DRAFT #3

City of Goleta, California

May 2004

BACKGROUND REPORT NUMBER 18
BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This report was prepared as a technical resource document to support the development of the General Plan for the City of Goleta. It provides a description of the various biological resources within the City of Goleta, including of resources of special interest that may require General Plan policies and guidelines to protect these resources. The report was developed using available information on the nature and occurrence of biological resources in Goleta Valley. Major sources of information include the Goleta Community Plan prepared by the County of Santa Barbara, biological studies of major regional resources (e.g., Ellwood Mesa, More Mesa, Goleta Slough, and Devereux Slough), and biological studies prepared in association with CEQA environmental documents for specific projects in Goleta Valley.

It should be noted that biological resources are dynamic. Habitats change over time due to natural processes such as plant growth and senescence, short-term weather changes, long-term climate changes, and natural catastrophes such as fires, floods, and pests. Populations of plant and wildlife species also change due to natural population cycles, changes in the amount and conditions of habitats, and effects of non-native species. Hence, information presented in this report is subject to change over time.

This report is accompanied by the following three oversized biological resource maps which are available for viewing at the City of Goleta's offices:

- Upland Habitats
- Riparian and Wetland Habitats
- Eucalyptus Groves and Monarch Populations

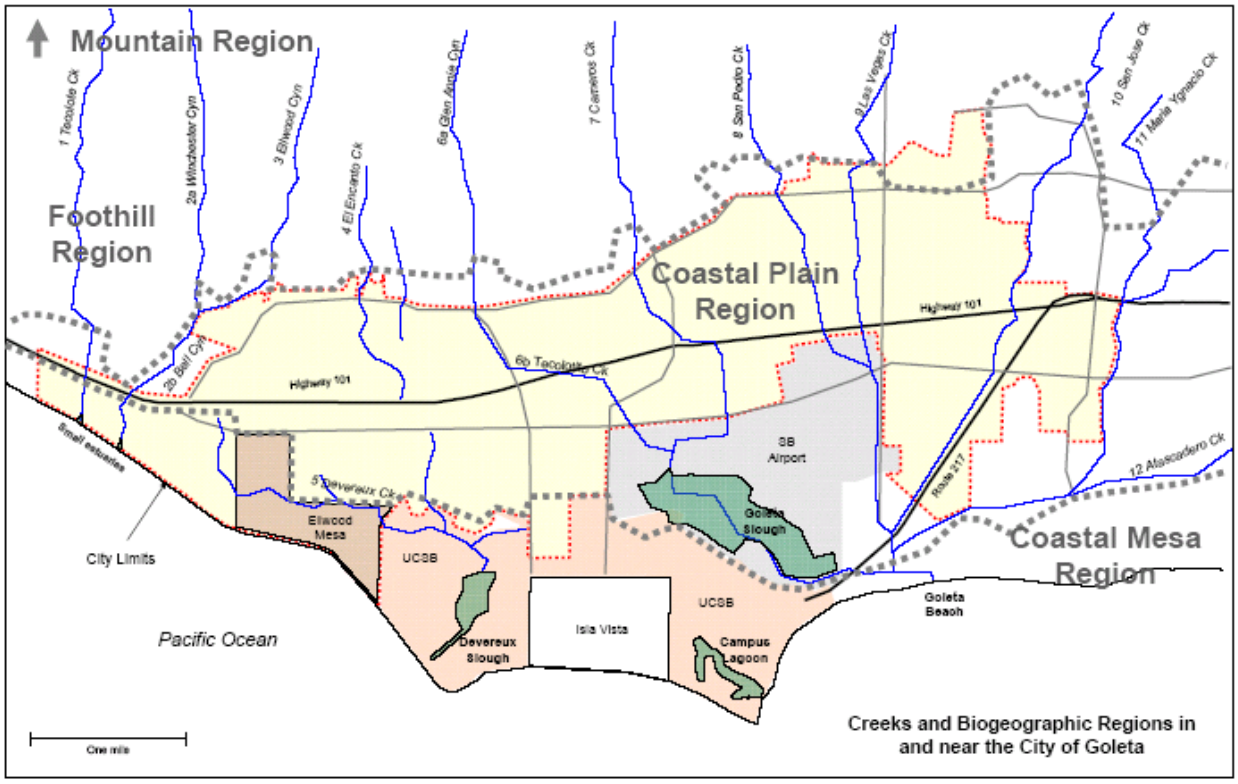
A generalized map summarizing these three maps of habitat types is at the end of this report.

The accuracy of the boundaries displayed on the biological resource maps vary greatly. The boundaries of mapped habitats are based on recent aerial photographs with limited field confirmation. A systematic and detailed field investigation to map these habitats has not been completed. Hence, the habitat labels and boundaries will require field

confirmation when such information is needed for specific projects or environmental documents.

The amount and reliability of information on the occurrence of "special status" plant and wildlife in the City of Goleta also vary greatly. Reliable information is available for certain areas in the City, such as at Ellwood Mesa, because of a history of biological investigations. However, the occurrence of such species throughout much of the City is limited because field investigations have not been carried out except in specified locations for projects. Information on special status species on private property is largely unknown and based on extrapolation from observations from other areas in Goleta Valley.

Based on the above considerations, the biological resource maps should not be used for detailed site or project planning purposes. They provide information that can be used for planning efforts at a general plan level, and as a first level screening tool in the initial stages of project development. The City of Goleta will refine and update the biological resources maps over time.



2.0 REGIONAL SETTING

The City of Goleta is situated on the coastal terrace and adjacent foothills of the Santa Ynez Mountains. There are four biogeographic regions in and near the City of Goleta. The Mountain Region consist of the mid- to upper slopes of the Santa Ynez Mountains

with elevations that range from about 500 to 2,500 feet. The steep slopes are dominated by dense, impenetrable chaparral. Most of this land is located in the Los Padres National Forest. The Foothill Region consists of the lower slopes between elevations 100 to 500 feet. The foothills contain a mixture of annual grassland, coastal sage scrub, and oak woodlands. Deep canyons traverse the Mountain and Foothill Regions. They contain streams and alluvial valleys that vary greatly in width from canyon to canyon.

The Coastal Plain represents the flat coastal terrace that is almost entirely developed. Remnants of native habitats remain in undeveloped pockets and along creeks that traverse the plain, consisting primarily of oak and riparian woodland. The City is almost entirely located in the Coastal Plain Region. The Coastal Mesa Region occurs along coast, consisting of numerous mesas overlooking the ocean, dominated by annual grasslands and eucalyptus groves. The Coastal Mesa Region is also traversed by stream corridors that empty into the ocean, and by two major estuaries: Devereux Slough and Goleta Slough.

The City is situated in the middle of a narrow ecological transition that extends from the top of the Santa Ynez Mountains to the intertidal zone of the Pacific Ocean. The close proximity of different biogeographic regions creates highly productive and diverse biological resources. The different regions are connected by riparian-estuarine corridors – that is, creeks that traverse all of the ecological regions and meet the ocean in an estuarine setting.

The region is highly developed. Most of the City is developed with a variety of agricultural, residential, commercial, recreational, and industrial land uses. Undisturbed native habitat is present in the Mountain Region where the National Forest provides protection from development. Elsewhere, undisturbed native habitat is present either along narrow riparian corridors, or in scattered undeveloped lands of varying sizes and under different management authorities. The most extensive undeveloped land with intact native habitats in the region includes:

- Ellwood Mesa and Santa Barbara Shores – vernal pools, native grasslands, monarchy butterfly groves, raptor habitat
- Coal Oil Point Reserve, including Devereux Slough – estuary, riparian habitat, dune habitat, snowy plover
- Goleta Slough – largest salt marsh and estuary on the South Coast, extensive wetlands and waterfowl
- Campus Lagoon – extensive open water, wetlands, and coastal scrub habitat
- More Mesa – extensive grasslands, riparian habitat, seasonal wetlands, and coastal bluff scrub
- Major streams in the region – reaches with well-developed riparian habitat and aquatic habitat

There are large expanses of grazing lands with annual grassland in the Foothill Region and, in the City limits, at Bishop Ranch. These lands provide wildlife habitat, although the annual grassland does not represent the native habitat originally present in this region. Lake Los Carneros is a public open space with valuable native habitats that have been created through man-induced changes in the landscape.

Land development in the region has significantly affected biological habitats in the region because it has displaced them from most of the Coastal Plain Region. Similarly, orchards in the Foothill Region and lower Mountain Region have removed native habitats from steep slopes. Other significant developments or man-made actions in the region that have altered displaced native habitats include the Santa Barbara Airport, University of California, flood control improvements, roadway systems including Highway 101, and past onshore oil development.

There are 12 creeks that traverse a portion of the City of Goleta or are located in close proximity. They are listed below from west to east. Most of the creeks exhibit intermittent, seasonal flows. The magnitude and duration of flows vary with rainfall. In general, rain-induced flows occur from December through June. Flows in the summer are a combination of groundwater discharge, runoff from agricultural irrigation in the foothills, and residential/commercial landscape irrigation in the urbanized areas. Creeks with prolonged or year-round flows are noted below.

1. Tecolote Creek
2. Winchester/Bell Creek – year-round flow in foothills
3. Ellwood Creek
4. El Encanto Creek/Phelps Ditch
5. Devereux Creek
6. Glen Annie/Tecolotito Creeks – year-round flow in foothills or base of foothills
7. Carneros Creek – year-round flow in foothills or base of foothills
8. San Pedro Creek -– year-round flow in foothills
9. Las Vegas Creek
10. San Jose Creek – year-round flow in foothills or base of foothills
11. Maria Ygnacio Creek – year-round flow in foothills or base of foothills
12. Atascadero Creek – year-round flow in foothills or base of foothills

The conditions of the creeks vary greatly. Many creeks in the Coastal Plain have been channelized to provide conveyance for flood flows. For most creeks, the channelization involved re-aligning and shaping the creek channel to a more uniform geometry such as long San Pedro Creek, Atascadero Creek, and Tecolotito Creek. Similar channelization has occurred along certain reaches in agricultural areas north of the City to protect orchards. In some creek reaches in the Coastal Plain Region, concrete lining and rock rip-rap have been placed along the channel, such as along lower San Jose Creek, Las

Vegas Creek upstream of Highway 101, Carneros Creek upstream of Hollister Avenue, and Glen Annie Creek upstream of Highway 101.

3.0 HABITAT TYPES IN THE CITY

A variety of native and non-habitat types occur in the City which are described below.

Upland Habitat Types

Chaparral dominates the steep dry slopes in the Mountain Region above the City of Goleta. It has a limited distribution within the City limits, restricted to scattered small patches. There are two types of chaparral in and near the City. Ceanothus chaparral is the most common type, dominated by buckbrush or greenbark. Greenbark ceanothus is common on the cool rocky canyons. Buckbrush is more common on dry slopes. Mixed chaparral includes a variety of plant species such as mountain mahogany, greenbark ceanothus, scrub oak, holly leaf redberry, buck brush, toyon, chaparral mallow, and chamise.

Coastal Sage Scrub – This habitat consists of a low, dense to sparse scrub dominated by purple sage, coyote brush, California sagebrush, goldenbush, morning glory, giant wild rye, and annual non-native grasses. Coastal sage scrub occurs on rocky, well-drained upper banks and terraces, usually with a south-facing aspect. It occurs throughout the City on very dry and sometimes disturbed slopes and road cuts.

Coyote Brush Shrub. This habitat type is dominated by coyote brush, a ubiquitous native shrub that readily colonizes disturbed areas and is very drought resistant. Coyote brush shrub is dominated by coyote brush with a matrix of annual grasses. This vegetation type occurs along the margins of riparian scrub, in wet areas, and in upper drainages. It is often used in highway landscaping.

Non-native Annual Grassland – This very common habitat type is dominated by widespread non-native annual grasses including Italian ryegrass, wild oats, common barley, and rip-gut brome. The habitat occurs primarily in disturbed areas with limited seasonal moisture. These areas often have scattered invasive weeds (see Ruderal/Disturbed) and coastal sage scrub species.

Ruderal/Disturbed – This habitat occurs on banks that have been disturbed by erosion or human action, and have become colonized with aggressive weeds, such as wild fennel, black mustard, castor bean, cheeseweed, wild radish, Italian thistle, milk thistle, white sweet clover, cocklebur, ox tongue, horseweed, tree tobacco, ice plant, pampas grass, giant reed, and others.

Native Grassland. Native grassland is dominated by perennial, tussock-forming purple needlegrass. Native and introduced annuals occur between the perennials, often

actually exceeding the bunchgrasses in cover. Native grasslands usually occur on fine-textured soils that are moist during the winter but very dry in the summer. Historically, native grasslands were much more widespread throughout California than today. Purple needlegrass is the most common native grass and generally grows in relatively pure stands, occasionally intermixing with other native grass species, particularly meadow barley.

Oak Woodland. This habitat consists of coast live oak trees and associated shrubs and perennial herbs. The structure of oak woodland ranges from open savanna-like woodlands with scattered trees and a grassy understory to relatively dense woodland. Oak woodland typically occupies north-facing slopes, canyon bottoms and along the outer edges of stream courses where soil is well developed and/or the site is relatively mesic. This vegetation type intergrades with chaparral on drier sites, grassland on sites with well developed soils and riparian woodland on wetter sites. Common understory plants include poison oak, coffeeberry, blackberry, stinging nettle, and toyon.

Eucalyptus Woodland. This habitat consists of monoculture of large non-native evergreen trees, primarily blue gum. These trees were planted in the late 1800s for both lumber and windbreaks, and have spread rapidly throughout the landscape, particularly along drainages. There is little to no understory. Many of the eucalyptus groves in the City of Goleta provide aggregation sites for overwintering monarch butterflies. The monarch butterfly migrates to the coast each fall, and aggregate in large numbers in eucalyptus groves near the coast during the winter (October through February). During this time, they enter a dormant phase in which they aggregate for protection from the weather and predators. They spend most of the time resting in the trees. They feed rarely, living off fat reserves. They collect nectar from flowers on eucalyptus, citrus, and other winter flowering trees. They may travel to grassy areas in the morning to collect dew. There are approximately 15-20 known roosting sites in and near the City. The largest butterfly groves occur on and near Ellwood Mesa.

Coastal Bluff Scrub. This habitat types occurs along the face of coastal cliffs and is dominated by perennial herbs and small shrubs. The most common species are deerweed, Australian saltbush, California sunflower, Brewer's saltbush seashore blight sagebrush and seacliff buckwheat. This habitat types occurs on surfaces or areas exposed to nearly constant winds with high salt and moisture content. The soil is usually rocky and poorly developed. The density of the vegetation varies with the topography. It ranges in density from the sheer cliff faces completely lacking vegetation, to areas that are less steep that support dense stands of characteristic coastal bluff scrub.

Southern Foredunes. Southern foredunes consist of perennial herbs and low-growing shrubs that occupy wind-blown beach sand that receives salt spray from steady onshore sea breezes. It occurs in patches along the coast and intergrades with open beach sand on the ocean side and coastal bluff scrub on the landward side. Dominant species of the southern foredunes habitat include sand verbena, beach bursage,

European rocket, and beach primrose. Naturalized iceplant has colonized portions of this habitat.

Southern Dune Scrub. Southern dune scrub consists of soft woody shrubs with a continuous to open canopy and a sparse ground layer. It occurs in areas of sand accumulation along the coast, but farther back than the foredune species. Characteristic species include saltbush, croton, lemonade berry, coyote bush, morning glory, and California sagebrush.

Non-Riparian Wetland Habitats

Coastal Salt Marsh. Southern coastal salt marsh is dominated by halophytic (salt tolerant) species that are exposed to periodic tidal inundation. Coastal salt marsh occurs in Devereux Slough and Goleta Slough, and at the small estuarine lagoons at the mouths of Winchester/Bell Creek and Tecolote Creek. Dominant species include pickleweed, saltgrass, and alkali heath.

Southern Vernal Pool. Vernal pools form as winter rains fill topographic depressions where underlying claypan layers prevent the water from percolating through to the subsurface. Southern vernal pool habitat is characterized by a particular plant association that is adapted to an alternating process of wet and dry conditions. Plant species characterizing vernal pools include coyote thistle, wooly heads, and popcorn flower. Vernal pools are present on Ellwood Mesa.

Freshwater Marsh – This habitat occurs in low lying areas where there is perennial ponded water or saturated soils. It develops in isolated depressions, along the margins of ponds or lakes (i.e., Lake Los Carneros), or in riparian areas along the low flow channel or in protected pools along oxbows. It consists of a mixture of opportunistic, fast growing perennial herbs that are common to freshwater situations throughout southern California, including bulrush, nutsedge, spikerush, willow herb, cattail, watercress, common rush, speedwell and pondweed.

Riparian Habitat Types

Freshwater Marsh – This habitat occurs in riparian corridors where there is perennial ponded water or saturated soils near the low flow channel or in protected pools along oxbows. It also occurs in non-riparian conditions, as described above.

Herbaceous Riparian. A variety of small native perennial plants occur in the seasonally moist bottoms of creeks and drainages. They persist by either colonizing the channel bottom each year after flows recede, or withstanding the winter flows. In general, these species occur as scattered individuals, rather than in dense stands. They occur on sandbars and protected, moist portions of the channel bed with full or partial sunlight. Common species include mugwort, mulefat, , arroyo willow, ricegrass, salt grass, and

horehound. Non-native plants are also common, such as rabbitsfoot grass, periwinkle, curly dock, cocklebur, castor bean, horseweed, and white sweet

Riparian Scrub – This habitat consists of dense monocultures of arroyo willow or mulefat. This habitat occurs in the channel bottom or lower banks where there is periodic inundation, but insufficient flows to remove the woody plants. The density and height of plants varies depending upon the amount of moisture and sunlight in the channel.

Riparian Woodland – This habitat consists of mature trees that occur along the middle stream terraces, slope of banks, tops of banks, and floodplain of creeks. The most common trees include willow (arroyo, sandbar, narrow leaf and red willow), western sycamore, and black cottonwood. Other less common trees include white alder, elderberry, and California bay. This habitat creates a tall closed canopy over narrow drainages. A highly variable shrub understory is present with such species as blackberry, poison oak, gooseberry, nightshade, and coyote brush.
Oak Woodland-Riparian Woodland – This habitat occurs on the floodplain adjacent to creeks where there are deep soils to support oak trees. It consists of a mixture of riparian woodland (see above) and coast live oak woodland. In closed canopy woodlands, the understory is dominated by shade tolerant shrubs and woody vines such as nightshade, poison oak, and blackberry; and by perennial herbs such as wood mint and fiesta flower. In openings in the canopy, common understory shrubs include California sagebrush and coyote brush. Vines such as wild cucumber, honeysuckle, and virgin's bower often climb trees.

Aquatic Habitats

Lakes and Ponds. The only lake in the City of Goleta is Lake Los Carneros. Small ponds associated with rural residences and orchards are present in the foothill portions of the City. These waterbodies provide habitat for waterfowl and amphibians.

Estuaries. This habitat is very scarce within the City of Goleta – it is only present at the mouths of Winchester/Bell Creek and Tecolote Creek. These small coastal lagoons contain brackish water and small mudflat areas used by shorebirds and waterfowl.

Stream Habitat. This habitat represents aquatic habitat that is present in creeks. Water is mostly present during the winter; however, there are creeks with year-round flow due to groundwater seepage and springs in the summer. The depth, flow velocity, and temperature of aquatic habitat in creek channels vary greatly depending upon the time of year, substrate, riparian cover, and flow conditions. Creek beds exhibit a wide range of conditions, including sandy substrates, cobble and gravel bottoms, or boulder-dominated substrates. In some areas, pool habitats form due to scouring effects. Creek beds are often devoid of vegetation due to scouring, recent deposition, or very dry conditions.

Shoreline and Marine Habitats

There are several shoreline and marine habitats that occur within and adjacent to the City of Goleta. Shoreline habitats include foredune, dune scrub, and coastal bluff scrub, as described below.

- Southern Foredune. Southern foredune consists of perennial herbs and low-growing shrubs that occur on the beach above the mean high tide line. This habitat is present in small patches along the Ellwood-Devereux coastline and between Campus Point and Goleta Beach. Common plant species include sand verbena, beach bursage, European rocket, beach primrose, and hottentot fig.

- Southern Dune Scrub. This habitat occurs landward of the foredune habitat on more stabilized dunes. Characteristic plant species include saltbush, croton, lemonade berry, coyote bush, and morning glory. Non-natives are often present such as ice plant, fennel, and black mustard.

- Southern Coastal Bluff Scrub. This habitat occurs on the coastal bluffs in the City of Goleta. It consists of dwarf shrubs and herbaceous perennials. It occurs on exposed to nearly constant winds with high salt and moisture content. The soil is usually rocky and poorly developed. The density of the vegetation varies. Common plant species saltbush, lemonade berry, and seashore blight.

Below the high tide line, the following marine habitats are present:

- Intertidal Habitat. The intertidal areas include sandy beach with intermittent protruding shale rock outcrops. On the beach, sand is wetted on a permanent basis (in the lower zone) or twice a day (in the higher zone). Rooted vascular plants are absent. However, this habitat supports various invertebrates in the sand that provide important food sources for shorebirds. This habitat is also the primary recreation zone for beach users. Exposed boulders in the intertidal zone are support barnacles and limpets. The soft shale strata is often pitted with boring clam holes. Common inner reef algae are *Ulva* sp., *Polysiphonia* sp., Bryopsis sp., *Gracilaria andersoni* and *Corallina vancouveriensis*. Protruding rocks farther offshore support red algae.

- Benthic Habitat. This habitat consists of the bottom of the nearshore waters below the intertidal zone. The nearshore substrate along the Goleta coast is characterized by sandy bottom with patches of rocky outcroppings. Characteristic benthic invertebrates in sandy areas include tube worm, whelk, snail, cerianthid anemones, and sea star. Low rocky reef areas are dominated by clams and tunicate urchins.

- Kelp Beds. Kelp beds dominated by *Macrocystis pyrifera* represent a significant marine community within the Santa Barbara Channel. Kelp beds are primarily found on rock substrates which provide a secure hold. Kelp beds occur along the Goleta coast in small patches; the most well developed beds in or near the City

are located at Naples Reef and Goleta Beach. In general, kelp beds occur in water depths of 16 to 65 feet. At its inner edge, the kelp forest is bounded by patches of the feather boa kelp and the bottom cover is composed of the red algae and the brown algae.

4.0 FISH AND WILDLIFE

The non-marine habitats described above support various fish and wildlife species. The diversity and abundance of fish and wildlife species vary greatly between the habitats. Fish are present in the estuaries of the City at the mouths of Winchester/Bell and Tecolote canyons – native fish that may occur during favorable conditions at these estuaries include the endangered tidewater gobies, sculpin, California killifish, topsmelt, longjaw mudsucker, and staghorn sculpin. Perennial reaches of major drainages in the City support the introduced mosquitofish which is planted for vector control. In addition, resident trout may be present in the headwaters of many streams that traverse the City. The southern steelhead trout may occasionally occur along several streams that traverse the City, including San Jose Creek, Atascadero Creek, and Maria Ygnacio Creek.

The abundance and variety of wildlife are greatest in riparian and oak woodland habitats due to the presence of shelter, food, and corridors for movement to and from the foothills. Riparian and wetland habitats along creeks and rivers support a great diversity of wildlife species. Streams and pools provide habitat for aquatic and semi-aquatic species such as Pacific chorus frog, western toad, Pacific treefrog, and the introduced bullfrog. Common reptiles in riparian habitats include the ensatina, western fence lizard, common kingsnake, gopher snake, and common garter snake. Drainages with riparian cover are also used by small mammals for cover, movement corridors, and foraging. Mature oak-riparian woodland with an understory and dense litter layer provides habitat on the woodland floor for the arboreal salamander and black-bellied slender salamander. Common small mammals include the Virginia opossum, dusky-footed woodrat, striped skunk, raccoon, and coyote.

A tremendous diversity of birds use riparian habitat along creeks and drainages. The most common species observed by the District Biologist along maintained drainages during the spring surveys include the following species: black phoebe, house finch, song sparrow, scrub jay, plain titmouse, yellow warbler, red-tailed hawk, giant horned owl, common yellowthroat, turkey vulture, house sparrow, cliff swallow, California quail, California towhee, spotted towhee, Anna's hummingbird, mourning dove, acorn woodpecker, and bush tit. Other species common to riparian habitats include Cooper's hawk, red-shouldered hawk, yellow-rumped warbler, northern oriole, lesser goldfinch, hermit thrush, yellow warbler, orange-crowned warbler, back-headed grosbeak, and rufous-sided towhee. Riparian-oak woodland with a dense understory is used by a variety of birds such as the barn owl, Anna's hummingbird, Nuttal's woodpecker, northern flicker, ash–throated flycatcher, scrub jay, plain titmouse, bushtit, western

bluebird, Hutton's vireo, lark sparrow, white-crowned sparrow, California quail, mourning dove, and dark-eyed junco.

Annual grassland, although dominated by non-native species, provides important habitat for local raptors. Various rodents and small mammals reside in grassland areas, which are prey for raptors such as the white-tailed kite, red-tailed hawk, and kestrel. Annual grassland also provides nesting habitat for many birds such as the horned lark and western meadow lark.

5.0 SPECIAL STATUS SPECIES

Special status species are plant, fish, and wildlife species that have limited distribution or abundance, are particularly vulnerable to human disturbances, or have special educational, scientific, or cultural/historic interest. The degree of rarity, vulnerability, and/or interest varies greatly amongst these species, and as such, the level of protection afforded to them in the City's General Plan will vary. The categories of special status species are summarized below, in decreasing order of sensitivity:

1. Plant, fish, and wildlife species that have been officially designated as rare, threatened, or endangered by the state government (California Department of Fish and Game) or federal government (US Fish and Wildlife Service and NOAA Fisheries).

2. Plant, fish, and wildlife species that have been officially proposed as rare, threatened, or endangered by the state or federal governments, and are undergoing public review.

3. Plant species that have been included on List 1B (Rare and Endangered) of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) Rare Plant Inventory of California.

4. Fish and wildlife species that have been designated as "Species of Special Concern" by the California Department of Fish and Game.

In addition to the above categories, there are many other plant species of interest to local biologists, scientists, and educators due to their relative rarity in the county, although they may be abundant outside the county. These species include: (1) Plant species that have been included on List 4 (Plants of Limited Distribution – A Watch List) of the California Native Plant Society Rare Plant Inventory of California; and (2) Plant species included in the list of Rare Plants of Santa Barbara County prepared by the Central Coast Center for Plant Conservation, Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. At this time, these plant species are not considered special status species.

5.1 Plant Species

A list of special status plant species that are known to occur, or have a reasonable probability of occurring, in or near the City of Goleta is provided below:

TABLE 1
SPECIAL STATUS PLANT SPECIES KNOWN TO OCCUR IN OR NEAR THE CITY OF GOLETA

Common Name Scientific Name	Special Status Category	Preferred Habitat
Southern tarplant *Hemizonia parryi ssp. australis*	CNPS List 1B	Vernal pools
Coulter's saltbush *Atriplex coulteri*	CNPS List 1B	Coastal scrub
Davidson's saltbush *Atriplex serenana var. davidsonii*	CNPS List 1B	Coastal scrub
Contra Costa goldfields *Lasthenia glabrata ssp coulteri*	CNPS List 1B	Seasonal wetlands
Late-flowered mariposa lily *Calochaortus weedii var. vestus*	CNPS List 1B	Chaparral, oak woodland
Santa Ynez Mountains honeysuckle *Lonicera subspicata var subspicata*	CNPS List 1B	Chaparral, oak woodland
Black-flowered figwort *Schrophularia atrata*	CNPS List 1B	Chaparral, oak woodland

5.2 Fish and Wildlife Species

A list of special status fish and wildlife species that are known to occur, or have a reasonable probability of occurring, in or near the City of Goleta as residents, regularly observed migrants, or regularly observed seasonal breeders is provided below in Table 2. In addition to the species listed in Table 2, there are many other wildlife species of local interest to biologists, scientists, and educators.

TABLE 2
SPECIAL STATUS FISH AND WILDLIFE SPECIES KNOWN TO OCCUR IN OR NEAR THE CITY OF GOLETA

Common Name Scientific Name	Special Status Category	Preferred Habitat
State or Federally Listed Species		
Southern Steelhead	Federal endangered	Coastal streams
Tidewater goby	Federal endangered	Coastal streams
Snowy plover	Federal threatened	Beaches
Belding savannah sparrow	State endangered	Salt marsh
California least tern (winter visitor)	Federal endangered	Sloughs, beaches
California red-legged frog	Federal threatened	Riparian corridors
Least Bell's vireo (migrant)	Federal endangered	Riparian woodlands
Southwestern willow flycatcher (migrant)	Federal endangered	Riparian woodlands
Other Species		
Monarch butterfly	Local interest	Eucalyptus groves
Arroyo chub	CSC	Coastal streams
Coast range newt	CSC	Coastal streams
California horned lizard	CSC	Chaparral and scrub
Southwestern pond turtle	CSC	Ponds and streams
Two-striped garter snake	CSC	Coastal streams
White tailed kite	Local interest	Grasslands, woodlands
Sharp-shinned hawk (winter visitor)	CSC	Grasslands, woodlands
Cooper's hawk	CSC	Woodlands
Northern harrier (winter visitor)	CSC	Grasslands
Osprey (winter visitor)	CSC	Coastal waters
Burrowing owl (winter visitor)	CSC	Grasslands
Horned lark	CSC	Grasslands
Short-eared owl (winter visitor)	CSC	Grasslands
Loggerhead shrike	CSC	Grasslands
Yellow warbler	CSC	Riparian woodland
Yellow breasted chat	CSC	Riparian woodland
Tri-colored blackbird	CSC	Freshwater marsh
Turkey vulture (rookery sites)	Local interest	Eucalyptus trees
Great blue heron (rookery sites)	Local interest	Eucalyptus trees
Black-crowned night heron (rookery sites)	Local interest	Eucalyptus, ornamental trees
Pallid bat	CSC	Insufficient information
California mastiff bat	CSC	Insufficient information
Pale big-eared bat	CSC	Insufficient information
Yuma myotis	CSC	Insufficient information
Townsend's big-eared bat	CSC	Insufficient information

CSC= California Species of Special Concern.

6.0 ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE HABITATS

"Environmentally sensitive habitats (ESH)" represent areas with important biological resources that may require protection under the policies, guidelines, and development standards in the General Plan. Most are native habitats, but non-native habitats may qualify as an ESH. The definition of an ESH in the City of Goleta is very similar to that in the Coastal Act and in the County of Santa Barbara's Goleta Community Plan. An ESH must exhibit one or more of the following characteristics:

a) *Exhibit highly limited distribution within the City of Goleta and the South Coast*. Examples: coastal salt marshes, freshwater marshes, estuaries, vernal pools, and native grasslands

b) *Provide valuable ecosystem functions in the City of Goleta and vicinity*. Examples: wetlands provide water quality bio-filtering and flood retention; riparian woodlands provide wildlife movement corridors from the mountains to the ocean

c) *Support a diverse, highly productive, or abundant fish or wildlife population*. Examples: oak woodlands, riparian woodlands, and estuaries

d) *Support biological resources with regional or national importance*. Examples: monarch butterfly groves provide wintering habitat for a species that migrates across the country; coastal salt marsh, riparian woodlands, and estuaries provide habitat for migrants on the Pacific Flyway

e) *Support species of special interest, or at least a critical portion of their life cycle*. Example: streams support southern steelhead and red-legged frogs; certain eucalyptus trees may provide roosting for turkey vultures or function as rookery site for great blue herons

f) Represent vegetated wetlands under the jurisdiction of the Corps of Engineers under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act

g) Represent wetlands as defined in the Coastal Act and Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas (ESHA) as defined in the Coastal Act

h) *Is designated as critical habitat for a federally listed species.* Example: beach dune habitat for the snowy plover at Coal Oil Point Reserve

i) Provide an example of the natural resource heritage of the Goleta Valley and South Coast. Examples: very large and old oak trees.

j) Provide a critical connection between native habitats in the City that offsets the effects of habitat fragmentation by urbanization. Example: riparian corridors that traverse the City and provide a connection from the mountains to the ocean

The following habitats should be considered ESHs for the purposes of developing policies, guidelines and development standards in the General Plan:

Freshwater Aquatic Habitats

- Seasonal, intermittent, or perennial creeks or streams that are unimproved or that have an earthen bottom with modified banks, and that are connected to an undisturbed creek or stream at one or both ends. The presence of vegetation of any type in the drainage is not required.
- Flood control channels that have an earthen bottom and that are connected to an undisturbed creek or stream at one or both ends. The presence of vegetation of any type in the drainage is not required.
- Freshwater ponds that are functioning as a natural or semi-natural aquatic feature, but not ornamental ponds or swimming pools
- Coastal lagoons, estuaries, tidal channels, mudflats, salt flats, and related coastal water bodies

Marine Habitats

- Kelp beds
- Rocky intertidal areas and reefs

Vegetated Wetlands

- Coastal salt marsh
- Freshwater marsh (emergent wetland)
- Vernal pools
- Seasonal vernal wetlands (non-tidal)

Riparian Habitats

- Riparian herbaceous
- Riparian scrub
- Riparian woodland
- Oak-riparian woodland

Upland Habitats

- Oak woodland and savannah
- Eucalyptus woodland
- Native grassland

Miscellaneous Habitats

- Eucalyptus groves that are currently used by monarch butterflies, or groves that have supported winter aggregations in the past; eucalyptus groves that exhibit characteristics suitable for monarch aggregations and that are located in proximity to occupied groves
- Any other habitats that meet the above criteria

7.0 AREAS OF SCIENTIFIC OR EDUCATIONAL VALUE

Many of the biological habitats in the City provide opportunities for scientific research and environmental education for all ages. The following habitats or geographic areas within the City limits provide such opportunities: (1) intertidal habitats; (2) all riparian habitats and natural drainages; (3) oak woodlands; (4) Ellwood Mesa/Santa Barbara Shores area; (5) Coronado Butterfly Preserve; (5) Lake Los Carneros; and (6) estuarine lagoons at the mouths of Winchester/Bell Creek and Tecolote Creek.

8.0 PLANNING ISSUES

The following planning issues should be considered when developing policies, guidelines, and development standards for the General Plan:

1. The monarch butterfly groves in the City represent a regionally important biological resource that should be afforded a very high level of protection.

2. Coastal estuaries, lagoons, and wetlands are scarce in the City and should be afforded a very high level of protection.

3. Riparian corridors represent a significant biological resource to the City because they contain aquatic and riparian habitats, provide a physical connection between the mountains and the ocean, provide a refugia for wildlife in urban areas, enhance water quality, and support many special status species. Policies should be developed to protect riparian corridors from incompatible development, enhance habitat conditions, and provide suitable buffer zones.

4. Most of the undeveloped land in the City is dominated by non-native, naturalized plants. Many of these species provide valuable habitat for wildlife, and function in the same manner as native plants. However, there are many invasive exotic plants that displace native habitat and degrade fish and wildlife habitat. Policies should be developed that recognize the distinctions between different types of non-native species and their impact on the environment.

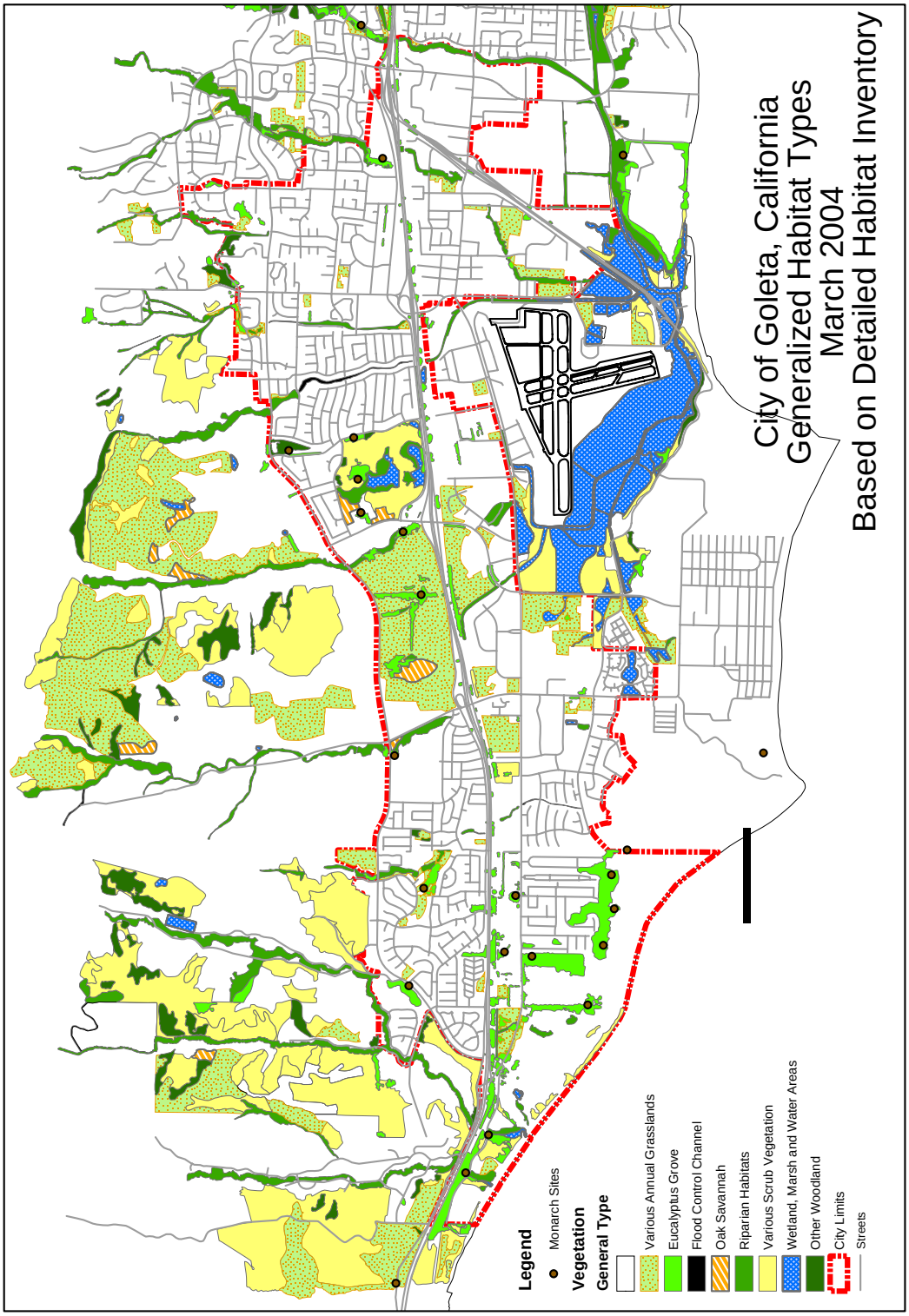
5. Oak woodlands provide valuable habitat for many wildlife species. The extent of oak woodland in the City has been greatly reduced over time. Well-developed woodland

with closed canopies and large trees require decades to develop. Policies should be developed that recognize the long period of time to develop this habitat, and the significance of impacts to mature oak woodland.

6. The biological resources in the City are part of a larger ecosystem on the South Coast, and are connected to significant resources outside the City, including Goleta Slough, Devereux Slough, Campus Lagoon, More Mesa, and the Santa Ynez Mountains (Los Padres National Forest). Policies should recognize this interconnectedness and the need to protect biological resources that lie outside the City, but are affected by City actions.

7. The biological function and value of an Environmentally Sensitive Habitat (ESH) will vary from site to site depending upon its size, level of disturbance, and biological integrity. The condition of a particular ESH should be considered during any environmental review related to impacts to the ESH.

8. Information on the occurrence and condition of biological resources should be periodically updated because of the dynamic nature of these resources.


City of Goleta, California
Generalized Habitat Types
March 2004
Based on Detailed Habitat Inventory
Legend
Monarch Sites
Vegetation
General Type
Various Annual Grasslands
Eucalyptus Grove
Flood Control Channel
Oak Savannah
Riparian Habitats
Various Scrub Vegetation
Wetland, Marsh and Water Areas
Other Woodland
City Limits
Streets