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Ara Azhderian San Luis and Delta Mendota Water Authority PO Box 2157 Los Banos, CA 93635

RE: Summer and Spring Rare Plant Surveys, Two Gates Project Locations, Bacon Island and Holland Tract, San Joaquin and Contra Costa Counties

Dear Ara:

This report contains the findings of the summer and spring rare plant surveys that were conducted for the 2-Gates Project Locations on Bacon Island and Holland Tract, San Joaquin and Contra Costa Counties ("the study area", Figure 1). The project area on Mandeville Island, and a portion of the construction area on Holland Tract were not surveyed due to access constraints. Mosaic Associates conducted a summer rare plant survey on September 23 and 29, 2008; and spring rare plant survey on June 24, 2009 during daylight hours. The completion of these surveys is intended to partially satisfy the Mitigation Measures set forth in the Mitigated Negative Declaration for the 2-Gates Project. An inventory of plant species present on site is provided as Table 1.

METHODS

Amy Richey of Mosaic Associates and Tom Mahony of Coast Range Biological carried out botanical surveys timed to coincide with the blooming periods for target species on September 23 and 29, 2008 and on June 24, 2009. The surveys were conducted according to California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG 2000) and United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS 2000) protocols. During the surveys, a meandering transect method was employed, in which all plant species detected were identified and recorded.

Through a review of the California Natural Diversity Data Base (CNDDB 2008) and California Native Plant Society's Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants (CNPS 2008), 18 special-status plant species were considered for their potential to occur on the study area. A complete list of these species, their habitat affinities, and blooming periods, is included as Table 2. Ten of these species were ruled out due to absence of suitable habitat.

Plants that rate a "Moderate" or higher likelihood of presence, based on an analysis of the habitats present with in the study area, and upon documented occurrences of the species within the study area and within the four-quad search area surrounding the project sites, merit the conduct of rare plant surveys. The following eight special-status plant species with a moderate or higher potential to occur with in the study area were identified:

- ▶ bristly sedge *Carex comosa*: Has same habitat requirements as *Carex vulpinoidea*, which has been documented on the project site. Flowering Period: May-Sep
- ▶ brown fox sedge *Carex vulpinoidea*: has been documented on project site (in 2002). Flowering Period: May-Jun. This plant was observed on the levee margin of Bacon Island at Old River during the June 2009 rare plant survey.
- ▶ woolly rose-mallow *Hibiscus lasiocarpus*: This plant was observed on the levee margin of Bacon Island at Old River during the September 2008 rare plant survey. It has been documented within the islands of Old River nearby the study area, and on the levee margins just south of study area. Flowering Period: June-Sept
- ▶ Mason's lilaeopsis *Lilaeopsis masonii*: 68 records within the four-quad search; and 4 within the study area. Flowering Period: Apr-Nov
- ▶ Delta mudwort *Limosella subulata*: Mudflat habitats available for this species are absent in the levee areas. Absence of such mudflat habitat greatly reduces the likelihood of this species' presence, and it was not observed during the summer or spring rare plant surveys. Additionally, the nativity of this species is under scrutiny; the Jepson manual lists it as a non-native. Flowering Period: May-Sep.
- eel-grass pondweed *Potamogeton zosteriformis*: may occur in aquatic habitats on site, though none was observed during the summer or spring rare plant surveys. Flowering Period: Jun-Jul.
- ▶ marsh skullcap *Scutellaria galericulata*: Occurs in marshes and swamps, suitable habitat is present on levee margins, though none was observed during the summer or spring rare plant surveys. Flowering Period: Jun-Sep.
- ▶ side-flowering skullcap *Scutellaria lateriflora*: Occurs in marshes and swamps, suitable habitat is present on levee margins, though none was observed during the summer rare plant survey. Flowering Period: Jul-Sep.
- Suisun Marsh aster *Symphyotrichum lentum:* This species occurs on the levee margins of Old River, with one individual on the Bacon Island side, and several dispersed on the Holland Tract side. It has been documented near the project site in Old River islands. Flowering Period: May-Nov.

SITE LOCATION AND DESCRIPTION

The project sites are located on Holland Tract and Bacon Island and Mandeville Island in Contra Costa and San Joaquin Counties. Surrounding land use is primarily agricultural. The Old River flows between Holland Tract and Bacon Island to the west of Bacon Island, while Connection Slough flows between Bacon Island and Mandeville Island to the north of Bacon Island. The project areas have level topography, except on the levee sides.

The study area contains two disused two-story wood frame farm residences on Bacon Island near Old River, and a single large barn on Holland Tract near Old River.

Vegetation

Vegetation in the study area is dominated by ruderal herbaceous vegetation and agricultural cropland. Other habitat types present within the study area include ruderal scrub, Coastal and Valley Freshwater Marsh, seasonal wetland, mixed riparian woodland, and planted trees. The *ruderal herbaceous* type would correspond most closely to Holland's (1986) Pasture series (11206), or to Sawyer and Keeler-Wolf's California Non-Native Grassland series (1995). Dominant herbaceous species observed in the ruderal herbaceous areas included ripgut brome (*Bromus diandrus*), poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*), Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*), Mediterranean mustard (*Hirschfeldia incana*) and field radish (*Raphanus sativus*), and stinging nettle (*Urtica dioicia*).

Our survey focused on the *Coastal & Valley Freshwater Marsh* vegetation type located on the river side of the levee margins. This series is dominated by cattails and tules of up to 4 meters tall, and is most extensive in the upper portion of the Sacramento-San Joaquin River Delta. It is common in the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys in river oxbows and other areas on the flood plain (Holland 1986). Narrowleaf cattail (*Typha angustifolia*), and tule rush (*Schoenoplectus acutus*) are among the dominant hydrophytic vegetation along the levee margins of Connection Slough and Old River.

Seasonal Wetland. Seasonal wetlands occur throughout the Study Areas in a variety of geomorphic settings including swales, shallow concave basins, and creek channels; primarily in areas with concave topography and fine textured and/or compacted soils which impede surface water infiltration, or allow groundwater infiltration to occur. The seasonal wetlands on Bacon Island near Connection Slough were located in a shallow basin that is sparsely vegetated. Species that did occur in the basin or near the margin included Bermuda grass, umbrella sedge (Cyperus eragrosits), knotweed (Polygonum arenastrum), and an unidentified plant that may be dogbane (Apocynum cannabinum). On the Holland Tract, and on Bacon Island near Old River, the seasonal wetlands were dominated by Bermuda grass and water smartweed (Polygonum amphibium).

Mixed Riparian Woodland. Although not specifically described in Holland (1986), mixed riparian woodland consists of annual and perennial native and non-native riparian herbaceous and woody species. This vegetation type is typically found along stream and

river banks, on terraces adjacent to floodplains, and along perennial or intermittent streams, gullies, springs or seeps. On site, the mixed riparian woodland would conform most closely to Holland's Great Valley Willow Scrub, described as "An open to dense, broadleafed, winter-deciduous shrubby streamside thicket dominated by any of several Salix species. Dense stands usually have little understory or herbaceous component. More open stands have grassy understories, usually dominated by introduced species" (Holland 1986). Mixed riparian woodland on Bacon Island occurs near the Old River and includes mostly shrubby willows (*Salix* sp.), the majority of which are not tall in stature, but do form a dense stand. Two taller trees within this habitat type, located on the Holland Tract, may provide habitat for nesting birds.

Planted Trees. In a small area around the abandoned farmhouse, on Bacon Island, Old River, several planted trees are present, including cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*), apple (*Malus x domestica*), and sweet almond (*Prunus dulcis*).

RESULTS

We detected three rare plant species on the river sides of the levees on Old River; one individual of wolly rose mallow (*Hibiscus lasiocarpus*) and one individual of brown fox sedge (*Carex vulpinoidea*) on Bacon Island, Old River, and several Suisun Marsh aster (*Symphyotrichum lentum*) individuals on Holland Tract and Bacon Island along Old River. No rare plants were detected within the project area on the Bacon Island side of Connection Slough, nor in the Alternate Storage Area on Holland Tract.

A map displaying the locations of the rare plants is provided as Figure 2. A complete inventory of all plant species detected is included as Table 1.

The following four spring-blooming species with a moderate to high potential for occurrence were **not** detected during our surveys: bristly sedge (*Carex comosa*), Mason's lilaeopsis (*Lilaeopsis masonii*), marsh skullcap (*Scutellaria galericulata*), and sideflowering skullcap (*Scutellaria lateriflora*). In relation to delta mudwort, although there are records in the vicinity, mudflat habitats available for this species are absent in the levee areas. Absence of such mudflat habitat greatly reduces the likelihood of this species' presence, and it was not observed during the summer rare plant survey. Additionally, the nativity of this species is under scrutiny; the <u>Jepson Manual</u> (Hickman 1993) lists it as a non-native.

The eight summer-blooming special-status species with a very low or low potential to occur were **not** detected during our summer rare plant survey. These included: heartscale (*Atriplex cordulata*), San Joaquin spearscale (*Atriplex joaquiniana*), big tarplant (*Blepharizonia plumosa*), soft bird's beak (*Cordylanthus mollis* ssp. *mollis*), Delta button-celery (*Eryngium racemosum*), Delta tule pea (*Lathyrus jepsonii* var. *jepsonii*), Delta mudwort (*Limosella subulata*), and Antioch Dunes evening-primrose (*Oenothera deltoids* ssp. *howellii*).

Eel-grass pondweed (*Potamogeton zosteriformis*), can be distinguished from other pondweeds by its vegetative structures. The pondweed we observed was not *P. zosteriformis*.

Sincerely,

Amy Richey Mosaic Associates

Enclosures:

Literature Cited

Figure 1. Project Location Map

Figure 2. Habitat Types and Rare Plant Location Map

Table 1. List of Species Detected at the 2-Gates Study Area

Table 2. List of Potentially Occurring Special Status Plants

LITERATURE CITED

- California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). 2008. *List of Terrestrial Natural Communities recognized by the California Natural Diversity Database*. Natural Diversity Database, Wildlife and Habitat Data Analysis Branch. September.
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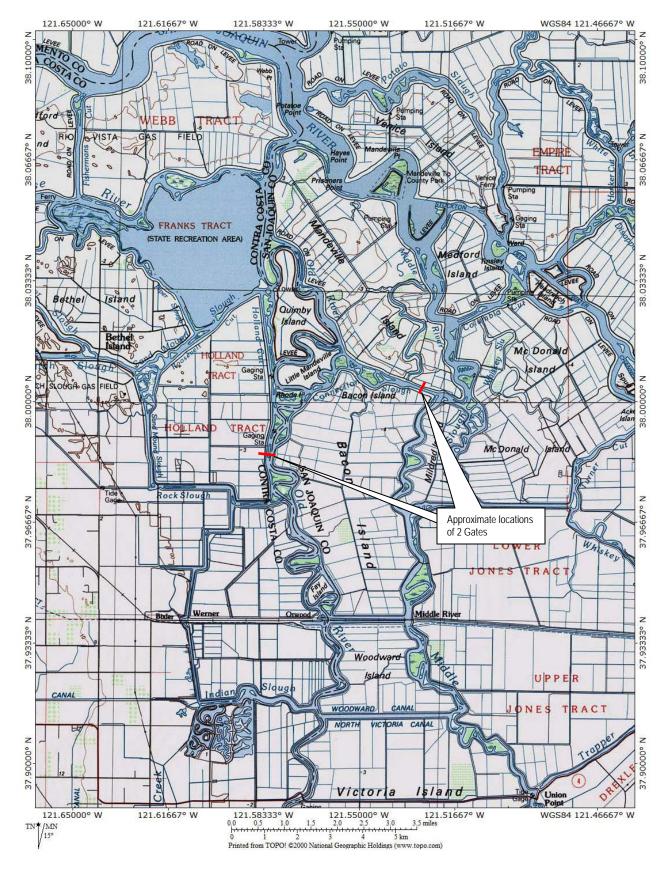


Figure 1. Project Location Map

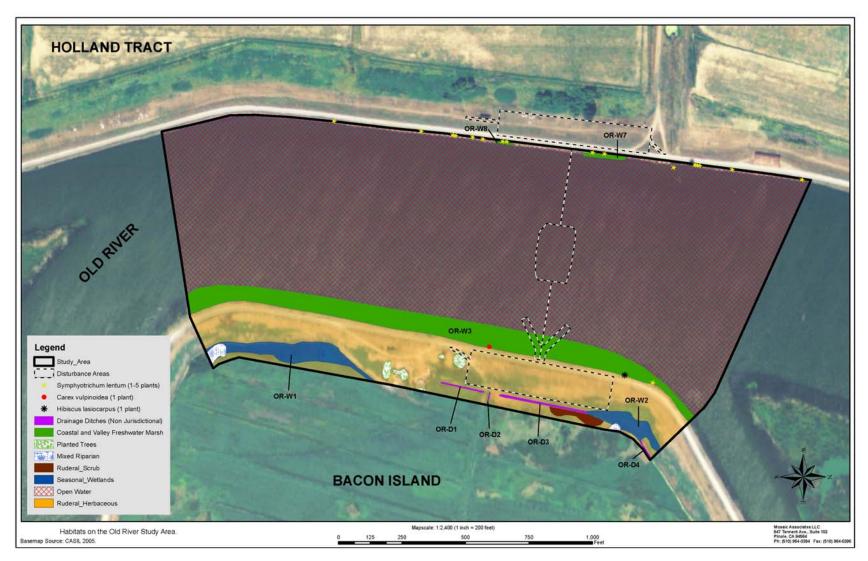


Figure 2. Habitat Types and Rare Plant Location Map. No rare plants were detected at the Connection Slough site.

Table 1: Plant Species Detected at the Two Gates Project Site

Family	Botanical Name	Common Name	Sep-08	Jun-09
Apiaceae	Conium maculatum	poison hemlock	Χ	Х
Apocynaceae	Apocynum cannabinum	Indian hemp	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Artemisia douglasiana	mugwort	Х	Х
Asteraceae	Baccharis douglasii	marsh baccharis	Χ	
Asteraceae	Baccharis salicifolia	mulefat	Χ	
Asteraceae	Carduus pycnocephalus	Italian thistle	Χ	Χ
Asteraceae	Centaurea solstitialis	yellow starthistle	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Cirsium vulgare	bull thistle	Χ	Χ
Asteraceae	Conyza canadensis	horse weed	Χ	Χ
Asteraceae	Euthamia occidentalis	western goldenrod	Χ	
Asteraceae	Gnaphalium canescens	white everlasting	Χ	
Asteraceae	Heliantha annua	cultivated sunflower	Χ	Χ
Asteraceae	Heterotheca grandifolia	talegraph weed	Х	
Asteraceae	Lactuca serriola	prickly lettuce	Х	Х
Asteraceae	Picris echioides	bristly ox-tongue	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Salsola kali	tumbleweed	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Silybum marianum	milk thistle	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Sonchus asper	prickly sow thistle	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Symphyotrichum lentum	Suisun marsh aster	Χ	
Asteraceae	Xanthium strumarium	common cocklebur	Χ	Х
Asteraceae	Anthemis cotula	dog fennel		Х
Asteraceae	Cotula coronopifolia	brass buttons		Х
Boraginaceae	Heliotropium curassavicum	seaside heliotrope	Χ	Х
Boraginaceae	Amsinckia menziesii cf	common fiddleneck		Х
Brassicaceae	Brassica nigra	black mustard	Х	Х
Brassicaceae	Hirschfeldia incana	Mediterranean mustard	Χ	Х
Brassicaceae	Lepidium latifolium	perennial pepperweed	Χ	Х
Brassicaceae	Raphanus sativus	cultivated radish	Χ	Х
Cactaceae	Opuntia ficus-indica	Indian Fig Opuntia	Χ	Х
Caryophyllaceae	Spergularia rubra	Purple Sand Spurry		Х
Chenopodiaceae	Chenopodium rubrum	red goosefoot	Х	Х
Convolvulaceae	Calystegia sepium ssp.	hedge bindweed		
	limnophila	-	Χ	Χ
Convolvulaceae	Convolvulus arvensis	field bindweed	Χ	Χ
Cyperaceae	Cyperus eragrostis	umbrella sedge	Χ	Х
Cyperaceae	Cyperus esculentus	yellow nutsedge	Χ	
Cyperaceae	Schoenoplectus acutus	tule rush	Х	Х
Cyperaceae	Schoenoplectus californicus	California bull rush	Х	Х
Dryopteridaceae	Athyrium filix-femina	common ladyfern	Χ	Х
Dryopteridaceae	Athyrium felix-femina	common ladyfern	Х	Х
Equisetaceae	Equisetum arvense	common horsetail	Χ	
Euphorbiaceae	Eremocarpus setigerus	turkey mullein	Х	Х
Fabaceae	Lotus corniculatus	birdsfoot trefoil	X	X
Fabaceae	Medicago sativa	alfalfa	x	

Family	Botanical Name	Common Name	Sep-08	Jun-09
Fabaceae	Melilotus albus	sweet white clover	X	Х
Geraniaceae	Erodium cicutarium	redstem filaree		Х
Iridaceae	Iris pseudacorus	yellow iris	Х	Х
Juglandaceae	Juglans regia	English walnut	Х	Х
Juncaceae	Juncus effusus	common rush	Х	Х
Lamiaceae	Mentha arvensis	wild mint	Х	Х
Lamiaceae	Stachys albens	whitestem hedgenettle	Х	
Malvaceae	Hibiscus lasiocarpus	woolly rose mallow	Х	Х
Malvaceae	Malva sp. cf		Х	Х
Moraceae	Ficus L.	fig tree	Х	Х
Onagraceae	Epilobium ciliatum	fringed willowherb	Х	Х
Onagraceae	Ludwigia peploides	floating primrose-willow	Х	Х
Plantaginaceae	Plantago major	common plantain		Х
Poaceae	Arundo donax	giant reed	Х	Х
Poaceae	Bromus diandrus	ripgut brome	Х	Х
Poaceae	Cortaderia jubata	pampas grass	Х	Х
Poaceae	Cynodon dactylon	Bermuda grass	Х	Х
Poaceae	Elymus sp. cf	_	Х	
Poaceae	Hordeum murinum	mouse barley	Х	Х
Poaceae	Lolium multiflorum	Italian ryegrass	Х	Х
Poaceae	Paspalum dilatatum	Dallis grass	Х	Х
Poaceae	Polypogon australis	Chilean rabbitsfoot grass	Х	Х
Poaceae	Sorghum halpense	Johnson grass	Х	Х
Poaceae	Avena fatua	wild oat		Х
Poaceae	Distichlis spicata	inland saltgrass		Х
Poaceae	Hordeum marinum	Mediterranean barley		Х
Poaceae	Polypogon monspeliensis	rabbitsfoot grass		Х
Polygonaceae	Polygonum amphibium	water smartweed	Х	Х
Polygonaceae	Polygonum arenastrum	common knotweed	Х	Х
Polygonaceae	Polygonum hydropiperoides	waterpepper	Х	
Polygonaceae	Rumex crispus	curly dock	Х	
Polygonaceae	Rumex pulcher	fiddle dock	Х	
Pontederiaceae	Eichhorinia crassipes	water hyacinth	Х	Х
Potamogetonaceae	Potamogeton sp.	pond weed	Х	
Rosaceae	Malus x domestica	cultivated apple	Х	
Rosaceae	Prunus dulcis	sweet almond	Х	Х
Rosaceae	Rubus discolor	Himalayan blackberry	Х	Х
Rosaceae	Rubus ursinus	California blackberry	Х	Х
Rubiaceae	Cephalanthus occidentalis	California buttonwillow		
	var. californicus		Х	Х
Salicaceae	Populus fremontii	Fremont cottonwood	Х	Х
Salicaceae	Salix exigua	narrow-leaved willow	Х	Х
Salicaceae	Salix laevigata	red willow	Х	Х
Salicaceae	Salix lasiolepis	arroyo willow	Х	Х
Solanaceae	Petunia parviflora	wild petunia	Х	
Solanaceae	Solanum sp.	nightshade	Х	Х
Typhaceae	Typha latifolia	broad-leaf cattail	Х	Х
Urticaceae	Urtica dioicia	stinging nettle	Х	Х

Table 2. Potentially Occurring Special-Status Plant Species at the Two Gates Project Area, Bacon Island and Holland Tract, San Joaquin and Contra Costa Counties, California.

Common Name Scientific Name	Habitat Affinities	Blooming Period	Potential To Occur in Study Area	Listing Status ¹		
				Federal	State	CNPS
heartscale Atriplex cordulata	Chenopod scrub, Meadows and seeps, Valley and foothill grassland(sandy)/saline or alkaline	Apr-Oct	Very low. Some very marginal habitat present, but no alkaline soils observed.	-	_	List 1B
San Joaquin spearscale Atriplex joaquiniana	Chenopod scrub, Meadows and seeps, Playas, Valley and foothill grassland/alkaline	Apr-Oct	Very low. Some very marginal habitat present, but no alkaline soils observed.	-	_	List 1B
big tarplant Blepharizonia plumosa	Valley and foothill grassland	Jul-Oct	Very low. Some very marginal habitat present, but no occurrences reported. Grasslands on site receive regular disking.	-	-	List 1B
round-leaved filaree California macrophylla	Cismontane woodland, Valley and foothill grassland/clay	Mar-May	Low. Grasslands on site receive regular disking.	_	-	List 1B
bristly sedge Carex comosa	Coastal prairie, Marshes and swamps(lake margins), Valley and foothill grassland	May-Sep	Moderate. Suitable habitat present in levee margins.	-	_	List 2
brown fox sedge Carex vulpinoidea	Marshes and swamps(freshwater), Riparian woodland	May-Jun	Moderate to High. Documented to occur on study area (Old River). Has potential to occur on levee margins.	_	-	List 2

Common Name Scientific Name	Quadrangles Contain Habitat Affinities	Blooming Period	Potential To Occur in Study Area	Listing Status ¹		
				Federal	State	CNPS
soft bird's-beak Cordylanthus mollis ssp. mollis	Marshes and swamps(coastal salt)	Jul-Nov	Very Low. Other halophytes do not occur in the study areas.	FE	SR	List 1B
Delta button-celery Eryngium racemosum	Riparian scrub(vernally mesic clay depressions)	Jun-Sep	Low. May occur in Riparian Scrub on Mandeville, if present. Marginal habitat present.		SE	List 1B
woolly rose-mallow Hibiscus lasiocarpus	Marshes and swamps(freshwater)	Jun-Sep	High. Documented as occurring in islands of Old River in 1992. Has potential to occur on levee margins.	-	-	List 2
Delta tule pea Lathyrus jepsonii var. jepsonii	Marshes and swamps(freshwater and brackish)	May-Jul(Sep)	Low. Has potential to occur on levee margins.	-	_	List 1B
Mason's lilaeopsis Lilaeopsis masonii	Marshes and swamps(brackish or freshwater), Riparian scrub	Apr-Nov	Moderate to High. Documented as occurring on study area (Old River); has potential to occur on levee margins.	-	SR	List 1B
Delta mudwort Limosella subulata	Marshes and swamps	May-Aug	Low. Documented as occurring near study area; suitable mudflat habitat not present; has potential to occur on levee margins, though mudflat habitat does not occur.	-	-	List 2

Common Name Scientific Name	Habitat Affinities	Blooming Period	Potential To Occur in Study Area	Listing Status ¹		
				Federal	State	CNPS
Antioch Dunes evening- primrose <i>Oenothera</i> <i>deltoides</i> ssp. <i>howellii</i>	Inland dunes	Mar-Sep	None. Dune habitats not present within the study areas.	FE	SE	List 1B
eel-grass pondweed Potamogeton zosteriformis	Marshes and swamps(assorted freshwater)	Jun-Jul	Moderate. Suitable habitat present within aquatic habitats.	-	-	List 2
marsh skullcap Scutellaria galericulata	Lower montane coniferous forest, Meadows and seeps(mesic), Marshes and swamps	Jun-Sep	Moderate. Suitable habitat present in levee margins.	-	-	List 2
side-flowering skullcap Scutellaria lateriflora	Meadows and seeps(mesic), Marshes and swamps	Jul-Sep	Moderate. Suitable habitat present in levee margins.	-	_	List 2
Suisun Marsh aster Symphyotrichum lentum	Marshes and swamps(brackish and freshwater)	May-Nov	Moderate to High. Documented in Old River north of study area; suitable habitat present in levee margins.	-	-	List 1B
caper-fruited tropidocarpum Tropidocarpum capparideum	Valley and foothill grassland(alkaline hills)	Mar-Apr	Very low. No alkaline soils observed.	-	-	List 1B

FE = federally listed as endangered; SE = state listed as endangered; SR = state listed as rare; List 1B = rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere; List 2 = Rare, threatened, or endangered in California, but more common elsewhere.

Source: CNDDB 2008. Data compiled by Mosaic Associates in 2008.