to designated list of migratory birds.



Vernal pools on More Mesa provide habitat which could be suitable for the threatened vernal pool fairy shrimp.



Burrowing owls, a severely declining species in Santa Barbara County and California still frequent More Mesa.



More Mesa's grasslands provide important foraging habitat for sensitive species, such as the northern harrier.

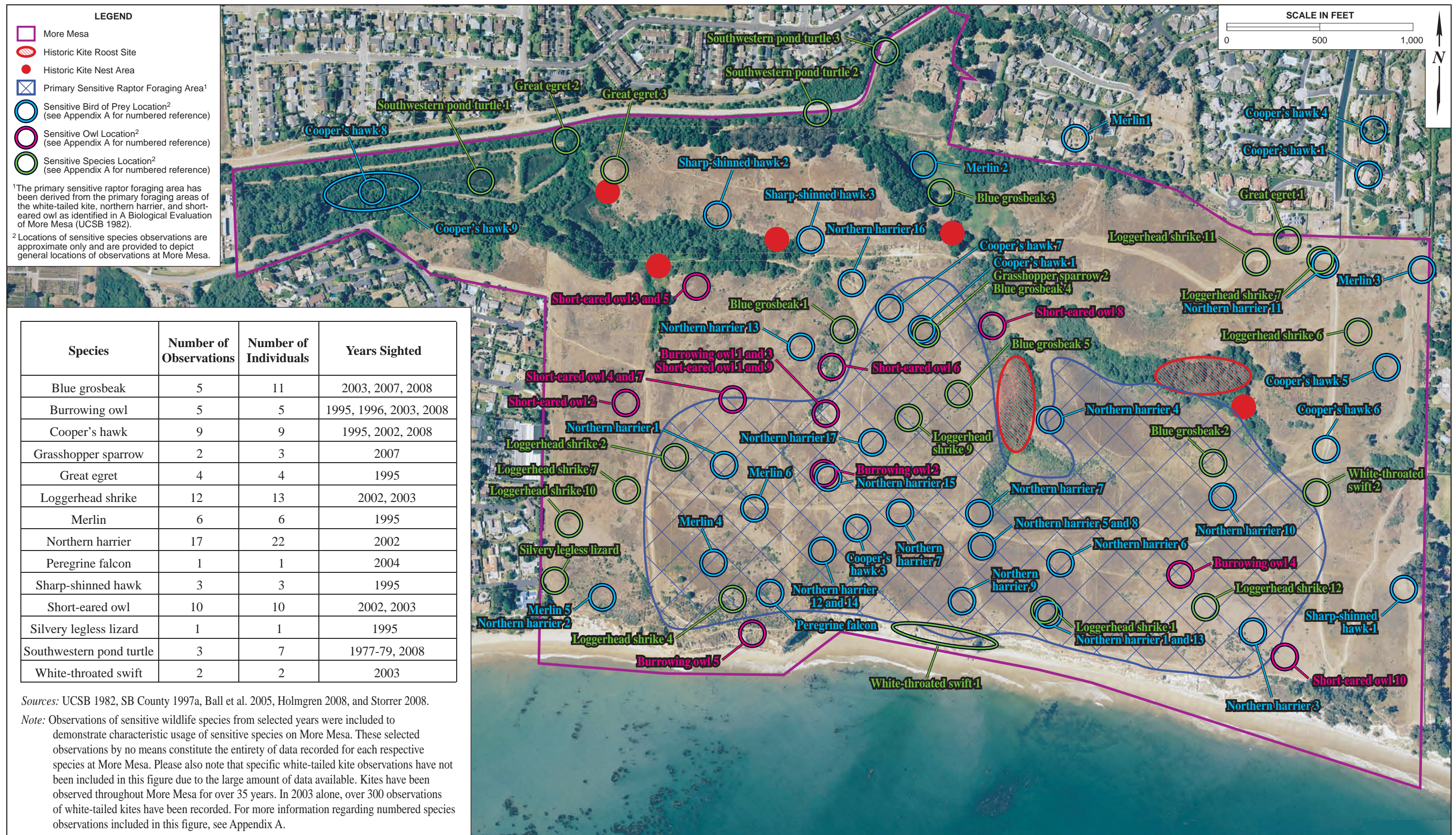
Table 3-2. Notable Sensitive Species of More Mesa

Common Name	Status (Federal/State/Local)	Potential for Occurrence
Invertebrates		
Globose dune beetle (<i>Coelus globosus</i>)	None/SA	Low – potential in coastal dune scrub southwest corner of mesa
Vernal pool fairy shrimp (<i>Branchinecta lynchi</i>)	FT/SA	Moderate – no records, potential in vernal pool(s) southeast corner of mesa
Reptiles		
California horned lizard (<i>Phrynosoma coronatum frontale</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – southwest corner of the Mesa; potential in dune scrub southwest corner of mesa
Silvery legless lizard (<i>Anniella pulchra pulchra</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – southwest corner of the Mesa; potential in dune scrub southwest corner of mesa
Two-striped garter snake (<i>Thamnophis hammondi</i>)	None/CSC	Low – riparian woodlands-wetlands
Southwestern pond turtle (<i>Clemmys marmorata</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – Atascadero Creek and adjacent wetlands
Amphibians		
California red-legged frog (<i>Rana aurora draytonii</i>)	FT/CSC	Low – suitable habitat; invasive bull frog reduces potential for occurrence
Fish		
Southern steelhead (<i>Oncorhynchus mykiss</i>)	FE/CSC	Observed – infrequent transient in Atascadero Creek
Birds		
Northern harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – winter visitor grassland, dune scrub and riparian woodlands
Cooper's hawk (<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>)	None/CWL	Observed – woodlands and grassland; nests in west canyon woodlands
Short-eared owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – winter visitor throughout mesa; grasslands/riparian woodlands
Loggerhead shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – winter visitor; grasslands/riparian woodlands across mesa
Sharp-shinned hawk (<i>Accipiter striatus</i>)	None/CWL	Observed – winter visitor to grasslands
American peregrine falcon (<i>Falco anatum peregrinum</i>)	FT/CE/CFP	Observed – winter visitor grasslands, riparian areas, windrows on east mesa
Burrowing owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – winter visitor; grasslands, dune scrub and central bluff face
Merlin (<i>Falco columbarius</i>)	None/CWL	Observed – winter visitor; grasslands and wetlands
Warbling vireo (<i>Vireo gilvus</i>)	None/None/Local Concern	Observed – riparian/oak-riparian woodlands. Breeding in west canyon
White-tailed kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>)	None/CFP	Observed – across mesa; resident/winter visitor nests in oak-riparian woodlands
Western screech owl (<i>Otus kennicottii</i>)	None/None/Local Concern	Observed – oak woodlands; historic nest in oaks on NE edge of More Mesa
Grasshopper sparrow (<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>)	None/CSC	Observed – grasslands; potentially nest on mesa
Blue grosbeak (<i>Passerina caerulea</i>)	None/None/Local Concern	Observed – grasslands/riparian woodlands; confirmed nesting
White-throated swift (<i>Aeronautes saxatalis</i>)	None/None/Local Concern	Observed – over grasslands; nests on coastal bluffs

Notes:

a) **Federal:** FE=Federally Endangered; FT=Federally Threatened**State:** CE=California Endangered; CFP=California Department of Fish and Game Fully Protected; CSC=California Department of Fish and Game Species of Special Concern; CWL=California Department of Fish and Game Watch List; SA=Special Animal**Local:** Local Concern=local or regional scarcity and/or unusual distribution as determined by local agency.**MBTA:** All bird species included in this table are protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act.

b) Species Status determined by California Department of Fish and Game Special Animals List and California Bird Species of Special Concern List.



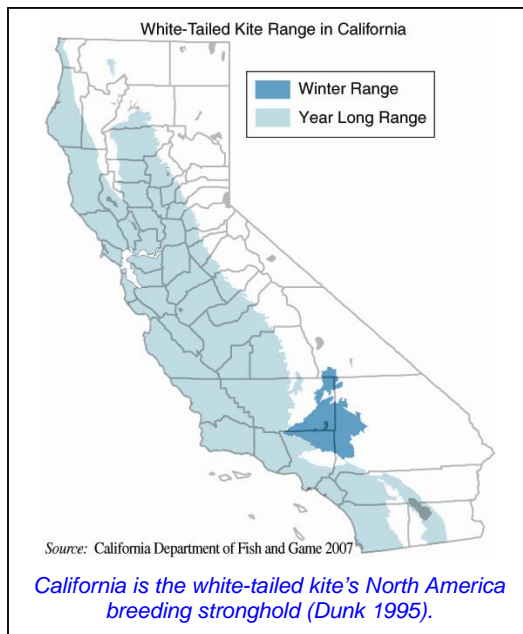
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White-tailed Kite

Species Background – In the 1930s, the white-tailed kite was predicted for extinction in California. However, after being given Fully Protected state status in 1957, populations recovered from the edge of collapse. More Mesa played an important role in the recovery for the species regionally, and likely state-wide, by providing critical hunting and nesting habitat that could support high densities of kites (UCSB 1982). Today the white-tailed kite remains a Fully Protected species with specific provisions for nest site protection under CDFG Code.

White-tailed kites range from the West and Gulf Coast of the United States into Central America and eastern South America. They can be found year-round along the California coast in open grassland, marshes, and agricultural areas. Kites feed mainly on small rodents, particularly the California vole, and are especially recognizable when hunting because they often search for prey while hovering in flight.

Characteristics – White-tailed kites are medium-sized raptors with body lengths of 14 to 17 inches and a 3-foot wingspan. They are easily identified by their distinctive white coloring, with black patches on the underside of their wings, and their red eyes.



White-tailed kites are semi-social and often roost and hunt together. They form communal roosts during the evening hours of the fall and winter months, and typically establish and defend breeding territories by the end of March. Preferring sparsely wooded areas for roosting and nesting, they generally require 100 to 150 acres of nearby foraging areas, depending on habitat quality, to support a single nest (Dunk 1995). Nests are built on a platform of sticks in the fork of a tree or bush and contain three to five eggs that are incubated for approximately 1 month. Chicks fledge at 5 to 6 weeks of age; kites typically raise one clutch per year, but if prey is abundant, a second clutch of eggs may be laid (Peregrine Fund 2007).

White-tailed kites appear sensitive to human disturbance and do not tolerate regular human activity near nest or roost sites, particularly in the hours preceding nightfall. Kites often nest no closer than 150 feet to homes and may be flushed from nest or roost by pedestrians, motorcycles, or other disturbances approaching closer than 100 to 150 feet (UCSB 1982).

Populations at More Mesa – More Mesa has long been recognized as providing important foraging, roosting, and nesting habitat for white-tailed kites, and is subject to both State law and County regulations written to protect kite use of More Mesa (UCSB 1982; SB County 1993). More Mesa supports frequent foraging by resident and visiting kites and generally sustains one to two kite nests annually, with up to three nests in highly productive years (UCSB 1982; Ball et al. 2005; Storrer 2008). More Mesa has historically supported a major winter roost, with roosting documented for 27 out of the last 42 years (UCSB 1982; Ball et al. 2005; Holmgren 2008). More Mesa's 215 acres of grassland are unusually productive, often supporting two and sometimes three nests annually (UCSB 1982; Dunk 1995; Ball et al. 2005).

Santa Barbara County's Coastal Plan classifies 280 acres of the greater More Mesa as ESH; including roosts, nesting areas and grasslands that are vital for the white-tailed kite.

Although extensive kite use of More Mesa is well documented, state-wide kite populations plummeted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, with no birds being located on the entire South Coast in 1991. It is probable the crash was due to

3 - MORE MESA'S RESOURCES

extended drought (Land Trust for SB County 1992a). Further, consistent decades-long historic roosts known to occur on More Mesa were frequently relocated to other Goleta sites during the late 1980s and early 1990s. However, white-tailed kites can still be consistently observed at More Mesa with over 1,100 sightings recorded in an 8-year period (Ball et al. 2005). This makes More Mesa likely the most heavily utilized site for white-tailed kites on the South Coast.

Kite Studies – The use of More Mesa by white-tailed kites has been the subject of multiple studies over the last 4 decades; data for kite activity on More Mesa is available from more than 400 recorded visits to all or portions of the property over a 35 year period (see Appendix A). These studies include annual Audubon Society bird counts, Santa Barbara County studies, academic studies; professional biologists' field notes, student projects, and reports by interested birders. This data constitutes an unusually comprehensive record of kite and other wildlife activity. In particular, kite use of More Mesa has been monitored for 8 years to determine populations and key territories in the Goleta Valley (Ball et al. 2005). This study included approximately 300 surveys of More Mesa by groups of 1 to 3 observers¹, as summarized in Table 3-3. During these surveys, multiple kites were generally observed, most notably in 1998, where an average of just over 6 kites was recorded during each survey. In addition, at least two kites were observed in 217 of 282 surveys (77% of surveys). Kites were observed foraging, perching, roosting, and nesting. These activities have been detailed below.

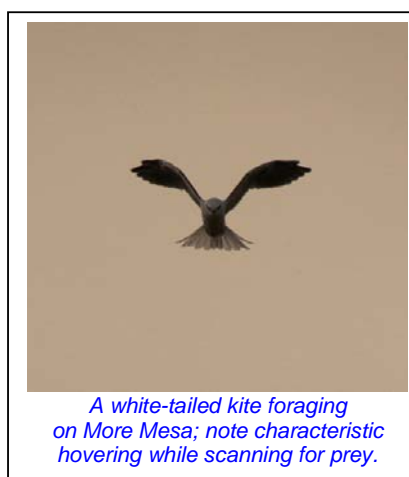
Table 3-3. White-tailed Kites Observations at More Mesa (1995-2003)

Species Name	Species Status	Year	# of Surveys	# Kite Observations	# With Two or More Observed (% of total)
White-tailed Kite (<i>Elanus leucurus</i>)	Declining due to habitat loss. California Fully Protected Species. Habitat protected by County Local Coastal Plan.	1995*	13	72	13 (100.0%)
		1997	13	37	9 (69.2%)
		1998	62	386	45 (72.6%)
		1999	26	143	21 (80.8%)
		2000	23	62	18 (78.3%)
		2001	10	27	5 (50.0%)
		2002	44	91	31 (70.5%)
		2003	91	317	75 (82.4%)
		Total	282	1,135	217 (77.0%)

* Includes two surveys performed in January 1996.

Foraging – More Mesa's open grasslands provide important foraging habitat for the white-tailed kite. More Mesa has been considered the "... *single most important piece of land for the white-tailed kite from Gaviota to Santa Barbara and possibly further south. There is no other comparably large grassland area in the region that has exhibited the potential for providing food for that many birds for an extended period of time*" (Waian 1972). Almost 80 percent of More Mesa's grasslands have been identified as either primary or secondary white-tailed kite foraging areas (UCSB 1982; see Figure 3-4); this study found moderate foraging activity by winter communal roosting birds and summer foraging by four resident birds. Waian and Stendall found considerable foraging by roosting birds at More Mesa (Waian and Stendall 1970).

More Mesa's high quality foraging habitat supports a high density of nesting birds, which typically includes one or two, and as many as three nests on-site, with some records of double clutching (Ball et al 2005; Storrer 2008). More recent surveys have documented continued use of More Mesa for kite foraging. During approximately 400 surveys of the site, foraging has been typically observed in most instances (UCSB 1982; SB County 1997a; Ball et al 2005; Storrer 2008; see also Appendix A).



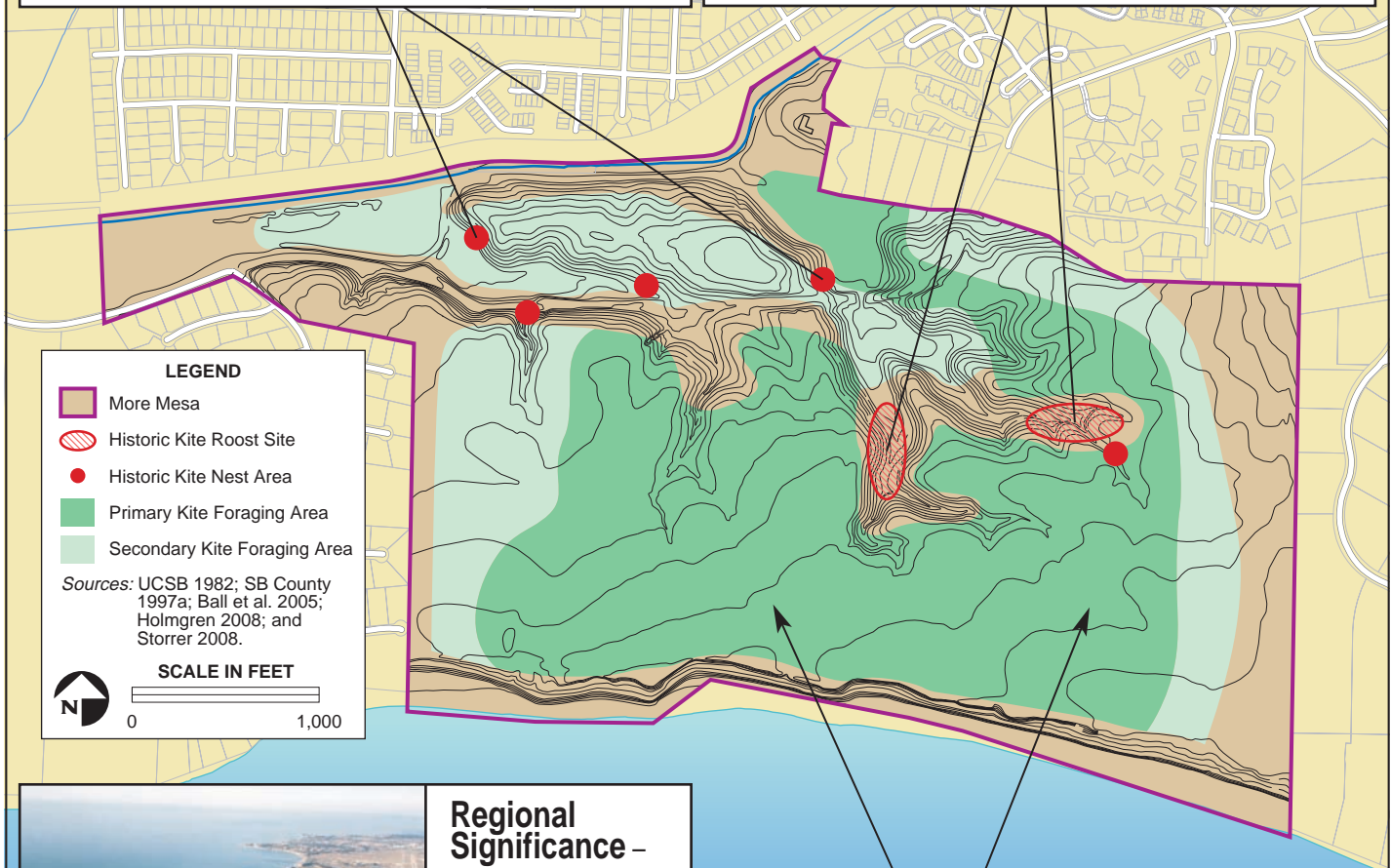
¹ On a number of occasions, larger groups of birders or university classes recorded white-tailed kite activity.



Nesting – More Mesa is the most important known location for white-tailed kite nesting on the South Coast. This site consistently supports from one to three kite nests annually and supports nesting when other key sites such as Ellwood-Devereux do not. Up to 16 kites have been fledged on More Mesa in a single season; a major contribution to regional populations.



Winter Roosts – Historically, More Mesa supported one of the largest white-tailed kite roosts in California, ranging in size from 20 to 110 birds during the 1970s and early 1980s. Records of kite roosts exist for 27 out of the last 43 years, with 5% of the total statewide population thought to roost here in 1978. Roosting has been sporadic for more than a decade, with the last known roost of 16 birds recorded in 2003.



Regional Significance –

More Mesa has been identified by UCSB, the County, and the State as regionally significant for the white-tailed kite. Hundreds of surveys from the late 1990s through 2003 indicate

More Mesa's continued importance to nesting and visiting birds, with over 1,100 kite observations during this period. More Mesa appears to remain the most significant site for white-tailed kites on the South Coast for its ability to support foraging, nesting, and winter roosts.



Foraging – More Mesa has been identified as “the single most important piece of property for white-tailed kites” on the South Coast largely due to its ability to provide prey to large numbers of resident and visiting birds. More Mesa's grasslands consistently support a high density of nesting birds and, historically, a major winter kite roost. Kites regularly forage over 165 acres (76.7%) of More Mesa's grasslands.

Figure 3-4. White-Tailed Kite Habitat at More Mesa



More Mesa's historic white-tailed kite roosts supported as many as 110 birds (Photo of Orcutt Creek Kite Roost; no known photos exist for More Mesa. Photo credit: H.P. Smith).

Roosting – White-tailed kites are semi-social animals that gather in communal overnight roosts in the fall and winter. Kites can begin to gather in September, with roosts typically breaking up not later than February (Lehman 1994). Such communal roosting is thought to play an important role in courtship behavior. However, such roosts appear ephemeral, lasting from several days to two or more months, although the dynamics of roosting are not well understood (Waian 1976; Dunk 1995). Further, there is some indication that roosts may shift between different sites within a region, both within the same season and between seasons. The reasons for such shifts in roost locations are

not well understood, but may be related to prey base, levels of disturbance, or other factors (Waian 1972; 1976; Dunk 1995). Thus, roost occurrence can be difficult to document without continuous observations at dawn and dusk over an extended time period.

One of the largest known communal roosts for white-tailed kites in California was found on More Mesa in 1965, with long-standing locations documented in the Central Valley; the willow woodland in the West Fork and the oak-willow forest in the East Fork (UCSB 1982; SB County 1992b). These roosts appear to have been utilized annually by a range of 10 to 110 birds (average 30 to 40) for 18 continuous years between 1965 and 1983. More recently, white-tailed kite roosts were documented in 9 seasons during the 20 year period between 1987 and 2007². However, the total number of roosting birds observed declined to a low of 40 in 1998, with an annual average of 14 birds observed during the most recent 9 years of documented roosting. The most recent communal roost documented on More Mesa peaked at 16 birds in 2003 (Ball et al. 2005).

While the reasons for the decline in kite roosting at More Mesa are not clearly understood, communal kite roosts have been documented at two other primary locations in the vicinity of More Mesa: previously at the Los Carneros wetlands, although this site appears to have been reduced in size and function due to the construction of the Willow Springs Condominiums (formerly Los Carneros Community), and within a South Patterson area lemon orchard. In addition, as many as 13 additional, less frequently utilized, kite roost sites have been documented around the Goleta Valley. However, it is apparent that More Mesa remains a regionally important foraging area for kite populations on the South Coast (Ball et al. 2005; Holmgren 2008).

Nesting – A review of available data demonstrates that breeding pairs of kites have consistently used More Mesa for raising offspring over the last 35 years, with documented nesting recorded from 1998 to 2003 (Table 3-4). Indeed, More Mesa is considered by many to be the most consistent and important nesting site known on the South Coast, often supporting one or two, and sometimes up to three nests (UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a; Ball et al. 2005; Storrer 2008). White-tailed kites show strong fidelity to general nesting locations and return annually to the same sites to breed (UCSB 1982). Unlike some other raptors however, kites tend to exhibit nesting fidelity to a particular tree or grove of trees but may not reutilize their historic nest from previous years (Waian 1973).

Five historic nest locations are well documented on More Mesa (see Figure 3-4). In years of normal prey base (i.e., non-drought), available data indicates that More Mesa generally supports nests in two of these areas and up to three nests in years when prey populations are abundant. The two nest sites with the highest observed rate for repeated use are located in an elderberry shrub at the east edge of the eastern canyon and in a large oak on the west facing slope of the County property (see Figure 3-4; Appendix A). In 2003, More Mesa supported a total of four nest sites, with three located on More Mesa itself, and one on an oak grove off Vieja Drive (Holmgren 2008). This adjacent nest was observed with an adult kite with

² Data is unavailable for the periods of 1984-1986 and 1991-1992.

Table 3-4. White-tailed Kite Nesting

Year	West	Central	East	Number of Nest Observations*
1998	0	1	2	10
1999	0	0	2	7
2000	1	0	1	3
2001	0	1	0	2
2002	1	0	0	2
2003	0	1	1	37
Total	2	3	6	61

* Indicates number of times a nest was observed, not total nests. Some nest sightings did not record a specific location but are included in the Nest Observations tab.

four dependent juveniles (Watson 2003). In addition, in years of abundant prey, double clutching has been documented on More Mesa (see Appendix A). The well documented occurrence of two or up to three nest sites, along with documented double clutching, are indicative of More Mesa's importance to the area's white-tailed kite populations.

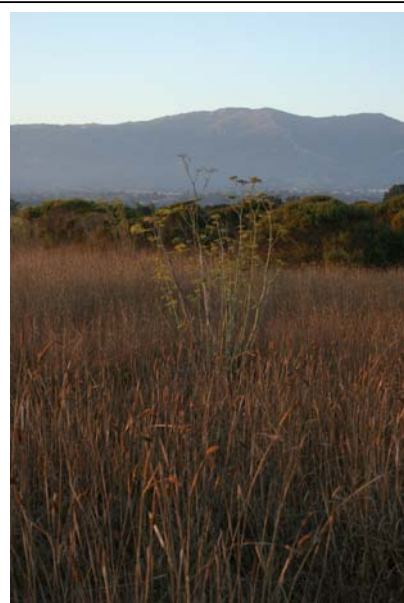
Regional Significance: On the South Coast, white-tailed kites can be found foraging in grasslands throughout the region. However, a number of the region's larger open spaces are known to most consistently support foraging and occasionally nesting kites, including More Mesa, Ellwood-Devereux, San Marcos Foothills, Elings Park and sites along the Gaviota Coast such as Arco-Dos Pueblos. Of these areas, available data indicates that More Mesa consistently sustains a very high level of foraging kites, as well as the highest number of recorded kite nests. In addition, although kite roosting has declined in recent years, More Mesa has been documented to be the most consistent location for kite roosts in the Goleta Valley over the last 40 or more years. The kite roosts on More Mesa are in fact the only currently protected, regularly used roosts in region. Because of the these qualities, the open grasslands, nesting areas, and potential roosting sites at More Mesa have been identified as regionally significant for South Coast white-tailed kite populations (Waian 1972; UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a; SB County 1994; Storrer 2008).



A white-tailed kite collecting nesting materials on More Mesa.



More Mesa has been identified as the South Coast's most significant site for white-tailed kites.



More Mesa's grasslands provides abundant prey for white-tailed kites, supporting 2 to 3 nests in some years

Short-eared Owl

Species Background – The short-eared owl is found globally in grassland and marshes near the coast. In California, they are listed as a Species of Special Concern by the CDFG and frequent the Central Valley, western Sierra Nevada foothills, and the coast (CDFG 1995; 2008). Historically, this species appeared to be a regular visitor to Santa Barbara County, with a number of records for both the North and South County; however, regular visitation appears to have declined countywide. On the South Coast, More Mesa had been the only location where this species was regularly noted until the late 1980s (Lehman 1994).

In recent decades, short-eared owls have faced population declines globally, primarily in the southern portion of their range (National Audubon Society 2008c). Populations have declined throughout California due to habitat loss and fragmentation, as they require large tracts of grassland for foraging. They also nest on the ground, which increases their risk of predation from mammals often found near human developments (CDFG 1995).



The short-eared owl is a regular winter visitor to More Mesa's grasslands, but is declining throughout California.

Characteristics – Short-eared owls are 13 to 17 inches in length and have wingspans of 33 to 41 inches. Adult plumage is a mottled brown with whitish streaking on the chest, while facial features include large yellow eyes and ear tufts that are barely visible while perched or flying. This species can often be identified by their characteristic low-flying, floppy flight pattern.

Short-eared owls typically prefer open country, including coastal grasslands and marshes that support populations of small mammals, such as their dominant prey item, the California vole. They are active both day and night, hunting primarily on the wing. They are ground nesters, building their nests on dry sites with enough vegetation to conceal the female, who typically lays an average of six eggs per clutch on an annual basis. Because of their ground nesting habits, short-eared owls are vulnerable to predation by mammals including foxes, domestic dogs, and skunks (CDFG 1995; Birds of North America 2007).

Populations at More Mesa – Very few short-eared owl observations have been recorded along the South Coast; observations primarily include More Mesa, the Devereux and Goleta Sloughs, the Carpinteria Salt Marsh, and San Marcos Foothills. Based on a review of available regional and site-specific studies, More Mesa has been the most consistently used wintering location along the entire South Coast for this sensitive species (see Appendix A). More Mesa has been identified “as the only known location which annually supports this species in Santa Barbara County” (Land Trust for SB County 1992a). From 1971 to 1982, one to three individuals were noted on a regular basis; during 1982, two owls were observed (UCSB 1982). From 2000 to 2003, 26 observations of the short-eared owl were recorded in the western, central, and eastern areas of the Mesa, including three owls on the Mesa's west end in 1999 (Ball et al. 2005; Storrer 2008). Most recently, short-eared owls have been observed hunting on the east Mesa in December of 2007 (More Mesa Preservation Coalition [MMPC] 2008). Based upon a review of available data, including surveys of More Mesa and reports on other major open space areas (e.g., Naples, Ellwood, Arco-Dos Pueblos, Devereux, San Marcos Foothills), More Mesa would appear to be the most regionally significant over-wintering habitat for this sensitive species along the South Coast.

Pairs of short-eared owls were sighted on More Mesa regularly from 2000 to 2003.

Table 3-5. Recent Short-Eared Owl Observations on More Mesa (2000-2003)

Species Name	Species Status	Year	Observations	Locations
Short-eared Owl (<i>Asio flammeus</i>)	Declining due to habitat loss. California Species of Special Concern.	1999	4	1 West Mesa 3 Central Mesa
		2000	1	1 Not Noted
		2001	1	1 Central Mesa
		2002	7	2 East Mesa 2 Central Mesa 3 Not Noted
		2003	13	3 Central Mesa 3 East Mesa 3 West Mesa 4 Not Noted
		2007	2	2 East Mesa
		Total	28	

Note: Multiple observations also exist for the time period 1971 to 1982. Observations are available for only 5 out of last 13 years. The number of observations could relate to the number, timing and intensity of available surveys which varied from 1971 to 2008. Heavily surveyed years (e.g., 2003) tend to indicate more owls.

Burrowing Owl

Species Background – The burrowing owl is found in southwestern Canada, Florida, northern Alaska, and the western United States and is listed by the California Department of Fish and Game as a Species of Special Concern. It has also been listed as a sensitive species by the Bureau of Land Management and was added to the United States Bird Conservation Watch List due to its population declines and extreme habitat loss (SB County 2004c; California Partners in Flight 2006; CDFG 2008).

The burrowing owl has historically occurred throughout much of California in a variety of open habitats, though population has declined markedly for at least the past 60 years. Conversion of grasslands to agriculture, other habitat destruction, and accidental poisoning associated with ground squirrel control has contributed to its decline in recent decades. Within the past 20 years, and particularly within the past 5 years, the decline of burrowing owls in California appears to have greatly accelerated, likely due to habitat loss from increased urban development (CDFG 1995). In Santa Barbara County, burrowing owls

Burrowing owls are regularly observed on More Mesa; two were observed in winter 2007 to 2008.

were formerly common, but have been virtually eliminated; nesting may now be limited to only one to two pairs in the North County, with only one to two over-wintering birds along the entire South Coast (Lehman 1994).



Burrowing owls have a long history of use of More Mesa; possibly this species' most consistent South Coast location.

Characteristics – Burrowing owls are small owls with body lengths of 7 to 10 inches and wingspans of 22 inches. They have brown plumage with white spots on their back and white bars on their front and can be distinguished by relatively long legs and bright yellow eyes. They are most commonly observed during daylight hours perching on earthen mounds or low shrubs. Burrowing owls prefer open habitats such as grasslands, oak savannah, and open oak woodland (Land Trust for SB County 1992a; SB County 1997a). They nest in burrows typically dug by small mammals such as ground squirrels and lay clutches of four to ten eggs. The species is active both day and night, yet are most active in the morning and evening. Their primary prey consists of insects and small mammals, which they hunt by walking, hopping, running along the ground, or by flying and catching the prey with their feet.

Populations at More Mesa – On the South Coast, burrowing owls are rarely observed at Ellwood-Devereux and Elings Park, seen nearly annually at More Mesa and at the Carpinteria Salt Marsh, and observed almost every year of the 12 years that the San Marcos Foothills have been surveyed. No observations are known for Naples or Arco Dos Pueblos. Observations for More Mesa exceed both Ellwood-Devereux and Elings Park and are less than those found on San Marcos Foothills which has occasionally hosted up to three birds annually (Holmgren 2008). More Mesa has been a relatively consistent foraging area for burrowing owls, including 8 observations of this species from 1978 to 1982, with owl sightings 5 of the 7 years from 1975 to 1981 (UCSB 1982). No records for this species exist on-site from 1982 to 1995; however, no survey data (aside from Audubon bird counts) appear to be available for this period. From 1995 to 2008, nine burrowing owl sightings were recorded across the Mesa, with two owls observed on the west mesa in 2008 (Ball et al. 2005; SB County 1997a; Storrer 2008). In addition, grasslands and coastal bluff scrub overlying sandy soils on the site's west end provide burrows that appear suitable for nesting. Based on available data, More Mesa would appear to be one of two most regionally important South Coast locations for this species by supporting over-wintering burrowing owls. With the loss of burrowing owl habitat on San Marcos Foothills due to development, the importance of More Mesa is likely to increase.

Table 3-6. Burrowing Owls on More Mesa (1995-2008)

Species Name	Species Status	Year	Observations	Locations
Burrowing Owl (<i>Athene cunicularia</i>)	Seriously declining due to agricultural and urban development. California Bird Species of Special Concern. Recommended in 2003 for listing as threatened by CDFG under State Endangered Species Act; petition denied.	1995*	2	1 Western Mesa Bluff 1 Central Mesa Bluff
		2002	2	2 Not Noted
		2003	3	1 Eastern Mesa 1 Not Noted
		2008	2	Central Mesa
		Total	9	

* Includes two surveys performed in January 1996 within this year.

Note: Survey timing and intensity varies significantly by year. For example, 1996 to 2001 had few surveys, while 2002 and 2003 had multiple surveys. Heavily surveyed years (e.g., 2003), tend to indicate more owls.

Northern Harrier

Species Background – Northern harriers, also known as marsh hawks, reside in parts of Europe, Asia, and North America and are primarily seen in grasslands, marshes, and coastal sage scrub. In California, they are a Species of Special Concern and range from the central valley to the coast (Bird Life International 2007; CDFG 2008).

This species has been declining somewhat as a wintering bird (and possibly as a breeder) in Santa Barbara County and throughout the State due to extensive habitat loss (Lehman 1994; CDFG 1995; California Partners in Flight 1998). Worldwide, there is evidence that the northern harrier is experiencing an overall population decline (Bird Life International 2007).



Northern harriers frequent More Mesa's open grasslands which provide ample small mammals for this species to prey upon.

Characteristics – The northern harrier is medium-sized raptor with a body length of 18 to 20 inches and a wing span of 40 to 46 inches. Adult males are gray on back and light in front with black wingtips, while adult females are brown on back and striped brown and white in front. These birds can be distinguished by the characteristic shallow "V" that is formed by its long wings and its flight habit of flying low while searching for prey.

Up to three northern harriers have been recorded on More Mesa at one time, reinforcing the importance of the site to this species.

Northern harriers prefer open wetlands, meadows, grasslands, and riparian woodlands, where they primarily forage for small mammals and birds by flying low over open habitats. Females nest on the ground (in open fields, meadows, or riparian areas) by building a platform from vegetation and lay clutches of four to six eggs. Breeding records exist for Ventura and San Luis Obispo counties, as well as along San Antonio Creek in the North County (California Partners in Flight 1998; Storrer 2008).

Populations at More Mesa – More Mesa was known to be visited by one or two wintering northern harriers annually from 1971 to 1982 and up to two individuals were regularly seen during the winter in 1981 to 1982, particularly along the southern half of the site (UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a). From October 1995 through January 1996, northern harriers were observed 35 times across More Mesa (SB County 1997a). Northern harriers were observed at least 58 times between 1999 and 2005, mostly in the central and eastern areas of the mesa (see table below). Along the South Coast, northern harriers are often observed at key regional open spaces such as Ellwood-Devereux, Elings Park, More Mesa, Carpinteria Salt Marsh, Goleta Slough, San Marcos Foothills and are noted along the Gaviota Coast. Of these areas, More Mesa appears to be the most consistent wintering location with two and sometimes three birds recorded (UCSB 1982; Ball et al. 2005; Storrer 2008). More Mesa has been previously identified as a regionally significant habitat for the northern harrier (UCSB 1982; Land Trust for SB County 1992a). A review of the available observations for this species indicates that More Mesa continues to be an important South Coast wintering location for this species.

Table 3-7. Periodic Northern Harrier Observations on More Mesa (1995-2005)

Species Name	Species Status	Year	Observations	Locations
Northern harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)	Declining due to habitat loss. California Bird Species of Special Concern.	1995*	35	throughout Mesa
		1999	3	2 Central-east Mesa 1 West Mesa
		2000	2	2 Central Mesa
		2001	8	8 East Mesa
		2002	26	5 Central Mesa 12 East Mesa 8 Not Noted
		2003	14	4 East Mesa 1 West Mesa 9 Not Noted
		2004	2	1 Central Mesa 1 Not Noted
		2005	3	3 East Mesa
		Total	93	

* Includes two surveys performed in January 1996.

Note: Observations additionally exist for the time period 1971 to 1982. Records are available for only 8 out of last 13 years; number, timing and intensity of available surveys varies annually from 1971 to 2008. Heavily surveyed years (e.g., 2002), tend to indicate more harriers.

Loggerhead Shrike

Species Background – The loggerhead shrike is found exclusively in North America, from southern Canada down through the United States and into southern Mexico. In California, they frequent open and semi-open habitats including grassland, savanna, coastal sage scrub, open riparian woodland, and agricultural areas (Lehman 1994). Locally, the shrike is known to occur in both the North and South County, with limited breeding confined or concentrated in the North County and wintering of limited numbers of birds along the South Coast. The species is listed by the CDFG as a Species of Special Concern (SB County 2004c; CDFG 2008).

Most populations along the coastal plains of southern California have been displaced by urban development, although the subspecies occupying the region is not yet in danger of local extinction (Riverside County 2007). The loggerhead shrike is thought to breed in limited numbers in the Santa Ynez and Santa Maria Valleys, at Hollister Ranch, Vandenberg Air Force Base, and to the south along the Santa Clara River (Lehman 1994; Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008).



The population of the loggerhead shrike has been declining due to changes in agricultural land management and increased urban development.

Characteristics – The loggerhead shrike is a medium-sized predatory songbird with a body length of 8 to 9 inches and a wing span of 11 to 13 inches. It has a gray back, white throat and chest, black mask, and a stout black bill. Male and female birds look alike, while juveniles are a duller gray color with faint bars on their chest and back.

More Mesa is one of three areas on the south coast that loggerhead shrikes sightings are regularly recorded.

Loggerhead shrikes prefer to forage for insects, amphibians, small reptiles, small mammals, and birds in open grassland habitats such as More Mesa. Usually they will scan for prey from perches. Shrikes also store this prey for later consumption by impaling on barb wire fences, cactus, or other sharp objects. This species nests in trees or shrubs with dense foliage and lays clutches of five to six eggs (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007). Some sources cite coyote brush scrub, such as that found on More Mesa, as appropriate breeding habitat; however, breeding is thought to be extremely rare along South Coast (City of Goleta 2004).

Populations at More Mesa – Key open spaces along the South Coast that are known to support wintering loggerhead shrikes include Ellwood-Devereux, San Marcos Foothills, Naples, Carpinteria Salt Marsh, and More Mesa. However, historic shrike use of More Mesa and other open space areas is not well documented. During the 1970s, this species was a rare, but regular visitor to More Mesa; shrikes were noted in 1971 to 1982 one to five times daily (UCSB 1982). During 1982, shrikes were observed on More Mesa on 13 different occasions, with two birds seen on two separate days (UCSB 1982). During surveys in 1995, this species was observed on 10 different occasions, while a total of 18 observations were recorded on More Mesa over a 7-year span from 1999 through 2005 (SB County 1997a; Ball et al. 2005). From the available data, More Mesa appears to be one of several larger South Coast open spaces that are frequently used by wintering shrikes. Although this sensitive species regularly winters at More Mesa, it is unclear how regionally important the site is to this species, or if the Mesa provides suitable breeding habitat.

Table 3-8. Loggerhead Shrike Observations at More Mesa (1995-2005)

Species Name	Species Status	Year	Observations	Locations
Loggerhead shrike (<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>)	Declining due to habitat loss. California Species of Special Concern.	1995*	10	5 Central Mesa 5 West Mesa
		1999	1	1 West Mesa
		2002	8	2 Central Mesa 4 East Mesa 1 West Mesa
		2003	7	2 East Mesa 1 Central Mesa 1 Not Noted
		2004	1	1 Not Noted
		2005	1	1 Not Noted
		Total	28 (observed 6 of 10 years of available surveys)	

* Includes two surveys performed in January 1996.

Note: Observations additionally exist for the time period 1971 to 1982. Records are available for only 6 out of last 13 years; number, timing and intensity of available surveys varies annually from 1971 to 2008. Heavily surveyed years (e.g., 2003), tend to indicate more loggerhead shrikes.

Cooper's Hawk

The Cooper's hawk is a medium-sized raptor distinguished by its dark grey-blue back color, white underparts, a long tail that is rounded and barred, and short rounded wings. This species is found in wooded and semi-open riparian habitats across North America from southern Canada to Central America (Lehman 1994; Cornell Ornithology Lab 2007). The Cooper's hawk is included on the CDFG's Watch List due to population decline attributed to the loss of lowland riparian forests (City of Goleta 2004). This species breeds throughout California and had been widespread in Santa Barbara County, and was once an uncommon winter visitor and breeder (Lehman 1994; City of Goleta 2004). However, Cooper's hawks are now more widespread and are known to occasionally nest on Ellwood Mesa along Mission Creek, and potentially San Marcos Foothills (City of Goleta 2004; SB County 2004b). More Mesa's riparian and oak woodlands provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat for this species. Cooper's hawks have been observed on More Mesa continually since 1981 and appear to have frequently used the woodlands along More Mesa's west canyon for nesting, with confirmed nesting activity in 2000, 2004, and 2008 (SB County 1997a; SB County 2004b; Ball et al. 2005; Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008). However, this species appears to breed at least periodically at two other major South Coast Open Spaces (Ellwood-Devereux and San Marcos Foothills), as well as potentially in other wooded areas such as Hope Ranch (City of Goleta 2004; SB County 2004; Storrer 2008). Because this sensitive species is a relatively uncommon and elusive breeder along the South Coast, its consistent use of More Mesa for breeding would appear to contribute to the Mesa's regional importance.



West More Mesa supports regular nesting activity by Cooper's hawks, with confirmed nests in 2000, 2004, and 2008.

Merlin

The merlin is a small hawk distinguished by its brown or grey back color, white and red tinted underparts, long pointed wings, and long banded tail. Merlins frequent grasslands, agricultural fields and sloughs throughout North America and occasionally the South Coast (Lehman 1994; Cornell Ornithology Lab 2007). This species is listed on the CDFG's Watch List due to significant population decline (City of Goleta 2004; CDFG 2008). The merlin is a rare to uncommon visitor to the coast of Southern California, with less than 10 seen annually before 1982 (UCSB 1982). Merlins are regular, but infrequent visitors to More Mesa, with a single individual wintering there in 1974-75 and 1975-76, a foraging bird observed in 1995, and two observations in 2003 and at least one in 2008 (UCSB 1982; SB County 1997a; Ball et al. 2005; Storrer 2008). Based upon a review of available data, More Mesa appears to be among the South Coast open spaces most frequently used by this species; however, the occasional visits of this species to the site do not appear to be regionally important.



The merlin appears to be an occasional visitor to More Mesa. This species is experiencing population decline throughout its range.

Western Screech-Owl

The western screech-owl is small, nocturnal owl distinguished by a grey or grey-brown back, small black streaks on its feathers, and bright yellow eyes. It is primarily found in woodlands throughout the western regions of North America, particularly in those dominated by oak trees (Lehman 1994; Cornell Ornithology Lab 2007). Although this species is not frequently sighted because it is mainly active during night hours, it is still clear that populations in some areas of Santa Barbara County are declining (Lehman 1994). The Goleta Valley was down to just a few pairs of the western screech-owl, at most, in 1982 (UCSB 1982). More Mesa's riparian and oak woodlands provide suitable foraging and nesting habitat; one pair was known to nest in the oaks trees on the northeast facing slope of the County-owned parcel (Land Trust for SB County 1992a). However, no recent records exist for this species. It is unknown if nesting continues at More Mesa; therefore, it is difficult to characterize More Mesa's regional significance for this species.



Western screech-owls were known to breed at More Mesa as recently as 1982; no recent sightings exist.

Grasshopper Sparrow

The grasshopper sparrow is a small brown bird with a large head, short tail and dark crown with a pale middle stripe. This species' range includes the United States east of the Rocky Mountains and adjacent portions of southern Canada, with isolated populations in the western United States, Mexico, and Central America (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007; National Audubon Society 2008a). Grasshopper sparrows frequent large grasslands with scattered shrubs and taller plants that can be utilized as perches; More Mesa being a perfect example of suitable habitat (Lehman 1994). In California, this species ranges from Lassen County south to San Diego County, yet favors the coast in southern California (PRBO 2008). North American populations of this species have declined from approximately 31 million birds in the 1960s, to approximately 11 million today, with declines specifically recorded in Southern California and Santa Barbara County (Lehman 1994, National Audubon Society 2008a). Grasshopper sparrows are listed as a California Species of Special Concern and are ranked by the National Audubon Society as number ten of common birds in decline (Lehman 1994, SB County 2004c; National Audubon Society 2008a). This decline is due to habitat loss and fragmentation related to development, over-grazing, etc. Grasshopper sparrows were formally widespread breeders in the County and were cited in 1910 as a "common summer resident in the vicinity of Santa Barbara". Although in decline, this species still breeds in the North County at locations such as Point Sal (Lehman 1994). Along the South Coast, occasional sightings of possible breeding birds are known along the Gaviota Coast with summer-fall transients in the Ellwood-Devereux area, but not apparently at Naples, Arco-Dos Pueblos or Elings Park. By far the largest recent South Coast record includes as many as 42 pairs nesting at San Marcos Foothills (SB County 2004c). Records for More Mesa are intermittent and include one singing bird in 1977 (Lehman 1994). Three singing males were identified in spring of 2008 on both the east and west Mesa; singing indicates territoriality, probable breeding, and the importance of More Mesa to this declining species (Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008).



The grasshopper sparrow is a common bird in severe decline; this species probably nested on More Mesa in 2008.

White-throated Swift

The white-throated swift is a small bird characterized by its black back, shallowly-notched tail, long pointed wings, and white throat, belly and rump sides (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007). This species frequents sea cliffs as well as ridges and mountain tops in the western United States, Mexico, and Central America. In California they are found in the Sierra Nevada Mountains and along the coast from San Diego to north of San Francisco (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007; Lehman 1994). In Santa Barbara County, this species is primarily found in the North County and along the ridge of the Santa Ynez Mountains, with spring/early summer migrants occasionally observed along the South Coast (Lehman 1994). This sensitive species is included on the Audubon Watch List. The swift's decline appears to be caused by the decrease in the aerial insects it feeds on, potentially caused by habitat destruction and increased pesticide use (National Audubon Society 2008b). Less than five of these birds were observed on More Mesa from 1971 to 1982 during annual fall and winter surveys (UCSB 1982). Two swifts were sighted on the shore area of More Mesa in 1995 and multiple observations exist for 2000 to 2003, 2007, and 2008 (SB County 1997a; Ball et al. 2005; Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008). Specifically, three to five nesting pairs have been noted on the bluff face in at least three of the last five years, including 2008 (Storrer 2008). Because rare documentation of breeding along the South Coast makes this a species of local concern, the presence of breeding swifts would appear to contribute to More Mesa's regional importance.



The formerly common white-throated swift is now in decline; this species nests on More Mesa's shoreline cliffs.

Blue Grosbeak

The blue grosbeak is a medium-sized songbird with a large silver grey bill and chestnut wingbars. The males typically are deep blue in color while the females are mostly brown (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007). This species' range includes the southern United States, the Caribbean, Mexico, and Central America (Cornell Lab of Ornithology 2007). Blue grosbeaks frequent and breed in riparian and brushy areas that border fields and pastures, and along creeks and ditches (Lehman 1994). While global populations are relatively stable, California's breeding population has declined in recent years due to habitat destruction and nest disturbance by cowbirds, with general population declines in coastal southern California and the San Joaquin Valley also noted (California Partners in Flight 1998). In Santa Barbara, this species may occur county-wide during migration, but breeding is only common to a few areas such as the Barka Slough, Vandenberg Air Force Base, the Hollister Ranch, and along the Santa Ynez River. Breeding sites have become less common on the South Coast during recent years (Holmgren 2008). On the South Coast, blue grosbeaks are most frequently sighted during summer and fall, with most breeding occurring along Atascadero Creek in Goleta (Lehman 1994). A number of summer and fall observations of this species have been recorded at More Mesa over the last 30 years indicating a low level of regular usage (see Appendix A; UCSB 1982). Of particular note is the apparent use of More Mesa for breeding by this species, an unusual occurrence along the South Coast, with singing males observed on the central Mesa in 2002, 2003, 2007, and 2008 (Ball et al. 2005; Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008). In addition, an adult with dependent young was sighted in 2002; a key sign of probable breeding activity (Storrer 2008). While no records exist for actual nest observations, the presence of singing males indicates a probability of active nesting (Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008). Because documented breeding of blue grosbeaks along the South Coast is unusual—making it a species of local concern—the presence of breeding blue grosbeaks would appear to contribute to More Mesa's regional significance to biological resources.



Blue grosbeaks appear to breed at More Mesa.

Silvery Legless Lizard

The silvery legless lizard is approximately the length of a pencil and completely lacks legs. Its head, upper body, and sides are silvery-gray with a yellow throat and belly (Sprackland 2008). This species is nearly endemic to California ranging from Contra Costa County south along the coast and includes the western edge of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, parts of the San Joaquin Valley, and the Mojave Desert to El Consuelo in Baja California (Contra Costa County 2007). It occurs under sparse vegetation in the vicinity of logs, rocks, compacted debris of wood, rat nests in loose sandy or loamy soils on beaches, and in chaparral or pine-oak woodland (Contra Costa County 2007). Local records of silvery legless lizard observations are known from More Mesa, Hope Ranch, Carpinteria Salt Marsh, and other areas with outcrops of sandy soils to the east, as well as Elings Park in Santa Barbara (City of Goleta 2004; Rindlaub 2007; Holmgren 2008). Many local and global populations are declining or have become extinct within the last 30 years due to habitat destruction from residential development (Contra Costa County 2007; Sprackland 2008). As such, the silvery legless lizard is now listed as a California Species of Special Concern (SB County 2001). The scarcity of records for this elusive species makes characterization of the relative importance of More Mesa to this species problematic.



Local records of the silvery legless lizard are noted on More Mesa, Hope Ranch, and other sand outcrops to the east.

Southwestern Pond Turtle

The southwestern pond turtle is a small to medium sized turtle that is dark brown or dull olive in color. This species ranges from north of San Francisco, south to the western Mojave Desert and Baja California (Nature Alley 2008). It primarily occurs in ponds or slow water in both natural and man-made water features; pond turtles are capable of long-distance movement between such water features (City of Goleta 2004). Local observations have occurred in Tecolotito Creek, Devereux Slough, Goleta Slough, and on More Mesa in Atascadero Creek and the newly-created



Populations of southwestern pond turtles have been declining due to factors such as development and disturbance of upland nesting habitat.

wetlands in the West Canyon in 2008 (City of Goleta 2004; Storrer 2008). The southwestern pond turtle has been declining due to habitat loss and disturbance from agricultural and urban development (Nature Alley 2008). Because of steep population declines, this species is listed as a California Species of Special Concern and a Federal Species of Concern (SB County 2004c). More Mesa's wetlands and riparian areas would appear to be important to, but not of regional significance for this species.

Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp

The vernal pool fairy shrimp is listed as Threatened by the USFWS and is widely distributed in grassland vernal pools throughout the Central Valley of California as well as other locations throughout California. They are observed in both clear pools found in sandstone outcrops and pools with muddy bottoms found in swales in grasslands. Although More Mesa has potential habitat for this threatened species, no recorded observations exist; however, no site-specific surveys are known to have been conducted. This species was recorded in 2001 approximately 5 miles west of More Mesa at Dos Pueblos Canyon and in the City of Carpinteria approximately 10 miles to the east (City of Goleta 2004; City of Carpinteria 2008). Based upon a review of the available literature, this species has a reasonable potential to occur on More Mesa. If present, this would constitute the third known location for this species on the South Coast, which would contribute to More Mesa's regional significance.

Ecological Interaction and Habitat Value at More Mesa

As discussed in this section, More Mesa contains a surprising range of habitats types which in turn support an unusual diversity of sensitive wildlife. The mesa's high ecological value is a result of the interaction among a variety of factors. Clay soils support vernal pools and ponds on the mesa's east end while sandy soils to the west support areas of coastal dune scrub and rodent burrows which attract burrowing owls. The varying soils also support diverse grassland cover, while the underlying geologic formation's differing responses to erosion create varied coastal bluff face habitats. The More Ranch Fault's intersection with the mesa's canyon system creates freshwater springs and associated riparian areas and forested wetlands in the canyon bottoms. The salty soils in the northern central valley, perhaps the historic Goleta Slough margin, sustain relatively rare saline meadow wetlands. The north facing bluffs above Atascadero Creek and canyon margins provide oak woodland habitats which link directly to the wetland and riparian areas along Atascadero Creek which in turn links More Mesa to the greater Goleta Slough ecosystem and the more distant foothills. The totality of these factors interact to create a diverse ecosystem capable of supporting a unique mix sensitive raptors along with other wildlife species which utilize More Mesa and make this area among the most valuable wildlife habitats on the South Coast (Ferren 2008; Holmgren 2008).

Recreation on More Mesa

For over 30 years, More Mesa has been utilized by the general public to access the beach as well as provide a variety of informal passive recreational opportunities (SB County 1982; 1985; 1993). The value of the site for coastal access and recreational uses, and the high quality of its natural resources has led to prioritization for possible future public acquisition of some, or the entire mesa, by the County and State (SB County 1993; 1982). In particular, the State and County have recognized More Mesa's recreational value for providing access to the large sandy beach fronting the site and also hosting a trail system that supports passive recreational uses. Major informal recreational uses of this property include hiking, dog-walking, jogging, mountain biking, paragliding, flying model gliders, horseback riding, painting and photography, birding, and access to beach activities such as tide-pooling, sunbathing, and swimming. The 1982 LCP states that as many as 800 visitors may recreate on More Mesa beach on warm, sunny days. Although, comprehensive data on the types and level of recreational use at More Mesa are not available, one informal recreational user survey of 300 visitors has been completed by the More Mesa Preservation Coalition (MMPC). Survey respondents indicated regular ongoing use of the Mesa for an average of 14.7 years, with some indicating they have been regular visitors for over 50 years (MMPC 2007, see Appendix B). Although the public utilizes More Mesa for informal recreation, the large majority of the study area remains private property, with only 54 acres under actual public ownership.

Existing Access and Parking - Access to More Mesa is available at eight different points (Figure 3-5). The majority of public access occurs via four access entries at the north and east end of the site, particularly off Mockingbird Lane and a trail from Puente Drive. More limited local access off Vieja Drive, and Via Roblata in Hope Ranch is also available. On-street public parking is located north of the mesa along Puente Drive. On the west end of the mesa, three access points are located off of South Patterson Avenue/Shoreline Drive, with limited public parking along South Patterson Avenue. In addition, the public can also access More Mesa by the rustic beach stairway at the mesa's southeast end and, during low water conditions in summer, via a jury-rigged plank walkway across Atascadero Creek on the site's northern boundary (see Figure 3-5) (SB County 1995b).



Figure 3-5. Trails, Access Points, and Parking on More Mesa

More Mesa currently supports approximately 1.9 miles of existing County trails, with a total of 6.9 miles of County trails proposed for public and private lands; most existing public access occurs via trails off Puente Drive.

Trails on More Mesa - The existing 8 miles of informal trails on More Mesa traverse both public and private land, and allow extensive passive recreational use (SB County 1993). This trail system provides north-south access to the coast across the mesa via three main and three secondary informal trails, with the main trails located near the site's eastern and western boundaries and across the central mesa. In addition, east-west access is provided via three primary trails and one secondary trail, particularly the main inland trail which connects South Patterson Avenue with the Puente Drive access trails and the coastal bluff top trail (SB County 1995b). Existing trails vary from narrow paths of 2 feet in width to 10- to 12-foot-wide old dirt roads.



Trail running and mountain biking are common activities on More Mesa's trail system on public and private land.

Existing Public Trails - Approximately 1.5 miles of existing public trails are concentrated on the 54 acres of County-owned land located on the northwestern area of More Mesa. These trails primarily extend along Atascadero Creek and through the West Canyon, providing access to scenic oak and riparian woodlands as well as encompassing mesa and mountain views from hilltop grassland trails (SB County 1995b).

Existing Trails on Private Land - Approximately 8 miles of larger informal trails occur throughout most of the undeveloped 275 acres of private land that comprise much of More Mesa, including the west, central, and east portions the mesa (SB County 1995b). These trails extend throughout the level coastal bluff and provide sweeping views of the Santa Ynez Mountains from the mesa's open grasslands, as well as dramatic coastal views from the bluff top trail. These trails cross private lands and are *not* public trails; however, these trails presently receive heavy use.

Future Trail System - The County's adopted plans envision the eventual establishment of over 6.9 miles of public trails on More Mesa and are depicted as a series of broad trail corridors on adopted County plans (SB County 1993; 1995b; see Figures 3-5 and 4-1). Trail corridors are planned to generally follow major existing trails and would provide public access to all areas proposed to remain as open space on More Mesa, as well as continued coastal access (SB County 1993; 1995b). These trails would be acquired, designed, and constructed either when development is approved for portions of the mesa (see Section 4, *Future of More Mesa*) or when all or portions of the site are acquired for preservation by the public or a private land preservation group (SB County 1995b).



An informal eucalyptus branch stairway leads from More Mesa's bluff top to one of the most pristine beaches on the South Coast.

More Mesa Beach - More Mesa Beach is one of the largest and most pristine beaches on the South Coast (SB County 2002b). The beach is characterized by a white sandy berm and clear clean water with a generally sandy bottom, which provides excellent swimming when compared to other sometimes rocky South Coast beaches. This beach is relatively isolated and is backed by scenic, but steep coastal bluffs, with the nearest other public coastal access points at Arroyo Burro Beach 3 miles to the east, and Goleta Beach 2 miles to the west. This relative isolation allows shore and marine birds to frequently use this beach as a roost, with flocks of hundreds of California pelicans, California and western gulls, cormorants, willets, and other birds observed congregating in the mornings (AMEC 2008). This beach also provides users with a more natural beach experience than more developed beach parks (SB County 1997a; AMEC 2008).

Existing User Groups - More Mesa supports a diverse group of recreational users and has a long

Major Recreational User Groups on More Mesa:

- Beach Goers
- Hikers/Dog Walkers/Joggers
- Bikers
- Paragliders/Model Airplane Flyers
- Equestrians
- Educational Users

3 - MORE MESA'S RESOURCES

history of informal public recreational use. Although diverse and sometimes conflicting user groups utilize More Mesa, such as mountain bikes and equestrians or dog walkers and birders, these groups appear to coexist with limited friction and with apparently modest overall impacts on the site's sensitive biological resources (AMEC 2008).

Beach Goers - More Mesa is the only accessible coastal access point for the 5-mile reach of coastline between Arroyo Burro and Goleta Beach parks. Beach access is a correspondingly important activity on the site, with approximately 50% of recently surveyed users indicating past use of More Mesa's beach (MMPC 2007). On busy summer days more than 100 visitors at a time will utilize the More Mesa beach (Malloy 2008). Beach goers primarily park along Puente Drive and access the beach via the informal trails along the site's east end.

Hikers, Dog Walkers, and Joggers - Hiking, walking, jogging, and dog-walking are the dominant forms of recreation on the mesa identified by recent More Mesa recreation survey respondents, with approximately; 62% hiking, 25% dog-walking, and 23% jogging (MMPC 2007). The mesa's large size and varied trail system provides users relative solitude and exposure to a variety of pleasant experiences including scenic bluff top and mountain views and mature oak forests (Santa Barbara Running 2008).

Bikers - The natural beauty of More Mesa and the areas diverse topography make the site attractive to modest levels of mountain bike use, with approximately 12% of recent survey respondents indicating this type of use on the site (MMPC 2007). The site's proximity to urban and residential areas and the nearby Obern Bike Trail makes this an important property for the casual biker, with enough terrain to make riding enjoyable (Land Trust for SB County 1992b). It is one of the few large open areas on the South Coast, along with Elings Park and Ellwood where bikers can enjoy trail riding in a scenic area.

Paragliders and Model Gliders - More Mesa's bluffs provide ideal wind updrafts to support paragliders and model glider use, with approximately 2% of recent survey respondents using the area for this purpose (MMPC 2007). These activities require a steep slope, preferably an oceanfront slope, which permits unrestricted air flow to approach activity points (Eagle Paragliding 2008).

Equestrians - More Mesa is an important area for casual equestrian trail riding, with its proximity to nearby stables and the equestrian community of Hope Ranch. It allows local riders to enjoy riding without having to trailer their horses to distant locations. The open vistas along most of the site's trails, and limited amounts of steep downhill, permit relatively safe mountain bike and horseback riding when compared to steeper foothill regions. Horseback riding is a commonly observed activity with 6% of survey respondents using the site for riding (MMPC 2007).

Educational Users - More Mesa's diverse habitats and avian population attract both scientific research and birding activity. Approximately 4% of survey respondents indicated use of the property for this purpose (MMPC 2007).



More Mesa is regularly visited by dog walkers and is one of the few unregulated locations for off-leash dog walking on the South Coast.



Paragliders find More Mesa to be a prime place to fly because of its scenic beauty and ideal wind conditions.

Natural Beauty of More Mesa

Importance of Visual Resources - The scenic resources and natural beauty of Santa Barbara County are recognized as being central to the County's economic and social well-being (SB County 1982). The County's coastline in particular, is noted for its beauty with areas such as the Gaviota Coast, Ellwood, and More Mesa all recognized as areas of outstanding natural beauty and worthy of protection (SB County 1980; 1982; 2002b). Reflective of the importance of these resources, the County's adopted Local Coastal Plan (LCP) identifies protection of scenic coastal views as an important planning issue and includes policies and mechanisms to protect key coastal views (SB County 1982). As discussed below, visual resources of note on More Mesa include sweeping coastal and mountain views, an undisturbed beach, a dramatic steep coastal bluff, streams and wetlands, oak and eucalyptus woodlands, canyons, and broad vistas available from the open coastal terrace.

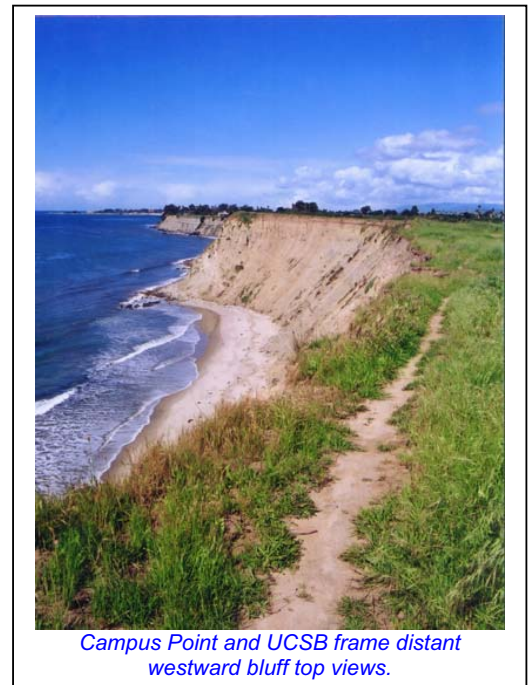


More Mesa's bluff top trails provide scenic coastal views of the Pacific Ocean and undeveloped beaches.

Existing Visual Characteristics at More Mesa - More Mesa is widely recognized as one of the most scenic undeveloped open spaces remaining on the South Coast of Santa Barbara County (SB County 1993; 2002b). The mesa's combination of expansive level open bluff top and wooded canyons provide a range of views and experiences for users of the site's public and informal trail system¹. Paths traversing the open mesa provide panoramic views of the Goleta Valley and the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north, and sweeping views of the Pacific Ocean and Channel Islands to the south. The 1-mile-long informal trail along the bluff top offers distant views of Campus Point and UCSB to the west, Hope Ranch and the Douglas Family preserve to the east, and overlooks the unspoiled white sandy beach 80 to 100 feet below the bluff.

Public and informal trails on private land also wind through and across wooded canyons and along the forested bank of Atascadero Creek. Users entering More Mesa from South Patterson Road stroll through almost ½ mile of oak woodland with interlocking branches of mature coast live oaks arching overhead. In spring and summer, trail users encounter patches of native and non-native wildflowers including California poppies, owl's clover, lupines, blue eyed grass, large expanses of California bush sunflower and mustard, California wild rose, and California buckwheat. At several locations, hikers and birdwatchers can often observe aerial hunting displays, occasional winter roosts, and nesting activity of the white-tailed kite. Additional frequently observed wildlife of common interest include northern harrier, American kestrel, flocks of western meadowlarks and house finches. Less frequently, toward dawn and dusk, coyotes, foxes, weasels, shrews, and the elusive short-eared, burrowing, and great horned owls may be seen.

More Mesa's trail system provides access to the large, scenic, undeveloped beach which fronts the site. This broad white sandy beach is accessed via a rustic eucalyptus branch stairway which winds down the bluff face, through a eucalyptus grove and coastal bluff scrub, to the seashore below. This scenic beach supports a wide sandy berm in summer with clear clean water and



Campus Point and UCSB frame distant westward bluff top views.

¹ As discussed in *Recreation Resources*, More Mesa supports approximately 2 miles of existing public trails and 8 miles of longstanding informal trails on private land.

3 - MORE MESA'S RESOURCES

a sandy bottom ideal for swimming². To the west of More Mesa's shore are undeveloped coves and a seal haul out on emergent offshore rocks. To the east are the broad, open, uncrowded beaches which front Hope Ranch. These conditions make More Mesa's beach one of the premiere undeveloped beaches along Santa Barbara County's South Coast. These same conditions make this area ideal for viewing marine wildlife, including marine and shore birds such as brown pelicans, cormorants, a variety of gulls, and sandpipers, and in offshore waters, dolphins, seals, and occasionally otters or migrating whales.

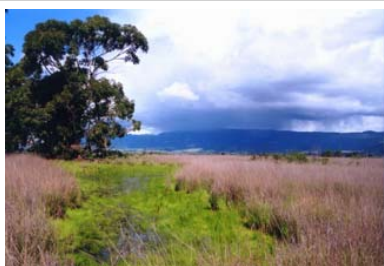
Natural Beauty and County Policy - Adopted State and County policy recognize that the protection of the natural beauty of scenic areas such as Santa Barbara's coastline is an important public concern. As such, the County's LCP and the Goleta Community Plan (GCP) identify important undeveloped open areas and scenic resources, and contain guidelines for the protection of key open space areas and associated visual resources. The LCP states: "The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance" (SB County 1982). As discussed in this section, the protection of the natural beauty and visual resources of areas such as More Mesa is important to the quality of life of nearby communities



Wild roses are found in the mesa's woodlands.



Aerial displays by the white-tailed kite enliven visitor experience at More Mesa.



The rolling hills of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north are important scenic resources.

and the South Coast. The LCP identifies beaches, coastal bluffs, wetlands, canyons, and upland terraces as "vulnerable" visual resources important to public enjoyment. More Mesa is also identified as an "urban perimeter", a peripheral open space that provides "a sense of community identity" and "a sense of freedom and offer recreational opportunities close to home or work" (SB County 1993). The gradual encroachment of development around the border of More Mesa has adversely affected views from heavily used informal trails and impinged upon mountain-view corridors (SB County 2004b; MMPC 2007). Any future development on More Mesa will be subject to scrutiny for its effect on the site's natural beauty and visual resources and its consistency with adopted State and County policy.

Adopted State and County Regulations and Plans identify protection of open space and natural scenic beauty as an important issue. The State Coastal Act and County Comprehensive and Coastal Plans all identify protection of scenic resources as a priority, particularly in coastal areas, as outlined below.

- State Coastal Act, Section 30251: "The scenic and visual qualities of coastal areas shall be considered and protected as a resource of public importance."
- Santa Barbara County Coastal Plan contains the following discussion and policies that apply to More Mesa:
 - Defines coastal zone visual resources worthy of protection under 30251 above as "beaches, sand dunes, coastal dunes, coastal bluffs, headlands, wetlands, estuaries, islands, hillsides and canyons, upland terraces and plains, and its river and streams."
 - Policy 4-4: Requires new development to be "in conformance with the scale and character of the existing community" and encourages "clustered development."
 - More Mesa's Planned Residential Development land use designation is intended to "allow for flexibility and innovative design of residential development so that the important resource values of a particular site (i.e., scenic quality) are preserved."
 - Policy 2-17: Requires that development use flexible design concepts, including clustering of units, mixture of dwelling types, etc., "to accomplish as much as possible the following goals:
 - Protection of the scenic qualities of the site;
 - Protection of coastal resources."

² Beaches below bluffs along the South Coast are often rocky and unsuitable for swimming. For example, large areas fronting the Mesa in Santa Barbara, Hope Ranch, and Ellwood often support ecologically valuable rocky inter-tidal areas, which are less than ideal for swimming. In addition, ocean water off More Mesa generally lacks tar and large amounts of kelp, and is often more clear than other area beaches (AMEC 2008).

Future of More Mesa

The future of More Mesa and the preservation of its sensitive resources is tied to the location and extent of ESH areas, the potential for development, and the management, restoration and future use of areas of open space. In order to protect ESH areas and other site resources (e.g., mountain/coastal views), the County's Goleta Community Plan (GCP) currently limits new development to a maximum of 70 homes confined to 40 acres on the east side of the mesa adjacent to Hope Ranch. Up to six homes on about 3 acres are also allowed on the mesa's west end, north of the More Mesa Shores neighborhood (refer Section 2, Figure 2-4). General direction for management of ESH/open space areas is also provided in the GCP, along with proposed trail locations, coastal access provisions, etc. Management of the County's 54 acres is governed by a management plan and adopted habitat mitigation agreements. As discussed below, adopted plans provide relatively detailed guidance on development potential and the extent of ESH areas onsite, but are lacking in specificity on management of areas proposed to remain in open space.

Extent of ESH Areas and Potential for Development

The key issue that governs future potential development at More Mesa is the location and extent of ESH areas. The State Coastal Act mandates that ESH areas shall be protected "against any significant disruption of habitat values" and that development "shall be sited and designed to prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas" (Coastal Act Section 30240). The Coastal Act defines ESH areas as "any area in which plant or animal life or their habitats are either rare or especially valuable because of their special nature or role in an ecosystem and which could be easily disturbed or degraded by human activities or development" (Section 3107.5). Based on this guidance from the State, the County's 1982 Local Coastal Plan (LCP) identifies oak and riparian woodlands, wetlands (including vernal pools) and coastal bluff-dune scrub as ESH. The LCP also identifies More Mesa as providing high-quality foraging habitat for both nesting and roosting kites, and mandates that "the maximum feasible area shall be retained in grassland to provide feeding area for the kites" (Policy 9-29; SB County 1982). In addition to supporting foraging kites, these grasslands also provide foraging areas for other sensitive raptor species such as the northern harrier, burrowing owl and short-eared owl (UCSB 1982; SB County 1993). Based on the documented use of these grasslands by kites and other sensitive species provided in the 1982 UCSB Biological Evaluation of More Mesa and the directives provided in the Coastal Act, the County's 1993 GCP designates almost 80% of More Mesa's grasslands as ESH (SB County 1993). However, the GCP allows consideration of an increase in development on the eastern 40-acre developable area if a future study demonstrates that increased development would not disturb sensitive resources and would protect ESH areas¹.

A key factor governing future development potential at More Mesa is the extent of grassland habitat that should be designated as ESH. Protection of foraging areas for roosting and nesting white-tailed kites was an important consideration in the designation of extensive areas of More Mesa's grasslands as ESH, as was use by other sensitive species (SB County 1993). Based on available data, More Mesa's grasslands continue to support a high level of foraging by kites. This

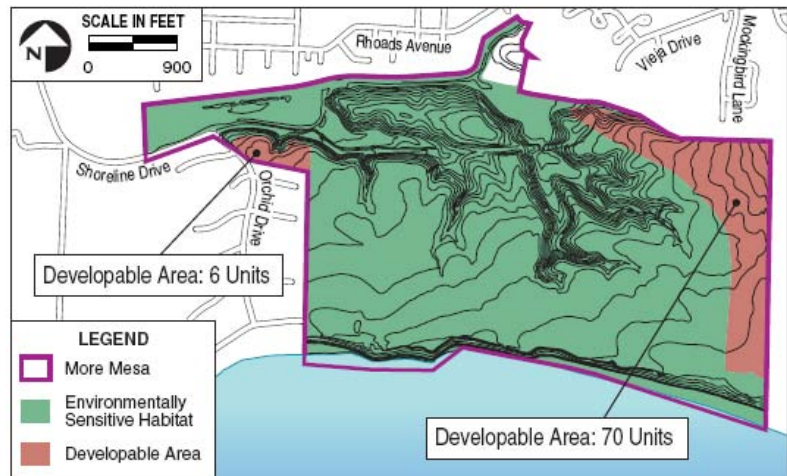
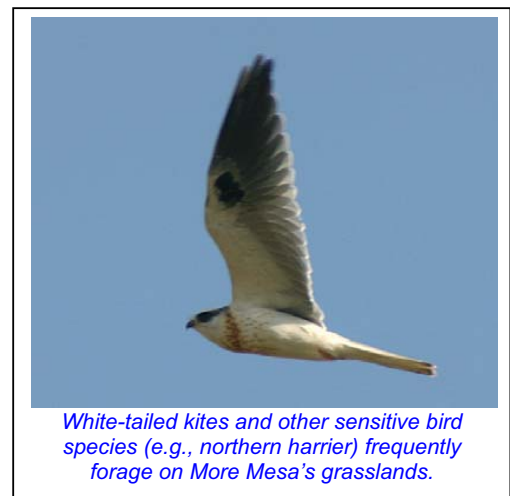


Figure 4-1. Developable Area and ESH



¹ The County of Santa Barbara is currently overseeing preparation of such a study by a private consulting firm funded by Sun Mesa Inc. Study results are expected in 2009.

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foraging evidence is recorded in over 1,100 kite observations from 1995 to 2003; observations that also document regular kite nesting activity and periodic roosting (refer to Section 3). Continued use by kites and other sensitive species indicates that More Mesa's grassland persists in supporting the same mix of species that was a primary basis for the 1993 designation of approximately 80% of the site's grassland as ESH as discussed below:

- White-tailed kite roosts: More Mesa is historically known to have supported one of the largest kite roosts in the State from the mid-1960s through the early 1980s (UCSB 1982). Data contained in this handbook demonstrates that ongoing, but apparently less regular and intensive white-tailed kite roosting continues on More Mesa, with roosting documented in 1998, 1999, 2000 and 2003 (refer to Section 3; Appendix A)². In addition, while over 15 other kite roosts have now been documented in Goleta, only one or two, such as the lemon orchard on South Patterson, appear to experience consistent long-term use (Ball et al 2005; Holmgren 2008). Further, some of these roosts, such as those at west Ellwood Mesa, UCSB's Harder Stadium, Willow Springs condominiums, Dos Pueblos High School and San Marcos Foothills seem to have been destroyed or compromised by development (AMEC 2008). Thus, it appears that More Mesa continues to play an important role in periodically hosting white-tailed kite roosts and provides one of the few protected known kite roost sites along the South Coast³.
- White-tailed Kite Nests: More Mesa is known to regularly support two and sometimes three white-tailed kite nests, making it probably the most consistent and productive kite nesting site on the South Coast (Ball 2005 et al; Storrer 2008). Protection of foraging areas for nesting white-tailed kites was an important consideration in the designation of extensive areas of More Mesa's grasslands as ESH (SB County 1993). A total of five historic nest trees or groves are documented for the mesa, with kites regularly returning to these locations. Based on a review of available data, this level of nesting activity appears to be higher than that for any other major open space along the South Coast, including the Ellwood Devereux area, San Marcos Foothills, Elings Park, Douglas Family Preserve, Carpinteria Bluffs, Naples or the Arco Dos Pueblos Golf Course site (AMEC 2008).
- Additional Sensitive Bird Species: More Mesa's grasslands continue to be utilized as "active foraging grounds" by the same mix of sensitive raptor species identified in the GCP as a basis for designating these grasslands as ESH. As discussed in Section 3, there were 93 observations of the northern harrier from 1995 to 2005, 28 short-eared owl observations from 1999 to 2007 and nine observations of burrowing owls from 1995 to 2008. Based on a review of EIRs and other studies, More Mesa appears to be one of the most frequently utilized sites along the South Coast for these three species. In particular, it exhibits very high use by the northern harrier and is one of only two locations known to exhibit consistent use by short-eared and burrowing owls (Holmgren 2008)⁴. As such, the site would appear to be either locally important and/or regionally significant to these three bird species.

In addition to the sensitive species described above, More Mesa's grasslands regularly support additional sensitive species, including recurring winter visits by the loggerhead shrike and apparent breeding by the grasshopper sparrow and blue grosbeak, and provide foraging area for white throated swifts which nest on the bluff face (SB County 1997a; Holmgren 2008; Storrer 2008). The use of More Mesa by these relatively rare or declining species, especially for breeding, emphasizes the regional importance of More Mesa's grasslands.



Sensitive birds species such as the blue grosbeak nest on More Mesa.

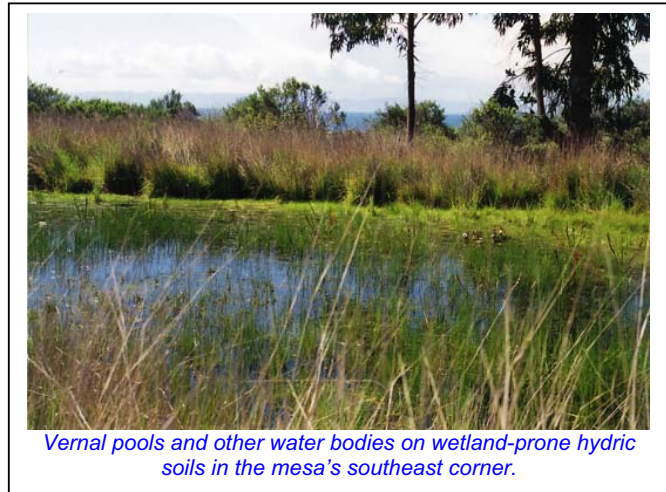
² Available data indicate periodic kite roosting on More Mesa throughout much of the 1980s and 1990s, although at lower levels than recorded for the 1960s and 1970s. No data is apparently available for 2004 to 2007.

³ Trees occasionally utilized as a kite roost on east Ellwood Mesa are protected as permanent open space, as are occasionally utilized trees at the Coal Oil Point Reserve; however, non-native trees may be subject to eventual removal in the reserve.

⁴ San Marcos Foothills is the other documented site for regular use by these species. It is unclear what effect development on the upper mesa at the San Marcos Foothills will have on this use.

Based on the review of existing data contained in this report, More Mesa appears to support the same mix of sensitive species that was the basis of County and Coastal Commission actions to designate the majority of the site's grassland as ESH. Regular use by foraging and nesting kites continues at high levels compared with use of other known kite habitats on the South Coast. White-tailed kites continue to use the mesa for roosting, although at lower levels than occurred in the 1960s and 1970s. Based on available data, More Mesa appears to remain an important kite roosting site. Use by the burrowing owl, short-eared owl and northern harrier also continues at relatively high levels when compared to that known for other South Coast open space areas. In addition, a review of observed data indicates that these sensitive species continue to utilize much of the grassland located across the central portions of the mesa (refer to Figure 3-3). This pattern of use generally matches that documented in the 1982 UCSB Evaluation of Biological Resources at More Mesa that formed the basis for these grasslands being designated as ESH. Thus, substantial existing data indicates that the majority of grasslands at More Mesa may continue to meet the criteria for designation as ESH as identified in the 1993 GCP. In addition, several more sensitive species have been documented using these grasslands for both foraging and potentially breeding. Taken together, these facts appear to support the County and State's decision to designate the majority of grassland at More Mesa as ESH.

Potential Wetlands - More Mesa supports substantial wetland habitats, primarily confined to the canyon and ravine system and areas along Atascadero Creek. In addition, known and potential vernal pools are located on the southeast corner of the mesa, along with scattered vernal ponds. These known and potential vernal pools and scattered vernal ponds overlie soils in the mesa's southeast corner that are identified by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers as hydric or wetland soils (refer to Figure 3-3). To date, no wetland delineation or detailed mapping of these water features has been performed⁵. However, the presence of standing water and hydric soils could indicate the potential presence of wetlands in addition to those identified by the County in 1993. These hydric soils, and associated scattered water features and the potential vernal pools, overlap with the southern portions of the proposed building envelope. If future mapping identifies these features as wetlands, these areas would be subject to review and consideration as possible ESH areas under the California Coastal Act. Formal wetland delineation would be required to determine if these scattered water features and underlying hydric soils would qualify as potential wetlands.



Vernal pools and other water bodies on wetland-prone hydric soils in the mesa's southeast corner.

Available evidence suggests that More Mesa continues to function as an important ecosystem that supports a variety of resident and visiting sensitive bird species. Areas currently mapped as ESH exhibit the characteristics that match the criteria for designation as ESH that were identified in the County's LCP and the GCP. The presence of larger predators, such as a bob cat and coyotes on More Mesa also indicate that the site continues to have a link to surrounding habitats, perhaps along Atascadero Creek. In addition, some areas currently planned for development warrant investigation of a number of water features (i.e., potential vernal pool, scattered ponds) and underlying hydric soils. Completion of a formal wetland delineation would be required to determine if these features could qualify as wetlands. This would permit consideration of the nature and quality of these water features and whether these areas would meet the criteria for consideration as ESH.

Protection and Management of Planned Open Lands at More Mesa

Future management of land planned to remain in open space at More Mesa would likely include two principal objectives. First would be the protection of open areas from adverse effects of any new development and second, the long-term management and enhancement of these areas' habitats and recreational opportunities. More than 280 acres of the greater More Mesa area is currently planned to remain undeveloped, including; approximately 225 acres of the central and western mesa currently owned

⁵ The 1982 UCSB study and the 1993 GCP were completed before formal wetland delineation and mapping came into common use; as such, it is possible that such potential wetlands may have been overlooked in previous studies.

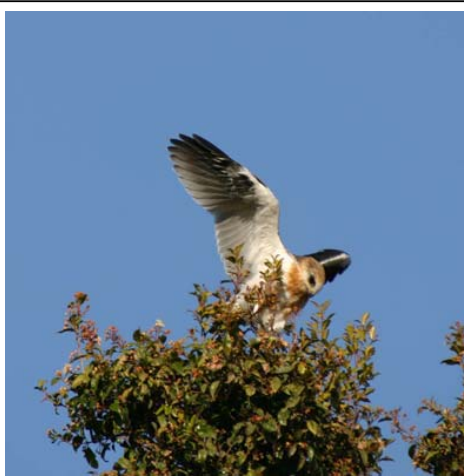
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by Sun Mesa, Inc.; 54 acres of the northern mesa and lands along Atascadero Creek owned by the County; and roughly 3 acres of hillside and floodplain on the far west end of the study area known as the Kunda parcel. In addition, several acres of the already developed Gray parcel outside of the homesite and established gardens may contain wetlands and thus qualify as ESH (refer to Figure 3-2). Under existing County plans and policies, all of these areas appear likely to remain undeveloped over the long-term.

Management issues for these undeveloped areas will include determining the appropriate long-term ownership or management authority, coordination between property owners, habitat protection and restoration, wildlife management and provision for recreational opportunities and limited recreational facilities. As noted above, with the exception of 35 acres of County property purchased as parkland, existing County plans provide minimal guidance on how to manage the majority of properties at More Mesa. These issues are discussed below.

Protection of ESH Areas from New Development - As discussed above, adopted County plans currently restrict new development to 40 acres on the east end of the mesa and 3 acres on the west, with both developable areas bordered by designated ESH areas. Development on the 40 acres on the east end of the mesa (Sun Mesa property), would be located adjacent to oak woodlands in the east canyon, a vernal pool and white-tailed kite nest and roost sites. Development on 3.8 acres of the mesa's west end (Kunda property) would occur adjacent to oak woodlands. New development in either of these areas adjacent to More Mesa's ESH areas could degrade these areas through loss of habitat, increased disturbance, noise, light and glare. Therefore, a range of measures would be required to protect these ESH areas from the impacts of possible future development. Typical measures required under County plans are summarized below:

- **Development Setbacks:** Adopted County policy would require that new development be set back from ESH areas to "prevent impacts which would significantly degrade those areas." In order to protect ESH areas, the LCP and GCP require *minimum* setbacks for all new development of 100 feet from wetlands (e.g., vernal pools) and 25 feet from oak woodlands. Development setbacks would also be required from known raptor nest trees (SB County 1993). Although no specific standards exist for setbacks from raptor nest trees, kites may be sensitive to disturbances that occur within 150 feet of perches (refer to Section 3). The layout and design of any new development would need to incorporate adequate setbacks to protect these resources.
- **Landscape Screening and Fencing:** In order to screen development from public use areas and to buffer ESH areas, the GCP currently requires that a new "belt" of native and non-native trees be planted along the western perimeter of any new development on the Sun Mesa property. Although no such standards are currently proposed for the western development area, such measures would appear equally applicable for that development. Such vegetation should involve a mix of native trees, shrubs and vines to provide visual separation between development and open space areas. Fencing or other barriers to separate development from open space should also be considered to minimize disturbance of sensitive areas adjacent to development. This new landscape buffer and fenceline could be similar to the existing edge of Hope Ranch. In addition, exterior lighting



Potential development on the east mesa should be setback from a nearby historic kite nest.



Existing trails in More Mesa's southeast area cross several vernal ponds.

would need to be carefully designed to minimize the potential adverse effects of light spillover from new development into ESH areas.

- Construction Timing: More Mesa's ESH areas support use by sensitive wildlife, particularly during the winter kite roosting season (November through February) and wildlife nesting season (March through June). Construction activities adjacent to key wildlife areas (e.g., kite nests) would need to be timed to avoid disruption of nesting.
- Location and Extent of ESH Areas: Adopted County plans would require that any new development within the greater More Mesa identify the precise extent and location of any ESH areas. This would include issues discussed in this report such as the importance of More Mesa's grasslands to sensitive species (e.g., white-tailed kite, northern harrier), the location and extent of water features overlying wetland-prone soils types in the southeast corner of the mesa and whether these areas qualify as wetlands. These matters are currently under review by the County with a draft study expected to be completed in late 2009.

Long-Term Management Authority - Land within the 330-acre greater More Mesa area is currently controlled by four different property owners, including two undeveloped private holdings which total 271 acres, 54 acres owned by the County and an existing single-family home on 5 acres (refer to Table 2-1). To permit effective long-term management of the contiguous open space on the various parcels, unified management strategies and actions would need to be coordinated between different owners. Coordination of management between these open areas would be facilitated if undeveloped lands were managed cooperatively, or placed under a single management authority. Cooperative management or establishment of a unified management authority for these open lands would need to be done in coordination with, and with the consent of, affected property owners.

Such management issues would be addressed as part of any development proposals considered for properties on More Mesa. Under existing plans, it is unclear if lands currently planned to remain undeveloped (i.e., ESH areas) would be retained in private ownership, or purchased by, or transferred to, the public. This transfer could be either outright, if funding is available, or as part of development approvals. Adopted County plans currently identify acquisition of sensitive areas on More Mesa as a priority, but do not address ultimate ownership, a preferred management authority or available funding mechanisms to support purchase (SB County 1982; SB County 1992). In other instances, such as at the Ellwood Mesa-Devereux Slough area, open space protection was accomplished through a combination of purchase of land planned to remain as open space and permitting development of private and University housing in peripheral areas that surrounded sensitive habitats and key open space. Whatever approach is selected, the choice of an appropriate management entity is critical to protection of More Mesa's sensitive resources and management of long-term recreational use.

Long-term management of this 280-acre undeveloped area would be most effective if under control of a public or private agency with land management experience, adequate staff and financial resources. Local public agencies with appropriate capabilities and experience include the County Parks Department, or upon potential annexation of the area, the Goleta or Santa Barbara city parks departments. Private groups such as the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, which manages the 700-acre Arroyo Hondo Preserve, may also have the capabilities to undertake management of the area. Alternately, a new management entity could be created, similar to the Elings Park Foundation, which manages the 212-acre Elings Park in the city of Santa Barbara. Any private or public agency undertaking management of More Mesa would require provision of adequate funding to offset the costs associated with this effort.



A long-term management agency for More Mesa would need to address both recreation and protection of sensitive resources on a site frequented by mountain bikers, dog walkers and equestrians.

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The appropriate management entity for More Mesa would need to be able to support and implement the values for the area's identified adopted County's plans. These values include More Mesa's importance in supporting sensitive biological resources and its role as an important recreational area, with existing and planned trails, multiple user groups and an important recreational beach. The mission and ability to manage both sensitive biological resources and substantial recreational activity would appear to be most suited for either the County Parks Department or that of the cities of Santa Barbara or Goleta. These agencies each manage existing large natural parks which also support ongoing recreational activity. This dual mission of managing both sensitive biological resources and substantial recreational uses would seem to rule out management by the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County which typically focuses on resource preservation, and not management of recreational areas. Finally, creation of a new management entity with a mission to manage both sensitive biological resources and recreation would be possible, but would require major fundraising and organizational efforts.

Habitat and Wildlife Management - The 280 acres planned for open space within the greater More Mesa area supports a variety of sensitive habitats and wildlife, including extensive grasslands, wetlands and woodland areas (refer to Section 3). Portions of More Mesa, particularly the grassland and wetland areas on the level mesa top, have been subject to past disturbance due to agricultural cultivation, construction of the historic railroad line, off-road vehicle activity and ongoing recreational use. Although valuable in their existing condition, some of these habitats are in need of active management to address a number of issues. These include the presence of invasive non-native plants, limited incompatible recreational use, the unwitting expansion of the trail system into sensitive areas and some areas of ongoing erosion associated with trails across steep slopes or past disturbance (e.g., historic railroad cut). Habitat management issues are summarized below:

- **Invasive Species Control:** As with many open lands in Santa Barbara County, especially those within or near urban areas, habitats at More Mesa are comprised of a mix of native and non-native species. Non-native plants can displace native species, may not provide suitable food for native wildlife and may facilitate the spread of non-native wildlife. The extent and level of the infestation of invasive plant species on More Mesa varies by habitat; for example, riparian areas generally consist of mostly native species, especially tree species, while grasslands are dominated almost entirely by non-native species. In order to address how best to manage and control the spread of such species on More Mesa, a comprehensive plan for removal of exotic or invasive species would need to be developed and implemented over an extended period of time. Such a plan would involve both outright removal of exotics and careful management of others, both approaches integrated with habitat restoration efforts.

Control methods vary for invasive plant species. These include hand removal, use of heavy equipment, burning, use of herbicides, "solarization" (covering vegetation with black plastic sheeting), or other techniques. On More Mesa, hand removal, solarization and targeted use of herbicides may be most appropriate given the type of invasive species and the site's location in an urban area. Short-term control efforts could be focused on highly



Control of pampas grass (foreground) and other non-native plants would enhance native habitats.



Thinning of eucalyptus saplings and sprouts would permit gradual transition of these areas to native habitats.

invasive species susceptible to hand removal followed by herbicide use. Some of these are fennel, pampas grass, ice plant, nasturtium periwinkle and German Ivy. Hand removal can be effective, particularly if followed up with targeted application of herbicides on resilient resprouts of species such as periwinkle, pampas grass and fennel. Due to their habitat value and scenic character, some exotic species such as eucalyptus trees, should be managed through removal of sprouts and saplings to prevent expansion of range and to facilitate gradual elimination from native habitats (e.g., oak woodlands). This approach is preferable to immediate large-scale removal of mature trees. Given their predominance, efforts to remove or control invasive species which dominate More Mesa's grasslands would require careful integration with habitat restoration efforts, as this effort would be long-term in nature and would likely need to be accompanied by substantial efforts to revegetate grasslands with native species.

- **Habitat Restoration:** Habitat restoration can involve a wide variety of techniques including erosion control, recontouring or grading to redirect or retain water flows, burning to remove unwanted vegetation⁶, removal of invasive species, replanting or reseeding areas with appropriate native plants, particularly locally occurring varieties or those obtained from the project site, etc. Over the last decade, several habitat restoration projects have been undertaken on County owned land at More Mesa, including excavation of areas adjacent to Atascadero Creek to create ponds and wetlands, planting native riparian and wetland species in and adjacent to these new ponds, planting of north facing slopes above Atascadero Creek with coastal sage or oak woodland species and efforts to control invasive species along Atascadero Creek.

Priorities for habitat restoration at More Mesa include erosion control at a several locations along the west canyon where past grading, steep slopes and an expanding trail system contribute to high levels of surface erosion, canyon back-cutting and resultant sedimentation. Erosion control in these areas could involve moderate recontouring to "lay back" overly steep slopes, use of fiber matting or straw wattles (bundles of rolled straw) to control erosion and revegetation with native grassland or coastal sage scrub species. Some of these areas are on land owned by the County and could be subject to restoration in the short-term, while others are on private land and would require resolution of long-term management authority. Removal of non-native vegetation such as periwinkle and German Ivy from riparian areas along Atascadero Creek and removal of eucalyptus sprouts and saplings from oak and riparian woodlands could also be accomplished, as these areas are also currently under public ownership.



Volunteers have helped install and maintain an oak woodland and coastal sage scrub restoration project on County land.

Over the long-term, a comprehensive habitat restoration plan should be developed for all land planned to remain in open space within the greater More Mesa area. A major component of any restoration effort would be to address restoration of both previously disturbed grassland and wetland areas on the mesa itself. Restoration of grassland areas may involve removal or control of non-native species such as Harding grass and wild radish through burning of limited areas, solarization, hand removal or targeted application of herbicides. Grassland restoration projects at Ellwood, the Devereux Slough and San Marcos Foothills have shown that to be successful, removal and control of non-native species would need to be accompanied by extensive planting of desired locally obtained native grasses and other species. Restoration of vernal pools and other mesa top wetlands may also require removal of invasive species, particularly Harding grass, followed by planting of desired wetland vegetation. Limited recontouring to redirect water flows into wetlands such as ponds and vernal pools may also be appropriate, along with rerouting of

⁶ Controlled burns are a standard vegetation management and habitat restoration technique; however, use of controlled burns in an urban context would need to be carefully considered and coordinated with the County Fire Department.

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trails that cross wetlands or possibly the construction of a boardwalk or raised trail for those adjacent to wetland areas⁷.

Revegetation efforts should employ plant material obtained from More Mesa to the maximum extent feasible. In particular, restoration or creation of vernal pools should use seed stock from More Mesa's vernal pools as some of these species, particularly the coyote thistle, may be endemic to More Mesa only (Ferren 2008). Similarly, grassland restoration should employ seed stock gathered from existing stands of purple needlegrass, California brome, and California barley that occur on More Mesa.

- **Protection of Sensitive Wildlife:** Wildlife and existing recreational uses at More Mesa appear to exist in relative harmony as exhibited by ongoing use of the site by sensitive bird species and the presence of larger predators such as coyotes and a bob cat. However, More Mesa currently experiences moderate to high levels of recreational uses that have potential to disturb wildlife. These include mountain biking, off-leash dog walking, equestrian use, trail running, para-gliding and model glider flying. Although adopted County policy gives priority to protection of wildlife over recreational use, these recreational uses are highly valued by the community and are also recognized as important under County policy. As such, provision of recreational opportunities must be balanced with protection of sensitive habitats and wildlife. Given the need to balance these values, the most appropriate management approach would appear to be to first employ non-intrusive management methods to protect wildlife such as education, signs, unobtrusive barriers, closing smaller trails, etc. Only if such methods fail should more intrusive management techniques such as limiting user groups, more extensive fencing, etc. be considered. Permitting ongoing recreational uses while gradually implementing unobtrusive management techniques may be the most appropriate approach to balancing management of More Mesa resources as discussed below.



The closure of small trails would reduce disturbance to large areas of grassland and help protect sensitive wildlife.

The ongoing expansion of the informal trail system at More Mesa and associated recreational uses may disturb or displace both common and sensitive wildlife species. Multiple minor trails run between the larger historic trail network. Users of these minor trails have the potential to disrupt wildlife use of these areas, particularly ground nesting or roosting birds. In addition, such trails can cross sensitive habitats including wetlands, with ongoing disturbance to these resources. A number of trails, including the main coastal access trail system along the property's east side, traverse intermittent drainages or other water features which cause users to circumvent saturated muddy areas and trample adjacent vegetation causing further damage to habitats.

Of particular concern are trails which could disturb white-tailed kite roosts and historic nest locations. These include a small trail which runs along the east fork of the Central Valley with its historic kite nest and roost. Also of concern is another trail which crosses the Central Valley immediately adjacent to the historic kite roost in that area (Figure 4-2). Both of these trails have been created in the past 10 to 15 years and may have played a role in changes observed in kite roosting behavior (AMEC 2008). In addition, areas used by the ground nesting and roosting burrowing owl are adjacent to or traversed by heavily used trails, with one known location of burrowing owl activity used for a small area of BMX bike jumps.

⁷ Substantial successful vernal pool restoration has occurred in Isla Vista where native seeds from vernal pools were collected and deposited in restored pools along with impermeable soils (e.g., clay) to enhance water retention.

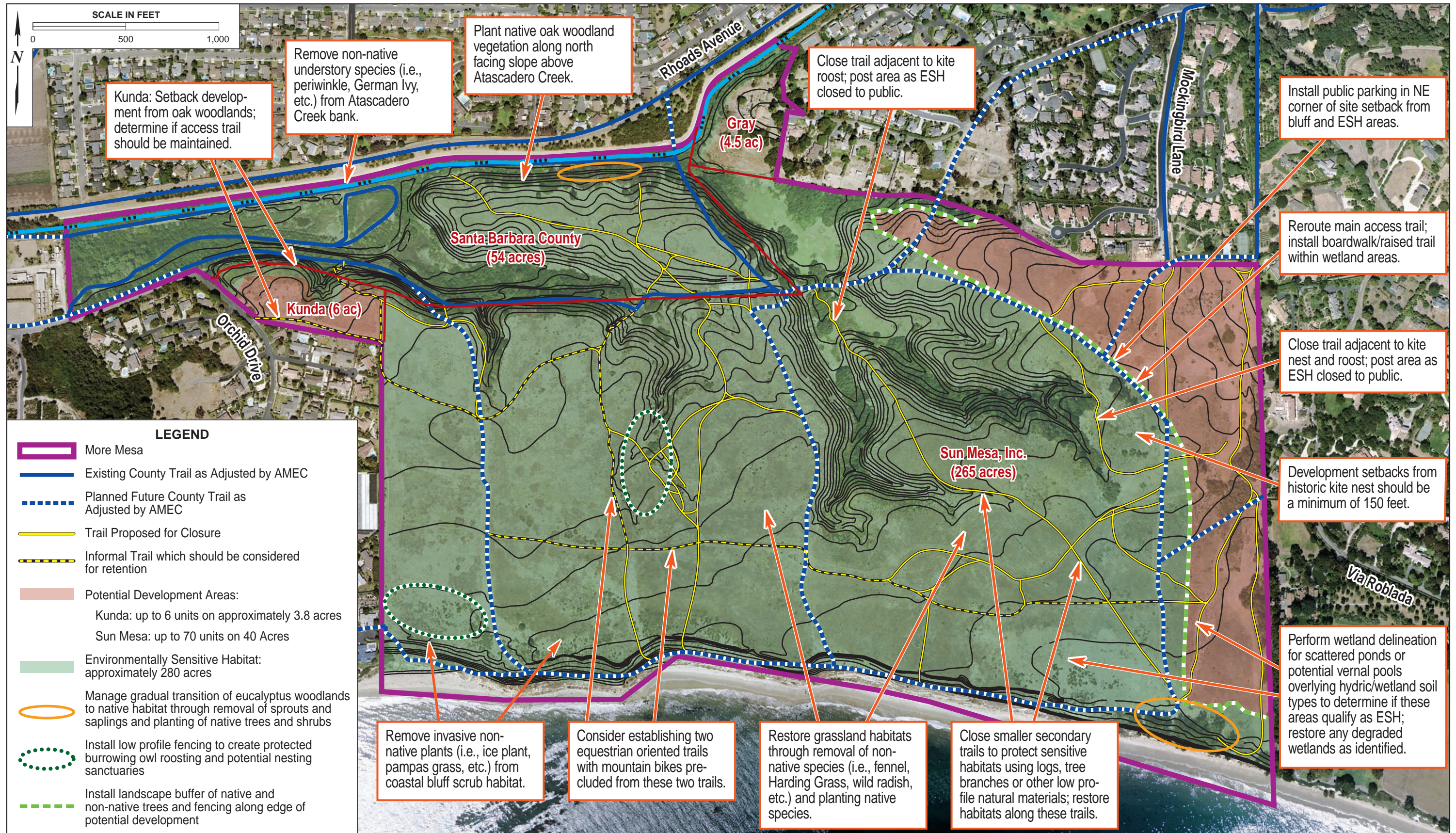


Figure 4-2. Open Space/Habitat Management Actions

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In order to protect sensitive wildlife from disturbance, the trail system should be consolidated, with smaller trails closed as recommended in the County's 1995 Goleta Trails Study and larger more heavily used trails maintained for public access to and along the coast (refer to Figure 3-5). Consolidating the trail system would retain large areas of relatively undisturbed grassland for use by wildlife, would minimize disturbance to kite nests and roosts and permit ground nesting birds such as the western meadowlark and, potentially, even sensitive species such as the burrowing owl to nest. Trail closures could be accomplished by use of signs or use of informal barriers such as logs. Logs, tree branches or other informal barriers could also be employed to reduce trail braiding and keep users on the established path. These informal techniques are more in keeping with More Mesa's rustic character, less intrusive than fencing and are far less expensive to install and maintain. Where these techniques fail, the use of low unobtrusive fencing should be considered to keep users or dogs out of particularly sensitive areas, such as a potential burrowing owl roosting or nesting zone.



Great blue herons and other birds would benefit from decreased disturbance from the closure of small trails at More Mesa.

Recreation and Access - More Mesa currently supports approximately 1.9 miles of existing public trails on the County's 54 acres, along with almost 9 miles of additional major and minor informal trails that cross primarily private land. Adopted County plans also propose a number of recreational improvements for More Mesa and require that any development must be "*designed to accommodate maximum public access to the site and beach.*" These requirements are focused on the Sun Mesa property, but include proposed trails on County property and trail links with surrounding neighborhoods. Primary improvements set forth in County plans include creation of a public trail system to provide access to, and along, the coast and provision for substantial parking to facilitate coastal access. All County trails are multi-use and would accommodate the site's current mix of beach goers, hikers, dog walkers, mountain bikers and equestrians. Dedication of property to the public is also required. Proposed recreational improvements are described below, along with several potential refinements to these proposals.

- **Proposed Public Trails:** The County's 1995 Goleta Trails Plan envisions creation of a 6.9-mile planned future trail system. This system will provide access throughout 280 acres of the public and private land planned to remain in open space across the More Mesa area. The trail system would include three main north-south trails leading from inland areas and surrounding neighborhoods to the coastal bluff and beach, and two main east-west trails, one inland and one along the coastal bluff top (refer to Figure 4-2)⁸. These proposed trails closely match the existing larger public and informal trails that occur throughout the area. Over 6 miles of generally smaller



Existing trails on County land would eventually connect to a larger trails system across the site.

⁸ AMEC has adjusted the proposed trail system to generally more closely match the existing main trail system as the original County maps depict proposed trails far offset from existing trails in conflict with stated County goals. Several minor adjustments have also been made to account for sensitive areas. However, actual future trail locations would be subject to review and adjustment based on specific trail design criteria (e.g., avoidance of wetland, reducing erosion, etc.).

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informal trails would eventually be closed to facilitate habitat protection while still permitting ample recreational opportunities.

Two potential outstanding trail siting issues may remain. The first is whether the County should recognize the existing historic access across the Kunda property which is heavily utilized by More Mesa Shore's residents. If this access is to be retained, it may make sense to realign it to the outside (northern) edge of the developable area, to provide residents with more privacy and trail users with a more desirable experience. Alternately, these trail users could proceed down Orchid Drive 100 yards to the existing County trail along Atascadero Creek. The second issue is whether one or two of the trails currently proposed for closure should be retained, possibly as equestrian-oriented trails. Currently, bike-equestrian conflicts seem to be minimal. This is because the terrain is generally level, there is good visibility and usage by mountain bikes and equestrians is moderate. However, bike-equestrian conflicts have been an issue on other local trails, and designation of special equestrian trails might be appropriate for More Mesa. Additional trails to consider retaining to provide for equestrian oriented recreation could include the existing east-west cross mesa trail and another north-south trail. This would provide additional options for recreation, while still permitting large areas of grassland to be closed to access and set aside for wildlife.



Creation of two equestrian-oriented trails would provide safe recreational opportunities for area equestrians.

- **Public Parking:** Existing parking for public access to More Mesa is located on Puente Drive on the east and in small pockets of South Patterson/Shoreline Drive on the west. The County's GCP currently *requires* that new development on the Sun Mesa property provide parking for 300 cars through a combination of onstreet parking and construction of 2 to 3 new public parking lots located within the developable area toward the northern end of the site (refer to Figure 4-2). Although this proposal is consistent with the County's goal to maximize public access to the site, provision of this level of public parking in such close proximity to ESH areas and a relatively natural undisturbed beach, could impact sensitive resources. When considering future development and design of public access, provision for a less intrusive amount of public parking may be appropriate. A single parking lot of 50 cars would appear to be more in keeping with the goal of protecting sensitive resources while providing public access. A 50-space parking lot would be larger than that provided at the City of Goleta's Santa Barbara Shores-Sperling Preserve and when combined with existing (e.g., Puente Drive) and potential new onstreet parking provided in the new development, would provide for a level of public access more in keeping with an ecologically sensitive area. Limiting onstreet parking to the more northerly areas of the proposed development area would also help reduce possible impacts to sensitive resources. Limited public parking would also continue to be available along South Patterson/Shoreline Drive at the mesa's west end.
- **Recreational Amenities:** The County's GCP requires that new development provide amenities such as restrooms, interpretive signs, picnic/seating areas and bikes racks as deemed appropriate by the County. In order to protect the area's ecological sensitivity and aesthetic character, any major improvements such as picnic areas or restrooms should be confined to the developable area adjacent to the proposed parking lot. Rustic seating, interpretive signs and bike racks may be appropriate along the main coastal access trails leading from the parking lot to the beach, with several rustic chairs or benches provided along the bluff top trail or at other key viewing locations around the mesa. A bike rack could also be installed at the top of the beach stairway. Any improvements to this stairway itself should be in keeping with its existing informal character and perhaps constructed from locally obtained eucalyptus logs⁹.

⁹ The lower reach of this coastal access stairway/path is subject to erosion and occasional wave action. As such, in order for a public or private agency to assume responsibility for its maintenance, a higher level of improvements, such as a more formal and durable stairway may need to be installed along these lower reaches.

- **Property Dedication:** The County's GCP requires that development on the Sun Mesa Inc. site dedicate a minimum of 20% of the 265-acre site (53 acres) to the County or another appropriate public/private agency. This would include a *minimum* 100-foot-wide undeveloped bluff top area. Such a dedication would occur at the time of development approval.

Natural Beauty - Existing County Plans recognize More Mesa's natural beauty and the importance of considering protection of mountain views from the site as part of any future development. As such, the County's GCP requires the clustering of development to minimize disruption of significant views from areas of high public use. In addition, the GCP also requires installation of a landscape buffer of native and non-native trees along the edge of new development on the Sun Mesa property to screen this development from areas retained in open space. Similar measures could also be applied to development on the Kunda site or development/redevelopment of other adjacent properties to protect views from these areas planned to remain in open space. This could be achieved through review of individual development projects or by enacting policy clarifications requiring protection of key views during any update of the GCP.



County policy encourages protection of key mountain views from heavily used areas on More Mesa.

Table 4-1. Management Issues and Actions; Summary Table

Management Issue	Management Action
Wetlands - Extent of wetlands in southeast corner of mesa is undetermined	Perform wetland delineation for all areas proposed for development that overlies designated wetland soil types
Kite Roosts - Kite roosting behavior and the interrelationship between roosts on South Coast is not well understood	Review regional kite data to identify history, frequency and intensity of use, and protection status of all known roosts
ESH Protection - New Development planned adjacent to ESH areas may disturb sensitive resources	Employ development setbacks, landscape screening, fencing and construction scheduling-timing to minimize impacts
Long-Term Management - More Mesa has four different owners; no overall plan exists to coordinate and manage land planned as remaining open space	Identify a single management entity for the 280 acres planned as open space; coordinate with property owners to ensure unified management approaches
Invasive Plants - Non-native plants occur throughout habitats on More Mesa (e.g., grasslands), displacing native species and potentially lowering habitat wildlife values	Prepare invasive plant control plan; use hand removal, herbicides and other techniques to control invasive species; integrate with habitat restoration
Habitat Restoration - More Mesa's grasslands, mesa wetland areas and portions of other habitats have been degraded by past cultivation, grading, invasive species, recreation, etc.	Prepare overall habitat restoration plan; control erosion along old railroad cut, remove invasive species and replant grasslands, mesa wetlands and oak woodlands with native species
Disturbance of Sensitive Wildlife - Recreational users may disturb sensitive wildlife, flush kites from nest or roosts, prevent burrowing owls from roosting-nesting, etc.	Close 6 miles of smaller trails, specially in sensitive areas (e.g., adjacent to kite nest); use natural materials (e.g., logs, tree branches, etc.) to close off trails; post sensitive areas as closed; create burrowing owl sanctuaries with low fencing
Planned Future Public Trails - County plans call for eventual creation of 6.9 miles of public trails	Align proposed public trails along existing main trail system; determine if existing trail on Kunda parcel should be retained; consider provision of some equestrian-oriented trails
Public Parking - County plans propose 300 public parking spaces within Sun Mesa development envelope, with potential to substantially increase access to, and use of, sensitive areas	Consider limiting public parking to one parking lot of 50 cars to protect sensitive resources; allow additional onstreet parking on Puente Drive and on streets in northern portion of new development
Recreational Amenities - County plans may require provision of rest rooms, picnic/seating areas, bike racks, etc.	Confine major improvements to developable area adjacent to parking lot; restrict improvements in ESH areas to rustic seating, benches, etc.
Protection of Views - County plans identify important mountain views from More Mesa	Provide landscape screening of new development along edge of More Mesa; consider new policies in community plan update to clarify view protection standard
Rezoning - County-owned lands is currently designated and zoned for three different uses	Consider rezoning of County-owned land as part of a future community plan

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Appendix A

**Wildlife Observations
(Includes Attached CD)**

Appendix A

More Mesa Data Methodology

Appendix A is organized to make accessible the numerous biological data resources recorded over the past few decades on More Mesa. The data, coming from a variety of sources including biological studies, field observations and emails, was compiled and sorted into several excel spreadsheets for accessibility. The data was sorted into the following sections:

- **Nesting:** This tab notes nesting behavior observations as well as the number of nestlings/fledglings recorded between 1998 and 2003. It is organized by location.
- **Nests Observed:** This tab compiles the number of nest observed each year between 1998 and 2003.
- **Data:** This tab is the most comprehensive of the spreadsheets and contains white-tailed kite observation location, number, age range, and behavior, as well as other important incidental bird observations. All of this information was inserted chronologically and included the source of the data or observer, and date, where available.
- **Observations:** This tab is a compilation of white-tailed kite observations, and includes location, behavior, age, and nesting data from 1987-2005.
- **Other Species:** This tab is a compilation of notable species observations (primarily raptors) recorded between 1981 and 2005
- **Location:** This tab is a compilation of white-tailed kite observations, sorted by location, between 1987 and 2005.
- **Storrer:** John Storrer's field notes (51 surveys), were placed into this tab, which was created to differentiate the data from these expert field notes, as his observations were mixed throughout the "Data" spreadsheet due to its chronological organization.
- **Roosting:** This tab is a compilation of white-tailed kite roosts observations, sorted by location, between 1987 and 2005.

The first series of data included in the "Data" spreadsheet comes from the 1982 Biological Survey (1981-1982- 44 surveys). From this study, only the numbers of white-tailed kite observations were included by AMEC within the spreadsheet, although many incidental species were noted within the survey. These incidental species observations were deemed too numerous for the scope of this spreadsheet but can be accessed via the 1982 Biological Survey, included on the Appendix CD.

The next series of data came from various white-tailed kite observation field notes, surveys, and emails (237 surveys/emails). The amount of data and detail provided on these records varies widely (e.g. some entries on the spreadsheet depict all the data noted within a given entry, while some are simplifying very long narratives on white-tailed kite behaviors, etc.),

however only the pertinent information (e.g. behavior, location, age, etc.) was included within the spreadsheet. These observations include: Mike Holmgren's field notes and observation between 1987 and 2003; John Storrer's field notes and observation between 1999 and 2003; a multi-year study coordinated by Morgan Ball from 1999-2003; observation's coordinated by the More Mesa Preservation Coalition; and others.

Lastly, several 2008 emails of personal communication between both John Storrer and Mark Holmgren were added, including all incidental species sightings, which were carefully noted within the "Other Species" tab (6 emails). The observations in the SB County 1997 report were not recorded within the spreadsheet, yet were recorded within the other tables (all data between 1995 and 1996 is from this report).

Sensitive Species Observation Table

Corresponds to Specific Species Observations in Figure 3-3

Sensitive Species	Observation
Blue grosbeak 1	Observed 4/08.
Blue grosbeak 2	Male observed 4/03 1 or 2 individuals heard singing, 3 or 4 individuals heard calling 7/03
Blue grosbeak 3	
Blue grosbeak 4	Singing male observed with female 06/07
Blue grosbeak 5	Singing male observed 06/07
Burrowing owl 1	Observed April 2008
Burrowing owl 2	Observed sitting and posing 1/03
Burrowing owl 3	Observed 1/03
Burrowing owl 4	Individual observed 1/96
Burrowing owl 5	Individual observed 12/95
Cooper's hawk 1	Juvenile observed resting on pole 12/02
Cooper's hawk 2	Adult observed 8/02
Cooper's hawk 3	Juvenile observed 8/02 Immature observed flying into private kitchen after a pigeon 5/02
Cooper's hawk 4	
Cooper's hawk 5	Individual observed flying west 11/95
Cooper's hawk 6	Individual observed flying east 12/95,
Cooper's hawk 7	Individual observed flying east 10/95
Cooper's hawk 8	Individual observed 12/95
Cooper's hawk 9	Approximate location of nesting area observed 08
Grasshopper sparrow 1	Singing pair observed 6/07
Grasshopper sparrow 2	Individual observed 6/07
Great egret 1	Individual observed 11/95
Great egret 2	Individual observed 12/95
Great egret 3	Individual observed 11/95
Great egret 4	Individual observed 11/95
Loggerhead shrike 1	Observed 7/03
Loggerhead shrike 2	Individual observed sitting Jan 2003
Loggerhead shrike 3	Individual observed 1/03
Loggerhead shrike 4	Individual observed sitting 1/03
Loggerhead shrike 5	Individual observed sitting 11/02
Loggerhead shrike 6	Adult observed 10/02
Loggerhead shrike 7	Individual observed sitting 9/02
Loggerhead shrike 8	Individual observed sitting Sept 2002
Loggerhead shrike 9	2 individuals observed sitting 8/02
Loggerhead shrike 10	Individual observed 8/02,
Loggerhead shrike 11	Individual observed 8/02
Loggerhead shrike 12	Individual observed sitting 8/02,
Merlin 1	Individual observed flying east 10/95
Merlin 2	Individual observed flying west 10/95,
Merlin 3	Individual observed flying northwest 12/95,
Merlin 4	Individual observed flying 11/95
Merlin 5	Individual observed flying 11/95,
Merlin 6	Individual observed flying east 10/95 Male observed chasing a young white-tailed kite out of his hunting territory 12/02
Northern harrier 1	
Northern harrier 2	2 females observed hunting 12/02

Northern harrier 3	Individual observed hunting 12/02
Northern harrier 4	Female observed hunting 12/02
Northern harrier 5	2 females observed hunting 12/02
Northern harrier 6	Female observed hunting 11/02
Northern harrier 7	2 females observed hunting-one low, one high 11/02
Northern harrier 8	Female observed hunting 11/02
Northern harrier 9	Female observed hunting 12/02
Northern harrier 10	Female observed hunting 12/02
Northern harrier 11	2 adults observed hunting 12/02,
Northern harrier 12	Individual observed flying and hunting 11/02,
Northern harrier 13	2 adults observed hunting 10/02
Northern harrier 14	Female observed hunting 8/02
Northern harrier 15	Female observed 8/02
Northern harrier 16	Female observed 8/02
Northern harrier 17	Female observed 8/02,
Peregrine falcon	Individual observed flying east 7/04
Sharp-shinned hawk 1	Individual observed flying north 12/95
Sharp-shinned hawk 2	Individual observed flying north 11/95
Sharp-shinned hawk 3	Individual observed flying east 10/95
Short-eared owl 1	Adult observed hunting and perching 2/03
Short-eared owl 2	Observed 1/03
	Individual observed flying south and west to bluff
Short-eared owl 3	1/03
Short-eared owl 4	Observed 1/03
Short-eared owl 5	Individual observed hunting at dusk 1/03
	Individual observed hunting and flying low over
Short-eared owl 6	meadow 1/03
Short-eared owl 7	Individual observed hunting 1/03
	Individual observed flying out of ravine area by
Short-eared owl 8	cattails 12/02
Short-eared owl 9	Individual observed hunting 12/02
Short-eared owl 10	Individual observed 4/03
	Approximate location of 4 individuals observed
Southwestern pond turtle 1	during 1977-79 survey and 1 individual in 2008
Southwestern pond turtle 2	Observed 1977-79 survey
Southwestern pond turtle 3	Observed 1977-79 survey
	Approximate location of nesting observed in bluff
White-throated swift 1	face in 2008
White-throated swift 2	Individual observed 4/03,

Appendix B

Recreation Survey

Final Usage Survey Analysis

The More Mesa Preservation Coalition would like to offer our heartfelt thanks to all those members of the community who took the time to complete the More Mesa Usage Survey. Without their help, this report would not exist. THANK YOU!

Summary

The results of the More Mesa Usage Survey, as contained in this report, are yet another example of how much More Mesa means to the Santa Barbara Community. It clearly demonstrates the breath and depth of usage by our residents. People of all ages use this land, and have enjoyed it for decades. They use it every day of the week, during all hours of the day, and for myriad forms of recreation. More Mesa is truly an "open space", not because of any designation, but because it invites every member of the community to participate in its wonders.

Collection Techniques: Results described below are based on data from three hundred and five (305) users of More Mesa. Data were collected during the period between August 2004 and March 2007. Early respondents were solicited on More Mesa and completed a hard copy of the survey (Included in this Appendix), while the other half of the responses were obtained by creating a feature on our web site, <http://www.moremesa.org>, that allowed for electronic submittal. All responses were subsequently recorded into a spread sheet and analyzed from that data base.

Categories: The survey focused on respondents' demographics, usage patterns and forms of recreation on More Mesa. We asked respondents:

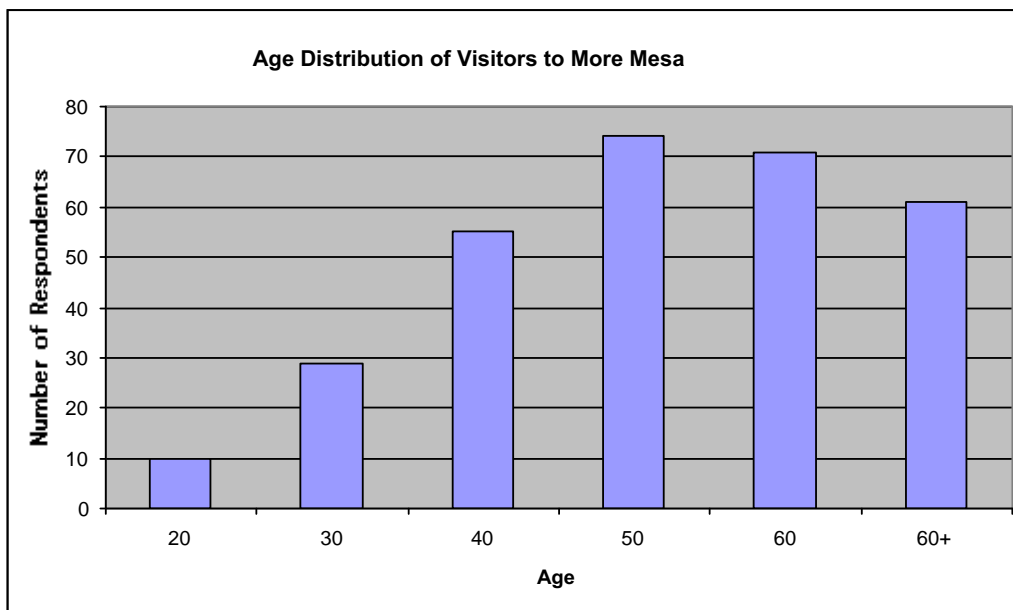
- Their age (within a decade)
- How many years have they been using More Mesa
- Whether they come to More Mesa on weekdays, weekends or both
- What part of the day do they come to More Mesa
- Number of visits per month
- How much time is spent on More Mesa during each visit
- In what ways do they recreate on More Mesa
- Any additional comments

Results of analysis of the data for each category are shown in the following pages.

MORE MESA IS USED BY PEOPLE OF ALL AGES

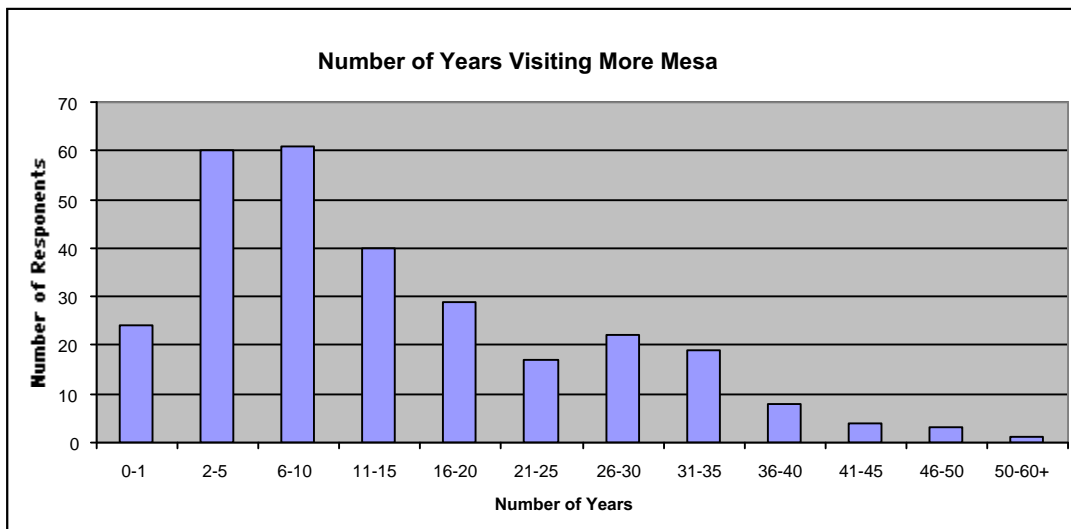
Age Distribution: The age distribution of the 300 respondents who answered this question is shown below.

Under 20	20-29	30-39	40-49	50-60	Over 60
10	29	55	74	71	61



**SOME MEMBERS OF OUR COMMUNITY HAVE
BEEN USING MORE MESA FOR
MORE THAN HALF A CENTURY**

Years Visiting More Mesa: The combined total of years visiting More Mesa, for the 299 people who answered this question, is 4407 years. **This is an average of 14.7 years per person.** Details are shown below.



MOST PEOPLE USE MORE MESA THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE WEEK

Visitation by Weekday or Weekend:

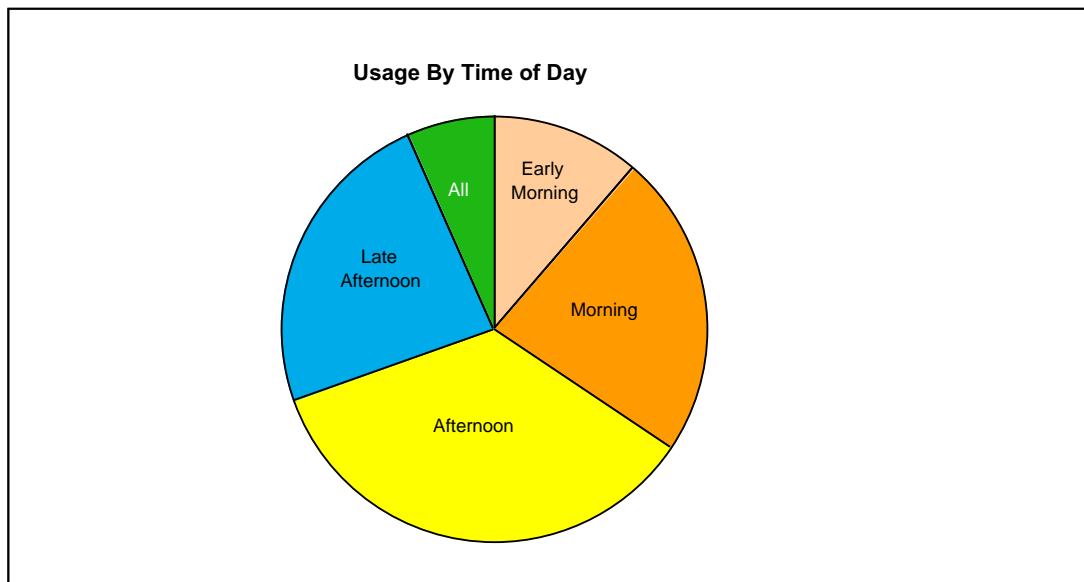
- Only on **weekend**: 25%
- Only on **weekdays**: 5%
- Both **weekend and weekdays**: 68%

MORE MESA IS ENJOYED BY OUR COMMUNITY ANY TIME OF DAY

Time of Day:

Time of Day	Number of People	% of 341 Responses
Early Morning	40	17
Morning	77	33
Afternoon	120	52
Late Afternoon	79	34
All Times	25	11

Respondents were asked to indicate all times of day that applied. Therefore, there were more than 305 replies to this question.



PEOPLE COME TO MORE MESA OVER AND OVER AGAIN

Visits/Month: While respondents reported enjoying More Mesa in a range between once every other month and 30 times a month, most reported multiple visits per week. The total number of visits to More Mesa, by the 297 respondents to this question, was 2523. **This is an average of 8.4 times per month.**

PEOPLE COME TO MORE MESA FOR HOURS AT A TIME

Time Spent on More Mesa: For the 296 people who answered this question:

- Thirty nine (39), or 13%, spent less than 1 hour
- One hundred sixty three (163), or 55%, spent between one and two hours:
- Ninety four (94), or 31% spent more than two hours.

THIS LAND ALLOWS PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN SO MANY WAYS

Recreational Activities on More Mesa: Respondents were asked to indicate all recreational activities that applied. Therefore, there are more than 305 replies to this question

Recreational Activity	Number of Responses	% of Total Responses
Hiking	187	81
Beach	154	67
Dog Walking	74	32
Running	69	30
Bird Watching	49	21
Biking	38	16
Other	23	10
Equestrian	19	8
Educational	11	5
Gliding/Soaring	5	2

See aerial map below



THIS LAND ALLOWS PEOPLE TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES IN SO MANY WAYS

Comments: This section allowed respondents to comment on any aspect of More Mesa. Most comments focused on how much More Mesa meant to the person completing the survey. Some of these comments can be found at:
http://www.moremesa.org/mesa_people_input.html

Prepared By: Valerie Olson
More Mesa Preservation Coalition
May 2007

MORE MESA USAGE SURVEY - HARD COPY

Date: _____

Many of us are acutely aware of how very important More Mesa is to our community. However, we need statistics, based on actual data, to send the most powerful messages about how much we care about More Mesa. For this reason, we are asking you to take a moment to complete the survey below and get it back to us. Thank you so much for your time, your interest and for caring about More Mesa.

More Mesa Preservation Coalition

- **Age:** (a) Under 20 _____ (b) 21-30 _____ (c) 31-40 _____ (d) 41-50 _____
(e) 51-60 _____ (f) Over 60 _____
- **How long have you been enjoying More Mesa?** _____ yrs
- **When do you usually visit?**
(a) Weekends? _____ (b) Weekdays? _____ c) Both _____
- **How many times a month do you come to More Mesa?** _____
- **On average, how long do you spend there?**
(a) less than 1 hour _____ (b) 1-2 hours _____ (c) more than 2 hours _____
- **What kinds of activities do you enjoy there** (check all that apply)?
(a) Walking/hiking _____ (b) Running _____ (c) Beach _____
(b) (d) Walking dog _____ (e) Bird Watching _____ (f) Horseback riding _____
(c) (g) Hang gliding _____ (h) Other _____

Name (Optional): _____

Contact us at moremesa@mindspring.com if you are interested in the results of this survey, or would like to in being kept informed about issues concerning More Mesa.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!

Appendix C

Goleta Community Plan: More Mesa Development Standards

GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

Policy LUR-GV-8: If the Sungate settlement project is abandoned by the developer, rejected by the County or expires in accordance with the law, the County shall consider initiating a redesignation and rezone of APN 65-080-12 to Agriculture I, unless an AHO-Gol project application is submitted and found complete before January 1, 1994.

PARCEL SPECIFIC DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

In order to provide additional guidance for new development located on especially constrained sites or for those sites which are important to achieving some key goals of the Community Plan due to location, size or other factors, the Plan contains site specific development standards for 12 key sites within the planning area. These sites are divided between major coastal open spaces and other key or constrained parcels.

COASTAL OPEN SPACES

With the increasing development of undeveloped open space and impacts on associated ecosystems within the urban areas of the south coast, the public's interest in the protection of major undeveloped open spaces has grown. This has been demonstrated by the high level of public involvement surrounding the potential development of Ellwood Beach, the Wilcox Property and the Carpinteria Bluffs. With approved developments at Loon Point, Hammonds Meadow, the Wilcox Property and Haskell's Beach, and development proposed for the Carpinteria Bluffs, the University's West Campus and Ellwood Beach, the majority of previously undeveloped major coastal open spaces within the urbanized portions of the South Coast may soon be developed.

The sites identified below are focused upon due to their location in ecosystems of regional importance, as key components of remaining local blocks of coastal open space which experience heavy public use, and due to the potential contribution of buildout of these sites to regional impacts.

More Mesa (#34)

More Mesa is comprised of approximately 300 acres which are divided into seven parcels (APN 65-320-01,02,04,07 through 10). All parcels, except the 35.5 acre County owned open space parcel (APN 65-320-04), are currently privately owned (7/93). The Mesa encompasses a gently sloping coastal terrace bisected by two deep canyon systems which drain the majority of the terrace northward into Atascadero Creek. Surrounding land formations and uses include Atascadero Creek and residential uses to the north, steep coastal bluffs, wide

GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

sandy beaches and the Pacific Ocean to the south, estate residential to the east and mixed residential and agriculture to the west. The site contains numerous trails which receive extensive passive recreational use from hikers, cyclists, equestrians, beach users and at times by off-road vehicles.

As discussed in the 1982 LCP and in The Biological Evaluation of More Mesa (1982), the site contains a variety of habitats, which individually qualify as environmentally sensitive habitats (ESH) under LCP guidelines and were so designated during certification of the County's LCP. These include all major wetlands, oak woodlands and the roosting/nesting site(s) for the Black Shouldered Kite. In addition to these habitats, the majority of the grasslands onsite serve as both active foraging grounds and buffer areas for four sensitive species of raptors. These include the Kite, Northern Harrier, Burrowing and Short Eared Owls, along with a wide variety of other wildlife. Based upon the conclusions of this 1982 study and the endorsement of the State Department of Fish and Game and the Coastal Commission (7/10/82), the site functions as an interrelated ecosystem with approximately 246 acres now designated with an ESH Overlay. Further, a wide variety of other wildlife utilize the site, which is part of an ecosystem of regional importance, especially given its proximity to, and interrelationship with the Atascadero Creek ecosystem (91-EIR-13).

In order to maintain consistency with LCP policies and to promote an environmentally sound design for the site, development standards are included which recognize that these constraints limit the development potential of the site to areas primarily located outside of designated ESH areas. Further, the intensity of such development must be consistent with the long term protection of the site's biological and aesthetic character. Given these constraints, the following development standards require that the developable area of the site be limited to approximately 40 acres at the eastern end of the site (Figure 10), and that such development be limited to about 2 units per developable acre (70 units).

Development Standards

Policy LUDS-GV-1: With the exception of the County owned parcel (APN 65-320-04) which shall be designated Open Lands and zoned Recreation (REC), the More Mesa site (APN 65-320-01,02,07 through 10) shall be designated PD-70 and zoned PRD-70 and shall comply with the following development standards for any proposed development on the site:

DevStd LUDS-GV-1.1: No applications for development shall be accepted prior to approval of a Specific Plan for the entire site. A Specific Plan shall be prepared for the entire site (currently including APNs 65-320-01,02,07 through 10) which incorporates all of the

GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

conditions listed below and conforms to all other policies of the land use plan. The specific plan shall show the location of roads and structures and indicate the amount and location of open space for habitat preservation and public recreation. Any parcels within the More Mesa site purchased subsequent to the adoption of this Community Plan by the County or other public/private agencies for the purposes of resource /open space protection shall be excluded from the boundaries of the Specific Plan. All new development shall be confined to the buffer areas on the eastern side of the site indicated as being acceptable for development on Figure 10 of the Community Plan, with the exception of minor public improvements such as trails, signs and restrooms. Any high density development shall be clustered toward the north end of the developable area, with lower density development toward the south.

DevStd LUDS-GV-1.2:

Prior to accepting any increase in the developable area depicted on Figure 10, or any increase in the number of allowable units over 70 to 100, the County Resource Management Department, in consultation with the site's property owner, the State Department of Fish and Game and California Coastal Commission, shall prepare a new study on the site's biological sensitivity to review the extent of the environmentally sensitive habitat designation for the site, the extent of developable area relative to biological resources, and the site's relative importance to the related open lands within the Atascadero Creek ecosystem. The study shall provide recommendations to protect ESH areas from the adverse effects of development, including identification of all areas that shall not be disturbed, buffer areas to protect all ESH areas from uses on the site and other appropriate methods to avoid disturbance to sensitive resources. This study shall include a recommendation on areas to be subject to development, potential numbers of units, and those areas to be preserved as permanent open space.

The property owner shall be responsible for funding the entire cost of undertaking this study, although County RMD should assist in obtaining any available grants to help offset costs. During preparation of this study, County RMD shall consult with the property owner, State Department of Fish and Game and Coastal Commission at the following stages:

GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

1. Prior to the request for proposals and during the selection of the consultants to be retained for the preparation of the study, focusing on study scope, methodology and costs.
2. At the "kick-off" meeting for initiation of the study and at key points during the preparation of the study.
3. During the review of the administrative draft, draft and final document stages of study preparation. Public review and/or hearings on the scope of the study and its eventual findings shall be conducted.

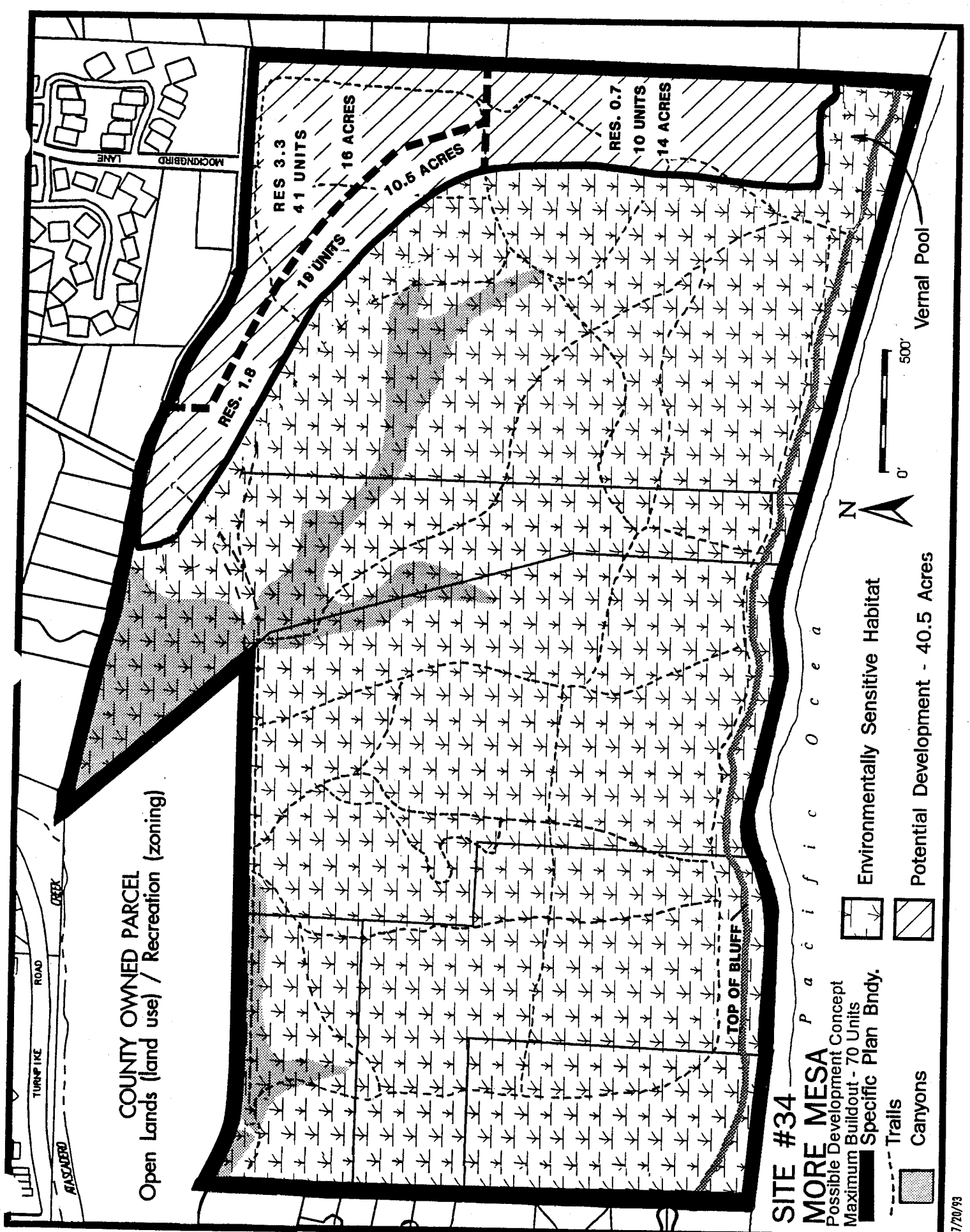
The final document shall contain a summary of the issues raised during preparation, particularly an outline of any disagreements between experts. The results of this study shall be subject to review and approval by the County Planning Commission, Board of Supervisors and Coastal Commission.

DevStd LUDS-GV-1.3:

Concurrent with the preparation of the environmental document for the Specific Plan for residential development on the site, the applicant shall fund the preparation of a habitat protection and management plan to be prepared under the direction of RMD in consultation with appropriate agencies. This plan shall provide recommendations on methods for the long term management and enhancement of the site's open space and environmentally sensitive areas emphasizing programs to reduce or eliminate the impacts of the project on the site's ESH areas and sensitive species as identified through the environmental and development review process. Preparation of this plan shall be coordinated with and account for any similar efforts on adjacent parcels owned by public agencies or private organizations.

DevStd LUDS-GV-1.4:

A minimum of 20% of the site shall be dedicated to the County or another appropriate public agency and/or private organization to be set aside for public use. The majority of the dedicated area shall be located adjacent to and include the dry sandy beach, and shall include a minimum 100 foot undeveloped bluff top public open space area and should also include areas adjacent to public access from the nearest public road(s).



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DevStd LUDS-GV-1.5:

New development onsite shall be designed to accommodate maximum public access to the site and beach with appropriate public improvements, consistent with protection of ESH areas, maintenance of reasonable privacy for new residents of the site and retention of the open undeveloped character of the site. All access improvements shall be coordinated with those on any adjacent County owned land or trail system. Such access and improvements, to be provided by the developer(s) of the site, shall include the following:

1. A minimum of one public access road, sited and designed to minimize disruption of the site's natural features and aesthetic qualities. This road or another public road shall form the western perimeter of the developable area, in order to provide a clear delineation between future developed areas and open space.
2. Parking for a total of 300 cars, inclusive of existing parking on public roads within 100 yards of trailheads leading to the site, parking available on the new access road(s) and within a gravel/unpaved lot(s) designed to hold 100 cars. Areas of parking along new public street(s) shall be sited to minimize disruption for new residents while providing adequate space to meet the 300 car total. New parking areas shall be dispersed into a minimum of two, but preferably three new lots located toward the northern end of the property.
3. An informal trail system aligned as closely as possible with the existing, primary historic trails shall provide access from both the site's east and west ends, and include stairway(s) to the beach, bluff top path(s), and accommodations for pedestrians, bikers and equestrians. The primary access trail from the east shall be realigned to the western boundary of the developable area in order to provide separation between public and private uses. All trails shall be sited and designed to maintain the natural character of the trails.
4. Public restrooms, informal picnic/seating areas, bicycle racks and directional and interpretive signage as deemed appropriate by the County.

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- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.6:** Prior to issuance of a CDP, the applicant(s) shall file a performance security with the County sufficient to cover the cost of all public improvements and mitigations described above, and the maintenance of such improvements for a period of at least 5 years. The total amount of this performance security shall be determined by the County Public Works Department in consultation with the Parks Department and RMD.
- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.7:** Development shall be clustered to minimize disruption of significant views from areas of high public use, and shall be located outside of all designated or potential Environmentally Sensitive Habitat areas.
- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.8:** All development on the site, including trails and roads, shall be sited and designed to avoid areas used for nesting and roosting by the Black-Shouldered Kites and other sensitive species as identified by the More Mesa Habitat Study.
- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.9:** To the maximum extent feasible, vegetation consisting of drought tolerant native species shall be used for landscaping to screen development from public use areas and to create buffers from ESH areas. Landscaping shall be designed to complement, enhance and restore native habitats onsite. As part of this buffer, a belt of native (e.g.: oaks, Sycamores, willows) and non-native trees (e.g.: Monterey Cypress, Eucalyptus) shall be planted along the perimeter of the developable area and access road.
- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.10:** Natural building materials and colors compatible with the surrounding terrain shall be used on exterior surfaces of all structures, including water tanks and fences. The applicant shall submit architectural drawings of the project for review and approval by the BAR, concurrently with the submittal of grading plans to RMD.
- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.11:** Emergency access for the Fire Department shall be provided between development on this site and Via Roblada.
- DevStd LUDS-GV-1.12:** All development shall be sited to preserve land use compatibility between the clustered medium density development at More Mesa and the existing lower density

GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

development at adjacent Hope Ranch Park. Therefore, a landscaped buffer of a minimum of 50 feet shall be required between Hope Ranch Park and this clustered development in order to ensure required land use compatibility.

DEVEREUX SLOUGH ECOLOGICAL SYSTEM OVERVIEW

The Devereux Ecological System is unique among the three major estuaries on the South Coast of Santa Barbara in that a large portion of its watershed in the areas immediately adjacent to the Slough remain in a relatively undeveloped state. The continuum of undeveloped land in this area (see Figures 11, 12, 13) not only provides a buffer for the Slough from surrounding uses, but provides important habitat for species utilizing the Slough itself. The maintenance of the various undeveloped wetland and upland habitats within the Slough's drainage area greatly enhances the wildlife diversity within the ecosystem and provides foraging areas, roosting and/or nesting sites and cover for species that are either wholly or partially dependent upon the Slough.

The relatively undeveloped block of land surrounding the Slough consists of about 800 acres of coastal open space which extends from the high density neighborhoods of Isla Vista on the east to Sand Piper golf course on the west. This area is notable for the panoramic views of the Pacific Ocean and beaches provided from undeveloped bluffs and often unobstructed views of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the north. The natural resources of the site contribute to the highly scenic quality of the GPA, with the cypress studded headlands of Coal Oil Point, expanses of beaches and the rolling dunes, groves of trees and the Slough and bluffs all contributing to the vicinity's natural beauty. The public accesses this area from an extensive network of trails extending from Isla Vista to Hollister Avenue.

The three major components of these open lands surrounding the Slough are comprised of the University's West Campus, the University Exchange Corporation's West Devereux property (including the Ocean Meadows Golf Course) and the Ellwood-Beach/Santa Barbara Shores properties owned by Southwest Diversified and the County. As part of its Long Range Development Plan, the University approved the construction of substantial amounts of new housing and other facilities on the West Campus, while attempting to provide open space, setbacks and other measures to protect the integrity of the Slough's ecosystem. The development standards outlined below for the West Devereux and Ellwood-Beach/Santa Barbara Shores sites attempt to similarly balance development of these sites with protection of the open space and habitat values which make this estuary unique among those remaining on the South Coast.

GOLETA COMMUNITY PLAN

West Devereux Specific Plan Area (#12 University Exchange)

The West Devereux Specific Plan Area is located southwest of the Storke Rd. and Phelps Rd. intersection. The site is comprised of two parcels (APN 73-090-10,50; 235.82 total acres) with ownership currently divided between the University Exchange Corp. (UEC), and Harris Sherline. The University of California is currently in escrow to purchase UEC's interest in these properties. Surrounding features include the Pacific Ocean to the south, UCSB's Devereux Slough Nature Preserve to the southeast, Storke Rd to the east, University Village subdivision to the north, and Ellwood Beach (Southwest Diversified parcel) to the west. Approximately 67 acres are currently developed as the Ocean Meadows Golf Course, and about 17 acres developed in existing facilities for oil processing and storage within a 40 acre area currently leased to Mobile Oil. The remaining undeveloped property consists of 7 noncontiguous areas ranging from 2.8 acres to 41.3 acres in size (Figure 11).

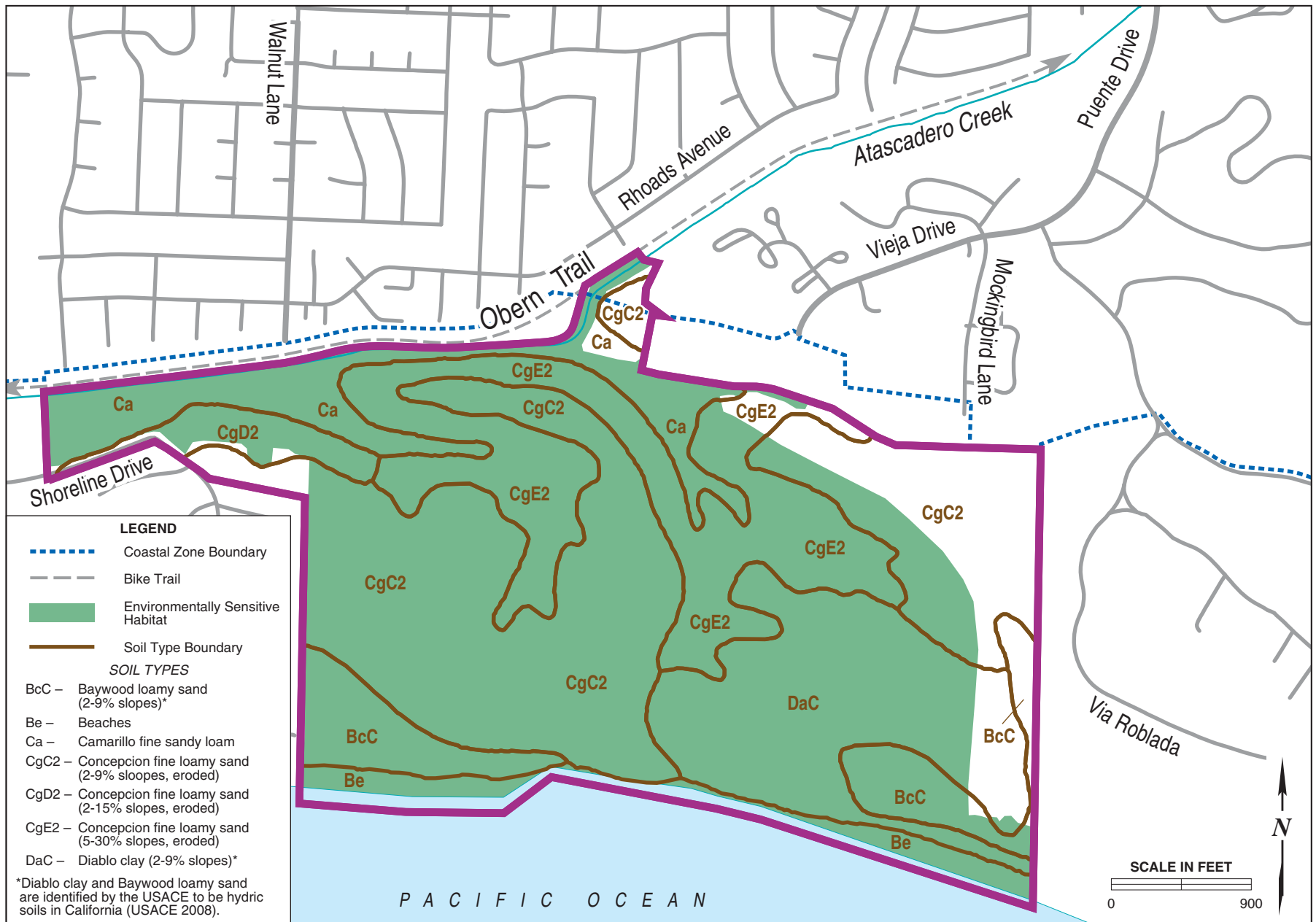
The undeveloped portions of the site are divided by topography and existing improvements into three fairly distinct areas. The first consists of a series of relatively undeveloped areas of land located adjacent to, and primarily north of the existing Golf Course, and in the southeast corner of the site, historically used for a driving range. These areas consist mainly of non-native grasslands frequently mowed or plowed, which are of low biological and scenic value (except for sections of Devereux Creek) and do not provide public access to the coast. These areas are generally the most suitable for residential development.

The second distinct area of the site contains the Ocean Meadows Golf Course which is bisected by the main branch of Devereux Creek and several of its tributaries. This golf course provides an important public recreational resource and open space area, and is generally of low biological sensitivity except for those areas within and immediately adjacent to Devereux Creek and Slough. With the exception of the sensitive areas noted above, this area is suitable for a continued or intensified high level of use.

Although the entire site lies within the Devereux Creek-Slough drainage and ecosystem, it is the roughly triangular area south of the golf course that contains the site's most environmentally sensitive areas. This third district area also provides substantial informal public access to and along the coast and contains the existing oil storage facilities. The majority of this area is either devoted to oil storage facilities and buffer, or contains coastal salt marsh/freshwater ponds, dune and back-dune habitats. It is also traversed by a number of existing trails. Sensitive species utilizing this area include: the Black Shouldered Kite, Northern Harrier, and historically, the burrowing owl.

Appendix D

Soil Survey



Mapped Soil Types at More Mesa

