

Santa Barbara Audubon Society, Inc.

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society



5679 Hollister Avenue Suite 5B, Goleta, CA 93117

(805) 964-1468

January 31, 2014

Kathy Allen, Senior Planner
City of Goleta
130 Cremona Drive, Suite B
Goleta, CA 93117

Dear Ms. Allen:

Santa Barbara Audubon Society (SBAS) is a chapter of the National Audubon Society. SBAS has about 1100 members in the Santa Barbara area. The mission of SBAS is to help conserve and restore the earth's natural ecosystems and improve its biological diversity, principally in the Santa Barbara area, and to connect people with birds and nature through education, science-based projects and advocacy. As a local organization dedicated to the conservation of biodiversity, SBAS would like to advocate for revisions to the proposed Village at Los Carneros development project.

Upon review of the Draft Environmental Impact Report (DEIR) it is apparent that measures to protect the environmentally sensitive Stream Protected Area (SPA) of the Tecolotito Creek are inadequate. The proposed setback from the creek involves a setback ranging from 30-40 feet. Goleta's General Plan policy CE 2.2 requires that "The SPA upland buffer shall be 100 feet outward on both sides of the creek, measured from the top of the bank or the outer limit of wetlands and/or riparian vegetation, whichever is greater." The policy also states that the 100 foot buffer may be reduced (but not to less than 25 feet) based on a site-specific evaluation showing that "(1) there is no feasible alternative siting for development that will avoid the SPA upland buffer; and (2) the project's impacts will not have significant adverse effects on streamside vegetation or the biotic quality of the stream." To date, the applicant has not provided substantial evidence that verifies the infeasibility of the project. Therefore, the DEIR is inadequate in its protection of the SPA.

<http://www.SantaBarbaraAudubon.org>

The City's DEIR has stated that increasing the proposed development setbacks to 100 feet would defeat the purpose of the project. Reducing the setback to 100 feet would reduce the number of units that the developer could build. According to the DEIR, these are the objectives of the development:

2.3 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Project are to:

- 1) Provide a mixed use residential development consisting of 465 homes, including 321 units of ownership housing to address the local and regional housing deficit.
- 2) Provide 70 affordable rental apartments (included within the total of 465 homes) to help address the local affordable housing deficit.
- 3) Provide 74 market-rate rental apartments to address the rental shortage in the local and regional community.
- 4) Provide residential housing opportunities within walking distance of existing, adjacent office and research park development to encourage pedestrian and bicycle commuting.
- 5) Provide a common recreation center including a pool and recreation building for use by the residents.
- 6) Provide a neighborhood park with a combination of passive and active uses for use to the Project residents and the general public and a public Class I bikeway and pedestrian mall through the Project site.
- 7) Make minor modifications to the lot lines and zoning between the residential and business park components of the Project site to facilitate proposed development.
- 8) Reconfigure existing parking and landscaping for the existing business park development to accommodate residential project access roads.
- 9) Repeal the obsolete Raytheon Specific Plan.

Creek setbacks of at least 100 feet are required by Goleta's General Plan policy CE 2.2, as noted above. Adjusting the creek setback to 100 feet, which is the project's alternative 2, would at most affect two of the nine objectives. According to CEQA (California Environmental Quality Act) the EIR must propose alternatives that "would feasibly attain most of the basic objectives of the project but would avoid or substantially lessen any of the significant effects of the project," (section 15126.6). Rejecting alternative 2 then, on the basis that reducing creek setbacks to 100 feet would reduce the number of proposed homes, is not compliant with CEQA policy. If producing fewer units than originally proposed makes the project economically infeasible for any reason, then according to Policy CE 2.2, the city must require the developer to provide supporting evidence in the administrative record.

In addition, SBAS has concerns with projects that could adversely affect local bird species. In this specific project, we are concerned with the project's growth-induced traffic and biological impacts.

Mark Holmgren¹, a locally recognized expert on the White-tailed Kite², has observed kites for decades in the Goleta Valley. Mr. Holmgren organized the Kite Watch (hereafter KW), which is a citizen-science monitoring organization that focuses on the nesting areas in the Goleta Valley used by White-tailed Kites. When there are enough volunteers available, it also documents breeding season and non-breeding season roosts, winter use areas, and movement corridors used by kites. Kite Watch has been allied with SBAS since 2010. Incidentally, KW also gathers information on other raptor species.

The Village at Los Carneros property was not considered one of the principle nesting areas for kites for many years. Near Los Carneros Road, in the early 1990's, KW observed the roosting and nesting of kites at the Los Carneros Wetland (now Willow Springs Condominiums). This area was illegally graded at a time when kites were roosting there. The development of Willow Springs eliminated all meaningful raptor use of that area. In the late 1980s and 1990s we also observed kite nesting on the former Delco property (now occupied by the Cabrillo Business Park). However, in 2012, prompted by observations of kites crossing Highway 101, KW

¹ Please see Mr. Holmgren's Curriculum Vitae in the appendix.

² The White-tailed Kite is a fully protected special-status raptor species.

initiated direct observations of kites using the Village at Los Carneros site (which we referred to as Raytheon).

We first observed perching of kites near the northwest corner of the Village at Los Carneros site (in the vicinity of 34.43555 -119.86110) beginning on 17 February 2012 and through the 2013 nesting season (last observation was 17 August). In 2013 and to the present, kite numbers are reduced due to low reproduction in 2013 and the ongoing drought, which as the DEIR correctly notes, particularly affects kites.

On 15 March 2012, we observed four White-tailed Kites going to roost at dusk along Tecolotito Creek (at approx. 34.43473 -119.86144). On 2 April, we observed a kite delivering nest materials to a nest structure in a Eucalyptus tree and one member of the pair again roosted in the Tecolotito riparian area. Subsequent observations in April and May indicated that nest was not successful. But kites continued to favor perching in those Eucalyptus trees near the NW corner of the Village at Los Carneros site through the summer of 2012.

We also observed Cooper's Hawks, Red-tailed Hawks, and Red-shouldered Hawks along Tecolotito Creek in spring and summer 2012. This information demonstrates that the DEIR inadequately characterizes White-tailed Kite and other raptor occupancy in the project area. The project area is nesting habitat for White-tailed Kites. The Eucalyptus is known to support Red-tailed Hawks and White-tailed Kites nesting or intending to nest in them.

We concur with statements in the DEIR concerning the capacity of Tecolotito Creek as a corridor for mammals alleviating some of the effects of fragmentation between open spaces in Goleta north and south of the railroad/Highway 101 barrier. The Tecolotito Creek corridor is critical for gene flow and re-colonization among small mammal populations north and south of Highway 101. The width of the creek corridor and the buffer, which is where passage of small mammals occurs, not only should be protected but should be expanded and managed in a manner that sustains a small mammal populations. SBAS believes that a 100 foot buffer on each side of the riparian edge is the minimum acceptable design for this project. Anything smaller than 100 feet has the potential to limit the movement of California Vole populations, thereby further fragmenting the vole populations in North and South Goleta. The importance of this corridor's effectiveness extends beyond those populations adjacent to the highway and the railroad tracks

(Village at Los Carneros and Bishop Ranch). The Tecolotito Creek corridor is vital to maintaining healthy vole population on both sides of the railroad/Highway 101 barrier. The success of White-tailed Kites is highly dependent on having a sufficient vole population, as the DEIR correctly notes.

For these reason, SBAS believes that impacts of the Village at Los Carneros Project to raptor nesting and animal passage through the Tecolotito Creek corridor amount to Class I impacts. The bridge over Tecolotito Creek is an impediment that further exacerbates the challenges to animal movements. The DEIR is inadequate in that it does not sufficiently identify or mitigate these impacts.

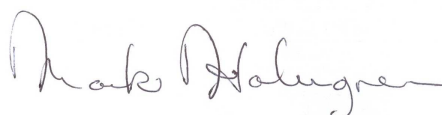
In conclusion, the developer has not provided sufficient evidence justifying the reduced creek setback. The proposed objective of 465 units, under CEQA guidelines, should be considered an untenable part of the developer's objectives unless they provide evidence to the contrary. Otherwise, the DEIR is inadequate. SBAS supports Alternative 2, which includes the 100 foot buffer zone required by the Goleta General Plan and which protects Tecolotito Creek. If the city is to be in compliance with General Plan policy CE 2.2 it must require a 100 foot setback from the creek, require evidence supporting the necessity of a reduced setback, or deny the proposed project until it is in compliance with city policy. As the DEIR stands, it is inadequate.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment in this important project.

Yours truly,



Kevin Lamb
Member
SBAS Conservation/Science Committee



Mark Holmgren
Member
SBAS Conservation/Science Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Stephen J. Ferry". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'S' and 'F'.

Stephen J. Ferry
Co-President
Santa Barbara Audubon Society

APPENDIX

CURRICULUM VITAE

of

MARK ALAN HOLMGREN

(Retired)

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Santa Barbara, California 93105
(805) 680-4045 mobile
maholmgren@yahoo.com

EDUCATION University of Kansas, Lawrence. 3 years graduate studies 1981-1984.
University of Colorado, Boulder. B.A. 1979.

POSITIONS 1995- 2010 Associate Director and Vertebrate Collections
Curator, UCSB Center for Biodiversity and Ecological
Restoration
1987-1994 Museum Scientist, UCSB Vertebrate Museum
1984-1987 Staff Research Associate, UCSB Biological Sciences,
Vertebrate Museum and Human Anatomy Lab
1981-1984 Teaching Assistant, Human Anatomy, University of
Kansas
1980 Museum Intern, Section of Birds, Carnegie Museum
of Natural History, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania.

PUBLICATIONS

1. "Trends in Riparian Bird Abundance on Vandenberg Air Force Base, California". N. Seavy, M. Holmgren, M. Ball, G. Geupel. submitted Sept 2011 to *Journal of Field Ornithology*
2. The distribution and abundance of Southwestern Willow Flycatchers on the lower Santa Ynez River, California. 2003. C. Farmer, S. Rothstein, and M. Holmgren. *Studies in Avian Biology* 26: 30-35.
3. Sexual dichromatism in the plumage of juvenile Brown-headed Cowbirds. Summer 2000. Farmer, C., and M. A. Holmgren. *Journal of Field Ornithology* 71: 429-436.
4. "A Plan for the Preservation and Stewardship of San Marcos Foothills" with M. Kelly, T. Stone. San Marcos Foothills Coalition, Santa Barbara, July 2001.
5. "Changes in Habitats and Bird Populations in Santa Barbara County" in *The Status and Distribution of the Birds of Santa Barbara County, California*. P.E. Lehman author, May 1994.
6. (Editor of) "The Status and Distribution of the Birds of Santa Barbara County, California". P.E. Lehman author. May 1994. Fundraising, publication.

CONTRACT REPORTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTS

- UCSB Campus Wetlands Management Plan, Part II, Vertebrate Resources of West and Storke Campuses (with Lawrence E. Hunt and Eric Schultz), UCSB Vertebrate Museum Environmental Report No. 1, draft report 1988.
- Biological Evaluation of a Toro Canyon Oak Woodland. Prepared for the Division Environmental Review, County of Santa Barbara, California (with K. Rindlaub). 1988.
- Vertebrate Resources in the Carpinteria Ocean Bluffs vicinity. Prepared for the City of Carpinteria, California. 1988.
- An Assessment of Biological Resources of Bobcat Springs with Emphasis on Birds of Prey. Prepared for Division of Environmental Review, County of Santa Barbara, California. 1990.
- The Abundance and Distribution of **Belding's Savannah Sparrow in Goleta Slough**, Santa Barbara County, California. with K. Burnell. November 1992.
- Holmgren, M., Z. Labinger, and J. Greaves. Proposed Riparian Mitigation Sites along the Santa Clara River, Ventura County, California. [Draft] Report Prepared for the California Department of Transportation, Los Angeles. 1993.
- Historical and Current Status of **Snowy Plovers in the Coal Oil Point Reserve Vicinity**, Goleta, California, (with Krista Fahy) for the UC Natural Reserve System. 1993.
- The Abundance and Distribution of **Belding's Savannah Sparrows** at Goleta Slough, Santa Barbara County, California. with D. Kisner. August 1994.
- Carpinteria Bluffs Biological Resources and Environmentally Sensitive Habitats. 1997. Gevirtz, E., M. Holmgren, and R. Philbrick. Prepared for the City of Carpinteria, Santa Barbara County, California. Condor Environmental Planning Services, Santa Barbara.
- Distribution and Habitat Associations of Six Bird Species of Special Concern on Vandenberg Air Force Base, Santa Barbara County, California. 1999. Holmgren, M.A. and P.W. Collins. University of California at Santa Barbara Museum of Systematics and Ecology Environmental Report No. 7.
- Initiation of a Long-term Ecological Monitoring Project: Avian Point Counts and Habitat Assessment in Riparian Communities in 1998 at Vandenberg Air Force Base, California. 2000. Gallo, J., J. Scheeter, M. Holmgren, and S. Rothstein. University of California Santa Barbara, Museum of Systematics and Ecology, Environmental Report No. 13.
- Distribution and Abundance of **Southwestern Willow Flycatchers on Vandenberg Air Force Base and the Lower Santa Ynez River**, 1995-2003. 2003. Farmer, C., M. A. Holmgren, and S. I. Rothstein. Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology, University of California, Santa Barbara, California.
- County Lands Inventory with Enhancement Opportunities 2005. Natural Resources Advisory Committee, Second Supervisorial District of Santa Barbara County, California. Principal co-author, with R.L. Couch.
- Land Management Plan for Burton Mesa Ecological Reserve. with E. Gevirtz, M. Carroll, K. Burton, P. Collins, L. Spanne, and A.

Nelson. 2005. Prep. for The Resources Agency, Calif. Department of Fish and Game. Condor Environmental Planning Services, Inc., Santa Barbara.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

- Endangered Species and Sensitive Ecosystem monitoring and surveying. **Least Bell's Vireo productivity and Brown-headed Cowbird removal** on the Santa Clara River, Ventura County, California. 1990-1993. Experience also with **Willow Flycatcher, Bald Eagle, California Least Tern, Belding's Savannah Sparrow, Snowy Plover**; monitoring on Lake Cachuma, Goleta riparian systems, wintering waterfowl in the Goleta Valley, many others.
- Status and Problems of **Willow Flycatcher Management on the Santa Ynez River**, Santa Barbara County, California. Invited speaker for The Willow Flycatcher Workshop, San Diego Natural History Museum. 17 November 1995.
- Advisor to municipalities, counties, agencies and conservancy groups on variety of issues including endangered or sensitive vertebrate species, riparian restoration and enhancement, fire abatement techniques, hydrological impacts to vertebrate habitats.
- Founding member of **Natural Resources Advisory Committee (NRAC)** for Santa Barbara County 2nd District Supervisor Susan Rose. 2000-2006.
- Ecological Restoration Design**. Coordinate designs for vertebrate objectives in Center for Biodiversity and Ecological Restoration projects; monitor restoration results for vertebrate performance. Conducted 14-year riparian restoration effort on local Goleta creek.
- Ecological Monitoring. Designed and execute **long-term vertebrate monitoring programs on UCSB Campus** restoration projects. **Long-term riparian bird monitoring study for Vandenberg AFB**, 1998 to 2005.
- White-tailed Kites**. Archivist for roosting and breeding records for the Goleta and Santa Barbara areas since 1987. Designed and Coordinated intensive **community volunteer program** monitoring breeding and roosting of the Goleta population of kites, 1998. Prepared '**White-tailed Kites Near Orcutt in September 1999**', a study for the County of Santa Barbara.
- President (and Board Officer) and founding member of the **San Marcos Foothills Coalition**, an open space preservation effort, since 1998.

Curriculum Vitae

Kevin Lamb

DOB: 3/14/1990

(805) 450-5048

kvieiralamb@gmail.com

Mailing Address:

734 Elkus Walk apt. 107

Goleta CA 93117

Academia:

SBCC:

Associate in Liberal Arts in Sciences emph. Math and Science

Fall 2008-Spring 2009, Fall 2011-Spring 2012

Final GPA: 3.30

UCSB:

B.S. Biological Sciences

Fall 2012 – Spring 2014 (anticipated)

Research Interests:

My research interests lie in the field of ecology. I am fascinated by trophic interactions, how species have evolved co-dependence, and I want to further understand the variables that control these complex systems. I want to pursue research that will advance the knowledge of how we can anticipate the consequences of changes in biological systems and how they will affect each trophic level. This will help to create models that can be applied to an array of species, ultimately with applications in conservation biology.

Research Experience:

National Audubon Society – Santa Barbara Chapter:

White-tailed Kite Project Intern

February 2012 – September 2013

- Performed weekly bird observation and took rigorous notes on behavior, habitat, and populations of White-tailed kites.

- Notes were made available for use in local conservation efforts.

Marine Science Institute – Parasitology Lab

Undergraduate Assistant

October 2013 – Present

- Perform routine Lab maintenance such as lab organization, preparing chemical solutions, and maintaining equipment.

- Sort through sediment samples to collect and classify invertebrate organisms by taxa.

- Collect *Cerithidea californica* snails from the Carpinteria Salt Marsh monthly, prepare and assist in dissections, and record parasite information.

Independent Research

Primary Investigator

- Organize archived White-tailed Kite population data into graphs and tables that can be used in the conservation of county land.
- Establish information about the decline and current state of White-tailed Kites in Santa Barbara.
- Network with local conservation activists to disseminate the data and the information it represents.

Presentations:

Santa Barbara Chapter of the National Audubon Society

January 2014

- At the conservation science board meeting, I presented my most up to date findings on White-tailed Kite populations in Santa Barbara County.

Teaching Experience:

LDS Missionary Service in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

August 2009 – August 2011

- Plan and teach at least two one hour lessons each day
- Teach and train other missionaries on how to be more effective teachers in weekly training meetings

Boy Scout Merit Badge Counselor:

Environmental Science

Oceanography

October 2013 – Present

- Teach local Boy Scouts about oceanography and environmental science
- Help Scouts meet the merit badge requirements through meaningful lessons and experiments

Teaching Assistant

EEMB 148 – Stream Ecology

Spring Quarter 2014

- Plan and teach discussion section for Stream Ecology
- Help students learn to use JMP statistical software and Microsoft Excel to draw meaningful conclusions from biological data sets.

Scholarships and Fellowships:

2013:

A.F. Nunes Trust Scholarship, \$2500

Lawrence and Lillian Smith Endowed Scholarship, \$3400

2014: (anticipated)

NSF GRFP, \$30,000 yearly stipend, \$12,000 tuition grant, 3 year duration

Awards and Honors:

Eagle Scout

March 2008

Veterans of Foreign Wars Eagle Scout Recognition

March 2008

SBCC President's Honor Roll

December 2008, June 2009, December 2011

Community service and Volunteer Activities:

Eagle Scout Project

March 2008

- Planned and built extra storage space for the Goleta Valley Boys and Girls Club

LDS Missionary Service in Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil

August 2009 – August 2011

- Built houses

- Helped people achieve goals to stop smoking and/or drinking

Santa Barbara Audubon Society Conservation Science Committee

- Research local conservation issues

- Advocate for protection of local environmental resources by writing letters to local decision makers on behalf of the Audubon Society.

Recent Professional Experience:

Integrative Medicine Center of Santa Barbara

Medical Assistant

October 2012 – October 2013

- Took blood pressure, heart rate, temperature, height, and weight of patients.

- Answered phones, scheduled appointments, corresponded with insurance companies and suppliers.

- Maintained numerous excel databases of medical information and maintained electronic health records up to date.

The Devereux Foundation

Supported Living Staff

September 2011 – April 2012

- Supported mentally disabled adults in routine daily activities.
- Supported and taught mentally disabled adults in their goals to become self-sufficient, e.g. taking the bus, washing clothes, holding a steady job.
- Administered medication to mentally disabled adults.

Software Proficiencies:

JMP 10 Statistical Software

Microsoft Office (Word, Excel, Power Point, Outlook)

Google Docs, Calendar, and Mail

Acme Mapper 2.0

R-Commander Statistical Software