
**Compliance Biology, Inc., March 2010, Letter report from Dave Crawford
to Matt Carpenter (Newhall) regarding Special Status Species
in the NRMP area**



March 18, 2010

Mr. Matt Carpenter
Newhall Land and Farming Company
23823 Valencia Boulevard
Valencia, California 91355

Dear Mr. Carpenter,

Pursuant to your request, the following is a list of citations of observations and records of occurrences for four special-status species including western spadefoot toad, black-tailed jackrabbit, and western pond turtle within the NRMP area. These citations include records from various surveys and casual observations from Dave Crawford and Ron Francis, Jr. of Compliance Biology. Also attached is a list of occurrences of the federally-listed Endangered unarmored threespine stickleback documented by Dr. Camm Swift, currently of Entrix.

Western spadefoot

- March 2004 - western spadefoot eggs and tadpoles identified in three seasonal rainpools on the River Village project site by Dave Crawford, Compliance Biology, Inc. Two seasonal rainpools were constructed on site in 2005, outside of the proposed development area. The first annual monitoring effort in 2006 revealed the presence of spadefoot adults, eggs, and/or tadpoles in one or both constructed ponds. In 2007 drought conditions resulted in a lack of enough water in the ponds to produce suitable breeding habitat. Cited in "*Second Annual Western Spadefoot Toad habitat Enhancement Monitoring Report; River Village Project Site; City of Santa Clarita, California*" Prepared by Compliance Biology, Inc., June 2007.

- March 2004; western spadefoot tadpoles observed in drying seasonal pool on the Mission Village project site located on the south side of the Santa Clara River and the existing mobile home park. Cited in "*Results of Focused Western Spadefoot Toad Surveys on the Mission Village Project Site*," a letter report to Newhall Land and Farming May 26, 2006.
- May 2004; several newly metamorphosed western spadefoot were observed around a retention pond on the Newhall Land West Creek project site, adjacent to the west side of San Francisquito Creek. Two seasonal rainpools were constructed on site in 2005, outside of the proposed development area. The first annual monitoring effort in 2006 revealed the presence of spadefoot eggs in one of the constructed ponds. Cited in "First Annual Western Spadefoot Toad Habitat Enhancement Monitoring Report; West Creek Project Site, County of Los Angeles, California." Prepared by Compliance Biology, Inc. December 2006.
- March 2006; western spadefoot toad egg cluster
- February 2008; western spadefoot eggs and tadpoles observed in both constructed seasonal pools on the River Village project site - Dave Crawford, Compliance Biology, Inc.
- February 2009; western spadefoot eggs and tadpoles observed in both constructed seasonal pools on the River Village project site - Dave Crawford, Compliance Biology, Inc.
- January 2010; constructed seasonal pools on the River Village project site - Ron Francis, Jr., Compliance Biology, Inc. Several subsequent visits to the constructed rainpools on the River Village site since January by both Ron Francis, Jr. and Dave Crawford have revealed the presence of western spadefoot adults, eggs, and tadpoles. As of the date of this report, numerous western spadefoot tadpoles are developing in both pools.

Black-tailed jackrabbit

- June 2006; multiple black-tailed jackrabbits observed on multiple occasions on the West Creek project site on the west side of San Francisquito Creek south of Copperhill Drive during construction monitoring. Dave Crawford, Ron Francis, Jr. of Compliance Biology. Personal observations.
- January 29, 2010; Single adult black-tailed jackrabbit observed in the Santa Clara River channel between the aqueduct pipe and the Golden Valley Road Bridge. Ron Francis, Jr. of Compliance Biology. Recorded in daily monitoring log for Biological Monitoring of the Golden Valley Road Bridge construction project for the City of Santa Clarita.
- February 1, 2010; Single adult black-tailed jackrabbit observed in the Santa Clara River channel between the aqueduct pipe and the Golden Valley Road Bridge. Ron Francis, Jr. of Compliance Biology. Recorded in daily monitoring log for Biological Monitoring of the Golden Valley Road Bridge construction project for the City of Santa Clarita.
- March 17, 2010; Single adult black-tailed jackrabbit observed in the Santa Clara River channel between the aqueduct pipe and the Golden Valley Road Bridge. Ron Francis, Jr. and Dave Crawford of Compliance Biology. Recorded in daily monitoring log for Biological Monitoring of the Golden Valley Road Bridge construction project for the City of Santa Clarita.

Western pond turtle

I have not observed any pond turtles within the NRMP area within the past five years. Previous to that, I have observed numerous pond turtles in the Santa Clara River west of the I-5 bridge and east to Las Brisas Bridge during aquatic species surveys for Newhall Land.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,

Dave Crawford

Dave Crawford
President/Principal Biologist

Camm Swift records for stickleback in Santa Clara River drainage, for Matt Carpenter and Dave Crawford. Extracted from permit reports to U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service. March 18, 2010, by Camm Swift

Ventura-Los Angeles County, Santa Clara River from mouth of Salt Creek upstream to Castaic Junction

March 31-April 1, 2004, primarily habitat typing but thirty seine hauls and many dip nets did not observe any stickleback, arroyo chubs abundant, small numbers of Santa Ana sucker larvae present

November 8, 2004, habitat typing on river from mouth of Long Canyon upstream to mouth of Castaic Creek, and then up Castaic Creek to Hwy 126 crossing. Occasional dipnetting in river took 8 stickleback. Present but not very common

February 1, 2005, river from mouth of Chiquito Canyon upstream to mouth of Castaic Creek and up creek to Hwy 126 crossing. Stream strongly winter scoured but Castaic Creek only intermittent and shallow, about 30 seine hauls and 40 dip nets took only one stickleback near the mouth of Chiquito Canyon amphibian habitat typing with Sean Barry

September 1-2, 5, 7, 2005, habitat typing of river from Salt Creek up to Old Road Bridge including marginal sloughs, springs at creek mouths. Very few fish seen and no stickleback observed except in stable "Refuge" area along southern margin of floodplain north of Magic Mountain Parking area along bluff. Refuge area identified in 1991, 1994 by San Marino Environmental Associates during oil spill surveys.

Ventura-Los Angeles County, tributaries of the south bank of the Santa Clara River (Humble, Middle, Long, Portrero, and Salt Canyons) from Castaic Junction downstream to Salt Canyon (or Blue Cut area).

April 06, 2004, thorough visual inspection with some dipnetting in likely places for fish. Mosquitofish only and arroyo chubs in springs on floodplain of river downstream from mouth of Middle canyon, no stickleback.

February 22, 2006, examination of Long and Middle Canyons, no stickleback seen, primarily habitat survey and reported in ENTRIX report on tributaries in this area.

February 22, 2006, examine mouth of Middle Canyon and springs downstream along south edge of river floodplain downstream to San Jose Flats where water disappears. Arroyo chubs common but no stickleback seen or observed.

May 4,7-8, 2007, examine all north and south side tributaries of Santa Clara River from mouth of Salt Creek upstream to Castaic Junction, except Castaic Creek itself. All northern tributaries dry except San Martinez Grande and Chiquito Canyons which are wetted 1-2 miles upstream of river although dry in intervening areas. Few adult tree frogs and larvae

only. Salt Creek also not flowing near river and intermittent upstream, tree frog larvae only. Ayres, Long, and Humble Canyons dry. Potrero Canyon with downstream extension along southside of river floodplain for about half mile below its mouth no stickleback observed, arroyo chubs present. Lion, Middle, Dead End, Exxon, and Airport Mesa canyons dry. Very dry year thus far, results reported in tributary report for Newhall land and Farming

June 06, 2008. Main river at mouth of Long Canyon with Newhall Land, USFWS, Santa Clarita school classes, 25-30 unarmored threespine stickleback along with many other fishes and amphibians.

Los Angeles County, Castaic Creek at crossing of Interstate 5, about 1 mile north of Castaic Junction

December 16, 2004, casual observations, Castaic Creek bed dry but small wetted area on west side of floodplain from storm drain could support fish, none seen but not sampled.

Los Angeles County, Castaic Creek, vicinity of west end of Muirfield Lane, about 1.5 miles north of Castaic Junction, from 34° 26.528, 118° 36.792 upstream to 34° 26.832, 118° 36.961.

July 2, 2004, sampled three small wetted areas in an otherwise dry floodplain of creek, amphibian larvae and insects only, no stickleback or other fish

Santa Clara River at Interstate 5 crossing in Santa Clarita

December 12, 2000, electroshocked about 60 suckers for trial PIT tagging experiment before tagging SAR fish (with San Marino Environmental Associates), no unarmored threespine stickleback observed (Haglund et al. 2002).

April 24, 2003, five hauls, no stickleback or larval suckers, primary effort for suckers.

September 15-18, 2003, fish exclusion project from lower end of culverts before culvert removal for CalTrans, 522 unarmored threespine stickleback relocated locally (report by San Marino Environmental Associates [Jonathan Baskin] to Cal Trans and VFWO).

November 6-7, 2003, fish exclusion, 13 unarmored threespine stickleback excluded along with hundreds of arroyo chubs and tens of Santa Ana suckers, report by San Marino Environmental Associates for CalTrans.

January 25, 2006, cursory examination of river just downstream at Old Road Bridge in preparation for culvert repair and reconstruction for City of Santa Clarita. No fish seen.

August 22, 2006, visual habitat survey of river from Old Road Bridge to about 1.5 miles downstream, including "Refuge" spring fed tributary along south margin of floodplain and along north edge of Magic Mountain parking lot and downstream. Cursory dipnetting for fishes showed stickleback to be common both in main river and refuge area

January 7, 2007, habitat survey from Interstate 5 bridge downstream about one mile, habitat survey of river and stickleback “refuge” area along south shore, reported in tributary survey

July 13, 2007, preconstruction survey for vegetation removal by Security Paving for about 100 m above and below Old Road bridge, dip net only. Unarmored threespine stickleback abundant, about 70 observed in 40-45 dips, Santa Ana suckers and arroyo chubs common also, mosquitofish scarce

July 31-August 1, 2007, blocknetted 179 m of stream excluded about 4000 stickleback downstream, field work with Maurice Cardenas and Tim Hovey, California Department of Fish and Game

August 27-29, 2007, additional stickleback exclusion associated with de-watering of small abandoned channel near culvert outlet, 260 stickleback excluded to downstream

September 13-17, 2007, additional stickleback exclusion associated with new block netting and new pump installation after flood disruption of diversion and construction area, 69 stickleback excluded.

October 9, 2007, about one hour visual monitoring of die-off of Santa Ana suckers at Old Road Bridge and from 200 m above and below, with Dan Duncan, City of Santa Clarita, and Tim Hovey of California Department of Fish and Game, about 39 dead suckers observed whereas arroyo chubs and unarmored threespine stickleback seemed unaffected.

October 17, 2007, stickleback exclusion associated with re-establishment of natural channel and removal of plastic lining from diversion channel, 274 stickleback diverted to main natural channel.

August 26, 2009, with San Marino, Robert Fisher, et. al. 20-200 m downstream of Old Road Bridge, stickleback common.

September 29, 2009, during stream flow data collection, stickleback observed common in river above inflow of Valencia wastewater plant and very rare or absent downstream of it.

Los Angeles County, Santa Clara River, about half mile upstream of Interstate 5, north shore above and below jct. Avenue Hopkins and Avenue Tibbetts.

July 25, 2007, examined main river and separate thread nearer north shore with dip nets, visual. Unarmored threespine stickleback common, arroyo chubs and mosquitofish also common (ENTRIX 2007h).

October 9, 2007, visually examined about 300 m of stream (to compare with fish kill observed at Old Road Bridge earlier in the day), unarmored threespine stickleback, Santa Ana suckers, and arroyo chub common and no dead individuals noted. About 40 dip nets taken also.

August 24, 2009, just below gas pipeline with San Marino, Chris Dellith, Robert Fisher, et al 30-40 stickleback observed, common in watercress choked river

October 26, 2009. Main Santa Clara River, monitoring of Sewer Siphon at [Union Pacific?] Railroad Bridge upstream of Hopkins Tibbetts. Stickleback observed to be common, and also for the next few days. Crawford did most of this monitoring.

Los Angeles County, San Francisquito Canyon, vicinity of crossing of Desoro Drive, Santa Clarita.

July 2, 2004, stream bed largely dry two or three small pools up to 45 cm deep, amphibian larvae only, no stickleback (ENTRIX 2004, report to Chambers Group for L. A. County Public Works).

Los Angeles County, San Francisquito Canyon, trib. Santa Clara River, upstream above Powerhouse Number 2..

December 19, 2000, sampled about 1.5 miles upstream of Powerhouse No. 2, or from base of old St. Francis Dam down to road bridge. About 40(10-50) unarmored threespine stickleback observed and released with Norman Scott, Manna Warburton, and others of USGS and reported on by them

December 19, 2000, as above but from mouth of Drinkwater Canyon down to road bridge, about 60 (10-40) unarmored threespine stickleback observed and released, reported on by USGS.

December 19, 2001, briefly dipnetted Drinkwater Reservoir site and at upper road bridge site of Dec. 19, 2000 and no fish detected.

Los Angeles County, Santa Clara River from Bouquet Canyon Road upstream to 0.5 miles above DWP Aqueduct Pipeline.

December 03, 2003, visual and dipnet survey of a few very small seeps on otherwise dry floodplain, no fish observed, report for Newhall Land and Farming, by ENTRIX, Inc., Ventura for River Park Project.

Los Angeles County, Bouquet Canyon, lower 600 m above mouth in Santa Clara River and lower extension on to Santa Clara River floodplain 150 m downstream.

July 2, 2004, very slight flow, up to 32° C. in mid-afternoon, nine seine hauls, 12 dip nets, 31 mosquitofish at one site, no fish observed. Tadpoles and aquatic insects absent also. No stickleback.

July 12, 2007, sampled with seine extensively in outlet of Saugus wastewater treatment plant outflow channel on south side of river floodplain at jct of Bouquet Canyon and Santa Clara River, with Tim Hovey, Maurice Cardenas, Jeff Humble, Chris McKibben of California Fish and Game and Dan Duncan, City of Santa Clarita to remove population of convict cichlids. Hundreds of cichlids, no stickleback, one large arroyo chub, one prickly sculpin, and abundant mosquitofish observed. Later removals by others and reported on by

Tim Hovey. This flow found to dry out before reaching flow in main river downstream and cichlids have never been observed in river downstream where unarmored threespine stickleback were abundant at the same time. At this time this wastewater flow dried up downstream before reaching permanent flow farther downstream, but above Interstate 5 bridge.

Los Angeles County, Santa Clara River, Soledad Canyon, U. S. Forest Service Soledad Campground.

December 19, 2001, two or three seine hauls, about 30 (25-35) stickleback observed and released with 40 arroyo chubs. (T:4N,R:14W, S¼ Sec 11).

Los Angeles County, Santa Clara River, Soledad Canyon from Lang and Rivers End park upstream to Thousand Trails Park and mouth of Arrastre Canyon, and up Arrastre Canyon one mile, about 8 miles of stream.

March 3, 2007, primarily driving and habitat survey from road, stream examined closely, visually in Thousand Trails and Arrastre Canyon only. Flow continuous from mouth of Arrastre Canyon downstream to about half a mile downstream of Rivers End Park. Well vegetated with marginal water cress since virtually no rain or scouring flows this year. A few unarmored threespine stickleback, about 20, observed at three locations in Thousand Trails Park along with about 100 arroyo chubs. One impassable (for stickleback) culvert crossing in Thousand Trails. About a mile up Arrastre Canyon stream examined and no fish seen. No fish seen at crossing of Bootlegger Canyon Road downstream of Thousand Trails Park.

On August 24 and 26, 2009, in addition to the catches of stickleback at the Hopkins-Tibbitts area and at Old road bridge, additional rigorous sampling did not observe stickleback in the main river at Portrero, Las Brisas, Humble, Alfalfa, and Salt Creek Road areas of the river, downstream of the Valencia Plant. But some records are present above for some of these areas in earlier years of the 2000s.