LA COUNTY PLANNING

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW BOARD

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES DESCRIPTION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Meeting Date: November 17, 2025 – Monday

PROJECT: 616 Cold Canyon Road Single-Family Residence

Project No.: RPPL2023005937
Permit No.: RCDP-2017-004158
APN: 4465-019-010, -020, -021, -024, -025, -029
Address: 616 Cold Canyon Road, Calabasas, CA 91302
Location: Malibu Creek Watershed
USGS Quad: Malibu Creek
Project Applicant: Padraic Hannon
Project Biologist: Matt Ingamells, Padre Associates
Staff Planner: William Chen
Staff Biologist: Michael Cady

GENERAL PROJECT DESCRIPTION

The project is a request for a 436.5 square-foot addition and alteration of an existing single-family residence with construction of an attached 586.25 square-foot garage and a 360 square-foot in-ground swimming pool. Legalize un-permitted 365 square foot accessory shed structure and site fencing. No change to the existing septic system is proposed.

SITE BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES & HABITAT MAPPING

Biological Resources

The project site lies on the southern slopes of the Santa Monica Mountains, within the Cold Canyon Creek watershed (a tributary of Malibu Creek). The project site is part of a small, developed area (Monte Nido Rural Village) composed of residences along Cold Canyon Road and adjacent streets. Areas to the east of this community supports intact native vegetation, as part of Malibu Creek State Park.

The project site had been mapped as H3 habitat due to existing and surrounding development and fuel modification and brush thinning. This designation corresponds to

National Park Service (NPS) mapped vegetation polygons comprising the following, which are named for their dominant constituents[1]:

- urban/disturbed or built-up as H3
- urban - California sycamore-coast live oak

Urban/disturbed or built-up is mapped where urban or built-up non-vacant land is present, with an overstory of exotic (horticultural/ornamental) and native trees.

Urban - California sycamore-coast live oak is mapped where urban or built up non-vacant and non-agricultural land is present and their associated off-site brush-thinning zones on adjacent areas.

Survey Findings

Vegetation Communities and Land Cover

The northern portion of the project site is entirely developed (structures, pavement, landscaping). The southern portion of the project site supports coast live oak woodland along the Dark Canyon drainage and in the northeastern corner of the project site (near the existing studio). Coast live oak woodland is dominated by coast live oaks with scattered California sycamore. The woodland understory is composed of widely scattered greater periwinkle (non-native).

Sensitive or Listed Plant and Wildlife Species

Of the 47 special-status plant species reported from the region, suitable habitat for these species does not occur on the project site and/or they were not found during botanical surveys.

Of the 44 special-status wildlife species reported from the region, suitable habitat for these species does not occur on the project site.

Protected Trees

Forty-seven (47) protected coast live oak trees (two on an adjacent property) and nine protected western sycamore trees were mapped.

Riparian Features

Approximately 0.04 acres of coastal wetlands occur within the Dark Canyon drainage at the project site.

[1] Aerial Information Systems, Inc. 2007. Final USGS-NPS Vegetation Mapping Program, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area Photo Interpretation Report. Prepared for Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area.

Proposed changes to habitat categories: The BA determined that the classification of some portions of the project site supporting oak woodland should be changed from H3 to H1. The oak woodland located within the fuel modification area of the existing structures in the northeastern corner of the project site should remain H3 habitat per Section 22.44.1810.E of the LIP.

PROJECT IMPACTS TO BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The proposed project would not result in the loss of vegetation. The proposed project would not result in the removal of any protected trees; however, two protected trees would be encroached from 10 to 30 percent. The wetlands delineated within the Dark Canyon drainage would not be impacted by the project.

Landscape, Fuel Modification, and Off-Site Brush Thinning: No additional fuel modification or brush thinning would be necessary due to existing and surrounding development.

MITIGATION & MINIMIZATION MEASURES

Section 22.44.1920.K of the LIP requires a 5:1 tree mitigation ratio for a 10 to 30 percent encroachment into the protected zone. Therefore, ten coast live oak trees will be planted and monitored for 10 years, with annual reports submitted to the County.

LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM CONSISTENCY

The following findings are required to be made in order to satisfy the requirements of the Santa Monica Mountains LIP:

That the proposed development is in conformity with the certified local coastal program.

- The Project is a principal permitted use within the R-C-10,000 (Rural Coastal) zone and consistent with the RV (Rural Village) land use policy designation.

That any development, located between the nearest public road and the sea or shoreline of any body of water located within the coastal zone, is in conformity with the public access and public recreation policies of Chapter 3 of Division 20 of the Public Resources Code.

- The Project is not located within the described areas and does not impede public access to public recreation areas.

The following findings are required to be made in order to satisfy the requirements of the Santa Monica Mountains LIP:

i. That the requested development is sited and designed to avoid H1 Habitat and areas within 100 feet of H1 Habitat except as permitted by Sections 22.44.1800 through 22.44.1950;

The project is sited in H3 habitat and avoids H1 Habitat and areas within 100 feet of H1 Habitat.

ii. That the requested development is sited and designed to avoid the 100-foot Quiet Zone except as set forth herein; and

The project is not located within the 100-foot Quiet Zone.

iii. That the requested development is sited and designed to avoid H2 "High Scrutiny" and H2 Habitat to the maximum extent feasible. Where avoidance is not feasible and it is necessary to allow the owner a reasonable economic use of the property, the requested development is sited and designed to minimize and mitigate significant adverse impacts in conformance with the policies and provisions of the LCP; and

The Project is sited to avoid H2 "High Scrutiny" and H2 Habitat and it is entirely within H3 Habitat.

iv. That the requested development is sited and designed to avoid wildlife movement corridors (migratory paths) to the maximum extent feasible to ensure these areas are left in an undisturbed and natural state. Where avoidance is not feasible and it is necessary to allow the owner a reasonable economic use of the property, the requested development is sited and designed to minimize significant adverse impacts in conformance with the policies and provisions of the LCP; and

No known wildlife corridors would be affected by the Project.

v. That roads and utilities serving the proposed development are located and designed so as to avoid H1 Habitat, H1 buffer, and to avoid or minimize significant adverse impacts to H2 "High Scrutiny," and H2 Habitat, and migratory paths.

The project is with an already developed portion of the parcels.

PROJECT SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS

No changes or modifications are necessary to reduce or avoid biological impacts. The report is accurate and complete in its inventory of biological resources on site.

No changes or modifications are necessary to ensure consistency with LCP.

ERB PROJECT GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

All projects shall comply with the ERB General Recommendations (see, *Attachment 1*).

Staff Recommendation:	**_ Consistent**	**_ Consistent after Modifications & Bio Report Completion**
	_ Inconsistent	

(Attachment 1)
ERB General Recommendations

1. **Landscaping—**In addition to the requirements of §22.44.1240.B.3 (emphasize the use of native plant palettes in fuel-modification Zones A and B; use exclusively native plant palettes in Zone C; prohibit invasive non-natives species in all zones), the plant palette shall avoid the use of ornamental cultivars and selections, including those of California native species, that have potential to hybridize with local wild plant populations or escape into adjacent natural habitat areas.
2. **Fuel Modification**
    a. Retain as many non-sprouting species as possible. These usually have a single trunk. Do not cut off the trunk in pruning, as this kills the plant.
    b. Choose multiple-trunked, resprouting species for removal over non-sprouters. The remaining multi-trunked shrubs should be pruned in a staggered, clumped pattern on an alternating schedule, allowing 2 – 3 years between prunings for any one clump. Re-sprouting species can be pruned to near ground level.
    c. It is recommended that locally-indigenous plants thinned for fuel modification be chipped and used as native plant mulch. SMM native plant mulch is not widely available in stores, but is an excellent addition to the landscape to retain soil moisture and reduce growth of invasive weeds.
    d. Disking and indiscriminate clearing is not allowed in any Fuel Modification Zone.
    e. For trees to have fuel ladders removed: prune lower branches up to 1/3 of tree height or up to 6 ft. maximum for trees 18 ft. and taller, per County fire requirements. Consult with LA County Planning (County Planning) or Forestry before pruning protected oaks or native trees.
    f. Include provisions for irrigation, both permanent for Zones A and B, and temporary for establishment of native plants in Zone C and outside of Fuel Modification Zones.
3. **Permanent Runoff Control/Drainage Plan—**The Applicant shall provide a grading plan and drainage report, including proposed site design and source control best management practices to minimize post-construction runoff and infiltrate at minimum the first 0.75-inches of stormwater. This plan should show all proposed drainage improvements, such as locations of infiltration basins, measures to convey runoff from impervious surfaces into permeable areas of the property (e.g., raingardens or bioswales) in a non-erosive manner, measures to maximize the ability of native substrates to retain and infiltrate runoff, and placement of cisterns or rain barrels for stormwater capture.
4. **Glass** should be least reflective or have frit patterns that will promote energy conservation and prevent bird strikes caused by the bird mistaking a reflection of habitat for available flight space, per §22.44.1320.
5. **Lighting** should carefully follow provisions of §22.44.1270 for exterior lighting. Avoid trespass of light into the night sky and onto natural areas both on and off the project parcels.
6. **Biological Monitor—**Prior to the issuance of a grading permit, a qualified biologist shall be retained by the Applicant as the lead biological monitor subject

to the approval of County Planning. That person shall ensure that impacts to all biological resources are minimized or avoided, and shall conduct (or supervise) pre-grading field surveys for species that may be avoided, affected, or eliminated as a result of grading or any other site preparation activities. The lead biological monitor shall ensure that all surveys are conducted by qualified personnel (e.g., avian biologists for bird surveys, herpetologists for reptile surveys, etc.) and that they possess all necessary permits and memoranda of understanding with the appropriate agencies for the handling of potentially-occurring special-status species. The lead biological monitor shall also ensure that daily monitoring reports (e.g., survey results, protective actions, results of protective actions, adaptive measures, etc.) are prepared, and shall make these monitoring reports available to County Planning and CDFW at their request.

7. **Staking of Grading Limits—**The Applicant's contractor shall delineate the proposed grading limits of the building site or the extents of the proposed development area, whichever is greater, the driveway, and the extents of the fuel modification zones before any of the measures outlined below are implemented. The contractor shall not remove any native vegetation during staking and shall set the stakes so that they are clearly visible. The locations of the stakes within the fuel modification zones shall be recorded using GPS and provided to the project biologist.
8. **Nesting Bird Survey & Protection Plan—**Initial staging, grubbing, grading, and construction shall be scheduled to occur outside the nesting season of birds as defined by the CDFW, if feasible. Regardless of timing, breeding bird surveys shall be conducted before any activities are scheduled to occur and before installation of any protective fencing (see below), as follows:
    a. If initial grubbing, grading, and construction activities are scheduled to occur outside CDFW defined nesting season (generally February 1 – August 31), a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys in the Santa Monica Mountains shall conduct a survey within 7 days prior to and again within 3 days of the date that activities are scheduled to begin. The biologist should focus efforts within the grading area, development area, the fuel modification zones, the driveway area, and areas within 50 ft. of them. The biologist should also survey 300 ft. beyond these areas, as access allows.
    b. If avoidance of the avian breeding season is not feasible, a qualified biologist with experience in conducting breeding bird surveys in the Santa Monica Mountains shall conduct weekly bird surveys beginning thirty days prior to the initiation of project activities, to detect protected native birds occurring in suitable nesting habitat that is to be disturbed and (as access to adjacent areas allows) any other such habitat within 500 ft. of the disturbance area. The surveys shall continue on a weekly basis with the last survey being conducted no more than 3 days prior to the initiation of project activities. If a protected native bird is found in suitable nesting habitat, all project activities within 300 ft. of on- and off-site suitable nesting habitat (within 500 ft. for suitable raptor nesting habitat) may be delayed until August 31. Alternatively, the qualified biologist may continue the surveys in order to locate any active nests. If the biologist determines that there are

active nests within or adjacent these areas, they should establish appropriate buffer zones, as defined in "c" below.

c. If an active nest is found, regardless of time of year, project activities within 300 ft. of the nest (within 500 ft. for raptor nests) or as determined by a qualified biological monitor, must be postponed until the nest is vacated and juveniles have fledged and there is no evidence of a second attempt at nesting. Flagging, stakes, or construction fencing shall be used to demarcate the inside boundary of the buffer of 300 ft. (or 500 ft.) between the project activities and the nest. Project personnel, including all contractors working on site, shall be instructed on the sensitivity of the area.
d. The qualified biologist shall provide County Planning with a brief report summarizing the results of the surveys, as well as a description and assessment of implemented protective measures described above to document compliance with applicable State and Federal laws pertaining to the protection of native birds.
e. If the qualified biologist determines that a narrower buffer between the project activities and observed active nests is warranted, he/she shall submit a written explanation as to why (e.g., species-specific information; ambient conditions and birds' habituation to them; and the terrain, vegetation, and birds' lines of sight between the project activities and the nest and foraging areas) to County Planning and CDFW. Based on the submitted information, County Planning (in consultation with CDFW) will determine whether to allow a narrower buffer.
    i. In circumstances when activities are scheduled to occur between an original buffer and a reduced buffer, a qualified biologist should monitor the nest before, during, and after the activities, to determine if it is being affected.
    ii. The only activities that shall be allowed between the original buffer and the reduced buffer are those that generate noise levels less than 60 dBA as measured at the resource. The biologist shall record noise levels every hour and must have the authority to stop any activities that exceed 60 dBA if they determine that it is affecting, or has the potential to affect the outcome of a nest.
    iii. The biologist shall send weekly monitoring reports to County Planning and, upon request, to CDFW, documenting the status of monitored nests, and shall notify County Planning immediately if project activities damage active avian nests.

9. **Temporary wildlife fencing** shall be utilized to reduce the potential for wildlife being harmed by or moving into the work site. The project proponent's contractor shall delineate the grading limits/approved development area and shall fence the area in its entirety with green screen before beginning removal of any vegetation, as follows:
    a. To install the screen, laborers will remove a 5-foot strip of vegetation at the limits of the grading limits/development area using hand-held tools to allow wildlife, including special status species, a chance to escape and reduce the potential of them being crushed by heavy machinery.

   b. The green screen shall be partially buried, or fitted with silt fence that is partially buried, in a manner that reduces the potential for wildlife moving back in.
   c. Laborers installing the fence shall remain within the cut areas and any paths leading to it.
   d. A biologist shall monitor fence installation so that they can capture and relocate wildlife as necessary, and to ensure that no protected trees or special status plants are impacted during installation.
   e. The biologist must hold a CDFW Scientific Collectors Permit authorizing handling of invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.
   f. A gated entrance shall allow ingress and egress. The gates shall remain open until after the project biologist conducts a pre-construction survey and shall be closed only after vegetation is cleared from within the fenced area (see below).

10. **Pre-Construction Biological Resources Survey & Site Clearance—**A pre-construction biological resources survey shall be conducted within the area that is screened and within areas adjacent the driveway the day after screening.
   a. The project proponent's contractor shall plan to remove vegetation from within the screened area no more than 1 day after completion of the Pre-Construction Biological Resources Survey.
   b. Laborers shall use hand-held tools to remove the vegetation. Using hand-held tools will allow wildlife, including special-status species, a chance to escape and reduce the potential of them being crushed by heavy machinery.
   c. A biologist shall monitor vegetation removal so that they can capture and relocate wildlife as necessary.
   d. The biologist must hold a CDFW Scientific Collectors Permit authorizing handling of invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.
11. **Initial Grubbing & Grading—**Initial grubbing and grading shall occur 3 to 7 days after vegetation has been cleared from the proposed development area/grading limits. The delay between vegetation clearance and the grubbing and grading activities will allow wildlife, including special-status species, a chance to escape and reduce the potential of them being crushed by heavy machinery.
   a. A biologist shall monitor initial grading and grubbing so that they can capture and relocate wildlife as necessary.
   b. The biologist must hold a CDFW Scientific Collectors Permit authorizing handling of invertebrates, reptiles, amphibians, and mammals.
12. **Initial Fuel Modification—**The site shall only be fuel-modified after the construction phase of the proposed project has been completed or as otherwise directed by the Fire Department.
   a. A qualified biologist shall implement the Nesting Bird Survey & Protection Plan before fuel modification occurs.
   b. A qualified biologist shall be present during initial fuel modification activities and shall stake the limits of fuel modification and flag any areas or plants to be excluded from fuel modifications.
   c. The stakes shall remain in place until after fuel modification activities have been completed.

d. A qualified biologist shall be present during initial fuel modification activities to ensure that no protected trees or special-status species are damaged by the fuel modification activities.