

Final

MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION

No. 253

**Rancho Potrero
SPECIFIC PLAN 19**



Case Nos.

SP 2007-70045 / Z 2007-70773
LU 2007-70060 / ANX 2007-70061

Contact Person

Greg Smith, Senior Planner
(805) 449-2329 / gsmith@toaks.org

**THOUSAND OAKS
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT**

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Final MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION



Cases: SP 2007-70045 / Z 2007-70773 / LU 2007-70060 / ANX 2007-70061

Applicant: CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS

Request: 1) to approve Rancho Potrero Specific Plan No. 19, which establishes various permitted facilities, land uses, design standards and management policies for the Rancho Potrero property; 2) expand the Planning Area Boundary of the Thousand Oaks General Plan to include approximately 156 acres comprising the southern portion of the Specific Plan, which is presently outside the Planning Area; 3) amend the Land Use Element of the Thousand Oaks General Plan to apply the "Existing Parks, Golf Courses and Open Space" designation to this 156 acres; 4) pre-zone 306 acres as OS (Open Space) and the remaining 20 acres comprising the Rancho Potrero Equestrian Center on Lynn Road as PL (Public, Quasi-Public and Institutional Lands and Facilities), said zoning to become effective upon annexation; 5) expand the Sphere of Influence of the City of Thousand Oaks, the Thousand Oaks Area of Interest, and Conejo Recreation and Park District to include the 326 acre Specific Plan area; and 6) annex the 326 acre Specific Plan area to the City of Thousand Oaks and to the Conejo Recreation and Park District, with a concurrent detachment from the Ventura County Resource Conservation District.

Location: South side of Lynn Road opposite the intersection of Via Andrea and Rancho Dos Vientos.

Initial Study Determination / CEQA Findings

As required under the provisions set forth in Section 15063 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, an Initial Study has been prepared by the City of Thousand Oaks. The Initial Study, which is attached, evaluates the potential effects of this proposed project on the environment. Although the Initial Study has determined that the proposed project could have a potentially significant impact on the environment, feasible mitigation measures have been identified that will either avoid, or reduce them to a level of insignificance. Based on these findings, a Mitigated Negative Declaration (MND) has been prepared for the proposed project in compliance with the provisions set forth in Section 15070 of the CEQA Guidelines as amended.

Contact Person / Public Review Period

The contact person for this MND is: Greg Smith (805) 449-2329 / cdgrsmith@toaks.org. The public review period is 21 days. Comments are solicited and must be submitted in writing to the Community Development Department, 2100 E. Thousand Oaks Blvd., Thousand Oaks, California 91362-2903, no later than: Monday, December 14, 2009.

Final Mitigated Negative Declaration Issued

- Public Comments and Staff Response Included in Final MND
 No Comments Received

Date: March 10, 2010 Signature: _____

CITY OF THOUSAND OAKS INITIAL STUDY CHECKLIST

1. **Project Title:** Rancho Potrero Specific Plan No. 19 (SP 2007-70045)/ Annexation No. 150 (ANX 2007-70061)/ General Plan Amendment LU 2007-70060 / Pre-Zoning Request Z 2007-70773.
2. **Lead Agency Name and Address:** City of Thousand Oaks, 2100 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks, California, 91362-2903.
3. **Contact Person Phone Number/Email Address:** Greg Smith, Senior Planner (805) 449-2329/gsmith@toaks.org.
4. **Project Location:** South side of Lynn Road opposite the intersections of Via Andrea and Rancho Dos Vientos. Refer to **Appendix A, Figure 1**.
5. **Project Sponsor's Name and Address:** City of Thousand Oaks, 2100 East Thousand Oaks Boulevard, Thousand Oaks, California, 91362-2903.
6. **Description of the Project:** Specific Plan No. 19 is based on a Conceptual Plan for the Rancho Potrero property that was jointly approved by the Thousand Oaks City Council, Conejo Recreation and Park District Board of Directors, and Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency Board of Directors in early 2008.

The plan calls for the majority of the property (306 acres, or 94%) to be protected as natural open space, which would be owned in fee title by the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA). Correspondingly, most of this open space is comprised of a sensitive resource area with limited access (Sub Area 8 – formerly 9), a native grassland/oak savannah re-vegetation area (Sub Area 10 – formerly 11), an existing conservation easement (Sub Area 7), a future wetland mitigation bank, and secondary trailhead access from adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista to a joint-use picnic/shade structure located within Sub-Area 9 (formerly 10).

The balance of the property (20 acres, or 6%) is designated for use as an equestrian center, which currently exists on-site and is located on the south side of Lynn Road. Operation of this 20 acre facility originally began in 1995, and was recently been upgraded in 2007. The current equestrian center is subject to a Special Use Permit approved by the City and reviewed by staff of the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board.

Proposed improvements pursuant to the Specific Plan are compatible with open space land use/zoning designations and include: a) a trailhead for 30 cars and trailers and a restroom is proposed on the north side of the property , b) a ride-in corral, landscaped picnic grove, outdoor classroom (benches only), picnic tables, and a native plant garden at the previous “Olympia Farms” site on the west side

of the property (Sub Areas 1-4), c) about 1 mile of new dirt trails (currently there are about 2 miles of trails on-site), and d) a 60-person capacity rustic picnic/shade structure with restrooms near the easterly boundary at Sub Area 9 (formerly 10). The shade structure will be used for outdoor education by the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and for general public use. As a future phase, a small expansion of the nearby parking lot on the National Park Service adjacent property, and associated landscaping enhancements, with trail and limited-use road access to Sub-Area 9 (formerly 10) is proposed. This element will be subject to approval by the National Park Service after completion of a separate, stand alone NEPA environmental document.

Specific actions proposed at this time include:

- (a) Adopt Specific Plan No. 19 for the Rancho Potrero property, which regulates permitted facilities and land uses, and sets forth appropriate design standards and management policies. Refer to **Appendix A**.
- (b) Approve an amendment to the Thousand Oaks General Plan to expand the Planning Area Boundary to include the southerly approximately 156 acres of the Specific Plan area, and to adopt a Land Use Element designation of "Existing Parks, Golf Courses and Open Space" for this added area. Refer to **Appendix B, Figure 2**.
- (c) Pre-zone 306 acres as OS (Open Space) and the remaining 20 acres comprising the Rancho Potrero Equestrian Center as P-L (Public, Quasi-Public and Institutional Lands and Facilities), said zoning to become effective upon annexation of the property to the City. Refer to **Appendix B, Figure 1**.
- (d) Adjust the boundary of the Thousand Oaks Area of Interest, which is coterminous with the Planning Area Boundary to align with the proposed Planning Area boundary as shown in **Appendix B, Figure 4**.
- (e) Expand the Spheres of Influence of the City of Thousand Oaks and the Conejo Recreation and Park District to include the entire 326-acre Rancho Potrero property. Refer to **Appendix B, Figure 3**.
- (f) Annex the entire 326-acre Rancho Potrero property to the City of Thousand Oaks and to the Conejo Recreation and Park District, and concurrently detach it from the Ventura County Resource Conservation District. Refer to **Appendix B, Figure 3**.

7. **Future Joint-Use Facilities to be located at Rancho Sierra Vista:**

As noted above, future improvements are proposed on adjacent National Park Service land that would serve as joint-use facilities for both visitors to Rancho Sierra Vista and to the shade structure area proposed on the east side of the

Rancho Potrero property. A conceptual plan has been reviewed and approved by NPS staff at the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area that will serve to slightly expand the capacity of an existing parking lot located near the entrance to Rancho Sierra Vista to accommodate twenty-seven (27) additional spaces for cars. The design will also reconfigure this lot to provide better separation between the general public and equestrians with horse trailers, and includes a low-flow, bio-swale drainage system, as well as a series of contoured earthen berms with native landscaping along the parking lot's perimeter. Refer to **Appendices E and F**.

Additional improvements proposed within Rancho Sierra Vista include: 1) gated access to the picnic area; 2) an unpaved maintenance road/accessible path of travel, and 3) a prefabricated steel bridge spanning a small tributary creek drainage. These ancillary improvements are intended to provide a convenient means of visitor access to the shade/picnic structure proposed on the east side of the Rancho Potrero property. Correspondingly, it has been agreed that the City will process a separate stand-alone NEPA document for these joint-use facilities, subject to the approval of the National Park Service at a later time. It should be noted that the potential environmental effects associated with these future off-site improvements have been addressed in this Mitigated Negative Declaration.

8. **Current General Plan Designation:** The northerly 170 acres of the Rancho Potrero Specific Plan area is designated as "Existing Parks, Golf Courses, and Open Space" in the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan. The southerly 156 acres of the Rancho Potrero property is located outside the City's Planning Area boundaries and adoption of a General Plan designation is part of this project.

The Ventura County General Plan, including the Thousand Oaks Area Plan which applies to unincorporated areas within the City's Planning Area, currently designates the northerly portion of the Rancho Potrero property as OS-3 (Open Space, 40 Acre Minimum Parcel Size). The southerly portion located outside the City's Planning Area is currently designated as OS (Open Space, 10 Acre Minimum Parcel Size). This designation in the County General Plan permits residential and other types of development subject to the minimum lot size.

9. **Surrounding Land Uses:** Surrounding land uses include: the existing Dos Vientos Ranch residential development, including a neighborhood park, located on the north side of Lynn Road; private ranch land to the west, and National parklands to the east and south.
10. **Other public agencies whose approval is required:** The Ventura Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) has approval authority with respect to the Area of Interest amendment, the Sphere of Influence Amendments, and the annexations.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS POTENTIALLY AFFECTED:

The environmental factors checked below could be potentially affected by this project, as indicated by the checklist on the following pages.

	Land Use and Planning	X	Biological Resources	X	Aesthetics
	Population and Housing		Energy and Mineral Resources	X	Cultural Resources
X	Geologic Conditions		Fire Hazard		Recreation
X	Water Quality		Noise	X	Mandatory Findings of Significance
	Air Quality		Public Services		
	Transportation and Circulation		Utilities and Service Systems		

DETERMINATION: (To be completed by the Lead Agency).

On the basis of this initial evaluation:

I find that the proposed project COULD NOT have a significant effect on the environment, and a NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	
I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there will not be a significant effect in this case because of the mitigation measures described in this report. A MITIGATED NEGATIVE DECLARATION will be prepared.	X
I find that the proposed project MAY have a significant effect(s) on the environment, but at least one effect (1) has been adequately analyzed in an earlier document pursuant to applicable legal standards, and (2) has been addressed by mitigation measures based on the earlier analysis as described on attached sheets, if the effect is a "Potentially Significant Impact" or "Potentially Significant Unless Mitigated." An ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT REPORT is required, but it must analyze only the effects that remain to be addressed.	
I find that although the proposed project could have a significant effect on the environment, there WILL NOT be a significant effect in this case because all potentially significant effects (1) have been analyzed in an earlier EIR pursuant to applicable standards and (2) have been avoided or mitigated pursuant to that earlier EIR, including revisions or mitigation measures that are imposed upon the proposed project.	


 Greg Smith, Senior Planner

November 27, 2009
 City of Thousand Oaks

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
1. LAND USE AND PLANNING. Would the proposal:					
a) Conflict with general plan designation or zoning?	2, 26, 34, 35, 40				X
b) Conflict with applicable environmental plans or policies adopted by agencies with jurisdiction over the project?	27, 28, 31, 32, 38				X
c) Be incompatible with existing land use in the vicinity?	1, 2, 4				X
d) Affect agricultural resources or operations (e.g. impact to soils or farmlands, impacts from incompatible land uses)?	37				X
e) Disrupt or divide the physical arrangement of an established community (including a low-income or minority community)?	9				X
2. POPULATION AND HOUSING. Would the proposal:					
a) Cumulatively exceed official regional or local population projections?	2				X
b) Induce substantial growth in an area either directly or indirectly (e.g. through projects in an undeveloped area or major infrastructure)?	2				X
c) Displace existing housing, especially affordable housing?	9				X
3. GEOLOGIC CONDITIONS. Would the proposal result in or expose people to potential impacts involving:					
a) Fault rupture?	5				X
b) Seismic ground shaking?	5			X	
c) Seismic ground failure, including liquefaction?	5				X
d) Landslides or mudflows?	5				X
e) Erosion, change in topography or unstable soil conditions from excavation, grading or fill?	12		X		
f) Subsidence of the land?	5				X
g) Expansive soils?	5				X
h) Significant grading encroachments into 25% terrain?	12				X
i) Creation of manufactured slopes exceeding 25 feet in height?	12				X

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
j) Unique geologic or physical features?	1				X
4. WATER. Would the proposal result in:					
a) Changes in absorption rates, drainage patterns, or the rate and amount of surface runoff?	12, 25			X	
b) Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding?	1,5,8,36				X
c) Discharge into surface waters or other alteration of surface water quality (e.g. temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity)?	1, 12, 25		X		
d) Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body?	9				X
e) Changes in currents, or the course or direction of water movements?	12				X
f) Change in the quantity of ground waters, either through direct additions or withdrawals, or through interception of an aquifer by cuts or excavations or through substantial loss of groundwater recharge capability?	9				X
g) Altered direction or rate of flow of groundwater?	9				X
h) Impacts to groundwater quality?	12				X
i) Substantial reduction in the amount of groundwater otherwise available for public water supplies?	9				X
5. AIR QUALITY. Would the proposal:					
a) Violate any air quality standard or contribute to an existing or projected air quality violation?	10				X
b) Expose sensitive receptors to pollutants	10				X
c) Alter air movement, moisture, or temperature, or cause any change in climate?	9				X
d) Create objectionable odors?	1,12				X
6. TRANSPORTATION/CIRCULATION. Would the proposal result in:					
a) Increased vehicle trips or traffic congestion?	11				X
b) Hazards to safety from design features (e.g. sharp curves or dangerous intersections) or incompatible uses (e.g. farm equipment)?	3,11				X
c) Inadequate emergency access or access to nearby uses?	15				X

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Insufficient parking capacity on-site or off-site?	3,12				X
e) Hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists?	11,12				X
f) Conflicts with adopted policies supporting alternative transportation (e.g. bus turnouts, bicycle racks)?	11				X
g) Rail, waterborne or air traffic impacts?	9				X
7. BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES. Would the proposal result in:					
a) Endangered, threatened or rare species or their habitats (including but not limited to plants, fish, insects, animals or birds)?	1,13,14,16,32			X	
b) Locally designated species (e.g. oak trees, landmark trees)?	1,3				X
c) Locally designated natural communities (e.g. oak forest, coastal habitat, etc.)?	1,13,16				X
d) Wetland habitat (e.g. marsh, riparian and vernal pool)?	1,12,13,16, 24		X		
e) Wildlife dispersal or migration corridors?	1,31,32			X	
8. ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES. Would the proposal:					
a) Conflict with adopted energy conservation plans?	9				X
b) Use non-renewable resources in a wasteful and inefficient manner?	9				X
c) Result in the loss of availability of a known mineral resource that would be of future value to the region and the residents of the State?	9				X
9. HAZARDS. Would the proposal involve:					
a) A risk of accidental explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to: oil, pesticides, chemicals or radiation)?	9				X
b) Possible interference with an emergency response plan or emergency evacuation plan?	5				X
c) The creation of any health hazard or potential health hazard?	9				X
d) Exposure of people to existing sources of potential health hazards?	9				X
e) Increased fire hazard in areas with flammable brush, grass of trees?	1,12,15			X	

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
10. NOISE. Would the proposal result in:					
a) Increase in existing noise levels?	17				X
b) Exposure of people to severe noise levels?	17				X
11. PUBLIC SERVICES. Would the proposal have an effect upon, or result in a need for new or altered government services in any of the following areas:					
a) Fire protection?	15				X
b) Police protection?	27				X
c) Schools?	18				X
d) Maintenance of public facilities, including roads?	19				X
e) Other governmental services?	9				X
12. UTILITIES AND SERVICE SYSTEMS. Would the proposal result in a need for new systems or supplies, or substantial alterations to the following utilities:					
a) Power or natural gas?	20				X
b) Communications systems?	21				X
c) Local or regional water treatment or distribution facilities?	22				X
d) Sewer or septic tanks?	25			X	
e) Storm water drainage?	19			X	
f) Solid waste disposal?	7			X	
g) Local or regional water supplies?	22				X
13. AESTHETICS. Would the proposal:					
a) Affect a scenic vista or scenic highway?	1, 26, 30, 31			X	
b) Have a demonstrable negative aesthetic effect?	1,26			X	
c) Create light or glare?	1,12				X
14. CULTURAL RESOURCES. Would the proposal:					
a) Disturb paleontological resources?	9			X	
b) Disturb archaeological resources?	6,23			X	
c) Affect historical resources?	9				X

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
d) Have the potential to cause a physical change which would affect unique ethnic cultural values?	9				X
e) Restrict existing religious or sacred uses within the potential impact area?	9				X
15. RECREATION. Would the proposal:					
a) Increase the demand for neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities?	26,43				X
b) Affect existing recreational opportunities?	28,43				X
16. MANDATORY FINDINGS OF SIGNIFICANCE.					
a) Does the project have the potential to degrade quality of the environment, substantially reduce a fish or wildlife species habitat, cause a fish or wildlife population to drop below self-sustaining levels, threaten to eliminate a plant or animal community, reduce the number or restrict the range of a rare or endangered plant or animal or eliminate important examples of the major periods of California history or prehistory?					X
c) As noted in the project description and initial study checklist, the potential environmental effects associated with the adoption of the Specific Plan are minimal and affect less than ten percent (10%) of the 326 acre property. The same is true of future joint-use facilities proposed within adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista, the total footprint of which is confined to less than 0.35 acres. Correspondingly, no significant adverse impacts have been identified either on, or off-site that cannot be avoided or mitigated to a level of insignificance.				X	
d) Does the project have environmental effects which will cause substantial adverse effects on human beings, either directly or indirectly?					X
17. EARLIER ANALYSES					
Earlier analysis may be used where, pursuant to tiering, program EIR, or other CEQA process, one or more affects have been adequately analyzed in an earlier EIR or Negative Declaration. Section 15063 (C) (3) (D). In this case a discussion should identify the following items:					
a)	Earlier analysis used. N/A				
b)	Impacts adequately addressed. N/A				
c)	Mitigation measures. N/A				

Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
<p>Authority: Public Resources Code Sections 21083 and 21087. Reference: Public Resources Code Sections 21080 (c), 21080.1, 21080.3, 21082.1, 21083, 21083.3, 21093, 321094 21151; <i>Sundstrom v. County of Mendocino</i>, 202 Cal. App. 3d 296 (1988); <i>Leonoff v. Monterey Board of Supervisors</i>, Cal. App. 3d 1337 (1990).</p>					
18. SOURCE REFERENCES					
1	Site Inspection				
2	City of Thousand Oaks General Plan				
3	City of Thousand Oaks Municipal Code				
4	City of Thousand Oaks Zoning Maps				
5	Safety Element - Thousand Oaks General Plan / Preliminary Geotechnical Exploration At The Rancho Potrero Equestrian Center, December 2000, GEO-ETKA, INC.,				
6	City of Thousand Oaks Archaeological Resource Map				
7	Guidelines for Preparation of Environmental Assessments for Solid Waste Impacts				
8	Flood Insurance Rate Map				
9	Not applicable to project				
10	Ventura Co. APCD Guidelines for the Preparation of Air Quality Impact Analyses				
11	Public Works Department, Traffic Division				
12	Rancho Potrero Equestrian Center Staff Report and Draft Design Development Plans				
13	City data base of rare, endangered and/or sensitive Species / Rancho Potrero Biological Resources Inventory – Updated 2008				
14	Population sizes and territory characteristics of Grasshopper Sparrows (<i>Ammodramus savannarium</i> , <i>ssp. perpallidus</i>) in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and nearby localities prepared by Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology, December 2007				
15	Ventura County Fire Department				
16	Broome Ranch Land Use Constraints Analysis, Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency, November 1995 (copy available for review upon request)				
17	Noise Element - Thousand Oaks General Plan				
18	Conejo Valley Unified School District				
19	Public Works Department, Development Engineering Division				
20	The Gas Company; Southern California Edison				
21	GTE California Incorporated				
22	Public Works Department, Water/Wastewater Division				

	Issues and Supporting Information Sources	Sources	Potentially Significant Issues	Potentially Significant Unless Mitigation Incorporated	Less Than Significant Impact	No Impact
23	Phase I Archaeological Reconnaissance Survey, Phase II Archaeological Testing of a Portion of the Broome Ranch (Copies of these reports, which were prepared by W & S Consultants are not attached to the MND, but are available for review by qualified individuals upon request at the City of Thousand Oaks Department of Community Development).					
24	Wetlands delineation prepared by Rincon Consultants, Inc., for the proposed Rancho Sierra Vista bridge site, March 2008 - Appendix D.					
25	Conceptual grading plan and landscape design prepared by the RRM Design Group for the joint-use facilities proposed with Ranch Sierra Vista, November 2009 – Appendices E and F.					
26	Photo-simulations of proposed shade/picnic structure and parking lot from selected perspectives within Rancho Sierra Vista, November 2009 – Appendix G					
27	Thousand Oaks Police Department					
28	Conejo Recreation and Park District					
29	County of Ventura Environmental Health					
30	County of Ventura Zoning Maps					
31	Open Space Element – Thousand Oaks General Plan					
32	Conservation Element - Thousand Oaks General Plan					
33	Scenic Highways Element - Thousand Oaks General Plan					
34	Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan					
35	County of Ventura Thousand Oaks Area Plan					
36	County of Ventura General Plan					
37	California Department of Conservation Important Farmlands Map					
38	Longtin's California Land Use, 2nd Edition					
39	Hydrology and Drainage Report, Broome Ranch					
40	Recreation Element- Thousand Oaks General Plan					

CHECKLIST RESPONSES

1. Land Use and Planning

Potential Environmental Impacts

- e. As noted, the proposed project includes adoption of a Specific Plan for Rancho Potrero, which describes various facilities and land uses permitted on-site, including appropriate design standards and management polices. Other related elements of the project are a proposed amendment to the Land Use Element of the City's General Plan that will designate the southerly 156 acres of the Rancho Potrero property as "Existing Parks, Golf Courses, and Open Space" (which is the current City Land Use Element designation for the northern 170 acres of the property), as well as pre-zoning of 306 acres as O-S ("Open Space"), with the remaining 20-acre equestrian center to be pre-zoned as P-L ("Public, Quasi-Public, and Institutional Lands and Facilities") prior to annexation. The Specific Plan limits the use of these 20 acres to an equestrian center. All of these requests are consistent with the goals and policies set forth in the Open Space and Conservation Elements of the General Plan. The Sphere of Influence amendment, annexation to the City, Specific Plan, General Plan amendment, and pre-zoning will limit the use of the property to a greater degree than the existing County General Plan designation and zoning.
- f. The proposal will not conflict with environmental policies or plans adopted by state and federal agencies with jurisdiction, or permit authority over, certain aspects of the project. This includes proposed joint-use facilities located within Rancho Sierra Vista, the conceptual design of which has been previously reviewed and approved by local National Park Service staff and is identified in the project description.
- g. The subject property is not presently used for agriculture, nor does it contain any prime farmland or farmlands of statewide importance. The same is true of land located within adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista.
- h. The subject property is located on the opposite side of a road from an established residential community. Therefore, the proposed project will not disrupt or divide its physical arrangement. The same is true of land located within adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista, which is part of the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area and administered by the National Park Service.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

2. **Population and Housing**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. The project is not residential in nature. Therefore, it will not induce local population growth, or affect regional or local population projections. Only that infrastructure necessary to support the permitted uses identified in the Specific Plan are proposed to be constructed.
- b, c. There is no affordable housing located on-site. The same is true of adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

3. **Geologic Conditions**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. No known "active", or "potentially active", earthquake faults or geologic hazards exist within the limits of the proposed project. The subject property is not situated near any State-designated Alquist-Priolo Special Study Zone. As a result, the potential for damage due to fault rupture is considered remote. This also includes adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista.
- b. As is characteristic of the Thousand Oaks area in general, the project site will be subject to strong ground shaking due to seismic events on regional active faults. Structures will be designed to reduce the potential for damage associated with anticipated ground shaking in accordance with the Uniform Building Code. Correspondingly, potential impacts from seismic events are considered to be reduced to a level that is less than significant.
- c. Ground failure and/or liquefaction due to strong, prolonged seismic shaking is not expected to pose a significant risk to the site given the nature of shallow underlying volcanic bedrock units, which tend to be mantled by thin layers of alluvium, and capped by relatively thick, silty-clay soils. Similar soil conditions exist within the adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista.
- d. No landslide or mudflows have been mapped or identified on-site. Sub Areas 1 through 4, which have been previously graded, also have manufactured cut and fill slopes that are stable and show no visible signs of previous failure.

- e. On-site construction activities are likely to involve some limited grading, as well as the removal of vegetation, thereby exposing earthen surfaces to erosion.
- f. As previously noted, subsidence is not considered a problem with either Rancho Potrero, or Rancho Sierra Vista.
- g. Based on the Safety Element of the Thousand Oaks General Plan, expansive clay soils occur on-site, however, no new habitable structures are proposed for this area.
- h. Only limited encroachment in natural hillside terrain exceeding 25% gradient is proposed (less than 200 linear feet) in order to accommodate trail construction in Sub-Area 8 (formerly 9).
- i. The project will not involve the creation of any significant manufactured slopes.
- j. No unique geomorphic features, or prominent landforms, will be potentially impacted by the proposed project.

Mitigation Measures

- 1) If grading of any kind is scheduled to occur during the rainy season (November 1st through April 15th), an erosion control plan shall be prepared in coordination with the Public Works Department. Landscape treatment with native plant materials will be required in order to reduce the potential for erosion. This includes any off-site grading within Rancho Sierra Vista, which may be subject to additional regulation by the National Park Service.

4. **Water**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. Surface water runoff is not expected to significantly increase because the majority (94%) of the property will remain as undeveloped open space and no expansion of the existing equestrian center is proposed. The same is true of the adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista property since a total of less than 0.35 acres will be paved to expand an existing parking lot to accommodate an additional 27 cars. This incremental increase in runoff is considered to be insignificant and will be mitigated by the future installation of a perimeter bio-swale sized to accommodate nuisance water runoff.
- b. The project site is not located within the mapped 100-year floodplains of either the South Branch Arroyo Conejo, or the Big Sycamore Canyon

Creek watershed. As a result, no potential for significant flooding exists on-site. The same is true of the adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista property.

- c. Surface water resources are very limited on-site and tend to be ephemeral or intermittent in nature. In the case of the equestrian center, a bio-swale has been constructed all along its perimeter, which intercepts any nuisance water runoff before it can enter the South Branch Arroyo Conejo Creek drainage. The same is true of existing onsite parking areas, which consist of permeable, unpaved surfaces.
- d. The project will not alter the amount of surface water in any body of water.
- e. The project will not result in any significant change to the course or direction of surface water within either Rancho Potrero or Rancho Sierra Vista.
- f, g, h. The project will not affect the direction, rate of flow, or quantity of ground water either on, or of-site. Groundwater is not utilized for domestic purposes.

Mitigation Measures

- a) Any site preparation work or construction activities within Rancho Potrero or Rancho Sierra Vista will be subject to the requirements of the Ventura Countywide Stormwater Quality Management Program, National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Permit No. CAS063339. This permit requires that the following Best Management Practices (BMP's) be employed in order to protect the quality of downstream receiving waters:
 - 1) If feasible, all grading and construction shall be undertaken during the normally dry season.
 - 2) A protocol shall be established for maintaining a clean work site. This includes the proper capture and recycling of construction materials and equipment fluids.
 - 3) All disturbed areas shall be replanted in an expedited manner in order to restore natural vegetative erosion control.
 - 4) All exposed graded surfaces that are to remain unvegetated shall be compacted and stabilized in a suitable manner in order to prevent erosion.
 - 5) Bio-swales shall be installed adjacent to all paved roads and parking lots.

5. **Air Quality**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. The project will not exceed any air quality standards or emission thresholds adopted by the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District. This includes proposed joint-use facilities located within Rancho Sierra Vista, the conceptual design of which has been previously reviewed and approved by National Park Service staff and is identified in the project description.
- b. Ongoing measures to reduce dust to a less than significant level include the following: 1) principal roads have a compacted road base or asphalt surface; 2) parking areas have a compacted road base surface; 3) the posted vehicle speed on-site will be 10 mph, and 4) sand is used as base material throughout the equestrian center in the arenas and corrals.
- c. No significant structures are proposed that would potentially alter air movement, moisture, or temperature or cause any a change in climate.
- d. Ongoing manure management practices at the equestrian center, which include daily cleanup and on-site storage in enclosed containers is adequate to reduce objectionable odors to a less than significant level.

Mitigation Measures

Compliance with standard Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) mitigation measures to control fugitive dust and reduce construction equipment emissions is required.

6. **Transportation/Circulation**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. Lynn Road is the primary means of access to the subject property. All nearby intersections, including Via Andrea and Rancho Dos Vientos Drive currently operate at Level of Service (LOS) A during both the a.m. and p.m. peak-traffic-hours. As a result, this road and these intersections have more than sufficient capacity to accommodate additional vehicle trips generated by the proposed project, which are estimated to range between 25 to 50 ADT (average daily trips) during the peak-use period when the Conejo Recreation and Park District's outdoor education program is in full operation and the picnic and trail facilities are expected to attract the highest daily use. The reason for this fluctuation in vehicles trip is several-fold: 1) vans with seating for 15 passengers are utilized by the District to transport children and instructors involved in the outdoor education program, 2) the proposed joint-use shade/picnic structure located within

Sub Area 9 (formerly 10) is limited to a maximum capacity of only 60 people and 3) traffic levels generated by the existing equestrian center will not be affected by adoption of the Specific Plan.

- b. The proposal does not include any features that will create traffic hazards for motor vehicles, bicyclists or pedestrians.
- c. Adequate emergency access to the site can be provided to both Rancho and Rancho Sierra Vista directly from Lynn Road.
- d. A combination of on and off-site parking is being proposed to adequately serve the needs of visitors. This will include twenty-seven (27) additional spaces at the existing equestrian parking lot located near the entrance to Rancho Sierra Vista, as well as the construction of a new trailhead parking lot for approximately thirty (30) cars, including horse trailers, at Sub-Area 5.
- e. The project will not create any hazards or barriers for pedestrians or bicyclists.
- f. The project does not conflict with any adopted policies supporting alternative transportation.
- g. Not applicable to the project.

Mitigation Measures

Payment of standard County-wide traffic mitigation fee in the amount of \$152.75 is required prior to any construction.

7. **Biological Resources**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. Blochman's Dudleya (*Dudleya blochmaniae* ssp. *blochmaniae*), is known to occur on-site and is listed by the California Native Plant Society as being "rare and endangered" in Southern California. This plant is essentially restricted to rocky, north-facing substrates located within Subarea 9, all of which is to remain as permanent natural open space. Refer to Figure 2, Rancho Potrero Biological Resources Inventory (April 2008). As a result, no impacts to this species are anticipated.

Grasshopper Sparrows (*Ammodramus savannarum*, ssp. *perpallidus*) are also known to occur on-site within Sub-Areas 8 (formerly 9) and 10 (formerly 11) where suitable habitat is present. This species is listed by the California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Diversity Data Base website as "endangered". It is also included on the Audubon Society's

“Partners in Flight Watch List”, as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s “Migratory Non-Game Birds of Management Concern” list. A breeding bird survey conducted by the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in 2007 confirmed the presence of a population of 14 to 15 birds on-site, which are spread over a fairly large area of grassland habitat. A similar, but somewhat smaller population, of between 9 to 12 birds has also been identified on the adjoining Rancho Sierra Vista property managed by the National Park Service. Refer to **Appendix C**.

In February of 2008, Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA) staff met on-site with NPS staff who had participated in this survey. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the general characteristics of the bird’s preferred habitat and to see firsthand areas where Grasshopper Sparrows had been observed. As a follow-up to this meeting, COSCA Rangers staked and flagged each of these localities using GPS coordinates provided in the principal investigator’s (Linnea Hall, Ph.D.), final report. In April, 2008, COSCA biologists revisited these flagged sites at various times during the day and reconfirmed the presence of this species in the same areas as noted during the previous field surveys conducted by the Western Foundation of Vertebrate Zoology in 2007.

Impacts associated with the adoption of Specific Plan No. 19 include the potential loss of approximately 0.45 acres of suitable grassland habitat associated with the proposed construction of a picnic/shade structure with free standing restrooms in Sub-Area 9 (formerly 10). This potential impact includes future grading of a 15 ft. wide maintenance road and disabled access pathway connecting this picnic/shade structure with an existing equestrian parking lot located within adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista, which is proposed to be expanded to accommodate 27 additional cars. It should be noted that none of the area proposed for expansion of this parking lot is suitable habitat and consists primarily of old dumped fill that is vegetated with weedy, non-native plant species.

Sub-Area 5, which is also proposed to be developed within Rancho Potrero as a trailhead with public restroom, is highly disturbed and does not contain suitable habitat for Grasshopper Sparrows. On an interim basis, a 15 ft. wide unpaved maintenance road and disabled access pathway would be constructed to connect with the trailhead with Sub-Area 9 (formerly 10) as depicted in the Specific Plan Land Use Exhibit. Because most of this interim access road follows a pre-existing alignment used to maintain landscaping within the Conservation Easement in Sub-Area 7, the loss of additional suitable grassland habitat is estimated to be only 0.25 acres. No loss of habitat is anticipated due to proposed trail construction since new proposed segments follow previously established routes and therefore require little or no vegetation clearance. Given the presence of approximately 200 acres of suitable grassland habitat available to Grasshopper Sparrows within the both Rancho Potrero and

adjacent portions of Rancho Sierra Vista, the combined loss of less than one acre is not considered to be significant.

- b. No oak or landmark trees will be impacted by the project on either Rancho Potrero or Rancho Sierra Vista.
- c. With the exception of some small patches of degraded coastal sage scrub located within Sub-Areas 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 and 9, the predominant vegetation type consists of non-native California Grassland. Given the limited amount of new facilities being proposed on Rancho Potrero and Rancho Sierra Vista, the project will not displace any biologically significant plant or animal habitats.
- d. A jurisdictional wetland delineation has been prepared by Rincon Consultants, Inc. for a small tributary drainage to South Branch Arroyo Conejo Creek that is located off-site on adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista. Refer to **Appendix D**. According to this report, approximately 0.16 acres of wetland exists within the future alignment of a joint-use maintenance road/accessible pathway that is intended to link Sub-Area 9 (formerly 10) with an existing parking lot and proposed gated trailhead in adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista. A proposal to span these wetlands with a prefabricated steel bridge will avoid impacting these sensitive resources, as well as facilitate ranger patrols.
- e. Rancho Potrero has been identified in the Conservation Element of the Thousand Oaks General Plan as an important east-west movement corridor. It has also been included in the South Coast Linkages Project's recommended linkage design for the greater Santa Monica Mountains-Sierra Madre regional area. All of the movement pathways identified on-site in both the Conservation Element and the South Coast Linkages Project will remain unobstructed and be accessible to wildlife. As noted before, about 94% of the property will be permanently preserved as open space.

Mitigation Measures

- a. In order to limit human disturbance during the Grasshopper Sparrow's breeding season from March until July, sensitive nesting areas will be posted to restrict entry. This may also include installation of temporary barriers or fencing as necessary to prevent access.
- b. In the event wetland or riparian habitat restoration or "In-kind" replacement is required by either the U.S. Army Corps or the California Department of Fish and Game, Sub-Area 7a has been designated on-site as a suitable mitigation area that can be utilized for this purpose.

- c. Wherever proposed multi-use trails cross tributary stream drainages located on-site, foot-bridges shall be installed in order to avoid impacts to any jurisdictional wetland or riparian resources that may be present.
- d. Installation of a prefabricated steel bridge is proposed within the adjoining Rancho Sierra Vista property in order to accommodate a maintenance road and disabled-path-of-travel where this proposed alignment crosses a small tributary stream channel. Note: None of these proposed facilities will be constructed or installed until a separate NEPA Environmental Assessment is prepared and approved.
- e. Permanent barriers or fencing shall be installed as necessary in order to prevent unauthorized public access into Sub-Area 8 (formerly 9), which contains a variety of sensitive resources.

8. **Energy and Mineral Resources**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a, b. The proposal will not use substantial amounts of fuel or energy or result in an increase in demand on existing sources of energy within either Rancho Potrero or Rancho Sierra Vista.
- c. Not applicable to project.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

9. **Hazards**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a-d. The proposal is not expected to result in a risk of explosion or the release of hazardous substances, interfere with an emergency response or emergency evacuation plan or expose people to existing sources of potential health hazards within either Rancho Potrero or Rancho Sierra Vista.
- a. Fire hazard management is consistent with standards and guidelines of the County of Ventura Fire District, which includes annual weed abatement and brush clearance within 100 feet of combustible structures.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

10. **Noise**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. Ambient noise levels on-site are not expected to significantly increase due to the proposed project. No amplified public-address or sound systems are permitted outside the existing equestrian center.
- b. Severe noise levels are not associated with open space land uses.

Mitigation Measures

In accordance with the Thousand Oaks Municipal Code, any construction activity shall be limited to the hours of 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., Monday through Saturday only.

11. **Public Services**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. The proposal will not result in the need for new or expanded fire protection service beyond what is already provided to this area, which includes both Rancho Potrero and Rancho Sierra Vista. It should also be noted that the joint-use picnic/shade structure is proposed to be made entirely of non-combustible metal in order to avoid the need for expanded brush removal.
- b. The proposal will not result in any need for new or expanded police service beyond what is already provided in this area, which includes the City of Thousand Oaks and unincorporated portions of Ventura County.
- c. The proposed project will not generate any students.
- d. The project is not expected to have a significant effect on public facilities, including any existing or future proposed roads.
- e. No significant effects on other governmental services have been identified with the project.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

12. **Utilities and Service Systems**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. Water will be needed for horses at the proposed ride-in corral in Sub Area 1. This also includes irrigation of a native plant garden and picnic area to be

landscaped with shade trees. Water will also be needed to re-establish a native oak savannah within Sub Area 10 (formerly 11), as well as at Sub Areas 5 and 9 (formerly 10) where public restrooms are proposed. Minimum-capacity lines from ½ to 3 inches in diameter will be used to accommodate only these basic needs.

Motion-sensor activated security lighting, similar to that utilized by the National Park Service at Rancho Sierra Vista, is proposed at Sub Area 9 (formerly 10) for both the permanent shade structure and the public restrooms. These will be powered by solar panels and storage batteries.

- b. Not applicable to the project.
- c, d. Although adequate wastewater capacity is available at the Hill Canyon Treatment Plant to serve the limited needs of the proposed project, it has not been determined whether a sewer line will be extended to serve the public restrooms proposed within Sub Areas 5 and 9 (formerly 10). It is technically feasible, since the restrooms at Rancho Sierra Vista are currently served by a wastewater line, as is the caretaker's residence and public restrooms located at the Rancho Potrero Equestrian Center. As an alternative, a state-of-the-art waste system that utilizes composting technology would also be an acceptable means of waste disposal on-site.
- e. No significant stormwater facilities are proposed at either Rancho Potrero or Rancho Sierra Vista.
- f. Adequate capacity exists at local landfills to accept the limited amount of solid waste generated by the proposed project.
- g. Adequate water supplies are available to serve the project from the Cal American Water Company.

Mitigation Measures

- a, c. Wherever feasible, utility easements and alignments should follow existing roads and trails and avoid disturbing any sensitive plant or animal habitats.

13. **Aesthetics**

Potential Environmental Impacts

Lynn Road is designated as a Scenic Highway by the City of Thousand Oaks General Plan. It is also considered eligible for a similar designation by the County of Ventura, and is identified as a "Scenic Parkway and Scenic Corridor" in the Santa Monica Mountains Comprehensive Plan.

The entire Rancho Potrero property is also located within the County's Scenic Resource Protection Overlay Zone.

Specific Plan No. 19 is considered compatible with the policies of these plans for the following reasons: 1) the existing equestrian center incorporates a fully landscaped 50-ft. wide set-back from the edge of roadway; 2) the majority of this publicly-owned, 326-acre property is proposed to be preserved as natural open space, which includes the prominent east-west ridgeline that parallels the Lynn Road scenic highway corridor to the south, and 3) the proposed shade structure located within Sub-Area 9 (formerly 10) will be minimally visible from Lynn Road as well as from various perspectives within the adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista selected by National Park Service staff. Refer to photo-overlay exhibits prepared by the RRM Design Group - **Appendix G**.

Mitigation Measures

Although not a part of this project, the existing parking lot that is proposed to be expanded for joint-use within Rancho Sierra Vista will incorporate a series of contour-graded, landscaped earthen perimeter berms to limit visibility from Lynn Road. As previously noted, the conceptual design of these facilities has been reviewed and approved by National Park Service staff. Refer to **Appendices E and F**.

14. Cultural Resources

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. Given the nature of underlying volcanic bedrock and the absence of fossil bearing sedimentary formations, the project will not disturb any paleontological resources.
- b. Based on previous Phase I and Phase II archaeological reconnaissance and testing conducted by W & S Consultants, no archaeological resources will be directly impacted by the project. Although several previously recorded sites are known to exist within the Rancho Potrero property, these have either been salvaged or are permanent preserved with Sub-Area 8 (formerly 9). Although there are a number of previously recorded archeological sites located within adjacent Rancho Sierra Vista, Philip Holmes, staff anthropologist for the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, has confirmed that the layout of the proposed joint-use facilities will not impact any of these cultural resources.
- c-e. The proposal will not affect historical resources, unique cultural values, or restrict existing religious or sacred uses within Rancho Potrero. National Park Service staff have also verified that the proposed construction of future joint-use facilities within Rancho Sierra Vista will have no effect on such resources.

Mitigation Measures

- a. None required.
- b. In order to avoid any potential indirect impacts a permanent fence shall be erected along the southern perimeter of Sub Area 1 in order to restrict public access.
- c-e. None required.

15. **Recreation**

Potential Environmental Impacts

- a. The proposal will not increase the demand for parks or any other recreational facilities. Rather, it is intended to help meet recreational needs of the community, as well as provide for additional outdoor education opportunities.
- b. The proposal will serve to enhance recreational alternatives on-site by improving public access and providing minimal improvements consistent with an area that is largely natural open space.

Mitigation Measures

None required.

Department of Fish and Game "De Minimis Finding"

Although the potential loss of native plant and animal habitat is relatively limited, a "De Minimis Finding" cannot be made.