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**Riverside County
Multi-Species Habitat Conservation Plan
Interim Management Evaluation and Recommendations**

SITE NAME: ANZA3

EDA NAME: ~~Unknown~~

→ United Five

I. SITE PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION

1.A. Site Physical Location & Access:

The ANZA3 site actually consists of three separate parcels. From west to east they are: ANZA3-A (583-050-007), ANZA3-B (581-190-006), and ANZA3-C (581-100-043). Although separate, all three parcels lie in the hills between Aguanga Valley on the south and Lancaster and Wilson Valleys on the north. All parcels are rectangular in shape. Parcel B lies between the other two, a distance of about 666 meters (1/2 mile) from each.

Parcel A can be accessed from either the west or east via a formerly graded dirt road. This road runs along the crest of the hills in this vicinity, and can be accessed from either Sage Road on the west or from State Highway 371 on the east via El Conquista Road. This dirt road cuts Parcel A approximately in half diagonally from the northwestern corner to the southeastern one.

Parcels B and C can be accessed by a graded road which crosses Billy Goat Mountain from Highway 371. This road proceeds east-west across Parcel C before dropping and turning south to go through Parcel B in a north-south direction. It eventually meets up with El Conquista Road to the southeast of Parcel B.

The parcels' general locations are:

PARCEL	UTM (NAD-27, meters)	STATE PLAIN (NAD-83, feet)	TOWNSHIP / RANGE
A	509465E 3702864N	6363577E 2114020N	E3/4, N1/2, Sec.20, T8S, R1E
B	511223E 3704072N	6369545E 2118073N	E1/2, Sec. 16, T8S, R1E
C	512831E 3704968N	6374836E 2120947N	S1/2, SE1/4, Sec. 10, T8S, R1E

1.B. Acreage:	Parcel A:	240.00
	Parcel B:	320.00
	Parcel C:	<u>81.98</u>
	Total:	641.98

1.C. Topography:

Topography of the three parcels is somewhat varied. Parcel A contains the crest of the ridge separating Aguanga and Lancaster Valleys, and the rough and steep canyons derived from it. These canyons form to the north, south and west within the parcel, and in several places exhibit eroded head walls and cliffs. These northern canyons are quite scenic. Parcel B is formed of the broken hills and valleys of the west-facing slopes of Billy Goat Mountain. It also includes a portion of the bottom of Lancaster Valley which has been dry farmed. Parcel C is found wholly on the north-facing slope of Billy Goat Mountain. Parcels B and C contain a substantial amount of rocky outcrops and large boulders.

1.D. Surrounding Land Use:

Generally the areas surrounding these parcels support natural open space or low density residences, primarily mobile homes. Lancaster Valley supports dry land farming. Residential development of low density is occurring to the east-northeast for Parcel C, and to a lesser degree, southeast of Parcel B.

2. BIOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

2.A. Plant Communities:

All three parcels support a varying mixture of sage scrub and chaparral. Parcel A appears to have been burned within the last decade, and much of the shrub cover has not fully recovered yet. It supports a sparse growth of chamise (*Adenostoma fasciculatum*), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*), and California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*).

Parcels B and C also show some evidence of burning, however, the fires were older, and much of the area has recovered.

Parcel C is distinctly more sage scrub dominated but also supports some shoulders of non-native grasses, primarily cheat grass (*Bromus tectorum*) and some mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*) near the road. Vegetation in Parcel C is dominated by California buckwheat, white sage (*Salvia apiana*), California sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), and brittlebush, with an occasional manzanita (*Arctostaphylos sp.*).

Parcel B is distinctly more chaparral dominated on the upper portions, these areas being dominated by chamise and California buckwheat. The lower southern end of Parcel C supports much higher shrub diversity within the wash

there. Extensive areas of ceanothus (*Ceanothus sp.*), yucca (*Yucca whipplei*), with scattered sugar bush (*Rhus ovata*), and valley cholla (*Opuntia parreyi*) are found there.

2.B. Likely Animal Species:

Because these sites are mostly pristine, it could be expected that many of the animals of the region utilize them. Commonly encountered species include the coyote (*Canis latrans*), bobcat (*Lynx rufus*), mountain lion (*Felis concolor*), mule deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), spotted skunk (*Spilogale putorius*), woodrats (*Neotoma spp.*), various field mice species (*Peromyscus spp.*), brush rabbit (*Sylvilagus bachmani*), side-blotched lizard (*Uta stansburiana*), western fence lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*), granite spiny lizard (*Sceloporus orcuttii*), coachwhip (*Masticophis flagellum*), southern Pacific rattlesnake (*Crotalus viridis*), and the rosy boa (*Lichanura trivirgata*).

The types and distributions of heteromyids (i.e., kangaroo rats and pocket mice) in the Aguanga area are very complex. Recently, the Pacific kangaroo rat (*Dipodomys agilis*) was split into two distinct species; *D. agilis* apparently inhabiting higher altitude sites, while its congener, the target species Delzura kangaroo rat (*D. simulans*) inhabits lower elevation sites. The use of the *simulans* species designation has become common within small mammal circles. Additionally the target subspecies Aguanga kangaroo rat (*D. merriami collinus*) is found in the area. The Delzura kangaroo rat is highly likely to inhabit all these sites, while the Aguanga kangaroo rat could inhabit some of the sandy wash bottoms associated with Parcels A and B.

2.C. Other Habitat or Wildlife Features:

These sites lie within the general area to allow wildlife movement between the San Jacinto Mountains, Vail Lake area and the Palomar Mountains. The presence of significant rock outcrops and large boulders in Parcel C are very conducive for several bat species.

2.D. Target Species:

A qualified botanist should inspect the Ceanothus plants found on this site to determine if they are the Vail Lake ceanothus (*Ceanothus ophiochilus*), a MSHCP covered species. A qualified small mammal ecologist should perform a trapping program in the southeastern corner of Parcel B to determine which kangaroo rat species are found there. Currently the Natural Resources Manager for the Park District, Ron Baxter, is so qualified, but his current workload prevents its timely completion. However, it could be done by him at a later date.

Please see Appendix A for a qualitative checklist of MSHCP target animal species, and Appendix B. for plant species.

3. IMPACTS AND CURRENT CONDITIONS

3.A. Current Uses:

Parcel C appears pristine with no impacts.

Parcel A appears to have supported a mine or some other grading activity in the northwestern corner. It appears abandoned, but some of the debris has been left behind (i.e., pipes, hose). Some of the lowland valleys of Parcels A and B have recently supported dry land agriculture.

Currently, Parcel A supports sporadic OHV use by local residents. This use seems to stay centered on the existing road and ridgelines, primarily because the steep topography prevents additional routes. At least one additional trail has been created from the ridgeline road down to the southwest toward the homes at Sage.

A previously graded road crosses Parcel B as it climbs from south to north. This road then turns east to steeply climb to cross the southern edge of Parcel C. It is derived from the extreme northwestern corner of El Conquista Road, and terminates east of Billy Goat Mountain at Highway 371. OHV activity seems centered on this road, however; the border areas around El Conquista Road support significant motorcycle action, with numerous turn-arounds and trails (see photograph). This activity spills west into Parcel B some, but not extensively.

3.B. Fencing & Access Controls:

Access to the sites is primarily blocked by intervening private parcels. Many of these are gated and signed to prevent trespassing. One old fence was observed on the eastern boundary of Parcel B in the extreme southeastern corner. It has been cut to allow access along to the road described above.

It is advisable to close off the main roads running through these parcels. These roads allow access directly into the heart of these parcels, with the possibility of facilitating new trash dumping, wildfire, and/or increased OHV use. This could best be accomplished with gates and minor fencing along the roads at the property boundaries. However, it is also recommended to maintain these roads with periodic grading (about every two years, or as needed) to maintain management and fire fighting access.

3.C. Off-Road Vehicle (OHV) Use / Damage:

Damage in parcel A is confined primarily to the existing roadways. Small turn-arounds can be found on most peaks along the road in Parcel A, but significant erosion has not occurred.